

Fact Sheet – Older People in Willoughby[^]

Key Insights

Willoughby has a growing population of residents who are 65 and over and the rate of growth is faster in Willoughby than the average for Greater Sydney.

- Approximately 8,615 residents are aged between 65 and 79 years which is 11% of the population.
- Approximately 3,470 residents are over 80 years of age which is 5% of the population.

Comparative to Greater Sydney, Willoughby these residents are:

- working for longer,
- more likely to volunteer,
- more culturally and linguistically diverse, and
- in better health.

Council's Community Wellbeing Survey results show that most residents who are 65 and over report that they have high quality of life and sense of financial security.

Most own their own homes and while the higher proportion live in standalone dwellings, there are more residents 65 and over living in high density housing in Willoughby comparative with Greater Sydney.

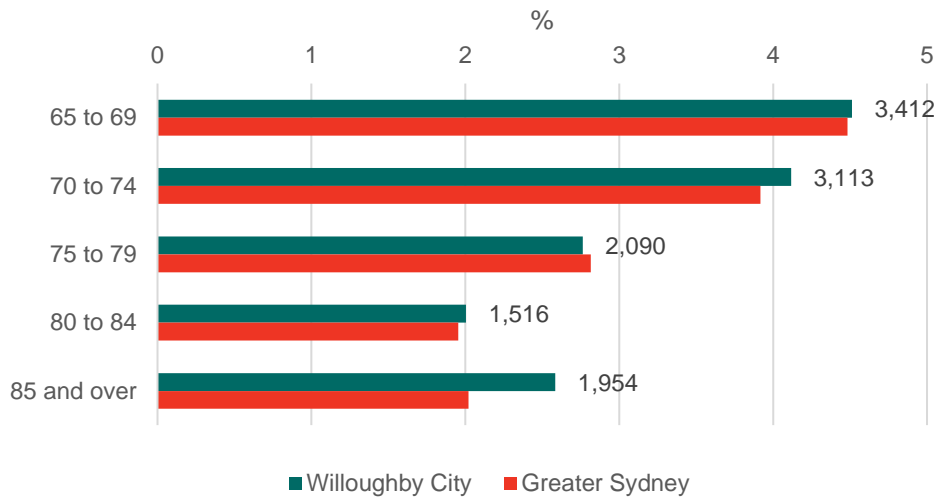
Willoughby has a growing population of older residents.

The 2021 Census shows that 8,615 of residents were aged between 65 and 79 years (5% of the population) and 3,470 were 80 years of age or over (11% of the population). As shown in Figure 1, Willoughby has a slightly higher proportion of residents in older age groups in comparison to Greater Sydney, with the exception of residents aged between 75 and 79.

The high number of residents aged 80+ reflects the significant number of residential aged care facilities located in the LGA. This age group represents 5% of the population which is higher in comparison with Greater Sydney (4%), and nearby LGAs of North Sydney (4%) and Lane Cove (4%), and lower than Ku-ring-gai (6%) or Mosman (6%).

[^] All figures are sourced from the ABS Census via analysis from .id (profile.id.com.au/Willoughby) unless otherwise stated.

Figure 1: People 65+ years by cohort group for Willoughby LGA comparative to Greater Sydney



There is significant variation between suburbs within the Willoughby LGA. Artarmon has one of the lowest concentrations of 65+ residents (13%), while areas such as Northbridge (21%), Chatswood West & Lane Cove North (22%), and Castle Cove & Middle Cove (21%) all have more than one fifth of their populations who are 65+.

Suburbs of Artarmon (13%) and Chatswood CBD (12%) have a lower proportion of 65+ residents, however because they have higher densities the actual number of residents in these suburbs 65+ is higher in comparison with other suburban areas.

The 65 and over population is growing faster in Willoughby LGA than Greater Sydney.

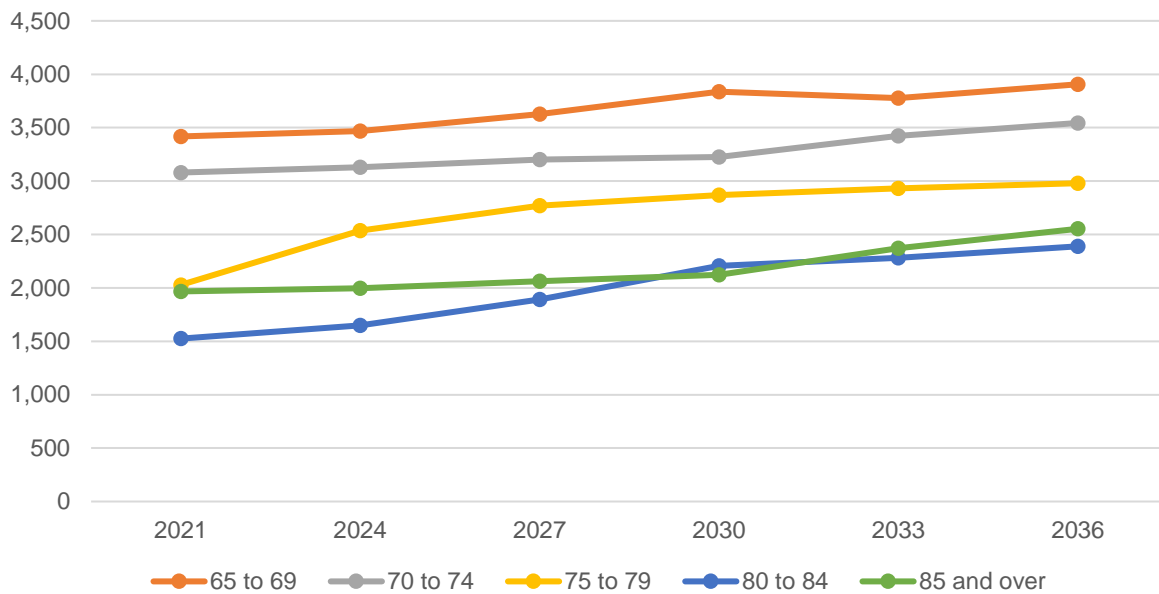
The proportion of the Willoughby population aged 65+ rose from 14% to 16% between 2016 and 2021. This was an increase of approximately 1,900 people. The total population for Willoughby LGA increased by only approximately 1,300. This change in the LGA population profile reflects a growing trend of younger people leaving and the increase in the incoming 65+ population.

Significant drivers of this change are the existing population ageing in place, new residents moving into aged care residential accommodation operating within the LGA, and the increased opportunity for downsizing presented by high quality developments such as the Mirvac Nine site for people 65 and over.

The population forecasts for Willoughby, shown in Figure 2, anticipate that the 65+ population will continue to steadily increase over the next decade. While modest, the rise is more pronounced in the 80 and over age groups. By 2036, the estimated population will be 15,372 people 65+, representing 18% of the population¹.

¹ Forecast.id, 2023. <https://forecast.id.com.au/willoughby>.

Figure 2: Forecasted population, aged 65 years and over by five year age groups



Residents 65+ are working for longer.

The 2021 Census shows that 18% of residents aged 65 and over remain in the workforce, comparative to 14% for Greater Sydney. Of those residents, 37% are working full time, while 50% are working part time. This reflects current trends in workforce participation for people employed in high skilled and professional occupations that are dominant in the LGA.

Residents 65+ are more likely to volunteer.

The 2021 Census data shows that 16% of residents aged 65+ reported that they had undertaken voluntary work in the last 12 months, which is significantly higher than 12% for this age group for Greater Sydney. Volunteer numbers were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 lockdowns in 2021, we anticipate that these rates are now higher.

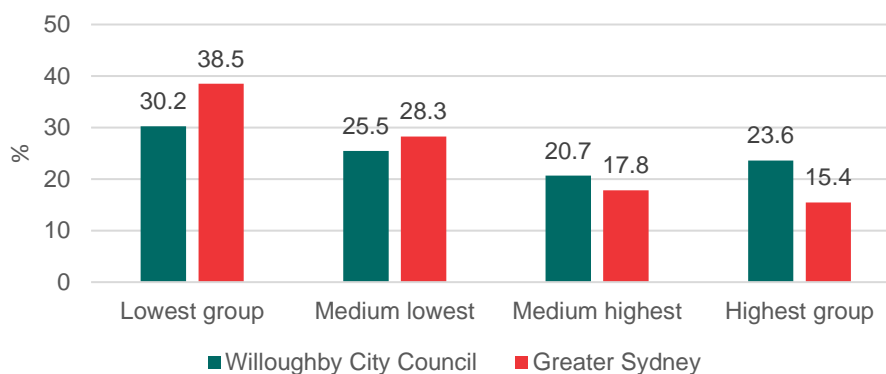
Residents 65+ are culturally and linguistically diverse.

More than half of residents 65+ were born overseas (55%) and 38% spoke a language other than English at home. The most common languages spoken by residents 65+ were Cantonese (12%), Mandarin (9%), Italian (2%), Armenian (2%) and Croatian (2%).

Residents 65+ are more financially secure compared to the NSW average.

The 2021 Census shows that Willoughby residents aged 65+ were more likely to have higher household incomes in comparison to Greater Sydney. As shown in Figure 3, more than 44% of households were in the medium highest to highest income quartiles for the LGA. The household income for this group is reflective of household employment participation rates, education levels and superannuation incomes.

Figure 3: Household income quartiles for residents aged 65+



Approximately 31% of aged residents in Willoughby receive an Aged Pension payment comparative to 54% for NSW as a whole². It is most likely that residents in receipt of an Aged Pension are captured in the Lowest Income group in Figure 3.

People who are 65+ in Willoughby are generally in better health than those in Greater Sydney.

In 2021, the Census explored incidence of long-term health conditions for the first time. Residents aged 65 + in Willoughby LGA reported lower rates of long-term health conditions. 57% reported having at least one health condition, compared to 61% for Greater Sydney.

We know that there are a range of socioeconomic factors that determine health outcomes including education and income levels. The lower incidence of health-related conditions is typical of an LGA profile such as Willoughby's.

Most older people in Willoughby own their own standalone house.

In total, 68% of residents aged 65+ own their home outright. Only 13% have a mortgage and 12% are renting.

Almost one in four people who are 65+ and one in three people who are 80+ live alone. However, most aged residents live in 3 bedroom (37%) or 4 bedroom (26%) dwellings.

While 61% live in standalone houses, 27% live-in high-density apartments which is almost double the 14% of people in the same age group living in high density for Greater Sydney.

People aged 70+ rated their quality of life as excellent or very good.

Council's 2023 Community Wellbeing Survey, found that 97% of residents aged 70 or over rated their quality of life as excellent or very good. Further, the survey results show that these residents were half as likely to be impacted by housing costs compared to other age groups. Only 17% of residents aged 70 and over reported that they were unwillingly sacrificing spending on other things as a direct result of housing costs, compared to 38% for all other age groups in the LGA.

² Department of Social Services, June 2024. <https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/dss-payment-demographic-data>