



National  
Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait  
Islander Social  
Survey 2014-15

*It's about me, It's about us*

# 2014-15 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS)

*It's about me, It's about us*

The ABS thanks the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who shared their stories in the 2014-15 NATSISS

Artwork by Jessie Victoria Bonson

JVBono





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**The NATSISS is one of only two large, nationally representative, household surveys for and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.**


**Originated from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 25 years ago.**

**Fourth in this series (6-yearly).**



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**Content focused on wellbeing  
and supports further investigation of  
relationships between people's  
circumstances and outcomes.**



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2014-15 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey

# Positive progress

...since the 2008 NATSISS:

- Increased year 12 completions
- Increased non school qualifications
- Better housing (less overcrowding)
- Lower rates of daily smoking & risky drinking
- Increased maternal health protective behaviours
- Lower rates of tooth and gum problems in kids



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# However ...

compared with 2008:

- Employment is flat
- People experienced high levels of violence, and family violence
- People reported high levels of contact with police and incarceration rates remain high
- Substance use is on the increase



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## Focus on Western Australia



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In 2014, the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in WA was 87,200 (up from 69,200 in 2008).

Almost half (**45%**) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were under the age of 20.

In 2014-15,

# 52%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in WA **rated their overall life satisfaction as 8 out of 10 or better**



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## Culture and language



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In 2014-15,

# 70%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged  
15 years and over in WA **identified with a clan,  
tribal or language group**

## Cultural identity/connection

- **57%** in the greater Perth region, 71% in regional areas and **83%** across remote and very remote areas in WA **identified with a clan, tribal or language group.**
- **78%** recognise **traditional country or homelands** in WA, **70%** in greater Perth region, 70% in regional areas and **89%** across remote and very remote areas in WA.

## Cultural activity participation

- Over two thirds (**68%**) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 3 years and over in WA **participated in cultural activities**
- Of those aged 3-14 years who had **participated in cultural activities, 4%** were in inner regional areas, **15%** in outer regional areas, **51%** in remote and very remote areas, and **28%** in the Greater Perth area.



## Language

- **24%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in WA speak an Indigenous language, **38%** speak some Indigenous words
- Regionally, **39%** in the greater Perth region, **38%** in regional areas and **39%** across remote and very remote areas speak some Indigenous words

In 2014-15,

# 92%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged  
15 years and over in WA **felt they were able to get  
support in times of crisis from outside the  
household**



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# Maternal and child health

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In 2014-15,

# 9 in 10

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0 – 3 years in WA **had a birth mother who went for check ups during pregnancy, and around**

# 1 in 2

**had a birth mother who took folate prior to, or during pregnancy**



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## Maternal health, compared to 2008

- No difference in mums who used tobacco while pregnant (**40%, compared to 41% in 2008**)
- Nationally, a decrease in mums who drank alcohol while pregnant (**10%, down from 20%**)

## Child health (4 – 14 years)

- **80%** of kids (0 – 14 years) had their health rated as excellent or very good
- **11%** had an eye or sight problem in 2014-15, up from **8%** in 2008.
- **12%** had an ear or hearing problem in 2014-15, up from **10%** in 2008.
- **32%** had tooth or gum problem in 2014-15, down from **36%** in 2008.



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## Education & employment

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In 2014-15,

**98%**

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 4 - 14 years in WA **usually attended school (including pre-school and kindergarten)**

**62%**

were being **taught about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture at school**

In 2014-15

44%

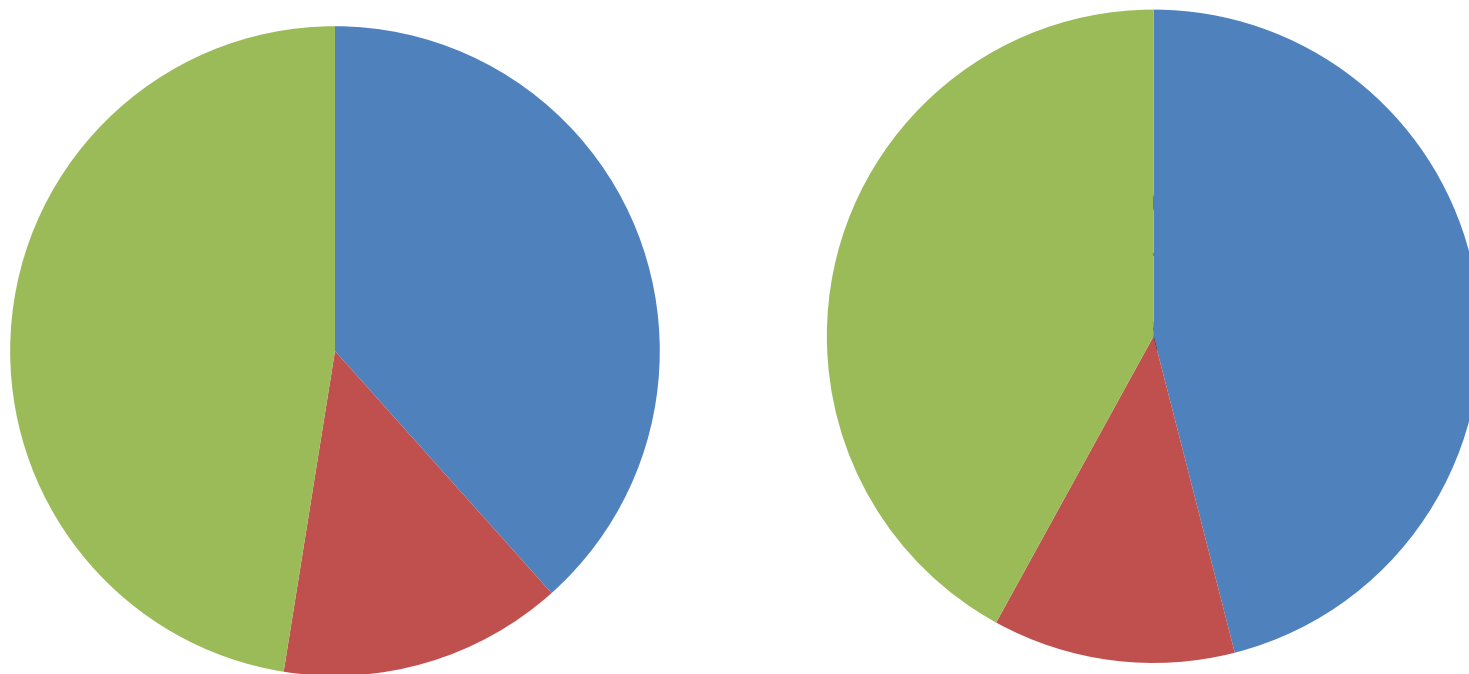
of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people  
aged 15 years and over in WA **had a non school  
qualification**

## Non-school qualification

- **51%** in the Greater Perth region, **44%** in inner and outer regional areas and **37%** in remote and very remote areas **had a non-school qualification**

## Labour Force Status

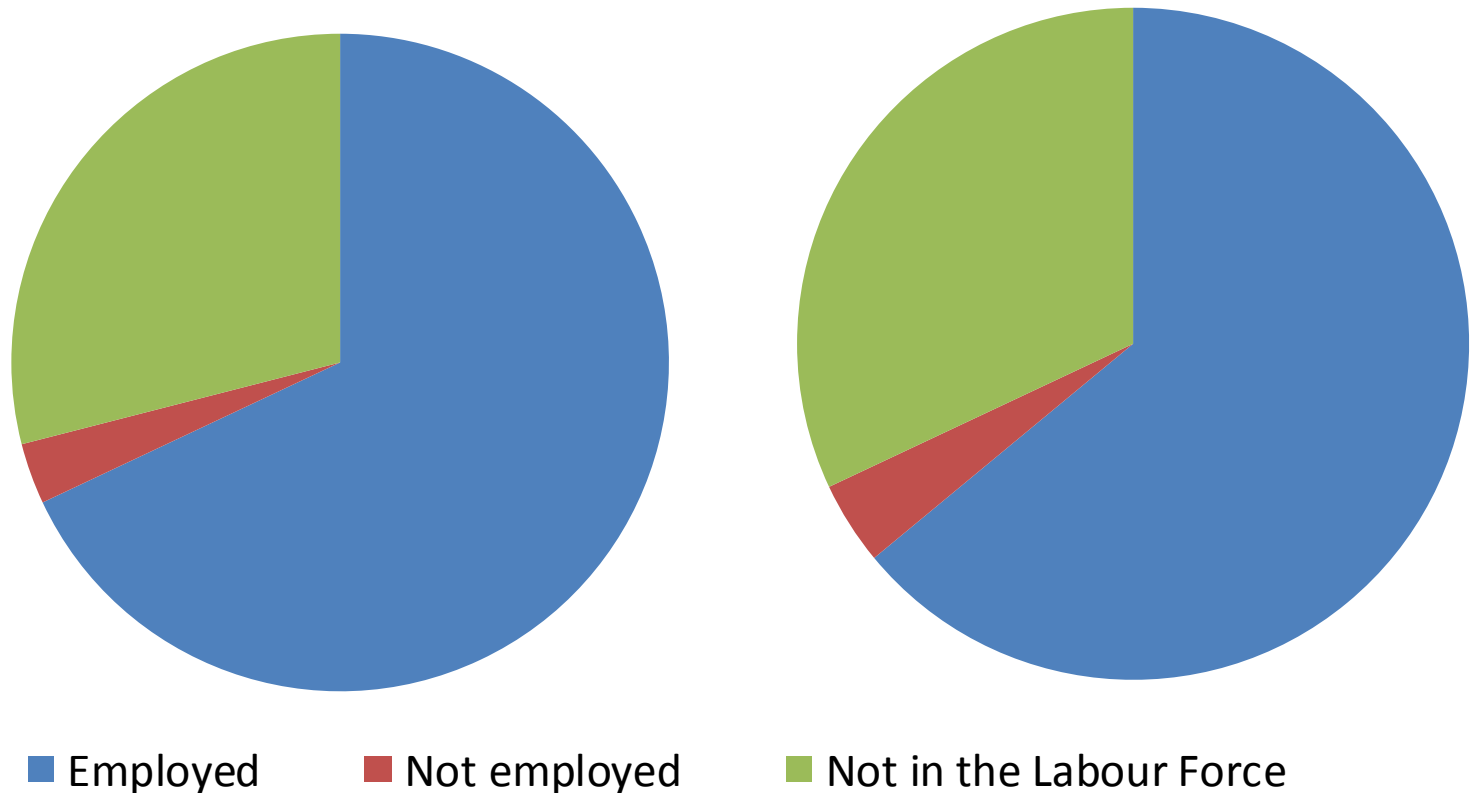
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons,  
WA and Australia



■ Employed ■ Not employed ■ Not in the Labour Force



## Labour Force Status Non-Indigenous, WA and Australia



In 2014-15,

38%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people  
aged 15 years and over in WA **were employed**

67%

of them **were employed fulltime**

## Labour Force Status

- **39%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in the Greater Perth region, **41%** in regional areas, and **36%** in remote and very remote areas **were employed**
- Of those, **69%** in the Greater Perth region, **73%** in regional areas, and **59%** in remote and very remote areas **were employed fulltime**



Artwork by Jessie Victoria Bonson

## Persons employed, WA



## Barriers to employment

- **9 in 10 (96%)** unemployed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in WA **had difficulty finding work**
- Those difficulties included:
  - **No jobs in local area or line of work/no jobs at all (40%)**
  - **No driver's licence (39%)**
  - **Transport problems/distance (35%)** and
  - **Insufficient education, training, skills (25%)**



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# Health

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## Smoking

- Frequency of smoking
- Number of cigarettes smoked
- Whether ever smokes
- Attempts to quit or reduce smoking
- Reasons for attempting to quit or reduce smoking

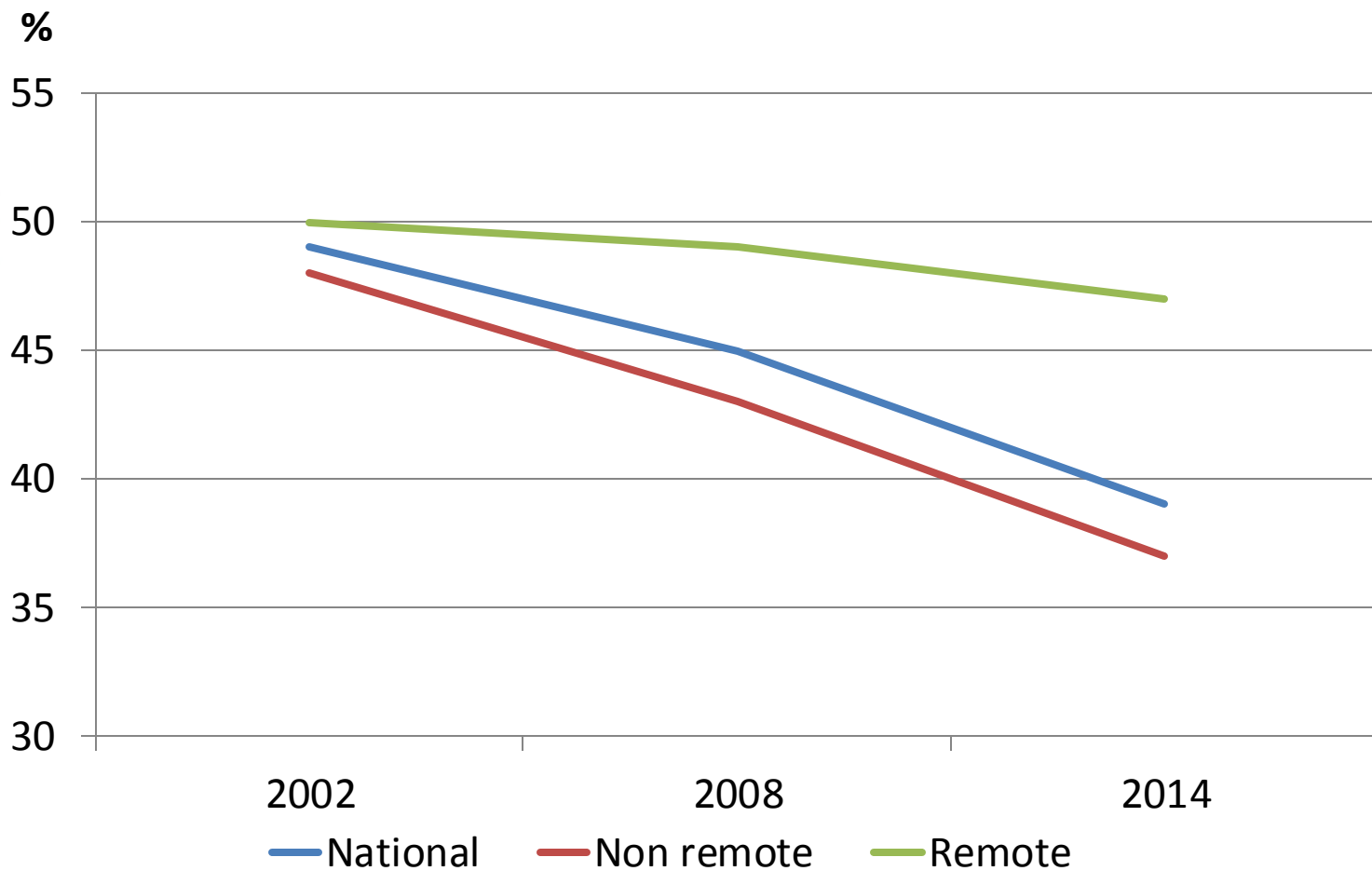


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## Current daily smoking trends by remoteness, Australia



This data has been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. Discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

In 2014-15,

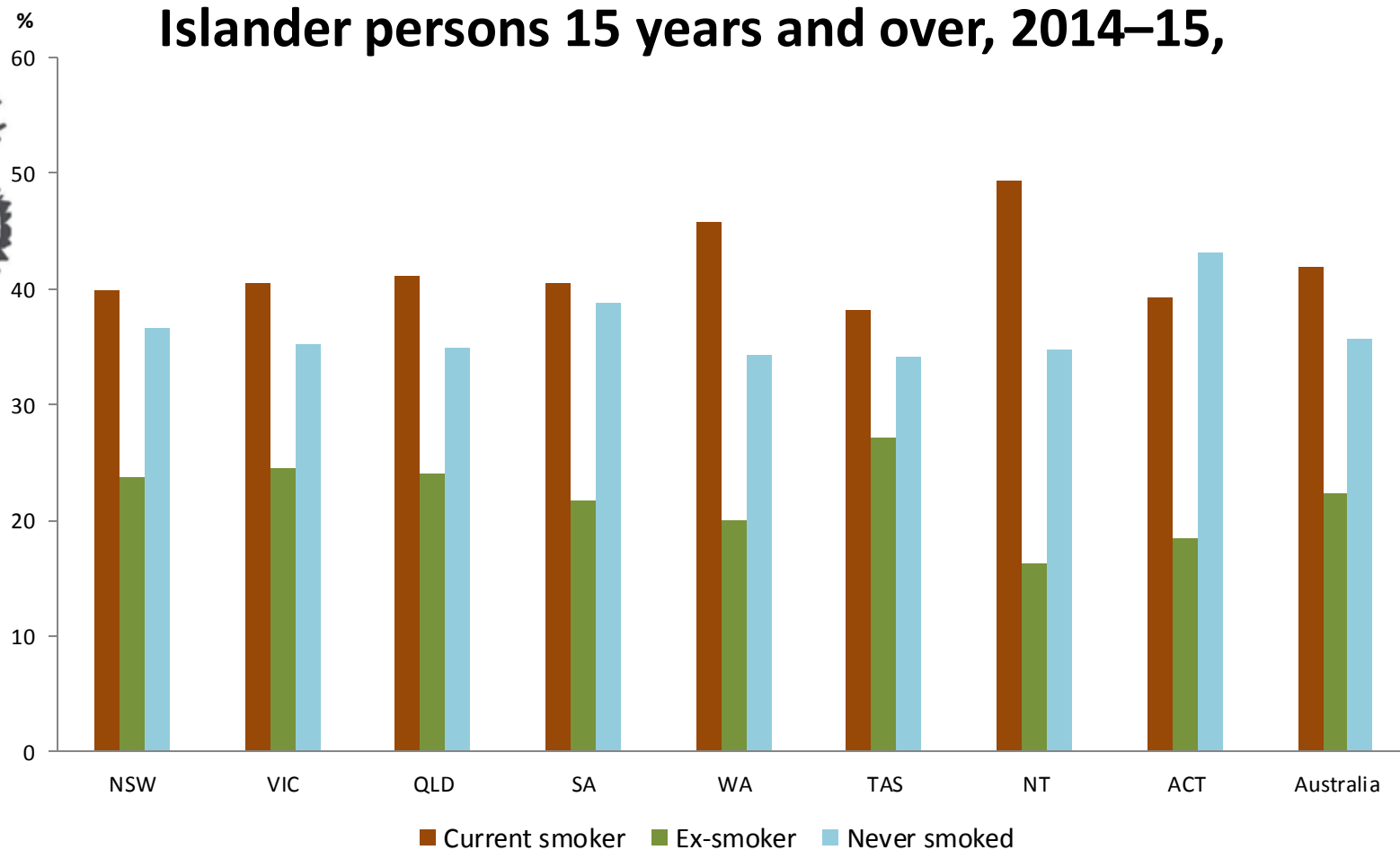
# 42%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in WA were **current daily smokers,**

Above the national figure of

# 39%

## Smoker status, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons 15 years and over, 2014–15,



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- Consumption in last 12 months
- Frequency of consumption
- Daily consumption
- Consumption in last 2 weeks

In 2014-15,

**33%**

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
people aged 15 years and over in WA  
engaged in **single occasion risky drinking**

In 2014-15,

**32%**

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people  
aged 15 years and over in WA **had used  
substances in the previous 12 months**

## Health status

In 2014-15,

**41%**

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in WA aged 15 years and over rated their health as excellent or very good.

In 2014-15,

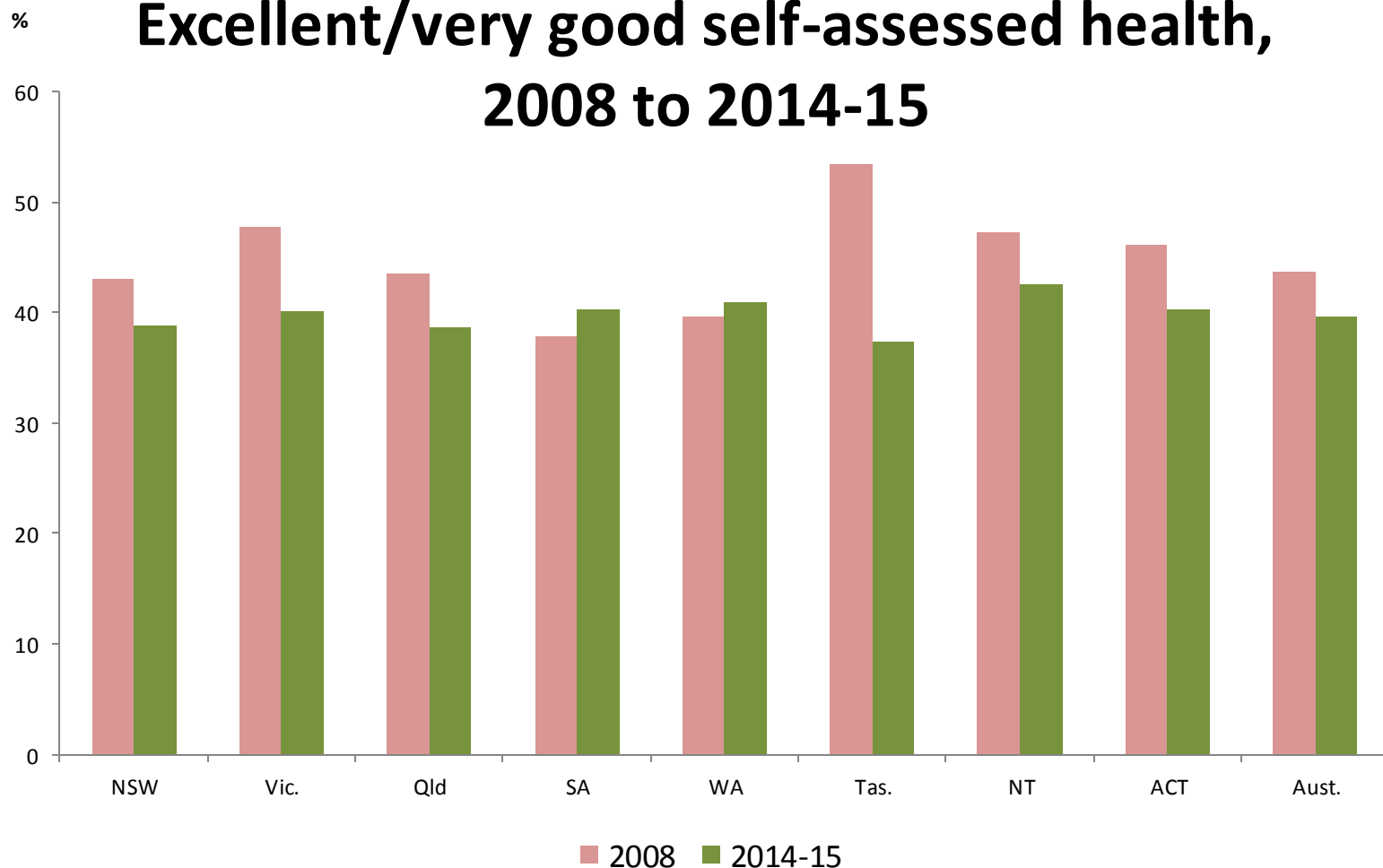
**60%**

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in WA aged 15 years and over have a long-term health condition.



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JB<sub>2010</sub>

## Excellent/very good self-assessed health, 2008 to 2014-15



# Mental health

- Self reported depression, anxiety, behavioural and emotional problems, harmful use/dependence on alcohol drugs, diagnosed by doctor or nurse
- Not a prevalence of mental illness



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## Mental health feature article

- compared outcomes with those who had other long term health condition/s, no long term health condition/s ....
  - Lower overall life satisfaction
  - Less likely to report excellent or very good health
  - Had more trouble accessing health services
  - More likely to have used substances
  - Less likely to be participating in the labour force



J.B.

In 2014-15,

# 26%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in WA **reported having been told by a doctor or nurse that they have a mental health condition**

# 20%

**reported having both a mental health condition and another long term health condition**



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## Safety & justice



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In 2014-15,

# 27%

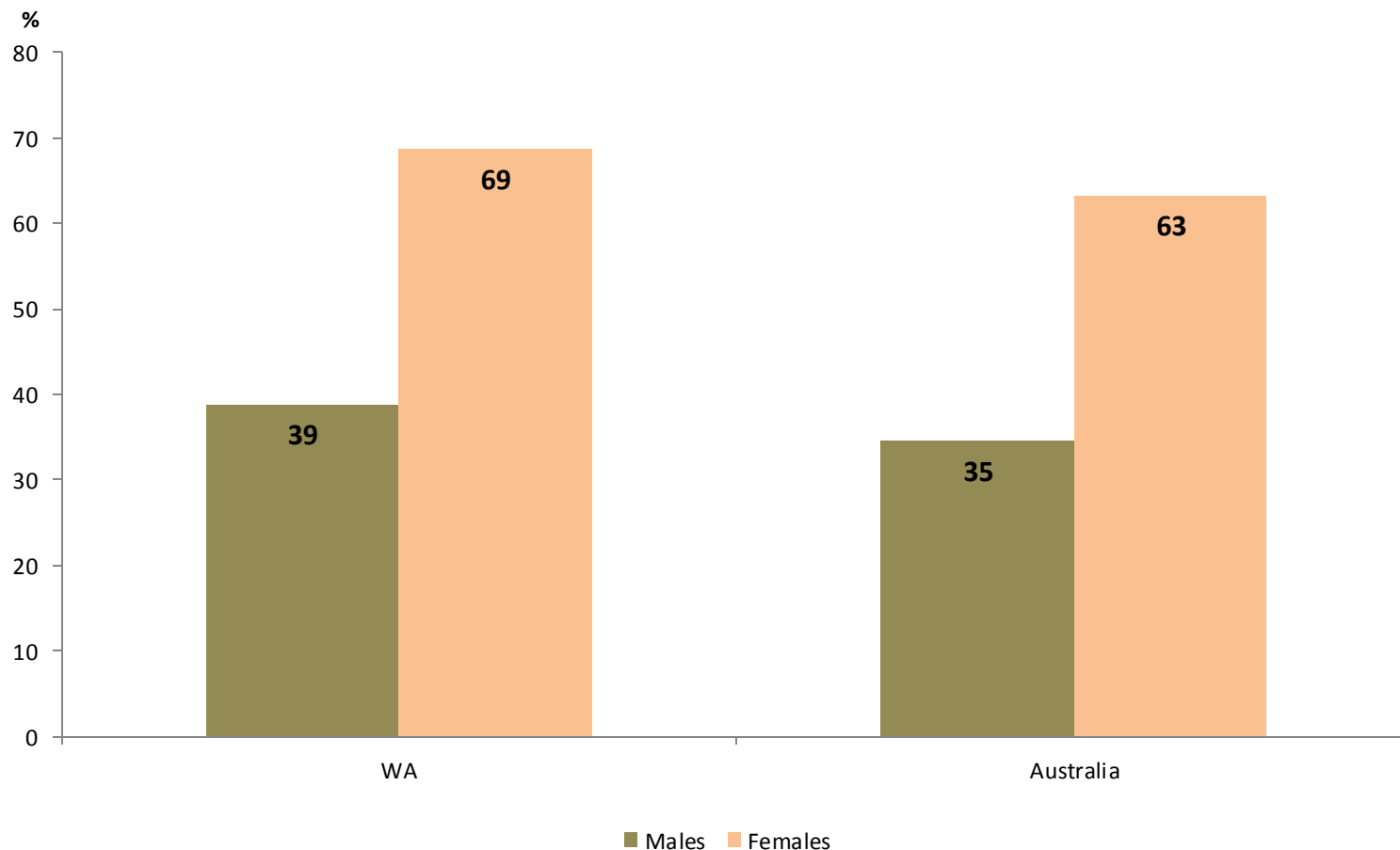
of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years  
and over in WA **experienced physical or threatened  
physical violence in the last 12 months**

In 2014-15,

# 94%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in WA **who had experienced physical violence in the last 12 months knew the perpetrator of the most recent incident.**

## Physical violence involving a family member





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In 2014-15, nearly

# 16%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in WA **had used a legal service in the last 12 months**

In 2014-15

# 18%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in WA (15% nationally) said they **had been arrested in the last five years** (25% of males compared with 12% of females).

Nationally, 20% of males compared with 9% of females said they **had been arrested in the last five years**.



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## Housing & homelessness

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In 2014-15,

# 24%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in WA **were living in a dwelling that was overcrowded.**

## Homelessness

Have you ever experienced any of these things because you did not have a permanent place to live?

- Stayed with [relatives/family]
- Stayed at a friend's house
- Stayed in a caravan
- Stayed at a boarding house/hostel
- Stayed in a night shelter
- Stayed in a shelter for the homeless
- Stayed at a refuge (e.g. women's shelter)
- Squatted in an abandoned building
- Slept rough (including sleeping in cars, tents etc.)
- Other
- No



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In 2014-15,

# 31%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years  
and over in WA had **experienced homelessness**

## Housing in WA

- **76%** were living in rented properties, **14%** lived in and owned the property with a mortgage and **8%** lived in and owned the property without a mortgage.
- In regional WA, **70%** were living in rented properties. Nationally - **67%** were living in rented properties, **19%** lived in and owned the property with a mortgage and **9%** lived in and owned the property without a mortgage.

In 2014-15,

# 39%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in WA that had **experienced homelessness** also **reported having been told by a doctor or nurse that they have a mental health condition**



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**NATSISS release (includes infographic)  
see ABS cat. no. 4714.0**

**User Guide - cat. no. 4720.0**

**NATSISS Tablebuilder and NATSISS CURF.  
cat. no. 4720.0.55.002**

**Find more @ [abs.gov.au](http://abs.gov.au) or email  
[ncatsis@abs.gov.au](mailto:ncatsis@abs.gov.au)**



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