

# Bringing Data to Life

Isabelle Whittington



**dunk after dunk, jam after jam**

@llewstevens

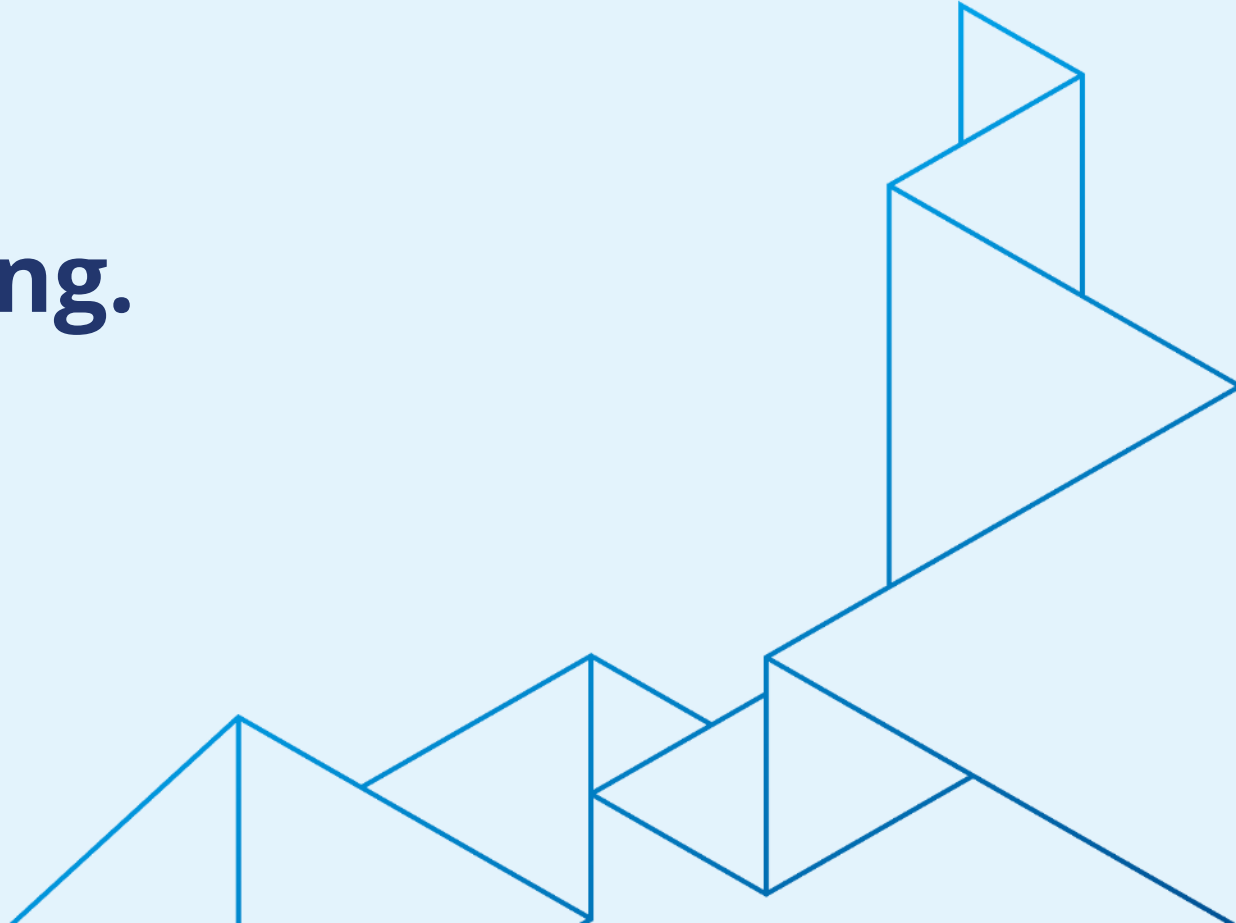
Replying to @ABSStats

love stats

absolutely fiending for some more stats

11:42 AM · Dec 24, 2019 · [Twitter Web App](#)

**Data is boring.**





**“We’re not a sportswear company.  
We’re a storytelling company.”**

Dennie Wendt, Nike



**“We’re not a data agency.  
We’re a storytelling agency!”**

me



Home > Articles > New CDC Study Finds Majority Of Those Infected With COVID-19 'Always' Wore Masks



Mandatory face mask rules in some Californian cities now come with a fine. (Photo: Youtube)

## New CDC Study Finds Majority of Those Infected with COVID-19 'Always' Wore Masks

California's BYD mask deal inked with mask data in question

By Katy Grimes, October 13, 2020 10:41 am

Once again it appears there are conflicting facts, data and plenty of opinions about the efficacy of wearing masks to prevent contracting the Coronavirus.

In addition to causing "maskne" and skin infections on the face and around the mouth, persistent coughing, "mask mouth," and respiratory illnesses including lung infections, it turns out that most everyone infected with COVID-19 "always" wore masks, according to a newly published study by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

## PICK-POCKET PROOF TRAVELWEAR YOU WANT



"The CIA version of khakis." - FORBES

CLOTHING ARTS

GET A WEEKLY SUMMARY OF CALIFORNIA GLOBE STORIES:

email address

Major Doctors' Organization Publicly Embraces Chambering Babies Until Birth

## CDC Study Finds Overwhelming Majority Of People Getting Coronavirus Wore Masks

BY JORDAN RIFE | OCTOBER 13, 2020 | 2 MIN READ



Over 70 percent of the case-patients who were

- ✓ **Tell stories with data so that people listen**
- ✓ **Have fun and get creative**
- ✓ **Build an audience and make a difference**





A photograph of three male rugby players from the NSW Blues team. They are wearing light blue jerseys with red accents and are captured in a moment of celebration, with their arms around each other and their mouths open as if shouting or cheering. The background is dark and out of focus.

**Keep it simple, stupid**

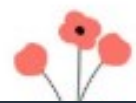
**You'll be sweet sweet sweet if  
you repeat repeat repeat**

**When You're Getting Sick Of Your  
Message, Is When Your Audience Is  
Starting To Pay Attention**





**More than half a million Aussies have served, or are currently serving, in the ADF**



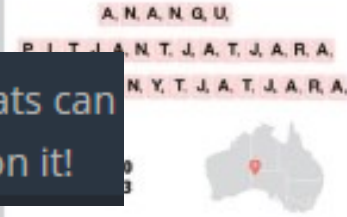
**Normal People show turns 5!**  
There are 394 Irish born Aussies with a Language and Literature qualification



**39% of Aussie kids did arts and crafts in 2021-22**



**Happy Scrabble day**  
Which Aussie LGAs have the highest scrabble score?

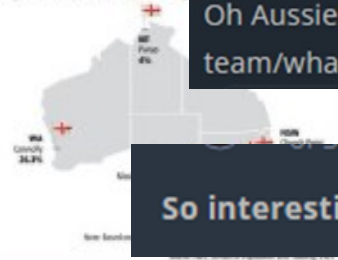


Happy  
to the  
Morse code

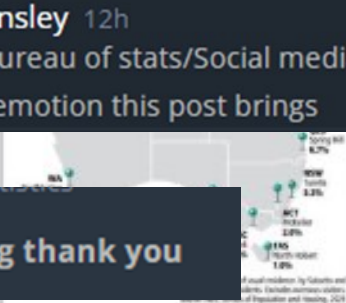
Excellent visual!! Such a clear picture of a shifting demographics!

It is awesome how data and stats can come alive with the right spin on it!

**Suburbs with the highest % of people born in England by state and territory**



**Top Spanish-speaking suburbs**



@eleanor.ansley 12h  
Oh Aussie bureau of stats/Social media team/what emotion this post brings

So interesting thank you

It's been a release of

Thank you, ABS, these are the important statistics

**brating Aussie mums**  
are over 6.5 million mums in Aus!



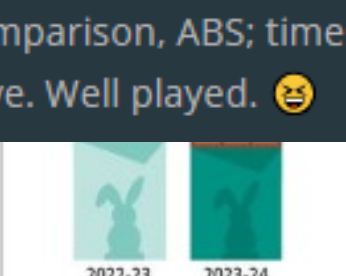
We could have been reading boring stats. Thanks for counting and keeping us amused.

Thankyou Australian Bureau of Statistics for another fun fact I'll use in the classroom.

**The ACT has the highest % of protected land**  
% of protected land, by state



**Aussies bought 5.7% less**

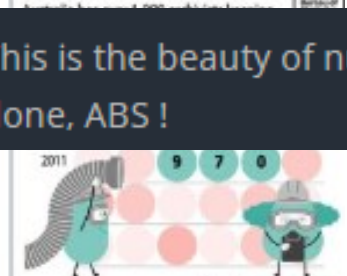


An apt comparison, ABS; timely and informative. Well played. 🙄

**Average Australian dwelling reaches \$1 million**  
selling price, national, states and territories



**Inside Out turns 10!**



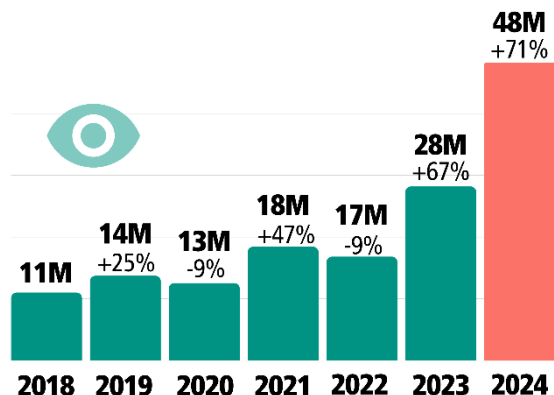
This is the beauty of numbers; well done, ABS !

**Suburbs with the highest % Indonesia**



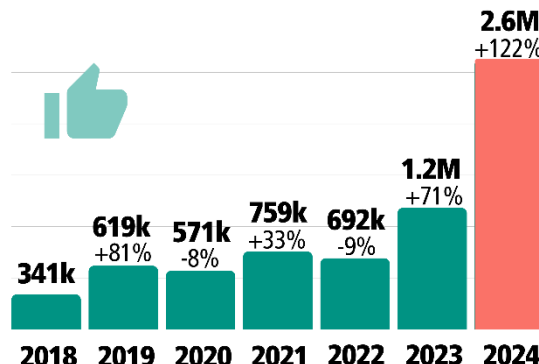
# ABS Social Media Strategy by numbers

## Impressions



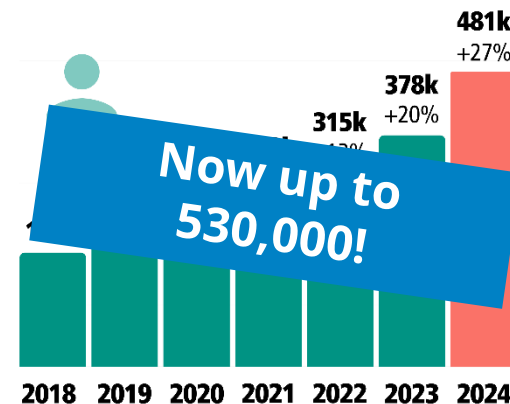
How many times a post appears on a screen

## Engagements



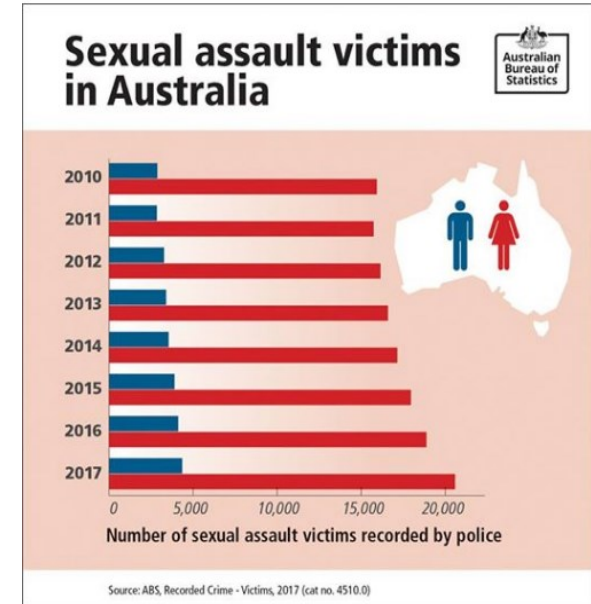
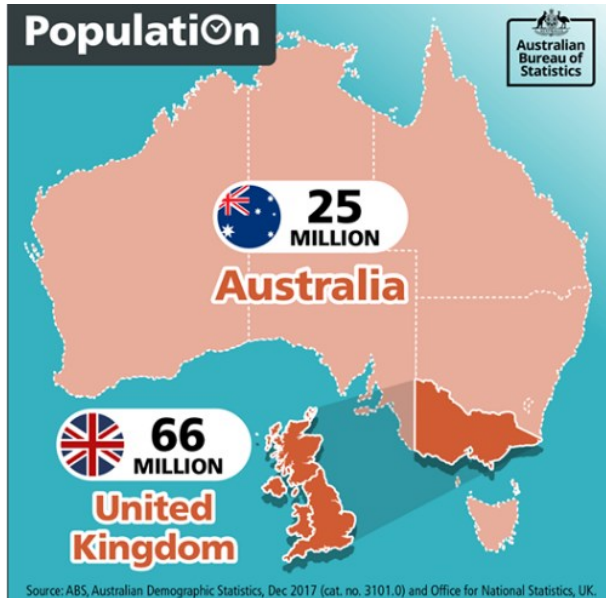
Number of times our posts are liked, commented on and shared

## Followers



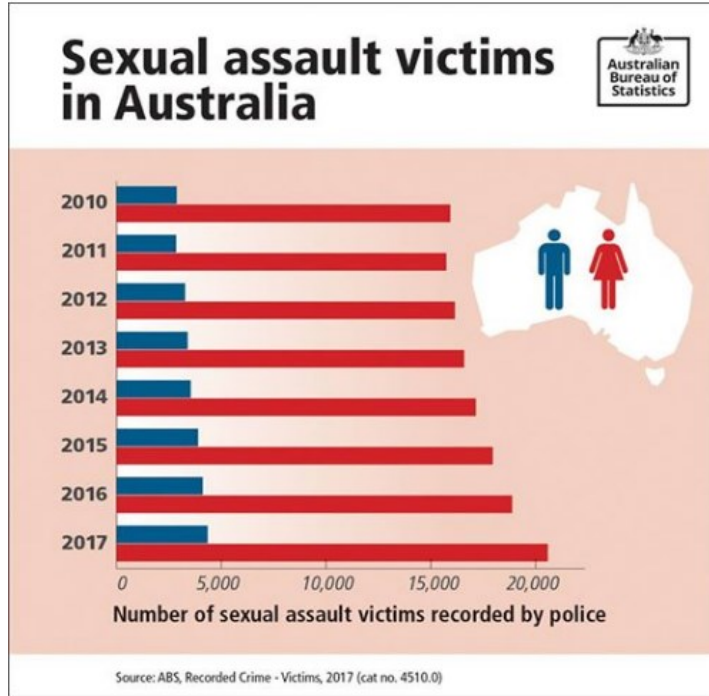
Number of users who follow our channels

# Content audit – 2018





**DO**



**DON'T**

**Review of Census  
Topics Closed**





# Contextual/relatable



DO

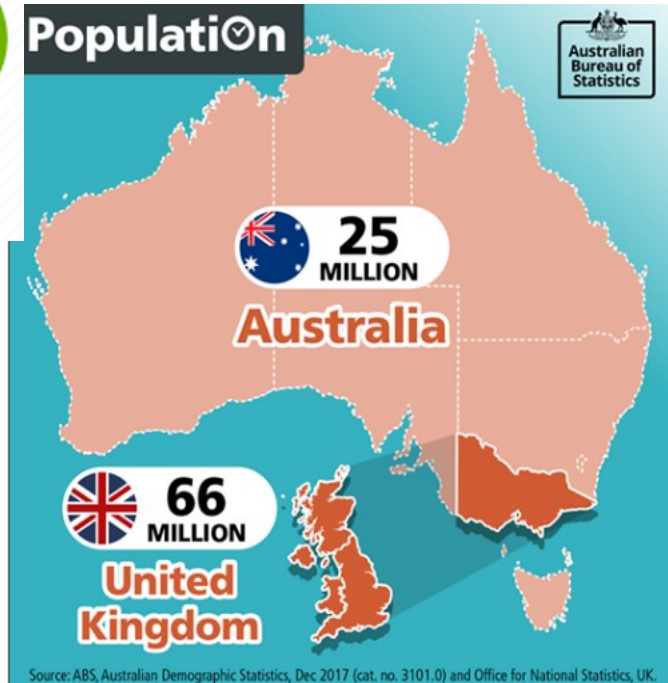


DON'T

# Simple



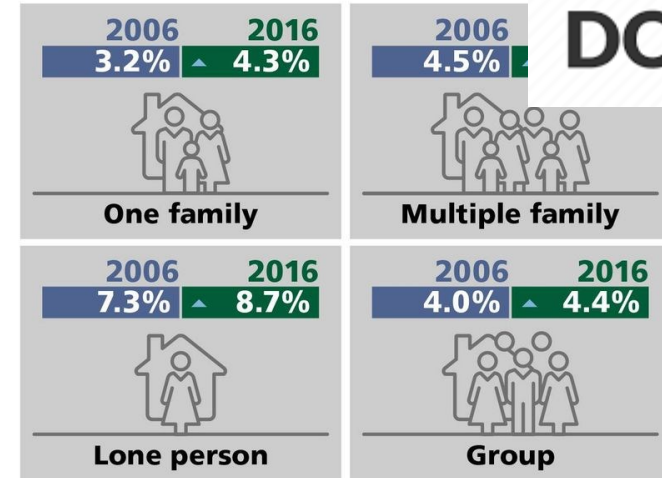
DO



Need for assistance by Australian household type – 2006 and 2016



DON'T



Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing



# ABS Instagram 2018

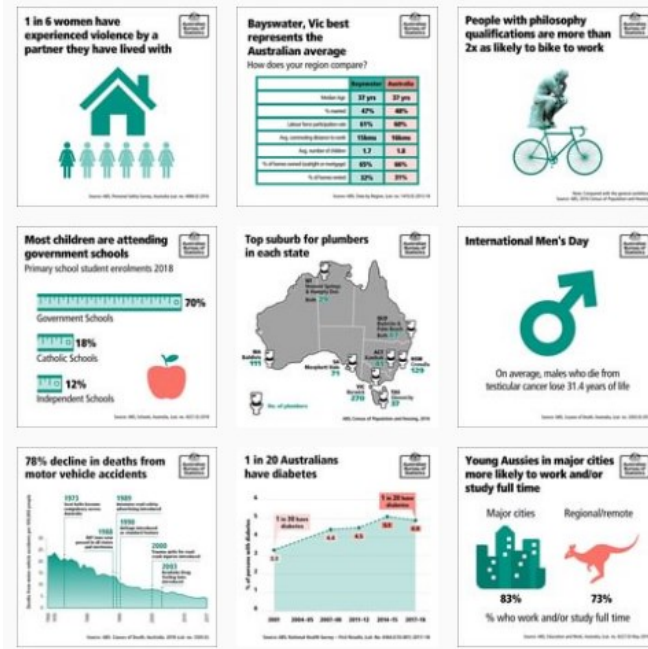
Before



- Informative
- Contextual
- Simple
- Consistent style

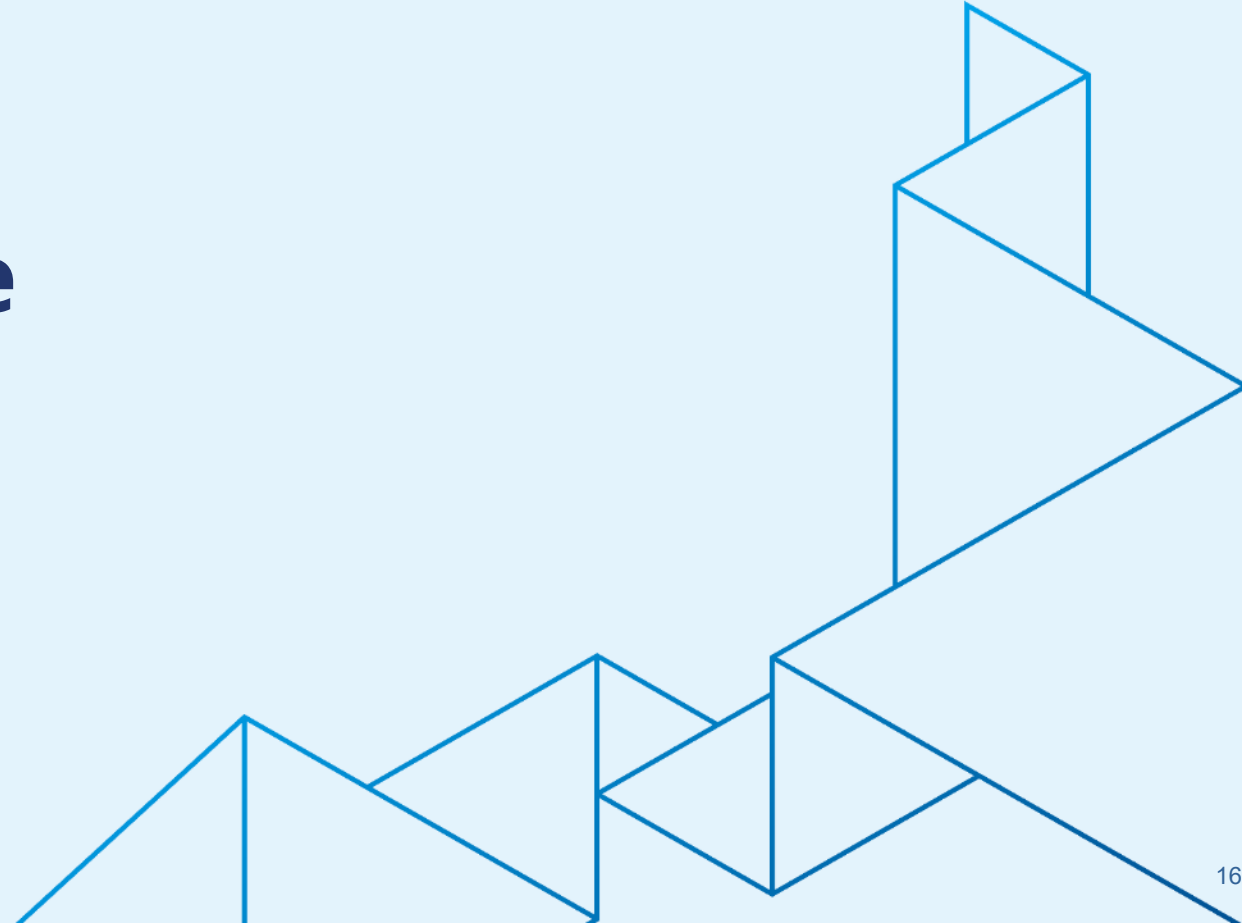


After

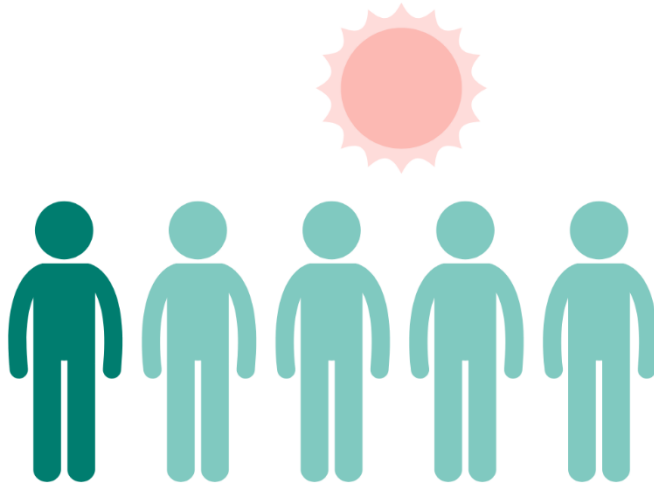


Across all platforms:  
Impressions **up 27%**  
Engagement **up 142%**

# Informative



## 1 in 5 Aussies have a vitamin D deficiency



Note: For persons aged 18+  
Source: ABS, National Health Measures Survey, 2022-24

## People with philosophy qualifications are 3x as likely to bike to work



Note: Compared with all employed persons 15 years and over  
Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2021

# Comparing values?

## A tale of two cities

Our two biggest cities head to head



**Sydney**



**Melbourne**

Population*	5,297,089	5,031,195
2021-2022 population increase*	0.7%	1.1%
Median weekly income	\$881	\$841
Median weekly rent	\$470	\$390
Households where a non-English language is used	42%	38%

Note: Refers to Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA),  
population increase from 30 June 2021 to 30 June 2022

Source: ABS, \*Regional population, 2022; Census of Population and Housing, 2021

# Comparing values?

## Sydney's population has grown over 4x since the opening of the Harbour Bridge



1932



1,214,000

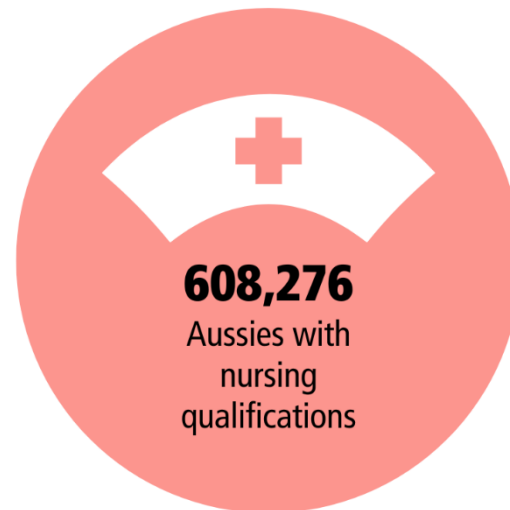
2022



5,303,000

Source: ABS, Historical population, 2016; Regional population, 2021-22

## 12 statisticians have nursing qualifications, just like Florence Nightingale



3,521

Statisticians

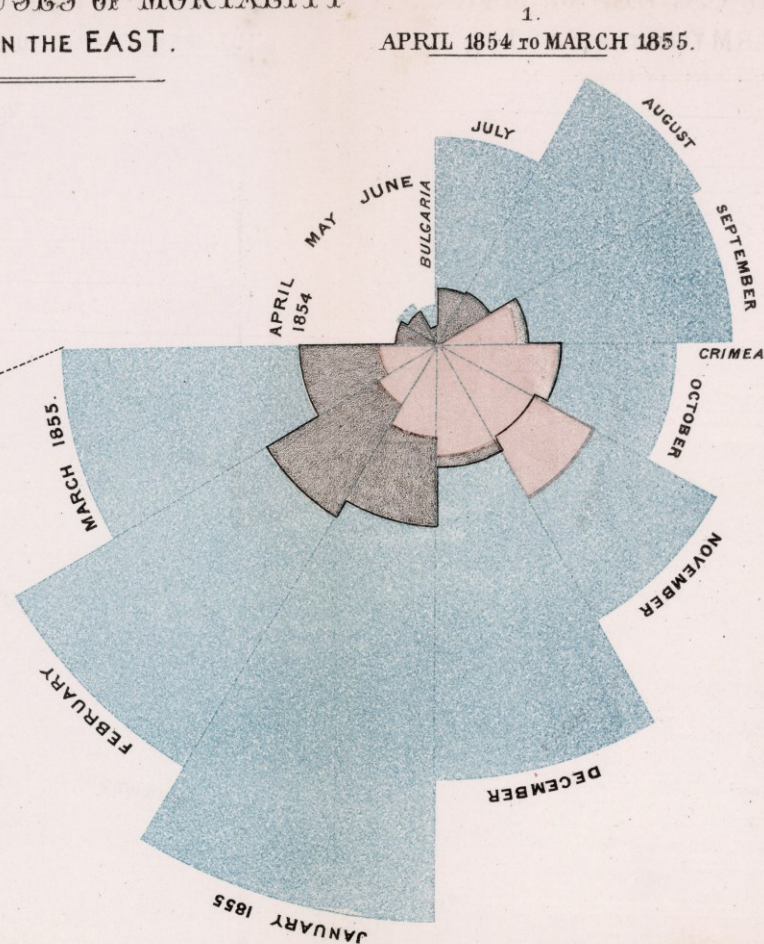
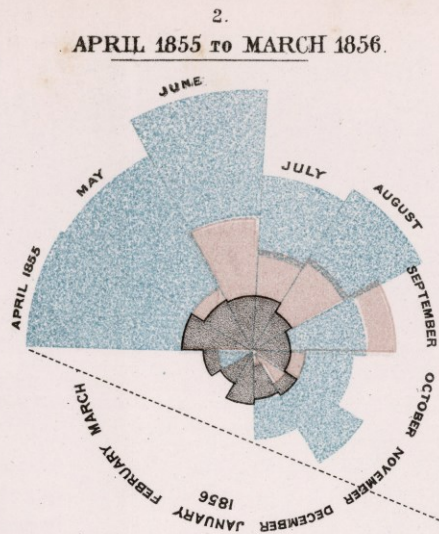
12

Statisticians  
with nursing  
qualifications

Note: Refers to employed persons aged 15 years and over.  
And persons aged 15 years and over who stated a completed qualification  
Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2021



# DIAGRAM OF THE CAUSES OF MORTALITY IN THE ARMY IN THE EAST.



*The Areas of the blue, red, & black wedges are each measured from the centre as the common vertex.*

*The blue wedges measured from the centre of the circle represent area for area the deaths from Preventible or Mitigable Zymotic diseases; the red wedges measured from the centre the deaths from wounds; & the black wedges measured from the centre the deaths from all other causes.*

*The black line across the red triangle in Nov. 1854 marks the boundary of the deaths from all other causes during the month.*

*In October 1854, & April 1855, the black area coincides with the red; in January & February 1855, the blue coincides with the black.*

*The entire areas may be compared by following the blue, the red & the black lines enclosing them.*



## Deaths caused by Parkinson's higher for men in 2021



**1,472 deaths**



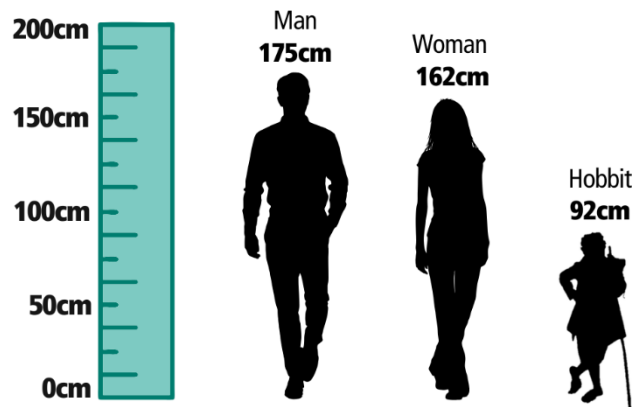
**816 deaths**

Note: Includes Parkinson's disease and secondary Parkinsonism.  
Source: ABS, Causes of Death, Australia, 2021

## These Two Tower over the Hobbit



Average height of Australians vs Hobbits

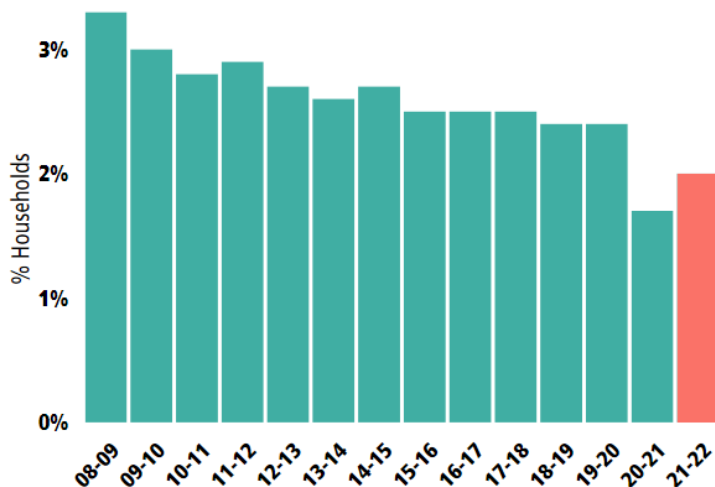


Note: Based on average height of Australians aged 18+. Average Hobbit height based on assumed normal distribution of sourced Hobbit height range of 2-4 feet (61-122cm)  
Source: ABS, National Health Survey, Australia, 2022  
Tolkien, J.R.R. 1995. The Lord Of The Rings. HarperCollins Publishers. Image sourced from clipart.email

# Patterns, trends, outliers?

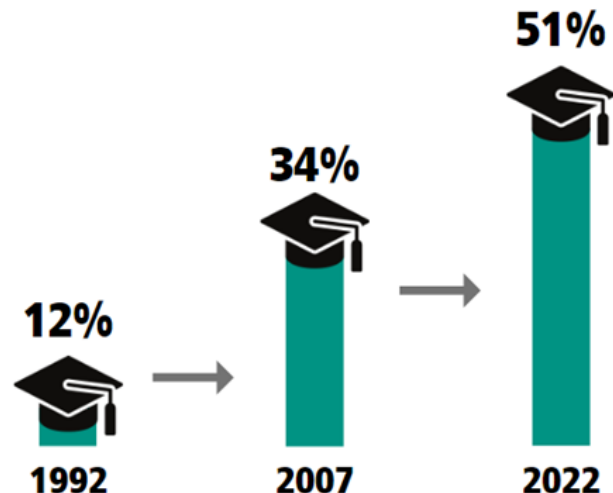
## Break-ins increase after record low in 2020-21

1 in 50 households experienced a break-in last year



Source: ABS, Crime Victimisation, 2021-22

## 1 in 2 women aged 25-34 years now have a university degree



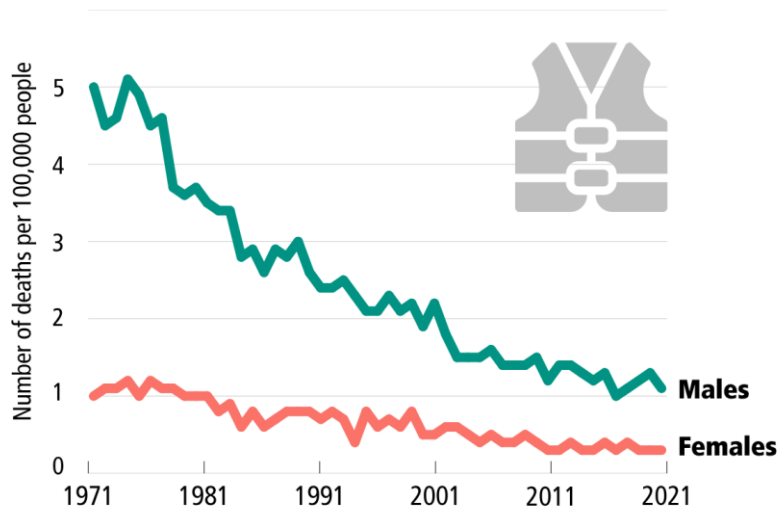
Source: ABS, Education and Work, Australia 2022

# Patterns, trends, outliers?

## Drownings dropped over the last 50 years



Death rates for drownings 1971-2021

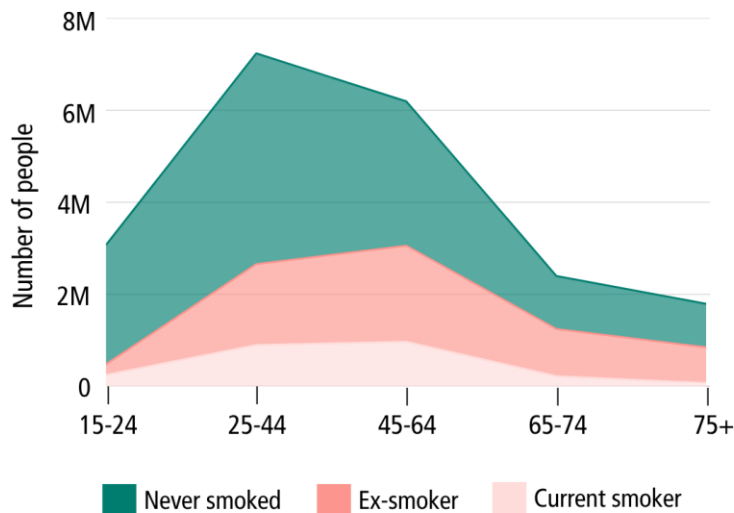


Source: ABS, Causes of Death, Australia, 2021

# Parts to a whole?

## Most young Aussies have never smoked

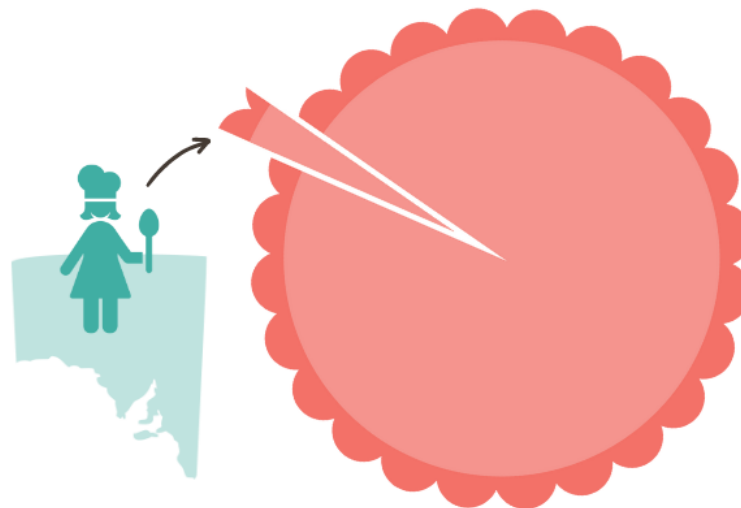
Smoker status, by age



Note: Refers to people aged 15 years and over.  
Source: ABS, National Health Survey, 2022

## Happy Pi Day!

3.14% of bakers are females living in South Australia

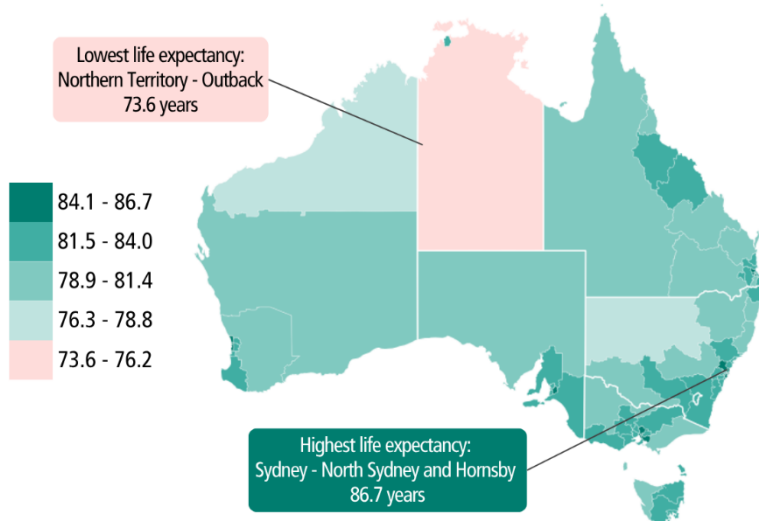


Note: Refers to Bakers and Pastrycooks  
Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2021

# Distribution

## Life expectancy in cities higher than remote areas

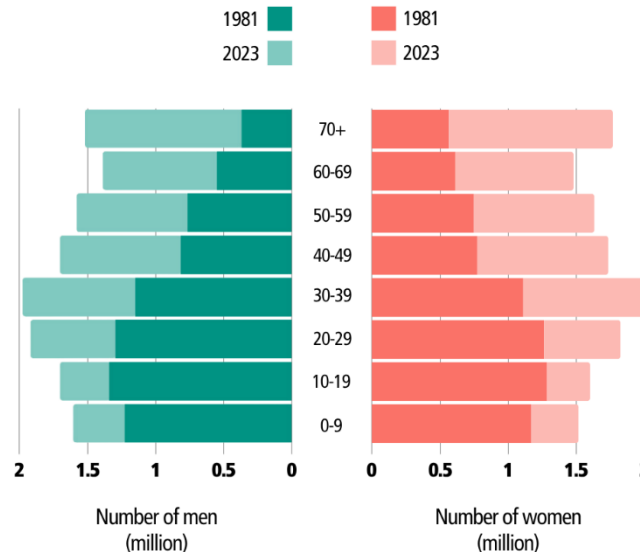
Life expectancy by area



Note: Area refers to Statistical Areas Level 4 (SA4s). Regional SA4s tend to have smaller populations of 100,000 to 300,000 people while in cities, SA4s tend to have 300,000 to 500,000 people. Made with Datawrapper.

Source: ABS, Life expectancy, 2021 - 2023

## Australia's ageing population 1981 vs 2023



Source: ABS, Population clock and pyramid

# Contextual and relatable





# Where is 1 million?

Landy, D., Silbert, N. and Goldin, A.  
(2013), Estimating Large Numbers.  
Cogn Sci, 37: 775-799.

1 thousand

1 billion



50% placed 1 million  
somewhere around  
the middle

# Writing about numbers

Use digits, not words

seven  7

Simplify big numbers

1,000,000  1 million

# Proportions and fractions

25%

VS

1 in 4

**2 in 5 Australians experienced  
a mental disorder at some  
time in their life**



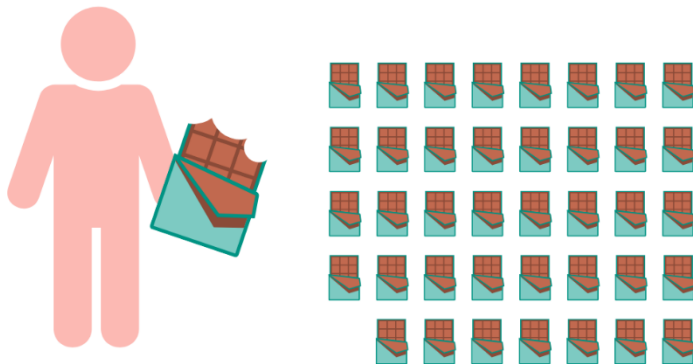
If you, or someone you know is experiencing distress, contact Lifeline

 13 11 14  [lifecycle.org.au](https://lifecycle.org.au)

Source: ABS, National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, Australia, 2020–2022

# Divide big numbers

**Aussies buy 168,200 tonnes  
of chocolate a year**



...that's 35 family chocolate blocks each!

Note: Based on 180g chocolate block  
Source: ABS, Apparent Consumption of Selected Foodstuffs, Australia, 2022-23

**North Qld grew over 345,000  
tonnes of bananas in 2023-24**



...that's enough to make 90 banana smoothies  
per Aussie!



345,016 tonnes

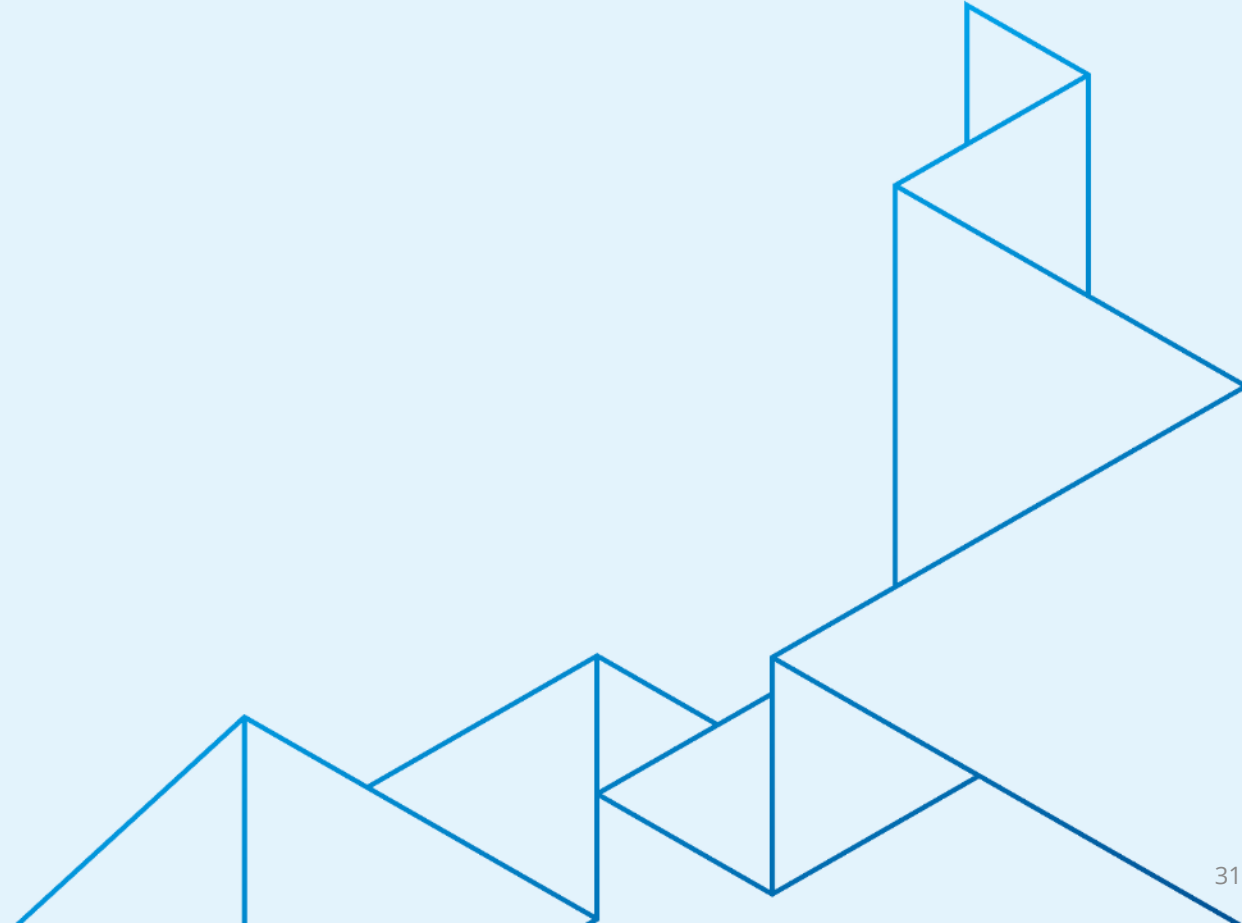
=



90 smoothies  
per Aussie

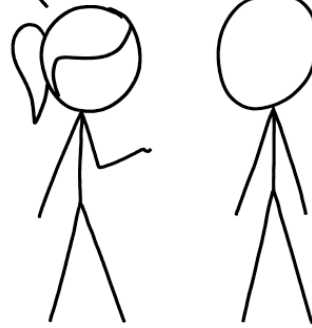
Note: Based on 140g in each smoothie.  
Source: ABS, Australian Agriculture: Horticulture, 2023-24

# Simple



SILICATE CHEMISTRY IS SECOND NATURE TO US GEOCHEMISTS, SO IT'S EASY TO FORGET THAT THE AVERAGE PERSON PROBABLY ONLY KNOWS THE FORMULAS FOR OLIVINE AND ONE OR TWO FELDSPARS.

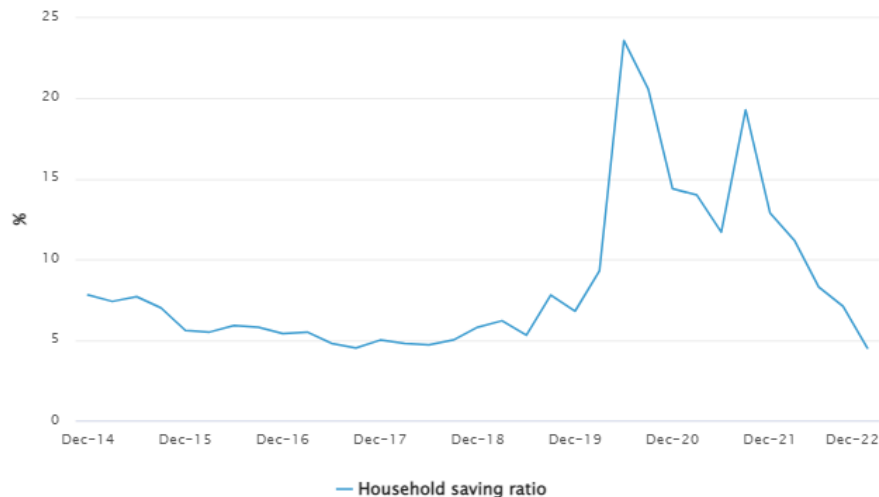
AND QUARTZ, OF COURSE.  
OF COURSE.



EVEN WHEN THEY'RE TRYING TO COMPENSATE FOR IT, EXPERTS IN ANYTHING WILDLY OVERESTIMATE THE AVERAGE PERSON'S FAMILIARITY WITH THEIR FIELD.

# What's the story?

Household saving ratio, seasonally adjusted



## Households savings rate falls to pre-pandemic levels

% of income saved by households, seasonally adjusted

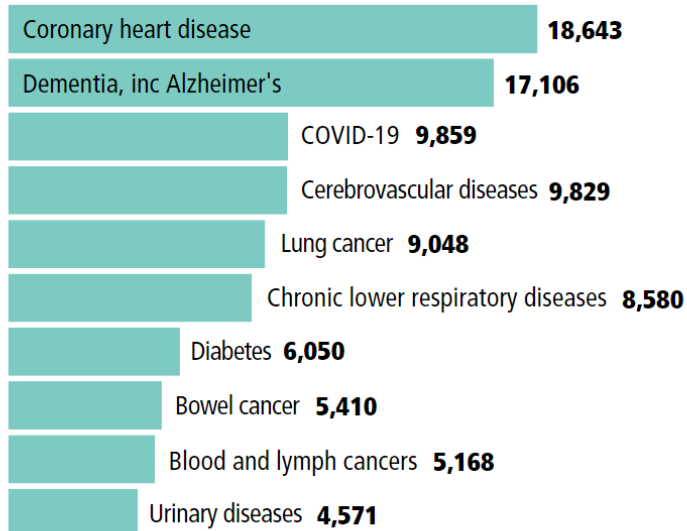


Source: ABS, Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product, Sept 2022

# Where do you want people to look?

## Diabetes remains 7th leading cause of death

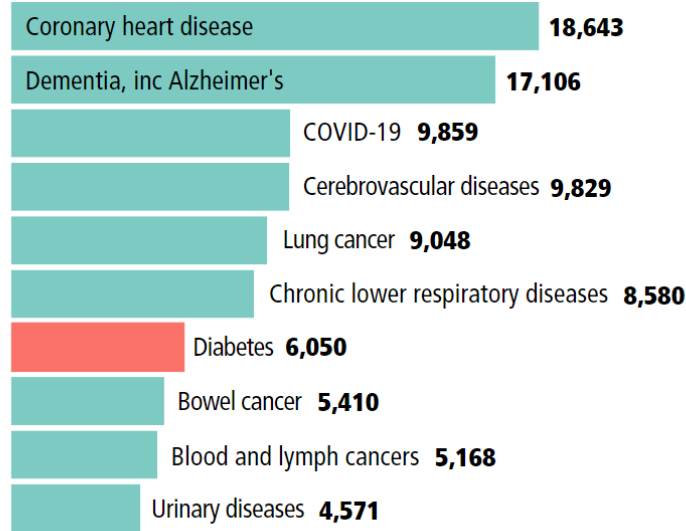
Leading causes of death in 2022



Source: ABS, Causes of Death, Australia, 2022

## Diabetes remains 7th leading cause of death

Leading causes of death in 2022

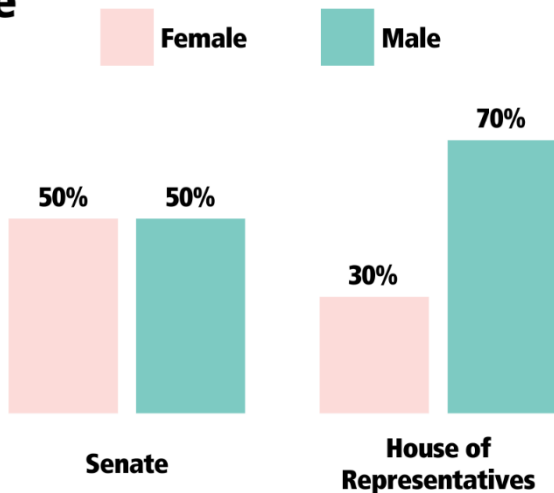


Source: ABS, Causes of Death, Australia, 2022



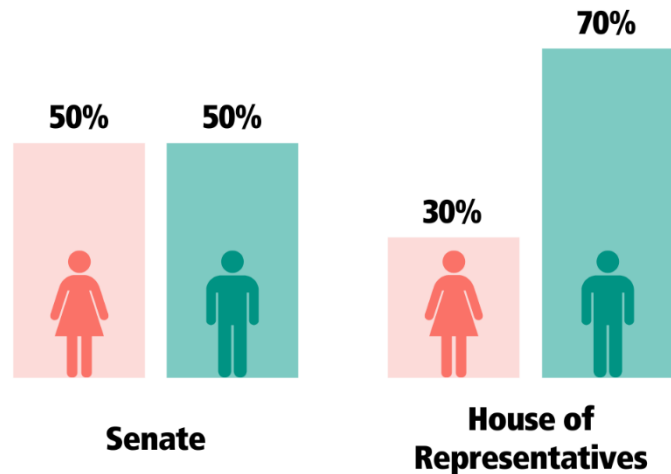
# Avoid legends

**In 2020, for the first time,  
there was an equal number  
of male and female federal  
parliamentarians in the  
Senate**



Source: ABS, Gender Indicators, Australia, 2020

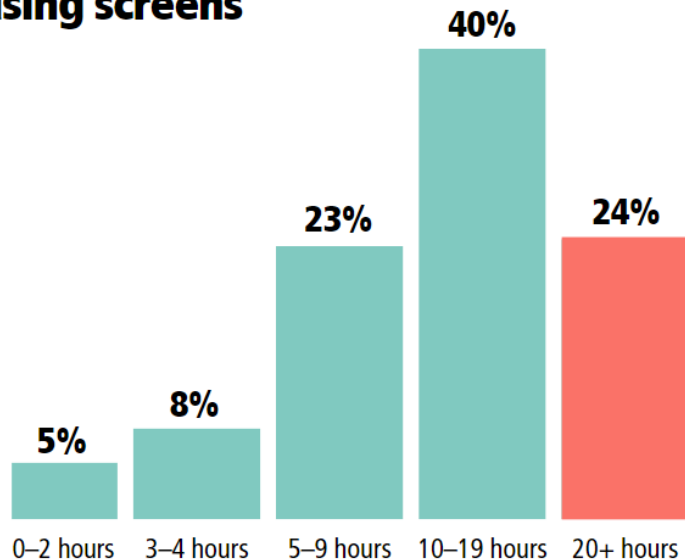
**In 2020, for the first time,  
there was an equal number  
of male and female federal  
parliamentarians in the  
Senate**



Source: ABS, Gender Indicators, Australia, 2020

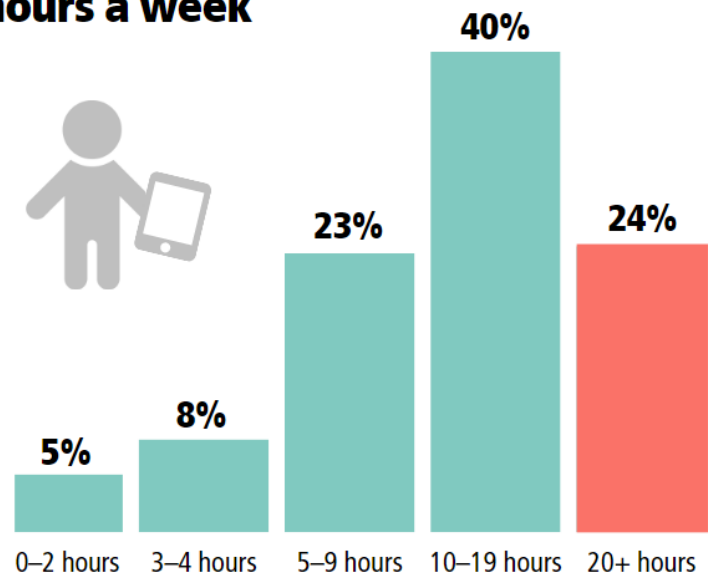
# Use visual elements

## Almost a quarter of kids spend 20+ hours per week using screens





Note: Outside of school hours  
Source: ABS, Cultural and creative activities, 2021-22

## Almost a quarter of kids using screens spend 20+ hours a week



Note: Outside of school hours  
Source: ABS, Cultural and creative activities, 2021-22

# Simple language

Don't use 	Use instead 
Provide	Give
Enable	Allow, support
Deliver	Make, do, complete
Additional	Extra, more
Increase/decrease	Rise, growth/fall, drop, go up
Regarding / in regard to / in relation to	About
A number of / a range of	Some, several, many or give exact number
Therefore / thus	'Because of this / that' or remove

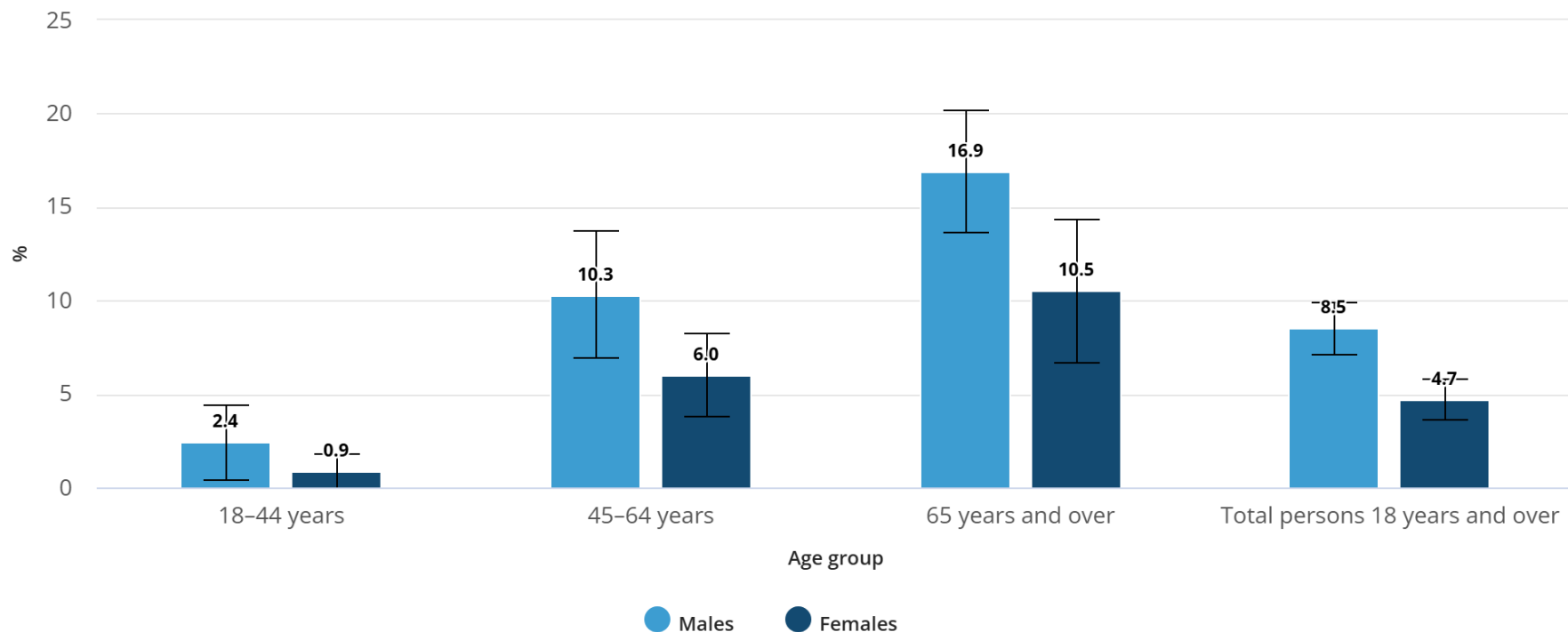
**Let's put it into action**



# Real world example

Proportion of people aged 18 years and over(a) with diabetes(b) by age and sex, 2022-24						
	Males (%)	95% confidence interval	95% confidence interval	Females (%)	95% confidence interval	95% confidence interval
18-44 years	2.4	0.4	4.4	0.9	0	1.8
45-64 years	10.3	6.9	13.7	6	3.8	8.2
65 years and over	16.9	13.6	20.2	10.5	6.7	14.3
Total persons 18 years and over	8.5	7.1	9.9	4.7	3.6	5.8
a. Weighted results for persons where a fasted blood sample was collected.						
b. Includes people who had known diabetes and those with newly diagnosed diabetes.						
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, National Health Measures Survey 2022-24						

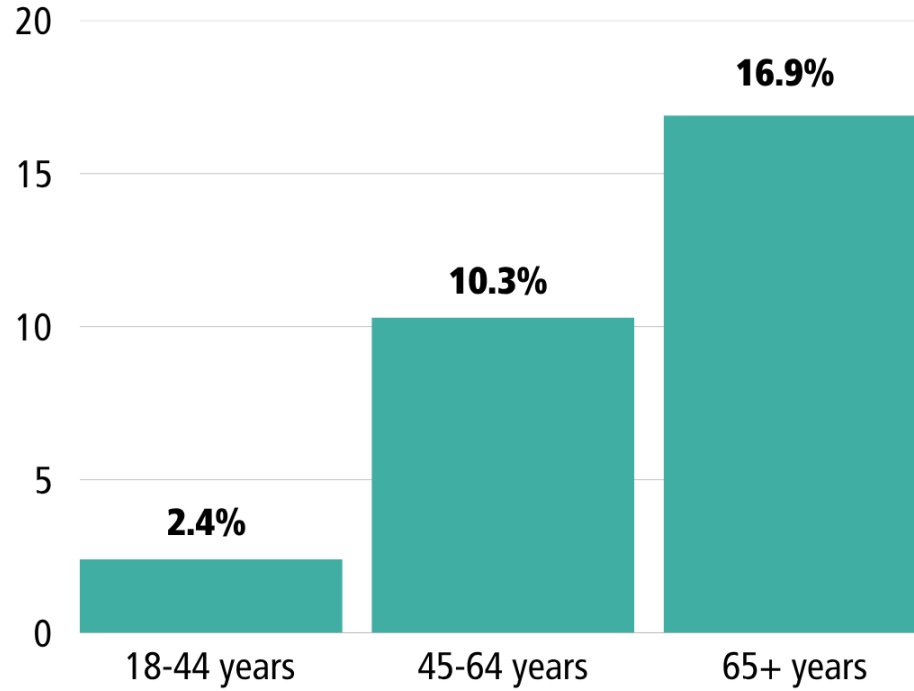
## Proportion of people aged 18 years and over(a) with diabetes(b) by age and sex, 2022-24

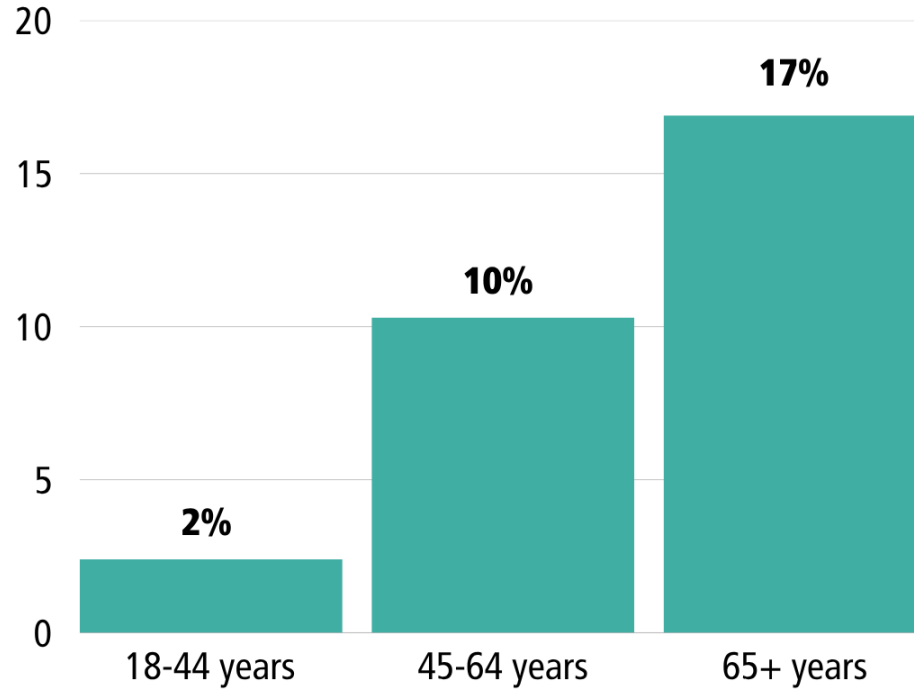


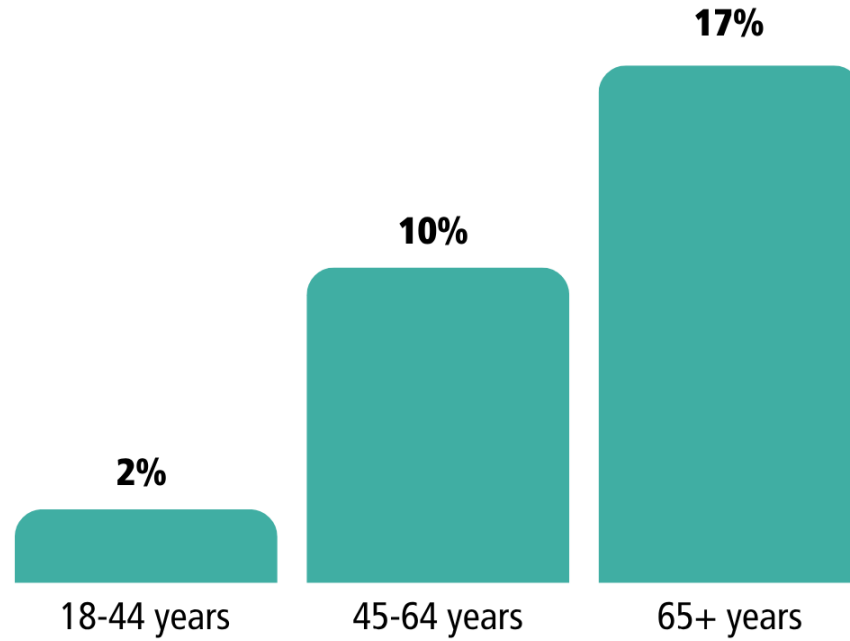
a. Weighted results for persons where a fasted blood sample was collected.

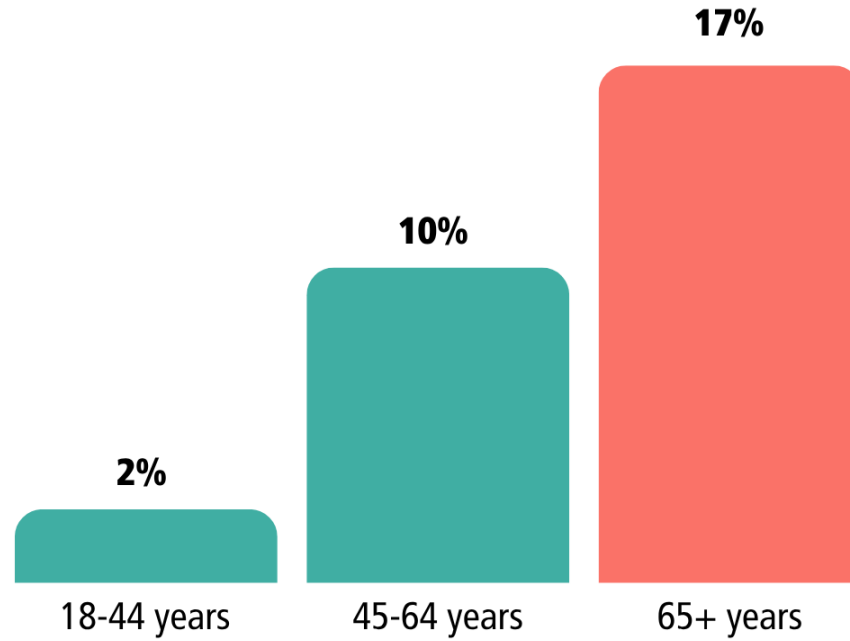
b. Includes people who had known diabetes and those with newly diagnosed diabetes.



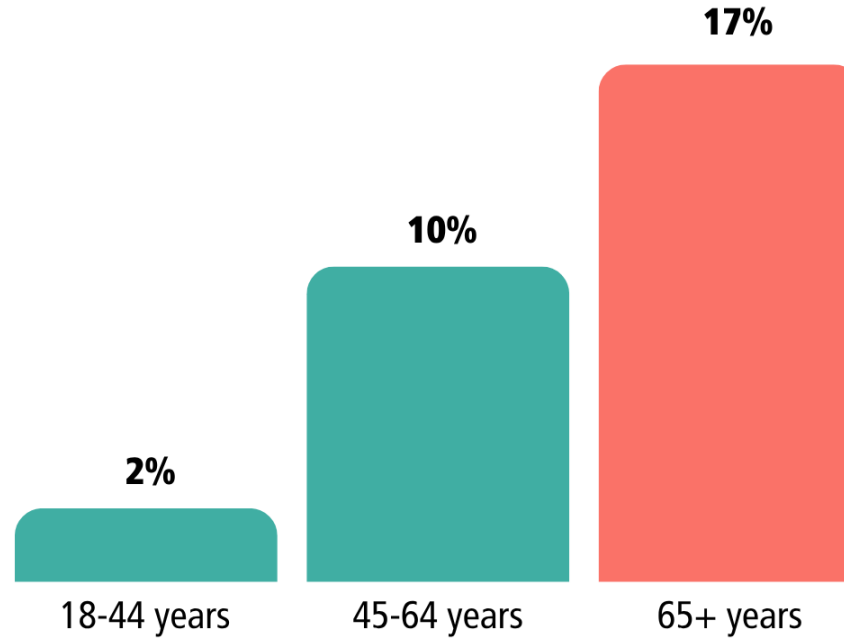








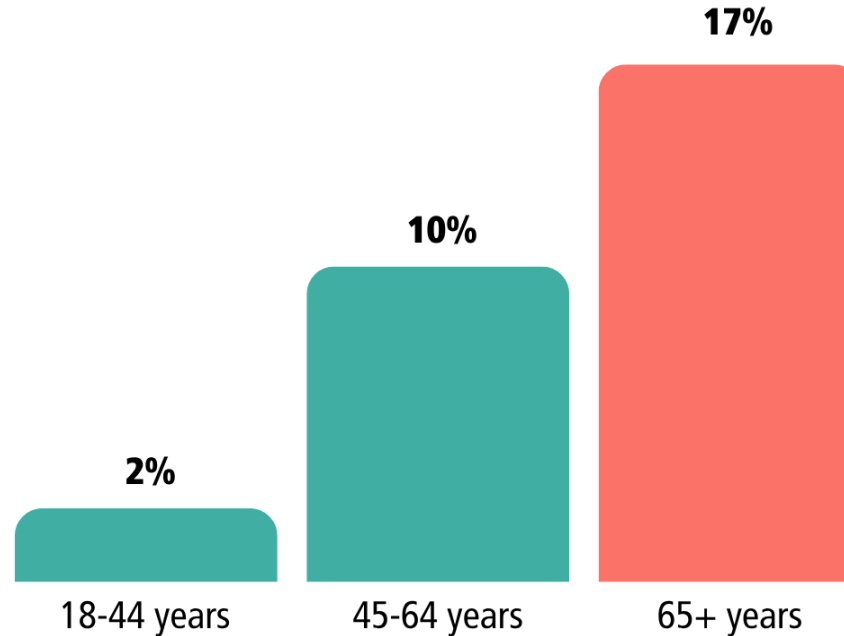
# Almost 1 in 5 men aged 65+ have diabetes



# Almost 1 in 5 men aged 65+ have diabetes



% of Aussie males with diabetes by age

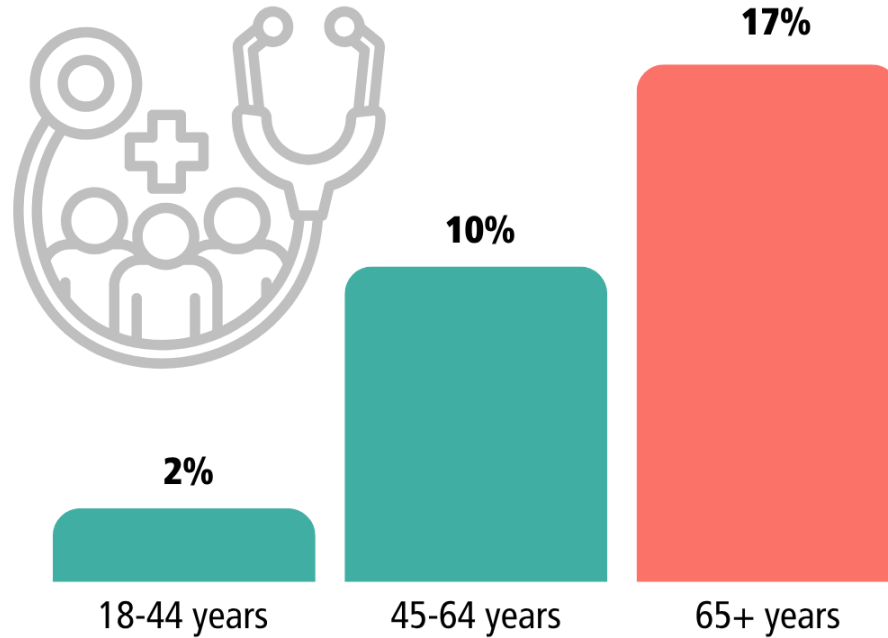




# Almost 1 in 5 men aged 65+ have diabetes



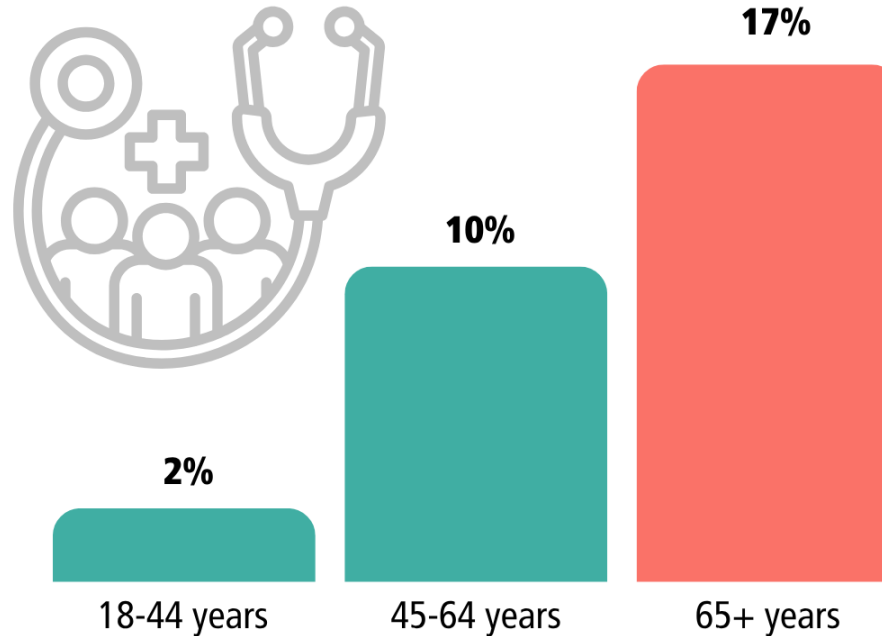
% of Aussie males with diabetes by age



# Almost 1 in 5 men aged 65+ have diabetes



% of Aussie males with diabetes by age

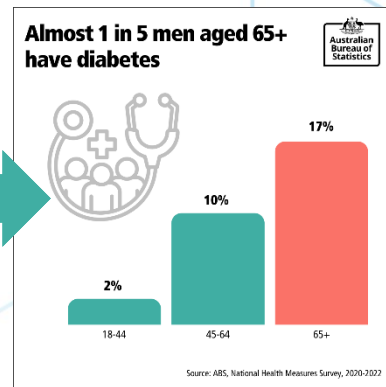
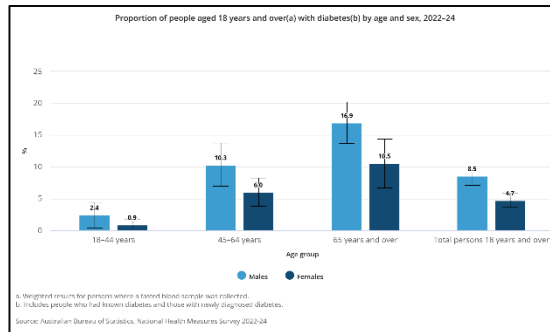


Source: ABS, National Health Measures Survey, 2020-2022

# Activity – 10 mins



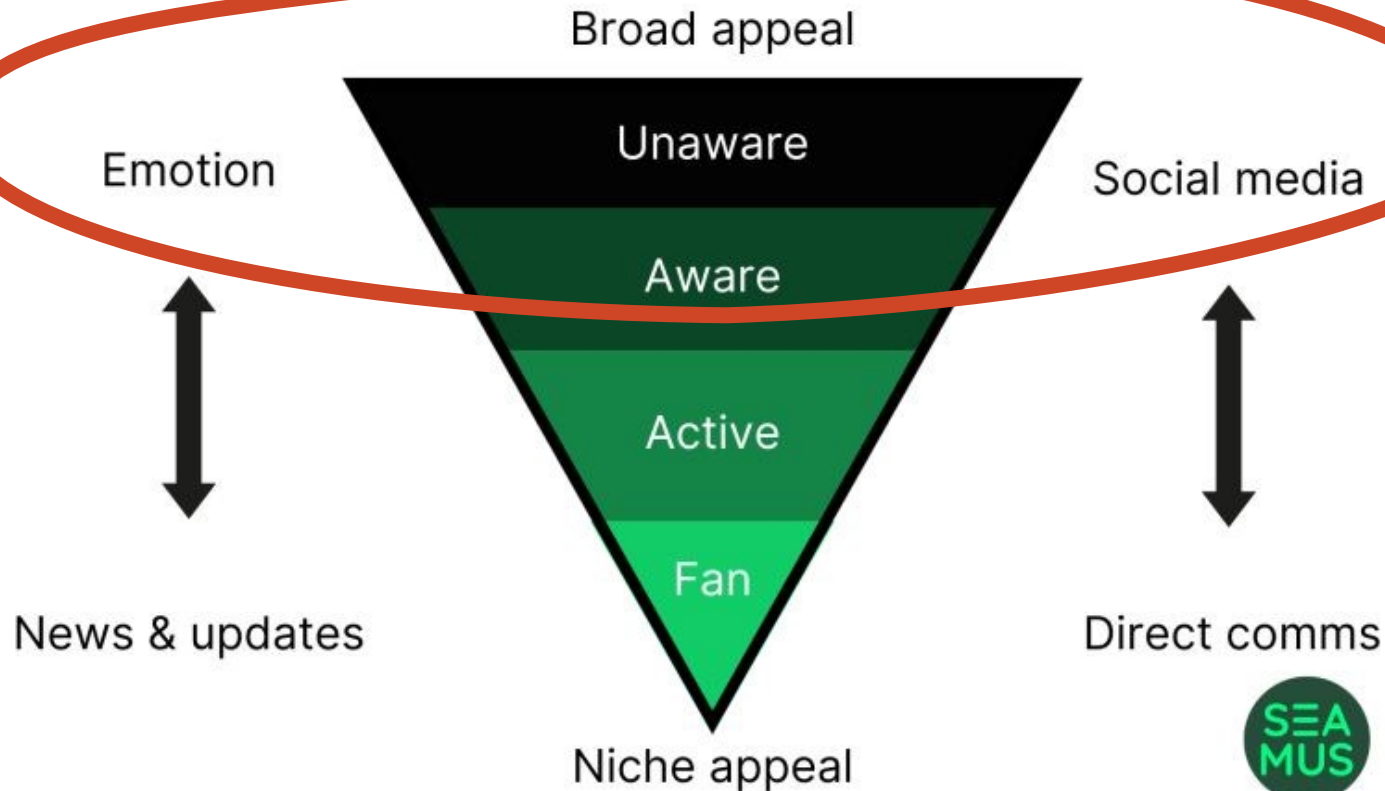
- ▶ Scan the QR code or google 'ABS National Health Survey'
- ▶ Find an interesting point, table or graph
- ▶ In groups of 2-3, brainstorm an idea for a social post



# Build your audience



# Why social media?



# Lean in to what works



Australian Bureau of Statistics

Published by Reputation Publish

19 January 2021

2021

It's Edgar Allan Poe's birthday. We wrote this post haste, hopefully it's to Poe's taste.

#YouGoEdgarAllanPoPo #EdgarAllanPoe #TheRaven

## Quoth the Raven: "One in four"



Dreaming of stats, one day while napping,  
I heard at my window, a raven tapping.

I wondered, how many Aussies were born offshore?  
Quoth the Raven "One in four"

And how many were active in a volunteer corps?  
Quoth the Raven "One in four"

How many live in Victoria, I implore?  
Quoth the Raven "One in four"



And how many have a Uni qualification in their drawer?  
Quoth the Raven "One in four"

And should statisticians write more poetry, hencetofore?  
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore"

Note: 1 in 4 people aged 15+ has a university degree, graduate certificate or graduate diploma. 1 in 4 people aged 15+ volunteered in 2019.  
Source: ABS, Census of Population And Housing, 2016; National, state and territory population, June 2020;  
General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2019

Boost

1.4K

250 777



Australian Bureau of Statistics

Published by Reputation Publish

19 January 2022

2022

It's Edgar Allan Poe's birthday. We wrote this post haste, hopefully it's to Poe's taste.

#YouGoEdgarAllanPoPo #EdgarAllanPoe #TheRaven

## Quoth the Raven: "One in four"



Dreaming of stats, one day while napping,  
I heard at my window, a raven tapping.

I wondered, how many Aussies were born offshore?  
Quoth the Raven "One in four"

And how many were active in a volunteer corps?  
Quoth the Raven "One in four"

How many live in Victoria, I implore?  
Quoth the Raven "One in four"



And how many have a Uni qualification in their drawer?  
Quoth the Raven "One in four"

And should statisticians write more poetry, hencetofore?  
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore"

Note: 1 in 4 people aged 15+ has a university degree, graduate certificate or graduate diploma. 1 in 4 people aged 15+ volunteered in 2019.  
Source: ABS, Census of Population And Housing, 2016; National, state and territory population, June 2020;  
General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2019

Boost

4K

373 1K



Australian Bureau of Statistics

Published by Reputation Publish

19 January 2023

2023

It's Edgar Allan Poe's birthday. We wrote this post haste, hopefully it's to Poe's taste.

#YouGoEdgarAllanPoPo #EdgarAllanPoe #TheRaven

## Quoth the Raven: "One in four"



Dreaming of stats, one day while napping,  
I heard at my window, a raven tapping.

I wondered, how many Aussies were born offshore?  
Quoth the Raven "One in four"

And how many were born in '64 or before?  
Quoth the Raven "One in four"

How many live in Victoria, I implore?  
Quoth the Raven "One in four"



And how many have a Uni qualification in their drawer?  
Quoth the Raven "One in four"

And should statisticians write poetry forevermore?  
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore"

Note: 1 in 4 people aged 15+ has a university degree, graduate certificate or graduate diploma.  
Source: ABS, Census of Population And Housing, 2021; National, state and territory population, June 2022

Boost

8.5K

600 1.6K

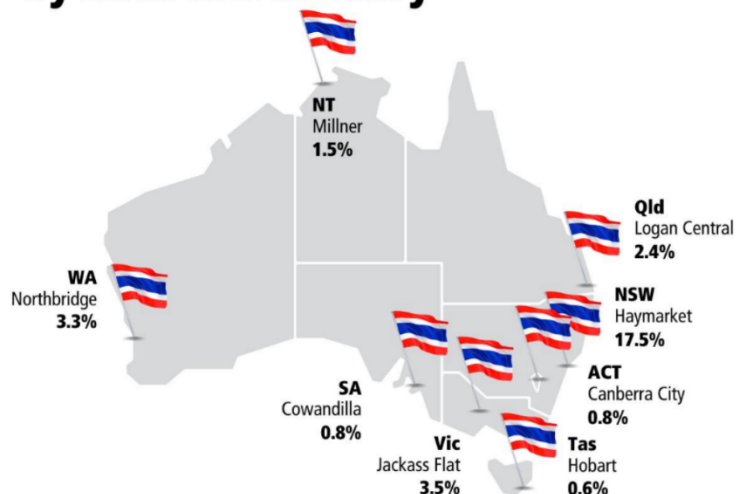


# Re-post monthly and yearly



Top post June 2025

## Suburbs with the highest % of people born in Thailand by state and territory



Note: Based on place of usual residence, by Suburbs and Localities for places with over 1,000 residents. Excludes overseas visitors.  
Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2021



Top post of 2024

## Pesto the penguin weighs about the same as the average 5-7 year old



23kg



**Pesto**  
9 months

24kg



**Child**  
5-7 years

Source: ABS, National Health Survey, 2022

- ✓ **Tell stories with data so that people listen**
- ✓ **Have fun and get creative**
- ✓ **Build an audience and make a difference**



# Ask a question... and follow us!



@absstats



@absstats



Australian Bureau of Statistics



# Thank you!

**AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**  
Informing Australia's important decisions

