# PRESERVING A VITAL SYSTEM

## The Future of Foster Care

**Queensland Foster Carer Demographic Insights Report**

**JUNE 2024**

Queensland Family & Child Commission

PeakCare
Children | Young People | Futures

# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians. We recognise their cultures, histories and diversity and their deep connection to the lands, waters and seas of Queensland and the Torres Strait.

We acknowledge the Jagera people and the Turrbal people as the Traditional Custodians of Meanjin (Brisbane), the lands on which our offices are located and where we meet, work and learn, and acknowledge all of the Traditional Custodians of every lands across Queensland.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and strive every day for true reconciliation and self-determination for all First Nations children, young people, their families, carers and communities.

We must do better. Now more than ever.

Artwork by Bigi Nagala. *See Country Mullet Season.*

# A message from PeakCare's Chief Executive Officer

The number of foster carers in Australia is significantly declining while the number of children in residential care continues to increase. Although this trend is impacting each Australian state and territory differently, it is critical we understand what is contributing to this change and what we can do over the coming 10 years to guide the modernisation of this vital part of the child and family services system.

PeakCare is proud to have partnered with the Queensland Family and Child Commission and The Demographics Group to undertake a demographic analysis of Foster Carers in Queensland. This report draws on a number of different sources and its 10 opportunities provide a clear path forward for how the Queensland Government can sustain this vital care system for children and families in need.

When children and young people cannot live safely at home for a time, foster carers are instrumental in providing temporary, safe and nurturing care in a family-based environment.

This report clearly identifies where our focus should be in delivering a contemporary and reimagined foster care system that reciprocates the level of care our foster carers provide for children and young people every day.

There is also no surprise that less foster carers and a continuing lack of investment in alternative models of professionalised in-home care will continue to increase pressure on our residential care systems - meaning those children who could benefit from more intensive levels of support will find it increasingly difficult to access this due to a system overwhelmed by demand.

When you read this report and consider what can be done to better support Queensland's foster carers, I strongly encourage you to consider the undeniable fact that the cost of appropriately caring for our foster carers over the coming 10 years, is not nearly as high as the cost of a system without them.

**TOM ALLSOP**

Chief Executive Officer
PeakCare

# A message from QFCC's Chief Executive Officer & Principal Commissioner

## LUKE TWYFORD

Chief Executive Officer & Principal Commissioner Queensland Family & Child Commission (QFCC)

Foster carers play a vital role in the child protection system, offering stability, care, and love to children who are unable to live with their birth families. As someone whose parents were foster carers, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact that dedicated and compassionate foster families can have on the lives of children who have suffered abuse and maltreatment. Foster carers are the critical frontline warriors in our battle against many social issues, serving as the first step in a child's journey toward healing and growth.

Across our society, it is imperative that we recognise the importance of providing as many safe and nurturing bonds as possible for children in need. Every child deserves the chance to experience consistent, loving relationships that foster their growth and development. The bonds formed between foster carers and children can be transformative and bridge the gap between a child's past traumas and their future potential.

However, the landscape of foster care is facing significant challenges. Fewer people are choosing to become or remain foster carers, and this is putting additional strain on the child protection system. The reasons for this decline are multifaceted, and together with PeakCare, we invested in specialist demographic research to identify what can be done.

This report, and the associated analysis by The Demographics Group, shines a light into the future to help us steer a course. Our world has changed, and it is changing, and we must adjust traditional approaches to our new and emerging world.

The three-year-old taken into care yesterday will need a foster carer for at least the next 20 years, and it's up to us to find, recruit and support them.

# A message from The Demographics Group

**SIMON KUESTENMACHER**

Co-Founder & Director
The Demographics Group

Following the successful completion of the work for Victoria in November 2023, PeakCare and QFCC approached The Demographics Group (TDG) to complete a similar project specific to the Queensland foster carer market. Recognising the importance of a data-driven evidence base for informed decision-making, PeakCare and QFCC sought to understand how Queensland's changing demographic and socio-economic landscape may impact the foster care system.

At first glance, demographic data might suggest a great decade ahead for the recruitment of foster carers. After all, Queensland experiences very strong population growth in all age groups in the coming decade. The age cohort of foster children (0-17) grows at a much lower rate (+4 per cent) than the age cohort (18+) of potential foster carers (+17 per cent).

A closer look at demographic data shows a different picture. Rising costs of living, changing social trends, fewer available spare bedrooms, generational value shifts, an increased geographical separation of potential foster carers and foster children, and a declining middle-class suggest a diminishing pool of potential foster carers in Queensland.

In this environment, relying on old ways of recruiting foster carers is unlikely to be successful at the scale needed - therefore, systemic reform is essential. It is hoped these insights will provide PeakCare, its members, and the Government with a solid evidence base to drive significant improvements in this critical part of the child protection system.

# Contents

# Executive Summary

# Executive Summary

This report presents a comprehensive demographic analysis of foster carers in Queensland, highlighting the significant challenges and opportunities for the sector. Key findings include a decline in traditional foster carers, demographic shifts impacting availability, and the need for systemic reforms.

The report offers actionable opportunities to revitalise the foster care system, emphasising the importance of targeted recruitment, improved support systems, and greater flexibility for potential carers.

## ▲ KEY FINDINGS

### Big Picture Demographics

1. **Population Trends:** Queensland's overall population is growing, yet the pool of available foster carers is shrinking. This paradox is attributed to rising living costs, changing social trends, and fewer households with spare bedrooms.

2. **Generational Insights:**

   - **Gen Z:** Although their numbers are increasing, they are unlikely to contribute significantly to the foster carer pool due to later family formation trends.
   - **Millennials:** Despite being the largest growth cohort, their high workforce participation and financial pressures limit their availability for foster caring.
   - **Gen X:** This small generation faces multiple pressures from dependent children and aging parents, reducing their capacity to take on foster care roles.
   - **Baby Boomers:** This group presents potential but requires flexible foster care models to accommodate their lifestyle and health considerations.

### Foster Carer Personas

Nine typical foster carer personas were identified by PeakCare, each with unique challenges and opportunities:

- Empty Nesters
- Parents
- Single Income Families with Two Parents/Adults
- Same-sex Couples
- Faith-Based Carers
- Social Service Workers
- Teachers/Childcare Workers
- Healthcare Workers
- Volunteers/Unpaid Carers

These personas highlight the need for targeted messaging and support strategies to recruit and retain diverse foster carers.

# Opportunities

## ▲ BETTER SUPPORT FOR FOSTER CARERS

**1** **Adequate Foster Carer Support:** Increase financial support for foster carers to alleviate the cost burdens that deter prospective foster carers. This includes increasing allowances to meet the actual cost of care and providing superannuation payments on all foster carer allowance payments.

**2** **Adequate Agency Support:** Undertake a national baseline of foster carer support costs to identify opportunities for bringing Queensland's funding arrangements into line with other states and territories.

**3** **'Foster Friendly' workplaces:** Establish a foster care related leave entitlement for all Queensland Public sector employees.

**4** **Space to Care:** Consider practical measures to enable more Queenslanders to open their homes to care for children e.g., foster carer rental subsidies, mortgage support, house and contents insurance rebates etc.

## ▲ INNOVATIVE MODELS OF FOSTER CARE

**5** **Flexible Models:** Develop more flexible and contemporary foster care models that better align with the interests, values and capacity of identified growth cohorts.

**6** **Professionalised Models:** Expand the range and availability of professionalised model of home-based care through the establishment of a multi-portfolio innovation fund which includes, philanthropic, state and federal funding sources.

## ▲ IMPROVED APPROACHES TO RECRUITING FOSTER CARERS

**7** **Engagement with First Nations Communities:** Improve place-based recruitment and support for First Nations foster carers to help keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in community and on country, if they cannot be cared for by kin for a time.

**8** **Targeted Recruitment and Retention Strategies:** Use the demographic insights from this report to tailor recruitment and retention efforts towards the carer personas with the greatest growth trajectories and align messaging with identified generational value sets.

**9** **Systemic Reform:** Immediately undertake a comprehensive overhaul of Queensland's foster care recruitment and retention strategies to address the identified demographic tightening over the next 10-years.

**10** **Statewide visibility:** Facilitate statewide visibility of foster carer enquiries and conversions to assist in place-based recruitment and retention strategies that are guided by demographic and service demand forecasts.

# Conclusion

The Queensland foster care system is at a critical juncture. With traditional pools of foster carers drying up, it is imperative to adopt innovative and flexible approaches to foster carer recruitment and retention. Collaborative efforts involving all stakeholders are essential to revitalise this crucial part of the child protection system.

By addressing the identified demographic challenges and leveraging the opportunities presented by different carer personas, Queensland can build a more robust and responsive foster care system that meets the needs of children, young people, families and communities.

# Introduction

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# Introduction

## ▲ BACKGROUND

Australia has witnessed a notable rise in the number of children and young people entering out-of-home care over the past five years. Concurrently, the number of new foster carers has dwindled, and many existing foster carers are exiting the system. This imbalance has led to more children being placed in non-family-based care, such as residential care.

As of 30 June 2022, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reported the following:

- the number of available foster care households has remained static or decreased in most jurisdictions
- the number of foster care households exiting the system has increased in most jurisdictions
- the overall number of children in care increased by 1 per cent between 2019 and 2022
- the number of children and young people entering residential care has increased by 53% since 2017

**These trends are realising globally and across all jurisdictions at different paces.**

Queensland has seen its foster carer numbers remain relatively stable until recently, with residential care numbers doubling in the last five years...

**– HIGHER THAN ANY OTHER JURISDICTION IN AUSTRALIA**

## Factors Affecting Foster Carer Availability:

The post-COVID environment and the evolving nature of Australian households is believed to be impacting the willingness and ability of families or individuals to become foster carers (cost of living, property prices, all adults in the home working etc.).

The social, economic and demographical reasons behind the decline in peoples' willingness or ability to become or stay foster carers are not well researched in Australia or globally.

The 2023 Australian Child Maltreatment Study clearly identified the current out-of-home-care system is outdated and there is the need for differentiated models and a more contemporary approach to prevent the extinction of the traditional foster carer model.

## Purpose and Scope

This report, commissioned by PeakCare in partnership with the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC), aims to analyse demographic trends and their impact on the foster care system in Queensland. The goal is to provide a data-driven evidence base to inform decision-making and identify opportunities for revitalising Queensland's child protection system.

# The Foster Care Demographic Analysis Project

Commencing in early February 2024, The Demographic Group (TDG) researched, extracted and analysed the demographic and socio-economic variables that relate to the foster carer pool in Queensland, and provided insights into how these variables have changed and are likely to continue to change into the future.

The data is based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) remoteness statistical boundaries which are particularly relevant to Queensland due to the geographic dispersion of the population. The main data source is the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), including current and past Population and Housing Censuses.  Where appropriate, data is benchmarked against the national or Queensland averages for context and comparative purposes.

Data is also provided for First Nations populations where available.

**The following seven broad 'selection criteria' to becoming a foster carer were considered;**

1. 18 years of age or older (ideally 21 or over)
2. Able to hold a Blue Card
3. Spare bedroom (adequate available space)
4. Mentally, emotionally and physically fit to care
5. Financially stable position (ability to cover expenses until reimbursed)
6. Provide a safe and clean-living environment
7. Have time and able to be flexible with available time

**The following nine 'personas' of a typical foster carer were also explored:**

1. Empty nesters
2. Parents
3. Single income families with two parents/adults
4. Same-sex couples
5. Faith-based homes
6. Social service workers
7. Teachers and early child education and care workers
8. Healthcare workers
9. Volunteers and unpaid carers (aging parents, child with a disability etc.)

**The demographic analysis in this report includes:**

1. Big picture demographics that effects some of the key selection criteria to becoming a foster carer, and;
2. The nine personas of a typical foster carer.

Lastly, PeakCare and QFCC sought foster care agency input. A statewide forum was facilitated on 8 April 2024 with 22 Queensland organisations represented. The qualitative insights provided from sector representatives have been used to both validate and contextualise the demographic insights provided in this report.

# Main Findings

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# Main Findings

## ▲ DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

### Population

Despite strong population growth, Queensland is facing a shortage of traditional foster carers. This issue is not due to ineffective marketing campaigns but rather a result of demographic tightening. A systemic overhaul of Queensland's foster care sector will be needed to counter the alarming shrinkage of the pool of available foster carers.

At first glance, it might seem puzzling why Queensland is running out. The age group of foster children (0-17) is projected to grow by only 4 percent in the coming decade, while the potential foster carer cohort (aged 18+) is expected to grow by 17 percent. Despite this growth, the pool of foster carers is shrinking.

| 2024 | 5.56 m |
|------|--------|
| 2034 | 6.33 m |
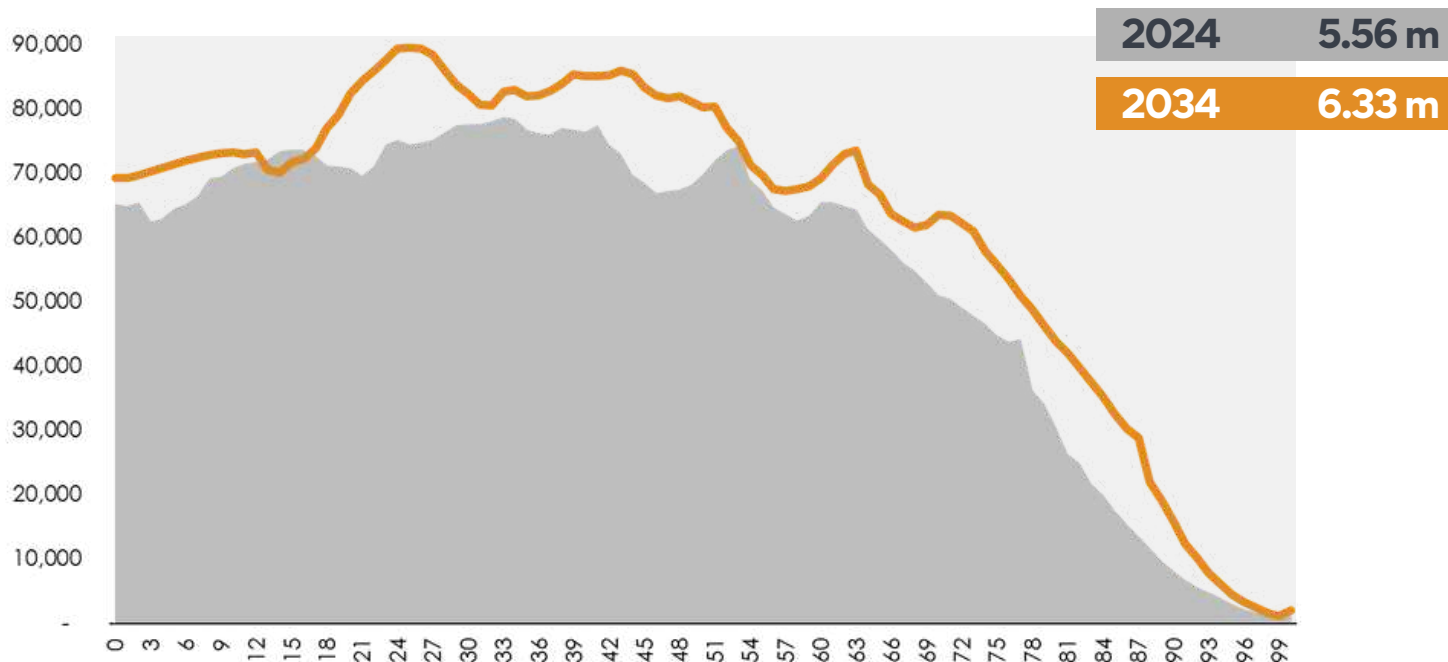
**Graphic 1:** Queensland population by age in 2024 and 2034
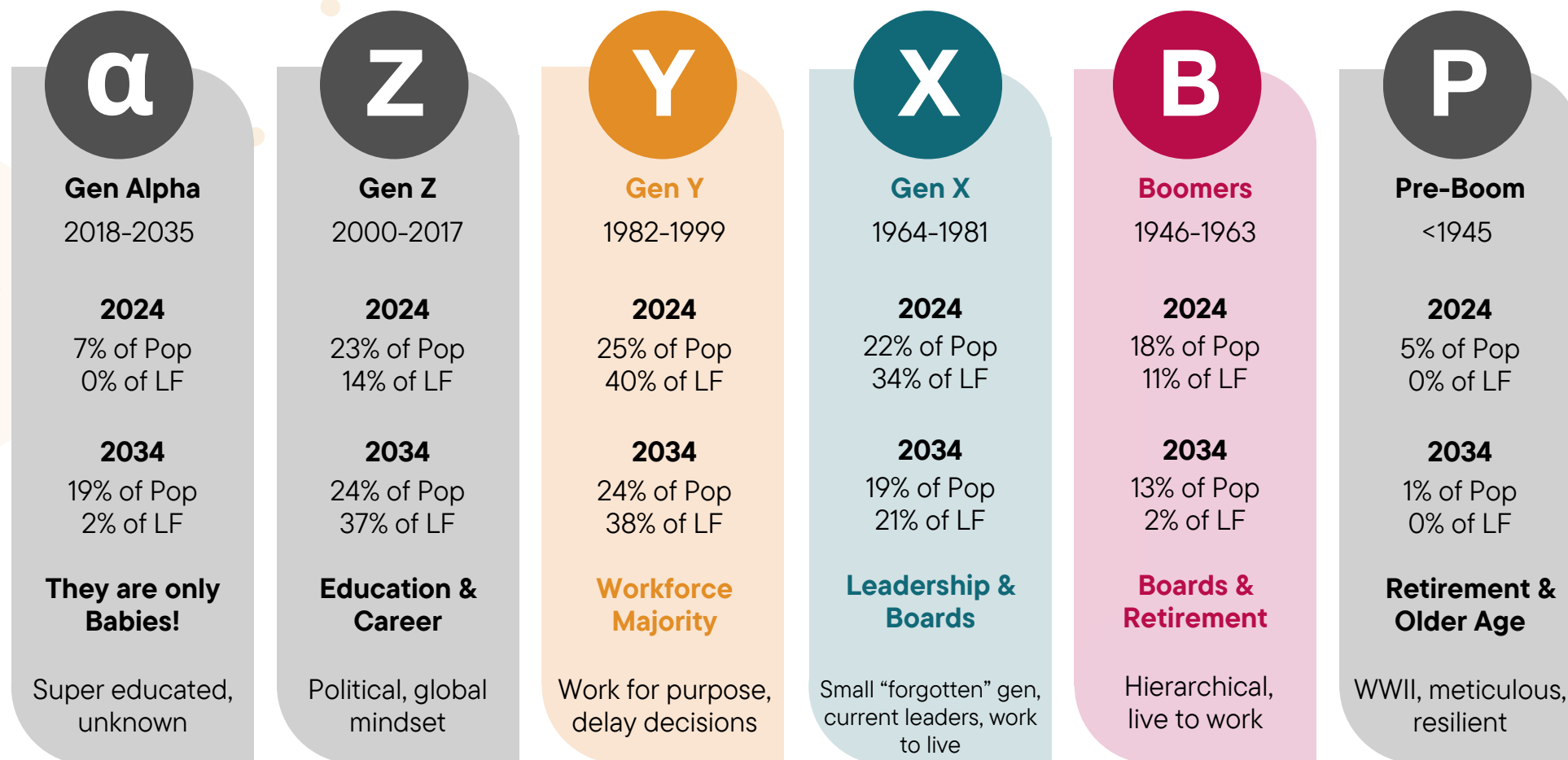
## ▲ GENERATIONAL INSIGHTS

### Gen Z

**Queensland will see a strong influx of younger adults in their 20s in the coming decade (graphic 2).** While this cohort are eligible to become foster carers, it is unlikely they will significantly contribute to the foster carer pool. Australians are starting families much later in life.

The median age of fathers has increased by five years since the 1970s, while the median age of mothers has increased by six years (graphic 3). Given this broader social trend of people starting families in their early 30s, relying on Gen Z individuals in their 20s as foster carers is unlikely to be a successful strategy. Compounding these issues are the financial challenges this generation will face with rising housing costs and increasing debts being incurred through the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS).
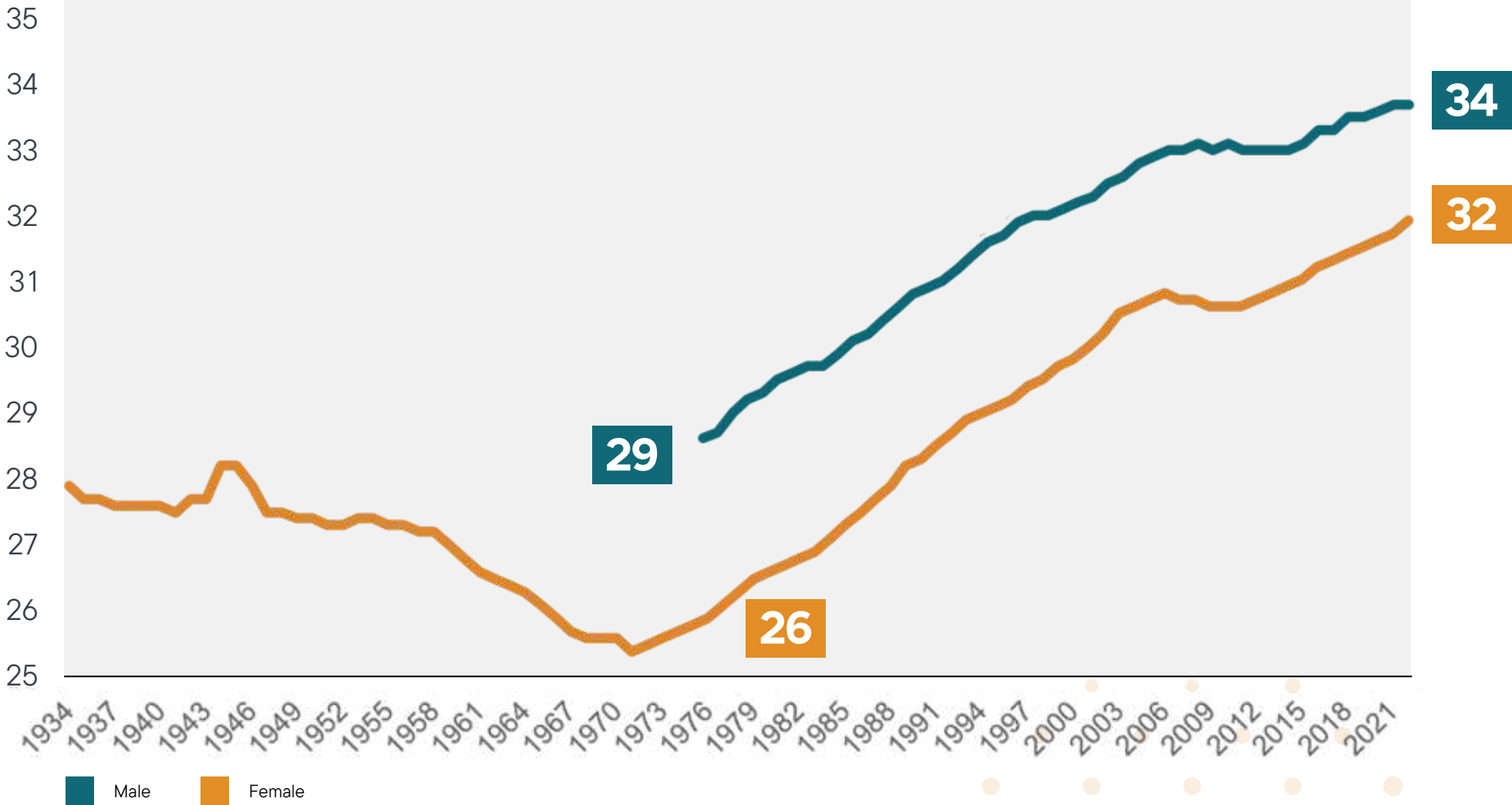
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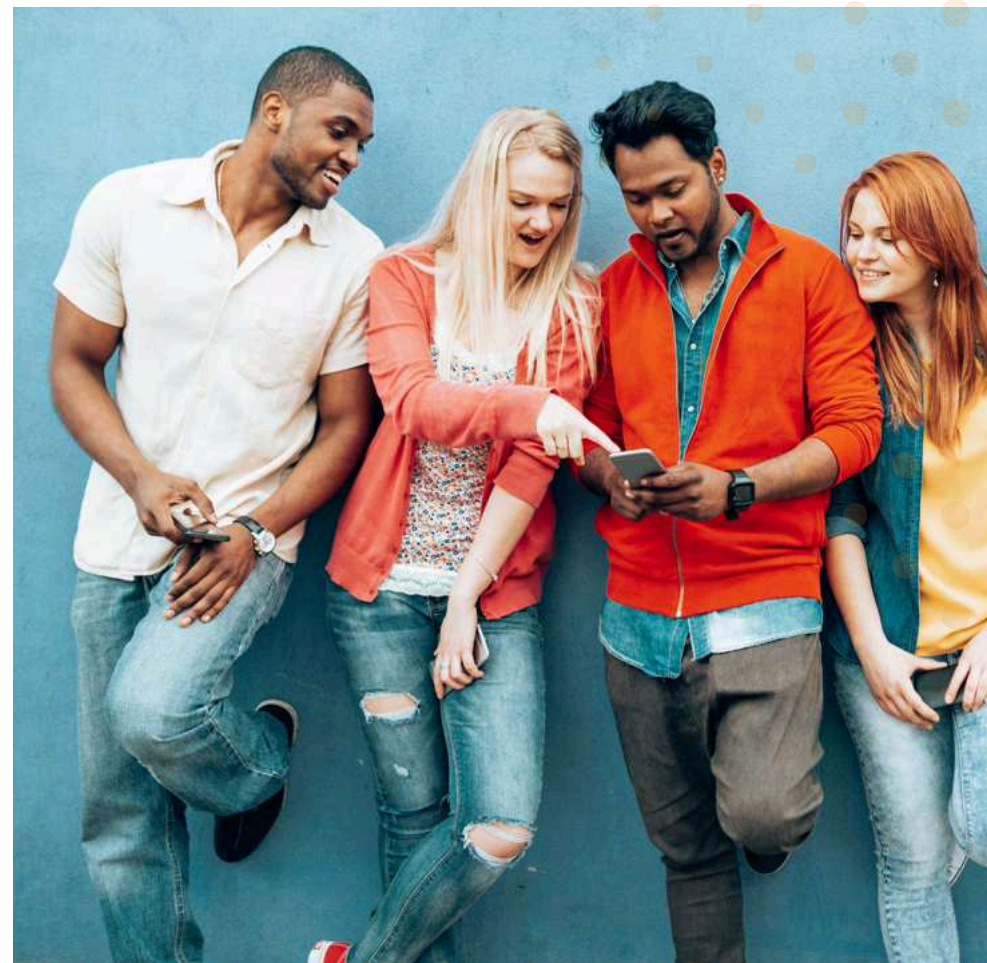
TDG has characterised Queensland's population into six generational categories for the purposes of expressing how each of the generations are likely to contribute to the foster carer pool based on where they fall within their life trajectory.

| **α** | **Z** | **Y** | **X** | **B** | **P** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gen Alpha** | **Gen Z** | **Gen Y** | **Gen X** | **Boomers** | **Pre-Boom** |
| 2018–2035 | 2000–2017 | 1982–1999 | 1964–1981 | 1946–1963 | <1945 |
| **2024** | **2024** | **2024** | **2024** | **2024** | **2024** |
| 7% of Pop | 23% of Pop | 25% of Pop | 22% of Pop | 18% of Pop | 5% of Pop |
| 0% of LF | 14% of LF | 40% of LF | 34% of LF | 11% of LF | 0% of LF |
| **2034** | **2034** | **2034** | **2034** | **2034** | **2034** |
| 19% of Pop | 24% of Pop | 24% of Pop | 19% of Pop | 13% of Pop | 1% of Pop |
| 2% of LF | 37% of LF | 38% of LF | 21% of LF | 2% of LF | 0% of LF |
| **They are only Babies!** | **Education & Career** | **Workforce Majority** | **Leadership & Boards** | **Boards & Retirement** | **Retirement & Older Age** |
| Super educated, unknown | Political, global mindset | Work for purpose, delay decisions | Small "forgotten" gen, current leaders, work to live | Hierarchical, live to work | WWII, meticulous, resilient |

**Graphic 2:** Queensland's population (Pop) and labour force (LF) by generation (2024 & 2034)

**Graphic 3:** Median age of parents at birth in Australia by gender from 1934 to 2022
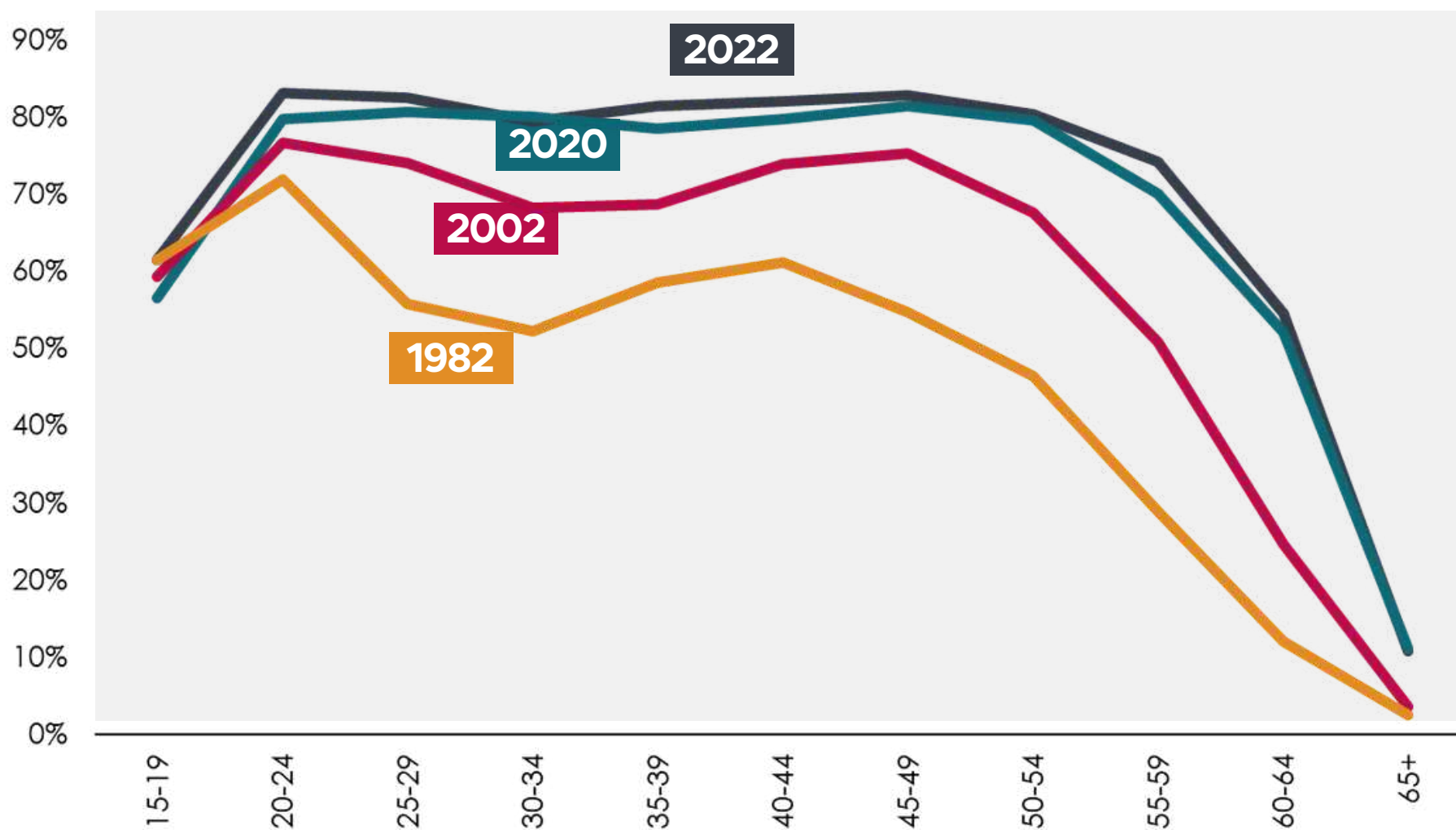
## Millennials

Millennials (also known as Gen Y) represent the largest growth cohort over the coming decade. As they enter their 30s and 40s, they are approaching middle age. Traditionally, the largest generation reaching the young family stage of the lifecycle would suggest a rise in the number of foster carers. However, this is not expected to be the case over the coming 10-years. Millennial families now rely on two (increasingly full-time) incomes to meet their financial needs, which include servicing HECS debts for any tertiary education they have undertaken. Over the past four decades, female workforce participation has steadily increased and is now at an all-time high (graphic 4). This high level of workforce participation means that Millennial families have little time to spare, making it unlikely that this cohort will significantly contribute to the pool of foster carers.

It will be challenging to convince Millennials to dedicate their limited spare time to the role of foster caring. Additionally, the very high cost of living means that few Millennials can afford homes with spare bedrooms. Millennial families often settle wherever they can afford a family sized home, leading to increased socio-economic segregation.

Wealthier Millennials tend to purchase homes in the middle suburbs of Queensland's largest cities. However, even high-income earners are being pushed to their financial limits and may be reluctant to take on the additional responsibilities of foster care.

**Graphic 4:** Female labour force participation by age

Financially less well-off Millennial families are being pushed to the urban fringe. In practice, this means poorer Queenslanders spend more time commuting, further limiting their availability to volunteer as foster carers. This combination of financial strain and time constraints makes it unlikely that Millennials will significantly bolster the pool of foster carers.

# Gen X

People born in the 1960s and 1970s belong to Generation X. Gen X is an exceptionally small generation, born during a period of historically low migration intake and the introduction of the contraceptive pill. With some now in their 50s, this cohort will see relatively little growth in the coming decade.

The next ten years will be particularly challenging for Gen X, with pressure coming from three different angles, suggesting further reluctance to become foster carers. Firstly, many still have financially dependent children, even if some may have already moved out of the parental home. Secondly, they increasingly face financial or caregiving responsibilities for their aging parents. Thirdly, they are the generation most likely to have recently upgraded their family homes during a period of exceptionally low interest rates.

These three pressure points make the 2020s likely the most challenging decade for Gen X, making it unlikely that they will significantly contribute to the pool of foster carers.

# Baby Boomers

The strongest relative population growth in the coming decade will occur among those in their 70s—retiring Baby Boomers (graphic 1). This cohort presents a promising opportunity for the foster care system in Queensland, though it does come with significant challenges.

To appeal to Baby Boomers, foster care must be packaged attractively, with flexibility being key. Baby Boomers have a history of reinventing each stage of their lifecycle, and retirement will be no exception. In 10 years, even the youngest Baby Boomers will be of retirement age.

With a reluctance to downsize, Baby Boomers typically still live in large family homes, making them the cohort with the highest number of spare bedrooms. Recent trends show that Baby Boomers often remain engaged with work longer, gradually transitioning into retirement by reducing their workload over several years. This approach allows them to draw an income while increasing their spare time.

Finding foster carers in their 70s who are in good health might be challenging, as this is typically when chronic health conditions begin to emerge (graphic 5).
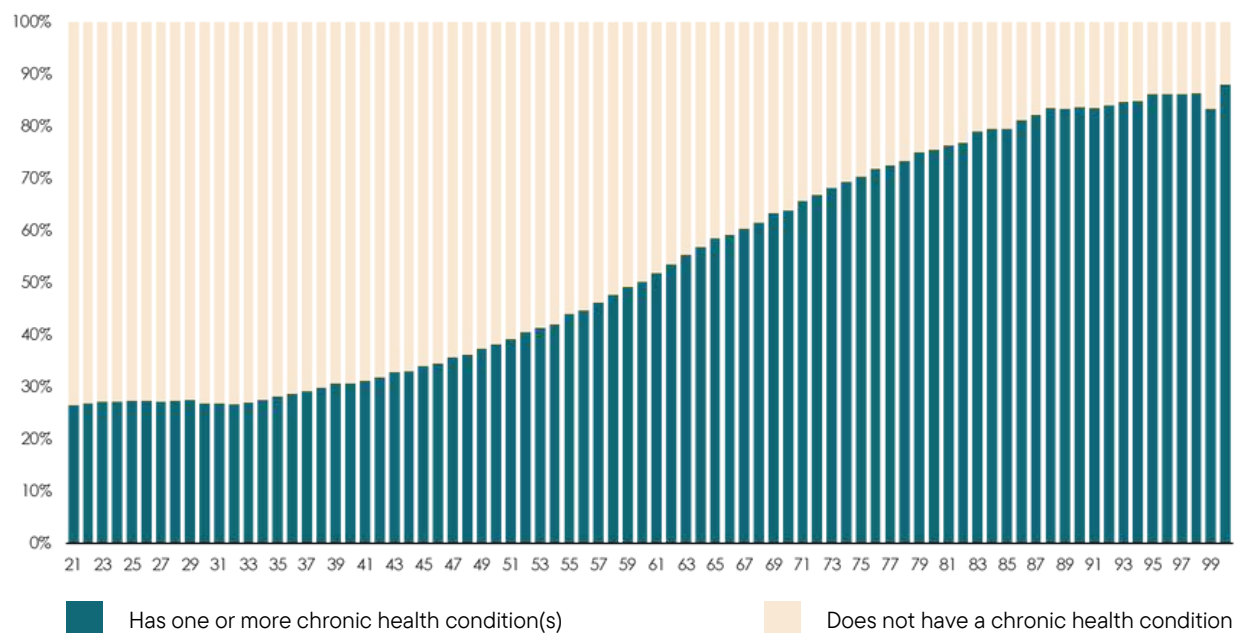


**Graphic 5:** Proportion of population with or without chronic health conditions by age in Queensland

Legend: Has one or more chronic health condition(s) — Does not have a chronic health condition

Targeting this age group is a consideration though as those aged in their early 70s is when volunteering peaks in the lifecycle (graphic 6).



**20**    **40**    **60**    **80**

**17**    **45**    **57**    **74**

Volunteer — — Provided unpaid assistance

**Graphic 6:** Share of population by age who volunteer or provide unpaid care
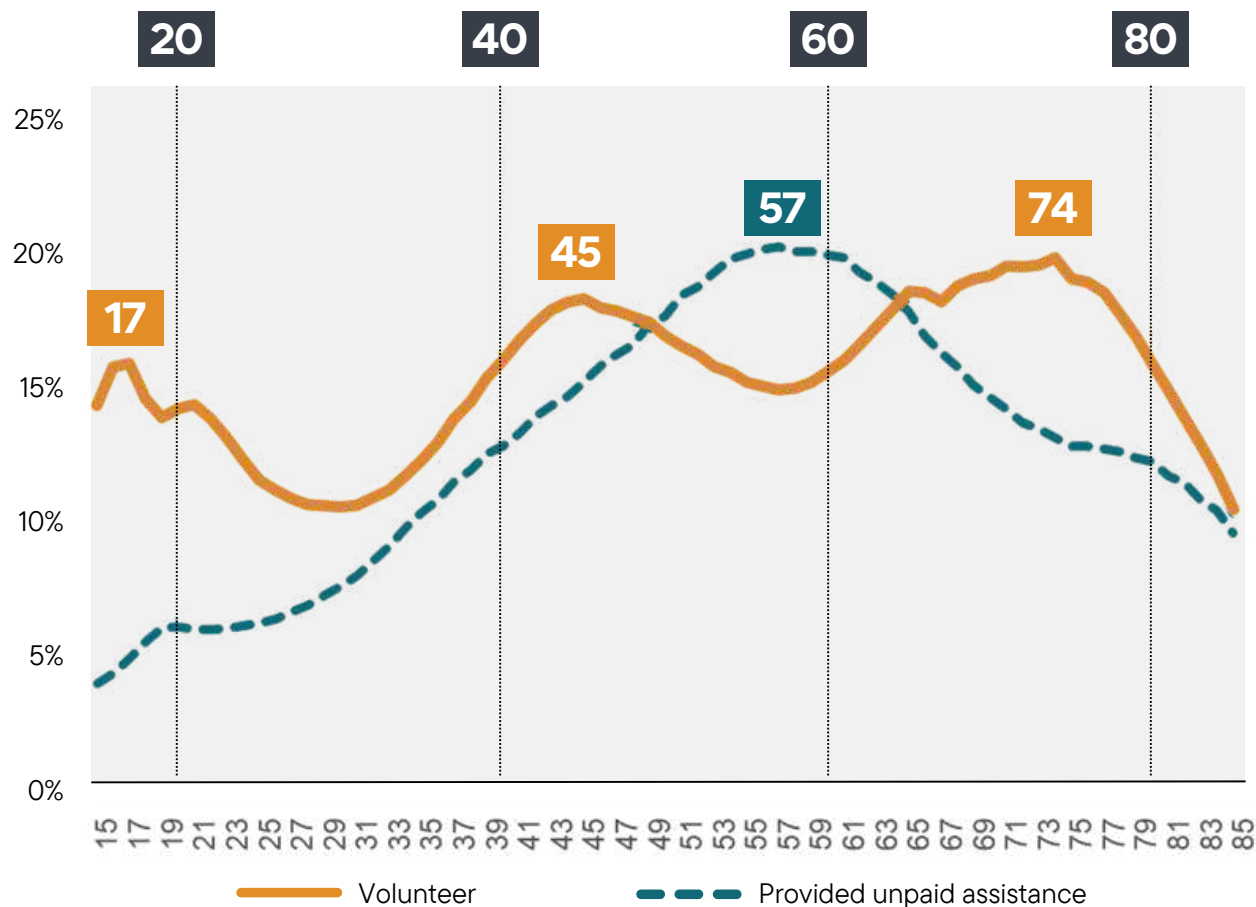
Baby Boomers as a group will likely be reluctant to commit to long-term fostering. They see the 2020s as their golden years, a time to enjoy the fruits of their labour. Many are eager to travel and spend time with their grandchildren, who are now arriving in significant numbers.

To effectively engage Baby Boomers, opportunities should align with their lifestyles. They might be more inclined to serve as respite carers and should be able to do so according to their own schedules.

To attract Baby Boomers, it is essential to fully operate on their terms, providing flexibility and accommodating their desire for a balanced, fulfilling retirement.

Most foster care agencies sighted new carer enquiries as having remained **about the same** or **decreased** in the last three years. When asked what they thought has contributed to this they said...

*"More people work, complexity of children is greater, people have busy lives and the department's expectation of things like appointments is much higher. It makes foster care not an option for many families"*

*"Cost of living is a key issue which means there are not as many stay at home carers as both adults are working"*

*"Unable to reach enquiries after info sessions. People think it's a paid job"*

*"Financial pressure - can't afford 4 bed house. Can't find them to rent"*

*"Child having their own room"*

**Has your agency experienced either an increase or decrease in foster carer enquiries over the past three years?**

Small increase 18.2%

Significant decrease 31.8%

About the same 22.7%

Small decrease 27.3%
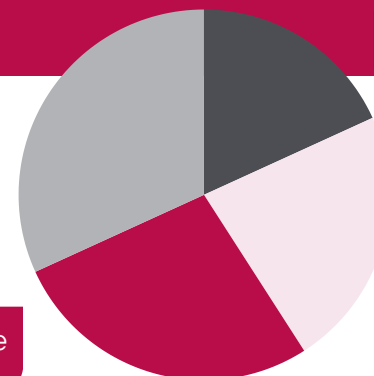
# Geographic and Workforce Dynamics

▲ **REMOTENESS REGIONS OF QUEENSLAND**

Below is the geography of Queensland as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) remoteness regions (and based on Statistical Area 2 boundaries).



Legend:
- Inner Regional Australia
- Major Cities of Australia
- Outer Regional Australia
- Remote Australia
- Very Remote Australia

# ▲ POPULATION GROWTH CLUSTERS

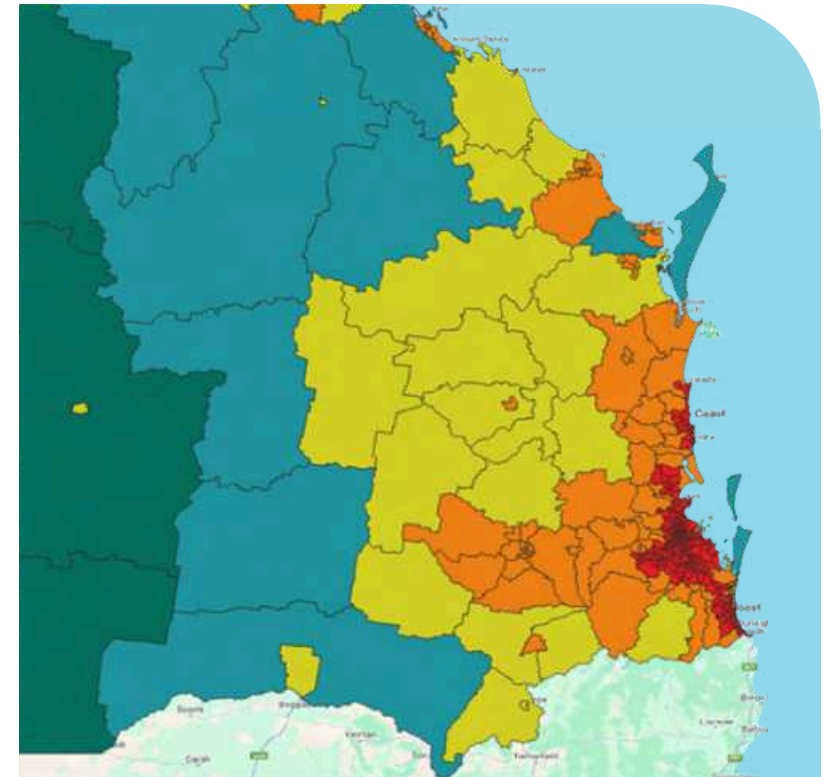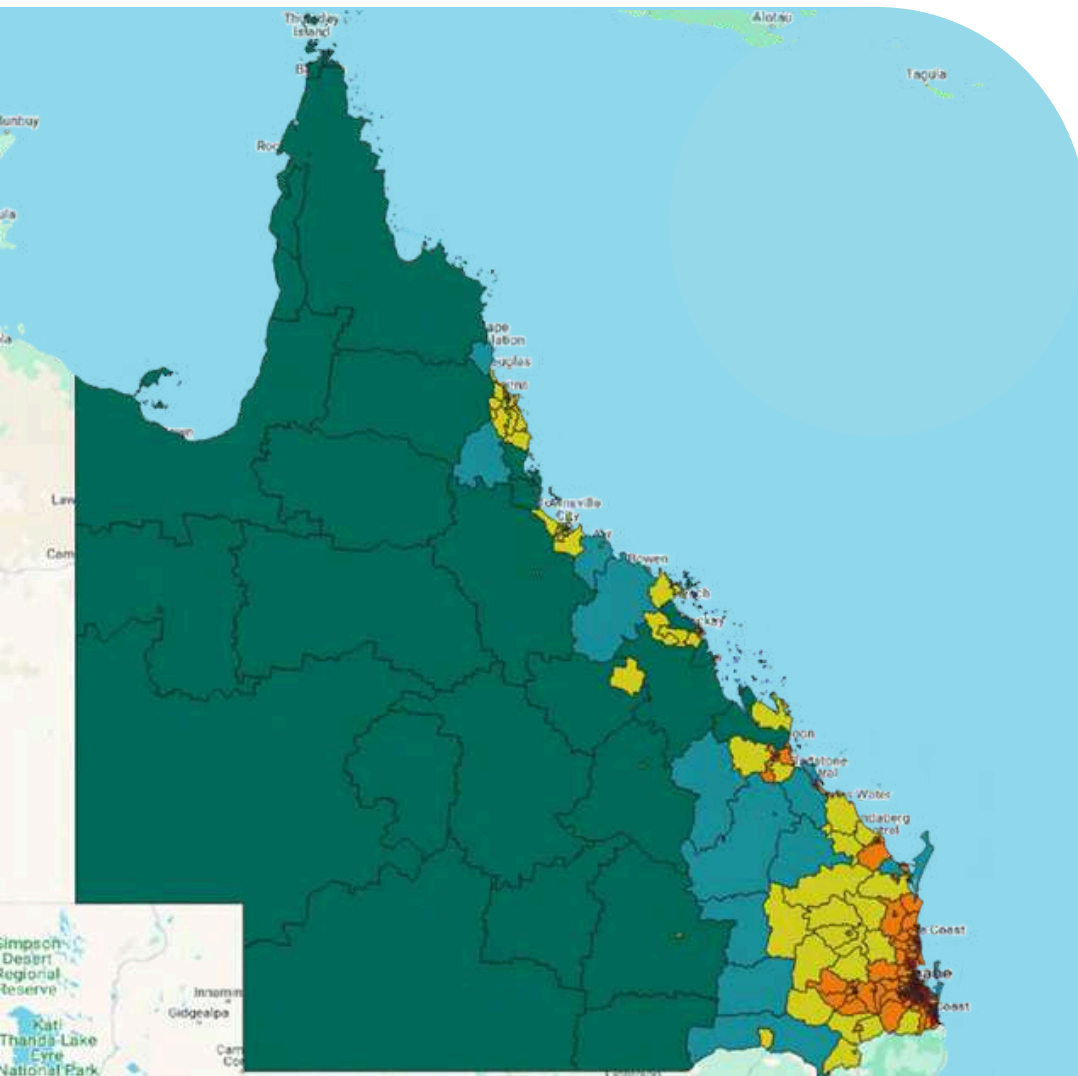**New migrants tend to settle near universities or major job centres (cities), contributing to two thirds of population growth. Much of the migrant population (more than 3 in 4) falls within the age range of 18-39 and are unlikely to consider a foster caring role.**

In the coming decade, strong growth is anticipated on the urban fringes across Queensland, where young Millennial families are expected to move into family-sized homes (graphic 7). However, this presents a geographic mismatch, as foster carers and children entering out-of-home care are segregated geographically.



**Queensland**

**Brisbane**

Less than 2%     2% - 7%
-2% - 0%          More than 7%
0% - 2%
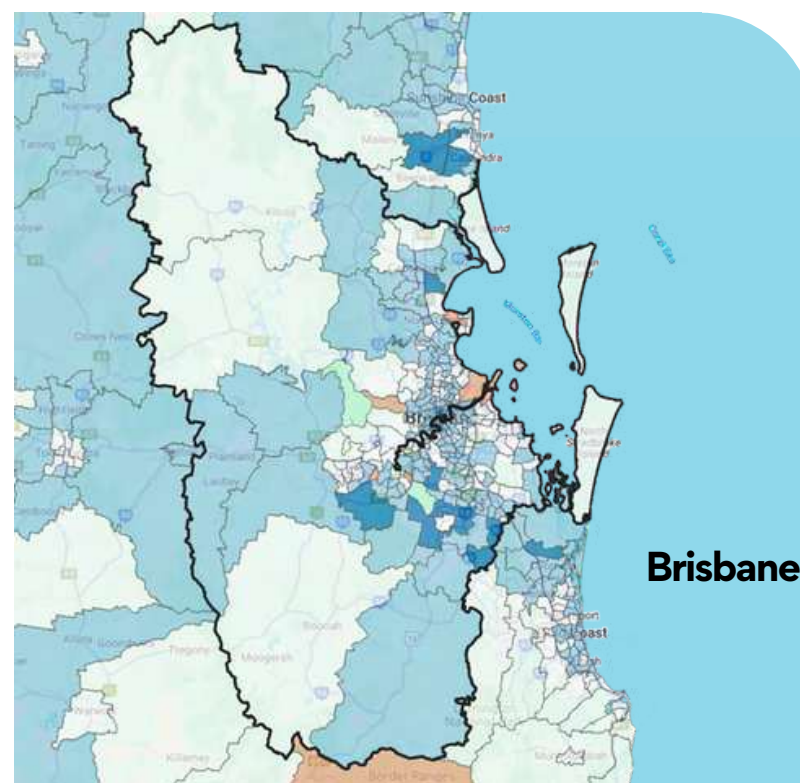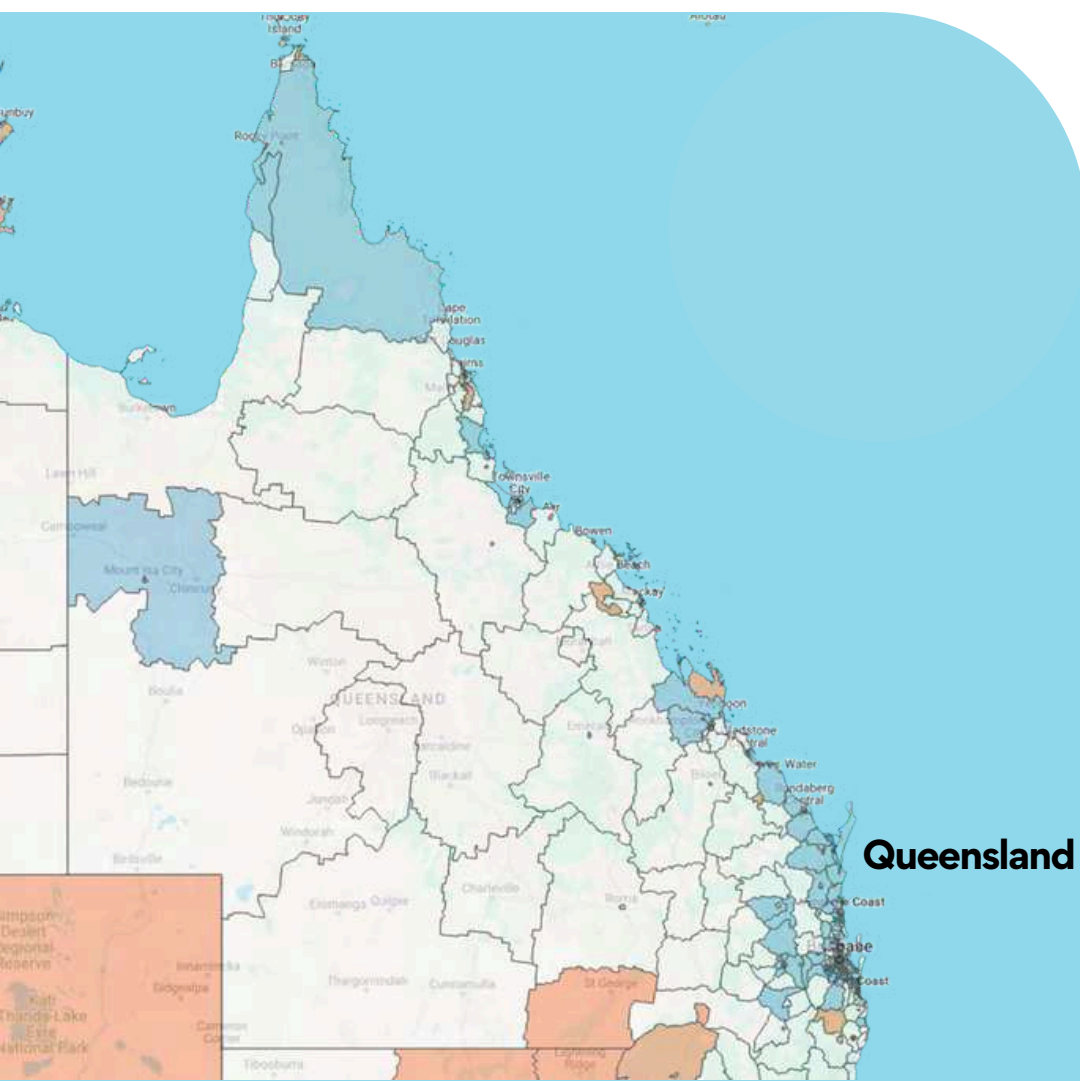
**Graphic 7:** Population change June 2021 to June 2022 by SA2

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# Workforce

**Many foster carers invest their own financial resources into providing care.** Due to rising costs of living, Queensland's middle- and lower-class households often do not perceive themselves as having additional resources to spare. With the number of spare bedrooms declining across the state, adding another person to the household may be seen as impractical, especially if space is limited.

Over the past four decades, more households have relied on dual incomes, resulting in fewer households where one parent, traditionally the mother, is home most of the time. Financial pressures also lead to fewer available hours in the day, with potential foster carers feeling they may not have the time to adequately meet the needs of children in their care.

Furthermore, Queensland's workforce is undergoing a large shift, with fewer workers earning middle-income wages see (skill level 3 in graphic 9) and more earning higher wages (skill level 1 in graphic 9). This erosion of the middle class, coupled with rising living costs (one example in graphic 10), could mean that only higher-income earners may perceive themselves as having the financial flexibility to take on additional caring responsibilities.

The restructuring of Queensland's workforce poses challenges for the recruitment of foster carers. Higher-income earners, who are more likely to have financial flexibility, increasingly live in different geographic areas from low-income earners, who are more likely to contribute to the demand on the child protection system. This geographic division further complicates the recruitment of foster carers.

ABS data categorises the skill level of a person's occupation. Level one is the highest level of skill and level five is the lowest level of skill. The skill level is determined from the characteristics of the person's occupation, rather than the skill level of the person themselves.
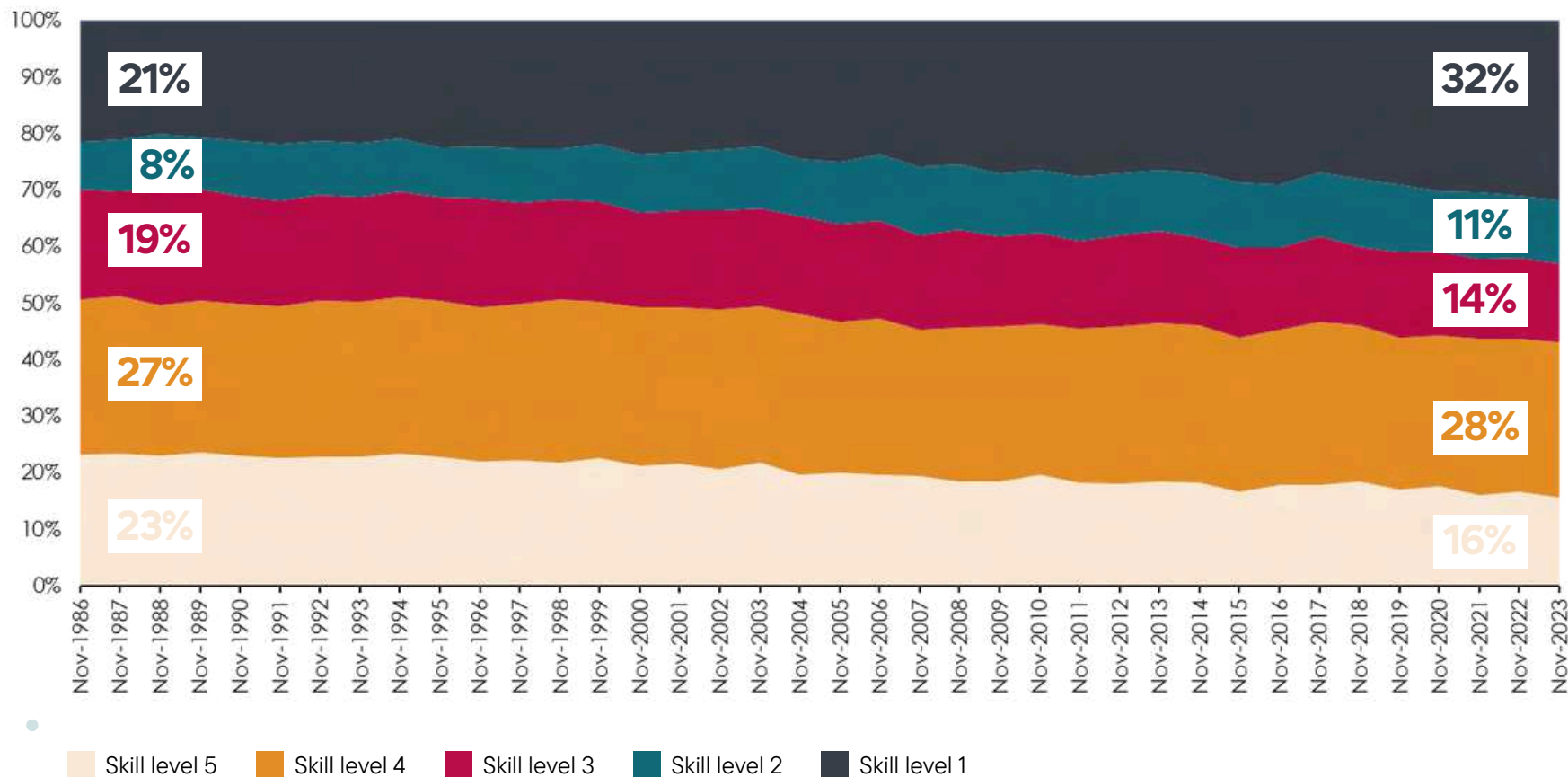


**Graphic 8:** Workforce in Queensland by skill level from Nov 1987 to Nov 2023
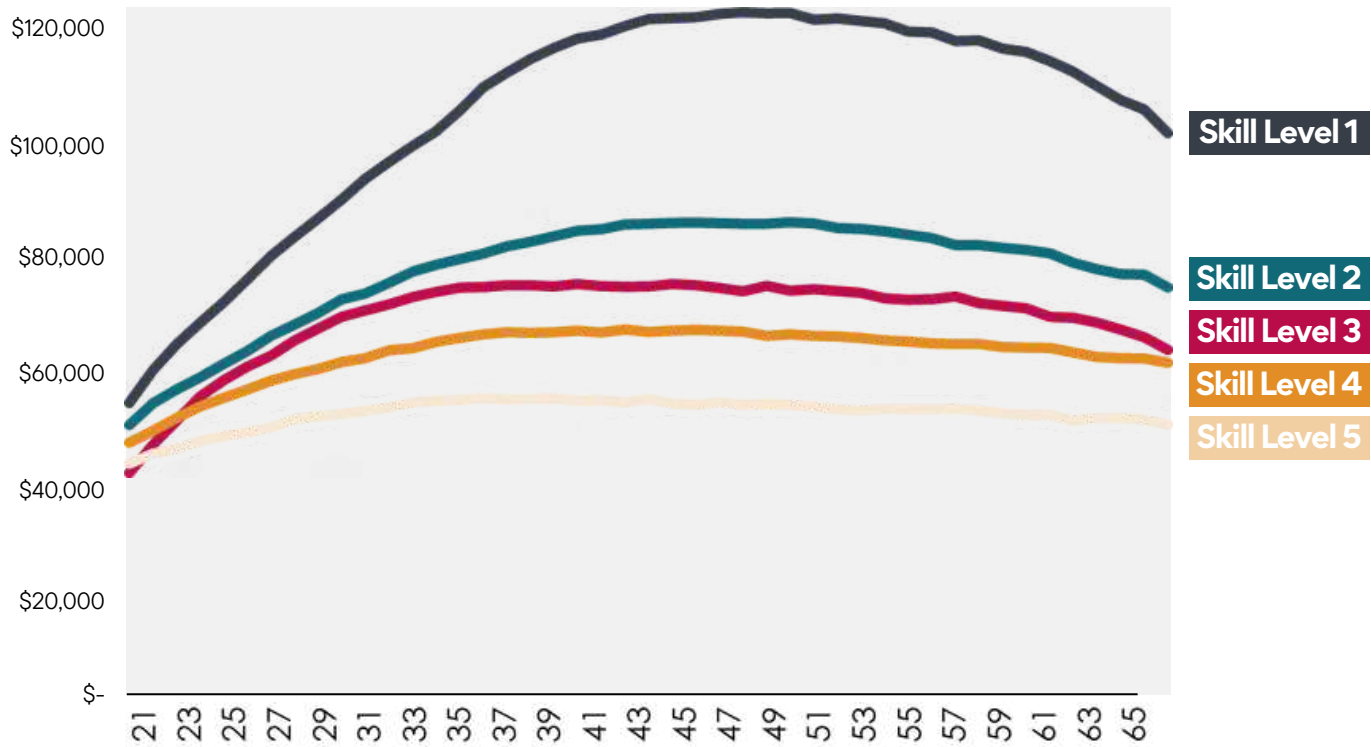
**Graphic 9:** Median income for full-time employed workers in Australia by age and skill level



**Graphic 10:** Employee households in Australia: Mortgage interest charges, annual movement (in %)

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## AGENCY CHECK POINT

**Most foster care agencies sighted carers leaving the system has remained about the same or increased in the last three years. When asked what they thought has contributed to this they said...**

*"Exhaustion with all the appointments"*

*"Seeing more carers wanting to offer short breaks and not primary"*

*"Increase in time needed for support, needing to be available 24/7 but can't to needing to work"*

*"Increase is caring responsibility and personal health"*

*"Cost of living pressures. No family support to help with care, lack of support with short break care. No respite available anymore"*

**Has your agency seen either an increase or decrease in the number of foster carers exiting in the past three years?**

Significant decrease 11.1%

Significant increase 11.1%

Small decrease 11.1%

Small increase 27.8%

About the same 38.9%

31
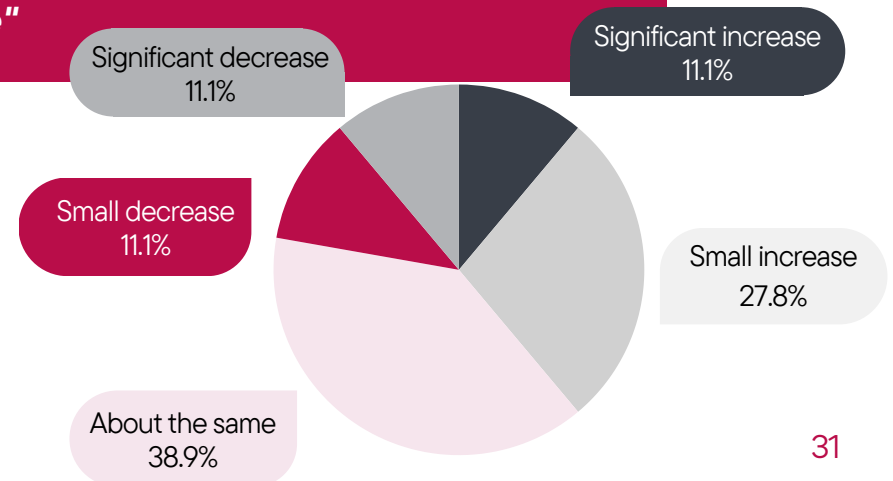
# First Nations and Cultural Diversity

## ▲ FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are significantly over-represented in the foster care system. While Census data on Foster Children is imperfect, it provides a general perspective of this over-representation.

First Nations children and young people (aged 0-17) represent nine per cent of all children but account for 44% of all foster children. Government data on the actual number and share of First Nations children is higher.

Addressing the challenge of finding adequate care for First Nations children is pressing and complex in Queensland. Over the last decade, the number of Queenslanders identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander has significantly increased across all age groups (graphic 11).
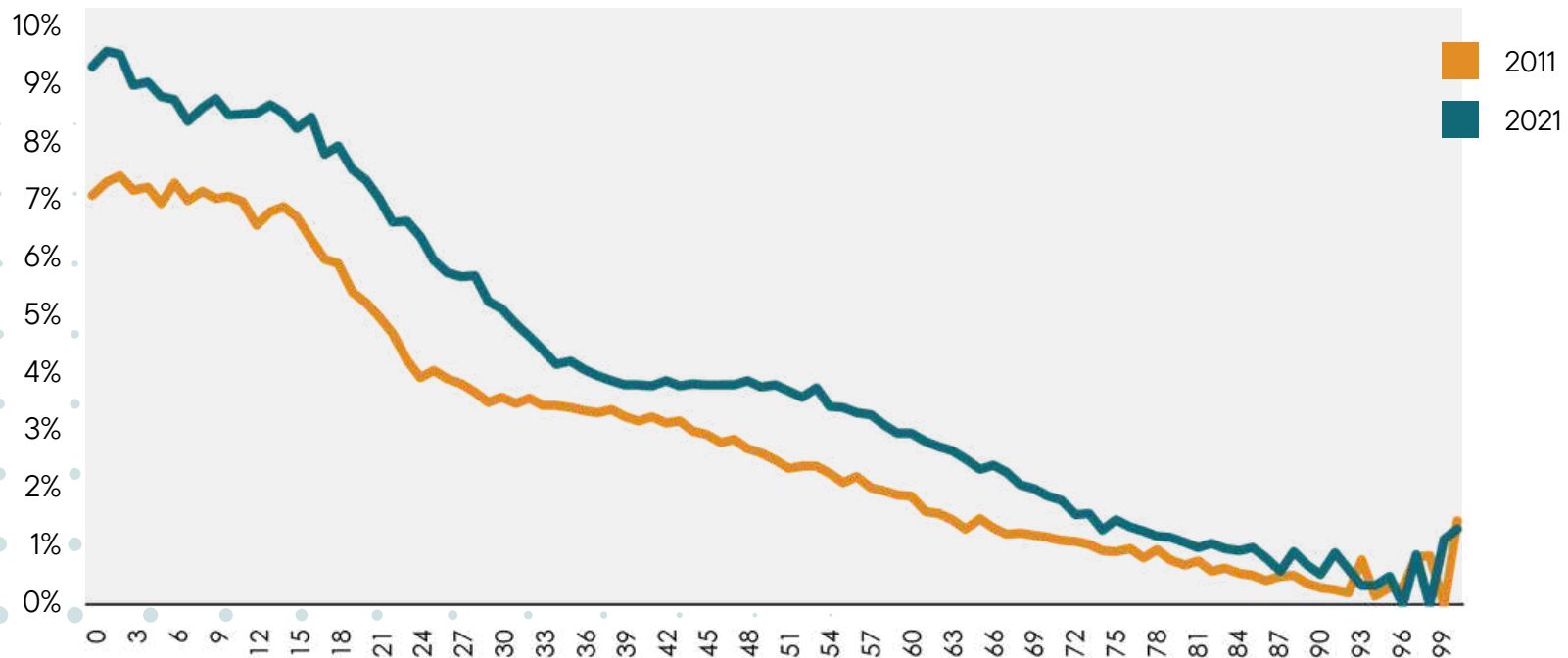


**Graphic 11:** Share of population by age identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in Queensland

# ▲ PERCENTAGE POPULATION FIRST NATIONS

This trend potentially indicates an opportunity to identify an increased pool of First Nations foster carers. Becoming a foster carer could be a critical step in closing the gap and addressing the disadvantages faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences of disadvantage have multiple intersecting origins, including the impacts of colonisation which have led to dispossession and inter-generational trauma, which can be clearly evidenced through income and education gaps, and the amplification of these gaps for individuals living in remote locations (as seen in graphics 13 and 14).
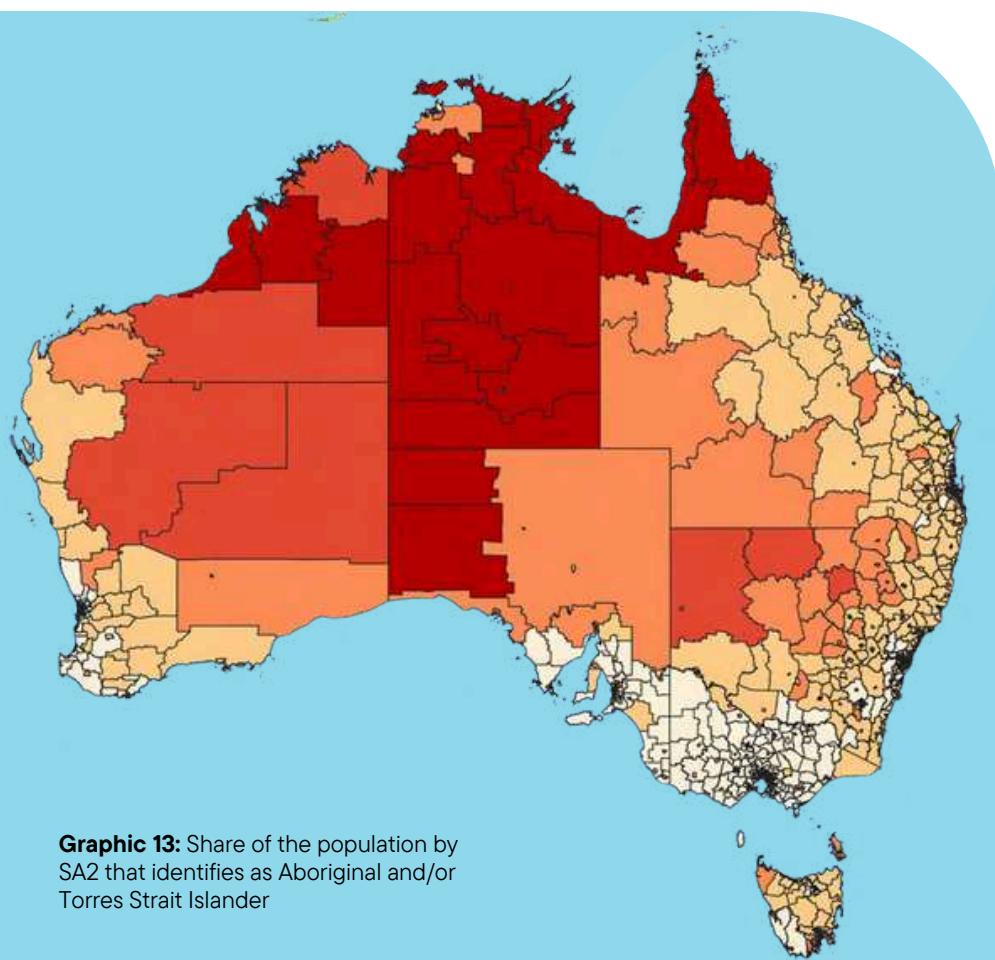


**Graphic 13:** Share of the population by SA2 that identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



**Percentage population First Nations**

| | |
|---|---|
| 0 - 3 | 30 - 50 |
| 3 - 10 | 50 - 100 |
| 10 - 30 | |

33
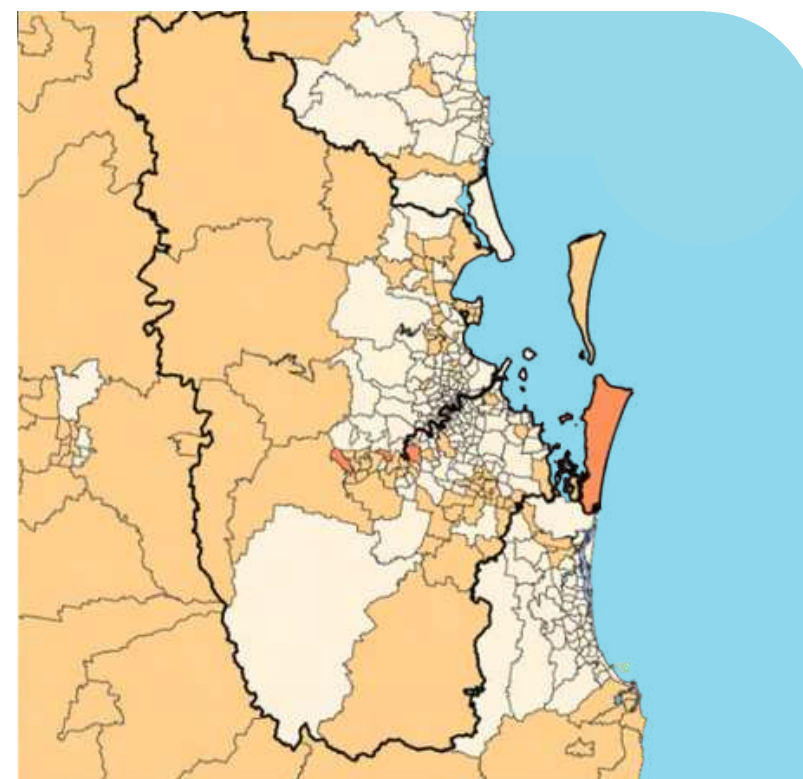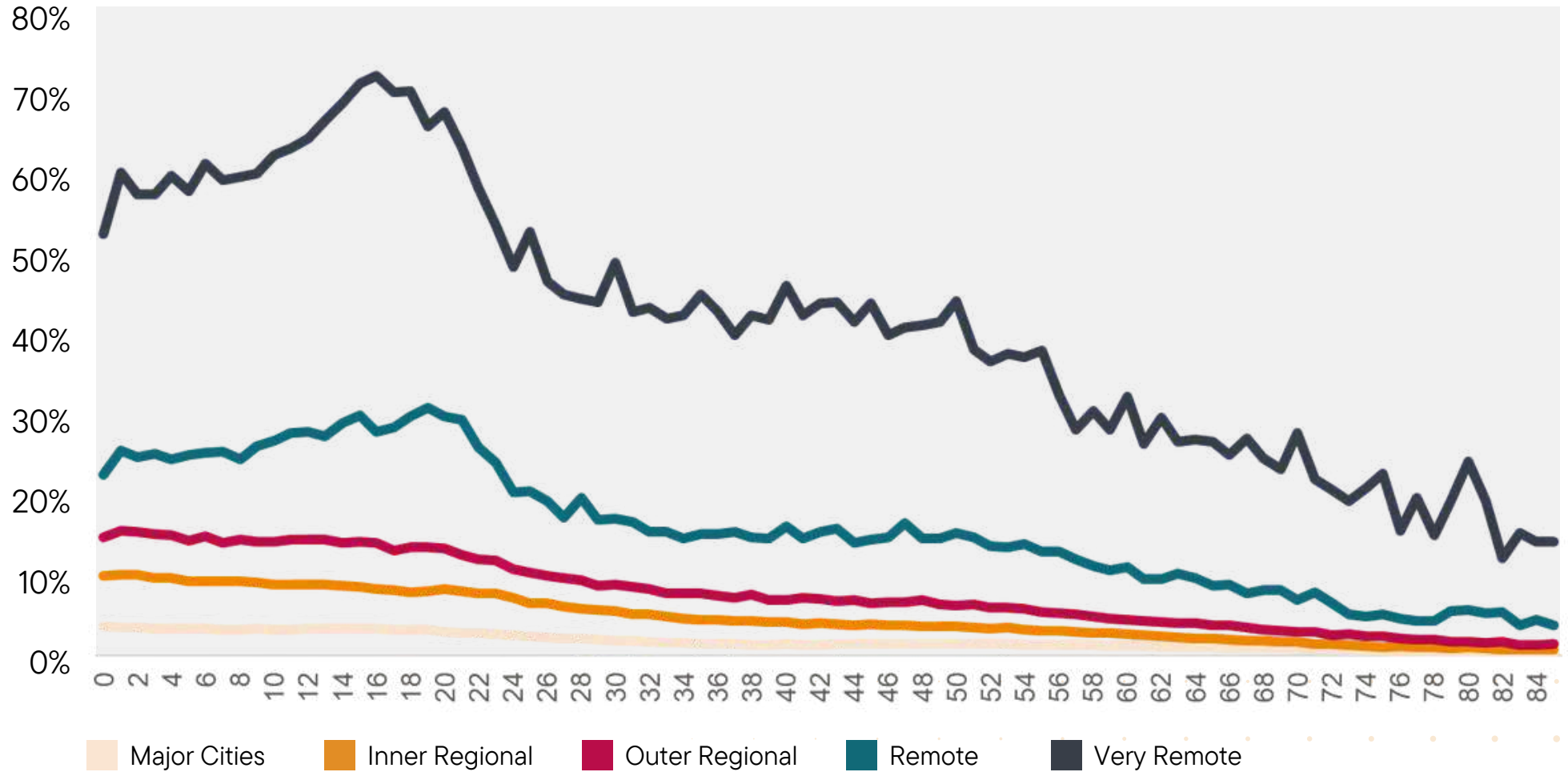
**Graphic 14:** Share of population by age identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in Queensland by remoteness area

Unless there is a systemic shift, the status quo of remote living resulting in economic disadvantage will remain in Queensland.

# Cultural Diversity

Queensland is an increasingly culturally diverse population. Indian- and Chinese-born Queenslanders doubled in number over the last decade (graphic 15) and more households speak a language other than English at home (graphic 16).

With this demographic shift, it is imperative that the foster care system and the sector as a whole, prioritises understanding and embracing non-western cultures and ways of living and working. By recognising and valuing diversity, we need to create a more effective foster care system that meets the needs of Queensland's increasingly diverse population.

| Rank | Country of birth | Population 2011 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Australia | 3,192,114 | 74% |
| 2. | New Zealand | 192,028 | 4.4% |
| 3. | England | 179,377 | 4.2% |
| 4. | South Africa | 35,529 | 0.8% |
| 5. | India | 30,281 | 0.7% |
| 6. | Philippines | 29,469 | 0.7% |
| 7. | China | 27,052 | 0.6% |
| 8. | Scotland | 24,026 | 0.6% |
| 9. | Germany | 21,059 | 0.5% |
| 10. | Vietnam | 16,161 | 0.4% |
| | Total Qld | 4,320,769 | |

| Rank | Country of birth | Population 2021 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Australia | 3,679,877 | 72% |
| 2. | New Zealand | 208,591 | 4.1% |
| 3. | England | 191,721 | 3.7% |
| 4. | India | 71,845 | 1.4% |
| 5. | China | 55,709 | 1.1% |
| 6. | Philippines | 51,570 | 1.0% |
| 7. | South Africa | 49,677 | 1.0% |
| 8. | Vietnam | 24,430 | 0.5% |
| 9. | Scotland | 22,826 | 0.4% |
| 10. | Germany | 21,020 | 0.4% |
| | Total Qld | 5,144,201 | |

**Graphic 15:** Ten most common countries of birth in Queensland in 2011 and 2021

| Rank | Language spoken at home | Population 2011 | |
|------|-------------------------|-----------------|------|
| 1. | English | 3,675,958 | 85% |
| 2. | **Mandarin** | **3,8116** | **0.9%** |
| 3. | Cantonese | 22,258 | 0.5% |
| 4. | Vietnamese | 21,852 | 0.5% |
| 5. | Italian | 21,711 | 0.5% |
| 6. | German | 16,352 | 0.4% |
| 7. | Spanish | 15,602 | 0.4% |
| 8. | Hindi | 13,188 | 0.3% |
| 9. | Japanese | 13,086 | 0.3% |
| 10. | Samoan | 12,809 | 0.3% |
| | **Total Qld** | **4,320,769** | |

| Rank | Language spoken at home | Population 2021 | |
|------|-------------------------|-----------------|------|
| 1. | English | 4,151,206 | 81% |
| 2. | **Mandarin** | **83,607** | **1.6%** |
| 3. | Vietnamese | 31,370 | 0.6% |
| 4. | Punhabi | 30,873 | 0.6% |
| 5. | Spanish | 29,642 | 0.6% |
| 6. | Cantonese | 27,437 | 0.5% |
| 7. | Korean | 21,904 | 0.4% |
| 8. | Hindi | 21,344 | 0.4% |
| 9. | Tagalog | 20,603 | 0.4% |
| 10. | Italian | 17,989 | 0.3% |
| | **Total Qld** | **5,144,201** | |

**Graphic 16:** Ten most common languages spoken at home in Queensland in 2011 and 2021

When asked **what trends** agencies had experienced or observed in relation to the recruitment, capacity and retention of foster carers, they said...

*"The general trend is definitely the [increased] length of time from application to approval"*

*"Seeing more carers wanting to offer short breaks and not primary"*

*"Definitely see highest number of [carers] leaving within their first 12 months"*

*"Foster care isn't spoken about in the positive way it once was"*

*"Lack of transparent training and education prior to approval – therefore a limited understanding of the role of the foster carer: level of decision making, reunification, parental rights. Motivation"*

*"A consistent trend of people dropping out after training but before completing homework/reflections"*

# Foster Care Personas

Despite strong population growth the demographic analysis is showing a tightening of Queensland's traditional foster carer pool. PeakCare tasked TDG with exploring nine typical foster carer personas – individuals who typically respond to attraction or marketing activities and are more likely to make take up the opportunity to become a foster care household.

**Empty Nesters**

**Parents**

**Single Income Families with Two Parents/Adults**

**Same-sex Couples**

**Faith-based Carers**

**Social Service Workers**

**Teachers/Childcare Workers**

**Healthcare Workers**

**Volunteers/Unpaid Carers**

**Nov 2013 - Nov 2023**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Jobs grown:** | **+601,000** |
| **Jobs contracted:** | **-23,000** |
| **Net jobs added:** | **578,000** |

Wholesale Trade

Mining

Rental/ Hiring & Real Estate

Manufacturing

Prof./ Scientific/ Tech.

Construction

Public Admin & Safety

Financial & Insurance

Agriculture/ Forestry & Fishing

Other Services

Info Media & Telecoms

**Queensland is home to 2.8m jobs**

Healthcare & Social Assistance

Education & Training

Accom. & Food

Transport/ Postal/ Warehouse

Retail Trade

Admin & Support

Arts & Recreation

Electricity/ Gas/Water & Waste
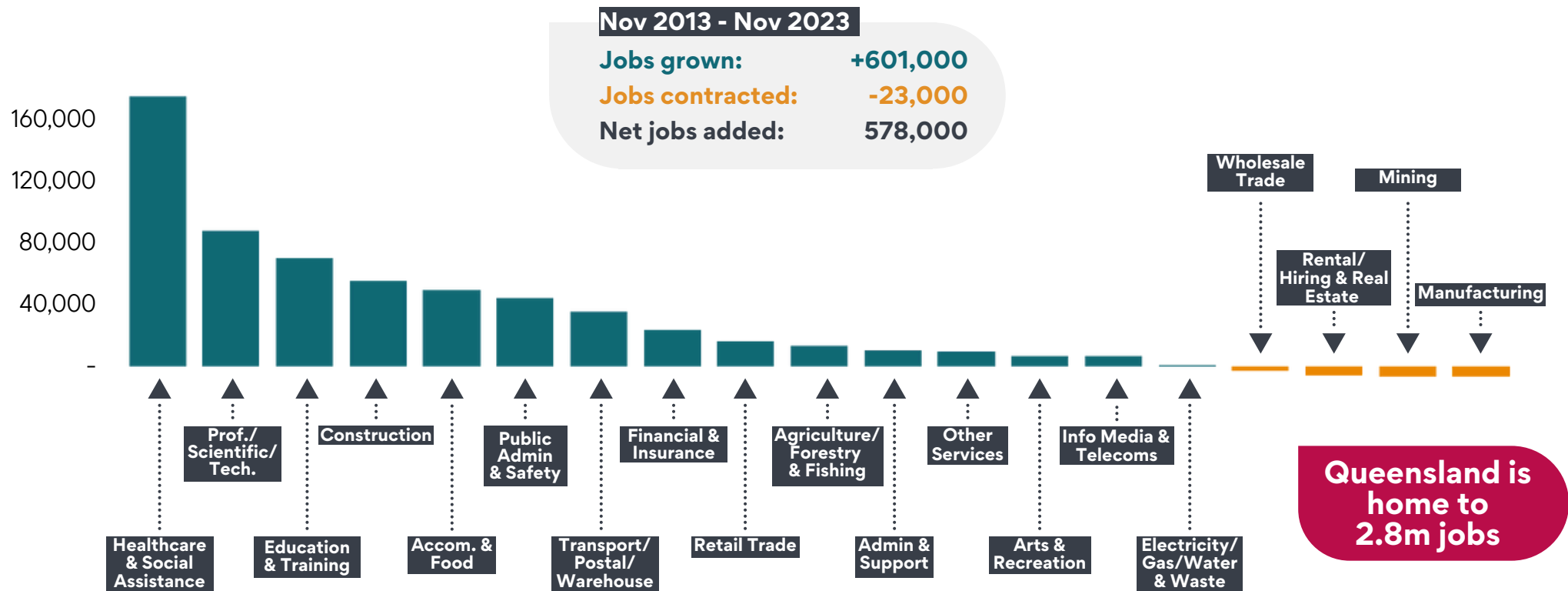
**Graphic 17:** Jobs ('000) added/lost by industry in Queensland between 2013 and 2023

In Queensland, job growth continues to rise, driven by specific industries. Our sector remains in high demand and therefore faces the same workforce challenges as the key foster carer personas - in industries such as healthcare and social assistance, education and training, and public administration and safety.

Each persona varies in size, availability, and geographic distribution across Queensland, highlighting the importance of targeted messaging and support. If these traditional carer cohorts are to continue providing 24/7 care to children and young people in care with increasingly complex needs, tailored strategies and supports are essential to address the unique needs and circumstances of each household.

| Remoteness region | Population | Healthcare worers | Social service workers | Teachers | Single income couple families |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Major Cities | 67% | 73% | 67% | 69% | 72% |
| Inner Regional | 18% | 14% | 19% | 17% | 16% |
| Outer Regional | 13% | 11% | 13% | 13% | 11% |
| Remote | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Very Remote | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Total | 5,140,805 | 104,487 | 75,264 | 84,737 | 284,736 |

| Remoteness region | Same-sex couples | Empty Nesters | Parents | Faith | Volunteers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Major Cities | 78% | 60% | 71% | 66% | 66% |
| Inner Regional | 11% | 25% | 16% | 19% | 18% |
| Outer Regional | 10% | 14% | 12% | 13% | 14% |
| Remote | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Very Remote | 0% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Total | 12,519 | 389,593 | 1,143,428 | 1,369,945 | 32,5967 |

**Graphic 18:** Population distribution for the nine personals in Queensland based on remoteness region

The demographic analysis of each foster care persona, including data graphics, is included in the appendix of this report.
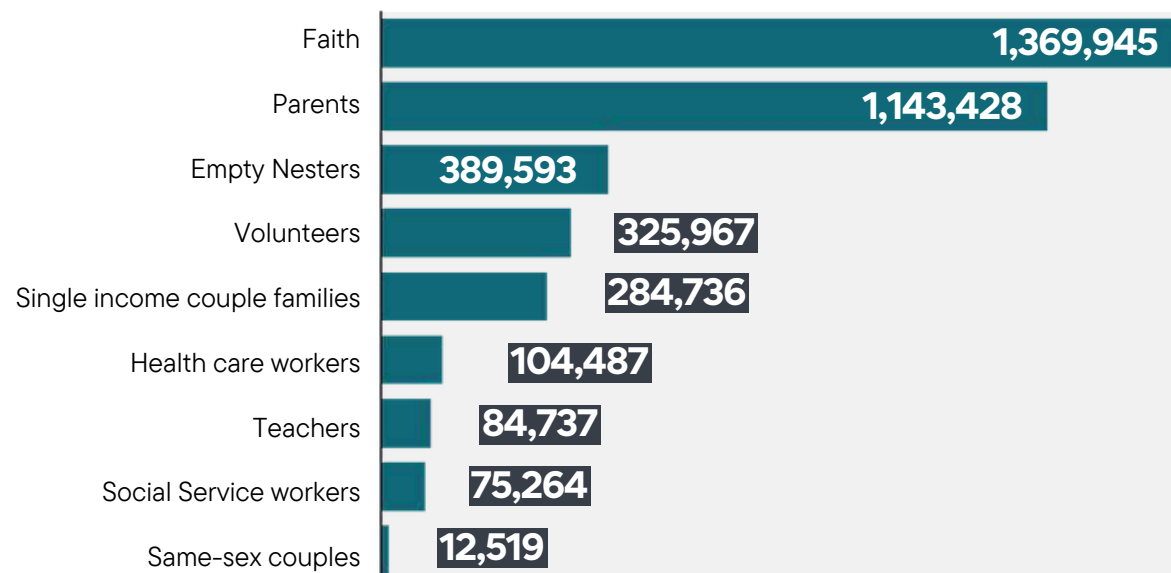


**Graphic 19:** The nine personas by population size in Queensland

40

## AGENCY CHECK POINT

When asked what their agency is doing, or would like to see done to **improve the recruitment and retention** of foster carers in Queensland, they said…

*"Funding needs to be realistic to attract, recruit, assess and train"*

*"Higher financial reimbursements for carers or models of care that can provide professionalisation without having to go through so many hoops with the ATO"*

*"Looking at ways to streamline process from EOI to approval"*

*"Paid Superannuation for carers"*

*"A system that far better supports First Nations children and families"*

*"Ensuring carers are considered as genuine partners in the care team, consulted in decision making, their views respected and taken into account"*

*"Children need to come into a new placement with supports in place [for the carer] not when it reaches critical pressure points"*

# Opportunities & Conclusion

PeakCare
Children I Young People I Futures

# Opportunities & Conclusion

## ▲ KEY POINTS AND FINDINGS

### Big Picture Demographics

Queensland faces a critical shortage of traditional foster carers despite strong population growth. Generational, geographic, and socio-economic factors contribute to this decline, necessitating systemic reform to revitalise the foster care system.

Queensland is not unique; this is a national problem. We urgently need to rethink home-based care and consider not just the impact of cost-of-living pressures, but also the changing nature of households, how we work, and the changing needs of children and young people who are entering care.

The co-creation of a contemporary foster care system that involves collaboration between researchers, policymakers, peak bodies, agencies, intersecting systems, carers, children and young people, and their families is the right step forward.

# Opportunities

## Better support for foster carers

**1** **Adequate Foster Carer Support:** Increase financial support for foster carers to alleviate the cost burdens that deter prospective foster carers. This includes increasing allowances to meet the actual cost of care and providing superannuation payments on all foster carer allowance payments.

**2** **Adequate Agency Support:** Undertake a national baseline of foster carer support costs to identify opportunities for bringing Queensland's funding arrangements into line with other states and territories.

**3** **'Foster Friendly' workplaces:** Establish a foster care related leave entitlement for all Queensland Public sector employees.

**4** **Space to Care:** Consider practical measures to enable more Queenslanders to open their homes to care for children e.g., foster carer rental subsidies, mortgage support, house and contents insurance rebates etc.

## Innovative models of foster care

**5** **Flexible Models:** Develop more flexible and contemporary foster care models that better align with the interests, values and capacity of identified growth cohorts.

**6** **Professionalised Models:** Expand the range and availability of professionalised model of home-based care through the establishment of a multi-portfolio innovation fund which includes, philanthropic, state and federal funding sources.

## Improved approaches to recruiting foster carers

**7** **Engagement with First Nations Communities:** Improve place-based recruitment and support for First Nations foster carers to help keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in community and on country, if they cannot be cared for by kin for a time.

**8** **Targeted Recruitment and Retention Strategies:** Use the demographic insights from this report to tailor recruitment and retention efforts towards the carer personas with the greatest growth trajectories and align messaging with identified generational value sets.

**9** **Systemic Reform:** Immediately undertake a comprehensive overhaul of Queensland's foster care recruitment and retention strategies to address the identified demographic tightening over the next 10-years.

**10** **Statewide visibility:** Facilitate statewide visibility of foster carer enquiries and conversions to assist in place-based recruitment and retention strategies that are guided by demographic and service demand forecasts.

## Limitations and Further Research

This report highlights the need for further research into the socio-economic and demographic factors affecting foster carer recruitment and retention. Additionally, exploring innovative models and international best practices could provide valuable insights for future reforms.

# References

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Child Protection data

- Queensland Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services Child Protection data

- Business Demographics Australia Pty Ltd (The Demographics Group)

- Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data
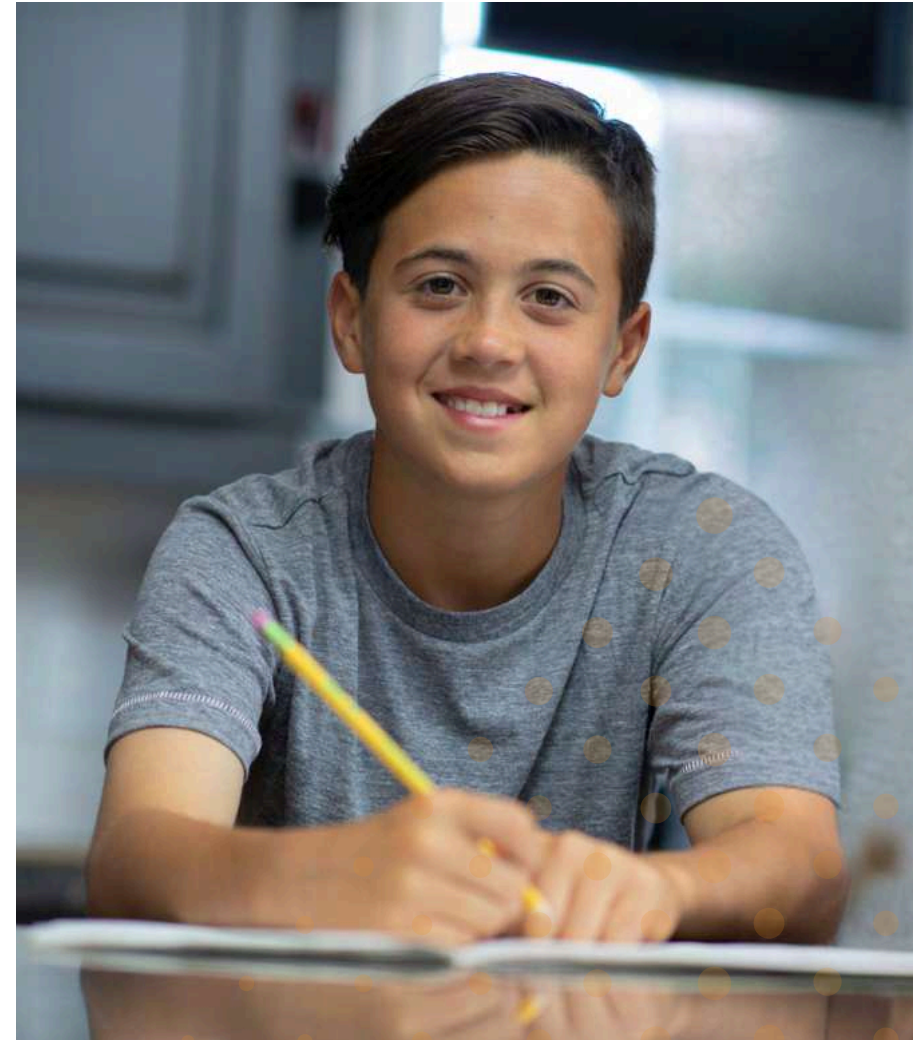
# Appendix

▲ PERSONA DATA SNAPSHOT

| Distance from CBD | Healthcare Workers | | Total Queensland pop | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Major Cities | 76,578 | 77% | 1,204,547 | 70% |
| Inner Regional | 14,615 | 15% | 268,986 | 16% |
| Outer Regional | 11,995 | 7% | 219,308 | 13% |
| Remote | 692 | 1% | 16,819 | 1% |
| Very Remote | 607 | 1% | 14,175 | 1% |
| **Total** | **104,487** | **100%** | **1,723,835** | **100%** |

## HEALTHCARE WORKERS

## ▲ INSIGHTS

Workers aged between 25-49, employed in the Hospital, Medical & Other Health Care Services industries.

Healthcare workers closely mirror the general population distribution but cluster around centrally located medical facilities. This group will see strong growth in the coming decade.

| Rank | Highest no. of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Newstead – Bowen Hills | 933 |
| 2. | Coorparoo | 734 |
| 3. | The Hills District | 725 |
| 4. | Springfield Lakes | 694 |
| 5. | Kedron – Gordon Park | 638 |
| 6. | Burdell – Mount Low | 595 |
| 7. | Murrumba Downs – Griffin | 590 |
| 8. | Southport – North | 586 |
| 9. | South Brisbane | 575 |
| 10. | Annerley | 567 |

| Rank | Highest share of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Douglas | 17% |
| 2. | Wurtulla – Birtinya | 14% |
| 3. | The Range – Allenstown | 13% |
| 4. | Whitfield – Edge Hill | 13% |
| 5. | Freshwater – Stratford | 13% |
| 6. | Middle Ridge | 13% |
| 7. | Toowoomba – East | 12% |
| 8. | Townsville City – North Ward | 12% |
| 9. | Windsor | 11% |
| 10. | Grange | 11% |

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# Queensland rejuvenated its healthcare workforce
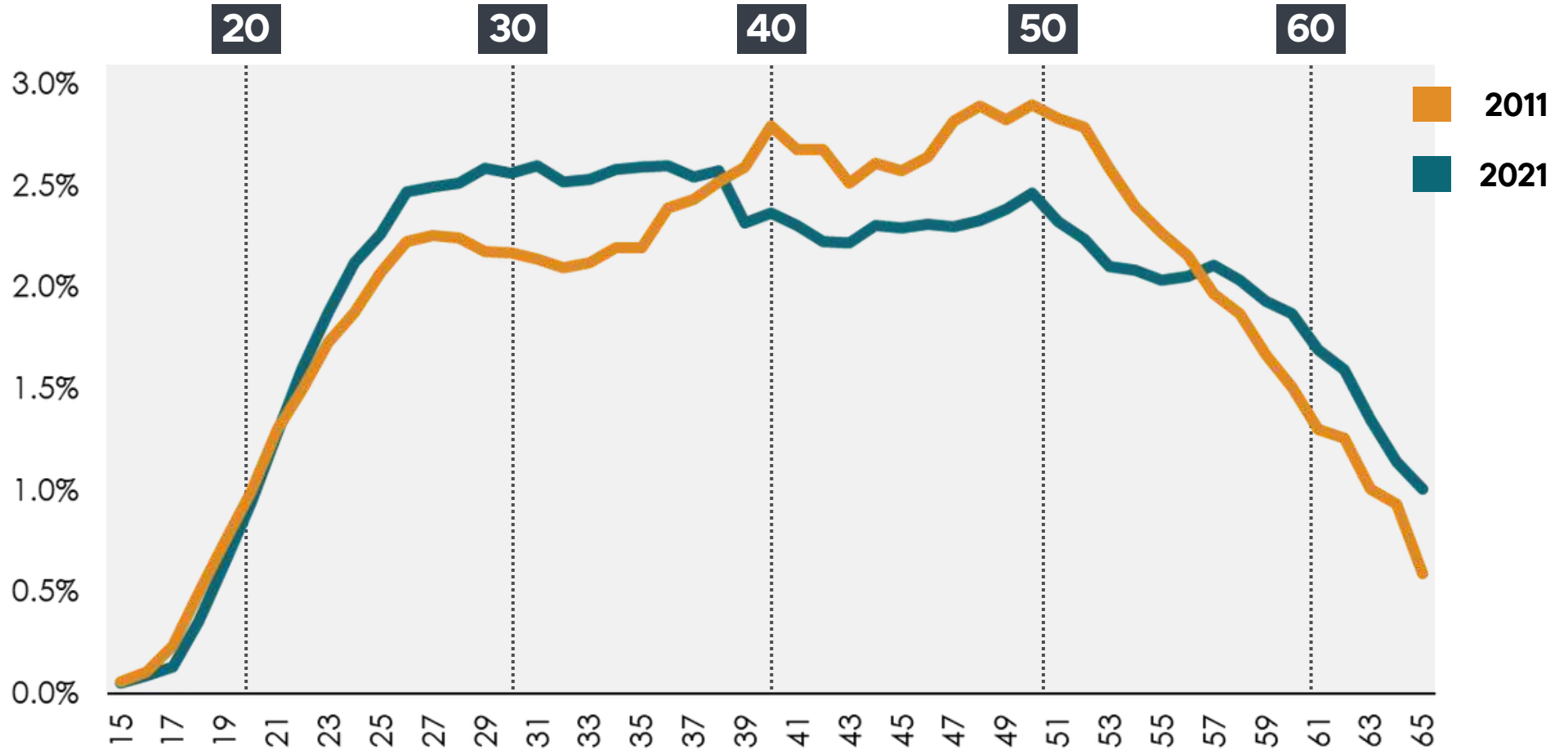


Age profile of Social Services Workers in Queensland 2011 and 2021; ABS Census

2011
2021

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| Distance from CBD | Social Service Workers | | Total Queensland pop | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Major Cities | 50,183 | 67% | 1,806,637 | 68% |
| Inner Regional | 14,638 | 19% | 461,826 | 17% |
| Outer Regional | 9,577 | 13% | 352,596 | 13% |
| Remote | 476 | 1% | 26,013 | 1% |
| Very Remote | 390 | 1% | 22,382 | 1% |
| Total | 75,264 | 100% | 2,669,454 | 100% |

# SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS

## ▲ INSIGHTS

Social services workers are identified from the census data as persons employed in Social Assistance Services industry between the ages of 25 and 64.

Their geographic distribution is directly linked to the geographic distribution of the population.

| Rank | Highest no. of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Redbank Plains | 567 |
| 2. | Murrumba Downs - Griffin | 486 |
| 3. | Nambour | 479 |
| 4. | Kallangur | 465 |
| 5. | Springfield Lakes | 465 |
| 6. | North Lakes | 451 |
| 7. | Caboolture - Sout | 425 |
| 8. | Burdell - Mount Low | 394 |
| 9. | Deception Bay | 392 |
| 10. | Forest Lake - Ellen Grove | 391 |

| Rank | Highest share of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Northern Peninsula | 9% |
| 2. | Palm Island | 6% |
| 3. | Svensson Heights - Norville | 5% |
| 4. | Darling Heights | 5% |
| 5. | Point Vernon | 5% |
| 6. | Yorkeys Knob - Machans Beach | 5% |
| 7. | Drayton - Harristown | 5% |
| 8. | Pialba - Eli Waters | 5% |
| 9. | Newtown (Qld) | 5% |
| 10. | Redbank Plains | 5% |

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# Are social service workers getting too young to foster?
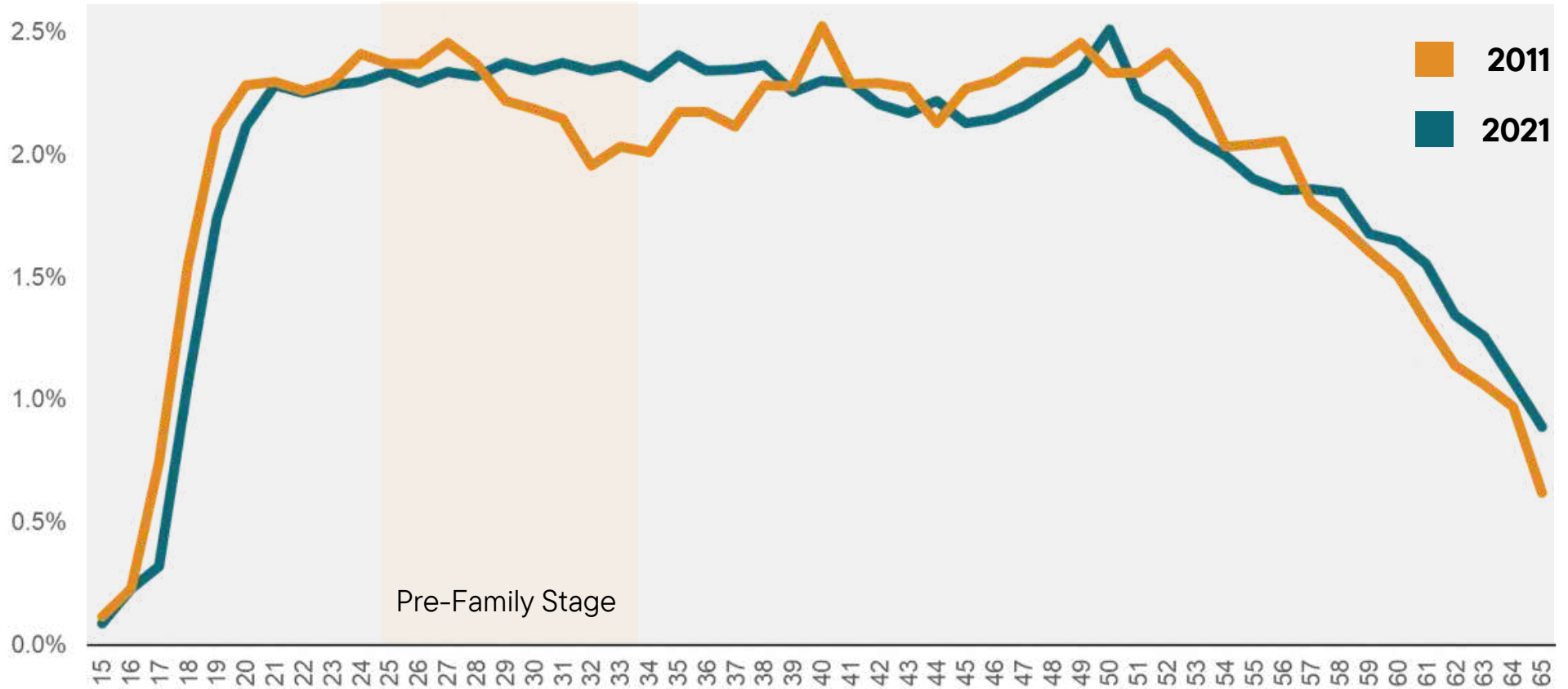


Age profile of Social Services Workers in Queensland 2011 and 2021; ABS Census

Pre-Family Stage

2011
2021

## TEACHERS

| Distance from CBD | Teachers | | Total Queensland pop | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Major Cities | 58,404 | 69% | 1,424,538 | 69% |
| Inner Regional | 14,275 | 17% | 330,457 | 16% |
| Outer Regional | 10,702 | 13% | 264,719 | 13% |
| Remote | 705 | 1% | 20,001 | 1% |
| Very Remote | 651 | 1% | 16,959 | 1% |
| Total | 84,737 | 100% | 2,056,674 | 100% |

## ▲ INSIGHTS

Teachers are identified from the census data as Education Professionals between the ages of 25 and 59.

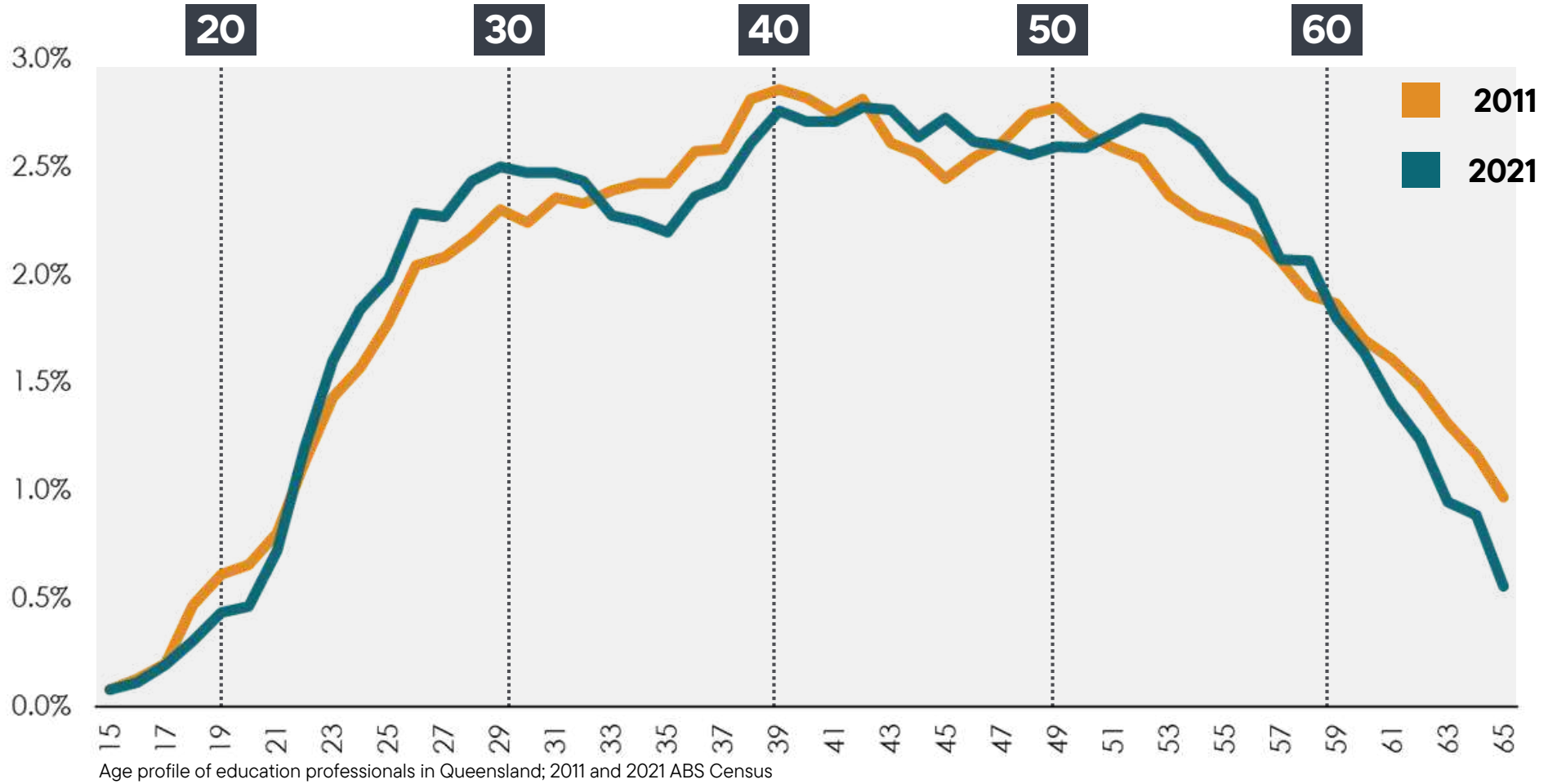Teachers' geographic distribution is directly linked to the geographic distribution of the population.

| Rank | Highest no. of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | The Hills District | 666 |
| 2. | Coorparoo | 468 |
| 3. | Yeppoon | 465 |
| 4. | The Gap | 462 |
| 5. | Mudgeeraba – Bonogin | 448 |
| 6. | Mount Gravatt | 442 |
| 7. | Buderim – South | 430 |
| 8. | North Lakes | 429 |
| 9. | Springfield Lakes | 417 |
| 10. | Redlynch | 417 |

| Rank | Highest share of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Middle Ridge | 7% |
| 2. | Rangeville | 7% |
| 3. | Charters Towers | 6% |
| 4. | Toowoomba – East | 6% |
| 5. | Taringa | 6% |
| 6. | St Lucia | 6% |
| 7. | Kenmore | 6% |
| 8. | Bellbowrie – Moggill | 6% |
| 9. | Highfields | 6% |
| 10. | Redlynch | 6% |

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# Education professionals in their 50s are worth targeting



Age profile of education professionals in Queensland; 2011 and 2021 ABS Census

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GROUP

| Distance from CBD | Same-sex couples | | Total Queensland pop | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Major Cities** | 9,808 | 1 | 1,132,501 | 78% |
| **Inner Regional** | 1,399 | 0 | 290,462 | 11% |
| **Outer Regional** | 1,216 | 0 | 220,867 | 10% |
| **Remote** | 63 | 1% | 15,702 | 1% |
| **Very Remote** | 33 | 1% | 13,433 | 0% |
| **Total** | **12,519** | **1** | **1,672,965** | **100%** |

## SAME-SEX COUPLES

## ▲ INSIGHTS

Persons identifying as husband/wife/de facto partner in a relationship between the age of 25 and 39.

Same-sex attracted people tend to live in inner suburbs where there is a larger population.

| Rank | Highest no. of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Newstead – Bowen Hills | 227 |
| 2. | New Farm | 160 |
| 3. | Morningside – Seven Hills | 108 |
| 4. | West End | 104 |
| 5. | Fortitude Valley | 102 |
| 6. | Coorparoo | 99 |
| 7. | The Hills District | 92 |
| 8. | Nundah | 92 |
| 9. | Trinity Beach – Smithfield | 91 |
| 10. | Brisbane City | 91 |

| Rank | Highest share of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Sandgate – Shorncliffe | 4% |
| 2. | New Farm | 4% |
| 3. | Caloundra Hinterland | 4% |
| 4. | Scarborough – Newport | 3% |
| 5. | Golden Beach – Pelican Waters | 3% |
| 6. | Karana Downs | 3% |
| 7. | Eagle Farm – Pinkenba | 3% |
| 8. | Northgate – Virginia | 3% |
| 9. | Grange | 3% |
| 10. | Bulimba | 3% |

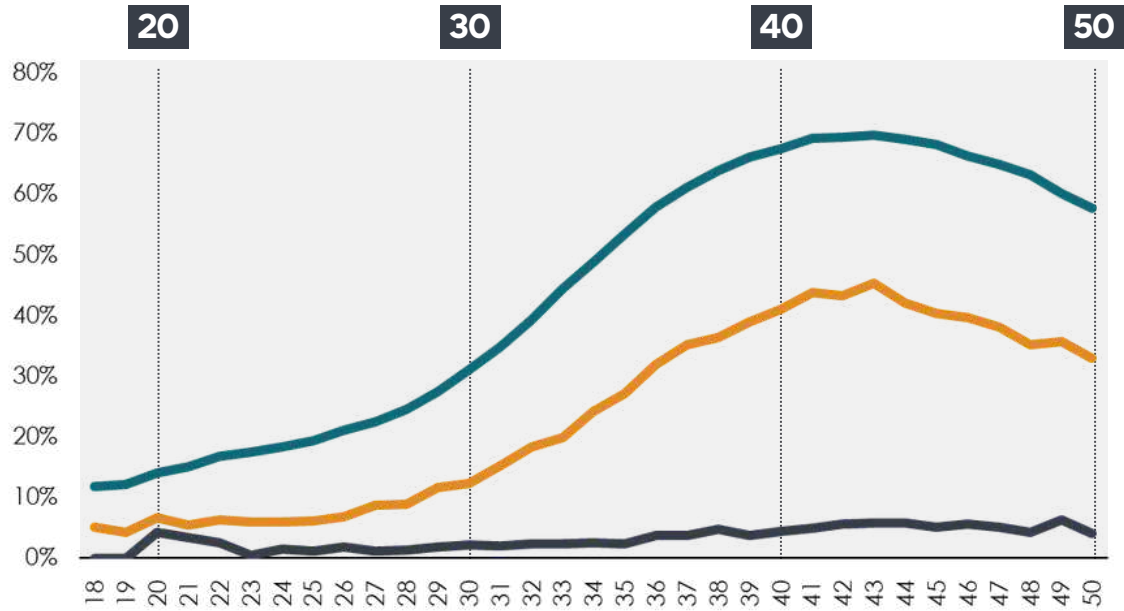THE DEMOGRAPHICS GROUP
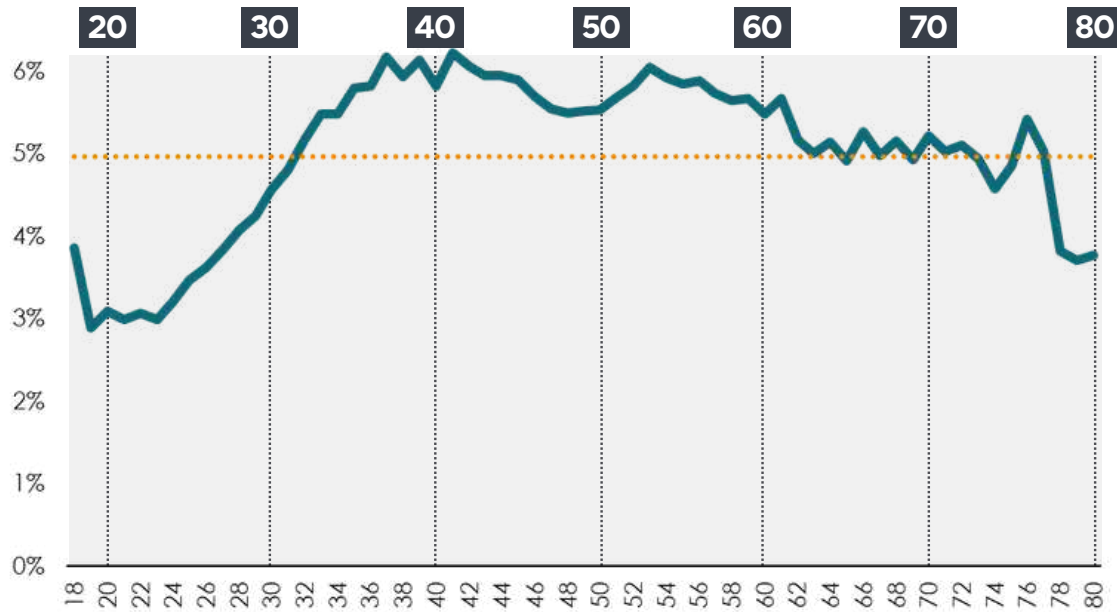
Data sourced from ABS Census 2021 based on SA2 boundaries

**At least six per cent of Australians are same-sex attracted**

**Recruiting same-sex couples? Millennials for the win!**

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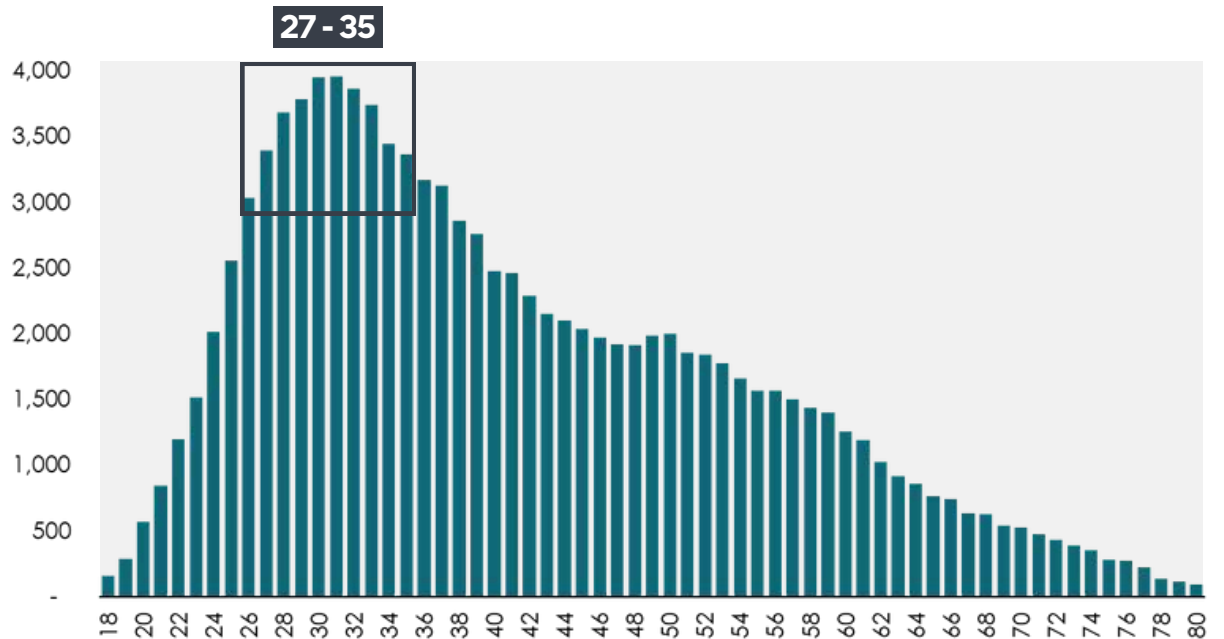


Number of people in same-sex de facto relationship by age; ABS Census 2021

54

Share of population in a de facto relationship that is a parent by age; Source: ABS Census 2021

**Recruiting same-sex couples? Bet on women!**

Legend (top chart):
- Female same-sex de facto couple AND parent
- Male same-sex de facto couple AND parent
- Opposite-sex de facto couple AND parent

**Young same-sex couples experience poor mental health**

Legend (bottom chart):
- Opposite-sex couple & has mental health condition
- Same-sex couple & has mental health condition
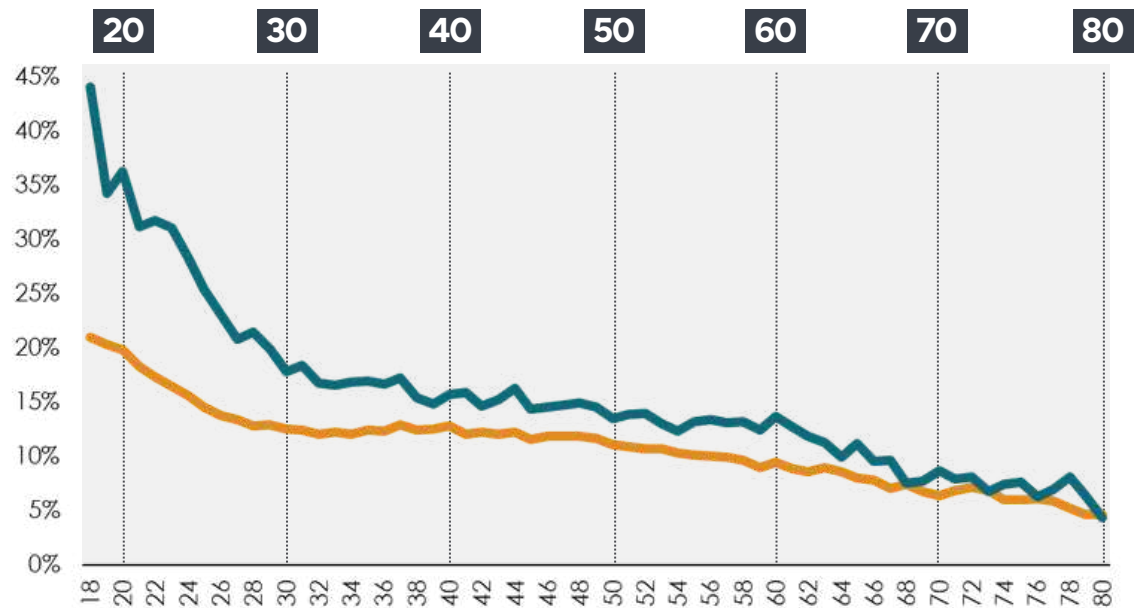
Share of population by age that reports to have a chronic mental health condition; Source: ABS Census 2021

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## EMPTY NESTERS

| Distance from CBD | Empty nesters | | Total Queensland pop | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Major Cities** | 232,057 | 1 | 541,924 | 62% |
| **Inner Regional** | 95,607 | 0 | 193,761 | 22% |
| **Outer Regional** | 55,888 | 0 | 124,858 | 14% |
| **Remote** | 3,198 | 0 | 8,152 | 1% |
| **Very Remote** | 2,843 | 0 | 7,376 | 1% |
| **Total** | **389,593** | **1** | **876,071** | **100%** |

## ▲ INSIGHTS

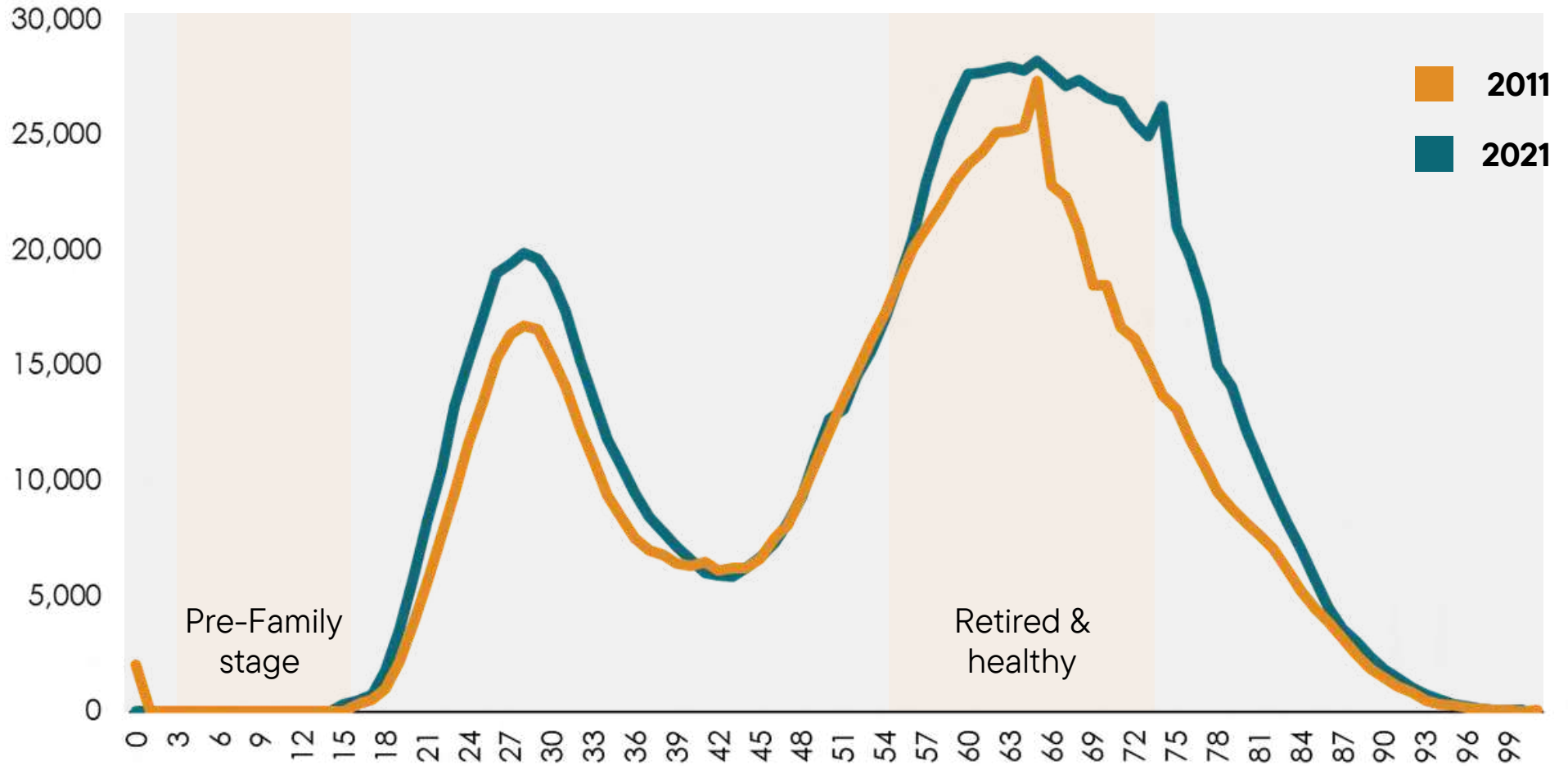Persons who live in couple families with no children and are between the ages of 55 and 69.

Sea-changers and tree-changers: Empty nesters frequently choose to move to lifestyle destinations in inner regional Australia.

| Rank | Highest no. of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Bribie Island | 3,578 |
| 2. | Noosa Hinterland | 3,106 |
| 3. | Gympie Surrounds | 2,734 |
| 4. | Bargara - Burnett Heads | 2,602 |
| 5. | Maroochydore - Kuluin | 2,247 |
| 6. | Beachmere - Sandstone Point | 2,191 |
| 7. | Yeppoon | 2,051 |
| 8. | Lockyer Valley - East | 2,035 |
| 9. | Golden Beach - Pelican Waters | 1,955 |
| 10. | Hope Island | 1,950 |

| Rank | Highest share of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Craignish - Dundowran Beach | 61% |
| 2. | Highfields | 61% |
| 3. | Golden Beach - Pelican Waters | 59% |
| 4. | Bribie Island | 58% |
| 5. | Cambooya - Wyreema | 58% |
| 6. | Booral - River Heads | 58% |
| 7. | Hope Island | 57% |
| 8. | Gowrie (Qld) | 57% |
| 9. | Burrum - Fraser | 57% |
| 10. | Boonah | 56% |

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# Retired empty nesters are a sizeable cohort to tap into



Queenslanders living in couple families with no children in 2011 and 2021; ABS Census

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# PARENTS

| Distance from CBD | Parents | | Total Queensland pop | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Major Cities** | 808,271 | 71% | 1,624,106 | 68% |
| **Inner Regional** | 184,222 | 16% | 395,228 | 17% |
| **Outer Regional** | 133,389 | 12% | 309,634 | 13% |
| **Remote** | 9,521 | 1% | 23,152 | 1% |
| **Very Remote** | 8,025 | 1% | 19,817 | 1% |
| **Total** | **1,143,428** | **100%** | **2,371,937** | **100%** |

## ▲ INSIGHTS
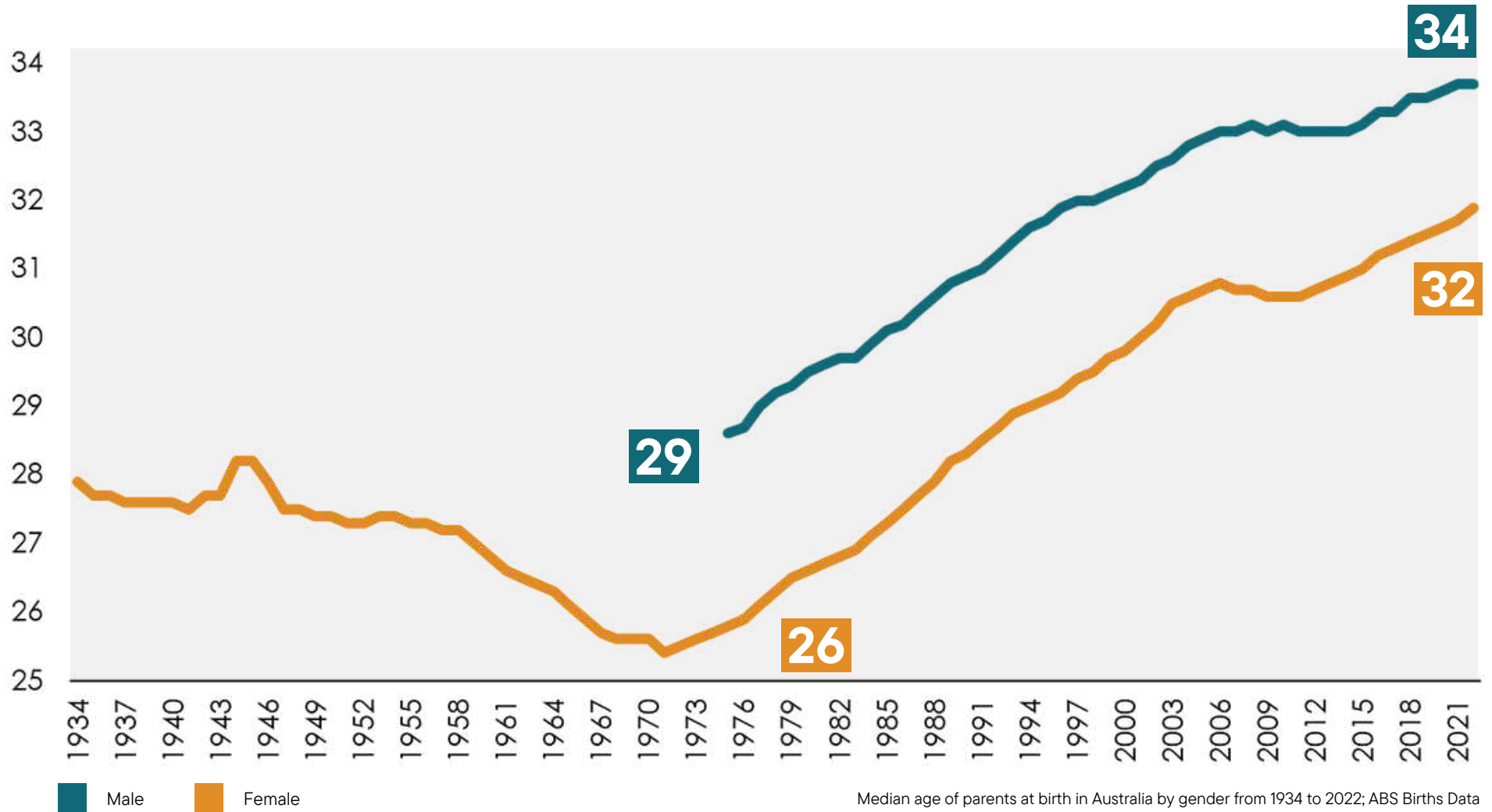
Persons identified as parents in Parent Indicator variable between the age of 25 and 59.

Parents are somewhat clustered in the major cities because this is where the majority of jobs are located.
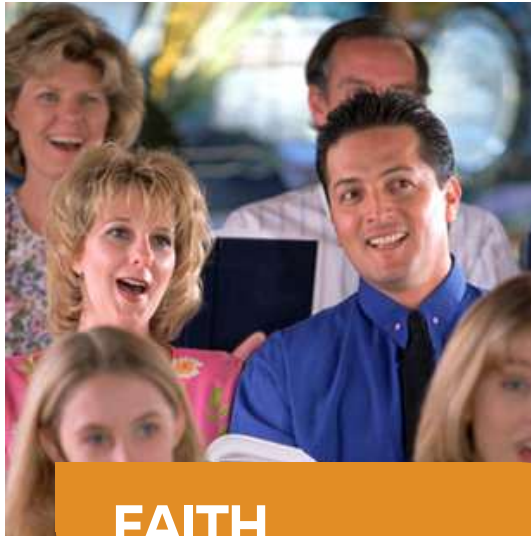
| Rank | Highest no. of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Springfield Lakes | 7,763 |
| 2. | North Lakes | 7,045 |
| 3. | The Hills District | 6,844 |
| 4. | Murrumba Downs - Griffin | 6,720 |
| 5. | Calamvale - Stretton | 6,626 |
| 6. | Narangba | 6,373 |
| 7. | Forest Lake - Ellen Grove | 6,161 |
| 8. | Cashmere | 6,113 |
| 9. | Redbank Plains | 6,020 |
| 10. | Upper Coomera - North | 5,818 |

| Rank | Highest share of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Fig Tree Pocket | 74% |
| 2. | Wakerley | 73% |
| 3. | Kenmore | 69% |
| 4. | Chapel Hill | 69% |
| 5. | Brookfield - Kenmore Hills | 68% |
| 6. | Augustine Heights - Brookwater | 68% |
| 7. | Eatons Hill | 68% |
| 8. | Bellbowrie - Moggill | 68% |
| 9. | The Gap | 68% |
| 10. | Pinjarra Hills - Pullenvale | 67% |

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# Older parents shorten the foster care window



Male     Female

Median age of parents at birth in Australia by gender from 1934 to 2022; ABS Births Data

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## FAITH

| Distance from CBD | Parents | | Total Queensland pop | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Major Cities | 901,401 | 66% | 1,724,077 | 67% |
| Inner Regional | 261,923 | 19% | 472,066 | 18% |
| Outer Regional | 180,026 | 13% | 344,936 | 13% |
| Remote | 13,644 | 1% | 24,378 | 1% |
| Very Remote | 12,951 | 1% | 21,041 | 1% |
| **Total** | **1,369,945** | **100%** | **2,586,498** | **100%** |

## ▲ INSIGHTS

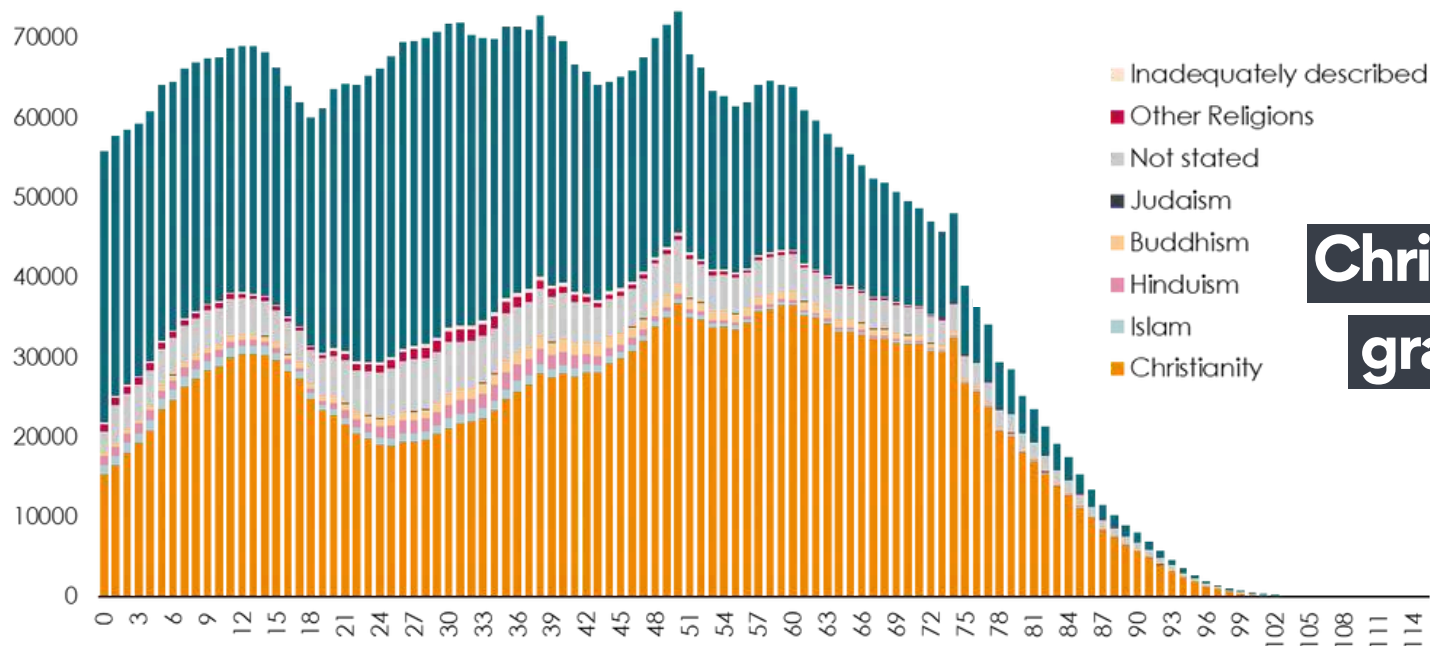Persons with a religious belief between the ages of 30-69.

Believers' geographic distribution mirrors the geographic distribution of the population.

| Rank | Highest no. of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Forest Lake - Ellen Grove | 7,056 |
| 2. | Calamvale - Stretton | 6,902 |
| 3. | Springfield Lakes | 6,861 |
| 4. | The Hills District | 6,460 |
| 5. | North Lakes | 6,386 |
| 6. | Murrumba Downs - Griffin | 6,372 |
| 7. | Inala - Richlands | 6,030 |
| 8. | Cashmere | 6,011 |
| 9. | Lockyer Valley - East | 5,793 |
| 10. | Redbank Plains | 5,666 |

| Rank | Highest share of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Yarrabah | 84% |
| 2. | Palm Island | 78% |
| 3. | Torres Strait Islands | 78% |
| 4. | Kowanyama - Pormpuraaw | 75% |
| 5. | Middle Ridge | 72% |
| 6. | Pallara - Willawong | 72% |
| 7. | Ayr | 71% |
| 8. | Eungella Hinterland | 70% |
| 9. | Kuraby | 70% |
| 10. | Pittsworth | 70% |

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Population in Queensland by age and religious affiliation in 2021; ABS Census

## Christianity lost its gravitational pull

## The faithful are a shrinking cohort and increasingly diverse

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|  | 2011 | 2021 | 2011 | 2021 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Christianity** | 66% | 44% | 2,785,058 | 2,357,393 | –15% |
| **Islam** | 3% | 4% | 34,051 | 60,374 | +77% |
| **Hinduism** | 2% | 4% | 28,622 | 69,519 | +143% |
| **Buddhism** | 4% | 4% | 65,930 | 73,691 | +12% |
| **Judaism** | 1% | 1% | 4,460 | 4,825 | +8% |
| **Faith pool** | | | 2,918,121 | 2,565,802 | **-12%** |

| **No Religion** | 26% | 44% | 955,749 | 2,125,469 | +122% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Population** | | | 4,332,675 | 5,156,110 | +19% |

Believers in Queensland in 2011 and 2021; ABS Census

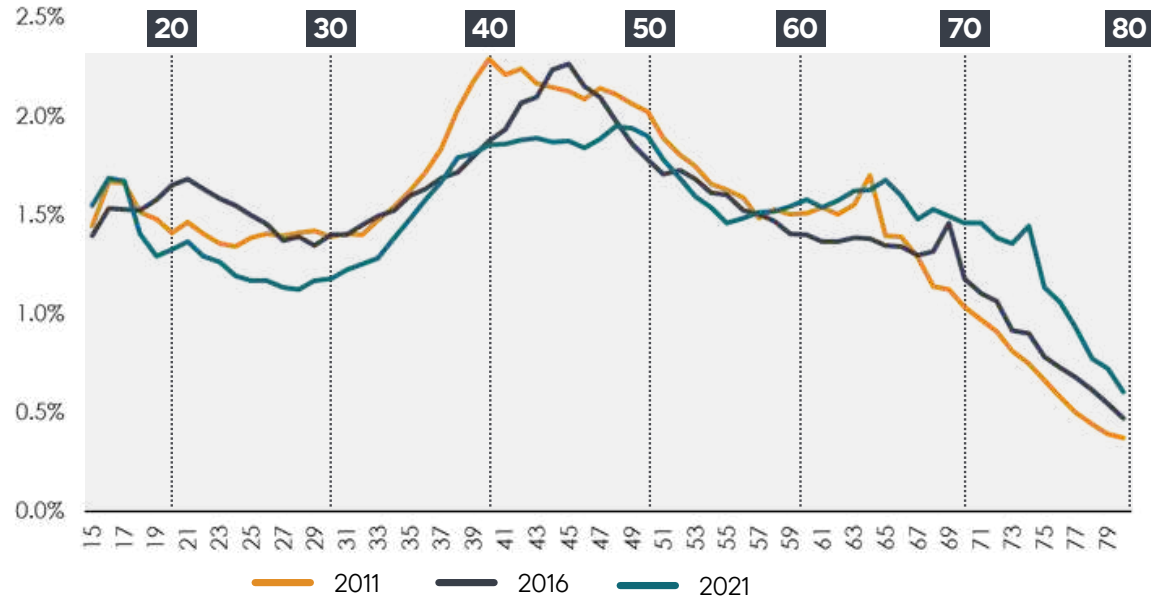| Distance from CBD | Volunteers | | Total Queensland pop | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Major Cities | 214,044 | 66% | 1,624,106 | 68% |
| Inner Regional | 57,173 | 18% | 395,228 | 17% |
| Outer Regional | 46,515 | 14% | 309,634 | 13% |
| Remote | 4,037 | 1% | 23,152 | 1% |
| Very Remote | 4,198 | 1% | 19,817 | 1% |
| Total | 325,967 | 100% | 2,371,937 | 100% |

# VOLUNTEERS

## ▲ INSIGHTS

Persons who did unpaid volunteer work between the ages of 25-59.

Volunteers mirror the general population distribution.

| Rank | Highest no. of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | The Hills District | 2,007 |
| 2. | Coorparoo | 1,684 |
| 3. | The Gap | 1,639 |
| 4. | Noosa Hinterland | 1,571 |
| 5. | West End | 1,515 |
| 6. | Nambour | 1,508 |
| 7. | Ashgrove | 1,489 |
| 8. | Newstead - Bowen Hills | 1,484 |
| 9. | Gympie Surrounds | 1,396 |
| 10. | Cashmere | 1,372 |

| Rank | Highest share of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | The Hills District | 17% |
| 2. | Coorparoo | 17% |
| 3. | The Gap | 22% |
| 4. | Noosa Hinterland | 16% |
| 5. | West End | 17% |
| 6. | Nambour | 15% |
| 7. | Ashgrove | 23% |
| 8. | Newstead - Bowen Hills | 12% |
| 9. | Gympie Surrounds | 16% |
| 10. | Cashmere | 14% |

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# Big growth in the volunteering spike age group (40s)



Age profile of Volunteers in Queensland 2011-2021; ABS Census

Legend: 2011 — 2016 — 2021

# Australians do their fair share and are willing to help out
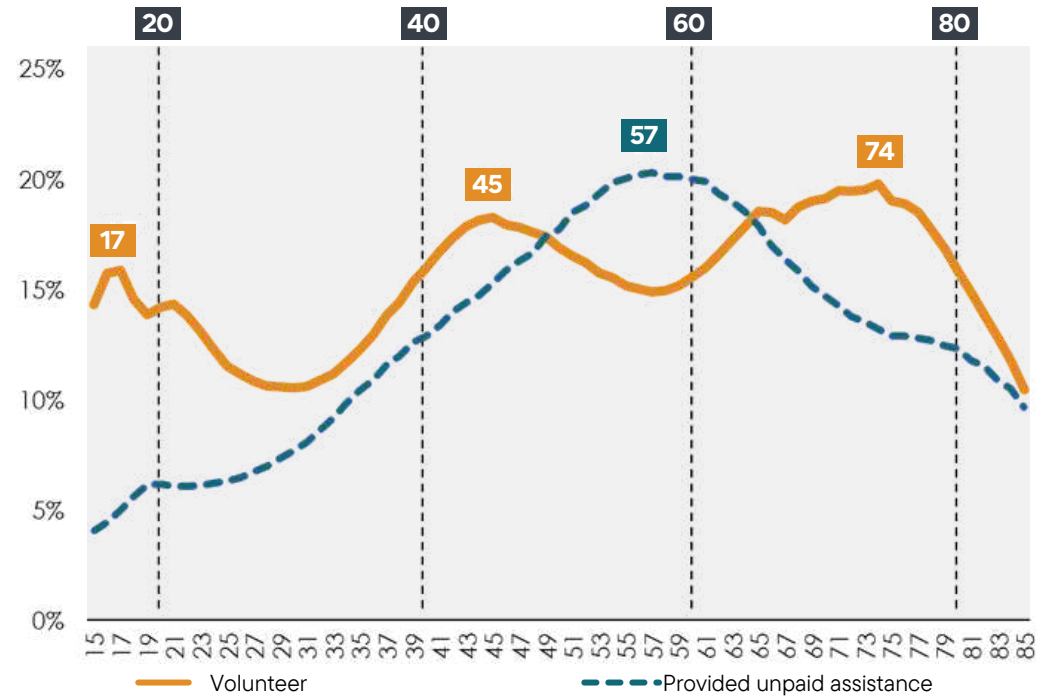


Share of population by age who volunteer or provide unpaid care; ABS Census 2021

Legend: Volunteer — Provided unpaid assistance

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| Distance from CBD | Single income couples | | Total Queensland pop | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Major Cities** | 203,930 | 72% | 1,624,106 | 68% |
| **Inner Regional** | 46,147 | 16% | 395,228 | 17% |
| **Outer Regional** | 30,859 | 11% | 309,634 | 13% |
| **Remote** | 2,111 | 1% | 23,152 | 1% |
| **Very Remote** | 1,689 | 1% | 19,817 | 1% |
| **Total** | **284,736** | **100%** | **2,371,937** | **100%** |

## SINGLE INCOME COUPLES

## ▲ INSIGHTS

Workers between aged 25-49, employed in the Hospital, Medical & Other Health Care Services industries.

Healthcare workers closely mirror the general population distribution but cluster around centrally located medical facilities. This group will see strong growth in the coming decade.

| Rank | Highest no. of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| **1.** | Calamvale - Stretton | 2,109 |
| **2.** | Redbank Plains | 1,982 |
| **3.** | Springfield Lakes | 1,928 |
| **4.** | Forest Lake - Ellen Grove | 1,709 |
| **5.** | North Lakes | 1,672 |
| **6.** | Murrumba Downs - Griffin | 1,560 |
| **7.** | Coomera | 1,464 |
| **8.** | Inala - Richlands | 1,463 |
| **9.** | Sunnybank Hills | 1,435 |
| **10.** | Kallangur | 1,432 |

| Rank | Highest share of persona | Count |
|---|---|---|
| **1.** | Barcaldine - Blackall | 35% |
| **2.** | Far Central West | 32% |
| **3.** | Roma Surrounds | 31% |
| **4.** | Far South West | 30% |
| **5.** | Croydon - Etheridge | 29% |
| **6.** | Longreach | 29% |
| **7.** | Northern Highlands | 28% |
| **8.** | Balonne | 26% |
| **9.** | Banana | 26% |
| **10.** | Miles - Wandoan | 25% |

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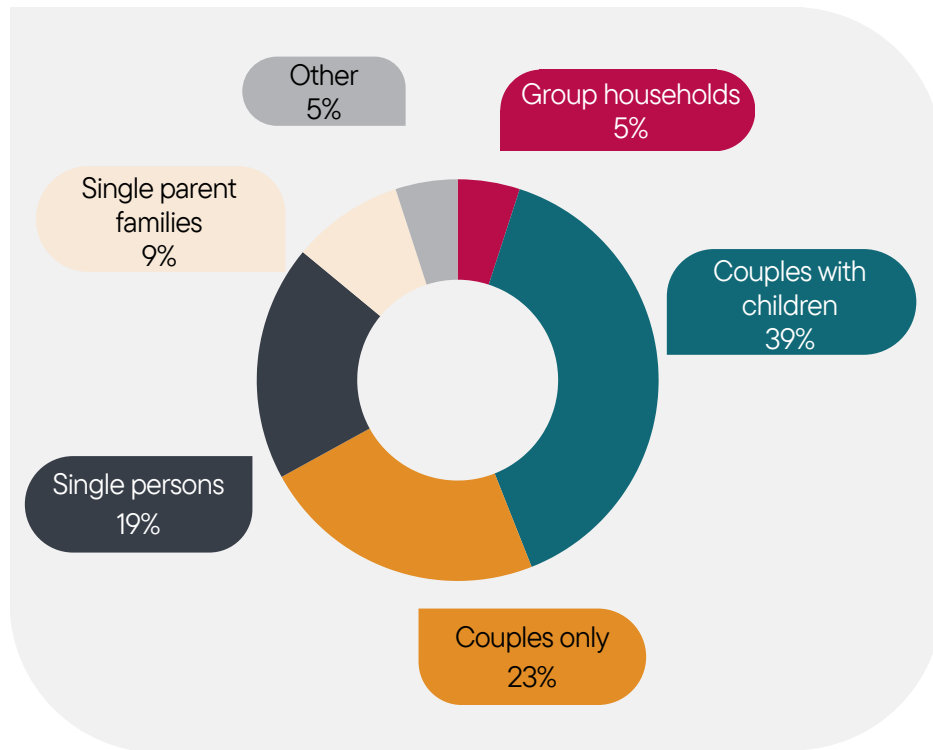# Who to target? Fewer traditional families, more couples, stable single parent families
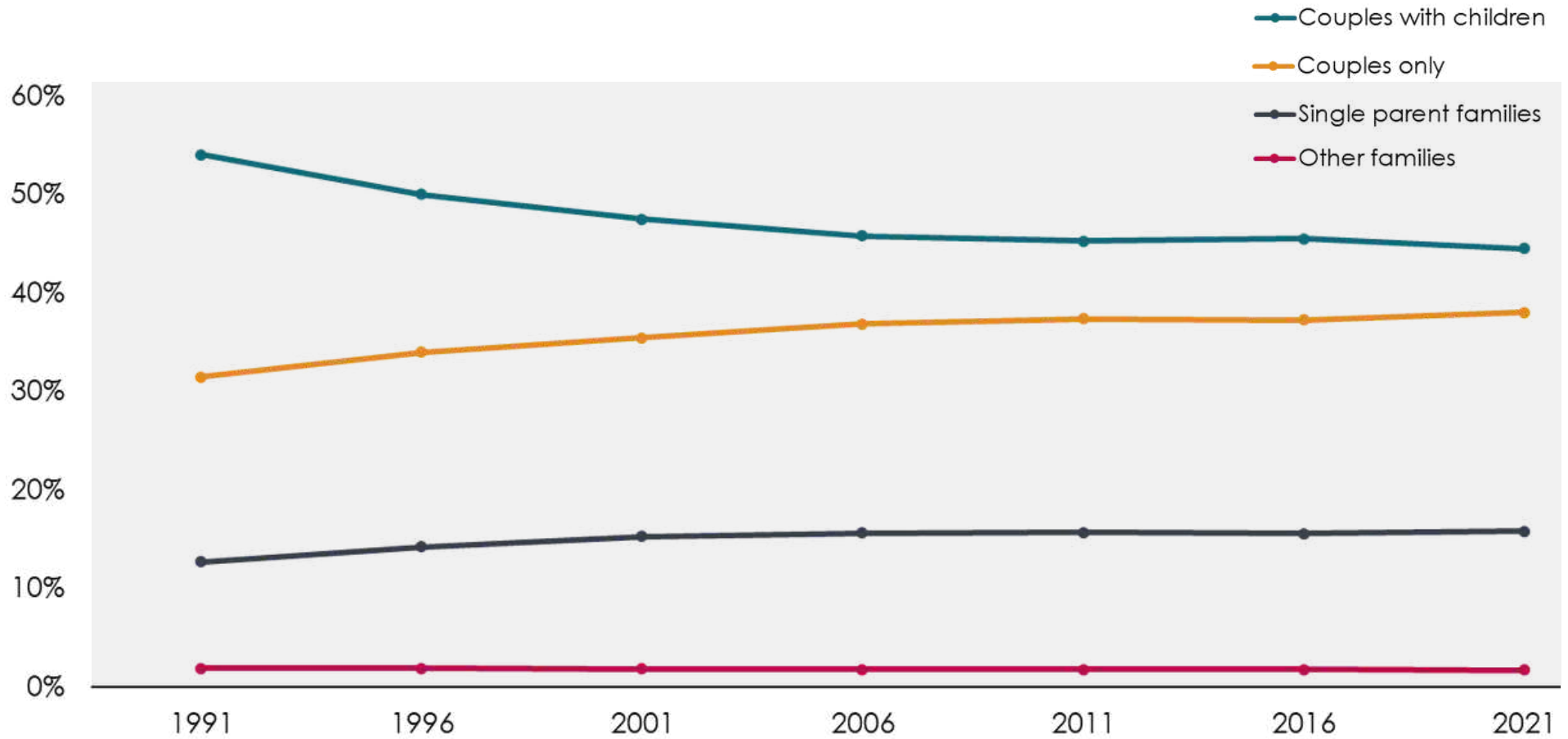


Family compositions in Australia; ABS Census 1991-2021

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# Could single person households act as foster carers?

▲ **HOUSEHOLD TYPES 1991**



Other 5%
Group households 5%
Single parent families 9%
Couples with children 39%
Single persons 19%
Couples only 23%

▲ **HOUSEHOLD TYPES 2021**



Other 7%
Group households 4%
Single parent families 11%
Couples with children 29%
Single persons 24%
Couples only 25%
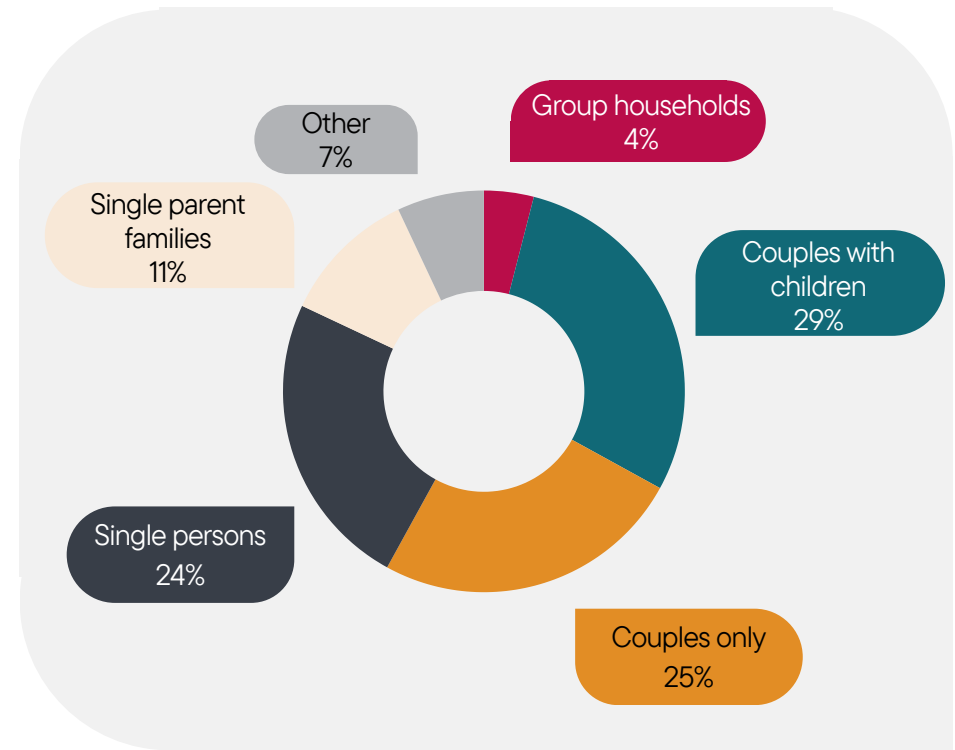
Household compositions in Australia; ABS Census 1991 & 2021

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