

Analysis of Indigenous Enrolment

Population estimates

Table 1 represents the ABS estimated resident Indigenous population 18 years and over by state as at 2016 and projected to 30 June 2019.

The projected population for Indigenous Australians has been recently updated and adjusted by the ABS. Table 2 provides the AEC's estimated Indigenous voting age population as at 30 June 2018, before the more recent ABS Indigenous populations adjustments for 2018.

Table 1 – ABS estimated resident and projected population – Indigenous Australians – 18 years and over

State/territory	Estimated Resident Population	Projected Population (a)			
	2016 (b)	2017	2018	2019	
NSW	156,172	160,403	164,510	168,896	
VIC	34,289	35,457	36,645	37,839	
QLD	127,492	131,166	135,141	139,306	
WA	60,733	62,544	64,451	66,335	
SA	24,991	25,719	26,507	27,207	
TAS	16,991	17,471	17,986	18,489	
ACT	4,670	4,886	5,089	5,273	
NT (b)	48,180	49,282	50,464	51,674	
Australia (c)	473,710	487,121	500,988	515,215	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006 to 2031 (cat. No. 3238.0)

(a) Projection Series B has been used for the period 2017-2019.

(b) An age heaping adjustment was applied to derive final 30 June 2016 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates for the Northern Territory. This information was published in Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2016 (cat. no. 3238.0.55.001) and has been used as the base population for compiling estimates and projections for this release.

(c) Includes Other Territories.

Indigenous enrolment rate estimates

As Australia's federal electoral roll does not have a personal Indigenous identifier, estimating the enrolment rates for Indigenous persons is problematic, however, having this key franchise KPI for the Indigenous population is important for Closing the Gap purposes and the AECs focus on how the franchise could be better delivered.

In 2014 the AEC's Research Section commenced indirect estimation of these figures, using a regression model of the relationship between the Indigenous population and each of the three franchise KPIs at a small area level, such as polling place catchment or the ABS' SA2 geography.

While the models did not fit the data particularly well, the resulting Indigenous enrolment rates were statistically based on real data, rather than anecdote. Yet the resulting enrolment and turnout rates in particular were alarmingly low, and hopefully represented a worst case picture.

Current method

The Centrelink client file with Indigenous indicator available to the AEC annually since 2017 has presented an excellent opportunity, via matching to the Roll and mark-off data, to improve estimation of Indigenous franchise KPIs.

While the results are subject to a number of non-trivial assumptions, the more direct estimation methods lead to a higher likelihood of robust results. The figures should nevertheless still be regarded as ***indicative*** only.

As part of the Annual Roll Integrity Review (ARIR), the person-level matching between the Roll and Centrelink now includes Centrelink's Indigenous indicator. However, as Centrelink customers represent only around half of the Roll, the matching (even if perfect) would be far from assigning all enrolments an Indigenous flag. Nevertheless, for the first time the AEC has a very large number of enrolled persons, over 6 million, matched to Centrelink records with an explicit Indigenous status.

The enrolment rate, even for all persons regardless of indigeneity, is difficult to calculate reliably due to conceptual, collection and methodological differences between the Roll (numerator) and the ABS-based enrolment-eligible population (denominator, "EEP"). In the case of the Indigenous population these problems are magnified by having no Indigenous identifier on the Roll and less reliable estimates of Indigenous EEP.

However, matching the Roll to Centrelink data allows a more direct method of estimating the Indigenous enrolment rate. Results for 30 June 2018 are provided in Table 2.

Table 2 - Estimated Indigenous Enrolment Rates, 30 June 2018

State	Estimated Indigenous voting age population	Estimated enrolled	Estimated not enrolled	Estimated enrolment rate
NSW	164,845	143,891	20,954	87.3%
VIC	36,538	27,775	8,763	76.0%
QLD	135,642	98,357	37,285	72.5%
WA	64,545	41,182	23,363	63.8%
SA	26,522	18,622	7,900	70.2%
TAS	18,004	15,150	2,854	84.1%
ACT	5,000	3,971	1,029	79.4%
NT	50,563	34,130	16,433	67.5%
Australia	501,659	383,078	118,581	76.4%

It is still subject to quite courageous assumptions, but as fewer are required it likely represents an improved approach. In summary:

- For all Centrelink customers with an identified Indigenous or non-Indigenous status, calculate the proportion on the Roll. This is the raw enrolment rate of Centrelink clients.
- Calculate the ratio of the actual AEC enrolment rate versus the Centrelink-based rate, for the same point in time. This is the overall factor to adjust any Centrelink-based rates to align with AEC enrolment rates.
- Apply the adjustment factor to raw Centrelink-based enrolment rates by Indigenous status to give Indigenous and non-Indigenous enrolment rates.

- This process can be done at the State level, though results will have lower reliability.

It should be noted that while this method avoids indirectly modelling Indigenous enrolment rates via geographic association, it does assume that any bias in Centrelink clients being enrolled is equal for Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and that there are no substantive Indigenous-status biases inherent in the Roll-to-Centrelink person matching.

Centrelink data

The number of Indigenous Australians that are identified both on the Centrelink file sent to the AEC in July 2018 and the electoral Roll does not represent all Indigenous enrolments. It is limited to those Indigenous Australians who both receive a Centrelink benefit and who have self-identified as Indigenous to Centrelink.

After considerable data cleansing and analysis the AEC identified 72,451 potentially unenrolled Indigenous Australians. This represents around 61 per cent of the 118,581 Indigenous Australians the AEC estimate were not enrolled as at 30 June 2018 (see Table 2 above).

The enrolment stimulation event conducted in February/March 2019 using 2018 Centrelink data resulted in the enrolment of 2,646 people who indicated they were Indigenous. This reduced the estimated number of unenrolled Indigenous Australians identified in the Centrelink dataset to 69,143. Table 3 sets out the distribution of this cohort across states and Table 4 provides the data for electoral divisions.

It is important to note that the potential unenrolled under 65 Indigenous Australians as at the 2019 close of rolls represents those people that are on the Centrelink file sent to the AEC in July 2018 and who were included in the February 2019 enrolment stimulation event but had not enrolled as at the 2019 close of rolls (18 April 2019).

Analysis of the Centrelink potentially unenrolled Indigenous Australians 65 years and older identified significant matching error, due to the quality of data input and the nature of the residential status of this cohort. Work will be undertaken on the 2019 dataset to better understand this phenomenon to facilitate better targeting of potentially unenrolled indigenous Australians in the future.

Table 3 – Indigenous Australians identified on the 2017-18 Centrelink file by state and territory – enrolled as at 30 June 2018 and potentially not enrolled as at the 2019 close of rolls

State	Number of Indigenous Australians in the Centrelink file and enrolled as at 30 June 2018	Potential not enrolled under 65 Indigenous Australians as at the 2019 close of rolls
NSW	78,610	11,972
VIC	15,993	4,785
QLD	61,507	23,792
WA	26,783	13,976
SA	12,322	5,143
TAS	7,406	1,623
ACT	1,801	470
NT	20,132	6,878
No fixed address	-	1,166
Total	224,554	69,805

Table 4 – Indigenous Australians identified on the 2017-18 Centrelink file by electoral division – enrolled as at 30 June 2018 and potentially not enrolled as at the 2019 close of rolls

State	Division	Indigenous Australians in the Centrelink file and enrolled as at 30 June 2018	Potential not enrolled under 65 Indigenous Australians as at the 2019 close of rolls
NSW	Banks	365	50
NSW	Barton	415	63
NSW	Bennelong	206	23
NSW	Berowra	133	14
NSW	Blaxland	364	52
NSW	Bradfield	74	4
NSW	Calare	3,676	494
NSW	Chifley	2,838	439
NSW	Cook	307	21
NSW	Cowper	4,382	743
NSW	Cunningham	1,229	164
NSW	Dobell	2,386	210
NSW	Eden-Monaro	1,658	308
NSW	Farrer	2,641	733
NSW	Fowler	532	87
NSW	Gilmore	2,839	439
NSW	Grayndler	659	160
NSW	Greenway	710	102
NSW	Hughes	370	19
NSW	Hume	1,133	91
NSW	Hunter	3,017	253
NSW	Kingsford Smith	1,010	153
NSW	Lindsay	2,159	257
NSW	Lyne	3,088	387
NSW	Macarthur	1,911	218
NSW	Mackellar	160	14
NSW	Macquarie	1,182	100
NSW	McMahon	567	68
NSW	Mitchell	155	11
NSW	New England	5,527	805
NSW	Newcastle	2,033	234
NSW	North Sydney	101	13
NSW	Page	3,856	837
NSW	Parkes	10,143	2,162
NSW	Parramatta	493	103
NSW	Paterson	2,955	247
NSW	Reid	208	27
NSW	Richmond	1,961	328
NSW	Riverina	3,337	451
NSW	Robertson	1,308	123
NSW	Shortland	1,831	159
NSW	Sydney	1,231	376

State	Division	Indigenous Australians in the Centrelink file and enrolled as at 30 June 2018	Potential not enrolled under 65 Indigenous Australians as at the 2019 close of rolls
NSW	Warringah	120	4
NSW	Watson	307	41
NSW	Wentworth	124	11
NSW	Werriwa	1,077	177
NSW	Whitlam	1,832	197
VIC	Aston	172	29
VIC	Ballarat	625	179
VIC	Bendigo	761	176
VIC	Bruce	303	104
VIC	Calwell	361	116
VIC	Casey	327	75
VIC	Chisholm	125	21
VIC	Cooper	571	225
VIC	Corangamite	302	56
VIC	Corio	576	186
VIC	Deakin	187	39
VIC	Dunkley	404	120
VIC	Flinders	393	62
VIC	Fraser	251	77
VIC	Gellibrand	295	74
VIC	Gippsland	1,121	489
VIC	Goldstein	75	23
VIC	Gorton	393	103
VIC	Higgins	126	25
VIC	Holt	301	61
VIC	Hotham	118	20
VIC	Indi	717	184
VIC	Isaacs	141	26
VIC	Jagajaga	253	72
VIC	Kooyong	69	9
VIC	Latrobe	256	25
VIC	Lalor	446	75
VIC	Macnamara	222	68
VIC	Mallee	1,631	662
VIC	Maribyrnong	206	61
VIC	McEwen	391	66
VIC	Melbourne	264	115
VIC	Menzies	73	10
VIC	Monash	497	157
VIC	Nicholls	1,570	576
VIC	Scullin	415	105
VIC	Wannon	764	251
VIC	Wills	291	63
QLD	Blair	2,331	898
QLD	Bonner	832	224

State	Division	Indigenous Australians in the Centrelink file and enrolled as at 30 June 2018	Potential not enrolled under 65 Indigenous Australians as at the 2019 close of rolls
QLD	Bowman	945	286
QLD	Brisbane	636	234
QLD	Capricornia	2,537	991
QLD	Dawson	2,687	971
QLD	Dickson	818	217
QLD	Fadden	978	195
QLD	Fairfax	866	216
QLD	Fisher	911	201
QLD	Flynn	2,715	1,114
QLD	Forde	1,464	484
QLD	Griffith	691	247
QLD	Groom	2,035	748
QLD	Herbert	4,808	2,504
QLD	Hinkler	2,178	731
QLD	Kennedy	7,587	4,221
QLD	Leichhardt	10,021	3,537
QLD	Lilley	1,077	379
QLD	Longman	1,888	551
QLD	Maranoa	3,025	1,131
QLD	McPherson	751	123
QLD	Moncrieff	885	202
QLD	Moreton	704	258
QLD	Oxley	1,499	640
QLD	Petrie	1,536	467
QLD	Rankin	1,653	749
QLD	Ryan	408	112
QLD	Wide Bay	1,886	818
QLD	Wright	1,155	343
WA	Brand	1,371	430
WA	Burt	1,718	675
WA	Canning	1,025	332
WA	Cowan	953	347
WA	Curtin	339	131
WA	Durack	9,241	6,885
WA	Forrest	1,274	424
WA	Fremantle	1,012	444
WA	Hasluck	1,420	583
WA	Moore	303	72
WA	O'Connor	3,260	1,684
WA	Pearce	1,437	505
WA	Perth	730	343
WA	Stirling	886	380
WA	Swan	1,484	602
WA	Tangney	330	139
SA	Adelaide	1,038	459

State	Division	Indigenous Australians in the Centrelink file and enrolled as at 30 June 2018	Potential not enrolled under 65 Indigenous Australians as at the 2019 close of rolls
SA	Barker	1,207	610
SA	Boothby	620	221
SA	Grey	3,938	1,931
SA	Hindmarsh	1,141	412
SA	Kingston	810	278
SA	Makin	773	242
SA	Mayo	443	131
SA	Spence	1,936	705
SA	Sturt	416	154
TAS	Bass	1,199	326
TAS	Braddon	2,491	364
TAS	Clark	964	279
TAS	Franklin	1,231	255
TAS	Lyons	1,521	399
ACT	Bean	702	168
ACT	Canberra	468	157
ACT	Fenner	631	145
NT	Lingiari	16,473	5,483
NT	Solomon	3,659	1,395
	No fixed address		1,166
Total		224,554	69,805