



**A SNAPSHOT
OF THE AGEING
POPULATION IN
PENRITH**

PENRITH

INTRODUCTION

The Australian population is ageing, which means older Australians are making up an increasingly larger proportion of the total population. This increase is seen in most Local Government Areas (LGAs) across Australia, including Penrith.

The 2016 Census data shows a demographic shift as the proportion of older people in Penrith draws closer to the national average. Not only is the ageing population in Penrith growing, it is also becoming more culturally diverse. This shift provides the possibility for government and services to further foster opportunities for older people with infrastructure and community projects.

This snapshot explores these demographic changes and shows the increasing diversity of older people across the city. It includes valuable information about older people's participation in the community, need for assistance, access to aged care services and risk of social isolation. These risks are particularly pertinent now in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community service providers, planners, policy makers, businesses, researchers and members of the public can use the information in this snapshot to work with older people to ensure we have an age-friendly city into the future through the creation of activities and events celebrating the diversity of older people in the city, increasing access to services and improving support for older people to stay healthy and well.

Community and residential aged care providers could also benefit from the information gathered to support the implementation of Cultural Diversity Action Plans to reflect the growing number of older people from diverse backgrounds.

Throughout this publication, the term "older people" is used to refer to people aged 65 years and over and for people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds who are aged 50 and over.

PENRITH CITY'S AGEING POPULATION

The most recent Census in 2016 showed the number of older people in the city was 22,911, making up 12% of the total population, which was a relatively low proportion of the older population compared to NSW (16.3%) and Australia (15.7%). However, there was a significant increase in people aged 65 and over between 2006 and 2016 in Penrith City. The change from 14,036 to 22,911 people in that age group meant an increase of +63%. This was one of largest increases in the number of older people amongst Western Sydney LGAs (Westir, 2019).

The number of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 39, 901 over the next 15 years, when it is predicted to make up 15.5% of the Penrith population in 2036 (Penrith City Council Population Forecast, 2020).

FIGURE 1: AGEING POPULATION IN PENRITH

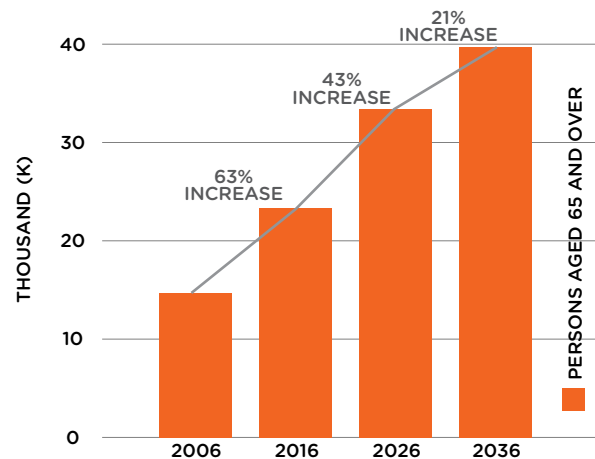


Table 1 shows that more than half of the older people in Penrith were aged between 65 and 75 between 2006 and 2016. They were also the fastest growing age group (+85%) in this period, followed by those aged 85 years and over (+62%), 55-64 year olds (+31%), and 75-84 year olds (+28%) (Penrith Community Profile, 2018). These different age groups amongst older people have differing needs and interests and require different services and planning responses.

There were similar proportions of men (47%) and women (52%) among people aged 65 and over, although the percentage of women was slightly higher than men.

TABLE 1: PEOPLE AGED 65 AND OVER IN PENRITH

AGE GROUP	2006		2016		CHANGE 2006 TO 2016	
	NUMBERS	%	NUMBERS	%	INCREASE	%
65-74 years	7,799	56%	14,463	63%	+6,664	85%
75-84 years	4,805	34%	6,132	27%	+1,327	28%
85 years and over	1,432	10%	2,316	10%	+884	62%
TOTAL	14,036		22,911		+8,875	63%

It is generally considered that decreasing birth rates, falling death rates and increased life expectancy due to public health and medical interventions have contributed to the trend of rapid ageing populations in developed countries (WHO, 2010), which we can assume has happened in Penrith, too.

Migration in the past and present may have also impacted the current age structure in Penrith, particularly because of the “baby boomers”, born between the mid-1940’s and mid-1960’s, who settled in the new suburbs of the city in the 1970’s and 80’s (Penrith Planning for Ageing Community Strategy 2010+) and are now aged 55-75 years old.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older people has more than doubled

Generally, ageing-related health conditions can disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at a younger age than non-Indigenous Australians. This reflects the vulnerability to generally poorer health compared with other Australians (AIHW, 2018). For this reason, Indigenous people over 50 years are statistically defined as “older people”.

Penrith’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of older people has increased in recent years from 1% in 2006 to 1.8% in 2016, an increase from 395 people to 1,042. This proportion sits slightly higher than Western Sydney (1%), Greater Sydney (0.8%), and NSW (1.5%).

FIGURE 2: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POPULATION AGED 50 AND OVER IN PENRITH

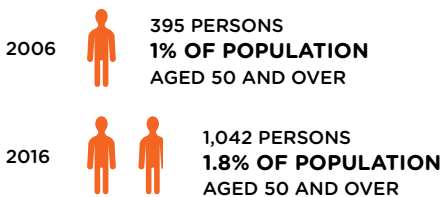
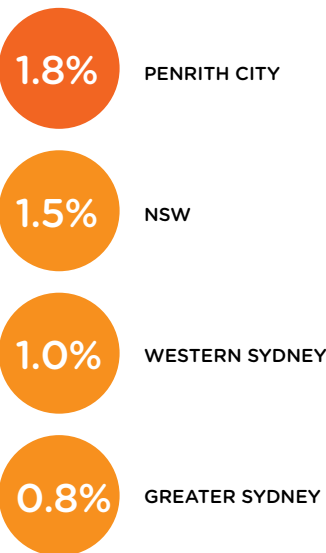


FIGURE 3: PROPORTION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PERSONS IN POPULATION AGED 50 AND OVER, PENRITH LGA AND COMPARATIVE REGIONS



CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

There has been an increase in older people from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds

Cultural diversity in Penrith's older population has also grown significantly between 2006 and 2016. During this time, the number of older people who spoke a language other than English at home had increased from 2,048 (15%) to 4,655 (20%). This was an increase of 2,617 people, equivalent to a growth of +128%.

Italian, Maltese, Greek, and Arabic are the top languages other than English spoken among older people. Figure 5 shows that some of the top language groups from 2006 (Italian, Maltese and Greek) had increased significantly by 2016. This is reflective of immigration patterns to Australia post-WW2.

However, there were also significant increases of older people from Arabic, Tagalog, Filipino, and Croatian speaking backgrounds, reflecting newer migrant groups in Australia. There may be a greater increase in these groups within the older population going forward.

These increases are due to both older people migrating to the area and the natural increase of people who speak those languages who have lived in the area for many years now ageing into the 65 years and over age bracket.

FIGURE 4: OLDER PEOPLE WHO SPOKE A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT HOME

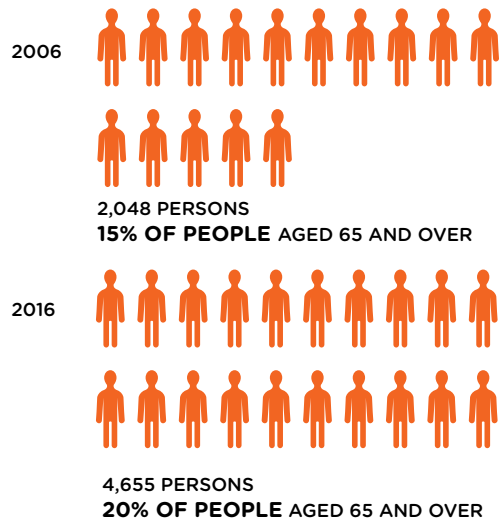
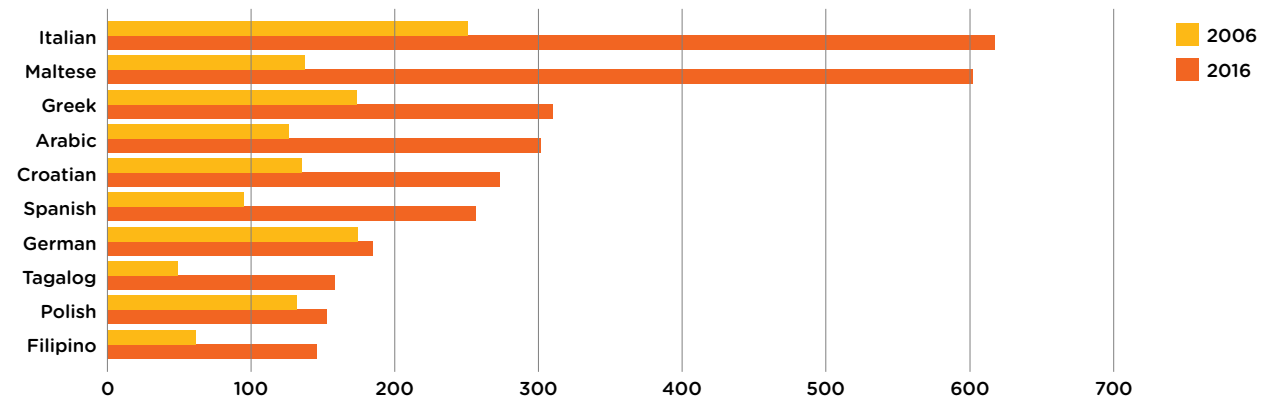


FIGURE 5: TOP 10 GROUPS OF OLDER PEOPLE WHO SPOKE A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH



The Australian Government Department of Health (2019) showed that many older Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds face barriers in accessing and engaging with the support services that contribute to healthy outcomes and are therefore less likely to utilise them. These barriers include:

- a lack of awareness and knowledge of the services that are available;
- system complexity;
- language barriers; and
- lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate aged care providers.

Census data indicates some of the older people in Penrith experienced these barriers. More than a quarter of older people speaking either Arabic (31%) or Greek (30%) and a quarter of the people speaking Croatian (25%) reported limited proficiency in spoken English.

The proportion of those who did not have an internet connection at home was also higher among older people who spoke languages other than English (28%). Language barriers and a limited capacity to access information online can add additional challenges in being aware of and accessing services.

As cultural diversity continues to grow among older people in Penrith, local services can continue to adapt by working with CALD communities in planning and delivering services and increasing culturally competent practices. Embedding these practices is essential in overcoming the barriers some CALD older people can face in relation to accessing health, economic, legal and social support. The Australian Government Department of Health's "Actions to Support Older CALD People: A Guide for Aged Care Providers" outlines the actions that services can take to deliver more culturally inclusive services.

Currently there are limited services for older people that target CALD communities across the city, such as the Multicultural Mobile Aged Day Care Program facilitated by Nepean Multicultural Access Inc. The My Aged Care website also lists some services in Penrith (such as meal services, community transport, domestic assistance, personal care and home modification services) that are available to support older people from diverse backgrounds. As the population of older people grows and becomes more culturally diverse, there will be a higher need for culturally specific services.



WHERE OLDER PEOPLE LIVE IN PENRITH

Where people live can have a significant influence on the way older people socialise, access essential services and participate in the community.

Table 2 shows the suburbs of the city with the highest concentrations of older people. The suburbs with the highest number of older people are Penrith, South Penrith, St Clair, Emu Plains and Glenmore Park. The suburbs with the highest proportion of older people are Caddens, Emu Plains, Leonay and Kemps Creek.

When looking at these areas, 43% of the total older population in the city are living where there

is significant socioeconomic disadvantage. These areas are also where communities have been established for longer and the high concentration of older people could be due to people ageing in place or living in homes where they remain connected to their communities. These homes may be larger than they need and can be associated with higher energy costs.

The suburbs with the highest proportions of older people speaking a language other than English at home live in Orchard Hills, Mount Vernon, Kemps Creek, Jordan Springs and Llandilo.



The data on where older people live provides important insights for health and community care services planning how their services can reach people. This data can be used to consider the barriers that may be experienced by socio-economic disadvantage and cultural diversity to effectively and inclusively engage with older people.

TABLE 2: WHERE OLDER PEOPLE LIVE BY SUBURB

SUBURB	People Aged 65 and Over		Older People Who Speak a Language Other than English at Home	
	Number	Proportion of Suburb Population (%)	Number	Proportion of Older People in Suburb (%)
PENRITH	2325	17%	333	14%
SOUTH PENRITH	1862	15%	207	11%
ST CLAIR	1783	9%	524	29%
EMU PLAINS	1630	19%	149	9%
GLENMORE PARK	1601	7%	308	19%
ST MARYS	1575	12%	433	27%
CRANEBROOK	1232	8%	193	16%
KINGSWOOD	1221	12%	197	16%
COLYTON	1088	13%	271	25%
CAMBRIDGE PARK	933	14%	116	12%
JAMISONTOWN	807	14%	70	9%
NORTH ST MARYS	599	15%	112	19%
LONDONDERRY	516	13%	80	16%
WERRINGTON COUNTY	465	13%	72	15%
LEONAY	463	18%	38	8%
ERSKINE PARK	432	7%	129	30%
WERRINGTON	432	10%	85	20%
KEMPS CREEK	417	18%	168	40%
OXLEY PARK	354	12%	100	28%
EMU HEIGHTS	336	10%	17	5%
MULGOA	332	17%	49	15%
ORCHARD HILLS	317	17%	149	47%
WERRINGTON DOWNS	295	9%	33	11%
WALLACIA	263	16%	30	11%
CLAREMONT MEADOWS	261	5%	89	34%
LLANDILO	246	5%	85	35%
CAMBRIDGE GARDENS	227	11%	30	13%
CADDENS	227	21%	13	6%
JORDAN SPRINGS	212	4%	77	36%
LUDDENHAM	196	11%	53	27%
CASTLEREAGH	187	16%	28	15%
MOUNT VERNON	159	13%	71	45%
BERKSHIRE PARK	148	7%	44	30%
AGNES BANKS	111	12%	16	14%
REGENTVILLE	106	13%	14	13%
BADGERYS CREEK	38	17%	11	29%

HOME OWNERSHIP

In 2016, 59.1% of people aged 65 years and over in Penrith City owned their dwelling outright. This is slightly higher than comparative rates in Greater Western Sydney (56%) and Greater Sydney (58.7%), and slightly lower than rates for NSW (60.8%).

Home ownership among people aged 65 years and over varied across the city (see Table 3). With the divided into ABS statistical areas (SA2s), we can see that Cambridge Park (including Werrington County, Werrington Downs and Cambridge Gardens) had the highest home ownership rates at 71%. The area with the lowest rate of home ownership was Penrith (including only Penrith suburb) at 40.4%.

TABLE 3: HOME OWNERSHIP FOR PEOPLE 65 YEARS AND OVER

STATISTICAL AREAS 2	% OF PEOPLE 65 YEARS AND OVER WHO OWN THEIR HOME OUTRIGHT
Cambridge Park	71.0%
Castlereagh - Cranebrook	56.8%
Emu Plains - Leonay	71.8%
Glenmore Park - Regentville	62.7%
Jamisontown - South Penrith	69.1%
Kingswood - Werrington	41.4%
Mulgoa - Luddenham - Orchard Hills	66.6%
Penrith	40.4%
Yarramundi - Londonderry	62.2%
Erskine Park	60.4%
St Clair	63.1%
Colyton - Oxley Park	64.1%
St Marys - North St Marys	48.2%
Horsely Park - Kemps Creek	61.0%



OLDER PEOPLE WITH A NEED FOR ASSISTANCE

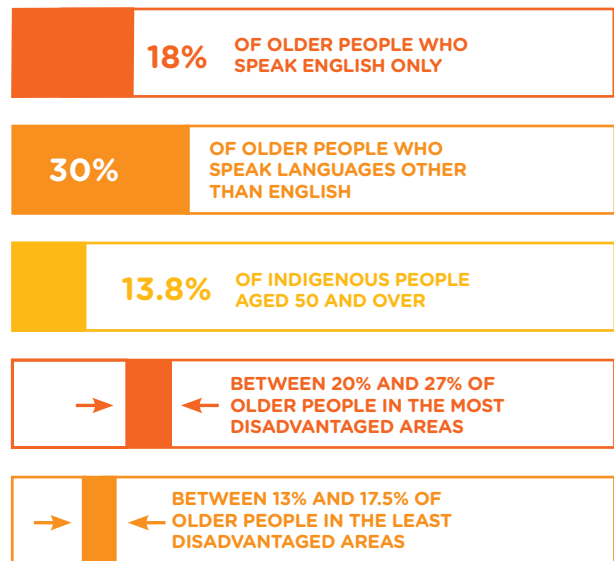
In 2014-15, the ABS National Health Survey found that 7 in 10 Australians aged 65 years and over considered they had good, very good or excellent health. In Penrith City, over 80% of older people reported they had no need for assistance with their core activities, leading to the assumption they'd be likely to also experience good health. In 2016, only 19.6% of older people in Penrith required assistance for core activities, which is lower than Greater Western Sydney at 28%.

Older people who live in socio-economically disadvantaged areas and those who speak a language other than English were more likely to have a need for assistance. While only 18% of older people who speak English have a need for assistance with core activities, 30% of older people who speak other languages require assistance.

In Penrith, there is a clear link between those who live in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage and those requiring assistance for core activities. In St Marys and North St Marys, where a high proportion of households experience socioeconomic disadvantage, 27% of older people needed assistance with core activities. Whereas in areas such as Mulgoa, Emu Plains and Leonay, where less households experience socioeconomic disadvantage, there was between 13% and 17.5% requiring assistance.

A relatively large number of older people are concentrated in areas of disadvantage, and it could be that in some cases any disadvantage they've experienced has impacted their health, resulting in the relatively higher need for assistance. This connection between socioeconomic disadvantage and high need for assistance could be examined through further consultation and engagement with older people in those areas.

FIGURE 6: OLDER PEOPLE WHO NEED ASSISTANCE WITH CORE ACTIVITIES



The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 and over (13.8%) who required assistance with core activities is lower than other groups of people aged 65 and over in Penrith. State-wide, the difference is much smaller with 17.6% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 and over requiring assistance compared to 19% of non-Indigenous people 65 and over. Reasons for this would require further investigation and engagement.

AGED CARE SERVICES IN THE NEPEAN REGION

Older people in Australia are eligible to access support under different types of Commonwealth subsidised and funded aged care programs. These include:

1. The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) which provides entry-level support for older people.
2. The Home Care Package Programme which provides support for people with higher level care needs that require care coordination and case management to help them live independently in their home.
3. Residential Aged Care which provides full-time care in a residential facility.

Penrith City is in the Nepean Aged Care Planning Region (ACPR), the regional boundary used by the Australian Government to plan for the distribution and types of support required for aged care. Data available for the Nepean region indicates how older people in Penrith City use the local community and residential aged care services available to them (GEN Aged Care Data by Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).

In the Nepean region, there are 56 community aged care providers and 24 residential care services (see Figure 7).

FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF AGED CARE SERVICES IN NEPEAN AT 30 JUNE 2018

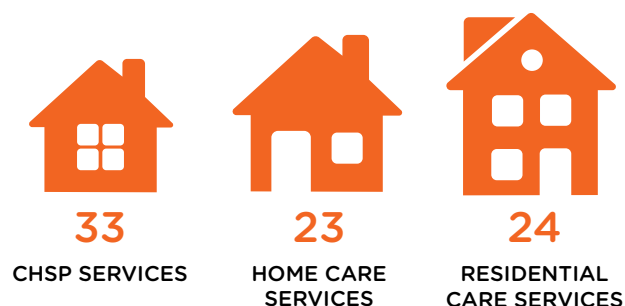
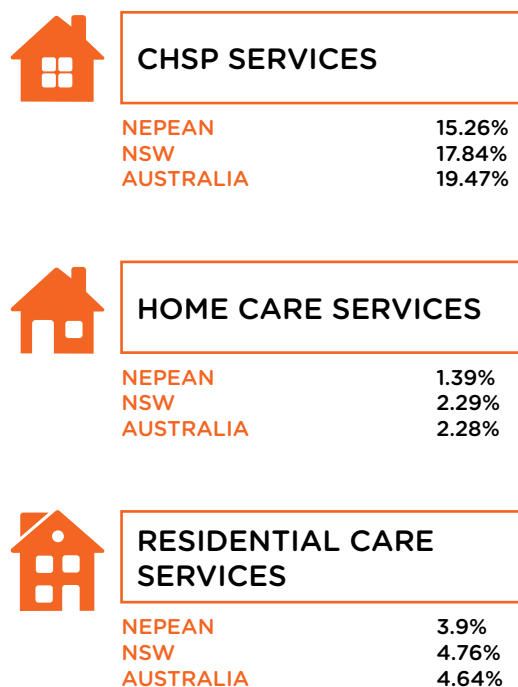


Figure 8 shows that in the Nepean region, 15.2% of older people used entry level support in the CHSP program, 1.3% used home care services, and 3.9% used residential care facilities.

Figure 8 shows how these rates of service usage in Nepean are lower compared to NSW and Australia, but the pattern across the types of service accessed is similar. These lower service levels may be because of the lower level need for assistance but it may require further investigation. Barriers to accessing services, including limited awareness of available services and how to navigate services, could also be contributing to low usage rates.

Penrith Council's consultation with older people (2018) found there was limited knowledge among participating seniors about accessing My Aged Care and community care services.

FIGURE 8: RATE OF AGED CARE SERVICES RECIPIENTS (%) AT 30 JUNE 2018, NEPEAN AND COMPARATIVE REGIONS



EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Employment enables older people to maintain their financial independence and to participate more in their local community and economy. Volunteering opportunities for older people also help support the economy and community, while providing an opportunity for volunteers to stay socially connected.

Volunteering

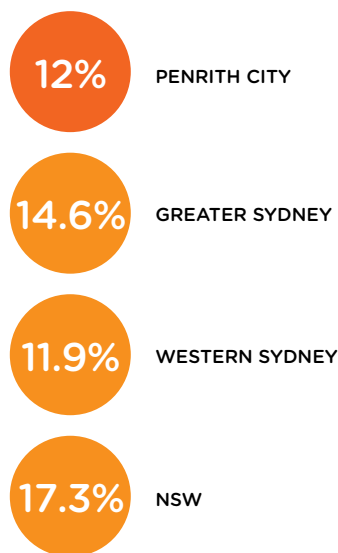
Volunteering is an indicator of well-being and has links to the economic and health status of communities. It benefits the economy and the health and well-being of volunteers by providing a personal sense of satisfaction and making them happier (AIHW 2017). Not everyone has the capacity to volunteer because of caring commitments, work commitments or because of poor health or disability. However, volunteering and non-paid work significantly contribute to the local economy.

Older people are considerable contributors to volunteering services across Penrith, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, organisations in Penrith services had to quickly adapt to providing services while also ensuring the health and wellbeing of older volunteers who were more vulnerable to the virus.

In 2016, there were 5,197 older people in Penrith City who volunteered in a range of local community groups, art and historical societies and organisations providing services for aged care, disability, emergency aid, homelessness, and environmental sustainability. These volunteers made up 12% of all older people in the city.

This rate of older people volunteering in Penrith was lower than Greater Sydney (14.6%) and NSW (17.3%). Council's 2018 consultation with older people revealed that they would like more opportunities to volunteer. In response to this feedback, Council held a Volunteer Expo in 2019 where 25 organisations provided information about volunteer opportunities. The event was attended by approximately 300 people and more than a 60% of them were older people.

FIGURE 9: PROPORTIONS OF OLDER PEOPLE WHO VOLUNTEERED IN 2016, PENRITH LGA AND COMPARATIVE REGIONS



Employment

In 2016, 2,902 people aged 65 years and over in Penrith were employed. This represents 13% of the local older population and is equal to the proportion in Greater Sydney (13%). Of those employed, 63% were men and 37% were female. The industries with the highest numbers of workers 65 years and over were:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (377)
- Construction (275)
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing (272)
- Education and Training (258)
- Retail Trade (248)

These top 5 industries of work for older people in Penrith are similar to the top industries of employment for all workers in Penrith.

In 2016, the total labour force for people aged 65 years and over in Penrith was 2,972. More than 90% of those people were aged 74 years and under. It should be noted that there was a large number of people aged 65 years and over in Penrith in 2016 who were not in the labour force (18,117), reflecting a high proportion of this age group who are retired (see Table 4).

FIGURE 10: PROPORTION OF OLDER PEOPLE EMPLOYED, PENRITH LGA AND COMPARATIVE REGIONS

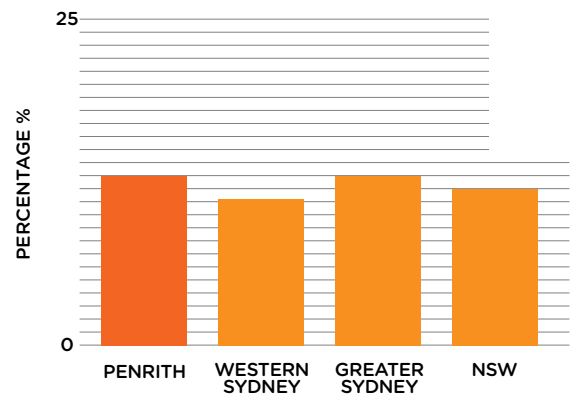


TABLE 4: LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF OLDER PEOPLE

AGE GROUPS	EMPLOYED FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME	UNEMPLOYED	NOT IN LABOUR FORCE
65-74 years	2,504	65	10,762
75-84 years	174	0	5,370
85 years and over	15	0	1,985
Total	2,693	65	18,117

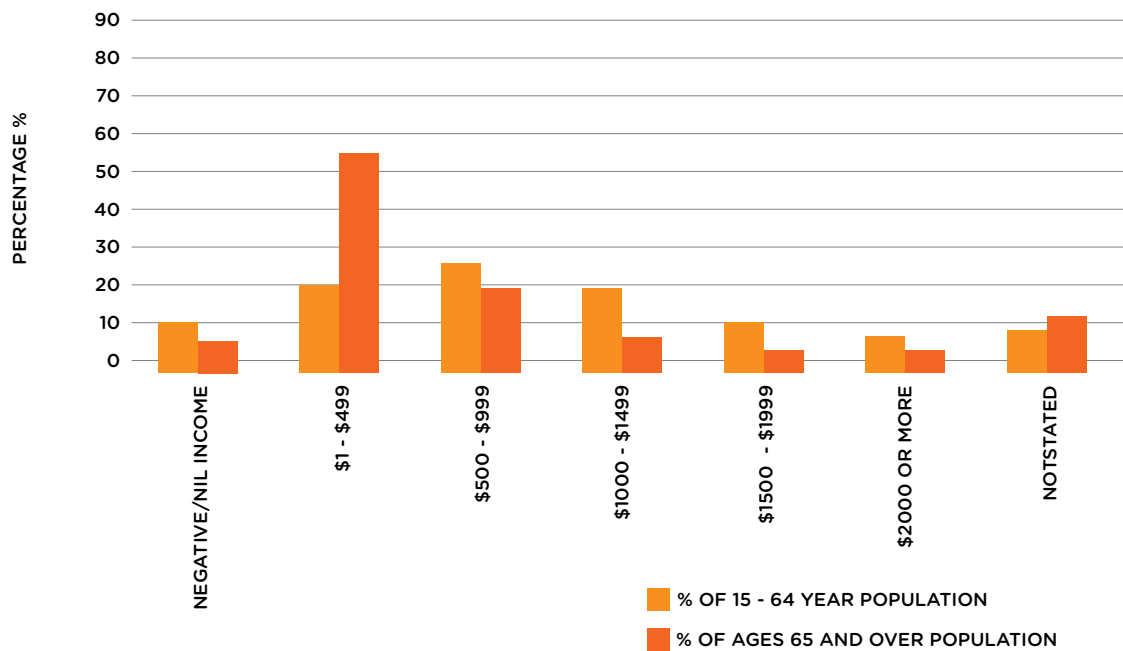
Income

More than half (55%) of older people in Penrith City earned a total personal income of \$1-\$499 per week. This pattern is similar to other comparative regions, such as Greater Western Sydney (55.5%) and Greater Sydney (47.8%).

For comparison, nearly half (45%) of people aged 15-64 years old in Penrith City earned weekly personal incomes of \$500-\$1,499 (see Figure 11).

This discrepancy in incomes could be for a range of reasons, such as the proportion of older people who are not in the labour force, the proportion of older people who earn only government support payments, and the proportion of older people who are in the labour force but working less hours than younger age groups.

FIGURE 11: TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME (WEEKLY) BY AGE, PENRITH, 2016



FACTORS FOR SOCIAL ISOLATION

Social isolation can negatively affect an individual's physical and mental health, with research showing it is associated with increased mortality, poorer health behaviours such as smoking and physical inactivity, and biological effects such as high blood pressure (Westir, 2020). This puts older people who are socially isolated at greater risk of adverse health outcomes.

Technology and language skills play an important role in the lives of older people in maintaining independence and social connections. Whether an older person lives with family or alone also has a significant effect on an individual. Although it is unknown how many older people in Penrith City are socially isolated, we can use the following indicators to show the potential risk of social isolation for older people: English language skills, rates of household internet connection, and living alone.

English proficiency

Many older people experience isolation as a result of barriers to communication. Those with limited English may have difficulty accessing mainstream services (if there is a lack of translated material), work opportunities and non-kin social networks due to their inability to communicate in the same language (Westir, 2020).

In the 2016 Census, of those who spoke a language other than English, 25% reported they do not speak English well or at all. This proportion varied according to language groups. More than a quarter of older people speaking either Arabic (31%) or Greek (30%), a quarter of the people speaking Croatian (25%), and just under a quarter of people speaking Spanish (23%) and Italian (22%) reported limited proficiency in speaking English.

Older people from these backgrounds may need language support through bilingual workers/ volunteers or interpreted information to access the services they require.

Household internet connection

Connection to the internet, or support from someone connected to the internet, is crucial to accessing services that can help older people live independently because information about government subsidised services are mainly available through web-based platforms, such as My Aged Care and MyGov.

In Penrith, 23.7% of older people did not have a household internet connection. This percentage is higher among older people who spoke other languages (28%). The lack of household internet connection also varied according to language groups with nearly half of older people from Croatian, Greek, Maltese, and Italian backgrounds reporting they did not have a household internet connection.

There is also a disparity in rates of household internet connections for older people based on where they live. More than 30% of older people who live in areas of greater socioeconomic disadvantage reported they did not have a household internet connection (see Table 5), compared to 16.4% of those in the areas of least disadvantage.

There is no information available on whether households without an internet connection are accessing the internet another way (e.g. on mobile devices) but this low rate of household internet connections could indicate a significant barrier to accessing service information. This could be partially overcome by making printed information to promote relevant activities and services available.

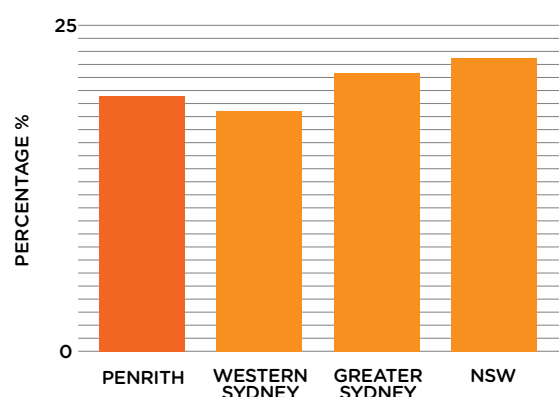
Living alone

Living alone can reduce interactions with others and may leave people with fewer economic resources to draw on to maintain connection with their social networks (Westir, 2020). Research has revealed that those who live alone report a high level of boredom and loneliness, and lower feelings of social support than those who live with others (AIFS, 2015).

In 2016, there were 4,601 persons aged 65 years and over in Penrith who were living alone. This equated to 19.4% of people 65 years and over, slightly higher than in Greater Western Sydney (18.5%) but lower than in Greater Sydney (21.3%) and NSW (22.5%).

It's important to note that not all older people living alone are at risk of social isolation. The level of risk also depends on factors such as their financial situation, language and technological skills, the support services available and the availability of support from their social connections and family.

FIGURE 12: PROPORTION OF OLDER PEOPLE LIVE ALONE, PENRITH LGA AND COMPARATIVE REGIONS



Looking at which areas across the city have relatively higher rates of older people living alone, no household internet connection and who have poor English language skills or none at all can show where services may be needed to build social connection. Social connection can be improved by supporting people to access recreational activities, community groups, social clubs and volunteering opportunities.

TABLE 5: INDICATORS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION ACCORDING TO SA2 STATISTICAL AREAS

STATISTICAL AREAS 2	% NO INTERNET CONNECTION IN SA2	% WHO SPEAK ENGLISH NOT AT ALL/NOT WELL	% LIVE ALONE
St Marys - North St Marys	34.1%	7.0%	24.6%
Colyton - Oxley Park	32.0%	7.5%	16.9%
Penrith	28.2%	4.3%	35.1%
Horsley Park - Kemps Creek	24.2%	12.0%	10.0%
Jamisontown - South Penrith	23.9%	2.6%	21.5%
Castlereagh - Cranebrook	23.3%	6.3%	14.8%
Kingswood - Werrington	22.5%	5.5%	21.5%
Cambridge Park	22.2%	2.1%	17.4%
Emu Plains - Leonay	22.2%	1.7%	21.3%
Mulgoa - Luddenham - Orchard Hills	20.7%	4.2%	12.5%
Yarramundi - Londonderry	20.6%	4.1%	9.8%
Glenmore Park - Regentville	16.4%	4.4%	15.0%
St Clair	16.1%	7.5%	12.4%
Erskine Park	15.7%	8.5%	13.0%

CONCLUSION

The data presented in this snapshot shows older people in Penrith City are a diverse group in terms of where and how they live, the kinds of services they require and how they access information about those services.

A considerable proportion of older people in the city are more likely to use entry-level aged care than home care packages and residential aged care facilities. The rate of using all three aged care programs in Penrith is lower than other comparative regions. This indicates a low level of need for assistance and that a significant proportion of older people are able to live independently in their homes.

The level of social and economic participation (employment and volunteering) and housing ownership among older people in the area looks positive when compared to other regions. There

is still a likelihood of older people being at risk of experiencing disadvantage because of barriers in accessing community services and a lack of social connection.

There are higher concentrations of older people living in the areas of the city that have higher rates of socioeconomic disadvantage. Individuals who have limited English language skills, limited access to technology, or living alone have an increased vulnerability to social isolation.

To create an age-friendly city and address the potential barriers older people may experience in staying well, it is crucial that services and activities are planned and delivered collaboratively by all levels of government, community partners and community members.



PENRITH
CITY COUNCIL

ISBN 978-1-64467-363-8

For further information please contact
Penrith City Council's Social Planning team on
4732 7943 or SocialPlanning@penrith.city