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## Health and Welfare Statistics on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

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### **Abstract**

The ABS has identified the urgent need for good quality data on Australia's Indigenous population, and has taken up the challenge to produce information that can help to monitor national progress in reducing the social and economic disadvantage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There is also a continuing need for statistics on this population group to inform public policy and support government programs in, for example, the important areas of health, housing arrangements and access to and use made of government services. To assist in meeting these needs, the ABS is implementing a broad work program for providing regular statistical information in the Indigenous population across all areas of social concern.

The effort required to achieve this goal includes substantial improvement in the quality and completeness of administrative data sources, improvements in census counts for the Indigenous population and the productions of relevant and reliable survey statistics. An area of high priority in the development of Indigenous statistics is the collection and reporting of data on health and welfare.

The paper will provide a range of statistics that are currently available to describe the health and welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The data will include recently released information on the morbidity and mortality of the Indigenous population, as well as other public health issues such as housing infrastructure, and will address both the utility and limitations of these data. Progress towards improving the collection of data in health and vital statistics will also be outlined.