

Data quality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification

Seven community services data collections

November 2004

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Canberra

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Abbreviations

ACAT	Aged Care Assessment Team
ACCMIS	Aged and Community Care Management Information System
AODTS	Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ATSIHWIU	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Welfare Information Unit
CSDA	Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement
CACP	Community Aged Care Packages
CDSMC	Community and Disability Services' Ministers Conference
CSMAC	Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council
HACC	Home and Community Care
IGCD	Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs
MDS	Minimum Data Set
NCP	National Child Protection
NCSDD	<i>National Community Services Data Dictionary</i>
NCSIMG	National Community Services Information Management Group
NDCA	National Data Collection Agency
NDARC	National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
NMDS	National Minimum Data Set
PADV	Partnership Against Domestic Violence
RACS	Residential Aged Care Services
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SPARC	System for the Payment of Aged Residential Care

Symbols

..	Not applicable
–	Nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)
n.e.s.	Not elsewhere specified

Summary

This report examines the quality of identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in seven data collections. The analyses focused firstly on the extent to which Indigenous status was missing or not stated in each data collection and, secondly (where possible) whether improvements in data quality had occurred over time. Thirdly, variations in data quality were explored in relation to particular groups of clients (e.g. age, sex, or service type) and by geographic location.

The seven data collections are:

- Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement Minimum Data Set (MDS) (Chapter 2)
- Three aged care data collections: Residential Aged Care Services Data Collection; Home and Community Care MDS; and Community Aged Care Packages data collection (Chapter 3)
- Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection (Chapter 4)
- National Child Protection data collection, incorporating 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 (NMDS) (Chapter 6).

Context

At the outset of this project, it was recognised that the preparedness of clients to identify as Indigenous was 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. For some of the services examined in this report, contact with the service is voluntary (i.e. the client is seeking a service, as in the case of a HACC service) while for others it is not (i.e. the service is essentially imposed upon them, as in the case of child protection). For some services there is a degree of urgency (for example the need for secure accommodation in the event of a serious threat of domestic violence) whereas for others the need for assistance may be less urgent (e.g. a request for Meals on Wheels). Some services are 'one-off' events (as in the case of treatment in a hospital casualty room) while others are ongoing (e.g. residential care). In each of these cases, the willingness to provide any 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. It is important to recognise in reading this report that these issues may affect Indigenous identification in services such as alcohol and drug treatment services quite differently from services for homeless people, and differently again in aged care or disability services.

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 MDS, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collections, and in the data collection for children on care and protection orders. Comparatively higher 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 agencies with a high or low proportion of missing/not stated Indigenous status supplying data to a national data collection and the proportion of services from different geographic areas supplying data to the data collections.

In two data collections, a relationship was found between the proportion of agency clients who were Indigenous and the proportion of missing data. In the Home and Community Care and Alcohol and Other Drugs Treatment Services programs, where an agency had a high proportion of Indigenous clients there were lower proportions of missing data. The relationship was not, however, consistent across all seven data collections. For example, for the data collections from the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement and Residential Aged Care Services the same type of analysis on the proportion of Indigenous clients by agency did not reveal a clear pattern.

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. Missing/not stated Indigenous records were often associated with the absence of other demographic data. In those instances, efforts to strengthen the collection of basic demographic information are likely to have a positive effect on Indigenous identification rate.

While this report was largely focused on the presence or absence of data on Indigenous status, in three collections it was possible to use data linkage to test the reliability of Indigenous identification. For these data collections, a comparison of different records for the same client was possible using statistical record linkage. The proportion of consistent records (i.e. either consistent and valid, or consistent and missing) was very high – between 96% and 99%. However, analysis of the remaining, inconsistent, records produced different results according to the data set. In two data sets – the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement and Home and Community Care – most clients with inconsistent records were recorded as non-Indigenous for one or more record(s) and missing/not stated for other record(s). In the third data set – Supported Accommodation Support Services – most clients with inconsistent records were recorded as non-Indigenous for one or more record(s) and Indigenous for the other record(s).

Specific results and findings for each data collection are presented below.

Key findings

Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement Minimum Data Set

- The coding categories used in the Indigenous data item in the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement Minimum Data Set (CSDA MDS) changed between 1997 and 2002. In 2002, the 'not known' option was removed. In 2001 and 2002 the proportion of missing data was generally lower than in previous years, at 5% (Table 2.1b).
- In this collection, a large proportion of the missing data on Indigenous status came from a small number of agency outlets with high 'missing/not stated' rates. Significant gains in data quality could therefore potentially be made by concentrating efforts to reduce missing data on those agencies.
- 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 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.
- The highest proportions of missing/not stated data on Indigenous status were found in regional locations (inner and outer) and major cities (which also involve the largest numbers of clients). Proportions of missing/not stated data were lowest in remote regions of Australia. (Table 2.3).
- Higher rates of missing/not stated data were found for clients who communicate non-verbally other than with sign language, and for clients who use aids to communicate (Tables 2.7a and 2.7b).
- Higher rates of missing/not stated data were found in the records of clients receiving community access and community support services. For these services, data quality may be affected by the sporadic nature of their contact with some clients (Table 2.9).

Residential Aged Care Services Data Collection

- Between 1998–99 and 2001–02 the proportion of permanent admissions with missing/not stated records for Indigenous status has hovered around 8 and 9% (Table 3.1). There was no apparent trend associated with age or sex.
- The highest proportion of missing/not stated responses for Indigenous status was recorded in the Northern Territory (20%) and the lowest in the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and Victoria (around 2%). These three jurisdictions had very few residents who were identified as Indigenous (1 person in the Australian Capital Territory, and 2 in each of Tasmania and Victoria).
- Based on the analysis by region, the highest proportion of missing/not stated responses on the Indigenous variable occurred in the category ‘Major cities’ (10%), with lower proportions in regional areas (6%) and quite small proportions in very remote areas (2%) (Table 3.5).

Home and Community Care Minimum Data Set

- There was a reduction in the proportion of missing/not stated responses on Indigenous status over the five quarterly collections examined in this report (14% in July–September 2001 to 12% in July–September 2002) (Table 3.7).
- Some agencies did not report Indigenous status for any of their clients (7%).
- Agencies with small proportions of clients who identified as Indigenous had the highest proportion of records with a missing/not stated response on Indigenous status (14% for those with less than 1% of Indigenous clients) (Table 3.14).
- There are data quality problems for Indigenous reporting among Home and Community Care (HACC) clients of specific age groups. In some cases, when usage rates are calculated (clients per 1,000 persons in that age group), the results obtained are over 1,000 per 1,000 (e.g. for the 65 and over age group) (Tables 3.17 and 3.18). Several possible explanations are being explored by data custodians, with particular attention given to the most likely reason, the over-counting of Indigenous clients due to software coding problems.
- Missing/not stated Indigenous records are sometimes associated with other missing demographic client data. This means that efforts to improve the collection of basic

demographic information from clients are likely to increase the Indigenous identification rate.

- The proportion of missing/not stated Indigenous identification data was much higher in some jurisdictions (21–23%) than the national average. This suggests Indigenous identification could be significantly improved overall by focusing efforts on those states and territories where the missing/not stated rate is high, and where no or little gains in the identification rate have been achieved in recent years (Table 3.10 and 3.11).
- Given that rates of Indigenous identifications vary with service type, efforts to increase the rate of identification of Indigenous clients who receive delivered home meals, centre nursing, home nursing and social support would have a significant impact on the identification rates for the HACC program overall (Table 3.15).

Community Aged Care Packages data collection

- The rate of missing/not stated Indigenous status was very low. However, this was at least partly due to imputation carried out at the state and territory level: recipients with missing/not stated Indigenous status, unless clearly receiving services from a predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service, are assumed to be non-Indigenous (Table 3.19). It is recommended that this practice cease.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection

- Non-participation in the national data collection of some SAAP-funded agencies presents a potentially bigger problem in fully enumerating the Indigenous population within SAAP than missing/not stated data. The SAAP National Data Collection Agency and the SAAP Information Sub-committee are currently looking at strategies to increase and encourage participation.
- In 2001–02 the missing/not stated rate increased from 1.4 to 2.2% (Table 4.1a). This was probably attributable to the introduction of new agencies to the SAAP National Data Collection. It often takes an agency some time to develop appropriate procedures to collect data from clients who are victims of domestic violence, have substance abuse issues or are desperate to find accommodation.
- The 2.2% of missing/not stated responses to the Indigenous question on the SAAP client collection form includes some ‘non-consents’. For those records, strategies to improve the consent rate will also assist in an improvement in the identification rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients (Table 4.1a).
- Continued refinement of the SAAP data training program and research into participation and consent rate changes in the regions where training has been conducted will continue to inform strategies to improve data quality.

National Child Protection Data Collection

- This report presents the first National Child Protection data on the number of children and young people with not known/ missing/or not stated Indigenous status, collected in 2001–02.
- Variations across jurisdictions in the quality of the data on Indigenous status are due mainly to differences in practices used to identify and record Indigenous status. For example, although the Indigenous status field is mandatory in all jurisdictions, there is a ‘not known’ option when entering the information onto the data system in six out of eight states and territories. To reduce variations across jurisdictions it is recommended

that child protection workers be encouraged to ask the standard Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) question of clients about Indigenous status. For this to be done effectively, staff would need to be supported and trained appropriately.

- A relatively low rate of not known/missing/not stated Indigenous status was found in the national data collection for children on care and protection orders (Table 5.2).
- This report recommends that Indigenous status should not be reported at the notification stage of a child protection matter. The quality of these data is questionable, as many notifications are from third parties who do not know the child or family well (Table 5.1).
- The report also recommends that Indigenous status be reviewed by case workers at the substantiation stage of a child protection matter. One way to do this is to use pop-up screens on the computerised records to automatically prompt staff to check the accuracy of the Indigenous status.

Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set

- This report presents data from the first Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set (AODTS NMDS), collected in 2000-01. As these data will now be collected annually, time series data will be available in future years. It is recommended that, when available, the rate of missing/not stated records in the 2001-02 data set be examined and compared with this report's data, to ascertain whether the rate has decreased.
- Some agencies have higher rates of missing/not stated Indigenous status than others. Follow-up work is being undertaken to alert those agencies so that they can then explore ways to increase the level of Indigenous identification of their clients.
- 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.
- Within agencies providing alcohol and other drug treatment services, the higher the proportion of clients who were reported as Indigenous, the lower the proportion with a missing/not stated Indigenous status (Table 6.7).

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^(a) of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day by recorded Indigenous status by jurisdiction by year, 1997–2002

Indigenous status	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
New South Wales						
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>
Victoria						
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>
Queensland						
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>
Western Australia						
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>
South Australia						
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>
Tasmania						
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>
Australian Capital Territory						
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>
Northern Territory						
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>
Commonwealth						
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>
All						
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
Total	64,432	69,198	73,982	74,929	77,205	77,382

(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^(a) of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day by recorded Indigenous status by jurisdiction by year, 1997–2002

Indigenous status	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
New South Wales						
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>
Victoria						
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>
Queensland						
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>
Western Australia						
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>
South Australia						
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>
Tasmania						
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>
Australian Capital Territory						
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>
Northern Territory						
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>
Commonwealth						
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>
All						
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
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(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^(a) 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
Total	1,726	3.9	1,279	4.0	987	71.6	3,992	5.2

(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^(a) 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
Number							
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
Total	50,506	18,106	6,758	664	215	1,133	77,382
Per cent							
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
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(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^(a) of CSDA-funded services on a snapshot day by recorded Indigenous status and sex, 2002

	Males	Females	Unknown sex	Total
	Number			
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
Total	44,208	31,795	1,379	77,382
	Per cent			
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
Total	57.1	41.1	1.8	100.0

(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^(a) 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
Total	1,884	100.0	71,506	100.0	3,992	100.0	77,382	100.0

(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^(a) 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
Total	1,884	2.4	71,506	92.4	3,992	5.2	77,382	100.0

(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^(a) 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
Total	1,884	2.4	71,506	92.4	3,992	5.2	77,382	100.0

(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^(a) 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
Total	1,884	2.4	71,506	92.4	3,992	5.2	77,382	100.0

(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^(a) 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
Total	1,884	2.4	71,506	92.4	3,992	5.2	77,382	100.0

(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 ^(a)	Total
Number						
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 ^(b)	134	—	—	8	3	145
Total	61,791	3,451	5	462	100	65,809
Per cent						
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 ^(b)	92.4	—	—	5.5	2.1	100.0
Total	93.9	5.2	0.0	0.7	0.2	100.0

(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.

3 Aged care

3.1 Residential Aged Care Services Data Collection

Introduction

Residential aged care provides accommodation and other support services, such as domestic services (laundry, cleaning), help with performing daily tasks (moving around, dressing, personal hygiene, eating) and medical care (various levels of nursing care and therapy services). Residential aged care is for older people with physical, medical, psychological or social care needs which cannot be met in the community.

Prior to 1 October 1997, the Australian system of residential aged care consisted of two discrete systems of care – hostels (for lower dependency residents) and nursing homes (for higher dependency residents). As part of the Federal Government's 1997 aged care reforms, hostels and nursing homes were amalgamated into one residential care system.

Both the Aged Care Assessment Team and the residential aged care service record information on residents of residential aged care. The data are entered into the System for the Payment of Aged Residential Care (SPARC), and from there into the Aged and Community Care Management Information System (ACCMIS), managed and regularly updated by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

The Indigenous status of residential aged care residents is recorded on the Aged Care Application and Approval Form which is completed by the Aged Care Assessment Team at the time of assessment. The relevant questions, requiring a yes or no answer, are:

- Are you Aboriginal?
- Are you a Torres Strait Islander?

Analyses

Trend in missing data

Between 1 July 1998 and 30 June 2002 the number and proportion of permanent admissions with missing/ not stated records for Indigenous status has fluctuated. No clear trend over time is discernable. The percentage of missing/ not stated records has increased from 8.1% in 1999–00 to 8.7% in 2001–02. However, this is lower than the rate recorded in 1998–99 (9.4%). The proportion of permanent admissions identified as being Indigenous has remained fairly steady (Table 3.1).

It must be remembered that places offered through Multi-Purpose Services and places funded under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy are not included in these figures. The same is true for all tables throughout this section.

Table 3.1: Permanent admissions to residential aged care, by Indigenous status, 1 July 1998 to 30 June 2002

Indigenous status	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02
Number				
Indigenous	249	227	180	224
Non-Indigenous	40,907	41,593	42,424	42,995
Missing/not stated	4,277	3,690	4,030	4,126
Total permanent	45,433	45,510	46,634	47,345
Per cent				
Indigenous	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5
Non-Indigenous	90.0	91.4	91.0	90.8
Missing/not stated	9.4	8.1	8.6	8.7
Total permanent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Age and sex

The number of Indigenous female permanent admissions was higher in every year than the number of male permanent admissions. The proportion of cases in which Indigenous status was missing/not stated was generally lower among female admissions than male admissions: 9.2% compared with 9.8% for 1998–99 admissions and 8.4% compared to 9.3% for 2001–02 admissions (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Permanent admissions to residential aged care, by Indigenous status, 1 July 1998 to 30 June 2002

Sex/status	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02
	Number			
Females				
Indigenous	128	115	107	119
Non-Indigenous	26,113	26,563	27,656	27,937
Missing/not stated	2,652	2,272	2,514	2,574
<i>Total females</i>	28,893	28,950	30,277	30,630
Males				
Indigenous	121	112	73	105
Non-Indigenous	14,794	15,030	14,768	15,058
Missing/not stated	1,625	1,418	1,516	1,552
<i>Total males</i>	16,540	16,560	16,357	16,715
	Per cent			
Females				
Indigenous	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Non-Indigenous	90.4	91.8	91.3	91.2
Missing/not stated	9.2	7.8	8.3	8.4
<i>Total females</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Males				
Indigenous	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.6
Non-Indigenous	89.4	90.8	90.3	90.1
Missing/not stated	9.8	8.6	9.3	9.3
<i>Total males</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

There was no discernible pattern in the distributions of missing/ not stated records for Indigenous status over age groups for the years examined. In the 50–64 age group the proportion of missing/ not stated reduced from 11.3% to 8.4% during the period 1998–99 and 2001–02, with the corresponding figures in the 65 and over age group being a reduction from 9.3% to 8.7%. However, the levels fluctuated in the years in between. In the under 50 age group the highest level of missing/ not stated was in the last year of calculation, 2001–02, at 9.8% compared to 7.4% in the previous year (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Permanent admissions to residential aged care, by age group and Indigenous status, from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 2002

Age/status	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02
Number				
Under 50				
Indigenous	30	18	9	21
Non-Indigenous	352	310	327	273
Missing/not stated	39	32	27	32
<i>Total under 50</i>	421	360	363	326
50–64				
Indigenous	64	58	49	54
Non-Indigenous	1,483	1,542	1,427	1,435
Missing/not stated	198	128	154	136
<i>Total 50–64</i>	1,745	1,728	1,630	1,625
65+				
Indigenous	155	151	122	149
Non-Indigenous	39,072	39,741	40,670	41,287
Missing/not stated	4,040	3,530	3,849	3,958
<i>Total 65+</i>	43,267	43,422	44,641	45,394
Per cent				
Under 50				
Indigenous	7.1	5.0	2.5	6.4
Non-Indigenous	83.6	86.1	90.1	83.7
Missing/not stated	9.3	8.9	7.4	9.8
<i>Total under 50</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
50–64				
Indigenous	3.7	3.4	3.0	3.3
Non-Indigenous	85.0	89.2	87.5	88.3
Missing/not stated	11.3	7.4	9.4	8.4
<i>Total 50–64</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
65+				
Indigenous	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3
Non-Indigenous	90.3	91.5	91.1	91.0
Missing/not stated	9.3	8.1	8.6	8.7
<i>Total 65+</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

State and territory

In 2001-02, the highest percentage of missing/not stated responses for Indigenous status was recorded in the Northern Territory (20%) and the lowest in the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and Victoria (around 2%). These three jurisdictions also had very few residents who were identified as Indigenous. South Australia also had very few residents identified as Indigenous, but had the second highest percentage of missing/not stated responses in 2001-02, and the highest percentage for the years 1999-00 and 2000-01.

In New South Wales the proportion of permanent admissions for whom Indigenous status was missing/not stated increased from 10.3% in 1999-00 to 12.7% in 2001-2002, although this is still lower than the proportion missing/not stated in 1998-99 (13.2%).

In Queensland, the percentage of missing/not stated responses Indigenous status declined from 6.9% in 1998-99 to 3.9% of permanent admissions in 2000-01. The percentage increased to 7.3% in 2001-02.

In Western Australia between 2000-01 and 2001-02 there was a modest decrease in the proportion of admissions for whom Indigenous status was missing/not stated (from 8.7% to 8.1%), although the proportion was somewhat lower in 1998-99 and 1999-00 (7.7% and 7.6% missing/not stated respectively).

The number of new admissions in any year in the Northern Territory is small but almost half of those admitted are Indigenous, where Indigenous status is available. The proportion of missing/not stated in the Northern Territory increased each year from 10.0% for 1998-99 admissions to 20.0% for 2001-02 admissions.

Table 3.4: Admissions of permanent residential aged care residents by state/territory and Indigenous status, from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 2002

Year/status	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
1998–99									
Indigenous	46	6	78	79	2	1	0	37	249
Non-Indigenous	13,749	10,704	7,079	3,683	4,172	1,079	397	44	40,907
Missing/not stated	2,107	960	534	312	297	52	6	9	4,277
Total	15,902	11,670	7,691	4,074	4,471	1,132	403	90	45,433
Per cent missing/not stated	13.2	8.2	6.9	7.7	6.6	4.6	1.5	10.0	9.4
1999–00									
Indigenous	38	4	59	67	8	2	0	49	227
Non-Indigenous	14,351	10,809	7,426	3,655	3,740	1,095	465	52	41,593
Missing/not stated	1,647	608	397	304	682	31	5	16	3,690
Total	16,036	11,421	7,882	4,026	4,430	1,128	470	117	45,510
Per cent missing/not stated	10.3	5.3	5.0	7.6	15.4	2.7	1.1	13.7	8.1
2000–01									
Indigenous	46	4	50	43	3	2	0	32	180
Non-Indigenous	14,913	11,257	7,804	3,568	3,217	1,159	468	38	42,424
Missing/not stated	1,997	309	317	346	1,031	11	3	16	4,030
Total	16,956	11,570	8,171	3,957	4,251	1,172	471	86	46,634
Per cent missing/not stated	11.8	2.7	3.9	8.7	24.3	0.9	0.6	18.6	8.6
2001–02									
Indigenous	48	2	75	51	4	2	1	41	224
Non-Indigenous	14,723	11,575	7,786	3,629	3,635	1,136	460	51	42,995
Missing/not stated	2,150	269	618	326	705	25	10	23	4,126
Total	16,921	11,846	8,479	4,006	4,344	1,163	471	115	47,345
Per cent missing/not stated	12.7	2.3	7.3	8.1	16.2	2.1	2.1	20.0	8.7

Remoteness

The proportion of residential aged care admissions for which Indigenous status was missing/not stated was higher in major cities than for other geographic areas. For admissions in 2001–02 the proportion of records with missing/not stated Indigenous status for residents in major cities was 10.2% compared with 6% for inner regional areas. The rate of missing/not stated records has remained at a similar level in major cities over the four years reported, whereas the proportion for remote areas has increased from 6.3% to 8.6%. In very remote areas, admissions of Indigenous people outnumbered admissions of non-Indigenous people. While the overall number of admissions in very remote areas was small, a low proportion of missing/not stated for Indigenous status was evident in these areas (2.4% in 2001–02). Other areas showed no particular patterns, with the proportion missing or not stated predominantly around the 6% mark.

Table 3.5: Admissions of permanent residential aged care residents by ASGC remoteness^(a) and Indigenous status, from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 2002

Year/status	Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote	Australia
1998–99						
Indigenous	55	22	56	58	58	249
Non-Indigenous	26,963	10,299	3,373	241	27	40,903
Missing/not stated	3,144	871	235	20	7	4,277
Total	30,162	11,192	3,664	319	92	45,429
Per cent missing/not stated	10.4	7.8	6.4	6.3	7.6	9.4
1999–00						
Indigenous	38	17	80	60	32	227
Non-Indigenous	27,187	10,613	3,513	256	20	41,589
Missing/not stated	2,732	707	227	21	3	3,690
Total	29,957	11,337	3,820	337	55	45,506
Per cent missing/not stated	9.1	6.2	5.9	6.2	5.5	8.1
2000–01						
Indigenous	34	16	52	37	41	180
Non-Indigenous	27,453	11,042	3,652	247	30	42,424
Missing/not stated	3,096	660	244	25	5	4,030
Total	30,583	11,718	3,948	309	76	46,634
Per cent missing/not stated	10.1	5.6	6.2	8.1	6.6	8.6
2001–02						
Indigenous	35	20	75	44	50	224
Non-Indigenous	27,524	11,554	3,665	222	30	42,995
Missing/not stated	3,131	736	232	25	2	4,126
Total	30,690	12,310	3,972	291	82	47,345
Per cent missing/not stated	10.2	6.0	5.8	8.6	2.4	8.7

(a) ASGC is the Australian Standard Geographical Classification as developed by the ABS.

Proportion of permanent residents who identified as Indigenous

At 30 June 2002, many permanent residents of residential aged care services who identified as Indigenous were in services where there was a large proportion of residents who identified as Indigenous in that service. For example, of all residents who identified as Indigenous, nearly half (48%) were in services where more than 25% of the residents identified as Indigenous. Thirty eight per cent of those who identified as Indigenous were in services where at least 50% of the residents identified as Indigenous.

There was no consistent relationship between the proportion of records with missing/not stated Indigenous status and the proportion of residents in a service who identified as Indigenous (Table 3.6). The percentage of records with missing/not stated Indigenous status was lowest (7.5%) where services had more than 50% residents who identified as Indigenous. Services with between 1% and 25% of residents who identified as Indigenous had missing/not stated data on Indigenous status for just over 10% of residents. However, services with fewer than 1% of residents who identified as Indigenous were missing Indigenous status information on 8.8% of records.

It should be noted that the percentage of clients who identified as Indigenous 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 service, 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 this particular analysis.

Table 3.6: Permanent residents in residential aged care services, by Indigenous status, by service's proportion of Indigenous residents, 30 June 2002

Indigenous status	Proportion of residents in service who identified as Indigenous					Total
	<=1%	>1-10%	>10-25%	>25-50%	>50%	
	Number					
Indigenous	19	266	69	72	261	687
Non-Indigenous	112,138	11,064	269	108	47	123,626
Missing/not stated	10,803	1,311	38	17	25	12,194
Total	122,960	12,641	376	197	333	136,507
	Per cent					
Indigenous	0.0	2.1	18.4	36.5	78.4	0.5
Non-Indigenous	91.2	87.5	71.5	54.8	14.1	90.6
Missing/not stated	8.8	10.4	10.1	8.6	7.5	8.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: All services reported a valid code for Indigenous status for at least some of their permanent residents.

Note that variations in numbers of admissions over the first three years of data will vary from previously published data as the database used in this report is a refreshed collection to 30 June 2002. The small variation in numbers between Table 3.5 and earlier tables for 1998-99 and 1999-00 (4 admissions) is probably due to minor omissions in one of the files in the database.

3.2 Home and Community Care Minimum Data Set

Introduction

The Home and Community Care Minimum Data Set (HACC MDS) is collected quarterly. The first available data set covers the July–September 2001 quarter and at the time of preparing this report the most recent data set available was for the July–September 2002 quarter.

In the HACC MDS collection, each agency is asked to submit a one line summary of the service provision provided in that quarter for each client. This includes the clients' circumstances and demographic details. The protocol for internal linkage is that if two or more client records are found to have the same data linkage key then they will be classed as a successful match and their records linked.

While one set of demographic, circumstance, and assistance totals is held in the data repository for each agency reporting the client's data, only one set of demographic data is included in the combined linked data set. This demographic data is not a compilation from multiple data records but rather is a selection of one demographic data record. Consequently not all valid demographic values may be captured and some invalid or missing values may be included. This may have an impact on the consistency of reporting of Indigenous status over time within the linked data, although an increase in the reporting of Indigenous status over time in the unlinked data can be expected to result in an improvement in the linked data.

Where quality is examined over time in this section's text and tables, data covers five quarterly collections. Where only one collection has been examined this is always the most recent collection available at the time of preparing this report, i.e. July–September 2002. As the purpose of this assessment of the data is the improvement of the collection of the data, most of the analysis has been carried out on the unlinked data set as this reflects the data that is received from service agencies. This is also more appropriate where information is analysed by agency, since one record in the linked data set may reflect assistance provided by one or more agencies. Trends are similar in unlinked and linked data.

Analyses

Trend in missing data

Table 3.7 shows the proportion of each response category across the five quarterly collections. The proportion of missing/not stated Indigenous status is declining with time across the collections, from 13.8% in the July 2001 quarter to 11.7% in the July 2002 quarter.

Table 3.7: Indigenous status by quarterly collection, HACC MDS, unlinked client data

Indigenous status	Jul–Sep 2001	Oct–Dec 2001	Jan–Mar 2002	April–Jun 2002	Jul–Sep 2002
Number					
Indigenous	13,902	14,786	10,824	15,061	14,964
Non-Indigenous	316,302	313,012	337,487	382,036	401,552
Missing/not stated	53,035	51,636	51,094	56,565	55,098
Total reports	383,239	379,434	399,405	453,662	471,614
Per cent					
Indigenous	3.6	3.9	2.7	3.3	3.2
Non-Indigenous	82.5	82.5	84.5	84.2	85.1
Missing/not stated	13.8	13.6	12.8	12.5	11.7
Total reports	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: The number of Indigenous clients in the HACC collection exceeds the number expected for the population in some jurisdictions. This is most likely due to inconsistent coding of this item across agencies.

Table 3.8 shows the proportion of agencies not reporting Indigenous status for any of their clients, and the proportion that has no missing/not stated Indigenous status. Over 40% of agencies report Indigenous status for all of their clients, and in general the number of agencies doing so has been increasing over time. However, because the number of agencies participating in the HACC collection has been increasing at a greater rate, overall the proportion of agencies reporting on Indigenous status for all of the clients has been falling slightly. The number of agencies never reporting Indigenous status has also been decreasing over time, both in numbers and percentage terms. In the July 2002 quarter 7% of agencies were not reporting on Indigenous status.

Table 3.8: Number and proportion of agencies by proportion of records containing missing/not stated Indigenous data by quarter, HACC MDS, unlinked records

Agency reporting of Indigenous status	Jul–Sep 2001	Oct–Dec 2001	Jan–Mar 2002	April–Jun 2002	Jul–Sep 2002
Number					
Not reported	178	173	170	172	165
Reported—some missing/not stated	934	951	1020	1097	1193
Reported—no missing/not stated	859	839	881	924	946
Total agencies	1,971	1,963	2,071	2,193	2,304
Per cent					
Not reported	9.0	8.8	8.2	7.8	7.2
Reported—some missing/not stated	47.4	48.4	49.3	50.0	51.8
Reported—no missing/not stated	43.6	42.7	42.5	42.1	41.1
Total agencies	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Age and sex

There is a higher proportion of missing/not stated responses in males than in females, and for those aged under 50 compared with those 50 years or older (Table 3.9). The proportion of missing/not stated responses is only marginally lower in the 50–64 year age group when compared with the 65 and over age group. The proportion of missing/not stated responses was very high where sex was unknown.

Table 3.9: Missing Indigenous identifier, by sex and age, HACC MDS July–September 2002, unlinked client data

Age group	Male	Female	Unknown	Total
Number				
Records with missing Indigenous identifier				
0–49	3,517	3,732	64	7,313
50–64	2,338	3,288	29	5,655
65+	13,631	27,999	500	42,130
Total	19,486	35,019	593	55,098
All records				
0–49	22,112	28,970	106	51,188
50–64	18,605	32,475	72	51,152
65+	107,855	260,557	862	369,274
Total	148,572	322,002	1,040	471,614
Per cent				
Proportion of records with missing Indigenous identifier (%)				
0–49	15.91	12.88	60.38	14.29
50–64	12.57	10.12	40.28	11.06
65+	12.64	10.75	58.00	11.41
Total	13.12	10.88	57.02	11.68

State and territory

Examination of Indigenous status by state and territory, shows that Queensland and South Australia had the highest proportion of missing/not stated responses (21% and 23% respectively) (Table 3.10). These rates were around double that of the Australian Capital Territory which had the third highest non-response rate. The Northern Territory had the lowest proportion of missing/not stated responses to Indigenous status in the most recent collection although this was not consistent over the five quarters (Table 3.11).

Table 3.10: Indigenous status by state and territory, HACC MDS July–September 2002, unlinked client data

Indigenous status	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Other	Aust
Number										
Indigenous	8,849	1,006	2,113	455	1,533	178	786	43	1	14,964
Non-Indigenous	98,996	123,146	75,238	37,344	42,044	16,795	1,733	5,745	511	401,552
Missing/not stated	6,928	11,393	20,683	11,128	2,519	1,584	138	724	1	55,098
Total	114,773	135,545	98,034	48,927	46,096	18,557	2,657	6,512	513	471,614
Per cent										
Indigenous	7.7	0.7	2.2	0.9	3.3	1.0	29.6	0.7	0.2	3.2
Non-Indigenous	86.3	90.9	76.7	76.3	91.2	90.5	65.2	88.2	99.6	85.1
Missing/not stated	6.0	8.4	21.1	22.7	5.5	8.5	5.2	11.1	0.2	11.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: The number of Indigenous clients in the HACC collection exceeds the number expected for the population in some jurisdictions. This is most likely due to inconsistent coding of this item across agencies.

Only Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory are showing consistent increases in reporting Indigenous status over time. However, all states and territories reported their lowest proportion of missing data in the most recent quarter (Table 2.11).

Table 3.11: Records with missing/not stated Indigenous status by quarter and by state/territory, HACC MDS, unlinked client data (%)

State	Jul–Sep 2001	Oct–Dec 2001	Jan–Mar 2002	Apr–Jun 2002	Jul–Sep 2002
New South Wales	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.7	6.0
Victoria	8.7	11.7	8.8	8.3	8.4
Queensland	24.0	22.7	23.1	22.7	21.1
South Australia	23.3	24.0	22.8	24.0	22.7
Western Australia	10.0	8.7	6.4	6.3	5.5
Tasmania	19.8	10.2	8.1	9.2	8.5
Northern Territory	6.1	6.6	3.2	9.3	5.2
Australian Capital Territory	45.8	15.5	16.0	13.5	11.1

Note: The proportion of records with missing/not stated Indigenous status for 'Other territories' was 0.2%.

Sex and age profile

Analysis was carried out to examine if the sex distribution (Table 3.12) and age distribution (Table 3.13) amongst the missing/not stated records was similar to that of the Indigenous or the non-Indigenous clients. There was a much higher proportion of females in both the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous clients (68.6 and 68.9% respectively), with a similar profile for the missing/not stated records (63.6%).

Table 3.12: Indigenous status by sex, HACC July–September 2002, unlinked client data

Indigenous status	Male	Female	Unknown	Total
Number				
Indigenous	4,680	10,271	13	14,964
Non-Indigenous	124,406	276,712	434	401,552
Missing/not stated	19,486	35,019	593	55,098
Total	148,572	322,002	1,040	471,614
Per cent				
Indigenous	31.3	68.6	0.1	100
Non-Indigenous	31.0	68.9	0.1	100
Missing/not stated	35.4	63.6	1.1	100
Total	31.5	68.3	0.2	100.0

Note: The number of Indigenous clients in the HACC collection exceeds the number expected for the population in some jurisdictions. This is most likely due to inconsistent coding of this item across agencies.

The proportion of Indigenous clients was higher within the under 50 and 50–64 year age groups compared with the 65 and over age group, reflecting the lower life expectancy of Indigenous people. Comparing the profiles of the three groups, the profile of the missing/not stated showed a greater resemblance to the profile of the non-Indigenous data than to that of the Indigenous data (Table 3.13).

Table 3.13: Indigenous status by age, HACC MDS, July–September 2002, unlinked client data

Age group	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Missing/not stated	Total
Number				
0–49	2,979	40,896	7,313	51,188
50–64	3,095	42,402	5,655	51,152
65+	8,890	318,254	42,130	369,274
Total	14,964	401,552	55,098	471,614
Per cent				
0–49	19.9	10.2	13.3	10.9
50–64	20.7	10.6	10.3	10.8
65+	59.4	79.3	76.5	78.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: The number of Indigenous clients in the HACC collection exceeds the number expected for the population in some jurisdictions. This is most likely due to inconsistent coding of this item across agencies.

Proportion of clients who identified as Indigenous

The proportion of missing data is highest where the agencies are reporting fewer than 1% of clients as Indigenous (Table 3.14). Note that this group includes those agencies which did not report Indigenous status for any of their clients (7.2% of agencies, see Table 3.8).

It should be noted that the percentage of clients who identified as Indigenous 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. In addition, the number of Indigenous clients in the HACC collection exceeds the number expected for the population in some jurisdictions. Possible reasons for this are discussed at the end of this section. These factors need to be taken into account when interpreting the outcome of this particular analysis.

Table 3.14: Indigenous status, by agencies' proportion of Indigenous clients, HACC MDS July–September 2002 collection, unlinked client data

Indigenous status	Proportion of clients in agency who identified as Indigenous					Total
	<1% ^(a)	1–9%	10–24%	25–49%	>50%	
	Number					
Indigenous	818	2,580	4,835	3,320	3,411	14,964
Non-Indigenous	287,279	82,266	24,602	7,070	335	401,552
Missing/not stated	46,265	7,786	690	293	64	55,098
Total reports	334,362	92,632	30,127	10,683	3,810	471,614
	Per cent					
Indigenous	0.2	2.8	16.0	31.1	89.5	3.2
Non-Indigenous	85.9	88.8	81.7	66.2	8.8	85.1
Missing/not stated	13.8	8.4	2.3	2.7	1.7	11.7
Total reports	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Includes those agencies which did not report Indigenous status for any of their clients (7.2% of agencies, see Table 3.8).

Note: The number of Indigenous clients in the HACC collection exceeds the number expected for the population in some jurisdictions. This is most likely due to inconsistent coding of this item across agencies.

The type of assistance provided to clients is included in the HACC MDS and has been used here to see if people getting particular services are more or less likely to have missing data on Indigenous status. Assessment, case planning, case coordination and counselling may be provided by most types of agency and have not been included in this list. Similarly, the provision of aids and equipment has not been included as this assistance tends to be a component of personal care service.

Table 3.15 presents the different assistance types arranged by increasing proportion of missing/not stated Indigenous status. Indigenous status was most frequently identified where the type of assistance was domestic assistance (3.8% missing/not stated) and personal care (5.1%). Indigenous status was much less likely to be reported where the assistance was provision of delivered meals (31.3% missing/not stated), followed by centre nursing (22.5%). Other assistance types had between 8% and 15% missing/not stated responses for Indigenous status.

Table 3.15: Indigenous status, by type of service provided, HACC MDS July–September 2002, unlinked client data

Assistance type	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Missing/ Not stated	Total	Missing/ Not stated
	Number				Per cent
Domestic assistance	7,641	129,174	5,348	142,163	3.8
Personal care	1,567	31,153	1,772	34,492	5.1
Home maintenance	1,369	32,013	2,854	36,236	7.9
Respite care	234	7,749	691	8,674	8.0
Centre meals	961	18,624	1,716	21,301	8.1
Centre day care	1,657	37,644	3,969	43,270	9.2
Transport	2,578	50,676	5,877	59,131	9.9
Home nursing	939	50,073	7,224	58,236	12.4
Home modification	86	4,997	725	5,808	12.5
Linen delivery	26	559	87	672	12.9
Social support	1,573	28,534	4,794	34,901	13.7
Other food services	192	1,058	225	1,475	15.3
Centre nursing	296	6,457	1,959	8,712	22.5
Home meals	1,849	34,765	16,711	53,325	31.3
All reports	14,964	401,552	55,098	471,614	11.7

Notes

1. The HACC MDS does not include information about the agency type. The type of service provided has been used here as a surrogate for the agency type, although agencies may provide more than one type of service. As assessment, case planning and counselling may be provided by most types of agency these have not been included in this list. Similarly, the provision of aids and equipment has not been included as this service tends to be a component of personal care service.
2. The number of Indigenous clients in the HACC collection exceeds the number expected for the population in some jurisdictions. This is most likely due to inconsistent coding of this item across agencies.

Consistency of Indigenous identification within the HACC MDS data collection

Internal linkage of the July–September 2002 quarter is based on the statistical linkage key, with no consideration of any other variable, and gives the exact number of records held in the linked data set.

Table 3.16 shows an analysis of the consistency of Indigenous status when linking records within the unlinked database. Within the unlinked data set, 68% (322,705/471,614) of records had a unique statistical linkage key. The remaining 148,909 records were associated with 65,692 different linkage keys, so that these keys average 2.27 client records each. Indigenous status was reported consistently for 76% (49,910) of these linkage keys. That is, Indigenous status was always recorded as Indigenous, non-Indigenous or was not reported for all records with the same linkage key.

For the linkage keys with consistent multiple records, 2% (1,080) were for Indigenous clients and 96% (47,799) were for non-Indigenous clients; 2% (1,031) had consistently missing/not stated Indigenous status. A combination of non-Indigenous with missing/not stated was reported for 21% of the linkage keys with multiple records. This percentage was only 0.3% for a combination of Indigenous with missing/not stated. Incompatible Indigenous status

(Indigenous with non-Indigenous alone or a combination of Indigenous, non-Indigenous and missing/not stated) was recorded for only 2%.

Table 3.16: Internal linkage consistency for Indigenous status within the HACC MDS, July–September 2002, distinct linkage keys

No. of records	Consistent		Inconsistent				Total
	Consistent (Indigenous status reported)	Consistent (Missing/not stated)	Indigenous & Missing/not stated	Non-Indigenous & Missing/not stated	Indigenous & Non-Indigenous	Indigenous, Non-Indigenous & Missing/not stated	
	Number						
One	284,993	37,712	..	..	..	..	322,705
Two	39,872	968	163	9,771	996	..	51,770
Three	7,335	60	37	3,232	329	42	11,035
Four or more	1,672	3	4	1,072	105	31	2,887
<i>Subtotal 2 or more records</i>	<i>48,879</i>	<i>1,031</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>14,075</i>	<i>1,430</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>65,692</i>
Total	333,872	38,743	204	14,075	1,430	73	388,397
	Per cent						
1	88.3	11.7	..	..	..	..	100.0
2	77.0	1.9	0.3	18.9	1.9	..	100.0
3	66.5	0.5	0.3	29.3	3.0	0.4	100.0
4	57.9	0.1	0.1	37.1	3.6	1.1	100.0
<i>Subtotal 2 or more records</i>	<i>74.4</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>21.4</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Total	86.0	10.0	0.1	3.6	0.4	0.0	100.0

Note: For this table an event is the record submitted by the service provision agency and represents receipt of one or more types of assistance by an agency over a 3-month period.

HACC usage rates

A related problem with the identification of Indigenous status is seen in the analysis of usage rates for Indigenous clients. In New South Wales in particular, usage rates of over a thousand per thousand Indigenous population are calculated for the 65 and over age group, with Victoria showing rates up to 556 per thousand population (Table 3.17, linked data). When rates are calculated for 5-year age groups, apparently illogical rates are seen, particularly in New South Wales and Victoria, resulting in an Australian 75 years plus rate of 1,062 persons per thousand population (Table 3.18). This issue means that it is not possible to publish meaningful age-specific rates for Indigenous HACC clients.

Possible explanations for this problem are:

- an underestimation of the Indigenous population in these areas;
- higher self-identification of Indigenous status among HACC clients than in the Australian Bureau of Statistics census data used to estimate the Indigenous population;
- poor or inconsistent identification of the components of the elements used to derive the statistical linkage key (in particular name and date of birth). This would result in under-matching records for clients who receive assistance from more than one service agency and consequently in an overestimation of the number of Indigenous clients;

or the most likely reason,

- software coding problems in some agencies resulting in the overcounting of Indigenous clients.

Table 3.17: HACC usage rates per 1,000 Indigenous population, HACC MDS July–September 2002, linked client data

Age group	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Other	Aust
Indigenous HACC clients										
0–49	1,174	234	366	146	376	40	212	16	—	2,564
50–64	1,102	191	551	136	434	19	235	10	1	2,679
65+	4,883	474	980	134	610	64	298	8	—	7,451
Total	7,159	899	1,897	416	1,420	123	745	34	1	12,694
ABS Indigenous population estimates^(a)										
0–49	120,760	24,909	113,647	23,030	59,406	15,652	51,748	3,700	197	413,049
50–64	10,668	2,167	8,920	1,881	4,658	1,331	4,148	200	31	34,004
65+	3,891	852	3,468	709	2,005	459	1,654	41	8	13,087
Total	135,319	27,928	126,035	25,620	66,069	17,442	57,550	3,941	236	460,140
Age-specific usage rate (per 1,000 population)										
0–49	9.7	9.4	3.2	6.3	6.3	2.6	4.1	4.3	—	6.2
50–64	103.3	88.1	61.8	72.3	93.2	14.3	56.7	50.0	32.3	78.8
65+	1,254.9	556.3	282.6	189.0	304.2	139.4	180.2	195.1	—	569.3
Total	52.9	32.2	15.1	16.2	21.5	7.1	12.9	8.6	4.2	27.6

(a) Estimated Indigenous population at 30 June 2001 (ABS Cat. No. 3101).

Table 3.18: HACC usage rates per 1,000 Indigenous population (50 years and over) by 5 year age groups, HACC MDS July–September 2002, linked client data

Age group	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Other	Aust
Indigenous HACC clients										
50–54	297	50	151	33	132	9	58	2	—	732
55–59	372	71	179	45	135	5	71	4	—	882
60–64	433	70	221	58	167	5	106	4	1	1,065
65–69	628	75	277	41	195	12	111	1	—	1,340
70–74	888	91	281	43	181	21	75		—	1,580
75+	3,367	308	422	50	234	31	112	7	—	4,531
Total 50+	5,985	665	1,531	270	1,044	83	533	18	1	10,130
ABS Indigenous population estimates										
50–54	4,818	1,047	4,202	867	2,151	615	1,849	96	7	15,652
55–59	3,381	659	2,716	579	1,431	401	1,257	68	10	10,502
60–64	2,469	461	2,002	435	1,076	315	1,042	36	14	7,850
65–69	1,718	317	1,405	278	766	197	664	18	4	5,367
70–74	1,040	218	918	210	511	125	424	6	1	3,453
75+	1,133	317	1,145	221	728	137	566	17	3	4,267
Total 50+	14,559	3,019	12,388	2,590	6,663	1,790	5,802	241	39	47,091
Age specific usage rate per 1,000 population										
50–54	61.6	47.8	35.9	38.1	61.4	14.6	31.4	20.8	—	46.8
55–59	110.0	107.7	65.9	77.7	94.3	12.5	56.5	58.8	—	84.0
60–64	175.4	151.8	110.4	133.3	155.2	15.9	101.7	111.1	71.4	135.7
65–69	365.5	236.6	197.2	147.5	254.6	60.9	167.2	55.6	—	249.7
70–74	853.8	417.4	306.1	204.8	354.2	168.0	176.9	0.0	—	457.6
75+	2,971.8	971.6	368.6	226.2	321.4	226.3	197.9	411.8	—	1,061.9
Total 50+	411.1	220.3	123.6	104.2	156.7	46.4	91.9	74.7	25.6	215.1

(a) Estimated Indigenous population at 30 June 2001 (ABS Cat. No. 3101).

3.3 Community Aged Care Packages

Introduction

The Community Aged Care Packages program is a Commonwealth-funded program designed to provide assistance to enable frail or disabled older people with complex care needs to continue living in the community. The care provided is equivalent to low level care provided in residential aged care, and includes assistance with activities such as personal care, domestic chores, rehabilitation and delivered meals.

Community Aged Care Packages have been in operation since 1992, and data regarding care recipients and service provision have been collected since this time. This information is collected by the Aged Care Assessment Team and the service provider, and is entered into the Aged and Community Care Management Information System (ACCMIS). This database is managed and regularly updated by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

The Indigenous status of Community Aged Care Package (CACP) recipients is recorded on the Aged Care Application and Approval Form which is completed by the Aged Care Assessment Team at the time of assessment. The relevant questions, requiring a yes or no answer, are:

- Are you Aboriginal?
- Are you a Torres Strait Islander?

The number of missing/not stated in the Indigenous status variable for Community Aged Care Package recipients is very low. This is partly due to imputation carried out by the state and territory offices: recipients with missing/not stated Indigenous status, unless clearly receiving services from a predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service, are assumed to be non-Indigenous. Most of the missing/not stated records reported in this section are therefore likely to relate to these predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services. The very low level of missing/not stated Indigenous status should be taken into consideration in the following discussion.

Analyses

Trend in missing data

Since 1999, both the number and proportion of missing/not stated Indigenous status has declined, from a very low 0.4% in 1999 to 0.1% in 2002 (Table 3.19). The number of care recipients, including Indigenous recipients, has increased substantially over the same period, in line with the increase in the size of the program. The proportion of clients identified as being Indigenous has remained fairly steady.

Table 3.19: CACP recipients, by Indigenous status, 30 June 1999 to 30 June 2002

Indigenous status	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number				
Indigenous	383	426	503	717
Non-Indigenous	12,716	16,149	20,197	23,849
Missing/not stated	58	42	28	19
Total recipients	13,157	16,617	20,728	24,585
Per cent				
Indigenous	2.9	2.6	2.4	2.9
Non-Indigenous	96.6	97.2	97.4	97.0
Missing/not stated	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1
Total recipients	100.0			

Sex and age

Approximately 71% of CACP recipients are female. There was a similar decline over time in the proportion with missing/not stated Indigenous status for both males and females (Table 3.20). However, there was a slightly higher percentage of females than males with missing/not stated Indigenous status across all years.

Table 3.20: CACP recipients, by sex and Indigenous status, 30 June 1999 to 30 June 2002

Sex/status	1999	2000	2001	2002
	Number			
Females				
Indigenous	252	275	336	480
Non-Indigenous	8,964	11,423	14,243	16,853
Missing/not stated	46	33	23	16
<i>Total female recipients</i>	<i>9,262</i>	<i>11,731</i>	<i>14,602</i>	<i>17,349</i>
Males				
Indigenous	131	151	167	237
Non-Indigenous	3,752	4,736	5,954	6,996
Missing/not stated	12	9	5	3
<i>Total male recipients</i>	<i>3,895</i>	<i>4,896</i>	<i>6,126</i>	<i>7,236</i>
	Per cent			
Females				
Indigenous	2.7	2.3	2.3	2.8
Non-Indigenous	96.8	97.4	97.5	97.1
Missing/not stated	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.1
<i>Total female recipients</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Males				
Indigenous	3.4	3.1	2.7	3.3
Non-Indigenous	96.3	96.7	97.2	96.7
Missing/not stated	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0
<i>Total male recipients</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

At 30 June 2002, 93% of CACP recipients were aged 65 and over; 6% were between 50 and 65, and 1% were under age 50. Among the small number of clients aged under 50 there were no cases with missing data (Table 3.21). In general, slightly higher percentages of missing/ not stated Indigenous status were found in the 50–64 age group than the 65 and over group over the 4 years from 1999 to 2002. The proportion of missing/ not stated has declined in a similar pattern over time for the 50–64 and 65 and over age groups.

Table 3.21: CACP recipients, by age group and Indigenous status, 30 June 1999 to 30 June 2002

Age/status	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number				
Under 50				
Indigenous	29	30	29	40
Non-Indigenous	113	144	170	210
Missing/not stated	0	0	0	0
<i>Total under 50</i>	<i>142</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>199</i>	<i>250</i>
50–64				
Indigenous	111	115	136	221
Non-Indigenous	702	870	1,028	1,318
Missing/not stated	5	5	3	2
<i>Total 50–64</i>	<i>818</i>	<i>990</i>	<i>1,167</i>	<i>1,541</i>
65+				
Indigenous	243	281	338	456
Non-Indigenous	11,901	15,135	18,999	22,321
Missing/not stated	53	37	25	17
<i>Total 65+</i>	<i>12,197</i>	<i>15,453</i>	<i>19,362</i>	<i>22,794</i>
Per cent				
Under 50				
Indigenous	20.4	17.2	14.6	16.0
Non-Indigenous	79.6	82.8	85.4	84.0
Missing/not stated	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Total under 50</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
50–64				
Indigenous	13.6	11.6	11.7	14.3
Non-Indigenous	85.8	87.9	88.1	85.5
Missing/not stated	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.1
<i>Total 50–64</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
65+				
Indigenous	2.0	1.8	1.7	2.0
Non-Indigenous	97.6	97.9	98.1	97.9
Missing/not stated	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1
<i>Total 65+</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Key points

Residential Aged Care Services Data Collection

- There has been an increase in the rate of missing/not stated Indigenous status over the past 3 years. The 2001–02 rate was, however, lower than the rate for 1998–99 permanent admissions (Table 3.1).
- The missing/not stated rate was slightly higher in males (Table 3.2). There was no apparent trend associated with age or sex (Table 3.3).
- The rate of missing/not stated Indigenous status decreased in some states and territories, but it increased in others (Table 3.4).
- The highest proportions of missing/not stated Indigenous status were found in major cities, with lower proportions in regional areas (6%) and quite small proportions in very remote areas (2%) (Table 3.5).
- Residential Aged Care Services in which more than half the residents were Indigenous had the lowest rate of missing/not stated Indigenous status. The next lowest rate was for those services with between 25–50% of Indigenous residents (Table 3.6).
- Overall, the picture is one of decreasing identification of residents in terms of their Indigenous status.

Home and Community Care MDS

- The proportion of missing/not stated Indigenous status has declined with time across five quarterly collections (Table 3.7).
- Over 40% of HACC agencies reported a valid code for Indigenous status for all their clients (Table 3.8).
- Seven per cent of agencies did not report Indigenous status for any of their clients in the latest quarter. This proportion had declined from 9% in the first quarter (Table 3.8).
- There were large differences in the proportion of missing/not stated records between the states and territories (Table 3.10). The most consistent increase in Indigenous identification over the five quarters occurred in Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory (Table 3.11).
- While the sex profile of the missing/not stated records was similar to that of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients, the age profile of the missing/not stated showed a greater resemblance to the age profile of the non-Indigenous data than to that of the Indigenous data (Table 3.12).
- HACC agencies where more than half the clients identified as Indigenous had the lowest rate of missing/not stated Indigenous status. Conversely, those agencies with less than 1% clients who identified as Indigenous had the highest rate (Table 3.14).
- Comparison of the HACC assistance types showed that for those clients receiving domestic assistance and personal care, the rate of missing/not stated Indigenous status was the lowest. The highest rate of missing data was reported for those clients who were provided with delivered meals (Table 3.15).

- Analysis using linkage of records showed that Indigenous status was reported consistently for 74% of the linkage keys. The highest proportion of inconsistent multiple records concerned the combination of non-Indigenous status with missing/not stated (Table 3.16).
- The usage rates of Indigenous people in specific age groups were very high and apparently illogical, indicating data quality problems. Discussion with data custodians suggested the most likely source of this issue is the overcounting of Indigenous clients (due to software coding problems) (Tables 3.17 and 3.18).

Community Aged Care Packages

- The rate of missing/not stated Indigenous status was very low. However, this was at least partly due to imputation carried out at the state and territory level (Table 3.19).

Issues for follow-up

Residential Aged Care Aged Care Services data collection

- Based on the analysis by region, most gains in Indigenous identification could be made in the category 'Major cities', as the highest number of residents, and the highest missing/not stated rate is found in this category.

Home and Community Care MDS

- Given that rates of Indigenous identifications vary with service type, efforts to increase the rate of identification of Indigenous clients who receive delivered home meals, centre nursing, home nursing and social support would have a significant impact on the identification rates for the HACC program overall (Table 3.15).
- As HACC data custodians are already aware, there is a need for investigation into the very high usage rates of specific age groups for Indigenous people in the HACC data collection. Several possible explanations are given earlier in this chapter, and these continue to be explored, particularly in relation to software coding problems.

Community Aged Care Packages

- It is recommended that the practice of imputing clients' Indigenous status based on the main client profile or other service characteristics when their Indigenous status is missing or recorded as not stated should cease.

4 Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

Introduction

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) is jointly funded and managed by the Commonwealth and state governments. SAAP provides temporary accommodation and support services, such as domestic violence counselling, employment assistance and living skills development, to homeless people, and aims to help them achieve self-reliance and independence. Families, single people, young people, and women and children who are escaping domestic violence are assisted under the program.

The SAAP National Data Collection has been providing information on the provision of assistance through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program since 1996–97. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has had the role of National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) since the collection's inception.

The National Data Collection consists of distinct components, each of which can be thought of as a separate collection. Currently, four collections are run annually: the Client Collection, the Administrative Data Collection, the Demand for Accommodation Collection and the Casual Client Collection.

The Client Collection is the main component. It collects information about all clients receiving support under SAAP of more than 1 hour's duration. Data are recorded by service providers during, or immediately following, contact with clients and are then forwarded to the NDCA after clients' support periods have ended or, for ongoing clients, at the end of the reporting period. Data collected include basic socio-demographic information and information on the services required by, and provided to, each client. Information about each client's situation before and after receiving SAAP services is also collected. The data reported here relate only to the Client Collection.

Background

The agencies funded to provide accommodation and support also collect personal information on aspects of their homeless clients. Under the Client Collection protocols agencies must inform clients about how their data will be used and clients must give consent for their personal details to be included in the data collection. Therefore, data quality is affected by the levels of consent to the data collection as well as by errors and omissions. The AIHW has, however, developed a weighting system to adjust for non-consent whereas no adjustments are made for errors and omissions. Given that large numbers of clients do not consent to provide their personal details (13% in 2001–02), the weighting system is essential to estimate to a reasonable degree of accuracy the number of clients assisted by SAAP. The higher the consent rate, the more accurate the estimate.

This chapter includes information on both the levels of non-consent and errors and omissions. While the support period tables provide raw numbers and rates of non-consent, the client tables illustrate how the weighting system can improve the data quality. The client

tables (Table 1b and 2b) also provide the number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients attending SAAP agencies so that comparisons can be made against the rates of clients whose Indigenous status is missing/not stated.

Some general points about the data presented here are below.

- The consent rate across all states and territories has increased dramatically since the commencement of the National Data Collection in 1996–97 (Table 4.1a). Even without the use of the weighting system, this trend has significantly improved SAAP data quality. The improvement in consent rates can be attributed to factors such as: a stable questionnaire; frequent training of service providers in all states and territories; and increased trust in the NDCA’s confidentiality protocols.
- The actual rates of missing/not stated data in the tables presented here are low in comparison to non-consent rates (ranging between 1.4% and 2.5% nationally). The trend in missing/not stated responses shows a decrease across the 6 reporting years (with an average of 2.1% of clients), with the exception of 2001–02 (Table 4.1a). Some of the increase in missing/not stated responses in 2001–02 is attributable to the inclusion of many new SAAP-funded agencies in the last financial year. For example, the inclusion of one new agency in 2001–02 increased the number of support periods in one jurisdiction by approximately 20%, reduced the average consent rate by 9% and contributed to a significant rise in the number of errors and omissions. Data from 2002–03 may shed more light on the trends in data quality, in particular whether the last reporting year was an aberration in a trend that has otherwise seen a continued decrease in the rates of missing/not stated data. Preliminary data from the NDCA suggest that this will be the case (for example, the above mentioned agency has improved its consent rates from under 50% to above 90% for the data received so far this year).
- It should be kept in mind that informed consent is one of the key foundations of the collection when assessing data on the SAAP program and its clients. As such, the client has the right to decide what personal information is recorded about them on the client form. So whilst some clients may generally consent to provide personal details about themselves, they may still decide not to consent to a particular question, such as the Indigenous status question. Therefore the total missing/not stated figure possibly comprises a number of non-responses allowed for under the Collection’s protocols. It is not known what proportion of the missing/not stated responses constitute these ‘non-consents’.
- The participation of previously non-participating SAAP-funded agencies in the collection has the potential to provide greater improvements to the quality of Indigenous data than the low rates of errors and missing/not stated responses. For example, Table 4.2a shows that there are 3,600 out of 166,000 support periods in which Indigenous status is not reported. Even if all of those 3,600 support periods were Indigenous (and this report suggests that less than 17%, or about 600 support periods, are likely to be Indigenous) then the participation of one big agency with many Indigenous clients is likely to have a more significant impact on the number of Indigenous clients in the SAAP National Data Collection than all the missing/not stated support periods. In 2001–02, 5.5% of SAAP-funded (or about 70) agencies did not participate in the Collection compared with only 2.3% of support periods where Indigenous status was not recorded. The AIHW has been discussing strategies with the state and territory departments of community services to improve participation of agencies supporting predominantly Indigenous clients.

Analyses

Indigenous identification in SAAP

In the year 2001–02, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 17% (excluding missing/not stated data) of all adults assisted under the SAAP program (AIHW 2002a). The number of Indigenous clients of SAAP services constitutes a substantial over-representation of this population group, which was about 2% of the total Australian adult population during this period.

Tables 4.1a and 4.1b show the proportion of responses to each category from the Indigenous status question on the SAAP form.

Trend in missing data

The proportion of responses to all four categories of Indigenous status has increased across the 6 years of data collection while non-consent has reduced from one-third of support periods to 13% in 2001–02 (Table 4.1a). The rate for missing/not stated responses fell from 2.5% in 1996–97 to 1.4% in 2000–01, but then returned to above the 1997–98 level of 1.9% in 2001–02.

When looking at client-level data in Table 4.1b the picture is somewhat different. The proportion of Aboriginal clients increased from 11.8% in 1996–97 to 15.1% in 2001–02, and the proportion of non-Indigenous clients fell from 84% to 82%. There was an increase in the proportion of Torres Strait Islander clients from 0.4% to 0.8%, and a decrease in the proportion of missing/not stated responses to Indigenous status from 2.5% to 2.2%.

The major reasons for the increase in Indigenous clients in the SAAP National Data Collection are the rolling into SAAP of PADV (Partnership Against Domestic Violence) funds, which funded a high proportion of Indigenous clients, and the recent participation of one agency that supports a large number of Indigenous clients (over 10,000 support periods a year).

When comparing the proportion of 'missing/not stated' in Tables 4.1a and 4.2a (support periods) with those in the client tables (4.1b and 4.2b), the missing/not stated rate is slightly higher when the reporting unit is clients, even though there are more support periods with a missing/not stated Indigenous identifier than clients. This is caused by the interaction between the weighting system used to adjust for agency non-participation and SAAP client non-consent, support periods and clients. In this chapter the support period tables have been left unweighted so raw numbers can be reported. Refer to the *Homeless people in SAAP: SAAP National Data Collection annual report 2001–02 Australia* for a detailed explanation of the weighting system utilised in the National Data Collection.

The highest proportion of missing/not stated Indigenous status responses amongst SAAP clients was recorded in 1996–97 at 3.2% (Table 4.2b). Since that time the proportion of missing/not stated responses to the question on Indigenous identification has accounted for approximately 2% of clients.

Table 4.1a: SAAP support periods: proportion of responses to Indigenous identification categories by reporting period, Australia, 1996–97 to 2001–02

Indigenous identification response categories	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	Total (%)	Total (no.)
Non-Indigenous	57.0	64.1	63.4	66.1	64.2	66.2	63.6	593,900
Aboriginal person	8.2	9.1	9.6	10.7	14.2	16.5	11.5	107,300
Torres Strait Islander person	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.0	2.0	0.7	6,700
Both Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander ^(a)	—	—	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	1,000
Consent not provided	32.1	24.6	25.0	21.0	18.5	13.0	22.2	207,200
Missing/not stated	2.5	1.9	1.6	1.7	1.4	2.2	1.9	17,400
<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>..</i>
Total (no.)	148,900	156,600	155,000	146,800	160,500	166,500	..	934,300

(a) This category was only introduced in the 1998–99 collection year.

Note: Number excluded due to errors (un-weighted): 1,000.

Table 4.1b: SAAP clients: proportion of responses to Indigenous identification categories by reporting period, Australia, 1996–97 to 2001–02

Indigenous identification response categories	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	Total (%)	Total (no.)
Non-Indigenous	84.4	85.6	85.5	84.6	82.6	81.5	84.0	485,200
Aboriginal person	11.8	11.8	12.3	12.9	14.4	15.1	13.1	75,600
Torres Strait Islander person	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.5	3,000
Both Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander ^(a)	—	—	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	700
Missing/not stated	3.2	2.0	1.7	1.9	1.7	2.4	2.1	12,300
<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>..</i>
Total (no.)	87,800	99,600	95,900	95,200	98,200	100,700	..	577,500

(a) This category was only introduced in the 1998–99 collection year.

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors (weighted): 700.
2. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.

States and territories

Across the states and territories, Tasmania generally reported a higher proportion of clients whose Indigenous status was missing/not stated (4.6%) compared to all other jurisdictions (Table 4.2b). In the last 4 years the Northern Territory reported the lowest proportion of clients whose Indigenous status was missing/not stated, generally 1% of clients or less.

The proportion of missing/not stated responses to Indigenous status has decreased across all years with the exception of 2001–02. The conclusions at the end of this chapter present a possible explanation for the increase in 2001–02.

Table 4.2a: SAAP support periods: proportion of missing/not stated and Indigenous identification category responses by state and territory, by reporting period, Australia, 1996–97 to 2001–02

Year		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total (%)	Total (no.)	
1996–97	Indigenous	9.9	2.7	7.3	18.3	7.2	4.9	6.5	22.5	8.4	12,500	
	Non-Indigenous	61.3	61.4	48.7	46.1	57.2	55.8	64.1	39.6	57.0	84,800	
	Missing/not stated	2.6	2.0	3.2	1.6	2.4	3.4	1.8	1.6	2.5	3,700	
	Consent not provided	26.2	33.9	40.8	33.9	33.2	35.9	27.6	36.3	32.1	47,800	
	<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	..
	Total (no.)	55,000	34,900	23,900	11,500	10,900	4,900	3,000	4,600	..	148,800	
1997–98	Indigenous	10.2	3.1	8.1	25.4	9.4	5.2	5.8	28.0	9.4	14,800	
	Non-Indigenous	65.3	74.8	55.6	50.7	66.9	54.7	69.5	44.7	64.1	100,400	
	Missing/not stated	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.5	1.5	2.6	1.4	1.7	1.9	2,900	
	Consent not provided	22.7	20.1	34.4	22.3	22.2	37.5	23.4	25.7	24.6	38,500	
	<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	..
	Total (no.)	52,700	39,600	25,500	11,900	12,300	6,100	3,200	5,200	..	156,500	
1998–99	Indigenous	10.2	3.3	9.4	22.3	10.0	6.5	5.9	39.2	10.0	15,400	
	Non-Indigenous	61.5	73.7	59.2	50.6	67.3	58.6	66.8	44.3	63.5	98,300	
	Missing/not stated	1.9	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.6	2,400	
	Consent not provided	26.4	21.5	30.0	25.3	21.3	33.9	26.4	15.5	25.0	38,800	
	<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	..
	Total (no.)	52,900	42,500	22,900	11,800	10,700	5,600	3,000	5,600	..	155,000	
1999–00	Indigenous	12.0	3.5	12.1	25.4	10.0	6.6	7.8	38.5	11.2	16,400	
	Non-Indigenous	61.8	77.8	64.2	53.3	69.3	62.4	72.2	45.6	66.1	97,000	
	Missing/not stated	1.7	1.7	1.9	1.3	1.6	2.3	0.9	1.1	1.7	2,500	
	Consent not provided	24.5	17.0	21.8	19.9	19.0	28.7	19.1	14.9	21.0	30,900	
	<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	..
	Total (no.)	47,000	39,900	24,100	12,200	10,200	5,600	3,200	4,600	..	146,800	
2000–01	Indigenous	12.2	3.5	26.4	30.1	11.4	7.5	9.1	42.6	15.4	24,700	
	Non-Indigenous	63.4	77.3	56.7	52.8	68.4	67.0	75.4	42.8	64.5	103,100	
	Missing/not stated	1.7	1.4	1.4	1.0	1.3	1.6	0.9	0.6	1.4	2,300	
	Consent not provided	22.7	17.8	15.5	16.1	19.0	23.9	14.7	14.0	18.6	29,700	
	<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	..
	Total (no.)	45,400	40,900	35,600	14,700	10,300	5,000	2,900	4,900	..	159,800	
2001–02	Indigenous	13.7	4.0	37.1	30.6	11.5	7.6	10.7	51.8	18.7	31,100	
	Non-Indigenous	70.9	81.1	51.3	56.6	62.0	70.7	74.3	38.0	66.2	110,200	
	Missing/not stated	2.3	2.9	1.8	1.0	1.7	3.5	1.4	1.1	2.2	3,600	
	Consent not provided	13.1	12.0	9.9	11.8	24.8	18.1	13.6	9.1	13.0	21,600	
	<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	..
	Total (no.)	44,800	43,100	38,300	14,300	13,300	5,400	2,600	4,700	..	166,500	

Note: Clients may have support periods at agencies in more than one state or territory.

Table 4.2b: SAAP clients: proportion of missing/not stated and Indigenous identification category responses by state and territory, by reporting period, Australia, 1996-97 to 2001-02

Year		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total (%)	Total (no.)	
1996-97	Indigenous	13.3	4.2	13.3	26.7	11.0	7.5	9.8	38.2	12.4	10,300	
	Non-Indigenous	83.0	93.3	82.7	70.9	85.7	88.3	88.0	58.9	84.4	70,200	
	Missing/not	3.7	2.5	4.0	2.4	3.3	4.1	2.2	2.9	3.2	2,700	
	<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	..
	Total (no.)	25,400	22,900	13,900	7,300	6,400	3,000	1,900	2,300	..	83,200	
1997-98	Indigenous	13.2	4.0	13.0	29.9	12.1	7.8	7.4	39.5	12.4	11,700	
	Non-Indigenous	84.9	94.1	84.5	68.3	86.6	88.7	90.9	58.8	85.6	80,500	
	Missing/not	1.9	1.9	2.5	1.7	1.3	3.5	1.7	1.7	2.0	1,900	
	<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	..
	Total (no.)	27,700	27,000	15,400	7,800	7,900	3,600	1,900	2,800	..	94,000	
1998-99	Indigenous	13.2	4.5	13.9	29.6	13.1	8.9	7.9	44.8	12.9	11,700	
	Non-Indigenous	84.9	93.9	84.4	68.4	85.5	90.1	90.7	54.3	85.4	77,400	
	Missing/not	2.0	1.6	1.7	2.0	1.4	1.0	1.4	0.9	1.7	1,500	
	<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	..
	Total (no.)	25,900	28,000	14,300	7,500	6,800	3,300	1,800	3,000	..	90,700	
1999-00	Indigenous	14.6	4.5	15.1	30.4	12.1	8.5	9.8	42.4	13.5	12,200	
	Non-Indigenous	83.5	93.6	82.5	68.2	86.1	88.7	89.0	56.6	84.6	76,100	
	Missing/not	1.9	1.8	2.4	1.4	1.8	2.8	1.2	1.0	1.9	1,700	
	<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	..
	Total (no.)	24,400	27,400	15,000	8,100	7,000	3,300	1,900	2,800	..	90,000	
2000-01	Indigenous	15.3	4.8	19.6	33.5	13.3	8.8	10.0	44.4	15.4	14,300	
	Non-Indigenous	82.7	93.6	78.6	65.1	85.3	88.8	88.9	55.1	82.9	76,700	
	Missing/not	1.9	1.6	1.8	1.4	1.4	2.4	1.1	0.6	1.7	1,600	
	<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	..
	Total (no.)	24,500	26,900	16,800	9,300	7,000	3,300	1,900	2,800	..	92,500	
2001-02	Indigenous	15.8	5.0	23.1	32.6	13.6	8.9	11.8	52.4	16.2	15,500	
	Non-Indigenous	81.9	92.1	74.8	66.2	84.1	86.5	86.5	46.6	81.4	77,800	
	Missing/not	2.4	2.9	2.1	1.2	2.3	4.6	1.7	1.1	2.4	2,300	
	<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>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	..
	Total (no.)	25,200	28,200	17,300	8,600	8,200	3,500	1,700	2,900	..	95,600	

Notes

1. Clients may have support periods at agencies in more than one state or territory.
2. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.

Remoteness

In locations where support periods to Indigenous clients make up the majority of responses to the Indigenous question (that is in the more remote areas of Australia), the proportion of missing/ not stated responses to Indigenous status was lower (Table 4.3). Consent rates tend to be higher in remote areas than in major cities and inner regional areas.

Table 4.3: SAAP support periods: proportion of missing/not stated and Indigenous identification responses by geographical location and reporting period, Australia, 2001–02

Geographical location	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Consent not provided	Missing/not stated	Total (%)	Total (no.)
Major cities	75.5	7.0	15.0	2.5	100.0	97,000
Inner regional	72.8	11.8	13.1	2.3	100.0	31,200
Outer regional	43.9	47.4	7.1	1.5	100.0	29,300
Remote	25.5	63.3	10.6	0.7	100.0	4,900
Very remote	5.0	86.2	7.8	1.1	100.0	4,200
Total (%)	66.2	18.7	13.0	2.2	100.0	..
Total (no.)	110,200	31,100	21,600	3,600	..	166,500

Main reason for seeking assistance

For Indigenous clients, the most commonly reported main reasons for seeking assistance were domestic violence (26%), physical and emotional abuse (23%), time out from family or other situation (25%), and recent arrival to area with no means of support (18%). The missing/not stated rates for these categories were lower than the overall 1.8% missing/not stated rate (1.7%, 1.6%, 1.5% and 1.3% respectively). Conversely, the two categories with the highest missing/not stated rates (emergency accommodation ended and 'other') had relatively few support periods where clients identified themselves as Indigenous (10.6% and 12.3% respectively).

Table 4.4: SAAP support periods: proportion of missing/not stated and Indigenous identification category responses by main reason for seeking assistance, Australia, 2001–02

Main reason for seeking assistance	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Missing/not stated	Total (%)	Total (no.)
Time out from family/other situation	73.9	24.6	1.5	100.0	5,300
Relationship/family breakdown	87.1	11.1	1.8	100.0	10,700
Interpersonal conflict	86.0	11.8	2.2	100.0	2,700
Physical/emotional abuse	75.3	23.1	1.6	100.0	3,100
Domestic violence	72.4	25.9	1.7	100.0	21,800
Sexual abuse	87.1	12.0	0.8	100.0	700
Financial difficulty	87.1	11.4	1.5	100.0	9,400
Eviction/previous accommodation ended	87.5	10.8	1.8	100.0	12,000
Drug/alcohol/substance abuse	83.2	15.1	1.7	100.0	6,000
Emergency accommodation ended	85.8	10.6	3.6	100.0	1,900
Recently left institution	85.0	13.3	1.7	100.0	1,800
Psychiatric illness	92.4	5.8	1.8	100.0	1,800
Recent arrival to area with no means of support	80.7	18.0	1.3	100.0	6,000
Itinerant	80.5	17.4	2.0	100.0	3,100
Usual accommodation unavailable	83.7	14.2	2.1	100.0	10,900
Gambling	90.3	7.6	2.1	100.0	300
Other	84.6	12.3	3.1	100.0	6,200
Total (%)	81.7	16.4	1.8	100.0	..
Total (no.)	84,600	17,000	1,900	..	103,500
Consent not provided	..	..	..	..	17,500
Total including consent not provided	..	..	..	..	121,000

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions associated with the question on main reason for seeking assistance (un-weighted): 5,480.
2. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.

Service provided

Table 4.5 shows the types of support provided to clients. Like previous tables, it shows that where there are high proportions of Indigenous records, the proportion of missing/not stated responses tends to be smaller (e.g. culturally appropriate support (1.0%), assistance to obtain/maintain government payment (1.1%) and drug and alcohol assistance (1.2%)). Only three categories are over 2.0%. The three categories are intellectual disability services (2.2%), assistance with immigration issues (2.3%) and interpreter services (2.1%). Two of these categories suggest that high rates of missing/not stated responses may be more closely associated with SAAP clients who were born overseas in non-English-speaking countries.

Table 4.5: SAAP support periods: proportion of missing/not stated and Indigenous identification category responses by type of services provided, Australia, 2001-02

Type of service	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Consent not provided	Missing/not stated	Total (%)	Total (no.)
Housing/accommodation	66.3	22.3	9.8	1.6	100.0	123,200
SAAP/CAP accommodation	64.7	24.9	8.8	1.6	100.0	103,900
Assistance to obtain/maintain short-term accommodation	57.9	32.2	8.5	1.4	100.0	36,200
Assistance to obtain/maintain independent housing	77.1	11.6	9.9	1.4	100.0	29,600
Financial/employment	65.3	24.4	8.7	1.6	100.0	65,500
Assistance to obtain/maintain government payment	52.5	41.4	5.1	1.1	100.0	26,000
Employment/training assistance	78.8	10.8	9.0	1.4	100.0	5,600
Financial assistance/material aid	70.0	18.2	10.1	1.8	100.0	46,000
Financial counselling	79.7	10.8	7.9	1.6	100.0	12,100
Counselling	64.5	22.7	11.4	1.3	100.0	80,500
Incest/sexual assault	65.6	9.4	23.5	1.4	100.0	3,300
Domestic violence	66.3	14.1	17.9	1.7	100.0	21,800
Family/relationship	67.4	21.5	9.9	1.2	100.0	23,000
Emotional/other	66.8	21.4	10.5	1.3	100.0	69,200
Assistance with problem gambling	86.5	7.0	5.3	1.1	100.0	1,000
General support/advocacy	68.0	18.8	11.6	1.6	100.0	119,700
Living skills/personal development	78.0	12.0	8.8	1.2	100.0	23,400
Assistance with legal issues/court support	64.7	24.1	9.8	1.4	100.0	17,800
Advice/information	67.4	19.4	11.7	1.6	100.0	101,300
Retrieval/storage/removal of belongings	64.2	29.3	5.1	1.4	100.0	44,100
Advocacy/liaison on behalf of client	72.8	12.3	13.4	1.5	100.0	49,000
Brokerage services	71.9	12.7	14.0	1.4	100.0	6,800
Specialist services	57.7	34.6	6.4	1.4	100.0	48,600
Psychological services	82.2	7.5	8.8	1.4	100.0	1,600
Psychiatric services	85.2	7.8	5.8	1.2	100.0	3,200
Pregnancy support	74.2	15.0	8.9	1.8	100.0	2,500
Family planning support	76.1	12.6	10.2	1.1	100.0	1,200
Drug/alcohol support or intervention	52.0	43.3	3.5	1.2	100.0	24,600
Physical disability services	76.8	10.3	12.6	0.3	100.0	300
Intellectual disability services	79.9	7.4	10.5	2.2	100.0	400
Culturally appropriate support	29.7	64.8	4.5	1.0	100.0	22,300
Interpreter services	84.9	3.5	9.5	2.1	100.0	1,700
Assistance with immigration issues	85.5	0.8	11.4	2.3	100.0	1,000
Health/medical services	54.7	39.3	4.7	1.3	100.0	28,700
Basic support and services n.e.s	65.4	23.9	9.2	1.6	100.0	108,500
Meals	63.5	26.8	8.3	1.4	100.0	85,100
Laundry/shower facilities	62.5	27.5	8.5	1.5	100.0	82,800
Recreation	64.0	27.5	7.1	1.4	100.0	44,100
Transport	65.9	22.1	10.6	1.4	100.0	45,200
Other	75.8	16.0	6.3	1.9	100.0	17,500
No services provided directly	68.7	9.0	18.1	4.2	100.0	2,500
Total (%)	66.2	18.7	13.0	2.2	100.0	—
Total (no.)	110,200	31,100	21,600	3,600	—	166,500

Target group and service delivery model

The results from analyses of target group and service delivery model tend to indicate that the less targeted the service provision, the higher the proportion of missing/not stated responses to the Indigenous status question (Tables 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8). For example, in Table 4.6, agencies with a primary target group of cross-target, multiple or general recorded a higher proportion of missing/not stated responses to Indigenous status (2.6%) compared with other primary target groups. Similarly, in terms of service delivery model, Table 4.7 illustrates that day support agencies (6.1%) and 'other' agencies (2.7%) recorded the highest proportion of missing/not stated responses. Consistent with the previous tables, Table 4.8 shows that the lowest rates of missing/not stated responses (1.3%) were reported in agencies where the secondary target group was Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background. Agencies whose secondary target group were clients with 'Other' special characteristics or those with no secondary target group reported higher rates of missing/not stated responses (2.4% and 2.3% respectively).

Table 4.6: SAAP support periods: proportion of missing/not stated and Indigenous identification category responses by primary target group of SAAP agency, Australia, 2001-02

Primary target group	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Consent not provided	Missing/not stated	Total (%)	Total (no.)
Young people	69.9	10.8	17.2	2.0	100.0	33,300
Single men only	83.0	8.1	6.9	1.9	100.0	29,300
Single women only	71.5	11.9	14.3	2.3	100.0	3,800
Families	67.4	12.5	18.2	1.8	100.0	8,200
Women escaping domestic violence	52.2	26.6	19.3	1.9	100.0	35,700
Cross-target/multiple/general	63.6	25.1	8.7	2.6	100.0	56,200
Total	66.2	18.7	13.0	2.2	100.0	..
Total no.	110,200	31,100	21,600	3,600	..	166,500

Table 4.7: SAAP support periods: proportion of missing/not stated and Indigenous identification categories responses by service delivery model of SAAP agency, Australia, 2001–02

Service delivery model	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Consent not provided	Missing/not stated	Total (%)	Total (no.)
Crisis/short-term	58.9	28.8	10.4	1.8	100.0	70,900
Medium/long-term	76.2	7.7	14.3	1.8	100.0	37,000
Day support	84.1	4.9	4.9	6.1	100.0	9,500
Outreach support	42.4	23.4	32.3	2.0	100.0	8,500
Telephone information/referral	73.6	5.0	19.5	1.9	100.0	4,500
Multiple	70.8	12.7	14.4	2.1	100.0	25,600
Other	68.8	17.8	10.6	2.7	100.0	10,400
Total	66.2	18.7	13.0	2.2	100.0	..
Total no.	110,200	31,100	21,600	3,600	..	166,500

Table 4.8: SAAP support periods: proportion of missing/not stated and Indigenous identification categories responses by secondary target group of SAAP agency, Australia, 2001–02

Secondary target group	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Consent not provided	Missing/not stated	Total (%)	Total (no.)
Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander peoples	26.7	65.0	7.0	1.3	100.0	24,400
People from non-English-speaking backgrounds	79.3	5.0	13.6	2.1	100.0	3,700
Other special characteristics	72.4	15.7	9.4	2.4	100.0	14,500
No secondary target group	72.9	10.3	14.5	2.3	100.0	124,000
Total	66.2	18.7	13.0	2.2	100.0	..
Total no.	110,200	31,100	21,600	3,600	..	166,500

Linkage key analysis of Indigenous data quality

Tables 4.9 to 4.11 present the findings of linkage key analysis in Indigenous SAAP data quality over three years. The protocols established for the SAAP National Data Collection require that SAAP clients provide information in a climate of informed consent. If a client's consent is not obtained, only a limited number of questions can be completed on data collection forms, and an 'alpha code' is not recorded. Alpha codes are used to create a linkage key, which allows data collected on separate occasions from the same client to be combined without identifying the client. Thus alpha codes allow enumeration of actual clients in addition to occasions of support.

In analysing the linkage key data potential scenarios include:

- the client reported their Indigenous status consistently;
- the client reported varied responses to the Indigenous status question across multiple support periods (this may be unintentional, the client may consent on one occasion but not the next, or the client may consciously choose to report varying responses);

- the client may have given consent to record their alpha code but may have chosen to not consent to the question on Indigenous status;
- the agency worker may not have asked the question of the client and therefore left the question blank, or they may have responded to the question by making an assumption about the Indigenous status of the client without asking.

It is also worth noting that recent analysis shows that as the client population increases so too does the rate of alpha code duplication. Based on 1999–00 data the total number of clients is underestimated by approximately 3% because about 3% of clients have the alpha code of another client.

The total proportion of consistent and valid responses has decreased slightly from 95.8% in 1999–00 to 94.8% in 2001–02 (Tables 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11). Furthermore, as clients had more support periods it was more likely that Indigenous status was reported more inconsistently. For example, in 2001–02 the rate of consistent and valid reporting for clients with two support periods was 90.8% and with four or more it declined to 78.6%. A similar pattern was seen across all years examined.

There was a slight increase in the proportion of responses where both Indigenous and non-Indigenous status was reported for the same alpha code (from 1.6% in 1999–00 to 1.8% in 2001–2002). Duplication of alpha codes (i.e. where two clients have the same or similar names that produce the same alpha code) may partly contribute to this apparently inconsistent reporting.

Whilst the overall rate of inconsistent reporting of Indigenous status in 2001–02 was 5.2%, a response can be assigned to the missing Indigenous status for 1% of clients. In these instances, at least one support period for these clients reported a valid response to the Indigenous status question. It is not unreasonable to assume that the Indigenous status reported by the client on at least one form can be assigned against the missing status on other forms for the same clients. This means that the Indigenous status of 4.2% of clients in SAAP cannot be determined for 2001–02.

Table 4.9: SAAP clients (unweighted): proportion of recorded Indigenous status by support periods, Australia 1999–00

Support periods	Consistent (Indigenous status reported)	Consistent (missing/ not stated)	Indigenous & missing/ not stated	Non-Indigenous & missing/ not stated	Indigenous & Non-Indigenous	Indigenous, Non-Indigenous & missing/ not stated	Total (%)	Total number
One	98.0	2.0	—	—	—	—	100.0	55,950
Two	91.7	1.8	0.2	1.5	4.8	—	100.0	9,800
Three	88.6	1.8	0.3	2.5	6.6	0.2	100.0	3,650
Four or more	81.5	1.3	0.5	6.1	9.7	0.9	100.0	4,150
Total	95.8	1.9	0.1	0.7	1.5	0.1	100.0	..
Total no.	70,400	1,400	50	500	1,100	50	..	73,500

Table 4.10: SAAP clients (unweighted): proportion of recorded Indigenous status by support periods, Australia 2000–01

Support periods	Consistent (valid)	Consistent (missing/ not stated)	Indigenous & missing/ not stated	Non-Indigenous & missing/ not stated	Indigenous & Non-Indigenous	Indigenous, Non-Indigenous & missing/ not stated	Total (%)	Total number
One	97.8	2.2	—	—	—	—	100.0	58,250
Two	92.1	1.9	0.3	1.4	4.3	—	100.0	10,400
Three	86.9	1.8	0.7	3.1	7.2	0.3	100.0	3,750
Four or more	79.2	2.0	1.0	7.2	9.3	1.3	100.0	4,750
Total	95.4	2.1	0.1	0.8	1.5	0.1	100.0	..
Total no.	73,600	1,650	100	600	1,150	50	..	77,150

Table 4.11: SAAP clients (unweighted): proportion of recorded Indigenous status by support periods, Australia 2001–02

Support periods	Consistent (valid)	Consistent (missing/ not stated)	Indigenous & missing/ not stated	Non-Indigenous & missing/ not stated	Indigenous & Non-Indigenous	Indigenous, Non-Indigenous & missing/ not stated	Total (%)	Total number
One	97.6	2.4	—	—	—	—	100.0	61,450
Two	90.8	2.1	0.4	1.7	5.0	—	100.0	11,600
Three	86.1	2.4	0.5	3.2	7.5	0.3	100.0	4,350
Four or more	78.6	2.0	1.6	6.6	9.6	1.6	100.0	5,300
Total	94.8	2.4	0.2	0.8	1.7	0.1	100.0	..
Total no.	78,400	1,950	150	700	1,400	100	..	82,700

Increasing the level of Indigenous identification

- The above analysis indicates that non-Indigenous clients of SAAP appear more likely to report an error or not respond to the Indigenous question than Indigenous clients.
- The 2.2% of missing/not stated responses to the Indigenous question on the SAAP client collection form includes some ‘non-consents’. The number is, however, unknown and strategies to reduce errors and other non-responses will not work in this instance. Strategies to improve consent are more appropriate for these types of non-responses.
- As alluded to in the opening section, the non-participation of some SAAP-funded agencies appears to present a potentially greater challenge to fully enumerate the Indigenous population within SAAP than errors and omissions in data recorded. The SAAP NDCA together with the SAAP Information Sub-committee is currently looking at strategies to continually increase and encourage participation. One essential element of this is the current training program, which has recently been adapted for specific use in training Indigenous service providers in the value, uses and ‘how to’s’ of the data

collection. The success of the training program has been notable with the continued increase in consent and participation rates over several years of the collection. Continued refinement of the training program and research into participation and consent rate changes in the regions where training has been conducted will continue to inform strategies to improve data quality.

- The rise in the missing/not stated rates in 2001–02 is probably attributable to the introduction of new agencies to the SAAP National Data Collection. The increase in missing/not stated responses is likely to happen every time there is an injection of funds into the SAAP program and new agencies start participating in the collection. It often takes an agency some time to develop appropriate procedures to collect data from clients who are victims of domestic violence, have substance abuse issues or are desperate to find accommodation.

Key findings

- The proportion of valid responses to each category from the Indigenous status question have increased across the 6 years of data collection as consent rates to the data collection have improved (Tables 4.1a).
- The proportion of missing/not stated responses to Indigenous status decreased across all years with the exception of 2001–02. In the last 4 years the Northern Territory reported the lowest proportion of clients whose Indigenous status was missing/not stated, generally 1% of clients or less (Tables 4.2a and 4.2b).
- The proportion of missing/not stated responses by type of service provided tended to be smaller where there were high proportions of Indigenous records (Table 4.5).
- The results from analyses related to target group and service delivery model tended to indicate that the less targeted the service provision, the higher the proportion of missing/not stated responses to the Indigenous status question (Tables 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8).
- Linkage key analysis showed that Indigenous status was reported consistently for 95% of SAAP clients for the period 2001–02.

Issues for follow-up

- Strategies to improve the consent rate will also assist in an improvement in the identification rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.
- Likewise, strategies to improve the participation rate of SAAP-funded agencies in the SAAP collection will also facilitate a more accurate count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. Strategies are currently being considered by the major SAAP data collection stakeholders.

5 National Child Protection Data Collection

Introduction

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 are suspected of, or have been abused, neglected or otherwise harmed; 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 notification by an individual, an organisation, a third party such as a medical professional, or by children themselves. These reports are assessed by the child protection agencies and in cases where there is a possibility of risk of harm to the child or it is suspected that abuse or neglect has occurred, they are classified as a notification. Most notifications are then investigated and classified as either 'substantiated' or 'not substantiated' depending on whether it is concluded that the child has been or will be abused or neglected or otherwise harmed. A range of services may then be provided to the child and his/her family.

In the more serious cases, the department may also apply to the relevant court to place a child on a care and protection order. Care and protection orders vary between jurisdictions but they can provide a supervisory role for the department or 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 or where there is family conflict and 'time out' is needed or where parents are ill or unable to care for the child.

The AIHW is responsible for the collection and publication of national child protection data. The three areas of child protection services for which national data are collected are:

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

The data is supplied by state and territory community service departments who fund the AIHW to collate and publish these data annually. Currently the data are provided to the AIHW in the form of aggregate data in Excel spreadsheets, although the collection is moving to unit record for future collections. The AIHW has been responsible for collecting national data on child abuse and neglect (now referred to as child protection notifications,

investigations and substantiations) and on children on care and protection orders since 1992 and for national data on children in out-of-home care since 1995–96.

Data quality issues

As each state and territory has its own legislation, policies and practices in relation to child protection, the data provided by the jurisdictions are not strictly comparable. This is particularly the case with the data on notifications, investigations and substantiations, where jurisdictions use different definitions, policies and practices.

There are also variations across jurisdictions in the quality of the data on Indigenous status due to differences in practices adopted to identify and record Indigenous status. Some jurisdictions are using the standard ABS question (e.g. Queensland have just introduced this as a requirement for all child protection workers) but in others the information appears to be acquired in a more ad-hoc way. Although the Indigenous status field is mandatory in all jurisdictions, there is a 'not known' option when entering the information onto the data system in all states and territories, except in Victoria.

If a client's Indigenous status is marked not known there is usually no requirement to review these data when the client's status becomes known, except in Western Australia, where a 'pop-up' message automatically reminds the case workers that the Indigenous status is currently not known and that they ought to update this information in the database.

The current counting rules require jurisdictions to allocate all children with not known/missing not stated Indigenous status to the non-Indigenous category. Therefore no information about the quality of the data is available nor the extent to which quality varies across jurisdictions. However, in 2001–02, data for each state and territory on the number of children and young people with not known/missing/not stated Indigenous status were collected nationally for the first time. The information was not disaggregated by age, sex or other characteristics. As these data were collected for the first time in 2001–02, there are no time series data on not known/missing/not stated data for Indigenous status, although this information will now be collected annually.

The data on Indigenous status for notifications are likely to be the least reliable as the information on a child may come from third parties who do not know the child or family well. A significant number of notifications are not subject to an investigation and in these cases there is no way of verifying the information provided. The data on investigations and substantiations are likely to be more reliable as departments will have face-to-face contact with children in these cases and will have obtained more detailed information about a child and their circumstances. The data for children on care and protection orders and children in out-of-home care are likely to be the most reliable as there is significant intervention by the department for children receiving these services.

The nature of child protection services, which are fairly intrusive interventions into family life and in which many families are not involved voluntarily, means that there are particular issues in relation to the identification of the Indigenous status of children and young people. In some situations workers may not feel that it is appropriate to ask about a child or young person's Indigenous status. This could include situations where parents are not happy about their involvement with the child protection system. Parents may also be reluctant to identify as Indigenous in certain situations, particularly given the long and fraught relationship between Indigenous people and child welfare services. These factors are likely to impact on both the validity and the reliability of the data on Indigenous status.

Child protection also has the added complication of dealing with very young children. It is not clear at what age a child is considered old enough to be asked to self-identify. It is also not clear how to record the status when the views of the parents conflict – one parent identifies the child as Indigenous while the other does not.

Analyses

Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations

Table 5.1 shows the number and proportion of notifications, investigations and substantiations where Indigenous status was not known/missing/not stated. The totals for Australia show that the proportion of not known/missing/not stated decreased from 13% at the point of notification, to 12% at the point of investigation and 7% at substantiations. There were, however, marked variations by jurisdiction.

In Victoria and the Northern Territory there were no notifications, investigations or substantiations recorded where the Indigenous status of the child was not known/missing/not stated. In Victoria, the Indigenous status of children in the child protection system must be coded as either Indigenous or non-Indigenous. There are no provisions for recording not known/missing/not stated Indigenous status.

In other jurisdictions, the proportion of notifications, investigations or substantiations when Indigenous status was recorded as not known/missing/not stated varied. In relation to notification the proportion ranged from 9% in South Australia to 95% in Tasmania; for investigations the range was 8% in South Australia to 94% in Tasmania; and for substantiations, the range was 3.3% in New South Wales to 95% in Tasmania. The proportion of not known/missing/not stated was relatively low at each stage of the child protection process for Queensland, from notification, through investigation to substantiation.

Table 5.1: Notifications, investigations and substantiations, by Indigenous status by state and territory 2001-02

Indigenous status	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Notifications									
Number									
Indigenous children	6,421	2,134	2,527	946	1,926	6	58	795	14,813
Other children	36,126	35,842	21,567	1,726	8,291	21	299	810	104,682
Not known/missing/ not stated	12,661	..	3,498	373	986	520	444	—	18,482
Total	55,208	37,976	27,592	3,045	11,203	547	801	1,605	137,977
Per cent									
Indigenous children	11.6	5.6	9.2	31.1	17.2	1.1	7.2	49.5	10.7
Other children	65.4	94.4	78.2	56.7	74.0	3.8	37.3	50.5	75.9
Not known/missing/ not stated	22.9	..	12.7	12.2	8.8	95.1	55.4	—	13.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100
Investigations									
Number									
Indigenous children	4,442	1,052	2,180	913	1,069	7	50	479	10,192
Other children	24,297	12,159	17,965	1,671	4,098	23	251	356	60,820
Not known/missing/ not stated	4,879	..	2,889	353	466	499	349	—	9,435
Total	33,618	13,211	23,034	2,937	5,633	529	650	835	80,447
Per cent									
Indigenous children	13.2	8.0	9.5	31.1	19.0	1.3	7.7	57.4	12.7
Other children	72.3	92.0	78.0	56.9	72.7	4.3	38.6	42.6	75.6
Not known/missing/ not stated	14.5	..	12.5	12.0	8.3	94.3	53.7	—	11.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100.0
Substantiations									
Number									
Indigenous children	1,101	630	1,206	426	483	2	11	236	4,095
Other children	7,224	7,057	7,546	646	1,568	8	102	113	24,260
Not known/missing/ not stated	281	..	1,284	115	179	172	107	—	2,142
Total	8,606	7,687	10,036	1,187	2,230	182	220	349	30,497
Per cent									
Indigenous children	12.8	8.2	12.0	35.9	21.7	1.1	5.0	67.6	13.4
Other children	83.9	91.8	75.2	54.4	70.3	4.4	46.4	32.4	75.9
Not known/missing/ not stated	3.3	..	12.8	9.7	8.0	94.5	48.6	—	7.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

Children on care and protection orders

In the data collection for children on care and protection orders there was only one jurisdiction with no not known/missing/not stated records for Indigenous status – the Northern Territory. Across other jurisdictions, the proportion of not known/missing/not stated records was 3% in New South Wales and Queensland, 10% in South Australia and 49% in Tasmania. In Tasmania the proportion of not known/missing/not stated records for care and protection orders (49%) was markedly lower than for substantiations (95%).

Table 5.2: Not known/missing/not stated counts for children on care and protection orders, at 30 June 2002

Indigenous status	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
	Number								
Indigenous children	1,992	510	880	469	233	29	32	126	4,265
Other children	6,000	4,463	2,762	914	926	208	161	68	15,734
Not known/missing/ not stated	237	2	123	1	127	227	68	—	558
Total	8,229	4,975	3,765	1,384	1,286	464	261	194	20,557
	Per cent								
Indigenous children	24.2	10.3	23.4	33.9	18.1	6.3	12.3	64.9	20.7
Other children	72.9	89.7	73.4	66.0	72.0	44.8	61.7	35.1	76.5
Not known/missing/ not stated	2.9	—	3.3	0.1	9.9	48.9	26.1	—	2.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

Children in out-of-home care

Table 5.3 shows the number of children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2002. The proportion of children with not known/missing/not stated Indigenous status in each jurisdiction was similar to the proportions on care and protection orders. Proportions ranged from 2% of children in Victoria to 45% of children in Tasmania (although this State has a relatively low number of children in out-of-home care). In Western Australia, each child in care with a not known/missing/not stated Indigenous status is followed up to ascertain Indigenous status. This allows the calculation of the number of Indigenous children placed according to the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, required for the annual report for the Western Australian Department of Community Development.

Table 5.3: Not known/missing/not stated counts for children in out-of-home care, at 30 June 2002

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total ^(a)
Number									
Indigenous	2,098	489	708	511	232	22	27	105	4,192
Non-Indigenous	5,687	3,354	2,429	983	851	191	135	n.a.	13,630
Not known/missing/ not stated	299	75	120	—	113	172	62	n.a.	841
Total	8,084	3,918	3,257	1,494	1,196	385	224	163	18,721
Per cent									
Indigenous	26.0	12.5	21.7	31.8	19.4	5.7	12.1	64.4	22.4
Non-Indigenous	70.3	85.6	74.6	68.2	71.2	49.6	60.3	n.a.	72.8
Not known/missing/ not stated	3.7	1.9	3.7	—	9.4	44.7	27.7	n.a.	4.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Total percentages do not include the Northern Territory.

Key findings

- Data on the number of children and young people with not known/missing/not stated Indigenous status were first collected in 2001–02. Therefore there are no time series data of this kind for Indigenous status; however these data will now be collected annually.
- The proportion of not known/missing/not stated records decreased from 13% at the point of notification, to 12% at the point of investigation and 7% at substantiations. There were, however, marked variations by jurisdiction, due to differences in practices adopted to identify and record Indigenous status (Table 5.1).
- In Tasmania the proportion of not known/missing/or not stated was higher than other jurisdictions. However, this is probably more a reflection of recording practices than case workers' knowledge of the child's Indigenous status.
- In the data collection for children on care and protection orders there were three jurisdictions with virtually no not known/missing/not stated records for Indigenous status (Table 5.2).
- When providing data for the National Child Protection Data Collection to the AIHW, jurisdictions allocate all children with not known/missing/not stated Indigenous status to the non-Indigenous category, as instructed in the counting rules.

Issues for follow-up

- To reduce variations across jurisdictions it is recommended that child protection workers be encouraged to ask the standard ABS question of clients about Indigenous status. For this to be done effectively staff would need to be supported and trained appropriately.
- Indigenous status should ideally not be recorded at the notification stage of a child protection matter. The quality of the data is questionable, as many notifications are from third parties who do not know the child or family well.

- Indigenous status should be reviewed by the case workers at the substantiation stage of a child protection matter. One way to do this is to use pop-up screens on the computerised records to automatically prompt staff to check the accuracy of the Indigenous status.

6 Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set

Introduction

The Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set (AODTS–NMDS) has been implemented to assist in monitoring and evaluating key objectives of the National Drug Strategic Framework and to assist in the planning, management and quality improvement of alcohol and other drug treatment services. In general, it aims to provide ongoing information on the demographics of clients who use these services, the treatment they receive and administrative information about the agencies that provide alcohol and other drug treatment services. Although the NMDS aims to provide a measure of service utilisation, it was not designed to calculate trends in alcohol and other drug use or to monitor general patterns of drug problems in Australia. Nevertheless, the information collected by the AODTS–NMDS will play a role in monitoring patterns of drug problems in Australia.

The AODTS–NMDS is a subset of alcohol and other drug treatment services information that is routinely collected by states and territories to monitor treatment services within their jurisdiction. The information collected by the AODTS–NMDS is a nationally agreed set of common data items collected by service providers for clients registered for treatment. The AIHW has the role of data custodian for the national minimum data set. The Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs (IGCD) NMDS Working Group is responsible for the development and implementation of the national collection. Members of the working group include representatives from the Commonwealth and each state and territory as well as other organisations such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC).

The AODTS–NMDS for 2000–01 consists of de-identified unit record data for both clients and treatment agencies. The client-level records consist of 14 data items and the agency-level records consist of 3 data items. The client-level data items are intended to collect demographic information and information about the client's drug use behaviour.

Scope

The following agencies and clients are within scope for the collection:

- All publicly funded (at state and/or Commonwealth level) government and non-government agencies that provide one or more specialist alcohol and/or other drug treatment services, including residential and non-residential agencies. Specialist alcohol and drug units based in acute care hospitals or psychiatric hospitals were included if they provided treatment to non-admitted patients (e.g. outpatient services).
- All clients assessed and accepted for one or more types of treatment from an alcohol and other drug treatment service within scope during the relevant reporting period (1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001).

The following agencies and clients are excluded from the collection:

- Agencies for which the primary function is to provide accommodation or overnight stays such as 'halfway houses' and 'sobering-up shelters'.
- Agencies for which the primary function is to provide services concerned with health promotion (e.g. needle and syringe exchange programs).
- Treatment services based in prison or other correctional institutions.
- Clients receiving treatment from services based in prison or other correctional institutions.
- Agencies whose sole activity is to prescribe and/or dose for methadone maintenance treatment.
- Clients who were on a methadone maintenance program and who were not receiving any other form of treatment. It should be noted that methadone maintenance data are featured in this chapter and this additional information should be taken into account when any attempt is made to estimate the total number of clients receiving treatment from all publicly funded alcohol and other drug treatment services.
- Alcohol and drug treatment units in acute care or psychiatric hospitals that only provide treatment to admitted patients.
- Admitted patients in acute care or psychiatric hospitals.
- People who sought advice or information but were not formally assessed and accepted for treatment.
- Private treatment agencies that do not receive public funding.

Data quality

There were difficulties in aggregating data from highly diverse state/territory data collection systems. The national collection is a compilation of agency administrative data from state and territory health authority systems. There is a large degree of diversity in the data collection systems and practices that are in place within the alcohol and other drug treatment sector across Australian jurisdictions. The following notes should be used to guide interpretation of the data:

- New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory had already implemented systems designed to collect treatment episode data (which is what will be reported in the AODTS-NMDS from 2001-02) before the first collection period had finished. Therefore, these jurisdictions provided AIHW with treatment episode rather than client registration data. Treatment episode data are based on completed episodes (i.e. a period of contact between a client and a treatment provider with defined dates of commencement and cessation), therefore while AIHW was able to transform episode data into client registration data, clients with open records were not included. As a result, data from these jurisdictions are likely to be an under-count of the actual client numbers.
- Although the *National Health Data Dictionary* definitions provide the basic standards of the data set, there is some variation in the actual data definitions used by data providers within a few jurisdictions. Where possible, the AIHW has performed data mapping to align information to the equivalent national standard.

For the data in scope the following caveats must be observed:

- These figures do not include data from Queensland Health.
- These figures do not include the majority of Commonwealth-funded Indigenous substance use services or a number of Aboriginal primary health care services that also provide treatment for alcohol and other drug problems. These services are generally not under the jurisdiction of the state or territory health authority and the Commonwealth currently only reports NMDS data from one specific program. In addition, both of these services have a different collection basis to the NMDS. As a result, most of these data are not currently included in the AODTS-NMDS collection. Therefore the number of Indigenous clients in this report will under-represent the total number of Indigenous Australians that received treatment for alcohol and other drug problems during 2000–01.
- These figures do not include all of the services provided under the National Illicit Drug Strategy Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Program (NGOTGP). The respective state or territory where the service is located reports many of those services, however some are reported by the Commonwealth. Not all of those agencies under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth were able to supply data for this report (21 of the 33 services supplied data). It is anticipated that all services will be reported on in future collections. Those reported by the Commonwealth are included in the total in the jurisdiction-based tables.
- On their own, these figures do not provide measures of the incidence or prevalence of alcohol or other drug abuse or dependence in the community. This is because not all persons who abuse or become addicted to alcohol or other drugs seek treatment for their condition, or seek treatment from a publicly funded service.

Interpretation of data

The following counting rule has been used for the data included in the report:

A 'client registration' occurred when a person commenced treatment for an alcohol or other drug problem within the period of 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001.

A person was identified as commencing treatment if:

- they were a new client (i.e. seeking treatment from the agency for the first time);
- they were a previous client who was re-registering for treatment because they had had no contact with the service for a period of 3 months or more and no plan in place for further contact (i.e. there had been an extended break since the client had last sought treatment from the agency); or
- they were a current client whose principal drug of concern had changed (i.e. the main drug problem for which they were seeking treatment had changed).

Although there has been national agreement on the definitions and standards for the data items that comprise the AODTS-NMDS, this does not ensure that there is perfect comparability of the data across states and territories, nor across agencies within states and territories.

Analyses

Age and sex

Of all clients of alcohol and other drug treatment services, 8.5% had a missing/not stated Indigenous status (Table 6.1). Female clients (9%) were more likely than male clients (8%) to have a missing/not stated Indigenous status.

Clients who did not state their sex had the highest rates of missing/not stated Indigenous status (12.5%), particularly those in the 40–49 and 50–59 age groups (18% and 20% respectively).

Clients aged 40 years or more had slightly higher rates of missing/not stated Indigenous status than those aged under 40 years. For example, one in ten clients in the 40–49 age group had a missing/not stated Indigenous status.

Table 6.1: Proportion of clients with a missing/not stated Indigenous identifier^(a) by age and sex, Australia^(b), 2000–01

Age group (years)	Males	Females	Unknown sex	Total
	Per cent			
10–19	6.8	6.6	11.2	6.8
20–29	7.7	8.4	12.3	8.0
30–39	8.2	10.1	12.3	8.9
40–49	9.2	10.8	17.9	9.9
50–59	8.9	9.5	20.0	9.2
60+	9.6	8.5	0.0	9.2
Unknown age	7.8	12.5	0.0	9.8
Total (%)	8.0	9.1	12.5	8.5
Total (no.)	53,057	29,445	1,027	83,529

(a) Proportion of all clients of each age and sex who have a missing/not stated Indigenous identifier.

(b) Excludes Queensland.

Age and sex profiles

Analysis was carried out to examine if the sex distribution (Table 6.2) and age distribution (Table 6.3) amongst the missing/not stated records was similar to that of the Indigenous or the non-Indigenous clients. There was a much higher proportion of males in both the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous clients (63.2 and 63.9% respectively), with a similar sex profile for the records with a missing/not stated Indigenous identifier (60.3%) (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Number and proportion of clients by Indigenous status by sex, Australia^(a), 2000–01

Indigenous status	Males	Females	Unknown	Persons^(c)
		Number		
Indigenous	4,152	2,368	51	6,571
Non-Indigenous	44,649	24,399	848	69,896
Missing/not stated	4,256	2,678	128	7,062
Total	53,057	29,445	1027	83,529
		Per cent		
Indigenous	63.2	36.0	0.8	100.0
Non-Indigenous	63.9	34.9	1.2	100.0
Missing/not stated	60.3	37.9	1.8	100.0
Total	63.5	35.3	1.2	100.0

(a) Excludes Queensland.

(b) Includes instances where sex was not stated.

Of all clients with a missing Indigenous identifier, the highest proportions were in the 20–29 age group (34%) and the 30–39 age group (27%) (Table 6.3). This was also true for both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients.

However, below age 20 and from age 40 onwards the age profile of the clients with a missing Indigenous identifier had greater similarities to the age profile of non-Indigenous clients than that of Indigenous clients.

Table 6.3: Number and proportion of clients by Indigenous status by age, Australia^(a), 2000–01

Age group (years)	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Missing/not stated	Total
Number				
10–19	1,185	9,854	802	11,841
20–29	2,341	25,393	2,413	30,147
30–39	1,943	17,619	1,913	21,475
40–49	716	10,274	1,203	12,193
50–59	223	4,361	464	5,048
60+	40	1,379	143	1,562
Unknown age	123	1,016	124	1,263
Total	6,571	69,896	7,062	83,529
Per cent				
10–19	18.0	14.1	11.4	14.2
20–29	35.6	36.3	34.2	36.1
30–39	29.6	25.2	27.1	25.7
40–49	10.9	14.7	17.0	14.6
50–59	3.4	6.2	6.6	6.0
60+	0.6	2.0	2.0	1.9
Unknown age	1.9	1.5	1.8	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Excludes Queensland.

State and territory

South Australia had the highest proportions of clients with a missing/not stated Indigenous status (31%) and the Australian Capital Territory the lowest (0.5%) (Table 6.4).

There did not appear to be an association at the jurisdiction level between the proportion of Indigenous clients and the proportion of missing/not stated Indigenous status.

Table 6.4: Number and proportion of clients by Indigenous status by state and territory^(a), 2000–01

Indigenous status	NSW	Vic	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total ^(b)
Number								
Indigenous	1,725	1,325	1,479	397	92	116	1,099	6,571
Non-Indigenous	23,980	25,518	9,677	4,125	1,165	2,599	1,354	69,896
Missing/not stated	1,689	2,044	953	2,034	129	15	111	7,062
Total	27,394	28,887	12,113	6,556	1,400	2,743	2,564	83,529
Per cent								
Indigenous	6.3	4.6	12.2	6.1	6.6	4.2	42.9	7.9
Non-Indigenous	87.5	88.3	79.9	62.9	83.2	94.8	52.8	83.7
Missing/not stated	6.2	7.1	7.9	31.0	9.2	0.5	4.3	8.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Excludes Queensland.

(b) Includes other NGOTGP services not currently reported through a specific state or territory collection.

Principal drug of concern

The highest proportion of missing/not stated Indigenous status was found amongst those clients who did not provide information on their principal drug of concern (19.2%) (Table 6.5).

Of those who did report their principal drug of concern, clients who reported 'balance of analgesics' or 'balance of drugs of concern' as their principal drug of concern were most likely to have a missing/not stated Indigenous status (16.6% and 16.5% respectively). The next highest proportion was for clients who reported methadone as their principal drug of concern (12.9%).

The groupings 'balance of analgesics' and 'balance of drugs of concern' are groupings from the Australian Standard Classification of Drugs of Concern 1248.0 (ABS 2000). In the grouping 'balance of analgesics', the majority of clients with missing/not stated Indigenous status reported code 1000, 'Analgesics, not further defined (nfd)' as their principal drug of concern. In the grouping 'balance of drugs of concern', the majority of clients with missing/not stated Indigenous status reported code 9999, 'Other drugs of concern'.

While those clients reporting alcohol or heroin as their principal drug of concern did not, comparatively, have a high proportion of missing/not stated Indigenous status, they did by far constitute the biggest group of clients, at 1,901 and 1,455 records with missing/not stated Indigenous status respectively.

Table 6.5: Number and proportion of substance users^(a) by selected principal drug of concern by Indigenous status, Australia^(b), 2000–01

Principal drug of concern	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Missing/not stated	Total
Number				
Heroin	1,177	19,249	1,455	21,881
Methadone	73	1,102	174	1,349
Balance of analgesics ^(c)	126	2,831	587	3,544
Alcohol	3,020	20,968	1,901	25,889
Benzodiazepines	64	1,444	127	1,635
Amphetamines	476	5,859	644	6,979
Cannabinoids	865	9,137	796	10,798
Ecstasy	5	129	5	139
Cocaine	11	259	21	291
Nicotine	50	655	48	753
Balance of drugs of concern ^(c)	346	1,885	440	2,671
Not stated	37	824	204	1,065
Total	6,250	64,342	6,402	76,994
Per cent				
Heroin	5.4	88.0	6.6	100.0
Methadone	5.4	81.7	12.9	100.0
Balance of analgesics ^(c)	3.6	79.9	16.6	100.0
Alcohol	11.7	81.0	7.3	100.0
Benzodiazepines	3.9	88.3	7.8	100.0
Amphetamines	6.8	84.0	9.2	100.0
Cannabinoids	8.0	84.6	7.4	100.0
Ecstasy	3.6	92.8	3.6	100.0
Cocaine	3.8	89.0	7.2	100.0
Nicotine	6.6	87.0	6.4	100.0
Balance of drugs of concern ^(c)	13.0	70.6	16.5	100.0
Not stated	3.5	77.4	19.2	100.0
Total	8.1	83.6	8.3	100.0

(a) Substance user population comprises all client registrations excluding clients seeking treatment for the drug use of others.

(b) Excludes Queensland.

(c) Balance of drugs of concern coded to Australian Standard Classification of Drugs of Concern.

Client type

In general, where a client did not provide information on a particular question such as age, sex or client type etc., they were also less likely to provide information on their Indigenous status. As a result, proportions of missing/not stated Indigenous status were usually highest for this group.

Clients who were seeking treatment for the drug use of others, or both their own and others' drug use, had higher proportions of missing/not stated Indigenous status (10% and 11% respectively) than those seeking treatment for their own drug use (8%) (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6: Number and proportion of clients by client type by Indigenous status, Australia^(a), 2000-01

Client type	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Missing/not stated	Total
Number				
Own drug use	5,911	61,388	5,958	73,257
Other's drug use	321	5,554	660	6,535
Own and other's drug use	144	312	56	512
Not stated	195	2,642	388	3,225
Total	6,571	69,896	7,062	83,529
Per cent				
Own drug use	8.1	83.8	8.1	100.0
Other's drug use	4.9	85.0	10.1	100.0
Own and other's drug use	28.1	60.9	10.9	100.0
Not stated	6.0	81.9	12.0	100.0
Total	7.9	83.7	8.5	100.0

(a) Excludes Queensland.

Proportion of clients who identified as Indigenous

Within agencies, the higher the proportion of clients who were reported as Indigenous, the lower the proportion with a missing/not stated Indigenous status. For example, in agencies where more than half their clients were reported as Indigenous, overall 91% of clients were reported as Indigenous and less than 1% had a missing Indigenous status. Conversely, in agencies where less than 1% of their clients were reported as Indigenous, 0.3% of clients were reported as Indigenous and 15% had a missing Indigenous status (Table 6.7).

It should be noted that the percentage of clients who identified as Indigenous 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 this particular analysis.

Table 6.7: Number and proportion of clients by Indigenous status by agencies' proportion of known Indigenous status, Australia^(a), 2000–01

Indigenous status	Proportion of agencies' clients who identified as Indigenous				
	<1% ^(b)	1–9%	10–24%	25–49%	>50%
	Number				
Indigenous	29	2,511	1,446	955	1,630
Non-Indigenous	7,668	52,092	8,435	1,560	141
Missing/not stated	1,322	4,967	662	96	15
Total	9,019	59,570	10,543	2,611	1,786
	Per cent				
Indigenous	0.3	4.2	13.7	36.6	91.3
Non-Indigenous	85.0	87.4	80.0	59.7	7.9
Missing/not stated	14.7	8.3	6.3	3.7	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Excludes Queensland.

(b) Includes three agencies which did not report Indigenous status for any of their clients.

Indigenous identification: two areas of concern

The AODTS–NMDS is a relatively new data set that commenced on 1 July 2000, with data from this 2000–01 period published in November 2002. The collection is still undergoing improvements to data procedures and data quality. There are two main areas in relation to Indigenous data that need addressing: the quality of responses to the Indigenous status question; and the comprehensiveness of data on Indigenous people who receive treatment for an alcohol or other drug use problem.

In relation to the first area, jurisdictions have received feedback on the level of 'not stated' responses to the Indigenous status data item and they are taking steps to increase the level of Indigenous identification where necessary. South Australia, for instance, is taking steps to

decrease the rate of missing/not stated responses for 2001–02 including training agency staff on the necessity of asking the question and suggesting sensitive ways of doing it.

For the second area, additional sources of data on Indigenous clients who receive treatment for an alcohol or other drug use problem have been identified (see p. 69). A recent strategic planning workshop convened by the Department of Health and Ageing considered these additional sources of data and their relationship to the scope and data definitions of the AODTS NMDS. A report from that workshop is in preparation, for consideration by the Inter-Governmental Committee on Drugs.

With efforts being undertaken in both of these areas it is expected that, over time, the quality and coverage of data on Indigenous people accessing treatment services for an alcohol or other drug use problem will improve.

Key findings

- Of all clients of alcohol and other drug treatment services, 8.5% had a missing/not stated Indigenous status (Table 6.1).
- In general, where a client did not provide information on a particular question such as age, sex or client type, they were also less likely to provide information on their Indigenous status.
- Of all clients with a missing Indigenous identifier, the majority were aged 20–29 (34%) and 30–39 (27%) (Table 6.3). This was also true for both the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous clients. However, below age 20 and from age 40 onwards the age profile of the clients with a missing Indigenous identifier had greater similarities to the age profile of non-Indigenous clients than that of Indigenous clients (Table 6.3).
- Clients who were seeking treatment for the drug use of others, or both their own and others' drug use, had higher proportions of missing/not stated Indigenous status than those seeking treatment for their own drug use (Table 6.6).
- Within agencies, the higher the proportion of clients who were reported as Indigenous, the lower the proportion with a missing/not stated Indigenous status (Table 6.7).

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.
- Agencies with a low proportion of clients who identified as Indigenous were more likely to report missing/not stated Indigenous status. It is expected that the efforts made by the jurisdictions to encourage service providers to ask the standard ABS question on Indigenous status will result in an increase in the level of Indigenous identification.
- Some agencies had higher rates of missing/not stated Indigenous status than others. Follow-up work is being undertaken to alert those agencies so that they can then explore ways to increase the level of Indigenous identification in their agency.

- It is suggested that, when available, the rate of missing/not stated records in the 2001-02 data set be examined and compared with the data in this report, to ascertain whether the rate has decreased.

Appendix A

This appendix contains the *National Community Services Data Dictionary* (NCSDD) Version 3 metadata definition for Indigenous status. This is the national standard for the storage and transmission/reporting of Indigenous data, and it includes the recommended question for the collection of Indigenous status.

Indigenous status

Identifying and definitional attributes

Knowledgebase ID: 2009

Version No: 5

Metadata type: Data Element

Definition: Indigenous status is a measure of whether a person identifies as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. This is in accord with the first two of three components of the Commonwealth definition. See Comments for the Commonwealth definition.

Context: Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples occupy a unique place in Australian society and culture. In the current climate of reconciliation, accurate and consistent statistics about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are needed in order to plan, promote and deliver essential services, to monitor changes in wellbeing and to account for government expenditure in this area. The purpose of this data element is to provide information about people who identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. Agencies or establishments wishing to determine the eligibility of individuals for particular benefits, services or rights will need to make their own judgements about the suitability of the standard measure for these purposes, having regard to the specific eligibility criteria for the program concerned.

Representational attributes

Datatype: Numeric

Representational form: Code *Field size (minimum):* 1

Representational layout: N *Field size (maximum):* 1

Data domain:

1	Aboriginal but not Torres Strait Islander origin
2	Torres Strait Islander but not Aboriginal origin
3	Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin
4	Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander origin
9	Not stated/inadequately described

Guide for use: This data element is based on the ABS Standard for Indigenous status. For detailed advice on its use and application please refer to the ABS website as indicated below under source document.

The classification for 'Indigenous Status' has a hierarchical structure comprising two levels. There are four categories at the detailed level of the classification which are grouped into two categories at the broad level. There is one supplementary category for 'not stated' responses. The classification is as follows:

Indigenous:

- Aboriginal but not Torres Strait Islander origin
- Torres Strait Islander but not Aboriginal origin
- Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin

Non-Indigenous:

- Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander origin

Not stated/ inadequately described:

This category is not to be available as a valid answer to the questions but is intended for use:

- primarily when importing data from other data collections that do not contain mappable data;
- where an answer was refused;
- where the question was not able to be asked prior to completion of assistance because the client was unable to communicate or a person who knows the client was not available.

Only in the last two situations may the tick boxes on the questionnaire be left blank.

Verification rules:

Collection methods:

The standard question 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.....

This question is recommended for self-enumerated or interview-based collections. It can also be used in circumstances where a close relative, friend, or another member of the household is answering on behalf of the subject.

When someone is not present, the person answering for them should be in a position to do so, i.e. this person must know the person about whom the question is being asked well and feel confident to provide accurate information about them. However, it is strongly recommended that this question be asked directly wherever possible.

This question must always be asked regardless of data collectors' perceptions based on appearance or other factors.

The Indigenous status question allows for more than one response. The procedure for coding multiple responses is as follows:

If the respondent marks 'No' and either 'Aboriginal' or 'Torres Strait Islander', then the response should be coded to either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander as indicated (i.e. disregard the 'No' response).

If the respondent marks both the 'Aboriginal' and 'Torres Strait Islander' boxes, then their response should be coded to 'Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin'.

If the respondent marks all three boxes ('No', 'Aboriginal and 'Torres Strait Islander'), then the response should be coded to 'Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin' (i.e. disregard the 'No' response).

This approach may be problematical in some data collections, for example when data are collected by interview or using screen-based data capture systems. An additional response category

Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.....

may be included if this better suits the data collection practices of the agency or establishment concerned.

Relational attributes

Related metadata:

NCSDD and NHDD:

NCSDD: supersedes the data element Indigenous status version 2

NHDD: supersedes the data element Indigenous status version 4

Information Model link:

NCSIM: Party characteristic/Person characteristic/socio-cultural characteristic

NHIM: Party characteristic/Person characteristic/social characteristic

Administrative attributes

Registration authority: National Community Services Information Management Group and National Health Information Management Group

Admin. status: Current **Effective date:** Date of reg. auth. endorsement

Source document: Available on the ABS website. From the ABS site (www.abs.gov.au) select: About Statistics/About Statistical Collections (Concepts & Classifications) /Other ABS Statistical Standards/Standards for Social Labour and Demographic Variables/Cultural Diversity Variables/Indigenous Status.

Source organisation: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Comments: This metadata item is common to both the *National Community Services Data Dictionary* and the *National Health Data Dictionary*.

The following definition, commonly known as 'The Commonwealth Definition' was given in a High Court judgement in the case of *Commonwealth v Tasmania* (1983) 46 ALR 625.

'An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives'.

There are three components to the Commonwealth definition:

- descent;
- self-identification; and
- community acceptance.

In practice, it is not feasible to collect information on the community acceptance part of this definition in general purpose statistical and administrative collections and therefore standard questions on Indigenous Status relate to descent and self-identification only.

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