

Older Australians



Australians are living longer and healthier lives, and population ageing is one of the major forces shaping Australia's future. Compared to previous generations, Australians today are participating actively in the workforce and many other areas of public life to older ages. Older Australians provide enormous contributions to Australia's society, culture, communities, workplaces, and economy.

Yet for some older Australians the story is very different, with many experiencing increased levels of economic stress, including housing vulnerability, and an increasing risk of abuse. Ageism and age discrimination continue to create barriers to older people's full and equal enjoyment of their human rights.

On average, people in Australia enjoy one of the **highest life expectancies in the world.**¹

MEN
81
YEARS

WOMEN
85
YEARS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to experience a lower life expectancy.²

MEN
72
YEARS

WOMEN
76
YEARS

Over 16% of people in Australia are aged 65 and over:

Women over 65:
2.2 million

Men over 65:
2 million³

But only around

6%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over 65 years of age.⁴

Australians are increasingly working to older ages.



Workforce participation of people aged 65 years and over:

2001: 6%

2021: 15%⁷

Of these older workers, **3 in 5 are men** and **2 in 5 are women.**

Nearly 1 in 4

older working Australians have **experienced age discrimination** in employment since turning 50.⁸



1 in 5

older Australians were born in countries where

English is not the first language.⁵

18%

Speak a language other than English at home.

The most common languages spoken are:

Italian

Chinese

(including both Cantonese and Mandarin)

Greek⁶



of Australians aged 65 and over **receive the Age Pension.** ⁹



While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up almost 4% of the population¹⁰ in Australia, **they make up only around 1% of people accessing the Age Pension.** ¹¹

More than

1 in 4

older Australians **live in poverty.** ¹²

On average, women aged 60-64 retire with **about 25% less**

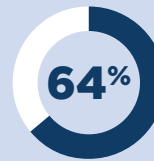
superannuation compared to men the same age.¹³



Housing insecurity has become

increasingly widespread among older women. ¹⁴

From 2011 - 2021, the rate of **homelessness among older women** grew by **almost 40%.** ¹⁵



of older Australians say they have been **affected by ageism** in the last 5 years. ¹⁶

Around 1 in 6 ¹⁷

older people in Australia **experience elder abuse** in a given year.

Psychological abuse is the most commonly reported type, followed by neglect and financial abuse.



1 in 2 ¹⁷

perpetrators of elder abuse is a **family member**, with **adult children** the most likely to commit abuse.

Australians aged 55 years and over contribute

\$74.5 billion ¹⁸

each year in **unpaid caring and voluntary work.**



1 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023, November 8). [Life expectancy - Key statistics](#).

2 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023, November 29). [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy - Key statistics](#). Men: 71.9 years, women: 75.6 years. It is important to note First Nations people are undercounted in census data, so these numbers are approximate.

3 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023). [Older Australians - Demographic profile 2020, June 30](#). 16% = 4.2 million 2.2 million = 53%

4 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022, July 1). [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population summary](#).

5 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023). [Older Australians - Culturally and linguistically diverse older people](#). 1 in 5 = 20%. Older Australians = aged 65 years and over.

6 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023). [Older Australians - Culturally and linguistically diverse older people](#).

7 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023). [Older Australians - Employment and work](#). 3 in 5 = 61% 2 in 5 = 39%

8 Polidoras, A., Banks, C., Toner, K., & Diseris, I. (2023). [State of the Older Nation 2023](#). Councils on the Ageing Federation, p. 5. Nearly 1 in 4 = 24%

9 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023). [Income support for older Australians](#). Australian Government, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

10 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023, August 31). [Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians](#). Almost 4% = 3.8%

11 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023, September 07). [Income and finance of First Nations people](#).

12 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2009). [Pensions at a Glance 2009: Retirement-income systems in OECD countries](#), p. 63.

13 Clare, R. (2023). [An update on superannuation account balances](#). The Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia, pp. 8 - 9.

14 Australian Human Rights Commission. (2019). [Older Women's Risk of Homelessness: Background Paper](#).

15 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2024). [Specialist homelessness services annual report 2022 - 2023](#).

16 Australian Human Rights Commission. (2021). [What's Age Got To Do With It?](#) p. 37.

17 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2024). [Family, domestic and sexual violence - Older people](#). 1 in 6 = 15% 1 in 2 = 53%

18 Australian Institute of Family Studies. (2003). [Measuring the value of unpaid household, caring and voluntary work of older Australians](#).