

# 1 Introduction

This report explores some of the issues associated with the identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who receive community services in Australia. Information on the Indigenous status of clients of community services has been collected nationally for a number of years and the quality of this information has been examined in relation to a number of collections. However, the issue of data quality across a range of data collections requires further investigation. This report specifically focuses on instances where Indigenous status is missing or 'not stated' in data sets, and explores this issue through a range of data analyses. It should be noted that no independent verification of the Indigenous status of clients was carried out as part of this project. The directions outlined in this report, if implemented, will facilitate improvements in the identification of Indigenous Australians within community services. This will in turn improve the information available on the need for and use of community services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The objectives of this report are to:

- determine the extent to which Indigenous status is missing or not stated in each data collection and, where possible, determine whether improvement has occurred over time;
- identify attributes which are associated with missing and not stated Indigenous status, in order to allow program managers to better target efforts to improve the quality of Indigenous data in these data collections, through:
  - identifying particular locations or service types where missing or not stated data are most frequently reported; and
  - determining, where possible, the likely Indigenous status of the community services clients whose Indigenous status is missing or not stated.

## Advancing Reconciliation

This report is one of two outcomes of the Indigenous Data Quality project, carried out by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) on behalf of the National Community Services Information Management Group (NCSIMG). The project is one of a range of activities undertaken as part of the 'Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference (CDSMC) Action Plan – Advancing Reconciliation' (priority area 7: 'Information and reporting'). The CDSMC has developed the Plan to address the issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the community services area. The Indigenous Data Quality project is funded by the Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CSMAC).

The Indigenous Data Quality project seeks to enhance Indigenous identification in community services statistics. It consists of two components. Firstly, a series of analyses of seven existing community services data collections and, secondly, the development of a web portal which will provide access to available materials and information about activities to improve the quality of Indigenous identification in state, territory and national community services data collections.

# Identification of Indigenous people and data quality

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has developed a standard for identifying Indigenous people in data collections, the ABS Standard for Indigenous Status (ABS 2003). The term 'Indigenous status' is a measure of whether a person identifies as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, and is used to describe the variable or data element now included in many data collections. The standard recommended question included in the ABS Standard for Indigenous Status is as follows:

*[Are you] [Is the person] [Is (name)] of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?*

*(For persons of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, mark both 'Yes' boxes.)*

No.....

Yes, Aboriginal.....

Yes, Torres Strait Islander.....

Note that the standard question does not include a category for 'Not known'. However, where an answer has been refused or not recorded, the code 'Not stated/inadequately described' may be used in data collections. More detailed information about the standard for Indigenous status is provided under 'National standards' on page 5, and in Appendix A.

## The importance of identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in data collections

The accurate identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients is essential for measuring the effectiveness of community services in meeting the needs of the Indigenous population. Accurate information on Indigenous status also assists planning and improvement in service delivery, which can lead to improvements in the wellbeing of Indigenous people (ATSIHWIU 2002:9). For example, analysis shows that there is an over-representation of Indigenous people among the clients of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) (AIHW 2002a). Similarly, there is some evidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience higher rates of disability (AIHW 2002b). Such analysis may provide support for the maintenance of, or show the need for higher levels of, culturally appropriate services and staff in the relevant agencies. Furthermore, a consistent approach to data collection and management means enhanced comparability between data. Comparable data are important in supporting policy development, program planning and performance monitoring, and can help support funding for specific Indigenous programs and services.

The importance of identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in administrative data collections has been recognised for many years, and many advances have been made. Important initiatives were taken in the 1980s, when many health departments and Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages started recording Indigenous status (ATSIHWIU 1997).

Despite continuing improvement in the identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including clients of health and welfare services, investigations into the quality of data related to Indigenous identification carried out in recent years indicate that problems still exist. Administrative data collections in hospitals, birth and death registrations and community services include information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Some of these data collections, or jurisdictions, do not have adequate accuracy of identification to allow for national reporting. Others may be sufficiently accurate to permit the national reporting of Indigenous status, but the proportion of Indigenous clients is affected by high levels of missing Indigenous status, artificially high levels of non-Indigenous status, or other factors. The reasons for lack of accuracy include the use of different definitions for determining Indigenous status, differences in the methods of data collection and failure to record clients' Indigenous status (ATSIHWIU 2002).

## **Obstacles to accurate identification**

There are a number of obstacles to the accurate identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in the context of community services provision. Some of these are outlined below.

### **Factors due to setting or circumstances**

The circumstances in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients are asked to identify their Indigenous status vary greatly. The issues confronting a person receiving services at an alcohol and other drugs treatment agency, or women's refuge, and the staff involved, will be different from those affecting the staff of an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) and the person being assessed. Similarly, a person from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin who is taken into custody or who undergoes compulsory treatment faces different considerations when asked to identify their Indigenous status than someone attending a disability support service. The identification of a child on a child protection order occurs under different circumstances again, particularly given the long and fraught relationship between Indigenous people and child welfare services.

However, different levels of difficulty in identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients may also occur within one type of service. For example, the amount of time, or the number of times, a client receives a service can affect data quality. If the service is a 'one-off', it will not be possible to collect any information subsequent to that collected at the time of service, resulting in missing data. On the other hand, if a client has been receiving a service for a while, staff may find it awkward to ask at a late stage about the person's Indigenous status, or may be more inclined to guess.

Yet, in all these situations accurate identification is important and, while a consistent approach is necessary to achieve comparable data, it is also clear that a certain amount of flexibility and sensitivity in how staff approach this issue is critical. This issue is also discussed in the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Services Information Plan*. The Plan acknowledges that community services is a large and complex field of service provision, with services provided by thousands of outlets of different sizes in many different settings and circumstances. It also states that 'these complexities result in the need for local arrangements to be developed in order to best serve client needs'. The importance of developing these arrangements is recognised (ATSIHWIU 2002:xii).

## **Factors affecting staff**

Some community services staff have reported factors that hinder them in the collection of Indigenous status. In the review of collection protocols of Indigenous status carried out by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Welfare Information Unit (ATSIHWIU), difficulties reported by child protection services staff included:

- a reluctance to ask about a person's Indigenous status when it was felt that the person would be distressed or angered by the question.
- a reluctance to ask about a person's Indigenous status when acquiring the information seemed unnecessary, resulting in some staff making an independent decision about the person's Indigenous status based on their own knowledge or on the person's appearance.
- a belief that staff have no right to ask this question, due to a belief that Indigenous status is a personal matter.
- a perception that the question is discriminatory.
- staff not sure why the information was necessary and unable to explain the reasons for its collection if asked to do so by clients.
- the highly sensitive issues around the Stolen Generation and past government policies involving the removal of Indigenous children.
- in situations where the parents cannot agree on a child's Indigenous status, the collector of the information was more likely to record the child's status as unknown than side with one parent or guardian over the other (ATSIHWIU 2002).

Similarly, the review of Indigenous identification in the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program found that a number of staff experienced difficulties in obtaining the Indigenous status of clients. These difficulties included a perception that such questions were annoying, discriminatory, that the information was irrelevant or private, and some staff felt too busy or too embarrassed to ask (ATSIHWIU 2002). Very similar difficulties were reported by some disability support services staff during the review of Indigenous identification in disability support services provided under the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement (ATSIHWIU 2002).

## **No collection or non-standard methods**

Some community services agencies do not collect Indigenous status as part of their ongoing client data recording processes (ATSIHWIU 2002:37). Others may collect Indigenous status using alternative questions rather than the standard ABS question (AIHW 2002:38). In both cases data quality is adversely affected.

## **Default to non-Indigenous**

There is some evidence that in some community services areas, missing Indigenous identification data are coded to 'non-Indigenous' (ATSIHWIU 2002:38) (see also this report, Section 3.3). This process may occur through imputation, or by system default. This method results in an artificial increase in the number of people who identify as non-Indigenous.

## **Improving identification**

Many of the improvements that have taken place are the result of a number of factors. These include the development of an Australian Bureau of Statistics standard for identifying

Indigenous people in data collections, the inclusion of that standard in the *National Health Data Dictionary* (NHDD), the *National Community Services Data Dictionary* (NCSDD) and the *National Housing Assistance Data Dictionary* (NHADD), and a gradual increase in the number of health and community services data collections which include the Indigenous standard question and reporting format as a reporting requirement.

## **National standards**

The *National Community Services Data Dictionary* (NCSDD) is the authoritative source of community services data definitions where national consistency is required. Similarly, the *National Health Data Dictionary* (NHDD) is the authoritative source of health data definitions where national consistency is required under the National Health Information Agreement, while the *National Housing Assistance Data Dictionary* (NHADD) is the authoritative source of housing-related data definitions. The NCSDD, the NHDD and the NHADD include the national standard for Indigenous status, which was developed to improve the quality, availability and comparability of Indigenous statistics across data collections, and which includes a standard Indigenous status question module.

In 2002, the ABS updated its standard for Indigenous status, resulting in changes to the Indigenous status data definition in Version 12 of the NHDD. These changes are reflected in the NCSDD Version 3 and in the NHADD Version 2. The new standard provides improved advice regarding its use in administrative data collections. In particular, the updated standard allows for some flexibility in adapting the standard question for use in a variety of circumstances, and provides more comprehensive guidelines on various practical aspects of the use of the standard. Appendix A contains the Indigenous status data definition, endorsed by the National Community Services Information Management Group (NCSIMG), from the NCSDD Version 3. The NCSIMG is the national body with the authority to endorse national data standards in the community services sector.

In 1999 the Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CSMAC) endorsed the *National Community Services Information Development Plan* (AIHW 1999). This Plan identified information development priorities in the community services sector. The development of high quality data on Indigenous people was identified as one of the highest priorities. In 2002, the former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Welfare Information Unit (ATSIHWIU) produced the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Services Information Plan* (ATSIHWIU 2002). The publication consists of three parts: a draft Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Services Information Plan; proposed principles and standards for community services Indigenous client data; and reviews of collection protocols of Indigenous status in three community services programs/areas. The principles and standards for community services Indigenous client data included in the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information Plan* provides a basis for consistency in approach to data collection and management between community services, health and housing sectors.

## The structure of this report

The analyses included in this report are presented by subject area, in separate chapters. The following seven data collections have been included in this report:

- Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement National Minimum Data Set (CSDA NMDS) (Chapter 2).
- Three aged care data collections: Residential Aged Care Services (RACS) data collection; Home and Community Care Minimum Data Set (HACC MDS); Community Aged Care Packages (CACP) data collection (Chapter 3).
- Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) National Data Collection (Chapter 4).
- National Child Protection (NCP) data collection, which incorporates three data collections: children who are the subject of notifications, investigations and substantiations; children on care and protection orders; and children in out of home care (Chapter 5).
- Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set (AODTS NMDS) (Chapter 6).

A uniform presentation of the chapters has been attempted, but the variation between the collections has resulted in a number of differences in content and presentation. The variety in analyses carried out for each data collection were guided by limitations of the particular collection, for example whether the data related to several years or one year only, and by particular characteristics of each collection, such as specific service types or client characteristics.

The term 'missing/not stated' is used consistently throughout this report, to describe records that have a missing or not stated (usually code 9) Indigenous status field. Where the original data collection form included the option 'not known' in the Indigenous status question, the term 'not known/missing/not stated' has been used. This was the case in the CSDA data collection during the years reported here before 2002 (i.e. 1997–2001, see Chapter 2, 'Trend in missing data by jurisdiction', page 10). The term 'not known/missing/not stated' is also used in relation to the NCP data collection (Chapter 5), where most states/territories have a 'not known' option at the point of data entry.

To clearly distinguish between missing/not stated Indigenous status and other variables that are either not known, missing or not stated (e.g. sex, age), the term 'unknown' has been used throughout this report in relation to these other variables. In other words, the term 'unknown' has been used as an umbrella term for three types of unknown variables (other than Indigenous status): unknown, missing or not stated.

Analyses on the proportion of Indigenous clients by agency are included in several of the chapters (RACS, HACC, CSDA and AODTS). These analyses aim to discover whether agencies with a high proportion of clients who identified as Indigenous were more or less likely to report missing or not stated data on Indigenous status. It should be noted that the percentage of clients who identified as Indigenous as presented in the tables has been extracted from the same data that are under scrutiny here. In other words, there is no way of knowing the 'true' proportion of Indigenous clients for each agency, only the reported proportion, which itself is affected by the proportion of missing/not stated records. This needs to be taken into account when interpreting the outcome of these particular analyses.

Some chapters in this report also explore clients' multiple reporting (over time or across agencies) of their Indigenous status, to ascertain whether all records record Indigenous status in the same way. For three of the data collections included in this report (HACC, CSDA and SAAP), a statistical linkage key was available. Such a key is often used to estimate the number of clients from the data on services received. For the data linkage analyses in this report, however, the linkage key was used to analyse the consistency or otherwise of the Indigenous identification across linked records in the same collection. Of particular interest in the context of this report were those linked records that for one occasion of service had a missing/not stated Indigenous identifier, but an Indigenous and/or non-Indigenous identifier for other occasions of service.

# 2 Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement Minimum Data Set

## Introduction

Services funded under the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement (CSDA) are designed for people who need ongoing support with everyday life activities. Services are grouped into the broad categories of accommodation support, employment services, community support, community access and respite. Under the agreement the Commonwealth has responsibility for planning, development and management of employment services, while the states and territories are responsible for all other disability services. (Advocacy, print disability and information services are considered joint responsibilities of the Commonwealth and the states and territories, but no client-level information is currently reported for these services.)

The national CSDA Minimum Data Set is produced and analysed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare from data sent annually by each jurisdiction. Data are collected by the Commonwealth, states and territories for the services for which they are responsible from the agencies providing those services.

The collection is based on a selected day, known as the 'snapshot day'. The level to which services are utilised on the snapshot day gives a national picture of an 'average' or 'typical' day for CSDA service providers, although it may not be a true picture for an individual agency, particularly one affected by regular variations (e.g. providers of school holiday programs).

A person may receive more than one service over any time period, including on the snapshot day itself. For each service type a form is completed by the agency providing the service, for every consumer receiving a service of that type on the snapshot day. This means that the number of consumer forms represents the number of services received on the snapshot day, but not the number of consumers. That is, services received are not counts of individual consumers since a person may have received (or been allocated) resources from more than one service outlet on the day and hence may be counted more than once. For example, a consumer may receive two types of state-supported services (such as accommodation and community support), or an accommodation service and an employment service.

Since 1999 a statistical linkage key has been collected on the consumer form. The statistical linkage key enables the number of consumers to be estimated from the data on services received (see Box 1). Data collected for each service received include characteristics of a person at the collection time and place (that is, on the snapshot day, at each service outlet). Consumer counts for these characteristics can be estimated by using the statistical linkage key. Most linked records specify a response for each data item consistently, and the appropriate data for the consumer (now counted as one) are easily determined. Sometimes linked records have inconsistent responses for some data items. Agreed rules to resolve these inconsistencies are used.

For Indigenous status, inconsistencies are resolved by the following order of precedence: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal, not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The rationale for this is that anyone who is identified at some time as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is likely to be so. People of both Aboriginal and Torres



Strait Islander descent are more likely to be recorded as either one, with Torres Strait Islanders being more likely to be recorded as Aboriginal than vice versa.

The tables in this chapter, however, are based on the responses for Indigenous status as originally recorded for each service received and the counts in the tables (except Table 2.10) are of services received rather than consumers. To indicate this, the term 'recipients' is used in these tables.

### **Box 1: Statistical linkage key**

*To link records within the data set, the linkage key part of each record for a service received is compared electronically with the linkage key part of all other records. Records that have matching linkage keys are assumed to belong to the same individual consumer and are 'linked'. Some degree of false linking is expected. Because the linkage key is not a unique identifier, there is a small probability that some of the linked records do not actually belong to the same individual, and, conversely, that some records that did not link do belong to the same individual. For privacy reasons, the linkage key is not constructed to enable the linking of records to the extent needed to be totally certain that a 'consumer' is one individual person.*

*Linkage can identify two, three or more records as probably relating to the same person. These linked records are assumed to be for one person and are counted as one consumer. Thus the total number of consumers can then be estimated.*

*Missing or invalid linkage keys cannot be linked to other records and so must be treated as belonging to separate individual consumers. This may result in the number of consumers being overestimated.*

*Most linked records specify a response for each data item consistently, and the appropriate data for the consumer (now counted as one) are easily determined. Sometimes linked records have inconsistent responses for some data items. Rules to resolve these inconsistencies have been used.*

*The AIHW Ethics Committee approved a trial of the statistical linkage key in July 1998. The Committee reviews its approval regularly – most recently in August 2001 – and has noted that the linkage key is now being collected routinely, and data sets (with the consumer's name reduced to only the linkage key components) are being transmitted to the AIHW. All state and territory jurisdictions have signed assurances in relation to the CSDA MDS collections that:*

- *consumers will be informed about the information being recorded and its purpose;*
- *each consumer's information will not be electronically matched with other information in an attempt to identify that consumer, and no other attempt will be made to identify individuals;*
- *no access to the collection will be given, except as statistical information that does not identify an individual; and*
- *the information will be used for statistical purposes only.*

*The Commonwealth undertakes its collection, used for CSDA MDS purposes as well as for policy development and program management purposes, meeting its legislative obligations under the Privacy Act 1988, Information Privacy Principles.*

## Redevelopment of the CSDA MDS

In 1999, in recognition of the changing information needs in the disability services field, the National Disability Administrators and the AIHW began a process to review and redevelop the CSDA MDS and related data collections. The redevelopment was undertaken over two years and the collection was fully implemented nationally in October 2002. During the period of the redevelopment there has been extensive consultation, field testing and training. The most significant change in the redeveloped collection is that, for most service types, service providers are required to provide information about all service users during the year rather than just those who receive a service on a snapshot day. This means that service providers need to collect and store information on an ongoing basis. In the longer term this should lead to an improvement in non-response rates for service user characteristics, including Indigenous status. The new collection will be known as the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement National Minimum Dataset (CSTDA NMDS).

## Analyses

### Trend in missing data by jurisdiction

The Indigenous question in the CSDA MDS has changed between 1997 and 2002 and the trends in the 'not known/missing/not stated' response rate must be interpreted in light of these changes.

In 1997 and 1998 there were only three options: 'Yes, of Indigenous origin', 'No' and 'Not known'. In 1999 it was possible to distinguish between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, and from 2000 there was an option of ticking one box to indicate both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. During all collection years before 2002 there was an option of ticking a box for 'Not known'. Therefore, in tables 2.1a and 2.1b, the numbers and rates for the year 2002 include the missing/not stated codes only, whereas the numbers and rates for all other years include both 'not known' and 'missing/not stated'.

The standard ABS question for Indigenous status was used in 2002 with one variation. As in 2000 and 2001, rather than ticking two boxes to indicate that the respondent was of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, there was a separate box for 'Yes, of Aboriginal **and** Torres Strait Islander origin'.

Between 1997 and 1998 there was a drop in the not known/missing/not stated rate overall (Tables 2.1a and 2.1b). However, the rate increased again in 1999. This may have been because of the change in the question with the addition of separate categories for 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' and possibly because of the introduction of the statistical linkage key which may have had an affect on the quality of data collection. Between 2000 and 2001 the not known/ missing/not stated rate fell again to just over 5%. The missing/not stated rate in 2002 was also just over 5%.

The pattern for individual jurisdictions was highly variable from year to year. Possibly this reflects specific problems and improvements in data collection from one year to the next.

**Table 2.1a: Number of recipients<sup>(a)</sup> of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day by recorded Indigenous status by jurisdiction by year, 1997–2002**

| <b>Indigenous status</b>            | <b>1997</b>   | <b>1998</b>   | <b>1999</b>   | <b>2000</b>   | <b>2001</b>   | <b>2002</b>   |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>New South Wales</b>              |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Indigenous                          | 372           | 482           | 392           | 364           | 388           | 401           |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 12,083        | 11,999        | 12,225        | 12,617        | 12,801        | 13,063        |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 258           | 312           | 394           | 749           | 746           | 501           |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>12,713</i> | <i>12,793</i> | <i>13,011</i> | <i>13,730</i> | <i>13,935</i> | <i>13,965</i> |
| <b>Victoria</b>                     |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Indigenous                          | 234           | 321           | 232           | 311           | 313           | 243           |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 15,350        | 18,236        | 20,446        | 20,649        | 20,835        | 20,108        |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 733           | 576           | 683           | 538           | 881           | 2,244         |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>16,317</i> | <i>19,133</i> | <i>21,361</i> | <i>21,498</i> | <i>22,029</i> | <i>22,595</i> |
| <b>Queensland</b>                   |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Indigenous                          | 249           | 183           | 249           | 268           | 301           | 342           |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 4,054         | 6,180         | 4,494         | 5,092         | 7,316         | 7,261         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 1,981         | 70            | 2,279         | 2,149         | 71            | —             |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>6,284</i>  | <i>6,433</i>  | <i>7,022</i>  | <i>7,509</i>  | <i>7,688</i>  | <i>7,603</i>  |
| <b>Western Australia</b>            |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Indigenous                          | 216           | 275           | 308           | 307           | 313           | 249           |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 4,740         | 5,770         | 7,080         | 6,694         | 7,203         | 5,467         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 271           | 865           | 967           | 555           | 474           | 468           |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>5,227</i>  | <i>6,910</i>  | <i>8,355</i>  | <i>7,556</i>  | <i>7,990</i>  | <i>6,184</i>  |
| <b>South Australia</b>              |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Indigenous                          | 76            | 103           | 67            | 104           | 99            | 125           |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 3,718         | 3,471         | 3,830         | 3,984         | 4,705         | 5,546         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 132           | 206           | 209           | 482           | 355           | 159           |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>3,926</i>  | <i>3,780</i>  | <i>4,106</i>  | <i>4,570</i>  | <i>5,159</i>  | <i>5,830</i>  |
| <b>Tasmania</b>                     |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Indigenous                          | 27            | 20            | 37            | 51            | 26            | 28            |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 1,081         | 1,045         | 1,242         | 1,417         | 1,452         | 1,492         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 262           | 252           | 155           | 139           | 54            | 149           |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>1,370</i>  | <i>1,317</i>  | <i>1,434</i>  | <i>1,607</i>  | <i>1,532</i>  | <i>1,669</i>  |
| <b>Australian Capital Territory</b> |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Indigenous                          | 4             | 13            | 5             | 10            | 10            | 9             |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 453           | 412           | 540           | 640           | 633           | 829           |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 32            | 19            | 44            | 75            | 50            | 15            |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>489</i>    | <i>444</i>    | <i>589</i>    | <i>725</i>    | <i>693</i>    | <i>853</i>    |
| <b>Northern Territory</b>           |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Indigenous                          | 153           | 138           | 122           | 152           | 169           | 167           |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 110           | 112           | 131           | 107           | 148           | 136           |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 3             | 1             | —             | —             | 7             | 1             |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>266</i>    | <i>251</i>    | <i>253</i>    | <i>259</i>    | <i>324</i>    | <i>304</i>    |
| <b>Commonwealth</b>                 |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Indigenous                          | 252           | 325           | 296           | 274           | 315           | 320           |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 16,001        | 17,343        | 15,860        | 15,711        | 16,234        | 17,604        |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 1,587         | 469           | 1,695         | 1,490         | 1,306         | 455           |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>17,840</i> | <i>18,137</i> | <i>17,851</i> | <i>17,475</i> | <i>17,855</i> | <i>18,379</i> |
| <b>All</b>                          |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Indigenous                          | 1,583         | 1,860         | 1,708         | 1,841         | 1,934         | 1,884         |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 57,590        | 64,568        | 65,848        | 66,911        | 71,327        | 71,506        |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 5,259         | 2,770         | 6,426         | 6,177         | 3,944         | 3,992         |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>64,432</b> | <b>69,198</b> | <b>73,982</b> | <b>74,929</b> | <b>77,205</b> | <b>77,382</b> |

(a) An individual may be counted more than once if more than one service type was accessed on the snapshot day.

**Table 2.1b: Proportion of recipients<sup>(a)</sup> of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day by recorded Indigenous status by jurisdiction by year, 1997–2002**

| <b>Indigenous status</b>            | <b>1997</b>  | <b>1998</b>  | <b>1999</b>  | <b>2000</b>  | <b>2001</b>  | <b>2002</b>  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>New South Wales</b>              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Indigenous                          | 2.9          | 3.8          | 3.0          | 2.7          | 2.8          | 2.9          |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 95.0         | 93.8         | 94.0         | 91.9         | 91.9         | 93.5         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 2.0          | 2.4          | 3.0          | 5.5          | 5.4          | 3.6          |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> |
| <b>Victoria</b>                     |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Indigenous                          | 1.4          | 1.7          | 1.1          | 1.4          | 1.4          | 1.1          |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 94.1         | 95.3         | 95.7         | 96.1         | 94.6         | 89.0         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 4.5          | 3.0          | 3.2          | 2.5          | 4.0          | 9.9          |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> |
| <b>Queensland</b>                   |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Indigenous                          | 4.0          | 2.8          | 3.5          | 3.6          | 3.9          | 4.5          |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 64.5         | 96.1         | 64.0         | 67.8         | 95.2         | 95.5         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 31.5         | 1.1          | 32.5         | 28.6         | 0.9          | 0.0          |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> |
| <b>Western Australia</b>            |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Indigenous                          | 4.1          | 4.0          | 3.7          | 4.1          | 3.9          | 4.0          |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 90.7         | 83.5         | 84.7         | 88.6         | 90.2         | 88.4         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 5.2          | 12.5         | 11.6         | 7.3          | 5.9          | 7.6          |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> |
| <b>South Australia</b>              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Indigenous                          | 1.9          | 2.7          | 1.6          | 2.3          | 1.9          | 2.1          |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 94.7         | 91.8         | 93.3         | 87.2         | 91.2         | 95.1         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 3.4          | 5.4          | 5.1          | 10.5         | 6.9          | 2.7          |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> |
| <b>Tasmania</b>                     |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Indigenous                          | 2.0          | 1.5          | 2.6          | 3.2          | 1.7          | 1.7          |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 78.9         | 79.3         | 86.6         | 88.2         | 94.8         | 89.4         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 19.1         | 19.1         | 10.8         | 8.6          | 3.5          | 8.9          |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> |
| <b>Australian Capital Territory</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Indigenous                          | 0.8          | 2.9          | 0.8          | 1.4          | 1.4          | 1.1          |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 92.6         | 92.8         | 91.7         | 88.3         | 91.3         | 97.2         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 6.5          | 4.3          | 7.5          | 10.3         | 7.2          | 1.8          |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> |
| <b>Northern Territory</b>           |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Indigenous                          | 57.5         | 55.0         | 48.2         | 58.7         | 52.2         | 54.9         |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 41.4         | 44.6         | 51.8         | 41.3         | 45.7         | 44.7         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 1.1          | 0.4          | 0.0          | 0.0          | 2.2          | 0.3          |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> |
| <b>Commonwealth</b>                 |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Indigenous                          | 1.4          | 1.8          | 1.7          | 1.6          | 1.8          | 1.7          |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 89.7         | 95.6         | 88.8         | 89.9         | 90.9         | 95.8         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 8.9          | 2.6          | 9.5          | 8.5          | 7.3          | 2.5          |
| <i>Total</i>                        | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> | <i>100.0</i> |
| <b>All</b>                          |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Indigenous                          | 2.5          | 2.7          | 2.3          | 2.5          | 2.5          | 2.4          |
| Non-Indigenous                      | 89.4         | 93.3         | 89.0         | 89.3         | 92.4         | 92.4         |
| Not known/missing/not stated        | 8.2          | 4.0          | 8.7          | 8.2          | 5.1          | 5.2          |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

(a) An individual may be counted more than once if more than one service type was accessed on the snapshot day.

## Age and sex

Missing/not stated Indigenous status was most likely when other basic information was also unknown, such as age and sex (Table 2.2). All jurisdictions except the Commonwealth and the Australian Capital Territory had some unknown data for age and sex in 2002. Nearly all (96%) recipients who had both these unknown also had a missing/not stated Indigenous identifier. Thus Indigenous missing/not stated records may sometimes be the result of failure to collect basic client data more generally.

Otherwise the highest proportion of missing/not stated (8%) was in the 5 to 14 year age group. Other age groups ranged between 3% and 4%. The rates were similar for males and females (4% for all age groups).

**Table 2.2: Number and proportion of recipients<sup>(a)</sup> of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day with Indigenous identifier recorded as missing/not stated, by sex and age, 2002**

| Age group    | Males        |            | Females      |            | Unknown sex |             | Total        |            |
|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|------------|
|              | No.          | %          | No.          | %          | No.         | %           | No.          | %          |
| 0–4          | 73           | 4.0        | 35           | 3.3        | 5           | 11.4        | 113          | 3.9        |
| 5–14         | 277          | 7.5        | 159          | 7.5        | 20          | 30.8        | 456          | 7.7        |
| 15–24        | 344          | 4.2        | 241          | 4.4        | 16          | 20.5        | 601          | 4.4        |
| 25–44        | 624          | 3.2        | 455          | 3.3        | 21          | 18.1        | 1,100        | 3.3        |
| 45–59        | 300          | 3.4        | 249          | 3.8        | 6           | 7.1         | 555          | 3.6        |
| 60+          | 84           | 3.7        | 112          | 4.4        | 3           | 7.5         | 199          | 4.1        |
| Unknown age  | 24           | 10.2       | 28           | 14.4       | 916         | 96.2        | 968          | 70.1       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,726</b> | <b>3.9</b> | <b>1,279</b> | <b>4.0</b> | <b>987</b>  | <b>71.6</b> | <b>3,992</b> | <b>5.2</b> |

(a) An individual may be counted more than once if more than one service type was accessed on the snapshot day.

## Remoteness

The proportion of Indigenous clients in receipt of CSDA-funded services increased with remoteness category, as determined from the client's postcode (Table 2.3). Remote and very remote locations had a lower proportion of records with missing/not stated Indigenous status than less-remote regions, with the highest proportions in inner regional locations.

**Table 2.3: Number and proportion of recipients<sup>(a)</sup> of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day by recorded Indigenous status and region, 2002**

| Indigenous status  | Major cities  | Inner regional | Outer regional | Remote       | Very remote  | Unknown region | Total         |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| <b>Number</b>      |               |                |                |              |              |                |               |
| Indigenous         | 724           | 409            | 482            | 157          | 103          | 9              | 1,884         |
| Non-Indigenous     | 47,723        | 16,680         | 6,007          | 492          | 107          | 497            | 71,506        |
| Missing/not stated | 2,059         | 1,017          | 269            | 15           | 5            | 627            | 3,992         |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>50,506</b> | <b>18,106</b>  | <b>6,758</b>   | <b>664</b>   | <b>215</b>   | <b>1,133</b>   | <b>77,382</b> |
| <b>Per cent</b>    |               |                |                |              |              |                |               |
| Indigenous         | 1.4           | 2.3            | 7.1            | 23.7         | 48.1         | 0.8            | 2.4           |
| Non-Indigenous     | 94.5          | 92.1           | 88.9           | 74.1         | 49.8         | 43.9           | 92.4          |
| Missing/not stated | 4.1           | 5.6            | 4.0            | 2.2          | 2.1          | 55.3           | 5.2           |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>100.0</b>  | <b>100.0</b>   | <b>100.0</b>   | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b>   | <b>100.0</b>  |

(a) An individual may be counted more than once if more than one service type was accessed on the snapshot day.

## Sex and age profiles

Analysis was carried out to examine if the sex distribution (Table 2.4) and age distribution (Table 2.5) among the missing/ not stated records was similar to that of the Indigenous or the non-Indigenous clients. There was a higher proportion of males in both the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous recipients (56% and 58% respectively) (Table 2.4). This was also the case for the recipients with a missing/ not stated Indigenous identifier (43%), however, for a high proportion of those recipients their sex was also unknown (25%).

**Table 2.4: Number and proportion of recipients<sup>(a)</sup> of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day by recorded Indigenous status and sex, 2002**

|                | Males           | Females       | Unknown sex  | Total         |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                | <b>Number</b>   |               |              |               |
| Indigenous     | 1,057           | 812           | 15           | 1,884         |
| Non-Indigenous | 41,425          | 29,704        | 377          | 71,506        |
| Not stated     | 1,726           | 1,279         | 987          | 3,992         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>44,208</b>   | <b>31,795</b> | <b>1,379</b> | <b>77,382</b> |
|                | <b>Per cent</b> |               |              |               |
| Indigenous     | 56.1            | 43.1          | 0.8          | 100.0         |
| Non-Indigenous | 57.9            | 41.5          | 0.5          | 100.0         |
| Not stated     | 43.2            | 32.0          | 24.7         | 100.0         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>57.1</b>     | <b>41.1</b>   | <b>1.8</b>   | <b>100.0</b>  |

(a) An individual may be counted more than once if more than one service type was accessed on the snapshot day.

For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous recipients, the highest proportions of recipients were in the 25–44 year age group (42% and 44% respectively) (Table 2.5). This was also true for recipients with a missing Indigenous identifier (28%). Generally, the age profile of the recipients with a missing Indigenous identifier did not clearly resemble either the profile of non-Indigenous recipients or Indigenous recipients. The true age profile of the recipients with a missing Indigenous identifier was doubtful due to the high proportion of recipients whose age was also unknown (24%).

**Table 2.5: Number and proportion of recipients<sup>(a)</sup> of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day by recorded Indigenous status and age, 2002**

| Age group    | Indigenous   |              | Non-Indigenous |              | Missing/not stated |              | Total         |              |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
|              | No.          | %            | No.            | %            | No.                | %            | No.           | %            |
| 0–4          | 101          | 5.4          | 2,711          | 3.8          | 113                | 2.8          | 2,925         | 3.8          |
| 5–14         | 237          | 12.6         | 5,212          | 7.3          | 456                | 11.4         | 5,905         | 7.6          |
| 15–24        | 413          | 21.9         | 12,728         | 17.8         | 601                | 15.1         | 13,742        | 17.8         |
| 25–44        | 783          | 41.6         | 31,246         | 43.7         | 1,100              | 27.6         | 33,129        | 42.8         |
| 45–59        | 255          | 13.5         | 14,664         | 20.5         | 555                | 13.9         | 15,474        | 20.0         |
| 60+          | 81           | 4.3          | 4,546          | 6.4          | 199                | 5.0          | 4,826         | 6.2          |
| Unknown age  | 14           | 0.7          | 399            | 0.6          | 968                | 24.2         | 1,381         | 1.8          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,884</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>71,506</b>  | <b>100.0</b> | <b>3,992</b>       | <b>100.0</b> | <b>77,382</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

(a) An individual may be counted more than once if more than one service type was accessed on the snapshot day.

## Primary disability group

The proportion of Indigenous recipients and the proportion of missing/ not stated varied with primary disability group, however the two proportions were not consistently related

(Table 2.6). Clients with developmental delay had the highest proportion of 'missing/not stated' (14%) but this primary disability can only be recorded for children under 6 years of age, so this may be age-related. The next-highest proportions are for speech (11%), vision (8%), psychiatric (6%) and autism (6%).

**Table 2.6: Number and proportion of recipients<sup>(a)</sup> of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day by recorded Indigenous status and primary disability, 2002**

| Primary disability    | Indigenous   |            | Non-Indigenous |             | Missing/not stated |            | Total         |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
|                       | No.          | %          | No.            | %           | No.                | %          | No.           | %            |
| Intellectual          | 1,039        | 2.1        | 45,404         | 93.6        | 2,068              | 4.3        | 48,511        | 100.0        |
| Specific learning     | 42           | 4.4        | 858            | 90.9        | 44                 | 4.7        | 944           | 100.0        |
| Autism                | 57           | 2.0        | 2,627          | 92.0        | 172                | 6.0        | 2,856         | 100.0        |
| Physical              | 341          | 3.6        | 8,681          | 92.3        | 381                | 4.1        | 9,403         | 100.0        |
| Acquired brain injury | 103          | 3.7        | 2,591          | 92.8        | 98                 | 3.5        | 2,792         | 100.0        |
| Neurological          | 52           | 2.0        | 2,401          | 93.9        | 104                | 4.1        | 2,557         | 100.0        |
| Deafblind             | 6            | 2.9        | 187            | 91.7        | 11                 | 5.4        | 204           | 100.0        |
| Vision                | 25           | 1.4        | 1,664          | 91.0        | 139                | 7.6        | 1,828         | 100.0        |
| Hearing               | 19           | 2.1        | 842            | 92.9        | 45                 | 5.0        | 906           | 100.0        |
| Speech                | 25           | 5.9        | 356            | 83.6        | 45                 | 10.6       | 426           | 100.0        |
| Psychiatric           | 130          | 2.5        | 4,683          | 91.3        | 317                | 6.2        | 5,130         | 100.0        |
| Developmental delay   | 35           | 3.0        | 971            | 82.6        | 169                | 14.4       | 1,175         | 100.0        |
| Unknown disability    | 10           | 1.5        | 241            | 37.1        | 399                | 61.4       | 650           | 100.0        |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>1,884</b> | <b>2.4</b> | <b>71,506</b>  | <b>92.4</b> | <b>3,992</b>       | <b>5.2</b> | <b>77,382</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

(a) An individual may be counted more than once if more than one service type was accessed on the snapshot day.

The type of primary disability will affect how information is obtained by the service provider, that is, whether directly from the person, from their carer or by other means (Table 2.7 a, b and c).

## Communication

Both Indigenous status and the proportion of missing/not stated records varied with method of communication (Table 2.7a). The lowest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people but the highest proportion of missing/not stated was recorded for people with other effective non-spoken communication (8%). The next-highest proportion of missing/not stated was for people using sign language as their method of communication.

Communication is one of nine areas for which there is a question asking the level of need for personal help or supervision. Again Indigenous status and the proportion of missing/not stated varied with the level of support needed for communication (Table 2.7b). The lowest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but the highest proportion of missing/not stated was recorded for people who do not need support but use aids. There was much less variation between people who always or sometimes need support and people who do not need support.

These patterns suggest that people who communicate but only with the help of aids are more likely to be recorded as missing/not stated, compared with people who have no difficulty communicating, and with those who cannot communicate for themselves and thus will have someone answering on their behalf.

**Table 2.7a: Number and proportion of recipients<sup>(a)</sup> of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day by recorded Indigenous status and method of communication, 2002**

| Method of communication                   | Indigenous   |            | Non-Indigenous |             | Missing/not stated |            | Total         |              |
|---|--------------|------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
|   | No.          | %          | No.            | %           | No.                | %          | No.           | %            |
| Spoken language (effective)               | 1,067        | 2.3        | 43,760         | 94.0        | 1,721              | 3.7        | 46,548        | 100.0        |
| Sign language (effective)                 | 45           | 2.9        | 1,417          | 92.1        | 77                 | 5.0        | 1,539         | 100.0        |
| Other effective non-spoken communication  | 49           | 2.0        | 2,161          | 89.6        | 203                | 8.4        | 2,413         | 100.0        |
| Little or no effective communication      | 615          | 2.7        | 21,102         | 94.2        | 689                | 3.1        | 22,406        | 100.0        |
| Child aged under 5 years (not applicable) | 91           | 3.4        | 2,511          | 93.1        | 95                 | 3.5        | 2,697         | 100.0        |
| Unknown method of communication           | 17           | 1.0        | 555            | 31.2        | 1,207              | 67.8       | 1,779         | 100.0        |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>1,884</b> | <b>2.4</b> | <b>71,506</b>  | <b>92.4</b> | <b>3,992</b>       | <b>5.2</b> | <b>77,382</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

(a) An individual may be counted more than once if more than one service type was accessed on the snapshot day.

**Table 2.7b: Number and proportion of recipients<sup>(a)</sup> of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day by recorded Indigenous status and frequency of need for personal help or supervision with communication**

| Need for support with communication         | Indigenous   |            | Non-Indigenous |             | Missing/not stated |            | Total         |              |
|---|--------------|------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
|   | No.          | %          | No.            | %           | No.                | %          | No.           | %            |
| Unable to do or always needs support        | 641          | 2.8        | 21,191         | 93.8        | 755                | 3.3        | 22,587        | 100.0        |
| Sometimes needs support                     | 671          | 2.5        | 25,480         | 94.2        | 911                | 3.4        | 27,062        | 100.0        |
| Does not need support but uses aids         | 52           | 1.8        | 2,625          | 91.5        | 193                | 6.7        | 2,870         | 100.0        |
| Does not need support and does not use aids | 497          | 2.2        | 21,319         | 94.0        | 862                | 3.8        | 22,678        | 100.0        |
| Not stated                                  | 23           | 1.1        | 891            | 40.8        | 1,271              | 58.2       | 2,185         | 100.0        |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>1,884</b> | <b>2.4</b> | <b>71,506</b>  | <b>92.4</b> | <b>3,992</b>       | <b>5.2</b> | <b>77,382</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

(a) An individual may be counted more than once if more than one service type was accessed on the snapshot day.

Both Indigenous status and the proportion of missing/not stated records varied with the need for interpreter services (Table 2.7c). The highest percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as well as the highest percentage of missing/not stated were for those who needed an interpreter for a spoken language other than English, followed by those who needed an interpreter for non-spoken communication.

As noted for other items, when information was missing for any of the communication-related questions, the information on Indigenous status was also more likely to be missing.





Most agency outlets had the Indigenous status for all their clients recorded. Nearly nine-tenths (88%) of all agency outlets had no missing/not stated responses for Indigenous status. A further 6% of outlets had Indigenous status for only one or two clients recorded as missing/not stated. About 1% (75) of agency outlets had 10 or more cases missing/not stated and these outlets accounted for half (50% or 2,005) of all 3,992 cases.

**Service type**

The proportion of Indigenous clients varied considerably with service type, with respite and community support services having the highest percentage (4.8% and 3.7% respectively) and employment and community access services having the lowest percentage (1.7% and 1.8% respectively) (Table 2.9).

To some extent the proportion of missing/not stated may reflect the extent and/or the type of contact that agencies of each service type have with their clients. Community access and community support services had the highest proportion of missing/not stated. As well as learning and life skills development and other services, community access includes recreation services, which are short-term and had a missing/not stated rate of 15%. In contrast, community support includes a range of services of various degrees of contact with the client. Employment and accommodation services generally have extensive and long-term contact with clients, although this is not usually the case with respite services.

**Table 2.9: Number and proportion of recipients<sup>(a)</sup> of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day by recorded Indigenous status and service type, 2002**

| Service type      | Indigenous   |            | Non-Indigenous |             | Missing/not stated |            | Total         |              |
|-------------------|--------------|------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
|                   | No.          | %          | No.            | %           | No.                | %          | No.           | %            |
| Accommodation     | 541          | 2.4        | 20,948         | 92.7        | 1,108              | 4.9        | 22,597        | 100.0        |
| Community support | 520          | 3.7        | 12,524         | 89.9        | 890                | 6.4        | 13,934        | 100.0        |
| Community access  | 346          | 1.8        | 17,479         | 91.0        | 1,389              | 7.2        | 19,214        | 100.0        |
| Respite           | 157          | 4.8        | 2,951          | 90.6        | 150                | 4.6        | 3,258         | 100.0        |
| Employment        | 320          | 1.7        | 17,604         | 95.8        | 455                | 2.5        | 18,379        | 100.0        |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>1,884</b> | <b>2.4</b> | <b>71,506</b>  | <b>92.4</b> | <b>3,992</b>       | <b>5.2</b> | <b>77,382</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

(a) An individual may be counted more than once if more than one service type was accessed on the snapshot day.

**Consistency of Indigenous identification**

As outlined in this chapter’s introduction, records of services received from different agency outlets, and possibly different jurisdictions, which relate to the same client are linked by using the statistical linkage key (with a small degree of error). The information from different records for the same client is used to create one client record, where necessary using standard rules to reconcile any difference between records. However it is possible to compare the recorded responses for any variable from the records of services received for each client. This type of comparison was carried out for Indigenous status using 2002 data (Table 2.10).

A client may have had up to six services received records. Almost all clients (94%) had consistent and valid information for Indigenous status (Table 2.10). For another 5%, Indigenous status had been consistently recorded as missing/not stated, but only a few of these clients had received more than one service in any case. Of the remaining clients, most

were recorded as non-Indigenous on one (or more) services received records and missing/not stated on other record(s).

Only 100 clients (0.2%) had been recorded as both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. (These clients would be recorded in the final data set as Indigenous.) However, far fewer (5 clients) had been recorded as Indigenous and missing/not stated. This suggests that when a client is Indigenous, if they are not recorded correctly, there is a greater probability that they will be recorded as non-Indigenous rather than as missing/not stated. This, taken together with the overall missing/not stated rate of 5%, means that the recorded Indigenous proportion (2.4%) is possibly an underestimate of the actual population.

**Table 2.10: Linkage consistency for Indigenous status for consumers of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day, 2002**

| Number of services received | Consistent (Indigenous status reported) | Consistent (missing/not stated) | Indigenous and missing/not stated | Non-Indigenous and missing/not stated | Indigenous and Non-Indigenous <sup>(a)</sup> | Total         |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------|
| <b>Number</b>               |   |                                 |                                   |                                       |  |               |
| One                         | 52,203                                  | 3,391                           | —                                 | —                                     | —  | 55,594        |
| Two                         | 8,478                                   | 57                              | 4                                 | 403                                   | 83   | 9,025         |
| Three                       | 976                                     | 3                               | 1                                 | 51                                    | 14   | 1,045         |
| Four or more <sup>(b)</sup> | 134                                     | —                               | —                                 | 8                                     | 3  | 145           |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>61,791</b>                           | <b>3,451</b>                    | <b>5</b>                          | <b>462</b>                            | <b>100</b>                                   | <b>65,809</b> |
| <b>Per cent</b>             |   |                                 |                                   |                                       |  |               |
| One                         | 93.9                                    | 6.1                             | —                                 | —                                     | —  | 100.0         |
| Two                         | 93.9                                    | 0.6                             | 0.0                               | 4.5                                   | 0.9  | 100.0         |
| Three                       | 93.4                                    | 0.3                             | 0.1                               | 4.9                                   | 1.3  | 100.0         |
| Four or more <sup>(b)</sup> | 92.4                                    | —                               | —                                 | 5.5                                   | 2.1  | 100.0         |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>93.9</b>                             | <b>5.2</b>                      | <b>0.0</b>                        | <b>0.7</b>                            | <b>0.2</b>                                   | <b>100.0</b>  |

(a) Includes two cases for which Indigenous, non-Indigenous and missing were all recorded.

(b) Includes nine clients with five services received, and seven clients with six services received.

## Key points

- During all collection years before 2002 there was an option of ticking a box for not known. Therefore the numbers and rates for the year 2002 include the missing/not stated codes only, whereas the numbers and rates for all other years include both 'not known' and missing/not stated.
- The rate of not known/missing/not stated Indigenous status over the 6 collection years was variable, with a missing/not stated rate of 5% for 2002 (Tables 2.1a and 2.1b).
- Services with moderate proportions (10–24%) of clients who identified as Indigenous appear to have the highest proportions of missing/not stated records (Table 2.8).
- Missing/not stated Indigenous status was most likely when other basic information, such as age and sex, was also unknown. Otherwise the highest rate was in the 5 to 14 year age group. (Table 2.2) However, the true sex and age profile of the recipients with a missing/not stated Indigenous identifier was doubtful due to the high proportion of recipients whose sex and age were also unknown (25% and 24% respectively) (Tables 2.4 and 2.5).

- Remote and very remote locations had a lower proportion of records with missing/not stated Indigenous status than less-remote regions, with the highest proportions in inner regional locations (Table 2.3).
- Patterns suggest that people who communicate but only with the help of aids are more likely to have Indigenous status recorded as missing/not stated, compared with people who have no difficulty communicating, and with those who cannot communicate for themselves and thus will have someone answering on their behalf (Tables 2.7a and 2.7b).
- The proportion of missing/not stated may reflect the extent and/or the type of contact that agencies of each service type have with their clients. Community access and community support services had the highest proportion of missing/not stated (Table 2.9).

## **Issues for follow-up**

- Missing/not stated Indigenous records are sometimes part of a broader pattern where other demographic data on clients are also missing. In these cases general efforts to improve the collection of demographic information from clients are likely to increase the Indigenous identification rate.
- As regional locations (inner and outer) and major cities had the highest proportions of missing/not stated data, as well as the largest number of clients, efforts to improve Indigenous identification in CSDA-funded services should be concentrated in those locations.
- The identification rate of Indigenous clients may be increased by concentrating efforts on those clients who communicate non-verbally other than with sign language and of clients who use aids to communicate.
- Efforts could also be directed at the identification of Indigenous clients of community access and community support services. These services may have particular issues due to the sporadic nature of their contact with clients.
- Efforts should be concentrated on the small number of agency outlets that have very high missing/not stated rates and account for the majority of missing data.