
Report on Government Services 2021

PART A, SECTION 2: RELEASED ON 20 JANUARY 2021

2 Statistical context

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The Statistical context contains information to assist interpretation of the performance information in this Report. It includes information and data on 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 \(PDF - 476 Kb\)](#)

[Statistical concepts \(Word - 295 Kb\)](#)

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

[Section 2 Data tables \(XLSX - 589 Kb\)](#)

[Section 2 dataset \(CSV - 1063 Kb\)](#)

See the Statistical concepts document and corresponding table number in the data tables above for detailed definitions, caveats, footnotes and data source(s).

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 25.4 million people lived in the eastern mainland states as at 30 June 2019. 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 2015 and 2019 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 (figure 2.1b) is markedly different to that of all Australians (figure 2.1a). At 30 June 2019, 11.1 per cent of Australia's population was aged 70 years or over, compared with just 2.3 per cent of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population as at 30 June 2016 (tables 2A.1 and 2A.4).

The most recent estimate of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (2016) is used to make comparisons with the most recent estimated Australian population (2019). Annual data are based on the 2016 Census of Population and Housing and are available in tables 2A.1 and 2A.4.

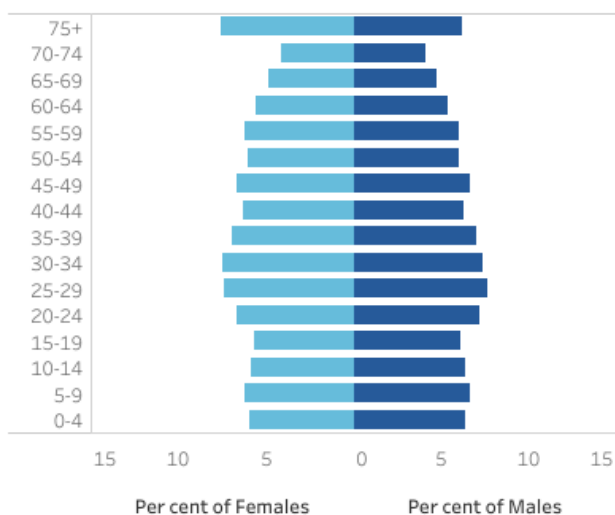
Select jurisdiction:

Aust

Females

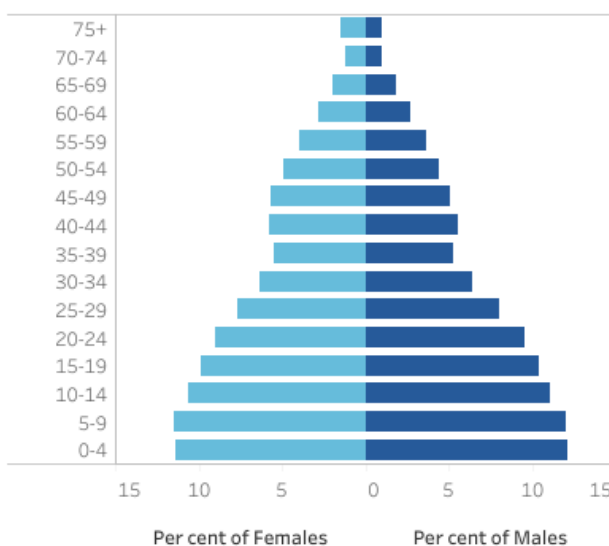
Males

Figure 2.1a Population distribution, all people in Aust, by age and sex, 2019



Source: table 2A.1

Figure 2.1b Population distribution, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Aust, by age and sex, 2016 (a)



Source: table 2A.4

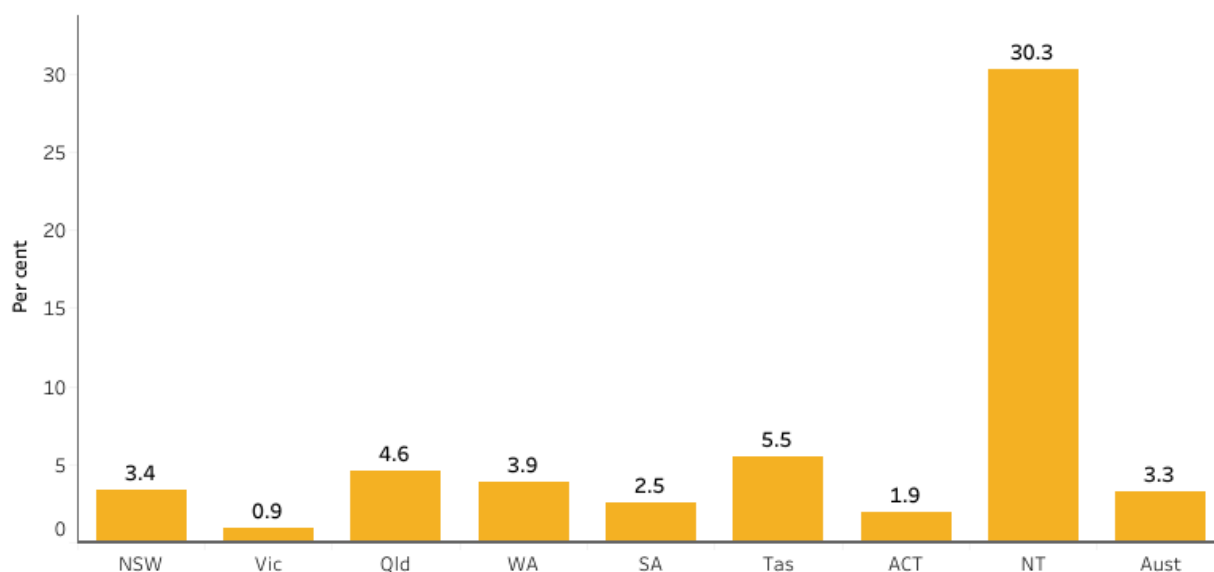
(a) Population data for Tasmania and the ACT for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people are not published for age groups for 65 years and over.

Data tables are referenced above by a '2A' prefix and all data (footnotes and data sources) are available for download from the supporting material below (both in Excel and CSV format).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population

There were an estimated 798 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (50.1 per cent female, similar to the total population) in Australia at 30 June 2016, accounting for approximately 3.3 per cent of the total Australian population in 2016 (figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a proportion of the population, 2016



Source: tables 2A.1 and 2A.4

Data tables are referenced above by a '2A' prefix and all data (footnotes and data sources) are available for download from the supporting material below (both in Excel and CSV format).

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Population, by ethnicity and proficiency in English

Some 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 26.3 per cent of the population in August 2016 (8.4 per cent from the main English speaking countries and 17.9 per cent from other countries) (table 2A.7). Of those born outside Australia, 88.7 per cent spoke only English, or spoke another language as well as speaking English well or very well (table 2A.7). Approximately 20.8 per cent of Australians spoke a language other than English at home in August 2016 (table 2A.8).

Population, by geographic location

Those living in remote areas can have greater difficulty in accessing government services, often needing to travel long distances, or facing lower service levels than provided in major cities. The Australian population is highly urbanised, with 72.2 per cent of the population located in major cities as at 30 June 2019 (table 2A.3).

Family and household

Family structure

There were 7.2 million families in Australia in 2020. Nationally, 36.9 per cent of families had at least one child aged under 15 years, and 16.7 per cent of families had at least one child aged under 5 years (table 2A.10). 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 in 2020, 19.2 per cent of families with children aged under 15 years were lone parent families (table 2A.11).

Employment status also has implications for the financial independence of families. Nationally in 2020, in 6.6 per cent of couple families with children under 15 years neither parent was employed. For lone parent families with children under 15 years, in 6.8 per cent of families the parent was unemployed (table 2A.12).

Household profile

There were a projected 9.8 million households in Australia in 2020 (based on the 2016 Census), and 25.0 per cent of these were lone person households (table 2A.14). As at 30 June 2020, the proportion of people aged 65 years or over who lived alone (24.5 per cent) was around three times higher than the proportion for people aged 15–64 years (8.5 per cent).

Income and employment

Income

Nationally in August 2016, 20.8 per cent of people aged 15 years or over had a relatively low weekly individual income of \$299 or less (table 2A.16). The proportion was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (30.9 per cent) and nearly four times higher for younger people (76.2 per cent for people aged 15–19 years) (tables 2A.17 and 2A.18).

Nationally, 20.1 per cent of the total population was receiving income support in June 2020, an increase from 16.9 per cent in June 2019, with the largest increase in the proportion receiving a labour market program allowance (an increase from 3.0 per cent in 2019 to 6.3 per cent in 2020) (table 2A.19). This increase is likely due, at least in part, to the labour market impacts of restrictions to slow the spread of COVID-19 (ABS 2020)¹.

Employment and workforce participation

There were 13.3 million people aged 15 years or over in the labour force in Australia as at 30 June 2020 — 92.8 per cent were employed. The majority of employed people (68.6 per cent) were in full time employment. Nationally, the unemployment rate was 7.2 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 2020, the labour force participation rate was 64.0 per cent (table 2A.24). When compared to 30 June 2019, the unemployment rate has increased (from 5.1 per cent) and the labour force participation rate has decreased (from 66.1 per cent). These changes are likely due, at least in part, to the labour market impacts of restrictions to slow the spread of COVID-19 and government support to mitigate the restrictions (ABS 2020)¹.

Income and employment are strongly influenced by education. Census data on highest level of schooling and type of educational institution attended are available in tables 2A.20–23. Additional educational data are also available in [Part B of this Report \(Childcare, education and training\)](#).

Footnotes

1. ABS (2020) Labour Force, Australia, 'People who lost a job or were stood down: flows analysis', May 2020, Canberra.