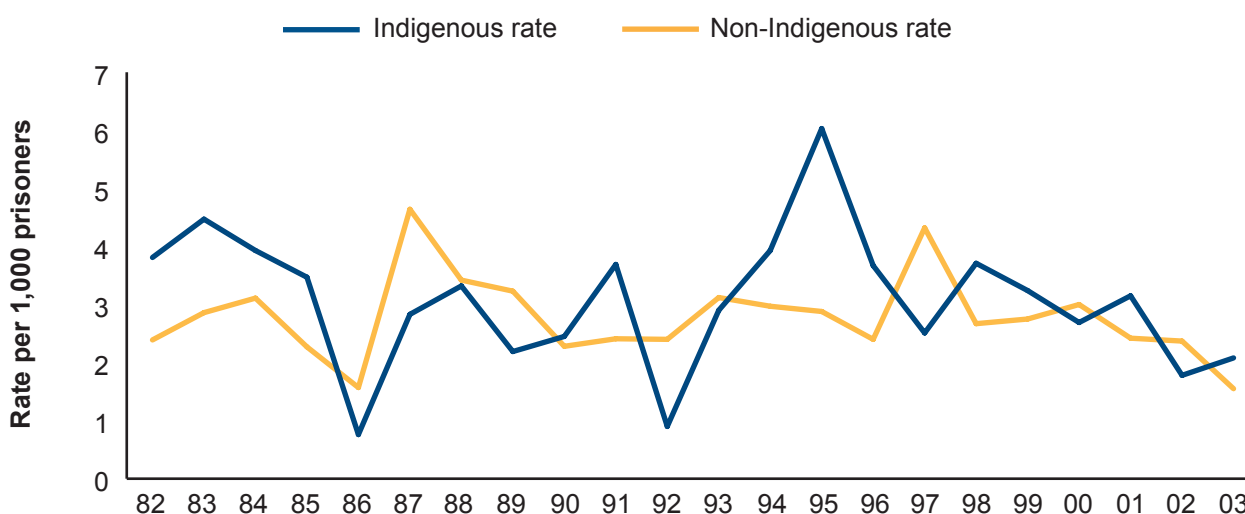


## Prison custody deaths 1982–2003

The National deaths in custody program (NDICP) has been responsible for monitoring the extent and nature of deaths in police, prison and juvenile custody since 1980. The 2003 NDICP annual report shows there were 68 deaths in custody in 2003, a decline from 85 in 2002. The number of deaths in police custody decreased from 33 in 2002 to 29 in 2003, and the number of deaths in prison custody also declined from 50 deaths in 2002 to 39 deaths in 2003. The rate of Indigenous deaths in prison custody in 2003 was 2.1 per 1,000 Indigenous prisoners, while the rate of non-Indigenous deaths in prison custody was 1.6 per 1,000 non-Indigenous prisoners. The figure below shows that the rates of Indigenous deaths in prison custody peaked in 1995 and that rates of prison deaths have been declining since. The leading cause of death in prison custody was death due to natural causes, accounting for 44 per cent of all prison deaths. Furthermore, this is the first time since the NDICP's inception that there have been no accident-related deaths in prison.

Trends in prison custody deaths, 1982–2003<sup>(a)</sup>



Note: Prison census data not available prior to 1982

(a) Rate per 1,000 prisoners

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, NDICP 1982–2003 [computer file]

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2004. *Prisoners in Australia 2003*, cat no 4517.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics

SOURCE: McCall M 2004. *Deaths in custody in Australia: 2003 national deaths in custody program annual report*. Technical and background paper series no 12. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology

Full report available on the AIC web site: <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tbp/tbp012/>

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