
Report on Government Services 2017

VOLUME A, CHAPTER 2

Statistical context

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The Statistical context contains contextual information to assist interpretation of the performance information in this Report. It includes information and data on the population, families and households, and income and employment. Information on some of the statistical concepts that are used in the Report is available in the Statistical Concepts note.

[Statistical concepts \(PDF - 343 Kb\)](#)

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Data referenced by a '2A' prefix (for example, table 2A.1) are included in the Attachment tables, which can be downloaded below.

[Chapter 2 Attachment tables \(XLSX - 2676 Kb\)](#)

[Chapter 2 Attachment tables \(XLSX - 1151 Kb\)](#)

Population

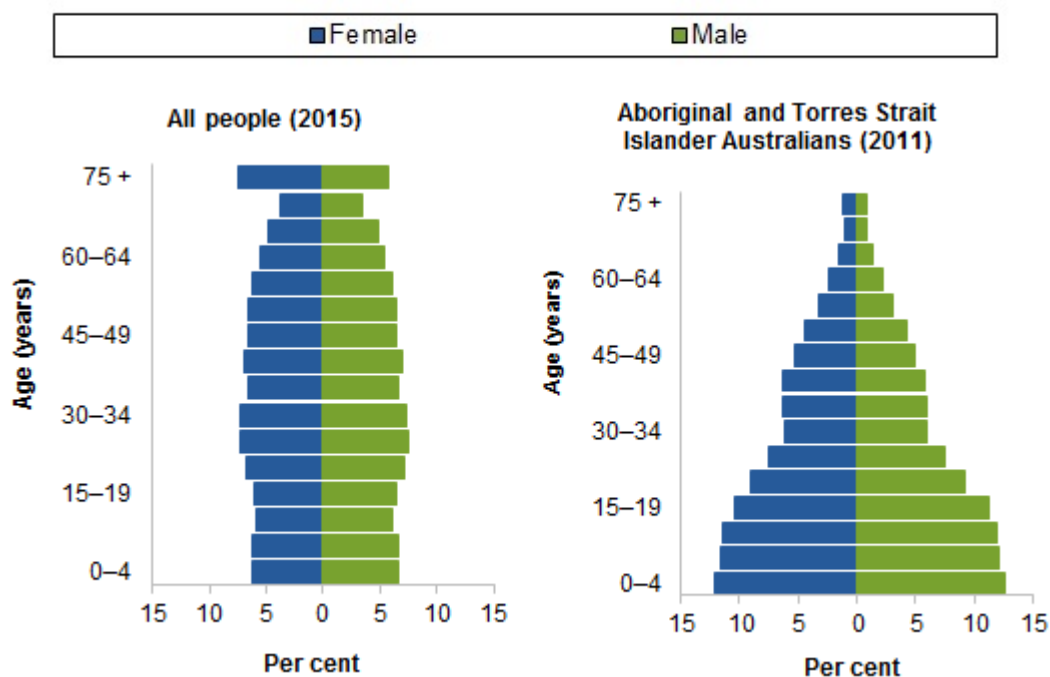
The Australian people are the principal recipients of the government services covered by this Report. The size, trends and characteristics of the population can have significant influences on the demand for government services and the cost of service delivery.

Population size and trends

More than three-quarters of Australia's 23.8 million people lived in the eastern mainland states as at 30 June 2015. As the majority of Australia's population lives in the eastern mainland states, data for these jurisdictions generally have a large influence on national averages. Nationally, the average annual growth rate of the population between 2011 and 2015 was approximately 1.6 per cent (table 2A.1).

As in most other developed economies, greater life expectancy and declining fertility have contributed to an 'ageing' of Australia's population. However, the age distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is markedly different to that of all Australians (figure 1). At 30 June 2015, 10.2 per cent of Australia's population was aged 70 years or over, compared with just 1.9 per cent of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population as at 30 June 2011 (tables 2A.1 and 2A.13).

Figure 1 – Population distribution, Australia, by age and sex, 30 June^a



^a See tables 2A.1 and 2A.13 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.

Source: ABS (2015) *Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2015*, Cat. no. 3101.0; ABS (2013) *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026*, Cat. no. 3238.0; tables 2A.1 and 2A.13.

Population, by ethnicity and proficiency in English

New Australians face specific problems when accessing government services. Language and cultural differences can be formidable barriers for otherwise capable people. Cultural backgrounds can also have a significant influence on the support networks offered by extended families.

People born outside Australia accounted for 24.6 per cent of the population in August 2011 (8.9 per cent from the main English speaking countries and 15.7 per cent from other countries) (table 2A.8). Of those born outside Australia, 89.3 per cent spoke only English, or spoke another language as well as speaking English very well or well (table 2A.5). Approximately 18.2 per cent of Australians spoke a language other than English at home in August 2011 (table 2A.11).

Population, by geographic location

Those living in remote areas can have greater difficulty in accessing governments services, often needing to travel long distances, or facing lower service levels than provided in major cities. The Australian population is highly urbanised, with 70.9 per cent of the population located in major cities as at 30 June 2015 (table 2A.12).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population profile

There were an estimated 669 881 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (50.2 per cent female, the same as for the total population) in Australia at 30 June 2011, accounting for approximately 3.0

per cent of the total Australian population in 2011 (figure 2). Nationally, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is projected to grow to 924 953 people in 2026 (table 2A.14).

Figure 2 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a proportion of the population 2011^a



^a See tables 2A.1 and 2A.13 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.

Source: ABS (2015) *Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2015*, Cat. no. 3101.0; ABS (2013) *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026*, Cat. no. 3238.0; tables 2A.1 and 2A.13.

Family and household

Family structure

There were 6.6 million families in Australia in 2015. Nationally, 37.7 per cent of families had at least one child aged under 15 years, and 17.9 per cent of families had at least one child aged under 5 years (table 2A.18). Lone parent families might have a greater need for government support and particular types of government services (such as child care for respite reasons). Nationally, 19.4 per cent of all children aged under 15 years lived in lone parent families in 2015 (table 2A.19).

Employment status also has implications for the financial independence of families. Nationally in 2015, 6.2 per cent of couple families with children under 15 years had neither parent employed, this was 54.7 per cent for lone parent families with children under 15 years (table 2A.20).

Household profile

There were 9.2 million households in Australia in 2016 (some households may contain more than one family), with 24.8 per cent lone person households (table 2A.24). As at 30 June 2016, the proportion of people aged 65 years or over who lived alone (24.4 per cent) was around three times higher than the proportion for people aged 15–64 years (8.7 per cent).

Income and employment

Income

Nationally in August 2011, 25.9 per cent of people aged 15 years or over had a relatively low weekly individual income of \$299 or less (table 2A.30). The proportion was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (37.2 per cent) and around three times higher for younger people (74.8 per cent for people aged 15–19 years).

Nationally, 18.6 per cent of the total population was receiving income support in 2015. The age pension was received by 10.5 per cent of the population, while 3.4 per cent received a disability support pension and 1.1 per cent received a single parent payment, and a further 3.5 per cent of the population received some form of labour market allowance (table 2A.37).

Employment and workforce participation

There were 12.7 million people aged 15 years or over in the labour force in Australia as at 30 June 2016 — 94.4 per cent were employed. The majority of employed people (68.3 per cent) were in full time employment (table 2A.46). Across jurisdictions, the unemployment rate was 5.6 per cent. The unemployment rate needs to be interpreted within the context of labour force participation rates (the proportion of the working age population either in employment or actively looking for work). Nationally in June 2016, the labour force participation rate was 64.8 per cent (table 2A.46).