

2.09 Housing tenure type

The tenure status of a person's occupancy of a residence: owning without a mortgage; owning with a mortgage; renting public housing; renting community housing; and renting privately

Data sources

Data presented for this measure come predominantly from the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS). 2001 Census data are presented for comparisons between Indigenous and non-Indigenous households and by remoteness. The 2004–05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) is used for the analysis of housing tenure type by selected health characteristics.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS)

The 2004–05 NATSIHS collected information from 10,439 Indigenous Australians of all ages. This sample was considerably larger than the supplementary Indigenous samples in the 1995 and 2001 National Health Surveys. The survey was conducted in remote and non-remote areas of Australia and collected a range of information from Indigenous Australians about health-related issues including health-related actions, health risk factors, health status, socioeconomic circumstances and women's health. It is planned to repeat the NATSIHS at six-yearly intervals, with the next NATSIHS to be conducted in 2010–11. Selected non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the 2004–05 National Health Survey (NHS).

The NATSIHS collects housing tenure information at both the person and household level but results are published on a person basis.

The 2004–05 NATSIHS does not include a question on landlord type. Therefore it does not provide data on rentals broken down by private, state/territory housing authority and community housing. The 2004–05 National Health Survey did not include any questions on housing tenure, so non-Indigenous comparisons are not available from this survey.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS)

The 2002 NATSISS collected information from 9,400 Indigenous Australians across all states and territories of Australia. The sample covered persons aged 15 years or over who were usual residents of private dwellings. It collected information on a wide range of subjects including family and culture, health, education, employment, income, financial stress, housing, as well as law and justice. The 2002 NATSISS is the second national social survey of Indigenous Australians conducted by the ABS. Selected non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the 2002 General Social Survey (GSS). The ABS plans to conduct the NATSISS every 6 years. The next survey is planned for 2008.

The NATSISS collects housing tenure information at both the person and household level but results are published on a person basis. The NATSISS can provide non-Indigenous comparisons with the General Social Survey (GSS). However, the GSS was not conducted in remote areas and therefore non-Indigenous data are not available by remoteness area. In addition, the rental categories were different in the GSS so it is not possible to compare types of rental arrangements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians from these surveys.

Census of Population and Housing

The ABS Census of Population and Housing is conducted by the ABS at five-yearly intervals with 2006 being the most recent and is designed to include all Australian households. The Census uses the ABS standard Indigenous status question and it is asked for each household member.

While the Census data are adjusted for undercounts at the person level to arrive at the Estimated Resident Population, no such adjustment is done at the household level. This affects the accuracy of the person counts at the household level to provide adjusted household estimates.

The Census includes data on housing tenure type that are published at a household level. For the purposes of data analysis, Indigenous households can be defined in two different ways:

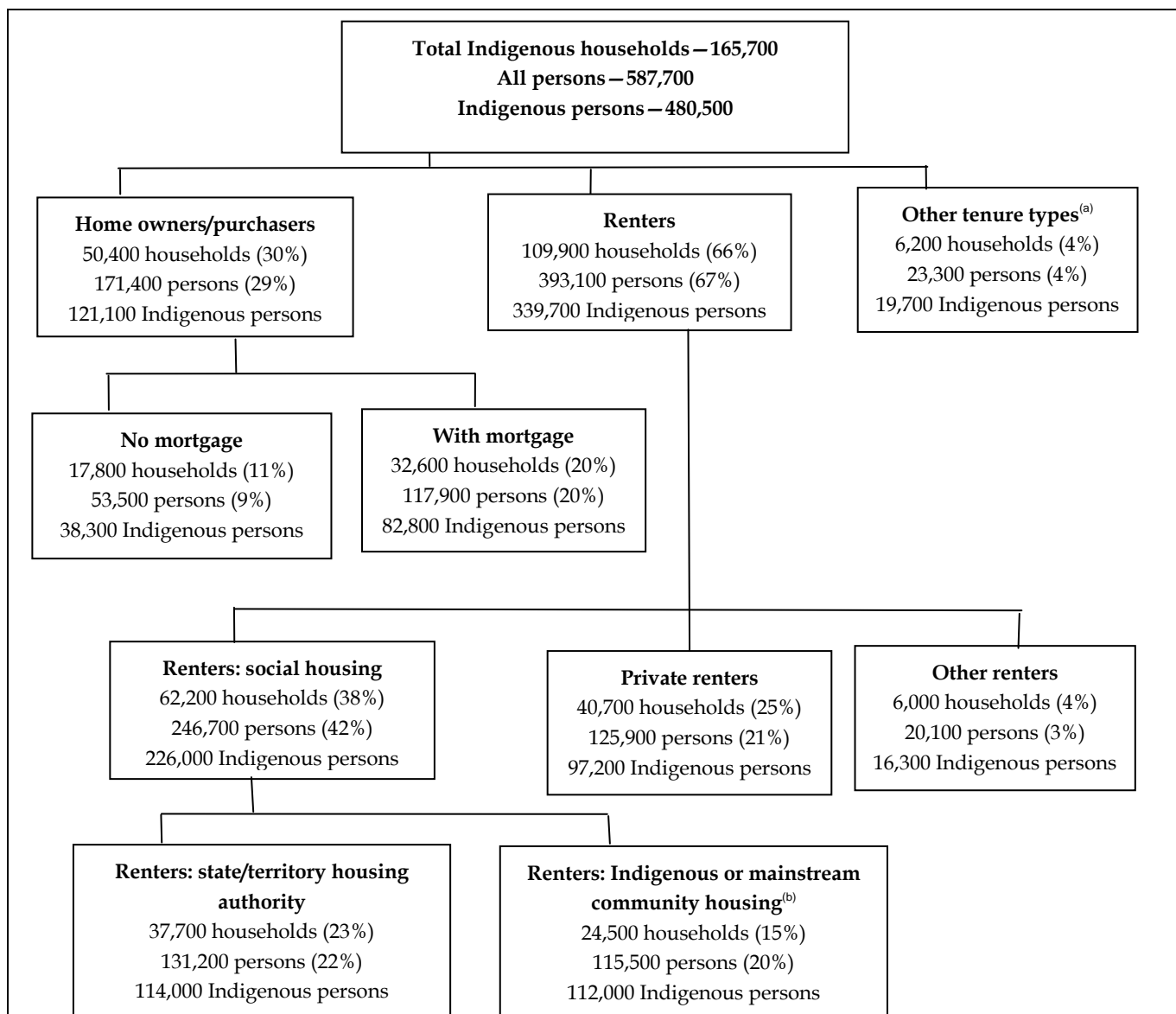
- a household where the reference person or the spouse is Indigenous
- a household containing one or more Indigenous people.

For this measure, the second definition of an Indigenous household is used, that is, a household containing one or more Indigenous people. This is the definition used in the *National housing assistance data dictionary* (AIHW 2006).

Data analyses

Tenure type

- Among the estimated 165,700 Indigenous households in 2002, 30% were home owners or purchasers, 28% were private and other renters, and 38% were renters of some form of social housing (Figure 2.09.1). This can be compared with non-Indigenous households where 70% were home owners or purchasers, and 27% were renters (Table 2.09.1).
- Home ownership provides a relatively secure form of housing tenure but there are much lower rates of home ownership among Indigenous households. This is indicative of the lower socioeconomic status of many Indigenous households and that many Indigenous households live in remote areas on Indigenous land where individual home ownership is generally not possible. In 2002 there were 11% of Indigenous households who owned their homes outright and 20% who were purchasing their homes.
- In 2002, the majority of Indigenous households lived in some form of rental accommodation (66%). The largest group were renters of social housing which included those renting from state or territory housing authorities (that is, those in public housing and State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing) (23%) and those renting from Indigenous or mainstream community housing organisations (15%). Around one-quarter of Indigenous households were in the private rental market.
- In 2002, approximately 27% of Indigenous persons aged 18 years and over were home owners and 70% were renters. Around one-quarter of Indigenous adults were renters of community cooperative housing (24%). In comparison, 73% of non-Indigenous adults were home owners, and 24% were renters (Table 2.09.1).



(a) Includes households and persons in rent/buy schemes, living rent free or under a life tenure scheme.

(b) Indigenous community housing managed by Indigenous community housing organisations and community housing within mainstream programs.

Source: 2002 NATSISS.

Figure 2.09.1: Indigenous households, by tenure type, 2002

Table 2.09.1: Households and persons, by tenure type and Indigenous status, 2002

	Persons ^(a)				Households			
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Home owners								
Owned without a mortgage	25,248	10.0*	5,527,272	38.5*	17,833	10.8*	2,903,901	39.2*
Being purchased	41,456	16.5*	4,971,283	34.6*	32,610	19.7*	2,315,629	31.3*
<i>Total home owners</i>	<i>66,703</i>	<i>26.5*</i>	<i>10,498,555</i>	<i>73.1*</i>	<i>50,443</i>	<i>30.5*</i>	<i>5,219,530</i>	<i>70.5*</i>
Renters								
Private and other landlord types ^(b)	61,943	23.9	n.p.	n.p.	46,780	28.2	n.p.	n.p.
State/territory housing authority	53,184	21.2	n.p.	n.p.	37,673	22.7	n.p.	n.p.
Community or cooperative housing	59,904	24.5	n.p.	n.p.	24,493	14.8	n.p.	n.p.
<i>Total renters^(c)</i>	<i>175,031</i>	<i>69.6*</i>	<i>3,491,054</i>	<i>24.3*</i>	<i>108,946</i>	<i>65.7*</i>	<i>1,988,918</i>	<i>26.8*</i>
Other ^(d)	9,664	3.9	364,181	2.6	6,163	3.7	200,129	2.7
Total^(e)	251,398	100.0	14,353,790	100.0	165,674	100.0	7,408,577	100.0

* Represents statistically significant differences in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous comparisons.

n.p. Not published, as the categories for renters are different in the GSS and the NATSISS.

(a) Persons aged 18 years and over.

(b) Includes real estate agents, unrelated persons, relatives, owner/managers of caravan parks, employers and other landlords.

(c) Includes landlord type not stated.

(d) Includes persons living under life tenure schemes, those living rent free and participants in rent/buy schemes.

(e) Includes tenure type 'not stated'.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS and 2002 GSS.

Tenure type by age

- In 2002, the highest proportion of Indigenous home owners were aged 45–54 years (37%), while non-Indigenous Australians aged 55 years and over were most likely to be home owners (86%) (Table 2.09.2).
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians aged 18–24 years were most likely to be renting in 2002 (80% and 40% respectively) than those in the older age groups.
- Across all age groups Indigenous Australians were more likely to be renting and less likely to be home owners than non-Indigenous Australians in 2002.

Table 2.09.2: Proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons,^(a) by tenure type and age group, 2002

	18–24		25–34		35–44		45–54		55+	
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.
Home owners										
Owned without a mortgage	*6	*25	*5	*13	*8	*19	*16	*41	*24	*74
Being purchased	*11	*32	*18	*46	*22	*53	*21	*39	*8	*12
<i>Total home owners</i>	*17	*57	*23	*59	*29	*73	*37	*80	*32	*86
Renters										
Private and other renter ^(b)	34	n.p.	27	n.p.	23	n.p.	18	n.p.	12	n.p.
Renter state/territory housing authority	20	n.p.	20	n.p.	22	n.p.	20	n.p.	25	n.p.
Renter Indigenous/mainstream community housing	26	n.p.	26	n.p.	23	n.p.	20	n.p.	26	n.p.
<i>Sub Total renters^(c)</i>	*80	*40	*73	*38	*67	24	*58	*17	*63	*12
Other ^(d)	2	3	4	2	4	3	6	3	5	2
Total^(e)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Represents statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

n.p. Not published, as the categories for renters are different in the NATSISS and the GSS.

- (a) Persons aged 18 years and over.
- (b) Includes real estate agents, unrelated persons, relatives, owner/managers of caravan parks, employers and other landlords.
- (c) Includes landlord type not stated.
- (d) Includes persons living under life tenure schemes, those living rent free and participants in rent/buy schemes.
- (e) Includes tenure type 'not stated'.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS and 2002 GSS.

Tenure type by state/territory

- In 2002, the Northern Territory had the lowest proportion of Indigenous households who were home owners (13%) and the highest proportion living in Indigenous or community housing (49%). For those living in Indigenous communities, the dwellings are owned by the community (Table 2.09.3).
- The proportion of Indigenous persons aged 18 years and over who were home owners/purchasers was highest in Tasmania (57%) and the Australian Capital Territory (41%).
- Western Australia (32%) and South Australia (27%) had a relatively high proportion of households renting from the state housing authority, that is, those in public housing and SOMIH. Western Australia also had a relatively high proportion of households in the 'other' category which include those living rent free.

Table 2.09.3: Proportion of households and persons, by tenure type, Indigenous status and state/territory, 2002

	NSW		Vic		Qld		WA		SA		Tas		NT		ACT	
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.
Persons^(a)																
Owned without a mortgage	*14	*39	*12	*41	*10	*35	*6 ^(b)	*34	*8	*40	*24	*42	*3 ^(b)	*15	*10	*36
Being purchased	*19	*33	*23	*35	*17	*33	*13	*41	*19	*34	33	34	*5 ^(b)	*38	32	39
<i>Total home owners</i>	*32	*73	*35	*77	*27	*68	*19	*74	*26	*74	*57	*77	*8	*52	*41	*75
Private and other renter ^(c)	30	n.p.	30	n.p.	28	n.p.	22	n.p.	18	n.p.	20	n.p.	7 ^(b)	n.p.	29	n.p.
Renter state/territory housing authority	21	n.p.	22	n.p.	20	n.p.	31	n.p.	26	n.p.	17	n.p.	10	n.p.	27	n.p.
Renter Indigenous/mainstream community housing	12	n.p.	10	n.p.	23	n.p.	24	n.p.	27	n.p.	3 ^(d)	n.p.	68	n.p.	2 ^(d)	n.p.
<i>Total renters^(e)</i>	*63	*25	*62	*21	*71	*30	*76	*22	*72	*24	*39	*21	*86	*44	*58	*24
Other ^(f)	4 ^(b)	2	3 ^(b)	3	2 ^(b)	2	5	4	2 ^(b)	2	4 ^(b)	2	7 ^(b)	4	1 ^(d)	1 ^(b)
Total^(g)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(continued)

Table 2.09.3 (continued): Proportion of households and persons, by tenure type, Indigenous status and state/territory, 2002

	NSW		Vic		Qld		WA		SA		Tas		NT		ACT	
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.
Households																
Owned without a mortgage	*13	*40	*12	*42	*10	*36	*7 ^(b)	*34	*8	*40	*23	*42	*5 ^(b)	*14	*9	*35
Being purchased	*19	*29	*24	*33	*20	*29	*17	*37	*21	*30	33	32	*8 ^(b)	*36	31	36
<i>Total home owners</i>	*32	*70	*36	*75	*30	*66	*24	*71	*29	*71	*55	*73	*13 ^(b)	*49	*39	*72
Private and other renter ^(c)	32	n.p.	30	n.p.	31	n.p.	25	n.p.	22	n.p.	21	n.p.	15 ^(b)	n.p.	30	n.p.
Renter state/territory housing authority	22	n.p.	21	n.p.	20	n.p.	32	n.p.	27	n.p.	18	n.p.	18	n.p.	29	n.p.
Renter Indigenous/mainstream community housing	9	n.p.	9	n.p.	16	n.p.	14	n.p.	20	n.p.	3 ^(b)	n.p.	49	n.p.	1 ^(d)	n.p.
<i>Total renters^(e)</i>	*64	*28	*60	*22	*68	*32	*70	*26	*69	*27	*41	*24	*81	*46	*60	*27
Other ^(f)	4 ^(b)	3	4 ^(b)	3	2 ^(b)	2	6	4	2 ^(b)	3	4 ^(b)	2	6 ^(b)	5	1 ^(d)	1
Total^(g)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Represents statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

n.p. Not published, the categories for renters are different in the NATSISS and GSS.

- (a) Persons aged 18 years and over.
- (b) Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.
- (c) Includes real estate agents, unrelated persons, relatives, owner/managers of caravan parks, employers and other landlords.
- (d) Estimate has a relative standard error of greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use.
- (e) Includes landlord type not stated.
- (f) Includes persons living under life tenure schemes, those living rent-free and participants in rent/buy schemes.
- (g) Includes tenure type 'not stated'.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS and 2002 GSS.

Tenure type by remoteness

- In 2002, a total of 29,200 Indigenous households lived in remote areas of Australia and 136,500 lived in non-remote areas. Tenure type varied by remoteness, reflecting the availability of different housing options for Indigenous people as well as their lower socioeconomic status (Table 2.09.4).
- Among Indigenous households living in remote areas of Australia, one-half (50%) were renters of Indigenous or community housing, 17% were renters of state or territory housing and 14% were home owners.
- In comparison, among Indigenous households in non-remote areas, the highest proportion were home owners (34%) followed by private or other renters (32%) and renters of state and territory housing (24%).

Table 2.09.4: Indigenous households and persons, by tenure type and remoteness, 2002

Tenure type	Persons ^(a)		Households	
	Remote	Non-remote	Remote	Non-remote
Home owners				
Owned without a mortgage	3.8	12.0	5.9	11.8
Being purchased	4.8	21.3	7.7	22.2
<i>Total home owners</i>	8.6	33.3	13.6	34.0
Renters				
Private and other landlord types	8.5	28.9	12.3	31.6
State/territory housing authority	13.2	25.4	17.1	24.0
Community or cooperative housing	63.9	9.3	50.0	7.3
<i>Total renters</i>	85.6	63.7	79.4	62.9
Other ^(b)	5.8	3.0	7.0	3.0
Total^(c)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Persons aged 15 years and over.

(b) Includes other, life tenure, rent/buy/shared equity scheme.

(c) Includes tenure type 'not stated'.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS.

Information on the tenure type of Indigenous and other households by remoteness is available from the 2001 Census and is presented in Table 2.09.5 below.

- Among the estimated 144,731 Indigenous households enumerated in the 2001 Census, approximately 32% were home owners or purchasers, 31% were renters of some form of social housing and 31% were private or other renters. This can be compared to other households where 67% were home owners or purchasers, 4% were renters of some form of social housing and 21% were private or other renters.
- In 2001, the proportion of Indigenous households in the different tenure types varied by remoteness. Of the estimated 23,700 Indigenous households in remote areas, 43% were renters in Indigenous community or cooperative housing, 17% were renters of state/territory housing, 8% were renters through private landlords and 15% were home owners (Table 2.09.5).
- In comparison, among the estimated 121,000 Indigenous households in non-remote areas, 5% were renters in Indigenous community or cooperative housing, 21% were renters of state/territory housing, 31% were renters through private landlords and one-third (35%) were homeowners.
- In 2001, the proportion of other households in the different tenure types also varied by remoteness but not as much as among Indigenous households. Among other households in remote areas, approximately 55% were home owners and 36% were renters. This compared with 68% and 26% of other households in non-remote areas respectively.

Table 2.09.5: Households, by tenure type, Indigenous status and remoteness, 2001

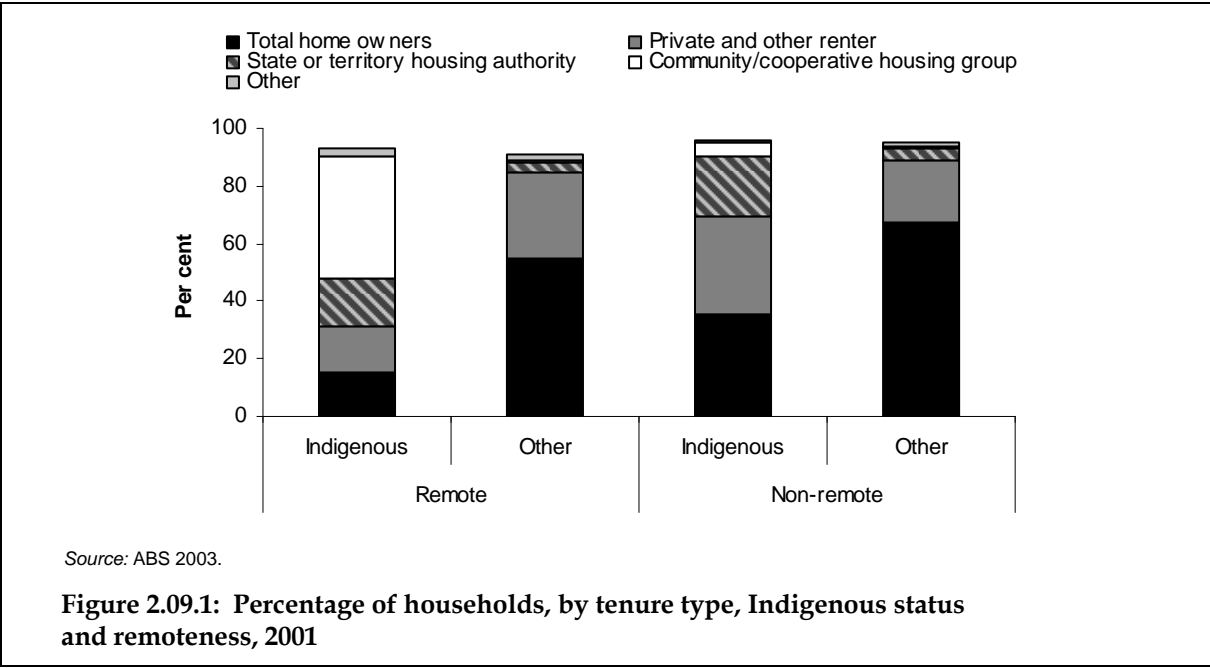
	Remote				Non-remote				Total			
	Indigenous		Other		Indigenous		Other		Indigenous		Other	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Home owners												
Fully owned	1,873	7.9	49,166	36.9	16,311	13.5	2,691,954	40.5	18,184	12.6	2,741,120	40.4
Being purchased	1,694	7.1	23,970	18.0	26,342	21.8	1,810,606	27.2	28,035	19.4	1,834,576	27.0
<i>Total home owners</i>	<i>3,567</i>	<i>15.0</i>	<i>73,136</i>	<i>54.9</i>	<i>42,653</i>	<i>35.2</i>	<i>4,502,560</i>	<i>67.7</i>	<i>46,219</i>	<i>31.9</i>	<i>4,575,696</i>	<i>67.5</i>
Renters												
Private landlord	1,986	8.4	18,073	13.6	37,615	31.1	1,291,409	19.4	39,601	27.4	1,309,482	19.3
State or territory housing authority	3,974	16.8	4,657	3.5	25,543	21.1	281,824	4.2	29,517	20.4	286,481	4.2
Community/ cooperative housing group	10,073	42.5	1,167	0.9	5,660	4.7	27,424	0.4	15,733	10.9	28,591	0.4
Other renter	1,845	7.8	21,622	16.2	3,360	2.8	118,932	1.8	5,206	3.6	140,554	2.1
<i>Total renters^(a)</i>	<i>18,290</i>	<i>77.1</i>	<i>47,799</i>	<i>35.9</i>	<i>73,587</i>	<i>60.8</i>	<i>1,757,191</i>	<i>26.4</i>	<i>91,878</i>	<i>63.5</i>	<i>1,804,990</i>	<i>26.6</i>
Other ^(b)	566	2.4	2,345	1.8	1,325	1.1	85,828	1.3	1,891	3.5	88,173	3.1
Total^(c)	23,713	100.0	133,273	100.0	121,018	100.0	6,650,229	100.0	144,731	100.0	6,783,502	100.0

(a) Includes rent-free accommodation and landlord type not stated.

(b) Includes life tenure, other.

(c) Includes tenure type not stated.

Source: ABS 2003.



Time series

- Between 1994 and 2002, there has been an increase in the proportion of Indigenous households and persons aged 18 years and over who were home owners. Over the same period, there has been an increase in the proportion of households and persons who were private or other renters, a decline in the proportion of renters of state/territory housing and an increase in those renting community or cooperative housing (Table 2.09.6).

Table 2.09.6: Indigenous households and persons, by tenure type, 1994 and 2002

	Persons ^(a)				Households			
	1994		2002		1994		2002	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Home owners								
Owned without a mortgage	20,837	10.9	25,248	10.0	13,831	12.7	17,833	10.8
Being purchased	20,195	10.6	41,456	16.5	13,881	12.8	32,610	19.7
<i>Total home owners</i>	<i>41,032</i>	<i>21.5</i>	<i>66,703</i>	<i>26.5</i>	<i>27,712</i>	<i>25.5</i>	<i>50,443</i>	<i>30.5</i>
Renters								
Private and other landlord types ^(b)	40,346	21.1	60,842	24.2	24,952	23.0	46,780	28.2
State/territory housing authority	63,583	33.3	53,184	21.2	37,796	34.8	37,673	22.7
Community or cooperative housing	31,559	16.5	60,788	24.2	11,900	11.0	24,493	14.8
<i>Total renters^(c)</i>	<i>136,384</i>	<i>71.5</i>	<i>175,031</i>	<i>69.6</i>	<i>75,029</i>	<i>69.1</i>	<i>108,946</i>	<i>65.7</i>
Other ^(d)	10,016	5.2	9,664	3.9	4,210	3.9	6,163	3.7
Total^(e)	190,843	100.0	251,398	100.0	108,579	100.0	165,674	100.0

(a) Persons aged 18 years and over.

(b) Includes real estate agents, unrelated persons, relatives, owner/managers of caravan parks, employers and other landlords.

(c) Includes landlord type not stated.

(d) Includes persons living under life tenure schemes, those living rent free and participants in rent/buy schemes.

(e) Includes tenure type 'not stated'.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey and 2002 NATSISS.

Tenure type by selected health and population characteristics

- In 2004–05, a higher proportion of Indigenous Australians with reported fair/poor health status were renters than Indigenous Australians with excellent/very good health status (79% compared to 67%). A much higher proportion of Indigenous Australians with no long-term health conditions were home owners than Indigenous Australians with one or more long-term health conditions (Table 2.09.7).
- In 2002, a higher proportion of Indigenous Australians who were renters than home owners or purchasers spoke a language other than English, were in the lowest quintile of household income, were unable to raise \$2,000 within a week for something important, were unemployed, had housing problems (that is, structural problems, repairs or maintenance) and had moved in the last 12 months (Table 2.09.8).

Table 2.09.7: Summary health characteristics and housing tenure, by Indigenous status: 2004–05^(a)

	Self-assessed health status						Number of long-term conditions														
	Excellent/very good /good			Fair/poor			0		1			2			3+			Total			
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Rate ratio
	%	%		%	%		%	%		%	%		%	%		%	%		%	%	
Owners without a mortgage	12	30	0.4*	8	27	0.3*	6 ^(a)	19	0.3*	11 ^(b)	25	0.4*	8	27	0.3*	10	25	0.4*	10	26	0.4*
Owner with a mortgage	19	37	0.5*	11	26	0.4*	13 ^(b)	42	0.3*	14	41	0.3*	19	41	0.5*	16	37	0.4*	16	39	0.4*
Subtotal owners	30	68	0.4*	19	53	0.4*	19 ^(b)	61	0.3*	24	67	0.4*	28	68	0.4*	27	63	0.4*	26	65	0.4*
Renter	67	22	3.0*	79	33	2.4*	79	27	2.9*	73	24	3.1*	69	23	3.0*	70	27	2.6*	70	24	2.9*
Boarder	— ^(a)	4	0.1*	— ^(a)	7	0.1*	— ^(a)	4	0.1*	n.p.	4	np	n.p.	4 ^(b)	n.p.	— ^(b)	4	0.1*	—	4 ^(b)	0.1*
Other tenure type ^(c)	2 ^(b)	6	0.4*	2 ^(b)	7	0.2*	2 ^(a)	8	0.2*	2 ^(b)	6	0.4*	2 ^(b)	6 ^(b)	0.4*	2b ^(b)	7	0.4*	2	6	0.4*
Total^(d)	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..	100	100	..

* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

- (a) Estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use.
- (b) Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.
- (c) Includes persons living under life tenure schemes, those living rent free and participants in rent/buy schemes.
- (d) Includes not stated.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS and 2004–05 National Health Survey.

Table 2.09.8: Tenure type by selected population characteristics, persons aged 18 years and over, by Indigenous status: 2002

	Home owner/purchaser		Renter		Total ^(a)	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
		Percent				
Main language spoken at home						
English	*98	*84	81	84	86	84
Language other than English	*2 ^(b)	*16	19	16	*14	*16
Household income						
1st quintile	17	16	*42	*24	*35	*18
5th quintile	*13	*23	*2	*17	*5	*21
Index of disparity						
1st quintile	*29	*15	*53	*29	*46	*19
5th quintile	*5 ^(b)	*25	*3 ^(b)	*16	*3	*23
Financial stress						
Unable to raise \$2,000 within a week for something important	*21	*8	*67	*30	*54	*14
Employment^(c)						
Employed CDEP	3 ^(b)	..	16	..	13	..
Employed non-CDEP	64	..	26	..	38	..
Total employed	*68	*77	*42	*66	*50	*74
Unemployed	*6	*3	*14	*8	*11	*4
<i>Subtotal in labour force</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>*56</i>	<i>*75</i>	<i>*62</i>	<i>*79</i>
Not in labour force	*26	*19	*44	*25	*38	*21
Housing						
Dwelling has major structural problems	23	..	46	..	39	..
Repairs and maintenance carried out in last 12 months	69	..	60	..	62	..
Dwelling requires additional bedroom(s)	10 ^(b)	..	31	..	25	..
Mobility						
Moved dwellings in last 12 months	19	..	35	..	31	..
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

(a) Includes persons living under life tenure schemes, those living rent free and participants in rent/buy schemes.

(b) Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.

(c) Persons aged 15–64 years.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2002 NATSISS and 2002 GSS.

Data quality issues

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS)

The NATSIHS and NATSISS both use the standard Indigenous status question. The survey samples were specifically designed to select a representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and thus overcome the problem inherent in most national surveys with small and unrepresentative Indigenous samples. As with other surveys, the NATSIHS and NATSISS are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Calculations of standard errors and significance testing help to identify the accuracy of the estimates and differences.

Information recorded in these surveys are essentially 'as reported' by respondents. The ABS makes every effort to collect accurate information from respondents, particularly through careful questionnaire design, pre-testing of questionnaires, use of trained interviewers and assistance from Indigenous facilitators. Nevertheless, some responses may be affected by imperfect recall or individual interpretation of survey questions.

Non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the National Health Survey (NHS) and the 2002 General Social Survey. The NHS was conducted in major cities, regional and remote areas, but very remote areas were excluded from the sample. Time series comparisons are available through the 1995 and 2001 National Health Surveys and the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey.

In remote communities there were some modifications to the NATSIHS and NATSISS content in order to address language and cultural appropriateness in traditional communities, as well as to assist respondents in understanding the concepts. Some questions were excluded and some reworded. Also, paper forms were used in communities in remote areas and computer-assisted interview (CAI) instruments were used in non-remote areas. The CAI process included built in edit checks and sequencing.

Further information on NATSIHS and NATSISS data quality issues can be found in the national publications (ABS 2004; ABS 2006).

Housing tenure data

The 2004–05 NATSIHS does not include a question on landlord type. Therefore it does not provide data on rentals broken down by private, state/territory housing authority and community housing. The 2004–05 National Health Survey did not include any questions on housing tenure, so non-Indigenous comparisons are not available from these surveys.

The NATSISS can provide non-Indigenous comparisons with the General Social Survey (GSS). However, the GSS was not conducted in remote areas and therefore non-Indigenous data are not available by remoteness area. In addition, the rental categories were different in the GSS so it is not possible to compare types of rental arrangements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians from these surveys.

Census of Population and Housing

The Census uses the National health data dictionary standard Indigenous status question and it is asked for each household member. Measures that are drawn from Census data are subject to broad data concerns relating to the unexplainable growth in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population since the 1991 Census, and limitations of self-identification. Other Census data issues relate to the accuracy of the Census count itself, for example, whether people are counted more than once, or are undercounted (ABS 1996).

(continued)

Data quality issues (continued)

For the 2002 NATSISS it was estimated that there were 165,700 Indigenous households compared with 144,700 enumerated in the 2001 Census. While the Census data are adjusted for undercounts at the person level to arrive at the Estimated Resident Population, no such adjustment is done at the household level. This affects the accuracy of the person counts at the household level to provide adjusted household estimates.

Housing tenure data

It is likely that the Census data understates the number of households and residents in community rental housing. The Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey counted 21,287 permanent dwellings managed by Indigenous housing organisations, of which 19,618 were occupied. The Census data for the same period found 15,733 households with Indigenous residents in community rental housing. It is likely that some households with Indigenous residents have recorded a state/territory housing authority or private owner as their landlord on the Census when they were actually renting community housing (SCRGSP 2003).

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