

Mental health statistics

Like many countries, Australia has a trend of urbanisation, with young people moving to the cities and rural areas facing economic downturn. In the agricultural sector severe droughts have a heavy impact. The "rural recession" has also resulted in many businesses shutting down. These social pressures in turn affect people's emotional wellbeing and can exacerbate mental illnesses.

Despite the economic and physical stressors in rural communities, many rural Australians are reluctant to admit they are feeling the pressure as there is a culture of self-reliance. People may be unwilling to admit that they are "not holding up" or "can't hack it", even when facing difficult situations. This is true of many Australians but is especially the case for people living in rural areas, where the smaller community means people's "weaknesses" are on show. It is a trend also noticed more strongly in men, especially those of older generations.

- Prevalence of mental disorders is 18% in rural areas, equivalent to the 17.5% in major cities (National MH Survey). This data excludes Aboriginal populations.
- Substance misuse rates are the same in rural Australia as in major cities, but there is a greater emphasis on alcohol abuse in rural areas, and less on hallucinogens and "party drugs" like ecstasy (National MH Survey).
- When surveyed, rural residents are less likely to report unhappiness or life dissatisfaction.