



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

BUREAU OF COMMUNICATIONS, ARTS AND REGIONAL RESEARCH

Telecommunications affordability and access for First Nations households: Learnings from the HILDA survey - Visual Summary



The Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research (BCARR) has analysed digital inclusion trends for First Nations households in the working paper *'Telecommunications affordability and access for First Nations households: Learnings from the HILDA survey'*.



What is this reporting on?

- Findings that relate to First Nations households from the BCARR publication: [Australian households and the affordability of telecommunications: evidence from the HILDA survey](#).
- Findings on affordability are complemented by additional insights on internet access for First Nations households from Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) and Census data.
- In 2021, the HILDA survey included 399 households with at least one First Nations member (4.4% of the total sample) and 179 households where all members were First Nations (2.0%). These are referred to as 'some' and 'all' First Nations households respectively in the paper.



Sensitivity: The HILDA survey covers metropolitan and regional households only. The sample does not include very remote households, and so is not nationally representative. This work could be used to complement the [Mapping the Digital Gap report](#) which examines remote First Nations communities.

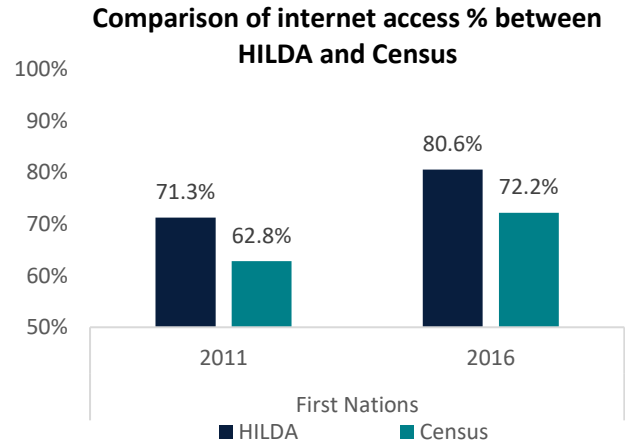
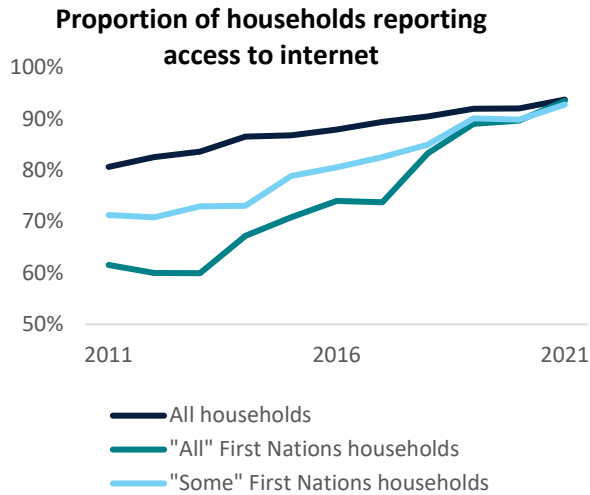


What can it be used for?

- To gain insight into telecommunications affordability and internet access trends for metropolitan and regional First Nations households from a previously unused data source.
- As a contribution to the evidence base for Closing the Gap Target 17: *'By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion.'*

Key findings

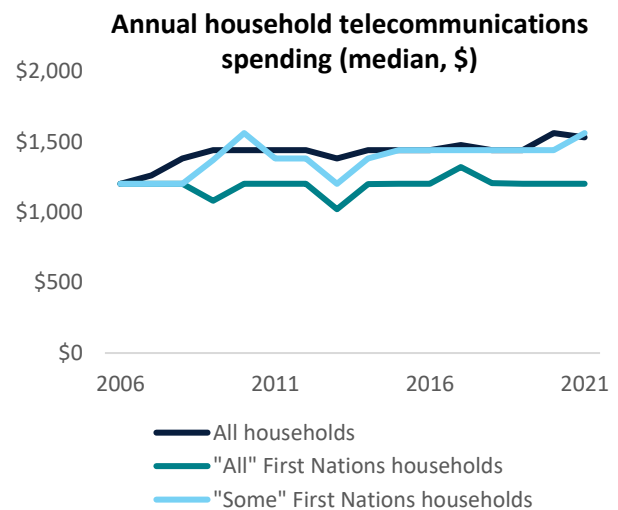
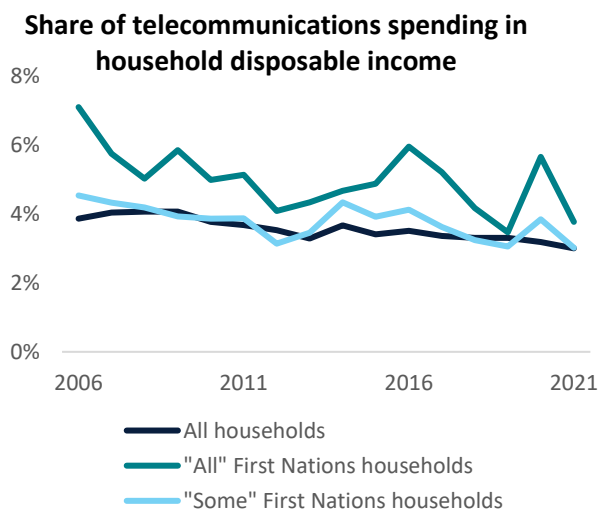
Internet access has been increasing in First Nations households



Internet access increased in households with 'all' First Nations members from 61.6% in 2011 to 93.5% in 2021. This internet access rate was similar to the 2021 Australian household average. This HILDA measure counts access to internet at home by any technology type (including mobile).

Internet access is increasing. However, the HILDA sample overestimates this figure as it does not include very remote households (where internet access rates are lower and 9.4% of the First Nations population lived in 2021). Comparing with Census data in 2011 and 2016, HILDA overestimated internet access by over 8 percentage points.

Spending on telecommunications as a share of household income has decreased



Household spending on telecommunications as a share of income decreased for all household types since 2006. In nominal terms, spending on telecommunications has stayed relatively unchanged since around 2009 for all household groups while incomes have increased.

Households with 'all' First Nations members tended to spend less on telecommunications than other households. In the regression modelling, which controls for factors like income, it found that First Nations households spend less on telecommunications.