



# Insufficient physical activity

## Quick facts

Based on self-reported survey data from 2014–15:

- Over half of Australian adults (56.4%) did not meet the recommended level of physical activity.
- Overall, a higher proportion of adults in regional PHN areas (62.4%) did not meet the recommended level of physical activity, compared with adults in metropolitan PHN areas (53.3%).



62.4%



53.3%



This fact sheet covers local-level results for the proportion of Australian adults (18 years and over) who reported insufficient levels of physical activity. Results are presented by Primary Health Network (PHN) areas.

Please note, the results presented are crude rates, which reflect the actual level of insufficient physical activity in the community. However, caution is needed when making comparisons across PHN areas as the rates presented do not account for differences in the age of the populations.

## What is insufficient physical activity?

Physical activity is the expenditure of energy generated by moving muscles in the body. Most physical activity occurs during leisure time, or through active transport and incidental activity such as housework or gardening.

**Insufficient physical activity** refers to physical activity levels that do not meet the Department of Health's *Australia's Physical Activity & Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines* (see Box 1 for more information).

This includes adults (18–64 years) who did not complete more than 150 minutes of physical activity, on at least 5 sessions over a week, and older Australians (65+ years) who did not complete 30 minutes of activity on at least 5 days.

Based on self-reported survey data from 2014–15, 56.4% of Australian adults had insufficient levels of physical activity.

### Box 1 Australia's Physical Activity & Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

The Department of Health's guidelines aim to reduce health risks from low physical activity and sedentary behaviour.

Part of these guidelines specify healthy men and women (18–64 years) are to accumulate, on at least 5 sessions each week:

- 150 to 300 minutes (2 ½ to 5 hours) of moderate intensity physical activity, or
- 75 to 150 minutes (1 ¼ to 2 ½ hours) of vigorous intensity physical activity, or
- an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous activities on most days.

Healthy older Australians (65 years and older) are recommended to accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days.

### What is a Primary Health Network?

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are organisations that connect health services over local geographic areas. There are 31 PHNs in Australia. Due to the availability of robust and reliable data at PHN area-level, results for 28 PHN areas are reported in this fact sheet.

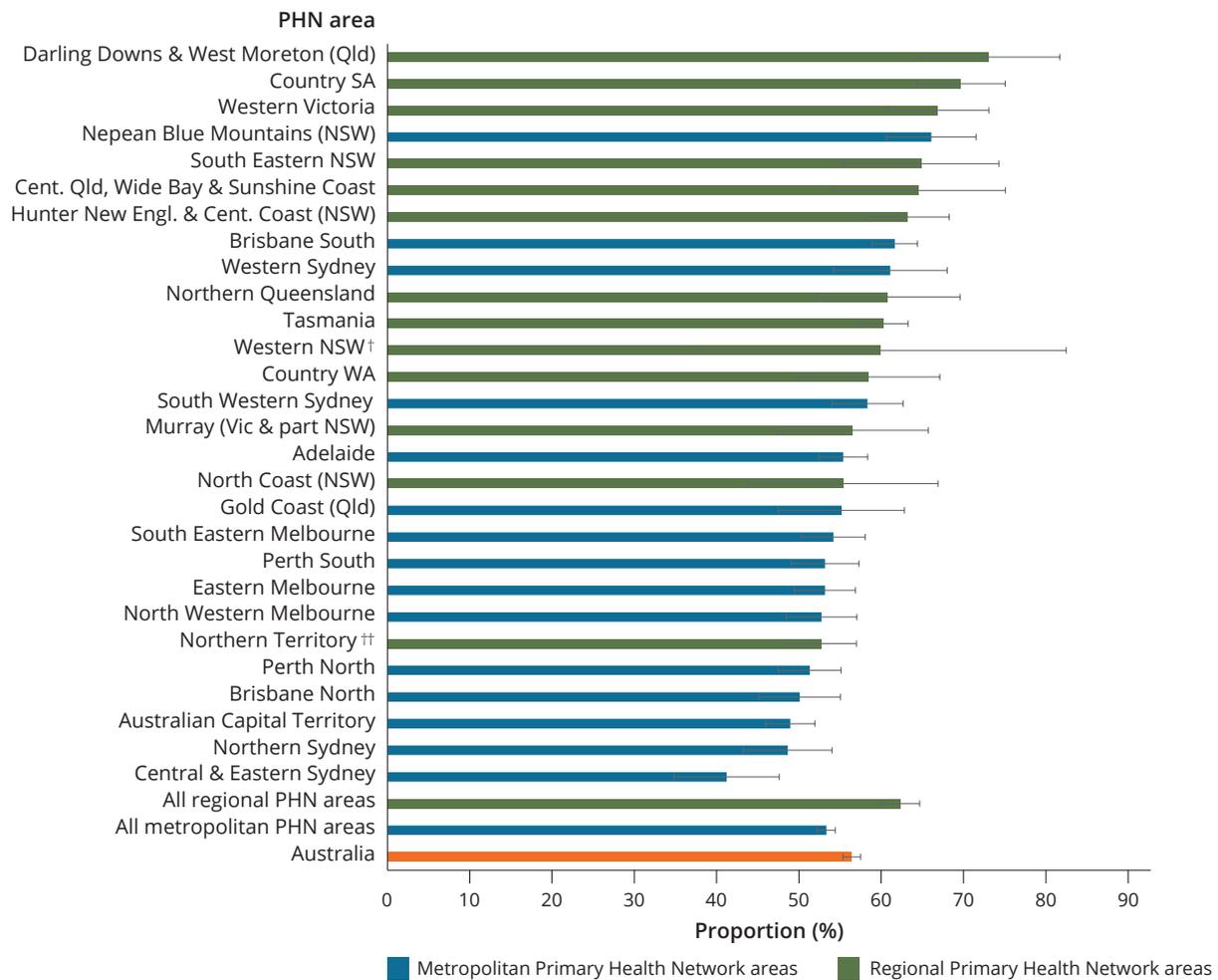
## Variation across metropolitan and regional PHN areas

In 2014–15, the proportion of adults with insufficient physical activity levels across all regional PHN areas was 62.4%, compared with 53.3% for all metropolitan PHN areas.

Four of the five PHN areas with the highest proportion of adults with insufficient physical activity levels were in regional locations (Figure 1).

The five PHN areas with the lowest proportion of adults with insufficient physical activity levels—that is, they were most active—were all in metropolitan, capital city locations.

**Figure 1: Proportion of adults who reported insufficient levels of physical activity, by metropolitan and regional Primary Health Network area, 2014–15**



Source: ABS, National Health Survey 2014–15: Customised report, 2017.

— 95% confidence interval.

† Data for Western NSW should be interpreted with caution, as the estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50%.

‡ Data for the Northern Territory should be interpreted with caution, as 28% of the population live in very remote areas and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and are therefore excluded from the survey.

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