

The Dr Bilawara Lee OAM (Aunty B) Faculty of Health Public Lecture 2026

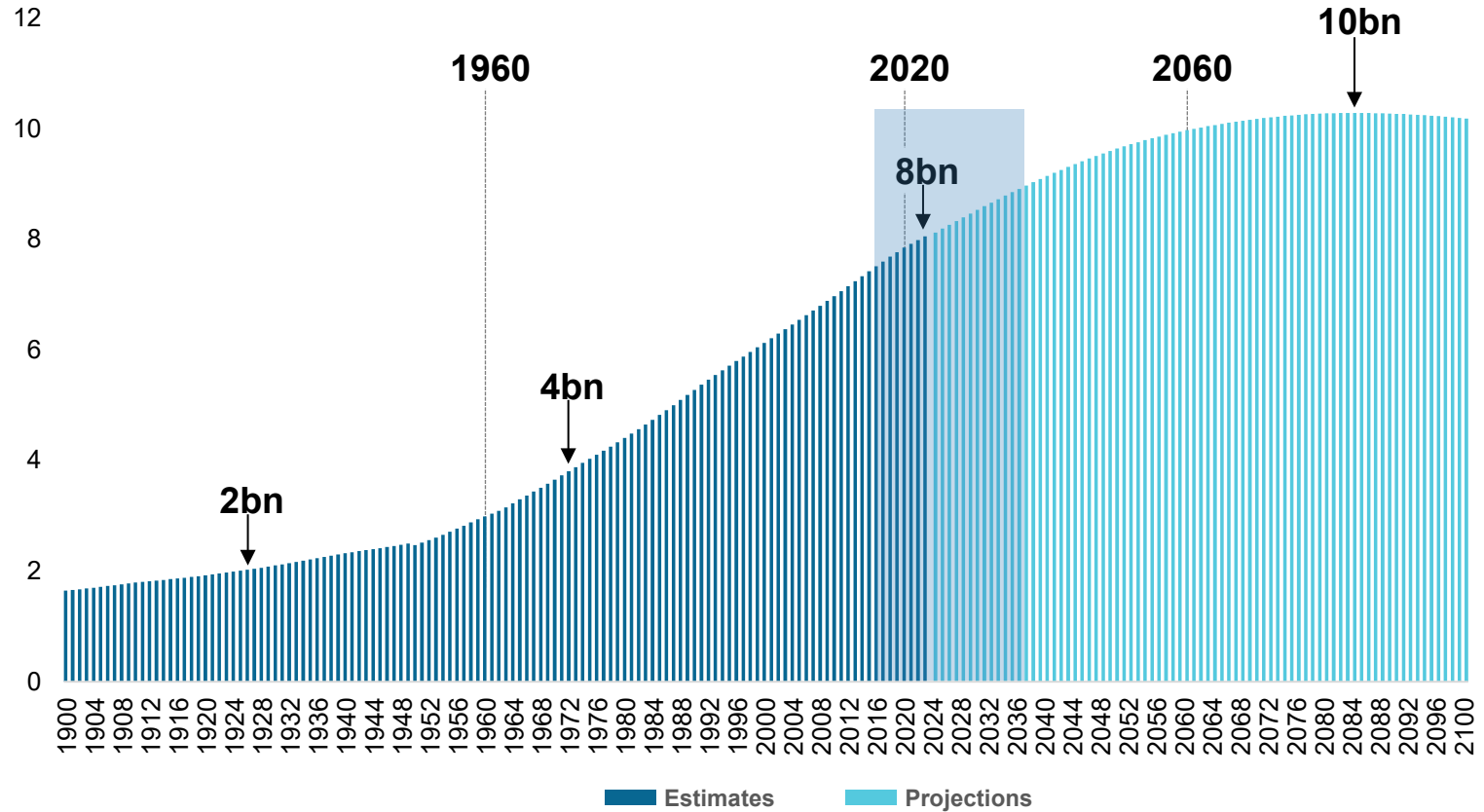
Baby Boomers & the Care Economy: Planning for Healthcare in Australia, 2026 – 2036

Bernard Salt AM

8 July 2026

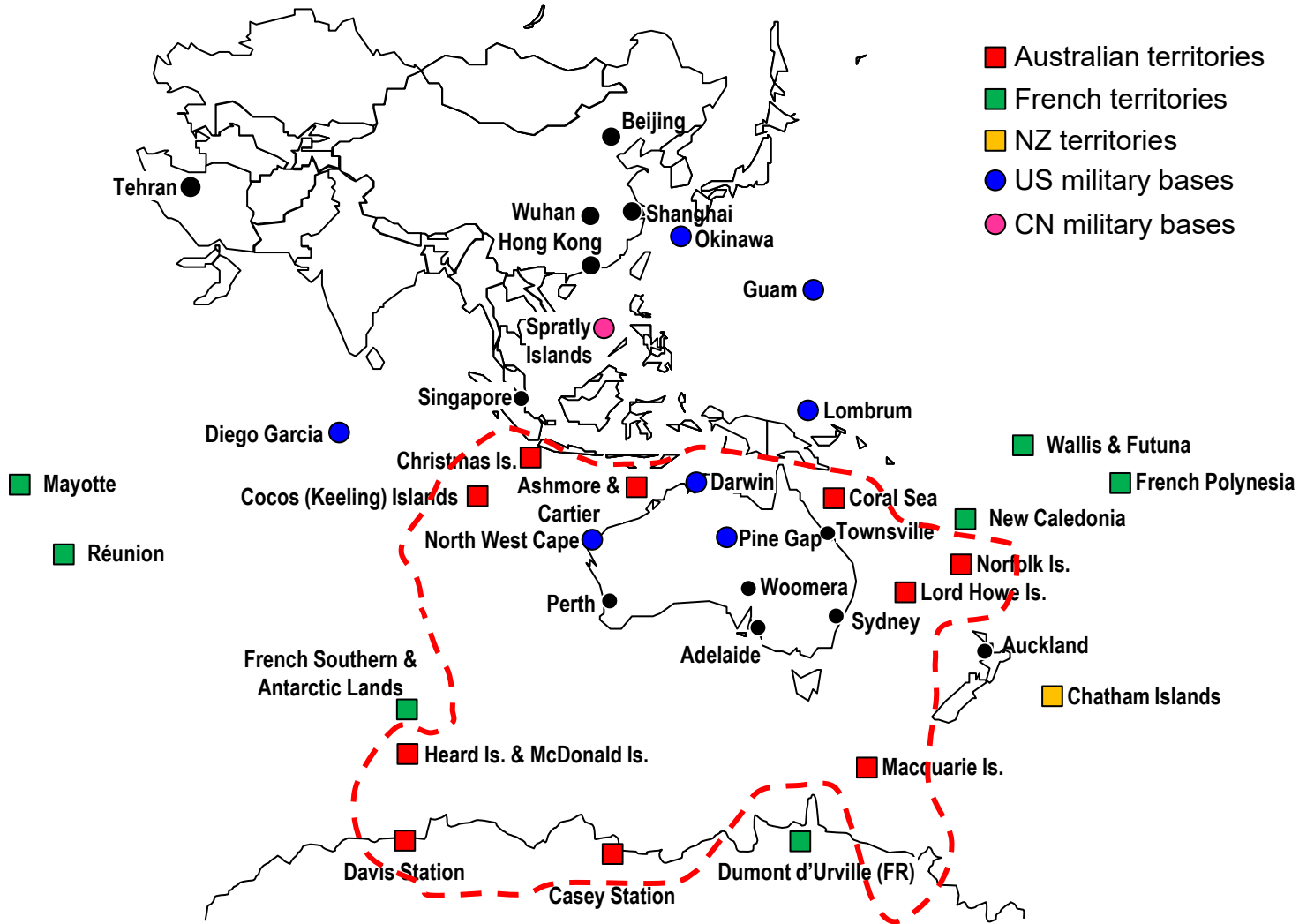


Global population growth drives demand for food, energy, resources



World population between 1900 – 2100; Source: UN World Population Prospects 2024

Australia makes a vast territorial claim... we need to assure supply lines... a growing Top End plays a critical role



Australians spend their wealth on housing, super, wellness, lifestyle



1.
Luxembourg
\$158,733



2.
Ireland
\$140,186



3.
Switzerland
\$126,177



4.
Iceland
\$110,048



5.
Singapore
\$107,758



6.
Norway
\$105,877



7.
United States
\$94,430



8.
Denmark
\$83,445



9.
Netherlands
\$79,918



10.
Australia
\$75,648



11.
Sweden
\$70,676



12.
Israel
\$69,804



13.
Qatar
\$68,138



14.
Austria
\$67,761



15.
Germany
\$65,303



16.
Belgium
\$65,112



17.
United Kingdom
\$61,056



18.
Canada
\$60,305



19.
Finland
\$60,130



20.
UAE
\$54,214



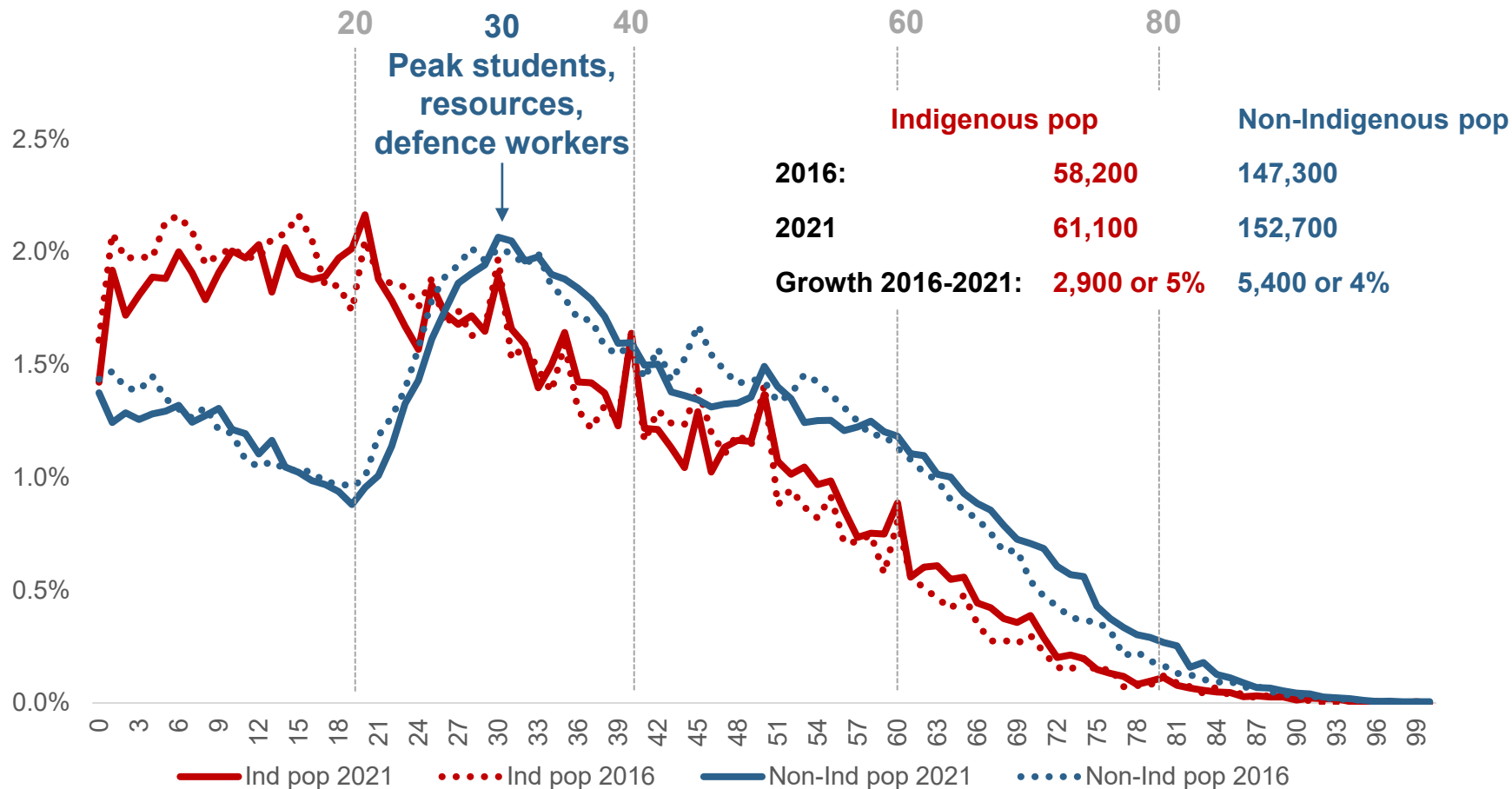
21.
France
\$52,083

NT must invest in the skills and infrastructure to deliver aged care



Proportion of population aged 65+ at 2021; Source: United Nations data, ABS data

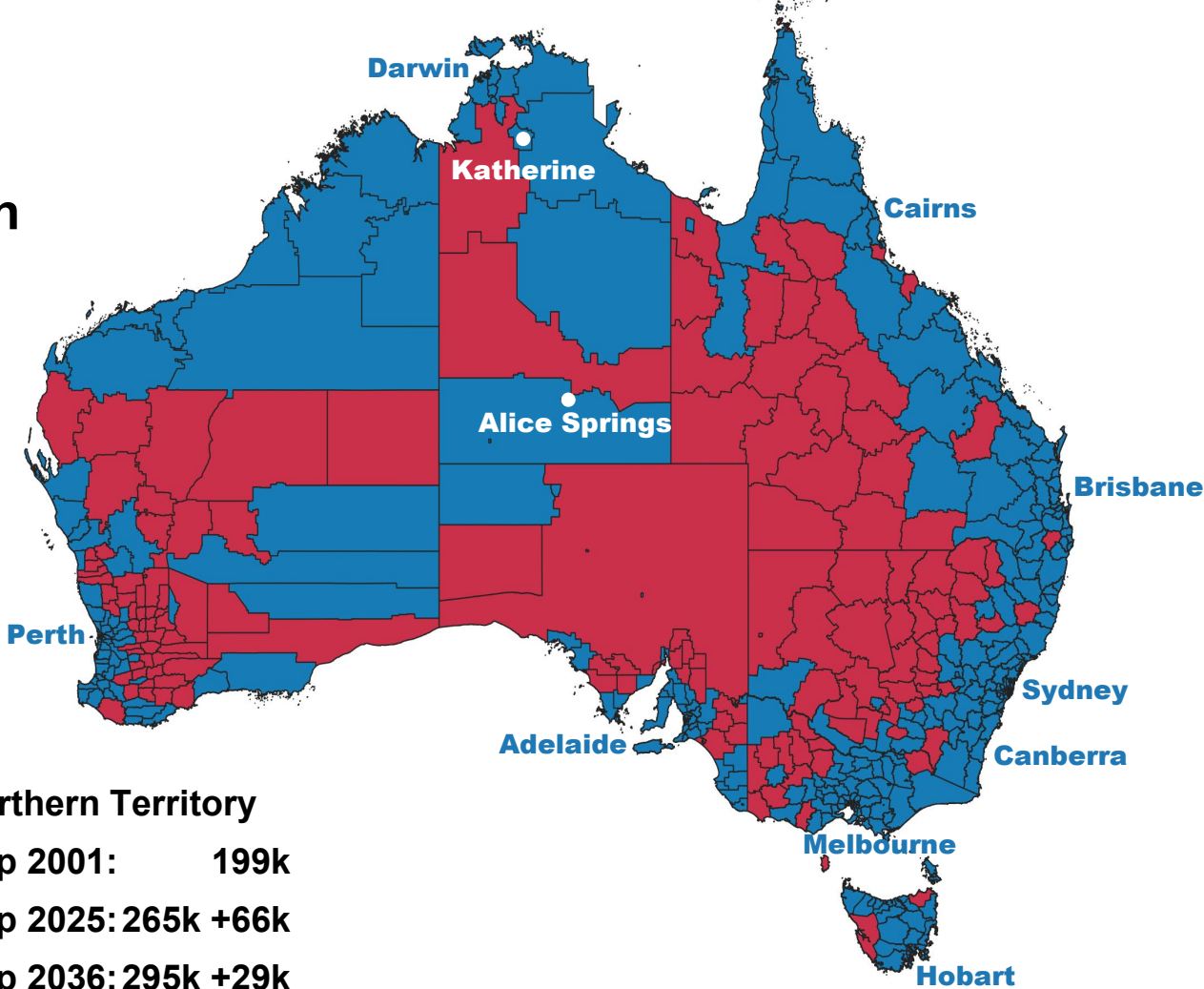
The Indigenous community not getting equal access to ageing



Indigenous population and total population in Northern Territory by age 2021 and 2016; ABS

4 million net extra residents by 2036... including an extra 29k in the Northern Territory

Areas of population growth (blue) and (contiguous) loss (red) between 2001 and 2025



Australia		Northern Territory	
Pop 2001:	19m	Pop 2001:	199k
Pop 2025:	28m +9m	Pop 2025:	265k +66k
Pop 2036:	32m +4m	Pop 2036:	295k +29k

Australia's lifestyle cities and towns are on the rise

2016		
1	Greater Sydney	4,930
2	Greater Melbourne	4,586
3	Greater Brisbane	2,319
4	Greater Perth	1,999
5	Greater Adelaide	1,313
6	Gold Coast - Tweed Heads	642
7	Newcastle - Maitland	476
8	Canberra - Queanbeyan	440
9	Sunshine Coast	342
10	Wollongong	295
11	Geelong	254
12	Greater Hobart	224
13	Townsville	178
14	Cairns	149
15	Greater Darwin	145
16	Toowoomba	134
17	Ballarat	102
18	Bendigo	96
19	Albury - Wodonga	91
20	Launceston	86
Total Australia		24m

2026		
1	Greater Sydney	5,714
2	Greater Melbourne	5,541
3	Greater Brisbane	2,892
4	Greater Perth	2,511
5	Greater Adelaide	1,510
6	Gold Coast - Tweed Heads	774
7	Newcastle - Maitland	549
8	Canberra - Queanbeyan	491
9	Sunshine Coast	433
10	Wollongong	326
11	Geelong	321
12	Greater Hobart	256
13	Townsville	192
14	Cairns	166
15	Greater Darwin	162
16	Toowoomba	156
17	Ballarat	123
18	Bendigo	107
19	Albury - Wodonga	104
20	Launceston	93
Total Australia		28m

2036		
1	Greater Melbourne	6,467
2	Greater Sydney	6,457
3	Greater Brisbane	3,337
4	Greater Perth	2,932
5	Greater Adelaide	1,631
6	Gold Coast - Tweed Heads	924
7	Newcastle - Maitland	614
8	Canberra - Queanbeyan	587
9	Sunshine Coast	519
10	Wollongong	374
11	Geelong	355
12	Greater Hobart	265
13	Townsville	216
14	Cairns	184
15	Greater Darwin	182
16	Toowoomba	168
17	Ballarat	133
18	Bendigo	116
19	Albury - Wodonga	113
20	Mackay	103
Total Australia		32m

Source: Based on ABS data; relevant State Government planning authorities

Regions for capital cities are GCCSA (greater capital city statistical area) and all other cities are SUA (significant urban areas). Central Coast is excluded from the SUA rankings as it falls within GCCSA of Sydney. Note Mandurah now within Perth

Big shift in immigrant/student sources over the last decade... India on the rise

Country of Birth Australia		2025
	United Kingdom	1,155,000
	India	971,000
	China	732,000
	New Zealand	638,000
	Philippines	413,000
	Vietnam	327,000
	South Africa	230,000
	Nepal	214,000
	Sri Lanka	185,000
	Malaysia	184,000
	Italy	153,000
	Pakistan	144,000
Total All Persons		27.6 m

Australian migrant community by country of birth at 2025
Source: ABS

International Students		2025
	China	222,900
	India	176,300
	Nepal	85,500
	Philippines	46,300
	Vietnam	44,600
	Colombia	38,400
	Bangladesh	31,400
	Indonesia	30,800
	Pakistan	30,400
	Brazil	28,800
	Thailand	28,100
	Sri Lanka	25,000
Total Students		1,025,800

Top 12 nationalities of international students in Australia in YT Oct-2025
Source: Department of Education

Country of Birth NT		2021
	Philippines	6,400
	United Kingdom	5,900
	India	5,000
	New Zealand	4,000
	Nepal	3,000
	China	1,700
	Indonesia	1,400
	Vietnam	1,400
	Sri Lanka	1,300
	United States	1,200
	Greece	1,200
	Thailand	1,100
Total All Persons		232,600

Northern Territory migrant community by country of birth at 2021
Source: ABS 2021 Census

Australian consumer behaviour absorbs immigrant influences



ANGLO



MEDITERRANEAN



ASIAN

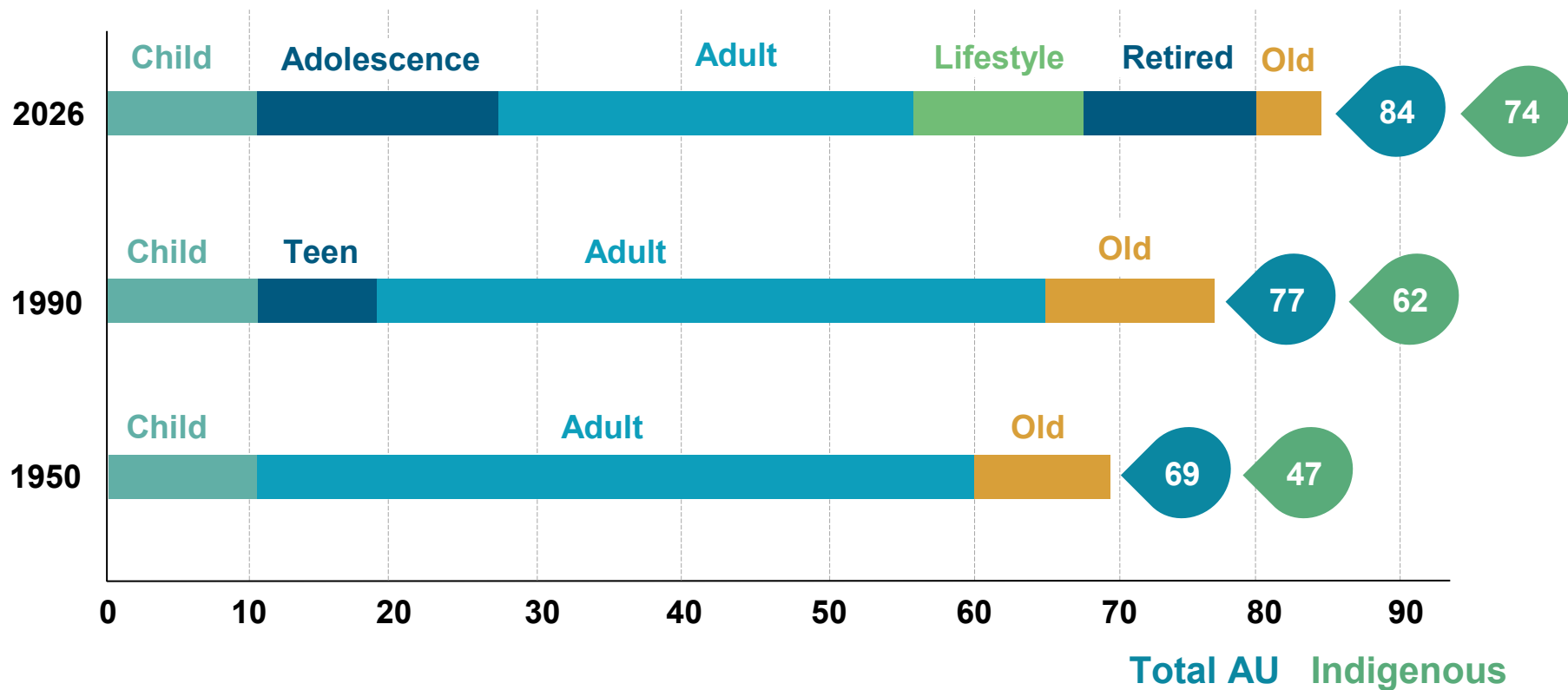


MIDDLE EASTERN



INDIAN

We need better definition of the life stages in life's last 30 years



Change in life expectancy over 76 years in Australia; Source: UN World Population Prospects 2024; various sources

Key places at the forefront of ageing well in Australia inc the NT



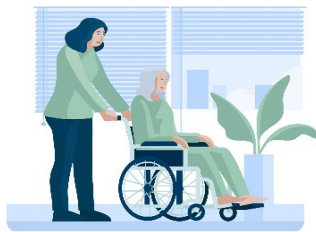
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Empty Nester Kick-off

- Cooloolo, Qld 95%
- Bribie, Qld 95%
- Alligator, NT * 94%

- Castle Cove, NSW 57%
- AU Avg 81%

**Empty Nesters
Aged 55-64**



58

Peak Unpaid Care

- Pascoe Vale, Vic 33%
- Keilor, Vic 30%
- Malak-Marrara, NT 20%

- Port Hedland, WA 7%
- AU Avg 19%

**Unpaid Care
Aged 50-59**



65-78

The Great Contentment

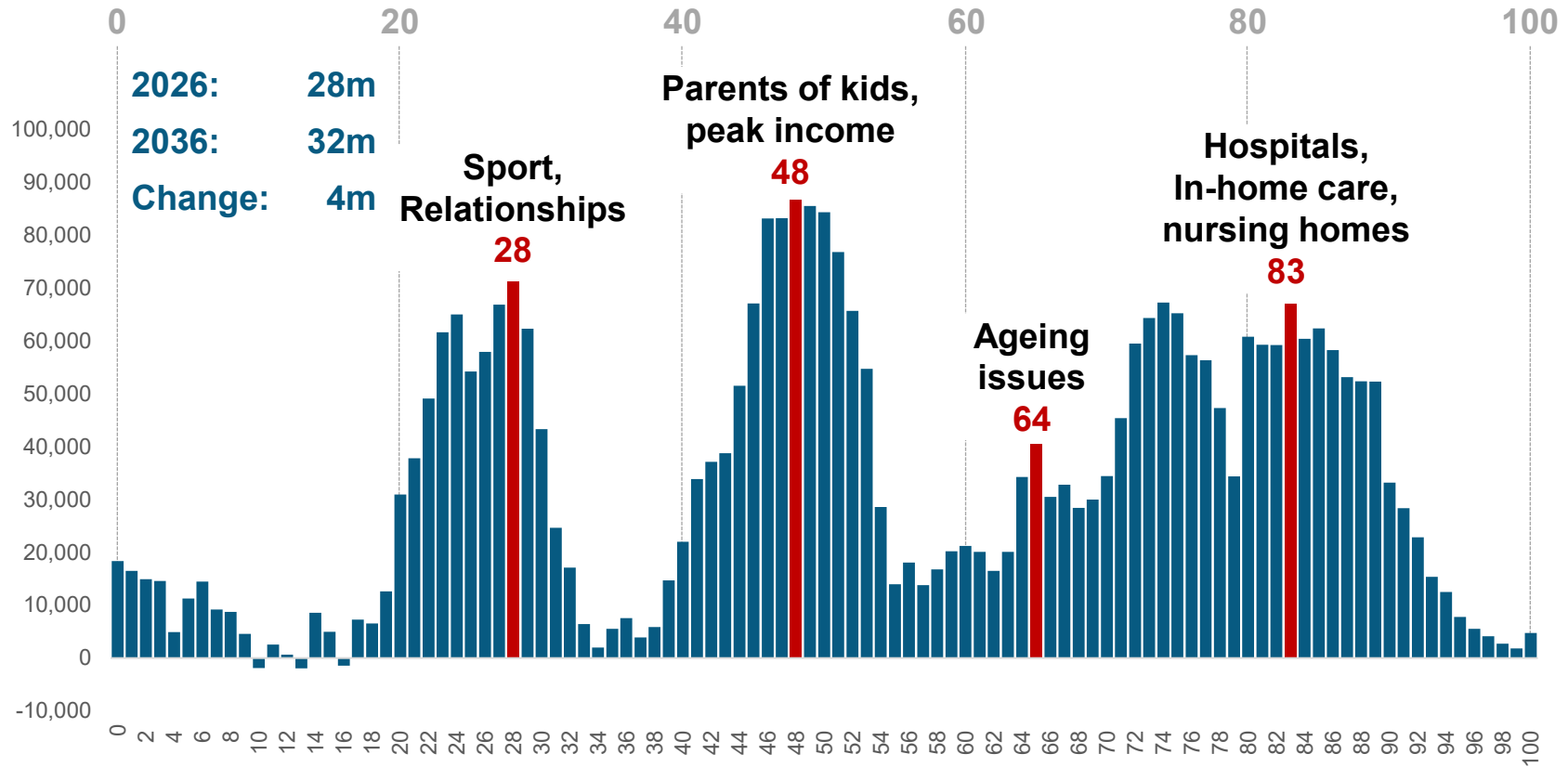
- Elizabeth, SA 17%
- Sandgate, Qld 17%
- Alligator, NT * 7%

- Castle Cove, NSW 3%
- AU Avg 9%

**Lowest Anxiety/Depression
Aged 65-78**

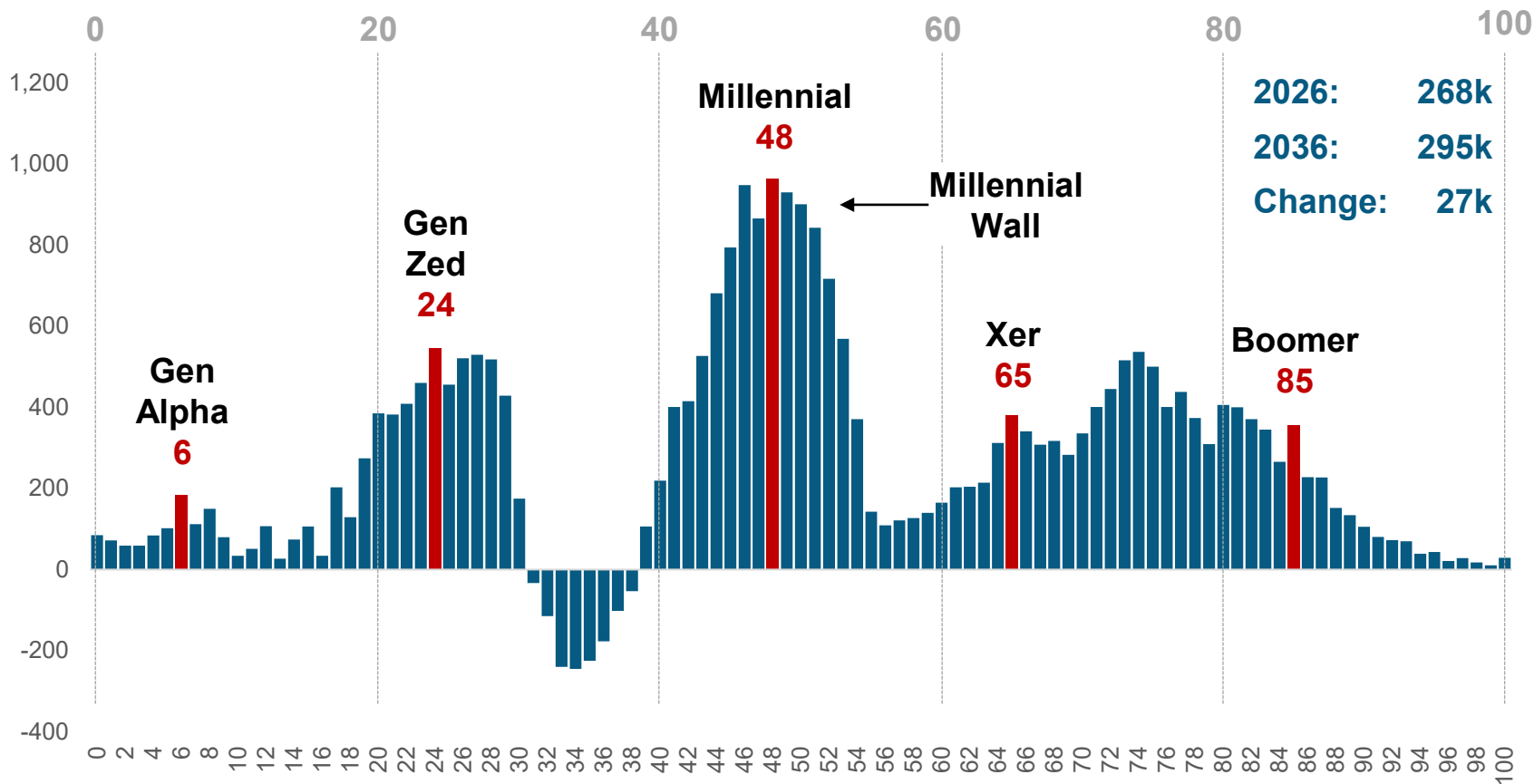
* Alligator encompasses the extreme periphery of Darwin and extends from Batchelor to Kakadu and contains roughly 5,000 residents

Millennials building families... boomers being cared for



Net annual change in Australia's population by age 2026-2036; Source: ABS Population Projections

NT has a late-40s/early-50s 'Millennial-wall' surging towards retirement



Net annual change in Northern Territory's population by age 2026-2036; Source: ABS Population Projections

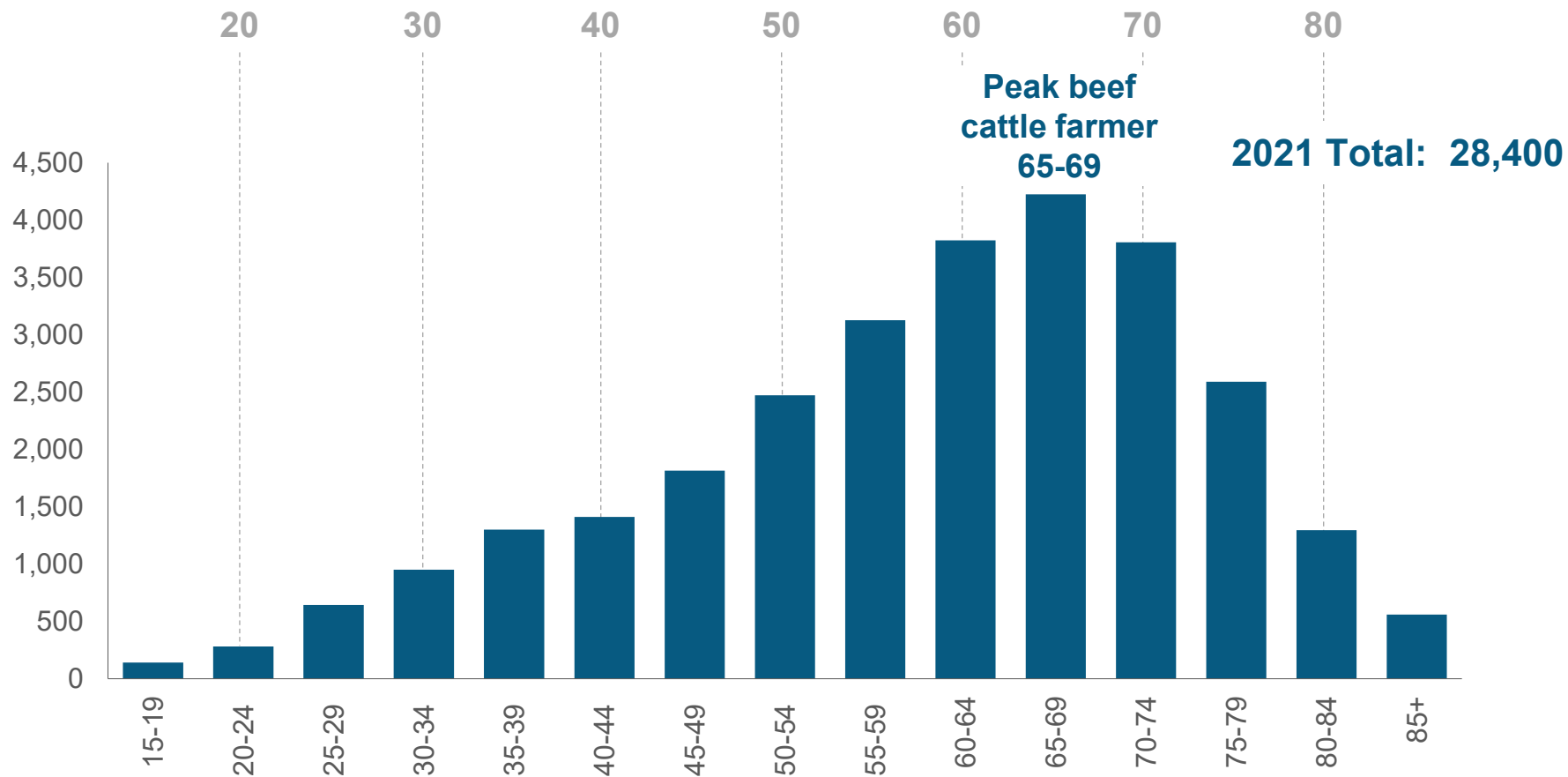
Consumer spending has widened from lifestyle to wellness

Industry	Year End Jun 2019 - Jun 2025	Year End Jun 2009 - Jun 2015
Pharmaceutical, cosmetic and toiletry goods	57%	31%
Recreational goods	52%	10%
Cafes, restaurants & catering	51%	58%
Liquor	46%	31%
Clothing	45%	20%
Footwear and other personal accessory	42%	7%
Hardware, building and garden supplies	33%	38%
Furniture, floor coverings, houseware & textile goods	32%	22%
Takeaway food services	32%	34%
Supermarket and grocery stores	30%	29%
Electrical and electronic goods	25%	2%
Department stores	24%	-2%
Newspaper and books	-30%	-25%
Total (including other)	36%	24%

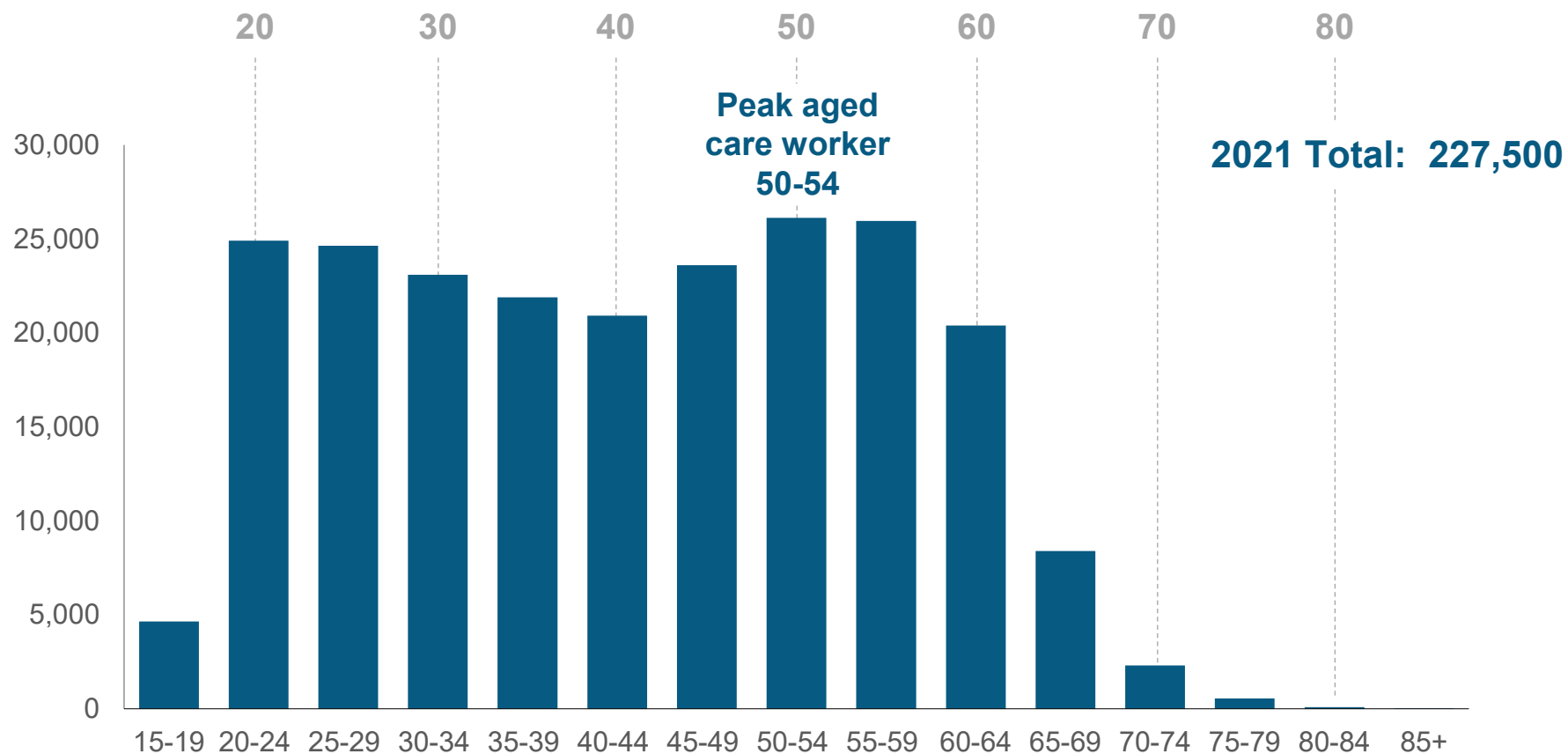
Percentage change in retail sales by category over 6 years to June 2015 and to June 2025, Australia

Source: ABS

Six thousand beef cattle farmers are simply 'refusing to retire'



Aged and disabled carers can be drawn from all age groups



Most common jobs across the NT... see also the rise of care

Biggest Occupations		2011 No.	Biggest Occupations		2016 No.	Biggest Occupations		2021 No.
1.	Sales Assistants (General)	3,174	1.	Sales Assistants (General)	3,675	1.	Sales Assistants (General)	3,736
2.	General Clerks	2,728	2.	General Clerks	2,769	2.	Registered Nurses	2,978
3.	Registered Nurses	2,049	3.	Registered Nurses	2,326	3.	General Clerks	2,694
4.	Defence Force Members - Other Ranks	1,786	4.	Electricians	1,934	4.	Aged and Disabled Carers	1,863
5.	Contract, Program and Project Administrators	1,682	5.	Retail Managers	1,568	5.	Welfare Support Workers	1,819

Top 5 occupations in the Northern Territory by absolute number at the 2011, 2016 & 2021 Censuses; Source: ABS

The NT has less than 1% of medical specialists... plus big skills gaps

Occupation	Australia	NT
Anaesthetist	5,600	48
Orthopaedic Surgeon	1,500	9
Cardiologist	1,100	10
Surgeon (General)	700	11
Dermatologist	700	4
Gastroenterologist	600	0
Neurologist	600	0
Thoracic Medicine Specialist	400	3
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon	500	4
Urologist	400	0
Specialist Physician (General Med.)	800	19

Occupation	Australia	NT
Endocrinologist	300	0
Otorhinolaryngologist	400	0
Renal Medicine Specialist	200	11
Neurosurgeon	300	3
Vascular Surgeon	200	3
Clinical Haematologist	200	0
Cardiothoracic Surgeon	200	0
Paediatric Surgeon	100	0
Total selected occupations	14,700	125
Total all occupations	12,049,400	107,035

Biggest healthcare hubs in Australia.... and in the NT

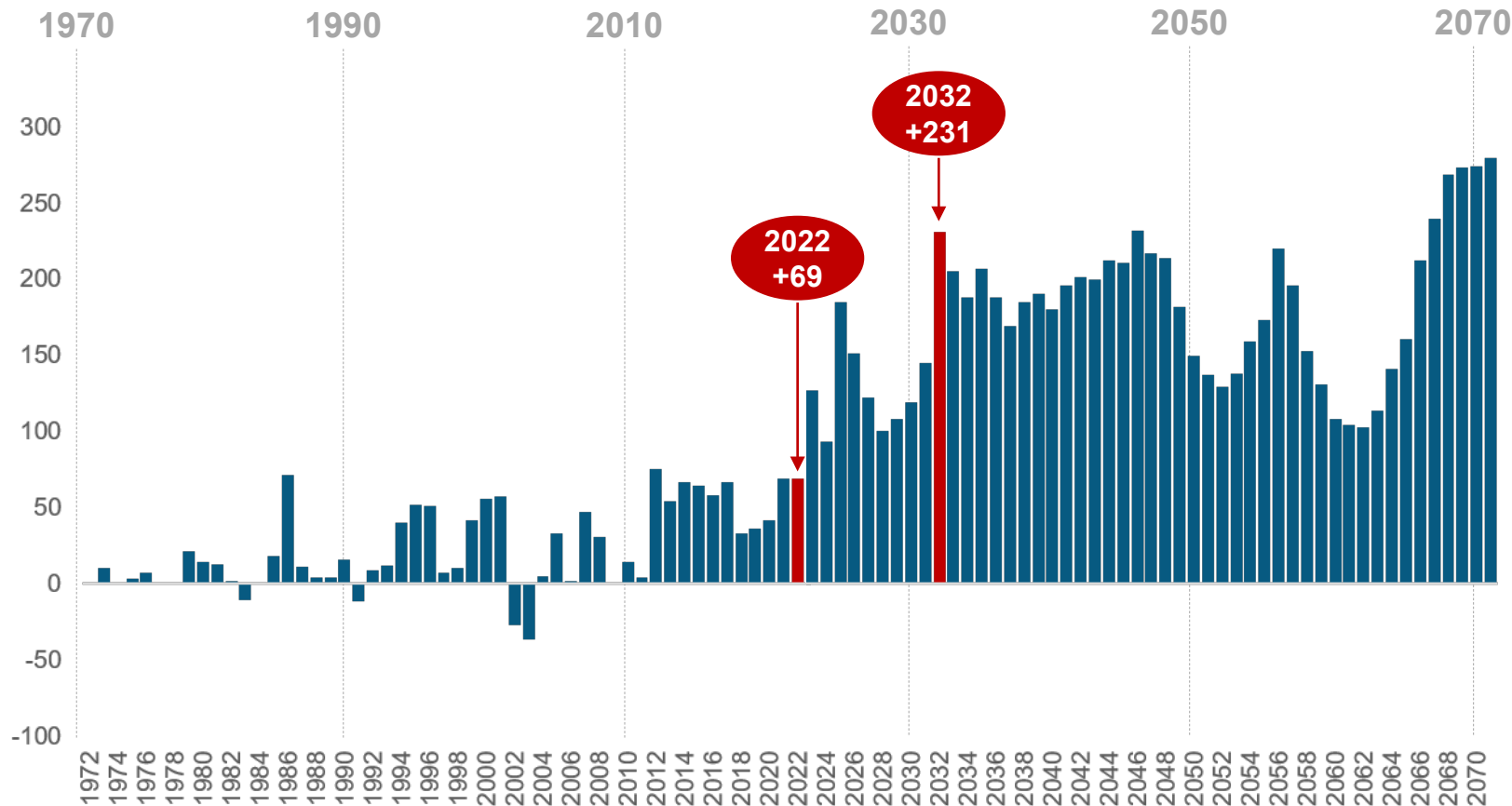
	Place of work Australia	2021
1.	Adelaide, SA	17,000
2.	Parkville, Vic	16,900
3.	Nedlands-Dalkeith-Crawley, WA	13,800
4.	Northmead, NSW	13,500
5.	Southport-North, Qld	11,400
6.	Kelvin Grove-Herston, Qld	11,400
7.	South Brisbane, Qld	11,400
8.	Perth (West)-Northbridge, WA	11,000
9.	St Leonards-Naremburn, NSW	10,900
10.	Heidelberg-Rosanna, Vic	10,400

	Place of work Northern Territory	2021
1.	Tiwi (inc Darwin Hospital)	4,000
2.	Mt Johns (Alice Springs South)	1,400
3.	Charles (Alice Springs North)	1,300
4.	Katherine (inc RAAF)	800
5.	Brinkin – Nakara (inc CDU)	700
6.	Darwin City	700
7.	Woolner - Bayview (Darwin)	600
8.	Howard Springs (inc Robertson)	500
9.	Palmerston – North (Darwin)	500
10.	Berrimah (Darwin)	500

Number of employed persons by place of work in 2021 in the Healthcare & Social Assistance industry

Source: ABS Labour Force data

Need for 85+ care is rising in NT ... but it will surge from 2032 onwards



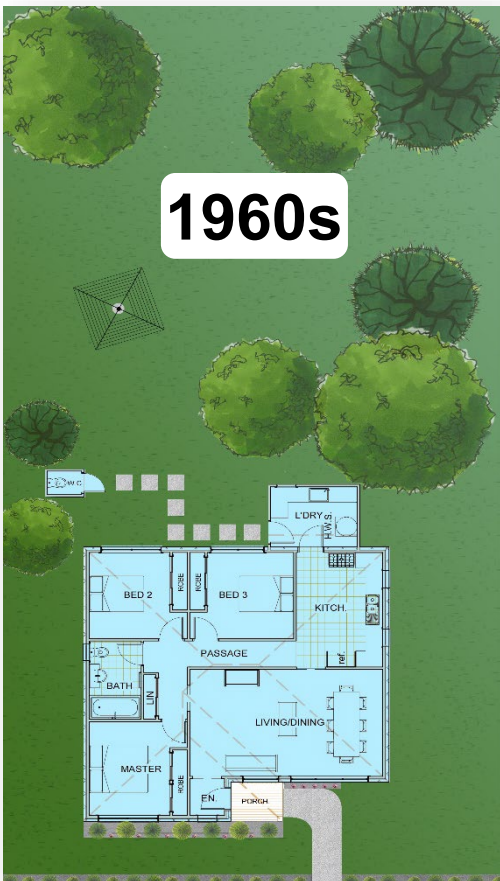
Consumers have 'leant into' the idea of accessing services via apps



Selection of apps downloaded by Australians over the last decade

Work, study, shop, Netflix, Telehealth, care ... all from/to a 'forever home'

1960s



Today



Source: Visualised by The Demographics Group; House plans created by Sawmill Designs

Demographic outlook for healthcare in Australia including NT to 2036

1.
World pop growth drives demand food, energy, resources



World population projected to increase by 25 per cent over 50 years... this will surely create a 25 per cent (or more) increase in demand for food, energy, resources... all Australian & NT exports

Australia inc NT should have the capacity to deliver world class healthcare to residents

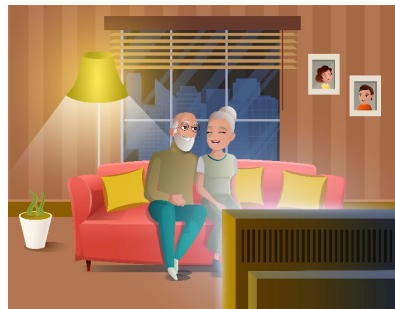
2.
Baby boomers will need care... NT needs skills, infrastructure



In the decade to come baby boomers will tip into their 80s and as such drive demand for healthcare and aged care services... this will surge as boomers reach 85 in 2032

As the NT population grows a greater number will require aged care and healthcare resources inc local and immigrant workers

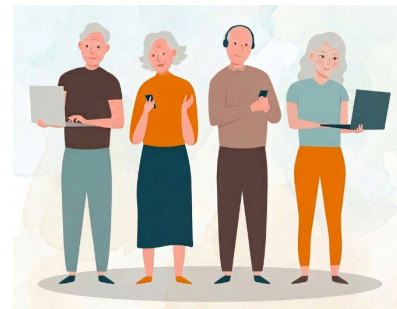
3.
Aussies have long life expectancy... must aim to be experts in ageing



Life expectancy in Australia is 83 for men and 85 for women... this delivers roughly 20+ years in retirement... we are the first generation to care for such a big cohort for decades beyond working life

Opportunity for Australia to 'show the way' in delivering quality years later in life

4.
Shift to greater use of tech since pandemic ... and to in-home services



Covid taught Australians how to use QR codes, Telehealth, conduct a Zoom call... we have leant into greater use of technology eg HotDoc app... AI will continue this trend... older cohorts will need help

Big shift toward 'forever homes' that enable care-in-the-home and even hospital-in-the-home



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