

Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status 2023

Key facts and tables

Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet

The mandate of the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (HealthInfoNet) is to contribute to improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health by making relevant, high-quality knowledge and information easily accessible to policy makers, health service providers, program managers, clinicians and other health professionals (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners) and researchers.

The HealthInfoNet also provides easy-to-read and summarised material for students and the general community.

The HealthInfoNet achieves its commitment by undertaking research into various aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and disseminating the results (and other relevant knowledge and information) mainly via HealthInfoNet websites (<https://healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au>), the Alcohol and Other Drugs Knowledge Centre (<https://aodknowledgecentre.ecu.edu.au>), Tackling Indigenous Smoking (<https://tacklingsmoking.org.au>) and WellMob (<https://wellmob.org.au>).

The research involves analysis and synthesis of data and other information obtained from academic, professional, government and other sources. The HealthInfoNet's work in knowledge exchange aims to facilitate the transfer of pure and applied research into policy and practice to address the needs of a wide range of users.

We acknowledge and pay our deepest respects to Elders past, present and emerging throughout the country. In particular, we pay our respects to the Whadjuk Noongar peoples of Western Australia on whose Country our offices are located (<https://healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/acknowledging-country>).

Population

- In 2023, the estimated Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population was 913,889.
- In 2023, NSW had the highest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (the estimated population was 303,186 people, 33% of the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population).
- In 2023, the NT had the highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in its population, with 32% of the NT population identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population

Estimated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) population, by jurisdiction, Australia, 2023

Jurisdiction	Indigenous population (number)	Proportion of Australian Indigenous population (%)	Proportion of total jurisdiction population (%)
NSW	303,186	33	3.6
Vic	68,693	7.5	1.0
Qld	258,411	28	4.7
WA	114,312	13	4.0
SA	48,338	5.3	2.6
Tas	31,849	3.5	5.6
ACT	9,113	1.0	2.0
NT	79,695	8.7	32
Australia	913,889	100	3.4

Note: The Australian population includes Jervis Bay Territory, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Christmas Island and Norfolk Island.

Births and pregnancy outcomes

- In 2022, there were 24,388 births registered in Australia with one or both parents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (8.1% of all births registered).
- In 2022, the median age for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers who gave birth was 26.7 years.
- In 2022, the total fertility rate was 2.4 babies per 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.
- In 2021, 88% (crude proportion) of pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women attended five or more antenatal visits.
- In 2021, the average birthweight of babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers was 3,217 grams.

Mortality

- In 2022, the age-standardised death rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT was 10 per 1,000.
- For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people born in 2020-2022, life expectancy was estimated to be 71.9 years for males and 75.6 years for females, around 8-9 years less than the estimates for non-Indigenous males and females.
- In 2022, the median age at death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT was 62.3 years.
- For 2017-2021, among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-4 years, living in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT, there were 613 deaths; 518 in children aged 0-1 years (85% of deaths) and 95 in children aged 1-4 years.
- In 2022, the leading causes of death among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT were ischaemic heart disease (IHD), diabetes, chronic lower respiratory diseases and cancer of trachea, bronchus and lung.
- For 2012-2021, the maternal mortality ratio for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women was 17 deaths per 100,000 women who gave birth.
- In 2017-2021, there were 7,766 deaths from avoidable causes among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged under 75 years living in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT.

Mortality

Numbers and proportions (%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths, Australia, 2022

Jurisdiction	Number of deaths	Proportion of deaths in total jurisdiction population %
NSW	1,691	2.7
Vic	337	0.7
Qld	1,271	3.3
WA	733	4.2
SA	275	1.8
Tas	124	2.4
ACT	29	1.1
NT	617	46
Australia	5,082	2.7

Note: Australian total includes other territories including Jervis Bay Territory, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Christmas Island and Norfolk Island.

Mortality

Number of deaths and age-standardised death rates, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, NSW, Qld, WA, SA

Jurisdiction	Numbers	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
NSW	1,691	8.8
Qld	1,271	9.8
WA	733	12
SA	275	10
NT	617	13
Total for the selected jurisdictions	4,587	10

Notes:

1. Rates are per 1,000 population.
2. Rates are based on three-year averages; for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data, rates are calculated for each calendar year and then averaged to reduce variability in annual rates.

Mortality

Expectation of life at birth in years, by Indigenous status and sex, selected jurisdictions, Australia, 2020-2022

Jurisdiction	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Non-Indigenous people	Difference
Males			
NSW	73.8	80.6	6.8
Qld	72.9	80.2	7.4
WA	68.9	81.2	12.3
NT	65.6	79.1	13.5
Australia	71.9	80.6	8.8
Females			
NSW	77.9	83.8	5.9
Qld	76.6	83.5	7.0
WA	72.6	84.3	11.7
NT	69.4	83.2	13.8
Australia	75.6	83.8	8.1

Notes:

1. These estimates are based on the average number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths registered in 2020, 2021 and 2022 adjusted for under/overidentification of Indigenous status in registrations. Final Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates are based on the 2021 Census.
2. Australian estimates are based on deaths in all states and territories.
3. Differences are based on unrounded estimates.
4. Life expectancy estimates for Australia are calculated taking age-specific identification rates into account.

Mortality

Expectation of life at selected ages, by Indigenous status and sex, selected jurisdictions, Australia, 2020-2022

Age	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Non-Indigenous people	Difference
Males			
0	71.9	80.6	8.8
1	71.3	79.9	8.6
5	67.4	75.9	8.6
25	48.1	56.3	8.2
50	26.4	32.5	6.1
65	15.5	19.3	3.9
85	4.4	4.7	0.3
Females			
0	75.6	83.8	8.1
1	75.0	83.0	8.0
5	71.0	79.1	8.0
25	51.4	59.2	7.8
50	28.5	34.9	6.4
65	16.7	21.1	4.4
85	4.5	4.8	0.3

1. These estimates are based on the average number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths registered in 2020, 2021 and 2022 adjusted for under/overidentification of Indigenous status in registrations. Final Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates are based on the 2021 Census.
2. Australian estimates are based on deaths in all states and territories.
3. Differences are based on unrounded estimates.
4. Life expectancy estimates for Australia are calculated taking age-specific identification rates into account.

Mortality

Expectation of life at birth in years, by Indigenous status and remoteness, Australia, 2020-2022

Remoteness	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people		Non-Indigenous		Difference	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Major cities	72.5	76.5	81.0	84.0	8.5	7.5
Inner and outer regional	72.8	76.7	79.6	83.2	6.8	6.5
Remote and very remote	67.3	71.3	79.7	83.7	12.4	12.4

Notes:

1. These estimates are based on the average number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths registered in 2020, 2021 and 2022. adjusted for under-identification and over-identification of Indigenous status in registrations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates are based on the 2021 Census.
2. Differences are based on unrounded estimates.
3. Life expectancy estimates for Australia are calculated taking age-specific identification rates into account.

Mortality

Median age at death (in years), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by sex, NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT,

Jurisdiction	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people		
	Males	Females	Persons
NSW	62.3	67.9	64.6
Qld	60.9	65.6	63.2
WA	55.9	61.9	59
SA	57.7	64.7	60.5
NT	56.7	61.3	59.2
Total for the selected jurisdictions	60.1	65.1	62.3

Notes:

1. Information is not available for the other jurisdictions because of the relatively small numbers of deaths recorded.
2. Median age of death is the age below which 50% of deaths occur.

Mortality

Numbers and age-specific rates for avoidable deaths, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT, 2015-2019

Age-group (years)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	
	Number	Rate per 100,000
Less than 1	335	374
1-4	60	18
5-14	92	11
15-24	492	71
25-34	690	132
35-44	982	251
45-54	1,457	402
55-64	1,678	691
65-74	1,580	1,383
All ages – crude rate	7,366	208
All ages – age-standardised rate	7,366	314

Hospitalisation

- In 2021-22, 5.3% of all hospital separations were for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2021-22, the age-standardised hospital separation rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was 969 per 1,000, with the highest rate in the NT of 2,113 per 1,000.
- In 2017-19, age-specific hospital separation rates (excluding dialysis) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people increased with age (except for 0–4 year olds among males and females, and 35-44 year olds among females), with the highest rate in the 65 years and over age-group.
- In 2021-22, the main cause of hospitalisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was for 'Factors influencing health status and contact with health services' (mostly for care involving dialysis), responsible for 47% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hospital separations.
- In 2021-22, the age-standardised rate of overall potentially preventable hospitalisations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was 65 per 1,000.

Hospitalisation

Numbers of hospital separations and age-standardised hospital separation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by jurisdiction, 2021-22

Jurisdiction	Number	Rate
NSW	119,774	544
Vic	34,587	704
Qld	184,896	1,044
WA	108,085	1,440
SA	35,417	1,089
NT	120,171	2,113
Australia	619,767	969

Notes

1. Rates per 1,000 population.
2. Numbers and rates for the NT are for public hospitals only; numbers and rates are not included separately for public hospitals in Tas or the ACT but included in totals where applicable. The data are not published for confidentiality reasons and low numbers.

Hospitalisation

Age-specific hospital separation rates (excluding dialysis), by sex, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, 2017-

Age-group (years)	Males	Females	Rates Persons
0-4	358	284	322
5-14	115	103	109
15-24	162	399	277
25-34	242	565	402
35-44	384	550	469
45-54	532	567	550
55-64	652	661	657
65+	965	935	948
All ages (age-standardised rate)	422	520	470
All ages (crude rate)	312	427	369

Notes:

1. Rates per 1,000 population.
2. Data includes public and private hospitals in all jurisdictions.
3. Age-standardised using the Australian 2001 standard population.

Hospitalisation

Numbers, proportions (%), and age-standardised hospitalisation rates for leading causes of hospital separations among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Australia, 2021-22

Principal diagnosis (ICD)	Number of separations	Proportion of separations (%)	Age-standardised separation rate
Symptoms, signs and abnormal clinical and laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	41,315	6.7	59
Injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	40,433	6.5	53
Pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium	33,226	5.4	34
Diseases of the digestive system	31,405	5.1	45
Diseases of the respiratory system	26,770	4.3	37
Mental and behavioural disorders	25,440	4.1	34
Diseases of the circulatory system	16,986	2.7	31
Diseases of the genitourinary system	16,630	2.7	25
Certain infectious and parasitic diseases	16,452	2.7	21
Diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue	16,122	2.6	26
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	12,351	2.0	19
Diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue	11,393	1.8	15
Neoplasms	11,232	1.8	20
Diseases of the nervous system	9,161	1.5	13
Factors influencing health status and contact with health services	289,550	47	517
All causes	619,767	100	976

Notes:

1. Hospital separation rates per 1,000 population.
2. Hospitalisation data for Tas, the ACT and the NT include only public hospitals.
3. Some principal diagnoses have been excluded.

Hospitalisation

Age-standardised hospital separation rates for selected potentially preventable hospitalisations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by condition type, by jurisdiction, all hospitals, 2021-22

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Vaccine preventable conditions	4.3	4.7	7.7	14	9.5	1.5	2.7	29	9.0
Acute conditions	19	22	34	34	27	10	24	43	28
Chronic conditions	22	30	34	38	33	15	14	44	30
Total	45	55	74	83	68	26	40	111	65

Note: Rates are per 1,000 population.

Hospitalisation

Age-standardised hospital separation rates for potentially preventable hospitalisations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by condition type, by remoteness, 2021-22

	Major cities	Regional	Remote	Australia
Vaccine preventable conditions	5.2	6.0	22	9.0
Acute conditions	23	25	43	28
Chronic conditions	25	29	43	30
Total	52	58	104	65

Notes:

1. Rates are per 1,000 population.
2. Data are from public and private hospitals in all jurisdictions.

Cardiovascular health

- In 2018-19, around 15% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reported having cardiovascular disease (CVD).
- In 2017-2021, in Qld, WA, SA and the NT combined, there were 1,750 new diagnoses of rheumatic heart disease (RHD) among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, at a crude rate of 75 per 100,000.
- In 2020-21, there were 16,986 hospital separations for CVD among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, representing 5.1% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hospital separations (excluding dialysis).
- In 2022, IHD was the leading specific cause of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT.

Cardiovascular health

Proportion (%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with measured high blood pressure, by age-group and sex, persons aged 18 years and over, 2018–19

Age-group (years)	Males	Females	Persons
18–24	9.5	7.3	8.8
25–34	19	12	16
35–44	24	22	23
45–54	40	32	36
55 years and over	39	35	37
Total 18 years and over	25	21	23

Note: Proportion expressed as percentages.

Cancer

- For 2014-2018, there were 9,262 new cases of cancer diagnosed among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in NSW, Vic, Qld, WA and the NT, at an average of 1,852 new cases per year.
- For 2014-2018, the most common cancers diagnosed among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in NSW, Vic, Qld, WA and the NT were lung cancer, breast cancer (in females), bowel and prostate cancer.
- Survival rates indicated that of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in NSW, Vic, Qld, WA, and the NT who were diagnosed with cancer between 2009 and 2018, just over half (55%) had survived for five years or more after their diagnosis.
- In 2021-22, there were 11,232 hospital separations for neoplasms among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2022, cancers of the trachea, bronchus and lung combined were the fourth leading cause of death overall for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT, being responsible for 271 deaths.
- For 2017-2021, the age-standardised mortality rate for cancer in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT was 244 per 100,000.
- In 2018, cancer accounted for 9.9% of the total burden of disease among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Cancer

Incidence of all selected and combined cancers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by sex, NSW, Vic, Qld, WA and the NT, 2014-2018

Cancer type	Males		Females		Persons	
	Number of new cases	Average new cases (per year)	Number of new cases	Average new cases (per year)	Number of new cases	Average new cases (per year)
Colorectal (bowel)	456	91	394	79	850	170
Lung	733	147	671	134	1,404	281
Breast	n/a	n/a	1,150	230	1,150	230
Cervical	n/a	n/a	173	35	173	35
Prostate	765	153	n/a	n/a	765	153
Head and neck	429	86	159	32	588	118
Uterine	n/a	n/a	293	59	293	59
Liver	285	57	104	21	390	78
All cancers combined	4,646	929	4,616	923	9,262	1,852

- Notes:
1. Incidence of breast and uterine cancers are for females only. Incidence of prostate cancer is for males only.
 2. n/a – non-applicable.
 3. All cancers combined include cancer types not listed in the table.

Cancer

Five-year approximate relative survival (%) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by sex, for selected cancers, NSW, Vic, Qld, WA and the NT, 2009-2018

Cancer type	Males	Females	Persons
Colorectal (bowel)	63	64	64
Lung	12	14	13
Breast	n/a	85	n/a
Cervical	n/a	56	n/a
Prostate	94	n/a	n/a
Head and neck	46	50	47
Uterine	n/a	82	n/a
Liver	11	n.p.	11
Bladder	45	42	44
Stomach	23	n.p.	24
All cancers combined	52%	58%	55%

Notes

1. Survival for breast, uterine and cervical cancers are for females only. Survival for prostate cancer is for males only.
2. n/a - non-applicable.
3. n.p. - not published (estimate not reliable as there were not enough cases).
4. All cancers combined include cancer types not listed in the table.

Cancer

Number of deaths for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by sex, for all cancers combined and selected cancers, NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT, 2015-2019

Cancer site/type	Number of deaths - Males	Number of deaths - Females	Total number of deaths
Lung	526	416	942
Breast	6	185	191
Colorectal (bowel)	148	128	276
Prostate	119	n/a	n/a
Head and neck	162	57	219
Melanoma (skin)	19	11	30
Liver	170	97	267
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	38	28	66
Uterine	n/a	39	n/a
Unknown primary site	126	106	232
Pancreatic	117	123	240
Cervical	n/a	69	n/a
Kidney	32	18	50
Bladder	35	19	54
All cancers combined	1,939	1,637	3,576

Notes:

1. Numbers of deaths due to cervical cancer are for females only, and prostate cancer is for males only.
2. All cancers combined include cancer types not listed in the table.
3. This table only includes deaths due to malignant neoplasms (cancerous tumours) and excludes deaths due to non-malignant neoplasms (in situ tumours, benign tumours and tumours of uncertain or unknown malignancy).
4. n/a - non applicable.

Diabetes

- In 2021, 5.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reported having diabetes as a long-term condition.
- In 2019-20, there were 4,835 potentially preventable hospitalisations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for a principal diagnosis of diabetes.
- In 2022, diabetes was the second leading specific cause of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NSW, Qld, SA, WA and the NT.
- In 2018, endocrine disorders accounted for 3.3% of total disease burden among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Of this, 87% was attributed to type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes

Incidence of diabetes, by diabetes type and sex, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, 2021

Diabetes type	Number			Crude rate		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Type 1	84	67	151	19	15	17
Type 2	1,009	968	1,977	230	220	225
All diabetes	1,156	1,091	2,248	263	248	256

Notes:

1. Rates are per 100,000 population.
2. Rates may be influenced by the low capture on the National Diabetes Services Scheme of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in places classified as remote and very remote.
3. Excludes persons whose Indigenous status was not stated or inadequately described.

Social and emotional wellbeing (including mental health)

- In 2018-19, 80% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males over 18 years of age reported feeling calm and peaceful all/most of the time and 87% felt happy all/most of the time.
- In 2018-19, 78% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females over 18 years of age reported feeling calm and peaceful all/most of the time and 88% felt happy all/most of the time.
- In 2018-19, 31% of Aboriginal people and 23% of Torres Strait Islander people aged 18 years and over reported high or very high levels of psychological distress.
- In 2018-19, 25% of Aboriginal people and 17% of Torres Strait Islander people, aged two years and over, reported having a mental and/or behavioural condition.
- In 2018-19, anxiety was the most common mental or behavioural condition reported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged two years and over (17%), followed by depression (13%).
- In 2021-22, there were 25,440 hospital separations with a principal diagnosis of International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 'mental and behavioural disorders' identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
- In 2022, 212 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT died from intentional self-harm.
- In 2018, mental and substance use disorders accounted for 23% of total disease burden among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Of all disease groups, mental and substance use disorders made the highest contribution to total burden.

Kidney health

- In 2018-19, 1.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Aboriginal people: 1.9%; Torres Strait Islander people: 0.4%) reported kidney disease as a long-term health condition.
- For 2018-2022, the age-standardised notification rate of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) was 605 per 1,000,000.
- In 2022, 372 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people commenced dialysis.
- In 2022, 55 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people received a kidney transplant.
- In 2018-19 there were 242,274 hospitalisations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for end-stage kidney disease (ESKD).
- In 2022, the most common cause of death for dialysis patients was CVD (113 deaths).
- For 2017-2021, the age-standardised death rate for kidney disease (as a major cause of death) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT was 22 per 100,000.
- In 2018, chronic kidney disease (CKD) was the 10th leading specific cause of total disease burden among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (2.5%).

Kidney health

Numbers of notifications and age-standardised notification rates for ESRD for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, selected jurisdictions, Australia, 2018-2022

Jurisdiction	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	
	Number	Rate
NSW	173	153
Vic	55	277
Qld	492	637
WA	401	1,071
SA	111	709
NT	533	1,781
Australia	1,788	605

Notes:

1. Rates per 1,000,000 population have been standardised using the ERP from 30 June 2001.
2. Notification rates for Tas and the ACT have not been shown separately because of the small numbers of notifications but are included in the figures for Australia.

Kidney health

Numbers of notifications and notification rates of ESRD for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by age-group, Australia, 2018-2022

Age-group (years)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	
	Number	Crude rate
0-14	16	11
15-24	36	44
25-34	139	211
35-44	249	550
45-54	521	1,220
55-64	509	1,638
65-74	271	1,695
75+	47	779
All ages (crude)	1,788	415
All ages (age-standardised)	1,788	605

Notes: Rates per 1,000,000 population.

Injury, including family violence

- In 2018-19, 16% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over had experienced physical harm or threatened physical harm at least once in the last 12 months.
- In 2021-22, injury was the second leading cause of hospitalisation (excluding dialysis) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2021-22, the leading cause of injury-related hospitalisations among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was falls (21%).
- In 2022, intentional self-harm was the leading specific cause of injury deaths in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT (4.6% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths).
- In 2018, of all disease groups, injury made the second highest contribution to the total disease burden among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (12%).

Respiratory health

- For December 2021-September 2023, there were 421,696 confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2021, 13% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reported having asthma and 2.2% chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- In 2018-19, 29% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reported having a long-term respiratory condition.
- For 2021-22, there were 26,770 hospitalisations for respiratory disease among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- For August 2021-September 2023, there were 220 deaths from COVID-19 among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2022, chronic lower respiratory disease was the third leading cause of death overall for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT.
- In 2018, COPD was the 2nd leading specific cause of total disease burden among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and asthma the 11th.

Respiratory health

Long-term respiratory diseases among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by age-group and remoteness, all jurisdictions, 2018-19, proportion (%)

	Age-group (years)						Remoteness		Total
	0-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Non-Remot e	Remot e	
COPD	1.7	0.8	1.3	3.6	6.4	13	3.8	1.4	3.4
Asthma	12	14	15	17	21	26	17	8.6	16
Chronic sinusitis	2.6	4.7	8.9	13	14	13	n/a	n/a	7.4
Other diseases of the respiratory system	8.6	16	20	19	19	20	n/a	n/a	15
Total respiratory system diseases	19	28	32	35	37	47	n/a	n/a	29

- Notes:
1. 'Other diseases of the respiratory system' includes hay fever and allergic rhinitis, chronic sinusitis, all other diseases of respiratory system, symptoms/signs involving respiratory systems.
 2. n/a – non applicable, information unavailable.

Respiratory health

Hospitalisation rates for selected respiratory diseases among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by age-group and remoteness, 2016-18

	Age-group (years)					Remoteness		Crude rate
	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Major Cities	Remote/ Very Remote	
Influenza and pneumonia	5.5	2.2	6.7	17	31	7.2	25	8.3
COPD	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.2	8.9	6.0
Acute upper respiratory infection	8.3	2.9	2.4	2.1	2.0	2.6	5.8	4.4
Asthma	4.0	1.5	2.3	2.9	2.6	2.5	3.5	2.8

Notes:

1. n/a – non applicable, information unavailable.
2. Crude rate per 1,000 population.

Eye health

- In 2018-19, eye and sight problems were reported by 38% of Aboriginal people and 40% of Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2018-19, eye and sight problems were reported by 32% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and by 43% of females.
- In 2018-19, the most common eye conditions reported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were hyperopia (long sightedness: 22%), myopia (short sightedness: 16%), other diseases of the eye and adnexa (8.7%), cataract (1.4%), blindness (0.9%) and glaucoma (0.5%).
- In 2018-19, 10% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, aged 0-14 years, were reported to have eye or sight problems.
- In 2022, 87 cases of trachoma were detected among 1,491 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 5-9 years living in at-risk communities in WA, SA and the NT.
- For 2019-21, 6,528 of the 11,058 (59%) hospitalisations for diseases of the eye among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were for disorders of the lens (mainly cataracts).
- For 2019-21, crude hospitalisation rates for eye disease, by Indigenous Regions, ranged from 2.8 per 1,000 in the ACT, to 16 per 1,000 in the Pilbara, WA.

Eye health

Prevalence (%) of diseases of the eye and adnexa among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by sex, 2018-19

	Males (%)	Females (%)	Persons (%)
Hyperopia (long sightedness)	18	25	22
Myopia (short sightedness)	11	20	16
Cataract	1.3	1.4	1.4
Blindness	0.9	0.8	0.9
Glaucoma	0.6	0.4	0.5
Other diseases of the eye and adnexa	8.3	9.2	8.7
Total	32	43	38

Note: Proportions are non-age-standardised.

Ear health and hearing

- In 2018-19, 43% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged seven years and over had measured hearing loss in one or both ears.
- There were 3,185 ear-related hospitalisations in 2021-22, representing 1.0% of all hospitalisations (excluding dialysis) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The most common ear-related reasons for hospitalisation in 2020-22 were middle ear disease/s (70% of ear/hearing related hospitalisations), inner ear disease/s (10%), otitis externa (7.6%) and hearing loss (6.7%).
- In 2018, hearing loss was the 13th leading specific cause of total disease burden among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Oral health

- In 2012-2014, 61% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 5-10 years had experienced tooth decay in their baby teeth, and 36% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 6-14 years had experienced tooth decay in their permanent teeth.
- In 2017-18, 7.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over had complete tooth loss.
- In 2020-21, the age-standardised hospitalisation rate for acute dental conditions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was 4.6 per 1,000.
- In 2018, oral disorders accounted for 2.1% of total disease burden among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Of this, 63% was caused by dental caries.

Disability

- In the 2021 Census, 8.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reported a need for assistance with either self-care, mobility or communication.
- In 2018-19, 38% of Aboriginal people and 35% of Torres Strait Islander people reported having a disability or restrictive long-term health condition.
- In 2018-19, 8.2% of Aboriginal people and 8.3% of Torres Strait Islander people reported a profound or severe disability.
- In 2018-19, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reported a profound/severe disability more often in non-remote areas (8.6%) than in remote areas (5.7%).
- In 2018-19, the most commonly self-reported disabilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were physical (63%), sensory (47%), psychological (23%) and intellectual (18%).

Communicable diseases

- In 2021, there were 7,241 notifications of chlamydia for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2021, there were 4,653 notifications of gonorrhoea for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2021, there were 959 notifications of syphilis for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2021, there were 17 notifications (3.1% of the 552 total notifications) of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2021, there were 1,232 notifications of hepatitis C virus (HCV) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2021, there were 156 notifications of hepatitis B virus (HBV) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- For 2018-2022, there were 1,298 notifications of invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- For 2018-2022, 142 (18%) of the 770 notified cases of invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
- In 2020, the notification rate for tuberculosis (TB) among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was 3.0 per 100,000.
- For 2016-2019, there were 22 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people diagnosed with invasive *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) in Australia.
- In 2018-19, there were 1,230 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, aged four years and under, who were hospitalised with a principal diagnosis of 'diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue'.
- In 2018, skin disorders accounted for 1.4% of total burden from all diseases among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Factors contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Nutrition and breastfeeding

- In 2018-19, 39% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over reported eating the recommended amount of two serves of fruit per day and 4.2% reported eating the recommended five serves of vegetables per day.
- In 2018-19, 92% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 2-3 years reportedly ate an adequate amount of fruit per day and 23% ate an adequate quantity of vegetables per day.
- In 2018-19, 24% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over reported that they usually consumed sugar sweetened drinks every day and 5.5% consumed diet drinks; 71% usually consumed sugar sweetened drinks or diet drinks at least once per week.
- In 2018-19, 20% of children aged 2-14 years usually consumed sugar sweetened drinks daily and 1.5% consumed diet drinks daily; 63% usually consumed sugar sweetened drinks or diet drinks at least once a week.
- In 2018-19, 87% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-2 years had been breastfed.
- In 2018, all dietary factors were the fifth leading risk factor contributing to the total burden of disease among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, responsible for 6.2% of the total burden of disease.

Factors contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Physical activity

- In 2018-19, 89% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in non-remote areas (aged 15 years and over) had not met the physical activity guidelines, and 22% had not participated in any physical activity in the week prior to being surveyed.
- In 2018, physical inactivity was the 11th leading risk factor contributing to the burden of disease among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, responsible for 2.4% of the total burden of disease.

Factors contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Bodyweight

- In 2018-19, 71% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over were either overweight or obese (Aboriginal people: 71%; Torres Strait Islander people: 75%), 25% were in the normal weight range and 3.9% were underweight.
- In 2018-19, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 2-17 years, 38% were overweight or obese; 53% were normal weight and 8.8% were underweight.
- In 2018, overweight (including obesity) was the third leading risk factor contributing to the burden of disease among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, responsible for 9.7% of the total burden of disease.

Factors contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Immunisation

- As of 30 June 2023, 95.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander five-year-old children were fully immunised against the recommended vaccine preventable diseases.

Factors contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Immunisation

Percentage (%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as fully immunised, by age, as of 30 June

Age (years)	1	2	5
Percentage assessed as fully immunised	90.8%	88.6%	95.8%

Notes:

1. Proportion expressed as percentages rounded to one decimal point.
2. Combination of September 2022, December 2022, March 2023 and June 2023 quarterly coverage data.

Factors contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Immunisation

Influenza vaccination coverage percentage (%) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by age, as of 31

Age (years)	Australia (%)
6 months - < 5	20
5 - <15	14
15 - <50	19
50 - <65	40
> 65	61

Notes:

1. Proportion expressed as percentages rounded to one decimal point.
2. Coverage calculated using doses given 1 March–31 August 2023 using AIR data as of 3 September 2023.

Factors contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Tobacco use

- In 2018-19, 37% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over reported they smoked daily, a reduction from levels reported in 2012-13 (41%).
- The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers who reported smoking during pregnancy decreased from 50% in 2011 to 42% in 2021.
- In 2018-19, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote areas reported a higher proportion of people who smoked daily (49%) than those living in non-remote areas (35%).
- A study from 2021 found half of deaths among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NSW aged 45 years and over, and 37% of deaths among all age-groups, were caused by smoking.
- In 2018, tobacco use was the leading risk factor contributing to the burden of disease among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, responsible for 12% of the total burden of disease.
- In 2018-19, 8.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults self-reported having ever used e-cigarettes and 1.3% reported that they were currently using e-cigarettes either daily or weekly.

Factors contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Alcohol use

- In 2018-19, 26% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults reported abstaining from alcohol.
- In 2018-19, 18% of Aboriginal adults and 22% of Torres Strait Islander adults did not exceed the guideline for drinking at risk on a single occasion.
- In 2018-19, 26% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults did not exceed the guideline for drinking at lifetime risk.
- In 2018-19, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males (30%) exceeded the guideline for drinking at lifetime risk than females (10%).
- In 2021, 92% of pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women self-reported not consuming alcohol during the first 20 weeks of pregnancy, increasing to 97% after 20 weeks.
- In 2017-19, the crude alcohol-related hospitalisation rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was 7.0 per 1,000.
- For 2015-2019 in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crude rate for deaths related to alcohol use was 13 per 100,000.
- In 2018, alcohol use was the second leading risk factor contributing to the total burden of disease among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, accounting for 11% of the burden of disease.

Factors contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Illicit drug use

- In 2018-19, 70% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over reported they had never used illicit substances in the last 12 months.
- In 2018-19, 28% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over reported they had used an illicit substance in the previous 12 months.
- In 2017-19, the leading drugs of concern that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were hospitalised for were methamphetamines (1.9 per 1,000) and cannabinoids (1.1 per 1,000).
- In 2017-2021, there were 536 unintentional drug-induced deaths among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In 2018, illicit drug use contributed to 6.9% of the total burden of disease among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Factors contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Volatile substance use

- In 2018-19, 0.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over reported using petrol or other inhalants in the last 12 months.
- In 2017-19, the crude hospitalisation rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people due to volatile solvent use (based on principal diagnosis) was 0.1 per 1,000.

Factors contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Environmental health

- In 2021, 19% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reported living in overcrowded households.
- In 2018-19, 80% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households reported living in houses of an acceptable standard.
- In 2018-19, 33% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households reported major structural issues with their dwelling.
- In 2018-19, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crude hospitalisation rates for selected diseases related to environmental health were 9.2 per 1,000 for influenza and pneumonia, 9.0 per 1,000 for intestinal infectious diseases, 8.0 per 1,000 for bacterial diseases, 4.6 per 1,000 for acute upper respiratory infections, 2.7 per 1,000 for asthma and 1.8 per 1,000 for scabies.
- For 2014-2018, the age-standardised death rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT from conditions associated with poor environmental health was 41 per 100,000.

Factors contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Environmental health

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households' access to facilities, by state and territory and remoteness, all jurisdictions, 2018-19, proportion (%)

	State/Territory								Remoteness		Australia
	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Non-remote	Remote	
Washing people	98	97	98	95	96	99	98	91	98	92	97
Washing bedding and clothes	98	98	97	92	94	97	99	85	97	86	96
Preparing/storing food	94	89	93	84	88	98	95	79	93	79	91
Working sewerage	100	99	99	98	97	100	100	93	99	94	98

Citation and contact details

Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (2024) *Overview of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status, 2023 (PowerPoint slides)*. Perth, WA: Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet

For a complete list of references, see:

Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (2024) *Overview of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status, 2023*. Perth, WA: Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet

<https://healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/learn/health-facts/overview-aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-health-status>

Contact:

Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet
Edith Cowan University
2 Bradford Street, Mount Lawley,
Western Australia 6050

P: (08) 9370 6336
E: healthinfonet@ecu.edu.au
W: healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au