



Population Ageing in ASEAN + 3: A Shared Future of Inclusivity and Sustainability

A 2025 Wall Chart by the Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing (MyAgeing®), Universiti Putra Malaysia



Rise and Rise of Older Persons

The ASEAN + 3 region (Southeast Asian countries together with China, Japan, and South Korea) has experienced a dramatic and continuing rise in its older population from 1950 to 2100. Median ages have steadily increased, reflecting longer life expectancies and declining fertility rates from youthful populations in the mid-20th century to rapidly ageing societies today. The number of people aged 60 and above has surged from under 39 million in 2000 to nearly 90 million in 2025, and this is projected to exceed 170 million by 2050. As a share of the total population, older persons (60+) will grow from just 5% in 1960 to nearly 15% by 2030, marking one of the most profound demographic shifts in modern history.

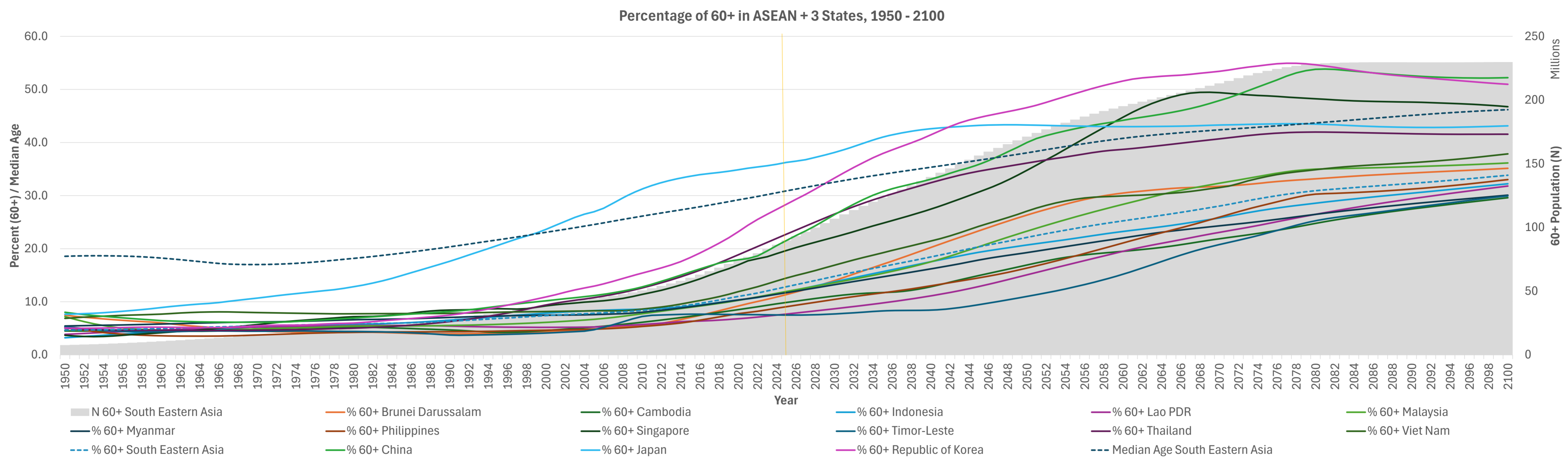


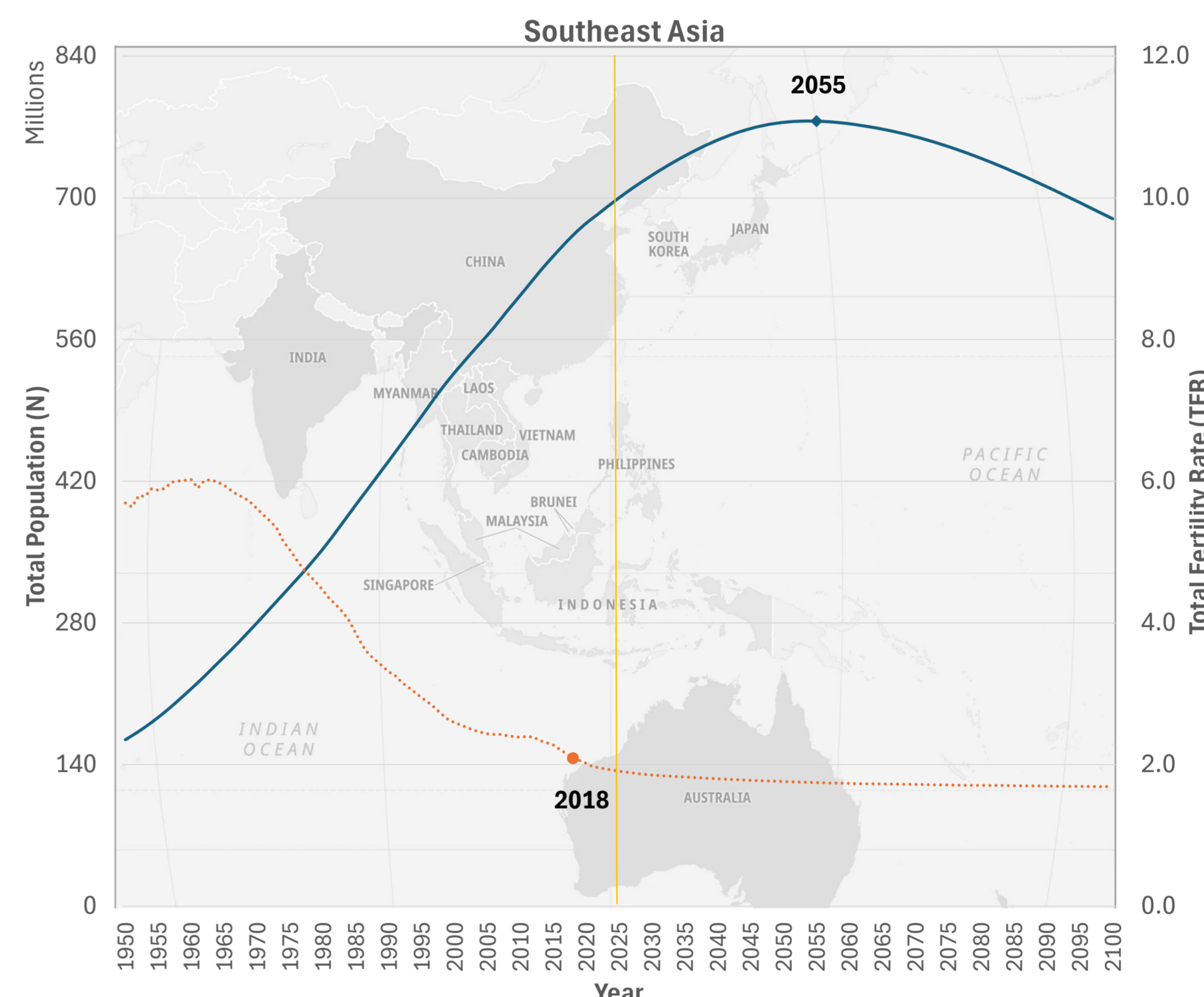
Figure 1. Increase in Median Age, Absolute Number and Percentage of Older Persons (60+) in ASEAN Member States, 1950 - 2100

Fertility, Ageing and Depopulation

Population projections are less reliable in the long-term because the world changes in new and unexpected ways that affect our current assumptions on births, deaths and migration. Nevertheless, we can see how a steady decline in fertility levels will eventually lead to depopulation, even with significant improvements in life expectancy or longevity. There are significant variations and diversity within the region in terms of economic growth and population development.

Table 1. Years When TFR Falls Below Replacement Levels, Older Population (60+) Exceeding Younger Population (<18), and Depopulation in ASEAN + 3 Region

Country	Year Occurred / Occuring			Total Population (2025)
	TFR ≤ 2.1	60+ Pop. > <18 Pop.	Depopulation	
Brunei D.	2004	2041	2056	466,331
Cambodia	2042	2074	2079	17,847,982
Indonesia	2022	2056	2059	285,721,236
Lao PDR	2033	2067	2069	7,873,046
Malaysia	2010	2045	2073	35,977,838
Myanmar	2022	2060	2050	54,850,648
Philippines	2020	2060	2058	116,786,963
Singapore	1975	2019	2041	5,870,750
Thailand	1989	2021	2023	71,619,863
Timor-Leste	2036	2073	2077	1,418,518
Viet Nam	1998	2040	2050	101,598,527
South Eastern Asia	2018	2050	2055	700,051,968
China	1991	2024	2023	1,416,096,094
Japan	1957	1995	2009	123,103,479
Korea	1983	2015	2021	51,667,030



Source: World Population Prospects: The 2024 Revision (UNDESA, 2024)

How Will Health Care, Social Welfare and Long-term Care Systems Cope?

Many countries still lack adequate infrastructure, financing models, and trained workforce to meet the growing demand for eldercare facilities and support services. Health systems must shift from hospital-centric to community-based and preventive care models, while social welfare systems need to expand coverage and ensure sustainability through reforms in pensions, risk pooling, and intergenerational solidarity mechanisms. Long-term care (LTC), often informal and family-based, will require formalization, regulation, and multisectoral investments in home- and community-based services. Without timely and coordinated policy responses, the region risks widening inequalities and undermining the well-being of population.

Note: OOP = Out-of-pocket Expenditure
 PPP = Purchasing Power Parity
 GDP = Gross Domestic Product
 GGHE-D = Domestic General Government Health Expenditure

Table 2. Health Care Financing, ASEAN + 3, 2010 & 2022

Country	Current Health Expenditure (CHE)							
	as % of GDP		GGHE-D as % of CHE		OOP as % of CHE		CHE per capita PPP (\$)	
	2010	2022	2010	2022	2010	2022	2010	2022
Lao PDR	2.9	2.0	20.7	31.0	36.0	28.7	115.65	188.93
Myanmar	2.1	5.2	9.8	11.1	80.7	65.1	61.10	241.94
Cambodia	5.6	4.7	19.7	24.9	51.9	61.2	165.60	333.34
Timor-Leste	6.5	14.3	50.8	72.0	11.6	5.5	126.52	340.95
Indonesia	2.8	2.7	23.7	51.8	60.6	33.0	233.10	390.15
Philippines	4.1	5.2	31.9	45.1	54.9	44.6	226.73	529.39
Vietnam	5.1	4.6	40.3	43.6	34.7	39.6	273.27	610.72
Thailand	3.4	5.4	73.8	72.7	14.5	9.2	438.35	1,107.21
China	4.2	5.4	51.9	54.9	40.8	33.6	384.13	1,135.67
Brunei	2.3	1.8	91.7	92.3	8.3	7.7	1,811.95	1,242.00
Malaysia	3.2	3.9	53.1	50.6	34.1	37.9	648.06	1,280.89
South Korea	6.0	9.4	55.5	62.8	38.6	28.8	1,943.25	4,859.75
Japan	9.1	11.4	81.9	86.0	14.6	11.0	3,199.57	5,387.27
Singapore	3.2	4.9	35.9	56.6	41.5	24.7	2,411.03	6,657.93

Source: Global Health Observatory (WHO, 2025)



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