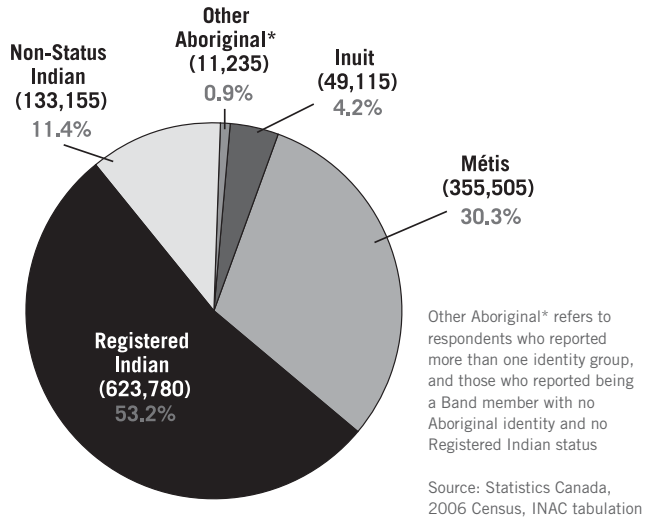
CANADIAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION... in numbers

FIGURE 1: Distribution of the Aboriginal Population, Canada, 2006



Other Aboriginal* refers to respondents who reported more than one identity group, and those who reported being a Band member with no Aboriginal identity and no Registered Indian status

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, INAC tabulation

Demographic Growth

In 2006, **1.17 million** people in Canada identified themselves as Aboriginal representing 3.8% of the Canadian population.

The Aboriginal population is growing rapidly. Overall, it increased by 46.7% between 1996 and 2006 compared to 8.4% for the non-Aboriginal population.

The Aboriginal population is much younger than the non-Aboriginal population (Figure 2). Amongst the Aboriginal population 47.8% of individuals are the under age of 25, compared to less than 30.7% for the rest of the Canadian population. The Inuit population is the youngest of all Aboriginal groups.

The Aboriginal population is currently growing almost twice as fast as the Canadian population at an average of 1.8% per annum compared to 1.0% for the Canadian population. Population projections suggest this trend is expected well into the future. *(Aboriginal Population, Household and Family Projections, INAC and CMHC, 2007).*

There is great variation in growth rates among Aboriginal groups. Fertility, migration and changes to the *Indian Act* in 1985 (Bill C-31) can explain some of the growth in the Aboriginal population. However, a significant portion of the population growth is attributable to "ethnic mobility", a term used to define changes in self-reporting of cultural affiliation over time and over generations. (Guimond 2009), *L'explosion démographique des populations autochtones du Canada de 1986 à 2001.*)

Jeanette Steffler *has been working for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada for fifteen years as a specialist in Aboriginal socio-economic and demographic analysis and research. She holds a Bachelor of Science specializing in Mathematics and Economics from the University of Alberta and a Master of Arts in Economics from the University of Western Ontario. She is currently a Strategic Research Manager in the Socio-economic and Demographic Statistics Section of INAC. /* ***Andrea Street*** *is an analyst in the Socio-Economic and Demographic Statistics Section of INAC. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Waterloo and is currently working towards her Masters degree at Carleton University.*

MEDIAN AGE BY ABORIGINAL GROUP

Aboriginal (total):
27 years

Registered Indian:
25 years

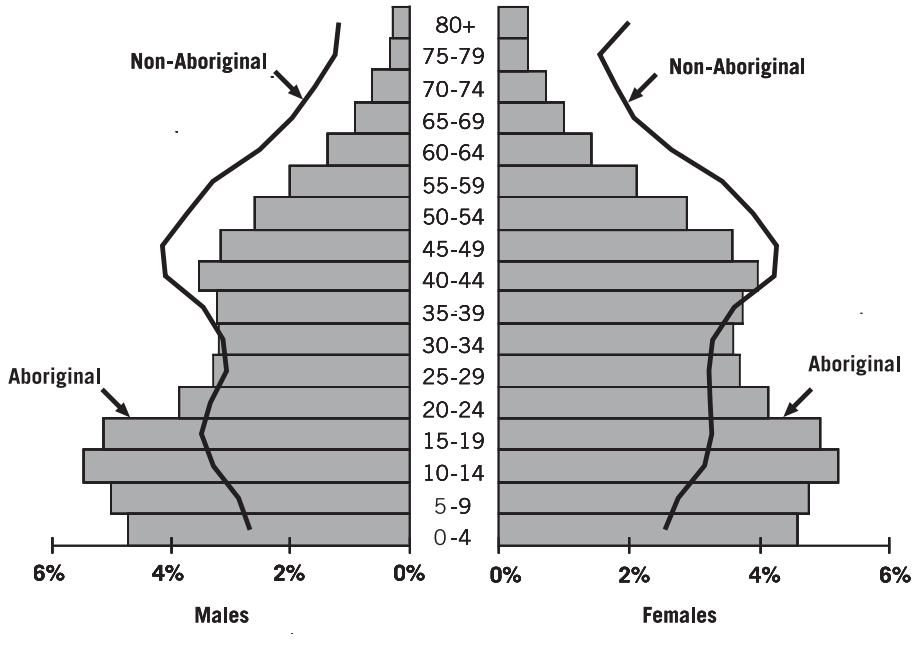
Métis:
29 years

Non-Status Indian:
26 years

Inuit:
21 years

Non-Aboriginal:
40 years

FIGURE 2: Age-Gender Pyramid, Canada, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, INAC tabulation.