



**Ministerial Council for Aboriginal  
and Torres Strait Islander Affairs**

*Bringing them home: A Report on the  
economic and social characteristics of those  
impacted on by past policies of forcible  
removal of children.*

*June 2006*



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## **Purpose of the Baseline Report**

The purpose of this report is to show whether there are significant differences in the economic and social characteristics of those impacted on by the forcible removal of children, in comparison with those Indigenous Australians who were not removed from their families. It is part of the ongoing role played by the Ministerial Council of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (MCATSIA) in the evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of the *Bringing them home* recommendations.

## **History of Reporting**

### ***Bringing them home: The original report***

In 1995 the Australian Government commissioned a public inquiry into the separation of Indigenous children from their families. The inquiry was conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC), whose subsequent report *Bringing them home: National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* (the *Bringing them home* report) was released in May 1997.

The report was established in response to increasing concern that the general public's ignorance of the history of forcible removal was adversely affecting both the recognition of the needs of its victims and their families, and the provision of services. The report therefore aimed to raise public awareness of the facts and issues surrounding past policies of forcible removal, and in doing so address the continuing impact of those policies on the lives of Indigenous Australians.

### **The role of MCATSIA**

MCATSIA is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the *Bringing them home* recommendations at a ministerial level across the Commonwealth, state and territory Governments.

Each of MCATSIA's reports so far has taken the approach of collating jurisdictional policy and programming responses to the 54 recommendations – originally through a recommendation-by-recommendation approach and then later using a thematic approach. The outcome of this has been a series of reports recording jurisdictional implementation of the *Bringing Them Home* recommendations. More recent MCATSIA reports have been organised around a set of overarching themes that encapsulated the various recommendations.

To ensure that its role in the evaluation remains strategic and forward-looking, MCATSIA has recognised the need to create a direct link to the COAG reconciliation agenda and thereby to the OID framework. The objective of the COAG reconciliation is underpinned by the view that “Governments can make a real difference in the lives of indigenous people by addressing social and economic disadvantage...”. To achieve this COAG is committed to an “approach based on partnerships and shared responsibilities

with indigenous communities, programme flexibility and coordination between government agencies...”. The OID framework provides the indicators of indigenous disadvantage and can also demonstrate if and where policies and programs are making an impact to overcome the sources of disadvantage currently experienced by many Indigenous people and communities.

MCATSIA has therefore adopted an alternative approach to reporting on the *Bringing them home* recommendations which links reporting more closely to the OID framework. It is anticipated that this new approach will add value to the reporting process, facilitating more meaningful analysis of the specific disadvantages suffered by those Indigenous Australians whose lives have been impacted upon by past policies of forcible removal.

## New Framework and Data

The framework for this report draws on existing data to take an alternative approach to that previously applied to the evaluation of the recommendations of the *Bringing them home* report. Unlike earlier reports, it does not seek to report on each recommendation. Neither does it continue to address the themes developed in previous evaluations. Instead, this report aims to provide an analysis of the socio economic and health status of Indigenous Australians relative to their direct experiences of the forcible child removal policies of past governments. In doing so, it is anticipated that the results will provide more significant data with which individual jurisdictions will be better able to evaluate and monitor implementation of the *Bringing them home* recommendations.

The framework uses NATSISS (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey) and NATSIHS (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey) data because these surveys include identifiers for those people who were removed from their families. The Australian Census includes no such identifiers. The NATSISS and NATSIHS surveys were chosen as data sources for the MCATSIA baseline report as:

- they are the only reliable national data sources which inform on the experiences of Indigenous Australians removed from their families compared with those who were not removed. Other research has studied the effect of forcible removal, but at the jurisdictional rather than national level.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> One example of this is the *Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey* (WAACHS), conducted by the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research in 2001 and 2002. The WAACHS findings were “the first data of their kind to establish both the current proportion of WA Aboriginal children and their families affected by forced separations and document some of the associated outcomes”. The question on forced separation used in the WAACHS survey was identical to that used in the 2002 NATSISS. WAACHS states that “While the survey findings are confined to the effects of past child removal policies on the Western Australian Aboriginal population, they help to inform aspects of the national discussion which has followed the release of Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission’s *Bringing them home* report in 1997”. The WAACHS report found that “Significant associations exist between the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal carers and their children and the past policies and practices of forced separation of Aboriginal people from their natural families”. (Zubrick SR, Silburn SR, Lawrence DM, Mitrou FG, Dalby RB, Blair EM, Griffin J, Milroy H, De Maio JA, Cox A, Li J. *The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey: Forced Separation from Natural Family, Forced Relocation from Traditional Country or Homeland*,

- they present existing quality data, and
- as time series data, it may provide indications of whether any existing gaps between those removed and those not removed are widening. The surveys are conducted alternately every three years.

The NATSISS and NATSIHS data can be analysed to compare the relative socio-economic and health positions of those removed and those not removed. Such analysis will assist in evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of the *Bringing Them Home* recommendations.

This approach does not provide an evaluation of the actual outcomes arising from the implementation of the *Bringing Them Home* recommendations. It makes the assumption that the recommendations continue to be implemented, and that any subsequent health or socio-economic consequences will emerge through analysis of the NATSISS and NATSIHS data.

## Methodology

NATSISS (2002) surveyed 9,400 Indigenous Australians, while NATSIHS (2004-2005) collected information from 10,400 Indigenous Australians. These sample sizes were large enough to provide reliable estimates on a suite of variables at the State and National level, but unlike a census do not include the entire population. The limited sample size therefore introduces several issues for consideration when analysing the data provided.

- As a survey does not include the entire population, data from these surveys can only be indicative, rather than representative, of the experiences of Indigenous Australians.
- Sampling a population, as has been done with the NATSISS and NATSIHS surveys, results in a degree of uncertainty associated with any derived estimate. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reports uncertainty as a proportion of the actual estimate, which is referred to as the relative standard error (RSE). The larger the RSE the more unreliable the estimate is, and as such the ABS advises caution in drawing conclusions from estimates with RSEs larger than 25 per cent. Differences in outcomes therefore cannot be made between the Removed and non-Removed populations by directly comparing estimates. This was instead done by significance testing, which is the process of determining if two population groups have different estimated rates after taking into account the uncertainty caused by sampling (see the technical note in the Australian Bureau of Statistics *National and Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2002* for a more

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*and Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Aboriginal Children and Young People: Additional Notes.* Perth: Curtin University of Technology and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, 2005).

detailed explanation of significance testing). Differences have only been stated and reported when they are statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level (see “Technical notes – uncertainty” for a more detailed explanation).

- Access to NATSISS and NATSIHS variables for the purposes of this Report was limited due to the small proportion of people who reported being removed from their natural family and the resulting degree of uncertainty. A total of 18 OID indicators, including 22 distinct comparisons, are therefore included in this Report.
- The small sample size prohibited reporting on comparisons between states and territories, as dividing the Removed sample into the respective state jurisdictions resulted in large RSEs and subsequent concern over the quality of the estimates. This Report therefore analyses outcomes based on national data only.

## **Interpreting the Charts**

The charts within the Report illustrate the estimates for the Removed and non-Removed populations along with their associated upper and lower bounds. The error bounds for each estimate indicate the uncertainty associated with the estimate. Estimates indicating significant difference are noted as such below the respective charts.

Please note that the Y-Axis is not consistent throughout the charts, but is scaled relative to the strengths of the estimates.

## **Available Data**

The NATSISS and NATSIHS were able to supply data on a limited suite of the OID indicators. These were:

### **Headline indicators**

1. Rates of disability
2. Year 10 and 12 retention and attainment
3. Post-secondary education participation and attainment
4. Labour force participation and unemployment
5. Household and individual income
6. Home ownership
7. Victim rates for crime
8. Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates

## **Strategic areas for action/Strategic change indicators**

Early child development and growth:

1. Hearing impediments

Positive childhood and transition to adulthood:

1. Retention at year 9
2. Participation in organised sport, arts or community group activities

Substance use and misuse:

1. Alcohol and tobacco consumption
2. Drug and other substance use

Functional and resilient families and communities:

1. Repeat offending
2. Proportion of Indigenous people with access to their traditional lands

Economic participation and development:

1. Employment (full-time/part-time)
2. CDEP participation
3. Long-term unemployment

## **Summary of findings**

Evidence from the analysis suggests that those who were removed from their families suffered poorer outcomes over a range of discrete socio-economic indicators.

This is supported by the following:

- Of the 22 distinct comparisons with the NATSISS and NATSIHS data, nine of the comparisons showed the Removed population to have worse outcomes than the non-Removed population.
- None of the comparisons showed the non-Removed population to have worse outcomes than the Removed population.
- Thirteen comparisons did not indicate any significant difference in outcomes between the two populations, but the estimates were always ordered in the same direction, i.e. the Removed population outcomes were worse than the non-Removed.

Disadvantage for the Removed populations was not concentrated in any particular outcome; rather it covered a broad spectrum of indicators:

- Higher rates of people with a disability or long-term health condition (68.8 per cent compared to 55.3 per cent)
- Lower rates of completion of Year 10 – 12 schooling (28.5 per cent compared to 38.5 per cent)
- Lower rates of living in owner occupied housing (16.9 per cent compared to 28.3 per cent)
- Higher rates of being a victim of physical or threatened violence (33.5 per cent compared to 18.1 per cent)
- Lower rates of retention to Year 10 (28.5 per cent compared to 38.5 per cent)
- Lower rates of participation in sport or physical recreation activities (35.4 per cent compared to 47.0 per cent)
- Higher rates of smoking (70.5 per cent compared to 51.2 per cent)
- Higher rates of being arrested more than once in a five year period (14.6 per cent compared to 8.8 per cent)
- Lower rates of full-time employment (17.8 per cent compared to 24.8 per cent).

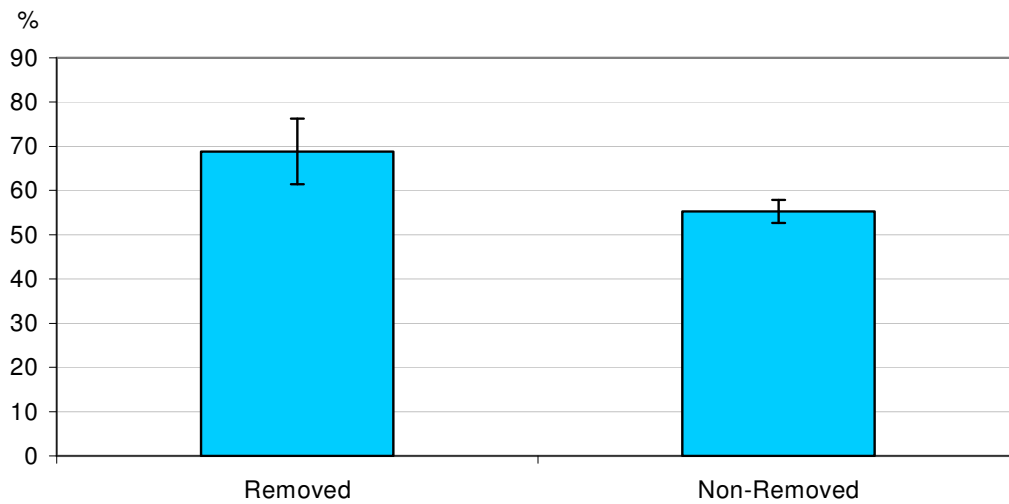
High measurement error in the Removed population indicator statistics was the main cause for the failure of the remaining 13 comparisons to report any difference between the Removed and the non-Removed populations, and was directly caused by the small number of persons within the Removed population estimates.

## Headline Indicators

### Rates of disability

The rate of disability or long-term health condition (see Glossary for definition) was higher for the Removed population than the non-Removed (68.8 per cent compared to 55.3 per cent).

**Figure 1** Has a disability or long-term health condition: persons aged 18 years and over, 2002



(a) The Removed and non-Removed estimates are different at the 95 per cent confidence level.

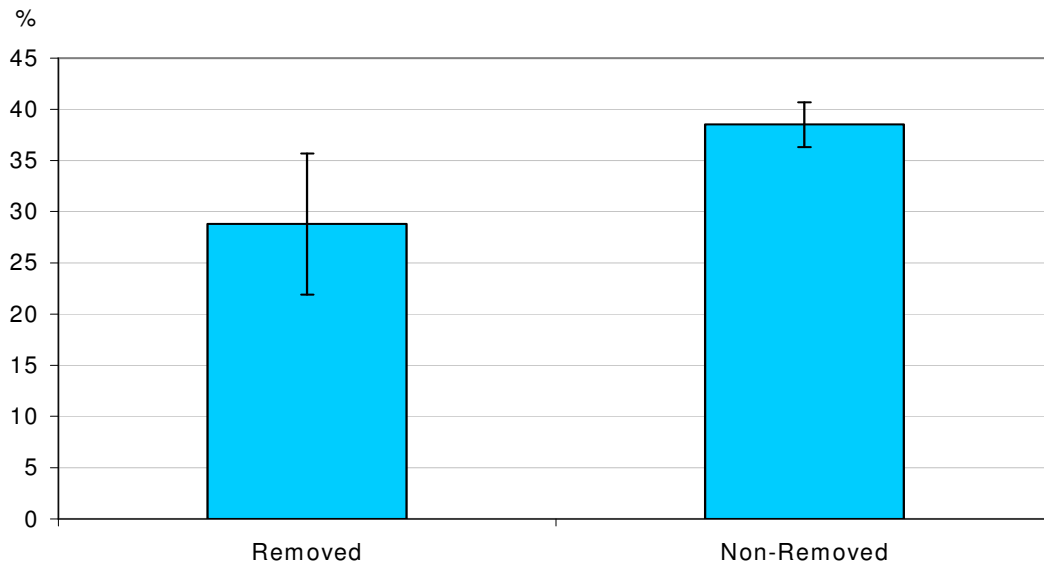
*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

## Year 10 & 12 retention and attainment

The *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* framework uses apparent retention rates to measure retention from Year 8 to Year 10 and Year 12 and achievement of a Year 12 certificate to measure attainment. Unfortunately, the NATSISS is not able to provide such detailed information. It does however collect information on the highest level of schooling completed (see Education attainment in Glossary), which is an alternative measure for attainment.

The proportion of people who had completed Years 10, 11 or 12 was lower in the Removed population (28.8 per cent) than the non-Removed (38.5 per cent). This indicates that the Removed population had lower schooling attainment rates than the non-Removed.

**Figure 2** Completed Years 10, 11 or 12: persons aged 18 years and over, 2002



(a) The Removed and non-Removed estimates are different at the 95 per cent confidence level.

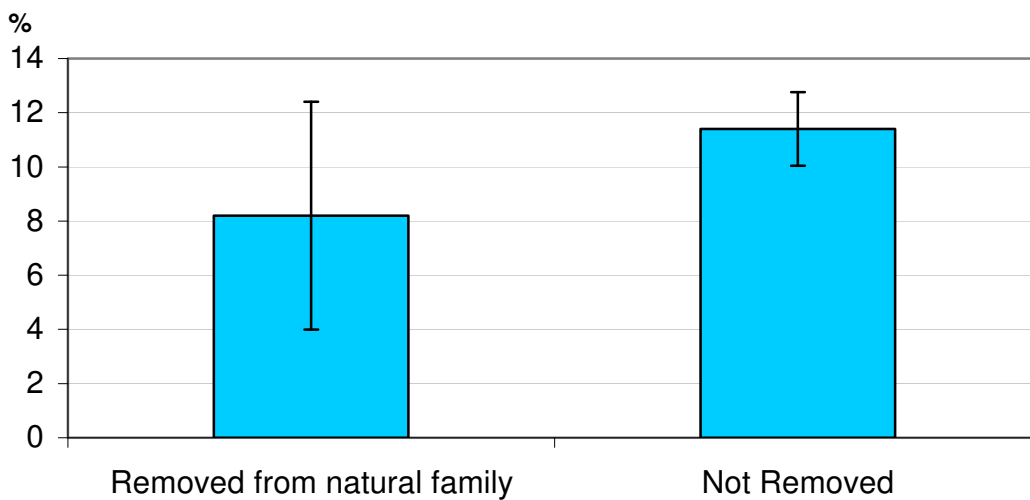
Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)

## Post-secondary education – Participation and attainment

Participation in post-secondary education was measured by the proportion of population attending a post-school institution (includes TAFEs, business colleges, industry skills centres, and universities or other higher education institutions).

After taking into account the measurement error, no significant difference in participation rates could be found between the Removed and non-Removed populations (8.2 per cent and 11.4 per cent respectively).

**Figure 3 Attending post-school institutions: persons aged 18 years and over, 2002**

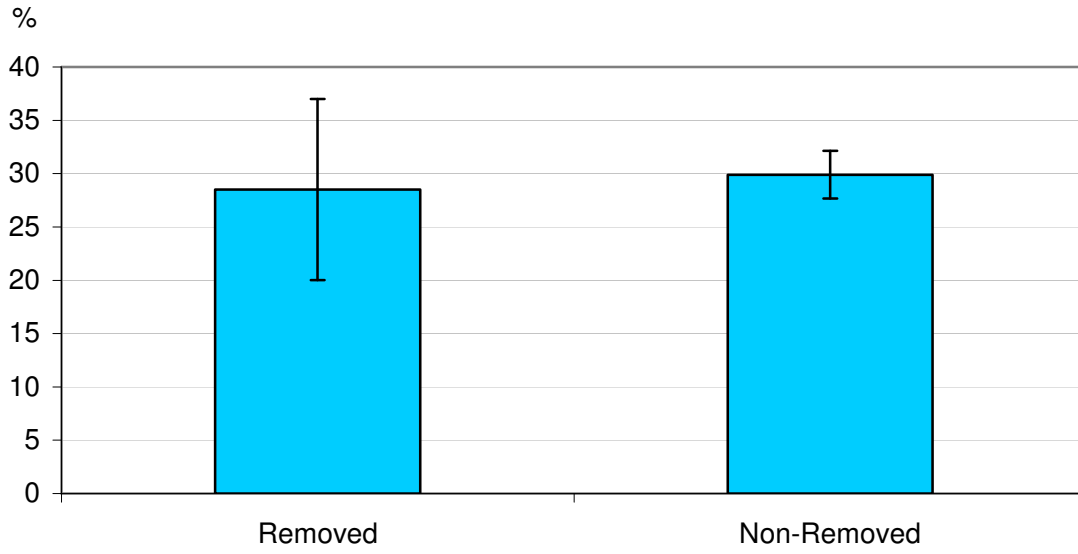


*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

The attainment rate of post-secondary education was measured by the proportion of population with a non-school qualification (see Glossary for definition). The variable does not include information about the level of qualification achieved.

There was no significant difference in the proportion of people with a non-school qualification between the Removed and non-Removed populations (28.5 per cent and 29.9 per cent respectively).

**Figure 4** Has a non-school qualification: persons aged 18 years and over, 2002



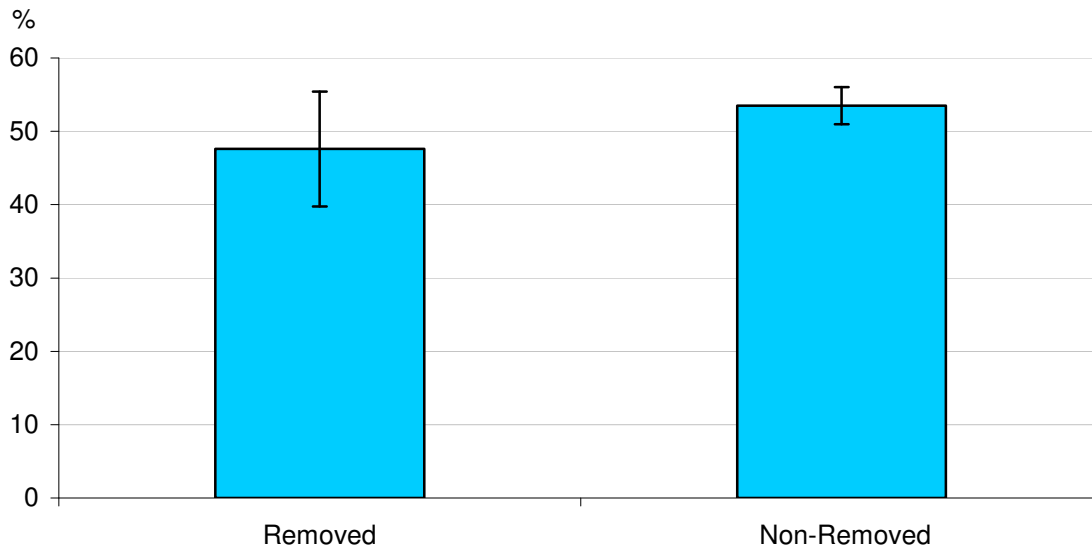
*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

## Labour force participation and unemployment

The labour force participation rate measured within the NATSISS is the proportion of persons aged 18 years or over who were either employed or unemployed (see Glossary for explanation of labour force status and unemployed).

Between the two populations there was no significant difference in age-standardised labour force participation rates (47.6 per cent and 53.5 per cent).

**Figure 5 Labour force participation (a): persons aged 18 years and over, 2002**

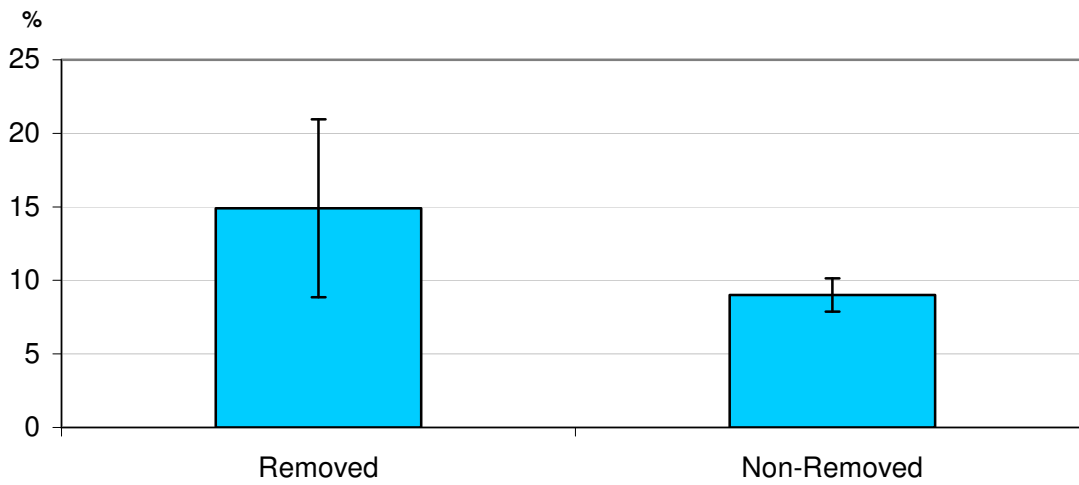


(a) Rates are age-standardised

*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

The NATSISS was not able to find any statistically significant difference in the age-standardised proportions of unemployed people between the Removed and non-Removed populations (14.9 per cent and 9.0 per cent).

**Figure 6** Proportion of population that is unemployed (a): persons aged 18 years and over, 2002



(a) Rates are age-standardised

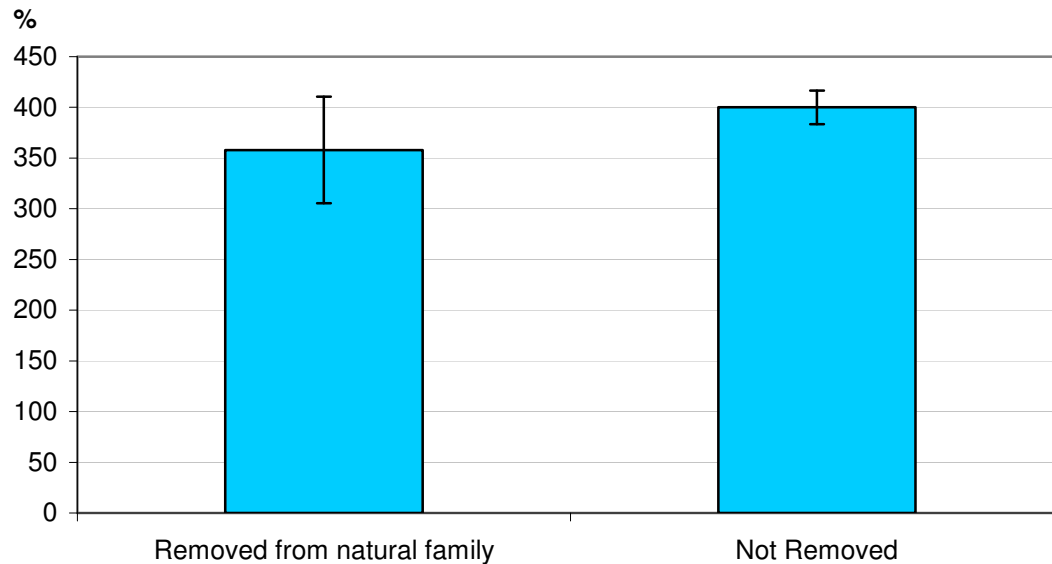
Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)

## Household and individual income

While data reflecting individual income could not be obtained from the NATSISS, the NATSISS did report the mean equivalised gross household income (see Glossary for explanation).

The Removed and non-Removed populations mean equivalised gross household income was not significantly different (\$358 per week and \$400 per week respectively).

**Figure 7** Mean equivalised gross household income (\$), persons aged 18 years and over, 2002



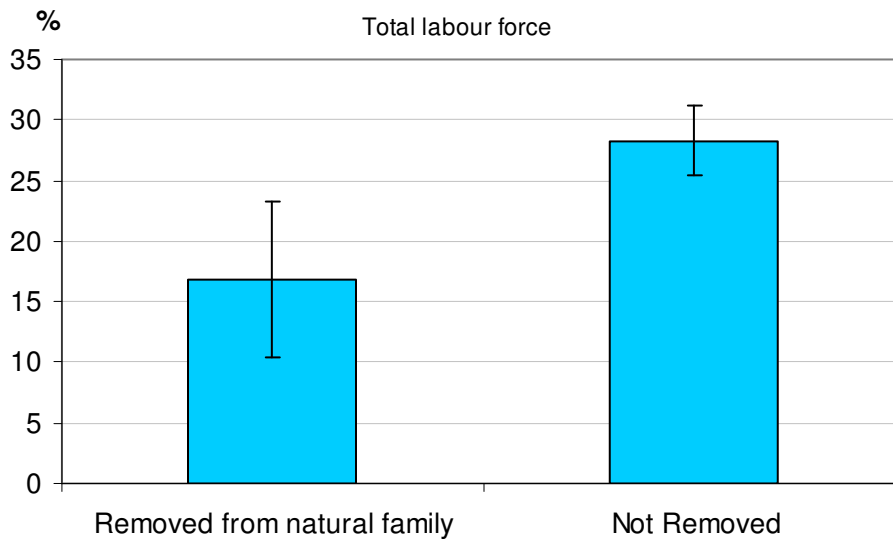
*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

## Home ownership

Levels of home ownership are reflected in the proportion of population living in owner occupied houses (owned either outright or via a mortgage by someone who lives in the dwelling).

NATSISS data reveals that the non-Removed population had a higher rate of persons living in owner occupied houses than the Removed population (28.3 per cent compared to 16.9 per cent of persons aged 18 years and over).

**Figure 8 Living in owner occupied housing: persons aged 18 years and over, 2002**



(a) The Removed and non-Removed estimates are different at the 95 per cent confidence level.

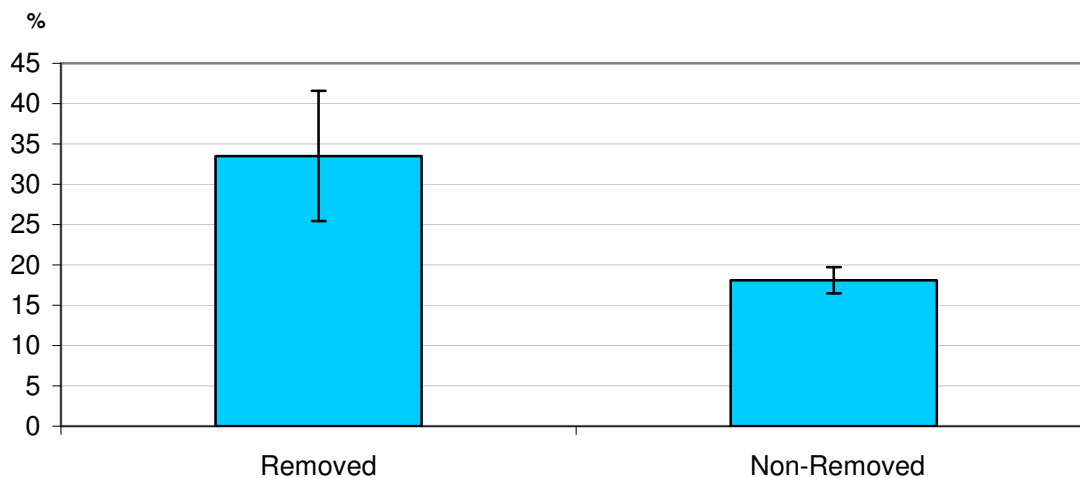
Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)

## Victim rates for crime

The victimisation rate is the proportion of population who had been a victim of physical or threatened violence in the previous 12 months. The following rates have been age standardised.

Those removed from their families experienced a statistically significant higher rate of victimisation than those who hadn't been removed (33.5 per cent compared to 18.1 per cent).

**Figure 9** Victim of physical or threatened violence in last 12 months (a): persons aged 18 years and over, 2002



(a) Rates are age-standardised. (b) The Removed and non-Removed estimates are different at the 95 per cent confidence level.

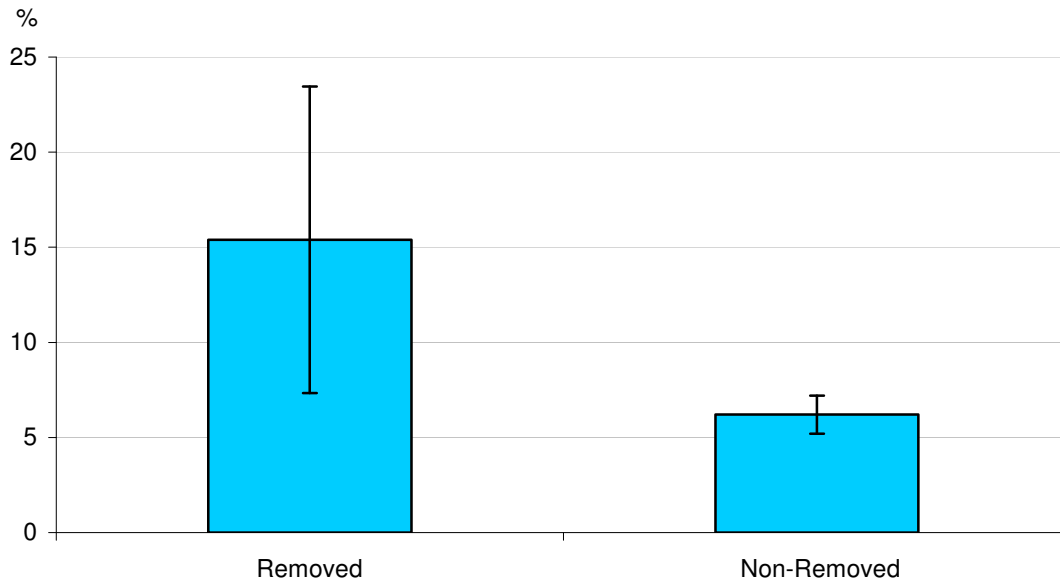
*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

## Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates

Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates indicate the proportion of population imprisoned or detained at a particular time. Data regarding the imprisonment or detention rates of people who had been removed from their natural family is not available from the NATSISS. However, the proportion of population who had been incarcerated in the last 5 years has been used as a proxy measure.

No statistically significant difference was found in the proportion of people who had been incarcerated in the last 5 years between the Removed and non-Removed populations (15.4 per cent and 6.2 per cent).

**Figure 10** Incarcerated in last 5 years: persons aged 15 years or over, 2002



(a) The Removed and non-Removed estimates are different at the 95 per cent confidence level.

*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

## Strategic areas for action

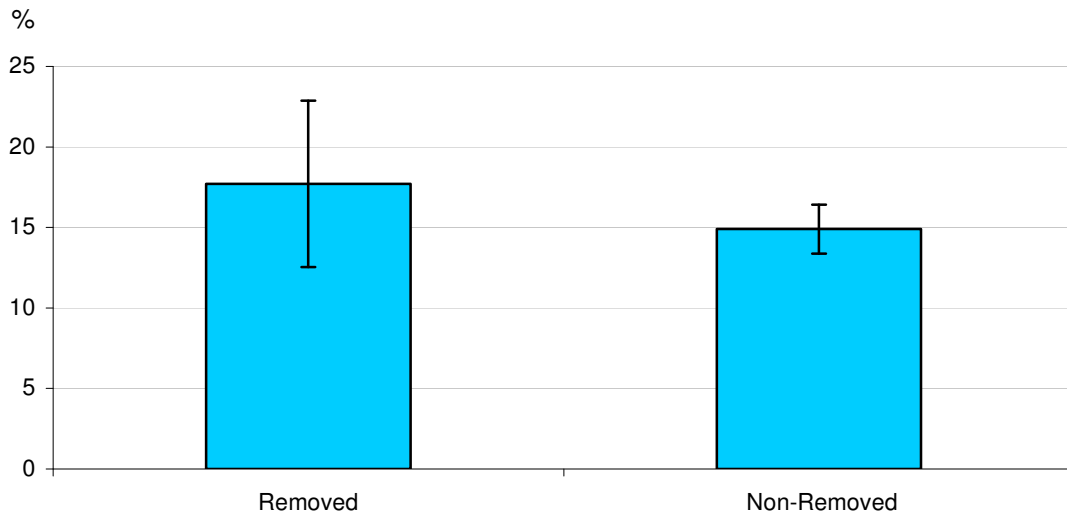
### Early Child Development and Growth

#### Strategic Change Indicator: Hearing impediments

The following data is obtained from the NATSIHS 2004-05 and shows the proportion of the population suffering from diseases of the ear and mastoid. Note that the OID framework focuses on hearing impediments in children aged 0-3 years, whereas the following data is for persons aged 18 years and over.

No statistically significant difference in hearing impediment rates could be found between the Removed and non-Removed populations (17.7 per cent and 14.9 per cent respectively).

**Figure 11 Diseases of ear & mastoid: persons aged 18 years and over, 2004-05**



*Source: ABS NATSIHS (unpublished data)*

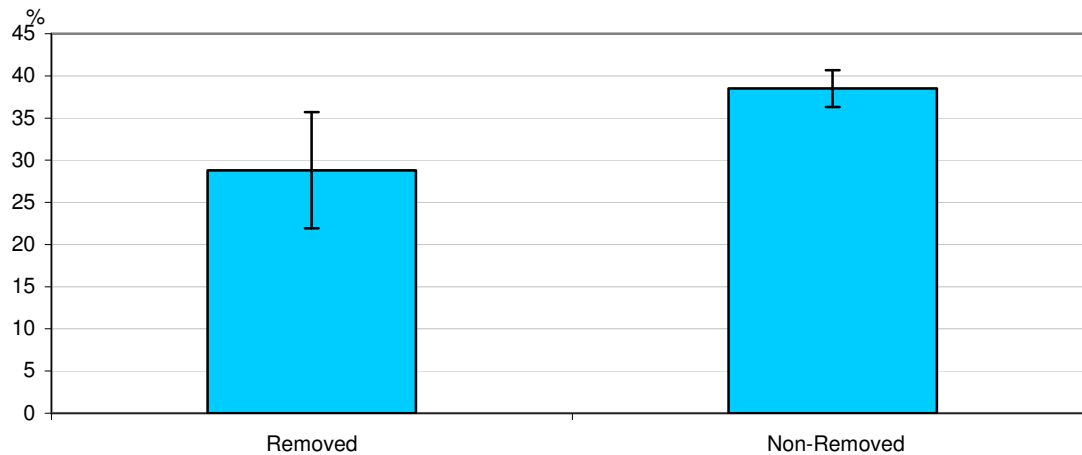
## Positive childhood and transition to adulthood

### Strategic Change Indicator: Retention at year 9

In the Headline Indicator *Year 10 and 12 Retention and Attainment* the highest level of schooling completed was used as a measure of schooling attainment. Within this section it is used as a proxy measure of retention, and indicates when the Removed and non-Removed populations leave school.

The proportion of people who had completed Years 10, 11 or 12 was lower in the Removed population (28.8 per cent), than the non-Removed (38.5 per cent).

**Figure 12** Completed Year 10, 11 or 12: persons aged 18 years and over, 2002



(a) The Removed and non-Removed estimates are different at the 95 per cent confidence level.

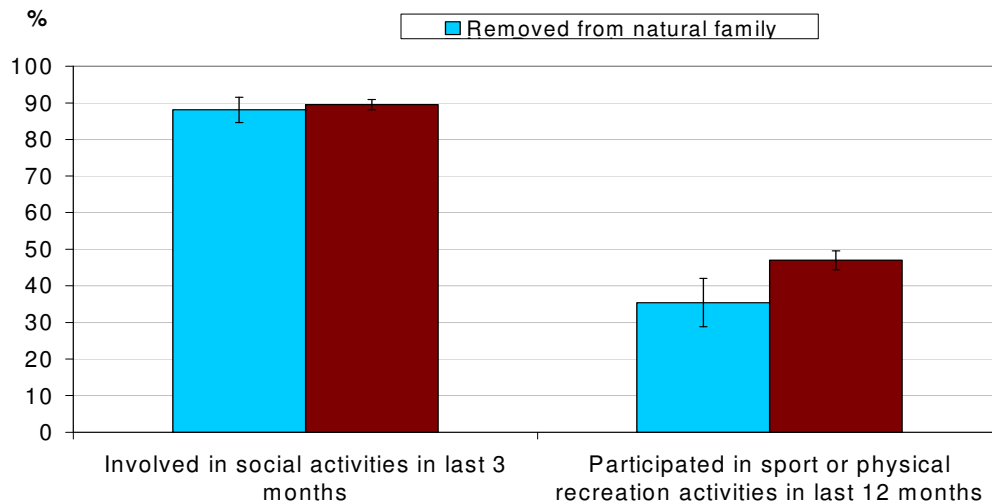
*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

## Strategic Change Indicator: Participation in organised sport, arts or community group activities.

The NATSISS collected information on participation in sport or physical recreational activities in the past 12 months. The survey found that those people who had not been removed had a higher rate of participation in sport or physical recreation activities than those people who had been removed (47.0 per cent compared to 35.4 per cent).

The NATSISS also collected information on participation in social activities in the past three months, and found that there was no significant difference between the Removed and non-Removed population (88.1 per cent and 89.5 per cent respectively).

**Figure 13 Participation in sport and social activities (a): persons aged 18 years and over, 2002**



(a) Participation in a sport or physical recreational activity in the last 12 months. Includes persons involved in 'non-playing roles', such as coaches, officials, umpires and administrators. (a) The Removed and non-Removed participation in sport or physical recreation estimates are different at the 95 per cent confidence level.

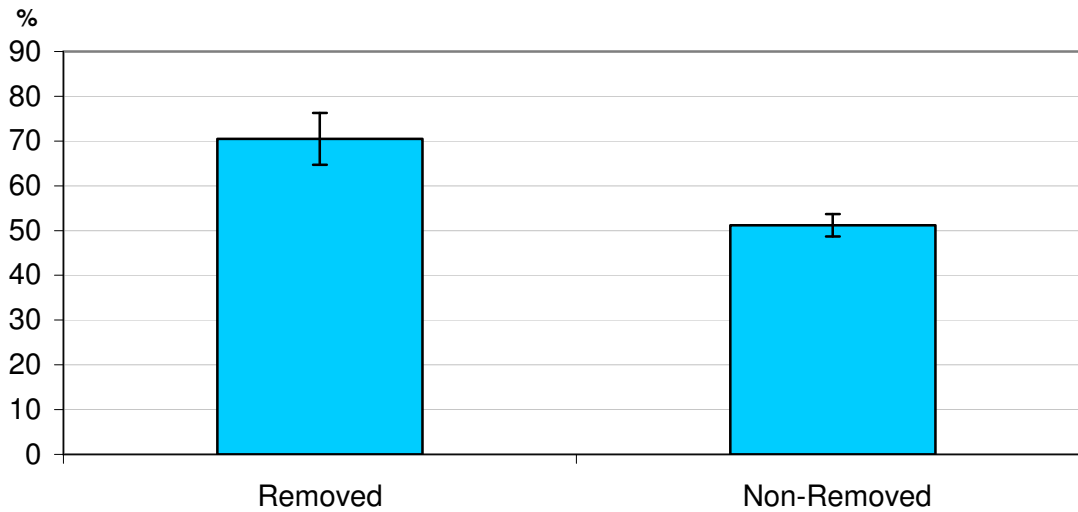
Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)

## Substance use and misuse

### Strategic Change Indicator: Alcohol and tobacco consumption

The NATSISS found that the rate of smoking (see Glossary for explanation) in the Removed population was significantly higher than the non-Removed population (70.5 per cent compared to 51.2 per cent).

**Figure 14** Currently smokes cigarettes: persons aged 15 years and over, 2002

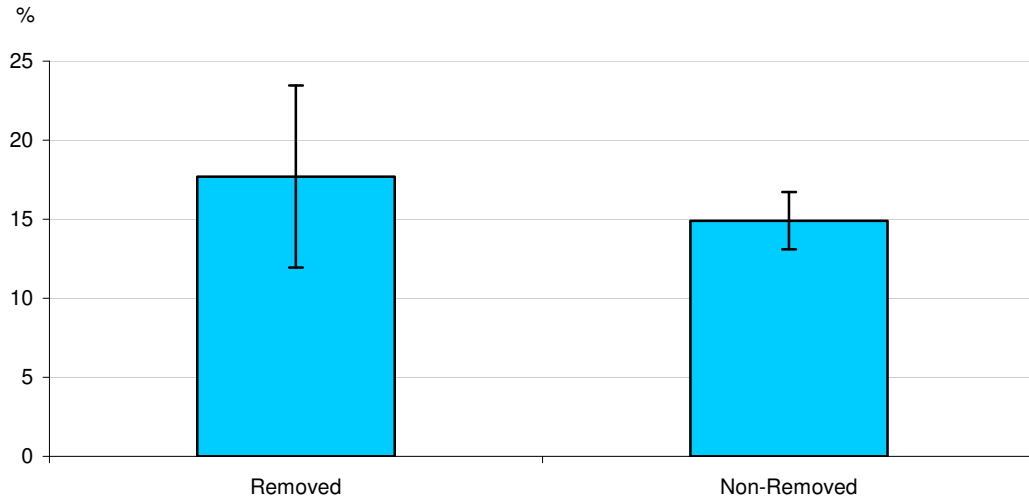


(a) The Removed and non-Removed estimates are different at the 95 per cent confidence level.

*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

However, there was no significant difference in the rate of risky/high risk alcohol consumption (see Glossary for explanation) between the two populations of interest (17.7 per cent and 14.9 per cent respectively).

**Figure 15 Risky/High risk alcohol consumption: persons aged 15 years and over, 2002**

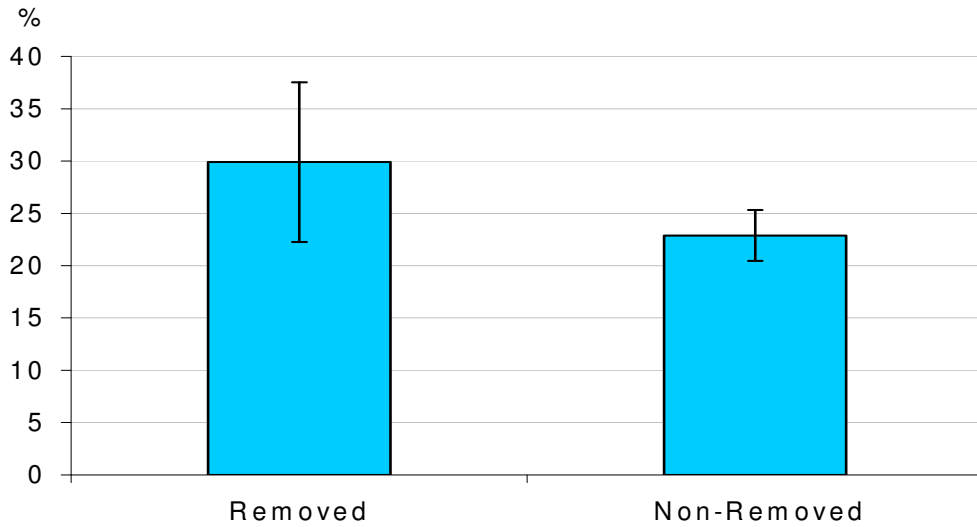


*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

## Strategic Change Indicator: Drug and other substance use

The rate of substance use, as measured by the proportion of population having used substances in the past 12 months (see Glossary for explanation), shows no significant difference between the Removed and non-Removed populations (29.9 per cent and 22.9 per cent respectively).

**Figure 16** Has used substances in last 12 months: persons aged 15 years and over, 2002



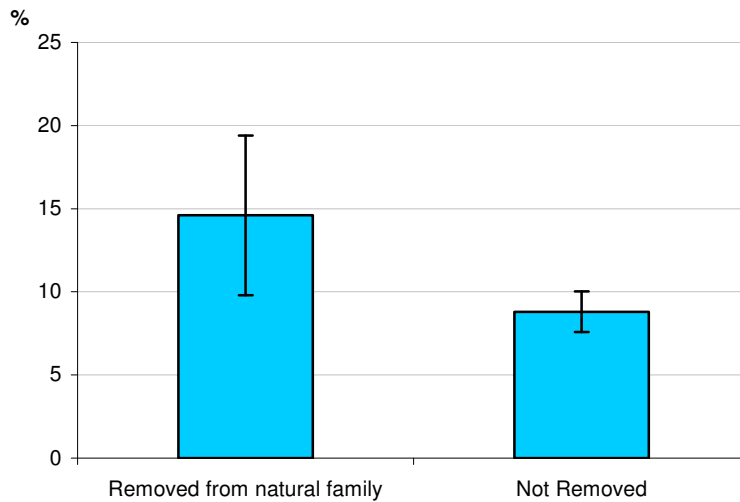
*Source: ABS NATSISS 2002 (unpublished data)*

## Functional and resilient families and communities

### Strategic Change Indicator: Repeat offending

There was a significant difference between the Removed and non-Removed populations in the rates of people who had been arrested more than once in the past five years (14.6 per cent compared to 8.8 per cent).

**Figure 17** Arrested more than once by the police in the past five years: persons aged 18 years and over, 2002



(a) The Removed and non-Removed estimates are different at the 95 per cent confidence level.

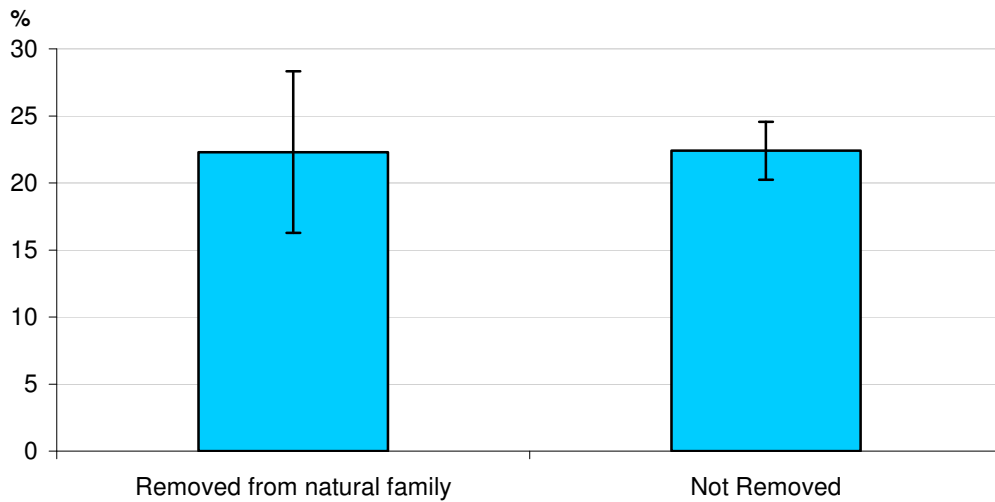
Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)

## Strategic Change Indicator: Proportion of Indigenous people with access to their traditional lands

The OID framework uses two responses from the NATSISS 2002 survey to measure this indicator: the proportion of people who currently live in homelands/traditional country (which is an area of land to which the person has ancestral or cultural links) and the proportion of people who do not live in homelands/traditional country but are allowed to visit. Due to data quality concerns, only the former measure is available for the Removed and non-Removed populations.

The NATSISS found that there was no significant difference in the proportion of people living in homelands/traditional country between the Removed and non-Removed populations (22.3 per cent and 22.4 per cent respectively).

**Figure 18** Currently lives in homelands/traditional country



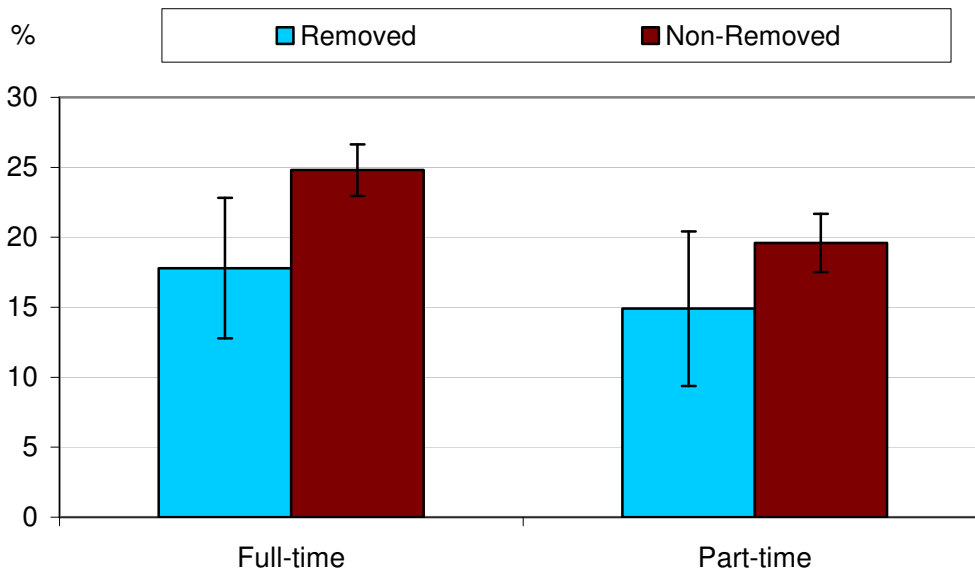
*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

## Economic participation and development

### Strategic Change Indicator: Employment (full-time / part-time)

As a proportion of the population, persons who were removed from their family reported lower rates of full-time employment than those who weren't removed (17.8 per cent compared to 24.8 per cent). There was no significant difference in the proportion of people in part-time employment between the two populations (14.9 per cent and 19.6 per cent respectively).

**Figure 19** Proportion of population in employment by full-time/part-time status (a): persons aged 18 years and over, 2002



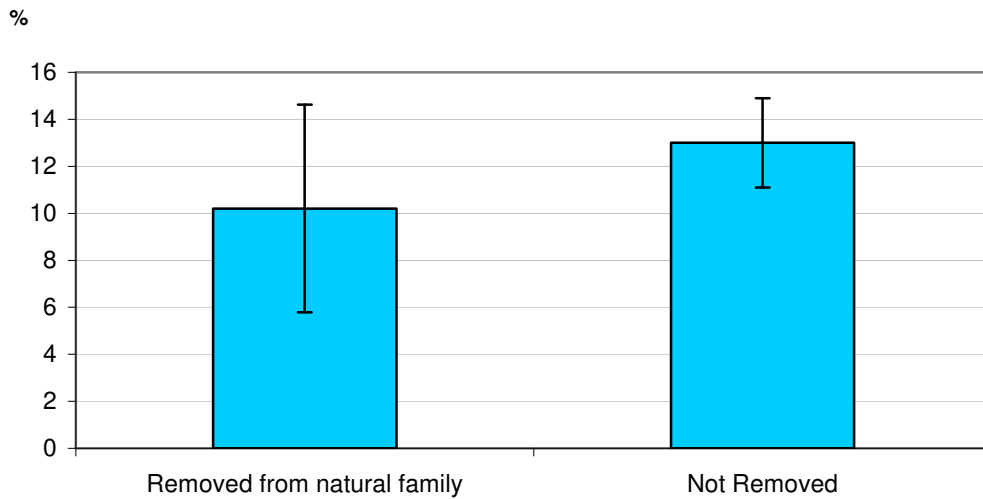
(a) Part-time employment includes persons who usually work at least one hour, but less than 35 hours, per week. Full-time employment includes persons who usually work 35 hours or more per week. (b) The Removed and non-Removed full-time employment estimates are different at the 95 per cent confidence level.

Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)

## Strategic Change Indicator: CDEP participation

There was no significant difference in the proportion of people employed in CDEP between the Removed and non-Removed populations (10.2 per cent and 13.0 per cent respectively).

**Figure 20** Proportion of population employed in CDEP: persons aged 18 years and over, 2002

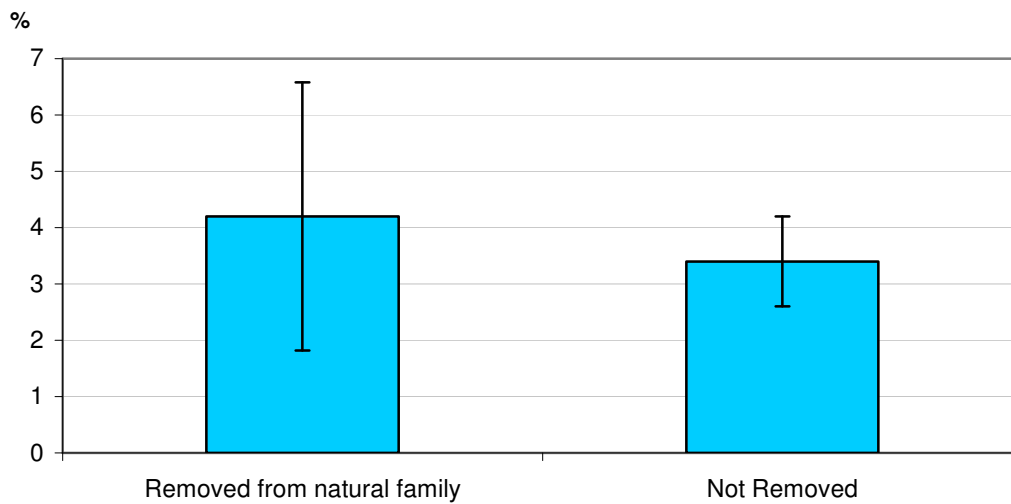


*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

## Strategic Change Indicator: Long-term unemployment

There was no reported difference in the rate of long-term unemployment (proportion of population aged 18 years and over who were unemployed for more than one year) between the Removed and non-Removed populations (4.2 per cent and 3.4 per cent respectively).

**Figure 21** Unemployed for more than one year: persons aged 18 years and over, 2002



*Source: ABS NATSISS (unpublished data)*

## Glossary

### **Alcohol consumption risk level**

Usual daily consumption of alcohol and the frequency of consumption in the previous 12 months. Risky/High risk alcohol consumption as defined by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is more than 75mls of pure alcohol per day.

### **CDEP**

Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) is an ATSIIC funded program giving employment opportunities to Indigenous communities within remote and urban areas, with a particular focus on community development. Participants of CDEP are included as part of the labour force, and they exchange unemployment benefits for work and training opportunities.

### **Disability or long-term health condition**

A limitation, restriction, impairment, disease or disorder which had lasted, or was likely to last, for six months or more, and which restricted a person's ability to perform everyday activities.

Based on this information, some people were identified as having a schooling or employment restriction only while others were restricted in the performance of one or more core activities such as self-care, mobility and communication.

### **Educational attainment**

The highest level of education attained. Includes both primary and secondary school and non-school qualifications.

### **Equivalised gross household income per week**

Gross household income adjusted using an equivalence scale. For a lone person household it is equal to income received. For a household comprising more than one person, it is an indicator of the gross household income that would be required by a lone person household in order to enjoy the same level of economic well being as the household in question.

### **Equivalised gross household income quintiles**

These are groupings of 20% of the total population of Australia when ranked in ascending order according to equivalised gross household income. The population used for this purpose includes all people living in private dwellings, including children and other persons under the age of 15 years.

### **Incarceration**

In the 2002 NATSISS, incarceration was broadly defined to include all Indigenous persons 15 years or over who had spent time in jail in the last five years, regardless of the length of time spent in jail.

<b>Labour force status</b>	Identifies whether a person is employed, unemployed or not in the labour force.
<b>Non-school qualification</b>	A non-school qualification is awarded for post-school educational attainment. It includes Certificates, Diplomas, Bachelor degrees, Graduate certificates, Graduate Diplomas and Postgraduate degrees. Non-school qualifications may be attained concurrently with school qualifications.
<b>Removed from natural family</b>	A person who has been ‘taken away’ from their natural family. Includes the removal, as a child, from natural family as part of government policy, and which may have occurred under old welfare policies as well as more recent ones. ‘Family’ may include extended family members such as aunts, uncles and grandparents. Interviewers were instructed to exclude persons who had been removed from their family for a period of less than six months and those who had been separated from their family for other reasons, such as family dissolution or traditional adoption.
<b>Smoker status</b>	<p>‘Currently smokes cigarettes’ includes persons who smoke less than one cigarette per day and those who have at least one cigarette per day.</p> <p>Smoking in this context includes the regular smoking of tobacco (both manufactured (packet) cigarettes and roll-your-own cigarettes), cigars and pipes and excludes chewing tobacco and non-tobacco products (e.g. marijuana).</p>
<b>Substance use</b>	The use of substances for non-medical purposes. Includes analgesics, tranquillisers, amphetamines, marijuana, heroin, cocaine, hallucinogens (both synthetic and naturally occurring), Ecstasy and other designer drugs, petrol and other inhalants, and kava.
<b>Unemployed</b>	Persons who were not employed and actively looking for work in the four weeks prior to the survey, and were available to start work in the week prior to the survey.

## Technical Notes –Uncertainty

The ABS reports uncertainty as the relative standard error (RSE), which is calculated as a proportion of the estimate. The larger the RSE the more unreliable the estimate is, and as a rule of thumb caution is advised when drawing conclusions from estimates with RSEs larger than 25 per cent. Multiplying the estimate by the RSE gives the standard error of the estimate, which is used to calculate confidence bounds for the sample estimate. For example, it is known that there is approximately a 68 per cent chance that the sample estimate differs from the actual value by less than one standard error and approximately 95 per cent chance that it differs by less than 1.96 standard errors of the actual value.

For example, within the NATSISS 68.8 per cent of the Removed population reported they had a long-term disability or health condition. The estimate had a 5.5 per cent RSE, which meant the estimate had a standard error of  $68.8 * (5.5 / 100) = 3.8$  per cent. Therefore, there is a 95 per cent chance that the sample estimate of 68.8 per cent differs from the actual value by less than  $3.8\% * 1.96 = 7.4\%$ .

This statement can be interpreted in the following way:

Had the entire Removed population been surveyed, the actual proportion with a disability or long-term health condition is expected to be between 61.4 per cent and 76.2 per cent.

Note that even after factoring in uncertainty by calculating a 95 per cent confidence interval, one still can't say for sure that the estimate lies within the stated ranges.

However, it is common practice to be almost sure that it does, given that the survey has validity (for a complete understanding of the relative standard of error please see the technical note in the Australian Bureau of Statistics *National and Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2002*).

## Supporting Data

NATSISS 2002						
	<i>Removed</i>		<i>Not removed</i>		<i>Sign.</i>	
	<i>(%)</i>	<i>C.I. (%)</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>C.I. (%)</i>		
Has a disability or long-term health condition	68.8	61.4 - 76.2	55.3	52.7 - 57.9	Yes	
Completed Year 10, 11 or 12 of schooling	28.8	21.9 - 35.7	38.5	36.3 - 40.7	Yes	
Attending post-school institution	8.2	4.0 - 12.4	11.4	10.0 - 12.8	No	
Has a non-school qualification	28.5	20.0 - 37.0	29.9	27.7 - 32.1	No	
Labour force participation	47.6	39.8 - 55.4	53.5	51.0 - 56.0	No	
Proportion of population that was unemployed	14.9	8.9 - 20.9	9.0	7.9 - 10.1	No	
Living in owner occupied housing	16.9	10.5 - 23.3	28.3	25.4 - 31.2	Yes	
Victim of physical or threatened violence in last 12 months	33.5	25.4 - 41.6	18.1	16.5 - 19.7	Yes	
Incarcerated in last 5 years	15.4	7.3 - 23.5	6.2	5.2 - 7.2	Yes	
Involved in social activities in past 3 months	88.1	84.6 - 91.6	89.5	88.1 - 90.9	No	
Participated in sport or physical recreation activities in past 12 months	35.4	28.8 - 42.0	47.0	44.4 - 49.6	Yes	
Currently smokes cigarettes	70.5	64.7 - 76.3	51.2	48.7 - 53.7	Yes	
Risky/High risk alcohol consumption	17.7	11.9 - 23.5	14.9	13.1 - 16.7	No	
Has used substances in last 12 months	29.9	22.3 - 37.5	22.9	20.5 - 25.3	No	
Arrested more than once by the police in the past five years	14.6	9.8 - 19.4	8.8	7.6 - 10.0	Yes	
Currently lives in homelands/traditional country	22.3	16.3 - 28.3	22.4	20.2 - 24.6	No	
Proportion of population in full-time employment	17.8	12.8 - 22.8	24.8	23.0 - 26.6	Yes	
Proportion of population in part-time employment	14.9	9.4 - 20.4	19.6	17.5 - 21.7	No	
Proportion of population employed in CDEP	10.2	5.8 - 14.6	13	11.1 - 14.9	No	
Unemployed for more than one year	4.2	1.8 - 6.6	3.4	2.6 - 4.2	No	
	(\$)	(\$)	(\$)	(\$)		
Mean equivalised gross household income	\$358.0	\$305.4 - \$410.6	\$400.0	\$383.5 - \$416.5	- No	

NATSIHS 2004 - 2005					
	<i>Removed</i>		<i>Not removed</i>		<i>Sign.</i>
	<i>(%)</i>	<i>C.I. (%)</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>C.I. (%)</i>	
Diseases of ear & mastoid, persons aged 18 years and over, 2004-05	17.7	12.5 - 22.9	14.9	13.4 - 16.4	No