



Priority area

4 Women's health and wellbeing

Life expectancy

In 2016–18, females had life expectancy of 84.7 years at birth, compared with 80.2 years for males.¹

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females had life expectancy of 76.4 years at birth in 2015–17 – higher than that of 72.0 years for Indigenous males, but 8 years lower than for non-Indigenous females.²

General health status

Most females considered themselves to be in 'excellent', 'very good' or 'good' health, with little difference between females (85.4%) and males (85.0%) in 2018.³

Females (66.3%) were more likely than males (58.9%) to experience at least one personal stressor in the previous 12 months in 2014, with common stressors for both females and males being illness, death of a family member or friend and unable to get a job.⁴

Smoking and drinking

Females 18 years and over were less likely to smoke daily (10.0%), compared with males (12.2%) in 2018.⁵

Daily smoking rates were highest in the 45–64 years with male rates peaking at 45–54 years (15.8%) and females at 45–54 years (14.0%).⁶

In 2018, females aged 18 years and over were far less likely to drink alcohol at 'lifetime risky'⁷ levels (11.9%), compared with 33.2% for males.⁸

11.9% of mothers smoked some time during pregnancy in 2017, compared with 12.4% in 2015.⁹ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers were considerably more likely to

smoke at some time during pregnancy than non-Indigenous females (42.7% compared with 9.6% in 2017).¹⁰

Healthy weight and food

Females aged 18 years and over were 36.3% more likely than males to be in the healthy weight range in 2018, based on self-reported data.¹¹ The difference was mainly due to the higher prevalence of self-reported overweight for males (43.2% compared with 29.5%), while obesity was similar (24.5% compared with 23.9%).

Females aged 18 years and over were more likely than males to consume the recommended daily serves of fruit (55.3% compared with 48.8%) and vegetables (12.8% compared with 4.2%) in 2018.¹²

Cancer screening

Females in the target age groups for cancer screening programs participated in cervical screening at 53% of those aged 20–69 years in the two years 2015 to 2016 and breast screening at 56% of those aged 50–74 years in the two years 2015 to 2016.¹³

Pregnancy and childbirth

Of the total 61,158 births registered in 2017, 48.1% were female babies and 51.9% were male babies, resulting in a sex ratio at birth of 107.8 male births per 100 female births.¹⁴

Females had an average of just under two children during their reproductive life at the fertility rate of 1.77 babies per female in 2017 – nationally 1.74.¹⁵

Females had a median age for childbirth of 30.4 years in 2017, compared with 32.4 years for the median age of father.¹⁶



The median age of Queensland's first-time mother was 29.1 years in 2017.¹⁷

Of the 59,399 mothers who gave birth in 2017¹⁸:

- about three-quarters (76.0%) were aged 20–34 years. A further 3.4% were teenage mothers and the remaining 20.6% were aged 35 years and over.
- 7.0% were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers.

Falls

Females aged 65 years and older comprised the majority of fall-related hospitalisations (64.8% in 2017–18)¹⁹, and fall-related deaths (57.0% in 2015).²⁰

Mental health and wellbeing



24.3% of females reported having mental and behavioural health problems in the previous 12 months, which lasted or were expected to last at least six

months or more, compared with 21.2% of males in 2017–18.²¹

Anxiety related problems were the most commonly reported mental and behavioural conditions for all Queenslanders, but at a greater rate for females (17.9%) than for males (13.0%) in 2017–18.²²

Females (15.4%) were more likely to experience a high to very high level of psychological distress in the previous four weeks, compared with males (12.5%) in 2017–18²³:

- The 45–54 years age group showed the largest difference between females (18.0%) and males (13.4%) experiencing a high to very high level of psychological distress.

Deaths from suicide (intentional self-harm) were less likely to occur among females, compared with males.²⁴ In 2018, of total 786 suicide deaths, 21.4% were female deaths.

- The highest proportion of suicide deaths of females occurred among those 45–54 years of age, while for males it was 35–44 years of age.²⁵

Physical activity



Females were less likely than males (56.6% compared to 62.9%) to be sufficiently active for health benefits²⁶ in 2018.²⁷

Girls aged 5–17 years were less likely than boys of the same age to be active every day of the past week (36.4% compared with 44.7%) with the 16–17 years age group being least active for both girls (14.9%) and boys (21.7%) in 2018.²⁸

Just over half of females (54.5%) and males (52.9%) participated in sport and physical recreation activities in the previous 12 months in 2013–14²⁹, showing the lowest participation rate in Australia – nationally 59.4% for females and 61.0% for males.

Diseases and causes of death

The two most common causes of death for both females and males were cancers (malignant neoplasms) and ischaemic heart diseases in 2018, followed by^{30 31}:

- organic, including symptomatic, mental disorders (such as dementia), cerebrovascular diseases, and other forms of heart disease for females.
- chronic lower respiratory diseases, cerebrovascular diseases, and other forms of heart disease for males.

The top three causes of cancer-related death for females were bronchus and lung cancer, breast cancer and pancreas cancer.³²

Females were overrepresented in some cause of death categories, including female-specific causes^{33 34}:

- cancers of the female reproductive system (100.0%), breast cancer (99.3%), hypertensive heart and renal disease (73.2%), intestinal infectious diseases (71.1%), and bronchiectasis (70.2%).

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the most common cause of death was ischaemic heart diseases, followed by diabetes for females and suicide for males.³⁵



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- ¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019, *Life tables, states, territories and Australia, 2016–2018*, 'Table 1: Life tables, States, Territories and Australia - 2016–2018, Table 1.3 Life tables, Queensland, 2016–2018', cat. no. 3302.0.55.001.
- ² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018, *Life tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2015–2017*, 'Table 1.4 Life Tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, Queensland, 2015–2017', cat. no. 3302.0.55.003.
- ³ Queensland Health. Queensland survey analytic system (QSAS), Detailed Queensland and regional preventive health survey results, accessed 13 August 2019.
- ⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017, *General social survey, summary results, Australia, 2014*, 'Table 3.3 All persons, selected personal characteristics – by state and territory', customised data.
- ⁵ Queensland Health, 2018, *The health of Queenslanders 2018*. Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland.
- ⁶ *ibid.*
- ⁷ Consuming two or more standard drinks per day (greater than 14 per week) at risk of harm/developing health problems over a lifetime.
- ⁸ Queensland Health, 2018, *The health of Queenslanders 2018*. Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland.
- ⁹ Queensland Health, Queensland perinatal statistics.
- ¹⁰ Queensland Health, 2018, *Queensland perinatal statistics 2017*, 'Perinatal statistics 2017 annual report tables' 'Table 5.07 Mothers birthing in Queensland, 2017, smoking status by number of cigarettes after 20 weeks gestation'.
- ¹¹ Queensland Health, 2018, *The health of Queenslanders 2018*. Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland.
- ¹² *ibid.*
- ¹³ *ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018, *Births, Australia, 2017*, 'Births, summary, by state', cat. no. 3301.0.
- ¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018, *Births, Australia, 2017*, 'Fertility, by age, by state', cat. no. 3301.0.
- ¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018, *Births, Australia, 2017*, 'Confinements, by nuptiality, by state', cat. no. 3301.0.
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*
- ¹⁸ Queensland Department of Health, 2018, *Queensland perinatal statistics 2017*, 'Perinatal statistics 2017 annual report tables' 'Table 1.01 Selected variables by year - number of mothers'.
- ¹⁹ Queensland Department of Health, 2019, Queensland Hospital Admitted Patient Data Collection, prepared by Statistical Reporting and Coordination Unit, Statistical Services Branch.
- ²⁰ Queensland Health, 2018, *The health of Queenslanders 2018*. Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland, unpublished data.
- ²¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018, *National health survey: first results, 2017–18*, 'Table 22: Queensland, Table 3.3 Long-term conditions, proportion of persons – persons', cat. no. 4364.0.55.001.
- ²² *ibid.*
- ²³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018, *National health survey: first results, 2017–18*, 'Table 22: Queensland, Table 7.3 Psychological distress, proportion of persons', cat. no. 4364.0.55.001.
- ²⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019, *Causes of death, Australia, 2018*, '11. Intentional self-harm (Suicide) (Australia)', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ²⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019, *Causes of death, Australia, 2018*, '4. Underlying causes of death (Queensland), Table 4.3 Underlying cause of death, selected causes by age at death, numbers and rates, Queensland, 2019', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ²⁶ Participating in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity over five or more sessions in a week for adults.
- ²⁷ Queensland Health, 2018, *The health of Queenslanders 2018*. Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland.
- ²⁸ *ibid.*
- ²⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015, *Participation in sport and physical recreation, Australia, 2013–14*, 'Table 1 Persons participating in sport and physical recreation, states and territories, by sex and age', cat. no. 4177.0.
- ³⁰ Using International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 10th Revision blocks of categories.
- ³¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019, *Causes of death, Australia, 2018*, '4. Underlying causes of death (Queensland), Table 4.1 Underlying cause of death, all causes, Queensland, 2018', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ³² *ibid.*
- ³³ *ibid.*
- ³⁴ Using International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 10th Revision three-character categories where total deaths are greater than 30.

³⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019, *Causes of death, Australia, 2018, '12*. Deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, Table 12.5 Underlying causes of death, Leading causes by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, NSW, Qld, SA, WA and NT, 2014-2018', cat. no. 3303.0.