

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in the labour force, 2018–19

Source: (ABS 4715.0) *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey*, released 11 December 2019, 10:30 a.m. AEST

Labour force data in this brief are sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS). The NATSIHS collects labour force information at a point in time from a sample of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population aged 15 years and over.

While these data are comparable with labour force statistics from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (ABS 4714.0) and the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (ABS 4727.0), these data are not comparable with labour force statistics sourced from either the Census of Population and Housing, or the Labour Force Survey (ABS 6202.0). The ABS have used non-Indigenous comparative data from the 2018 Education and Work Survey (ABS 6227.0). All data refer to the working-age population (15–64 years).

Key data

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander working age population summary, Queensland

2018–19

Employment to population ratio 50.8%

Unemployment rate..... 20.2%

Labour force participation rate 63.5%

2012–13

Employment to population ratio 51.4%

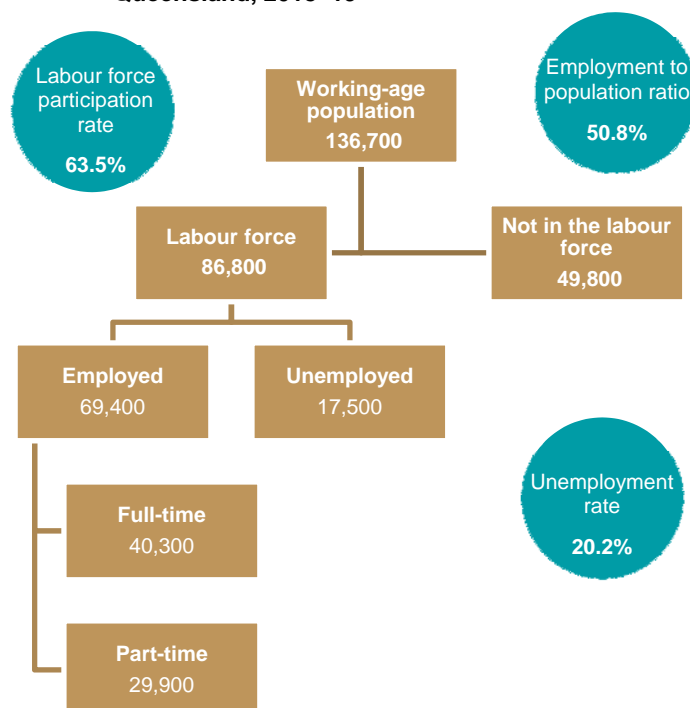
Unemployment rate..... 21.3%

Labour force participation rate 65.4%

Main findings

- Almost two-thirds of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander working age population were participating in the labour force.
- The proportion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander working age population that were employed has changed little since 2012–13.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in major city areas of Queensland experienced higher rates of employment.
- The ratio of employment to population for working age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland remains lower than that of the non-Indigenous population.

Figure 1 Labour market summary, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander working age population, Queensland, 2018–19^(a)



(a) Figures shown are rounded and may not sum to totals.

Labour force status

Nearly two-thirds (63.5%) of working-age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were participating in the labour force (either employed or unemployed) in 2018–19, compared with 65.4% in 2012–13.

Around half of all working-age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were employed (employment to population ratio of 50.8%), similar to the 51.4% reported in 2012–13. Queensland's employment to population ratio in 2018–19 was also similar to the national average of 49.1%.

In 2018–19, Queensland's unemployment rate (the proportion of the labour force that were unemployed) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 15–64 years was 20.2%, compared with 21.3% in 2012–13. This was similar to the national average of 18.6% in 2018–19.

Comparison with non-Indigenous rates

In 2018–19, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders aged 15–64 years were both less likely than non-Indigenous Queenslanders to be participating in the labour force (rate ratio of 0.8) and were around two-thirds as likely to be employed (0.7).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were also around three times as likely as non-Indigenous persons to be unemployed (rate ratio of 3.4).

By remoteness region

In 2018–19, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in non-remote areas were more likely to be employed than those in remote areas (Table 1).

Just over half of working age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in Major cities were employed (56.9%) in 2018–19, compared with three-quarters (74.8%) of non-Indigenous persons.

There was little difference in unemployment rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders between major cities, remote and very remote areas (16.2% to 18.5%). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had higher rates of unemployment than non-Indigenous persons in all regions where data were reported.

Table 1 Labour force by remoteness region

Remoteness region	Employment to population ratio	Unemployment rate	Persons in the labour force
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	— per cent —		
Major cities	56.9	16.2	69.6
Inner regional	60.3*	17.6*	67.0*
Outer regional	38.2	38.3*	56.8*
Remote	47.7*	18.5	61.4*
Very remote	47.5	17.2	58.1
Total	50.8	20.2	63.5
Non-Indigenous	— per cent —		
Major cities	74.8	5.9	79.6
Inner regional	71.7	5.8	76.4
Outer regional	73.9	7.4	79.6
Remote	74.2*	n.p.	72.5
Very remote	47.6*	n.p.	47.6*
Total	74.1	6.0	78.8

* use with caution, estimate has a high level of uncertainty
n.p.: Not published as estimate has a very high level of uncertainty

Employment levels over time

The proportion of the working-age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in employment has been relatively stable since 2012–13 at around half (Figure 2).

While employment levels have remained steady, the proportion of the working age population not in the labour force has increased.

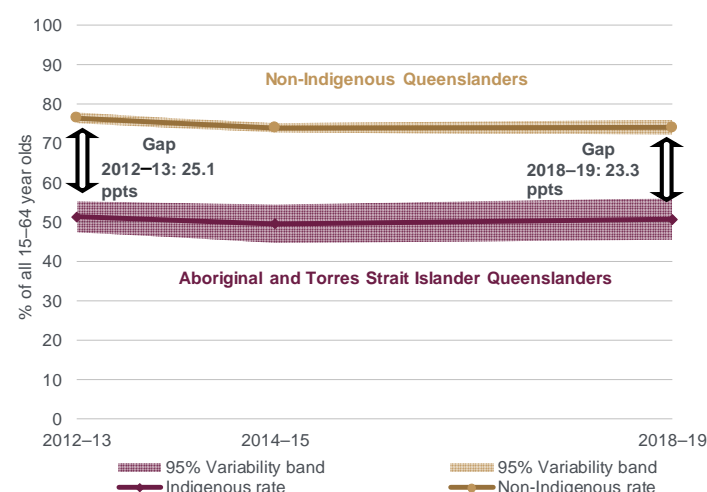
Figure 2 Proportion of working age population by labour force status^(a) over time



(a) Unemployment estimates in Figure 2 are shown as a proportion of the working age population, not as a proportion of the labour force (unemployment rate).

The gap between the employment to population ratios for non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders has narrowed slightly to 23.3 percentage points in 2018–19, down from 25.1 percentage points in 2012–13 (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Working-age population in employment



Sources: ABS 4714.0, 2014–15; ABS 4715.0, 2012–13, 2018–19.