

Queensland

Closing the Gap

Snapshot Report 2023 Edition





Acknowledgement

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestors of this land, their spirits and their legacy. The foundations laid by these ancestors—our First Australians—give strength, inspiration and courage to current and future generations, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, towards creating a better Queensland.

We recognise it is our collective efforts and responsibility as individuals, communities and governments to ensure equality, recognition and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders across all aspects of society and everyday life.

On behalf of the Queensland Government, we offer a genuine commitment to fearlessly represent, advocate for and promote the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders with unwavering determination, passion and persistence.

As we reflect on the past and give hope for the future, we walk together on our shared journey to reconciliation where all Queenslanders are equal.



Statement on use of terms

We recognise that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples each have their own unique languages, beliefs, cultural practices, traditions and diversity within each culture.

This document includes a range of collective terms to reference and reflect the unique identity of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The primary term that has been used is Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with other terms used including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and First Nations people/s.

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1. Purpose of this report

It is essential that we track progress, identify and build on strengths and successes, and inform areas of focus to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Introduction

Taking effect on 27 July 2020, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) is the first of its kind to be developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, represented by the national Coalition of Peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations (Coalition of Peaks). The objective of this partnership approach to Closing the Gap is to improve the life outcomes and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The National Agreement includes four Priority Reforms designed to change the way governments work and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve progress in the 17 socio-economic Outcome areas, covering 19 Targets. The Priority Reforms are:

- establish and strengthen formal partnerships and shared decision-making;
- build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector;
- transform government organisations so they are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- and improve and share access to data and information to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make informed decisions.

The Targets have embraced an ambitious agenda, along with a strengths-based approach, and most are set to be achieved by 2031. They cover a range of areas including: health; education; early childhood; justice; child protection; employment; housing; language; culture; digital inclusion; and land and waters.

Queensland's 2022 Closing the Gap Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan), available at www.qld.gov.au/ctg, documents how the Queensland Government is working to address the Priority Reforms and socio-economic Targets, and how our progress will be evaluated. This plan will be updated in 2023 including key input from the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coalition (QATSIC), which has been established as a key partner in progressing Closing the Gap agenda in Queensland. Work is also occurring with QATSIC on refreshed governance arrangements for Closing the Gap that embed shared decision making and enhance accountability for progress.

The Implementation Plan documents the ongoing significant, structural reforms that underpin how we share decision-making with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Significant national and state reforms are being implemented to reframe the relationship with First Nations peoples; close the gap in socio-economic outcomes; and recognise and share decision-making authority. These historic reform agendas are reshaping Australia as a nation.

The Australian Government has committed to improving the lives of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through two complementary reform agendas through the Uluru Statement (strategic reforms) and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (service delivery reforms). The Queensland Parliament passed a motion on 29 November 2022 supporting the implementation of the Uluru Statement.

In 2019, the Queensland Government committed to reframe the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by recognising historical injustices, the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the need for self-determination.

The *Statement of Commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government* (Statement of Commitment) articulates the future direction and underlying principles for Queensland centred on truth-telling, self-determination and empowerment. This aligns to the four Priority Reforms that underpin how we are seeking to give effect to the Closing the Gap Agreement and its targets. The key strategic reforms that set the structural change foundations include:

Voice

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard and can influence decision-making on the issues that matter to First Nations people. A First Nations Consultative

Committee was established in July 2022 to provide advice on an Indigenous Voice model for Queensland that reflects First Nations Queenslanders' views and aspirations, and Queensland's current reform context.

Co-design work has included investigating options for the establishment of a state-wide representative body and how this could link with local and regional voices provided through existing Queensland reforms; including Local Thriving Communities, Path to Treaty and Closing the Gap; and Investigating options for how Queensland's Voice could link to the National Voice. The Committee met regularly and liaised with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, and key stakeholders throughout this process. The Committee provided its report to the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts in August 2023.

Path to Treaty

The Path to Treaty began in 2019 with the release of the Statement of Commitment to reframe the relationship between the Queensland Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Following this, an Eminent Panel was appointed to start the treaty conversation with the support of a Treaty Working Group, which led public consultations across the state on what a Treaty or treaties might mean to Queenslanders.

In 2021, the Treaty Advancement Committee came together to build on the work of the Eminent Panel and the Treaty Working Group and to provide recommendations to the Queensland Government on the next steps along the Path to Treaty.

In August 2022, the Queensland Government released its response to the Treaty Advancement Committee Report and the Premier announced the next steps, which included the commitment to establish the key Path to Treaty structures in legislation.

In May 2023, the *Path to Treaty Act 2023* was passed in Queensland Parliament. The legislation was co-designed with the Interim Truth and Treaty Body and provides for:

- a Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry — which will hear from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and non-Indigenous Queenslanders, and chronicle the experiences and impacts of colonisation; and
- a First Nations Treaty Institute — an independent statutory body that will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to prepare for treaty making and co-develop a Treaty Making Framework with the Queensland Government.

Treaty and truth-telling are both essential elements to ensuring healing and reconciliation. Progressing the Path to Treaty in Queensland is an opportunity to reconcile the past so that all Queenslanders can build a strong future together based on truth, respect and equity. Truth-telling is important as a critical step and a basis to increase cross-cultural understanding and address racism.

Working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop the Path to Treaty, with the ultimate aim to achieve a Treaty or treaties is consistent with the National Agreement's aims to achieve self-determination and improvements to the wellbeing and lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This co-design approach is consistent with the Government's commitment to the National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap, which commits to improve engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and build structures to empower First Nations people to share decision-making with governments.

Local Thriving Communities

The Local Thriving Communities (LTC) Action Plan 2022-2024 is the Queensland Government's commitment to structural, service delivery, and economic reform to facilitate government readiness to engage in local decision-making.

Under the National Agreement, the Queensland Government has committed to Priority Reform 1, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements. Engagement with the local First Nations communities and leaders is critical. Local Decision-Making Bodies (LDMBs) provide this formal supported mechanism for local leadership to be engaged during strategy and service design and delivery, including opportunities for shared decision-making on program delivery and funding.

As communities determine how LTC can best work for them, Queensland Government agencies are undertaking actions that will ensure effective engagement and support for the success of LDMBs in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This includes improving outcomes through the co-design and delivery of culturally safe, quality services that meet community needs and aspirations.

Public Sector Act 2022

The *Public Sector Act 2022* includes legislative requirements for public sector entities to reframe the relationship with First Nations peoples by delivering initiatives to strengthen cultural capability, foster a culturally capable workforce and ensure a culturally safe workplace. This includes recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first people of Queensland; engaging in truth-telling about the shared history of all Australians; recognising the right of First Nations peoples to self-determination; promoting a fair and inclusive public sector that supports a sense of dignity and belonging for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and ensuring the workforce and leadership is reflective of the community they serve. All public sector entities must release a Reframing the Relationship Plan and review it annually.

This report

This 2023 edition of the Snapshot Report examines baseline and historical data for each of the Targets, and measures progress against the baseline for Targets where data are available. The Queensland Government published a snapshot report in 2019, 2020 and 2022, but not in 2021 due to the transition from the previous National Indigenous Reform Agreement with 7 targets to the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap with 17 socio-economic outcomes and 17 targets.

This is the third year of the National Agreement. The agreed targets are National Targets, as are the published trajectories. Nevertheless, Queensland is committed to achieving the targets and annual reporting examines Queensland's progress against each target. As this is only the third year of the new agreement, Queensland's progress against some of the targets can only be examined from

a historical perspective. Progress against targets in 13 of the Outcome areas can be measured, as comparable data beyond the baseline is now available.

A key focus of the National Agreement is accountability and transparency. This snapshot fulfils Queensland's ongoing commitment to publish progress towards Closing the Gap, including information on supporting investment and actions. Also included in this snapshot is a short description of progress to date on efforts to implement the National Agreement's four Priority Reforms in Queensland.

Data used in this report

Much of the data used in this report is drawn from nationally collated datasets, including administrative data, the Census of Population and Housing, and national survey collections.

For each Target, a primary measure and data source have been agreed to nationally, from which the baseline data and Target are sourced.

The primary data for each state and territory, where available, is published on a national dashboard currently available at <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/dashboard>. The dashboard will be updated annually with the most recently available data and will be maintained for the life of the National Agreement, until 2031.

Assessments as to whether Targets are on track can only be made using the primary data source. Where the primary data is not available annually, supplementary data sources may be used as a proxy for the primary data source. This supplementary data cannot be used to measure progress against the Target.

For most Targets, numerous drivers of progress have also been nominated in the National Agreement. This data is used to provide contextual information and a broader examination of outcomes.

For each measure, the most recent available data at the time of publication — whether primary, supplementary, or contextual — have been reported. Administrative data is generally able to be reported annually, while Census data is collected every five years (with the latest available data being for 2021). Surveys may be collected at other intervals, for example, every three years. There will often be a time lag between finalisation of the collection and the release of data, and, in some cases, the lag will be 12 months or more. Where possible, the latest available data for 2021–22 has been reported, however some measures rely on data from earlier years for the reasons noted above.

As data release dates are specific to the dataset in question, and spread throughout the year it is likely that between collation and publication of this report new data may be published for some measures.

Lastly, estimates derived from data collected from sample surveys such as the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey is not directly comparable with estimates derived from data collected in the Census of Population and Housing, even where questions are similarly worded. This is due to their different collection methodologies.

Assessing progress

Where data allows, this report includes an assessment of whether progress towards the target is on track or not on track.

To assess progress consistently with the national approach, straight line trajectories have been drawn from the baseline estimate to the target.

As per the national approach, these trajectories represent hypothetical, straightforward improvement scenarios, which do not take into account variations in delivery and effectiveness of initiatives and programs, nor do they consider impacts of other external circumstances that may influence 'real' trajectories (e.g. COVID-19, natural disasters).

Each new progress estimate is compared to the corresponding straight-line trajectory estimate at the same time point. An assessment of whether the outcome is "on track" or "not on track" to meet the target is made by statistically comparing the observed estimate with its matching straight line trajectory estimate.

Where testing shows no statistical evidence of a difference between the observed estimate and the trajectory point, progress is assessed as "on track". There are two cases that may arise where testing shows statistical evidence of a difference between the observed estimate and the trajectory:

- if progress is lower than expected, then progress is considered "not on track"
- if progress is higher than expected, then progress is considered "on track".

These assessments are indicative only, as it is unlikely that real progress would follow a straight line.

COVID-19 pandemic

Please note that data included in this report may be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in several ways, including restrictions related to COVID-19.

Entry to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities ('designated areas') in Queensland was restricted under the *Commonwealth Biosecurity Act 2015* from 27 March 2020 until 12 June 2020. From 13 June to 10 July 2020, some entry requirements, quarantine requirements and travel restrictions remained in place under the Biosecurity Act.

Various levels of restrictions and border closures in response to COVID-19, for the broader community, were in place up until March 2023 when the vaccination requirements for international travellers from selected countries were lifted.

In addition, there may have been methodological or practical changes to the way data has been collected and processed. Data impacted by COVID-19 in this report may include any statistics incorporating the periods from 27 March 2020 to 30 June 2023.

The targets and Queensland's baseline

An explanation of how the assessment of whether a target is on track or not is made, can be found on page 5: Assessing Progress. Due to the nature of the comparative trajectories, these assessments are indicative only. Consideration should also be given to whether outcomes are improving, even where improvements do not follow the expected trajectory.

Baseline data and progress against target for Queensland ¹	
Outcome 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives.	NOT ON TRACK
Target 1: Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.	<i>Baseline: 2005–2007</i> <i>2015–2017:</i> <i>Male: 72.0 years</i> <i>(Gap: 7.8 years)</i> <i>Female: 76.4 years</i> <i>(Gap: 6.8 years)</i>
Outcome 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong.	ON TRACK
Target 2: Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent by 2031.	<i>Baseline: 89.1% in 2017</i> <i>89.4% in 2020</i>
Outcome 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years.	TARGET MET ²
Target 3: Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 per cent by 2025.	<i>Baseline: 82.2% in 2016</i> <i>95.2% in 2022</i> <i>Not significantly different from Target</i>

¹ At the time of the report's compilation, there is no additional data beyond the baseline for Targets 13, 14, 16 and 17.

² The percentage cited for Target 3 currently uses 2016 Census based Indigenous population estimates. The 2021 Census showed higher than expected growth rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons. Revised 2021 Census based population estimates will be published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2024 and will include revised estimates for the years 2011 onwards, in addition to projections out to 2036. It is anticipated that the preschool participation rates will decrease once these new population estimates are applied.

Baseline data and progress against target for Queensland¹	
Outcome 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years.	<i>NOT ON TRACK</i>
Target 4: Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent by 2031.	<i>Baseline: 33.5% in 2018 33.8% in 2021</i>
Outcome 5: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential.	<i>NOT ON TRACK</i>
Target 5: Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20–24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent by 2031.	<i>Baseline: 69.5% in 2016 Improvement to 75.0% in 2021</i>
Outcome 6: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways.	<i>NOT ON TRACK</i>
Target 6: Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent by 2031.	<i>Baseline: 42.4% in 2016 Improvement to 47.2% in 2021</i>
Outcome 7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education.	<i>NOT ON TRACK</i>
Target 7: Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15–24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67 per cent by 2031.	<i>Baseline: 55.4% in 2016 Improvement to 58.1% in 2021</i>
Outcome 8: Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.	<i>ON TRACK</i>
Target 8: Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 who are employed to 62 per cent by 2031.	<i>Baseline: 52.1% in 2016 Improvement to 57.2% in 2021</i>

Baseline data and progress against target for Queensland¹	
Outcome 9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and needs.	Target 9a: NOT ON TRACK <i>Baseline: 79.4% in 2016</i> <i>Improvement to 81.2% in 2021</i>
Target 9a: increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent by 2031.	Target 9b: Not able to be reported against as there is no data source currently available.
Target 9b: By 2031, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households: i) within discrete Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities receive essential services that meet or exceed the relevant jurisdictional standard ii) in or near to a town receive essential services that meet or exceed the same standard as applies generally within the town (including if the household might be classified for other purposes as a part of a discrete settlement such as a “town camp” or “town based reserve”).	
Outcome 10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.	NOT ON TRACK <i>Baseline: 1,815 per 100,000 in 2019</i> <i>2,047 per 100,000 in 2022</i>
Target 10: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent by 2031.	
Outcome 11: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.	NOT ON TRACK <i>Baseline: 41.2 per 10,000 in 2018–19</i> <i>40.9 per 10,000 in 2021–22</i>
Target 11: Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10–17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent by 2031.	
Outcome 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system.	NOT ON TRACK <i>Baseline: 37.0 per 1,000 in 2019</i> <i>45.0 per 1,000 in 2022</i>
Target 12: Reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent by 2031.	
Outcome 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe.	NO ADDITIONAL DATA <i>Baseline: 2018–19</i>

	Baseline data and progress against target for Queensland ¹
Target 13: The rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50 per cent, as progress towards zero, by 2031.	<i>6.4% women reported violence or threatened violence</i>
Outcome 14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.	NO ADDITIONAL DATA Assessment can be made when 2019–2023 data are released.
Target 14: Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.	<i>Baseline: 24.2 per 100,000 in 2014–2018</i> <i>28.1 per 100,000 in 2017–2021</i>
Outcome 15: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters.	ON TRACK <i>Baseline: 2020</i> <i>Land: 33.0% in 2022, up from 30.7%</i> <i>Sea: 20.3% in 2022, up from 19.7%</i>
Target 15a: A 15 per cent increase in Australia's landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests by 2030. Target 15b: A 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests in the sea by 2030.	
Outcome 16: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.	NO ADDITIONAL DATA <i>Baseline: 2018–19</i> <i>26 languages spoken (with 5 considered strong)</i>
Target 16: There is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken by 2031.	
Outcome 17: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives.	NO ADDITIONAL DATA <i>Baseline: 2014–15</i> <i>76.1% accessed internet at home</i>
Target 17: By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion.	



2. Priority reforms

Central to the success of the National Agreement is the implementation of the four Priority Reforms. These four areas will guide a shift in how government develops and implements policies and programs and provide the foundation for a genuine partnership between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and government.

The Queensland Government is working with First Nations partners on Queensland's Closing the Gap governance arrangements to elevate the focus, to coordinate our efforts and shared decision making, and to enhance accountability.

For further information on Queensland's initiatives to address the Priority Reforms, please read Queensland's Implementation Plan at www.qld.gov.au/ctg. The national Productivity Commission is leading the development of measures for the Priority Reforms³.

Priority Reform 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.

Target: There will be formal partnership arrangements to support Closing the Gap in place between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments in place in each state and territory enshrining agreed joint decision-making roles and responsibilities and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have chosen their own representatives

Measures

Partnerships reviewed (new or existing) meeting the 'strong partnership elements'.

- This measure requires data development activity.

Number of partnerships by function, such as decision-making or strategic.

- This measure requires data development activity.

³ For the Priority Reforms the term "This measure requires data development activity" is used. This refers to the fact that there are currently no measures/data that have been developed to track progress on the Priority Reforms. Work to develop measures/data to track progress is currently underway.

Queensland has several existing partnership mechanisms with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including:

- Path to Treaty Independent Truth and Treaty Body
- First Nations Consultative Committee
- Local Thriving Communities Joint Coordinating Committee
- Ministerial and Government Champions program
- Queensland First Children and Families Board
- First Nations Health Improvement Advisory Committee
- Justice Policy Partnership
- Community Justice Groups
- Youth Interdepartmental Committee
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training Advisory Committee.

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting they are able to have a say in their community on issues important to them.

- This measure requires data development activity.

Proxy data from the 2014–15 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey show that 21.0 per cent of people felt that they had a say on important community issues ‘all’ or ‘most of the time’, while 23.1 per cent reported ‘some of time’.

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting improvements in their communities.

- This measure requires data development activity.

Priority Reform 2: There is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country.

Target: Increase the amount of government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services going through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations

Measures

Number of Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations (ACCOs) across the socio-economic outcome areas of the Agreement.

- This measure requires data development activity.

Number of government contracts awarded to ACCOs.

- This measure requires data development activity.

Number of sectors with elements of a strong sector, by element.

- This measure requires data development activity.

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting fewer barriers in accessing services.

Proxy data from the 2014–15 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey show that of those who accessed services, 71.8 per cent reported that they did not have any problems with access.

Priority Reform 3: Governments, their organisations and their institutions are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including through the services they fund.

Target: Decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have experiences of racism

Measures

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in government mainstream institutions and agencies.

- This measure requires data development activity.

In March 2023, 7,526 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were employed in the Queensland Public Service, equating to 2.55 per cent of the workforce, up from 2.13 per cent in 2018.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in governance positions in government mainstream institutions and agencies.

- This measure requires data development activity.

The Queensland Department of the Premier and Cabinet is progressing work to collect consistent information on the diversity characteristics of all people appointed to government boards to allow for analysis and reporting on the diversity of membership.

Number and proportion of government mainstream institutions and agencies with Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in place, by RAP type.

- This measure requires data development activity.

The Queensland Government recognises it is our collective efforts and responsibility that ensure equality, recognition, and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders across all aspects of life. Our vision for reconciliation is to foster and maintain respectful, trusting and mutually beneficial relationships based on an understanding and acknowledgement of past hurts that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have endured and to move forward on a shared journey towards reconciliation where all Queenslanders are equal. Reconciliation is a long-term commitment to building a better future for all Queenslanders.

The RAP, first launched in May 2018, provides a unique opportunity to recognise and celebrate the major achievements towards reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders,

and was developed in partnership with peak reconciliation bodies, Reconciliation Australia and Reconciliation Queensland Incorporated, to measure progress towards reconciliation as articulated in the actions and targets outlined in the RAP.

In implementing the RAP as an accountability framework to achieve reconciliation it is essential that all departments, agencies and statutory authorities, local governments, and Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to partner and share responsibilities.

Under Queensland's RAP, all agencies are committed to developing a Cultural Capability Action Plan to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability practices within policies, programs and services.

The [new RAP for 2023 to 2025](#) has been released and continues to include all Queensland government agencies.

Government mainstream institutions and agencies reporting actions to implement the transformation elements.

- This measure requires data development activity.

The Public Sector Act 2022 for the first time imposes legislative obligations on public sector entities to support the State Government's commitment to reframing its relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Chief executives of particular public sector entities, including departments and hospital and health services, must develop a 'reframing the relationship plan', which identifies measures for developing the entity's cultural capability.

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting experiences of racism.

- This measure requires data development activity.

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who identify as feeling culturally safe in dealing with government mainstream institutions and agencies.

- This measure requires data development activity.

Priority Reform 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.

Target: Increase the number of regional data projects to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make decisions about Closing the Gap and their development

Measures

Number of formal data sharing partnerships established between government agencies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people/organisations.

- This measure requires data development activity.

Number of comprehensive regional data profiles created.

- This measure requires further data development activity.

The Queensland Government currently hosts a range of regional profile tools:

- Know Your Community, a census profile tool containing data at a range of Queensland geographies including Indigenous Localities, Local Government Areas, State Electoral Districts and Statistical Areas Level 2
<https://statistics.qgso.qld.gov.au/datsip/profiles>
- Queensland Regional Profiles containing a mix of Census, demographic and administrative data
<https://statistics.qgso.qld.gov.au/qld-regional-profiles>
- Queensland Housing Profiles containing the latest housing, demographic, social and economic data <https://statistics.qgso.qld.gov.au/hpw/profiles>
- StatShot provides targeted statistical reports covering a range of wellbeing outcomes to remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to facilitate engagement in local decision-making.

Number of government initiatives established to make data more accessible and usable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.

- This measure requires data development activity.

The [Local Thriving Communities Action Plan 2022-24](#) includes investment mapping as a priority activity, and identifies a staged approach towards providing each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community a greater insight and influence on investment and service delivery in their community. Actions that are underway include working with Government agencies to ensure proactive sharing of investment data that meets community needs and collaborating to overcome barriers as they arise.

The Queensland Government Open Data Policy Statement and departmental strategies commit to release Queensland Government data to allow it to be freely used by the public. The Open Data Portal operationalises this commitment, containing almost 3,000 datasets. The Queensland Globe enables interaction with spatial data.

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Burden of Disease and Injury series provides statewide data about which conditions, age groups, and geographic areas contribute the most to the disease and injury burden experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland.

Number of government agencies working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to build expertise in data collection and analysis.

- This measure requires data development activity.



The seventeen socioeconomic outcome areas reported on under the National Agreement can be broadly grouped into life outcome areas of: long and healthy lives; thriving children achieving their potential; strong economic participation and development; strong and safe families and communities; and flourishing cultures and languages.

3. Long and healthy lives

Quality of life is shaped by good physical health, emotional and social wellbeing and healthy environments in which to live and work.

Data snapshot



Queensland is already close to meeting the healthy birthweight target.

9 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies are born with a healthy birthweight.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are increasingly engaging with antenatal care.

71.6 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women attend antenatal care in their first trimester of pregnancy (up 18.6 percentage points in 9 years).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults report positive wellbeing.



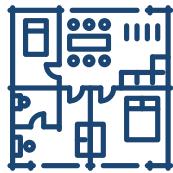
While more than 9 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults report medium or high wellbeing levels, mental health remains an ongoing challenge — suicide rates continue to increase, reaching 28.1 per 100,000 over 2017–2021.

Most people who have a mental health condition sought help from a health service for it (73.2%).



While Queensland is not on track to meet the life expectancy target, life expectancy has increased over time, reaching:

- 76.4 years for females
- 72.0 years for males.



Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders live in homes with enough bedrooms.

8 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders live in appropriately sized housing.

Outcome 1: long and healthy lives

Target 1: close the gap in life expectancy within a generation by 2031 — not on track (No new data since previous report)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders experienced the greatest improvement in life expectancy Australia wide in recent years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female life expectancy increased by 3.7 years, while male life expectancy improved by 4.9 years from the baseline.

Life expectancy	2005–2007	2015–2017
Male	67.1 years	↑ 72.0 years
Female	72.7 years	↑ 76.4 years



↑ Deaths if the gap closed

↓ Excess deaths in 2017 to 2021

While life expectancy data for 2020–2022 was not available at the time of writing, recent mortality rates show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders die at younger ages on average, than other Queenslanders. For example, over the five years 2017–2021, mortality rates for 35–44 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were 3.1

times higher than for other Queenslanders. The rate ratio was the same for 45–54 year olds.

For the gap in mortality rates to have closed over these five years, there would have had to have been 2,403 deaths, less than half of the 5,074 recorded.

Promisingly, infant mortality rates continue to decline, with the rate falling to 5.6 per 1,000 live births for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies in 2017–2021. Most infant deaths occur in the first month after birth and are due to complications arising during pregnancy and birth, including growth disorders.

While there are variations by age, overall, heart disease remains the leading cause of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, followed by diabetes. Notably, hospitalisation rates for potentially preventable chronic conditions, which include heart disease and diabetes, have decreased in the last three years.

Hospitalisations for potentially preventable conditions	2018–19	2021–22
Chronic conditions	4,986 per 100,000	4,486 per 100,000

Outcome 2: children are born healthy and strong

Target 2: increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent by 2031 — on track

A healthy and safe pregnancy, being born full-term and with a healthy birthweight gives babies the best chance of a healthy start to life.

Like previous years, almost 9 in 10 (89.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies in Queensland were born with a healthy birthweight in 2020. Based on the number of babies born in 2020, to meet the target of 91%, an extra 89 babies would need to have had a healthy birthweight.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are increasingly starting antenatal visits in their first trimester and attending more visits through their pregnancies.

After steadily increasing each year to 72.0 per cent in 2020, 71.6 per cent of women attended an antenatal visit in their first trimester in 2021.

Over the same period, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women attending at least five antenatal visits during pregnancy continued to increase, reaching 90.9 per cent Queensland wide, with higher rates in very remote areas of Queensland.

	2012	2021
Women who were at least 32 weeks pregnant attending 5 or more antenatal visits	85.6%	↑ 90.9%
Women who attended their 1 st visit in their 1 st trimester	52.7%	↑ 71.6%

Smoking during pregnancy is a risk factor for low birthweight babies. While smoking rates among pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have fallen by 4.8 percentage points since 2012, there has been little change in the last five years. In 2021, 43.8 per cent of women reported smoking during their pregnancy. There are still challenges in this area:

- smoking rates increased with remoteness, with levels over 57 per cent in remote and very remote areas
- most pregnant women in 2021 received advice about stopping smoking during their pregnancy, but very few gave up.

Outcome 14: social and emotional wellbeing

Target 14: significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero — not yet comparable to baseline (2014–2018)⁴

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders report a high level of wellbeing. In 2018–19, 9 in 10 (92%) adults in Queensland reported medium to high positive wellbeing, while 2 in 3 (66%) reported low to moderate distress levels. This positive wellbeing can result from strong connections to family, land and culture, among other things. Nevertheless, a significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience emotional distress and mental health issues.

Over the five years 2017 to 2021, 318 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders lost their life to suicide — around 3 in 4 were male. Concerningly, of the 318, 1 in 3 were aged 18 to 24 years.

Mortality rate due to suicide per 100,000 persons	2012–2016	2017–2021
	22.8	▲ 28.1

The rate of suicide among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders has been slowly increasing over time.

⁴ Formal assessment of progress from the baseline can be made when 2019–2023 data are released (no overlapping years).

⁵ The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and NACCHO (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation) 2018, National Guide to a Preventive Health Assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: Evidence Base, 3rd edn., Melbourne.

Outcome 9: the right housing

Target 9a: increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent by 2031—not on track, but improving

Target 9b: By 2031, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households:

- i. within discrete Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities receive essential services that meet or exceed the relevant jurisdictional standard
- ii. in or near to a town receive essential services that meet or exceed the same standard as applies generally within the town (including if the household might be classified for other purposes as a part of a discrete settlement such as a “town camp” or “town based reserve”)—no data source identified

Overcrowded housing can affect health, education and social outcomes, including by jeopardising personal safety and security. However, research has found wellbeing benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live with a supportive network of people.⁵ The experience of overcrowding for First Nations households includes cultural and social factors, such as connection to family and a culture of sharing resources.⁶⁷ In 2021, just over 8 in 10

⁶ AIHW, 2019, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: A Focus Report on Housing and Homelessness, 29 March, Cat. no. HOU 301, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Government.

⁷ Moran, M, Memmott, P, Nash, D, Birdsall-Jones, C, Fantin, S, Phillips, R & Habibis, D, 2016, Indigenous Lifeworlds, Conditionality and Housing Outcomes, 260, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, URI, Melbourne.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples lived in homes that had an appropriate number of bedrooms for their family and household situation, up from around 7 in 10 in 2001. The proportion of people living in homes where no extra bedrooms were needed, increased 4.8 percentage points between 2011 to 2016, then rose a further 1.8 percentage points over the five years to 2021.

Home ownership also increased over time, with the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households owning or mortgaging their home up by 9.5 percentage points in the 20 years to 2021.

Housing	2001	2021
Enough bedrooms	69.7%	81.2% 
Owned or mortgaged	29.4%	38.9% 

For further information on Queensland's initiatives to ensure First Nations Queenslanders have access to holistic, culturally safe, trauma-informed and responsive services, please read Queensland's Implementation Plan at www.qld.gov.au/ctg.



4. Thriving children achieving their potential

The benefits of culturally safe and inclusive education from birth to the end of childhood are lifelong.

Data snapshot



Queensland has met the preschool education target.

More than 9 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are enrolled in preschool in the year before they start school.



Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prep students are developing strong skills.

3 in 5 demonstrated well or highly developed strengths in important aspects of their early childhood skills and wellbeing.

In each domain, at least 3 in 5 children were on track — though only 1 in 3 were developmentally on track in all domains.



Queensland's young people are increasingly achieving year 12 or equivalent qualifications.

3 in 4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20–24 year olds have achieved at least a Year 12 or equivalent education.

In 2021, 80.2 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 students were awarded a Queensland Certificate of Education.

Student retention rates to Year 12 in secondary school have decreased sharply in recent years, a cause for concern.

Outcome 3: early childhood education

Target 3: increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in early childhood education, in the year before full-time school, to 95 per cent by 2025 — on track

Children who participate in early childhood education are given the opportunity to build a strong foundation for emotional, social, physical and mental wellbeing. Research consistently demonstrates a wide range of gains among children who attend preschool including language, literacy, numeracy, cognitive and problem-solving skills, and that these benefits support future academic achievement⁸.

In 2022, 95.2 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were enrolled in preschool in the year before starting school, up from 91.4 per cent in 2019. While the collection method has changed over time, the enrolment rate is up by more than 10 percentage points compared with 2016.

Queensland's enrolment rate in 2021 and 2022 met the target.

Preschool in the year before full-time school	2016	2022
	82.2%	95.2%

The percentages shown here for Target 3 use 2016 Census based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population projections in their estimation.

The 2021 Census showed higher than expected growth rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons. Revised 2021 Census based population estimates will be published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2024 and will include revised estimates for the years 2011 onwards, in addition to projections out to 2036. It is anticipated that the preschool participation rates shown above will decrease once these new population estimates are applied. Adjustments to the baseline may also occur.

Outcome 4: thriving children

Target 4: increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent by 2031 — not on track

(No new data since previous report)

In their first year of schooling in 2021, 3 in 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland demonstrated well or highly developed strengths in important aspects of their early childhood skills and wellbeing.

However, only 1 in 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were assessed as being developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census. These domains assess language and cognitive skills (school-based), social

⁸ <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/family-matters/issue-95/preschool-participation-among-indigenous-children-australia>

competence, emotional maturity, and physical health and wellbeing, and communication skills and general knowledge.

Girls were more likely to be developmentally on track in all five domains than boys, reflecting the biological and developmental differences between males and females upon school entry⁹.

Developmentally on track in all 5 domains	2018	2021
All	33.5%	~ 33.8%
Girls	42.5%	~ 41.3%
Boys	24.7%	↑ 26.7%

While significant progress is needed to meet the target of 55 per cent developmentally on track in all five domains, children are showing **stronger results in individual domains**.

Around 64.1 per cent of children were developmentally on track for the physical health and wellbeing domain and 63.8 per cent were developmentally on track for the emotional maturity domain. Similar levels were reported for the other three domains.

Outcome 5: students achieve their potential

Target 5: increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20–24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent by 2031 – not on track, but improving

There are lifetime benefits associated with completing year 12 or an equivalent qualification. These include increased employment and income opportunities and improved health and wellbeing¹⁰.

Attainment levels for Year 12 or equivalent qualifications continue to improve with each 5-yearly census. In 2021, 75.0 per cent of Queensland's 20–24 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders had attained Year 12 or equivalent qualifications. This was 5.5 percentage points higher than the baseline (69.5 per cent in 2016) and almost 25 percentage points higher than the 50.9% recorded 20 years earlier.

At least Year 12 or a Certificate	2001	2021
III level qualification	50.9%	↑ 75.0%

2020 saw the first full prep-year cohort graduate Year 12. This was also the first cohort to complete their senior studies under the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) system. This cohort faced completing their senior studies during the COVID-19 period, with lockdowns, remote learning, and other associated restrictions.

⁹ <https://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/detail/gender-differences-in-the-aedc-and-into-the-school-years>

¹⁰ <https://handsonlearning.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/DAE-investing-in-preventing-ESL-September-2012-1.pdf>

Of the 2,892 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completing their senior studies in Queensland in 2020, 77.8 per cent were awarded a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE). Around 1 in 5 were also eligible for an ATAR. In the following year, 2021, 80.2 per cent of Year 12 graduates attained a QCE.

Despite these improvements, apparent retention rates from Year 7 to Year 12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have fallen in recent years.

For further information on Queensland's initiatives to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children a positive start and supporting them throughout their learning journey, please read Queensland's Implementation Plan at www.qld.gov.au/ctg.



5. Strong economic participation and development

Participation in higher education and access to high quality, and affordable digital technologies provides employment opportunities leading to higher earnings, and the ability to participate more fully in life.

Data snapshot



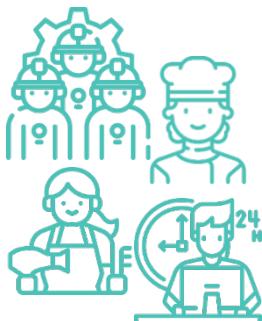
Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young adults are increasingly engaging in higher education.

Almost half had completed a Certificate III or higher qualification, with the rate more than doubling in 20 years.

The number of students commencing University studies continues to increase.

Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are engaging in education, employment or training.

Almost 3 in 5 were fully engaged in 2021.



Apprenticeships and traineeships are increasing.

3,505 young people in off-the-job vocational education at Certificate III and above as part of their training at March 2022 — up from around 2,400 at March 2018.

Employment rates for Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults have improved.

57.2 per cent were employed in 2021.

Every age group saw an uplift in employment.

Employment rates are highest among those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Outcome 6: learning pathways

Target 6: increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent by 2031 — not on track, but improving

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are increasingly engaging in post school education, including vocational education and training (VET) and university courses, with levels **more than doubling** in 20 years. More recently, the percentage of 25–34 year olds with Certificate III or higher qualifications increased from 42.4 per cent in 2016 to 47.2 per cent in 2021. The majority of these qualifications are Certificate III and IV level.

	2001	2021
Certificate III or above qualifications	19.8%	47.2%

To reach the 70 per cent target by 2031, the proportion will need to increase by 22.8 percentage points over 10 years — a similar gain seen over the 15 years from 2001 to 2016. This may be achievable as the proportion of 20–24 year olds with Year 12, or Certificate III and above qualifications has increased over time to 75.0% in 2021. These young people will be in the 30 to 34 year age group at the 2031 Census. If their attainment continues to improve, and they go on to some form of tertiary study, the target could foreseeably be met.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students commencing studies at Queensland universities continues to

increase, reaching 2,602 in 2021. This included 559 school leavers. The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in university in 2021 was 6,279, up by over 1,000 persons since 2018 (5,229 students).

Participation in VET also continues to increase, with 43,784 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in some form of VET in 2021, compared with 39,927 in 2020.



Outcome 7: fully engaged young people

Target 7: increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15–24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67 per cent by 2031 — not on track, but improving

In 2016, 55.4 per cent of 15–24 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in Queensland were fully engaged in some form of education, employment, training, or a combination of these.

By 2021, this had increased slightly to 58.1 per cent. Engagement was highest among 15 and 16 year olds, aligning with compulsory schooling ages. Notably, 19-year-olds had the lowest engagement levels.

Fully engaged in education, employment or training	2001	2021
	49.4%	58.1%

To reach the target of 67.0 per cent, the rate of improvement will need to be 8.9 percentage points over the 10 years from 2021 to 2031 — double that seen over the previous 10 years.

While engagement was highest among 15 and 16 year olds in 2016 and 2021, they saw no improvement over the five year period. In comparison, engagement among 20 to 24 year olds increased by at least four percentage points for every single year of age.

Outcome 8: economic participation and development

Target 8: increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 who are employed to 62 per cent by 2031 — on track

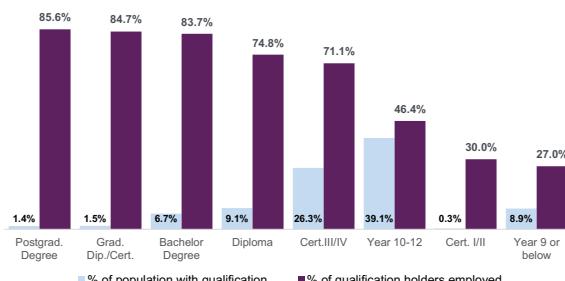
Almost 3 in 5 (57.2%) 25–64 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders reported being employed in 2021. Of these:

- 61.5 per cent were working full-time;
- 28.5 per cent were working part-time;
- and 10.0 per cent were employed but away from work.

To reach the target of 62.0 per cent, employment rates will need to increase by 4.8 percentage points by 2031.

25–64 year olds employed	2016	2021
	52.1%	57.2%

There is a strong relationship between education and employment. In 2021, while 9.5 per cent of 25–64 year olds held a bachelor's degree or higher qualifications, over 80 per cent of these people were employed. This compares to people with Year 10 or below education levels, where fewer than 50 per cent were employed.



Outcome 17: digital inclusion

Target 17: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion by 2026 – no state baseline data are available

This target is focused on improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's access to information and services to support people to make informed decisions about their lives. Digital inclusion forms the platform for improving access to information and services and includes affordability of and access to the internet, ability to use digital technologies, accessibility of online services, and the availability and use of culturally relevant media.

Reliable data which capture the various aspects of full digital inclusion are limited at present and are currently only available for 'internet access at home'. In 2014–15, an estimated 76.1 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders aged 15 years and over accessed the internet at home. There is no comparable non-Indigenous data at present to determine progress to equal levels of digital inclusion and no data updates since the baseline.

Recently published research undertaken on Erub Island in 2022 as part of the 'Mapping the digital gap' research project showed that Erub Island residents have a high level of digital ability but have unreliable access to the Internet¹¹.

Survey respondents who were regular internet users reported inconvenient access (63%) and expense (41%) as key barriers for not using the Internet more often.

Digital gap research from Wujul Wujal in early 2022 found similar results to those reported on Erub Island¹². Internet access options available in Wujul Wujal are 4G mobile coverage, Sky Muster satellite or Wi-Fi available at the Centrelink office and Indigenous Knowledge Centre during opening hours—few households had fixed home internet access.

For further information on initiatives to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's engagement in Queensland's economy, please read Queensland's Implementation Plan at www.qld.gov.au/ctg.

¹¹ [Mapping the Digital Gap: Erub, Zenadh Kes Queensland, Community Outcomes report 2022](#)

¹² [Mapping the Digital Gap: Wujul Wujal Queensland Community Outcomes report 2022](#)

6. Strong and safe families and communities

Many vulnerable children, families and adults in contact with child safety and/or justice services face common challenges.

Data snapshot



Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland grow up in safe homes.

Around 4.5 per cent are living in out of home care:

- Over half (56.9 per cent) of these were living with kin, relatives or other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.
- almost all had a cultural support plan.



Youth in custody are likely to have a history of significant risk factors.

In October 2022, the Youth Justice Census showed that for all youth in custody:

- 39 per cent were living in unstable or unsuitable accommodation.
- 12 per cent were diagnosed or suspected of having foetal alcohol spectrum disorder.
- 56 per cent had been impacted by domestic violence.
- 35 per cent had parents who had been in custody.
- 83 per cent had used substances.
- 35 per cent had a mental health or behavioural disorder.

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders do not experience violence in their daily lives, but those who do are more likely to be female.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females accounted for 73.3 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims in 2021–22.

Adult imprisonment rates continue to be high but decreased slightly in the most recent year.

3,410 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults were in Queensland prisons on 30 June 2022, accounting for 1 in 3 adult prisoners.

Outcome 12: safe children

Target 12: reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent by 2031 — not on track

Most of Queensland's children grow up in safe families and do not come to the attention of child safety services. Of the families that do come to the attention of Queensland's child safety services, many are complex family environments. These families need extensive support and intervention to keep their children safe.

At 30 June 2022, 4,508 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (0 to 17 years) were living in out-of-home care in Queensland. More than half of these children were living with relatives, Indigenous care givers or in Indigenous residential care.

At the same time, there were 1,129 identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer families in Queensland, up from 930 in 2019. This included 531 kinship carer families.

Almost all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care in 2019, and more recently in 2022, had a cultural support plan aiming to keep them connected with their culture, families and communities.

Children in out-of-home care, per 1,000 ¹³	2019	2022
	37.0	45.0

To achieve a 45 per cent reduction in over-representation, the rate of children in care will need to fall to at least 20.4 per 1,000 children by 2031, from the baseline of 37.0 per 1,000 in 2019.

New data about families receiving early intervention Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services show positive signs of success, with 48.1 per cent of children who received services in 2021–22 having all or the majority of their needs met, and of these, 86.8 per cent not having a subsequent child safety notification within six months of their case closing¹⁴.

¹³ These data are produced from the Child Protection National Minimum Data Set based on nationally agreed specifications and may not match Queensland figures published elsewhere.

¹⁴ Refers to children who had a case closed during the reference year.

Outcome 13: safe families

Target 13: by 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50 per cent, as progress towards zero — no new data since 2018–19 baseline (6.4%)

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders do not experience physical violence in their day to day lives.

In 2018–19, 83.9 per cent reported they had not been threatened with physical harm in the previous 12 months, nor experienced physical harm through violence, including 91.9 per cent of women. An estimated 6.4 per cent of women reported experiencing violence or threatened violence.

For those that do experience harm, the majority are women. Queensland Police Service data show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females accounted for 14 per cent of all reported victims of an offence against the person in 2021–22, and 73.3 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims. Almost 8 in 10 female victims were offended against by a family member¹⁵, including 53.2 per cent by a partner or ex-partner.

¹⁵ Where status of the relationship was known.

Outcome 11: young people in detention

Target 11: reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10–17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent by 2031 – not on track

In both 2019–20 and 2020–21, Queensland was on track to achieve the target, with a youth detention rate of 32.7 per 10,000 (or 138 young people in detention on an average day) recorded in 2019–20. Levels in 2020–21 were relatively unchanged, at 33.7 per 10,000 (144 young people).

The stability in the average daily rate over these two years occurred against a backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic impacts and amendments to the *Youth Justice Act, 1992*, which strengthened accountability and support for repeat offenders, and introduced limitations on bail eligibility.

More recent data shows a strong uptick for 2021–22, with the number of young people in detention on an average night increasing to 177 – a rate of 40.9 per 10,000.

Young people in detention, average daily rate per 10,000 ¹⁶	2020–21	2021–22
	33.7	40.9

Queensland's youth justice data shows that 570 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 10 to 17 year olds were admitted to detention in 2021–22, up slightly from 548 the year before. The overall admission rate was also relatively stable. The increase in average daily number in 2021–22 was primarily due to longer

periods spent in detention. For example, 35.4 per cent of young people on remand in 2021–22 spent at least six weeks in detention, compared with 29.8 per cent the year before.

Much like families encountering child safety services, young people in detention are likely to have experienced a range of challenging circumstances putting them at higher risk of offending and subsequent incarceration. For example, in 2022, 35 per cent of young people in custody had at least one mental health or behavioural disorder, and at least 4 in 5 had used substances, with 40 per cent reporting methamphetamine use, including ice¹⁷.

¹⁶ These data are produced from the Youth Justice National Minimum Data Set based on nationally agreed specifications and may not match Queensland figures published elsewhere.

¹⁷ <https://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/resources/dcsyw/youth-justice/resources/census-summary-custody.pdf>

Outcome 10: adults in prison

Target 10: reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent by 2031 — not on track

On the night of 30 June 2022, 3,410 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults were in prison in Queensland. This equated to a rate of 2,047 per 100,000 people, slightly down from 2,144 per 100,000 in 2021.

To meet the target of a 15 per cent reduction from the 2019 baseline (1,815 per 100,000 persons), the imprisonment rate will need to fall to 1,542 per 100,000 persons by 2031 — a level last seen in 2015.

Imprisonment rate, per 100,000 persons	2021	2022
	2,144	2,047

Underlying factors for higher rates of offending include socio-economic disadvantage, substance abuse, homelessness and overcrowding, lack of education and physical and mental health issues. Attaining a qualification, or at least Year 12 education, and having a position of employment are generally protective factors against offending and incarceration.

The rate of imprisonment in Queensland increased by an average of 5.7 per cent per year from 2012 to 2022, presenting an increasingly difficult challenge in terms of the target, particularly when recent research shows that:

- almost 1 in 5 prisoners had a history of hospitalisation for mental illness¹⁸;

- more than 8 in 10 prisoners had not completed their secondary education;
- and 4 in 5 prisoners had a prior imprisonment.

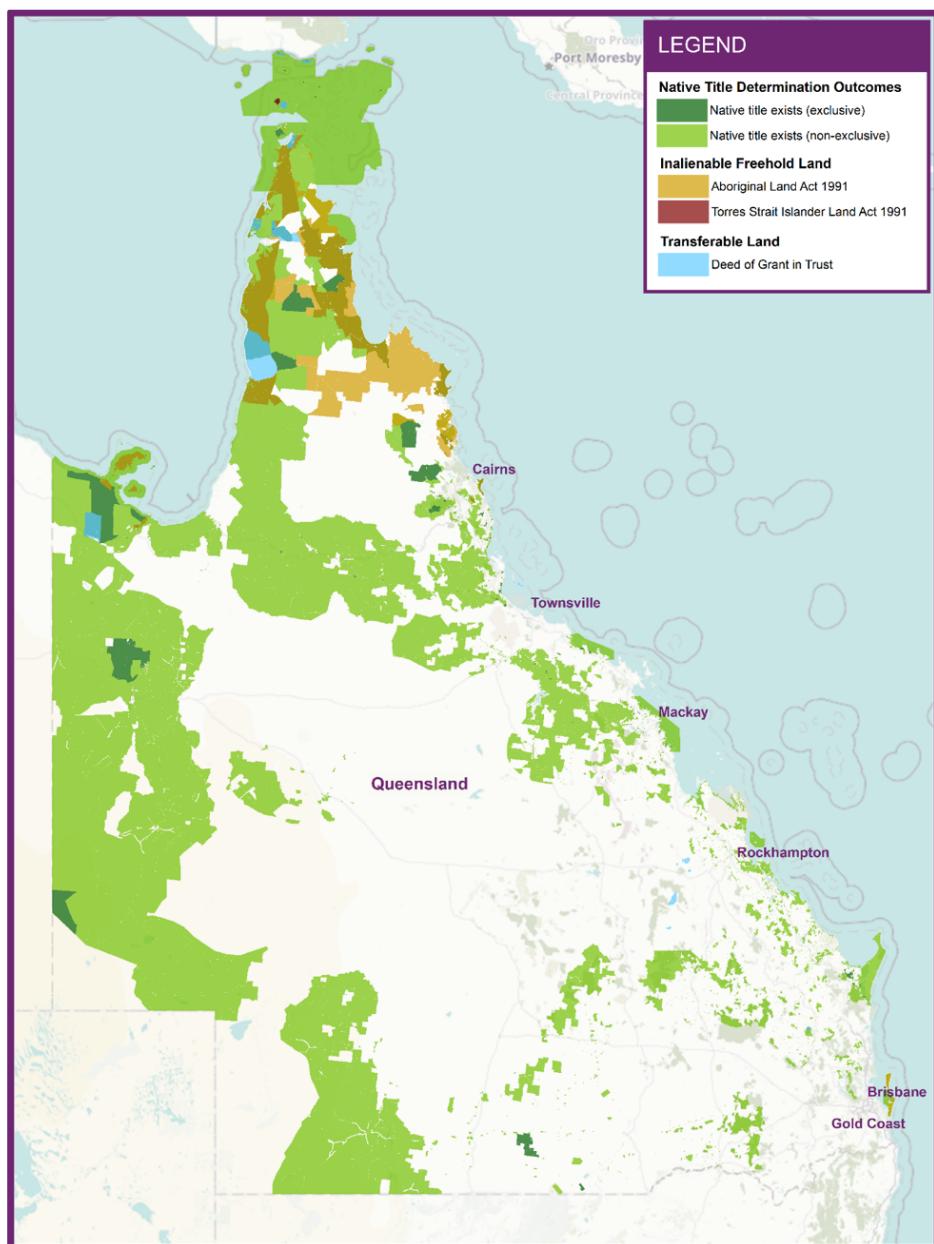
For further information on Queensland's initiatives to support strong and safe families and communities, please read Queensland's Implementation Plan at www.qld.gov.au/ctg.

¹⁸ <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/epidemiology-and-psychiatric-sciences/article/prevalence-of-psychiatric-disorders-for->

[indigenous-australians-a-populationbased-birth-cohort-study/EE128FE6D78B99C94D9F997B5569338A](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/epidemiology-and-psychiatric-sciences/article/prevalence-of-psychiatric-disorders-for-)

7. Flourishing cultures and languages

Deep connection to culture through land, water and language is central to First Nations identity, kinship and spirituality, linked to success across the course of life.



Queensland's total land area recognised under Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal rights or interests

Source: National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT), Native Title Determination Outcomes [spatial data], downloaded 30 May 2023 and Queensland Department of Resources [spatial data], extracted 6 June 2023

Outcome 15: land and waters

Target 15a: a 15 per cent increase in Australia's landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests by 2030 — on track

Target 15b: a 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests in the sea by 2030 — on track

In 2022, 33.0 per cent (570,423 square kilometres) of Queensland's landmass was under Native Title or was Indigenous estate. If the increasing trend in land under Native Title between 2016 and 2022 continues, Queensland will likely meet the 2030 target of a 15 per cent increase of land mass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights (609,666 square kilometres).

Additionally, 20.3 per cent (24,829 square kilometres) of Queensland's sea country was under Native Title. A 15 per cent increase will mean that, by 2030, 27,724 square kilometres of sea country will need to be under Native Title.

Outcome 16: flourishing languages

Target 16: there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken by 2031 — no new data since baseline

In 2018–19, the *National Indigenous Languages Survey* reported 26 languages spoken in Queensland. Three traditional and two creole languages were considered strong¹⁹ and eight languages were gaining speakers.

Being able to pass on language to future generations is central to keeping language, identity and culture strong²⁰. A 2020 report on first languages in Australia found widespread health, social and economic benefits associated with speaking an Indigenous language²¹.

In Queensland in 2021²², eight per cent of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons spoke an Australian Indigenous language at home. Results varied widely across Queensland, with those in the Torres Strait regions (79.1%) and Cape York (52.8%) most likely to speak an Australian Indigenous language at home. The most widely spoken Australian Indigenous languages in Queensland were:

- Yumplatok (Torres Strait Creole) (38.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language speakers)
- Wik Mungkan (5.0%)
- Kalaw Kawaw Ya/Kalaw Lagaw Ya (4.2%)
- Guugu Yimidhirr (4.1%).

¹⁹ Strong language: the language is used by all age groups, including all children, and people in all age groups are fluent speakers.

²⁰ <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/living-languages>

²¹ <https://www.qarts.gov.au/what-we-do/indigenous-arts-and-languages/national-indigenous-languages-report>

²² Queensland Government Statisticians Office (QGSO) (2022) <https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics.theme/census-2021>



8. Sources

All baseline and current target data has been sourced directly from the Closing the Gap dashboard hosted by the Productivity Commission. For more information about the data and measures, see <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/data>. This Snapshot also contains data and information sourced from other reports and data sets. These are noted below.

Target	Target data source	Other sources
1	Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>Life Tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2015–2017</i> Closing the Gap dashboard	Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>Causes of death, Australia</i> Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, 2018–19</i> Queensland Health, <i>Queensland Hospital Admitted Patient Data Collection, unpublished data</i>
2	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, <i>National Perinatal Data Collection</i> Closing the Gap dashboard	Queensland Health, <i>Queensland Perinatal Data Collection</i>
3	Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>Preschool Education</i> Closing the Gap dashboard	Hewitt, B and Walter, M, <i>Preschool participation among Indigenous children in Australia, Family Matters 2014 No.95</i> https://aifs.gov.au/publications/family-matters/issue-95/preschool-participation-among-indigenous-children-australia
4	Australian Early Development Census Closing the Gap dashboard	Australian Early Development Census, <i>Gender differences in the AEDC and into the school years</i> https://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/detail/gender-differences-in-the-aedc-and-into-the-school-years
5	Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>Census of Population and Housing</i> Closing the Gap dashboard	Deloitte Access Economics, <i>The socio-economic benefits of investing in the prevention of early school leaving</i> https://handsonlearning.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/DAE-investing-in-preventing-ESL-September-2012-1.pdf

Target	Target data source	Other sources
6	Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>Census of Population and Housing</i> Closing the Gap dashboard	Department of Education, <i>Higher education statistics, Student data</i> https://www.dese.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/student-data National Centre for Vocational Education Research, <i>Latest VET statistics</i> https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/visualisation-gallery/latest-vet-statistics
7	Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>Census of Population and Housing</i> Closing the Gap dashboard	National Centre for Vocational Education Research, <i>Latest VET statistics</i> https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/visualisation-gallery/latest-vet-statistics
8	Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>Census of Population and Housing</i> Closing the Gap dashboard	
9	Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>Census of Population and Housing</i> Closing the Gap dashboard	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, <i>Understanding 'demand sharing' of Indigenous households</i> https://www.ahuri.edu.au/analysis/brief/understanding-demand-sharing-indigenous-households
10	Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>Prisoners in Australia</i> Closing the Gap dashboard	
11	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, <i>Youth Justice National Minimum Data Set</i> Closing the Gap dashboard	Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, <i>Youth justice pocket stats</i> https://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/youth-justice/resources Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, <i>Youth Justice Census Summary - Custody</i> https://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/resources/dcsyw/youth-justice/resources/census-summary-custody.pdf
12	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, <i>Child protection Australia, 2021–22</i> Closing the Gap dashboard	Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, <i>Our performance</i> https://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/about-us/performance-evaluations/our-performance

Target	Target data source	Other sources
13	<p>Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, 2018–19</i></p> <p>Closing the Gap dashboard</p>	
14	<p>Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>Causes of death, Australia</i></p> <p>Closing the Gap dashboard</p>	<p>Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, 2018–19</i></p> <p>-<i>Mini indicator of positive wellbeing over the last 4 weeks (categorised) by Kessler 5 score (categorised) by Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) - Edition 2016 - State Only</i></p> <p>https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/tablebuilder</p> <p>-<i>Selected health characteristics, by time series, state/territory, sex, Indigenous status</i> https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/national-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health-survey/2018-19/471500d0010.xls</p>
15	Closing the Gap dashboard	
16	<p>Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, <i>National Indigenous Languages Surveys</i></p> <p>Closing the Gap dashboard</p>	<p>Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, <i>National Indigenous Languages Report</i> https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/indigenous-arts-and-languages/national-indigenous-languages-report</p> <p>Queensland Government Statisticians Office, <i>Australian Indigenous languages, Queensland, Census 2021</i> https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/census/census-2021</p>
17	<p>Australian Bureau of Statistics, <i>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2014–15</i></p> <p>Closing the Gap dashboard</p>	<p>Thomas, J, Barraket, J, Wilson, CK, Rennie, E, Ewing, S, MacDonald, T, <i>Measuring Australia's Digital Divide: The Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2019</i>, RMIT University and Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, for Telstra https://digitalinclusionindex.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ADII_Report-2019_.pdf</p> <p>Featherstone D, Holcombe-James I, Ormond-Parker L, and Hawkins L, <i>Mapping the Digital Gap: Wujal Wujal Queensland Community Outcomes report 2022</i> https://www.apo.org.au/node/319574</p> <p>Featherstone D, Holcombe-James I, Ormond-Parker L, Hawkins L, Gutchen L, Mye N, Thomas J and Kennedy, J,</p>



Target	Target data source	Other sources
		<p><i>Mapping the Digital Gap: Erub, Zenadh Kes Queensland, Community Outcomes report 2022</i></p> <p>https://www.apo.org.au/node/319988</p>



A note on population-based rates and percentages

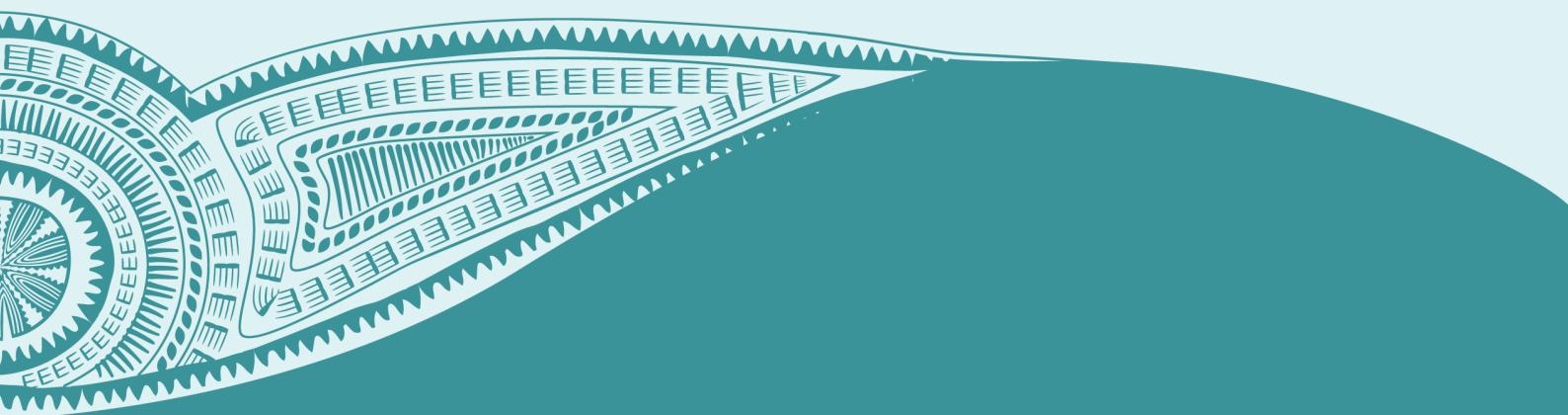
Population-based rates and percentages in this report are subject to change.

Population-based rates and percentages in this report use population data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006 to 2031*, released in July 2019. After a methodological review in mid-2021, the ABS re-released these data in July 2021, resulting in minor revisions to the previously published population estimates and projections. The ABS advise that impacts on rates will be very small.

Since these estimates were released, the 2021 Census has been undertaken. The 2021 Census showed higher than expected growth rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons. Revised 2021 Census based population estimates and projections will be published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2024. This release will include revised estimates for the years 2011 onwards, in addition to projections out to 2036. Outcomes using population-based rates include Outcomes 3, 10, 11, 12 and 14.

Adjustments to some targets using population rates may also be made once these new population estimates are applied.

It is possible that application of these new population estimates will change assessments of whether targets are on track, or not.



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