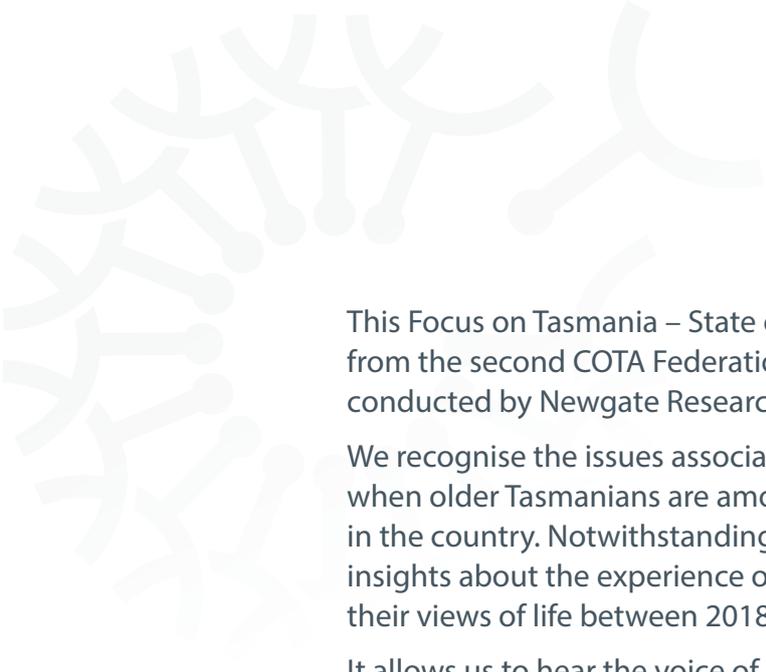




COTA 
T A S M A N I A
for older Australians

Focus on Tasmania State of the (Older) Nation 2021

From a nationally representative survey
prepared by the Council on the Ageing



This Focus on Tasmania – State of the Older Nation 2021 report is drawn from the second COTA Federation State of the Older Nation Report conducted by Newgate Research in February 2021.

We recognise the issues associated with conducting a survey online when older Tasmanians are among the most digitally excluded groups in the country. Notwithstanding this fact, the report provides valuable insights about the experience of older Tasmanians and the changes in their views of life between 2018 and 2021.

It allows us to hear the voice of older Tasmanians on a wide range of issues and highlights areas that need ongoing advocacy and action. As such, the report will inform policy debates now and into the future.



Sue Leitch

CEO

Council on the Ageing
Tasmania

This project was conducted in accordance with AS: ISO20252:2012 guidelines, to which Newgate Research is accredited.

ISSN: 2652-8759

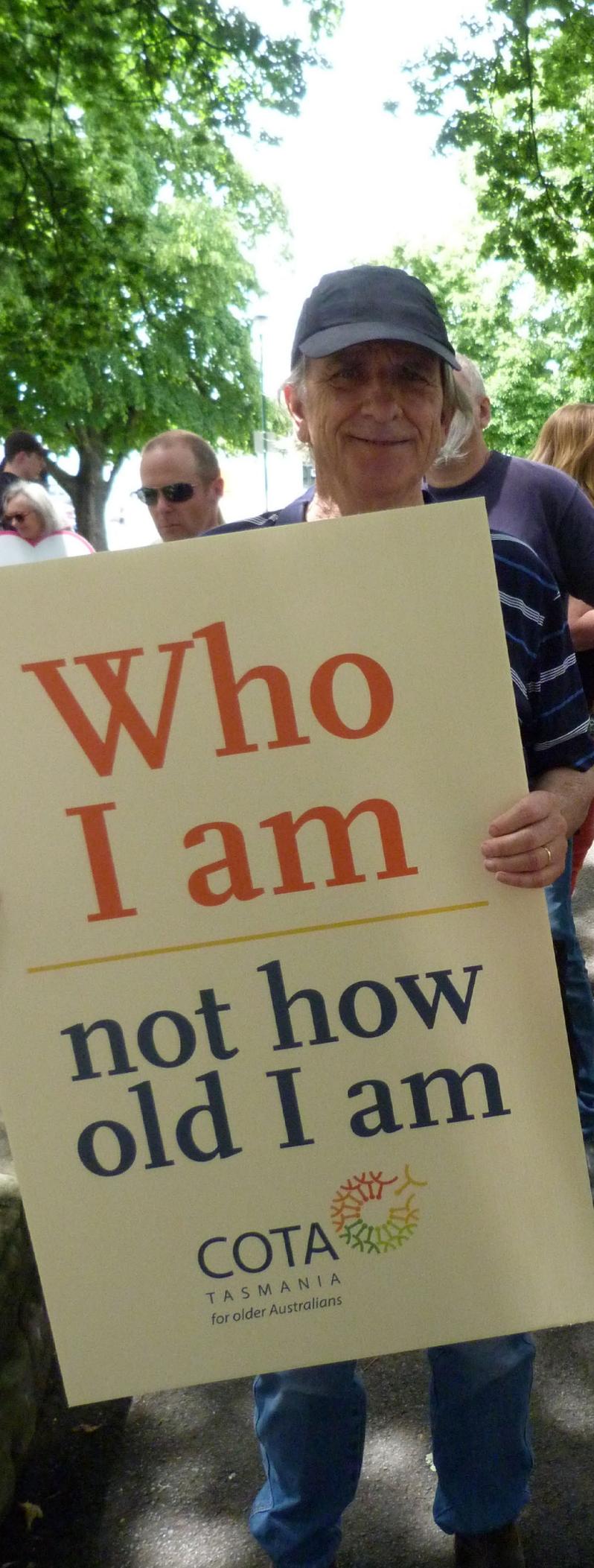
Download the full report at www.stateoftheoldernation.org.au

Please note the full report includes additional information on the topics discussed here and also covers a range of additional topics such as JobMaker, Health Services, Technology and COVID-19, as well as more details on the methodology, sample and weighting.

Disclaimer

The COTA Federation, the nine Councils on the Ageing across Australia, Newgate Research (a division of Newgate Communications Pty Ltd) and their representatives have prepared this publication on the basis of information available to them. In doing so, the COTA Federation, the nine Councils on the Ageing across Australia, Newgate Research and its representatives accept no legal responsibility for this publication's contents. To the fullest extent allowed by law, the COTA Federation, the nine Councils on the Ageing across Australia, Newgate Research and their representatives exclude all liability in respect of the information and opinions expressed in this publication. The research was undertaken in compliance with the Australian Polling Council Quality Mark standards. The Long Methodology Disclosure Statement for this research can be viewed here: www.newgatecomms.com.au/disclosure-statements/

 Throughout the report, arrows denote results which are significantly higher or lower than the previous wave at the 95% confidence level.

Purpose and methodology

This research was commissioned by the Federation of nine Councils on the Ageing (COTA) across Australia – including all eight COTA state and territory organisations and COTA Australia – in order to understand the views, life experiences and needs of Australians aged 50+.

Newgate Research conducted a nationally representative online survey lasting 20 minutes on average, with a robust sample of 2,830 Australians aged 50 and over, with quotas set for state and territory, metropolitan and regional areas, gender and age.

This study follows the inaugural State of the (Older) Nation research conducted in 2018 and seeks to monitor trends over time, and the impact of any changes made to improve the lives of older Australians.

The survey was conducted between 9th February and 24th February 2021 with participants drawn from an online research panel.

The findings presented within this summary report focus on older Australians living in Tasmania, with a sample size of $n=235$ for the 2021 study. This results in a margin of error of $\pm 6.4\%$ at the 95% confidence interval. The data set was weighted using population data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Census 2016 for age, gender, state and location (Capital/Non-capital cities). The weighting structure is shown in the Appendix of the full report, which can be found at www.stateoftheoldernation.org.au. All results presented throughout this report are weighted unless specified otherwise.

Report at a glance

Quality of life

69% feel younger than their age, but this is significantly lower than in 2018 when 78% said they felt younger than their age



74% rate their quality of life highly (7 or more out of 10) which is slightly lower than in 2018 (80%)



Sentiment about the future

62% feel positive about what the future holds for them personally in the next year or two, but this has declined significantly since 2018 (74%)



36% say things are getting worse for their generation (38% in 2018). More than the 24% who feel things are getting better (23% in 2018)



Elder abuse

3% have personally experienced elder abuse



10% know someone else who has experienced it



Financial security

56% feel fairly secure about their finances being able to meet their needs throughout the rest of their lives (rating 7 or more out of 10) but **26%** feel insecure (rating 0-4)



49% have one or more vulnerability indicators*, unchanged since 2018 (49%) and **13%** have overdue bills due to payment difficulties (compared to 11% in 2018)



*Vulnerability metric is a composite measure of having one or more of the following: a low personal annual income (\$1 - \$30k per capita), a disability, speaking a language other than English, identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, experienced domestic violence, bereavement or homelessness in the past year.

Health

58% have private health insurance, with the majority having both hospital and extras cover (51%)



54% do at least two hours of exercise per week, significantly less than in 2018 (56%)



Age related discrimination

32% have experienced some form of age-related discrimination



20% have experienced *employment-related* discrimination since turning 50



Employment

51% of those aged 65 have retired, while nearly a quarter (24%) of employed 65-69 year olds would like more paid work



30% of those still working do not think they will ever retire (23% in 2018)



Social isolation and loneliness

21% say they have felt lonely at least some of the time in the past few weeks



3% had no contact with anyone in the preceding week



Voluntary assisted dying

82% support voluntary assisted dying

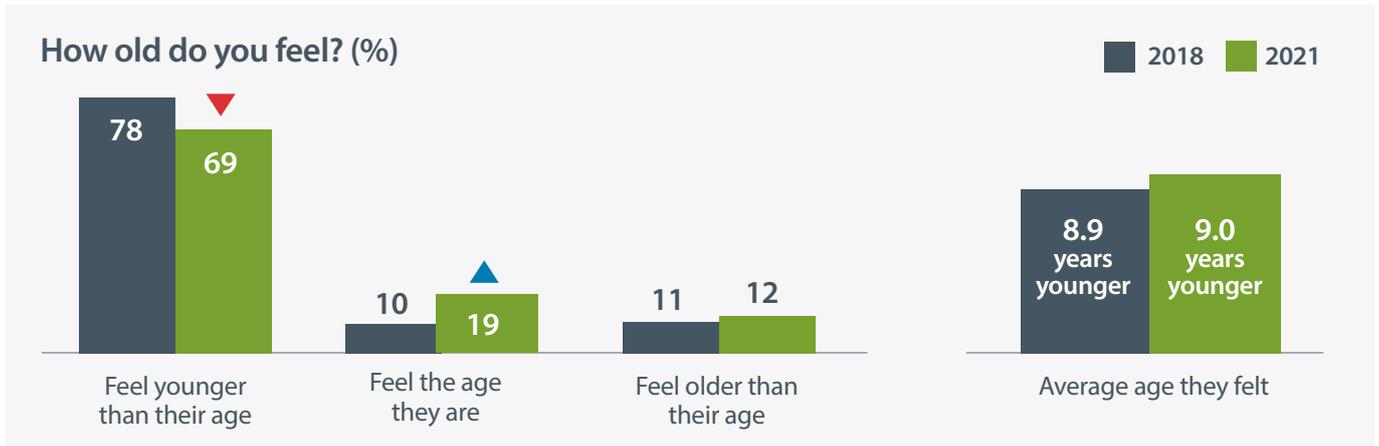


59% would look into this as an option for themselves

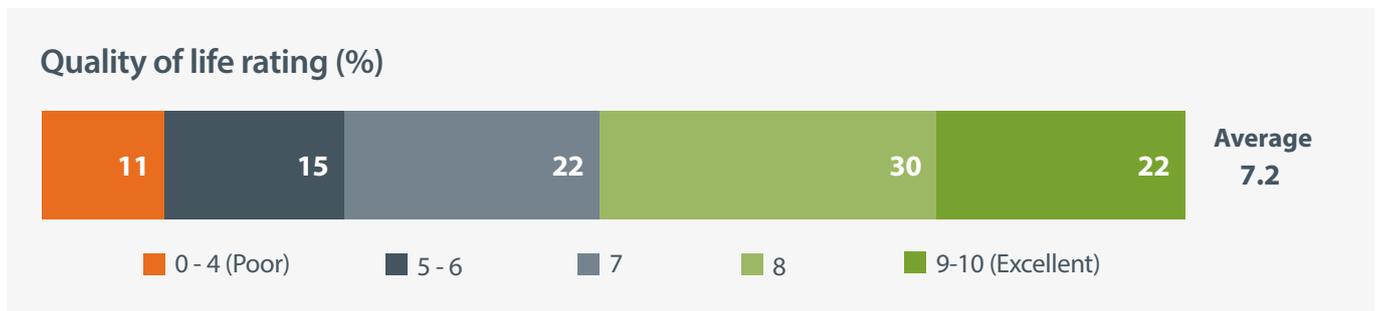


Quality of life

Most over 50s feel younger than their actual age (69%), but older Tasmanians aren't feeling as young as they did in 2018 (78%). Around three in four rate their quality of life highly, but ratings have declined since 2018.



Compared to the 2018 State of the Older Nation study, the proportion of Tasmanians over 50 who say they feel younger than their actual age decreased significantly from 78% to 69%. Although people don't necessarily feel older, they are now significantly more likely to feel the age they are, 19% up from 10%.



Nearly three quarters of survey participants (74%) rated their quality of life highly, at 7 or more out of 10, slightly lower than in 2018 (80%). Just over half (51%) have a very high quality of life (rating 8 to 10), however this has decreased significantly from 62% in 2018. One in ten (11%) say they have a poor quality of life, giving a rating less than 5, which is a slight increase from 2018 (7%).

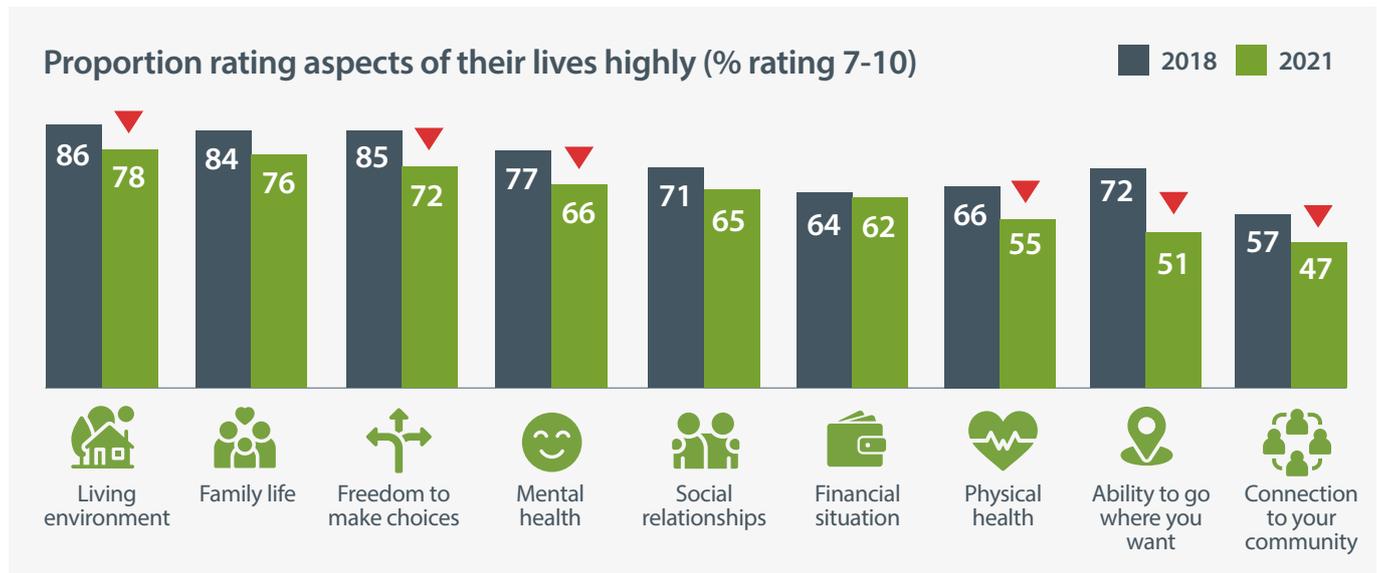
“
Increase services, in particular financial and health services, and support. More information on choices as people become older and near retirement.
 – Metropolitan Tasmania”

“
Job prospects are hard for people who are not in a regular professional position or those who have lost their jobs due to Covid-19. Prices are going higher with food, living expenses etc.
 – Metropolitan Tasmania”

Q3. What is your actual age? What age do you feel? / Q6. How would you rate your overall quality of life at the moment?
 Base: All Tas participants (2018: n=202, 2021: n=235)

Quality of life cont.

A reduced quality of life for older Tasmanians is evident across all aspects: most notably the ability to go where they want, freedom to make choices, physical and mental health as well as connection to local community.



Consistent with 2018, Tasmanians aged 50 and over were most positive (giving a rating of 7 or more out of 10) about their living environment, family life and freedom to make choices, and least positive about their connection to the local community. Of note however, is that scores for all aspects decreased since 2018, with significant decreases for:

- **Living environment:** ratings declined from 86% in 2018 to 78% in 2021 giving this a rating of 7 or more out of 10;
- **Freedom to make choices in life:** ratings declined from 85% to 72%;
- **Mental health:** ratings declined from 77% to 66%;
- **Physical health:** ratings declined from 66% to 55%;
- **Ability to go where they want, when they want:** ratings declined from 72% to 51%; and
- **Sense of connection to local community:** ratings declined from 57% to 47%.

“ For some reason there is this ‘stigma’ that people believe and show to you that once you are over 50 you are old, feeble and weak. I don’t know it just seems that way, society seems to put it all in a box especially the government departments.

– Regional Tasmania

“ Things were looking pretty good. We were financially quite well off. But then COVID-19 came along and stopped us travelling.

– Metropolitan Tasmania

Q11. How would you rate each of the following at this point in your life?

Base: All Tas participants (2018: n=202, 2021: n=235)

Sentiment about the future

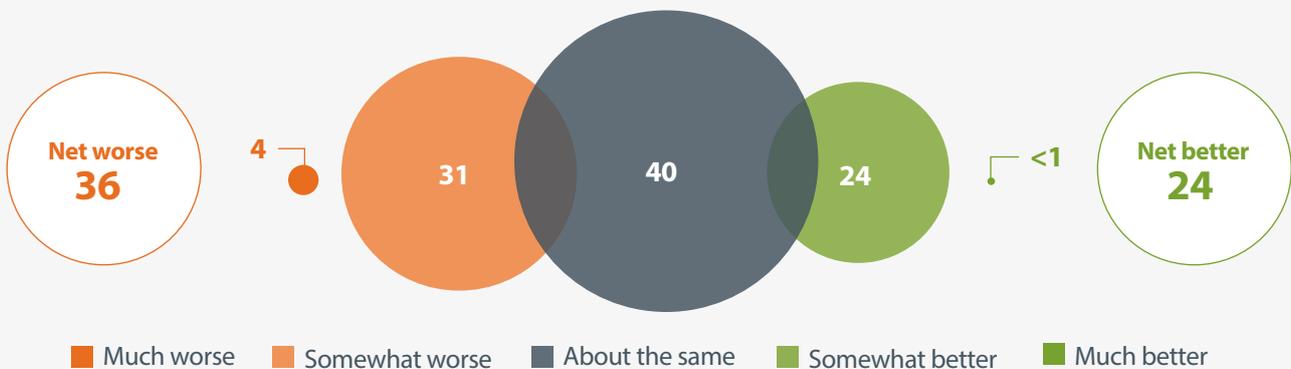
Fewer older Tasmanians feel calm and relaxed about what the future holds, although one in four continue to believe things are better for their generation.

Feelings about their personal outlook over the next year or two (%)



Although a majority (62%) feel positive about what the future holds in the next year or two, rating 7 or more out of 10, this is a significant decrease from 2018 (74%). The proportion of Tasmanians feeling very calm and relaxed (22%, rating a 9 or 10) has not changed greatly since 2018 (24%). However, there is an increase in both those feeling very worried (rating 0-4) from 7% to 13% and those feeling somewhat worried (rating 5 or 6) from 19% to 25%, contributing to the significantly more negative personal outlook at an overall level, with 38% (up from 26%) now feeling worried (rating 0 to 6).

Are things getting better or worse for Australians aged 50+? (%)



One in four older Tasmanians (24%) feel that things are getting better for their generation, consistent with 2018 (23%). However, this opinion is now more subdued with <1% believing the situation is 'much better', significantly fewer than 4% in 2018. The proportion of those feeling things are staying about the same (40%) is largely unchanged from 2018 (38%). At the other end of the spectrum, fewer people believe things are 'much worse' (4% vs. 8% in 2018), although the overall share with a negative point of view (much or somewhat worse) remains stable at 36% compared to 38% in 2018.

Q9. How are you feeling about what the future holds for you personally over the next year or two? / Q12. Thinking more broadly, do you think things are generally getting better or worse for Australians aged 50+?

Base: All Tas participants (2018: n=202, 2021: n=235)

Elder abuse

One in eight older Tasmanians reported experiencing elder abuse themselves or knowing someone else who has – and over half of cases go unreported.



In the 2021 study, 3% of older Tasmanians admitted to having personally experienced elder abuse and 10% knew someone else who has experienced it. Of the 13% who personally experienced it or knew someone who has, just 49% reported it – leaving over half (51%) of cases going unreported.

Among those who had personally experienced it, only 42% spoke to someone about it or sought assistance, while 58% did not seek any assistance.*

Just over half (52%) of those who knew someone else who has experienced elder abuse spoke to someone about it or sought assistance, leaving a substantial 48% of people who have not raised the issue with anyone else.**

“*The person who abused me physically and mentally was a loved family member who I rely on for assistance. He is an alcoholic who is abusive when under the influence of drink and always sorry the next day when sober. Or sometimes he can't remember.*

– Metropolitan Tasmania ”

“*Interfering into the family dynamics would see me getting abused by a family member. I've had it all my life and now I try and keep a low profile, as I am not young and need to take care of my mental health.*

– Metropolitan Tasmania ”

*Caution: Please treat result as indicative due to low base size (n=7)

** Caution: Please treat result as indicative due to low base size (n=23)

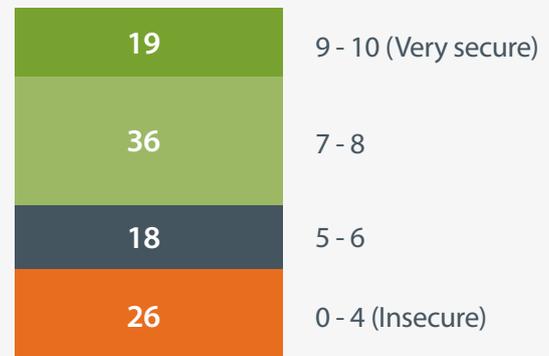
Q78. Have you personally experienced elder abuse or do you know someone who has? Base: All Tas participants (2021: n=235) / Q79. Did you seek any assistance or speak to anyone about it when you personally experienced elder abuse? Base: Those who personally experienced elder abuse (n=7), / Q82. Did you speak to anyone or seek any assistance when someone you knew experienced elder abuse? Base: Those who knew someone who experienced elder abuse (n=23)

Financial security

Over half of older Tasmanians feel quite secure about their finances being able to meet their needs for the rest of their lives.

Long term financial security (%)

When asked how secure they felt about their finances being able to meet their needs for the rest of their lives, over half (56%) gave quite a high rating of 7 or more out of 10, which was consistent with 2018 (58%). However, this leaves two in five (42%) who didn't feel very secure, providing a rating of 6 or below. Just over one in four (26%) felt very insecure, rating 0-4 out of 10 (on par with 24% in 2018).



One in two Tasmanians aged 50+ are vulnerable – which is unchanged since the 2018 study.



Our analysis looked particularly at those older Tasmanians who could be considered more at risk. Using the indicators listed in the chart above to create a segmentation, we see that people with one or more indicators of higher vulnerability represent half of all Tasmanian survey participants (49%), which is consistent with 2018.

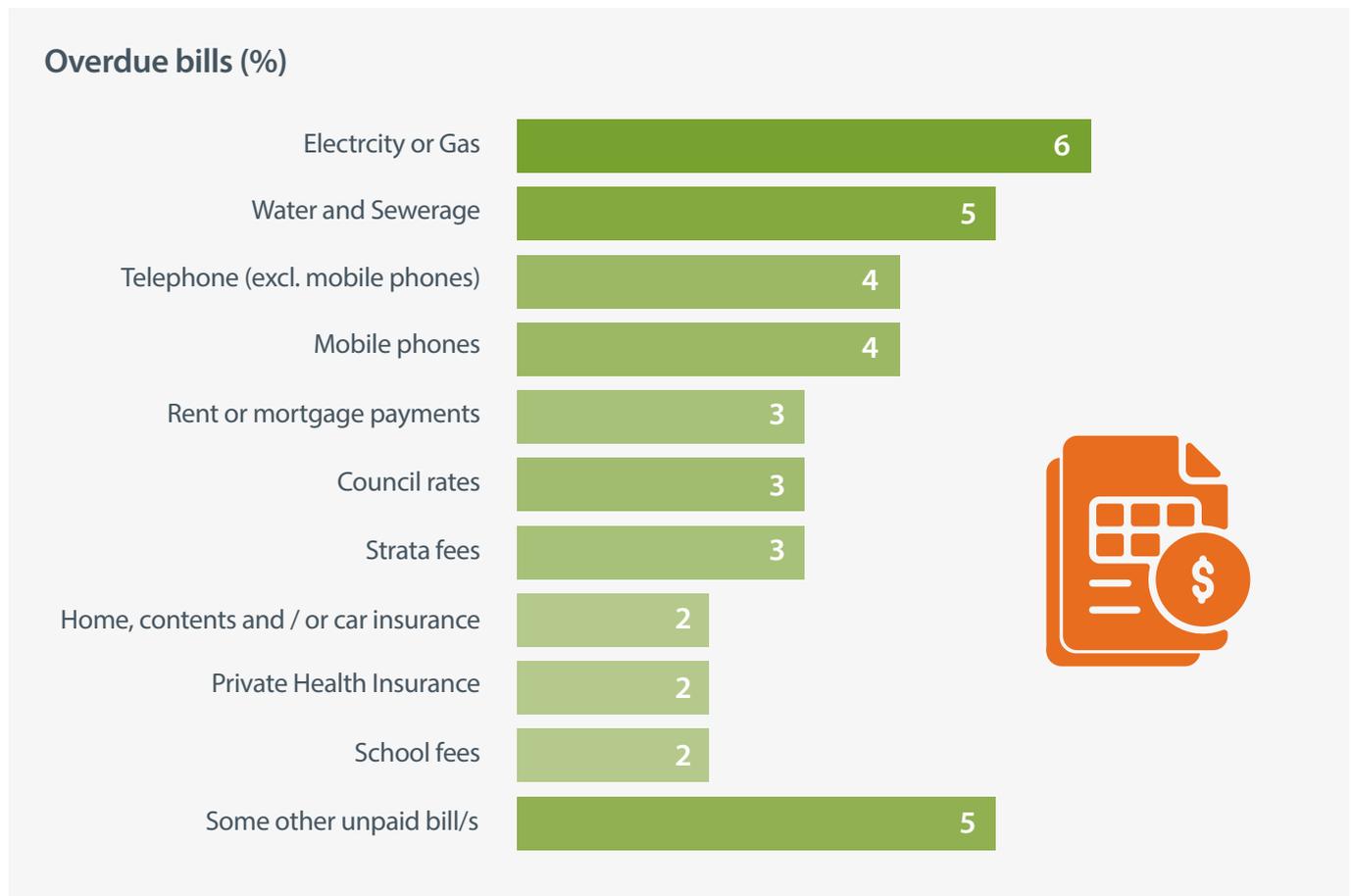
The higher vulnerability group in Tasmania was significantly more likely to be aged 60 or over (61% vs. 36% of those in their 50's), although equally likely to be female or male (49% of each) and located in metro or regional areas (50% and 48% respectively).

These results highlight a group of older, vulnerable people whose needs deserve particular attention.

Q40. How secure do you feel about your finances (income from all sources and savings) being able to meet your needs throughout the rest of your life? / This vulnerability measure is composite of: DM7. Do any of the following apply to you? DM8. Have you personally experienced any of these in the last year? DM14 & DM15. And what is the combined annual income of everyone in your household, from all sources before tax or other deductions?

Base: All Tas participants (2018: n=202, 2021: n=235)

Just over one in ten older Tasmanians have unpaid bills, with an average of three bills left unpaid - consistent with 2018.



13%

have overdue bills due to payment difficulties. (consistent with 11% in 2018).

3

Among those who had payment difficulties, **the average number of bills overdue was 3** (consistent with 2018).

Q41. Does your household currently have any bills from this list that are overdue specifically because you are having difficulty paying them? MULTIPLE RESPONSE

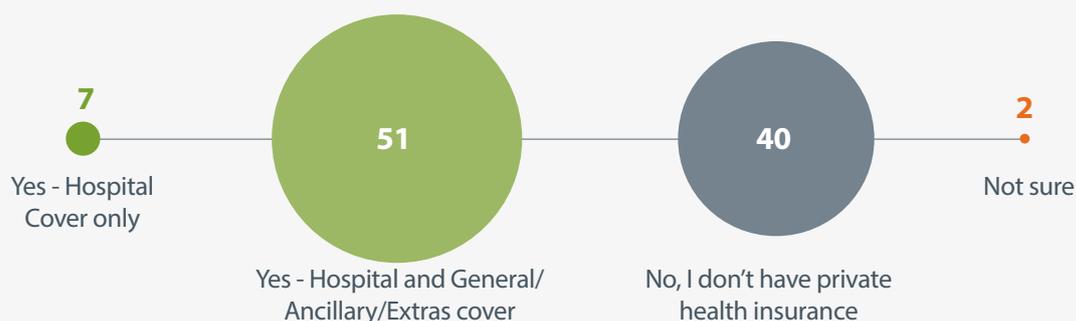
Base: All Tas participants (2018: n=202, 2021: n=235)

Health

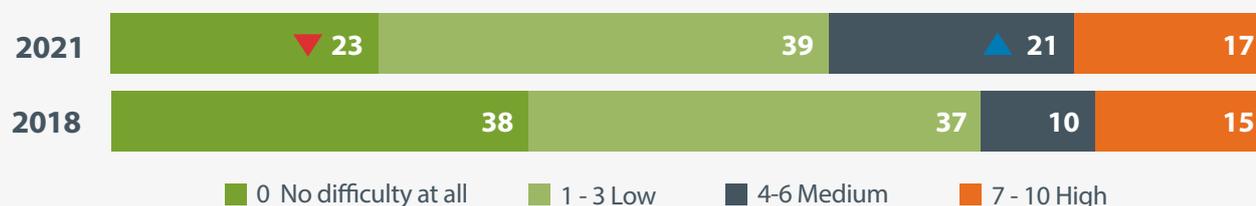
Nearly six in ten Tasmanians aged 50+ have private health insurance, while just over one third face difficulty in accessing the medical and health services they need, an increase from 2018.

Have private health insurance? (%)

Nearly six in ten Tasmanians aged 50+ have private health insurance (58%) with the majority of them having both hospital and extras cover (51%).



Level of difficulty accessing health services (%)*



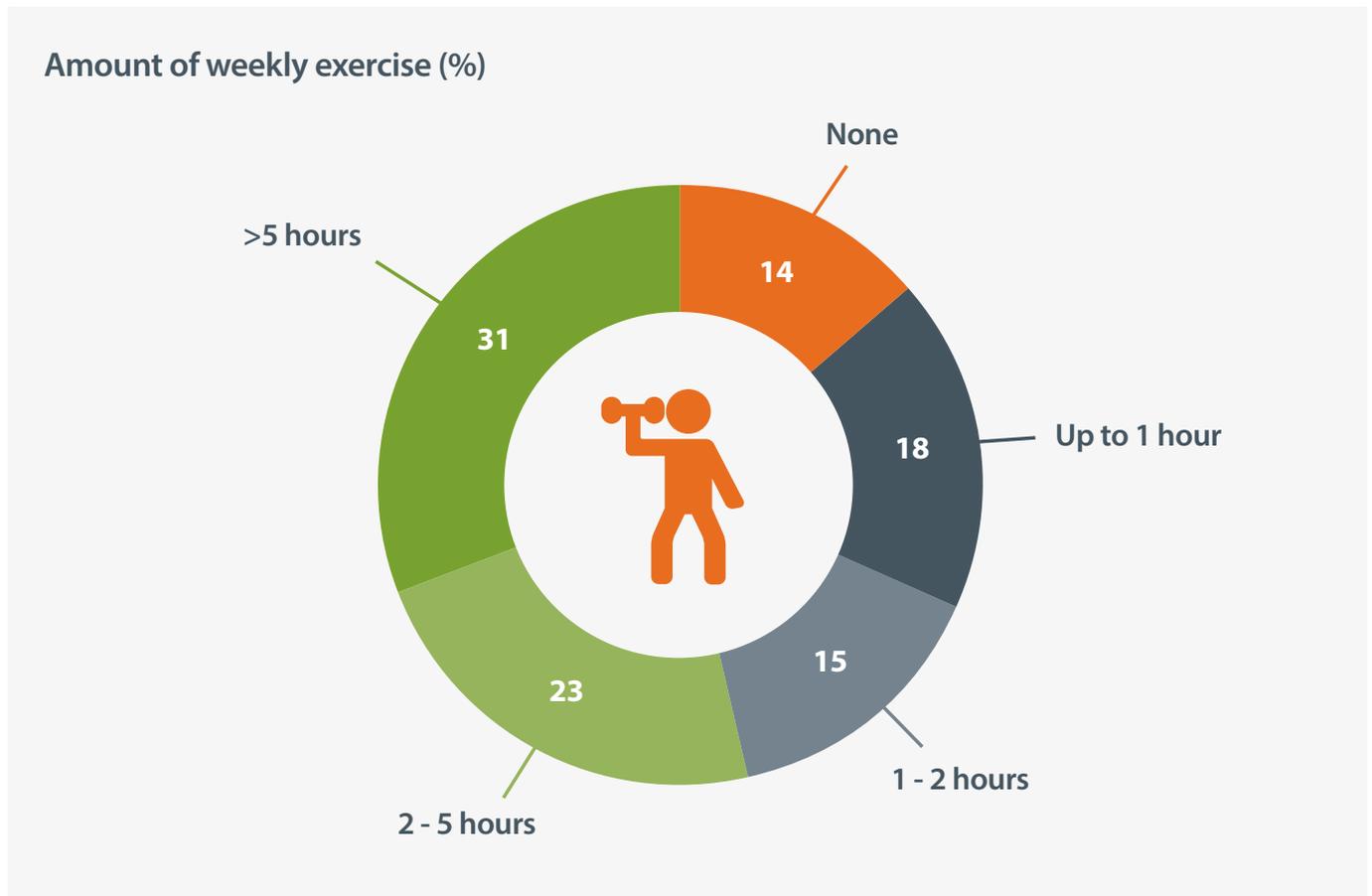
Among those who needed health and medical services, the majority (62%) experienced no difficulty (23% gave a rating of 0) or low levels of difficulty (39% gave a rating between 1 and 3) accessing these services. However, this was a significant decrease from 2018, when 75% of people were able to access services without difficulty. In 2021, over one third (38%) had a medium to high level of difficulty in accessing services, significantly higher than in 2018 (25%).

Among those who faced difficulty accessing the services they needed, the long waiting lists (40%) and the cost (30%) were the main barriers.

Q49. Do you have private health insurance? Base: All Tas participants (2018: n=202, 2021: n=235) / Q47. How difficult, if at all, is it for you to access the health and medical services you need? Scale: 0 = no difficulties at all, 10 = extremely difficult. Base: All who accessed medical services (2018: n=184, 2021: n=202). / Q48. Which of the following difficulties do you have in accessing the health and medical services you need? Base: Participants who had difficulties accessing medical services (gave a rating higher than 0 out of 10) (2018: n=113, 2021: n=155)

*The chart has been rebased to exclude these participants who did not need access to medical services: 14% said they did not need to access medical services.

Consistent with 2018, most older Tasmanians are doing at least some exercise each week. Just over half are doing two hours or more per week which is the recommended minimum, but the remainder are falling below this recommendation.



Nearly nine in ten survey participants (86%) reported that they do at least some exercise (compared to 90% in 2018). One in three (32%) say they do up to 2 hours of exercise per week and just over half (54%) say they do two or more hours per week – consistent with 2018 (56%).

The recommended amount of exercise is at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days* and this survey data shows that a significant proportion (46%) of older Tasmanians are falling below this recommendation.

Q42. How much time do you spend exercising each week on average (this includes going for a walk and swimming)?
 Base: All Tas participants (2018: n=202, 2021: n=235) * Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines and the Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines: <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines#:~:text=Older%20people%20should%20be%20active,most%2C%20preferably%20all%2C%20days>.

Age-related discrimination

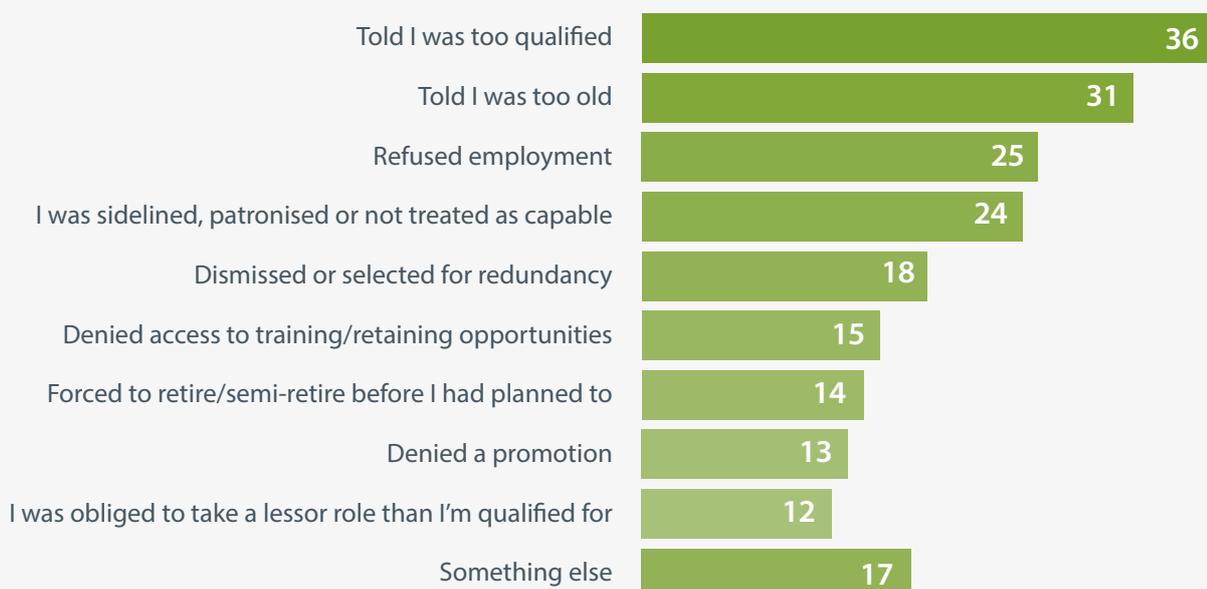
Age-related discrimination continues to be an issue for one third of Tasmanians aged 50+, with employment-related discrimination most common.

The most common form of discrimination was employment-related with one in five (20%) claiming to have experienced it while seeking work / employment or in the workplace, this level is consistent with 2018. There was a significant increase in the proportion of older Tasmanians being discriminated against when accessing government services (up to 7% in 2021 from 3% in 2018).

32% Have experienced some form of discrimination since turning 50 (32% in 2018)

20% Have experienced **employment-related** discrimination since turning 50 (20% in 2018)

Type of employment-related age discrimination - prompted list (%) Among participants who have experienced age discrimination

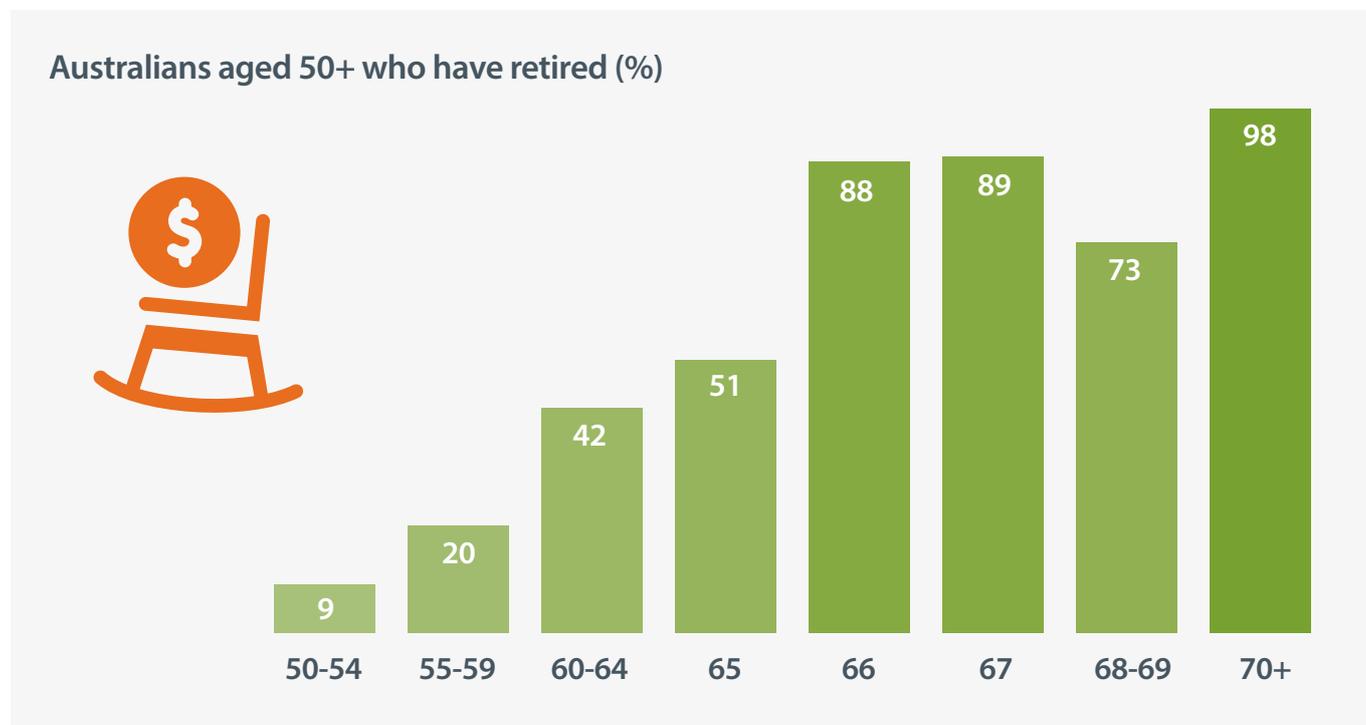


Among Tasmanians who had experienced employment-related discrimination, it was most common for people to be told they were too qualified (36% up from 22% in 2018), or too old (31% up from 17% in 2018). Meanwhile, the feeling of being sidelined or patronised fell from 33% in 2018, to 24% in 2021.

Q55. The next topic is "age discrimination". This is where a person is treated less favourably than another person in a similar situation specifically because of their age or because they are an older person. Since turning 50, have you experienced a sense of discrimination specifically because of your age in any of the following situations? MULTIPLE RESPONSE. Base: All Tas participants (2018: n=202, 2021: n=235) / Q56. You mentioned you've experienced discrimination related to work because of your age. What did this involve? MULTIPLE RESPONSE Base: All participants who have experienced age discrimination (2018: n=40, 2021: n=48)

Employment

Although Tasmania has a lower median retirement age than the rest of Australia, the majority only retire at the age of 66 once pension payments become accessible.



Median retirement age (Among those already retired)	58
Median expected retirement age (Among those still working)	65
Working Tasmanians aged 50+ who don't think they'll ever retire	30%

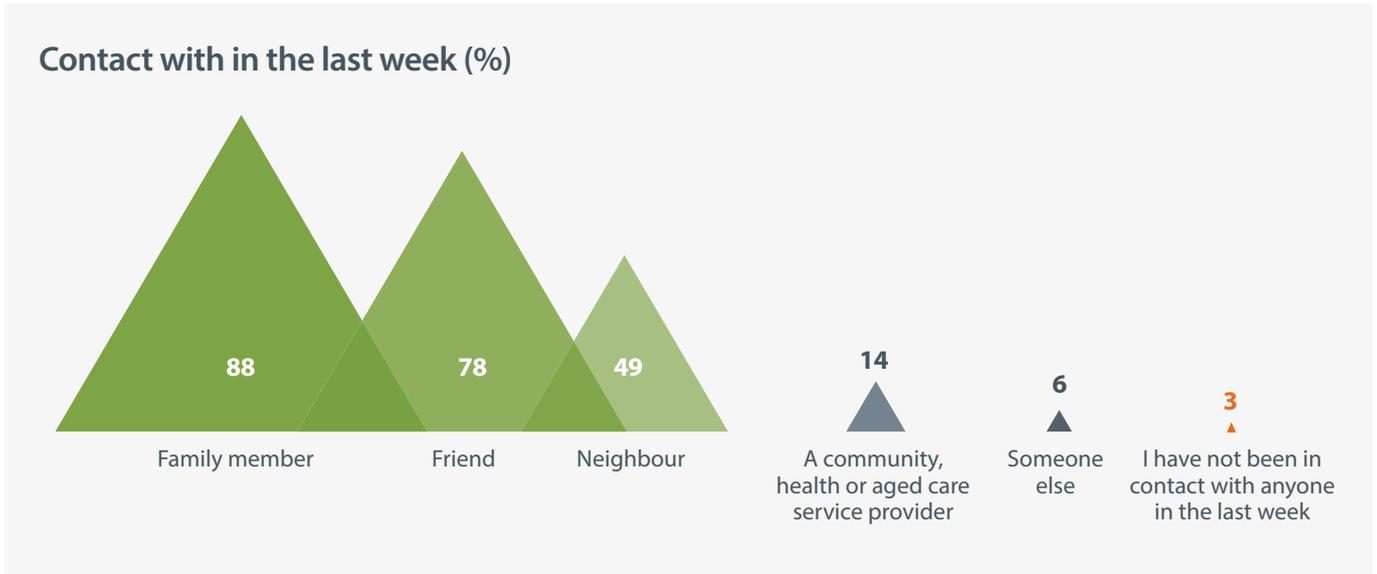
With the age that Australians can access age pension payments increasing from 65 in 2018 to 66 in 2021, Australians are working later in life. Although Tasmania's median retirement age of 58 years is lower than for Australia overall (62 years) there is an obvious increase in retirement related to pensions. Half (51%) of Tasmanians aged 65 have retired, compared to the 88% that have retired by 66 years of age.

Meanwhile, 30% of older working Tasmanians don't think they'll ever retire (up from 23% in 2018). Meanwhile a quarter (26%) of working Tasmanians said they would like more paid work, which is largely consistent with 2018 (30%).

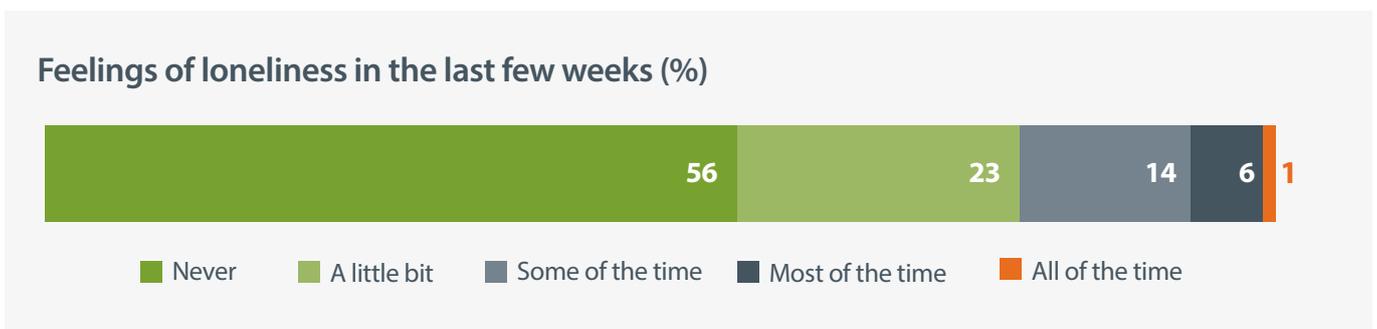
Q21. What is your current employment status? Base: All Tas participants (2018: n=202, 2021: n=235) / Q22. At what age did you retire / partially retire from paid employment or self employment? Base: Respondents who are retired (2018: 103, 2021: 104) / Q23. At what age, roughly, do you think you will fully retire? / Q25. Would you like more or less paid work? Base: Participants who are employed (2018: n=74, 2021: n=103)

Social isolation and loneliness

The vast majority of Tasmanians aged 50+ have had contact with someone in the last week, most likely a family member or friend. While over half have not experienced any feelings of loneliness in the last few weeks, one in five have felt lonely at least some of the time.



In a new series of questions exploring social isolation, the survey found that most older Tasmanians had some form of contact with people in the past week, most likely a family member (88%), friend (78%) or neighbour (49%). Of concern is that 3% claimed to have had no contact with anyone in the last week.



When asked how often they have felt lonely in the last few weeks, just over half (56%) claimed they never felt lonely, and almost a quarter (23%) said they felt lonely a little bit of the time. However, one in five (21%) felt lonely either some (14%), most (6%) or all of the time (1%).

Q87. Have you had contact with any of the following people in the last week? This could be in person, by phone or text message, social media etc. Select all that apply. MULTIPLE RESPONSE / Q88. Thinking about the last few weeks, how often would you say you felt lonely? Base: All Tas participants (2021: n=235)

Social isolation and loneliness cont.

While the majority are content with their personal relationships, one in ten older Tasmanians appear to be experiencing social isolation and there are mixed feelings when it comes to feeling part of a community.

Do you agree with the following (% who agree)

81%

I am content with my friendships and relationships

70%

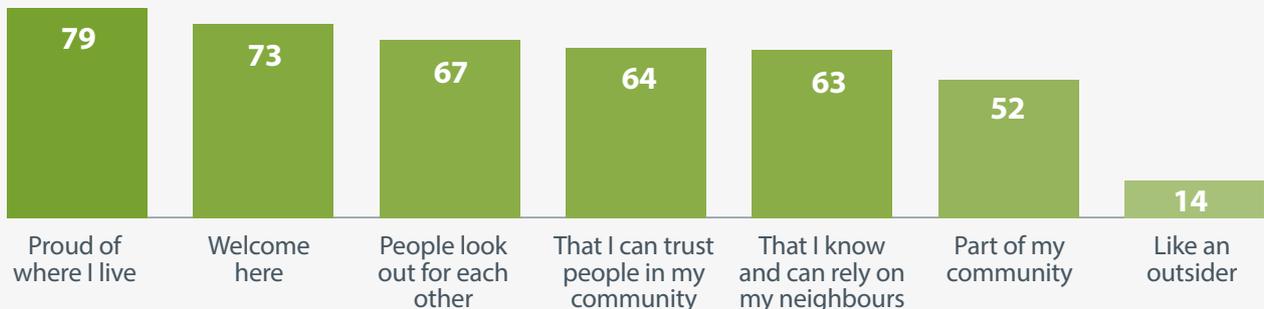
I have enough people I feel comfortable asking for help at any time

71%

My relationships are as satisfying as I would want them to be

When it comes to the relationships of older Tasmanians, around three in four agreed that they are content with their friendships and relationships (81%), that they have enough people they feel comfortable asking for help at any time (70%), and that their relationships are as satisfying as they would want them to be (71%). Just over one in ten were neutral towards each of these statements and around one in ten disagreed with them.

Do you agree with the following (% who agree)



Around three quarters of Tasmanians surveyed felt proud of where they live (79%) and welcome in their local suburb or town (73%). Around two thirds also felt that people look out for each other (67%), that they can trust people in their community (64%) and that they could rely on their neighbours (63%). A similar proportion also disagreed that they feel like an outsider in their local suburb or town (65%).

We note that this survey was administered online and these results might not capture older people who are digitally isolated.

Q86. Do you agree or disagree with the following?/ Q89. In my local suburb or town, I feel...

Base: All Tas participants (2021: n=235)

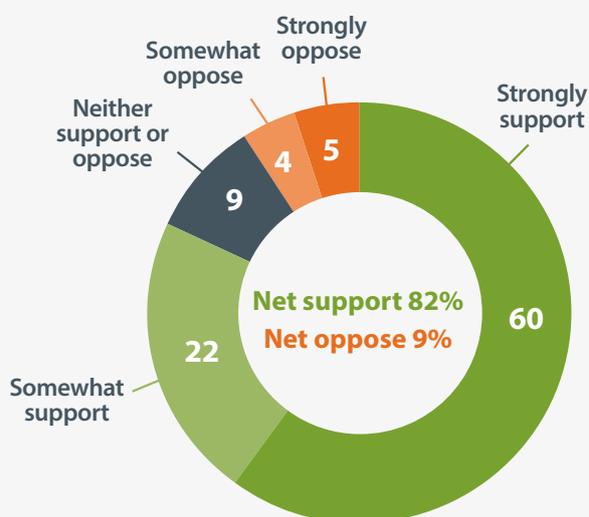
NB: Don't know responses have been excluded.

Voluntary assisted dying

There is strong support for voluntary assisted dying among older Tasmanians and three in five of those aged 50+ would personally look into it as an option for themselves.

Support for voluntary assisted dying (%)

One in eight older Tasmanians (81%) support voluntary assisted dying, with a solid 60% saying they are strong supporters. Just 9% are opposed to it. These results are fairly consistent with 2018, however it is important to note that in the previous survey participants were just given the option to choose from 'support this' (79%) or 'oppose this' (21%).



Likelihood to personally look into voluntary assisted dying (%)



Consistent with 2018, nearly three in five older Tasmanians (59%) said they would look into voluntary assisted dying as an option for themselves, with 41% saying they would 'definitely look into it'. Just one in eight (13%) said they wouldn't look into it and a quarter (27%) were undecided, saying they might, they didn't know or they did not want to say.

Q63. "Assisted dying" is the practice whereby a person suffering from a terminal illness or incurable condition has the right to request a lethal drug from a doctor to end their life. Assuming there are sufficient protections and legislation in place, do you support or oppose this for your state/territory? / Q64. And if you were in this situation, how likely do you think you would be to personally look into assisted dying as an option for yourself? Base: All Tas participants (2018: n=202, 2021: n=235) *NB: Wording changed in 2021 – was previously 'Not at all likely'

Contact details

TAS (Tasmania)

'Westella', 181 Elizabeth Street
Hobart TAS 7000

P: (03) 6231 3265

E: admin@cotatas.org.au

W: www.cotatas.org.au

COTA Federation Members

The COTA Federation is a collaboration of the nine Councils on the Ageing across Australia.

Copyright ©

All copyright subsisting in the contents of this publication is owned by the COTA Federation, the nine Councils on the Ageing across Australia and may not be reproduced without the prior consent of the COTA Federation, the nine Councils on the Ageing across Australia. Where permission is granted, it will be subject to the requirement that the COTA Federation, the nine Councils on the Ageing across Australia is acknowledged on any reproduced or quoted material, whether in whole or in part.

All rights reserved.

Research undertaken by

**Newgate Research (a division of
Newgate Communications Pty Ltd)**

Level 10, 120 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

P: (03) 9611 1850

E: research@newgateresearch.com.au

W: www.newgateresearch.com.au



