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Demographic profile of the Aboriginal population of NSW

New South Wales has Australia's largest number of Aboriginal people, and the Aboriginal population is increasing at a higher rate than the general population.

The population characteristics of Aboriginal people in New South Wales are distinctly different to the rest of the State and, as a consequence, the Aboriginal community faces different challenges.

Aboriginal people in New South Wales predominantly reside in urban and regional areas of the State, yet they comprise the largest proportion of the populations of the most remote regions of New South Wales.

This chapter provides an overview of the key demographic characteristics and trends for Aboriginal people in New South Wales based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data.

3.1 Overview

Population indicators

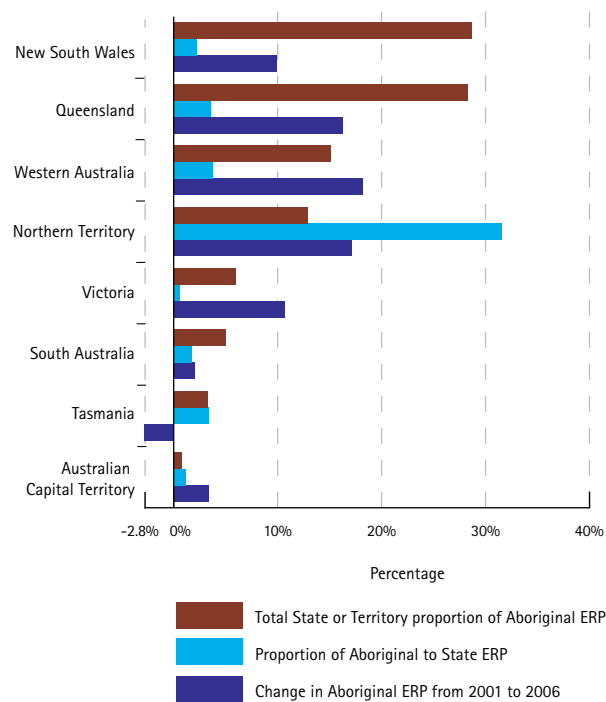
3.1A Estimated Aboriginal Residential Population in 2001 and 2006

State, Territory and Australia	2001 Census		2006 Census	
	Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population	Total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population	Aboriginal proportion of state/ Australian population	
	Number	Number	%	
New South Wales	134,888	148,178	2.2	
Victoria	27,846	30,839	0.6	
Queensland	125,910	146,429	3.6	
South Australia	25,544	26,044	1.7	
Western Australia	65,931	77,928	3.8	
Tasmania	17,384	16,900	3.4	
Northern Territory	56,875	66,582	31.6	
Australian Capital Territory	3,909	4,043	1.2	
Australia	458,520	517,174	2.5	

Source: *Population distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006* ABS Cat. No. 4705.0



3.1B Estimated Aboriginal Residential Population comparisons



Source: *Population distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006* ABS Cat. No. 4705.0

3.1C NSW Estimated Aboriginal Residential Population by age and sex

NSW Aboriginal Estimated Residential Population	Male	Female	Total
Less than five	9,567	8,938	18,505
5 to 14	19,515	18,523	38,038
15 to 24	14,571	13,443	28,014
25 to 44	18,026	19,701	37,727
45 to 64	10,116	10,758	20,874
65 and over	2,201	2,819	5,020
All ages	73,996	74,182	148,178

Source: ABS Demography Unit Canberra, Unpublished data

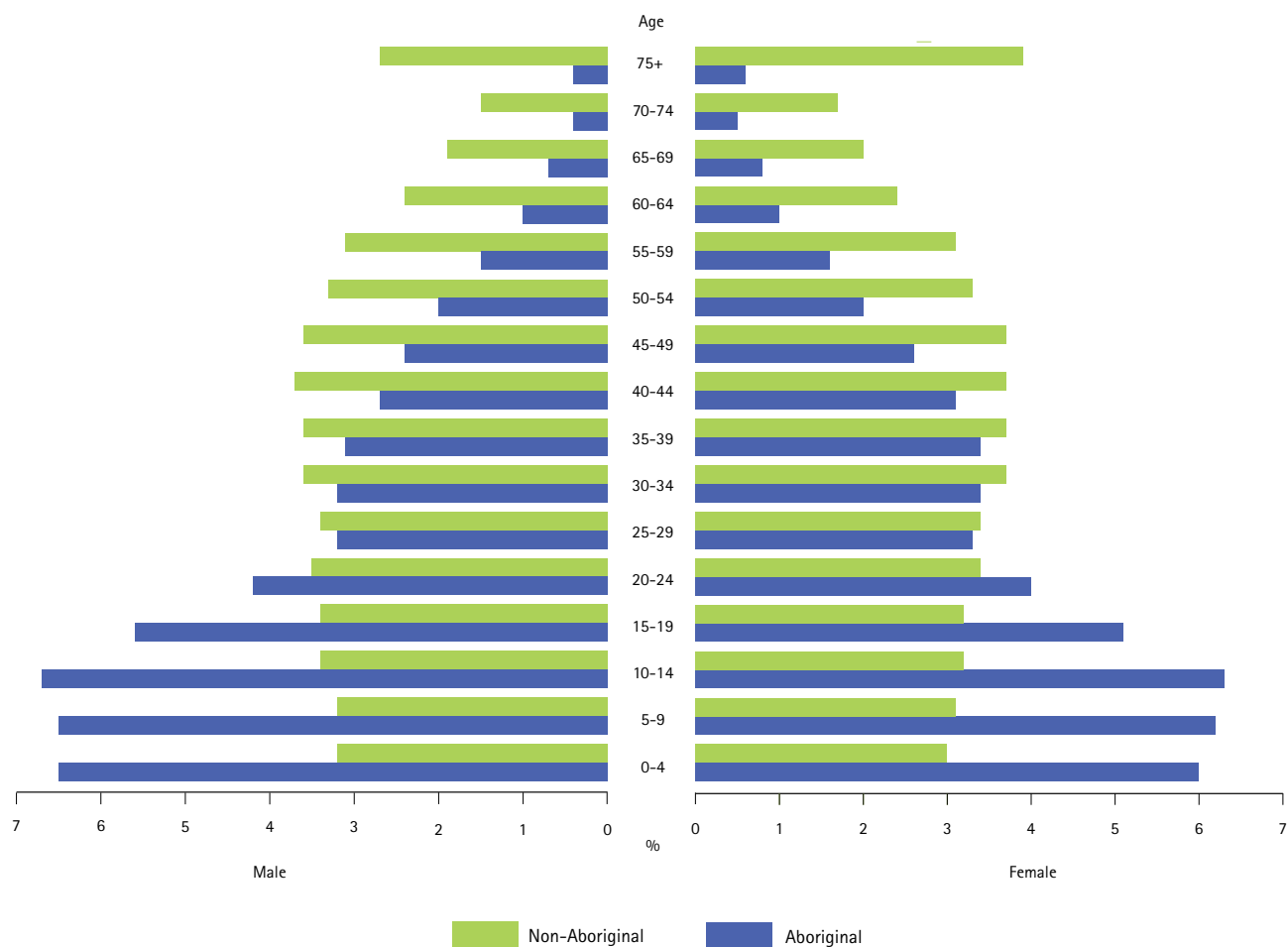
Census data and Estimated Residential Population

The Australian Bureau of Statistics produced Estimated Residential Population (ERP) data for the Aboriginal population of the States and Territories, based on the 2006 Census of Population and Housing in *Population distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006* ABS Cat. No. 4705.0 released on 15 August 2007.

ERP data is the most accurate count of the Aboriginal population published by the ABS. It is more accurate than 'raw' census data which the ABS started to release from the end of June 2007. The ERP makes allowance for census forms where the Aboriginality question has not been completed as well as the Aboriginal undercount established by the Post Enumeration Survey conducted about three weeks after the census.

Other chapters in this Report sometimes make use of data direct from the Census because the Census collects many variables or cross-classifications of variables which, for a variety of reasons, are not produced on an ERP basis, for example, occupation.

3.1D Population pyramid, 2006



Source: Population distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006 ABS Cat. No. 4705.0

What do the data show?

In 2006, the Estimated Aboriginal Residential Population of NSW was 148,178 or 2.2% of the total NSW population and 28.7% of the Aboriginal population of Australia. NSW has more Aboriginal residents than any other State or Territory although the Aboriginal population of Queensland should soon overtake that of NSW.

With 146,429 Aboriginal people, Queensland is now close behind NSW with the second highest Aboriginal population. If the growth rate in its Aboriginal population between the 2001 and 2006 censuses is maintained, Queensland will overtake NSW as the State or Territory with the highest number of Aboriginal people well before the next Census is due in 2011.

The Northern Territory has 31.6% of its population made up of Aboriginal residents, by far the highest proportion of any State or Territory.

Between 2001 and 2006, the Aboriginal population of NSW grew by 13,290 people while the total population of NSW grew by 222,596. Thus, the growth in the Aboriginal population accounted for 6.0% of the growth in the population of NSW through this period. A note of caution is necessary in assuming that all of this increase represents actual growth in the Aboriginal population as it is not clear how much of it can be attributed to people who did not identify as Aboriginal at the 2001 Census but who did identify as Aboriginal at the 2006 Census.

The term Aboriginal is used in this Report to include people of Torres Strait Islander descent. This section of the Report also uses the term Torres Strait Islander because separate ERP data are available for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for States, Territories and Australia. Based on the results

for NSW from the 2006 Census, 94.4% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of NSW identified as Aboriginal, 3.4% identified as Torres Strait Islander and 2.1% identified as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

At 15.4% for both, NSW had the second highest proportion of both Torres Strait Islander people and people with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, behind Queensland (63.8% and 59.5% respectively).

The juxtaposition of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population age and sex profiles in the population pyramid, graphically demonstrates the differences. A corollary of these differences is the shorter life expectancy of Aboriginal than non-Aboriginal people. For NSW, this gap is 16.4 years for males and 16.8 years for females.

The differences are most noticeable at the two ends of the pyramid. The proportion of the Aboriginal population is about twice the proportion of the non-Aboriginal population at the younger age end of the pyramid. For example, for the 0 to 4 age bracket, Aboriginal males constitute 6.5% of the total Aboriginal population while the non-Aboriginal males of the same age are only 3.2% of the non-Aboriginal population. The higher proportions of Aboriginal people in younger age brackets extend up to and include the 20 to 24 age group.

For age ranges ascending from the 25 to 29 range, the non-Aboriginal population has higher proportions of its population in them than the Aboriginal population has, with the size of the difference widening with each ascending age group.

3.2 Regional NSW

Population indicators

3.2A RCMG regions demographic profile, 2006

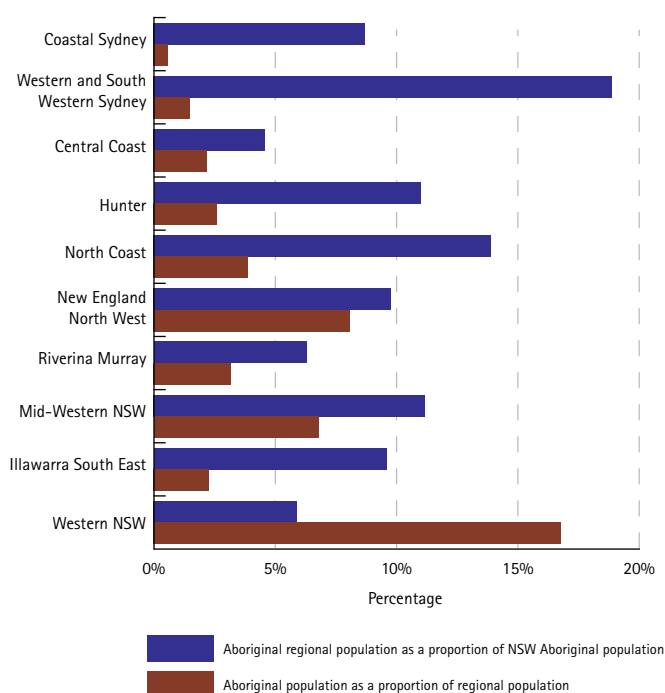
Experimental Estimated Resident Aboriginal Population by RCMG region at 30 June 2006						
RCMG Region	Aboriginal males	Aboriginal females	Aboriginal population	All NSW males	All NSW females	All NSW/RCMG region
Coastal Sydney	6,494	6,435	12,929	1,049,218	1,081,379	2,130,597
Western and South Western Sydney	13,814	14,251	28,065	929,605	940,086	1,869,691
Central Coast	3,402	3,426	6,828	147,457	157,284	304,741
Hunter	8,167	8,136	16,303	306,902	310,551	617,453
North Coast	10,291	10,323	20,614	259,845	266,736	526,581
New England North West	7,210	7,349	14,559	89,644	90,131	179,775
Riverina Murray	4,704	4,626	9,330	145,271	143,756	289,027
Mid-Western NSW	8,309	8,233	16,542	120,971	120,630	241,601
Illawarra South East	7,191	7,028	14,219	302,220	303,275	605,495
Western NSW	4,414	4,375	8,789	26,961	25,260	52,221
Total NSW	73,996	74,182	148,178	3,378,094	3,439,088	6,817,182

Source: ABS Demography Unit Canberra, Unpublished data

Note:

1 Experimental estimates at 30 June 2006 are preliminary estimates based on the 2006 Census.

3.2B Aboriginal composition of RCMG regions



Source: ABS Demography Unit Canberra, Unpublished data

Note:

1 Experimental estimates at 30 June 2006 are preliminary estimates based on the 2006 Census.

What do the data show?

Western and South Western Sydney had the highest number of Aboriginal people of any RCMG region in NSW. However, because it had a population of 1.9 million people, the Aboriginal population represents only 1.5% of the region, the second lowest concentration among the regions, behind Coastal Sydney with 0.6%.

At 16.8%, Western NSW has the highest proportion of Aboriginal people of all the regions, while only accounting for 5.9% of the NSW Aboriginal population. At 8,789, Western NSW had the second lowest number of Aboriginal residents of the RCMG regions, after Central Coast (at 6,828).

New England North West and Mid-Western NSW regions (8.1% and 6.8% respectively) also had significant proportions of Aboriginal residents while North Coast and Hunter (20,614 and 16,303 respectively) also had large Aboriginal populations.

