



Australia's **2011**
welfare

In brief

Introduction



Every two years the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare releases the nation's most comprehensive and authoritative source of statistics on welfare services. To mark the tenth report in the series, *Australia's welfare 2011* is accompanied by this companion booklet, introducing new readers to AIHW's wide-reaching flagship publication.

Australia's welfare in brief presents key comparisons and trends across the welfare sector, including those aspects that influence the demand for welfare services. We hope readers will be inspired to find out more by consulting *Australia's welfare 2011* or one of AIHW's range of around 150 publications produced annually.



Australia's **2011**
welfare

In brief

Australia's welfare 2011—in brief

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1

Who are we?



Australia is a diverse and dynamic nation. Understanding demographic and family trends is of critical importance in planning and delivering services to meet our different needs.

This section takes a look at our population's size, shape and composition with a particular focus on changes over recent decades.

Australians in brief



2.5% are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders



27% are migrants:

- 9.4% born in English-speaking countries
- 17.5% born in other countries

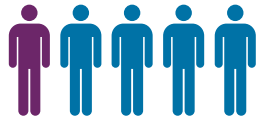


33% are aged less than 25,

including **7%** aged 0–4

13% are aged 65 or over





Almost **one in five** have a disability

12% are informal carers for someone who has a disability or is ageing



More than **half a million** people work for community service organisations

69% of households own their home



4% rent from a public housing authority

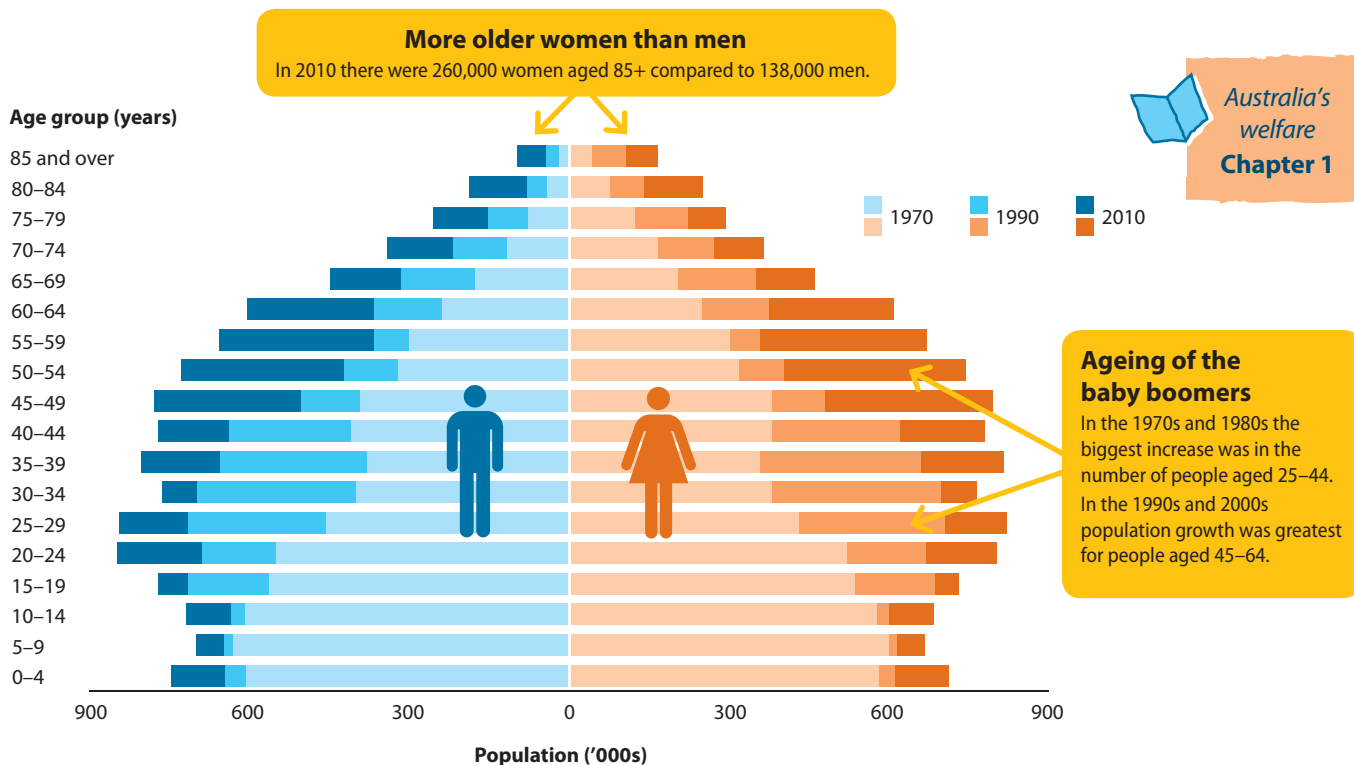


Our population is growing and ageing

Australia's population in June 2010 was 22.3 million people. One-third were aged 0–24 while 13% were aged 65 or over (including 1% of the population who were aged 85 or older). The Indigenous population is younger: more than half of Australians of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent were aged under 25 in 2006, and only 3% were 65 or over.

The population grew by 78% between 1970 and 2010—an extra 10 million people. The number of people aged 65 or over almost tripled, while the number of children aged under 15 rose by only 17%.

Australian population structure

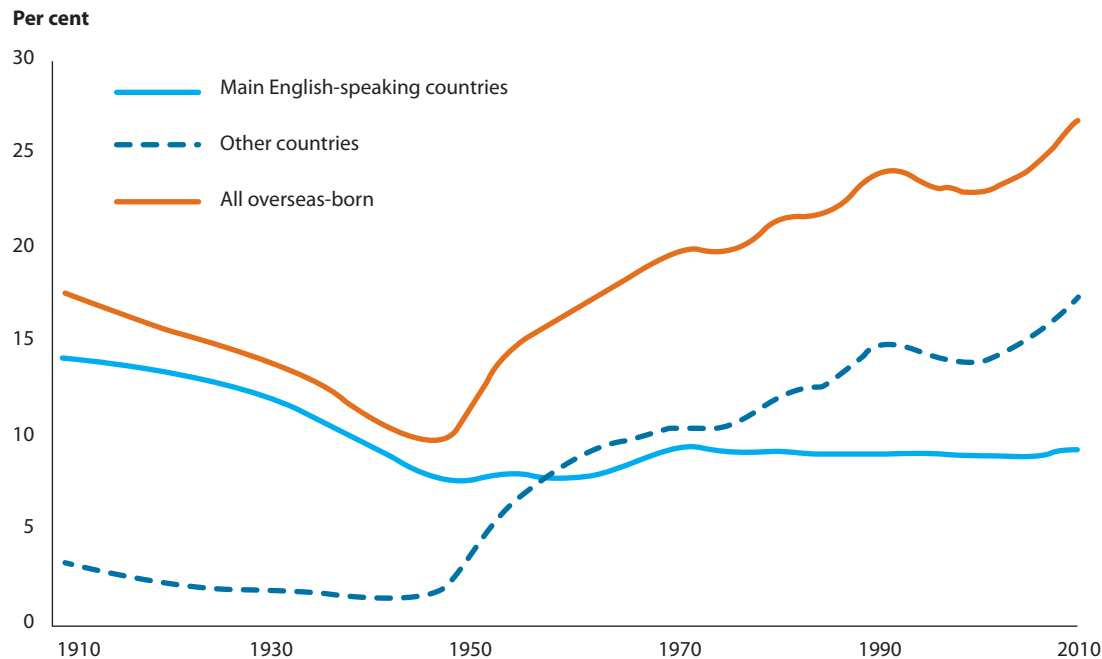


We are becoming more culturally diverse

In 2010, more than one in four (27%) of us were born overseas—a higher percentage than at any time in the past 100 years. The percentage born in main English-speaking countries has been steady at around 9% since the 1970s while migration from other countries continues to rise.

The top 5 countries of birth of migrants to Australia were the United Kingdom (5.3% of the population), New Zealand (2.4%), China (1.7%), India (1.5%) and Italy (1.0%). Country of origin varies between age groups. For example, one in 25 people aged 65 or over were born in Italy, compared to around one in 2,000 people aged less than 25. People aged 25–64 were more likely than younger or older people to come from China, India, the Philippines or Malaysia.

Population born overseas



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Fast facts

One in three people aged 65 or over were born outside Australia, compared to one in seven aged less than 25.

Note: Main English-speaking countries are the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Ireland, the USA, Canada and South Africa.

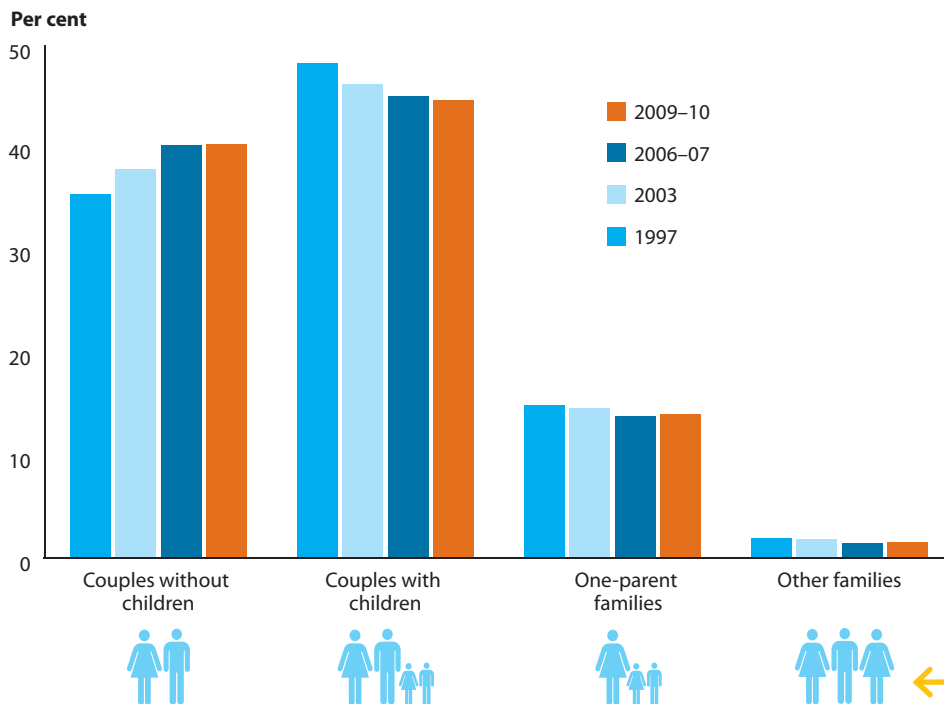
We live in different types of families

In 2009–10 there were 6.2 million family households; 2 million people lived alone, and there were a quarter of a million group households.

Almost half of all families living together consisted of a couple with children (44%), while 40% were couples without children and 14% were one-parent families. Other types of families made up less than 2% of co-resident families.

Couples without children are increasing as a percentage of all families that live together. This includes couples who have never (or not yet) had children, and couples whose children have moved out of home. The percentage of families that are lone parents with children has been fairly stable for over a decade.

Families living in the same household



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Chapter 2

Fast facts

In 2009–10, 73% of children aged under 18 lived in intact families; 9% lived in step or blended families and 18% lived in one-parent families.

← eg. Adult siblings living together

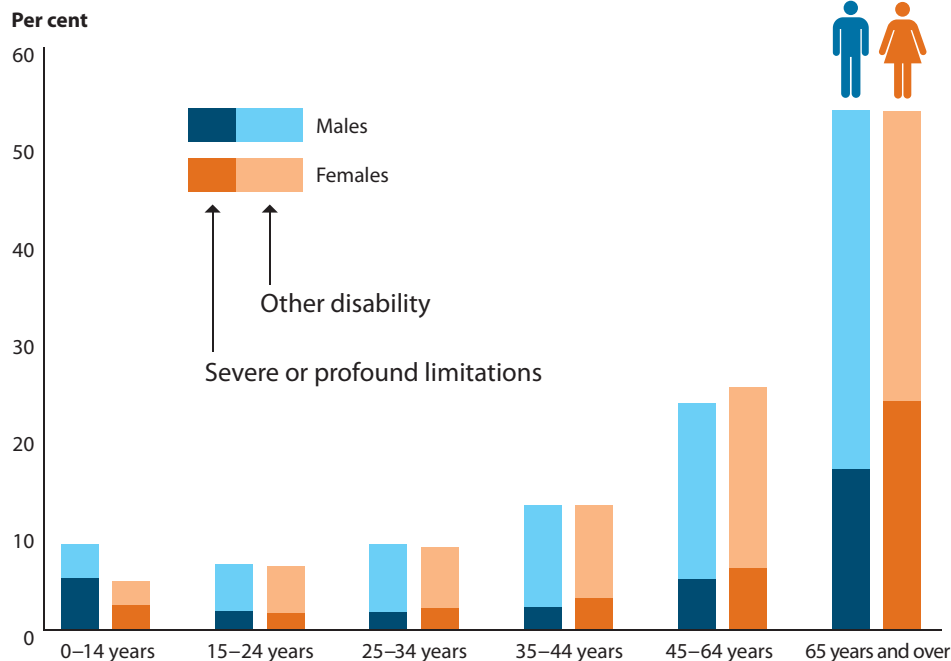
One in five of us has a disability

Over 4 million Australians (18.5% of the population) had some form of disability in 2009, including:

- 0.5 million children and young people aged 0–24
- 2.0 million people aged 25–64
- 1.6 million older people aged 65 or over

Almost 1.3 million people (5.8% of the population) sometimes or always needed help with daily activities relating to mobility, self-care or communication—referred to as having severe or profound core activity limitations. Boys aged 0–14 were twice as likely as girls to have severe or profound core activity limitations; among people aged 65 or over they were more common for females than males.

Population with a disability



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Fast facts

While disability was most commonly caused by physical health conditions, one in five people with disability said that their main disabling condition was a mental or behavioural disorder (including intellectual and developmental disorders).

We are living longer, with more disability-free years

Some people are born with a disability or acquire disability at a young age. However, for many people disability is associated with health conditions related to ageing. This means that, generally speaking, the longer a person lives the more likely they are to experience disability at some time in their life.

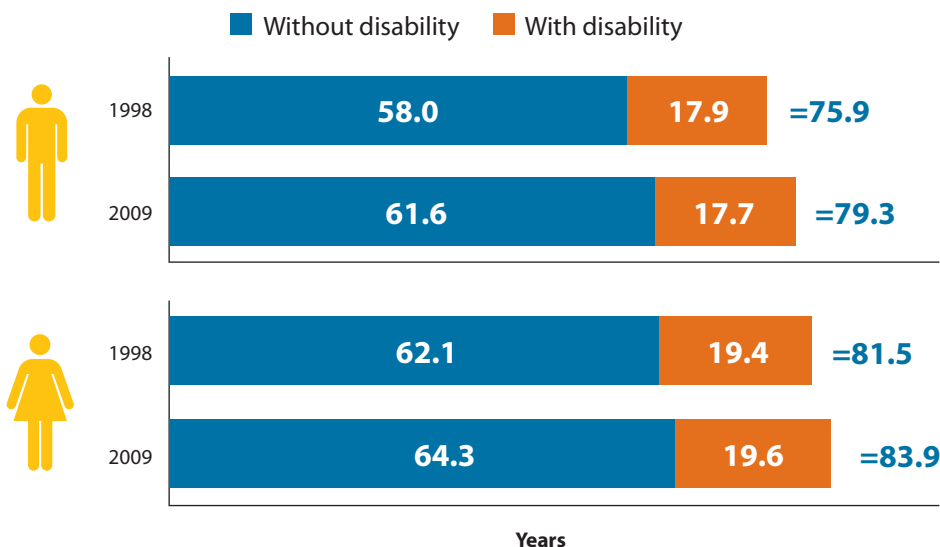
Life expectancy for the average Australian boy born in 2009 was 79.3 years. Based on current disability rates, he could expect to live 61.6 years without any form of disability (or more than three-quarters of his total life expectancy). The average Australian girl born in 2009 could expect to live 83.9 years, of which 64.3 years were disability-free.

Life expectancy has increased for both males and females since 1998, and the latest information suggests that almost all of this increase will be extra years of life without disability.

Life expectancy at birth



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Chapter 5



Fast facts

While years lived with disability account for 22–23% of the average life expectancy, less than 10% are predicted to involve severe or profound disability (5.5 years for boys born in 2009 and 7.5 years for girls).

2

Where do we live?



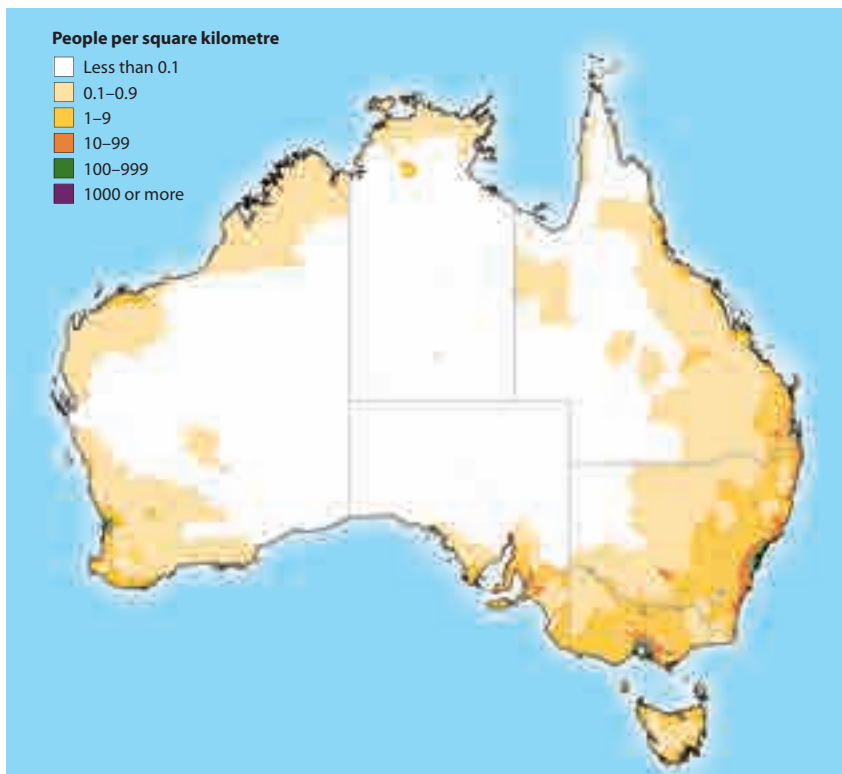
This section considers the question 'where do we live?' in two ways: by examining some differences in the populations living in cities compared to regional and remote areas; and by focusing on the tenure arrangements of individual households

Most of us live in coastal cities

Australia has an uneven population distribution. In June 2010, almost two-thirds (64%) of the population lived in capital cities, including 21% in Sydney alone. Population density ranged from less than one person per square kilometre in remote areas to more than 1,000 people per square kilometre in some city suburbs.

Indigenous Australians are more likely than non-Indigenous Australians to live in remote areas. According to the 2006 Census, one in 40 Australians (2.5%) identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, but in areas classified as *Remote* or *Very Remote* this was as high as one in four (26%). Although Indigenous Australians are more likely than other Australians to live in remote areas, the majority live in cities and large regional towns.

Population density, June 2010



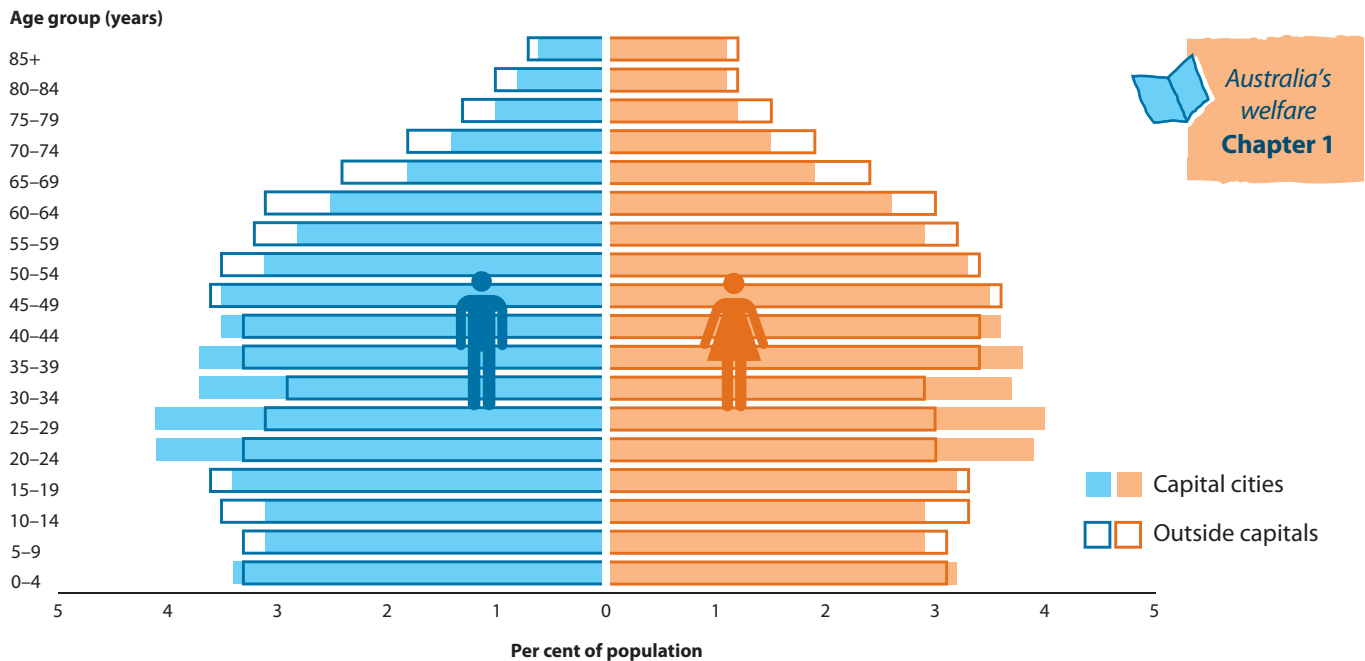
A generation gap in regional areas

The population age profile is generally younger in capital cities than in other areas. This is largely due to a relatively high proportion of people aged in their 20s and 30s living in capital cities: in 2010, almost one in three (31%) people living in capital cities were aged 20–39, compared to one in four (25%) people living in other areas. The concentration of education, employment and other opportunities in cities is likely to be a driving factor behind young adults moving out of regional areas.

Fast facts

In 2010 there were 102 females living in the capital cities for every 100 males, compared to 99 females for every 100 males outside the capitals.

Population age structure within and outside capital cities, 2010



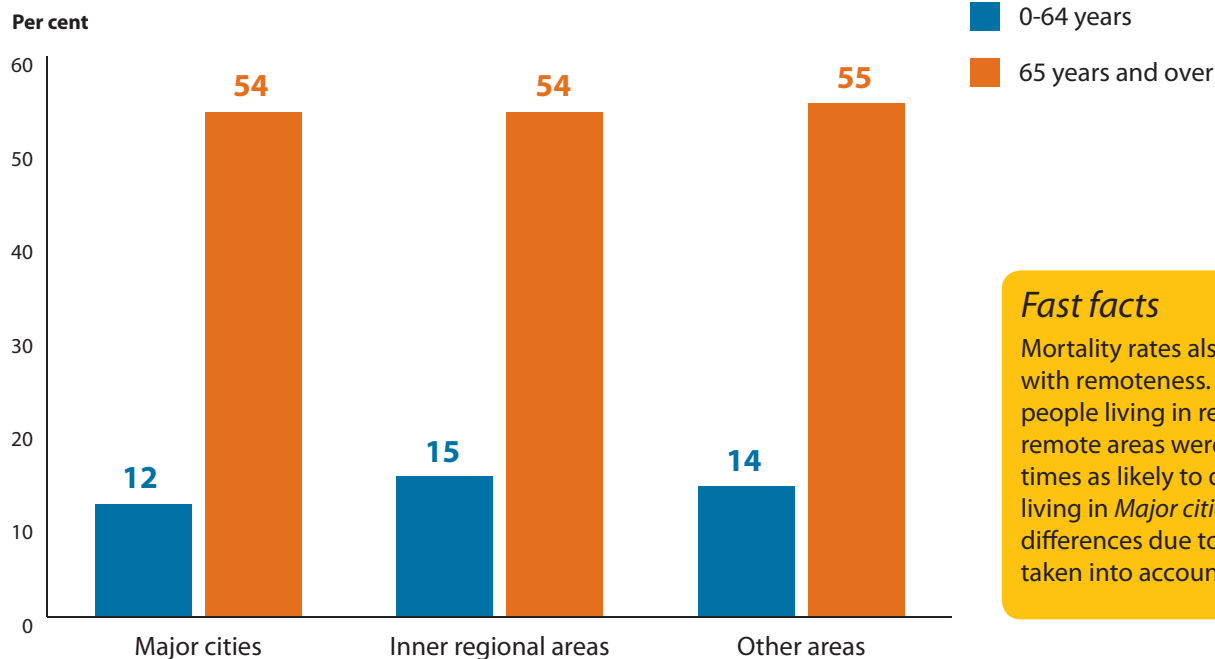
Disability is more common in regional areas

While the majority of people with disability (2.6 million) lived in *Major cities* in 2009, almost 1 million lived in *Inner regional* areas and 436,000 lived in *Outer regional, Remote* and *Very remote* areas.

After taking different population age structures into account, people aged under 65 living outside *Major cities* were more likely to have a disability than people living in *Major cities*. However, there were no significant differences in disability rates among older people.



Population with disability, 2009



Fast facts

Mortality rates also increased with remoteness. In 2007, people living in regional or remote areas were 1.1–1.3 times as likely to die as those living in *Major cities*, after differences due to age are taken into account.

Note: Rates are age-standardised.

Most of us own our home

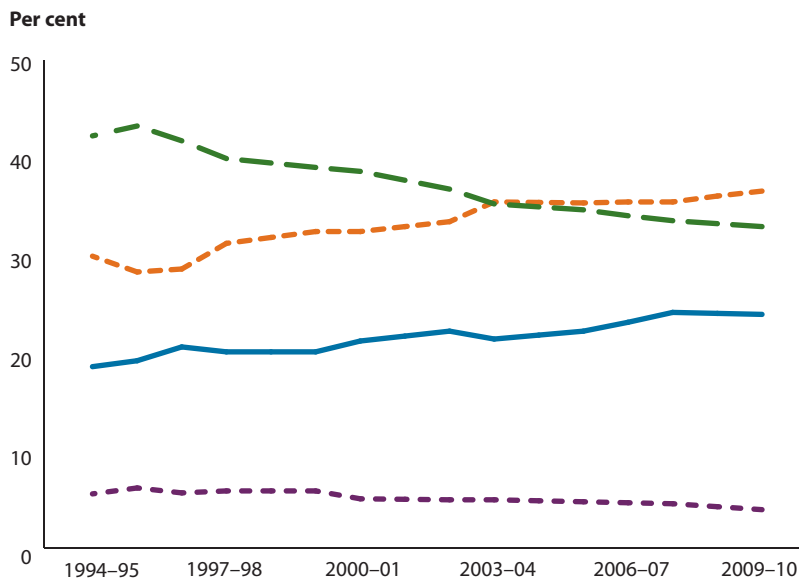
In 2009–10 there were around 8.4 million households in Australia. More than two-thirds (69%) were owner-occupiers, while one in four (24%) rented from a private landlord and 4% lived in housing provided by a state or territory housing authority ('public housing'). A small percentage of people lived in households with other types of tenure, such as rent-free housing.

Between 1994–95 and 2009–10 the overall percentage of households that were owner-occupiers changed only slightly, falling from 71% to 69%. However, within this group there was a shift away from outright ownership, as the percentage of households paying off a mortgage increased. Over the same period, rental from a private landlord became more common while the public housing share fell slightly.



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Trends in selected housing tenures



Fast facts

Private rental is the most common form of tenure for young adult households.

From the mid-30s to mid-50s people are most likely to have a mortgage, while the majority of older people own their home outright.

- Private landlord
- - - Public housing
- - - Owner with a mortgage
- - - Owner without a mortgage

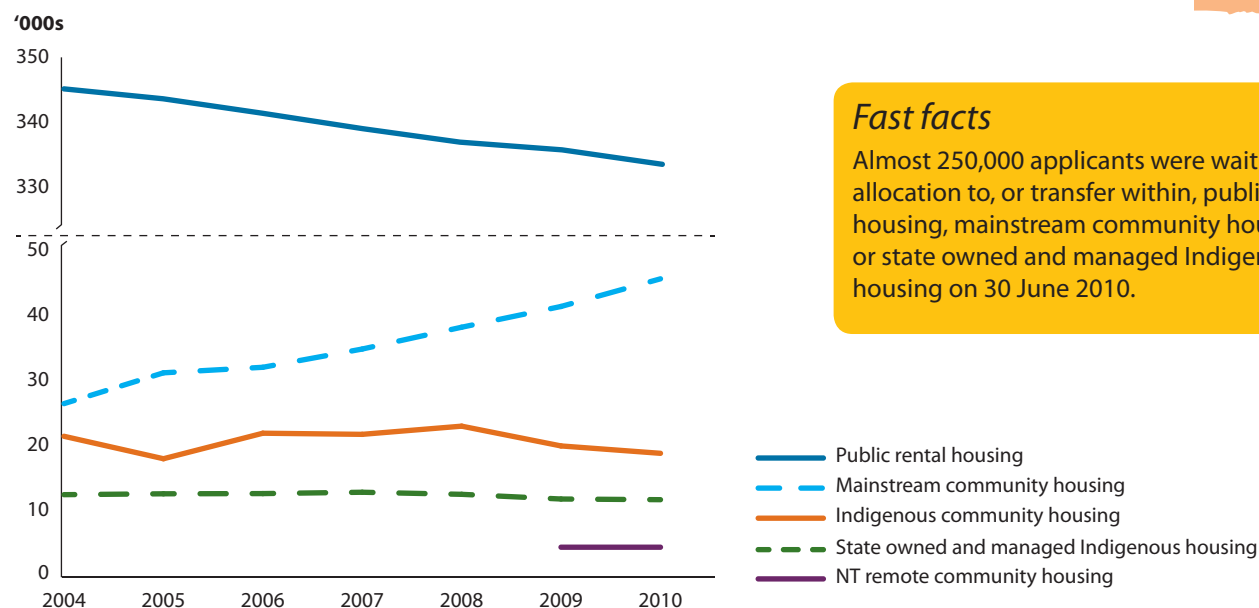
Less public housing, more community housing

In 2010 there were more than 400,000 dwellings managed by social housing programs. The largest of these was public rental housing, which accounted for around four in five social housing dwellings. Since 2004 the number of dwellings in public rental housing has fallen. On the other hand, there has been an increase in housing provided to low- and moderate-income or special needs households managed by community-based organisations ('mainstream community housing').

Around one-third of all Indigenous households in Australia were living in social housing in June 2010—roughly 60,000 households. Indigenous-specific programs accommodated half of these households, but Indigenous households also accounted for 7–8% of households in mainstream community programs.



Number of social housing dwellings



Fast facts

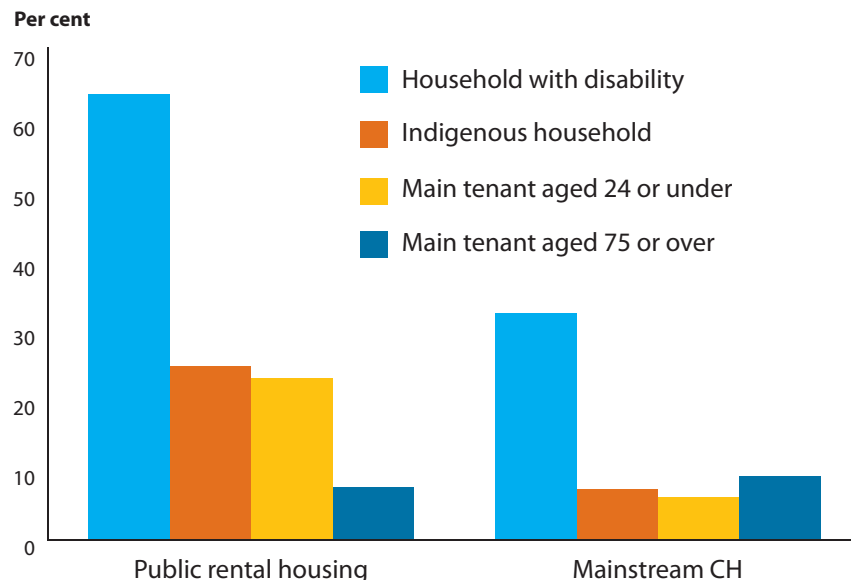
Almost 250,000 applicants were waiting for allocation to, or transfer within, public rental housing, mainstream community housing, or state owned and managed Indigenous housing on 30 June 2010.

People with special needs dominate social housing recipients

Around 60–65% of households that were newly allocated to public rental housing or mainstream community housing in 2009–10 were classified as ‘special needs households’. The most common type of special need household was one that included a person with a disability. Other special needs categories were Indigenous households, and households whose main tenant was aged under 25, or 75 or over. Much of the newly allocated housing went to households that fell into multiple special needs categories.

Households that are considered to be in greatest need are given priority access to social housing. There are a number of situations under which a household may be categorised as being in greatest need, including homelessness or risk of homelessness. In 2009–10, 75% of households newly allocated to public rental housing and 63% of those newly allocated to mainstream community housing were classified as being in greatest need.

Newly allocated housing in 2009–10



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Fast facts

More than half of all households in public rental housing in June 2010 were single adults, and almost one in five were one-parent families. These groups were over-represented in public housing compared to all renting households in Australia (public and private).



3

How do we engage with the community?



Community engagement takes many forms.

This section presents information on Australians' engagement in two critical areas— education and employment— in which participation is strongly associated with individual and family wellbeing, as well as bringing benefits to the nation at large.

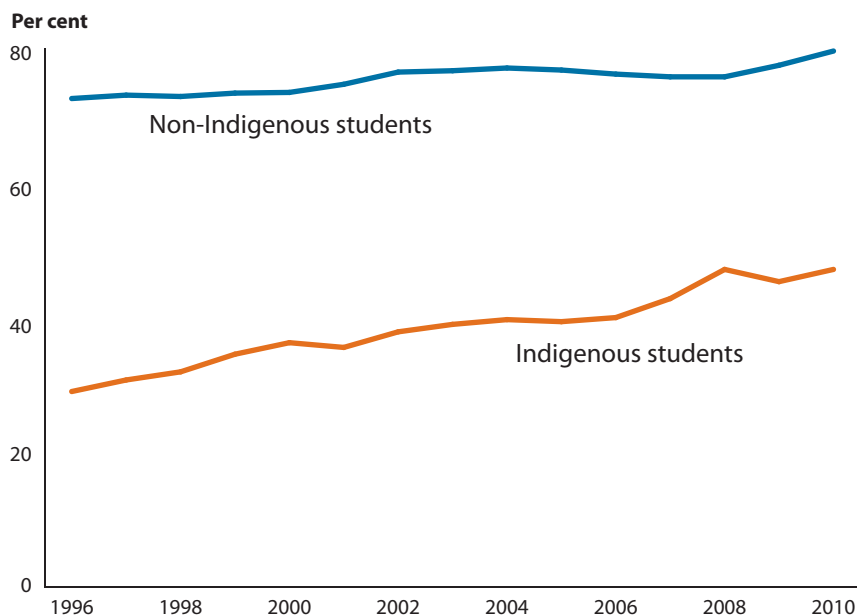
Students are staying at school longer

Students who leave school early are at risk of facing reduced employment opportunities and longer periods of unemployment compared to Year 12 graduates. Retention rates have increased in recent years, especially for Indigenous students. However, in 2010 only 47% of Indigenous students remained in school until Year 12, compared to 79% of non-Indigenous students. Overall, retention rates were higher for girls (83%) than boys (73%).

Not everyone who remains at school until Year 12 necessarily completes Year 12. In 2010, 70% of school leavers aged 15–24 had completed Year 12; a slight increase from 68% in 2001.



Retention to Year 12



Fast facts

Of the teenagers aged 15–19 who left school in 2008, by May 2009:

- 86% of those who completed Year 12 were working or in full-time study.
- 60% of those who did not complete Year 12 were working or in full-time study.

More females than males now participate in higher education

People with a non-school qualification such as an advanced vocational certificate, diploma or degree are more likely to be employed, and had higher earnings, than people who completed high school only.

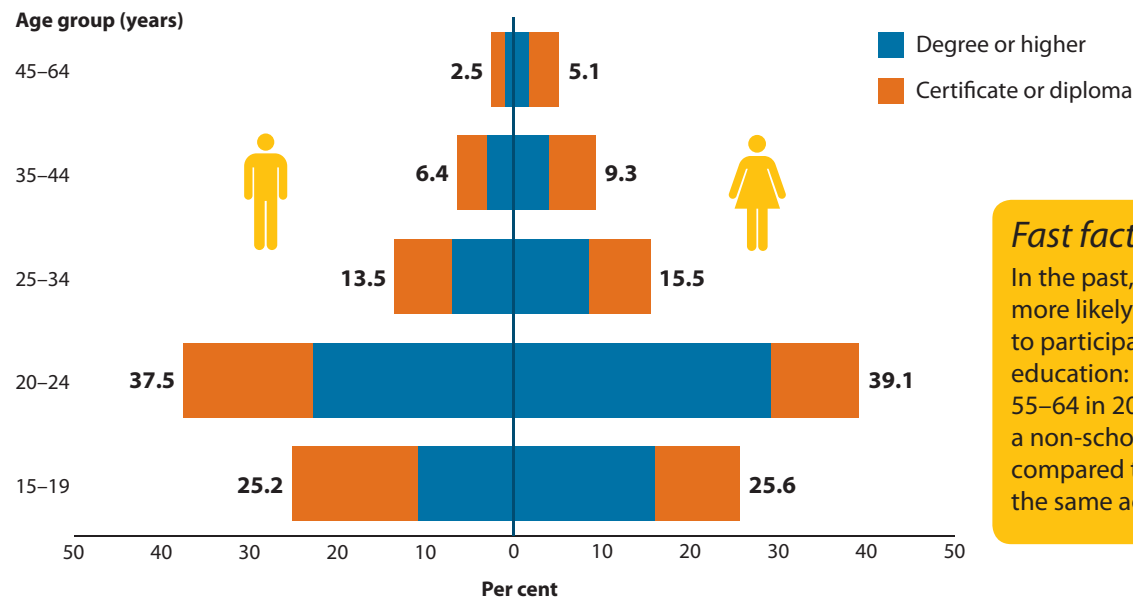
In 2010, more than half of all Australians aged 15–64 had completed a non-school qualification. Overall, males were slightly more likely to have a non-school qualification than females. However, there were more females than males enrolled in 2010: 12% of males and 14% of females.

Participation in a bachelor degree or postgraduate qualification was higher for females in all age groups. On the other hand, up to the age of 25 there were more males than females enrolled in certificate or diploma level courses.

Participation in non-school education, 2010



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Fast facts

In the past, males were more likely than females to participate in higher education: 60% of men aged 55–64 in 2010 had completed a non-school qualification, compared to 48% of women the same age.

Increasing workforce participation among women and older Australians...

Over the past decade, labour force participation rates increased markedly for older workers, including people who had reached retirement age. Overall, 72.5% of men and 59.0% of women aged 15 or over were in the labour force in 2010–11—an increase of 0.4 and 4.1 percentage points, respectively, over the participation rates 10 years ago.

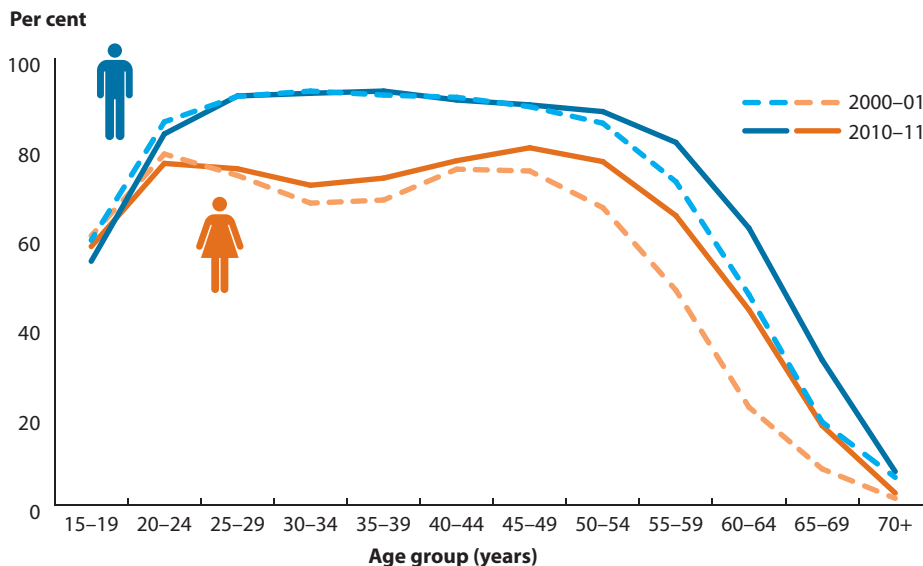
For men, almost all of the modest increase in labour force participation was in the age group 55 or over; for women participation grew strongly from 45 years, including more than doubling among those in their 60s.

Participation also rose by 4–5 percentage points among women in their 30s—at the same time as fertility rates rose in this age group. This suggests that women increasingly choose to remain in the workforce while having young children.

Labour force participation rates



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Fast facts

Almost one-third of Australian workers were employed part time in 2010–11 (working less than 35 hours per week)—16% of men and 46% of women.

Half (53%) of all employed people aged 65 or over worked part time—45% of older men and 70% of older women.

...but some people still miss out on the benefits of work

Some groups have lower rates of labour force participation and/or higher rates of unemployment than the wider Australian population. This puts them at increased risk of social exclusion, economic instability and reliance on government assistance. People who experience extended periods outside the labour force are less able to build up wealth (including superannuation and home ownership) to provide financial security as they age.



	Participation rate (15–64 year olds)	Unemployment rate
<p>↓ Rate for this group is generally lower than for the total Australian population</p> <p>↑ Rate for this group is generally higher than for the total Australian population</p>		
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	↓	↑
People with disability	↓	↑
Primary carers	↓	Information not available
Social housing tenants	Information not available	↑
Recent migrants from English-speaking countries	↑	↑
Recent migrants from non-English-speaking countries	↓	↑
People living outside capital cities	↓	↑



4

How do we Care for others?



Most Australians provide care to others at various stages of their life: to children, other family members, friends and neighbours; or to users of welfare services through direct employment or volunteering. Care is also provided indirectly by taxpayers in the form of subsidies, payments and services funded through the taxation system.

This section presents statistics on some of the different ways Australians provide care to each other, formally and informally, directly and indirectly.

Half of all children under 15 attend child care

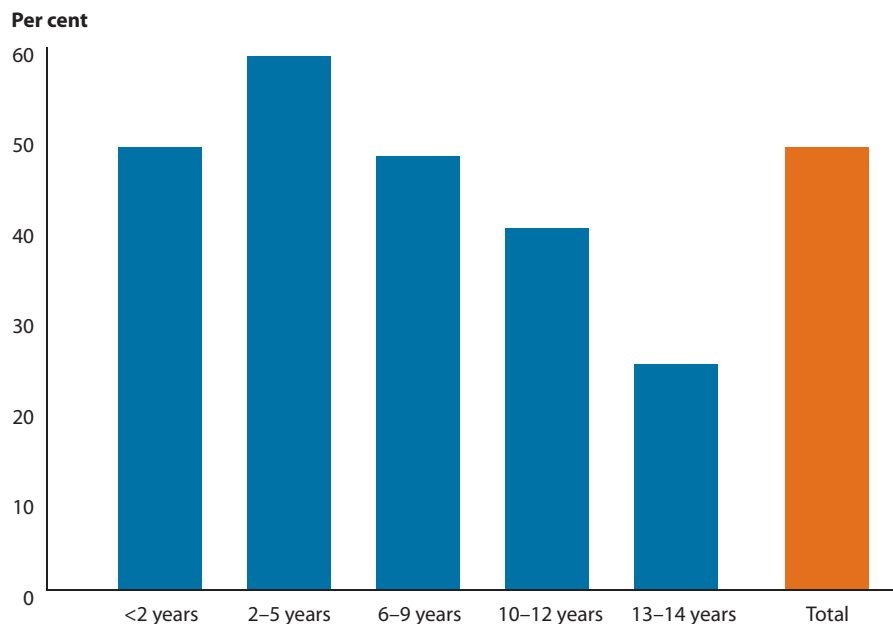
In 2009, 49% of children aged 0–14 attended child care, including after-school care, at some time during the year. Child care use was most common for children aged 2–5 (59%), then declined with age to 25% of teenagers aged 13 or 14.

Children in couple families whose parents' combined income was \$2,000 or more per week were twice as likely to have usual child care arrangements as those whose parents' combined income was less than \$800 per week. In part, this may be because many higher income families have two working parents and therefore may have a greater need for childcare. On the other hand, cost may be a barrier to child care for some low-income families.

Child care use, 2009



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Fast facts

There were around 110,000 child care workers in 2010. On average, child carers worked 37.5 hours and earned \$753.50 per week.

Women and older people provide most informal care

In 2009, 2.6 million people (12% of the population) were informal carers of a person with a disability or someone who was ageing. Of these, 771,000 were primary carers—the person who provides the most informal care to a care recipient. Over half of all informal carers and two-thirds of all primary carers were female.

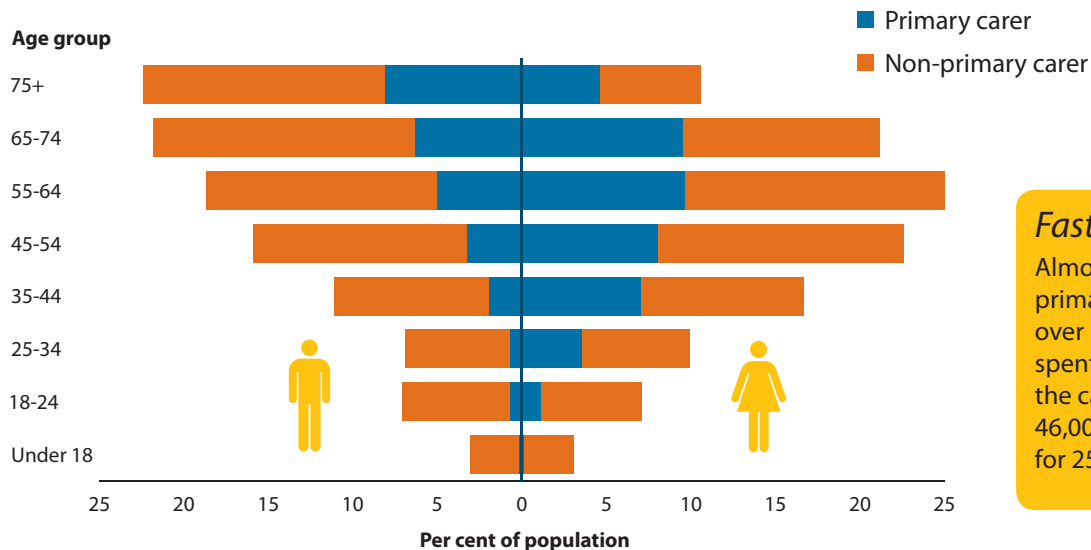
Primary carers aged 15–24 were most likely to be caring for a parent; those aged 25–44 were most likely to be caring for their son or daughter; and primary carers aged 45 or older were most likely to be caring for their spouse/partner.

One in four primary carers were aged 65 or over in 2009, compared to one in five in 1998. Like the Australian population generally, the informal carer population is ageing.



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Population providing informal care, 2009



Fast facts

Almost one-third of all primary carers aged 15 or over (243,000 people) had spent 10 years or more in the caring role—including 46,000 who had been caring for 25 years or more.

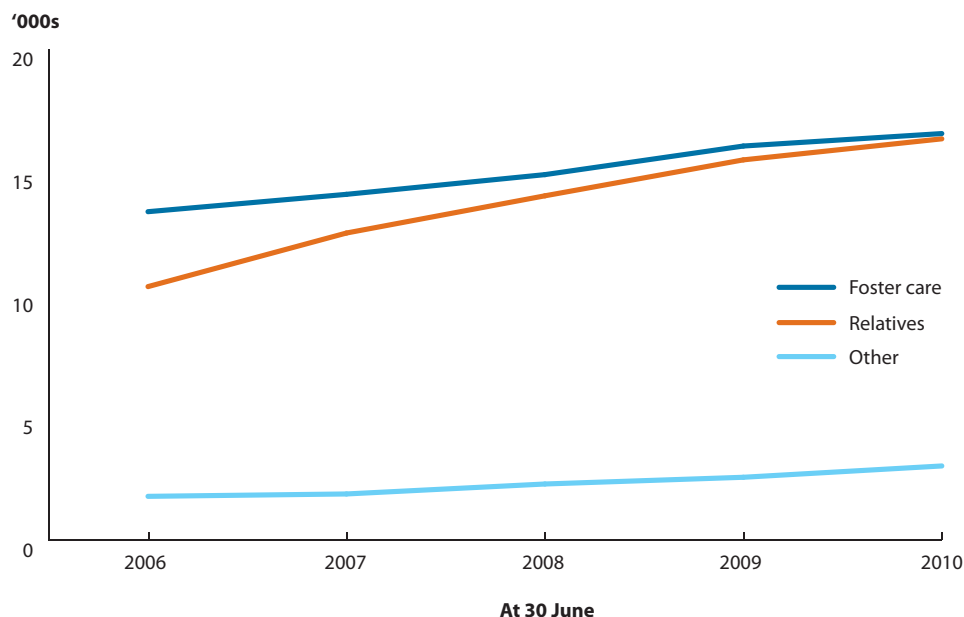
More children living in out-of-home care

Children may be placed in out-of-home care for a range of reasons including for protective concerns, situations where the parents are incapable of providing adequate care, or where alternative accommodation for the child is needed, such as during times of family crisis.

On 30 June 2010 there were almost 36,000 children living in out-of-home care across Australia. Roughly equal numbers of these children were in foster care and relative/kinship care arrangements (where children are placed with relatives/kin other than their immediate family). Around 3,000 children were living in other forms of out-of-home care, such as family group homes, residential care or independent living.

Between 2006 and 2010 the number of children living in out-of-home care rose by more than 10,000. Much of this increase is due to the length of time children tend to remain in care.

Number of children in out-of-home care, 2006–2010



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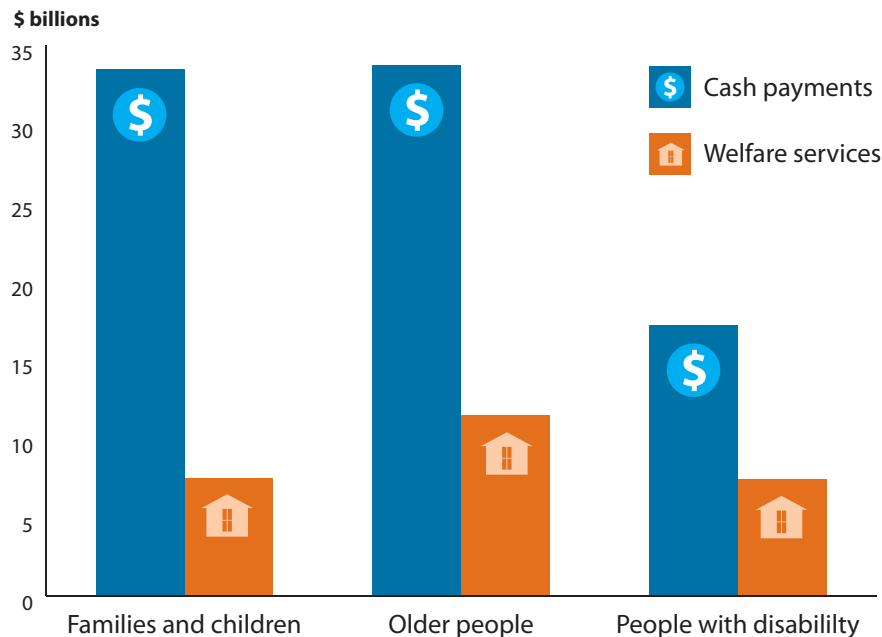
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were almost ten times as likely as non-Indigenous children to be in out-of-home care.

More than \$130 billion spent on welfare in 2008–09

In 2008–09, \$136.6 billion was spent providing welfare services and payments to Australians (not including tax expenditures or exemptions, or payments or services to people who were unemployed). The bulk of Australia's welfare expenditure is targeted at supporting three groups: families and children; older people; and people with disabilities.

More than two-thirds (69%, or \$94.4 billion) of the total welfare expenditure was for cash payments such as the Age Pension, Family Tax Benefit and Disability Support Pension. Expenditure on welfare services included residential aged care, home and community care for older people, and specialist services for people with disability. Assistance provided to families to meet child care costs (for example, the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate) is included under welfare services.

Major areas of government welfare expenditure, 2008–09



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Fast facts

While almost three-quarters of funding for welfare services came from governments, most services were provided by non-government organisations.

Almost all of the funding for cash payments came from governments.

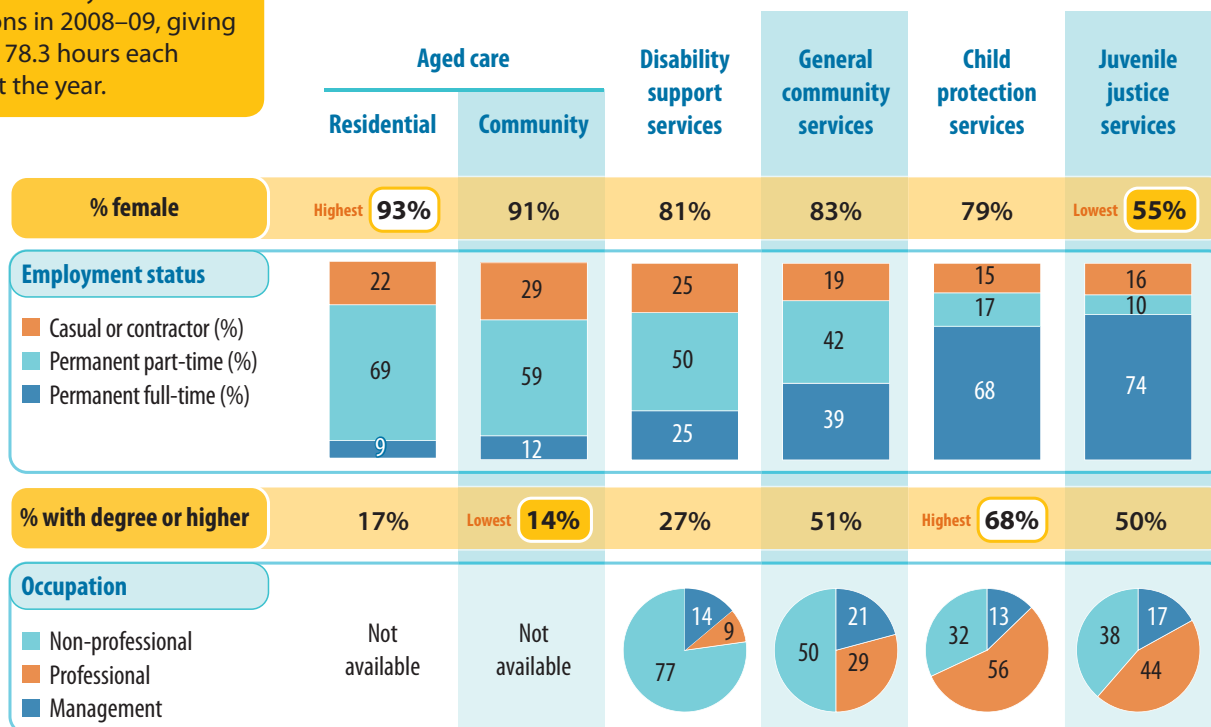
Community service organisations employ over half a million people

In June 2009 there were 571,000 people employed by organisations providing community services such as aged care, disability support, child care, and child protection services. Compared to the wider Australian workforce, community service workers were more likely to be female, employed on a part-time, casual or contract basis, and less likely to have a degree or higher qualification. However, there were some important differences between specific workforces within the community services sector.



Fast facts

An estimated 325,000 volunteers assisted community service organisations in 2008–09, giving an average 78.3 hours each throughout the year.



Note: Data refer to 2009 except for aged care, which are from 2007.

5 Who is at risk of missing out?



Most Australians are doing well, able to participate in the various aspects of family, community and economic life.

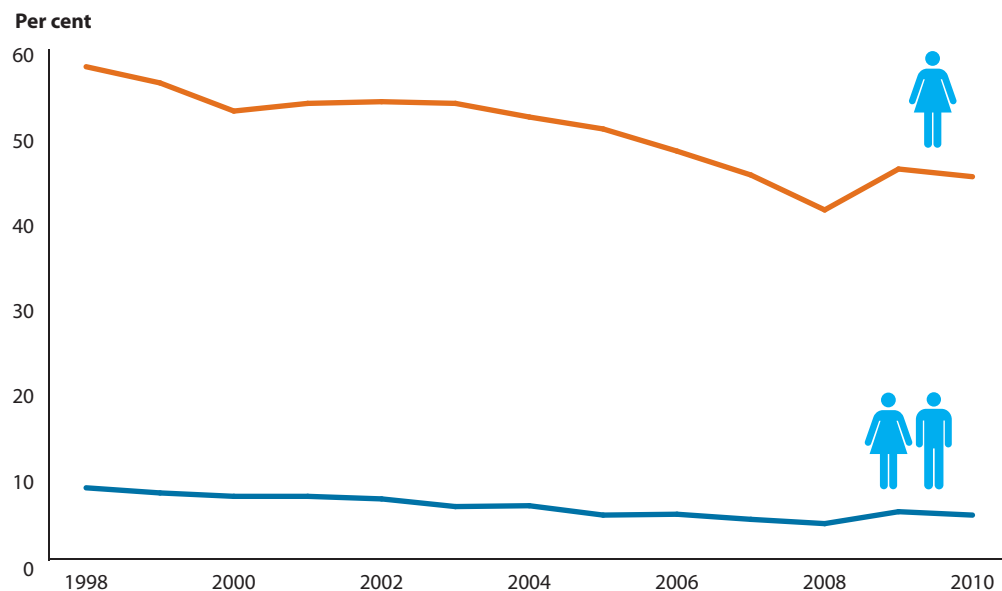
However, some groups experience comparatively more disadvantage or situations that place them at risk of missing out on the benefits others enjoy. This section focuses on some key indicators of disadvantage within our community.

Jobless families

Families in which there was no employed parent living in the household are referred to as jobless families. Parents and children living in jobless families are at increased risk of poverty, lower educational attainment and poor health. The Australian Government's social inclusion agenda has identified jobless families as a priority area for action.

In 2010, almost half (45%) of all one-parent families and 5% of all couple families with children aged 0–14 were jobless families. Over the past decade or so the rate of joblessness has fallen for both family types, in line with changes in the unemployment rate seen in the population generally.

Families with children under 15 years without an employed parent



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The most common working arrangement for couple families with children under 15 was for both parents to be employed (61%), often with the mother working part-time.

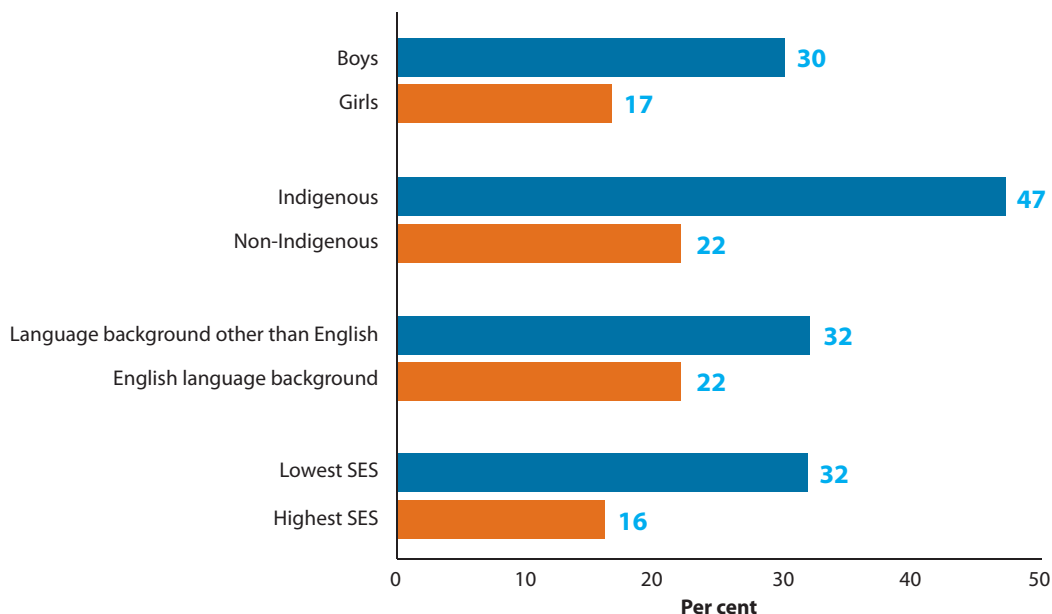
One-third of couple families had one parent employed; usually the father.

School readiness varies

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) collects information on five developmental domains at school entry, based on a teacher-completed checklist: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills; and communication skills and general knowledge. The majority of Australian children were doing well in 2009, with around three-quarters (76%) of children 'on track' across all AEDI domains at Year 1 entry. However, almost one-quarter (24%) of children were considered to be 'developmentally vulnerable', suggesting that they may have difficulty in Year 1.

Some groups of children were more likely than others to be classified as developmentally vulnerable, including Indigenous children, children living in areas of the lowest socioeconomic status (SES), and children from language backgrounds other than English.

Children developmentally vulnerable on one or more AEDI domains, 2009

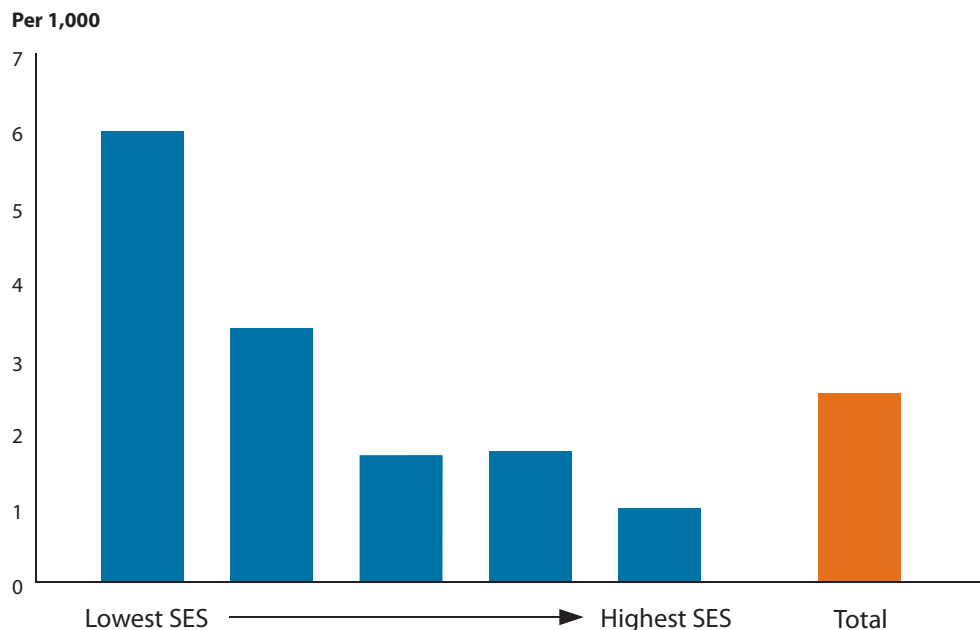


Young people in the juvenile justice system

Almost three in every 1,000 young Australians were under juvenile justice supervision on an average day in 2009–10. Most of those under supervision were under community-based supervision, with 15% in detention. Males were almost five times as likely to be under supervision as females.

Young people who were from disadvantaged areas were more likely to be under supervision than those from more advantaged areas. Those from areas of the lowest socioeconomic status (SES) were five times as likely to be under supervision as those living in the highest SES areas. Supervision rates were also much higher in remote areas than in major cities.

Young people aged 10–17 years under juvenile justice supervision, 2009–10



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Fast facts

Two out of every five young people under juvenile justice supervision in 2009–10 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, including half of those in detention.

Note: Breakdown by SES excludes data for Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

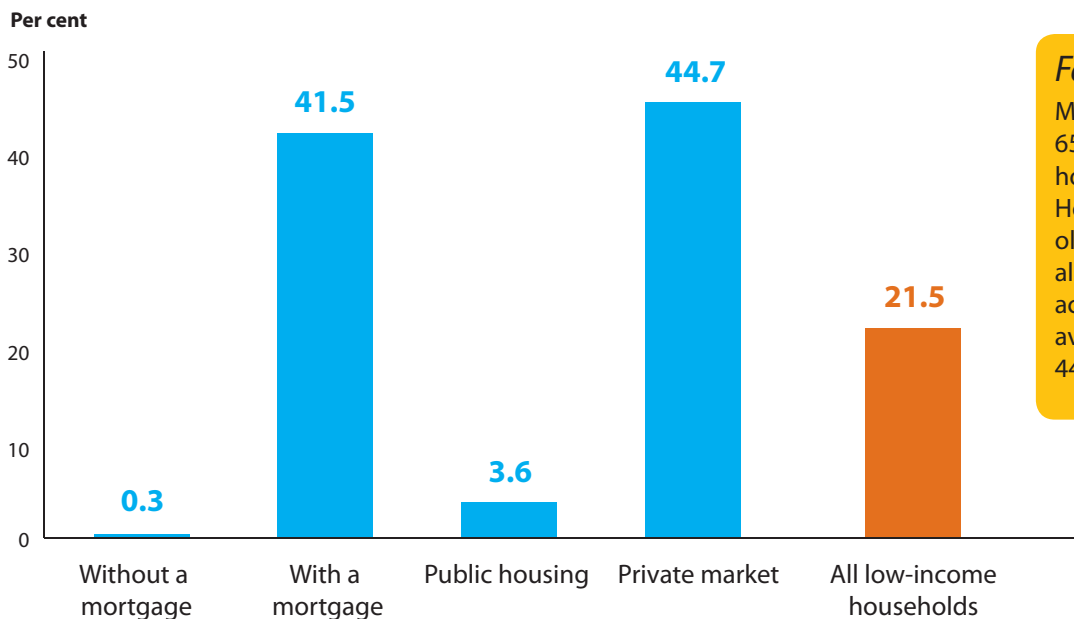
Low income households in housing stress

The cost of housing can place a significant burden on the household budget, reducing the funds available for other types of expenditure. Housing affordability is of particular concern for low income households, who may have less capacity to reduce their discretionary spending. A low income household that spends more than 30% of its gross (before-tax) income on housing costs is considered to be in housing stress.

In 2007–08, more than one in five low income households were in housing stress, including more than two in five low income households that were paying off a mortgage or renting in the private market.



Low income households in housing stress, 2007–08



Fast facts

Most Australians aged 65 or over had low housing costs in 2007–08. However, for low income older people living alone in private rental accommodation, the average housing cost was 44% of their gross income.

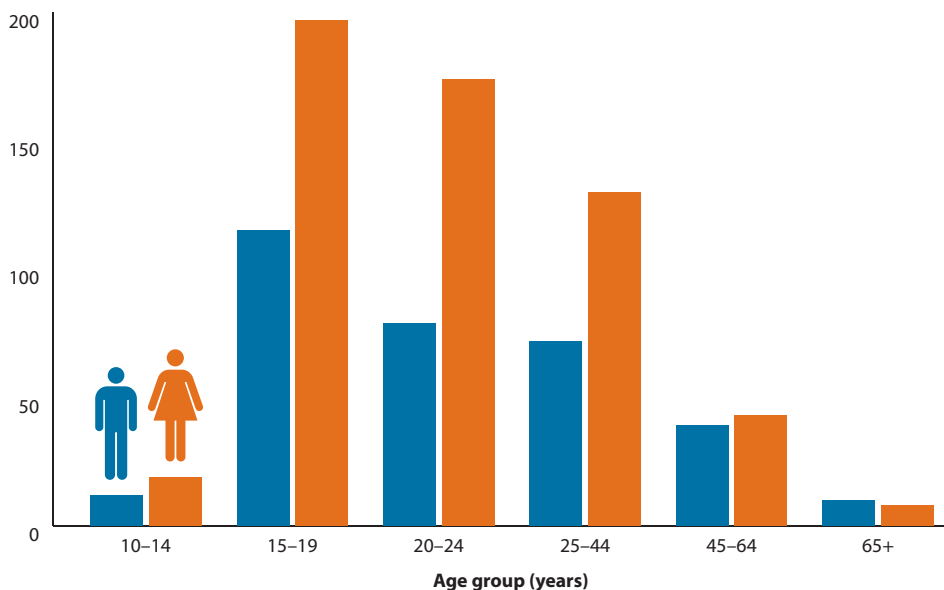
People seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services

In 2009–10, specialist homelessness services provided accommodation and other support to almost 220,000 people—or one in every 100 Australians. Both the number of people and proportion of the population seeking assistance have increased since 2006–07.

Females were more likely than males to use these services, in all age groups except 65 and over. Rates of service use were highest among young people of both sexes. These patterns reflect the historical focus of specialist homelessness services on providing services for youth and for women escaping domestic violence. Although there has been an expansion of target groups over time, the majority of agencies in 2009–10 were funded primarily to deliver services to these two groups.

Clients of specialist homelessness services aged 10 years and over, 2009–10

Per 10,000 population



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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were over-represented among users of specialist homelessness services. In 2009–10, 18% of clients were Indigenous, as were 26% of children accompanying clients.

Groups vulnerable to homelessness

Research has shown that there are many pathways into homelessness in Australia. They include domestic violence, financial crisis, substance use problems, mental health issues and leaving care and custodial settings such as hospitals or prisons.

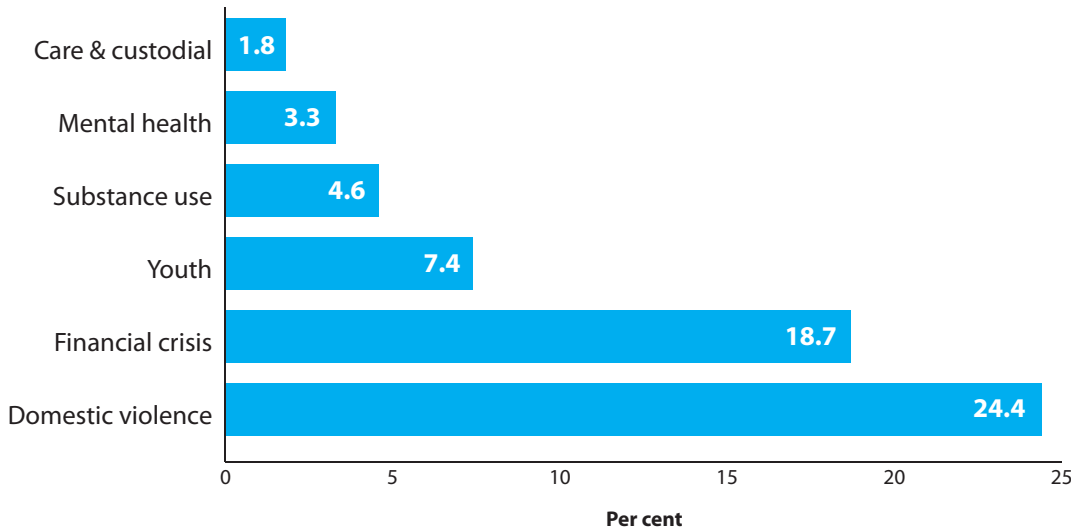
A separate 'youth pathway' refers to teenagers who seek assistance from specialist homelessness services because of interpersonal problems including relationship or family breakdown, domestic/family violence, sexual abuse and needing time out from their home situation.

In 2009–10, around 60% of clients of specialist homelessness services fit into one or more of these pathway groups, with the largest being adults who reported domestic violence as their main reason for seeking assistance.

Pathways into homelessness for clients of specialist homelessness services, 2009–10



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Women made up 96% of clients in the domestic violence pathway, 63% of youth and 50% of the financial crisis group. Men were more likely to belong to the substance use, mental health and care and custodial groups.



6

How do we compare?



It can be difficult to make international comparisons about welfare because of differences between social, political, historical and cultural contexts in which services are delivered. However, there are some areas in which information is sufficiently comparable to enable us to look overseas and ask—“How do we compare?”

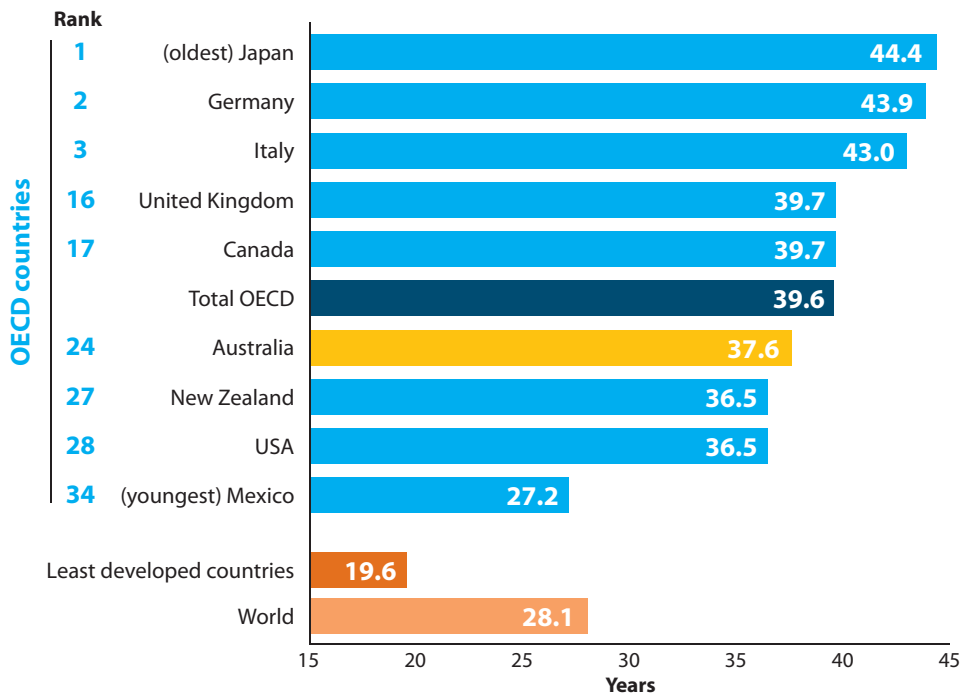
We are younger than many developed countries

Australia's median age in 2009 was 37.6 years—in other words, half the population was aged 37.6 years or younger. This is two years younger than the median age across the OECD (the group of the most developed countries), putting Australia in the youngest third of the OECD group. Japan had the oldest population in the world, with a median age of 44.4 years.

Poor countries tend to have younger populations due to a combination of high birth rates and low life expectancy. Half of all people living in the least developed countries in the world were aged 19.6 or younger. The median age of the entire world population was 28.1 years.

So despite its ageing population, Australia is still relatively young for a wealthy country. However, by world standards we are quite old.

Median age, 2009



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Like Australia, the world population is ageing. In 1950 the median age was 24 years; it is projected to reach 38 years by 2050. Most of the gains in median age were in developed countries.

Welfare expenditure is slightly below OECD average—but relatively high for families

In 2007, Australia's total expenditure on welfare-related services and cash payments was 12.4% of gross domestic product (GDP). This is lower than the OECD average of 13.9% of GDP spent on welfare.

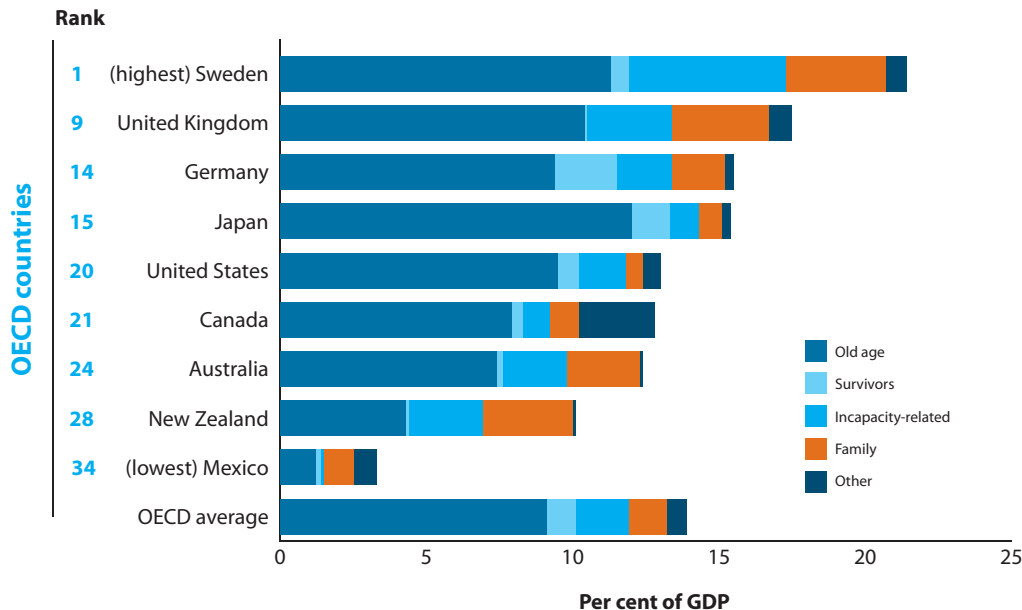
Expenditure on older people is the largest component of welfare spending in almost all OECD countries. However, direct comparisons are difficult because of differences between countries in funding models (such as pension schemes or superannuation for the care of older people).

A notable feature of Australia's welfare expenditure is the relatively high share dedicated to families. Around 2.4% of GDP was spent on payments and services to families (such as family assistance payments and child care subsidies)—almost double the OECD average (1.3%).

Welfare expenditure, 2007



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Fast facts

Australia's total welfare expenditure in 2007 was equivalent to \$6,943 per person—close to the OECD average of \$6,452 per person.

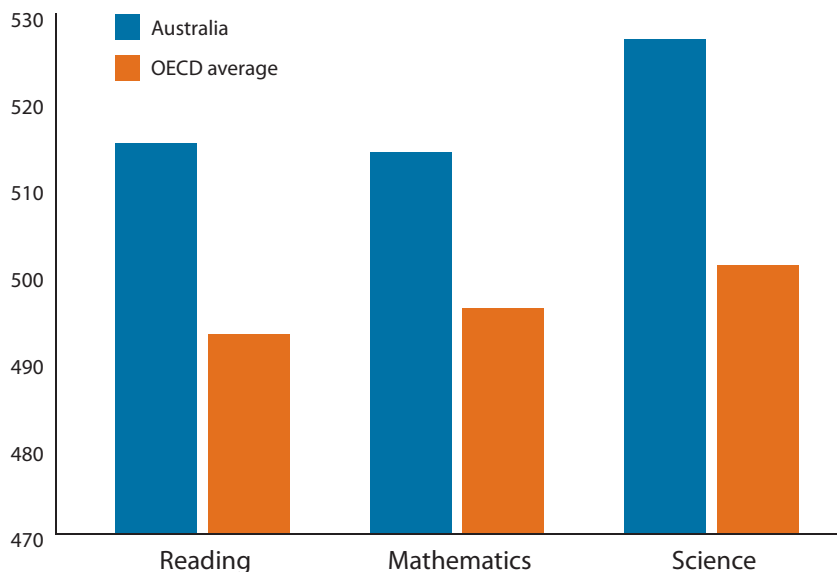
Per capita expenditure across the OECD ranged from \$658 in Mexico to \$11,400 in Norway and \$15,645 in Luxembourg.

Our high school students perform well

The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is conducted every three years across a number of industrialised countries. It looks at how well students nearing the end of compulsory schooling have acquired the knowledge and skills needed for full participation in society.

Australian students consistently perform better than the average for all OECD countries, in each learning domain tested. In 2009 the average result for Australian 15 year olds was 6th highest (out of 34 OECD countries) in reading, 7th highest in science and 9th highest in maths. Korea and Finland were the two top-performing OECD countries for reading and mathematics, while Finland and Japan had the best performance for science.

Average PISA score, 2009



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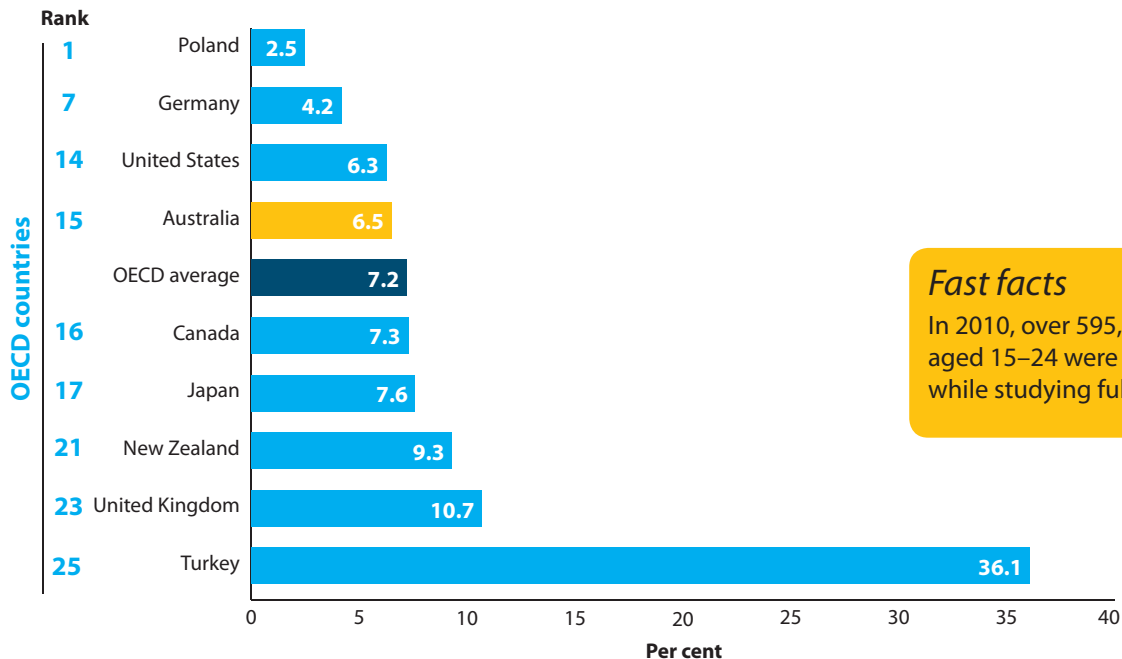
While most Australian students perform well, national assessments of literacy and numeracy show that around one in ten students in Year 9 fail to meet minimum standards in reading and writing, and 7% fall short of minimum standards in numeracy.

But youth disengagement is still a problem

Most young people participate in education or employment, often in combination—for example, working part time while enrolled in full-time study. Young people who are not engaged in either work or study may be at increased risk of future unemployment and economic insecurity. In 2007, 6.5% of Australians aged 15–19 were not engaged in education or employment—ranking in the middle of OECD countries at the time.

Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were less likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to be fully engaged in education, employment, or a combination of work and study. In 2008, 41% of Indigenous youth aged 15–24 living in remote areas and 58% living in non-remote areas were fully engaged, compared to 83% of non-Indigenous youth.

15–19 year olds not engaged in education or employment, 2007



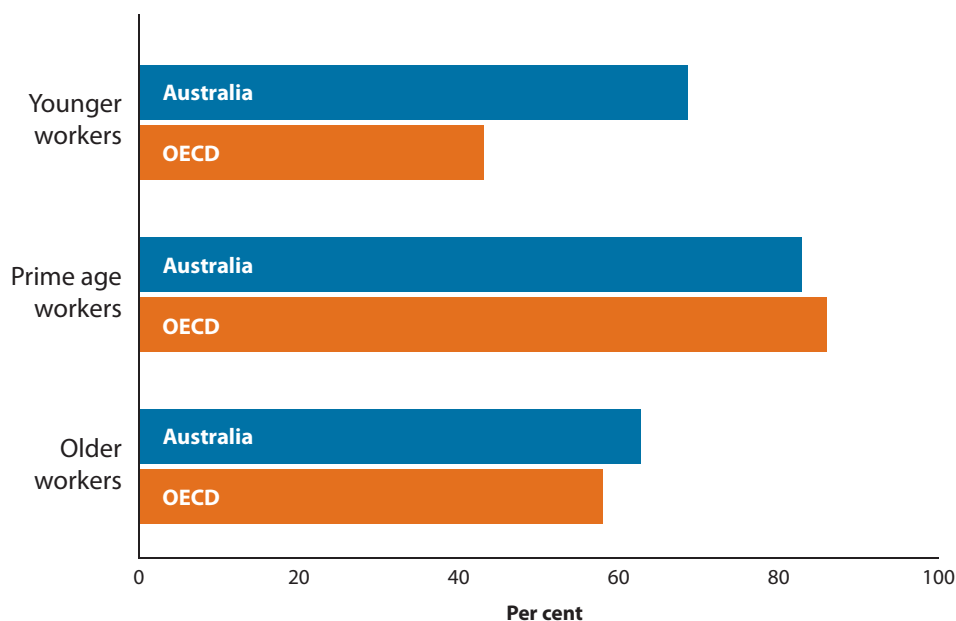
Fast facts
 In 2010, over 595,000 Australians aged 15–24 were working part time while studying full time.

Labour force participation lags for 'prime age workers'

Patterns of labour force participation in different countries are affected by a range of factors including local economic conditions, rules concerning eligibility for retirement benefits and other forms of income support, participation in post-compulsory education, and the extent to which women remain in the workforce after having children.

In 2010, the labour force participation rate for Australians of 'traditional working age' (76.5%) was 10th highest out of 34 OECD countries. Younger workers (15–24 years) in Australia were engaged in the labour force at a greater rate than any other country, except Iceland and the Netherlands. The participation of people aged 55–64 was also in the top half of the OECD. On the other hand, the participation rate for 'prime age workers' (25–54 years) in Australia ranked 25th—in the bottom third of developed countries.

Labour force participation rates, 2010



Fast facts

Almost one in four Australians aged 65–69 were in the labour force in 2010. This is equal to the OECD average (24%) but behind countries including the USA (29%), New Zealand (36%), Japan (38%) and Iceland (50%).

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What are we
doing to find
out more?



The AIHW, together with other agencies in the Australian Government and the states and territories, is working on a number of projects to increase and improve information about Australia's welfare. Here are just a few of the things we're doing to improve what we will know in the future.

Current AIHW projects

- We are working to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the experience of children and young people in the child protection system, including those in the system for multiple years.
- Under strict conditions protecting privacy, we are investigating the pathways between child maltreatment, homelessness and juvenile offending, helping to design early intervention policies.
- The AIHW and ABS have worked together to increase what we know about early childhood education across the country.
- In July 2011 we implemented the Specialist Homelessness Services collection, which will improve information about pathways into and out of homelessness, as well as the assistance provided by homelessness services. Work is also underway to improve statistics in the social housing sector.
- We will be reporting detailed statistics collected by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency which includes nurses and psychologists working in community services.
- We are enhancing the information available on people receiving specialist disability services, and developing a method of consistently identifying people with disability who receive other community services. This will help us better understand the full range of services used by people with disability and their carers.



Australian Government

**Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare**

Australia's welfare 2011—in brief presents selected highlights from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's 10th biennial report on welfare services in Australia.