

Chapter

11

Indicators of Australia's welfare

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11 Indicators of Australia's welfare

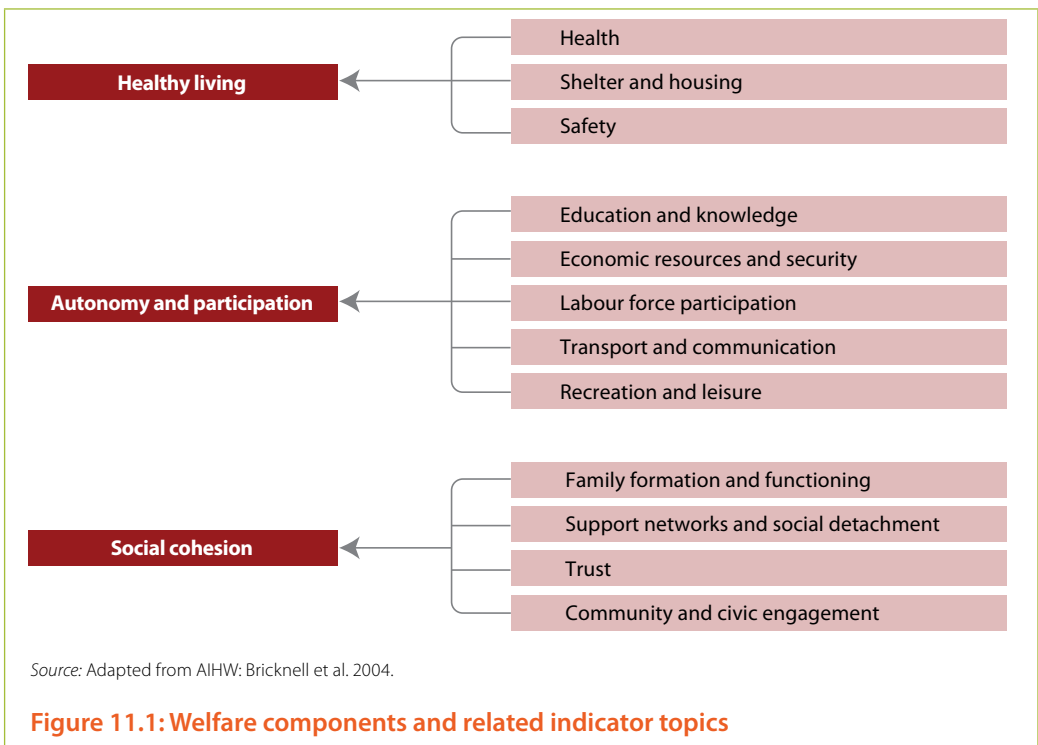
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11.1 Introduction

Welfare is difficult to define in specific and universally agreed terms. Nonetheless, some tangible and measurable aspects can be described and, in earlier volumes of *Australia's welfare*, a conceptual framework was developed that specified three domains (AIHW 2007):

- Healthy living, which embodies the most basic human needs—good health, shelter and freedom from harm
- Autonomy and participation, which is a concept that reflects the value people place on the opportunity to realise their potential, be self-sufficient and participate in their community
- Social cohesion, which indicates the importance to individuals of relationships, both at the personal and societal level.

Figure 11.1 illustrates the framework and specifies the 12 indicator topics that relate to these domains.



This chapter presents data for each of the 12 indicator topics, using the same indicators as presented in *Australia's welfare 2011* (AIHW 2011c). Note that the indicators shown are not exhaustive and do not exist in isolation. In addition, other frameworks take into account a



different mix of indicators when looking at related topics—see, for example, *Measures of Australia's progress* (ABS 2012h), *Social inclusion in Australia* (Australian Social Inclusion Board 2012), and *Measuring wellbeing in theory and practice* (Gorecki et al. 2011). The AIHW plans to review its indicator set and the underlying framework for future reports.



11.2 Healthy living

Healthy living embodies the most basic needs of human beings—good health, shelter and freedom from harm—and these components are included in the conceptual framework (Figure 11.2). These factors play an important role in the promotion and maintenance of physical, mental and social wellbeing.

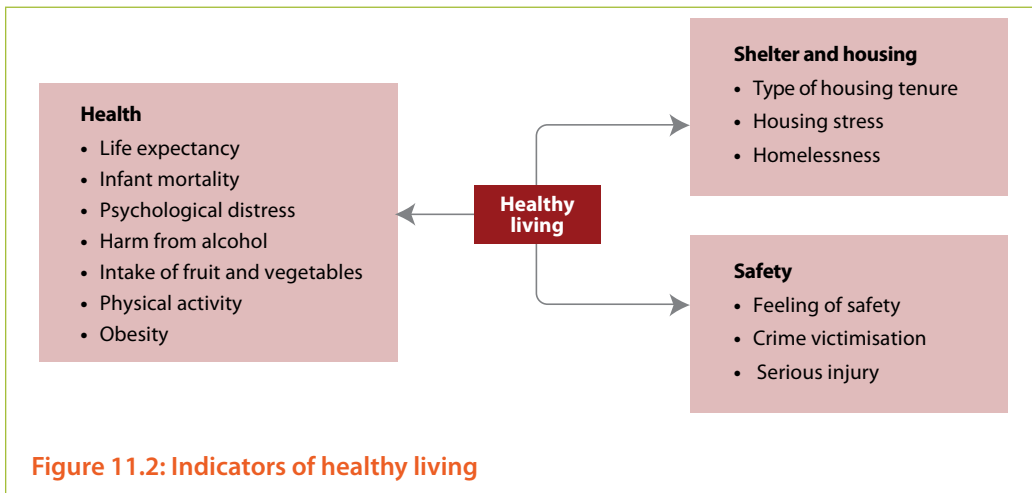


Figure 11.2: Indicators of healthy living

Good health represents quality of life in terms of longevity and functioning. Health can influence participation in many aspects of life, including education, work and recreation. It is an important resource for personal, social and economic development and participation, as well as being important in its own right (AIHW 2010).

Seven indicators of health are presented:

- Life expectancy at birth: life expectancy is a well-established and widely accepted indicator of the general health of a population
- Infant mortality rate: infant mortality is also a well-established and widely accepted indicator of population health; it reflects the effect of economic and social conditions on the health of mothers and newborns, as well as the effectiveness of health systems (OECD 2009)
- Proportion of adults with very high levels of psychological distress: reported psychological distress may be associated with a mental disorder, in particular anxiety and affective disorders (Andrews & Slade 2011)
- Proportion of adults at risk of lifetime harm from alcohol: excessive alcohol use is a major risk factor for morbidity and mortality, and has wider social and economic costs (NHMRC 2009)





- Proportion of adults who usually consume the recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables: eating sufficient fruit and vegetables plays an important role in maintaining good health, and contributes to the prevention of many chronic diseases and being overweight (WHO 2003)
- Proportion of people aged 15 and over who have sedentary levels of exercise: regular physical activity also plays an important role in maintaining good health, and can also provide social and mental health benefits (WHO 2006)
- Proportion of adults who are obese: obesity has many negative consequences, including increased risk of Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and some cancers (WHO 2000, 2008).

A more thorough investigation of similar indicators and other determinants of health is provided in *Australia's health 2012* (AIHW 2012).

Access to adequate shelter and housing is recognised as a basic human need. Housing provides protection from environmental elements, and access to facilities such as sanitation. It also gives people a place to form and maintain relationships with family and friends. Having a home may influence both physical and mental health.

Three indicators of shelter and housing are presented:

- Proportion of households with selected tenure types (for example, owners with a mortgage and owners without a mortgage): home ownership brings autonomy and an opportunity to build wealth; it is a goal to which Australians have traditionally aspired (Section 3.4 provides additional information about housing tenure)
- Proportion of lower income households that spent more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs: this is a commonly used indicator of housing affordability
- Number of homeless people: homeless people are among Australia's most disadvantaged (Chapter 7 provides detailed information about homeless people).

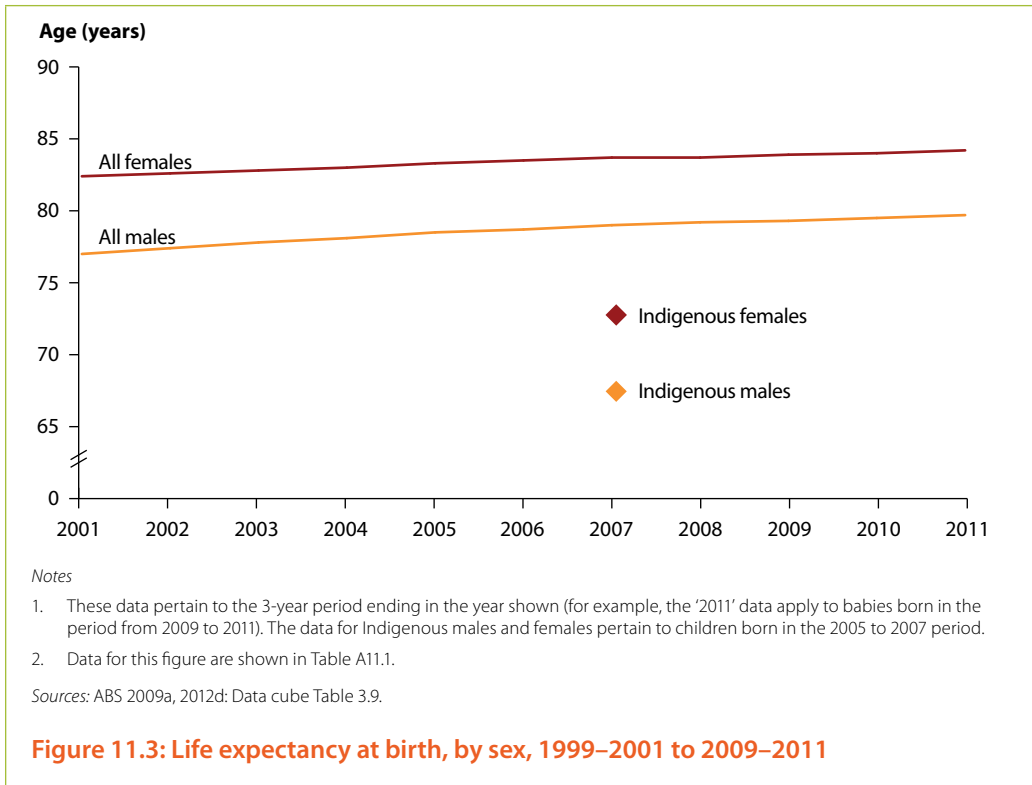
Safety is an important indicator for both physical and mental wellbeing. Issues surrounding safety not only reflect protection from actual harm but also from perceived harm. Fear, crime and injury can have serious detrimental effects, both for those directly affected and for those involved through family, friendship or community ties.

Three indicators of safety are presented:

- Proportion of adults who feel safe in various situations: feeling unsafe may have an impact on people's ability to engage with their communities, as well as have a negative effect on their mental wellbeing
- Victimization rate of selected crimes: experiences of crime are not only traumatic for victims, they may also have a negative effect on feelings of safety for the victims and the community. In addition, there are costs involved in treating victims, and apprehending and sentencing perpetrators
- Rate of hospitalisation due to injury: serious injuries can have a considerable negative impact on physical and mental wellbeing, and also represent costs to the health system.



1. Life expectancy at birth. The number of years that a baby born in a given year can expect to live, if age-specific death rates do not change.

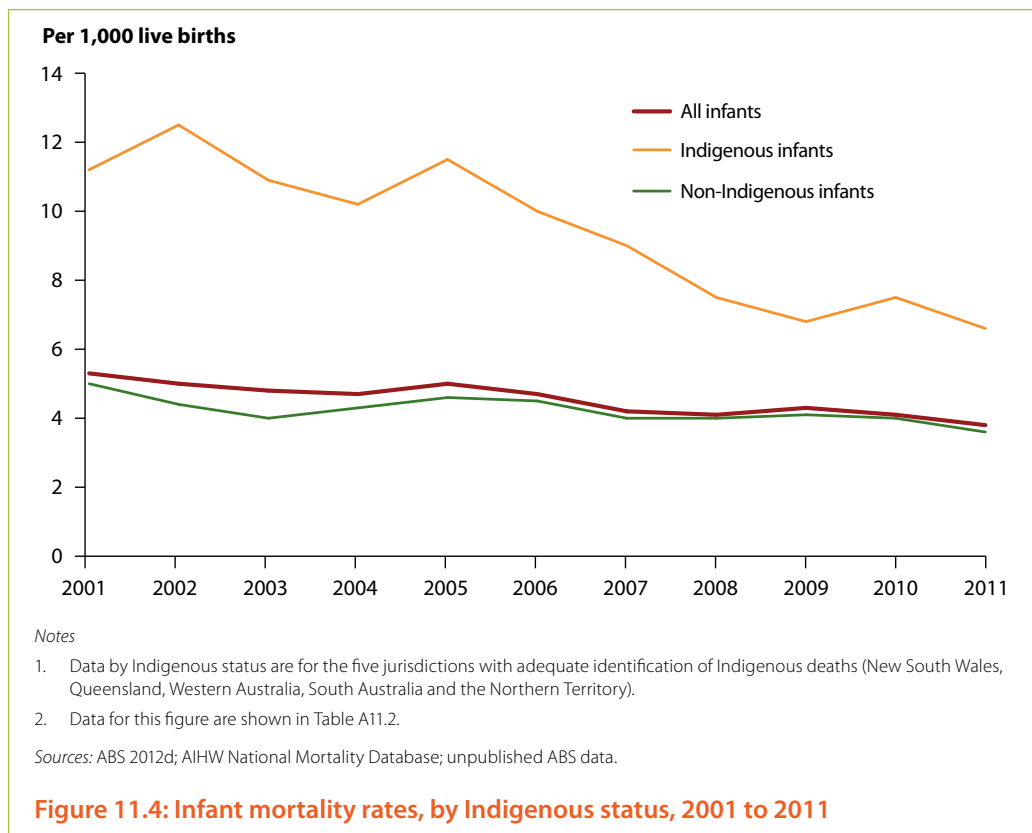


- Life expectancy for a boy born in Australia between 2009 and 2011 was 79.7 years and for a girl, 84.2 years (ABS 2012d)—among the highest in the world for both sexes (OECD 2012).
- Over the last century, the overall life expectancy at birth has increased dramatically (ABS 2008b, 2012d). This has continued in recent years, with life expectancy increasing by 2.7 years for males and 1.8 years for females in the decade to 2011.
- Life expectancy of Indigenous boys born between 2005 and 2007 was estimated to be 11.5 years lower than that of non-Indigenous boys (67.2 years compared with 78.7), and for Indigenous girls, 9.7 years lower than non-Indigenous girls (72.9 years compared with 82.6). These were the latest life expectancy data available for Indigenous people at the time of writing.



2. Infant mortality rate. The number of deaths among infants aged less than 1 year per 1,000 live births.

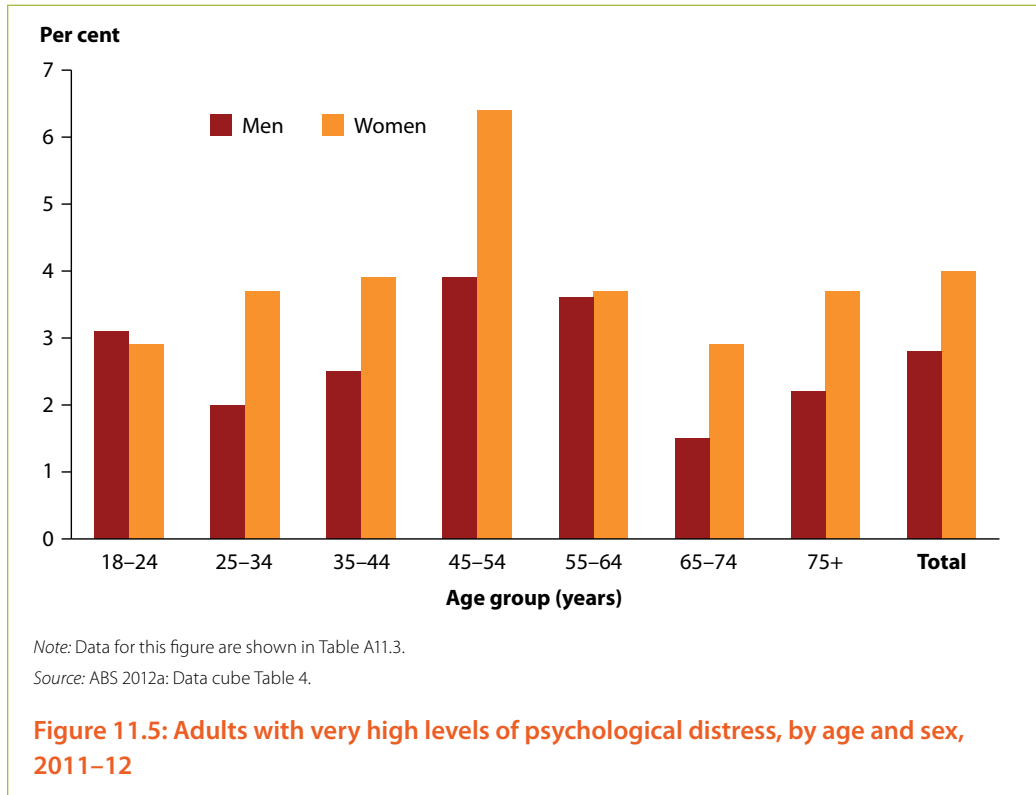
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- In 2011, there were 3.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in Australia.
- The infant mortality rate was 5.3 in 2001, indicating a fall of 28% between 2001 and 2011.
- In 2011, mortality was almost twice as high for Indigenous infants (6.6 per 1,000 live births) as non-Indigenous infants (3.6 per live 1,000 births) in the five jurisdictions with adequate identification of Indigenous deaths.
- Among Indigenous people, infant mortality declined from 11.2 to 6.6 per 1,000 live births between 2001 and 2011. By comparison, non-Indigenous infant mortality fell from 5.0 to 3.6 per 1,000 live births over the same period. See Section 1.4 for a discussion about the 'closing of the gap' in infant mortality rates.



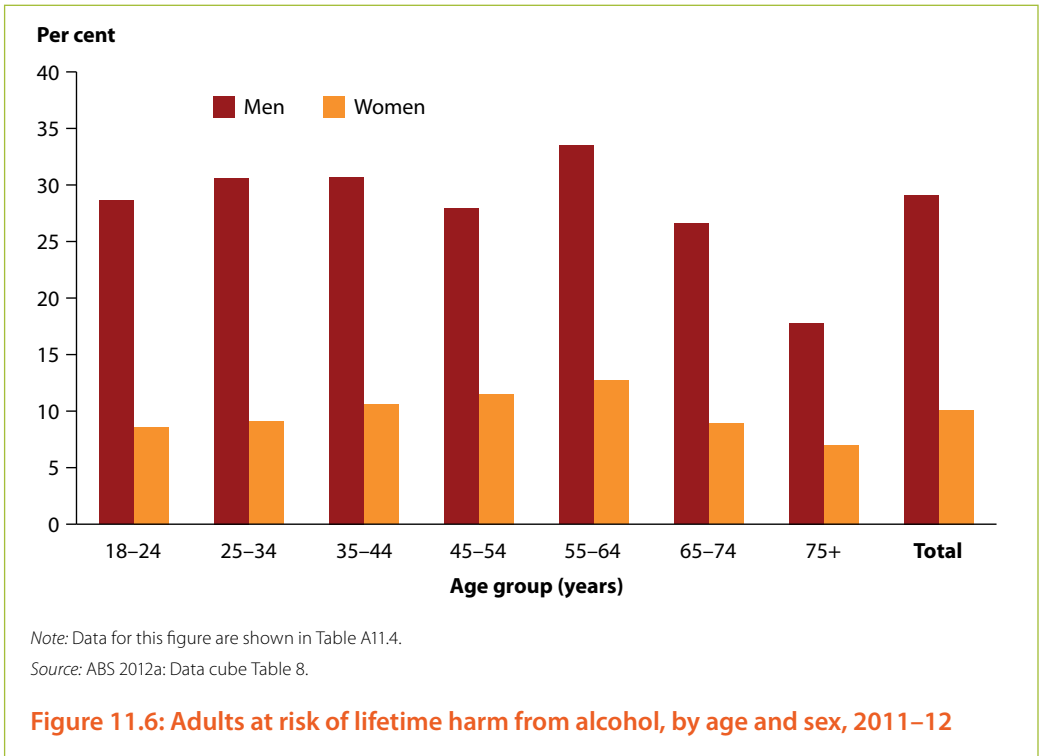
3. Adults with very high levels of psychological distress. The proportion of adults with very high levels of psychological distress as measured using the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale—10 items (K10). (The K10 is a scale of non-specific psychological distress based on 10 questions about negative emotional states in the 4 weeks prior to being interviewed.)



- In 2011-12, 3.4% of adults had very high levels of psychological distress.
- Women (4.0%) were more likely than men (2.8%) to have very high levels of distress.
- Women aged 45-54 had the highest rate of psychological distress (6.4%).
- Rates were similar in 2007-08, with 4.1% of women and 2.8% of men having very high levels of psychological distress (ABS 2010b).



4. Adults at risk of lifetime harm from alcohol. The proportion of adults who consumed alcohol in quantities that put them at risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury over their lifetime (on average, more than two standard drinks per day). This definition relates to Guideline 1 of the National Health and Medical Research Council 2009 guidelines (NHMRC 2009).



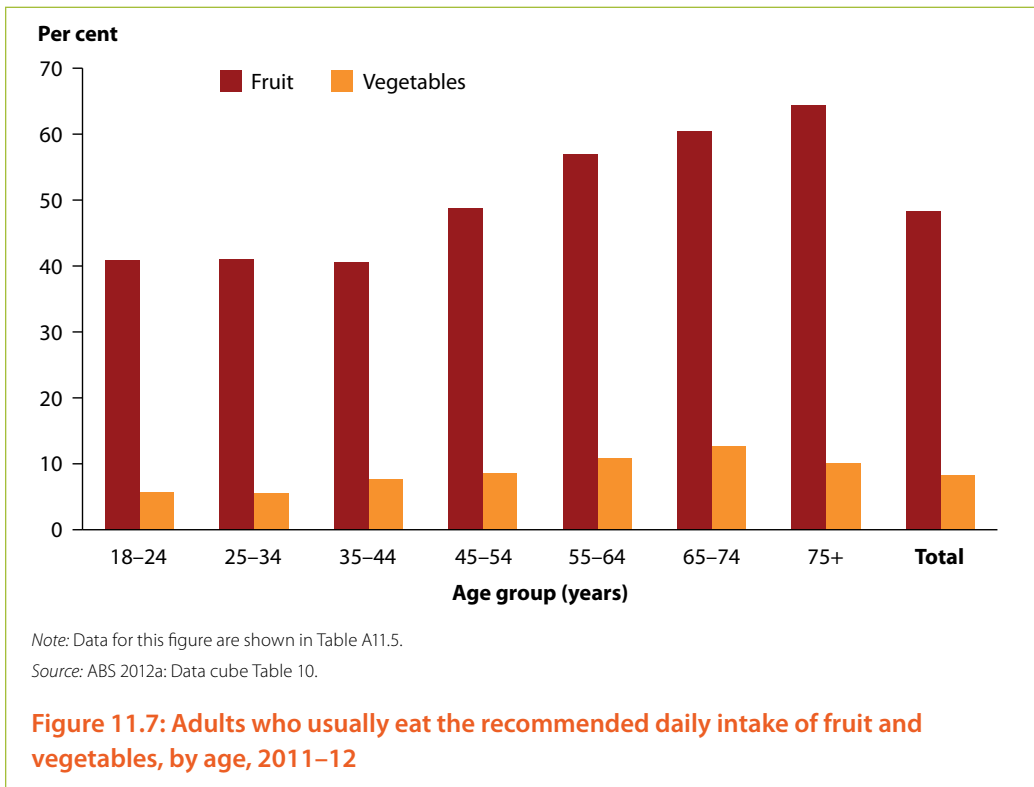
- In 2011-12, 1 in 5 adults (20%) consumed alcohol in amounts that put them at risk of lifetime harm from alcohol-related disease or injury. This is similar to the 21% in 2007-08 (ABS 2012a).
- In 2011-12, women (10%) were less likely than men (29%) to be at risk.
- Drinking at levels that posed a risk of lifetime harm was most common among people aged 55-64 (23%).
- In contrast, drinking at levels that posed single occasion risk (more than four standard drinks on at least one occasion in the last 12 months) was most common among those aged 18-24 (ABS 2012a).



5. Adults who usually consume the recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables.

The proportion of adults who usually consumed the quantities recommended by the NHMRC (2005). For those aged 19 and over, the recommended amounts are 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables per day. (One serve is approximately 150 grams of fresh fruit, 50 grams of dried fruit, half a cup of cooked vegetables, or one cup of salad vegetables; beverages are not included.) Note that new Australian dietary guidelines were released in early 2013 (NHMRC 2013); national data based on these new guidelines were not available at the time of writing.

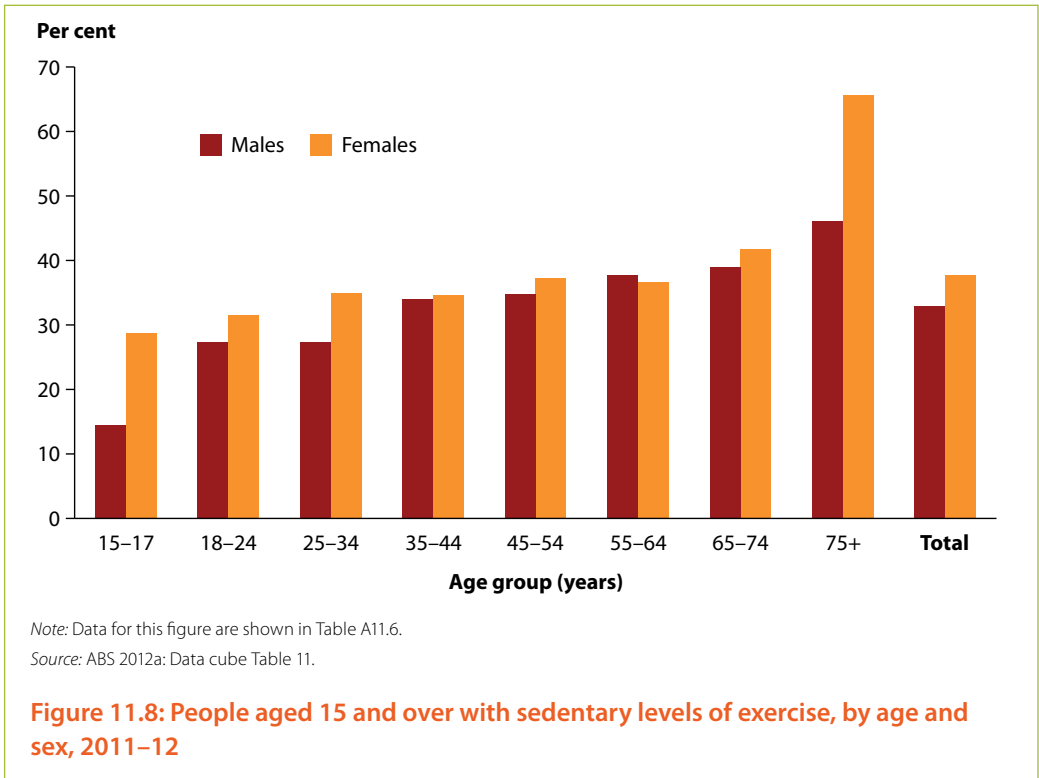
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- In 2011-12, 48% of adults usually ate 2 or more serves of fruit and 8% ate 5 or more serves of vegetables.
- This is lower than in the past. In 2007-08, 51% of adults ate the recommended amount of fruit and 9% ate the recommended amount of vegetables (ABS 2010b). The corresponding proportions for 2004-05 are 54% and 14% (ABS 2006c).
- Women were more likely than men to consume recommended amounts—in 2011-12, 53% of women and 44% of men met the guidelines for fruit consumption, while 10% and 7%, respectively, ate enough vegetables.
- Sufficient consumption of fruit and vegetables was highest for people aged 55 and over although, even among people in these older age groups, a low proportion ate the recommended amount of vegetables.



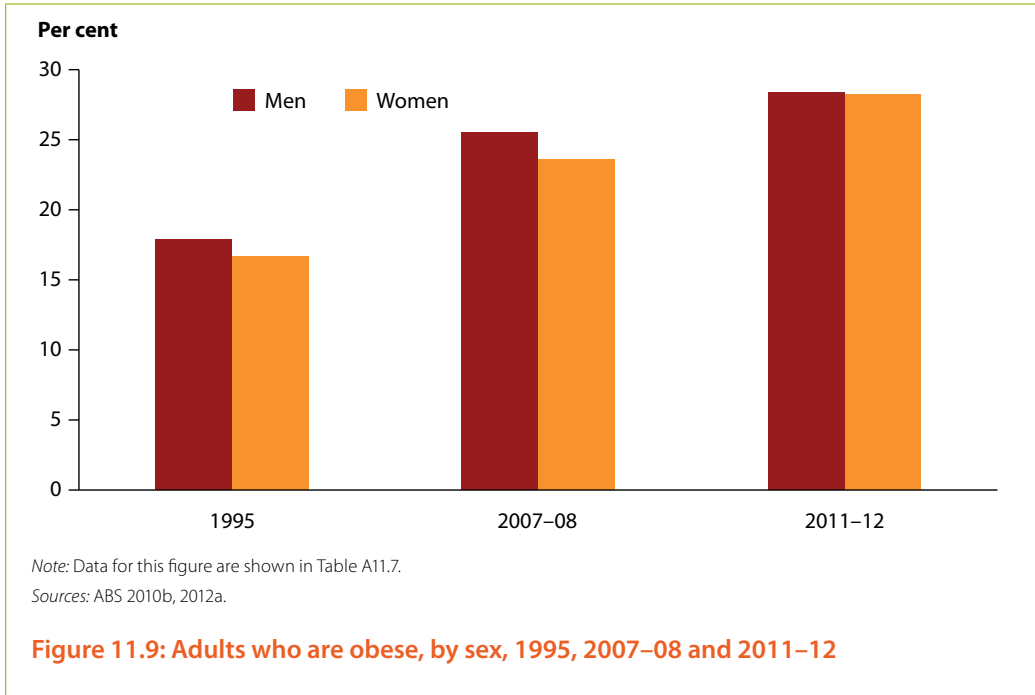
6. People aged 15 and over who have sedentary levels of exercise. The proportion of people aged 15 and over who were considered to have done no or very little exercise, based on the frequency, duration and intensity of exercise undertaken for fitness, recreation or sport during the week before the survey.



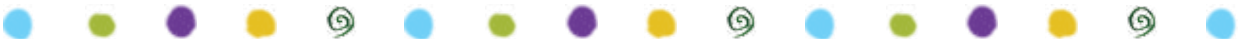
- In 2011-12, 35% of people aged 15 and over were sedentary—that is, they did no or very little exercise.
- The proportion who were sedentary increased with age—from 21% of those aged 15-17 to 57% of those aged 75 and over.
- Females (38%) were more likely than males (33%) to be sedentary, especially among the youngest and oldest age groups.



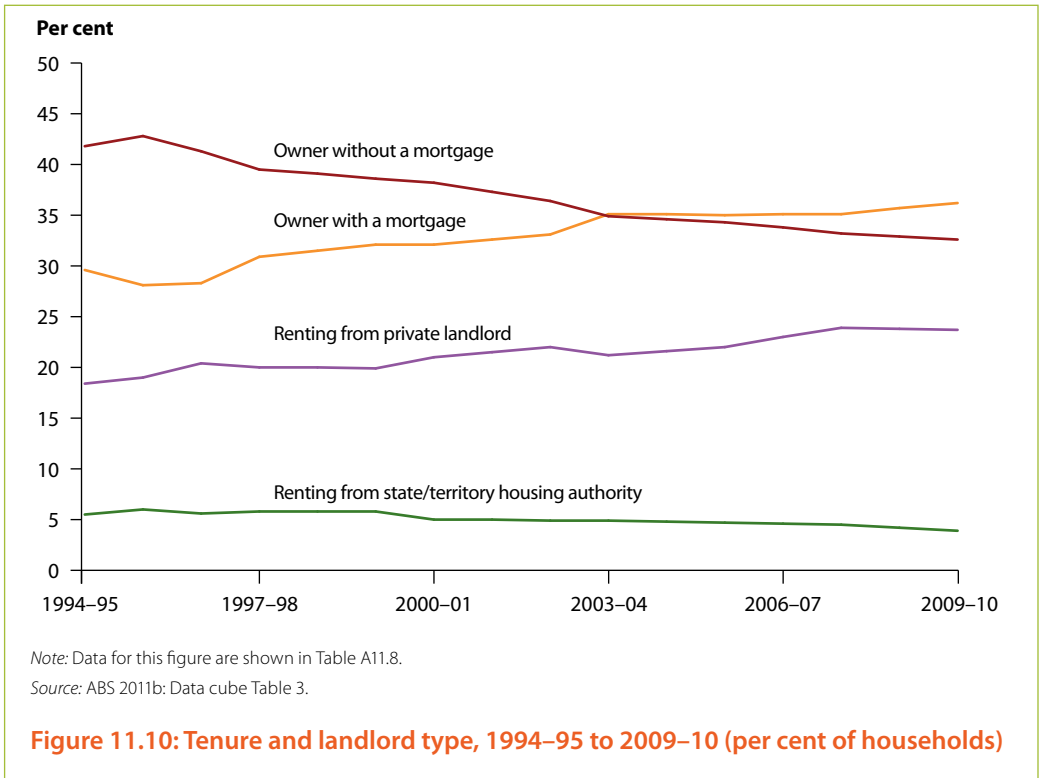
7. Adults who are obese. The proportion of adults who, based on measured height and weight, were considered obese by the World Health Organization definition—that is, a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more (WHO 2013).



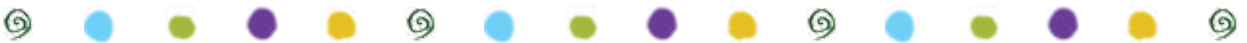
- In 2011-12, 28% of adults were obese, with no difference in this proportion by sex.
- The prevalence of obesity has increased over time, from 19% in 1995 and 25% in 2007-08 to 28% in 2011-12 (ABS 2010b).
- Those aged 18-24 were least likely to be obese (17%), while those aged 55 to 74 were most likely (36%) to be obese (ABS 2012a).



8. Household tenure types. The proportion of households that were: owners with a mortgage, owners without a mortgage, renting from a state or territory housing authority or renting from a private landlord. Note that two other tenure types are possible—'renting from other landlord type' (1%–2% of households) and 'other tenure type' (2%–3% of households).

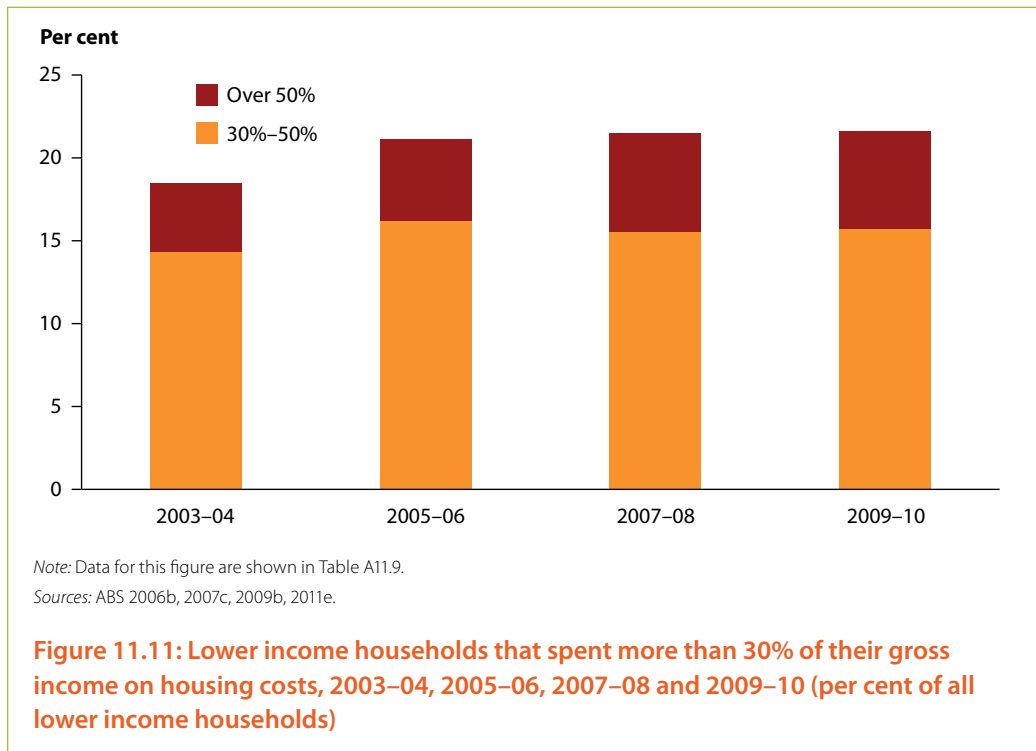


- According to data from the 2009-10 Survey of Income and Housing (SIH), 69% of households were owner-occupiers (36% with a mortgage, 33% without), 4% were renting from a state or territory housing authority, and 24% were renting from a private landlord. These proportions are similar to those recorded in the 2011 Census (see Section 3.4).
- Between 1994-95 and 2009-10, the proportion of households that were owner-occupiers has remained fairly steady (between 68% and 71%). However, patterns of home ownership changed over time—from 2003-04 onwards, there were more owner-occupiers with a mortgage than without.
- The proportion of households that was renting from a private landlord increased from 18% in 1994-95 to 24% in 2009-10. The proportion that was renting from a state or territory housing authority fell from 6% to 4% respectively.
- Census data indicate that home ownership has risen from 32% of Indigenous households in 1996 to 36% in 2011 (AIHW 2011a; AIHW analysis of 2011 Census).



9. Lower income households that spent more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs.

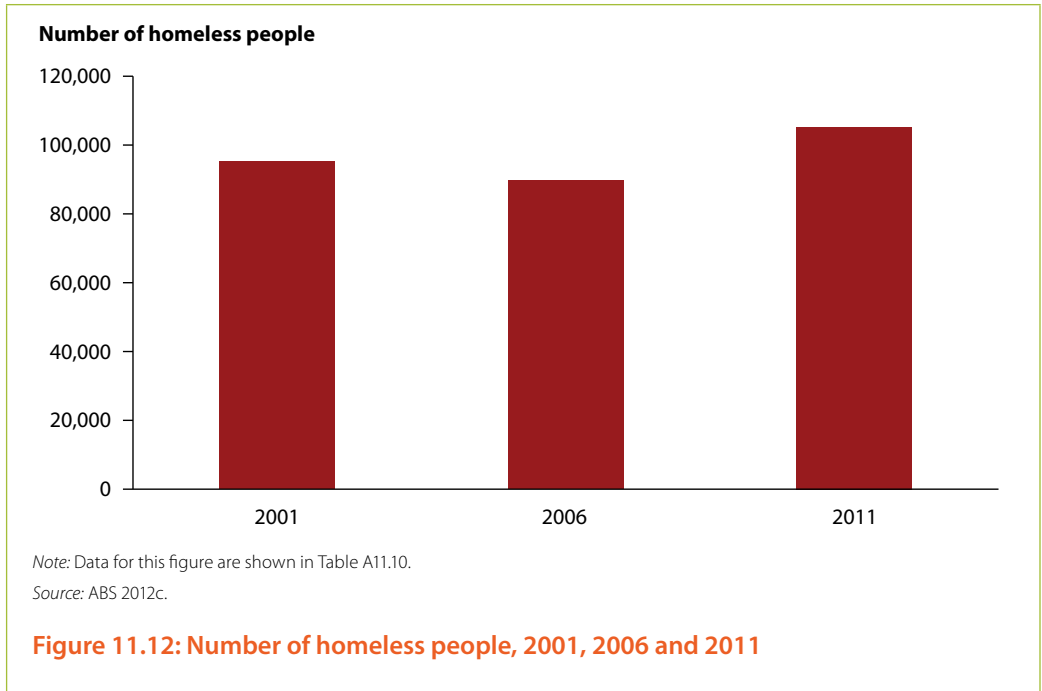
The proportion of lower income households that spent more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs (that is, rent payments, rates payments, and mortgage or unsecured loan repayments if the initial purpose was primarily to buy, add to or alter the dwelling). For this indicator, lower income households are defined as those whose equivalised disposable income is ranked between the bottom 10% and bottom 40% of the income distribution (see Glossary).



- In 2009-10, 22% of lower income households spent more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs, including 6% that spent more than 50% of gross income.
- The proportion of lower income households spending more than 30% was lower (19%) in 2003-04 but remained fairly steady between 2005-06 and 2009-10.
- In 2009-10, almost half (49%) of lower income private renters spent more than 30% of their income on housing costs, as did 37% of those with a mortgage and 8% of those renting from a state or territory housing authority (ABS 2011e).



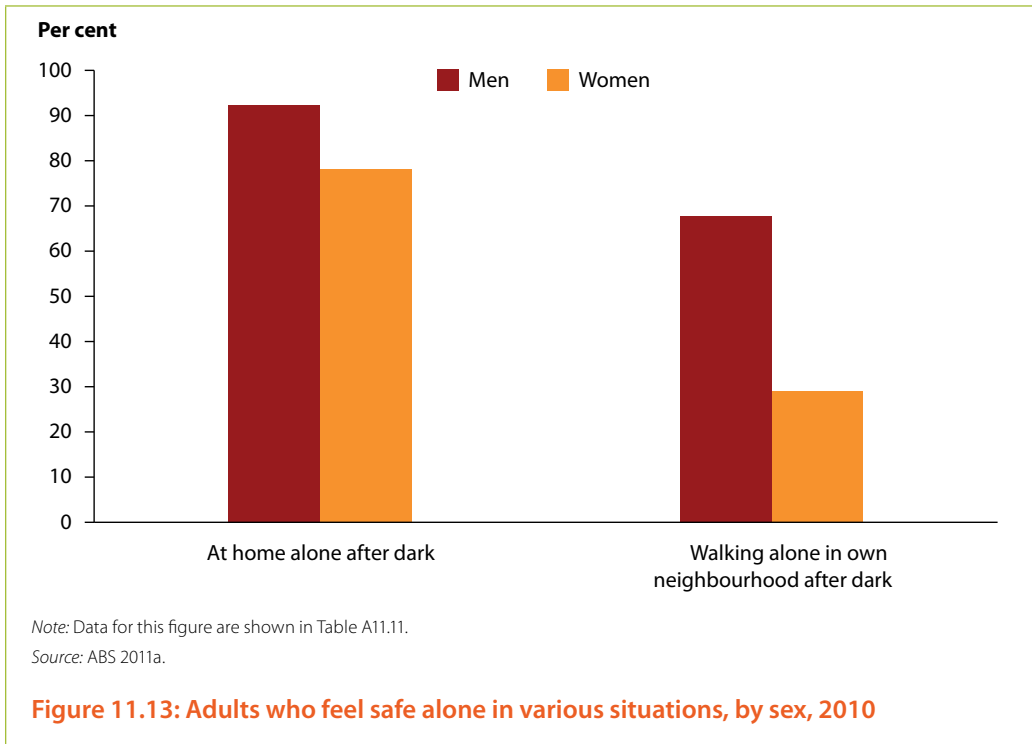
10. Number of homeless people. The number of homeless people estimated from the ABS Census. People are considered homeless if their current living arrangement: is in a dwelling that is inadequate; has no tenure or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or does not allow them to have control of, and access to, space for social relations (ABS 2012f; see Section 7.4 for further information).



- In 2011, an estimated 105,200 people were considered to be homeless (see Section 7.5). Those who were homeless were most commonly living in severely crowded dwellings (39% of the homeless).
- Just over half (56%) of homeless people were male.
- The rate of homelessness for Indigenous Australians was 14 times as high as the rate for non-Indigenous Australians, with 1 in 20 Indigenous people considered homeless. Three-quarters (75%) of Indigenous homeless people were living in severely crowded dwellings (ABS 2012c).
- The estimated number of homeless people in 2011 was higher than the estimated number for the two previous Censuses.
- In 2011, the homeless rate was 49 homeless people per 10,000 population, up from a rate of 45 per 10,000 in 2006 but down from a rate of 51 per 10,000 in 2001 (ABS 2012c).



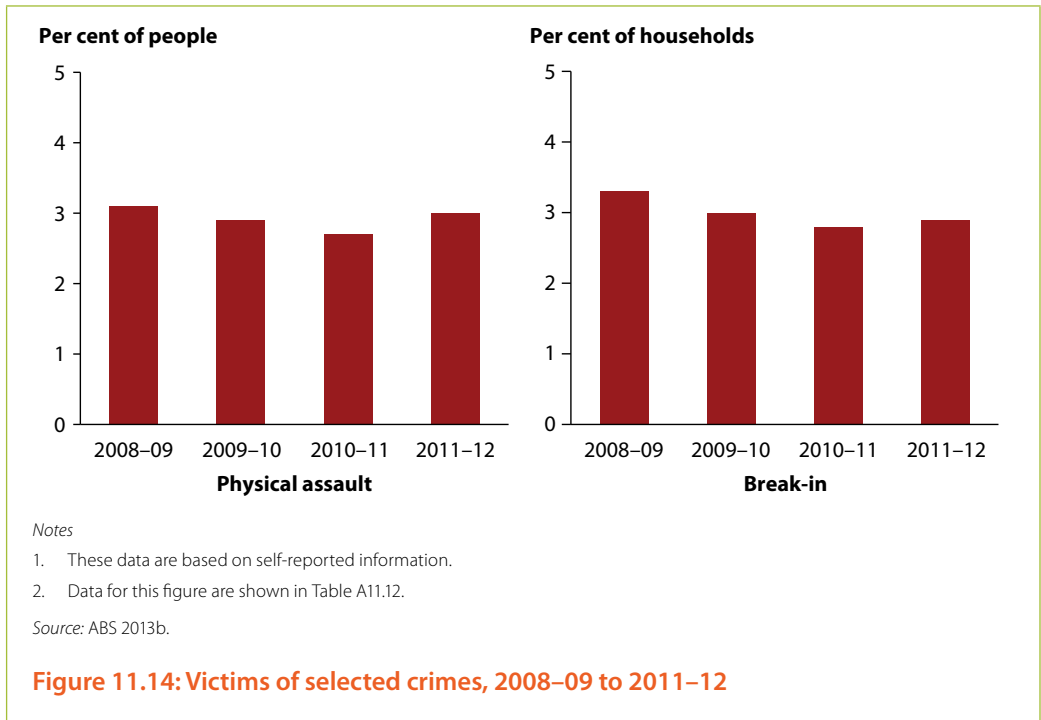
11. Adults who feel safe in various situations. The proportion of adults who felt 'safe' or 'very safe' when alone at home after dark and when walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.



- In 2010, 85% of adults felt safe (including those who felt very safe) at home alone after dark and 48% felt safe (or very safe) walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.
- The proportions in 2006 were virtually the same: 86% felt safe at home alone after dark and 48% when alone in their neighbourhood after dark (ABS 2007b).
- In 2010, men were substantially more likely than women to feel safe, particularly when walking alone in their neighbourhood (68% compared with 29%).



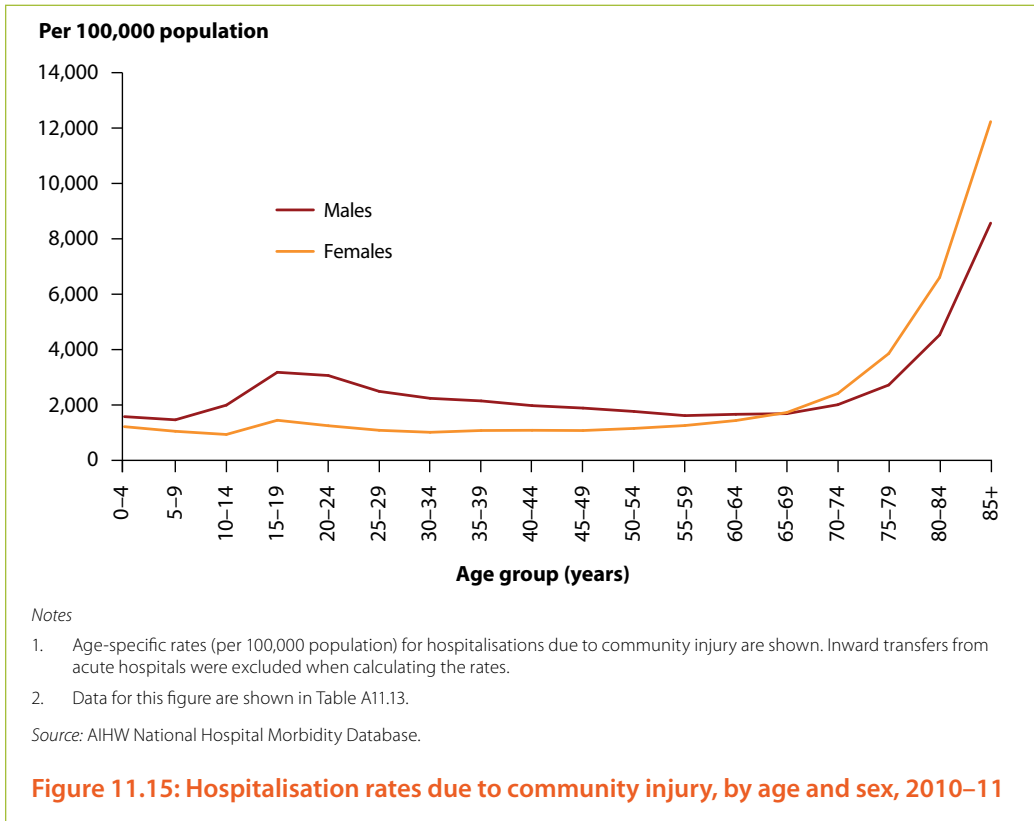
12. Victimisation rate for selected crimes. The proportion of people aged 15 and over who were a victim of a physical assault and the proportion of households that were a victim of a break-in. Incidents not reported to police are included.



- In 2011-12, 3.0% of people aged 15 and over were a victim of a physical assault, and 2.9% of households were a victim of at least one break-in to their home, garage or shed.
- Between 2008-09 and 2011-12, the victimisation rates for physical assault have fluctuated slightly (between 3.1% and 2.7%), as have the rates for break-ins (between 2.8% and 3.3%).
- Males (3.5%) were more likely to be assault victims than females (2.5%) (ABS 2013b).
- People aged 20-24 were most likely to be assault victims (6.0%), with the proportion decreasing with age thereafter (ABS 2013b).



13. Hospitalisation due to injury. The number of hospitalisations due to community injury per 100,000 population (expressed as an age-standardised rate). Community injury refers to injuries typically sustained in places such as the home, workplace or street rather than in the context of surgical and medical care.



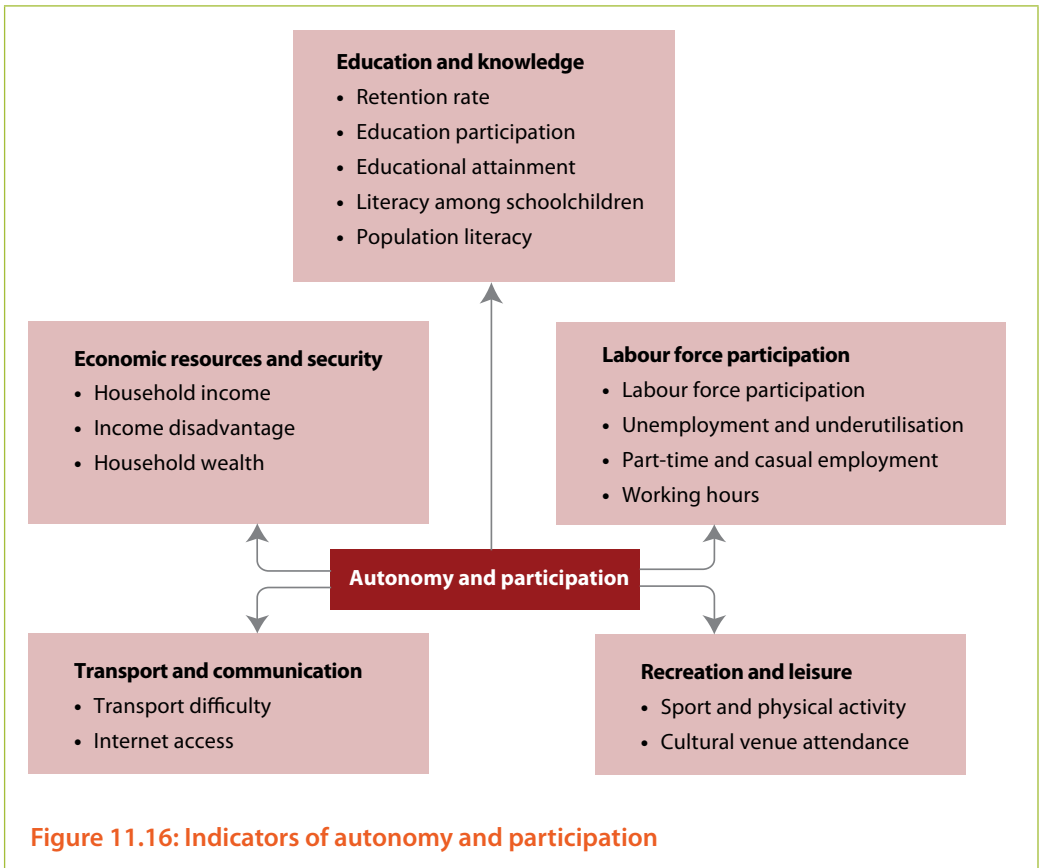
- In 2010–11, the age-standardised rate of hospitalisations due to injury was 1,897 hospitalisations (per 100,000 population).
- The rate of such hospitalisations was higher for older people (due mainly to falls) and also disproportionately high for males aged 15 to 24 (due to a higher rate of transportation-related accidents and assaults).
- The age-standardised injury rate of hospitalisation for Indigenous Australians was about twice that for other Australians in 2010–11 (3,879 compared with 1,865 per 100,000) based on data for six jurisdictions with reliable data (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and private hospitals in the Northern Territory) (AIHW analysis of AIHW National Hospital Morbidity Database).
- Between 2000–01 and 2010–11, the age-standardised rate of hospitalisation due to injury increased by 9% (from 1,733 per 100,000 population). This rate increased more sharply for females (13%) than males (8%) (AIHW analysis of AIHW National Hospital Morbidity Database).

11.3 Autonomy and participation

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Autonomy—the opportunity to make and implement choices, and to develop the capabilities to do so—and active participation in the economy and in society are vital for wellbeing since they generally reflect the value people place on the opportunity to be self-sufficient, realise their potential and participate in their community.

The conceptual framework defines five components of autonomy and participation: education and knowledge, economic resources and security, labour force participation, transport and communication, and recreation and leisure (Figure 11.16).



Education and knowledge help to empower individuals and allow them to become more autonomous within society. Education is considered to be a lifelong process by which both individuals and their communities benefit from the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Education relates to many other facets of society, including employment, health and participation in the civic, cultural and social life of communities.



Five indicators of education and knowledge are presented:

- Apparent retention rate to Year 12: an approximate measure of the proportion of students who remain at school until the final year of secondary education
- Proportion of people aged 15 to 64 studying for a qualification
- Proportion of people aged 15 to 64 with a non-school qualification
- Proportion of Year 5 schoolchildren not meeting national minimum standards for literacy and numeracy
- Proportion of people aged 15 to 74 with insufficient levels of literacy: the concept of literacy in developed countries has evolved into a term that describes the ability to use various forms of information to function most effectively in society. 'Sufficient literacy' encompasses the ability to appropriately use information contained in various written formats to effectively respond to the mathematical demands of diverse situations and to apply goal-directed thinking in situations where no routine solution is available (ABS 2008a).

For further information about education, see chapters 2 and 4.

The material standard of living enjoyed by individual Australians primarily depends on their command of economic resources, both in the immediate and long term. Economic factors are related to all aspects of the welfare framework, including health, education, employment and social networks.

Three indicators of economic resources and security are presented:

- Average equivalised disposable household income: while income is usually received by individuals, it is generally shared between co-resident family members and, to a lesser extent, other household members who benefit from economies of scale. Hence, household (rather than individual) income is considered. Equivalence scales are applied to account for different income levels required by households of different size to achieve a similar standard of living (see Box 2.8 for further information)
- Proportion of households with low income
- Average household wealth: wealth is a source of economic security since accumulated assets can buffer material living standards during periods of low income.





Labour force participation provides avenues for income and, as such, is a major factor influencing material wellbeing. In addition, participation in the workforce is strongly related to other aspects of the welfare framework—lack of work is associated with crime, poor health and decreased social cohesion, in addition to reduced financial wellbeing. Describing labour force participation, however, is not simply a matter of counting the number of employed and unemployed people—the basis and conditions under which people are employed also have an impact on Australians’ sense of autonomy and participation.

Four indicators of labour force participation are presented:

- The labour force participation rate
- Unemployment and underutilisation rates
- Proportion of employment that is part-time and the proportion that is casual (that is, without paid leave entitlements)
- Average hours worked by full-time workers.

More detailed statistics about employment are in Chapter 2.

Transport and communication are fundamental to autonomy and participation. Having access to reliable transport allows people to participate in the community. As well as enhancing social wellbeing, access to transport can broaden access to jobs, which in turn may increase financial security. Access to means of communication is also beneficial to many aspects of welfare enabling, for example, greater access to educational and social resources.

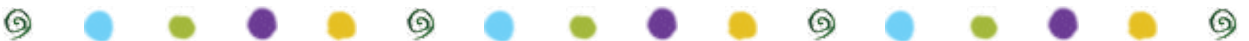
Two indicators of transport and communication are presented:

- Proportion of adults who had difficulty with transport
- Proportion of households with access to the Internet at home.

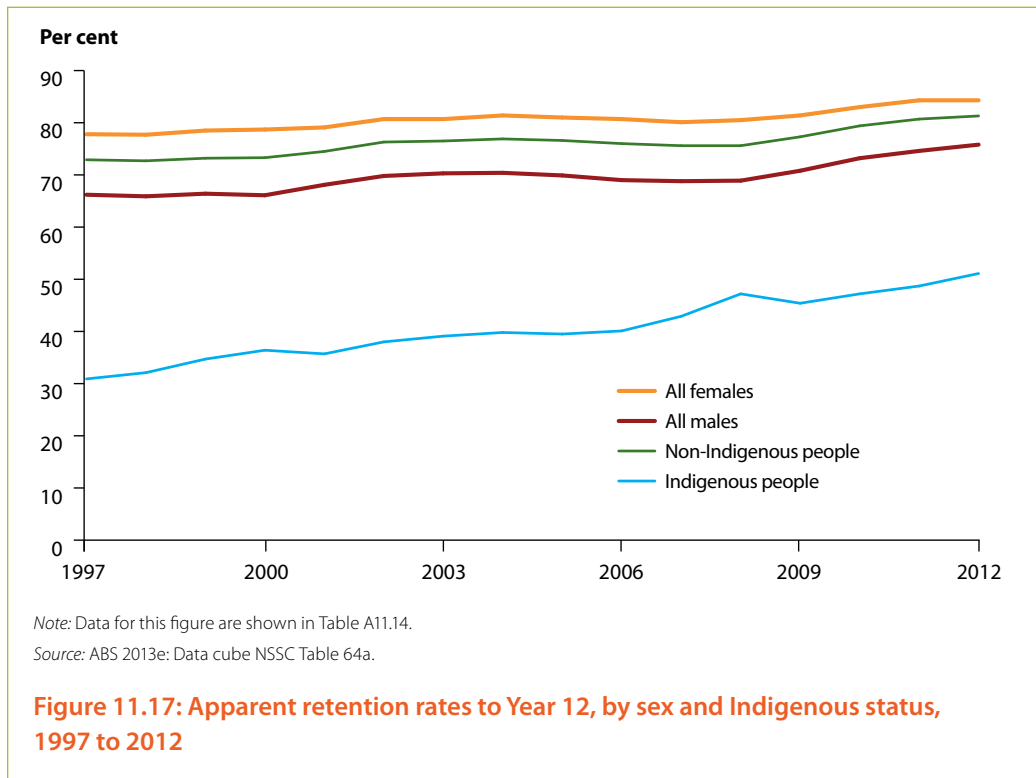
Participation in recreational and leisure activities contributes to overall wellbeing through benefits to physical and mental health, and by providing opportunities for social interaction and community engagement.

Two indicators of recreation and leisure are presented:

- Proportion of people aged 15 and over who participated in sport and physical activities
- Proportion of people aged 15 and over who attended selected cultural venues.



14. Apparent retention rate to Year 12. The proportion of full-time students who remained in secondary education from the start of secondary school to Year 12. (To calculate the apparent retention rate for any year, the total number of full-time students enrolled in Year 12 in that year is divided by the number of full-time students who were in the base year—namely, Year 7 in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory in 2006, and Year 8 in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory in 2007.) For further information about apparent retention rates, see Chapter 4.



- The apparent retention rate to Year 12 for full-time students in 2012 was 80%. It was higher for females (84%) than males (76%).
- These rates have gradually increased over time for both males and females.
- Retention to Year 12 was substantially lower for Indigenous students (51%) than non-Indigenous students (81%) in 2012.
- Between 1997 and 2012, the apparent retention rate increased by 20 percentage points for Indigenous students (from 31%) and 8 percentage points for non-Indigenous students (from 73%).



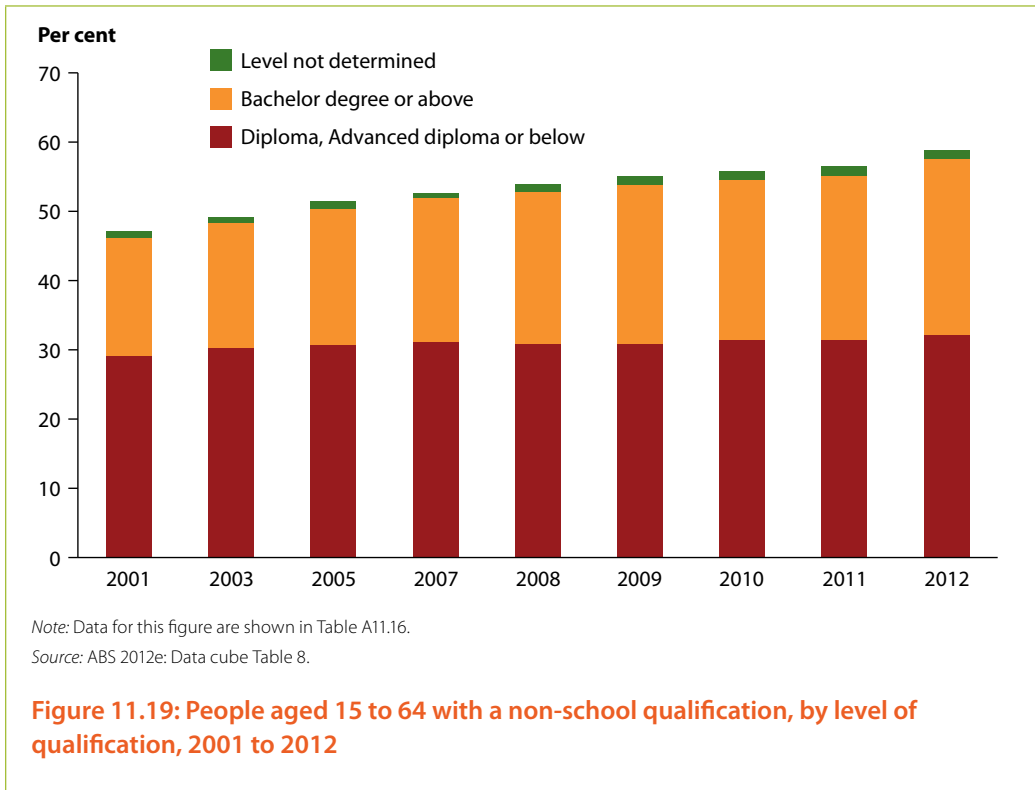
15. People aged 15 to 64 studying for a qualification. The proportion of people aged 15 to 64 who were enrolled in formal learning (that is, study that is likely to lead to a recognised qualification).



- In 2012, 19% of people aged 15 to 64 were studying for a qualification.
- Participation declined with age, and was more common for females than males in each age group.
- Of those studying for a qualification, 31% were enrolled in a Bachelor degree, another 28% in Year 12 or below, and 20% in a Certificate-level qualification (ABS 2012e).
- Participation increased from 17% in 2001 (ABS 2012e).



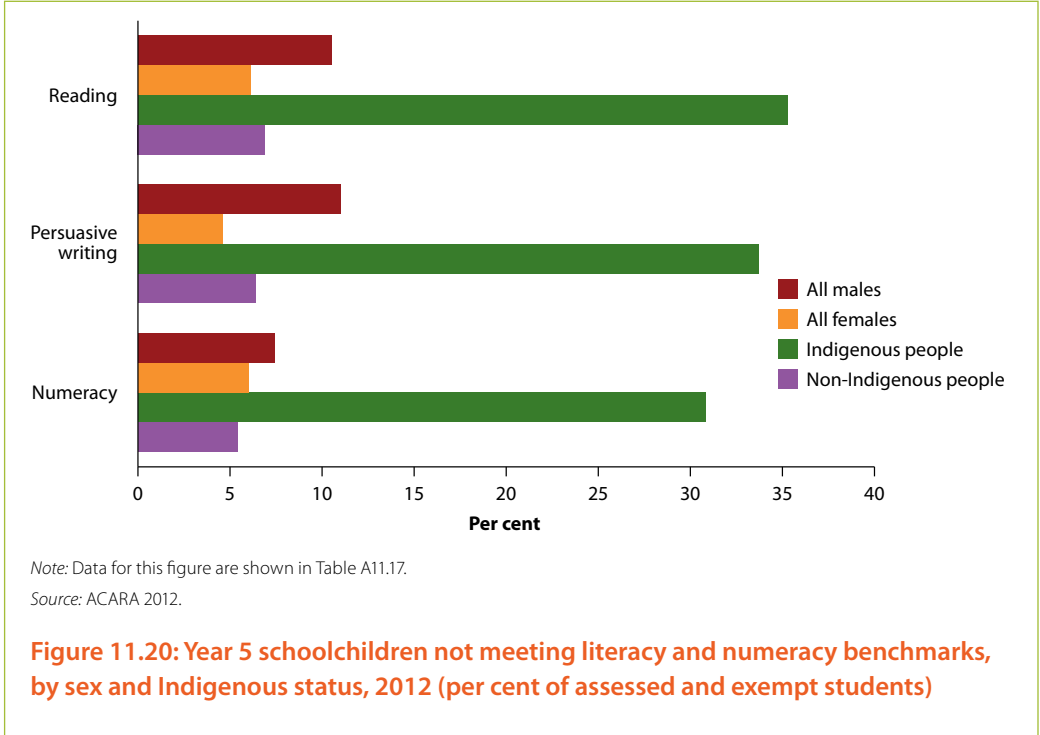
16. People aged 15 to 64 with a non-school qualification. The proportion of people aged 15 to 64 who had a non-school qualification (that is, a qualification which is awarded for an educational attainment other than that of pre-primary, primary or secondary education).



- In 2012, 59% of people aged 15 to 64 had a non-school qualification, with 25% having a Bachelor degree or above as their highest qualification, and 32% having a Diploma, Advanced diploma or below as their highest qualification.
- Attainment of non-school qualifications increased from 47% in 2001, with attainment of a Bachelor degree or above rising from 17%.
- In 2012, people aged 25–34 and 35–44 were the most likely to have a non-school qualification (72% and 70% respectively) (ABS 2012e).
- In 2008, 40% of Indigenous people aged 25 to 64 had a non-school qualification compared with 61% of non-Indigenous people in the same age range (AIHW 2011a).



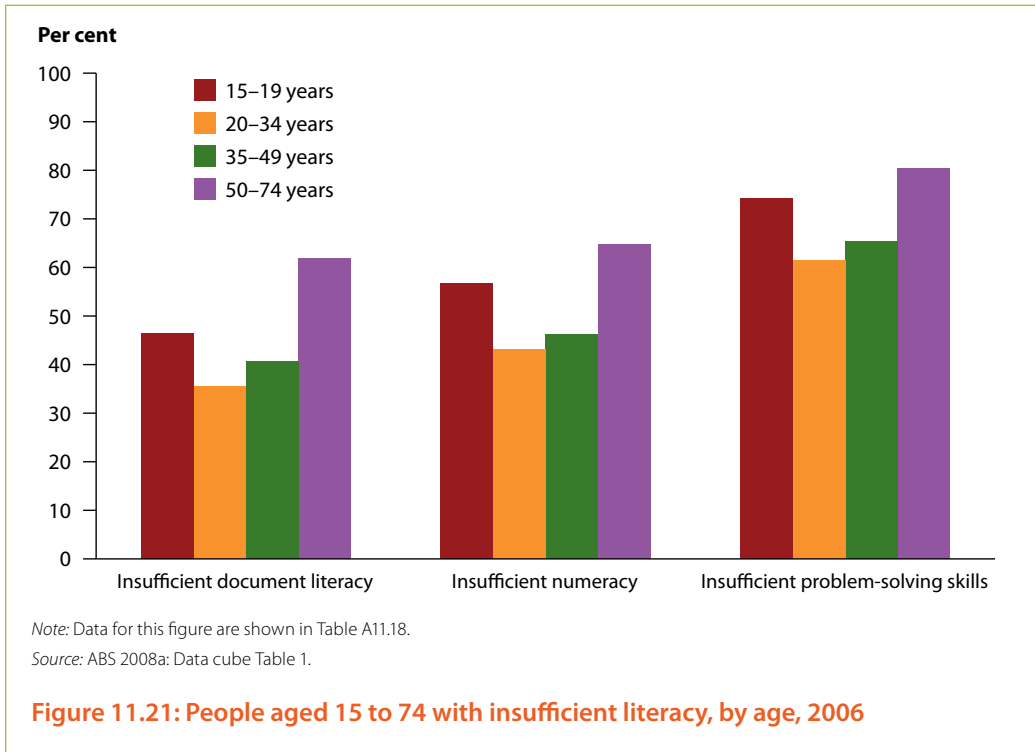
17. Year 5 schoolchildren not meeting national minimum standards for literacy and numeracy. The proportion of Year 5 students who did not meet the national minimum standard in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) reading, persuasive writing and numeracy tests.



- In 2012, 8.4% of Year 5 students had skills below the national minimum standard for reading, 7.9% for persuasive writing and 6.7% for numeracy.
- Boys were less likely than girls to meet minimum standards, and Indigenous students were much less likely than non-Indigenous students to meet minimum standards across all three domains.
- The proportion not meeting minimum standards in reading was fairly stable since 2008 while, for numeracy, the proportion fell to 6.7% in 2012 from 7.3% in 2008 (ACARA 2012).



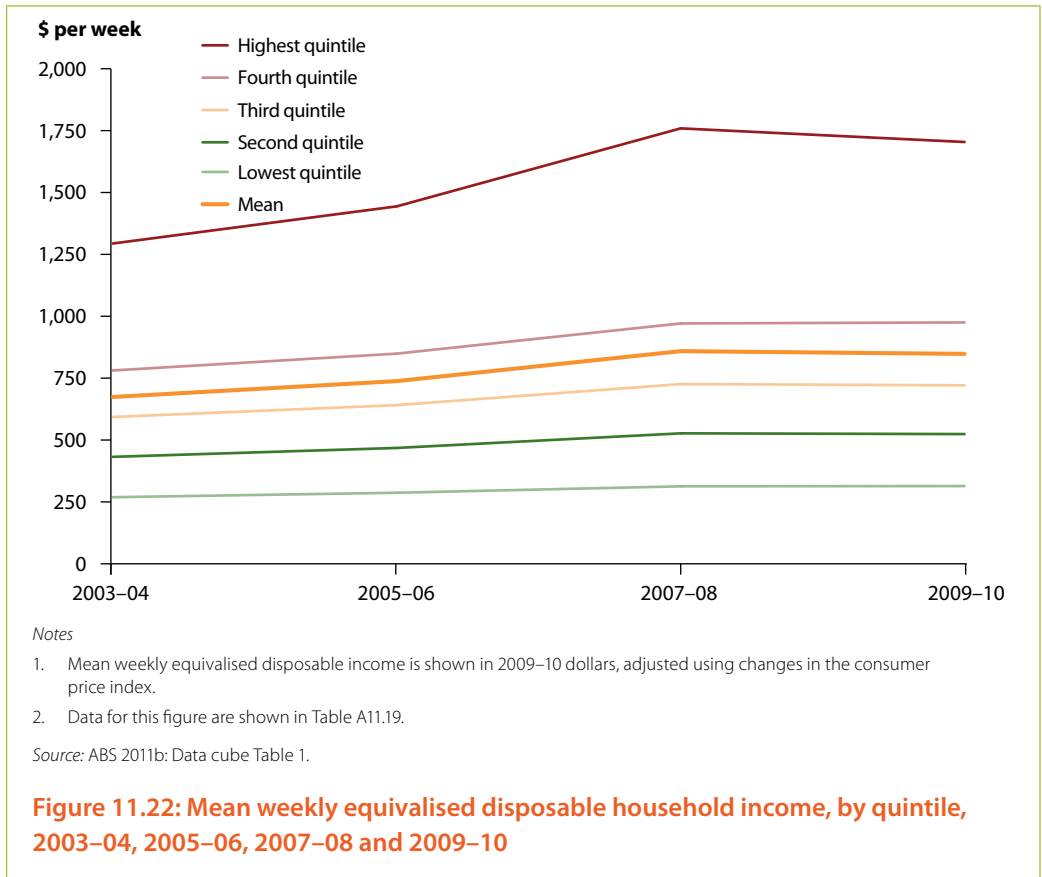
18. People aged 15 to 74 with insufficient levels of literacy. The proportion of people aged 15 to 74 whose measured document literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills were deemed to be below the minimum required 'for coping with the increasing demands of the emerging knowledge society and information economy' (OECD & Statistics Canada 2005).



- In 2006, 47% of people aged 15 to 74 had insufficient levels of document literacy, 53% had insufficient levels of numeracy and 70% had insufficient problem-solving skills.
- People aged 50–74 were most likely to have insufficient levels of literacy across all three domains.
- In 1996, the proportion with insufficient levels of document literacy was about the same (48%) (ABS 2008a).



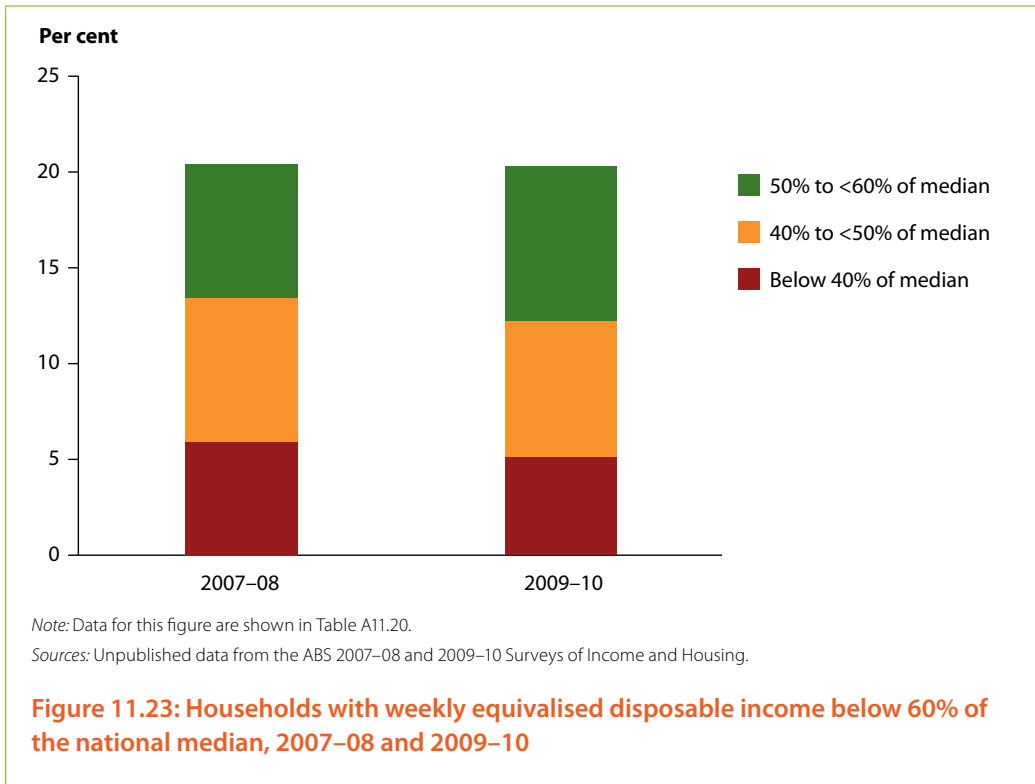
19. Average equivalised disposable household income. The mean weekly equivalised disposable income of households (see Section 2.4 for more information about household economic resources and the Glossary for definitions of key terms).



- In 2009-10, the average (mean) equivalised disposable household income was \$848 per week.
- There was no significant difference between 2007-08 and 2009-10 in the average equivalised disposable household income.
- In 2009-10, the average income of the lowest-income households was \$314 per week, compared with \$1,704 for the highest-income households.
- People living in households where the reference person was aged 65 and over had the lowest average equivalised disposable household incomes per week (\$598), while the highest such incomes were observed for people in households where the reference person was aged 45-54 (\$943) (ABS 2011b).



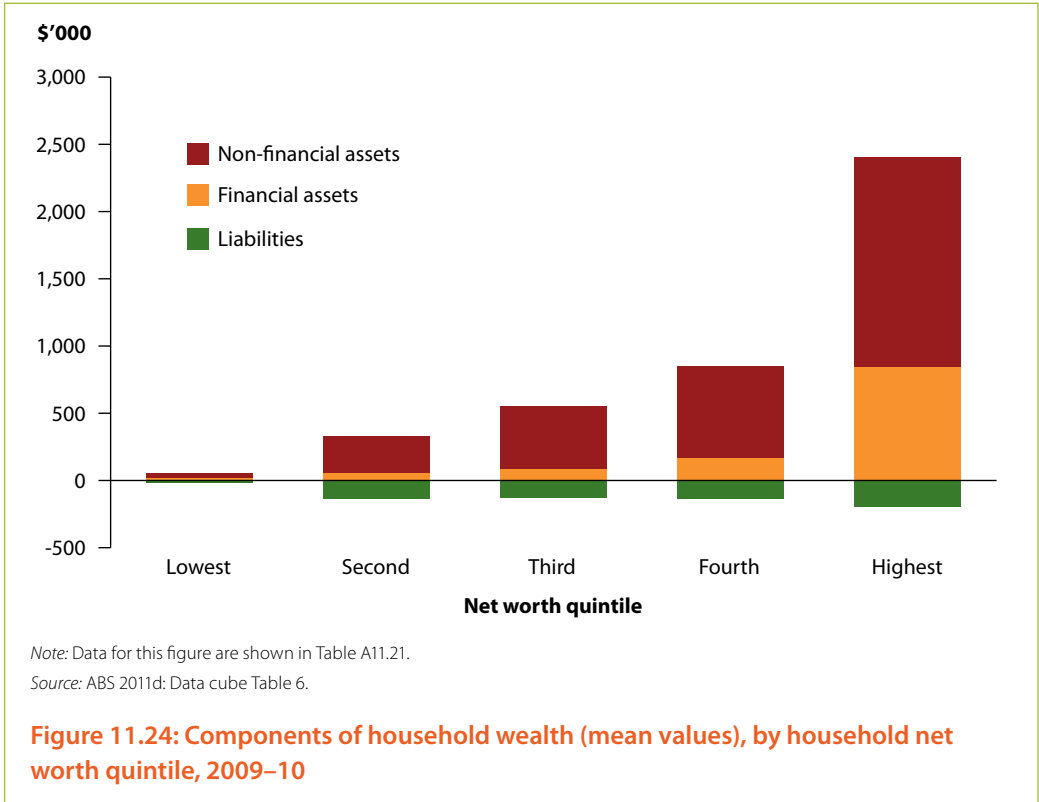
20. Lower income households. Lower income households are defined, for the purposes of this indicator, as those households whose equivalised disposable household income is below 40%, 50% and 60% of median equivalised disposable household income.



- In 2009-10, 12% of households had an equivalised disposable income less than 50% of the national median (\$715, ABS 2011b). This includes 5% whose income was less than 40% of the median.
- One in 5 households had an equivalised disposable income less than 60% of the median.
- In 2007-08, 13% of households had an equivalised disposable income less than 50% of the national median (\$726, ABS 2011b), including 6% whose income was less than 40% of the median.



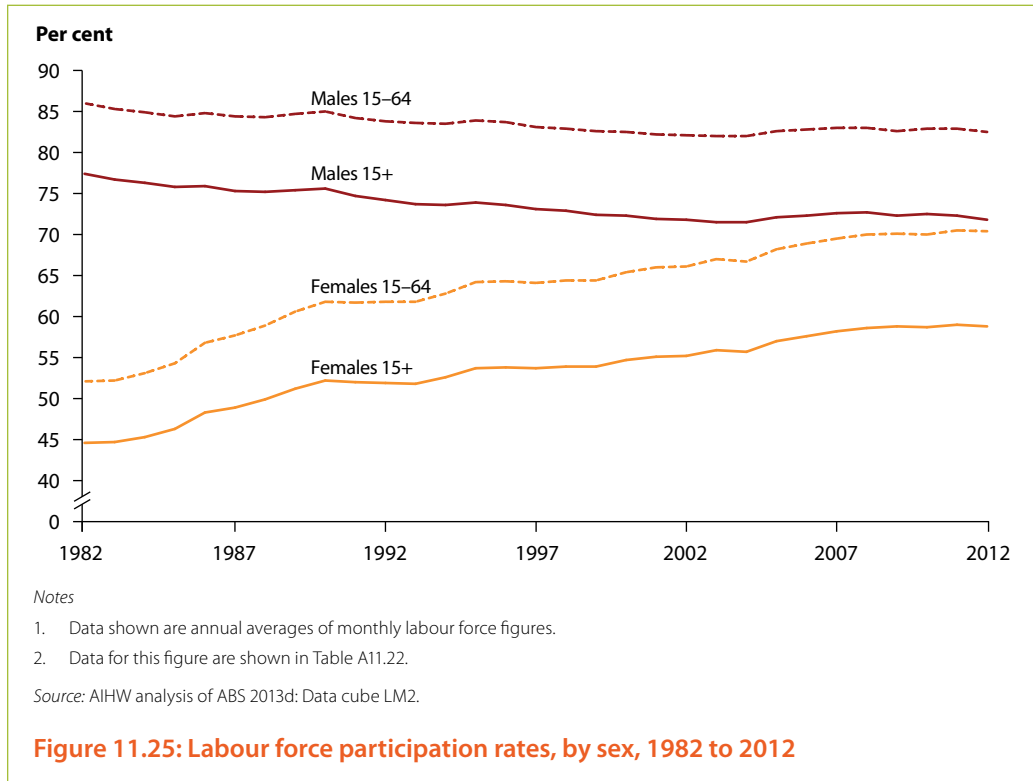
21. Average net household wealth. The net wealth of a household is the value of its assets less the value of its liabilities. Assets include property, owned businesses, shares and superannuation. Liabilities are primarily the value of loans outstanding. (See Section 2.4 for more information about household wealth).



- In 2009–10, average household net worth was \$719,600, comprising \$233,500 in financial assets (such as shares, superannuation and savings), \$605,900 in non-financial assets (such as property or owned businesses) and \$119,800 in liabilities (such as money owed on a mortgage or other loan).
- The largest component of household wealth was equity in owner-occupied dwellings (on average, \$296,500 per household) (ABS 2011d).
- The average net worth of the wealthiest 20% of households (\$2.2 million) was 3 times the average of all households.



22. Labour force participation rate. The proportion of the civilian population aged 15 and over in the labour force, that is, employed and unemployed. (See the Glossary for definitions of key terms and see Section 2.3 for detailed information about labour force participation, including information about participation among selected population groups.)



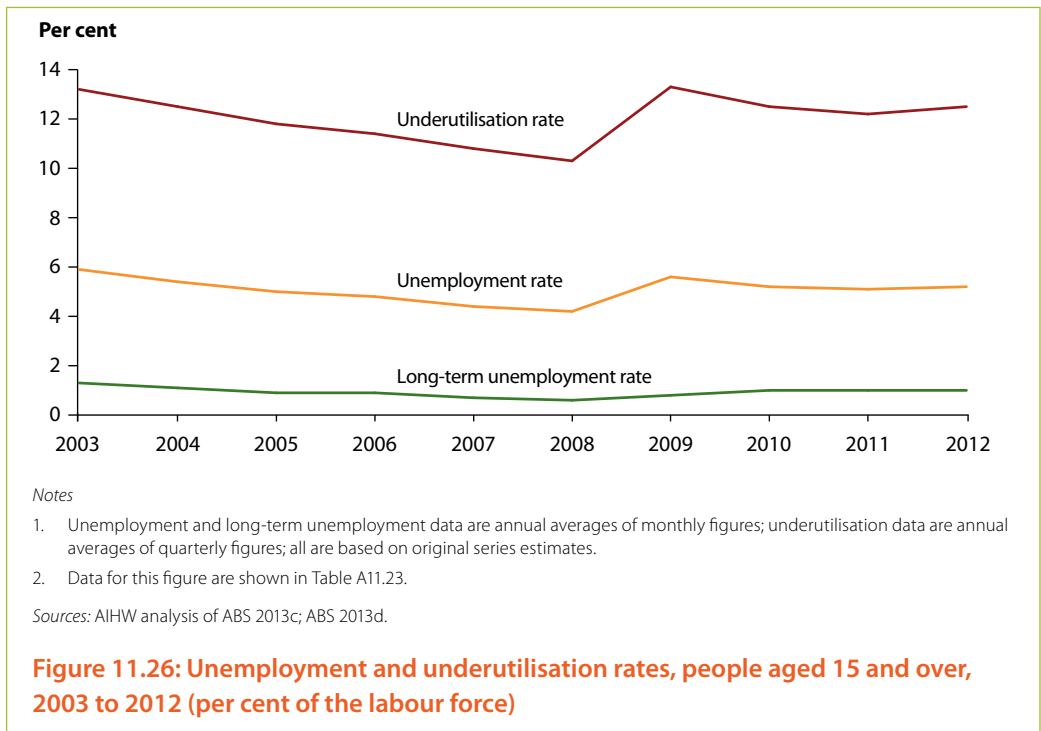
- In 2012, the participation rate of people aged 15 and over was 72% for males and 59% for females. Excluding people aged 65 and over, participation among people of 'traditional working age' was 83% for males and 70% for females.
- Participation among females of 'traditional working age' continued to increase in the decade to 2012, albeit at a slower pace than in the 1980s. In contrast, male participation stabilised, after falling in the 1980s and 1990s.
- The most recent and reliable data available on the labour force status of Indigenous Australians pertain to 2008. In 2008, participation among Indigenous Australians aged 15 to 64 (65%) was lower than non-Indigenous Australians (79%). Over time, labour force participation rates of Indigenous Australians have increased—from 52% in 2001 among those aged 15 to 64 (AHMAC 2012).



23. Unemployment and underutilisation. The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed people (that is, those not employed, but actively looking for work and available for work, or waiting to start a new job and able to start) as a proportion of the labour force.

The long-term unemployment rate is the number of people unemployed for 12 months or more as a proportion of the labour force.

The labour force underutilisation rate is the sum of the numbers of unemployed people and underemployed people as a proportion of the labour force. Underemployed people are those who want and are available for more hours of work than they currently have, including part-time and full-time workers who worked part-time hours for reasons including insufficient work being available (ABS 2013c).

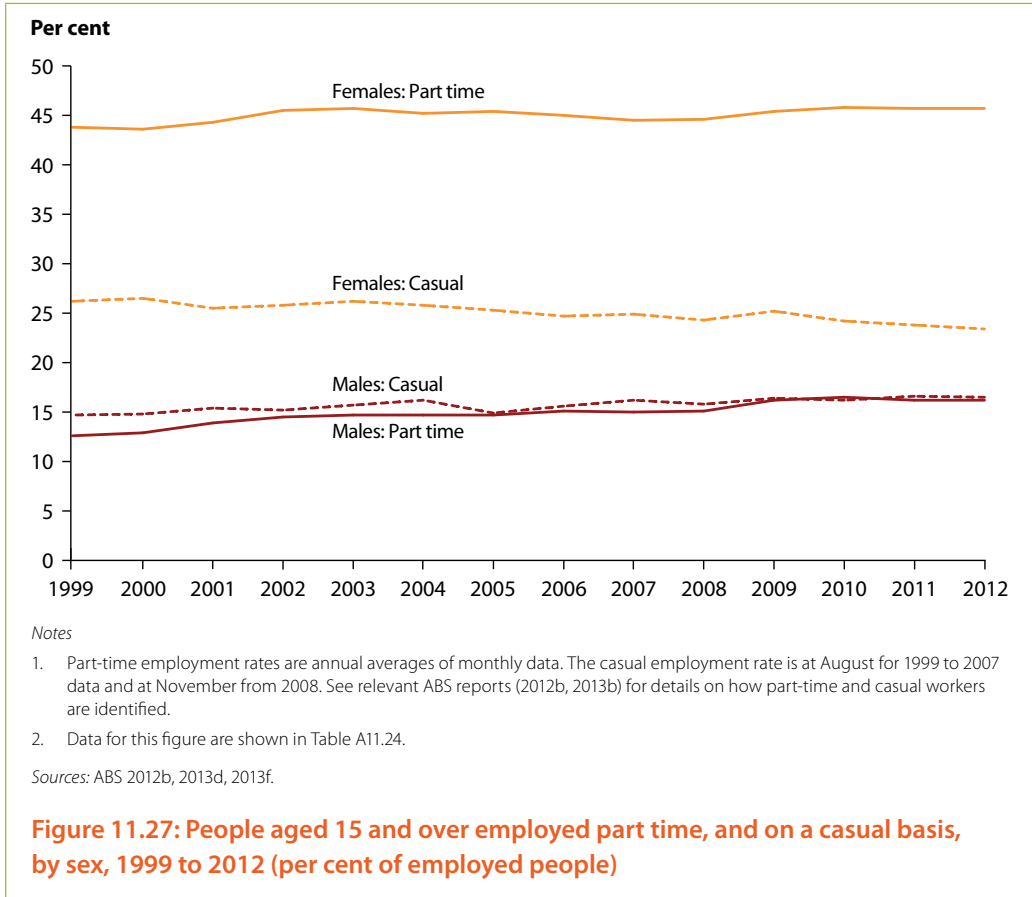


- In 2012, the average annual unemployment rate was 5.2%, up from 5.1% in 2011, but down from 5.6% in 2009. For both males and females, unemployment rates were highest among young people and lowest among older people. See Section 2.3 for more information.
- The proportion of the labour force who were long-term unemployed remained at 1.0% between 2010 and 2012.
- The rate of labour force underutilisation was 12.5% in 2012, the same as 2010, having dropped to 12.2% in 2011. These rates are lower than that in 2009 (13.3%), which was associated with the global financial crisis.
- In 2008, the unemployment rate of Indigenous Australians aged 15 to 64 was 17% which is more than four times the rate for non-Indigenous Australians (4%) (AHMAC 2012).



24. Part-time and casual employment. This indicator measures:

- the proportion of employed people working fewer than 35 hours a week
- the proportion of employed people who are casual employees (that is, without paid leave entitlements).

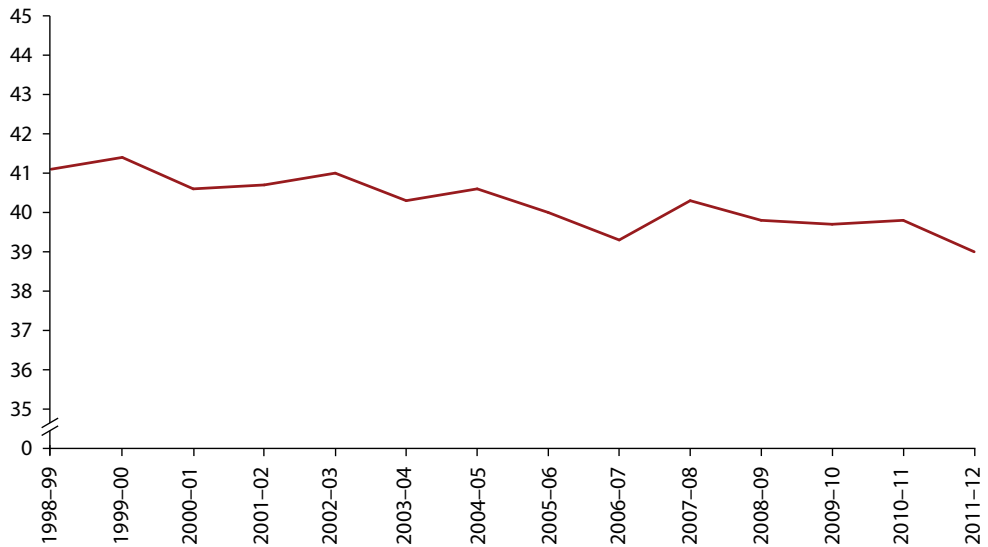


- In 2012, 30% of employed people worked part time: 16% of male workers and 46% of female workers.
- In 2012, casual workers, whether on full-time or part-time hours, comprised 20% of employed people: 17% of employed males and 23% of employed females.
- Since 1999, the proportion in part-time work increased for both males and females, while the proportion of casual workers rose among males but fell for females.



25. Average hours worked by full-time workers. Average actual hours worked per week by people employed full time (35 or more hours) during the year ending 30 June.

Hours per week



Notes

1. Average (mean) hours worked takes into account overtime, but hours paid for but not worked (such as paid annual leave, public holidays or paid sick leave) are not included.
2. Data for this figure are shown in Table A11.25.

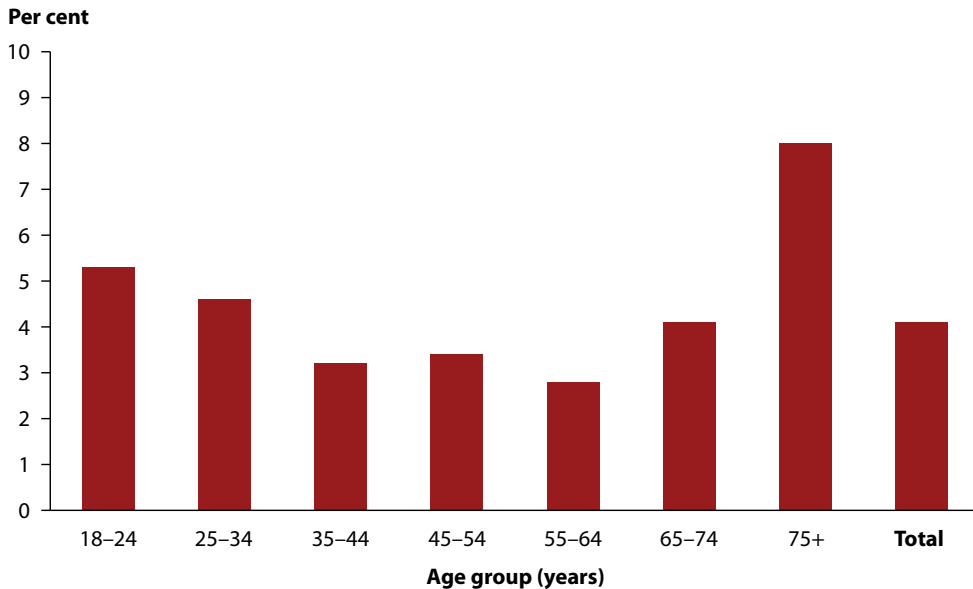
Source: ABS 2013a: Data cube Work Table 1.

Figure 11.28: Hours worked by people employed full-time, 1998-99 to 2011-12

- In 2011-12, full-time workers worked an average of 39.0 hours a week.
- Average full-time working hours have tended to fall somewhat over time; in 1998-99, the average was 41.1.
- About 1 in 5 (21%) full-time workers worked 50 or more hours a week in 2011-12; this is down from 26% in 1999-2000 (Table A11.25).



26. Adults who had difficulty with transport. The proportion of adults who indicated they 'often have difficulty' or 'can't get to the places needed' when asked how difficult it was for them to travel to places they may need to go to in normal circumstances. Difficulties which may have been taken into account were traffic problems, parking and distances, as well as those difficulties not directly related to transport, such as poor health or lack of finances. People who reported that they never went out or were housebound were not included.



Note: Data for this figure are shown in Table A11.26.

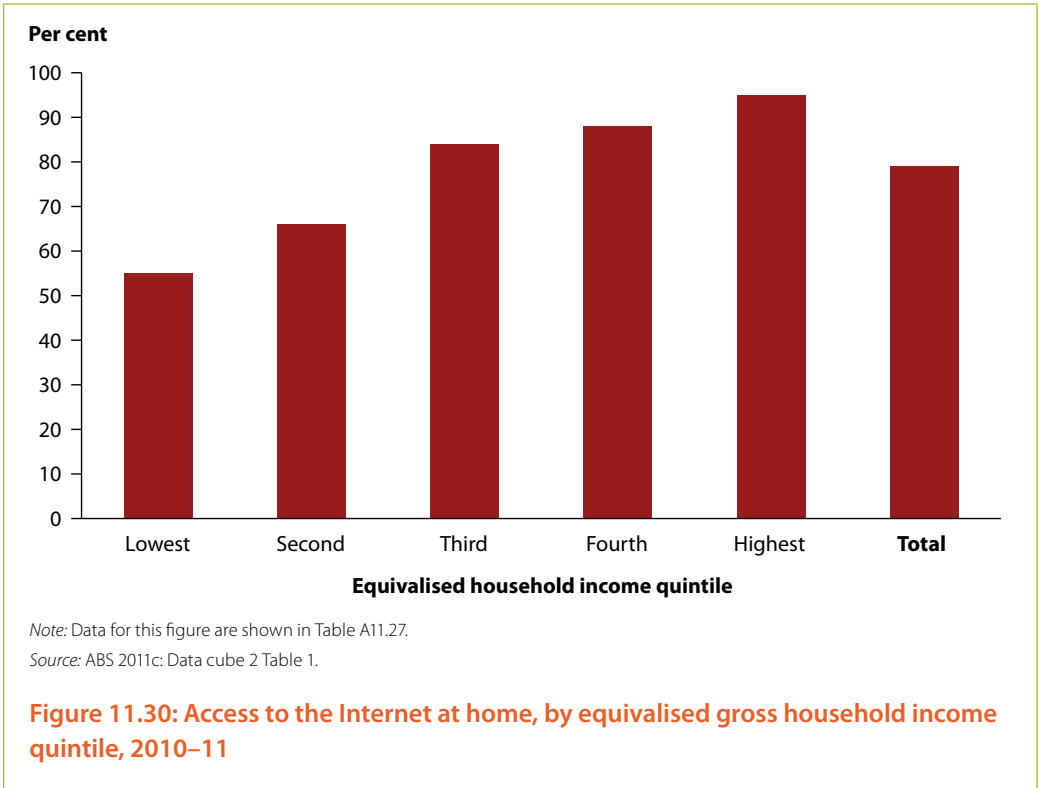
Source: ABS 2011a: Data cube Summary tables Table 2.1.

Figure 11.29: Adults who reported difficulty with transport, by age, 2010

- In 2010, 4.1% of adults reported that they could not, or often have difficulty, getting to places needed. This proportion was similar to that reported in 2002 (3.7%) and 2006 (4.3%) (ABS 2011a).
- Those most likely to indicate difficulty with transport were aged 75 and over (8.0%). This compared with 11.3% in 2006 (ABS 2007b).
- In 2008, 11% of Indigenous adults reported that they could not get to, or often have difficulty getting to, the places they needed to, compared with 4% of non-Indigenous adults (AIHW 2011a).



27. Households with access to the Internet at home. The proportion of households with Internet access at home, including the availability of lines, points, ports and modems for subscribers to access the Internet (ABS 2011c).

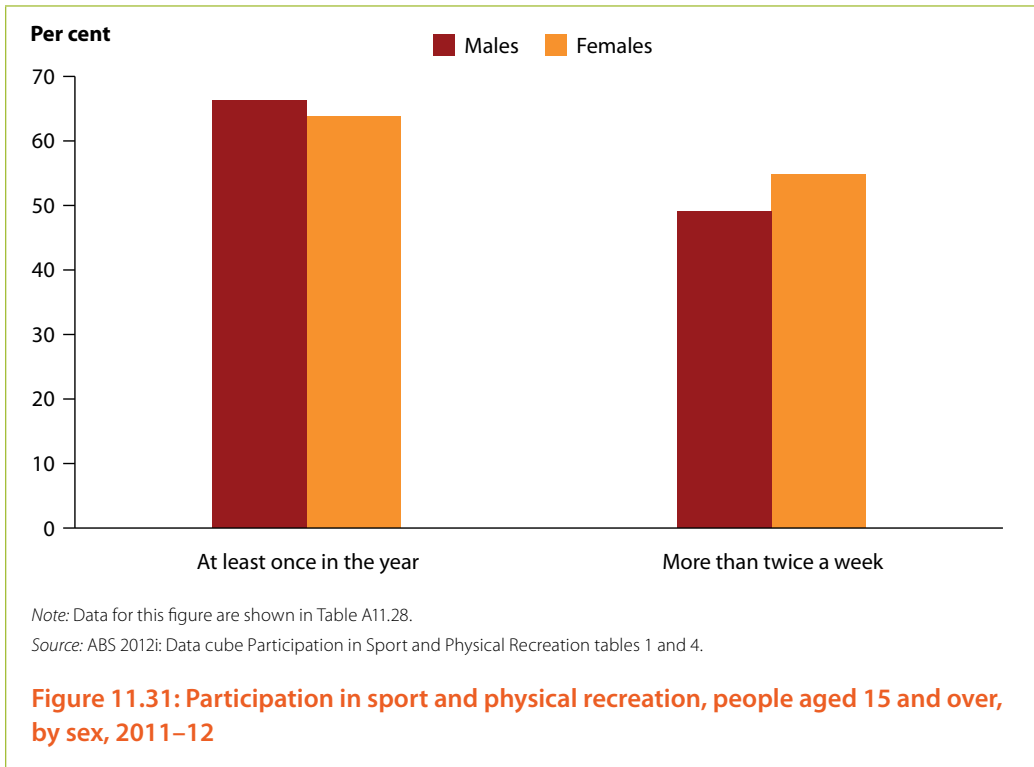


- In 2010–11, 79% of households had access to the Internet at home. This was up from 60% in 2005–06 (ABS 2011c).
- Just over half (56%) of households in the lowest quintile of equivalised gross household income had Internet access in 2010–11, compared with 95% of those in the highest quintile. This compares with 47% and 95% respectively in 2005–06 (ABS 2006a).
- Households with children under 15 were more likely to have home Internet access than households without children under 15 (93% and 74% respectively in 2010–11) (ABS 2011c).
- Access to the Internet varied by remoteness area, with households in *Major cities* most likely to have access (81%). This compares with 74% in *Inner regional areas*, 71% in *Outer regional areas* and 70% in *Remote areas* (ABS 2011c).



28. People aged 15 and over who participated in sport and physical recreation. The proportion of people aged 15 and over who participated, at least once in the year, in sport and physical recreation.

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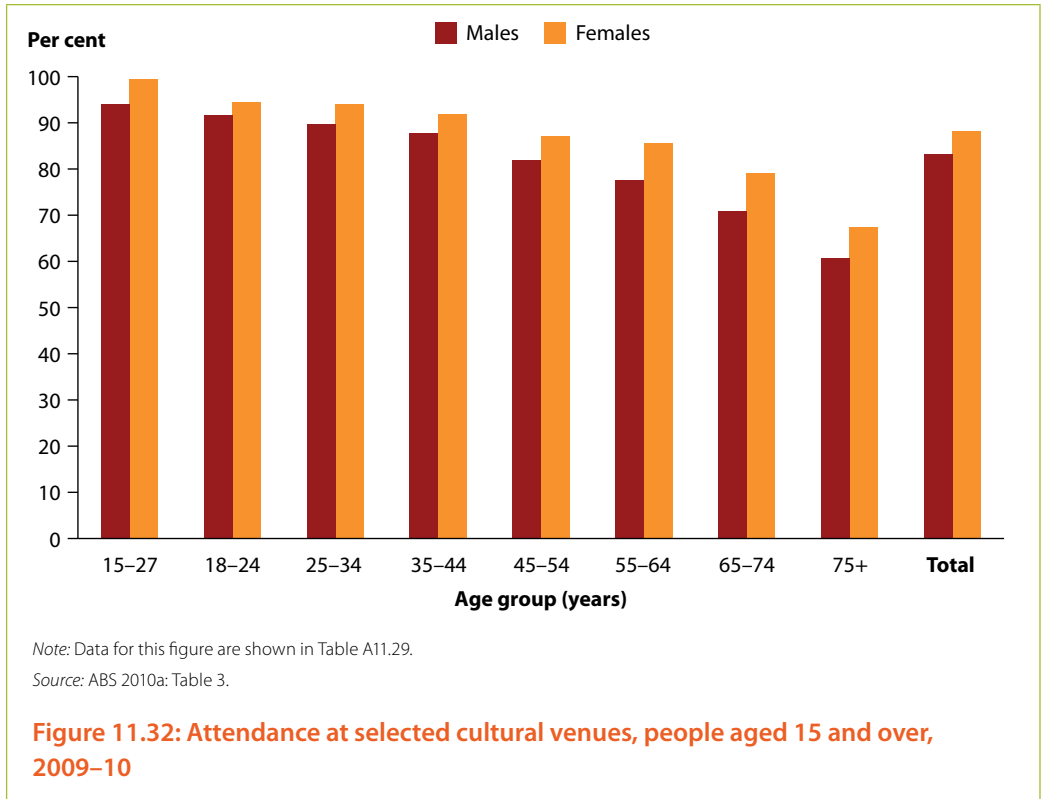


- In 2011–12, 65% of people aged 15 and over participated in sport and physical recreation at least once in the year, while 52% participated more than twice a week on average.
- These proportions were similar to 2009–10 (64% and 51% respectively) (ABS 2010c).
- Males (66%) were marginally more likely to have participated at least once a year than females (64%), while females were more likely to participate more than twice a week than males (55% and 49% respectively).
- Participation decreased with age, with 78% of people aged 15–17 participating at least once in 2011–12, compared with 50% of people aged 65 and over.

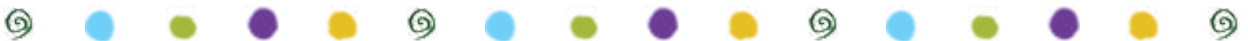




29. People aged 15 and over who attended selected cultural venues. The proportion of people aged 15 and over who attended, at least once in the year, art galleries, museums, zoological parks and aquariums, botanic gardens, libraries, archives, classical music concerts, popular music concerts, theatre performances, dance performances, musicals and operas, other performing arts or cinemas.



- In 2009-10, 86% of people aged 15 and over attended a selected cultural venue at least once. This is similar to the proportion of 85% in 2005-06 (ABS 2007a).
- Attendance was higher for females than males at all ages and declined with age.
- The most common venues attended were cinemas (67%), zoos and aquariums (37%), and botanic gardens (35%) (ABS 2010a).

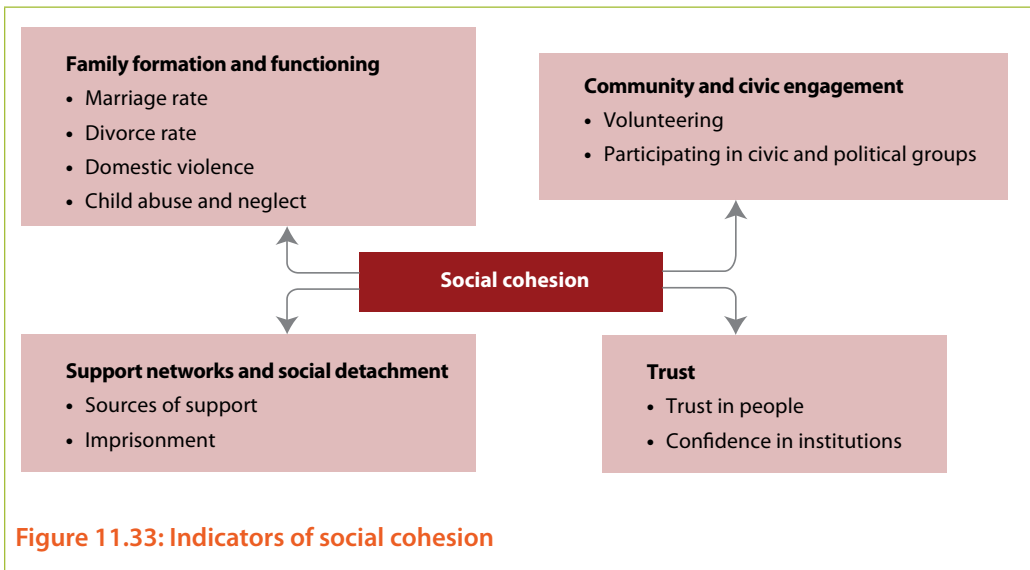


11.4 Social cohesion

Social cohesion refers to the interrelatedness and unity between the individuals, groups and associations that exist within society. This unity is established through social relationships based on trust, shared values, feelings of belonging and the expectation of reciprocity.

The conceptual framework defines four components of social cohesion—family formation and functioning, support networks and social detachment, trust, and community and civic engagement (Figure 11.33).

Families are the core unit of society in which people are supported and cared for, and where social values are developed. The structure of Australian families has undergone considerable transformation over time, reflecting wider social, demographic and economic changes. The role of each member within a family can be affected by changes in family situations and changes in the formation of the family itself. How well families function is a key factor in their ability to nurture personal wellbeing and serve as the basis for a cohesive society.



Four indicators of family formation and functioning are presented:

- Crude marriage rate
- Crude divorce rate
- Proportion of adults who experienced violence by a current or previous partner: partner violence can have severe negative consequences, both for victims and for any children who witness the violence
- Proportion of children who were the subject of a child protection substantiation.



Family formation and functioning is further discussed in chapters 1 and 4.

Support networks describe the connections between individuals and groups. As well as providing a sense of belonging, support networks can provide tangible benefits such as informational, emotional and financial support. Being disengaged from support networks—or ‘socially detached’—can have significant negative effects.

Two indicators of support networks and social detachment are presented:

- Proportion of adults who feel able to access support outside the household in times of crisis
- Imprisonment rate: people in prison may be severely socially detached and may have difficulty rejoining society. Social detachment may also be a precursor to criminal behaviour (Colvin et al. 2002).

The incidence of crime and prevalence of homelessness, both discussed earlier in this chapter, are also indicators of social detachment.

Trust is an important factor for all positive relationships, whether between individuals or groups, and as such is a key dimension of social capital. People’s trust in others is often described with reference to the type of relationship: interpersonal trust refers to individuals well known to them, social trust refers to casual acquaintances or strangers, and civic trust refers to public or high-profile institutions.

Two indicators of trust are presented, with the first being a measure of social trust and the second, of civic trust:

- Proportion of adults who agree that most people can be trusted: social trust is perceived as a more sensitive measure of acceptance than interpersonal trust (Cox & Caldwell 2000)
- Proportion of adults who have confidence in selected institutions (for example, Australia’s social welfare system and the police): civic trust promotes better access to resources and socially useful links (Anheier & Kendall 2000; Black & Hughes 2001).

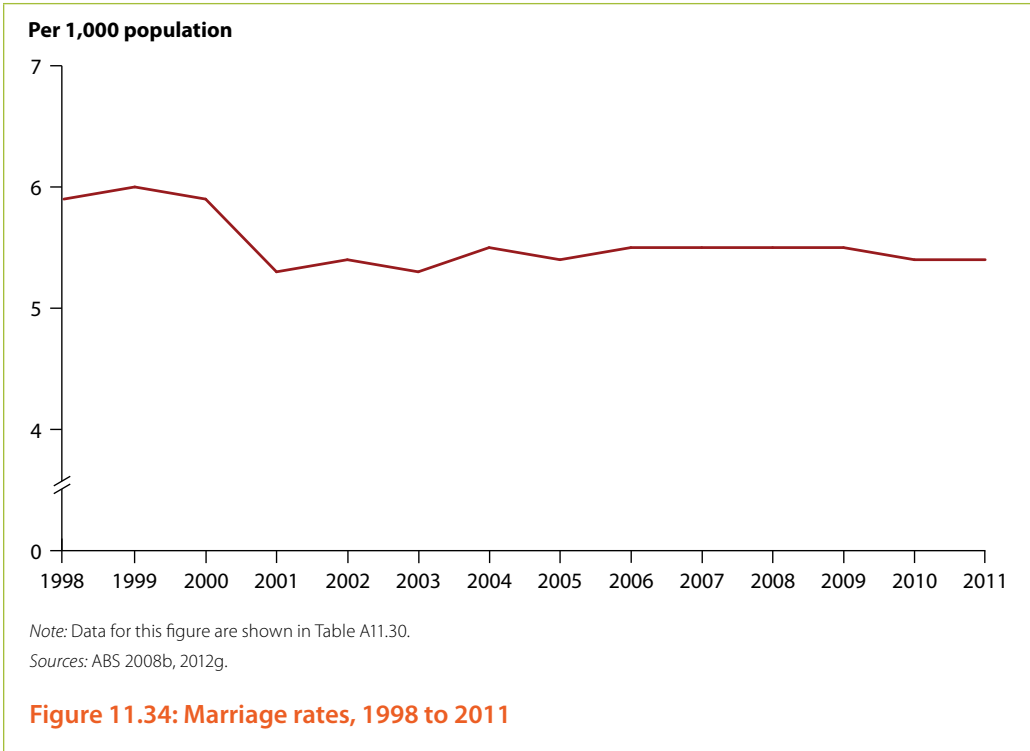
Community and civic engagement creates cohesive networks of people from various backgrounds, as well as allowing individuals to have a say in the future direction of their communities. Community and civic engagement can be expressed in various ways, such as being involved in the community or political life, or simply through volunteering.

Two indicators of community and civic engagement are presented:

- Proportion of adults who volunteer
- Proportion of adults who participate in civic and political groups.



30. Crude marriage rate. The number of marriages granted during the calendar year per 1,000 population at 30 June.



- In 2011, the crude marriage rate was 5.4 marriages per 1,000 population—a rate that has remained fairly steady since 2001 (see Section 1.6 for additional information).
- The median age at marriage was 31.4 for males and 29.3 for females, with 71% of marriages being the first marriage for both partners (ABS 2012g).
- The marriage celebrant was a minister of religion for 30% of marriages, which is substantially lower than 20 years previously (62% in 1991) (ABS 2012g).



31. Crude divorce rate. The number of divorces granted during the calendar year per 1,000 population at 30 June.

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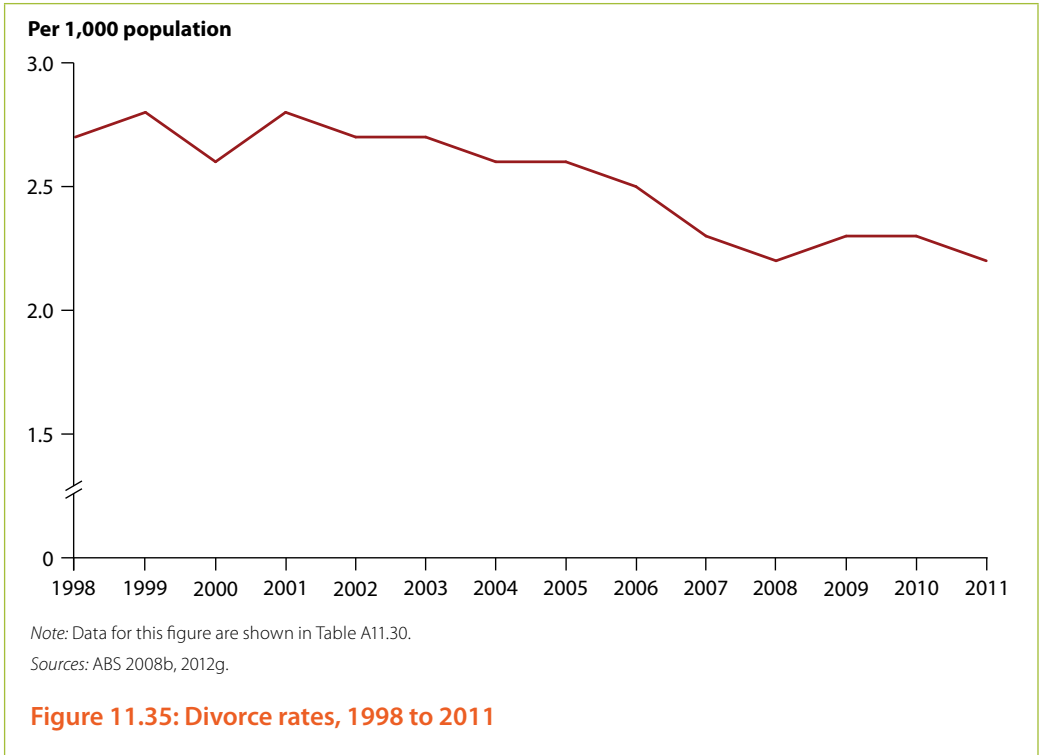


Figure 11.35: Divorce rates, 1998 to 2011

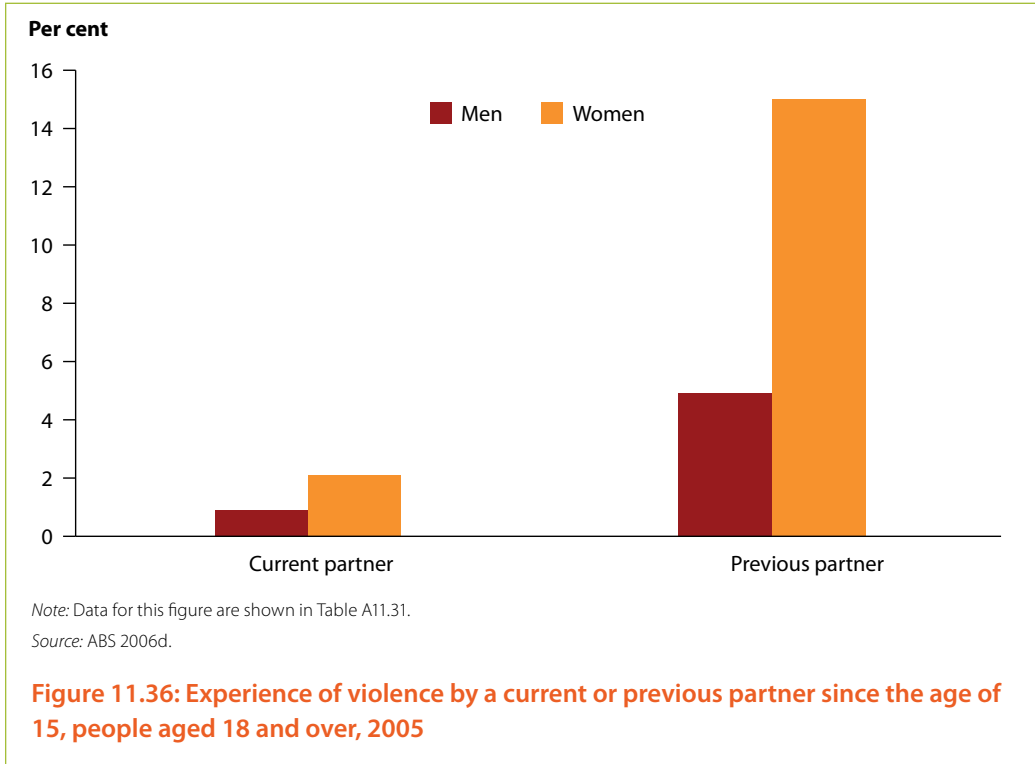
- In 2011, the crude divorce rate was 2.2 divorces per 1,000 population, down from 2.8 per 1,000 population in 2001 (see Section 1.6 for additional information).
- Almost half (48%) of divorces in 2011 occurred between couples with children aged under 18, a decrease from 54% in 1991 (ABS 2012g).
- The median length of marriage to separation was 8.7 years, and from marriage to divorce, 12.2 years (ABS 2012g).
- The median age at divorce was 44.5 for males and 41.7 for females (ABS 2012g).



32. Adults who experienced partner violence at some time since the age of 15.

The proportion of adults who experienced violence by a current or previous partner at some time since the age of 15. Violence is any incident of sexual assault, threatened sexual assault, physical assault or threatened or attempted physical assault.

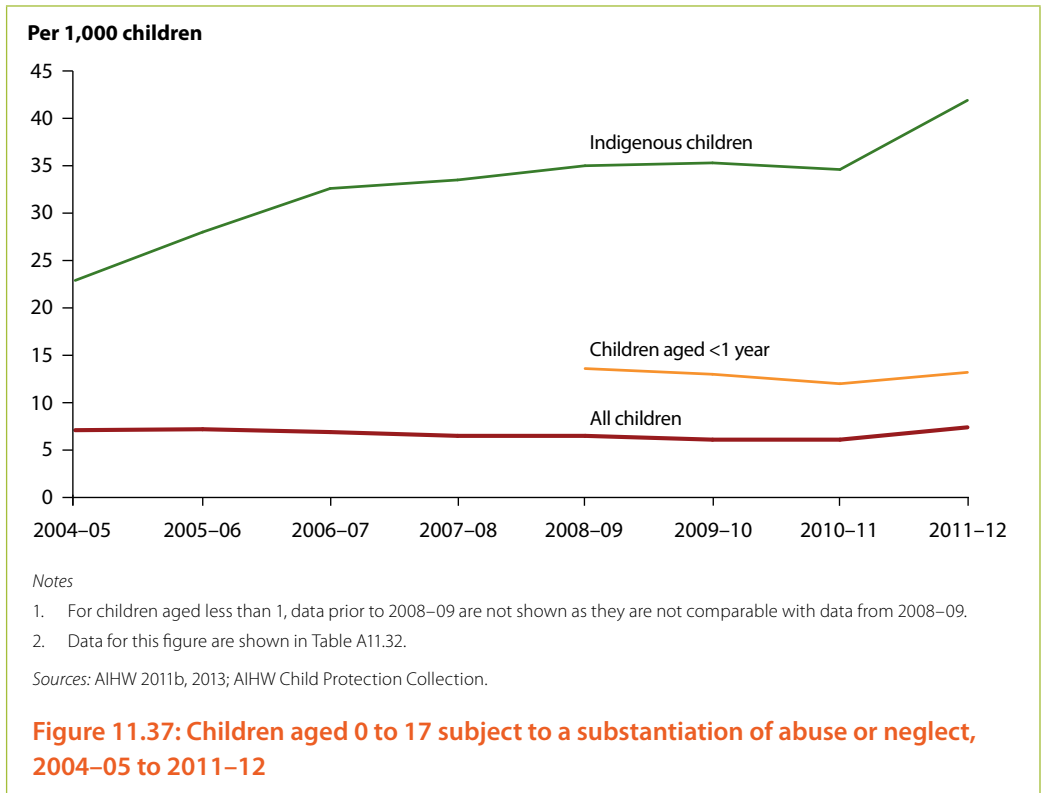
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- In 2005, 0.9% of men and 2.1% of women had experienced violence (threats and/or assaults) by their current partner, while 4.9% of men and 15.0% of women had experienced violence by a previous partner.
- Almost half (49%) of people who experienced violence by their current partner and 61% by a previous partner had children in their care at some time during the relationship (ABS 2006d).



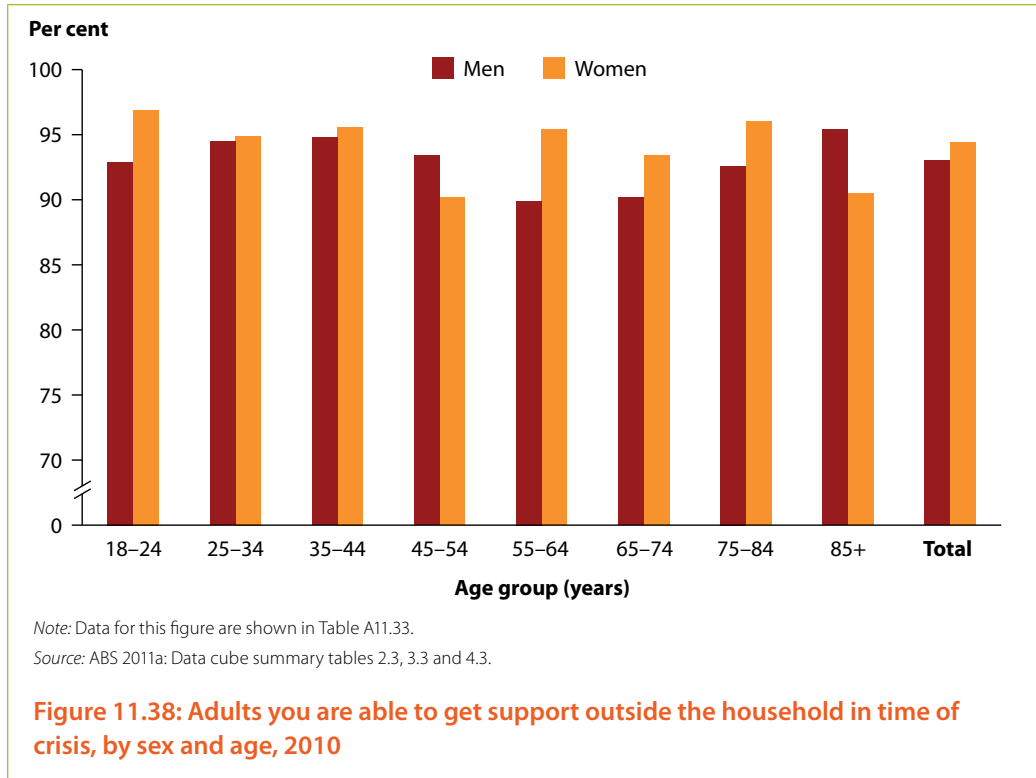
33. Children who were the subject of a child protection substantiation. The number of children under the age of 18 who were the subject of substantiation of a child protection notification received during the relevant year, per 1,000 children. A substantiation occurs when an investigation into a child protection notification concludes that there is reasonable cause to believe that the child had been, is being, or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed. See Section 4.7 for additional information about child protection substantiations.



- In 2011-12, 7.4 per 1,000 children aged 0 to 17 were the subject of a child protection substantiation.
- Across all age groups, children aged under 12 months were most likely to be the subject of a substantiation (13.2 per 1,000 children in 2011-12) (AIHW 2013).
- Indigenous children were almost 8 times as likely as non-Indigenous children to be the subject of a substantiation (AIHW 2013).
- Rates have fluctuated in the 8 years to 2011-12, with the lowest rate of 6.1 per 1,000 children recorded in 2009-10 and 2010-11. Changes in substantiation rates over time can be influenced by a range of factors—including legislative changes, enhanced public awareness and inquiries into child protection processes, along with real changes in abuse and neglect rates.



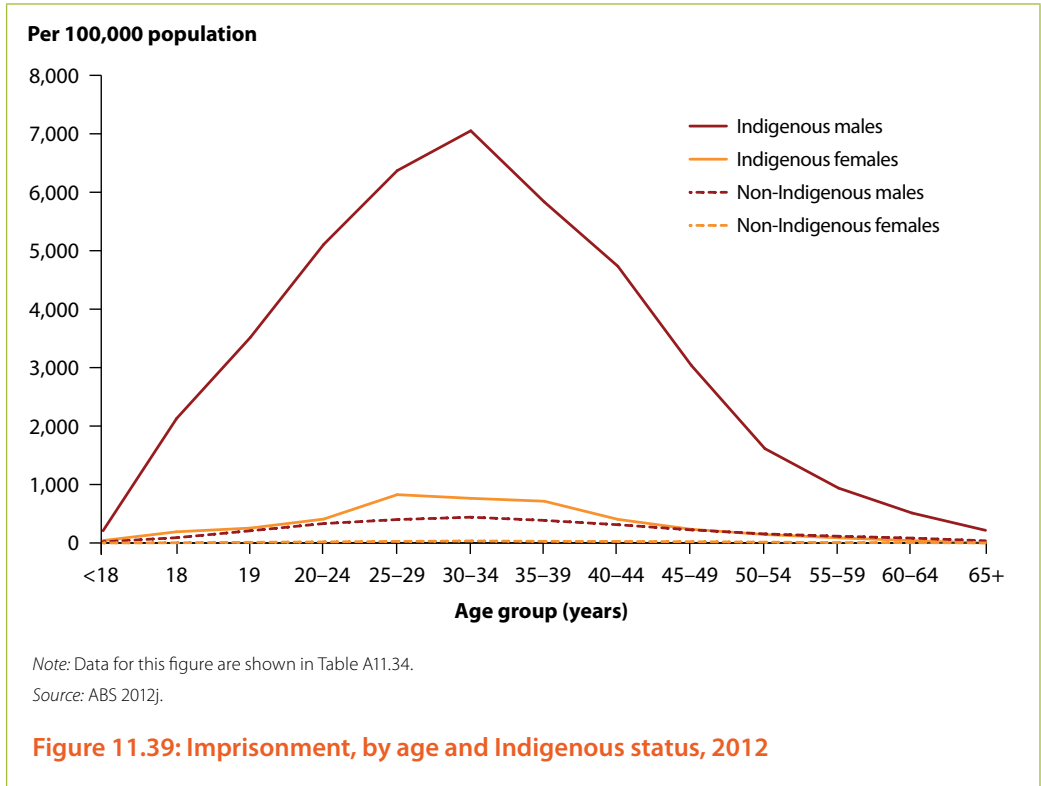
34. Adults who feel able to access support outside the household. The proportion of adults who were able to get support in a time of crisis from people living outside the household. Support could be in the form of emotional, physical or financial help. Potential sources of support could be family members, friends, neighbours, work colleagues and various community, government and professional organisations.



- In 2010, 94% of adults reported being able to access support in times of crisis from people living outside their household.
- Overall, the proportion of men and women who could access support was similar (93% and 94% respectively), although differences by sex are evident for some age groups.
- The proportion of adults who reported being able to access support outside the household did not change substantially over time (94% in 2002 and 93% in 2006) (ABS 2011a).



35. Imprisonment rate. The number of people in adult prisons on the night of 30 June, per 100,000 population. Unsentenced prisoners are included; people held in juvenile institutions, psychiatric custody and police custody are excluded.

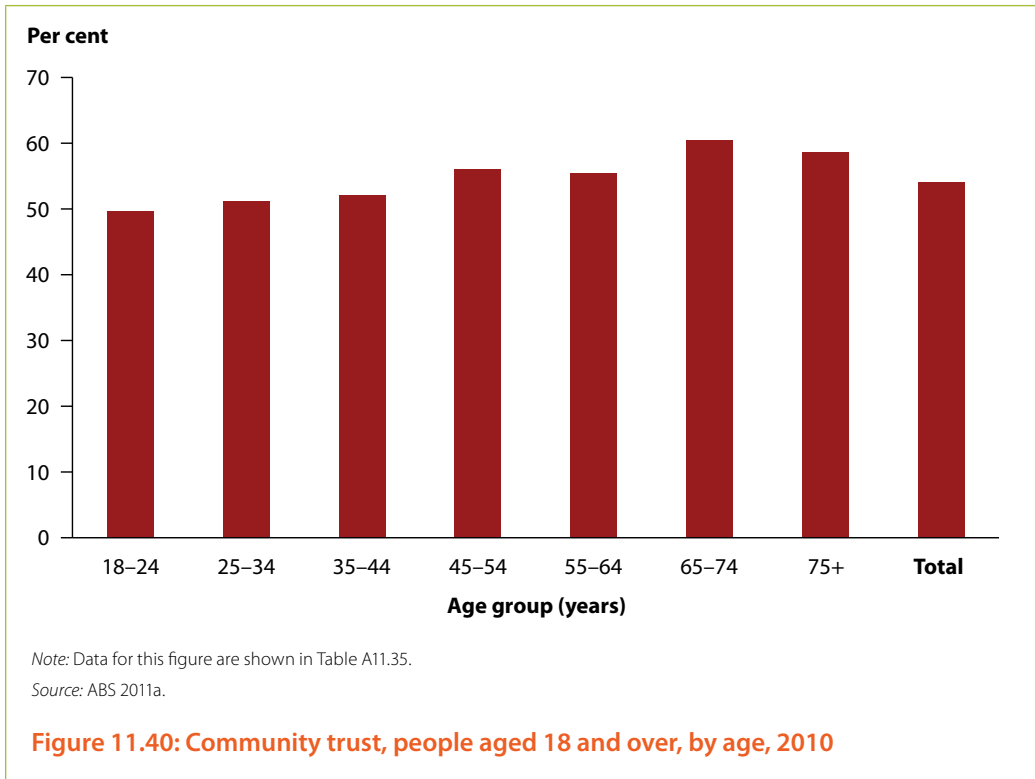


- In 2012, the imprisonment rate in adult prisons was 168 per 100,000 population; 7% of prisoners were females (ABS 2012j).
- Men aged 30–34 were the most likely to be in prison (599 per 100,000).
- The age-standardised imprisonment rate was 15 times as high for Indigenous people (1,914 per 100,000) as non-Indigenous people (129 per 100,000) (ABS 2012j).



36. Adults who agree that most people can be trusted. The proportion of adults who agreed or strongly agreed that most people could be trusted.

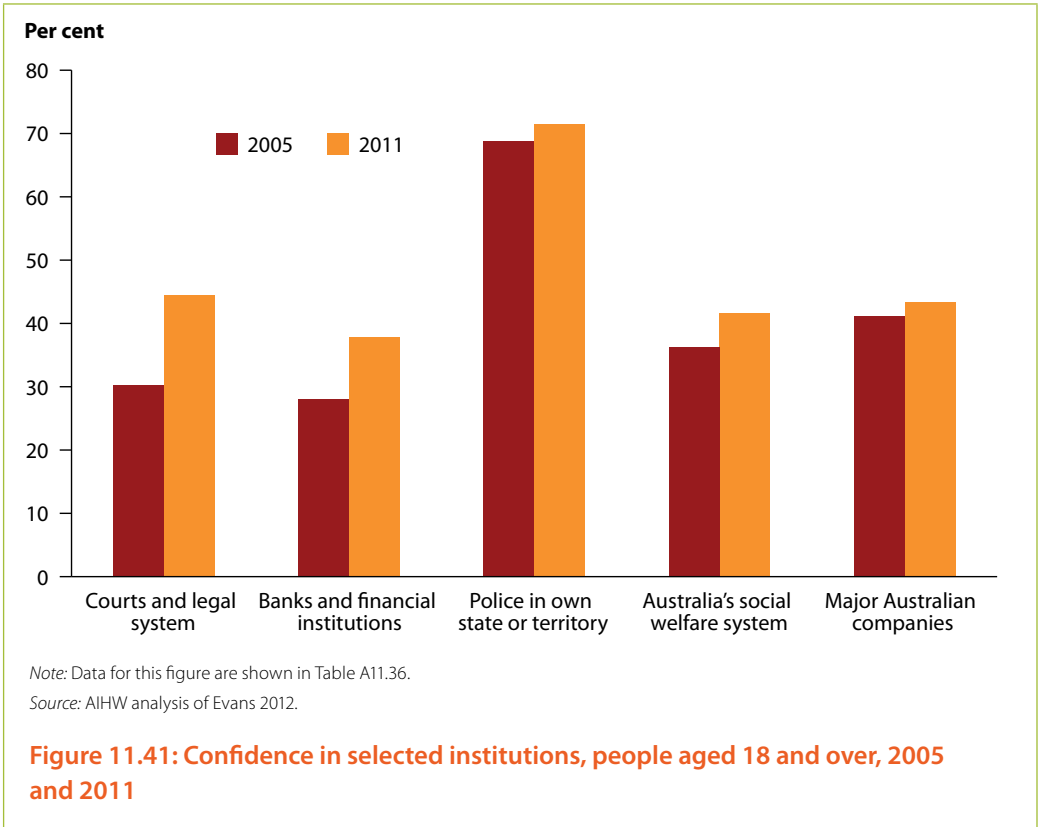
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- In 2010, 54% of adults agreed or strongly agreed that most people could be trusted.
- The proportion of those agreeing that most people could be trusted tended to increase with age, with those aged 65–74 most likely to agree (60%).
- Men and women were just as likely to agree that most people could be trusted (54%) (ABS 2011a).



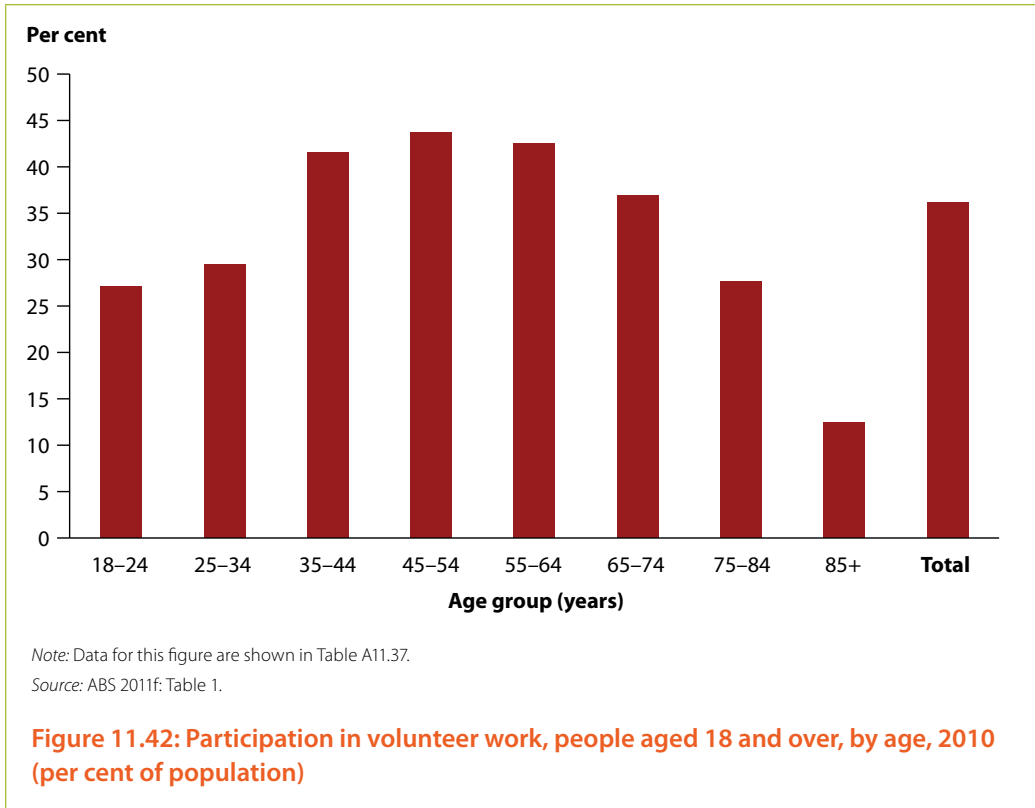
37. Adults who have confidence in selected institutions. The proportion of adults who expressed 'a great deal of confidence' or 'quite a lot of confidence' when asked about their confidence in a number of selected institutions.



- In 2011, 72% of adults expressed a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the police in their own state or territory, 44% in the courts and the legal system, 43% in major Australian companies, 42% in Australia's social welfare system, and 38% in banks and financial institutions.
- In 2005, confidence in the courts and legal system (30%) and the banks and financial institutions (28%) was considerably lower than in 2011.
- Men were more likely than women to have confidence in major Australian companies (48% compared with 39%), while women were more likely than men to have confidence in the police (74% compared with 68%) (Table A11.36). For the other selected institutions, levels of confidence were fairly similar between men and women.
- Confidence in Australia's social welfare system increased with age (from 29% of those aged 18–34 to 59% of those aged 65 and over) (AIHW analysis of Evans 2012).



38. Adults who volunteer. The proportion of adults who performed voluntary work at least once in the year. Voluntary work is unpaid help, willingly provided to an organisation or group. It excludes voluntary work done overseas, and unpaid community work that was not strictly voluntary or would not normally be seen as voluntary work (for example, work experience and the Work for the Dole Program).

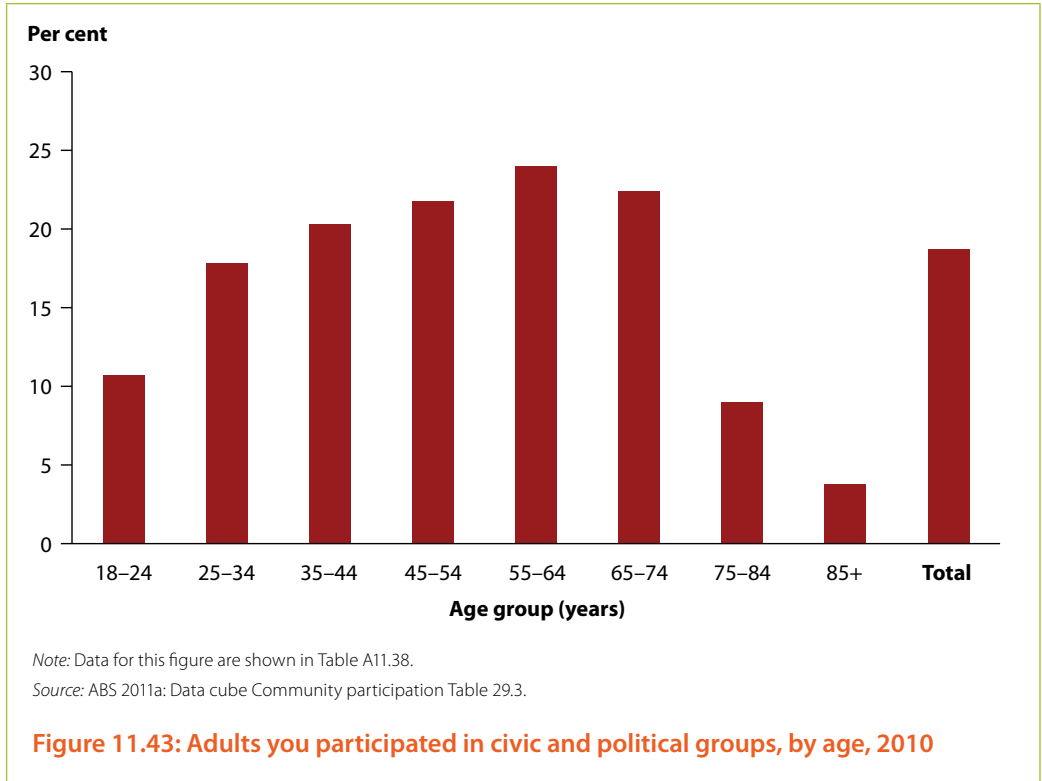


- In 2010, 36% of adults volunteered in the 12 months prior to being interviewed. This compares with 34% in 2006 (ABS 2011f).
- Overall, women (38%) were more likely than men (34%) to volunteer (ABS 2011f).
- People aged 45–54 had the highest rate of volunteering (44%), followed by those aged 55–64 (43%) and 35–44 (42%).





39. Adults participating in civic and political groups. The proportion of adults who actively participated in civic and political groups at least once in the year.



- In 2010, 19% of adults actively participated in civic and political groups in the 12 months prior to being interviewed—the same proportion as in 2006 (ABS 2007b).
- Participation was highest among people aged 55–64 (24%).



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