



2008 Summary Booklet

National Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander

Social Survey



Western Australia



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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 for Western Australia.

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 includes information collected about children aged 14 years or under.

Where possible, this booklet shows how things have changed for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population since the 2002 NATSISS.

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 people 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.



Population

In 2008, there were around 69,200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Western Australia.

Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Western Australia:

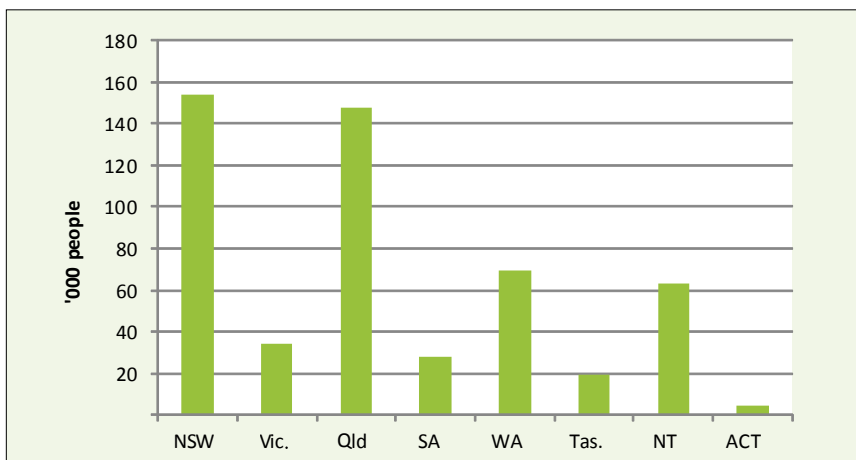
- 96% identified as Aboriginal only.
- 4% identified as Torres Strait Islander only or of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

WHERE PEOPLE LIVE

In 2008, 13% of the total Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population lived in Western Australia.

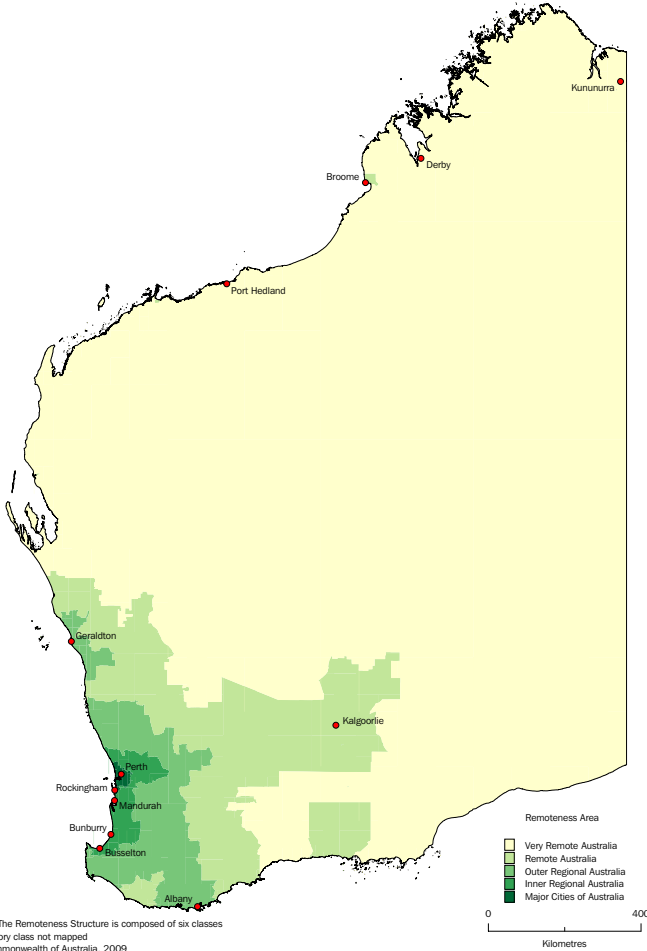
57% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Western Australia lived in non-remote areas and 43% lived in remote areas.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population by state, 2008.



Population

WESTERN AUSTRALIA BY REMOTENESS



Population

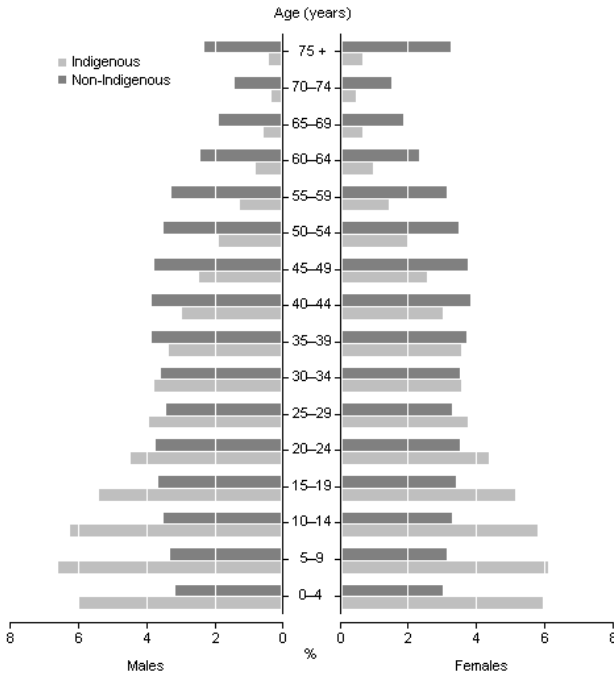
AGE

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Western Australia is much younger than the rest of the Western Australian population.

Of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Western Australia in 2006:

- Over half (56%) were aged 24 years or younger, compared with 34% of the non-Indigenous population.
- About one in five (19%) were aged 15 to 24 years (young adults).
- 37% were aged 14 years or under (children).

Indigenous and non-Indigenous population in Western Australia, by age and sex, 2006



Note: The data presented in this section are 2006 population figures. (See 'ABS Data Sources' for further details).

Language and Culture



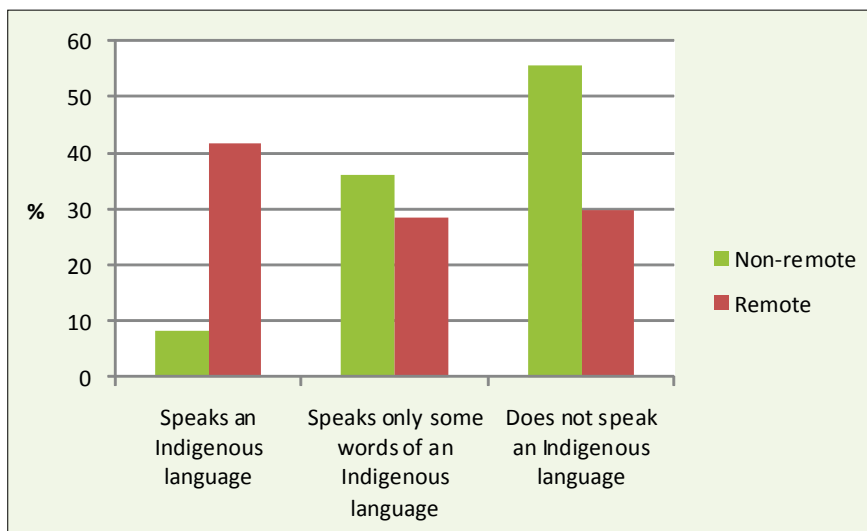
SPEAKING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LANGUAGES

23% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in Western Australia said they could speak an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language.

Another 33% 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 (42%) than those in non-remote areas (8%).

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



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



Language and Culture

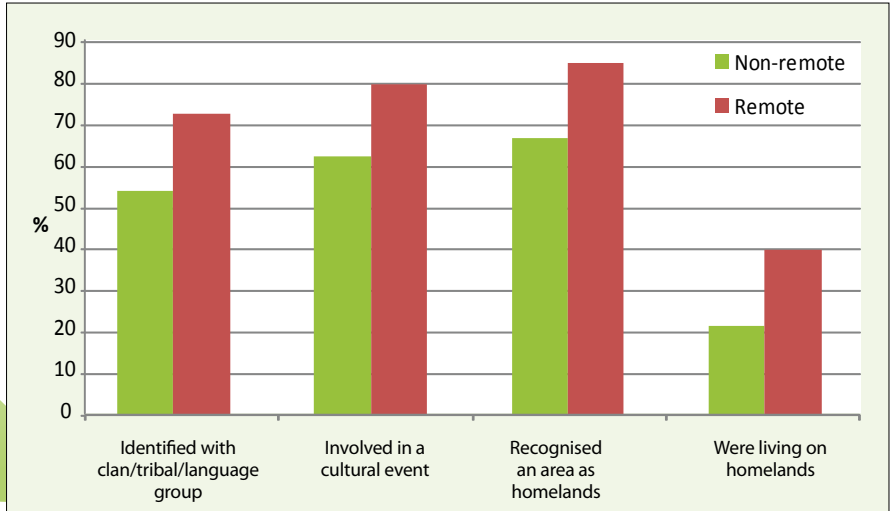
IDENTIFYING WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURES

In Western Australia more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults identified with an Indigenous cultural group, such as a clan, tribal or language group in 2008 (62%) than in 2002 (54%).

Three in ten adults (30%) were living on their homelands in 2008. A further 45% recognised an area as their homeland but did not live there.

70% of adults were involved in a cultural event, ceremony or organisation in the year before the 2008 survey.

Cultural identification, by remoteness, 2008



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



Health



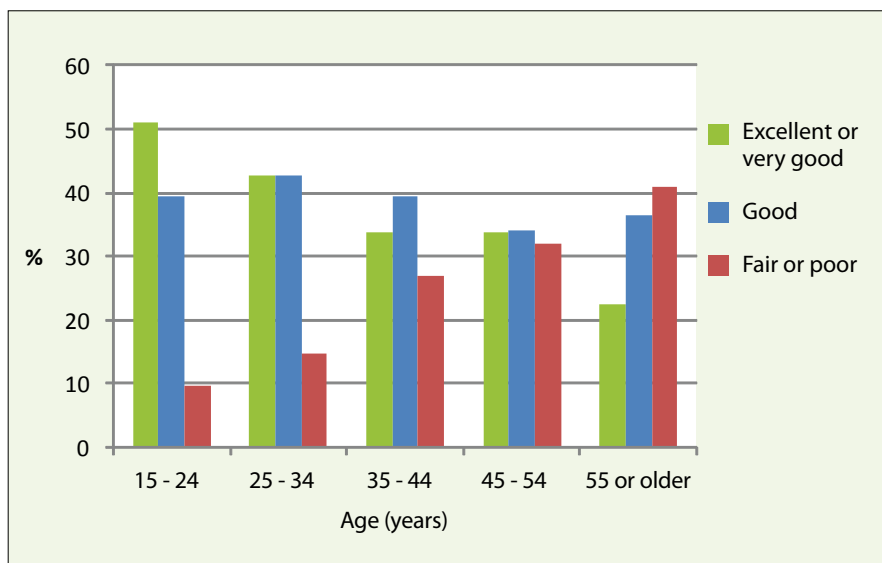
FEELING HEALTHY

Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in Western Australia in 2008:

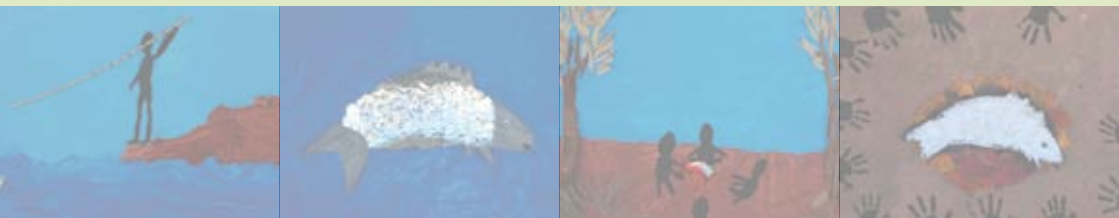
- 40% rated their health as being excellent or very good.
- 39% rated their health as good.
- 21% rated their health as fair or poor.

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

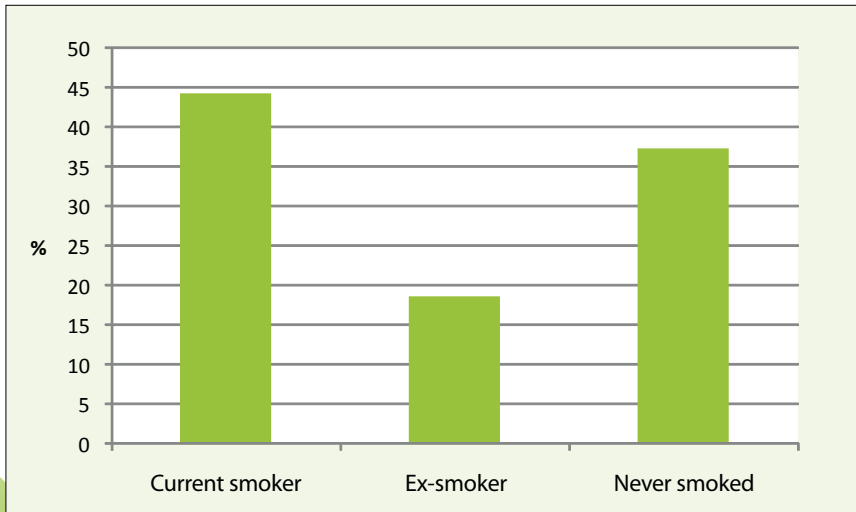
SMOKING

Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in Western Australia in 2008:

- 44% identified themselves as current smokers.
- 19% said they were ex-smokers.
- 37% had never smoked.

Adults living in remote areas were more likely to be current smokers (52%) than adults living in non-remote areas (39%).

Smoking, 2008



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



Education



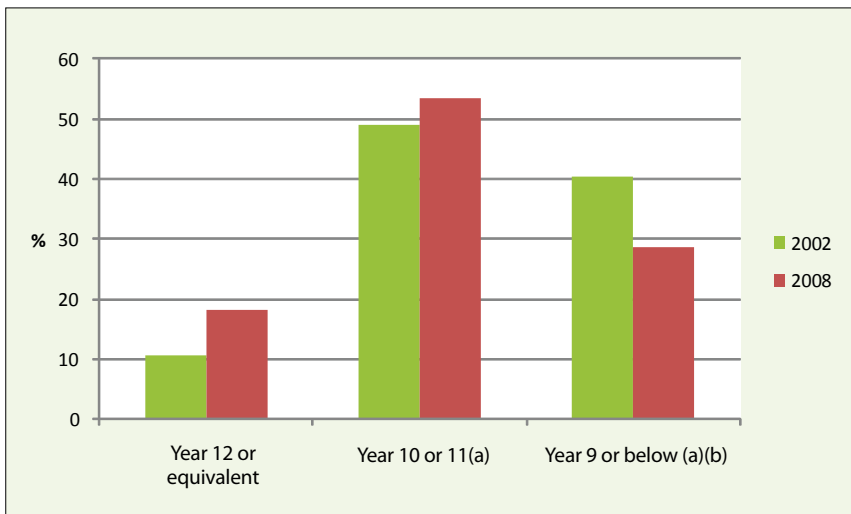
FINISHING SCHOOL

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults had finished Year 12 in 2008 than in 2002.

Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in Western Australia in 2008:

- 18% had completed Year 12 or equivalent, an increase from 10% in 2002.
- 53% had completed Year 10 or 11.
- 29% had completed Year 9 or below, a decrease from 41% in 2002

Highest year of school completed, 2002 and 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.



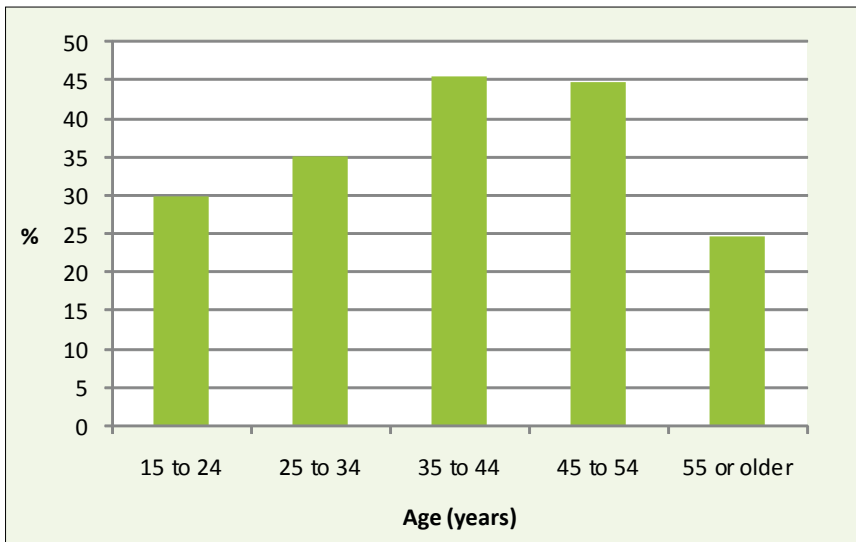
Education

HAVING A QUALIFICATION

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in Western Australia had a non-school qualification in 2008 (36%) than in 2002 (24%).

Adults living in non-remote areas were more likely to have a non-school qualification (41%) than those living in remote areas (28%).

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).



Labour force



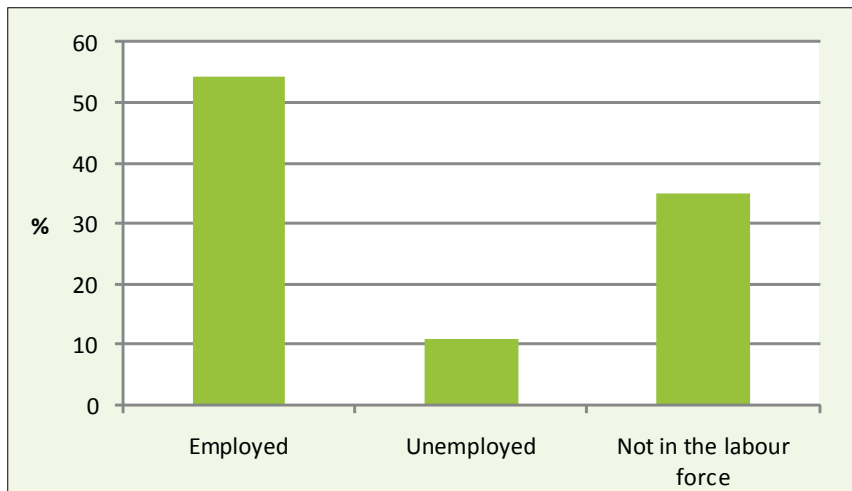
BEING IN THE LABOUR FORCE

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 Western Australia in 2008:

- Almost two in three (65%) were in the labour force.
- 54% were employed.
- 11% were unemployed.

Labour force status, 2008



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



Housing

RENTING OR OWNING

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

Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in Western Australia in 2008:

- Over seven in ten (73%) lived in homes that were being rented.
- Over two in ten (23%) lived in homes that were either owned or being purchased.

OVERCROWDING

In 2008, 28% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in Western Australia were living in a home that was overcrowded.

More adults in remote areas were living in a home that was overcrowded (38%) than those in non-remote areas (21%).

STANDARD OF HOUSING

In 2008, 32% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in Western Australia 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 in Western Australia have good family and support networks. For example, 90% of adults said they would be able to get help, such as emotional support, money or food, from someone 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 Western Australia in 2008:

- 11% of adults reported that they had been removed from their natural family.
- 55% of adults 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 Western Australia in 2008:

- 49% identified with an Indigenous cultural group such as a clan, tribal or language group.
- 61% were being taught about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture at school.

TIME WITH ELDERS

One in four (40%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children spent one or more days a week with an Indigenous elder or leader.

Over half (51%) of children living in remote areas spent at least one day a week with an elder compared with 32% of children in non-remote areas.

EXERCISE

In 2008, 80% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Western Australia 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 (ie: 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.

Remoteness

To categorise how remote particular locations in Australia are, the ABS uses the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Remoteness Structure. The structure uses five levels of remoteness: 'Major Cities of Australia', 'Inner Regional Australia', 'Outer Regional Australia', 'Remote Australia' and 'Very Remote Australia'. These levels are shown on the map on page 3.

This publication combines the five categories into 'Remote' and 'Non-remote'. 'Non-remote' areas are made up of 'Major Cities of Australia', 'Inner Regional Australia' and 'Outer Regional Australia', while 'Remote' areas are made up of 'Remote Australia' and 'Very Remote Australia'.

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).

NATSISS, 2002

The NATSISS (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey) was conducted from August 2002 to April 2003 (cat. no. 4714.0).

Estimated Resident Population

Experimental Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2006 (cat. no. 3238.0.55.001). Note that 2006 is the only year where estimates are available for non-Indigenous persons. The population pyramid on page 4 uses Indigenous and non-Indigenous estimates derived from the Census of Population and Housing 2006.





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.



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