

GET THE FACTS: AUSTRALIA'S DIGITAL DIVIDE IS REAL



AUSTRALIANS DIGITAL DIVIDE IS REAL AND WIDESPREAD

Over 2.5M Australians do not have internet connectivity in their homes (ABS, 2018) and more than four (4) million Australians access the internet solely through a mobile connection. In 2019, mobile-only users have an ADII score of 43.7, some 18.2 points lower than the national average (61.9) (ADII, 2019).

Being mobile-only not only diminishes Access, but also impacts on the Affordability and Digital Ability aspects of digital inclusion. Mobile-only use is linked with socio-economic factors, with people in the lowest household income quintile (30.7%), those with low levels of education (28.0%), and the unemployed (25.3%) more likely to be mobile-only (ibid., 2019).

Australia does have a digital divide with those most impacted being our most vulnerable – the elderly, disabled, indigenous communities, mentally ill, those living in a low-income household or dependent on a parenting or carer payment, an age pension, disability support pension or a Newstart allowance. Furthermore, geographically our regional locations are hardest hit.

THE KEY FACTS

- > People aged 65+ are Australia's least digitally included age group. The ADII score for this age group is 48.0, some **19.5 points lower** than the most digitally included age group (people aged 25-34 years).
- > Those on a disability pension and living with a disability have an ADII score of 52.0, **9.9 points lower** than the national average.
- > Australians with low levels of income, education, and employment are significantly less digitally included. Australians in Q5 low-income households have a digital inclusion score of 43.3, which is **30.5 points lower** than those in Q1 high-income households (73.8). Although this gap has narrowed by 0.4 points since 2018, it remains at the same level as recorded in 2014 (30.5).
- > Indigenous Australians living in urban and regional areas have low digital inclusion (55.1, or **6.8 points lower** than the national average).
- > There are substantial differences between Australians living in rural and urban areas with digital inclusion being 8.1 points higher in capital cities (63.8) than in country areas (55.7) (ibid., 2019).

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Restricting this highest digitally divided sector of the community to additional isolation from limited information access needs to be challenged to ensure all citizens are afforded access to basic levels of communication, community notices as well as media, retail and entertainment services.

The very health concerns we seek to implement to protect these citizens through isolation may well see the people most impacted by mental and physical health deterioration without access to established media channels – magazines, letterbox and commercial print.

The paper, print, publishing, mail and distribution reaches the most vulnerable citizens with trusted, credible and well-sourced information.

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