



HBNC

Creating Connected Communities

State of Seniors Report 2024

Fraser Coast





The State of Seniors Report 2024: Fraser Coast is an initiative of the
Seniors Legal & Support Service

www.hbnc.com.au

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We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia and pay our respects to Elders past and present.





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Making Fraser Coast more age-friendly



CAUTION:

Some people may find parts of this report confronting or distressing. Please carefully consider your needs when reading the following report. This report discusses mental health issues including suicide. It also discusses elder abuse. The information included here places an emphasis on data, and as such, can appear to depersonalise the pain and loss behind the statistics. HBNC acknowledges the individuals, families and communities affected by mental health, suicide, and abuse each year.

NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

Don't go it alone. Please reach out for help.

Lifeline:

13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue:

1300 22 4636 or beyondblue.org.au

Kids Helpline:

1800 55 1800 or kidshelpline.com.au

Headspace:

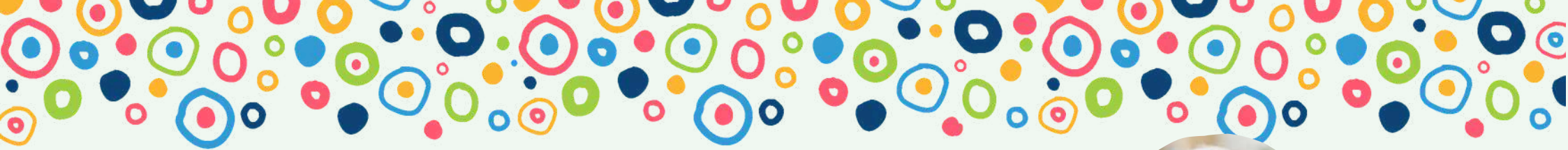
1800 650 890 or headspace.org.au

13YARN:

Speak to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis supporter on 13 92 76 or visit 13yar.org.au

Queensland Elder Abuse Hotline:

1300 651 192



LIVING SITUATION

52% of Fraser Coast seniors live with their spouse
20% live alone
Approx. 1 in 6 are widowed (18%)
15% are divorced

1



DEMOGRAPHICS

Approx. 1 in 3 Fraser Coast residents are seniors 65+ (30%)
51% are women & 49% men
1.4% are from an Indigenous background
1.5% are from a CALD background
1 in 5 have a need for assistance (18%)
1 in 10 are veterans (10%)

2



PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

64% of Fraser Coast seniors have a long term health condition
Arthritis (55%), heart disease (29%) and diabetes (22%) are the top 3 long term health conditions
Approx. 1 in 7 (16%) have a long term mental health condition

3



ACTIVITIES & ENGAGEMENT

14% of Fraser Coast seniors are volunteers
6.4% are employed
Approx. 1 in 8 (13%) are carers
59% provide unpaid domestic work
5% provide unpaid child care
49% attend a community or social group

4



CHALLENGES

Almost 1 in 3 (29%) Fraser Coast seniors don't feel connected to the wider community
1 in 10 (10%) of elder abuse cases reported to the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit in 2023 were in Wide Bay
Over half of Fraser Coast seniors (55%) have experienced scamming including financial scamming
Approx. 1 in 8 seniors uses alternative transport (13.8%)
51% of seniors feel concerned about ageing
Approx 1 in 6 (17%) do not feel prepared for later life
Approx. 38% do not have an Enduring Power of Attorney

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Seniors Snapshot

State of Seniors Report 2024 Fraser Coast



UN Principles for Older Persons

Independence

1. Older persons should have access to adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and health care through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help.
2. Older persons should have the opportunity to work or to have access to other income-generating opportunities.
3. Older persons should be able to participate in determining when and at what pace withdrawal from the labour force takes place.
4. Older persons should have access to appropriate educational and training programmes.
5. Older persons should be able to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities.
6. Older persons should be able to reside at home for as long as possible.

Participation

7. Older persons should remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations.
8. Older persons should be able to seek and develop opportunities for service to the community and to serve as volunteers in positions appropriate to their interests and capabilities.
9. Older persons should be able to form movements or associations of older persons.

Care


10. Older persons should benefit from family and community care and protection in accordance with each society's system of cultural values.
11. Older persons should have access to health care to help them to maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being and to prevent or delay the onset of illness.
12. Older persons should have access to social and legal services to enhance their autonomy, protection and care.
13. Older persons should be able to utilize appropriate levels of institutional care providing protection, rehabilitation and social and mental stimulation in a humane and secure environment.
14. Older persons should be able to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms when residing in any shelter, care or treatment facility, including full respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs and privacy and for the right to make decisions about their care and the quality of their lives.

Self-Fulfilment

15. Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential.
16. Older persons should have access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society.


Dignity

17. Older persons should be able to live in dignity and security and be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse.
18. Older persons should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and be valued independently of their economic contribution.



"Older persons are invaluable sources of knowledge and experience and have much to contribute towards peace, sustainable development, and protecting our planet."

-UN Secretary-General António Guterres



The WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework

The World Health Organisation's (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities framework proposes eight interconnected domains that can help to identify and address barriers to the well-being and participation of older people.

These domains overlap and interact with each other. For example, respect is reflected in the accessibility of public buildings and spaces and in the range of opportunities that the city offers to older people for social participation, entertainment, volunteering or employment. The lack of affordable public transport for example isolates older people who no longer drive in their homes and make participation in community life difficult, increasing the risk of isolation and loneliness. When transport is available and adapted to the needs of seniors, both in terms of scheduling and destinations, it enhances mobility and facilitates social participation and a sense of belonging in one's community. It is equally important that older people continue to have a good reason to go out and participate. Cultural offers and entertainment that cater to the interests of older people, opportunities for volunteering or civic engagement contribute to a fulfilling and enjoyable older age. (World Health Organisation, n.d.)



Community & Health Care

Easily accessible & affordable community & health care services give seniors peace of mind they will be able to receive the care they need regardless of their ability to pay.



Transportation

Accessible and affordable public transport is key to ensuring a city's elderly population is able to age actively and remain engaged with their community.



Housing

Affordable & appropriate housing design and its proximity to community and social services allow older residents to live comfortably and safely. This allows seniors to age actively and independently improving quality of life.



Social Participation

Having a wide variety of activities available that are accessible, affordable, held within appropriate hours, and located near transport helps seniors stay connected, informed and reduces social isolation. Intergenerational activities are mutually enriching and fulfilling for all ages.



Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

A clean city with well-maintained recreational areas, ample rest areas, well-developed and safe pedestrian and building infrastructure, and a secure environment provides an ideal living environment for seniors to age-in-place in.



Respect & Social Inclusion

An inclusive society encourages older people to participate more in their city's social, civic and economic life. This, in turn, promotes active ageing. Age-friendly initiatives keep seniors engaged with the community, and help them feel valued in their community.



Participation & Employment

An age-friendly city and community provides ample opportunities for older people to do so, be it through voluntary or paid employment, and keeps them engaged in the political process.



Communication & Information

Staying connected with events, news and activities with timely, accessible and practical information is a key part of active ageing. Cities must provide access to information to seniors in an accessible format, and bear in mind the wide range of needs and resources older people have.

Source: World Health Organisation

QLD Government Vision for an Age-Friendly Community

The Queensland Government is listed with the World Health Organisation (WHO) as an Affiliate Member of the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

In 2016, the Queensland Government launched the Queensland Age-Friendly Community Strategic Direction Statement adopting the WHO Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Framework. This also included the launch of an Action Plan with targets against each of the 8 WHO framework domains.

In 2018-2019, the Queensland Government released a Report Card detailing achievements towards the Action Plan, which included:

- implementation of the Advancing Queensland: an age-friendly community grants program
- over 269,447 Seniors Card +go issued in total - an increase of 30,000 from the previous year
- over 27,000 seniors are active members of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme
- 2,768 seniors received information and advice through RentConnect's Advisory Services to assist in securing private rental accommodation
- six new seniors legal and support services and financial protections services provided
- 13 age-friendly regional workshops were held across Queensland to build capacity and understanding of local communities to use an age-friendly approach
- Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative supported 6143 mature-aged jobseekers to gain skills or undertake new qualifications and training
- BOLD short films to challenge negative stereotypes about ageing were shown at six film festivals across Queensland.

In October 2022, the Queensland Government launched the Future Directions for an Age-Friendly Queensland affirming their commitment to creating age-friendly communities where older Queenslanders are:

- Connected to their communities and the important people in their lives
- Cared for and supported, if care and support is needed
- Contributing to their local communities in ways of their choosing

The Queensland Government is now developing a Seniors Strategy, which is due for release in 2024.

(Source: Queensland Government, 2023).



Queensland: an age-friendly community

Action plan



Queensland: an age-friendly community

Strategic direction statement





Welcome to the State of Seniors Report

Almost 1 in 3 people on the Fraser Coast are seniors. With local residents living longer than ever and birth rates dropping, 30% of our population are now classified as “seniors”, being aged 65 years and over (ABS, 2021). This is forecast to reach 35% by 2041. While it is wonderful news that Australians are living on average 30 years longer than they were a century ago, this also brings challenges and opportunities as to how we can make our local region more age-friendly and ensure we support older people to positively age and remain participating members of the community. This inaugural Fraser Coast State of Seniors Report 2024, collates local research and data on our seniors community, highlighting challenges to invoke discussion as well as celebrating initiatives already in place through a series of showcases, laying out a baseline for our region.

The State of Seniors Report has been developed as a resource of the Seniors Legal & Support Service of HBNC after identifying a gap in collated seniors data at a local level. Data for this report has been gathered in a number of ways including:

- Using information direct from local seniors through the 2024 Fraser Coast Seniors Survey implemented by HBNC
- Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census
- Research on specific social determinants impacting on seniors ability to age positively
- Queensland and National data have also been researched for comparison for a wider snapshot


Demographically, the Fraser Coast has a much higher proportion of older residents, being 13% higher than Queensland and Australia (both 17%). Nation-wide ageing population trends have combined with local regional trends of rapid growth since the 1970's of retirees moving to the area, along with many young people moving away, resulting in a large seniors population. Many of these seniors are our neighbours, our friends, our families, our parents, and our grandparents.

Living longer brings with it a unique set of physical and social challenges. Cost of living, elder abuse, scamming, and social isolation are amongst the biggest social challenges affecting older people in our community. With the cost of living and inflation increasing, 69% of seniors surveyed through the Fraser Coast Seniors Survey 2024 reported some impact on their finances, and 19% reported severe impact. This impact affected grocery expenses (78%), health (76%) and energy expenses (50%) the most. Disturbingly, 47% of Fraser Coast seniors reported the cost of health made them hesitate to access health care, and 9% reported it stopped them altogether. This is especially concerning given the incidence of long term health conditions for seniors are also rising with arthritis, heart disease and diabetes, along with depression and anxiety being the main physical and mental health disorders seniors struggle with. Coronary heart disease and dementia further remain the top two causes of mortality for seniors. Preparing for later life also brings many challenges with approximately 1 in 6 (17%) of Fraser Coast seniors not feeling prepared for later life, 38% not having an Enduring Power of Attorney and 10% reporting they do not live in a house suitable for later life and are unable to modify it. A further 42% reported they were not registered with My Aged Care (MAC).

While so many challenges may seem overwhelming, there is still much to look forward to as we age. Many (35%) locals feel there are many positive aspects to ageing with freedom and more time to do what they want being the main benefit reported (35%). The confidence and wisdom life experience brings was another benefit frequently mentioned (15%), along with less stress from day to day living (14%). This leans into the importance of “positive ageing” and our right to lead fulfilling lives as we get older, and what this should look like.

The concept of “positive ageing” involves maintaining a positive attitude, feeling good about oneself, keeping fit & healthy, and engaging fully as one ages (Australian Psychology Society, n.d.). In terms of supporting older people to this end, the United Nations (UN) has set out 18 Principles for Older People outlining basic rights for seniors over 5 key areas including independence, care, participation, self-fulfilment and dignity. The World Health Organisation (WHO) have further developed an age-friendly cities framework to model how regions can support older people to age positively and achieve these principles. The framework covers 8 overlapping domains across community & health care, transportation, housing, social participation, outdoor spaces & buildings, respect & social inclusion, participation & employment, and communication & information. This has been adopted by the Queensland Government who have subscribed as an affiliate member to the WHO age-friendly cities network and have implemented an action plan to achieve this vision for senior Queenslanders. Locally, the Fraser Coast Regional Council Community Plan 2031 aims to ensure seniors, including Elders, are respected for their experience and knowledge and are valued as contributing members of our community.

With this framework and vision in place, what can we as a local community do to action these and help our families, friends and neighbours to positively age and enjoy meaningful and fulfilling lives in a more age-friendly Fraser Coast?



"There is a good life for everyone, but you have to seek it for yourself. Kindness leads to happiness."

-Fraser Coast resident when asked what is the one bit of life wisdom they would share with others





1. Our Local Seniors

Demographics





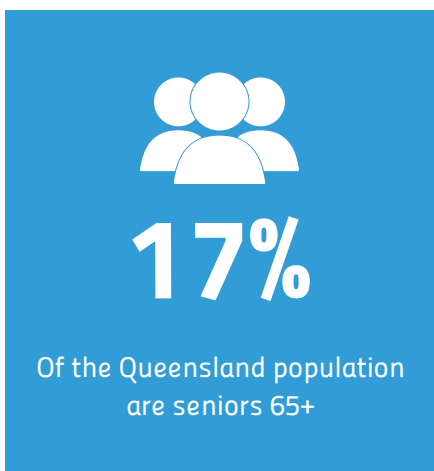
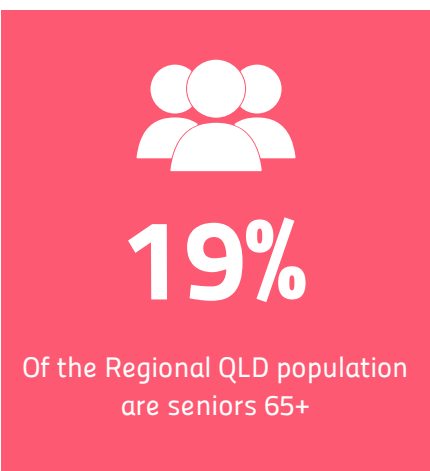
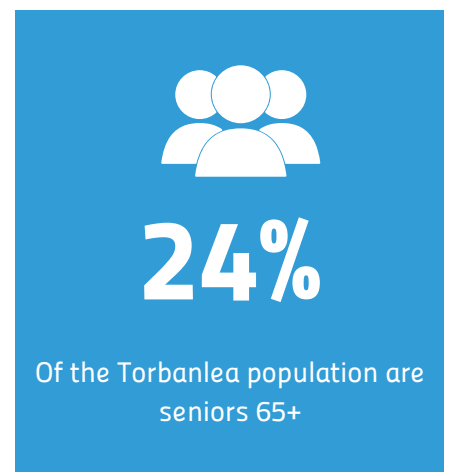
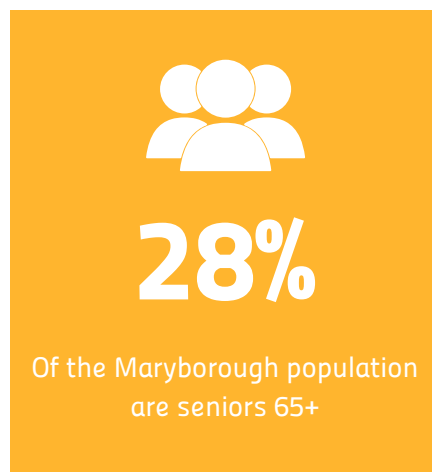
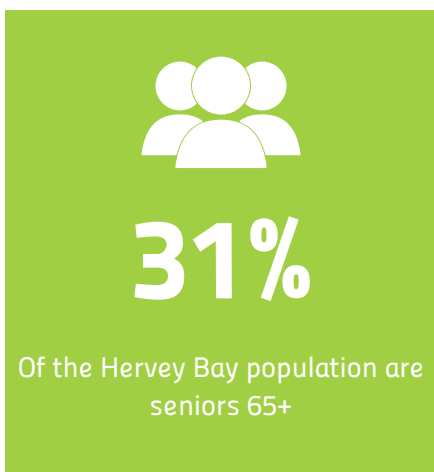
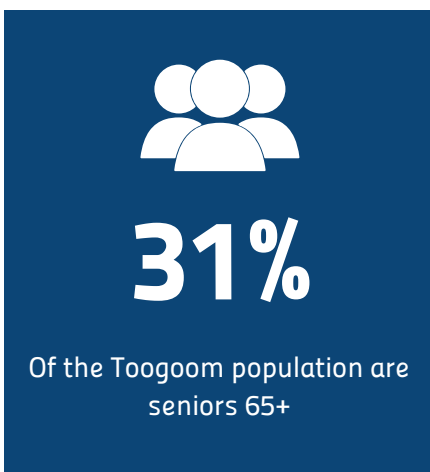
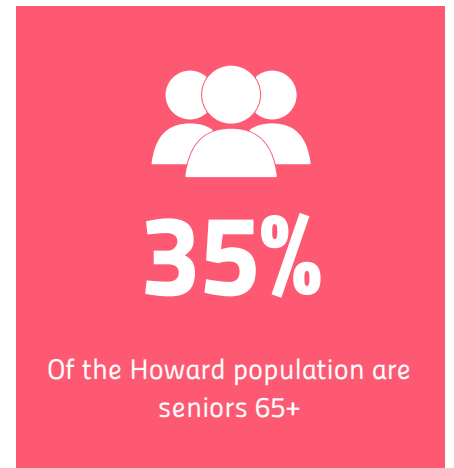
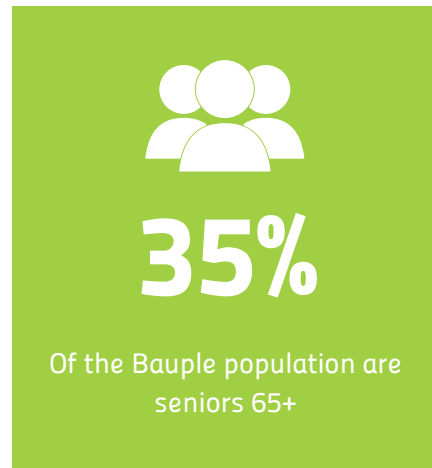
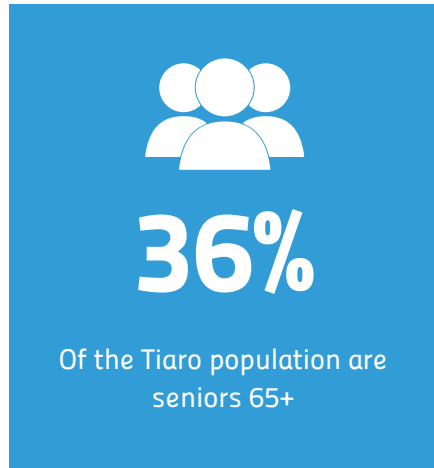
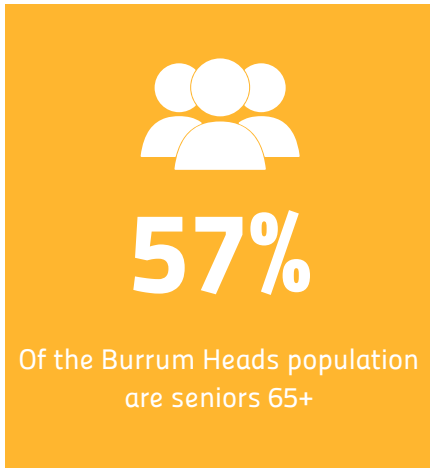
1.1 Our Seniors Population

Approximately 1 in 3 residents in the Fraser Coast is aged 65+

The Fraser Coast has a large seniors demographic with 30% of the population aged 65+, compared to 17% for Queensland & Australia. This is also a high proportion compared with Regional Queensland (19%). Within Queensland, Fraser Coast has the second highest proportion of seniors in the state. Within the Fraser Coast, Burrum Heads has the highest seniors population with 57% aged 65+. This is followed by Tiaro (36%), and Bauple & Howard (both 35%). Like many developed countries, Australia has an aging population driven by a baby boomer cohort born during 1946-1965 getting older (Australian Journal of Rural Health, 2017), increasing life expectancy and current low fertility rates (AIHW Older Australians Demographic Profile, 2024). This has combined with local population trends to drive seniors growth in the region.

Local Seniors Population Growth:

Research shows older people are happier when they retire to regional places (Australian Housing & Urban Research Institute, 2020). The Fraser Coast, in particular, has experienced rapid population growth since the 1970's, particularly from retirees moving to the region (Fraser Coast Regional Council Drivers of population change, id (informed decisions), 2024). And while retirees prefer to stay in one place once moved (Australian Housing & Urban Research Institute, 2020), the Fraser Coast, like most regional areas, regularly loses young adults as the same time (18-24 years), who move to Brisbane and elsewhere for education and employment opportunities. This has resulted in the Fraser Coast having a significant seniors population.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing



Showcase

Centenary Trees



Since 2021, the Fraser Coast Regional Council have had in place a “Centenary Tree” policy. This sees a tree planted to commemorate local community members when they turn 100 years old, becoming centenarians. Trees are planted at the Hervey Bay Botanic Gardens, Elizabeth Park Rose Garden in Maryborough or the Tiaro Memorial Park, depending on where residents live. Each tree planting is accompanied by a small celebration ceremony and the placement of a plaque with the centenarian’s name and birth date. Queensland firewheel trees (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*) are planted in Maryborough and Tiaro; and Smooth Leaved Quandong (*Elaeocarpus eumundii*) are planted in the Hervey Bay Botanic Garden. Applications for a Centenary Tree can be made online through the Council website. There is no cost for people to apply for a centenary tree and it is a wonderful way to visually see how many people are now reaching 100 years old in our local community.

Source: Fraser Coast Regional Council



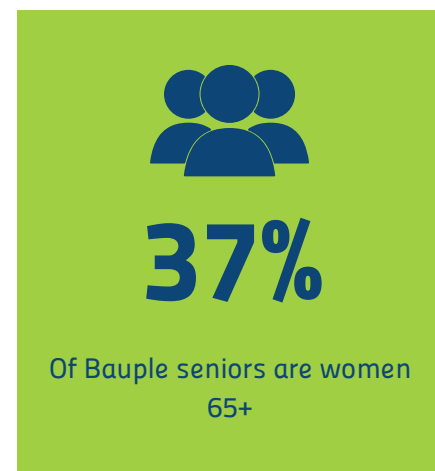
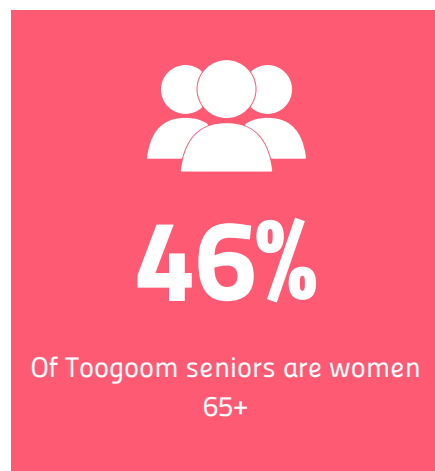
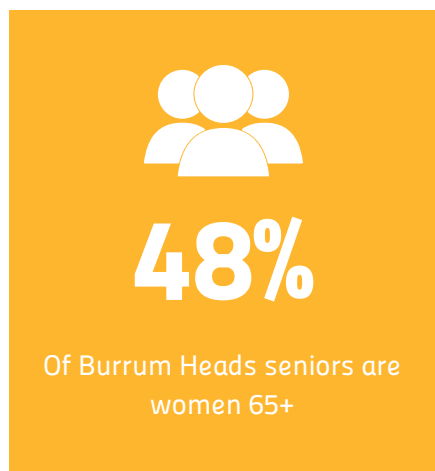
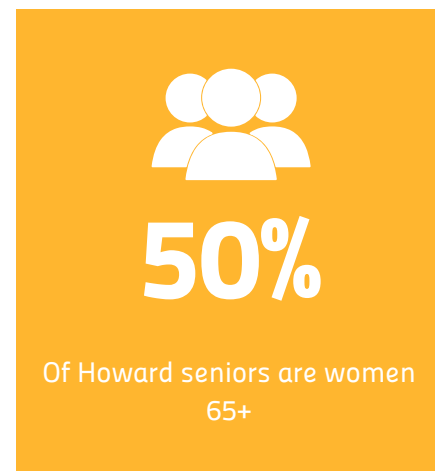
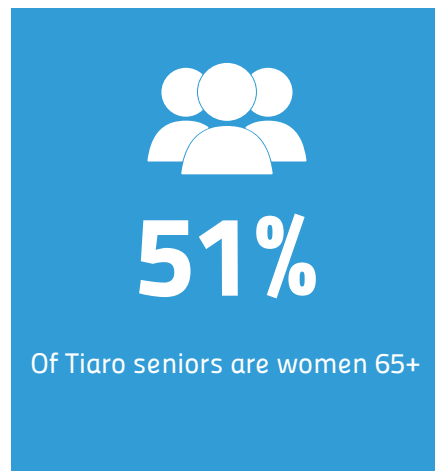
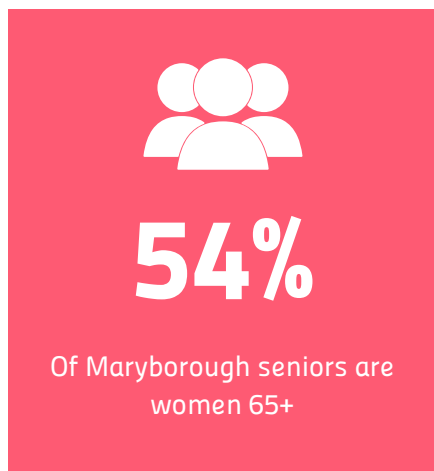


1.2 Senior Women

Over half of seniors on the Fraser Coast are women

Amongst the Fraser Coast Seniors population, 51% are women aged 65+ (ABS, 2021). This is 2% lower than Queensland & Australia (both 53%). Within Fraser Coast, Maryborough has the highest proportion of senior women with 54% of seniors being female. This higher ratio of women to men can be attributed to women having relatively longer life expectancies (Australian Human Rights Commission National Summit on Women's Safety, 2021) with the average life expectancy of women in Queensland being 84.5 years (Queensland Women's Strategy 2022-2027, p.9). In contrast, Bauple has the least number of women 65+ on the Fraser Coast, with just 37% of seniors being female.

Older women often face different challenges than men. Women 65+ experience more financial insecurity during retirement due to having less superannuation than men and as a result are at higher risk of homelessness (Older Women In Australia: Housing Insecurity & Homelessness, 2020, p.19). Women also have higher rates of obesity, and more women than men experience depression and anxiety. Unique issues older women face also include being the largest demographic for falls-related hospitalisations and being more likely than men to delay obtaining medical services and medications (Queensland Women's Strategy, 2016-2021).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.



Showcase

Fraser Coast Artslink Creative Crafters

The Creative Crafters are a social group engaged in a wide range of arts and craft including knitting, crocheting and sewing. Anyone is welcome and the group is open to everyone of all levels of experience - beginner to expert. As well as working on individual crafts, the group also work on group projects for charity including knitting hundreds of Read Bears for the HBNC Read Bear Program each year for Year 1 students, making Welcome Worms for new students starting school and knitted toys and blankets for hospital.

Creative Crafters meet Wednesdays from 9am-12pm at the Fraser Coast Artslink Hall, located on Bideford Street.



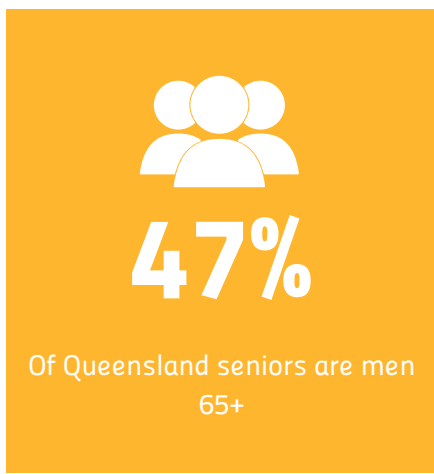
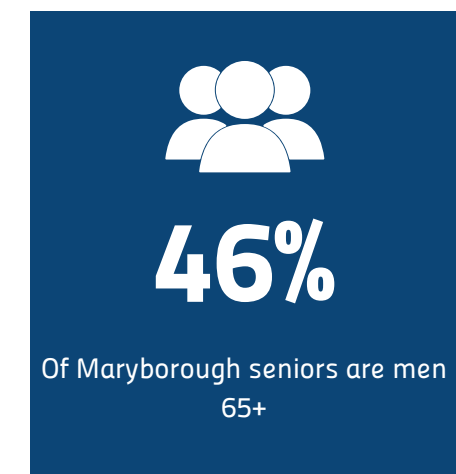
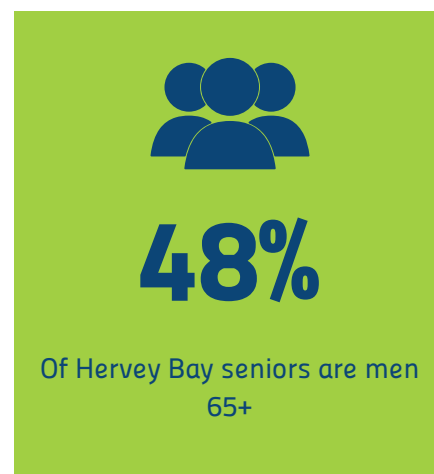
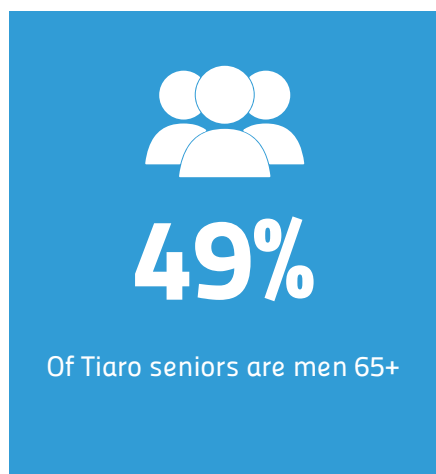
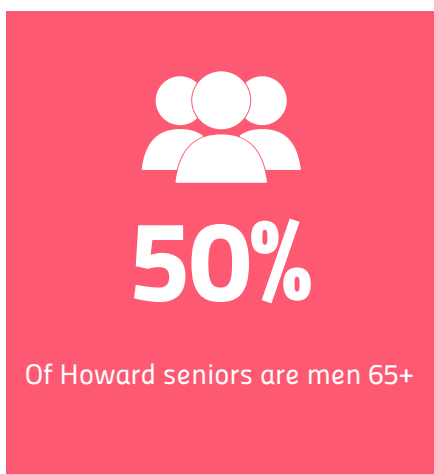
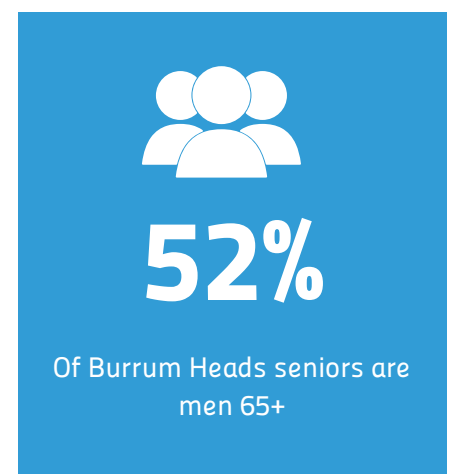
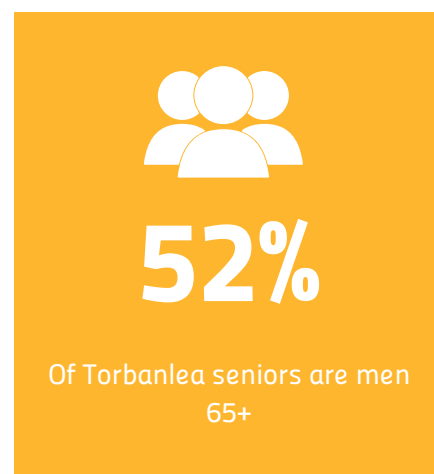
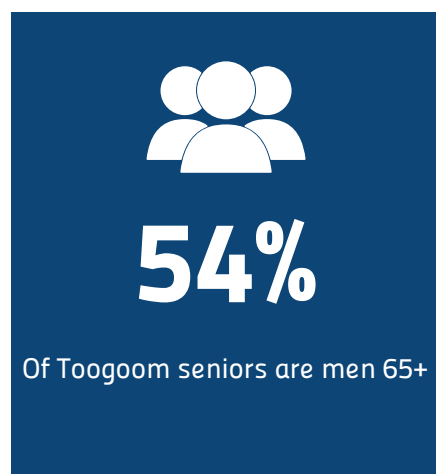
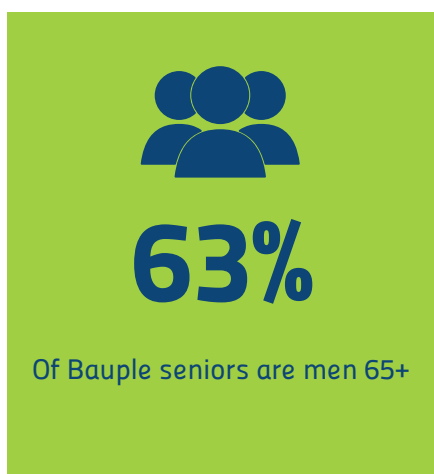


1.3 Senior Men

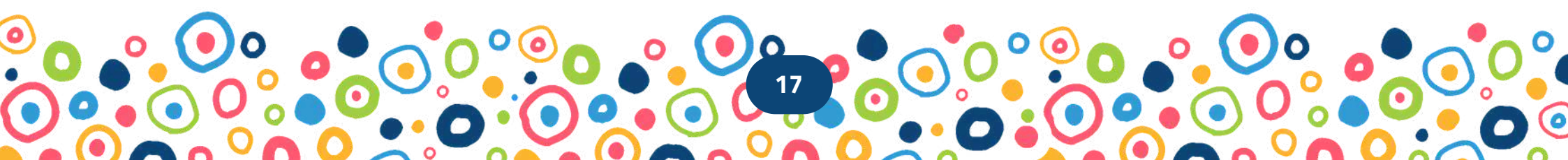
49% of seniors on the Fraser Coast are men

Amongst the Fraser Coast seniors population, 49% are men (ABS, 2021). This is 2% higher than Queensland and Australia (both 47%). Within the Fraser Coast, Bauple has the highest proportion of senior men (63%) and in contrast, Maryborough has the lowest (46%). Men in Queensland generally have a shorter life expectancy than women with an average expectancy of 80.1 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Like women, men also face a unique set of challenges. Like women, men's overall life expectancy and health has improved substantially over the last 5 decades (AIHW, 2011), however, men's average life expectancy remains substantially lower than that of women. Men are more vulnerable to disorders across the lifespan (Ricciardelli, L., et al., 2012). Cultural factors also contribute to this, such as the impact of notions of masculinity and stoicism contributing to the complexities of men's use of health services and help-seeking for mental health issues (Tynan, A., et al., 2015). Males aged over 85 years also have the highest age-specific suicide rate of all age groups in Australia (ABS, n.d.) with factors such as chronic pain, dependence on others, loneliness, grief and loss of meaning of life being contributing factors to vulnerability (Life Mind, n.d.).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.



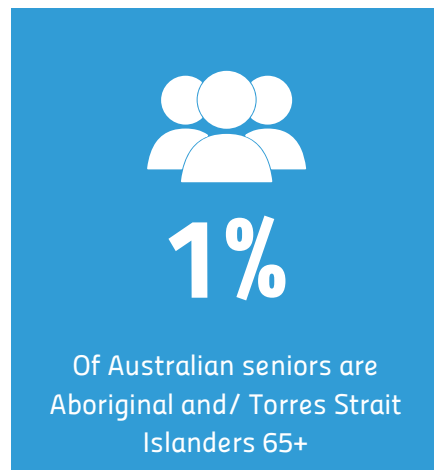
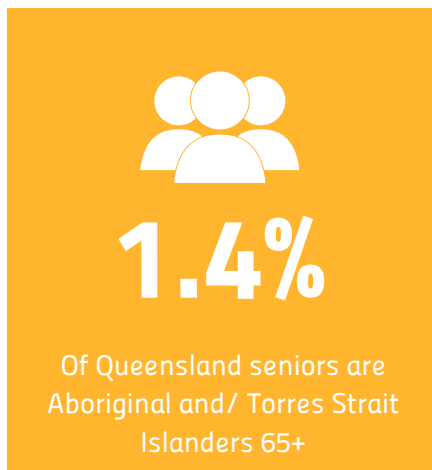
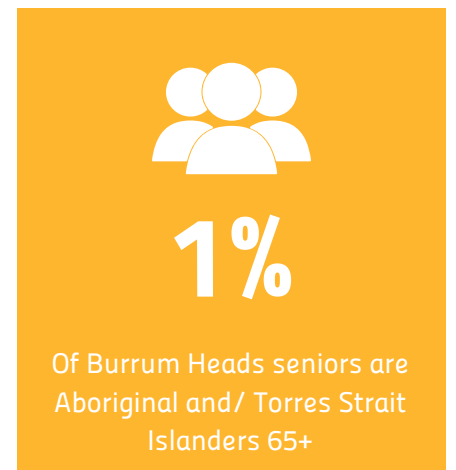
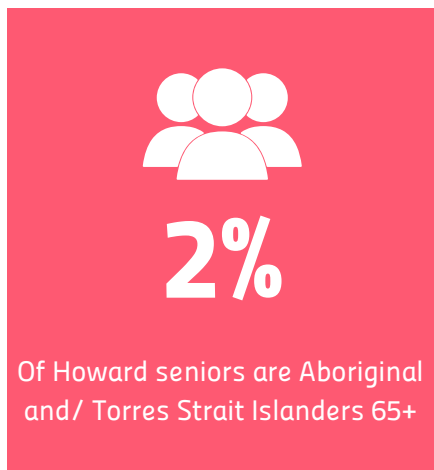
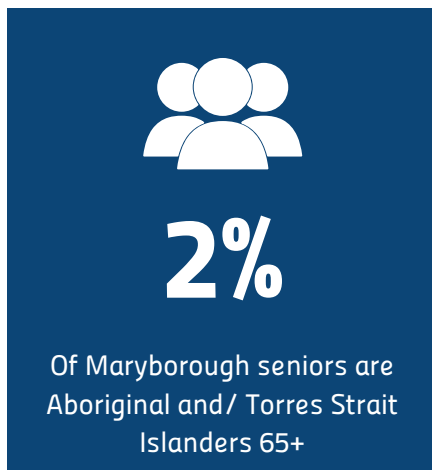
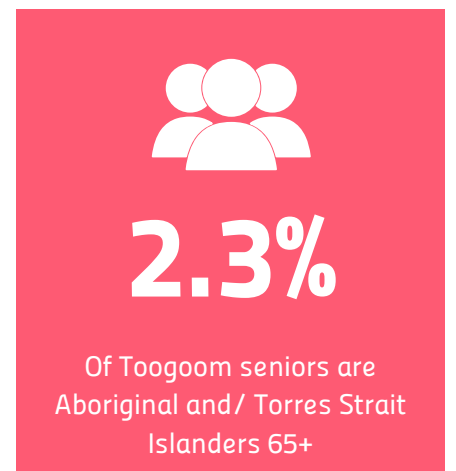
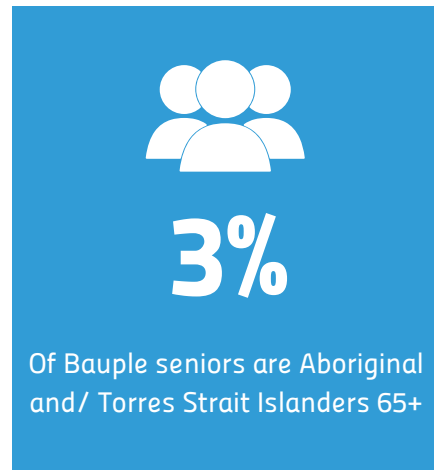
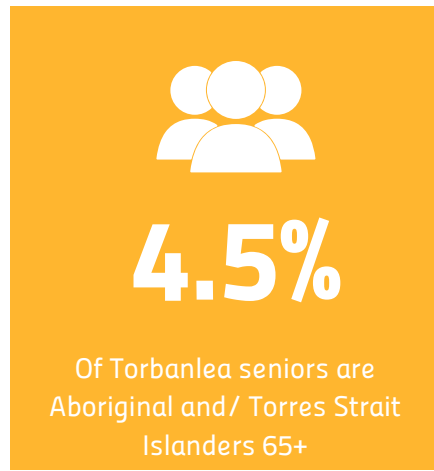
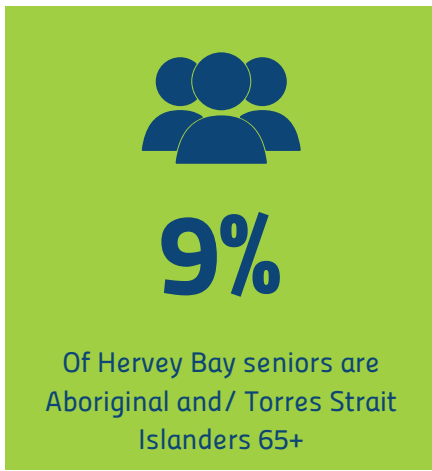


1.4 First Nations Seniors

Just 1 in 100 seniors on the Fraser Coast are Indigenous

Only 1.4% of the seniors population on the Fraser Coast are Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islanders (ABS, 2021). This is the same proportion as Queensland (1.4%) and 0.4% higher than Australia (1%). Within the Fraser Coast, Hervey Bay has the largest proportion of First Nations seniors aged 65+ (9%).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are affected by unique challenges. This includes being more likely to develop medical conditions earlier in life and having a lower life expectancy than non-Indigenous Australians- 71.9 years for males (8.8 years less than non-Indigenous males) and 75.6 for women (8.1 years less than non-Indigenous females) (ABS, n.d.). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also continue to suffer from the consequences of European settlement resulting in social dislocation and economic disadvantage, which also contribute to poor health and life outcomes for First Nations people (AIHW, n.d.). Indigenous seniors also have higher rates of disability, including dementia.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.



Showcase

Kalang Respite Care Centre Aboriginal Corporation

Kalang Respite Care Centre Aboriginal Corporation is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to caring for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Community Elders. Kalang recognises that community members aged 50 years or over are considered Elders in light of lower life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The centre provides Home Care Services to the elderly community who are approved for a Level 1-4 Home Care Package. Kalang works in partnership with Elders, their Carer and their loved ones to assist them to achieve their goals aimed at supporting existing skills and learning new skills. In doing so client's independence and autonomy is supported and quality of life is enhanced. Kalang ensures cultural sensitivity and appropriateness in Service Delivery as well as also encouraging cultural revival and preservation. Services include support in the home, shopping, lawn maintenance, medical appointments social support and community gatherings and outings.



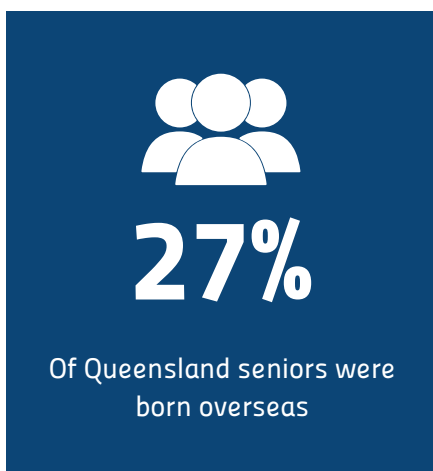
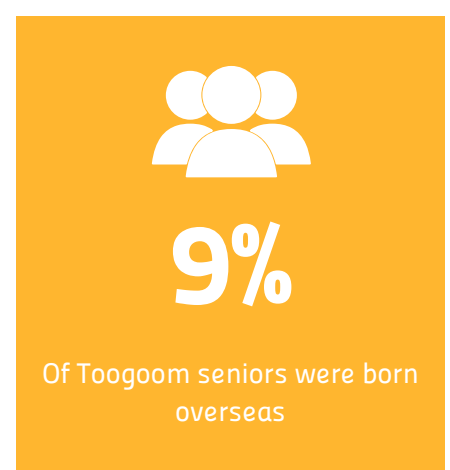
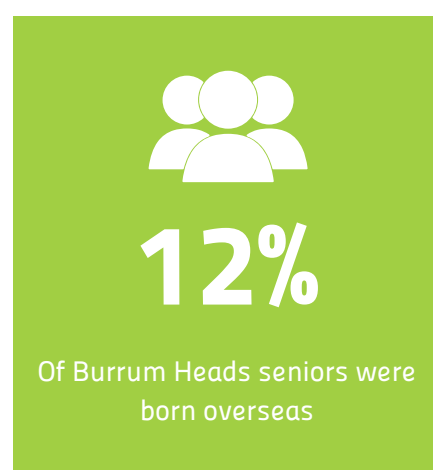
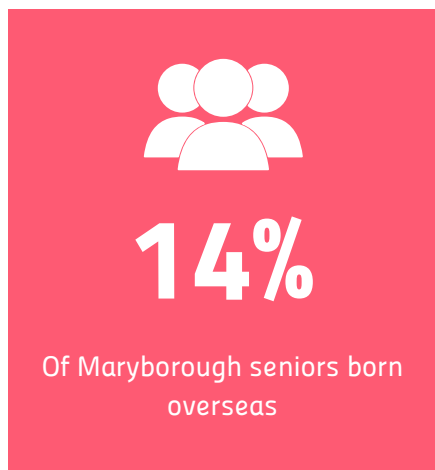
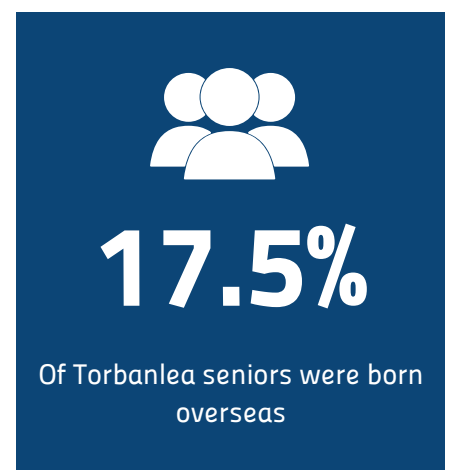
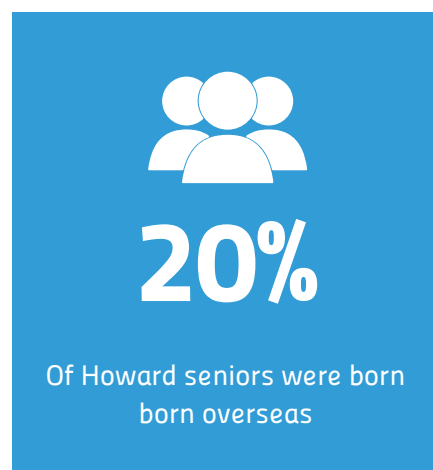
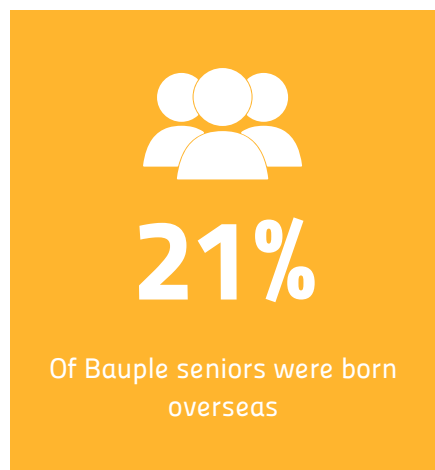
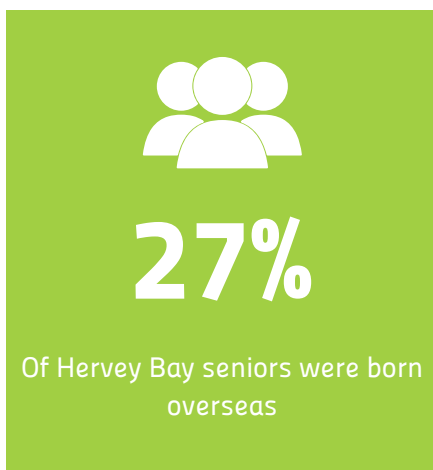


1.5 Culturally Diverse Seniors

Approximately 1 in 5 seniors on the Fraser Coast were born overseas

Among Fraser Coast seniors, 23% were born overseas (ABS, 2021). The top 5 non-English speaking countries of birth for seniors 65+ were Germany (6%), Netherlands (5%), Philippines (2%), Italy (1%) and Malta (1%). The Fraser Coast has a 4% lower culturally diverse seniors population than the rest of Queensland (27%) and 12% lower than the rest of Australia (35%). Within the Fraser Coast, Hervey Bay had the highest proportion of culturally diverse seniors (27%), while Toogoom had the lowest (9%).

While having the same challenges as general population, research also shows those who are from non-English speaking backgrounds are generally more likely to experiencing difficulties in accessing services due to language and cultural barriers and which can result in poorer health, wellbeing and social inclusion outcomes (Healthy Ageing: Strategy for Older Queenslanders, Queensland Health, 2019).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.

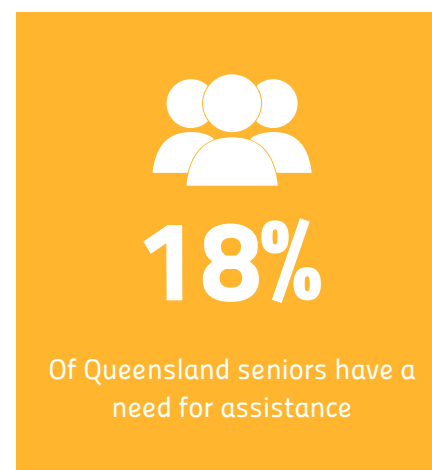
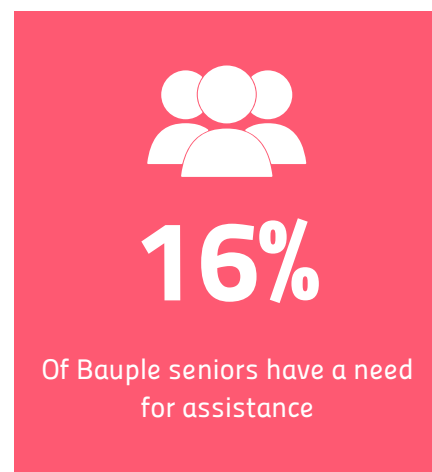
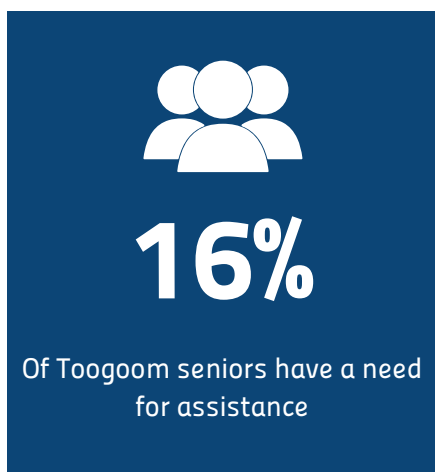
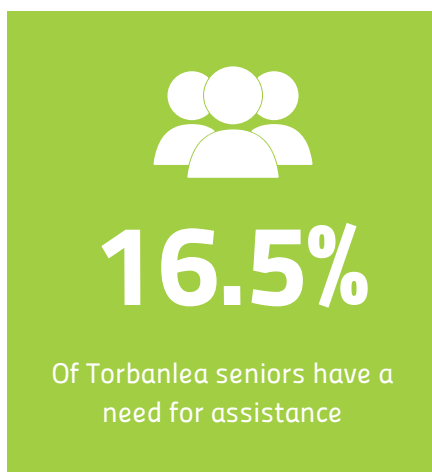
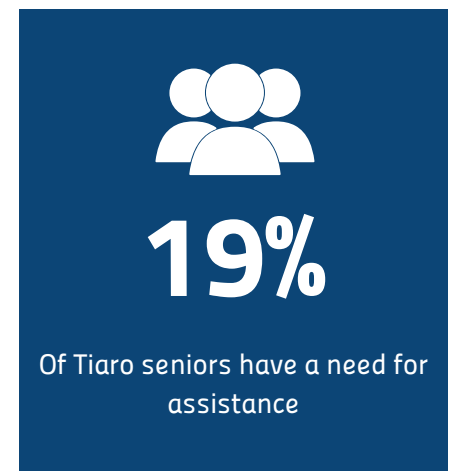
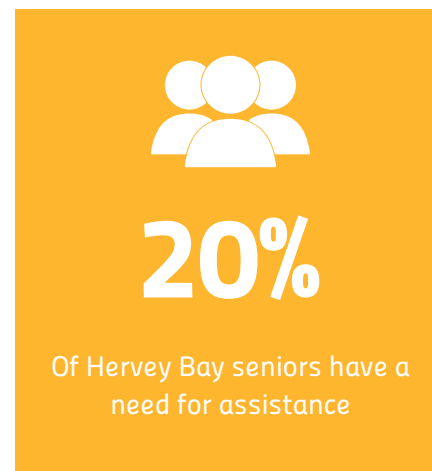
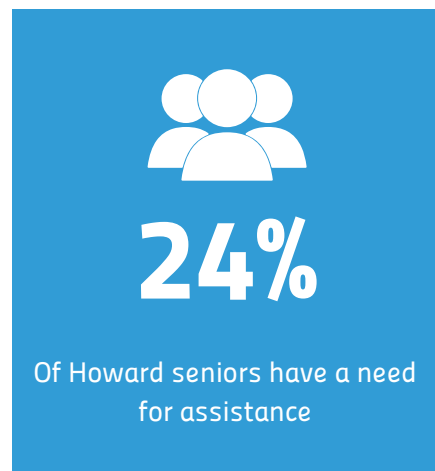
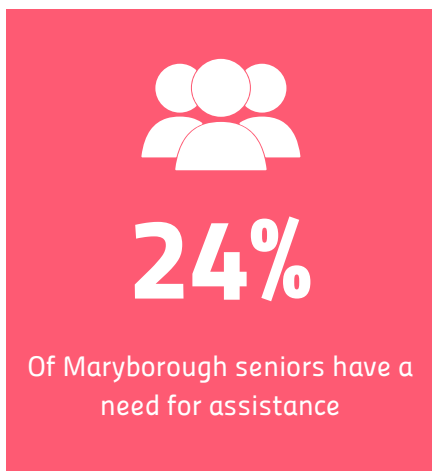




1.6 Seniors With A Need for Assistance

Almost 1 in 5 Seniors on the Fraser Coast have a need for assistance

According to the 2021 census, among Fraser Coast seniors 65+, 18% have a need for assistance with everyday activities. This is the same as Queensland and Australia (both 18%). Within the Fraser Coast, Maryborough & Howard have the highest proportion of seniors with a need for assistance (both 24%). Burrum Heads has the lowest (12%). Generally, older women are more likely to need help with at least one activity (43%) compared with men (30%) and required assistance with tasks including mobility (17.8% compared to 12.2% for men), property maintenance (23.9% compared with 15.6% of men) and household chores (21.1% compared with 10.3%), (Australian Bureau of Statistics, n.d.).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.



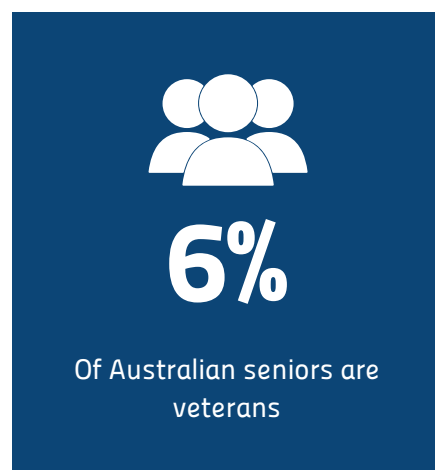
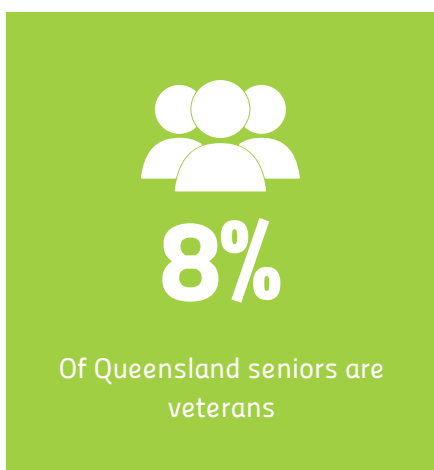
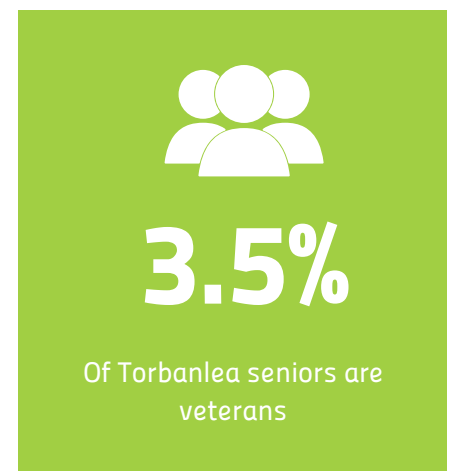
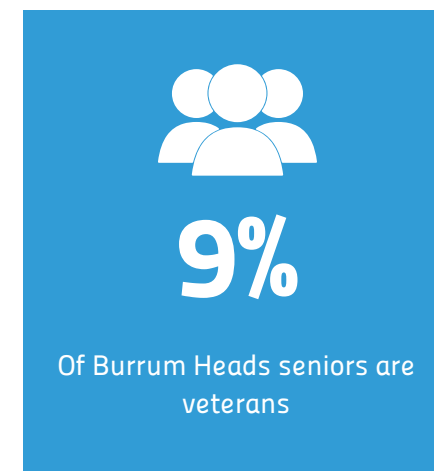
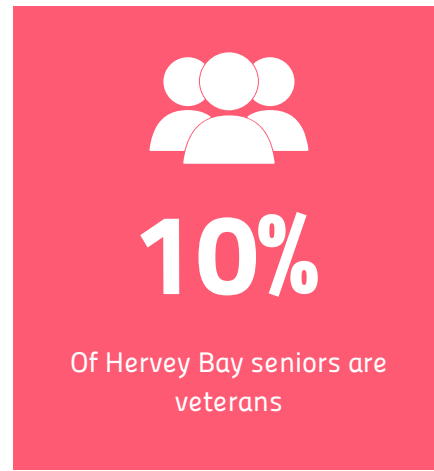
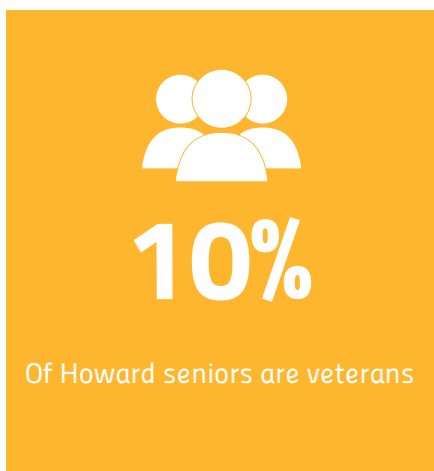
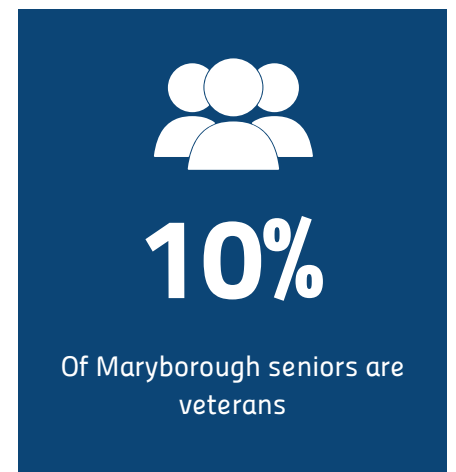
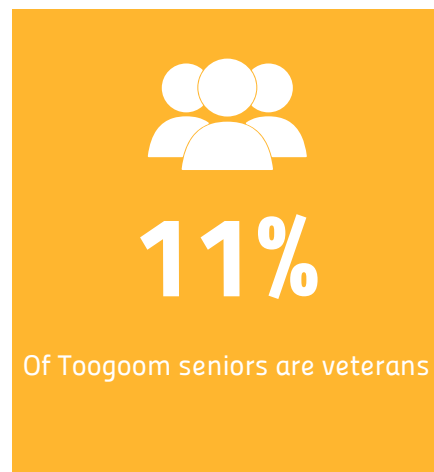
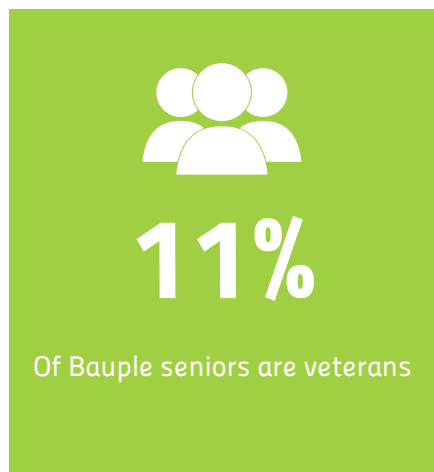
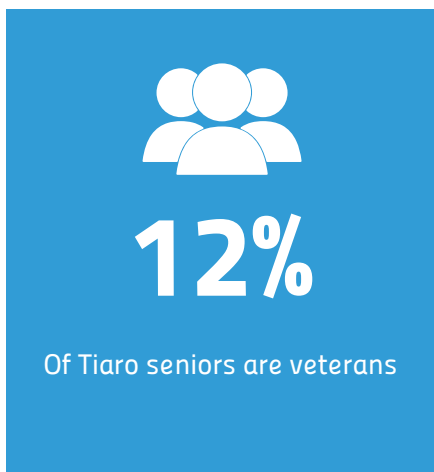


1.7 Senior Veterans

1 in 10 seniors on the Fraser Coast are veterans

According to the 2021 Census, 10% of seniors 65+ on the Fraser Coast are veterans. Fraser Coast has a 2% higher rate of senior veterans compared to Queensland (8%) and 4% higher than Australia (6%). Within the Fraser Coast, Tiaro had the highest proportion of veteran seniors (12%) and Tobanlea had the lowest (3.5%).

Along with the usual challenges of ageing, many veterans also experience additional physical, mental and social health conditions associated with their military experience. For World War II, Korean and Vietnam veterans, issues of depression, alcohol misuse and dependence, and PTSD are common (Open Arms, n.d.). Males aged 65-74 who have served in the Australian Defence Force reported mental and behavioural conditions at a rate 10% higher than males 65-74 who had never served (AIHW, n.d.). International studies also indicate increased prevalence of dementia among veterans than general population as well as increased prevalence of risk factors for dementia including traumatic brain injury sustained through active duty (AIHW, n.d.).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.



Showcase

Fraser Burnett Legacy

Legacy is a uniquely Australian organization which puts great emphasis on personal contact. The Spirit of Legacy is Service, which is provided by its members, the legatees, throughout Australia, to Widows(ers), children and disabled dependents of those who served in ALL conflicts in which Australia has been involved. That service is also extended to the family of a discharged veteran when the veteran is terminally ill or suffers from a physical or mental condition that renders him/her incapable of managing his/her own affairs.

The Legacy Laurel Club is a group of Legacy Widows, who meet once a month. This provides a social outlet for connection and helps to overcome isolation and loneliness. For many widows, Legacy is the focal point of their social life. The Laurel Club provides activities such as guest speakers, afternoon teas and bus trips.



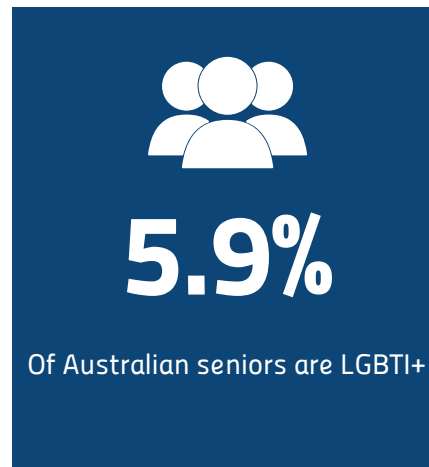


1.8 LGBTI+ Seniors

There is a lack of data available on Fraser Coast LGBTI+ Seniors


LGBTI+ communities include people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or otherwise in gender, sex or sexuality (AIHW, n.d.). No data on Fraser Coast seniors who identify as LGBTI+ was found, with data for LGBTI+ communities continuing to be largely national-scale data, not region specific. It was only on 9 December 2017 that the Marriage Act in Australia was changed to allow any two people the right marry, and the 2021 Census was the first census conducted following this amendment and people, where people were able to report registered same-sex marriages for the first time. Prior to this, same-sex couples were able to report a relationship of husband/wife in the relationship as reported for couples variable.

Among senior Australians, those aged 70 years and over and living in same-sex couples increased dramatically from 2011 to 2021 (8 times more for men and 12 times more for females) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, n.d.). Older LGBTI+ Australians have experienced many periods of social and cultural transition and have a shared experience of discrimination, prejudice, violence, isolation and stigma (LGBTIQ Health, n.d.). Specific challenges seniors from the LGBTI+ community may experience as they age include barriers in accessing safe and inclusive aged care services where older people who have experienced the criminalisation of homosexuality during most of their lifetime tend to return to living “in the closet” (i.e. concealing their identity) once entering aged care due to a fear of discrimination and misunderstanding in a new communal environment (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019 General Social Survey





"Always be kind and forgiving.
Don't bear grudges, they can
make you ill. Smile and exercise
daily."

-Fraser Coast resident when asked what is the one bit of life wisdom they would share with others



2. Where are Seniors Living?

Living Situation





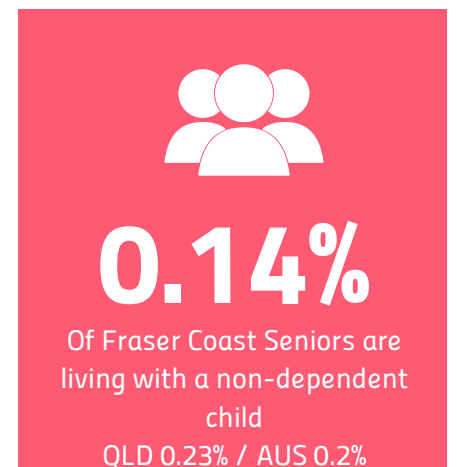
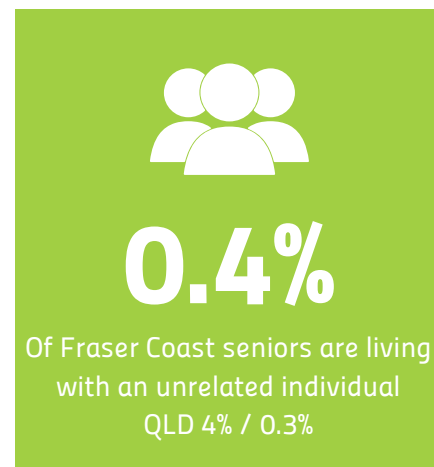
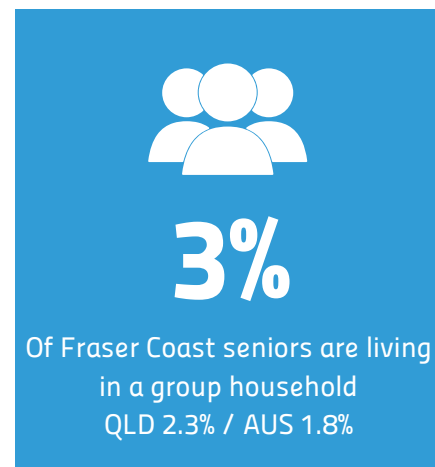
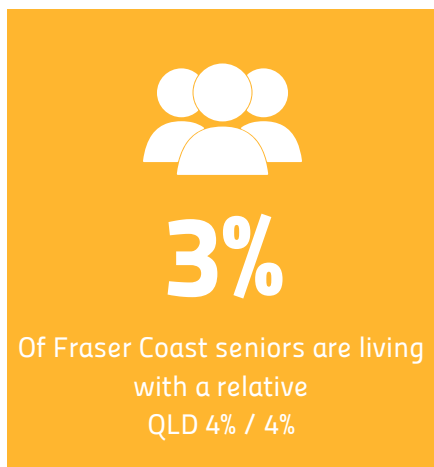
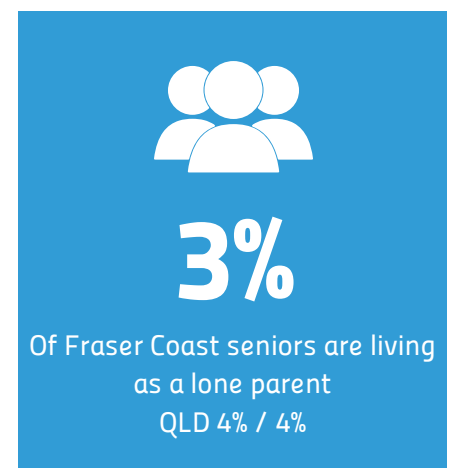
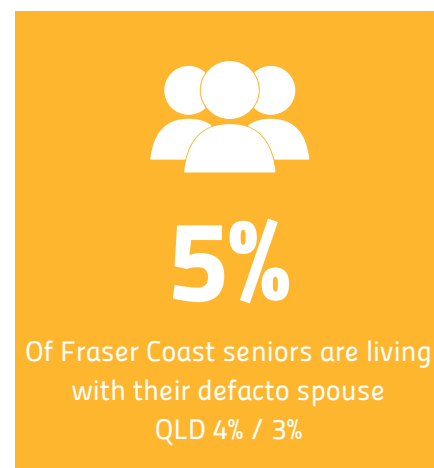
2.1 Living Situation

Over half of Fraser Coast seniors live with their spouse

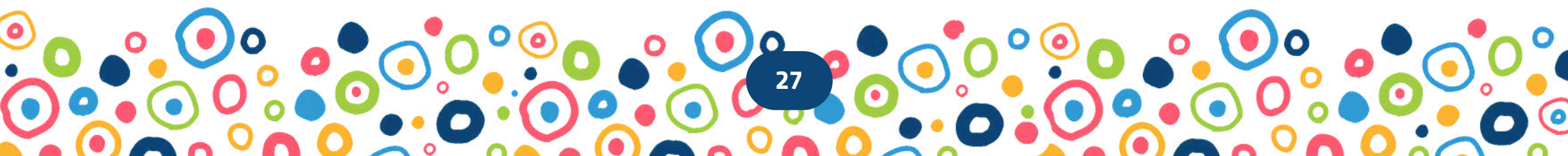
According to 2021 Census data, 52% of Fraser Coast seniors live with their married spouse, 20% live alone, and 5% are living with a defacto spouse. These are comparable to Queensland and Australian rates. No census data was found relating to what type of housing seniors are living in (only whole of population data), however on the 2024 Fraser Coast Seniors Survey, 81% of respondents reported they were homeowners, 12.5% were renting, 1% were boarding and 5% other (responses for other included living in a lifestyle village, caravan park, housemate, and living with family/relatives).

On the same survey, in terms of housing affordability, 40% of respondents reported being “unconcerned” about housing (indicating they had no housing issues), 25% were “neither concerned nor unconcerned”, 19% were “extremely concerned” and 16% were “quite concerned”. Comments listed included concern at being able to stay in their home as they get older and still be financially secure, concerns around the cost of rates and insurance, preferring to live in their own home but being unable to, separating from partners/spouse but not being able to afford independent housing, and also those living currently with their spouse being worried about not being able to afford to live on their own if their partner passed away. When asked if their current home was suitable for later life, 47% of seniors reported “yes, it is suitable”, 35% reported “it will be okay with some modifications” 10% reported “it’s not okay and I can’t modify it” and 7% were “unsure”.

Housing plays a critical role in quality of life, and the health and wellbeing of older people contributing to physical, psychological, health and emotional security (ABS, 2020). The majority of seniors being homeowners on the Fraser Coast aligns with national data, which shows that older Australians are wealthier than ever and have higher rates of home ownership than younger generations (Australian Journal of Rural Health, 2017). Evidence also shows that older Australians prefer to age in place, staying in their local home or community (AIHW, n.d). This is concerning for the 35% who expressed concern about housing affordability. For those who do rent, affordability has decreased markedly since 2020, while rental costs have grown sharply due to a lack of rental stock (Queensland Treasury; Rental Affordability in Queensland, 2020, p.1). This causes a divide between wealthy seniors and seniors experiencing socio-economic hardship.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.



Showcase


HUMPS Hervey Bay Ukulele Music Pickers and Strummers Inc.



HUMPS – Hervey Bay Ukulele Music Pickers and Strummers Inc – is an enthusiastic music club that offers beginners instruction, friendship and fun through playing the ukulele. The group meets every Tuesday night to play and to encourage and support our members. The group is very welcoming to new members to join in the music and fun.

In addition to meetings, the group has performed throughout Queensland.





*"Look forward in life, not
back. Just enjoy the future."*

-Fraser Coast resident when asked what is the one bit of life wisdom they would share with others



3. What are Seniors Doing?

Activities & Community Engagement



3.1 Volunteering

Seniors are valuable volunteers providing 14% of the Fraser Coast's volunteering

According to the 2021 Census, approximately 1 in 7 seniors on the Fraser Coast (14%) do volunteer work. This is comparable to Queensland (15%) and Australian (16%) rates. Within Fraser Coast, Tiaro has the highest proportion of volunteers (16%).

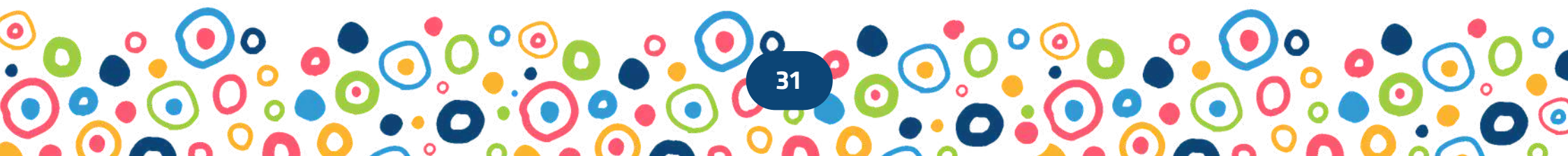
According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Baby Boomers (Aged 55-74) are the most likely people in Australia to volunteer (ABS, 2022b). Volunteering and volunteering opportunities are an important part of keeping older Fraser Coast residents engaged with community for better overall quality of life. Volunteering for older people is associated with reduced symptoms of depression, better self-reported health, fewer functional limitations, and lower mortality (N. Anderson, et al., 2014).

In 2023, HBNC ran a Community Volunteers Survey to find out what kind of volunteer work people are doing in the community. The most common area for volunteering were in administration (29%), in meals & food (29%), welfare & social support (18%) and aged support (16%).

Within the HBNC organisation, there are over 400 actively registered volunteers of which, 38% are seniors aged 65+.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.



Showcase

Fraser Coast Heroes Volunteering Database



The Fraser Coast Heroes Volunteer Database helps make finding volunteers easier. It also makes it easier for community-minded people to find opportunities to help.

Delivered in partnership with the Fraser Coast Regional Council, Fraser Coast Heroes is a centralised database where community members can express their interest in volunteering and specify what areas of community service they want to be involved in.

The database is managed and maintained by HBNC staff and provides the opportunity for community organisations to request access to contact lists specifically tailored to the volunteering opportunity they have on offer.



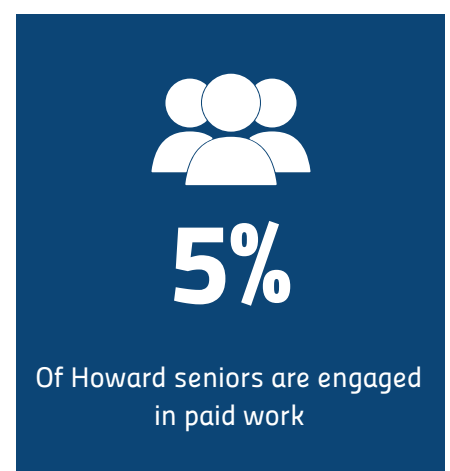
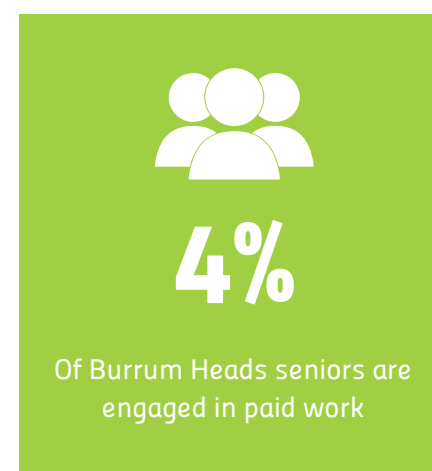
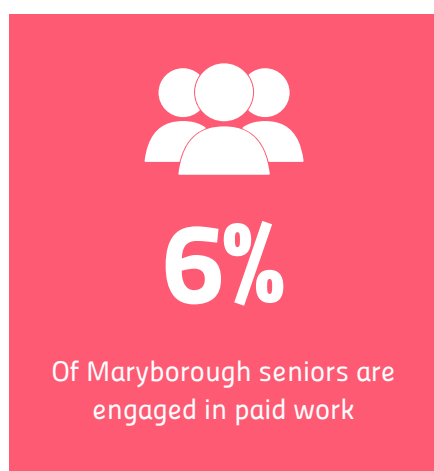
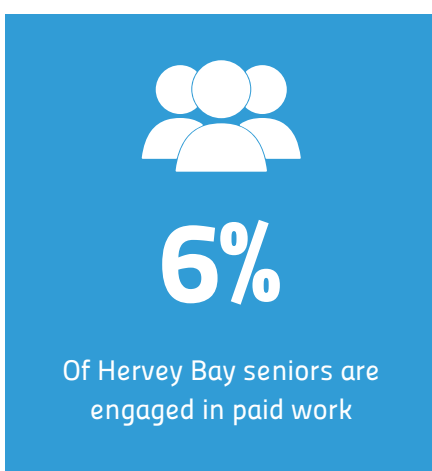
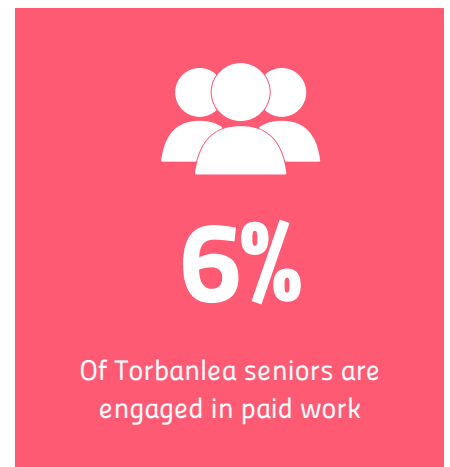
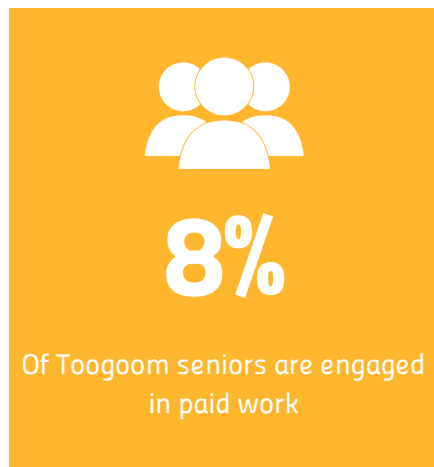
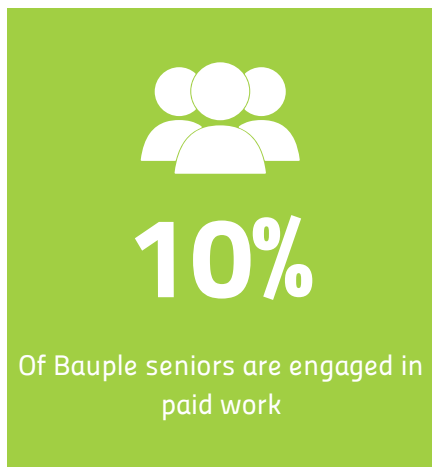


3.2 Employment

6.4% of seniors on the Fraser Coast are engaged in paid work

According to the 2021 Census data, 6.4% of seniors aged 65+ on the Fraser Coast are engaged in paid work. This is 6.6% lower than Queensland (13%) and 7.6% lower than Australia (14%). Within Fraser Coast, Bauple (10%) and Tiaro (8%) have the highest proportion of employed seniors.

A noted trend is that the number of seniors who are choosing to stay engaged in work is growing. This is due to a number of factors. Older people have a greater capacity than previous generations to work beyond retirement ages of 60–65 years old as they are generally healthier, more educated, and due to the nature of work becoming less demanding than previously (J. Healy, 2004).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.



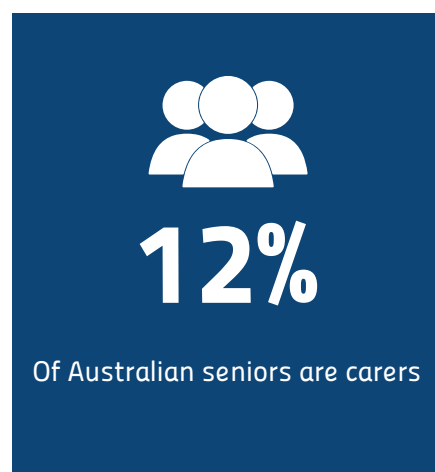
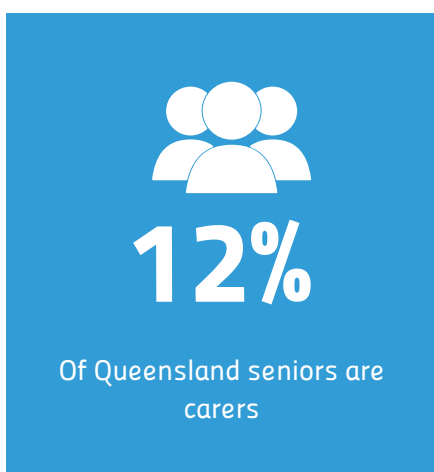
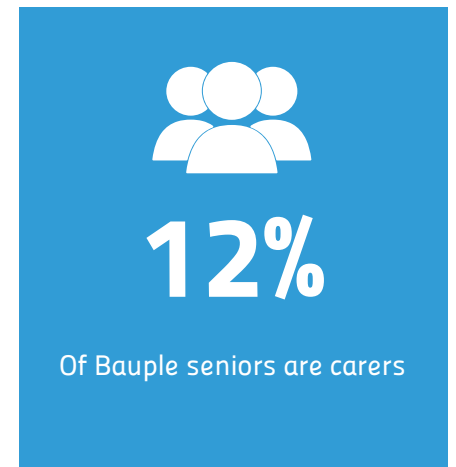
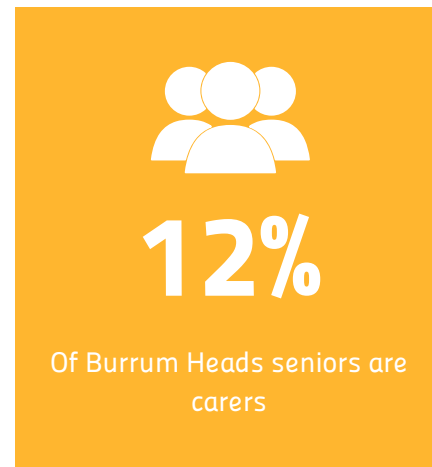
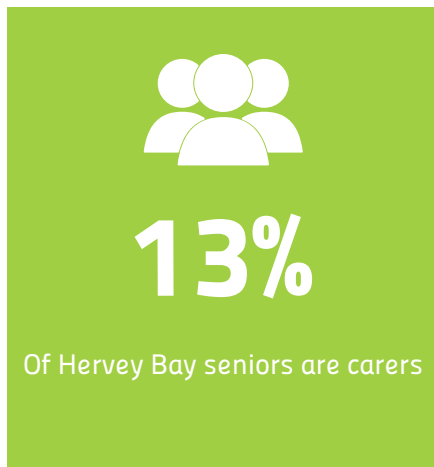
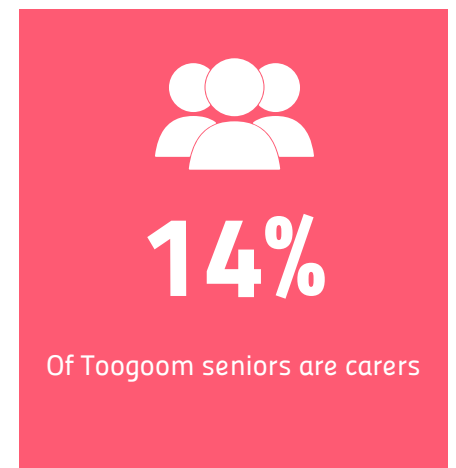
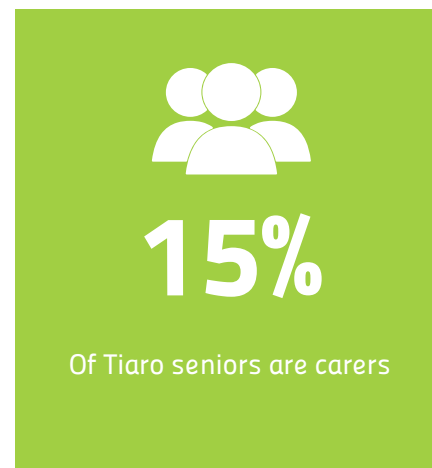
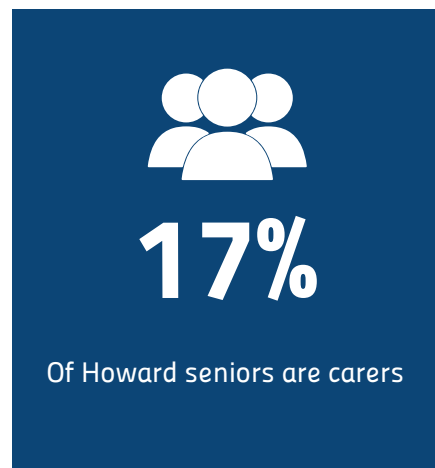
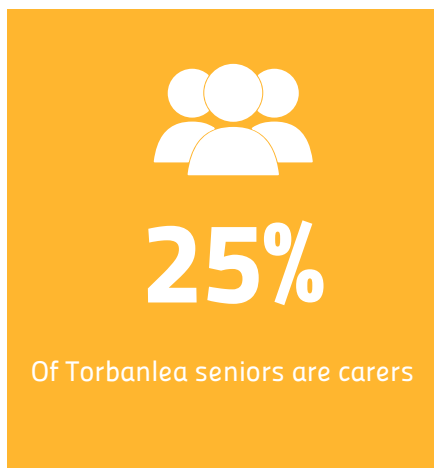


3.3 Carers

1 in 8 seniors on the Fraser Coast are carers

According to 2021 Census data, 13% of seniors on the Fraser Coast are carers. This is 1% higher than Queensland and Australia (both 12%). Within the Fraser Coast, Torbanlea had the highest proportion of senior carers (25%), followed by Howard (17%) and Tiaro (15%).

Australia-wide, over half (55%) of those providing care to a spouse or partner were aged 65+, with women overall being 2.5 times more likely than men to be a primary carer (ABS, 2023, n.d.). With so many seniors being primary carers, the time, costs, physical and emotional exertion associated with providing ongoing care can take a toll, with the demands often linked to social isolation, limited engagement in community, stress, anxiety and a decline in their own health (Queensland Government: A strategy for older Queenslanders, 2019). In 2017, it was estimated that unpaid care of adults was worth 15.4 million dollars Australia-wide (Understanding the unpaid economy, 2017).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.



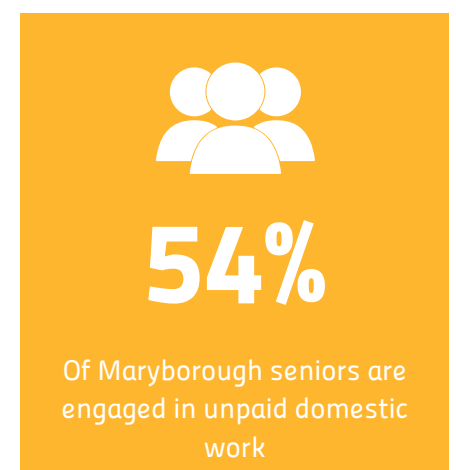
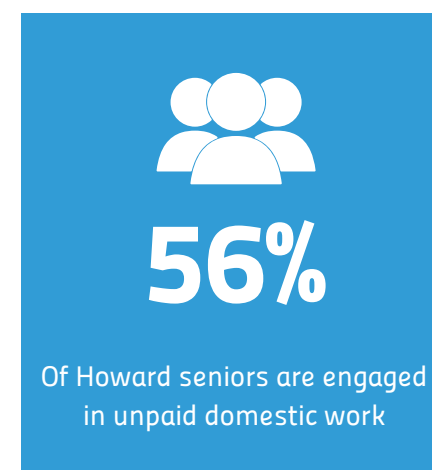
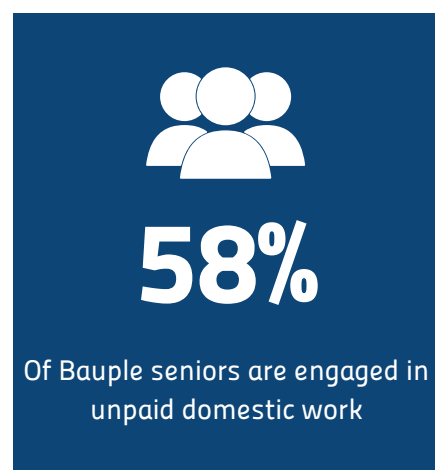
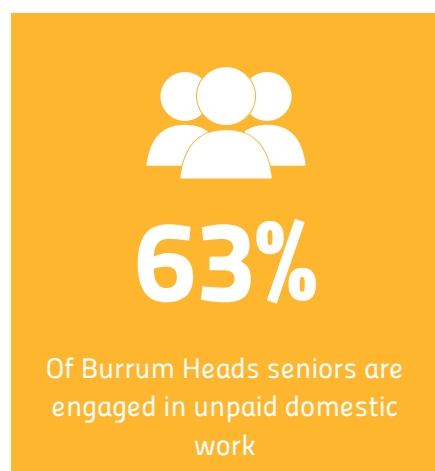
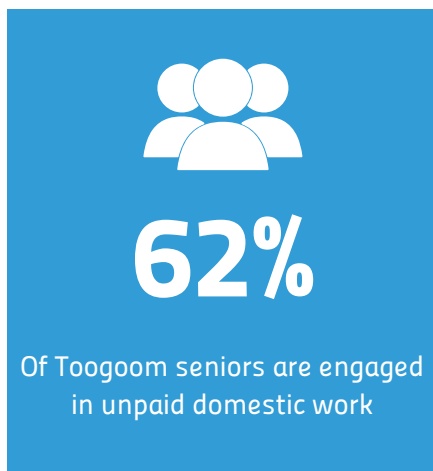


3.4 Unpaid Domestic Work

Over half of Fraser Coast seniors are engaged in unpaid domestic work

Within Fraser Coast, 59% of seniors are engaged in unpaid domestic work (ABS, 2021). This is 2% lower than Queensland and Australian levels (both 61%). Within Fraser Coast, Burrum Heads had the highest proportion of seniors engaged in unpaid domestic work (63%).

Unpaid domestic work is part of a huge unpaid economy locally, and across Australia. In 2017, it was estimated that unpaid domestic assistance was worth \$132,702 million to the Australian economy (Understanding the unpaid economy, 2017). Women are also more likely than men to undertake unpaid work including domestic assistance with this being indicative of social norms that regardless of household situation, women are more likely to undertake domestic or caring tasks (Understanding the unpaid economy, 2017).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.



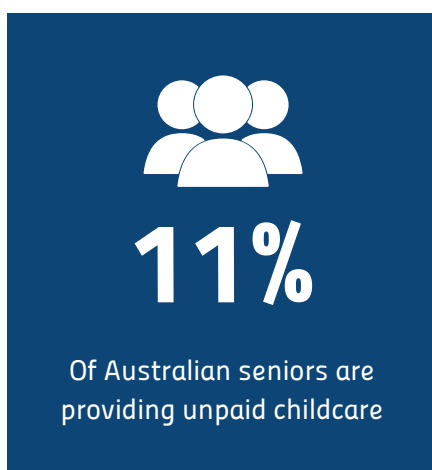
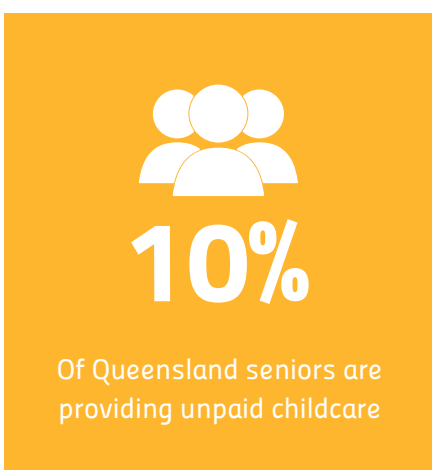
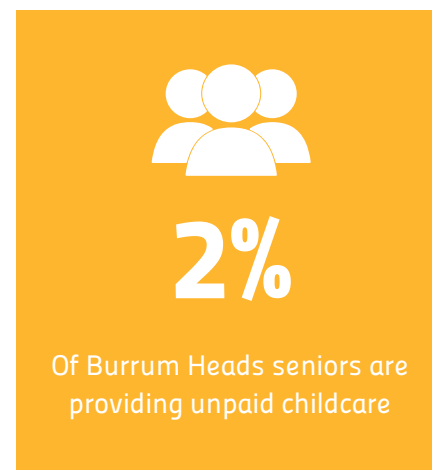
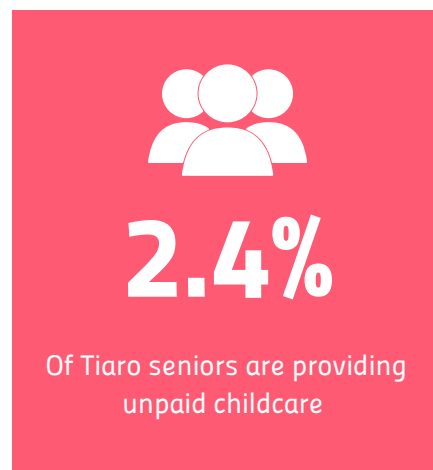
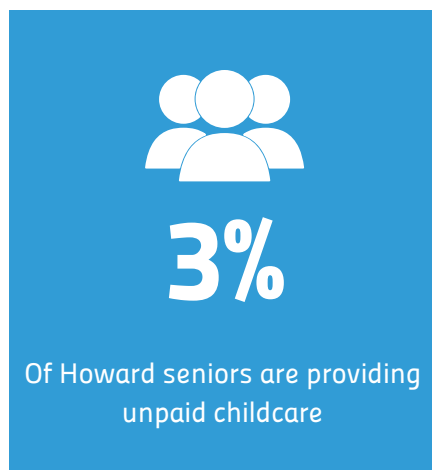
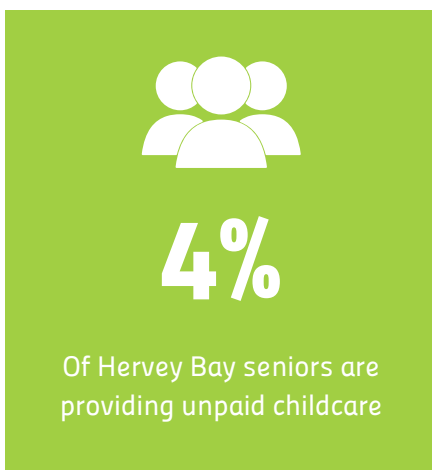
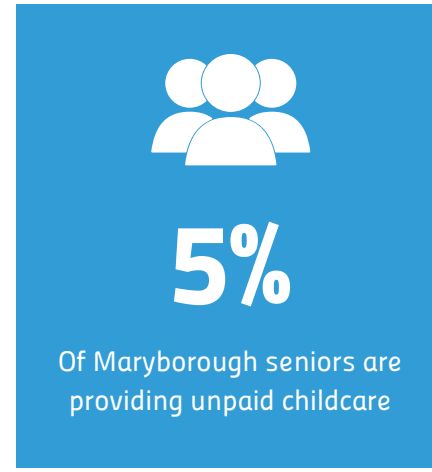
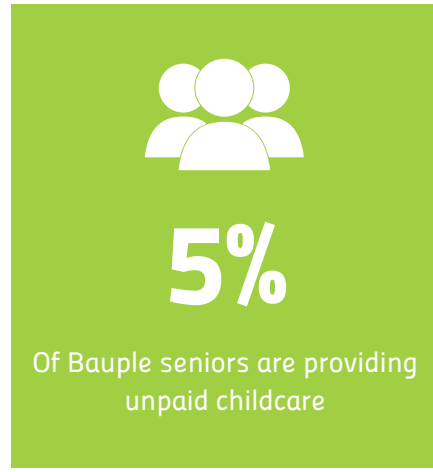
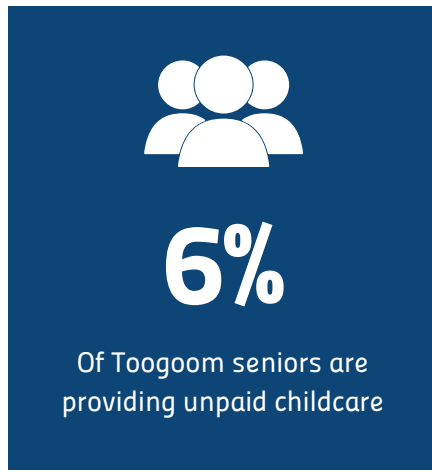
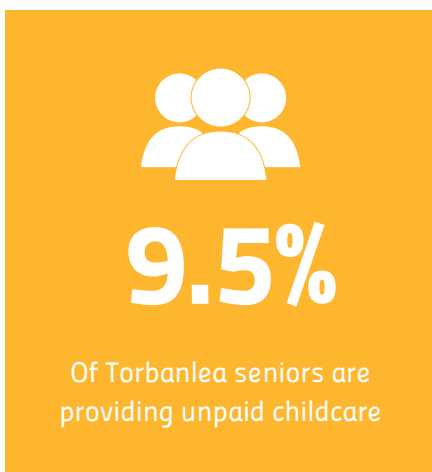


3.5 Unpaid Child Care

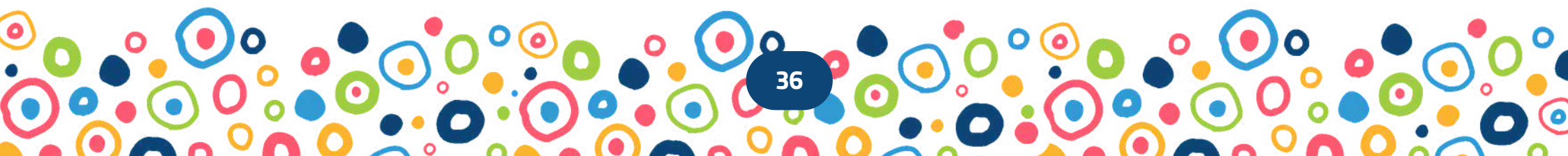
1 in 20 seniors on the Fraser Coast provides unpaid childcare

According to 2021 Census data, 5% of Fraser Coast seniors provide unpaid childcare assistance. This is 5% lower compared to Queensland (10%) and 6% lower compared to all of Australia (11%). Within Fraser Coast, Torbanlea seniors provide the highest rate of unpaid childcare (9.5%).

The Australian Institute of Health & Welfare states that baby boomers aged 55-74 are most likely to provide unpaid caring for grandchildren or children in addition to volunteering (ABS, 2022b). Older people make up the single largest provider of unpaid childcare, with this unpaid work estimated to be worth \$409,531 million Australia-wide in 2017 (Understanding the unpaid economy, 2017). Community and caring services would be severely overstretched and possibly overwhelmed without the work of those 65 years and older (Australian Journal of Rural Health, Volume 25 Issue 4, 2017). Alternately, many families would also not be able to afford the rising costs of paid childcare services.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.





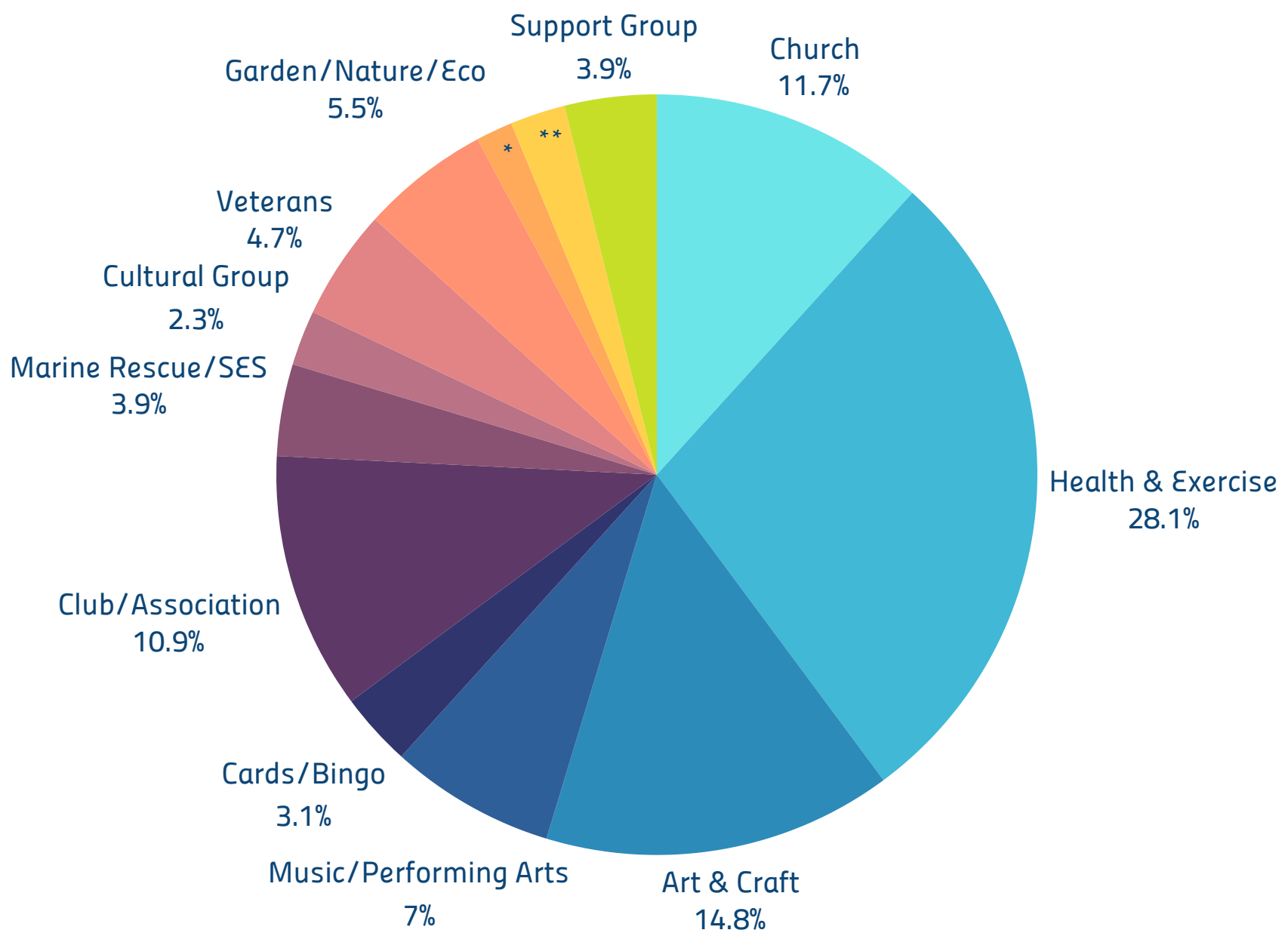
3.6 Community Engagement

Almost 1 in 2 Fraser Coast seniors attends a community or social group

According to the 2024 Fraser Coast Seniors Survey, 49% of respondents reported attending a community or social group. The most common types of groups attended were health & exercise (28%), art & craft (14.8%), church groups (11.7%), and clubs & associations (10.9%).

Social interaction is an important part of maintaining quality of life. Social engagement helps older people maintain and improve their mental health & wellbeing, while reducing depression and cognitive decline (Australian Journal of Rural Health, 2017).

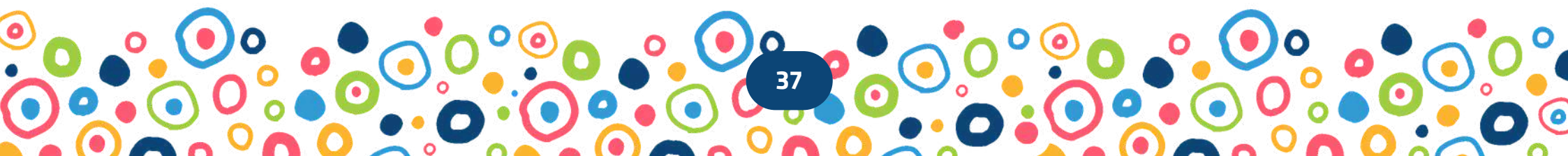
Where are Seniors Engaging?



*Book Club 1.6%

** Learning 2.3%

Source: 2024 Fraser Coast Seniors Survey, HBNC.



Showcase

University of the Third Age (U3A) Hervey Bay



U3A Hervey Bay aims to provide programs of learning for mature people under a broad philosophy of 'life long learning'. Courses are many and varied with classes being usually around 2 hours long and with an emphasis on friendly, fun learning. Types of courses being run in Semester 1, 2024 by U3A include Gentle Yoga for Beginners & Over 50's, Memoir Writing, and Artificial Intelligence for Everyone.





*"If you want to be happy,
make someone else happy."*

-Fraser Coast resident when asked what is the one bit of life wisdom they would share with others



4. How are Seniors Doing?

Physical & Mental Health

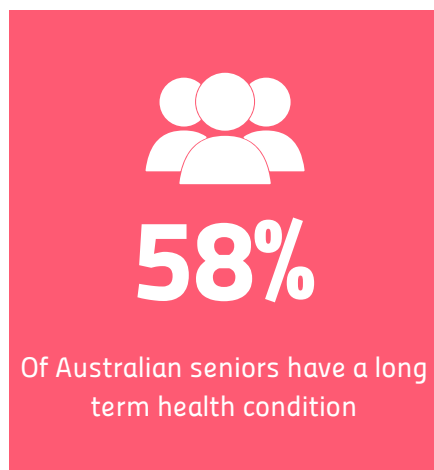
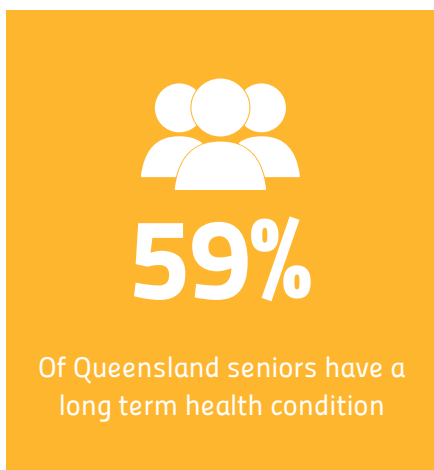
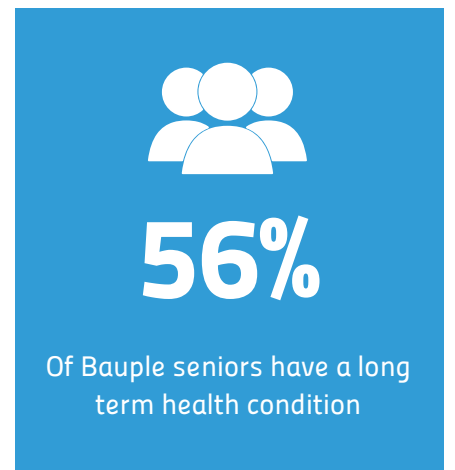
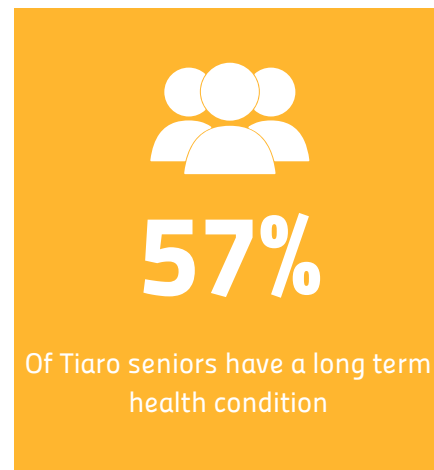
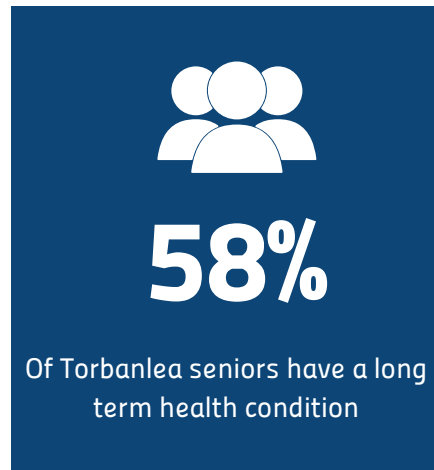
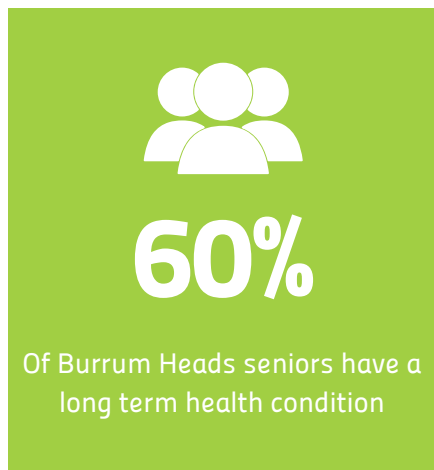
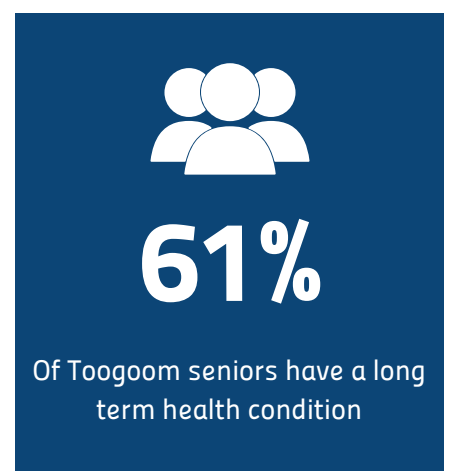
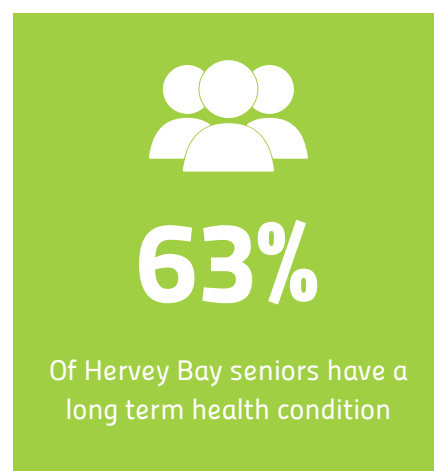
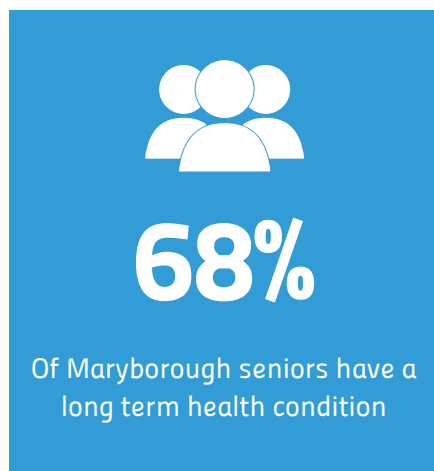
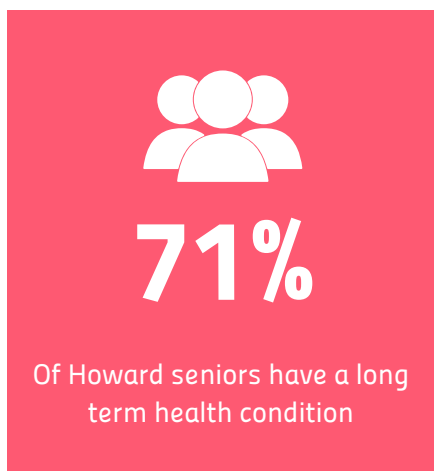


4.1 Physical Health

Over half of Fraser Coast Seniors have a long term health condition

According to 2021 Census data, 64% of Fraser Coast seniors have a long term health condition. This is 5% higher than Queensland and 6% higher than Australian seniors. Among those with a long term health condition on Fraser Coast, 30% have 1 condition, 18% have 2 conditions and 15% have 3 or more conditions. Within Fraser Coast, Howard had the highest proportion of seniors with a chronic condition (71%). The types of long term conditions most prevalent on the Fraser Coast were arthritis (55%), heart (29%), diabetes (22%), cancer (18%), lung conditions (17%), asthma (16%), dementia (6%) and kidney conditions (6%). Statistics on mortality specific to Fraser Coast were not found, however, in 2021, dementia was the second leading cause of death in Australia after coronary heart disease, and was the leading cause of death for women (AIHW, 2024).

On the recent Fraser Coast Seniors Survey, 47% of respondents rated their overall wellbeing as “good”, 30% as “neither good nor bad”, 14% as “excellent”, 14% as “not very good” and 3% as “poor”. On the same survey, 71% reported having a long term health condition with 69% stating they found it easy to access health care and 31% stating it wasn’t. Further in terms of the cost of accessing health care, 47% of respondents said the cost of visiting a GP made them hesitate to seek health support, 9% it stopped them altogether and 43% said cost had no impact.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.

Showcase

Wide Bay Falls Group – Lifestyle Cafe

The Wide Bay Falls Collaborative – Fraser Coast Fall Prevention Service is a pilot project involving Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service (WBHHS), the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), the local Primary Health Network (PHN) and Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre.

The service was initially a pilot project in April 2021 meeting its full complement of staffing and commissioning in October 2021.

The Nurse Navigator and the Bolton Clarke Community RN work together with the Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre to provide the weekly Lifestyle Café with Bolton Clarke Strength & Balance program. They are responsible for the overall delivery of the program, including working with the collaborators to ensure a high-quality program that provides participants with a strength and balance class, education about healthy ageing, community awareness, entertainment, and social connection. This involves attending the group weekly or bi-weekly as agreed with the Bolton Clarke RN.

The program is seeing positive results in improving quality of life, particularly in general health, physical functioning, role limitations due to emotional problems and physical health and social functioning. Furthermore, there are early positive indicators toward higher confidence and less fear of falling in those who have received intervention through the complex pathway under the Nurse Navigator Service.

Since its inception, the program has had 586 referrals.



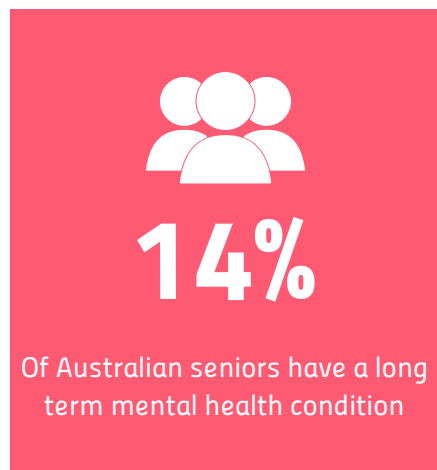
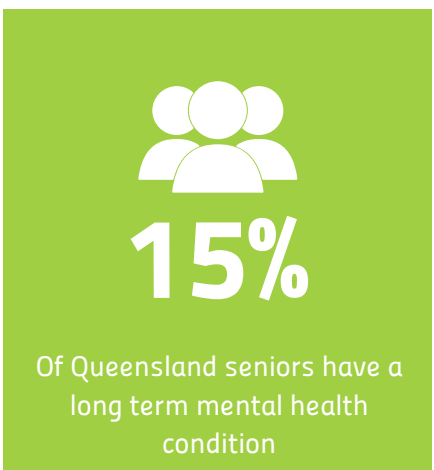
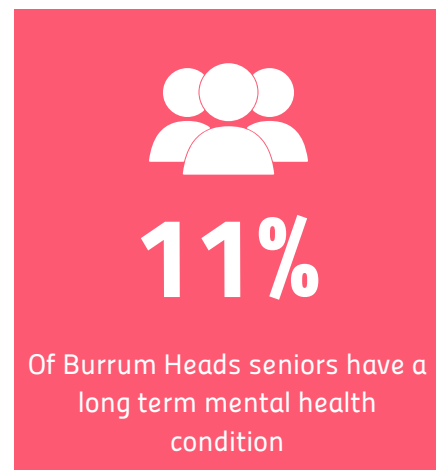
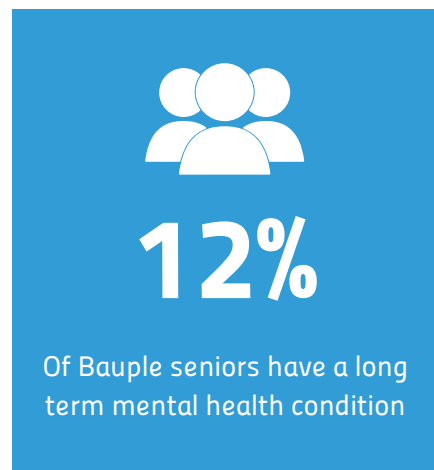
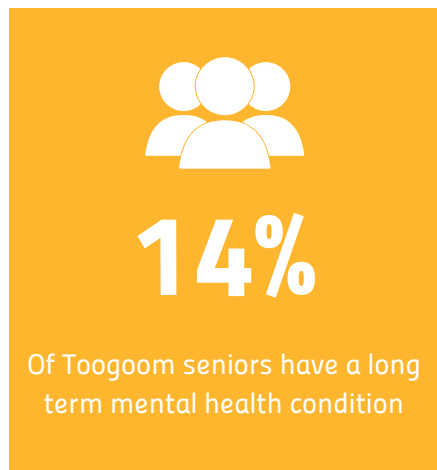
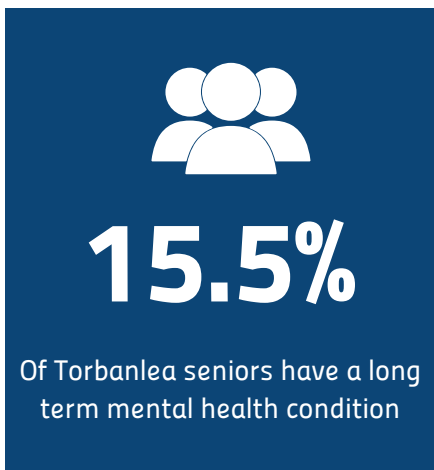
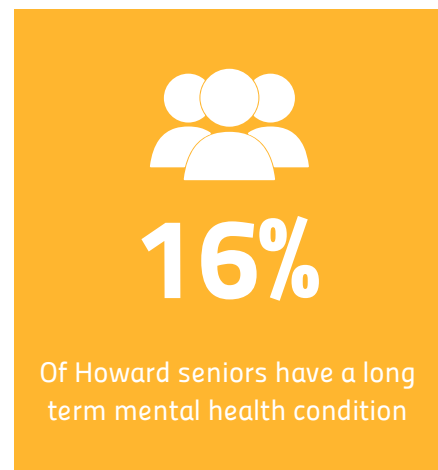
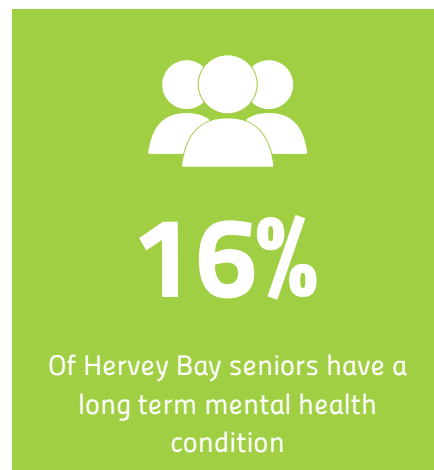
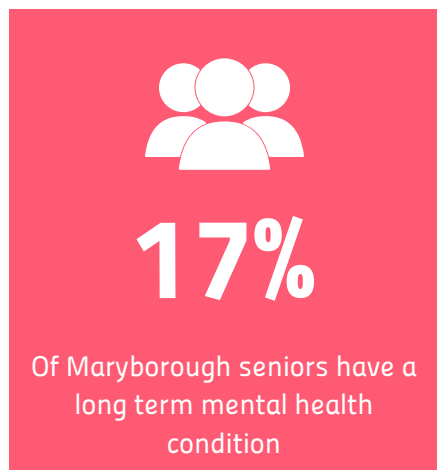
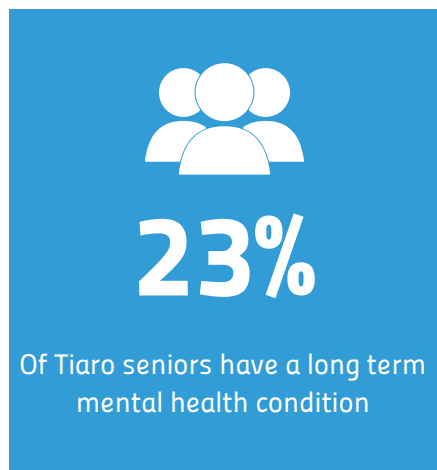


4.2 Mental Health

Nearly 1 in 7 Fraser Coast seniors have a long-term mental health condition


The 2021 Census data shows that 16% of Fraser Coast seniors have a long-term mental health condition including anxiety or depression. This is 1% higher than Queensland seniors (15%) and 2% higher than Australian seniors (14%). Within Fraser Coast, Tiaro had the highest proportion of seniors with a long-term mental health condition (23%) and Burrum Heads had the lowest (11%).

Factors that may contribute and/or increase the risk of mental health conditions include grief and bereavement, social isolation, lack of physical activity, losing the ability to live independently, sensory impairment and losses (particularly among men), financial difficulties, chronic pain and poor physical health, retirement and losing a sense of purpose or role in life, and elder abuse (Australian Journal of Rural Health, 2017). Alternatively, factors that support mental health wellbeing include strong social networks, community participation, learning new skills or having a hobby, maintaining physical health, help seeking (particularly for women), connection to land, spirituality and ancestry, kinship networks and cultural continuity (for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders), having a purpose and role to play, self-efficacy, volunteering, and a sense of control over life (Life in Mind, n.d.).




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.





"Care and love each other.
Family, friends and health are
our true wealth."

-Fraser Coast resident when asked what is the one bit of life wisdom they would share with others



A close-up photograph of an elderly woman with short, dark, curly hair and glasses. She is smiling warmly and looking down at a smartphone she is holding in her hands. She is wearing a maroon corduroy button-down shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with green foliage. The top and bottom of the image are decorated with a pattern of colorful, overlapping circles in shades of blue, green, yellow, and red.

5. Challenges for Seniors

Social determinants impacting seniors



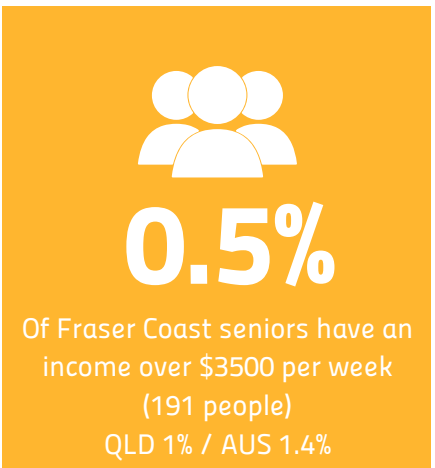
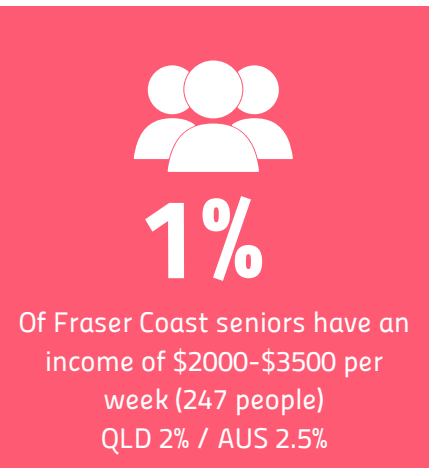
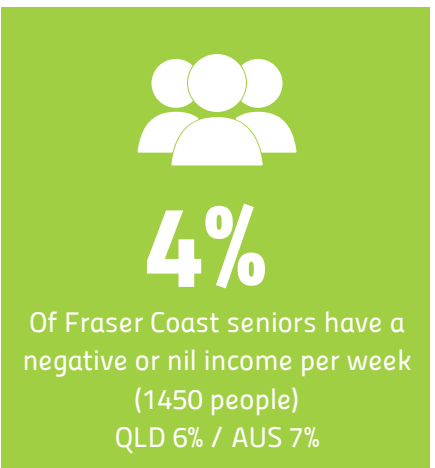
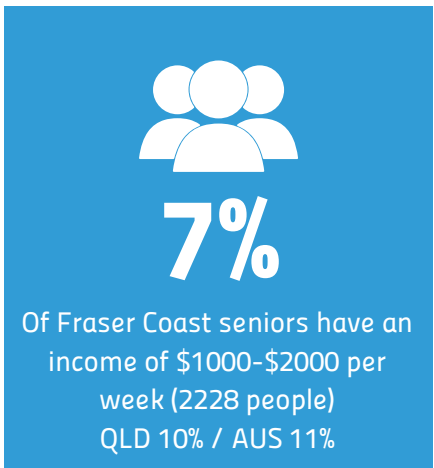
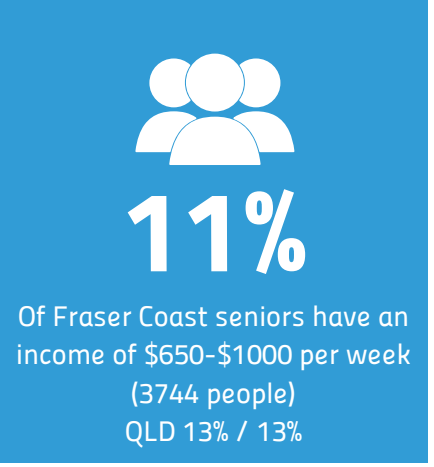
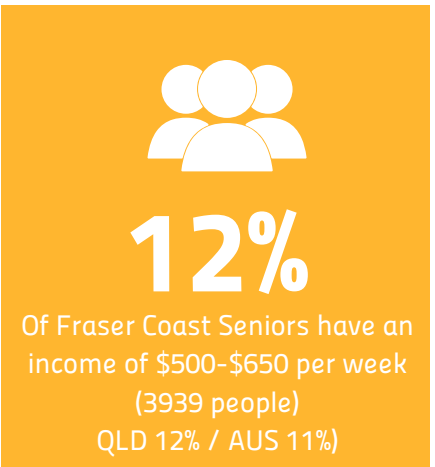
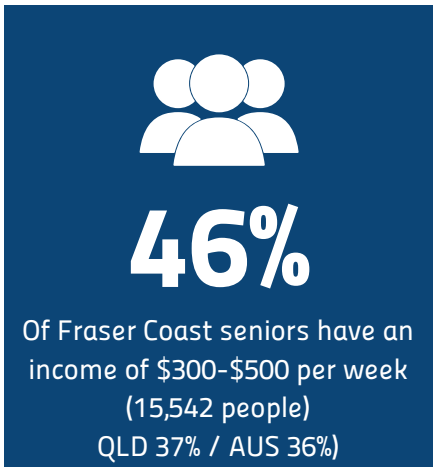
5.1 Income & Cost of Living

More than 1 in 3 Fraser Coast seniors have an income between \$300-\$500 per week

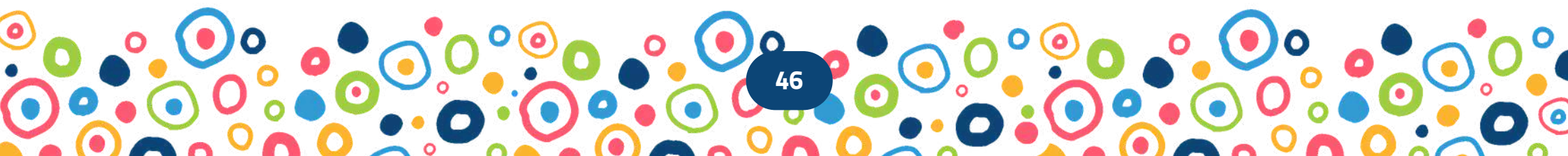
According to ABS 2021 Census data, most Fraser Coast seniors have an income between \$300-\$500 per week (46%). This is 9% higher than Queensland (37%) and 10% higher than Australia (36%). However, Fraser Coast seniors have a lower rate of higher wealth than Queensland and Australia. Just 7.9% of Fraser Coast seniors have an income of \$1000 per week or more compared to 13.8% of Queensland seniors and 15.4% of Australian seniors (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022), which is attributable to Fraser Coast being a lower socioeconomic region.

The 2024 Fraser Coast Seniors Survey revealed that 51% of respondents were “somewhat worried” about their financial future, 24% were “not worried”, 22% were “very worried”, and 3% were “unsure”. The same survey revealed 11% of respondents were financially supporting their child/children and 6% were financially supporting other relatives (not their spouse/partner). In terms of the current cost of living, when asked if the current cost of living had impacted their lifestyle, 69% of respondents said they were experiencing “some impact”, 19% reported experiencing “severe impact”, 11% reported “no impact” and 0.3% were “unsure”. The expenses Fraser Coast seniors were most concerned about were groceries (78%), health expenses (76%), energy expenses (50%), phone/internet (44%), and transport (35%).

For those renting, the current rental prices are \$500 per week for a house, \$430 per week for a townhouse and \$470 per week for a unit (Real Estate Investar, 2024). This means rental prices are unaffordable for most single seniors on pensions. Current pension amounts are \$1,116.30/ fortnight for a single person (includes base amount of \$1,020.60 + \$81.60 max pensions supplement + \$14.10 energy supplement) or \$1,682.80/ fortnight for a couple (includes base amount of \$1,538.60 + \$123.00 max supplement + \$21.20 energy supplement). Rent assistance maximum amounts are \$184.80 for singles and \$174 for couples. Based on these figures a single pensioner renting a house would pay 77% of their pension on rent per fortnight and a couple 53% on rent. Fraser Coast, like many regions, also has very low rental stock currently (vacancy rate is 0.53%), and with 25% of the Fraser Coast population renting, this means there is much housing stress in the community. As stated previously, the 2024 Fraser Coast Seniors Survey showed 35% of respondents were either “quite concerned” or “extremely concerned” about the cost of housing.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.



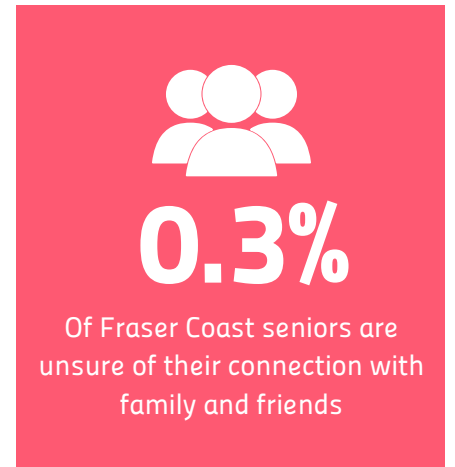
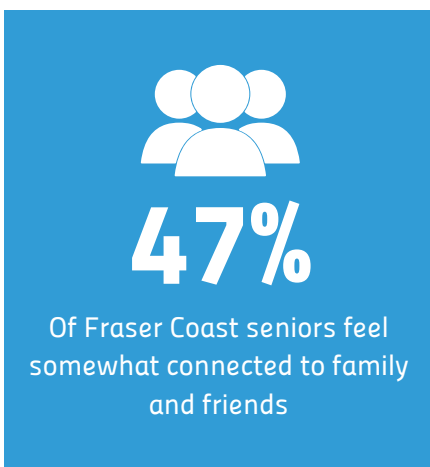
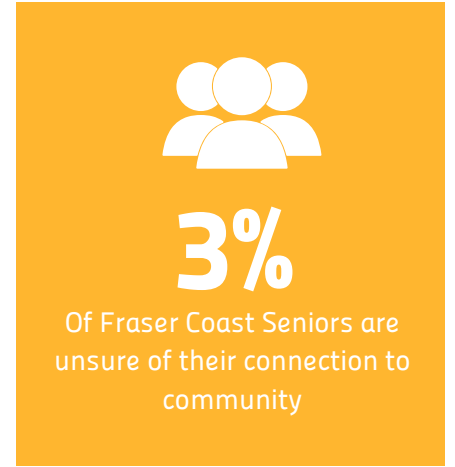
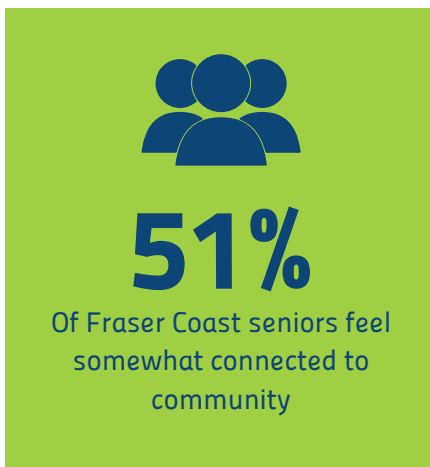


5.2 Social Isolation & Loneliness

Almost 1 in 3 Fraser Coast seniors doesn't feel connected to our community

According to data from the 2024 Fraser Coast Seniors Survey, 29% of respondents "don't feel connected" to community, 51% of respondents "feel somewhat connected", 18% "feel very connected" and 3% were "unsure". The same survey revealed approximately 1 in 7 Fraser Coast seniors "don't feel connected" to family and friends (15%), 47% "feel somewhat connected", 28% "feel very connected" and 0.3% were "unsure".

Social isolation and loneliness are a major factor in quality of life and the wellbeing of seniors. Research shows that lonely people are 60% more likely to use emergency services than those who are not and that lonely older people are twice as likely to be admitted to residential aged care (Melbourne School of Population and Global Health: Ageing Industry Network, 2019). Social isolation differs to loneliness in terms of having few social relationships and infrequent social contact, where loneliness refers to an unpleasant and distressing feeling of a lack of connection to other people, along with a desire for more, or more satisfying, social relationships (AIHW, 2023). For older people, consequences to health from social isolation and loneliness include sleep disruption, elevated blood pressure, increase in morning rises of the stress hormone cortisol, altered immunity, increased incidence of depression and lower overall wellbeing (Melbourne School of Population and Global Health: Ageing Industry Network, 2019).



Source: 2024 Fraser Coast Seniors Survey, HBNC.





Showcase

Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme



The Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) is dedicated to providing friendship and companionship to older people who may be experiencing social isolation.

ACVVS understands the importance of fostering meaningful connections and aims to reach out to older people who may benefit from companionship and support.

Visits are available to anyone who:

- Receives government-subsidised residential aged care or Home Care Packages, including care recipients approved or on the National Priority System for residential or home care packages.
- Is socially isolated.

Volunteer visitors provide friendship and companionship to older people, while helping to develop social connections. Through one-on-one visits, ACVVS volunteers help meet the diverse needs of older people, including those from linguistic, cultural, and complex vulnerability backgrounds. The program focuses on reaching out to those who may be at a greater risk of social isolation, ensuring that they feel valued, heard, and connected within their communities.





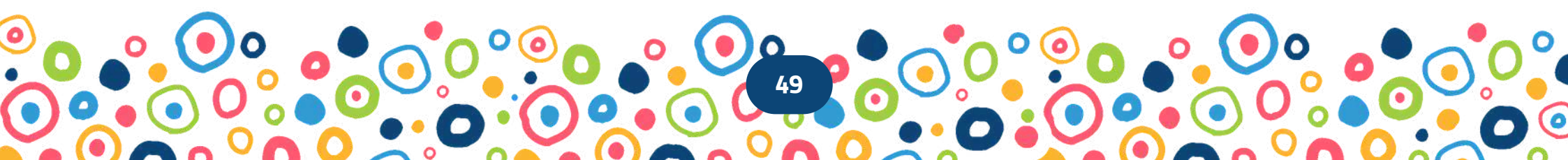
5.3 Grief & Loss

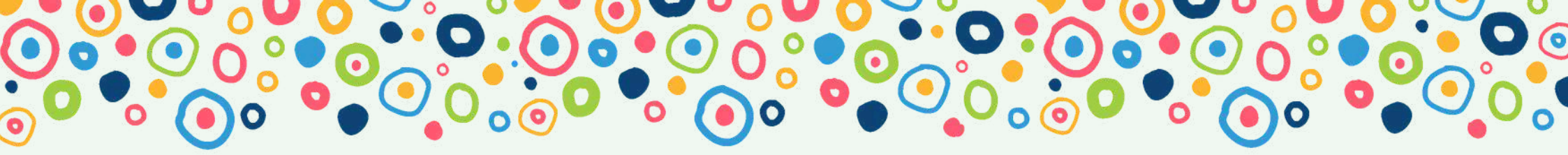
Seniors experience major grief and loss more than any other age group

Seniors experience grief and loss more than any other age group, with national data showing 21% of over 65s met criteria for prolonged grief (Engel, L. et al., 2022). This is also more likely to be major grief and loss, such as the loss of a partner, financial security, or a best friend. Grief is the natural response to a significant loss, and can affect people's health, wellbeing and quality of life. Prolonged grief refers to grief symptoms that remain severe and impairing for longer than 6-12 months (National Ageing Research Institute, n.d.). No specific data around grief and loss was found for the Fraser Coast region, however it was identified through a review by the HBNC Connecting Communities Social Prescription Program that there are only 2 grief support groups in the Fraser Coast and there is a need for more. For older people, confusion is one of the most common effects of grief and loss including experiencing forgetfulness, disorientation and disorganisation (Centre for Grief and Trauma Therapy, n.d.). Older people are also at much higher risk for severe health problems due to the increased stress levels combined with health conditions and the natural physical ageing process. The social isolation and loneliness that accompanies grief and loss also has a major impact on seniors. Social isolation drastically increases the risk of premature death with the risk being similar in presentation to that of obesity, smoking, and physical inactivity (Centre for Grief and Trauma Therapy, n.d.).



Source: National Ageing Research Institute.





Showcase

Connecting Communities Program



The Connecting Communities Social Prescription Program at HBNC helps residents over the age of 18 to connect to social events, clubs, groups and activities in a bid to reduce social isolation and loneliness and improve health and wellbeing. Social Prescription offers one on one support service to Fraser Coast residents who would like to:

- Make new friends or socialise
- Find out what is happening in their local area
- Be connected to local clubs, groups or activities
- Find exercise classes to join
- Improve their health and wellbeing
- Try something new

Social prescribing is proven to improve health outcomes by addressing the issues of social isolation and loneliness through engagement with social and physical activities. The Connecting Community Social Prescription Pilot program has been funded by the Queensland Government and enables health care professionals to refer patients to a HBNC Link Worker, to co-design a non-clinical low level social approach to improving patient's health and wellbeing.



Once a person joins the Connecting Communities program they are assigned one of the friendly HBNC Link Workers who will work one-on-one with them to identify their interests and what they might like to do socially.

Program participants will then be supported by Connecting Communities team members to access activities, groups or other services with the aim of providing long-term friendship, engagement and purpose. Connecting Communities staff may also accompany participants to any activities to ensure they feel comfortable attending the new environment. If required, Link Workers will continue to work with the participant over a number of months until they feel comfortable attending activities on their own.



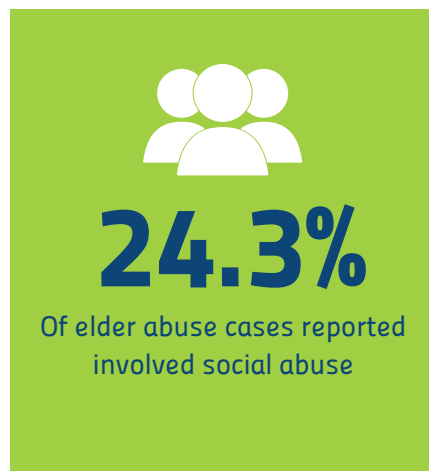
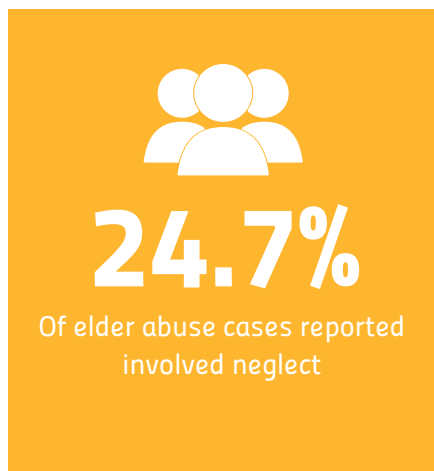
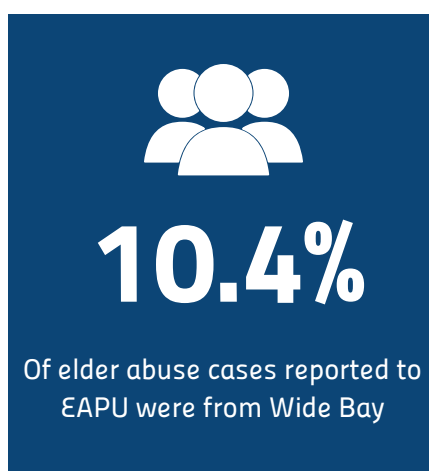


5.4 Elder Abuse

1 in 10 abuse cases reported to the EAPU in 2023 were from the Wide Bay region

According to the Elder Abuse Statistics in Queensland: Year in Review 2023 report, 10% of reported abuse cases to the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU) were from the Wide Bay region. No Fraser Coast specific data was found. Of EAPU Queensland reports, the majority of cases involved psychological abuse (74.8%), followed by financial abuse (64.7%) and neglect (24.7%). Of those experiencing elder abuse, 49.1% were males, and 50.9% were females. Of those who perpetrated elder abuse and their relationship to the person experiencing abuse, 35.7% were sons, 35.7% were daughters, 13% were spouses/partners, 5.3% were grandchildren and 3% were other family. Of those perpetrating elder abuse, 9.8% were reported to have some form of mental health condition and 12.7% were reported to have substance misuse. It should also be noted that 4.4% of Queensland seniors experiencing abuse are from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background and 4.7% were from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. Among those experiencing abuse, 35.5% had a known impaired capacity, with dementia being the most frequent reported cause of impaired capacity (11.7%), and 60% had care needs. The Seniors Legal & Support Service of the HBNC, supports older people in the Fraser Coast region at risk of or experiencing elder abuse. Over the last 18 months, the service has provided 6178 hours of support to seniors in the area.

The consequences of experiencing elder abuse include a range of physical, psychological and financial consequences. Elder abuse can result in pain, injury and even death, and is associated with higher levels of stress, depression and an increased risk of hospitalisation or being placed in an aged care residential facility (Qu, L. et al, 2023). The Elder Abuse Statistics in Queensland 2023 report shows the main impacts recorded as psychological (65.1%), health impacts (62.4%), relationships (51.9%), financial (50.2%), social isolation (17%), and homelessness (11.6%). Impacts also often extend beyond the person experiencing abuse to family members, friends, neighbours and whole of community (Elder Abuse Statistics in Queensland: Year in Review 2021-22).



Source: National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study Final Report, 2021 & Elder Abuse Statistics in Queensland: Year in Review 2023



Showcase

Seniors Legal and Support Service



The Seniors Legal and Support Service is a community service providing free and confidential legal advice and counselling support for seniors 60 years and over in the Fraser Coast community who are experiencing, or are at risk of, elder abuse, mistreatment or financial exploitation. Services include legal advice, representation and information, short term counselling, advocacy, referral and community education.

The service uses a multi-disciplinary approach which promotes a tailored and holistic response to the needs of older people at risk. This provides a mix of centre based assistance, telephone support, home visits and flexible outreach to ensure vulnerable seniors can access support. All interventions seek to promote the independence, safety and security of seniors and to minimise risk of further harm.

The service can provide information, advice and support including:

- Short term counselling / advocacy
- Advice on your legal rights
- Information and referrals to other support, legal and consumer services
- Community education

SLASS have also put together a Dementia Handbook for Carers resource which can be accessed on the HBNC website at www.hbnc.com.au/caring-for-people-with-dementia-handbook

The Seniors Legal and Support Service is aligned with community legal services across Queensland and around Australia. It is accredited and certified by Community Legal Centres Australia for quality assurance.





5.5 Scamming

Over half of Fraser Coast seniors reported experiencing scamming

Scams seek to obtain money or other goods from vulnerable people through dishonest means (AIHW, n.d.). According to the 2024 Fraser Coast Seniors Survey, 55% of respondents reported experiencing scamming, including financial scamming. Nationally, 301,765 scamming reports were made to the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC)'s Scamwatch service in 2023. This cost Australians \$476.7M. Of reports made, 24% (72,517 reports) were made by seniors with financial losses of \$120.9M (25.3% of total losses).

Types of scams that were reported the most by Australians were Phishing (35.9%), false billing (13%), online shopping (7%), identity theft (6.5%), hacking (4.1%), classifieds (3.8%), remote access (2.9%), investment scams (2.7%), rebate (2.3%) and threats (1.8%). Conversely, the scams that involved the highest financial loss were investment scams (\$291.8M), dating and romance (\$34.3M), false billing (\$28M), phishing (\$25M), jobs and employment (\$24M), remote access (\$15.5M), threats to life or arrest (\$13.8M), identity theft (\$8.5M), rebate (\$8.2M), and classifieds (\$7.7M). For seniors, the ACCC reports investments, dating and romance, and remote access are the most common scams older Australians experience. Among states, Queensland had the third highest reports and losses with 62,188 reports made (20.6% of total reports) and \$91.9M in losses (19.2% of total losses). Seniors tend to be more vulnerable to scamming due to generally having less technology literacy and scammers knowing this, specifically target older people. In terms of remote access scams, Telstra, Amazon and NBN were the most impersonated businesses reported to ID Care in 2021 (Choice, 2024).

On the Fraser Coast, the Seniors Legal & Support Service at HBNC, in addition to elder abuse support, provides a seniors financial protection service. Over the last 18 months, the service provided 614 hours of seniors financial protection support to people experiencing financial abuse and scamming.



Source: ACCC Scamwatch Statistics, 2023





5.6 Transport

1 in 8 Fraser Coast seniors doesn't have their own transport

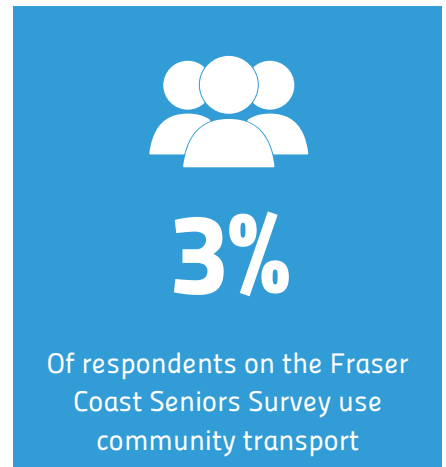
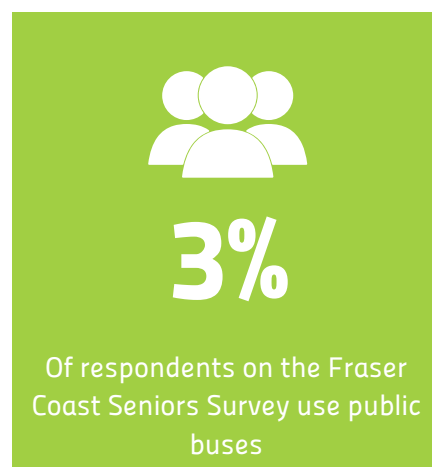
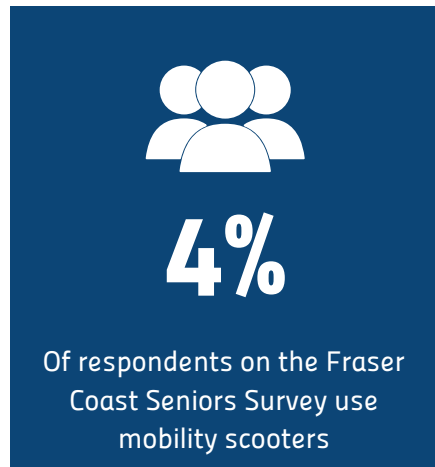
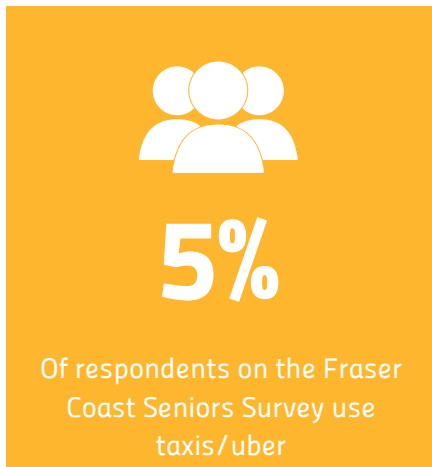
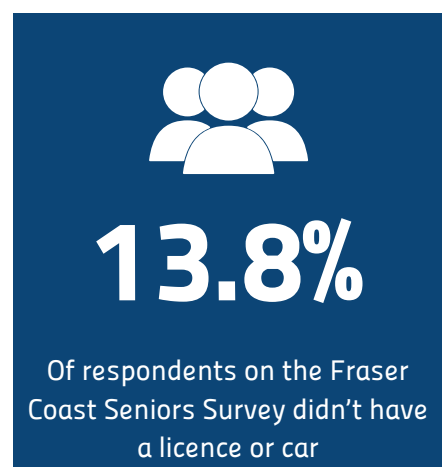
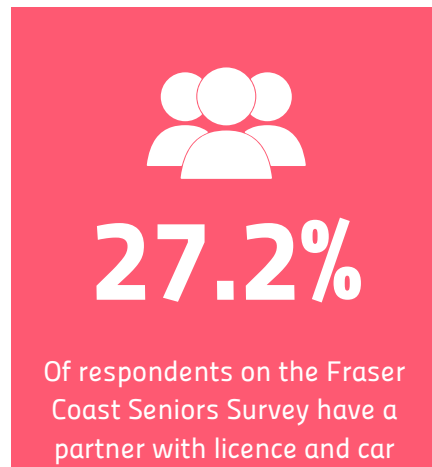
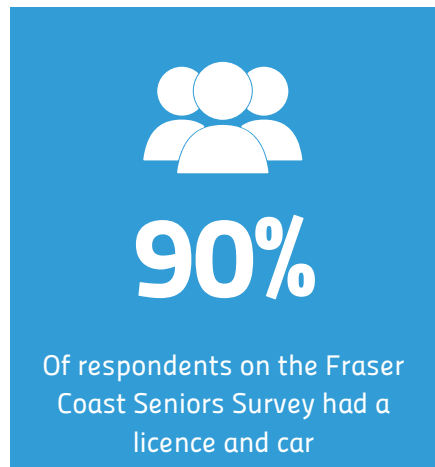
According to the 2024 Seniors Survey, 13.8% of respondents don't have a car and use alternative transport options. Community Transport is used by 3%, taxis or uber by 5%, public buses by 3%, and mobility scooters by 4%. Many Fraser Coast seniors surveyed still have their own car however, with 90% of respondents reporting they have a licence and vehicle. There were also 27% who relied on a partner who drives for transport. According to the Queensland Department of Transport, 1,103,461 Queenslanders 60+ years old have a current licence in 2023. This is 27.2% of all Queenslanders with a licence. No specific Fraser Coast statistics were found from Department of Transport.

The proportion of seniors who have a drivers licence declines with age with loss of licence likely to be associated with medical conditions that impact on driving ability. These conditions include cognitive impairment, vision impairment and loss of physical movement.

In terms of traffic accidents, a study that examined data of older people's involvement with accidents over a 9 year period was compared to other age cohorts. Research revealed older drivers 60+ represented in the greatest proportion of crashes resulting in fatality and hospitalisation compared to other age groups. It also revealed that of all older drivers, those aged 60-69 were most likely to crash at interchanges and as a result of driving fatigued, older drivers 70-79 years old were most likely to crash at stop and give way signs and drivers 80+ were most likely to be seriously injured or killed. Overall, the findings highlighted the need to age-related differences to be considered in any measures or initiatives designed to improve older driver safety (Rakotonirainy, A., et al., 2012).

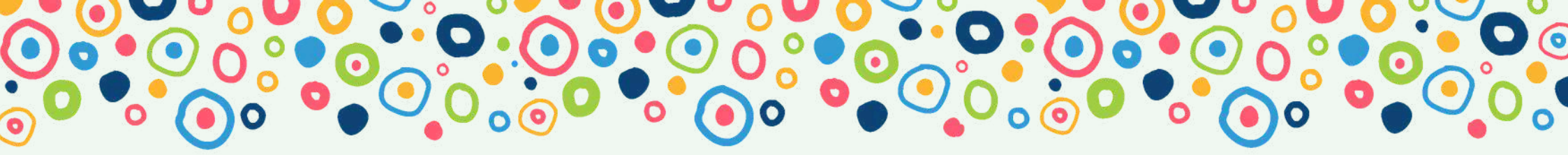
In Queensland, everyone 75 years or older must obtain every 13 months, a medical certificate to assessing their ability to drive safely and maintain their licence. The loss of a driver licence as people age can have a significant impact on their ability to connect with community and family and friends.

The HBNC implements a TransComCare community transport program providing subsidized transport to seniors. Over the last 18 months, the service has provided 19,851 trips to Fraser Coast seniors 65+.



Source: HBNC Fraser Coast Seniors Survey 2024, Queensland Department of Transport and Main Road, 2023.



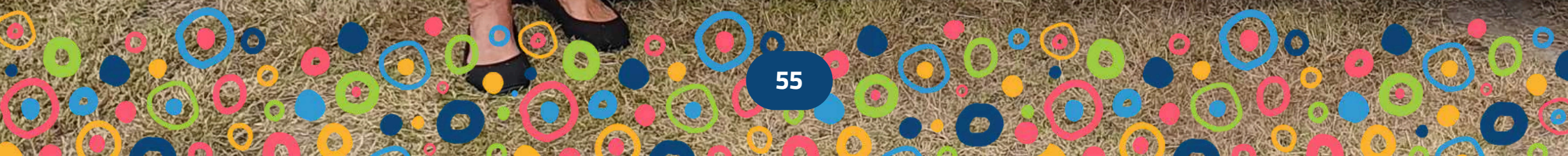


Showcase

TransComCare—Community Transport Service



The TransComCare program provides subsidised community transport to older adults and people with disabilities and their carers to run important errands. This includes taking clients to doctors, dentists, hospital appointments, shopping and social activities around the local district. TransComCare is delivered by trained volunteer drivers for low-care clients.

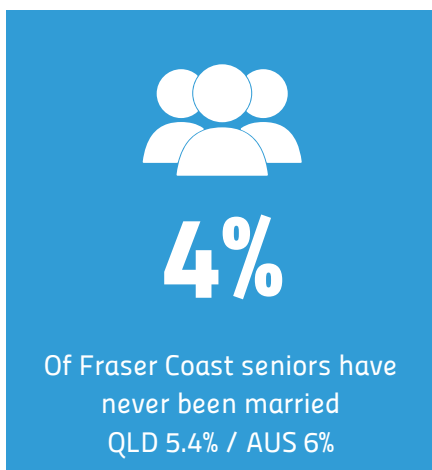
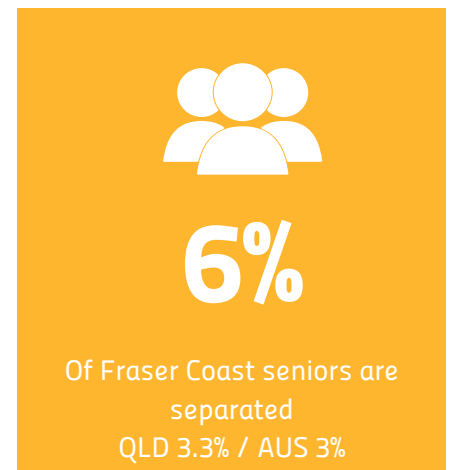
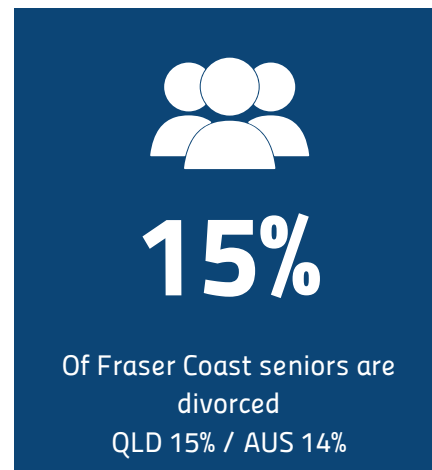
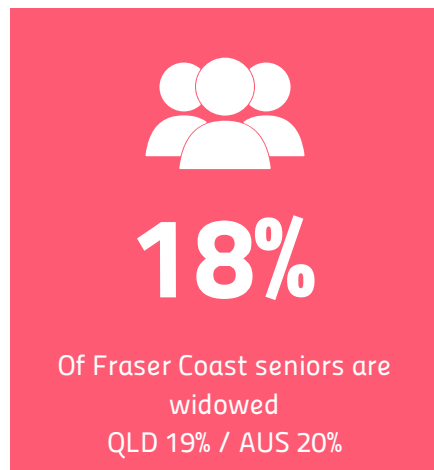
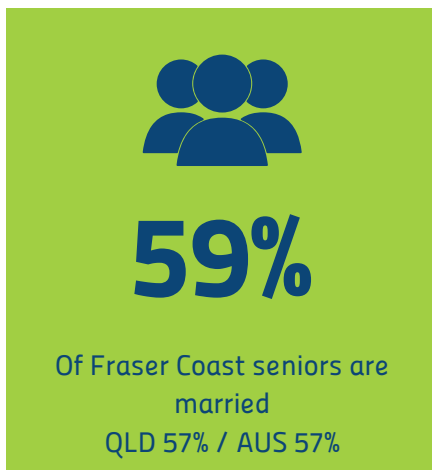


5.7 Relationships

Approximately 1 in 6 Fraser Coast seniors are widowed

According to 2021 Census data, 59% of Fraser Coast seniors are married, 18% are widowed, 15% are divorced, 6% are separated and 4% have never been married. These are similar to Queensland and Australian statistics. Though most seniors are married or widowed, one of the growing trends among seniors has been divorce.

The Australian Seniors 2023 Love After 50 Report shows that one third of Australian couples over 50 separate (Love After 50 Report, 2023). This growing trend has been labelled “grey divorce”. The same report lists causes for divorce to include empty nest syndrome (48%), financial pressures (35%), and retirement adjustments (34%). The greatest challenges of “grey divorce” are listed as asset division and legal complexities (55%), financial instability (53%), and emotional impacts and adjustments (50%). Also contributing to this trend are shifting societal expectations around marriage and divorce with these being seen as “more socially acceptable” among older Australians (Love After 50 Report, 2023). The “grey divorce” trend is converse to general Australian population where divorce rates have been dropping since the 1990s. The same Love After 50 report also revealed that 29% of Australians over 50 are happy to be single and that being single positively influences their happiness. Primary relationship challenges for those over 50s are changes in sexual health, appetite or intimacy (32%), physical health, ageing or caregiving responsibilities (28%), and financial difficulties or issues (20%).



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2021 Census of Population and Housing.

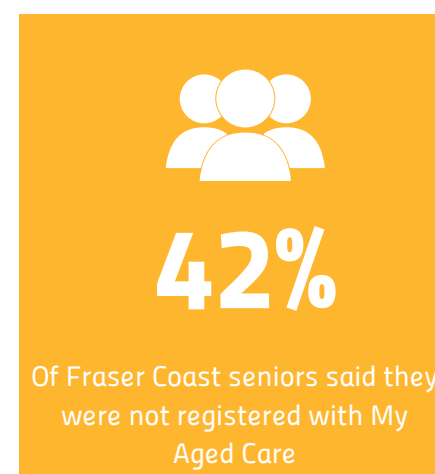
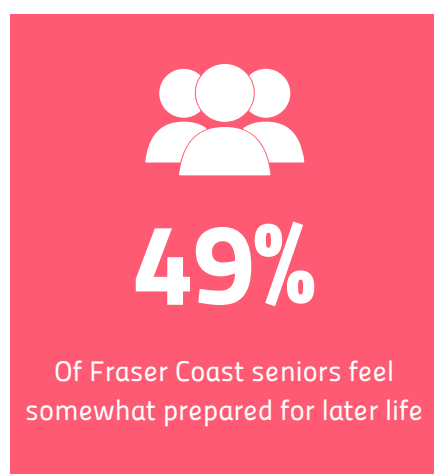


5.8 Ageing & Accessing Support

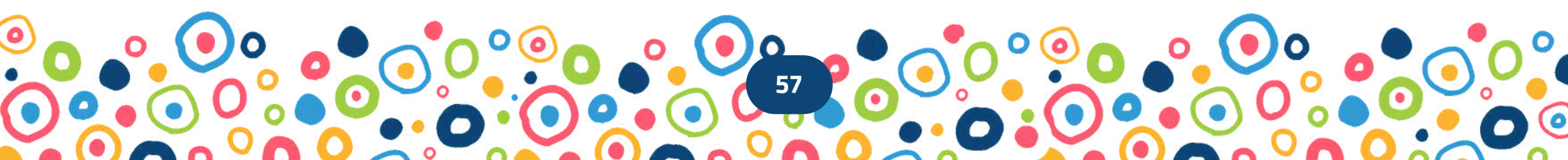
More than 1 in 3 Fraser Coast seniors feel positive about ageing

Positive Ageing is “the process of maintaining a positive attitude, feeling good about yourself, keeping fit and healthy, and engaging fully in life as you age” (Australian Psychology Society, n.d.). Research shows that keeping a positive attitude towards ageing is an important factor in improving and maintaining physical and mental health, enabling a person to maintain a sense of control and quality of life. When asked how they feel about ageing on the 2024 Fraser Coast Seniors Survey, 51% of respondents “felt concerned”, 29% “felt unconcerned” and 10% “preferred not to say”. On the same survey, 46% of respondents felt there were positive aspects to ageing and 54% did not. The most common positives mentioned included more freedom and time to spend on the things you want to (35%), more confidence and wisdom (15%), and less stress (14%).

As adults age, they also often experience a number of health conditions associated with ageing including deterioration in vision and hearing (Heine, C. et al., 2020). Managing health conditions and its impacts in older age is an important contributor to quality of life and wellbeing. In terms of being prepared for these natural ageing processes and needing to access support, the Fraser Coast Seniors Survey showed 1 in 6 respondents (17%) do not feel prepared for later life. Just 9% of respondents felt “very prepared” and 49% felt “somewhat prepared”. When asked if they were registered with My Aged Care (the Australian Government’s service to help seniors find and access age support services), 58% of respondents reported they are registered and 42% reported they are not.



Source: Fraser Coast Seniors Survey, 2024.



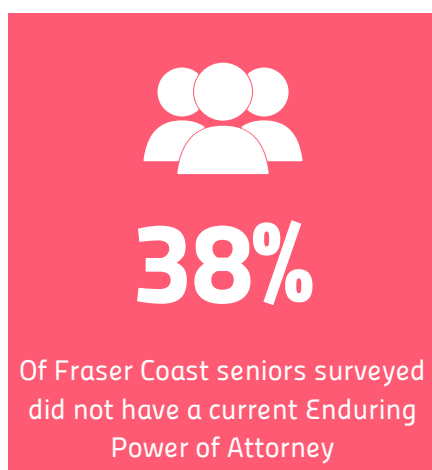
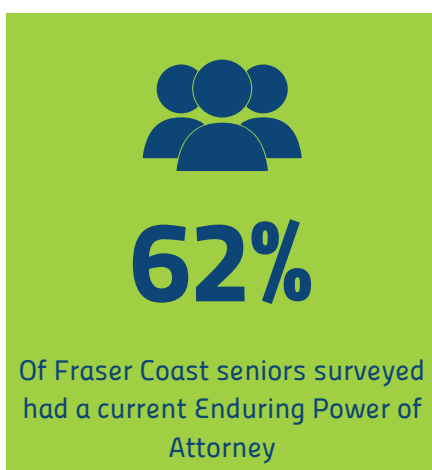


5.9 Advanced Care Planning

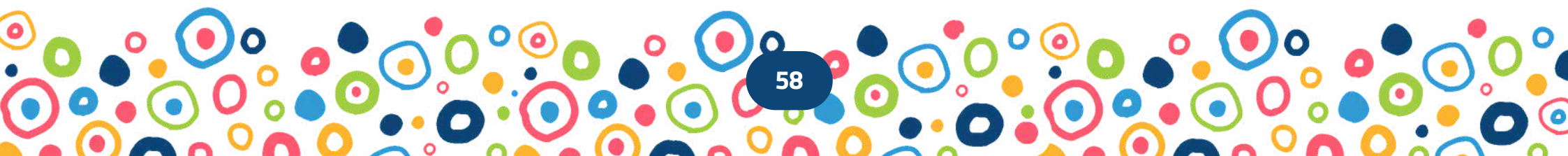
More than 1 in 3 Fraser Coast seniors have an EPOA

On the 2024 Fraser Coast Seniors Survey, over 1 in 3 (62%) of respondents said they had a current Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA) and 38% said they did not. An Enduring Power of Attorney is a legal document that allows a person to choose a trusted relative or friend to manage their personal matters, including health care, and financial matters as a substitute decision maker in the event a person is incapacitated and unable to for themselves (Advanced Care Planning Australia, n.d.).

According to the Public Trustee: community advocacy and education report 2020-2022, only one third of Queenslanders have an EPOA, and only 1 in 4 Queenslanders believe they don't need an EPOA if they are currently of sound mind (Public Trustee, 2022). The same document also reveals that 1 in 5 Queenslanders pass away without a valid will. Barriers to wills included 1 in 3 Queenslanders believing it is expensive to make a will and 1 in 7 Queenslanders wanting to make a will but simply "haven't gotten around to it".



Source: Fraser Coast Seniors Survey, 2024
Public Trustee, 2022.



Showcase

MADCOTA – Maryborough & District Council On The Ageing Inc.



MADCOTA is a Maryborough-based seniors not-for-profit providing programs and activities aimed at older people on the Fraser Coast.

Programs include:

Well Aged:

The Well Aged program supports those persons who are 60 years or older and who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, social isolation through offering Community Support and Information, advice and referral services.

The Oracle Newspaper:

The Oracle "Talking Newspaper" is a FREE service offered to enable print and vision impaired persons to enjoy the local news. Each week a group of willing volunteers are recorded whilst reading aloud local newspapers. These recordings are transferred to disc and mailed out to subscribers.


MADCOTA Indoor Sports:

Indoor sports to keep seniors active and engaged including indoor bowls, pool/8 ball and darts.

Tech Savvy:

Tech support for seniors to learn how to stay connected and use smart technology.

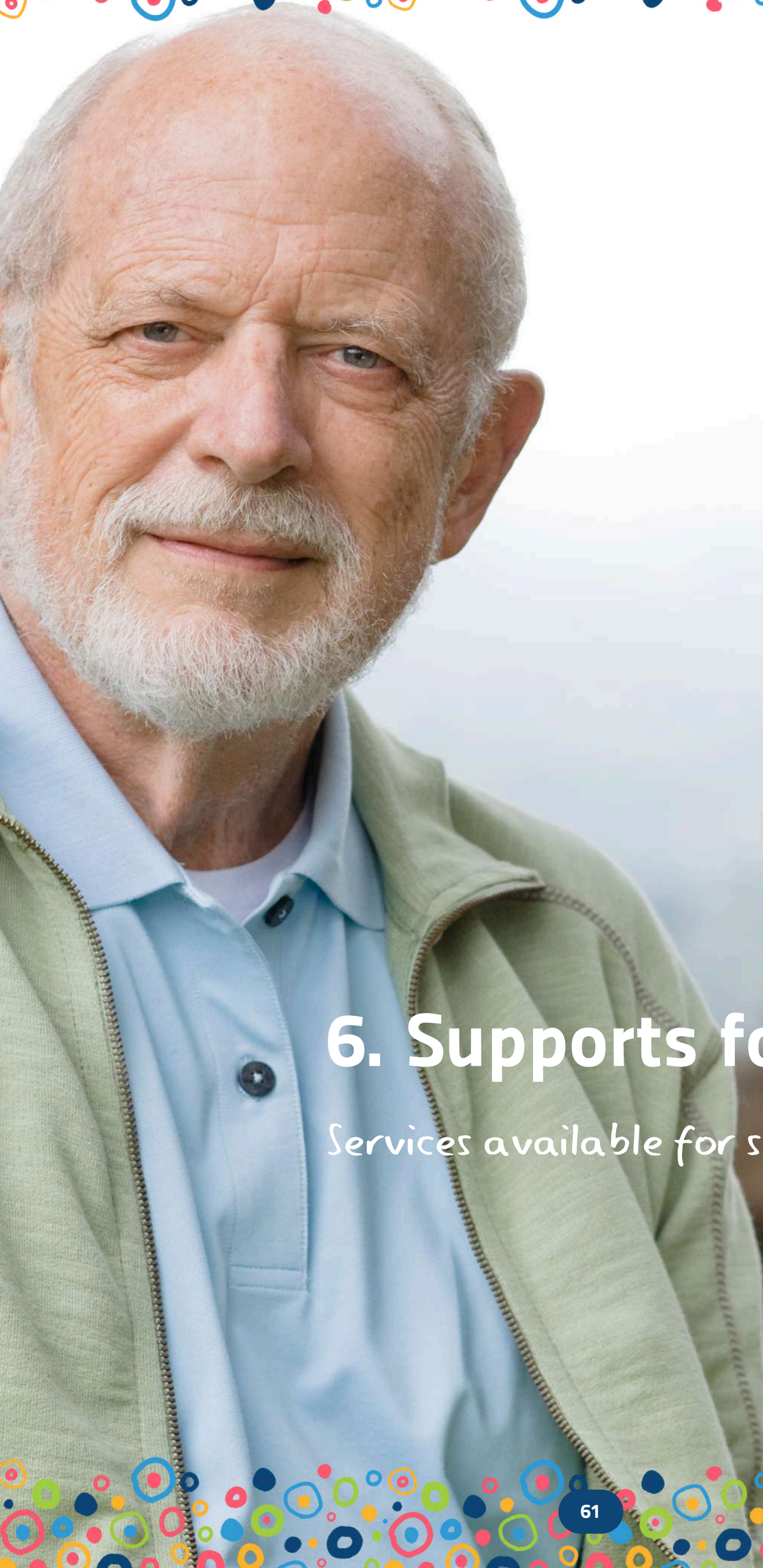




"Just keep on keeping on. Bad things happen but there are many more good things if you look for them."

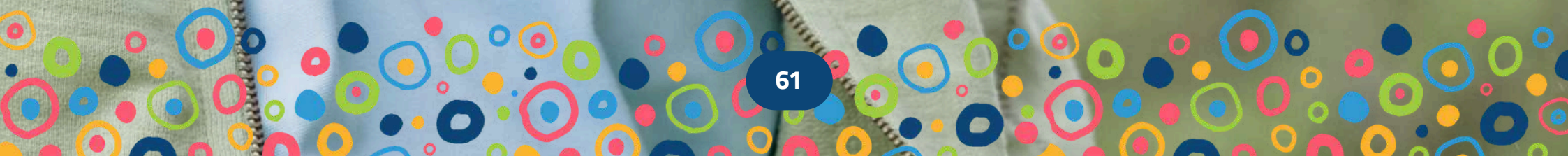
-Fraser Coast resident when asked what is the one bit of life wisdom they would share with others





6. Supports for Seniors

Services available for seniors



Showcase

Halcro Street Community Centre

The Fraser Coast Regional Council has many supports for seniors based at the Halcro Street Community Centre. The Halcro Street Community Centre offers:

- Information and referrals
- Individual support
- Seniors directories and resources
- Senior services support
- Safe scooter education sessions
- Specialised seniors events
- Workshops
- Project groups



Seniors in Focus

Seniors in Focus is a program based at Halcro Street, which supports and encourages all seniors in the Fraser Coast community to:

- Live productive, enjoyable lives
- Be independent and make informed choices for their own wellbeing
- Participate in activities and interests of their own choosing
- Access services to stay healthy, mobile and safe

Hit and Giggle Table Tennis

Offers for fun and exercise for seniors on Thursdays from 1pm-3pm.

Do It Yourself Tai Chi

Strength building and moving your body at your own pace on Mondays from 10am-12pm

Halcro Street Community Garden

Offers individual plots available for hire and volunteering opportunities to assist with the maintenance and on-going management of the garden.

Community Art Group

Art group for all types and abilities meeting in the Botanic Gardens near the Orchid House to work on their own pieces while sharing knowledge and experience.

China Painting

Decorate glazed porcelain objects such as plates, bowls, vases or statues. Open to beginners through to experienced painters. On Fridays from 9am-12pm

Hervey Bay Inspirations Seniors Music Group

Performs around town at different events and venues to entertain local community. Anyone is welcome to join in for some good, old-fashioned sing-a-longs. The group rehearses at the Torbay Tavistock Court Retirement Village on Tuesdays from 10am-12pm.

Social Games

Includes Rummikub and Tri-Dominoes. On at Halcro Street Centre on Tuesdays from 12pm-3pm and Fridays from 9am-12pm

Coffee and Chat

A fun social group that chooses a fun activity every week. From guest speakers, games, excursions, craft and so much more. On Thursdays from 10am-12pm.

Indoor Walking Group

Social Indoor Walking meet to do a series of walking movements to keep the body and brain active. On Wednesdays from 9.30am-11.30am

Rolling Bones Players Senior Drama

The drama group create, rehearse live and video productions. It is a fun and interactive group. On Fridays from 1pm-3pm



Contacts

Fraser Coast Senior Support Services

Aged and Disability Advocates (ADA) - (07) 3637 6092

Anglicare Southern Queensland - 1300 610 610

Blue Care Fraser Coast - 1300 258 322

Bolton Clarke (RSL Care Wide Bay) - (07) 4131 1900

Care Connect (QLD) - 1800 692 464

Carer Gateway Queensland - 1800 422 737

Carinity Home Care - 1300 109 109

Continuity Care Hervey Bay - 0451 511 200

Centacare Fraser Coast - 1300 236 822

Churches of Christ Home Care - (07) 4124 8985

Deaf Connect QLD - (07) 3892 8500

Dementia Australia Queensland - (07) 3895 8200

Feros Care Wide Bay QLD - 1300 780 493

Five Good Friends QLD - 1300 787 581

Footprints Care Finder - 1800 366 877

Halcro St Community Centre - (07) 4194 2441

Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre (HBNC) - (07) 4194 3000

Home Assist Community Services - (07) 4123 2234

Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) - 1300 852 598

Integrated Living Wide Bay - 1300 782 896

Just Better Care Wide Bay - (07) 5353 5111

Kalang Respite Care Centre Aboriginal Corporation - (07) 4124 7780

KinCare - Wide Bay - 1300 733 510

Life Without Barriers - Hervey Bay and Bundaberg - 1800 792 359

My Aged Care - 1800 200 422

Office of the Public Guardian Queensland - 1300 653 187

Ozcare - Hervey Bay - 1800 692 273 (Dementia Advisor)

Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) - 1300 753 228

Right at Home RightCare - 1300 363 802

Sapphire Living Queensland - 1800 773 722

Senior Helpers Wide Bay - (07) 4325 4455

Seniors Legal & Support Service - (07) 4124 6863 (Elder Abuse)


Services Australia Aged Care (Aged Care Service Officers) - 1800 227 475

Suncare Community Services - 1800 786 227

The Public Trustee of Queensland - 1300 360 044

Trilogy Care - 1300 147 601

Wide Bay Burnett Community Legal Service - (07) 4194 2663



"Be yourself, you're great.
Trying to make yourself into
someone you think other people
will like is a waste of time and
energy. Be happy, it's a choice."

-Fraser Coast resident when asked what is the one bit of life wisdom they would share with others





7. Action

Making Fraser Coast more age-friendly



7.1 Action

Do you have an idea on how to make Fraser Coast a more age-friendly region?

Providing Feedback to the State of Seniors Report 2024:

Visit www.hbnc.com.au to provide feedback to us on this report

Opportunities for funding:

HBNC hosts a Community Innovator Pitch Night twice a year. This initiative provides an opportunity for any person or group/organisation in our local community to present a project that aims to address local social challenges. Pitches are reviewed by a panel of judges with the winner receiving \$2,500 in funding to implement their idea. There is also another \$2,500 available to a “Community Choice” winner, which is decided by community votes. To present a pitch contact info@hbnc.com.au for more information.





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