



People using aged care

Australia’s aged care system offers a variety of services to cater to people as they age. This fact sheet presents highlights from the GEN topic People using aged care.

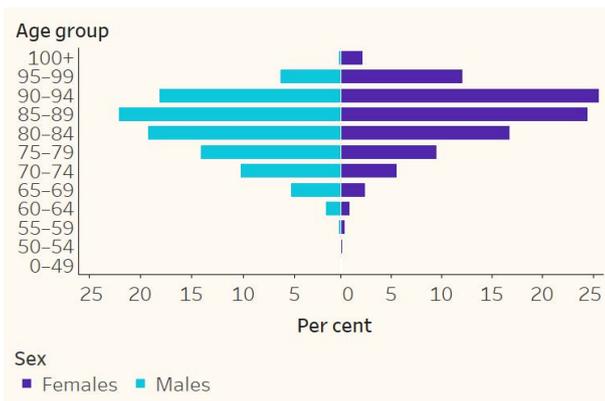
At 30 June 2021 (or during the 2020–21 financial year for home support), approximately 191,000 people were using residential care (permanent and respite), approximately 176,000 people were using home care, over 825,000 people were using home support, and approximately 3,700 people were using transition care.

Aged care use by age and sex

Over 70% of the people in residential care, home care and transition care were aged 80 and over at 30 June 2021.

At 30 June 2021 (or during the 2020–21 financial year for home support), approximately 2 in 3 (65%) people using aged care services in Australia were women. Almost two-thirds (64%) of women living in permanent residential care were aged 85 years and over, compared with 48% of men. The age profiles of men and women using home care or home support were similar between the sexes. There were more men than women in residential care in younger age groups, despite more women using aged care services overall. For example, 3.3% of men living in permanent residential aged care were aged under 65 years, compared with 1.5% of women (Figure 1).

Figure 1: People living in permanent residential aged care, by age and sex, 30 June 2021

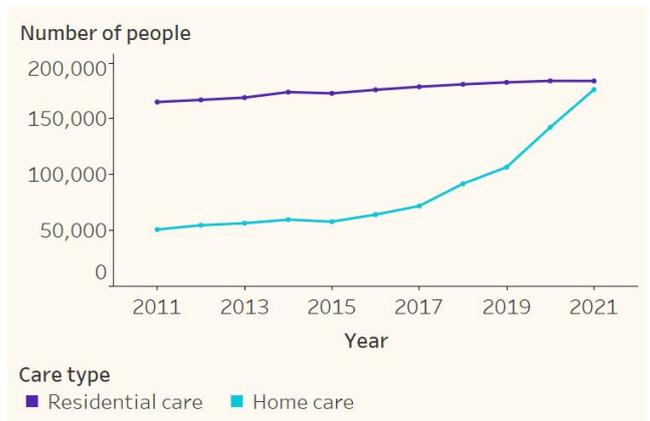


Note: Excludes unknown age and sex.

Aged care use since 2011

Between 30 June 2011 and 30 June 2021, the number of people using home care has increased more than threefold (from approximately 51,000 people to approximately 176,000 people, an increase of 245%). The number of people using permanent residential aged care increased by 11% (from approximately 165,000 people to approximately 184,000 people) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: People using permanent residential care and home care, 30 June 2011–2021



Note: Includes unknown age and sex.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians using aged care

Indigenous Australians are eligible to receive aged care services at an earlier age than non-Indigenous people. In practice, Indigenous Australians may face barriers to accessing and using aged care services for complex, inter-related reasons, including remoteness, language barriers, and the effects of racism and continued socioeconomic disadvantage. Delivering culturally appropriate aged care can improve access to, and the quality of, aged care for Indigenous Australians.

At 30 June 2021 (or during the 2020–21 financial year for home support), Indigenous Australians represented 2.7% of people using the most frequently used aged care services (residential care, home care, home support, and transition care).

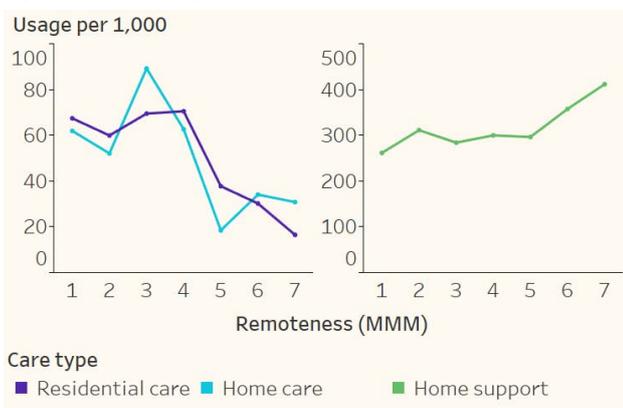
Remoteness

The proportion of people using aged care varies depending on types of aged care services within remoteness regions.

At 30 June 2021, the usage of permanent residential aged care across all age groups was highest in medium rural towns (MM 4), large rural towns (MM 3), metropolitan areas (MM 1) and regional centres (MM 2), in descending order (Figure 3). By age group, people aged 85 and over in these areas (MM 1–4) had the highest usage, with the percentage of this group using permanent residential aged care being approximately 4 times that of people in very remote communities.

During the 2020–21 financial year, home support had a different trend, with less variation between remoteness areas within age groups. Usage was lowest in metropolitan areas (MM 1) and highest in remote and very remote areas (MM 6 & 7) across all age groups (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Usage of aged care per 1,000 of the target population, by remoteness, 30 June 2021



Notes: Location is based on the location of the service. A target population of all people aged 70+ was used for these calculations to align with Australian Government planning ratios.

MMM = Modified Monash Model. The Modified Monash Model is a classification system which defines a location's remoteness; MM 1 is a metropolitan area, including Australia's major cities, and MM 7 is a very remote community, such as Longreach, Wilcannia or Derby.



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People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Australia's older population is culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD). Many CALD Australians face barriers in accessing and engaging with services that support wellbeing, although these Australians are by nature heterogeneous, and situations and needs vary greatly.

At 30 June 2021 (or during the 2020–21 financial year for home support), across all mainstream aged care services, 33% of people were born overseas, of whom 66% were born in non-English-speaking countries. Significant proportions of people using aged care services had preferred languages other than English—9% in permanent residential aged care, 17% in home care and 10% in home support.

COVID-19 and people using aged care

Australia has faced significant challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 can be more serious for people who are vulnerable, including older Australians. This heightened risk prompted a specific response in the aged care sector. Approximately one-third of COVID-19-related deaths in Australia have occurred in people living in residential aged care facilities.

For further information related to older Australians and COVID-19, including access to advice and support resources, see the Australian Government's My Aged Care website. For more information regarding COVID-19 outbreaks in Australian residential aged care facilities, see the latest [weekly report](#).

Where can I find out more?

GEN Topic: People using aged care

<<https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Topics/People-using-aged-care>>

Report on the operation of the Aged Care Act 1997:

Department of Health 2021. 2020–21 Report on the operation of the Aged Care Act 1997. Accessed 3 March 2022. Available at: <<https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/resources/reports-and-publications/2021/november/2020%E2%80%9321-report-on-the-operation-of-the-aged-care-a>>

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Information and data on aged care in Australia

[GEN-agedcaredata.gov.au](https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au)

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