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# Report on Government Services 2019

PART A, CHAPTER 2

## 2 Statistical context

### In this chapter

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- ∨ [Population](#)
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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 \(Word - 241 Kb\)](#)

[Statistical concepts \(PDF - 330 Kb\)](#)

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 \(XLSX - 1077 Kb\)](#)

[Chapter 2 Attachment tables \(PDF - 5204 Kb\)](#)

## 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.

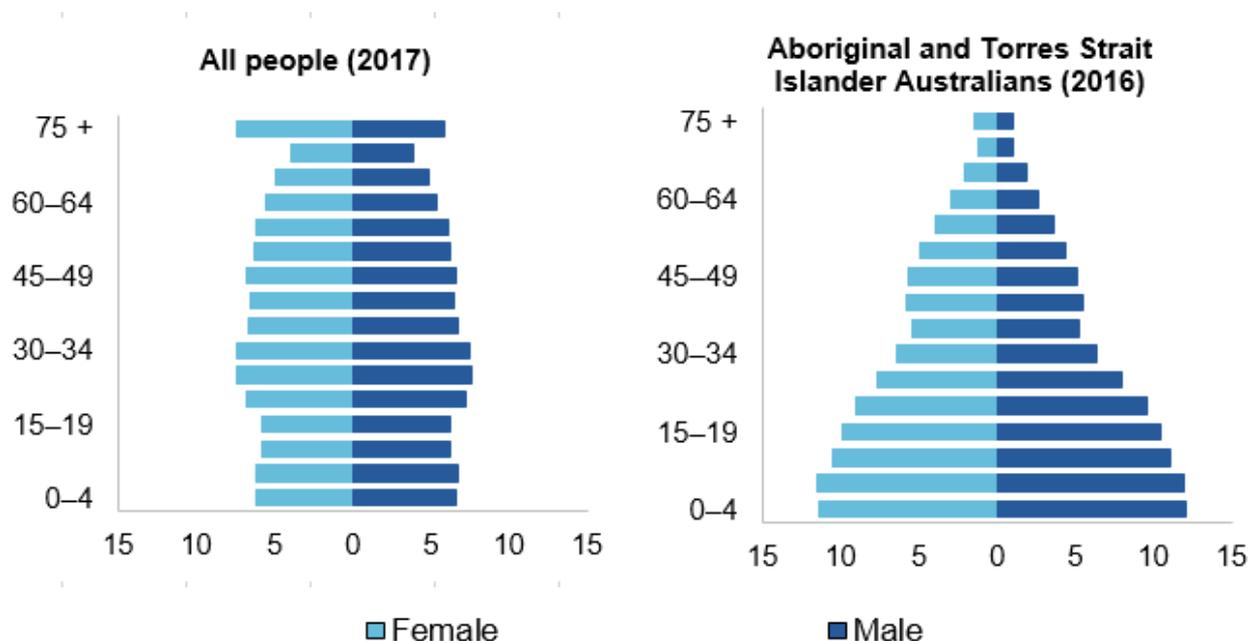
### Population size and trends

More than three-quarters of Australia's 24.6 million people lived in the eastern mainland states as at 30 June 2017. 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 2013 and 2017 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 2.1). At 30 June 2017, 10.6 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.13).

The most recent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimate is for 2016 and is used here as the most recent point-in-time comparison with population estimates on all people. These population data are based on the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. Annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population data based on the 2016 Census are not yet available. Annual data are based on the 2011 Census and are available in table 2A.14.

**Figure 2.1 – Population distribution, Australia, by age and sex, 30 June<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> See tables 2A.1 and 2A.13 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.

Source: ABS (2017) *Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2017*, Cat. no. 3101.0; ABS (2018) *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2016*, Cat. no. 3238.0.55.001; tables 2A.1 and 2A.13.

## 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.8). Of those born outside Australia, 88.7 per cent spoke only English, or spoke another language as well as speaking English very well or well (table 2A.5). Approximately 20.8 per cent of Australians spoke a language other than English at home in August 2016 (table 2A.11).

## 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 71.8 per cent of the population located in major cities as at 30 June 2017 (table 2A.12).

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population profile

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<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> See tables 2A.1 and 2A.13 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.

Source: ABS (2017) *Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2017*, Cat. no. 3101.0; ABS (2018) *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2016*, Cat. no. 3238.0.55.001; tables 2A.1 and 2A.13.

## Family and household

### Family structure

There were 6.8 million families in Australia in 2017. Nationally, 37.8 per cent of families had at least one child aged under 15 years, and 17.7 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 in 2017, 18.7 per cent of families with children aged under 15 years were lone parent families (table 2A.19).

Employment status also has implications for the financial independence of families. Nationally in 2017, 6.1 per cent of couple families with children under 15 years had neither parent employed. For lone parent families with children under 15 years, 7.8 per cent had the parent unemployed (table 2A.20).

### Household profile

There were a projected 9.6 million households in Australia in 2018 (based on the 2011 Census), with 25.0 per cent lone person households (table 2A.24). As at 30 June 2018, the proportion of people

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aged 65 years or over who lived alone (24.3 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 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.30). The proportion was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (30.9 per cent) and around three times higher for younger people (76.2 per cent for people aged 15–19 years) (tables 2A.33 and 2A.36).

Nationally, 17.7 per cent of the total population was receiving income support in 2017, with proportions similar or lower across all reported payment types compared to 2016. The age pension was received by 10.2 per cent of the population (65.8 per cent of the qualifying population), while 3.1 per cent received a disability support pension and 1.0 per cent received a single parent payment, and a further 3.4 per cent of the population received some form of labour market allowance (table 2A.37).

### 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 2018 — 94.8 per cent were employed. The majority of employed people (67.8 per cent) were in full time employment. Nationally, the unemployment rate was 5.2 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 2018, the labour force participation rate was 65.7 per cent (table 2A.48).

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.38–47. Additional educational data are also available in [Part B of this Report \(Childcare, education and training\)](#).