

Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety  
(Staysafe Committee)  
Parliament of New South Wales

13 January 2022

by email [StaySafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:StaySafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

### **Inquiry into support for rural and regional drivers - question on Notice - response**

I refer to the request to answer a question that arose in oral evidence at the Inquiry. I stated that statistics are available on numbers of people who do not have birth certificates, However, there does not appear to be any currently available NSW statistics on who has/does not have birth certificates.

I have reached out to Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM), but as at the time of writing, I have not heard back. It may be useful for the Inquiry to reach out to BDM directly.

#### **Available data**

To be eligible to receive a birth certificate, a birth first needs to be registered. There are reports and studies from Queensland and Western Australia that undertook quantitative analysis of the issue of under registration – with under registration as a contributor to rates of birth certificates. These findings would likely be analogous for NSW.

It's important to note, however, that under registrations likely only represent a small proportion of the total statistics of people with no birth certificates. Other reasons (set out in our submission) as to why people may not have birth certificates include barriers such as cost, literacy, access to identity documents required to get a birth certificate (eg, drivers licence, passport, medicare card etc).

#### **Queensland statistics on under-registration**

The Queensland Ombudsman, in its *The Indigenous birth registration report, June 2018* (at [https://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au/improve\\_public\\_administration/investigative\\_reports\\_and\\_casebooks/investigative\\_reports/the\\_indigenous\\_birth\\_registration\\_report](https://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au/improve_public_administration/investigative_reports_and_casebooks/investigative_reports/the_indigenous_birth_registration_report)) referred to (and included in the Report) a study conducted by Queensland Health into birth registrations, titled “*An estimate of the extent of under registration of births in Queensland.*” – see

[https://www.health.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/140040/underreg.pdf](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/140040/underreg.pdf). This study found significant differences between Indigenous families (15.18% under registration) compared to non Indigenous families (1.8% under registration) with higher rates in regional and remote areas (23.27%).

The Queensland Indigenous birth registration report concluded “Without a birth certificate it is difficult for an individual to fully participate in society.”

### **Western Australia statistics on under-registration**

The study, *No official identity: a data linkage study of birth registration of Aboriginal children in Western Australia*, published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, available at [https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1753\\_6405.12548](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1753_6405.12548) found almost 1 in 5 Aboriginal children born between 1996 to 2010 did not have a birth registration record – compared to an approximate 3% of the general population.

This Study concluded: “*[d]ifficulties proving identity can lead to serious and wide ranging social and economic impacts. These include barriers to securing employment ... and has also been linked to unlicensed driving and subsequent incarceration in WA.*”

### **Impact of not having identity documents**

As is apparent from conclusions of the above Reports and studies, the impact of not having a birth certificate is significant, including the link to unlicensed driving and incarceration. It may be useful for the Committee to consider recommendations that address this problem – including better data, and addressing the barriers to hinder access to birth certificates in Aboriginal communities, particularly regional and remote communities.

Yours faithfully,



**Jenny Lovric**

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Just Reinvest NSW