

## PROFILE OF THE INDIGENOUS POPULATION

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1. This Chapter contains basic data relating to the Indigenous population.

### *The Indigenous Population and its Location*

2. The information from the 1996 Census counts indicated that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population at that time was 350 909 people. However, the Census count data were considered to suffer from a number of deficiencies. For example, the ABS estimated an under-enumeration rate of about 7 per cent for Indigenous people, compared with less than 2 per cent for the total Australian population. In addition, more people did not respond to the question on Indigenous status than those who identified as Indigenous<sup>1</sup>.

3. To adjust for these and other factors, the ABS prepared the *Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population, 30 June 1991-30 June 1996*. These estimates provide better information on the Indigenous population, although the ATSI region is the smallest geographical area for which they are produced.

4. The experimental estimates indicate that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population at 30 June 1996 was 386 049, or 2.1 per cent of the total Australian population. This figure represents an increase of 33 per cent over the similar experimental estimate figure produced for June 1991 on the basis of data from the 1991 Census. This increase is much larger than can be explained by natural population growth. Researchers have attributed it to several factors, including more people recording themselves as Indigenous in the 1996 Census<sup>2</sup>.

5. Notwithstanding the adjustments made in deriving the experimental estimates, it was common for organisations contacted during the Commission's consultations to argue that the actual population in their region or community was greater than the ABS figures. For example, concerns were expressed about the quality of the data for several specific locations, including the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands, and parts of the Kimberleys and the Northern Territory. The only region where the estimate of the Indigenous population was said to be too high was Tasmania — it was argued that the real figure might be about half those recorded.

6. Nevertheless, there are no better data available and to make partially informed adjustments to the ABS data would not improve the quality of the data overall. The Commission's calculations, therefore, used the experimental estimates at the national, State and regional levels.

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<sup>1</sup> Ross, K 1999, *Occasional Paper: Population Issues, Indigenous Australians, 1966*, Cat 4708.0, ABS, Canberra.

<sup>2</sup> Ross, K 1999, *Occasional Paper: Population Issues, Indigenous Australians, 1966*, Cat 4708.0, ABS, Canberra.

7. Table 1 shows:

- (i) the 1996 Census count of the Indigenous population that was in each State on Census night ; and
- (ii) the experimental estimates of the Indigenous population resident in each State in June 1991, 1996 and 1999. The 1999 figure was estimated by ABS on the assumption that the propensity of people to identify as Indigenous is the same as it was in the 1996 Census.

**Table 1** INDIGENOUS POPULATION

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
1996 Census count	104.7	21.5	95.3	50.7	18.9	13.9	(a)	46.0	350.9
<b>Experimental estimates of resident population</b>									
1991	75.0	17.9	74.2	44.2	17.2	9.5	1.6	43.8	283.6
1996	109.9	22.6	104.8	56.2	22.1	15.3	3.1	51.9	386.0
1999	116.7	23.8	113.1	59.4	23.4	16.1	3.4	54.6	410.6
State proportion of Indigenous resident population – 1996 (%)	28.5	5.9	27.1	14.6	5.7	4.0	0.8	13.4	100.0
Indigenous resident proportion of State population – 1996 (%)	1.8	0.5	3.1	3.2	1.5	3.2	1.0	28.5	2.1

(a) Included in the New South Wales figure.

Source: ABS, *Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population*, 1991 Cat. No. 3230.0.  
 ABS, *Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population*, 1996 Cat. No. 3231.0.

8. The rest of this Chapter outlines some features of the Indigenous population in each ATSI region. The features which were chosen because they generally have an influence on needs or the services required to meet them are:

- (i) distribution of population;
- (ii) age structure
- (iii) income;
- (iv) educational attainment;
- (v) labour force; and
- (vi) housing.

9. As well as examining the data on a regional basis, the ATSI regions have been classified according to their level of socio-economic disadvantage as indicated by the ABS Experimental Index of Socio-economic Disadvantage prepared for the Commission<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> The full report from the ABS is included in the separate volume of consultant's reports that also support the Commission's Report.

For this purpose, each ATSI region was classified as either Least Disadvantaged, Less Disadvantaged, More Disadvantaged or Most Disadvantaged according to its ranking on the Experimental Index of Disadvantage that was based on ABS 1996 Census, NATSIS and National Perinatal data.

10. This presentation provides some insights into how well individual variables align with the overall index of Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage produced by ABS. It is a descriptive process and does not seek to establish causal relationships.

11. Table 2 shows how each ATSI region was classified in the Experimental Index of Indigenous Socio-economic Disadvantage.

**Table 2** RANKING OF ATSI REGIONS BASED ON EXPERIMENTAL INDEX OF INDIGENOUS SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE <sup>(a)</sup>

Most disadvantaged	More disadvantaged	Less disadvantaged	Least disadvantaged
Apatula	Port Augusta	Cairns	Ballarat
Nhulunbuy	Broome	Alice Springs	Rockhampton
Tennant Creek	Torres Strait	Narrogin	Sydney
Jabiru	Bourke	Tamworth	Perth
Cooktown	South Hedland	Geraldton	Adelaide
Derby	Ceduna	Coffs Harbour	Queanbeyan
Katherine	Mount Isa	Roma	Wangaratta
Warburton	Townsville	Darwin	Brisbane
Kununurra	Kalgoorlie	Wagga Wagga	Hobart

(a) Index based on data from 1996 Census, 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, and National Perinatal Data.

Source: ABS *Experimental Indigenous Socio-Economic Disadvantage Indexes*, Report to Commonwealth Grants Commission, November 2000.

### **Population Distribution**

12. Table 3 shows the basic population data for each ATSI region that have been used in most of the analysis in the Commission's Report. The table, which is based on the 1996 experimental estimates of the Indigenous population, shows:

- (i) the resident Indigenous population as at 30 June 1996 for each ATSI region;
- (ii) the proportion of the total Indigenous population resident in each region; and
- (iii) the resident Indigenous population of each ATSI region as a proportion of the total population of the region.

**Table 3** RESIDENT INDIGENOUS POPULATION, 1996

ATSI Region	Indigenous resident population <sup>(a)</sup>	Proportion of total Indigenous population	Proportion of region's total population
	No.	%	%
<b>New South Wales</b>			
Sydney	37 117	9.6	1.0
Queanbeyan (includes ACT)	9 855	2.6	1.7
Binaal Billa (Wagga Wagga)	19 535	5.1	3.7
Murdi Paaki (Bourke)	7 951	2.1	14.0
Kamilaroi (Tamworth)	11 595	3.0	5.6
Many Rivers (Coffs Harbour)	27 127	7.0	2.2
<b>Victoria</b>			
Binjurr (Wangaratta)	10 938	2.8	0.4
Tumbukka (Ballarat)	11 660	3.0	0.6
<b>Queensland</b>			
South East Queensland (Brisbane)	30 325	7.9	1.4
Goolburri (Roma)	9 661	2.5	3.4
Central Queensland (Rockhampton)	12 436	3.2	3.4
Townsville	16 107	4.2	5.3
Cairns and District	16 144	4.2	8.8
Gulf and West Queensland (Mount Isa)	7 306	1.9	22.9
Peninsula (Cooktown)	6 184	1.6	49.9
Torres Strait	6 654	1.7	86.0
<b>Western Australia</b>			
Perth Noongar	19 765	5.1	1.5
Kaata-Wangkinyinyi (Narrogin)	6 814	1.8	2.8
Yamatji (Geraldton)	5 497	1.4	9.8
Ngarda-Ngarli-Yarndu (South Hedland)	4 721	1.2	13.7
Kullari (Broome)	3 760	1.0	38.5
Malarabah (Derby)	4 347	1.1	66.8
Wunan (Kununurra)	4 887	1.3	52.0
Western Desert (Warburton)	2 952	0.8	30.0
Wongatha (Kalgoorlie)	3 462	0.9	6.6
<b>South Australia</b>			
Patpa Warra Yunti (Adelaide)	13 686	3.5	1.0
Wangka-Willurrara (Ceduna)	2 014	0.5	5.3
Nulla Wimila Kutju (Port Augusta)	6 351	1.6	7.9
<b>Tasmania</b>			
Tasmania	15 322	4.0	3.2
<b>Northern Territory</b>			
Yilli Rreung (Darwin)	10 078	2.6	10.3
Jabiru	8 685	2.2	75.4
Miwatj (Nhulunbuy)	7 848	2.0	61.7
Garrak-Jarru (Katherine)	7 986	2.1	46.7
Yappakurlangu (Tennant Creek)	3 866	1.0	59.0
Papunya (Apatula)	8 427	2.2	79.5
Alice Springs	4 986	1.3	19.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>386 049</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>

(a) Based on ABS *Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population*, ABS, Cat No 3230.0.

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996.

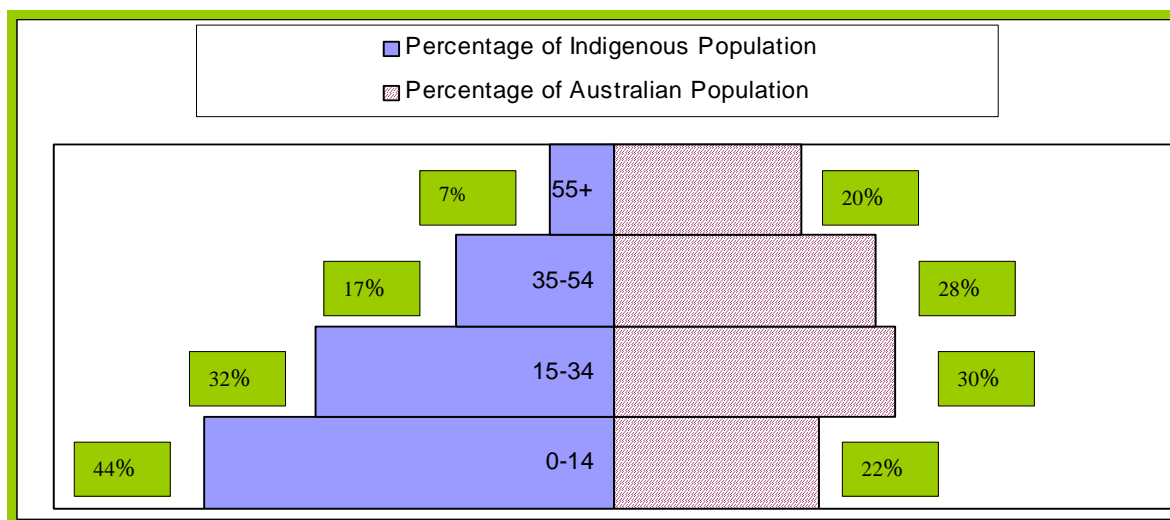
13. Because the details for many of the variables (such as income, educational attainment and those used by the ABS in preparing the experimental index of Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage) are only available from the Census counts, Table 4 provides 1996 Census count information on:

- (i) Indigenous population for each ATSI region;
- (ii) the proportion of the total Indigenous population in each region; and
- (iii) the Indigenous population of each ATSI region as a proportion of the total population of the region.

These figures differ from the resident population data shown in Table 3. One of the main differences between the two sets of figures is that the Census count data do not contain adjustments for the effects of under counting or for people who did not respond to particular questions in the Census.

14. Table 5 shows the median age of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population in each ATSI region. It shows that the Indigenous population is much younger than the non-Indigenous population with median ages of 20 years and 34 years respectively. This is further illustrated by the age pyramid for the two populations

**Figure 1** AGE PYRAMIDS



15. Another perspective on age structure can be obtained by considering ‘the dependency ratio’. This ratio indicates the average proportion of the population that is dependent on those in the working age group. It is calculated as the ratio of the dependent population (that is, the population aged 0 to 14 years plus that aged 65 years and over) to the working age population (those aged 15 to 64 years). Table 6 ranks the ATSI regions on the basis of the dependency ratio of the Indigenous population. The table also shows the non-Indigenous dependency ratio for each region.

16. The dependency ratio for the Indigenous population is greater than that for the non-Indigenous population because of the higher proportion of the Indigenous population in the younger age groups.

**Table 4** CENSUS COUNTS OF POPULATION, 1996

ATSI Region	Indigenous population	Non-Indigenous population	Indigenous proportion of region's total population
	No.	No.	%
<b>New South Wales</b>			
Sydney	34 271	305	1.0
Queanbeyan (includes ACT)	9 128	137	1.6
Binaal Billa (Wagga Wagga)	18 109	127	3.6
Murdi Paaki (Bourke)	7 341	348	13.5
Kamilaroi (Tamworth)	10 735	745	5.5
Many Rivers (Coffs Harbour)	25 085	110	2.1
<b>Victoria</b>			
Binjurr (Wangaratta)	10 450	460	0.4
Tumbukka (Ballarat)	11 074	85	0.6
<b>Queensland</b>			
South East Queensland (Brisbane)	27 637	664	1.4
Goolburri (Roma)	8 815	823	3.3
Central Queensland (Rockhampton)	11 304	315	3.1
Townsville	14 670	684	4.9
Cairns and District	14 667	681	8.0
Gulf and West Queensland (Mount Isa)	6 675	681	20.3
Peninsula (Cooktown)	5 623	628	44.3
Torres Strait	5 892	897	82.0
<b>Western Australia</b>			
Perth Noongar	18 014	32	1.4
Kaata-Wangkinyinyi (Narrogin)	6 200	206	2.7
Yamatji (Geraldton)	5 073	78	8.6
Ngarda-Ngarli-Yarndu (South Hedland)	4 319	323	12.2
Kullari (Broome)	3 409	412	27.5
Malarabah (Derby)	3 977	980	57.1
Wunan (Kununurra)	3 780	783	37.9
Western Desert (Warburton)	2 722	724	25.1
Wongatha (Kalgoorlie)	3 157	160	6.2
<b>South Australia</b>			
Patpa Warra Yunti (Adelaide)	12 654	666	1.0
Wangka-Willurrara (Ceduna)	1 871	872	5.2
Nulla Wimila Kutju (Port Augusta)	4 373	377	5.8
<b>Tasmania</b>			
Tasmania	13 867	880	3.1
<b>Northern Territory</b>			
Yilli Rreung (Darwin)	9 007	16	9.5
Jabiru	7 760	767	67.4
Miwatj (Nhulunbuy)	6 989	995	59.3
Garrak-Jarru (Katherine)	6 872	878	38.5
Yappakurlangu (Tennant Creek)	3 454	457	51.9
Papunya (Apatula)	7 494	501	65.6
Alice Springs	4 441	445	17.5
Total	350 909	1259	2.0

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996.

**Table 5** MEDIAN AGE, INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS POPULATION, 1996

ATSIC Region	Median age of Indigenous population	Median age of non-Indigenous population
	Years	Years
<b>New South Wales</b>		
Sydney	20	33
Queanbeyan (includes ACT)	19	33
Binaal Billa (Wagga Wagga)	18	34
Murdi Paaki (Bourke)	20	36
Kamilaroi (Tamworth)	19	35
Many Rivers (Coffs Harbour)	19	36
<b>Victoria</b>		
Binjurr (Wangaratta)	21	34
Tumbukka (Ballarat)	20	33
<b>Queensland</b>		
South East Queensland (Brisbane)	19	34
Goolburri (Roma)	17	34
Central Queensland (Rockhampton)	18	34
Townsville	18	33
Cairns and District	20	34
Gulf and West Queensland (Mount Isa)	20	32
Peninsula (Cooktown)	23	35
Torres Strait	20	33
<b>Western Australia</b>		
Perth Noongar	19	33
Kaata-Wangkinyinyi (Narrogin)	19	34
Yamatji (Geraldton)	19	35
Ngarda-Ngarli-Yarndu (South Hedland)	21	31
Kullari (Broome)	20	39
Malarabah (Derby)	21	36
Wunan (Kununurra)	20	37
Western Desert (Warburton)	23	31
Wongatha (Kalgoorlie)	20	29
<b>South Australia</b>		
Patpa Warra Yunti (Adelaide)	20	35
Wangka-Willurrara (Ceduna)	19	34
Nulla Wimila Kutju (Port Augusta)	21	35
<b>Tasmania</b>		
Tasmania	18	34
<b>Northern Territory</b>		
Yilli Rreung (Darwin)	20	31
Jabiru	20	35
Miwatj (Nhulunbuy)	20	31
Garrak-Jarru (Katherine)	19	33
Yappakurlangu (Tennant Creek)	20	34
Papunya (Apatula)	21	33
Alice Springs	22	32
Total	20	34

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996.

**Table 6** DEPENDENCY RATIOS, INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS, 1996

ATSIC Region	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Western Desert (Warburton)	54.2	23.2
Peninsula (Cooktown)	58.9	33.1
Alice Springs	62.8	41.2
Papunya (Apatula)	63.5	20.3
Miwatj (Nhulunbuy)	64.7	40.9
Yilli Rreung (Darwin)	65.4	37.2
Jabiru	68.2	29.7
Sydney	70.0	46.3
Binjurr (Wangaratta)	70.1	49.2
Nulla Wimila Kutju (Port Augusta)	71.6	52.4
Cairns and District	72.2	45.7
Patpa Warra Yunti (Adelaide)	72.7	51.6
Wongatha (Kalgoorlie)	73.1	41
Ngarda-Ngarli-Yarndu (South Hedland)	73.3	40.9
Malarabah (Derby)	73.9	32.1
Perth Noongar	74.2	47.6
Tumbukka (Ballarat)	74.4	48.9
Tasmania	74.7	52.5
Queanbeyan	75.0	49.5
Kullari (Broome)	75.9	39.8
Yappakurlangu (Tennant Creek)	75.9	35.3
Murdi Paaki (Bourke)	76.4	51.6
Gulf and West Queensland (Mount Isa)	76.7	37.6
South East Queensland (Brisbane)	76.8	49.3
Garrak-Jarru (Katherine)	77.2	39.8
Kamilaroi (Tamworth)	77.7	54.7
Kaata-Wangkinyinyi (Narrogin)	77.8	55.9
Wangka-Willurrara (Ceduna)	78.0	55.2
Townsville	79.1	48.5
Yamatji (Geraldton)	79.8	50.9
Many Rivers (Coffs Harbour)	80.4	61.2
Central Queensland (Rockhampton)	81.1	54.5
Binaal Billa (Wagga Wagga)	83.5	56.7
Goolburri (Roma)	83.6	55.8
Wunan (Kununurra)	84.2	31.1
Torres Strait Area	85.6	24.6

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996.



17. Table 7 shows the Indigenous population of each State classified according to the level of socio-economic disadvantage assigned to the area where they live by the ABS Experimental Index of Indigenous Socio-economic Disadvantage. The table shows that:

- (i) the largest number of Indigenous people (about 104 000) live in the New South Wales, but few Indigenous areas in that State were classified as most disadvantaged;
- (ii) New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia account for about 84 per cent of Indigenous people;
- (iii) about 41 per cent of all Indigenous people live in areas that were classified as more or most disadvantaged under the experimental index; and
- (iv) about half of the people who live in areas classified as most disadvantaged people are in the Northern Territory.

**Table 7** DISTRIBUTION OF INDIGENOUS POPULATION BY LEVEL OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE, 1996

Level of disadvantage	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	NT	Total
<b>Number of Indigenous People</b>								
Least disadvantaged	35 510	12 460	20 193	4 498	6 863	13 142	4 917	97 583
Less disadvantaged	39 341	7 633	33 974	20 701	4 519	725	3 166	110 059
More disadvantaged	29 393	1 431	24 179	14 431	6 287		7 171	82 892
Most disadvantaged	425		16 937	11 021	1 229		30 763	60 375
<b>Total</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>1544</b>	<b>2376</b>	<b>1700</b>	<b>1915</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>2061</b>	<b>2258</b>
<b>Distribution of Indigenous Population (per cent)</b>								
Least disadvantaged	10.1	3.6	5.8	1.3	2.0	3.7	1.4	27.8
Less disadvantaged	11.2	2.2	9.7	5.9	1.3	0.2	0.9	31.4
More disadvantaged	8.4	0.4	6.9	4.1	1.8	0.0	2.0	23.6
Most disadvantaged	0.1	0.0	4.8	3.1	0.4	0.0	8.8	17.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.8</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996.

18. Table 8 shows the concentration of Indigenous people in the population of areas. For this purpose, concentration is calculated as the Indigenous population of the area divided by the non-Indigenous population of the area. The table shows that in every State the level of socio-economic disadvantage assigned to areas increases with the concentration of Indigenous people in the population.

**Table 8** CONCENTRATION OF INDIGENOUS POPULATION BY STATE, 1996

Disadvantage quartiles	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	NT	Total
<b>Concentration of Indigenous Population</b>								
Least disadvantaged	1.2	0.4	2.2	1.0	0.8	3.5	8.4	1.8
Less disadvantaged	3.3	1.1	4.6	3.8	1.7	6.0	10.0	3.7
More disadvantaged	16.4	16.4	14.1	13.7	6.0	n.a.	21.7	14.9
Most disadvantaged	17.7	n.a.	84.1	72.7	70.3	n.a.	85.0	80.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>2.0</b>

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996.

19. Table 9 cross-classifies Indigenous population by ARIA<sup>4</sup> and the level of socio-economic disadvantage estimated by the ABS index. In general, it shows that the Indigenous areas in the relatively least disadvantaged socio-economic category are in accessible areas and those in the relatively most disadvantaged socio-economic category are in the most remote areas. However, there are many Indigenous areas in accessible areas that are in the more disadvantaged socio-economic category — for example, Blacktown (Sydney, New South Wales), Redfern (Sydney, New South Wales), Inala (Queensland) and Swan (Western Australia).

### *Income*

20. Table 10 contains details of the following variables for each ATSI region:

- (i) median weekly individual income for non-Indigenous people;
- (ii) median weekly individual income for Indigenous people;
- (iii) estimated average weekly family income for Indigenous families; and
- (iv) average Indigenous household size.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) developed by the National Key Centre for Social Applications of Geographical Information Systems at the University of Adelaide. This classification of localities measures accessibility and remoteness in terms of a location's road distance from service centres with populations of 5000 or more. Each location in Australia is classified into one of five categories: highly accessible; accessible; moderately accessible; remote; or very remote.

**Table 9** DISTRIBUTION OF INDIGENOUS POLULATION BY ARIA AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE, 1996

Disadvantage quartiles	Highly accessible	Accessible	Moderately accessible	Remote	Very remote	Total
<b>Number of Indigenous People</b>						
Least disadvantaged	79 959	14 682	2 169	400	373	97 583
Less disadvantaged	62 304	30 378	8 288	7 901	1 188	110 059
More disadvantaged	13 435	21 760	20 873	13 218	13 606	82 892
Most disadvantaged		1 314	5 688	5 270	48 103	60 375
<b>Total</b>	<b>1852</b>	<b>2200</b>	<b>2053</b>	<b>1814</b>	<b>1332</b>	<b>2258</b>
<b>Distribution of Indigenous Population (per cent)</b>						
Least disadvantaged	22.79	4.18	0.62	0.11	0.11	27.81
Less disadvantaged	17.76	8.66	2.36	2.25	0.34	31.36
More disadvantaged	3.83	6.20	5.95	3.77	3.88	23.62
Most disadvantaged	0.00	0.37	1.62	1.50	13.71	17.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>44.38</b>	<b>19.41</b>	<b>10.55</b>	<b>7.63</b>	<b>18.04</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996.

21. Socio-economic disadvantage is usually associated with low income. Table 11 ranks the ATSI regions according to the percentage of families with annual income less than \$15 600. It also shows the socio-economic disadvantage category for each Region.

22. As expected, there is a strong association between the ranking of regions on the basis of the percentage of families whose annual income is less than \$15 600 and the socio-economic disadvantage category.

23. There are some exceptions. For example, Alice Springs and Cairns rank 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respectively based on the percentage of families whose income is less than \$15 600 a year — that is a relatively low proportion of families have incomes below \$15 600. But on the basis of the experimental index of socio-economic disadvantage they are in the relatively more disadvantaged category (implying a rank of between 19<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>). This may be partly because of their relatively high number of persons per family. Data on average household size are in Table 10.

**Table 10** MEDIAN INCOME AND AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE, 1996 <sup>(a)</sup>

ATSI Region	Median non-Indigenous individual income	Median Indigenous individual income	Average Indigenous family income	Average Indigenous household size
	\$ per week	\$ per week	\$ per week	No.
<b>New South Wales</b>				
Sydney	346	252	749	3.2
Queanbeyan (includes ACT)	340	218	677	3.2
Binala Billa (Wagga Wagga)	268	191	553	3.3
Murdi Paaki (Bourke)	234	187	541	4.1
Kamilaroi (Tamworth)	254	185	541	3.6
Many Rivers (Coffs Harbour)	241	192	590	3.2
<b>Victoria</b>				
Binjurr (Wangaratta)	314	246	694	2.9
Tumbukka (Ballarat)	266	217	642	3.2
<b>Queensland</b>				
South East Queensland (Brisbane)	294	234	666	3.2
Goolburri (Roma)	251	194	545	3.6
Central Queensland (Rockhampton)	251	193	614	3.6
Townsville	313	194	629	3.9
Cairns and District	333	195	610	4.1
Gulf and West Queensland (Mount Isa)	436	192	663	3.9
Peninsula (Cooktown)	400	170	512	5.4
Torres Strait	510	195	604	6.0
<b>Western Australia</b>				
Perth Noongar	307	206	649	3.6
Kaata-Wangkinyinyi (Narrogin)	288	196	603	3.8
Yamatji (Geraldton)	303	192	580	4.3
Ngarda-Ngarli-Yarndu (South Hedland)	535	185	700	3.7
Kullari (Broome)	358	175	566	4.3
Malarabah (Derby)	463	175	517	5.4
Wunan (Kununurra)	468	179	490	5.9
Western Desert (Warburton)	851	148	453	7.3
Wongatha (Kalgoorlie)	453	191	698	4.7
<b>South Australia</b>				
Patpa Warra Yunti (Adelaide)	271	203	614	3.2
Wangka-Willurrara (Ceduna)	267	174	563	4.3
Nulla Wimila Kutju (Port Augusta)	241	174	524	5.3
<b>Tasmania</b>				
Tasmania	260	216	655	2.8
<b>Northern Territory</b>				
Yilli Rreung (Darwin)	437	214	748	3.9
Jabiru	495	168	500	7.4
Miwatj (Nhulunbuy)	616	161	483	8.4
Garrak-Jarru (Katherine)	425	169	485	6.0
Yappakurlangu (Tennant Creek)	414	163	499	5.9
Papunya (Apatula)	522	154	418	7.3
Alice Springs	456	182	666	3.9
	294	218	620	3.7

(a) Based on *Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population*, ABS, Cat No 3230.0.  
Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996.

**Table 11** PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES WHOSE ANNUAL INCOME IS LESS THAN \$15 600 AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

ATSIC Region	Family income indicator		Socio-economic disadvantage category
	Families with annual income below \$15 600	Rank	
	%		
Yilli Rreung (Darwin)	14.7	1	Less disadvantaged
Tasmania	16.3	2	Least disadvantaged
South East Queensland (Brisbane)	17.1	3	Least disadvantaged
Binjurrú (Wangaratta)	18.0	4	Least disadvantaged
Townsville	18.5	5	Less disadvantaged
Kaata-Wangkinyinyi (Narrogin)	18.5	6	Less disadvantaged
Alice Springs	18.6	7	More disadvantaged
Cairns and District	18.7	8	More disadvantaged
Sydney	19.2	9	Least disadvantaged
Wongatha (Kalgoorlie)	19.7	10	Less disadvantaged
Ngarda-Ngarli-Yarndu (South Hedland)	19.8	11	More disadvantaged
Perth Noongar	19.9	12	Least disadvantaged
Tumbukka (Ballarat)	19.9	13	Least disadvantaged
Torres Strait	20.5	14	More disadvantaged
Central Queensland (Rockhampton)	20.9	15	Less disadvantaged
Queanbeyan	21.2	16	Least disadvantaged
Yamatji (Geraldton)	21.5	17	Less disadvantaged
Patpa Warra Yunti (Adelaide)	21.9	18	Least disadvantaged
Many Rivers (Coffs Harbour)	21.9	19	Least disadvantaged
Gulf and West Queensland (Mount Isa)	22.5	20	More disadvantaged
Kullari (Broome)	22.9	21	More disadvantaged
Goolburri (Roma)	23.5	22	Less disadvantaged
Murdi Paaki (Bourke)	24.3	23	More disadvantaged
Kamilaroi (Tamworth)	24.8	24	Less disadvantaged
Binaal Billa (Wagga Wagga)	24.8	25	Less disadvantaged
Jabiru	25.7	26	Most disadvantaged
Wunan (Kununurra)	27.7	27	Most disadvantaged
Malarabah (Derby)	27.8	28	Most disadvantaged
Nulla Wimila Kutju (Port Augusta)	28.7	29	More disadvantaged
Wangka-Willurrara (Ceduna)	30.4	30	More disadvantaged
Garrak-Jarru (Katherine)	31.4	31	Most disadvantaged
Yappakurlangu (Tennant Creek)	31.9	32	Most disadvantaged
Peninsula (Cooktown)	32.7	33	Most disadvantaged
Papunya (Apatula)	35.6	34	Most disadvantaged
Miwatj (Nhulunbuy)	36.6	35	Most disadvantaged
Western Desert (Warburton)	44.3	36	Most disadvantaged

Source Commonwealth Grants Commission

## ***Education***

24. Level of education has an important effect on the type and extent of employment for people and, consequently, is usually considered to have an important effect on socio-economic status. Table 12 shows the:

- (i) percentage of Indigenous people aged 15 and over who never went to school;
- (ii) percentage of Indigenous people aged 15 and over who left school at age 14 or under; and
- (iii) percentage of persons aged 15 and over who in response to the Census question on English fluency, indicated that they do not speak English or do not speak it well.

25. These indicators are shown because the percentage of Indigenous people aged 15 and over who left school at age 14 or under is the basis of one of the education outcomes indicators the Commission used in its Report. The other two indicators were examined by the ABS in preparing the experimental index of Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage.

26. Table 12 also shows the rank of each ATSI region on the basis of each indicator. (The table is ordered on the basis of the rank for the percentage of Indigenous people aged 15 and over who never went to school.) The table also shows the socio-economic category for each region.

27. The table shows a strong association between the percentage of Indigenous people aged 15 and over who never went to school and the socio-economic disadvantage category for the ATSI Region. However, there are some exceptions. For example, Torres Strait and Ceduna have relatively low percentages of people aged 15 and over who never went to school (ranking 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> on the basis of that indicator, but they rank between 19<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> on the basis of socio-economic disadvantage — rankings that are consistent with their ranking on the basis of English fluency (24<sup>th</sup> for Ceduna and 31<sup>st</sup> for Torres Strait)). Conversely, Darwin and Kalgoorlie rank between 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> on the basis of the ‘no school’ and ‘English fluency’ indicators, but between 10<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> for socio-economic disadvantage.

28. The association between socio-economic disadvantage categories and the percentage of Indigenous people aged 15 and over who left school at age 14 or under and percentage of persons aged 15 and over with low English fluency is not as strong.

### ***Labour Force***

29. One of the main reasons for low income among the Indigenous population is the low level of employment. Table 13 shows, for each ATSI region:

- (i) the percentage of the Indigenous population aged 15 and over who are employed, with CDEP treated as unemployed;
- (ii) the percentage of Indigenous people aged 15 years or over who work in jobs classified as Labourer and Related Workers; and
- (iii) the percentage of Indigenous people of working age who are not in the labour force.

30. Table 13 also ranks each region on the basis of these indicators and compares those ranks with the socio-economic disadvantage category. Regions in the table are ordered on the basis of the percentage of people in employment indicator.

31. There are strong associations between the percentage of people employed and the percentage of people employed as labourers, and the socio-economic disadvantage category. Generally, the lower the level of employment and the higher the percentage of people employed as labourers, the greater the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage. One exception is Tamworth which has a relatively low percentage of people employed (it ranks 25<sup>th</sup> on this indicator), but is ranks between 10<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> on the overall socio-economic index (that is, it is in the less disadvantaged category). This may be due to the low labour force participation rate.

### ***Housing***

32. Table 14 shows, for each ATSI region:

- (i) the percentage of households in improvised dwellings; and
- (ii) the percentage of occupied dwellings that house two or more families.

The table orders the regions from the lowest to the highest percentage of households living in improvised dwellings.

33. These two variables are often associated with socio-economic disadvantage and were examined by the ABS in preparing the experimental index of Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage.

34. There is a strong association between the percentage of households living in improvised dwellings in each region and the socio-economic disadvantage category of the region.

**Table 12** EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT INDICATORS

ATSIC Region	Education Attainment Indicators			Education Attainment Indicators			Socio-economic disadvantage category
	Never attended school	Left school at or before 14	No or low English fluency	Never attended school	Left school at or before 14	No or low English fluency	
	%	%	%	Rank	Rank	Rank	
Hobart	0.4	11.4	0.2	1	1	2	Least disadvantaged
Queanbeyan	0.7	13.1	0.4	2	5	10	Least disadvantaged
Wagga Wagga	0.8	15.1	0.3	3	15	6	Less disadvantaged
Coffs Harbour	0.8	13.4	0.2	4	7	3	Least disadvantaged
Sydney	1.0	12.8	0.8	5	2	13	Least disadvantaged
Tamworth	1.0	14.2	0.2	6	11	4	Less disadvantaged
Brisbane	1.1	15.9	0.6	7	21	12	Least disadvantaged
Adelaide	1.1	15.2	1.0	8	16	16	Least disadvantaged
Rockhampton	1.3	17.9	0.3	9	28	7	Less disadvantaged
Ballarat	1.3	17.2	1.5	10	24	20	Least disadvantaged
Wangaratta	1.3	14.5	1.4	11	13	19	Least disadvantaged
Torres Strait	1.4	13.4	12.2	12	8	31	More disadvantaged
Ceduna	1.4	13.2	3.4	13	6	24	More disadvantaged
Townsville	1.5	17.2	0.9	14	25	14	Less disadvantaged
Roma	1.5	20.5	0.2	15	33	5	Less disadvantaged
Perth	1.8	18.1	1.0	16	29	15	Least disadvantaged
Cairns	1.9	14.9	1.3	17	14	18	More disadvantaged
Narrogin	2.0	19.3	0.5	18	31	11	Less disadvantaged
Bourke	2.1	15.9	0.0	19	22	1	More disadvantaged
Darwin	3.0	13.0	1.9	20	4	21	Less disadvantaged
Kalgoorlie	3.2	19.1	3.3	21	30	22	Less disadvantaged
Cooktown	3.3	16.4	5.2	22	23	25	Most disadvantaged
Geraldton	4.4	17.8	0.3	23	27	8	Less disadvantaged
Broome	4.8	14.4	1.1	24	12	17	More disadvantaged
Mount Isa	5.3	15.5	0.4	25	19	9	More disadvantaged
Jabiru	6.0	17.3	15.8	26	26	33	Most disadvantaged
Nhulunbuy	6.4	14.1	16.7	27	9	34	Most disadvantaged
Alice Springs	6.5	19.6	6.3	28	32	26	More disadvantaged
Port Augusta	8.8	15.2	7.0	29	17	27	More disadvantaged
South Hedland	9.7	12.9	3.3	30	3	23	More disadvantaged
Katherine	12.4	15.4	9.1	31	18	29	Most disadvantaged
Derby	14.2	14.1	13.2	32	10	32	Most disadvantaged
Kununurra	14.5	15.7	7.6	33	20	28	Most disadvantaged
Warburton	16.0	34.9	20.3	34	36	35	Most disadvantaged
Tennant Creek	16.7	21.5	12.1	35	34	30	Most disadvantaged
Apatula	17.5	26.1	35.6	36	35	36	Most disadvantaged

Source Commonwealth Grants Commission



**Table 13** LABOUR FORCE INDICATORS

ATSI Region	Labour Force Indicators			Labour Force Indicators			Socio-economic disadvantage category
	Proportion employed	Proportion in labourer jobs	Proportion not in labour force	Proportion employed	Proportion in labourer jobs	Proportion not in labour force	
	%	%	%	Rank	Rank	Rank	
Tasmania	49.5	15.2	39.0	1	9	2	Least disadvantaged
Wangaratta	47.9	12.4	40.5	2	3	5	Least disadvantaged
Sydney	46.6	11.2	40.9	3	1	6	Least disadvantaged
Brisbane	43.9	14.7	42.1	4	8	9	Least disadvantaged
Ballarat	43.6	13.8	43.2	5	6	10	Least disadvantaged
Queanbeyan	42.7	12.7	43.9	6	4	12	Least disadvantaged
Adelaide	37.9	14.3	47.0	7	7	16	Least disadvantaged
Rockhampton	35.4	25.2	46.4	8	13	14	Less disadvantaged
Darwin	35.4	12.3	51.6	9	2	26	Less disadvantaged
Coffs Harbour	35.2	18.3	47.4	10	10	17	Least disadvantaged
Narrogin	34.9	27.6	52.4	11	16	28	Less disadvantaged
Townsville	34.7	35.1	47.0	12	22	15	Less disadvantaged
Roma	34.6	32.8	47.6	13	21	18	Less disadvantaged
Perth Noongar	34.0	12.8	51.8	14	5	27	Least disadvantaged
Cairns	33.6	31.7	49.1	15	20	21	More disadvantaged
Wagga Wagga	33.6	25.7	49.7	16	15	23	Less disadvantaged
Mount Isa	33.0	39.2	48.6	17	24	20	More disadvantaged
Alice Springs	32.8	21.7	55.9	18	11	31	More disadvantaged
Kalgoorlie	32.7	25.4	55.2	19	14	30	Less disadvantaged
Torres Strait	32.3	39.9	41.6	20	25	7	More disadvantaged
Geraldton	31.2	25.2	53.8	21	12	29	Less disadvantaged
Bourke	31.1	30.6	51.4	22	18	25	More disadvantaged
South Hedland	31.0	31.5	49.6	23	19	22	More disadvantaged
Ceduna	30.9	37.3	41.7	24	23	8	More disadvantaged
Tamworth	29.7	28.3	51.1	25	17	24	Less disadvantaged
Broome	26.6	49.1	43.3	26	28	11	More disadvantaged
Kununurra	24.4	50.3	39.4	27	29	4	Most disadvantaged
Port Augusta	18.9	40.7	45.6	28	26	13	More disadvantaged
Derby	18.5	60.2	39.2	29	34	3	Most disadvantaged
Katherine	18.0	53.6	48.0	30	32	19	Most disadvantaged
Tennant Creek	17.2	50.9	59.5	31	30	34	Most disadvantaged
Cooktown	15.9	61.1	36.3	32	35	1	Most disadvantaged
Jabiru	13.2	45.8	57.5	33	27	33	Most disadvantaged
Nhulunbuy	11.6	64.3	62.4	34	36	35	Most disadvantaged
Warburton	11.4	53.5	56.3	35	31	32	Most disadvantaged
Apatula	10.6	55.1	68.6	36	33	36	Most disadvantaged

Source: Commonwealth Grants Commission

**Table 14** HOUSING INDICATORS

ATSIIC Region	Housing Indicators		Housing Indicators		Socio-economic disadvantage category
	Households living in improvised dwellings	Two or more families in a dwelling	Households living in improvised dwellings	Two or more families in a dwelling	
	%	%	Rank	Rank	
Perth	0.9	3.4	1	10	Least disadvantaged
Hobart	1.2	1.0	2	1	Least disadvantaged
Adelaide	1.3	2.1	3	2	Least disadvantaged
Sydney	1.7	3.4	4	11	Least disadvantaged
Ballarat	1.7	2.1	5	3	Least disadvantaged
Queanbeyan	1.9	2.5	6	4	Least disadvantaged
Port Augusta	2.4	6.1	7	20	More disadvantaged
Wangaratta	2.5	2.7	8	5	Least disadvantaged
Brisbane	2.5	3.2	9	8	Least disadvantaged
Narrogin	2.6	4.1	10	13	Less disadvantaged
Wagga Wagga	2.7	3.1	11	7	Less disadvantaged
Tamworth	2.7	3.3	12	9	Less disadvantaged
Roma	3.1	4.7	13	15	Less disadvantaged
Geraldton	3.5	5.4	14	18	Less disadvantaged
Townsville	4.2	5.2	15	16	Less disadvantaged
Coffs Harbour	4.5	2.8	16	6	Least disadvantaged
Cairns	4.9	6.5	17	21	More disadvantaged
Rockhampton	5.0	4.1	18	12	Less disadvantaged
Darwin	5.6	4.6	19	14	Less disadvantaged
Alice Springs	5.7	7.1	20	24	More disadvantaged
South Hedland	5.8	6.5	21	22	More disadvantaged
Mount Isa	5.9	9.7	22	26	More disadvantaged
Cooktown	6.1	23.5	23	31	Most disadvantaged
Ceduna	6.2	5.9	24	19	More disadvantaged
Bourke	6.8	5.3	25	17	More disadvantaged
Kalgoorlie	7.2	7.7	26	25	Less disadvantaged
Derby	8.4	18.0	27	28	Most disadvantaged
Kununurra	9.1	18.9	28	29	Most disadvantaged
Warburton	10.4	31.0	29	33	Most disadvantaged
Broome	11.2	7.0	30	23	More disadvantaged
Torres Strait	15.7	12.8	31	27	More disadvantaged
Tennant Creek	19.3	23.5	32	30	Most disadvantaged
Jabiru	19.4	32.6	33	34	Most disadvantaged
Katherine	20.2	23.6	34	32	Most disadvantaged
Nhulunbuy	23.3	47.6	35	36	Most disadvantaged
Apatula	25.8	34.7	36	35	Most disadvantaged

Source: Commonwealth Grants Commission

## **AUSTRALIA'S TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POPULATION**

35. This section provides a table showing experimental estimates of the Torres Strait Islander population by State and by ATSI Region as at 30 June 1996. In December 2000, the ABS published experimental estimates of the Torres Strait Islander population at the State level in the publication *Australian Demographic Statistics*. The experimental estimates are 'place of enumeration' estimates, not 'usual residence' estimates.

36. At the Commission's request, the ABS has extended its estimates of the Torres Strait Islander population to the ATSI Region level. These figures are shown in Table 15 which includes the population count at the 1996 Census, the experimental estimates at 30 June 1996 and the proportion of the population in each ATSI region.

37. In the main, the experimental estimates for the Torres Strait Islander population were derived on a similar basis to the experimental estimates for the total Indigenous population (see *Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population*).

38. The table indicates that (a) most Torres Strait Islander people live in the Torres Strait Area and other parts of Queensland, and (b) New South Wales has the next largest share of Torres Strait Islander people.

**Table 15** TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POPULATION, 30 JUNE 1996 <sup>(a)</sup>

	Census count, 1996	Experimental estimates, 30 June 1996 <sup>(b)</sup>	Proportion of experimental estimates %
<b>New South Wales</b>			
Sydney	3 546	3 938	9.3
Queanbeyan (includes ACT) <sup>(c)</sup>	542	570	1.3
Binaal Billa (Wagga Wagga)	902	969	2.3
Murdi Paaki (Bourke)	123	127	0.3
Kamilaroi (Tamworth)	425	446	1.1
Many Rivers (Coffs Harbour)	2 138	2 363	5.6
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>7 676</b>	<b>8 413</b>	<b>19.8</b>
<b>Victoria</b>			
Binjurr (Wangaratta)	1 473	1 573	3.7
Tumbukka (Ballarat)	1 617	1 726	4.1
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>3 090</b>	<b>3 299</b>	<b>7.8</b>
<b>Queensland</b>			
South East Queensland (Brisbane)	3 795	4 139	9.8
Goolburri (Roma)	534	561	1.3
Central Queensland (Rockhampton)	1 367	1 487	3.5
Townsville	4 180	4 564	10.8
Cairns and District	4 312	4 714	11.1
Gulf and West Queensland (Mount Isa)	323	329	0.8
Peninsula (Cooktown)	853	911	2.1
Torres Strait	5 760	6 335	14.9
<b>Sub Total — incl Torres Strait</b>	<b>21 124</b>	<b>23 040</b>	<b>54.3</b>
<b>Sub Total — excl Torres Strait</b>	<b>15 364</b>	<b>16 705</b>	<b>39.4</b>
<b>Western Australia</b>			
Perth Noongar	810	892	2.1
Kaata-Wangkinyinyi (Narrogin)	200	209	0.5
Yamatji (Geraldton)	94	97	0.2
Ngarda-Ngarli-Yarndu (South Hedland)	257	269	0.6
Kullari (Broome)	115	119	0.3
Malarabah (Derby)	38	40	0.1
Wunan (Kununurra)	153	175	0.4
Western Desert (Warburton)	32	35	0.1
Wongatha (Kalgoorlie)	98	101	0.2
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1 797</b>	<b>1 937</b>	<b>4.6</b>
<b>South Australia</b>			
Patpa Warra Yunti (Adelaide)	1 332	1 455	3.4
Wangka-Willurrara (Ceduna)	48	51	0.1
Nulla Wimila Kutju (Port Augusta)	122	126	0.3
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1 502</b>	<b>1 632</b>	<b>3.8</b>
<b>Tasmania</b>			
Tasmania	<b>1 850</b>	<b>2 089</b>	<b>4.9</b>
<b>Northern Territory</b>			
Yilli Rreung (Darwin)	940	1 068	2.5
Jabiru	109	117	0.3
Miwatj (Nhulunbuy)	221	245	0.6
Garrak-Jarru (Katherine)	265	287	0.7
Yappakurlangu (Tennant Creek)	33	34	0.1
Papunya (Apatula)	102	110	0.3
Alice Springs	121	132	0.3
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1 791</b>	<b>1 993</b>	<b>4.7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>38 830</b>	<b>42 403</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) State totals and total Australian data are taken from Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2000, ABS 3101.0.

(b) Figures for the ATSI Regions were especially produced for the Commission by the ABS.

(c) Includes 187 persons in the ACT.

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996.