

## 2011 Census: Labour force and education characteristics of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons

### Key Points:

At the time of the 2011 Census, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queensland usual residents of working age:

- participated in the labour force at a lower rate than non-Indigenous residents (59.7% compared with 77.8%);
- had a higher unemployed rate than non-Indigenous residents (20.2% compared with 5.9%); and
- reported lower median gross weekly income than non-Indigenous residents for those employed full-time (\$889 compared with \$1,084).

Almost one third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents aged 20-64 years held a non-school qualification in 2011 (32.6%) compared with 55.1% of non-Indigenous residents.

### 1. Labour force participation

At the time of the 2011 Census, 52,805 or 59.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queensland residents aged 15-64 years (working age) were participating in the labour force. Of these, 42,146 (79.8%) were employed and 10,659 (20.2%) were unemployed<sup>1</sup>. In comparison, the labour force participation rate of non-Indigenous persons of the same age was 18.2 percentage points higher at 77.8%.

Participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in the labour force decreased by 2.0 percentage points in the five years to 2011, while the rate for non-Indigenous persons rose by 1.1 percentage points over the same period (Table 1).

**Table 1: Labour force status, persons aged 15-64 years, Queensland**

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	2006	2011	2006	2011
	— persons —			
Employed	33,239	42,146	1,733,963	1,920,876
Unemployed <sup>1</sup>	10,268	10,659	83,712	119,627
<i>Total in labour force</i>	43,507	52,805	1,817,675	2,040,503
Not in labour force	27,016	35,711	550,469	581,598
<b>Total population aged 15-64<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>74,126</b>	<b>92,028</b>	<b>2,395,791</b>	<b>2,647,785</b>
	— % —			
	Labour force participation rate <sup>(b)</sup>			
Males	68.9	65.5	83.2	83.3
Females	55.0	54.1	70.5	72.5
<b>Persons</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>59.7</b>	<b>76.8</b>	<b>77.8</b>
	Unemployment rate <sup>1 (b)</sup>			
Males	24.3	21.4	4.3	5.8
Females	22.7	18.8	5.0	5.9
<b>Persons</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>5.9</b>

(a) Includes labour force not stated.

(b) Rates exclude labour force not stated. Due to rounding, differencing of these rates may not reflect actual percentage point differences.

Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing, TableBuilder Pro

<sup>1</sup> Includes participants in the Community Development and Employment Projects (CDEP).

In 2011, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males participated in the labour force at higher rates than females (65.5% compared with 54.1% respectively). However, the gap in participation rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females narrowed over time, from 13.8 percentage points in 2006 to 11.4 percentage points in 2011.

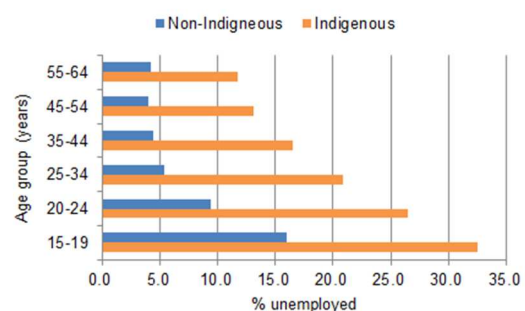
### 2. Unemployment<sup>1</sup>

The unemployment rate of working age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in Queensland in 2011 was 20.2%, more than three times the rate of the non-Indigenous usual residents (5.9%). In the five years to 2011, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unemployment rate decreased by 3.4 percentage points from 23.6% to 20.2%.

The unemployment rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females was lower than that of males in 2011, with 18.8% of working age females in the labour force looking for work, compared with 21.4% of males.

The unemployment rates of 15-19 year old and 20-24 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons were 32.5% and 26.5% respectively. These rates were notably higher than unemployment rates among older age groups. A similar pattern was observed in the non-Indigenous population where the unemployment rates for 15-19 year olds and 20-24 year olds were 16.0% and 9.4% respectively (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Unemployed persons<sup>1</sup> aged 15-64 years, Queensland, 2011**



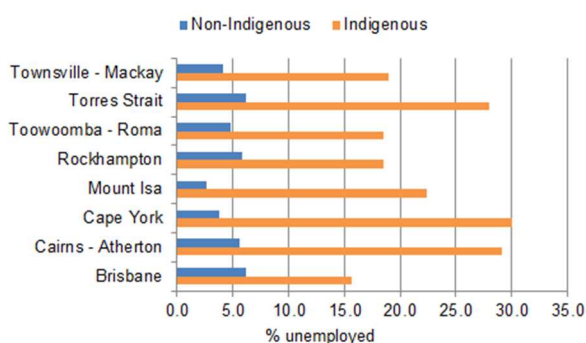
Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing, TableBuilder Pro



### Queensland Indigenous regions

Across the Queensland Indigenous regions, the highest unemployment rates for working age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons were recorded in Cape York (30.1%), Cairns – Atherton (29.2%) and Torres Strait (28.0%), while the lowest rate was recorded in Brisbane (15.7%). In contrast, for non-Indigenous people, Brisbane and the Torres Strait had the highest unemployment rates (6.2% each) while Mount Isa had the lowest rate (2.6%) (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Unemployed persons<sup>1</sup> aged 15-64 years by Indigenous region, Queensland, 2011**



Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Table Builder Pro

### 3. Employment<sup>2</sup>

At the time of the 2011 Census, 42,146 or 45.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons of working age were in employment. Of these, 61.0% were employed full-time, 30.2% worked part-time and 8.8% did not work in the week prior to the Census. Similar proportions of non-Indigenous persons worked full-time (64.7%) and part-time (29.4%).

A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males worked part-time (41.2% compared with 20.3%). A similar pattern was also observed in the non-Indigenous population, where 43.4% of non-Indigenous females worked part-time compared with 16.8% of non-Indigenous males.

#### Sector<sup>3</sup>

At the time of the 2011 Census, most employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons (74.9%) were working in the private sector. A further 13.8% were working in State government, 5.2% in local government and 3.8% in the Commonwealth government. Compared with non-Indigenous employment patterns, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons were employed in the private sector at a lower rate and in local government at a higher rate.

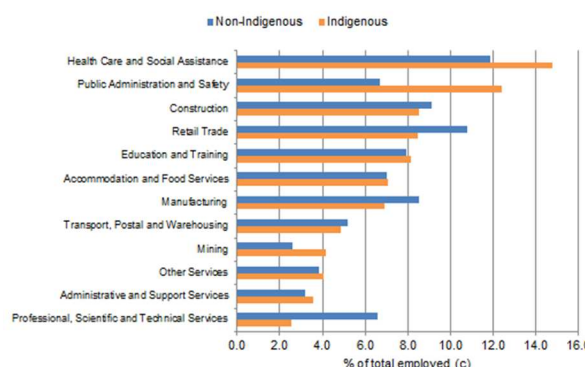
<sup>2</sup> Excludes participants in the Community Development and Employment projects (CDEP).

<sup>3</sup> Proportions presented are based on total employed persons in each Indigenous status category including sector not stated.

### Industry

The industry employing the largest proportion of working age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in Queensland in 2011 was health care and social assistance (14.8%), followed by public administration and safety (12.4%) and construction and retail trade (8.5% each). In comparison, the industries employing the largest proportion of working age non-Indigenous persons were health care and social assistance (11.9%), retail trade (10.8%), construction (9.1%) and manufacturing (8.5%) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Employed persons aged 15-64 years by selected industries<sup>(a)(b)</sup> Queensland, 2011**



- (a) Most common industries reported for Indigenous employed persons.
- (b) Industry of employment was coded to the 2006 Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification.
- (c) Total includes industry not stated and not adequately described.

Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Table Builder Pro

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons were employed in public administration and safety at almost twice the level as non-Indigenous persons (12.4% compared with 6.7%). They were also employed at a higher rate in health care and social assistance (14.8% compared with 11.9%) and mining (4.1% compared with 2.6%). In contrast, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons were employed at lower proportions than non-Indigenous persons in professional, scientific and technical services (2.6% compared with 6.6%), retail trade (8.5% compared with 10.8%), manufacturing (6.9% compared with 8.5%) and financial and insurance services (1.1% compared with 2.7%).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were employed at much higher proportions than their male counterparts in health care and social assistance (24.0% compared with 6.5%) and education and training (12.8% compared with 3.9%). In contrast, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males were employed at much higher proportions than females in the construction (14.6% compared with 1.8%) and mining industries (6.5% compared with 1.5%). A similar pattern was observed in the non-Indigenous population.



### Occupation

At the time of the 2011 Census, more than two-thirds (64.2%) of working age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males were employed as tradespersons, labourers and related workers, comprising labourers (24.3%), technicians and trades workers (22.0%) and machinery operators and drivers (17.8%) (Table 2). In comparison, only around one in five (19.0%) working age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were employed in these occupations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were primarily employed as community and personal service workers (23.3%) and clerical and administrative workers (22.4%).

While almost half (49.5%) of non-Indigenous males were also employed as tradespersons, labourers and related workers in 2011, they were employed as managers and professionals (30.3%) at more than twice the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males (14.1%).

**Table 2: Employed persons aged 15-64 years by occupation<sup>(a)</sup>, Queensland, 2011**

Occupation <sup>(a)</sup>	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
	— % —			
Managers	5.7	5.7	14.2	9.3
Professionals	8.4	14.8	16.1	22.6
Technicians and trades workers	22.0	4.1	24.7	4.5
Community and personal service workers	9.0	23.3	5.6	14.8
Clerical and administrative workers	5.0	22.4	5.8	24.8
Sales workers	4.1	11.6	6.9	13.2
Machinery operators and drivers	17.8	1.9	12.4	1.4
Labourers	24.3	13.1	12.4	7.9
<b>Total employed persons aged 15-64 years<sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	— persons —			
<b>Total employed persons aged 15-64 years<sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>22,088</b>	<b>20,058</b>	<b>1,011,373</b>	<b>909,505</b>

(a) Occupation of employment was coded to the 2006 Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)

(b) Includes not stated and inadequately described.

Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Table Builder Pro

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were employed as managers and professionals at lower levels than their non-Indigenous counterparts (20.6% compared with 31.8%). In contrast, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were employed at higher proportions than non-Indigenous females as community and personal service workers (23.3% compared with 14.8%) and labourers (13.1% compared with 7.9%).

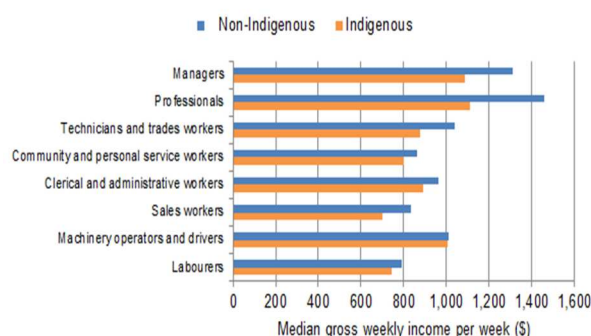
### Income

Differences in individual income largely reflect a person's labour force status and if employed, their hours of work and occupation.

Median gross personal income for employed working age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons was \$737 per week, or 83.2% of the corresponding non-Indigenous median (\$886 per week). For full-time employed persons, the differences in income were greater. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders employed full-time reported a median gross weekly income of \$889 compared with \$1,084 for non-Indigenous persons.

Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons working full-time, the highest median gross weekly incomes were reported by professionals (\$1,113) and managers (\$1,088). The lowest median gross weekly income was reported for sales workers (\$703) (Figure 4). While professionals and managers also reported the highest gross personal incomes for the non-Indigenous population (\$1,460 and \$1,314 per week respectively), the lowest incomes were reported by labourers (\$793 per week).

**Figure 4: Median gross weekly individual income, Employed persons aged 15-64 years by Occupation Queensland, 2011**



Source: ABS, 2011 Census of Population and Housing, unpublished data.

In general, full-time employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons reported lower median gross personal incomes than their non-Indigenous peers in the same occupation. The greatest difference in weekly gross personal income between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons and non-Indigenous persons was reported for professionals. The median gross weekly income of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals working full-time was 76.2% per cent of the non-Indigenous median (\$1,113 compared with \$1,460). In contrast, the weekly gross personal income of machinery operators and drivers was similar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons and non-Indigenous persons (\$1,008 compared with \$1,014).



## 5. Non-school qualifications

In August 2011, 32.6% of 20-64 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders held a non-school qualification (Table 3). The highest qualification held by most (21.2%) was a certificate level qualification, while 5.0% held an advanced diploma or diploma and a further 5.4% held a bachelor degree or higher.

In comparison, more than half (55.1%) of non-Indigenous Queenslanders of the same age held a non-school qualification with 20.9% of persons reporting that their highest level qualification was a bachelor degree or higher qualification.

Similar proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous persons reported their highest qualification as certificate level (21.2% compared with 23.6%).

**Table 3: Level of non-school qualification, persons 20-64 years, Queensland, 2011**

Level of non-school qualification	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
	— % —	
<i>Bachelor degree or higher</i>	5.4	20.9
<i>Advanced diploma and diploma</i>	5.0	9.3
<i>Certificate Level</i>	21.2	23.6
Total with non-school qualification <sup>(a)</sup>	32.6	55.1
No non-school qualification	56.9	41.3
Level not stated	10.5	3.7
Total persons aged 20-64 years	100.0	100.0
	— persons —	
Total persons aged 20-64 years	<b>75,136</b>	<b>2,384,926</b>

(a) Includes inadequately described.

Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Table Builder Pro

While similar proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females held a non-school qualification in 2011 (31.4% compared with 33.6%):

- 7.0% of females held a bachelor degree or higher compared with 3.6% of males; and
- 6.4% held an advanced diploma compared with 3.4% of males.

Between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons aged 20-64 years with a non-school qualification increased by 6.2 percentage points from 26.4% to 32.6%. Most of the increase occurred at the certificate level (4.6 percentage points).

### Field of study

The 2011 Census revealed the three most popular fields of study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females with a non-school qualification in Queensland as management and commerce (27.0%), society and culture (24.1%) and health (14.2%). In comparison, the most popular fields of study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males were engineering and related technologies (29.2%), architecture and building (18.2%), society and

culture and management and commerce (10.3% each).

### Notes

Population counts in this bulletin are based on Census counts of usual residents. While the Census counts are an important source of information about the characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, a more accurate estimate of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is provided by the estimated resident population, based on the Census but adjusting for net undercount and unknown Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status.

Unless otherwise stated, person level data in this bulletin excludes people who did not answer the question regarding their Indigenous status in the 2011 Census (5.5% of residents).

As the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has a younger age profile than the non-Indigenous population, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has a significantly lower proportion aged 65 years and over, analysis of labour force participation, employment and unemployment has been restricted to the traditional working age population, i.e. persons aged 15-64 years.

### CDEP

In recognition of the particular difficulties faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people particularly in remote regions, the Community Development and Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme was established in 1977 as an alternative to unemployment. From 2009, the CDEP scheme has undergone a series of reforms, including its removal from rural and urban locations with established economies, and from July 2013, it is expected to transition into the Remote Jobs and Communities program (RJCP). At the time of the 2011 Census, 1,084 or 1.2% of working age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders stated that they were participating in CDEP compared with 6.1% in 2006. A further 48 non-Indigenous persons reported that they were CDEP participants in 2011 compared with 142 in 2006. Consistent with the preferred treatment in Queensland policy analysis and reporting on Closing the Gap targets, CDEP participants have been classified as unemployed for the purposes of this paper.

These data were sourced from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing TableBuilder Pro online tool, extracted during November 2012. Cells in these tables have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. No reliance should be placed on small cells. In addition, as each table generated is adjusted independently, data downloaded at a different time, or subtotals and totals generated from data at different geographies may show some minor discrepancies.

For more information, please visit Government Statistician's *Queensland Regional Profiles* and *Queensland Regional Database* at [www.oesr.qld.gov.au](http://www.oesr.qld.gov.au).

All data in this report were sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Censuses of Population and Housing ([www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)).

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