



Aged care in rural and remote Australia

Over one in four (25.6%) Australians in the aged care target population live in rural or remote communities. In addition to mainstream aged care services, other flexible aged care programs, including the Multi-Purpose Services (MPS) Program and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (NATSIFACP) play important roles in providing access to aged care to these communities.

	Rural			Remote	
	Large rural towns (MM 3)	Medium rural towns (MM 4)	Small rural towns (MM 5)	Remote communities (MM 6)	Very remote communities (MM 7)
Target population	348,590 (8.1%)	237,216 (5.5%)	423,154 (9.9%)	46,424 (1.1%)	41,506 (1.0%)
Home care	16,471 (4.7%)	8,252 (3.5%)	4,966 (1.2%)	835 (1.8%)	399 (1.0%)
Home support	70,664 (20.3%)	43,338 (18.3%)	91,162 (21.5%)	8,570 (18.5%)	5,433 (13.1%)
Residential care	16,539 (4.7%)	10,797 (4.6%)	12,038 (2.8%)	961 (2.1%)	188 (0.5%)

Table 1: Aged care target population, number of people using aged care services, and proportion of target population using aged care services, 30 June 2020 (or during 2019–20 for home support)

Note: Aged care target population includes people aged 65 and over and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 and over.

The Modified Monash Model (MMM) classification system defines whether a location is a city, rural, remote or very remote. 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. This fact sheet presents data predominantly on mainstream aged care services in rural (MM 3–5) and remote (MM 6–7) Australia. See 'Where can I find out more?' for access to resources and data on MPS Program and NATSIFACP.

Aged care services

There are fewer aged care services in rural and remote Australia than in metropolitan regions. In rural and remote regions in 2020, the largest proportion of aged care services were accounted for by home support outlets. In rural regions, there were 0.9 home care services for each residential aged care service, but in remote regions this increased to 2.4 home care services (Figure 1).

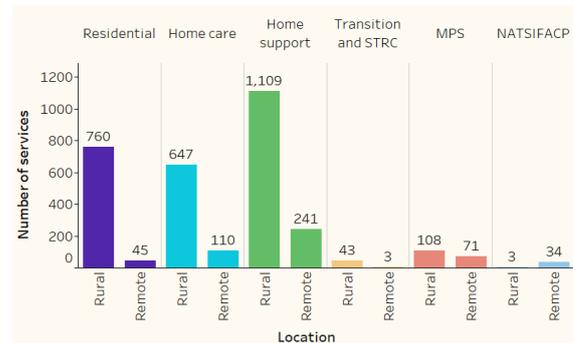


Figure 1: Number of aged care services in rural and remote Australia, 30 June 2020 (or during 2019–20 for home support) Note: Excludes services with unknown MMM; STRC = Short Term Restorative Care.

People using aged care

Compared with rural areas, people who used residential aged care in remote areas tended to be younger and comprise a greater proportion of men and a greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Figure 2A). Residential care was used at a higher rate than home care in rural areas, but not in remote areas (Figure 2B).

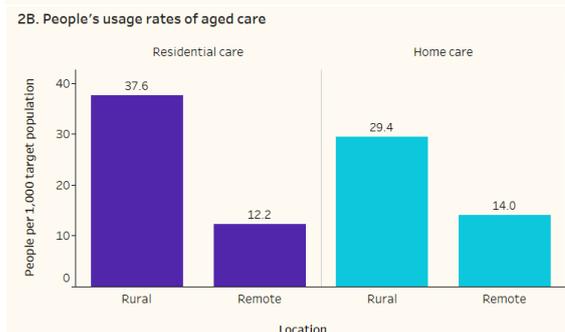
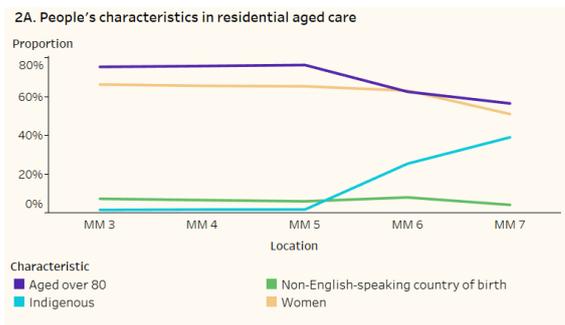


Figure 2: People using aged care services in rural and remote Australia, 30 June 2020

Note: Includes permanent residential care only; does not include respite.

Admissions to aged care

The proportion of admissions to aged care services differs between rural and remote areas. The location of services may mean that people living in these areas need to move to less remote areas to access higher-level aged care services. In 2019–20, rates of admissions to mainstream aged care services tended to be highest in large and medium rural towns (MM 3–4) and lowest in remote and very remote areas (Figure 3).

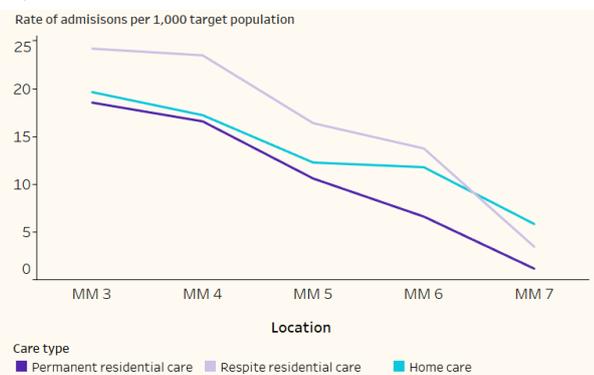


Figure 3: Number of admissions to aged care services in rural and remote Australia, 2019–20

Note: Location is based on people's residential address for home care and on the location of the service for residential aged care.

Length of stay

The time that a person spends using an aged care service in a single episode is described as 'length of stay', regardless of whether they used community or residential care. Here we describe length of stay using the median value, which represents a typical length of stay.

For exits that took place in 2019–20, the median length of stay in rural and remote areas was longer in residential care than in home care (Figure 4). The length of stay for these aged care programs tended to be longer for people living in more remote areas.

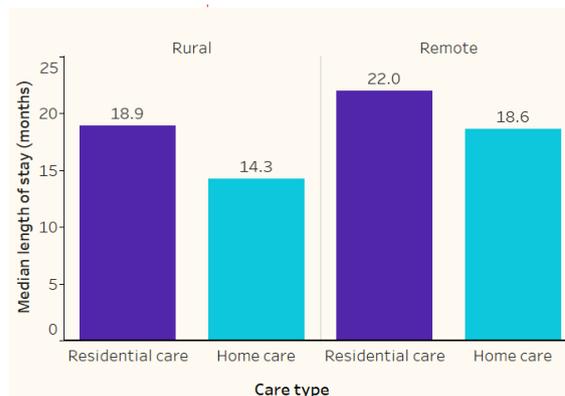


Figure 4: Length of stay of people in aged care in rural and remote Australia, 2019–20

Note: Includes permanent residential care only; does not include respite.

A note about COVID-19 and aged care in rural and remote Australia

Australia has faced significant challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 illness can be more serious for people who have health vulnerabilities and pre-existing health conditions, including older Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. People living in rural and remote communities often have access to fewer aged care resources than people living in metropolitan regions. Further service restrictions due to COVID-19 are likely to have impacted the number of people using, entering and exiting aged care services in rural and remote Australia.

Where can I find out more?

Fact sheet: Multi-Purpose Services Program Residential Care 2019–20

<https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/www_ahwgen/media/DoH-factsheets/MPS-fact-sheet-2019-20.pdf?ext=.pdf>

Fact sheet: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using aged care services, 2018–19

<https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/www_ahwgen/media/DoH-factsheets/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-peoples-use-of-aged-care-services-2018-19.pdf?ext=.pdf>

GEN dashboard: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using aged care

<<https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Resources/Dashboards/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-people-using>>

Suggested citation

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2021. GEN fact sheet 2019–20 Aged care in rural and remote Australia. Canberra: AIHW.

Any enquiries about copyright and/or this fact sheet should be directed to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, GPO Box 570, Canberra ACT 2601, Tel: (02) 6244 1000, Email: <info@aihw.gov.au>



© Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2021

This product, excluding the AIHW and GEN logos, Commonwealth Coat of Arms and any material owned by a third party or protected by a trademark, has been released under a Creative Commons BY 3.0 (CC BY 3.0) licence

(<<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/>>).

You may distribute, remix and build upon this work. However, you must attribute the AIHW as the copyright holder of the work in compliance with our attribution policy available at <www.aihw.gov.au/copyright/>. The full terms and conditions of this licence are available at <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/>>.

Information and data on aged care in Australia

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

Contact

GPO Box 570, Canberra, ACT 2601
(02) 6244 1000 | GEN@aihw.gov.au

