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Northern Territory Indigenous Demography

Selected Statistics

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**NORTHERN TERRITORY
INDIGENOUS DEMOGRAPHY
1994**

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STATISTICIAN, NORTHERN TERRITORY**

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

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INQUIRIES

- *for further information about statistics in this publication and the availability of related unpublished statistics, contact Geoff Dane on (08) 8943 2167 or any ABS State office.*
 - *for information about other ABS statistics and services, please refer to page 14.*
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INTRODUCTION

This publication provides an introduction to the demography of the Indigenous population of the Northern Territory. It brings together in one volume material available in a range of other ABS publications relating to the Indigenous population of the Northern Territory. The *Related Publications* section on page 10 outlines publications which offer further detail and explanation of the topics covered.

The demographics of the Northern Territory's Indigenous population are markedly different from that of the non-Indigenous population. In the Northern Territory the Indigenous population tends to be younger, have higher birth and death rates, and is less concentrated in the larger urban centres. Using 1994 demographic information this publication looks at these aspects both in relation to the Indigenous population as a distinct group and in comparison to the non-Indigenous population. Table 1 provides a reference summary of Indigenous and non-Indigenous demographic statistics.

**TABLE 1 INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY,
NORTHERN TERRITORY, DECEMBER 1994**

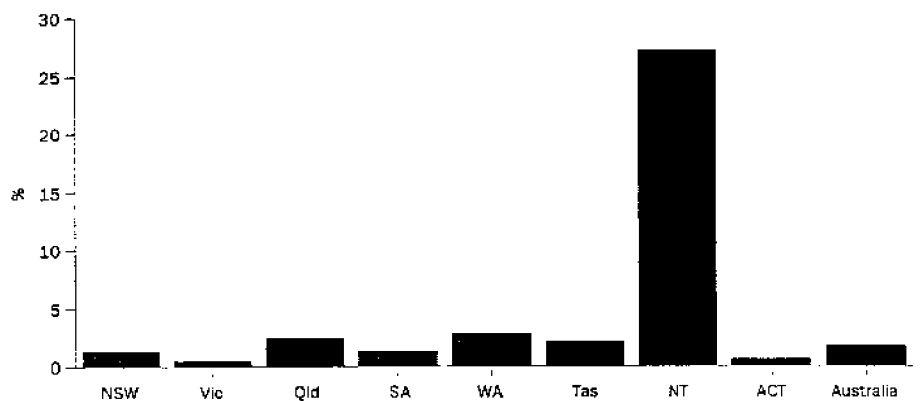
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Population (a)	46,688	124,412
Median age (a)	19.8	29.5
Population growth rate	2.2%	0.6%
Number of births	1,338	2,288
Total fertility rate	2.87	2.00
Number of deaths	380	394
Standardised death rate	26.80	3.43

(a) as at 30 June 1994

POPULATION

The 30 June 1994 Indigenous population of the Northern Territory was projected to be between 46,605 and 46,758 people (ABS catalogue no. 3231.0). The medium series projection was 46,688 and this projection series is used in the following discussion. The estimated resident population of the Northern Territory at the same time was 171,100. Indigenous people accounted for 27% of the Northern Territory's population compared to only 2.8% of the Western Australian population, the State with the second highest proportion of Indigenous people. Graph 1 represents the estimated Indigenous populations as proportions of total populations for 1994 in Australian States and Territories.

GRAPH 1 INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS AS % OF TOTAL POPULATIONS



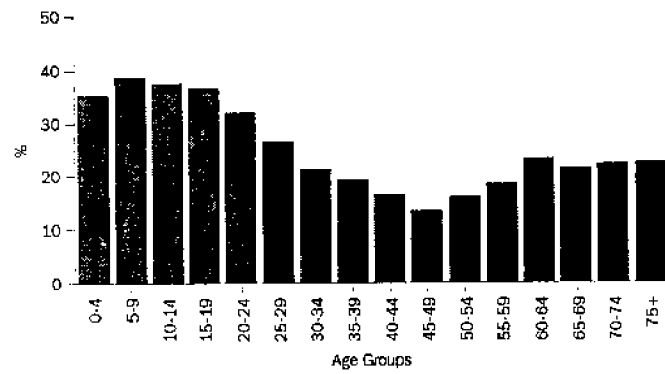
AGE

The age structures of the Northern Territory Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations differ markedly, with the Indigenous population having greater proportions of young people and smaller proportions of adults, including the elderly. Children, aged 0-14 years, made up 39% of the Indigenous population compared to only 24% of the non-Indigenous population, while adults aged 25-64 years old accounted for 38% of the Indigenous population compared to 58% of the non-Indigenous population.

The high proportion of Indigenous people in the 0-14 year age groups is due to the higher fertility rate for Indigenous women. Indigenous mothers in the Northern Territory have a total fertility rate of 2.9 compared to a rate of 1.8 for the total Australian population. The smaller proportion of Indigenous people in the 30-50 year old range is partially due to the influx of non-Indigenous people of this age group into the Northern Territory, and the age structure of the Indigenous people.

Despite their higher death rates and lower life expectancy, the Indigenous population comprises a significant proportion of the elderly in the Northern Territory. This is primarily due to large numbers of older non-Indigenous people moving interstate. This trend is changing with the growth rate for the aged population, 65 years and over, in the Northern Territory increasing by almost 7% per year since 1991. Graph 2 shows the Indigenous population as a percentage of the total Northern Territory population by five year age groups.

GRAPH 2 INDIGENOUS POPULATION AS % OF AGE GROUP TOTAL

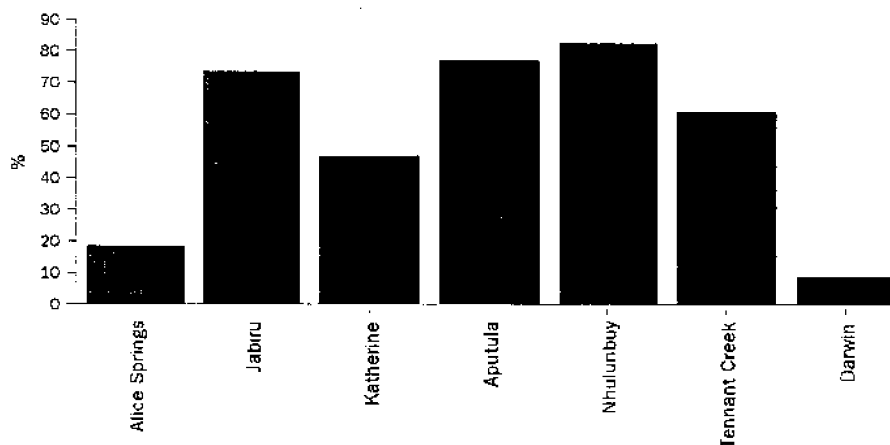


GEOGRAPHIC
CONCENTRATION

The majority of Indigenous people in the Northern Territory live in rural and remote areas. At the 1991 Census over one quarter (26%) of Indigenous people resided in communities with populations between 200 and 999, compared with 2% of non-Indigenous people. Most non-Indigenous people (77%) lived in urban centres of more than 1,000 persons. This compared with only 34% of the Indigenous population. More indigenous (39%) than non-Indigenous people (19%) lived in the rural remainder of the Northern Territory.

When looking at 1994 population estimates for ATSIC Regions Indigenous people made up just 10% of the population of the Darwin ATSIC Region while in the Aputula and Nhulunbuy ATSIC regions they made up over 80% of the estimated population. Graph 3 shows the Indigenous population as a percentage of the total population for all ATSIC regions in the Northern Territory.

GRAPH 3 INDIGENOUS POPULATION AS % OF TOTAL BY ATSIC REGION, 1994



PROJECTIONS

The Northern Territory's Indigenous resident population is projected to increase from 46,688 to between 53,003 and 54,343 in the year 2001, depending on the assumptions made regarding future fertility and mortality. These increases represent annual rates of growth between 1.7% and 2.2% for the years 1994-2001. As a comparison, latest Australian Bureau of Statistics projections show that the total Australian population is projected to experience annual rates of growth between 1.0% and 1.1% over the corresponding period. As a proportion of the Northern Territory population the Indigenous population is projected to rise from 27.3% in 1994 to between 28.0% and 28.2% by 2001.

Table 2 provides experimental projections of the Northern Territory's Indigenous population. For more information on the basis of these projections refer to *Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population, (3231.0)*.

TABLE 2 EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTIONS OF THE INDIGENOUS POPULATION, NORTHERN TERRITORY

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
HIGH SERIES	47,787	48,830	49,887	50,964	52,064	53,191	54,343
GROWTH RATE %	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2
MEDIUM SERIES	47,681	48,683	49,694	50,718	51,759	52,820	53,900
GROWTH RATE %	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.0
LOW SERIES	47,537	48,459	49,372	50,279	51,187	52,095	53,003
GROWTH RATE %	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.7

A more balanced sex ratio is projected for the Northern Territory by 2001. The 1994 sex ratio was 100.6 males to 100 females, and it is projected to fall to between 100.3 to 99.9 by 2001. This declining sex ratio trend is similar to that projected for the total Australian population. In 1991 the sex ratio for total Australia was 99.4, and the most recent projections show that it falls slightly to 99.0 in 2001.

BIRTHS

In 1994, 1,338 births of Indigenous children were recorded in the Northern Territory. Whilst this accounted for 37% of all births the Indigenous population for the Northern Territory was projected to be only 27% of the total population. This reflects the higher birth rates for Indigenous, compared to non-Indigenous, women in the Northern Territory.

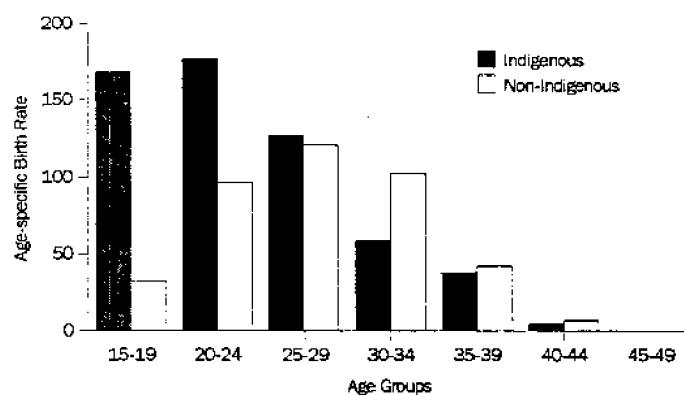
Of Indigenous births, 63% were to mothers under 25 years compared to only 26% for non-Indigenous births. Table 3 displays the relative percentages, by age group, for Indigenous and non-Indigenous mothers, in the Northern Territory.

TABLE 3 AGE OF MOTHER, INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS BIRTHS, NORTHERN TERRITORY, 1994

Age at birth (years)	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	no.	%	no.	%
14 and under	20	1.5	1	-
15-19	353	28.1	108	4.7
20-24	435	34.6	494	21.5
25-29	277	22.0	727	31.7
30-34	110	8.7	675	29.5
35-39	55	4.3	246	10.7
40-44	6	0.4	35	1.5
45 and over	-	-	1	-
Not stated	-	-	1	-
Total	1,256	100.0	2,288	100.0

Age specific birth rates differ markedly between Indigenous and non-Indigenous mothers. As displayed by Graph 4 the rates tended to be higher for Indigenous mothers in the younger age groups and lower in the older age groups.

GRAPH 4 AGE-SPECIFIC BIRTH RATES, INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS MOTHERS



DEATHS

In 1994, 49% (380) of all deaths in the Northern Territory were of Indigenous people. By comparison the Indigenous population of the Northern Territory at 30 June 1994 was projected to be 27% (46,688) of the total Northern Territory population.

Age at death for the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous populations of the Northern Territory were markedly different. Around 71% of deaths for Indigenous people in the Northern Territory were in age groups under 65 years compared with only 55% for the total non-Indigenous population. The trend of higher death rates for Indigenous people was evident in each age group from under 1 year to 55-64 years.

The difference is also evident when the Indigenous and non-Indigenous standardised death rates are compared. The standardised death rates for the Indigenous population were seven and a half times that expected for the Northern Territory's non-Indigenous population. For 1994 the standardised death rate for the Indigenous population was 26.8 persons per 1,000 standard population. This compared to 3.4 for the non-Indigenous population and 10.8 for the Northern Territory as a whole.

In the Northern Territory in 1994 there were 25 infant deaths of Indigenous children representing 61% of all infant deaths (41).

In 1994 diseases of the circulatory system (including ischaemic heart disease and cerebrovascular disease) were the major causes of death for both the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous populations of the Northern Territory. Deaths from diseases of the circulatory system accounted for 29% of Indigenous deaths and 28% of non-Indigenous deaths.

For the Indigenous population respiratory system diseases recorded the next highest percentage of deaths (16%), followed by external causes (14%) and neoplasms (11%). The corresponding percentages for the non-Indigenous population of the Northern Territory were 6%, 17% and 30% respectively. Graph 5 displays these comparisons.

GRAPH 5 SELECTED CAUSES OF DEATH, INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS POPULATION

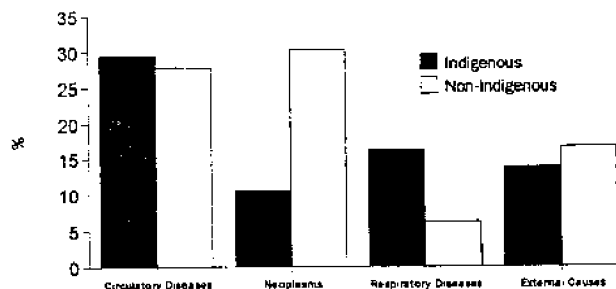


TABLE 4 BIRTHS OF INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS CHILDREN: SELECTED DETAILS, NORTHERN TERRITORY, 1994

	Mothers of Indigenous children			Non Indigenous mothers	Total mothers	Indigenous % of total
	Total	Indigenous mothers				
	Number	Number	%			
BIRTHS						
Total births	1,338	1,256	93.9	2,288	3,626	36.9
Males	686	641	93.4	1,132	1,818	37.7
Females	652	615	94.3	1,156	1,808	36.0
Sex ratio	105.2	104.2	..	97.9	100.6	..
<i>Age group of mother (years)—</i>						
14 and under	20	20	100.0	1	21	95.2
15-19	363	353	97.2	108	471	77.0
20-24	467	435	93.1	494	961	48.5
25-29	304	277	91.1	727	1,031	29.4
30-34	118	110	93.2	675	793	14.8
35-39	59	55	93.2	246	305	19.3
40-44	7	6	85.7	35	42	16.6
45 and over	—	—	—	1	1	—
Not stated	—	—	—	1	1	—
<i>Age-specific birth rates—</i>						
15-19	..	168.4	..	32.3	84.0	..
20-24	..	176.5	..	96.4	121.4	..
25-29	..	126.7	..	120.8	122.3	..
30-34	..	59.0	..	102.5	93.0	..
35-39	..	37.9	..	42.0	41.2	..
40-44	..	5.1	..	6.9	6.6	..
45-49	..	—	..	0.2	0.2	..
Total fertility rate	..	2.87	..	2.00	2.34	..
Total confinements	1,322	1,240	93.8	2,258	3,580	36.9
Median age of mother	22.9	22.7	..	28.6	26.7	..
Median age of father	26.1	26.0	..	n.a.	30.7	..
<i>Previous births—</i>						
0	345	312	90.4	1071	1,416	24.3
1	199	174	87.4	749	948	20.9
2	108	98	90.7	228	336	32.1
3	49	46	93.9	63	112	43.7
4 and over	51	49	96.1	27	78	65.3
Average number of births	2.0	2.1	..	n.a.	1.8	..

TABLE 5 DEATHS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE: SELECTED DETAILS, NORTHERN TERRITORY, 1994

Selected details	Indigenous people			Non Indigenous people	Total	Indigenous % of total
	Males	Females	Persons			
	DEATHS					
Total deaths	216	164	380	396	776	48.9
Standardised death rates	32.1	22.0	26.8	3.43	10.8	..
<i>Age at death (years)—</i>						
Under 1	10	15	25	16	41	60.9
1-14	12	3	15	9	24	62.5
15-24	14	7	21	16	37	56.7
25-34	34	11	45	22	67	67.1
35-44	34	22	56	41	97	57.7
45-54	34	17	51	46	97	52.5
55-64	34	23	57	67	124	45.9
65 and over	44	66	110	179	289	38.0
Not stated	—	—	—	—	—	—
Median age at death (years)	46.7	60.3	49.7	57.8	57.9	..
<i>Principal causes of death—</i>						
Infectious and parasitic diseases (001-139)	4	7	11	9	20	55.0
<i>Neoplasms (140-239)—</i>	24	17	41	120	161	25.4
Malignant neoplasms (140-208)	24	16	40	116	156	25.6
Other (210-239)	—	1	1	4	5	20.0
<i>Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases and immunity disorders (240-279)—</i>	10	18	28	12	40	70.0
Diabetes mellitus (250)	6	16	22	5	27	81.4
Other (240-246, 251-279)—	4	2	6	7	13	46.1
<i>Mental disorders (290-319)</i>	8	1	9	7	16	56.2
<i>Diseases of the circulatory system (390-459)—</i>	62	50	112	110	222	50.4
Ischaemic heart disease (410-414)	28	18	46	58	104	44.2
Other heart disease (393-398, 402, 404, 415, 416, 420-429)	12	19	31	23	54	57.4
Cerebrovascular disease (stroke) (430-438)	14	12	26	19	45	57.7
Other (390-392, 401, 403, 405, 417, 440-459)	8	1	9	10	19	47.3
<i>Diseases of the respiratory system (460-519)</i>	40	22	62	25	87	71.2
<i>Diseases of the digestive system (520-579)</i>	9	7	16	12	28	57.1
<i>Diseases of the genitourinary system (580-629)</i>	—	5	5	2	7	71.4
<i>Congenital anomalies (740-759)</i>	4	1	5	6	11	45.4
<i>Perinatal conditions (760-779)</i>	5	11	16	12	28	57.1
<i>Other medical conditions (Remainder of 001-799)</i>	11	11	22	15	37	59.4
<i>External causes (E800-E999)—</i>	39	14	53	66	119	44.5
Motor vehicle traffic accidents (E810-E819)	12	4	16	23	39	41.0
All other accidents (E800-E807, E820-E929)	12	3	15	24	39	38.4
Suicide (E950-E959)	5	—	5	14	19	26.3
Other (Remainder of E800-E999)	10	7	17	5	22	77.2

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Births Australia (3301.0)

Causes of Death, Australia (3303.0)

Census of Population and Housing, Counts of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, Australia, States and Territories, 30 June 1971, 1976, 1981 (2164.0)

Deaths, Australia (3302.0)

Demography, Northern Territory (3311.7)

Estimated Resident Population by Age and Sex in Statistical Local Area, Northern Territory (3207.7)

Estimated Resident Population by Statistical Local Areas, Northern Territory (3201.7)

Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population (3230.0)

Experimental Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population (3231.0)

Experimental Estimated Resident Population for Community Government Councils and Incorporated Associations, 1991-1994 (3233.7)

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey: Detailed Findings (4190.0)

Northern Territory's Indigenous People (4107.7)

Perinatal Deaths, Australia (3304.0)

1991 Census - Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population (2740.0)

1991 Census Counts: Final Counts for Selected Areas, Northern Territory (2801.7)

1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey: ATSIC Regional Statistics (4196.0.00.001-036)

GLOSSARY

AGE-SPECIFIC BIRTH RATES	Age-specific birth rates are the live births registered during the calendar year, according to age of mother, per 1,000 of the estimated mid-year female resident population of the same age as estimated for 30 June. For the purposes of calculating these rates, births to mothers aged less than 15 years are included in the 15-19 year age group, and births to mothers aged 50 years and over are included in the 45-49 year age group.
AGE-SPECIFIC DEATH RATE	The age-specific death rate is the number of deaths at a specified age per 1,000 of the estimated resident population of that age at 30 June. The infant mortality is used for the age-specific rate for children under one year of age. Pro rata adjustment is made in respect of deaths for which the age of deceased is not given.
ATSIC REGION	The Northern Territory is divided into seven ATSIC regions, each represented by an ATSIC Regional Council.
BIRTHS	A birth, unless otherwise stated, is a live birth, i.e. the delivery, irrespective of the duration of the pregnancy, of a child who, after being born, breathes or shows any other evidence of life such as a heartbeat. A multiple birth is a confinement which results in two or more births, at least one of which is liveborn.
CONFINEMENTS	Confinements are the number of pregnancies resulting in at least one live birth.
DEATH FROM EXTERNAL CAUSE	Death from external causes covers death by motor vehicle accident, all other accidents, suicide and all other deaths not already covered under existing causes.
INDIGENOUS ORIGIN	Persons who identify as being of either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. An Indigenous birth refers to the birth of a liveborn child where either the mother or the father has identified as being of either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

An Indigenous death refers to a death where the deceased was identified as being of either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

MEDIAN VALUES

The median value (age, duration or interval) is that value which divides the relevant population into two equal parts, half falling below this value, and half above it. Where the value for a particular record has not been stated, that record is excluded from the calculation.

POPULATION

The population projections are not intended as predictions or forecasts; they are illustrations of growth and change in the population which would occur if certain specified assumptions about the future demographic trends were realised. While the selection of the assumptions is based on analysis of past demographic trends, and an assessment of their likely future movements, there is no certainty that any of the assumptions will be realised.

PREVIOUS BIRTHS

Previous births refers to children born alive (which may be still living or now dead) to a mother prior to the registration of the current birth in the processing period. In some States/Territories, legitimated and legally adopted children may also be included.

Due to variations in data collection and processing methods across States and Territories, different definitions of the concept of previous births have been applied throughout this publication.

Previous births of the current marriage relates to nuptial births to the same parents prior to the current nuptial confinement.

All previous births of the mother includes all births prior to the current confinement, regardless of nuptiality and paternity. This information is important for measuring fertility.

STANDARDISED DEATH RATES

Two different methods are used in the calculation of standardised death rates:

- Direct method — expressed per 1,000 persons. It is the overall death rate that would have prevailed in a standard population if it had experienced at each age the death rates of the population being studied. The standard population used in these calculations is all persons in the 1991 Australian population. The direct method is used for State/Territory and Australia rates.
- Indirect method — expressed per 1,000 persons. This is calculated by initially applying a standard set of age-specific rates (those for persons in the

1991 Australian population) to the population under study, and comparing the actual number of deaths with the number expected assuming that these standard death rates applied. The standardised death rate for the population under study is then calculated by multiplying the crude death rate of the standard population by the ratio of actual deaths to expected deaths. The indirect method is used in the calculation of standardised death rates for data at Statistical Local Area level.

TOTAL FERTILITY RATE

The total fertility rate is obtained by summing the 5 year age-specific birth rates, multiplying by 5 and dividing by 1,000. It represents the number of children one woman would bear if the age-specific rates of the year shown continued during her child-bearing lifetime.

SYMBOLS AND OTHER
USAGES

n.a. not available
.. not applicable
— nil or rounded to zero

The ABS publishes a wide range of statistics and other information on Australia's economic and social conditions. Details of what is available in various publications and other products can be found in the *ABS Catalogue of Publications and Products* available at all ABS Offices (see below).

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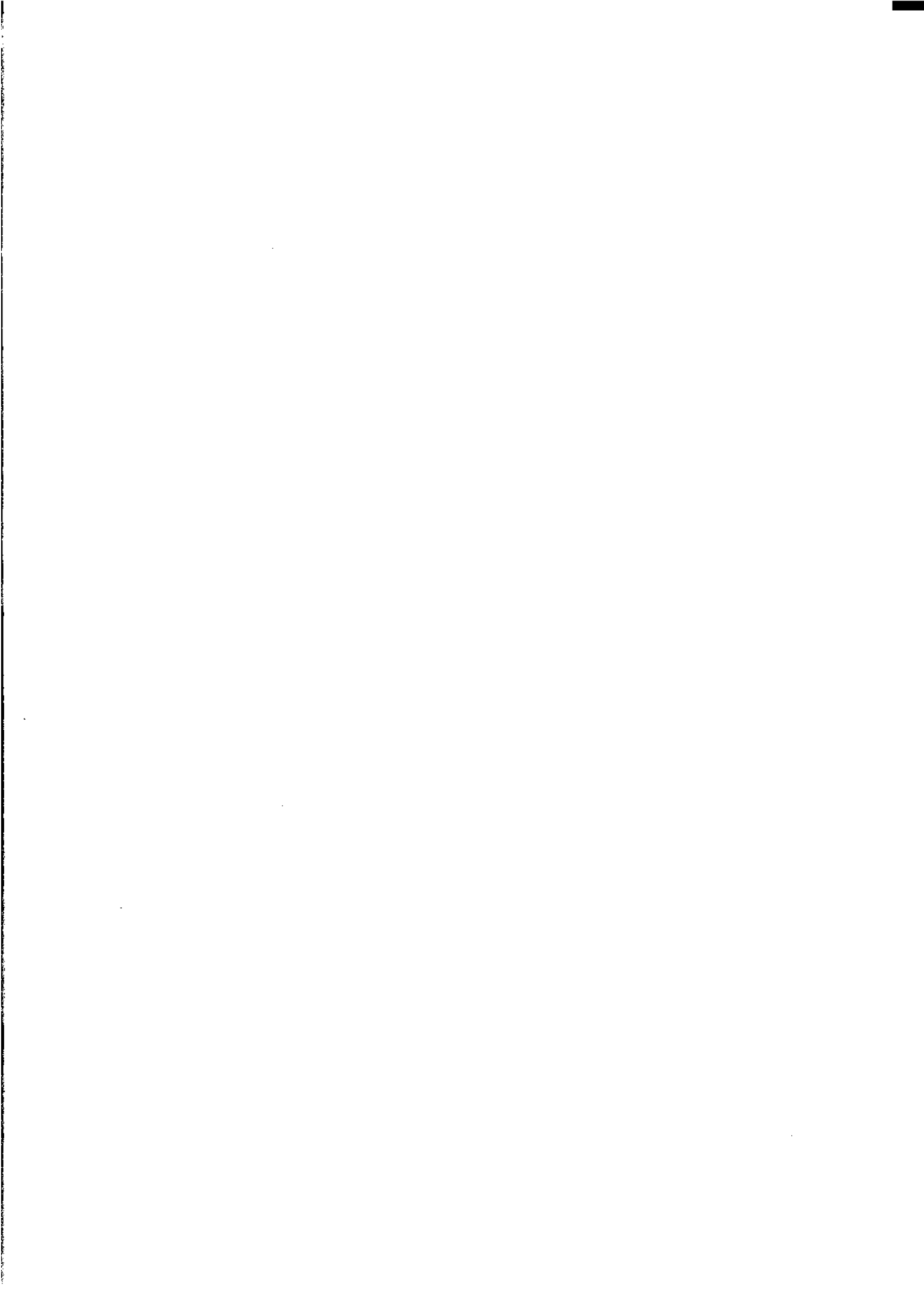
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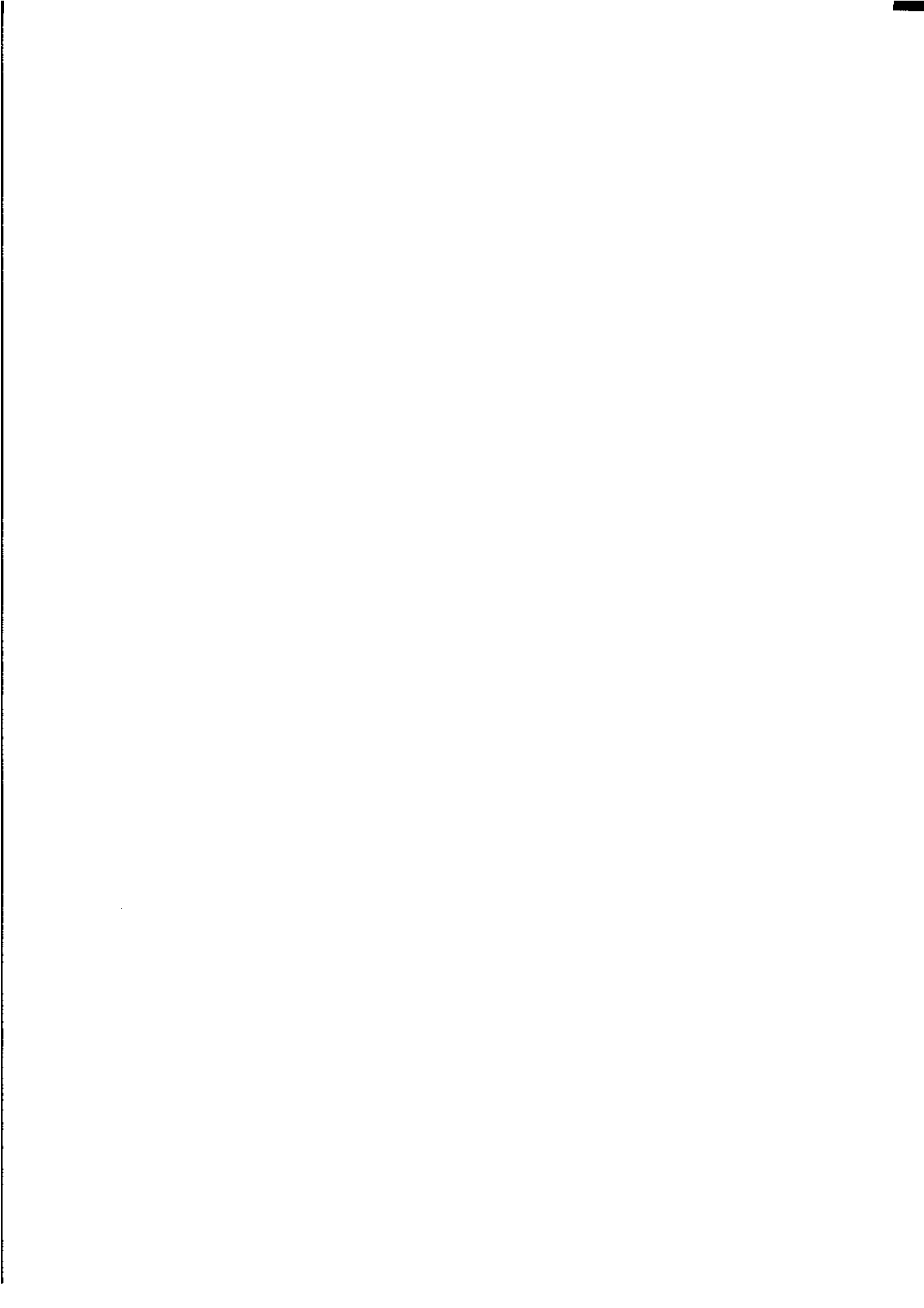
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