

## Health: life expectancy

Historically, Indigenous Australians have not enjoyed the same rights as non-Indigenous Australians. For example:

- many Indigenous Australians were driven off their traditional lands
- children were removed from their families
- Indigenous people were denied the right to vote
- until 1967, many Indigenous Australians were not entitled to equal pay with other Australians for their work.

The emotional and physical trauma of these events continues to affect Indigenous people today.

### Indigenous population

There were almost 517,200 Indigenous people living in Australia in 2006. Indigenous people make up 2.5% of the total Australian population. More than one-quarter of Indigenous people live in each of New South Wales and Queensland. The Northern Territory has the highest percentage of Indigenous people among its population.

Almost 32 out of 100 Indigenous people live in major cities, 21 out of 100 in inner regional areas, 22 out of 100 in outer regional areas, 10 out of 100 in remote areas, and 16 out of 100 in very remote areas.

### Health and life expectancy

Indigenous people are much more likely to die before they are old than people in the rest of the Australian population. An Indigenous male could be expected to live to 59 years, which is around 17 years less than a male in the total population (who could expect to live 76.5 years). An Indigenous female could be expected to live to 65 years, which is around 17 years less than a woman in the total population (82 years).

Indigenous babies are more likely to die in their first year than non-Indigenous babies. In 2004-2006, the infant mortality rate for Indigenous babies was highest in the Northern Territory (almost 17 babies died out of 1,000 births) and Western Australia (12 babies died out of 1,000 births). The rate for the total Australian population was 5 deaths per 1,000 births.

Disease of the middle ear or 'otitis media' (glue ear) is almost three times more common for Indigenous people than for non-Indigenous people. If not treated early, this can cause permanent hearing loss that limits life opportunities, particularly in education and in employment.

**Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. Governments should help families who cannot afford to provide this. (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 27)**

Life expectancy in years

