

Median age at death, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, 2013 to 2017

Findings

Background

The median age at death is an indicator of premature mortality. It is the age at which exactly half the deaths registered in a given time period were deaths of people above that age and half were deaths below that age.

Overall

Over the five years 2013 to 2017, the median age at death in Australia was 78 years for males and 84 years for females. There is little variation between the capital cities and the areas outside of the capital cities, other than in the Northern Territory, with a ten-year gap between Darwin (a median age at death of 69 years) and the Rest of NT (59 years).

In both Darwin and the Rest of NT, the gap between the male and female median ages at death (of just two years lower for males) was relatively small, being around one third of that in the states, indicating the relatively poorer outcomes for females in the Northern Territory.

Geographical variations in median age at death

WA: The range in ages at the small area level is from 50 years in Newman to 85 years in Albany (Table 2). Of note, however, are the lower median ages at death for females, in particular in Newman (7.5 years lower than for males) and Leinster - Leonora (6 years). Yet the ages for both Perth and the Rest of WA show higher median ages for females, at 6 years and 7 years, respectively. These are very poor and concerning outcomes for women and stand in stark contrast to the usual pattern of longer life experienced by women in comparison to men.

NT: The range in ages at the small area level is from 53.5 years in Alice Springs - Remote and 54.0 years in Anindilyakwa/ East Arnhem/ Nhulunbuy, to 66.0 years in both Alice Springs - Town and Katherine. The much higher median age at death seen in some areas for Western Australia is not repeated (at this geographical level) in the Rest of NT. Only in Darwin do some areas have lower median ages for females than for males.

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Caveats re median age at death by small geographic area

People move address over time; for example, they move within a city, between cities, or from rural areas to regional and coastal towns. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also move in these ways, as well as in many instances moving from a remote community to live near larger centres providing health services that they need. As a result, calculating the median age at death for those who died in an area does not necessarily reflect the true circumstances had people born in an area stayed there over their whole life. For example, the location in an area of above-average concentrations of residential aged care places can impact on the comparisons. Similarly, mining towns with predominantly young populations will have relatively few deaths, but those that occur will be at a lower median age than in the population at large. The [population pyramid generator](#) allows you to view the age profiles of different geographical areas; an example for a mining town, Mount Newman, compared with regional Western Australia as a whole, can be seen [here](#).

What this measure does show is that there is a strikingly clear gradient in age at death from urban to regional and remote areas, a gradient also evident in deaths before 75 years of age (premature mortality).

Further information as to the calculation of median age can be found [here](#).

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Background

The median age at death is an indicator of premature mortality. It is the age at which exactly half the deaths registered in a given time period were deaths of people above that age and half were deaths below that age. See Box, *Caveats re median age at death by small geographic area*, overleaf, for important notes on this measure when used for small geographical areas.

Overview for Australia

In Australia, over the five years 2013 to 2017, the median age at death was 78 years for males and 84 years for females. There is little variation between the capital cities and the areas outside of the capital cities (referred to as Rest of States/ NT), other than in the Northern Territory, with a ten-year gap between Darwin (a median age at death of 69 years) and the Rest of NT (59 years) (Table 1). Among the states, only Western Australia, with a gap of four years, and South Australia, with a gap of two years, has a gap of more than a single year.

Table 1: Median age at death, by sex and Section of state/ territory, 2013 to 2017

| Section of state | Males | | Females | | Persons | |
|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| | Number of deaths | Median age (years) | Number of deaths | Median age (years) | Number of deaths | Median age (years) |
| Australia | 400,178 | 78.0 | 379,545 | 84.0 | 779,723 | 81.0 |
| Greater Capital Cities | 232,142 | 79.0 | 229,500 | 85.0 | 461,642 | 82.0 |
| Rest of States/ NT | 166,250 | 78.0 | 149,117 | 84.0 | 315,367 | 81.0 |
| New South Wales | 134,197 | 79.0 | 128,591 | 85.0 | 262,788 | 82.0 |
| Greater Sydney | 70,946 | 79.0 | 70,259 | 85.0 | 141,205 | 82.0 |
| Rest of New South Wales | 62,780 | 78.0 | 58,087 | 84.0 | 120,867 | 81.0 |
| Victoria | 96,940 | 79.0 | 96,163 | 85.0 | 193,103 | 82.0 |
| Greater Melbourne | 64,532 | 80.0 | 65,225 | 85.0 | 129,757 | 82.0 |
| Rest of Victoria | 32,113 | 79.0 | 30,800 | 85.0 | 62,913 | 82.0 |
| Queensland | 77,902 | 77.0 | 69,730 | 83.0 | 147,632 | 80.0 |
| Greater Brisbane | 32,908 | 77.0 | 31,910 | 84.0 | 64,818 | 81.0 |
| Rest of Queensland | 44,580 | 77.0 | 37,587 | 83.0 | 82,167 | 80.0 |
| South Australia | 33,690 | 79.0 | 33,412 | 85.0 | 67,102 | 82.0 |
| Greater Adelaide | 24,361 | 80.0 | 25,299 | 85.0 | 49,660 | 83.0 |
| Rest of South Australia | 9,250 | 78.0 | 8,069 | 84.0 | 17,319 | 81.0 |
| Western Australia | 37,659 | 77.0 | 33,323 | 84.0 | 70,982 | 80.0 |
| Greater Perth | 28,316 | 78.0 | 26,293 | 84.0 | 54,609 | 81.0 |
| Rest of Western Australia | 9,048 | 74.0 | 6,904 | 81.0 | 15,952 | 77.0 |
| Tasmania | 11,647 | 77.0 | 11,281 | 83.0 | 22,928 | 80.0 |
| Greater Hobart | 4,596 | 78.0 | 4,794 | 84.0 | 9,390 | 81.0 |
| Rest of Tasmania | 7,017 | 77.0 | 6,458 | 83.0 | 13,475 | 80.0 |
| Northern Territory | 3,267 | 63.0 | 2,319 | 65.0 | 5,586 | 63.5 |
| Greater Darwin | 1,666 | 68.0 | 1,029 | 70.0 | 2,695 | 69.0 |
| Rest of Northern Territory | 1,462 | 58.0 | 1,212 | 60.0 | 2,674 | 59.0 |
| ACT/ Greater Canberra | 4,817 | 77.0 | 4,691 | 84.0 | 9,508 | 81.0 |

There is, however, considerable variation in the median age at death for males and females, with the ages for males between five and seven years below those for females in all but the Northern Territory. In both Darwin and the Rest of NT, the gap between the male and female median ages at death (of just two years lower for males) was relatively small, being around one third of that in the states, indicating the relatively poorer outcomes for females in the Northern Territory.

The following maps (also available for males and females and for a range of geographical areas [here](#)) illustrate differences in the median age at death by Population Health Area (PHA¹). The maps show the broad view in Western Australia, outside of Perth (referred to as 'Rest of Western Australia') and the Northern Territory, outside of Darwin (referred to as 'Rest of NT') as examples of variations found regional areas; separate reports provide the same information for Australia and another covers Sydney and Adelaide. The maps can be viewed for other areas (e.g., for each capital city, regional area and state and territory) at the link above.

It is important to be aware of the caveats related to the PHA data for median age at death: these are noted in the box **Caveats re median age at death by small geographic area**, above.

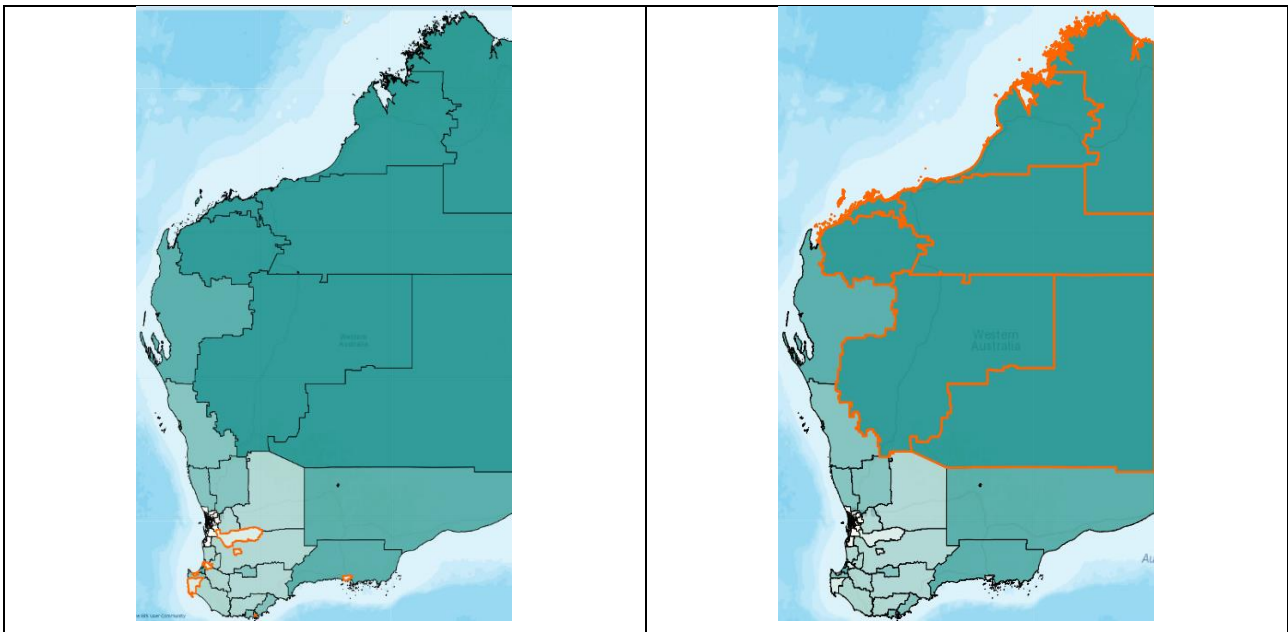
An additional report provides a summary of the findings from the analysis by Indigenous status: the Indigenous status atlases can be viewed [here](#), the data [here](#) and the summary report [here](#).

Overview for the Rest of Western Australia

The maps for Western Australia outside of Perth show the stark contrast in the geographical location of areas with high (Map 1) and those with low (Map 2) median ages at death over the period 2013–17. People living the longest live in the south and south-east of the State and those with the shortest lives are in PHAs covering central and northern Western Australia.

Map 1: 79.1 to 85 years of age at death

Map 2: 50 to 62 years of age at death



The range in ages is from 50 years in Newman to 85 years in Albany (Table 2). Of note, however, are the lower median ages at death for females, in particular in Newman (7.5 years lower than for males) and Leinster - Leonora (6 years). These are very poor and concerning outcomes for women and stand in stark contrast to the usual pattern of longer life experienced by women in comparison to men.

¹ PHAs are based on the 2016 Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Further details as to PHAs are available [here](#).

Table 2: PHAs with the highest and lowest median age at death, by sex, Rest of Western Australia, 2013–17

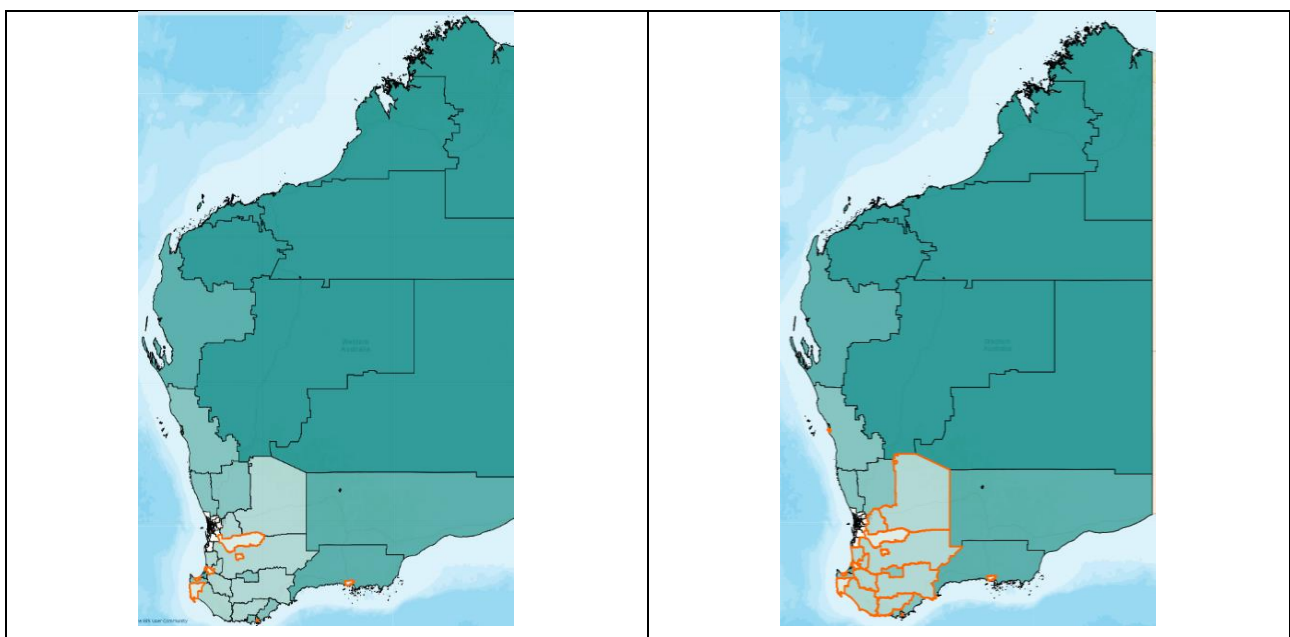
| PHA | Males | | Females | | Persons | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|------------|---------|------------|---------|------------|
| | Number | Median age | Number | Median age | Number | Median age |
| Newman | 18 | 52.5 | 14 | 43.0 | 32 | 50.0 |
| East Pilbara | 29 | 52.0 | 23 | 51.0 | 52 | 51.0 |
| Karratha | 100 | 54.0 | 30 | 50.0 | 130 | 52.5 |
| Ashburton | 39 | 51.0 | 17 | 60.0 | 56 | 55.5 |
| Leinster - Leonora | 69 | 60.0 | 47 | 54.0 | 116 | 58.5 |
| Derby - West Kimberley/ Roebuck | 183 | 62.0 | 140 | 59.0 | 323 | 60.0 |
| Halls Creek/ Kununurra | 240 | 59.0 | 126 | 61.0 | 366 | 60.0 |
| Roebourne | 51 | 60.0 | 38 | 59.0 | 89 | 60.0 |
| Esperance | 260 | 76.0 | 187 | 84.0 | 447 | 80.0 |
| Brookton | 113 | 77.0 | 86 | 84.5 | 199 | 80.0 |
| Augusta/ Margaret River | 187 | 76.0 | 172 | 85.0 | 359 | 81.0 |
| Bunbury/ Koombana | 482 | 79.0 | 485 | 84.0 | 967 | 82.0 |
| College Grove - Carey Park/ Davenport | 169 | 76.0 | 146 | 85.5 | 315 | 82.0 |
| Dardanup/ Eaton - Pelican Point | 281 | 80.0 | 256 | 84.0 | 537 | 82.0 |
| Narrogin | 118 | 80.0 | 126 | 83.5 | 244 | 82.0 |
| Busselton | 546 | 81.5 | 619 | 85.0 | 1,165 | 84.0 |
| Albany | 490 | 83.0 | 573 | 86.0 | 1,063 | 85.0 |

Progression in median age at death

Map 3 shows the median age of death for those aged over 79 years, with those in the next group, aged over 76 and up to 79 years added in Map 4. Again, these latter areas are located in the south-east of the State.

Map 3: 79.1 to 85 years of age at death

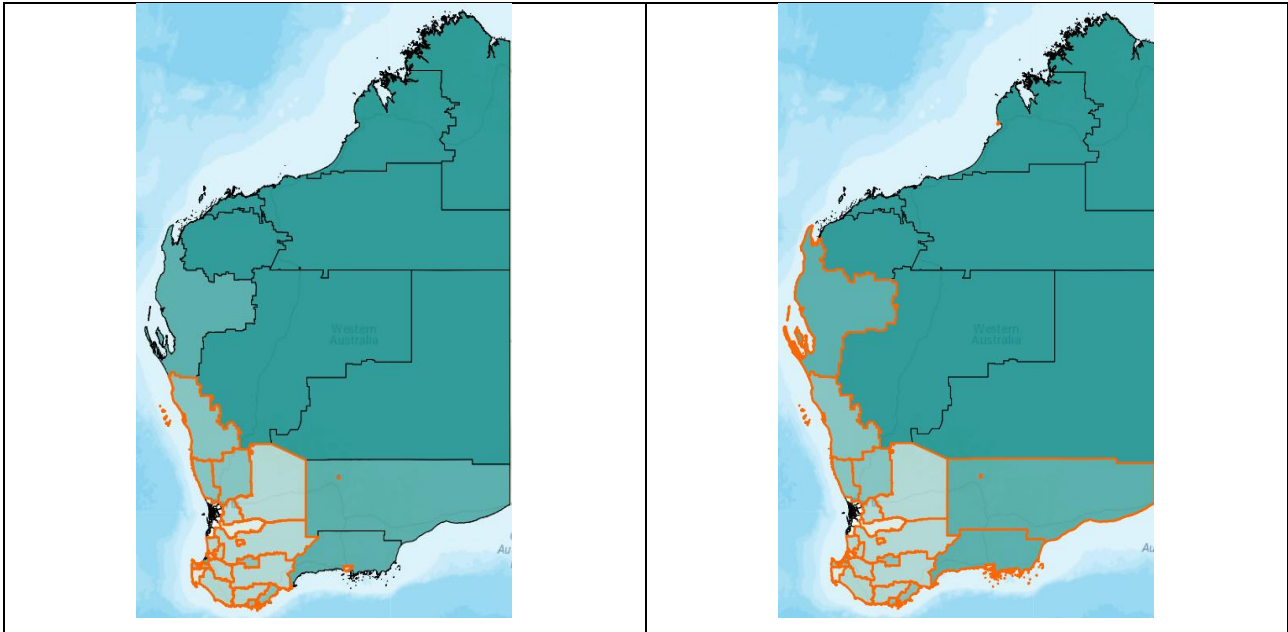
Map 4: 76.1 to 79 years of age at death added



Map 5 adds the median age of death for those aged from 70.6 to 76 years, completing coverage in the south-east and including a number of areas to the north of Perth. Median ages at death from 62.1 to 70.5 years are found in Exmouth and over a wide area from Esperance through to Kalgoorlie (Map 6).

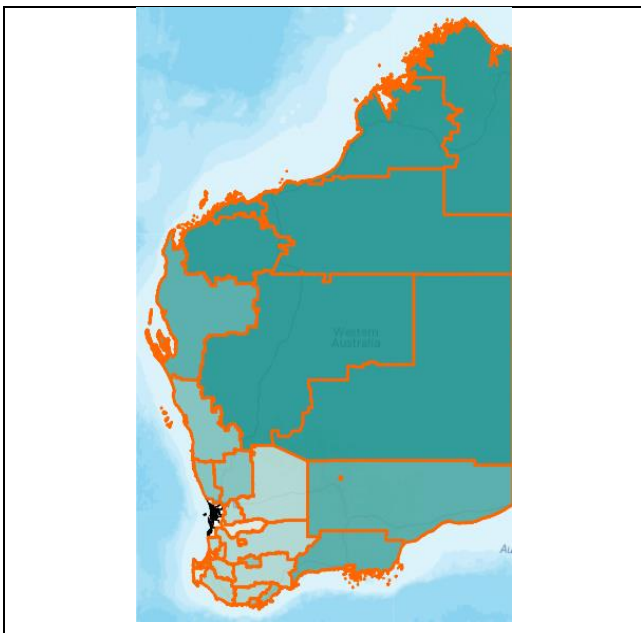
Map 5: 70.6 to 76 years of age at death

Map 6: 62.1 to 70.5 years of age at death added



Map 7 completes the picture with the addition of a large area, covering central and northern Western Australia, and the population with the shortest lives.

Map 7: Deaths at 50 to 60 years of age added



Overview for the Rest of Northern Territory

The range in median age at death at the PHA level in the Northern Territory outside of Darwin is from 66 years in Alice Springs - Town (which includes the Community Living Areas, also known as Town Camps) and Katherine, to 53.5 years in Alice Springs - Remote, a very large area surrounding the town (Table 3).

Unlike in Western Australia, none of the median ages at death for females are below those for males, with the largest gap, of 7 years, in Barkly/ Tennant Creek.

Table 3: PHAs with the highest and lowest median age at death, by sex, Rest of Northern Territory, 2013–17

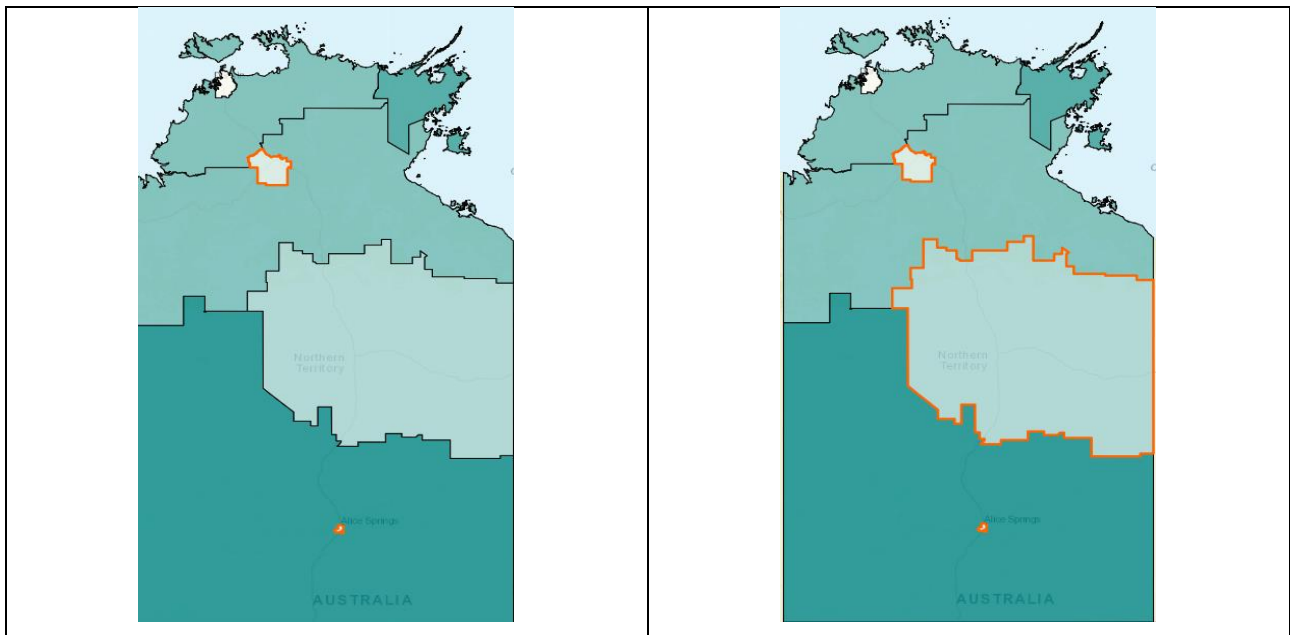
| PHA | Males | | Females | | Persons | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|------------|---------|------------|---------|------------|
| | Number | Median age | Number | Median age | Number | Median age |
| Elsey/ Gulf/ Victoria River | 176 | 54.0 | 119 | 55.0 | 295 | 55.0 |
| Alice Springs - Remote | 165 | 53.0 | 161 | 54.0 | 326 | 53.5 |
| Anindilyakwa/ East Arnhem/ Nhulunbuy | 183 | 53.0 | 193 | 57.0 | 386 | 54.0 |
| Barkly/ Tennant Creek | 114 | 56.0 | 93 | 63.0 | 207 | 59.0 |
| Daly - Tiwi - West Arnhem | 281 | 56.0 | 233 | 57.0 | 514 | 56.0 |
| Alice Springs - Town | 371 | 64.0 | 293 | 69.0 | 664 | 66.0 |
| Katherine | 172 | 66.0 | 120 | 68.5 | 282 | 66.0 |

Progression in median age at death

Map 8 shows the median age at death in the PHAs with those living the longest; Map 9 adds the next age range, which includes only Barkly/ Tennant Creek, with a median age at death of 59 years, well below the oldest ages in Alice Springs - Town and Katherine, of 66 years.

Map 8: 63.3 to 66 years of age at death

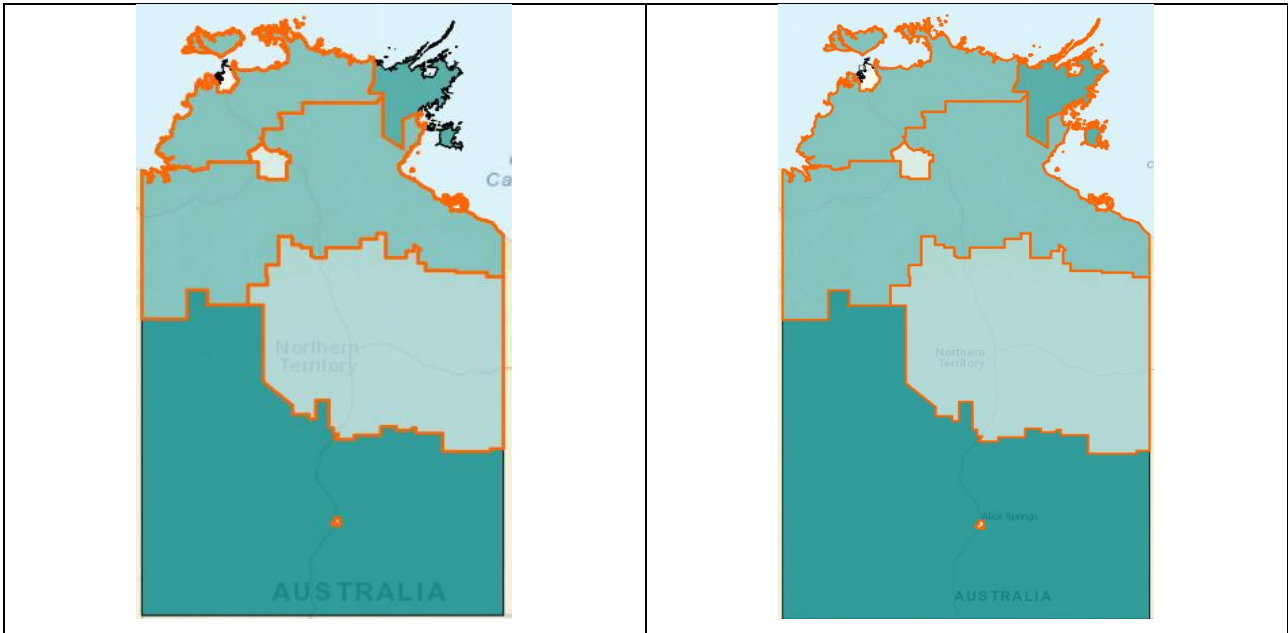
Map 9: 56.7 to 63.2 years of age at death added



Daly - Tiwi - West Arnhem (56 years) and Elsey/ Gulf/ Victoria River (55 years) are added in Map 10, as is Anindilyakwa/ East Arnhem/ Nhulunbuy (54 years), in Map 11.

Map 10: 54.9 to 56.6 years of age at death

Map 11: 53.8 to 54.8 years of age at death added



Alice Springs - Remote has the lowest median age at death (53.5 years) in the Northern Territory, and the fifth lowest in Australia (Map 12).

Map 12: Deaths at 53.5 to 53.7 years of age added

