

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND**  
**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO**  
**2011-12 Additional Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number:** 7

**Question No:** 298

**Topic:** Closing the Gap

**Hansard Page:** 17/02/2012 - CA12

**Senator Scullion** asked:

Can you provide an indication of those areas where you are unable to provide information about differences for outcomes for Indigenous people in remote areas and their outcomes in metropolitan areas at the moment and what the mechanisms or jurisdictional issues are?

Could you also outline the mechanisms to ameliorate whatever the challenges are?

**Answer:**

It is desirable to measure progress against all of the six closing the gap targets by remoteness area. In most instances this is already possible.

Estimates of Indigenous life expectancy are available for most jurisdictions (NSW, Qld, WA and the NT). Estimates (based in part on the Census) for remaining jurisdictions (Vic, SA, Tasmania & ACT) are not produced due to the small numbers of Indigenous deaths reported in these jurisdictions. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) currently does not produce any estimates of mortality or life expectancy by remoteness area, however the ABS is exploring the feasibility of doing so at a national level.

Data for the target of halving the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children aged under five are available at the national level and for some jurisdictions. Data at a national level are available annually.

Data on under-5 Indigenous mortality are not published for all jurisdictions. This is not a data quality issue it is rather an issue surrounding volatility with small numbers. Under-5 Indigenous mortality data for the jurisdictions for which data are published (NSW, Queensland, WA, South Australia and the NT) are provided for 5 year periods for reporting under the National Indigenous Reform Agreement due to small numbers.

There are no current estimates of Indigenous under-5 mortality by remoteness area. While small numbers may preclude the production of reliable estimates, the ABS are currently investigating whether it would be possible to produce estimates of Indigenous under-5 mortality by remoteness area.

Data on mortality is the responsibility of the States and Territories.

The Preschool Census already provides some data on the participation of Indigenous children in preschool by remoteness area. A new National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection is being developed. More detailed and robust data will be available this year (for the 2011 collection period). This new collection will include data on participation in early childhood education for Indigenous children by remoteness area. The new collection will provide more comprehensive data.

Data from the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) for the target to halve the gap for Indigenous children in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade are already available by remoteness area.

Data for the target to halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020 are already available from the census by remoteness area.

To support reporting against the year 12 or equivalent attainment target, data on school attendance for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are also provided to the COAG Reform Council. Data on school attendance for full-time students in Years 1-10 are sourced to the National Schools Attendance Collection. Data on school attendance are the responsibility of State and Territory Governments.

The geographic location of schools and student attendance are reported at school level on the My School website.

ACARA is working with State and Territory governments toward greater standardisation of attendance data. This should, in future, enable reporting of more fully comparable student attendance indicators at school, jurisdiction and national levels of aggregation. The NT Government already publishes data on school attendance rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by remoteness area.

Data for the target to halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade are already available and published by remoteness area.