



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POPULATION PROJECTIONS FACT SHEET

WHAT ARE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POPULATION PROJECTIONS?

Population projections illustrate how the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population would change in the future if specific patterns of fertility and paternity (births), mortality (deaths) and migration were to occur. These potential scenarios are based on assumptions regarding what could happen, based on recent demographic trends. As we cannot know what will happen in the future, a number of different assumptions are used to illustrate a range of possible outcomes. These outcomes include the level, growth, distribution and composition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

WHAT ARE POPULATION PROJECTIONS USED FOR?

Population projections are used by governments, policymakers, planners, the private sector and others for a range of purposes including planning. They are commonly used to estimate future demand for products, services, infrastructure, energy, water and funding. For example, a high growth area with a young population may require investment in public transport, day care centres and schools. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population projections are important for supporting national reporting on the health and socio-economic wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PROJECTION AND A FORECAST?

The ABS' population projections do not predict or forecast how the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population will look in the future. They do not incorporate any non-demographic factors which influence population change, such as changes in an individual's decision to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, government policy, improvements in health treatment or the occurrence of natural disasters. Projections only show how the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population would change if the demographic assumptions made were to eventuate over the projection period. This may or may not happen.

WHAT METHOD DOES THE ABS USE TO PRODUCE POPULATION PROJECTIONS?

The ABS uses a method that involves making assumptions about future levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fertility, paternity, mortality, net overseas migration and net interstate migration. These are applied to a starting (or base) population, split by sex and single year of age, to obtain a projected population for the following year. The assumptions are then applied to this new (projected) population to obtain a projected population for the next year, and so on through to the end of the projection period.

WHAT PERIOD IS COVERED?

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Australia as at 30 June 2011 is used as the base for the projection series. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is then projected for the period 30 June 2012 to 30 June 2026 for Australia, states and territories, Remoteness Areas and Indigenous Regions (scheduled to be released 21 May 2014).

WHAT COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE ARE CONSIDERED IN ABS POPULATION PROJECTIONS?

Various population growth and demographic information is taken into account in the creation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population projections. These include:

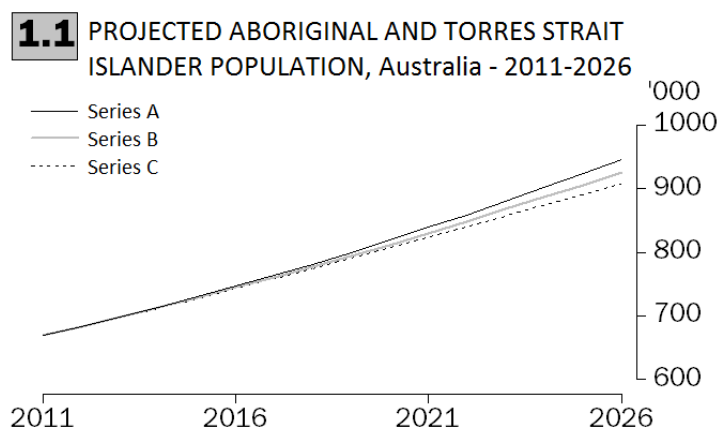
- Children ever born data from several Censuses
- Total and age-specific fertility and paternity (i.e. births to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fathers, where the mother's Indigenous Status is non-Indigenous or not stated) rates
- Ratios of males to females
- Life expectancy at birth
- Total and age-specific death rates
- Migration flows internationally and interstate; and
- Differences in these trends between states and territories, Remoteness Areas and Indigenous Regions.

WHAT ASSUMPTIONS ARE USED AND HOW ARE THEY DETERMINED?

Assumptions are based on demographic trends observed over the past two decades in Australia. The ABS also consults various experts, government department representatives and other advisory groups at the national and state/ territory level. Three assumptions (high, medium and low) are used for fertility, paternity and mortality. Net interstate migration has one assumption based on the rates of interstate arrivals and departures observed in the 2011 Census. Net overseas migration is assumed to be zero, that is, no arrivals or departures. Observed differences between states and territories, Remoteness Areas and Indigenous Regions are also incorporated. There are 10 possible combinations of assumptions at the national and state/territory levels, all of which yield different potential populations.

WHAT ARE SERIES A, B AND C?

Future uncertainty, along with the subjective nature of assessing recent trends, means that it is useful to provide a range of possible outcomes (rather than a single series) for the future size, distribution, growth and age and sex structure of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. The ABS presents three projection series (Series A, B and C) to provide a useful and accessible range of projections for analysis and discussion.



FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, please see the release *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026* (cat. no. 3238.0) or visit the ABS website at www.abs.gov.au. The National Information and Referral Service can also be contacted on 1300 135 070.