



# People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background



## In SESLHD

### Aboriginal people represent 1% of the District's population.

The number of people identifying as Aboriginal grew by 31% between the 2011 and 2016 Census from 6,312 to 8,281 people.<sup>1,2,3</sup> However, this may under represent the Aboriginal community as post census surveys have highlighted that up to 22% of Aboriginal people may not have identified as such, many to avoid racism and discrimination.<sup>4,5</sup>

The LGAs with the largest Aboriginal communities are **Sutherland** (30% of the Aboriginal population), **Randwick** (27%) and **Botany Bay** (10%).<sup>2</sup>

## Population Profile

**The age profile is significantly younger in the Aboriginal population, with a median age of 25-26 years for most LGAs compared to 35-40 years for the total population.**<sup>3</sup>

This is due to a combination of higher birth rates, lower life expectancy and higher rates of premature death among Aboriginal people.<sup>6</sup>

**In SESLHD, 1.8% of all children born are identified as Aboriginal,** however, evidence suggests that there is a substantial level of under-reporting of Aboriginality in the Perinatal Data Collections.<sup>2</sup> Consideration must be given to a history of child removals through the Stolen Generations and how an increasing rate of child removal for Aboriginal mothers has contributed to an under-reporting of Aboriginality for both mothers and babies.

## Issues and challenges

Aboriginal people often experience multiple disadvantages. In 2016, a higher percentage of Aboriginal people over the age of 15 years (38%) reported having low income compared with 34% of non-Aboriginal people.<sup>2</sup> Aboriginal people are also over-represented in the homeless population with 11% of people experiencing homelessness in SESLHD. Aboriginal people represent 37% of the carer population.<sup>2</sup>

The rate of hospitalisations for all causes in 2015-16 among Aboriginal people in SESLHD was 29% higher than in non-Aboriginal people.<sup>8</sup> Aboriginal people in SESLHD are hospitalised at higher rates than non-Aboriginal people for:

- circulatory disease;
- endocrine disease;
- mental health disorders; and
- respiratory disease.

Aboriginal people are also over-represented for potentially preventable hospitalisations; up to 50% higher for chronic conditions compared to the non-Aboriginal population.<sup>8</sup> The rates of hospitalisation for all causes is increasing at a higher rate in Aboriginal people than in non-Aboriginal.<sup>8</sup>

1. Within NSW Health, the term 'Aboriginal' is generally used in preference to 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander', in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of the land.

2. ABS, 2016 ABS Census of Population and Housing.

3. Excluding not stated

4. Post enumeration survey data. Harding, S; Jackson Pulver, L; McDonald, P; Trewin, D; Voss, A (2017). Report on the quality of 2016 Census Data. Retrieved from: <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/Home/Independent+Assurance+Panel>.

5. Moran, A. (2017) Census 2016: Indigenous population could have been undercounted again. webpage article <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-28/concerns-over-undercount-of-indigenous-population-in-census/8660972>

6. Regarding the median age at death.

7. SESLHD, Draft Homelessness Health Strategy and Action Plan (2018).

8. Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence, HealthStats NSW (2006-7 to 2015-16).