

There are 3,676 Australians with disability under 65 living in aged care. The government seems confident that its efforts to get them out will succeed, highlighting the 20% reduction in the number of YPIRAC in the past year.¹ However, this falling number overlooks a grim reality: *most YPIRAC do not leave aged care for a better housing situation.*

The lower number of YPIRAC is mostly due to people either dying or remaining in aged care until they turn 65, and 'ageing out' of the cohort. Furthermore, over 50 younger people are still entering aged care every month. The inefficiencies at the health-disability interface mean it is still easier to discharge people from hospital to aged care than secure NDIS funding for housing.

In November 2019, the Australian Government committed to the following targets, outside of exceptional circumstances:

- No people under the age of 65 entering residential aged care by 2022
- No people under the age of 45 living in residential aged care by 2022
- No people under the age of 65 living in residential aged care by 2025.¹

What progress has been made towards the YPIRAC targets?

Since the announcement of the targets:

- 1,393 younger people entered aged care
- 1,613 younger people 'exited' aged care:
 - 1,140 died
 - 48 went to hospital (and may have subsequently died there)
 - 277 returned to home or family
 - 148 moved to 'other' housing

Therefore, while 1,393 younger people entered aged care, *only 425 left aged care alive, and may have moved to a better housing situation.*²

Why aren't YPIRAC moving out faster?

The average length of stay in aged care for YPIRAC is 4.5 years.² Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) is part of the solution to the issue; however, in the past 12 months only 30 younger people moved from aged care into SDA.³ And, while 30,000 participants are expected to be eligible for SDA, only 16,972 are receiving SDA funding. Furthermore, many NDIS participants who have not received adequate funding for SDA are appealing decisions to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, costing the NDIA over \$19m in legal expenses from July-December 2021.⁵

Why are younger people still entering aged care?

Over 50 people under 65 enter aged care every month.² One of the key reasons is because aged care funding can be allocated in a matter of days to hospital patients, allowing quick discharge. In contrast, the NDIA currently takes on average 60 days to approve funding for housing and support for hospital patients,⁶ making discharge to aged care more likely. More effective hospital discharge and timely approval of NDIS plans, including funding for SDA will help slow down the steady flow of younger people into aged care.

Natural attrition due to death or turning 65, and ongoing admissions to aged care of younger people cannot imply policy success.

Notes

1. DSS (2020). *Younger people in residential aged care*. <https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/programmes-services/for-people-with-disability/younger-people-with-disability-in-residential-aged-care-initiative>
2. AIHW (2022). *Younger people in residential aged care*. <https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Resources/Younger-people-in-residential-aged-care>
3. Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee (2022). 'Question on Notice, Social Services Portfolio, NDIA SQ22-000011'.
4. NDIA (2022). 'NDIS Quarterly Report to Disability Ministers: Q2 2021-2022.'
5. Commonwealth (2022). Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee Hansard. 17 February 2022.
6. Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee (2021). 'Question on Notice, Social Services Portfolio, NDIA SQ21-000177'.