

August 2021

ABS Census Data and Survey Data Summary

Women in regional and remote Australia

Datasets used:

- 2016 Census: Persons Place of Usual Residence
- 2016 Census: Estimating Homelessness
- 2016 Personal Safety Survey

Definitions used:

Rural Australia: Rural Australia is the sum/combination of four ABS Remoteness Area classifications - Inner Regional, Outer Regional, Remote and Very Remote.

Women of working age: Women of working age is defined as an adult up to [approximate] pension age, that being ages 18 to 65 inclusive.

Related useful resources:

- [2016 Census QuickStats: Australia \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au): Online tool which produces summary statistics for Australia from the 2016 Census. The tool can be searched for specific LGA's and remoteness area classifications to generate local data.
- ABS 2016 Census Dictionary: [2901.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Census Dictionary, 2016 \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au)

Summary of variables and data files:

No.	Variable	Data File(s)
1	Demographics	1. Demographics.xlsx
2	Employment status	1. Employment.xlsx
3	Unpaid care	1. Unpaid care.xlsx
4	Volunteerism	1. Volunteerism.xlsx
5	Level of education	1. Education.xlsx
6	Income	1. Income.xlsx

7	Domestic violence	1. Domestic violence.xlsx 2. 2015 CFCA Practitioner Resource 'Domestic and family violence in regional, rural and remote communities'
8	Happiness	1. Happiness.xlsx 2. http://www.acqol.com.au/uploads/surveys/survey-037-appendices.pdf
9	Access to health services	1. https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/rural-and-remote-health
10	Mortality/Cause of death	1. https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/rural-and-remote-health
11	Homelessness	1. Homelessness.xlsx 2. Census of Population and Housing: Understanding the Census & Census Data

1. DEMOGRAPHICS

Distribution of Women within Australia

- Of all Australian women (11,835,754), 72% reside in major cities and 28% in rural Australia. 51% of the adult population living in rural Australia are female. Of Australian women who live in rural Australia, 64% live in inner regional areas, 29% in outer regional areas, 4% in remote areas and 3% in very remote areas (Census, 2016).
- There are a total of 3,370,760 women and girls of any age living in rural Australia (2,160,522 in inner regional Australia; 987,647 in outer regional Australia; 135,379 in remote Australia; and 87,212 in very remote Australia; Census, 2016).
- There are a total of 2,626,856 adult women (aged 18 or older) living in rural Australia (1,693,231 in inner regional Australia; 767,838 in outer regional Australia; 102,300 in remote Australia; and 63,487 in very remote Australia; Census, 2016).

Age distribution of women in rural Australia

	Age in Years							
	<18	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	>80
Major Cities	21%	17%	15%	14%	12%	10%	6%	5%
All Rural	22%	13%	12%	13%	14%	13%	8%	5%
Inner Regional	22%	13%	11%	13%	14%	13%	9%	6%
Outer Regional	22%	13%	12%	13%	14%	13%	8%	5%
Remote	24%	15%	15%	14%	14%	10%	5%	3%
Very Remote	27%	18%	15%	13%	13%	8%	3%	2%

First Nations Peoples

- There are a total of 202,657 women in rural Australia who identify as either Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:
 - 77,851 in inner regional Australia
 - 64,410 in outer regional Australia
 - 20,199 in remote Australia
 - 40,197 in very remote Australia; Census, 2016).

- There are a total of 122,471 adult women (aged 18 or older) identifying as either Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living in rural Australia:
 - 45,095 in inner regional Australia
 - 38,680 in outer regional Australia
 - 12,902 in remote Australia
 - 25,794 in very remote Australia; Census, 2016).



Registered Marital Status

- **Rural Australia:** 50% Married, 11% Divorced, 10% Widowed, 26% Never Married.
- **Major Cities:** 49% Married, 10% Divorced, 8% Widowed, 30% Never Married.

1. EMPLOYMENT

- The majority (63%) of women of working age (18 years to 65 years) in rural Australia are employed in any work (63% in either full or part-time capacity, Census, 2016). This is comparable although slightly lower than the employment rate of women of the same age range in major cities within Australia (65%).
- Of women of working age in rural Australia who indicated they are employed, approximately equal numbers worked in a part-time capacity (47%) as worked in a full-time capacity (47%) (5% employed away from work, 2% employed hours of work not stated, Census, 2016).
- There are comparable numbers of women of working age who are unemployed and looking for any work in rural Australia (4%) versus women of working age in major cities in Australia (5%, Census, 2016).
- There is a slightly higher number of unemployed women looking for work in very remote Australia (6%) versus all other regional areas (4% respectively for inner and outer regional areas and remote areas), and the rate of women unemployed in very remote areas is also higher than in major cities.
- The top five industries for women of working age in rural Australia are:
 1. Health Care and Social Assistance: 287,742 (14%)
 2. Education and Training: 180,372 (9%)
 3. Retail Trade: 151,109 (8%)
 4. Accommodation and Food Services: 104,732 (5%)
 5. Public Administration and Safety: 88,547 (4%)
- More women of working age are employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing in rural Australia (2.7%, 53,475 women) than in major cities (0.3%, 14,665 women). However, women still represent a small proportion of all workers employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing in rural Australia (29% female, 71% male, Census, 2016).
- There are more women of working age in major cities in Australia employed in professional, scientific, or technical services (5.2%, 281,810 women) versus in rural Australia (2.8%, 56,635 women; Census, 2016).
- There are also more women of working age in major cities in Australia employed in Financial and Insurance Services (3%, 167,039) versus in rural Australia (1%, 27,768; Census, 2016).

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2. UNPAID CARE

Childcare

- Ten percent (10%) or 255,770 adult women (18 or older) in rural Australia provided unpaid childcare for someone else's child or children (Census, 2016).
- Half as many men, that is 5% (133,095) of adult men aged 18 or older in rural Australia provided unpaid childcare for someone else's child or children (Census, 2016).
- Similar proportions of men and women engage in unpaid childcare in major cities versus rural Australia (Census, 2016).

Care for someone with a disability

- Fourteen percent (14%) or 380,659 adult women (18 or older) in rural Australia provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability (Census, 2016).
- Ten percent (10%) or 246,631 adult men in rural Australia provided unpaid care to a person with a disability (that is 134,028 fewer men providing unpaid care compared to women; Census, 2016).

3. VOLUNTEERISM

- One fifth of all women who live in rural Australia volunteer (20%) which is a slightly higher rate than women in major cities (16%). Within the different rural areas, slightly more women volunteer in remote areas (22%) than in inner regional (20%), outer regional (21%) or very remote areas (17%) (Census, 2016).

5. EDUCATION

Highest level of Education achieved

- Less women in rural Australia (1.8%, 60,126 women) have a postgraduate degree compared to women living in major cities (4.7%, 396,339).
- Less women in rural Australia have a bachelor's degree (9.6%, 324,171 women) compared to women in major cities (15.4%, 1,305,391 women).
- More women in rural Australia (29%) have year 10 or above of secondary education as their highest level of educational attainment compared to major cities (26.5%; Census 2016).

Current student status

- The majority of women of any age in rural Australia are not current students (70% or 2,356,205 women):
 - 17% of women (584,607) in rural Australia are currently studying full-time
 - 5% of women (151,895) in rural Australia are currently studying full-time
 - These statistics are comparable to women in major cities

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- When filtered to adult women (aged 18 and over) in rural Australia, 84% or 2,195,307 are not currently studying:
 - 3% of adult women (89,269) in rural Australia are currently studying full-time
 - 4% of adult women (109,926) in rural Australia are currently studying part-time
 - More adult women in major cities are studying full-time (8%)
 - Slightly fewer adult men in rural Australia are studying full-time (2%) or part-time (2% ; Census 2016)

6. INCOME

Weekly Income (individual)

- The weighted median of personal gross weekly income for women living in rural areas is \$575 per week and \$950 per week for men (Personal Safety Survey, 2016).
- The weighted median hours usually worked each week for women living in rural areas is 33.7 hours, which is less than the weighted median hours usually worked each week by men living in rural areas (40 hours; Personal Safety Survey, 2016).
- The weighted median of personal gross weekly income for women living in major cities is \$700 per week and \$1050 per week for men (Personal Safety Survey, 2016).

Financial Stress – Cash Flow

- Higher rates of women in rural Australia reported cash flow problems in the last 12 months compared to women in major cities in Australia:
 - 13% of women in rural Australia reported they could not pay an essential services bill on time (i.e., gas, electricity, phone) compared to 9% of women in major cities.
 - Twice as many women in rural areas pawned or sold something because they needed the cash (4% versus 2%).
 - However, the largest proportion of women in both major cities and rural areas indicated that none of the cash flow problems listed affected them in the past 12 months (81% and 77% respectively; Personal Safety Survey, 2016).

Financial Stress – Raise Emergency Money

- The majority of women in major cities (82%) and rural Australia (80%) reported they could raise \$2000 of emergency money within a week if needed, however, slightly more women in rural Australia (17%) believed they could not raise \$2000 of emergency funds than women in major cities (13%; Personal Safety Survey, 2016).

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7. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Intimate Partner Violence Prevalence

- Women in rural Australia are more likely to experience intimate partner violence than women in major cities:
 - 27% of women living in rural Australia have experienced violence from an intimate partner since the age of 15 (compared to 21% of women living in a capital city; Personal Safety Survey, 2016).

Access to Social Support from Outside the Home

- Women in rural Australia report generally comparable ability to get support in a time of crisis from outside of the household, with the exception being women who live in very remote areas within Australia (Personal Safety Survey, 2016):
 - 96% major cities
 - 97% inner regional
 - 96% outer regional
 - 96% remote
 - 0% very remote

8. HAPPINESS/WELLBEING

- Weighted median overall life satisfaction of women in rural Australia is high (median = 8.0) which is the same value as the weighted median overall life satisfaction for women in major cities (scale of 0 to 10; Personal Safety Survey, 2016).
- The ABS data tells the same story as more recent data from the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index Survey November 2020 Appendices 37.0 Subjective wellbeing during COVID-19
<http://www.acqol.com.au/uploads/surveys/survey-037-appendices.pdf>:

Table 15 Descriptive statistics for Personal Wellbeing Index by geographical remoteness (Frequencies, Proportions, Means, Standard Deviations and Normative Ranges)

Remoteness	PWI				Normative Range (Remoteness)	
	N	%	M	SD	Lower	Upper
Metropolitan	1377	73.09	76.21	12.63	73.71	76.25
Regional	482	25.58	76.95	12.27	74.51	78.27
Remote	25	1.33	79.83	12.03	72.94	80.11
<i>Sub-total</i>	1884	100.00				
Missing	81					
Total	1965					

ANOVA:
 $F(2, 1881) = 1.56, p = .211$

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9. ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

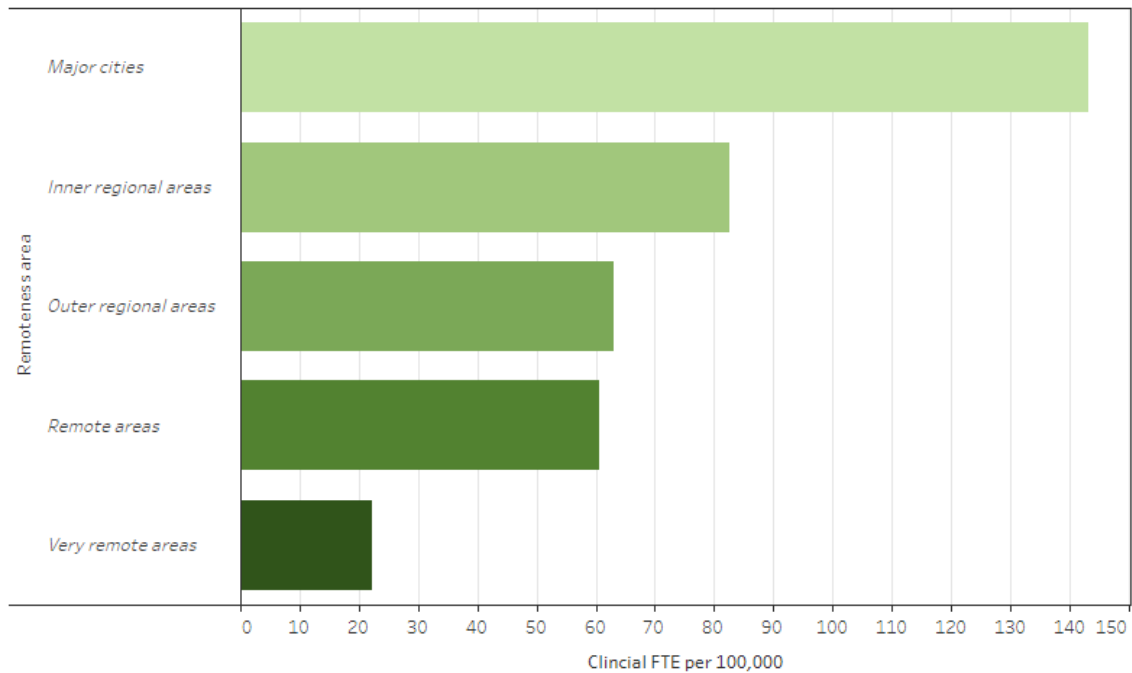
- There are substantially fewer health professionals outside of major cities. Figure 3 available at this link: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/rural-and-remote-health-is-an-interactive> figure that you can use to view the rate of full-time equivalent practitioners for a range of health professions per 100,000 population in major cities versus inner regional areas, outer regional areas, remote, areas and very remote areas.

Figure Data Table

Figure 3: Employed health professionals, clinical full-time equivalent (FTE) rate, by remoteness area, 2018

Type of health professional

Specialists



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10. MORTALITY AND CAUSE OF DEATH

- Both men and women living in rural Australia are more likely to die at a younger age than people living in major cities (<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/rural-and-remote-health>, Data source: AIHW 2019e. [National Mortality Database](#). Findings based on our unit record analysis. Canberra: AIHW).
- In 2018, the median age at death for women living in rural and remote areas is younger than for women in major cities:
 - Major Cities: 85 years
 - Inner Regional: 84 years
 - Outer Regional: 83 years
 - Remote: 80 years
 - Very remote: 70 years
- Women living in very remote areas have a mortality rate 1.7 times higher than women in major cities. Women in outer and remote areas have a mortality rate 1.2 times as high as those living in major cities, and women in inner regional areas have a mortality rate 1.1 times as high as those living in major cities.

11. HOMELESSNESS

- The ABS defines homelessness as: A person is homeless if they do not have suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement is in a dwelling that is inadequate; has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.
- There were 116,426 people classified as being homeless on Census night in Australia (Census, 2016).
- One percent of women living in rural Australia were classified as homeless on Census night, that's 19,118 women (Census, 2016). 41,227 people were homeless in rural Australia on Census night. 46% of homeless people in rural Australia were women (54% male, 22,108 men).
- For women living in rural Australia who were homeless on Census night:
 - 9% (1,666): Improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
 - 15% (2,865): Supported accommodation for the homeless
 - 17% (3,200): Staying temporarily with other households
 - 5% (1,002): Living in boarding houses
 - 1% (160): Living in other temporary lodgings
 - 53% (10,225): Living in 'severely' crowded dwellings (Census, 2016)