

Stronger Together – RUOK?

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Social Causes to the breakdown in Wellbeing

Aboriginal Language Map



- Prior to colonisation, 1788, there were over 500 Indigenous languages.
- Today, we account for 3% of the entire Australian population.
- Torres Strait Islanders make up 10% of the combined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

Historical Facts:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in all parts of Australia and speak a multitude of different Indigenous Australian languages.
- Health and welfare of Indigenous people living in cities are different to those living in the Torres Strait, and those people living on the outskirts of Alice Springs or those living in remote communities.
- Today's Indigenous people in Australia are descendants of the First Australians dating back about 50,000 to 85,000 years ago.

- Hundreds of Indigenous people served in the Australian armed forces, especially in the Second World War.
- It was not until 1962 that Indigenous people had the right to vote in Australia.
- In 1967 a national referendum recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as ‘people of their own country’, and included them in the national census.
- In 1992 the High Court of Australia declared that the legal concept of terra nullius (‘land belonging to no-one’) was invalid as applied to Australia.

- Colonisation severely disrupted Aboriginal society and economy—epidemic disease caused an immediate loss of life, and the theft of land by settlers and the restriction of Aboriginal people to ‘reserves, missions or DOGIT communities’ disrupted their ability to support themselves forcing Indigenous people to become welfare dependant.
- Colonisation had such an impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that by the 1930s only an estimated 80,000 Indigenous people remained in Australia (Smith 1980).

Population trends from census data:

1971: 115,953

1976: 160,915

1981: 159,897

1986: 227,593

1991: 265,371

1996: 352,970

2001: 410,003

2006: 455,031

2011: 548,370

(AIHW, 2014)

TODAY:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience a burden of disease 2.3 times the rate of non-Indigenous people.
- The estimated life expectancy at birth for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males is 69.1 years, and 73.7 years for females. This is 10.6 and 9.5 years lower than the life expectancy of non-Indigenous Australian males and females respectively.
- In 2014-2015, 45% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over reported having a disability or long term restrictive health conditions.

- Cancer death rates have increased for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 21% between 1998 and 2015, while rates for non-Indigenous people have declined by 13%.
- There has been no improvement for Indigenous diabetes rates since between 1998 and 2015. In 2014, the rate of diabetes/ high sugar levels to that of non-Indigenous people was 3.3 times more to that of non-Indigenous people. There has been no improvement for diabetes mortality rates in the same period either.
- Indigenous people are 3 times as likely to be hospitalised for respiratory conditions to that of non-Indigenous people.

- The end stage death rate for Indigenous Australians with kidney disease was seven times the rate as that of non-Indigenous people in 2014 and there has been minimal improvement on this rate.
- Suicide rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had increased by 32% between 1998 and 2015.

Death Rates:

- For the period 2008–2012, about two-thirds (65%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths occurred before the age of 65, compared with 19% of non-Indigenous deaths.
 - After adjusting for differences in age structure, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander death rates were 1.6 times higher than non-Indigenous death rates (AIHW, 2014).
 - The worst death rates per age group in 2013 were:
 - 35-44 year age group - the rate is five times that of non-Indigenous Australians.
 - Children aged 0-4 died at more than twice the rate of non-Indigenous children in 2012.
- (AIHW, 2013)

The campaign

- <https://www.ruok.org.au/strongertogether>