



People using aged care

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

At 30 June 2020 (or during the 2019–20 financial year for home support) 189,954 people were using residential care (permanent and respite), 142,436 people were using home care, 839,373 people were using home support, and 3,499 people were using transition care.

Aged care use by age and sex

Almost half of the people in residential care, home care and transition care were aged between 80 and 89 years at 30 June 2020.

At 30 June 2020 (or during the 2019–20 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 47% of men. The age profiles of men and women using home care or home support were similar. There were more men than women in younger age groups, despite more women using aged care services, overall. For example, 4.3% of men living in permanent residential aged care were aged under 65 years, compared with 1.8% of women (Figure 1).

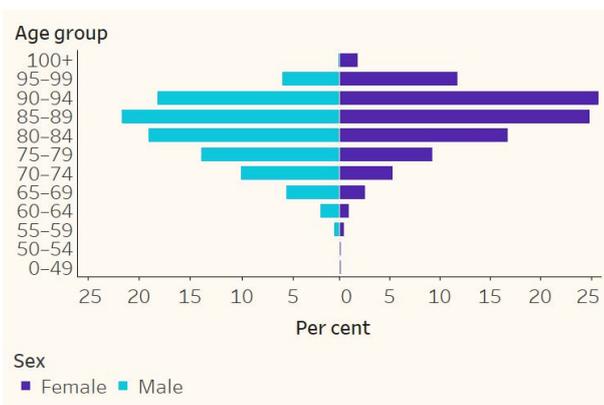


Figure 1: People living in permanent residential aged care, by age and sex, 30 June 2020

Note: Excludes unknown age and sex.

Aged care use since 2010

In the 10 years between 30 June 2010 and 30 June 2020, the number of people using home care has tripled (from 47,684 people to 142,436 people, an increase of 199%). The number of people using permanent residential aged care increased by 13% (from 162,578 people to 183,989 people) (Figure 2).

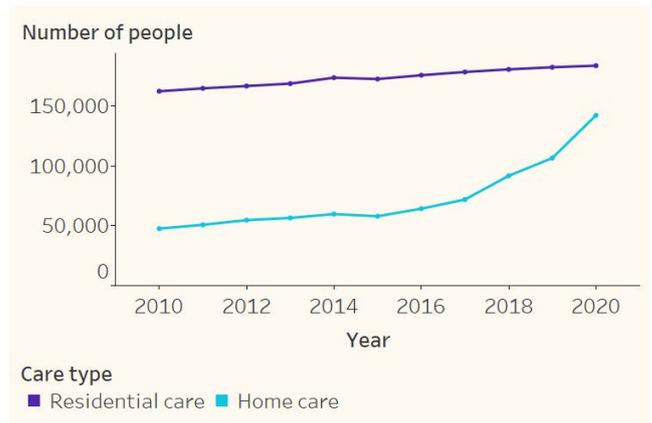


Figure 2: People using permanent residential care and home care, 30 June 2010–2020

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. At 30 June 2020 (or during the 2019–20 financial year for home support), Indigenous Australians represented 2.6% of people using the most frequently used aged care services (residential care, home care, home support, and transition care). During the 2019–20 financial year, 12% of Indigenous Australians using home support were aged under 55 years, compared with less than 1% of non-Indigenous people. This partly reflects the fact that eligibility for this program is extended to Indigenous Australians aged 50 and over.

Remoteness

The proportion of people using aged care in the target population (that is, all people aged 65 years and over and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people aged 50-64 years) decreases as people live in increasingly remote areas. However, this is most obvious for high-care services (permanent residential care) and absent for basic support services (home support). This may be because people in remote areas need to move to access higher-level aged care services.

At 30 June 2020 the usage rate (number of people using an aged care service per 1,000 in the target population) of permanent residential aged care was highest in metropolitan areas (MM 1) and large rural towns (MM 3) (Figure 3). For example, people aged 85-89 in metropolitan areas had a usage rate of over 10 times that of people in very remote communities (11.1 compared to 1.0). During the 2019-20 financial year home support had the opposite trend, where the usage rate was lower in metropolitan areas (MM 1) than in remote communities (MM 6). For example, people aged 80-84 in remote communities had a usage rate nearly 3 times that of people in metropolitan areas (114.6 compared to 41.3 in metropolitan areas) (Figure 3).

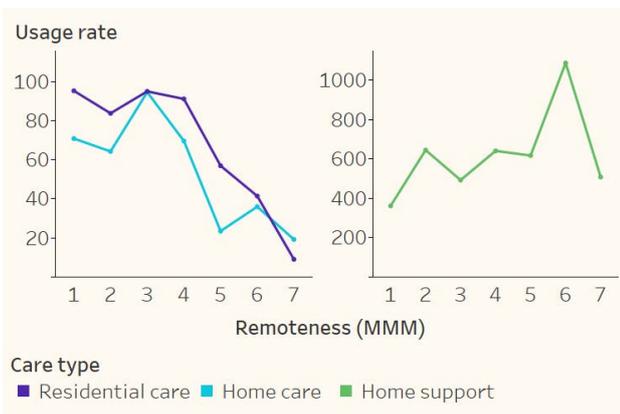


Figure 3: Proportion of people in permanent residential aged care, by remoteness, 30 June 2020

Note: Location is based on the location of the service.
MMM = Modified Monash Model.



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People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

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

At 30 June 2020 (or during the 2019-20 financial year for home support) people using aged care services had languages other than English as their preferred language—9% in permanent residential aged care and 15% in both home support and home care. Across all aged care services, between 18-28% of people were born in non-English speaking countries.

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 two-thirds 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 national snapshot.

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 2020. 2019-20 Report on the operation of the Aged Care Act 1997. Accessed. Available at:

<<https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/resources/reports-and-publications/2020/november/2019%E2%80%9320-report-on-the-operation-of-the-aged-care-a>>

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Information and data on aged care in Australia

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