Health at a Glance 2021: OECD Indicators

Highlights for Australia


COVID-19 infections and deaths are low in Australia, yet a slow initial vaccine rollout delayed the removal of restrictions

As of November 1, more than 170 000 COVID-19 infections and over 1750 deaths from the virus had been recorded in Australia.

All-cause mortality in 2020 and the first six months of 2021 rose by 2.6% compared with the 2015-2019 average.

Two-thirds (65%) of the Australian population has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, in line with the OECD average of 65% (as of 1st November).

Australia had the lowest vaccination rate across 37 OECD countries on July 1, but had risen to 21st highest as of November 1.

The proportion of people reporting depression or symptoms of depression nearly tripled to 28% in early 2020, compared to 10% the previous year.

Access to cancer screening services temporarily worsened during the pandemic, with mammograms falling 20% for women aged 50-69 between January and September 2020, compared to the same period in 2018.

The rise in teleconsultations helped make up a drop in face-to-face GP consultations, which fell by 40% in May 2020 compared to May 2019.

Cumulative excess mortality compared to reported COVID-19 deaths per million population, January 2020 to end June 2021
Health at a Glance 2021: How does Australia compare?

The overall health status of Australians is higher than the OECD average

Life expectancy (2019 or nearest year)
Years of life at birth

Avoidable mortality (2019 or nearest year)
Deaths per 100 000 population (age-standardised)

Population ageing (2019 or nearest year)
% of population 65 and older

Self-rated health (2019 or nearest year)
Population in poor health (% population 15+)

Deaths from ambient particulate matter pollution in Australia are among the lowest in the OECD

Smoking (2019 or nearest year)
Daily smokers (% population 15+)

Alcohol (2019 or nearest year)
Litres consumed per capita (population 15+)

Overweight/obese (2019 or nearest year)
Population with BMI>=25 (% population 15+)

Air pollution (2019 or nearest year)
Deaths due to ambient particulate matter pollution (per 100 000 population)

All Australians have access to core health services, but this does not guarantee financial protection

Population coverage, eligibility (2019 or nearest year)
Population eligible for core services (% population)

Financial protection (2019 or nearest year)
Expenditure covered by compulsory prepayment (% total expenditure)

Population coverage, satisfaction (2019 or nearest year)
Population satisfied with availability of quality health care (% population)

Australia lags behind OECD countries in major indicators for primary care safety and quality

Safe primary care (2019 or nearest year)
Antibiotics prescribed (defined daily dose per 1 000 people)

Effective primary care (2019 or nearest year)
Avoidable COPD admissions (per 100 000 people, age-sex standardised)

Effective preventive care (2019 or nearest year)
Mammography screening within the past two years (% of women 50+)

Effective secondary care (2019 or nearest year)
30-day mortality following AMI (per 100 000 people, age-sex standardised)

Australia has a relatively high number of nurses compared to the OECD average

Health spending (2019 or nearest year)
% GDP

Long-term care spending (2019 or nearest year)
% GDP

Hospital beds (2019 or nearest year)
Per 1 000 population

Doctors (2019 or nearest year)
Practicing physicians (per 1 000 population)

Nurses (2019 or nearest year)
Practicing nurses (per 1 000 population)