



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.

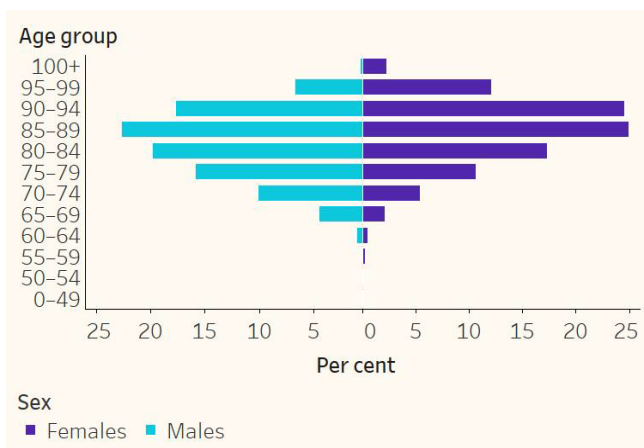
At 30 June 2023 (or during the 2022–23 financial year for home support), approximately 193,000 people were using residential care (permanent and respite), 258,000 people were using home care, 4,500 people were using transition care or short-term restorative care and over 816,000 people were using home support.

Aged care use by age and sex

At 30 June 2023 (or during the 2022–23 financial year for home support):

- Almost 3 in 5 (58%) people using permanent residential care were aged 85 and over, compared with 40% of people using home care and 29% of people using home support.
- Around 2 in 3 (65%) people using aged care services 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 people 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 (52% of people aged under 65 in permanent residential care were men) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: People living in permanent residential aged care, by age and sex, 30 June 2023

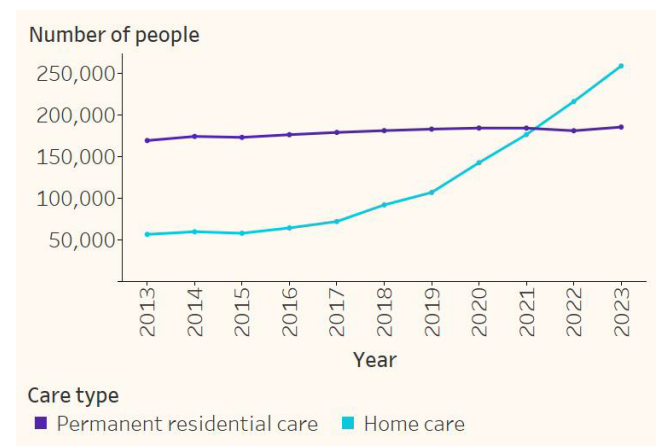


Note: Excludes unknown age and sex.

Aged care use over time

Between 30 June 2013 and 30 June 2023, the number of people using home care increased more than fourfold – from 57,000 people to 258,000 people (an increase of 357%). The number of people using permanent residential care increased by 9.5% (from 169,000 people to 185,000 people) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: People using permanent residential care and home care, 30 June 2013–2023



Note: Includes unknown age and sex.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians using aged care

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (First Nations) people are eligible to access aged care services at an earlier age than non-Indigenous people.

At 30 June 2023 (or during the 2022–23 financial year for home support), First Nations people represented 2.7% of people using the mainstream aged care services (residential care, home care, home support, transition care and short-term restorative care).

In practice, First Nations people may face barriers to accessing and using aged care services for complex, interrelated 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 First Nations people.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care (NATSIFAC) Program provides culturally appropriate care for First Nations people in certain locations, mostly in rural and remote areas, that are close to their communities.

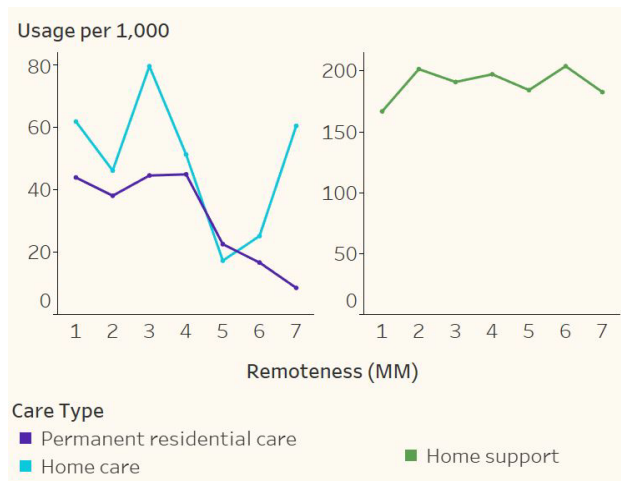
Remoteness

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

At 30 June 2023 (or during the 2022–23 financial year for home support):

- Usage of permanent residential aged care per 1,000 population aged 65 and over was highest in medium rural towns (MM 4) and large rural towns (MM 3), and decreased with increasing remoteness.
- Home care usage per capita was lowest for home care services in small rural towns (MM 5) and remote communities (MM 6) and highest in large rural towns (MM 3).
- Home support had a different usage pattern, with less variation between remoteness areas. Per capita usage was lowest for home support outlets in metropolitan areas (MM 1) and highest in remote communities (MM 6) and regional centres (MM 2) (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Usage of aged care per 1,000 population aged 65 and over, by care type and remoteness, 30 June 2023



Notes: Home support measured across financial year 2022–23.

Location is based on the location of the service. The population aged 65 and over was used to align with the aged care target population.

The Modified Monash Model (MMM) 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.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Australia's older population is culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD). The situations and needs of CALD Australians vary due to their diverse backgrounds. However, many often face barriers in accessing and engaging with services that appropriately support their wellbeing.

At 30 June 2023 (or during the 2022–23 financial year for home support), across mainstream aged care services (residential care, home care, home support, transition care and short-term restorative care), most people were born in mainly English-speaking countries. The proportion of people born in non-English-speaking countries was highest for home care (31%), short-term restorative care (25%) and repite residential care (24%). Home care had the largest proportion of people with a preferred language other than English (19%), followed by short-term restorative care (14%) and respite residential care (12%).

COVID-19 and people using aged care

COVID-19 continues to impact people using aged care.

People in residential care were acutely impacted by COVID-19 because the close proximity of residents increased the risk of virus transmission. Older people also had an increased risk of death if they contracted COVID-19.

In residential care, there was a total of 94,133 resident cases, 43,781 staff cases and 2,885 resident deaths in 2022–23. These numbers are an increase on the previous financial year. For the period of 1 January 2023 to 10 July 2023, COVID-19 was recorded as the cause of death in 3.5% of all deaths in permanent residents.

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 and Aged Care 2023. 2022–23 Report on the operation of the *Aged Care Act 1997*. Available at: <https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/resources/publications/2024/november/2023-24-report-on-the-operation-of-the-aged-care-act-1997>

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Suggested citation

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) *GEN fact sheet 2022–23: People using aged care*, AIHW, Australian Government.

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