

Preface

This report draws on data from the 2025 SOTON survey provided by COTA Australia. The Plug-in was not involved in the data collection and is therefore unable to provide further insight into the survey methodology, data governance arrangements, or collection processes.

While the dataset has been weighted by COTA Australia to align with ABS Census population distributions, The Plug-in cannot guarantee that the findings are fully representative of the broader older population. This is particularly important to note given that the survey was conducted online, which may skew participation towards digitally confident respondents. In addition, the sample includes a disproportionately high number of individuals who have not yet accessed aged care services, despite this being a significant and relevant experience for people aged 50 and over.

These factors should be considered when interpreting the findings, as they may limit the generalisability of results to all older Tasmanians.

Tasmanian respondents Demographics		
Total sample size		N= 217
Gender	Woman/Female	117 (54%)
	Man/Male	100 (46%)
Age group	50-59	93 (43%)
	60-69	66 (30%)
	70-79	37 (17%)
	80+	21 (10%)
Region	Metro	92 (42%)
	Regional	125 (58%)
Identify as ATSI	Yes	9 (4%)
	No / Prefer not to say	208 (96%)
Identify as LGBTI+	Yes	9 (4%)
	No / Prefer not to say	208 (96%)
Live with Disability	Yes	45 (21%)
	No / Prefer not to say	172 (79%)
CALD	CALD	36 (17%)
	Non-CALD	181 (83%)
Employment Status	Employed / Self-employed / own a business	96 (44%)
	Retired fully / partially	102 (47%)
	Unemployed / Student /Not in paid employment	14 (6%)
	Work as volunteer	6 (3%)
	Other	9 (4%)

Geographical distribution

1. **Metro postcodes:** Metro responses spread across 23 postcodes.
 - 7000 (Hobart CBD) – Highest with 10% of metro responses
 - 7005, 7018, 7009, 7010 and 7052 – 29% of all metro responses
2. **Most common regional codes:** Regional responses spread across 38 unique postcodes but with heavy concentration on Launceston.
 - 7250 (Launceston) – 25% regional responses
 - 7310, 7320, 7248 and 7315 – 30% of regional response

Key highlights

- **Modest improvement in overall quality of life but Tasmania continues to lag nationally:** Quality of life and perceived financial security have improved slightly since the last SOTON survey in 2023, yet both remain below national averages, with persistent gaps for people living with disability, those in poverty and other vulnerable groups.
- **Ageism remains a defining challenge:** Experiences of ageism are widespread and appear to be increasing, particularly in employment. Tasmania reports among the highest impacts of ageism nationally, with strong links to poorer wellbeing, financial security and sense of control.
- **Cost-of-living and service access pressures are more acute:** While poverty rates are slightly below the national average, financial stress is deeply concentrated among vulnerable cohorts. Tasmania stands out for higher healthcare access barriers, especially long waiting times.
- **Lower optimism about the future compared to other states:** Older Tasmanians are less optimistic about the future and less confident that government policies reflect their needs, with dissatisfaction particularly strong among those experiencing disadvantage.
- **Access to aged care services:** Nearly all (91%) of the respondents for Tasmania reported that they had not attempted to access any aged care services. As a result, aged care service access and experiences have not been explored within this report.

Quality of life

Nearly three quarters (73%) of older Tasmanians rated positive quality of life (QoL) (7 or higher out of 10) – a slight increase from last survey (70% in 2023). It is, however, lower than the national average of 76%.

Quality of life appears to increase with age as shown in Figure 1. Respondents of early or later retirement age were likely to have more positive quality of life than those of working age (63% aged 50-59 years rated positive QoL vs 86% aged 75+).

Physical and mental health status, financial stability, experiences of crime or FDSV and social/support networks are key factors impacting quality of life, in line with national data.

Some specific cohorts were less likely to report positive QoL including respondents identifying as LGBT+ (53%) compared to who do not identify as LGBT+ (74%), live with disability (46% compared to 80% of those without), and individuals in poverty (54% compared to 79% of those not in poverty).

Respondents identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) were also less likely to report positive QoL (68%) compared to those who do not identify as ATSI (74%) along with those identifying as CALD (77% compared to 73% of non-CALD).

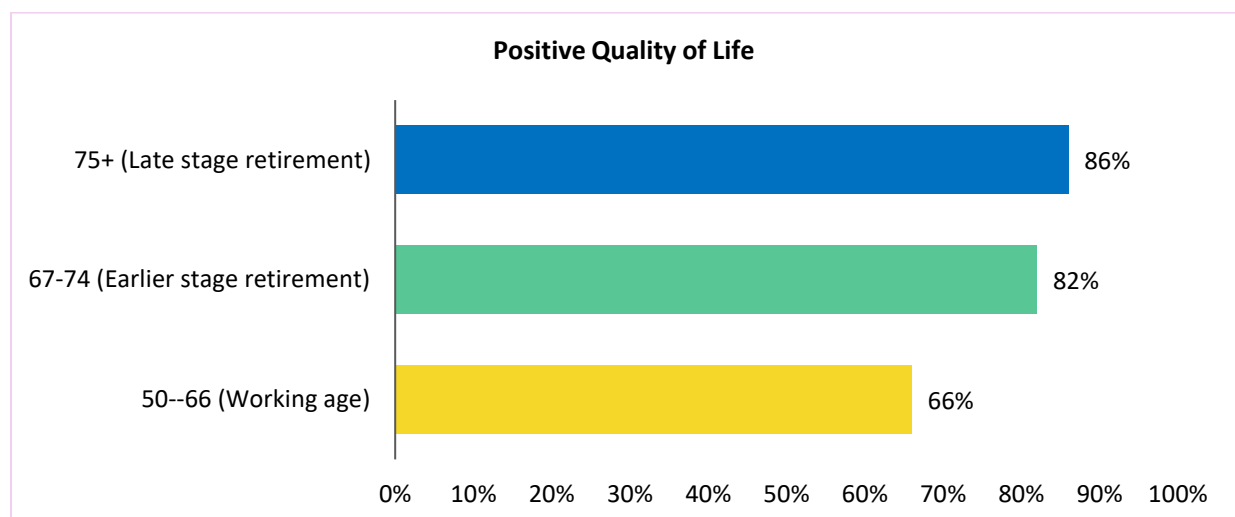


Figure 1: Positive Quality of life (rated 7 or higher out of 10) by Life stages

Optimism about the future

Nearly half of older Tasmanians (43%) were likely to report things were getting worse in line with national data (48%). Participants were also less likely to feel positive about what their future holds compared to other states (61% rating 7 or higher out of 10 vs 66% national average rating), primarily due to cost-of-living pressures, higher vulnerability, and associated impacts on affordability of healthcare, aged care and housing.

Ageism

Ageism continues to remain a significant and a growing challenge for older Tasmanians. Nearly two-in-five (39%) respondents reported experiencing one or more forms of ageism since turning 50, in a trend that appears to be growing. This result is lowest compared to all other states except NSW (38%).

More than half (52%) also agreed that they feel less valued by society now than when they were younger and 25% also agreed to feeling like a burden to others which is highest relative to all other states.

Those who reported experiencing ageism also experience poorer outcomes on many indicators, including freedom to make choices, quality of family life, health and financial situation.

Despite the experiences of ageism, majority of the respondents felt that they have much to offer society through their life experiences (67%) and only half of the respondents (52%) agreed that people their age had a voice.

Older Tasmanians feel that government policies are not meeting their needs as reported by 53% of respondents.

This sentiment was particularly higher for respondents living in metropolitan areas (61%, compared with 47% of regional respondents) and those living with disability (60%, compared with 52% of those without disability). This highlights that individuals with higher disadvantage perceive that government policies do not reflect and serve the needs of older people with intersecting challenges.

Workforce Participation

Perspectives on retirement among people aged 50 and over are diverse and often conflicting, with many expressing a desire to remain engaged in paid work despite facing age-related barriers. Among those who are not yet retired, nearly half (43%) do not believe they will ever fully retire, and a similar proportion (51%) would prefer to continue working the same amount in paid employment.

Among respondents who are fully or partially retired, one-quarter (25%) reported being open to returning to work. This openness is supported by a strong sense of continued value, with two-thirds (66%) believing they still have something meaningful to contribute.

However, more than half of retirees (55%) indicated that nothing would encourage them to re-enter the workforce or seek paid employment. However, nearly one-third (33%) cited ageism-related barriers as a key factor influencing their reluctance.

This is significant, considering 73% of people who had ever experienced ageism since turning 50 reported experiencing work-related discrimination, with 48% suspecting that their workplace wanted someone younger, and 41% reporting being sidelined, patronised, or not treated as capable.

For others, the nature of work remains a critical motivator: 28% reported that finding a role they feel passionate about would encourage them to consider paid employment again.

Cost of living and Financial Security

While many older Tasmanians report financial stability, a substantial proportion continue to experience financial stress and heightened risk of disadvantage in later life.

Just over half (57%) felt positive about their long-term financial security, representing an improvement from 2023 SOTON survey (50%).

However, one-in-five respondents (20%) were living in poverty, slightly below the national average (25%), and poverty remains strongly associated with poorer outcomes across multiple wellbeing measures.

Financial disadvantage is particularly concentrated among older Tasmanians living with disability (40%) and those ranked higher on the vulnerability metric (43%), highlighting the compounding nature of disadvantage.

Poverty rates were highest among respondents aged 75 years and over (27%), compared with those aged 50-66 years (21%) and 67-74 years (10%), broadly consistent with national average of 26% as shown in Figure 2.

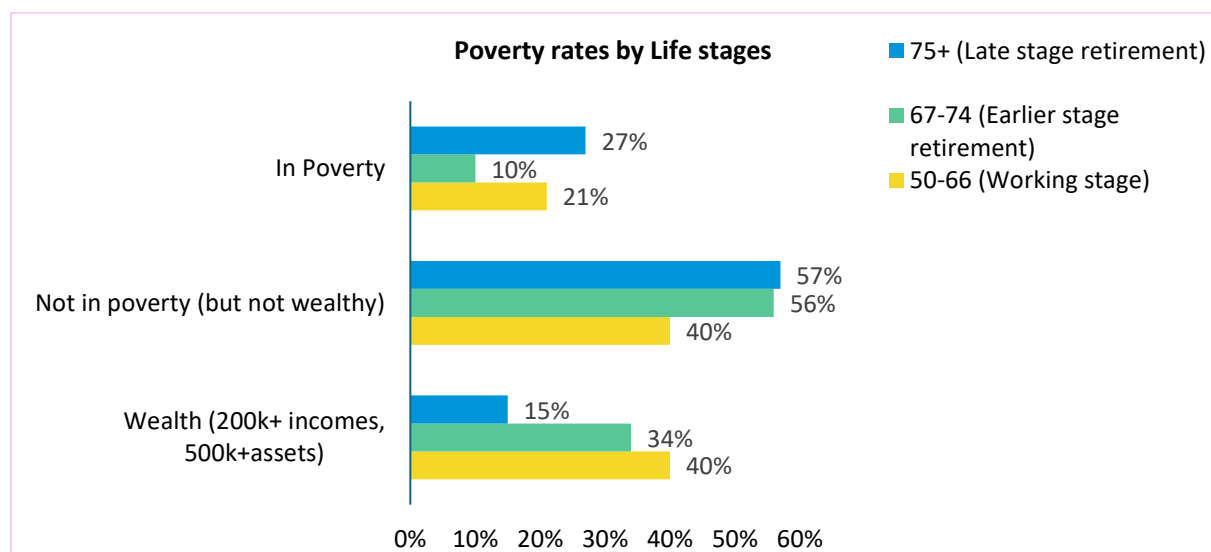


Figure 2: Poverty rates by Life stages

Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing

Demand for healthcare services among older Tasmanians is high and largely being met, although significant access barriers remain for many. Almost all participants (97%) accessed health or medical care in the past year, and the majority reported satisfaction with their experience. Pharmacy services were the most accessed (84%), followed by GP services (65%).

However, nearly half (42%) experienced difficulties accessing the services they needed, slightly lower than the national figure for older Australians (46%).

Long waiting lists were the most frequently cited barrier (49%) - the highest rate reported across all states, followed by the cost of services (37%). These challenges are broadly consistent with national patterns, highlighting ongoing system-wide pressures on healthcare access for older people.

Housing and Downsizing

Older Tasmanians are more likely to own their homes than their peers nationally, yet housing insecurity, accessibility challenges and downsizing barriers remain significant.

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of older Tasmanians own their home, compared with a national average of 53%, although 8% reported feeling insecure in their current living arrangements.

More than one-third (37%) indicated they are unable to adapt their home to better meet their accessibility needs, and almost one-quarter (23%) are likely to move house within the next five years suggesting unmet need for accessible housing and accommodations.

While one-in-five respondents (20%) have already downsized, a further quarter (29%) reported that the idea of downsizing is appealing. Among those interested in downsizing, more than half (57%) felt it was likely they would move within the next five years. If they were to move:

- most would prefer to remain within the same city, town or suburb with 82% wishing to remain within the state and 40% within their current local area
- Standalone houses are the most widely preferred option, 80% of those interested in downsizing indicated a preference for another standalone house.

These findings highlight the ongoing challenge of identifying appropriate housing options for older people seeking to downsize.

Financial barriers remain prominent, with 34% concerned about the affordability of suitable properties in their preferred area, 33% worried about stamp duty costs, and 31% reporting a lack of suitable housing options.

Technology and Digital Inclusion

In a digitally confident respondent group with nearly all respondents (91%) reporting confidence in using technology, almost half (44%) indicated that they find it challenging to keep pace with ongoing technological change. A substantial proportion (69%) also believe that existing technologies need to be better designed to meet the needs of older people.

Technology plays a critical role in maintaining social connection.

For the majority (69%), technology is the primary way they stay up to date with news, events, and social connections, highlighting its importance in supporting relationships and reducing social isolation. More than half of respondents (55%) reported that they would feel socially isolated from friends and family without access to technology.

Older men and women have notable differences in their experiences, challenges and concerns

Older women and men in Tasmania experience later life differently, with women reporting poorer outcomes across several key wellbeing measures.

Older women were less positive about their lives overall, with 69% reporting positive QoL compared with 79% of men, a gender gap that is not evident in the national data. They were more likely to report feelings of loneliness (50% compared with 43% of men) and experienced greater difficulty accessing healthcare services (31% compared with 16% of men).

Consistent with these access challenges, women also reported lower satisfaction with the healthcare services they had used in the past year (76% compared with 83% of men). A higher proportion of women aged 50 and over were participating in the workforce (43%) compared with men (39%). They were however less likely to feel financially secure, with only half (50%) reporting positive financial security compared with nearly two-thirds of men (64%).