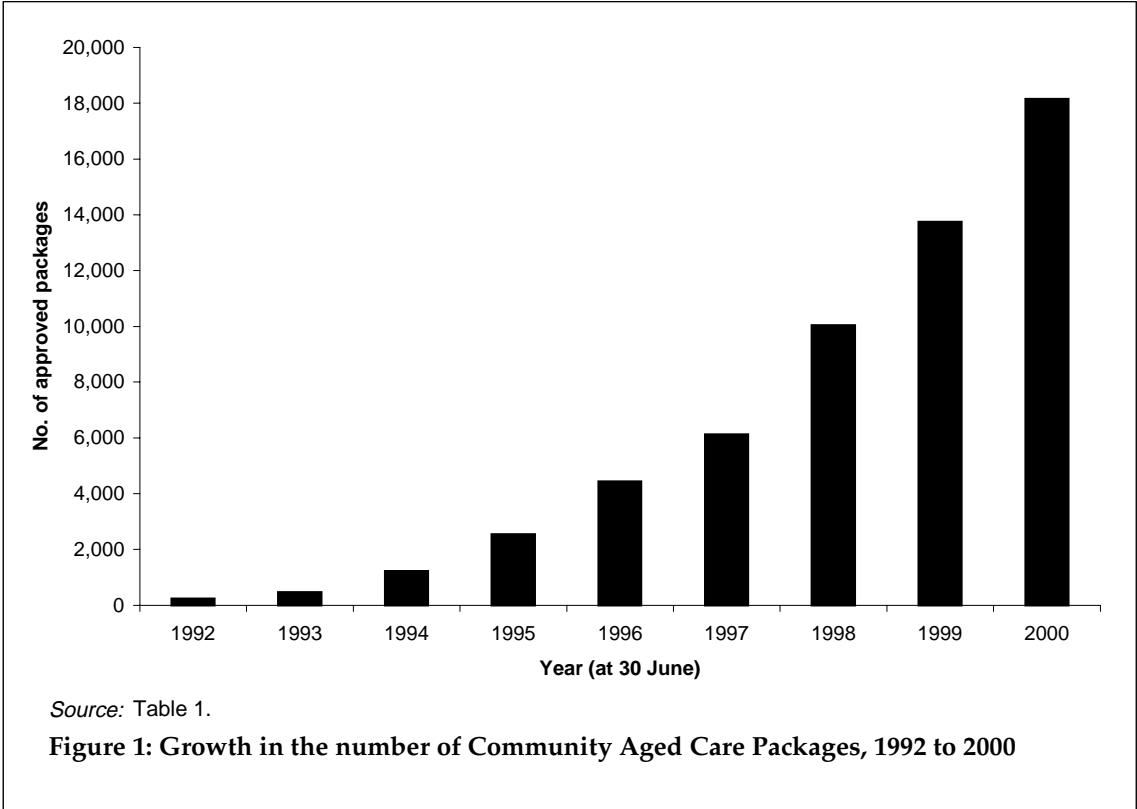


# 2 Main features

## 2.1 Community Aged Care Packages

Community Aged Care Packages were initiated in 1992 as a Commonwealth-funded program to provide an alternative to low-level residential aged care for older people living in the community. Since 1995, it has been a government policy to provide 10 funded care packages for every 1,000 persons aged 70 years and over. Figure 1 shows that growth in the number of care packages<sup>1</sup> has been rapid since 1992.



As at 30 June 2000 there were 18,149 packages throughout Australia. The majority of these packages were in New South Wales and Victoria (35% and 25%, respectively). Queensland had 17% of the packages, followed by South Australia (9%) and Western Australia (8%),

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<sup>1</sup> These care packages are available for use in the community and include packages that are currently in use by care recipients and those temporarily not in use but available. As at 30 June 2000, of the 18,149 care packages available, 16,617 were in use by care recipients. The 18,149 approved packages include 151 places approved as conversions from residential aged care places or restructuring places.

with the remaining 6% of packages distributed across Tasmania (3%), the Australian Capital Territory (2%) and the Northern Territory (1%).

Capital cities accounted for 62% of packages while 4% were in remote centres and other remote areas. The distribution of packages among other metropolitan centres, large rural centres, small rural centres and other rural areas ranged from 8% to 9% (see Table 2).

Overall, the number of packages increased nationally by 32% during the 12 months to 30 June 2000—from 13,753 at 30 June 1999 to 18,149 packages at 30 June 2000. The ratio of packages per thousand persons aged 70 years and over also increased—from 8.4 at 30 June 1999 to 10.8 at 30 June 2000 (see Table 3).

In addition to the care recipients described in this report, there were also Community Aged Care Packages provided from Multi-Purpose Services and services receiving flexible funding under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy. As at 30 June 2000 there were 86 packages provided from Multi-Purpose Services and 81 packages receiving flexible funding under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy.

## **2.2 The service outlets**

As at 30 June 2000 there were 720 service outlets providing packages to 16,617 care recipients<sup>2</sup> throughout Australia. The majority of outlets (84%) were located in the four largest Australian States, namely New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. The Australian Capital Territory had the smallest share of outlets providing packages (less than 1%, see Table 4).

The majority of service outlets were operated by the religious and charitable sector (77%). Of the remainder, 16% were run by state and local governments, 6% by the private (commercial) sector, and 1% by ex-service organisations.

On average, there were 25 packages per outlet. However, the outlet size varied greatly across Australia, with the majority of outlets having between 1 and 20 packages (56%), followed by outlets having between 21 and 40 packages (28%). The five largest outlets, each responsible for more than 121 care packages, were located in Victoria (see Table 5).

As expected, outlets operating in remote centres, other remote areas and other rural areas were small in size (the majority had 20 packages or less). Larger outlets of more than 80 packages each can be found operating only in areas of high density population such as capital cities, other metropolitan and large rural centres (with one exception in a small rural centre) (see Table 6).

## **2.3 Multi-Purpose Services and services receiving flexible funding under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy**

In addition to the outlets and packages described in this report as part of the Community Aged Care Packages Program, some additional packages and residential care places are provided from Multi-Purpose Services and services receiving flexible funding under the

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<sup>2</sup> Under existing data reporting arrangements, a number of care recipients receiving assistance under the program are not included in the current national database.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy. As at 30 June 2000, there were 51 Multi-Purpose Services providing 1,038 residential care places and 86 packages, and 21 services receiving flexible funding under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy providing 267 residential care places and 81 packages. At 30 June 1999, the comparable figures were 815 residential care places and 61 packages for Multi-Purpose Services, and 232 residential care places and 82 packages for services receiving flexible funding under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy.

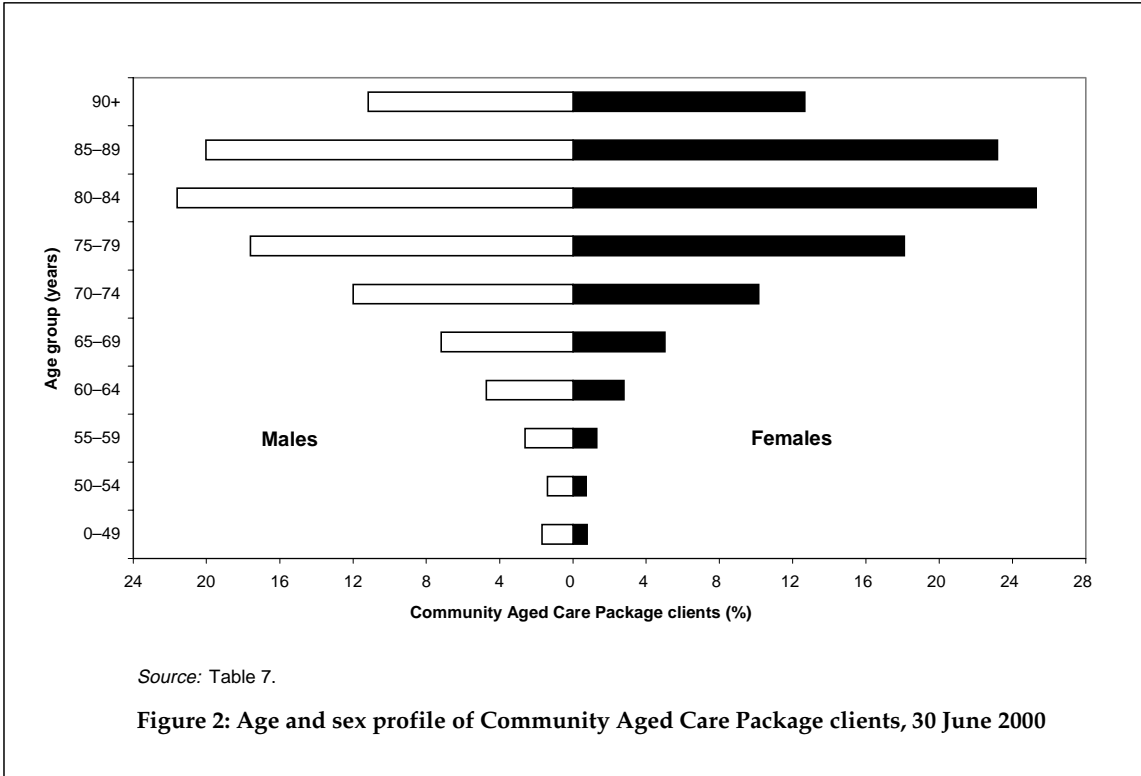
## 2.4 Client socio-demographic characteristics

### Age and sex profiles

As is evident from Table 7, the vast majority of the 16,617 recipients of packages at 30 June 2000 were aged 70 years and over (87%). Those in the 80 and over age category comprised 59% of the total number of recipients, while those aged 90 years and over accounted for 12%.

Female recipients predominated in absolute numbers, as is illustrated in Figure 2, varying between 53% among those aged under 50 years to over 73% among those aged 85 years and over.

Taken together, these age and sex trends result in a client profile where the single largest group of package recipients (56%) are women aged 75 years and over.



## **Younger care recipients (aged under 65)**

Although the program targets older people in the community who have complex care needs, younger people with disabilities can also receive packages if their care needs fit the criteria of the program and if there are no other appropriate services operating in their area (Department of Health and Aged Care 1999). It is not common that younger people with disabilities access the program.

About 7% of care recipients were aged under 65, and only 1% of care recipients were under the age of 50 (see Figure 2 and Table 7).

## **Indigenous status<sup>3</sup>**

In total, there were 426 package recipients who were identified as Indigenous Australians at 30 June 2000, making up 3% of all package recipients. There was no record of Indigenous people receiving packages in the Australian Capital Territory, while 64% of care recipients in the Northern Territory indicated that they were Indigenous. After the Northern Territory, Western Australia had the next highest proportion of Indigenous care recipients, at 7.6%. The proportion of Indigenous care recipients reported in other States ranged from 0.3% in Victoria to 3.7% in Queensland (see Table 10). In addition, there were 81 packages provided to Indigenous care recipients by flexible services funded under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy.

As shown in Table 11, remote centres and other remote areas of Australia were home to over half the Indigenous care recipients at 30 June 2000. A further third of the Indigenous care recipients were estimated to live in large and small rural centres and other rural areas. The remaining Indigenous care recipients lived in capital cities and other metropolitan centres.

## **Birthplace and preferred language**

Birthplace and preferred language both had an 85% response rate for package recipients. Of those care recipients who reported their birthplace, about 3 in 10 were born overseas (31%). Approximately 10% were born either in the United Kingdom or Ireland while over 13% were born in other areas of Europe. People born in Asia accounted for 3% of package recipients (see Table 12).

Nationally, 88% of all responding care recipients indicated that English was their preferred language, while 9% preferred a European language. Australian Indigenous languages accounted for approximately 1% of all respondents (see Table 13).

## **Pension status**

The pension status recorded for recipients of Community Aged Care Packages was the type of pension received, for example the age pension, the invalid pension, or the repatriation pension.

The proportion of missing data on pension status for packages recipients was considerably higher (a non-response rate of approximately 20%) than for variables such as birthplace and preferred language. Among those for whom data were available, 79% were receiving an age

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<sup>3</sup> Indigenous Australians are defined in this report as those people who were reported as being of either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, or both.

pension, 9% a repatriation pension, and 2% an invalid pension. Care recipients receiving other pensions comprised 10% of those care recipients with known pension status (see Table 14).

Overall, the proportion receiving an invalid pension was higher among men while the proportion of care recipients receiving an age, repatriation or some other pension was higher among women.

### **Usual residence status**

Of the 11,911 care recipients who reported their usual residence status at the time of application for a Community Aged Care Package, the majority were home owners/purchasers (72%). Care recipients who lived in public rental housing comprised 16% while those who lived in a private rental property or board/lodging accounted for the remaining 12% (8% and 4% respectively) (Table 15).

The Northern Territory stood out from the other States and Territories with 61% of all responding care recipients indicating public rental housing as their usual residence status compared with less than 20% in any other State or Territory. Care should be taken when using this figure, given the small number of care recipients in the Northern Territory.

### **Living arrangements**

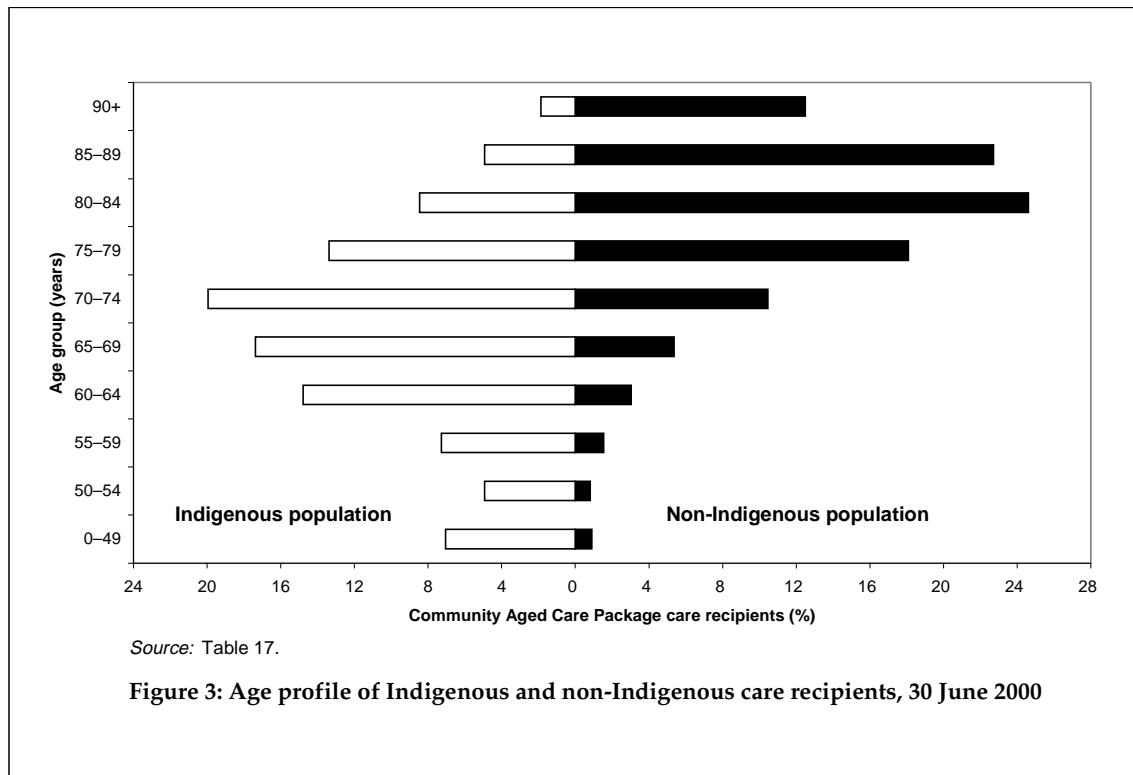
The question care recipients were asked in relation to their living arrangement at the time of application for a package was 'With whom do you normally live?'. Excluding the missing cases, a large proportion of care recipients reported normally living alone (57%) or with their spouse only (26%). Those who reported normally living with brothers and/or sisters made up the smallest group of care recipients, at approximately 1% (see Table 16).

## **2.5 'Special needs' groups**

There are particular groups of older Australians who are more likely to be disadvantaged in accessing aged care services than older Australians in general. These groups are defined by the *Aged Care Act 1997* as 'special needs' groups, which include those who live in rural or remote areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from non-English-speaking backgrounds, and people with a personal financial hardship. One of the government's objectives is for the provision of aged care services to specifically target the needs of these groups of people in order for them to have equitable access to the program.

### **Indigenous care recipients**

As mentioned in the previous section, care recipients who were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin accounted for almost 3% of the total number of Community Aged Care Package recipients at 30 June 2000. The age profile of this subgroup of care recipients is considerably younger than that of the general package recipient population (see Figure 3), with 7% aged under 50, 44% aged between 50 and 69, and 49% aged 70 and over (compared to less than 1%, 11% and 88% respectively for non-Indigenous care recipients).



Using the low series<sup>4</sup> of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) experimental projections of the Indigenous population in Australia (ABS 1998) for June 2000, the ratio of Indigenous people receiving Community Aged Care Packages, including the 81 care recipients receiving flexible funding under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy, at 30 June 1999 was 12.0 per 1,000 Indigenous persons aged 50 years and over. The ratio would be 10.6 per 1,000 persons aged 50 years and over if the high series was used. Although there are considerable differences across Australian regions, the ratio indicates that the provision of care to aged Indigenous people was similar to if not above the provision of care to aged people in the general population (10.9 per 1,000 persons aged 70 and over).

### Care recipients from non-English-speaking backgrounds

For the purpose of this report, people from non-English-speaking backgrounds are defined as those who were born in countries other than Australia, Ireland, United Kingdom, New Zealand, United States of America, Canada, and South Africa (and hence are defined as those whose first spoken language was not English). Overall, there were 4,133 care recipients from non-English-speaking backgrounds receiving packages at 30 June 2000, accounting for 25% of care recipients who reported their place of birth (see Table 18).

<sup>4</sup> Two different series were published in the ABS experimental projections of the Indigenous population in Australia for June 2000—high series and low series. Both use the same assumption about future fertility rates, mortality rates, and net migration levels, with the difference being the assumed change in the propensity of the population to identify as being of Indigenous origin. The low series assumes that the 1996 Census propensity to identify as Indigenous will remain constant throughout the projection period while the high series assumes a continuing increase in the propensity to identify as Indigenous throughout this period at the same rate as recorded between 1991 and 1996.

Based on ABS preliminary estimated resident population by country of birth for 2000, the ratio of people from non-English-speaking backgrounds receiving packages at 30 June was 14.1 care recipients per 1,000 persons aged 70 years and over from non-English-speaking backgrounds (ABS 2000b)—a higher rate than that for the general population (10.8 per 1,000 persons aged 70 and over).

### **Care recipients in financial hardship**

For the purposes of the program, a person with financial hardship is defined as someone 'who did not own a home in the two years before the reference time; and at the reference time was in receipt of the maximum basic rate of pension or benefit' (Department of Health and Aged Care 1999). The program requires service providers to allocate a proportion of packages to people in financial hardship. The specified proportion of allocations varies from region to region depending mainly on the existing service provision levels in the region where the outlet is located. Outlets providing Housing Linked Care Packages are specifically obliged to reserve all their places for care recipients in financial hardship.

At 30 June 2000, 720 outlets were providing Community Aged Care Packages throughout Australia. Almost all (99%) were required to allocate at least 10% of their total packages to care recipients in financial hardship, with the majority (79%) having a target set between 11% and 30% (see Table 19). There were 9 outlets with no target and 90 with a requirement to provide more than 90% of their care packages to care recipients in financial hardship. The Northern Territory was a special case with 20 out of 28 outlets having a target of more than 90%, reflecting the higher proportion of people identified as being in financial hardship in this Territory.

The proportion of care recipients identified as those in financial hardship for each State and Territory is presented in Table 21. Of those whose financial hardship status was reported, 46% were in financial hardship and 54% were not. A similar distribution to the national average can be seen in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. Queensland and Tasmania, on the other hand, showed a predominating number of care recipients in financial hardship, with the Northern Territory reporting 100% of responding care recipients in financial hardship.

When the proportion of packages targeted to people in financial hardship for each State and Territory (see Table 22) is compared to the actual proportion of clients in financial hardship (see Table 21), it is evident that all States and Territories exceeded their targets. In the Northern Territory, all responding clients were financially disadvantaged, the next highest proportion of any State or Territory was 65.3% in Tasmania.

### **Care recipients in rural and remote areas**

As shown in Table 8, 4,844 community aged care recipients lived in rural and remote areas of Australia. This number accounted for 29% of all care recipients at 30 June—26% in rural areas and 3% in remote areas. The age profile for care recipients in these regions appears to be relatively younger than for care recipients in capital cities and other metropolitan areas, with 16% of care recipients under the age of 70 years (compared to some 11% of care recipients in capital cities and metropolitan areas aged under 70). This difference in the age profile is more apparent when care recipients in remote areas are viewed separately, amongst whom care recipients under the age of 70 accounted for approximately 33%.

## 2.6 Admissions and separations

There were 10,824 care recipients admitted to a Community Aged Care Package between 1 July 1999 and 30 June 2000. During the same period 7,242 care recipients left their service providers (see Tables 24 and 25).

Among those leaving between 1 July 1999 and 30 June 2000, the main reasons reported were that care recipients either left to go to an aged care home (47%) or died (21%). Care recipients leaving for all other reasons such as to be admitted to a hospital or to another community aged care service provider accounted for 32% of care recipients (see Table 25).

This pattern of completed care episodes reflects the patterns seen in most States and Territories. The Northern Territory, again, is an exception with the proportion moving to an aged care home being lower (25% compared with 47% nationally) and the proportion of deaths higher (45% compared to 21% nationally). As mentioned earlier, care must be taken in interpreting results for the Northern Territory given the small number of care recipients in the Northern Territory as a proportion of the national figure.

The proportion of men who left to go to an aged care home was generally lower (44% of male care recipients) than that for women (49%). Conversely, there was a higher proportion of deaths among men (27%) than among women (18%).

Among those who left the service, 20% received care for less than 3 months prior to leaving, 36% for 3 months to a year, and 26% between 1 and 2 years. The number of care recipients who received care for more than 2 years accounted for 18% (see Table 26).

The relationship between length of stay and reasons for separations was also examined (see Table 27). There seems to be no strong correlation between length of stay and reason for separations. However, very short stay (less than 8 weeks) and very long stay (over 4 years) care recipients were less likely to leave a package and enter residential care than other care recipients.

## 2.7 State and Territory variations

The ratio of package provision varied greatly among States and Territories. With the exception of the Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory had the highest ratio of provision at 17.4 packages per 1,000 persons aged 70 years and over, followed by Tasmania (12.4). Other States had ratios of provision ranging from 10.2 to 10.9 packages per 1,000 persons aged 70 years and over. The Northern Territory had a ratio of 46.1 packages per 1,000 persons aged 70 years and over, however, this ratio is not comparable with those of other States and Territories due to the differences in age structure and Indigenous status of the potential clientele in the Northern Territory.

The size of service-providing outlets varied from one package to 179 packages across the country. The Australian Capital Territory had the highest average of 51 packages, with the next largest groups in Victoria (43), South Australia (32) and New South Wales (29). The Northern Territory had the smallest average of 7, followed by Queensland (15), Western Australia (16) and Tasmania (18). All of the outlets in the Northern Territory were of smaller size, with 12 or fewer packages, while 8 outlets in Victoria had 100 packages or more as did 1 outlet in New South Wales.

When compared to those in the other States and the Australian Capital Territory, care recipients in the Northern Territory had the youngest age profile, with 52% under the age of

70. The 'oldest' profile was found in Tasmania where care recipients aged 70 years and over made up approximately 92% compared with the national average of 87%.

The composition of care recipients by origin of birth also varied among States and Territories. In Western Australia, overseas-born care recipients made up 43% while only 6% of care recipients in the Northern Territory were overseas-born. The majority of overseas-born care recipients living in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania were from other European countries (i.e. non-English-speaking). In the other States and Territories, care recipients who were born in either the United Kingdom or Ireland made up the highest proportion, the exception being Queensland where there was an equal representation of people from each group.