



Priority area

4 Women's health and wellbeing

General health status

The majority of females considered themselves to be in 'excellent' or 'very good' health, with little difference between females (55.2%) and males (53.6%) in 2014.¹

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.²

Life expectancy

In 2013-15, females had life expectancy of 84.3 years at birth, compared with 80.0 years for males.³

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females had life expectancy of 74.4 years at birth in 2010-12 — higher than that of 68.7 years for Indigenous males, but 8.6 years lower than 83.0 years for non-Indigenous females.⁴

Pregnancy and childbirth

Of total 61,745 births registered in 2015, 48.4% were female babies and 51.6% were male babies, resulting in a sex ratio at birth of 106.5 male births per 100 female births.⁵

Females had an average of just under two children during their reproductive life at the fertility rate of 1.85 babies per woman in 2015 — nationally 1.81.⁶

Females had a median age for childbirth of 30.2 years in 2015, compared with 32.3 years for the median age of father.⁷

The median age of Queensland's first-time mother was 29.1 years in 2015.⁸

Of the 60,942 mothers who gave birth in 2015,

- about three quarters (76.6%) were aged 20-34 years.⁹ A further 3.9% were teenage mothers and the remaining 19.5% were aged 35 years and over.
- 6.5% were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers.¹⁰

Falls

Females aged 65 years and older comprised the majority of falls-related hospitalisations (66.2% in 2013-14), and falls-related deaths (52.2% in 2012) in this age group.¹¹

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 to 16.0% of males in 2014-15¹²:



20.1% of females and **16.0%** of males had mental and behaviour health problems in 2014-15.

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 2014-15.¹³

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 2014-15.¹⁴

- The 35-44 years age group showed the largest difference between women (15.5%) and men (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.¹⁵ In 2015, of total 746 suicide deaths, 23.9% were female deaths.

- the highest proportion of suicide deaths of females occurred among those 45-54 years of age, while for males it was the 35-44 years of age.¹⁶

Smoking and drinking

Females (10.5%) were less likely to smoke daily, compared to males (13.5%) in 2016.¹⁷

Daily smoking rates were highest in the 35-54 years with male rates peaking at 35-44 years (17.2%) and females at 45-54 years (14.0%).¹⁸

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers were considerably more likely to smoke at some time during pregnancy than non-Indigenous women (43.3% compared with 10.3% in 2015).¹⁹

Females were less likely to drink alcohol at risky levels. 11.0% of females, compared with 31.5% for males, drank alcohol at the level of the lifetime risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury²⁰ in 2016.²¹

Physical activity



Females (57.3%) were less likely than males (65.3%) to be sufficiently active for health benefits²² in 2016.²³

Girls were less likely than boys to be active every day (42.0% and 46.8% in 2016) with the 16-17 years age group being least active for both girls (25.2%) and boys (27.7%).²⁴

Just over half of females (54.5%) and males (52.9%) participated in sport and physical recreation activities in the previous 12 months in 2013-14²⁵, showing the lowest participation rate in Australia — nationally 59.4% for females and 61.0% for males.

Healthy weight and food

Females were more likely to be in the healthy weight range at 45.2%, compared with 31.8% of males, and less likely to be overweight or obese at 50.8%, compared with 67.2% of males in 2016.²⁶

Females were more likely than males to consume the recommended daily serves of fruit (62.3% of females compared with 52.2% of males) and vegetables (10.8% of females compared with 2.6% of males) in 2016.²⁷

Diseases and causes of death

The most specific cause of death for both women and men was heart disease in 2015, followed by²⁸:

- stroke, dementias, chronic lower respiratory diseases (including asthma, bronchitis), lung cancer, and breast cancer for females
- lung cancer, stroke, chronic lower respiratory diseases, prostate cancer, and dementias for males.

Females were overrepresented in some cause of death categories, including female-specific causes²⁹:

- ovarian cancer (100%), breast cancer (99.1%), bone density and structure (87.0%), systemic connective tissue (70.5%), Alzheimer's disease (65.2%), heart failure (65.2%), dementias (62.3%), and stroke (59.1%).

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, heart diseases was the most common cause of death (comprising 10.1% of female deaths and 15.7% of male deaths in 2015), followed by diabetes for females and suicide for males.³⁰

Cancer screening

Females in the target age groups for cancer screening programs participated in cervical screening (at 56% of those aged 20-69 years in the two years 2013 to 2014) and breast screening (at 57.6% of those aged 50-69 years in the two years 2013 to 2014) — nationally 57% and 54% respectively.³¹



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- ¹ 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.
- ² *ibid.*
- ³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *Life tables, states, territories and Australia, 2013-15*, 'Table 1.3 Life tables, Queensland, 2013-2015', cat. no. 3302.0.55.001.
- ⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *Life tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2010-2012*, cat. no. 3302.0.55.003.
- ⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *Births, Australia, 2015*, 'Births, summary, by state', cat. no. 3301.0.
- ⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *Births, Australia, 2015*, 'Fertility, by age, by state', cat. no. 3301.0.
- ⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *Births, Australia, 2015*, 'Confinements, by nuptiality, by state', cat. no. 3301.0.
- ⁸ *ibid.*
- ⁹ Queensland Health, 2016, *Queensland prenatal statistics 2015*, 'Perinatal statistics 2015 annual report tables'.
- ¹⁰ *ibid.*
- ¹¹ Queensland Health, 2017, Hospitalisations and deaths due to falls, comparison of 0-85+ and 65+ by sex, Queensland Hospital Admitted Patient Data Collection (QHAPDC), Queensland Health Cause of Death Unit Record File, Australian Coordinating Registry customised data by Health and Wellbeing Policy Team, Epidemiology Group, Queensland Health.
- ¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *National health survey: first results, 2014-15 — Queensland*, 'Table 3.3 Long-term conditions, proportion of persons — persons', cat. no. 4364.0.55.001.
- ¹³ *ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *National health survey: first results, 2014-15 — Queensland*, 'Table 7.3 Psychological distress, proportion of persons', cat. no. 4364.0.55.001.
- ¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *Cause of death, Australia, 2015*, '11. Intentional self-harm (Suicide) (Australia)', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *Cause of death, Australia, 2015*, '4. Underlying causes of death (Queensland), Table 4.3 Underlying cause of death, selected causes by age at death, numbers and rates, Queensland, 2015', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ¹⁷ Department of Health, 2016, *Preventive health surveys 2016: Queensland*, Queensland preventive health data and trends.
- ¹⁸ *ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Queensland Health, 2016, *Queensland prenatal statistics 2015*, 'Perinatal statistics 2015 annual report tables' 'Table 5.07 Mothers birthing in Queensland, 2015, smoking status by number of cigarettes after 20 weeks gestation'.
- ²⁰ Consuming two or more standard drinks per day (greater than 14 per week) at risk of harm/developing health problems over a lifetime.
- ²¹ Department of Health, 2016, *Preventive health surveys 2016: Queensland*, Queensland preventive health data and trends.
- ²² Participating in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity over five or more sessions in a week for adults.
- ²³ Department of Health, 2016, *Preventive health surveys 2016: Queensland*, Queensland preventive health data and trends.
- ²⁴ *ibid.*
- ²⁵ 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.
- ²⁶ Department of Health, 2016, *Preventive health surveys 2016: Queensland*, Queensland preventive health data and trends.
- ²⁷ *ibid.*
- ²⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *Cause of death, Australia, 2015*, '4. Underlying causes of death (Queensland), Table 4.1 Underlying cause of death, all causes, Queensland, 2015', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ²⁹ *ibid.*
- ³⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *Cause of death, Australia, 2015*, '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, 2011-2015', cat. no. 3303.0.
- ³¹ Queensland Health, 2016, *The health of Queenslanders 2016*, Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland.