

INTRODUCTION

Community services, in conjunction with other service sectors such as employment, income support, education and health, are designed to address individual and societal needs. They are provided by Australian Government, state, territory and local government agencies, as well as by non-government not-for-profit and for-profit organisations.

This chapter presents information about delivery of community services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in the areas of child care, child protection, adoptions, juvenile justice, disability services and aged care. Where possible, comparisons with the services delivered to ‘other’ or ‘non-Indigenous’ Australians are included.

Most of the data in this chapter come from the administrative databases of community service providers and are compiled by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). While these data provide useful information, there are some limitations on data quality. The Indigenous status of clients is not always disclosed by the clients or recorded by the service provider. In addition, in some cases where Indigenous status is recorded, inconsistencies in recording methods result in data that are not comparable between jurisdictions.

CHILD CARE

Child care services provide care and development activities for children generally aged 12 years or younger. These services enable parents to participate in employment, education and training, community activities and personal activities. They may also be used for family support reasons. As a condition of government funding and regulation, child care services must promote and enhance children’s emotional, intellectual, social and physical development. Dedicated preschool services offer educational and developmental programs for children in the year or two before full-time school.

The Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) funds most child care services through the Child Care Support Program (FaCS 2004). All state and territory governments fund dedicated preschool services; they also provide some funding for other child care services, either solely or in conjunction with the Australian Government. The Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) provides supplementary funding for Indigenous children enrolled in state and territory funded preschools under the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP).

The Australian Government supports mainstream child care services such as long day care centres, family day care services and outside hours care services, as well as culturally specific services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. These include:

CHILD CARE *continued*

- Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS), which provide flexible services to meet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's social and developmental needs. MACS offer care for children under school age and for school age children, including long day care, playgroups, before and after school care and school holiday care, and cultural programs
- Aboriginal Playgroups and Enrichment Programs. Aboriginal playgroups provide opportunities for children under school age and their parents to socialise and interact with one another. Enrichment programs provide supervised care, organised activities, homework centres and nutrition services for school age children.

Although not specifically for Indigenous children, the Australian Government also funds mobile children's services which visit remote areas and provide occasional care, school holiday care, playgroups, story telling, games and toy library services for children, and information and support for parents.

States and territories also fund culturally specific child care and preschool services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. For instance, the Queensland Department of Families, through the Remote Area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care Program, provides funding for the operation of a range of children's services to meet the cultural and community needs in remote area communities. These include long day care centres, children's activity programs and playgroups.

Nationally, comprehensive and comparable data on children using child care and preschool services are not available. The development phase of a Children's Services National Minimum Data Set is nearing completion. The final report of the development phase and the data specifications are expected to be available in late 2005.

Since most child care services are supported by FaCS, the department's Census of Child Care Services is currently the most comprehensive source of data on Indigenous children attending child care services in Australia.

In 2004, there were a total of 651,044 children using Australian Government supported child care services, of whom 11,971 (or 1.8%) were Indigenous. Non-Indigenous children were supported by these government services at more than twice the rate of Indigenous children, with usage rates of around 19% and 8% respectively. Within each service type, Indigenous-specific services such as Aboriginal Playgroups and Enrichment Services and MACS, had the highest proportions of Indigenous children (88% and 79% respectively), with the proportion of Indigenous children being considerably lower in services dedicated to all children. In 2004, approximately 10% of children using Mobile and Toy Library Services were Indigenous and 6% of children using Multifunctional Children's Services were Indigenous. Indigenous children represented less than 2% of all children using the remaining service types.

Of all Indigenous children in Australian Government supported child care services, 51% were in long day care centres, 16% were in before/after school care and 9% were in family day care compared with 59%, 25% and 14% of other children respectively (table 11.1).

CHILD CARE *continued***11.1** CHILDREN IN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED CHILD CARE, by Indigenous status and service type—May 2004

		Indigenous children	Other children(a)
Long day care centres	%	50.7	59.0
Family day care	%	8.9	13.8
Occasional care	%	1.1	1.2
Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services	%	11.7	0.1
Multifunctional Children's Services	%	0.5	0.2
Before/after school care (Outside of School Hours Care) services	%	15.5	24.9
Vacation care	%	—	—
Mobile and Toy Library Services	%	2.5	0.4
Aboriginal Playgroups and Enrichment Services	%	8.9	0.1
In-home care services	%	0.2	0.5
Total	%	100.0	100.0
Total	no.	11 971	639 073

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Includes children for whom Indigenous status was not stated.

Source: FaCS, 2004 Australian Government Census of Child Care Services

Some data are also available on the number of Indigenous children enrolled in state and territory funded and non-government funded preschool services from the annual census conducted for DEST. In 2003, there were 4,697 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in state/territory funded preschools in all jurisdictions, excluding Queensland and Victoria (children attending state and territory funded preschools in Queensland and Victoria were excluded from the data collection in 2003), and there were a further 4,354 Indigenous children enrolled in non-government funded preschools in all states and territories.

CHILD PROTECTION

Statutory child protection services are the responsibility of the community services departments in each state or territory. Children who come into contact with the community services departments for protective reasons include those:

- who have been abused, neglected or otherwise harmed; and/or
- whose parents cannot provide adequate care or protection.

The community services departments provide assistance to these children through the provision of, or referral to, a wide range of services. Non-government agencies are often contracted by the departments to provide these services, which range from family support to the placement of children in out-of-home care.

Children who are seen to be in need of protection can come to the attention of child protection authorities through a report by an individual (professional or member of the community), an organisation, or by the children themselves. These reports are assessed by the child protection agencies, and in cases where there is a risk of harm to the child or evidence of abuse or neglect, are classified as a notification. Most notifications are then investigated and classified as either 'substantiated' (that is, child abuse and neglect, or the risk of harm, are confirmed) or 'not substantiated', depending on the degree of risk, or actual harm, to the child. A range of services may then be provided to the child and the child's family.

CHILD PROTECTION

continued

In more serious cases, the department may also apply to the relevant court (usually a special children's court) to place a child under a care and protection order. Care and protection orders vary between jurisdictions but can provide for a supervisory role for the department, or the temporary or permanent transfer of legal guardianship to the department. The issuing of a care and protection order is often a legal requirement if a child is to be placed in out-of-home care. This option can be used to protect the child from further harm, where there is family conflict and 'time out' is needed (commonly known as 'respite care') and/or where parents are ill or unable to care for the child.

The three areas of child protection services for which national data are collected are:

- child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations;
- children under care and protection orders
- children in out-of-home care.

Each state and territory has its own legislation, policies and practices in relation to child protection, so the data provided by jurisdictions are not strictly comparable. This is particularly the case with the data on notifications, investigations and substantiations, where jurisdictions use different definitions and processes (AIHW 2005d). It is also worth noting that the quality of the Indigenous data varies across jurisdictions due to differences in the practices used to identify and record the Indigenous status of children and young people in the child protection system.

Substantiation notifications

The rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children entering the child protection system are higher than the rates for other children. In 2003–04, the rate of Indigenous children in substantiations was higher in all states and territories except New South Wales, for which data could not be provided, and Tasmania. In Victoria, the rate was nearly ten times higher, while in Western Australia and South Australia, the rate for Indigenous children was eight times the rate of other children (table 11.2). The reasons behind the over-representation of Indigenous children in child protection substantiations are complex but may include intergenerational effects of previous separations from family and culture, and poor socioeconomic status (HREOC 1997).

11.2 CHILDREN WHO WERE THE SUBJECT OF A CHILD PROTECTION SUBSTANTIATION (a), by Indigenous status—2003–04

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN			RATE PER 1,000 CHILDREN (b)			Rate ratio (c)
	Indigenous	Other (d)	Total	Indigenous	Other (d)	Total	
New South Wales (e)	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Victoria	700	6 323	7 023	57.7	5.9	6.4	9.8
Queensland	1 192	11 481	12 673	20.8	13.6	14.0	1.5
South Australia	441	1 499	1 940	39.9	4.7	5.9	8.4
Western Australia	322	599	921	11.2	1.4	2.0	8.0
Tasmania (f)	12	317	329	1.6	3.1	3.0	0.5
Northern Territory	375	116	491	16.2	3.5	8.7	4.7
Australian Capital Territory	44	441	485	25.3	6.2	6.7	4.1

na not available

(a) Children aged 0–16 years.

(b) Based on ABS 'low series' population projections.

(c) The rate for Indigenous children divided by the rate for other children.

(d) Includes children for whom Indigenous status was not stated.

(e) No data available due to the ongoing implementation of the data system.

(f) Data should be interpreted with caution since few child protection workers recorded Indigenous status at the time of the substantiation.

Source: AIHW 2005d

Substantiation notifications continued

Substantiation cases are classified into one of the following four categories depending on the main type of abuse or neglect that has occurred: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect. It is not always clear what type of abuse, neglect or harm has occurred, and how a substantiation is classified varies according to the policies and practices of the different jurisdictions.

The pattern of substantiated abuse and neglect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children differs from the pattern for other children. In 2003–04, Indigenous children were much more likely to be the subject of a substantiation of neglect than other children. For example, in Western Australia 43% of Indigenous children in substantiated cases were the subject of a substantiation of neglect, compared with 27% of other children. In the Northern Territory the corresponding percentages were 40% and 26% respectively.

It is important to note that these variations in the distribution of types of abuse or neglect across jurisdictions are likely to be the result of differences in what is classified as a substantiation as well as differences in the types of incidents that are substantiated. In Western Australia a relatively high proportion of substantiations were classified as either 'physical abuse' or 'sexual abuse', as the child protection data from that state includes only child abuse cases; cases which require a family support response (predominantly neglect and emotional abuse matters) are dealt with and counted separately.

Victoria, on the other hand, had a relatively high proportion of substantiations that were classified as 'emotional abuse', probably reflecting that jurisdiction's greater focus on emotional abuse concerns. Similarly, the high proportion of substantiations classified as 'neglect' in Queensland reflects the policies in that state which focus on identifying the protective needs of a child and assessing whether parents have protected the child from harm or risk of harm.

Care and protection orders

In jurisdictions for which data were available, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being placed under care and protection orders varied considerably by jurisdiction, ranging from 9 per 1,000 children in the Northern Territory to 45 per 1,000 in Victoria (table 11.3). The variations between jurisdictions are likely to reflect the differences in child protection policies and in the types of orders available in each state and territory (AIHW 2005d).

In jurisdictions for which data were available, the rate of Indigenous children under orders was higher than the rate for other children. In Victoria, the rate for Indigenous children was 11 times the rate of other children, and in Western Australia the rate was around eight times that of other children.

11.3 CHILDREN UNDER CARE AND PROTECTION ORDERS, by Indigenous status and state/territory—30 June 2004

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN		RATE PER 1,000 CHILDREN (a)		Rate ratio (b)
	Indigenous	Other (c)	Indigenous	Other (c)	
New South Wales (d)	na	na	na	na	na
Victoria	574	4 677	44.7	4.1	11.0
Queensland	1 146	3 804	18.9	4.2	4.5
South Australia	275	1 180	23.5	3.5	6.7
Western Australia	583	1 056	19.2	2.3	8.3
Tasmania	83	551	10.2	5.0	2.0
Northern Territory	230	115	9.4	2.2	4.3
Australian Capital Territory	53	300	28.7	5.2	5.5

na not available

(a) Based on the ABS 'low series' population projections.

(b) The rate for Indigenous children divided by the rate for other children.

(c) Includes children for whom Indigenous status was not stated.

(d) No data available due to the ongoing implementation of the data system.

Source: AIHW 2005d

Out-of-home care

At 30 June 2004, there were 5,059 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care. The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being placed in out-of-home care was around seven times the rate for other Australian children. In all jurisdictions there were higher rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care than other children (table 11.4). In Victoria, the rate of Indigenous children in out-of-home care was nearly 13 times the rate for other children, and in New South Wales the rate of Indigenous children was nearly nine times that for other children.

Out-of-home care
continued

11.4 CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE, by Indigenous status and state/territory—30 June 2004

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN		RATE PER 1,000 CHILDREN (a)		Rate ratio(b)
	Indigenous	Other(c)	Indigenous	Other(c)	
New South Wales	2 459	6 686	38.7	4.4	8.9
Victoria	531	3 778	41.4	3.3	12.5
Queensland	958	3 455	15.8	3.8	4.1
South Australia	236	968	20.2	2.9	7.0
Western Australia	587	1 094	19.3	2.4	8.0
Tasmania	55	432	6.7	3.9	1.7
Northern Territory	175	83	7.2	1.6	4.6
Australian Capital Territory	58	240	31.4	4.2	7.5
Total	5 059	16 736	23.7	3.6	6.5

(a) Based on 'low series' ABS population projections.

(b) The rate for Indigenous children divided by the rate for other children.

(c) Includes children for whom Indigenous status was not stated.

Source: AIHW 2005d

Indigenous status of
caregivers

One of the most significant changes in child welfare policy in relation to Indigenous children was the introduction of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (box 11.5). The Principle is based on the premise that Aboriginal children are better cared for in Aboriginal families and communities. All jurisdictions have adopted the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle in either legislation or policy.

11.5 THE ABORIGINAL CHILD PLACEMENT PRINCIPLE

The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle expresses a preference for the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people when they are placed outside their family (Lock 1997). The Principle has the following order of preference for the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children:

- with the child's extended family;
- within the child's Indigenous community; or
- with other Indigenous people.

The Principle covers the placement of Indigenous children in out-of-home care as well as the adoption of Indigenous children.

The impact of the Principle is reflected in the relatively high proportion of Indigenous children who are placed with Indigenous caregivers or with relatives, though this proportion varies by state and territory. At 30 June 2004, for the jurisdictions that provided data, 68% of Indigenous children in out-of-home care in Australia were placed in accordance with the Principle (table 11.6). This proportion ranged from 40% in Tasmania to 81% in Western Australia, which also had the highest proportion (55%) of Indigenous child placements within the child's extended family. These figures should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of Indigenous children in out-of-home care in some jurisdictions.

Indigenous status of
caregivers continued

11.6 INDIGENOUS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE(a), by
relationship to care-giver and placement—30 June 2004

	NSW(b)	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT
NUMBER								
Placed in accordance with the Principle								
Indigenous relative/kin	na	98	326	37	282	3	67	26
Other Indigenous caregiver	na	117	236	131	127	3	53	5
Other relative/kin	na	81	42	15	33	13	na	3
Indigenous residential care	na	12	3	—	28	—	—	1
Total	na	308	607	183	470	19	120	35
Not placed in accordance with the Principle								
Other caregiver	na	155	351	51	77	28	55	18
Other residential care	na	36	—	2	33	—	—	5
Total	na	191	351	53	110	28	55	23
Total	na	499	958	236	580	47	175	58
PROPORTION								
Placed in accordance with the Principle								
Indigenous relative/kin	na	20	34	16	49	6	38	45
Other Indigenous caregiver	na	23	25	56	22	6	30	9
Other relative/kin	na	16	4	6	6	28	na	5
Indigenous residential care	na	2	—	—	5	—	—	2
Total	na	62	63	78	81	40	69	60
Not placed in accordance with the Principle								
Other caregiver	na	31	37	22	13	60	31	31
Other residential care	na	7	—	1	6	—	—	9
Total	na	38	37	22	19	60	31	40
Total	na	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

na not available

(a) Excludes Indigenous children who were living independently or whose living arrangements were unknown.

(b) No data available due to issues surrounding the ongoing implementation of the data system.

Source: AIHW 2004a

ADOPTION

The formal adoption of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has not been a common practice in recent years. In many cases where Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children cannot live with their birth parents, informal arrangements are made for them to live with a relative or other member of their community (HREOC 1997). Arrangements of this type are generally preferred, and adoption orders are made only when informal alternatives are judged not to be in the best interests of the child.

Between 1999–2000 and 2003–04 there were only 15 registered adoptions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Australia. Seven of these were ‘known’ child adoptions where the adoptive parents had a pre-existing relationship with the child (e.g. relatives/kin or carers), and eight were ‘placement’ adoptions where there was no pre-existing relationship between the parent and the child.

The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle also covers the adoption of Indigenous children. Of the eight Indigenous placement adoptions recorded between 1999–2000 and 2003–04, four were adoptions by Indigenous parents and four were adoptions by other parents (AIHW 2004a).

JUVENILE JUSTICE

The juvenile justice system is responsible for dealing with young people who have committed or allegedly committed an offence while considered to be a 'juvenile'. Juvenile justice is a state and territory responsibility and each jurisdiction has its own legislation that dictates policies and practices with regard to juvenile justice. While there are differences in detail, the intent of the legislation is very similar across Australia. For example, key elements of juvenile justice in all jurisdictions include:

- diversion of young people from court where appropriate
- incarceration as a last resort
- victim's rights
- the acceptance of responsibility by the offender for his or her behaviour
- community safety.

One of the ways in which the legislation varies across states and territories is in the definition of a 'juvenile'. In Queensland, juvenile justice legislation applies to those people who were aged 10–16 years at the time of the offence. In most other jurisdictions, however, those who were aged 10–17 years are included as juveniles. Victoria's juvenile legislation has been similar to Queensland's but from July 2005, Victoria's legislation is also expected to apply to juveniles aged 10–17 years. Victoria also has a sentencing option for adult courts which allows those aged 17–20 years where appropriate, to be sentenced to detention in juvenile justice facilities.

The juvenile justice system in each state and territory comprises several organisations, each having a different primary role and responsibility in dealing with young offenders:

- the police, who are usually the young person's first point of contact with the justice system. Where considered appropriate, the Police may administer warnings, cautions and in some jurisdictions use conferencing to divert the juvenile from proceeding to court
- the courts (usually a special children's or youth court), where matters regarding the charges against the young person are heard. The courts are largely responsible for decisions regarding bail (and remand) and sentencing options if the young person admits guilt or is found guilty by the court
- the juvenile justice departments, which are responsible for the supervision of juveniles on a range of community-based orders and supervised bail, and which are also responsible for the administration of juvenile detention centres.

There are only limited national data on young people in the juvenile justice system. The AIHW and all states and territories are currently implementing a national data collection that includes young offenders who are on supervised community-based orders or in detention centres. The first report from the Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set is expected to be available in late 2005, and to include data from 2000–01 to 2003–04. The quality of information collected on the Indigenous status of juvenile justice clients varies according to differing collection and recording practices in the states and territories. It is expected that quality will improve over the next couple of years as standardised methods are implemented.

National data are available on the number of young people held in juvenile justice detention centres, either on remand or after sentencing. Data for the years 1998–99 to 2002–03 are provided in tables 11.7 and 11.8. Few young people have contact with the juvenile justice system, and as indicated in these tables, only a small proportion of these

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continued

young people are in juvenile detention centres. Many young people are diverted from the court when the offences committed are relatively minor and/or are a first offence. Of those young people who do go to court, most receive either non-supervised orders or community-based orders.

Tables 11.7 and 11.8 show that the rates of incarceration in juvenile detention centres for Indigenous people aged 10–17 years are higher than those for all Australians, in all jurisdictions. The data available for Australia (excluding Tasmania) indicate that between 1998–99 and 2000–01, around 40% of 10–17 year olds in detention centres were Indigenous. This rose during 2001–02 to 44% and during 2002–03 to 48%. It is estimated that less than 4% of the Australian population in that same age group were Indigenous at 30 June 2001.

11.7 ESTIMATED AVERAGE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN JUVENILE CORRECTIVE INSTITUTIONS (a), by state/territory—1998–99 to 2002–03 (b)

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas. (c)	NT	ACT	Australia
INDIGENOUS									
1998–99	96	9	77	14	80	na	17	2	295
1999–00	91	8	60	13	77	na	10	2	261
2000–01	86	7	53	13	71	na	12	4	246
2001–02	92	7	53	19	71	na	12	5	259
2002–03	98	10	54	28	80	na	19	4	295
TOTAL									
1998–99	285	72	133	42	125	29	23	9	716
1999–00	251	63	112	47	116	31	15	11	647
2000–01	223	62	87	59	103	43	17	17	611
2001–02	217	62	89	56	108	27	16	17	590
2002–03	220	64	96	65	106	25	24	17	616

na not available

(a) Based on the population of juvenile corrective institutions on the last day of each quarter of the financial year.

(b) As a result of variations in legislation, and the relatively small number of young people in detention centres in some jurisdictions, care should be taken when comparing the data across jurisdictions and time.

(c) Data for Indigenous children in Tasmania are unavailable due to data quality concerns.

Source: SCRGSP 2005: tables F2 and F5

JUVENILE JUSTICE

*continued***11.8** ESTIMATED AVERAGE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN JUVENILE CORRECTIVE INSTITUTIONS(a)(b), per 100,000 population by states/territories—1998–99 to 2002–03

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.(c)	NT	ACT	Australia
INDIGENOUS									
1998–99	393.9	201.8	347.1	314.7	677.7	na	173.5	236.1	378.6
1999–00	343.5	181.9	250.8	266.2	624.1	na	97.6	284.1	315.1
2000–01	324.9	142.4	222.2	265.9	565.4	na	121.4	524.7	294.5
2001–02	351.4	135.8	221.1	388.2	555.6	na	119.9	624.4	307.9
2002–03	353.8	173.6	212.0	538.1	604.7	na	182.6	458.6	326.6
TOTAL									
1998–99	40.6	14.2	32.9	25.6	57.5	51.7	92.5	24.8	34.0
1999–00	35.5	12.4	27.2	29.1	52.8	45.7	61.2	30.2	30.4
2000–01	31.1	12.0	21.0	36.4	46.2	61.8	68.6	46.6	28.4
2001–02	30.0	11.9	20.9	34.1	47.9	48.6	63.0	47.4	27.2
2002–03	30.3	12.1	22.3	40.2	47.0	45.1	94.0	45.9	28.1

na not available

(a) Based on the average population of juvenile corrective institutions on the last day of each quarter of the financial year.

(b) As a result of variations in legislation, and the relatively small number of young people in detention centres in some jurisdictions, care should be taken when comparing the data across jurisdictions and time.

(c) Data for children in Tasmania are not available due to data quality concerns.

Source: SCRGSP 2005: tables F3 and F6

The data also show that the national detention rate for Indigenous young people has fluctuated over the five-year period, from a high of 379 per 100,000 in 1998–99 to a low of 295 per 100,000 in 2000–01, before rising again to 327 per 100,000 in 2002–03. While the overall rate of detention for those aged 10–17 years has generally declined, from 34 per 100,000 in 1998–99 to 28 per 100,000 in 2002–03, Indigenous young people are still detained at more than ten times the rate of all young people.

The over-representation of Indigenous people in the justice system is not confined to young people. At 30 June 2004, Indigenous Australians constituted 21% of all people incarcerated in Australian prisons (ABS 2004g).

DISABILITY SERVICES

Services funded under the Commonwealth–State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA) are designed for people who need ongoing support with everyday life activities. Under this agreement the Australian Government has responsibility for planning, policy setting and management of employment services, while the states and territories have responsibilities for all other disability services. These include:

- accommodation support—services that provide accommodation to people with a disability and services that provide the support needed to enable a person with a disability to remain in his or her existing accommodation or move to more suitable or appropriate accommodation.
- community support—services that provide the support needed for a person to live in a non-institutional setting, including therapy, early childhood intervention, counselling and case management.
- community access—services that provide opportunities for people with a disability to gain and use their abilities to enjoy their full potential for social independence.

DISABILITY SERVICES

continued

- respite—services that provide a short-term break for families and other voluntary caregivers of people with disabilities, while providing a positive experience for the person with a disability.

Advocacy, print disability and information services are considered shared responsibilities of the Australian Government and the states and territories.

Information about disability services provided to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population can be obtained from the National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) collected by agencies funded under the CSTDA. This data set, which contains the standard question about Indigenous status, is collected by all jurisdictions and reported to the AIHW annually. Up until 2002, the CSTDA National Minimum Data Set was based on data collected on a single ‘snapshot’ day; however, data are now collected on an ongoing, financial year basis, with the 2003–04 data set being the first full year of data available. Thus the data presented below are not directly comparable to the 2002 snapshot data described in the last report of this series (ABS & AIHW 2003).

During 2003–04, an estimated 187,806 people (referred to as ‘service users’) were provided with CSTDA-funded services. Of these service users, 3.5% (6,524 service users) reported that they were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin compared with their 2.7% share of people aged less than 65 years in the Australian population. The Indigenous status of 17,882 service users (10%) was not known.

The proportion of Indigenous people who received CSTDA-funded services varied by service type (table 11.9).

Respite (5%), community support (5%) and accommodation (4%) services had an above-average proportion of Indigenous service users. On the other hand, service users of employment (3%) and community access (3%) services had a smaller Indigenous representation than in the overall CSTDA service population.

11.9 USERS OF CSTDA-FUNDED SERVICES, by Indigenous status and service(s) used—2003–04(a)

	<i>Indigenous</i>		<i>Other(b)</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Accommodation support	1 257	3.8	31 918	96.2	33 175	100.0
Community support	3 597	4.6	75 250	95.4	78 847	100.0
Community access	1 325	2.8	46 311	97.2	47 636	100.0
Respite	1 064	5.2	19 483	94.8	20 547	100.0
Employment	1 677	2.6	62 604	97.4	64 281	100.0
All service groups(c)	6 524	3.5	181 282	96.5	187 806	100.0

(a) Service user data are estimates after use of a statistical linkage key to account for individuals who received services from more than one service type outlet during the 12 months from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004.

(b) Includes 17,882 service users whose Indigenous status was not stated.

(c) Components do not add to total since persons may have accessed more than one service during the 12 month period.

Source: AIHW 2005i

Data on the support needs of CSTDA service users relating to nine life areas were collected. These areas were grouped into three main categories as follows:

DISABILITY SERVICES

continued

- Activities of daily living (ADLs)—including self-care; mobility; and communication.
- Activities of independent living (AILs)—including interpersonal interactions and relationships; learning, applying knowledge and general tasks and demands; and domestic life.
- Activities of work, education and community living (AWECs)—including education; community (civic) and economic life; and working. This category is analysed for service users aged five years or over, as service users under five years of age are allowed to respond 'not applicable due to age' for all three of these life areas.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users reported a somewhat more frequent need for support than other service users in all three of the support categories (table 11.10).

11.10 USERS OF CSTDA-FUNDED SERVICES, by Indigenous status and support needed—2003–04 (a)

Frequency of support needed	Indigenous		Other(b)		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING (c)						
Always or unable to do	1 889	34.9	36 917	27.8	38 806	28.1
Sometimes	2 473	45.7	60 963	45.9	63 436	45.9
None, but uses aid(s)	174	3.2	5 930	4.5	6 104	4.4
None	871	16.1	28 933	21.8	29 804	21.6
<i>Total</i>	5 407	100.0	132 743	100.0	138 150	100.0
ACTIVITIES OF INDEPENDENT LIVING (d)						
Always or unable to do	2 281	42.3	44 567	33.9	46 848	34.2
Sometimes	2 625	48.7	71 020	54.0	73 645	53.8
None, but uses aid(s)	114	2.1	3 303	2.5	3 417	2.5
None	372	6.9	12 727	9.7	13 099	9.6
<i>Total</i>	5 392	100.0	131 617	100.0	137 009	100.0
ACTIVITIES OF WORK, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY LIVING (e)						
Always or unable to do	2 586	49.9	53 544	41.9	56 130	42.2
Sometimes	2 206	42.6	62 395	48.8	64 601	48.6
None, but uses aid(s)	115	2.2	3 655	2.9	3 770	2.8
None	274	5.3	8 228	6.4	8 502	6.4
<i>Total</i>	5 181	100.0	127 822	100.0	133 003	100.0

(a) Service user data are estimates after use of a statistical linkage key to account for individuals who received services from more than one service type outlet during the 12 months from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004.

(b) Includes 17,882 service users whose Indigenous status was not stated.

(c) Self-care; mobility; and communication. Excludes 49,656 service users whose support needs were not stated.

(d) Interpersonal interactions and relationships; learning, applying knowledge and general tasks and demands; domestic life. Excludes 50,797 service users whose support needs were not applicable or not stated.

(e) Education; community (civic) and economic life; working for people aged five years or over. Excludes 38,147 service users whose support needs were not applicable or not stated.

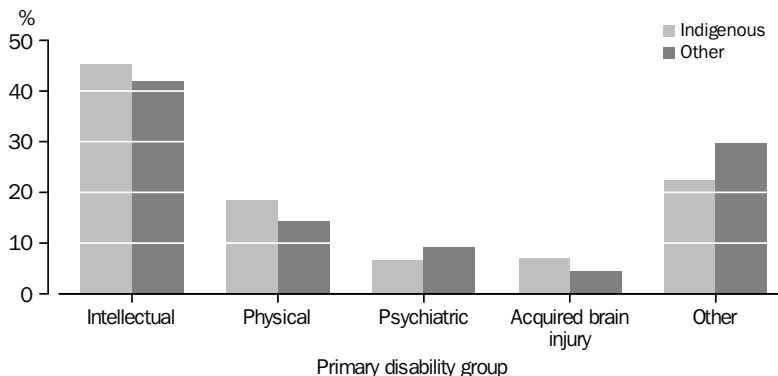
Source: AIHW 2005i

DISABILITY SERVICES
continued

For activities of daily living, 35% of Indigenous service users reported always needing help and a further 46% reported sometimes needing help. Nearly all Indigenous service users reported always or sometimes needing support with activities of independent living and activities of work, education and community living (91% and 93% respectively). Indigenous service users were more likely to report always needing help with, or being unable to do, activities of daily living (35%), independent living (42%) and work, education and community living (50%) than other service users (28%, 34% and 42% respectively).

The most common primary disability group reported among Indigenous service users was intellectual disability (45% of Indigenous service users), followed by physical disability (19%), acquired brain injury (7%), and psychiatric disability (7%) (graph 11.11). Other primary disabilities included neurological, sensory and speech disabilities, specific learning/attention deficit disorder and autism. A higher proportion of Indigenous service users had an intellectual disability, physical disability or an acquired brain injury compared with other service users. Other service users were more likely to report one of the other disability groupings than Indigenous service users (30% compared with 22%).

11.11 USERS OF CSTDA-FUNDED SERVICES(a), primary disability group by Indigenous status—2003–04



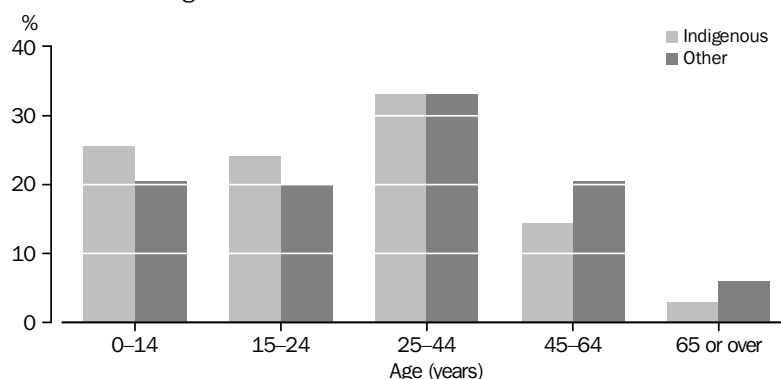
(a) Excludes 17,587 service users whose primary disability was not stated.
Source: AIHW 2005i

Indigenous service users of CSTDA services were younger, on average, than other service users (graph 11.12). Nearly one-quarter (24%) of Indigenous service users were aged 15–24 years, and 83% were aged under 45 years. The median age for Indigenous service users was 25 years compared with 31 years for other service users (AIHW 2005i). This may reflect the earlier onset of chronic health conditions and lower life expectancy in the Indigenous population (Chapter 9).

DISABILITY SERVICES

continued

11.12 USERS OF CSTDA-FUNDED SERVICES(a), by Indigenous status and age—2003–04

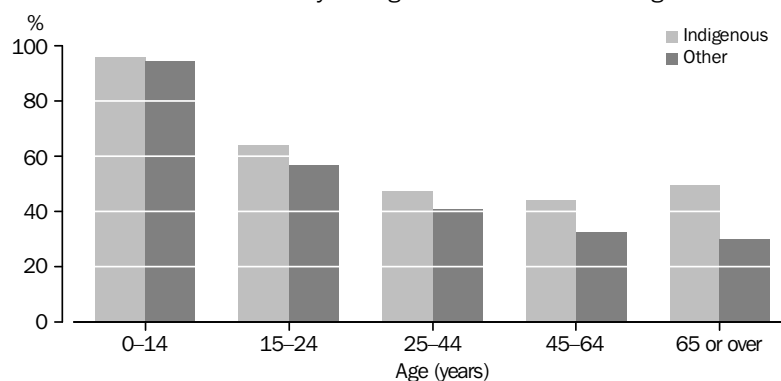


(a) Excludes 2,854 service users for whom age was not stated.

Source: AIHW 2005i

Considering valid (non-missing) responses only, Indigenous service users were more likely to report the presence of an informal carer than were other service users across all age groups (graph 11.13). The most marked difference was found in the oldest age group (65 years or over), where 50% of Indigenous service users reported having a carer, compared with 30% of other service users. A large difference was also found in the proportion of service users reporting the presence of a carer in the 45–64 year age group (44% of Indigenous service users compared to 32% of others). The relationship of a carer to service user varied somewhat between Indigenous and other service users. While mothers were by far the most common carer reported, they provided care to 58% of Indigenous service users compared to 69% of other service users. Indigenous service users were more likely to report ‘other female relative’ as their main carer (14%, compared to 4% for non-Indigenous) (AIHW 2005i). This is probably a reflection of the extended kinship patterns evident in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families that are different to mainstream care arrangements established around the nuclear family (Zubrick et al. 2004).

11.13 USERS OF CSTDA-FUNDED SERVICES(a), presence of an informal carer by Indigenous status and age—2003–04



(a) Excludes 37,308 service users for whom the presence of an informal carer was not stated.

Source: AIHW 2005i

AGED CARE

This section provides information on government services that provide care and support to older people who are living in the community or who are in formal residential aged care.

Residential aged care is funded by the Australian Government and provides accommodation and other support services, such as domestic assistance, personal care and nursing care. Community Aged Care Packages are also Australian Government funded, and support people who prefer to remain at home but who require care equivalent to low level residential care. The Home and Community Care Program (HACC) is jointly funded by Australian and state and territory governments. It provides community-based support services, such as home nursing, personal care, respite care, domestic help, meals and transport to people who can be appropriately cared for in the community and can therefore remain at home.

Although these services are commonly associated with older people, a proportion of younger people also utilise such services. This occurs relatively more often among Indigenous Australians because of the higher prevalence of chronic diseases. For example, Type II diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and kidney disease often have earlier onset among Indigenous people, resulting in a relatively high proportion of Indigenous people needing care at a younger age. Also, a higher proportion of Indigenous Australians die at younger ages, with the life expectancy at birth about 18 years less than that of all Australians. The Commonwealth's *Aged Care Act 1997* recognises the implications of these differences in health status and life expectancy between the two population groups. When planning services for older people, the Australian Government uses population estimates for the general population aged 70 years or over, compared with 50 years or over for Indigenous Australians (DHAC 2001).

In developing programs to meet the care needs of older people, particular consideration is given to issues of access and equity for groups with special needs, such as Indigenous Australians. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy was developed in 1994 after consultation with Indigenous communities and organisations involved in aged care services. This Strategy tackles issues of access to services, including those related to the rural and remote location of many Indigenous communities. The Strategy established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Services, which provide aged care services with a mix of residential and community care places that can change as community needs vary. Many of these services have been established in remote areas where no aged care services were previously available.

In rural and remote locations that are too small to support the standard systems of aged care provision, Multi-purpose Services provide a more workable care and treatment model by bringing together a range of local health and aged care services, often including residential aged care, under one management structure. Multi-purpose Services provide flexible care places.

Residential aged care services

At 30 June 2004, there were 29 residential services operating under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy, providing 336 places for Indigenous residents (AIHW 2005l). No demographic data are available for clients of these services.

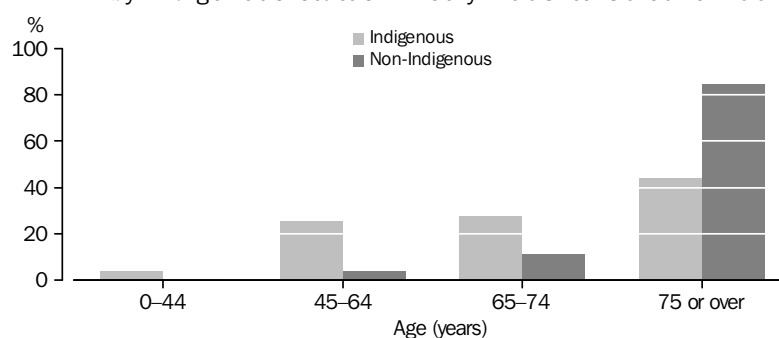
Residential aged care services continued

There were 154,487 places in mainstream residential aged care services as at 30 June 2004. Of these, 809 permanent residents (0.6% of all permanent residents) and 19 people in respite care (0.7% of all people in respite care) identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. Indigenous status was not recorded or not known for 10,967 (7%) of all residents (AIHW 2005).

AGE PROFILE

Of those who were admitted to permanent or respite care during 2003–04, proportionately more Indigenous people were in the younger age groups (graph 11.14). Almost 29% of Indigenous people were under 65 years of age on admission to residential aged care, compared with fewer than 5% of non-Indigenous Australians. About 44% of Indigenous Australians were aged 75 years or over on admission, compared with 84% of non-Indigenous Australians.

11.14 AGE PROFILE OF RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE ADMISSIONS (a), by Indigenous status—1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004



(a) There were 4,373 residents whose Indigenous status was not stated. Within age groups, these residents have been distributed between the 'Indigenous' and 'non-Indigenous' categories according to the proportion that occurred for residents with a known Indigenous status.

Source: AIHW analysis of the DoHA Aged and Community Care Management System database

USAGE RATES

Age-specific usage rates show that Indigenous Australians make higher use of residential aged care services at relatively younger ages (table 11.15). At 30 June 2004, 9 per 1,000 Indigenous people aged 50–74 years were in residential aged care, compared with 4 per 1,000 non-Indigenous Australians. Among people aged 75 or over, 103 per 1,000 Indigenous people and 104 per 1,000 non-Indigenous people were in residential care.

Residential aged care services continued

USAGE RATES continued

11.15 RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE USE(a), by Indigenous status and age(b)—30 June 2004

Age (years)	RESIDENTS			AGE-SPECIFIC USAGE RATE PER 1,000(c)		
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total
Less than 50	71	951	1 022	0.2	0.1	0.1
50–74	425	18 380	18 805	8.9	3.9	3.9
75 or over	408	127 405	127 813	102.8	103.6	103.6
Total	904	146 736	147 640

.. not applicable

- (a) Places provided by multi-purpose services and services receiving flexible funding under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy are not included, as age-specific figures are not available for these programs.
- (b) Includes 10,967 residents whose Indigenous status was not stated. Within age groups, these residents have been distributed between the 'Indigenous' and 'non-Indigenous' categories in accordance with the proportion that occurred for residents with a known Indigenous status.
- (c) Based on the ABS 'low series' population projections.

Source: AIHW analysis of the DoHA Aged and Community Care Management Information System database.

Community Aged Care Packages

At 30 June 2004, there were 29 Community Aged Care Packages services operating under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy, providing 243 packages to Indigenous clients (AIHW 2005h). No demographic data are available for clients of these services.

Out of a total of 27,657 people receiving mainstream Community Aged Care Packages at 30 June 2004, 1,113 (4%) identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. Indigenous status was not known for 1.3% of care recipients.

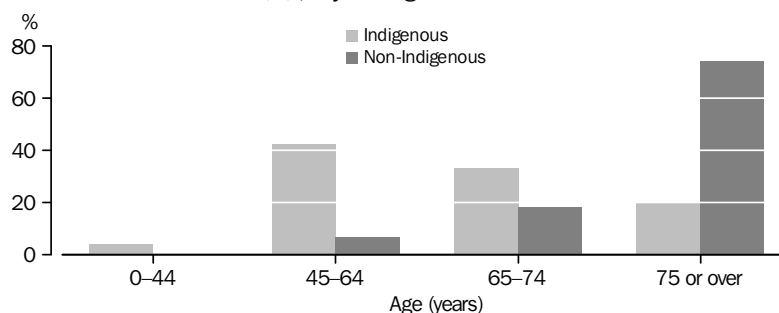
AGE PROFILE

Of people receiving assistance, proportionately more Indigenous recipients were in the younger age groups (graph 11.16). About 46% of Indigenous care recipients were under 65 years of age, compared with fewer than 8% of non-Indigenous care recipients. About 20% of Indigenous care recipients were aged 75 years or over, compared with 74% of non-Indigenous care recipients.

Community Aged Care
Packages continued

AGE PROFILE *continued*

11.16 AGE PROFILE OF COMMUNITY AGED CARE PACKAGE RECIPIENTS(a), by Indigenous status—30 June 2004



(a) Includes 235 recipients whose Indigenous status was not stated. Within age groups, these recipients have been distributed between the 'Indigenous' and 'non-Indigenous' categories in accordance with the proportion that occurred for recipients with a known Indigenous status.

Source: AIHW analysis of the DoHA Aged and Community Care Management Information System database

USAGE RATES

Use of Community Aged Care Packages is higher among Indigenous Australians than non-Indigenous Australians in all age categories examined. At 30 June 2004, there were 16 per 1,000 Indigenous clients aged 50–74 years, compared with 1 per 1,000 non-Indigenous Australian clients in the same age group (table 11.17). There were 71 per 1,000 Indigenous Australians aged 75 years or over and over using Community Aged Care Packages, compared with 17 per 1,000 non-Indigenous Australians.

11.17 COMMUNITY AGED CARE PACKAGE RECIPIENTS(a), by Indigenous status and age(b)—30 June 2004

Age (years)	RESIDENTS			AGE-SPECIFIC USAGE RATE PER 1,000(c)		
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total
Less than 50	70	171	241	0.2	—	—
50–74	760	5 171	5 931	15.9	1.1	1.2
75 or over	283	21 202	21 485	71.1	17.2	17.4
Total	1 113	26 544	27 657

.. not applicable

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Recipients provided packages by Multi-Purpose Services and services receiving flexible funding under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy are not included, as age-specific figures are not available for these programs.

(b) Includes 235 recipients whose Indigenous status was not stated. Within age groups, these recipients have been distributed between the 'Indigenous' and 'Non-Indigenous' categories in accordance with the proportion that occurred for recipients with a known Indigenous status.

(c) Based on the ABS 'low series' population projections.

Source: AIHW analysis of the DoHA Aged and Community Care Management Information System database.

Home and Community Care Program

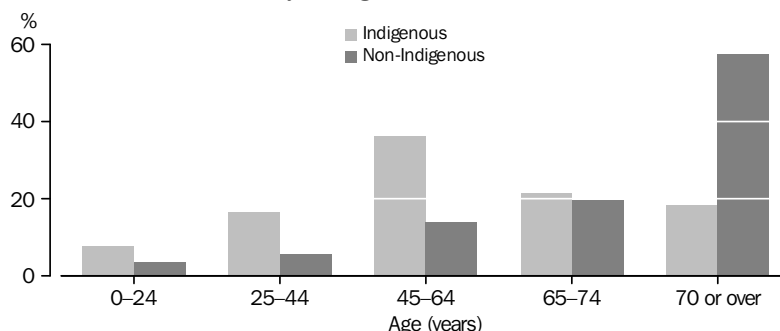
The HACC Minimum Data Set (MDS) collects data on the Indigenous status of its clients. Since implementation of the collection in January 2001, improvements have been made in the quality and comprehensiveness of the HACC MDS data.

During 2003–04 approximately 3,500 organisations provided HACC-funded services to clients across Australia, of which about 83% submitted data. Among participating agencies, HACC services were provided to about 707,200 clients of all ages (table 11.19). Of these, just over 2.4% (about 17,000) were reported to be Indigenous clients, ranging from over 42% in the Northern Territory to 1% in Victoria. Indigenous status was not recorded or not known for 11% of HACC clients.

AGE PROFILE

Analysis of HACC MDS data suggests that Indigenous HACC clients had a younger age profile than non-Indigenous clients (graph 11.18). About 60% of Indigenous clients were under 65 years of age, compared with 23% of non-Indigenous clients. About 18% of Indigenous clients were aged 75 years or over, compared with 57% of non-Indigenous clients.

11.18 AGE PROFILE OF HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM CLIENTS (a), by Indigenous status—2003–2004



(a) Includes 75,822 clients whose Indigenous status was not stated. Within age groups, these clients have been distributed between the 'Indigenous' and 'non-Indigenous' categories in accordance with the proportion that occurred for clients with a known Indigenous status.

Source: AIHW analysis of Home and Community Care Program data

USAGE RATES

The HACC program was used by a higher proportion of Indigenous Australians than non-Indigenous Australians in all age groups examined. At 30 June 2004, there were 184 per 1,000 Indigenous clients aged 50–74 years, compared with 45 per 1,000 non-Indigenous clients in the same age group (table 11.19). There were 773 per 1,000 Indigenous clients aged 75 years or over using HACC services, compared with 321 per 1,000 non-Indigenous clients.

The high usage rate of HACC services among the Indigenous population aged 75 years or over (table 11.19), reported at 773 per 1,000 Indigenous clients, should be treated with some caution. For some age groups in a couple of states and territories, the number of HACC clients identified as Indigenous were close to, or greater than, the ABS estimates of the corresponding Indigenous population. This suggests that Indigenous status was not well recorded in the HACC MDS in those states and territories. This could occur if repeat clients provided different name or birth date information to different HACC

*Home and Community
Care Program continued*

USAGE RATES *continued*

agencies, resulting in their being counted more than once. In addition, the usage rate might also be inflated if people were more inclined to identify themselves as Indigenous in the HACC collection than in the 2001 Census.

11.19 HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM CLIENTS (a), by Indigenous status and age—2003–04

Age (years)	CLIENTS			AGE-SPECIFIC USAGE RATE PER 1,000 (b)		
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total
Less than 50	5 200	79 600	84 900	12.1	5.8	6.0
50–74	8 800	215 700	224 500	184.3	45.4	46.8
75 or over	3 100	394 800	397 800	772.6	321.1	322.5
Total (c)	17 100	690 100	707 200

.. not applicable

- (a) Data include 10.9% of clients whose Indigenous status was not stated. Within age groups, these clients have been distributed between the 'Indigenous' and 'Non-Indigenous' categories in accordance with the proportion that occurred for clients with a known Indigenous status.
- (b) Based on the ABS 'low series' population projections. This method results in slightly different numbers from those published in the Home and Community Care Minimum Data Set 2003–04 Annual Bulletin.
- (c) Not all HACC agencies submitted data to the HACC MDS. For 2003–04, the proportion of HACC-funded agencies that submitted HACC MDS data differed across jurisdictions (ranging from 77% to 99%). Actual client numbers will therefore be higher than those reported here. Because of this incomplete coverage, and because of cases with missing age and Indigenous status, numbers have been rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: AIHW analysis of Home and Community Care Program data

*Home and Community
Care Program continued*

USAGE RATES *continued*

11.20 INDIGENOUS IDENTIFICATION IN COMMUNITY SERVICES COLLECTIONS

The quality of identification of Indigenous clients in seven community services data collections has been examined since the 2003 edition of this report. The analyses focused on the extent to which Indigenous status was missing or not stated in each data collection and the relationship between missing or not stated data and age and sex of clients, service type and location of service. Variation in data quality over time was also analysed. The seven data collections examined were:

- Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement Minimum Data Set
- Residential Aged Care Services Data Collection
- Home and Community Care Minimum Data Set
- Community Aged Care Packages Data Collection
- Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection
- Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set
- National Child Protection Data Collection, incorporating three data collections:
 1. Children who are the subject of notifications, investigations and substantiations;
 2. Children under care and protection orders; and
 3. Children in out-of-home care.

The preparedness of clients to identify as Indigenous is likely to be influenced by a range of factors including the type of service, the nature of contact with the service, and the purpose of the service. The willingness to provide information on Indigenous status, the quality of the information provided, and the perceived relevance of the information by both service provider and client will vary to a considerable extent for each collection.

The extent to which the Indigenous identifier was missing or not stated varied greatly between the data sets. In 2002, lower rates of missing/not stated Indigenous status were seen in the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement Minimum Data Set, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection, and in the data collection for children under care and protection orders. Comparatively high rates were observed in the remaining data collections.

The rate of missing or not stated Indigenous status was also influenced by a number of factors not associated with service type. These include the proportion of agency clients who were Indigenous and the proportion of services from different geographic areas supplying data to the data collections. Variations were also observed among the data collections in the analyses of Indigenous identification by age, sex and geographic area, including both state/territory and remoteness measures. There were also differences in patterns across collections over time. However, one consistent pattern was seen in several data collections. Records with a missing/not stated Indigenous identifier were often missing other demographic data. In those instances, efforts to strengthen the collection of basic demographic information are likely to have a positive effect on the overall Indigenous identification rate (AIHW 2004c).

SUMMARY

In 2004, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children using Australian Government supported child care services was 2%. Non-Indigenous children were supported by these government services at more than twice the rate of Indigenous children. Of all Indigenous children in Australian Government supported child care services, 51% were in long day care centres, 16% were in before/after school care and 9% were in family day care. Of all other children, the proportions were 59%, 25% and 14% respectively.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were over-represented in the child protection systems across most of Australia, with ratios of 10:1 in Victoria and 8:1 in Western Australia and South Australia. The rate of Indigenous children being placed under care and protection orders and in out-of-home care was higher than the rate for other children in all jurisdictions. Just over two-thirds of children in out-of-home care were placed with Indigenous relatives/kin (38%) or with other Indigenous caregivers (30%). These are the preferred placements under the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle that has been adopted by all jurisdictions.

Despite the limitations of available data, rates of incarceration in juvenile detention centres for Indigenous Australians aged 10–17 years are much higher than those for other young Australians in all jurisdictions. In 2002–03, 48% of those aged 10–17 years in detention centres in Australia were Indigenous.

In 2003–04, 6,524 people, 3.5% of those receiving Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement funded services identified as Indigenous. The proportion of people who received CSTDA-funded services who were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin varied by service type. Respite (5%), community support (5%) and accommodation (4%) services had an above-average proportion of Indigenous service users. On the other hand, service users of employment (3%) and community access (3%) services had a smaller Indigenous representation than in the overall CSTDA service population.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people utilise aged care services at a younger age, consistent with poorer health status and lower life expectancy. Of those admitted to permanent or respite residential care during 2003–04, almost 29% were under 65 years of age, compared with fewer than 5% of other Australians. Of all Indigenous Australians receiving Community Aged Care Packages at 30 June 2004, 46% were aged below 65 years compared with 8% among other Australians. Of all clients receiving home and community care, 18% of Indigenous clients were aged 75 years or over compared with 57% of other clients.

