

MEDIA RELEASE

15 January 2019

Access to support for day to day living affecting the wellbeing of older Australians

The places where older people experience the lowest levels of wellbeing are the places with the highest proportions of older people who need assistance with their day to day activities; who rent their home; who have no superannuation income; and who need to use age care services.

Conversely, the places where older people experience the highest levels of wellbeing have higher proportions of older people engaged in volunteering and with higher education levels.

These findings come from the Index of Wellbeing for Older Australians (IWOA), commissioned by The Benevolent Society and developed by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) at the University of Canberra, and released today.

IWOA provides a unique tool for understanding the multiple and complex factors contributing to the wellbeing of people aged 65 and over nationwide. The report includes data from the 2016 Census, the ABS Household Expenditure Survey and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The Index maps out how older people are faring across five key domains – participation; education; health; housing; and resources and wealth – giving us insights into what strengthens and weakens wellbeing for this group.

The 2019 IWOA Report also reveals the places where wellbeing ranks lowest and highest tend to be mainly in urban areas, reflecting the diversity and stratification that exists in our cities.

IWOA also demonstrates that inequality between regional and urban populations is in large part driven by the concentration of high wellbeing in urban areas, with 25% of older people experiencing the highest level of wellbeing living in capital cities but only 12% of people living outside of capital cities experiencing the highest level of wellbeing. 20% of older residents in capital cities and 21% of older residents in regional areas are experiencing the lowest level of wellbeing.

“As we get older, we all want a good quality of life, living independently in our own homes, but we need services and support to thrive whilst doing so. Governments have no excuse for not providing this support purely because they are rationing services that should be provided.” said The Benevolent Society’s Executive Director of Strategic Engagement, Research and Advocacy, Dr Kirsty Nowlan.

“IWOA provides insights into many aspects of wellbeing for older people. People are social, and we remain social as we get older. As this report shows, participating in our communities through volunteering or maintaining employment – no matter what your age – enriches our wellbeing,”

“So much of the public discourse about getting older is negative. The Benevolent Society is responding to this by working closely with a broad coalition of stakeholders to understand and tackle the harmful phenomenon of ageism through a long-term, multi-platform advocacy campaign, [EveryAGE Counts](#) and also through our [Fix Pension Poverty](#) campaign.” added Dr Nowlan.

“With Governments making more use of detailed place based data in their policy making and service planning, the IWOA provides an aggregate picture of wellbeing for older people which can quickly identify areas for further analysis using more detailed spatial datasets available to Government.” said Professor Robert Tanton of NATSEM.

Dr Nowlan reinforced this, saying, “We need more place-based targeting of programs so that people in the same communities aren’t left behind every time, leading to entrenched and layered disadvantage,”.

To address the issues raised in the IWOA report, The Benevolent Society is calling for the Government to:

- Cut the waiting list of over 125,000 Older Australians waiting a Home Care Package at their appropriate level by increasing funding and ensuring packages are available to the right people in the right places.
- Make housing central to ageing policy, including increases to Commonwealth Rent Assistance, more social housing stock and better security of tenure in rental markets.
- Address the ageism that is creating barriers to community participation faced by older Australians, including in our workplaces.
- Make use of small-area wellbeing indexes (such as IWOA) in service planning and place-based responses to disadvantage.

For more information and to download the full report, visit <https://bit.ly/2FjWi18>

Link to maps:

<https://canberra.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=071c7b8e4ff54eff811b944e66de97a5>

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About The Benevolent Society - Australia’s first charity, working as a catalyst for social justice and change for over 200 years. Founded in 1813, The Benevolent Society advocates for a better life for all Australians, and provides in-home services for older Australians, and people with disability, as well as providing programs in Family support and early intervention. We help people age well and live their best lives, staying in their homes wherever possible. For more information, please visit benevolent.org.au, on Facebook/thebenevolentsociety or on Twitter - @BenevolentAU

Table 5: Communities with the highest and lowest wellbeing by State

STATE	5 AREAS OF LOWEST WELLBEING (LOW TO HIGH)	5 AREAS OF HIGHEST WELLBEING (HIGH TO LOW)
NSW	<i>Fairfield</i>	<i>Pymble</i>
NSW	<i>Cabramatta - Lansvale</i>	<i>Wahroonga (East) - Warrawee</i>
NSW	<i>Shortland - Jesmond</i>	<i>St Ives</i>
NSW	<i>Port Kembla - Warrawong</i>	<i>Double Bay - Bellevue Hill</i>
NSW	<i>Fairfield - East</i>	<i>Avalon - Palm Beach</i>
Vic	<i>Footscray</i>	<i>Flinders</i>
Vic	<i>Broadmeadows</i>	<i>Mount Dandenong - Olinda</i>
Vic	<i>Braybrook</i>	<i>Panton Hill - St Andrews</i>
Vic	<i>Meadow Heights</i>	<i>Macedon</i>
Vic	<i>Dandenong</i>	<i>Toorak</i>
Qld	<i>Inala - Richlands</i>	<i>Kenmore</i>
Qld	<i>Riverview</i>	<i>Fig Tree Pocket</i>
Qld	<i>Woodridge</i>	<i>Samford Valley</i>
Qld	<i>Westcourt - Bungalow</i>	<i>Pinjarra Hills - Pullenvale</i>
Qld	<i>Rocklea - Acacia Ridge</i>	<i>Chapel Hill</i>
SA	<i>The Parks</i>	<i>Coromandel Valley</i>
SA	<i>Davoren Park</i>	<i>Aldgate - Stirling</i>
SA	<i>Salisbury North</i>	<i>Blackwood</i>
SA	<i>Elizabeth</i>	<i>Clarendon</i>
SA	<i>Smithfield - Elizabeth North</i>	<i>Uraidla - Summertown</i>
WA	<i>Willagee</i>	<i>Glen Forrest - Darlington</i>
WA	<i>Midland - Guildford</i>	<i>Nedlands - Dalkeith - Crawley</i>
WA	<i>South Hedland</i>	<i>City Beach</i>
WA	<i>Bentley - Wilson - St James</i>	<i>Cottesloe</i>
WA	<i>College Grove - Carey Park</i>	<i>North Coogee</i>
Tas	<i>South Launceston</i>	<i>Mount Nelson - Dynnyrne</i>
Tas	<i>Glenorchy</i>	<i>South Arm</i>
Tas	<i>Mowbray</i>	<i>Cambridge</i>
Tas	<i>Bridgewater - Gagebrook</i>	<i>Bruny Island - Kettering</i>
Tas	<i>Mornington - Warrane</i>	<i>Taroona - Bonnet Hill</i>
NT	<i>Coconut Grove</i>	<i>Woolner - Bayview - Winnellie</i>
NT	<i>Moulden</i>	<i>Darwin City</i>
NT	<i>Woodroffe</i>	<i>Howard Springs</i>
NT	<i>Wagaman</i>	<i>Parap</i>
NT	<i>Gray</i>	<i>Anula</i>
ACT	<i>Charnwood</i>	<i>Wright</i>
ACT	<i>Canberra East</i>	<i>Forrest</i>
ACT	<i>Conder</i>	<i>Aranda</i>
ACT	<i>Bonython</i>	<i>Hawker</i>
ACT	<i>Richardson</i>	<i>Civic</i>