

Change in social indicators for East Kimberley Aboriginal people (2001 - 2016)

A Report to Traditional Owners of the Argyle Participation Agreement and Empowered Communities East Kimberley

Key messages



More people in mainstream employment, more on higher incomes, additional housing, increased school retention, fewer avoidable deaths.

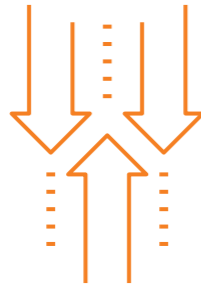
However, change is often mixed with either increase or decline in the employment rate (depending on definition), more people on higher incomes but poverty rates high and increasing, no change in low school attendance rates, less apparent housing need but continued high occupancy in many places and decline in data on housing stock, significant decline in mortality and morbidity for some conditions but increase for others, reduced but still very high arrest rates.

Population

Aboriginal population

6,000+

Low growth - little change since 2001
Growth in working-age but getting older:
8% over 55 years in 2001; 17% by 2031
Higher proportion in three main towns



Participation in regional labour market

Prominence of mining employment in decline.

Participation more diverse. However, Aboriginal business and community organisation sector remains statistically invisible even though they likely provide for more Aboriginal employment in the region than the three tiers of government combined.



Education, employment and training

The proportion of students attending for more than 90% of days is low and unchanged at around **25% in primary** schools and has declined from 30% to just **10% in secondary**.

27% Less than one-third of the Aboriginal working age population is employed

65% Two-thirds of adults are not engaged in employment, education or training

Of the total student enrolment, **7% are above NMS** (National Minimum Standards) in literacy and numeracy, **17% are at NMS** and **33% are below**. Almost half of students (**43%**) **did not participate** in NAPLAN.

Many of those not engaged (1600) were registered with CDP (data from other parts of the report indicate that factors such as ill-health, disability, caring duties, arrest and incarceration all contribute to low participation).

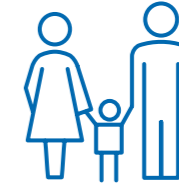
At its peak, ADM employed **15% of Aboriginal male workers** and **40% of all Aboriginal apprentices** in the region.

To keep the Aboriginal employment rate at its current (low) level for those aged 25-54 the existing stock of those employed (790) would need to be retained and a **further 14 jobs would need to be added each year over the next 10 years**.

Housing

No single authoritative or comprehensive database exists on Aboriginal housing stock in the region. Data for small localities is scarce or non-existent.

The vast majority of Aboriginal households (almost 90%) **remain in rented accommodation** despite a **slight rise in home ownership**.



The percentage of Aboriginal dwellings deemed to be **overcrowded has reduced** (29% in 2016) but the **true level is unknown due to census undercount**.

Income

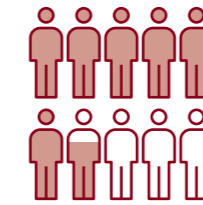


Median Aboriginal personal and household incomes have fallen further behind others in the region since 2001.

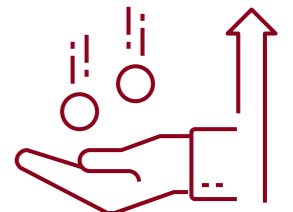
90%

90% of Aboriginal personal incomes in Halls Creek LGA are now **in the lowest regional income quintile** compared to 70% in Shire of Wyndam - East Kimberley (SWEK).

Since 2001, the Aboriginal population resident in low income households increased from 61% to 67% in Halls Creek and remained unchanged at 47% in SWEK. The **overall household poverty rate increased from 50% in 2011 to 53%** in 2016.



Aboriginal incomes from employment have increased in real terms by 10% in Halls Creek and 24% in SWEK. **Real incomes from social security payments remained static** leading to widening income disparity.



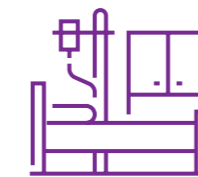
Health

Measurable improvement in some outcomes but all-cause mortality and morbidity rates have not significantly declined. High vulnerability to COVID-19 due to prevalence of circulatory, respiratory and other co-morbidities.



Aboriginal people consistently **account for almost 80% of those in the East Kimberley with a disability** despite comprising only **55% of the population**.

Leading causes of mortality have remained unchanged and are dominated by those that are potentially avoidable. Intentional self-harm is now the third leading cause of death.



FASD hospitalisations are relatively high in the East Kimberley (currently **10% of the State total**) but this has fallen.

It is estimated that **830 Aboriginal people provide care for others** who are incapacitated. A growing proportion of these are younger adults.



Crime and justice

Virtually all cases brought to the Children's Court in the East Kimberley refer to Aboriginal defendants. In the Magistrate's Court it is 92%. Almost 10% of the Aboriginal prison population in WA is from the East Kimberley.



19%

In 2016, 19% of Aboriginal adult males were in custody or subject to a Community Based Order. This proportion has declined since 2006.

Feeding into this are rates of arrest that are persistently high involving **40%** of all males over 10 years of age and **13%** of all females. Young adult rates are even higher. Assaults are consistently the most commonly reported offence.

