

## INDIGENOUS JAIL RATE STARTLING

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by Madura McCormack

More than eight out of every 10 prisoners in the Northern Territory are First Nations peoples, with new data again highlighting the Territory's struggle with Aboriginal over-representation in the justice system.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data released yesterday revealed 84.5 per cent of the Northern Territory's prison population on average are First Nations peoples, the highest proportion in the country. The over-representation of Indigenous people in prisons has been an ongoing issue in the Territory, with data showing 2.6 out of every 100 First Nations Territorians behind bars

The NT is second only to Western Australia, where the imprisonment rate for First Nations people is nearly 4 out of every 100.

The Territory also holds the mantle for having overall imprisonment rates more than four times the national average.

Imprisonment rates have decreased slightly since September last year, when 930 out of every 100,000 Territorians were behind bars compared to 218.4 per 100,000 people nationwide.

In September this year, there were 1682 people across the NT's prisons every day on average.

The latest Department of Attorney-General and Justice annual report shows it costs \$321 [and 59 cents] a day to hold a person in a Territory prison.

Attorney-General Selena Uibo said the government was “determined to turn the tables” on the “gross over-representation of Aboriginal people” in NT prisons and youth detention centres.

“Our government is supporting a new model of delivery that will reduce re offending and imprisonment rates of Aboriginal Territorians, engage and support Aboriginal leadership, and improve justice responses and services to Aboriginal Territorians,” she said.

The NT government is due to finalise its Aboriginal Justice Agreement – a framework for improving justice outcomes for First Nations people – by the end of the year.