

This brief contains key points extracted from publications that have reported social statistics about the Northern Territory. The summary is not exhaustive and does not interpret information nor in all cases contain qualifiers or contextual information. Readers should check cited publications to assess suitability for the intended use. Care should be taken to ensure that population-based statistics reported for the Northern Territory do not refer to urban areas only. Although all due care has been exercised in the preparation of this document, no responsibility is accepted for any errors or omissions.

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## Australian Hospital Statistics 2006-07

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, AIHW Cat No HSE 55.

This is the fourteenth annual report on the characteristics and activity of Australian hospitals. Data for this report were provided by state and territory health authorities. In the Territory, there are five public hospitals and one private hospital. Note that all Territory data refers to public hospital statistics unless stated otherwise. Data relating to Indigenous people were collected from six jurisdictions; the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria.

### Key Point:

During 2006-07, the Territory had the lowest availability rate of hospital beds (3.5 per 1000 population, less than 4 per 1000 nationally) and the highest proportion of available hospital beds in public hospitals (76 per cent compared with 68 per cent nationally).

In the Territory in 2006-07:

- A total of 750 hospital beds were available with most (600 beds or 76 per cent) available in public hospitals. The Territory and the Australian Capital Territory both had the lowest rate of hospital beds available (3.5 per 1000 population), less than the national rate of 4 per 1000 (Table 1).
- There were 2853 full-time equivalent hospital staff employed, of which 43 per cent were nurses and 12 per cent were salaried medical officers.
- The rate of non-hospital admissions for accident and emergency services provided per 1000 resident population (583) was about double the national rate (326).

### Patients in public hospitals

- The public patients separations rate per 1000 population was 464.2, more than double the national rate of 189.5. The private patients separations rate was 15.9, the lowest separation rate for private patients in public hospitals and nearly half of the national rate (29).
- The rate of patient days (previously bed days) (1593 per 1000 population) was nearly double the national rate (808.1) (Table 1).
- Average length of stay was the lowest of all jurisdictions (3 days), and less than the national average (3.7 days) (Table 1).

### Separations

- The public hospital separation rate of 480.1 per 1000 population was the highest of the jurisdictions and more than double the national rate of 218.8. The separation rate for potentially preventable hospitalisations (47.9) was also the highest of the jurisdictions (Table 1).
- The Indigenous overnight separation rate (380.6 per 1000 population) was the highest of the six jurisdictions<sup>a</sup> and more than three times the rate for other people in the Territory (125.6) (Table 1).
- About half of public hospital separations were for diseases of the kidney and urinary tract (44 per cent), which was double the national rate (21 per cent), and drives the Territory's disproportionately high rate of separations for renal dialysis (194.68 compared to a national rate of 36.57).

**Table 1:** Comparison of hospital statistics, Northern Territory and Australia 2006-07

	Northern Territory	Australia
	(rate per 1 000 people)	
Hospital beds available	3.5	4.0
Public hospital separation rate	480.1	218.8
Patients days (previously bed days)	1593.0	808.1
Average length of stay in public hospitals	3.0	3.7
Potentially preventable hospitalisation separation rate	47.9	32.5
Indigenous overnight separation rate <sup>a</sup>	380.6	298.6
Non-Indigenous overnight separation rate <sup>a</sup>	125.6	156.8

Source: AIHW HSE 55

<sup>a</sup> the data for Australia includes Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria.

## Cervical screening in Australia 2005-2006

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, AIHW Cat no CAN 36

This is the tenth annual report on the performance of the National Cervical Screening Program (the Program) against six performance indicators that include participation of women aged 20-69 in cervical screening, rate of early re-screening, low- and high-grade abnormalities detected, and incidence and mortality of cervical cancer. For the first time, 3-year and 5-year participation rates and national participation by geographic region and socioeconomic status are included.

### Key Point:

During the two years to 2006, Territory women aged 20-69 years had the lowest national participation rate in the National Cervical Screening Program (55 per cent).

### Participation of women aged 20-69 in the Program

- Territory women's participation decreased between the 2-year periods to 2004 and 2006 from 60 to 55 per cent, whereas the national proportion remained at 61 per cent.
- The Territory had the second lowest proportion of women screened in the 3-year period to 2006 (71 per cent), less than nationally (73 per cent).
- In the 2-year period to 2006, national participation rates were highest in major cities (62 per cent) and lowest in very remote regions (53 per cent), and highest in the highest level of socioeconomic status (72 per cent) and lowest in the lowest level of socioeconomic status (57 per cent).

### Incidence of cervical cancer

- In the four years to 2004, the Territory had the highest incidence rate of 15.0 new cases per 100 000 women aged 20-69, significantly higher than the national rate (9.1).
- The Territory's incidence rate declined slightly between the 4-year periods to 2000 and 2004 (15.9 to 15.0 new cases), compared to a decline in the national rate from 11.0 to 9.1.
- In the five years to 2004, Indigenous women\* in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and the Territory combined had double (16.9) the non-Indigenous rate (7.1) of new new cases per 100 000 women.

### Mortality (age-standardised rate for cervical cancer in women aged 20-69 per 100 000 women)

- The Territory had the second highest mortality rate in the four years to 2005 (3.0), higher than the national rate of 2.0.

- Between the 4-year periods to 2001 and 2005, the Territory mortality rate decreased from 4.6 to 3.0 deaths. Nationally in the same time period the mortality rate declined from 2.4 to 2.0 deaths.
- In the four years to 2005, the mortality rate for Indigenous women\* was 8.3 deaths, four times higher than the rate for other Australian women (2.0).

\* Note that identification of Indigenous people in cancer registry records is not complete in all states and territories.

### **Delivery of child health services in Indigenous communities: implications for the federal government's emergency intervention in the Northern Territory**

Source: *Bailie et al, Medical Journal of Australia, Vol 188 no 10*

This article presents findings from research into the delivery of child health services in Australian Aboriginal communities to identify gaps in services required to improve the health of Aboriginal children. Findings are reported from clinical audits conducted in 2006 of 11 primary health care centres participating in a quality improvement intervention study in Indigenous primary care (the ABCD project). The participating centres were located in remote communities in the Territory (4) and small regional towns in Far West New South Wales (FWNSW) (6) and Western Australia (WA) (1).

#### **Key Point:**

More children attending Territory primary health care centres had a record of growth faltering, underweight, chronic ear disease, anaemia, or chronic respiratory disease than those studied in Far West New South Wales and Western Australia. The high prevalence of these conditions and their link to poor living conditions in Aboriginal communities highlight the inadequacy of existing follow-up systems.

In the Territory in 2006:

- A larger proportion of children attending centres were Aboriginal (98 per cent), compared to 79 per cent attending FWNSW and WA centres (the other centres) (Table 2).
- Less children attended centres for well baby checks or immunisation (35 per cent) than in the other centres (51 per cent).
- Half of the children attended centres for acute care (50 per cent), compared to 30 per cent in the other centres.
- At the children's most recent attendance, the health care provider was most likely to be a nurse (59 per cent) or an Aboriginal health worker (32 per cent), with 7 per cent of children seeing a doctor. In the other centres most children saw a nurse (75 per cent) or a doctor (15 per cent), with 6 per cent of children seeing an Aboriginal health worker.

**Table 2.** Key characteristics of children attending participating health centres, Northern Territory, Far West New South Wales (FWNSW) and Western Australia (WA).

		NT %	FWNSW/WA %
Age distribution			
	3 to < 12 months	32	28
	1 to < 3 years	35	36
	3 to < 5 years	33	36
Aboriginal status			
	Aboriginal	98	79
	Non-Aboriginal	2	9
	Not stated	0	12
	Attended centre in previous year	99	82
Reason for most recent attendance during previous year			
	Acute care	50	30
	Well baby check	16	24
	Immunisation	19	27
	Other	15	19
Key health care provider at most recent attendance			
	Nurse	59	75
	Aboriginal health worker	32	6
	Doctor	7	15
	Specialist	1	2
	Other	1	2

Source: Bailie et al, Table 1.

## Forms of Employment, Australia, November 2007

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, ABS Cat no 6359.0

This publication presents information about the nature of employment arrangements in the Australian workforce. The information was compiled from a survey conducted as a supplement to the ABS monthly Labour Force Survey in November 2007.

Note that the survey did not include very remote regions where about 23 per cent of the Territory's population resides.

### Key Point:

More employed people in the Territory were employees (85 per cent) and less were owner managers of enterprises (15 per cent) than nationally (82 per cent and 18 per cent).

In the Territory in November 2007:

- A third of employed people worked 36 to 40 hours a week (32 per cent) compared to about a quarter of employed people nationally (27 per cent).
- A larger proportion of employed people had worked continuously with their current employer for under 12 months (28 per cent) compared to 23 per cent of employed people nationally.
- A smaller proportion of people expected to be with their current employer in 12 months (84 per cent) than nationally (90 per cent).

## Labour Force Characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, Estimates from the Labour Force Survey, 2007

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, ABS Cat no 6287.0

This publication presents information on labour force characteristics by sex, age, state or territory, and remoteness based on pooled data collected in the national monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS) in 2007.

Note that the issue of sampling errors for LFS estimates is particularly relevant to Indigenous estimates because of the small size of the Indigenous population and the small number of Indigenous people in the LFS sample. Estimates of unemployment for remote areas in particular are subject to high sampling errors. Consequently for the Territory, an apparent improvement in any single characteristic of labour force outcomes does not carry weight on its own due to large standard errors. It is more accurate to consider apparent longer-term trends.

### Key Point:

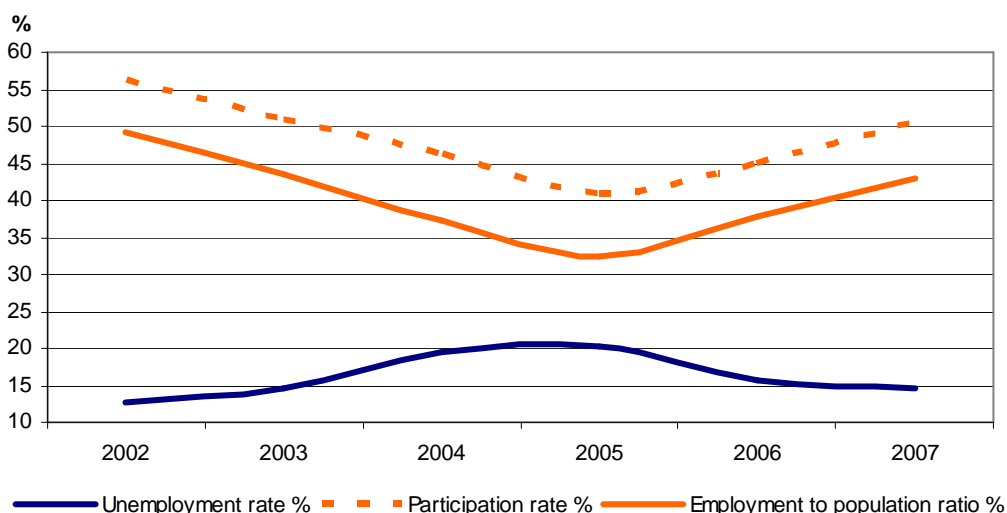
Between 2002 and 2005, the Territory's Indigenous labour force outcomes declined, and between 2005 and 2007 the decline steadied.

For Indigenous people in the Territory aged 15 years and over:

- The unemployment rate increased from 12.7\* per cent in 2002 to 20.3 per cent in 2005, and declined to 14.6 per cent in 2007 (Chart 1).
- Labour force participation (people either employed or unemployed in the labour force) declined from 56.2 per cent in 2002 to 40.7 per cent in 2005 and increased to 50.5 per cent in 2007.
- The employment to population ratio declined from 49.1 per cent in 2002 to 32.4 per cent in 2005, and increased to 43.1 per cent in 2007.

\*Estimate is subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes

**Chart 1.** Labour force status of Indigenous people aged 15 years and over, Northern Territory, 2002 to 2007



Source: ABS Cat. No. 6287.0 Table 3.

## Maternal deaths in Australia 2003-2005

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, AIHW Cat no PER 42

This publication provides statistics on direct and indirect maternal deaths in Australia for the period 2003-2005. Maternal deaths are reported by state/territory where death occurred, and nationally by maternal age, cause of death and remoteness. Due to the small number of deaths, data are provided in six year periods to calculate state/territory maternal mortality ratios.

Note that inconsistent collection of Indigenous statistics, variations in classification of deaths and small numbers of deaths affect the comparability of state and territories data.

### Key Point:

From 1997 to 2005, the Territory's maternal mortality rate was comparable to the national rate of 9.1 deaths per 100 000 women who gave birth.

- For the periods 1997-2002 and 2000-2005 in the Territory, the maternal mortality rate was 9.3 and 9.2 deaths per 100 000 women who gave birth, comparable to the national rate for 1997-2005 (9.1).
- More than half of Australian deaths were women whose usual residence were in major cities (56 per cent), where 69 per cent of the population live. About a tenth of deaths occurred to women whose usual residence were in remote and very remote locations (8 per cent), where 3 per cent of the population live.

## Performing Arts, Australia, 2006-07

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, ABS Cat no 8697.0

This publication presents information for 2006-07 from surveys of businesses/organisations primarily involved in performing arts operation or performing arts venue operation. Information is included on performing arts and performing arts venues' operation, income and expenses, workforce characteristics, and performances.

Sampling variability for estimates at the state/territory level was highest for smallest states/territories and therefore their data should be used with caution.

### Key Point:

In the Territory at 30 June 2007, there were 3 performing arts venue operators (2.1 per cent of the national total of 145) and 4 performing arts spaces (1.5 per cent of a total 271).

During 2006-2007:

- About 2 per cent of Australia's performing arts businesses/organisations operated in the Territory (12 organisations or 1.7 per cent), generated income of \$3M and employed 46 (0.7 per cent of the national performing arts workforce).
- Territory performing arts operations reported 250 paid performances (0.6 per cent of the national total) and 55 700 paid attendances (0.5 per cent of the national total).

## Report on the Audit of Health Workforce in Rural and Regional Australia, April 2008

Source: Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

This report presents information from an audit of the health workforce in rural and remote Australia compiled from the most recent national data collections, Australian Bureau of Statistics surveys and administrative data held by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

### Key Point:

Proportional to its population, the Territory has the lowest number of general practitioners (GPs) and the second lowest number of dental practitioners in Australia.

Medicare data showed that in the Territory in 2006-07:

- The full-time work equivalent rate of GPs per 100 000 population was 54.1, compared to the national rate of 91.3.
- Most GPs were in remote or very remote areas (60 per cent or 212 GPs), compared to 3 per cent (886 GPs) nationally. About a quarter of GPs were in the Territory's remote and very remote areas (24 per cent).

In the Territory:

- In 2005, there were 36.3 dental practitioners per 100 000 population, the second lowest ratio after Tasmania (31.2) and compared to 49.5 nationally.
- In 2006, the ratio of dental practitioners per 100 000 population was highest in outer regional areas (including Darwin) (150), and declined from 42 in remote areas, to 12 in very remote areas. This compares to national ratios for the same geographic areas of 97, 53 and 22.

## Re-vitalising the Community Development Employment Program in the Northern Territory

Source: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), Topical Issue No 5/2008

This publication presents research findings on the Community Development Employment Program. While noting the scarcity of rigorous evaluations of CDEP, particularly in remote regions, limited statistical analyses are included of Censuses, national Indigenous surveys, the experimental Labour Force survey and earlier CAEPR research.

### Key Point:

Most Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) participants worked more than 15 hours a week that the scheme was funded to provide.

In the researched communities (both in and outside the Territory):

- In 1996, about 20 per cent of CDEP participants worked between 25-34 hours a week (16-19 per cent) and about a quarter worked more than 35 hours (23 per cent).
- In 2002, most CDEP participants worked more than 16 hours a week (84-89 per cent) and 20 per cent worked more than 35 hours.
- In 2002, CDEP participants in remote and very remote regions earned over \$100 per week more than the unemployed, and \$300 less than those in mainstream employment.

## The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 2008

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, ABS Cat no 4704.0, AIHW Cat no IHW 21.

This report presents the latest information on the health and welfare of Australia's Indigenous population from a range of administrative data collections and the 2006 Census. Data are provided on demographics, housing circumstances, disability and carers, health status, the provision, access and use of health and community services, and on changes in the circumstances of Indigenous people over time.

Note that most information is presented at a national level, with some data presented for states and territories and by remoteness.

### Key Point:

In 2006, Indigenous households in the Territory were nearly three times more likely to be living in overcrowded housing than nationally and were the least likely to be home owners.

### Health

In the Territory:

- Over the period 1991 to 2005, Indigenous infant mortality rates decreased significantly from 25 to 16 deaths per 1000 live births, compared with rate decreases in Western Australia (26 to 12) and South Australia (20 to 10) over the same period.
- The mortality rate for other Australian infants also declined over the period 1991 to 2005, but to a lesser extent, so the difference between the two has also decreased significantly.
- From 2001 to 2004, the proportion of Indigenous mothers less than 20 years old was 29.1 per cent, highest of all jurisdictions, higher than the national proportion (22.5 per cent), and compared to 5.2 per cent for non-Indigenous mothers less than 20 years old in the Territory.

### Housing Circumstances

In the Territory in 2006:

- The overcrowding rate among Indigenous households was 38 per cent, highest of all jurisdictions, and higher than the national rate which fell to 14 per cent from 16 per cent in 2001. The rate of overcrowding in the rented Indigenous/mainstream community housing sector was especially high with 61 per cent of households overcrowded.
- The proportion of Indigenous home owner households (18 per cent) was the lowest of all jurisdictions, and lower than the national proportion which increased to 34 per cent from 31 per cent in 2001.
- The rate of Indigenous households in different housing assistance programs (per 100 households) varied from 60.8 households in Indigenous community housing to 9.2 households (or income units) accessing Commonwealth Rent Assistance (9.2) (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Indigenous households or income units in major housing assistance programs, Northern Territory and Australia, 30 June 2006, rate per 100 households

	NT	AUST
Indigenous community housing	60.8	13.3
State owned/managed Indigenous housing	..	7.4
Public housing	14.7	12.7
Community housing	na	1.0
Commonwealth Rent Assistance*	9.2	18.1

Source: AIHW 2008, Table 4.6.

.. not applicable

na not available

\* Commonwealth Rent Assistance data refer to income units. In some cases there may be more than one income unit per household.