

6. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS AND BABIES

Reporting of Aboriginality

Maternal Aboriginality is under-reported on the MDC. One method of assessing the extent of under-reporting and monitoring changes over time is to compare the reporting of maternal Aboriginality to the MDC with reporting of maternal Aboriginality on birth registrations held by the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Using capture-recapture methods, an estimate of the total number of babies born to Aboriginal mothers was obtained and compared with the number of babies born to Aboriginal mothers as reported to the MDC. The method used here is described in Chapter 3 (page 13).

The percentage of births to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers reported to the MDC ranged from 65 to 70 per cent between 2001 and 2004. Reporting varied markedly between area health services, ranging from 43.6 per cent in the Sydney South West Area to 91.1 per cent in the Greater Western Area in 2004 (Table 33, Figure 2).

Under-reporting of Aboriginality on the MDC means that numbers of births presented in this chapter should be interpreted with caution. The total number of babies born to Aboriginal mothers in 2004 is estimated to be 3,396, about one and one third times higher than the number reported to the MDC.

TABLE 33

BIRTHS TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS BY SOURCE OF BIRTH REPORT, YEAR OF BIRTH AND HEALTH AREA OF HOSPITAL, NSW 2001–2004[#]

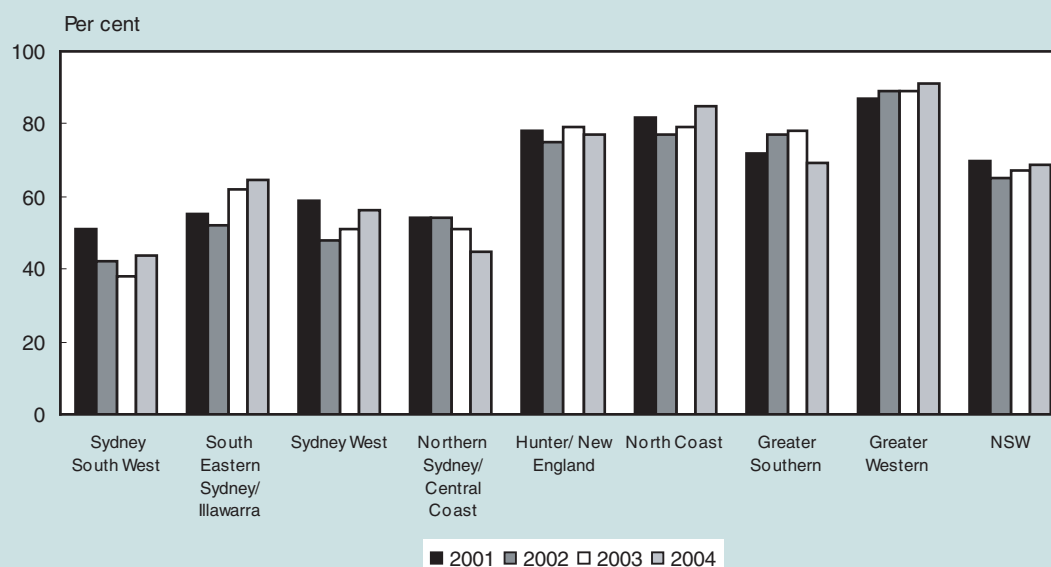
Year– Area health service of hospital	MDC births No.	RBDM births No.	Births reported to both MDC–RBDM No.	Total estimated Aboriginal births No.	Estimated Aboriginal births reported to MDC %	95% confidence interval of estimated births reported
2001						
Sydney South West	192	272	138	378	50.8	45.7–55.8
South Eastern Sydney & Illawarra	156	182	100	283	55.0	49.2–60.8
Sydney West	223	253	148	381	58.6	53.6–63.5
Northern Sydney & Central Coast	75	97	52	140	53.8	45.5–62.0
Hunter & New England	486	434	339	622	78.1	74.9–81.4
North Coast	336	197	162	408	82.3	78.6–86.0
Greater Southern	178	140	101	246	72.2	66.6–77.8
Greater Western	490	321	278	566	86.6	83.8–89.4
NSW	2136	1896	1318	3072	69.5	67.9–71.1
2002						
Sydney South West	166	269	113	395	42.1	37.2–46.9
South Eastern Sydney & Illawarra	179	203	106	342	52.3	47.0–57.6
Sydney West	224	299	142	471	47.6	43.0–52.1
Northern Sydney & Central Coast	89	105	56	166	53.5	45.9–61.1
Hunter & New England	534	421	317	709	75.3	72.1–78.5
North Coast	336	197	152	435	77.2	73.3–81.2
Greater Southern	165	117	90	214	77.0	71.4–82.6
Greater Western	489	303	268	553	88.5	85.8–91.1
NSW	2182	1914	1244	3357	65.0	63.4–66.6
2003						
Sydney South West	174	275	103	463	37.5	33.1–42.0
South Eastern Sydney & Illawarra	180	180	111	292	61.7	56.2–67.3
Sydney West	242	276	140	476	50.8	46.3–55.3
Northern Sydney & Central Coast	82	110	56	161	51.0	43.3–58.8
Hunter & New England	535	426	336	678	78.9	75.8–82.0
North Coast	319	181	142	406	78.5	74.5–82.5
Greater Southern	176	115	89	227	77.5	72.1–82.9
Greater Western	482	291	260	539	89.4	86.8–92.0
NSW	2190	1854	1237	3282	66.7	65.1–68.3
2004						
Sydney South West	174	280	122	399	43.6	38.8–48.5
South Eastern Sydney & Illawarra	230	214	138	356	64.6	59.6–69.5
Sydney West	259	306	172	460	56.3	51.7–60.8
Northern Sydney & Central Coast	93	114	51	207	45.0	38.2–51.7
Hunter & New England	528	473	364	686	77.0	73.8–80.1
North Coast	393	257	218	463	84.9	81.6–88.1
Greater Southern	187	157	109	269	69.5	64.0–75.0
Greater Western	476	302	275	523	91.1	88.6–93.5
NSW	2340	2103	1449	3396	68.9	67.4–70.5

Source: Linked NSW Midwives Data Collection and Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages birth registration data.

[#] Births where the hospital of birth was not reported, or where the birth occurred other than in hospital, were excluded.

FIGURE 2

LEVEL OF REPORTING OF ABORIGINALITY TO THE NSW MIDWIVES DATA COLLECTION BY YEAR OF BIRTH AND HEALTH AREA OF HOSPITAL, NSW 2001–2004#



Source: Linked NSW Midwives Data Collection and Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages birth registration data.
Births where the hospital of birth was not reported or where the birth occurred other than in hospital were excluded.

Information on paternal Aboriginality is not collected by the MDC, but is reported to the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Of the 85,514 births registered for residents of NSW in 2004, 3,533 (4.1 per cent) were reported to have an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander mother or father (Table 34). For 1,243 babies, the mother was reported to be non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and the father was reported to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. There are therefore a substantial number of babies with non-indigenous mothers and indigenous fathers who are not represented in the numbers reported in this chapter.

TABLE 34

BIRTH REGISTRATIONS BY MATERNAL AND PATERNAL INDIGENOUS STATUS, NSW 2004#

Mother#	Father	No.	%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	738	0.9
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1552	1.8
Non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1243	1.5
Non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	81981	95.9
TOTAL	TOTAL	85514	100.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics birth registration data (HOIST), Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.
Births registered among NSW residents. Births where indigenous status was not stated were classified as non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Trends in births

In 2005, 2,376 babies were born to Aboriginal mothers, 31 babies were born to Torres Strait Islander mothers and 100 babies were born to mothers of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background (Table 35).

TABLE 35

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS AND BABIES BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, NSW 2001–2005#

Plurality	2001		2002		Year 2003		2004		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Pregnancies										
Aboriginal	1988	94.2	2041	94.7	2014	93.2	2161	93.6	2347	94.9
Torres Strait Islander	40	1.9	25	1.2	35	1.6	48	2.1	30	1.2
Both Aboriginal and TSI	82	3.9	89	4.1	112	5.2	99	4.3	97	3.9
TOTAL	2110	100.0	2155	100.0	2161	100.0	2308	100.0	2474	100.0
Births										
Aboriginal	2014	94.2	2069	94.8	2039	93.1	2184	93.6	2376	94.8
Torres Strait Islander	42	2.0	25	1.1	37	1.7	48	2.1	31	1.2
Both Aboriginal and TSI	82	3.8	89	4.1	114	5.2	101	4.3	100	4.0
TOTAL	2138	100.0	2183	100.0	2190	100.0	2333	100.0	2507	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown.

Plurality

Between 2001 and 2005, the reported number of babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers increased from 2,138 to 2,507 (Table 36), representing 2.5 and 2.8 per cent respectively of all babies born in NSW. Multiple pregnancies (twins, triplets etc.) were reported for about one per cent of mothers.

TABLE 36

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS AND BABIES BY PLURALITY, NSW 2001–2005#

Plurality	2001		2002		Year 2003		2004		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Pregnancies										
Singleton	2082	98.7	2127	98.7	2134	98.8	2283	98.9	2443	98.7
Twins	28	1.3	28	1.3	26	1.2	25	1.1	29	1.2
Triplets	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.1
TOTAL	2110	100.0	2155	100.0	2161	100.0	2308	100.0	2474	100.0
Births										
Singleton	2082	97.4	2127	97.4	2134	97.4	2283	97.9	2443	97.4
Twins	56	2.6	56	2.6	53	2.4	50	2.1	58	2.3
Triplets	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	0.1	0	0.0	6	0.2
TOTAL	2138	100.0	2183	100.0	2190	100.0	2333	100.0	2507	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown.

Previous pregnancies

In 2005, about one-third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers gave birth for the first time (Table 37), about 60 per cent of mothers reported between one and 4 previous births and 8.6 per cent of mothers had given birth to 5 or more babies. This pattern has not changed substantially since 2001.

TABLE 37

NUMBER OF PREVIOUS PREGNANCIES AMONG ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS, NSW 2001–2005#

No. previous pregnancies (>20 weeks)	2001		2002		Year 2003		2004		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0	634	30.0	664	30.8	668	30.9	759	32.9	787	31.8
1–4	1309	62.0	1302	60.4	1316	60.9	1327	57.5	1472	59.5
5+	164	7.8	183	8.5	177	8.2	221	9.6	214	8.6
Not stated	3	0.1	6	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0
TOTAL	2110	100.0	2155	100.0	2161	100.0	2308	100.0	2474	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown.

Maternal age

The reported number of babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers has increased at all ages. About one in 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers were teenagers in 2005.

Following statewide trends, the number of mothers giving birth at 35 years of age or more has increased over the last 5 years. The proportion of mothers aged 35–plus years increased from 7.2 per cent in 2001 to 9.3 per cent in 2005 (Table 38).

TABLE 38

AGE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS, NSW 2001–2005#

Maternal age (years)	2001		2002		Year 2003		2004		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
12–19	439	20.8	481	22.3	455	21.1	493	21.4	504	20.4
20–34	1515	71.8	1524	70.7	1553	71.9	1594	69.1	1739	70.3
35+	152	7.2	146	6.8	153	7.1	221	9.6	231	9.3
Not stated	4	0.2	4	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
TOTAL	2110	100.0	2155	100.0	2161	100.0	2308	100.0	2474	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown.

Health area of residence

The reported number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers who gave birth in 2005 ranged from 88 in the Northern Sydney and Central Coast Area to 600 in the Hunter and New England Area (Table 39). The proportion of mothers who were teenagers varied from 13.3 per cent in the Sydney South West Area to 23.5 per cent in the Hunter and New England Area (Table 40).

TABLE 39

HEALTH AREA OF RESIDENCE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS, NSW 2001–2005[#]

Health Area	2001		2002		Year 2003		2004		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sydney South West	148	7.0	129	6.0	129	6.0	164	7.1	181	7.3
South Eastern Sydney & Illawarra	146	6.9	169	7.8	173	8.0	221	9.6	198	8.0
Sydney West	212	10.0	204	9.5	237	11.0	238	10.3	269	10.9
Northern Sydney & Central Coast	74	3.5	85	3.9	82	3.8	93	4.0	88	3.6
Hunter & New England	478	22.7	513	23.8	514	23.8	508	22.0	600	24.3
North Coast	329	15.6	327	15.2	304	14.1	390	16.9	350	14.1
Greater Southern	162	7.7	158	7.3	170	7.9	173	7.5	209	8.4
Greater Western	511	24.2	517	24.0	493	22.8	505	21.9	560	22.6
Other—not stated	50	2.4	53	2.5	59	2.7	16	0.7	19	0.8
TOTAL	2110	100.0	2155	100.0	2161	100.0	2308	100.0	2474	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

[#] Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers for the total are about one and one third times higher than shown. The level of under-reporting varies between area health services (Table 33).

TABLE 40

HEALTH AREA OF RESIDENCE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS BY AGE, NSW 2005[#]

Health Area	Maternal age (years)				TOTAL	
	Less than 20		20+			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sydney South West	24	13.3	157	86.7	181	100.0
South Eastern Sydney & Illawarra	37	18.7	161	81.3	198	100.0
Sydney West	55	20.4	214	79.6	269	100.0
Northern Sydney & Central Coast	18	20.5	70	79.5	88	100.0
Hunter & New England	141	23.5	459	76.5	600	100.0
North Coast	66	18.9	284	81.1	350	100.0
Greater Southern	32	15.3	177	84.7	209	100.0
Greater Western	128	22.9	432	77.1	560	100.0
Other—not stated	3	15.8	16	84.2	19	100.0
TOTAL	504	20.4	1970	79.6	2474	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

[#] Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers for the total are about one and one third times higher than shown. The level of under-reporting varies between area health services (Table 33).

Booking status

In 2005, 91.4 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers were booked into the hospital of birth, a rise from 87.0 per cent in 2001. In 2005, 97.3 per cent of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander mothers were booked into the hospital of birth.

Duration of pregnancy at first antenatal visit

Between 2001 and 2005, the proportion of mothers who commenced antenatal care at less than 20 weeks gestation rose from 64.7 to 74.9 per cent (Table 41). This compares with 88.4 per cent of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander mothers who commenced antenatal care at less than 20 weeks gestation in 2005.

In 2005, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers who commenced antenatal care at less than 20 weeks gestation varied from 63.0 per cent in the Sydney South West Area to 90.9 per cent in the Northern Sydney & Central Coast Area (Table 42).

TABLE 41

DURATION OF PREGNANCY AT FIRST ANTENATAL VISIT AMONG ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS, NSW 2001–2005[#]

Duration of pregnancy at first antenatal visit (weeks)	2001		2002		Year 2003		2004		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0–19	1365	64.7	1448	67.2	1526	70.6	1618	70.1	1854	74.9
20–plus	615	29.1	560	26.0	547	25.3	573	24.8	561	22.7
Not stated	130	6.2	147	6.8	88	4.1	117	5.1	59	2.4
TOTAL	2110	100.0	2155	100.0	2161	100.0	2308	100.0	2474	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

[#] Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown.

TABLE 42

DURATION OF PREGNANCY AT FIRST ANTENATAL VISIT AMONG ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS BY HEALTH AREA OF RESIDENCE, NSW 2005[#]

Health Area	Duration of pregnancy at first antenatal visit (weeks)						TOTAL	
	0–19		20+		Not stated		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sydney South West	114	63.0	62	34.3	5	2.8	181	100.0
South Eastern Sydney & Illawarra	152	76.8	43	21.7	3	1.5	198	100.0
Sydney West	196	72.9	68	25.3	5	1.9	269	100.0
Northern Sydney & Central Coast	80	90.9	6	6.8	2	2.3	88	100.0
Hunter & New England	459	76.5	128	21.3	13	2.2	600	100.0
North Coast	260	74.3	77	22.0	13	3.7	350	100.0
Greater Southern	162	77.5	46	22.0	1	0.5	209	100.0
Greater Western	416	74.3	128	22.9	16	2.9	560	100.0
Other–not stated	15	78.9	3	15.8	1	5.3	19	100.0
TOTAL	1854	74.9	561	22.7	59	2.4	2474	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

[#] Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers for the total are about one and one third times higher than shown. The level of under-reporting varies between area health services (Table 33).

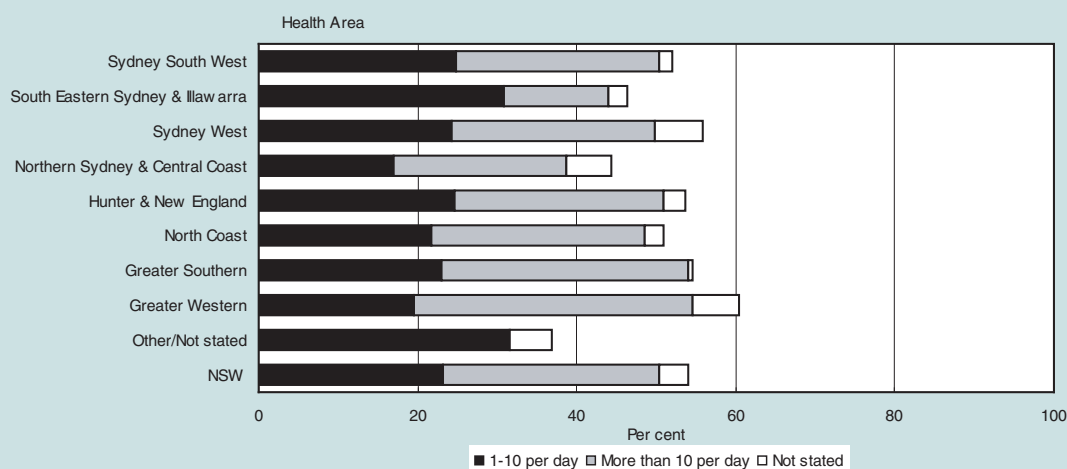
Smoking in pregnancy

In 2005, 55.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers reported smoking at some time during pregnancy, compared to 59.0 per cent in 2001. This compares with 13.1 per cent of non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander mothers who reported smoking at some time during pregnancy in 2005.

Smoking in the second half of pregnancy poses the greatest risk to the health of both mother and baby. In 2005, 54.0 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers reported smoking in the second half of pregnancy. This percentage varied from 44.3 per cent in the Northern Sydney and Central Coast Area to 60.4 per cent in the Greater Western Area (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3

SMOKING IN THE SECOND HALF OF PREGNANCY AMONG ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS BY AMOUNT SMOKED AND HEALTH AREA OF RESIDENCE, NSW 2005*



Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown. The level of under-reporting varies between health areas (Table 33).

Medical conditions and obstetric complications

In 2005, there was a slightly lower rate of gestational diabetes reported among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers compared with non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander mothers (Table 43). The number

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers with medical conditions and obstetric complications reported to the MDC is low, even after taking into account under-reporting of maternal Aboriginality. This is particularly the case for diabetes. The low numbers may be due to under-detection and/or under-reporting.

TABLE 43

MATERNAL MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND OBSTETRIC COMPLICATIONS BY ABORIGINALITY, NSW 2005*

Condition	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander		Non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander		Aboriginality Not stated		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Diabetes mellitus	11	0.4	492	0.6	0	0.0	503	0.6
Gestational diabetes	82	3.3	4080	4.7	3	3.1	4165	4.7
Essential hypertension	22	0.9	820	0.9	0	0.0	842	0.9
Pre-eclampsia	138	5.6	4415	5.1	0	0.0	4553	5.1
TOTAL CONFINEMENTS	2474	100.0	86570	100.0	96	100.0	89140	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown.

Labour and delivery

The rate of spontaneous onset of labour fell from 70.4 per cent in 2001 to 65.2 per cent in 2005 (Table 44), while the rate of induction of labour among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers increased from about 19 to 24 per cent. The rate of induction of labour among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers was slightly lower than the rate of 25.5 per cent reported among non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers in 2005.

Between 2001 and 2005, the rate of normal vaginal birth fell from 74.0 to 70.4 per cent. The caesarean section rate rose from 20.2 to 23.3 per cent (Table 45). The rate of forceps delivery remained stable at about 2 per cent, and vaginal breech delivery was about 1 per cent.

TABLE 44

LABOUR ONSET FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS, NSW 2001–2005[#]

Labour onset	2001		2002		Year 2003		2004		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Spontaneous	1486	70.4	1507	69.9	1469	68.0	1581	68.5	1613	65.2
No labour ^{##}	207	9.8	223	10.3	250	11.6	260	11.3	277	11.2
Induced	417	19.8	423	19.6	442	20.5	467	20.2	584	23.6
Not stated	0	0.0	2	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
TOTAL	2110	100.0	2155	100.0	2161	100.0	2308	100.0	2474	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

[#] Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown.

^{##} No labour indicates elective caesarean section.

TABLE 45

TYPE OF DELIVERY AMONG ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS, NSW 2001–2005[#]

Type of delivery	2001		2002		Year 2003		2004		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Normal vaginal	1562	74.0	1598	74.2	1585	73.3	1647	71.4	1741	70.4
Forceps	39	1.8	30	1.4	35	1.6	60	2.6	42	1.7
Vacuum extraction	66	3.1	68	3.2	67	3.1	74	3.2	91	3.7
Vaginal breech	16	0.8	14	0.6	9	0.4	16	0.7	24	1.0
Elective caesarean section	207	9.8	223	10.3	250	11.6	260	11.3	277	11.2
Emergency caesarean section ^{##}	220	10.4	222	10.3	215	9.9	251	10.9	299	12.1
TOTAL	2110	100.0	2155	100.0	2161	100.0	2308	100.0	2474	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

[#] Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown.

^{##} Emergency caesarean section includes caesarean section where the onset of labour was not stated.

Birth weight

Since 2001, the rate of low birth weight (less than 2,500 grams) in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies has been over 10 per cent and was 12.5 per cent in 2005 (Table 46). This is over twice the rate for babies born to non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander mothers, which was 5.9 per cent in 2005. In 2005, the largest number of low birth weight babies were born in the Hunter and New England Area (Table 47).

TABLE 46

WEIGHT OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BABIES, NSW 2001–2005*

Birth weight (grams)	2001		2002		Year 2003		2004		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Less than 1,000	27	1.3	21	1.0	31	1.4	23	1.0	36	1.4
1,000–1,499	33	1.5	28	1.3	19	0.9	34	1.5	20	0.8
1,500–2,499	228	10.7	230	10.5	221	10.1	244	10.5	257	10.3
2,500+	1848	86.4	1900	87.0	1917	87.5	2032	87.1	2193	87.5
Not stated	2	0.1	4	0.2	2	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.0
TOTAL	2138	100.0	2183	100.0	2190	100.0	2333	100.0	2507	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown.

TABLE 47

WEIGHT OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BABIES BY HEALTH AREA OF RESIDENCE, NSW 2005*

Health Area	Less than 2,500		Birthweight (grams) 2,500+		Not stated		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sydney South West	22	12.1	160	87.9	0	0.0	182	100.0
South Eastern Sydney & Illawarra	20	9.9	182	90.1	0	0.0	202	100.0
Sydney West	40	14.8	230	85.2	0	0.0	270	100.0
Northern Sydney & Central Coast	10	11.2	78	87.6	1	1.1	89	100.0
Hunter & New England	83	13.6	528	86.4	0	0.0	611	100.0
North Coast	46	12.9	311	87.1	0	0.0	357	100.0
Greater Southern	19	9.0	193	91.0	0	0.0	212	100.0
Greater Western	71	12.6	494	87.4	0	0.0	565	100.0
Other-not stated	2	10.5	17	89.5	0	0.0	19	100.0
TOTAL	313	12.5	2193	87.5	1	0.0	2507	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers for the total are about one and one third times higher than shown. The level of under-reporting varies between health areas (Table 33).

Gestational age

Since 2001, over 10 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies have been premature (less than 37 weeks gestation) (Table 48). The rate of prematurity was 12.0 per cent in 2005—compared with a rate of 7.1 per cent for babies born to non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander mothers. In 2005, the largest number of premature babies were born in the Hunter and New England Area (Table 49).

TABLE 48

GESTATIONAL AGE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BABIES, NSW 2001–2005#

Gestational age (weeks)	2001		2002		Year 2003		2004		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
20–27	26	1.2	21	1.0	29	1.3	31	1.3	30	1.2
28–31	38	1.8	34	1.6	30	1.4	29	1.2	27	1.1
32–36	201	9.4	212	9.7	206	9.4	212	9.1	244	9.7
37–41	1824	85.3	1868	85.6	1878	85.8	2038	87.4	2180	87.0
42 +	48	2.2	45	2.1	47	2.1	23	1.0	26	1.0
Not stated	1	0.0	3	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
TOTAL	2138	100.0	2183	100.0	2190	100.0	2333	100.0	2507	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown.

TABLE 49

GESTATIONAL AGE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BABIES BY HEALTH AREA OF RESIDENCE, NSW 2005#

Health Area	Less than 37		Gestational age (weeks) 37+		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sydney South West	25	13.7	157	86.3	182	100.0
South Eastern Sydney & Illawarra	22	10.9	180	89.1	202	100.0
Sydney West	30	11.1	240	88.9	270	100.0
Northern Sydney & Central Coast	14	15.7	75	84.3	89	100.0
Hunter & New England	81	13.3	530	86.7	611	100.0
North Coast	47	13.2	310	86.8	357	100.0
Greater Southern	17	8.0	195	92.0	212	100.0
Greater Western	64	11.3	501	88.7	565	100.0
Other—not stated	1	5.3	18	94.7	19	100.0
TOTAL	301	12.0	2206	88.0	2507	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers for the total are about one and one third times higher than shown. The level of under-reporting varies between health areas (Table 33).

Apgar score

In 2005, 3.0 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies had an Apgar score less than seven (Table 50), higher than the rate of 1.9 per cent for babies born to non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander mothers.

TABLE 50

APGAR SCORE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BABIES, NSW 2001–2005#

Apgar score at 5 minutes	2001		2002		Year 2003		2004		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0–4	49	2.3	38	1.7	42	1.9	34	1.5	42	1.7
5–6	29	1.4	31	1.4	30	1.4	34	1.5	33	1.3
7+	2048	95.8	2104	96.4	2109	96.3	2256	96.7	2416	96.4
Not stated	12	0.6	10	0.5	9	0.4	9	0.4	16	0.6
TOTAL	2138	100.0	2183	100.0	2190	100.0	2333	100.0	2507	100.0

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown.

Perinatal mortality

Since 2005, the perinatal mortality rate among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies has varied from 11.0 to 18.2 per 1,000 births (Table 51). The rate of 15.2 per

1,000 in 2005 is substantially higher than the rate of 8.6 per 1,000 experienced by babies born to non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander mothers.

TABLE 51

PERINATAL DEATHS AMONG ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BABIES, NSW 2001–2005#

Perinatal deaths	2001		2002		Year 2003		2004		2005	
	No.	Rate/1,000	No.	Rate/1,000	No.	Rate/1,000	No.	Rate/1,000	No.	Rate/1,000
Stillbirth	29	13.6	18	8.2	24	11.0	20	8.6	22	8.8
Neonatal death	10	4.7	6	2.7	9	4.1	7	3.0	16	6.4
TOTAL	39	18.2	24	11.0	33	15.1	27	11.6	38	15.2

Source: NSW Midwives Data Collection (HOIST). Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.

Perinatal deaths include deaths reported to the MDC only. As the MDC form is completed at discharge or transfer of the baby, deaths occurring after this time may not be reported to the MDC. Due to under-reporting of Aboriginality to the MDC, it is likely that the true numbers are about one and one third times higher than shown.