



2008 Summary Booklet

National Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander

Social Survey



Northern Australia Region



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Introduction



The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) was conducted from August 2008 to April 2009 and aims to provide a broad social picture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This booklet has been prepared so that you can conveniently and quickly access key findings from the survey.

The NATSISS was first conducted in 1994, then again in 2002, collecting information from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, aged 15 years or older. The 2008 NATSISS also collected information about children aged 14 years or under.

THE ABS SAYS THANKS

The success of the 2008 NATSISS was dependent on the very high level of cooperation received from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities. Without this cooperation, the range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statistics published by the ABS would not be possible.

Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the Census and Statistics Act 1905.

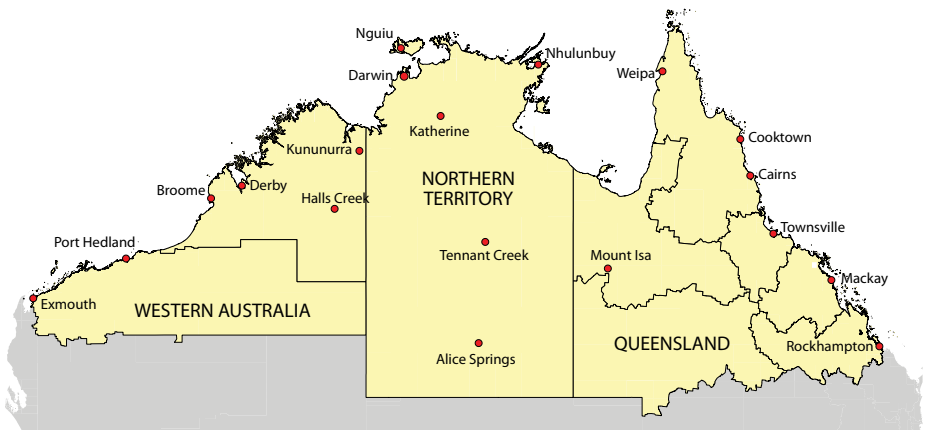


Northern Australia Region

The northern Australia region, is comprised of the Northern Territory and the northern areas of Western Australia and Queensland. This region has a unique combination of characteristics, including remoteness, vast distances, a dispersed and mobile population and a significant Indigenous population living both in remote communities and in urban areas. Presenting data for Northern Australia gives us a picture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within this unique region.

The northern Australia region comprises all of the Northern Territory; the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of Western Australia; and the Northern, Far North, North West, Central West, Mackay and Fitzroy regions of Queensland.

NORTHERN AUSTRALIA REGION



Population



In 2008, there were around 160,300 people living in the Northern Australia region, 31% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Of people living in the Northern Australia region in 2008:

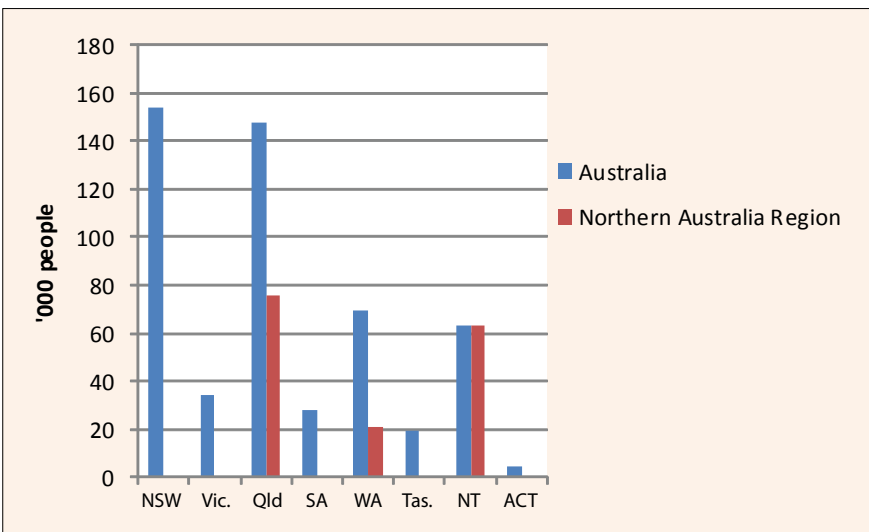
- 61% lived in remote areas.
- 39% lived in non-remote areas.

WHERE PEOPLE LIVE

In 2008, within the Northern Australia region:

- Nearly half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people lived in Queensland (47% or 75,900 people).
- 40% lived in the Northern Territory (63,400 people).
- 13% lived in Western Australia (21,000 people)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Australia and the Northern Australia region, 2008



Language and Culture

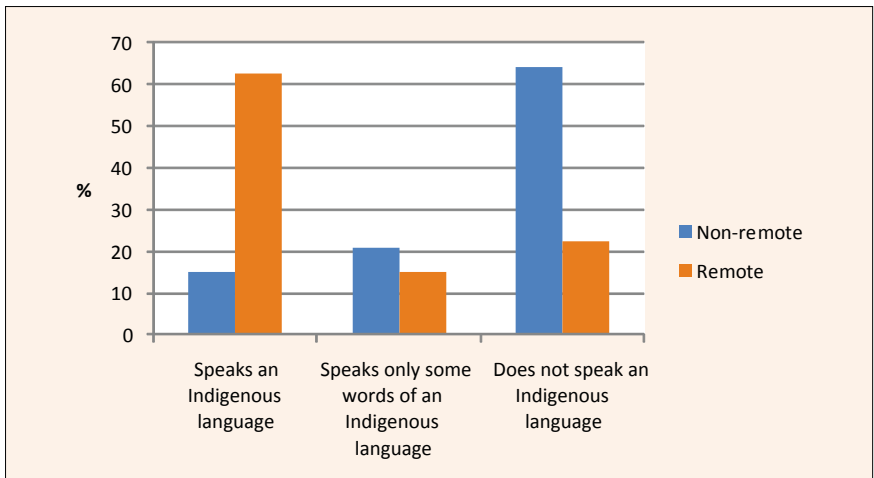
SPEAKING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LANGUAGES

45% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in the Northern Australia region said they could speak an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language.

Another 17% of adults said they could speak only some words of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language.

A lot more adults in remote areas could speak an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language (63%) than those in non-remote areas (15%).

Speaking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, by remoteness, 2008



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Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Language and Culture



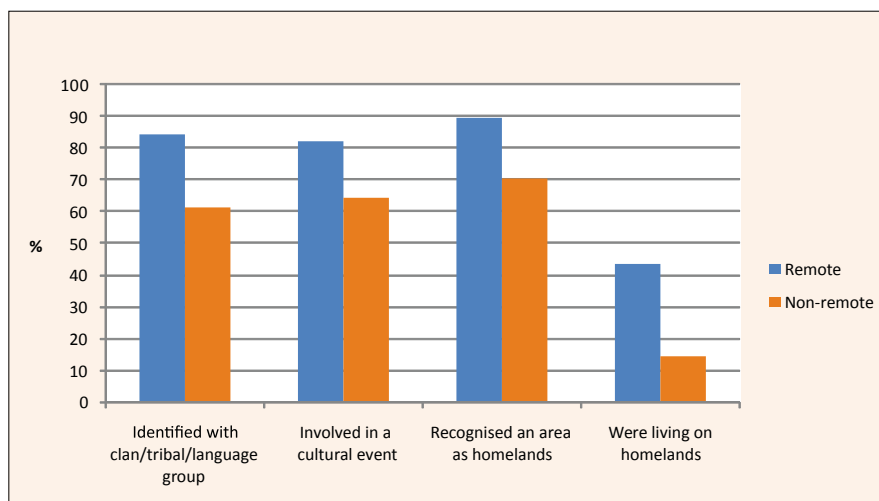
IDENTIFYING WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURES

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults identified with an Indigenous cultural group, such as a clan, tribal or language group in remote areas (84%) than in non-remote areas (61%).

Almost one in three adults (32%) were living in their homelands in 2008.

75% of adults were involved in a cultural event, ceremony or organisation in the year before the survey.

Cultural identification, by remoteness, 2008



Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Health

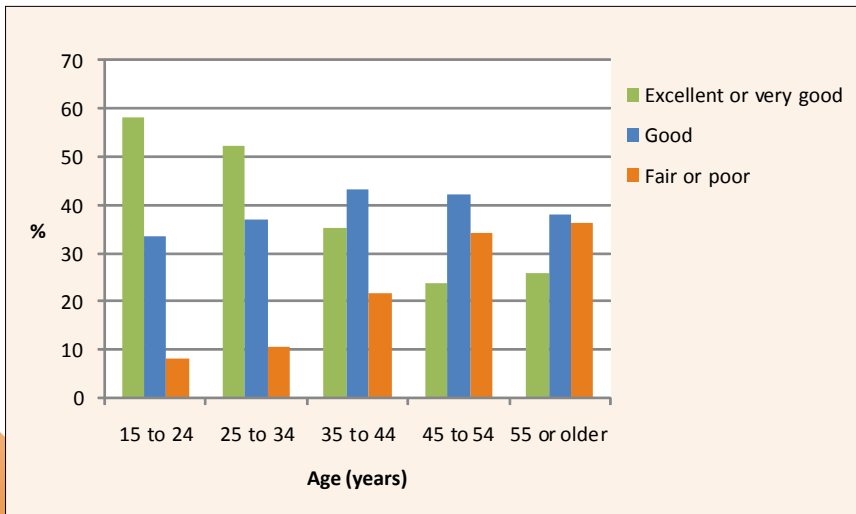
FEELING HEALTHY

Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in the Northern Australia region in 2008:

- 43% rated their health as being excellent or very good.
- 38% rated their health as good.
- 19% rated their health as fair or poor.

Younger adults were more likely to rate their health as excellent or very good compared with adults in older age groups.

Self assessed health, by age groups, 2008



Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Health



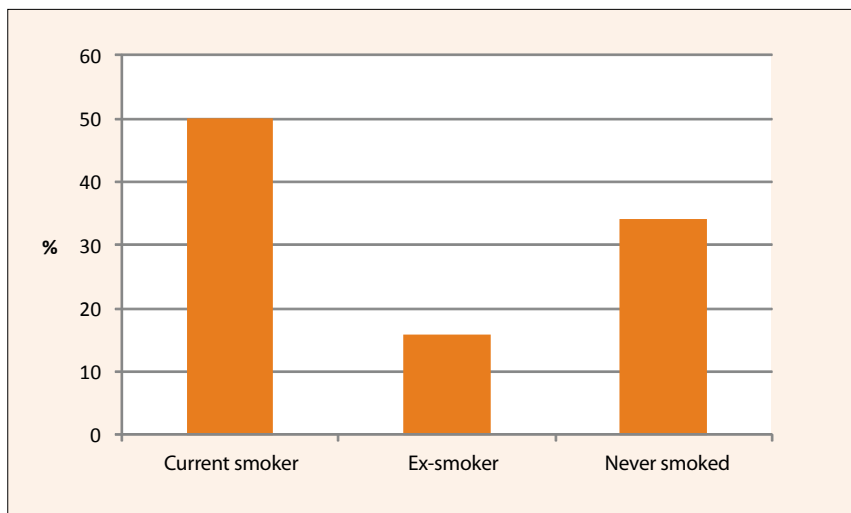
SMOKING

In 2008, the rate of smoking was higher in remote areas (53%) of the Northern Australia region than in non-remote (45%) areas.

Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in the Northern Australia region in 2008:

- Half of all adults (50%) identified themselves as current smokers.
- 16% said they were ex-smokers.
- Just over one in three (34%) had never smoked.

Self assessed health, by age groups, 2008



Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



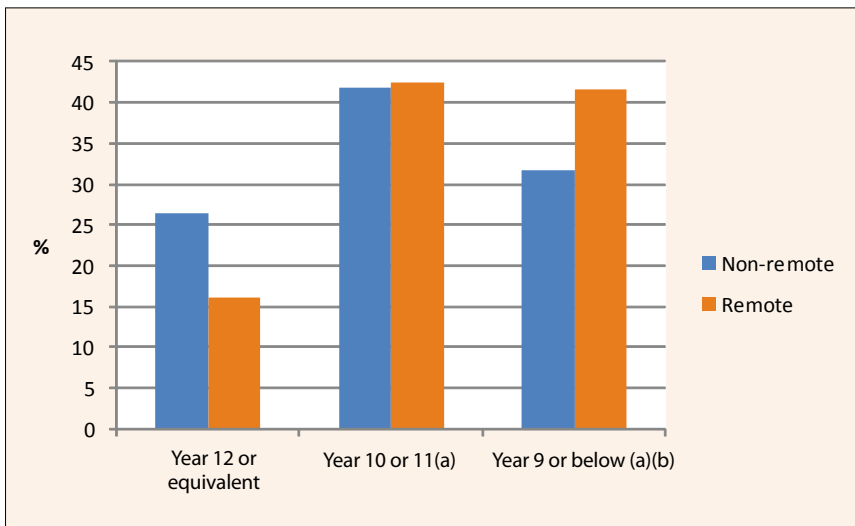
Education

FINISHING SCHOOL

Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in the Northern Australia region in 2008:

- 20% had completed Year 12 or equivalent.
- 42% had completed Year 10 or 11.
- 38% had completed Year 9 or below.

Highest year of school completed, by remoteness, 2008



(a) Includes people who were currently studying.

(b) Includes people who have never attended school.

Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



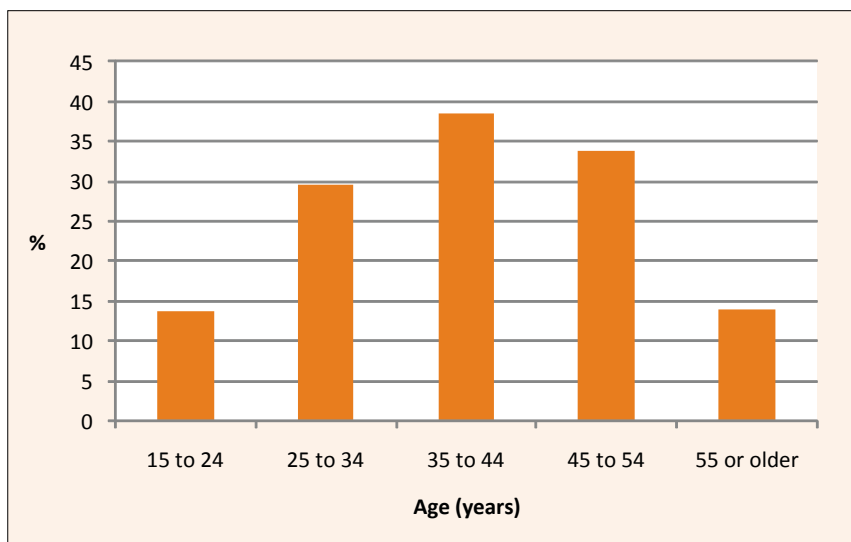
Education



HAVING A QUALIFICATION

In 2008, one in four (25%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in the Northern Australia region had a non-school qualification.

Adults with a non-school qualification(a), 2008



a) Non-school qualifications are awarded for finishing courses outside of those taken at Primary or High School (e.g. qualifications awarded through University studies, and TAFE training courses).

Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Labour force

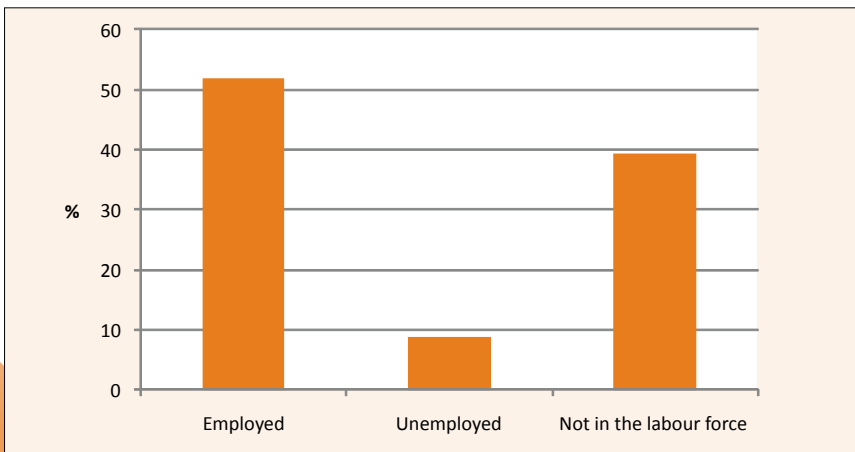
BEING IN THE LABOUR FORCE

Adults in the 'labour force' are those who are currently employed (including those working for Community Development Employment Projects) or who are looking for work (unemployed). Adults who are not currently working and are not looking for work are classified as 'not in the labour force'.

Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in the Northern Australia region in 2008:

- Just over six in ten (61%) were in the labour force.
- More than five in ten (52%) were employed.
- Less than one in ten (9%) were unemployed.

Labour force status, 2008



Housing



RENTING OR OWNING

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults were living in homes that were rented than homes that were owned.

Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in 2008:

- 82% lived in homes that were being rented.
- 15% lived in homes that were either owned or being purchased.

OVERCROWDING

In 2008, 44% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults were living in a home that was overcrowded.

More adults in remote areas were living in a home that was overcrowded (54%) than those in non-remote areas (28%).

STANDARD OF HOUSING

In 2008, 35% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults were living in homes that had major structural problems. Major structural problems refer to problems such as large cracks in the walls or floor or serious problems with plumbing.

Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Family and Support Networks

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults have good family and support networks. For example, 93% of adults reported having contact, at least once a week, with family and friends who did not live with them.

REMOVAL

The NATSISS asked Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults whether they or any of their relatives had been removed from their natural families for welfare reasons or because of government policy, or if they had been taken to a mission.

In the Northern Australia region in 2008:

- 7% of adults reported that they had been removed from their natural family.
- 36% reported that they had relatives who were removed from their natural family.

Note: 'Adults' refers to people aged 15 years or older.



Children



CULTURE

Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Northern Australia region in 2008:

- 62% identified with an Indigenous cultural group such as a clan, tribal or language group.
- 57% were being taught about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture at school.

TIME WITH ELDERS

Just over four in ten (41%) children spent one or more days a week with an Indigenous elder or leader.

Almost half (48%) of children living in remote areas spent at least one day a week with an Indigenous elder or leader compared with three in ten (30%) children in non-remote areas.

EXERCISE

In 2008, eight in ten (80%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children exercised for at least 60 minutes every day.

Note: 'Children' refers to people aged 4 to 14 years.



Explanatory Notes and Glossary

Adults

In this publication 'adults' refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or older.

Children

In this publication 'children' refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 4 to 14 years.

Labour force

The 'labour force' includes people aged 15 years or older, who are either currently working or who are looking for work (employed or unemployed).

Adults who are not currently working and are not looking for work are classified as not being in the labour force.

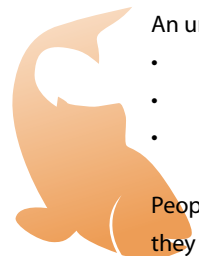
An employed person is someone who:

- is 15 years or older,
- is currently working in a job or business, or working for Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), or who undertakes work without pay in a family business, and
- worked at least one hour in the week prior to interview.

An unemployed person is someone who:

- is not currently working,
- has been looking for work in the four weeks before the survey was conducted, and
- was available to start work during the week before answering the survey.

People were not counted as unemployed if they were not currently working because they were retired, they were unable to work on a permanent basis, or if they intended never to work.



Explanatory Notes and Glossary



Overcrowding

To measure overcrowding the ABS uses the Canadian National Occupancy Standard for Housing Appropriateness. The following criteria are used to assess overcrowding:

- there should be no more than two persons per bedroom,
- a household of one unattached individual may reasonably occupy a bed-sit (i.e. have no bedroom),
- couples and parents should have a separate bedroom,
- children aged 5 years or over, of different sexes, should not share a bedroom,
- children aged less than 18 years and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom, and
- single household members aged 18 years or over should have a separate bedroom.

Homes that require at least one additional bedroom are considered to be overcrowded.

Removal from natural family

Removal from natural family in this survey includes the removal of the person or their relatives, as a child, from their family as part of government policy. It does not include those who were removed from their family for a period of less than six months and those who had been separated from their family for other reasons such as family break-up or traditional adoption.

ABS Data Sources

NATSISS, 2008

The NATSISS (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey) was conducted from August 2008 to April 2009 (cat. no. 4714.0).



More Information

Information about Indigenous persons in this summary booklet is from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2008 (cat. no. 4714.0).

More detailed information is available free of charge through the ABS website: www.abs.gov.au. Also available through the website are electronic State/Territory versions of the publication tables.



Artwork supplied by
Junior Primary Class,
Point Pearce Aboriginal School,
Point Pearce, SA

For more information about ABS statistics on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population:

Phone: 1800 633 216 (free call)
Email: indigenous.statistics@abs.gov.au
Internet: www.abs.gov.au/indigenous

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