

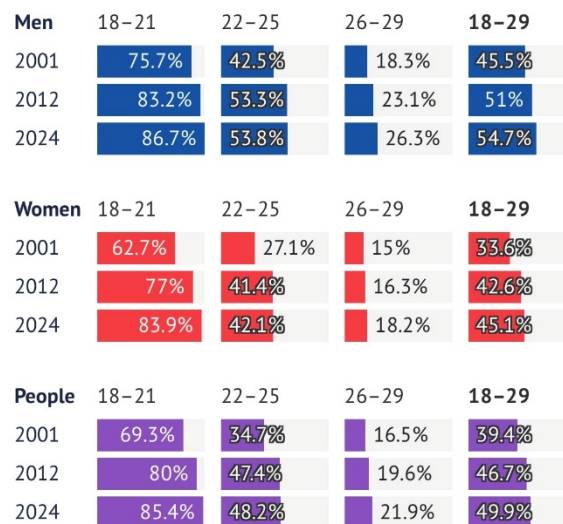
Priced out and staying put: Gen Z Australians are living with their parents in record numbers

Half of Australians in their 20s are still living with their parents, while a record share of lower-income families is suffering housing stress as the social and economic cost of the housing affordability crunch mounts.

One of the nation's most important social studies, The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, shows the proportion of people aged 18 to 29 years old living in the family home has reached 49.9 per cent, up from 39.4 per cent in 2001.

Adults still living with their parents

Proportion of young adults living with parents, by sex and age group, 2001-2024



Note: Living with parents refers to persons residing in a household where at least one parent is present.

Source: University of Melbourne, Melbourne Institute, Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey

Young men are more likely to live with their parents than young women; 55 per cent of men aged 18-29 still live in the family home compared to 45 per cent of women.

However, the gender gap has narrowed – in 2001, young men were 11.9 percentage points more likely than women to live with parents, but that had fallen to 9.6 percentage points by 2024.

Trade journalist Ethan Benedicto, 24, lives with his parents and 18-year-old brother in Clyde North, a south-eastern suburb of Melbourne, and has never lived out of home.

“Everything is just expensive in general. Rent’s expensive ... but I save over 60 per cent of my fortnightly pay,” he said.



Ethan Benedicto with his mother, Sheila Benedicto, at home in Melbourne. PICTURE BY JOE ARMAO

"I think it's kind of cultural as well. A lot of South-East Asian friends, Middle Eastern friends, I know live with their families as well. They have cousins, uncles and aunties at their homes. But I think my other reasoning is that my parents aren't kicking me out or anything. Like, they still want me to stay at home."

Benedicto does have a cut-off point – he wants his own place with his partner by the time he's 27 to 30.

"I also just think that like my parents want their own space," he said.

Oliver Mason, 24, works part-time at an op shop and feels no pressure to move out of home in Sydney's Picnic Point. To him, it doesn't make sense to move out when housing is so expensive, and all of his friends live with their parents.



Oliver Mason, 24, lives at home with his parents in Picnic Point. WOLTER PEETERS

"I think there's a bit of complacency and apathy that's bred out of the fact that the housing market is hard to access," he said.

"And my parents are middle-class comfortable, so I don't feel that rush or that push. If your friends are also all moving out, then you might think 'oh, my friends are having all these new experiences, and I'm at home'. But since a lot of my friends haven't moved out, I don't feel like I'm missing out on too much," he said.

Mason said he would only move out if he fell in love.

"If you partner with someone, and you want your own space, I will say that that would be my main driver to move out," he said.

Melbourne University's Dr Kyle Peyton, a report co-author, said housing costs were a major factor keeping young adults in the family home.

"It's more difficult than it's ever been in Australia for young people to get out of their parents' house and find a place to live and start a family," he said.

"Real incomes have been stagnating over the past few years, and so I think for this generation there is a real sense of hopelessness about the future."

Unhappy and broke renters

Most people aged under 30 who live out of home are renters, but the HILDA survey shows many of them are dissatisfied with their accommodation.

One in five young people not living with their parents reported their accommodation had "inadequate comfort" versus one in 25 who lived with parents.

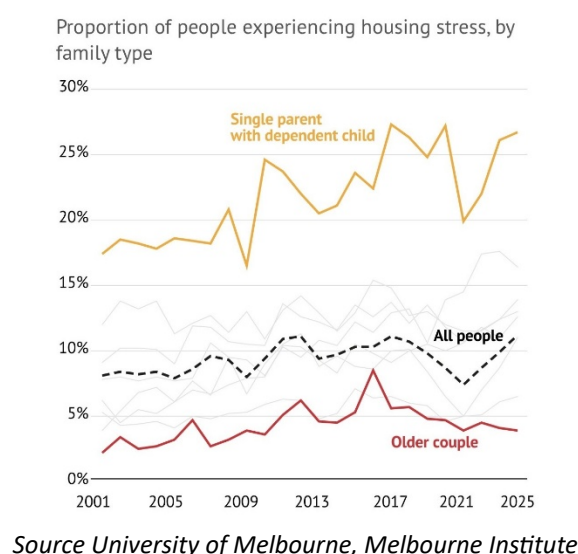
"The data are showing us that those people who do move out of home are less satisfied with the housing they're moving into, and they are more satisfied if they live with their parents, basically," said Peyton.

"For a lot of young people they're asking, 'am I going to go live in what may be a mould-infested rental property or do I just stay with my parents until I'm in my late 20s to try to save up for a deposit and try to buy something?'"

The survey also revealed 36 per cent of private renters and 30 per cent of mortgage holders among the bottom 40 per cent of earners in mainland capital cities spent more than 30 per cent of disposable income on housing. Households in the bottom 40 per cent of the income distribution that spend more than 30 per cent on rent or mortgage payments are considered to be in housing stress.

"Housing stress reached a record high in 2024," the report said. "Renters, single parents and older singles have the highest rates of housing stress."

Australians reporting housing stress



The survey also drew attention to the consequences of a prolonged period of cost-of-living pressure. Nearly 8 per cent reported not being able to pay the mortgage or rent on time, the highest share since 2003.

Melbourne University economics professor Roger Wilkins said key measures of financial and housing stress were “heading in the wrong direction” despite a relatively strong jobs market.

“What’s concerning is that this is happening in the context of record high employment rates,” he said. “We’re working more than ever, yet the cost of living is outpacing growth in incomes. The real concern is what if employment starts to turn down? Should the labour market weaken, we could see these measures of economic wellbeing deteriorate even further.”

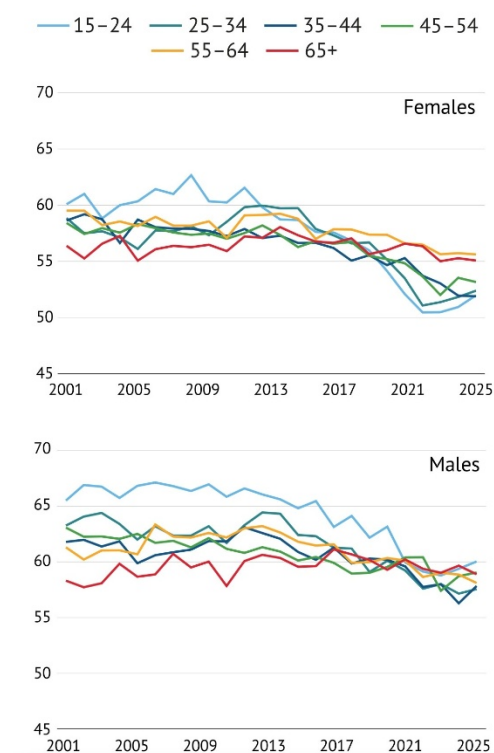
Life is exhausting

As Australians struggle with the cost of living, they are also reporting less energy and more fatigue.

The survey’s vitality scores – which measure how energetic people feel versus tired and worn out – have fallen steadily across all age groups (for men and women) during the past decade, with the largest decline among women aged 25-34.

Australians say how tired they are

Mean vitality source, by sex and age group



Note: Vitality captures energy levels and fatigue- how energetic versus and worn-out people feel. Higher scores mean more vitality.

Source: University of Melbourne, Melbourne Institute

There has also been a substantial and persistent decline in self-reported mental health among younger Australians, particularly young women.

The HILDA survey has tracked the same 9000 households since 2001; the newly published survey was taken in 2024, tracking almost a quarter-century.

Authors: Matt Wade, Mostafa Rachwani and James Costa

Source: SMH