



NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
**FARMER
HEALTH**

State of Rural Health



1/16

Sustainable Farm Families™ - The most important aspect of a healthy Australian farm? A healthy farming family

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Highlight that the health of Australia is well documented, but there is minimal documentation on farmer's health. This program enables us to explore farmer health.



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What are the facts

- Rural populations have above average rates of premature mortality and death through heart disease, cancer and suicide.” (AIHW: 2016)
- These higher death rates may relate to differences in access to services, risk factors and the regional/remote environment. (AIHW: 2015)



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Explain the difficulty associated with getting data on farmers due to occupation, women on farms, and where it is due to access, risk factors or environment.



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In your table groups

Consider the following questions:

Question1

- Think about your level of health compared to an urban person, who has the better health status and why?

Document your answers on page 1.2
in your resource kit



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2 minutes only, document on white board/butchers paper. Allow the group to express their own personal thoughts, and why. Do not argue. There is no correct answer.



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In your table groups

Consider the following

- **Question 2**
- What do you believe are some of the major causes for the differences between men's and women's health status?

Document your answers on page 1.2
in your resource kit



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The issues facing farming people

- No paid sick leave
- Tend to live at work
- The influence of stress
- Socioeconomic status
- Reduced opportunities for exercise
- Commodity prices
- Climate variability
- Work long hours
- Attitude to health
- Poor knowledge of health factors
- Poor physical resources
- Access to medical services
- Diet and nutrition factors
- Seasonal pressures



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Need to expand on some of these points if not mentioned in above table group discussion.



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Comparing men and women

- There are gaps between men and women in terms of life expectancy
- On average in Australia men live to 81.1 and women live to 84.7 (ABS 2016)
- In metropolitan areas men live to an average 81.0 and women to 85.1
- In Victoria in 2015, the life expectancy of men was 80.5 and women 84.5 years (ABS 2016)



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INSERT YOUR OWN LOCAL RELEVANT DATA HERE



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Life expectancy (years) by Remoteness Area

Life expectancy (years) by Remoteness Area, 2002-04

	Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote	Australia
Males	79.0	77.8	76.9	76.5	72.1	78.4
Females	83.8	83.1	82.6	81.8	77.6	83.4

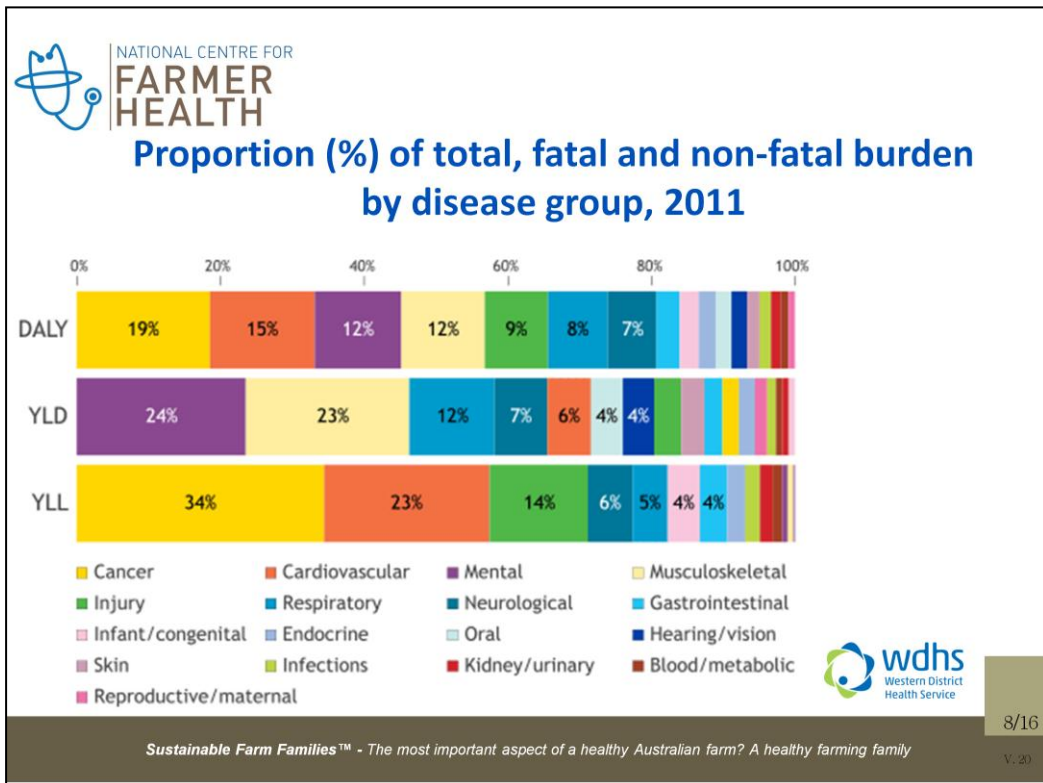
Source: AIHW National Mortality Database.



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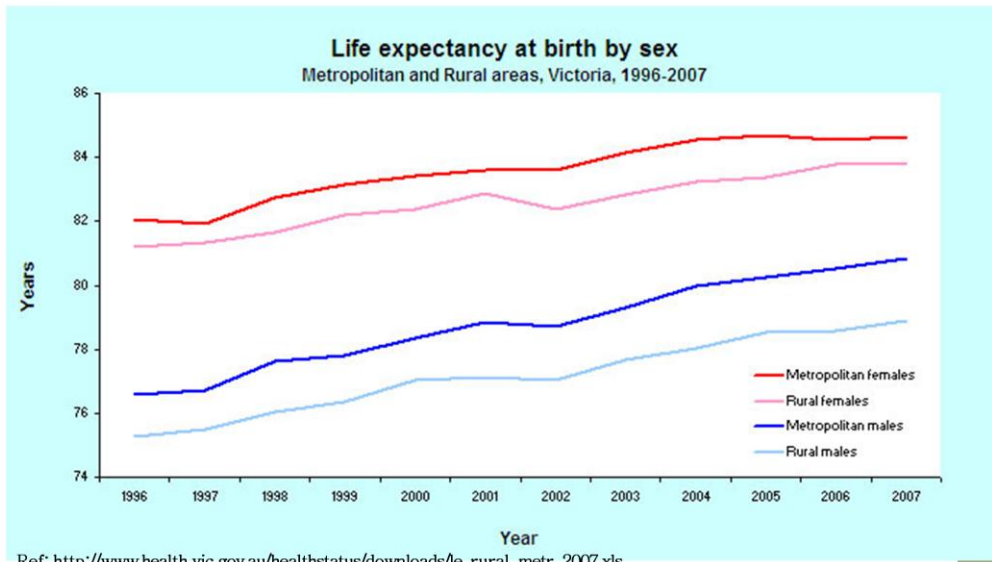
Most of the burden of disease in 2011 was from chronic diseases. Cancer caused the greatest amount of burden (19%), followed by cardiovascular diseases (15%), mental and substance use disorders (12%), musculoskeletal conditions (12%) and injuries (9%). Together these disease groups accounted for around two-thirds of the total burden of disease in Australia.

About a third of the burden experienced by the population could be prevented by reducing the exposure to modifiable risk factors. The risk factors causing the most burden were tobacco use, high body mass, alcohol use, physical inactivity and high blood pressure.



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Rural health facts



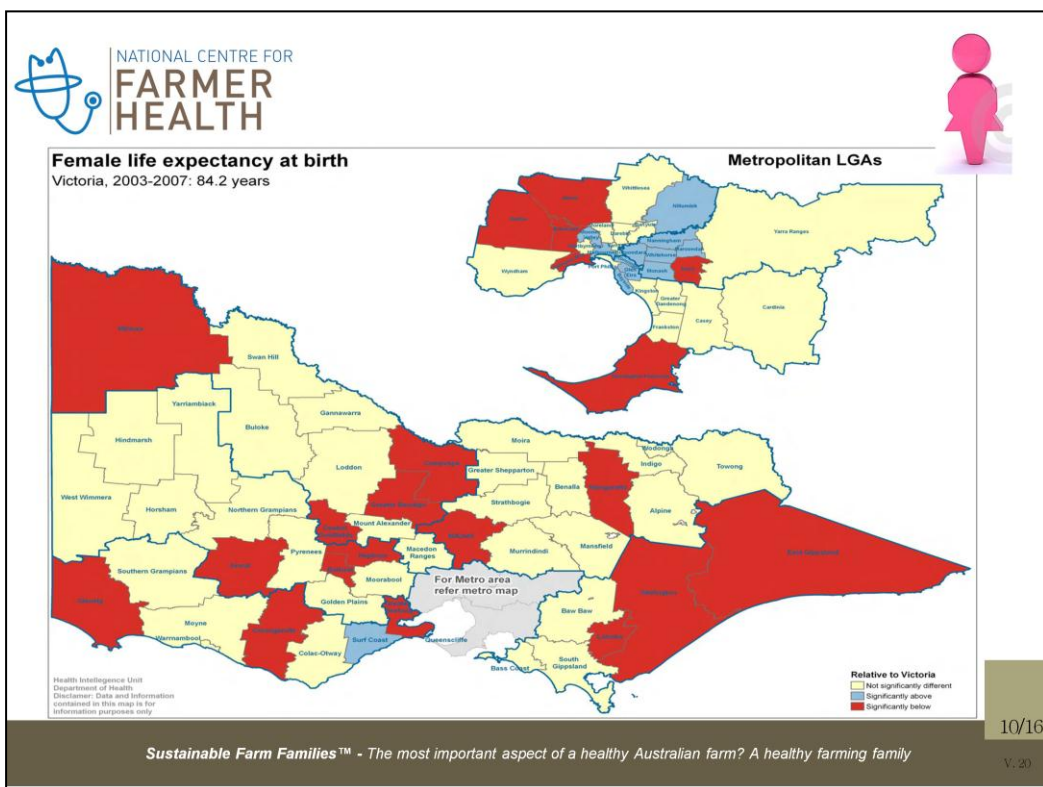
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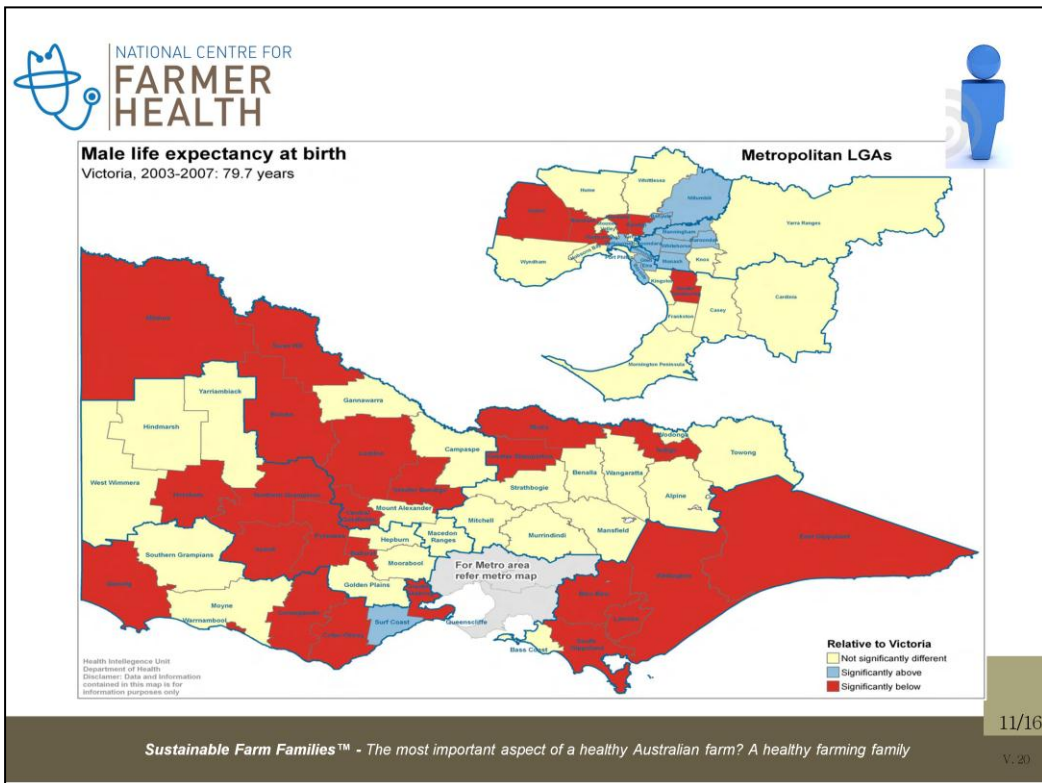
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Life expectancy - metro woman 84 years, rural male 77 years!!!!

We all know the impact of a sudden and unexpected death on a farming business.



Whilst not as bad as the men rural women too also experience shorter life expectancies when compared to metro women. Women also live around 14 years of their later lives with a disability.



Notice that the significantly below the average life expectancies are mostly in the rural local government areas.



Life expectancy (years) at birth, by sex, by state and territory

State or territory	Males	Females
New South Wales	79.9	84.2
Victoria	80.5	84.5
Queensland	79.5	84.0
South Australia	79.8	84.2
Western Australia	80.1	84.8
Tasmania	78.7	82.6
Northern Territory	74.7	80.0
Australian Capital Territory	81.2	85.1

Source: ABS 2013.



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Causes of reduced life expectancy

- Cardiovascular disease
- Cancers; lung, bowel, prostate and breast
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Injuries



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Comparing rural and metro

A big difference in the statistics including:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Suicides
- Farm injuries and deaths
- Road and vehicle traffic accidents
- Drowning
- All higher per capita in rural areas



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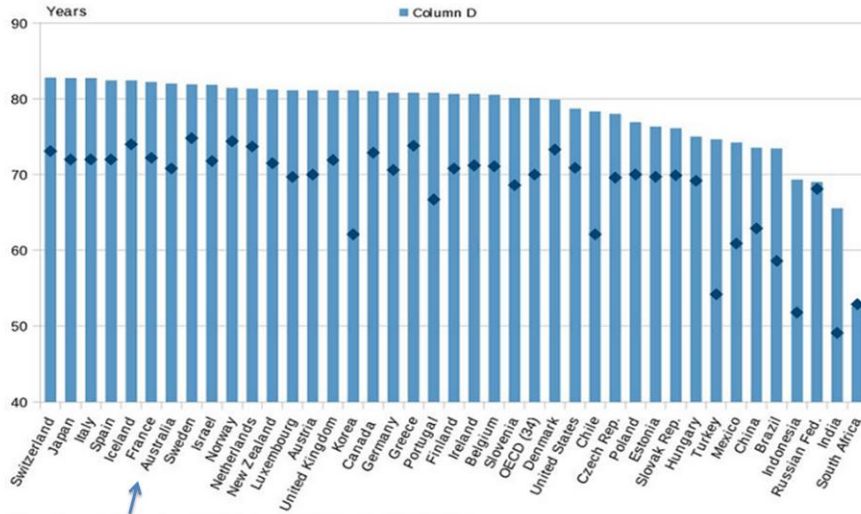
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Comparing as a nation

1.1.1. Life expectancy at birth, 1970 and 2011 (or nearest year)



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As a nation we are doing pretty well but note some of the improvement that have been made – see Chile, Korea, India



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Climate change and rural health

- Extreme weather event (floods, droughts, wind)
- Heat related conditions (hyperthermia, heat stress, death)
- Mental health, anxiety, and stress related conditions
- Change in blood borne disease (mosquitoes-Ross River)
- Food and water viruses may rise
- Food and water shortage



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Give examples and get people to think about this. Anxiety and depression are exacerbated in the heat. Eg if heat waves are coming shutting your curtains, having water in the fridge, not travelling, not working in the heat of the day, allocating a cool room in your home, be aware of what is forecast.



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In your table groups

Discuss the following

Identify 5 ways to improve your family health and reduce rural communities significant mortality and morbidity rates.

Document your answers page 1.11 in your resource kit



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2 minutes only, get them to write in their resource manual and then document on white board/butchers paper.

Make sure both areas of the question is covered.

This works to reinforce and reflect.



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What can we do?

- Take time to relax each day
- Make allowances for the possibility of sick days
- A minimum of a 2 week holiday away from the farm
- Participate in regular exercise
- Yearly checkup with your doctor
- Plan for climate variability

***Remember your health is your biggest asset to
success.***



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At the end of each session participants complete the evaluation form for the session.



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The other facilitator asks participants to complete the EVALUATION form for this Rural Health session.