

# Measuring Digital Inclusion for First Nations Australians

## About the project

The project aims to measure the levels of digital inclusion and media use for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over a three-year period (2024-2027). This project has been funded by the Australian Government to contribute data for remote Australia to the Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII), an annual survey of digital inclusion levels across the country.

The project aims to accurately measure Closing the Gap Target 17, which states:

**By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion**

The researchers are working with First Nations led survey company Ipsos Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Unit and community partners to undertake surveys online and face-to-face with First Nations people living in urban, regional and remote part of Australia. We want to hear from people of all ages, genders, levels of education or employment, and from all parts of Australia.

It is hoped that this research will inform policy and programs by government and industry aimed at closing the gap on digital inclusion and access to information services for First Nations people and communities.



Port Lincoln co-researcher Sharon Betts conducting a survey with Edward Betts



Associate Professor Heron Loban conducting a survey with Thursday Island resident

## How does the research work?

We are undertaking this research in cities, towns and remote communities across Australia over three years using a mix of online and face to face surveys. We are working with a national First Nations survey company and partner organisations in 10 regional towns to undertake this research.



### Surveys

We are conducting 15-20 minute surveys with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who are over 18 years of age and willing to participate



### First Nations researchers

In most cases, the surveys are being conducted by or with a First Nations researcher to ensure surveys are done in a culturally appropriate manner



### Participants will receive vouchers

Survey respondents will receive a small recompense for their time e.g. \$40 voucher

## Your rights and interests

We will ask if you would like to do a survey and will outline what is involved. You do not have to take part if you do not wish to. If you agree, you can withdraw at any time. You can also ask to skip a question you do not want to answer.

The survey will ask questions about your use of media services, phone and internet, how much you pay, use of online services and what you can do online.

We also ask some questions about you – postcode where you live, your age, gender, work and household income, education. But the survey is anonymous, we do not collect your name so this information is to help us in analysing the survey results.

## Are there any risks to me participating?

We do not think that there are any risks associated with your participation in the research. If, however, any questions we ask make you feel uncomfortable, you can stop the survey at any time.

People's names are not collected in the survey so the data collected cannot be identified to a person.

## How will the Data be used and shared?

The survey data is securely stored, processed (cleaned, weighed against ABS population data and aggregated) and any identifying information removed. It will then be compared to national data collected through the Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) and Mapping the Digital Gap project in remote communities to enable measurement of Closing the Gap target 17, with breakdown for the areas of Access, Affordability and Digital Ability.



### The data is made publicly available

For use and analysis by First Nations communities and organisations, government agencies, industry, academics and other stakeholders. This is to align with the requirements of the Closing the Gap Priority Reform Four - Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level and our commitment to Indigenous Data Sovereignty



### Data dashboard

Our online data portal enables users to explore the data according to Access, Affordability, Digital Ability, remoteness category, by state and region, as well as by age, gender, household type, etc.



### ADII report and dashboard

The data will also contribute to the biennial ADII report and online dashboard. The outcomes will also be shared in journal articles, presentations to government, and conferences



Derby co-researchers Aaron Shadforth (left) and Owen Burns (right) completing a survey

### Closing the Gap Priority Reform 4

[closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/national-agreement-closing-the-gap/6-priority-reform-areas/four](https://closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/national-agreement-closing-the-gap/6-priority-reform-areas/four)

### 2025 Regional and Remote Towns Report

The first round of surveys from 2025 were published as part of this report: <https://apo.org.au/node/334481>

### First Nations Digital Inclusion Dashboard

[dashboard.digitalinclusionindex.org.au/FirstNations/Home](https://dashboard.digitalinclusionindex.org.au/FirstNations/Home)

## Research Ethics

This project has received Ethics approval through the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee (No: 28091). Should you have any concerns or questions about this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the researchers, you may contact our Human Research Ethics Committee representative:

### RMIT University HREC Secretary

Peter Burke

Research Ethics Co-Ordinator: Research Integrity Governance and Systems

03 9925 2251

RMIT University, GPO Box 2476, Melbourne VIC 3001

## Further information

If you would like further information about the project, including notification of publications arising from the research, please do not hesitate to contact:

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