



YOUNG PEOPLE IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE, 2018-2019: A SNAPSHOT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE:

To utilise the available administrative data to describe the characteristics and geographical distribution of young people in permanent residential aged care (RAC) in Australia in 2018-2019.

DATASETS:

The most recent data available from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) National Aged Care Data Clearinghouse was obtained. The statistics within these datasets include de-identified aggregated data from the 2018-2019 financial year from Residential Aged Care, Transition Care Programme and Home Care Packages. The primary dataset uses data from Data Request R1920_3728, a customised request for the Summer Foundation, along with publicly available data from the GEN website. The data is broken down by age and jurisdiction.

KEY FINDINGS:

Across Australia, there were 5,606 young people, under the age of 65, living in permanent RAC as of 30 June 2019. They accounted for 3.1% of all residents in permanent RAC. The number of young people residing in RAC decreased by 7.3% (442 people) compared to the previous financial year, ending on 30 June 2018. While the number of young people living in permanent RAC varied across Australian states and territories, the proportion per state was similar to the proportion of the Australian population residing in that state. On average, the population-standardised prevalence of young people in permanent RAC was 27.5 per 100,000 population aged under 65 years.

As of 30 June 2019, 7.3% of people under 65 years who were living in permanent RAC identified as Indigenous, which was more than twice as many as would have been expected given that only 3.1% of people under 65 years in the Australian population identified as Indigenous.

While most young people living in permanent RAC have a disability and thus should be eligible to be NDIS participants, over a third (36.6%) were not active participants in the NDIS at 30 June 2019.

In the 2018-2019 financial year, 2,110 young people were admitted to permanent RAC across Australia, accounting for 3.0% of all admissions to permanent RAC. On average, approximately 42 young Australians entered permanent RAC each week, with 1 of these being aged less than 45 years. Adjusting the number of total admissions to remove those who had been transferred from another RAC facility showed that the 'real' number of admissions to permanent RAC was 1,836. However, given that the number of first admissions to permanent RAC in 2018-2019 was 1,709 people, there were 127 young people who were readmitted to permanent RAC during the financial year.

There were 1,611 young people who exited from permanent RAC in 2018-2019, yet this was 499 less than the total number of admissions to permanent RAC in the same period. Of those who exited permanent RAC, approximately 1 in 9 (11.7%) returned to the community, while more than half died (58.6%). Of the remaining young people who exited permanent RAC, 4.7% exited to hospital, 17.0% moved to another residential care facility, and 8.0% left for other reasons. In contrast, in the subgroup of young people aged less than 45 years who exited from permanent RAC (45 people), approximately 1 in 6 returned to the community (17.8%), while 37.8% exited due to death.

CONCLUSIONS:

The data included in the analysis was collected largely for administration and funding purposes by the Australian Government. The data is useful for understanding the characteristics and geographical distribution of young people in RAC in Australia; however, it has limitations for informing the design and development of more appropriate housing and support options and the prevention of new admissions to RAC.

The issue of young people living in permanent RAC is a complex issue, evidenced by considerable movement in and out of the aged care system by young people. Focusing on preventing new admissions to RAC has the potential to make the greatest shift; however, substantial effort must be given to enabling young people to exit from RAC with the supports they require to live successfully in the community.

ABBREVIATIONS & DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
HCP	Home Care Package
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
TCP	Transition Care Programme
RAC	Residential aged care
SDA	Specialist Disability Accommodation
Young person	A person aged less than 65 years

TERM	AUSTRALIAN STATE/TERRITORY
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
Tas	Tasmania
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Australian Government has committed to minimising the number of younger people living in residential aged care (RAC) facilities. The *Younger People in Residential Aged Care Action Plan* (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2019), released in March 2019, aims to reduce the number of younger people aged under 65 years living in aged care by helping them access more age-appropriate housing and support options. In response to the Interim Report from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (2019) on 25 November 2019, the Australian Government strengthened its initial commitment and revised the targets for the Younger People in Residential Aged Care Action Plan (Prime Minister of Australia, 2019).

The revised targets seek to ensure that, apart from in exceptional circumstances, there are:

1. No people under the age of 65 entering RAC by 2022
2. No people under the age of 45 living in RAC by 2022
3. No people under the age of 65 living in RAC by 2025

Young people enter RAC largely due to the lack of suitable housing and support options. There is a significant shortage of housing and support options that provide the level and type of support needed by people with disability and complex needs (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2019). Ensuring eligible participants have the ability to exercise choice and control and, if they desire, are able to move from RAC facilities, is a priority for the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2020). As of 30 June 2020, there were 4,360 Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) properties enrolled in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and 14,982 NDIS participants with SDA funding in their plans (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2020). It is estimated that approximately 28,000 participants will require SDA when the NDIS is fully rolled out (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2019).

As of 30 June 2020, 3,690 individuals in permanent RAC under the age of 65 years were active participants in the NDIS, including 127 people under the age of 45 (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2020). The number of NDIS participants who lived in permanent RAC increased considerably between 2017 and 2019 due to young people living in RAC being progressively enrolled as NDIS participants (see Figure 1.1). However, the number of NDIS enrolments of young people living in permanent RAC has almost plateaued in the 2019-2020 financial year (see Figure 1.1; Sep-19 to June-20). This number of NDIS participants living in permanent RAC changes in response to 2 things: (i) NDIS participants entering or leaving RAC; and (ii) people in RAC being enrolled in or leaving the NDIS.

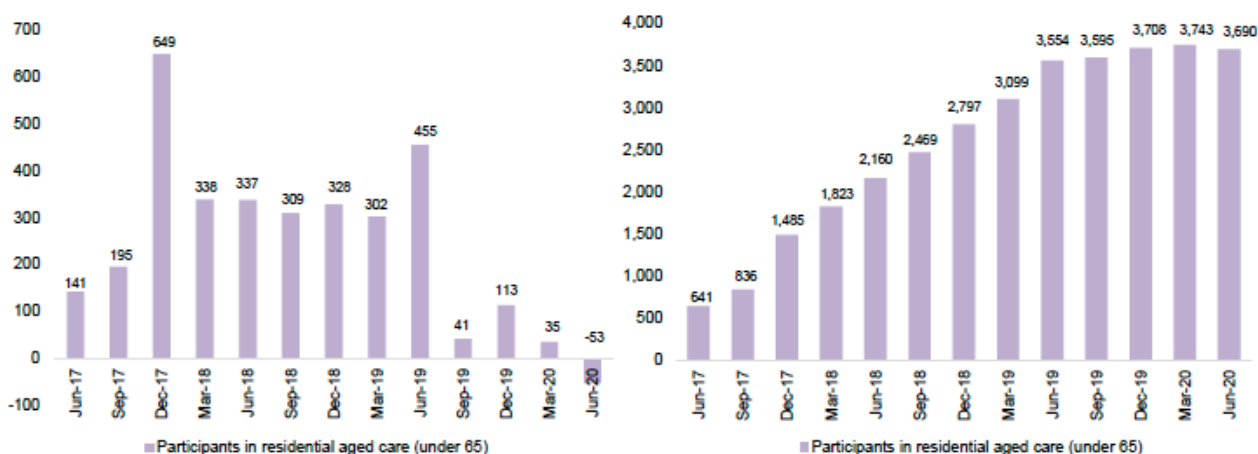


Figure 1.1. Young people in permanent RAC who were active NDIS participants. The graphs show the change (left) and total (right) number of young people in RAC who were active NDIS participants for each quarter (Figure E.7, taken from National Disability Insurance Agency, 2020).

The NDIA, as part of the Joint Agency Task Force, which also includes the Department of Social Services and the Department of Health, has committed to developing a strategy that builds on the Younger People in Residential Aged Care Action Plan to decrease the number of young people in aged care (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2020). Early data indicates that the approach may be working, since even though the number of active NDIS participants who live in permanent RAC has not increased considerably in the past financial year, the number of young people in aged care appears to be decreasing (see Figure 1.2). This recent decrease is of considerable interest given that there was little change in the numbers of young people in aged care over the decade from 2008 to 2018 (Brown *et al.*, 2020).



Figure 1.2. Comparison of the number of people under 65 years living in permanent RAC who are NDIS participants to the total number of people under 65 years living in permanent RAC (Figure 10, taken from National Disability Insurance Agency, 2020).

As of 30 September 2019, only 88 people in permanent RAC under the age of 65, who were active NDIS participants, had been approved for and had SDA funding included in their plans (Senate Community Affairs Committee, 2019). To achieve further reductions of the number of younger people living in permanent RAC, active NDIS participants require improved access to SDA funding. Furthermore, younger people with disability living in aged care often have complex health needs, thus accessing proactive primary health supports is essential to enabling them to leave aged care (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2019).

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

In order to change the current systems that lead to younger people entering and remaining in aged care, we need to understand as much as we can about this population. This report analysed the 2018-2019 administrative data available for aged care in Australia to create more information about people under 65 years in aged care.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PRIMARY DATASET

The most recent data available from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) National Aged Care Data Clearinghouse (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, no date) was obtained for this report. The statistics within these datasets include de-identified aggregated data from the 2018-2019 financial year from Residential Aged Care, Transition Care Programme and Home Care Packages.

The primary dataset includes 2 different sources of data. Firstly, the Summer Foundation submitted a customised request to AIHW, which was provided as Data Request R1920_3728. Secondly, publicly available data was sourced from AIHW, which included GEN data: People using aged care¹ (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020d) and GEN data: Admissions into aged care² (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020a, 2020b). The data is broken down by age and jurisdiction, and uses terminology according to the GEN Data Dictionary (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020c). Unless otherwise specified, the data reported is based on the primary dataset.

The primary dataset was analysed to extract, summarise and compare key information on young people in aged care regarding their characteristics and geographical distribution. When required, footnotes are used to clarify data transformations.

2.2 ADDITIONAL DATASETS

To provide context for the aged care data, additional Australian statistical datasets were analysed as required, including datasets from the AIHW National Aged Care Data Clearinghouse and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. When data from these additional datasets are reported in this document, footnotes are used to indicate a reference for that dataset.

2.3 INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The purpose of this report was to summarise key findings from the data. It does not seek to interpret the data. It is left to the reader to interpret the data within the context of their interest.

¹ <https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Resources/Access-data/2020/March/GEN-data-People-using-aged-care>

² <https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Resources/Access-data/2020/August/GEN-data-Admissions-into-aged-care>

3. PERMANENT RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE

3.1 YOUNG PEOPLE RESIDING IN PERMANENT RAC

3.1.1 NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE RESIDING IN PERMANENT RAC

Across Australia, there were 5,606 young people, under the age of 65, living in permanent RAC as of 30 June 2019. They accounted for 3.1% of all residents in permanent RAC. The number of young people residing in permanent RAC decreased by 7.3% (442 people) compared to the previous financial year, ending on 30 June 2018³. Table 3.1 provides a breakdown of the number of young people in permanent RAC in each jurisdiction.

Table 3.1. Number of young people in permanent RAC at 30 June 2019, by age and jurisdiction

Age	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
20-24 years	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
25-29 years	4	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
30-34 years	21	8	7	3	0	2	1	0	0
35-39 years	41	11	19	4	1	2	4	0	0
40-44 years	94	34	27	21	3	7	1	0	1
45-49 years	279	98	94	49	18	14	5	0	1
50-54 years	630	206	203	115	49	34	16	2	5
55-59 years	1,491	521	413	290	119	94	26	10	18
60-64 years	3,043	1,065	812	586	253	211	73	20	23
Less than 45 years	163	56	55	29	5	11	6	0	1
Less than 60 years	2,563	881	765	483	191	153	53	12	25
Less than 65 years	5,606	1,946	1,577	1,069	444	364	126	32	48

³ Data obtained from AIHW Aged Care Data Clearinghouse, Data Request R1819_3140; data is from the 2017-2018 financial year.

Figure 3.1 shows the contribution of each specific age group to the total population of young people in permanent RAC. It can be seen that older individuals, particularly those aged between 55-64 years, constituted a substantial proportion of residents in permanent RAC, with the number of residents increasing as age increased. This pattern is consistent across the states and territories.

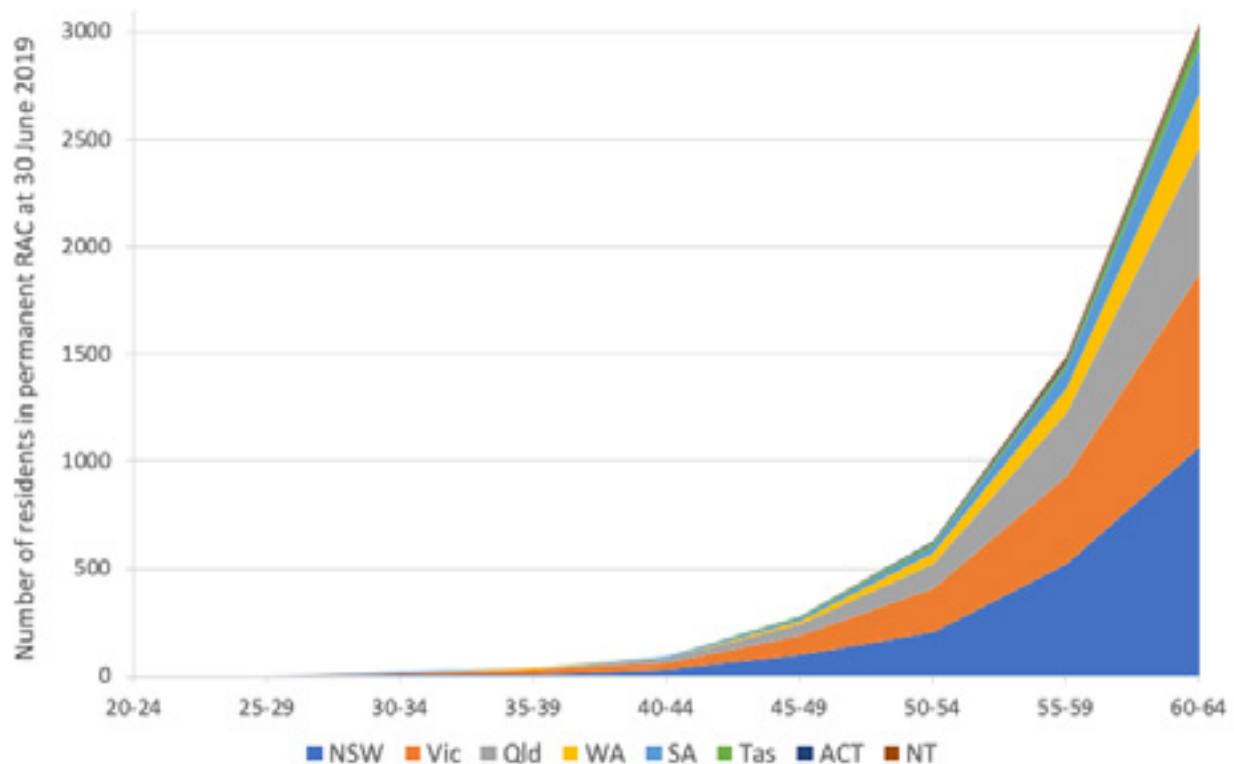


Figure 3.1. Number of young people in permanent RAC at 30 June 2019, by age at 30 June 2019, broken down by jurisdiction. Within each age group, the total number of residents was summed for all jurisdictions, showing the total number of permanent residents for a given age group, as well as the proportion contributed by each jurisdiction.

While the number of young people living in permanent RAC varied across Australian states and territories, the proportion per state was similar to that of the proportion of the Australian population residing in that state. On average, the population-standardised prevalence of young people in permanent RAC was 27.5 per 100,000 population aged under 65 years. The exception to this was the ACT, which had a substantially lower population-standardised prevalence of young people in permanent RAC. See Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Young people in permanent RAC compared to Australian population estimates at 30 June 2019, by jurisdiction

	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Number of young people in permanent RAC	5,606	1,946	1,577	1,069	444	364	126	32	48
% of young people in permanent RAC by jurisdiction	100.0%	34.7%	28.1%	19.1%	7.9%	6.5%	2.2%	0.6%	0.9%
Number of people aged under 65 years ('000) ⁴	20,354	6,460	5,333	4,089	2,130	1,361	408	354	216
% of population aged under 65 years by jurisdiction	100.0%	31.7%	26.2%	20.1%	10.5%	6.7%	2.0%	1.7%	1.1%
Population-standardised prevalence (young people in permanent RAC per 100,000 population aged under 65 years) ⁵	27.5	30.1	29.6	26.1	20.8	26.7	30.9	9.0	22.3

3.1.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN PERMANENT RAC

3.1.2.1 SEX

Just over half (54.2%) of young people in permanent RAC at 30 June 2019 were male. However, in South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory, the proportion of males was just under half. See Table 3.3 for a breakdown of the sex of young people in permanent RAC by jurisdiction.

Table 3.3. Sex of young people in permanent RAC at 30 June 2019, by jurisdiction

Sex	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Number of male young people in permanent RAC	3,041	1,097	854	558	257	178	58	16	23
% of young people in permanent RAC who were male	54.2%	56.4%	54.2%	52.2%	57.9%	48.9%	46.0%	50.0%	47.9%
Number of female young people in permanent RAC	2,565	849	723	511	187	186	68	16	25
% of young people in permanent RAC who were female	45.8%	43.6%	45.8%	47.8%	42.1%	51.1%	54.0%	50.0%	52.1%

⁴ Data obtained from Quarterly Population Estimates by State/Territory, Sex and Age, as of June 2019, http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/index.aspx?DatasetCode=ERP_QUARTERLY, people aged less than 65 years.

⁵ Calculated as the number of young people in permanent RAC per 100,000 population aged less than 65 years.

3.1.2.2 INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Across Australia, 7.3% of people under 65 years who were living in permanent RAC as of 30 June 2019 identified as Indigenous. The proportion of young people in permanent RAC who identified as Indigenous was substantially higher in Western Australia and the Northern Territory, with 20.5% and 79.2%, respectively; however, it was substantially lower in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT. Compared to the proportion of young people who identified as Indigenous within each state, according to the 2016 Australian Census⁶, there was a substantially higher proportion of young people who identified as Indigenous within permanent RAC than would be expected. See Table 3.4 and Figure 3.2.

Table 3.4. Young people in permanent RAC who identified as Indigenous at 30 June 2019, by jurisdiction

	Australia	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Number of young people in permanent RAC who identified as Indigenous	411	120	21	126	91	12	2	1	38
% of young people in permanent RAC who identified as Indigenous ⁷	7.3%	6.2%	1.3%	11.8%	20.5%	3.3%	1.6%	3.1%	79.2%
% of population aged under 65 years who identified as Indigenous ⁸	3.1%	3.3%	0.9%	4.5%	3.4%	2.4%	5.4%	1.8%	26.4%

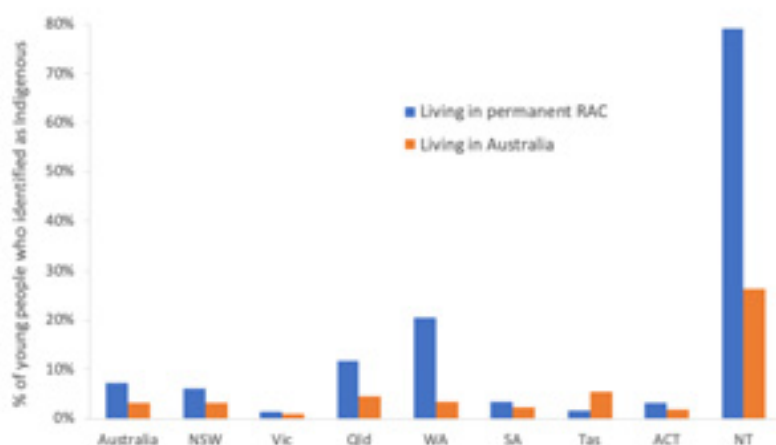


Figure 3.2. Comparison of the proportions of young people who identified as Indigenous who were living in permanent RAC vs those in the Australian population.

⁶ 2016 Australian Census data, Indigenous Status, extracted from <http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/>, People > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples > Census 2016 by SA2+.

⁷ Proportion of people under 65 years in permanent RAC who identified as Indigenous, compared to the total number of young people in RAC.

⁸ Proportion of people under 65 years who identified as Indigenous within the Australian population compared to the total number of people under 65 years; based on the 2016 Australian Census. Data extracted from <http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/>, People > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples > Census 2016 by SA2+.

3.1.2.3 COUNTRY OF BIRTH

Approximately 4 out of 5 (81.1%) young people in permanent RAC at 30 June 2019 were born in Australia. Of the remaining, 6.3% were born in another English-speaking country, while 11.3% were born in non-English-speaking countries. It is noteworthy that there were some differences in proportions based on jurisdiction, with some states or territories having higher or lower percentages for different countries of birth. See Table 3.5 for a breakdown of the country of birth of young people in permanent RAC by jurisdiction.

Table 3.5. Country of birth of young people in permanent RAC at 30 June 2019, by jurisdiction

Country of birth	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Australia	81.1%	79.3%	80.6%	85.1%	75.0%	84.3%	91.3%	75.0%	91.7%
Other English-speaking countries	6.3%	5.1%	4.4%	8.0%	13.7%	8.5%	2.4%	9.4%	2.1%
Non-English-speaking countries	11.3%	13.8%	14.3%	5.6%	10.8%	4.9%	4.8%	15.6%	0.0%
Unknown	1.3%	1.7%	0.7%	1.3%	0.5%	2.2%	1.6%	0.0%	6.3%

3.1.2.4 PREFERRED LANGUAGE

The majority (93.6%) of young people in permanent RAC at 30 June 2019 had English as their preferred language, with only 5.4% having another preferred language. This pattern was fairly similar in most jurisdictions with the exception of the Northern Territory, where just over one-third (35.4%) of young people in permanent RAC preferred a language other than English. This is likely due to the fact that 79.2% of young people in permanent RAC in the Northern Territory identified as Indigenous (see Table 3.4). See Table 3.6 for a breakdown of the preferred language of young people in permanent RAC by jurisdiction.

Table 3.6. Preferred language of young people in permanent RAC at 30 June 2019, by jurisdiction

Preferred language	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
English	93.6%	91.7%	94.1%	97.2%	92.1%	96.4%	97.6%	93.8%	56.3%
Other languages	5.4%	7.3%	5.3%	1.6%	6.8%	2.5%	1.6%	6.3%	35.4%
Not stated / Inadequately described	1.0%	1.0%	0.6%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	0.8%	0.0%	8.3%

3.1.3 NDIS ELIGIBILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN PERMANENT RAC

Most young people living in permanent RAC have a disability and thus should be eligible to be NDIS participants. However, when comparing the number of young people living in permanent RAC at 30 June 2019 to the number of young people who were active NDIS participants⁹, it was found that over a third (36.6%) of young people living in permanent RAC were not active participants in the NDIS. See Table 3.7.

It is noteworthy that the proportion of young people living in permanent RAC who were enrolled in the NDIS varied considerably between jurisdictions. Western Australia and Tasmania both had particularly low enrolment rates, only 18.5% and 27.8%, respectively. In contrast, New South Wales and the Northern Territory had higher levels of enrolment (76.8% and 79.2%, respectively).

Table 3.7. Number of young people in permanent RAC who were NDIS participants at 30 June 2019, by jurisdiction

	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Number of young people in permanent RAC who were active NDIS participants at 30 June 2019 ¹⁰	3,554	1,495	947	705	82	230	35	21	38
Number of young people in permanent RAC at 30 June 2019 ¹¹	5,606	1,946	1,577	1,069	444	364	126	32	48
Percentage of young people in permanent RAC who were NDIS participants	63.4%	76.8%	60.1%	65.9%	18.5%	63.2%	27.8%	65.6%	79.2%

⁹ Data obtained from Figures E.7, F.3, G.3, H.3, I.3, J.3, K.3, L.3 and M.3 of the NDIS Quarterly Report to Disability Ministers, 30 June 2020 (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2020).

¹⁰ Data obtained from Figures E.7, F.3, G.3, H.3, I.3, J.3, K.3, L.3 and M.3 of the NDIS Quarterly Report to Disability Ministers, 30 June 2020 (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2020).

¹¹ From Table 2.1.

3.2 ADMISSIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE INTO PERMANENT RAC

3.2.1 TOTAL ADMISSIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE INTO PERMANENT RAC

In the 2018-2019 financial year, 2,110 young people were admitted to permanent RAC across Australia, accounting for 3.0% of all admissions to permanent RAC. See Table 3.8 for the admissions to permanent RAC, broken down by jurisdiction.

Table 3.8. Number of young people admitted to permanent RAC in 2018-2019, by age and jurisdiction

Age	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
20-24 years	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
25-29 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30-34 years	6	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	0
35-39 years	14	4	9	0	1	0	0	0	0
40-44 years	25	10	12	2	0	1	0	0	0
45-49 years	99	33	36	13	10	4	3	0	0
50-54 years	235	73	71	38	29	10	9	2	3
55-59 years	542	184	168	89	59	23	10	3	6
60-64 years	1,188	376	329	254	107	69	34	11	8
Less than 45 years	46	15	24	4	1	2	0	0	0
Less than 60 years	922	305	299	144	99	39	22	5	9
Less than 65 years	2,110	681	628	398	206	108	56	16	17

On average, approximately 42 young Australians entered permanent RAC each week, with 1 of these being aged less than 45 years. Table 3.9 shows the average weekly admissions to permanent RAC, broken down by jurisdiction.

Table 3.9. Average weekly admissions to permanent RAC in 2018-2019, by age and jurisdiction

Age	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Less than 45 years	0.9	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Less than 60 years	18.4	6.1	6.0	2.9	2.0	0.8	0.4	0.1	0.2
Less than 65 years	42.2	13.6	12.6	8.0	4.1	2.2	1.1	0.3	0.3

3.2.2 REAL ADMISSIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE INTO PERMANENT RAC (NOT THE RESULT OF A TRANSFER)

The admissions data reported above includes all admissions to permanent RAC within the 2018-2019 financial year, including admissions resulting from people transferring from one residential care facility to another (see Section 3.3 for more information on exits from RAC). This artificially inflates the actual number of admissions to permanent RAC within the financial year. To gain a better understanding of the real admissions to RAC, the total admissions were adjusted to remove the number of people who were recorded as exiting permanent RAC to another residential care facility within the same period, based on the procedure outlined in Brown et al (2020). The 'real' admissions to permanent RAC are shown in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10. Number of 'real' admissions¹² to permanent RAC in 2018-2019, by age and jurisdiction

Age	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Less than 45 years	39	15	21	1	1	1	0	0	0
Less than 60 years	789	253	259	118	92	35	21	5	6
Less than 65 years	1,836	576	551	343	191	93	52	16	14

Based on this adjustment, the average number of 'real' admissions to permanent RAC was, on average, approximately 35 young Australians per week, with 1 of these aged less than 45 years. Table 3.11 shows the average weekly 'real' admissions to permanent RAC, broken down by jurisdiction.

Table 3.11. Average weekly 'real' admissions¹³ to permanent RAC in 2018-2019, by age and jurisdiction

Age	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Less than 45 years	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Less than 60 years	15.2	4.9	5.0	2.3	1.8	0.7	0.4	0.1	0.1
Less than 65 years	35.3	11.1	10.6	6.6	3.7	1.8	1.0	0.3	0.3

¹² 'Real' admissions to permanent RAC is calculated as the total number of admissions to permanent RAC minus the number of exits to 'other residential care' within the same period.

¹³ The data in this table are calculated from those reported in Table 3.10 for 'real' admissions.

3.2.3 FIRST ADMISSIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE INTO PERMANENT RAC

In the 2018-2019 financial year, 1,709 young people were admitted to permanent RAC across Australia for the first time, accounting for 81.0% of all admissions of young people to permanent RAC. It is noteworthy that for the young people admitted to permanent RAC in Tasmania, a greater proportion (91.1%) were first admissions. See Table 3.12.

Table 3.12. First admissions of young people aged under 65 years into permanent RAC in 2018-2019, by jurisdiction

Admission type	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Number of first admissions to permanent RAC	1,709	536	530	316	159	89	51	14	14
Total number of admissions to permanent RAC	2,110	681	628	398	206	108	56	16	17
First admissions to permanent RAC as % of all admissions	81.0%	78.7%	84.4%	79.4%	77.2%	82.4%	91.1%	87.5%	82.4%

By comparing the number of first admissions to permanent RAC to the number of 'real' admissions to permanent RAC, i.e. the number of admissions minus the number of transfers from another RAC, it can be seen there were 127 young people across Australia who were readmitted to permanent RAC in 2018-2019. See Table 3.13.

Table 3.13. Readmissions of young people aged under 65 years into permanent RAC in 2018-2019, by jurisdiction

Admission type	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Admissions to permanent RAC minus transfers to other respite care ¹⁴	1,836	576	551	343	191	93	52	16	14
Number of first admissions to permanent RAC	1,709	536	530	316	159	89	51	14	14
Number of readmissions to permanent RAC ¹⁵	127	40	21	27	32	4	1	2	0

¹⁴ From Table 3.10.

¹⁵ Readmissions were calculated as the number of 'real' admissions minus the number of 'first' admissions.

3.2.4 ADMISSIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE INTO PERMANENT RAC FROM RESPITE CARE

While respite care is designed to be a temporary stay, 598 young people were transferred from respite care to permanent RAC in 2018-2019, accounting for 28.3% of permanent RAC admissions in people under 65 years. It is noteworthy that there was considerable variation between Australian states with regards to the proportion of young people who entered permanent RAC via respite care. In particular, New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory had higher proportions of people under 65 years entering permanent RAC via respite RAC (42.9%, 45.4% and 41.2%, respectively); in contrast, the proportions were lower for Victoria, Western Australia and the ACT (17.7%, 14.1%, and 18.8%, respectively). See Table 3.14.

Table 3.14. Transfers of young people from respite care to permanent RAC in 2018-2019, by jurisdiction

	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Transfers of young people from respite care to permanent RAC	598	292	111	93	29	49	14	3	7
Admissions of young people to permanent RAC (from any source)	2,110	681	628	398	206	108	56	16	17
% of young people who entered permanent RAC via respite care	28.3%	42.9%	17.7%	23.4%	14.1%	45.4%	25.0%	18.8%	41.2%

3.3 EXITS OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM PERMANENT RAC

In the 2018-2019 financial year, 1,611 young people exited from permanent RAC, which was 499 less than the number of admissions to permanent RAC in the same period. This means that 23.6% more young people were admitted to permanent RAC than those who left. See Table 3.15.

The higher number of admissions than exits of young people from permanent RAC is of note because the total number of young people residing in permanent RAC across Australia decreased by 7.3% from 30 June 2018 to 30 June 2019 (see Section 3.1). This difference is likely due to 'ageing out' of people who were aged 64 years in the previous year, thus turning 65 years in the current year, and therefore no longer remaining part of the under 65 years cohort examined in this dataset. This conclusion is supported by the fact that there were 827 people aged 64 years at 30 June 2019, who will either age out of the cohort in the next financial year or exit permanent RAC for another reason.

Table 3.15. Exits vs admissions of young people from permanent RAC in 2018-2019, by jurisdiction

	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Number of young people admitted to permanent RAC	2,110	681	628	398	206	108	56	16	17
Number of young people exiting permanent RAC	1,611	542	403	335	158	101	49	12	11
Difference between admissions and exits ¹⁶	499	139	225	63	48	7	7	4	6

Of the 1,611 young people who exited permanent RAC in 2018-2019, approximately 1 in 9 (11.7%) returned to the community, while more than half died (58.6%). Of the remaining young people who exited permanent RAC, 4.7% exited to hospital, 17.0% moved to another residential care facility, and 8.0% left for other reasons. In contrast, in the subgroup of young people aged less than 45 years who exited from permanent RAC (45 people), approximately 1 in 6 returned to the community (17.8%), while 37.8% exited due to death. See Table 3.16 and Figure 3.3.

Table 3.16. Reason for young people exiting permanent RAC in 2018-2019, by age group

Reason for exit	Less than 45 years		Less than 65 years	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Death	17	37.8%	944	58.6%
Hospital	4	8.9%	76	4.7%
Other residential care	7	15.6%	274	17.0%
Community	8	17.8%	188	11.7%
Other	9	20.0%	129	8.0%
Total	45	100.0%	1,611	100.0%

¹⁶ The difference between admissions and exits was calculated as admissions minus exits; a positive number indicates that more people were admitted to permanent RAC than those who left. Note: this does not take into account individuals who aged out of the cohort during 2018-2019.

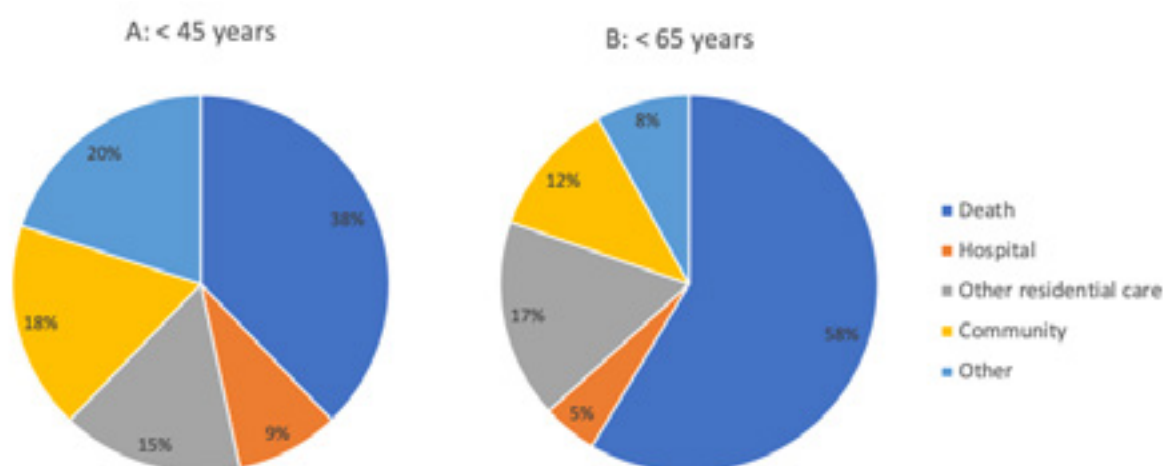


Figure 3.3. Comparison of the reason for young people exiting permanent RAC in 2018-2019. A: young people aged less than 45 years. B: young people aged less than 65 years.

There was considerable variability between jurisdictions with regard to the reason why young people exited permanent RAC. For instance, the proportion of young people who died was higher in South Australia and the ACT (68.3% and 66.7%, respectively) than the national average. Exiting to hospital occurred at almost twice the rate of the national average in the ACT (8.3%). Transferring to other residential care occurred at a higher rate in the Northern Territory (27.3%) than in other states. Returning to the community occurred more frequently in New South Wales, Tasmania and the ACT (15.3%, 16.3% and 25.0%, respectively) than in other states. See Table 3.17 and Figure 3.4.

Table 3.17. Reason for young people exiting a permanent RAC facility in 2018-2019, by jurisdiction

Reason for exiting RAC	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Death	944	289	242	208	94	69	29	8	5
Hospital	76	28	19	16	9	2	1	1	0
Other residential care	274	105	77	55	15	15	4	0	3
Community	188	83	33	36	15	9	8	3	1
Other	129	37	32	20	25	6	7	0	2
Total	1,611	542	403	335	158	101	49	12	11

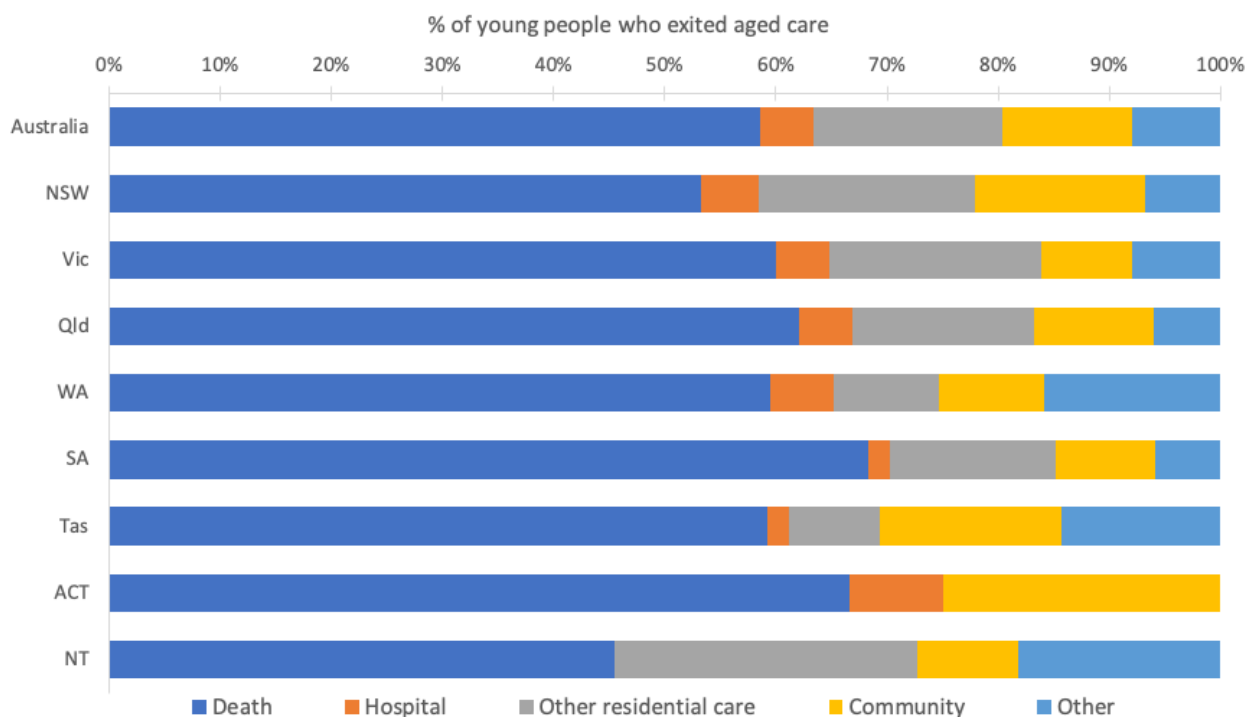


Figure 3.4. Comparison between jurisdictions of the reason for young people exiting permanent RAC in 2018-2019. Values are expressed as a percentage of the total number of young people who exited permanent RAC within a given jurisdiction.

4. OTHER AGED CARE PROGRAMS

In addition to permanent RAC, people aged under 65 used 3 other aged care programs: Transition Care Programme (TCP) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020c); Home Care Packages (HCP) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020a); and respite care (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020b). These programs provide help to people who need assistance, yet do not require the full and permanent level of care in permanent RAC. TCP provides time-limited, goal-oriented and therapy-focused packages of services to older people after a hospital stay and is designed to improve a client's independence and functioning as an alternative to permanent RAC. TCP can be provided in a range of locations including the person's home, in a RAC facility or in hospital. In contrast, HCPs are designed to provide at home support for older people who have complex needs so that they can stay at home for longer, including personal care, nursing services and allied health services, as well as domestic assistance and connection to community services. Finally, respite care in residential care facilities is designed to support older people who require ongoing and continuous carer support, allowing people and their carer to have a break for a few days to a few weeks.

In 2018-2019, across Australia, 890 young people were admitted to a TCP, 1,005 people were admitted to an HCP, and 2,208 people were admitted to respite care. The proportion of admissions per jurisdiction to each of these other aged care programs varied considerably and was rarely consistent with the proportion of young Australians residing in the respective jurisdiction. See Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Admissions of young people to other aged care programs in 2018-2019, by jurisdiction

Other Aged Care Program	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Number of TCP admissions	890	135	378	293	43	20	19	0	2
% of TCP admissions by jurisdiction	100.0%	15.2%	42.5%	32.9%	4.8%	2.2%	2.1%	0.0%	0.2%
Number of HCP admissions	1,005	437	141	226	94	45	22	8	20
% of HCP admissions by jurisdiction	100.0%	43.5%	14.0%	22.5%	9.4%	4.5%	2.2%	0.8%	2.0%
Number of respite care admissions	2,208	872	487	369	162	186	84	8	40
% of respite care admissions by jurisdiction	100.0%	39.5%	22.1%	16.7%	7.3%	8.4%	3.8%	0.4%	1.8%
% of population aged under 65 years by jurisdiction ¹⁷	100.0%	31.7%	26.2%	20.1%	10.5%	6.7%	2.0%	1.7%	1.1%

¹⁷ See Table 3.2 for population estimates of people aged under 65 years by jurisdiction.

Compared to the proportion of young Australians per state, the proportion of TCP admissions per state was lower than expected for New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia, the ACT and the Northern Territory, and higher than expected for Victoria and Queensland. Compared to the proportion of young Australians per state, the proportion of HCP admissions per state was lower than expected for Victoria and the ACT, and higher than expected for New South Wales and the Northern Territory. Finally, compared to the proportion of young Australians per state, the proportion of respite care admissions per state was a little lower than expected for Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and the ACT, and a little higher than expected for New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory. See Figure 4.1.

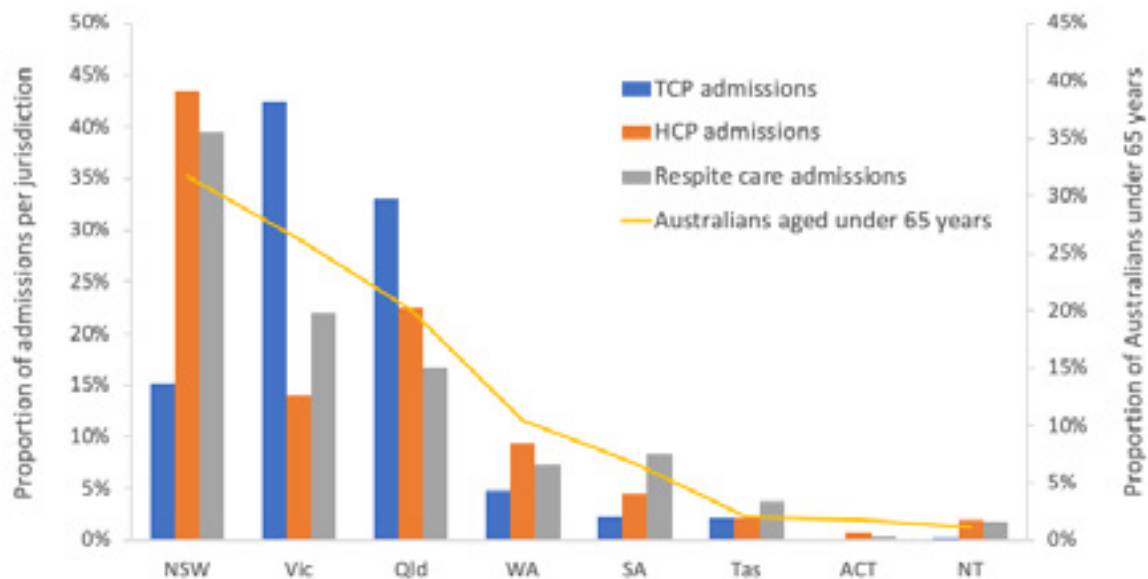


Figure 4.1. Proportion of admissions of young people to each aged care program, by jurisdiction, in 2018-2019, compared to the proportion of the Australian population under 65 years that resides in that jurisdiction.

4.1 TRANSITION CARE PROGRAMME

In 2018-2019, 890 people under the age of 65 were admitted to a TCP, accounting for 3.7% of all TCP admissions. Of the young people admitted to a TCP in 2018-2019, 77.4% were admitted to a TCP for the first time, indicating that 22.6% of young people were admitted to a TCP for at least the second time. See Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Admissions of young people to a Transition Care Programme in 2018-2019, by jurisdiction

TCP admissions	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Number of TCP admissions	890	135	378	293	43	20	19	0	2
Number of first admissions to TCP	689	112	290	218	34	15	18	0	2
First TCP admissions as a % of all TCP admissions	77.4%	83.0%	76.7%	74.4%	79.1%	75.0%	94.7%	N/A	100.0%

4.2 HOME CARE PACKAGES

In 2018-2019, a total of 1,005 admissions to an HCP were provided to young people, accounting for 2.1% of all HCP admissions. There are 4 levels of HCP, based on care needs: Level 1 – basic; Level 2 – low; Level 3 – intermediate; Level 4 – high care (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020a). Of the HCP admissions, 65.1% were for Levels 1 & 2, while 34.9% were for Levels 3 & 4. It is noteworthy that there was a higher frequency of admissions to HCP Levels 3 & 4 in Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania (53.1%, 53.2% and 40.9%, respectively). In contrast, there were much lower admissions to HCP Levels 3 & 4 in New South Wales, South Australia, the ACT and the Northern Territory (24.3%, 26.7%, 25.0% and 10.0%, respectively). See Table 4.3.

Of the young people admitted to an HCP in 2018-2019, 88.3% were admitted to an HCP for the first time, indicating that 11.7% of young people were admitted to an HCP for at least the second time.

Table 4.3. Admissions of young people to a Home Care Package in 2018-2019, by jurisdiction

HCP admissions ¹⁸	Australia	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Number of HCP admissions, all levels	1,005	437	141	226	94	45	22	8	20
Number of HCP admissions, Levels 1 & 2	654	331	96	106	44	33	13	6	18
% of HCP admissions, Levels 1 & 2	65.1%	75.7%	68.1%	46.9%	46.8%	73.3%	59.1%	75.0%	90.0%
Number of HCP admissions, Levels 3 & 4	351	106	45	120	50	12	9	2	2
% of HCP admissions, Levels 3 & 4	34.9%	24.3%	31.9%	53.1%	53.2%	26.7%	40.9%	25.0%	10.0%
Number of first admissions to HCP	887	408	125	182	81	39	19	8	14
First HCP admissions as a % of all HCP admissions	88.3%	93.4%	88.7%	80.5%	86.2%	86.7%	86.4%	100.0%	70.0%

¹⁸ There were a small number of HCP admissions where 'other' was listed as the jurisdiction; these are included in the total number of HCP for Australia and thus are why the Australian values are slightly higher than the sum of the states and territories.

4.3 RESPITE CARE

In 2018-2019, 2,208 young people were admitted to respite care, accounting for 2.6% of all respite admissions. For about half (53.0%) of the young people admitted to respite care in 2017-2018, it was their first admission, indicating that 47.0% of young people were admitted to respite care for at least the second time. A noteworthy exception occurred in South Australia where 64.5% of young people were admitted to respite care for the first time in 2017-2018. See Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Admissions of young people to respite care in 2018-2019, by jurisdiction

Respite admissions	Australia	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Number of respite care admissions	2,208	872	487	369	162	186	84	8	40
Number of first admissions to respite care	1,170	512	227	190	74	120	28	3	16
First respite care admissions as a % of all respite care admissions	53.0%	58.7%	46.6%	51.5%	45.7%	64.5%	33.3%	37.5%	40.0%

5. CONCLUSION

The data included in the analysis was collected largely for administration and funding purposes by the Australian Government. While this data provides some useful insights, it should be noted that the data has limitations for informing interventions. These limitations extend to informing the design and development of more appropriate housing and support options, and the prevention of new admissions to RAC. Nonetheless, this data is valuable for understanding the characteristics and geographical distribution of young people in RAC in Australia. Knowledge about the current population of younger people in aged care is critical since it can inform organisations and government bodies that are working to create the systems change needed to resolve the issue of young people in aged care in Australia.

Of particular interest in the 2018-2019 aged care data was that the number of young people under the age of 65 living in permanent RAC decreased by 7.3% (442 people) compared to the previous year. While it remains to be seen if this decrease will continue, given that the number of young people in aged care did not change substantially in the previous 10-year period (Brown *et al.*, 2020), initial data reported by the NDIA suggests that it may (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2020). Creating a sustained decrease in the number of young people living in permanent RAC requires both reducing the number of young people being admitted into permanent RAC, while also increasing the number who exit from RAC.

With regards to admissions, on average, approximately 42 young Australians were admitted to permanent RAC facilities each week, with 1 of these being aged less than 45 years. This however includes people being transferred between RAC facilities, as well as first time admissions to permanent RAC and readmissions. Indeed, after adjusting for transfers between RAC facilities and subtracting first-time admissions to permanent RAC, it was noted that 127 young people were readmitted to permanent RAC during the 2018-2019 financial year.

Also of concern are the patterns seen in the numbers of young people exiting from RAC. There were 1,611 young people who exited from permanent RAC in 2018-2019, yet this was 499 fewer than the total number of admissions to permanent RAC in the same period. This may seem contradictory given that the total number of young people in RAC at 30 June 2019 decreased by 442 people compared to the previous year; however, this difference relates to people aged 64 years ageing out of the cohort in subsequent years. Out of the people who did manage to exit RAC before ageing out, an alarming 58.6% (944 people) died. Another 4.7% (76 people) exited to hospital, and 8.0% (129 people) exited to unknown destinations. There was also a considerable shuffling of young people between RAC facilities, with 17.0% (274 people) classed as exiting to another RAC facility, which means that they were transferred to another permanent RAC facility and remained within the system. Only 11.7% (188 people) exited RAC to return to the community. Given that 127 people were readmitted to RAC during 2018-2019, this suggests that some exits from RAC are temporary.

Another noteworthy finding arose within the data from other aged care programs, where 1,005 young people accessed HCPs and at least some of the 890 young people who accessed TCPs would have been using them within their homes. It was also concerning that 2,208 young people needed to access respite residential care, particularly given that 598 young people were admitted to permanent RAC following a stay in respite care. While it is anticipated that access to these programs for young people will be phased out and replaced by services funded by the NDIS, considerable service developments may be required.

The issue of young people living in permanent RAC is thus a complex issue, evidenced by considerable movement in and out of the aged care system by young people. Focusing on preventing new admissions to RAC has the potential to make the greatest shift; however, substantial effort must also be given to enabling young people to exit from RAC with the supports they need to return to community living.

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