



TWO WAYS TOGETHER
REGIONAL REPORT
Public Report

Coastal Sydney

– November 2006 –



TWO WAYS TOGETHER REGIONAL REPORT Coastal Sydney

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report gathers together data¹ about Aboriginal people and the government services provided to them in the Coastal Sydney region of NSW. The report has been developed as part of the regional implementation of *Two Ways Together*.

Two Ways Together 2003-2012 is the NSW Government's plan to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities. *Two Ways Together* recognises that in order to affect real and sustainable improvements in the wellbeing of Aboriginal people, a whole-of-government approach is required. It recognises that effective partnerships with Aboriginal communities must underpin government, action if policies and programs are to be relevant to Aboriginal people. In developing sustainable partnerships between Aboriginal people and government it, aims to strengthen Aboriginal people's capacity to exercise their inherent rights as the first peoples of Australia.

At a state level, *Two Ways Together* targets seven priority areas to positively improve the lives of Aboriginal people. These areas have been identified as priorities by Aboriginal communities in New South Wales. They are: Justice; Health; Housing and Infrastructure; Education; Culture and Heritage; Economic Development and Families and Young People. Four cross-agency Cluster Groups have been established with responsibility for developing innovative initiatives which meet the needs of Aboriginal people in these priority areas. Each of the Cluster Groups is chaired by a lead agency and includes representation from 60 relevant NSW and Australian Government agencies and five Peak Aboriginal Bodies. *Two Ways Together* Action Plans for 2005-2007 are currently being implemented by the Cluster Groups.

At the regional level, Regional Engagement Groups (or REGs) have been established to ensure that government agencies are meeting community needs in the regions. to the Regional Reports will be used by REGs to develop regional action plans to focus regional government activity on locally identified priority issues and areas. In most of the regions, regional action planning will include particular focus on up to three Partnership Communities. REGs are coordinated by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs' Regional Managers. The regional reports have been developed to inform the work of REGs and government agencies in the regions.

A description of the contents and major findings of the report are outlined below.

Chapter 1 outlines the characteristics of the region, noting its geographical location, the local government areas that fall within its borders and its population. This chapter also outlines the Aboriginal cultural and language groups and the Local Aboriginal Land Councils in the region. There is a brief overview of the local economy, in which Aboriginal men are most commonly employed in government administration and defence, construction, transport and storage, and to a lesser extent in retail, manufacturing, and property and business management. Aboriginal women primarily work in government administration and defence, community services, education and health services, and to a lesser extent in retail trade and property and business services.

¹ Note: all data is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2001 Census unless otherwise specified

Chapter 2 presents a demographic profile of the region. It reveals that the Aboriginal population of Coastal Sydney is 0.54% of the total population and marked by a high youth demographic, with 25% of the Aboriginal population under 10 years of age, compared to 13% for the general population. There is a very large proportion of young people, with 47% of Aboriginal people in 2001 being less than 20 years old. The region had 10% of the total 119,865 people that identified as Aboriginal in NSW in 2001.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of socio-economic indicators. It confirms that Aboriginal people in the region are significantly disadvantaged in contrast to the general affluence of the region. With respect to several of the health indicators (such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes), Coastal Sydney Aboriginal people have above average health when compared with other Aboriginal people in the State. However, Coastal Sydney has specific health problems associated with higher levels of illicit drug use. Levels of Aboriginal unemployment are lower in this region when compared with the state average, but are almost three times the rate for non-Aboriginal people in the region. Compared to other Aboriginal people in New South Wales, Aboriginal people in the Sydney region are worse off in the areas of justice, particularly remand, imprisonment and lack of access to bail and juvenile diversion.

Chapter 4 provides a snapshot of the current environment by summarising the needs identified through assessment of the demographic and socio-economic data and the community's priorities. Chapter 4 concludes by suggesting some areas for further examination at the local and regional planning levels.

Important note:

The *Two Ways Together* regional reports have been written based on the ten Regional Coordination Management Group (or RCMG) regions in New South Wales. REGs are constituted as sub-committees of RCMGs, which are coordinated by the NSW Premier's Department.

However, much of the data relied upon in this report is collected by ATSI region, and these boundaries are not consistent with the RCMG boundaries. Where this creates possible issues in interpreting the data contained in this report, it is noted. **Figure 1** notes the six ATSI regions, outlined in black, the ten RCMG regions by colour, and the Local Government Areas, outlined in white and by name. The six former ATSI regions are:

- Sydney
- Many Rivers (on the north coast)
- Kamilaroi (including north-west NSW)
- Murdi Paaki (including western NSW)
- Binaal Billa (including mid-west and south-western NSW)
- Queanbeyan (on the south coast).

The ten RCMG regions are:

- Coastal Sydney
- Western/South Western Sydney

- Central Coast
- Hunter
- North Coast
- New England/North West
- Western NSW/Murdi Paaki
- Mid-Western NSW
- Riverina/Murray
- Illawarra/South East.

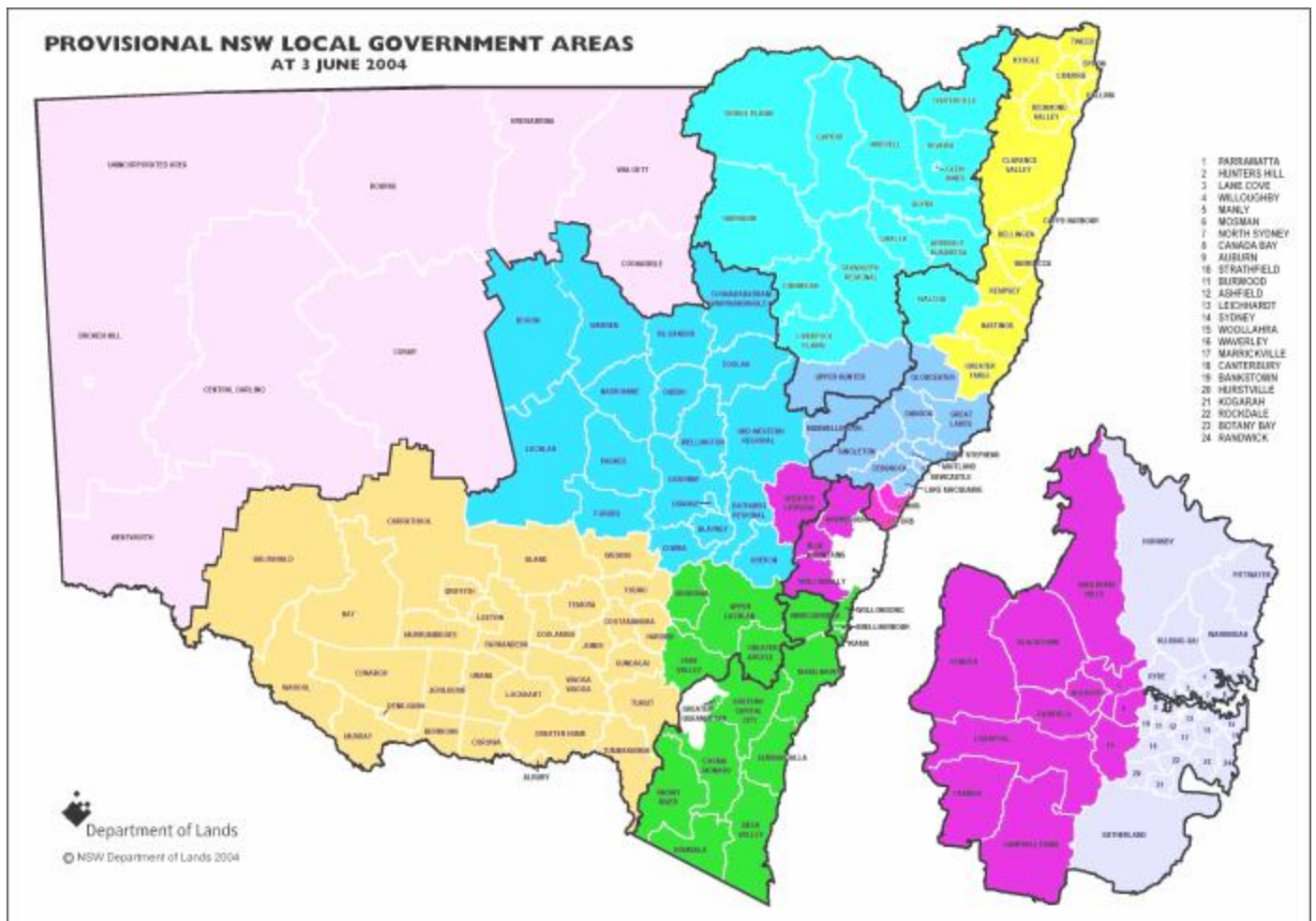


Figure 1: Map of RCMG, ATSI and LGA boundaries

Please note that for the purposes of this report Weddin, Young and Harden have been included in the Riverina Murray region as their statistics are collected with West Wyalong, Temora, Coolamon and Bland. Weddin is situated within the Mid-Western RCMG boundary and Young and Harden are situated within the Illawarra-South East boundary.

Also although the Wentworth LGA is part of the Riverina Murray RCMG boundary, the statistics have been captured with Western NSW as it is expected that the information will be used to assist with the COAG Trial in the Murdi Paaki region, and Wentworth is part of the Trial site.

1.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

1.1 Geography

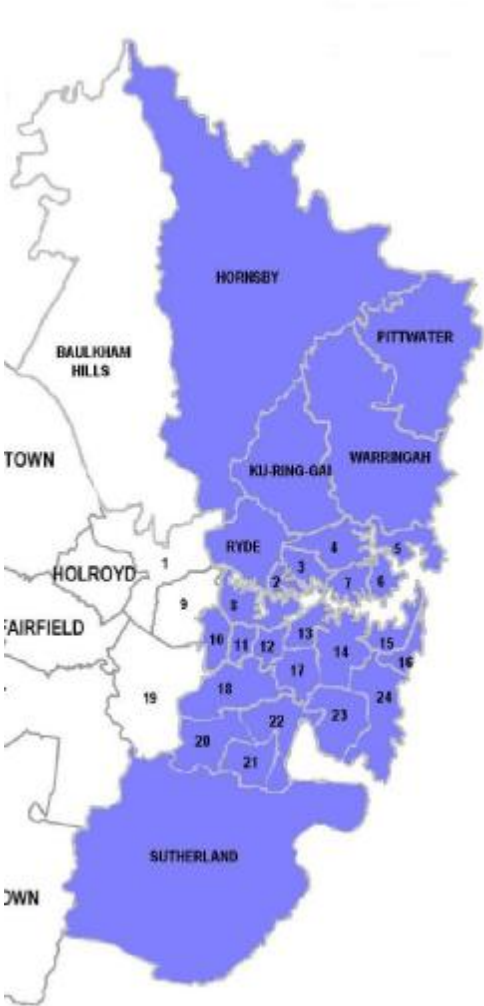
The Sydney region is shown on the map at **Figure 2**. The region extends from Hornsby and Pittwater Local Government Areas (LGAs) to the north, west to Ryde, Canada Bay, Strathfield and Canterbury LGAs, and south to Hurstville and Sutherland LGAs.



Figure 2: NSW Local Government Areas in New South Wales

There are 27 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the Coastal Sydney region:

- Ashfield
- Botany Bay
- Burwood
- Canada Bay
- Canterbury
- Hornsby
- Hunters Hill
- Hurstville
- Kogarah
- Ku-ring-gai
- Lane Cove
- Leichhardt
- Manly
- Marrickville
- Mosman
- North Sydney
- Pittwater
- Rockdale
- Randwick
- Ryde
- Strathfield
- Sydney
- Sutherland
- Warringah
- Waverley
- Willoughby
- Woollahra



1.2 Local Planning for Aboriginal Communities

1.2.1 Local Government Council Social Plans

The City of Sydney, Randwick and Marrickville Local Government Authorities and the Redfern Waterloo Authority along with certain Local Councils have undertaken community consultations and developed social plans targeting Aboriginal communities. These are briefly reviewed below.

City of Sydney Local Government Authority

The City of Sydney Local Government Authority Draft Social Plan recognises that the region has a high Aboriginal population with specific social and economic needs. There were 1,890 Aboriginal people confirmed as living in the area at the time of the *2001 Census*. Aboriginal people are one of eight target groups for whom action plans have been prepared. The City of Sydney Social Plan covers a range of areas including:

- increased access to training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people
- increased rates of school attendance amongst young Aboriginal people
- improved co-ordination of services and infrastructure in Redfern and Waterloo
- improved health and health education services for local Aboriginal people
- an improved range of services and facilities for Aboriginal young people
- a reduction in the incidence of homelessness amongst the local Aboriginal population and
- promotion and support for reconciliation and Aboriginal culture.

Randwick Local Government Authority

Randwick City Council developed a Communities Facilities Study and accompanying Plan which included a needs analysis through consultations with the Aboriginal communities of La Perouse, Malabar and Little Bay. The areas most heavily utilised by Aboriginal people community included the South East Area Health Service, Yarra Bay House (which has been closed since February 2006) and schools in the La Perouse area. However, there were no appropriate facilities to hold programs for Aboriginal youth, and there was an identified need for hall space in the Malabar and Little Bay region, as well as for a multi-purpose centre at La Perouse. Specific areas of identified need included:

- safe houses and crisis accommodation
- employment initiatives
- promotion of arts and culture
- childcare, playgroups and long day care centre (recently met by Gujaga Childcare Centre)
- improved communication and governance
- youth facilities
- aged care facilities
- multi purpose facility
- health facility
- intervention and prevention program for youth
- rehabilitation and outreach program
- support services for victims of domestic violence
- educational support programs; and
- affordable housing.

Redfern Waterloo Human Services Plan

The Redfern/Waterloo Authority, in consultation with government and non-government local service providers and community members is developing a Human Services Plan (HSP) to meet the needs of the Redfern Waterloo communities. Phase One of the HSP has been completed, and it focuses on services for children and families, young people and Aboriginal people. The following priority actions have been identified:

1. Improve the health and wellbeing of children
2. Lift local school numeracy and literacy levels to at least the state average
3. Lift local school attendance and retention rates to at least the state average
4. Improve support for vulnerable people
5. Reduce the incidence of family violence
6. Increase participation and involvement of young people in the community
7. Increase numbers of young people accessing employment and training opportunities
8. Reduce drug and alcohol misuse
9. Reduce offending and recidivism
10. Build community capacity.

Phase Two of the HSP will focus on the aged, people with disabilities, people who are homeless and migrant communities.

1.3 Aboriginal Cultural Groups of the Region

The Coastal Sydney Region covers the traditional lands of 12 Aboriginal peoples.

- Birrabirragal
- Borogegal
- Boromedegal
- Darramurragal
- Gadigal
- Gamaragal
- Gameygal
- Garigal
- Gayamaygal
- Gweagal
- Wallumedegal
- Wangal

Language groups of the region include Darginung, Darug, Dharawal, Gundungurra and Guringai.²

1.3.1 Aboriginal Organisations in the Coastal Sydney Region

(a) Redfern

- Aboriginal Medical Service & Dental Service
- Sydney Regional Aboriginal Legal Service
- Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council
- Mudgin-Gal (Women's Services)
- Aboriginal Children's Services Ltd
- Organisation of Aboriginal Unity (Coalition of Aboriginal Organisations)
- Mac Silva Centre (Men's Hostel)
- Murawina Pre-School and Childcare
- Aboriginal Housing Company
- Bangarra

² Source: Australian Museum Online 'Living Harbour Clans and Language groups.

- Redfern Dance Theatre
- Tribal Warrior Association
- Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care
- Black Theatre
- The Settlement (After School Care)
- Eora College (TAFE)

(b) Glebe

- Tranby Aboriginal College

(c) Sydney City

- The National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA)

(d) La Perouse

- The La Perouse and Botany Bay Aboriginal Corporation (Housing, Culture, Youth & Aged issues)
- Guriwal Aboriginal Corporation (Respite Centre)
- La Perouse Aboriginal Land Council
- Gujaga Child Care Centre
- La Perouse Aboriginal Sport and Recreation
- La Perouse Rugby League Youth Corporation
- Two Women Dreaming Group (grief, loss and mental health)
- La Perouse Bummas Youth Haven

(e) Marrickville

- Inner West Aboriginal Community Company
- Warringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Resource Centre
- Gadigal Information Services & Koori Radio

(f) Leichhardt

- Boomalli Aboriginal Arts Co-Operative

1.4 Land

As of 12 October 2005, the Aboriginal Land Corporation owns or has granted four properties in the Sydney region (ATSIC boundaries) totalling 0.168 hectares.

There are no native title determinations, management agreements, non-statutory co-management agreements or Aboriginal Land Use Agreements in the Sydney region. The Department of Environment and Conservation has confirmed that in March 2006 they have 3,660 sites and eight Aboriginal Places of Significance registered in the Coastal Sydney region.

A Native Title claim which includes parcels of land throughout metropolitan Sydney was filed with the National Native Title Tribunal in May 1997 by the Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation. The claim includes numerous parcels of land within the following Local City Council and Municipal Council boundaries: Ashfield, Auburn, Bankstown, Botany Bay, Canada Bay, Canterbury, Hunters Hill, Hurstville, Kogarah,

Leichhardt, Marrickville, Randwick, Rockdale, Ryde, Strathfield, City of Sydney, Waverly and Woollahra.³

1.4.1 Land Councils

There are three Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) in the region. The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) covers the vast majority of Coastal Sydney, with La Perouse to the south and crossing over into Darkinjung LALC to the north.

1.5 Regional Economy

The Coastal Sydney region forms the heart of economic activity for New South Wales, with centres of government, business, transport and education located in the region. However the prosperity and benefits of the city are not equally shared with the region’s Aboriginal community. It is a place of extreme social disadvantage that contrasts starkly with the general affluence of the region.

The central business district is dominated by office-based corporate and public sector employment which supports a large retail tourism and leisure service sector.

This region has a larger proportion of professionals, advanced clerical, clerical, sales and service workers related to jobs in property and business services, finance and insurance and government administration. The greater share of associate professionals is based on more jobs in transport and storage industries.

The region features computing professionals, sales assistants, accountants, and secretaries and personal assistants as the most significant occupations. The most notable industries include legal and accounting services, deposit taking financiers, government administration, and other business services, including employment placement, contract staff and secretarial services, cleaning, pest control, security and auctioning.

The region also has several occupations that employ fewer people, but which form an unusually large share of the market compared to other regions: business and organisation analysts, information technology managers and industries such as life insurance and superannuation funds and radio and television services.⁴

The top five industry employers of **men** (from the ABS census statistics for this region) are:

<i>Non-Aboriginal Men</i>	<i>Aboriginal Men</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property & Business Services • Manufacturing • Retail • Construction • Finance & Insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Administration & Defence • Transport & Storage • Construction • Manufacturing • Retail

³ National Native Title Tribunal.
⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census.

The top five industry employers of **women** are:

<i>Non-Aboriginal Women</i>	<i>Aboriginal Women</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property & Business Services • Retail Trade • Health Services • Education • Finance & Insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Administration & Defence • Community Services • Education • Health Services • Property & Business Services

1.5.1 Where are the job vacancies?

In June 2006, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Jobseeker website listed 6,265 job vacancies in the Sydney region. The occupations with the highest number of job vacancies were: marketing and sales representatives (1267 vacancies); social welfare and security (530 vacancies) and clerks, receptionists and secretaries (442 vacancies).

1.5.2 Community Development and Employment Project (CDEP)

There are two Community Development Employment Programs (CDEPs) in the Coastal Sydney region: Redfern and La Perouse. In 2001, there were 150 participants in the Sydney ATSI region, of which 19 were non-Aboriginal. In December 2005, there were 95 participants in the Sydney RCMG region, 61 of whom were Aboriginal men and 25 of whom Aboriginal women, while six were non-Aboriginal men and three were non-Aboriginal women.⁵

⁵ 2001 Census and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, December 2005.

2.0 STATISTICAL PROFILE OF THE REGION

2.1 Demography

The *2001 Census* recorded the total Aboriginal population in the Coastal Sydney region as 11,931⁶ people. The Aboriginal population was 0.54% of the total population of 1,941,877 inhabitants. Though there is a relatively high Aboriginal population, the ratio of Aboriginal people to non-Aboriginal people remains low as a result of the total population density. The Coastal Sydney region had 8.8% of the total Aboriginal population in New South Wales in 2001.

Most of the Coastal Sydney region's Aboriginal population, other than the community at La Perouse, have moved to the area from other regions of New South Wales and Australia, and have cultural ties to the range of communities from which they originate. This has resulted in a relative lack of community organisations compared to communities with historical and cultural links to a region.

There are six communities in the region with a significant Aboriginal population. These are, Redfern/Waterloo, La Perouse, Glebe, Woolloomooloo, Marrickville, and Sutherland. The Aboriginal communities fall within the following LGAs: Sydney City, Randwick, Sutherland and Marrickville Councils (each of which have Aboriginal populations of between 1,000 and 1,600); Leichhardt, Canterbury, Botany Bay, Hornsby, Warringah, Rockdale and Hurstville (which each have an Aboriginal population of between 400 and 700).

The Aboriginal population in Coastal Sydney is marked by a high youth demographic, with 25% of the Aboriginal population under 10 years of age, compared to 13% for the general population. Some 47% of the Aboriginal population is under 20 years of age, compared to 26% for the general population. The median age for Aboriginal people in the Sydney region in 2001 was 21 years, compared to 34 years for the non-Aboriginal population.

As in the general population, the proportion of Aboriginal people older than 55 years of age is increasing. An Aboriginal 'baby boom' occurred in the late 1980s and 1990s which will generate intense demand for Aboriginal aged care services in the 2040s as these people move into retirement.⁷

The proportion of the sexes at various age levels indicates a greater proportion of boys in the 0-4 and 10-14 age groups, and a relatively even distribution of the sexes in the 5-9 and 15-24 age groups. All of the age groups above 25 years of age have a greater proportion of women.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics advises that there was an under-reporting of Aboriginality in the 2001 census. Estimates for the population at a regional level are not currently available.

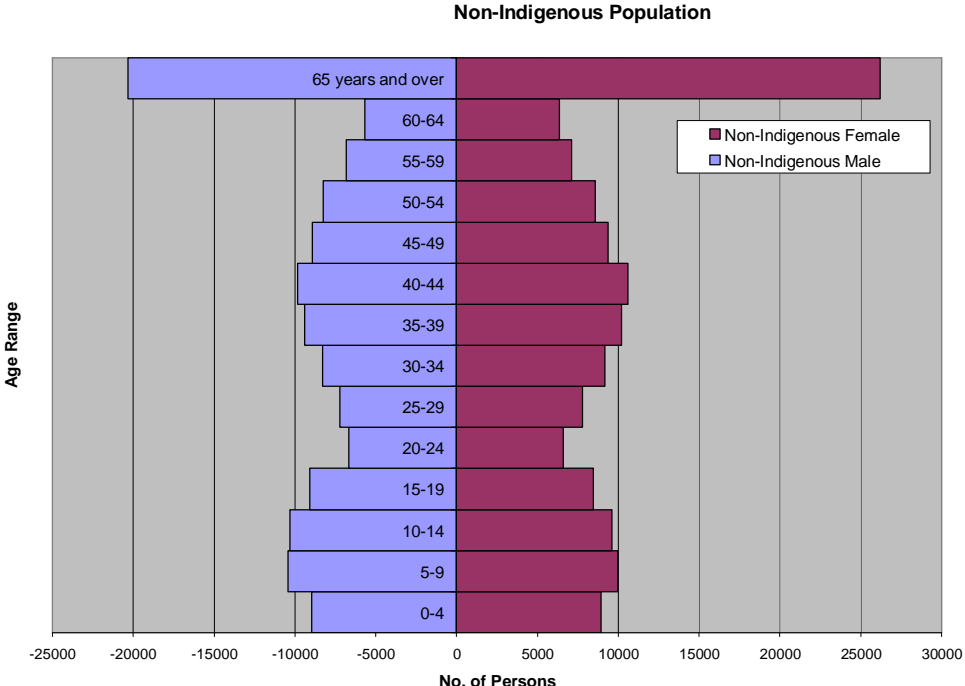
⁷ Based on ABS Sydney Statistical Division which includes western Sydney the Blue Mountains and the central coast.

The following diagrams, based on data from the 2001 Census, illustrate the markedly different age distribution of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations of the Coastal Sydney region.

Figure 3: Age and Gender Distribution by Aboriginal Population



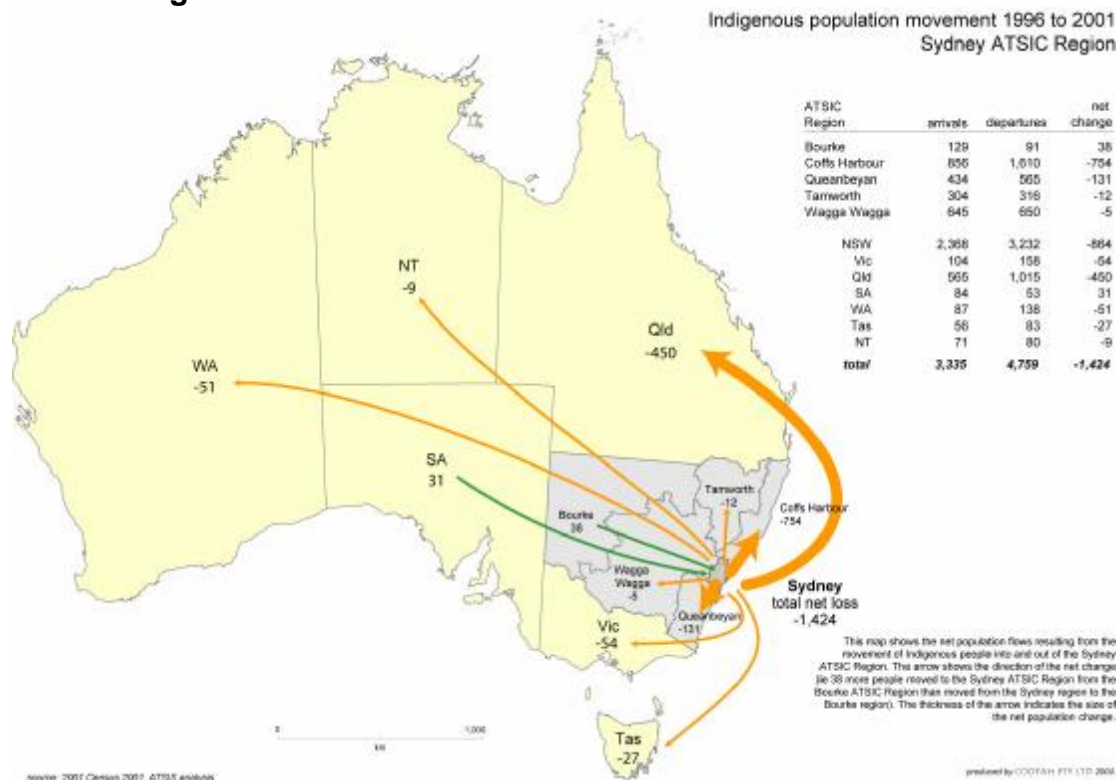
Figure 4: Age and Gender Distribution by Non-Aboriginal Population



2.2 Population Projections

Population projections prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics⁸ indicate that the Aboriginal population of Coastal Sydney will rise from approximately 12,000 people in 2001, to between roughly 14,000 (low series) and 16,000 (high series) in 2009.⁹ This is the second highest projected increase in Aboriginal population of all regions in New South Wales. These projections reflect the current trend of Aboriginal people moving from regional areas to Sydney and the high birth rate. The projections suggest a reversal of the Aboriginal population movements in the Sydney region between 1996 to 2001, when the region lost 1,424 Aboriginal people as they moved to other regions.

Figure 5: Aboriginal Population Movement 1996 to 2001, Sydney ATSI Region



⁸ These figures are calculated on the ATSI Sydney regional boundary, which is larger than the Sydney Coastal region boundaries.

⁹ These figures are the population projections for the Sydney ATSI region. Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001-2009* (Canberra: ABS: Cat. No. 3238.0.55.002).

3.0 SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

The social and economic indicators confirm that Aboriginal people in the Sydney region are significantly disadvantaged compared to non-Aboriginal people, although they are less disadvantaged with respect to most of these indicators when compared with Aboriginal people in other regions of the State. In Sydney, Aboriginal people are over-represented in the poorest suburbs and, within these neighbourhoods, show the worst economic outcomes as is demonstrated by the unemployment rates of the Aboriginal population compared to the unemployment rates of the non-Aboriginal population¹⁰. The following sections examine particular indicators in detail.

3.1 Health

The health profile of Aboriginal people in the Coastal Sydney region is generally better than other areas of the State. In some respects, the region ranks well compared to other regions of the State, but is below average or only average in other areas. For example, with respect to cardiovascular disease and diabetes, although the rates in the Aboriginal population in Coastal Sydney are increasing, they are far lower than the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal statewide averages. While hospital separations¹¹ for alcohol and trauma attributed to alcohol are much lower than the state average for Aboriginal people, they are still considerably higher than for the non-Aboriginal population. Rates of hospital separations for pertussis, measles and Haemophilus influenzae are also above the state average for Aboriginal people. Of more concern, however, is that with respect to antenatal visits by pregnant women, Aboriginal women in Coastal Sydney are visiting clinics at a much lower rate than the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal state averages. The region also has a relatively high rate of low birthweight babies, which appears to be related to high rates of smoking amongst Aboriginal mothers.

All of the material in the Health section of this report was sourced from the *Report of the New South Wales Chief Health Officer*, accessed on 31 March 2006, unless otherwise indicated.¹²

3.1.1 Maternal and Child Health

A birth weight of less than 2,500 grams for babies is considered to be low and may be indicative of poor health of the mother, her environment or the lack of available antenatal care. Coastal Sydney had the fourth lowest proportion of Aboriginal low birth weight babies in New South Wales. The proportion of Aboriginal babies in

¹⁰ J. Taylor, *Population and Diversity: Policy Implications of Emerging Indigenous Demographic Trends*, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, (2006)

¹¹ Hospital separation: A formal separation is a discharge, transfer or death of a patient. It refers to the process by which a same day patient or inpatient completes an episode of care. A type of change separation occurs when an episode of care ends because the type of care provided to the patient changes.

¹² NSW Department of Health, Population Health Division, *The health of the people of New South Wales – Report of the Chief Health Officer*, Sydney, at: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health/chorep/atsi/atsi_anteprocatsi_rcmg.htm.

Coastal Sydney that were born with a low birth weight decreased between 1993 and 1998, increased again between 1999 and 2001, and decreased again between 2002 and 2004. The period between 1993 and 2004 saw a 20% overall reduction in the number of Aboriginal babies born in the region.

Between 1999 and 2001, 14.5% of Aboriginal babies in the region were born with low birth weight, compared to 12.6% of all Aboriginal babies in New South Wales. Between 2002 and 2004, 11.9% of Aboriginal babies in the region were born with low birth weight, compared to 12.7% of all Aboriginal babies in New South Wales. This figure is still 53% higher than for non-Aboriginal babies in the region, only 5.6% of which were born with low birth weight in the period 2002-04.

The higher rates of Aboriginal babies born with low birth weights is related to a high incidence of Aboriginal mothers smoking in the second half of pregnancy (58% in 2000, compared with 15.3% of non-Aboriginal mothers), and the younger overall age of Aboriginal mothers (smoking rates among younger women are higher than among older women).

Linked to low birth weight is the time of the first antenatal visit by pregnant women. Ideally, this should occur before 20 weeks of pregnancy. Between 2002 and 2004, Coastal Sydney had the third worst figures in New South Wales for visits to antenatal clinics, with only 65.4% of pregnant Aboriginal women consistently having their first antenatal visit before 20 weeks. This figure is lower than the average for Aboriginal mothers throughout the State (69.3%), and much lower than that of non-Aboriginal mothers throughout the State, 87.3% of whom had their first antenatal visit before 20 weeks of pregnancy. It is also much lower than the average for non-Aboriginal mothers in the region at 90%. These data suggest that there is a very low awareness of the need for antenatal visits amongst Aboriginal mothers in Coastal Sydney.

It is also possible that the birth-weight data collected by NSW Health is under-reporting data on Aboriginal babies. For example, the Midwives Data Collection (MDC) only collects information on the Aboriginal status of the mother and not the father. Maternal Aboriginality is also under-reported on the MDC. In 2002, it was estimated that of all babies born to Aboriginal mothers, only 69% were reported as having an Aboriginal mother

Another factor that may skew the figures is that in the cases of birthing complications, some Aboriginal mothers are brought to a Sydney hospital for delivery.

Almost 5% of Aboriginal mothers in the Coastal Sydney region are aged under 18 years of age, compared to 0.5% for non-Aboriginal mothers. Early pregnancy rates, a smoking rate during pregnancy that is four times the rate of other mothers, and drug and alcohol use have contributed to lower Aboriginal birth weights.¹³

¹³ South East Health Population Health Profile 2000.

3.1.2 Cardiovascular Disease

Between 2002 and 2005, rates of hospital separation for cardiovascular disease amongst Aboriginal people in the Coastal Sydney region were around 46% lower than the NSW average for Aboriginal people: 1,641 per 100,000, compared to 3,071 per 100,000. Interestingly, the rate is around 24% lower than the rate for the non-Aboriginal population of New South Wales over the same period (2,164 per 100,000), and 15% lower than the rate for the non-Aboriginal population in Coastal Sydney (1,924 per 100,000).

The rate of hospital separations for cardiovascular disease in the region has increased by around 18% between 1993 and 2005, which appears to reflect across-the-board increases in the incidence of this disease amongst Aboriginal people in New South Wales over the same period.

3.1.3 Diabetes

Diabetes is a major health problem. The rate of diabetes amongst Aboriginal people in Coastal Sydney rose dramatically from 1993-96 (57 per 100,000) to 2002-05 (204 per 100,000). The rate in the period from 2002 to 2005 was therefore almost four times higher than the rate from 1993 to 1996. However, it is still around 83% lower than the average rate of 746 per 100,000 for the total NSW Aboriginal population in the period from 2002-05, and is around 14% lower than the rate for the total NSW non-Aboriginal population (236 per 100,000).

While the diabetes rate for Aboriginal people in the region is lower than both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal average throughout the State, the four-fold worsening of the statistics over this period is comparable to the significant overall worsening of the statistics across the total NSW population over the last decade or so. These statistics indicate a major public health crisis in relation to diabetes across the whole population.

3.1.4 Infectious Diseases

Hospital separation rates for pertussis, measles and Haemophilus influenzae meningitis throughout the State amongst Aboriginal people have dropped by 80% over the period from 1993 to 2005, and by 18% in the Coastal Sydney region.

The rate of hospital separations for these infections amongst Aboriginal people in Coastal Sydney during the period from 2002 to 2005 is higher than the rate for all Aboriginal people in New South Wales, at 5.7 per 100,000, compared to 4.2 per 100,000. However, it is around twice the rate of non-Aboriginal people in the region and throughout the State during the same period.

Skin infections are related to the later onset of heart and kidney disease. Hospital separation rates for skin infections throughout the State amongst Aboriginal people have increased by 16% over the period from 1993 to 2005.

The rate of hospital separations for skin infections amongst Aboriginal people in Coastal Sydney during the period from 2002 to 2005 is somewhat higher than the rate of non-Aboriginal people in the region and in the State, at 246 per 100,000,

compared to 208 per 100,000, and 235 per 100,000, respectively. However, it is around 57% lower than the rate for all Aboriginal people in New South Wales (583 per 100,000).

There has been a slight decrease in the rate of hospital separations for skin infections amongst Aboriginal people in the region between 1993 and 2005, although it is not clear why this should be the case.

3.1.5 Alcohol-related issues

Hospital separation rates attributed to alcohol throughout the State amongst Aboriginal people have increased by 11% over the period from 1993 to 2005.

The rate of hospital separations attributed to alcohol amongst Aboriginal people in Coastal Sydney during the period from 2002 to 2005 is 33% lower than the rate for all Aboriginal people in New South Wales, at 1,195 per 100,000, compared to 1,790 per 100,000. However, this is more than twice the rate for non-Aboriginal people in the region and throughout the State during the same period.

The rate of hospital separations for trauma attributed to alcohol amongst Aboriginal people in Coastal Sydney during the period from 2002 to 2005 is around 46% lower than the rate for all Aboriginal people in New South Wales, at 266 per 100,000, compared to 497 per 100,000. However, it is around 30% higher than the rate for non-Aboriginal people in the region, and around 20% higher than the rate for non-Aboriginal people throughout the State during the same period.

The 10% increase in the rate of hospital separations attributed to alcohol and 13% increase in trauma attributed to alcohol amongst Aboriginal people in the region between 1993 and 2005 appears generally consistent with the general upward trend in the statistics for Aboriginal people across the State. These statistics indicate that alcohol-related problems are on the increase in the Aboriginal population.

3.1.6 Drug Use

The South East Health's Population Health Profile in 2000, reported that drug dependence and harmful use was the major reason for homeless people being admitted to hospital. Mental and drug related disorders were more common in the diagnoses for hospital admissions among Aboriginal people than among other residents in the Sydney Coastal region.¹⁴

Statistical data related to illicit drug use among Aboriginal people is based on the number of clients in a range of drug and alcohol treatment programs, including detoxification, abstinence-based programs and pharmacotherapy programs in New South Wales. Though specific data on Aboriginal drug use in the Sydney region is not available, the pharmacotherapy data for New South Wales reveals that the rate of Aboriginal people seeking treatment increased from 670 in 2001 to 940 in 2003. This rate was three times the non-Aboriginal rate of 230 in 2001, and more than four times the non-Aboriginal rate in 2003 which remained steady at 230.¹⁵

¹⁴ South East Health *Population Health Profile 2000*.

¹⁵ These figures may underestimate Aboriginal status as Aboriginal status was only introduced in 1999 and the proportion of missing data was 58% in 2001 and remained at 32% in 2003.

3.1.7 Mental Health

While there are no specific data on Aboriginal mental health in this region, broader data does indicate a higher rate of mental health problems for Aboriginal people generally. The 2004-5 Australian Bureau of Statistics' *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey* included a component on social and emotional wellbeing for the first time. It found Aboriginal people generally were twice as likely to be hospitalised for mental and behavioural disorders. Hospitalisations for mental and behavioural disorders due to psychoactive substance use were around four times higher for Aboriginal men, and three times higher for Aboriginal women when compared with non-Aboriginal people. Hospitalisations rates for injury such as assault or intentional self-harm may also be indicative of mental illness and distress. Hospitalisations as a result of assault were seven times more likely for Aboriginal men and 31 times more likely for Aboriginal women. The rate of hospitalisations as a result of self-harm for Aboriginal men and women was twice the rate of non-Aboriginal people.

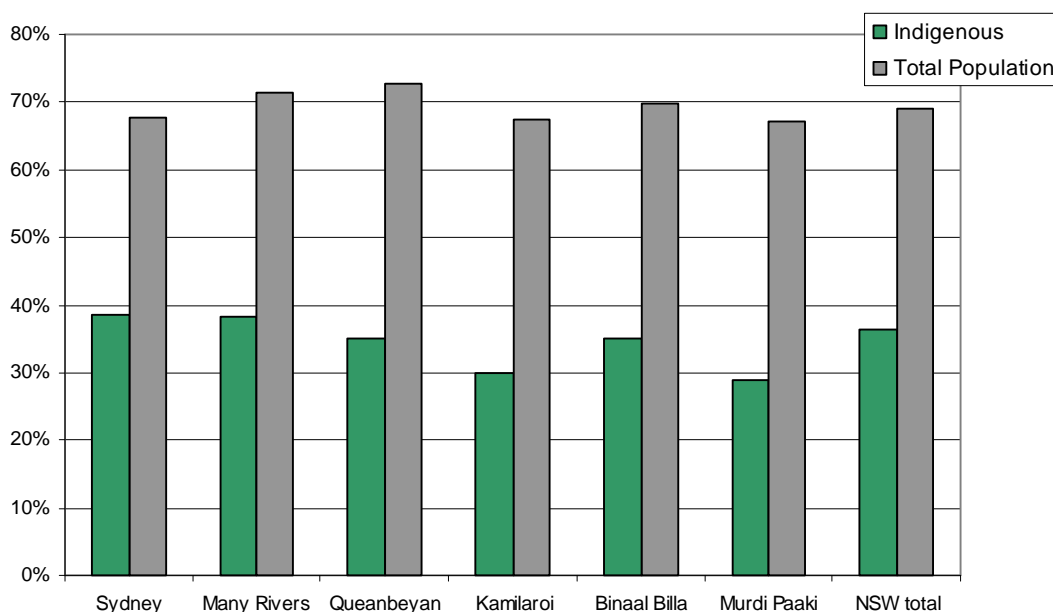
3.2 Housing

A substantial number of Aboriginal people in New South Wales are assisted with public housing. In 2004-05, 934 Aboriginal households were newly assisted, while there are currently around 8,700 Aboriginal tenants in public housing. Mainstream community housing also houses an additional 600 Aboriginal households.

In the Coastal Sydney region, the proportion of Aboriginal households who own or are buying their own home is almost half that of households generally. In 2001, the proportion of Aboriginal households who owned or were buying their own home was 39%, compared to a rate of 68% for the total population. The proportion of Aboriginal households buying or owning their own home was slightly greater in Sydney than any other region. The average for Aboriginal home ownership in New South Wales in 2001 was 37%, compared to the average for the total population of 69%.¹⁶

¹⁶ ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing

Figure 6: Proportion of Aboriginal households who own or are buying a home, NSW and ATSC regions 2001



Data on overcrowding in Aboriginal Housing Office dwellings reveals that the Coastal Sydney region and the Murdi Paaki region had the highest proportion of households experiencing overcrowding: in 2002/03 approximately 3% of Aboriginal Housing Office dwellings were defined as overcrowded. This represented a slight increase from 2000/1 and 2001/2 figures of 2.9%. Aboriginal overcrowding in Sydney was above the State average of 2.7% for Aboriginal people.¹⁷

Table 1: Proportion of households with overcrowding in Aboriginal Housing Office dwellings, NSW and ATSC regions 2000/01 to 2002/03¹⁸

ATSC region	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Sydney	2.9%	2.9%	3.0%
Many Rivers	2.4%	3.2%	2.7%
Queanbeyan	2.1%	1.0%	0.7%
Kamilaroi	3.0%	3.1%	2.7%
Binaal Billa	1.9%	2.2%	1.4%
Murdi Paaki	3.8%	3.3%	3.0%
NSW total	2.6%	2.4%	2.7%

The Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) is situated in Redfern and currently owns 55 houses in the Sydney metropolitan area. The Aboriginal Housing Office has 38 properties within Marrickville. There are significant numbers of Aboriginal people housed in Department of Housing dwellings in Marrickville, Dulwich Hill and Erskineville. The La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council owns approximately 40 houses within the Reserve which includes bed sitters. The Aboriginal Housing Office

¹⁷ NSW Department of Housing. overcrowding is defined from the CSHA national performance indicator.

¹⁸ Source: NSW Department of Housing. Overcrowding is defined according to the CSHA national performance indicator at p 3

has properties in the following areas (managed by the Department of Housing): 23 properties in Matraville, 28 properties in Phillip Bay, seven properties in Little Bay and two properties in Malabar.

3.2.1 Environmental Health

Hospital separations for acute respiratory infection, gastrointestinal infection, rheumatic heart disease, skin infections and tuberculosis are conditions related to environmental health. In particular, they may be related to poor housing factors, such as over-crowding and lack of access to adequate means of sanitation.

Aboriginal households in Coastal Sydney tend to be more overcrowded than in other parts of the State, although this fact does not appear to be reflected in the statistics for environmental health standards in the region.

Hospital separations for acute respiratory infection amongst Aboriginal people during the period from 1993 to 1996 were 649 per 100,000, but had dropped to 504 per 100,000 for the period from 2002 to 2005: a 22% decrease over twelve years. The Coastal Sydney figures for the period 2002-05 are 66% lower than the NSW average for Aboriginal people (1,504 per 100,000), and around 4% higher and 20% lower than the rates for non-Aboriginal people in the region and the State over the same period (738 and 627, respectively per 100,000).

Hospital separations for gastrointestinal infection amongst Aboriginal people during the period from 1993 to 1996 were 72 per 100,000, but had risen to 88 per 100,000 for the period from 2002 to 2005: a more than 18% increase over twelve years. The Coastal Sydney figures for the period 2002-05 are almost 70% lower than the NSW average for Aboriginal people (285 per 100,000), and around 50% and 60% lower than the rate for non-Aboriginal people in the region and the State over the same period (175 and 278, respectively per 100,000).

3.3 Justice

The data below were sourced from the *Two Ways Together Report on Indicators*, June 2005, and refer to the Sydney ATSIC region as a whole.

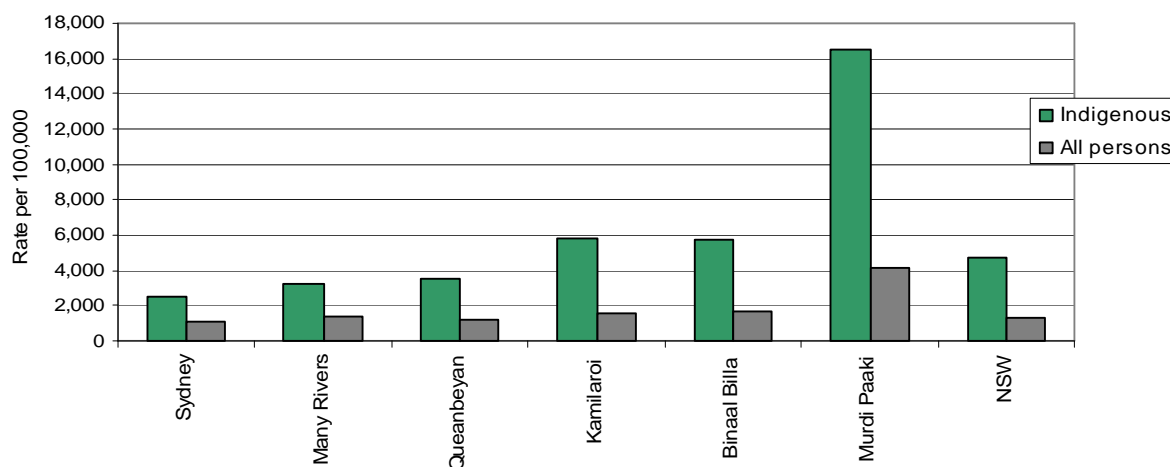
3.3.1 Victimisation from Assault

The rate of hospitalisations from assault for Aboriginal people was lower in the Sydney region than in any other region in New South Wales in the period 1999/2000, and was approximately half the NSW average for Aboriginal people. However, at around 250 per 100,000, it was more than twice the rate of non-Aboriginal people (100 per 100,000).

In 2002, the rate of police reports of assaults of Aboriginal people in Coastal Sydney was 2,500 per 100,000, which was lower than any other region, as well as being lower than the state average rate of 4,800 per 100,000. However, assault rates for Aboriginal victims were much higher than the average for the total NSW population (1,300 per 100,000).¹⁹

¹⁹ NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Figure 7: Rate of assault victimisation per 100,000 population (incidents reported to NSW Police) by Aboriginal status, ATSC regions 2002²⁰



3.3.2 Bail and Remand

The Sydney ATSC region had the highest rate of Aboriginal adults on remand in New South Wales in 2002 (320 per 100,000). There was a significant gap between Sydney and the region with the second highest rate of Aboriginal people on remand: Murdi Paaki, which had 220 per 100,000. This compares very unfavourably with non-Aboriginal people, with only 25 per 100,000 on remand for the total Sydney population.²¹

In the Sydney region, the proportion of Aboriginal people refused bail was 46% – more than double the 23% for the total population. The state average for Aboriginal people refused bail was, however, higher at 65%.²²

3.3.3 The Rate of Adult Imprisonment

The rate of imprisonment of Aboriginal adults in Sydney was higher than any other region in 2003, with 1,200 per 100,000 Aboriginal people imprisoned. The non-Aboriginal rate of imprisonment was significantly less with 100 per 100,000. In that year, more than 1% of the adult Aboriginal population was imprisoned.²³ This may be at least partially related to the high rates of in-migration to the region, but nevertheless reflects very poorly on the justice system in the region.

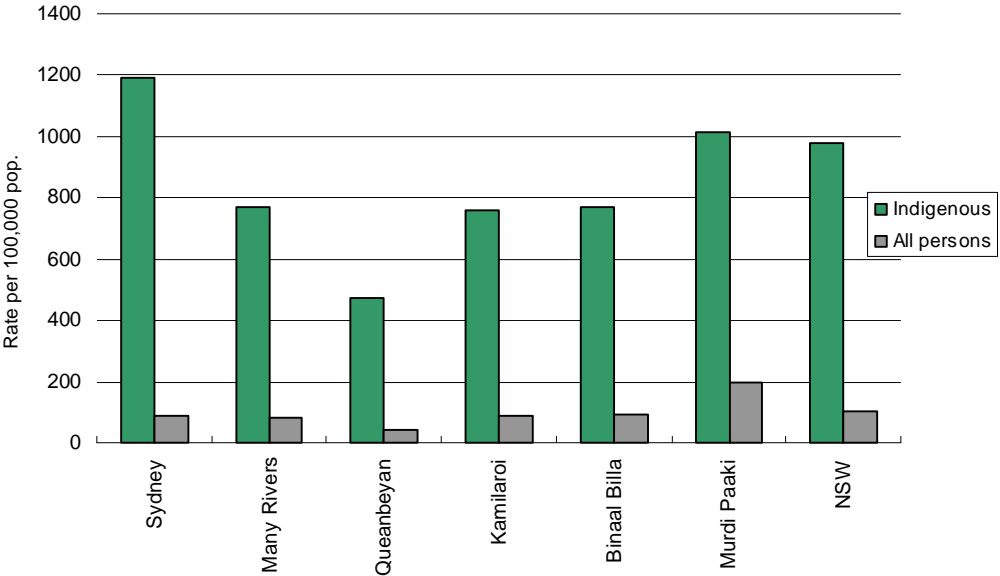
²⁰ Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

²¹ NSW Department of Corrective Services

²² NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

²³ NSW Department of Corrective Services

Figure 8: Rate of adult imprisonment per 100,000 population by Aboriginal status, ATSC regions 2003²⁴



3.3.4 Juveniles

The Sydney region had the lowest rate of Aboriginal juveniles diverted²⁵ from court in New South Wales in 2002. The proportion of Aboriginal juveniles diverted from court was 48%, compared to 84% of the total juvenile population of this region. The gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal juveniles being diverted from court was the greatest in the Sydney region.²⁶

There are many factors that can affect the likelihood of juveniles being diverted from court by police, including the nature of the offences, and the offending history of the individual. These factors are not analysed here.

3.4 Economic Development

3.4.1 Employment and Unemployment

With an Aboriginal unemployment rate of 16.7% in 2001, the Sydney region had the lowest rate of Aboriginal unemployment of all regions in New South Wales. This rate was less than the 23.1% unemployment rate for Aboriginal people across all regions of New South Wales. However, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people in the Sydney region was significantly higher than the 6.1% rate for non-Aboriginal people.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Diversion: This is where juvenile persons of interest (POI) have their charges proceeded against by legal processes other than referral to court. Not all crimes have an associated POI and not all POIs have legal proceedings taken against them. The legal processes available to police include referral to court, referral to a youth justice conference, the issue of a caution or warning, or the issue of an infringement notice. There are many factors that can affect the likelihood of POIs being diverted from court by police, including the nature of the offence or the offending history of the individual.

²⁶ NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

The unemployment rate for Aboriginal people in Coastal Sydney varies between suburbs. South Sydney had the worst rate of Aboriginal unemployment (20.7%) in 2001, while Bankstown, Burwood, Leichhardt, Marrickville, South Sydney and Sydney LGAs all had unemployment rates between 16.7% and 20.7%. The Ashfield, Botany Bay, Canterbury, Drummoyne, Randwick and Waverley LGAs areas have Aboriginal unemployment rates between 16.5% and 11.3%.²⁷

Table 2: Unemployment rate by Aboriginal status (%), NSW and ATSI regions 2001

	NSW	Sydney	Many Rivers	Queanbeyan	Kamilaroi	Binaal Billa	Murdi Paaki
Aboriginal	23.1	16.7	27.4	26.4	30	25.2	23.9
Non-Aboriginal	7.2	6.1	10.7	7.5	8.6	6.9	9.8

3.4.2 Income

The low income levels for Aboriginal people in Coastal Sydney reflect the high unemployment rate and concentration of employment in low waged positions. In 2001, 51% of Aboriginal men in the 15-24 age range earned less than \$200 a week, while around 40% of Aboriginal men 25-44 years of age earned less than \$400 a week. Aboriginal women's incomes were less clear, as the number of dependent children a woman cares for increases the rate of a sole parent's benefit. However, 47% of women aged 15-24 earn less than \$200 a week, and around 50% of Aboriginal women aged 25-54 earn less than \$400 a week.

3.5 Education

The Coastal Sydney region could be considered the education centre of the State, with three universities and a high number of schools to service the high-density population.

The data below were sourced from either the *2001 Census*, or from the Department of Education and Training's Planning and Innovation Directorate *Mid-Year Census 2003-2005*, unless otherwise indicated.

Levels of literacy and numeracy in Years 3 and 5 for Aboriginal students in Coastal Sydney in 2005 are in most cases slightly higher than the state average for Aboriginal students. Aboriginal students in the region are currently performing between three and sixteen percentage points lower than the state average for all students (Band 2 and above for Year 3, and Band 3 and above for Year 5).

With respect to overall literacy results for Year 3 students in the region, 23.8% of Aboriginal students were placed in the two highest skill bands, while 28% were placed in the two highest skill bands for numeracy. These compare with 16.5% of all Aboriginal students in the State for Year 3 literacy, and 21.1% of all Aboriginal

²⁷ Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, NSW Labour and Economic Office that used Australian Bureau of Statistics data 2001 Census.

students in the State for Year 3 numeracy. On the other hand, 59.6% of all students in the region were placed in the two highest skill bands for literacy, 63.2% in the two highest skill bands for numeracy, and 42.2% and 46.2% respectively, for all students across the State.

With respect to overall literacy results for Year 5 students in the region, 21.3% of Aboriginal students were placed in the two highest skill bands, while 26.7% were placed in the two highest skill bands for numeracy. These compare with 18.4% of all Aboriginal students in the State for Year 5 literacy, and 21.5% of all Aboriginal students in the State for Year 5 numeracy. On the other hand, 64.2% of all students in the region were placed in the two highest skill bands for literacy, 67.6% in the two highest skill bands for numeracy, and 47.4% and 50.7% respectively, for all students across the State.

3.5.1 School Retention

The region has the best performance when compared with other RCMG regions for retention rates for Years 10 to 12 Aboriginal students.

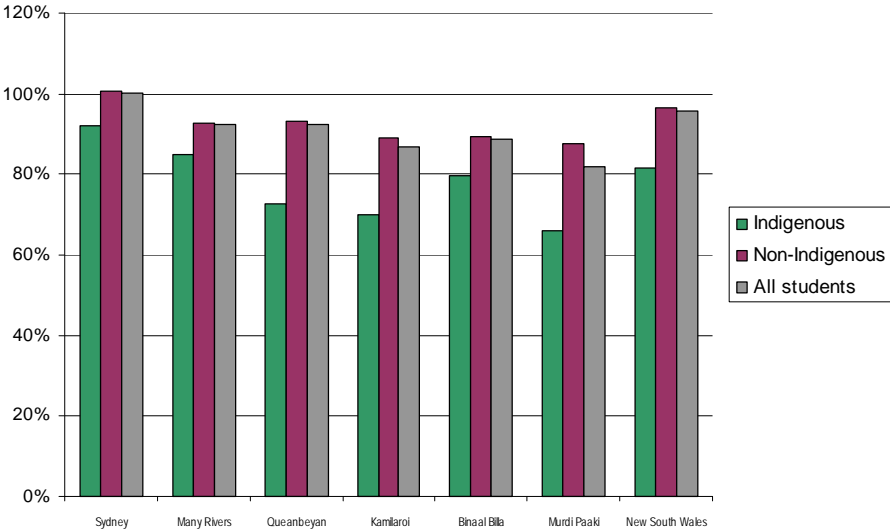
In 2005, the full-time equivalent retention rate across all schools for Coastal Sydney Aboriginal students in Years 10 to 12 was 53.4%, compared to 91.5% for all students in the region. The NSW average for all Aboriginal students was 39.3%, and for all students was 74.2%, indicating that Aboriginal students in Coastal Sydney are remaining in school at a rate around 28% lower than the state average.

These data indicate that Coastal Sydney schools need to improve their efforts at assisting Aboriginal students in the transition to, and completion of, senior high school. However, these statistics do not fully capture all of the students who may be enrolled in Year 11 and 12 coursework, such as part-time students, mature-aged students, and repeating students.

3.5.2 Educational Attainment

In 2002, the Sydney ATSIC region had the highest percentage of Year 10 Aboriginal students who attained Year 10 certificates of all ATSIC regions, at 92%. This is reflected in the following graph.

Figure 9: Percentages of Aboriginal candidates who attain a Year 10 certificate, NSW and ATSC regions 2002²⁸



3.5.3 Tertiary Education

An estimated 22% of Aboriginal people aged 15 years or over had tertiary qualifications, compared to 39% of the all persons.

Qualification	Aboriginal	All persons
Postgraduate Degree	0.8%	2.9%
Bachelor Degree	4.1%	12.5%
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	3.8%	6.9%
Certificate	12.8%	15.3%

Table 3: What qualifications do people in the Sydney ATSC Region have?

3.6 Culture and Heritage

An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee was recently established under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. The Committee will advise the Minister for the Environment and the Director General of the Department of Environment and Conservation about any matter relating to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in New South Wales. The Committee will not replace existing local, regional and state-wide consultative processes of the Department of Environment and Conservation or other NSW government agencies. The Committee will provide strategic advice about the development and administration of Aboriginal culture and heritage programs, policies and projects.

²⁸ Data were sourced from the NSW Department of Education and Training, IESIP sOut6

3.6.1 Environmental and Natural Resource Management

The broad environmental and natural resource management themes are land (land quality, land use and management), atmosphere (air quality, climate), biodiversity conservation, water (water quality and ecology, water use and allocation) and human settlement (waste, noise, Aboriginal heritage and non-Aboriginal heritage).

According to the Department of Environment and Conservation, there are 3,460 known and recorded sites of Aboriginal cultural and heritage significance listed on the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) for the 27 LGAs in the region.

There are eight Aboriginal Place Declarations within the region:

- 1) Towra Point Keeping Place
- 2) Camp Wonawong Aboriginal Place
- 3) Dharawal Resting Place – Coast Hospital Cemetery
- 4) Ku-ring-gai Resting Place: Reef Beach
- 5) Dharawal Resting Place - Costens Point
- 6) Ku-ring-gai Resting Place – Towlers Bay
- 7) Ku-ring-gai Resting Place – Bujiwa Bay
- 8) Ku-ring-gai Resting Place – Quarantine Station.

There is also one Aboriginal Area declared within the region, i.e., Mount Kuring-gai Aboriginal Area, and one Historic Site, i.e., Maroota Historic Site.

There are no Natural Resource Management Agreements, non-statutory co-management agreements or Aboriginal Land Use Agreements in the Sydney region.

3.6.2 Aboriginal Land Claims

Ownership, control of and access to land increases opportunities for Aboriginal people to practice, promote and protect their culture and heritage and participate in natural resource management, which has both cultural and economic benefits. In addition to an individual's private purchases, there are several mechanisms through which Aboriginal people can own or control land in New South Wales. These are: the *Native Title Act 1993*; *NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*; the Aboriginal Land Corporation; management agreements; non-statutory co-management agreements and Aboriginal Land Use Agreements. As of 12 October 2005, the Aboriginal Land Corporation owns or has granted four properties in the Sydney region, totalling 0.168 hectares.

Under the *NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*, 339 claims have been granted in the Sydney region as of 6 December 2005.²⁹

²⁹ These estimates are based on Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) boundaries, not ATSIC boundaries.

3.7 Families and Young People

3.7.1 Abuse and Neglect

The rate of domestic violence victimisation in the Sydney region was significantly greater for Aboriginal people at 5 per 1000 people than for the total population at 1.5 per 1000 people. This region had the lowest victimisation rate for domestic violence for Aboriginal people of all regions in New South Wales: the state average was 8 per 1000 people.³⁰

The rate of Aboriginal children and young people involved in reports where assessment determined abuse/neglect issues was more than four times the rate for the total population in 2001/2002. Aboriginal cases of substantiated reports of abuse/neglect were 21 per 1000 people, while that for the total population was 5 per 1,000. The Sydney region had the fourth highest rate of substantiated child protection reports for Aboriginal children in New South Wales.³¹

3.7.2 Marital Status

In 2001, the Australian Bureau of Statistics recorded a significantly lower rate of Aboriginal people in a marital relationship, with 24% of Aboriginal people over 15 years of age married, compared to 48.6% for non-Aboriginal people. The rate of divorce/separation was again higher at 13%, compared to 9.3% for non-Aboriginal people. In the same year, 58% of Aboriginal people had never been married, compared to 36.6% for non-Aboriginal people.

³⁰ NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

³¹ NSW Department of Community Services, Client Information System Annual Statistical Extracts.

4.0 CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Community Priorities

Aboriginal communities in the Coastal Sydney region have identified priority areas through a number of community consultations undertaken by various bodies. These include the former Sydney ATSIC Regional Council, several Local Governments with high Aboriginal populations (including Sydney City, Randwick and Marrickville), and the Redfern Waterloo Authority. The key priority areas identified by communities are:

- Housing
- Sexual assault and domestic violence
- Illicit drug and alcohol use
- Employment
- Mental health
- Children's and youth services
- Family support.

4.1.1 Housing

Aboriginal housing need in Coastal Sydney is particularly high. It has been identified by the community as a priority, a fact that is reflected in the high levels of homelessness and overcrowding in the region. Housing demand can be expected to increase further, when the large young population reaches the age at which they will seek their own housing.

4.1.2 Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

The Coastal Sydney region identified family violence and sexual assault as requiring a priority focus. Statistical data confirms that the rate of victimisation in the Sydney region was significantly higher for Aboriginal people than for non-Aboriginal people, and that rates were higher in Sydney than in a number of other regions. With data on sexual assault and domestic violence for adult and youth victims significantly under-reported by Aboriginal victims, the repeated identification of this issue by the Aboriginal community suggests a lack of culturally appropriate services in this area.

4.1.3 Alcohol and Other Drugs

The data also suggests that the Aboriginal community in Sydney suffers less alcohol related hospitalisations and trauma compared to other regions, although this is still substantially higher than the non-Aboriginal population. The communities of the region have identified as problematic the lack of culturally appropriate alcohol and drug rehabilitation services in Coastal Sydney. Currently, Aboriginal people wishing to break their addiction and use of illicit drugs must utilise mainstream services, some of which (such as Kirrketon Road Clinic) employ Aboriginal drug workers.

The community consultations have also identified a need for safe, wet (drinking) places, or accommodation in the region for Aboriginal people who drink heavily.

4.1.4 Justice

Though justice is not included in the above community priorities, it is reflected in the data as requiring a targeted approach. The rate of Aboriginal adult imprisonment in Coastal Sydney was the highest amongst all NSW regions, at 1,200 per 100,000, and is dramatically higher than the non-Aboriginal rate in this region at 100 per 100,000. The rate of juvenile diversions is the lowest amongst all NSW regions, and the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal juvenile diversions is the highest in this region.

4.1.5 Family Health and Support

The need for increased family support services has been prioritised by Aboriginal communities in Coastal Sydney, and is also reflected in maternal and child health indicators as an area requiring a more focused approach. The low birthweights for Aboriginal babies in Coastal Sydney are only marginally better than the worst regions for Aboriginal people in New South Wales.

Services providing family support for young mothers and families is another area identified by Aboriginal communities as requiring a higher priority. The Sydney region has the fourth highest rate of substantiated reports of abuse and neglect for Aboriginal children in New South Wales, and is four times the rate of non-Aboriginal people. The high rate of early pregnancies in Coastal Sydney, with 5% of all Aboriginal mothers being under 18 years of age, leaves a significant proportion of young mothers that require targeted support services.

The high rate of single parent families among the Aboriginal communities in La Perouse, Maroubra, Redfern, Waterloo and Woolloomooloo also have particular support needs with many of these women from regional areas, and lacking family support in the city.

4.1.6 Children's and Youth Services

With 47% of the Aboriginal population under the age of 20 years, there is a high demand for services to cater for Aboriginal youth. The need for targeted support services for Aboriginal students to increase literacy and numeracy skills were additional areas highlighted through various community consultations.

It appears that there are insufficient Aboriginal specific youth and children's services in regions with high Aboriginal populations such as La Perouse, Marrickville, Redfern and Woolloomooloo. Aboriginal youth have previously failed to be drawn into mainstream services and facilities. Youth require after hours services that can provide sporting, cultural and crime prevention initiatives, as well as initiatives that support the integration of educational, employment, drug and alcohol, and other relevant programs.

Literacy and educational support services for children and youth were also identified by Aboriginal communities as requiring a targeted approach. This is also reflected in the data, which reveals a very large gap in literacy and numeracy outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal primary aged children in this region.

4.2 Analysis of Need

This section is based on an analysis of need identified from the socio-economic and demographic data, as well as those needs identified by Aboriginal communities in the region. There is a high correlation between Aboriginal community priorities and areas of need identified through the data.

An overview of the demographic information detailed previously suggests that, with a high proportion of the Aboriginal population aged 25 years or younger, there is a high level of need for early childhood initiatives, pre-school education, sport and recreation, school education and youth programs, vocational training, unemployment programs, housing and disease prevention programs.

The socio-economic indicators also identify the Coastal Sydney region's Aboriginal population as being more disadvantaged or less disadvantaged (relative to Aboriginal people in other regions) in the following areas:

Less disadvantaged	More disadvantaged
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cardiovascular disease• Infectious diseases• Years 10-12 retention rates• Environmental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maternal and child health• Sexual assault & domestic violence rates• Housing• Adult incarceration rates• Alcohol and illicit drug use• Services for families• Years 3 & 5 literacy & numeracy

4.3 Issues for Consideration

On the basis of the information set out in this report, it is recommended that the Coastal Sydney Regional Engagement Group undertake further investigation of the following issues:

1. The ongoing problems of overcrowding and the expected increase in housing demand resulting from the high youth demographic and pregnancy rates, which suggest a need for a continued high focus on housing programs.
2. The need for more attention to the health needs of Aboriginal mothers and babies in the region.
3. The communities' identification of the need for culturally appropriate rehabilitation services with supported medical interventions to most effectively assist Aboriginal users to overcome their addictions.
4. Consideration of provision of safe, wet (drinking) places, or accommodation in the region for Aboriginal people who drink heavily.
5. Whether there are sufficient services and programs targeting Aboriginal victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual assault, including crisis accommodation.

6. Whether the need for sport and recreation facilities and outreach programs for Aboriginal youth is being met.
7. Consideration of means of addressing the high rate of Aboriginal imprisonment, remand and low bail rate for Aboriginal and juvenile offenders.

In developing appropriate responses to these issues, consideration should be given to advice consistently provided by Aboriginal people in various forums in relation to service delivery.

This reflects a broader concern identified by Aboriginal people regarding the culturally inappropriate manner in which services are delivered. This manifests itself in a range of ways, including:

- ✓ the absence of Aboriginal staff in organisations, particularly at the first point of contact such as reception areas;
- ✓ an inability by service providers to communicate effectively with Aboriginal people; and
- ✓ overt racism expressed by service providers.

“Cultural understanding” is listed as one of the goals under the *Two Ways Together*. The Department of Education and Training has developed a cultural competence course called the Aboriginal Cultural Education Program. It is suggested that the relevant CEOs prioritise cultural awareness training for public sector employees in key agencies with high levels of contact with Aboriginal people, including NSW Police, and the Departments of Community Services, Corrective Services, Education and Training, Environment and Conservation, Health, Juvenile Justice and Primary Industries.

Agencies are recommended to give careful consideration to these factors when developing a response to the issues identified in this report.

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