

# Snapshot of First Nations digital inclusion

First Nations Australians are highly digitally engaged.

However, this engagement is not spread evenly across the First Nations population.



**92% used the internet**

in the last week and 96% within the last six months



**96% own or share a mobile phone**



**93% use social media**

to keep in touch with family and friends



**92% used online banking**

in the last six months



**86% used online government services**

in the last six months

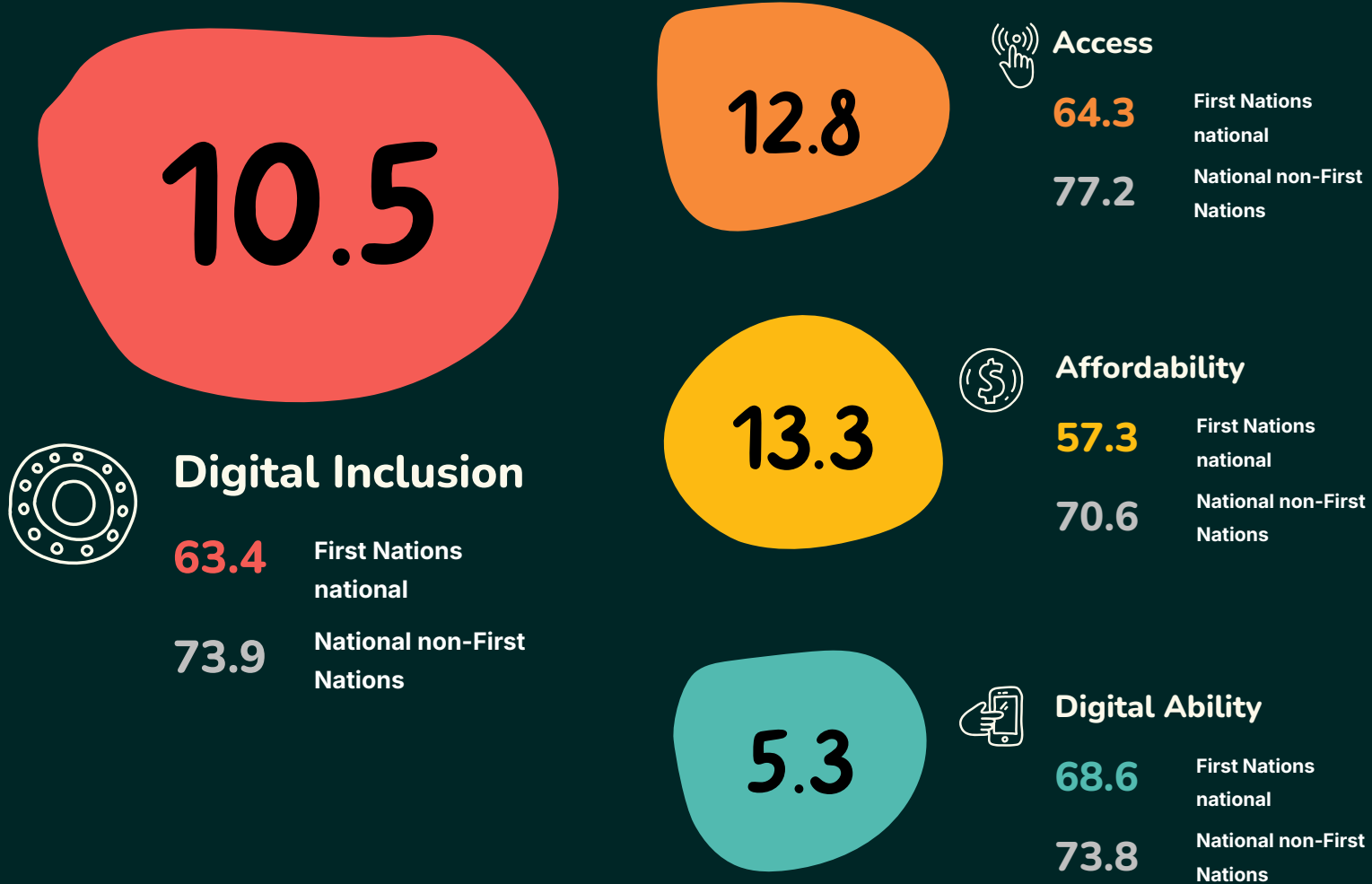


**18-34 year olds have high Digital Ability**

with a Digital Ability score of **78.8**, 5.0 points above the non-First Nations average of **73.8**



# The digital inclusion gap



## First Nations Australians are digitally excluded at double the rate of other Australians

Nearly a quarter of First Nations Australians (23%) are considered Highly Excluded with over two in five (41%) rated as Excluded or Highly Excluded.

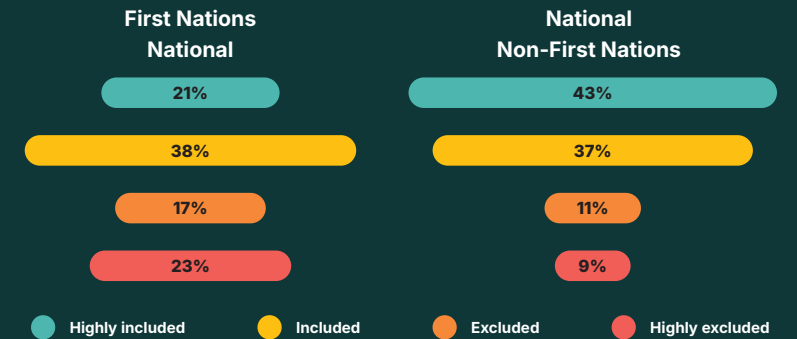


Figure 1. Exclusion scores for First Nations national average and non-First Nations average

Being digitally excluded means one is less able to access, afford or use digital technologies to meet everyday needs and pursue their aspirations. It means missing out on critical services, communication and opportunities.

Some gap figures may not add up due to rounding (+/- 0.1 variation)

# The digital inclusion gap

The digital gap increases significantly with remoteness

from 6.2 in major cities to 22.8 in very remote Australia, more than double the national average gap of 10.5. Access to reliable connectivity varies widely in remote and regional areas.

6.2 Major Cities

22.8 Very Remote Australia

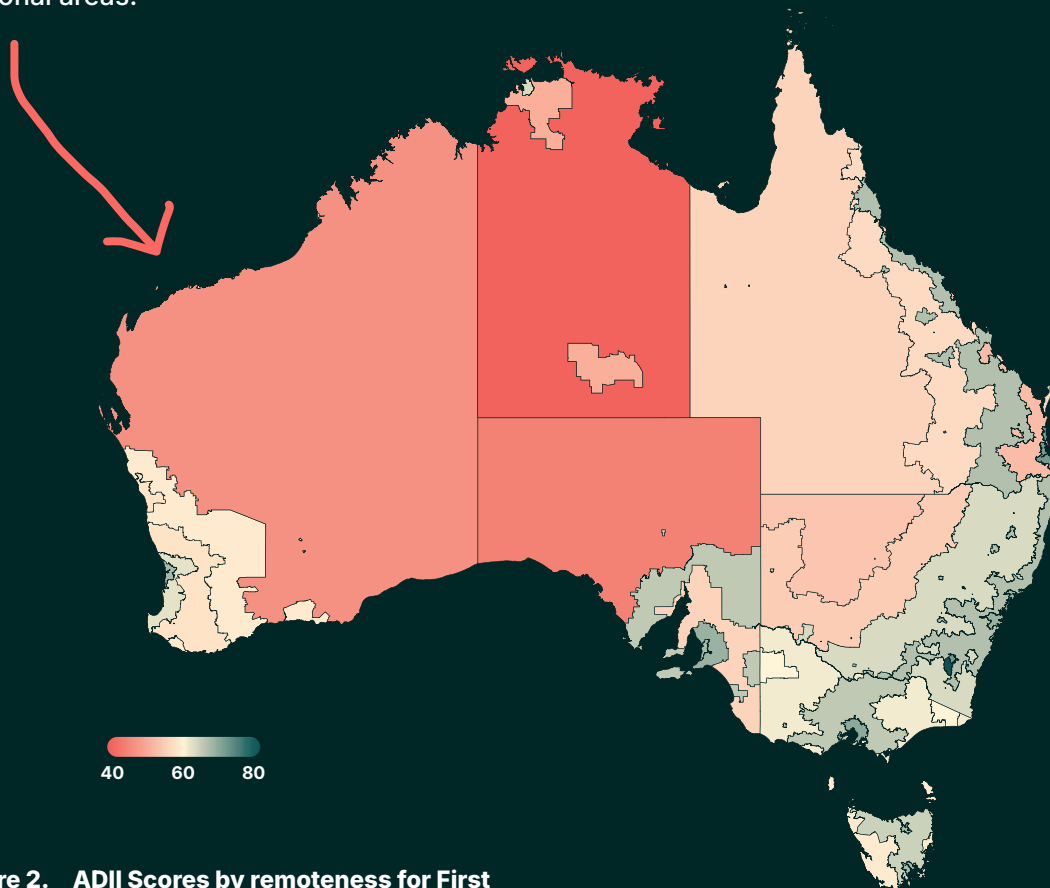


Figure 2. ADII Scores by remoteness for First Nations Australians

## Digital inclusion varies widely among First Nations Australians

based on where they live, their socio-economic and housing situation, age, education, health and employment status. The digital gap, relative to the non-First Nations average, is particularly significant for:

32.3 Elders 75 and over  
Compared with 6.7 for 18-34 age group

21.1 People excluded from the education system  
11.9-point difference between those who completed secondary school and those who did not, and nearly a 20-point difference relative to those who had completed a bachelor degree

18.7 People who speak a First Nations language at home  
Compared with 9.4 for those who speak only English at home

17.4 People on income support  
Compared with 2.8 for those not reliant on income support

17.1 People with disability  
Compared with 8.5 for those without disability

15.3 Gender  
The gap for First Nations males is 5.3 greater than for females (8.0)

# States and Territories

The digital gap is spread evenly across most states, however those with a larger remote population have much lower averages.

There is variation in digital inclusion between states, largely related to the proportion of people living in remote and very remote areas. The gaps are greatest in Northern Territory (NT) (average score is 56.6, a 17.3 gap), Western Australia (WA) (avg. 58.8, 15.1 gap), and New South Wales (NSW) (avg. 63.1, 10.8 gap).

The **Access gap** is the primary factor in NT (25.0) and WA (21.8). Across all jurisdictions, inner-metropolitan areas score highly, while remote and very remote areas record the lowest scores.

Across the country, the **Digital Ability gap** is greatest for those living in NT (18.3), especially regional NT (27.6), and in very remote areas (17.0).

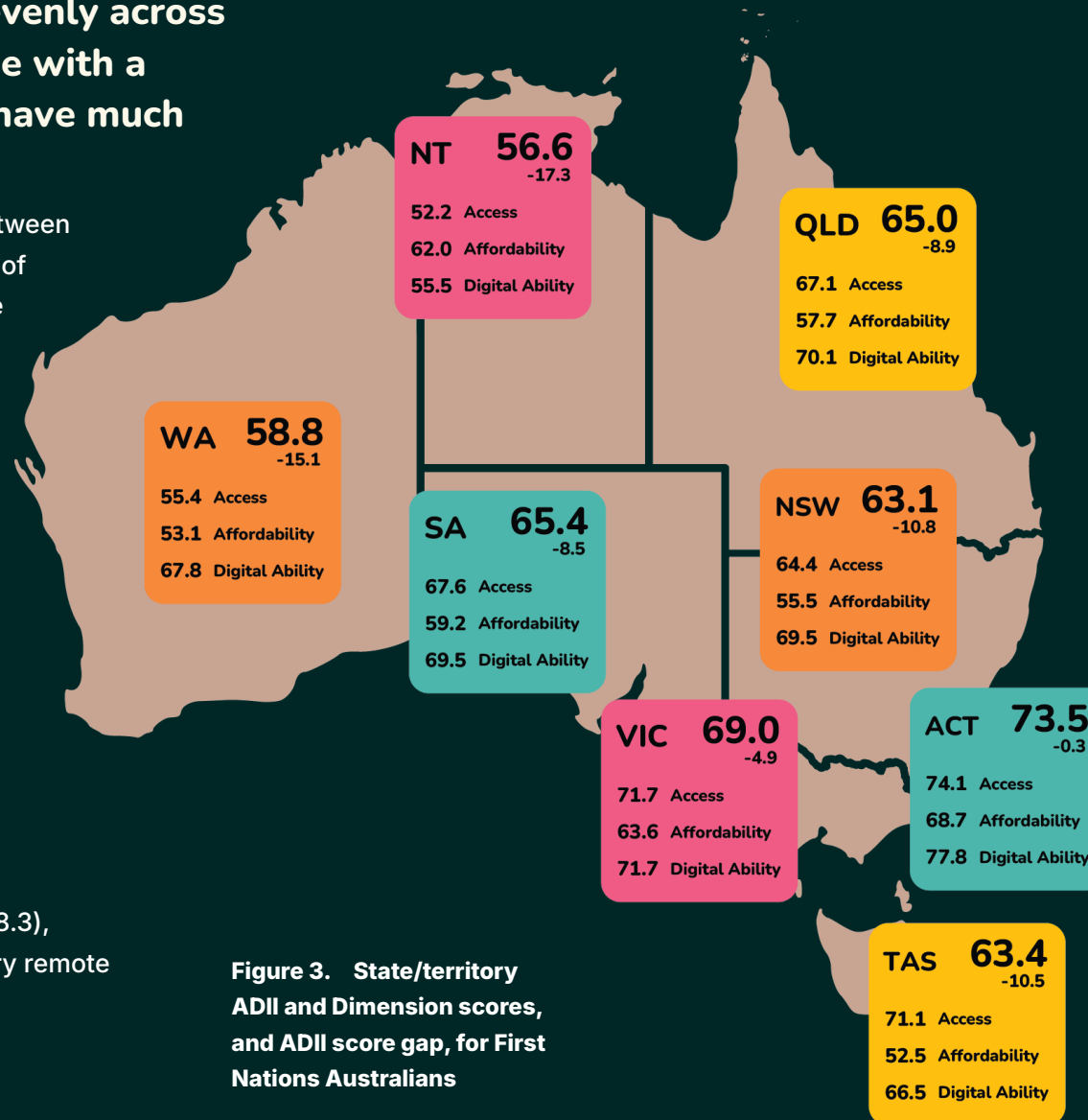


Figure 3. State/territory ADII and Dimension scores, and ADII score gap, for First Nations Australians

## State gaps at a glance

Figure 4. First Nations state/territory digital inclusion gaps against national non-First Nations score

Australian Capital Territory

0.3

Northern Territory

17.3

Western Australia

15.1

New South Wales

10.8



## Affordability

The share of a household's monthly income needed to buy an adequate internet and mobile service bundle tailored to its composition and remoteness.

Of the three key dimensions used to measure digital inclusion—Access, Affordability and Digital Ability—the **key contributor to the digital gap is Affordability with a national average gap of 13.3**. This is consistently high across all remoteness zones, with a gap of 12.4 in major cities, 15.7 in inner regional and 15.7 in remote Australia.

**The ADII has changed the way Affordability is measured** to better reflect the diversity of household size and makeup, connectivity options and costs, and different contexts across urban, regional and remote Australia. Because of these changes, **Affordability scores in the 2025 ADII are not directly comparable to previous years, and the total ADII scores are not comparable.**

## With high cost of living and lower than average incomes, Affordability is a key contributor to digital exclusion.

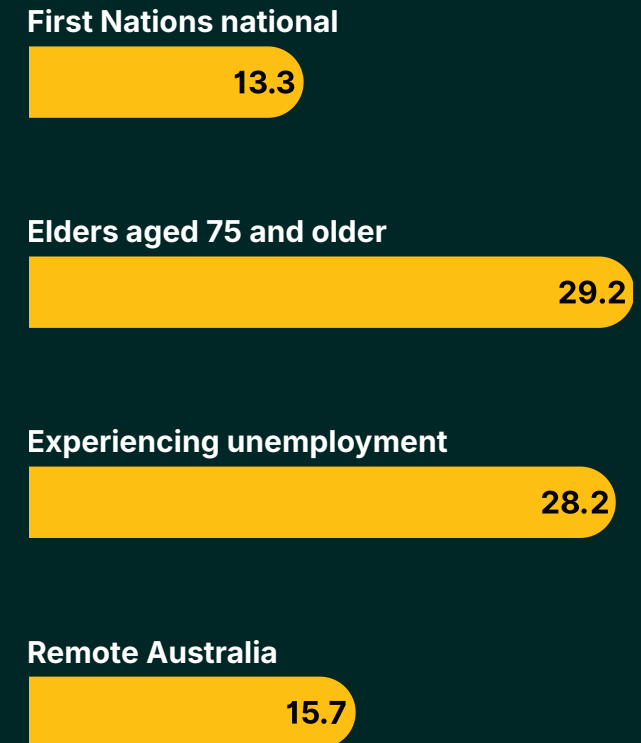
The overall gap in Affordability between First Nations Australians and other Australians is 13.3. However, the gap is much higher for Elders aged 75 and over (29.2), those experiencing unemployment (28.2), people in single person households (27.3), public housing residents (22.4), people who did not complete secondary school (22.4), those on income support (22.4) and people with disability (20.1). Cost of living pressures leave many households under-connected even where networks are available.

## Affordability factors limit household broadband uptake, computer access and drive high reliance on pre-paid mobile as a primary means of internet access.

This in turn limits the types of applications and services that can be used.

## Affordability gap at a glance

Figure 5. First Nations affordability gap against National non-First Nations score





## Access

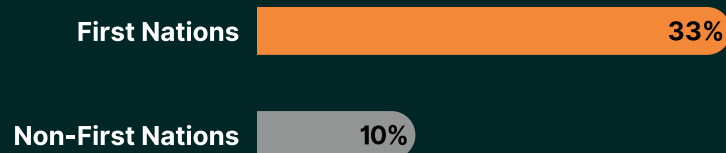
Opportunities to gain a reliable internet connection and use various digital devices, along with frequency of online access and data use.

### The gap in Access is also high at 12.8 nationally

The Access measure primarily refers to use of online services and devices, but is impacted by availability of services. As such, the Access gap varies significantly with remoteness, increasing from 7.8 in major cities to 39.9 in very remote areas. Single person households have very low Access scores (gap of 22.2) and multi-family or group households also have a significant Access gap (15.8).

33% of First Nations households **have no fixed broadband service** compared with 11% for other Australians. Household connectivity ranges from 74% in major cities and 75% in outer regional areas to 19% in very remote.

Figure 6. % of people who have no fixed broadband service at home



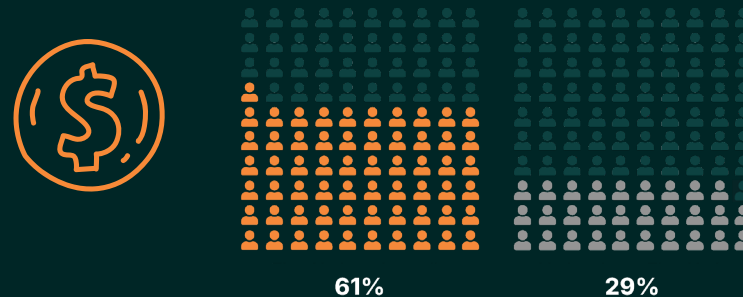
### There is high reliance on mobile services as a primary means of internet access.

A quarter (25%) of First Nations Australians rely on **mobile as their only connection**, compared with 9% for other Australians.

Figure 7. % of people who are mobile only, and % of people who use pre-paid mobile only

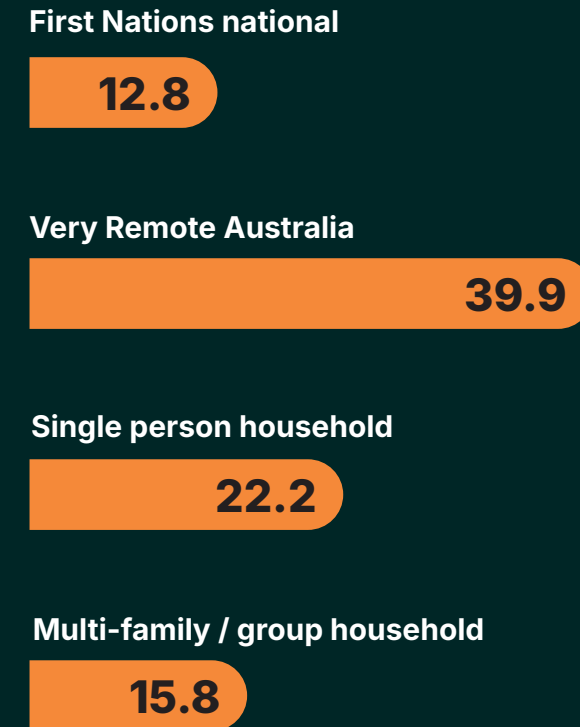


First Nations Australians access **pre-paid mobile at double the national average** (61% compared with 29%), impacting on data cost and usage.



## Access gap at a glance

Figure 8. First Nations Access gap against National non-First Nations score



# Digital Ability



## Digital Ability

The skills and confidence to use digital tools and applications safely and effectively.

### The Digital Ability gap is much lower overall than other Dimensions (-5.3)

The 18-34 age group scores 5.0 points above the national average and those in major cities score 1.6 points above the average.

There was a **7.9 increase** in Digital Ability score for First Nations Australians from 2022 (60.7) to 2024 (68.6).

### Significant gaps persist for age groups, education, employment, and language use

The Digital Ability gap increases significantly with age, with a 20.7 gap for those aged 55-64, and 32.4 for those 65-74 and 44.1 for Elders aged 75 and over.

There are also large gaps for those who did not complete secondary school (15.8) and those not in the labour force (16.9).

Language barriers are significant, with a 16.2 Digital Ability gap for those who speak a First Nations language at home in contrast to a 3.8 gap for those who speak only English at home.

## Digital Ability gap at a glance

Figure 9. First Nations Digital Ability gap against National non-First Nations score

First Nations national

5.3

Elders 75 years and over

44.1

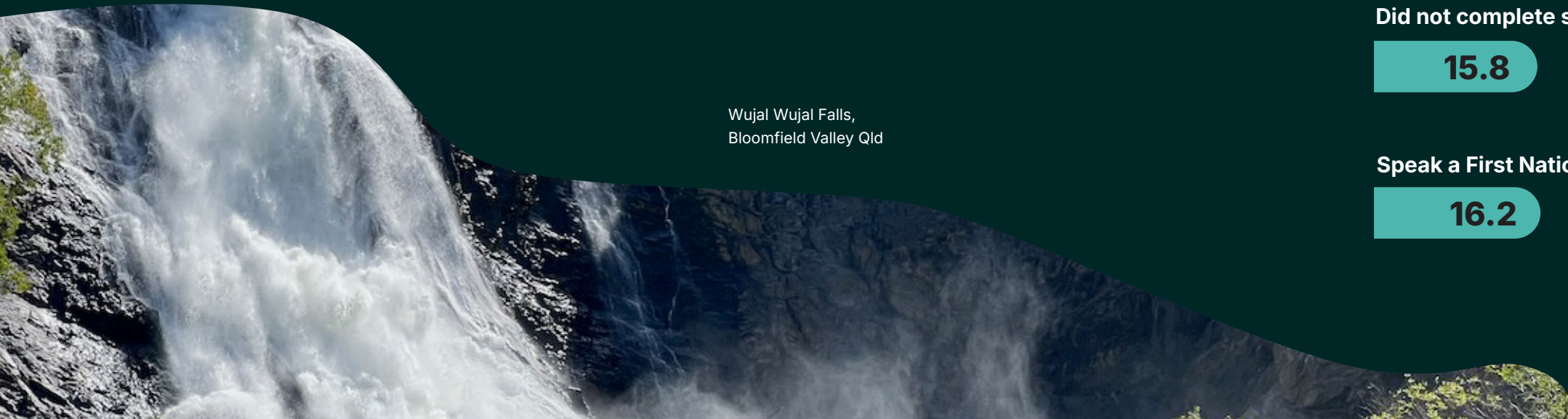
Did not complete secondary school

15.8

Speak a First Nations language at home

16.2

Wujal Wujal Falls,  
Bloomfield Valley Qld



# Media and information



## Media and Information

Use of broadcast and digital media services to access news, information and relevant First Nations content.

**Media and information services, including via First Nations broadcasting and media providers, are also an important element of Outcome 17 in supporting informed decision making.**

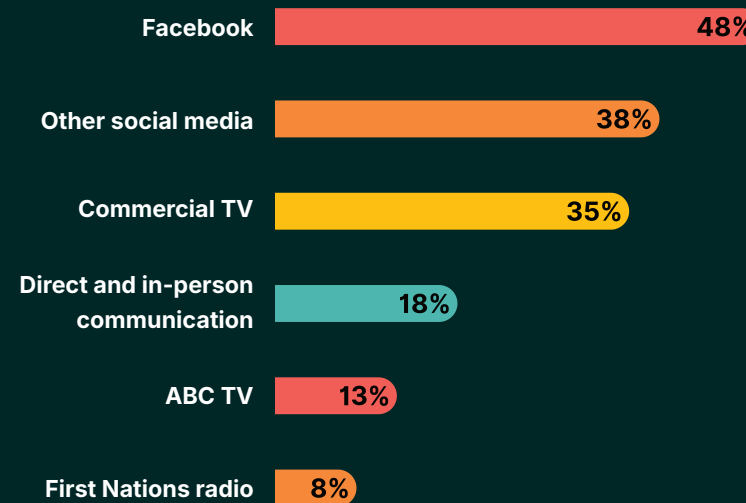
While not used in developing Index scores, our survey includes questions on access and use of media, news and information services. This includes broadcast media, online and face-to-face communications as modes of information sharing.

Access to online media content is a primary use of the internet, with 86% of respondents using entertainment services online in the last six months.

## Most popular sources of news and information

are Facebook (48% daily), other social media (38%) and commercial TV (35%), direct and in-person communication (18% daily) and ABC TV (13%). First Nations radio services also provide a trusted source of locally relevant news (8% daily).

Figure 10. Means of accessing news and information for First Nations Australians



## Media and information at a glance



**18% listened to First Nations radio weekly**

10% daily



**67% access radio via car radio**

20.1% via home radio, 15.3% online



**61% of remote households do not have TV services working**

Source: *Mapping the Digital Gap*



**59% get emergency information via Facebook**

49% via text message, 43% via commercial TV



**70% use streaming services weekly**

for TV and video content (61% via YouTube, 56% via commercial TV)

# Summary

Digital inclusion is a dynamic and evolving journey.

Its three core dimensions—Access, Affordability and Digital Ability—are deeply interconnected and shaped by changes in technology, markets, policy, and people’s everyday lives.

Along with reliable access to relevant media and information services, **digital inclusion is essential for informed decision-making**, connections to culture and community, and participation in education, employment, and social life for First Nations Australians.

The findings of this project clearly demonstrated the **strong links between Closing the Gap Outcome 17 and other outcomes**, showing how digital inclusion underpins progress in health and well-being, education, employment, housing, justice, and the preservation of language and culture.

The research identified key barriers to full digital participation while also **highlighting the strengths, resilience, and aspirations of First Nations communities**. Having a baseline measure of the scale and nature of the digital gap relative to other Australians provides an opportunity to inform initiatives to help make progress towards Target 17 and help close the digital gap.