



# Minute

**File reference:** 16/895

**To:** Andrew Gately, First Assistant Commissioner

**Through:** Robyn Legg, Assistant Commissioner, Roll Management and Community Engagement

5 [REDACTED] Delyse Paliaga, Director, Roll Program and Community Engagement

**CC:** Anna Stewart, Assistant Commissioner, Operations Branch

Andrew Trainer, Director, Business Intelligence, Research and Electoral Integrity

**Subject: For action – Using DHS Indigeneity data to enhance Indigenous enrolment**

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## Purpose

To advise you of recent analysis undertaken with regard to Indigenous enrolment, seek your approval to develop some options for future targeted enrolment activities and propose some longer term options to enhance both Indigenous and non-Indigenous enrolment in the future.

## Background

In July 2017 the AEC received its initial annual Centrelink data file to support the 2017 Annual Roll Integrity Review. The data provided included details of all clients 18 years of age or older who had transacted with Centrelink in the 2016-17 financial year. The data includes an Indigeneity indicator which is provided to DHS voluntarily by individual applicants.

This data is provided to the AEC to help assess the completeness and accuracy of the electoral Roll as part of the Annual Roll Integrity Review (ARIR) and will be provided to the AEC annually each July. It is also available for use for roll maintenance via elector contact where appropriate. The use agreement with DHS prohibits the disclosure of personal information to Joint Roll Partners.

The data received in July 2017 included around 7.5 million records, of which around 320,000 records included a positive Indigenous indicator. When matched against the Roll we identified around 213,000 Indigenous Australians were enrolled while the remaining 107,609 could not be matched with an elector on the Roll. The number of non-enrolled Indigenous Australians was reduced to 98,494 when the data was subsequently updated with enrolments and deaths that occurred since the receipt of the data.

Approximately 33,000 (30 per cent) of the identified non-enrolled Indigenous Australians are between 18 and 24 years of age.

The Roll Management and Community Engagement (RMCE) draft community and indigenous engagement strategy identifies the development of data based approaches to enhancing Indigenous

enrolment and the use of this Centrelink data presents an opportunity to drive more targeted and effective Indigenous enrolment strategies.

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### Updated Indigenous enrolment estimates

The availability of the Indigenous indicator in the Centrelink data has enabled the Business Intelligence, Research and Electoral Integrity Section (BIREI) to review and update estimates of Indigenous enrolment and turnout. Details of the methodology applied in formulating these estimates are at [Attachment A](#).

The revised estimates for Indigenous participation calculated by BIREI can be applied to ABS estimates of Indigenous adult population. The preliminary calculations are set out in the table below.

It should be noted that these estimates are preliminary, based on one year of Centrelink data and a model which is still developing. On receipt of the 2017-18 Centrelink data expected in mid-July 2018, BIREI will be better placed to more accurately model this data. While we do not expect the broad direction of the data to change, we do anticipate changes in rates will arise. On this basis we do not recommend these estimates being released publically or to joint roll partners until the updated model is developed. We expect this updated model to be available around mid-August 2018.

The Centrelink data also provides an opportunity to estimate the proportion of Indigenous Australians not enrolled who are represented in the Centrelink data. This is also summarised in the table below.

State	Indigenous voting age population as at 30 June 2017	Estimated enrolled as at 30 June 2017	Estimated 'missing' as at 30 June 2017	Indigenous in Centrelink data but not on Roll	Proportion of Indigenous 'missing' included in the Centrelink data
NSW	160,728	138,123	22,605	18,550	82%
VIC	35,442	26,101	9,341	6,412	69%
QLD	131,700	92,129	39,571	31,416	79%
WA	62,731	39,364	23,367	18,345	79%
SA	25,783	17,507	8,276	6,748	82%
TAS	17,517	14,583	2,934	2,024	69%
ACT	4,828	3,680	1,148	645	56%
NT	49,419	33,144	16,275	14,354	88%
National	488,148	364,631	123,517	98,494	80%

i think this means  
who are in centrelink  
data?

### Locating the Indigenous 'missing'

The inclusion of a recent address in the Centrelink data for those Indigenous Australians who are not enrolled enables us to develop targeted activities grouped by geographic boundaries. For example the top five locations for non-enrolled Indigenous Australians on the Centrelink data for the NT are Alice Springs (1,191) Galiwinku (580), Tennant Creek (566), Katherine (538) and Maningrida (494). The top five for WA are Broome (1,181), Halls Creek (926), Derby (890), Fitzroy Crossing (784) and Kununurra (718) (around 4,500 for the Kimberley region).

The largest locality for Queensland is Yarrabah (654), for NSW is Dubbo (481), for Victoria is Mildura (366), for SA is Port Augusta (515) for Tasmania is Glenorchy (102) and for the ACT is Kambah (41).

The Alice Springs data is of particular importance as the NT Electoral Commissioner has raised concerns with RMCE and via NT estimates about NT enrolment, particularly with regard to Alice Springs and has recently sent emails to electors in Alice Springs as part of his review activities preceding the NT Legislative Assembly redistribution scheduled for early 2019.

As well as name and address data, the Centrelink data includes mobile phone and email addresses for around 80 per cent of identified Indigenous clients who are not on the Roll.

### **NT Remote Community Engagement Project**

RMCE also notes that work to try and contact this cohort will complement work currently underway as part of the NT Remote Community Engagement Project being co-ordinated from the Queensland office. Once the RMCE receives and processes the 2017-18 Centrelink data file, we propose to use that data to assist the project in identifying non-enrolled Indigenous Australians in the NT.

### **Options to Enhance Indigenous Enrolment**

In order to make effective and efficient use of the Centrelink data and to test its veracity and our underlying assumptions about its usefulness, RMCE propose to:

- Enhance the targeting of Federal Direct Enrolment and Update using enhanced Australia Post mailing data and Centrelink non-enrolled elector data and using mobile phone and emails to target matched non-enrolled Indigenous Australians. This will be discussed in further detail in a subsequent Minute.
- Implement a cross discipline approach to targeting non-enrolled Indigenous electors in Alice Springs. This approach is discussed in more detail below.

Alice Springs data

The 2017 Centrelink data identifies the names and addresses of 1,191 Indigenous Australians within the locality of Alice Springs who are not enrolled. A map displaying where these Indigenous Australians reside is at Attachment B.

Around 81 per cent (967) of these Indigenous Australians have either mobile phone numbers, email addresses or both recorded in the Centrelink data.

While this data is over 12 months old, refreshed data from Centrelink will be received in mid-July and this data is expected to identify a similar number of non-enrolled Indigenous Australians within the Alice Springs precinct. This additional data will also enable us to better understand the mobility of Indigenous Australians based on address changes in the 2017-18 data.

RMCE propose to develop a pilot program of field activity aimed at leveraging the Centrelink data received in July 2018 to enhance Indigenous enrolment in Alice Springs. This would be undertaken as a joint activity with RMCE, the Queensland office and the NT Electoral Commission.

As RMCE has the base data, direct measurement of the success of this approach will be possible.

Longer term policy options

As a longer term option, consideration could be given to legislating a link between receipt of government payments and enrolment. Such a link could be marketed as part of a person's mutual obligation and would see a significant increase in the enrolment numbers for Indigenous and youth cohorts. Under this scenario it may also be possible to outsource the processing of the enrolment application for welfare recipients to Centrelink.

*Noted  
at stage  
1  
don't*

*See this as  
a likely  
policy direction*

*Noted - more information in due course please*

In the past work was undertaken with the Australian Taxation Office to include application for enrolment as part of the Tax File Number application process, however, this work lapsed due to cost impediments. Consideration could be given to revisit this discussion with the ATO.

RMCE has commenced discussions with the Department of Health to access Medicare data and the potential for the use of the Medicare number as a form of evidence of identity. If successful, this approach would enable Indigenous Australians without a passport or driver licence to enrol and update their details directly via the Online Enrolment Service.

*Noted .*

## Consultation

This Minute has been prepared in consultation with BIREI.

## Recommendations

That you:

1. Note the updated Indigenous enrolment 19 [REDACTED] estimates and agree for these to be provided to joint roll partners following the revision of the model in August 2018.
2. Approve the application of Centrelink Indigenous data to support the NT Remote Community Engagement Project.
3. Approve the development of a pilot field based Indigenous enrolment exercise in Alice Springs involving the NT Electoral Commission.
4. Consider the suggested long term options to further enhance enrolment outcomes.

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1.  Noted  Discuss
2.  Approved  Not approved  Discuss
3.  Approved  Not approved  Discuss
4.  Comments provided  Discuss

Guy Lewis

Assistant Director, Roll Management Design  
Roll Program and Community Engagement  
Section

2 July 2018

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Andrew Gately  
First Assistant Commissioner

*22/7/18*

## Indigenous Franchise KPIs using Centrelink data

Business Intelligence, Research and Electoral Integrity Section - 8 May 2018.

### Background

As Australia's federal electoral roll does not have a personal Indigenous identifier, estimating the **enrolment**, **turnout** and **formality** rates for Indigenous persons is problematic. Having these key franchise KPIs for the Indigenous population is important for *Closing the Gap* purposes and the AEC's focus on how the franchise could be better delivered.

In 2014 the AEC's Research Section commenced indirect estimation of these figures, using a regression model of the relationship between the Indigenous population and each of the three franchise KPIs at a small area level, such as polling place catchment or the ABS' SA2 geography. While the models did not fit the data particularly well, the resulting Indigenous **enrolment**, **turnout** and **formality** rates were statistically based on real data, rather than anecdote.

The resulting enrolment and turnout rates in particular were alarmingly low, and hopefully represented a worst case picture.

### Centrelink Data

Around the same time, the Research Section informally proposed that person-level Centrelink extracts that the AEC received occasionally for other Roll validation work, could perhaps be extended to include Centrelink's Indigenous indicator. This came to fruition in 2017<sup>1</sup>.

As part of the Annual Roll Integrity Review (ARIR), the person-level matching between the Roll and Centrelink now included Centrelink's Indigenous indicator. However as Centrelink customers represent only around half of the Roll, the matching (even if perfect) would be far from assigning all enrolments an Indigenous flag. Nevertheless, for the first time the AEC has a very large number of enrolled persons, over 6 million, with an explicit Indigenous status.

### Data Limitations

These modelled national estimates contain many assumptions and cannot be ascribed to any particular sub-national location. The absence of an Indigenous identifier on the Federal Roll has been partially supplemented with Centrelink information. The 2016 figures align to the 2016 Federal election. These figures can be footnoted "unofficial internal AEC modelling".

#### 1. Enrolment Rate

The enrolment rate, even for all persons regardless of indigeneity, is difficult to calculate reliably due to conceptual, collection and methodological differences between the Roll (numerator) and the ABS-based enrolment-eligible population (denominator, "EEP"). In the case of the Indigenous population these problems are magnified by having no Indigenous identifier on the Roll and less reliable estimates of Indigenous EEP.

<sup>1</sup> Acknowledge with appreciation the work of the former Electoral Integrity Unit and the IT Branch.

However, matching the Roll to Centrelink data allows a more direct method of estimating the Indigenous enrolment rate. It is still subject to quite courageous assumptions, but as fewer are required it likely represents an improved approach. In summary:

- For all Centrelink customers with an identified Indigenous or non-Indigenous status, calculate the proportion on the Roll. This is the raw enrolment rate of Centrelink clients.
- Apply the raw enrolment rates to Indigenous and non-Indigenous EEP benchmarks<sup>2</sup> to yield draft Indigenous status enrolments. Calculate the factor to scale these to the overall enrolments used in the AEC's published enrolment rates.
- Apply the adjustment factor to the draft Indigenous status enrolments, then recalculate the enrolment rates against the EEP benchmarks.
- This process can be done at the State level, though results will have lower reliability.

**Note:** While this method avoids indirectly modelling Indigenous enrolment rates via geographic association, it does assume that any *bias* in Centrelink clients being enrolled is equal for Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and that there are no substantive Indigenous-status biases inherent in the Roll-to-Centrelink person matching.

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<sup>2</sup> Indigenous benchmarks use ABS projected adult populations; non-Indigenous are then the residual with published EEP.

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## Conclusion and Results

The Centrelink client file with Indigenous indicator newly available to the AEC has presented an excellent opportunity, via matching to the Roll 19 [REDACTED], to improve estimation of Indigenous franchise KPIs.

While the results are subject to a number of non-trivial assumptions, the more direct estimation methods lead to a higher likelihood of robust results. The figures should nevertheless still be regarded as *indicative* only.

### Indigenous Franchise KPIs

KPI	Indigenous	Non - Indigenous	Difference
Enrolment (2017)	75%	96%	21%

19 [REDACTED]

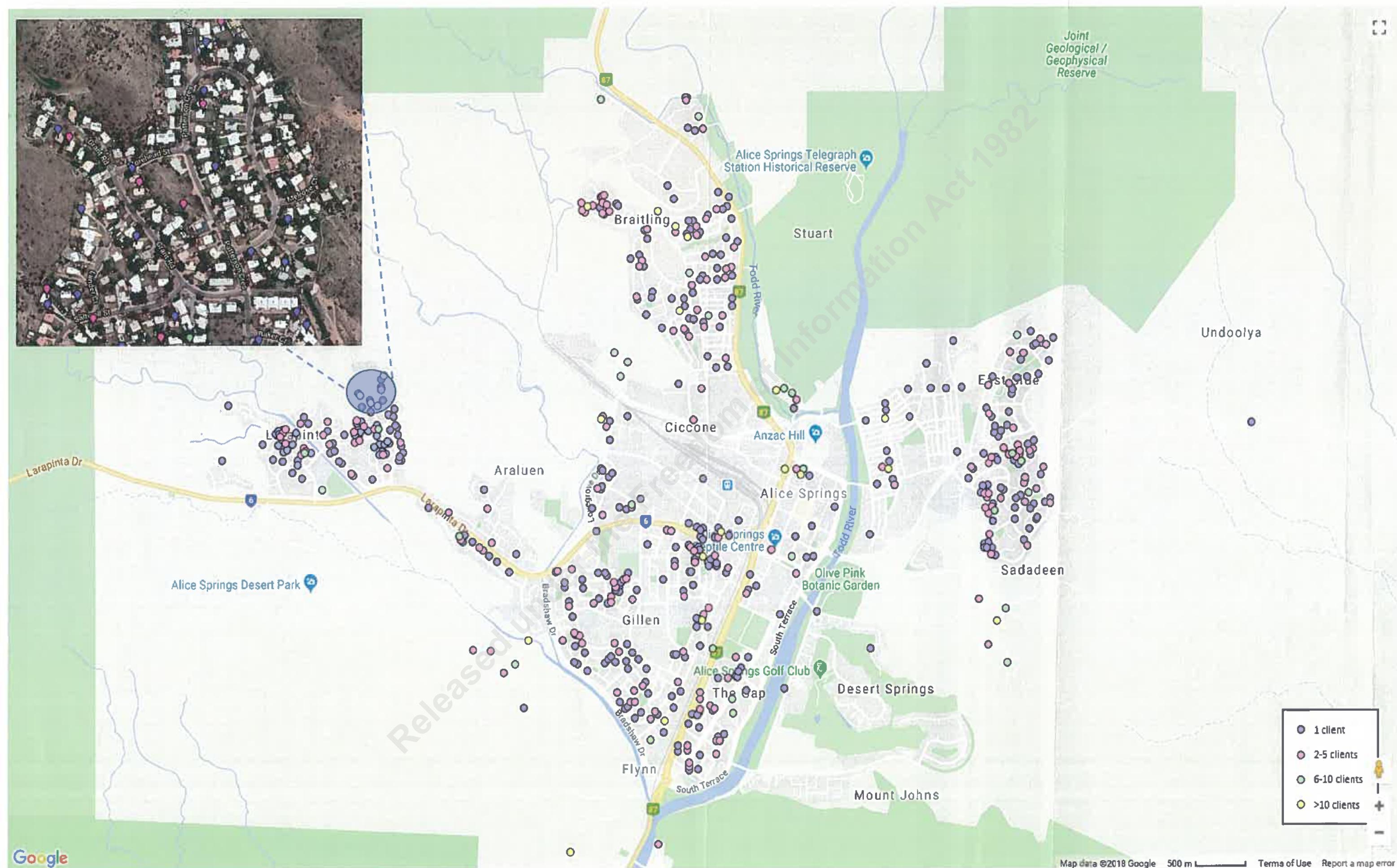
<sup>^</sup> enrolment 19 [REDACTED]

### Indigenous Enrolment - 30 June 2017

State/Territory	Indigenous	Non - Indigenous	Difference
NSW	86%	98%	12%
VIC	74%	96%	22%
QLD	70%	95%	25%
WA	63%	96%	33%
SA	68%	97%	29%
TAS	83%	97%	14%
ACT	76%	99%	23%
NT	67%	91%	24%
National	75%	96%	21%

**Indigenous Turnout - 2016 federal election**

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>Indigenous</b>	<b>Non - Indigenous</b>	<b>Difference</b>
NSW	76%	92%	16%
VIC	69%	91%	22%
QLD	74%	92%	18%
WA	52%	90%	38%
SA	63%	92%	29%
TAS	86%	94%	8%
ACT	74%	92%	18%
NT	66%	88%	22%
National	70%	92%	22%



## **REDACTION CODES**

- 1 Personal Information (name) redacted.
- 2 Personal Information (date of birth) redacted.
- 3 Personal Information (photograph) redacted
- 4 Personal Information (facsimile of signature) redacted.
- 5 Personal Information (facsimile of manuscript initialling) redacted.
- 6 Personal Information (Individual's address) redacted.
- 7 Personal Information (individual's telephone number) redacted.
- 8 Personal Information (individual's opinion) redacted.
- 9 Personal Information (opinion about individual) redacted.
- 10 Personal Information (employment history) redacted.
- 11 Personal Information (qualifications) redacted.
- 12 Personal Information (health) redacted.
- 13 Personal Information (identifying individual) redacted.
- 14 Business information (Bank Account details) redacted.
- 15 Business information (Billing Account details) redacted.
- 16 Business information (internal operations) redacted.
- 17 Legal Professional Communication redacted.
- 18 Deliberative material redacted.
- 19 Irrelevant material redacted.
- 20 Electoral Roll material redacted.
- 21 Tests, examinations or audits material redacted.
- 22 Management or assessment of personnel material redacted.
- 23 Proper and efficient conduct of the operations of AEC material redacted.
- 24 Lawful methods or procedures for preventing, detecting, investigating, or dealing with matters arising out of, breaches or evasions of the law.
- 25 Trade Secrets.
- 26 Commercial valuable information.
- 27 Financial interests of the Commonwealth.
- 28 Property interests of the Commonwealth.