

Despite improvements, a new overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health data confirms there is still a gap in life expectancy

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The most recent indicators of the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are now available in the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet's authoritative publication, the [Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status 2023](#). Accompanying this is a plain language Summary version and PowerPoint of the key facts.

Life expectancy still shows a gap with the 2023 ABS data estimating that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males born in Australia in 2020-2022 could expect to live to 71.9 years - 8.8 years less than the 80.6 years expected for non-Indigenous males. The expectation of life at birth for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females was 75.6 years - 8.1 years less than the 83.8 years for non-Indigenous females.

The 2023 National Health and Climate Strategy has also described the disproportionate impacts that climate change has had on the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In 2021-22, figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare showed again that the highest rates for potentially avoidable hospitalisations were for chronic conditions. Also as in previous years, Ischemic heart disease was the leading specific cause of deaths in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT combined in 2022.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and children, in 2021, 42% of mothers reported smoking during pregnancy (an 8% decrease from 2011). 88% of pregnant women attended five or more antenatal visits. As of 30 June 2023, the proportion of children aged 5 years who were fully immunised exceeded the national target, but the proportion of children aged 1 and 2 years did not.

HealthInfoNet Director, Professor Neil Drew said 'New to the Overview is a section on cultural indicators focussing on language which captures some encouraging news'.

The 2021 Census reported that there were 167 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being actively spoken in Australia. The 2018-19 National Indigenous Languages Survey stated there were at least 31 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being reawakened by communities.

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More information: The HealthInfoNet is a comprehensive Internet resource that informs practice and policy in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health by making up to date research and other knowledge readily accessible via any platform. It contributes to closing the gap in health between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. For over 25 years, working in the area of knowledge exchange with a population health focus, the HealthInfoNet makes research and other information freely available in a form that has immediate, practical utility for practitioners and policy-makers in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, enabling them to make decisions based on the best available evidence. [Home Page - Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet \(ecu.edu.au\)](#)