



Priority area

4 Women's health and wellbeing

Life expectancy

In 2015-17, females had life expectancy of 84.4 years at birth, compared with 80.0 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' or 'very good' health, with little difference between females (55.2%) and males (53.6%) in 2014.³

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 less likely to drink alcohol at 'lifetime risky'⁷ levels (12%), compared with 33% for males.⁸

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers were considerably more likely to smoke at some time during pregnancy than non-

Indigenous females (42.9% compared with 9.8% in 2016).⁹

Healthy weight and food

Females aged 18 years and over were 36% more likely than males to be in the healthy weight range in 2018, based on self-reported data.¹⁰ The difference was mainly due to the higher prevalence of self-reported overweight for males (43% compared with 30%), 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 2018.¹¹

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).¹²

Pregnancy and childbirth

Of the total 61,841 births registered in 2016, 49.1% were female babies and 50.9% were male babies, resulting in a sex ratio at birth of 103.8 male births per 100 female births.¹³

Females had an average of just under two children during their reproductive life at the fertility rate of 1.82 babies per female in 2016 – nationally 1.79.¹⁴

Females had a median age for childbirth of 30.4 years in 2016, compared with 32.4 years for the median age of father.¹⁵

The median age of Queensland's first-time mother was 29.2 years in 2016.¹⁶



Of the 61,876 mothers who gave birth in 2016¹⁷:

- about three-quarters were aged 20–34 years. A further 3.4% were teenage mothers and the remaining 20% were aged 35 years and over.
- 6.8% were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers.

Falls

Females aged 65 years and older comprised the majority of fall-related hospitalisations (65.5% in 2015–16), and fall-related deaths (57.0% in 2015).¹⁸

Mental health and wellbeing



20.1% 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 16.0% of males in 2014–15.¹⁹

Anxiety related problems were the most commonly reported mental and behavioural conditions for all Queenslanders, but at a greater rate for females (14.0%) than for males (10.7%) in 2014–15.²⁰

Females (13.0%) were more likely to experience a high to very high level of psychological distress in the previous four weeks, compared with males (10.4%) in 2014–15.²¹

- The 35–44 years age group showed the largest difference between females (15.5%) and males (9.0%) 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.²² In 2016, of total 674 suicide deaths, 22.1% were female deaths.

- the highest proportion of suicide deaths of females occurred among those 15–24 years of age, while for males it was the 35–44 years of age.²³

Physical activity



Females aged 18 years and over (56.6) were less likely than males (62.9) to be sufficiently active for health benefits²⁴ in 2018.²⁵

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% in 2018) with the 16–17 years age group being least active for both girls (25.2%) and boys (27.7%).²⁶

Just over half of females (54.5%) and males (52.9%) participated in sport and physical recreation activities in the previous 12 months in 2013–14²⁷, showing the lowest participation rate in Australia – nationally 59.4% for females and 61.0% for males.

Diseases and causes of death

The most common cause of death for both females and males was malignant neoplasms in 2016, followed by:^{28 29}

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

Females were overrepresented in some cause of death categories, including female-specific causes:^{30 31}

- Malignant neoplasms of female genital organs (100.0%), malignant neoplasm of breast (98.9%), disorders of bone density and structure (77.8%), systemic sclerosis (75.0%), and bronchiectasis (73.0%).

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the most common cause of death was ischaemic heart diseases (comprising 10.4% of female deaths and 15.7% of male deaths in 2016), followed by diabetes for females and suicide for males.³²



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- ¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018, *Life tables, states, territories and Australia, 2015-2017*, 'Table 1: Life tables, States, Territories and Australia - 2014-2016, Table 1.3 Life tables, Queensland, 2014-2016', 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 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015, *General social survey, summary results, Australia, 2014*, 'Table 3.3 All persons, selected personal characteristics – by state and territory', customised data.
- ⁴ *ibid.*
- 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, 2017, *Queensland perinatal statistics 2016*, 'Perinatal statistics 2016 annual report tables' 'Table 5.07 Mothers birthing in Queensland, 2016, smoking status by number of cigarettes after 20 weeks gestation'.
- ¹⁰ Queensland Health, 2018, *The health of Queenslanders 2018*. Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland.
- ¹¹ *ibid.*
- ¹² Queensland Health, 2018, *The health of Queenslanders 2018*. Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland.
- ¹³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017, *Births, Australia, 2016*, 'Births, summary, by state', cat. no. 3301.0.
- ¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017, *Births, Australia, 2016*, 'Fertility, by age, by state', cat. no. 3301.0.
- ¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017, *Births, Australia, 2016*, 'Confinements, by nuptiality, by state', cat. no. 3301.0.
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*
- ¹⁷ Queensland Health, 2018, *The health of Queenslanders 2018*, Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland.
- ¹⁸ *ibid.*, unpublished data.
- ¹⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015, *National health survey: first results, 2014-15*, 'Table 22: Queensland, Table 3.3 Long-term conditions, proportion of persons – persons', cat. no. 4364.0.55.001.
- ²⁰ *ibid.*
- ²¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *National health survey: first results, 2014-15*, 'Table 22: Queensland, Table 7.3 Psychological distress, proportion of persons', cat. no. 4364.0.55.001.
- ²² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017, *Cause of death, Australia, 2016*, '11. Intentional self-harm (Suicide) (Australia)', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ²³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017, *Cause of death, Australia, 2016*, '4. Underlying causes of death (Queensland), Table 4.3 Underlying cause of death, selected causes by age at death, numbers and rates, Queensland, 2016', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ²⁴ Participating in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity over five or more sessions in a week for adults.
- ²⁵ Queensland Health, 2018, *The health of Queenslanders 2018*. Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland.
- ²⁶ *ibid.*
- ²⁷ 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.
- ²⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017, *Cause of death, Australia, 2016*, '4. Underlying causes of death (Queensland), Table 4.1 Underlying cause of death, all causes, Queensland, 2016', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ²⁹ Using International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 10th Revision blocks of categories.
- ³⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017, *Cause of death, Australia, 2016*, '4. Underlying causes of death (Queensland), Table 4.1 Underlying cause of death, all causes, Queensland, 2016', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ³¹ Using International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 10th Revision three-character categories where total deaths are greater than 30.
- ³² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017, *Cause of death, Australia, 2016*, '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, 2012-2016', cat. no. 3303.0.