2026

Caring For An Ageing Australia

How Local Insights Can Address A National Challenge

.id informed decisions

Executive Summary

An evidence base for planning aged care in a decade of demographic, workforce and regulatory change.

A system under pressure, shaped by place.

Australia's aged care system is entering a period of significant change. Population ageing is accelerating, the workforce underpinning care delivery is under sustained pressure and the regulatory environment is being reshaped under the new Aged Care Act.

While these forces are widely recognised across the sector, they are often discussed at a national level. In practice, aged care risks and opportunities are highly localised, shaped by the characteristics of individual communities.

Demand is increasing, but not evenly

Over the next two decades, Australia will experience unprecedented growth in its older population in two distinct waves. The first is underway as large post-war cohorts move into the 65 and over age group. The second, from the late 2020s, will see rapid growth in the number of people aged 80 and over, the ages at which care needs intensify. The timing and scale of change will vary markedly between states, regions and local areas, reflecting different migration histories, housing markets and patterns of ageing in place.

Workforce constraints are redefining feasibility

Demand alone is no longer a reliable guide to aged care feasibility. In many areas where demand is rising fastest, a large share of the workforce is also nearing retirement, while housing affordability is pushing younger workers further from high-need locations.

These pressures are compounded by competition from other care sectors drawing on the same labour pool. Workforce availability is now a critical determinant of whether services can be delivered reliably.

Local context now determines success

At the same time, demand is becoming more complex. Australia's older population reflects decades of migration, resulting in distinct cultural and linguistic profiles across communities. These differences shape expectations of care, patterns of aged care uptake and preferences for culturally specific services. The new Aged Care Act reinforces the importance of understanding these local characteristics, placing greater emphasis on rights, cultural safety and person-centred care.

AUSTRALIA'S OLDER POPULATION IS GROWING AT AN UNPRECEDENTED SCALE

Additional Australians aged 65 and over between 2025 and 2045, lifting the total 65+ population to more than 7.3 million.

2.5 MILLION

GROWTH IS FASTEST IN THE AGE GROUPS WHERE CARE NEEDS ESCALATE

Increase in the population aged 80 and over between 2025 and 2045, more than doubling the size of this age group.

+1.3 MILLION

AGEING IS NOT EVENLY DISTRIBUTED ACROSS AUSTRALIA

Range in the share of the each state and territory's population that is forecast to be aged 65+ in 2045.

18% - Northern Territory
26% - Tasmania

10% TO 26%

A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF AGED CARE WORKERS ARE NEARING RETIREMENT

Proportion of Australia's health care and social assistance workforce aged 55 years or older in 2021.

23%

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IS LIMITING WORKFORCE ACCESS

In some high-need regions, median house prices exceed 40 times the median annual income of aged care workers.

40X

AUSTRALIA'S AGEING POPULATION IS CULTURALLY DIVERSE

Share of Australians aged 80+ who were born overseas.

36%

AGED CARE USE VARIES SIGNIFICANTLY BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH

Difference between the percentage of Australian- and Overseas-Born residents aged 95-99 who lived in aged care in 2021.

46% VS 38%

A HEIGHTENED FOCUS ON CULTURALLY-APPROPRIATE CARE

The new Aged Care Act takes effect, introducing a new regulatory frame-work increasing the requirements for culturally appropriate care.

2025

Who This Report Is For

If you're involved in planning, funding or delivering aged care in Australia, this report is for you. It's written to support the decisions you make every day, with clear, evidence-based insights you can act on.

YOU PROVIDE AGED CARE SERVICES

You're responsible for services that support older Australians across the care continuum, including:

- ageing support and in-home care
- retirement and independent living
- residential aged care
- integrated care hubs
- palliative and end-of-life care

YOU PLAN, DEVELOP OR RUN SERVICES

You help shape how and where services are delivered. That could include:

- service planning and design
- development and property decisions
- care and operations management
- finance and commercial leadership
- frontline service delivery

YOU MAKE STRATEGIC AND INVESTMENT DECISIONS

You're accountable for critical decisions about:

- location and site selection
- service and capacity planning
- capital and investment decisions
- workforce and resource allocation
- adapting services as demand changes over time

Wherever you sit, this report will help you design and deliver more targeted, efficient services that meet the changing needs of older Australians.

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CHAPTER 01

Unprecedented Growth in Demand

Australia is entering a period of rapid population ageing, with growth in older age groups accelerating in ways that will fundamentally reshape demand for aged care.

By 2046, Australia will have **2.45 million** more people aged over 65 than today. **1.3 million** of them will be over 80.

Australia Will Age In Two Distinct Waves

Australia is ageing, and this shift is already reshaping the population profile.

In 2016, the median age of Australians was 37.2 years. By 2021, it had risen to 38.4 years. 2025 estimates place the median age at 38.3 years, with a steady increase expected over the next two decades to reach around 41 years by 2045. This gradual rise in age reflects long-running demographic forces that are now becoming more pronounced.

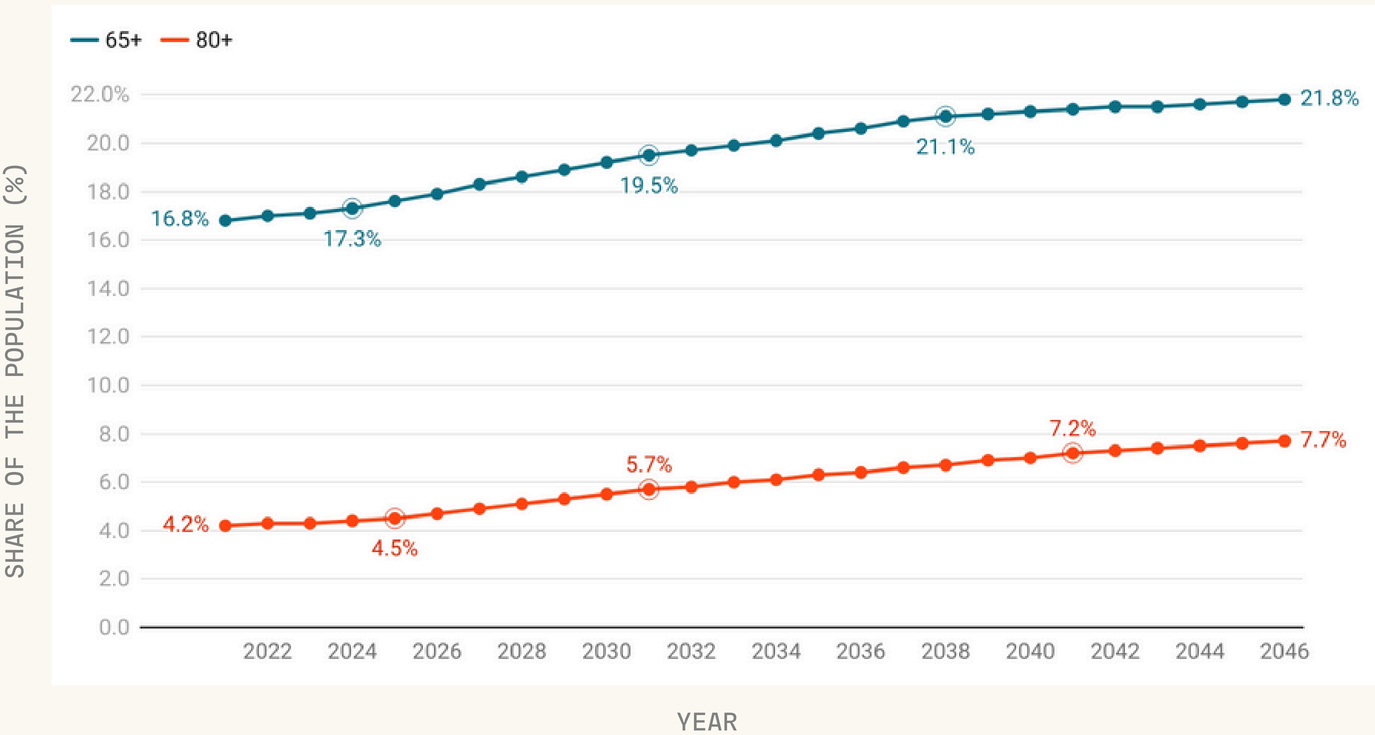
FORECAST GROWTH IN 80+ POPULATION

Source: National Forecasting Program, Informed Decisions.

Although overseas migration typically brings in younger adults and helps moderate the pace of ageing nationally, it does not offset the ageing of the existing population. Our current population also includes many earlier migrant cohorts which are themselves now progressing into older age, and continued gains in life expectancy mean more Australians are living longer than ever before. Added to this is the transition of the baby boomer generation into the 65-plus age group, a shift that will contribute to unprecedented growth in the number of older residents.

AN INCREASING PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION

Share of Australia's population aged 65+ and 80+, 2021 - 2046



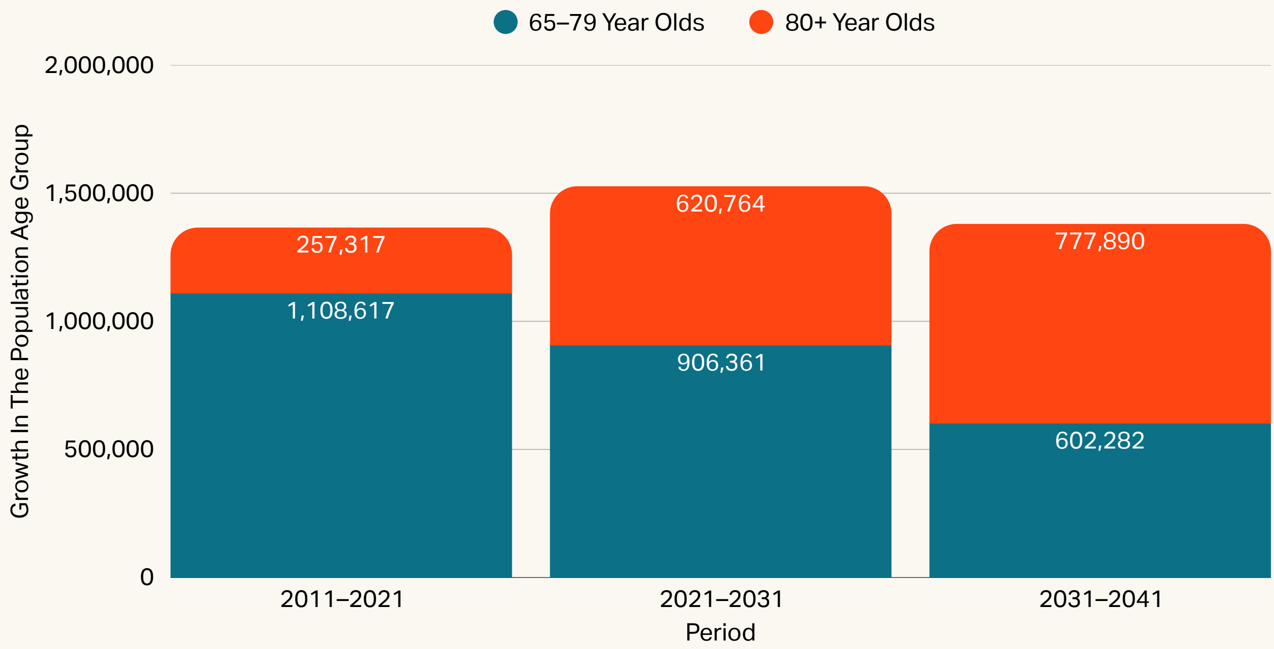
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

This ageing process will occur in two distinct waves. The first is already under way, with rapid expansion in the 65 plus population as the baby boomers enter retirement age. The second, beginning around 2026, will accelerate growth in the 80 plus population as the oldest boomers reach their eighties.

Together, these waves represent one of the most significant demographic transformations facing Australia, with far reaching implications for housing, health, aged care and community infrastructure.

AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION AGEING IN TWO WAVES

Absolute growth in the 65-79 and 80+ year old population of Australia, 2011 to 2041



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

Large Absolute Increases in Older People

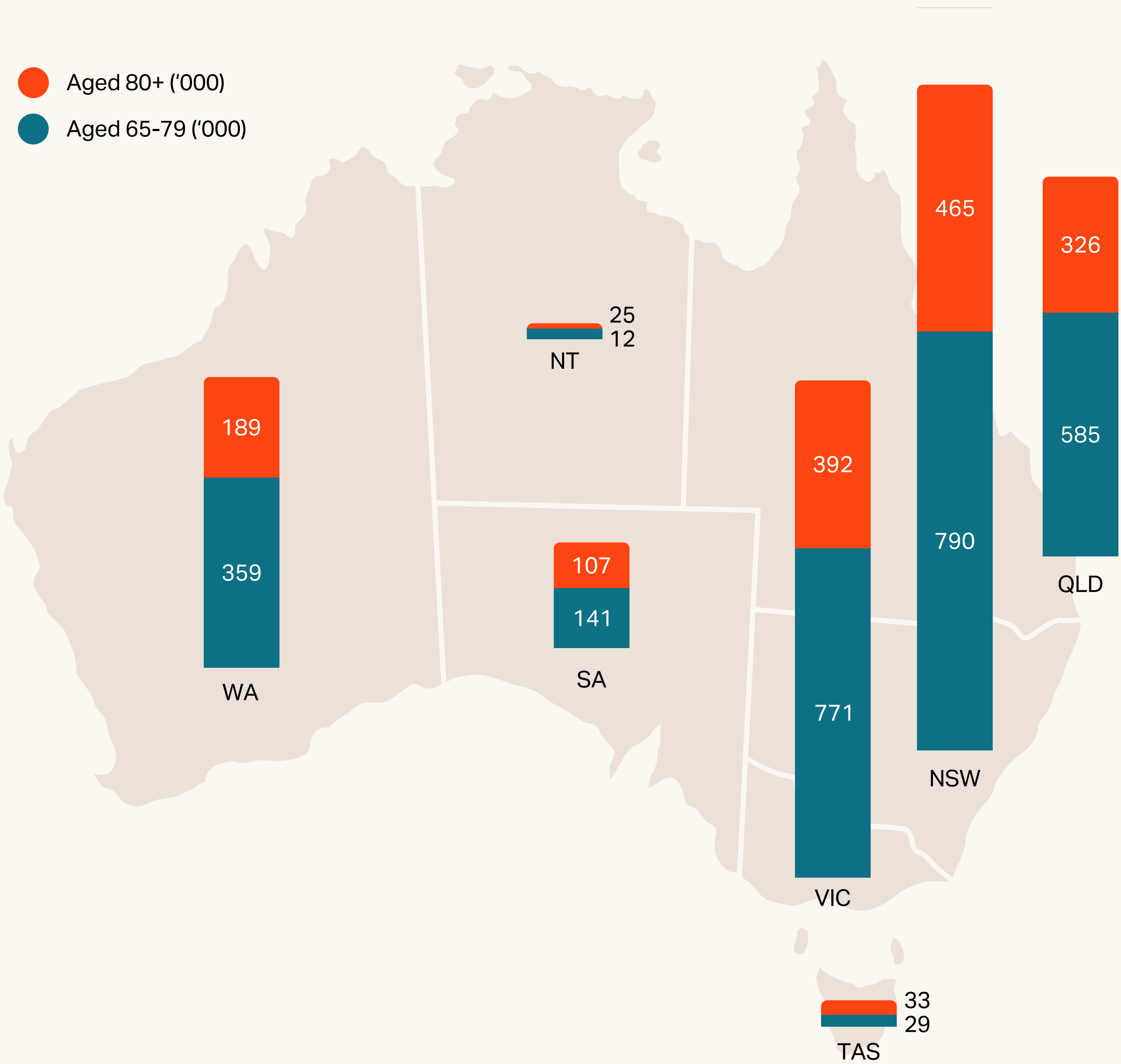
Population ageing is a national trend, but it will not play out the same way everywhere.

Australia's population is ageing, but the pace, timing and scale of that change vary widely across the country. Each state and territory is moving through its own demographic cycle, shaped by local migration patterns, housing markets, economic structures and the age profile of existing residents.

These differences mean that ageing pressures will not emerge uniformly. Some states face very large increases in the number of older people. Others experience ageing earlier, faster or from a very different starting point. Both are important for planning.

FORECAST GROWTH CONCENTRATED IN AUSTRALIA'S FOUR LARGEST STATES

Absolute change in older age groups, 2025-2045



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

Managing Structural Ageing And Workforce Imbalances

While the largest states dominate in absolute growth, looking at the share of population entering the 65+ and 80+ cohorts reveals structural changes that will impact the smaller states and territories.

	2025		2035		2045		Change (2025-45)	
	65-79	**80+**	**65-79**	**80+**	**65-79**	**80+**	**65-79**	**80+**
New South Wales	18%	5%	21%	7%	23%	8%	5%	3%
Victoria	17%	4%	20%	6%	22%	8%	5%	4%
Queensland	18%	4%	20%	6%	22%	8%	4%	4%
South Australia	21%	6%	23%	8%	24%	9%	3%	3%
Western Australia	17%	4%	20%	6%	22%	8%	5%	4%
Tasmania	22%	6%	25%	8%	26%	11%	4%	5%
Northern Territory	10%	2%	15%	3%	18%	6%	8%	4%
Australian Capital Territory	14%	4%	18%	5%	22%	7%	8%	3%
Australia	18%	5%	21%	6%	22%	8%	4%	3%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

Tasmania illustrates the challenge of structural ageing. Already the nation's oldest state, the share of residents aged 65+ rises from around 22% in 2025 to 26% by 2045, creating a significant localised demand and workforce challenge that doesn't show up on the national scale.

The Northern Territory and the ACT start from much younger age profiles but experience rapid structural ageing as large cohorts move into older age groups over a short period. This creates concentrated pressure on service systems that have historically been shaped around younger populations.

Metro vs Regional Demand For Aged Care

Australia's capital cities and regional areas have distinct demographic profiles, shaped by different patterns of migration, housing and local economic opportunities.

Metropolitan areas tend to attract a larger share of recent migrants and younger adults who move for study, employment or lifestyle reasons. As these cohorts age, they will form a substantial part of the future population requiring aged care. In contrast, many regional communities are ageing in place, with fewer young adults moving in and a higher existing share of residents already in the 65 plus age group.

POPULATION AGEING IS NATIONWIDE, NOT JUST REGIONAL

Forecast growth in the population aged 65+ and 80+ in metropolitan and regional Australia, 2025 to 2045

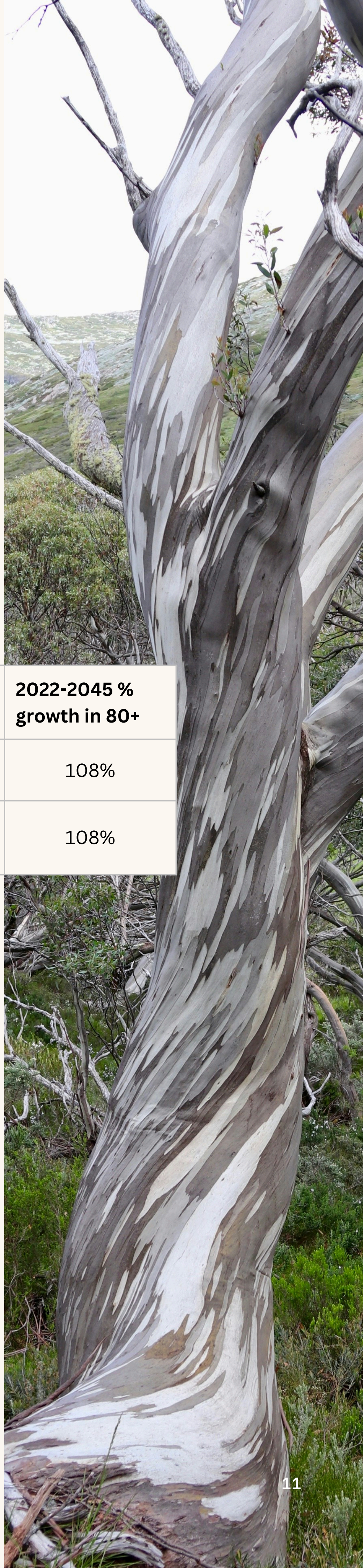
	2025-2045 growth in 65+	**2025-2045 growth in 80+**	**2022-2045 % growth in 65+**	**2022-2045 % growth in 80+**
Metro Australia	1,695,594	833,167	58%	108%
Regional Australia	827,054	514,586	43%	108%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

These differences shape the scale and timing of demand for aged care. The number of people aged 65 plus is forecast to grow by almost 60 percent in metropolitan Australia, compared with 43 percent in regional areas. Although regional communities will experience slower proportional growth, many are starting from a much older age structure and will feel the effects of ageing more immediately.

The growth of the oldest age groups will be felt nationwide. The population aged 80 plus is expected to more than double in both metropolitan and regional Australia, increasing by around 108 percent.

However, the absolute increase will be concentrated in the cities, where larger population bases mean far more people will reach the ages where care needs intensify. This combination of strong metropolitan growth and existing regional ageing highlights the need for different planning responses across Australia, ensuring aged care services are aligned with the demographic realities of each community.



Seeing Aged Care Demand Locally

National and state level trends provide important context for understanding Australia's ageing population. However, decisions about aged care infrastructure, workforce and service delivery are made at a much finer geographic scale, where local conditions shape both demand and feasibility. This section examines growth in the population aged 65 and over at the suburb level. This brings the analysis closer to the geographies aged care planners need to use to assess demand in a given area.

Suburbs With The Largest Growth In Residents Aged 65+

Across Australia, a number of suburbs are forecast to experience particularly large increases in the number of residents aged 65 and over over the 25 years to 2046. These locations include fast growing outer metropolitan corridors, established coastal centres and major suburban hubs within capital cities.

TODAY'S GROWTH AREAS ARE FUTURE AGED CARE DEMAND HOTSPOTS

Suburbs With The Largest Absolute Increase In Residents Aged 65+, 2021 To 2046

Suburb	State	Change In Residents Aged 65+
Surfers Paradise	Queensland	13,138
Sunbury	Victoria	9,907
Maroochydore	Queensland	9,732
Morayfield	Queensland	9,645
Two Rocks	Western Australia	9,619
Bells Creek	Queensland	9,587
Baldivis	Western Australia	8,737
Castle Hill	New South Wales	8,151
Clyde	Victoria	7,466
Austral	New South Wales	7,340

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

These patterns highlight how growth areas, currently dominated by young families, will evolve into much more age-diverse communities by 2046. For planners and service providers, understanding the timing and scale of this demographic shift will be critical for anticipating future demand for aged care, health services and age-friendly infrastructure.

Identifying Demographic Imbalance As A Feasibility Risk

Another way to look at growth in aged care demand is to consider the percentage of the population aged 65 and over. While you need to be wary of small populations that can skew the data, looking at the share of residents who have shifted into this older age group (whether due to an older starting population, people ageing in place, low birth rates in some states or migration to retirement destinations) can reveal structural challenges.

In these communities, a demographic dependency risk can emerge, where the number of older people outweighs the younger people in the workforce who are needed to deliver required services. These areas are often lost in a national view, but at the local level this imbalance can lead to workforce shortages, which can be a risk to sustainable operations and service delivery in these locations.

Building a localised evidence base
For more detailed local area demographic, workforce and population forecasts, speak with our team about data to support site selection and comparison between location.

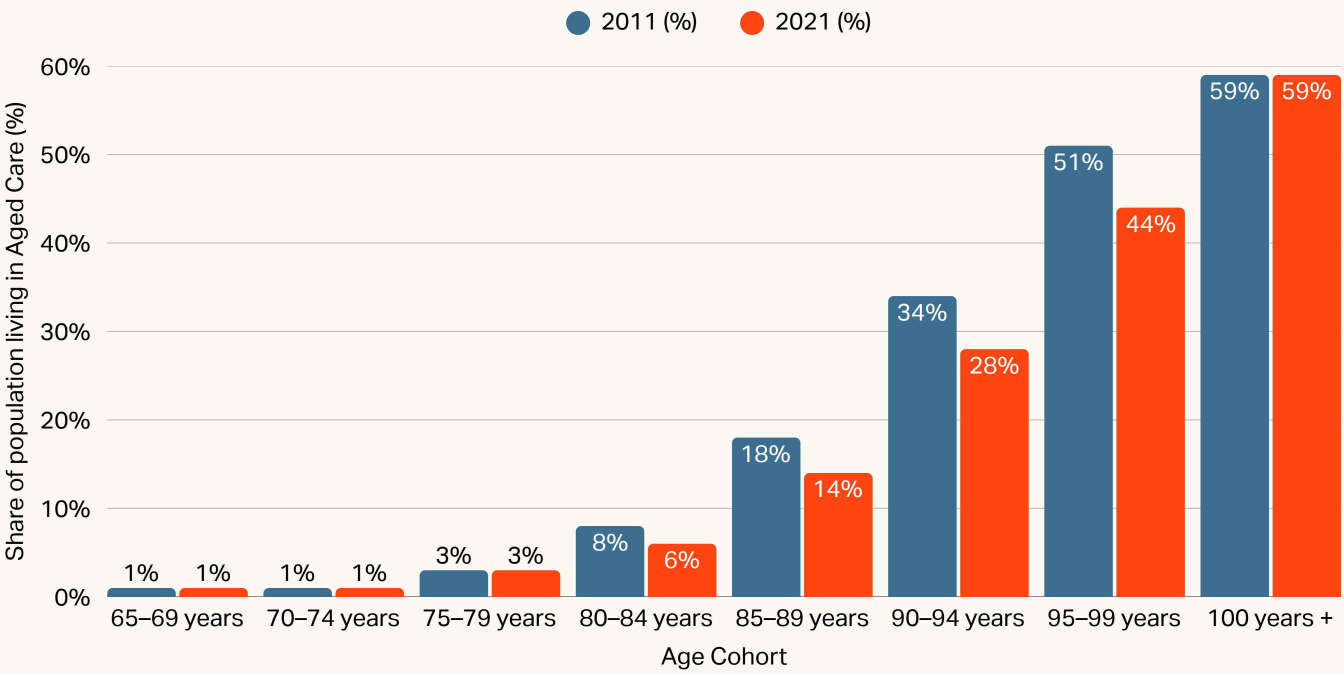
Photo credit: ©Getty Images Signature via Canva.com

Age, health and independence still drive aged care use, but patterns are shifting

Understanding the growth of the population that will require aged care in the future is an important part of assessing future demand. Equally important is understanding how older Australians use aged care today and how that behaviour has changed over time. Together, these perspectives provide a clearer sense of both the scale and timing of future need, as well as the shifting preferences of older cohorts as they move through life.

In 2021, around 4.5 percent of Australians aged 65 plus lived in aged care or nursing homes. Among those aged 80 plus, the share increased to 14 percent. While these headline figures offer a useful benchmark, breaking them down by smaller age groups reveals a more detailed picture.

PEOPLE ARE ENTERING AGED CARE LATER IN LIFE
Share of population living in a nursing home or aged care, by age cohort, 2011 vs 2021



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

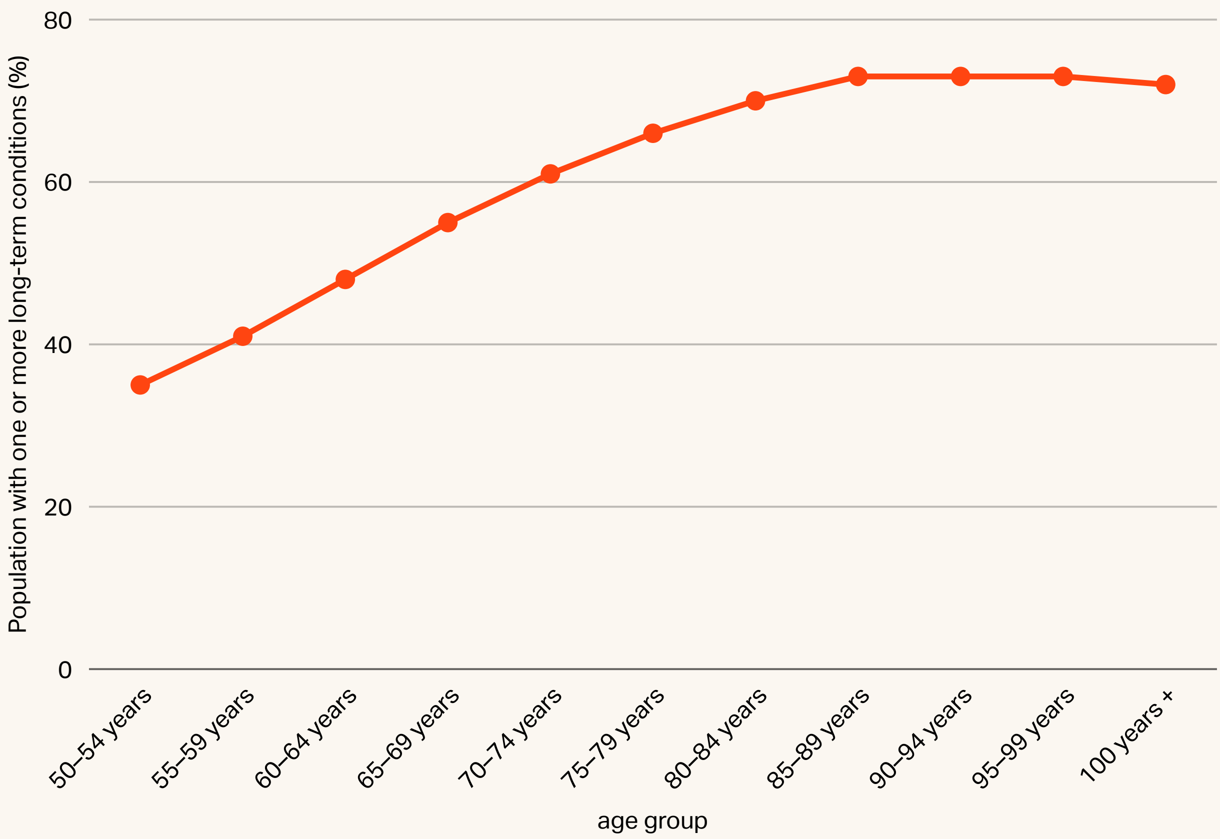
Aged care living is relatively uncommon among people in their late sixties and seventies, who are more likely to remain mobile, independent and living at home. From around age 80, however, the likelihood of entering aged care rises rapidly. This reflects the point at which mobility declines, chronic illness becomes more prevalent and many people begin to require more intensive daily support.

The prevalence of long-term health conditions increases sharply with age and is closely linked to aged care uptake. Around one in three Australians aged 50 to 54 has a long-term health condition. By age 75, that figure becomes two in three and from the age of 85, three in four Australians have a long-term health condition. This steep escalation in health needs across the oldest age groups aligns with the pattern of higher aged care usage from age 80 onwards, showing how health and functional limitations drive demand for formal care.

These trends highlight an important shift in the aged care landscape. As Australians live longer and remain healthier for more of their lives, the need for residential aged care is becoming more concentrated among the very oldest residents. This creates a future where demand will grow not only because the older population is increasing, but because the largest cohorts are moving into the ages where health needs intensify most rapidly.

THE PREVALENCE OF LONG TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS INCREASES WITH AGEING

Share of the population with one or more long-term health conditions



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

CHAPTER 02

Three Places With Different Demand Drivers

How distinct demographic, migration and market forces are influencing aged care demand in real locations.

Endeavour Hills, Victoria

Endeavour Hills is an established suburban area, approximately 30kms south east of Melbourne's CBD. Residential growth in the area kicked off in the 1970s, and Endeavour Hills was marketed as a 'prestige' suburb with larger, leafier family homes than surrounding suburbs.

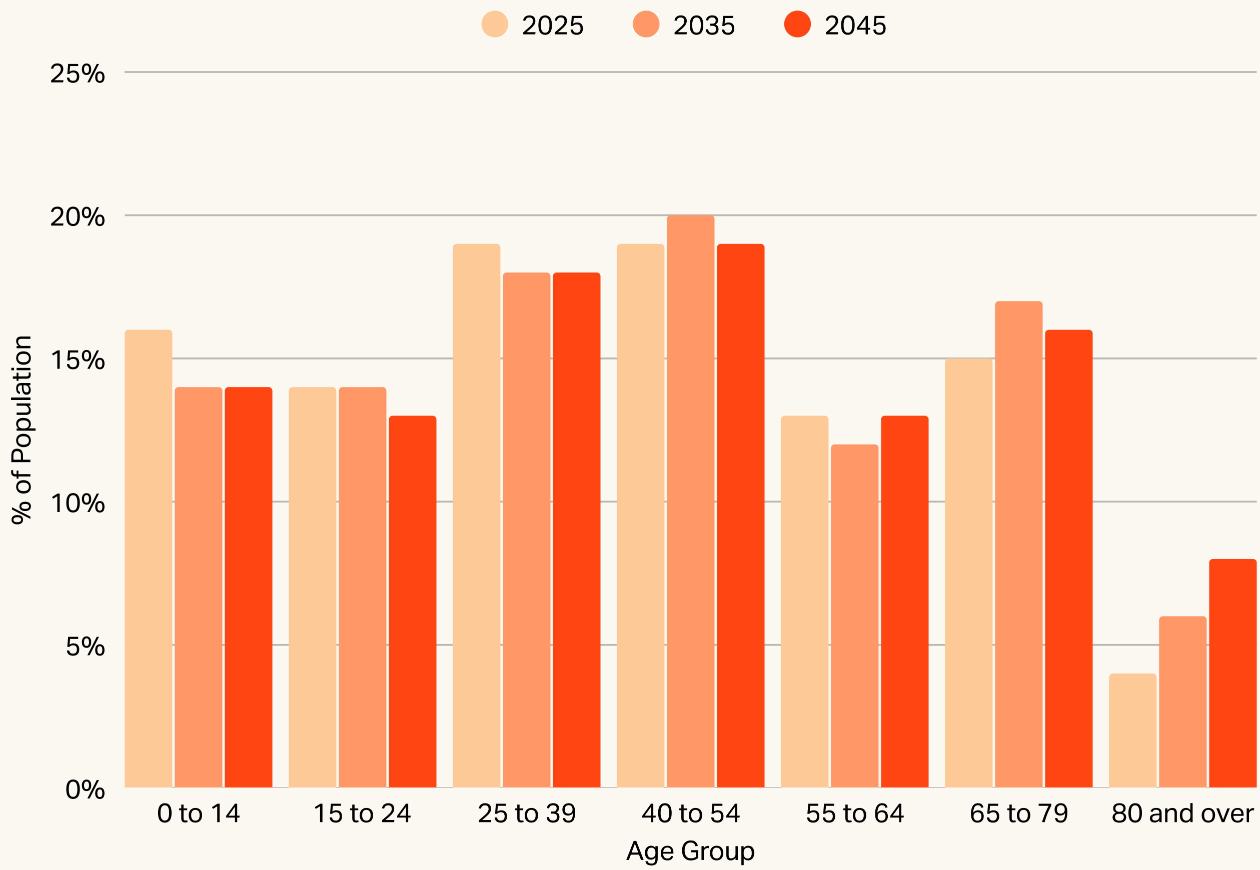
In 2001, just 5% of the population were aged over 65 years, but by 2021 this had grown to 17%. Those who had moved to the area in the 1970s and 1980s were 'ageing in place'.

Data from Informed Decisions' National Forecasting Program shows significant ageing in Endeavour Hills over the next 20 years, as those original residents continue to age in place. The number of those aged over 80 is forecast to more than double by 2045 to just over 2,000 residents.

Currently, there is just one aged care facility in the area.

AGEING IN PLACE IN AN ESTABLISHED OUTER SUBURBAN COMMUNITY

Change in Population Age Structure, Endeavour Hills, Victoria, by Age Group, 2025 - 2045



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

Tuross Head, New South Wales

A small coastal town on the south coast of New South Wales, Tuross Head is a popular retirement destination for those from Sydney and Canberra.

To accurately profile the town today and forecast how its population will change, we need to define Tuross Head using very small local building blocks of data (SA1s), because broader suburb or regional boundaries would blur the picture and miss what is really happening in a town of this size.

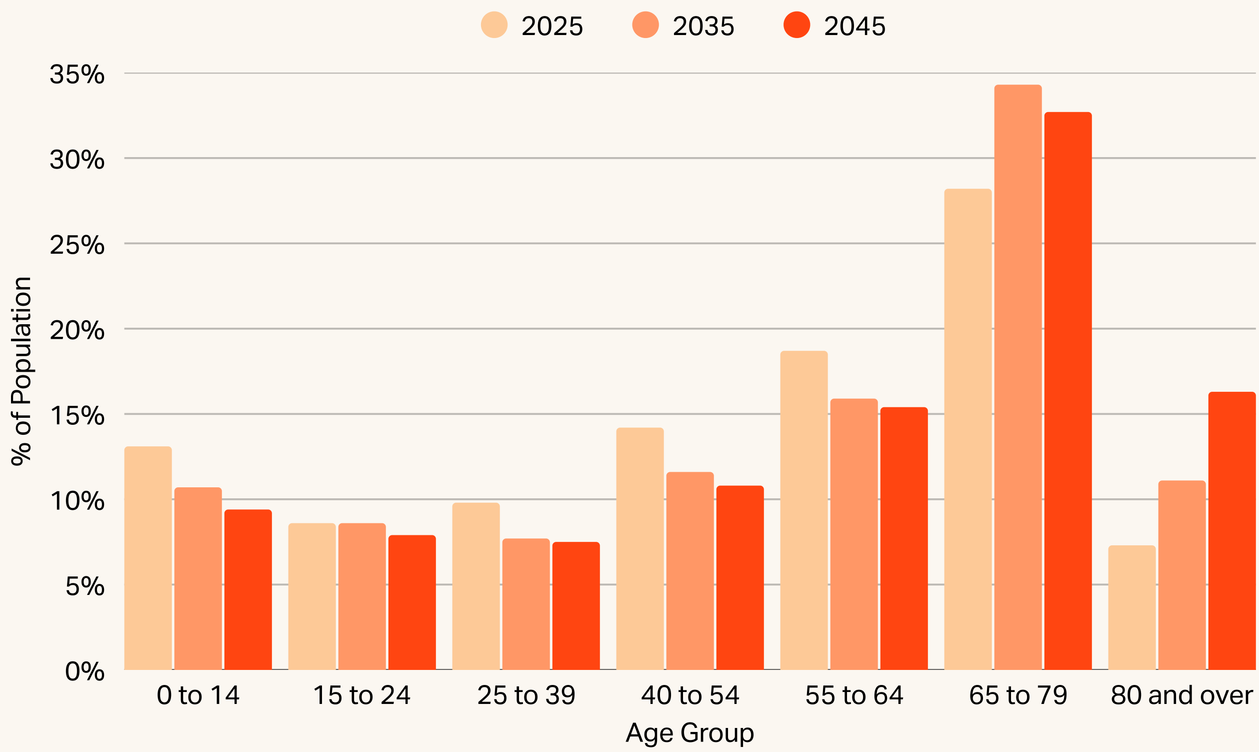
In 2021 the town had a population of 2,292, 45% of whom were aged over 65 years. The town attracts a significant number of people migrating to the area at around retirement age. In 2021, 6.4% of residents aged 50–64 years were living in Sydney in 2016, and a further 6.8% lived in Canberra.

Over the next two decades the older population of Tuross Head is forecast to grow further. By 2045 there will be 883 residents aged 65–79 years and 439 aged over 80 years, a doubling of current numbers.

However, there is no residential aged care facility in the town, meaning when elderly residents can no longer live safely in their own homes, they must move to other locations, such as Moruya or Dalmeny.

A COASTAL TOWN SHAPED BY RETIREMENT-LED MIGRATION

Change in Population Age Structure, Tuross Head, New South Wales, by Age Group, 2025 - 2045



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

Dawesville – Bouvard, Western Australia

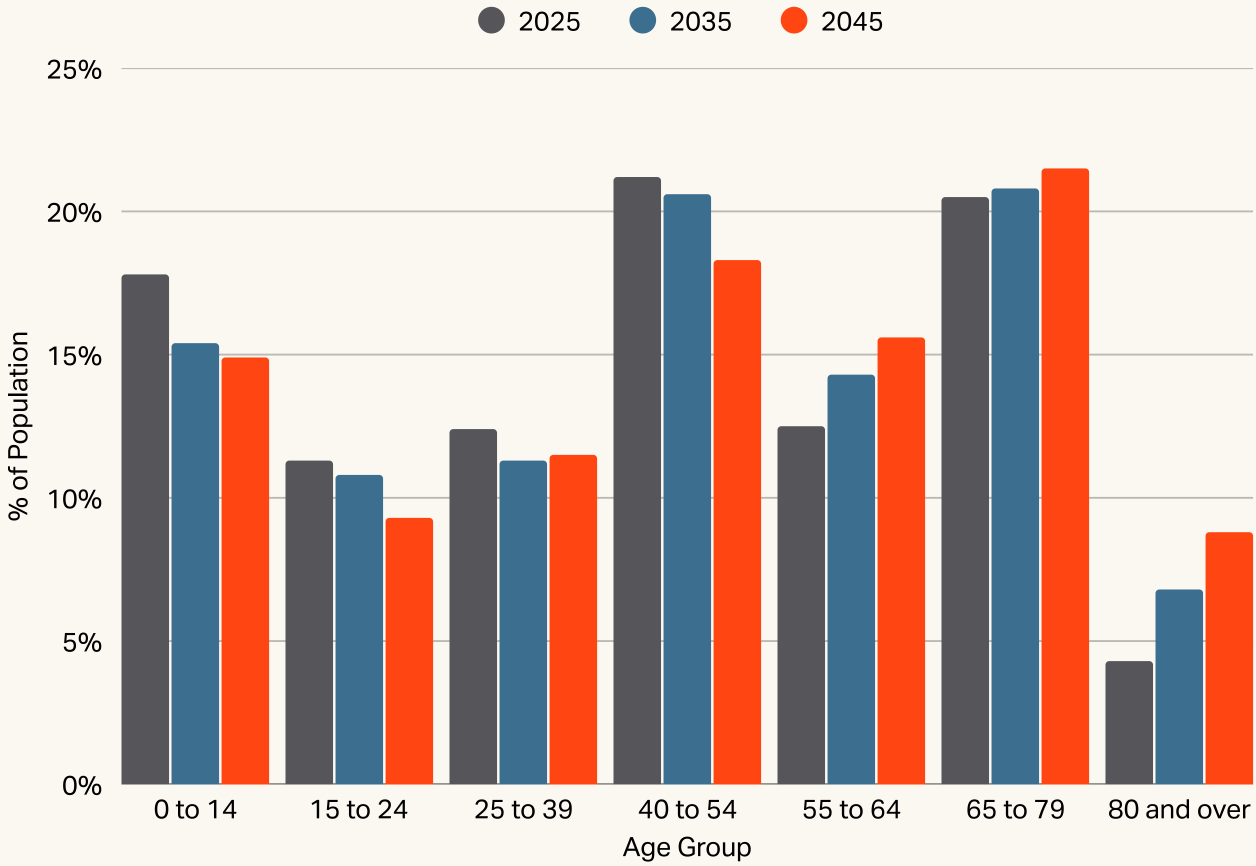
Dawesville – Bouvard is located in the Peel region of Western Australia, just south of Mandurah.

It has undergone significant population growth since the late 1990s, with a population of 2,555 in 2001, growing to 8,498 by 2021. The area has always been popular with older residents, with 13.2% of residents aged 65+ years in 2001, growing to almost 25% in 2021.

The older population of Dawesville – Bouvard is forecast to grow considerably over the next 20 years. In 2025, 24.9% of residents will be aged 65 years or older, increasing to 30.3% by 2045. Of note is the increase in population aged between 55 and 64 years, suggesting that the growth in the older population will continue after 2045.

AN OLDER RETIREMENT AREA, LATER IN THE SUBURB LIFECYCLE

Change in Population Age Structure, Dawesville-Bouvard (SA2) Western Australia, by Age Group, 2025 - 2045



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

CHAPTER 03

Identifying Opportunities Through Spatial Analysis

Understanding where aged care demand is likely to emerge starts with geography. Mapping existing supply alongside population ageing and growth forecasts helps reveal gaps that are not visible in headline figures or regional averages, showing how demand, access and service coverage interact across neighbouring suburbs and catchments.

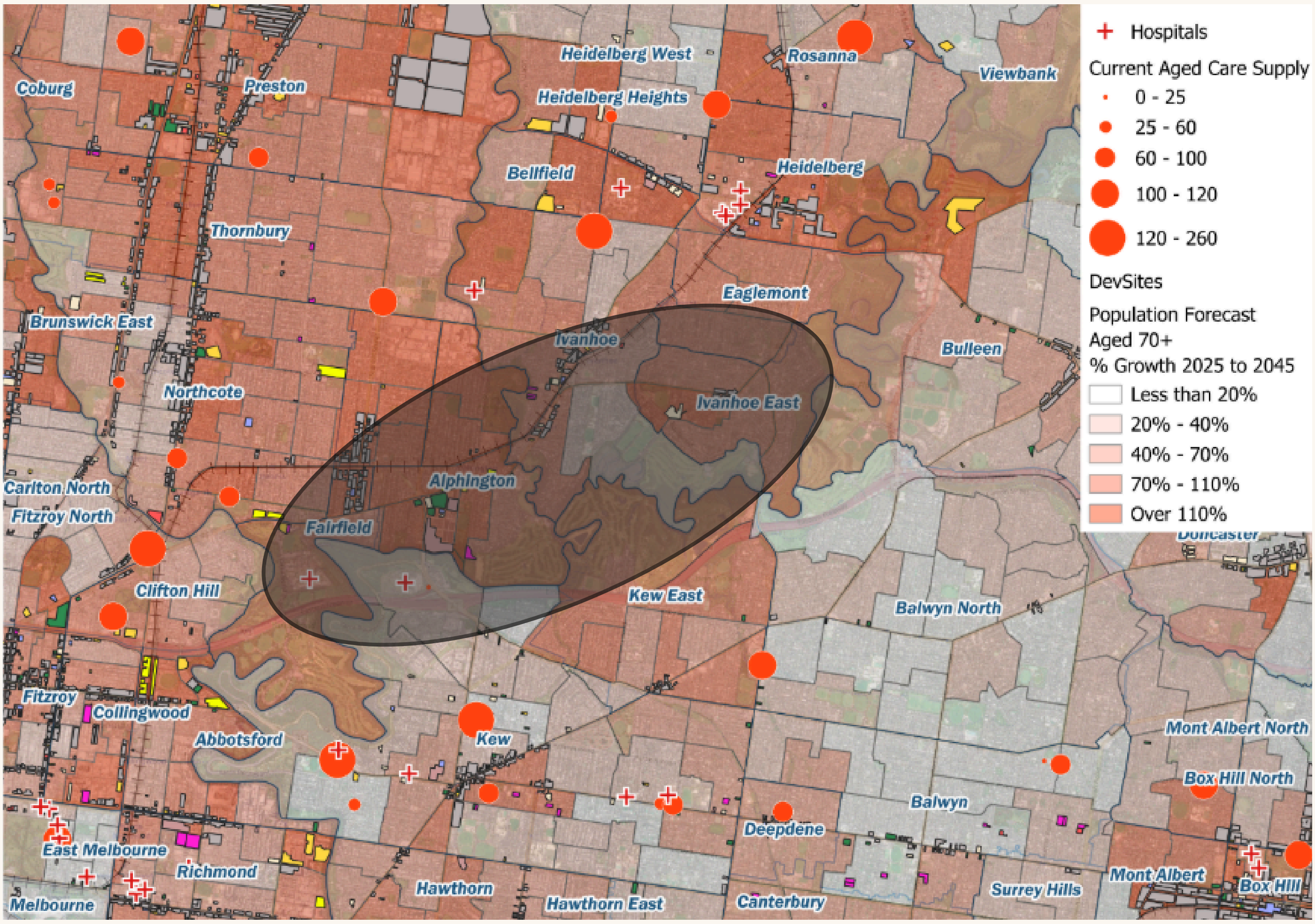
Revealing Gaps In Supply And Demand

In Melbourne's inner north-east, the map below reveals a clear gap between aged care demand and existing service provision across the Bulleen–Ivanhoe–Fairfield corridor.

Population forecasts from Informed Decisions' National Forecasting Program show sustained growth in older residents ageing in place, while facilities remain concentrated in surrounding suburbs rather than within the corridor itself. This level of insight depends on micro-geographic population forecasts that allow demand and supply to be assessed at a catchment scale.

AN AGED CARE DESERT IN A DEMAND HOTSPOT

Analysis of Aged Care Supply and Demand, North Eastern Suburbs of Melbourne.



Source: National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

Spatial analysis is effective at highlighting where future demand and existing supply are misaligned. It helps narrow the focus to locations where further investigation is warranted. In the next section, we examine how additional factors, including health need, workforce access and local demographic profiles can influence whether these supply-demand gaps translate into viable opportunities.

CHAPTER 04

A Workforce At Its Limits

Even as demand for aged care accelerates, the workforce required to deliver it is under growing strain, emerging as a critical constraint on service delivery and investment.

> Workforce feasibility, whether aged care providers can reliably attract, afford and retain the required workforce, is now a major determinant of aged care investment feasibility.

The Need For Aged Care Is Growing Fastest Where The Workforce Challenge Is Greatest

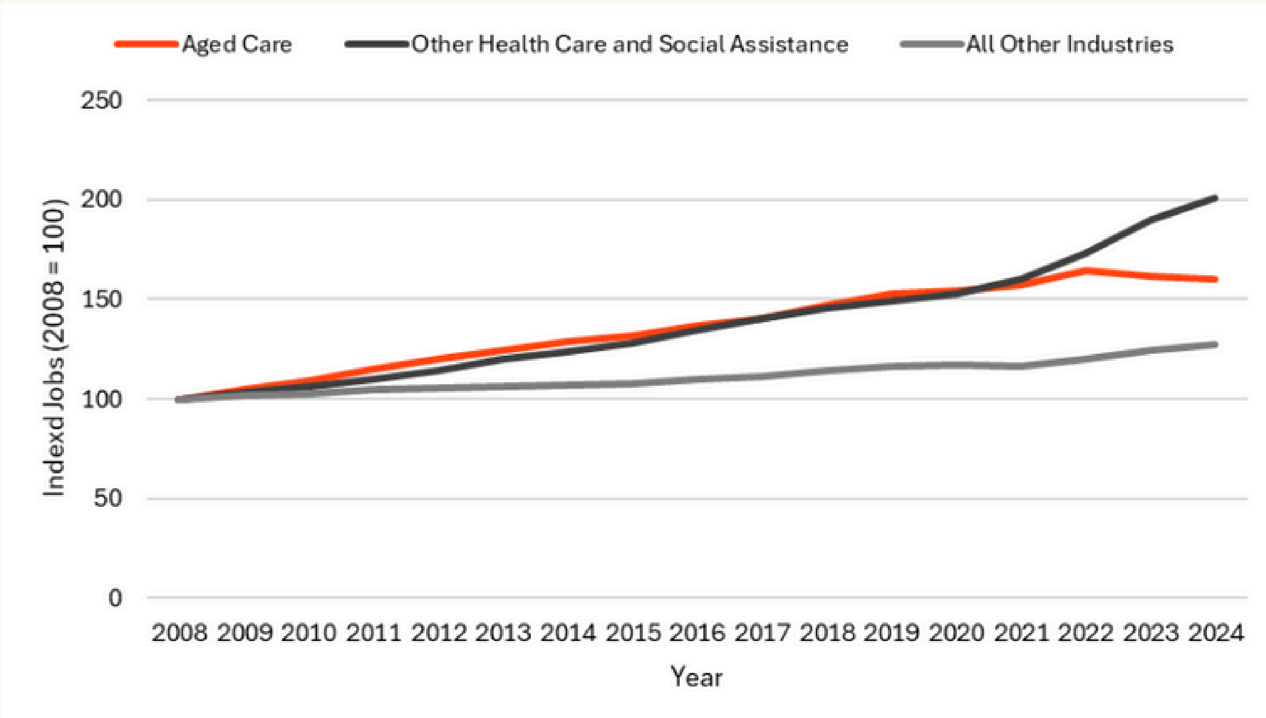
Australia's aged care workforce is under pressure in every part of the system. But applying a national lens hides the real risk: the workforce challenge is not evenly distributed and it is most severe in the very places where demand will rise fastest.

As we've shown, Australia's ageing population will sharply increase demand for aged care services. All sectors that rely on care labour - hospitals, disability, home care and aged care - are drawing on the same limited pool. As the population ages into later life, the demand for labour will rise sharply at the same time that the available workforce is ageing, dispersing, and in some areas, shrinking.

This means that workforce feasibility (whether aged care providers can reliably attract, afford and retain the required workforce) is now a major determinant of aged care investment feasibility. If an organisation cannot staff a facility, it cannot operate it, no matter how strong local demand appears on paper.

AGED AND HEALTH CARE JOBS HAVE SURGED, WELL ABOVE THE BROADER WORKFORCE

Indexed employment growth (2008 = 100) highlights the long-term structural expansion of the Aged Care sector.



Source: NIEIR, 2025; ABS Census, 2006-2021

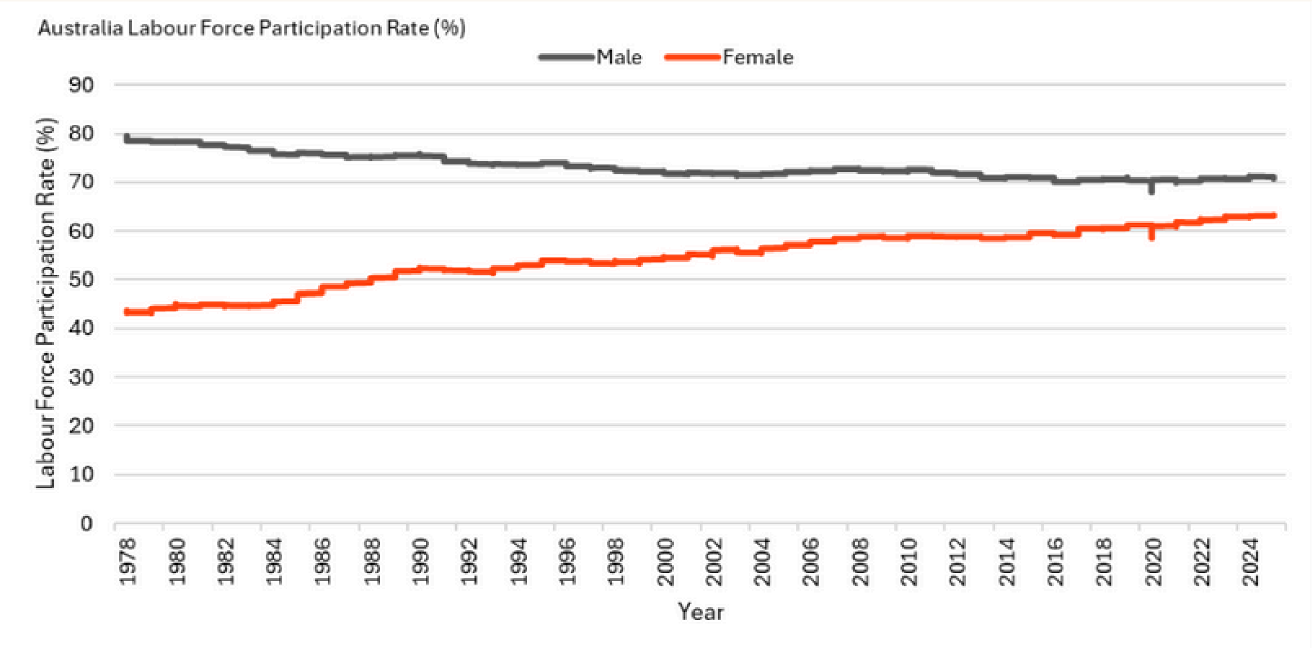
Aged And Health Care Workforce Has Grown Strongly, But Supply Is Tightening

Over the past decades, the aged and health care jobs have grown faster than other sectors of the Australian economy. The growth relied heavily on rising female labour force participation, particularly where women make up around three quarters of the workforce. However, this source of labour supply is beginning to slow down as female participation rates approach those of men.

With fewer additional women available to enter the workforce, pressure on the aged and health care sectors is likely to increase, intensifying worker shortages just as demand continues to rise.

AN INCREASE IN HEALTHCARE JOBS HAS SEEN INCREASED FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Australian Labour Force Participation Rate (1978-2025)



Source: ABS Labour Force Survey, 2025

> “Aged care providers must plan for rising demand at the same time the broader care industry is expected to replace around 23% of its workforce due to retirements.”
>
> **Rob Hall**
> Chief Economist
> Informed Decisions

The Health Care Workforce Is Ageing

Health care and social assistance is Australia's largest and fastest-growing industry. However, chronic shortages persist across critical occupations as demand continues to outpace supply. Many of these occupations appear on the national skills shortage list, including:

- Registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives
- Aged and disabled carers
- General practitioners and resident medical officers
- Allied health professions
- Psychologists, medical specialists, paramedics, dental practitioners

Many workers are nearing retirement, with a sizable share expected to leave the workforce over the next decade. Nationally, almost a quarter of workers are nearing retirement age, and some regions are far more exposed than others.

REGIONS WITH THE HIGHEST SHARE OF HEALTH CARE WORKERS NEARING RETIREMENT

Workers in Healthcare and social assistance, 2021

State	Region (SA4)	Health Care Workers Nearing Retirement (Aged 55+)	Retirement Exposure (% of Health Care Workers Aged 55+)
WA	Western Australia - Wheat Belt	2,323	34%
SA	Barossa - Yorke - Mid North	2,151	33%
NSW	Richmond – Tweed	6,369	33%
SA	South Australia - South East	3,635	32%
NSW	Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	3,181	32%
NSW	Mid North Coast	5,299	31%
VIC	Warrnambool and South West	2,909	31%
NSW	Coffs Harbour - Grafton	3,271	30%
VIC	Hume	3,808	30%
NSW	Capital Region	4,078	30%
	Australia Total	**400,217**	**23%**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

Housing Affordability Is Pushing Workers Away From High-Need Areas

Geography is amplifying the impacts of a tightening labour market. Rising house prices and rents are pushing key workers further from jobs. In metropolitan areas, this leads to long commutes and higher turnover. In regional communities, where ageing is most concentrated, many potential workers are priced out entirely.

In many regions with high demand for aged care, house prices are 30 to 40 times the median annual income of a health care worker, preventing workers from living within a reasonable distance of jobs. This results in fewer applicants, higher turnover, reliance on agency staff and less continuity of care.

HOUSING OUT OF REACH FOR WORKERS IN MANY HIGH-NEED REGIONS

The ten Regions (SA4s) with the highest house price to income ratios for Health Care and Social Assistance workers

Region	Health Care and Social Assistance median annual income	Median house price	House price to income ratio
Sydney - Eastern Suburbs	$89,907	$3,600,000	40
Sydney - Northern Beaches	$71,660	$2,625,000	37
Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby	$85,217	$3,100,000	36
Sydney - Ryde	$77,409	$2,500,000	32
Sydney - Inner West	$80,650	$2,500,000	31
Sydney - Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	$75,225	$1,895,000	25
Sydney - Sutherland	$70,967	$1,750,000	25
Sydney - Inner South West	$64,315	$1,551,000	24
Sydney - City and Inner South	$86,389	$2,000,000	23
Melbourne - Inner East	$82,702	$1,909,000	23

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

Armstrong Creek, Victoria

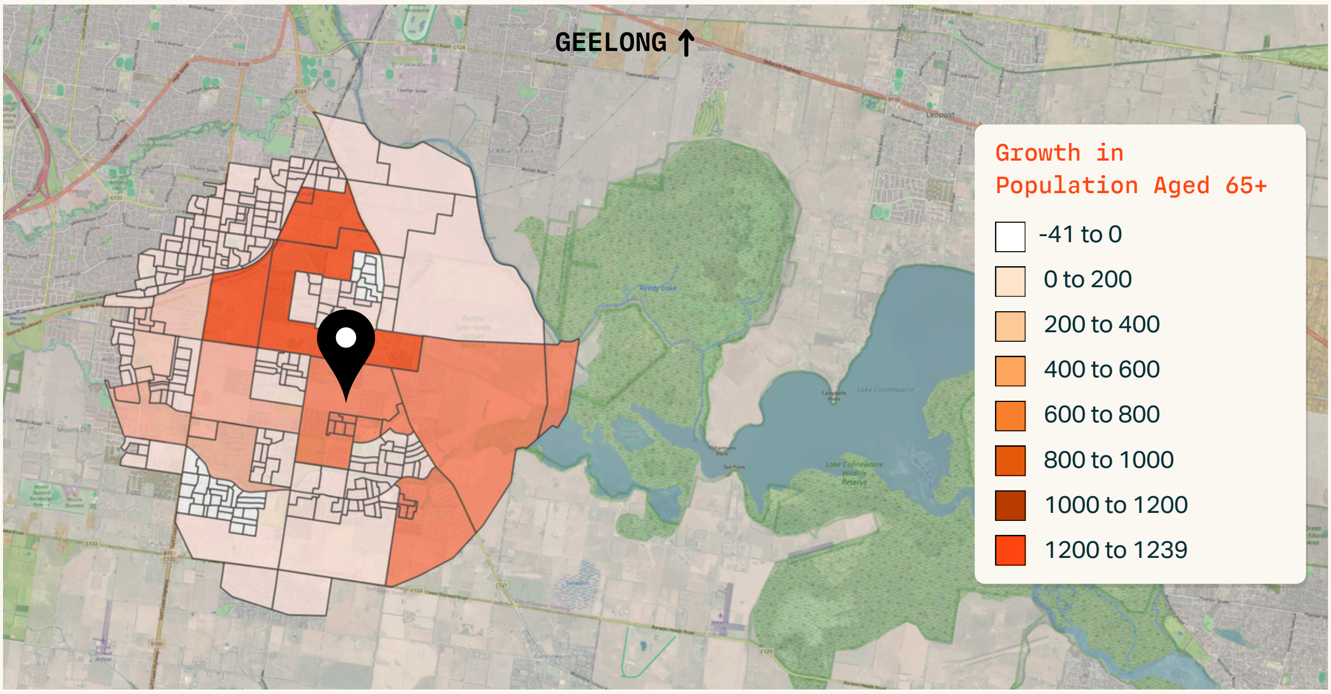
RAPID POPULATION GROWTH CREATING FUTURE AGEING DEMAND WITHIN A NEW GROWTH CORRIDOR

Armstrong Creek, one of the major growth areas in Greater Geelong, is forecast to add almost twelve thousand residents over the next twenty years.

This growth will occur alongside demographic change in neighbouring established suburbs such as Belmont, Grovedale and Marshall, where populations are ageing and household structures are shifting. For an aged care provider considering establishing a presence in this emerging corridor, understanding both the scale of future growth and the characteristics of the current older population is essential. This includes assessing health profiles, cultural diversity and the likely timing of demand as residents transition into older age.

SIGNIFICANT POCKETS OF AGEING FORECAST WITHIN THE CATCHMENT

Forecast change in 65+ population (2021 to 2046) within 4kms of Aged Care location, Armstrong Creek

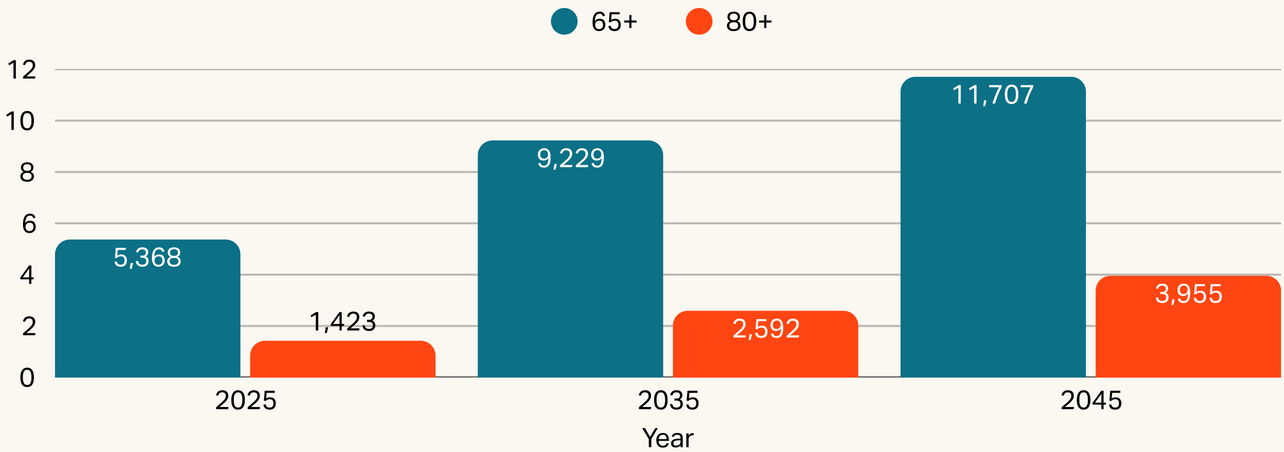


Source: National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

The example location on the northern edge of Armstrong Creek, shows strong future demand within close proximity to the proposed location. The number of residents aged 65 plus within four kilometres is projected to rise by more than 6,300 between 2025 and 2045, an increase of 118 percent. Growth in the oldest age groups will be even more marked, with an additional 2,500 residents aged 80 plus, representing a 178 percent increase. These shifts signal a substantial future market for aged care and related services.

STRONG GROWTH FORECAST FOR AGED CARE DEMAND IN ARMSTRONG CREEK CATCHMENT

Forecast change in 65+ and 85+ population (2021 to 2046) within 4kms of Aged Care location, Armstrong Creek



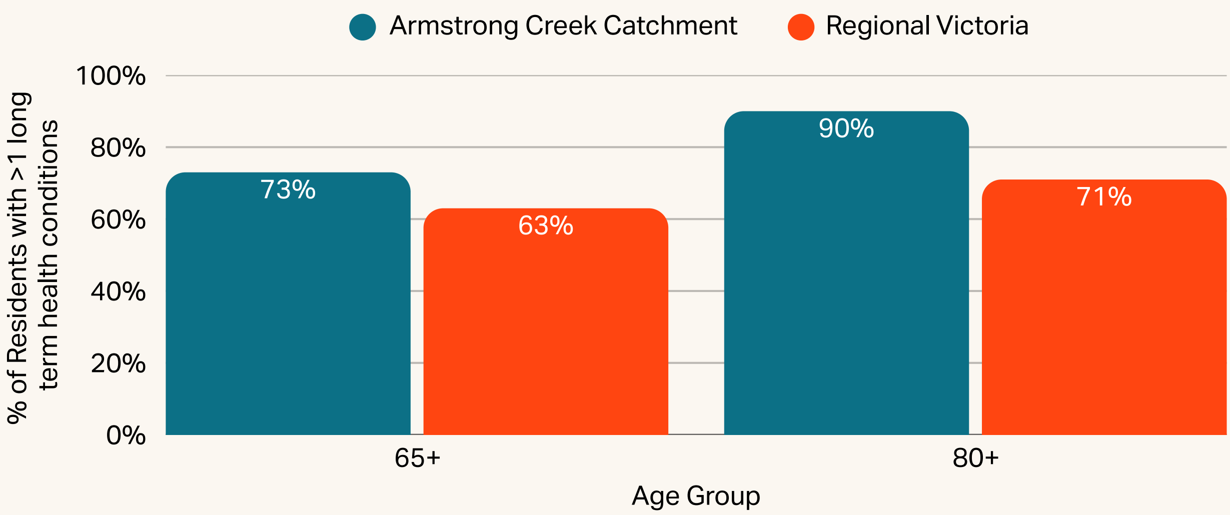
Source: National Forecasting Program, .id (informed decisions).

Long term health conditions impact demand

A demographic profile of the catchment highlights a higher prevalence of long-term health conditions compared with Regional Victoria overall. Around 73 percent of residents aged 65 plus and 90 percent of those aged 80 plus have one or more long term health conditions, compared with 63 percent and 71 percent respectively across Regional Victoria. This suggests that some residents may transition into aged care earlier due to more complex health needs.

LONG TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS INDICATES INCREASED DEMAND FOR AGED CARE

Prevalence of long-term health conditions for 65+ year-olds in the Armstrong Creek catchment, compared with the Regional Victorian average.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

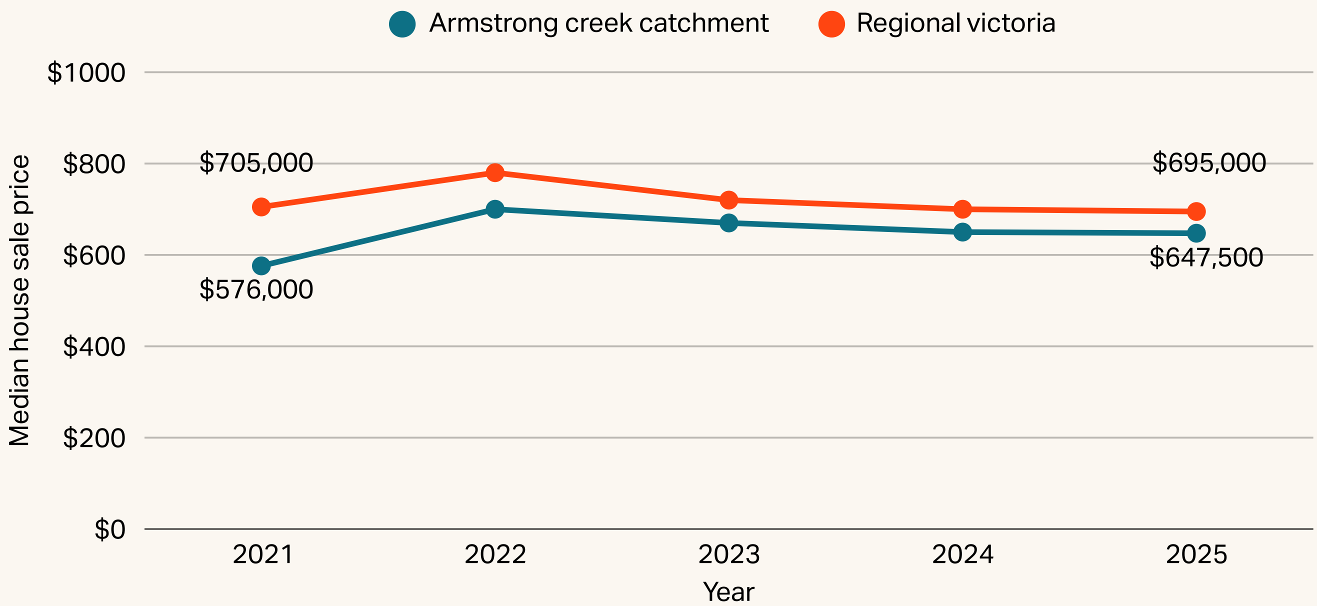
The impact of house prices

Housing market dynamics also play a key role in shaping aged care uptake. Understanding whether older homeowners are likely to sell and move, and how sensitive this behaviour is to market conditions, can help providers anticipate the potential pool of residents who may consider entering aged care.

Local housing conditions may also influence aged care decisions. Median house prices have softened in line with broader trends across Regional Victoria, which may affect the willingness or ability of some older residents to sell their homes as part of transitioning into aged care.

FALLING HOUSE PRICES IMPACT THE EQUITY OF RESIDENTS TRANSITIONING TO AGED CARE

Change in Median House Sale Price, Armstrong Creek Catchment vs Regional Victoria (2021-2025)



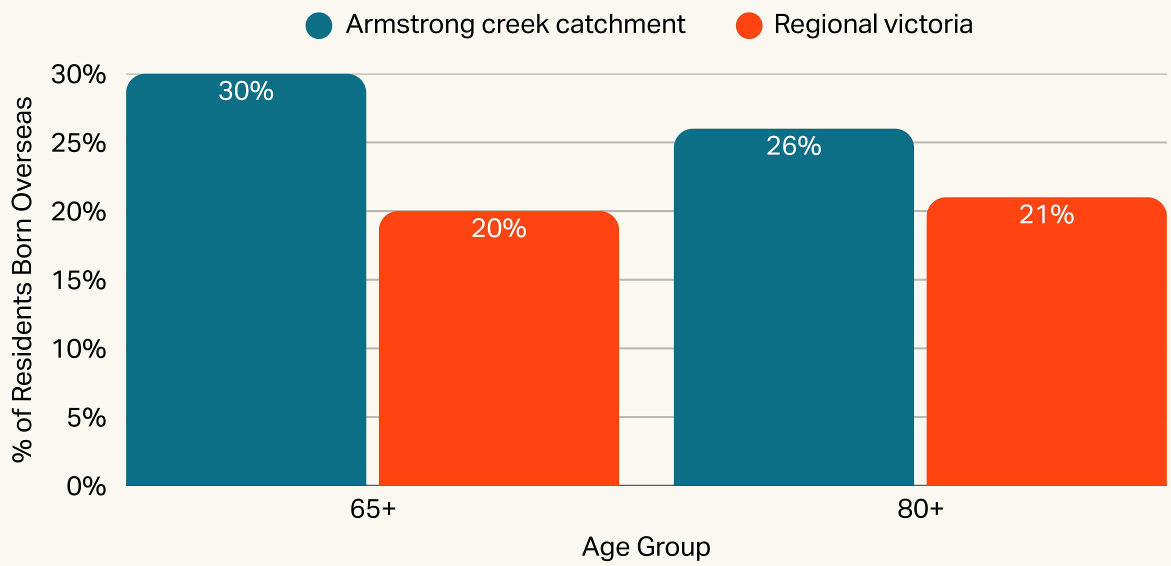
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

Understanding The Cultural Profile Of Residents

Cultural diversity is another factor shaping future service requirements. Almost one third of residents aged 65 plus and one quarter of those aged 80 plus are overseas born, both higher than the Regional Victorian average.

A HIGH PROPORTION OF RESIDENTS WERE BORN OVERSEAS

Proportion of 65+ and 80+ year-olds born overseas in the Armstrong Creek catchment



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

While First Nations representation in these older cohorts is very low at around 0.2 percent, and therefore not a major driver of culturally specific service planning in this area, the broader cultural mix may still influence expectations and preferences around care.

Workforce considerations present a relatively positive picture. Almost fifteen hundred residential aged care workers live within ten kilometres of the proposed site, representing around 40 percent of the available workforce within a fifty kilometre radius. Nearly seventy percent, or around 2,500 workers, live within twenty kilometres. This suggests that, at present, workforce availability in the area is stable and sufficient to support service delivery and future expansion.

LOCAL WORKFORCE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT AGED CARE SERVICES IN ARMSTRONG CREEK

Health and Aged Care Workers by Distance From The Catchment

Radius	Number of residential aged care workers	% of all residential care workers living within 50km of catchment
<10km of catchment	1,474	40%
10-20km of catchment	1,037	28%
20-30km of catchment	847	23%
30-40km of catchment	271	7%
40-50km of catchment	84	2%

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey, 2025

Distinct Regional Patterns Emerge

Combining retirement risk, labour-force depth, and housing affordability reveals six broad regional profiles:

REGIONAL COASTAL RETIREMENT HOTSPOTS

These regions are experiencing the fastest rise in care demand, yet they rely on shallow and increasingly constrained labour pools. Moderate to high housing costs further limit their ability to attract and retain the workforce they need.

Examples include the Mid-North Coast New South Wales, Wide Bay in Queensland and the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria.

HIGH-DEMAND, HIGH-COST METRO MARGINS

High housing costs are pricing out key workers just as demand for healthcare is increasing. As a result, providers are finding it harder to retain staff, leading to persistent vacancies, higher turnover, and greater reliance on agency workers.

These regions are located in the inner metropolitan areas of major capital cities.

FAST-GROWING OUTER SUBURBS

Strong population growth and an influx of young families are placing increasing demand for local health care services. However, the health care workforce growth, hospital capacity, and community care infrastructure are not keeping pace.

Examples include Ipswich, Sydney South West and Melbourne North West.

MODERATE-RISK REGIONS

Stable today but trending tighter. These inland regional centres and outer-metropolitan areas show moderate ageing and manageable workforce pressures. The regions benefit from more affordable housing and lower retirement exposure, but could face challenges if national workforce shortages deepen, making them more vulnerable to labour market competition.

Examples include Greater Bendigo, Launceston and Wagga Wagga.

REGIONAL CITIES NEAR CAPITAL CITIES

These regions stand out as more resilient. They host expanded health-care industries, attract younger workers and remain more affordable relative to metro markets. Their proximity to large capitals also provides access to deeper labour pools and specialist hospital networks.

These regions include Greater Geelong, Greater Newcastle, Greater Wollongong and Sunshine Coast.

REMOTE AND INLAND REGIONS

These regions have very limited workforce depth, weak hospital access, and low amenity. They therefore face significant long-term challenges. Without targeted planning and workforce investment, these areas risk persistent shortages and reduced service coverage.

These regions include Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia Outbacks, Far West NSW and North West Victoria.

Designing Aged Care Services For Culturally Diverse Communities

As Australia's older population becomes more diverse, culture is emerging as a key factor shaping how services are planned, delivered and sustained at the local level. The new Aged Care Act introduced in late 2025 places greater emphasis on delivering culturally appropriate care as a core expectation of service quality.

Meeting these requirements depends on understanding the cultural and linguistic profile of local communities and how needs, preferences and patterns of aged care use vary by place.

The new Aged Care Act, which took effect in late 2025, embeds a rights-based, risk-based framework that elevates culturally appropriate care as a core requirement of service quality and compliance.

For providers and investors, culture becomes a material factor within an already complex feasibility landscape. The size, distribution and characteristics of local communities matter, particularly in areas with large Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) populations where patterns of aged care use can differ.

Location selection, service models and financial viability must now account not only for demand and workforce availability, but for how well services align with the cultural expectations of the communities they are intended to serve.

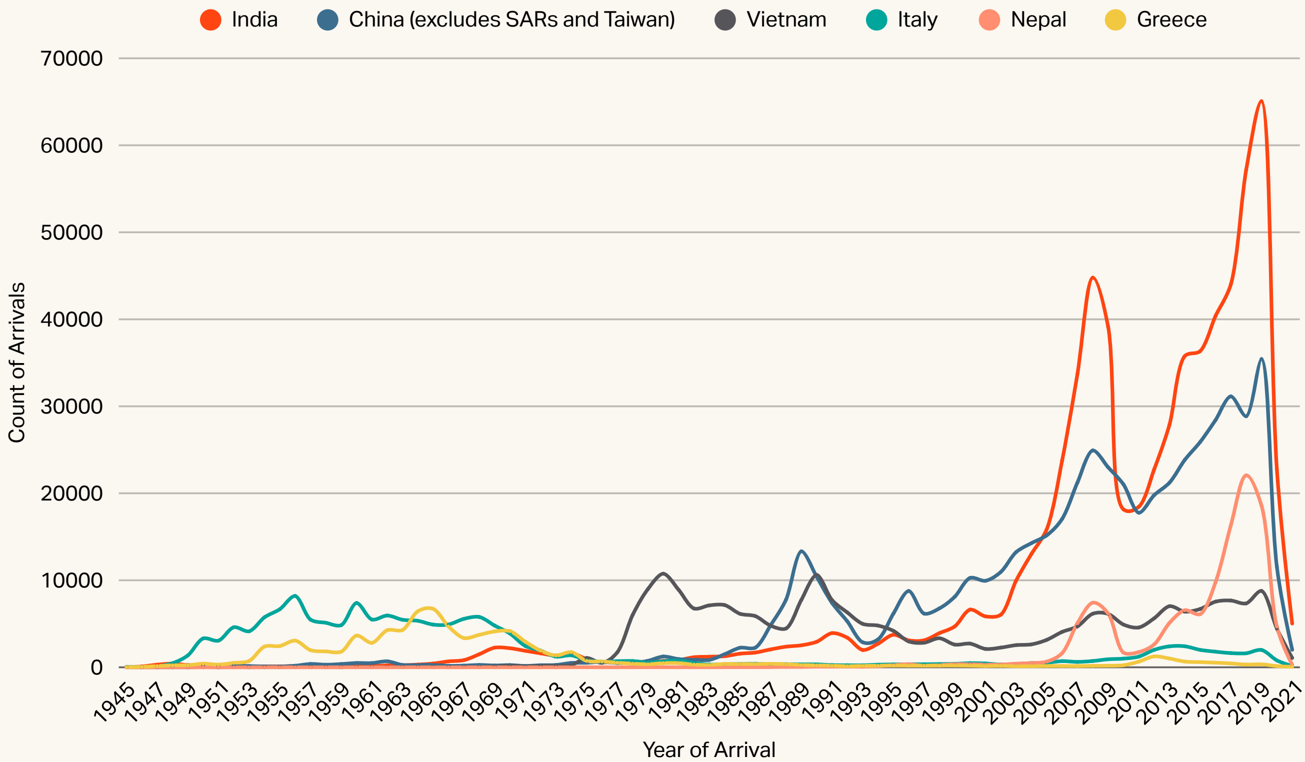
Generations Of Migrants At Different Life Stages

The cultural profile of each age group within Australia's population has been shaped by different eras of migration. These migration waves have created distinct cultural, linguistic and social profiles across the older population, which in turn influence how different communities engage with aged care.

Since World War 2, Australia has experienced several distinct migration waves starting with European migration in the immediate post war period (Italy, Greece), then Vietnamese migration during the Vietnam War and Chinese and Indian migration in the new millennium.

DIFFERENT MIGRATION COHORTS ARE AGEING AT DIFFERENT TIMES

Annual Arrivals By Country Of Birth, 1945 to 2021 (Select Countries of Birth)



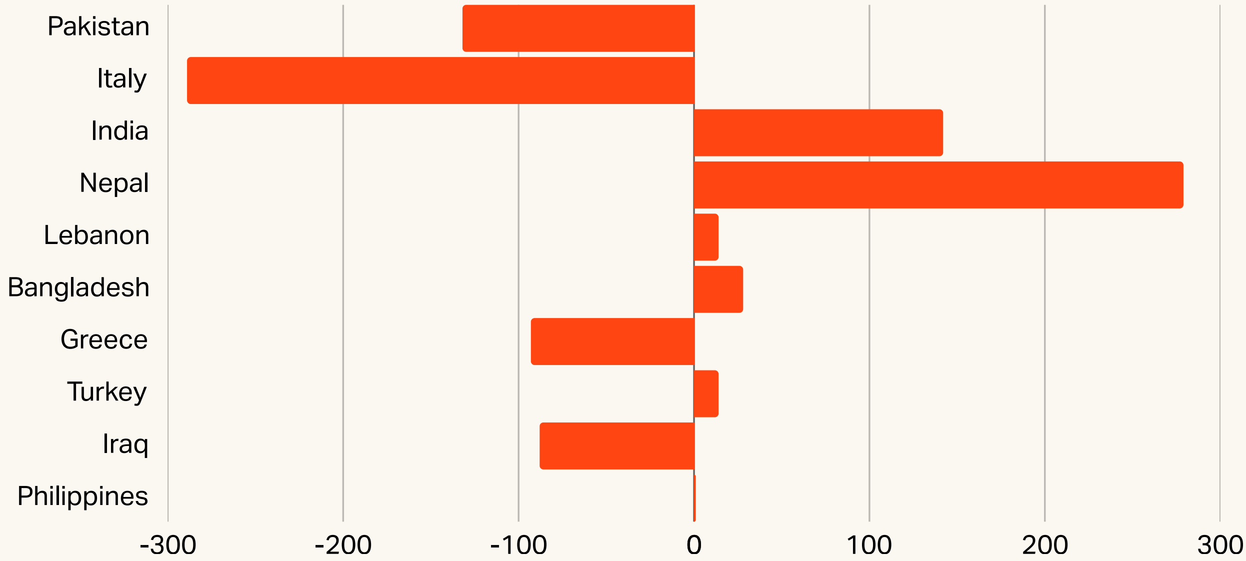
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

Among Australians aged 80 plus, 36 percent were born overseas, compared with 28 percent of the total population, reflecting these historical migration waves. Many of these may still prefer to speak their mother tongue, with 18 per cent of people aged 80 plus speaking a language other than English at home, compared with 22 per cent across the total population, indicating that a large share of the oldest overseas-born Australians come from English-speaking backgrounds.

An example of these migration waves playing out at a local level is Fawkner, in Melbourne's northern suburbs. Between 2011 and 2021 there was a decline in older migrant groups - those born in Italy or Greece - as older residents passed away or moved out of the area. At the same time, there has been a significant increase in those born in countries represented in current migration waves - India and Nepal.

INDIANS AND NEPALESE REPLACE PAKISTANI AND ITALIANS IN FAWKNER

Change in Country of Birth, 2011 to 2021, Fawkner, Victoria



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

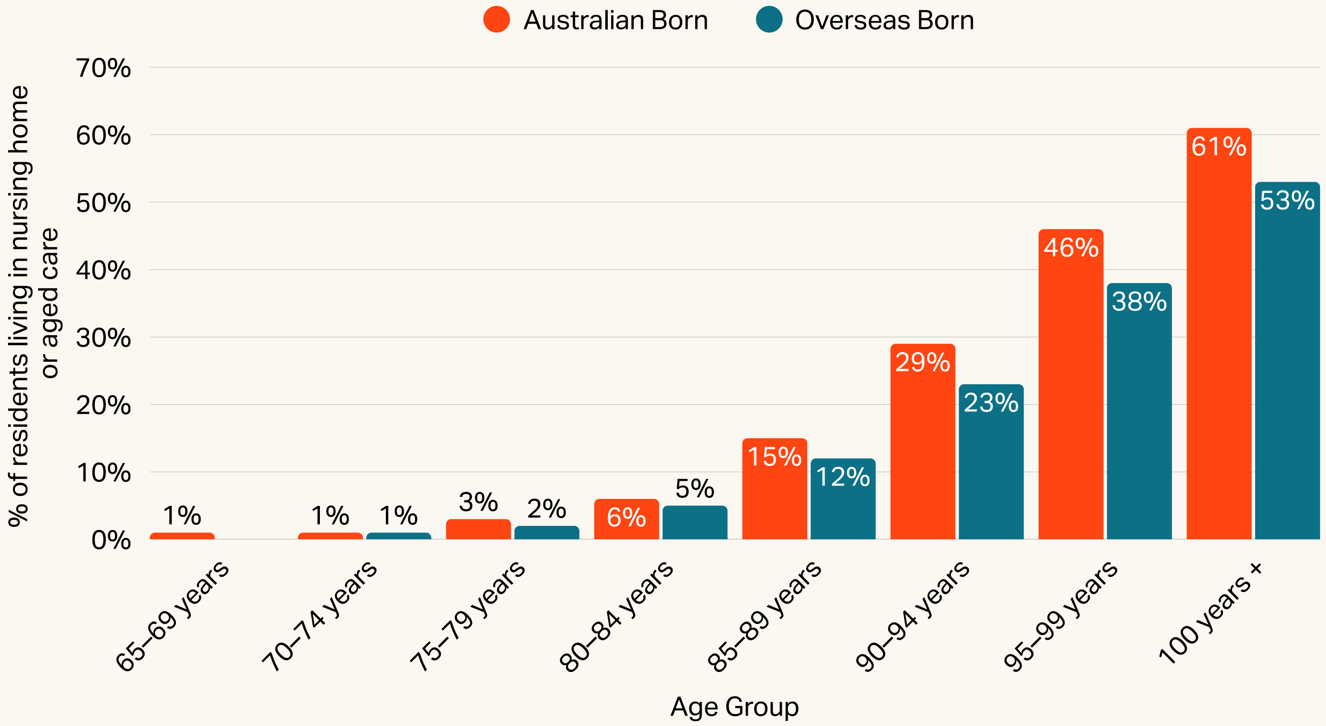
Cultural diversity and place of birth correspond with differing patterns of aged care use. In 2021, around 15 percent of Australian born residents aged 80 plus lived in aged care or nursing homes, compared with 11 percent of overseas born residents of the same age. This pattern holds across each age group above 65 plus, with Australian born residents consistently more likely to enter aged care than their overseas born counterparts.

Language background also appears to influence aged care uptake. Only 9 percent of non-English speaking residents aged 80 plus lived in aged care in 2021, suggesting that cultural preferences, family structures and expectations around support in older age play a role in decisions about residential care.

These differences highlight the importance of understanding the cultural and linguistic characteristics of older communities, as they shape both the demand for aged care and the types of services that will be required in the future.

PEOPLE BORN IN AUSTRALIA MORE LIKELY TO LIVE IN AGED CARE THAN THOSE BORN OVERSEAS

Share of Australian-Born and Overseas-Born Population Living in Nursing Homes or Aged Care (2021)

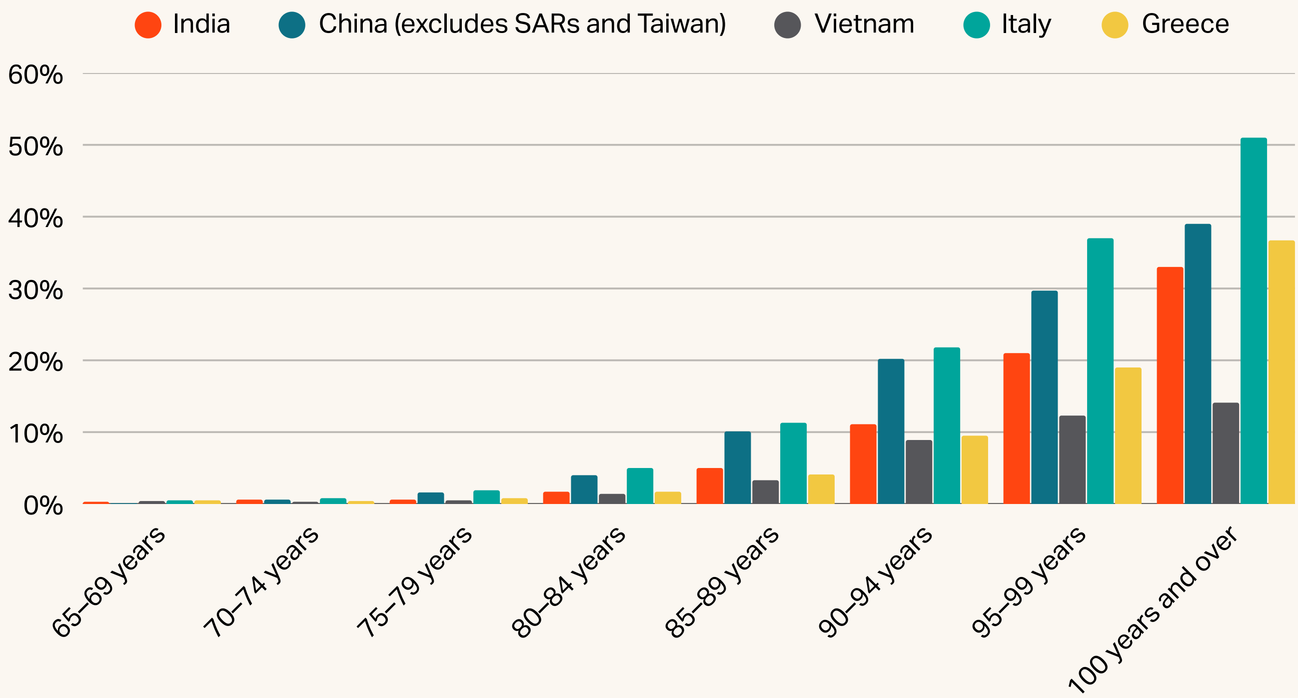


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

Within the overseas born community, take up rates for residential aged care can look very different depending on a person's country of origin. More established migrant groups, such as those born in Italy or Greece are more likely to be living in aged care. These communities have culturally specific aged care facilities in many states of Australia. Of note is the lower prevalence of those born in Vietnam to be living in aged care. This, along with lower rates for the Indian and Chinese communities may be explained by cultural expectations, where family based care is the norm.

PEOPLE BORN IN AUSTRALIA MORE LIKELY TO LIVE IN AGED CARE THAN THOSE BORN OVERSEAS

Share of Australian-Born and Overseas-Born Population Living in Nursing Homes or Aged Care (2021)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

Distinct Aged Care Pathways for First Nations Australians

Differences in aged care living from a cultural perspective are most clearly seen in the experience of Australia's First Nations peoples. Across all older age groups, First Nations Australians have significantly lower rates of aged care uptake than non-Indigenous Australians and those who do enter aged care tend to do so at younger ages. In 2021, the median age of First Nations residents in aged care facilities was 74.6 years, compared with 86.7 years for non-Indigenous residents.

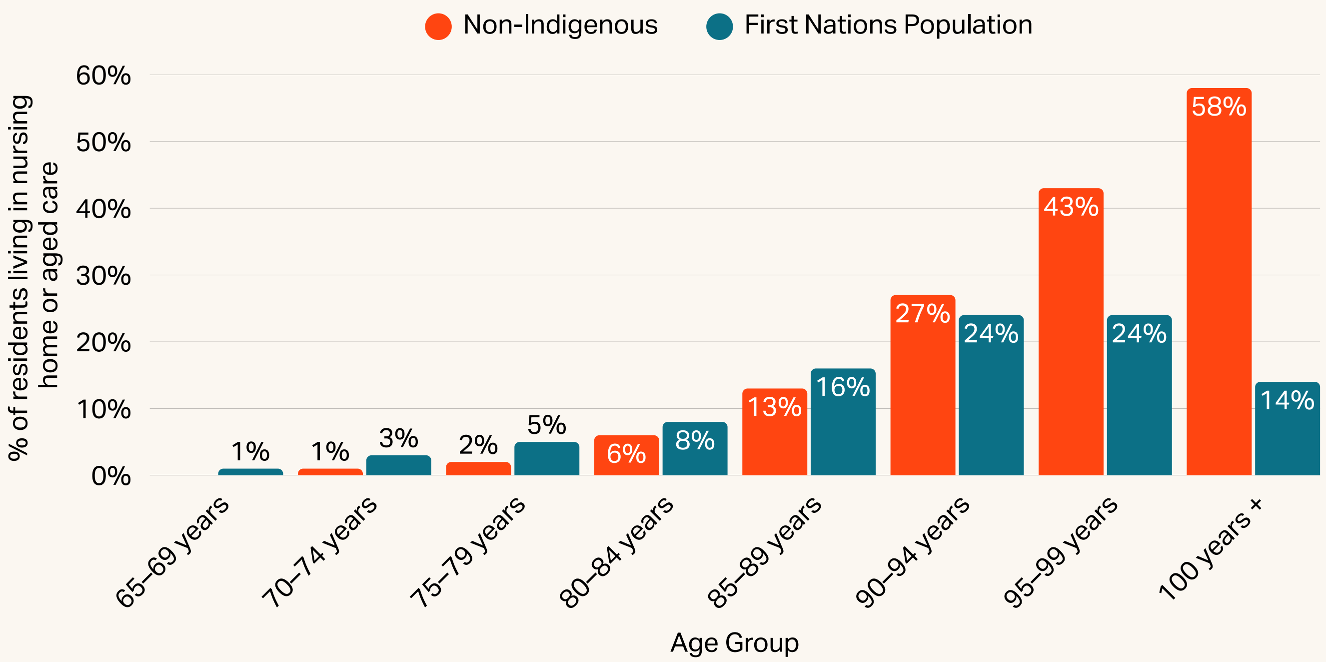
Several demographic and cultural factors underpin this difference. First Nations Australians have a lower life expectancy than non-Indigenous Australians, with the most recent ABS and AIHW data showing a life expectancy gap of about eight to nine years for both men and women. This means many do not reach the ages at which aged care use becomes most common in the wider population.

Cultural practices and community structures also play a strong role. The Productivity Commission's "Caring for Older Australians" inquiry report indicates that older First Nations people are more likely to remain living on Country, within their communities or with extended family rather than entering residential aged care. This reflects longstanding traditions of family based care, cultural obligations and the importance of maintaining connection to kin, place and identity as people age. For many, the preference is to receive support within familiar cultural and community environments rather than in institutional settings.

Alongside the cost and availability of aged care services, these combined demographic and cultural factors result in a very different pattern of aged care use for First Nations Australians. Their lower overall representation in residential aged care does not reflect lower need, but rather a distinctive set of preferences, cultural expectations and health outcomes that shape how care is accessed in older age. Understanding these differences is essential for planning future services that respect cultural practices while meeting the specific needs of First Nations communities.

FIRST NATIONS AUSTRALIANS LESS LIKELY TO LIVE IN AGED CARE

Prevalence of aged care living between First Nations Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians aged 65+



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

From evidence to action

How a more integrated, local and independent evidence base can materially improve aged care planning.

CONNECT THE DRIVERS OF AGED CARE DEMAND

By bringing together population forecasting, demographic analysis, housing and development research with workforce data and spatial analysis, we create a full picture of the forces shaping aged care demand. This integrated view supports clearer, more confident decisions in real places.

SEEING WHAT AVERAGES HIDE AT A LOCAL LEVEL

Local area analysis reveals differences that regional or headline averages can hide. By highlighting variations between neighbourhoods, suburbs and catchments, planning decisions can be better aligned with where demand will actually emerge.

TRANSLATING NATIONAL CHANGE INTO LOCAL DEMAND

Independent, in-house research programs and age-specific, year-specific local area population forecasts show how national population change is likely to play out locally. This reduces uncertainty and strengthens long-term planning.

EMBEDDING RESEARCH EXPERTISE INTO DECISIONS

With in-house data and research expertise, insight is applied directly by the people who build our unique datasets. This preserves local nuance and independence and ensures evidence is built into decisions from the outset.

How we can help you

We work with aged care providers, planners and investors who are responsible for making high-stakes decisions in an environment of long lead times, local variation and increasing regulatory scrutiny.

UNDERSTANDING FUTURE DEMAND AND COMMUNITY NEED

Build a clear picture of how population ageing, migration, housing change and household structure will shape demand across different places and cohorts. This supports informed decisions about where demand will grow or stagnate over time.

DESIGNING SERVICES FOR CHANGING COMMUNITIES

Understand the demographic, cultural and socioeconomic characteristics of older populations to design service models that meet the unique needs of each community. This includes identifying culturally and linguistically diverse communities, vulnerable or underserved groups and changing household and care preferences.

ASSESSING THE VIABILITY OF LOCATIONS AND CATCHMENTS

Evaluate existing or potential sites by analysing future demand, catchment dynamics, competition and the characteristics of surrounding older populations. This supports decisions about new facilities, expansions, refurbishments or consolidation.

PLANNING THE TIMING AND SCALE OF INVESTMENT

Understand not just how much demand is coming, but when it is likely to materialise. This supports realistic staging of capital investment, workforce planning and the rollout of services across residential, home care and retirement living models.

SUPPORTING BUSINESS CASES AND GOVERNANCE DECISIONS

Provide an independent, transparent evidence base that can be used to inform boards, funders, regulators and partners. This includes supporting investment decisions, funding applications and strategic decisions with defensible local evidence.

How organisations work with us

Engagement pathways

There is no single way organisations work with us. Engagements reflect how confident internal teams are in the evidence base, the level of resourcing available and whether an independent perspective is needed to support high-stakes decisions.

Most organisations use one or more of the following pathways.

DATA

Independent local area evidence for planning and decision-making.

We provide access to data from our in-house research programs, including detailed local area population forecasts and housing and development data. This evidence is consistent, independent and designed specifically for place-based planning.

✓ Strategy
✓ Planning
✓ Policy
✓ Research

TOOLS

Explore future demand, test scenarios and compare locations.

Our planning tools apply our research and data through structured analytics platforms, including the Demand Analytics Platform. These tools support early-stage exploration, option testing and ongoing monitoring.

✓ Strategy
✓ Property
✓ Investment
✓ Planning

CONSULTING

Apply expert insight to high-stakes planning and investment decisions.

Tailored analysis and advice from our consulting team drawing on expertise across population forecasting, demographics, economics, workforce, housing and development, spatial analysis and planning, combined with insights from our in-house research programs.

✓ Executives
✓ Boards
✓ Property and development
✓ Finance and governance

Data and resources

The analysis in this report is grounded in Informed Decisions' independent research programs and the public tools and insights used every day by planners and decision-makers across Australia.

The research behind this report

The analysis in this report draws on the following national research programs and datasets developed and maintained by Informed Decisions

NATIONAL FORECASTING PROGRAM

Age-specific population, housing and development forecasts for local areas.

NATIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC (CENSUS) DATA

Detailed Census data revealing how communities and households differ by place.

NATIONAL ECONOMIC DATA

Annual local employment and economic data including health and care sectors.

OTHER NATIONAL DATASETS

Housing, development and community sentiment data for place-based analysis.

Public tools and expert insights

INFORMATION TOOLS

Public profiles for 300+ councils and regions.

FORECAST ANALYSIS

Forecasting insights for every region of Australia

RESEARCH REPORTS

Applied analysis for specific topics and industry sectors.

WEBINARS AND EVENTS

Expert commentary from our team on emerging trends

EXPLORE OUR DATA, TOOLS AND PUBLIC INSIGHTS

Speak with our team

If you are planning aged care services or facilities, get in touch to talk about what local data and evidence is available for your area and how it could support your planning or investment decisions.

We usually start with a short call to understand your project and explore options. It's a chance to ask questions and see what's possible, without committing to a particular solution or scope of work.

(03) 9417 2205

info@id.com.au

id.com.au

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