



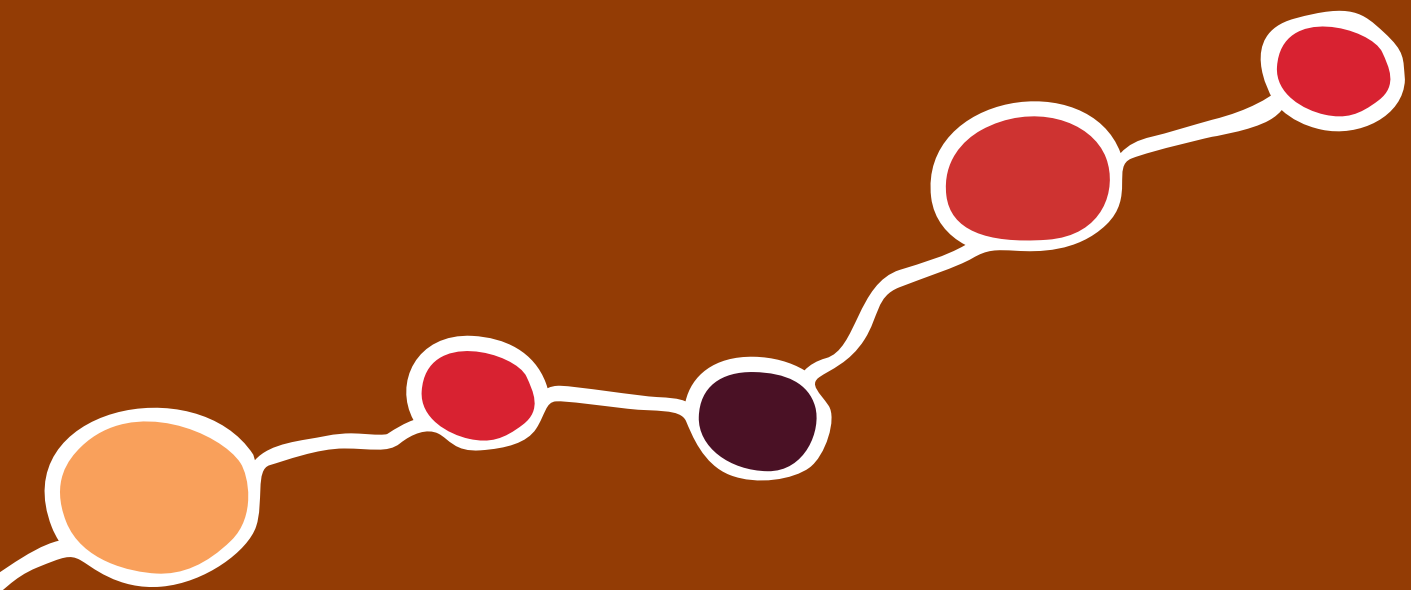
Department for  
Community Development  
Office for Women's Policy

# Indigenous Women's Report Card 2005

Supplement to the Women's Report Card

## Summary 2006





This publication has been prepared by the Office for Women's Policy to provide a summary of the data, issues and key findings of the Indigenous Women's Report Card 2005: Supplement to the Women's Report Card. It is provided solely on the basis that readers will be responsible for making their own assessment and for verifying all relevant representations, statements and information.

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# Minister's Foreword

This publication summarises the Western Australian *Indigenous Women's Report Card 2005*.

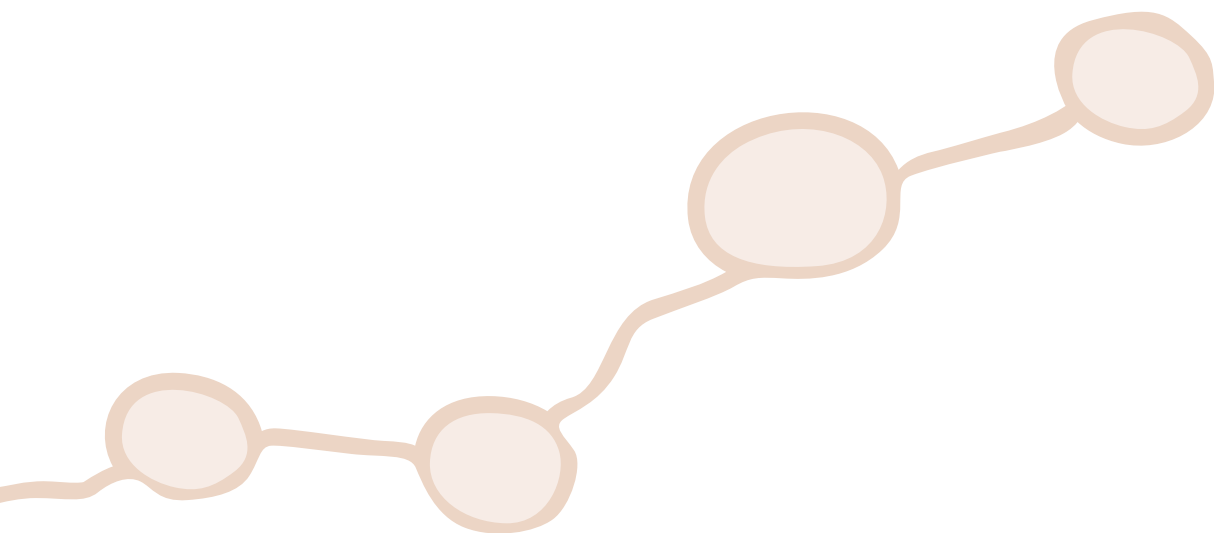
The *Indigenous Women's Report Card* is a supplement to the *Women's Report Card* which established a series of indicators to record change in the lives of women. The indicators reflect issues of importance to Indigenous women and were chosen in collaboration with the Indigenous Women's Congress.

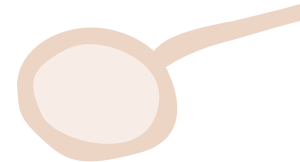
The summary version is designed to highlight the general findings and key messages of the comprehensive report. The summary version encourages users to engage with the data and use the information to inform decision making, services and programs affecting Indigenous women and their communities.

Margaret Quirk MLA  
MINISTER FOR WOMEN'S INTERESTS



INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER 1. LEADERSHIP AND OPPORTUNITY	5
CHAPTER 2. WORK AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE	8
CHAPTER 3. CRIME AND JUSTICE	12
CHAPTER 4. FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE	14
CHAPTER 5. SAFETY	19
CHAPTER 6. MATURE AGED WOMEN	21
CHAPTER 7. HEALTH AND DISABILITY	26





## Introduction

In 2001, there were an estimated 20,707 Indigenous women resident (aged 15 years and over) in Western Australia, representing 2.75% of the state's female population of the same age. The following table shows the distribution of Indigenous women in the Western Australian population by ATSI region.

**Table 1: Indigenous Women in Western Australia, Population by Region, 2001**

ATSI Region	Number	% of all Indigenous women aged 15 years and over
Broome	1,471	7.1
Derby	1,716	8.3
Geraldton	2,011	9.7
Kalgoorlie	1,257	6.1
Kununurra	1,679	8.1
Narrogin	2,415	11.7
Perth	7,299	35.2
South Hedland	1,788	8.6
Warburton	1,071	5.2
<b>Western Australia</b>	<b>20,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: ABS, 2004, *Experimental Estimate and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991-2009*, cat. no. 3238.

The relatively small number of Indigenous women in the population places limitations on data that can be reliably obtained. By necessity, the report focuses on Indigenous women at the state, rather than the regional, level.

Further information on the data presented in the summary report may be obtained from the original publication, available on the Office for Women's Policy website at <http://www.community.wa.gov.au/Communities/Women/Publications.htm>

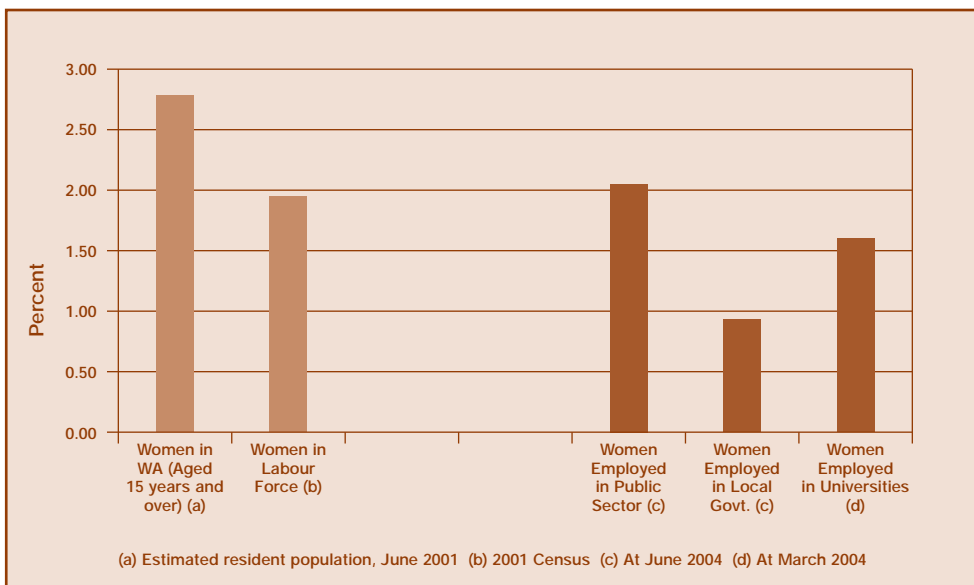
# Leadership and Opportunity

Promoting leadership among Indigenous women is a key objective of the *Indigenous Women's Congress* in Western Australia. The issues relating to leadership and opportunity for Indigenous women are: employment in public authorities, representation in government and community organisations, education, training and non-participation, housing and transport, and information technology.

## Employment in Public Authorities

The following figure shows the employment situation for Indigenous women in the public sector, local government and universities compared to total proportion of women.

**Figure 1: Indigenous Women as a Percentage of All Women in Selected Categories**



Sources: *Experimental Estimates of the Indigenous Population, June 2001 and 2001 Census (ABS)*; Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner, unpublished data.

## Key Findings:

- Indigenous women comprised 1.94% of all women employed in public authorities.
- Indigenous women are a majority of Indigenous employees in the state public sector, but are under-represented in senior management and the higher salary ranges.
- Indigenous women are about one quarter of Indigenous employees in local government, and the larger number of Indigenous employees in the university workforce.
- The last Census indicates that there were seven Indigenous women parliamentarians/councillors in WA.

## Participation in Education and Training

The following graph shows the educational attainment for Indigenous women in terms of their completion of secondary schooling, their participation in tertiary education, and their achievement of a qualification.

**Figure 2: Indigenous Women Aged 18 Years and Over: Educational Attainment: Selected Indicators, Western Australia, 2002**



The following table shows the average educational success rates for Indigenous women in terms of Year 12 retention rates, pass rates in Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses, which includes apprenticeships and traineeships, and higher education success rates in comparison to Indigenous men and non-Indigenous women and men.

**Table 2: Average Educational Success Rates, WA, 2001-2003**

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Females%	Males%	Females%	Males%
Year 12 Retention Rates	29.8	24.4	80.1	70.3
VET Pass Rates	57.1	60.2	75.9	74.6
Higher Education Success Rates	59.4	53.2	90.7	85.4

### Key Findings:

- More Indigenous women participated in education than Indigenous men.
- Indigenous women accounted for 38% of Indigenous enrolments in the VET sector.
- The educational success rates in year 12 retention, VET and university courses for Indigenous females is significantly lower than for non-Indigenous women
- The most popular VET courses among Indigenous women were in Society and Culture and Management and Commerce. The majority of enrolments were at Certificate I and II levels. Indigenous women are unlikely to be enrolled in courses in Food, Hospitality and Personal Services and Information Technology.
- The percentage of young Indigenous women aged 15-24 years not participating in education or paid employment is much higher than non-Indigenous women.

## Housing and Transport, Overcrowding and Computer Technology

The following table shows the situation for Indigenous women in housing compared to non-Indigenous women.

**Table 3: Women Aged 18 Years and Over, Household Tenure Type, WA, 2002**

	Indigenous %	Non-Indigenous %
<b>Owner</b>		
Owner without a mortgage	*6.8	34.8
Owner with a mortgage	14.0	37.6
<b>Renter</b>		
State Housing Authority	31.7	3.4
Indigenous Housing Organisation/Community housing	22.6	*0.8
Other landlord types	19.9	19.2
Total renters	74.2	23.5

\*Estimate has a relative standard error between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and General Social Survey.

The following table shows Indigenous women's access to transport compared to non-Indigenous women.

**Table 4: Women Aged 18 Years and Over, Access to Transport, WA, 2002**

	Total
<b>Indigenous</b>	
Has access to motor vehicle(s) to drive	56.8
Can easily get to the places needed	68.9
Cannot, or often has difficulty, getting to the places they needed to visit	11.9
<b>Non-Indigenous</b>	
Has access to motor vehicle(s) to drive	86.6
Can easily get to the places needed	84.0
Cannot, or often has difficulty, getting to the places they needed to visit	4.6

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and General Social Survey.

### Key Findings:

- Most Indigenous women rent their homes while a smaller number are buying or own their home.
- An estimated 18% of Indigenous women aged 18 years and over had experienced overcrowding in the home.
- 57% of Indigenous women in Western Australia had access to a motor vehicle. Access was highest among women in the middle years (25-44 years).
- 4.6% of Indigenous women experienced difficulty in getting to places they needed to visit.
- Indigenous women were more likely than Indigenous men to have used a computer at home or accessed the Internet, but not as much as non-Indigenous women.

# Work and Economic Independence

Economic independence for many women depends upon access to regular, well-paid employment. The issues relating to work and economic independence for Indigenous women are labour force characteristics, working arrangements, workplace and school-based training, income and financial stress.

## Participation in the Labour Force

The following table shows the labour force status of Indigenous women compared to Indigenous men and non-Indigenous women and men.

**Table 5: Employed Women Aged 15 Years and Over: Employment Status, Western Australia, 2001**

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	no.	%	no.	%
Employee	6,236	33.8	311,557	45.6
Self-employed (a)	231	1.3	50,706	7.4
Unemployed	1,274	6.9	24,327	3.6
Not in the labour force	9,984	54.2	287,750	42.2
Total (b)	18,433	100.0	682,586	100.0

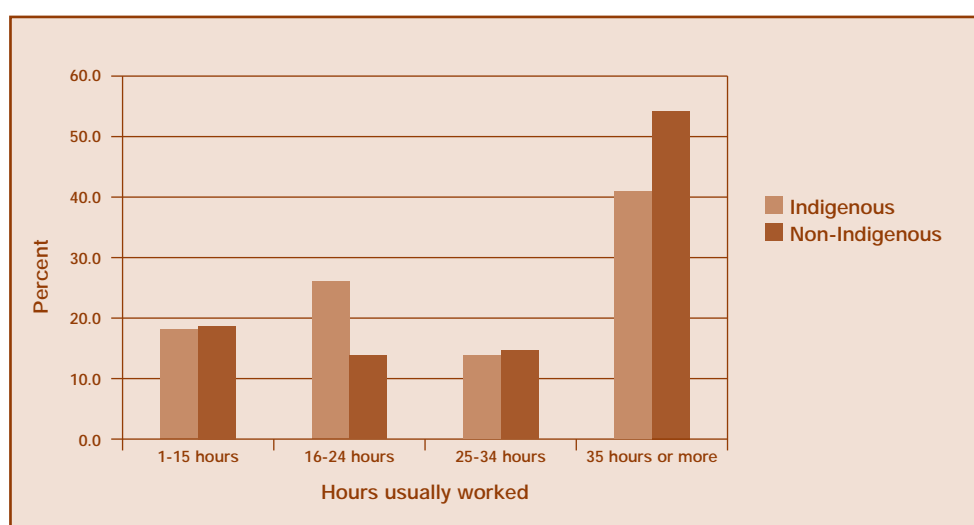
(a) Includes employers, own account workers and workers in family businesses

(b) Includes some persons for whom employment status was not stated

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 2001, unpublished data

The following graph shows the weekly hours worked per week by Indigenous women and non-Indigenous women.

**Figure 3: Employed Females Aged 18 Years and Over: Hours Worked Per Week**



(a) Estimates are standardised to the age composition of the estimated Australian resident population at June 2001

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002 and General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, unpublished data

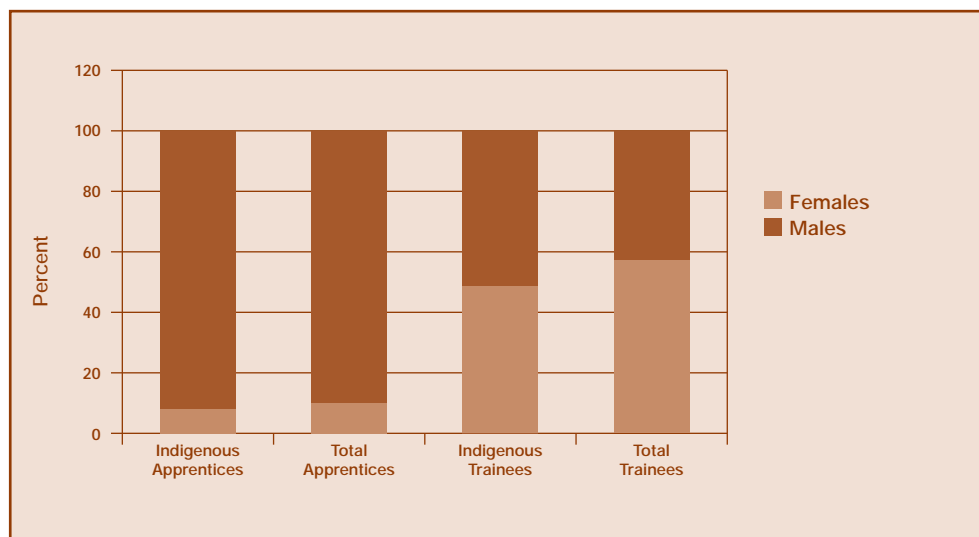
## Key Findings:

- 57.6% of Indigenous women aged 18 and over were not in the labour force and their unemployment rate was higher than for non-Indigenous women.
- 16% of all Indigenous women in Western Australia were employed through Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP).
- The most common employment difficulties for Indigenous women were the lack of appropriate jobs in the local area, insufficient education, training or skills, followed by transport problems and/or distance.
- 58% of employed Indigenous women worked part-time (less than 35 hours per week) and the largest proportion of which usually worked between 16 and 24 hours per week.
- The Government Administration and Defence industry employed the largest proportion (24%) of Indigenous women
- Substantial proportions of Indigenous women also worked in Health and Community Services (16%) and Education (15%). Indigenous women were less likely to be employed in the Retail industry, the largest employer of non-Indigenous women.
- Indigenous women in the employed labour force were most likely to be working as Intermediate Clerical and Service Workers, followed by Labourers and Related Workers and then as Professionals.
- Information for Indigenous women relating to flexible working hours and leave entitlements is not available.
- A majority of employed Indigenous women indicated they had some cultural responsibilities that work allowed them to meet. CDEP workplaces are more likely to provide cultural leave entitlements.
- Indigenous women are about one third of Indigenous people who are self-employed.

## Workplace and School-Based Training

The following graph shows the participation of Indigenous women in apprenticeships and traineeships compared to the total number of participants.

**Figure 4: Apprentices and Trainees in Vocational Training: Western Australia, 2001-2003**



Source: VET Enrolments Statistics Unit, Department of Education and Training, unpublished data.

The following table shows the number of Indigenous females in apprenticeships and traineeships as a proportion of Indigenous participants and all female participants.

**Table 6: Females Aged 15 Years and Over in Work and School Based Training, Western Australia, 2001-2003 (a)**

	Indigenous Females			All Females		
	no.	As proportion of Indigenous participants (b) %	Participation rate (c) %	no.	As a proportion of all participants (b) %	Participation rate (c) %
<b>Apprentices</b>						
Age 15 - 19	9	10.6	27.4	1,022	15.8	149.9
Age 20 - 24	9	10.0	32.7	390	8.8	61.0
Age 25 - 44	5	12.8	5.2	86	8.5	3.0
Age 45 and over	-	n.p.	n.p.	11	23.4	n.p.
All ages	23	10.7	n.p.	1,512	12.6	n.p.
<b>Trainees</b>						
Age 15 - 19	166	54.3	505.0	1,703	58.8	249.8
Age 20 - 24	51	40.5	185.3	872	48.2	136.4
Age 25 - 44	74	31.4	77.5	1,239	34.3	42.9
Age 45 and over	12	37.5	n.p.	472	36.1	n.p.
All ages	304	43.4	n.p.	4,287	44.5	n.p.

(a) Based on the annual average over 3 calendar years due to short-term fluctuations in annual data.

(b) Females as a proportion of participants (male + female) in each age group.

(c) Number of female participants per 10,000 females of same age in resident population at 30 June 2001.

(d) Rate ratio is calculated by dividing the rate for the total population by the Indigenous rate.

n.p. not provided. Rates for women aged 45 years and over and 'All ages' are not provided as these are affected by the larger proportion of older women in the total population.

Source: Dept. of Education and Training, Apprenticeship and Trainee Branch, unpublished data.

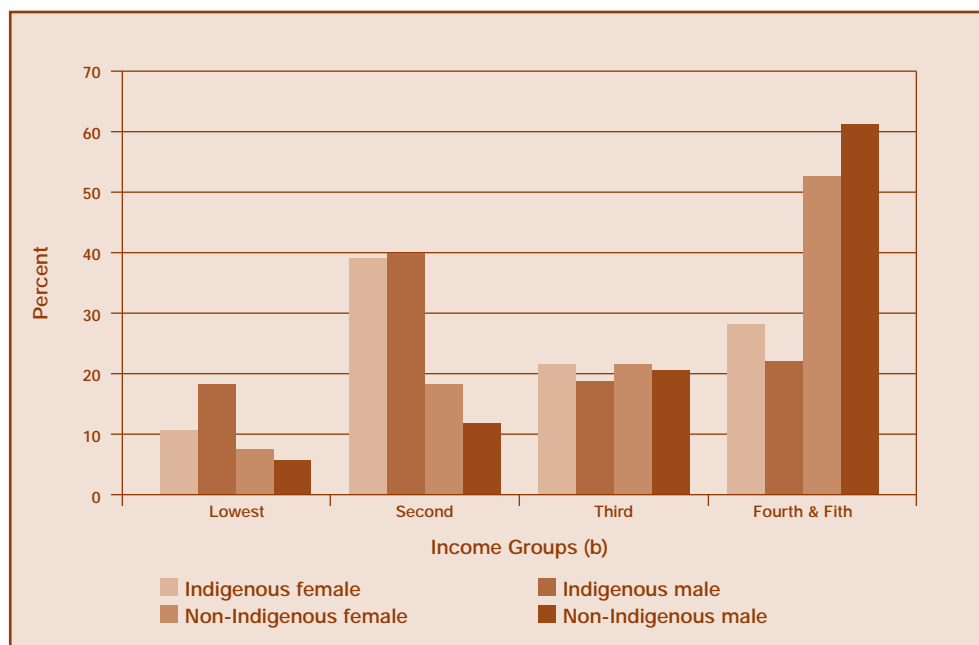
### Key Findings:

- Apprenticeship participation rates were considerably lower for Indigenous women under 25 years than for women in the total population.
- The participation rate of Indigenous women aged 15-19 years for traineeships was higher than the rates of all women.
- The participation rate of Indigenous females was higher in traineeships than in apprenticeships.

## Income and Financial Stress

The following figure shows the proportion of employed persons in the lowest to highest income groups.

**Figure 5: Household Income of Employed Persons, Western Australia, 2002(a)**



(a) Income data have been age-standardised to eliminate differences in the age structure of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.

(b) Income groups are based on income quintiles.

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002 and General Social Survey, 2002.

### Key Findings:

- The average household income of Indigenous women aged 18 years and over was \$364 per week which was around \$200 less than the average income of non-Indigenous women.
- The numbers of Indigenous women aged 18 and over in the lowest weekly income groups were much higher than for non-Indigenous women.
- Employed Indigenous women were also much more likely to be in the lowest or second lowest household income group than employed non-Indigenous people.
- 62% of Indigenous women aged 18 years and over were dependent on government pensions and allowances as their main source of income.
- Financial stress is measured by the ability to raise \$2,000 within a week in an emergency. 59% of Indigenous women aged 18 years and over were unable to raise \$2,000 in a week for something important.

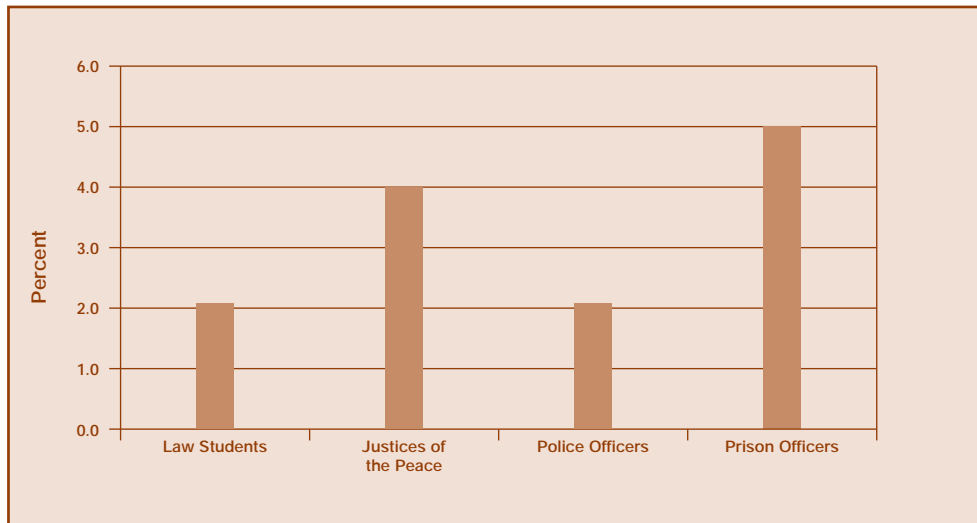
# Crime and Justice

The Australian Law Reform Commission's report, *Equality Before the Law*, found that Indigenous women were the single most legally disadvantaged group in Australian society. The issues relating to crime and justice for Indigenous women include women in the legislative process, women in the WA legal system, women police and prison staff and access to legal services.

## Women in the Legislative Process and the WA Legal System

The following graph shows the representation of Indigenous women in the legal system as a proportion of all women law students, justices of the peace, police officers and prison officers.

**Figure 6: Indigenous Women in Legal System as a Proportion of All Women in Selected Categories**



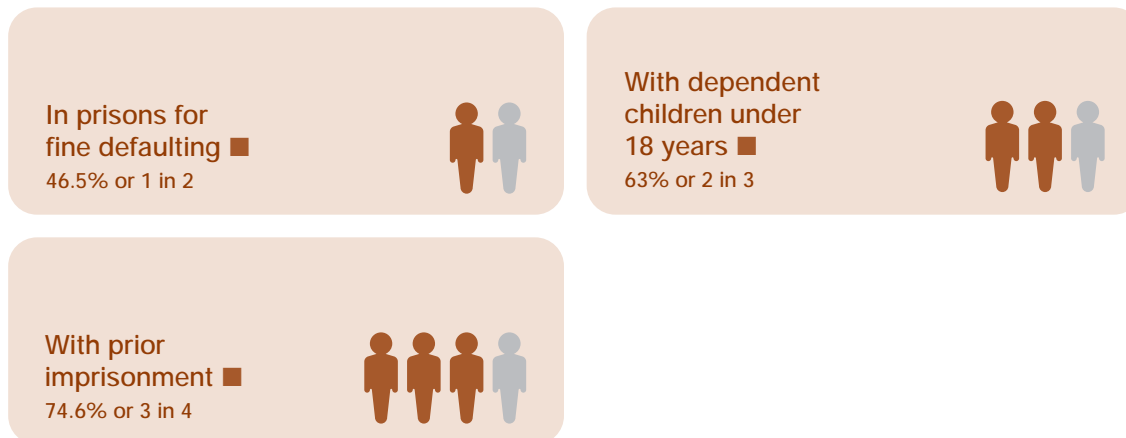
Sources: Murdoch University, UWA; Department of Justice; WA Police; Census of Population and Housing 2001.

The following graph shows the proportion of Indigenous women who have used legal services, been arrested by the Police, imprisoned, and have dependent children under 18 years as a proportion of all women.

**Figure 7: Arrest and Use of Legal Services**



**Figure 8: Sentenced Indigenous Women Prisoners**



## Key Findings:

- Information on Indigenous women as members of State and Federal Parliament is not collected.
- Although small in number, Indigenous women have relatively high representation as councillors in local government when compared to their representation in the total female population. This shows that local government is more accessible for Indigenous women to assume decision-making roles in government.
- There are no records to identify the Indigenous status of women who are practising judges and lawyers.
- A small number of Indigenous women were in the legal professional, including as a barrister or judge.
- 29 Indigenous women were enrolled in various law-related programs at Murdoch University and the University of Western Australia.
- 33 Indigenous women were justices of the peace.
- 2.1% of women police officers were Indigenous (non Aboriginal Police Liaison Officers) and a further 0.8% of women police staff were Indigenous.
- There was one female Aboriginal Police Liaison Officer per 1,000 Indigenous females in Western Australia.
- 15 Indigenous women were prison officers.
- 20.1% of Indigenous women reported using legal services in last 12 months.
- The imprisonment rate for Indigenous women aged 18 years and over is 643.8 per 100,000.
- In 2004 48.3% of women prisoners in WA were Indigenous.
- Around 63% of Indigenous women in prisons have dependent children under 18 years of age.
- 74.6% of Indigenous women prisoners are known to have had a prior adult imprisonment under sentence.
- Of sentenced Indigenous women prisoners, 46.5% were in prison for fine-defaulting, compared to 17.7% for non-Indigenous women.
- 13% of Indigenous women reported being arrested by police in the last five years.
- 23.3% of Indigenous women reported that they had a family member who had been sent to jail or was currently in jail.

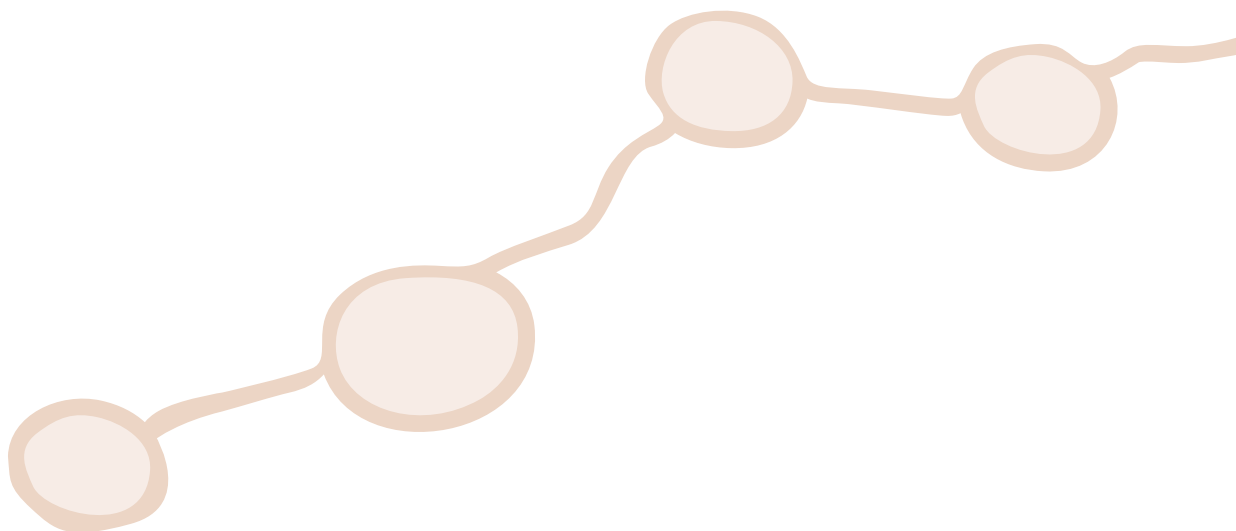
## Family, Community and Culture

Indigenous families are frequently organised around extended families, with care being provided to family members associated with more than one household. In addition, a greater proportion of households in Indigenous communities contain two or more 'families'. The issues relating to family, community and culture for Indigenous women are care of the aged and people with disabilities, care of children, carers and labour force participation, formal child care and labour force participation, community participation, support and social activities and cultural attachment.

### Indigenous Women as Carers

#### Key Findings:

- At present, there is no reliable information on the numbers of Indigenous women who are primary carers of the frail, aged or people with disabilities, or the total number of Indigenous women involved in child care, their relationships to children being cared for or whether they are paid for child care.
- 87% of Indigenous recipients of Centrelink carer payments were women.
- Almost half of Indigenous women aged 15 years and over had primary responsibility for children, and one in five Indigenous women were sole parents.
- Of Indigenous sole parent families, 87% were headed by a woman.
- More than 22% of Indigenous female carers had one or more children in their care who were not their natural children.
- About one third of Indigenous women with primary responsibility for children aged 12 years and under were employed.



## Formal Child Care and Labour Force Participation

The following table shows the use of formal child care by Indigenous women who are employed and not employed.

**Table 7: Indigenous Women (a) With Primary Responsibility for Children Aged 12 Years or Under: Selected Child Care Characteristics by Employment Status, Western Australia, 2002**

	Employed	Not employed (b)	Total
	%	%	%
Use of child care in last 4 weeks			
Used formal child care (c)	26.0	16.6	20.0
Used informal child care only	43.9	49.7	47.6
Did not use child care	30.1	33.7	32.4
Access to formal child care (d)			
Has access	78.2	89.5	85.5
Does not have access	21.8	10.5	14.5
<b>Indigenous women with primary responsibility for children (e) (No. '000)</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>9.9</b>

(a) Females aged 15 years and over.

(b) Comprises unemployed women and women not in the labour force.

(c) May include women who also used informal child care.

(d) Data collected in remote areas only.

(e) Includes women who did not state the kind of child care used.

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002.

### Key Findings:

- In remote areas, more than 85% of Indigenous women with primary responsibility for children reported access to formal child care facilities.
- The use of formal child care by Indigenous women is likely to be higher in non-remote areas.
- Formal child care is used by Indigenous women who are employed and not employed.

## Community Participation and Support

The following table shows the participation of Indigenous women in social activities outside the home compared to non-Indigenous women.

**Table 8: Females Aged 18 Years or Over, Type(s) of Social Activities, Western Australia, 2002**

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
	%	%
Participated (a)		
Church or religious activities	29.1	24.4
Went out to cafe, restaurant or bar (b)	47.1	82.1
Took part in/attended sport or physical activities	49.5	58.0
Total participated in social activities	88.6	94.0
Did not participate	11.4	6.0

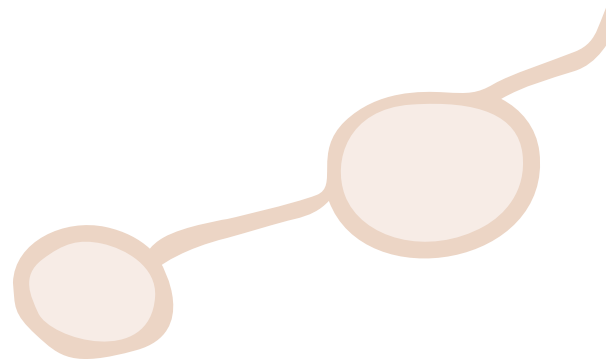
(a) Respondents may have indicated more than one response category.

(b) Includes people in remote areas who went to pubs, hotels and canteens.

Source: The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and the General Social Survey.

### Key Findings:

- 89% of Indigenous women had been involved in one or more social activities outside the home.
- Among Indigenous women, the youngest age group (18-24 years) had the highest involvement in social activities. For older age groups the proportion involved declined with age.
- 44% of Indigenous women had participated in or attended sporting or physical activities, compared to 74% of non-Indigenous women. Participation of Indigenous women varied significantly by age, falling from 57% for young women (18-24 years) to 26% for women aged 45 years and over.
- 23% of Indigenous women had undertaken voluntary work. Indigenous women aged 25-44 years were more likely to undertake voluntary work than those in younger or older age groups.



The following table shows the proportion of Indigenous women and non-Indigenous women experiencing different types of stress.

**Table 9: Females Aged 18 Years or Over: Personal Stressors Experienced in Last 12 Months, Western Australia, 2002**

Experienced stressor(s) (a)	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
	%	%
Serious illness or disability	28.1	25.5
Serious accident	11.3	5.0
Mental illness	14.0	11.5
Death of family member or close friend	51.0	19.9
Divorce or separation	14.7	12.6
Not able to get a job	21.4	16.5
Involuntary loss of job	3.3	6.6
Alcohol or drug-related problems	26.5	10.0
Gambling problem	9.8	1.5
Abuse or violent crime	15.3	5.4
Witness to violence	14.4	3.9
Trouble with the police	18.4	3.5
Member of family sent to jail or currently in jail	23.3	n.a.
Overcrowding at home	18.2	n.a.
Pressure to fulfil cultural responsibilities (b)	5.8	n.a.
Discrimination/racism	20.7	n.a.
Total experienced stressor(s) (c)	82.5	61.5
No stressors reported	17.5	38.5

(a) Respondents may have indicated more than one response category.

(b) Data collected for non-remote areas only.

(c) Total may include persons for whom some specific information could not be determined.

n. a. not available.

Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey and the General Social Survey, 2002, WA, Unpublished Data.

## Key Findings:

- Death of a family member or close friend ranked as the most significant personal stressor experienced by Indigenous women.
- Alcohol or drug-related problems and trouble with the police were reported much more frequently as stressors by Indigenous women than non-Indigenous women.
- Most Indigenous women were able to get support from someone outside the household in a time of crisis. The ability to access support among Indigenous women increased with age.
- Family members were the source of support most frequently reported by Indigenous women, followed by friends.

## Cultural Attachment

The following table shows the attachment of Indigenous women to their homeland or traditional country.

**Table 10: Females Aged 18 Years or Over: Attachment to Homeland/Traditional Country, Western Australia, 2002**

Recognises homelands/traditional country	%
Living there now	27.6
Not living there now	
Allowed to visit traditional country	44.8
Not allowed to visit traditional country	*0.7
<b>Total not living on homelands/traditional country</b>	<b>46.3</b>
<b>Total recognises homelands/traditional country</b>	<b>73.9</b>
<b>Does not recognise homelands/traditional country</b>	<b>26.1</b>

*\*Estimate has a relative standard error between 25% and 50% and should be treated with caution.*

*Source: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, 2002, WA, Unpublished Data.*

### Key Findings:

- 58% of Indigenous women have experienced considerable disadvantage resulting from family members being removed by missions, government or welfare agencies.
- 51% of Indigenous women identified with a clan, tribal or language group.
- 28% of Indigenous women were currently living in their homeland or traditional country. 26% of Indigenous women did not recognise their homeland or traditional country.
- More than 70% of Indigenous women had attended a cultural event. The most commonly reported events attended by Indigenous women were funerals, festivals or carnivals involving arts, craft, music or dance, and sports carnivals.
- 28% of Indigenous women were able to speak an Indigenous language.
- An Indigenous language was the main language spoken at home by one out of eight women.

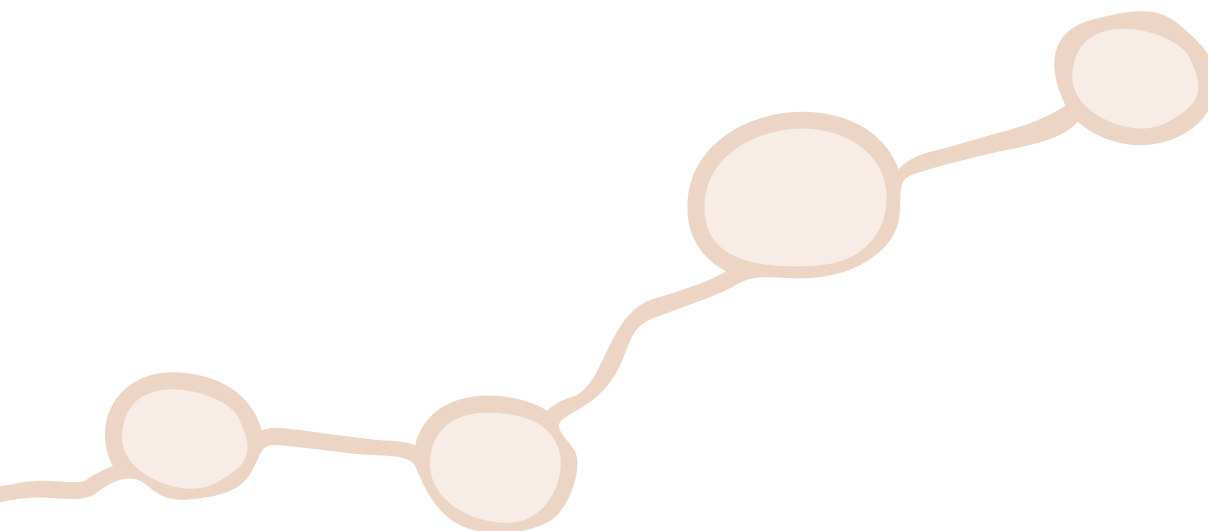
# Safety

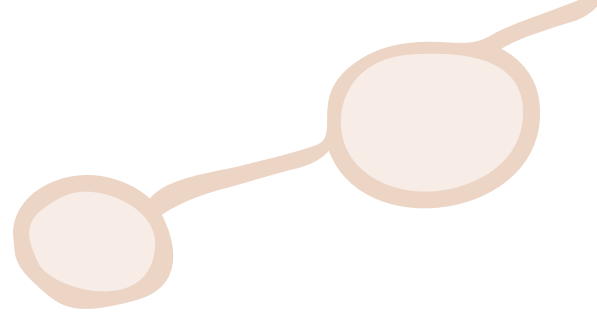
Family and domestic violence is an issue of particular concern among Indigenous communities as it affects their social, emotional, physical and financial wellbeing. Studies such as the Gordon Inquiry suggest that there is a disproportionate incidence of family violence in Indigenous communities compared with the total Australian population. The issues relating to safety for Indigenous women are violence against women and safety in the community.

## Violence Against Women

### Key Findings:

- Reliable information on the extent of family violence against women is not currently available.
- Indigenous women are nearly three times more likely than non-Indigenous women to report being a victim of physical or threatened violence.
- The age-adjusted rates (AAR) of deaths from assault purposely inflicted by another person was 9.4 for Indigenous women aged 15 years and over, compared to 0.7 for non-Indigenous women.
- The AAR of hospitalisation due to assault purposely inflicted by another person was 29.5% for Indigenous women aged 15 years and over.
- 22.6% of Indigenous women saw family violence as a problem in their community.
- The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) helps people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including women (and their children) who are victims of family/domestic violence. Compared to their representation in the total population, Indigenous women were over-represented as clients of the program. 82% of Indigenous female SAAP clients received services from domestic violence agencies or cited domestic violence as a reason for seeking assistance.

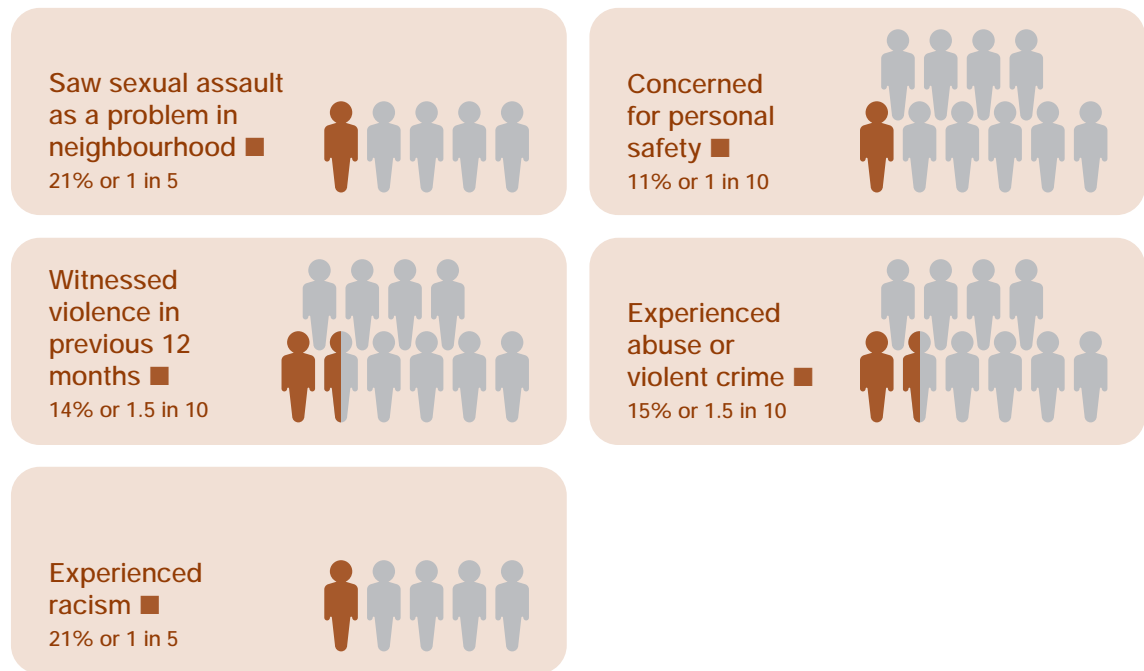




## Safety in the Community

The following graph shows the perceptions, experiences and concerns of Indigenous women regarding safety in the community.

**Figure 9: Issues Relating to Safety in the Community for Indigenous Women**



### Key Findings:

- 11% of Indigenous women were concerned by the level of personal safety in their neighbourhood
- One in five Indigenous women saw assault as a problem in their community and less than one in ten saw sexual assault as a problem.
- Indigenous women are significantly more likely to report being a victim of abuse, violent crime or a witness to violence.
- One in five Indigenous women experienced discrimination and or racism.

# Mature Aged Women

Indigenous women aged 45 years and over, are often referred to as “Mature Aged Women”. This is due to a number of factors including lower life expectancies, patterns of fertility and practical reasons relating to population sizes and the availability of statistics. In 2004, Indigenous women aged 60 years and over represented 5% of the total Indigenous female population, while all women aged 60 years and over represented 17%. The issues relating to mature aged Indigenous women are health and wellbeing, provision of care, elder abuse, income, superannuation and the age pension, labour force participation, housing, transport, and computer usage.

## Health and Wellbeing

The following table shows the differences in Indigenous women’s health and wellbeing by age, compared with non-Indigenous women.

**Table 11: Women Aged 18 Years and Over: Selected Health and Wellbeing Indicators, Western Australia, 2002**

Age range (years)	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	18-44	45+	18-44	45+
	%	%	%	%
Proportion reporting excellent or very good health	37.2	12.7	72.3	47.4
Proportion with a disability or long-term health condition	34.3	48.9	29.1	52.8

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

The following table shows the proportion of Indigenous women who were victims of physical or threatened violence compared to non-Indigenous women by age.

**Table 12: Women Aged 18 Years and Over: Victims of Physical or Threatened Violence in Last 12 Months, Western Australia, 2002**

	Age Range (years)		
	18-24	25-44	45+
	%	%	%
<b>Indigenous</b>	31.1	29.3	13.5
<b>Non-Indigenous</b>	10.9	12.1	5.5

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

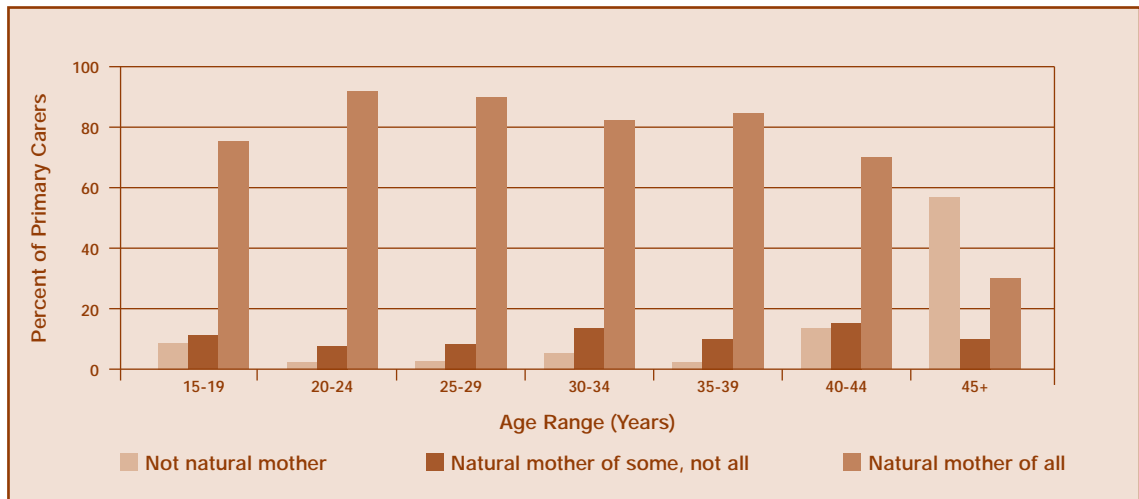
## Key Findings:

- A lower proportion of Indigenous women compared to non-Indigenous women report they have excellent or very good health and this declines with age.
- Between ages 18 to 44 years more Indigenous women have a disability or long-term health condition than non-Indigenous women. Indigenous women in the older age group are less likely to report a disability or long-term health condition than non-Indigenous women in that age group.
- Indigenous women's involvement in social activities declines with age. For Indigenous women, the age group with the highest involvement in voluntary work is found in the 25-44 years age group.
- While involvement in family life and community may be important for Indigenous women's sense of well being and value to society, there is no information on Indigenous women's perception of their continuing value and contribution to society as they age.
- Findings from the report Elder Abuse in Western Australia indicate that elder abuse may be more common among Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people.

## Provision of Care

The following figure shows the number and ages of Indigenous women who provide care for Indigenous children and their relationship to the children in their care.

**Figure 10: Indigenous Women Primary Carers: Relationship to Indigenous Children in Their Care, Western Australia, 2000/01**



Source: 2000–2001 Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey, Unpublished Data 2005

## Key Findings:

- 2% of Indigenous women aged 45 years and over were in receipt of the payment for carers who, because of their constant caring responsibilities at home, are unable to support themselves through participation in the workforce.
- 7% of Indigenous women aged 45 years and over received the Parenting Payment, which provides financial help for people who are primary carers of children (i.e. the recipient may be a parent, grandparent or foster carer).
- An estimated 9,360 Indigenous women were primary carers of Indigenous children aged 0-17 years
- The highest proportion of Indigenous women most likely to be caring for children for whom they were not the natural mother were aged 45 years and over (56%). It is likely that a number of these matured aged carers were the grandmothers of the children being cared for.

## Income, Superannuation, Age Pension and Labour Force Participation

The following table shows the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women in the lowest to highest weekly household income groups by age.

**Table 13: Women Aged 18 Years and Over: Proportion in Weekly Household Income Group, Western Australia, 2002**

Age Range (years)	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	18-24	25-44	45+	18-24	25-44	45+
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Lowest income group	*38.5	43.3	45.8	15.1	14.5	25.0
Second income group	33.6	33.6	29.4	23.7	19.4	22.8
Third income group	14.3	13.9	10.4	26.8	21.7	19.5
Fourth and fifth income group	13.6	9.2	14.4	34.3	44.4	32.7

\*Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

The following table shows the labour force participation of Indigenous women compared to non-Indigenous women by age.

**Table 14: Women Aged 18 Years and Over: Labour Force Participation, Western Australia, 2002**

Age Range (years)	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	18-24	25-44	45+	18-24	25-44	45+
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employed	46.9	46.4	31.6	66.1	66.3	42.9
Not employed (a)	53.1	53.6	68.4	33.9	33.7	57.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Due to high relative standard errors, 'unemployed' and 'not in the labour force' categories are combined into a single 'not employed' category

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

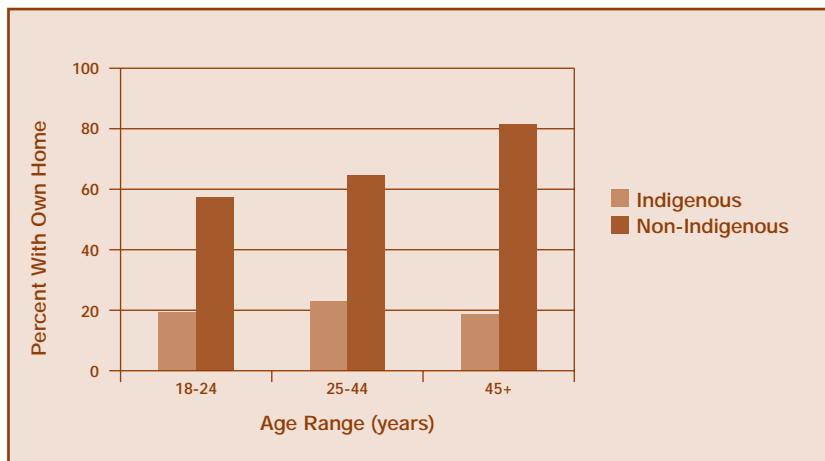
## Key Findings:

- 45.8% of Indigenous women aged 45 years and over were in the lowest income bracket. The proportion of Indigenous women living in the lowest income range increases with age.
- There is currently no comparable data on Indigenous women's superannuation coverage.
- 41% of Indigenous women aged 60 years and over were receiving the age pension.
- Indigenous women aged 45 years and over are less likely to be employed.

## Housing, Transport and Computer Usage

The following graph shows the age differences in home ownership of Indigenous women compared to non-Indigenous women.

**Figure 11: Women Aged 18 Years and Over: Home Ownership (a), Western Australia, 2002**



(a) Includes women with and without a mortgage.

Estimate for Indigenous women aged 18-24 and 45+ has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

The following table shows Indigenous women's access to transport compared to non-Indigenous women by age.

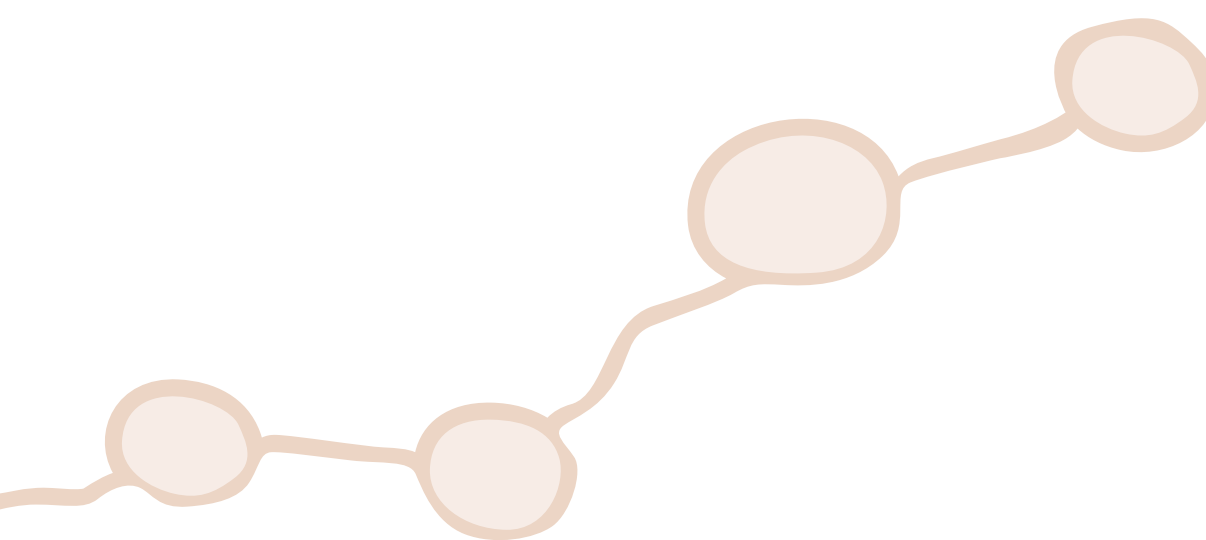
**Table 15: Women Aged 18 Years and Over: Selected Transport and Accessibility Indicators, Western Australia, 2002**

Age Range (years)	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous		
	18-24	25-44	45+	18-24	25-44	45+
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Has access to motor vehicle(s) to drive	46.8	65.7	48.3	83.4	94.4	80.8
Can easily get to the places needed	65.7	67.2	74.4	70.2	90.0	82.8

Sources: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4714.0; General Social Survey, 2002, ABS, cat. no. 4519.0

### Key Findings:

- While Indigenous women are generally less likely to own their own home than non-Indigenous women, Indigenous women aged 45 years and over are the least likely of all age groups to own their own home.
- For women aged 45 years and over, 76% of Indigenous women lived in rented accommodation, compared to 15% of non-Indigenous women.
- 48% of Indigenous women aged 45 years and over reported that they had access to motor vehicle/s to drive, compared to 81% of non-Indigenous women in the same age range.
- More mature aged Indigenous women could more easily get to the places they needed to go to than younger Indigenous women, but the proportion is smaller than for non-Indigenous women.
- Indigenous women aged 45 years and over were half as likely to have used a computer at home and one third as likely to have accessed the Internet than non-Indigenous women.



## Health and Disability

Life expectancy at birth is widely viewed as a key health indicator for both the Indigenous and total population. Differences in mortality levels between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population are difficult to establish conclusively. The issues relating to health and disability for Indigenous women are life expectancy and mortality, causes of death, health risk factors, self-assessed health status, disability, mental health and wellbeing, and maternal and sexual health.

### Life Expectancy and Mortality

The following table shows the age at death of Indigenous women compared to non-Indigenous women.

**Table 16: Age at Death, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Females (a), Western Australia, 2003**

Age (years)	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	no.	%	no.	%
0	14	10.4	29	0.6
1-14	5	3.7	28	0.5
15-24	6	4.5	39	0.8
25-34	10	7.5	62	1.2
35-44	11	8.2	103	2.0
45-54	21	15.7	215	4.2
55-64	21	15.7	375	7.3
65 and over	46	34.3	4,308	83.5
<b>Total (b)</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5,159</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Not stated Indigenous origin deaths have not been prorated over Indigenous and non-Indigenous deaths.

As a result, Indigenous and non-Indigenous deaths may be underestimated.

(b) Includes age at death not stated

Source: Deaths, Australia, 2003, ABS, (cat.no.3302.0)

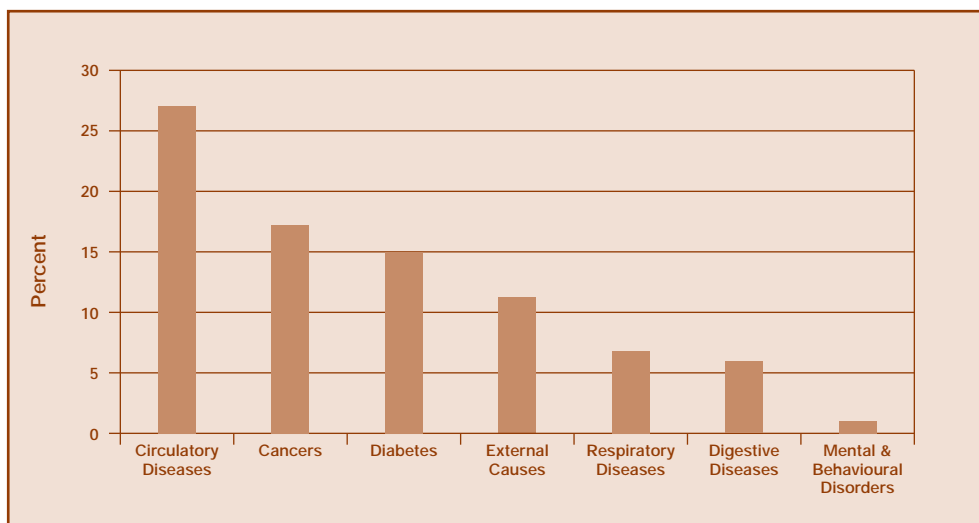
### Key Findings:

- An Indigenous girl born in the period 1996-2001 could expect to live 67.2 years.
- Around one third of deaths of Indigenous women occurred at 65 years or over, compared with 83% of deaths of non-Indigenous women. In all other age groups, the mortality level was higher among Indigenous females.
- After the age of 15 years, the death rates for Indigenous women were lower than for Indigenous men.
- In 2003, the average age at death for Indigenous females in WA was 55 years, which is higher than in South Australia and Northern Territory.

## Causes of Death

The following table shows the leading causes of death of Indigenous females aged 15 years and over.

**Figure 12: Females Aged 15 Years and Over: Leading Causes of Death: Western Australia, 1999-2003**



Source: *Epidemiology, Health Information Centre Department of Health WA, unpublished data Feb 2005*

### Key Findings:

- The leading causes of death among Indigenous women were heart disease and strokes, followed by malignant cancers.
- The rates for cancers of the digestive organs and lung were substantially higher among Indigenous women.
- Diabetes is a significant cause of death among the Indigenous population. It is ranked as the third most common cause of death among Indigenous women.
- Indigenous women are much more likely than other women to die from external causes such as injury and poisoning, with motor vehicle accidents as the highest cause.

## Health Risk Factors, Self-Assessed Health Status, Disability, Mental Health, and Maternal and Sexual Health

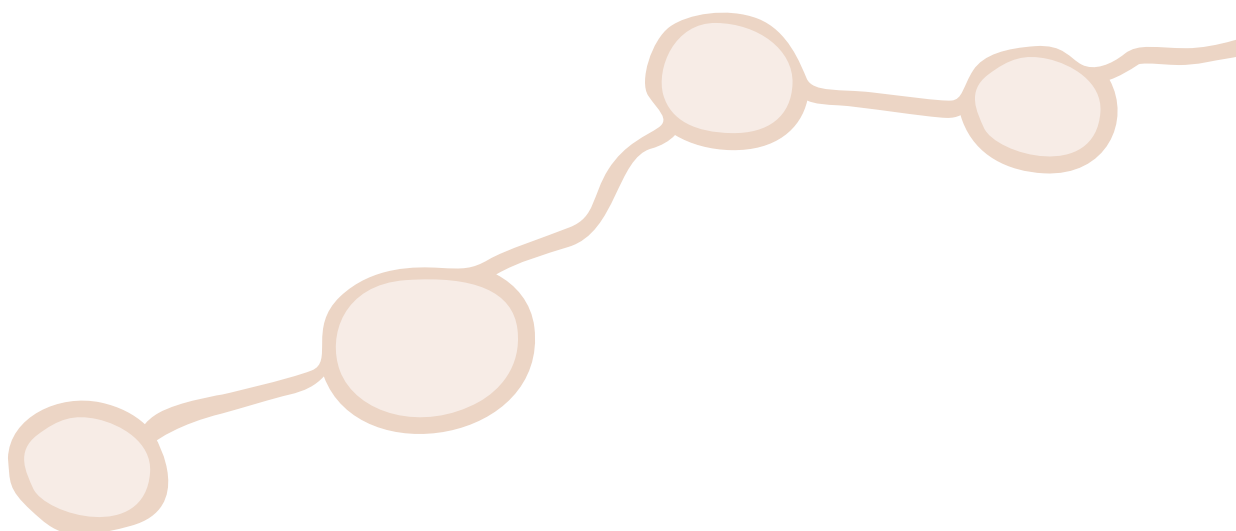
The following table shows the self-assessed health status of Indigenous women compared to non-Indigenous women.

**Table 17: Females Aged 18 Years and Over (a): Self-assessed Health Status, Western Australia, 2002**

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Self-assessed health status	%	%
Excellent/very good	24.1	59.9
Good	38.6	25.0
Fair/poor	37.2	15.2

(a) Estimates in this table have been age-standardised to the age composition of the estimated Australian resident population at 30 June 2001.

Source: 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey and General Social Survey, unpublished data



## Key Findings:

- Almost half of Indigenous women aged 18 years and over were current smokers. Some were ex-smokers while many had never smoked.
- One third of Indigenous women had not drunk any alcohol during the previous 12 months while 13.6% reported they had consumed risky or high risk levels of alcohol. Women in remote areas were less likely to drink dangerous levels of alcohol than women in non-remote areas.
- In non-remote areas, 74% of Indigenous women reported they had never used any substances for non-medical purposes, while 9.8% reported they had used one or more substances. Marijuana was the most common substance used.
- 44% of Indigenous women reported they had participated in sporting or physical activities compared to 74% of non-Indigenous women.
- Indigenous women in each age group were more likely to be classified as obese than non-Indigenous women.
- 24.1% of Indigenous women had excellent or very good health status compared to 59.9% of non-Indigenous women.
- 56.2% of Indigenous women had a disability or long-term health condition including sensory (sight, hearing, speech), physical and intellectual disabilities, compared to 41.0% of non-Indigenous women.
- Indigenous women have a higher prevalence of profound or severe core activity restriction than non-Indigenous women (9% compared with 6%).
- An estimated 15% of Indigenous women aged 15 years and over in non-remote areas had a mental illness. This represents the second most common condition after physical disability.
- Eight out of ten Indigenous women reported at least one cause of stress with the most common being the death of someone close.
- Indigenous women were hospitalised for intentional self-harm at least twice as much as non-Indigenous women.
- Fertility rates in the 15-19 years age groups were 87 for Indigenous women compared to 18.6 for all women. Among Indigenous women, the 20-24 age groups showed the highest fertility rate.
- 15% of babies born to Indigenous mothers were reported as underweight. Women who had used alcohol and/or tobacco in pregnancy tended to have lower birth weight babies.
- There are higher rates of chlamydia and gonorrhoea notifications for Indigenous women than non-Indigenous women.
- Indigenous status is not recorded on the WA cervical cancer screening database and there are no known sources of data for Indigenous women in WA.
- 40% of Indigenous women aged 50-69 years participated in breast cancer screening compared to 58% for all women.





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