

HIGHLIGHTS

15 to 19 year old teenagers

- 85 per cent of Australian teenagers are in full-time study or full-time work.
- 14.9 per cent or 206,000 teenagers were not in full-time education or full-time employment in May 2003, continuing the trend of the past decade.
- A quarter of 18 and 19 year olds were not in full-time education or full-time employment in May 2003.
- The highest proportion of teenagers not in full-time learning or work are in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory.²

20 to 24 year old young adults

- 23 per cent of young adults were not in full-time education or full-time employment in May 2003.
- In 2002 79 per cent of young adults had completed Year 12 or a post school qualification.

Indigenous young Australians

- 45 per cent of Indigenous teenagers were not in full-time learning or work in 2001.
- Nearly 70 per cent of Indigenous young adults were not in full-time learning or work (52 per cent unemployed or not in the labour force) in 2001.
- An estimated 45 per cent of Indigenous young people aged 15-24 years were receiving a Centrelink income support payment (excluding ABSTUDY).
- Indigenous young people in urban, regional and remote locations face a level of risk of disconnection from learning and work three times greater than non-Indigenous young people.

School leavers

- Five months after leaving school, 26 per cent or 76,100 school leavers were either working part-time but not studying, unemployed, or not in the labour force and not studying.
- 49 per cent of Year 10 leavers or below and 36 per cent of Year 11 leavers were not in full-time learning or work five months after leaving school.
- Work prospects for early leavers improved over the medium term during the late 1990s (reflecting better economic conditions) but 28 per cent of early leavers and 11 per cent of school completers still experience a significantly troubled transition.
- Entry level full-time work is a much better and more effective pathway to sustainable full-time work over the medium term than part-time work.

Employment

- Full-time jobs for teenagers and young adults have declined by 6.9 and 15.2 per cent since 1995.
- Australians aged 15 to 24 years have two and a half times (2.7) the level of unemployment recorded by adults aged 25 to 54 years.
- School leavers completing an apprenticeship have a lower unemployment rate than other school leavers, while those who completed a traineeship had a higher unemployment rate than other school leavers.

² Northern Territory consistently among the highest States but no figures available in May 2003 due to high standard errors.

How Young Indigenous People are Faring 2003

An essay prepared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS).

Introduction

Active participation in social, cultural and economic opportunities is a major element of the personal development of all young people. The risk of disconnection from these opportunities is greater for those who are homeless, who don't attend school or are unemployed, for teenage parents and those living in impoverished or dysfunctional community environments. Effective progress through education and transition from school to work is a crucial ingredient in maximising these opportunities and for overcoming some of the profound disadvantages facing Australia's Indigenous peoples and communities. This paper aims, for the first time, to assess how young Indigenous people are faring by summarising the broad education and labour force characteristics of young Indigenous people aged between 15 and 24.

The paper draws on the submission by ATSIC to the Senate Inquiry into poverty and financial hardship. The submission found:

- Most indicators of poverty and related disadvantage show that Indigenous people are between two and three times worse off than non-Indigenous people in Australia
- About 30 per cent of Indigenous households are in or at risk of poverty, which indicates that over 120,000 Indigenous people are below the poverty line
- Indigenous unemployment rates, which are affected by CDEP participation,⁴⁰ are well over twice that of non-Indigenous people in cities and regional centres and become much higher in remote areas
- Preliminary information on Indigenous clients of Centrelink, combined with CDEP participants, also show that around 50 per cent of Indigenous adults are reliant on some form of welfare payment and the proportion is only slightly lower for young people aged 15 to 24
- Being fully engaged in either employment or education decreased the likelihood of poverty. Indigenous people in full-time employment or education is around 30 per cent of each age cohort, compared to at least 50 per cent of non-Indigenous people in each age cohort
- The proportion of Indigenous teenagers (aged 15 to 19) not fully engaged in work or education is three times that of non-Indigenous people
- For young Indigenous adults (20-24), close to 70 per cent are not fully engaged with work or education.

⁴⁰ The Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme is one of ATSIC's largest programs with around 35,000 participants.

While Australia as a whole faces the issue of an ageing population, the demographic trend of Indigenous people is reversed, with a rapidly increasing youth and young adult population. This also means young Indigenous people will become a larger proportion of all youth in Australia over the next two decades. Without a strong policy framework to address the skill development, education and labour market needs of this cohort, young Indigenous people face the risk of increased poverty, welfare dependency and disadvantage. The data provide an indication that this age group will quickly form a large part of the total Indigenous labour force and cohort of young parents.

The charts below show the very different characteristics of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous working age population (defined at those aged between 15 and 65). In particular, the rate of full-time employment over the life cycle looks to be well set by the age of 30, with non-Indigenous full-time employment rates remaining about 50 per cent until after age 55, whereas Indigenous rates remain below 30 per cent. This suggests that early connection to full-time work or education for young people is crucial to long-term labour market success, leading to a need for a renewed emphasis on improving education and employment outcomes for young Indigenous people.

Figure 1
Indigenous employment and student status, 2001

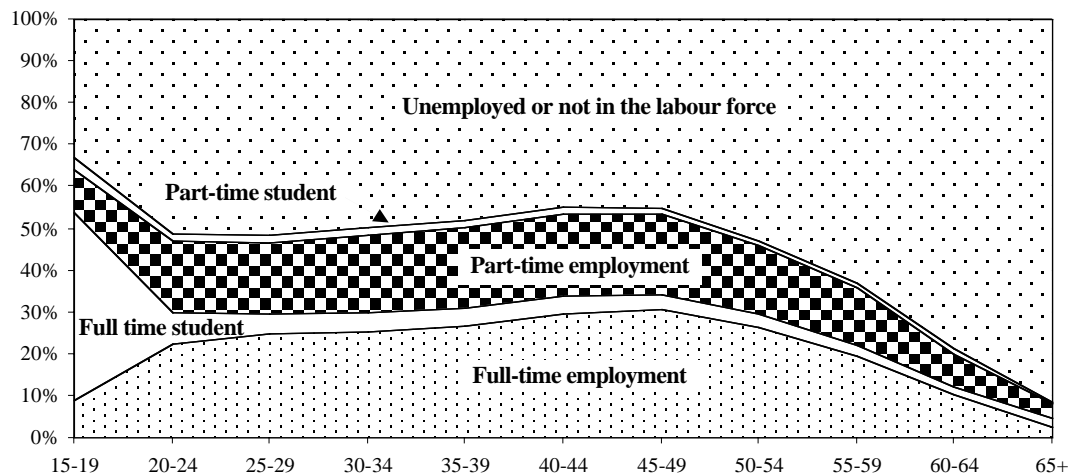
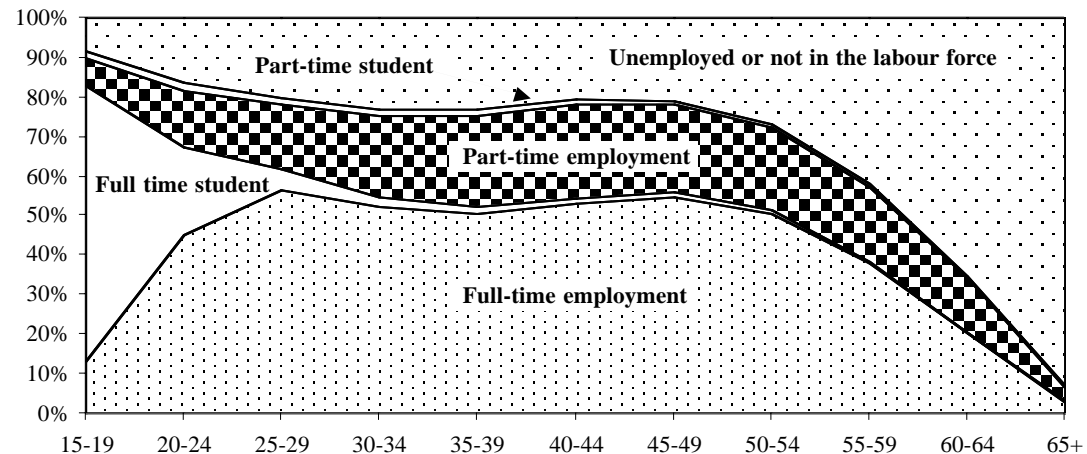


Figure 2
Non-Indigenous employment and student status, 2001



Source for both Figures: ABS Census, 2001, special tabulation.

This paper applies a number of measures used by the annual *How Young People are Faring, Key Indicators* reports published by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum to assess the level of marginal attachment to the labour market and possible ongoing links to low income and poverty. This analysis replicates some of the measures for Indigenous young people, teenagers (aged 15-19 years) and young adults (aged 20-24 years). As monthly ABS Labour Force surveys are not able to identify in sufficient detail the characteristics of the Indigenous population, data have been drawn from the ABS 1996 and 2001 Census.⁴¹ The ABS Tables included information for total Australia, States and Territories and by Remoteness.⁴² This paper focuses on total Australia and Remoteness comparisons. Detailed Tables covering States and Territories are included in Attachment A.

The use of the term *at risk* is used in this paper to identify those who are either not in full-time work or education and are therefore unlikely to be accumulating the necessary skills and experience that will lead to an ongoing connection to the labour force. Longitudinal research reported earlier in *How are Young People are Faring 2003* looked at the probability of measures of *at risk* at one point in time leading to being in the same or similar position into the future. While the direct implications of the measures of *at risk* still require further detailed research this paper aims to present the extent of the level of risk for young Indigenous people, and in comparison to non-Indigenous people, as the beginning of further work necessary to explore specific linkages into the future.

⁴¹ See 'A note on data and remoteness' at the end of this paper for an outline of the Table specifications and categories used in this paper.

⁴² See 'A note on data and remoteness' at the end of this paper for more detail for the use of the remoteness classification.

Young Indigenous people (15 to 24 years of age)

It is important to note the different age structure of the Indigenous population (median age of 20 compared with 35 for the non-Indigenous population) and the significant growth in this segment of the population. For example, it is estimated that Indigenous children (aged 0-14) will increase from 4.7% in 2002 up to 7.6% in 2022.⁴³ While Indigenous people aged between 15-24 now form 3.2 per cent of all young people this will at least double over the next twenty years. Table 1 contains some basic population characteristics of young people using the most up to date population estimates from the 2001 Census. However it should be noted that the rest of the Tables in this paper are derived from Census counts.

Table 1
Estimated resident population information for Young Australians⁴⁴

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	TOTAL AUSTRALIA
Teenagers – persons aged 15-19	46,579	1,306,166	1,352,745
Young adults – persons aged 20-24	37,409	1,265,003	1,302,412
TOTAL YOUNG PEOPLE	83,988	2,571,169	2,655,157
Per cent of all 15-24 year olds	3.2 %	96.8 %	100 %
15-24 year olds as a % of total population	18.3 %	13.6 %	13.7 %

Source: ABS Census Estimates.

Teenagers (15 to 19 years of age)

The significance of being measured as *at risk* is probably greater for teenagers than for those aged 20-24. This is because young adults (20-24 year olds) are more likely not to participate in education or the labour force for positive reasons, such as caring for children and household duties. *How Young People are Faring* estimated that for 2001 15.1 per cent of all teenagers were *at risk*, with time-series data indicating a small rise over the previous three years.⁴⁵ The following Table, using 2001 ABS Census data, summarises comparative data for non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians.

⁴³ See the ATSI Submission to the House of Representatives Committee on Ageing, 2003, Table 2, p. 5.

⁴⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, cat. no. 4713.0, ABS.

⁴⁵ Dusseldorp Skills Forum, *How Young People are Faring 2001*, DSF, Sydney, 2001.

Table 2
Education and labour market status of teenagers aged 15 to 19 years old,⁴⁶
Australia, 2001

2001 15-19 year olds	% Full-time education	% Full-time work	% Part-time work and/or education	% Unemployed & not in the labour force	Total population
Non-Indigenous					
Male	66.2	15.8	6.1	10.7	
Female	72.9	9.6	7.3	9.4	
TOTAL	69.5	12.7	6.7	10.0	1,235,580
TOTAL NON-INDIGENOUS TEENAGERS AT RISK, %			16.7		
Indigenous					
Male	42.0	10.6	10.7	34.7	
Female	46.8	6.6	9.1	36.1	
TOTAL	44.4	8.6	9.9	35.4	42,273
TOTAL INDIGENOUS TEENAGERS AT RISK, %			45.3		
TOTAL TEENAGERS AT RISK, %			17.2		

Using these data, the *at risk* calculation provides a national rate of 17.2 per cent, slightly above the rate reported using ABS survey data from 2002. This would be expected as information reported on the Census, being self reported, is not subjected to more refined survey questioning. The key finding is that of non-Indigenous teenagers 16.7 per cent were *at risk*, compared to 45.3 per cent of Indigenous teenagers.

This confirms our broad understanding of poor Year 11 and 12 retention for Indigenous students and shows that those who do not remain a school are not moving into full-time work. Nearly 70 per cent of non-Indigenous teenagers are still at school compared to around 45 per cent of Indigenous teenagers. Critically, over 35 per cent of Indigenous teenagers are either unemployed or not participating in the labour force, compared with 10 per cent of non-Indigenous teenagers.

Table 3
Education and labour market status of teenagers aged 15 to 19, population share,
Australia, 2001

2001 15-19 year olds	% Full-time education	% Full-time work	% Part-time work and/or education	% Unemployed & not in the labour force	Percentage of total population
Non-Indigenous	97.9	97.7	95.2	89.5	96.7
Indigenous	2.1	2.3	4.8	10.7	3.3

Table 3 shows that while Indigenous teenagers constitute 3.3 per cent of the total teenage population counted in the Census, they form 2.1 per cent of those in full-time education, 2.3 per

⁴⁶ All Tables for teenagers exclude 47,411 people whose Indigenous status is not known.

cent of full-time workers, 4.8 per cent of part-time workers and 10.7 per cent of those unemployed or not in the labour force.

Regional variation

By using the ABS Remoteness Classification we can compare the level of risk across regions.⁴⁷ Table 4 shows the regional pattern of those *at risk* varies between non-Indigenous and Indigenous teenagers. There is a consistent increase in the proportion of Indigenous teenagers *at risk* as we move away from major cities, from 38 per cent in major cities and 70 per cent in very remote areas. In comparison, while there is a similar trend for non-Indigenous teenagers (14 to 21 per cent) the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous teenagers is increasing.

Table 4
Level of *at risk* of teenagers aged 15 to 19 by remoteness,^(a) 2001

2001 At risk aged 15-19	Major cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote	Very Remote	TOTAL
Indigenous %	38	37	39	52	70	44
Non-Indigenous %	14	17	18	21	21	15
Ratio Indigenous / non-Indigenous	2.7	2.2	2.2	2.5	3.3	2.9

Note

(a) This calculation uses a slightly different way of calculating *at risk* leading to smaller totals (see 'A note on data and remoteness' at the end of this paper).

The increasing likelihood of Indigenous teenagers in remote and very remote areas not engaging with either full-time education or employment to some extent reflects diminished access to high school and tertiary education facilities in these regions and the limited size of the labour market. It may also reflect individual or family choice where living on traditional lands is preferred. The fact that many Indigenous families have children at younger ages will also impact on the numbers of Indigenous females in particular who are not in the labour force.

What has changed since 1996?

To gain some initial understanding of possible trends over time identical information from the 1996 Census was also obtained. The information in Table 5 should be compared with Table 2.

⁴⁷ Indigenous population estimates using the Remoteness Classification are – Major Cities 30.5%, Inner Regional 20.3%, Outer Regional 23.1%, Remote 8.5% and Very Remote 17.6%.

Table 5
Education and labour market status of teenagers aged 15 to 19, Australia, 1996⁴⁸

1996 15-19 year olds	% Full-time education	% Full-time work	% Part-time work and/or education	% Unemployed & not in the labour force	Total population
Non-Indigenous					
Male	63.5	18.0	5.5	12.1	
Female	70.0	10.6	7.3	11.6	
TOTAL	66.7	14.4	6.4	11.8	1,254,482
TOTAL NON-INDIGENOUS TEENAGERS AT RISK, %			18.2		
Indigenous					
Male	38.2	12.1	10.2	38.0	
Female	42.3	7.5	8.7	40.5	
TOTAL	40.2	9.8	9.4	39.2	32,808
TOTAL INDIGENOUS TEENAGERS AT RISK, %			48.6		
TOTAL TEENAGERS AT RISK, %			19.1		

When comparing 2001 to 1996 there was an overall decline in the proportion of those *at risk* by around 2 percentage points. The improvements for Indigenous teenagers was stronger with an increase of 4 percentage points of those in full-time education and a 4 percentage point decline in those unemployed or not in the labour force. Overall, the proportion *at risk* declined from 48.6 per cent to 45.3 per cent. Information in Tables 4 and 6 shows that these changes held across most regional areas except in very remote regions where Indigenous teenagers were slightly more *at risk* in 2001. This is likely to be due to an increasing Indigenous teenage population in this region with little change in education and labour market outcomes. It is also notable that in 2001, Indigenous teenagers seem to be relatively worse off in all regions in comparison to improvements for non-Indigenous teenagers, 2.8 times the rate *at risk* in 1996 increasing slightly to 2.9 times in 2001.

Table 6
Level of *at risk* of teenagers aged 15 to 19 by remoteness,^(a) 1996

1996 At risk aged 15-19	Major cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote	Very Remote	TOTAL
Indigenous %	41	42	43	54	69	48
Non-Indigenous %	16	20	21	23	23	17
Ratio Indigenous / non-Indigenous	2.6	2.1	2.0	2.3	3.0	2.8

Note

(a) This calculation uses a slightly different way of calculating *at risk* leading to smaller totals.

⁴⁸ All Tables for teenagers exclude 31,430 people whose Indigenous status is not known.

How are Indigenous teenagers faring?

In terms of participation in education and employment, not very well. The most important finding is that Indigenous teenagers are about 3 times as likely to be *at risk*, that is, not participating full-time in either education or work, compared to non-Indigenous teenagers. This situation tends to be worse in remote areas, however the situation is only slightly better in cities and regional areas where the population numbers are greater. There have been small improvements since 1996, largely driven by an additional 4 per cent of teenagers remaining in full-time education. The increasing numbers in full-time work and education are only just keeping pace with population growth.

Young adults (persons aged 20-24 years)

The young adult population will have related but differing characteristics to the teenage population. Greater numbers will have finished schooling, completed tertiary studies and have moved into full-time work. It is also expected that numbers calculated to be *at risk* would increase, as young adults are less likely to be still undertaking full-time education and are more likely to not be in the labour force for positive reasons, including caring for children and household duties. However, comparative data for non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians in the following Tables contain some disturbing trends.

Table 7
Education and labour market status of young adults aged 20 to 24, Australia, 2001⁴⁹

2001 20-24 year olds	% Full-time education	% Full-time work	% Part-time work and/or education	% Unemployed & not in the labour force	Total population
Non-Indigenous					
Male	21.2	48.7	11.7	16.0	
Female	24.6	38.4	15.8	19.7	
TOTAL	22.8	43.6	13.7	17.8	1,160,488
TOTAL NON-INDIGENOUS YOUNG ADULTS AT RISK, % 31.6					
Indigenous					
Male	7.0	25.9	18.0	45.7	
Female	8.8	16.9	15.2	57.5	
TOTAL	7.9	21.3	16.6	51.7	32,899
TOTAL INDIGENOUS YOUNG ADULTS AT RISK, % 68.3					
TOTAL YOUNG ADULTS AT RISK, % 31.8					

These data show that, in broad terms, about 70 per cent of the non-Indigenous young adults are fully engaged in either the labour market or education, and 30 per cent are not, with almost the opposite situation for Indigenous young adults. Where less than 30 per cent are fully engaged with either the labour market or education, nearly 70 per cent are not. Non-Indigenous people are three times as likely to still be in full-time

⁴⁹ All Tables for young adults in 2001 exclude 47,566 people whose Indigenous status is not known.

education, and twice as likely to be in full-time work. Indigenous people on the other hand are almost three times as likely to be unemployed or not in the labour force.

Table 8
Education and labour market status of young adults aged 20 to 24, population share, Australia, 2001

2001 20-24 year olds	% Full-time education	% Full-time work	% Part-time work and/or education	% Unemployed & not in the labour force	Percentage of total population
Non-Indigenous	99.0	98.6	96.3	92.4	97.2
Indigenous	1.0	1.4	3.7	7.6	2.8

Table 8 shows that while Indigenous young adults constitute 2.8 per cent of the total young adult population, they form only one per cent of those in full-time education, 1.4 per cent of full-time workers, 3.7 per cent of part-time workers and 7.6 per cent of those unemployed or not on the labour force.

Regional variation

This situation does vary by region, where the proportion of young Indigenous adults *at risk* increases as we move away from cities. While over 8 in ten young Indigenous adults in very remote areas are not in full-time work or education over half in major cities are in the same category. This compares to the non-Indigenous population where in both regions the proportion is around 25 per cent.

Table 9
Level of *at risk* of young adults aged 20 to 24 by remoteness,^(a) 2001

2001 At risk aged 20-24	Major cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote	Very Remote	TOTAL
Indigenous %	55	65	70	73	83	67
Non-Indigenous %	26	38	38	35	28	29
Ratio Indigenous / non-Indigenous	2.1	1.7	1.8	2.1	3.0	2.3

Note

- This calculation uses a slightly different way of calculating *at risk* leading to smaller totals.

Again, these data reflect the poor access to tertiary education facilities, the limited size of the labour market and to some extent reflect the lifestyle choice of Indigenous people in remote areas.

What has changed since 1996?

We can compare the situation of young adults in 1996 to what we are seeing in 2001 and also compare the teenage cohort in 1996 to what it looks like in 2001 as they are predominantly the same people. Table 10 should be compared to Table 7.

Table 10
Education and labour market status of young adults aged 20 to 24, Australia, 1996⁵⁰

1996 20-24 year olds	% Full-time education	% Full-time work	% Part-time work and/or education	% Unemployed & not in the labour force	Total population
Non-Indigenous					
Male	17.1	52.6	10.8	17.9	
Female	18.8	40.9	16.3	23.0	
TOTAL	17.9	46.8	13.5	20.4	1,254,482
TOTAL NON-INDIGENOUS YOUNG ADULTS AT RISK, %				33.9	
Indigenous					
Male	6.5	28.5	15.5	47.0	
Female	8.2	18.1	13.7	58.5	
TOTAL	7.3	23.5	14.5	52.9	32,808
TOTAL INDIGENOUS YOUNG ADULTS AT RISK, %				67.4	
TOTAL YOUNG ADULTS AT RISK, %				34.7	

As the total unemployment rate fell between 1996 and 2001 (Indigenous rate fell from 22.7 to 20.0 per cent, non-Indigenous fell from 9.0 to 7.2 per cent) it would be expected that those *at risk* were also likely to fall in this age group, in part due to these better employment outcomes. Table 10 shows that those *at risk* did fall by about 3 percentage points, yet this fall was stronger for the non-Indigenous young adults. This is partly explained by the fact that much of the improvement in Indigenous unemployment rates was due to increases in part-time employment. For both non-Indigenous and Indigenous young adults in 2001 there were proportionally more in full-time education, less in full-time work and less unemployed or not in the labour force. Improvements are greatest for non-Indigenous young adults. Overall there is little change for Indigenous young adults.

⁵⁰ All Tables for young adults in 1996 exclude 35,179 people whose Indigenous status is not known.

Table 11
Level of *at risk* of young adults aged 20 to 24 by remoteness,^(a) 1996

1996 At risk aged 20-24	Major cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote	Very Remote	TOTAL
Indigenous %	55	65	68	74	81	66
Non-Indigenous %	29	39	40	37	28	32
Ratio Indigenous / non-Indigenous	1.9	1.7	1.7	2.0	2.9	2.1

Note

(a) This calculation uses a slightly different way of calculating *at risk* leading to smaller totals.

Information in Tables 9 and 11 show that there was little change in the regional profile for Indigenous young adults, compared across the board, but small improvements for non-Indigenous young adults. As for Indigenous teenagers, the gap for Indigenous young adults is increasing, from 2.1 times the non-Indigenous rates to 2.3 times in 2001.

How are young Indigenous adults faring?

At a critical time in the life cycle where young adults are completing their education and are entering the labour market, young Indigenous adults are faring poorly in comparison to non-Indigenous young adults, with little change since 1996. Again, this situation is more pronounced in remote and very remote regions, yet those in cities and more urban regions, where the population is larger, are still around two times more likely not to be fully engaged in work or education in comparison to non-Indigenous young adults.

Income support and Indigenous young people

In recent months ATSISS has been working with Centrelink to extract and present information on Indigenous Centrelink income support customers to help get a better understanding of the nature of welfare and to validate some of the initial information on how young Indigenous adults are faring. The information contained in the following Table aims to provide a regional comparison using best estimates of the population, and compares Centrelink income support customers in September 2002 with population estimates in August 2001.

Table 12
Indigenous Centrelink income support payment customers aged 15 to 24, by primary payment, September 2002

Payment	Major cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote	Very Remote	TOTAL AUSTRALIA	Per cent of total
ABSTUDY	3,846	2,858	4,048	1,241	2,340	14,333	17.0
Newstart allowance	1,671	1,097	1,763	702	2,374	7,607	9.0
Youth allowance	2,993	2,177	2,916	1,000	2,882	11,968	14.2
Disability support pension	445	326	444	128	207	1,550	1.8
Parent payment							
– single	1,747	1,200	2,139	725	1,651	7,462	8.9
– partnered	227	211	446	229	1,260	2,373	2.8
TOTAL ^(a)	1,974	1,411	2,585	954	2,911	45,648	54.1
Per cent receiving a primary payment ^(b)	49.7	52.8	59.1	58.3	52.5	54.1	
CDEP ^(c)						11,075	

Notes

- (a) Total includes 355 other income support recipients.
- (b) Based on rough estimates of the regional population.
- (c) Total CDEP participants, who are also eligible for the CDEP Partipant Supplement (about 4,500 are receiving and are counted under Newstart Allowance).

Caution should be used when interpreting this information because it is based on Indigenous self-identification on Centrelink customer forms and a level of under-identification is likely.⁵¹ As yet we don't have a full regional profile of CDEP participants, although the majority of the 11,075 participants in this age group will be in remote and very remote regions.

Based on these figures we can estimate that about 60 per cent of Indigenous young adults are receiving an income support payment (total Centrelink plus those on CDEP but not on Newstart Allowance). If you exclude those on ABSTUDY the proportion is about 45 per cent. We expect a certain amount of double-counting when incorporating CDEP participants, which will be one of the initial further analysis tasks during the development of the use of these data. For comparative purposes it is estimated that 23 per cent of non-Indigenous young people are receiving a payment listed in Table 12.

In broad terms this information on income support shows a similar pattern to measures of *at risk* presented earlier. To better understand the possible use of this data in the future we need to undertake more specific analysis, including analysis of trends over time but as detailed labour force information from ABS surveys for Indigenous people is not available in sufficient detail this source of information should assist us in measuring how young Indigenous people are faring on an annual basis.

⁵¹ The percentage calculations are based on estimates of the population at 2001 (we used 84,000) that may differ from more sophisticated estimates that will be available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics sometime into the future.

Conclusion

While this paper presents information that requires further detailed analysis we can conclude that about half of young Indigenous people are fully engaged in either education or the labour market compared to over 80 per cent of non-Indigenous people, and the circumstances of young Indigenous people are not improving a great deal. Numbers in full-time work and education are increasing; although this is not happening fast enough to close the gap. The early Centrelink information supports the findings that around half of young Indigenous adults are in receipt of significant welfare support, compared with around 23 per cent of non-Indigenous young people.

Improving education and employment outcomes for Indigenous people is a vital ingredient if wider well-being outcomes are to be addressed. The data show that there are some modest improvements in full-time education measures, but for those not remaining in education there seems to be a decrease in full-time employment with an increase in unemployment and not being in the labour force. While there are some good signs in slowly improving full-time education participation there is little positive change in terms of full-time jobs for young Indigenous people.

Population labour market characteristics, particularly full-time employment rates, seem to be set by around age 30, suggesting a need to focus on younger age groups for improvements in education and attachment to the labour market. This is particularly important for Indigenous young people who are well behind non-Indigenous young people in both full-time education and full-time work as young people.

Given the known downstream outcomes from limited schooling and poor initial contact with the labour market these data indicate ongoing poor outcomes for young Indigenous people. The retention of Indigenous students through to the completion of Year 12, and increasing the numbers moving to tertiary education are critical headline indicators of transition to work. Further attention should be given to ways of improving retention in secondary school, increasing numbers in tertiary education and the training sector, and full-time jobs. In parallel, a focus on early child development and early school engagement provides a longer term policy focus for reform that targets the determinants of current poor retention in the later secondary school years and subsequently tertiary education.

Attachment A

Table 13
Education and labour market status of teenagers aged 15 to 19 by remoteness, by State
^(a), 2001 and 1996

At risk (%) aged 15-19	Major cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote	Very Remote	TOTAL
Indigenous – 2001						
New South Wales	38	39	40	48	67	39
Victoria	32	35	39	-	-	34
Queensland	38	37	39	53	60	42
South Australia	37	28	40	43	67	42
Western Australia	44	46	50	47	69	52
Northern Territory	-	-	37	58	75	65
Tasmania	-	29	28	43	-	29
ACT ^(a)	26	-	-	-	-	26
TOTAL	38	37	39	52	70	44
Non-Indigenous – 2001						
New South Wales	14	17	17	23	26	15
Victoria	11	14	14	11	-	12
Queensland	18	20	19	19	20	18
South Australia	17	18	20	17	25	18
Western Australia	16	22	21	25	23	17
Northern Territory	-	-	18	18	17	18
Tasmania	-	19	22	32	24	20
ACT ^(a)	12	-	-	-	-	12
TOTAL	14	17	18	21	21	15
Indigenous – 1996						
New South Wales	40	45	49	55	74	44
Victoria	37	39	43	50	-	39
Queensland	40	43	42	58	62	42
South Australia	44	50	48	44	76	52
Western Australia	44	41	51	48	69	54
Northern Territory	-	-	36	59	71	63
Tasmania	-	31	31	40	64	31
ACT ^(a)	32	-	-	-	-	32
TOTAL	41	42	43	54	69	48
Non-Indigenous – 1996						
New South Wales	15	19	20	24	26	16
Victoria	13	17	17	14	-	14
Queensland	18	22	20	23	26	18
South Australia	20	22	26	21	23	21
Western Australia	16	21	21	24	23	17
Northern Territory	-	-	20	20	16	20
Tasmania	-	21	25	38	25	22
ACT ^(a)	13	12	-	-	-	13
TOTAL	16	20	21	23	23	17

Note

(a) Caution should be used when interpreting these data as in smaller States and in some remoteness categories the population numbers can be small.

Table 14
Education and labour market status of young adults aged 20 to 24 by remoteness, by State, ^(a) 2001 and 1996

At risk (%) aged 20-24	Major cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote	Very Remote	TOTAL
Indigenous – 2001						
New South Wales	55	68	74	76	89	63
Victoria	48	58	64	-	-	53
Queensland	55	67	70	71	72	66
South Australia	59	66	76	61	84	68
Western Australia	62	73	79	68	80	72
Northern Territory	-	-	63	77	89	83
Tasmania	-	52	58	63	-	54
ACT ^(a)	40	-	-	-	-	40
TOTAL	55	65	70	73	83	67
Non-Indigenous – 2001						
New South Wales	26	37	42	37	31	28
Victoria	24	34	37	33	-	26
Queensland	30	41	35	32	26	33
South Australia	31	37	41	38	33	33
Western Australia	28	42	40	37	28	31
Northern Territory	-	-	30	29	27	28
Tasmania	-	36	49	52	30	39
ACT ^(a)	21	21	-	-	-	21
TOTAL	26	38	38	35	28	29
Indigenous – 1996						
New South Wales	54	68	75	83	80	64
Victoria	46	61	75	-	-	54
Queensland	55	65	68	71	70	66
South Australia	60	59	72	69	80	67
Western Australia	62	71	70	71	80	71
Northern Territory	-	-	58	73	86	79
Tasmania	-	52	53	61	43	52
ACT ^(a)	42	-	-	-	-	42
TOTAL	55	65	68	74	81	66
Non-Indigenous – 1996						
New South Wales	28	40	44	42	37	31
Victoria	27	37	40	37	-	30
Queensland	32	42	36	35	30	33
South Australia	35	41	45	45	36	36
Western Australia	28	41	38	37	28	31
Northern Territory	-	-	32	32	16	31
Tasmania	-	36	47	49	31	39
ACT ^(a)	26	34	-	-	-	26
TOTAL	29	39	40	37	28	32

Note

(a) Caution should be used when interpreting these data as in smaller States and in some remoteness categories the population numbers can be small.

A note on data and remoteness

- (a) The calculation of what is *at risk* is done in two different ways:
- In the Tables where a comparison to the method used in the *How Young People are Faring* report those *at risk* include all those who were not in either full-time education or full-time employment.
 - The second approach, used in all of the remoteness Tables was to include those who were in both part-time work and part-time education as not *at risk*. This leads to 1-3 per cent decline in the numbers *at risk*.

- (b) The ABS Remoteness Classification: In the mid-1990s the National Centre for Social Applications of Geographic Information Systems (referred to as GISCA) developed the Accessibility and Remoteness Index for Australia (ARIA). ARIA measures how remote a place is from cities or large towns (and the services they provide) leading to a 'score' for each area. ARIA has been refined over the past few years and is used by a number of agencies including Centrelink, Health and Ageing, Family and Community Services and the ABS.

Building on ARIA, the ABS has developed a Remoteness Geographical Classification with 5 major groups (there is a sixth for migratory and off-shore data that is not relevant to this discussion). The five groups are - Major Cities, Inner Regional, Outer Regional, Remote and Very Remote. The ABS is adopting it as one of their standard geographies by which data from the Census and Indigenous surveys will be made available, and ATSIIC has adopted the classification one of the key geographical ways to present and analyse data.

- (c) Most of the information presented in this paper was derived from a detailed Table request from ABS using the 1996 and 2001 census. The Table specifications were student status (full-time, part-time, not attending, not stated) by hours worked (35 hours plus, less than 35 hours, not applicable (which include both unemployed and not in the labour force) and not stated).

In the Tables full-time students include all those who are studying on a full-time basis regardless of their labour force status, whereas those in full-time work cover those working 35 hours or more but don't include those who also recorded as full-time students (there were not many in this category).