

# ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER QUEENSLANDERS

May 2003

This bulletin contains population and demographic information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Queensland. The data have been extracted from population censuses and experimental Indigenous population estimates published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Fertility and mortality data have been sourced from birth and death registrations processed by the ABS. This bulletin highlights areas of concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland. The main areas of interest were identified as families, culture, health, employment, income and education.

## Introduction

One of the most important sources of data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is the five yearly ABS Census of Population and Housing. Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people measure the number of persons who identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin on the census form on census night.

However, inevitably some persons are missed in the census or counted more than once. The net effect is referred to as net undercount. Post-censal surveys indicate that the net undercount for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is in the order of 5 to 10% across Australia.

In addition the number of people who identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin is undercounted as an unknown proportion do not answer this question. The 2001 Census in Queensland revealed that 3.7% (134,196) of people did not complete the identification question, exceeding the 3.1% (112,772 persons) who identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

## Key Points

A total of 112,772 persons identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin in Queensland in 2001. This represents 3.1% of the State's overall population.

The majority (77.4%) of Indigenous Queenslanders were of Aboriginal origin. A further 14.6% identified as Torres Strait Islander persons, while 8.0% identified as being of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

About two-thirds (68.7%) of Indigenous people lived outside Brisbane in 2001, largely in the northern areas of the State.

Queensland's Indigenous population increased 18.1% between the censuses of 1996 and 2001 compared with an increase of only 8.2% for the non-Indigenous population. The relatively large increase in the Indigenous population reflects a greater propensity for Indigenous people to identify, reflecting a growing strength in culture and status within the wider community.

The median age of Indigenous people in Queensland in 2001 was 19 years, considerably younger than non-Indigenous people who had a median age of 36 years.

According to the 2001 Census, Indigenous births in Queensland accounted for 7.5% (3,337) of total births. This is estimated to represent 97% of Indigenous births, up from 79% in 1996, the first year the Indigenous status of babies was recorded.

The median age at death for Indigenous persons in Queensland during 2001 was 53.2 years, more than 20 years less than the figure for the non-Indigenous population (78.1 years).

Of Indigenous Queenslanders aged 5-14 years, 85.9% (26,569) attended an educational institution in 2001, while 46.4% (1,283) of those aged 15-19 years attended an educational institution.

Post-school qualifications were held by 14.6% of Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over in Queensland in 2001, a substantial increase from the 10.1% who held post-school qualifications in 1996.

More than half (53.4%) of the 29,291 employed Indigenous persons in Queensland in 2001 worked in the private sector. A further 25.8% were employed in the public sector and 16.8% were part of the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) (4.0% did not state their industry sector).

The Indigenous unemployment rate in Queensland has decreased by 14% points since 1986, to be 20.0% at the time of the 2001 Census. In comparison, the non-Indigenous rate has fallen only 3% points over this period. However, the Indigenous unemployment rate remained 11.8% points higher than the total unemployment rate (8.2%).

The median weekly individual income of Indigenous persons in Queensland in 2001 (\$256) was much less than for non-Indigenous persons (\$360).

Indigenous women had a higher median age at death, had a lower unemployment rate, and were more likely to hold a university qualification or be attending a TAFE or university compared with Indigenous men. Conversely, more Indigenous men than women held certificate qualifications.

Indigenous crime statistics have been omitted from this bulletin due to Indigenous identifiers only becoming mandatory reporting fields for the Queensland Police Service on 1 January 2003. Reliable Indigenous specific crime statistics will be available for reporting after 1 July 2003.

## Population

Between censuses, the number of people counted as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin rose considerably. This increase cannot be fully accounted for by natural increase (births minus deaths) or migration. It appears that a large increase has occurred in the propensity to identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin between censuses.

Of the 3,585,639 persons counted in Queensland in the 2001 Census of Population and Housing, 112,772 (3.1%) identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin or of both (Table 1). This represents an 18.1% increase since the 1996 Census, when 95,518 Queenslanders identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Of this increase, about 13% points can be attributed to natural increase. The remaining 5% points can be explained by a change in the propensity to identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

The 1971 Census was the first census to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, although they were counted in the 1966 Census. Only 31,922 persons identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin in Queensland in that census. Within five years the number of people who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (41,300) had risen 29.4%. Since then, numbers have increased markedly.

**TABLE 1: INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS CENSUS COUNTS, QUEENSLAND, 1971 TO 2001**

Year	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous (b)	
	Number	Increase (a) %	Number	Increase (a) %
1971	31,922	..	1,827,065	..
1976	41,300	29.4	2,121,500	16.1
1981	44,600	8.0	2,345,400	10.6
1986	61,250	37.3	2,785,664	18.8
1991	70,102	14.5	2,907,708	4.4
1996	95,518	36.3	3,273,332	12.6
2001	112,772	18.1	3,542,367	8.2

.. not applicable

(a) Percentage increase since previous census year. Table excludes not stated.

(b) Includes overseas visitors

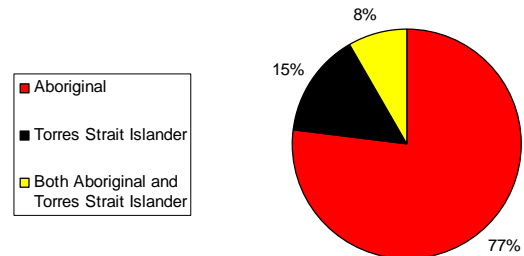
Source: ABS, Censuses of Population and Housing, 1971 to 2001

The ABS calculates the Indigenous estimated resident population by making adjustments to Indigenous census counts. These adjustments include a proportional allocation of 'not stated' responses in the Indigenous identification question, the application of an undercount rate to account for persons missed in the census, and the allocation of visitors back to their place of usual residence. When these adjustments were made in 2001, the census count of 112,772 Indigenous persons in Queensland was converted to an estimated resident population of 126,035 persons.

Although the 1971 Census was the first to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it was not until the 1986 Census that people were able to identify as being of *both* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

In the 2001 Census, 77.4% (87,322) of Indigenous persons in Queensland identified as being of Aboriginal origin, compared with 14.6% (16,415) who identified as Torres Strait Islander persons and 8.0% (9,035) who identified as being of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin (Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1: BREAKDOWN OF INDIGENOUS CENSUS COUNTS, QUEENSLAND, 2001**



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

## Spatial Distribution

The spatial distribution of the 112,772 persons who identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin in Queensland in the 2001 Census was significantly different to that of the non-Indigenous population.

Of the Indigenous population, 31.3% were counted in the Brisbane ATSI region, compared with 66.3% of the non-Indigenous population (Table 2). Conversely, nearly half (47.6%) of the Indigenous population were counted in the five northern ATSI regions (Cairns, Cooktown, Mount Isa, Torres Strait Islands and Townsville), compared with only 15.0% of the non-Indigenous population.

**TABLE 2: INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS CENSUS COUNTS BY ATSI REGION, QUEENSLAND, 2001**

ATSI Region	Proportion of Indigenous Persons	Proportion of Non-Indigenous Persons
Brisbane	31.3	66.3
Cairns	15.1	5.1
Cooktown	5.6	0.2
Mount Isa	6.4	0.8
Rockhampton	11.5	10.6
Roma	9.6	8.1
Torres Strait Islands	5.5	0.0
Townsville	15.0	8.9

Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

In the 2001 Census, more people identified as Indigenous in New South Wales (119,865 persons) than in any other state or territory (Table 3). The largest proportion of persons who identified as Indigenous was recorded in the Northern Territory (24.1%). Only 0.5% of people counted in Victoria identified as Indigenous.

**TABLE 3: INDIGENOUS CENSUS COUNTS BY STATE AND TERRITORY, 2001**

State/Territory	Indigenous Persons	% of Total Population
New South Wales	119,865	1.9
Victoria	25,078	0.5
Queensland	112,772	3.1
South Australia	23,425	1.6
Western Australia	58,496	3.2
Tasmania	15,773	3.5
Northern Territory	50,785	24.1
Aust Capital Territory	3,576	1.1
<b>Australia</b>	<b>409,770</b>	<b>2.2</b>

Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

In April 2003, the ABS released estimated resident populations for Indigenous Council Areas in Queensland. According to these estimates, 19,032 persons were usually resident in a Queensland Indigenous Council Area as at 30 June 2001. The majority of these persons were of Indigenous origin.

Of these 19,032 persons, 13,676 persons usually resided in the 15 Aboriginal Community areas in Queensland, while the 17 Island Community areas contained 5,356 persons (Table 4). Six Aboriginal Community areas had more than 1,000 persons, with Palm Island and Yarrabah being the largest. All Island Community areas contained less than 1,000 persons, with only two containing more than 500 persons (Badu and Bamaga).

**TABLE 4: ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION BY INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES, QUEENSLAND, 30 JUNE 2001**

Aboriginal Community	Number of Persons	Torres Strait Island Community	Number of Persons
Aurukun (S)	1,099	Badu	750
Cherbourg	1,209	Bamaga	885
Doomadgee	1,201	Boigu	290
Hope Vale	892	Dauan	120
Injinoo	440	Erub	320
Kowanyama	1,019	Hammond	203
Lockhart River	650	Iama	341
Mapoon	209	Kubin	221
Mornington (S)	1,007	Mabuiag	240
Napranum	800	Mer	448
New Mapoon	348	Poruma	175
Palm Island	2,313	Saibai	362
Pormpuraaw	630	Seisia	144
Umagico	278	St Pauls	229
Woorabinda	1,034	TRAWQ (Thursday Is.) (a)	1,049
Wujal Wujal	373	Port Kennedy (Thursday Is.) (a)	1,631
Yarrabah	2,280	Ugar	61
		Warraber	234
		Yorke	333
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,683</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,036</b>

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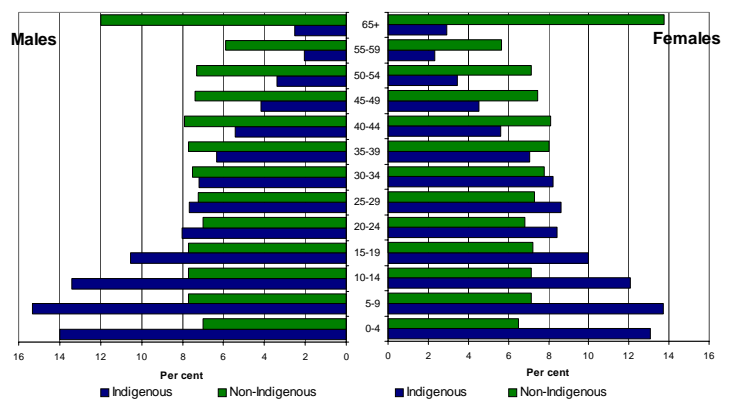
(a) Census count only. TRAWQ comprises those communities in Tamwoy, Rose Hill, Aplin, Waiben and Quarantine.

Source: ABS, Regional Population Growth, 2001-02, Cat. no. 3218.0.

## Age Structure

The age structure of the Indigenous population is considerably different to that of the non-Indigenous population (Figure 2). The Indigenous population has a much younger age profile with a median age of 19 years in Queensland, compared with 36 years for the non-Indigenous population.

For Indigenous people, 40.7% were aged 0-15 years, compared with 21.6% of the non-Indigenous population. Only 2.7% of the Indigenous population was aged 65 years and over, compared with 12.9% of the non-Indigenous population.

**FIGURE 2: AGE STRUCTURE BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, BY SEX, QUEENSLAND, 2001**

Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

## Fertility

Indigenous status was not recorded on birth registration forms in Queensland until 1996, when 2,534 births were registered as Indigenous (Table 5). Using 1996 Census-based experimental Indigenous population estimates, this represented only 79% of all Indigenous births in Queensland in that year. The number of births registered as Indigenous has generally increased since 1996, with 3,337 Indigenous births being registered in 2001. This represented an estimated coverage of 97% of all Indigenous births.

**TABLE 5: REGISTERED INDIGENOUS BIRTHS AND ESTIMATED COVERAGE, QUEENSLAND, 1996 TO 2001**

Year	Registered Births	Estimated Coverage (a) %
1996	2,534	79
1997	3,038	93
1998	3,085	93
1999	2,974	89
2000	3,172	93
2001	3,337	97

(a) Derived using 1996 Census-based experimental Indigenous population estimates.

Source: ABS, Demography, Queensland, Cat. no. 3311.3

When compared with births to all mothers, the age specific fertility rates for Indigenous mothers in Queensland are higher for younger age groups. For Indigenous mothers in Queensland, birth rates for the 15-19 years and 20-24 years age groups are about three times and double the rate for all mothers respectively (Table 6). While the birth rates in the 25-29 years age group are similar, birth rates for Indigenous mothers are lower for mothers aged 30 years and over when compared with all mothers.

The total fertility rate for Indigenous women (2.217) in Queensland in 2001 was slightly higher than the replacement level of the population (which is the fertility rate required for the population to replace itself accounting for female mortality). The total fertility rate for all women (1.795) was lower than the replacement level.

**TABLE 6: AGE SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES (PER 1,000 WOMEN) AND TOTAL FERTILITY RATE, BIRTHS TO INDIGENOUS MOTHERS AND TOTAL BIRTHS, QUEENSLAND, 2001**

Age Group	Indigenous	
	Women	All Women
15-19	74.2	22.5
20-24	139.4	68.9
25-29	118.5	111.3
30-34	74.0	103.8
35-39	31.6	44.4
40-44	5.7	7.6
45-49	0.0	0.0
TFR (a)	2.217	1.795

(a) Total fertility rate.

Source: ABS, Demography, Queensland, Cat. no. 3311.3

## Mortality

Statistics on Indigenous deaths are likely to be conservative, because reporting and identification of Indigenous status is not complete on death records. In Queensland in 2001, it was estimated that Indigenous deaths were under counted by 44%.

The age at death for Indigenous Queenslanders is much less than for the non-Indigenous population. In 2001, almost 1 in 4 Indigenous deaths occurred before the age of 35 years, compared with about 1 in 20 non-Indigenous deaths (Table 7). More than three-quarters of non-Indigenous deaths occurred after the age of 65 years, compared with less than one-third of Indigenous deaths.

**TABLE 7: INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS DEATHS, PROPORTION BY AGE GROUP, QUEENSLAND, 2001**

Age at Death	Non-Indigenous	
	Indigenous %	Indigenous %
0	6.7	1.1
1-14	3.0	0.6
15-24	6.4	1.3
25-34	6.7	1.8
35-44	13.1	2.9
45-54	17.0	5.6
55-64	16.5	9.8
65+	30.6	77.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Indirect standardised death rate per 1,000 of the population

(b) Per 1,000 live births.

Source: ABS, Deaths, Australia, 2001, Cat. no. 3302.0

There were 565 deaths in Queensland in 2001 where Indigenous status was recorded (Table 8). The median age at death for Indigenous persons (53.2 years) in Queensland in 2001 was about 25 years less than the figure for the non-Indigenous population (78.1 years). In addition, both the indirect standardised death rates (ISDR) and infant mortality rates for Indigenous Queenslanders are more than twice that for the non-Indigenous population.

Indigenous Queenslanders are over-represented in certain cause of death categories. In 2001, while Indigenous Queenslanders represented 3.1% of the total population, they accounted for 8.5% of deaths from intentional self-harm, 8.2% of deaths from diabetes mellitus and 5.5% of deaths from diseases of the liver.

**TABLE 8: INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS DEATHS, QUEENSLAND, 2001**

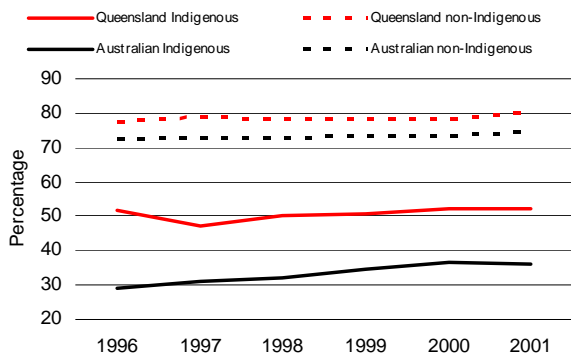
Indicator	Non-Indigenous		
	Indigenous	Indigenous	
Total deaths	no.	565	22,003
Median age at death	years	53.2	78.1
ISDR (a)	rate	12.6	5.6
Infant mortality rate (b)	rate	11.4	5.5
Selected causes of death:			
Malignant neoplasms	no.	104	6,297
Diabetes mellitus	no.	41	459
Diseases of the circulatory system	no.	158	8,654
Diseases of the respiratory system	no.	56	1,722
Diseases of the liver	no.	11	189
Intentional self harm	no.	42	453

Source: ABS, Deaths, Australia, 2001 (Cat. no. 3302.0)

## Education

The apparent retention rate for Indigenous Queensland school students (52.1%) was substantially greater than the rate for Indigenous Australians (36.3%) in 2001 (Figure 3).

**FIGURE 3: APPARENT RETENTION RATES BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, YEARS 7/8 TO YEAR 12, QUEENSLAND AND AUSTRALIA, 1996 TO 2001**



Source: ABS, Schools, Australia, Cat. no. 4221.0

There has been a large increase in Indigenous persons attending tertiary institutions. There were 2,558 Indigenous persons attending a TAFE institution and 1,907 Indigenous persons attending a university or other educational institution in Queensland (Table 9). These figures represent a large increase from those recorded at the 1996 Census, when 1,768 Indigenous persons attended a TAFE institution and 1,429 Indigenous persons attended a university or equivalent.

**TABLE 9: ATTENDANCE AT A TERTIARY INSTITUTION, INDIGENOUS PERSONS, QUEENSLAND, 2001**

	TAFE	University
Full-time	1,269	1,269
Part-time	1,279	622
<b>Total (a)</b>	<b>2,558</b>	<b>1,907</b>

(a) Includes not stated responses.

Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

## Qualifications

At the time of the 2001 Census, 1,840 Indigenous persons in Queensland held a bachelor degree qualification or higher (Table 10). In total, 9,871 (14.6%) Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over stated that they had a post-school qualification. The proportion of Indigenous persons with a post-school qualification was significantly less than for the non-Indigenous population for all qualification types.

**TABLE 10: POST-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION BY LEVEL BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, QUEENSLAND, 2001**

Qualification	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Number	% of total persons (a)	Number	% of total persons (a)
Postgraduate Degree	140	0.2	38,431	1.4
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate	243	0.4	31,410	1.2
Bachelor Degree	1,457	2.2	232,644	8.8
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	1,769	2.6	153,374	5.8
Certificate	6,262	9.3	442,055	16.7
Not stated(b)	8,624	12.8	211,401	8.0
Not applicable(c)	49,068	72.6	1,541,769	58.2
<b>Total (a)</b>	<b>67,563</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,651,084</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Persons aged 15 years and over.

(b) Includes 'inadequately described'.

(c) Includes persons who did not have a qualification.

Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

While the proportion of Indigenous persons with a post-school qualification is significantly lower than for the non-Indigenous population, the situation for Indigenous persons is improving. In the five years to 2001, the number of Indigenous persons in Queensland with a post-school qualification increased from 5,737 to 9,871 persons (Table 11). In particular, the number of Indigenous persons with a bachelor degree qualification or higher increased remarkably from 975 to 1,840 persons. In 1996, there were 4,762 Indigenous Queenslanders with a diploma or certificate. By 2001, this number had nearly doubled to 8,031 persons.

**TABLE 11: POST-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION BY LEVEL, INDIGENOUS PERSONS, QUEENSLAND, 1996 AND 2001**

Qualification	1996		2001	
	Number	% of total persons (a)	Number	% of total persons (a)
Postgraduate Degree	56	0.1	140	0.2
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate	133	0.2	243	0.4
Bachelor Degree	786	1.4	1,457	2.2
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	1,203	2.1	1,769	2.6
Certificate	3,559	6.3	6,262	9.3
Not stated (b)	6,890	12.2	8,624	12.8
Not applicable (c)	43,938	77.7	49,068	72.6
<b>Total (a)</b>	<b>56,565</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>67,563</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Persons aged 15 years and over.

(b) Includes 'inadequately described'.

(c) Includes persons who did not have a qualification.

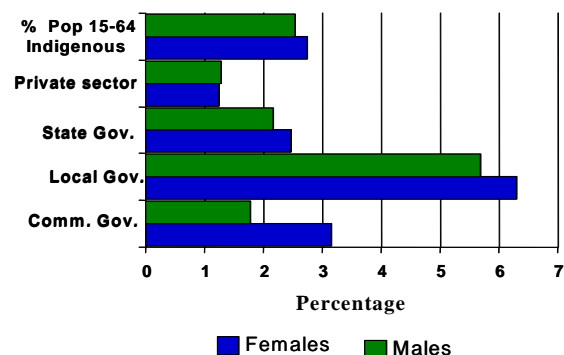
Source: ABS, Censuses of Population and Housing, 1996 and 2001

## Labour Force

At the time of the 2001 Census, 29,291 employed persons in Queensland identified as being of Indigenous origin. The employment status of Indigenous persons was different to that of non-Indigenous employed persons.

The Indigenous employment share in the private sector was less than half that of the percentage share of the working age population (Figure 4). The State Government's relative share was also low. To achieve parity of representation in the State Government sector, an extra 306 Indigenous females and 271 Indigenous males would have needed to be employed. Local government employed almost twice its proportional share (950 extra Indigenous jobs). The Commonwealth Government employed more than its proportional share of females (110 extra Indigenous jobs) and less than its proportional share of males (264 fewer Indigenous jobs).

**FIGURE 4: PERCENTAGE OF INDIGENOUS POPULATION AGED 15-64 YEARS AND PERCENTAGE REPRESENTATION BY EMPLOYMENT SECTOR, QUEENSLAND, 2001**



Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

The private sector experienced significant gains in both absolute numbers and in real terms of Indigenous persons employed in all ATSI regions during the period 1996 to 2001 except for Torres Strait Islands and Cooktown regions. Further, all ATSI regions experienced an absolute gain in Indigenous employment numbers in the State Government sector over this period except for Cooktown ATSI region.

The industry employing the largest number of Indigenous people in Queensland in 2001 was government administration and defence (23.8%) (Table 12). In comparison, only 4.4% of non-Indigenous employed persons worked in this industry. The proportions of Indigenous persons employed in the mining, education, health and community services, and personal and other services industries were greater than for the non-Indigenous population.

In comparison, for the non-Indigenous population, the three largest industries of employment in Queensland were retail trade, manufacturing, and property and business services. For the Indigenous population, these three industries were ranked fourth, fifth and sixth in terms of employment. Government administration and defence, health and community services, and education were the largest employees of Indigenous persons in Queensland.

**TABLE 12: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, PROPORTION BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, QUEENSLAND, 2001**

Industry	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	4.7	4.9
Mining	1.7	1.2
Manufacturing	6.9	10.7
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	0.4	0.8
Construction	5.4	7.1
Wholesale Trade	3.2	5.1
Retail Trade	8.4	15.4
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	4.4	5.7
Transport and Storage	3.7	5.0
Communication Services	1.1	1.5
Finance and Insurance	0.7	2.9
Property and Business Services	5.8	9.9
Government Administration and Defence	23.8	4.4
Education	8.6	7.6
Health and Community Services	10.6	9.6
Cultural and Recreational Services	2.2	2.4
Personal and Other Services	4.0	3.7
<b>Total (a)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Includes non-classifiable economic units and not stated responses.  
Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

At the time of the 2001 Census, employment by occupational categories varied significantly between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Non-Indigenous persons were more likely to be employed as managers, administrators and professionals, while a higher proportion of Indigenous persons were employed as tradespersons, labourers and related workers (Table 13).

**TABLE 13: EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES, PROPORTION BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, QUEENSLAND, 2001**

Occupation	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Managers, administrators and professionals	21.1	36.8
Tradespersons, labourers and related workers	46.9	30.7
Clerical, sales and service workers	28.2	30.6
<b>Total (a)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Includes inadequately described and not stated responses.  
Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

The labour force participation rate for Indigenous persons 15 years and over in Queensland rose from 59.5% to 61% between 1996 and 2001. With the exception of the ATSI regions of Townsville and Cooktown, labour force participation rates rose in all Queensland ATSI regions over this period.

The Indigenous unemployment rate has rapidly decreased (14%) since 1996 in comparison to the non-Indigenous population who recorded a decrease in unemployment of only 2.9% for the same year.

Although the unemployment rate for Indigenous Queenslanders was 20.0% in 2001, more than twice the rate for the total population (8.2%) (Table 14) the Indigenous differential is closing at a much faster rate compared to non-Indigenous persons.

While the Indigenous unemployment rate for females in Queensland in 1986 was higher than that for males (36.0% compared with 32.9%), this relativity has reversed in the three most recent censuses. In 1991, the female unemployment rate was 0.3% point less than the male rate. By 1996 the gap had reached 2.8% points, and in 2001 the female rate was 3.4% points lower than the male unemployment rate.

**TABLE 14: UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (%) BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, QUEENSLAND, 1986 TO 2001**

Year	Indigenous			Total Population
	Male	Female	Total	
1986	32.9	36.0	34.0	11.1
1991	27.8	27.5	27.7	11.3
1996	23.6	20.8	22.5	9.6
2001	21.5	18.1	20.0	8.2

Source: ABS, Censuses of Population and Housing, 1986 to 2001

## Income

The median individual income for Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over in Queensland was \$256 per week at the time of the 2001 Census, about \$100 less than the \$360 per week received by non-Indigenous people (Table 15).

Between 1991 and 2001, the average annual growth rate in the median weekly individual income for Indigenous persons was 3.4%. This was slightly higher than the average annual growth rate for the total population.

**TABLE 15: MEDIAN WEEKLY INDIVIDUAL INCOME BY INDIGENOUS STATUS (a), QUEENSLAND, 1991 TO 2001**

Census year	Indigenous	Total population
	\$	\$
1991	184	260
1996	227	293
2001	256	360

(a) Persons aged 15 years and over.

Source: ABS, Censuses of Population and Housing, 1991 to 2001

The majority of Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over (70.5%) received less than \$400 per week in 2001, compared with 54.1% for the total Queensland population (Table 16). Although 13.6% of the Indigenous population aged 15 years and over earned \$600 or more per week, twice this proportion (27.6%) of the total population aged 15 years and over earned this amount.

**TABLE 16: MEDIAN WEEKLY INDIVIDUAL INCOME BY INDIGENOUS STATUS (a), PROPORTION BY INCOME RANGE, QUEENSLAND, 2001**

Individual Weekly Income	Indigenous	Total population
	%	%
Less than \$200	42.1	29.3
\$200 - \$399	28.4	24.8
\$400 - \$599	15.9	18.3
\$600 - \$799	7.6	11.6
\$800 - \$999	2.9	6.5
\$1,000 or more	3.1	9.5

(a) Persons aged 15 years and over.

Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

The median income for Indigenous families is about \$200 per week less than for non-Indigenous families, despite the mean household size for Indigenous people being about 1.4 times larger than for non-Indigenous people.

## Language and Religion

The 2001 Census revealed that 84.2% (94,929 persons) of Indigenous Queenslanders spoke English only, while 5.0% (5,599 persons) spoke an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language.

There were 238 Indigenous persons counted in Queensland in the 2001 Census who reported that they practised an Australian Aboriginal traditional religion. Non-Indigenous people accounted for 23.5% of the total number of persons practicing a traditional Indigenous religion.

## Indigenous Women

Of the 112,772 persons in Queensland who identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin in the 2001 Census, 51.6% or 58,190 were women.

Indigenous women outnumbered men in all statistical divisions except for Central West and Mackay. This is in contrast to the total population where there were more men than women in Far North, Fitzroy, Mackay, Central West, South West and North West Statistical Divisions.

In the calendar year 2001, the median age at death for Indigenous females in Queensland was 54.1 years, slightly higher than for males (52.5 years). The median age at death for Indigenous females was 27.3 years less than for the total female population in Queensland (81.4 years). The median age at death for Indigenous males was 22.2 years less than for all Queensland males (74.7 years).

At the time of the 2001 Census, the unemployment rate for Indigenous women in Queensland was 18.1%. The rate has halved since 1986 when the figure was 36.0%.

The number of Indigenous women with a degree or diploma qualification in Queensland in 2001 (2,286) was higher than the corresponding number for men (1,323) (Table 17). The number of women exceeded the number of men in all qualification levels except for certificates.

**TABLE 17: POST-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION BY LEVEL BY SEX, INDIGENOUS PERSONS (a), QUEENSLAND, 2001**

Qualification	Males	Females
Postgraduate Degree	64	76
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate	77	166
Bachelor Degree	518	939
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	664	1,105
Certificate	3,883	2,379
Not stated (b)	3,602	5,022
Not applicable(c)	22,773	26,295
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,581</b>	<b>35,982</b>

(a) Persons aged 15 years and over.

(b) Includes 'inadequately described'.

(c) Includes persons who did not have a qualification.

Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing

More than three times as many Indigenous women (1,453) were qualified in management and commerce than Indigenous men (458) in Queensland in 2001. Society and culture was the next most popular field of study for Indigenous women, with 1,027 women and 524 men qualified in this area.

The 2001 Census showed that more Indigenous women than men were enrolled in technical and further education (TAFE) or at a university in Queensland. The number of women enrolled at a university (1,253) was nearly double the number of men (654), while the number of women enrolled in TAFE (1,412) was 20% greater than the number of men (1,176).

# Queensland Treasury

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