



Priority area

4 Women's health and wellbeing

Life expectancy

In the three years of 2017–2019, females had a life expectancy of 84.8 years at birth, compared with 80.3 years for males.¹

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females had life expectancy of 76.4 years at birth in 2015–2017, higher than that of 72.0 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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

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

non-Indigenous females (42.5% compared with 8.9% in 2018).⁹

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.¹⁰ 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 2018.¹¹

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 61,931 births registered in 2018, 48.5% were female babies and 51.5% were male babies, resulting in a sex ratio at birth of 106.1 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 1.76 babies per female in 2018 – nationally 1.74.¹⁴

Females had a median age for childbirth of 30.5 years in 2018, compared with 32.6 years for the median age of father.¹⁵

The median age of Queensland's first-time mother was 29.2 years in 2018.¹⁶



Of the 59,644 mothers who gave birth in 2018¹⁷:

- about three-quarters (75.6%) were aged 20–34 years. A further 3.0% were teenage mothers and the remaining 21.4% were aged 35 years and over.
- 7.0% were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Falls

Females aged 65 years and older comprised the majority of fall-related hospitalisations (63.5% in 2018-19)¹⁸, and fall-related deaths (57.0% in 2015).¹⁹

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 2017–18.²⁰

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 2017–18.²¹

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 2017–18²²:

- 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.²³ In 2019, of total 784 suicide deaths, 24.6% were female deaths.

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

Physical activity



Females aged 18 years and over were less likely than males (**56.6%** compared with **62.9%**) to be sufficiently active for health benefits²⁵ in 2018.²⁶

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 2018.²⁷

Just over half of females (54.5%) and males (52.9%) participated in sport and physical recreation activities in the previous 12 months in 2013–14²⁸, 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 2019, followed by^{29 30}:

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

Females were overrepresented in some cause of death categories, including female-specific causes^{31 32}:

- Malignant neoplasms of female genital organs (100.0%), malignant neoplasm of breast (99.1%), disorders of bone density and structure (80.9%), Systemic sclerosis (80.6%), and Malignant neoplasm of gallbladder (78.9%).

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.³³



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- ¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020, *Life tables, states, territories and Australia, 2017–2019*, 'Table 1: Life tables, States, Territories and Australia - 2017–2019, Table 1.3 Life tables, Queensland, 2017–2019', 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, 2019, *Queensland perinatal statistics 2018*, 'Perinatal statistics 2018 annual report tables' 'Table 5.07 Mothers birthing in Queensland, 2017, 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 *ibid.*
- ¹³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019, *Births, Australia, 2018*, 'Births, summary, by state', cat. no. 3301.0.
- ¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019, *Births, Australia, 2018*, 'Fertility, by age, by state', cat. no. 3301.0.
- ¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019, *Births, Australia, 2018*, 'Confinements, by nuptiality, by state', cat. no. 3301.0.
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*
- ¹⁷ Queensland Department of Health, 2019, *Queensland perinatal statistics 2018*, 'Perinatal statistics 2018 annual report tables' 'Table 1.01 Selected variables by year - number of mothers'.
- ¹⁸ Queensland Department of Health, 2020, Queensland Hospital Admitted Patient Data Collection, prepared by Statistical Reporting and Coordination Unit, Statistical Services Branch.
- ¹⁹ Queensland Health, 2018, *The health of Queenslanders 2018*. Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland, unpublished data.
- ²⁰ 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.
- ²¹ *ibid.*
- ²² 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.
- ²³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020, *Causes of death, Australia, 2019*, '11. Intentional self-harm (Suicide) (Australia)', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ²⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020, *Causes of death, Australia, 2020*, '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.
- ²⁵ Participating in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity over five or more sessions in a week for adults.
- ²⁶ Queensland Health, 2018, *The health of Queenslanders 2018*. Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland.
- ²⁷ *ibid.*
- ²⁸ 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.
- ²⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020, *Causes of death, Australia, 2019*, '4. Underlying causes of death (Queensland), Table 4.1 Underlying cause of death, all causes, Queensland, 2019', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ³⁰ Using International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 10th Revision blocks of categories.
- ³¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020, *Causes of death, Australia, 2019*, '4. Underlying causes of death (Queensland), Table 4.1 Underlying cause of death, all causes, Queensland, 2019', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ³² Using International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 10th Revision three-character categories where total deaths are greater than 30.
- ³³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020, *Causes of death, Australia, 2019*, '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, 2015-2019', cat. no. 3303.0.