

Snapshot of priority populations in Tasmania



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Acknowledgement of Country

Primary Health Tasmania acknowledges that the lands we work from are the traditional lands of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community. We respect their spiritual relationship with their country and honour and respect their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to the lands we work from.

Snapshot of priority populations in Tasmania MARCH 2024

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Introduction

Assessing need and determining local priorities is a key part of Primary Health Tasmania's work. We do this by collating and analysing data, including through our [annual needs assessment](#) activities. We consult experts – including service providers and consumers – so that our analysis is well informed when making decisions on how to use finite resources in a way that will have the best impact and outcome for those with the greatest need.

A range of statistics, insights and other information is collated to provide an evidence base for improvement activities. From our data, we understand that Tasmanians still rank poorly compared with other Australian states and territories on many health measures. In addition to this, Tasmania is home to a regionally dispersed population of over 560,000 people and socioeconomic disadvantage is prevalent across the state.

Access to health care is problematic for many – particularly for people with a disability, older Tasmanians, those people experiencing homelessness, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQ+ people, and people who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Primary Health Tasmania has developed [community health checks](#) which present health, wellbeing and demographic information for each of Tasmania's 29 local government areas. To complement this popular resource we have created a snapshot of health data and information for the following priority population groups:

- older people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- LGBTIQ+ people
- people at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- people living with a disability.

This resource will support the understanding of healthcare providers, communities, system partners, and consumers about current population-specific health data and information. It highlights activity that Primary Health Tasmania is involved in to support these priority populations, and includes links to useful resources and information about the social care and health needs of these groups.

Older people



This resource focuses on older Tasmanians – generally those aged 65 and over. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the age range 50 and over is used, reflecting the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Tasmanians.

The population of people aged 65 years and above in Tasmania reached 116,630 in 2021, or 19.2% of the population, compared to 17.5% in 2016.

The median age of Tasmanians in 2021 was 42, compared to 38 for the rest of Australia.

The older population is associated with an increased prevalence of chronic health conditions such as cancers, diabetes, heart disease, and dementia.

As of June 2021, the proportion of people with dementia living in permanent residential aged care in Tasmania was 275 per 10,000 people.

Local government areas with the highest proportion of people aged over 65 years in 2016 were Glamorgan Spring Bay, Tasman, Break O'Day, Flinders and Central Highlands.

Falls affect people of all ages, but the highest and increasing incidence and greatest burden was among people aged 65 years and over.

75% of older Tasmanians felt they had good, very good, or excellent health.

Older Tasmanians contribute to their communities in a range of ways including caring for children and grandchildren, sharing knowledge with younger generations, and supporting economic productivity.

Tasmania's population is remaining healthier for much longer than previous generations.

What does Primary Health Tasmania do?

Primary Health Tasmania commissions services to:

- connect vulnerable older people with aged care services
- deliver psychological treatment services for older people with mental illness who are living in aged care homes
- support older people with chronic health conditions who are living in rural areas.

Visit [Our Services Portal](#) for details.

We also support:

- increased access to and use of telehealth care options for people living in aged care homes
- access to after-hours support for residential aged care, including the Yellow Envelope initiative and shared transfers of care
- primary health professionals in caring for older people, through initiatives such as electronic medication management resources and emergency decision guidelines
- improved quality of palliative and end-of-life care for Tasmanians through collaboration under the *Greater Choice for At Home Palliative Care Measure*.

Health professionals can find care pathways specific to older people on the [Tasmanian HealthPathways](#) portal.

Resources aimed at improving aged care for individuals and their carers - visit [Primary Health Tasmania's website](#):

- ✓ [Shared Planning Checklist](#)
- ✓ [Information about managing medications](#)
- ✓ [Passport to Better Health](#)
- ✓ [Dementia resource for consumers.](#)

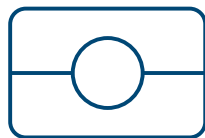
Other resources and helpful links:

- ✚ [FindHelpTAS](#)
- ✚ [COTA Tasmania](#)
- ✚ [Carers Tasmania](#)
- ✚ [Palliative Care Tasmania](#)
- ✚ [Tasmanian Department of Health: Palliative care](#)
- ✚ [Dementia Australia](#)
- ✚ [My Aged Care](#)
- ✚ [Carer Gateway](#)
- ✚ [Advocacy Tasmania.](#)

Sources:

- 2021 Tasmania, Census All persons QuickStats - Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Tasmania's Ageing Profile Parts I and II - COTA Tasmania
- The State of Public Health Report 2018 - Tasmanian Department of Health
- Dementia in Australia, Residential aged care - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Embracing the Future - Tasmania's Ageing Profile - COTA Tasmania

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



In Tasmania, 30,186 people identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the 2021 Census, representing 5.4% of the state's population.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience health inequalities in comparison to non-Indigenous Australians. Resulting in a reduction in life expectancy, higher rates of smoking lead to increased incidence of a number of diseases, including chronic diseases and mental health conditions.

In 2021 the median age of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was 25 years, up from 24 years in 2016 and 22 years in 2011.

The proportion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population aged 65 years and over in 2021 was less than in 2016 (6.2% compared to 5.9%).

The local government area with the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population was Launceston (2873 or 9.5% of the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population), followed by Glenorchy (2,725, 9%) and Clarence (2,623, 8.7%).

Circular Head had the greatest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (17.3% of the local government area's total population).

Most (96.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Tasmania used only English at home and 178 people used an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language at home.

A remarkable strength lies at the heart of palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal people) and culture. With the oldest continuing culture in the world, connection to lands and community, resilience and adaptability over thousands of years has been demonstrated.

What does Primary Health Tasmania do?

Primary Health Tasmania works with local communities, organisations and healthcare providers to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We turn to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations and healthcare providers to find out what's needed before designing, commissioning and monitoring services to meet those requirements.

Visit [Primary Health Tasmania's website](#) for more information.

Primary Health Tasmania has commissioned organisations across the state to deliver:

- integrated team care services to support chronic conditions management
- social and emotional wellbeing services.

Visit [Our Services Portal](#) for details.

Our [Passport to Better Health](#) resource aims to help older people keep track of their healthcare journey.

Health professionals can find care pathways specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the [Tasmanian HealthPathways](#) portal.

Other resources and helpful links:

- ✦ [FindHelpTAS](#)
- ✦ [Medicare services for Indigenous Australians](#)
- ✦ [Tasmanian Home and Community Care program](#)
- ✦ [Aboriginal Health Liaison Office - support while in hospital](#)
- ✦ [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health initiatives and programs.](#)

Sources:

- 2021 Tasmania, Census Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people QuickStats - Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2020 - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Frameworks for Australian Social Statistics, June 2015 - Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Tasmania: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population summary - Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Language used at home - Australian Bureau of Statistics

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities



Culturally and linguistically diverse-specific data is difficult to obtain for Tasmania.

Australia's population includes many people who were born overseas, have a parent born overseas or speak a variety of languages. Together, these groups of people are known as culturally and linguistically diverse populations or communities.

There are three out of 20 people living in Tasmania who were born outside Australia. The proportion of people born outside Australia increased to 15.3% in 2021 from 12% in 2016.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds comprise a smaller proportion of the population in Tasmania than elsewhere in Australia.

Culturally and linguistically diverse populations in Tasmania are concentrated in the population centres such as Launceston and Greater Hobart.

In 2021, the top five countries of birth in Tasmania were: Australia (79.1%), England (3.5%), China (1.2%), Nepal (1.1%), India (1.1%).

After English, the most common languages used were Mandarin, Nepali, Punjabi and Spanish.

People from migrant backgrounds often experience health disparities leading to lower quality health care, poorer health outcomes, delayed diagnoses, and disempowerment.

Barriers to health care include stigma, discrimination and racism, perceived lack of cultural safety, limited understanding of the Australian health system, visa status, associated medical costs, and social, cultural and spiritual health beliefs.

The rich cultural diversity is one of Australia's greatest strengths and is central to our national identity.

What does Primary Health Tasmania do?

Primary Health Tasmania commissions services to:

- reduce suicide risk and increase the capacity to respond to suicide crises within culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- provide a program to connect vulnerable older culturally and linguistically diverse people with aged care services.

Visit [Our Services Portal](#) for details.

The [Dementia resource for consumers](#) is available in different languages.

Health professionals can find care pathways specific to people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities on the [Tasmanian HealthPathways](#) portal.

Other resources and helpful links:

- [FindHelpTAS](#)
- [Translating and Interpreting Service](#)
- [Health Translations](#)
- [Embrace Multicultural Mental Health](#)
- [Cultural Atlas](#)
- [26TEN.](#)

Sources:

- Snapshot of Tasmania - Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Suicide prevention - culturally and linguistically diverse people - Primary Health Tasmania Services Portal
- Culturally and linguistically diverse populations, Chapter 5 Health of population groups - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Health in Tasmania - Health Needs Assessment 2022-23 to 2024-25 - Primary Health Tasmania
- The State of Public Health Report 2018 - Tasmanian Department of Health
- Practical strategies and tips for effective support - NSW Health
- Public Consultation on Tasmania's Multicultural Action Plan 2024-26 Summary Strategic Directions Report December 2023



LGBTIQ+ is an evolving acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual/agender/aromantic. There are many other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual) used by people to describe their experience of their gender, sexuality and physiological sex characteristics.

The *LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians: Telling us the Story* report states that LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians value the predominantly welcoming, progressive, and accepting socio-cultural environment in contemporary Tasmania and acknowledge that LGBTIQ+-inclusion has increased over the years. However, people still routinely experience abuse and discrimination and carry the legacy of abuse and discrimination from the past. This means the LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians have poorer mental and physical health outcomes than the general population.

LGBTIQ+-specific data is difficult to obtain for Tasmania. According to the 2016 Australian Census, approximately eight per 100,000 of Tasmanians identified as sex and/or gender diverse. However there is yet to be questions embedded in the Census that explicitly record data about the lives of LGBTIQ+ people.

In a 2021 online survey of 825 LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians:

40% of respondents work in health care or education

53% were born in Tasmania; 69% reported living in the Hobart region

5.4% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

97% have been told their sexuality or gender identity is the result of trauma or pathology and should be changed, fixed or healed

75% always or sometimes hid identity for fear of abuse in public

LGBTIQ+ people have higher levels of disability and chronic illness. 43% reported feeling they cannot do the things they want due to their health.

Mental health support is stated as difficult to access in rural and regional areas for LGBTIQ+ people.

The Tasmanian LGBTIQ+ community is 'close knit' and supportive of its members, offering many opportunities for socialising, recreation, and advocacy. LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians are proud of their community and all they have achieved together. They are eager to share and celebrate these strengths with the community at large.

What does Primary Health Tasmania do?

Primary Health Tasmania does not commission LGBTIQ+-specific services.

Our mainstream commissioned services are inclusive and supportive of all people regardless of ethnicity, faith, age, disability, language, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Health professionals can find care pathways specific to LGBTIQ+ people on the [Tasmanian HealthPathways](#) portal.

Specific services are provided by the Tasmanian Department of Health and other organisations, including:

🔗 [FindHelpTAS](#)

🔗 [Mental Health Services](#)

🔗 [Sexual Health Services](#)

🔗 [Tasmanian Gender Services](#)

🔗 [Youth Health Services](#)

🔗 [LGBTIQ+ Health Australia](#)

🔗 [Private Lives 3](#)

🔗 [Working It Out](#)

🔗 [TasCAHRD](#)

🔗 [Tasmanian Department of Health: LGBTIQ+ inclusive healthcare.](#)

Sources:

- Stories from the 2016 Census - Reflecting Australia - Australian Bureau of Statistics
- LGBTQ-Affirmative Behavioural Health Services in Primary Care - Heredia D, Pankey TL, Gonzalez CA
- LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians: Telling Us the Story Final Report December 2021 - Dwyer A, Grant R, Mason R, Barnes A

People experiencing or at risk of homelessness



Homelessness is when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives. They are considered homeless if their current living arrangement is in a dwelling that is inadequate, has no tenure or tenure is short and not extendable, or does not allow them to have control of and access to space for social relations.

Homelessness is often the result of a number of complex problems, including discrimination, a shortage of affordable and available housing, domestic and family violence, intergenerational poverty, long-term unemployment, economic and social disadvantage.

Homelessness affects people of all ages, and in all regions of Tasmania. During 2020-21, there were 6,977 people in Tasmania experiencing homelessness or marginal housing.

The number of people who sought support from Specialist Homelessness Services in Tasmania between 2017 and 2021 increased by 24% (2,270 people in 2017 to 2,818 in 2022).

Of the 2,818 people who received assistance, 1,579 were female, 1,239 were male, and 440 identified as Aboriginal.

894 people who accessed homelessness services in Tasmania during 2019-20 sought assistance for health or medical needs.

In 2016, Tasmania's homelessness was concentrated in the Hobart region and the south east (57%), while Launceston and the north east accounted for 23% and the west and north-west coast 20%.

Most homelessness is hidden from view - people staying temporarily with others ('couch surfing'), in precarious or substandard accommodation, emergency shelters, overcrowded dwellings, cars and tents.

Homelessness can be a full-time job. Finding a safe place to sleep and food to eat are the main priorities for people who are homeless and can take up much of any given day. Contacting housing providers or other welfare agencies that can meet immediate needs for shelter, food, warmth and safety will come ahead of healthcare appointments and can consume a great deal of time.

What does Primary Health Tasmania do?

Primary Health Tasmania commissions health outreach services for homeless people. These services include:

- vaccination
- basic health checks
- wound care
- referral to specialist services
- support to access health care
- connecting vulnerable older people with aged care services.

Visit [Our Services Portal](#) for details.

Health professionals can find care pathways specific to homeless people on the [Tasmanian HealthPathways](#) portal.

Other resources and helpful links:

- [FindHelpTAS](#)
- [Specialist homelessness services](#)
- [My Aged Care - care finder](#)
- [City Mission Launceston](#)
- [Shelter Tasmania](#)
- [Anglicare Tasmania](#)
- [Salvation Army](#)
- [Moreton Group \(mobile health clinic\).](#)

Sources:

- Specialist Homelessness Services - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Health of people experiencing homelessness - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Homelessness Week 2022 Fact Sheet - Hobart City Council
- Talking to women about homelessness, Tasmania 2020 - Women's Health Tasmania

People living with a disability



People with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which - in interaction with various barriers - may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In Tasmania, there were about 170,400 people in 2022 with reported disability - this was 30.5% of the population compared to 21.4% nationally. In 2021, 38,023 Tasmanians needed assistance with core activities.

The prevalence of disability generally increases with age. Two in five people with disability are 65 years or over.

In 2015, half of all people with disability used aids or equipment to help them with their disability.

In 2018, Tasmania had the highest rate in Australia of people with psychosocial disability at 8.3%.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) data for 2023 show there were 13,371 NDIS participants in Tasmania, of which 2,666 lived with intellectual disability. Tasmania had 3% of all NDIS participants with intellectual disability in Australia.

Over 15% of Tasmanians report that they experience discrimination due to their disability.

"People with disability lead meaningful lives. We work. We have families. We contribute to our community in myriad ways. We are entitled to respect. Many of us are proud of being people with disability and we want that identity to be affirmed in our private lives as well as in the public sphere."

People with Disability Australia language guide

What does Primary Health Tasmania do?

Primary Health Tasmania commissions psychosocial support services:

- non-clinical support services for adults with a severe mental illness that impacts their daily life.

Visit [Our Services Portal](#) for details.

We have developed a [flyer](#) providing tips on what people with intellectual disability can do to stay well. We have also developed a range of [resources](#) to support health professionals providing care to people with intellectual disability, and provide training for healthcare professionals. Visit [Primary Health Tasmania's website](#) for more information.

Health professionals can find disability-specific pathways on the [Tasmanian HealthPathways](#) portal.

Other resources and helpful links:

- [FindHelpTAS](#)
- [Speak Out Advocacy Tasmania](#)
- [Advocacy Tasmania](#)
- [The Association for Children with Disability \(Tas\) Inc.](#)
- [National Disability Services](#)
- [Carers Tasmania](#)
- [Council for Intellectual Disability](#)
- [Healthdirect: Your healthcare rights](#)
- [Inclusion Australia](#)
- [Carer Gateway](#)
- [University of NSW Department of Developmental Disability Neuropsychiatry \(3DN\)](#)
- [National Disability Insurance Scheme: Health Liaison Officers.](#)

Sources:

- Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2022 - Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Health in Tasmania - Health Needs Assessment 2022-23 to 2024-25 - Primary Health Tasmania
- Data and insights - National Disability Insurance Scheme December 2023

