

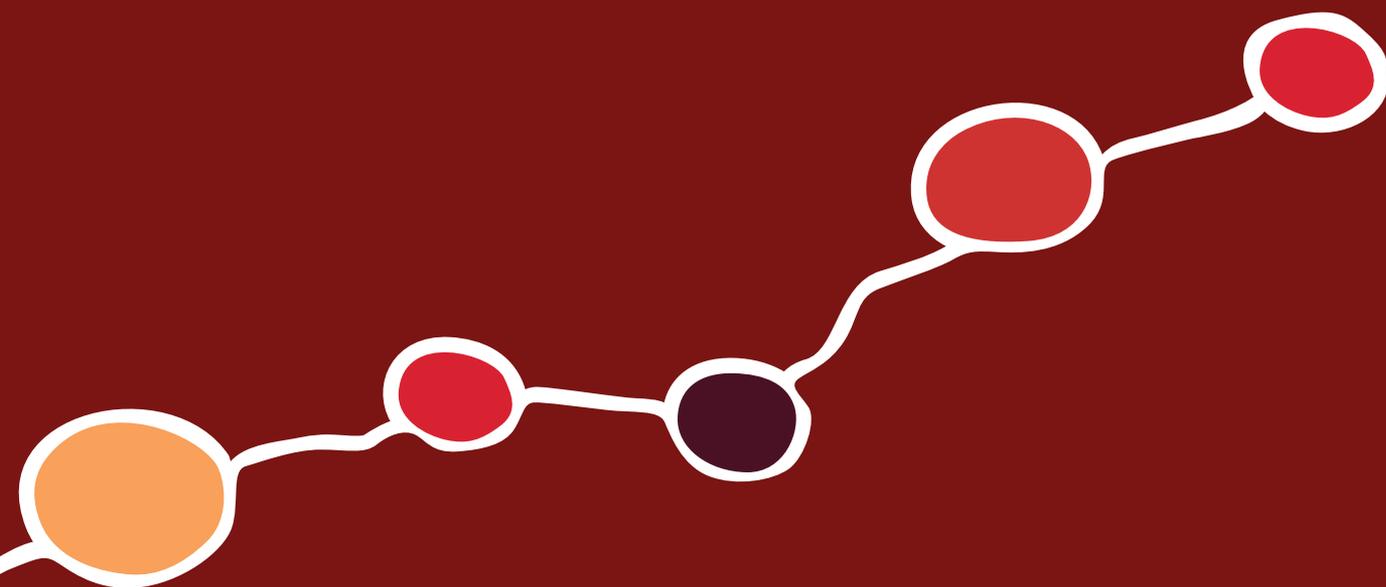


Department for
Community Development
Office for Women's Policy

Indigenous Women's Report Card 2005

Supplement to the Women's Report Card





This publication has been prepared by the Office for Women's Policy to provide a benchmark set of statistical indicators on Indigenous women in Western Australia. The information presented has been derived from a variety of sources and is believed to be reliable and accurate at the time of publishing. It is provided solely on the basis that readers will be responsible for making their own assessment and for verifying all relevant representations, statements and information.

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Minister's Message

The information presented in the *Indigenous Women's Report Card* is invaluable to the Indigenous community, Government and the many service providers wishing to make a positive contribution to Indigenous women's lives in Western Australia.

The *Indigenous Women's Report Card* is a supplementary report to the *Women's Report Card* launched in 2004. The lack of comparable data for Indigenous women was highlighted as a major concern when developing the Women's Report Card. It was also clear that some of the indicators for the broader population did not fully reflect the lives and experiences of Indigenous women.

The *Indigenous Women's Report Card* addresses those concerns by establishing a benchmark set of indicators to record change in the lives of Indigenous women. The indicators reflect issues of importance to Indigenous women in Western Australia and were identified during a twelve month consultative period, guided by the Indigenous Women's Congress. I am grateful to Congress members and key stakeholders for their valuable contributions and personal insights.

While some indicators in the *Indigenous Women's Report Card* highlight the important role played by Indigenous women in maintaining cultural identity and attachment within their communities, not all the data are positive. When compared to non-Indigenous women, some data reveal significant degrees of disadvantage for Indigenous women in key areas. These key areas are reflected in the goals of the National Indigenous Women's Action Plan and include Economic Independence, Leadership and Safety.

The *Indigenous Women's Report Card* is intended to complement the Department of Indigenous Affairs report, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* by providing insight into the gendered facet of disadvantage within Indigenous communities. While much is already being done throughout government to address many of the issues raised in this report, it is clear that more work is needed.

At the local level, the Statement of Commitment to a New and Just Relationship between the Government of Western Australia and Aboriginal Western Australians provides a framework to drive further change in key policy areas. The *Indigenous Women's Report Card* reflects that commitment by demonstrating the effectiveness of the partnership between the Office for Women's Policy and the Indigenous Women's Congress in developing the report. The report also contributes to that commitment by providing a meaningful basis upon which further partnerships can be developed with key policy stakeholders and service providers in improving outcomes for Indigenous women.



Sheila McHale
Minister for Women's Interests



Foreword

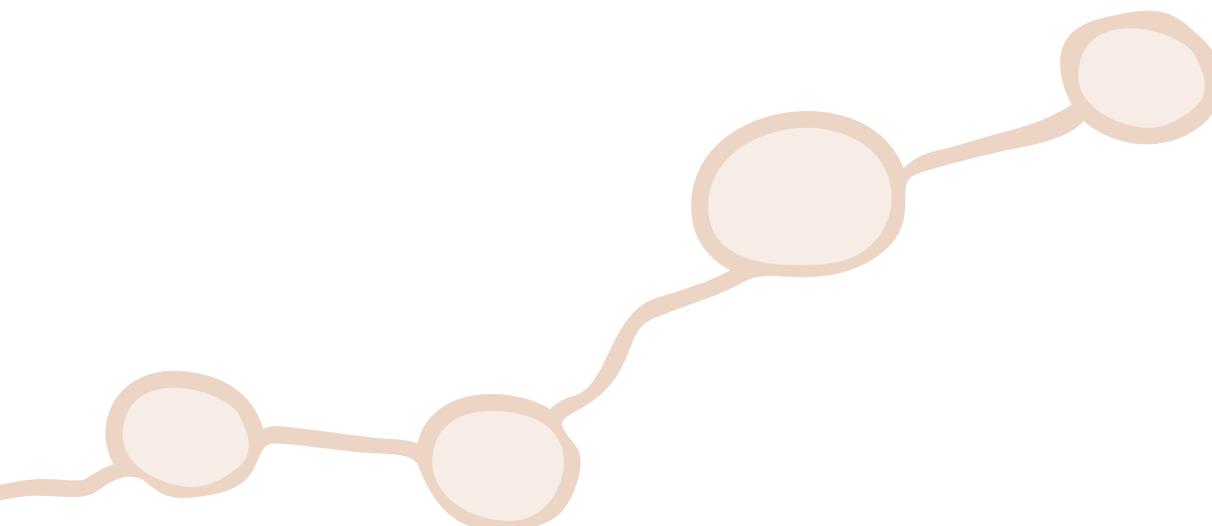
The Indigenous Women's Congress (IWC) welcomes the *Indigenous Women's Report Card* and is pleased to have helped shape the report.

Data around the lives of Indigenous people have improved significantly in recent years and this is reflected in the broad range of indicators presented in the report. In providing important benchmarks for measuring progress towards equality for Indigenous women, the Indigenous Women's Report Card is an important document for our daughters and granddaughters.

The IWC was closely involved in setting indicators across a range of community and family matters, but with a focus on the priorities expressed in the National Indigenous Women's Action Plan - Economic Independence, Leadership and Safety. The Report Card shows the gaps between the welfare of Indigenous women and other West Australian women and how far we still have to go.

It also shows where we, the IWC, the government and the whole community share responsibility for targeting change. Indigenous women's priorities focus on family and community. The safety of our kids, the eradication of domestic violence and poverty and greater opportunities in health, education and leadership, will guarantee strong futures for us all.

Helen McNeair
A/Chair, Indigenous Women's Congress



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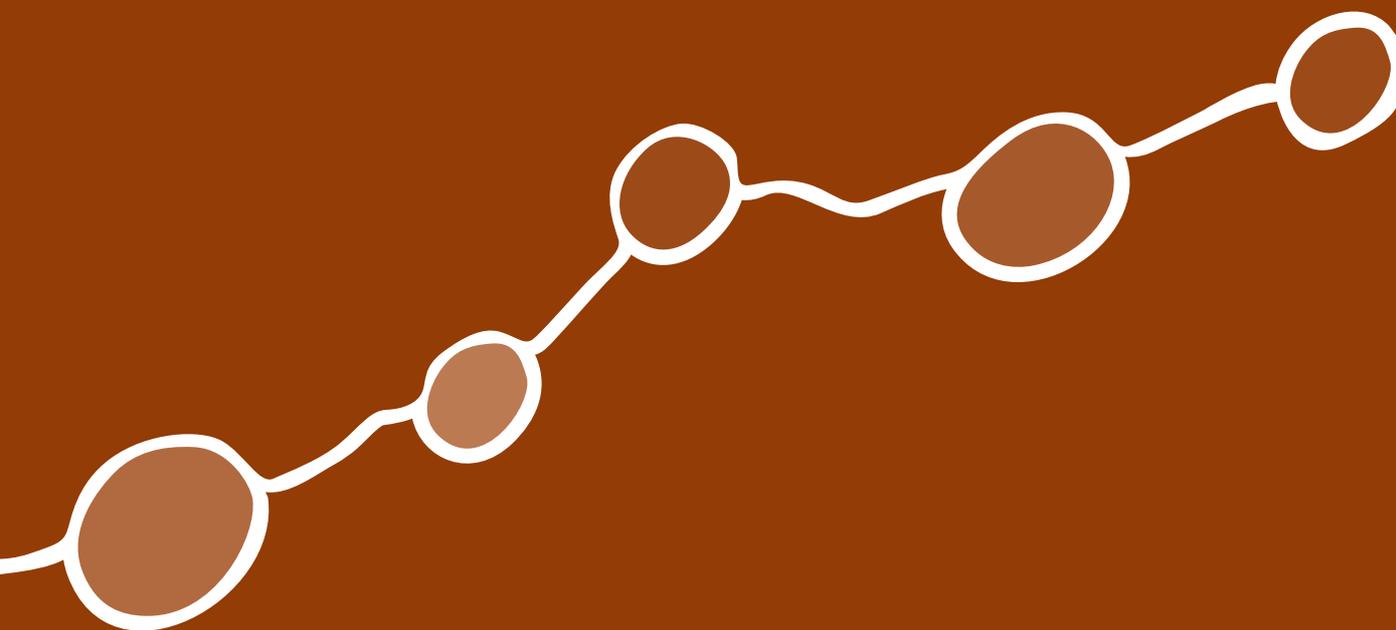
Introduction

This report sets out to provide a set of baseline indicators for measuring the social and economic wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) women ⁱ in Western Australia. It is intended that similar reports will be produced every three to five years to record change in the indicator data. The primary aim of these reports will be to improve outcomes for Indigenous women by driving change in government policy and assisting in appropriate service delivery.

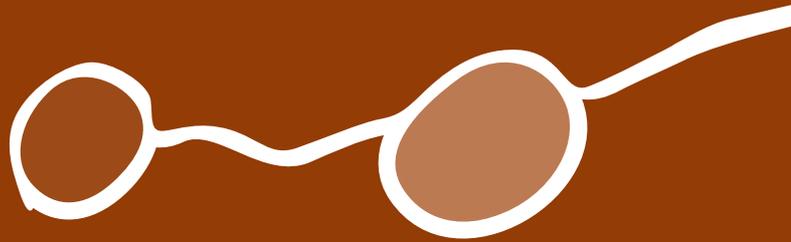
A secondary aim of this report is to identify gaps in the indicator data currently available and areas in which relevant datasets can be expanded or improved. At present, there are no sources of reliable data in many key areas of Indigenous women's wellbeing. These important gaps have been identified to encourage responsible agencies to rectify gaps in administrative data collections, particularly by ensuring that the Indigenous status of their clientele is not only collected, but collected on a comparable basis.

To monitor the wellbeing and progress of any population group over time requires high quality data, based on consistent data definitions and collection methodologies. Some of the more significant data quality concerns, relating to the Indigenous population, are included in this report to ensure the limitations of the data are understood by the user and that future changes in the data will be interpreted accurately by those responsible for developing and assessing policy.

A summary version of the report will be published at a later stage to cater for those users who do not require a technical understanding of the data and are primarily interested in the key findings of the report.



ⁱ Except where otherwise stated, the term 'women' is used throughout the report to refer to females aged 15 years and over.



In considering data gaps, it is important to distinguish between data not currently collected and those that are collected but cannot be released for confidentiality reasons. In 2001, there were an estimated 20,707 Indigenous women resident (aged 15 years and over) in Western Australia, representing just 2.75% of the state's female population of the same age.¹ The relatively small number of Indigenous women in the population of interest places limitations on data that can be reliably obtained from sample surveys and means that administrative data for some items of interest (e.g. women in higher salary levels of local government) are not publishable. Due to its relatively small population of interest, the report necessarily focuses on Indigenous women at the state, rather than the regional, level.

The indicators provided in this report are organised under seven theme areas, similar to those used in the *Women's Report Card: Measuring Women's Progress*, published by the Office for Women's Policy in March 2004. However, they have been broadened to ensure greater relevance to Indigenous women. They include:

- Leadership and Opportunity
- Work and Economic Independence
- Crime and Justice
- Family, Community and Culture
- Safety
- Mature Aged Women
- Health and Disability

Some of these areas (leadership, economic independence and safety) are key goals of the *National Indigenous Women's Action Plan*² and key areas for action promoted by the Indigenous Women's Congress in Western Australia.

The order of the chapters follow the format of the *Women's Report Card* for ease of reference between the two documents and does not reflect a value judgment on the information to suggest that one area is more important than another. Similarly, the number of indicators per chapter does not reflect the importance of the overarching issue to Indigenous women's lives, but generally reflects the availability of reliable and/or related data.

Many of the key indicators for women included in the *Women's Report Card* are also included in this publication, allowing comparisons to be drawn between the two groups of women and, where relevant, between Indigenous women and Indigenous men. The purpose of drawing comparisons is to identify the gaps between the population groups to further the Indigenous Women's Congress and the State Government's aim of achieving equality for all Australians.

While it is desirable to measure aspects of Indigenous women's lives within an Indigenous value system, as a supplementary report to the *Women's Report Card*, the capacity to do this within this report is fraught with complexities.

Like the *Women's Report Card*, this report is not intended to cover all significant trends affecting women in this state. Recent demographic trends, such as declining fertility rates and the growing proportion of single-parent households, may be seen positively or negatively depending on underlying cultural values as well as demographic and ecological assumptions. To the extent these trends are present in Indigenous communities (urban, rural and remote); desirable outcomes for Indigenous women are not always obvious and may vary from one community to another.

This report has the potential to measure real improvement in the lives of Indigenous women. The indicators, however, should not be taken as evidence of individual Indigenous women's ways of living and working. The views of the *Indigenous Women's Congress* were sought to ensure, as far as possible, that the indicators included in this report are relevant and culturally appropriate to the majority of Indigenous women.

Data quality

The selection of suitable indicators has been guided by data that are actually (or potentially) available from the Census of Population and Housing, household surveys and administrative collections, in particular the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS). Where there are data quality concerns care has been taken to ensure that the limitations of the existing data are highlighted.

Caution should be exercised when interpreting Indigenous data from all sources, particularly at the state and lower regional levels. As Indigenous status is not a mandatory item in most data collections, population totals may include a large number of people for whom Indigenous status was not provided. This should be borne in mind when comparing 'Indigenous' and 'non-Indigenous' populations.

Where no data source has been identified that can provide reliable and complete information for the selected indicators, alternative or proxy indicator data are occasionally used in this report. These are usually identified under the heading Related Data.

When comparing Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, another factor that should be taken into account is the different age structure of the two populations. Due to higher birth and death rates, the Indigenous population is a more youthful population. This should be borne in mind when interpreting data that could be affected by age. Where possible, age-standardised data (see *Glossary*) are used in this report to compare Indigenous with non-Indigenous women.

Care should also be exercised in utilising administrative data where the quality of the data or comparability with other data sources is unknown. For example, in some administrative data collections, Indigenous status may be collected by service providers using 'observation' or anecdotal information rather than by asking the standard question recommended by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).³

Selection of indicators

The selection of indicators for this report has been influenced by a number of factors including the need for data that are comparable over time and across data collections. While some of the data are available annually, many of the required items are collected only every five or six years in the Census of Population and Housing or national household surveys.

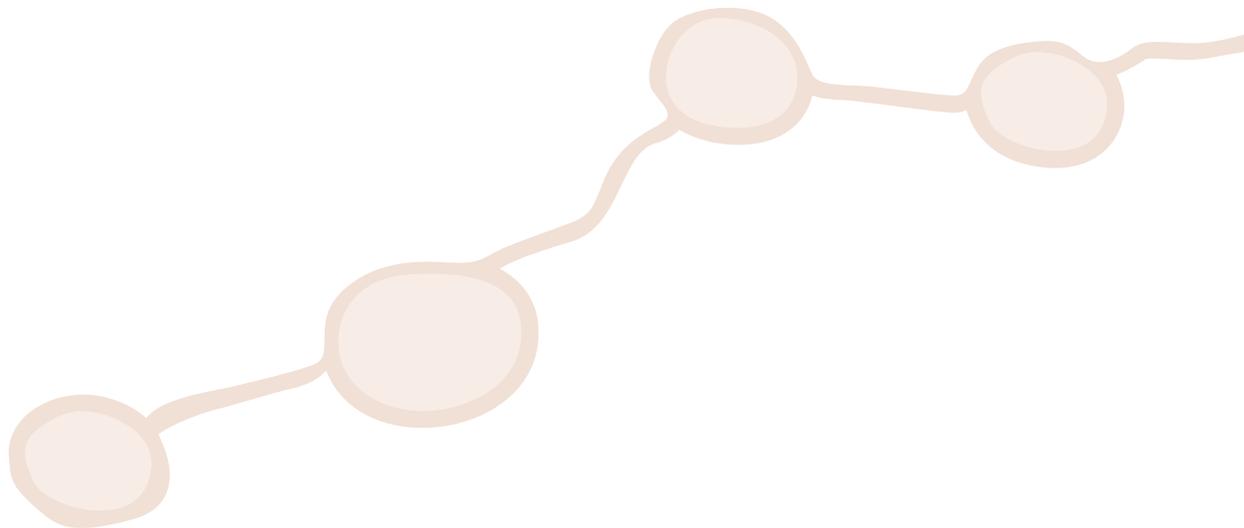
An essential test of indicators intended to measure the wellbeing of any population is that movement in the data should be easy to interpret, either as an improvement or deterioration in the circumstances of the population of interest. Where possible, the indicators selected for this report aim to satisfy this criterion. Some indicators, which will be seen by users as key indicators for Indigenous women, may need to be reviewed in the future in response to ongoing changes in data quality and/or collection methodology.

Many of the indicators included in this report relate to specific areas of disadvantage such as health, housing, employment and educational attainment, where Indigenous women have generally experienced poorer outcomes than other Western Australian women. These reflect the key indicators identified in the 2003 report, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage*⁴, endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

Other indicators have been selected because they relate to Indigenous cultural concerns such as language, links to traditional homelands and participation in cultural activities. These are important indicators for Indigenous women measuring their role in maintaining the vitality of Indigenous culture including traditional values and customs.

The report brings together a range of data on Indigenous women in Western Australia aged 15 years and over. This report is expected to complement the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) report, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage*, which has a more regional focus and include data on the wider Indigenous population of Western Australia.

It is envisaged that policy makers and other key stakeholders, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous women, will use this report in conjunction with the 2004 *Women's Report Card*. The report includes (and in some cases updates) data provided in the earlier report but also presents important additional data on Indigenous women.



Chapter 1. Leadership and Opportunity

Summary List of Indicators for Indigenous Women

No.	Indicator	Data source	Frequency
Employment opportunity in public authorities			
1.1	Representation in public authority employment	Office of the Public Sector Standards Commission (OPSSC)	Annual
1.2	State public sector staff by level		
1.3	Local Government employees by level		
1.4	University staff by level		
Representation in government and community organisations			
1.5	Representation in State Parliament	Partial (aggregated) data available from the Census of Population and Housing (ABS)	5 yearly
1.6	Representation in Federal Parliament		
1.7	Representation on local government councils		
1.8	Representation on WA Government Boards and Committees	Department of Premier and Cabinet	Quarterly
1.9	Representation in Indigenous peak bodies, community and service organisations	Data not available	Data gap
Education, training and non-participation			
1.10	Apparent school retention rates to year 12	National Schools Statistics Collection (ABS)	Annual
1.11	Educational attainment (qualifications/schooling completed)	NATSISS and GSS (ABS)	6 yearly
1.12	Enrolments in vocational education and training (VET) courses	Department of Education and Training	Annual
1.13	Load completion rates for students enrolled in VET courses		
1.14	Enrolments in higher education	Department of Education, Science and Training	Annual
1.15	Success rates for students enrolled in higher education courses		
1.16	Proportion of young women (aged 15-24) not participating in education or employment	Census of Population and Housing (ABS)	5 yearly
Housing and transport			
1.17	Proportion of women who own or are buying their own home	NATSISS and GSS (ABS)	6 yearly
1.18	Proportion of women living in overcrowded dwellings		
1.19	Proportion of women who have access to transport		
Information Technology			
1.20	Proportion of women using computer and internet in home	NATSISS and GSS (ABS)	6 yearly

Promoting leadership among Indigenous women is one of the three key goals of the *National Indigenous Women's Action Plan*⁵ and a key objective of the *Indigenous Women's Congress* in Western Australia.

Indigenous women play a significant role in both formal and informal leadership, however it is difficult to measure informal leadership roles. There are potential formal leadership opportunities in many spheres of public life including public authorities, federal, state and local government, corporate boards and committees and non-government organisations.

Areas of opportunity for Indigenous women also addressed in this chapter include education and training, housing, transport and information technology.

Issue: Employment in Public Authorities

The following indicators relate to Indigenous women in public authority employment and their distribution across salary and management levels. In this chapter, the term public authority is used to refer collectively to the state public sector, the local government sector and the university sectorⁱ.

As part of annual performance reporting, the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (OEEO) monitors the representation of specific EEO groups, including women and Indigenous Australians, in all sectors of public employment in Western Australia. The following table shows employment figures for Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and men.

Table 1 Public Authority Employees, Western Australia, 2004 (a)

	Indigenous Employees			All Employees		
	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total
State public sector	1,548	777	2,325	74,953	43,718	118,671
Local government	64	202	266	7,305	8,207	15,512
Public universities	117	41	158	7,053	5,800	12,853
Total	1,729	1,020	2,749	89,311	57,725	147,036

(a) University employee figures are at March 2004; figures for other sectors are at June 2004

Source: Office of the Public Sector Standards Commission, unpublished data.

1.1: Public authority employment

In 2004, women working for public authorities in Western Australia outnumbered men by a considerable margin, accounting for 63% of Indigenous employees and 61% of all employees.

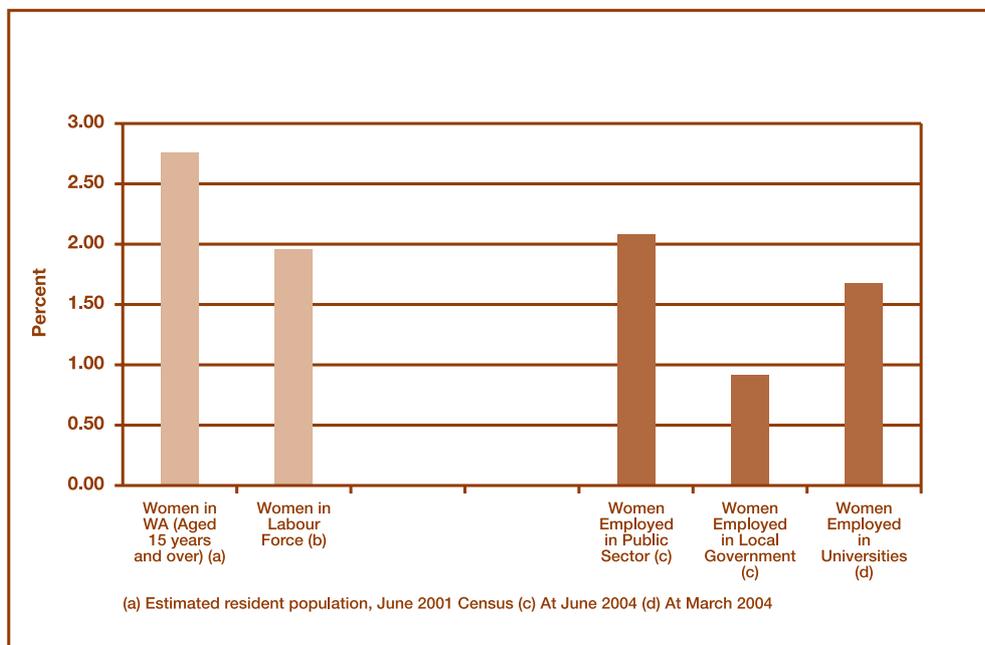
Female representation was lowest in local government, with 24% of Indigenous employees and 47% of all employees being women.

Indigenous women comprised 1.94% of all women employed in public authorities in 2004. This is lower than their representation in the female population of the state, where they comprise 2.75% of those aged 15 years and over, but is comparable to their representation in the female labour force (1.95%)ⁱⁱ.

ⁱ Indigenous women's representation in the three tiers of government and in the Police and Justice departments are also discussed in Chapter 3.

ⁱⁱ These proportions are based on the 2001 Census.

Figure 2 Indigenous Women as a Percentage of All Women In Selected Categories



Sources: *Experimental Estimates of the Indigenous Population, June 2001 and 2001 Census (ABS)*; *Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner, unpublished data.*

In 2004, the representation of Indigenous women varied between public authority employment sectors. State public sector agencies had the highest Indigenous representation among female employees (2.07%), followed by universities (1.66%) and local government (0.88%).

Among permanent female staff, the Indigenous proportion was 1.75% in the public sector, compared with 2.04% in universities and 0.93% in local government.

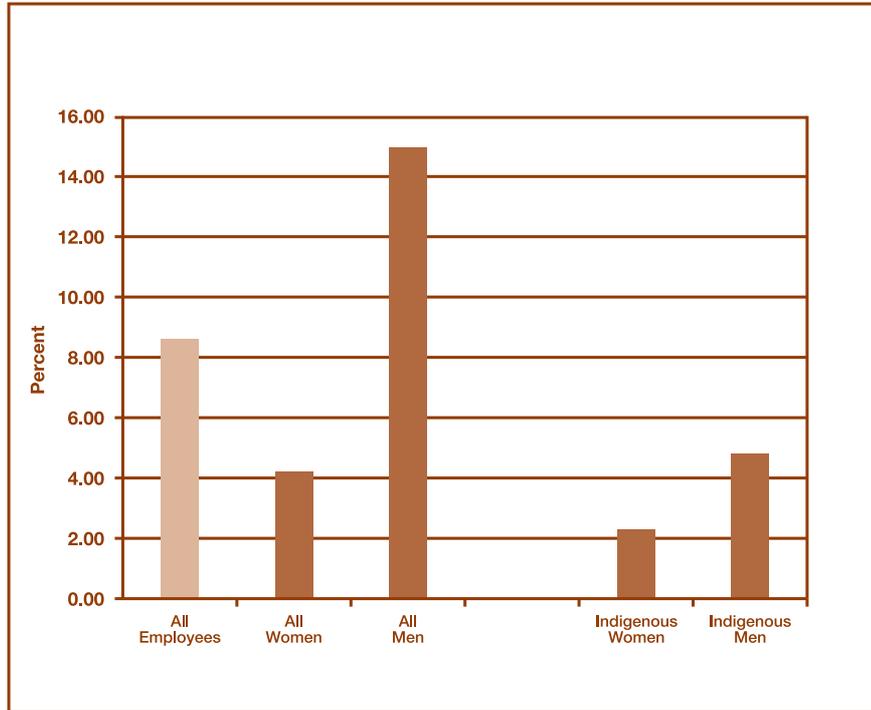
1.2: State public sector staff by level

Women accounted for 67% of Indigenous employees and 63% of all employees in the state public sector. However, they continued to be under-represented in senior management and the higher salary ranges. In 2004, women comprised exactly half (10 out of 20) of Indigenous public sector employees in management tiers 1, 2 and 3 and 29% of all employees in these management tiers.

In 2004, 49% of Indigenous employees in the higher salary ranges (levels 7-10) were female while just 29% of all employees in those salary ranges (35 out of 72) were female.

In 2004, 2.4% of Indigenous women employed in the state public sector belonged to salary ranges 7-10. The comparable proportion for all women in that sector was 4.2%; for Indigenous men 4.9% and for all men 15.0%.

Figure 3 Proportion of State Public Sector Employees in Salary Ranges 7-10, Western Australia 2004



Source: Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner, unpublished data.

1.3: Local government employees by level

There were 64 Indigenous women employed in local government in 2004, comprising one quarter of Indigenous employees in that sector. Of the 1,433 staff in management tiers 1, 2 and 3, only 16 (1.1%) were Indigenous while 283 (20%) were women. The distribution of Indigenous women across salary and management levels is not available for confidentiality reasons.

1.4: University staff by level

Women substantially outnumbered men in the university workforce in 2004, accounting for 74% of Indigenous employees and 55% of all employeesⁱ. These high proportions were also seen in the higher salary ranges (6 -11) of non-academic staff, with 70% of Indigenous staff and 52% of all staff in these salary ranges being women⁶.

Among academic staff, the female proportion was higher for Indigenous employees than all employees (66% and 39% respectively). Because of the small number of Indigenous women involved (35), salary and management data were not available for confidentiality reasons.

ⁱ Excludes casual employees.

Key Messages:

Indigenous women were clearly under-represented in the local government sector, comprising just 0.88% of all female employees.

Of all women employed in the state public sector, the Indigenous proportion was 2.07%, higher than the Indigenous proportion of the female labour force (1.95%) but lower than the Indigenous proportion of women in the state (2.75%).

Of all women employed in universities (academic and non-academic), the Indigenous proportion (1.66%), although lower than the labour force proportion (1.95%), was much higher than the proportion seen for Indigenous males (0.71%).

Indigenous women in the state public sector were under-represented in senior management and higher salary levels in comparison with other groups of public sector employees.

Indigenous women were well represented among senior levels of the non-academic university sector but the numbers in senior academic positions and the more senior levels of local government were considered too small to publish ⁱ.

Issue: Representation in Government and Community Organisations

The number of Indigenous representatives per head of population in federal, state and local government is a key equity issue for all Indigenous Australians. In addition adequate representation on government boards and committees, Indigenous peak bodies and community organisations is a particularly significant issue for Indigenous women.

1.5 - 1.7: Government

The five yearly Census of Population and Housing is the only source of data on the Indigenous status of federal and state parliamentarians and local government councillors. However, the Census can only provide aggregated data for the three tiers of government. At the 2001 Census, 237 people in Western Australia were identified as parliamentarians or councillors, of whom 92 (39%) were women. Of these women, seven were identified as Indigenous ⁱⁱ.

To provide suitable indicator data for each government area, Indigenous status would need to be collected by the relevant State or Federal agency from all newly elected councillors and parliamentarians using the standard (Census) question.

The representation of Indigenous women in government is further discussed in Chapter 3 in the context of Indigenous women in the legislative process.

1.8: Government boards and committees

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet provides quarterly information on women's membership on government boards and committees in Western Australia. However, information on member's Indigenous status is not currently collected but may be an item collected in the future.

1.9: Indigenous peak bodies and community organisations

Until 2004, the peak Indigenous organisation in Australia was the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). Indigenous women were considerably under-represented at all levels of this organisation (regional, state and national) despite priority issues affecting women such as family and domestic violence.

ⁱ In tabulating data, OPSSC do not release cell counts below 5 for reasons of confidentiality.

ⁱⁱ Numbers in this occupation category are understated due, in part, to the considerable number of occupation responses providing insufficient detail for coding purposes. In addition, many people do not provide their Indigenous status when completing the census form.

In the post-ATSIC era, it is essential that Indigenous women achieve strong representation on a wide range of advisory bodies, committees and advocacy groups that influence policy on Indigenous matters and provide services to Indigenous people. It is also desirable that these bodies provide reliable data on the representation of Indigenous women in their membership.

Key Messages:

Reliable data on the demographic characteristics of persons elected to each of the three tiers of government are not currently available. Among other characteristics that would be useful, the sex and Indigenous status of electors are considered essential.

Similar data are also required for government boards and committees, Indigenous peak bodies, community and service organisations.

Issue: Education, Training and Non-Participation

Given the broad range of pathways now available to students in post-compulsory education and training, a suite of indicators is ideally required to monitor participation and achievement. Post-compulsory education and training provided by schools, TAFE, the VET sector and higher education institutions are addressed below.

1.10: Apparent school retention rates ⁱ

Table 4 Apparent Retention Rates, Full-time Students, Western Australia, 2004

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)
From year 8 to:				
Year 9	101.2	95.2	100.8	100.9
Year 10	90.5	90.0	101.4	100.9
Year 11	57.0	53.0	93.4	88.9
Year 12	29.8	24.4	80.1	70.3

Source: National Schools Statistics Collection, 2004.

In 2004, the apparent retention rate to year 12 for Indigenous females was 29.8%, compared with 80.1% for non-Indigenous females. Females had a higher retention rate than males for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Given the recent changes to the education system, the ABS is currently undertaking a review of apparent retention rates as a measure to monitor student progress. The ABS is looking to develop a suite of alternate measures, which monitor student's progress beyond compulsory schooling into further education, training and employment ⁷.

ⁱ Apparent school retention rates - refer to Glossary.

1.11: Educational attainment

While retention rates aim to monitor the transition from compulsory to post-compulsory schooling among younger people (primarily in the 15-17 age group), educational attainment in this report relates to adults aged 18 years and over and covers all types of post-school educational institutions.

**Table 5 Persons Aged 18 Years And Over:
Educational attainment: Selected Indicators, Western Australia, 2002**

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)
Attending post-school educational institution (a)	12.7	8.7	12.5	12.3
Has a non-school qualification	26.5	27.6	52.3	58.6
Does not have a non-school qualification				
Completed Year 12	5.8	6.6	14.1	14.0
Completed Year 10 or Year 11	34.2	31.7	20.4	17.3
Completed Year 9 or below(b)	33.5	34.1	13.2	10.2
Total with no non-school qualification(c)	73.5	72.4	47.7	41.4

(a) Includes universities, other tertiary institutions, TAFE, technical college, business college, industry skills centre.

(b) Includes persons who never attended school.

(c) Total may include persons for whom some specific information could not be determined.

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002 and General Social Survey, 2002.

In 2002, non-Indigenous women aged 18 years and over were more than twice as likely to have a post-school educational qualification as Indigenous women of the same age (59% compared with 27%)ⁱ.

Among women who had no qualifications, one third of the Indigenous group had completed their schooling in Year 9 or below compared with 13% of the non-Indigenous group. This was more common among Indigenous women aged 45 years and over (65%), than among those aged 25-44 years (21%) or 18-24 years (20%).

In 2002, almost 13% of Indigenous women aged 18 years and over were attending a post-school educational institution, similar to the proportion for non-Indigenous women. However, the greater proportion of senior women (aged 60 and over) in the non-Indigenous population may serve to keep the attendance figure lower than it otherwise would be, as seniors are less likely to participate in education than younger people.

Indigenous women had a higher level of educational participation overall than Indigenous men (9%). However, there were notable differences between women and men in the educational participation of each age group (see Related Data below).

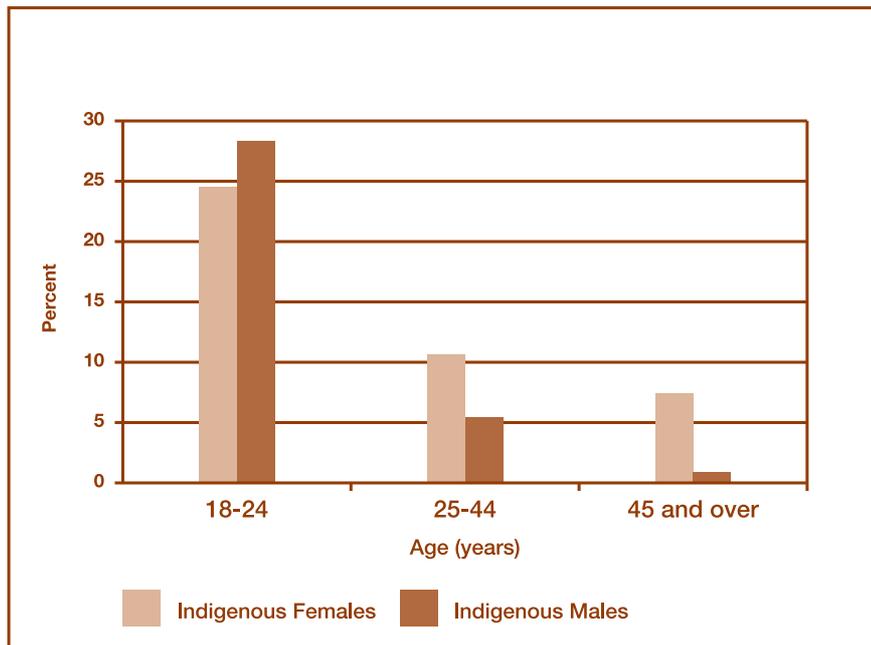
ⁱ Qualifications awarded for post-school educational attainment are referred to as "non-school educational qualifications". These may be attained concurrently with school qualifications and include Certificates, Diplomas, Bachelor degrees, Graduate certificates, Graduate diplomas, and Postgraduate degrees.

Related Data

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) provides insight into the educational participation of Indigenous women and men at different ages.

Women under 25 years of age were less likely to be attending an educational institution than men of the same age (25% compared with 28%), while women in older age groups were more likely to be attending.

Figure 6 Indigenous Persons Attendance at Educational Institution (a) WA, 2002



(a) Includes universities, other tertiary institutions, TAFE, technical college, business college, industry skills centre. *Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002.*

In the 25-44 year age group, the proportion of Indigenous women attending an educational institution was 11%, falling to 7% in the 45 and over age group. The lower proportions of educational attendance among Indigenous men of similar ages (5% and 1% respectively) suggests the tendency of Indigenous women to commence, or re-commence, post-compulsory education when child-bearing is completed.

1.12: Vocational education and training (VET)

A broad range of pathways is available in post-compulsory education. A range of public and private institutions provides these programs, including TAFE colleges, business colleges, industry skills centres, secondary schools and universities.

The table below shows average annual course enrolments over the three years 2001-2003, according to Indigenous status and sex ⁱ.

Persons undertaking apprenticeships and traineeships form part of the VET sector and are included in the following statistics. The representation of Indigenous women in these two types of vocational training is discussed in more detail in chapter 2, in the context of workplace training.

ⁱ Because some students enrol in more than one course, the number of course enrolments is estimated to be approximately 20% higher than the total number of students enrolled.

Table 7 Average Annual Course Enrolments in VET Sector, WA, 2001-2003 (a)

	Females	Males	Total
Indigenous	4,447	7,101	11,577
Non-Indigenous	53,635	56,744	110,579
Not Stated	19,947	26,395	46,454
Total(a)	78,029	90,240	168,459

(a) Expressed as an average of enrolments for the three calendar years.

Source: VET Enrolment Statistics Unit, Dept. of Education and Training, WA, unpublished data.

Between 2001 and 2003, Indigenous women represented 5.7% of 'female' enrolments in the VET sector. This is approximately twice their representation in the female population of the state aged 15 years and over.⁸ As Indigenous status was not provided for one quarter of female enrolments, the true Indigenous proportion was almost certainly higher.

Indigenous women were less likely to be enrolled in the VET sector than Indigenous men, accounting for 38% of all 'Indigenous' enrolments. Among non-Indigenous students, female representation was higher (48%).

Related data

The Western Australian Department of Education and Training provides additional data on VET enrolments. The following table shows the distribution of enrolments in 2003 by field of study, in order of popularity among Indigenous women.

Table 8 VET Course Enrolments, Selected Fields of Study, Western Australia, 2003

Field of Study	Indigenous Women	Non-Indigenous Women
Mixed Field Programs	1,339	5,009
Society and Culture	1,063	14,192
Management and Commerce	1,042	16,310
Creative Arts	304	3,732
Education	251	3,468
Health	231	2,579
Food, Hospitality and Personal Services	211	5,097
Agricultural, Environmental/Related Studies	191	1,851
Engineering and Related Technologies	190	2,227
Information Technology	127	3,527
Architecture and Building	21	732
Natural and Physical Sciences	5	713
Total	4,975	59,437

Source: VET Enrolment Statistics Unit, Dept. of Education and Training, WA, unpublished data.

After 'mixed field' programs, the most popular courses among Indigenous women in 2003 were in the fields of Society and Culture and Management and Commerce. The majority of enrolments in these fields were at Certificate I and II levels.

Indigenous women were half as likely as other women to be enrolled in courses in Food, Hospitality and Personal services and Information Technology.

1.13: VET pass rates

The VET module load completion (pass) rates show the extent to which students achieve passes in assessable modules or units of competency. The load pass rate is the ratio of hours attributed to students who passed in an assessable module or unit of competency to all hours attributed to students who were assessed and passed, failed or withdrew.

Table 9 VET Module Load Completion Rates, Western Australia, 2003

	Female	Male	Total (a)
Indigenous	57.10	60.18	58.95
Non-Indigenous	75.94	74.61	75.26
Total (b)	74.26	73.78	74.02
Ratio non-Indigenous to Indigenous (c)	1.33	1.24	1.28

(a) Includes sex unknown (b) Includes Indigenous status unknown

(c) Calculated by dividing non-Indigenous success rates by the Indigenous success rate.

A ratio greater than one implies that Indigenous people are disadvantaged in comparison with Non-Indigenous people.

Source: VET Enrolment Statistics Unit, Dept. of Education and Training, WA, unpublished data.

In 2003, pass rates in VET modules for Indigenous women in Western Australia were significantly below the rates for non-Indigenous women and marginally below those for Indigenous men.

1.14: Higher education enrolments

The number of students enrolling for university courses is a key indicator for Indigenous women. Numbers of students in 2003 are presented in the following table for each of the five public universities in Western Australia.

Table 10 Higher Education Students (a), Western Australia, 2003

	Indigenous Students			All Students (a)		
	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total
Curtin University	308	180	488	12,051	9,981	22,032
Edith Cowan University	350	155	505	12,510	7,392	19,902
Murdoch University	108	62	170	6,371	4,362	10,733
University of Notre Dame	33	5	38	1,931	971	2,902
University of WA	95	61	156	6,896	6,826	13,722
Total Western Australia	894	463	1,357	39,759	29,532	69,291

(a) Excludes overseas students Source: www.dest.gov.au

Source: www.dest.gov.au

In 2003, Indigenous women aged 15 years and over represented 2.25% of females enrolled in public universities in Western Australia. This is a little lower than their representation in the state's female population of the same age (2.75%) based on estimates of the resident population at 2001. Edith Cowan University had the highest representation, with Indigenous women comprising 2.80% of the female student population.

Although outnumbered by Indigenous men in VET enrolments, Indigenous women accounted for two-thirds (66%) of the Indigenous student population in higher education in 2003. Among the total student population female representation was 57%.

1.15: Success rates in higher education

In higher educational institutions, success rates relate to units undertaken. They are based on the number of units successfully completed as a proportion of the number of units successfully completed, failed or withdrawn from without penalty.

Table 11 Success Rates in Higher Education, 2001

	Western Australia		Australia	
	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)
Indigenous	59.4	53.2	67.4	61.0
Non-Indigenous	90.7	85.4	89.5	84.4
Ratio non-Indigenous to Indigenous (a)	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.4

(a) Calculated by dividing the non-Indigenous success rate by the Indigenous success rate. A ratio greater than one implies that Indigenous people are disadvantaged in comparison with non-Indigenous people.

Source: Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003, Supporting tables, Table 3A.4.6, Report of the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, Nov 2003

Source: DEST Higher Education Statistics, unpublished data.

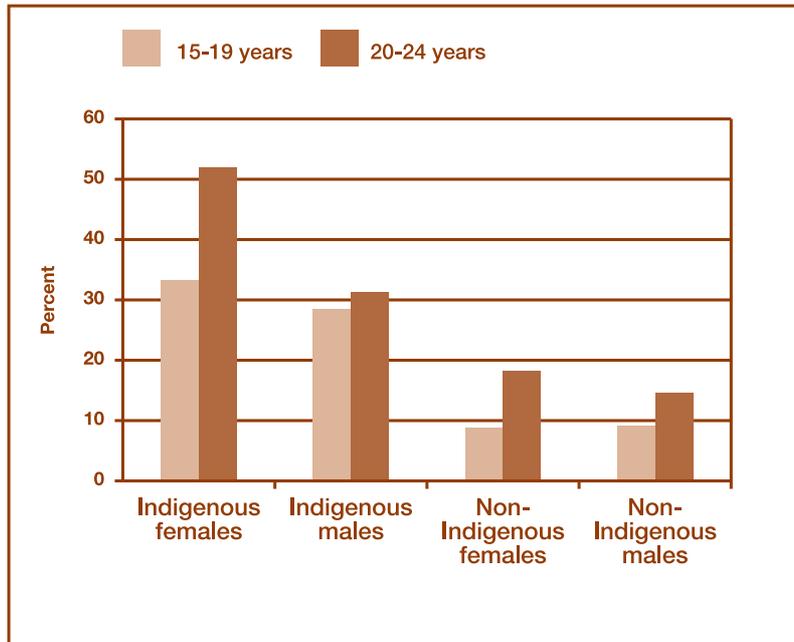
In 2001, success rates in higher education were marginally higher for Indigenous women than Indigenous males but were significantly below the rates for non-Indigenous women both in Western Australia and nationally.

1.16: Young women not participating in education or employment

In assessing the educational and labour force outcomes of young people (aged 15-24 years), it is important to consider those who are not participating in either education nor paid employment as they are most at risk of long-term unemployment and associated forms of social and economic disadvantage.

These 'non-participants' are known to be over-represented in the young Indigenous population.⁹ As young Indigenous women statistically are more likely to leave school at an earlier age and have higher birth rates than their non-Indigenous counterparts, they may be considered especially vulnerable in this regard.

Figure 12 Young People Aged 15-24 Years Not Participating in Education or Paid Employment, WA, 2001



Source: Census of Population and Housing, 2001.

In 2001, one third (33%) of the Indigenous women in Western Australia aged 15-19 years were not participating in education or paid employment. This 'non-participation rate' was four times the rate occurring among non-Indigenous women of the same age.

In the 20-24 age group, more than half (52%) of Indigenous women were not participating, compared with 18% of non-Indigenous women of the same age.

In both age groups, the majority of non-participating women were not in the labour force (ie not actively seeking work).

Although these figures reflect differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women in age-specific birth rates and family responsibilities, high non-participation rates among young Indigenous men are indicative of underlying Indigenous disadvantage.

Key Messages:

In 2002, only three in 10 Indigenous girls entering high school in 1998 had completed Year 12, compared with eight in 10 non-Indigenous girls entering in the same year.

Between 2001 and 2003, the representation of Indigenous women among female enrolments in VET courses (5.7%) was twice as high as their representation among women in the state.

In 2003, the representation of Indigenous women among female students in higher education (2.25%) was marginally below their representation among women in the state.

Indigenous women aged 15-19 years were four times as likely to be not participating in education or paid employment as their non-Indigenous counterparts.

Issue: Housing and Transport

Housing and transport are areas in which Indigenous Australians continue to experience significant disadvantage. Home ownership is also identified as a headline indicator for Indigenous people and overcrowding in housing as a strategic change indicator in *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003*.¹⁰

1.17: Household tenure type

Australia has one of the highest rates of home ownership in the western world. Despite this, few Indigenous Australians today have the opportunity to buy their own home. Raising levels of home ownership and reducing dependence on state housing are generally seen as priority issues for Indigenous women in Western Australia.

Table 13 Females Aged 18 Years and Over, Household Tenure Type, WA, 2002

	Indigenous (%)	Non-Indigenous (%)
Owner		
Owner without a mortgage	*6.8	34.8
Owner with a mortgage	14.0	37.6
Renter		
State Housing Authority	31.7	3.4
Indigenous Housing Organisation/Community housing	22.6	*0.8
Other landlord types	19.9	19.2
Total renters	74.2	23.5

*Estimate has a relative standard error between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution

Source: *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and General Social Survey*.

In 2002, approximately one in five (21%) Indigenous women aged 18 years and over in Western Australia lived in owner-occupied housing. The corresponding proportion among non-Indigenous women was 72%.

The proportion of Indigenous women living in accommodation rented from Community or Indigenous Housing Organisations (23%) was similar to the national figure (24%). However, the proportion renting from the state housing authority, Homeswest, was significantly higher (32% compared with 24% nationally).

In Western Australia, the proportion of non-Indigenous women renting from Homeswest was less than 4%.

1.18: Overcrowding

Due to cultural obligations, larger families and extended families overcrowded accommodation is seen as a significant issue in many Indigenous communities.

In 2002, an estimated 18% of Indigenous women aged 18 years and over in Western Australia had experienced overcrowding in the previous 12 months.¹¹ This estimate is based on survey respondents' own perceptions of overcrowding as a factor contributing to personal stressⁱ. There are no comparable data for non-Indigenous women.

ⁱ A more objective measure of overcrowding (based on the number of people and number bedrooms in the dwelling) is generally used in data analysis but the (more subjective) measure used in the NATSISS was selected to avoid concerns about cultural appropriateness.

1.19: Access to transport

Although access to private transport and getting to places they need to visit may not be significant problems for the majority of women in mainstream society, Indigenous women, elderly women and women in remote locations are more likely to experience disadvantage in one or both of these areas.

Transport data from the NATSISS are cross-classified by age in the following table to produce estimates for Indigenous women in Western Australia which are reasonably reliable. The Indigenous sample at the state level is, however, too small to permit cross-classification by remoteness.

Table 14 Females Aged 18 Years and Over, Access to Transport, WA, 2002

	18-24 years	25-44 years	45 years and over	Total
Indigenous				
Has access to motor vehicle(s) to drive	46.8	65.7	48.3	56.8
Can easily get to the places needed	65.7	67.2	74.4	68.9
Cannot, or often has difficulty, getting to the places they needed to visit	*12.4	13.7	8.2	11.9
Non-Indigenous				
Has access to motor vehicle(s) to drive	83.4	94.4	80.8	86.6
Can easily get to the places needed	70.2	90.0	82.8	84.0
Cannot, or often has difficulty, getting to the places they needed to visit	np	*3.2	5.5	4.6

*Estimate has a relative standard error between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and General Social Survey.

In 2002, 57% of Indigenous women in Western Australia had access to a motor vehicle, compared with 87% of non-Indigenous women. Access was highest among women in the middle years (25-44 years) for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations (66% and 95% respectively).

Approximately one in eight Indigenous women experienced difficulty in getting to places they needed to visit. In comparison, one in 20 non-Indigenous women experienced this difficulty.

Key Messages:

In 2002, home ownership rates among Indigenous women in Western Australia were significantly lower than rates among non-Indigenous women.

Indigenous women were more likely to rent from the state housing authority (32%) than from Indigenous housing or community organisations (23%) or from private landlords (20%).

Almost one in five Indigenous women reported overcrowded accommodation as a stressor they had experienced in the last 12 months.

Indigenous women were less likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to have access to a motor vehicle and more likely to have difficulty getting to places they needed to visit.

Issue: Information Technology

Australians who have access to, or training in the use of, information technology are becoming increasingly advantaged in many spheres of life, including education, the workplace, banking, commerce and the general acquisition of knowledge and services. Information on computer and Internet usage is now standardly collected in censuses and in a growing range of household surveys.

1.20: Computer and internet usage

Table 15 Computer and Internet Usage, Western Australia, 2002

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
Used computer at home in last 12 months	26.1	20.4	58.0	60.5
Accessed Internet at home in last 12 months	14.4	10.0	42.7	48.4

Sources: *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002 and General Social Survey, 2002.*

In 2002, Indigenous women were more likely than Indigenous men to have used a computer at home or accessed the Internet in the previous 12 months. However, non-Indigenous women were more than twice as likely to have used a computer and three times as likely to have accessed the Internet over the same period.

Key Message:

In 2002, Indigenous women in Western Australia had much lower rates of computer and Internet usage than their counterparts in the non-Indigenous population.

Chapter 2. Work and Economic Independence

Summary List of Indicators for Indigenous Women

No.	Indicator	Data source	Frequency
Labour force characteristics			
2.1	Proportion of women by labour force status (employed, unemployed, not in the labour force)	NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
2.2	Unemployment rate		
2.3	Proportion of employed women by number of hours worked		
2.4	Proportion of employed women in CDEP and non-CDEP employment		
2.5	Proportion of employed women by industry	Census of Population and Housing (ABS)	5 yearly
2.6	Proportion of employed women by occupation (skill level)		
Working arrangements			
2.7	Proportion of employed women with access to flexible working hours/days and holiday/sick leave entitlements	Not currently available	Data gap
2.8	Proportion of employed women entitled to leave for cultural responsibilities	NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
2.9	Proportion of employed women who are self-employed	Census of Population (ABS) and Housing	5 yearly
Workplace and school-based training			
2.10	Participation rates of women in apprenticeships and traineeships by age group	DET Apprenticeship and Trainee Branch	Annual
2.11	Proportion of female apprentices and trainees		
Income and Financial Stress			
2.12	Average (mean) equivalised gross household income per week	NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
2.13	Proportion of women in low income households		
2.14	Proportion of women in higher income households		
2.15	Proportion of employed women by equivalised household income		
2.16	Main source of income (CDEP, Other wages/salaries, Pensions/allowances)		
2.17	Proportion of women who would be unable to raise \$2000 within a week for something important		

Issue: Labour Force Characteristics

Promoting the economic independence of Indigenous women is another of the key goals of the National Indigenous Women's Action Plan.¹² Economic independence, for many women, depends upon access to regular, well-paid employment. Participation in the labour force and the unemployment rate are widely recognised as key indicators of women's economic wellbeing.

Labour force status is strongly influenced by age and stage of the family life cycle. Across Australia, young people aged 15-24 years are more likely to be unemployed than people in older age groups. Likewise women in their childbearing years are more likely to be employed part-time or not in the labour forceⁱ.

Like women in the total population, Indigenous women are concentrated in particular industries and occupations, many of which are relatively poorly paid.

Six indicators relating to labour force characteristics have been identified for Indigenous women in Western Australia.

2.1: Labour force characteristics

The labour force comprises persons who are employed (full-time or part-time) and persons who are unemployed (i.e. actively seeking work). The table below compares the labour force characteristics of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, using age-standardisedⁱⁱ data.

Table 16 Persons Aged 18 and over (a): Labour Force Characteristics, Western Australia, 2002

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
Labour force status				
Employed				
Full-time(b)	14.9	31.9	28.3	63.1
Part-time	21.0	23.8	25.3	10.7
Total employed	36.0	55.9	53.5	73.7
Unemployed	*6.3	11.0	4.4	4.0
Total labour force	42.4	66.9	58.0	77.7
Not in the labour force	57.6	33.1	42.0	22.3
Unemployment rate(c)	14.9	16.4	7.6	5.1

*Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution

(a) Estimates have been age-standardised to the age composition of the estimated Australian resident population at 30 June 2001.

(b) Refers to persons working 35 hours or more per week.

(c) The unemployment rate is the proportion of the total labour force who are unemployed.

Source: 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey and General Social Survey, unpublished data.

ⁱ As the Indigenous population has a much younger age structure than the non-Indigenous population, comparative data from the NATSISS and the GSS are age-standardised.

ⁱⁱ Age-standardised - refer to Glossary.

In 2002, Indigenous women were less likely than non-Indigenous women to be in the labour force (42% compared with 58%). The comparable proportions for Indigenous men and non-Indigenous men were considerably higher (67% and 78% respectively).

Only 15% of Indigenous women were employed full-time, compared with 32% of non-Indigenous women. In both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, the male rate of full-time employment was approximately twice the female rate.

2.2: Unemployment

In 2002, the proportion of women aged 18 years and over who were unemployed was 6.3% for the Indigenous population and 4.4% for the non-Indigenous population, after differences in age structure were removed. However, high sampling variability means that the Indigenous estimate should be treated with caution.

These proportions translate to (age-standardised) unemployment ratesⁱ of 15% for Indigenous women and 7% for non-Indigenous women. It might be reasonably assumed that without the Community Development Employment Projects, the Indigenous unemployment rates would be higher (see 2.4).

It may be significant however, that reported job security in the employed population was actually higher among Indigenous women than non-Indigenous women, with 92% of Indigenous women reporting that they expected to be in the same job in 12 months time. The comparable proportion for non-Indigenous women was 88%.

Related data

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) provides some additional data on the characteristics of unemployed Indigenous women and men at the national level. In the absence of reliable state data, these provide an indication of the likely duration of unemployment, use of employment support services and the difficulties in finding work which unemployed Indigenous women in Western Australia are likely to face.¹³

In 2002, almost half (47%) of the unemployed Indigenous women in Australia had been unemployed for less than 3 months while 10% had been unemployed for two years or more. In comparison, Indigenous men were likely to have been unemployed for longer, with more than 17% unemployed for two years or more.

Of those who had looked for work in the previous 12 months (but not in the previous four weeks), a much smaller proportion of Indigenous women than men had used employment support services during that 12 month period (54% compared with 79%).

The difficulties in finding work were similar for Indigenous women and men. The most common difficulty was insufficient education, training or skills, reported by 29% of unemployed females and 25% of unemployed males. This was followed by transport problems and/or distance, which were reported by 14% of unemployed women and 16% of unemployed men.

Approximately 10% of unemployed women indicated the main difficulty was the lack of any jobs at all while a similar percentage indicated there were no jobs in the local area or in their own line of work. These proportions would almost certainly be higher in remote areasⁱⁱ.

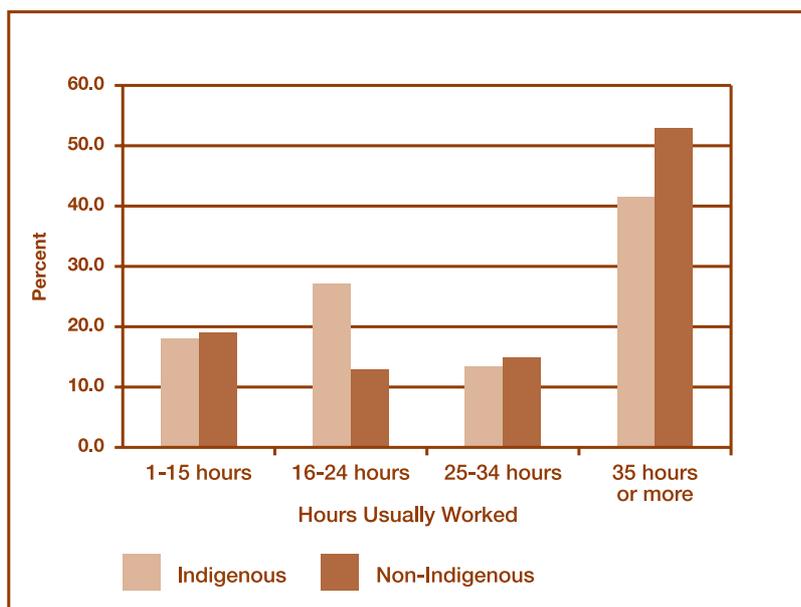
ⁱ Unemployment rate - refer to Glossary.

ⁱⁱ Table 16 of the ABS publication *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002*, (cat. no. 4714.0) shows that, in remote areas of Australia, 29% of unemployed Indigenous persons indicated the main difficulty as 'no jobs at all' and 18% indicated the main difficulty as 'no jobs in [their] local area or line of work'.

2.3: Part-time employment and number of hours worked

After adjustment for age differences, 58% of employed Indigenous women in Western Australia worked part-time (less than 35 hours per week) in 2002. The comparable proportion for employed non-Indigenous women was 47%. Among Indigenous part-time female workers the largest proportion (27%) usually worked between 16 and 24 hours per week.¹⁴

Figure 17 Employed Females Aged 18 Years and Over - Hours worked per week



(a) Estimates are standardised to the age composition of the estimated Australian resident population at June 2001
 Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002 and General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, unpublished data.

2.4: Community Development Employment Projects

A key labour force indicator for Indigenous women is the proportion participating in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP). These projects are intended to provide employment and training opportunities for Indigenous people in a range of activities that will benefit their communities. To participate, unemployed members of a community or group choose to give up their Centrelink payments; the payments are then used to provide grants to community organisations to undertake community-managed activities and pay wages to all participants. In reality CDEP reduces unemployment in some Indigenous communities but does not fully address all the training and income needs of participants.

CDEP provides most of the available jobs in some Indigenous communities. This should be remembered when comparing the unemployment rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Furthermore in 2002, 78% of CDEP employees (male and female) in Western Australia worked part-time, compared with 39% of non-CDEP employees.¹⁵

In 2002, 16% of all Indigenous women in Western Australia were employed through CDEP, compared with 27% of Indigenous men. As similar proportions of women and men (28% and 29%) worked in non-CDEP employment, women's lower participation in the employed labour force overall is largely explained by this lower involvement in CDEP.

Of the employed labour force, 36% of women, compared with 48% of men were CDEP workers¹⁶.

2.5: Industry

In 2001, Government Administration and Defence employed the largest proportion of Indigenous female and male workers (24% and 25% respectively). Substantial proportions of Indigenous women also worked in Health and Community Services (16%) and Education (15%) whereas Indigenous men were more evenly spread across Construction (8%), Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Mining, Manufacturing, Property and Business Services and Health and Community Services (all around 6%).

Indigenous women were distributed differently from non-Indigenous women across industries. While Indigenous women in the employed labour force were almost six times more likely to be working in Government Administration and Defence than non-Indigenous women, they were less than half as likely to be employed in the Retail industry, the largest employer of non-Indigenous women. These differences may, in part, reflect the greater concentration of Indigenous women in rural and remote areas as the proportions are quite different when examined on a regional basis. The difference may also be indicative of limited job opportunities for Indigenous women in some industries and barriers to employment.

Table 18 Employed persons aged 15 years and over: Industry of Employment, Western Australia, 2001

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1.7	5.9	3.1	5.5
Mining	0.9	5.7	1.3	5.2
Manufacturing	2.0	6.3	5.3	14.3
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	0.2	0.6	0.4	1.2
Construction	1.2	7.9	2.4	11.7
Wholesale Trade	1.1	2.6	3.6	6.4
Retail Trade	8.1	4.8	18.0	12.6
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	3.7	1.6	6.2	3.4
Transport and Storage	0.9	3.4	2.3	5.3
Communication Services	0.9	1.2	1.1	1.7
Finance and Insurance	0.8	0.3	3.9	2.2
Property and Business Services	8.1	5.6	11.1	10.9
Government Administration and Defence	24.3	25.1	4.2	3.8
Education	14.9	3.8	11.2	4.1
Health and Community Services	15.6	6.4	16.9	3.6
Cultural and Recreational Services	1.8	1.6	2.4	2.0
Personal and Other Services	7.9	11.0	4.0	3.8
Total Employed(a)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Includes employed persons for whom industry was not stated or not classifiable.

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 2001, unpublished data.

2.6: Occupation

Indigenous women have long been over-represented in lower-skilled (and generally lower paid) occupations. Occupations in the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) are hierarchically classified by skill levelⁱ. Measures of the distribution of Indigenous women across the nine occupational skill groupings are of key importance in monitoring their economic wellbeing over time.

Of particular concern is the proportion of employed Indigenous women in Labouring and Related occupations (comprising occupations in the lowest skill level).

Table 19 Employed Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over: Occupation, Western Australia, 2001

	Female		Male	
	Number	%	Number	%
Managers and Administrators	181	2.8	296	3.7
Professionals	816	12.7	526	6.6
Associate Professionals	607	9.4	561	7.0
Tradesperson and Related Workers	155	2.4	1,104	13.8
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	207	3.2	15	0.2
Intermediate Clerical and Service Workers	1,894	29.4	520	6.5
Production and Transport Workers	150	2.3	1,178	14.7
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	746	11.6	326	4.1
Labourers and Related Workers	1,356	21.0	2,938	36.7
Total(a)	6,446	100.0	8,002	100.0

(a) Includes inadequately described and not stated

Source: *Census of Population and Housing, 2001, unpublished data.*

ⁱ The criteria used to measure skill level are formal education and/or training; and previous experience.

**Table 20 Employed non-Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over:
Occupation, Western Australia, 2001**

	Female		Male	
	Number	%	Number	%
Managers and Administrators	18,829	5.2	52,105	11.7
Professionals	71,892	19.8	68,019	15.2
Associate Professionals	44,025	12.2	56,276	12.6
Tradesperson and Related Workers	11,618	3.2	96,635	21.6
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	27,684	7.6	3,135	0.7
Intermediate Clerical and Service Workers	94,984	26.2	35,114	7.9
Production and Transport Workers	8,916	2.5	60,153	13.5
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	52,427	14.5	24,683	5.5
Labourers and Related Workers	25,825	7.1	42,508	9.5
Total(a)	362,260	100.0	447,059	100.0

(a) Includes inadequately described and not stated

Source: *Census of Population and Housing, 2001, unpublished data.*

In 2001, 21% of Indigenous women in the employed labour force were working in the Labourers and Related Workers occupation grouping, approximately three times higher than the equivalent rate for non-Indigenous women (7%). This was the second largest occupation group among Indigenous women after Intermediate Clerical Sales and Service Workers (29% compared with 26% for non-Indigenous women). The most common occupation for Indigenous women in the Labourers and Related Workers grouping was cleaning. In Clerical Sales and Service Workers, education clerks were the most common occupation.

The third largest group was Professionals, accounting for 13% of employed Indigenous women in 2001. This was substantially lower than the comparable proportion for non-Indigenous women (20%). In this occupation grouping, welfare and community workers were the most common occupation for Indigenous women. For non-Indigenous women the most common occupations were registered nurses followed closely by primary school teachers. Employed Indigenous women were also less likely than their female counterparts in the non-Indigenous population to be working in other skilled occupations such as Managers and Administrators, Associate Professionals, Tradespersons and Advanced Clerical and Service Workers.

Indigenous women, however, were twice as likely as Indigenous men to be working as Professionals and less likely to be working as Labourers or Related Workers.

Key Messages: Labour Force Characteristics

In 2002, labour force participation rates in Western Australia were lower among Indigenous women than non-Indigenous women, reflecting overall differences in geographic distribution, educational attainment, skill level and family responsibilities.

Unemployment rates were twice as high among Indigenous women as non-Indigenous women.

Indigenous women and men had similar participation rates in non-CDEP employment (28% and 29% respectively).

Of the employed labour force, just over one third of Indigenous women were CDEP workers compared with one half of the men.

78% of CDEP employees (male and female) worked part time compared with 38% of non-CDEP employees (male and female) who worked part time.

In 2001, Indigenous women in the employed labour force were highly concentrated in particular industries, with over half (55%) working in Government Administration and Defence, Education, and Health and Community Services.

Indigenous women were also concentrated in some of the lower skilled occupations including Labourers and Related Workers, and both Elementary and Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers.

Issue: Working Arrangements

The working arrangements of Indigenous women are critical to their ability to enter, and remain in, the employed labour force. Those with children or other family responsibilities need access to holiday and sick leave entitlements and flexible working arrangements. Access to cultural leave entitlements are a critical element of employed Indigenous women's needs.

2.7: Flexible working hours and leave entitlements

In 2003, one in three employed women in the total population with children under 12 years did not have fixed start and finish times while four out of ten were able to work extra hours in order to take time off. Almost two-thirds had sick and holiday leave entitlements. These data are collected every three years in the ABS survey on *Working Arrangements* but comparable data are not currently available for Indigenous employees.¹⁷

2.8: Cultural Responsibilities

Indigenous women who maintain strong attachments to their traditional culture can be disadvantaged in mainstream employment when no provision is made for cultural responsibilities such as attendance at funerals, traditional rites and ceremonies and other Indigenous gatherings and meetings. The availability of leave to undertake such responsibilities may be as important for some Indigenous women as 'family-friendly' work practices. While cultural leave entitlements have become quite commonplace in the public sector, the extent of their penetration into the private sector is not widely known. The proportion of employees with access to such entitlements is therefore considered to be an important indicator for Indigenous women.

**Table 21 Employed Indigenous persons aged 18 years and over:
Whether work allows for cultural responsibilities, Western Australia, 2002**

	Female (%)	Male (%)
Have cultural responsibilities		
Can meet responsibilities	59.7	54.7
Cannot meet responsibilities	12.6	19.9
Do not have cultural responsibilities	27.3	24.9
All employed Indigenous persons aged 18 years or over	100.0	100.0

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002.

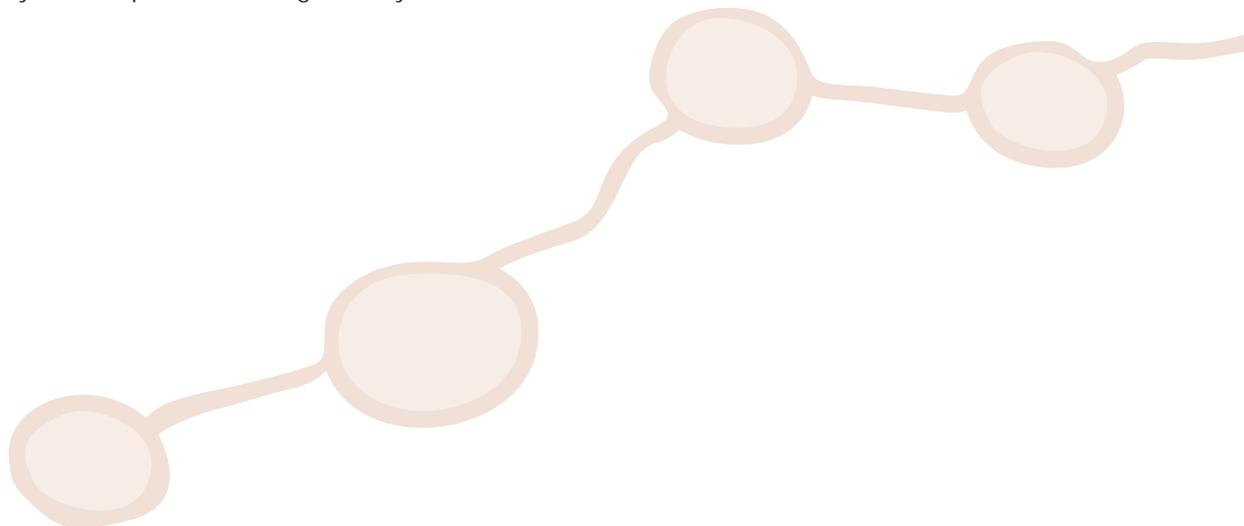
Of the 8,000 employed Indigenous women in Western Australia in 2002, more than seven out of 10 indicated they had some cultural responsibilities. While the majority considered that work allowed them to meet these responsibilities, 13% felt this was not the case. The comparable proportion for Indigenous male workers was 20%.

CDEP workplaces are more likely to provide cultural leave entitlements. In 2002, 69% of all CDEP employees (male and female) could meet their cultural responsibilities, compared with 46% of non-CDEP employees.¹⁸

2.9: Self-employment

The proportion of workers who are self-employed is another important indicator. This is particularly significant in more remote Indigenous communities where job growth is often dependent upon the entrepreneurial and marketing skills of individuals in developing successful businesses built on the creative talents of community residents. For example, selling paintings or craftwork or providing services in eco-tourism. In such communities, creating opportunities through self-employment or co-operative economic activity has the potential to increase the economic independence of Indigenous women.

Employment data from the 2001 Census, including the proportion of self-employed women, are provided below. The 'self-employed' include persons running their own business, with or without employees, and persons working in family businesses.



**Table 22 Employed persons aged 15 years and over:
Employment Status, Western Australia, 2001**

	Indigenous				Non-Indigenous			
	Female		Male		Female		Male	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Employee	6,236	33.8	7,571	44.2	311,557	45.6	342,138	51.4
Self-employed(a)	231	1.3	439	2.6	50,706	7.4	104,923	15.7
Unemployed	1,274	6.9	2,109	12.3	24,327	3.6	39,104	5.9
Not in the labour force	9,984	54.2	6,339	37.0	287,750	42.2	174,545	26.2
Total employed(b)	18,433	100.0	17,129	100.0	682,586	100.0	666,258	100.0

(a) Includes employers, own account workers and workers in family businesses

(b) Includes some persons for whom employment status was not stated

Source: *Census of Population and Housing, 2001, unpublished data.*

In 2001, a little over 1% of employed Indigenous women in Western Australia were self-employed compared with 7% of non-Indigenous women. In both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, the self-employment rate among male workers was twice as high as the female rate.

Of the 670 Indigenous self-employed persons in Western Australia in 2001, approximately one third (35%) were women.

Key Messages: Working Arrangements

No data on access to flexible working hours, leave entitlements or other family-friendly working arrangements are currently available for the Indigenous population.

In 2002, 13% of Indigenous working women reported that work did not enable them to meet their cultural responsibilities.

Indigenous women are less likely to be self-employed than other sectors of the working population including Indigenous men and non-Indigenous men and women.

Issue: Workplace and School-Based Training

Apprenticeships and traineeships provide a pathway through which young people can acquire qualifications in a range of skilled trade occupations. Traineeships are usually of a shorter duration and have traditionally been based in the workplace. In recent years, however, there has been a steady growth in opportunities for young women and men to undertake traineeships while still at school. A substantial part of this growth has occurred within the Indigenous population, with most training being undertaken by persons under the age of 25 years.

2.10: Participation rates: apprenticeships and traineeships

The participation rates of Indigenous women and all women in apprenticeships and traineeships are provided by age in the table below. Rates are based on the female resident population in each age group at 30 June 2001ⁱ. Rate ratios (Indigenous female rate divided by the all female rate) are also provided. A rate ratio of 1 signifies equality in the participation of the two population groups.

Table 23 Females aged 15 years and over in work and school based training, Western Australia, 2001-2003 (a)

	Indigenous Females			All Females			Rate ratio (e)
		As a proportion of Indigenous participants (b)	Participation rate (c)		As a proportion of Indigenous participants (b)	Participation rate (c)	
	no.	%	no.	no.	%	no.	
Apprentices							
Age 15 - 19	9	10.6	27.4	1,022	15.8	149.9	5.47
Age 20 - 24	9	10.0	32.7	390	8.8	61.0	1.87
Age 25 - 44	5	12.8	5.2	86	8.5	3.0	0.58
Age 45 and over	-	n.p.	n.p.	11	23.4	n.p.	n.p.
All ages	23	10.7	n.p.	1,512	12.6	n.p.	n.p.
Trainees							
Age 15 - 19	166	54.3	505.0	1,703	58.8	249.8	0.49
Age 20 - 24	51	40.5	185.3	872	48.2	136.4	0.74
Age 25 - 44	74	31.4	77.5	1,239	34.3	42.9	0.55
Age 45 and over	12	37.5	n.p.	472	36.1	n.p.	n.p.
All ages	304	43.4	n.p.	4,287	44.5	n.p.	n.p.

(a) Based on the annual average over 3 calendar years due to short-term fluctuations in annual data

(b) Females as a proportion of participants (male + female) in each age group

(c) Number of female participants per 10,000 females of same age in resident population at 30 June 2001.

(d) Participation rate for Indigenous females divided by the participation rate for all females.

(e) Rate ratio is calculated by dividing the rate for the total population by the Indigenous rate.

n.p. not provided. Rates for women aged 45 years and over and 'All ages' are not provided as these are affected by the larger proportion of older women in the total population

Source: Dept. of Education and Training, Apprenticeship and Trainee Branch, unpublished data.

Among those under 25 years, apprenticeship participation rates were considerably lower for Indigenous women than for women in the total population. The participation rate of all women aged 15-19 years was more than five times the rate of Indigenous women in this age group (equating to a rate ratio of 5.47). In the 20-24 age group, the participation rate of all women was approximately double (1.87) that of Indigenous women.

The situation was reversed for traineeships, with the participation rate consistently lower for all women. In the 15-19 age group, the participation rate of all women was approximately half that of Indigenous women (0.49) while, in the 20-24 and 24-44 age groups, the rates of all women were respectively 0.75 times and 0.55 times lower.

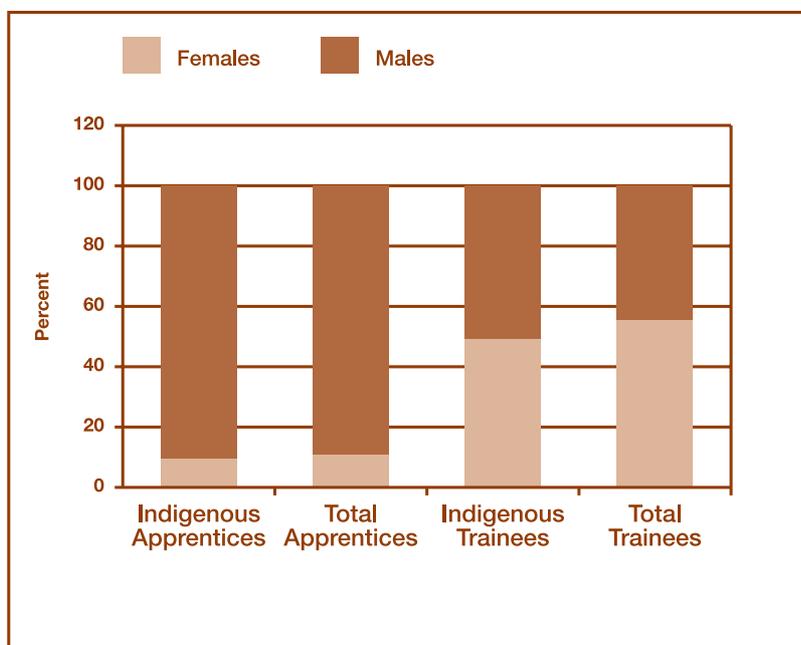
ⁱ The estimate of the Indigenous resident population (see Appendix 1) is experimental due to data quality issues.

2.11: Proportion of female apprentices and trainees

As indicated in the 2004 *Women's Report Card* women continue to be under-represented among apprentices in most fields, the notable exception being hairdressing. In the three years ending December 2003, the proportion of female apprentices averaged 9% for the Indigenous population and 11% for the total population.

Overall, women were much better represented among trainees. In the three years ending December 2003, the proportion of female trainees averaged 48% for the Indigenous population and 56% for the total population.

Figure 24 Apprentices and trainees in vocational training: Western Australia, 2001-2003



Source: VET Enrolments Statistics Unit, Department of Education and Training, unpublished data.

The number of school-based traineeships has grown rapidly in recent years. By 2003, the number of Indigenous women aged 15-19 years undertaking school-based traineeships was approximately double that of Indigenous women of the same age undertaking workplace traineeships. However, the extent to which participation in school-based training translates into improved labour force outcomes will need to be assessed in the future.

Key Messages: Work and School-based Training

In 2001-2003, Indigenous women under 25 years of age had a lower rate of participation in apprenticeships than women of the same age in the total population (based on the estimated resident population at June 2001).

Participation rates for traineeships were higher for Indigenous women than women in the total population. This was true for all age groups under 45 years.

Following the rapid rise in school-based vocational training among Indigenous students, performance indicators measuring the labour market outcomes of this type of training will need to be developed.

While similar numbers of men and women are undertaking traineeships, women continue to be under-represented among apprentices in both the Indigenous and total population. In 2001-2003, only 11% of Indigenous apprentices and 13% of all apprentices were female.

Issue: Income and Financial Stress

Low income and dependence on CDEP employment or government benefits are key factors in the overall economic disadvantage experienced by Indigenous people. Relatively high fertility rates, which impact on their ability to participate in the labour force and the number of dependent children they have to support, mean that Indigenous women are frequently among the most disadvantaged members of society.

The selected indicators include comparative measures of income and financial hardship, or stress, for women and men in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. The indicator data are derived from the 2002 NATSISS and the GSS.

2.12: Average weekly income

In 2002, the mean equivalised gross household incomeⁱ of Indigenous women aged 18 years and over was \$364 per week while the comparable figure for Indigenous men was \$390. Among the non-Indigenous population, the equivalised household income was considerably higher, at \$594 for females and \$710 for males.

2.13: Proportion of women in low income households

Income quintilesⁱⁱ are the groupings that result from ranking all people in the population in ascending order according to their equivalised gross household income, then dividing them into five equal groups. Each group therefore comprises 20% of the population.

The proportion of non-Indigenous persons in each quintile (see final column) is close to 20%, although some variation arises when this income group is disaggregated by sex.

If the Indigenous population had the same distribution of household income as the total population, it would be expected that each of the five groups would contain 20% of the Indigenous population.

ⁱ Equivalised household income - refer to Glossary

ⁱⁱ Income quintiles - refer to Glossary

Table 25 Equivilised gross household income of persons aged 18 years and over, Western Australia, 2002

Weekly Income	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	Males (%)	Females (%)	Persons (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	Persons (%)
Lowest group (\$0-\$264)	40.7	42.9	41.9	15.9	19.4	17.6
Second group (\$265-\$426)	33.5	32.5	32.9	17.5	21.5	19.5
Third group (\$427-\$611)	12.9	13.1	13.0	18.4	21.4	19.9
Fourth and fifth group (\$612 or more) (b)	13.0	11.6	12.2	48.3	37.7	43.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) income quintiles relate to the total population of Australia and are derived from the GSS.

(b) Due to the small number of Indigenous people in the fifth income quintile (\$870 or more per week), the fourth and fifth quintiles have been combined.

Source: 2002 NATSISS and GSS.

Since Indigenous equivilised household income is considerably lower overall than the corresponding income for the total population, the proportions of Indigenous women, men and persons in the lowest and second quintiles all exceed 20% by a substantial margin.

In 2002, there were only minimal differences in the income distribution of Indigenous women and men aged 18 years and over.

Of the Indigenous women 43% were in the lowest income quintile, with an equivilised household income of less than \$265 per week. Another third were in the second income quintile, with an equivilised income between \$265 and \$426 per week. The comparable proportions for non-Indigenous women were close to 20%.

2.14: Proportion of women in higher income households

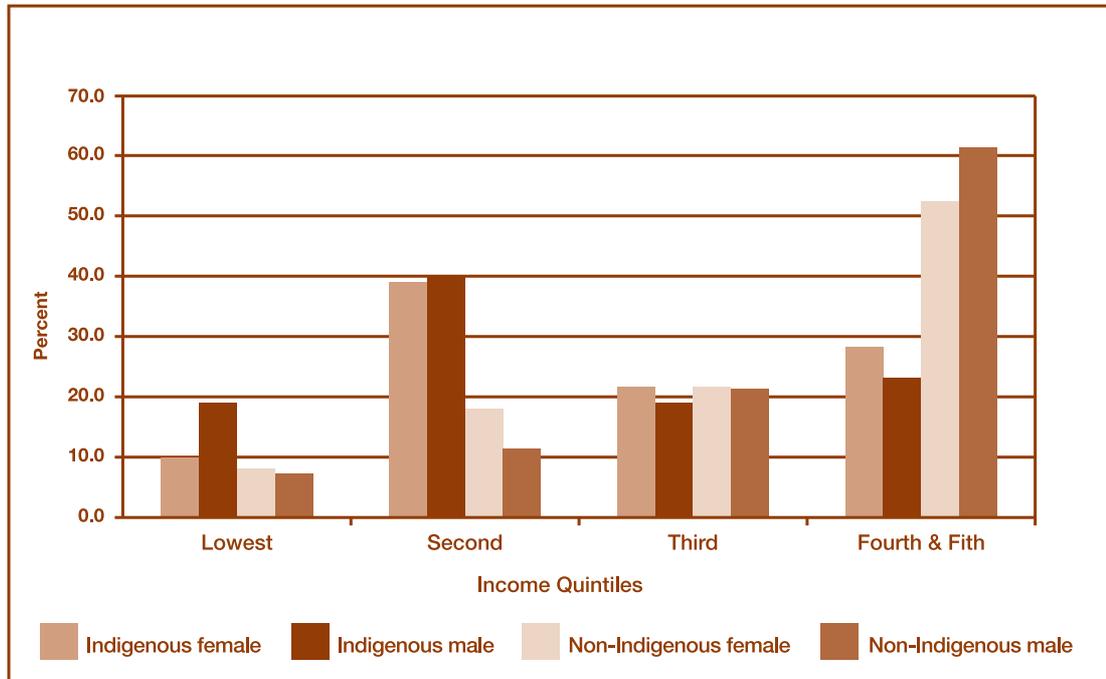
In 2002, the proportion of Indigenous women in each of the third and higher income quintiles was less than 20%. Whereas 21% of non-Indigenous women had an equivilised household income between \$427 and \$611 per week, only 13% of Indigenous women fell into this income group. Similarly, although 38% of non-Indigenous women had equivilised weekly incomes of \$612 or more, the comparable proportion for Indigenous women was less than 12%.

The proportion of Indigenous men with an equivilised household income of \$612 or more per week was only slightly higher at 13%.

2.15: Proportion of employed women by equivilised household income

The graph below shows the distribution across the national income quintiles of employed females and males in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations of Western Australia in 2002.

Figure 26 Equivalised household incomeⁱ of employed persons, Western Australia, 2002(a)



(a) Income data have been age-standardised to eliminate differences in the age structure of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002 and General Social Survey, 2002.

The graph shows that, in 2002, employed people in the Indigenous population were much more likely to be in the lowest or second household income quintiles than employed people in the non-Indigenous population. Conversely, employed people in the Indigenous population were much less likely to be in the fourth or fifth income quintiles than their non-Indigenous counterparts.

While the middle income groups contained similar proportions of Indigenous men and women, there were considerable differences in the distribution of males and females at each end of the income continuum. Among Indigenous workers, a greater proportion of females than males were in the highest income group and a smaller proportion of females than males were in the lowest income group.

2.16: Main source of income

The proportion of women who are not dependent for their economic survival on government benefits or work-for-the dole arrangements (such as CDEP) is a key indicator for measuring the economic independence of Indigenous women.

As shown in the table below, 62% of Indigenous women aged 18 years and over, were dependent on government pensions and allowances as their main source of income in 2002. This was considerably higher than the corresponding proportions for Indigenous men (39%) and non-Indigenous men (20%) and women (34%). However, a much higher proportion of Indigenous men were dependent on CDEP as their main source of income.

Those who had been dependent on government benefits for 2 years or more amounted to 59% of the Indigenous female population aged 18 years and over. The comparable figure for Indigenous men was 41%.

ⁱ Relates to income from all sources including pensions and allowances as well as wages and salaries.

**Table 27 Persons Aged 18 Years or Over:
Selected Income Characteristics, Western Australia, 2002**

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
Source of income				
Main current source of personal income				
CDEP(a)	26.1	12.6	N/A	N/A
Other wages or salary	30.6	20.9	68.8	47.0
Government pensions and allowances	39.1	61.9	19.7	34.3
Time that government pensions and allowances have been the main source of income in last 2 years				
Less than 1 year	8.2	*5.2	8.7	8.0
1 to less than 2 years	*9.4	8.5	3.7	6.3
2 years	40.9	59.4	14.2	25.6
Total time with government support as main source of income in last 2 years	39.1	61.9	19.7	34.3
Persons aged 18 years or over (No. '000)	16.2	19.0	707.2	699.2

*estimates have a relative standard error between 25% and 50% and should be treated with caution

(a) Community Development Employment Projects N/A Not Applicable

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002 and General Social Survey, 2002.

2.17: Financial stress

The NATSISS and GSS provide some comparable information on financial difficulties experienced by the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population. Financial stress was measured by the ability to raise \$2,000 within a week in an emergency.

Of the 19,000 Indigenous women aged 18 years and over in 2002, 59% were unable to raise \$2,000 in a week for something important. This was a little higher than the corresponding figure for Indigenous men (53%) and considerably higher than the corresponding figures for non-Indigenous women (15%) and non-Indigenous men (10%).

Key Messages: Income and Financial Stress

In 2002, the average weekly equivalised household income of Indigenous women aged 18 years and over was \$364, more than \$200 below the corresponding figure for non-Indigenous women.

Three-quarters of Indigenous women aged 18 years and over had gross equivalised household incomes of under \$427 per week. The corresponding figure for non-Indigenous women was 41%.

Among the employed population, Indigenous women were less likely to be in the lowest income quintile than Indigenous men.

In 2002, six out of ten Indigenous women had been dependent on government pensions and allowances as their main source of income for two years or more.

While 85% of non-Indigenous women indicated that they would be able to raise \$2,000 within a week for an emergency, only 41% of Indigenous women would have been able to do so.

Chapter 3. Crime and Justice

Summary List of Indicators for Indigenous Women

No.	Indicator	Data source	Frequency
Women in the legislative process			
3.1	Western Australian Indigenous women in Federal Parliament	Not currently available	Data gap
3.2	Women in State Parliament	Not currently available	Data gap
3.3	Women on local government councils	Dept of Local Government and Regional Development	Biannual
Women in the WA legal system			
3.4	Women in the judiciary and practising law	Not currently available	Data gap
3.5	Female law students	Murdoch University and University of Western Australia	Annual
3.6	Women as Justices of the Peace	Department of Justice	Annual
Women police and prison staff			
3.7	Representation of women in WA Police Service	Western Australian Police Service	Annual
3.8	Representation of women as prison officers	Census of Population and Housing (ABS)	5 yearly
Access to legal services			
3.9	Women's access to legal services	No Available Data	Data gap
Access to legal services			
3.10	Proportion of female prisoners who are Indigenous	Prisoners in Australia (ABS)	Annual
3.11	Annual rate of imprisonment (per 100,000 women aged 18 years and over)		
3.12	Proportion of prisoners with know prior imprisonment under sentence		
3.13	Proportion of women in prison for fine defaulting	Crime Research Centre, UWA	Annual
3.14	Proportion of women using legal services in last 12 months	NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
3.15	Proportion of women reporting arrest in last 5 years		
3.16	Proportion of women with family members in prison		

The Australian Law Reform Commission's report, *Equality Before the Law*¹⁹, found that Indigenous women were the single most legally disadvantaged group in Australian society.

This chapter seeks to provide indicators of Indigenous women's experiences in the State's legal system to highlight the various aspects of disadvantage. Where possible, the selected indicators provide comparative data for the total female population.

There are no sources of reliable data for some of the indicators identified in this section. These important gaps have been identified to encourage responsible agencies to collect such data.

Issue: Women in the Legislative Process

The representation of Indigenous women in legislative decision making positions ensures that Indigenous women have a voice and input into the decisions and laws affecting them. The representation of Indigenous women in public life also broadens the focus of the political agenda to ensure issues affecting Indigenous women are raised and addressed.

3.1: State Parliament

The human resource administration system at Parliament House is exempt from the State Government's Human Resources Minimum Information Obligatory Requirements (HR MOIR) reporting system and therefore is not required to collect information on the Indigenous status of Members of Parliament. It is widely acknowledged however, that Carol Martin became the first Indigenous woman elected to an Australian Parliament when she became a member of the State's Legislative Assembly in 2001. (See section 1.5-1.7 for related data).

3.2: Western Australian Indigenous women in Federal Parliament

Similarly, data is not collected which identifies Indigenous women members of the houses of Federal Parliament. However, officials at Federal Parliament indicated that, to date, no women members of Federal Parliament have identified themselves as Indigenous. (See section 1.5-1.7 for related data).

3.3: Local Government Councillors

Following the May 2005 local government elections, women represented 29% of all councillors in Western Australia. While comprising 2.75% of the state's female population (aged 15 years and over), Indigenous women comprised 7.2% of female councillors.²⁰

Key Message:

Administration records are not kept which identifies the Indigenous status of State or Federal members of Parliament.

The relatively high representation of Indigenous women as councillors in local government compared to Indigenous women in the total state population indicates that local government is an accessible sphere of government for Indigenous women to assume decision making roles.

Issue: Indigenous Women in the WA Legal System

The sensitivity of the legal system to the specific issues and needs of Indigenous women is likely to be affected by the level of representation of Indigenous women across the system.

3.4: Judiciary and practising lawyers

There are no means of identifying the Indigenous status of practising women judges and lawyers in the State. Western Australian Courts and the Legal Practitioners Board of Western Australia do not keep administration records which identify the Indigenous status of their practising judges and lawyers.

Related Data

ABS Census data shows that in 2001, Women comprised one third of all legal professionals in the state (1,178 women). A small number of Indigenous women indicated that their occupation was a legal professional, including barrister or judge. However, the small number means that no reliance can be placed on the accuracy of these figures ⁱ. Therefore the numbers are not presented.

3.5: Law students

At March 2004, there were 829 female students enrolled in various law related programs at Murdoch University and the University of Western Australia (or 59% of all enrolled students were female). Of those females, 29 identified themselves as Indigenous (or 2.1%), representing a significant increase in the past decade.

3.6: Justices of the Peace

At May 2005, there were 3,573 Justices of the Peace (JPs) in Western Australia, of which 865 (or 24%) were women. Of those women 33 identified themselves as Indigenous, representing 1% of the all Justices of the Peace or 4% of all women JPs.

Key Message:

Information on the representation of Indigenous women in the Western Australian legal system is severely limited and this is an area where work needs to be undertaken to address the data gaps.

In 2001, Indigenous women comprised 2.75% of all women in the State and 4% of women Justices of the Peace.

Issue: Women Police and Prison Staff

A diverse public sector workforce is a key priority of the State Government. It is widely recognised that the capacity of agencies to deliver services to the community is enhanced if the service providers are representative of the communities they serve.

3.7: Police service

At June 2005, 17.6% of all police officers were women and 2.1% of women police officers (non Aboriginal Police Liaison Officers) identified themselves as Indigenous. Among female police staff, 0.8% identified themselves as Indigenous. At 30 June there was one female Aboriginal Police Liaison Officer per 1,000 Indigenous females ⁱⁱ in Western Australia²¹.

3.8: Prison officers

At the 2001 Census, 268 women indicated that their occupation was a prison officer (18.5% of all prison officers in the State were women). The census also shows that 15 Indigenous women indicated that they were prison officers, comprising 5% of all female prison officers.

ⁱ The Census employs a random adjustment process to avoid the release of confidential data.

For further information- refer to Glossary

ⁱⁱ Based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population Projections, Low series, Western Australia, 2005

Key Message:

While the representation of Indigenous women among staff members of the prison and police services is low, Western Australian prisons and police services are working towards increasing the representation of Indigenous women staff members, as well as other diverse population groups.

Issue: Access to Legal Services

A key issue for Indigenous women, which is reflected in the terms of reference of the Commonwealth Government's Indigenous Law and Justice Inquiry²², concerns Indigenous women's access to culturally appropriate legal services.

3.9: Access to legal services

While the legal needs of Indigenous women are widely acknowledged in related literature as a critical issue, the ability to develop meaningful statistical indicators in relation to the availability of culturally appropriate legal services and issues of unmet demand is impracticable.

Related Data

NATSISS data provides information on the number of Indigenous women indicating that they used legal services in the last 12 months. In 2002, 20% of Indigenous women reported using legal services in last 12 months.

Issue: Arrest and Imprisonment

The high rate of imprisonment of Indigenous women and men is a key concern and persistent problem confronting the State's justice system²³. Despite being a consistently small proportion of the total prison population for the past ten years, women's imprisonment rate has increased more than men's over this period. The reasons behind the specific increase in Indigenous women's imprisonment rates are complex and interconnected. However, poverty and disadvantage are widely recognised as indicators for offending behaviour²⁴.

Around two thirds (63%) of women in prisons have dependent children under 18 years of age and the impact of imprisonment on their children and family is considerable²⁵. Of particular concern is the significant proportion of Indigenous people who are in the prison system for relatively minor offences such as fine defaulting.

3.10: Prisoners

At June 2004, there were 211 women aged 18 years and over in prisons in Western Australia. Of those, 130 (or 48.3%) were Indigenous women²⁶.

3.11: Rate of imprisonment

At June 2004, the annual rate of imprisonment for all women in WA (per 100,000 aged 18 years and over) was 35.9, the highest of all state and territories. For Indigenous women it was 643.8, compared with 5,756.5 for Indigenous men²⁷.

3.12: Prior imprisonment

74.6% of Indigenous women prisoners are known to have had a prior adult imprisonment under sentence²⁸.

3.13: Fine defaulting

Of sentenced Indigenous women prisoners during 2003, 46.5% were in prison for fine-defaulting. For non-Indigenous women the proportion was 17.7%²⁹.

3.14: Use of legal services

In 2002, 20.1% of Indigenous women reported using legal services in the last twelve months³⁰.

3.15: Arrest

In 2002, 13.0% of women reported being arrested by police in the last five years³¹.

3.16: Family members in prison

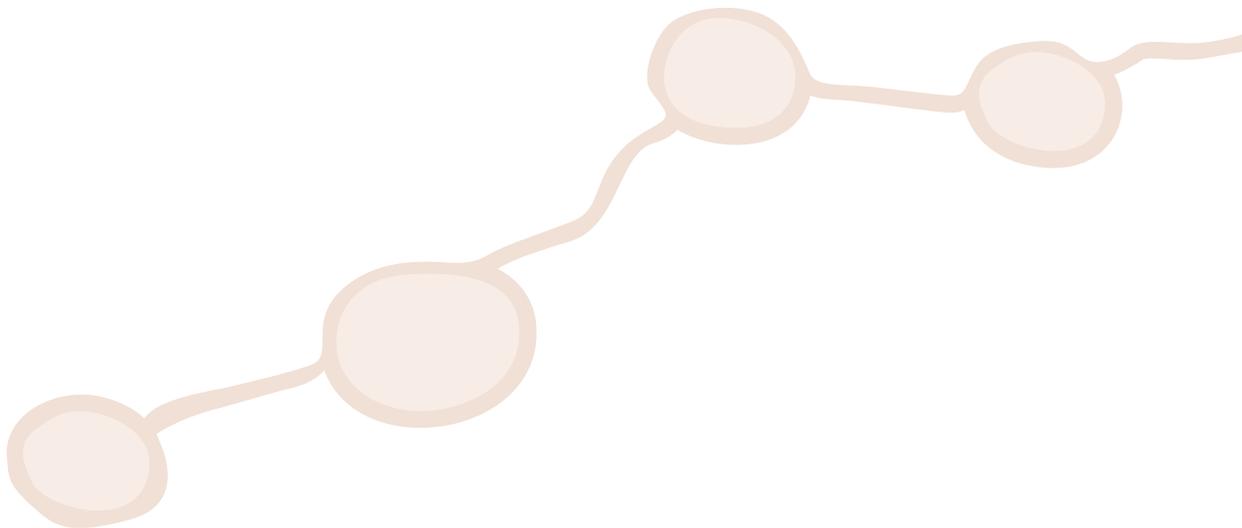
In 2002, 23.3% of Indigenous women reported that they had a family member who had been sent to jail or were currently in jail³².

Key Messages:

Of sentenced Indigenous women in prisons in 2003, almost half were in prison for fine defaulting.

The imprisonment rate of Indigenous women is 18 times higher than for all women in the State.

One in five Indigenous women accessed legal services in the twelve months to 2002 and almost one in four report that they have had or currently have a family member in prison.



Chapter 4. Family, Community and Culture

Summary List of Indicators for Indigenous Women

No.	Indicator	Data source	Frequency
Care of the aged and people with disabilities			
4.1	Proportion of women who are primary carers	Data not available	Data gap
Care of children			
4.2	Proportion of women by family type (couple/sole parent) and number of dependent children	Census of Population and Housing (ABS)	5 yearly
4.3	Proportion of women caring for children by hours of care per week/day	Data not available	Data gap
4.4	Proportion of women caring for children by relationship to child	Data not available	Data gap
4.5	Proportion of women caring for children from other households by whether paid or unpaid	Data not available	Data gap
Carers and labour force participation			
4.6	Labour force status/participation rate of female primary carers (of those needing help because of age or disability)	Data not available	Data gap
4.7	Labour force status/participation rate of women with primary responsibility for children aged 12 years and under	Partial data from NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
Formal child care and labour force participation			
4.8	Access to formal child care by employment status	NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
4.9	Usage of formal child care in last four weeks by employment status		
Community participation, support and social activities			
4.10	Proportion involved in social activities in last 3 months	NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
4.11	Proportion participating in sport or physical recreation activities		
4.12	Proportion undertaking voluntary work		
4.13	Proportion able to get support in time of crisis from someone outside the household		
4.14	Proportion experiencing stressor(s) by type of stressor		
Cultural attachment			
4.15	Proportion who had been removed, or had a close relative removed, from their natural family	NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
4.16	Proportion identifying with a clan, tribal or language group		
4.17	Proportion currently living in their homeland/traditional country		
4.18	Proportion attending cultural events in the last 12 months		
4.19	Proportion able to speak an Indigenous language		
4.20	Proportion whose main language spoken at home is an Indigenous language		

When considering issues of family structure and care arrangements, it is noted that Indigenous families are frequently organised around extended families, with care being provided to family members associated with more than one household. In addition, a greater proportion of households in Indigenous communities contain two or more 'families' (according to Census definitions)³³. This is particularly true in more isolated and less urban areas of Western Australia.

Issue: Care of the Aged and People with Disabilities

Assisting Indigenous and non-Indigenous families to care for the aged and people with disabilities is an ongoing concern for the Australian community and governments. The burden of care on families appears to be rising with continuing increases in life expectancy, women's participation in the labour force and the limited availability of high quality institutional care for the frail aged and those with disabilities. Most of this burden falls on women, including older women, who provide a substantial proportion of the care received by elderly parents, partners and children with disabilities³⁴.

4.1: Caring

Information on female carers in the total population is available from the five-yearly *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers*. In 2003, 73% of all primary carersⁱ in Western Australia were women and 14% of all women were carers. However, the Indigenous status of respondents is not collected in this survey and comparable data for Indigenous women are not available from any known source.

Related Data

Centrelink can provide quarterly data on recipients of carer payments in Western Australia, including the sex and Indigenous status of the carerⁱⁱ. In 2004, a greater proportion of Indigenous women compared to women in the total state population received carer payments³⁵.

Of the total average number of Indigenous recipients (386 per quarterⁱⁱⁱ) 87% were women, representing 1.5% of the state's projected Indigenous female population aged 15 years and over³⁶. For the total population recipients of carer payments averaged 5,990 per quarter and of these, approximately two-thirds were women, representing 0.5% of the state's estimated resident female population aged 15 years and over³⁷.

Key Messages:

Reliable indicator data on carers of the aged and people with disabilities are not currently available for the Indigenous population.

Information comparable to that collected in the five-yearly *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* is required for Indigenous women and men.

Centrelink data for 2004 indicate that Indigenous women are more likely to receive carer payments than women in the total population and much more likely to receive carer payments than Indigenous men.

ⁱ Primary care - refer to Glossary.

ⁱⁱ A significant limitation of this dataset is that it includes only the carers who receive Centrelink payments and Indigenous status is not a mandatory reporting item and, for a large proportion of recipients (12%) in 2004, Indigenous status was unknown.

ⁱⁱⁱ The number of recipients is a four quarter average for 2004.

Issue: Care of Children

Women undertake most of the childcare provided in families³⁸. In recent decades, the rise in sole parenthood is likely to have increased this role for some women.

For Indigenous women, the child care responsibility may be further increased by higher fertility rates and the earlier age at which women become mothers³⁹. Such factors may impact on the social and economic wellbeing of young Indigenous women, for whom early motherhood is often associated with limited educational and labour force outcomes.

Information on the provision of informal child care is difficult to collect and measure for conceptual as well as practical reasons. 'Child care' may be defined to include or exclude activities such as teaching, playing or reading with children, or inactive periods when the carer is simultaneously involved in other activities such as housework or home-based employment.

These conceptual problems are compounded by the fact that women may provide care, on a casual or regular basis, for children living in other households and may be paid or unpaid for the care they provide. While, for any given child 0-17 years, the 'primary carer' is most likely to be the mother, a woman who cares only for children from other households (and may devote many hours per week to this activity) is not a primary, or even secondary, carer.

4.2: Family Type and Number of Children

In 2002, there were an estimated 20,900 Indigenous women aged 15 years and over in Western Australia. Of these, almost half (47%) had primary responsibility for children⁴⁰.

Census data also showed that in 2001, 21% of Indigenous women living in Western Australia were sole parents⁴¹. The majority of sole parent families in Western Australia are headed by women and at the 2001 Census, the proportions were similar for the Indigenous and total populations (87% and 85% respectively). However, Indigenous women sole parents were likely to have more dependent children than their non-Indigenous counterparts. Approximately 15% of Indigenous female sole parents had four or more children present on Census night (compared with 4.5% of all women who headed sole parent families)⁴².

This suggests that Indigenous women who are sole parents may be more involved in child care, or may spend more time in care-related activities, than female sole parents in the total population.

4.3: Provision of child care and hours of care provided

Currently, there are no data sources available to estimate the total number of Indigenous women involved in child care or the extent of their involvement.

4.4: Relationship to child

There are no sources of regular data on the relationship of Indigenous women to the children they care for.

Related Data

In the *Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS)*, data on the 'primary' and 'secondary' carers of Indigenous children in selected households was collectedⁱ. The WAACHS provides some important insights into relationships between Indigenous children and their carers.

ⁱ No more than two carers per child were identified in the survey.

In 2000-2001, there were an estimated 12,600 primary carers ⁱ of Indigenous children aged 0-17 years in Western Australia. Almost 93% of these primary carers were women and 76% were Indigenous women ⁱⁱ. Of the estimated 9,630 Indigenous female carers, over 22% had one or more children in their care who were not their natural children. The figure was considerably higher (67%) for women aged 45 years and over and it is likely that many of these older carers were grandmothers of the children in question.

4.5: Paid or unpaid care

Currently, no sources of data are available on this issue.

Key Messages:

In 2001, approximately one in five Indigenous women aged 15 years or over were sole parents and almost one quarter of these had four or more dependent children.

In 2002, almost half of all Indigenous women had primary responsibility for children under the age of 13 years.

It is estimated that, in 2000-2001, 22% of Indigenous women who were primary carers of Indigenous children (aged 0-17 years) had one or more children in their care who were not their natural children. The proportion rose with the age of the carer.

Currently there are no reliable data sources on the total number of Indigenous women involved in child care, relationships to children being cared for or whether pay is received.

Issue: Carers and Labour Force Participation

Family care responsibilities are generally considered to be important factors influencing women's participation in the labour force ⁱⁱⁱ.

4.6: Labour force status/participation rate of female primary carers

In 2003, the participation rate of primary carers in Western Australia was only 41%, compared with 58% for all carers and 68% for non-carers⁴³. There are no comparable data for the Indigenous population.

4.7: Labour force status/participation rate of women with primary responsibility for children

In 2002, 36% of Indigenous women ^{iv} with primary responsibility for children aged 12 years and under ^v were employed.

Key Messages:

Currently there are no sources of data on the labour force characteristics of Indigenous women who are primary carers of the frail, aged or people with disabilities.

In 2002, approximately one third of Indigenous women with primary responsibility for children aged 12 years or under were employed.

ⁱ The 'primary carer' was considered to spend the most time with the child or who had primary responsibility for the upbringing of the child

ⁱⁱ These figures relate to carers aged 15 years and over. There were a few carers under 15 years who have been excluded from the figures.

ⁱⁱⁱ Labour force participation rate - refer to Glossary.

^{iv} Includes women aged 15 years and over.

^v Formal child care generally ceases at 13 years of age.

Issue: Formal Child Care and Labour Force Participation

The proportion of Indigenous children attending Australian Government approved child care services in Western Australia in 2002 was 1.7%⁴⁴.

The availability of affordable, high quality formal child care is a significant determinant of the labour force participation of women, especially in urban areas where more job opportunities exist.

Indigenous women in remote areas may have more limited access to formal child care services. However, these women are also more likely to have extended family networks and may be inclined to rely more heavily on informal child care arrangements.

4.8: Access to formal child care by employment status

In the 2002 NATSISS, persons who were responsible for children were asked whether or not they had access to formal child care, however this information was collected only in remote areas of the state. Usage of formal child care in the last four weeks was collected in both remote and non-remote areas ⁱ.

Table 28 Indigenous women(a) with primary responsibility for children aged 12 years or under: Selected child care characteristics by employment status, Western Australia, 2002

	Employed (%)	Not Employed (b) (%)	Total (%)
Use of child care in last 4 weeks			
Used formal child care(c)	26.0	16.6	20.0
Used informal child care only	43.9	49.7	47.6
Did not use child care	30.1	33.7	32.4
Access to formal child care(d)			
Has access	78.2	89.5	85.5
Does not have access	21.8	10.5	14.5
Indigenous women with primary responsibility for children (e) (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Females aged 15 years and over

(b) Comprises unemployed women and women not in the labour force.

(c) May include women who also used informal child care.

(d) Data collected in remote areas only

(e) Includes women who did not state the kind of child care used.

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002.

In remote areas of Western Australia, more than 85% of women with primary responsibility for children reported access to formal child care facilities. However, fewer women who were employed (78%) reported they had access than women who were not employed (nearly 90%).

ⁱ Remote and non remote areas - refer to Glossary.

4.9 Usage of formal child care in last four weeks by employment status

Of the women who were employed, 26% had used some formal child care in the last four weeks, compared with 17% of those who were not employed.

Key Messages:

In 2002, Indigenous women in Western Australia who were employed were more likely to have used formal child care services than women who were not employed (26% and 17% respectively).

National data from the NATSISS show that usage of formal child care by Indigenous women is likely to be substantially higher in non-remote areas.

There are no comparable data on usage of formal child care for non-Indigenous women (or all women) in Western Australia.

Usage data capable of cross-classification by employment status and remoteness would enable child care services to be better targeted across the state.

Issue: Community Participation and Support

In recent years, researchers and commentators have become increasingly interested in the concept of 'social capital' and associated measures of community participation and support. These measures are seen as critical to the wellbeing of individuals across Australian society.

Five measures, endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2003,⁴⁵ have been selected to compare aspects of community participation and support among Indigenous and non-Indigenous women in Western Australia.

4.10: Social activities

In 2002, most Indigenous women in Western Australia (89%) had been involved in one or more social activities outside the home in the three months prior to the survey. The comparable proportion for non-Indigenous women was a little higher, at 94%⁴⁶.

Among Indigenous women the youngest age group (18-24 years) had the highest involvement in social activities (93%), with proportions falling to 90% and 84% respectively for women aged 25-44 years and 45 years or over.

A wide range of social activities was reported including some that were specific to remote or non-remote areas, such as attending Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) or Native Title meetings, attending funerals, ceremonies or festivals, fishing or hunting in a group, going to the movies, theatre or concerts, or visiting parks, botanic gardens, zoos or theme parks. Some of the more commonly reported social activities are presented in the table below.

Table 29 Females aged 18 years or over, Type(s) of social activities, Western Australia, 2002

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Participated(a)		
Church or religious activities	29.1	24.4
Went out to cafe, restaurant or bar(b)	47.1	82.1
Took part in/attended sport/or physical activities	49.5	58.0
Total participated in social activities	88.6	94.0
Did not participate	11.4	6.0

(a) Respondents may have indicated more than one response category.

(b) Includes people in remote areas who went to pubs, hotels and canteens.

Source: *The National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and the General Social Survey.*

Attendance at sporting events and outings to cafes, restaurants or bars were among the most commonly reported social activities, with about half of Indigenous women reporting these activities in the last three months. In each case, the proportions were higher for non-Indigenous women.

4.11: Sport or physical recreation activities

In 2002, the proportion of Indigenous women who had participated in sporting or physical activities, as a player, coach, umpire, referee or in some other organising capacity during the previous 12 months, was much lower among Indigenous women (44%) than non-Indigenous women (74%). However, participation of Indigenous women varied significantly by age, falling from 57% for young women (18-24 years) to 26% for women aged 45 years and over.

4.12: Voluntary work

In 2002, 23% of Indigenous women in Western Australia had undertaken voluntary work in the previous 12 months. The comparable proportion for non-Indigenous women was 35%. This may reflect a greater tendency among non-Indigenous women to formally identify as 'volunteers' or a greater tendency among Indigenous women to label their time differently, such as time spent undertaking cultural obligations.

Indigenous women aged 25-44 years were more likely to report undertaking voluntary work (28%) than those in younger or older age groups.

4.13: Support in time of crisis

Support in times of crisis can include physical, financial or emotional help and can be sourced from family members, friends, neighbours or work colleagues or from a community, government or professional organisation.

Over 91% of Indigenous women in Western Australia, compared with 96% of non-Indigenous women, were able to get support from someone outside the household in a time of crisis. The ability to access support among Indigenous women increased with age, reaching 95% for those aged 45 years and over.

Family members were the source of support most frequently reported by Indigenous women (82%) and non-Indigenous women (83%), followed by friends (49% and 74% respectively).

4.14: Proportion experiencing stressor(s) ⁱ by type of stressor

In 2002, the proportion of Indigenous women in Western Australia who reported at least one stressor in the previous 12 months was 82%, compared with 61% for non-Indigenous women. Types of stressors experienced by women are provided in the table below.

Table 30 Females aged 18 years or over: Personal stressors experienced in last 12 months, Western Australia, 2002

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Experienced stressor(s)(a)		
Serious illness or disability	28.1	25.5
Serious accident	11.3	5.0
Mental illness(g)	14.0	11.5
Death of family member or close friend	51.0	19.9
Divorce or separation	14.7	12.6
Not able to get a job	21.4	16.5
Involuntary loss of job	3.3	6.6
Alcohol or drug related problems	26.5	10.0
Gambling problem	9.8	1.5
Abuse or violent crime	15.3	5.4
Witness to violence	14.4	3.9
Trouble with the police	18.4	3.5
Member of family sent to jail or currently in jail	23.3	n.a.
Overcrowding at home	18.2	n.a.
Pressure to fulfil cultural responsibilities(b)	5.8	n.a.
Discrimination/racism	20.7	n.a.
<i>Total experienced stressor(s)(c)</i>	<i>82.5</i>	<i>61.5</i>
<i>No stressors reported</i>	<i>17.5</i>	<i>38.5</i>

(a) Respondents may have indicated more than one response category.

(b) Data collected for non-remote areas only.

(c) Total may includes persons for whom some specific information could not be determined.

n. a. not available.

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey and the General Social Survey, 2002, WA, Unpublished Data.

ⁱ Stressors are defined as events or circumstances which survey respondents consider to have been a problem for them, or someone close to them.

Over half (51%) of Indigenous women reported the death of a family member or close friend as a stressor. In comparison, only 20% of non-Indigenous women reported this event.

The next most commonly reported stressor among Indigenous women was serious illness or disability (28%), similar to the proportion for non-Indigenous women (26%).

Alcohol and drug-related problems were reported as stressors by 26% of Indigenous women and 10% of non-Indigenous women.

Other significant stressors were having a family member currently in jail or sent to jail in the last 12 months (23%) and experiencing discrimination or racism (21%).

Key Messages:

In 2002, Indigenous women in Western Australia were much less likely to participate in sport or physical activities than non-Indigenous women (44% and 74% respectively).

Indigenous women aged 25-44 years were more likely to report undertaking voluntary work than all other age groups.

Death of a family member or friend ranked as the most significant personal stressor, experienced by more than half of all Indigenous women in the previous 12 months.

Alcohol or drug-related problems and trouble with the police were reported much more frequently as stressors by Indigenous women.

Issue: Cultural Attachment

A strong sense of cultural identity, or cultural attachment, is often seen as an important factor promoting the mental health and wellbeing of Indigenous people.

Six indicators have been selected which aim to provide objective measures of cultural attachment among Indigenous women in Western Australia. Some of these measures have been endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

4.15: Removal from their natural family

One area in which Indigenous women from this state have experienced considerable disadvantage, in comparison with Indigenous women across Australia, is in terms of family members being removed by missions, government or welfare agencies. In Western Australia, the proportion of Indigenous women reporting such an event was 58%, compared with 39% nationally⁴⁷.

Although the majority (86%) of Indigenous women in Western Australia had not personally been removed from their own families, females were more likely to have been removed than males (13% compared with 9%).

4.16: Identification with a clan, tribal or language group

In 2002, just over half (51%) the Indigenous women in this state identified with a clan, tribal or language group; in this respect, they were similar to Indigenous women across Australia⁴⁸.

4.17: Living in their homeland /traditional country

The proportion of Indigenous women currently living in their homeland or traditional country was markedly higher in Western Australia than across the nation (28% compared with 20%). However, 26% of Indigenous women in this state did not recognise their homeland or traditional country⁴⁹.

Table 31 Females aged 18 years or over: Attachment to homeland/traditional country, Western Australia, 2002

Recognises homelands/traditional country	%
Living there now	27.6
Not living there now	
Allowed to visit traditional country	44.8
Not allowed to visit traditional country	*0.7
Total not living on homelands/traditional country (h)	46.3
Total recognises homelands/traditional country	73.9
Does not recognise homelands/traditional country	26.1

*Estimate has a relative standard error between 25% and 50% and should be treated with caution.

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, 2002, WA, Unpublished Data.

4.18: Attendance and participation at cultural events

In this state, and nationally, more than 70% of Indigenous women had attended a cultural event in the previous 12 months. The most commonly reported events attended by Indigenous women in Western Australia were funerals (63%), festivals or carnivals involving arts, craft, music or dance (35%) and sports carnivals (31%)⁵⁰.

Almost three in ten Indigenous women in Western Australia had participated in one or more cultural activities, such as making arts and crafts, performing in dance or music and writing or telling stories, in the previous 12 months and one in ten had been paid for their participation.

4.19: Ability to speak an Indigenous language

The proportion of women who were able to speak an Indigenous language was higher in this state than in the nation as a whole (28% compared with 20%).

4.20: Indigenous language as the main language spoken at home

An Indigenous language was the main language spoken at home by one out of eight women, both nationally and in Western Australia.

Key Messages:

The baseline indicator data for 2002 suggest that Indigenous women in Western Australia are maintaining their cultural identity and participating in cultural events, at least as well as other Indigenous women across Australia.

In some areas, notably retention of Indigenous language skills and access to traditional homelands, they are faring better than Indigenous women nationally. However, a significantly greater proportion of Indigenous women in this state have experienced the removal of one or more family members by the civil authorities.

Chapter 5. Safety

Summary List of Indicators for Indigenous Women

No.	Indicator	Data source	Frequency
Violence against women			
5.1	Proportion who were a victim of physical or threatened violence in the last 12 months	NATSISS and GSS (ABS)	6 yearly
5.2	Deaths from assaults	No available data	Data gap
5.3	Hospitalisations due to assault	Department of Health	Annual
5.4	Perceptions of family violence	NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
5.5	Incidence of family violence	No available data	Data gap
Safety in the community			
5.6	Proportion perceiving assault as a problem in their community.	NATSISS and GSS (ABS)	6 yearly
5.7	Proportion perceiving sexual assault as a problem in their community.		
5.8	Proportion concerned by the level of personal safety in their community.		
5.9	Proportion who experienced abuse or violent crime in the last 12 months.		
5.10	Proportion who witnessed violence in the last 12 months.		
5.11	Proportion who experienced discrimination and or racism in the last 12 months.		

Issue: Violence Against Women

Violence against women is a serious problem for the entire Australian community. Numerous reports and studies show that Indigenous women are at a significantly greater risk of being victims of violence than non-Indigenous women. Violence affects family, friends and the workplace of victims. It also affects the broader community by increasing levels of fear and placing a significant social and economic cost on the community.

Indigenous women's safety is also a key goal of the National Indigenous Women's Action Plan⁵¹. Family and domestic violence is an issue of particular concern among Indigenous communities as it affects the social, emotional, physical and financial wellbeing of Indigenous families⁵². Studies such as the Gordon Inquiry suggest that there is a disproportionate incidence of family violence in Indigenous communities compared with the total Australian population⁵³.

Evidence also shows that women bear the burden of the violence. In attempting to address violence against women, government initiatives often encourage women to seek assistance and report the crimes. An increase or decrease in an indicator should be considered in this context, as any change may represent an increase or decrease in the number of reports made and the response to them by authorities.

There is a significant level of non-reporting and under-recording of incidents of violence against women, particularly family violence. Studies suggest that under-reporting and under-recording is particularly evident for Indigenous women⁵⁴. This means that family violence against women based on numbers of reported incidents is likely to be an underestimation of the actual rate.

5.1: Victims of physical or threatened violence

In 2002, 20.5% of Indigenous women indicated that they were a victim of physical or threatened violence in the last 12 months, compared to 8.6% of non-Indigenous women⁵⁵.

Related Data

In 2004, 1,968 cases of sexual assaults ⁱ on females (all ages) in Western Australia were reported to the police. Of those assaults, 184 (or 9.4%) were on Indigenous females ⁱⁱ. In the same year there were 8,409 cases of assault ⁱⁱⁱ on females reported to the police, of which 960 (or 11.4%) were on Indigenous females⁵⁶.

5.2: Deaths from assault

Reliable data on the deaths from assault of Indigenous women is unavailable. In 79% of deaths from murder, attempted murder and manslaughter the Indigenous status of the victim is not identified⁵⁷.

Related Data

Data available through the Department of Health provides age-adjusted rates ^{iv} (AAR) of deaths from assault purposely inflicted by another person. Between 1999 and 2003, the AAR for Indigenous females aged 15 years and over in the State was 9.4, compared to 0.7 for non-Indigenous females⁵⁸.

5.3: Hospitalisations due to assault

Between 1999 and 2003, the AAR of hospitalisation due to assault purposely inflicted by another person, for Indigenous females aged 15 years and over was 29.5. For non-Indigenous females of the same age in the state, the rate was 0.5⁵⁹.

ⁱ Sexual Assault - refer to Glossary.

ⁱⁱ Care should be exercised in the interpretation of these statistics as Indigenous status is derived from an attending police officer's subjective assessment of a person's appearance and in the majority of cases Indigenous status is not identified (59% for sexual assault and 75% for assault).

ⁱⁱⁱ Assault - refer to Glossary.

^{iv} Age-adjusted rates are standardised with the Australian 2001 population and expressed per 1,000 person years.

5.4: Perceptions of family violence

In 2002, 22.6% of Indigenous women perceived family violence as a problem in their community⁵⁰.

5.5: Incidence of family violence

There is no reliable source of data on the extent of family violence among Indigenous women or the total female population.

Related Data

Related data is available from a number of sources. However, the sources do not provide a complete picture of the extent of family violence as they only cover an exposed segment of the population.

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) helps people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including women (and their children) who are victims of domestic violence. In 2002/03 there were 2,850 Indigenous female SAAP clientsⁱ. Of those, 2,350 received support from domestic violence agencies or cited domestic violence as a reason or main reason for seeking assistance. By comparison, there were 2,800 non-Indigenous female clients, of which 1,750 received support from domestic violence agencies or cited domestic violence as a reason or main reason for seeking assistance⁶¹.

The Department of Health data also provides AAR for hospitalisation due to assault by a spouse. Between 2002/03 and 2003/04ⁱⁱ, the AAR for Indigenous females aged 15 years and over in the State was 13.5 compared to 0.2 for non-Indigenous females⁶².

Key Messages:

Indigenous women are more than twice as likely to have been a victim of physical or threatened violence than non-Indigenous women.

Almost one in four Indigenous women perceive family violence as a problem in their community.

Reliable indicator data on the extent of family violence against women is not currently available. The Department for Community Development's Family and Domestic Violence Unit has initiated a data collection project to establish a prevalence rate of family and domestic violence in Western Australia.

Issue: Safety in the Community

Women's perceptions of safety are often influenced by past experiences and fear of unsafe situations. Perceptions of safety within the community, to some extent, impact on women's ability to participate in their communities and enjoy life.

5.6: Perception of assault

In 2002, 21% of Indigenous women perceived assault as a problem in their neighbourhood⁶³ⁱⁱⁱ.

5.7: Perception of sexual assault

In 2002, 8% of Indigenous women perceived sexual assault as a problem⁶⁴.

5.8: Concern for personal safety

In 2002, 11% of Indigenous women were concerned by the level of personal safety in their neighbourhood⁶⁵.

ⁱ Supported Accommodation Assistance Program clients (SAAP) - refer to Glossary.

ⁱⁱ Coding for assault by spouse was limited prior to 2002/03-2003/04. Financial years are used to provide sufficient numbers.

ⁱⁱⁱ Data collected for non-remote areas only.

5.9: Experience of abuse or violent crime

In 2002, 15.3% of Indigenous women experienced abuse or violent crimeⁱ in the previous 12 months, compared with 5.4% of non-Indigenous women⁶⁶.

5.10: Witnessed violence

In 2002, 14.4% of Indigenous women were a witness to violence in the previous 12 months, compared with 3.9% of non-Indigenous women⁶⁷.

5.11: Discrimination and or racism

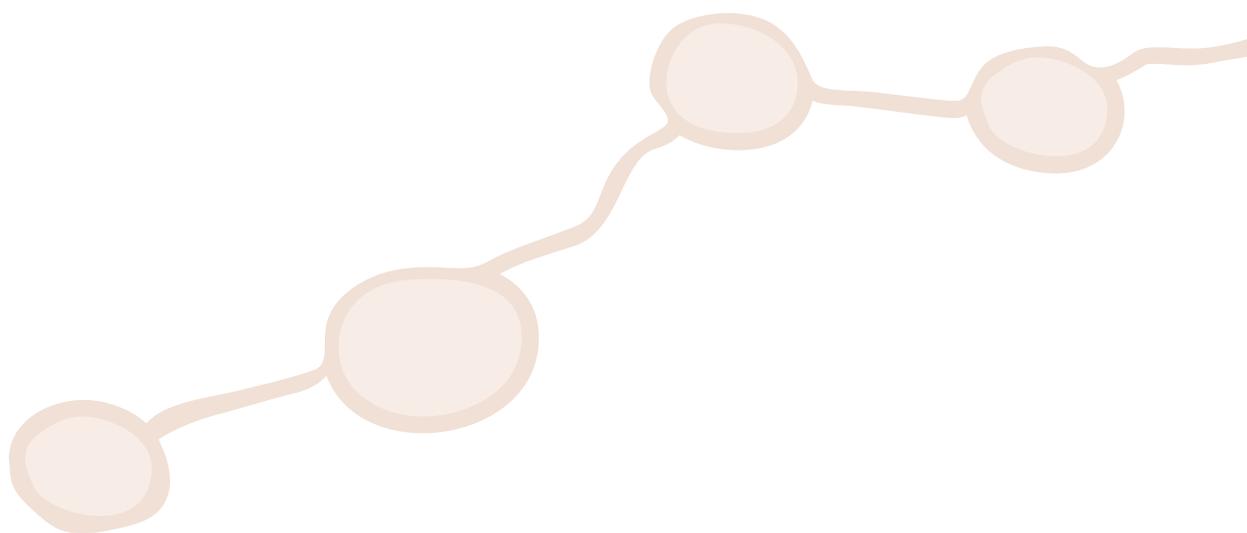
In 2002, 20.7% of Indigenous women experienced discrimination and or racism in the previous 12 months⁶⁸.

Key Messages:

In 2002, one in five Indigenous women perceived assault as a problem in their community and one in ten perceived sexual assault as a problem.

Indigenous women are significantly more likely to report being a victim of crime or witness to violence.

One in five Indigenous women experienced discrimination and or racism in 2002.



ⁱ The abuse of violent crime may have been experienced personally by Indigenous women or by someone close to them.

Chapter 6. Mature Aged Women

Summary List of Indicators for Indigenous Women

No.	Indicator	Data source	Frequency
Health and wellbeing			
6.1	Proportion self-reporting reporting excellent or very good health	NATSISS and GSS (ABS)	6 yearly
6.2	Proportion with a disability or long-term health condition		
6.3	Proportion who perceive ageing as positive	No available data	Data gap
Provision of care			
6.4	Proportion who are primary carers	No available data	Data gap
6.5	Proportion caring for children who are not their natural children		
Elder Abuse			
6.6	The prevalence of elder abuse among women aged 45 years and over	No available data	Data gap
Income			
6.7	Proportion living in the lowest income group (quintile)	NATSISS and GSS (ABS)	6 yearly
Superannuation and the age pension			
6.8	Proportion with superannuation coverage	No available data	N/A
6.9	Proportion reliant on government pensions/ benefits	Centrelink	Quarterly
Labour force participation			
6.10	Proportion employed in paid employment	NATSISS and GSS (ABS)	6 yearly
Housing			
6.11	Proportion owning their own home (with and without mortgage)	NATSISS and GSS (ABS)	6 yearly
Transport			
6.12	Proportion with access to motor vehicle(s)	NATSISS and GSS (ABS)	6 yearly
6.13	Proportion who can easily get to the places needed		
Computer usage			
6.14	Proportion using a computer at home in last 12 months	NATSISS and GSS (ABS)	6 yearly
6.15	Proportion accessing the Internet at home in last 12 months		

In recognition of the challenges and opportunities presented by an ageing population, policies and strategies that support active ageing have become a key focus of the State Government.

Seniors are generally defined as people aged 60 years and over. In 2004, women aged 60 years and over represented 17% of the total female population⁶⁹, while Indigenous women of the same age represented 5% of the total Indigenous female population. Given Indigenous women's lower life expectancies and patterns of fertility, this section focuses on a broader age range for Indigenous women - women aged 45 years and over, termed 'mature aged' women. Practical reasons also require a focus on a larger population group, as there are fewer data limitations for a population group which represents 16% of the total Indigenous female population.

While the other sections of this report are headed by an overarching issue of importance to women, this section is headed by a demographic group. Therefore, a number of the data items covering issues in other sections are repeated here according to age. Where possible comparisons have been made with non-Indigenous women or all women in Western Australia. Comparisons that are significant between mature women and younger women have also been highlighted.

Issue: Health and Wellbeing

Indicators to measure the health and wellbeing of Indigenous women are of critical importance given the lower life expectancy of Indigenous women. These are explored in more detail in the section on Health. The NATSISS and GSS however allow for some broader indicators of health and wellbeing to be analysed according to age.

Table 32 Women aged 18 years and over, Selected Health and Wellbeing Indicators, Western Australia, 2002

Age range (years)	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Rate Ratio (a)	
	18-44 (%)	45 + (%)	18-44 (%)	45 + (%)	18-44 (%)	45 + (%)
Proportion reporting excellent or very good health	37.2	12.7	72.3	47.4	0.5	0.3
Proportion with a disability or long-term health condition	34.3	48.9	29.1	52.8	1.2	0.9

(a) The rate ratio is the proportion of Indigenous women divided by the proportion of non-Indigenous women.

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

6.1: Self-reported health status

The rate ratio ⁱ, which compares the self-reported health status of Indigenous women and non-Indigenous women, shows that for ten non-Indigenous women reporting excellent or very good health, only three Indigenous women reported likewise.

The decline of the rate ratio from 0.5 for women aged 18-44 years to 0.3 for women aged 45 years and over shows that the number of Indigenous women compared to non-Indigenous women reporting excellent health declines with age.

ⁱ A number of data items have been weighted differently therefore to ensure comparability it has been necessary to compare the populations through a single rate ratio. The rate ratio is produced by dividing the proportion of Indigenous women in a particular category by the proportion of non-Indigenous women in that category.

6.2: Disabilities and long-term health conditions

For every non-Indigenous woman aged 18 to 44 years with a disability or long-term health condition, there were 1.2 Indigenous women of the same age. The rate ratio declines to 0.9 for women aged 45 years, showing that Indigenous women in the older age group are less likely to report a disability or long-term health condition than non-Indigenous women.

6.3: Positive ageing

Positive ageing reflects a woman's perception of her continuing value and contribution to society as she ages. The indicator is the proportion of Indigenous women (all ages) who perceive ageing as positive. In 2003, the Office for Seniors Interests undertook a survey of Western Australians perceptions of ageing⁷⁰. The survey showed that 53% of women in the State perceived ageing as a fair to very positive stage of life. However, there was no Indigenous status identifier in the survey questionnaire.

Related Data

Involvement in family life and community is important for Indigenous women's sense of well being and value to society. Participation in social activities and voluntary work as women age may provide some insight into the extent of positive ageing among Indigenous women and serve as a proxy indicator. The following data compares the proportion of Indigenous women who were involved in social activities and voluntary work, by age, with the proportion of non-Indigenous women.

Table 33 Women aged 18 years and over, Selected Family and Community Involvement Indicators, Western Australia, 2002

Age range (years)	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	18-24 (%)	25-44 (%)	45 + (%)	18-24 (%)	25-44 (%)	45 + (%)
Proportion of women involved in social activities in last 3 months	92.7	89.6	83.5	98.1	95.9	91.1
Proportion of women undertaking voluntary work in the last 12 months	*16.6	28.0	20.6	31.6	32.8	38.5

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

While a lower proportion of Indigenous women reported involvement in social activities than non-Indigenous women across all age groups, the difference between the two groups of women increased with age. In the 45 years and over age group, 83.5% of Indigenous women reported being involved in activities compared to 91.1% of non-indigenous women.

The proportion of non-Indigenous women undertaking voluntary work increases with age. In 2002, 38.5% of non-Indigenous women aged 45 years and over undertook some voluntary work in the last 12 months. For Indigenous women, the highest proportion undertaking voluntary work was found in the 25 to 44 years age group.

Key Messages:

Indigenous women are more likely to report a decline in health at a much younger age than non-Indigenous women.

Indigenous women aged 45 years and over are slightly less likely to report a disability or long-term health condition than non-Indigenous women of the same age.

Comparable information on Indigenous women's perceptions of ageing was not collected and reported in *A Report on the 2003 Seniors Week Community Awareness and Attitudes Survey*.

While involvement in social activities declines with age for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women, the proportion is consistently lower for Indigenous women and the difference between the two groups of women increases with age.

Issue: Provision of Care

As discussed in the section Family, Community and Culture, the burden of caring for the aged, young children and people with disabilities mainly falls on women. Given that caring rates of women in the total population are higher for mature aged women, the need to measure the caring responsibilities of mature Indigenous women (where the responsibility for caring is considered to be particularly pronounced) is important.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that a significant proportion of mature Indigenous women care for children who are not their natural children. Factors influencing the caring responsibilities of mature Indigenous women may include higher fertility rates, the earlier age at which Indigenous women often become grandparents, responsibilities arising from the extended family and kinshipⁱ structures and the related health care needs of Indigenous Australians (see Health section).

6.4: Primary carers

As discussed in the section on Family, Community and Culture, Indicator 4.1, information on female carers according to age in the total population is available from the five-yearly ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. However, the Indigenous status of respondents is not collected in this survey. Comparable data for Indigenous women are not available from any other known source.

Related Data

The Carer Paymentⁱⁱ is a Centrelink payment for carers who, because of their constant caring responsibilities at home, are unable to support themselves through participation in the workforce. In 2004, just over 2%ⁱⁱⁱ of Indigenous women aged 45 years and over were in receipt of the Carer Payment, compared to less than 1% of women in the same age range in the total population^{iv}.

The Parenting Payment^v provides financial help for people who are primary carers of children (ie the recipient may be a parent, grandparent or foster carer). In 2004 7% of Indigenous women aged 45 years and over received the Parenting Payment, compared with 1% of all women in the same age range in the total population⁷¹.

6.5: Caring for children (who are not natural children)

There are no sources of regular data on the relationship of Indigenous women to the children they care for.

ⁱ Kinship - refer to Glossary

ⁱⁱ Carer payments - refer to Glossary

ⁱⁱⁱ Proportions are based on Estimated Resident Populations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Projections. See Appendix.

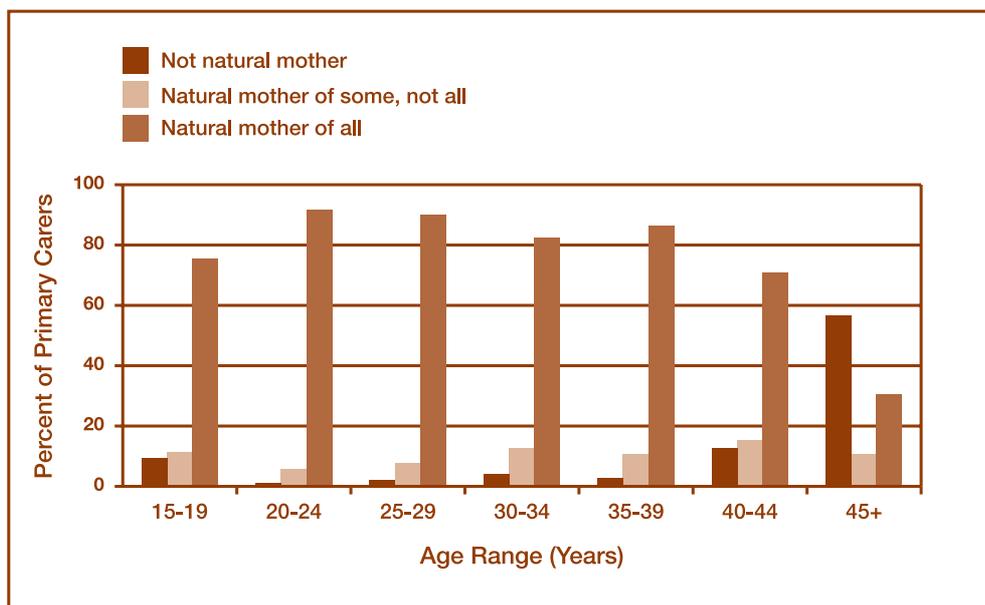
^{iv} This data only includes carers who receive selected Centrelink payments. The dataset does not cover all carers in the population. The Indigenous status of the recipient is not a mandatory reporting item and for 12% of payment recipients, the Indigenous status was unknown.

^v Parenting payment - refer to Glossary

Related Data

The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS) ⁱ provides some important insights into relationships between Indigenous children and their carers according to the age of the carer. Comparable data on primary carers of children are not currently available for women in the total population.

Figure 34 Indigenous women primary carers, Relationship to Indigenous Children in Their Care, Western Australia, 2000/01



Source: 2000-2001 Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey, Unpublished Data 2005.

In 2000/01, there were an estimated 9,630 Indigenous female primary carers ⁱⁱ of Indigenous children aged 0-17 years in Western Australia. As the figure above shows, of young women carers aged 15 to 19 years, 9% indicated that they were not the natural mother of the children in their care. A further 12% were the natural mother of some but not all the children in their care. It is likely that a number of these young women were caring for siblings. The group of women most likely to be caring for children for whom they were not the natural mother was highest for women aged 45 years and over (56%). A further 11% were the natural mother of some but not all the children in their care. It is likely that a number of these matured aged carers were the grandmothers of the children being cared for.

Key Messages:

Reliable indicator data on carers of the aged, people with disabilities and children are not currently available for the Indigenous population.

It is estimated that, in 2000/02, 67% of Indigenous women aged 45 years and over who were primary carers of Indigenous children (aged 0-17 years) had one or more children in their care who were not their natural children.

ⁱ See Family, Community and Culture, section 4.5 for further discussion of this survey.

ⁱⁱ The 'primary carer' is the person considered to spend the most time with the child or who had primary responsibility for the upbringing of the child.

Issue: Elder Abuse

A focus on the ageing population has been paralleled by an increasing focus on the abuse and neglect of older people. The report of a survey conducted for the Department for Community Development, the Office for Senior's Interests, entitled *Elder Abuse in Western Australia*⁷² explores the extent of elder abuse among people aged 60 years and over in Western Australia. The report found that women had an elder abuse prevalence rate 2.5 times that of men.

6.6: Elder abuse

Findings from the report *Elder Abuse in Western Australia* indicate that elder abuse may be more common among Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people. However a comparative prevalence rate for Indigenous women is not available.

Related Data

The table below shows the proportion of women who have been the victims of physical or threatened violence in the last 12 months according to age. This information may be considered a proxy indicator for elder abuse and has been expressed through a rate ratio.

Table 35 Women aged 18 years and over, Victims of Physical or Threatened Violence in Last 12 Months, Western Australia, 2002

	Age Range (years)		
	18-24 (%)	25-44 (%)	45+ (%)
Indigenous	31.1	29.3	13.5
Non-Indigenous	10.9	12.1	5.5
Rate Ratio	2.9	2.4	2.5

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

The rate ratio is highest for women aged 18 to 24 years. This means that for every non-Indigenous woman in that age group, almost three Indigenous women of the same age have been a victim of threatened violence in the last 12 months.

Key Messages:

An elder abuse prevalence rate is not available for Indigenous women.

In 2002, Indigenous women were victims of physical or threatened violence at a rate of two to three times higher than non-Indigenous women across all age groups. Younger Indigenous women were more likely to experience violence than Indigenous women aged 45 years and over.

Issue: Income

For women with no wealth accumulation, economic wellbeing is largely determined by their cash income. Low cash income impedes women's access to many of the goods and services needed in daily life.

6.7: Women living in the lowest income group (quintile) ⁱ

Information on the proportion of women living in each income group according to age has the potential to determine the extent of income inequality among mature aged Indigenous women.

Table 36 Women aged 18 years and over, Proportion in Weekly Household Income Group, Western Australia, 2002

Age Range (years)	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	18-24 (%)	25-44 (%)	45+ (%)	18-24 (%)	25-44 (%)	45+ (%)
Lowest income quintile	*38.5	43.3	45.8	15.1	14.5	25.0
Second income quintile	33.6	33.6	29.4	23.7	19.4	22.8
Third income quintile	14.3	13.9	10.4	26.8	21.7	19.5
Fourth and fifth income quintile	13.6	9.2	14.4	34.3	44.4	32.7

*Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

In 2002, 45.8% of Indigenous women aged 45 years and over were in the lowest income quintile. This shows a considerable degree of inequality, as the proportion of Indigenous women in that range should have been 20% if Indigenous women had the same distribution of household income as the total population.

The proportion of Indigenous women living in the lowest income range increases with age.

Issue: Superannuation and the Age Pension

Superannuation provides increased income in retirement and ensures that fewer women are reliant on the age pension.

6.8: Superannuation coverage

The most recent ABS survey on superannuation⁷³ shows that 28% of women aged 45 to 69 years in Western Australia have no superannuation. Of women with superannuation 45% have a total balance of between \$1 and \$4,999, compared with 29% of men. 11% of women and 26% of men have a balance over \$40,000.

There are no comparable data on Indigenous women's superannuation coverage. However given Indigenous women's weaker labour market attachment, above average levels of fertility and lower median weekly incomes, it is anticipated that Indigenous women have an even lower capacity to accumulate superannuation or save for retirement⁷⁴.

ⁱ Each quintile comprises 20% of the total population of Western Australia, ranked in ascending order according to gross household income. For further explanations of quintiles, refer to Glossary.

6.9: Reliance on government pensions/benefits

Centrelink data provides information on the number of Indigenous women receiving the age pension. In 2004, the total number of Indigenous women in receipt of the age pension in Western Australia averaged 740 per quarter (representing 41% of Indigenous women aged 60 years and over). For the total population of women, recipients averaged 93,826 per quarter (56% of all women aged 60 years and over). The lower proportion of Indigenous women in receipt of the age pension may be explained by the higher proportion of Indigenous women in receipt of other pensions and payments compared to all women in the State such as the Disability Support Pension (6% and 2% respectively⁷⁵).

Key Messages:

The data suggests that income inequality for Indigenous women compared to non-Indigenous women increases with age.

There are no comparable data on Indigenous women's superannuation coverage.

Issue: Labour Force Participation

For some mature women economic independence depends on access to paid employment. However, the barriers to employment opportunities for mature Indigenous women are multifaceted.

6.10: Labour force status

Table 37 Women aged 18 years and over, Labour Force Participation, Western Australia, 2002

Age Range (years)	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	18-24 (%)	25-44 (%)	45+ (%)	18-24 (%)	25-44 (%)	45+ (%)
Employed	46.9	46.4	31.6	66.1	66.3	42.9
Not employed (a)	53.1	53.6	68.4	33.9	33.7	57.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Due to high relative standard errors, 'unemployed' and 'not in the labour force' categories are combined into a single 'not employed' category'

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

While Indigenous women are less likely to be employed than non-Indigenous women across all age groups, the difference is more pronounced for women in younger age groups than for women aged 45 years and over. As section 2.4 identified, a significant proportion of employed Indigenous women are working in Community Development Employment Projects.

Key Messages:

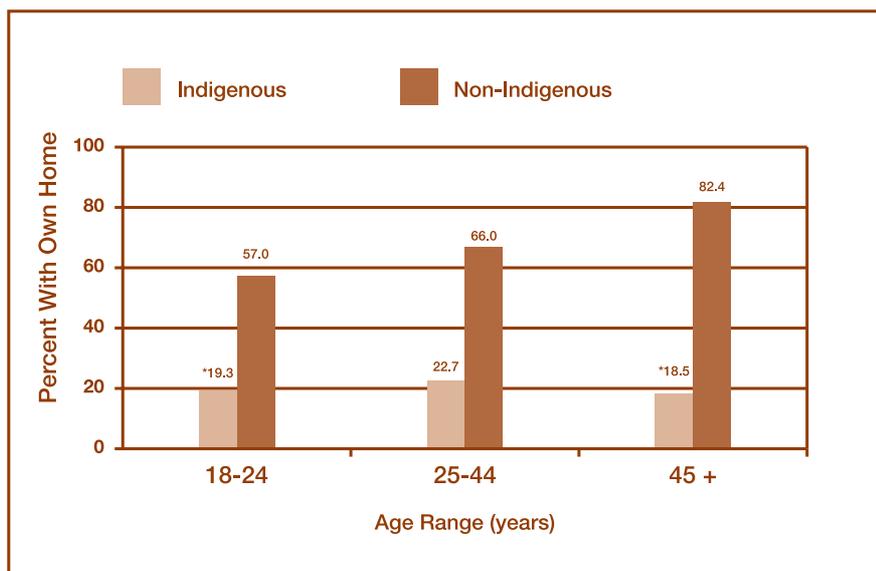
In 2002, less than one in three Indigenous women aged 45 years and over were employed, compared to over two in five non-Indigenous women of the same age.

Issue: Housing

While many discussions about the housing needs of Indigenous people tend to focus on the quality and size of the dwelling in relation to the number of occupants, housing tenure by age provides an insight into Indigenous women's ability to accumulate wealth and overall financial security later in life. Home ownership without a mortgage also provides more disposable cash income because there are no rents to be paid.

6.11: Home ownership

Figure 38 Women aged 18 years and over, Home Ownership (a), Western Australia, 2002



(a) Includes women with and without a mortgage.

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

The figures show that Indigenous women are significantly less likely to own their own home than non-Indigenous women across all age groups. The figures also suggest that the difference in proportions is highest for Indigenous women aged 45 years and over.

In 2002, the majority of Indigenous women lived in rented accommodation. For women aged 45 years and over, 76% of Indigenous women lived in rented accommodation compared to 15% of non-Indigenous women.

Key Messages:

The proportion of non-Indigenous women who report they own their own home increases substantially with age, while for Indigenous women the proportion remains consistently low across all age groups.

Issue: Transport

Transport is a significant issue for many Indigenous women, particularly mature Indigenous women and those living in more remote locations. Access to transport ensures that women are able to access the goods, services and programs they need and avoid social isolation.

Table 39 Women aged 18 years and over, Selected Transport and Accessibility Indicators, Western Australia, 2002

	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	Age Range (years)					
	18-24 (%)	25-44 (%)	45+ (%)	18-24 (%)	25-44 (%)	45+ (%)
Has access to motor vehicle(s) to drive	46.8	65.7	48.3	83.4	94.4	80.8
Can easily get to the places needed	65.7	67.2	74.4	70.2	90.0	82.8

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

6.12: Access to motor vehicle(s)

In 2002, almost half (48%) of all Indigenous women aged 45 years and over reported that they had access to motor vehicle/s to drive. This compares to 81% of non-Indigenous women in the same age range.

6.13: Mobility in the community

Mature aged Indigenous women could more easily get to the places they needed to (74%) than younger Indigenous women (66%). However, the proportion was smaller than non-Indigenous women (83%).

Key Messages:

In 2002, one in two Indigenous women aged 45 years and over had access to a motor vehicle to drive, compared to four in five non-Indigenous women in the same age range.

Three quarters of Indigenous women aged 45 years and over can easily get to the places needed.

Issue: Computer Usage

The computer and Internet ensure women are able to access readily available and up-to-date information. The computer and Internet are communication tools which can lessen social isolation, particularly for women in remote areas.

Table 40 Women aged 18 years and over, Computer and Internet Usage at Home in Last 12 Months, Western Australia, 2002

Age Range (years)	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous			Rate Ratio		
	18-24 (%)	25-44 (%)	45+ (%)	18-24 (%)	25-44 (%)	45+ (%)	18-24 (%)	25-44 (%)	45+ (%)
Used computer at home in last 12 months	30.3	27.8	*19.7	71.5	68.5	44.8	0.4	0.4	0.4
Accessed Internet at home in last 12 months	*16.2	15.1	*11.9	53.9	49.2	33.7	0.3	0.3	0.4

Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

Sources: *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0*

6.14: Computer usage at home

The rate ratio shows that non-Indigenous women aged 45 years and over were more than twice as likely to have used a computer at home in the last 12 months than Indigenous women of the same age.

6.15: Access to the Internet at home

Similarly, non-Indigenous women aged 45 years and over were more than twice as likely to have used the Internet at home in the last 12 months than Indigenous women of the same age.

Key Messages:

While computer and Internet usage declines with age for both Indigenous women and non-Indigenous women, non-Indigenous women aged 45 years and over were more than twice as likely to have used the computer and accessed the Internet than Indigenous women of the same age.

Chapter 7. Health and Disability

Summary List of Indicators for Indigenous Women

No.	Indicator	Data source	Frequency
Life expectancy and mortality			
7.1	Life expectancy at birth	Deaths Collection (ABS, cat. no. 3202.0)	5 yearly
7.2	Proportion of deaths by age group		Annual
7.3	Age-specific death rates		
7.4	Median age at death		
Causes of death			
7.5	Leading causes of death, (number, proportion, age-standardised rate)	Epidemiology Branch, Dept. of Health	Annual (aggregated data for previous 5 years)
7.6	Deaths from diabetes mellitus as a proportion of all deaths		
7.7	External causes of death as a proportion of all deaths		
Health risk factors			
7.8	Smoking	NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
7.9	Alcohol consumption		
7.10	Substance use		
7.11	Exercise level	Not currently available for WA	Data gap
7.12	Nutrition (consumption of fruit and vegetables)		
7.13	Body mass index		
Self-assessed health status			
7.14	Proportion of women reporting excellent/very good health	NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
Disability			
7.15	Proportion with a long-term health condition or disability	NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
7.16	Proportion with a profound/severe core activity restriction		
Mental health and wellbeing			
7.17	Proportion with a current mental health condition	NATSISS (ABS)	6 yearly
7.18	Experience of stressor(s) in previous 12 months		
7.19	Hospitalisation rates for intentional self-harm	Epidemiology Branch, Health Information Centre, WA Dept. of Health	Annual
Maternal and sexual health			
7.20	Age-specific fertility rates (births to teenage mothers)	ABS births collection (cat. no. 3301.0)	Annual
7.21	Incidence of sexually transmissible diseases (number, age-standardised rates for chlamydia and gonorrhoea)	Epidemiology Branch Dept. of Health	Annual
7.22	Participation rate in cervical cancer screening (20-69 years as per AIHW target group)	n/a	Data gap
7.23	Participation rate in breast cancer screening (target 50-69 years)	Breastscreen WA	Annual (aggregated over 5 years)

Issue: Life Expectancy and Mortality

Life expectancy at birth is widely viewed as a key health indicator for both the Indigenous and total population. Indigenous life expectancy estimates produced by the ABS are “experimental” as standard methods of calculation cannot be applied due to volatility in Indigenous census counts and deficiencies in Indigenous identification in death registrations.

Recently released estimates of Indigenous life expectancy by the ABS⁷⁶ are assessed to be adequate for preparing experimental population estimates and projections. However, the ABS advises that “over-precise analysis of the life expectancy estimates as measures of Indigenous health outcomes should be avoided”⁷⁷.

The use of life expectancy estimates to measure future change in the health outcomes of Indigenous people will require extreme caution as further improvements in the quality of deaths data and in methods of measuring Indigenous mortality occurⁱ. For this reason additional indicators of Indigenous mortality, including age at death, age-specific death rates and median age at death are used in this report. These measure different aspects of mortality and are available annually from the ABS deaths collection⁷⁸.

Differences in mortality levels between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population are difficult to establish conclusively. One of the issues impacting on the measurement of Indigenous mortality is the ‘coverage’ of Indigenous deathsⁱⁱ in the death registration system⁷⁹.

7.1: Life expectancy at birth

ABS experimental estimates indicate that an Indigenous girl born in Western Australia in the period 1996-2001 could expect to live 67.2 years while an Indigenous boy could expect to live 58.5 years⁸⁰. Estimated life expectancy at birth was between two and three years more for Indigenous females in Western Australia than for Indigenous females nationally (64.8 years).

The most recent life expectancy figures for the total population relate to the period 2001-2003. In the total population, girls born in Western Australia between those years could expect to live 82.8 years (compared with 77.8 years for boys)⁸¹.

Key Messages:

Use of experimental estimates of life expectancy to measure change in the health outcomes of Indigenous people requires extreme caution owing to continuing improvements in deaths data and in the methods of estimating Indigenous mortality.

It is estimated that the life expectancy of Indigenous girls born in Western Australia between 1996 and 2001 was approximately 15 years less than the life expectancy of girls in the total population.

Indigenous girls born between 1996 and 2001 could expect to live almost nine years longer than Indigenous boys born in that period. This compares with a five year difference in life expectancy between females and males in the total population.

7.2: Proportion of deaths by age group

Care should be taken when analysing Indigenous deaths by age as differences in implied coverage ratesⁱⁱⁱ may lead to biased results.

Observed deaths of Indigenous and non-Indigenous females in 2003 in Western Australia are shown for all ages in the following table.

ⁱ Collaborative work is being undertaken by the ABS and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to improve Indigenous mortality estimates.

ⁱⁱ Coverage of Indigenous deaths is the ratio of observed to expected deaths.

ⁱⁱⁱ Implied coverage is the ratio of observed to expected deaths

Table 41 Age at death, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Females (a), Western Australia, 2003

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	no.	%	no.	%
Age (years)				
0	14	10.4	29	0.6
1-14	5	3.7	28	0.5
15-24	6	4.5	39	0.8
25-34	10	7.5	62	1.2
35-44	11	8.2	103	2.0
45-54	21	15.7	215	4.2
55-64	21	15.7	375	7.3
65 and over	46	34.3	4,308	83.5
Total (b)	134	100.0	5,159	100.0

(a) Not stated Indigenous origin deaths have not been prorated over Indigenous and non-Indigenous deaths. As a result, Indigenous and non-Indigenous deaths may be underestimated.

(b) Includes age at death not stated

Source: *Deaths, Australia, 2003*, ABS, (cat.no.3302.0)

Whereas the majority (83%) of deaths in the non-Indigenous female population occurred at 65 years or over, only a third (34%) of the Indigenous female deaths were in this age group. In all other age groups, the mortality level was higher among Indigenous females.

Key Message:

In 2003, mortality levels in Western Australia were substantially higher among Indigenous females than non-Indigenous females in all age groups except 65 years and over.

7.3: Age-specific death rates

Age-specific death rates ⁱ for Western Australia and South Australia are provided in the table below for the period 1996-2001 ⁱⁱ. Rates for the years beyond 2001 are not calculated due to the lack of reliable death registration data.

ⁱ Age-specific death rates are the number of deaths (occurring or registered) in the calendar year at a specified age per 1,000 of the estimated resident population of the same age at 30 June.

ⁱⁱ For data quality reasons, the ABS currently produces Indigenous age-specific death rates by combining data for some states and territories.

Table 42 Experimental age-specific death rates (a), Indigenous Persons, Western Australia and South Australia, 1996-2001

	Females	Males
Age (years)	rate	rate
0	13.25	16.28
1-4	2.75	5.56
5-9	0.82	2.36
10-14	2.53	3.11
15-19	6.37	14.55
20-24	7.11	20.89
25-29	10.15	28.68
30-34	13.68	41.25
35-39	23.64	51.31
40-44	31.38	68.21
45-49	45.37	89.48
50-54	66.58	117.72
55-59	97.84	156.54
60-64	143.78	209.70
65-69	181.95	254.62
70-74	230.98	326.09
45-79	329.31	408.35
80-84	462.90	501.54
85 and over	1,000.00	1,000.00

(a) Per 1,000 of the estimated resident population at June 2001.

Source: *Deaths Australia, 2003, ABS (cat.no.3302.0)*

In the period 1996-2001, estimated death rates in Western Australia were lower for females than males in all age groups 0-84 years.

After the age of 15 years, the rates for males increased significantly and in the 'young adult population' (20-34 years) were about three times higher than the rates for females.

Key Messages:

In 1996-2001, age-specific death rates among Indigenous females were substantially below the rates for males in all age groups under 85 years.

7.4: Median age at death

The median age at death represents the age at which exactly half the deaths registered (or occurring) in a given year were deaths of people above that age and half were deaths of people below that ageⁱ.

Median age at death values are influenced by the age structure of a population. Because the Indigenous population has a younger age structure than the non-Indigenous population, this will be reflected in the median age of death of the two populations⁸².

This indicator of mortality is published for Indigenous females in five state/territory jurisdictions including Western Australia.

Table 43 Median age at death (a), Females, 2003

	NSW	Qld	SA	NT	WA
Indigenous	58.9	62.1	50.0	52.8	55.0
Non-Indigenous	82.7	82.2	83.2	74.5	82.4

(a) Not stated Indigenous origin deaths have not been prorated over Indigenous and non-Indigenous deaths. As a result, Indigenous and non-Indigenous deaths may be underestimated.

Source: *Deaths Australia, 2003, ABS (cat.no.3302.0)*

In 2003, the median age at death for Indigenous females was higher in Western Australia (55 years) than in South Australia and the Northern Territory but lower than in New South Wales and Queensland. Across the jurisdictions, this mortality indicator ranged between 50 and 62 years.

In comparison, the median age at death for non-Indigenous females was similar in most states being above 82 years in four out of five jurisdictions including Western Australia.

Over the last few years, the median age at death among Indigenous females in Western Australia has been quite variable, ranging from 53 years in 2002 to 57 years in 1998. Once again, this may reflect the variable quality of the Indigenous deaths data. However, there has been a fairly steady increase in the median age at death for non-Indigenous females, from 81.1 years in 1998 to 82.4 years.

The 25-30 year differential in the median age at death between Indigenous and non-Indigenous females in Western Australia is attributable, in part, to the different age structure of the two populations.

Key Messages:

In line with other mortality indicators, the median age at death indicates that the mortality level of Indigenous females in Western Australia is substantially higher than for non-Indigenous females.

Out of five jurisdictions, WA ranked third in the median age at death of Indigenous females.

Issue: Causes of Death

The leading causes of death are key indicators in monitoring the health status of the Western Australian population. Understanding the leading causes of death among Indigenous women is critical to the appropriate targeting of services and preventative programs in the field of health.

Cardiovascular disease and cancer are responsible for most female deaths in Western Australia. For Indigenous women, some additional concerns relating to mortality are reflected in the selected indicators.

ⁱ Caution is required when interpreting median age of death values for the Indigenous population. Differences in implied coverage rates may lead to biased results: for example, where there is higher coverage of infant deaths than deaths in other age groups, the median age at death will be underestimated.

7.5: Leading causes of death

The leading causes of death among Indigenous women in Western Australia are provided below for the five-year period 1998-2003⁸³.

Age-standardised death rates enable the comparison of death rates between populations with different age structures by relating them to a standard population (currently the total Australian resident population at June 2001).

Table 44 Females aged 15 years and over: Leading Causes of Death(a): Western Australia, 1999-2003

	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous			Total(b)		
	no.	%	rate(c)	no.	%	rate(c)	no.	%	rate(c)
All Causes	624	100	1,348.7	23,645	100	601.0	25,218	100	636.1
Diseases of the circulatory system	166	26.6	403.5	9,204	38.9	226.4	9,730	38.6	238.0
Ischaemic heart diseases	90	14.4	213.0	4,400	18.6	108.8	4,670	18.5	114.9
Cerebrovascular diseases	34	5.4	86.1	2,586	10.9	63.3	2,716	10.8	66.1
Neoplasms	104	16.7	236.4	6,617	28.0	177.8	6,971	27.6	185.2
Malignant neoplasm of breast	13	2.1	31.5	1,088	4.6	29.3	1,144	4.5	30.5
Malignant neoplasm of digestive organs	30	4.8	67.1	1,808	7.6	48.2	1,894	7.5	50.0
Malignant neoplasm of bronchus and lung	19	3.0	45.8	1,047	4.4	28.7	1,110	4.4	30.2
Diabetes mellitus	93	14.9	227.5	562	2.4	14.4	683	2.7	17.6
External causes	69	11.0	76.0	1,057	4.5	27.4	1,187	4.7	30.2
Transport accidents	25	4.0	25.8	197	0.8	5.3	239	0.9	6.3
Intentional self-harm	7	1.1	4.2	242	1.0	6.6	265	1.0	7.0
Assault	11	1.8	9.4	26	0.1	0.7	39	0.2	1.0
All other external causes	26	4.2	36.6	592	2.5	14.8	644	2.6	15.9
Diseases of the respiratory system	46	7.4	118.3	1,835	7.8	46.3	1,947	7.7	48.8
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	14	2.2	35.6	646	2.7	16.8	681	2.7	17.6
Diseases of the digestive system	37	5.9	61.6	889	3.7	22.6	954	3.8	24.0
Diseases of liver	24	3.8	26.9	145	0.6	4.0	175	0.7	4.7
Mental and behavioural disorders	9	1.4	19.0	715	3.0	17.1	749	3.0	17.8

(a) Based on the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10). Ranked in order of leading causes among Indigenous females

(b) Includes females for whom Indigenous status was not reported

(c) Age-standardised rate per 100,000 females. Standardised with total Australian population in June 2001.

Source: *Epidemiology, Health Information Centre Department of Health WA, unpublished data, Feb 2005.*

In the five years ending December 2003, the leading causes of death among Indigenous women in Western Australia were diseases of the circulatory system (cardiovascular diseases), accounting for 27% of the deaths of Indigenous females aged 15 years and over. These included ischaemic heart disease and cerebrovascular disease (stroke), which together were responsible for one in five deaths among Indigenous women.

Although diseases of the circulatory system accounted for a larger proportion of deaths among non-Indigenous women (39%), the age-standardised death rate associated with these conditions was considerably higher among Indigenous women. Diseases of the circulatory system were responsible for 403 deaths per 100,000 women in the Indigenous population and 226 deaths per 100,000 women in the non-Indigenous population. The age-standardised death rate for ischaemic heart disease among Indigenous women (213) was approximately twice as high as for non-Indigenous women (109).

Malignant neoplasms (cancers) ranked as the second leading cause of death in both the Indigenous and total female population, accounting for 17% and 28% of all deaths respectively. While the age-standardised rate of breast cancer was similar in the two populations, the rates for cancers of the digestive organs and bronchus/lung were substantially higher among Indigenous women.

7.6: Deaths from diabetes

Although diabetes mellitus is responsible for only a small proportion of non-Indigenous deaths, it is a significant cause of death among the Indigenous population. Between 1999 and 2003, it ranked as the third most common cause of death among Indigenous women (15% compared with 2% for non-Indigenous women). After age-standardisation, the death rate from this condition was 16 times higher among Indigenous women than non-Indigenous women.

7.7: Deaths from external causes (transport accidents, self-harm, assault, other)

Indigenous women are much more likely than other women in the Western Australian population to die from external causes (injury and poisoning). Between 1999 and 2003, external causes accounted for 11% of all deaths of Indigenous women in Western Australia, compared with fewer than 5% of all deaths of non-Indigenous women.

Motor vehicle accidents were the biggest single contributor to this category. After adjustments for the different age structure of the two populations, the Indigenous rate of death from motor vehicle accidents was five times higher than the non-Indigenous rate.

Key Messages:

Between 1999 and 2003, the leading causes of death among Indigenous women were diseases of the circulatory system (heart disease and stroke) and cancer.

The age-standardised death rate from ischaemic heart disease was twice as high for Indigenous women as non-Indigenous women.

The age-standardised death rates from diabetes were 16 times higher for Indigenous women than for non-Indigenous women while death rates from motor vehicle accidents were five times higher.

Issue: Health Risk Factors

As many of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity in the Indigenous and total population are related to behavioural factors, including diet, exercise, smoking and alcohol consumption, indicators which measure the prevalence of these behaviours are critical in monitoring the health status of any population group.

Six health-risk factors have been selected as indicators for Indigenous women in Western Australia. These factors are widely recognised as an important component of the greater burden of ill-health experienced by Indigenous people⁸⁴.

Indigenous data on smoking, alcohol consumption and substance usage are available at state level from the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS). The data below relate to females aged 18 years and over. Due to the perceived sensitivity of these data items, it is likely that some under-reporting of risk behaviours occurred.

Table 45 Indigenous females aged 18 years or over: Selected risk behaviours by remoteness, Western Australia, 2002

	Remote (%)	Non-remote (%)	Total (%)
Smoker status			
Current daily/occasional smoker	49.4	44.7	47.2
Ex-smoker	17.9	15.5	16.8
Never smoked	32.7	39.6	35.9
Alcohol consumption level in last 12 months			
Low risk	49.9	34.0	42.7
Risky/high risk	7.8	20.6	13.6
Did not consume alcohol in last 12 months	28.0	38.8	32.9
Type of substances used in last 12 months(a)(b)			
Used substances in last 12 months(c)			
Amphetamines or Speed	na	0.3	na
Marijuana, Hashish or Cannabis Resin	na	11.0	na
Total used substances in last 12 months	na	13.7	na
Has used substances, but not in last 12 months	na	9.8	na
Has never used substances	na	74.0	na
Indigenous females aged 18 years or over (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0
Indigenous females aged 18 years or over (No. '000)	10.4	8.6	19.0

(a) Data only available for non-remote areas

(b) Respondents may have indicated more than one response category

(c) Not all categories are shown for this data item.

na not available

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, unpublished data.

7.8: Smoking

In 2002, almost half (47%) of Indigenous women aged 18 years and over in Western Australia were current smokers. A further 17% were ex-smokers while 36% had never smoked.

The proportion of women who had never smoked was higher in non-remote ⁱ areas (40%) compared with remote areas (33%).

In non-remote areas, Indigenous women were much less likely to smoke than Indigenous men (45% compared with 58%).

7.9: Alcohol consumption

From the NATSISS it is estimated that, in 2002, one third (33%) of Indigenous women in Western Australia had not drunk any alcohol during the previous 12 months. This compares with 21% of Indigenous men.

Risky or high risk levels of alcohol consumption ⁱⁱ were reported by 14% of Indigenous women across the state. However, high risk behaviour was much less common in remote areas (8%) than non-remote areas (21%).

In remote areas, Indigenous men were twice as likely to engage in risky/high risk alcohol consumption as women (15% compared with 8%).

Previous surveys have shown that Indigenous Australians are less likely than non-Indigenous Australians to drink alcohol but, when they do so, they are more likely to consume it at hazardous levels⁸⁵.

7.10: Substance usage

This refers to the use of substances for non-medical or recreational purposes including: analgesics, tranquilisers, amphetamines, marijuana, heroin, cocaine, hallucinogens, ecstasy and other designer drugs, petrol and other inhalants, and kava.

Information collected in the NATSISS on substance use of persons living in remote areas of the state has not been released due to data quality concerns. In non-remote areas, almost three-quarters (74%) of Indigenous women reported they had never used any substances while a further 10% had not used any in the previous 12 months.

Almost 14% of Indigenous women in these areas reported they had used one or more of the listed substances in the previous 12 months compared with 26% of Indigenous men. Most of these women had used marijuana.

7.11: Exercise level

To date, no reliable sources of data on the exercise levels of Indigenous women in Western Australia have been identified. Comparative data from the NATSISS and GSS show that, in 2002, 44% of Indigenous women in Western Australia had participated in sporting or physical activities during the previous 12 months, compared with 74% of non-Indigenous women and 55% of Indigenous men. Neither the NATSISS nor GSS provides information on the frequency, intensity or duration of the physical activities undertaken.

ⁱ Remote and non-remote - refer to Glossary.

ⁱⁱ Measure of risk - refer to Glossary.

7.12: Nutrition (daily consumption of fruit and vegetables)

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommends that a balanced diet should include plenty of fruit and vegetables, reduced fat dairy foods and limited intake of saturated/total fat and salt⁸⁶.

The *WA Health and Surveillance System* collects some information on the nutritional intake of women and men in the general state population but cannot provide reliable data for the Indigenous population. To date, no reliable data sources on the nutritional intake of the Indigenous population of Western Australia have been identified.

The 2001 NHS provides national data on the dietary behaviours of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population in non-remote-areas (see Related data below) but reliable data for the Indigenous population are not available at the state level.

Related data

Estimates from the 2001 NHS indicate that 42% of Indigenous adults and 52% of non-Indigenous adults living in non-remote areas had a medium to high fruit intake. However, 83% of Indigenous adults were estimated to have a medium to high vegetable intake compared with 77% of the non-Indigenous population⁸⁷.

While these statistics do not tell us specifically about the dietary behaviours of Indigenous women in Western Australia, it is known that Indigenous people living in remote communities across Australia do not have access to the same range and cost options for healthy food as people living in non-remote areas. It therefore seems likely that nutritional intake will be influenced more by remoteness than by sex or the state in which Indigenous people live.

7.13: Body mass index

Body mass is an indicator of past and current health and a predictor of future health. Being underweight may reflect poor nutrition or illness while obesity is a risk factor for a number of health conditions including diabetes and heart disease.

Currently, there are no identified sources of data on the body mass of Indigenous women in Western Australia. As with other health risk indicators, the *WA Health and Surveillance System* is unable to provide reliable data for the Indigenous population while NHS data on Indigenous women and men are only available at the national level.

Related data

In the 2001 NHS, the body mass index (BMI) ⁱ was calculated for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians using self-reported height and weight measurements. It should be noted that self-reported measurements are likely to underestimate the BMI.

Results from the 2001 NHS indicate that Indigenous women in each age group were more likely to be classified as obese than non-Indigenous women of the same age. While there are no specific statistics for Western Australia, it is likely that national trends will be mirrored in most states.

ⁱ Body mass index - refer to Glossary.

Key Messages:

In 2002, over one-third (36%) of Indigenous women in Western Australia had never smoked. This figure increased to 40% in non-remote areas.

About one third (33%) of Indigenous women reported they had not consumed any alcohol in the previous 12 months. Among the Indigenous population, women in remote areas (8%) were less likely to engage in hazardous levels of alcohol consumption than women in non-remote areas (21%).

In non-remote areas, Indigenous women were much less likely to have used substances for non-medical purposes than Indigenous men (14% compared with 26%).

There are significant gaps in the data available on the exercise levels, diet and body mass index (BMI) of women in the Indigenous population, particularly for remote areas. These data gaps may be addressed by outputs from the 2004/5 National Indigenous Health Survey.

Issue: Self-Assessed Health Status

Self-assessed health status relates to survey respondents' assessment of their own health, using a five-point scale ranging from excellent to poor. As this measure is dependent on individuals' awareness and expectation of their own health, it may be influenced by access to health services and health information.

7.14: Proportion of women reporting excellent or very good health

Overall differences in health status between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women may be affected by differences in the age structure of the two populations. Age is an important determinant of health, with consistently higher rates of ill-health reported among older age groups. Age-standardised data, which remove the effects of age differences in the populations, are provided in the table below.

Table 46 Females aged 18 years and over(a): Self-assessed health status, Western Australia, 2002

	Indigenous (%)	Non-Indigenous (%)
Self-assessed health status		
Excellent/very good	24.1	59.9
Good	38.6	25.0
Fair/poor	37.2	15.2

(a) Estimates in this table have been age-standardised to the age composition of the estimated Australian resident population at 30 June 2001.

Source: 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey and General Social Survey, unpublished data.

After adjustments for differences in age structure, results indicate that less than a quarter (24%) of Indigenous women in Western Australia had excellent or very good health status. In comparison, the corresponding proportion among non-Indigenous women was 60%. The proportion of Indigenous women with fair or poor health status was more than twice that of non-Indigenous women.

Key Message:

In 2002, Indigenous women in Western Australia were much less likely than non-Indigenous women to perceive their overall health as excellent or very good.

Issue: Disability

People with disabilities or long-term health conditions are likely to experience disadvantage in many aspects of life. They are less likely than other members of the community to be involved in social activities and more likely to experience employment and transport difficulties, particularly if they have a core activity restriction ⁱ of a profound or severe nature.

The following indicators provide baseline data on the prevalence of disability and core activity restriction among Indigenous women in Western Australia ⁱⁱ.

Table 47 Females aged 18 years or over: Selected disability characteristics (a), Western Australia, 2002

	Indigenous(b) (%)	Non-Indigenous (%)
Disability status		
<i>Has a disability or long-term health condition</i>		
Has profound/severe core activity restriction	*8.7	6.0
Total with a disability or long-term health condition (c)	56.2	41.0
Has no disability or long-term health condition	43.8	59.0
Disability type (d)		
Sight, hearing, speech	18.9	9.4
Physical	42.0	29.1
Intellectual	*6.7	*1.9
Total with a disability or long-term health condition (c)	56.2	41.0
All persons aged 18 years or over (%)	100	100

*Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50%. These data should be used with caution as the sampling error variability is too high for most practical purposes.

(a) Estimates in this table have been age-standardised to the age composition of the total estimated resident population at 30 June 2001.

(b) The Indigenous data relate to non-remote areas only.

(c) Not all categories are shown for this data item.

(d) Respondents may have indicated more than one response category.

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

ⁱ Core activity restriction refers to a limitation in the performance of one or more core activities such as mobility, communication or self-care (eating, washing, dressing, toileting).

ⁱⁱ Due to differences in the way disability data were collected in remote and non-remote areas, comparisons with non-Indigenous women are limited to Indigenous women living in non-remote areas.

7.15: Disability rates

When the effects of age differences were removed, the disability rate among Indigenous women was 1.4 times higher than among non-Indigenous women (56% compared with 41%). Rates among Indigenous women were higher for sensory (sight, hearing, speech), physical and intellectual disability types.

7.16: Core activity restriction

Indigenous women also appear to have a higher prevalence of profound or severe core activity restriction than non-Indigenous women (9% compared with 6% after age-standardisation). However, these results are not conclusive due to high variability in sampling error.

Key Messages:

In 2002, Indigenous women were more likely than non-Indigenous women in Western Australia to have a disability or long-term health condition. Results also suggest that a greater proportion of Indigenous women also have a core activity restriction but these results are not conclusive.

Issue: Mental Health and Wellbeing

To date there are few sources of data on the mental health and well-being of Indigenous Australians. This is due in part to recognition that measures previously used in surveys of the mainstream population may not be culturally appropriate for Indigenous people, particularly those living in more traditional or isolated communities. Some exploratory work has been carried out by the ABS in this area and it is expected that additional indicator items will be collected in the Indigenous component of future National Health Surveys.

Three indicators are suggested below, one of which aims to measure the prevalence of mental illness among Indigenous women. No data sources have been identified for this indicator. The other two indicators measure aspects of mental health indirectly through stressors experienced in the previous 12 months and hospitalisations due to attempted suicide or intentional self-harm.

7.17: Mental health conditions

The ABS Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing provides detailed information on the mental health conditions of Australian women and men⁸⁸. Currently, there are no sources providing comparable data for Indigenous women in Western Australia.

Related Data

In the 2002 NATSISS, people who reported a long-term disability or health condition were classified according to the type(s) of disability they had. One of the available output categories was psychological disability. However this data item is only available for persons in non-remote areas and there are no comparable data for the non-Indigenous population.

Of the 11,400 Indigenous women aged 15 years and over in non-remote areas of Western Australia, an estimated 15% had a psychological disability. While the comparable figure for Indigenous men was lower (11%), this is subject to high sampling variability and should be treated with caution.

Among Indigenous women, psychological disability was the second most common condition after physical disability. These two categories accounted for 31% and 66% respectively of women with a disability.

7.18: Stressors experienced in the previous 12 months

Low stress levels are thought to contribute positively to mental health and wellbeing. In the 2002 NATSISS, data were collected on personal stressors experienced in the previous 12 months (see section 4 on Family, Community and Culture).

Eight out of ten Indigenous women in Western Australia reported at least one stressor compared with six out of ten non-Indigenous women. The most common stressor among Indigenous women was the death of someone close. Many women experienced more than one stressor over the 12 month period.

Mental illness was reported as a stressor by 14% of Indigenous women who had personally experienced it, or had someone close to them experience it. The comparable proportion for non-Indigenous women was slightly lower, at just under 12%.

7.19: Hospitalisation rates for intentional self-harm

Hospitalisation rates for intentional self-harm shed light on another aspect of the mental health of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women although they clearly do not include all cases of self-harm/attempted suicide or measure the incidence of any associated mental health condition.

The table below shows that after adjustment for age differences in the two populations, the hospitalisation rate for intentional self-harm was 2.4 times higher among Indigenous women than non-Indigenous women in the five years ending December 2003.

Table 48 Hospitalisations of women for intentional self-harm, Western Australia, 1999-2003(a)

	no.	rate(b)	CI
Indigenous	647	4.8	4.4 - 5.2
Non-Indigenous	7,300	2.0	1.9 - 2.0
Total (c)	7,947	2.1	2.0 - 2.1

(a) Data for 2003 are preliminary

(b) Rate is age-standardised with the total Australian resident population at June 2001 and expressed per 1,000 persons years.

(c) Includes some cases where Indigenous status is not stated

Source: Overview of hospitalisations due to suicide and self-inflicted injury among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents of the State (aged 15+ years). Epidemiology Branch, HIC, Department of Health. February 2005.

Key Messages:

In 2002, 14% of Indigenous women had personally, or had someone close to them, experience a mental illness during the previous 12 months.

Indigenous women are more likely to experience poor mental health than non-Indigenous women.

Issue: Maternal and Sexual Health

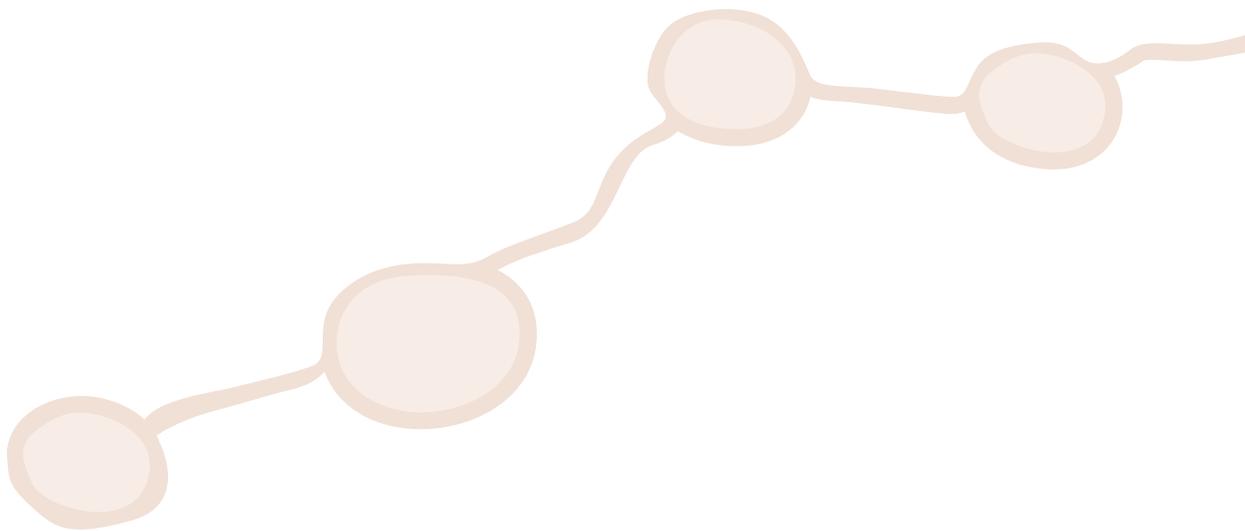
Declining fertility rates among young women aged 15-24 years are generally associated with higher levels of participation in post-compulsory education and better labour force outcomes. In addition, teenage mothers are more likely to experience complications in pregnancy, give birth to low birth weight babies and experience higher perinatal death rates⁸⁹.

In the total population, the proportion of births to teenage mothers has been in decline since the 1960s. While this trend has also been evident in the Indigenous population, teenage fertility among Indigenous women remains relatively high. The age-specific fertility rate of women under the age of 20 years is therefore considered to be a key indicator for Indigenous women.

Other measures of maternal and sexual health have been selected as indicators because they reflect areas where Indigenous women continue to experience poorer health outcomes than women in the total population.

7.20: Age-specific fertility rates (births to teenage mothers)

A comparison of the 2003 age-specific fertility ratesⁱ for Indigenous and all women in the Western Australian population, using data from the ABS registered births collection, is provided below.



ⁱ Age-specific fertility rates - refer to Glossary.

Table 49 Registered births(a); Age of Mother, Western Australia, 2003

	Births to Indigenous mothers	Births to All mothers
Age of mother	No.	No.
19 years and under	315	1,286
20-24 years	429	3,731
25-29 years	321	6,764
30-34 years	189	8,067
35-39 years	81	3,695
40-44 years	16	684
45 years and over	-	37
Age-specific fertility rates(b)		
15-19 years	87.0	18.6
20-24 years	143.8	56.1
25-29 years	122.3	103.7
30-34 years	68.5	109.5
35-39 years	33.9	50.6
40-44 years	7.8	8.9
45-49 years	1.3	0.5
Median age of mother (years)	24.1	30.2

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Coverage of Indigenous births ⁱ for 1998-2003 has been estimated at 91% on 2001 census based projections

(b) Indigenous rates are derived from the 2003 experimental projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population based on the 2001 Census. Births to mothers under 15 years are included in the 15-19 years age group, and births to mothers aged 50 years and over are included in the 45-49 years age group.

Source: *Births, 2003*, ABS (cat. No. 3301.0)

In 2003, age-specific fertility rates in the younger age groups (15-29 years) were higher for Indigenous women while rates in the age groups 30-44 years were higher for women in the total population. Among Indigenous women, the 20-24 age group showed the highest fertility rate whereas among women in the total population, the highest rate was recorded in the 30-34 age group.

In 2003, the fertility rate of teenage women was between four and five times higher in the Indigenous population than in the total population. For those in the 20-24 age group, the Indigenous rate was between two and three times higher.

ⁱ Indigenous births - refer to Glossary.

7.21: Maternal health during pregnancy

The birth weight of a baby can provide an indication of the mother's health and antenatal care during pregnancy. Between 2000 and 2004, Indigenous women were more likely to give birth to underweight ⁱ babies than non-Indigenous women. In that five-year period, 15% of babies born to Indigenous mothers in Western Australia were reported as underweight, compared with 6% of babies born to non-Indigenous mothers.

Related data

The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS) collected information on substances used during pregnancy by the mothers of Indigenous children. In 2000-2001, there were an estimated 24,000 Indigenous children aged 0-17 years in Western Australia whose primary carer was the birth mother. Of these, 85% had an Indigenous mother, 14% had a non-Indigenous mother and 1% had a mother whose Indigenous status was not stated ⁱⁱ.

The WAACHS showed that approximately one half of the birth mothers had used tobacco products in pregnancy, including 46% who had smoked cigarettes and a further 3% who had chewed tobacco. Almost one quarter (23%) of the birth mothers had consumed alcohol in pregnancy while 9% has used marijuana.⁹⁰

Women who had used alcohol and/or tobacco in pregnancy tended to have lower birth weight babies. The proportion of babies below 2,500 grams at birth ranged from 8% for mothers who had used neither tobacco nor alcohol in pregnancy to 15% of those who had used both substances⁹¹.

7.22: Sexually transmissible infections

The two most commonly reported sexually transmissible infections among Western Australian women are chlamydia and gonorrhoea. These infections are most prevalent among young adult, sexually active populations.

As the public health authority must be notified of all diagnosed cases, annual notification data are available from the Western Australian Department of Health.

ⁱ Underweight babies are those below 2500grams at birth.

ⁱⁱ Since substance usage in pregnancy has not been cross classified by the Indigenous status of the birth mother, care should be taken when drawing inferences from the following data about the health risk factors of Indigenous women in pregnancy.

Table 50 Females aged 15 years and over: Notifications of Selected Sexually Transmissible Infections, Western Australia, 2004(a)(b)

	No.	Crude Rate(c)	Age-Standardised Rate(d)
Chlamydia			
Indigenous	511	2,261.7	1,439.7
Non-Indigenous	944	122.5	125.8
Total notifications of chlamydia	2459	310.1	311.9
Gonorrhoea			
Indigenous	390	1,726.1	1,144.5
Non-Indigenous	69	9.0	9.3
Total notifications of gonorrhoea(e)	551	69.5	70.1

(a) Data, extracted from WANDD on 17/02/05, are provisional and subject to revision.

(b) Rates are per 100,000 females of the same age in the estimated resident population of Western Australia at June 2001.

(c) The observed number of notifications relates to females aged 15 years and over and is expressed as a proportion of the total number of resident females in that age group.

(d) Rate is age-standardised with the total Australian resident population at June 2001.

(e) Includes persons whose Indigenous status was unknown or not stated.

Source: Epidemiology Branch, Department of Health.

In 2004, the crude rate of chlamydia notifications for non-Indigenous women was 123 per 100,000 non-Indigenous women resident in the state. The crude rate for Indigenous women was 18 times greater. However after differences in the age structure of the two populations were taken into account, the Indigenous rate was approximately 11 times greater than the non-Indigenous rate.

In 2004, the crude rate of gonorrhoea notifications per 100,000 of the population was 1,726 for Indigenous women compared with 9 for non-Indigenous women. After differences in age structure were taken into account, the Indigenous rate was 120 times greater than the non-Indigenous rate.

7.23: Participation rate in cervical cancer screening (20-69 years as per AIHW target group)

The target population of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is all females in the 20-69 age group. At present, Indigenous status is not recorded on the WA cervical cancer screening database and there are no known sources of data for Indigenous women in Western Australia.

7.24: Participation rate in breast cancer screening (target 50-69 years)

Women aged 50-69 years have the highest incidence of breast cancer. Breast cancer screening is recommended every two years for women in this age group. Data on participation rates for Indigenous and all women in Western Australia are available from BreastScreen WA⁹¹.

In the two years to December 2004, the participation rate of Indigenous women aged 50-69 years was 40%ⁱ. In comparison, the participation rate of all women aged 50-69 years was 58%ⁱⁱ.

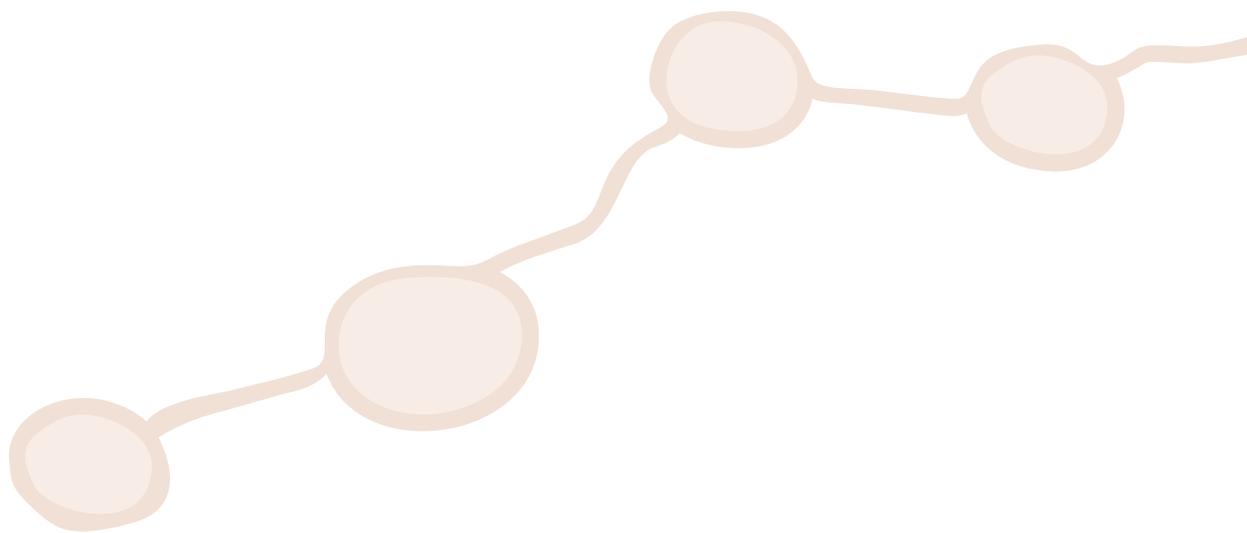
ⁱ Based on ABS experimental estimates of the resident Indigenous population at June 2001

ⁱⁱ Based on the estimated resident population at June 2003

Key Messages:

In 2003, the fertility rate of teenage women was between four and five times higher in the Indigenous population than in the total population.

Although public health notifications of sexually transmissible infections may not include all cases occurring in a given population, notifications in 2004 indicate that the age standardised rate of chlamydia notifications was approximately 11 times greater for Indigenous women than for non-Indigenous women.



Endnotes

- ¹ ABS 2004, Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991-2009 (cat. No. 3238.0)
- ² National Action Plan for Indigenous Women, endorsed at the annual meeting of the Ministerial Council (MINCO), Melbourne, 29 August 2004.
- ³ ABS 2003, p.123, *Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001* (cat. No.4713.0)
- ⁴ *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003*, Report of the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (Productivity Commission)
- ⁵ National Action Plan for Indigenous Women, endorsed at the annual meeting of the Ministerial Council (MINCO), Melbourne, 29 August 2004.
- ⁶ Office for the Public Sector Standards Commissioner (OPSSC).
- ⁷ See Appendix 1, Schools, Australia, 2004, cat.no. 4221.0)
- ⁸ Based on the Experimental Estimate of the Indigenous Population of WA at June 2001, ABS cat.no.3238.0.
- ⁹ See *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003*, Report of the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision
- ¹⁰ Report of the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision.
- ¹¹ National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002
- ¹² National Action Plan for Indigenous Women, endorsed at the annual meeting of the Ministerial Council (MINCO), Melbourne, 29 August 2004.
- ¹³ National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), 2002, unpublished data
- ¹⁴ NATSISS, Ibid
- ¹⁵ National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, state tables
- ¹⁶ National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, unpublished data
- ¹⁷ ABS, *Working Arrangements, 2000*, ABS cat. no. 6342.0
- ¹⁸ National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, unpublished data
- ¹⁹ *Equality Before the Law: Justice for Women*, ALRC 69 Part 1, AGPS, 1994, Chapter 5.
- ²⁰ Department of Local Government and Regional Development, unpublished data, May 2005.
- ²¹ Western Australian Police Service
- ²² Undertaken by the Public Accounts and Audit Committee.
- ²³ Women in Prison, Women's Custodial Services, Department of Justice Western Australia.
- ²⁴ See HEROC, Social Justice Report 2002.
- ²⁵ Women in Prison, Women's Custodial Services, Department of Justice Western Australia.
- ²⁶ ABS, Prisoners in Australia, cat. no. 4517.0 30 June 2004
- ²⁷ ABS, 2004, Ibid
- ²⁸ ABS, 2004, Ibid
- ²⁹ J. Fernandez, A. Ferrante, N. Loh, M. Maller, G. Valuri, Crime Research Centre, Crime and Justice Statistics for Western Australia, 2003
- ³⁰ National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, unpublished data
- ³¹ NATSISS, Ibid
- ³² NATSISS, Ibid
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Glossary

Age specific fertility rates are the number of live births (occurred or registered) during the calendar year, according to the age of the mother, per 1,000 of the female estimated resident population of the same age at 30 June.

Age standardised data removes the effects of age differences in populations. Australia's Indigenous population is considerably younger (on average) than the non-Indigenous population, and there is a close relationship between age and issues such as health. It is often misleading to compare Indigenous and non-Indigenous health outcomes unless the data have been age standardised to take account of this difference (i.e. adjusting the results to reflect the age composition of the total Australian population at the 2001 Census).

Apparent school retention rates for Western Australia are calculated by dividing the number of full-time students in Year 12 in the current year by the number of full-time students who were in Year 8 four years earlier. The resultant figure is converted to a percentage. This method of calculation does not take into account students repeating years or migrating in or out of the population. For this reason they are labelled *Apparent* Retention Rates.

Other factors not currently taken into account in calculating retention rates include the growing number of older students (18 years and over) and recent changes to the education system.

Assault Includes Aggravated and Non-Aggravated Assault. Aggravated Assault includes all non-sexual physical assaults resulting in serious or life-threatening injury. Non-Aggravated Assault includes all non-sexual physical assaults resulting in no or minor injuries.

Body Mass Index (BMI) is calculated by dividing weight (kg) by the square of the height (m). Results can then be grouped into categories (underweight, acceptable, overweight, obese) consistent with National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and/or World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendations.

Centrelink pensions and payments

Age pension - For retired people. Men aged 65 years and over are eligible for the Age Pension and women above certain qualifying ages (between 60.5 years and 65, depending on date of birth).

Carer payment - A payment for carers who, because of the demands of their caring role, are unable to support themselves through participation in the workforce.

Disability support pension - For people who cannot support themselves while caring for someone with a disability.

Parenting payment - Provides financial help for people who are primary carers of children (ie a parent, grandparent or foster carer). Parenting payment can only be paid to one person who cares for a child.

For further information visit: <http://www.centrelink.gov.au>

Equivalent Gross Weekly Household Income enables analysis of the relative wellbeing of people living in households of different size and composition (e.g. the number of adults compared with the number of children). The equivalence scale allocates 1.0 point for the first adult (aged 15 years and over) in a household; 0.5 for each additional adult; and 0.3 for each child. Equivalent household income is derived by dividing total household income by the sum of the equivalent points allocated to household members. For more information on equivalence scales, see Household Income and Distribution, Australia, 2000-01 (ABS cat. no. 6523.0)

Indigenous birth registrations classify a birth as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin (Indigenous) where at least one parent is identified as being of Indigenous origin. Indigenous fertility, on the other hand, refers to births to Indigenous mothers.

Income quintiles are the groupings that result from ranking all people in the population in ascending order according to their equivalised gross household income, then dividing them into five equal groups. Each group therefore comprises 20% of the population. If Indigenous women had the same distribution of household income after the equivalence scale had been applied, then we could expect that the income quintiles based on the total population would also divide the Indigenous population into five equal groups containing 20% of women.

Kinship encompasses a highly complex set of social relationships based on family, language, clan and skin systems. The combination of these systems results in an individual blueprint for each Indigenous person's ways of relating to other Indigenous people in all aspects of life. All of these relationships have roles and responsibilities attached to them.

Labour force participation rate is the number of persons in the labour force as a percentage of the population aged 15 years and over.

Measure of risk is based on the person's reported usual daily alcohol consumption and the frequency of consumption in the previous 12 months. High risk, as defined by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), is more than 50 mls for females and more than 75 mls for males.

Primary care. A primary carer provides the main care and support for a parent, partner, child, relative or friend who has a disability, is frail aged, or who has a chronic or physical mental illness.

Remote non remote categories are based on the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) which measures the remoteness of a point based on the physical road distance to the nearest Urban Centre.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) Clients are: a person aged 18 years or older, or a person of any age not accompanied by a parent or guardian, who: receives support or assistance from a SAAP *agency* which entails generally 1 hour or more of a worker's time, either with that *client* directly or on behalf of that client, on a given day; or is accommodated by a SAAP *agency*; or enters into an *ongoing support relationship* with a SAAP *agency*.

In WA, SAAP services are funded to provide accommodation for adults, including adults with accompanying children and/or unaccompanied young people 15 years and over.

Sexual Assault includes Aggravated and Non-Aggravated Sexual Assault. Aggravated Sexual Assault includes all physical assaults of a sexual nature involving circumstances of aggravation, including penetration, offences against children, use of threats, violence or weapons, etc. Non-Aggravated Sexual Assault includes all physical assaults of a sexual nature in which no circumstances of aggravation exist.

Unemployment rate is the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force (i.e. employed plus unemployed).

Appendix 1

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population projections, Low series, Western Australia, 2001-2009

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Males	0-4	4358	4382	4375	4373	4433	4505	4580	4657	4739
	5-9	4511	4481	4451	4446	4376	4312	4332	4328	4326
	10-14	4349	4387	4424	4457	4503	4461	4430	4398	4391
	15-19	3355	3532	3744	3914	4021	4219	4268	4311	4352
	20-24	2667	2807	2909	3051	3226	3339	3513	3716	3883
	25-29	2711	2636	2606	2596	2624	2707	2838	2943	3086
	30-34	2483	2514	2605	2616	2625	2597	2530	2503	2493
	35-39	2174	2216	2220	2281	2282	2337	2371	2454	2463
	40-44	1759	1824	1892	1907	1981	2000	2039	2044	2096
	45-49	1432	1500	1531	1575	1625	1650	1711	1773	1789
	50-54	1031	1068	1119	1166	1230	1307	1366	1392	1431
	55-59	688	713	752	814	842	908	940	982	1021
	60-64	488	502	520	534	557	553	575	605	658
	65-69	342	351	351	356	357	378	392	406	415
	70-74	229	244	247	252	247	246	251	251	256
	75 and over	304	303	292	286	288	303	307	306	306
	All Ages	32881	33460	34038	34624	35217	35822	36443	37069	37705
Females	0-4	4157	4205	4253	4261	4273	4330	4399	4470	4548
	5-9	4194	4153	4118	4138	4145	4129	4169	4212	4218
	10-14	3992	4023	4067	4088	4147	4181	4141	4108	4123
	15-19	3287	3486	3628	3770	3868	3937	3976	4024	4045
	20-24	2752	2846	2988	3104	3258	3388	3585	3730	3874
	25-29	2736	2681	2628	2666	2678	2779	2874	3013	3131
	30-34	2686	2724	2762	2711	2683	2653	2598	2547	2579
	35-39	2307	2373	2396	2492	2587	2635	2676	2718	2678
	40-44	1821	1928	2051	2135	2188	2246	2307	2329	2420
	45-49	1524	1542	1580	1639	1717	1775	1881	1998	2078
	50-54	1128	1213	1297	1351	1411	1447	1467	1502	1562
	55-59	743	793	833	892	950	1044	1119	1192	1242
	60-64	587	581	595	610	615	618	657	690	737
	65-69	426	442	451	456	478	494	488	498	510
	70-74	288	303	326	340	331	341	355	364	367
	75 and over	422	409	392	388	399	424	428	439	447
	All Ages	33050	33702	34365	35041	35728	36421	37120	37834	38559
Persons	0-4	8515	8587	8628	8634	8706	8835	8979	9127	9287
	5-9	8705	8634	8569	8584	8521	8441	8501	8540	8544
	10-14	8341	8410	8491	8545	8650	8642	8571	8506	8514
	15-19	6642	7018	7372	7684	7889	8156	8244	8335	8397
	20-24	5419	5653	5897	6155	6484	6727	7098	7446	7757
	25-29	5447	5317	5234	5262	5302	5486	5712	5956	6217
	30-34	5169	5238	5367	5327	5308	5250	5128	5050	5072
	35-39	4481	4589	4616	4773	4869	4972	5047	5172	5141
	40-44	3580	3752	3943	4042	4169	4246	4346	4373	4516
	45-49	2956	3042	3111	3214	3342	3425	3592	3771	3867
	50-54	2159	2281	2416	2517	2641	2754	2833	2894	2993
	55-59	1431	1506	1585	1706	1792	1952	2059	2174	2263
	60-64	1075	1083	1115	1144	1172	1171	1232	1295	1395
	65-69	768	793	802	812	835	872	880	904	925
	70-74	517	547	573	592	578	587	606	615	623
	75 and over	726	712	684	674	687	727	735	745	753
	All Ages	65931	67162	68403	69665	70945	72243	73563	74903	76264

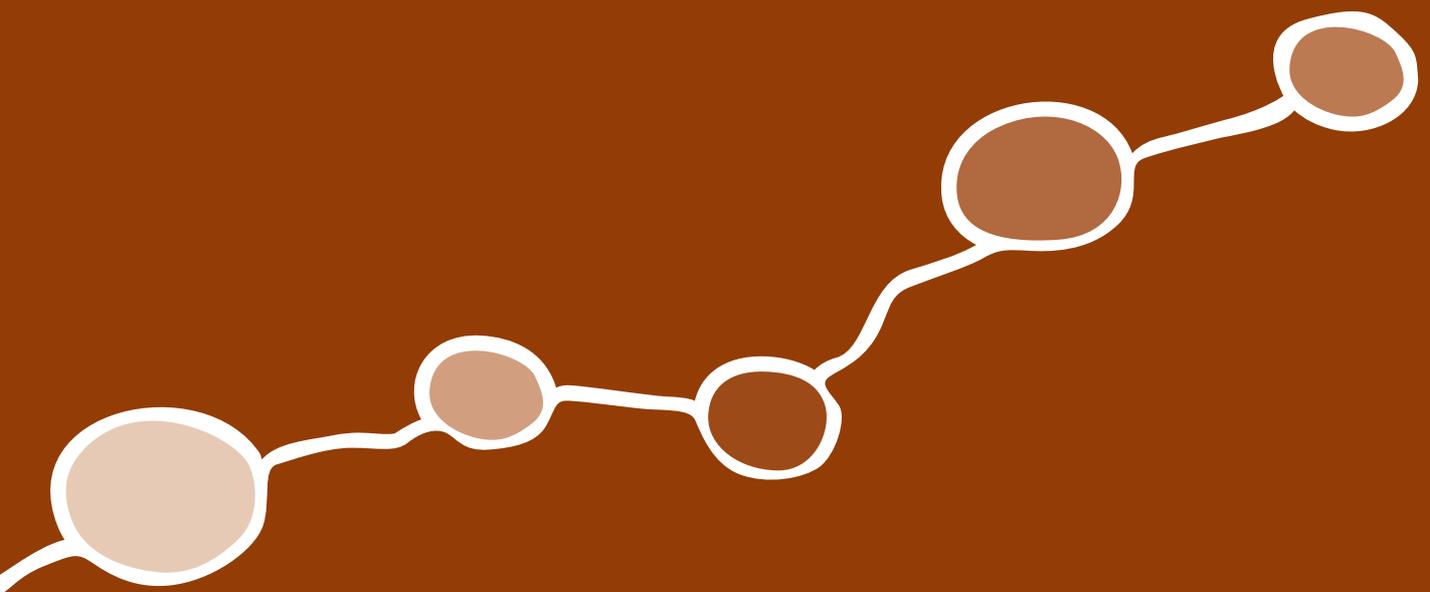
Source: ABS 2004, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991-2009*, cat. No. 3238.0

Appendix 2

Estimated Resident Population, By Age and Sex, Preliminary - 30 June 2004

Age	Males	Females	Persons
0-4	63,700	61,089	124,789
5-9	68,610	64,964	133,574
10-14	72,361	68,912	141,273
15-19	74,093	70,573	144,666
20-24	72,358	68,822	141,180
25-29	67,579	65,634	133,213
30-34	74,505	73,335	147,840
35-39	73,115	73,293	146,408
40-44	77,625	77,574	155,199
45-49	72,711	73,430	146,141
50-54	67,280	66,815	134,095
55-59	60,332	57,130	117,462
60-64	44,008	42,299	86,307
65-69	34,739	35,033	69,772
70-74	27,023	29,082	56,105
75-79	21,265	25,354	45,619
80-84	13,148	19,206	32,354
85 and over	8,000	17,207	25,207
total	992,452	989,752	1,982,204

Source: ABS, *Experimental Estimated Population Projections for Western Australia at 30 June 2004, cat. 3230.0*







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