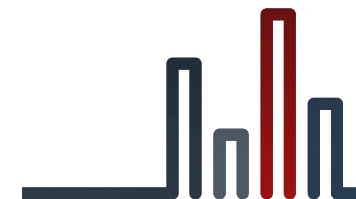


# **Ai** ECONOMICS FACTSHEET

## Australia's older workforce in 2019



### Older Australians account for an increasing share of Australia's adult population.

2.9 million Australians were 55 to 64 years old in June 2019 (14.2% of Australia's adult civilian population), up from 2.4 million in 2009 (11.9% of the adult civilian population).

4 million Australians were 65 years or older in June 2019 (19.6% of Australia's adult civilian population), up from 2.9 million in 2009 (16.5% of the adult civilian population).

### Older Australians account for an increasing share of Australia's workforce.

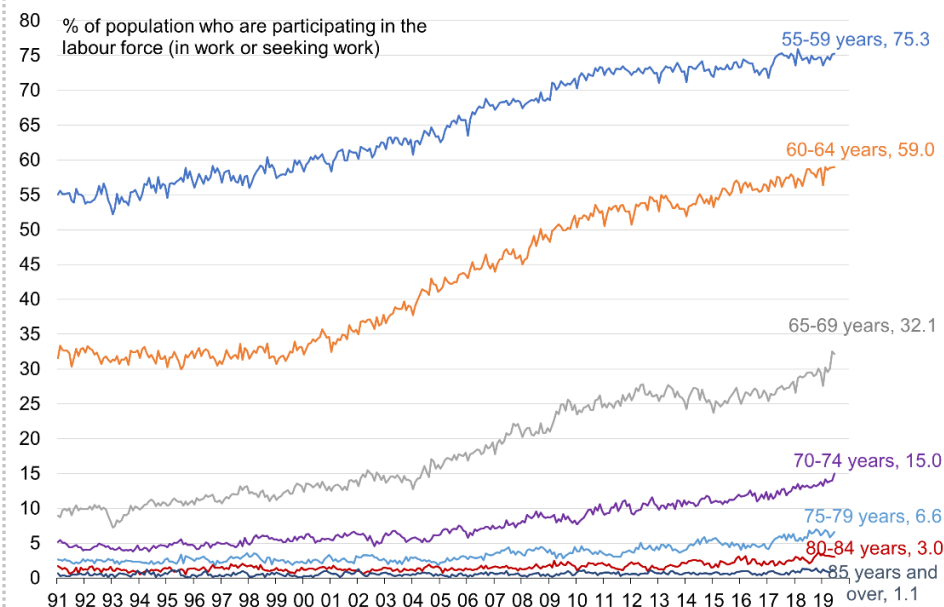
1.9 million Australian workers were 55 to 64 years old in June 2019 (14.7% of all workers), up from 1.4 million in 2009 (13.5% of all workers).

610,000 Australian workers were 65 years or older in June 2019 (4.7% of all workers), up from 300,000 in 2009 (2.8% of all workers). 63% of this group (385,000 workers) were 65-69 years old, 25% (156,000 workers) were 70-74 years old and the remainder were 75 years or older.

This rapid growth in older worker numbers and share is due to a combination of population growth and rising labour force participation among older Australians. 75% of people aged 55-59 years participate in the labour force (working or looking for work) in 2019, up from 70% in 2009 and 60% in 1999. 59% of those aged 60-64 years participate in 2019, up from 50% in 2009 and 33% in 1999. Participation rates in these age groups have risen for men and for women, but they remain significantly higher for men than for women of the same age (see Table 1).

Participation rates drop sharply for people aged 65 years and over (see Chart 1). This is partly because eligibility for Australia's age pension starts from 65 years. Currently, almost one third of people aged 65-69 years are in the labour force, up from 21% in 2009 and 12% in 1999. This includes 38% of men and 27% of women of this age. The qualifying age will gradually increase by 6 months every 2 years, to reach 67 years by 1 July 2023. This can be expected to push up the proportion of this age group who stay in work. The combination of population growth and rising labour force participation has pushed the number of workers in this age group to 385,000 in 2019, up from 210,000 in 2009 and 80,000 in 1999. 50% of workers in this age group work part-time, including 63% of female workers and 40% of male workers.

**Chart 1: labour force participation rates for older Australians**



### Australia's older workforce, June 2019

**1.9**

Million workers  
aged 55 to 64 years  
(14.7% of all workers)

**0.6**

Million workers  
aged 65 years or older  
(4.7% of all workers)

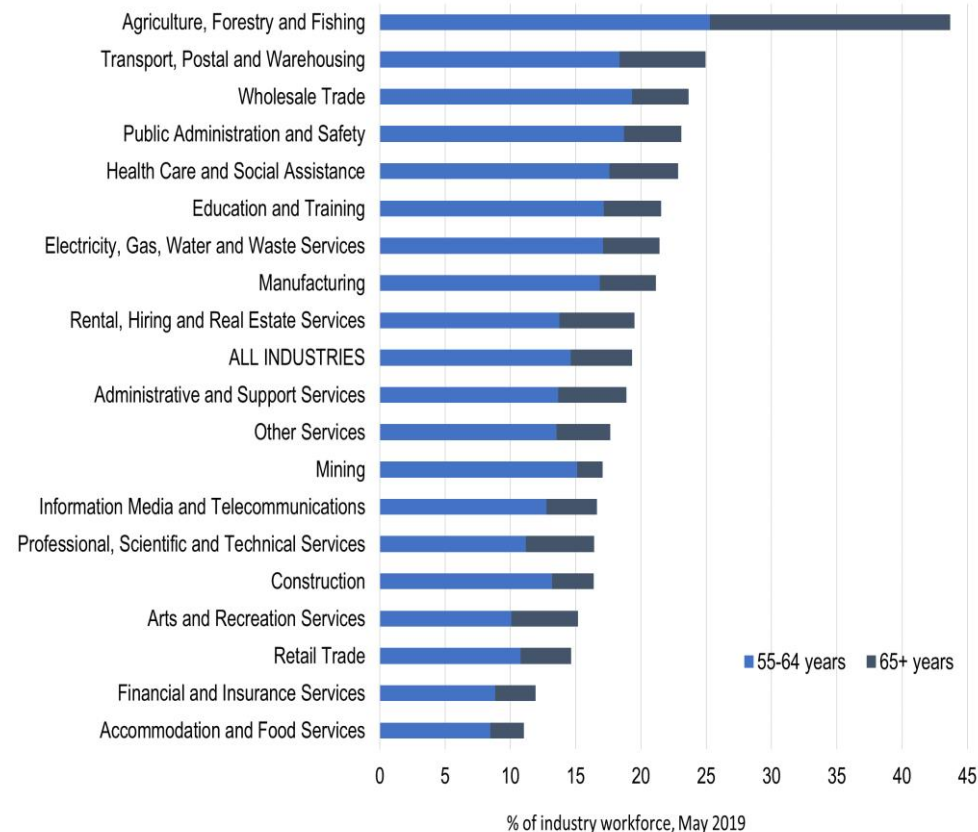
Among people aged 70-74 years, labour force participation reached a record high of 15% in June 2019 (20% for men and 11% for women). This is up from 9% in 2009 and 5% in 1999. The number of working people in this age group has roughly tripled to 156,600 in 2019, from 55,000 in 2009 (and 35,000 in 1999). 60% of workers in this age group are working part-time, almost double the rate of part-time work for the whole workforce (31%). Participation rates and employment numbers drop sharply for those aged 75 years or more, but have risen since 2009.

The industries in which older people work reflects the industry composition of Australia's workforce as a whole. The largest numbers are in the largest industries, including healthcare (15.5% of workers aged 55-64 years and 14% of workers aged 65 years or more), education, construction, public administration and manufacturing. As a share of each industry's workforce however, agriculture stands out as having the oldest workforce, with 25% aged 55-64 years and 18% aged 65 years or over. Other industries with relatively high proportions of older workers include transport, wholesale trade, public administration and healthcare (see chart 2). In manufacturing, 17% of the workforce is 55-64 years (153,000 workers) and 4.2% is aged 65 years or more (38,000) in 2019. Fewer older people work in hospitality, finance and retail trade.

**Table 1. People aged 55 years and over: labour force status, June 2019**

Age range original unadjusted data	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+
<b>Employed persons, '000</b>							
male	592.0	423.9	219.5	99.3	32.1	12.3	4.4
female	522.5	363.4	165.8	57.2	15.9	3.1	1.0
<b>ALL</b>	<b>1,114.6</b>	<b>787.3</b>	<b>385.4</b>	<b>156.6</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>5.4</b>
<b>Unemployment rate, % of labour force</b>							
male	3.8	4.9	2.6	1.6	1.4	0.0	0.0
female	4.4	2.7	1.6	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>ALL</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Participation rate, % of population</b>							
male	81.4	65.9	37.8	19.4	9.3	5.4	2.4
female	69.4	52.4	26.8	10.8	4.1	1.1	0.3
<b>ALL</b>	<b>75.3</b>	<b>59.0</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>Total population, '000</b>							
male	755.6	676.2	595.6	519.5	351.3	228.8	198.8
female	788.3	712.9	629.8	539.5	383.7	277.0	318.1
<b>ALL</b>	<b>1,544.0</b>	<b>1,389.1</b>	<b>1,225.4</b>	<b>1,059.0</b>	<b>735.0</b>	<b>505.8</b>	<b>516.9</b>

**Chart 2: Older workers, share of industry employment, May 2019**



**Data sources**

ABS 6291.003, *Labour Force Australia, electronic detailed*, June 2019  
 ABS 6291.0.55.003, *Labour Force Australia, detailed quarterly*, May 2019