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AUSTRALIA*

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Abbreviations

AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AIRC	Australian Industrial Relations Commission
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AD Act	Commonwealth <i>Age Discrimination Act 2004</i> (Cth)
AFP	Australian Federal Police
ALRC	Australian Law Reform Commission
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CROC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
Cth	Commonwealth of Australia
DAIP	Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
DD Act	Commonwealth <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
EPBC Act	Commonwealth <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>

FHOS	First Home Owners Scheme
FTE	Full-time equivalent
GDP	Gross domestic product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
HREOC Act	Commonwealth <i>Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986</i>
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDS	Immigration Detention Standards
IEP	Indigenous Employment Policy
IHSS	Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILUAs	Indigenous Land Use Agreements
IMETF	Indigenous Mining and Enterprise Task Force
IPP	Indigenous Pastoral Project
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MO	Mutual Obligation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NIELNS	National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
NPPs	National Privacy Principles
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSW	New South Wales

NT	Northern Territory
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PADV	Partnerships against Domestic Violence Program
PHOFA	Public Health Outcome Funding Agreement
POEM	Partnership Outreach Education Model
Qld	Queensland
RD Act	Commonwealth <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i>
SA	South Australia
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SD Act	Commonwealth <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i>
SES	Socio-economic status
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
Tas	Tasmania
TIS	Translating and Interpreting Service
UN	United Nations
VAJA	Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement
VTE	Vocational and Technical Education
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia
WFD	Work for the Dole
WR Act	Commonwealth <i>Workplace Relations Act 1996</i>
WRMC	Workplace Relations Ministers' Council

Introduction

1. The Australian Government is pleased to present its common Core Document, incorporating its reports under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and forming part of its reports under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC), the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT).

2. In preparing this expanded Core Document, Australia has followed the harmonised guidelines issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in May 2006 (HRI/MC/2006/3). The expanded Core Document includes a broad range of information relevant to all or several of the treaty bodies and reduces the amount of duplicated material and the overall length of the reports. This time around, Australia has incorporated its individual reports under the Covenants into this Document.

3. The reporting period covered in Part 3 of the common Core Document is January 1997 to June 2006, and the information provided is correct as at June 2006. Part 3 supplements and should be read in conjunction with Australia's previous reports under the six major human rights treaties. Together, these documents outline the legislative, judicial, administrative and other measures in Australia which give effect to Australia's human rights obligations.

4. A table is included at the beginning of each section in Part 3 of this document setting out the Articles from each treaty that are relevant to that section. Australia has responded to specific concerns raised by the relevant treaty body with respect to its last reports under the ICCPR and ICESCR in the documents submitted under those treaties (CCPR/C/AUS/5 and E/C.12/AUS/4, respectively), which were both submitted simultaneously with and should be read together with the present Core Document. They contain tables indicating where the previous Concluding Observations of the relevant Committee are addressed in the Core Document.

Consultation with stakeholders

5. The Australian Government consulted widely in preparing the common Core Document and is grateful, to those stakeholders and members of the public who provided input, for their assistance and comments.

6. The Australian Government recognises the important role played by non-government organisations (NGOs) in promoting and implementing the rights set out in the Covenants and undertook two rounds of consultations with a broad range of relevant NGOs in the preparation of this document. A list of NGOs contacted during the preparation of this document is at Appendix A.

7. A range of issues relevant to Australia's obligations under the human rights treaties were raised by NGOs. These comments were taken into consideration in the preparation of the common core document.

PART I: GENERAL FACTUAL AND STATISTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE REPORTING STATE

A. Demographic, economic, social and cultural characteristics of the State

8. Australia is a stable, democratic society with a skilled workforce and a strong, competitive economy. A profile of Australia can be found on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website: <<http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/australia/>>.

(i) Geography

9. In land area, Australia is the sixth largest nation after Russia, Canada, China, the United States of America and Brazil. It has, however, a relatively small population of approximately 20.5 million. Despite the vast size of the continent, the majority of Australians live on the coast and in major cities - around 75 per cent of Australia's population lives in urban areas. Australia is the only nation to govern an entire continent and its outlying islands.

(ii) History

10. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples inhabited Australia for more than 60,000 years before the arrival of British settlers and convicts in 1788. The size of the pre-colonial Indigenous population is not known with accuracy, but estimates range from 300,000 to one million people, comprising between 500 and 700 tribal groups and speaking approximately 250 different languages.

11. Between 1788 and 1859, six separate British colonies were established around Australia - NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, SA, WA and Queensland. These colonies were quasi-sovereign bodies, equal in status and politically independent of each other, with their own representative parliaments. European colonisation led to the wide spread dispossession of Australia's Indigenous population from its traditional lands.

12. During the 1850s, settlement in Australia was boosted by gold rushes. Scarcity of labour, the vastness of the bush, and new wealth based on farming, mining and trade all contributed to the development of uniquely Australian social institutions and sensibilities.

13. In 1901 the Australian colonies federated to become the Commonwealth of Australia, however Australia remained a part of the British Empire. The Statute of Westminster, adopted by Australia in 1942, formally ended most of the constitutional links between the UK and Australia, and the final constitutional ties were removed with the passing of the *Australia Act* in 1986. The British monarch remains the monarch of Australia.

(iii) Cultural diversity

14. Australia's culturally diverse society includes its Indigenous peoples and settlers from countries all around the world. Immigration is an important feature of Australian society. Since 1945, over six million people have come to Australia as new settlers. Migrants have made a major contribution to shaping modern Australia. People born overseas make up almost one quarter of the total population. Information on Australia's ethnic and demographic characteristics is available in Annex 1 "Statistical data and human rights indicators".

(iv) Economy

15. With high growth, low inflation and low interest rates, Australia has a vibrant economy. There is an efficient government sector, a flexible labour market and a very competitive business sector. With its abundant physical resources, Australia has enjoyed relatively high living standards since the Nineteenth Century. It has made a comparatively large investment in social infrastructure, including education, training, health and transport.

B. Constitutional, political and legal structure of the State**(i) General Political Structure***The Australian federal system*

16. Australia has a federal constitutional system in which legislative, executive and judicial powers are shared or distributed between the various federal institutions and the six States - NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA, SA and Tasmania - and three self-governing Territories - the ACT, the NT and the Territory of Norfolk Island, established under federal law. In each of these political units there is a parliament elected by the people, an executive, responsible to that parliament which is formed by the majority party or parties, and an independent judiciary.

The Constitution

17. The Australian Constitution is principally concerned with the establishment of the federal organs of government and with the distribution of constitutional power between the Commonwealth and State governments.

18. The Constitution combines responsible democratic parliamentary government based on the Westminster model - the system which had previously existed in the federating colonies - with a division of legislative power between the Commonwealth Government and State governments, the Commonwealth Government being given a list of specific powers and the States retaining the undefined residue.

19. Most of the heads of power enumerated in the Constitution are concurrent; that is, both the Commonwealth Government and the State governments may legislate on these subjects. If both the Commonwealth Government and a State government legislate on the same subject and the

two pieces of legislation are inconsistent, then the State legislation will be invalid to the extent of the inconsistency and the Commonwealth legislation will prevail. Where the Commonwealth legislation legitimately covers the whole field on any subject matter, State legislation on the same subject matter will be invalid.

20. Among the more important matters which fall within the area of concurrent Commonwealth and State power are interstate and overseas trade and commerce, taxation (other than duties of customs and excise), banking and insurance.

Federal government

21. Under the Australian Constitution the legislative power of the Commonwealth of Australia is vested in the Parliament of the Commonwealth, which consists of the Queen, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Queen is represented throughout the Commonwealth of Australia by the Governor-General.

22. The Upper House is known as the Senate and has 76 members. The Senate was intended to represent the interests of the people of the States as part of a federal system. Membership of the Senate is not determined by population or by size of territory. The less populated States and the States smaller in size have as many members, currently 12, as the more populated or larger States. Thus, in the Senate, all States have equal standing and an equal voice. Section 7 of the Constitution provides that Senators for each State are directly chosen by the people of the State voting as one electorate. Since December 1975, four territorial senators in total represent the two self-governing territories, the ACT and the NT, in the Senate.

23. The Lower House is known as the House of Representatives. The House of Representatives has 147 members elected on a popular basis from single member electorates. The number of members chosen to represent each State is in proportion to its population.

24. In general, legislation must be passed by both Houses before being presented to the Governor-General for assent and becoming law.

25. Australia's electoral system is based upon the democratic principle of universal adult suffrage. The qualifications for enrolment to vote are identical for both Houses. If an Australian citizen is 18 years of age and eligible, it is compulsory to enrol and to vote. The qualifications for enrolment to vote in State and Territory elections are similar. The following people are not eligible to enrol to vote in federal elections:

- People of unsound mind who are incapable of understanding the nature and significance of enrolment and voting
- People who have been convicted and are under sentence for an offence punishable by imprisonment, and
- People who have been convicted of treason and not pardoned

26. The Constitution also recognises a system of responsible government under which the Ministers of the Crown sit in and are directly responsible to Parliament, and can retain office only while they have the “confidence” of the Lower House. There is therefore a direct line of accountability from the people who elect the Members of Parliament to the Executive.

27. Following a general federal election, the Governor-General commissions a member of the Parliament to be Prime Minister. The person chosen is the leader of the party, or one of a coalition of parties, which obtained a majority of seats in the House of Representatives or the person who is able to obtain the general support or “confidence” of a majority of that House. Other Ministers of the Australian Government are appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister from among the Members of Parliament.

28. In theory the powers of the Governor-General are extensive. In practice, however, under the provisions of the Constitution, as well as by the conventions of responsible government in British Commonwealth countries, the Governor-General’s executive functions are exercised almost exclusively on the advice of Ministers of State and it is the Australian Government that accepts the political responsibility for those acts. In exercising statutory powers and functions, and many constitutional powers and functions, the Governor-General acts on the advice of the Federal Executive Council.

State government

29. Each of the six Australian States has its own constitution, a parliament elected by the people, an executive responsible to that parliament formed by the majority party or parties in parliament, and an independent judiciary. Each State legislature has a general power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the State although the wording of that general power varies slightly in some States. The extent of the legislative powers of each of these parliaments is defined by the Australian and State Constitutions.

30. The Queen is represented in each of the Australian States by a Governor. A Governor of a State has functions in relation to that State similar to the functions conferred on the Governor-General in relation to the Commonwealth Government.

Territory government

31. In addition to the States, there are also a number of Australian territories. Australia has 10 territories in all. The ACT and the NT are self-governing and have separate representative and administrative institutions and their own system of courts. The Commonwealth Government retains the power to legislate for all the territories and is responsible for the administration of the non-self governing territories.

The law in Australia - nature and composition

32. In Australia, the law consists of:

- Acts passed by the Commonwealth Parliament acting within the scope of its powers under the Australian Constitution, together with delegated or subordinate legislation made under such Acts

- Ordinances made in respect of the ACT, the NT, Norfolk Island and the other territories, together with delegated or subordinate legislation made under such Ordinances
- Acts passed by State parliaments and the Legislative Assemblies of the NT, the ACT and Norfolk Island, together with delegated or subordinate legislation made under such Acts
- That much of the common or statute law of England as was received and still applies to Australia and remains unrepealed, and
- The Australian common law, which developed from the English common law and is interpreted and enunciated by the Courts

The judiciary

33. The independence of the judiciary and its separation from the legislative and executive arms of government is regarded as of great importance in Australia. Judges act independently of the Australian Government in interpreting and applying the law. In the case of federal judges, their security of tenure is guaranteed by the Constitution. In the States and Territories, legislation provides security of tenure for judges.

The court system

34. The judicial power of the Commonwealth of Australia is vested in the High Court of Australia, in other federal courts created by the Commonwealth Parliament and in the State and Territory courts invested by Parliament with federal jurisdiction.

35. The Australian Constitution vests two types of jurisdiction in the High Court: original and appellate. Original jurisdiction is conferred under s.75 of the Constitution in respect of all matters: (a) arising under any treaty; (b) affecting consuls or other representatives of other countries; (c) in which the Commonwealth, or a person suing or being sued on behalf of the Commonwealth, is a party; (d) between States, or between residents of different States, or between a State and a resident of another State; and (e) in which a writ of mandamus or prohibition or an injunction is sought against an officer of the Commonwealth Government or of a Federal court. Under s 76 of the Constitution, the federal Parliament may also make laws conferring original jurisdiction on the High Court in certain other matters, including matters arising under or involving the interpretation of the Constitution. The High Court shares some of its jurisdiction under this section with the Federal Court of Australia. The High Court is also the final court of appeal in Australia.

36. The Federal Court of Australia was created by the *Federal Court of Australia Act 1976* (Cth). The Court has both original and appellate jurisdiction, conferred by laws made by the Commonwealth Parliament. The Court may hear appeals from judgments of other courts, including the State and Territory courts in limited circumstances and the Federal Magistrates

Court. The Federal Court's jurisdiction includes any matter arising under a law made by the Commonwealth Parliament and matters in which a writ of mandamus or prohibition or an injunction is sought against an officer of the Commonwealth.

37. The Family Court of Australia, established under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth), is a specialist court dealing with matrimonial and associated proceedings including guardianship, custody and access to and maintenance of children.

38. The creation of the Federal Magistrates Court through the *Federal Magistrates Act 1999* (Cth) has also provided the Australian community with an accessible forum for the resolution of less complex family law and general federal law disputes. Australia did not previously have a lower level federal court. The jurisdiction of the Federal Magistrates Court includes family law and child support, administrative law, bankruptcy, consumer protection law, privacy law, migration and copyright.

39. State and Territory courts have original jurisdiction in all matters brought under State or Territory laws, and in matters arising under Commonwealth laws, where jurisdiction has been conferred on the courts by the Commonwealth Parliament. Most criminal matters, whether arising under Commonwealth, State or Territory law, are dealt with by State or Territory courts.

40. The Supreme Courts are the highest State and Territory courts and deal with the most important civil litigation and the most serious criminal cases. Courts of Appeal (Full Courts of the Supreme Courts) exercise appellate jurisdiction from the lower State courts and appeals from a decision of a single judge of the Supreme Court.

41. The intermediate courts, which are presided over by a single judge, decide the great majority of serious criminal offences where a jury is required to decide the facts of a case. They also deal with civil litigation up to certain monetary limits.

42. The courts of summary jurisdiction are presided over by a magistrate and deal with matters summarily, that is, without a jury. They deal with most of the ordinary (summary) offences, such as traffic infringements and street offences. Magistrates also conduct committal proceedings in respect of the more serious offences to determine whether there is a *prima facie* case to be determined by a judge and jury. In most jurisdictions, these courts also deal with civil litigation for debt recovery, smaller claims by one citizen against another or against a company, as well as some maintenance, custody and property disputes.

43. Small claims courts and tribunals have been established in all States and Territories to enable minor legal disputes to be dealt with quickly, cheaply and informally.

PART II: GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

A. Acceptance of international human rights norms

44. Australia has a long tradition of supporting human rights around the world, and was closely involved in the development of the international human rights system.

45. Australia has ratified the main international human rights conventions and protocols set out below, with reservations listed. The full text of these reservations is provided under Appendix B:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
Reservations: *Article 10 (2)(a) and (b) and 3; Article 14 (6); Article 20*
- First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, concerning communications
- Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, concerning abolition of the death penalty
- International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
Reservation: *Article 4 (a)*
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
Reservations: *Article 11 (2); and concerning exclusion of women from combat duties*
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC)
Reservation: *Article 37 (c)*
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography

46. At present, all of the above reservations are considered necessary, with the possible exception of the reservation concerning paid maternity leave under article 11(2) of CEDAW, which the Australian Government is actively considering the possibility of withdrawing.

47. A list of other relevant treaties to which Australia is party is available at Appendix C.

B. General legal framework within which human rights are protected at the national level

(i) The human rights framework in Australia

48. In Australia, a variety of approaches and strategies are used to implement and protect human rights. These protections can be divided into two broad categories:

- Existing institutionalised processes present in a liberal and democratic society - such as parliaments and an independent judicial system, and
- Special legislative machinery to protect human rights, such as the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

49. The high level of acceptance, protection and observance of human rights in Australia is founded on a system of representative and responsible government, certain limited constitutional guarantees, statute law including specialised human rights legislation, the common law and an independent judiciary.

(ii) Existing institutionalised processes

Australian parliaments

50. The liberal democratic system of government in each of the Australian jurisdictions enables interested individuals to bring to notice areas in which human rights and fundamental freedoms are in need of protection or in need of further protection. Under the system of “responsible government”, Ministers are individually and collectively answerable to the Parliament and can retain office only while the Australian Government of which they form part retains the “confidence” of the Lower House. Ministers must also answer questions in the Parliament concerning matters dealt with by their departments.

51. In addition, several Parliamentary Standing Committees scrutinise proposed legislation and report on various aspects of that legislation. The Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills was established in 1981 for the purpose of reviewing proposed legislative measures and alerting the Senate “to the possibility of the infringement of personal rights and liberties or the erosion of legislative power of Parliament”. The Senate Standing Committee on Regulations and Ordinances examines delegated or subordinate legislation where it “takes away, reduces, circumscribes or qualifies the fundamental rights and liberties traditionally enjoyed in a free and democratic society”.

Constitutional guarantees

52. The Australian Constitution does not contain provisions in the nature of a bill of rights. However, the Constitution contains a significant number of express or implied guarantees of rights and immunities. Some of the express guarantees are as follows:

- Any property acquired by the Commonwealth Government must be acquired on just terms (s 51 (xxxii))
- Trial on indictment of any offence against any law of the Commonwealth shall be by jury (s 80)

- The Commonwealth Government shall not make any law to establish any religion or to interfere with religious freedom (s 116), and
- Citizens are not to be subjected to any discrimination in any State by reason of residence in another State (s 117)

53. Some provisions of the Constitution have also been found to include implied guarantees of individual rights. The High Court of Australia has recognised that there is an implied restriction on the legislative and executive power of the Commonwealth and of the States and Territories protecting freedom of communication on governmental and political matters. This implication arises from the system of representative government created by the Constitution.

54. The High Court has also indicated that there are some rights inherent in the structure of the Constitution itself. The Court has held that the Constitution is predicated on a system of “representative democracy” and that, since free communication and debate on political issues and institutions of government are essential to that system, legislation which infringes a freedom of communication on “political matters” is invalid, unless necessary to protect some other public interest.

The common law

55. Australia has a common law legal system which means that the recognition and protection of many basic rights and freedoms relies on the enunciation of those rights over the centuries by judges in common law. For example, the right to a fair trial is protected by the common law.

The judiciary

56. The judiciary plays an important role in protecting certain recognised rights and freedoms which are regarded as fundamental and by developing rules of statutory construction which reduce the degree of inadvertent legislative encroachment into those rights and freedoms.

Administrative law remedies

57. Beginning in the 1970s, Australia has established a legislative system to allow people to challenge a wide range of decisions made under federal laws and to obtain reasons for particular decisions that have been made. The scheme involves the following pieces of legislation: the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975*; the *Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977*; the *Ombudsman Act 1976*; and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

58. The Administrative Appeals Tribunal is an independent body whose function is to review decisions made by Commonwealth Ministers, authorities and officials under more than 200 Acts of the Commonwealth Parliament. The Tribunal is able to substitute its own decision in those areas in which it has jurisdiction, including social security, taxation, customs, and veterans’ entitlements.

59. The *Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977* provides for judicial review by the Federal Court of Australia of administrative action taken under Commonwealth legislation. Where an order of review is sought by an aggrieved person, the Court is empowered to review the lawfulness of a decision, the conduct leading up to the making of a decision, or circumstances where there has been failure to make a decision.

60. The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman investigates complaints about the administrative actions of all Commonwealth Government departments and prescribed Commonwealth agencies. The Ombudsman can investigate matters on his or her own motion.

61. The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* creates a general right for members of the public to obtain access to documents, and sets out a range of obligations and restrictions on departments and the public for exercising these rights.

62. There is also a variety of specialist review tribunals which provide review on the merits of administrative decisions in specific areas such as industrial relations, veterans' affairs, social security and migration.

63. All Australian States and Territories have administrative law mechanisms which perform similar functions to those performed in the Commonwealth sphere.

64. Australian governments, from time to time, also establish Royal Commissions to inquire into and report on matters of public concern, including human rights issues.

Relationship between treaty obligations and domestic administrative law

65. In its Concluding Observations on Australia's Third and Fourth Periodic Reports under the ICCPR, the Human Rights Committee noted its concern with "a Government bill which would provide that ratification of human rights treaties does not create legitimate expectations that government officials will use their discretion in a manner that is consistent with those treaties".

66. There is not a current bill before the Commonwealth Parliament which would have this effect. In a statement issued by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the then Attorney-General on 25 February 1997, the Australian Government noted that under Australia's system of government, it is for the elected Australian parliament to change Australia's domestic law where required to implement treaty obligations.¹ Consequently, the executive act of entering into treaties does not itself give rise to legitimate expectations in administrative law. This is a domestic issue concerning the relationship and roles of the different arms of government.

¹ This statement is available at: <http://www.ag.gov.au/agd/www/Attorneygeneralhome.nsf/Page/RWP06E67B7AB7E85390CA256B50001D32EC?OpenDocument>.

(iii) Specialised human rights machinery

Commonwealth human rights legislation

67. In Australia, treaties, including human rights instruments, are not self-executing and require legislative implementation to be effective in Australian law. Before Australia signs, ratifies or otherwise becomes bound by a treaty, the Australian Government satisfies itself that any legislation necessary to implement the treaty is in place.

68. An extensive human rights legislative framework exists in Australia at the federal level:

- The *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth) (RD Act) implements domestically obligations under CERD
- The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) (SD Act) implements domestically obligations under CEDAW and certain aspects of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 156
- The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) (DD Act) makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a disability in areas of public life
- The *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth) (AD Act) makes it unlawful to discriminate against people on the basis of age in areas of public life
- The *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986* (Cth) (HREOC Act) establishes the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) and gives it a wide range of functions, including educating and raising awareness in the community of human rights issues, complaint handling, the provision of advice on human rights compliance and assistance to the Australian Government on human rights policy and legislative development
- The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) gives effect to the right of privacy recognised in Article 17 of the ICCPR, protecting personal information collected and held by Australian Government agencies and many private sector organisations
- The *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (Cth) (WR Act) includes a range of provisions intended to help prevent and eliminate discrimination in the workplace on the basis of race, colour, sex, sexual preference, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

69. HREOC is Australia's national human rights institution. It is an independent statutory authority established by the Commonwealth Parliament, and meets the criteria for independent human rights institutions set out in the *Paris Principles*. The Commission plays an important national role in promoting awareness of, and a respect for, human rights in the community, and has functions under the HREOC Act, the RD Act, the SD Act, the DD Act and the AD Act.

70. The functions of the Commission include public education and human rights awareness functions and the power to investigate and conciliate individual complaints. It also has broader policy and promotional functions, including: advising the Australian Government on human rights questions, examining the potential domestic impact of draft treaties, reviewing existing and proposed legislation to ensure compliance with human rights principles, conducting research into human rights issues, and inquiring into, and if possible conciliating, complaints made under the HREOC Act, the RD Act, the SD Act, the DD Act and the AD Act. The educational role of HREOC is detailed further under the heading “*E. General framework within which human rights are promoted at the national level*”.

71. If a complaint of unlawful discrimination under the RD Act, the SD Act, the DD Act or the AD Act cannot be conciliated, the President of the Commission will terminate the complaint. If a complaint on the grounds of race, sex, disability or age is terminated, the complainant may bring legal proceedings before the Federal Magistrates Court or the Federal Court of Australia seeking an enforceable remedy for unlawful discrimination. Remedies that may be awarded include an apology, monetary compensation, reinstatement or promotion, provision of goods or services required or a combination of these remedies.

72. The Commission can also inquire into complaints concerning alleged breaches of human rights by the Australian Government or an Australian Government authority, or discrimination in the area of employment on numerous grounds, including political opinion, age, sexual preference or trade union activity. Such complaints, if they cannot be resolved by conciliation, will be the subject of a report by the Commission to the Australian Attorney-General, who in turn must table the report in Parliament.

73. One of the most significant and innovative powers given to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission is the power to conduct public inquiries into human rights matters. Such public inquiries place major human rights issues in Australia on the political and public agenda.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner

74. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner is a member of HREOC. The Commissioner prepares an annual “Social Justice” report on the enjoyment and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and on any action necessary to secure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

75. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner also prepares an annual “Native Title” report on the operation of the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993* and its effect on the exercise and enjoyment of human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. While there is no statutory obligation to table this report, the Australian Government’s practice has been to table the report at the same time as the Commissioner’s Social Justice Report.

The Privacy Commissioner

76. The Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner is an independent Office which investigates complaints from individuals about interferences with privacy against federal and ACT government agencies and private sector organisations.

(iv) State and Territory anti-discrimination legislation

77. A comprehensive anti-discrimination legislative framework also exists at State and Territory level, and each State and Territory has established a human rights, anti-discrimination or equal opportunity board or commission. Although the functions of each body vary, common functions include:

- The determination or conciliation of complaints of discrimination brought under legislation operating in the particular jurisdiction, and
- Developing and conducting human rights education and awareness initiatives

78. The Western Australian State Government endorsed the *WA Charter of Multiculturalism* in 2004. The purpose of the Charter is to explicitly state that the people of WA are of different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and to promote their participation in democratic governance within an inclusive society. The Charter recognises a democratic pluralism that understands difference as a hallmark of democracy, both at an institutional and individual level. The Charter signals the necessity to adopt different approaches to respond appropriately to these varying needs in order to ensure all people can participate fully in society.

79. The ACT *Human Rights Act 2004* establishes a “dialogue model” which essentially seeks to ensure that human rights are taken into account when developing and interpreting ACT law, without displacing the current constitutional arrangements. The model has been described as an “interpretive statutory model” based on similar models that have been established in the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

80. The Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (“the Charter”) was passed by the Victorian Parliament in July 2006. The Charter becomes fully operational on 1 January 2008. Like the ACT *Human Rights Act 2004*, the Charter is an Act of Parliament which seeks to protect and promote civil and political rights, based on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

(v) Non-government organisations and the media

81. NGOs play an active and important role in the promotion and protection of human rights in Australia. There are a large number of such groups in Australia and many operate as lobby groups, putting forward submissions to governments on matters of particular concern. Some of these agencies have received funding from both the Commonwealth and State or Territory governments to assist in their work.

82. The media in Australia also enjoys a high degree of freedom which allows the press, radio, television and the internet to play a significant role in exposing breaches of human rights and exerting pressure for remedial action. The media is free to report parliamentary and court decisions relating to human rights matters and parliamentary questions are often prompted by media coverage of a particular matter.

(vi) Means of ensuring protection of human rights in Australia

83. Australia's strong democratic institutions, the Constitution, the common law and current legislation, including anti-discrimination legislation at the Commonwealth, State and Territory levels, protect and promote human rights in Australia. For these reasons, the Australian Government is not convinced of the need for a Bill of Rights in Australia.

84. The Australian Government considers that the best ways to protect human rights are by ensuring that the existing mechanisms described above work effectively, and by educating the community about human rights and responsibilities.

C. General framework within which human rights are promoted at the national level

85. The Australian Government's five priorities for human rights, as set out in *Australia's National Framework for Human Rights - National Action Plan* (available at <<http://www.ag.gov.au/nap>>), are:

- Promoting a strong, free democracy
- Human rights education and awareness
- Assisting disadvantaged groups to become more independent
- Supporting the family, and
- Promoting human rights internationally

(i) Human rights education

86. Australia believes that education and raising public awareness are the most lasting and effective ways to minimise discrimination and promote tolerance of all members of the community.

87. Australia has played a central role in promoting human rights education in the United Nations. This has included co-sponsoring a resolution at the 60th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in April 2004 which recommended that the General Assembly proclaim a World Program for Human Rights Education, strongly supporting the resultant proclamation by the General Assembly contained in UNGA Resolution 59/113A of 10 December 2004 and introducing UNGA Resolution 59/113B of 14 July 2005 which adopted the Plan of Action for the first phase of the World Program (2005-2007).

The national human rights institution

88. HREOC's statutory functions include promoting an awareness of, and respect for, human rights in the community, and almost all areas of HREOC's work have an educational or public awareness component. Recent initiatives include:

- The launch in 2006 of HREOC's new human rights webpage, *Information for Students*, an online education resource for secondary school students to help them gain an awareness and understanding of human rights and their origin and history, the development of international human rights norms and contemporary human rights issues in Australia (available at <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/info_for_students/index.html>)
- The project *Ismaξ - Listen: National consultations on eliminating prejudice against Arab and Muslim Australians*, undertaken by HREOC in 2003-2004, with the aim of exploring whether Arab and Muslim Australians were experiencing discrimination and vilification post September 11
- The annual publication of *Face the Facts: some questions and answers about immigration, refugees and Indigenous affairs* (<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/face_facts/index.html>), and
- The publication of *Same-Sex: Same Entitlements*, the report on its inquiry into discrimination against same sex couples regarding financial and work-related entitlements (<<http://www.hreoc.gov.au/samesex/index.html>>)

89. The HREOC website contains detailed information on human rights and includes information on and links to the international human rights treaties to which Australia is a party.

Role of non-government organisations

90. An important educative function is also played by NGOs. Australia has a strong and active NGO community which plays a double role in human rights education. They provide vital information to Government about human rights issues which affect people at the grassroots level, through specific Government forums with NGOs and on a more general level. At the same time, they serve to educate the public about the human rights programs and protections which are available to them.

The National Committee on Human Rights Education

91. The National Committee on Human Rights Education was established in 1998, with Australian Government support, to develop strategies for the effective and coordinated delivery of human rights education throughout Australia in line with the objectives of the United Nations Decade on Human Rights Education (1995-2004).

Human rights education in schools

92. HREOC places an emphasis on human rights education programs in Australian schools, including the development, in consultation with education experts, of a range of human rights education modules specifically for use in upper primary and secondary schools. As discussed above, HREOC has also launched a human rights information webpage for students (see paragraph 88).

93. Australian Government initiatives in human rights education for schools have also included:

- The Civics and Citizenship program, which includes an annual national forum on civics and citizenship education for teachers, principals, pre-service educators, State and Territory officials, and parents, and
- The introduction of a National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools which emphasises values such as respect, responsibility and understanding, tolerance and inclusion, which help students appreciate their local, national, regional and global responsibilities and help them to understand human rights

94. States and Territories have also undertaken a range of initiatives to promote human rights education in schools, for example:

- NSW has incorporated cross-curriculum content on the areas of Difference and Diversity, Gender, Multiculturalism, Civics and Citizenship and Indigenous issues in all new syllabuses of the Years 7-10 curriculum; incorporated human rights issues in a compulsory test in Australian History, Geography, and Civics and Citizenship set for Year 10 School Certificate candidates; and included the study of human rights in the syllabuses for Legal Studies, Aboriginal Studies and Modern History
- Victoria has introduced the *Good Ideas for Human Rights Education* project, which documents and disseminates good practice in human rights education across the school sectors in Victoria, and established a Languages & Multicultural Education Resource Centre which provides professional development programs on anti-racism education, the needs of refugees and other groups of at risk students, and culturally inclusive curriculum, and
- The ACT has implemented a trial scheme with Amnesty International to introduce Human Rights Education programs into high schools and primary schools, and introduced the *School Excellence Initiative*, which reviews ACT government schools on a three-yearly basis against criteria which include student involvement in active citizenship and a curriculum that promotes intercultural understanding and ethnic and gender diversity

(ii) Promoting human rights internationally

95. Human rights are an inseparable part of Australia's overall foreign policy approach, because the treatment of individuals is of itself a matter of concern to Australians, and because promoting and protecting human rights underpins Australia's broader security and economic interests.

96. Australia's human rights policies are very strongly oriented towards achieving practical outcomes that improve the rights of individuals. The Australian Government considers that constructive engagement, combined with technical assistance, capacity building and development of institutions that protect human rights, is the most effective way of advancing human rights.

United Nations

97. The Australian Government plays a lead role in promoting efficiencies and reform of the United Nations human rights treaty body system, working with the UN to improve the functioning of the system.

Strengthening human rights in bilateral relationships

98. The Australian Government also continues its efforts to improve the human rights situations in other countries by engaging in bilateral dialogues. The Australian Government believes this approach is most likely to bring tangible long-term improvements. Australia continues to raise with other governments, on a case-by-case basis, individual cases of concern and thematic concerns, such as the use of the death penalty, and also conducts formal human rights dialogues with a number of countries including China, Vietnam, Iran and Laos.

99. Australia's extradition law provides that extradition cannot be granted unless the requesting country provides an undertaking that the death penalty will not be imposed, or if imposed, will not be carried out. Australia has longstanding relationships with a number of countries which retain the death penalty. In situations where extradition is sought for offences which carry the death penalty, our experience has been that our extradition partners have provided such undertakings in order to secure extradition for offences which carry the death penalty. Our experience is that these undertakings are honoured.

100. Mutual assistance is the process countries use to obtain government to government assistance in criminal investigations and prosecutions and to recover the proceeds of crime. Where a foreign country requests assistance to investigate an offence which carries the death penalty, Australian legislation provides a discretion to refuse to provide the assistance. Where a foreign country requests assistance where a person has been charged with, or convicted of, an offence which carries the death penalty, Australian legislation provides the request must be denied unless there are special circumstances. Special circumstances include where the evidence would assist the defence, or where the foreign country undertakes not to impose or carry out the death penalty.

101. Mutual assistance is a separate form of cooperation from police-to-police assistance. Police-to-police assistance is cooperation that is provided by one country's police force to the police force of another country. The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has guidelines that govern the provision of police-to-police assistance in death penalty cases. These guidelines are Australian Government policy and provide that the AFP can assist foreign countries on a police-to-police basis where no charges have been laid, regardless of whether the foreign country may be investigating offences that attract the death penalty. Where charges have been laid in the foreign country, and the offences carry the death penalty, the AFP cannot provide assistance unless the Australian Attorney General or the Minister for Justice and Customs approves.

102. Police-to-police assistance does not include the use of coercive powers on behalf of a foreign country. Such assistance must be sought through a mutual assistance request. Under Australian legislation it is then a matter for the Attorney General or the Minister for Justice and Customs to decide whether to authorise the use of coercive powers in Australia in response to a mutual assistance request from a foreign country.

Australia's overseas aid program

103. The Australian aid program contributes to the advancement of human rights through its focus on poverty reduction and sustainable development. Consistent with the need for States to take primary responsibility for their development, effective partnerships with developing countries are a central focus of Australia's aid. Country strategies are jointly developed with all major partner countries and form the basis for our assistance. Figures on Australia's development expenditure are available in the statistical annex.

104. Links to further information on human rights, and on Australia's promotion of human rights, are listed in Appendix D.

PART III: IMPLEMENTATION OF SUBSTANTIVE HUMAN RIGHTS PROVISIONS COMMON TO ALL OR SEVERAL TREATIES

A. Role of the reporting process in promoting human rights at the national level

105. In order to produce comprehensive reports under UN human rights instruments, it is necessary to provide information from Australia's nine jurisdictions. This is a particularly resource-intensive activity at the Commonwealth and State level. Government agencies also consult widely with NGOs during the drafting and evaluation stages.

106. Preparation of the reports provides each jurisdiction with an opportunity to consider the measures it has taken to ensure that Australia's international obligations are implemented.

107. Reports prepared under the various conventions are public documents and are available on the internet and in hard copy. The reports are also tabled in Parliament. Copies of the reports are distributed to NGOs, libraries, academic institutions and Australia's overseas posts.

108. The following government agencies have responsibility for preparing reports under the major UN human rights instruments:

Treaty	Responsible agency
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	Attorney-General's Department
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women	Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs - Office for Women
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	Attorney-General's Department
Convention on the Rights of the Child	Attorney-General's Department

109. Following receipt of Concluding Observations of Committees, the government department responsible for the relevant report publicises the Concluding Observations through NGO channels and government websites, and ensures that all relevant federal departments and State and Territory governments receive the recommendations for review.

B. Non-discrimination and equality

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
2, 3, 14, 26, 27	2, 3	12, 13	2, 9, 22, 23, 30	2, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

110. Australia's anti-discrimination legislation is described at paragraph 68 above. A number of recent developments concerning Australia's implementation of the obligations in the articles above are outlined below.

(i) Non-discrimination

Anti-discrimination legislation changes

111. The Commonwealth has introduced the *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (AD Act), which prohibits age discrimination in many areas of public life. The AD Act contains exemptions

which are designed to balance, to the greatest extent possible, the principle that people of all ages should be able to participate in the community with the legitimate need to take age into account in some circumstances.

112. In 2003, the SD Act was amended to make clear that it is unlawful to discriminate against women because of breast feeding and the act of expressing milk.

113. Most States and Territories have updated their anti-discrimination Acts to prohibit direct and indirect discrimination in a range of areas including employment, education, accommodation and the provision of goods and services on the basis of many attributes, including gender identity, industrial activity, HIV/AIDS status, religious belief or activity, breastfeeding, and sexual orientation.

Disability Discrimination Act-Productivity Commission review

114. In 2003, the Australian Government initiated the first comprehensive review of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* (DD Act). The review consulted with State and Territory governments, key interest groups and affected parties. The review found that the DD Act has been reasonably effective in reducing the overall levels of discrimination and raising awareness of the rights and abilities of people with disability. The review also made a number of recommendations for improving the DD Act's operation. The Australian Government's response accepts 26 of the 32 recommendations either in full, in part or in principle. Implementation of the Government Response will further enhance the benefits of the DD Act and ensure that it continues to provide net benefits to the Australian community as a whole. The Australian Government's response is available at <<http://www.ag.gov.au/PCDDA>>.

(ii) Equality before the law and equal protection of the law

Indigenous Australians and the law

Diversions and preventative programs

115. As at 30 June 2006, the age standardised rate² of Indigenous imprisonment was 1,668 per 100,000 adult Indigenous population, 13 times more than the non-Indigenous rate. Recognising the serious overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians in the criminal justice system, the Australian Government is actively exploring innovative strategies to divert Indigenous Australians from the criminal justice system through the Prevention, Diversion and Rehabilitation Program.

² Age standardisation adjusts crude rates to account for age differences between study populations. There are differences in the age distributions between Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. In 2001, the proportion of Indigenous peoples aged 18 years and over was 54.6%, compared with 75.8 % of non-Indigenous peoples (and 75.3% of the total Australian population).

116. The Australian Government is also working to prevent family violence and sexual assault from occurring through the Family Violence Prevention Legal Services. In addition, as part of its \$21 million National Crime Prevention Program, the Australian Government funded a number of initiatives aimed at addressing issues affecting Indigenous peoples including Indigenous family violence and Indigenous mentoring programs. The Australian Government is also developing a National Indigenous Law and Justice Strategy to recognise and address issues relating to law and justice and crime prevention in Indigenous communities at a national, State and Territory and regional level. A tender for specific Indigenous Legal Aid Services, with the aim of providing culturally inclusive and professional legal aid services to Indigenous Australians, was completed in 2006.

117. The Australian Government is also funding the development of a national study of Indigenous Night Patrols. Early indications are that night patrols play an important role in reducing crime in Indigenous communities. The project will identify models of best practice and will provide a valuable resource for community-based Indigenous organisations.

118. These strategies involve working with the States and Territories to prevent juveniles, particularly Indigenous juveniles, from entering the criminal justice system. An example of this is an agreement between the Government and the NT in 2000, under which the Australian Government provided \$20 million over four years for a juvenile pre-court diversion scheme and jointly funded an Aboriginal Interpreter Service. The Scheme provided that the Courts would only be used where offences committed are of a more serious nature or other diversion options have been tried and failed. There was a strong focus on diverting Indigenous juveniles to culturally appropriate diversion programs developed and delivered by local Indigenous community organisations. A total of 3,496 apprehension cases were dealt with in the first 29 months; of these, 63 per cent were offered diversion.

119. State and Territory governments have also developed, in consultation with Indigenous organisations, justice strategies and programs to reduce the incarceration rates for Indigenous Australians:

- In NSW, Victoria, Queensland, the ACT, and WA, circle-sentencing, *Koori Courts*, *Murri Courts* or Regional Community Conferencing programs have been established with the aim of providing more appropriate sentencing options for Aboriginal and young Aboriginal offenders, and to establish sentencing formats which allow for Aboriginal community involvement and control. A 2005 review of the Koori Courts in Victoria found they had been very successful in reducing repeat offenders, with recidivism rates of 12.5 per cent and 15.5 per cent compared with the general Koori rate of 29.4 per cent.
- Victoria has introduced the *Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (VAJA)*, under which six Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees meet regularly with government department representatives to discuss justice related issues impacting on the local communities. The Agreement promotes maximum Aboriginal community

participation in processes for legislative, policy and program development, service delivery and monitoring and review. The Victorian Government has provided funding of \$26.1 million in the 2006/07 budget for phase two of the VAJA over the next four years.

- In Queensland, parties to the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement have made a commitment to reduce the incarceration rate of Indigenous peoples in Queensland by 50 per cent by the year 2011. Also, the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* (Qld) creates an additional responsibility on police, when dealing with an Indigenous person, to notify a legal aid organisation if the Indigenous person has not already done so. Questioning must be suspended until a support person has been afforded an opportunity to speak privately with the Indigenous person, and the support person may be present during any subsequent questioning.
- The ACT Government has committed \$1.4 million over four years to establish Australia's first Aboriginal Justice Centre. The Aboriginal Justice Centre will be a community-managed facility that will provide a coordinated approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice programs and services in the ACT.

(iii) Special measures to accelerate progress towards equality

Indigenous Australians

120. The Australian Government is committed to reducing Indigenous disadvantage. Australian Government actions are founded on a genuine partnership with Indigenous peoples and follow a number of key themes:

- Taking a whole-of-government approach by involving all relevant portfolio Ministers and the States and Territories
- Increasing the focus on individuals and their families as the foundation of functional communities
- Encouraging and supporting self-reliance and independence from welfare
- Strengthening leadership, capacity and governance
- Addressing the debilitating effects of substance abuse and domestic violence
- Increasing opportunities for local and regional decision-making by Indigenous peoples, and improving program coordination and flexibility to respond to local needs, and
- Improving access to mainstream programs and services, so that Indigenous-specific resources can be better targeted to areas of greatest need, particularly to areas where mainstream services do not reach

121. The Australian Government is committed to addressing the underlying disadvantage confronting many Indigenous peoples, and spent a record \$3.3 billion on Indigenous-specific programs in 2006-2007, with a focus on the key areas of housing, health, education and employment, and targeting resources to those Indigenous peoples in greatest need, particularly those in remote areas. These programs are in addition to other social benefits such as universal health coverage and income support, which are available to all Australians, and Indigenous programs and services funded by State and Territory governments. Information on programs to address Indigenous disadvantage is available under subject-specific parts of this document.

122. In 2006, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a package to address violence and child abuse in Indigenous communities. The Australian Government has committed an additional \$120 million to this package, which focuses on law and order, health, school attendance, support for victims of violence, and corporate governance. COAG also agreed that no customary law or cultural practice excuses, justifies, authorises, requires, or lessens the seriousness of violence or sexual abuse. All jurisdictions agreed that their laws would reflect this principle.

Reconciliation

123. In addition to the material below, information about other initiatives which contribute to reconciliation are outlined at paragraphs 365-368 (Indigenous family support) and paragraphs 369-76 (addressing past policies of Indigenous child removal).

124. The Australian Government is firmly committed to the ongoing process of reconciliation with Indigenous Australians and is continuing its work on both practical and symbolic measures. The Australian Government has a multifaceted approach to reconciliation and is undertaking initiatives across a broad spectrum of areas that have a positive effect on the everyday lives of Indigenous Australians. Australian Government spending on Indigenous programs has increased by one-third in real terms since 1996 and is at record levels.

125. There is clear evidence that improvements are occurring in areas such as Indigenous health, education, housing, employment and land ownership. The Australian Government is committed to ensuring these positive trends in addressing Indigenous disadvantage are built upon, and the momentum for improvement is increased through the provision of adequate resources.

126. State governments have also initiated programs focusing on reconciliation:

- The Queensland Government is implementing a Reconciliation Action Plan with the aim of removing the barriers to full social and economic participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, both practically and symbolically.
- In 2003, the enRICH program (encouraging Reconciliation through Indigenous Culture and Heritage) was introduced through the WA Department of Indigenous Affairs. The enRICH program has been designed to better inform Western Australians about Indigenous peoples, their heritage and culture and the role they play in our past and our future.

Native title and Indigenous land ownership

127. Successive Australian Governments have implemented a range of initiatives in support or recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land rights. Consequently, approximately 20 per cent of the Australian continent is now owned or controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The various measures implemented include land rights legislation (relating to rights created by the Australian Government or State and Territory governments), legislation to recognise and protect native title (being Indigenous rights or interests recognised under Australian common law), and purchases of land on behalf of Indigenous Australians.

128. Native title was first recognised in Australia by the High Court of Australia in the decision of *Mabo v Queensland (No 2)*.³ The *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) subsequently established a framework for recognising and protecting native title.

129. The Australian Government funds most components of the native title system, including the National Native Title Tribunal, the Federal Court of Australia, Indigenous bodies to represent the interests of Indigenous peoples, and non government respondent parties, in order to achieve fair, effective and enduring outcomes. Australia's native title legislation recognises and protects Indigenous rights and interests in land or waters, based on continuity of connection with the land or waters in accordance with traditional laws and customs, and where recognition would be compatible with the common law of Australia.

Amendments to the Native Title Act in 1998

130. The *Native Title Amendment Act 1998* (Cth) was the legislative response to a range of judicial decisions, including the *Wik*⁴ decision, which accentuated the shortcomings of the original Native Title Act in dealing with rights and interests other than those held by the Crown. In *Wik*, the High Court found that native title could co-exist on pastoral leases, extending the interests able to affect and be affected by native title and thereby broadening the range of stakeholders in the native title system beyond governments and Indigenous claimants. The relationship between the different rights of parties was left unclear by the *Wik* decision.

131. The 1998 amendments addressed these difficulties, and followed an open and participatory consultation process with all interested parties. The amended Act clarifies the relationship between native title and other rights and gives the States and Territories the capacity to better integrate native title into their existing regimes. The amendments also established a framework for consensual and binding agreements about future activity known as Indigenous Land Use Agreements or ILUAs.

³ (1992) 175 CLR 1.

⁴ *Wik Peoples v Queensland* (1996) 187 CLR 1.

132. Significant progress has been made since the 1998 amendments to the *Native Title Act*. The number of native title determinations, mostly by agreement, continues to increase. As at 30 June 2006, 87 determinations of native title had been made, with 60 of these being determinations that native title exists, and over two-thirds of these with the agreement of the parties (consent determinations). Before the 1998 amendments came into effect, only five determinations had been made (including the original *Mabo* decision).

Indigenous Land Use Agreements

133. Governments or others wishing to undertake activities or development that may “affect” native title can enter into an ILUA. ILUAs are voluntary (but binding) agreements about the use and management of land, made between a native title group and others and can be tailored to meet the needs of particular Indigenous communities.

134. The amended *Native Title Act* ensures that Indigenous Australians have a “seat at the table” in relation to future developments to negotiate benefits for their communities, including financial benefits, employment opportunities, joint management of national parks and heritage protection. ILUAs have proved a popular option since their introduction in 1998, with 248 registered ILUAs as at 30 June 2006.

Measures to improve the native title system

135. In September 2005, the Australian Government announced a package of coordinated measures to improve the performance of the native title system. The proposals form part of the Australian Government’s broader commitment to helping Indigenous Australians maximise benefits in relation to native title and communal land. The measures, which will comprise legislative and non-legislative initiatives, are primarily directed at improving the processes for the recognition of native title and the resolution of disputes over land which may be subject to native title. The protection of native title rights is fundamental to the reform process.

Measures to promote Indigenous home ownership on Indigenous land

136. On 31 May 2006, the Australian Government introduced legislative amendments to the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* into Parliament to facilitate individual, long term leasing on Indigenous held land in the Northern Territory. Home ownership is an important contributor to generating economic independence and inter generational security and wealth.

137. Under the proposed reforms, Traditional Owners will be able to grant a 99 year head-lease over a township area. Granting a head lease will be entirely voluntary. Traditional Owners and the Land Council will negotiate the other terms and conditions of the head-lease, including any conditions on sub-leasing. Sub-leases may be issued to individual tenants, home purchasers, and business and government service providers. The underlying inalienable title will not be affected.

138. In addition to the legislative amendments, the Australian Government has committed \$104.5m over the next four years to address financial and other barriers faced by Indigenous Australians aspiring to home ownership. This funding will provide up to 460 low interest home loans, the construction of 45 new houses, and programs to build financial literacy and money management skills in Indigenous communities.

139. The Australian Government has invited States to enter into discussions on possible land tenure reform to ensure that all Indigenous Australians living on Indigenous land can access the new home ownership programs.

State and Territory developments

140. State and Territory governments have adopted a range of measures to assist in the resolution of native title claims:

- The Victorian Government's approach to resolving Native Title claims through mediation is reflected in the Victorian Guidelines for Native Title Proof, and has resulted in agreements such as those with the Wotjobaluk people in 2002 and the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Cooperation in 2004.
- In 2001, the WA Government established an Office of Native Title, which facilitates the resolution of native title applications, facilitates resolution of native title compensation applications wherever possible by agreement, and develops and implements policies, procedures and practices across Government to ensure efficiency and consistency in the administration of the future act regime.
- In 2005, the Tasmanian Government passed Legislation to transfer ownership of Cape Barren and Clarke Islands to the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (ALCT). Almost 51,000 hectares of land was transferred. In February 2006, a 40 year lease was granted to the ALCT for Eddystone Point (10.5 hectares). The Tasmanian Government is continuing to provide support to allow land management and maintenance activities to be undertaken by the Aboriginal community on transferred land.

141. States and Territories have also taken action to ensure greater community involvement in the management of land and natural resources:

- NSW has developed a number of non-native title strategies including freehold grants of claimable Crown land to Aboriginal Land Councils, an Aboriginal Business Development Program, Indigenous Fishing Strategy, Aboriginal Water Trust and Aboriginal ownership of national parks.
- The Victorian Government has established an Aboriginal Land and Economic Development Program to support Aboriginal land initiatives, including the development of land for use by Aboriginal communities to meet cultural, social and environmental interests.

- In the NT, the Indigenous Pastoral Project (IPP) Steering Committee is a consultative group where Commonwealth and NT Government agencies meet with the mainland Land Councils to increase herd numbers on Indigenous pastoral properties and increase the number of Indigenous peoples employed in the pastoral industry in the NT, whilst ensuring that any activity undertaken on Indigenous land meets with the aspirations of the community for their land. The NT Government also provides funding and secretariat support to the Indigenous Mining and Enterprise Task Force (IMETF), a consultative group dedicated to increasing and improving Indigenous employment and contracting opportunities in industry, in particular the mining industry.

Traditional forms of economy and cultural heritage management

142. The role of Indigenous Australians and their rights, interests and knowledge of natural resource management is recognised in the principal Commonwealth environment legislation, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) which aims to: promote a cooperative approach to the protection and management of the environment involving governments, the community, landholders and Indigenous peoples; recognise the role of Indigenous peoples in the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of Australia's biodiversity; and promote the use of Indigenous peoples' knowledge of biodiversity, with the involvement and cooperation of the owners of the knowledge.

143. An Indigenous Advisory Committee comprising 12 members was established in July 2000 to advise the Minister for the Environment and Heritage on Indigenous issues relevant under the EPBC Act.

144. The EPBC Act also provides protection for places on the National Heritage List. The National Heritage List comprises natural, historic and Indigenous places that are of outstanding heritage value to the Australian nation. For example, one of the first sites included on the list in 2004 was the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape at Lake Condah in Victoria's south-west, where thousands of years ago the Gunditjmarra people built a highly sophisticated system of weirs, channels, water races and fish traps so they could grow and harvest fish.

145. The purposes of the Commonwealth *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* are the preservation and protection from injury or desecration of areas and objects in Australia and in Australian waters that are of particular significance to Aboriginals in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. The Australian Government is committed to improving this legislation, and will consult Indigenous groups to obtain their views on the proposed reforms.

146. All Australian States and Territories also have legislation which protects Indigenous archaeological sites and traditions. For example:

- Victoria introduced the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* to preserve and protect Victoria's Aboriginal heritage for future generations, after the need for such legislation was identified as a priority by Aboriginal Victorians during earlier consultations.

- In the NT, the rights of Indigenous peoples to access Crown land and other land managed by the Crown for the purposes of hunting, fishing and gathering in accordance with Aboriginal tradition is preserved in a range of NT legislation. Indigenous peoples in the NT also have participatory and decision-making roles through various consultative frameworks, such as the Aboriginal Fisheries Consultative Committees, the Indigenous Mining and Enterprise Task Force, and the Indigenous Pastoral Project Steering Committee.
- In Queensland, the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of Indigenous communities to take marine products or fauna by traditional means for consumption by members of the community is specifically protected by a range of legislation. Queensland Government processes also ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, especially Traditional Owners, are consulted and their interests identified in land use and natural resource planning processes.
- In New South Wales, hunting, fishing and wildlife protection legislation protect traditional forms of economy by providing licensing exemptions for Aboriginal peoples.
- In WA, the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* provides for the protection of any site or object recognised as possessing heritage or cultural value to Indigenous peoples. Further, the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994 (WA)* contains provisions to protect customary Indigenous fishing activities. The WA Aboriginal Fishing Strategy Working Group has also produced a comprehensive and publicly available draft *Aboriginal Fishing Strategy* to acknowledge and protect customary fishing.

Maintenance and promotion of Indigenous languages and records

147. The Australian Government assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to maintain and revive Indigenous languages through:

- The administration of the Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records (MILR) Program. In 2005-06, the MILR program provided funding assistance for over 80 activities around Australia to conduct language maintenance and revival projects; language recording; production of language materials and curricula; public awareness and advocacy, and development and maintenance of archives.
- The implementation of targeted funding assistance to endangered Australian Indigenous languages to counter language loss.
- Support to Indigenous broadcasting services, including a focus on promoting local Indigenous languages.
- The commission of a National Indigenous Language Survey, completed in 2005, to better enable the targeting of programs to address language erosion; and
- The development of State-level Indigenous language maintenance policies.

148. The NT Government established the Aboriginal Interpreter Service in April 2000. With more than 70 per cent of the Indigenous peoples in the NT speaking a language other than English, the service is intended to meet the need for Aboriginal language interpreters, particularly in the health and criminal justice systems. Currently registered interpreters cover 104 Aboriginal languages/dialects.

Maintenance and promotion of Indigenous arts and cultures

149. Australian Indigenous art is the oldest ongoing tradition of art in the world. Aboriginal art has come to the forefront of Australia's national identity in recent years, celebrated by Australians and the world in the opening ceremony of the 2000 Olympic Games. Australia's Indigenous artists have had a major impact on the art world with exhibitions in major galleries around the globe, contributing to an industry that now generates around \$200 million a year nationally.

150. The Australian Government provides funding assistance to approximately 130 Indigenous cultural activities across Australia through the National Arts and Crafts Industry Support program (NACIS) and the Indigenous Culture Support program (ICS) to maintain and promote Indigenous cultures, enhancing Indigenous peoples' right to practise their own culture. Funding is provided for Indigenous art and craft centre operations, business management skills development, business plans, cultural development officers, training in visual arts and craft techniques, festivals and dance performances, exhibition development, media content, ceremonial activities and material gathering.

151. Under the auspices of the Cultural Ministers Council, the Return of Indigenous Cultural Property program plays a significant role in preserving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through the return of Indigenous ancestral remains and secret sacred objects. The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs' Repatriation Program facilitates the return of Indigenous human remains held in overseas collections to their communities of origin. The program is governed by a ministerially-approved Policy and Strategy, the Australian Government Policy on the Management of Overseas Repatriation of Indigenous Human Remains and the Australian Government Strategy and Procedures on the Management of Overseas Repatriation of Indigenous Human Remains.

(iv) Equal rights of men and women

Mainstreaming gender issues

152. Gender mainstreaming is an important consideration in Australian Government policy and program development and implementation. One of the important roles that the Australian Government Office for Women (OFW) undertakes is to ensure that the whole of the Australian Government continues to take gender issues into consideration when developing and implementing policies and programs. OFW works closely with other Australian Government agencies in contributing to policy development, monitoring government commitments that are relevant to and have impact on women. It provides advice and comment on the impact of policies and programs on women and highlights important issues for women that are, for example, revealed by research and consultation with non-government women's organisations.

Other initiatives

153. The Australian Government has a range of policies, programs and strategies aimed at ensuring equality between men and women. Specific details are available in Australia’s most recent report under CEDAW, and under the heading “R. Right to marry and found a family, protection of the family, mother and children” in this document.

154. State and Territory governments have also taken various steps to promote equity, access and rights for women, including the development of action plans and directions statements to address a range of key concerns and needs for women such as rates of pay, health and well-being, violence and safety, decision-making and leadership, economic security, balancing work, family and lifestyle and justice and civil legal equality.

C. Effective remedies

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
2(2) and (3)		14	39	2	6

155. Australia’s main remedies for human rights breaches are described above, under the heading “D. General legal framework within which human rights are protected at the national level”. Australia also provides effective remedies required under the human rights treaties in other ways. Specific issues that have received particular attention in recent years are addressed below.

(i) Investigation and complaints mechanisms

Complaints relating to the conditions of immigration detention centres

156. The *Immigration Detention Standards* establish a complaints mechanism for people in immigration detention. The Standards require that people in immigration detention be able to comment on or complain, without hindrance or fear of reprisal:

- In the case of any matter relating to the conditions of detention, to the Services Provider, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), HREOC or the Commonwealth Ombudsman
- In the case of a suspected criminal offence, to the police, or
- In the case of suspected child abuse, to the relevant State/Territory welfare agency

157. The Standards also require that people in immigration detention be informed of their rights and that material advising of the right to complain to HREOC and the Commonwealth Ombudsman be displayed prominently throughout the facilities at all times and be available to people in immigration detention on request. Adherence to these standards is monitored by DIAC staff managing immigration detention facilities.

(ii) Rehabilitation of victims of torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

158. Torture and trauma victims in Australia are predominantly refugees and people who have entered Australia on special humanitarian grounds following their experiences overseas. Specialist torture and trauma services exist in all Australian States and Territories to assist such people. For example, NSW has two specialised services that target survivors of torture and other human rights abuses:

- The Service for the Treatment of Torture and Trauma Survivors which provides counselling and medical support to those who have been tortured or traumatised as part of a refugee experience, and
- The NSW Refugee Health Service which provides assessments and information and generally protects the health of persons with a refugee background living in New South Wales

159. Further information is available in paragraphs 137-138 of Australia's Combined Second and Third Reports under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

D. Procedural guarantees

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
14, 15		12, 13, 14, 15	40		5(a)

160. The general framework in which human rights are protected in Australia is described above, under the heading D. *General legal framework within which human rights are protected at the national level*. Australia provides a range of procedural guarantees as required under the above articles. Particular developments relevant to these obligations are addressed below.

(i) Prohibition of reversal of a final decision on conviction or acquittal

161. In November 2003, Australian governments released the Model Criminal Code Officers Committee's *Discussion Paper on Issue Estoppel, Double Jeopardy and Prosecution Appeals Against Acquittals* for public consultation. The discussion paper recommended that the laws on double jeopardy be changed so that a person acquitted of an offence could be prosecuted for an administration of justice offence or the original or related offence in three circumstances:

- Prosecution for an administration of justice offence connected to the original trial
- Retrial of the original or similar offence where there is fresh and compelling evidence, and
- Retrial of the original or similar offence where the acquittal is tainted

162. Governments have settled model provisions and are committed to implementing nationally consistent provisions. In 2006, the Council of Australian Governments agreed that reform of the rule against double jeopardy is a priority criminal law policy reform that merits nationally-consistent treatment.

(ii) Mandatory sentencing regimes

163. The NT Parliament repealed mandatory sentencing laws for property offences effective from 22 October 2001. The *Juvenile Justice Amendment Act (No 2) 2001* repealed mandatory sentencing for juvenile offenders and the *Sentencing Amendment Act (No 3) 2001* repealed mandatory sentencing for property offences for adults.

164. Mandatory sentencing laws are still in effect in WA. A review of the Western Australian mandatory sentencing provisions in *The Criminal Code (WA)* was tabled in the WA Parliament on 15 November 2001. The review concluded that the provisions have had little effect on the criminal justice system. It found that courts generally sentence adult offenders with the required offence history to periods of imprisonment greater than the minimum 12 months mandated by the legislation. The review also confirmed the existence of a judicial discretion to impose non-custodial sentences instead of detention.

165. There are also mandatory sentencing provisions in the *Migration Act 1958 (Cth)*. These impose mandatory minimum prison terms for persons convicted of people smuggling offences.

E. Participation in public life

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
1, 24, 25			12, 23(1)	7, 8	5(c)

166. All people in Australia have the right to participate in public affairs, and can do so in many ways. The main institutional forms of participation are described above under the heading “B. Constitutional, political and legal structure of the State”. Australian governments also take positive action in a number of other areas to facilitate full and equal participation.

(i) Citizenship promotion

167. The Australian Government views citizenship as a cornerstone of Australia’s inclusive and culturally diverse society, and a unifying focal point shared by all Australians. For this reason, the Government is promoting Australian citizenship very widely in the community.

168. The citizenship promotion campaign, which commenced in 2001, is designed to encourage those eligible to apply for Australian citizenship to do so, and to promote the value and significance of Australian citizenship with the community. Focal points of the campaign are Australian Citizenship Day celebrated on 17 September and Australia Day, 26 January. For further information see <<http://www.citizenship.gov.au>>.

169. A multimedia program, *Let's Participate: A course in Australian Citizenship*, was introduced in July 2001 to help migrants learn more about Australia's society and institutions and assist their settlement.

(ii) Dual citizenship

170. Prior to 4 April 2002, Australians who became a citizen of another country by doing something (such as making an application for another citizenship) with the sole or dominant purpose of acquiring that other citizenship lost their Australian citizenship. Children under 18 of such persons also lost their citizenship, unless their other parent was an Australian. Since that date, Australian citizens are able to become a citizen of another country without losing their Australian citizenship. Those who lost their citizenship when they acquired another citizenship prior to 4 April 2002 can resume Australian citizenship, provided they apply and are eligible under certain criteria.

(iii) Electoral issues

171. As noted at paragraph 25, Australia's electoral system is based upon the democratic principles of universal adult suffrage.

172. Efforts are made to encourage all eligible voters to enrol and vote, including those in traditionally low participation groups, for example remote communities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and young people.

173. Efforts are also made to ensure that citizens have an opportunity to engage with governments, and to encourage participation in democratic processes at both federal and State level. For example, under the NT Community Cabinet program, Cabinet Ministers and their senior executives meet local business operators, community leaders and members of the public in their home communities to listen to their ideas and proposals. In QLD, relevant strategies include a Community Cabinet; Regional Ministerial Community Forums; regional sitting of Parliament; e-democracy initiatives, including e-petitions, internet broadcasts of Parliament; and tools and resources to promote and support better community engagement across all agencies and departments. WA also has a Community Cabinet program and has held regional sittings of Parliament.

174. Legislation passed in June 2006 provides that prisoners serving a sentence of full-time detention for an offence against a law of the Commonwealth or a State or Territory are not entitled to vote, but may remain on the roll, or if unenrolled, apply for enrolment. Those serving alternative sentences such as periodic or home detention, as well as those serving a non-custodial sentences or who have been released on parole, are eligible to both enrol and vote. Prior to this legislation, a prisoner serving a sentence of three years or more was not entitled to vote.

(iv) Women in political and public life

175. The Australian Government has noted concerns of NGOs about the representation of women in government and the judiciary. Increasing women's participation in leadership and decision-making positions is a major Australian Government priority.

176. Since 1996, the Australian Government has increased its activities to maximise the number of women appointed on merit to senior positions of power and decision-making. Today there are more women than ever before in Australian politics at the national, State and local levels. In 2006, more than 28 per cent of Commonwealth parliamentarians are women - more than double the international average. Further, in September 2005 the State and Territory governments agreed to a *National Strategy for the Increased Participation of Women on Boards*. The percentage of women on Australian Government Boards continues to rise and stands at 34.3 per cent as at 30 June 2006.

177. Significant appointments of women to senior judicial positions have also recently been made, with the Hon Justice Susan Crennan appointed to the High Court of Australia in November 2005 and the Hon Chief Justice Diana Bryant appointed as the Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia in July 2004.

178. The Australian Government has taken a number of initiatives directed towards advancing the participation of women in public life. They include the establishment of a Regional Women's Advisory Council and a leadership and mentoring programs for young women. It also provides funds, through the National Women's Leadership and Development Program, for activities by national non-government women's groups that strengthen the voice of women, improve the status of women and contribute to policy areas that affect women in Australia.

179. Details of specific programs and initiatives of the Australian Government to increase women's participation in political and public life are available in Australia's combined 4th and 5th report under CEDAW.

180. States and Territories in Australia have also taken a range of steps to improve women's participation in political and public life. These include:

- Programs in NSW to support rural women's leadership such as workshops for older women on understanding how decisions are made within government, and a leadership training pilot program for women in isolated communities
- Programs in QLD aimed at increasing representation of Indigenous women in government and community leadership positions
- Direct communication between women and the Government in the NT through the Women's Advisory Council to the Chief Minister, and
- The establishment of women's registers, with the aim of increasing women's participation on government boards, committees and authorities

(v) Indigenous Australians - Participation in decision-making and management

181. Indigenous Australians have the same rights of participation in public life as all other Australians. The Australian Government recognises the cultural distinctiveness and diversity of Indigenous peoples, and acknowledges the importance of Indigenous peoples being closely involved in the development and implementation of policies and programs.

182. Indigenous Australians have decision-making roles within Indigenous specific organisations (such as Aboriginal housing authorities in the States and Territories) and within mainstream agencies, and advise governments through a range of formal bodies. Most discrete Indigenous communities live on Indigenous owned land and many manage their own local government functions. A large number of Indigenous-controlled organisations are involved in the planning and delivery of government-funded services in areas such as health, housing and employment.

183. The establishment of Regional Indigenous Engagement Arrangements provides an important mechanism for the Australian and State and Territory governments to engage with Indigenous communities about agreed priority areas for joint effort, and promotes the principles of partnership, shared responsibility, and self-reliance. Eighteen proposals have been received and two have been finalised and funded - Ngaanyatjarra Council (Western Australia) under a Regional Partnership Agreement, and Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (MPRA) (western NSW) under a regional Shared Responsibility Agreement.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)

184. ATSIC was established in 1990 as a Commonwealth statutory authority which would represent and advocate on behalf of Indigenous peoples, advise government on Indigenous policy issues, and deliver a range of services to Indigenous peoples.

185. A review of ATSIC completed in November 2003 led to the Australian Government's decision to abolish ATSIC and establish more effective ways of addressing Indigenous disadvantage. The review found that ATSIC had lost touch with the concerns of Indigenous peoples and no longer had the confidence of the Indigenous community. The Review also concluded that there was an insufficient connection between the national, regional, and local levels of the organisation coupled with a lack of engagement between ATSIC and its constituents at the local level. Only one in five of those eligible to vote in the ATSIC elections did so. The proportion was even less in metropolitan areas.

Establishment of a National Indigenous Council

186. The National Indigenous Council (NIC) is an appointed advisory body to the Australian Government. Members of the NIC are Indigenous Australians chosen for their expertise and experience in a range of policy areas. The NIC is not a replacement for ATSIC and is not a representative body. While the NIC is the principal source of advice to the Australian Government on Indigenous matters, the Australian Government will also consult other Indigenous boards, committees, organisations or individuals.

187. The new approach focuses more strongly on working closely with Indigenous communities as well as with State, Territory and local governments. This gives Indigenous communities and individuals a more effective voice in the development and implementation of programs which are necessary for self-empowerment. This approach is supported by a number of NGOs.

188. As in other countries, Indigenous Australians are able to develop their own representative structures that, whilst independent of the Australian Government, have legitimacy within their own constituency.

Partnerships in the States and Territories

189. Australia's State and Territory governments also work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and have implemented a range of measures to promote Indigenous peoples' participation in decision-making and management.

190. As part of its reconciliation framework, COAG agreed that all governments would work together to improve the social and economic well being of Indigenous peoples and communities through the establishment of eight Indigenous Communities Co-ordination Pilots throughout Australia.

191. Other measures undertaken by State and Territory governments include the following:

- In Victoria, the *Premier's Aboriginal Advisory Council* has been established as the State's peak Indigenous advisory body to Government, and an *Indigenous Community Capacity Building Program* helps Aboriginal community organisations to improve their organisational capacity and community leadership.
- In QLD, a 2003 report, *Hands on Parliament: a parliamentary committee inquiry into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in Queensland's democratic processes*, made recommendations based on strategies to enhance and increase Indigenous participation in various aspects of the democratic process. The Queensland Government has supported most of these recommendations.⁵
- In order to increase the knowledge base surrounding effective Indigenous governance and generate practical approaches, the NT Government is a partner in the Reconciliation Australia/Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research project "Understanding and Developing Effective Governance in Indigenous Communities".
- In WA, the *Statement of Commitment to a New and Just Relationship Between the Government of WA and Aboriginal Western Australians* (2001) provides a partnership framework that incorporates and is informed by a series of agreements across a range of key areas, for example the Aboriginal Justice Agreement, signed in 2004.

⁵ A copy of the report and the Ministerial response are available at: <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/committees/Comdocs/LegalRev/LCARCR043.pdf>; and <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/committees/Comdocs/LegalRev/MinisterialResponses/Report42.pdf>.

- Across a number of States and Territories, public sector employment strategies and programs have also been introduced to increase the number of Indigenous peoples in public employment.

(vi) Participation by children and young people in public life

192. The Australian Government has established a National Youth Roundtable to create direct dialogue with young Australians to ensure that their views are taken into account in policy-making processes. The Roundtable is made up of young people, aged 15 to 24, from all States and Territories, metropolitan and regional areas and from various cultural backgrounds. Roundtable members undertake a series of consultations with their peers across Australia to develop a comprehensive picture of the views and attitudes of young people, which are reported back to Government.

193. State and Territory governments have also established a range of mechanisms to enable children and young people to participate in the development of policies, programs and services affecting them.

194. For instance, in 1999 the Tasmanian Government developed a state-wide participatory mechanism through the establishment of the Tasmanian Youth Consultative Committee (TYCC). The TYCC consists of up to 15 young people between 12 and 25 years of age, from various backgrounds and regions of Tasmania. Its role is to consult with young people on a state-wide basis on issues that impact on young people in Tasmania. TYCC also works on specific projects, including a biennial youth participation conference.

Children's Commissions

195. Children's Commissions in various States in Australia also work to ensure that the views of children are respected both in their own activities and generally. NSW, Tasmania and Queensland have Children's Commissioners, and Victoria's first Child Safety Commissioner was appointed in June 2004. The WA Government introduced a Bill in 2005 which, once passed, will establish a Commissioner for Children with a broad mandate to consider all issues covering children and young people. The ACT established a Children and Young People Commissioner as part of the Human Rights Commission in 2006, and the NT is also planning to establish a children's commissioner. Children and young people play an active role in decision-making by the Commissioners, and advise the Commissions on strategic directions and activities.

(vii) Participation by older Australians in public life

196. The ACT Government has developed strategies to implement the United Nations principles for Older Persons. For example, the ACT Government has established a Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing to assist the Government in ensuring that the needs of older Canberrans are met.

197. Tasmania provides funding to the Council on the Ageing (COTA) Tasmania, which is the peak body representing the needs and interests of older people in Tasmania. In June 2005 a Triennial Funding Agreement (2005-2008) was signed with COTA Tasmania, providing longer term funding certainty to undertake such activities as raising community awareness of issues for older people; promoting the positive contribution of older people to their own wellbeing; and effecting improvements in the provision of services for older Tasmanians, particularly in regional areas.

198. The Victorian Government's *Positive Ageing Program* promotes greater inclusion of older people in civic and public life. Specific initiatives include the *Images of Age* program which promotes non stereotypical portrayals of older people in the media, *Age Friendly Communities* which encourages greater responsiveness to the needs and participation of older people in local government; *Age Friendly Workplaces* which encourages small and medium sized employers to attract, retain and develop older workers, and initiatives that improve the access of senior Victorians to the internet and to lifelong learning.

(viii) Participation by people with disability in public life

199. The Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012 is based on fundamental principles of human rights and social justice and takes a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to considering all aspects of life for people with disability. The Plan provides a strong agenda for change, reaffirming the rights of people with disability to live and participate in the community on an equal footing with other citizens of Victoria and reduce the reliance on Government funded supports.

200. The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) has developed a Disability Action Plan aimed at improving access to the Victorian electoral system. Further, Victoria has recently passed legislation to allow for a trial of electronic voting, giving electors with vision impairment the opportunity to cast a secret vote.

F. Right of self-determination

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
1	1				

201. The Australian Government's general views on self-determination are set out at pages 5-11 of Australia's Third Periodic Report under the ICCPR.

202. The Australian Government believes that individuals and groups should be consulted about decisions likely to impact on them in particular, including by giving them the opportunity to participate in the making of such decisions through the formal and informal processes of democratic government, and exercise meaningful control over their affairs. However, the Australian Government does not support an interpretation of self-determination that has the potential to undermine Australia's territorial integrity or political sovereignty.

(i) Indigenous people in Australia

203. The Australian Government recognises the cultural distinctiveness and diversity of Indigenous peoples and acknowledges the importance of Indigenous peoples being closely involved in the development and implementation of policies and programs that impact on them.

204. Indigenous participation in government decision-making and management is addressed at paragraphs 181-191 above.

205. Native Title and traditional forms of economy and cultural heritage management are discussed at paragraphs 127-146 above.

**G. Right to life, right to physical and moral integrity,
slavery, forced labour and traffic in persons**

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
6, 7, 8		1, 16	6, 11, 19, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37	6	5(b)

206. Australia is committed to ensuring to people in Australia the right to life and physical and moral integrity, and protection from slavery, forced labour and trafficking in persons. Since 1997, the Australian Government has introduced a number of new laws and policies which enhance protection of these rights.

(i) Criminalisation of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity

207. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was ratified by Australia on 1 July 2002 and entered into force for Australia in September 2002. This followed the enactment in June 2002 of legislation to facilitate compliance with the Rome Statute.⁶ This legislation covers the offences of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes against the administration of the justice of the ICC.

208. These offences have been incorporated into Division 268 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* with specific reference to torture and inhuman treatment where relevant. These offences operate prospectively from September 2002 and apply to conduct both within and outside Australia. All genocide offences attract life imprisonment. Penalties for crimes against humanity range from 17 years to life imprisonment and war crimes offences attract penalties ranging from 10 years to life imprisonment.

⁶ The *International Criminal Court Act 2002* can be accessed at: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/icca2002303/. The *International Criminal Court (Consequential Amendments) Act 2002* can be accessed at: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/iccaa2002543/sch1.html.

(ii) Institutions and mechanisms to prevent torture

209. Acts constituting torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are a criminal offence and/or civil wrong in all Australian jurisdictions. For example, Queensland passed an offence of torture (*Criminal Code* section 320A) in 1997 and criminalised female genital mutilation (*Criminal Code* sections 323A and 323B) in 2000. Further information on the range of legislation criminalising torture and inhuman treatment is available in Australia's most recent report under the CAT.

(iii) Sexual assault

210. The Australian Government has implemented several initiatives over recent years under the *National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault* and the *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence* programs. These programs ended on 30 June 2005 and were replaced by the *Women's Safety Agenda*. Announced in May 2005, this four year program addresses four broad themes: prevention, health, justice and services. The program aims to decrease the impacts of domestic and family violence and sexual assault on the community.

211. In Victoria, the *Crimes (Sexual Offences) Act 2006* aims to reduce the further trauma experienced by children and people with a cognitive impairment by making it easier for them to give evidence in the prosecution of sexual offences. The legislation introduces fairer tests to assess the competence of young children to give evidence and allow evidence of complaints about the alleged abuse made to third parties in certain circumstances. The Victorian Government has also committed significant financial resources to support victims of sexual assault and child witnesses, providing extra prosecution resources, new female forensic nurses and more health and counselling services.

(iv) Slavery, sexual servitude, trafficking

Slavery

212. Under section 270.3 of the *Criminal Code*, it is an offence to possess a slave or exercise over a person any of the powers attaching to the right of ownership, to engage in slave trading, or to enter into any commercial transaction involving a slave. It is also an offence to exercise control or direction over, or to provide finance for, slave trading or a commercial transaction involving a slave. The maximum penalty for these offences is 25 years imprisonment.

Sexual servitude

213. Under section 270.6 of the *Criminal Code*, it is an offence for a person to cause another person to enter into or remain in sexual servitude, where the person intends to cause, or is reckless as to causing, that sexual servitude. The offence is punishable by a maximum penalty of 15 years imprisonment. Where the offence is committed against a person under 18, the maximum penalty is 20 years imprisonment.

214. Six of the eight States and Territories (NSW, Victoria, WA, SA, ACT and NT) now also have offences criminalising sexual servitude, including conducting a business involving sexual servitude. The two jurisdictions without specific sexual servitude laws have other criminal offences that could be used to prosecute incidents of trafficking in persons.

215. In 2005, Tasmania introduced the *Sex Industry Offences Act 2005* which provides for an offence (among other things) where a person, for the purpose of inducing any person to provide or continue to provide sexual services in a sexual services business, intimidates, assaults, or threatens to assault any person; or threatens to cause a person to be deported.

Deceptive recruiting

216. Under section 270.7 of the *Criminal Code*, it is an offence for a person to deceive a second person about the fact that their employment or other engagement will involve the provision of sexual services, where the first person intends to induce that second person into an engagement to provide sexual services. This offence is punishable by a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment. Where the offence is committed against a person under 18, the maximum penalty is nine years imprisonment.

217. Most States and Territories also have offences which target deceptive recruiting for sexual services.

People smuggling aggravated by exploitation

218. Section 73.2 of the *Criminal Code*, which came into force in 2002, criminalises people smuggling aggravated by exploitation where persons are smuggled into a foreign country (whether or not via Australia). Where the conduct occurs wholly outside Australia, this offence only applies to Australian citizens and residents. This offence carries a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment.

Trafficking in persons

219. The *Criminal Code Amendment (Trafficking in Persons Offences) Act 2005* created new and revised trafficking in persons offences in the Criminal Code. This comprehensively criminalises trafficking in persons activity, fulfilling Australia's obligations under the *United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* supplementing the *United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*.

Bridging Visa

220. The Australian Government has amended Australia's migration regulations to create a new class of bridging visa. The Bridging F Visa came into effect on 1 January 2004 and allows peoples who could assist Australian authorities investigating peoples trafficking to remain in Australia for up to 30 days.

221. If a person is assessed as being able and willing to assist Australian authorities in pursuing the prosecution of a trafficking offence, a Criminal Justice Stay Visa may be granted to cover the period for which their assistance is required. Additionally, victims who, as a result of their contribution to an investigation of the prosecution of people-trafficking offenders, are deemed at risk of harm if they return to their home country may be eligible for a temporary or permanent Witness Protection (Trafficking) Visa.

Support for victims of trafficking

222. Since 1 January 2004, a comprehensive support package has been in place in Australia for victims of trafficking. Suspected victims who are granted a Bridging F Visa (described above) receive intensive support for the period of the Visa's validity or until they wish to leave Australia, whichever occurs first. A range of services is available including \$300 for the purchase of immediate essentials such as clothing and toiletries, secure temporary accommodation, living and food allowances, access to Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, and access to legal services. Victims who are subsequently granted a Criminal Justice Stay Visa can continue to receive support including Special Benefit and Rent Assistance, assistance with securing long-term accommodation (provision for bond and rent advance), \$700 for the purchase of essential furniture, continuing access to the Medicare and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, access to legal services and access to employment and training opportunities (English language skills, budgeting skills and vocational training).

223. The Australian Government is also implementing a re-integration assistance project for victims of trafficking who return to their country of origin, and is working together with the International Organization for Migration on this project.

Community awareness

224. The Australian Government has a community awareness strategy to prevent trafficking. The strategy targets victims of trafficking who are working in the sex industry, as well as others who are likely to come into contact with these people - for example, other sex workers, clients, brothel owners and managers, brothel regulators, migration agents, sex worker outreach organisations, and providers of sexual health services.

Law enforcement

225. In October 2003, the Australian Government established a 23-member Transnational and Trafficking Strike Team within the Australian Federal Police (AFP). The Team brings together investigators and specialist analysts to tackle people trafficking and sexual exploitation. The AFP has undertaken over 100 investigations into sexual servitude and slavery-related offences since these offences were introduced in 1999, and over 50 since 1 January 2004.

Australia's overseas aid program

226. Australia's international aid program provides support to help "source" countries tackle primary causes of trafficking and sexual exploitation and better assist victims. Australia supports six anti-trafficking projects in South East Asia as part of a broader package of Australian development assistance worth approximately \$24 million over six years.

(v) Forced labor*Minimum age for employment of children*

227. Most Australian governments have not found it necessary to further legislate for a general minimum age for employment as current law and practice is sufficient to protect children from harmful or exploitative forms of child labour. Most Australian children who work do so at weekends and during school holidays in order to supplement allowances from parents, or to help pay their education expenses. This work also provides important life skills. Australia's sophisticated system of industrial regulation provides a safety net of minimum employment conditions, including health and safety standards.

228. Although the ACT does not legislate for a minimum age of employment, its *Children and Young People Act 1999* does not permit an employer to employ a child under school leaving age (15 years) for more than 10 hours per week. In WA, the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* prohibits, with limited exceptions, children under 15 years of age from being employed. In Victoria, the combined effect of the *Child Employment Act 2003*, the *Community Services Act 1970* and the *Education Act 1958* prevents children from entering into general employment before school leaving age (currently 15 years). Children, generally between the ages of 13-15 years, may engage in "light work" subject to authorisation through a child employment permit. Applications for permits are assessed individually, taking account of the suitability of the employer and any other direct supervisor, nature of the work, types of activities, and hours of work. Employment is prohibited during school hours unless a Ministerial exemption from school attendance has been obtained. The legislation limits hours that may be worked during school terms, outside school terms and starting and finishing times.

229. Legislation in all States and Territories prohibits employment of children under the school leaving age during school hours. The school leaving age is defined by law as 16 in Tasmania, WA and SA, and 15 years in all other States and Territories. From 1 January 2008, WA will make it compulsory for all children to attend school until the end of the year in which they turn 17 years. Victoria has legislated a new school leaving age of 16 years, due to come into effect by 31 December 2007.

Compensation for historical labour injustices towards Indigenous people

230. The Queensland Government is addressing injustices arising from historical controls exercised by the Queensland Government over the labour of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by establishing administrative processes to provide:

- Monetary compensation up to a total of approximately \$40 million to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who worked on Government-run communities between 1975 and 1986, and who were not paid Award Wages for work that they performed, and
- Reparations payments to people who were required to work and had their wages compulsorily managed by the Queensland Government in the period prior to 1976 - \$55.4 million has been allocated for this process

H. Right to liberty and security of the person

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
9, 10, 11			37 (b), (c) and (d)		5 (b)

231. All people in Australia have the right to liberty and security of the person in accordance with the above articles. Several developments are relevant to these rights, including new security measures following 11 September 2001, changes to immigration detention arrangements, and developments within the criminal justice system at the State and Territory level.

(i) Security measures since 11 September 2001

232. Australia has taken steps to enhance the capacity of its domestic law to respond to the new security environment following the terrorist attacks in the United States in September 2001 and London in July 2005.

Counter-radicalisation measures

233. Australia's counter-terrorism strategy recognises that targeting the early stages of radicalisation is an effective means of reducing the threat of home-grown terrorism. Radicalisation processes do not merely exacerbate the terrorist threat in the short term; they also jeopardise social cohesion and harmony, and in the long term threaten the democratic order. The Australian Government adopts whole-of-government strategies that both counter extremism and discrimination while affirming the value of a shared democratic legal order.

234. Violent radical Islam is a thoroughly contemporary phenomenon and has nothing to do with a traditional Islam which forms the belief system of the vast majority of Muslim Australians. As a result, the Australian Government is committed to ensuring that its counter-terrorism strategies reflect the input and concerns of Muslim Australians obtained through community engagement and is not used as a pretext for targeting Muslims or Islam itself.

235. Following the terrorist attacks in London of 7 July 2005, the Prime Minister met with leaders of Australia's Muslim community on 23 August 2005. The meeting issued an important "Statement of Principles" that commits all Australians to work together to protect Australia from intolerance and extremism and promote harmony and understanding.

236. At its September 2005 special meeting, the COAG requested that the Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (MCIMA) develop a National Action Plan for Commonwealth, State and Territory governments based on the Statement of Principles. The National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security seeks to address the underlying causes of terrorism, including the social and economic factors that encourage radicalisation and motivate extremist behaviours, as a wide-ranging preventative approach to counter-terrorism.

237. The Australian Government committed \$5.9 million in 2005–2006 to DIAC to develop the National Action Plan and coordinate related work. In mid-2006 the Australian Government announced a further commitment of \$35 million over four years to continue to address the risk of extremism developing in Australia, and to work against the promotion of violence and intolerance in Australian society.

Legislative developments

238. Summaries of and links to Australian laws to combat terrorism are available at <<http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/agd/www/nationalsecurity.nsf/AllDocs/826190776D49EA90CA256FAB001BA5EA?OpenDocument>>.

239. In July 2002, the Australian Government introduced a package of six pieces of counter-terrorism legislation. The legislation aimed to address critical aspects of the terrorist threat and to create a legal framework to enable the detection and effective prosecution of perpetrators of terrorist activity.

240. HREOC's comments on the 2002 counter-terrorism bills are available at <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/human_rights/terrorism_sub/asio_asis_dsd.html>.

241. In October 2005, the Australian Government introduced a further package of counter-terrorism legislation in the form of the *Anti-Terrorism Act (No 2) 2005* (Cth) which came into force on 28 December 2005. The legislation is aimed at preventing a terrorist attack from occurring and also allowing for evidence to be preserved if a terrorist attack takes place. The Act provides for an expanded definition of a terrorist organisation to include advocating terrorism, new offences of financing terrorist organisations, the power to make control orders and order preventative detention, the power to stop, question and search persons in relation to terrorist offences, the power to obtain information and documents, new and updated offences of sedition, the use of optical surveillance devices in airports and on board aircrafts, amendments to the *Financial Transaction Reports Act 1988* in relation to money laundering and terrorist organisations, and amendments to ASIO (Australian Security Intelligence Organisation) warrant powers.

242. HREOC's comments on the 2005 Anti-Terrorism Bill (which was subsequently amended after a Senate Constitutional and Legal Committee review) are available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/legcon_ctte/terrorism/submissions/sub158.pdf>. The Australian Government's submission to that Committee is available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/legcon_ctte/terrorism/submissions/sub290a_att_a.pdf>.

Amendments to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979 (Cth)

243. The *Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979* (the ASIO Act) was amended in July 2003 to empower ASIO to seek a warrant to question, and in limited circumstances detain, a person who may have information relevant to a terrorism offence. The ASIO Act was also amended in December 2003 in response to practical issues identified by ASIO in the planning and execution of warrants under this regime.

244. There are rigorous requirements and safeguards to ensure that the new powers are exercised reasonably. These include:

- The “issuing authority” of a warrant to question a person must be a federal judge, federal magistrate or another authority prescribed in regulations, and that questioning under a warrant can only take place before a “prescribed authority”, who must have certain judicial experience
- The issuing authority and the Attorney-General must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that issuing the warrant will substantially assist the collection of intelligence that is important in relation to a terrorist offence, and the Attorney-General must also be satisfied that relying on other methods of collecting that intelligence would be ineffective
- If the warrant is to authorise a person’s detention, the Attorney-General must also be satisfied of the need for the person to be brought into custody immediately
- Questioning periods limited to a total of 24 hours (48 hours if an interpreter is present) and, if permitted by the warrant, detention periods to a total of 168 hours
- Access to a lawyer of choice at all times and a requirement that the subject of a warrant be treated with humanity and with respect for human dignity
- Provision for the subject of a warrant to seek a remedy in a federal court in relation to the warrant or the subject’s treatment under the warrant, or to make a complaint to the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security or to the Commonwealth Ombudsman
- That the subject of a warrant must be at least 16 years of age to be questioned or detained, and a special regime with additional safeguards for young persons between 16 and 18 years of age, and
- Offences with a penalty of up to two years imprisonment for officials who contravene safeguards

Bail presumptions

245. The *Anti-Terrorism Act 2004* inserted new provision 15AA into the *Crimes Act 1914*. This section provides for a presumption against the granting of bail to persons charged with or convicted of terrorism offences, unless exceptional circumstances justifying bail can be established.

246. Bail is a complex area where courts have traditionally had considerable discretion. The provision is faithful to this approach, preserving judicial discretion by leaving it to the courts to determine what “exceptional circumstances” means in each case.

Investigating terrorism offences

247. The *Crimes Act 1914* was amended to extend the fixed-time for questioning arrested suspects from a total of 12 hours up to 24 hours.

248. The automatic initial investigation period for “terrorism offences” remains at the same level as for all other offences, namely four hours (or two hours for minors and Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander Australians). However, investigating officials may now apply to a judicial officer for an extension of the investigation period for a further 20 hours. If the full amount of time is judicially authorised in any particular case, the maximum amount of time an arrested person can be detained and questioned would be 24 hours - four hours initially and another 20 hours via a single or multiple extension(s).

249. An extension can only be granted if a judicial officer is satisfied of a number of matters, including that further detention is necessary to preserve or obtain evidence or complete the investigation and the investigation is being conducted properly and without delay. The suspect or his or her legal representative must also be given an opportunity to make representations about the extension application. If a magistrate or other judicial officer decides an extension should be authorised, that extension does not have to be for the full 20 hours - it can be for any amount of time less than 20 hours.

Preventative detention under the Anti-Terrorism Act (No 2) 2005 (Cth)

250. The *Criminal Code* (Cth) has been amended to provide for the power for AFP officers to preventatively detain a person who it is suspected, on reasonable grounds, will engage in a terrorist act, or possesses a thing connected with the preparation for or engagement in a terrorist act, or has done an act in preparation for a terrorist act, and making the order will substantially assist in preventing a terrorist act from occurring. A preventative detention order will only be made where it is reasonably necessary to detain the person to prevent the terrorist act.

251. Initial orders under the Commonwealth legislation may be made for a maximum period of 24 hours, including any extensions. They may be continued for up to a further 24 hours, but the total period of detention must be no more than 48 hours after the person is first taken into custody.

252. An initial order will be able to be made by a senior member of the AFP. A continuing order will only be able to be made by a judge, a Federal Magistrate, a former judicial officer or Deputy President of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (who is a legal practitioner). The President of the AAT, who will also be able to issue a continuing order, must be a Judge of the Federal Court. In both cases the person making the order must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that making the order would substantially assist in preventing an imminent terrorist act from occurring or preserve evidence of a recent terrorist attack.

253. There is provision for some contact with family members and others while detained. A detainee may telephone a family member and an employer or employee to inform them that he or she is safe. A detainee over 16 but under 18 can also have contact of two hours at a time with both of his or her parents or guardians unless one of those people is subject to a prohibited contact order. A prohibited contact order means that the AFP has determined that a person with whom the detainee would normally be allowed contact presents a risk to action being taken to prevent a terrorist act occurring or to preserve evidence, or for the safety of other people, amongst other things.

254. A person may also have contact with a lawyer to discuss bringing a complaint to the Ombudsman, a complaint in relation to the conduct of a police officer under relevant legislation, proceedings in a Federal Court to challenge the lawfulness of the preventative detention, or a challenge to the decision to make a preventative detention order in the AAT.

255. Further information about Australia's national security legislation is available at: <<http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/>>.

256. Information on legislation introducing control orders is located below at paragraphs 296-298 concerning freedom of movement, and sedition offences are addressed at paragraphs 322-324 in relation to freedom of opinion and expression.

State and Territories counter-terrorism legislation and preventative detention

257. In September 2005, COAG agreed to develop nationally consistent legislation to facilitate the investigation by Australian law enforcement agencies of terrorist conduct.

258. Following the COAG decision, in addition to the Commonwealth enacting preventative detention legislation (paragraphs 250-256 refer), the States and Territories developed legislation for preventative detention for up to 14 days.

259. The relevant State and Territory legislation is listed below:

- *Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 (NSW)*
- *Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003 (VIC)*
- *Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005 (Qld)*
- *Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2006 (WA)*
- *Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005 (SA)*
- *Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005 (TAS)*
- *Terrorism (Extraordinary Temporary Powers) Act 2006 (ACT)*, and
- *Terrorism (Emergency Powers) Act (NT)*

260. In addition, the States and Territories amended their existing legislation in order to improve law enforcement agencies' ability to combat the threat of terrorism by providing stop and search powers and the authority to enter and search, move vehicles, cordon designated areas and give directions to public bodies. The State and Territory legislation contains numerous and robust safeguards, similar to those contained in the Commonwealth legislation.

(ii) Immigration detention

261. It is the fundamental right of each country to determine which non-citizens are admitted to its territory and the conditions under which they are permitted to remain.

262. The *Migration Act 1958* requires that all unlawful non-citizens who are in the Australian migration zone must be detained and, unless they are granted permission to remain in Australia, must be removed as soon as practicable. Those detained include people who have:

- Arrived in Australia without a visa
- Overstayed their visa, or
- Had their visa cancelled, as may be the case where a visa holder has breached their visa conditions or has failed to satisfy the character test

In so doing, Australia fully complies with its obligations under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

263. People being held in immigration detention have broken Australian laws, either by seeking to enter Australia without authority or, having entered legally, failing to comply with their visa conditions. Detention provides the Australian Government with effective access to unlawful non-citizens so as to process their claims to remain in Australia (including protection claims) and, if those claims are unsuccessful, to remove such persons as soon as reasonably practicable. Australia does not have a policy of detaining people because they are seeking refugee status. Some of the people taken into immigration detention choose to lodge claims for refugee status after they are detained and, of this group, those who are found to be refugees are, subject to health and character checks, released immediately. Only about 15 per cent of people taken into immigration detention seek refugee status and the vast majority of people claiming such status are not detained while their claims are processed.

264. Amendments made to the Migration Act in June 2005 ensure that families with children in detention are placed in the community, under community detention arrangements, with conditions set to meet their individual needs. These amendments:

- State that the Parliament of Australia affirms as a principle that a minor shall only be detained as a measure of last resort

- Provide a non-compellable power for the Minister to specify alternative arrangements for a person's detention and to impose conditions to apply to the detention of that person
- Provide a non-compellable power for the Minister to grant a visa to a person who is in detention; and
- Require the Secretary of DIAC to report to the Commonwealth Ombudsman on persons who have been detained for two years or more, and for the Ombudsman to provide assessments and recommendations relating to those persons to the Minister, including statements to be tabled

265. Further amendments to the Migration Act announced in June 2005 require the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to make a decision on an application for a protection visa within 90 days of application. Likewise, reviews by the Refugee Review Tribunal must occur within 90 days. Cases where time limits are not met are the subject of periodic reports to the Parliament of Australia.

Access to legal advice

266. Pursuant to section 256 of the Migration Act, where a person is in immigration detention, the person responsible for his or her immigration detention shall, at the request of the person in immigration detention, afford him or her all reasonable facilities for obtaining legal advice or taking legal proceedings in relation to his or her immigration detention. Upon arrival at an immigration detention centre detainees are informed, as part of the induction process, of their right to receive visits from their legal representatives, contact them by phone and to receive and send material to them via fax or post.

267. DIAC encourages legal representatives to make appropriate arrangements prior to visiting clients in an immigration detention facility. This ensures that an appropriate meeting room is available and the detainee client is aware of the appointment. The Department also facilitates access through the provision of mail, telephone and fax services.

268. The *Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme* (IAAAS) provides free advice and assistance to asylum seekers, including unaccompanied minors, who are in immigration detention. The service includes assistance with the preparation, lodgement and presentation of applications for visas through the primary decision and merits review stages. The service also includes the assistance of interpreters, if required.

Length of detention

269. In 2004, the High Court of Australia confirmed that it is constitutional and lawful under the Migration Act to keep a person in detention where it may not be practical to remove the person for some time (*Minister for Immigration & Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs v. Al Khafaji* [2004] HCA 38 and *Al-Kateb v Godwin* [2004] HCA 37). Nevertheless, the

Australian Government seeks to minimise the period of time people remain in immigration detention. A person who is granted a visa becomes a lawful non-citizen, and is released from immigration detention.

270. In June 2005, the Australian Government announced several changes to the Migration Act, which have had a significant impact on the issue of lengthy detention in Australia: Parliament has declared detention of children and families is a last resort; all primary protection visa decisions and reviews by the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) need to occur within 90 days of application; and where a person has been in detention for two years or more there is a requirement for DIAC to report every six months to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman assesses that report and provides his assessment to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship who must then table the assessment in Parliament.

271. A range of factors contribute to extended detention periods including difficulties involved in returning people to a number of countries. These difficulties may relate to:

- Circumstances which are not conducive to a safe and orderly return - e.g. a state of warfare or civil unrest
- Difficulty confirming identity and related problems in obtaining travel documentation
- Ongoing litigation relating to immigration and visa issues
- The absence of any agreed protocols for return, and
- Difficulties in effecting transit through third countries

272. Another important change introduced effective from 11 May 2005 was the new Removal Pending Bridging Visa (RPBV) which provides greater flexibility to release from immigration detention a small number of people who have spent an extended period in detention. The RPBV is part of the Australian Government's commitment to constantly review the detention caseload to identify cases where alternative arrangements could be considered. The visa is aimed at those detainees who, for a variety of reasons outside of their own control, cannot be removed in the near future. Other alternatives which may be appropriate include Immigration Residential Housing and care arrangements with State agencies.

Conditions in immigration detention centres

273. The Australian Government has a strong commitment to responding to the needs of people who are placed in immigration detention. The Australian Government's commitment to ensure that detainees receive appropriate care is evidenced through the detention services provider's adherence to a contracted schedule of Immigration Detention Standards (IDS), which outline the quality of life expected in immigration detention facilities. These standards take into consideration individual needs such as gender, culture and the age of detainees.

274. Immigration detention facilities are managed in accordance with the following Core Operational Principles:

- Immigration detention is mandatory “administrative detention”, it is not indefinite or correctional detention
- People in immigration detention must be treated fairly and reasonably within the law
- Detention service policies and practices are founded in the principle of duty of care
- Families with children will be placed in facility-based detention only as a last resort
- People in facility-based immigration detention are to be provided with timely access to quality accommodation, health services, food and other necessary services
- People are detained for the shortest practicable time, especially in facility-based immigration detention
- People are carefully and regularly case-managed as to where they are to be located in the detention services network and the services they require
- The assessment of risk factors underpins operational decision making
- Detention service operations are subject to continuous improvement and sound governance

275. Qualified medical personnel identify the health care needs of all people as soon as possible after they are taken into immigration detention. Medical treatment is provided onsite at immigration detention centres by qualified doctors and registered nurses to support the health needs of each individual and if clinically required, people are referred for hospital or specialist care provided in the community. An enhanced mental health service has been implemented in immigration detention centres which includes formal mental health screening of all people on arrival at the centre, referral to a multidisciplinary mental health team for diagnosis, development of a specific mental health care plan and ongoing care. Mental health reassessment is undertaken periodically or at the request of the individual or another party. All centres have a visiting psychiatrist attend on a regular basis. If clinically required, a person in immigration detention can be referred to hospital or to a specialist offsite in the community for mental health treatment.

276. The Detention Health Advisory Group was established in March 2006 and plays a major role in providing DIAC with advice regarding the design, implementation and monitoring of improvements in health care for people in immigration detention. The Group is made up of expert representation from organisations that include psychiatry, psychology, public health, dentistry, refugees, nursing, general practice and the Ombudsman’s Office, which has observer status.

277. A number of programs are run within the immigration detention facilities that contribute to detainee development and quality of life, in accordance with the IDS. These include education services such as English language instruction, cultural classes and sporting activities. All people in immigration detention are free to practise their religion of choice, and religious services are conducted within the centres on special observance days.

278. The conditions of detention for immigration purposes are subject to administrative review. In February 2001, an Immigration Detention Advisory Group was established to provide advice to the Minister on the appropriateness and adequacy of services, accommodation and facilities at immigration detention facilities. The group is comprised of individuals selected for expertise on immigration and humanitarian issues. The group has unfettered access to all Australian immigration detention centres. Since its formation, the Group has visited all Australian immigration detention centres collectively and/or individually at least once per year.

279. Additionally, a permanent working party of senior departmental officers meets regularly to undertake an administrative review of all detention cases.

Release of children from immigration detention

280. The CROC has welcomed changes to the Migration Act made in June 2005,⁷ which now states that “the Parliament affirms as a principle that a minor child shall only be detained as a measure of last resort” (section 4AA). The amendment indicates that the principle relates to the holding of children in traditional detention arrangements. The principle would indicate that, where detention of a child is required under the Act, it should, when and wherever possible, take place in the community, under a residence determination arrangement (now known as Community Detention).

281. The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship now has an additional non-compellable, non-delegable power to specify alternative detention arrangements for a person and the conditions which will apply to that person’s detention. The objective of these amendments is to ensure that families with children in immigration detention will be placed in the community, under flexible community detention arrangements, with conditions set to meet their individual circumstances.

282. On 29 July 2005, all families with children were released from immigration detention facilities into community detention. All families with children who now enter into immigration detention will be placed in the community under Community Detention arrangements as soon as possible, following a decision by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship. All families with children who are placed in Immigration Residential Housing or alternative temporary detention in the community will be referred to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship for a decision of possible placement in Community Detention.

⁷ Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding Observations on Australia’s Second and Third Reports under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2005.

283. The Australian Government works with NGOs to make sure that, when a person is placed in Community Detention, they are properly supported. The NGOs are funded by the Australian Government to source housing for these persons and allow payment of their bills and other living expenses. The NGOs also provide case officers to assist people in Community Detention and to ensure they have access to the relevant services and social support networks. Community Detention is a community based detention option granted by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship. Although it is a non-compellable and non-delegable power, where families with children are detained, the Prime Minister has indicated that decisions regarding placements under Community Detention should be made within four weeks. The department has developed guidelines and procedures to support this timeframe for families. The department has published a fact sheet on Community Detention (previously known as Residence Determination) which is currently available on DIAC's website: <<http://www.immi.gov.au>>.

284. When families are first detained they may initially be placed in Immigration Residential Housing Centre (IRH) while their primary processing is completed and assessments take place on their prospect for removal and while the Minister considers placing the family into the community under Community Detention arrangements. IRH clients are provided with housing style accommodation in a community setting, with the opportunity to live a more self-sufficient lifestyle while they remain formally in immigration detention.

(iii) Aboriginal deaths in custody

285. Of the total of 54 deaths in prison and police custody in Australia in 2005, 15 deaths were of Indigenous people, which is the equal lowest number recorded by the Australian Institute of Criminology since 1996.

286. While rates for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous deaths in prison custody have fluctuated between one and six deaths per 1,000 prisoners since 1982, the rates for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous deaths have become more similar since 1999 and both have begun to trend downward since that time. In 2005, the rate of Indigenous deaths in prison custody was 1.2 per 1,000 Indigenous prisoners, compared with 1.4 per 1,000 non-Indigenous prisoners. There were no deaths of Indigenous prisoners from apparent unnatural causes in 2005-06.

287. However, Indigenous Australians remain overrepresented in the criminal justice system. Indigenous prisoners represented 24 per cent of the total prisoner population at 30 June 2006, the highest proportion at 30 June since 1996. As at 30 June 2006, the age standardised rate of Indigenous imprisonment was 1,668 per 100,000 adult Indigenous population, 13 times more than the non-Indigenous rate.

288. Despite a young and fast growing Indigenous population, rates of detention for Indigenous young people aged 10-17 have been in decline in the last decade (in 2005 down by 25 per cent compared to 1994 figures). Yet the over-representation of Indigenous young people in detention

using the rate ratio (Indigenous rate divided by the non-Indigenous rate) remains high and has not decreased since 1994. At 30 June 2005, Indigenous young people were 23 times more likely than non-Indigenous young people to be in juvenile detention.

289. For more information on Indigenous imprisonment issues, see Annex 1: Statistical data and human rights indicators.

(iv) Deprivation of liberty and prison conditions

290. A number of changes have occurred in the laws of States and Territories relating to deprivation of liberty in the criminal justice system:

- In Queensland, the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* allows for supervised release or preventive detention of certain prisoners beyond the term previously imposed on them by a court as punishment for their offences. The Supreme Court must be satisfied, after considering psychiatric assessments of the level of risk that the prisoner will commit another serious sexual offence if released, that the prisoner would be a serious danger to the community unless a continuing detention order or supervision order is made. A prisoner's continued detention is subject to regular annual review by the Supreme Court and is appealable to the Court of Appeal.
- In WA, the *Dangerous Sexual Offenders Act 2006* provides that the Director of Public Prosecutions can apply to the Supreme Court for a continuing detention order or a continuing supervision order for serious sexual offenders who are under a sentence of imprisonment for a serious sexual offence and who continue to present a serious risk to the safety of the community. The Court must have regard to psychiatric reports, other psychiatric, medical or psychological assessments, the success of the person's rehabilitation, the likelihood of the person re-offending, and the need to protect members of the community from the risk of the person re-offending. The Act sets out the conditions of the supervision order, and provides for appeals and amendments to the supervision orders.
- In Victoria and the NT, the common law defence of insanity has been replaced with a statutory defence of mental impairment, with release now determined by the courts according to criteria prescribed under law, rather than at the Executive's discretion.

291. A number of developments at State and Territory level have also occurred in relation to conditions in detention:

- In NSW, Custody Managers have been appointed to all Police stations to educate other police officers and to ensure that the human rights of all persons detained are upheld.
- In Victoria, an independent Corrections Inspectorate was created in 2003 to monitor correctional services. A purpose built, 600-bed Remand Centre was opened in April 2006, which maximises the separation of unsentenced prisoners from sentenced prisoners, and includes a Young Adults Unit to separately house more vulnerable

prisoners, including younger prisoners. Further, a purpose built, 300-bed correctional programs centre was also opened in early 2006, which provides an intensive level of treatment and offender management activity, including sex offender treatment programs, drug and alcohol treatment programs, violent offender treatment programs, and vocational services programs for prisoners.

- A new pre-release centre for women prisoners was opened in WA in June 2004. Services for women prisoners allow infants to stay with their mothers where this is in the child's best interest and can be managed within the prison. Children up to the age of four years are allowed to live with their mothers, and extended visits with older children are also allowed.

(v) Young offenders and detention

292. A range of initiatives have been taken by governments across Australia to improve the juvenile justice system and to ensure that children in detention are treated with dignity and respect for their rights. These include diversionary programs, reforms to regulation of juvenile detention facilities and the development of new facilities. Specific details of programs are available in Australia's most recent report under CROC.

I. Right to freedom of movement, right of access to any public place, expulsion and extradition

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
12, 13		3	10	15(4)	5(d-i), (d-ii) and (f)

293. Australia respects the rights of people in Australia under the above articles. The following relevant developments have occurred in recent years:

(i) Measures under the Anti-Terrorism Act (No 2) 2005

Powers to stop, question and search persons in relation to a terrorist act

294. Under the new Anti-Terrorism legislation referred to above at paragraphs 239-256, the police may stop a person who is in a Commonwealth place (an area about which the Commonwealth Government may make laws to ensure the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth under the Constitution), or in a Commonwealth place in a prescribed security zone (so prescribed by the Attorney-General for 28 days) to search for a thing related to a terrorist act or to prevent a terrorist act from occurring.

295. A police officer may stop and detain a person under this Act only for as long as it takes to reasonably search a person under the section. A police officer may search or frisk a person, search anything under his or her immediate control, any vehicle or anything which the police

officer suspects on reasonable grounds that the person brought into the Commonwealth place, and may confiscate any object that the officer suspects has a terrorist purpose. A person should not be subjected to greater indignity than is reasonable and necessary to conduct the search and may request that the object seized be returned within 90 days.

Control orders

296. A control order can be made to last for up to twelve months (three months for persons between the ages of 16-18) and places certain restrictions on the person against whom the order is made. Such restrictions include, amongst others, a prohibition or restriction on the person being at specified areas or places; a requirement that the person remain at specified premises between specified times each day, or on specified days; a requirement that the person wear a tracking device; a prohibition or restriction on the person accessing or using specified forms of telecommunication or other technology (including the Internet); a requirement that the person report to specified persons at specified times and places; a requirement that the person allow impressions of his or her fingerprints to be taken; and a requirement that the person participate in counselling or education if he or she so consents.

297. A control order is made by a court on the application of the AFP with the consent of the Attorney-General. Control orders must be issued by a court, which makes an interim control order only if it is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that making the order would substantially assist in preventing a terrorist act; or that the person has provided training to, or received training from, a listed terrorist organisation. The Court also has to be satisfied on the balance of probabilities that each of the obligations, prohibitions and restrictions to be imposed on the person by the order is reasonably necessary, and reasonably appropriate and adapted, for the purpose of protecting the public from a terrorist act.

298. The AFP can seek to confirm an “interim” control order. If they decide to do this, they must notify the issuing court and the person who is the subject of the interim control order. That person will be given a summary of the grounds on which the orders were made along with the interim control order, all the documents that were provided to the Attorney-General and the court in the application process for the interim order on the person, and any details that are necessary to ensure the person can understand and respond to the substance of those facts. The person and their legal representative may attend the court and make submissions as to why there are no grounds to make and confirm THE order when the court decides whether to confirm the order.

(ii) Refoulement and expulsion

299. Asylum seekers in Australia have access to merits review by an independent Tribunal if their visa application is refused. They also have access to judicial review of the Tribunal’s decision in the case of legal error. Section 417 of the Migration Act provides the Minister with a non-delegable, non-compellable power to substitute a decision of the Refugee Review Tribunal that an applicant is not a person to whom Australia has protection obligations under the Refugees

Convention with a more favourable decision if the Minister considers it in the public interest to do so. There are similar powers that can be used to substitute the decisions of other relevant Tribunals. Ministerial Guidelines introduced in 1999 establish a framework to assist departmental officers to identify the circumstances in which cases are to be referred to the Minister for possible use of his public interest powers under the Migration Act.⁸ The guidelines provide the policy framework for assessing cases for any unique or exceptional circumstances where it may be in the public interest for the Minister to intervene to grant a visa. Most notably, they refer to Australia's international obligations under the CAT, the CROC, and the ICCPR as relevant considerations in making this determination.

300. Where people found not to be refugees remain in Australia awaiting removal, DIAC closely monitors developments in relation to their case in order to raise with the Minister any cases which may warrant a fresh assessment. Since September 2005, this process has been further strengthened by the development of a pre-removal checking process, which requires a review of the case prior to removal, including assessment of Australia's international obligations and review of any new country information not previously considered. In cases where the applicant is subject to removal, section 417 of the Migration Act provides an additional mechanism to ensure Australia's compliance with its *non-refoulement* obligations under the CAT and the ICCPR.

301. Similarly, visa cancellation procedures also take account of obligations under the CAT, ICCPR and the CROC.

(iii) Disability access

302. The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) (DD Act) seeks to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against people on the basis of disability in a range of areas, including in employment, education, accommodation, the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs, and access to public premises and provision of goods and services.

303. Section 31(1) of the DD Act enables the Attorney-General to formulate disability standards in relation to a range of areas covered by the DD Act. To date, the Attorney-General has formulated two disability standards that apply throughout Australia.

304. The *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport* (Transport Standards) commenced on 23 October 2002. The Transport Standards specify how the objects of the DD Act are to be achieved in the provision of access to public transport. The Transport

⁸ The Ministerial guidelines for the identification of unique or exceptional cases where it may be in the public interest to substitute a more favourable decision under s345/351/391/417/454/501J of the Migration Act 1958. The Guidelines were signed by the Minister on 31 March 1999 and have effect from that date. These guidelines elaborated on previous guidelines and were reissued in 2003.

Standards establish minimum accessibility requirements to be met by providers and operators of public transport conveyances, infrastructure and premises, in accordance with a compliance timetable specified in the Standards.

305. The *Disability Standards for Education* (Education Standards) came into effect on 18 August 2005. The Education Standards clarify and elaborate the existing obligations of education providers under the DD Act in six key areas: enrolment; participation; curriculum development, accreditation and delivery; student support services; and elimination of harassment and victimisation.

306. The Australian Government is undertaking work on a possible Disability Standard on Access to Premises, to better align building regulation with existing DD Act obligations.

307. Specific initiatives are also in place with respect to telecommunications:

- The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has the power to make standards relating to specified customer equipment designed to cater for people with disabilities - Standard AS/ACIF S040:2001 (*Requirements for Customer Equipment for use with the Standard Telephone Service-Features for special needs of persons with disabilities*) was issued on 15 March 2002.
- Obligations fall on telecommunications carriers and other service providers with respect to the provision of specialty equipment to people with disabilities.
- The National Relay Service (NRS) is a telephone relay service that allows Australians who are deaf, or who have a hearing, speech or communication impairment, to communicate with anyone who uses a standard telephone. The NRS is an Australian Government initiative provided under contracts and is funded by a levy on eligible telecommunications carriers.

Initiatives of States and Territories

308. Anti-discrimination legislation and policies, including disability discrimination provisions, also exist in all States and Territories. For example, the Tasmanian Government's *Disability Framework for Action* (2005-2010) includes undertakings to ensure that Government establishes inclusive and consultative relationships with people with disability (in developing, implementing and evaluating services), and through the establishment of the Premier's Disability Advisory Council, which provides a forum for ongoing consultation on whole-of-government disability issues.

309. Part 5 of the Western Australian *Disability Services Act 1993* requires public authorities to develop and implement Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs). This regime is unique to WA and is considered highly innovative in the rest of the world. DAIPs, through six desired outcome areas, aim to ensure that people with disability can access public authorities' services, facilities and programs.

J. Right to privacy, right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
17, 18			14, 16		5(d) (vii)

310. The right to privacy and freedom of thought, conscience and religion are strongly upheld in Australia. Recent developments which relate to Australia's obligations under the above articles are detailed below.

(i) Privacy

Public sector

311. Since 1997, five Australian jurisdictions, apart from the Commonwealth, have introduced privacy legislation for the protection of personal information held by the public sector at the State level. The remaining States have administrative schemes in place. These legislative and administrative schemes reflect the existing Commonwealth Information Privacy Principles set out in the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* (the Privacy Act).

Private sector

312. Since 2001, the Privacy Act has regulated the handling of personal information by private sector organisations through the introduction of the National Privacy Principles (NPPs). The NPPs prescribe minimum standards for the collection, holding, use, disclosure and transfer of personal information by private sector organisations. The NPPs are intended to ensure Australians can be confident that information held about them by private sector organisations will be stored, used and disclosed in a fair and appropriate way. Under the Privacy Act business and industry may choose to be bound by the NPPs as described in the Privacy Act, or incorporate them directly into a binding business or industry-wide privacy code. As at July 2006, two industry based privacy codes had been approved by the Privacy Commissioner, with another five being drafted for consideration.

Protection of human genetic information

313. The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) and the Australian Health Ethics Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council undertook an Inquiry into the Protection of Human Genetic Information in Australia from 2001 to 2003, and reported to Parliament in May 2003 (ALRC 96 *Essentially Yours*). The report, available at <<http://www.alrc.gov.au>>, surveys the existing law and practice in Australia, and contains the results of the extensive consultations held throughout the inquiry, and final recommendations for change to law and practice. The Australian Government response, which adopted many of the Report's recommendations, is available at <<http://www.ag.gov.au>>.

(ii) Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

314. As mentioned above at paragraph 52, religious freedom is protected under the Constitution. The Australian Government has also undertaken a number of initiatives to support harmonious relationships between people of different cultures and religious backgrounds in Australia, in

order to promote and protect the freedom of thought, conscience and religion. For example, the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's Report, *Conviction with Compassion: A Report on Freedom of Religion and Belief*, was tabled in Parliament on 27 November 2000 and is available at <<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/Religion/Relindex.htm>>. The Australian Government's response is available at <<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/Religion/RelResponse.pdf>>.

315. During 2003 and 2004, HREOC undertook the project *Ismaξ - Listen: National consultations on eliminating prejudice against Arab and Muslim Australians*, with the aim of exploring whether Arab and Muslim Australians were experiencing discrimination and vilification post September 11.

316. As discussed at paragraphs 236-237, the Australian Government has, together with the Muslim Community Reference Group, developed a National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security. The Australian Government is funding a range of initiatives under the Plan to address extremism and intolerance in the Australian community. These initiatives will promote greater understanding and tolerance in the wider community in relation to different religions and beliefs.

317. The Australian Government is spending some \$20.5 million over the next four years on the refocused *Living in Harmony* program to enhance mutual respect between Australians and promote community participation. The program does this through four components:

- Funding for local community projects that develop activities at the local level
- A partnerships program which works with major organisations and peak bodies on projects of national and strategic significance
- Ad hoc grants that respond to crisis and emerging issues
- A public information strategy that includes the annual celebration of Harmony Day on 21 March which coincides with the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

K. Freedom of opinion and expression

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
19, 20			12, 13		4(a) and (c), 5(d)(viii)

318. In accordance with Australia's obligations under the above articles, all Australians are free to express themselves, subject only to appropriate limitations as provided for under these Articles. Recent developments concerning these rights are outlined below.

(i) Prohibition of incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence

319. Some NGOs have raised concerns about the role of the internet in promoting racial and religious hatred.

320. The *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Telecommunications Offences and Other Measures) Act (No 2) 2004* introduced an offence dealing with the use of a carriage service in a way which is intentionally menacing, harassing or offensive. This offence applies to both the use of a carriage service in a menacing, harassing or offensive way, and to the use of a carriage service to communicate content which is menacing, harassing or offensive. The offence provides that *reasonable persons* must regard the use of the carriage service, given all the circumstances, as menacing, harassing or offensive. This allows community standards and common sense to determine whether the conduct is in fact menacing, harassing or offensive.

321. Examples of the type of use of a carriage service the proposed offence may cover include usage that would make another person apprehensive as to their safety or well-being or the safety of their property, usage that encourages or incites violence, and usage that vilifies persons on the basis of their race or religion. The offence does not capture internet material advertising or advocating peaceful protest action.

(ii) Sedition offences under the Anti-Terrorism Act (No 2) 2005

322. The new Commonwealth Anti-Terrorism legislation referred to above has updated outmoded offences of sedition to make it an offence to, amongst other offences, urge violence against the community on the basis of race, religion, nationality or political opinion; urge a person to assist an enemy of Australia; or urge a person to engage in armed conflict against Australia with seditious intent. The offences do not apply to anyone who tries in good faith to show that the Sovereign, the Governor-General, the Governor of a State, the Administrator of a Territory or an advisor of any of these people are mistaken in any of his or her counsels, policies or actions. Nor do they apply to someone who points out in good faith errors or defects of the Australian Government, the Constitution or legislation, with a view to reforming those errors or defects, or urges in good faith another person to attempt to lawfully procure a change to any matter established by law, policy or practice in the Commonwealth, a State, a Territory or another country. They also do not apply to a person who points out in good faith any matters that are producing, or have a tendency to produce, feelings of ill-will or hostility between different groups in order to bring about the removal of those matters, does anything in good faith in connection with an industrial dispute or an industrial matter, or publishes in good faith a report or commentary about a matter of public interest.

323. The right to freedom of expression under article 19(2) of the ICCPR may be subject to restrictions provided by law, and that are necessary for the protection of national security and public order. The Australian Government is satisfied that restrictions on communication imposed by the measures outlined above are necessary for the protection of national security. The Australian Government is also satisfied that the defence of "good faith" will adequately ensure that people who make comments without seeking to incite violence or hatred will not be

deprived of the freedom of speech. Indeed, subsection 80.2(5) is in part implementation of article 20 of the ICCPR which requires State parties to prohibit advocacy that incites violence, discrimination or hostility.

324. An independent review of the offence of sedition has been conducted by the Australian Law Reform Commission. Information on the inquiry is available at <<http://www.alrc.gov.au/inquiries/current/sedition/about.html>>.

L. Right to peaceful assembly and association

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
21, 22	8		15		4(b), 5(d)(ix)

325. In accordance with Australia's obligations under the above articles, all people in Australia have the right to participate in peaceful assembly and association and are free to do so in a variety of ways, subject to appropriate limitations recognised by these articles. Recent developments relevant to these rights include:

(i) New Commonwealth offence of associating with a member of a terrorist organisation

326. Some NGOs have raised concerns about the new Commonwealth offence of associating with a member of a terrorist organisation. This was introduced in the *Anti-Terrorism Act (No 2) 2005* as an offence under section 102.8 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*. HREOC's submissions on the Bill enacting this offence are available at <<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/legal/submissions/terrorism.html>>.

327. However, the ICCPR provides for restrictions on the freedom of association where those restrictions are prescribed by law and where they are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. The association offence would only restrict association where that association provides support to a terrorist organisation and the person *intends* that the support assist the terrorist organisation to expand or to continue to exist. This restriction is a reasonable one in relation to the legitimate purpose of disrupting mechanisms which support the existence or expansion of terrorist organisations, and necessary for national security and public safety.

(ii) Children and public space

328. Some NGOs have expressed concern that the rights of young people from CALD backgrounds to peaceful assembly are often compromised through being constantly "moved on" by police. They have suggested that "moving on" laws restrict young peoples' opportunity to have a safe and open space to develop their own networks with their peers.

329. Any legal restrictions placed on children's right to associate freely and peacefully assemble are designed to ensure public safety and order, including the safety of children, as well as to prevent children from becoming involved in the criminal justice system.

330. As an example, the Young People in Northbridge policy was introduced in WA in 2003 to address the growing problem of young, unsupervised and often vulnerable children roaming the streets of Perth's main adult entertainment district, Northbridge, at night. The policy applies to primary school aged children during hours of darkness, and young people aged 13 to 15 after 10 pm on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. The policy does not apply to those children and young people who have legitimate reasons for being in Northbridge or are under the immediate care of a parent or a responsible adult. Since the introduction of the policy there are fewer unsupervised children and young people on the streets of Northbridge at night, and fewer children and young people have been apprehended by the police. Thirty five children who are regularly picked up have had access to assistance, along with their families, through a case management system which integrates several government departments including the Community Development, Education and Training, Justice, Housing, and Health Departments.

M. Right to marry and found a family, protection of the family, mother and children

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
23, 24	10		18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 33, 34, 36, 38	4, 5, 11, 12, 13(a), 16	5(d)(iv)

331. The Australian Government supports and respects choices made by Australians in defining their own families, and provides protection to families, women and children in accordance with the articles above. It recognises the many ways in which families create and conduct their lives, inclusively honouring differences of race, ethnicity, culture and religion, and promoting self-sufficiency and social responsibility.

332. Australian legislation provides protection and support for various types of families and households, and, in general, they have access to a wide range of financial and other forms of assistance.

(i) Developments in family law

333. On 10 May 2005, the Australian Government announced major changes to the family law system, and a package of Budget measures costing \$397 million over four years. This was in response to the report *Every Picture Tells a Story*, from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs' Inquiry into child custody arrangements in the event of family separation.

334. The Australian Government is determined to help children to have a meaningful relationship with both parents, reduce the impact of conflict on children, and reduce the emotional and financial costs of family separation on families and the community. The reforms include a network of 65 Family Relationship Centres across Australia, a major increase in funding to services to assist families, and legislative changes to the Family Law Act. A

presumption of joint parental responsibility has been introduced to promote parents consulting together on important parenting decisions such as where a child goes to school or major health issues, however the presumption will not apply in cases of family violence or child abuse.

Definition of marriage

335. The Australian Government believes that same sex relationships should not be given the same legal status as marriage. The Australian Government believes overwhelmingly in the institution of marriage and, in 2004, acted to define in legislation the common understanding in our community of marriage which is “the union of a man and a woman, to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life”. Accordingly amendments were made to the formal definition of marriage in the *Marriage Act 1961* and were passed with bi-partisan support in 2004. The amendments also confirm that Australia will not recognise as valid same-sex marriages entered into in another country. In 2006, the Australian Government took action to disallow the *ACT Civil Unions Act 2006*, which it believed compromised the unique status of marriage.

State and Territory initiatives

336. States and Territories have taken steps to provide greater protection and equality for families. For example, in Victoria, Queensland, ACT and the NT, amendments have been introduced to remove or modify distinctions based on a person’s gender, sexuality or de facto relationship.

(ii) Parenting support services

337. The Australian Government is committed to a national approach to parenting and childhood. It funds initiatives to support and strengthen parenting roles and contribute to the development and well-being of children in their early years. Major initiatives and funding programs include the *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy*, which was allocated \$240 million across four years up until June 2004 and additional funding of \$490 million for the next phase of the Strategy to 2009. Specific initiatives include:

- *Communities for Children*, a whole of community approach to early childhood development in 45 community sites around Australia
- *Early Childhood - Invest to Grow*, which funds resources such as the Australian parenting website and the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children and early childhood programs which aim to build the Australian evidence base in early childhood intervention and prevention
- *Local Answers*, which funds local, small-scale projects that help communities build skills and capacity; and
- *Choice and Flexibility in Child Care*, which provides Australian parents with flexible and innovative child care solutions

338. The Strategy is underpinned by a new comprehensive policy for children, the *National Agenda for Early Childhood*. This framework focuses on prevention and early intervention for children 0-8 years but has a long-term vision to improve outcomes for children into adolescence and beyond. The *National Agenda for Early Childhood* was endorsed by the Australian Government in December 2005 and now guides all Australian Government early childhood policy and program development.

339. State and Territory governments have also established a number of new parenting support services. For example, a confidential telephone information and counselling service to parents and primary care givers on child or youth health, parenting, development or behaviour is available in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, SA, and the ACT. The Victorian Government also provides funding for universal and targeted parenting education for parents and caregivers of children aged 0-18 years.

(iii) Balancing work and family

340. Balancing work and family has become an area of increasing policy interest to the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, as well as within the community more generally. A range of policy approaches, such as the provision of quality child care options, increased family benefits and other support for parents are facilitating choice for parents.

341. Major developments have also occurred in this area as a result of amendments to the Commonwealth *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (WR Act). The WR Act mandates minimum pay and conditions of employment under the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions standard, including entitlements to parental leave, personal/carer's leave and ordinary hours of work. The legislation facilitates negotiation between employers and employees of family-friendly provisions over and above the Standard in collective and individual agreements. The WR Act also prohibits termination of an employee's employment on the basis of family responsibilities.

342. The Victorian Government has signed a *Charter for Work and Family Balance* and an *Action Agenda for Work and Family Balance* to assist in implementing the Charter, setting out a number of initiatives to enhance issues of work and family balance.

343. The OECD undertook an analysis of Australia's work and family policies in the first volume of *Babies and Bosses: Reconciling work and family life* in 2002. The OECD noted that promotes choice for parents over how they meet their work and care arrangements and also encourages employer provided family friendly arrangements as agreed at workplace level.

Family benefits

344. In July 2000, the Australian Government simplified ways of paying family assistance through the Family Tax Benefit (FTB). FTB Part A is designed to assist families with the day-to-day costs of children, and is paid per child and assessed on combined family income. FTB Part B provides extra assistance to families with one main income, including sole parents, and is paid per family with a higher rate for families with a youngest child aged under five.

345. Around 2.2 million families with 4.2 million children benefit from FTB. This represents the vast majority of Australian families with dependent children, although it is not possible to measure the exact take-up of FTB. The average payment of FTB is around \$7,900 per year.

346. Changes announced for 2006-07 increased the FTB Part A maximum rate threshold to \$40,000 allowing families to keep more of each dollar they earn before their family payments are affected. The taper rate has been reduced to 20 per cent resulting in improvements in Effective Marginal Tax Rates faced by families.

347. In 2002, the Australian Government introduced the *Baby Bonus*. The Bonus was a payment of \$500 per year for up to five years to assist families with the cost of raising children. From 1 July 2004, a universal lump sum Maternity Payment of \$3,000 replaced the Maternity Allowance and the Baby Bonus. The Maternity Payment increased to \$4,000 from 1 July 2006 and will increase to \$5,000 from 1 July 2008. The Maternity Payment recognises the extra costs associated with the birth or adoption of a child, including the loss of income while on unpaid maternity leave.

348. Other recent Australian Government initiatives include:

- A one-off lump sum Maternity Immunisation Allowance of \$222.30, which is paid for children aged 18-24 months who are fully immunised or where an approved immunisation exemption has been obtained, and
- The extension of the Large Family Supplement of \$255.50 per year to families with three or more children

Child care

349. Child care is an essential element in helping families to balance their work and parenting roles, and provides a stimulating and nurturing environment for children. The Australian Government has a strong commitment to supporting families with access to quality child care and assisting families with the cost of that care. The Australian Government has spent over \$10 billion on child care since the introduction of Child Care Benefit in July 2000.

350. Through the Child Care Support Program, the Australian Government also provides operational support subsidies to some child care services, promoting greater flexibility and access in the sector in areas of high need. This includes operational support funding, which is a contribution to service providers' administrative costs and sustainability assistance funding. This assists eligible services in rural, remote, or inner or outer regional areas that may have small or fluctuating numbers of children in care.

351. Government funding is also provided to assist children with special needs, those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, Indigenous children and South Sea Islander children, to access and participate in child care.

352. In addition to the Commonwealth's Child Care Benefit scheme, some States and Territories have introduced their own initiatives, for example, a NT Government subsidy to all licensed child care services.

(iv) Domestic violence

353. Reflecting the seriousness with which the Australian Government takes domestic violence, the *Australia Says NO* campaign was launched in June 2004. The \$20 million national campaign reinforced the message that violence against women is totally unacceptable and was disseminated to all households through a broad cross-section of media. It also established a 24-hour Australian Government-funded confidential helpline, which provides immediate assistance by experienced counsellors.

354. Between 1997 and June 2005, the Australian Government also committed \$50 million to the *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence Program* (PADV). PADV aimed to reduce domestic violence and violence perpetrated against children. An evaluation of the first phase of PADV found that children suffer great harm from living in violent households with effects similar to those from child abuse and akin to post-traumatic stress disorder. It is estimated that child abuse and domestic violence co-exist in between 30 per cent and 60 per cent of cases and that greater integration and collaboration between the justice sector and children's, men's and women's services improves women's and children's safety, makes better use of resources and increases prosecution rates. Priority areas for this initiative included children at risk, Indigenous family violence, work with perpetrators and community education.

355. PADV was replaced in May 2005 by the new *Women's Safety Agenda*, to which the Australian Government has committed \$75.7 million over four years to address family violence and sexual assault. It addresses four broad themes: prevention; health; justice and services.

356. Through its commitment to the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program* (SAAP), Australia's primary service response to homelessness, the Australian Government provides substantial assistance to women escaping domestic violence. Domestic violence is a major factor in contributing to homelessness in Australia, particularly for women. In 2003-04, it is estimated that 33 per cent (32,700) of the 100,200 clients accessing SAAP were women escaping domestic violence. In addition, 66 per cent (34,700) of the 52,700 accompanying children in SAAP were children who accompanied a female parent or guardian escaping domestic violence.

357. States and Territories have also taken steps to help reduce domestic violence and assist victims, introducing or strengthening the provision of information and counselling for women and men, and undertaking a range of legislative action and law enforcement measures to combat domestic violence. Initiatives include:

- Grants to assist victims

- Improved law and processes relating to Apprehended Violence Orders in NSW, and in SA, where defendants must now obtain leave of the Court before applying for a variation or revocation of a restraining order
- Specialised training of police, appointment of a dedicated Family Violence Prosecutor and Family Violence Magistrate, and a mandated perpetrator education program in ACT
- Training for NSW and QLD health and community workers in responding to abuse of older people, people with disability and carers
- Improved law and processes for Family Violence Orders in Tasmania, through the establishment of the *Family Violence Act 2004*, strong public awareness campaigns, recruitment and training of prosecutors and other police officers, and improved support services
- A strong crime prevention policy framework in NT, encompassing Police Domestic Violence Units, safe houses and safe rooms, night patrols and training for workers in this field
- Provision of a Witness Assistance Service in NSW, which assists domestic violence victims and prosecution witnesses, and includes an Indigenous Project Officer to raise cultural awareness and address needs of Indigenous victims and witnesses
- Amendments to the WA restraining order regime to provide specific improvements in relation to family and domestic violence, including a power for Police to issue 72-hour interim orders and a broadening of the definition of family and domestic violence to include non-physical violence, and
- Implementation of a new, integrated approach to family violence in Victoria that includes a strengthened police response (through the implementation of a new code of practice), enhanced justice responses, 24-hour referral and support for victims of family violence, improved case management, additional counselling and support programs, perpetrator programs and the provision of a range of accommodation options

358. The level of family violence in Australia's Indigenous communities remains disproportionately high. The victims of family violence are usually women and children. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that in 2003 Indigenous women were 28 times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be victims of family violence and other assaults.

359. The Australian Government is taking a leadership role in developing a strong collaborative approach between governments and Indigenous communities to address family violence. The National Framework on Indigenous Family Violence and Child Protection provides a national platform for addressing levels of family violence in Indigenous communities. In addition, an Intergovernmental Summit on Violence and Child Abuse in Indigenous Communities, involving

Ministers from the Australian Government and all States and Territories, agreed to a *National Action Strategy* on 26 June 2006. The Australian Government offered a package of \$130 million over four years to combat violence and sexual abuse as part of its commitment to the *National Action Strategy*. A key element of the strategy is the establishment of a National Indigenous Violence and Child Abuse Intelligence Task Force. This is resourced by the Commonwealth, States and Territories with involvement from the Australian Federal Police, State and Territory police forces and other agencies, to provide a whole of government response to address violence and child abuse in Indigenous communities and monitor organised criminal activity relating to drugs, alcohol, pornography and fraud.

360. States and Territories have also strongly committed to reduce the incidence of Indigenous family violence by working in partnership with Indigenous communities, with a range of programs and strategies to address this issue being developed and implemented.

361. The ACT Government has undertaken preliminary work on developing a whole-of-government Indigenous Family Violence Policy Framework. It is acknowledged that this is a complex issue and needs a broad approach - through prevention and early intervention strategies including education; maternal health support and programs to address unemployment and substance abuse; and at the same time addressing the impacts of family violence through family support services and the justice system.

362. The ACT has also established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit within the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support that provides support services to families “at risk” and works closely with the Indigenous community to ensure more intensive and appropriate services.

363. Victoria’s Family Violence Court Division provides an outreach support service for Indigenous peoples. Additionally, the Male Adolescents at Risk Project has been established to provide early intervention programs to young adolescent males who have come to the attention of the justice system for exhibiting aggressive or violent behaviour. The Program will implement a strategy specifically targeting Koori adolescent males.

364. The Queensland Government has developed the Safe Haven initiative in partnership with the Commonwealth Government. Safe Haven service models are being developed in four Indigenous communities in Queensland (Cherbourg, Coen, Palm Island and Mornington Island). These models aim to reduce the impact of domestic and family violence on children and young people. Services proposed include an integrated case management approach to deal with complex needs, an approach which builds community capacity to manage family violence, and improved coordination across the service system for better outcomes.

(v) Indigenous family support

365. Australian governments recognise that Indigenous families need support, particularly given the large numbers of Indigenous children that are placed in care. All jurisdictions in Australia recognise the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, that is, where possible, Indigenous children in substitutive care should be cared for within their community or by another Indigenous family or community.

366. In addition to projects specifically targeted at Indigenous families and communities funded under the *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy*, the Australian Government has funded the following programs and initiatives:

- Children and family centres which are being developed in remote Indigenous communities to provide stability for the social, educational and cultural well-being of children by identifying children at risk and providing support for early and appropriate intervention to prevent/minimise long term disadvantages.
- *Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi* (meaning “doing good work for families”), a community based organisation working with Indigenous families in remote Central Australia to develop culturally appropriate children’s services based on Indigenous child rearing and parenting practices for children up to four years of age.
- *Indigenous Children Program (ICP)* which aims to improve access to support services and encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to engage with their community through partnership approaches. It is about building stronger and more sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities. ICP emphasises the early intervention and prevention approach in the delivery of services targeted at improving outcomes for Indigenous children and families, particularly those at risk of neglect or abuse.

367. The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have also developed an *Action Plan for Advancing the Reconciliation Process*. A priority of the Plan is to develop strategies to address the disproportionate number of Indigenous children in institutions.

368. Examples of State and Territory initiatives to provide support to Indigenous families include:

- The Victorian *Aboriginal Family Decision-Making* program, which enables extended family and respected community elders to participate in decision making about the care and protection of the children and young people in their community who have been notified to child protection, and
- The establishment in 2001 by the WA Government of an *Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities* (Gordon Inquiry), and the Government’s subsequent response to the Inquiry, which included significantly increasing the number of staff employed for the protection and support of Aboriginal children and their families

Addressing past policies of Indigenous child removal

369. In May 1997, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission released its *Bringing Them Home* Report in relation to the past policy of separating Indigenous children from their families under the child welfare and protection laws at that time. In December 1997, the Australian Government responded to the Report with a range of initiatives. The Australian Government’s response to the Report has focused on the Report’s central finding that “assisting family reunions is the most significant and urgent need of separated families”.

370. The Australian Government has allocated approximately \$120 million to measures such as:

- A national network of family Link Up services to trace and re-unite separated families. Over 1,147 clients have been reunited between the 1998-99 and 2003-04 financial years. A total of 26,661 people have been assisted under the program during this time
- Over 106 Bringing Them Home Counsellors in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services nationally to provide counselling to individuals, families and communities
- Fifteen social and emotional well-being regional centres to provide training, support and planning assistance to Bringing Them Home Counsellors, Link Up staff and other specialist staff, including allied health professionals
- A records preservation project to enable Indigenous peoples to access historical information about themselves and their families
- A national oral history project to record people's stories of family separation
- Programs to enhance the development of Indigenous parenting and family well-being, and
- A range of programs to preserve, revive and develop Indigenous culture and languages

371. The Prime Minister has expressed his personal sorrow in regard to past practices and, in 1999, the Australian Parliament passed a Motion of Reconciliation. This Motion expressed "deep and sincere regret that Indigenous Australians suffered injustices under the practices of past generations, and for the hurt and trauma that many Indigenous people continue to feel as a consequence of those practices".

372. The book, *Many Voices: Reflections on experiences of Indigenous child separation* was launched in late 2002. This marked the culmination of a highly successful oral history project that was commenced in response to the *Bringing Them Home* Report. The project, undertaken by the National Library, included 340 recorded and transcribed interviews bringing together testimonies from different perspectives.

373. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Family History Unit was established as part of the Recommendations from the *Bringing Them Home* Report and is funded by the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. The Unit specifically assists Link-Up caseworkers in family tracing and reunion for members of the Stolen Generations. The Unit can also assist anyone of Indigenous heritage with their family history research. The Unit maintains an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index which contains over 50,000 records, and is also a useful resource for historical research.

374. The Australian Government has allocated funding for separated children's artwork at Reconciliation Place in Canberra. Reconciliation Place was designed as a symbol of the nation's commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

375. As part of National Sorry Day 2004, the Australian Government dedicated a memorial to Indigenous children forcibly removed from their families at Reconciliation Place following consultations conducted by the National Sorry Day Committee. The memorial commemorates "all those Indigenous and non-Indigenous, whose genuine care softened the impact of what are now recognised as cruel and misguided policies".

376. Australia's States and Territories have also developed a range of important strategies to address the continuing impact of past policies of child removal. These include improving access to government records, providing culturally specific services to help members of the Stolen Generations and their families to deal with the complex social, cultural and health related needs arising from past child removal policies, increasing the availability and quality of out-of-home care placements for Aboriginal children, and increasing support in communities to reduce the need for out-of-home care placement of Aboriginal children.

(vi) Protection of the mother

Pregnancy discrimination

377. The *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (WR Act) provides measures to eliminate discrimination on a range of grounds, including on the basis of pregnancy and family responsibilities. A range of content is prohibited from being included in workplace agreements and awards, such as content which is discriminatory on the grounds of pregnancy. Employers face a range of penalties if they include prohibited content in new workplace agreements.

378. It is unlawful for an employer to terminate an employee's employment on discriminatory grounds. Employees can apply to the Australian Industrial Relations Committee (AIRC) if they believe their employment was terminated for an unlawful reason, such as pregnancy, family responsibilities and absence from work during maternity leave or other parental leave. Employees who believe they have been unlawfully terminated may be eligible to receive up to \$4,000 of independent legal advice, based on the merits of their claim.

379. The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (SD Act) prohibits discrimination against an employee on the basis of sex, pregnancy, potential pregnancy or because the employee is breastfeeding. The SD Act makes it unlawful for employers or potential employers to question employees about current or future pregnancies and to use medical information collected from pregnant women for discriminatory purposes.

Parental leave

380. Parental leave and its related entitlements are set out in Australian legislation. The parental leave provisions apply to permanent full-time and part-time employees and eligible casual employees who have had at least 12 months of continuous service with their current employer. The parental leave provisions include:

- Up to 52 weeks of unpaid parental leave (including maternity, paternity and adoption leave)
- Special maternity leave for a pregnancy related illness or in the event that the pregnancy ends other than by a live birth
- The right to transfer to a safe job if a female employee is unable to continue in her present position because of illness or risks arising out of her pregnancy or hazards connected with that position
- Up to two days of unpaid pre-adoption leave to attend any interviews or examinations required to obtain approval for the adoption, and
- The right to return to the position the employee held immediately before the start of parental leave or a position that has the same terms and conditions of employment as the former position

381. Some employees, including Commonwealth and State and Territory government employees, and some private sector employees, have access to paid maternity leave as a condition of their employment. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that 41 per cent of female employees in Australia are entitled to paid maternity leave.⁹ In current federal certified agreements, 50 per cent of female employees are entitled to paid maternity leave of an average duration of 8.7 weeks.¹⁰

382. The Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights has recommended that the Australian Government consider enacting legislation on paid maternity leave and ratifying ILO Convention No 103 (C 103) concerning maternity protection.¹¹ The Australian Government does not intend to ratify C 103, or ILO Convention 183 *Maternity Protection*, 2000, which has revised C 103. These conventions require the payment of cash benefits sufficient for the full and healthy maintenance of a woman taking maternity leave and her child in accordance with a suitable standard of living, for a minimum period. The WR Act provides for direct negotiations between employers and employees regarding workplace issues, including the provision of paid maternity leave, through agreement making, but does not require paid maternity leave. The Act provides for 52 weeks' unpaid parental leave for eligible employees under the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard.

⁹ ABS Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership (EEBTUM) Survey, August 2005.

¹⁰ Workplace Agreements Database, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, June 2006.

¹¹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations, Australia 08/09/2000, E/C.12/1/Add.50, paragraph 28.

383. A range of similar parental leave protections are also in place at State and Territory level. Other initiatives have also been taken to promote paid maternity leave - for example, the Victorian Government initiated a payroll tax exemption in 2003 as an incentive for employers to pay maternity leave voluntarily to their employees. The exemption applies to wages paid or payable for maternity and adoption leave which are paid in addition to an employee's normal leave entitlements. Additionally, the *Labour Relations Legislative Amendments Act*, recently passed by the Western Australian Parliament, includes improvements to statutory entitlements such as carer's leave and parental leave for employees with family responsibilities.

(vii) Protection of children and young people

Child abuse and neglect

384. Despite the ongoing efforts of governments and NGOs, child abuse remains a major concern in the Australian community. Indigenous children remain significantly overrepresented in the child protection system.

385. Australian governments have greatly increased the real recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services. In 2004-05 Australian governments spent over \$1,230.8 million on child protection and out-of-home care services, up from \$1,083.7 million in 2003-04, a real increase of 13.6 per cent.

386. The Australian Government values the important role played by foster, relative and kinship carers, including those in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, in raising children and young people when their parents are unable to do so. The Australian Government funds various initiatives under the *National Plan for Foster Children, Young People and Their Carers 2004-2006* (more commonly referred to as the National Plan). These include two publications to assist foster, relative and kinship carers, and research projects that support the National Plan. The Australian Government has also introduced a number of specific measures to assist grandparent and relative carers.

387. In recent years, Australian governments have also investigated ways of improving the operation of the child protection system. At State and Territory level, reviews of child protection services have been undertaken and inquiries held into the abuse of children, resulting in the implementation of many new initiatives in response to their findings:

- In Queensland, three major inquiries into the abuse of children whilst in institutional care have been conducted. These have resulted in the establishment of the Department of Child Safety, the appointment of Child Safety Directors in departments with child protection responsibilities; the extension of the powers of the Commissioner for Children and Young People to monitor systems, policies and practices of service providers which affect children in the child safety system and the establishment of legislative and committee review mechanisms for cases of child death following contact with the Department of Child Safety.

- The WA Government is implementing a range of recommendations arising from the *Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities* (Gordon Inquiry), including an expansion of the Child Protection Unit at WA's children's hospital, the establishment of two inter-jurisdiction Police facilities with the NT, the employment of an additional 23 Child Protection Workers and 14 Aboriginal Support Workers, and the recruitment of an additional 50 police officers with over 30 of those located in regional WA.
- WA has also introduced legislative amendments that make violence in the presence of children a circumstance of aggravation in relation to assault.
- The ACT has implemented recommendations from two 2004 reviews into child protection. The *Children and Young People Amendment Act 2006* was passed by the ACT Legislative Assembly on 9 March 2006. The amendment Act focuses on children and young people "at risk" of abuse and neglect, introduces cultural plans for Indigenous children and young people and provides for greater participation by children, young people and their families.
- Victoria has passed new child protection legislation, the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*, which focuses on the needs of vulnerable children and young people. It does this through the articulation of a range of best interests and decision-making principles.

388. The Victorian, Queensland, WA, SA, ACT and NT Governments have all implemented agreements for the efficient transfer of child protection orders and proceedings for children who cross State or Territory borders. The new arrangements allow for the interstate registration and transfer of child protection orders so that a child may be protected if the child moves to another jurisdiction.

389. In addition to these initiatives, the Family Court has trialled innovative projects, namely the *Magellan Project* in Victoria and the *Columbus Project* in WA, to improve the processes for family law cases involving physical and/or sexual child abuse. An evaluation of *Magellan* has found that the project was successful in reducing the time taken for the cases and the number of hearings required, reducing the breakdown rate of final orders and reducing the incidence of child distress (from 28 per cent to 4 per cent).

Sexual exploitation of children

390. In recent years, the Australian Government has supported a wide range of initiatives to protect children's human rights and prevent their sexual exploitation. For example, in 2000, Australia developed a national action plan to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Australia also actively participated in the negotiation of the Optional Protocol to the CROC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, which it has now ratified.

391. The *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Telecommunications Offences and Other Measures) Act (No 2) 2004* introduced new offences covering the use of the internet to access, transmit and make available child pornography, or to “groom” or procure children with the intention of engaging in sexual activity with them. Child pornography offences are punishable by 10 years imprisonment, procuring offences by 15 years imprisonment, and “grooming” offences by 12 years imprisonment.

392. In September 2004, the Australian Government launched the Australian National Child Offender Register to track child sex offenders, and others who commit serious offences against children. Under the Register, anyone convicted of sexual or other serious offences against children will be legally obliged to notify police of their address, places they frequent, car registration and other personal details. The Register will be a police-only information tool to which only designated officers will have access.

393. State and Territory governments have also taken steps to combat the sexual exploitation of children:

- In the ACT, legislation has been strengthened against the commercial exploitation of children, with the introduction of new or broadened offences.
- The NT has also strengthened its laws protecting children by increasing penalties and creating new offences relating to “carnal knowledge” offences; eliminating gender related discrimination by removing the different age of consent provisions and differing offences and penalty provisions; and removing traditional marriage as a defence to the offence of sexual intercourse with a child under the age of 16 years so that all NT children are now equally protected against sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or otherwise potentially harmful sexual relationships irrespective of their racial or ethnic origins.
- Victoria has established a legislative regime, through the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*, requiring persons who commit certain sexual offences against children to be placed on a Sex Offender Register maintained by police. The Register is aimed at reducing the likelihood that a “registrable offender” will re-offend and to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of any future offences that he or she may commit, thereby enhancing community protection, particularly in relation to children.

Child witnesses

394. Western Australia has made special legislative provision for child witnesses in criminal proceedings. The legislation ensures they are entitled to support and assistance before and while in court, prevents direct cross-examination by the accused (cross-examination must be through the judge), provides for the video-taping of a child’s evidence and its admission in court, and provides that the court may order special hearings including children giving evidence in a separate room.

395. The Victorian Government has also committed significant financial resources to support child witnesses. The funding will establish Victoria's first specialist child witness service, providing a specialist team of support workers to help prepare child witnesses for court and support them during and after the case, providing a link with police, prosecutors and victims services.

Petrol sniffing

396. The Australian Government is continuing its efforts to combat petrol sniffing which has been a health issue affecting small numbers of Indigenous peoples in remote communities in central and northern Australia.

397. The Australian Government has undertaken a comprehensive regional strategy in conjunction with State and Territory Governments to reduce the extent and effects of petrol sniffing through:

- Consistent substance abuse legislation, and appropriate levels of policing including cross-border coordination of policing activities
- Supply reduction through the substitution of petrol with non-sniffable *Opal* fuel through the *Petrol Sniffing Prevention Program*
- Alternative activities for young people, such as sport and recreation programs
- Treatment and respite activities
- Communication and education strategies, and
- Strengthening and supporting communities

The rates of petrol sniffing have been dramatically reduced where non-sniffable *Opal* fuel has been provided in communities. Recent evidence from northern SA indicates that *Opal* has helped reduce petrol sniffing by 80 per cent, with similar results reported in the NT.

N. Right to work

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
	6, 7			11	5 (e) (i)

(i) Reducing unemployment

398. The Australian Government's employment policy objective is that everyone who wants to work has the opportunity to do so. This is demonstrated by the Australian Government's commitment to reducing unemployment and giving working age Australians the best chance of getting a job. The best way to achieve this is through promoting economic growth so that Australian businesses will be in a position to create new, sustainable jobs. To this end the Australian Government has pursued sound macro economic policies, together with micro

economic reforms that help Australian businesses create new jobs. The success of the Australian Government's policies is evidenced by the reduction in the unemployment rate. In the period March 1996 to June 2006, the unemployment rate in Australia fell from 8.2 per cent to 4.9 per cent, its equal lowest level since August 1976. During this period over 1.8 million jobs have been created.

399. Based on the *2004-05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey* (NATSIHS), the unemployment rate for working age Indigenous Australians is 15.4 per cent. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Labour Force Survey* data, the rate is 16.4 per cent.

400. The methodology underlying NATSIHS is better suited to providing estimates of labour force status for the Indigenous population than the *Labour Force Survey*. The *Labour Force Survey* is designed to provide consistent estimates of labour force status at the national level, and to a lesser extent, the State and Territory level and is not designed for producing consistent estimates for sub-populations, such as Indigenous Australians.

Employment services, vocational education and training for employment

401. In 1998, the Australian Government established a system of free public employment agencies - the Job Network. The Job Network is a diverse national network of private and community organisations contracted by the Australian Government to deliver employment services and get unemployed people into jobs through a flexible system that delivers employment services tailored to the needs of individual job seekers.

402. The system is underpinned by the Australian JobSearch web site (<<http://www.jobsearch.gov.au>>) which provides a national database of job vacancies and an automatic job matching and notification system. The web site contains comprehensive information and resources to assist in finding work. Recent reforms to Job Network include introduction of Welfare to Work measures from 1 July 2006. The measures were announced by the Australian Government as part of the 2005-6 Budget and broader Welfare to Work reforms. The Welfare to Work reforms (<<http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Category/SchemesInitiatives/MovingIntoWork/AboutWelfaretoWorkreforms.htm>>) are aimed at making Australia's welfare system more sustainable while retaining a strong safety net. This will be achieved by encouraging increased workforce participation for those with a capacity to work.

403. The reforms focus on four priority groups, people with a disability, parents, mature age people and the very long-term unemployed. Welfare to Work also includes strategies to work with, and assist employers in encouraging flexible working arrangements and employment of people from the priority groups.

Protection of vulnerable workers

404. A broad range of initiatives have been implemented to support and educate vulnerable employees on the new federal workplace relations arrangements enacted under the Work Choices Act. This includes seminars, information products, the Work Choices internet site and the Work Choices Infoline. Specifically targeted services and products are available for

employees with special needs and those in a disadvantaged bargaining position. Activities to date include translating Work Choices material into 13 community languages and specialist strategies and products for Indigenous employees. To supplement these activities, there are Workplace Advisors located in every capital city. Advisors visit a range of organisations and special interest groups so that they can assist and educate their members in relation to Work Choices. There is a particular focus on needs-based groups including organisations that represent or service migrant workers, women, youth, Indigenous workers, people with a disability, regional and rural workers and apprentices and trainees.

Employment services for Indigenous Australians

405. The Australian Government introduced the Indigenous Employment Policy (IEP) in 1999 in response to the continuing high unemployment rates among Indigenous Australians and a demographic profile which indicated that the labour market disadvantages of Indigenous peoples would, in all likelihood, increase further unless special efforts were made. The IEP has three main elements:

- Indigenous specific programs
- Intensive employment assistance through Job Network services, and
- An Indigenous Small Business Fund to support both employers and Indigenous peoples looking for work

406. The Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program is an Australian Government funded initiative for unemployed Indigenous Australians providing activities which develop participants' skills and improve their employability in order to assist them move into employment outside the CDEP and to meet community needs.

407. The circumstances of Indigenous Australians will be improved through the implementation of the Indigenous Economic Development Strategy, which is aimed at supporting Indigenous Australians to achieve economic independence in the areas of employment, home ownership and business development. This initiative involves the Australian Government working closely with Indigenous Australians and Indigenous communities to assist in reducing welfare dependency and stimulate employment and economic development.

408. The following progress has been made in respect of Indigenous unemployment through services provided by the Australian Government:

- A total of 3,505 employment and/or training placements were achieved through Structured Training and Employment Projects in the 2005-06 financial year with 265 new projects approved.
- A total of 145 Indigenous Small Business Fund Projects, which aim to foster the development of businesses owned and run by Indigenous peoples and promote lasting employment outcomes, were approved during 2005-06. During 2005-06, 3,704 Indigenous peoples moved out of CDEP into open employment, an increase of over 135 per cent over the previous 12 months.

- Job Network placed over 44,500 Indigenous job seekers in work in the 12 months to end of June 2006, a 14 per cent increase on the previous twelve months.

Vocational and Technical Education

409. Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) is an area of shared responsibility between the Australian Government and the States and Territories. The States and Territories have primary responsibility for VTE: they provide two-thirds of the funding and have all of the regulatory responsibility for the sector.

410. The Australian Government in its role leading the national training system has focussed increasingly on promoting national quality, consistency and coherence in the provision of VTE. A key element in this agenda has been the introduction of competency-based Training Packages, an integrated set of national Australian Qualification Framework qualifications, competency standards, and assessment guidelines for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

411. The *Skilling Australia's Workforce Act 2005* is the vehicle for the new National Training Arrangements for the funding period 1 July 2005 - 31 December 2008. A key feature of the Skilling Australia's Workforce Act is the strengthening of the funding framework, which links funding for the States and Territories to a range of conditions and targets for training outcomes. These targets include increasing the number of training places for people with a disability, Indigenous Australians in regional and remote locations, and increasing the overall participation of Indigenous Australians at higher qualification levels specifically at Certificate III and above. These will drive quality improvement and increased flexibility in the vocational education and training sector.

412. Australia's national training system is industry-led, competency-based, nationally consistent and quality assured. In November 2003, Ministers for vocational education and training across Australia endorsed Australia's National Strategy for Vocational and Technical Education 2004-2010 - *Shaping Our Future* - which represents a commitment by the Australian and State and Territory governments to continue to work in partnership with industry, providers and other stakeholders to develop the national VTE system.

VTE for Indigenous Australians

413. Indigenous Australians have a high rate of participation in the Australian training system. While around 2.4 per cent of the Australian population is Indigenous, in 2005 they comprised around 3.8 per cent of the total students participating in VTE.¹² Between 2001 and 2005, the number of Indigenous Australians commencing Australian Apprenticeships increased 53 per cent from 5,860 in 2001 to 8,950 in 2005.

414. A Strategy and Blueprint, *Partners in a Learning Culture*, to improve opportunities for Indigenous Australians in VTE was agreed by Australian, State and Territory training authorities in 2000. A revised Blueprint, published in 2005, focuses activity at the national level on priority

¹² See Table 25, Statistical Annex.

activities, including building the capacity of the VTE sector through Indigenous involvement, creating more pathways for Indigenous Australians, ensuring the development of culturally appropriate products and delivery, and improving links to employment.

Australian Apprenticeships

415. Since the 1998 introduction of the Australian Apprenticeships (formerly *New Apprenticeships*) system, major trends include a broadening of the range of national industry and occupational qualifications covered to more than 1,500, increased take-up of Australian Apprenticeships by both new and existing (including mature aged) workers and a greater use of flexible training/employment arrangements including full-time, part-time and Australian School-based Apprenticeships. There were 389,000 Australian Apprentices in training on 31 December 2005 - a 151 per cent increase from the 154,800 Australian Apprentices in training in March 1996.

Youth services

416. Youth Pathways, which replaced the Jobs Pathway Program (JPP) from 1 January 2006, assists those young people who are most at risk of disengaging from education. It complements the broader *Careers Advice Australia* initiative by providing intensive individualised assistance and support to those young people identified as being the most at risk of not making a successful transition from school to further education, training or work. Each young person who participates in Youth Pathways receives:

- An assessment that determines their needs and barriers
- Individualised case management and intensive contact to address the needs and barriers, and
- Regular contact until the end of the calendar year to ensure he/she remains on track

417. In May 2001, the Australian Government released the Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce *Footprints to the Future* report, which outlined ways young people and their families can be better supported during the transitional period from school to further education, training and employment.

418. Other initiatives of the Australian Government are set out below:

- The Partnership Outreach Education Model (POEM) Pilot, established in 2002, provides an education and personal development program targeting young people (aged 13 to 19 years) who are disconnected from mainstream schooling. POEM offers flexible accredited education and training options delivered in supported community settings.
- The Australian Government has a range of career programs and policies to ensure that all Australians, particularly young people, have access to services through and beyond school which assist them to make informed choices about education and training options, career choices and pathways to employment.

- myfuture (<<http://www.myfuture.edu.au>>) is Australia's national online career information and exploration service aimed at all Australians, and especially students, wishing to explore their career options. It was developed with the goal of providing a single, comprehensive and effective career information and exploration service in Australia.
- The Professional Standards for Careers Practitioners were released in April 2006, and act as a mechanism for consistency in the delivery of Australian career development services. The Standards provide for a minimum entry level qualification, which will be enforceable by 2012.

O. Right to just and favourable conditions of work

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
	7			11	5 (e) (i)

(i) Fair and equal remuneration, and equal opportunity

419. Prior to 2006, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) was required under the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (WR Act) to “ensure the maintenance of an effective award safety net of fair and enforceable minimum wages and conditions of employment”. In June 2005, the AIRC handed down the Safety Net Review 2005, which provided scope for the Federal Minimum Wage to increase from \$467.40 to \$484.40 per week. This increase applies proportionately to junior, part-time and casual employees. At the time of the decision, the pay increase only applied to workers covered by the awards specified in the case. State industrial tribunals conduct their own State wage cases, but usually have regard to the national wage decision.

420. Under the *Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Act 2005* (the Work Choices Act) (enacted on 27 March 2006) the Australian Government established the Australian Fair Pay Commission to review and set minimum wages for employees in corporations. Under section 23 of the WR Act, in performing its wage setting function, the objective of the Fair Pay Commission is to promote the economic prosperity of the people of Australia, having regard to:

- The capacity for the unemployed and the low paid to obtain and remain in employment
- Employment and competitiveness across the economy
- Providing a safety net for the low paid, and
- Providing minimum wages for junior employees, employees to whom training arrangements apply and employees with a disability that ensure those employees are competitive in the labour market

421. Under the Work Choices Act, the Fair Pay Commission is required, when setting and adjusting wages to apply the principle that men and women should be paid equal remuneration for work of equal value. In addition, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission continues to be able to make equal remuneration orders in relation to residual award matters and agreements. These orders can not cover rates of pay set by the Australian Fair Pay Commission because it is separately bound by the same principle. Revised provisions also explicitly state that an employer cannot dismiss or otherwise cause detriment to any of his or her employees as a result of their involvement in an equal remuneration proceeding. Moreover, clauses in awards and agreements that discriminate on the basis of sex or other grounds are prohibited content in workplace agreements as specified in the *Workplace Relations Regulations 2006*. These clauses are void and subject to removal by the Employment Advocate.

422. With the implementation of the Work Choices amendments, the Australian Government is moving towards a unified national workplace relations system. The equal remuneration provisions of the WR Act will “cover the field” in this regard and will extend to all employees whose remuneration is determined by the Act, a law of a State or Territory or a contract of employment made in Australia and includes awards and agreements in federal and State systems.

Tax reform

423. The New Tax System introduced on 1 July 2000 represented a major restructuring of the Australian taxation system, which has continued in recent Budgets. The income thresholds at which higher marginal rates of tax apply have been increased and marginal tax rates reduced. In the 2005-06 Budget the 17 per cent rate marginal income tax rate was reduced to 15 per cent. The 2006-07 Budget reduced the top rate from 47 per cent to 45 per cent and the 42 per cent rate to 40 per cent. More than 80 per cent of Australian taxpayers now face a marginal income tax rate of 30 per cent or less. These reforms ensure that the Australian taxation system continues to support rewards from working.

Pay equity and equal opportunity

424. The *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* was designed to promote equal employment and eliminate discrimination. The Act requires private sector companies, unions, non-government schools, higher education institutions and community organisations (that have 100 or more people) to establish a workplace program to remove barriers to women entering and advancing in their organisation. The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency is a statutory authority responsible for administering the Act, and through education it assists organisations to achieve equal opportunity for women.

425. State Industrial Relations Commissions (including those in NSW and Queensland) have in recent years conducted inquiries into issues of pay equity and the promotion of equality in the workplace. A number of changes have been made in response to the recommendations of these inquiries. In Queensland, for example, changes have been made to guarantee equal remuneration for men and women employees for work of equal or comparable value.

426. The WA Government established a Pay Equity Unit (PEU) in February 2006. The PEU has analysed the recommendations of the Review of the Gender Pay Gap in WA to create an action plan, which is now being implemented.

427. The *Equity and Diversity Framework for the ACT Public Service* provided a framework under which agencies can build and develop policies and plans for active future development of Equal Employment Opportunity. The Framework supports measures to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage and maternity, and ensures their right to work.

428. The Victorian Government established a Pay Equity Inquiry in 2004 to identify the extent of the gender pay gap in Victoria, and to investigate the contributing factors. The Working Party established to oversee the Inquiry released its report *Advancing Pay Equity—their future depends on it*, which is available online at <http://www.business.vic.gov.au/BUSVIC.13238490/STANDARD//PC_61635.html>Actions are currently being implemented to address the issues raised.

Measures to protect outworkers

429. The Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights has strongly recommended that the Australian Government undertake measures to protect home-workers and to ensure that they receive the official minimum wage, that they benefit from adequate social security and that they enjoy working conditions in conformity with the legislation.¹³ In 2003, the Australian Government passed the *Workplace Relations Amendment (Improved Protection for Victorian Workers) Act 2003* which, among other things, ensures minimum rates of pay for contract outworkers (or home-workers) in the Victorian textile, clothing and footwear industry.¹⁴

430. Under the Work Choices amendments to the WR Act, employee outworkers are entitled to receive the minimum pay and leave entitlements as set out in the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard (the Standard). The Standard sets out the minimum wages and conditions of employment that apply to all employees in the federal system. The Standard contains basic rates (and piece rates) of pay including casual loadings, as well as maximum ordinary hours of work, annual leave, personal/carer's leave and parental leave. The new federal workplace relations legislation maintains existing federal and State protections for employee outworkers. Outworker protections (including provisions dealing with chain of contract arrangements, registration of employers, employer record keeping and inspection of records) remain in awards as allowable award matters. Further, workplace agreements covering outworkers will not be able to override award outworker conditions, except where the agreement is more favourable for the outworker than the award.

¹³ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations, Australia 08/09/2000, E/C.12/1/Add.50, paragraph 27.

¹⁴ This legislation relates to Victoria only, as Victoria has referred its powers in respect of industrial relations matters to the Commonwealth.

Labour in private prisons

431. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has recommended that the Australian Government ensure that labour in private prisons is voluntarily undertaken and is properly remunerated.¹⁵ Issues concerning the use of prison labour in private prisons, including those identified by the Committee, are being discussed by the Australian Government with the supervisory machinery of the ILO, including the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations.

432. In NSW's one private prison, Junee Correctional Centre, and in NSW Government-operated correctional centres, labour is voluntary. The pay scales for work performed at Junee are the same as those in government-operated centres.

433. In Victoria, most convicted prisoners are required by legislation to work during their sentence. Work undertaken by convicted prisoners in private and State run prisons in Victoria has been the subject of extensive dialogue between the Australian Government and the ILO. It is the Victorian Government's view that work in Victorian prisons does not fall within the definition of "forced or compulsory labour" in ILO Convention No 29 *Forced Labour*. The details of this view have been clearly expressed in article 22 reports on Convention 29 and in submissions for Australia's appearance before the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards in 1999 and 2004.

434. The Queensland Government is not authorised by law, to practise forced or compulsory labour in private or publicly operated facilities, which are subject to the same statutory requirements. Labour in Queensland's two "private prisons", and in correctional facilities run by the Government, is voluntarily undertaken and is properly remunerated, with the rate of remuneration reviewed annually.

435. In WA all prisoners are treated alike and in accordance with the ILO Conventions concerning forced labour.

436. Whilst Tasmania does not have private prisons, relevant legislation allows government prisons to direct a prisoner to undertake work that is considered suitable to the prisoner's physical and intellectual capacity. The prisoners are paid for the work that they do.

(ii) Job security

437. The Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights has recommended that the Australian Government ensure that legislative provisions concerning job security are strengthened and effectively implemented, especially for the most vulnerable groups, such as

¹⁵ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations, Australia 08/09/2000, E/C.12/1/Add.50, paragraph 30.

fixed-term contract workers, temporary workers and casual workers.¹⁶ The Australian Government believes that workers should be free to enter into either contractual or employment relationships. The Australian Government considers that it should not encourage one working arrangement to the detriment of another, whether it be permanent, casual, full-time, part-time or contract.

438. The *Independent Contractors Act 2006* (the Principal Act) and the *Workplace Relations Legislation Amendment (Independent Contractors) Act 2006* (the Amendment Act) were introduced in 2006. The Acts recognise and protect the unique position of independent contractors in the Australian workplace by supporting the freedom of independent contractors to enter into arrangements outside the framework of workplace relations laws. They also include protections for vulnerable workers. For example, the Amendment Act provides for penalties to be imposed on employers who seek to avoid their obligations under employment law by disguising their employees as independent contractors, or who coerce their employees to become independent contractors.

439. The Australian Government does not agree with proposals to introduce automatic conversion rights for casuals to become permanent employees after certain periods. Casual employees generally receive a loading on their hourly or weekly rate of pay in lieu of certain benefits such as accrued sick leave or annual leave. Under the Work Choices Act conversion from casual employment to another type of employment is no longer an allowable award matter.

440. Under the Work Choices Act the Australian Government prohibited employees employed by businesses with 100 employees or less from having access to the unfair dismissal protections of the WR Act. The Australian Government views that federal unfair dismissal laws had created an onerous burden for employers, particularly small business employers and reduced the labour market flexibility that has contributed significantly to Australia's improved productivity performance over the last ten years. The Australian Government notes that structural change is constant in all economies and that the best assurance of sustainable job security for Australian workers is a dynamic and responsive labour market with high productivity workplaces and readily available job opportunities.

441. However, all Australian employees will continue to have access to the unlawful termination provisions of the WR Act. These provisions make it unlawful to terminate an employee's employment on discriminatory grounds including temporary absence from work due to illness or injury; membership of a trade union, race, sex, sexual preference, age, physical or mental disability and marital status.

442. State governments have introduced measures to strengthen job security, especially for vulnerable workers, including protection against unfair dismissal.

¹⁶ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations, Australia 08/09/2000, E/C.12/1/Add.50, paragraph 26.

(iii) Safe and healthy working conditions

443. The Australian Government considers occupational health and safety (OHS) to be of great importance and remains committed to improving the capacity of employers and employees to prevent injury, disease and fatality at the workplace. OHS developments are discussed and considered by the highest level of Government - the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council (WRMC).

444. Additionally, all States and Territories have occupational health and safety legislation and workers compensation legislation to protect and compensate workers.

445. In seeking to achieve safer Australian workplaces free from injury and disease the Australian Government, along with the relevant Ministers in each State and Territory, the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed the National OHS Strategy 2002-2012 in May 2002. The Strategy identifies national priorities to bring about short-term and long-term OHS improvements, as well as longer-term cultural change, which are intended to foster sustainable safe and healthy work environments and to reduce significantly the number of people injured or killed at work.

446. In 2004, the Australian Government ratified ILO Convention No 155, whose objective is to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, linked with or occurring in, the course of work. State and Territory governments have, in recent years, developed their own OHS programs to complement the National OHS Strategy.

(iv) Rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours

447. Under the amendments to the WR Act enacted under the Work Choices Act, the Fair Pay and Conditions Standard (the Standard) guarantees minimum entitlements to paid annual leave and personal/carer's leave, and unpaid parental leave. The Australian Government's policy in regard to increases in leave entitlements is that these are to be gained through bargaining and not the subject of regulation. The Standard also provides that employees cannot be required or requested to work more than 38 hours per week, plus reasonable additional hours. In determining whether additional hours an employee is requested or required to work are "reasonable", a range of factors must be taken into account, including (but not limited to) any risk to the employee's health and safety, and the employee's personal circumstances including family responsibilities. Disputes regarding the Standard are resolved through the model dispute settling procedure. Civil remedies are also available for contraventions of the Standard.

P. Trade union rights

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
22	8				5 (e) (ii)

(i) The right to form and join trade unions

448. Part 16 of the WR Act contains extensive freedom of association provisions. The objects of this Part include ensuring that employees are free to join a trade union of their choice, to ensure that they are not victimised for exercising their rights to freedom of association and to provide appropriate remedies for breaches of the freedom of association provisions. The WR Act also makes it unlawful to terminate a person's employment or injure them in their employment on the grounds of membership (or non-membership) of a trade union.

449. The Work Choices Act retained the fundamental principles of the freedom of association provisions in the old WR Act. The legislation also strengthened those provisions by introducing new objects to provide effective relief to persons who are prevented or inhibited from exercising their right to freedom of association and by providing effective remedies to penalise and deter persons who engage in conduct which prevents or inhibits persons from exercising the right to freedom of association.

450. The Work Choices Act freedom of association provisions are intended to "cover the field" and exclude the operation of State laws that deal with freedom of association. As a consequence, the only remedies for breaches of freedom of association for parties are the remedies provided by the Work Choices Act. The Act supplements the previous types of prohibited conduct, including new provisions that make it unlawful to coerce a person to become, or not to become a member or officer of an industrial association, make false and misleading statements about membership of associations and organise, take or threaten industrial action because another person is not a member of an industrial association.

451. HREOC is empowered to inquire, on its own motion or upon receipt of a complaint, into acts or practices which may constitute discrimination in employment on the basis of trade union activity. The Commission has reported to Parliament twice on discrimination on this ground (in 1997 and 2000), <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/human_rights/others/index.html>.

(ii) The right to strike

452. The Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights has recommended that the Australian Government limit its prohibitions on the right to strike to essential services, in accordance with ILO Convention No 87 (C 87).¹⁷ C 87 does not explicitly provide for the right to strike and there is no consensus on the scope of this right. The Australian Government does not consider that prohibitions on the right to strike should be limited to essential services. Strikes cost jobs and the Australian Government believes that industrial action should be restricted to limited circumstances and used only after parties have genuinely tried to reach agreement.

¹⁷ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations, Australia 08/09/2000, E/C.12/1/Add.50, paragraph 29.

453. The WR Act (including provisions of the Work Choices Act) provides that industrial action may be taken in particular circumstances free from the threat of civil action for economic loss or damage associated with the action, or from being terminated (in the case of employees). Such action is called “protected action”, and must first be approved by a majority of affected employees through a secret ballot process. Protected action may only be taken during a “bargaining period” set aside for negotiating matters to be included in a certified agreement. However, protected action is not available in some circumstances including where the action is to support or advance claims to include certain prohibited content in an agreement, in support of “pattern bargaining” or involving persons who are not protected for that industrial action.

454. This reflects the Australian Government’s belief that enterprise level agreement-making offers benefits for employers and employees in terms of improved flexibility and choice in determining their working arrangements, resulting in more productive and harmonious workplaces.

455. Industrial action not occurring in the context of negotiations for the making of an agreement is not protected action under the WR Act. There are a number of civil remedies provisions in the WR Act, including injunctions and workplace determinations for unlawful industrial action.

456. Employees may also cease work over legitimate occupational health and safety concerns in the workplace - this does not constitute “industrial action” under the WR Act.

Q. Right to social security

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
	9		26	11, 13, 14	5 (e-iv)

(i) Reform of the social security system

457. From 1 July 2006, a number of measures were introduced to increase the social and economic participation of working age income support recipients. Particular emphasis was placed on arrangements to reduced welfare dependency among parents, people with partial capacity for work due to a disability, the mature-aged and the long term unemployed.

458. Key changes to working age income support arrangements included: revised eligibility criteria for payments; increased participation in job-search and/or other approved activities; relaxation of the income test for a number of payments to increase work incentives; and expansion of services to assist in engagement with the workforce.

(ii) Superannuation

459. The Australian Government continues to enhance the overall attractiveness, accessibility and security of private pensions (superannuation) to encourage people to achieve a higher standard of living in retirement than would be possible from the age pension alone. The Australian Government’s initiatives include:

- Improving superannuation incentives for low income employees by matching personal superannuation contributions with a limited Australian Government superannuation co-contribution
- Increasing superannuation incentives for high income earners by reducing the maximum superannuation surcharge rates applicable to their contributions
- Giving workers the power, from 1 July 2005, to choose their own superannuation fund, thereby increasing competition and efficiency in the superannuation industry, and
- Improving the effectiveness of the Superannuation Guarantee system by requiring employers to make at least quarterly superannuation contributions on behalf of their employees

(iii) The Work for the Dole Scheme

460. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has requested that the Australian Government provide detailed information on the Work for Dole program.¹⁸ Work for the Dole (WFD) is a Commonwealth Government initiative with the principal objective of the program being to provide:

- Structured activities that increase participants' employment prospects by developing or enhancing both core and vocational skills and encourage more active and effective participation in the work force
- Activities that involve local communities, generate outcomes beneficial to communities and are value for money for the Australian Government, and
- Flexible work experience opportunities for participants to re-engage with their community and workplace

461. Fundamental to the WFD program is the principle of Mutual Obligation (MO) which is based on the proposition that unemployed job seekers supported financially by the community should actively seek work, constantly strive to improve their competitiveness in the labour market and give something back to the community that supports them. The objective of MO is to instil greater self-reliance and motivation in job seekers by encouraging them to take responsibility for, and to be more focussed on, their job search and preparation for work activities. Actively engaging job seekers in planning for their future also gives them a better understanding of support arrangements and how they can use services to help them re-enter the workforce. The MO period for jobseekers in receipt of allowance begins after six months on benefits. Full Time WFD was introduced on 1 July 2006 to increase opportunities for long term

¹⁸ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations, Australia 08/09/2000, E/C.12/1/Add.50, paragraph 31.

unemployed jobseekers who have demonstrated a history of work avoidance and have become disengaged from the labour market. These jobseekers will be required to participate for extended periods on WFD activities in order to qualify for continuation of income support.

462. Quality activities are developed by local service providers known as Community Work Coordinators, who are contracted by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and include both non-profit and for-profit organisations. However, WFD places must be within non-profit groups or, if not, all benefits of the activity must accrue directly to the community. WFD activities are also required to include tasks that assist participants to acquire vocational skills that are in demand in their local area. WFD has a strict policy of non-displacement which prevents activities from replacing or reducing the hours of existing paid full-time, part-time or casual workers.

463. The WFD scheme has grown from its pilot program in October 1997, which provided places for around 10,000 unemployed 18-24 year-olds, to a sizable program with a budget of \$217.6 million to provide the unemployed with 16,500 full time and 64,000 standard work-experience places in the 2006-2007 financial year.

464. While WFD is intended to be a work experience program, strong employment outcomes are evident. In the year to end March 2006, 32.7 per cent of the job seekers who left WFD three months earlier were employed (15.5 per cent full-time; 17.2 per cent part-time) and 12.8 per cent were engaged in education or training. Combined this means 41.9 per cent of job seekers were either employed and/or in education or training three months after leaving the program. Another 36.0 per cent of job seekers who left WFD three months earlier had commenced some form of Government funded employment assistance.

(iv) Social security for new immigrants and refugees

465. The Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights has called upon the Australian Government to ensure that the two-year waiting period for the receipt of social security assistance by new immigrants does not infringe upon their right to an adequate standard of living.¹⁹ This two year waiting period has been waived for humanitarian entrants.

466. Australia has a long history of providing quality services to newly arrived migrants to ensure their effective settlement into Australian society.

467. The Australian Government, under the *Immigration (Education) Act 1971* (Cth), funds and manages the *Adult Migrant English Program* (AMEP), which assists recently arrived migrants without a functional level of English to acquire the language skills they need to settle effectively in Australia. Refugee and Humanitarian entrants under the age of 25 with low levels of schooling are eligible for up to 910 hours of English language tuition while those over 25 are eligible for up to 610 hours of tuition. Other migrants are eligible for up to 510 hours of tuition. Tuition is free.

¹⁹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations, Australia 08/09/2000, E/C.12/1/Add.50, paragraph 32.

468. Migrants entering Australia under the Migration Program are subject to a “two year residents waiting period” before they are eligible to access Australian Government benefits and services. This does not apply to permanent entrants under the Humanitarian Program who are immediately eligible for benefits and Job Network services. Consistent with the increased focus of the Migration Program to the permanent entry of young, skilled migrants with high levels of English language proficiency, research and statistics shows these migrants are performing well in the Australian labour market.

469. The Australian Government also provides funding under the *Settlement Grants Program* (SGP) to community organisations to undertake projects which have a specific focus on settlement outcomes for migrants and humanitarian entrants.

470. In addition, the *Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy* (IHSS) provides initial intensive settlement support to newly-arrived humanitarian entrants. It uses a case management approach to identify the needs of humanitarian entrants and tailors services to meet those needs. Services include information and orientation, assistance to find long-term accommodation, a household goods package and torture and trauma counselling.

471. The IHSS aims to help humanitarian entrants achieve self sufficiency as soon as possible after arrival. IHSS services are generally provided for around six months, but may be extended on a needs basis.

472. The *Woman at Risk Program* provides Australian re-settlement for refugee women and women “of concern” to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and their dependents, who are in dangerous or vulnerable situations because of the breakdown of traditional support mechanisms. This initiative provides assistance to women who have been tortured, sexually assaulted or otherwise traumatised and are in particular need of settlement assistance.

Translating and Interpreting Services

473. The Australian Government’s Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) provides a national 24-hour day, seven days a week, telephone interpreting service.

474. TIS provides interpreting on a fee-for-service basis to individuals, government agencies, community organisations, and private sector businesses and organisations. Other services include fee-free on-site interpreting, telephone interpreting and extract translations of personal documents to eligible individuals and community organisations providing settlement services to non-English-speaking migrants and refugees. Doctors in private practice can call a Doctors Priority Line which provides a free telephone interpreting service.

(v) Assistance for carers

475. There are two forms of Australian Government assistance that may be available in a caring situation:

- *Carer Payment* provides income support to people who, because of the demands of their caring role, are unable to support themselves through substantial workforce participation
- *Carer Allowance* is an income supplement available to people who provide daily care and attention in a private home to a person with a disability or severe medical condition, or who is frail aged

476. The Australian Government provided carers with direct payments, including bonuses, totalling an estimated \$2.2 billion in 2004-05. In addition to financial assistance, the Australian Government also provides non-financial assistance to carers such as resource centres to provide information and support, special measures for young carers, assistance to parents with disabled children and projects to address the impacts of long term caring.

477. In December 2003, the ACT Government released the *Caring for Carers Policy*, with the aim to better acknowledge and support carers in the ACT, and in August 2004 launched *Caring for Carers in the ACT - a Plan for Action* outlining actions to achieve the objectives of the Policy. To support the policy and action plan, the ACT Government committed \$830,000, to be delivered over four years in its 2004-05 Budget. This funding is delivered through Carers Recognition Grant Program to support the implementation of the *Caring for Carers Policy*.

478. In 2006, the Victorian Government introduced its carers' policy framework *Recognising and Supporting Care Relationships*, moving carer policy to a relationship-based model. Its overarching principles will guide the development of action plans that focus on the relationship between the carer and the person receiving care with regard to program delivery, funding and service provision.

(vi) Assistance to rural and regional Australians

Economic security and sustainability

479. A wide range of initiatives has been introduced to support the employment and economic security of rural families, and the economic sustainability of rural communities. The *Farm Family Restart Scheme*, introduced in 1997, is the key program for delivering improved welfare support to the farm sector, as well as adjustment assistance for farmers who wish to exit the industry. The Scheme incorporates several key features: access to income support; professional advice on the future viability of their business; and career counselling where appropriate.

480. Substantial funding (\$14.5 million) has been allocated to the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal to help provide a viable social and economic future for regional, rural and remote communities. The Foundation aims to encourage innovative collaboration between business, community and government in philanthropic endeavours that will boost the economic and social stocks of regional Australia.

481. The *Regional Partnerships* program provides funding for regional projects that:

- Stimulate growth by investing in projects that strengthen and provide greater opportunities for economic and social participation in the community
- Improve access to services (with a priority to communities with a population of less than 5,000)
- Support planning by investing in projects that assist communities to identify and explore opportunities and to develop strategies for action, and
- Help communities make structural adjustments in regions by investing in projects that assist specifically identified communities and regions adjust to major economic, social or environmental change

482. The *Sustainable Regions Program* assists regional communities to address priority issues they have themselves identified. The Program offers a planned, integrated approach to regions facing economic, social and environmental change. Assistance under the program has been provided to 10 regions. Local Advisory Committees provide advice to the Australian Government on issues associated with the regions, including recommendations on project funding.

(vii) Measuring poverty

483. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has strongly urged the Australian Government to establish an official poverty line. The Australian Government considers that, rather than generating a credible assessment of social outcomes, simplistic income poverty lines tend to obscure the wide range of factors which lead to disadvantage, and introduce a focus which risks inappropriately distorting social policy priorities. In addition, public debate and academic and other research and analysis has demonstrated little consensus on the definition and measurement of disadvantage.

484. The Australian Government does however support the collection of extensive economic and social data on the circumstances of Australians both through the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the longitudinal Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia Survey. These data are easily accessible to the community and have enabled academics and social welfare advocacy groups to produce a diverse range of different measures of poverty and disadvantage for which they can advocate.

R. Right to adequate food, clothing and housing

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
6	11		27	14	5 (e) (iii)

(i) Food and nutrition

485. During 1999-2000, the Australian Government took a lead role in developing a ten-year agenda for action in public health nutrition, titled *Eat Well Australia*. Priority nutrition areas identified include: prevention of overweight and obesity; increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables; promotion of optimal nutrition for women, infants and children; and improving nutrition for vulnerable groups.

(ii) Access to housing

Assistance for first home buyers

486. Since 1 July 2000, the Australian Government has required the States and Territories to assist first home buyers through the provision of a \$7,000 *First Home Owners Scheme* (FHOS) grant to ensure that first home buyers are appropriately compensated for the impact of tax reform on the price of houses. From 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2004, over 594,000 families and individuals received in excess of \$4.1 billion in FHOS grants to assist with the purchase of their first home.

487. The Australian Government also funded an Additional FHOS grant for eligible first home buyers contracting to buy or build a new home. Over 69,000 families and individuals have received in excess of \$425 million under the Additional FHOS to assist in buying or building a new home.

Other housing assistance

488. The Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement is the Australian Government's principal strategy to address housing needs of low-income people. The Australian Government is providing more than \$4.75 billion for housing assistance from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2008. Assistance includes the provision of government housing at subsidised rent.

489. The Australian, State and Territory governments have committed to spend \$1.82 billion on the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) from 1 October 2005 to 30 June 2010. SAAP is Australia's primary service delivery response to homelessness and assists people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (including women and children escaping domestic violence) through a range of support and transitional accommodation services. Some 1,290 SAAP agencies across Australia are funded through the program.

490. Rent Assistance is an additional payment provided by the Australian Government in recognition of the relatively higher costs faced by private renters. Whilst not intended to cover the full cost of private rent, Rent Assistance has a significant impact on increasing housing affordability for income support recipients and low-income families participating in the private rental market. In 2005-06, Rent Assistance provided \$2.11 billion in assistance to over one million Australians.

491. State and Territory governments have developed various strategies aimed at provision of affordable housing. These include Queensland Government efforts to encourage greater private sector involvement in the provision of affordable accommodation, Disability Services

Queensland's operation and support for a range of accommodation services to people with disability, significant commitment by the Victorian Government of funding to pursue growth and innovation in the delivery of social housing and maximise leveraging of resources from the private and non-government sectors and the NT's *Home Territory 2010* strategy, which aims to provide safe, secure and affordable housing for all Territorians.

Access to adequate and affordable housing for Indigenous peoples

492. Headway continues to be made in improving the standard of housing and infrastructure in Indigenous communities.

493. The States and Territories provide a range of housing programs which focus on the needs of Indigenous Australians. For example, in NSW the Department of Housing provides subsidised rental housing to 8,194 Aboriginal households. It has developed initiatives aimed at improving Indigenous access to housing, improving the quality and appropriateness of Indigenous housing, and involving Indigenous peoples in the planning and delivery of housing services. Victoria has also established a state-wide program to support Indigenous households at risk of eviction to maintain their tenancies, and a Joint Planning Committee to ensure Indigenous input into all major Indigenous housing planning decisions in Victoria.

Homelessness

494. In May 1996, the Prime Minister announced the formation of a Youth Homelessness Taskforce to explore more effective responses to youth homelessness, focusing on early intervention. Following on from the work of this Taskforce, the Australian Government took a lead role in responding to and preventing homelessness. The Australian Government funds a range of programs and initiatives which aim both at preventing homelessness and helping people who become homeless regain stability in their lives. These include:

- SAAP, a program funded jointly by the Australian, State and Territory governments, providing emergency and transitional supported accommodation and related services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (see paragraph 489)
- \$10 million over four years (1 July 2005 to 30 June 2009) for the *National Homelessness Strategy* (NHS), which funds demonstration projects to develop innovative ways to prevent and respond to homelessness and Communication Activities that help services share their knowledge and expertise in recognising or responding to homelessness
- \$10.4 million over four years (to 2008) for the *Household Organisational Management Expenses* (HOME) Advice Program, which is an early intervention program offering assistance to families who are getting into difficulties with maintaining their tenancies or home ownership
- *Reconnect*, a program aimed at young people aged 12-18 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and their families, providing early intervention support through

counselling, mediation and other practical assistance to help the young person to reconnect with their families (where appropriate), education, training, employment and the community, and

- The *Job Placement, Employment and Training Programme* (JPET), which assists disadvantaged and disconnected young people aged 15-21 years to overcome multiple personal and social barriers so that they can reconnect with education and training, employment and their communities

495. In terms of State and Territory government programs, in NSW the *Wood Accommodation Support Program* was established in response to the link between homelessness, sexual exploitation and offending identified by the Royal Commission into the NSW Police Force - the Paedophilia Enquiry. The NSW Government funds six accommodation programs through this program. These accommodation programs assist young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation, homeless or at risk of entering the juvenile justice system because of the former reasons.

496. The ACT Government has set a target under *The Canberra Social Plan* of reducing primary homelessness to as close as possible to zero by 2013. In April 2004, the ACT Government released *Breaking the Cycle - the ACT Homelessness Strategy*, which recognises the right of all ACT residents to safe, secure, affordable and appropriate accommodation.

497. Since 1999, the Victorian Government has improved Victoria's response to homelessness through the Victorian Homelessness Strategy and the Youth Homelessness Action Plan. These strategies have successfully trialled new models of service delivery with a focus on joined-up services across housing, health, community services and justice programs, and many of these service models have now been established as state-wide programs with ongoing funding.

Protection of tenants

498. The Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights has recommended that Australian Governments, at federal, State and Territory levels, develop housing strategies and policies which include the protection of tenants from forced eviction without reasons and from arbitrary rent increases.²⁰

499. The Victorian Government amended the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* to increase protection for rental housing tenants. Amendments have focussed on tenure security and fair rent mechanisms:

- The notice period a landlord, rooming house owner or caravan park owner may give to a tenant or resident to vacate without giving a reason has been increased from 90 to 120 days, to deter property owners from using the "no-reason" notice to vacate inappropriately

²⁰ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations, Australia 08/09/2000, E/C.12/1/Add.50, paragraph 34.

- The criteria to be considered when determining whether or not a rental increase is excessive were expanded, allowing each case to be assessed on its merits, rather than on general market information

500. The NT enacted the *Residential Tenancies Act* in 1999, replacing the *Tenancy Act*. The new Act provides for termination of a tenancy upon grounds of breach of the agreement and an order for possession only upon order of the court or the Commissioner of Tenancies after a hearing. A periodic tenancy (that is, one without a fixed term) can be terminated by the landlord without grounds only upon six weeks notice. Rent can only be increased in accordance with the tenancy agreement, and not more frequently than every six months. Tenants can apply to the Commissioner of Tenancies for a declaration that rent is excessive and the Commissioner can determine the amount of rent payable.

501. The Tasmanian *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* commenced on 14 January 1998. It sets out the grounds on which an owner may increase the rent payable by a tenant, and the reasons an owner may rely on to serve on a tenant of the premises a notice requiring the tenant to deliver vacant possession of the premises.

(iii) International cooperation and assistance

502. The objective of Australia's international development cooperation program is to assist developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, in line with Australia's national interest. Its focus is on the Asia-Pacific region. Australia addresses poverty through an overarching framework and four interlinked themes:

- Accelerating economic growth
- Fostering functioning and effective states
- Investing in people, and
- Promoting regional stability and cooperation

503. Australia's international development cooperation program contributes to the realisation of the right to an adequate standard of living through its primary focus on poverty and through specific initiatives in a number of key areas such as food, water, sanitation, health and education.

Freedom from hunger

504. Australia, through its overseas aid program, works with partner countries in the Asia Pacific region and Africa to alleviate hunger and create conditions that foster long-term food security. Since the 1960s, Australia has provided funds to the World Food Program for food aid. In 2005-06, Australia's total funding for food aid reached \$87.3 million. In 2003, Australia announced it would contribute \$1 billion from the aid program over five years from 1 July 2003-20 June 2008 for food security.

505. Australia also supports programs that enable farmers to grow more food and wider varieties of produce to make themselves less vulnerable to natural disasters and fluctuating international markets.

506. Australia is also committed to ensuring the preservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture around the world. The recent commitment of \$16.5 million over 5 years to the Global Crop Diversity Trust will help ensure that plant genetic material continues to circulate for research and development, ultimately increasing food.

507. The Australian Government views trade liberalisation as the key to promoting global food security. In 2003-04, Australia provided an estimated \$31 million, an increase of over 70 per cent in the last seven years, to developing countries to enhance their trade facilitation and negotiation, investment and business development capacity.

S. Right to enjoy the highest standard of physical and mental health

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
6	12		24, 27, 32, 33, 37	12, 14	5 (e) (iv)

508. The Australian Government has a leadership role in policy making for the physical and mental health of Australians particularly in national issues like public health, research and national information management. The States and Territories are primarily responsible for the delivery and management of health services and for maintaining direct relationships with most health care providers, including the regulation of health professionals. Public acute and psychiatric hospital services and a wide range of community and public health services including school health, dental health, maternal and child health, and environmental health programs are delivered by States and Territories.

(i) Improving access to health services

509. The Medicare program provides underlying universal access to the public health system. Under the *Strengthening Medicare* plan introduced in May 2004, Medicare continues to pay the 85 per cent rebate on the schedule fee and a new Medicare Safety Net was introduced to cover 80 per cent of out-of-pocket costs for out of hospital Medicare services for the rest of that calendar year once an individual or family has reached that year's defined threshold.

510. The *Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme* (PBS) continues to subsidise the cost of most prescriptions to ensure that all Australian residents have affordable access to the medicines they need. People from countries with which Australia has reciprocal health care agreements are also eligible for PBS subsidies. Patients are required to pay a co-payment for each PBS prescription. For concession card holders the co-payment was \$4.70 and for all other patients the co-payment was \$29.50 (for 2005). A safety net arrangement is also in place which is designed to protect those patients and their families who require a very large number of prescriptions.

511. A subsidy is provided to encourage people to take out private health insurance. Access to private health insurance is guaranteed through the community rating principle. Community rating means that all members of the community can access private health insurance, regardless of age, gender or higher health risks. Community rating ensures that older Australians and other high risk groups do not have to pay more for their private health insurance premiums.

512. In February 2004, the NT Government released a 5 year framework outlining strategies to improve the health and wellbeing for NT residents: *Building Healthier Communities - A framework for Health and Community Services 2004-2009*, available at <http://www.nt.gov.au/health/building_healthier_communities.pdf>. Progress to date has included the establishment of a dedicated Office of Aboriginal Health, Family and Social Policy within the Department of Health and Community Services, and the extension of specialist medical outreach services to remote areas.

513. In March 2004, the WA Government released the final report of the Health Reform Committee (HRC): *A Healthy Future for Western Australians*. The Report set out a plan for major health reform, recommending a fundamental reconfiguration of the State's health system during the next 10 to 15 years. The WA Government endorsed the 86 recommendations put forward by the Committee, The Health Reform Implementation Taskforce (HRIT) commenced operations in August 2004 with the task of driving the health reform changes by implementing the recommendations of the HRC's final report.

(ii) Women's health

514. The *Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health*, known as the Women's Health Australia Study, commenced in June 1995. About 40,000 women are involved in the study, which follows their individual experience of health and wellbeing while considering social, economic and psychosocial factors that influence health, and how to address health needs. The study is designed to run for at least 20 years. Results of analyses are published and provide guidance for health policy and program development.

515. Specific women's health needs are among the areas targeted under the Public Health Funding Outcomes Agreements (PHOFAs). The PHOFAs are bilateral agreements between the Australian Government and the State and Territory governments that provide broad-banded and specific purpose funding for a range of public health programs. The PHOFAs support services such as sexual assault counselling, information on alternative birthing, education in relation to female genital mutilation, breast and cervical cancer screening, and sexual and reproductive health services.

516. The Australian Government also funds a range of programs targeting health needs for particular groups of women.

517. From late 2006, additional support and information will be available for women who are anxious about their pregnancy. This support will be available through pregnancy support counselling by general practitioners and, on referral, by other health professionals. The

Australian Government will also fund a National Pregnancy Support Telephone Helpline, which will provide professional and non-directive advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Helpline will provide assistance to women, their partners and family members who wish to explore pregnancy options.

518. The Australian Government funds *Beyondblue*: the national depression initiative, which has developed a National Perinatal Mental Health Program. The first stage of the program was a 2001-2005 research project on postnatal depression involving 40,000 pregnant women and 12,000 new mothers across Australia. The second stage of the Program is now underway and aims to develop a national action plan to address depression and related difficulties in women during pregnancy and in early parenthood.

519. As part of the Investing in Stronger Regions policy, the Australian Government provides a Medicare rebate for practice nurses to take Pap smears on behalf of a GP in rural areas. This provides better preventive health care for women in rural areas.

520. State and Territory government initiatives include the Victorian *Women's Health and Wellbeing Strategy*, launched in 2002, which outlined the Victorian Government's key directions for improving the health and wellbeing of Victorian women, particularly those who are most disadvantaged, including women of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women in rural Victoria and women with disability.

(iii) Children and young people's health

Infant mortality

521. Australian children on average enjoy a high standard of health by international standards. However, Indigenous children often suffer poorer health outcomes from birth (see Statistical Annex, paragraph 38). In early May 2005 the Minister for Health and Ageing announced research funding of \$6.58 million under the *Healthy Start to Life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children*.

522. Increased access to antenatal care and improvements in health outcomes have been demonstrated by a number of Aboriginal community controlled health services. Three Child and Maternal Health Exemplar Sites have been established since 2002-2003 to support policy development and to document and disseminate information regarding "best practice" in the regional delivery of child and maternal health services in a primary health care setting. A report on outcomes from this initiative is available in a Resource Package at <<http://www.health.gov.au/healthyforlife>>.

523. In May 2005, the Australian Government provided \$102.4 million over four years for the Healthy for Life program. This initiative aims to improve the health of mothers, infants and children, and improve the prevention, early detection and management of chronic diseases.

524. A new annual health check for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children up to 14 years was introduced on 1 May 2006 through the Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS). This child health check complements the existing MBS-funded Adult Health Checks for Indigenous Australians over 15 years, and encourages doctors to carry out regular (annual) and comprehensive health checks for Indigenous children, to promote healthy behaviours, prevent illness, and improve the early detection of disease.

Youth suicide

525. At the completion in 1999 of the *National Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy* (NYSPS), the first attempt to provide a nationally coordinated approach to youth suicide prevention, the Australian Government announced a *National Suicide Prevention Strategy* (NSPS) to build on the good results of the NYSPS. Initially, \$48 million was allocated over five years for the NSPS. The NSPS was later extended to June 2006, with a total budget allocation of \$66 million. The focus of the NSPS is to foster strategic partnerships and to position suicide prevention effort across all sectors.

(iv) Older people's health

526. In 2004, the *Investing in Australia's Aged Care: More Places, Better Care* strategy was released. It provides further support for older Australians needing care, while encouraging aged care providers to become more flexible, accountable and innovative in the delivery of care. Features include: more aged care places, more choice, more training and better systems, better administration and better management. *A New Strategy for Community Care - The Way Forward* was also released, outlining ways to reshape and improve the community care system in areas such as access, eligibility and assessment, reducing overlap and duplication.

527. In 2004, the *National Action Plan for Improving the Care of Older People across the Acute-Aged Care Continuum* was endorsed. The Plan covers the period 2004-08 and focuses on acute, sub-acute, transition and aged care services. Each jurisdiction is implementing the National Action Plan goals in the context of the particular structure, the availability and the need for health and aged care services in the jurisdiction.

528. In 2005, the Australian Government provided \$320.6 million over five years for the *Helping Australians with dementia, and their carers - making dementia a National Health Priority* to provide support for people with dementia, their carers and families.

529. In 2006, the Australian Government provided continued funding of \$23.7 million over four years to expand psychogeriatric support services to give national coverage through the Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Services (DBMAS). The DBMAS provides expert advice and support for staff in residential care, improving their care of people with dementia and challenging behaviours.

530. In November 2005, Australian Health Ministers released the *National Framework for Action to Promote Eye Health and Prevent Avoidable Blindness and Vision Loss* in response to World Health Assembly Resolution 56.26 on the elimination of avoidable blindness. The

Framework sets out a blueprint for nationally coordinated action by governments, health professionals, non-government organisations, industry and individuals to work in partnership to prevent avoidable blindness amongst Australians.

531. State and Territory governments have introduced their own complementary initiatives in aged care. For example, the ACT has announced initiatives in aged care, including the *Building for Our Ageing Community Strategy*.

(v) Indigenous health

532. Although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the most disadvantaged group within the Australian community, Australian governments are making headway in addressing health disadvantage.

533. *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce National Strategic Framework* was launched in 2002. It is a ten-year plan to improve training, recruitment, support and retention of appropriately skilled health professionals, health service managers and health policy officers in both mainstream and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific services. An evaluation is due in 2007.

534. The 2003 *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health* outlines agreed principles and nine key result areas that all jurisdictions and the community sector are committed to achieving through collaboration over the next ten years. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework is providing the basis for quantitative measurement of the impact of the *National Strategic Framework*, with the first report at the end of 2006 reporting on approximately 90 measures that address key issues about health outcomes, determinants of health, and the performance of the health system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

535. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework Report 2006 shows that there was a 16 per cent drop in death rates and a 44 per cent drop in infant mortality rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Northern Territory, SA and WA between 1991 and 2003. The report shows that there are continuing areas of concern including deaths caused by chronic disease, hospitalisation for injury, low birth weight (which is twice as common among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as other Australians), chronic ear disease, smoking, nutrition and obesity.

536. State and Territory government initiatives have included the Queensland Indigenous Sexual Health Strategy 2003-2006, which identified key outcomes for improved sexual health among Queensland's Indigenous population, and suggested strategies for achieving them. The NT Aboriginal Health Framework (NTAHF) is a joint health and community services planning forum created under the NT Aboriginal Health Framework Agreement signed in 1998. The *Western Australian Aboriginal Sexual Health Strategy 2005-2008* recognises the importance of a comprehensive approach to sexual health, and outlines a framework for engaging communities and service providers to bring about improvements in sexual health.

(vi) Health of people with disability

537. State and Territory government initiatives in this area have included the following:

- The Disability Services Commission (Western Australia) has established a Health Resource and Consultancy Team, which aims to enhance the understanding within the wider community and the disability sector that health is part of quality of life considerations for people with disability. The team works to improve access to appropriate health services and ensure optimum health outcomes.
- The Queensland Government's *Strategic Plan for Psychiatric Disability Services and Support 2000-2005*, which provided a range of strategies for the Health Department to work with the psychiatric disability sector and other key stakeholders to improve access to services and support.
- In 2004, the ACT Government launched *Future Directions: A framework for ACT 2004-08*. Future Directions provides the community and the ACT Government, and in particular the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, with a framework to support all people with a disability to realise their vision and rights to respect, dignity and participation at all levels in the community. Future Directions builds on the implementation work already undertaken within the context of the Government's response to the 2002 Board of Inquiry into Disability Services in the ACT.
- Victoria is currently implementing, initially within disability accommodation services, a range of quality initiatives which focus on health promotion activities, screening and early identification of health risks, training for disability support workers and building partnerships with health professionals to improve accessibility of health services.

(vii) Health in regional, rural and remote locations

538. Building on the *Regional Health Strategy* of 2000-2001, the Australian Government reaffirmed its commitment to rural health and aged care in the 2004-05 Budget by providing renewed funding for what is now retitled the *Rural Health Strategy*. The funding of \$830.2 million over the next four years gives continuing support for programs to provide increased access to doctors and other health professionals in rural areas, and will also support two new Strategy objectives. Funding under the Strategy will support a flexible package of health and aged care services and workforce measures.

539. Based on the experience of the Strategy's first four years, the Australian Government has concluded that: more effort is required to provide allied and primary health services to more remote areas; and there should be an increased focus on preventative health, to address more directly the causes of health differences between metropolitan and rural and remote Australians.

540. The *Rural Women's GP Service*, launched in March 2000, aims to improve access to primary health services for rural women who have little or no access to a female general practitioner.

(viii) Better health information

541. *HealthConnect* began in 2004. It is the new national system of electronic health records designed to make available people's health information by electronically connecting the different health services people use.

(ix) Physical health

Obesity

542. The prevention of obesity in young people has been the focus of Australia's National Obesity Taskforce, which has been chaired by the Australian Government. *Healthy Weight 2008 - Australia's Future - A National Action Agenda for Children and Young People and their Families* and *Healthy Weight for Adults and Older Australians*, both align closely with the WHO's Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. In 2004, the *Building a Healthy, Active Australia* program began. The Program provides a national framework for addressing childhood obesity.

Immunisation rates

543. Immunisation rates continue to increase under the *National Immunisation Program*. As at 31 March 2006, 90.2 per cent of children aged 12 to 15 months and 92.1 per cent of children aged 24 to 27 months were fully immunised.

544. Since January 2003, the Department of Health and Ageing has commenced three new universal vaccination programs for children: the *National Meningococcal C Vaccination Program* commenced on 1 January 2003; the *National Childhood Pneumococcal Vaccination Program* commenced on 1 January 2005; and the *Childhood Varicella Vaccination Program* commenced on 1 November 2005. In 2005, four deaths from meningococcal C were recorded, a decrease of 80 per cent from 24 in 2002. The *National Childhood Pneumococcal Vaccination Program* has also been successful in reducing deaths in under 5 year olds from 16 in 2004 before the program was introduced to 9 in 2005. In addition, a targeted Hepatitis A vaccination program for Indigenous children was also implemented on 1 November 2005.

HIV/AIDS

545. The fifth *National HIV/AIDS Strategy 2005-2008* and the first *National Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs) Strategy 2005-2008* were implemented on 1 July 2005. They provide strategic direction towards a national approach to STIs, as well as revitalising Australia's response to HIV/AIDS.

Cancer

546. The Australian Government is providing substantial funding for cancer screening. Three examples of funded screening programs are:

- *BreastScreen Australia*, which aims to achieve significant reductions in mortality and morbidity from breast cancer by early detection of the disease through provision of free biennial screening and assessment services to women aged 50-69
- the *National Cervical Screening Program*, which seeks to reduce morbidity and mortality from cervical cancer by biennial screening of all women aged between 18 and 70 years, and
- the *National Bowel Cancer Screening Program*, which aims to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with bowel cancer through the provision of population screening using faecal occult blood tests followed by referral to further clinical services, as appropriate

Hepatitis C

547. The *National Hepatitis C Strategy 2005-2008* was released in June 2005 and builds on the success of the first Strategy. The aim of the Strategy is to reduce transmission rates of hepatitis C and minimise the physical and social impact of the disease on people living with and affected by hepatitis C.

Illicit drug use

548. Under the *National Illicit Drugs Strategy*, funding has been allocated for 169 non-government services across Australia through the *Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Program*. These services provide a range of education, counselling, rehabilitation and other types of support to individuals and families affected by illicit drug use.

Alcohol

549. Australia has developed a *National Alcohol Strategy 2006-09* to provide national direction for minimising the consequences of alcohol-related harm. The *National Alcohol Strategy* forms part of national action that has been under way for a number of years to reduce the harm caused by drugs in Australia, including mortality, morbidity and violence (including domestic violence). It contains strategies for high risk groups such as young people, Indigenous peoples and pregnant women.

Smoking

550. Australia's *National Tobacco Strategy 2004-09* is a statement of the resolve of governments to work together to reduce the misery and wasted human potential caused by tobacco smoking in Australia. The most recent estimate of daily smoking rates from

the 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey fell from the 2001 figure of 19.5 per cent to 17.4 per cent. In 2004-05, the *Australian Bureau of Statistics National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey* estimated that about 50 per cent of Indigenous Australians are daily smokers.

Hospital waiting periods

551. Several States now employ coordinators at public hospitals to develop and implement waiting list initiatives that improve outcomes for patients waiting for elective surgery. An elective surgery patient management policy is currently being developed to streamline waiting lists across the public hospitals.

(x) Mental health

552. The Australian Government, through the COAG process, has made mental health issues a priority area for action, requiring all jurisdictions to work on a range of measures to address the mental health needs of the nation.

553. The *National Mental Health Strategy* which was endorsed in 1992, and reaffirmed in 1998 and 2003, provides a framework for national reform from an institutionally based mental health system to one that is consumer focused with an emphasis on supporting individuals in their communities. In 2006, COAG agreed to the implementation of the *National Action Plan on Mental Health 2006-2011* to address the shortfall in service provision for people with mental illness. The Australian Government has contributed \$1.9 billion over five years for 19 measures to assist people with mental illness, their families and carers.

554. The Australian Government also funds the *MindMatters* mental health promotion resource for secondary schools and is supporting the pilot of the *KidsMatter* mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention resource for primary schools. These projects provide material to help schools foster a positive school community, to provide an effective social and emotional learning curriculum to students, to provide information and education of child and youth mental health for parents, and to develop processes for addressing the needs of students who are at risk of experiencing mental health difficulties.

555. The *National Action Plan for Promotion, Prevention & Early Intervention for Mental Health 2000* provides a framework for a co-ordinated national approach to the promotion of mental health and prevention and early intervention for mental health problems. The Australian Government has funded a number of projects aimed at improving the mental health of children, including *Auseinet*, a national early intervention network to promote early intervention in mental health problems in children, which commenced in May 1997. Australian Government funding for *Beyondblue*, a national, independent, not-for-profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression, anxiety and related substance misuse disorders in Australia, with a key goal of raising community awareness about depression and reducing stigma associated with the illness, has been extended to 2009.

T. Right to education and other cultural rights

ICCPR Articles	ICESCR Articles	CAT Articles	CROC Articles	CEDAW Articles	CERD Articles
27	13, 14, 15		23, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32	10, 13, 14	5 (e) (v), (e) (vi)

(i) Primary, secondary and tertiary education

School education in Australia

556. The schooling system in Australia comprises thirteen years, with some variations in Queensland and WA, and is compulsory between the ages of six and 15 (or 16 in some States).²¹ School education is divided into a preparatory year, primary schooling and secondary schooling. The final two years of secondary schooling are necessary for those wishing to proceed to higher education (including university).

557. The major responsibility for funding government schools lies with State and Territory governments, which provide about 90 per cent of schools' running costs. The Australian Government contributes approximately 10 per cent of government school running costs. Education for compulsory aged students in all government primary and secondary schools is free. Voluntary contributions are sought in some case for certain materials, services and facilities. Private school education exists in parallel with the State system.

558. Consultation and collaboration between the different levels of government in relation to school education occurs through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). Membership of the Council comprises State, Territory, Australian Government and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of education, employment, training and youth affairs, with Papua New Guinea and Norfolk Island having observer status. The Council meets at least once a year.

559. The Australian Government acknowledges the right of Australian parents to choose the most appropriate schooling for their children.

560. The Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights has expressed interest in the difference in quality of schooling available to students in public and private schools.²² NSW has conducted a review of non-government schools in NSW, and as a consequence amendments were made in June 2004 to the *Education Act 1990* which promote greater parity between public

²¹ The WA Government has recently amended its legislation to raise the leaving age to the end of the year in which young peoples turn 16. From 1 January 2008, this will be extended to the end of the year in which they turn 17.

²² Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations, Australia 08/09/2000, E/C.12/1/Add.50, paragraph 22.

and private schools, ensure all students undertake courses of study that are in accordance with NSW Board of Studies syllabuses, and also ensure greater accountability of non-government schools with regard to student welfare, child protection, teacher standards, improved governance and annual reporting mechanisms. Other States and Territories monitor quality of schooling system-wide (public and private) through annual national numeracy, reading, writing and spelling benchmark assessment activities as required by the Australian Government funding agreement, but do not compare, or have not compared, achievement of students in public and private schools.

Reform agenda for schools

561. The Australian Government has announced its reform agenda for Australian schools. The objectives of the reforms across all educational sectors are to promote quality (especially in terms of consistency and relevance), accessibility, choice, flexibility and sustainability. Issues covered include introducing national consistency in schooling and measures for dealing with poorly performing schools and the development of a National Safe Schools Framework.

562. The Australian Government also recognises that there are some students with particular needs who require additional help and resources to reach their full potential. All States and Territories offer a range of programs to address the special education needs of all students. Programs available include those for students with intellectual and physical disabilities, behaviour disorders, special learning needs, for gifted students, and for migrant students particularly those with low numeracy and literacy skills or without fluency in English.

National goals for schooling

(a) *Literacy and numeracy*

563. The *National Literacy and Numeracy Plan* is a coordinated approach by the Australian Government and States and Territories to improve literacy and numeracy standards, involving national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy to facilitate early identification of problems and intervention prior to high school, and professional development for teachers.

564. The Australian Government has developed a range of specific programs to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of Australian children:

- The Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs Program, introduced in 2005, aims to improve the literacy, numeracy and other learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities.
- The Reading Assistance Voucher Program provides support to parents of children who do not meet the 2006 Year 3 national reading benchmark. Parents of eligible students will be able to access \$700 worth of reading assistance for their child during the 2007 school year.

- *National Literacy and Numeracy Week* is an event held annually since 1999 to celebrate literacy and numeracy achievement.

565. The *English as a Second Language Program* remains an important part of addressing the special educational needs of newly arrived migrant students. Under this Program, education authorities (government and non-government) attract a one-off per capita payment for eligible newly-arrived primary and secondary students. The funding aims to provide intensive language tuition to improve English Language competence, and facilitate participation by these students in mainstream educational activities.

(b) *Information and communication technology (ICT) in school education*

566. In recent years a major instrument of change in the way schools operate has been the increased use of ICT. The Australian Government recognises the importance of ICT in improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout all Australian schools and has implemented strategies to ensure that young people have the school education that is needed for the knowledge society and the knowledge economy.

567. Information on Vocational and Technical Education is available at paragraphs 409-414 above.

Higher education

568. The higher education sector comprises 37 public and 2 private universities, one branch of an overseas university; four other self-accrediting institutions and over 150 other institutions, such as TAFES, theological colleges and other providers specialising in professional, business or artistic courses of studies.

569. The majority of Australian undergraduate students are enrolled in a Commonwealth supported place (previously called a HECS place) and contribute towards the cost of their education by paying a student contribution amount. From 2005, higher education providers are able to set student contributions within a range from \$0 to a maximum set by the Australian Government, which is no more than 25 per cent higher than the 2004 HECS rates (indexed). The Australian Government contributes to the cost of educating Commonwealth supported students through Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding.

570. Eligible students can access a HELP loan to defer payment of their tuition costs. HELP debts are required to be paid back only after an annual income threshold has been reached, \$38,149 in 2006-07. HELP debts are indexed by the Consumer Price Index to maintain their real value but are otherwise interest free.

571. A review of the higher education sector was carried out in 2002. As a result of the review, in 2003 the Australian Government introduced the *Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future* package of higher education reforms. The reforms give universities access to the funding they need to deliver world-class higher education, with a focus on quality learning outcomes.

572. In higher education, the following groups have been identified as targets for equity planning, on the basis of their history of relative disadvantage in accessing higher education: Indigenous Australians, people from low socio-economic backgrounds, people from rural and isolated areas, people with disabilities, and people from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

573. The progress that these groups have made in the last decade has varied. The proportion of all domestic students who have a disability has increased over recent years. The proportion who are from rural areas and low socio-economic backgrounds has remained fairly stable, while that for isolated students has fallen slightly. The proportion of students participating from a language background other than English has been declining. Fifty-six per cent of students are female and 44 per cent are male.

Women and men in education

574. Women have overtaken men in several key aspects of education performance. In general terms, girls out-perform boys during the school years in terms of levels of literacy and numeracy, retention to the end of secondary school (Year 12) and achievement in Year 12 (which increases the chances of entry into university). On the other hand, the post school experience of women and men in education, while different in character, is in many respects more equal. In 2005, women represented 50.1 per cent of all government funded VTE students. Women tend to undertake higher level Certificates and have pass rates comparable to men.

Indigenous people and education

575. There have been significant improvements in outcomes for Indigenous students, although disparities remain between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Indigenous Australians have a high rate of participation in the Australian training system. While 2.4 per cent of the Australian population is Indigenous, in 2005 Indigenous students comprised around 3.8 per cent of the total students participating in VTE.

576. In April 2004, the Australian Government announced that \$2.1 billion will be allocated over the 2005-2008 quadrennium to programs to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students.

577. A significant restructure of existing programs has been implemented to redirect funding to initiatives based on proven effectiveness and greatest need. The Indigenous Education Program includes elements such as:

- *Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA)*, which provides supplementary recurrent funding on a per student basis to independent preschools, government and non-government schools and independent vocational education and training institutions
- *Whole of School Intervention (WoSI)* strategy, which enables creative approaches to improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous schools students by encouraging the parents of Indigenous students, Indigenous communities and schools to work together, and

- *Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS)*, which provides supplementary tuition to Indigenous students

578. Other programs include the following:

- ABSTUDY provides income support and supplementary benefits to Indigenous secondary and tertiary students.
- *Indigenous Support Program (ISP)* enables higher education institutions to invest further in initiatives designed to increase the participation and success of Indigenous students in higher education.
- The *National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NIELNS)* was launched in 2000 with the objective to achieve literacy and numeracy for Indigenous students at levels comparable to those achieved by other young Australians.
- The *Indigenous Youth Mobility Program (IYMP)* supports the development of local economic employment opportunities for young Indigenous Australians in remote areas, and will support at least 600 young people from 2006 to 2009. The IYMP improves access for these young people to training and employment opportunities in major centres by providing pathways planning, mentoring, intensive support and safe and supported accommodation in ten IYMP host locations.
- The *Indigenous Youth Leadership Program (IYLP)* aims to assist young Indigenous people, generally from remote areas, to develop and fulfil roles as Indigenous leaders in their communities. The program will provide 205 talented Indigenous students with scholarships to attend high performing schools and universities.

579. Some State and Territory government initiatives over recent years have included:

- A NSW Department of Education and Training review of Aboriginal education in NSW (2003-2004)
- The Victorian Government's Aboriginal education policy, *Yalca: A Partnership in Education and Training for the New Millennium*, which supports lifelong education
- The introduction in SA of *Yurrekaityarindi*, an Aboriginal decision-making model introduced to ensure that Indigenous parents and community members are included in educational decision-making
- The WA Government's *Follow the Dream* strategy into selected government schools, aimed at improving secondary retention of Indigenous students
- Queensland's *Education and Training Reform Framework* and *Bound for Success* - education strategies for Cape York and the Torres Strait

- The NT Government's comprehensive Indigenous Education Strategic Plan (2000-2004), and
- The ACT Department of Education and Training's *Action Plan 2002-2004: Services to Indigenous Peoples*

Rural and remote education

580. The *National Inquiry into Rural and Remote Education* was initiated by HREOC in February 1999. The Commission's 1998 *Bush Talks* consultations on the human rights concerns of regional, rural and remote Australians had revealed that access to education of an appropriate standard and quality was a significant concern in rural and remote areas. The Commission made detailed recommendations aimed at improving the education provided to children in rural and remote Australia. Those recommendations can be found at <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/word/human_rights/Recommendations.doc>. Fifty-four per cent of students in vocational and technical education are located in major cities, 38 per cent in regional areas, and almost five per cent in remote areas.²³

581. The Australian Government directly supports rural and isolated school students through the following programs:

- The *Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme* provides financial assistance to families of students who are unable to attend an appropriate government school on a daily basis because of geographical isolation. The underlying principle of the Scheme is that all Australian children should have reasonable daily access to an appropriate government school without regard to parents' income.
- The *Country Areas Program (CAP)* provides supplementary funding to schools to cover some of the additional costs associated with schooling that result from geographic isolation. CAP funding is allocated to the State and NT government and non-government education authorities to be distributed by them in accordance with their priorities but within Australian Government guidelines.
- The *Non-Government School-Term Hostels Program* is a four year initiative targeted at not-for-profit, non-government, school term hostels that operate principally to accommodate primary and secondary students from rural and remote areas of Australia. The objective of this Program is to assist hostels provide a high standard of care to rural primary and secondary school students residing at the hostels.

²³ See Table 25, Statistical Annex.

(ii) Cultural rights

Cultural diversity

582. The Australian Government's cultural diversity policies have reflected its commitment to ensuring that all Australians have the opportunity to be active and equal participants in the economic, social and cultural life of the country. Based on universal civic responsibilities, respect for each person, fairness in opportunities for all people, and benefits of cultural diversity for all Australians, the policies have supported the goals of Australia's anti-discrimination legislation and the delivery of human rights in both the Australian workplace and the wider society.

583. As part of the regular funding cycle, an evaluation of multicultural policy and associated programs has been recently conducted. Renewed funding for the programs was provided in 2006 for four years. A key message to all Australians is that cultural diversity, as a national strength, must continue to be balanced against individual and collective commitment to common Australian values.

584. The Australian Government continues to support a system of government services appropriate for all Australians. Since 1998, the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society* has placed an emphasis on building cultural diversity considerations into the strategic planning, policy development, budgeting and reporting processes of government services - irrespective of whether these services are provided by government agencies, community organisations or commercial enterprises.

585. As discussed at paragraphs 236-237 and 316, the *National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security* developed by the Australian Government and the Muslim Community Reference Group builds on existing cultural diversity policies and programs at all levels of government. The Plan, and the initiatives pursued under it, addresses both extremism and intolerance, and promotes harmony, understanding and a diverse but still unified Australian community.

586. Sixteen Australian Government Agencies have been working together to develop strategies to improve the settlement outcomes of humanitarian entrants through an Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) on Humanitarian Settlement.

587. States and Territories have, in recent years, implemented their own complementary multicultural policies, including:

- Queensland's 1998 *Multicultural Queensland Policy*
- The Tasmanian *Multicultural Policy 2001*
- Establishment by the WA Government of an Office of Multicultural Interests, and
- Establishment in the NT of an Office of Ethnic Affairs, which includes programs such as *Cross Cultural Awareness Training*, and the *Multicultural Policy*, through which the NT affirms its commitment to multiculturalism

Arts

588. The Australian Government continues to support the Australian arts community and enhance the opportunity for Australians to take part in cultural life by providing the assistance described in the Third Australian periodic report under ICESCR.²⁴ New initiatives include:

- Additional funding of \$25.4 million over four years to ensure the ongoing sustainability of Australia's major orchestras, and
- Additional funding of \$10.6 million over four years for Australia's two specialist opera and ballet orchestras

National cultural institutions

589. Funding for national cultural institutions has increased substantially, from \$112 million in 1996-1997 to \$229 million in 2005-2006 - an increase of 104 per cent.

Sport

590. Consistent with its 2004 *Building Australian Communities Through Sport* policy, the Australian Government will invest in excess of \$250 million in Australian sport in the 2006-07 financial year. One of the four planks of the Australian Government's sport policy is to increase greater grass roots participation in sport for all ages so as to ensure that Australians regardless of culture, gender, race, capability, or age have an opportunity to participate in quality sporting activities.

591. The Australian Sports Commission takes an important leadership role in working with national sporting organisations to establish structures and policies to ensure that a fair, safe, ethical and inclusive culture pervades sport at all levels. The Commission's key initiative has been to devise and implement the *Harassment-free Sport Strategy* to address harassment and abuse issues in sport. The Commission also encourages the application of the principles outlined in the *Essence of Australian Sport* to realise the values and benefits offered by sport.

Broadcasting

592. There are 342 licensed community radio services throughout Australia, including 80 Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services (RIBS). There are 15 full-time Radio for the Print Handicapped stations and 40 full-time religious stations. There are also six full-time ethnic community broadcasters which, together with almost 100 other community radio stations who provide some ethnic programming, produce 1,800 hours of ethnic broadcasting in over 100 languages each week.

²⁴ See Economic and Social Council, *Third periodic report: Australia*, 23/07/98. E/1994/104/Add.22, paragraphs 322-325.

593. The national and commercial free-to-air broadcasters are required under the Australian Captioning Standards to provide a captioning service for people who are deaf or hearing impaired for television programs transmitted during prime time viewing hours and for news and current affairs programs transmitted outside prime viewing hours.

Indigenous culture

594. Language is a core element of Indigenous peoples' cultural identity. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been assisted in maintaining the richness and diversity of their cultural life through:

- The administration of the *Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records (MILR) Program* - in 2005-06, the MILR Program provided funding assistance around Australia to conduct activities in language maintenance and revival projects; language recording; production of language materials and curricula; public awareness and advocacy, and development and maintenance of archives
- The implementation of targeted funding assistance to endangered Australian Indigenous languages to counter language loss
- The commission of a *National Indigenous Language Survey*, completed in 2005, to better enable the targeting of programs to address language erosion, and
- The development of State-level Indigenous language maintenance policies

595. The Australian Government supports Indigenous cultural participation, enhancing opportunities for Indigenous peoples to take part in cultural life. The Australian Government provides funding assistance for community social and cultural participation through the *Indigenous Culture Support Program*.

596. The Australian Government provides funding to support, maintain and strengthen Indigenous visual arts and craft through the *National Arts and Crafts Industry Support Program*. The program recognises the critical connection between Indigenous culture, art practice and the success of the Indigenous visual arts industry.

597. The Australian Government administers Indigenous broadcasting programs, through which the use of traditional language, culture and religion is supported and encouraged via Indigenous organisations delivering television and community radio services.

Science

598. The Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training supports science through considerable funding to universities and to major research organisations such as the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, and the Australian Institute of Marine Science. It also supports the Cooperative Research Centres Program to bring together researchers and research users, particularly industry.

599. *Backing Australia's Ability - Building Our Future through Science and Innovation* is the most recent in a series of initiatives announced by the Australian Government in May 2004 to promote research, development and innovation. It builds on the 2001 *Backing Australia's Ability* package to establish a ten-year commitment to science and innovation. Total Australian Government funding for science and innovation is expected to be around \$52 billion over that period. The *Backing Australia's Ability* strategy focuses on strengthening Australia's ability to generate ideas and undertake research, accelerating the commercialisation of research, and developing and retaining skills. It also maintains the Australian Government's commitment to strategic investment in ICT. A key feature is increased emphasis on collaboration between businesses, universities and publicly funded research organisations.

Information technology

600. The Australian Government recognises the impact and importance of ICT as a means of enabling people to share in the economic, social and cultural benefits of society. The Australian Government's *Australia's Strategic Framework for the Information Economy 2004-2006* identified as a priority ensuring "that all Australians have the capabilities, networks and tools to participate in the benefits of the information economy" and proposes a range of key strategies to achieve this.

601. The Australian Government takes seriously its responsibility to provide an effective internet regime and of the need to address internet related criminal activity, publication of illegal and offensive material online, and consumer policy issues like spam, while ensuring that regulation does not place onerous or unjustifiable burdens on business, industry and citizens that inhibit the development of the online economy. These measures include:

- The *Broadcasting Services (Online Services) Act 1999* for the regulation of internet content
- The *Cybercrime Act 2001*, a series of provisions building on existing legislation, experience and international consultation on measures required to prevent computer damages and offences
- The *Interactive Gambling Act 2001*, providing for restrictions and complaints in relation to interactive gambling, and
- The *Spam Act 2003*, a scheme for regulating the sending of commercial electronic messages

Telecommunications

602. The Australian Government recognises the importance of access to telecommunications services to participation in all aspects of contemporary Australian life. The open and competitive telecommunications market established in 1997 is the key to improving the access of Australians to quality, lower cost telecommunications services. A range of other measures safeguard access to telecommunications include:

- The *Universal Services Obligation*, which provides all people in Australia, including people with disability, with reasonable access to standard telephone and payphone services on an equitable basis, regardless of where they reside or carry on business
- Safeguarding of effective access to the internet through the *Internet Assistance Program* and *Digital Data Service Obligation*, and
- Establishment of a *National Broadband Strategy* to improve the availability and effective use of broadband services and capture the economic and social benefits of greater broadband connectivity

603. Targeted Australian Government funding and a range of public awareness activities are also helping to improve telecommunications access and uptake in areas such as mobile telephony and broadband, particularly for regional, rural and remote, and Indigenous Australians.

Intellectual property and moral rights

604. The Australian Government is committed to creating a copyright regime which balances the rights of copyright owners and creators to receive appropriate rewards for their investment of skill and resources, with the rights of users to access copyright material on reasonable terms.

605. Since 2000, the *Copyright Act 1968* has been extensively amended to update Australia's copyright law in response to digital technology and the online environment. Some of these changes have included extending the term of copyright protection and broadening the range of criminal offences and civil remedies available for infringement. Moral rights for creators of works and films were incorporated into the Act in 2000, and these rights were extended to performers for their live and recorded performances in 2005. Amendments to the Act in 2006 strengthen owners' rights through new enforcement provisions and increased protection for technological protection measures. At the same time, the amendments provide certainty for users by ensuring exceptions are available for commonly used digital technology and providing innovative exceptions for socially useful purposes such as use by people with disability. For further information see <<http://www.ag.gov.au/copyright>>.

Appendix A

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS INVITED TO
PROVIDE INPUT INTO/COMMENT ON AUSTRALIA'S
COMMON CORE DOCUMENT**

Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement

ACT Chief Minister's Multicultural Consultative Council

ACT Multicultural Council Inc

Advisory Commission of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

Amnesty International Australia

Anglican Church of Australia - General Synod

Antidefamation

Unit B'nai B'rith

AntiSlavery

Society

Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions

AsiaPacific

Centre for Human Rights and the Prevention of Ethnic Conflict

AUSTCARE

Australia Baptist World Aid

Australia Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby

Australia Tibet Council

Australian Baha'i Community

Australian Catholic Migration and Refugee Office

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

Australian Council for International Development

Australian Council for Lesbian and Gay Rights

Australian Council of Social Services

Australian Council of Trade Unions

Australian Education Union

Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations

Australian Federation of Disability Organisations

Australian Federation of Human Rights Organisations

Australian Federation of Islamic Councils

Australian Forum of Human Rights Organisations

Australian Human Rights Centre

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights

Australian Library and Information Association

Australian Multicultural Foundation

Australian Muslim Civil Rights Advocacy Network

Australian Red Cross

Australian Section of the International Commission of Jurists

Australian Women's Lawyers Association

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation

Brahma Kumaris

Bravehearts Inc

Business and Professional Women Australia

Castan Centre for Human Rights Law

Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace

Centre for Democratic Institutions

Centre for International and Public Law ANU

Christian Solidarity Australasia

Civil Liberties Australia

Combined Community Legal Centres Group (NSW) Inc.

Communications Law Centre

Creative Industries Research & Application Centre, Queensland University of Technology
Defence for Children International
Environmental Defenders Office (NSW)
Equal Rights Network
Evatt Foundation
Executive Council of Australian Jewry
Faculty of Information Technology, Monash University
Federation of Community Legal Services Vic. Inc
Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of Australia
Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action
Health Consumers Network
Homelessness Legal Rights Project
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
Human Rights Council of Australia
Human Rights International
Human Rights Law Resource Centre
Indigenous Law Centre
International Society for Human Rights
International Women's Development Agency
Just Rights Queensland
Kingsford Legal Centre
Law Council of Australia
Law Institute of Victoria
Liberty Victoria
Maningrida Arts & Culture
Mooka Bula Indigenous Association Incorporated
Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association, NSW

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Services Secretariat
National Association of Community Legal Centres
National Children's and Youth Law Centre
National Committee on Human Rights Education
National Council of Churches
National Council of Women of Australia
National Ethnic Disability Alliance
National Legal Commission
National Women's Justice Coalition
National Youth Advocacy Network
NSW Council for Civil Liberties
Older Women's Network
Oxfam Community Aid Abroad
People with Disability Australia Inc
Plan International Australia
Project Nuff Stuff
Public Interest Advocacy Centre
Public Interest Law Clearing House Inc, NSW
Public Interest Law Clearing House Inc, Vic
Quaker Service Australia
Refugee Council of Australia
Rights Australia
School of Law, Queensland University of Technology
Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors
Sisters Inside
Southern Communities Advocacy Legal and Education Service

Tears of the Oppressed

Unifem

United Nations Association of Australia

United Nations Children's Fund

United Nations Youth Association of Australia

Uniting Church in Australia

Uniting Justice Australia

Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre

Victorian Council of Social Service

Vietnamese Community in Australia

Women with Disabilities Australia

Women's Electoral Lobby

Women's Rights Action Network Australia

Young Lawyers Human Rights Committee

Young Women's Christian Association of Australia

Appendix B

TEXT OF AUSTRALIA'S RESERVATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES

- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

Reservations:

Article 10

In relation to paragraph 2(a) the principle of segregation is accepted as an objective to be achieved progressively. In relation to paragraph 2(b) and 3 (second sentence) the obligation to segregate is accepted only to the extent that such segregation is considered by the responsible authorities to be beneficial to the juveniles or adults concerned.

Article 14

Australia makes the reservation that the provision of compensation for miscarriage of justice in the circumstances contemplated in paragraph 6 of article 14 may be by administrative procedures rather than pursuant to specific legal provision.

Article 20

Australia interprets the rights provided for by articles 19, 21 and 22 as consistent with article 20; accordingly, the Commonwealth and the constituent States, having legislated with respect to the subject matter of the article in matters of practical concern in the interest of public order (*ordre public*), the right is reserved not to introduce any further legislative provision on these matters.

- **International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination**

Reservation:

The Government of Australia ... declares that Australia is not at present in a position specifically to treat as offences all the matters covered by article 4 (a) of the Convention. Acts of the kind there mentioned are punishable only to the extent provided by the existing criminal law dealing with such matters as the maintenance of public order, public mischief, assault, riot, criminal libel, conspiracy and attempts. It is the intention of the Australian Government, at the first suitable moment, to seek from Parliament legislation specifically implementing the terms of article 4 (a).

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

Reservations:

The Government of Australia States that maternity leave with pay is provided in respect of most women employed by the Commonwealth Government and the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT. Unpaid maternity leave is provided in respect of all other women employed in the State of NSW and elsewhere to women employed under Federal and some State industrial awards. Social Security benefits subject to income tests are available to women who are sole parents.

The Government of Australia advises that it is not at present in a position to take the measures required by article 11(2) to introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits throughout Australia.

The Government of Australia advises that it does not accept the application of the Convention in so far as it would require alteration of Defence Force policy which excludes women from combat duties.

- **Convention on the Rights of the Child**

Reservation:

Australia accepts the general principles of article 37. In relation to the second sentence of paragraph (c), the obligation to separate children from adults in prison is accepted only to the extent that such imprisonment is considered by the responsible authorities to be feasible and consistent with the obligation that children be able to maintain contact with their families, having regard to the geography and demography of Australia. Australia, therefore, ratifies the Convention to the extent that it is unable to comply with the obligation imposed by article 37 (c).

The Australian Government has a policy of keeping existing reservations to human rights treaties actively under review, consistent with the *Vienna Declaration and Program of Action*.

Updates on the status of Australia's treaty ratifications are available from the Australian Treaties Database. The Database is an on-line resource for researching treaties to which Australia is a signatory, or where Australia has taken other treaty action:

<<http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/treaties/>>.

Appendix C

OTHER RELEVANT TREATIES TO WHICH AUSTRALIA IS PARTY

1. Other United Nations human rights and related conventions

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide 1948

Slavery Convention 1926 as amended 1955

Convention relating to the Status of Refugees 1951, and its 1967 Protocol

Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons 1954

Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness 1961

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court 1998

United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime 2000, and its Protocols against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air, and to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children

2. Conventions of the International Labour Organization

Forced or Compulsory Labour Convention 1930 (No. 29)

Labour Inspection Convention 1947 (No. 81)

Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention 1948 (No. 87)

Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention 1949 (No. 98)

Equal Remuneration Convention 1951 (No. 100)

Abolition of Forced Labour Convention 1957 (No. 105)

Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958 (No. 111)

Employment Policy Convention 1964 (No. 122)

Minimum Wage-Fixing Convention 1970 (No. 131)

Occupational Safety and Health Convention 1981 (No. 155)

Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention 1981 (No. 156)

3. Conventions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960

4. Conventions of the Hague Conference on Private International Law

Convention on the Recognition of Divorces and Legal Separations 1970

Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions relating to Maintenance Obligations 1973

Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1973

Convention on Celebration and Recognition of the Validity of Marriages 1978

Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption 1993

Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children 1996

5. Geneva Conventions and other treaties on international humanitarian law

Geneva Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field 1949

Geneva Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea 1949

Geneva Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War 1949

Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War 1949

Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) 1977

Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II) 1977

Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and On Their Destruction 1987

Appendix D

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN AUSTRALIA

Further information on human rights, and on Australia's promotion of human rights, is available from the following sources:

- Human Rights Manual: <http://www.dfat.gov.au/hr/hr_manual_2004/index.html>
- Australia's National Framework for Human Rights - National Action Plan:
<http://www.dfat.gov.au/hr/nap/nap_2004.pdf> and <<http://www.ag.gov.au/nap>>
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade human rights information:
<<http://www.dfat.gov.au/hr/>>
- AusAID: <<http://www.ausaid.gov.au>>
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission: <<http://www.humanrights.gov.au>>, including the following reports:
 - Social Justice Reports:
<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/sj_reports.html>
 - Native title reports:
<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/nt_reports.html>
 - Reports on Human Rights Issues:
<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/human_rights/index.html>
 - Reports on Complaints Under the HREOC Act:
<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/human_rights/index.html>
 - Reports on Racial Discrimination:
<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/publications.html>
 - Disability Inquiry Reports:
<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/inquiries/reports.html>
 - Attorney-General's Department: <<http://www.ag.gov.au>>

Annex 1

STATISTICAL DATA

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1. The Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia's official statistical organisation, regularly publishes key national indicators: <<http://www.abs.gov.au>>. Unless otherwise indicated, all material below is taken from the internet editions of the Australian Bureau of Statistics publications, *Yearbook Australia 2004* and *Yearbook Australia 2006*.

Land and people

Land use

2. The island continent of Australia comprises a land area of over 7.6 million square kilometres. In addition, the Australian Antarctic Territory is some 5.9 million square kilometres in size.

3. Australia features a wide range of climatic zones, from the tropical regions of the north, through the arid expanses of the interior, to the temperate regions of the south. Australia is the world's second-driest continent (after Antarctica), with average (mean) annual rainfall below 600 millimetres (mm) per year over 80 per cent of the continent, and below 300 mm over 50 per cent. Summers are hot through most of the country, with average January maximum temperatures exceeding 30 degrees Celsius (°C) over most of the mainland except for the southern coastal fringe between Perth and Brisbane, and areas at high elevations. Winters are warm in the north and cooler in the south, with overnight frosts common in inland areas south of the Tropic of Capricorn. However, extreme minimum temperatures are not as low as those recorded in other continents, due to Australia's relatively low latitude, the lack of high mountains to induce orographic cooling and because of the large expanse of relatively warm surrounding oceans.

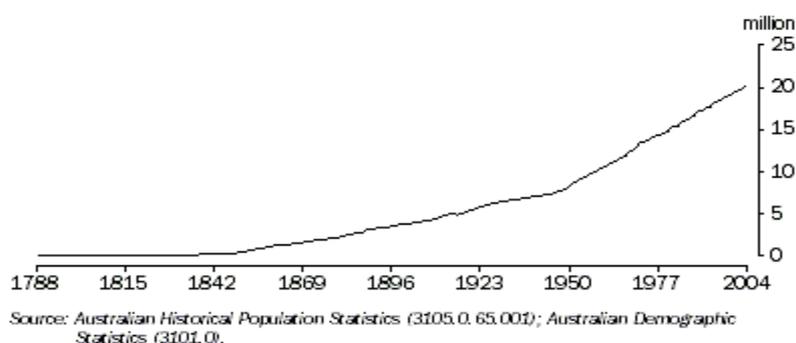
4. In spite of Australia's harsh environment, agriculture is the most extensive form of land use. At 30 June 2004, the estimated total area of establishments with agricultural activity was 440.1 million hectares (ha), representing about 57 per cent of the total land area. The remainder of the land area consists of unoccupied land (mainly desert in western and central Australia), Aboriginal land reserves (mainly located in the NT and WA), forests, mining leases, national parks and urban areas.

Population

5. Australia's estimated resident population at December 2005 was just under 20.5 million, an increase of 1.2 per cent over the previous year.

Graph 1

Australian demographic trends



Population growth

Table 1

Australia's population growth

Preliminary Data	Population at end Dec. quarter 2005	Change over previous year	Change over previous year %
New South Wales	6 803 003	53 700	0.8
Victoria	5 052 377	59 700	1.2
Queensland	4 001 023	74 800	1.9
South Australia	1 546 274	9 900	0.6
Western Australia	2 028 668	34 700	1.7
Tasmania	487 185	3 400	0.7
Northern Territory	204 453	3 600	1.8
Australian Capital Territory	326 671	2 400	0.8
Australia (a)	20 452 334	242 300	1.2

Source: ABS, Australian Demographic Statistics, December 2005 (cat. No. 3101.0)

(a) Includes Other Territories (Jervis Bay Territory, Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands).

6. The Australian population has increased by 12 per cent over the past decade. Australia's growth rate of 1.2 per cent for the 12 months to December 2005 was the same as the overall world growth rate. When compared with other countries, Australia's population growth rate was similar to New Zealand (1.1 per cent), higher than Canada (0.9 per cent), the United States of America (0.9 per cent), and Hong Kong (0.7 per cent); considerably higher than the United Kingdom (0.3 per cent), Japan (0.1 per cent) and Germany (0.0 per cent), and well below the growth rates for Papua New Guinea (2.4 per cent) and Malaysia (1.9 per cent). China (0.6 per cent), ranked as the largest population, had a growth rate half that of Australia.

Population density

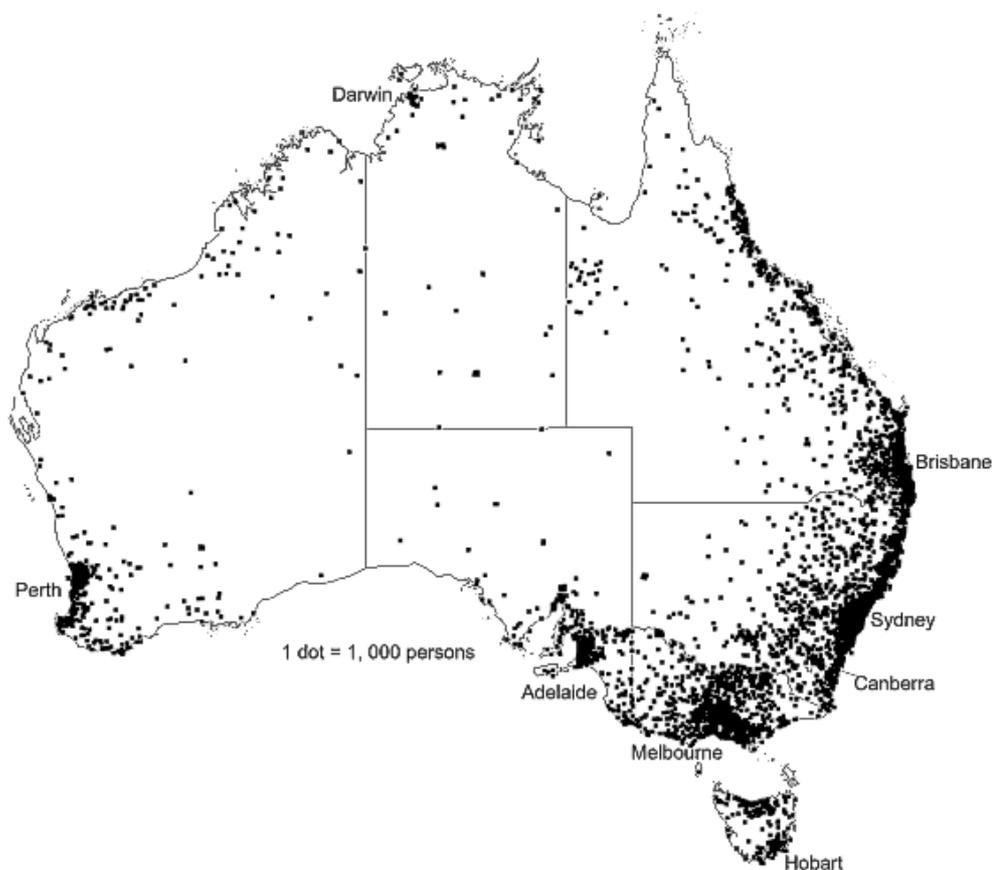
7. Australia's population density at 30 June 2005 was 2.6 people per square kilometre (sq km), compared with 2.5 people per sq km in 2000. The ACT had the highest population density of the States and Territories at June 2005 with 138 people per sq km (reflecting the fact that the city of Canberra constitutes a large proportion of the ACT's area), followed by Victoria with 22 people per sq km. The NT had a population density of only 0.1 people per sq km, the lowest of all the States and Territories (reflecting more recent settlement, distance from areas settled earlier, large arid areas and, perhaps, climate). Population density at June 2005 was highest in the city centres.

8. In 1904, 63 per cent of Australians lived outside capital cities. This proportion fell steadily and by 1962 only 40 per cent lived outside capital cities. Since the mid-1970s, this proportion appears to have steadied at around 36 per cent.

9. The distribution of Australia's population at 30 June 2004 is shown in Map 1 below.

Map 1

Australia's population distribution - 30 June 2004



Source: Regional Population Growth, Australia and New Zealand (3218.0).

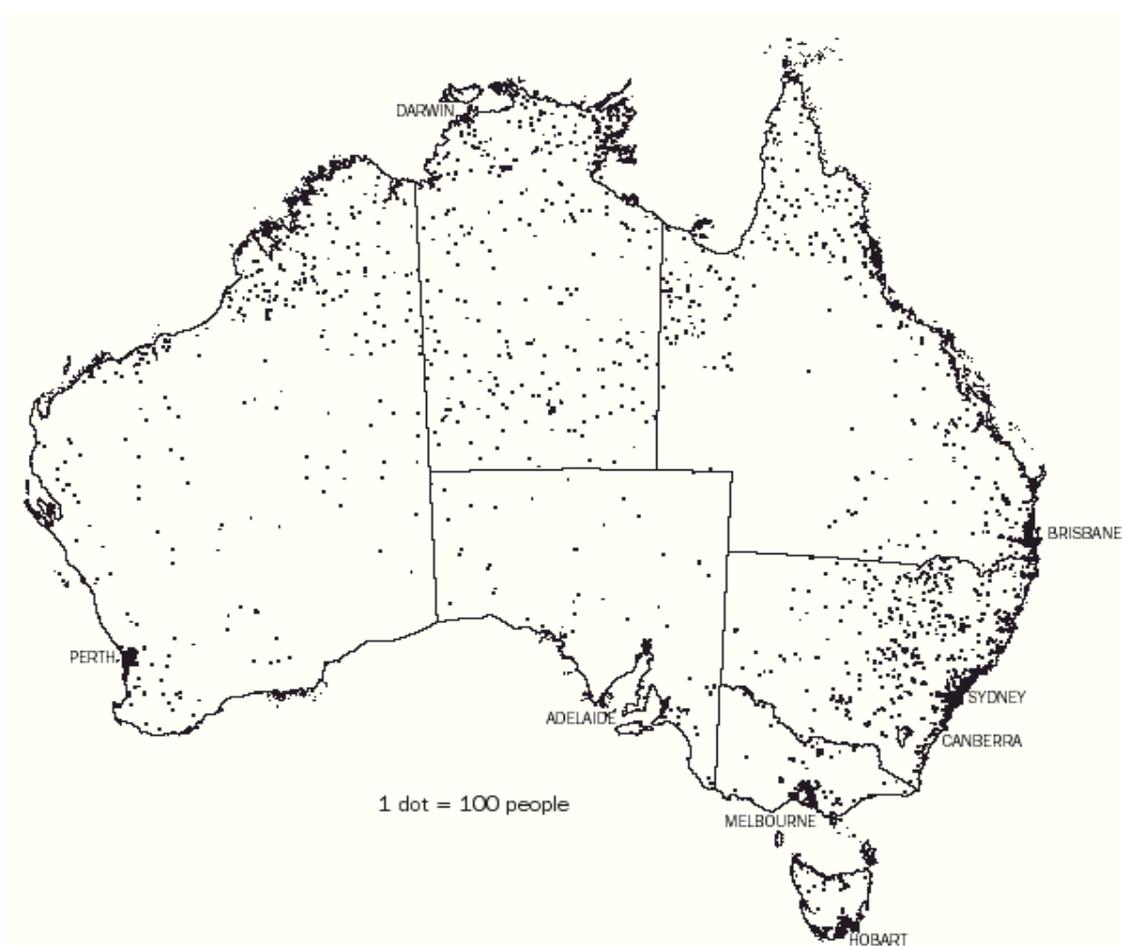
Geographic distribution of Indigenous Australians

10. The Indigenous population at 30 June 2001 was 458,500 of which 134,900 (29.4 per cent) lived in NSW, 125,900 (27.5 per cent) in Queensland, 65,900 (14.4 per cent) in WA and 56,900 (12.4 per cent) in the NT. The NT had the largest proportion of its population who were Indigenous (28.8 per cent) compared to 3.7 per cent or less for all other States and the ACT.

11. While most of the Australian population is concentrated along the eastern and south-west coasts, the map below shows the Indigenous population is more widely spread. This partly reflects the higher level of urbanisation among the non-Indigenous population than the Indigenous population. Indigenous peoples are much more likely to live in very remote areas than the non-Indigenous population.

Map 2

Australia's indigenous population distribution - 30 June 2001



Source: Census of Population and Housing: Population Growth and Distribution, Australia, 2001 (2035.0).

Country of birth

12. In 2004 the number of overseas-born Australians was over 4.5 million, or 25 per cent of the total population. Over the past 100 years, the range of countries of birth has increased substantially.

Table 2**Main countries of birth of the population**

	1954 (a)	1961 (a)	1971 (a)	1981 (a)	1994 (b)	2005 (b)
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
United Kingdom (c)	664.2	755.4	1 081.3	1 120.9	1 223.5	1 137.4
New Zealand	43.4	47.0	74.1	160.7	295.9	455.1
Italy	119.9	228.3	288.3	275.0	264.1	224.3
China (excl. SARs & Taiwan Prov.)	10.3	14.5	17.1	25.2	102.2	191.2
Vietnam	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	40.7	150.4	177.7
Greece	25.9	77.3	159.0	145.8	143.4	127.2
India	12.0	14.2	28.7	41.0	75.6	138.7
Philippines	0.2	0.4	2.3	14.8	93.2	129.4
Germany	65.4	109.3	110.0	109.3	119.9	115.2
South Africa	6.0	7.9	12.2	26.5	57.0	113.8
Malaysia	2.3	5.8	14.4	30.5	81.6	100.3
Netherlands	52.0	102.1	98.6	95.1	97.0	87.7
Lebanon	3.9	7.3	23.9	49.4	77.2	85.3
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	1.6	3.5	5.4	15.3	74.7	76.2
Total overseas-born	1 286.5	1 778.8	2 546.4	3 128.1	4 093.6	4 829.5
Australia	7 700.1	8 729.4	10 173.1	11 388.8	13 761.1	15 499.1
Total population (d)	8 986.5	10 508.2	12 719.5	14 516.9	17 856.7	20 328.6

Source: ABS data available on request, Estimated Resident Population; Migration, Australia (3412.0).

(a) Census counts;

(b) Estimated resident population at 30 June;

(c) Includes Ireland in 1954 and 1961;

(d) Includes country of birth "Not stated" and "At sea".

13. The 2001 census showed that 26 per cent of persons born in Australia had at least one overseas-born parent; that is, they were second generation Australians. Of Australian-born children with at least one overseas born parent 43 per cent had both parents born overseas, 35 per cent had their father born overseas and 22 per cent their mother born overseas. The variety and size of second generation populations reflect past migration and intermarriage patterns.

Language of population by mother tongue

14. Even though English is Australia's national language, due to cultural diversity in the population over 200 languages are spoken in the community. The 2001 census indicated that 2.8 million people (16 per cent of the population) spoke a language other than English at home, which represents an increase of 213,100 people or 8 per cent since 1996.

15. Over 50,000 people spoke an Australian Indigenous language (including Australian Creoles), which equates to 12 per cent of all Indigenous Australians and less than 1 per cent of the total Australian population.

Table 3
People who spoke a language other than English at home - 2001

	Males	Females	Persons	Proportion born in Australia (a)	Persons as a proportion of population
	'000	'000	'000	%	%
Italian	175.4	178.2	353.6	42.7	2.0
Greek	131.8	132.0	263.7	50.9	1.5
Cantonese	108.2	117.1	225.3	20.0	1.3
Arabic (incl. Lebanese)	108.7	100.6	209.4	43.2	1.2
Vietnamese	86.1	88.1	174.2	25.5	1.0
Mandarin	67.0	72.2	139.3	12.2	0.8
Spanish	45.2	48.4	93.6	22.7	0.5
Tagalog (Filipino)	30.8	48.1	78.9	8.8	0.4
German	35.7	40.8	76.4	19.4	0.4
Macedonian	36.6	35.4	72.0	38.6	0.4
Croatian	35.2	34.6	69.9	34.0	0.4
Polish	27.1	31.9	59.1	20.0	0.3
Australian Indigenous languages	25.1	25.9	51.0	99.6	0.3
Turkish	25.7	25.0	50.7	39.7	0.3
Serbian	24.8	24.4	49.2	22.1	0.3
Hindi	24.4	23.4	47.8	13.5	0.3
Maltese	20.5	20.9	41.4	28.7	0.2
Netherlandic	18.3	21.9	40.2	14.6	0.2
All other languages (b)	352.4	368.5	720.9	19.0	4.0
Total	1 378.9	1 437.6	2 816.5	29.5	15.8

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

(a) Persons whose birthplace was not stated, inadequately described, n.e.c. or at sea were excluded prior to the calculation of percentages.

(b) Excludes languages that were not stated, inadequately described, and non-verbal so described.

Religion

16. In response to the 2001 Census question, Australians' stated religious affiliations were: 27 per cent Catholic, 21 per cent Anglican, 21 per cent other Christian denominations and 5 per cent non-Christian religions.

17. Just over one-quarter of all Australians either stated that they had no religion, or did not adequately respond to the question.

18. Affiliates of religions other than Christianity have shown the largest proportional increases since the 1996 Census, although they still comprised a relatively small proportion of the population in 2001 (5 per cent). Stated affiliation to Buddhism increased by 79 per cent, to Hinduism by 42 per cent, to Islam by 40 per cent and to Judaism by 5 per cent. These changes partly resulted from trends in immigration. Although the most common religious affiliation of immigrants is Christianity, affiliates of other religions are more highly represented among recent immigrants than in the total population. Between 1996 and 2001, there were just over half a million new arrivals to Australia. Of these, 9 per cent were affiliated to Islam, 9 per cent to Buddhism, 5 per cent to Hinduism and 1 per cent to Judaism.

Table 4
Religious Affiliation

	1996		2001		Change %
	'000	%	'000	%	
Christianity					
Anglican	3 903.3	22.0	3 881.2	20.7	-0.6
Baptist	295.2	1.7	309.2	1.6	4.8
Catholic	4 799.0	27.0	5 001.6	26.6	4.2
Churches of Christ	75.0	0.4	61.3	0.3	-18.2
Jehovah's Witness	83.4	0.5	81.1	0.4	-2.8
Lutheran	250.0	1.4	250.4	1.3	0.2
Orthodox	497.0	2.8	529.4	2.8	6.5
Pentecostal	174.7	1.0	194.6	1.0	11.4
Presbyterian and Reformed	675.5	3.8	637.5	3.4	-5.6
Salvation Army	74.1	0.4	71.4	0.4	-3.7
Uniting Church	1 334.9	7.5	1 248.7	6.7	-6.5
Other Christian	420.6	2.4	497.9	2.7	18.4
Buddhism	199.8	1.1	357.8	1.9	79.1
Hinduism	67.3	0.4	95.5	0.5	41.9
Islam	200.9	1.1	281.6	1.5	40.2
Judaism	79.8	0.4	84.0	0.4	5.2
Other religions	68.6	0.4	92.4	0.5	34.6
No religion	2 948.9	16.6	2 906.0	15.5	-1.5
Not stated/Inadequately described	1 604.7	9.0	2 187.7	11.7	36.3
Total	17 752.8	100.0	18 769.2	100.0	5.7

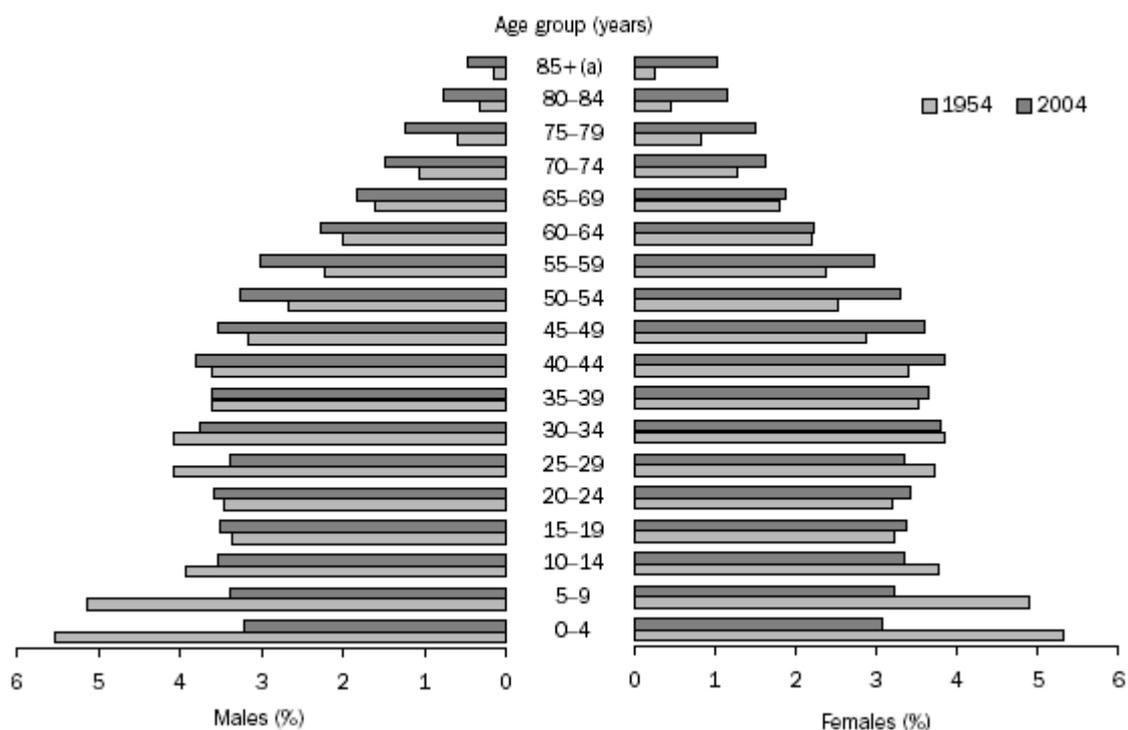
Source: ABS data available on request, 1996 and 2001 Censuses of Population and Housing.

Age composition

19. Over the last 50 years, the absolute number of persons has increased in all age groups. However, the proportion of the total population in older age groups has increased while the proportion in younger age groups has declined. The graph below shows the proportions of the population by age group and sex in 1954 and 2004, illustrating the ageing of Australia's population.

Graph 2

Age and sex distribution profile of population - 1954 and 2004



Source: Australian Historical Population Statistics (3105.0.65.001); Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories (3201.0).

(a) The 85+ age group includes all ages 85 years and over and is not directly comparable with the other 5-year age groups.

20. Australia's population is ageing because of sustained low fertility - which has resulted in proportionally fewer children in the population - and increased life expectancy. The projections show that the ageing of the Australian population, already evident, is set to continue. The median age of Australia's population is projected to increase from 35.9 years in 200-02 to between 40.4

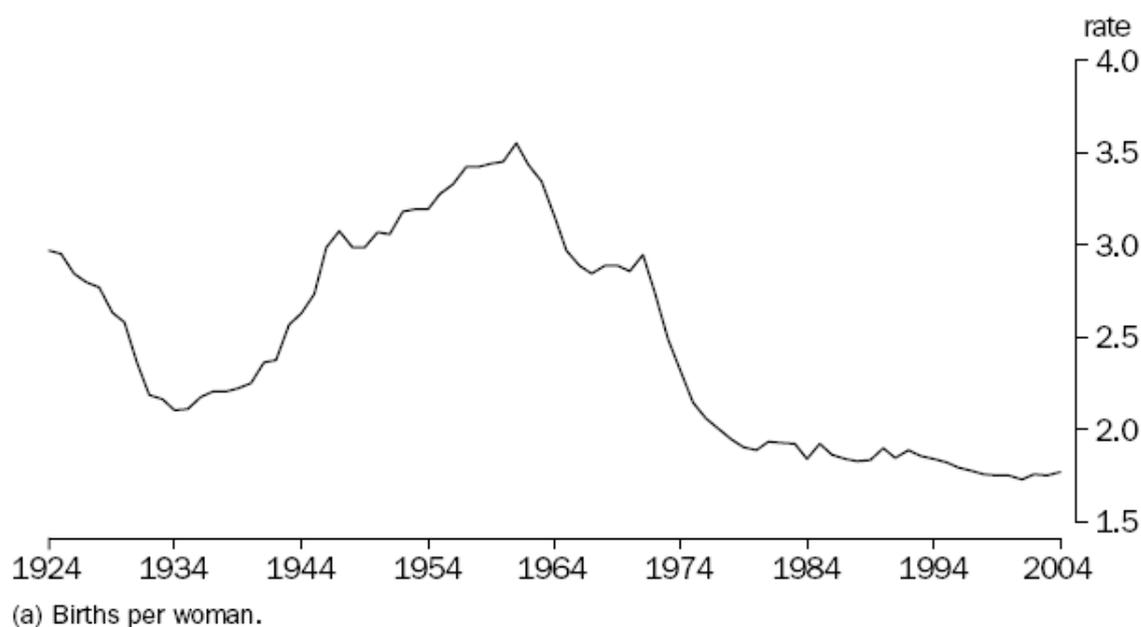
and 42.3 years in 2020-21 and to between 46.0 and 49.9 years in 2050-51. The proportion of the population aged 65 years and over is expected to increase substantially from 12 per cent in 1999 to between 24 per cent and 27 per cent in 2051.

Births

21. In 2004, there were 254,246 births registered in Australia, resulting in a total fertility rate of 1.8 babies per woman. Australia is experiencing the second of two long periods of fertility decline since 1901 - from 1907 to 1934 and from 1962 to the present (excluding a plateau from 1966 to 1972) - although in recent years the total fertility rate has remained relatively stable.

Graph 3

Total fertility rate (a), Australia



Source: ABS, Births Australia 2004 (Cat. No. 3301.0).

22. Of all births registered in Australia in 2004, an estimated 5 per cent (12,000) were Indigenous - that is, at least one parent identified as Indigenous. Indigenous women have a higher fertility rate (2.14 babies per woman) than all women, largely due to relatively high fertility at younger ages. In 2004, women under 30 years of age accounted for almost three-quarters of the total Indigenous fertility, compared to half of the fertility for all women. The median age of Indigenous women who registered a birth in 2004 was 24.6 years, six years younger than the median age of all women who registered a birth (30.6 years).

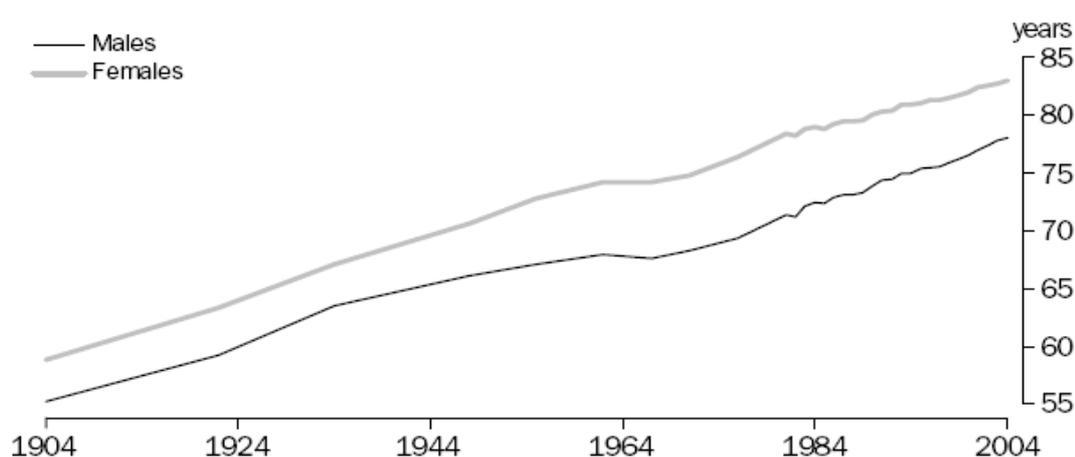
Life expectancy

23. Life expectancy refers to the average number of additional years a person of a given age and sex might expect to live if the age-specific death rates of the given period continued throughout his or her remaining lifetime.

24. Over the past 50 years the average life expectancy of a new-born boy has increased from 67 years in the period 1953-55 to 78 years in 2002-04. Likewise, the average life expectancy of a new-born girl has increased from 73 to 83 years during the same period (see Graph 4 below). The increase in life expectancy at birth is due to declining death rates at all ages.

Graph 4

Life expectancy at birth, Australia, 1904-2004



Note: Years represent the last year of a three-year period. For example, 2004 refers to the period 2002-2004.

Source: *Australian Historical Population Statistics, (3105.0.65.001)*.

25. Australians' life expectancy is one of the highest in the world. Australian men and women can expect to enjoy good health for around 90 per cent of their average life span, with only 10 per cent of their time lived with illness or disability. This compares favourably with other countries that have high life expectancies.

26. Differences in Indigenous and total mortality are reflected in substantially lower life expectancy for the Indigenous population. At the national level, life expectancy at birth for the period 1996-2001 was estimated to be about 59 years for Indigenous males and 65 years for Indigenous females (including an adjustment for the estimated under-coverage of Indigenous deaths), around 17 years lower than the average life expectancy for all Australians born in the same period.

Deaths

27. In 2004, 132,500 deaths (68,400 males and 64,100 females) were registered in Australia, an increase of 200 deaths (or 0.2 per cent) compared with the number of deaths registered in 2003 (132,300). Since 1984 the number of deaths has increased by 0.9 per cent on average annually. The steady increase in the number of deaths over time reflects the increasing size of the population and, in particular, the increasing number of older people. With continued ageing of the population the number of deaths will continue to rise, with deaths projected to outnumber births sometime in the 2040s.

Household size

28. At 30 June 2002, there were an estimated 7.5 million households in Australia, which were home to 19.4 million Australians, or 98 per cent of the resident population. Over the past 90 years the number of households has increased by an average 2.4 per cent per year, compared to 1.6 per cent average increase per year in the population over the same period. Reflecting the disproportionate growth in households is the fall in average size of households - from 4.5 persons per household in 1911 to 2.6 persons per household in 2002. Much of the decline in the number of persons per household over this period can be attributed to reductions in completed family size, and the associated increase in one and two-person households over the period. The number of one-person households has grown largely from the ageing of the population, while a combination of ageing, increased childlessness among couples and an increase in the number of one-parent families has contributed to the increase in the number of two-person households.

Graph 5

Average household size, persons per household



Source: Australian Demographic Statistics (3101.0); Census of Population and Housing, 1911 to 1981; <<http://www.abs.gov.au>>, Time Series Spreadsheet, Demography, 3101.0, table 25 'Estimated Resident Households'; ABS statistics available on request, Household Estimates.

29. One-parent families also increased, from 552,400 in 1991 to 762,600 in 2001, an increase of 38 per cent.

Table 5
Number of families, by family type

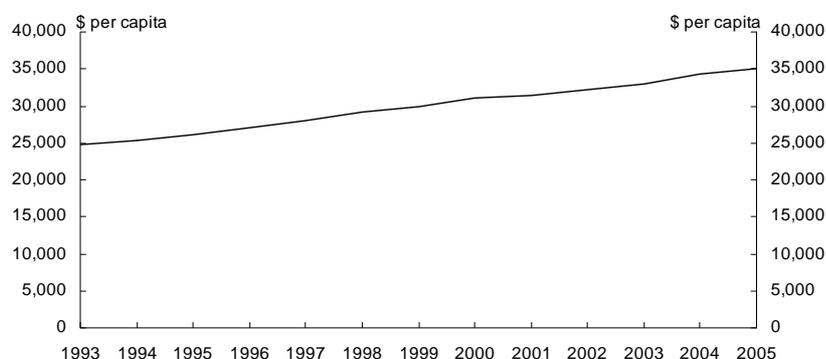
	1996	2001
Series A	'000	'000
Couple families with children	2 483.8	2 660.7
Couple families without children	1 735.1	1 894.2
One-parent families	742.3	797.1
One-parent families, male parent	114.9	126.3
One-parent families, female parent	627.4	670.8
Other families	94.4	98.4
Total	5 055.6	5 450.4
Series B		
Couple families with children	2 483.8	2 448.1
Couple families without children	1 735.1	1 952.5
One-parent families	742.3	852.5
One-parent families, male parent	114.9	129.6
One-parent families, female parent	627.4	722.9
Other families	94.4	96.7
Total	5 055.6	5 349.7
Series C		
Couple families with children	2 483.8	2 448.1
Couple families without children	1 735.1	1 952.5
One-parent families	742.3	852.5
One-parent families, male parent	114.9	129.6
One-parent families, female parent	627.4	722.9
Other families	94.4	96.7
Total	5 055.6	5 349.7

Source: Household and Family Projections, Australia, 1996 to 2001.

Social, economic and cultural statistics

Graph 6

Real net national disposable income (a) per capita



Source: Australian National Accounts.

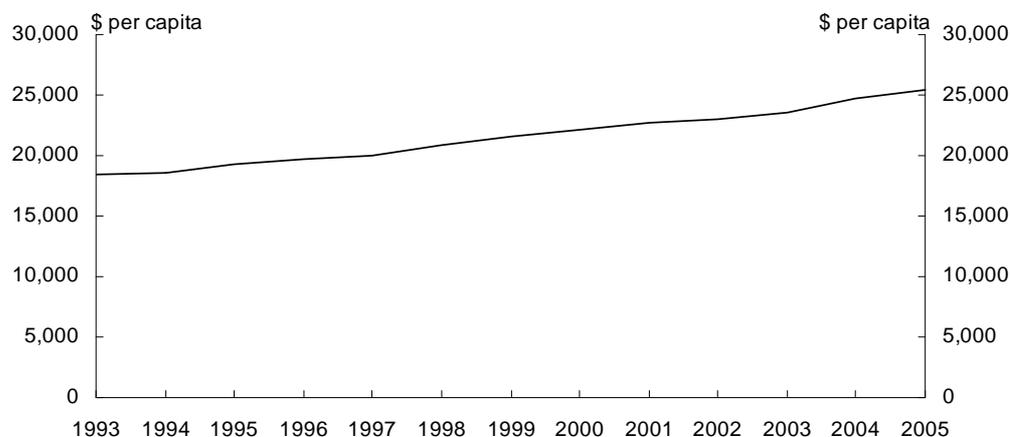
Consumption

30. If a nation experiences income growth, there may be an increase in consumption or saving or both. Among the different forms of consumption, final consumption expenditure (FCE) is the most directly relevant to an assessment of progress. FCE is the acquisition of goods and services used for the direct satisfaction of individual or collective wants. It is distinguished from “intermediate consumption” (the using up of goods and services in the production of other goods and services) and “consumption of fixed capital” (depreciation).

31. Consumption in Australia grew throughout the 1990s. Between 1992-1993 and 2002-2003, real FCE per capita rose by almost 2.3 per cent a year.

Graph 7

Real final consumption expenditure (a) per capita



Source: Derived from Australian National Accounts.

Table 6
Real household final consumption (a) per capita

	1992-93 \$	2004-05 \$	Average annual growth %
Food	2 515	2 782	0.8
Cigarettes & tobacco	696	490	-2.7
Alcoholic beverages	417	514	1.6
Clothing & footwear	769	997	2.0
Rent & other dwelling services	3 378	4 367	2.0
Electricity, gas & other fuel	397	514	2.0
Furnishings & household equipment	967	1 468	3.3
Health	1 051	1 296	1.6
Purchase of vehicles	524	1 028	5.3
Operation of vehicles	1 219	1 361	0.8
Transport services	395	604	3.3
Communications	265	733	8.1
Recreation & culture	1 676	3 084	4.8
Education services	653	840	2.0
Hotels, cafes & restaurants	1 385	1 905	2.5
Insurance & other financial services	1 163	1 741	3.2
Other goods & services	1 248	1 685	2.3
Total	18 384	25 411	2.5

Source: Derived from Australian National Accounts.

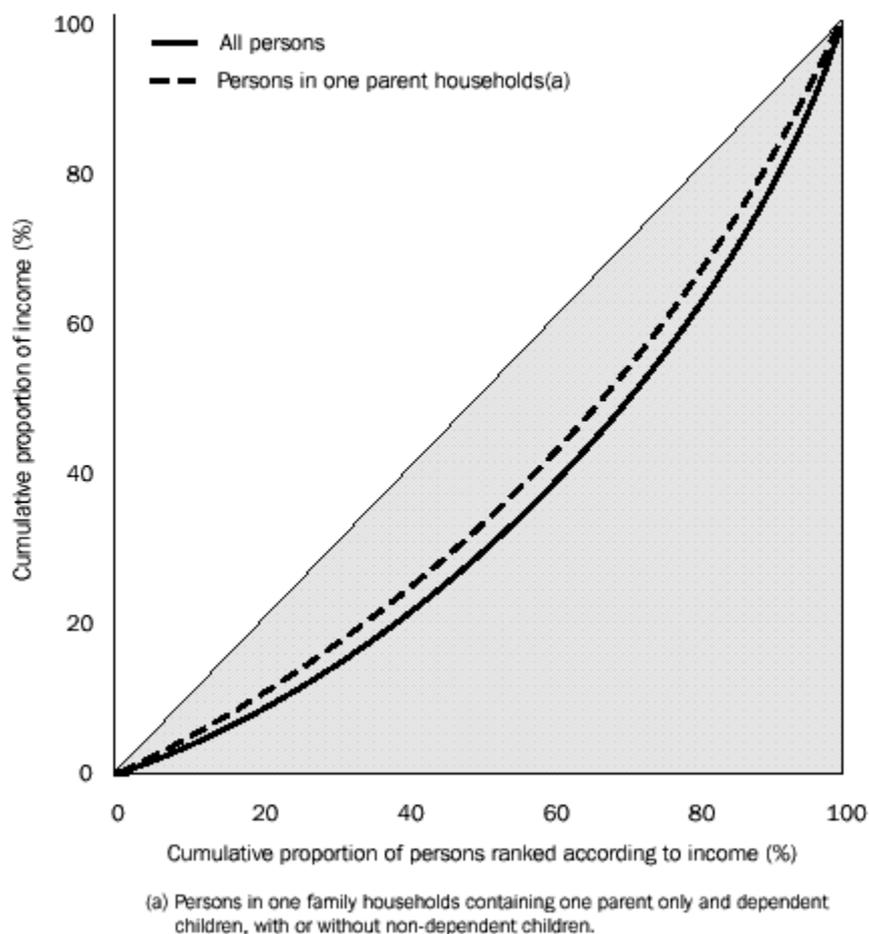
(a) Chain volume measures; reference year 2003-04.

Gini coefficient (relating to distribution of income)

32. The Gini coefficient in 2003-04 was 0.294 (Source: 6523.0 - Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia, 2003-04). This was not significantly different from that of the previous years. The Gini coefficient is a single statistic which summarises the distribution of income across the population.

33. The Gini coefficient can best be described by reference to the Lorenz curve. The Lorenz curve is a graph with horizontal axis showing the cumulative proportion of the persons in the population ranked according to household income and with the vertical axis showing the corresponding cumulative proportion of equivalised disposable household income. The graph then shows the income share of any selected cumulative proportion of the population, as can be seen below.

Graph 8
Lorenz curves



34. If income were distributed evenly across the whole population, the Lorenz curve would be the diagonal line through the origin of the graph. The Gini coefficient is defined as the ratio of the area between the actual Lorenz curve and the diagonal (or line of equality) and the total area under the diagonal. The Gini coefficient ranges between zero when all incomes are equal and one when one unit receives all the income, that is, the smaller the Gini coefficient the more even the distribution of income.

35. Normally the degree of inequality is greater for the whole population than for a subgroup within the population because subpopulations are usually more homogeneous than full populations. This is illustrated in the graph above, which shows two Lorenz curves from

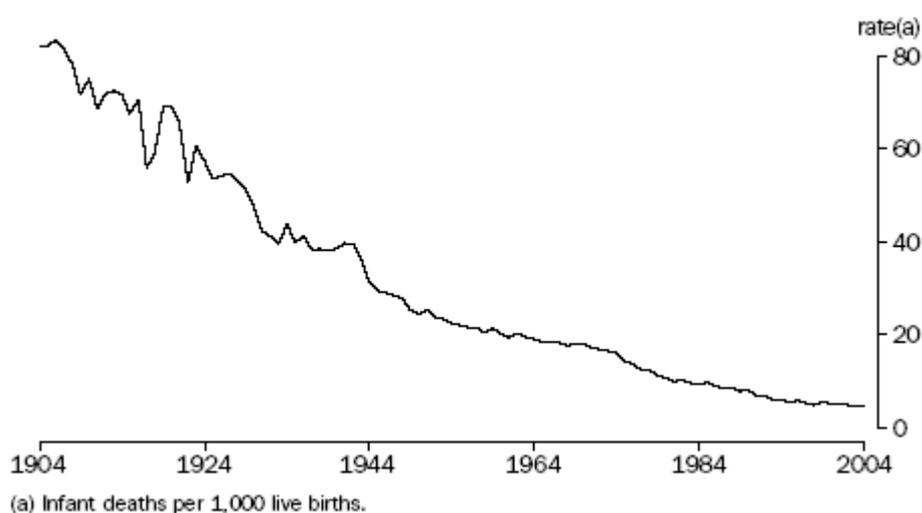
the 2000-01 Survey of Income and Housing Costs. The Lorenz curve for the whole population of the survey is further from the diagonal than the curve for persons living in one family households that contain one parent only and dependent children (they may also contain other children). Correspondingly, the calculated Gini coefficient for all persons was 0.311 while the coefficient for the persons in the one parent households included here was 0.259.

Infant mortality rates

36. The infant mortality rate (IMR) is defined as the number of deaths of children under one year of age per 1,000 live births. According to the United Nations, the projected world IMR for 2000-05 was 55 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. In 2004, 1,200 infant deaths were registered in Australia. In Australia, the IMR in 2004 was 4.7 deaths per 1,000 live births. This was half that recorded in 1984 (9.2 deaths per 1,000 live births). Over the past 100 years, Australia's infant mortality has declined significantly. In 1904, one in 12 infants did not survive to their first birthday (an IMR of 81.8). By 2004, less than one in 200 infants did not survive their first year of life. (ABS, *Deaths, Australia 2004* (Cat. No. 3302.0)).

Graph 9

Infant mortality rate, 1904-2004



37. In 2002, Australia's overall infant mortality rate ranked 14th lowest amongst the 30 other OECD countries, placing Australia in the middle third behind countries such as Sweden, France, Italy, Germany, Spain and Japan (OECD, *OECD Health Data 2006* <http://www.oecd.org/document/16/0,2340,en_2825_495642_2085200_1_1_1_1,00.html>).

38. Although the infant mortality in Australia is low and declining, the low level of infant mortality is not consistent for all population groups. Indigenous infant mortality rates during the period 1999-2003 were around three times the rates of non-Indigenous infants in Queensland, Western Australia, SA and the NT (the coverage of Indigenous peoples in deaths data in these jurisdictions is considered of sufficient completeness for statistical reporting) (ABS/AIHW, *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 2005*, Cat. No. 4704.0). Nevertheless, between 1993 and 2003, Indigenous infant mortality decreased by approximately 3.3 per cent per year in Queensland, WA, SA and the NT (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *A Picture of Australia's Children*, 2005).

39. A reliable assessment of trends in Indigenous foetal and infant mortality is not possible because of uncertainties about changes in the extent to which women are identified as Indigenous in perinatal data collections.

Maternal mortality

40. The 1997-1999, Australian maternal mortality ratio was 8.2 per 100 000 confinements, compared with the 1994-1996 ratio of 9.1 per 100 000 confinements (AIHW, *Maternal Deaths in Australia 1997-1999*).

41. In the 1997-1999 triennium, there were 62 maternal deaths, of which 34 (55 per cent) were direct deaths and 28 (45 per cent) were indirect. There were also 28 incidental maternal deaths (which the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends for exclusion from the definition of the maternal mortality ratio). This represented a decrease of 6 per cent in the number of deaths compared with the 1994-1996 triennium (when there were 66 maternal deaths).

42. The principal causes of direct maternal deaths were obstetric haemorrhage (eight deaths [24 per cent]), amniotic fluid embolism (seven deaths [21 per cent]), pulmonary thromboembolism (6 deaths [18 per cent]) and deaths due to hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (6 deaths [18 per cent]). The main causes of indirect death were deaths from psychiatric causes (eight deaths [29 per cent]) and deaths due to cardiac disease (seven deaths [25 per cent]).

43. The Indigenous maternal mortality ratio in 1997-1999 (23.5 deaths per 100,000 confinements, excluding incidental maternal deaths) remains about three times that of the non-Indigenous maternal mortality ratio (6.7 deaths per 100,000 confinements).

Causes of death - general population

44. Malignant neoplasms (cancer) and ischaemic heart diseases were the leading underlying causes of death in 2004, accounting for 29 per cent and 19 per cent respectively of total deaths registered.

Table 7
Leading causes of death - 2004

Cause of death (ICD-10 code)	Males	Females	Persons	Proportion of total deaths
	No.	No.	No.	%
All causes	68 395	64 113	132 508	100.0
Malignant neoplasms (cancer) (C00-C97) (a)	21 383	16 606	37 989	28.7
Trachea, bronchus and lung (C33, C34)	4 733	2 531	7 264	
Ischaemic heart diseases (I20-I25)	13 152	11 424	24 576	18.5
Cerebrovascular diseases (stroke) (I60-I69)	4 826	7 215	12 041	9.1
Chronic lower respiratory diseases (incl. asthma, emphysema and bronchitis) (J40-J47)	3 187	2 598	5 785	4.4
Accidents (V01-X59)	3 245	1 964	5 209	3.9
Transport accidents (V01-V99)	1 236	453	1 689	
Diabetes mellitus (E10-E14)	1 869	1 730	3 599	2.7
Diseases of arteries, arterioles and capillaries (incl. atherosclerosis and aortic aneurysm) (I70-I79)	1 263	1 214	2 477	1.9
Intentional self-harm (X60-X84)	1 661	437	2 098	1.6
Organic, including symptomatic, mental disorders (F00-F09)	904	1 975	2 879	2.2
Influenza and pneumonia (J10-J18)	1 498	1 883	33 816	2.6
All other causes	15 407	17 067	32 474	24.5

Source: ABS Causes of Death 2004 (Cat. No. 3303.0).

(a) Includes deaths from non-melanocytic skin cancer.

Table 8**Deaths of indigenous persons in QLD, SA, WA and NT(a) - 1999 - 2003**

Age at death (years)	Number of Indigenous deaths (no.)		Indigenous deaths as a proportion of total deaths (%)		Indigenous persons as a proportion of total population (%) (b)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
0	263	206	19.0	19.3	7.6	7.7
1-4	48	45	13.7	19.6	7.3	7.5
5-14	56	43	13.8	14.2	6.8	6.7
15-24	306	133	12.1	14.9	4.9	5.2
25-34	462	226	13.2	16.6	4.0	4.4
35-44	636	380	13.7	14.3	2.9	3.1
45-54	723	490	9.1	9.9	2.0	2.2
55-64	651	509	4.7	6.5	1.4	1.7
65 or over	1 058	1 118	1.2	1.4	0.9	0.9
Total (c)	4 222	3 165	4.3	3.6	3.7	3.8

Source: ABS/AIHW, *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples 2005* (Cat. No. 4704.0)

Notes: (a) Data for Queensland, South Australia, WA and the NT combined. Deaths are based on year of occurrence of death for 1999-2002 and year of registration of death for 2003;

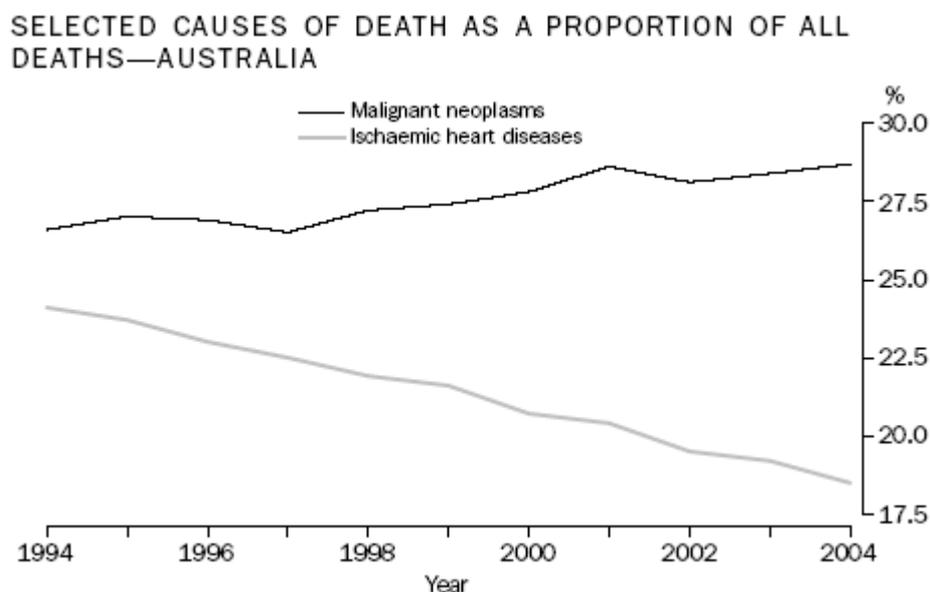
(b) Estimates of the Indigenous population for 1999-2003 are based on the 2001 Census;

(c) Includes deaths where age was not stated.

45. Over the 10 years to 2004, there were quite different patterns of decline in the two leading causes of death, malignant neoplasms and ischaemic heart diseases, which together account for nearly half the total deaths. Between 1994 and 2004, the standardised death rate for malignant neoplasms decreased by 14 per cent, while the rate for ischaemic heart diseases decreased by 42 per cent. As a proportion of all deaths, ischaemic heart disease has decreased from 24.1 per cent in 1994 to 18.5 per cent in 2004 whilst malignant neoplasms have increased from 26.6 per cent to 28.7 per cent.

Graph 10

**Ischaemic heart disease and malignant neoplasms
as a proportion of all deaths, 1994-2004**



Source: ABS Causes of Death Australia 2004 (Cat. No. 3303.0).

Immunisation status

46. Due to higher incidence rates of influenza and pneumonia, and pneumococcal disease, vaccination for influenza and pneumococcal disease is recommended to commence at a younger age for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (50 years of age and those who are in the age group 15-49 years who have health risk factors such as heart disease, kidney or lung disease, asthma or diabetes, immunocompromising conditions such as HIV infection or cancer and/or heavy drinkers or tobacco smokers) than non-Indigenous Australians (65 years). The *National Indigenous Pneumococcal and Influenza Immunisation Program* provides free annual influenza vaccine and a free pneumococcal vaccine every five years to all Aboriginal peoples aged 50 years and over and those who are in the age group 15-49 years who have health risk factors.

47. Table 9A shows the immunisation status in 2004-05 of Indigenous children in non-remote areas in relation to selected diseases.

Table 9A
Indigenous children aged 0-6 years in non-remote areas:
immunisation status, 2004-05

Immunisation status for selected vaccinations (a) (b)	Indigenous (%)
Diphtheria, tetanus	
Fully immunised	79
Partially immunised	16
Not immunised	--
Total (c)	100
Whooping cough	
Fully immunised	74
Partially immunised	23
Not immunised	*1
Total (c)	100
Hepatitis B (d)	
Fully immunised	83
Partially immunised	12
Not immunised	**1
Total (c)	100
Polio	
Fully immunised	79
Partially immunised	17
Not immunised	*2
Total (c)	100
Hib	
Fully immunised	73
Partially immunised	14
Not immunised	7
Total (c)	100
Measles, mumps, rubella	
Fully immunised	85
Partially immunised	*9
Not immunised	*4
Total (c)	100

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, 2004-05* (Cat. No. 4715.0).

(a) Children who had immunisation records available.

(b) Status derived based on schedule started.

(c) Includes "immunisation status" not known.

(d) Introduced in the recommended immunisation schedule in May 2000 and therefore data only applies to children born from that date.

* unreliable for practical purposes due to high relative standard error (between 25%-50%).

** unreliable for general purposes due to very high relative standard error (greater than 50%).

-- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells).

48. Table 9B shows the immunisation status in 2004-05 of Indigenous and non-Indigenous adults aged 50 years and over in relation to influenza and pneumonia.

Table 9B

Persons aged 50 years and over: immunisation status by indigenous status, 2004-05

Immunisation status	Adults (d)			
	Indigenous			Non-Indigenous
	Remote areas (%)	Non-remote areas (%)	Total (%)	(%)
Influenza				
Had vaccination in last 12 months	80	52	60	46
Had vaccination but not in last 12 months	8	18	15	14
Never had vaccination	11	30	25	39
Total persons (a)	100	100	100	100
Pneumonia				
Had vaccination in last five years	56	26	34	20
Had vaccination but not in last five years	--	*1	*1	1
Never had vaccination	37	67	58	77
Total persons (b)	100	100	100	100

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, 2004-05* (cat. No. 4715.0)

Notes: (a) Includes “influenza vaccination status” not known;

(b) Includes “pneumonia vaccination status” not known.

* unreliable for practical purposes due to high relative standard error (between 25-50%).

-- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells).

Rates of infection with HIV/AIDS

49. In collaboration with the State and Territory health authorities and the Australian Government, surveillance for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is conducted by the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research. This centre is part of the Faculty of Medicine, University of NSW and is funded in part by the Department of Health and Ageing.

50. At 31 December 2005, the cumulative number of HIV infections that had been diagnosed in Australia was estimated to be 22,360. The annual number of new HIV diagnoses was lowest in 1999 with 716 reported new cases, after which there has been a steady but small increase to 930 new cases in 2005. The cumulative number of AIDS diagnoses, adjusted for reporting delay, was 9,759. There was a cumulative total of 6,668 deaths. In 2005 it was estimated that 15,310 people in Australia were living with HIV/AIDS.

51. The reduced numbers of new AIDS diagnoses in recent years has been due to the decline in HIV incidence that took place in the mid 1980s, and the use, since around 1996, of effective combination antiretroviral therapy for the treatment of HIV infection. Transmission of HIV in Australia continues to be mainly through sexual contact between men (64 per cent of new infections between 2001-2005). Exposure to HIV was attributed to heterosexual contact in 18.5 per cent of new diagnoses between 2001-2005 and between 1996-2005 approximately 8 per cent of new infections to injecting drug use, more than half of these were men who also reported a history of homosexual contact. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations an almost equal proportion of diagnoses were attributed to male homosexual contact and heterosexual contact.

52. The following table shows rates of HIV infection between 2000 and 2005 among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and males and females and different age groups between 2004-2005.

Table 10

HIV and AIDS cases by age, sex and Indigenous status, Australia

Cases of newly diagnosed HIV infection in Indigenous and all Australians, 2000 to 2005							
Indigenous							
	Indigenous Status	Year of HIV diagnoses					
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total cases	Indigenous	16	14	25	23	21	17
	All persons	757	766	850	868	901	954
Males as % of total cases	Indigenous	87.5	57.1	52.0	73.9	71.4	82.4
	All persons	88.9	87.3	88.8	89.7	86.0	90.3

Note: Not adjusted for multiple reporting.

Number of AIDS diagnoses in Indigenous and all Australians, 2000-2005							
Indigenous							
	Indigenous Status	Year of AIDS diagnoses					
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total cases	Indigenous	5	5	8	11	11	8
	All persons	262	209	237	233	180	194
Males as % of total cases	Indigenous	100	100	62.5	81.8	90.9	87.5
	All persons	90.8	88.5	91.9	93.6	86.7	86.6

Note: Not adjusted for multiple reporting.

Newly diagnosed AIDS cases by age and sex				
Age Group	Year of AIDS diagnosis			
	2004		2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-19	0	0	0	0
20-29	7	3	11	3
30-39	50	5	52	11
40-49	58	5	65	9
50-59	29	5	25	3
60+	13	3	15	0

Newly diagnosed HIV cases by age and sex				
Age Group	Year of HIV diagnosis			
	2004		2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-19	8	8	13	9
20-29	160	51	179	25
30-39	308	30	314	41
40-49	189	20	215	15
50-59	81	12	101	4
60+	29	4	41	1

Source: HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia, Annual Surveillance Report 2006, National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research; Australian HIV and AIDS public access datasets.

Hepatitis infection

53. In 2004, it was estimated that 259,000 people in Australia were living with Hepatitis C and that 75 per cent of these people had cirrhosis or other Hepatitis C related liver disease.

54. In 2004, among Hepatitis cases with known Indigenous status, Indigenous Australians accounted for 11 per cent of Hepatitis A cases, 6.5 per cent of hepatitis B (incident) cases and 4.7 per cent of Hepatitis C (unspecified) cases. Indigenous Australians are 2.4 per cent of the total population of Australia.²⁵

²⁵ Whether a person had Indigenous status was known for 90% of Hepatitis A cases, 80% of Hepatitis B (incident) cases and 32% of Hepatitis C (unspecified) cases.

55. In 2004, Hepatitis B (incident) infections continued to decline. Universal infant Hepatitis B immunisation was introduced in Australia in May 2000. The full effect of vaccination on the overall incidence may take a number of years to be evident in childhood rates of Hepatitis B infection. Approximately 95 per cent of infants are currently receiving Hepatitis B vaccination in Australia.

Sexually transmissible infections

56. Chlamydia is the most frequently reported sexually transmissible infection (STI) in Australia. The population rate of reported diagnoses from 2000 to 2005 has more than doubled. The population rates of diagnoses of syphilis and gonorrhoea have increased over this period. The following tables show rates of sexually transmissible infections amongst males, females and different age groups in Australia between 2000 and 2004. The following tables show rates of sexually transmissible infections amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations 2001-2005 and males, females and different age groups in Australia between 2004 and 2005.

Table 11

Sexually transmissible infections by sex and age, Australia, 2001 to 2005					
	Year of diagnosis				
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Chlamydia	20 330	24 043	30 439	36 227	41 311
Gonorrhoea	6 291	6 279	6 792	7 187	8 015
Syphilis	1 851	1 958	2 007	2 332	2 203

Number of diagnoses of chlamydia by age and sex, 2001-2005 ¹				
Age group	Year of diagnosis			
	2004		2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-19	1 956	7 132	2 339	8 001
20-29	8 190	11 435	9 442	13 265
30-39	2 907	2 254	3 238	2 517
40-49	1 069	532	1 243	554
50-59	382	111	386	114
60+	107	30	90	12
Not reported	10	15	9	5

¹ Totals include diagnoses in people whose sex was not reported.

Number of diagnoses of gonorrhoea by age and sex, 2001-2005 ¹				
Age group	Year of diagnosis			
	2004		2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-19	722	908	826	1 027
20-29	1 936	858	2 027	975
30-39	1 322	326	1 532	371
40-49	682	91	747	123
50-59	236	36	249	36
60+	58	4	79	8
Not reported	93	0	0	0

¹ Totals include diagnoses in people whose sex was not reported.

Number of diagnoses of syphilis by age and sex, 2001-2005 ¹				
Age group	Year of diagnosis			
	2004		2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-19	64	83	60	74
20-29	264	228	223	175
30-39	377	201	364	179
40-49	310	109	322	132
50-59	210	60	223	69
60+	280	136	254	113
Not reported	1	0	0	2

Source: HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia, Annual Surveillance Report 2006, National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research; Australian HIV and AIDS public access datasets.

¹ Totals include diagnoses in people whose sex was not reported.

Health expenditure

57. The following table shows the level of expenditure on males, females, various age groups and various health conditions in Australia for 2000-2001.

Table 12**Allocated (a) health expenditure per person by age, sex and burden of disease chapter, Australia, 2000-01 (A\$ per capita)**

	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+	Total
Cardiovascular											
Male	13	7	17	36	95	262	619	1 301	1 954	2 401	296
Female	9	4	13	41	70	210	426	886	1 595	2 367	272
Neoplasms											
Male	25	12	17	25	42	120	277	639	956	1 089	145
Female	19	18	36	68	117	228	299	426	482	497	158
Musculoskeletal											
Male	24	42	84	154	187	242	355	500	695	912	204
Female	29	29	77	124	183	276	428	652	1 103	1 987	276
Nervous system											
Male	129	62	48	69	82	123	181	453	1 340	3 597	190
Female	95	56	69	87	92	142	189	518	1 769	6 019	322
Injuries											
Male	151	160	337	234	172	164	207	295	503	1 051	231
Female	101	131	136	120	125	145	165	298	589	1 183	186
Maternal conditions											
Female	8	1	236	535	150	2	0	0	0	0	135
Other causes (c)											
Male	1 515	836	821	784	883	1054	1 571	2 502	3 535	5 137	1 224
Female	1 296	1019	1217	1 211	1 267	1 425	1 885	2 674	3 378	4 357	1 559
Total											
Male	1 864	1 120	1 325	1 302	1 461	1 965	3 210	5 689	8 983	14 186	2 291
Female	1 556	1 258	1 782	2 186	2 004	2 428	3 391	5 453	8 917	16 411	2 908
Excl. maternal	1 548	1 257	1 546	1 651	1 854	2 426	3 391	5 453	8 917	16 411	2 773

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Health System Expenditure on Disease and Injury in Australia, 2000-01, second edition.

Notes: (a) Health expenditure able to be allocated to disease category was \$50.1 billion or 82% of total health expenditure of \$60.9 billion;

(b) Age-sex splits of oral health expenditure are preliminary estimates;

(c) "Other causes" includes infectious and parasitic, respiratory, neonatal causes, oral health, diabetes mellitus, endocrine, nutritional and metabolic, mental disorders, digestive system, genitourinary, skin diseases, congenital anomalies, and signs, symptoms, ill-defined conditions and other contact with health system.

Access to Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)

58. Limited information is available on Indigenous status of Medicare services recipients. To improve access to the PBS by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in remote areas, special supply arrangements operate under the provisions of Section 100 of the National Health Act 1953. These arrangements provide clients of remote area Aboriginal Health Services with PBS medicines at the time of medical consultation, without the need for a formal prescription form, and without charge. Indigenous access to pharmaceutical services under Medicare is being

progressed through an ongoing communication campaign to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to enrol in Medicare. From November 2002, Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders have also been able to identify voluntarily as Indigenous on the Medicare database. This Voluntary Indigenous Identifier will improve the data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's use of pharmaceutical services under Medicare and the PBS.

59. The following table shows the number of medical services accessed through Medicare by males, females and different age groups in Australia between 1998 and 2004.

Table 13

**Access to medical services through Medicare by age and sex,
Australia, 1999-00 to 2004-05**

Sex	Age Group	Number of medical services accessed					
		1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Male	0-4	5 900 480	5 684 957	5 577 517	5 421 086	5 346 225	5 579 235
	5-9	3 246 883	3 129 255	3 189 022	2 971 489	2 869 237	2 875 385
	10-14	2 877 647	2 849 387	2 914 689	2 746 701	2 741 711	2 718 946
	15-19	3 251 290	3 189 255	3 169 262	3 022 066	3 019 652	3 024 185
	20-24	3 406 397	3 333 218	3 311 181	3 208 498	3 209 422	3 286 330
	25-34	8 199 326	8 105 947	8 006 148	7 747 186	7 678 419	7 824 951
	35-44	10 401 346	10 575 420	10 744 057	10 473 953	10 447 273	10 723 432
	45-54	12 515 674	12 965 289	13 424 131	13 333 597	13 523 606	14 038 535
	55-64	12 922 182	13 602 267	14 552 363	15 153 787	15 986 128	17 072 070
	65-74	13 785 556	14 379 816	15 035 957	15 359 807	16 029 404	16 971 018
	75-84	6 204 246	6 697 401	7 533 164	8 456 494	9 668 355	10 992 268
85+	1 782 029	1 872 723	1 960 530	2 023 698	2 103 616	2 208 289	
Total		84 493 056	86 384 935	89 418 021	89 918 362	92 623 048	97 314 644
Female	0-4	5 130 458	4 920 632	4 844 198	4 695 200	4 614 228	4 798 752
	5-9	3 079 463	2 954 368	3 003 051	2 796 501	2 683 194	2 694 390
	10-14	2 824 456	2 767 079	2 799 922	2 662 439	2 650 978	2 628 683
	15-19	5 365 390	5 321 497	5 333 756	5 139 549	5 142 826	5 126 463
	20-24	7 218 901	7 091 222	7 155 528	7 019 463	7 078 994	7 230 122
	25-34	18 916 127	18 887 319	18 984 711	18 560 350	18 468 456	18 844 332
	35-44	17 915 757	18 275 396	18 624 549	18 306 767	18 340 955	18 956 548
	45-54	18 190 821	19 001 280	19 625 675	19 488 465	19 688 734	20 333 462
	55-64	15 206 153	16 030 836	17 140 827	18 044 436	18 850 104	19 992 138
	65-74	15 083 049	15 376 727	15 991 115	16 307 498	16 866 375	17 793 846
	75-84	11 688 176	12 209 855	12 838 774	13 348 613	14 043 220	14 978 003
85+	4 454 008	4 696 761	4 944 226	5 118 541	5 331 039	5 624 529	
Total		125 072 759	127 532 972	131 286 332	131 487 822	133 759 103	139 001 268
Persons	0-4	11 030 938	10 605 589	10 421 715	10 116 286	9 960 453	10 377 987
	5-9	6 326 346	6 083 623	6 192 073	5 767 990	5 552 431	5 569 775
	10-14	5 702 103	5 616 466	5 714 611	5 409 140	5 392 689	5 347 629
	15-19	8 616 680	8 510 752	8 503 018	8 161 615	8 162 478	8 150 648
	20-24	10 625 298	10 424 440	10 466 709	10 227 961	10 288 416	10 516 452
	25-34	27 115 453	26 993 266	26 990 859	26 307 536	26 146 875	26 669 283
	35-44	28 317 103	28 850 816	29 368 606	28 780 720	28 788 228	29 679 980
	45-54	30 706 495	31 966 569	33 049 806	32 822 062	33 212 340	34 371 997
	55-64	28 128 335	29 633 103	31 693 190	33 198 223	34 836 232	37 064 208
	65-74	28 868 605	29 756 543	31 027 072	31 667 305	32 895 779	34 764 864
	75-84	17 892 422	18 907 256	20 371 938	21 805 107	23 711 575	25 970 271
85+	6 236 037	6 569 484	6 904 756	7 142 239	7 434 655	7 832 818	
Total		209 565 815	213 917 907	220 704 353	221 406 184	226 382 151	236 315 912

Table 13 (continued)

Sex	Age Group	Number of Medical Services per capita					
		1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Male	0-4	9.0	8.6	8.6	8.4	8.2	8.6
	5-9	4.7	4.5	4.6	4.3	4.2	4.2
	10-14	4.2	4.1	4.2	3.9	3.9	3.8
	15-19	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.3	4.3	4.3
	20-24	5.2	5.0	4.9	4.6	4.5	4.5
	25-34	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.4	5.3	5.4
	35-44	7.1	7.2	7.2	7.0	7.0	7.2
	45-54	9.6	9.8	10.1	9.9	9.9	10.1
	55-64	14.5	14.7	14.9	14.8	15.0	15.5
	65-74	21.8	22.5	23.2	23.4	24.0	24.9
	75-84	18.3	18.8	20.3	21.9	24.1	26.5
85+	23.0	4.3	22.7	22.2	21.9	21.7	
Total		8.9	9.0	9.2	9.1	9.3	9.6
Female	0-4	8.2	7.9	7.8	7.6	7.5	7.8
	5-9	4.7	4.5	4.6	4.3	4.1	4.2
	10-14	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.0	3.9	3.9
	15-19	8.3	8.0	8.0	7.6	7.6	7.6
	20-24	11.4	11.1	11.0	10.4	10.2	10.4
	25-34	13.1	13.1	13.1	12.9	12.8	13.2
	35-44	12.1	12.2	12.4	12.2	12.2	12.5
	45-54	14.0	14.3	14.6	14.3	14.2	14.5
	55-64	17.5	17.7	17.9	18.0	18.0	18.4
	65-74	22.2	22.6	23.2	23.5	24.0	24.8
	75-84	24.5	24.7	25.4	25.7	26.5	27.8
85+	25.4	25.6	25.9	25.9	26.1	26.4	
Total		13.0	13.0	13.3	13.1	13.2	13.6

Source: Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing Medicare Statistics, <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/medstat-mar06-tables-d>, viewed 17 July 2006.

Notes: Most medical and some dental and optometrical services rendered to private in-patients in hospital, and most patients outside hospital, attract Medicare benefits. The medical services above include General Practitioner attendances, medical specialist attendances, pathology, diagnostic imaging and other medical services such as anaesthetics and optometry on a fee-for-service basis for which a rebate is paid under Medicare. Excluded from the above Medicare statistics are services rendered free-of-charge to public patients in public hospitals (public hospital funding under Medicare provides free access to these medical services), services rendered under motor vehicle third party and workers' compensation schemes, services for defence veterans and their dependents (these are covered under separate Australian Government funding arrangements), most government funded community health services, as well as services not necessary for patient care (for example, examinations for employment purposes).

School attendance - primary and secondary education

60. School attendance is compulsory throughout Australia between the ages of 6-15 years (16 years in SA, Tasmania and WA). Most children start primary school at around 5 years of age. The final two years of secondary schooling generally fall outside the compulsory stage of education. Despite this, 87 per cent of students who entered secondary school in 2001

or 2002 (depending on the State or Territory of schooling) continued on to Year 11 in 2005, and 75 per cent of students who started in secondary school in 2000 or 2001 continued to Year 12 in 2005.

61. Although each State and Territory has developed its own approach to schooling, moves are underway across Australia to standardise core education curriculum modules (such as mathematics, science and English) and the age of commencement of students. The expectation is that these changes will ensure that all Australian children have access to 13 years of schooling, on a comparable basis, transferable anywhere in Australia.

Schools, students and teaching staff

62. There were 9,623 schools operating in Australia as at the time of the August 2005 schools census, of which 72.0 per cent were government schools. There were 156,564 teaching staff (full-time, plus full-time equivalent (FTE)), employed in government schools (66.4 per cent of all teachers) and a further 79,231 employed in non-government schools.

63. In August 2005, 3.4 million students (FTE) were attending primary and secondary schools, comprising 2.3 million (67 per cent) in government schools and 1.1 million (33 per cent) in non-government schools. Between 2000 and 2005 the number of students (FTE) attending government schools decreased by 4,700 (-0.2 per cent), while the number of students attending non-government schools increased by 103,200 (10 per cent).

Table 14

Schools, students and teaching staff - August 2005

	Government schools	Non-government schools			All schools
		Catholic	Independent	Total	
	%	%	%	%	'000
Schools	72.0	17.6	10.4	28.0	9.6
Students (FTE) (a)					
Males	67.7	19.7	12.6	32.3	1 709.8
Females	66.6	20.4	13.0	33.4	1 649.2
Persons	67.2	20.0	12.8	32.8	3 359.0
Teaching staff (FTE) (b)					
Males	64.4	18.1	17.5	35.6	75.5
Females	67.4	18.9	13.8	32.6	160.3
Persons	66.4	18.6	15.0	33.6	235.8

Source: ABS data available on request, National Schools Statistics Collection, 2005.

(a) Full-time students plus full-time equivalent of part-time students;

(b) Full-time teaching staff plus full-time equivalent of part-time teaching staff.

Table 15**Students (a), by category of school - August 2005**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Government schools						
Males	1 154.8	1 156.9	1 163.4	1 161.9	1 159.7	1 157.3
Females	1 105.6	1 103.0	1 105.4	1 103.1	1 100.6	1 098.3
Persons	2 260.3	2 259.9	2 268.8	2 265.0	2 260.2	2 255.6
Non-government schools						
Males	501.7	512.2	524.7	534.1	543.0	552.5
Females	498.4	508.9	521.4	531.3	540.7	550.9
Persons	1 000.1	1 021.1	1 046.2	1 065.4	1 083.6	1 103.3
All schools						
Males	1 656.5	1 669.0	1 688.1	1 696.0	1 702.6	1 709.8
Females	1 604.0	1 611.9	1 626.8	1 634.3	1 641.3	1 649.2
Persons	3 260.5	3 280.9	3 314.9	3 330.3	3 343.9	3 359.0

Source: ABS annual data available on request, National Schools Statistics Collection.

(a) Full-time equivalent students.

Retention rates

64. Apparent retention rates are important measures of the performance of education systems and related government policies. The apparent retention rate is an estimate of the percentage of students of a given cohort who continued to a particular level or year of education. For instance, in 2005 the apparent retention rate of full-time secondary school students from Year 7/8 to Year 12 was 75.3 per cent. As in previous years, the 2005 apparent retention rate for female students (81.0 per cent) was higher than the corresponding rate for male students (69.9 per cent).

65. Table 16 below shows apparent retention rates from Year 10 to Year 12 rather than from the commencement of secondary schooling, where attendance due to age requirements is generally compulsory. Retention rates have been calculated for full-time students, and for all students.

Table 16
Apparent retention rates, from Year 10 to Year 12

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Full-time students						
Males	69.0	70.8	72.4	72.3	72.4	71.5
Females	80.0	80.1	81.7	81.6	82.3	81.6
Persons	74.4	75.4	77.0	76.9	77.2	76.5
Total students (a)						
Males	72.1	73.9	75.7	75.1	75.1	74.0
Females	84.7	84.9	86.9	86.4	86.9	85.7
Persons	78.3	79.4	81.3	80.7	80.9	79.8

Source: ABS data available on request, National Schools Statistics Collection.

(a) Includes part-time students.

66. Table 17 below shows Year 12 completion rates of students of high socio-economic status (SES), low SES, urban, rural and remote backgrounds.

Table 17
Year 12 completion rates (per cent): 1989-2002 (selected years)

	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
High SES (a)	79	78	77	73	76	76	74	75	76	77
Low SES (a)	63	65	61	61	63	64	63	64	63	61
Major Cities (b)	71	71	69	67	70	70	69	70	71	71
Regional (b)	68	67	62	64	67	68	67	67	66	63
Remote (b)	57	58	52	52	55	53	52	53	54	55
All students	69	69	67	66	69	69	68	69	69	68

Source: DEST, unpublished data.

(a) Based on the “Index of Education and Occupation” from the Australian Bureau of Statistics “Socio Economic Indexes for Areas”. Data from 1997 have been revised.

(b) Prior to 1997 based on the “Rural Remote and Metropolitan Areas Classifications” developed by the Department of Primary Industry and Energy. From 1997 the geography is based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Australian Standard Geographical Classification’s “Remoteness Structure”.

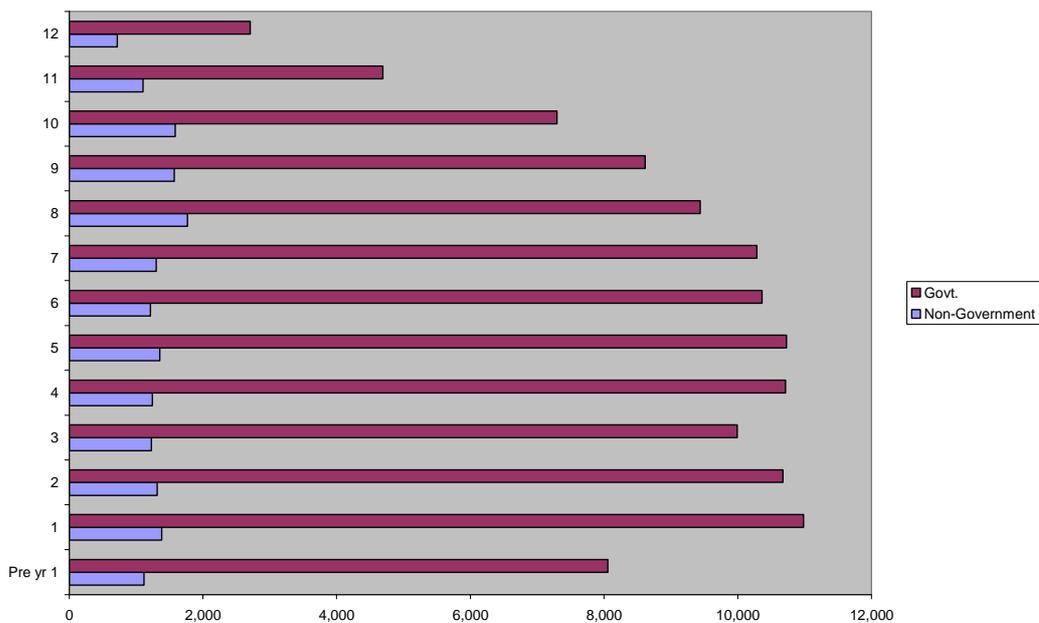
Indigenous school students

67. In August 2005, there were 88,592 full-time equivalent (FTE) Indigenous students attending primary schools and a further 46,505 Indigenous students (FTE) attending secondary schools. Most Indigenous students (87 per cent) attended government schools in 2005. Of the remainder attending non-government schools, about two thirds were attending Catholic systemic schools

68. Graph 11 below shows a decline in the number of Indigenous students at secondary school level, after Year 7. This decline is most marked in government schools and is due to a number of factors, such as declining retention and movement of students to non-government schools. The number of Indigenous students attending non-government schools remained relatively stable across the early grades, followed by an increase in Year 8, then a moderate drop-off until Year 12.

Graph 11

Indigenous school students (a) - August 2005



Source: ABS data available on request, National Schools Statistics Collection, 2005.

(a) Full-time equivalent students.

69. The table below shows an increase in Indigenous students (FTE) attending school between 1999 and 2005, from 106,628 to 135,097 students. NSW and Queensland experienced the largest increases in Indigenous school student (FTE) numbers, by 9,371 and 8,559 respectively. The number of Indigenous students (FTE) attending primary and secondary schools increased in every State and Territory over the period.

70. Between 1999 and 2005 overall growth of Indigenous school students (FTE) was 27 per cent. With the exception of the NT, all States had growth of over 19 per cent. The NT grew by 9.8 per cent. The number of secondary school Indigenous students (FTE) grew by 39 per cent between 1999 and 2005, compared with 21 per cent for primary students.

Table 18

Indigenous school students (a) by level of education - August 2005

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
PRIMARY Students									
1999	20 233	3 629	20 259	4 557	11 903	2 586	9 528	513	73 208
2005	25 304	4 813	25 057	5 473	14 389	2 999	9 893	664	88 592
SECONDARY Students									
1999	10 523	1 878	9 150	1 619	4 726	1 759	3 453	312	33 420
2005	14 823	2 864	12 911	2 341	6 584	2 190	4 354	438	46 505
TOTAL Students									
1999	30 756	5 507	29 409	6 176	16 629	4 345	12 981	825	106 628
2005	40 127	7 677	37 968	7 814	20 973	5 189	14 247	1 102	135 097

Source: ABS data available on request, National Schools Statistics Collection.

(a) Full-time equivalent students.

71. The retention of Indigenous students in senior secondary years has increased over the six-year period to 2005. The growth in Indigenous retention has generally been more notable than is the case for non-Indigenous students - see the table below.

72. The apparent retention rate for Indigenous students to Year 12 rose 4.8 percentage points from 1999 to 2005 compared with a rise of 3.4 percentage points for non-Indigenous students over the same period. Nonetheless, retention of Indigenous students in secondary schools remains substantially below that for non-Indigenous students. The apparent retention rate to Year 12 was 39.5 per cent in 2005 for Indigenous students compared with 76.6 per cent for non-Indigenous students.

Table 19**Apparent retention rates (a), Indigenous and non-Indigenous students**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Apparent retention of students from Year 7/8(a)	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To Year 9							
Indigenous	93.9	95.5	96.5	97.8	96.8	97.2	98.4
Non-Indigenous	99.9	99.8	99.9	99.8	99.9	99.9	99.9
To Year 10							
Indigenous	82.0	83.0	85.7	86.4	87.2	85.8	88.3
Non-Indigenous	97.9	98.0	98.4	98.5	98.9	98.5	98.6
To Year 11							
Indigenous	56.0	53.6	56.1	58.9	61.4	61.0	62.3
Non-Indigenous	86.4	86.2	87.6	88.7	89.5	88.9	88.3
To Year 12							
Indigenous	34.7	36.4	35.7	38.0	39.1	39.5	39.5
Non-Indigenous	73.2	73.3	74.5	76.3	76.5	76.8	76.6

Source: ABS data available on request, National Schools Statistics Collection.

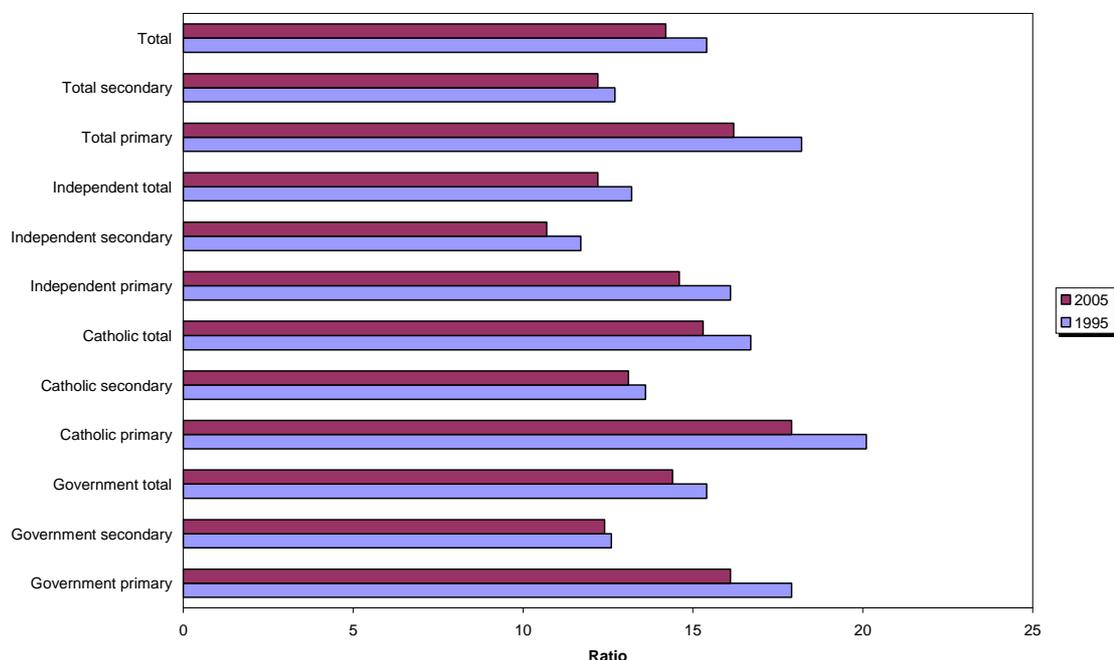
(a) Refers to retention from the first year of secondary school in each State.

Ratio of teachers to students

73. Graph 12 below shows student/teacher ratios by category of school by level in 1995 and 2005. These ratios represent the number of school students (FTE) divided by teaching staff (FTE). The most significant reduction in these ratios between 1995 and 2005 was an almost 2 percentage point decrease for primary schools - down from 18.2 students per teacher in 1995 to 16.2 in 2005. Catholic primary schools student teacher ratios fell by 2.2 percentage points, moving from 20.1 in 1995 to 17.9 in 2005. Among secondary schools, both the Catholic and Independent schools showed decreases (from 13.6 to 13.1, and 11.7 to 10.7 respectively). Government secondary schools reported a small decrease from 12.6 to 12.4 students per teacher over the same period.

Graph 12

Students to teaching staff (a), by category of school



Source: ABS data available on request, National Schools Statistics Collection.

(a) Number of students (FTE) divided by the number of teaching staff (FTE).

Note - this graph should not be used as a measure of class size.

Literacy rates

74. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) periodically publishes average scientific, mathematical and reading literacy scores under its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The 2003 PISA results for 15-year-old Australian students show that Australia has performed very well, achieving a mean score in reading of 525 which is significantly above the OECD average of 494. Australia was clearly outperformed (i.e. the difference is statistically significant), by one country in reading literacy (Finland). Australia had the fourth highest mean score (also the same as in 2000) and the OECD has estimated that Australia ranked between third and fifth among OECD countries and between third and sixth among all participating countries.

75. Australian females achieved better reading scores than males - female 545, males 506. Both sexes achieved significantly higher than the OECD average of 494. Indigenous students in Australia achieved a score of 444, significantly below the OECD score of 494, and that of all Australian students (525).

76. Australia was also among the countries with the lowest proportions of students at the lowest level of proficiency, i.e. scoring Below Level 1, (3.6 per cent). Of the top performing countries in reading, Finland had only 1.1 per cent, Korea 1.4 per cent and Canada 2.3 per cent of their students Below Level 1.

77. Despite the low proportions of students (Below Level 1) in Australia relative to many other countries, it is nevertheless a concern that more than one in ten Australian students (11.8 per cent) performed only at Level 1 or Below Level 1. For Indigenous students, the proportion who achieved at these levels was almost four in ten (38 per cent), with 15 per cent unable to achieve even Level 1.

78. In reading skills, Australia had one of the lowest proportions of students, achieving at the lowest level (3.6 per cent Below Level 1). However, it is still of concern that more than one in ten (11.8 per cent) of students only achieved at Level 1 or below (16.5 per cent of males, 7.1 per cent of females and 38 per cent of Indigenous students).²⁶

Table 20

Mean scores in reading literacy²⁷

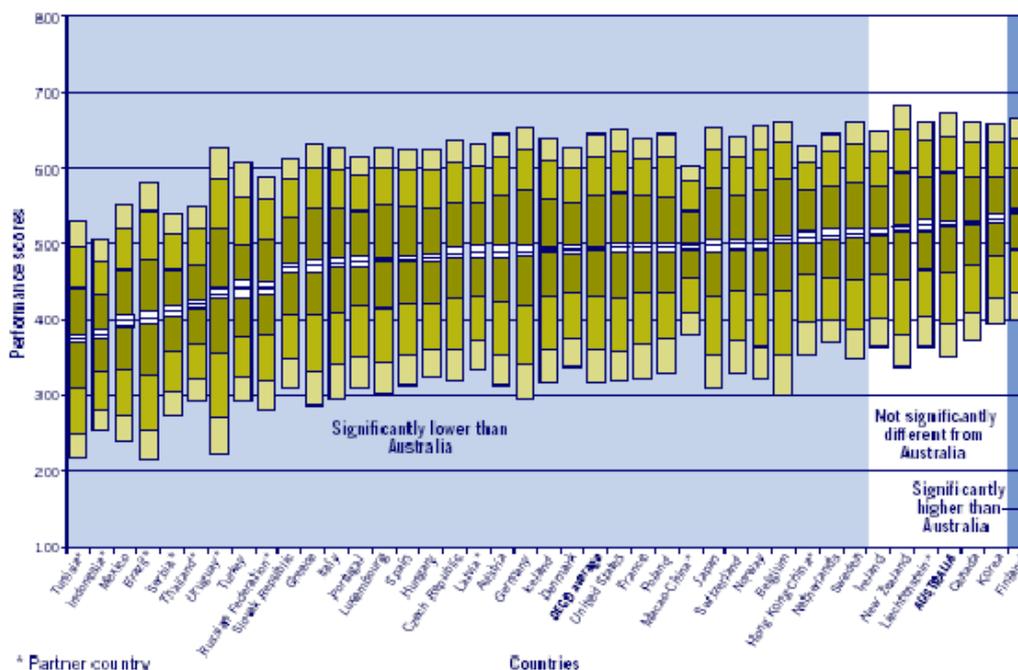
	Reading Literacy
Australia	525 (2.1)
Male	506 (2.8)
Female	545 (2.6)
Indigenous	444 (8.6)
OECD average	494 (0.6)
Top Country	543 (1.6) Finland

79. In Graph 13 below, each white block with the black line across it shows the best estimate of the country's mean (the middle line) and the range (the white block) within which the mean would be expected, with 95 per cent certainty, to fall if many samples were drawn in the same way from the same population. The charts also show the distributions of results for the middle half, then; all but the highest and lowest 10 per cent; and all but the highest and lowest 5 per cent of students.

²⁶ Department of Education, Science and Training 2005.

²⁷ As above.

Graph 13
Reading literacy - international comparison²⁸



80. Reports from the MCEETYA's National Report on Schooling in Australia show the vast majority of students in 2002, 2003 and 2004 met the national reading and writing benchmarks. The national literacy and numeracy benchmarks represent the minimum acceptable standards of literacy and numeracy that a student must have in order for the student to make progress at school.

81. However, results for Indigenous students' and boys' literacy cause concern. Achievement of Indigenous students was well below that for all students, and all other sub-groups of students, in each domain and year level. In 2004, the gap between all students and Indigenous students ranged from 10 percentage points in Year 3 reading to 20 percentage points in Year 7 reading (see Table 21 below). In 2002, 2003 and 2004, boys had lower achievement than girls in reading and writing in Years 3, 5 and 7 (see Tables 21 and 22 below).

²⁸ Source: *PISA in Brief from Australia's Perspective: Highlights from the full Australian Report*. Sue Thomson, John Cresswell and Lisa De Bortoli. Camberwell: ACER, 2003.

82. There was a significant difference between the results of students with a Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) and all students for Year 7 reading. There were no other significant differences in reading and writing for these students.

83. Geolocation data, reported for the first time in 2003, shows that students in very remote regions, achieve the benchmarks at significantly lower rates than other students in other geolocations. Students in remote areas also tended to achieve at lower rates (see Tables 23a and 23b below).²⁹

Table 21

Percentage of students achieving the reading benchmark by sub-group

READING	*Year 3		*Year 5		*Year 7	
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
Male	90.6 ±2.2	90.8 ±2.0	87.2 ±1.8	86.8 ±1.8	86.8 ±1.0	87.1 ±1.1
Female	94.1 ±1.5	94.3 ±1.4	91.5 ±1.4	91.6 ±1.4	91.6 ±0.8	91.9 ±0.8
Indigenous	76.7 ±4.1	78.8 ±6.9	68.0 ±3.5	67.7 ±4.1	65.3 ±2.9	66.5 ±3.1
LBOTE	90.2 ±2.0	90.0 ±2.0	87.1 ±1.8	88.7 ±1.6	85.6 ±1.3	86.4 ±1.3
Australia	92.3 ±1.7	92.5 ±1.7	89.3 ±1.5	89.0 ±1.5	89.1 ±0.8	89.4 ±0.9

Note: The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.

Table 22

Percentage of students achieving the writing benchmark by sub-group

WRITING	*Year 3		*Year 5		*Year 7	
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
Male	91.8 ±1.8	89.9 ±2.0	91.5 ±1.6	92.2 ±1.5	87.3 ±2.6	89.2 ±2.2
Female	95.5 ±1.1	94.7 ±1.2	95.7 ±0.9	96.1 ±1.1	94.1 ±1.4	95.2 ±1.2
Indigenous	77.1 ±3.1	75.2 ±4.1	76.4 ±3.8	79.6 ±3.8	71.6 ±4.8	74.4 ±4.4
LBOTE	95.0 ±1.3	92.3 ±1.4	92.1 ±1.2	92.5 ±1.2	89.0 ±2.4	91.0 ±2.1
Australia	93.6 ±1.2	92.2 ±1.5	93.6 ±1.1	94.1 ±1.1	90.7 ±1.7	92.1 ±1.7

Note: The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.

²⁹ Department of Education, Science and Training 2005.

Table 23a

Percentage of students meeting the benchmarks by geolocation in 2003

	Reading			Writing			Numeracy		
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7
Metropolitan	93.1 ±1.5	90.0 ±1.4	90.5 ±0.8	93.1 ±1.4	94.8 ±1.0	93.1 ±1.6	94.7 ±1.0	91.8 ±1.1	82.5 ±0.8
Provincial	91.7 ±2.0	87.7 ±1.7	88.2 ±1.1	91.4 ±1.8	93.6 ±1.4	90.7 ±2.0	94.1 ±1.3	89.8 ±1.9	79.3 ±1.1
Remote	87.1 ±3.4	81.5 ±3.1	82.5 ±3.2	82.3 ±3.7	88.0 ±3.1	83.6 ±3.5	87.6 ±3.2	82.2 ±3.6	74.8 ±3.6
Very Remote	71.2 ±5.7	62.5 ±5.0	61.0 ±5.4	63.6 ±5.9	68.9 ±5.2	67.0 ±5.3	71.2 ±5.7	61.2 ±5.4	51.1 ±4.9

Note: 1. The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.

2. Year 3 - Ages vary from 8 years 2 months - 9 years 3 months.
3. Year 5 - Ages vary from 10 years 2 months - 11 years 3 months.
4. Year 7 - Ages vary from 12 years 2 months - 13 years 2 months.

Table 23b

Percentage of students meeting the benchmarks by geolocation in 2004

	*Reading			*Writing			*Numeracy		
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7
Metropolitan	93.6 ±1.4	89.7 ±1.5	91.9 ±0.7	93.6 ±1.4	95.0 ±1.1	94.4 ±1.2	94.2 ±1.1	92.1 ±1.1	83.4 ±0.8
Provincial	92.2 ±1.8	87.7 ±1.8	90.1 ±0.9	92.5 ±1.8	93.9 ±1.3	92.8 ±1.5	93.7 ±1.4	90.6 ±1.5	80.2 ±1.1
Remote	90.3 ±3.2	82.9 ±3.6	83.0 ±3.0	83.4 ±4.2	87.8 ±3.1	84.4 ±3.5	87.4 ±3.7	82.0 ±3.7	73.3 ±3.4
Very Remote	78.7 ±4.6	64.2 ±5.4	63.0 ±4.9	66.9 ±5.9	70.2 ±4.6	65.8 ±5.0	71.6 ±6.2	59.1 ±4.9	50.8 ±4.9

Note: 1. The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.

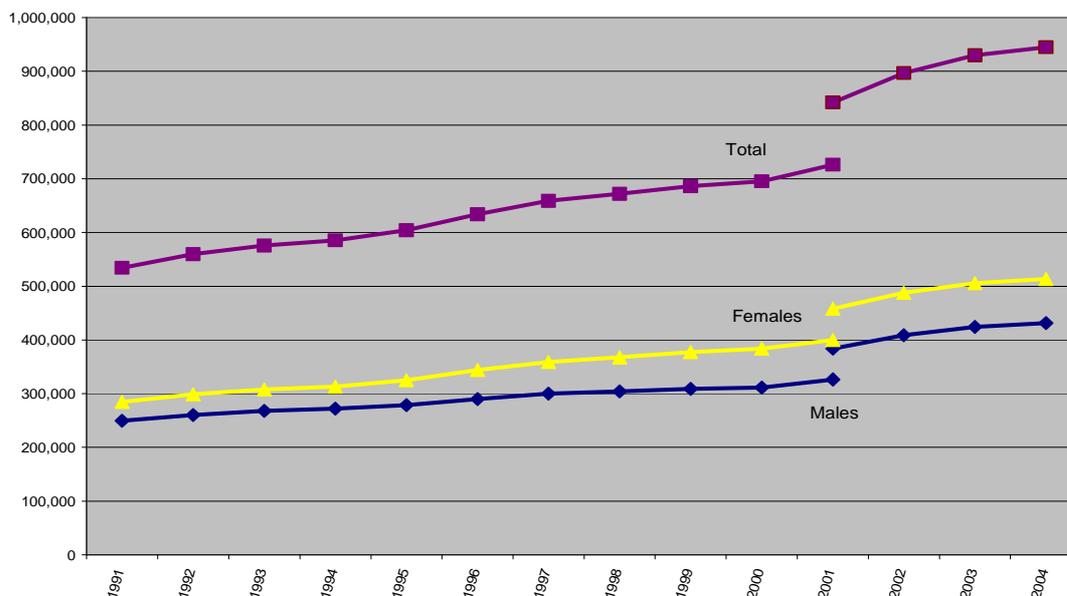
2. Year 3 - Ages vary from 8 years 2 months - 9 years 3 months.
3. Year 5 - Ages vary from 10 years 2 months - 11 years 3 months.
4. Year 7 - Ages vary from 12 years 2 months - 13 years 2 months.

Participation in tertiary and vocational education

84. Graph 14 below shows the participation rates of males and females in higher education.

Graph 14

Participation in higher education by gender, 1991-2004³⁰

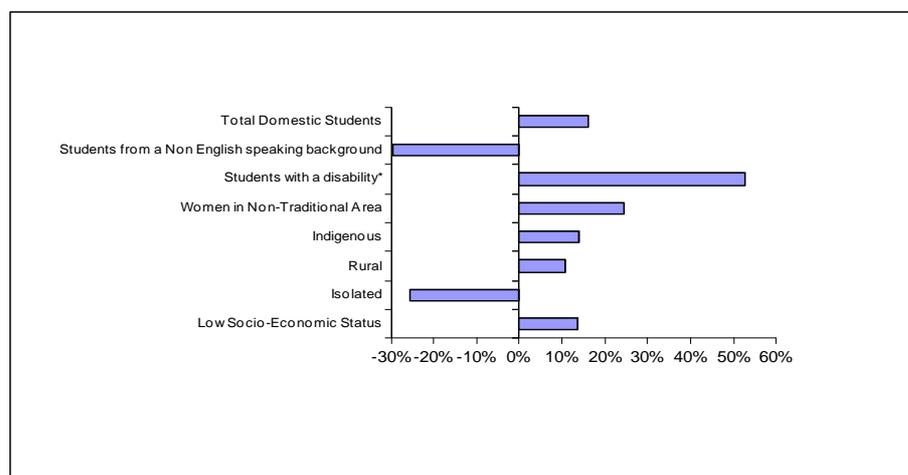


Source: DEST: Selected Higher Education Statistics, various years.

85. Graph 15 below shows the growth in participation rates in higher education of women in non-traditional areas, students from low SES backgrounds, students from a LBOTE, students with a disability, Indigenous students and rural and isolated students.

³⁰ There was a change in methods of data collection between 2001 and 2002 resulting in a break in series.

Graph 15
Growth in higher education student numbers
by equity group (1995-2004)



Source: DEST 2005.

* 1996 data is used instead of 1995 as disability status is only available from 1996 onwards.

86. Table 24 below shows the participation rates in VTE of male, female, urban, rural, remote, overseas, Indigenous and disabled students.

Table 24
Participation in vocational and technical education (VTE) by client groups, 2001 and 2005

	2001		2005	
	Number of students ('000)	Share of VTE	Number of students ('000)	Share of VTE
Sex				
Males	857.3	51.1%	847.7	51.6%
Females	814.6	48.5%	789.5	48.1%
Geographic region				
Major Cities*	915.0	54.5%	888.1	54.1%
Regional*	620.6	37.0%	623.1	37.9%
Remote*	47.9	2.9%	43.8	2.7%
Very Remote*	35.2	2.1%	31.1	1.9%
Indigenous	56.1	3.3%	62.7	3.8%
Students with a disability	68.5	4.1%	96.3	5.9%
TOTAL	1 679.1		1 641.3	

Source: NCVER (2006).

* Access/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA).

Rate of unemployment

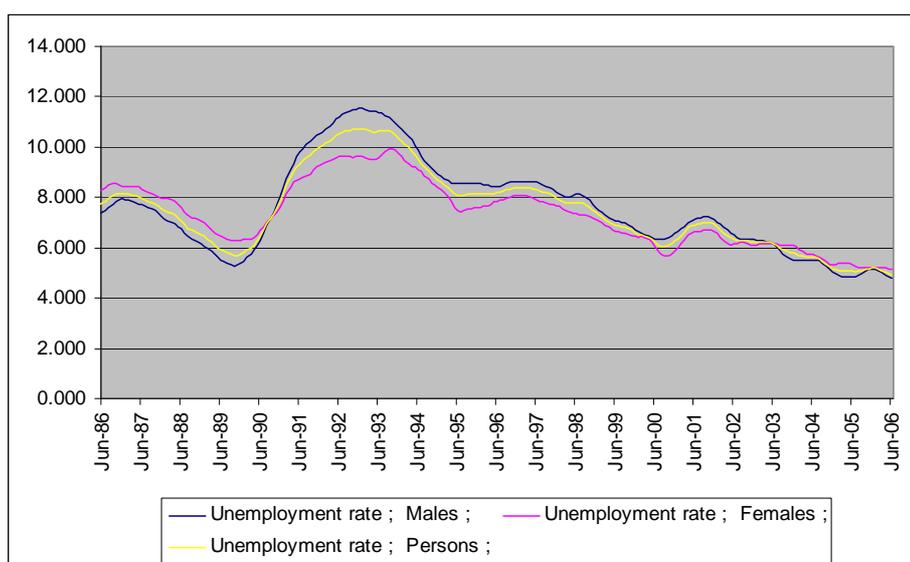
87. Two important measures of unemployment are the number of persons unemployed and the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate, defined as the number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force, offers an insight into the degree of slack in the labour market.

88. Movements in the unemployment rate over the past 20 years are dominated by the recessions of the early-1980s and early-1990s, and the subsequent periods of economic recovery. In trend terms, the unemployment rate peaked at 10.7 per cent in December 1992, then generally fell over the rest of the 1990s and early-2000s, and was 4.9 per cent in June 2006.

89. Prior to 1990, the unemployment rate for men was lower than for women. However, as the unemployment rate increased sharply in 1990-91, the male unemployment rate increased to a level above the female unemployment rate. Since May 2003, this has reversed and the female unemployment rate has been slightly higher than the male unemployment rate.

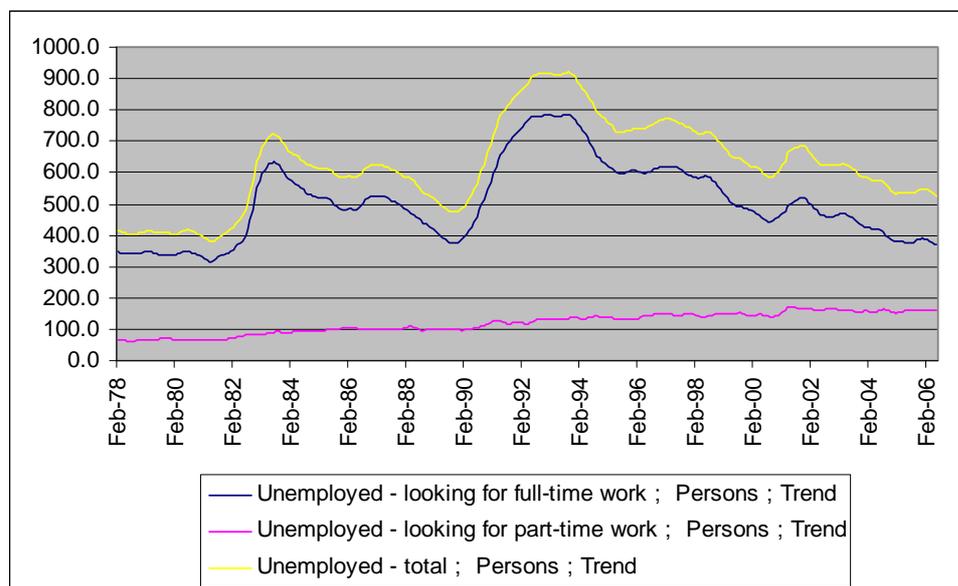
Graph 16

Unemployment rate: trend estimates



90. As Graph 17 below shows, the number of unemployed people has generally declined from the levels recorded in the early-1990s. For the unemployed seeking full-time work, the trend has generally reflected the overall impact of the economic cycle. In contrast, over the past two decades, the trend for those seeking part-time work has generally increased steadily, rising from 102,200 people (or 17 per cent of unemployed people) in June 1986 to 158,900 people (or 30 per cent of unemployed people) in June 2006.

Graph 17
Unemployed persons: trend estimates

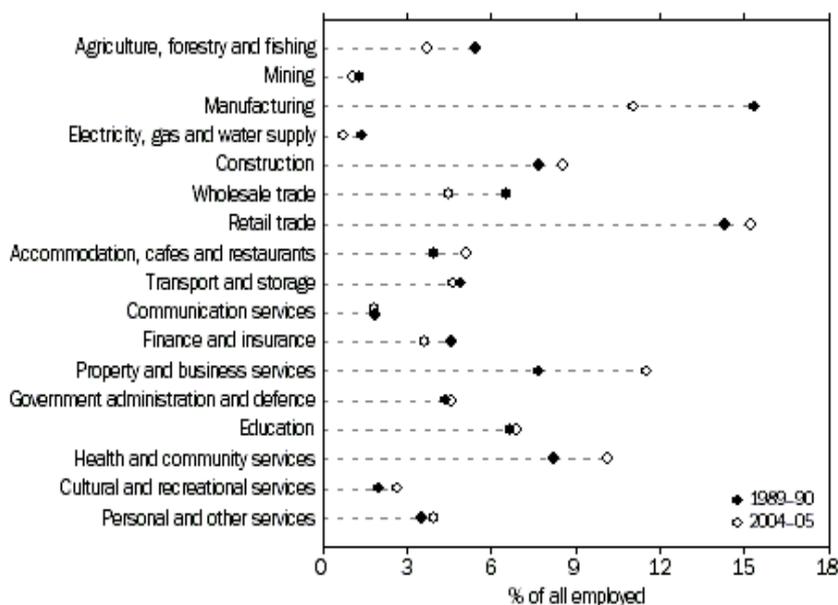


Employment by sectors

91. The distribution of employed people across industries and occupations, and the changes over time, provide an important insight into the structure of the labour market. Graph 18 below shows the proportion of employed people, by industry, for the years 1989-90 and 2004-05.

92. Since 1989-90, the industry composition of the labour market has changed considerably. Historically, the manufacturing industry has been the largest employing industry, but its contribution to the number of employed people has been declining. As recently as 1990-91, the manufacturing industry was the largest employer. However, in 2004-05, it is third to the retail trade and the property and business services industries, which have 15 per cent and 12 per cent of employed people respectively. Manufacturing has fallen from 15 per cent of all employed people in 1989-90 to 11 per cent in 2004-05. Employment in other traditional commodity-based industries, such as the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry, and mining has also fallen over this period.

93. Over the period 1989-90 to 2004-05, service-based industries have increased their share of employed people and now include the two largest industries. The increase was greatest for the property and business services industry (from 8 per cent to 12 per cent) while health and community services has risen from 8 per cent to 10 per cent, accommodation, cafes and restaurants from 4 per cent to 5 per cent, and retail trade from 14 per cent to 15 per cent.

Graph 18**Employed persons (a), by industry (b)**

(a) Annual average of quarterly data. (b) Classified according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification.

Source: Labour Force, Australia, Detailed – Electronic Delivery (6291.0.55.001).

Work participation rates

94. The overall employment/population ratio rose from 59.0 per cent in 1999-2000 to 60.7 per cent in 2004-05. In 2004-05, the employment/population ratio for men was considerably higher than for women (68.1 per cent compared with 53.4 per cent), which reflects the higher participation of men in the labour force.

Table 25**Employed persons, employment/population ratios (a)**

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Males	67.4	67.3	67.0	67.2	67.6	68.1
Females	50.8	51.6	51.5	52.5	52.3	53.4
Persons	59.0	59.3	59.1	59.7	59.8	60.7

Source: Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (6291.0.55.001).

(a) The employment/population ratio for any group is the annual average number of employed persons expressed as a percentage of the annual average civilian population aged 15 years and over in the same group.

95. Of Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over for whom labour force status was reported in the 2001 census, 52 per cent were reported to be participating in the labour force by being either employed at the time of the census (42 per cent employment to population ratio) or unemployed (10 per cent), while 48 per cent were not in the labour force.

96. The Indigenous employment to population ratio of 42 per cent included 7 per cent of Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over who were reported to be employed in Community Development Employment Projects, principally in remote areas of Australia.

97. The unemployment rate for Indigenous persons expresses the number of unemployed persons as a proportion of those Indigenous Australians participating in the labour force.

Table 26

Summary labour force indicators, by remoteness areas, August 2001

	Indigenous persons				Non-Indigenous persons			
	Major Cities %	Regional (a) %	Remote (b) %	Australia %	Major Cities %	Regional (a) %	Remote (b) %	Australia %
Participation rate (c)								
Males aged 15-64	67.4	60.9	58.1	62.1	81.5	79.3	87.2	80.9
Females aged 15-64	51.4	46.0	41.8	46.5	66.8	63.5	71.0	65.8
Persons aged 15-64	59.1	53.2	49.8	54.1	74.0	71.4	79.8	73.3
Persons aged 15 and over	57.3	51.3	47.6	52.1	64.3	61.0	73.4	63.4
Unemployment rate								
Males	22.1	26.4	12.7	21.8	7.4	8.5	4.9	7.7
Females	17.7	20.9	10.9	17.6	6.2	7.1	4.0	6.5
Persons	20.1	24.0	11.9	20.0	6.9	7.9	4.5	7.2
Employment to population ratio (c)								
Males	51.2	43.4	48.7	47.0	66.9	63.0	76.8	65.8
Females	40.9	34.9	35.4	36.7	53.3	49.5	62.1	52.2
Persons	45.8	39.0	41.9	41.7	59.9	56.2	70.0	58.9

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

(a) Combines Inner Regional and Outer Regional areas.

(b) Combines Remote and Very Remote areas.

(c) Persons whose labour force status is unknown have been excluded from the calculation of rates.

Gross domestic product (GDP)**Table 27****GDP, chain volume measures (a)**

	GDP \$m	GDP per person \$
1977-78	353 798	24 775
1978-79	369 039	25 563
1979-80	380 583	26 064
1980-81	393 281	26 555
1981-82	405 718	26 949
1982-83	395 860	25 888
1983-84	414 593	26 774
1984-85	436 669	27 845
1985-86	455 982	28 676
1986-87	466 368	28 896
1987-88	491 671	29 982
1988-89	511 388	30 648
1989-90	531 505	31 378
1990-91	528 344	30 759
1991-92	528 930	30 407
1992-93	548 718	31 199
1993-94	571 385	32 166
1994-95	596 953	33 241
1995-96	621 543	34 166
1996-97	645 999	35 071
1997-98	674 932	36 259
1998-99	709 866	37 722
1999-00	738 123	38 764
2000-01	752 434	39 024
2001-02	780 817	39 982
2002-03	806 161	40 804
2003-04	838 251	41 946
2004-05	859 192	42 511

Source: Australian National Accounts, March quarter 2006 (5206.0).

(a) Reference year is 2003-04.

98. Compared with many developed economies, Australia has experienced relatively strong growth over the past 10 years. With an average annual growth rate of 3.6 per cent for “real” GDP from 1995 to 2005, it is higher than any of the “G7” countries.

Table 28
GDP expenditure account, current prices - annual intervals

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Final consumption expenditure						
General government	117 462	125 264	132 301	141 564	150 329	162 888
Households	380 128	411 022	434 552	462 093	493 287	522 815
Total	497 589	536 286	566 853	603 657	643 616	685 703
Gross fixed capital formation						
Private	135 321	126 443	141 152	165 081	181 019	195 055
Public	24 768	25 031	27 679	28 708	30 704	33 590
Total	160 089	151 474	168 831	193 788	211 722	228 646
Changes in inventories	1 522	818	-102	2 829	5 944	2 726
Gross national expenditure	659 200	688 578	735 582	800 274	861 282	917 075
Exports of goods and services	126 863	154 669	154 778	149 691	144 676	164 390
less Imports of goods and services	140 912	153 910	154 580	167 170	167 706	188 881
Statistical discrepancy (expenditure-based)	-	-	-	-	-	1 119
Gross domestic product	645 153	689 340	735 783	782 798	838 251	893 704
Compensation of employees	319 085	339 301	356 097	377 268	398 662	425 934
Gross operating surplus	196 820	210 199	225 841	242 162	263 623	287 240
Gross mixed income	57 904	59 088	69 645	70 698	76 849	77 544
Total factor income	573 809	608 588	651 583	690 128	739 134	790 718
Taxes less subsidies on production and imports	71 344	80 750	84 204	92 671	99 117	103 280

Source: Australian National Accounts, March quarter 2006 (5206.0).

Gross National Income

Table 29
National income account, current prices - annual intervals

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
INCOME					
Compensation of employees	339 301	356 097	377 268	398 662	425 934
Gross operating surplus	210 199	225 841	242 162	263 623	287 240
Gross mixed income	59 088	69 645	70 698	76 849	77 544
Taxes less subsidies on production and imports	80 750	84 204	92 671	99 117	103 280
Net primary income from non-residents	-18 737	-19 667	-22 491	-23 734	-32 673
Gross national income	670 601	716 120	760 308	814 517	861 325
Net secondary income from non-residents	32	-17	-214	-269	-420
Gross disposable income	670 633	716 103	760 094	814 248	860 905
USE OF DISPOSABLE INCOME					
Final consumption expenditure					
General government	125 264	132 301	141 564	150 329	162 888
Households	411 022	434 552	462 093	493 287	522 815
Total final consumption expenditure	536 286	566 853	603 657	643 616	685 703
Net saving(a)	26 709	33 456	34 408	42 383	40 431
Consumption of fixed capital	107 638	115 794	122 029	128 249	134 771
Total use of gross disposable income	670 633	716 103	760 094	814 248	860 905

Source: Australian National Accounts, March quarter 2006 (5206.0).

(a) Net saving is derived as a balancing item.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

99. The CPI in 2005-06 was 151.7. In 2004-05 CPI was 147.0 and in 2003-04 it was 143.5.

External liabilities - foreign debt

100. In recent years, Australia's debt to the rest of the world has increased. Real net foreign debt grew on average by 7.6 per cent per year between March 1996 and March 2006 (see table below). The level of net foreign debt at 31 March 2006 was \$493.5 billion, up \$69.5 billion (16.4 per cent) on 31 March 2005. The increase since March 1996 resulted from a \$115.8 billion (16.7 per cent) increase in foreign debt liabilities, partly offset by an increase of \$46.2 billion (17.1 per cent) in foreign debt assets.

Graph 19

Real net foreign debt (a) - March 1996 to March 2006



(a) To convert net foreign debt to real terms, the current-price figure has been divided by the chain price index for domestic final demand. Reference year for chain volume measure is 2003-04.

Table 30

Real net foreign debt (a), by sector - March 1996 and March 2006

	31 March 1996	31 March 2006	Average annual growth rate
	\$ billion	\$ billion	per cent
General government	38.7	19.0	-6.9
Other public sector	43.5	-17.0	
Private financial corporations	85.1	378.0	16.1
Private non-financial corporations	57.4	87.7	4.3
Australia	224.7	467.8	7.6

Source: Balance of Payments and International Investment Position.

(a) To convert net foreign debt to real terms, the current-price figure has been divided by the chain price index for domestic final demand. Reference year for chain volume measure is 2003-04.

Development expenditure

101. The *Australian Overseas Aid Program* aims to assist developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, in line with Australia's national interest. Australian aid helps build a stable, prosperous and democratic Asia-Pacific region, responds to emergencies and humanitarian crises, and targets urgent needs in Africa and the Middle East. The AidPprogram was a central component of Australia's response to the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami disaster, and is helping neighbouring countries address longer-term challenges such as broad-based economic growth, weak governance, instability and HIV/AIDS.

102. In 2005-06, the Australian Government provided an estimated \$2.6b in Official Development Assistance (ODA), an increase of \$300m over the 2004-05 ODA of \$2.3b. Details of ODA to partner countries in 2005-06 are provided in the table below. The ratio of Australia's ODA to gross national income for 2005-06 is estimated at 0.28 per cent, placing Australia above the donor average which, in the latest year available (2004), was 0.25 per cent.

103. Further information and publications on the Australian Government's aid program can be obtained from the web site of the Australian Agency for International Development, AusAID: <<http://www.ausaid.gov.au>>.

Table 31**Australian Official Development Assistance (a) - 2005-2006**

	\$m
Papua New Guinea and Pacific	
Papua New Guinea	324.3
Solomon Islands	235.7
Vanuatu	32.1
Fiji	29.5
Samoa	21.0
Tonga	13.0
Kiribati	12.1
Regional Pacific	70.2
Nauru	16.3
Total	754.2
East Asia	
Indonesia (ongoing program)	160.9
Indonesia (AIPRD)(b)	94.1
Vietnam	76.2
Philippines	63.6
China	46.8
Cambodia	42.4
East Timor	43.5
Laos	18.4
Thailand	7.7
Regional East Asia	39.4
Total	592.9
South Asia, Africa and Other	
Bangladesh	32.4
India	10.0
Sri Lanka	25.2
Regional South Asia	68.9
Africa	82.5
Middle East and Central Asia	399.4
Total	618.4
Other Government Departments (OGD)(c)	205.0
Core contributions to multilateral organisations, other ODA(d)	480.4
Reconciliation of expenses to cash(e)	-10.1
Total ODA (cash)	2 640.9

Source: AusAID.

(a) Expected Outcome for 2005-06.

(b) Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development.

(c) Includes ODA eligible expenditure by government departments which has not been allocated to a particular country or region.

(d) Includes core contributions and cash payments to multilaterals that cannot be attributed to a particular country.

(e) Includes accrual adjustments for non-ODA eligible (administered and departmental) expenditure.

Political system and administration of justice statistics

Number of recognised political parties

104. The Australian Electoral Commission maintains a register of political parties. This register lists those parties which are eligible to have the party affiliation of their endorsed candidates printed on ballot papers.

105. To be eligible for registration, a party must be established on the basis of a written Constitution that sets out the aims of the party, and either:

- A parliamentary party, which is a political party with at least one member in the Parliament of the Commonwealth, or
- A political party that has at least 500 members who are entitled to be on the electoral roll and are not relied on by any other party.

106. As at 23 January 2006, there were 54 political parties registered in Australia.³¹

Distribution of legislative seats by party

Table 32

State of the parties - Commonwealth Parliament September 2005

House of Representatives	
Liberal Party	74
Nationals	12
Country Liberal Party	1
Government parties	87
Australian Labor Party	60
Independent	3
Total	150
Senate	
Liberal Party	32
Nationals	6
Country Liberal Party	1
Government parties	39
Australian Labor Party	28
Australian Democrats	4
The Greens	4
Family First Party	1
Total	76

Source: Library of the Commonwealth Parliament.

³¹ Australian Electoral Commission, http://www.aec.gov.au/_content/who/party_reg/registered/index.htm.

Women in Parliament**Table 33****Percentage of women in Parliament - November 2004**

Jurisdiction	Number of women in Lower House	Percentage of total %	Number of women in Upper House	Percentage of total %
Commonwealth	37	24.7	22	28.9
New South Wales	23	25	13	31
Victoria	27	30.7	13	29.5
Queensland	33	37.1	N/A	N/A
Western Australia	13	22.8	10	29.4
South Australia	16	34	6	27.3
Tasmania	6	24	4	26.7
Australian Capital Territory	6	35.3	N/A	N/A
Northern Territory	7	28	N/A	N/A

* Table based on information from the websites of each Parliament.

Periodicity of elections at the national and local level

107. Members of the Commonwealth House of Representatives are elected for a maximum term of three years, though elections may be called earlier. Senators have fixed terms of six years. Normally half the Senate retire every three years, and elections for the Senate are usually held at the same time as elections for the House of Representatives.

108. In NSW, the Legislative Assembly operates on four-year fixed terms. Members of the Legislative Council hold office for two terms of the Legislative Assembly (half the members of the Legislative Council retire at each Legislative Assembly election on a rotating basis). Local Councils in NSW operate on a four-year fixed term.

109. Members of the Victorian Legislative Assembly serve terms of a minimum of three years and a maximum of four years. Members of the Legislative Council hold office for two terms of the Legislative Assembly (half the members of the Legislative Council retire at each Legislative Assembly election on a rotating basis). Local Councils operate on a three-year term.

110. In Queensland, the Legislative Assembly has a maximum term of three-years. Local Councils operate on a three-year fixed term.

111. In WA, the Legislative Council operates on a four-year fixed term. The Legislative Assembly has a maximum term of four years. Half the Local Councillors of each Council in WA are elected every two years for four-year terms.

112. In SA, the Legislative Council operates on six to eight-year terms. The House of Assembly has a minimum of three-year and a maximum of four-year terms. Local Council elections are held every three years.

113. The Tasmanian Legislative Council has terms of six years, with three or two Members elected in alternative years. The House of Assembly has terms of up to four-years. In Local Councils, half the Councillors are elected every two years for four-year terms.

114. Members of the Legislative Assembly in the NT serve four-year terms. Municipal Council elections are held every four years. Local Councillors serve one to four year terms.

115. In the ACT, Members of the Legislative assembly serve four-year terms.³²

Voter turnouts

116. Every Australian citizen (18 years or older) is required by law to vote. If the citizen is unable to provide a “valid and sufficient” reason for not voting, a penalty is imposed.

Table 34
Voter turnout 1970-2004

Year	Senate	House of Representatives	Referendum
1970	93.98	-	-
1972	-	95.38	-
1973	-	-	93.39
1974	95.50	95.40	95.50
1975	95.40	95.40	-
1977	-	-	92.28
1977	95.08	95.08	-
1980	94.35	94.35	-
1983	94.64	94.64	-
1984	94.55	94.17	94.05
1987	94.34	93.84	-
1988	-	-	92.04
1990	95.81	95.31	-
1993	96.22	95.75	-
1996	96.20	95.77	-
1998	95.34	94.99	-
1999	-	-	95.10
2001	95.19	94.85	-
2004	94.82	94.32	-

Source: http://www.aec.gov.au/_content/What/voting/turnout/index.htm.

³² Electoral Council of Australia: http://www.eca.gov.au/systems/australia/by_category/terms_members.htm.

Total criminal cases

117. The table below shows the total number of criminal cases handled in the courts of Australia, including appeal and non-appeal cases. Of all the criminal cases filed in Australia during 2001-02, 95 per cent were filed in the Magistrates Courts, with NSW and Queensland being the largest contributors to the national total. A large proportion of cases in the Magistrates Court in most States and Territories are minor traffic matters.

Table 35**Criminal court finalisations - 2001-2002 (a)**

Court level	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust. (b)
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Supreme Court	1.1	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.2	4.5
District/County Court	9.0	3.0	8.0	1.0	3.0	25.0
Magistrates' Court(c)	133.0	110.0	144.0	55.0	60.0	39.0	12.0	5.0	557.0
Total	143.1	113.6	153.0	56.4	63.4	39.5	12.3	5.2	586.5

Source: Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision, "Report on Government Services 2003".

(a) Lodgements do not equal finalisations in any given year because matters lodged in one year may be finalised in the next.

(b) Australian totals may not add as a result of rounding.

(c) In Tas., the number of lodgements declined by between 8,000 and 10,000 matters due to information technology difficulties experienced by a major court user. This has had a considerable flow on effect on finalisations. The matters lodged by this user are usually resolved within the year of lodgement. It is estimated, therefore, that finalisations are affected by between 8,000 and 10,000 matters.

118. The number of victims of crimes recorded by police decreased between 2001 and 2002 for almost all of the offence categories listed in the table below. Declines were particularly noticeable for those offence categories related to the taking of property (such as robbery, unlawful entry with intent and theft offences). The largest proportional decreases were recorded for victims of armed robbery (30 per cent), driving causing death (21 per cent) and motor vehicle theft (19 per cent). Increases were evident for four offence categories: manslaughter (29 per cent), sexual assault (6 per cent), assault (5 per cent) and murder (2 per cent).

119. The number of victims recorded by Australian police again declined in most offence categories in 2004 when compared with 2003. Victims of the following offence categories recorded a decrease: homicide and related offences (18 per cent); robbery (16 per cent); unlawful entry with intent (13 per cent); other theft (12 per cent), motor vehicle theft (11 per cent); and blackmail/extortion (4 per cent). Victims of kidnapping/abduction recorded an increase (10 per cent). Variation from year to year is likely to be higher for both homicide and related offences and kidnapping/abduction due to small numbers.

Table 36
Victim and victimisation rates (a), by selected offences

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
NUMBER						
Homicide and related offences	969	1 020	1 066	979	958	789
Murder	344	316	310	318	302	256
Attempted murder	360	393	459	399	361	307
Manslaughter	41	46	37	48	39	37
Driving causing death	224	265	260	214	256	189
Kidnapping/abduction	766	695	767	706	696	768
Robbery	22 606	23 336	26 591	20 989	19 709	16 490
Armed robbery	9 452	9 483	11 233	7 840	7 189	5 993
Unarmed robbery	13 154	13 853	15 358	13 149	12 520	10 497
Blackmail/extortion	254	255	358	355	386	370
Unlawful entry with intent	415 735	436 968	435 754	394 323	354 020	308 368
Property theft (b)	322 983	n.a.	325 220	292 748	262 657	224 638
Other (b)	92 752	n.a.	110 534	101 575	91 363	83 730
Motor vehicle theft (c)	129 552	138 912	139 894	113 460	98 298	87 916
Other theft (d)	612 559	681 268	700 137	680 799	624 036	547 800
RATE (e)						
Homicide and related offences	5.1	5.3	5.5	5.0	4.8	3.9
Murder	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.3
Attempted murder	1.9	2.1	2.4	2.0	1.8	1.5
Manslaughter	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Driving causing death	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.3	0.9
Kidnapping/abduction	4.0	3.6	4.0	3.6	3.5	3.8
Robbery	119.4	121.8	137.0	106.9	99.2	82.0
Armed robbery	49.9	49.5	57.9	39.9	36.2	29.8
Unarmed robbery	69.5	72.3	79.1	67.0	63.0	52.2
Blackmail/extortion	1.3	1.3	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.8
Unlawful entry with intent	2 195.7	2 281.3	2 244.9	2 007.9	1 781.7	1 533.5
Property theft (b)	1 705.8	n.a.	1 675.5	1 490.7	1 321.9	1 117.1
Other (b)	489.9	n.a.	569.5	517.2	459.8	416.4
Motor vehicle theft (c)	684.2	725.2	720.7	577.7	494.7	437.2
Other theft (d)	3 235.2	3 556.8	3 607.0	3 466.7	3 140.6	2 724.2

Source: Recorded Crime - Victims, Australia, 2004 (4510.0).

(a) Recorded by police in all jurisdictions. Depending on the type of offence recorded, a victim may be a person, a premise, an organisation or a motor vehicle.

(b) A change in the legislation related to unlawful entry with intent (UEWI) offences in SA resulted in an inability to provide UEWI disaggregated into property theft and other for 2000.

(c) Prior to 2002, NT police incorrectly included theft of motor vehicle parts and contents and some theft n.e.c. in the count of motor vehicle theft. Since 2002, these offences were correctly included in the other theft offence category.

(d) Prior to 2004, counts of UEWI involving the taking of property were included in this offence category as well as in other theft for South Australia. The 2003 data for other theft have been revised to exclude counts of UEWI involving the taking of property, resulting in a break in the time series for other theft.

(e) Per 100,000 persons.

Prison population

120. The total prison population on 30 June 2005 was 25,353. There were 23,619 male prisoners, comprising 93 per cent of the total prisoner population. The median age of prisoners was 32 years for both males and females. The majority (52 per cent or 13,178) of prisoners were young adult males aged 20-34 years. NSW had the highest proportion of prisoners (39 per cent), followed by Queensland (21 per cent).

Table 37**Prisoners, by jurisdiction - 30 June 2005**

	NSW (a)	Vic.	Qld.	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT in ACT	ACT in NSW (a)	ACT Total	Aust. (b)
NUMBER											
All prisoners	9 819	3 692	5 354	1 473	3 482	551	820	162	113	275	25 353
Males	9 126	3 435	4 994	1 379	3 214	523	794	154	108	262	23 619
Females	693	257	360	94	268	28	26	8	5	13	1 734
Indigenous	1 682	220	1 331	265	1 408	70	663	17	9	26	5 656
Non-Indigenous	7 853	3 472	3 969	1 054	2 074	476	157	136	104	240	19 191
Unknown	284	-	54	154	-	5	-	9	-	9	506
Sentenced	7 832	3 043	4 235	977	2 928	420	686	99	113	212	20 220
Unsentenced	1 987	649	1 119	496	554	131	134	63	-	63	5 133
PROPORTION (%)											
All prisoners	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Males	92.9	93.0	93.3	93.6	92.3	94.9	96.8	95.1	95.6	95.3	93.2
Females	7.1	7.0	6.7	6.4	7.7	5.1	3.2	4.9	4.4	4.7	6.8
Indigenous	17.1	6.0	24.9	18.0	40.4	12.7	80.9	10.5	8.0	9.5	22.3
Non-Indigenous	80.0	94.0	74.1	71.6	59.6	86.4	19.1	84.0	92.0	87.3	75.7
Unknown	2.9	-	1.0	10.5	-	0.9	-	5.6	-	3.3	2.0
Sentenced	79.8	82.4	79.1	66.3	84.1	76.2	83.7	61.1	100.0	77.1	79.8
Unsentenced	20.2	17.6	20.9	33.7	15.9	23.8	16.3	38.9	-	22.9	20.2

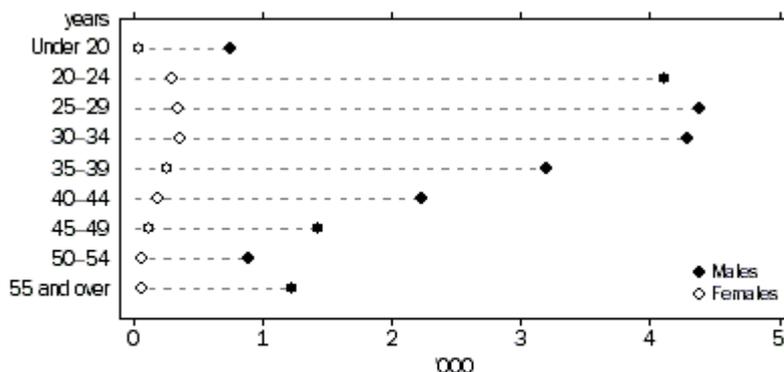
Source: Prisoners in Australia, 2005 (4517.0).

(a) The majority of full-time prisoners sentenced in the ACT are held in NSW prisons.

(b) The ACT in NSW figures are a subset of the NSW figures, and are not separately counted in the Australian totals.

Graph 20

Prisoners, by age group and sex - 30 June 2004

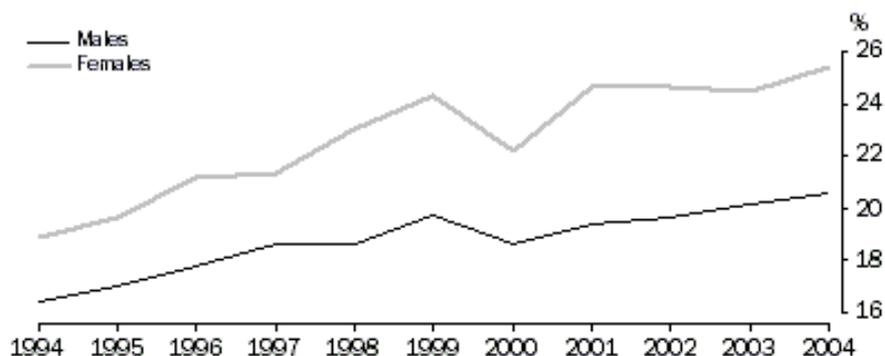


Source: *Prisoners in Australia, 2004* (4517.0).

121. There were 5,048 Indigenous prisoners (21 per cent of the prisoner population) at 30 June 2004. Over the past decade, Indigenous prisoners have accounted for an increasing proportion of the total prisoner population.

Graph 21

Proportion of prisoners who are Indigenous (a)



(a) Indigenous male prisoners as a proportion of all male prisoners and Indigenous female prisoners as a proportion of all female prisoners.

Source: *Prisoners in Australia, 2004* (4517.0).

122. At 30 June 2004, almost half (47 per cent) of all sentenced prisoners were convicted with a most serious offence involving violence or the threat of violence, including homicide and related offences (10 per cent), sexual assault and related offences (11 per cent), acts intended to cause injury (assault) (14 per cent) and robbery/extortion (12 per cent). A further 13 per cent of sentenced prisoners had a most serious offence of unlawful entry with intent, and 10 per cent were serving sentences for a most serious offence involving illicit drugs.

Table 38**Sentenced prisoners, by most serious offence - 30 June 2004**

	NSW (a)	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT in ACT	ACT in NSW (a)	ACT total	Aust. (b)
Homicide and related offences	619	368	484	126	221	49	54	-	12	12	1 921
Acts intended to cause injury	1 152	217	614	61	322	69	190	15	11	26	2 640
Sexual assault and related offences	593	362	627	121	359	58	61	n.p.	n.p.	18	2 182
Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons	53	29	97	n.p.	98	9	15	n.p.	n.p.	5	307
Abduction and related offences	64	28	8	n.p.	14	-	3	n.p.	-	n.p.	121
Robbery, extortion and related offences	930	357	527	113	397	28	14	n.p.	n.p.	19	2 367
Unlawful entry with intent	900	388	471	139	415	56	58	7	12	19	2 434
Theft and related offences	460	340	154	38	180	22	18	15	12	27	1 227
Deception and related offences	238	103	192	64	53	15	6	n.p.	n.p.	5	674
Illicit drug offences	877	350	370	76	211	12	20	9	5	14	1 925
Weapons and explosive offences	66	13	5	4	5	6	n.p.	n.p.	-	n.p.	104
Property damage and environmental pollution	57	35	56	54	22	13	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	250
Public order offences	61	30	6	n.p.	24	n.p.	-	-	n.p.	n.p.	124
Road traffic and motor vehicle regulatory offences	558	105	132	21	144	13	86	14	3	17	1 073
Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations	797	266	126	144	160	24	37	8	23	31	1 562
Miscellaneous offences	33	19	210	n.p.	43	n.p.	11	3	-	3	325
Total	7 458	3 010	4 079	970	2 668	379	587	85	118	203	19 236

Source: Prisoners in Australia, 2004 (4517.0).

(a) The majority of full-time prisoners sentenced in the ACT are held in NSW prisons.

(b) The ACT in NSW figures are a subset of the NSW figures and are not separately counted in the Australian totals.

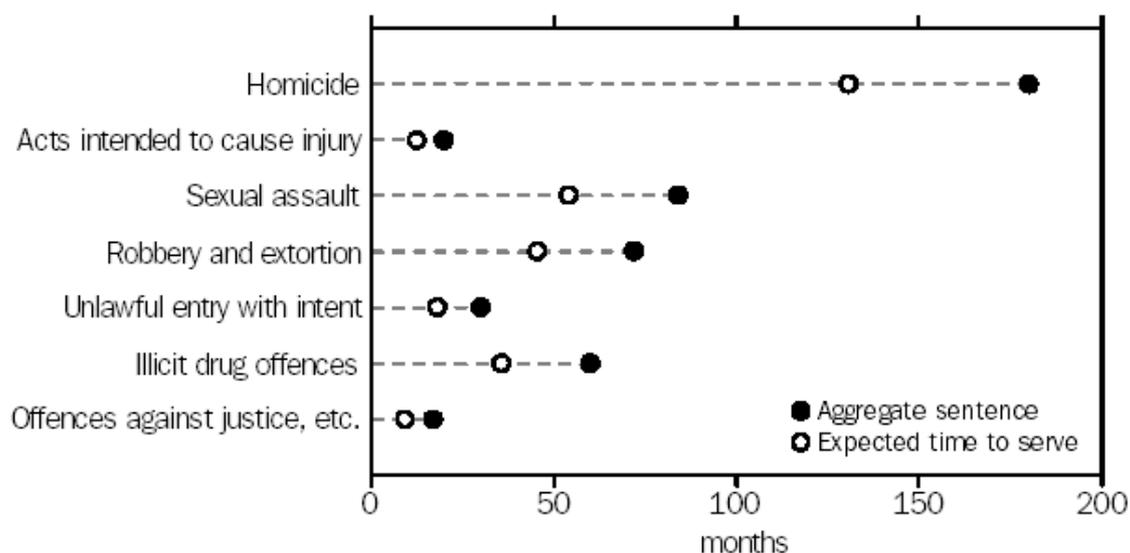
Sentence length

123. Aggregate length of sentence is a measure of the sentences imposed on an offender, sometimes taking multiple offences into account. Average sentence length excludes prisoners who receive an indeterminate type of sentence such as “life” as well as periodic detainee sentences. At 30 June 2004 the average aggregate sentence of all prisoners sentenced to a specific term was 4.9 years. Nearly one in four sentenced prisoners (23 per cent) had an aggregate sentence of 2-5 years, and prisoners with a sentence of 5-10 years comprised 22 per cent of the prisoner population.

124. The time a prisoner is expected to serve in custody depends upon the sentence originally handed down, the system of remissions and the forms of parole available. Taking into account the earliest dates for release of sentenced prisoners, the average expected time to serve at 30 June 2005 was 1.9 years.

Graph 22

Sentenced prisoners, by average sentence length (a) - 30 June 2005



(a) Prisoners with indeterminate, life and periodic detention sentences are excluded from these calculations.

Source: Prisoners in Australia, 2005 (4517.0).

Death in penal institutions

125. In 1991, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which investigated the deaths of 99 Indigenous persons in police or prison custody occurring between January 1980 and May 1989, presented its findings and recommendations. One of the outcomes was the establishment of a *National Deaths in Custody Monitoring and Research Program* at the Australian Institute of Criminology.

126. During 2004, 67 people died in all forms of custody in Australia, one fewer than for 2003. Of the 67 deaths, 13 were of Indigenous persons (with the Indigenous status of one person still to be determined). The largest number of deaths in custody recorded since 1990 was in 1997 (105), while the largest number of deaths of Indigenous persons was in 1995 (21).

Table 39

Deaths in custody

	Police		Prison		Total (a)		
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Total
1990	5	26	5	28	10	55	65
1991	5	26	8	31	13	57	70
1992	7	24	2	34	9	58	67
1993	3	28	7	42	10	71	81
1994	3	24	11	42	14	67	81
1995	4	22	17	42	21	66	87
1996	6	23	12	40	18	64	82
1997	6	23	9	67	15	90	105
1998	6	19	9	60	16	79	95
1999	6	20	13	46	19	66	85
2000	5	20	11	53	17	74	91
2001	5	26	14	42	19	68	87
2002	6	13	8	42	14	55	69
2003	7	26	10	25	17	51	68
2004	7	21	7	32	14	53	67

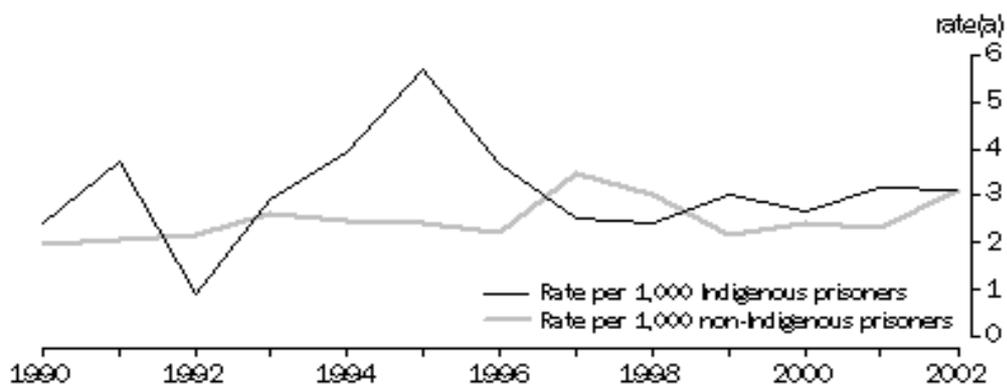
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, National Deaths in Custody database, 1990-2003.

(a) Includes deaths that occurred in custody other than police or prison custody (such as juvenile detention).

127. During the period 1990-2002, the majority of deaths (65 per cent) occurred in prison custody, while 34 per cent were in police custody - 18 per cent of all deaths in prison custody were of Indigenous prisoners. During this period, the proportion of the prison population that was Indigenous rose from 14 per cent to 20 per cent. In 1995 the crude death rate of Indigenous prisoners was more than twice that of non-Indigenous prisoners (5.7 and 2.4 respectively). However, in 2002, both the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous death rates were 3.1 per 1,000 prisoners. The death rate of non-Indigenous prisoners was higher than that of Indigenous prisoners in 1992, 1997 and 1998.

Graph 23

Prison custody death rates (a)



(a) Death rates are calculated using the Prisoner Census conducted on 30 June each year.
Source: *Prisoners in Australia* (4517.0); Australian Institute of Criminology, *National Deaths in Custody database, 1990–2002*.

The death penalty

128. The death penalty was outlawed in Australia for Commonwealth offences in 1973 and was formally abolished in all States and Territories by 1985.
