



INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT FACT SHEET

High Indigenous population growth since the 1990s requires employment, education, training and business initiatives to prevent rising unemployment rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- The employment rate for Indigenous Australians is 40% compared to 57% for the total Australian population.
- The median income for Indigenous Australians is \$231 per week compared to \$387 per week for non-Indigenous people.
- 60% of Indigenous workers are full-time, compared to 72% for non-Indigenous.
- The Indigenous working age population is forecast to grow by 28% between 1996 and 2006, compared to growth of 11.6% for the total Australian labour market.
- To achieve employment equality with the rest of the Australian population, an additional 77,000 Indigenous people would have to be employed by 2006.
- 20% of Indigenous workers are participating in the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) scheme, based on welfare payments.
- The Indigenous unemployment rate would exceed 40% – more than five times the national average – if CDEP participants were included in official statistics.
- In the absence of the CDEP scheme, the unemployment rate for Indigenous people is forecast to rise to 48% by 2006 if current trends continue.
- Two-thirds of the more than 32,000 workers in the CDEP scheme are employed in regional and remote areas of Australia.

Key social indicators:

- Life expectancy is 56.9 years for Indigenous males and 61.7 years for females, compared to 75.2 years and 81.1 years respectively for the rest of the population.
- Indigenous babies born in most States and Territories are about twice as likely to be of low birth weight and more than twice as likely to die at birth.
- 40% of children in Australian corrective institutions are Indigenous.
- 32% of Indigenous householders live in owner or purchaser occupied homes compared to 71% for all Australian households.
- One-third of all households living in improvised dwellings are Indigenous.
- 11% of Indigenous adults have a post school qualification compared to 31% for non-Indigenous adults.

(Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996 and 2001 Census data; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Office of Public Affairs)