

City of Greater Dandenong



2025

# Profile of Health and Wellbeing

Statistical summary of social, health & other conditions in the City of Greater Dandenong



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# Population

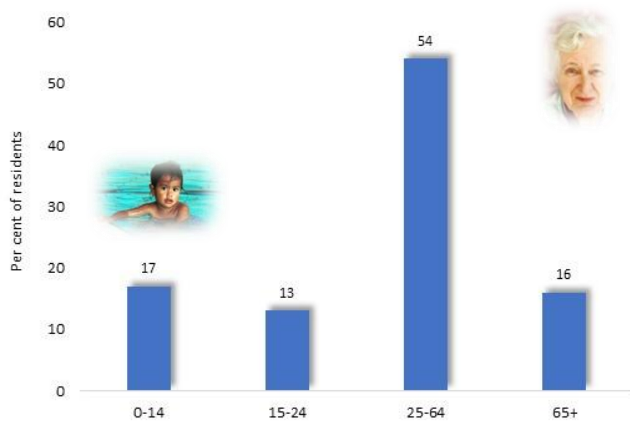
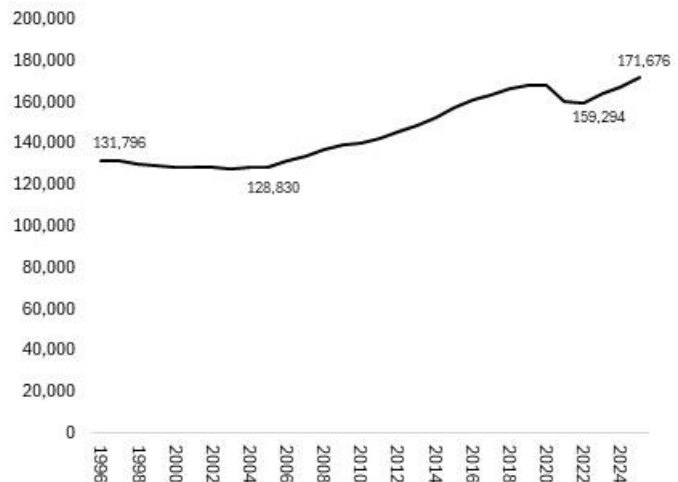
## Population Trends

The 2025 population of Greater Dandenong is estimated at nearly 172,000.

In the decade to 2006, the population of Greater Dandenong declined slightly, before rising due to residential developments in Keysborough South and Central Dandenong, as well as construction in dispersed locations throughout the city.

Estimated Population: Greater Dandenong, 1996-2021

After a brief slump in 2021 and 2022, the municipal growth returned to a pattern of steady growth.



## Population Age Profile

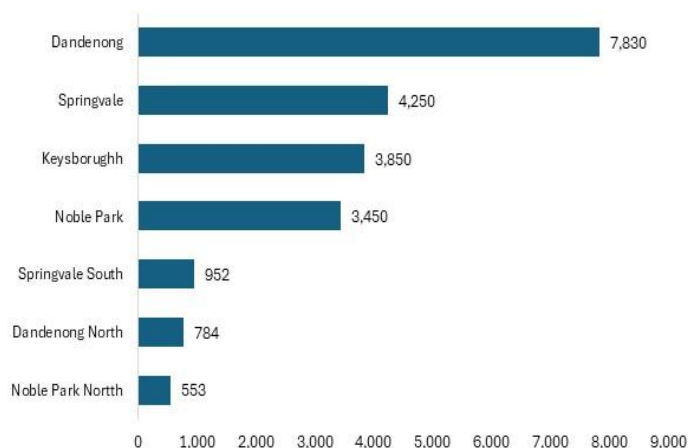
Examination of the structure of the population relies upon the 2021 Census, which records the ages of residents. Among them, 17% were 0-14-year-olds, 13% young people aged 15-24, 54% people aged 25-64, and 16% of retirement age.

Population by age: Greater Dandenong, 2021

## Population Growth

The municipal population is expected to grow by approximately 22,000, or 13%, in the decade to 2035. This forecast includes projected growth of 9%, or 2,600, in the number of 0-14-year-olds and 11%, or 1,200, in the number aged 75 years or more. Much of this growth is forecast for the suburb of Dandenong.

Forecast population growth: 2025-2035, by suburb



## Young People

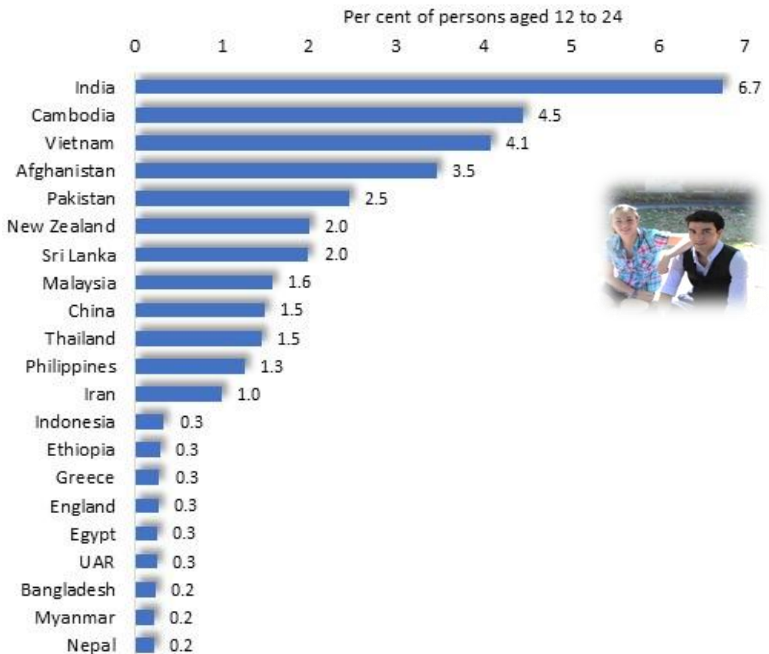
Persons aged 12 to 24 years are counted here as young people, as this range best matches the age span of those assisted by most youth service providers. In some instances though, other ages are specified, either to match the structure of the available data or because they are more suitable.

In 2021, nearly 20,300 residents in Greater Dandenong were aged 12-24 years, representing approximately one in six residents. Approximately 154 residents of this age were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

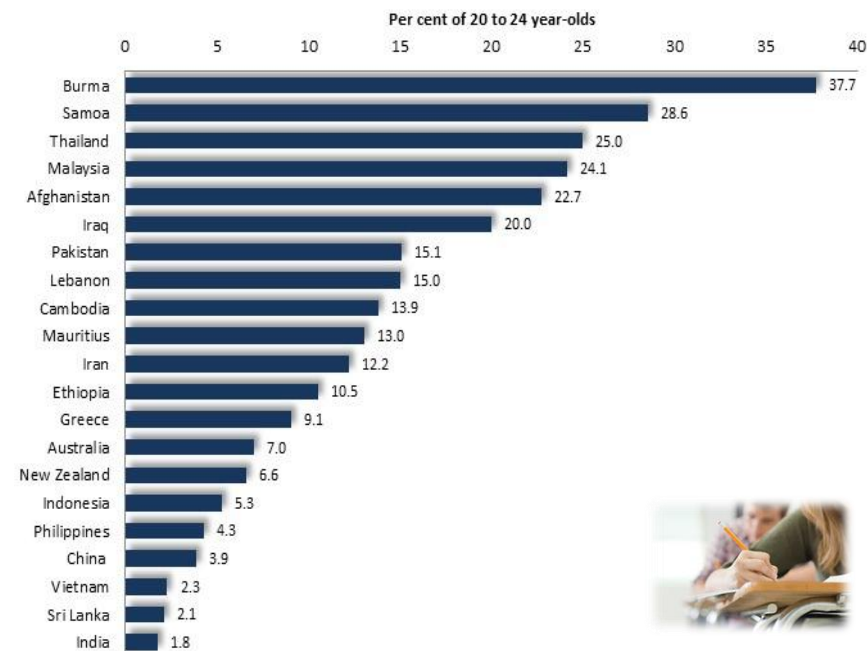
### Cultural Diversity

In 2021, nearly two-fifths (39%) of Greater Dandenong residents aged 12-24 were born overseas. They come from 86 different birthplaces, including India, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, China, Pakistan and Burma.

Selected birthplaces of persons aged 12 to 24:  
Greater Dandenong, 2021



### Educational Participation and Outcomes



8.1% of local 20- to 24-year-olds had left school before completing year 11 ('left school early') - compared with 6.3% across Melbourne.

Per cent of 20-24-year-olds who had left school before completing Year 11: Greater Dandenong, 2021

Early school leavers included one-fifth of young adults from Burma, Samoa, Thailand, Malaysia, Afghanistan.

Nearly a third (32%) of 20-24-

year-olds in Greater Dandenong were attending university and other tertiary institutions in 2021 (a rise from 20% in 2006), compared with 38% of those across Melbourne. By contrast, 12% of young adults of this age from Greater Dandenong were attending TAFE institutions, compared with 9.3% of those across Melbourne.

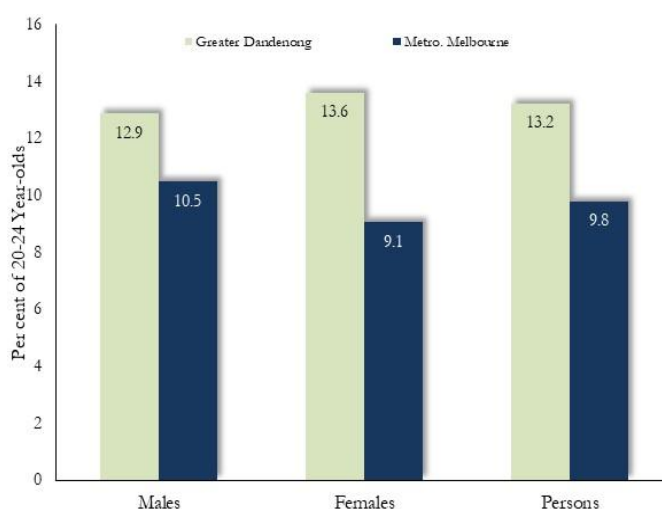
## Youth Disengagement

Counting the number of young people who are not in paid work or enrolled in education – termed ‘disengagement’ – gauges the overall educational and economic advancement of young people in the community.

In 2021, the Census found that 1,900 15-24-year-olds in Greater Dandenong were neither employed nor enrolled in education. The proportion of young people who were disengaged rose with age from 6.1% of 15-19-year-olds, to 13.2% among those aged 20-24 years.

Disengagement of 20-24-year-olds by age and sex: Greater Dandenong and metro. Melbourne 2021

	Number Disengaged	Per cent Disengaged
Burma	21	39.6
Cook Islands	9	39.1
Thailand	40	32.3
Iran	21	26.3
Afghanistan	109	22.6
Malaysia	72	22.4
New Zealand	37	18.9
Australia	735	14.5
Pakistan	26	12.6
China	21	11.5
Cambodia	60	10.2
Philippines	17	10.0
Vietnam	50	9.5
Sri Lanka	19	5.7
India	54	3.7



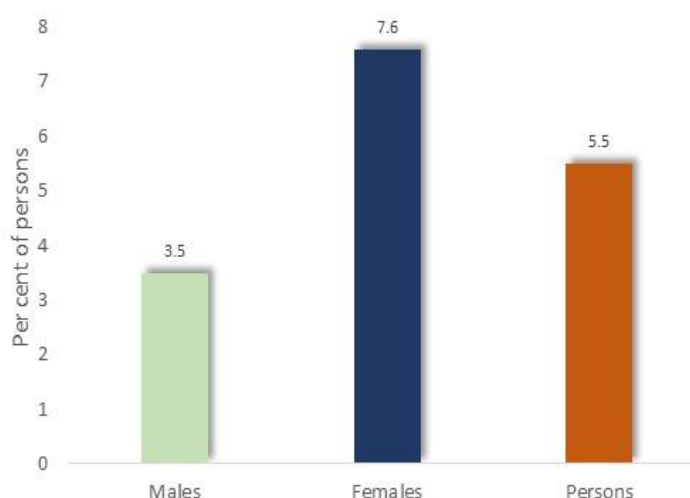
In 2021, the rate of disengagement in Greater Dandenong was 14.5% among Australian-born young people, rising to 20% or more among those from Burma, Thailand, Iran, Afghanistan, Cook Islands and Malaysia.

Disengagement rates by birthplace, Greater Dandenong, 2021

## Mental Health

The 2021 Census inquired in 2021, for the first time, about the presence of chronic illnesses, including mental health disorders. In response, 5.5% of 15 to 24-year-olds in Greater Dandenong recorded that they were experiencing a mental health disorder, including 3.5% of males and 7.6% of females.

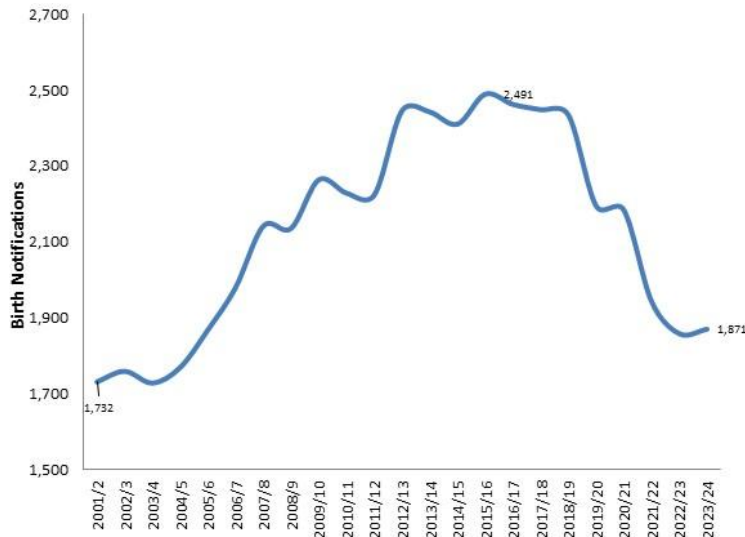
Prevalence of mental health disorders among persons aged 15 to 24, by sex: Greater Dandenong, 2021



## Families, Births and Children

### Births

In 2023/24, 1,871 births were recorded in Greater Dandenong, representing a decline of 620 or 25% since 2015/16.



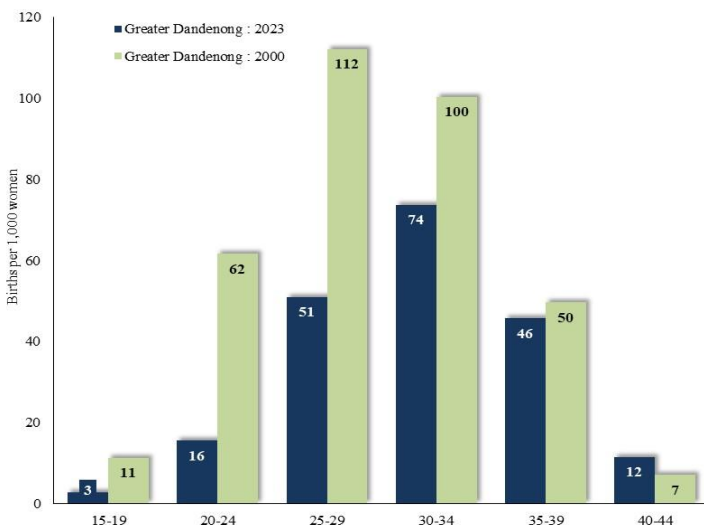
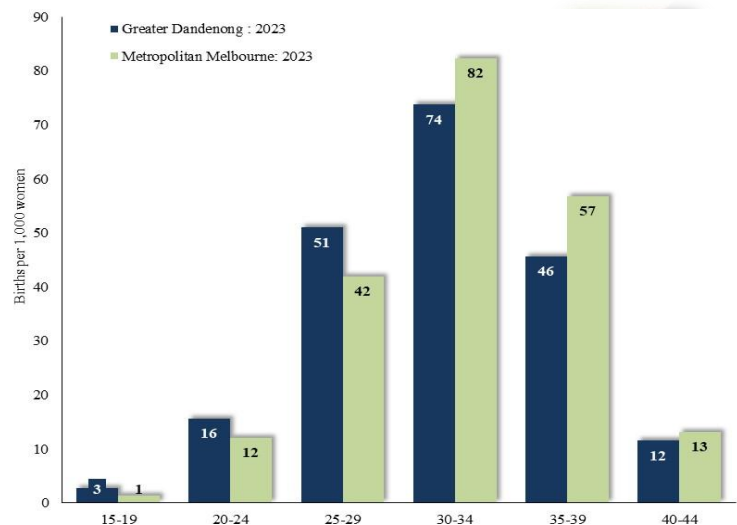
Annual Births: Greater Dandenong, 2001-2024

Among infants born just prior to the 2021 Census, 75% had an overseas-born mother - the highest proportion in Victoria - with birthplaces including India, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, China and Pakistan.

### Birth Rates

In 2023, birth rates among women aged 15-29 were substantially higher in Greater Dandenong than for Melbourne, and lower among women over 30 – a circumstance frequently encountered in localities of social disadvantage. The average number of children a woman can be expected to bear in a lifetime, based on current birth rates, is 1.0 – lower than the corresponding level in 2000 and the same as the metropolitan level.

Birth rates by age: Greater Dandenong and Melbourne, 2023



Birth rates by age: Greater Dandenong, 2000 and 2023

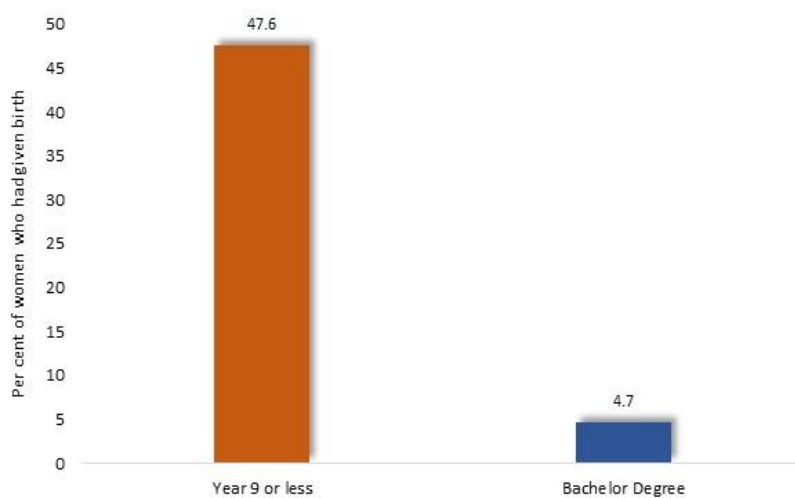
A comparison between the birth rates in Greater Dandenong in 2023 and 2000 – about a generation earlier – shows a decisive fall in birth rates among women aged less than 30 years, coupled with a smaller rise in rates among older women.

## Birth Rates & Education

Birth rates are strongly influenced by education.

The 2021 Census showed that among 20-24-year-old women in Greater Dandenong with year nine or less secondary education, 48% had given birth, compared with 4.7% of women with university degrees.

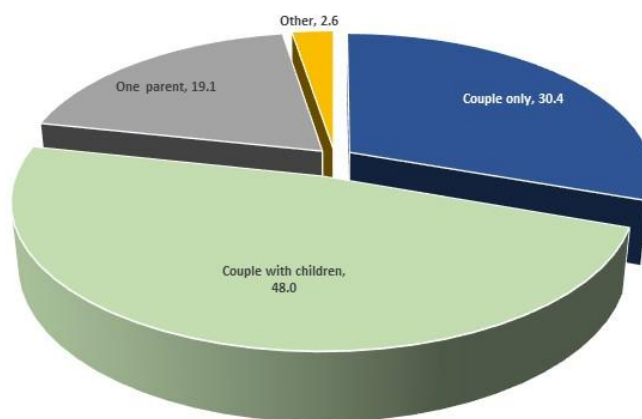
Proportion of women aged 20-24 who had given birth, by educational attainment: Greater Dandenong, 2021



## Families

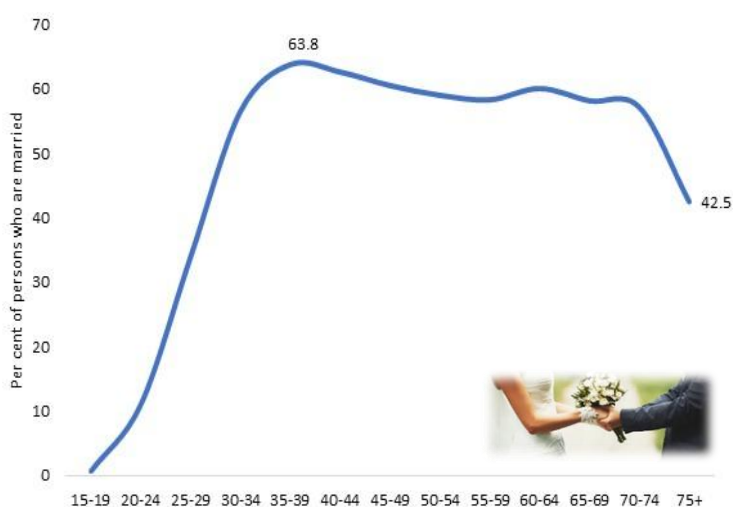
In 2021, there were approximately 40,000 families in Greater Dandenong. Among them, about a third (30%) were couples only, 48% couples with children, 19% headed by a single parent, and the balance, other family types.

Family Types: Greater Dandenong, 2021



## Marriage

Proportion of persons who are married, by age: Greater Dandenong, 2021



In 2021, 49% of Greater Dandenong residents aged 18 or more were married – 89% in registered marriages and 11% de-facto.

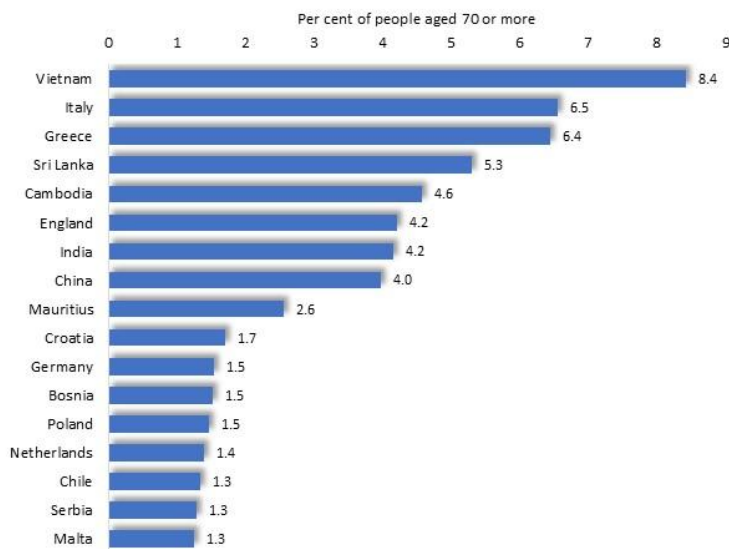
Among 15-24-year-old women, 7.7% are married (registered or de facto), including fewer than 5% of those born in Australia, New Zealand, China and the Philippines, and over a quarter from Burma, Afghanistan and Nepal.

## Older Residents

**Population:** In 2025, an estimated 17,000 people in Greater Dandenong, or 10% of residents, were aged 70 years or more.

Victorian municipalities with the highest proportion of older residents include Benalla, Central Goldfields, East Gippsland and Strathbogrie, each with about 25% of their populations aged 70 or more in 2025. The oldest municipality in Victoria though, is Queenscliffe, with 35% of residents of this age.

The 2021 Census provides information about the characteristics of older residents in Greater Dandenong.



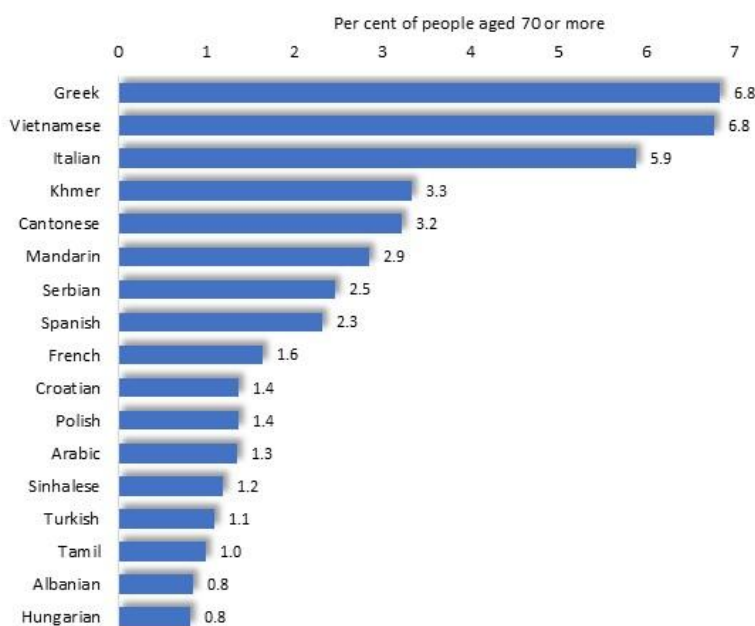
### Cultural Diversity

In 2021, three-quarters (75%) of local residents aged 70 or more were born overseas – higher than the metropolitan level of 5%, and the second largest proportion in Victoria.

Their birthplaces include Italy, Vietnam, Greece, England, Sri Lanka and China.

Persons aged 70 years or more, by selected birthplaces, 2021

### Spoken Languages



Reflecting the cultural diversity of residents aged 70 or more, over half (56%) speak languages other than English at home, including Greek and Vietnamese (each spoken by 6.8% of older residents), Italian (5.9%), Khmer (3.3%), Cantonese (3.2%), Mandarin (2.9%) and others.

Persons aged 70 years or more, by selected spoken languages: Greater Dandenong, 2021

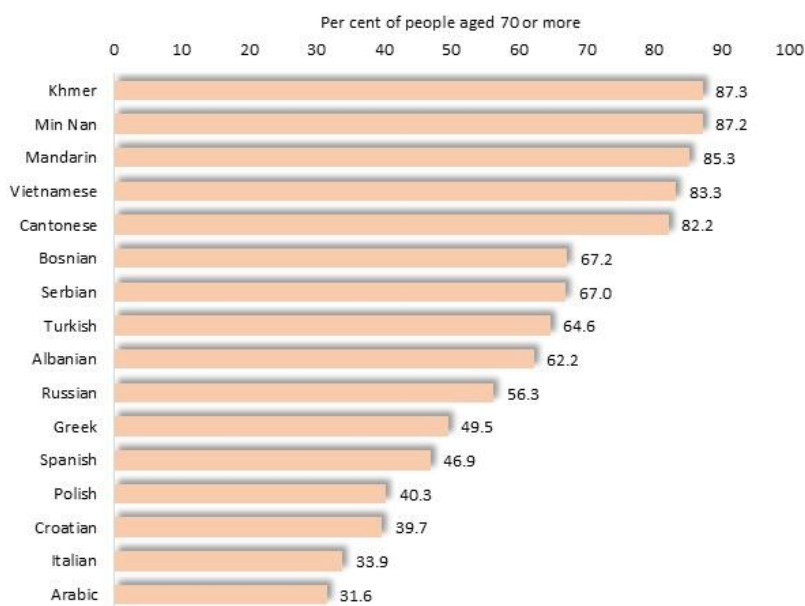


## English Fluency

Nearly a third (30%) of residents aged 70 or more has limited fluency in the use of spoken English - the highest proportion in Victoria.

These include over four-fifths of older residents who speak Khmer, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese and Min Nan.

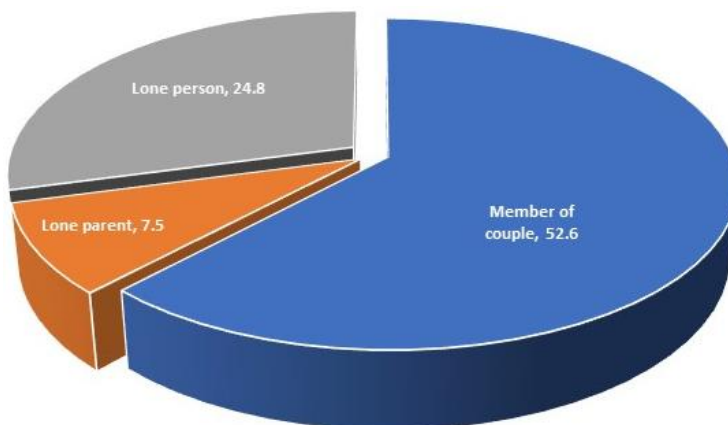
Per cent of residents aged 70 years or more, who have limited English fluency: Greater Dandenong, 2016



## Household Types

Of the 91% of residents aged 70 or more, who live in private households, over half are members of a couple, about a quarter are lone persons, and 7.5% are lone parents.

Relationship in Household, Persons aged 70+ and living in a private dwelling, 2021



## Incomes, Employment and Welfare Dependence

### Incomes and employment

In 2021, the median income among Greater Dandenong residents aged 55-59, an age when many are approaching retirement, stood at \$707 (including \$874 among men and \$525 among women) - the lowest in Melbourne in 2021 and substantially less than the corresponding Victorian median of \$1,017.

Among residents of this age, 61% were in paid employment – including 69% of males and 53% of females – lower than the Victorian level of 73%. Consequently, a substantial proportion of residents may enter their older age with a recent history of low income and non-employment, exposing them to the risk of financial hardship during retirement.

### Pensions

In June 2024, the ratio of aged pension recipients to persons aged 65 years or more in Greater Dandenong (expressed as a percentage) was 70% – the highest level in Melbourne, surpassing the metropolitan ratio of 51%.

## Cultural Diversity and Settlement

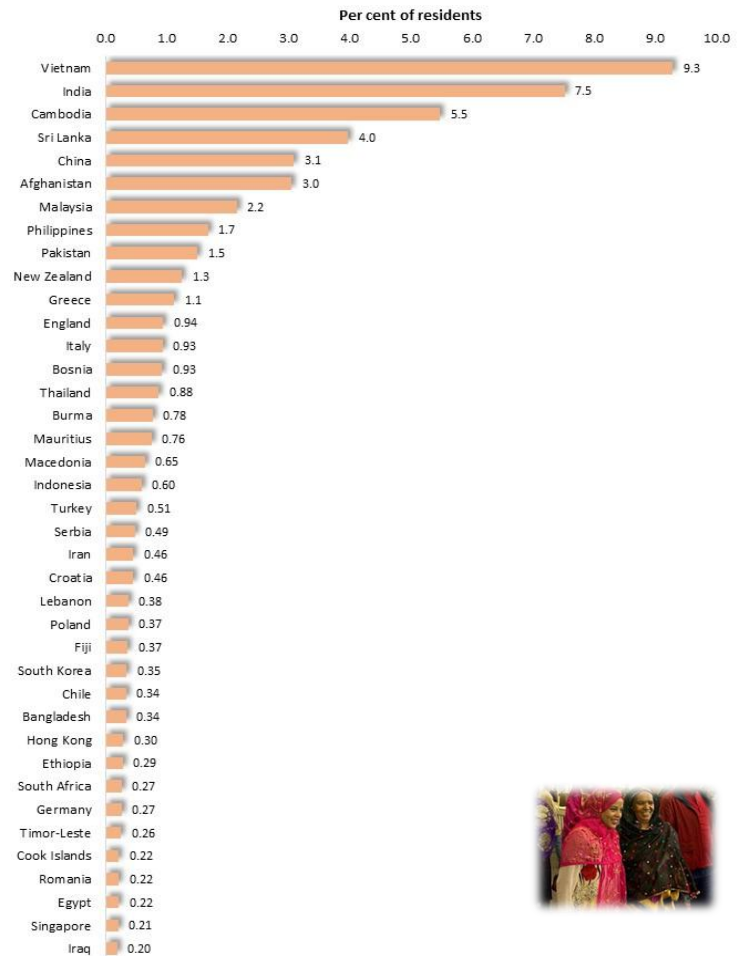
### Cultural Diversity

The 2021 Census found that Greater Dandenong is the most culturally diverse locality in Australia<sup>1</sup>, as it was in 2016, with residents from at least 154 different birthplaces and nearly two-thirds (63.4%) of its residents born overseas.

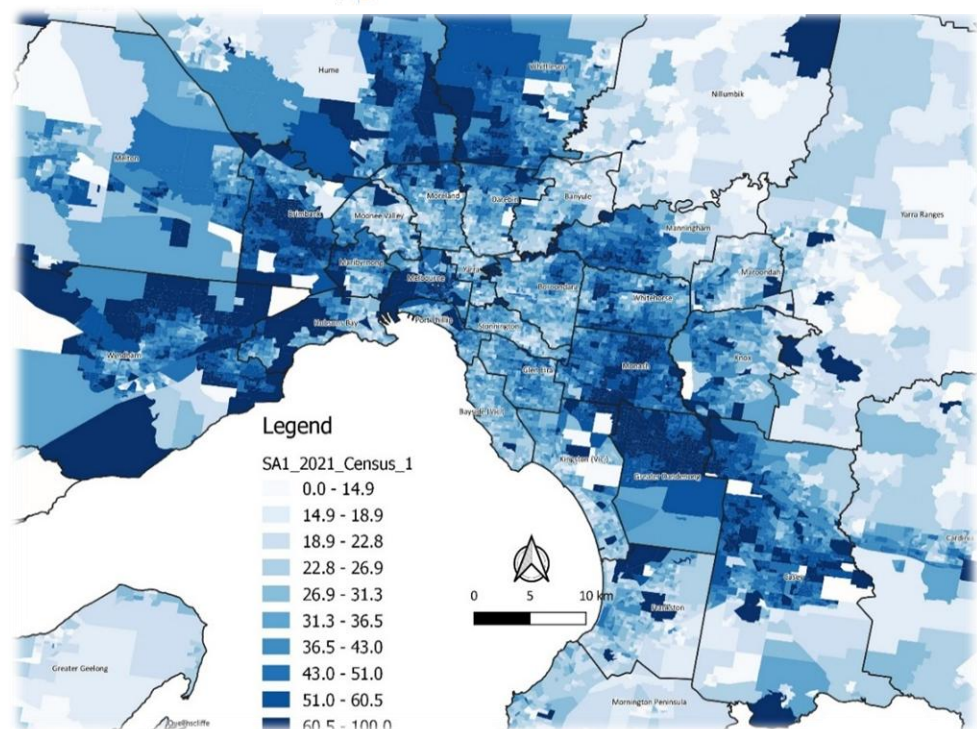
Major birthplaces, aside from Australia, included Vietnam, India, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, China, Afghanistan, Malaysia, Philippines, Pakistan, and New Zealand.

More than four out of five (88%) residents have at least one overseas-born parent.

Population by selected birthplaces: Greater Dandenong, 2021



Per cent of Persons who were born overseas: metropolitan Melbourne, 2021



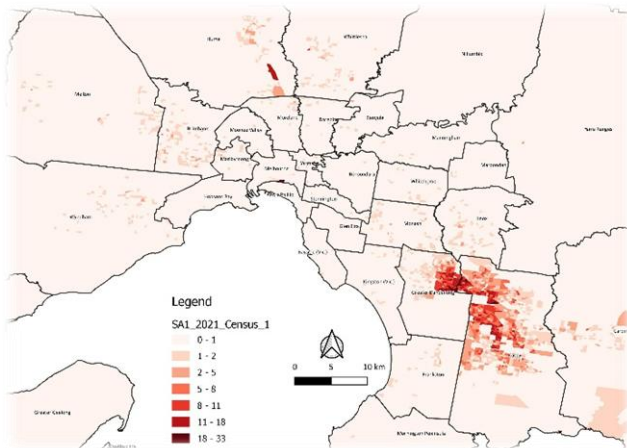
<sup>1</sup> Diversity of birthplaces among the residents of each municipality is measured as the probability that two people from a community, chosen at random, would come from different birthplaces. This measure provides an index of birthplace diversity which gives a balanced measure of the range of birthplaces and number of persons from each, and permits localities of widely varying population to be compared.



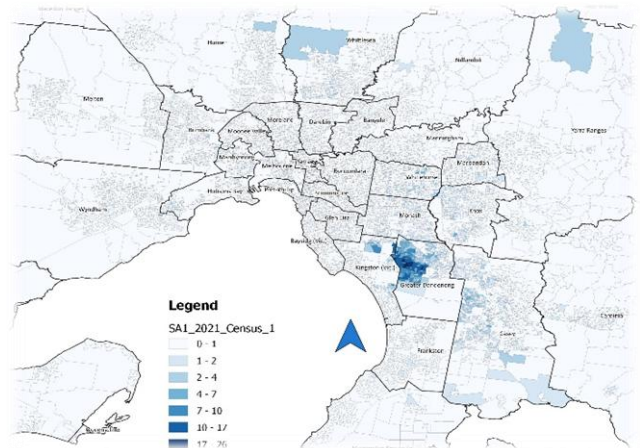
## Geographic Distribution of Settlers

Results of the 2021 Census, illustrated in the accompanying maps, show the widely varying distribution of settlers across metropolitan Melbourne. Featured here are a selection of birthplaces that account for substantial numbers of settlers in Greater Dandenong.

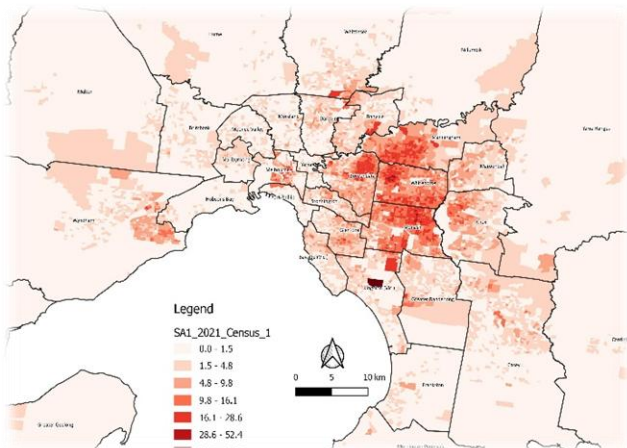
Afghanistan



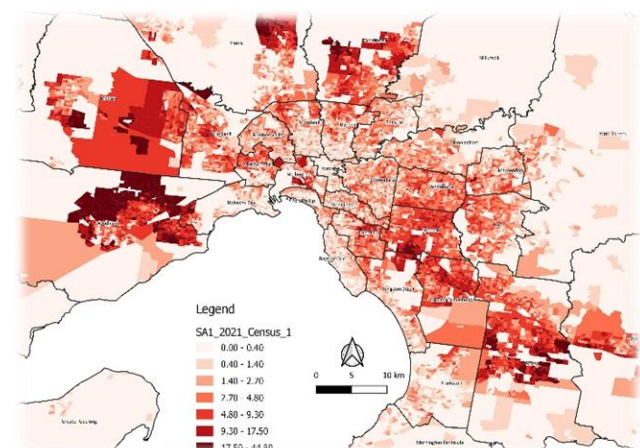
Cambodia



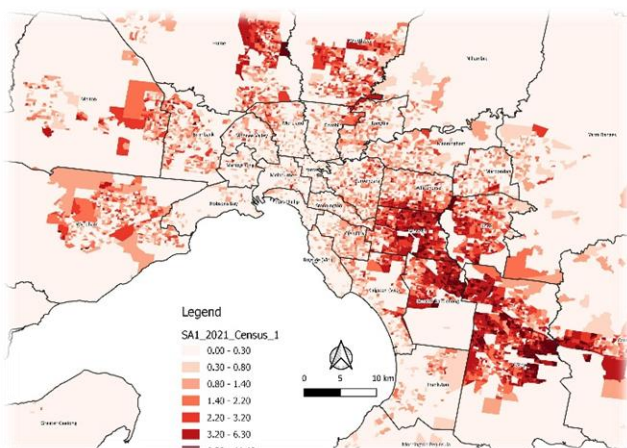
China



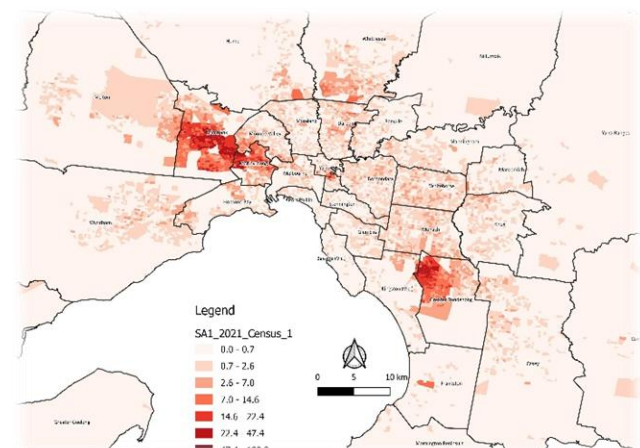
India



Sri Lanka



Vietnam



## Recently-arrived Residents

The 2021 Census recorded that approximately 2,038 residents of Greater Dandenong had arrived in Australia after 2019, representing 1.3% of the population.

Residents who had arrived in Australia in the past 18 months, by birthplace: Greater Dandenong, 2021

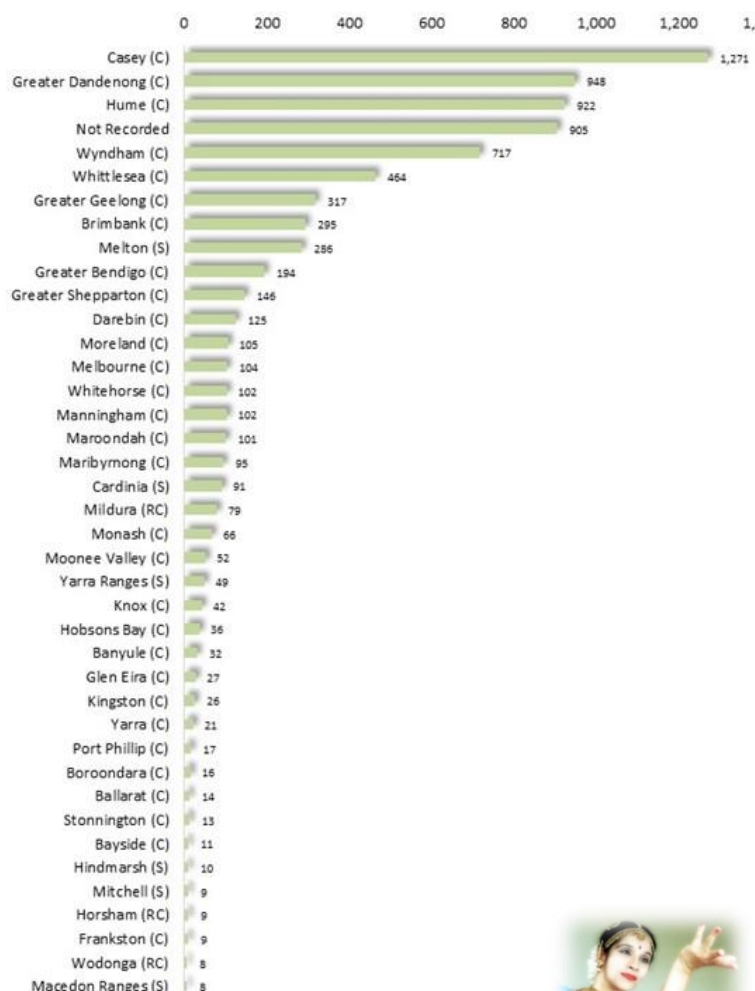
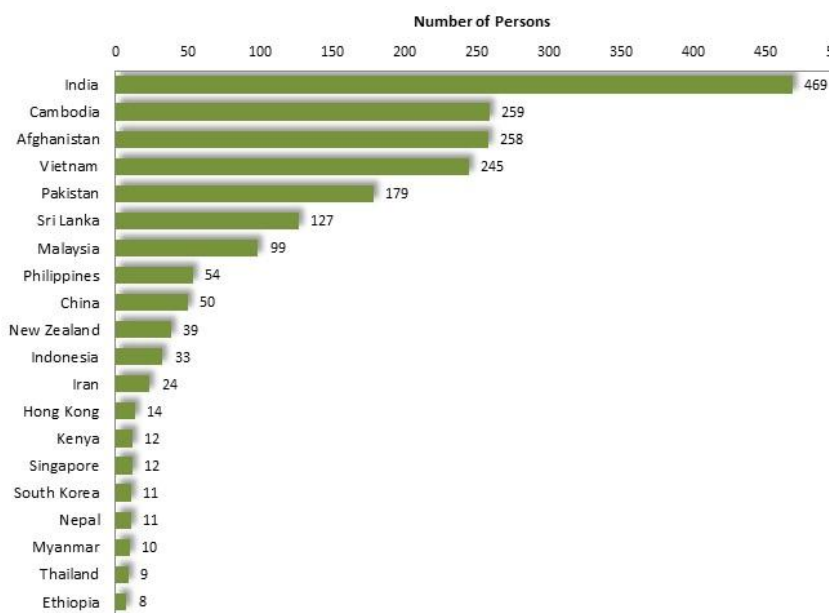
Among these new arrivals, 23% were born in India, 12.7% were from each of Cambodia and

Afghanistan, 12% were from Vietnam, and 9% were from Pakistan. Together, these nations account for over two-thirds (69%) of residents who had arrived in Australia in the 18 months prior to the 2021 Census.

## Settlement

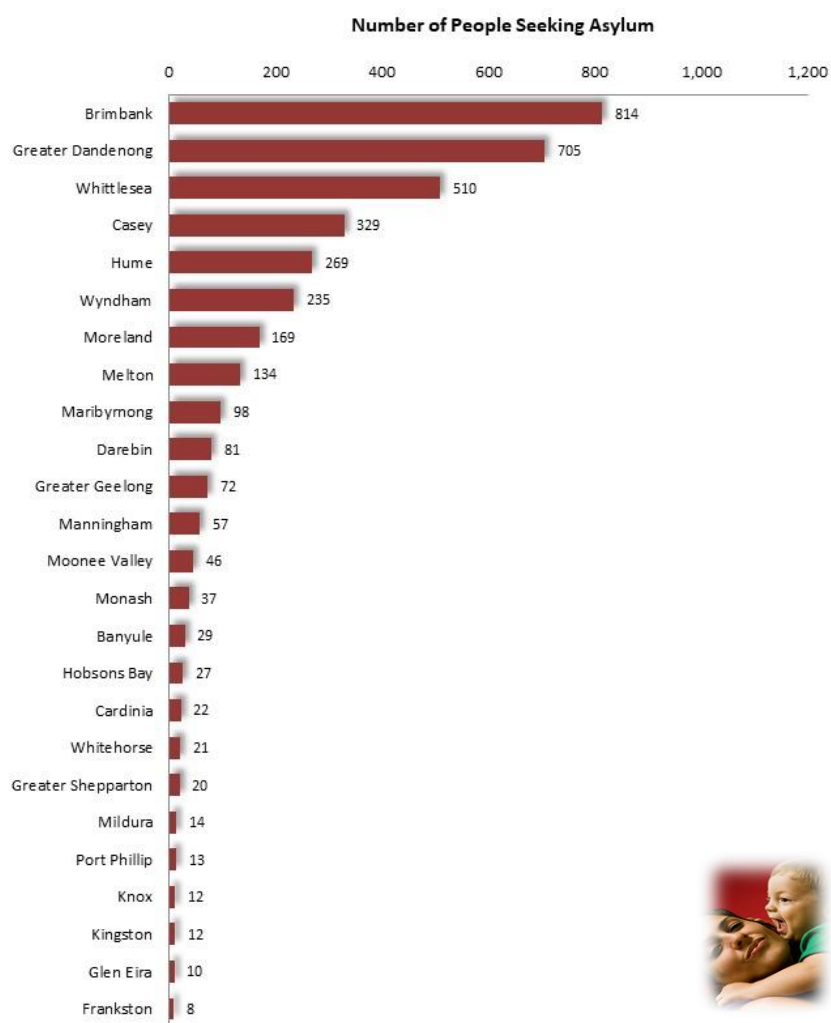
In 2023/24, 110,000 people settled in Victoria from overseas – twice the number recorded two years earlier. Among them, 4.9% or 5,393 people, settled in Greater Dandenong - representing the fifth highest rate of immigrant settlement among Victorian municipalities.

Migrant settlement by birthplace: Victoria, 2023/24



Among those who settled in Greater Dandenong in 2023/24, over half (47%) had arrived under skilled provisions, 35% under family reunion schemes, and 18% as humanitarian arrivals.

## People Seeking Asylum



Information about the number, geographic distribution and characteristics of people seeking asylum, who had arrived in Australia by boat, is published by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

### Municipality of Residence

In June 2024, 4,128 people seeking asylum were living in Victoria.

Approximately four-fifths (81%) were male and nearly one-fifth (19%) female.



People seeking asylum by municipality of residence: June 2024

Nineteen per cent of those people seeking asylum whose municipality could be determined<sup>2</sup> - numbering 705 - resided in Greater Dandenong - the second largest number in any Victorian municipality.

About two-fifths of people seeking asylum in Greater Dandenong (numbering 480 persons), resided in the suburbs of Dandenong and Dandenong North, with a further 94 in Springvale, 97 in Noble Park and Noble Park North, 26 in Springvale South and Dingley Village, and 20 in Keysborough. (Total slightly exceeds the municipal total, due to the inclusion of Dingley Village)

### Changes in Number of People seeking asylum

In the period from September 2014 to June 2024, the number of people seeking asylum residing in Victoria fell by 56%, or 5,229. In this time, a decline of 2,112 was recorded within Greater Dandenong – the largest in Victoria – accompanied by falls of 814 in Brimbank and 474 in Casey.

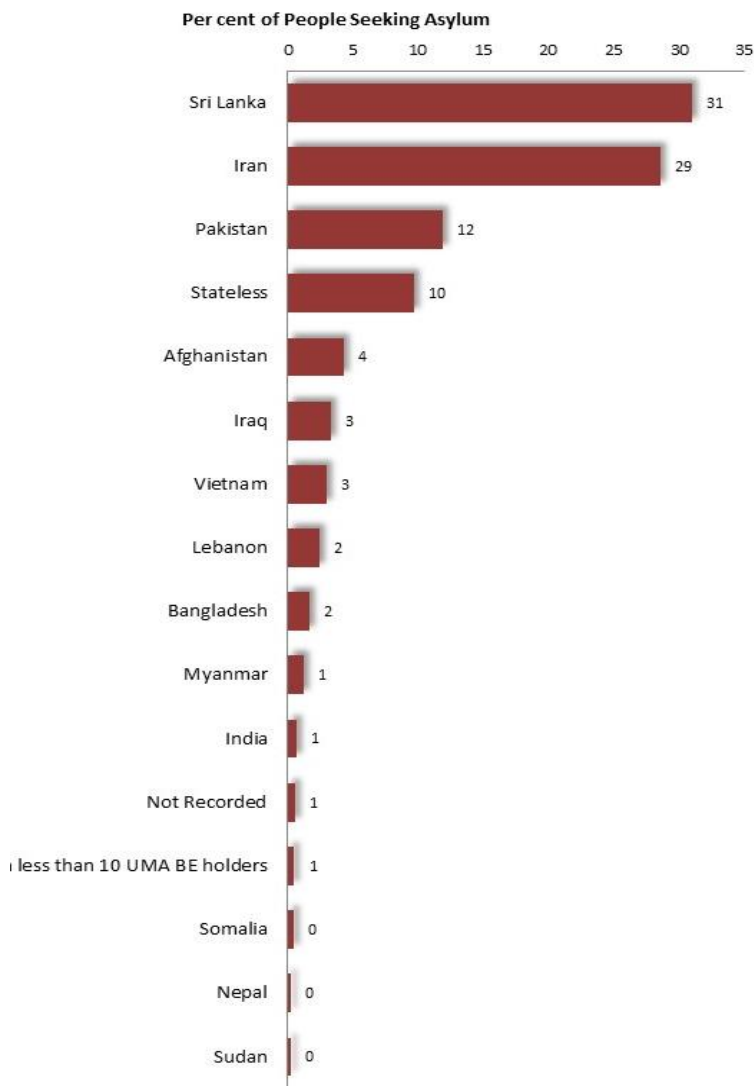
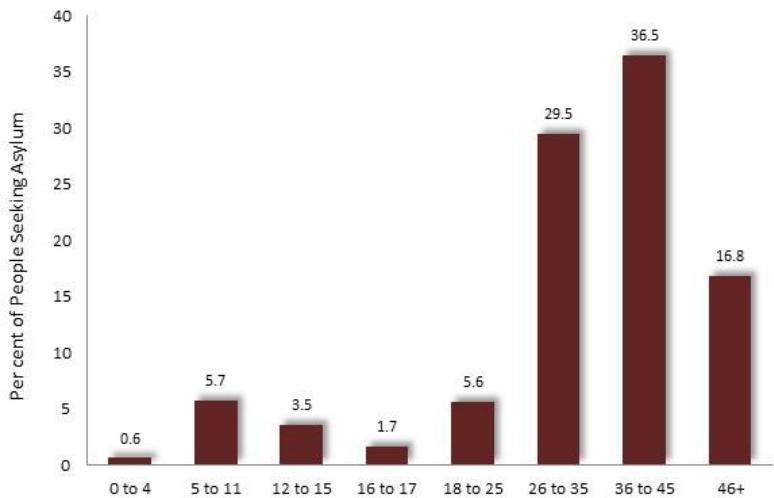
<sup>2</sup> For 384 people seeking asylum, their municipality of residence could not be determined, due to the manner in which information concerning their suburb of residence is tabulated by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. As a result, the total number of People seeking asylum used to calculate the percentages presented in the diagram above is less than the actual total.

Age

Information concerning age, birthplace and other social characteristics of people seeking asylum, is available at a State-wide level.

People seeking asylum across Victoria, by Age: June 2024

Among the 4,128 people seeking asylum in Victoria, one in six (17%) were aged up to 25 years, two-thirds (66%) were 26 to 45 years old, and 17% over 45.



Birthplace

People seeking asylum throughout Victoria are largely from Sri Lanka, accounting for nearly a third of asylum seekers, as well as Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. Together, these birthplaces account for nearly four-fifths (79%) of people seeking asylum in Victoria.

People seeking asylum across Victoria by selected birthplace: June 2024



## Spoken Languages

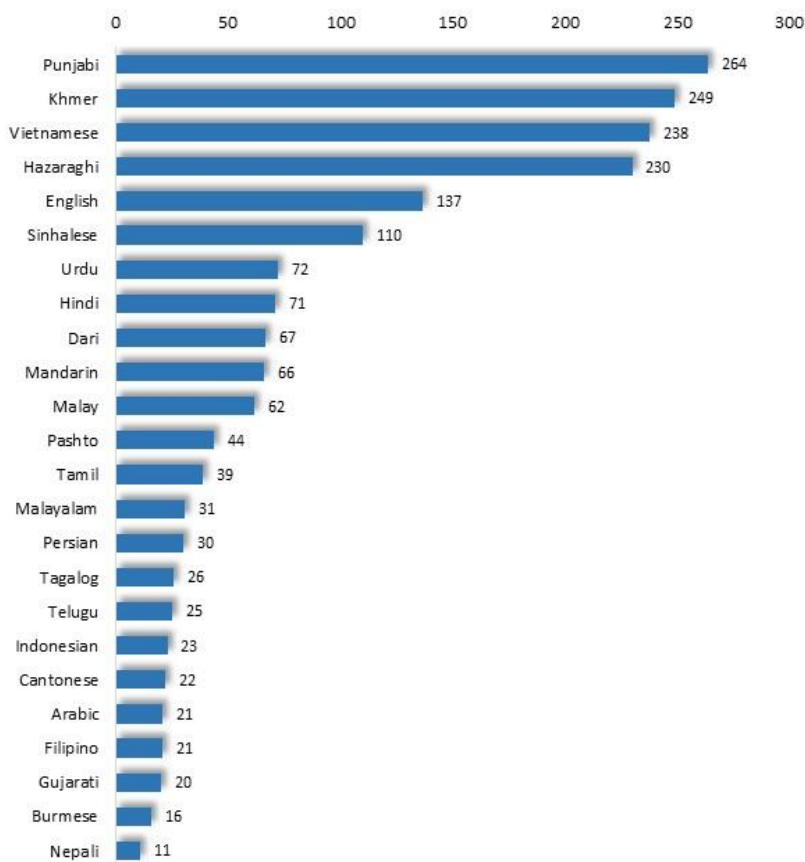
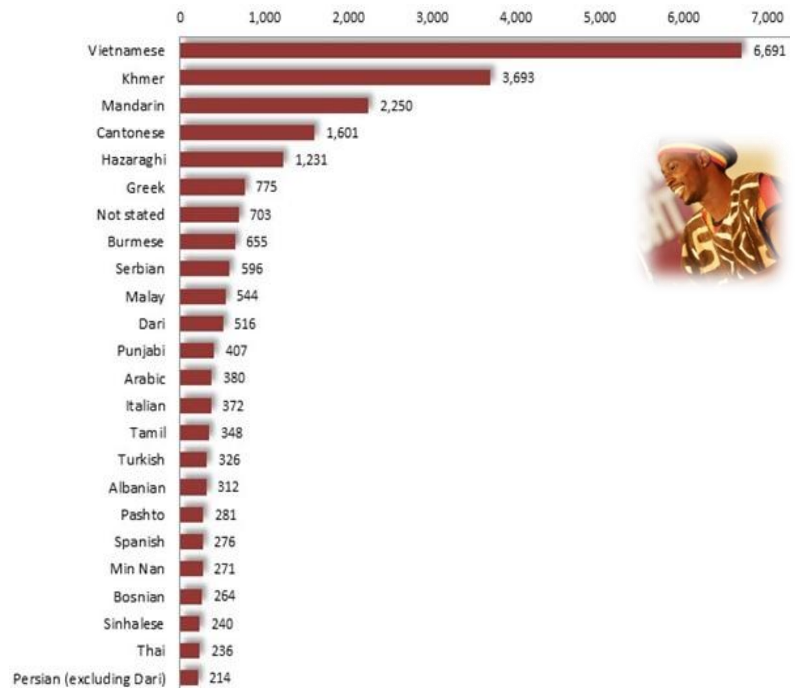
More than two-thirds of the residents of Greater Dandenong speak languages other than English in their homes, while one in seven has limited fluency in the use of spoken English.

Spoken Languages: Greater Dandenong, 2021

### Spoken Languages

In 2021, over 69% of residents spoke languages other than English in their homes – the largest proportion in Victoria and over twice the metropolitan level of 31%. Among the more than 135 different languages spoken are Vietnamese, Khmer, Chinese, Greek, Punjabi and Sinhalese.

Greater Dandenong has the widest diversity of languages in Victoria and the second highest in Australia.



The 2021 Census found that major spoken languages among residents who had arrived in Australia during the previous 18 months included Punjabi, Khmer, Vietnamese, Hazaraghi, Sinhalese and Urdu (diagram left).

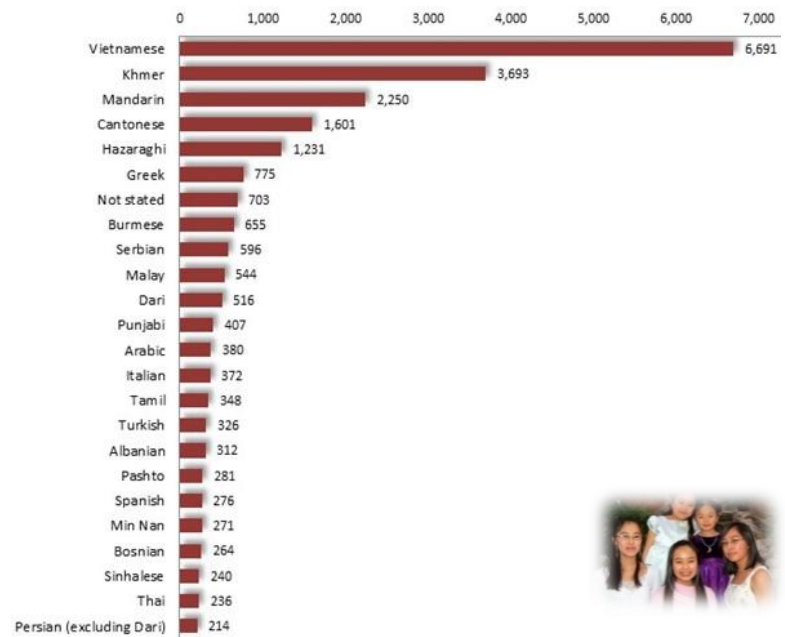
Spoken languages among residents who had arrived in Australia during the previous 18 months: Greater Dandenong, 2021

## English Fluency

Nearly one in five residents - accounting for nearly 23,000 people or 18% of the population at the time of the 2021 Census - has limited fluency in the use of spoken English – about four times the metropolitan level of 4.6%.

Many residents who speak Vietnamese, Khmer, Chinese languages, Afghani languages and Greek have limited English fluency (above right).

Limited English fluency by spoken language: Greater Dandenong, 2021



The prevalence of limited English fluency varies widely among the municipalities of Victoria. The map below illustrates the wide variation in the prevalence of limited English fluency across Melbourne.

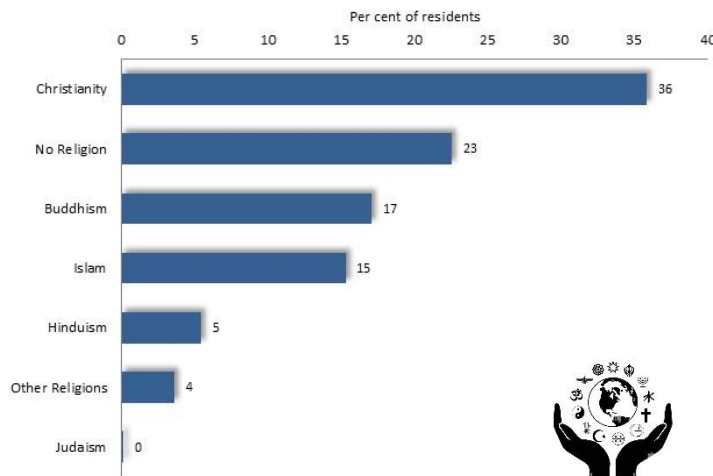
Per cent of residents with limited English fluency: metropolitan Melbourne, 2021



## Religion

### Religious Faith in Greater Dandenong

The cultural diversity of Greater Dandenong is reflected in its range of religious faiths, which include Buddhism, adhered to by approximately 17% of residents, Islam (15%), Hinduism (5%) and Christianity (36% - down from 41% in the 2016 Census). A further 23% of residents are atheists.

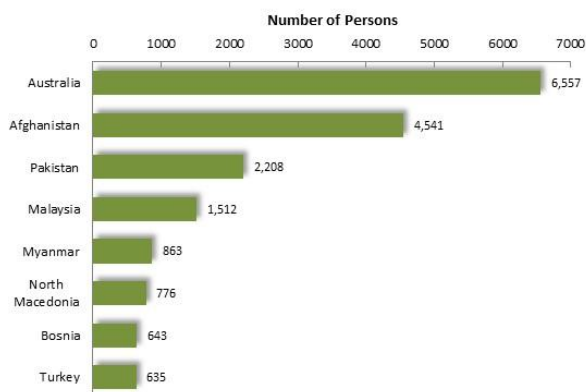


Per cent of residents who adhere to major faiths: Greater Dandenong, 2021

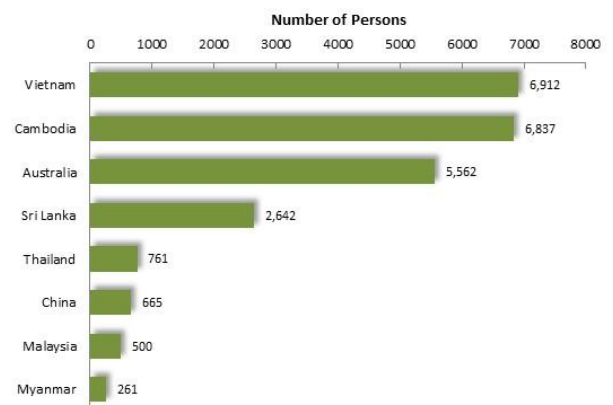
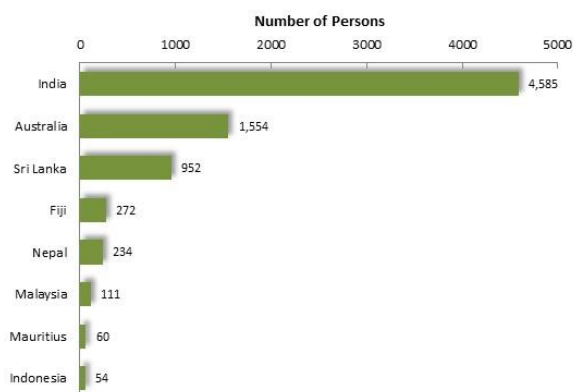
### Religion and Birthplaces

Major birthplaces among residents of each religion, vary widely. The number of residents from various birthplaces who adhere to each of the major religions, is illustrated below.

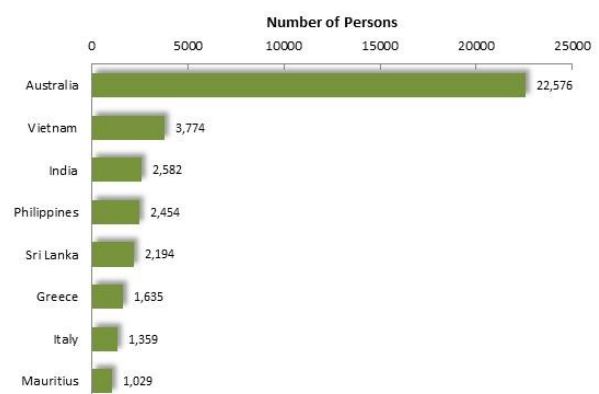
Number of people, by selected birthplace, who adhere to Buddhism: Greater Dandenong, 2021



Number of people, by selected birthplace, who adhere to Christianity: Greater Dandenong, 2021



Number of people, by selected birthplace, who adhere to Islam: Greater Dandenong, 2021



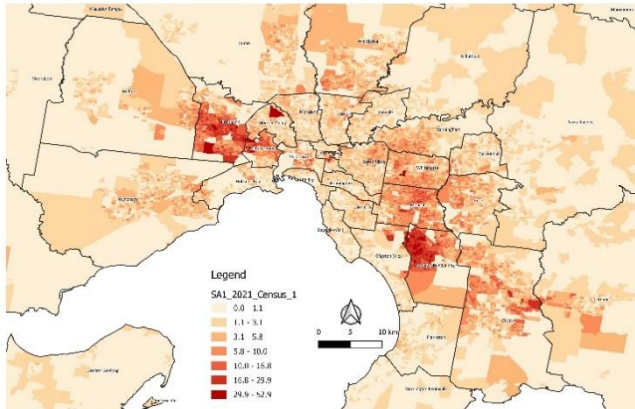
Number of people, by selected birthplace, who adhere to Hinduism: Greater Dandenong, 2021



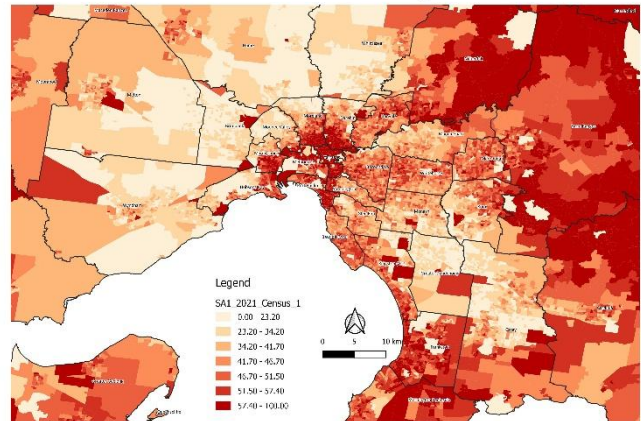
## Religion and Localities

The maps below illustrate the geographic distribution of major religions across Melbourne, with the 2021 Census recording notably high proportions of residents who adhere to Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism residing in Greater Dandenong.

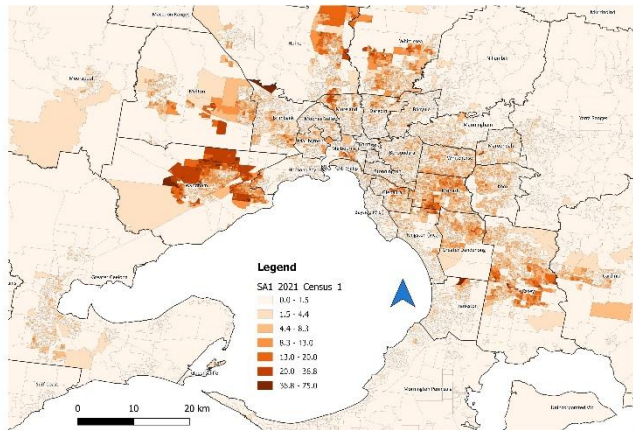
Per cent Persons who Adhere to Buddhism



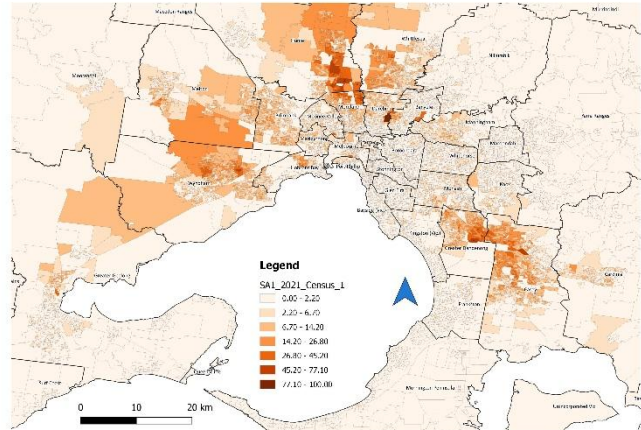
Per cent Persons with no Religion



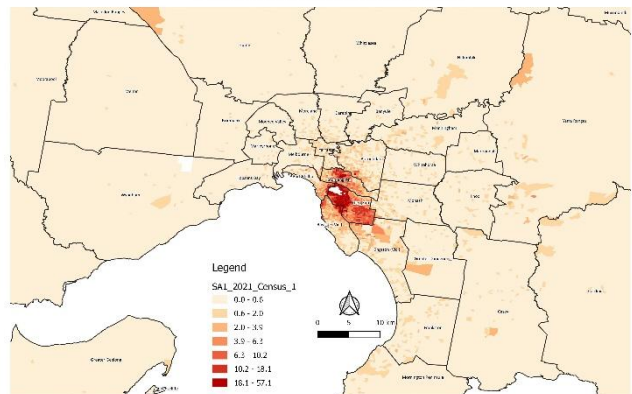
Per cent of Persons who adhere to Hinduism



Per cent of Persons who adhere to Islam



Per cent Persons with adhere to Judaism





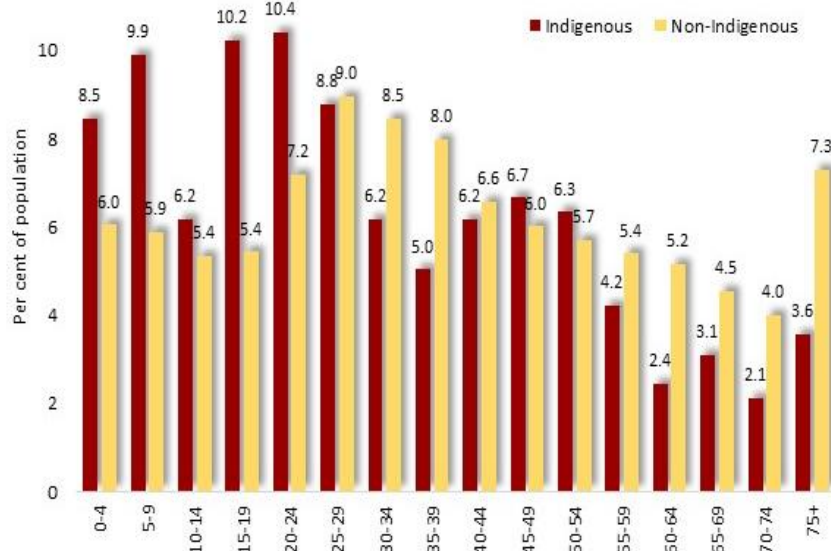
## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Residents

### Population

In the past forty years, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders recorded by the Census in Greater Dandenong has increased four-fold, from 150 in 1981, to 615 by 2021, representing 0.4% of the population. Within this city and its adjoining municipalities<sup>3</sup>, the 2021 Census recorded 7,076 Aboriginal residents.



Per cent of population by Age: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Residents, Greater Dandenong, 2021

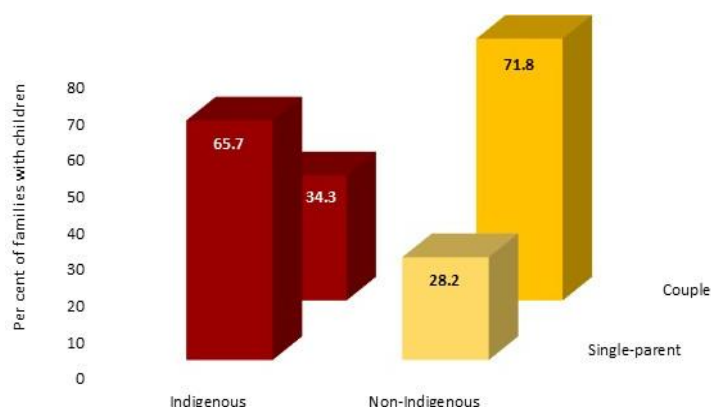


Indigenous people living in Greater Dandenong are relatively young, with nearly half (45%) aged less than 25 years, compared with 30% of the general population. Conversely, 9% are aged 65 years or more, compared with 16% of non-Aboriginal residents. Their median age is 28 years, in contrast to 37 years

for the general population, reflecting their lower life expectancy and higher birth rates.

Families with children by type and Indigenous status, Greater Dandenong, 2021

In 2021, nearly two-thirds (65.7%) of couple and single-parent families in Greater Dandenong with Indigenous members were one-parent families – more than twice the level of 28% among other families. In the same year, 47% of local Indigenous families with children had no parent in paid employment compared with 32% across all families with children in Greater Dandenong.



Early birth rates were relatively high among young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, with 6.7% of 15-24-year-old women in Greater Dandenong having borne a child, compared with 4.7% of non-Aboriginal women of that age.

<sup>3</sup> The municipality of Greater Dandenong and the adjoining municipalities of Casey, Frankston, Kingston, Knox and Monash.

## Education

In 2021, 30% of young Indigenous adults aged 20 to 24 years had left school before completing year 11 – over three times the corresponding level of 8% among non-Indigenous young adults in Greater Dandenong. Among Indigenous residents aged 25 to 44 years, 3.3% held a degree or higher qualification in 2021, compared with 18% of non-Indigenous people of that age across Greater Dandenong.

Further information of relevance comes from national sources. The 2021 Australian Early Development Index found that 42% of Australian prep. pupils of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent were vulnerable in one or more domains of development<sup>4</sup>, compared with 22% of all prep. pupils across the nation.

## Employment

The 2021 Census recorded an unemployment rate of 13% among 25 to 64 year-old Indigenous residents of Greater Dandenong, compared with 4% among the general population.

## Housing

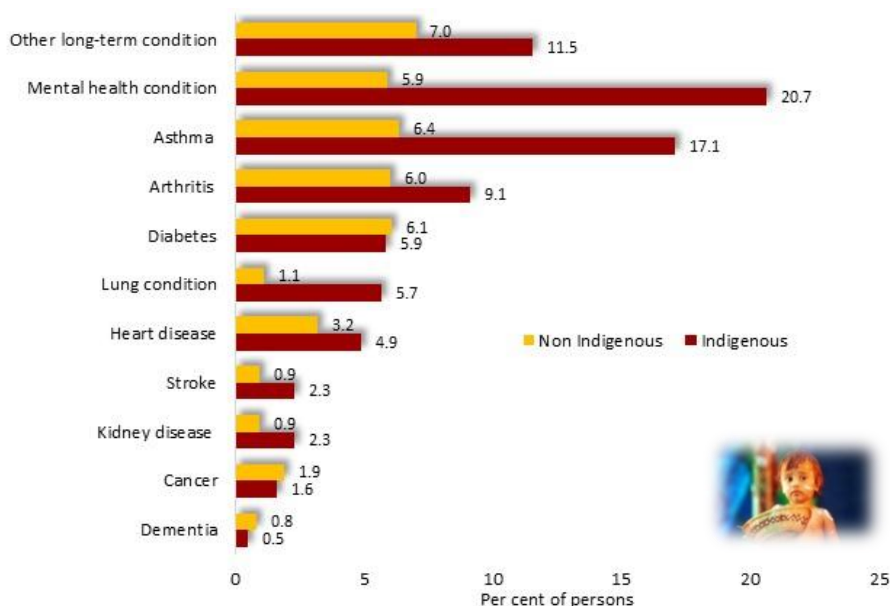
Indigenous residents Greater Dandenong are less than half as likely to own or be purchasing their homes (26%) as the general population (63%), and more often rent their accommodation. Twenty-seven per cent of Indigenous residents rent from government or community agencies, compared with 2.9% of others.

## Disability and Health

The 2021 Census revealed that the prevalence of severe disability stood at 14.4% among Indigenous residents – nearly twice the corresponding rate of 7.7% among the general population.

The prevalence of long-term health conditions – particularly those relating to mental health, lung function and asthma, and heart

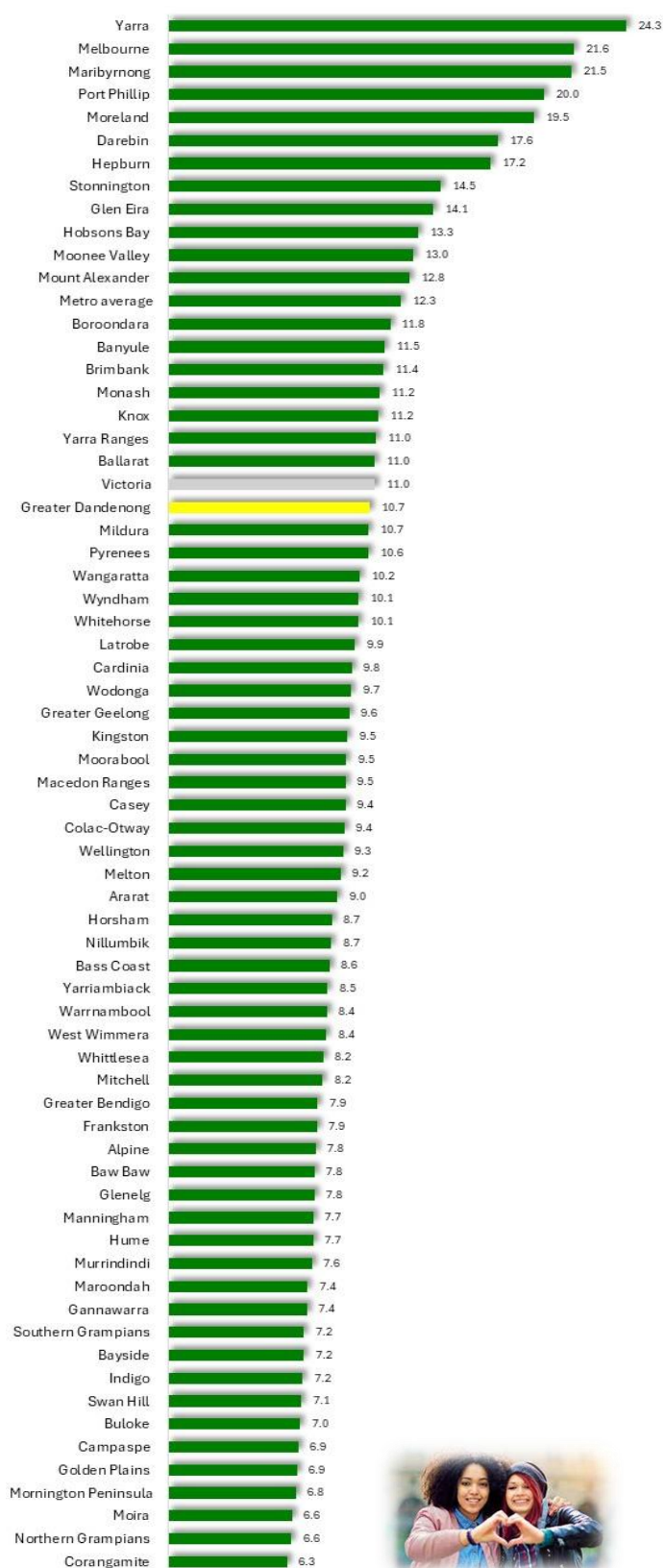
Long-term conditions by Indigenous status:  
Greater Dandenong, 2021



disease – is also markedly higher among Indigenous residents in Greater Dandenong (diagram, above right). For example, the 2021 Census recorded that approximately 21% of Indigenous residents had experienced mental health conditions sometime in the previous 12 months, compared with approximately 6% of non-Indigenous residents. A similar disparity was recorded in the prevalence of asthma, experienced by 17% of Indigenous residents and 6.4% of others.

<sup>4</sup> These were physical, emotional, social, language and communication.

## LGBTI Residents



### Population

In the 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey, 11% of Victorians and 12.3% of metropolitan residents identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

In Greater Dandenong, the corresponding figure was 10.7%.

The highest proportions of residents who identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual were in inner-metropolitan localities, and the lowest in rural communities.

Proportion of adults identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual: Victoria, 2023

Notably, these findings aggregated survey responses for all age groups. It is likely that the percentage would be higher for younger adults, as they have been for other surveys<sup>5</sup>. Based on the findings of such investigations, the prevalence of same-sex attraction among adults – regardless of how people chose to identify themselves in their middle and older ages – may approach 18%, or one-fifth, of the Victorian adult population.

<sup>5</sup> In the 2022 Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey, 18% of 15-34 year olds, though the lesser proportion of 4.7% of all respondents aged 15 or more, stated that they were lesbian, gay or bisexual. Similarly, a 2024 Australian investigation, based on the findings of a separate population survey, concluded that 17.7% of respondents identified “...with a diverse sexuality” (Higgins et al, 2024).

Higgins, D.H., Lawrence, D., Halsam, D.M., Mathews, B., Malacova, E., Erskine, H., Finkelhor, D., Pacella, R., Mejnck, F., Thomas, H.J., and Scott, J. (2024). Prevalence of Diverse Genders and Sexualities in Australia and Associations With Five Forms of Child Maltreatment and Multi-type Maltreatment. Child Maltreatment, Jan. 2024

## Discrimination and abuse

Many young people experience antagonism and aggression within their families, stemming from their gender identity or sexual orientation<sup>6</sup>, an experience which may be accentuated within particular cultural groups<sup>7</sup>. Victimization of young same-sex attracted people may occur at school, sport, social and other settings, resulting in social exclusion from peers, harassment, threats and violence. An Australian investigation found that just 12% of same-sex attracted young people in an Australian sample felt safe at school and 43% on the street.<sup>8</sup>

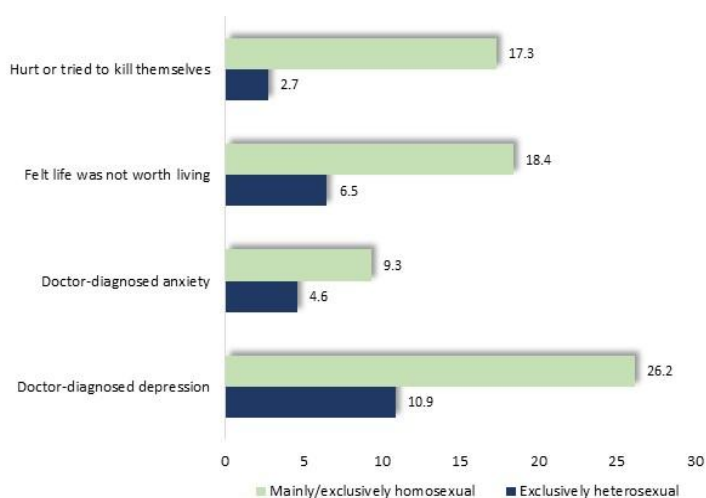
Further research reveals similarly adverse experiences among same-sex attracted or gender diverse people. One inquiry determined that 44% of a sample of 1,750 LGBTI Australians had experienced “verbal abuse relating to their sexuality or gender” and 16% had been physically abused.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, 34% of LGBTI survey participants in the 2017 Victorian Population Health Survey had experienced discrimination in the previous year, compared with 16% of others.

## Mental Health

Exclusion, harassment, abuse and violence jeopardizes the mental health of many young people and adults.

Mental health concerns: young, women who identified as same-sex attracted: 2020

An Australian study found that, compared with heterosexual women, those who were same-sex attracted experienced higher rates of doctor-diagnosed depression (26.2% compared with 10.9) or anxiety disorders (9.3% vs. 4.6%) in the previous four years, while a greater proportion had harmed or tried to kill themselves in the previous six months (17.3% vs. 2.7%).<sup>10</sup>



Same-sex attracted participants in the 2017 Victorian Population Health Survey registered lower levels of satisfaction with life, with 28% assessing their life satisfaction as ‘fair’ or ‘poor’ compared with 20% of others; higher rates of psychological distress (24% compared with 15% of non-LGB individuals); and elevated levels of doctor-diagnosed depression or anxiety (45% compared with 26% of non-LGB survey participants). Similarly, the 2021 Census found that among Greater Dandenong residents who were members of same-sex couples, 10% were experiencing mental health disorders, compared with 5.1% of members of opposite-sex couples.

<sup>6</sup> Fairchild, J. (2020). PiP Webinar: LGBTIQ Inclusive Prevention in Conversation with Rainbow Health Victoria. May 27, 2020 Family and Community Services (undated). I’m LGBTIQ and Experiencing Domestic Violence.

<sup>7</sup> National LGBT Health Alliance (2009). Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of Violence on Young Australians

<sup>8</sup> National LGBT Health Alliance (2009). Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of Violence on Young Australians

<sup>9</sup> National LGBT Health Alliance (2009). Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of Violence on Young Australians

<sup>10</sup> McNair, R., Kavanagh, A., Agues, P and Tong, B. (2004). The Mental Health Status of Young Adult and Mid-life Non-heterosexual Australian Women. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, Vol. 29 No. 3 pp. 265-271

## Health

Among respondents to the 2017 Victorian Population Health Survey, 36% of LGBTI individuals assessed their health as 'excellent' or 'very good' compared with 43% of others. Elevated rates of smoking (18% daily smokers, compared with 12% among others), and of chronic health conditions (36% compared with 25%) were also documented.

Among people who identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual in the 2022/23 National Drug Strategy Household Survey, the prevalence of illicit drug use in the previous 12 months, as well as daily smoking, e-cigarette use and risky alcohol consumption, was in most instances, two to three times higher than among those who identified as heterosexual.

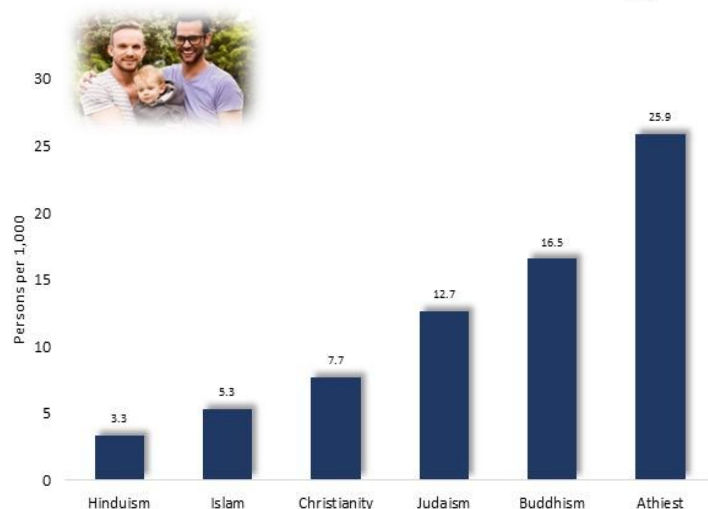
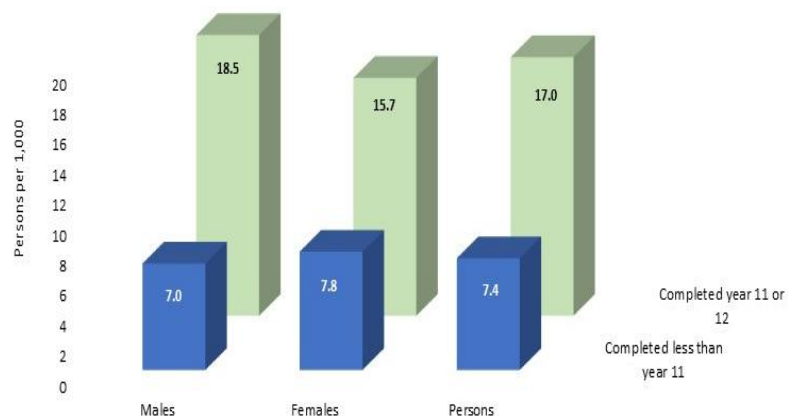
## LGBTIQ: prevalence by selected social characteristics

Evidence presented by the findings of the 2021 Census provides some suggestion about social environments which may set limits upon opportunities for same-sex attracted people to give free and open expression to their sexual preferences. In particular, those who were less educated, employed in menial occupations or residing in rural communities, may have fewer opportunities to safely enjoy a cohabiting, same-sex relationship than some of their more educated, affluent and professional counterparts in inner-urban localities.

### Education

People who recorded in the Census that they were living as same-sex couples were more likely to have completed secondary school.

Persons living as same sex couples per 1,000 people living as couples, by educational attainment: Victoria, 2021



### Religion

The proportion of people identifying themselves as members of same-sex cohabiting couples, also varied with religion.

Proportion of cohabiting residents who were members of same-sex couples, by major religion: Victoria, 2021

## Educational Outcomes

Young people in Greater Dandenong experience less favorable early school development, leave school earlier, less often attend university and are more often disengaged from employment and education, than those throughout Melbourne.

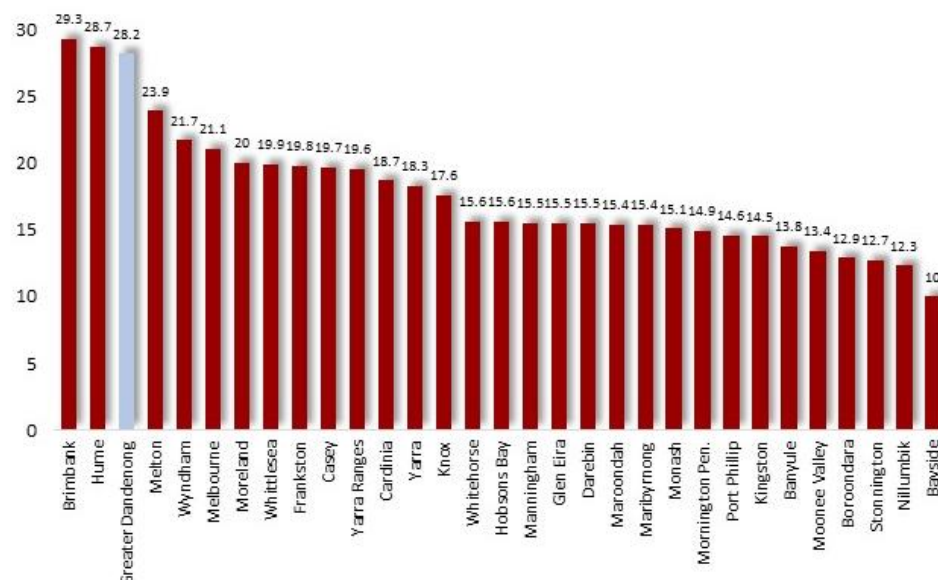


### Early Childhood Progress

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) measures the progress of all pupils in their first year of school across Australia, in five domains of development: physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive, and communication and general knowledge.

The 2021 AEDC findings revealed that 28% of prep pupils in Greater Dandenong were ‘developmentally vulnerable’ in *one or more* of these fields of development. For each metropolitan municipality, the percentage of prep pupils who are considered ‘developmentally vulnerable’ in one or more domains, is illustrated in the diagram at right.

Percent prep. pupils developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains by metropolitan municipality, 2021



### Pre-School & Kinder Participation

The 2021 Australian Early Development Indicators recorded that 6.7% of prep. pupils in Greater Dandenong schools had not participated in a pre-school program in the preceding year – nearly double the corresponding proportion of 3.8% across Victoria, and the second highest level in Melbourne.

### Literacy and Numeracy in Primary and Secondary School

The proportions of Greater Dandenong pupils in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 who *did not* meet the national literacy benchmarks in 2019 (the latest year for which this information is available), were approximately twice the Victorian average in these year levels. Among local pupils in year 9, the percentage whose test results were below the national benchmark was the third highest in the state.

The proportion of Greater Dandenong pupils who *did not* meet numeracy benchmarks was also approximately twice the Victorian level. Among year 9 pupils, the proportion from Greater Dandenong who did not meet the benchmark was the highest in the state.



## Early School Leaving

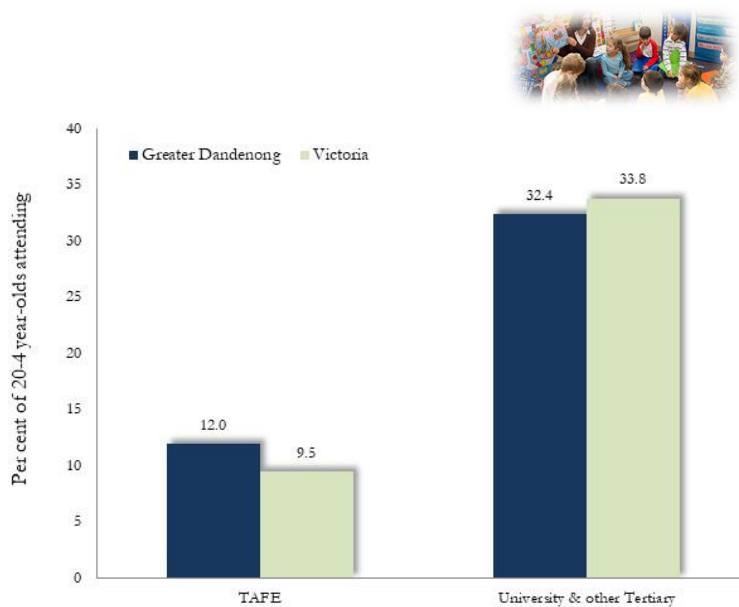
The 2021 Census found that 8.1% of young adults aged 20-24 in Greater Dandenong (including 9% of males and 7.2% of females) had left school before completing year eleven - compared with 6.3% across Melbourne. Among residents aged 45 years or less – or born after 1976 – early leaving rates among men have surpassed those among women, and by a margin that has steadily widened with the passing of time.

The proportion of young adults from selected birthplaces who had left school early, ranges from 64% among young people from Somalia, to fewer than 2% of those from India.

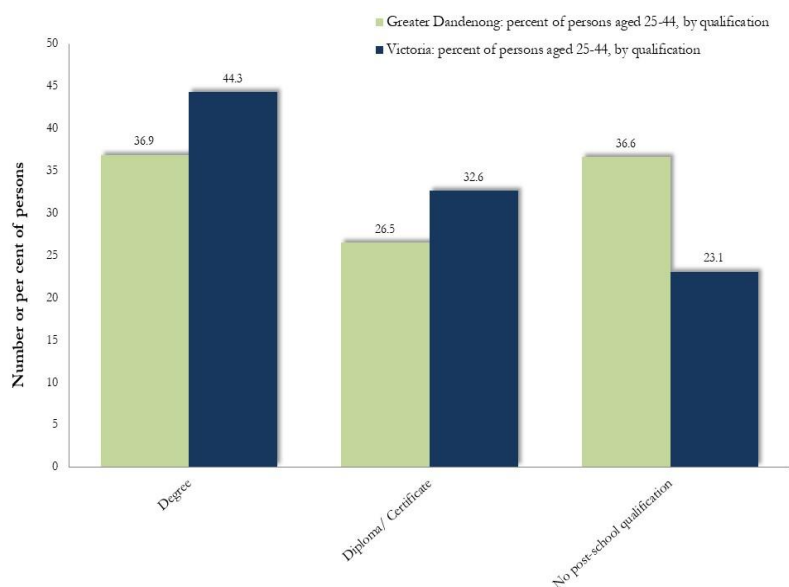
## Tertiary Participation Rates

Levels of participation in tertiary education among young adults in Greater Dandenong are lower than the metropolitan average, with 32% of local 20-24 year-olds attending university or other tertiary institutions (up from 23% in 2011), compared with 38% across Melbourne.

TAFE and university attendance: 20-24 year-olds, Greater Dandenong, 2021



Rates of attendance at TAFE though, are relatively high, with 12% of 20-24 year-olds in Greater Dandenong participating in TAFE courses, compared with 9.5% of Victorian residents that age.



## Qualifications

Consideration of qualifications is important to residents aged 25 to 44 years, among whom employment levels are relatively high. The proportion of residents this age who hold tertiary qualifications is lower than the Victorian level.

Qualifications among persons aged 25-44: Greater Dandenong and Victoria, 2021

## Education & Employment Prospects

The 2021 Census found that, among Greater Dandenong residents aged 30-39 years, 84% of those with a degree were employed, compared with 50% of people who had left school before completing year 11.

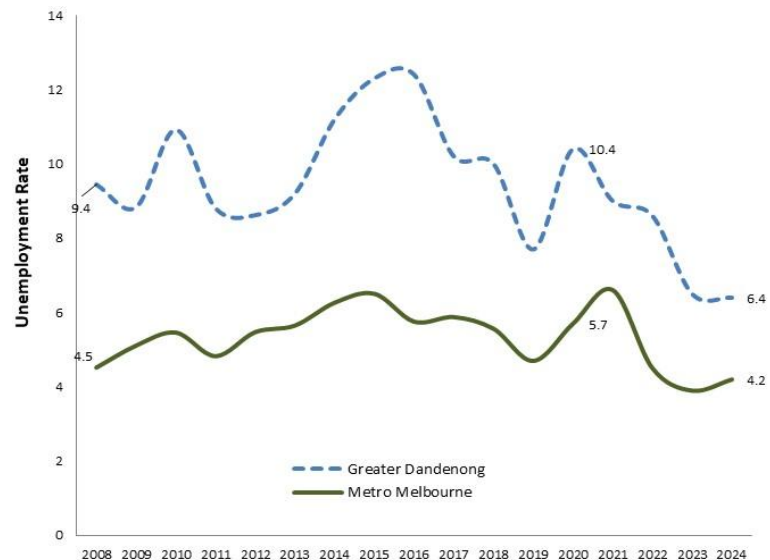
## Employment and Unemployment

The findings of the 2021 Census, coupled with other sources, offer insights into employment, occupations and labour force participation among residents of Greater Dandenong, as well as the nature of the paid work which takes place within this city.



### Unemployment

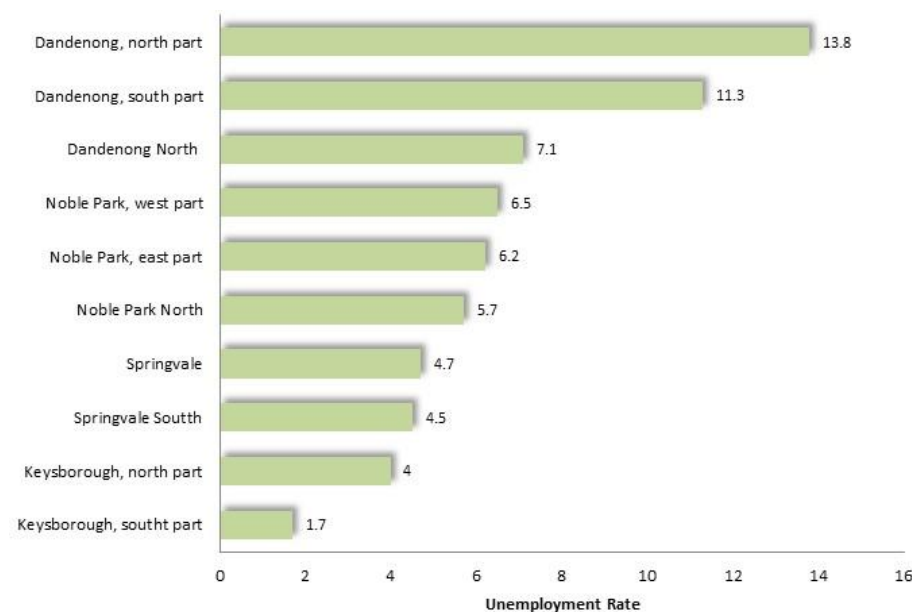
Unemployment rates in Greater Dandenong have fluctuated in the past decade, most recently declining unsteadily from 12.4% in June 2016 to 6.4% by 2024. Current rates though, remain the highest in Victoria and substantially exceed the metropolitan average of 4.2%.



Unemployment rates: Greater Dandenong and Metropolitan Melbourne, 2008-2024

### Unemployment and suburbs

This percentage represents 5,400 people who were unemployed in Greater Dandenong by June 2024 - a decline of 1,600 in the number of unemployed residents in mid-2022.

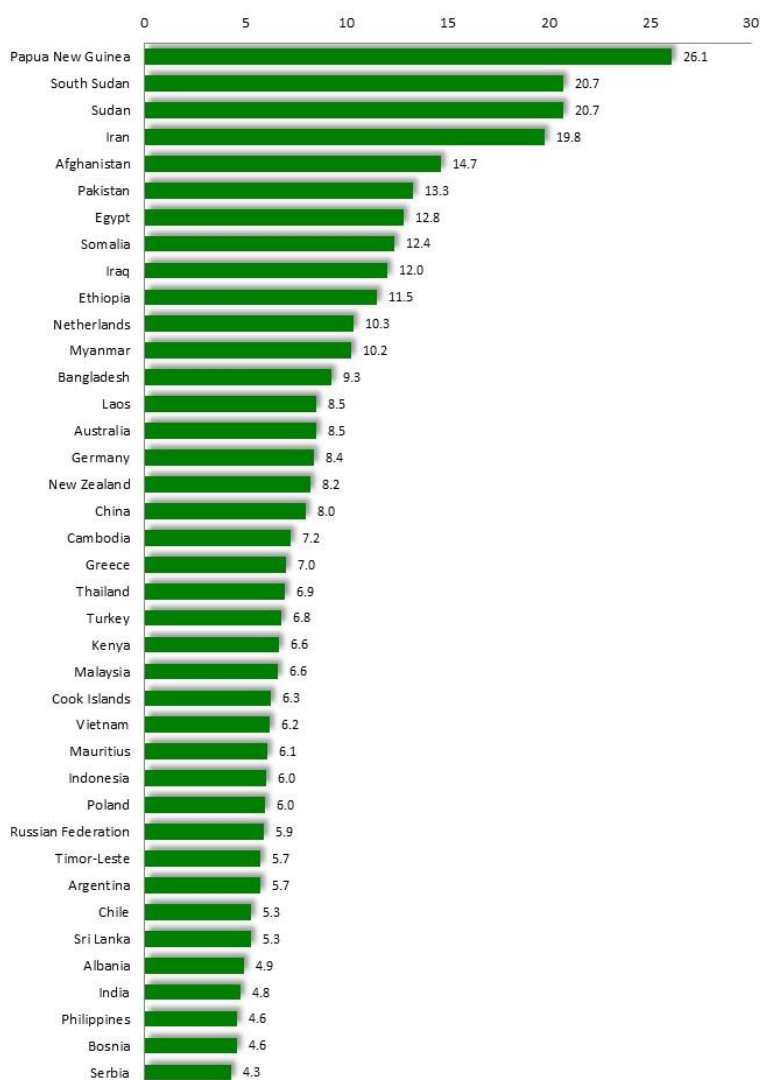


Among the suburbs of Greater Dandenong, unemployment rates in June 2024 were highest in Dandenong, at 13.8%, and lowest in Keysborough, at 1.7% in the southern part of that suburb.

Unemployment rate by suburb: Greater Dandenong and Melbourne, June 2024



## Unemployment and birthplace



The 2021 Census found that unemployment levels varied widely with birthplace, from less than 5% among residents from Macedonia, Nepal, Fiji, Serbia, Bosnia, India and Philippines, to more than 20% among those from Papua New Guinea and Sudan.

Unemployment by selected birthplace: persons aged 15 to 64, Greater Dandenong, 2021

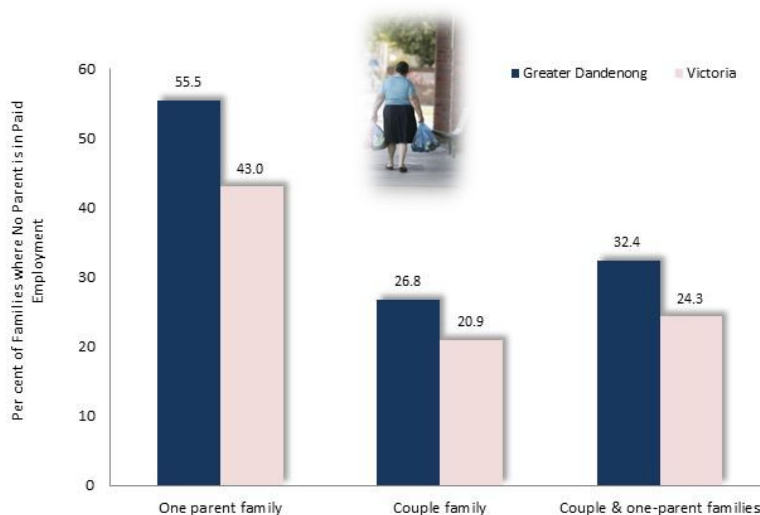
Overseas-born residents account for over two-thirds of unemployed residents.

## Families with No Parent in Paid Employment

The 2021 Census revealed that among families with children in Greater Dandenong, the head of the family had no paid work in 55% of single parent families, while 27% of couple families with children had no parent in paid employment (diagram, below).

Overall, 32.4% of families with children in Greater Dandenong had no parent in paid employment – the highest level in Melbourne, and substantially higher than the corresponding State figure of 24%.

Per cent of families with children that have no parent in paid employment, by family type: Greater Dandenong and Victoria, 2021



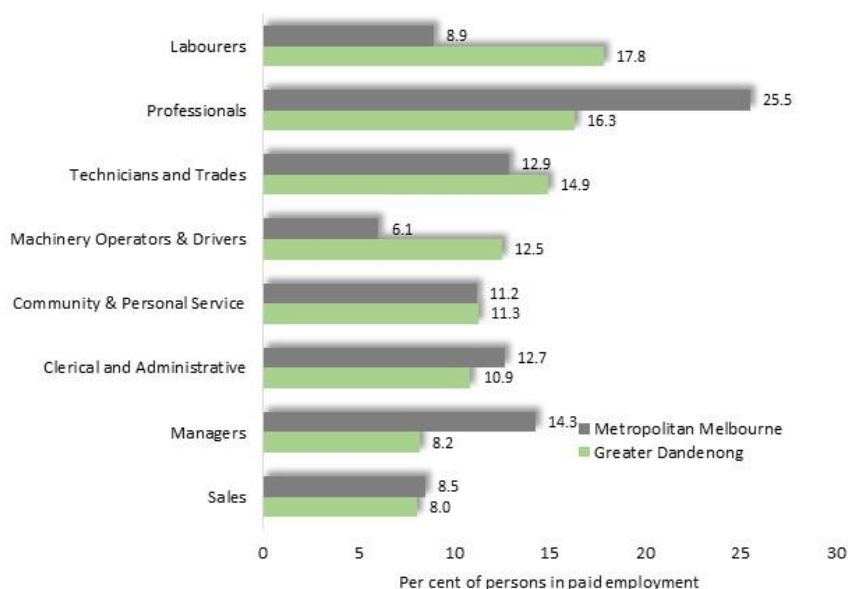
## Occupations and Industry of Employment among Residents

In 2021, approximately 66,000 residents, or approximately two-fifths (42%) of the population, held paid work – a rise of 7,000 since 2016.

### Occupations

The distribution of employed residents of Greater Dandenong among the major categories of occupation, is illustrated on the right. Notably, the proportion of employed residents who were labourers, machinery operators, technicians and trades workers, exceeded the State average.

Occupations of employed residents:  
Greater Dandenong and Victoria, 2021

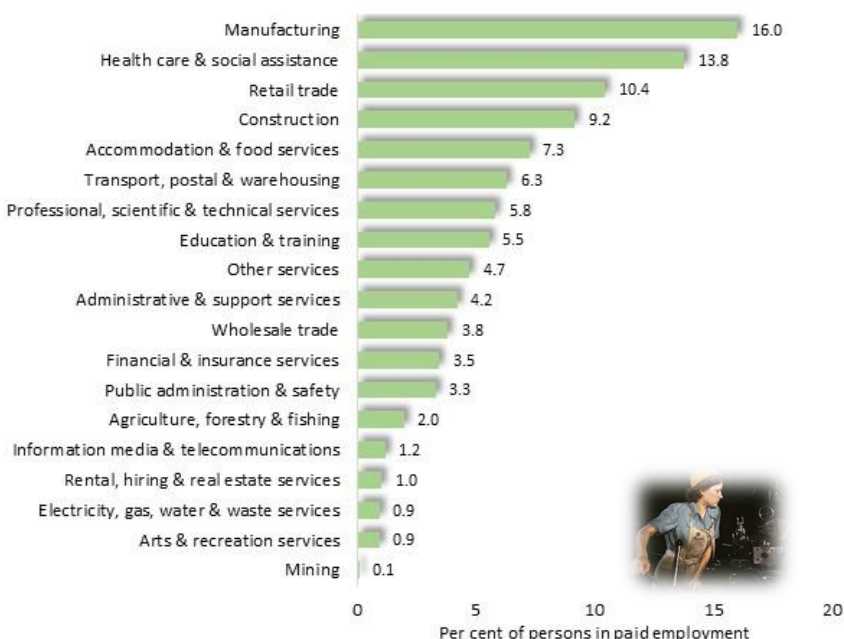


By contrast, the representation of local workers in professional or managerial occupations was markedly lower than the Victorian level.

### Industry

The distribution of employed residents among categories of industry was similar to the metropolitan pattern, with the principal exception of manufacturing, which accounted for 16% of jobs held by residents, compared with 7% of employment across Melbourne.

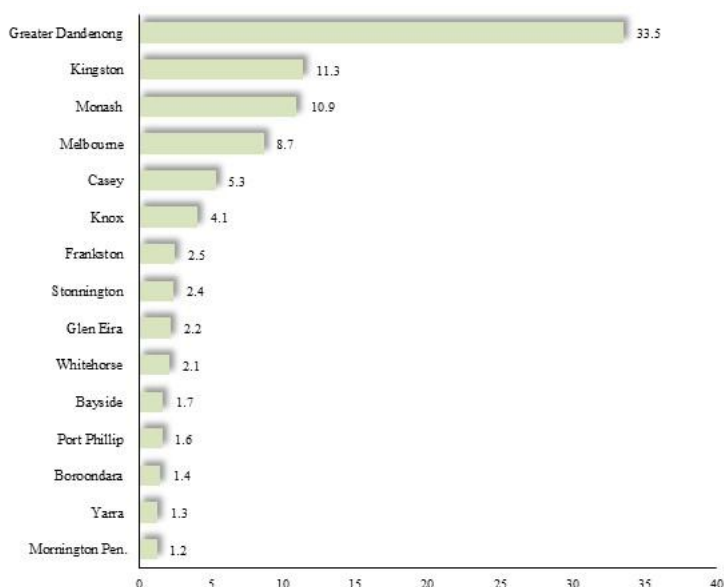
Industry of employed residents: Greater Dandenong, 2021



## Places of Employment

Of the 66,000 Greater Dandenong residents in paid employment in 2021, about a third (34%) worked in Greater Dandenong, and about a third in neighbouring municipalities such as Kingston, Monash, Melbourne, Casey, Knox and Frankston.

Municipality of employment: residents of Greater Dandenong, 2021

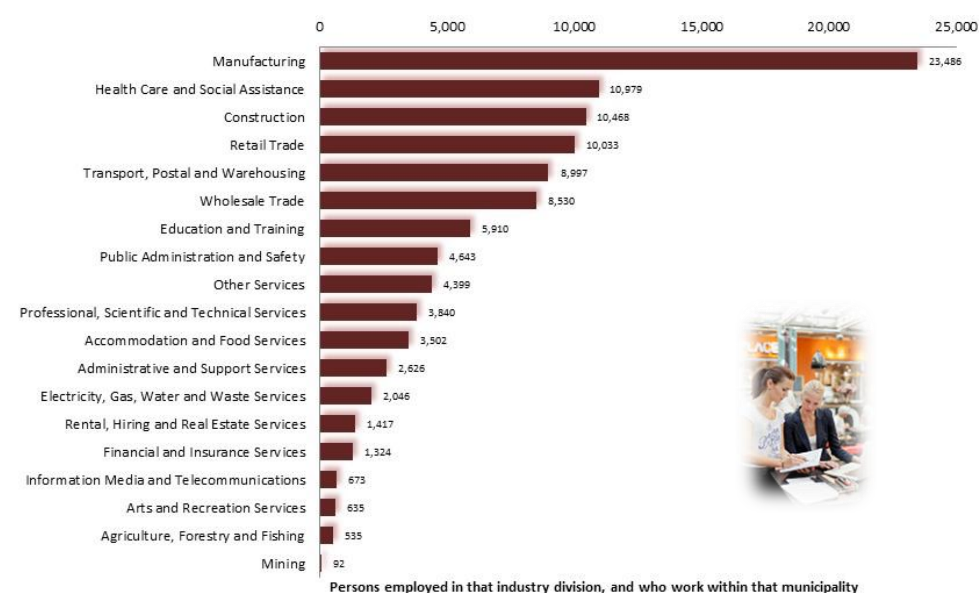


## Employment within Greater Dandenong

The 2021 Census recorded that 113,000 people worked in Greater Dandenong, an increase of 16,000 over the comparable level of 2016. Greater Dandenong therefore hosts 47,000 more jobs than the number of its residents in paid employment.

### Industry Sector

Employment within Greater Dandenong includes 23,000 jobs in manufacturing, representing 21% of



employment within the city, as well as over 11,000 in health care & social assistance, and more than 10,000 jobs in construction and retail.

Industry of work among persons employed within Greater Dandenong, 2021

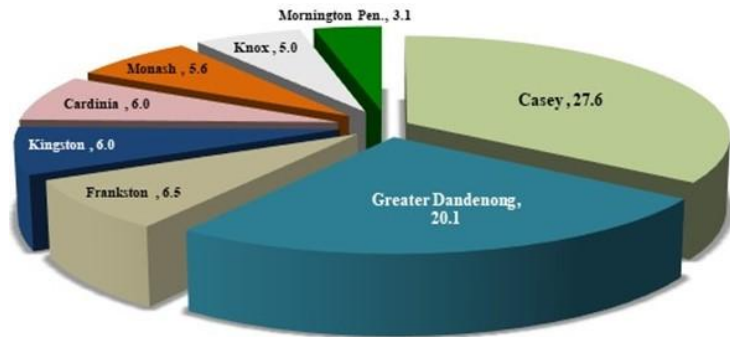
### Occupations

The distribution of employment within Greater Dandenong across occupational categories is similar to that for Victoria, except for professionals and community services workers, who account for a smaller proportion of jobs within the municipality than across Victoria; and machinery operators and drivers, who account for a substantially higher proportion of employment in Greater Dandenong than across the state.

### Places of Residence

Among the 113,000 people who work within Greater Dandenong, nearly 28% reside in Casey, 20% in Greater Dandenong and lesser numbers in neighbouring or nearby municipalities.

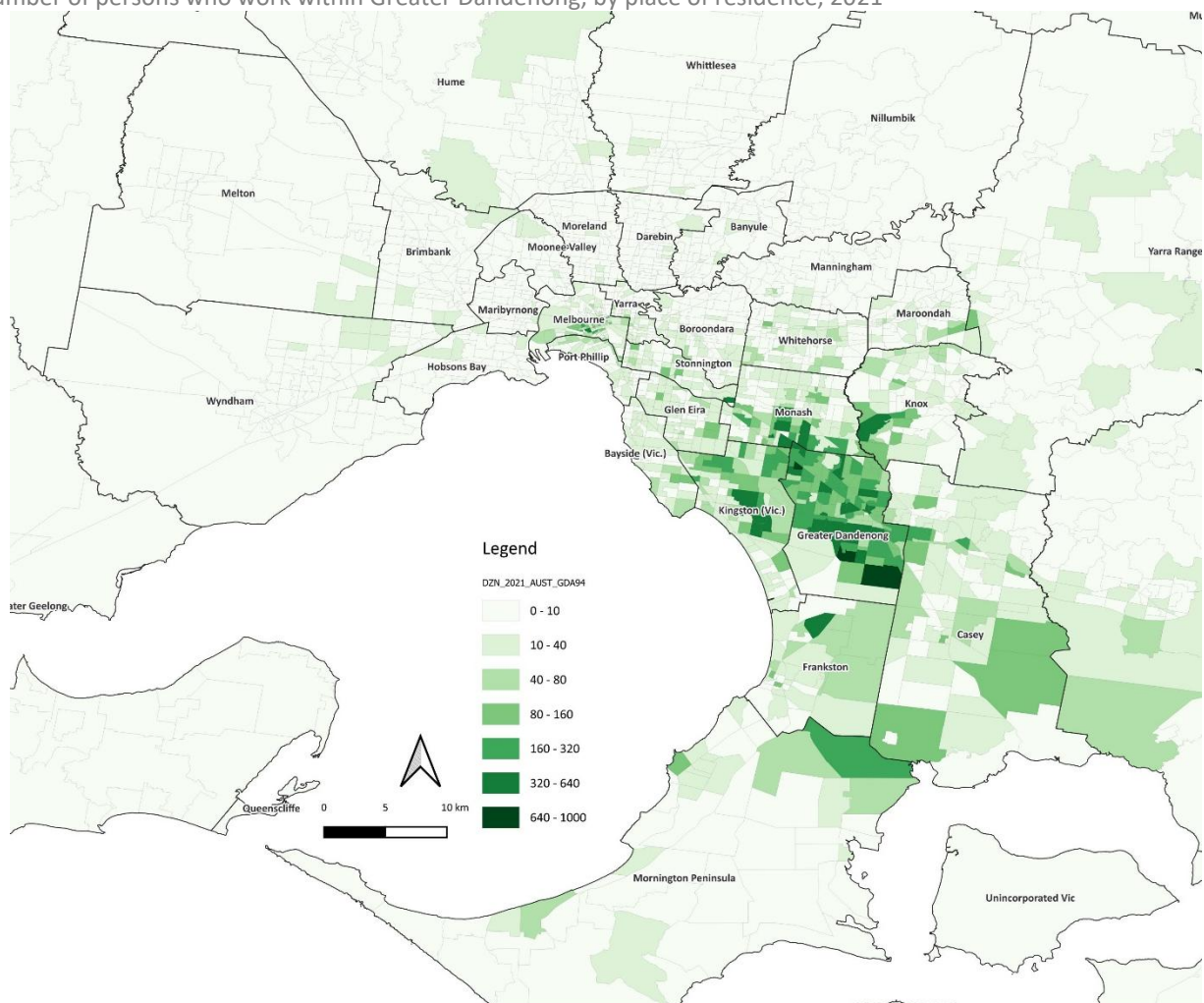
Residents of Greater Dandenong and its immediate neighbours account for nearly three-quarters (71%) of employment within the municipality.



Persons employed within Greater Dandenong:  
municipality of residence, 2021

The accompanying map shows the same trend, illustrating the high number of people who work within Greater Dandenong who live in this, or nearby, municipalities.

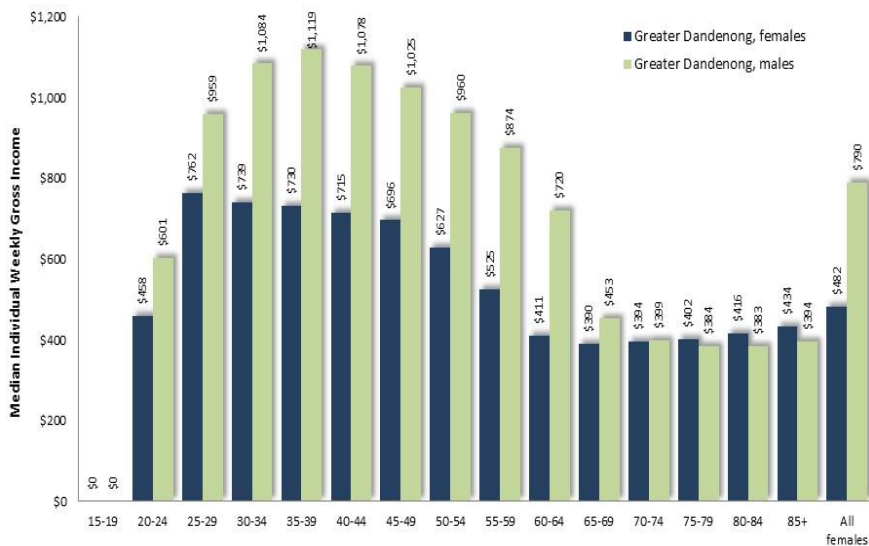
Number of persons who work within Greater Dandenong, by place of residence, 2021





## Incomes and Financial Disadvantage

In 2021, the median individual weekly gross income in Greater Dandenong stood at \$619 – the lowest in Melbourne and substantially less than the State-wide level. However, in the decade to 2021, individual gross incomes had risen from 70% to 76% of the Victorian level.

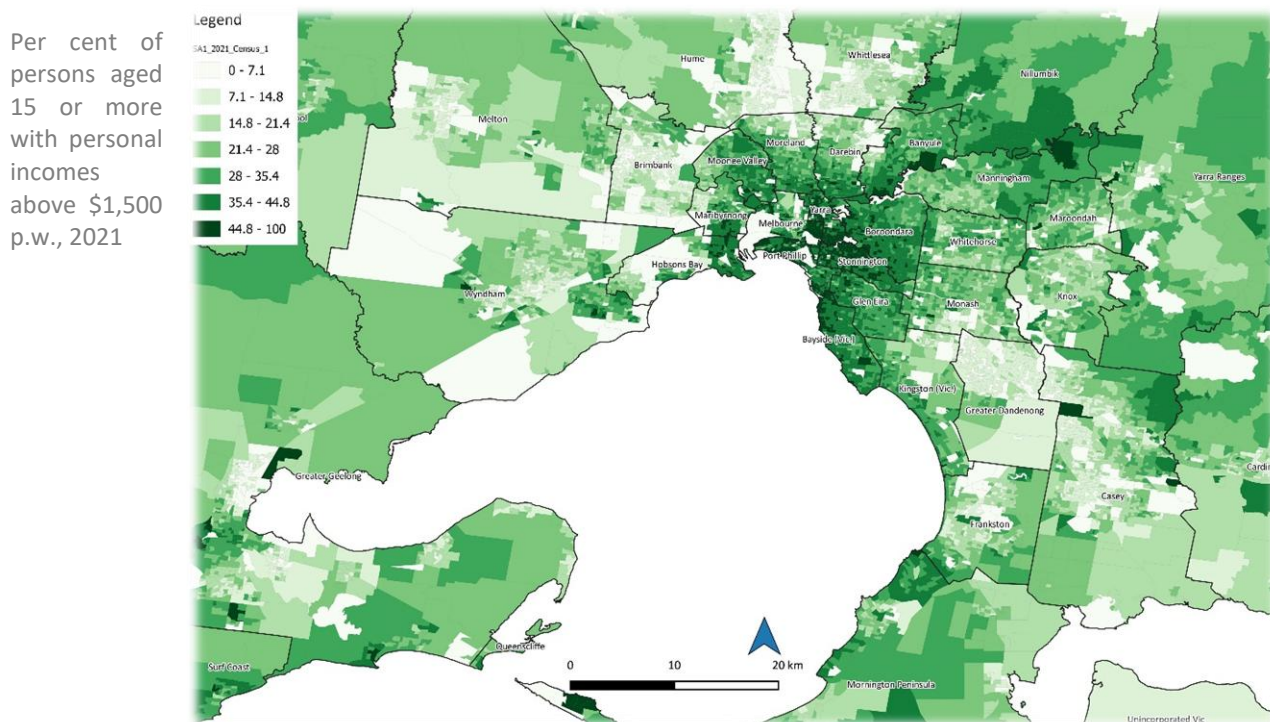


At \$482 per week, incomes among females were 61% of those for males, at \$790. This difference was most prominent among residents of working age (diagram, left). Income levels also vary widely by birthplace. Among residents aged 24 to 44 (ages of high employment levels), incomes ranged from their lowest level

among residents from Afghanistan, to the highest among those from Canada.

## Incomes and Localities

Income levels exhibit clear patterns of distribution across the metropolitan region, with a high proportion of residents in receipt of incomes exceeding \$1,500 per week in central and eastern localities (darker green), and lower incomes (in paler shades) in localities in the south-east, north and west of Melbourne.



## Incomes and Sex

In the findings of the 2021 Census, median gross incomes among men aged 15 or more were 56% higher than among women of the same age.

Median gross incomes – male incomes per cent higher than female: Greater Dandenong, 2021

The disparity declines among persons in paid employment, where median male incomes were 23%.

The difference in incomes falls further among people in full-time

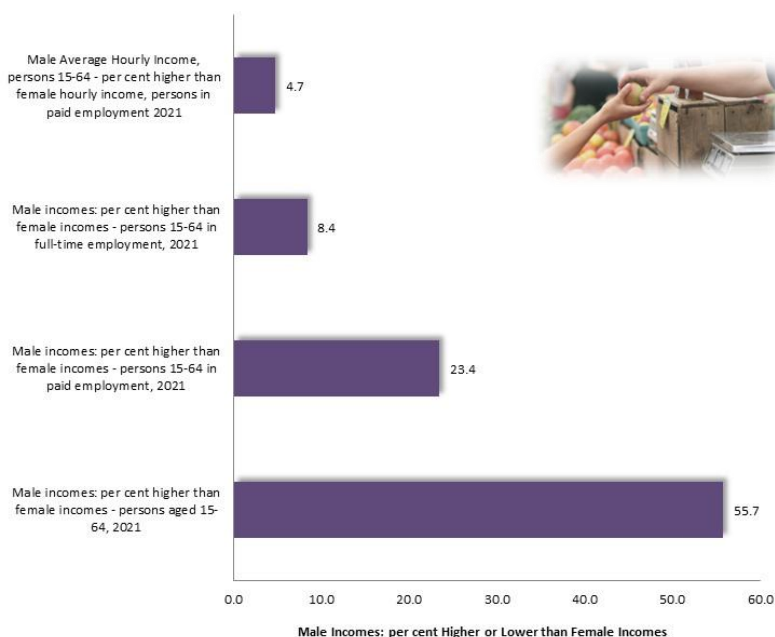
employment, to 8.4%. Finally, male hourly median incomes are 4.7% higher than for females.

These results show that differences in income between women and men in Greater Dandenong are largely due to the lesser proportions of women who hold paid work, and among them, the lower average hours of paid employment among women.

## Centrelink Support

In June 2024, 7.3% of Greater Dandenong residents held a Health Care Card – the eighth highest dependency upon such support in Victoria and substantially more than the metropolitan level of 5.1%, reflecting extensive financial hardship.

The 2024 Centrelink payments also revealed a high level of dependency of older local residents upon the aged pension, with the number of residents relying on this payment equal to 70% of the number of residents aged 65 years or more – the highest ratio in Melbourne and well in excess of the metropolitan ratio of 51%.



RATIOS	Greater Dandenong	Metro. Melbourne
Jobseeker Payment / Population 18-64 (%)	6.9	4.1
Parenting Payment Single / Population Females 20-44 (%)	5.3	4.1
Parenting Payment - partnered / Population Female 20-45 (%)	2.7	1.2
Disability Pension / Total population (%)	3.9	2.4
Aged Pension/ Population 65+ (%)	70	50.8
Health Care Card / Total population (%)	7.3	5.1
Rent Assistance/Occupied Dwellings (%)	18.1	9.9

## The Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage

On the basis of these and other social conditions, Greater Dandenong is ranked as the most disadvantaged municipality in Victoria on the 2021 Commonwealth Government Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage – as it was 20 years before, in 2001. This index is based on a blend of Census findings about income levels, education, English fluency, home ownership and other conditions.

## Gambling

### Legal Gambling and Electronic Gambling Machines (EGMs or ‘pokies’)



Legal gambling in Victoria includes sports betting, racing, lotteries, keno, lotto and the Casino. Electronic gambling machines (EGMs or ‘pokies’) though, account for nearly half of all legal gambling losses and most gambling problems, as they are widely accessible and provide people with the means to gamble continuously. In addition, EGM losses are highest among disadvantaged residents - those least able to afford them.

### Gambling Machines

928 EGMs operate at 14 clubs and hotels within Greater Dandenong – the fifth highest number among the Victorian municipalities. Under State Government municipal gambling machine limits, 989 EGMs are permitted to operate in this municipality. This means that 61 more may be installed in local venues before the cap is reached. Clubs account for nine of the existing 14 venues with EGMs and over half (56%) of the annual EGM gambling losses in Greater Dandenong (\$77 million in 2023/24).

### EGM Gambling Losses

In 2023/24, \$138 million was lost to electronic gambling machines in Greater Dandenong - an average of \$378,000 each day, and equal to the cost of adequately feeding 46,000 children for one year.

EGM gambling losses in that year were equivalent to \$1,089 per adult – the second highest rate of losses per adult in Victoria, nearly twice the metropolitan level of \$597 per adult, and eight times the rate of losses in Boroondara (\$140 per adult) - the most affluent municipality in the State.

Since the introduction of EGMs in Victoria in 1992, \$4.8 billion has been lost to gambling machines in Greater Dandenong alone (in 2024 dollars).

Information about the level and rate of EGM gambling losses, as well as the number and density of EGMs, within Greater Dandenong and metropolitan Melbourne, in the year 2023/24, is set out below.

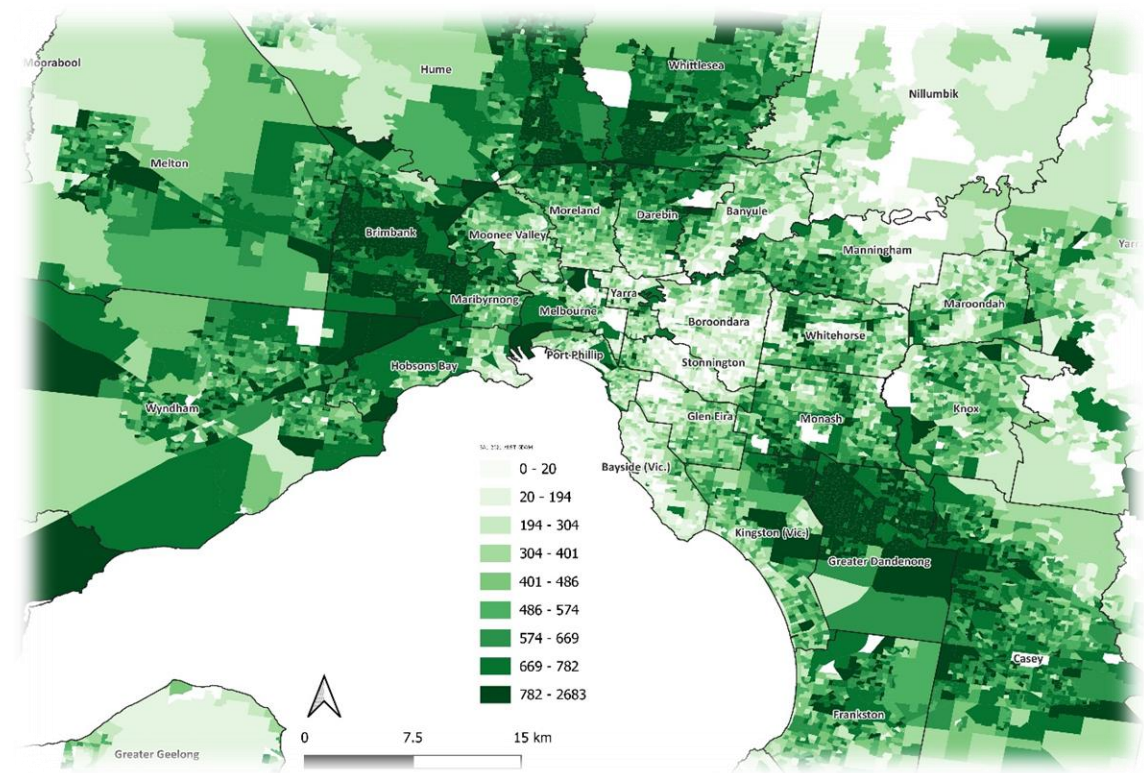
EGM losses and machines: Greater Dandenong and Metro. Melbourne, 2023/24

Greater Dandenong			Melbourne metro.	
	Totals	Ranking	Totals	Ranking
Venues: 2023 [includes venues with <u>no</u> attached EGMs] (1)	14	Relative to Victorian LGAs	324	Relative to Victorian LGAs
Attached EGMs: June 2024 (1)	928	5	18,619	*
EGMs per 1,000 Adults: 2023/2024	7.3	17	4.8	*
EGM Gambling Losses 2023/2024	\$137.9 million	5	\$2,337.4 million	*
EGM Gambling Losses per day	\$377,872	-	\$6,403,841	-
Losses per Adult 2023/2024 (2)	\$1,089	2	\$597	*
% Change in Losses in year 2022/2023	0.4 %	39	0.3 %	*
% Change in Losses - adjusted for Inflation (3)	-3.5 %	-	-3.5 %	-

In addition to EGM losses, an estimated \$199 million is lost each year by residents to other legal forms of gambling, bringing total annual gambling losses to approximately \$337 million in this municipality. This represents an average of \$2,593 per adult.

The accompanying map illustrates the variation in estimated EGM gambling losses per adult in 2021/22 across the metropolitan area<sup>11</sup>. Notably, losses are highest in the less affluent western and outer northern localities, as well as in Greater Dandenong and parts of Casey, to the south.

Estimated EGM Losses per adult: metropolitan Melbourne, 2021/22



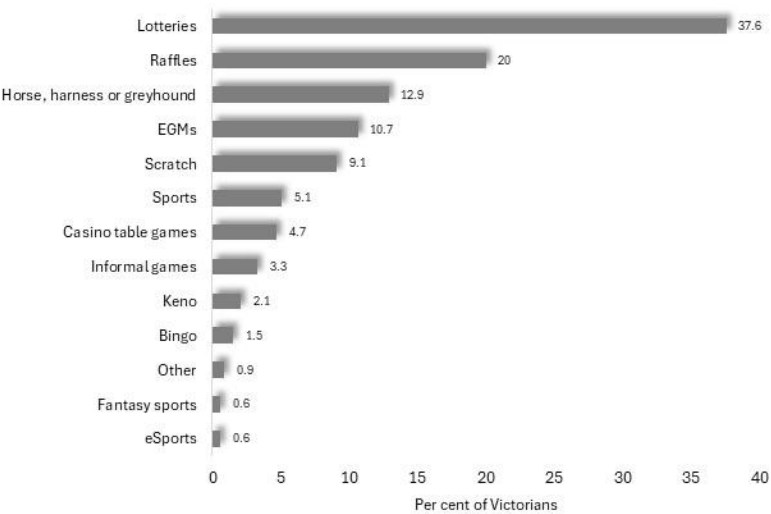
Statewide Gambling Trends

Prevalence of Gambling

The 2023 Victorian Population Gambling and Health Study found that approximately half (53%) of Victorian adults gambled during the previous 12 months, including similar proportions of women and men - at 51% and 56%, respectively.

Approximately one in nine (10.7%) Victorian adults had participated in EGM gambling and about one in twenty (5.1%) in sports betting.

Per cent of adults who gambled in the previous 12 months, by type of gambling: Victoria, 2023



<sup>11</sup> This year was chosen to match that of the 2021 Census, whose findings were used to generate the local-area estimates of gambling losses, which are depicted here



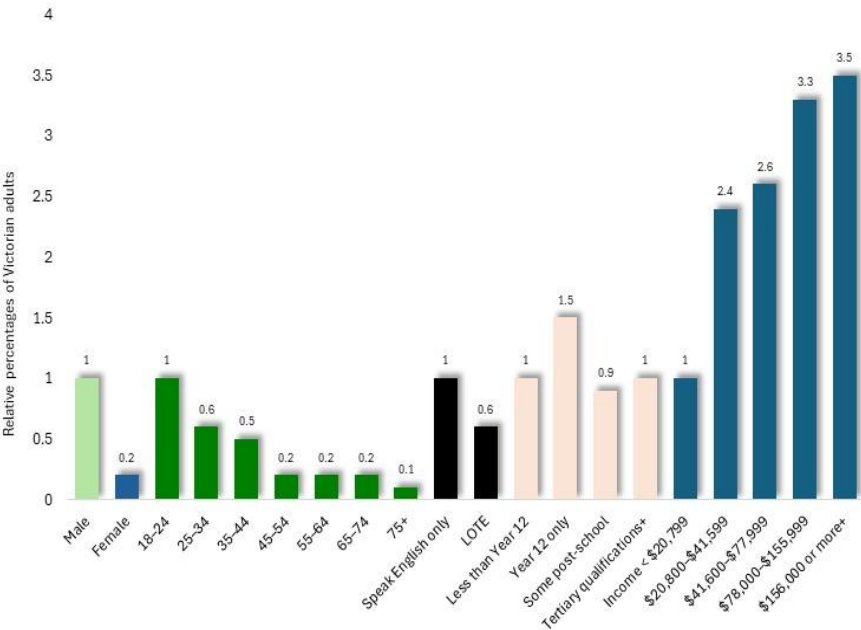
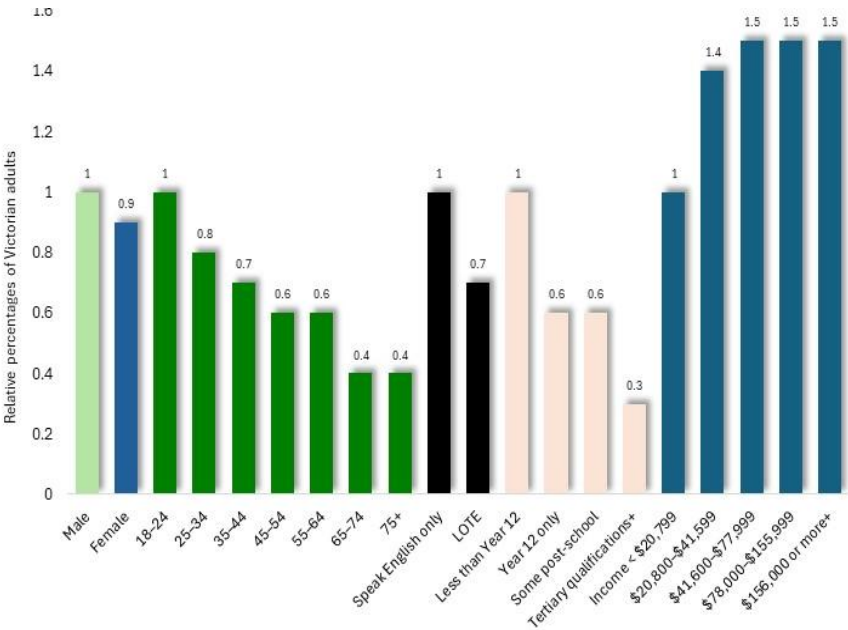
Gambling Participation by Social Characteristics

Rates of participation in gambling vary widely among the various types of legal gambling. The diagrams presented below illustrate these differences with odds ratios. For each variable, such as sex, age, spoken language, educational attainment and income, one category is assigned the value '1', with the number assigned to other categories of that variable showing the rate of participation, relative to that category. For example, in the diagram below, illustrating levels of participation in EGM gambling, the number 1 is assigned to males, with the number 0.9, assigned to females, showing that women are 90% as likely to participate in such gambling as men.

*Note: these odds ratios may only be compared among categories of a particular variable, such as sex, age, income and so on. However, they may not be compared between categories of different variables, for instance, between 26-34-year-olds and people with year 12 education.*

Participation in EGM gambling tends to be slightly higher among men, younger adults, English-only speakers and those with limited formal education, and rises with increasing income.

Odds Ratios, for participation in EGM gambling, by social characteristics: Victoria, 2023



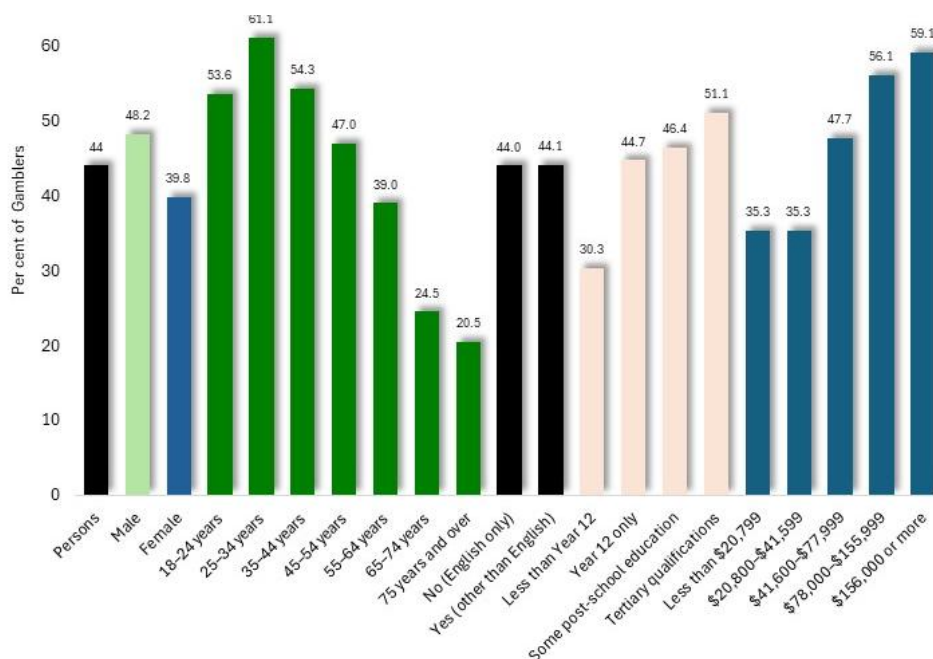
Participation in sports betting is five times higher among men than for women, is highest among young people and those who speak English-only at home, and also rises with increasing income.

Odds Ratios, for sports betting, by social characteristics: Victoria, 2023

## Online Gambling

Nearly a quarter (23%) of Victorian adults (up from 19.2% in 2018/19), and 44% of gamblers, gambled online in the previous 12 months. The proportion of gamblers who gambled online was similar for males and females, declined with age, was higher among people with a degree, and was highest among high income earners.

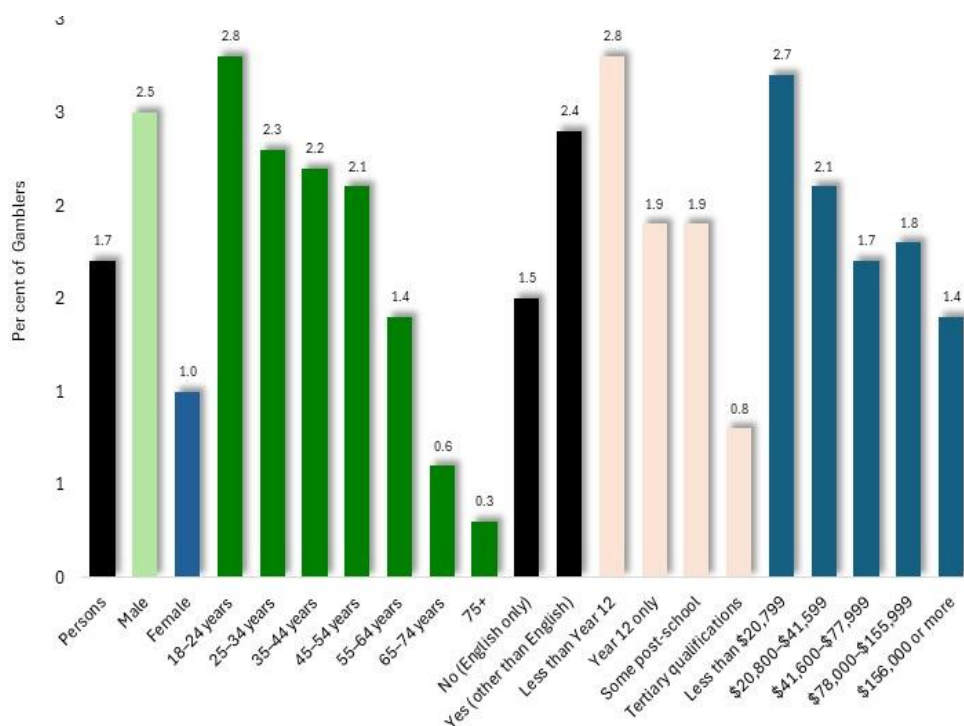
Per cent of gamblers who used online platforms to gamble in the previous 12 months, by characteristics: Victoria, 2023



## Gambling Problems

The 2023 survey found that, among the gambling population, 15.8% were at risk of gambling problems, with 9.9% deemed at low risk of gambling problems, 4.2% at moderate risk and 1.7% classified as problem gamblers - the latter including 2.5% of males and 1% of females (accompanying chart).

The proportion of gamblers classified as problem gamblers was highest among males, younger adults, people with limited formal education and lower income earners.



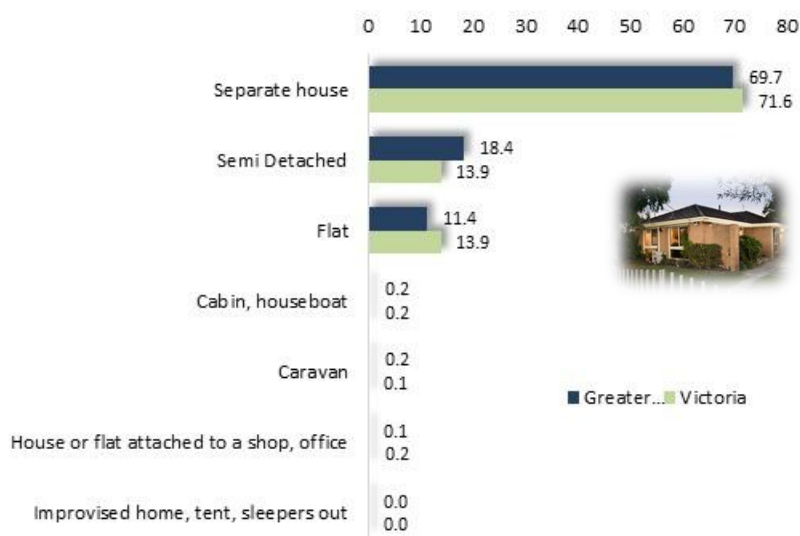
Per cent of gamblers who were classified as problem gamblers, by characteristics: Victoria, 2023

# Housing

## Housing Structure

In 2021, nearly 70% of households in Greater Dandenong were detached, 11% were flats and 18% semi-detached structures. The distribution of households by structure is depicted at right.

Per cent of private dwellings by structure:  
Greater Dandenong and Victoria, 2021

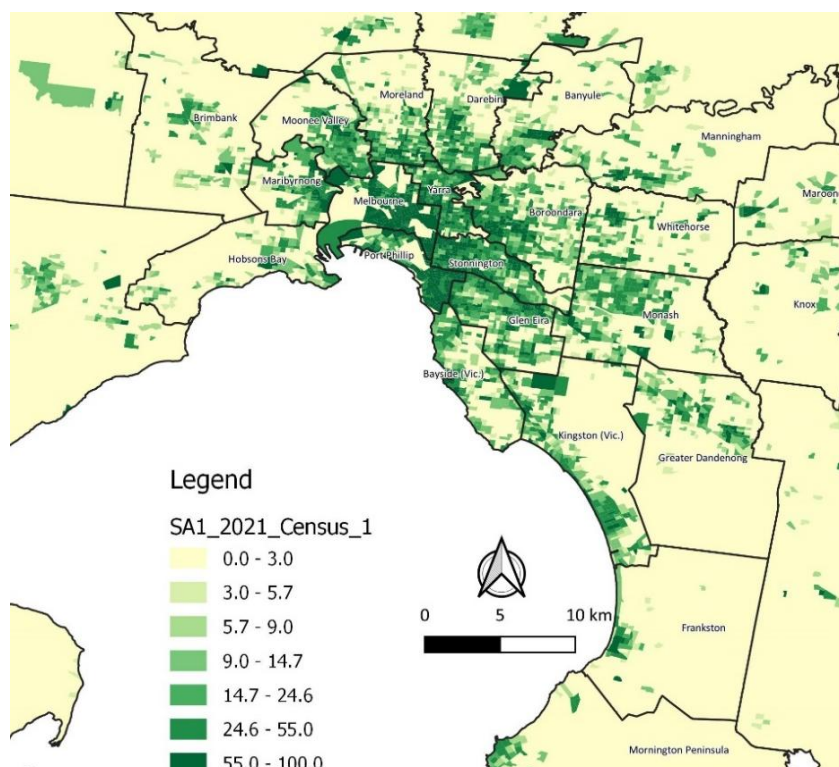


During the 20 years to 2021, the number of detached dwellings in Greater Dandenong rose by approximately 3,700 and the number of semi-detached dwellings by nearly 5,300, while the number of flats declined by 1,970.

The distribution of housing structure varies across the metropolitan area, with flats accounting for 88% of dwellings in Melbourne, 52% of dwellings in Yarra, falling to 1% in outer-metropolitan Cardinia.

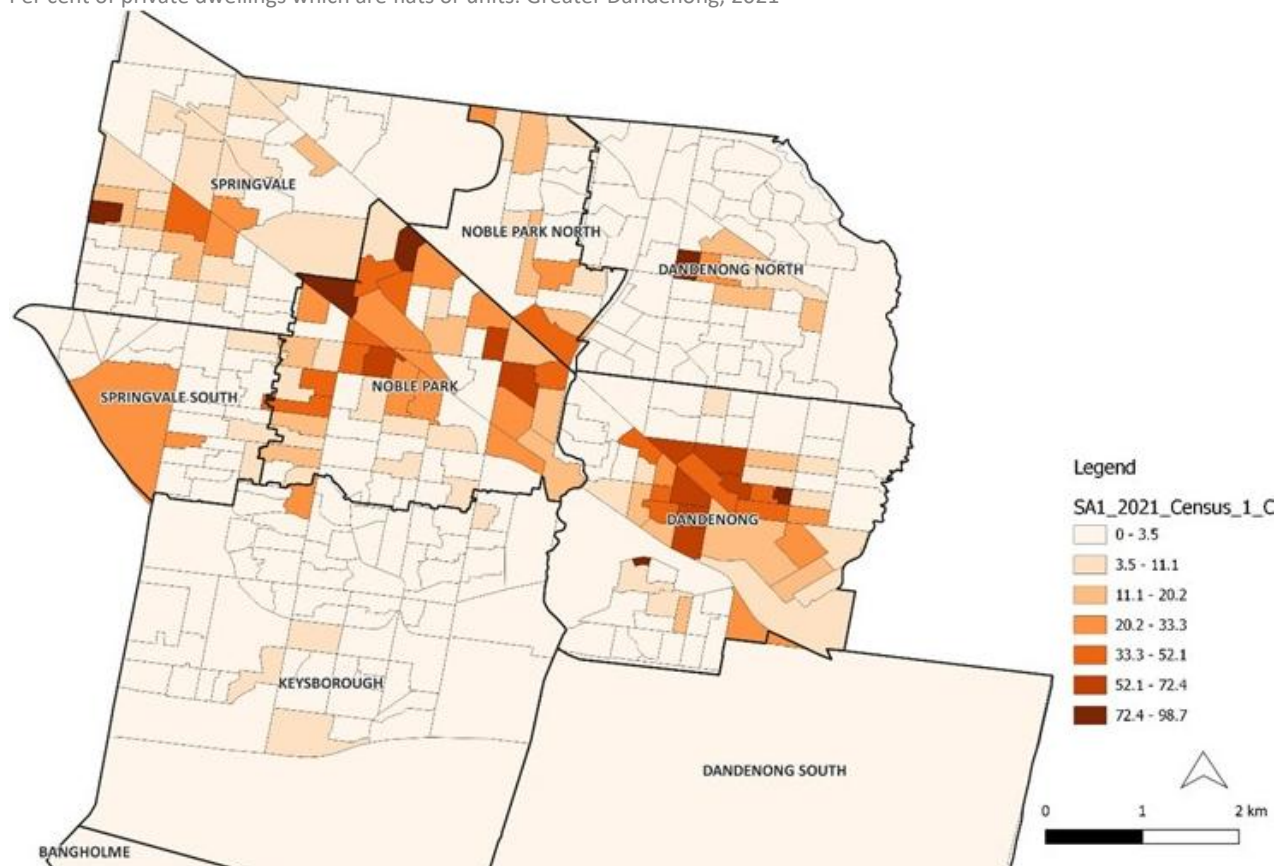
The accompanying map illustrates the pronounced concentration of flats and units around the central metropolitan area, and in extensions along some transport corridors.

Per cent of private dwellings which are flats or units: Metropolitan Melbourne, 2021



Within Greater Dandenong itself, units are largely concentrated in Noble Park and Dandenong, in proximity to the major rail and road transport corridors.

Per cent of private dwellings which are flats or units: Greater Dandenong, 2021



In 2021, flats of four or more storeys accounted for 9.6% of private dwellings across metropolitan Melbourne - including 31% across Port Phillip and 80% in Melbourne. By contrast, one per cent of private dwellings in Greater Dandenong, numbering 560 units, were built to four or more stories. Of these larger apartments, 386 or 70%, were situated in Dandenong, with 106 in Springvale and 63 in Noble Park, and none elsewhere in the municipality.

#### Suburban Trends

Units were largely concentrated in the suburbs of Dandenong and Noble Park North, where they represented a fifth of private dwellings. By contrast, units accounted for fewer than one in twenty dwellings in Springvale South, Keysborough and Dandenong North.

Suburb	Number of Units	Per cent Units
Dandenong	2,461	20.2
Dandenong North	283	3.4
Keysborough	113	1.2
Noble Park	288	10.0
Noble Park North	2,497	19.9
Springvale	829	10.2
Springvale South	132	3.2
<b>Greater Dandenong</b>	<b>6,603</b>	<b>11.4</b>



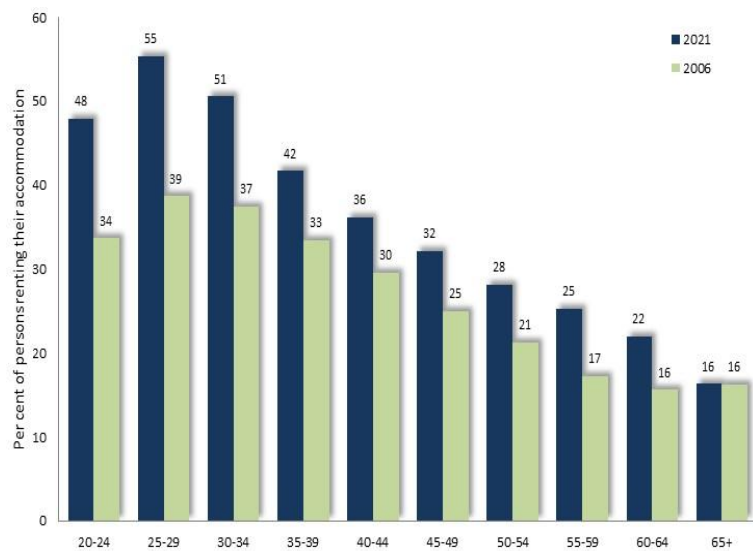
## Housing Tenure

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of private dwellings in Greater Dandenong were either owned or being purchased by their occupants in 2021 – a decline from 65% a decade earlier. Across metropolitan Melbourne, a slightly higher proportion of homes (67%), were owned or being purchased.

Conversely, 35.6% of dwellings were rented Greater Dandenong in 2021, compared with 30.8% across Victoria and 31.2% in Greater Dandenong in 2016.

The proportion of residents who are renting their accommodation is highest among younger age groups, and declines steadily with age.

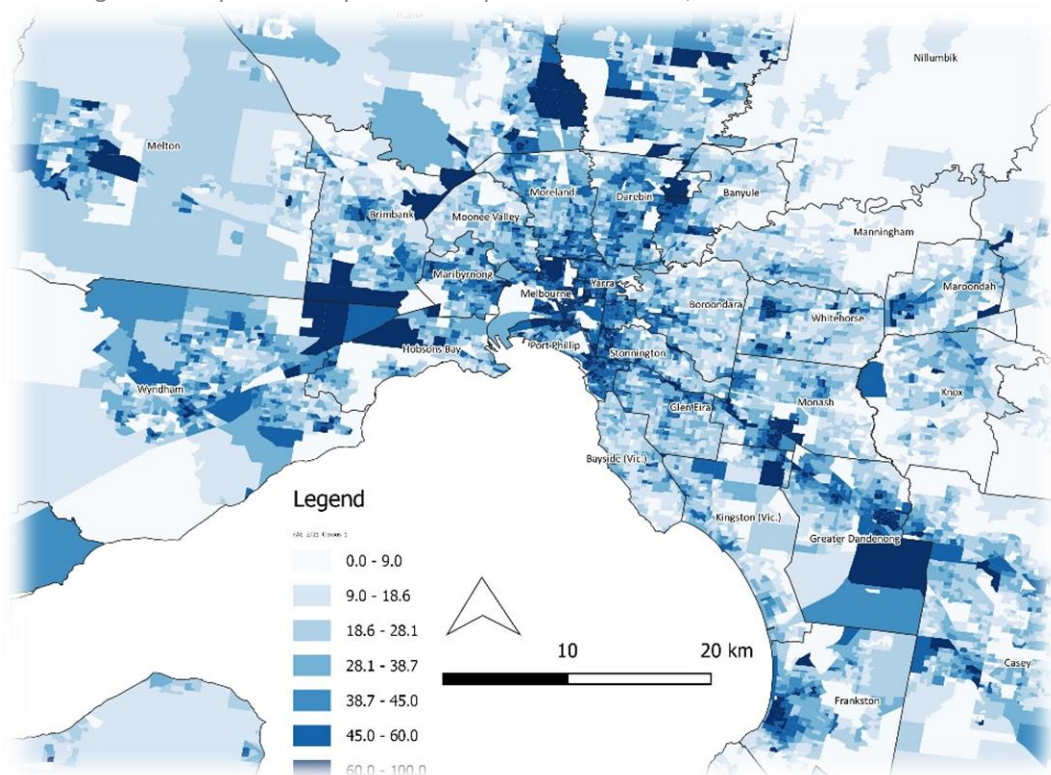
Per cent of persons renting their homes, by age:  
Greater Dandenong, 2006 & 2021



Notably, among most age groups, and particularly among younger people, the proportion of residents who were renting their accommodation rose appreciably between 2006 and 2021 – most likely due to rising costs of housing, relative to incomes, during that period.

Rental Housing tends to be concentrated in central Melbourne and specific metropolitan locations.

Per cent of dwellings rented by their occupants: metropolitan Melbourne, 2021





Within Greater Dandenong, residents who are renting their homes are distributed widely across the municipality, but are most numerous in Dandenong, Noble Park and Springvale

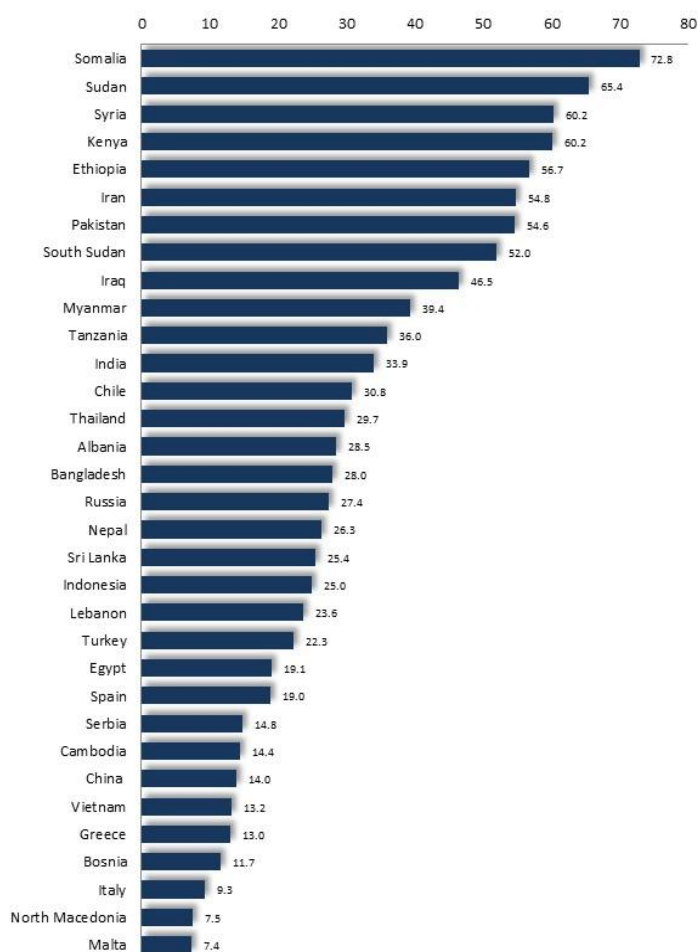
Suburb	Number	% of total
Dandenong	14,526	27.5
Dandenong North	6,155	11.6
Keysborough	5,605	10.6
Noble Park North	1,937	3.7
Noble Park	12,309	23.3
Springvale	8,906	16.8
Springvale South	3,458	6.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,896</b>	<b>100</b>

### Indigenous Residents

Indigenous residents Greater Dandenong are less than half as likely to own or be purchasing their homes (26%) as the general population (62%), and more often rent their accommodation. Twenty-seven per cent of Indigenous residents rent from government or community agencies, compared with 2.9% of others.

### Disability

Levels of home ownership or purchase are lower among disabled residents in Greater Dandenong, than for the general population. In 2021, 49% of 25-55-year-old residents living with a severe or profound disability, owned or were purchasing their home, compared with 57% of residents without such a disability.



### Settlers

Local home ownership levels are lowest among some overseas-born residents, with more than half of those from Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Ethiopia, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan renting their accommodation, compared with fewer than one in ten from Italy, North Macedonia and Malta (accompanying diagram).

Per cent of persons renting their homes, by selected birthplaces: Greater Dandenong, 2021

## Social Housing

The level of social housing has just matched household growth in Greater Dandenong during the past twenty years, with its local density exceeding average metropolitan levels.

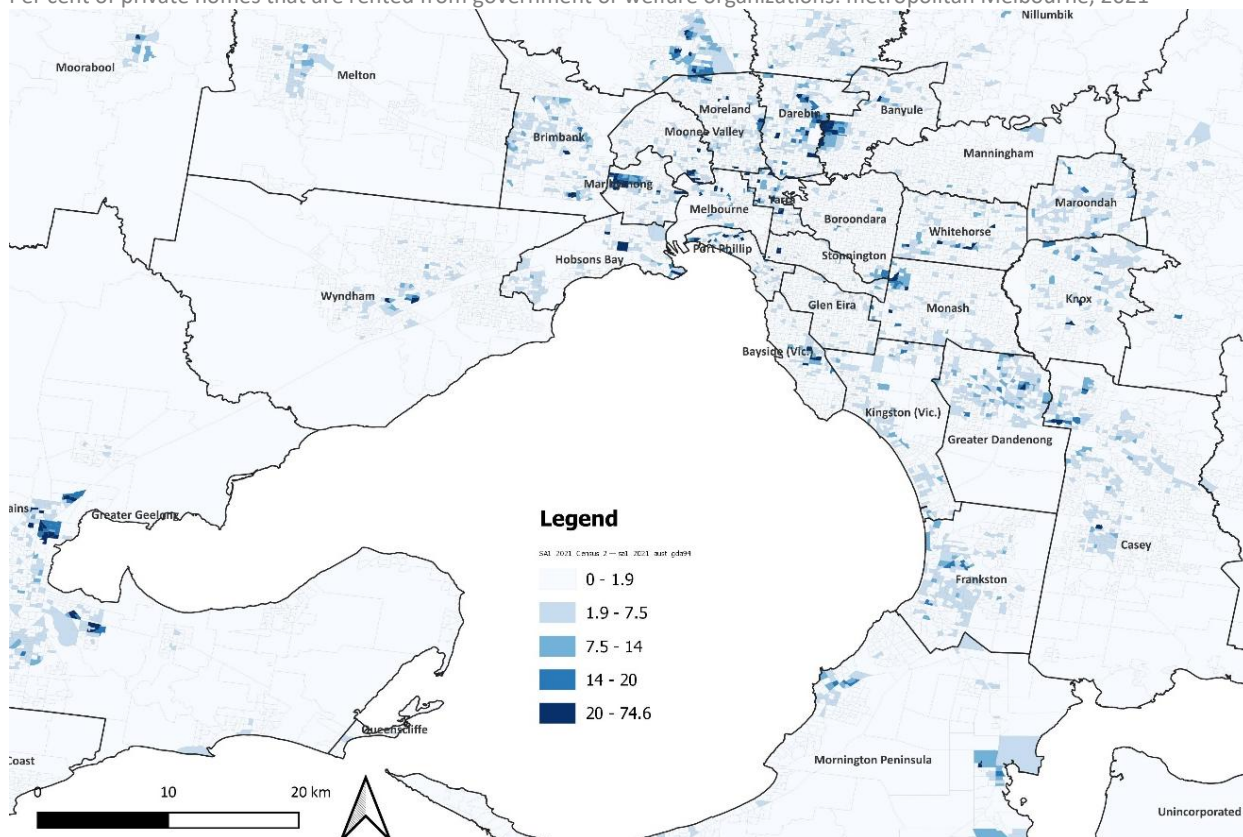
The 2021 Census recorded that 3.9% of private dwellings in Greater Dandenong were social housing - the 16th highest level in Victoria, and substantially more than the metropolitan level of 2.4%. At this time, the Victorian municipality with the highest proportion of social housing was Yarra, with social housing accounting for 8.6% of its private dwellings.<sup>12</sup> By 2024 the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported that 2,404 local dwellings were social housing.

Social housing as per cent of private dwellings: Greater Dandenong and metropolitan Melbourne, 1991-2021

Social housing as per cent of private dwellings		
	Greater Dandenong	Metropolitan Melbourne
2021	3.9	2.4
2016	3.6	2.6
2011	4.1	2.9
2006	4.1	3.0
2001	3.9	2.9
1996	3.5	2.9
1991	3.9	3.5

The distribution of social housing across metropolitan Melbourne is illustrated below.

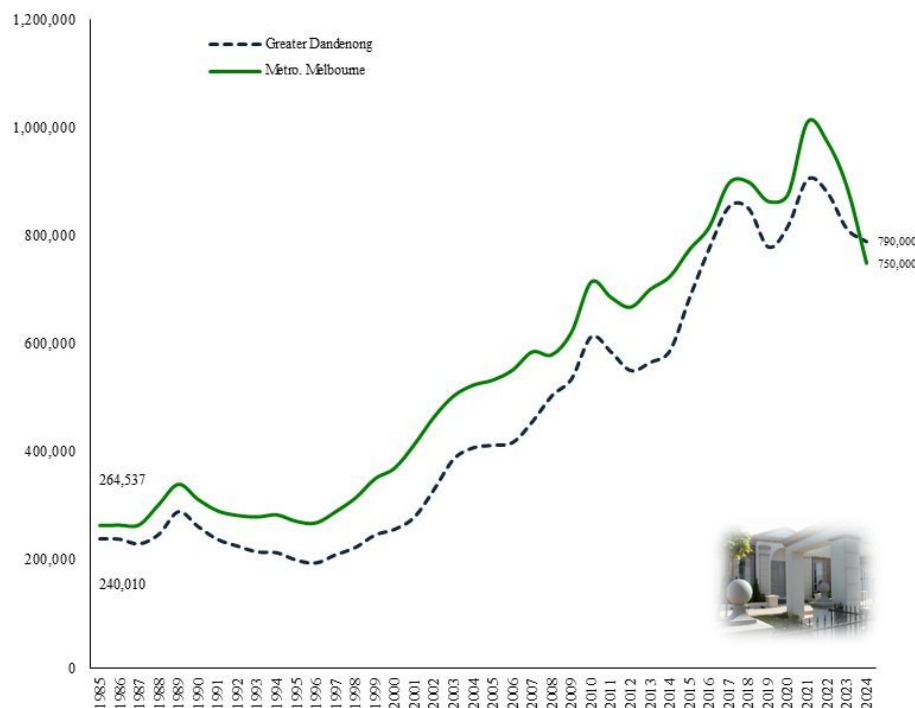
Per cent of private homes that are rented from government or welfare organizations: metropolitan Melbourne, 2021



<sup>12</sup> Census measures of the volume of social housing slightly understate its true level. However, its findings provide a reasonable indication of changes in the amount of social housing over time, as well as a basis for comparison between one locality and another.

## Housing Purchase and Rental Costs

In the 20 years to early 2024, median housing costs in Greater Dandenong had doubled in real terms, rising by 93%, compared with 43% across Melbourne in the same period (after adjustment for inflation).

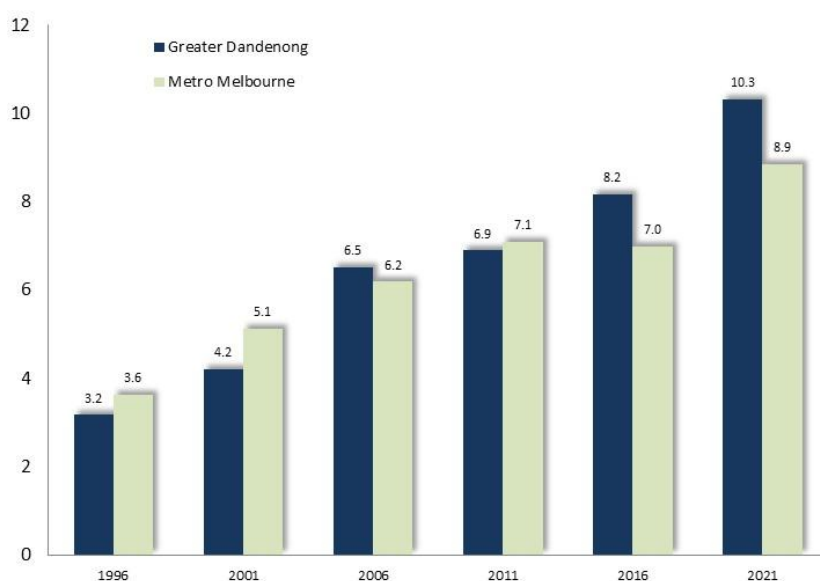


Median house purchase costs: Greater Dandenong and metropolitan Melbourne, 1985 to 2024 (adjusted for inflation)

And in the decade to 2024, house purchase prices rose by 34% (after inflation), nearly ten times the corresponding rate of 3.4% across metropolitan Melbourne (diagram, left), reaching \$790,000 by March

2024.

As a consequence of escalating home purchase costs, local price increases have outstripped growth in incomes, with the median cost of houses in Greater Dandenong rising from 3.2 years of median household income in 1996, to 10.3 years in 2021.

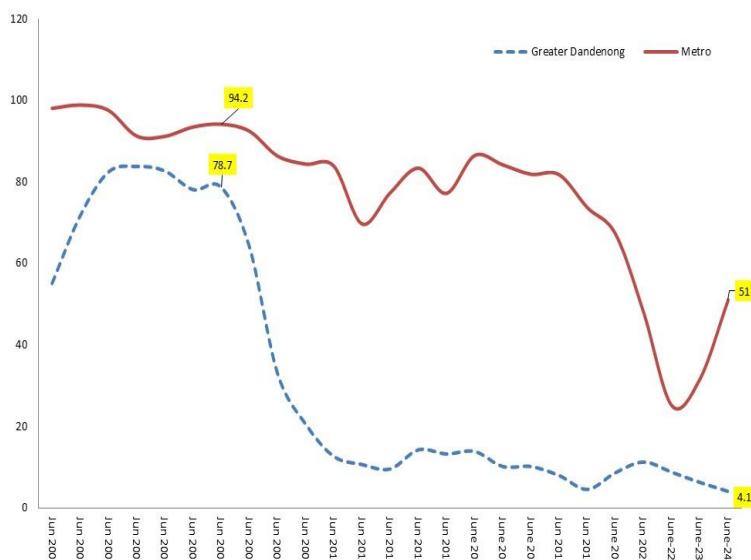


Median house purchase cost as a percentage of median household annual income: Greater Dandenong and metropolitan Melbourne, 1996 to 2021

In the same period, the median, local cost of units has climbed from 2.5 to 6.7 times the median annual household income.

## Rental Cost and Affordability

In June 2024, the average cost of renting a three-bedroom house in Greater Dandenong was \$550 – equal to the metropolitan average. In the past 24 years, local median rental costs have risen by 70% for three-bedroom houses in real terms – substantially higher than the corresponding rise across metropolitan Melbourne, of 51%.



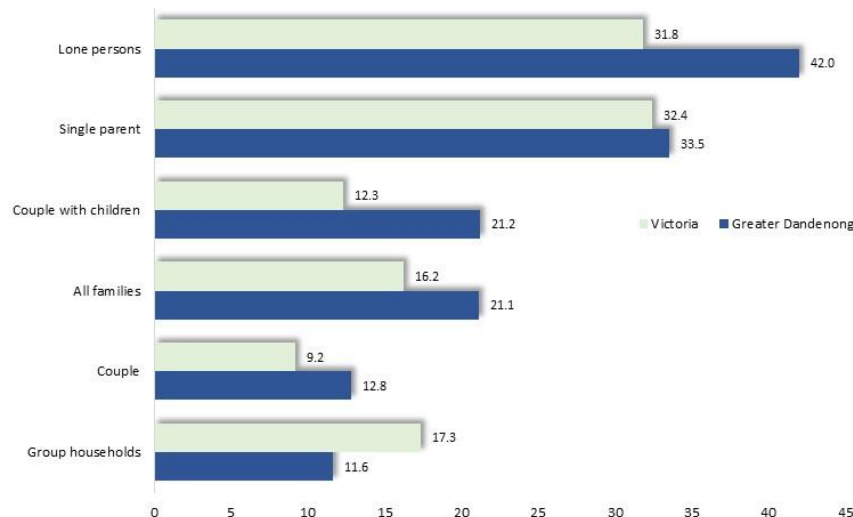
As a consequence, the proportion of local, rental properties affordable to Centrelink recipients fell from 84% in 2002, to 4.1% by 2024, thereby aggravating the financial difficulties faced by many renting households.

Per cent rental properties affordable, Greater Dandenong and Metropolitan Melbourne 2000-2024

Reflecting these conditions, 18.1% of households in Greater Dandenong in 2024 were in receipt of Centrelink rental assistance – twice the corresponding proportion of 9.9% across metropolitan Melbourne.

## Rent-related Poverty

Per cent of renting households living in poverty, by household type: Greater Dandenong and Victoria, 2021



Findings of the 2021 Census show that about one-fifth (21%) of families in Greater Dandenong which are renting their accommodation are living in acute financial stress – higher than the Victorian figure of 16% and third highest proportion in the State.<sup>13</sup> Among local households, the percentage

living in financial stress ranged from 13% among couples, to 21% for couples with children, 34% among single parent households, and 42% of sole persons.

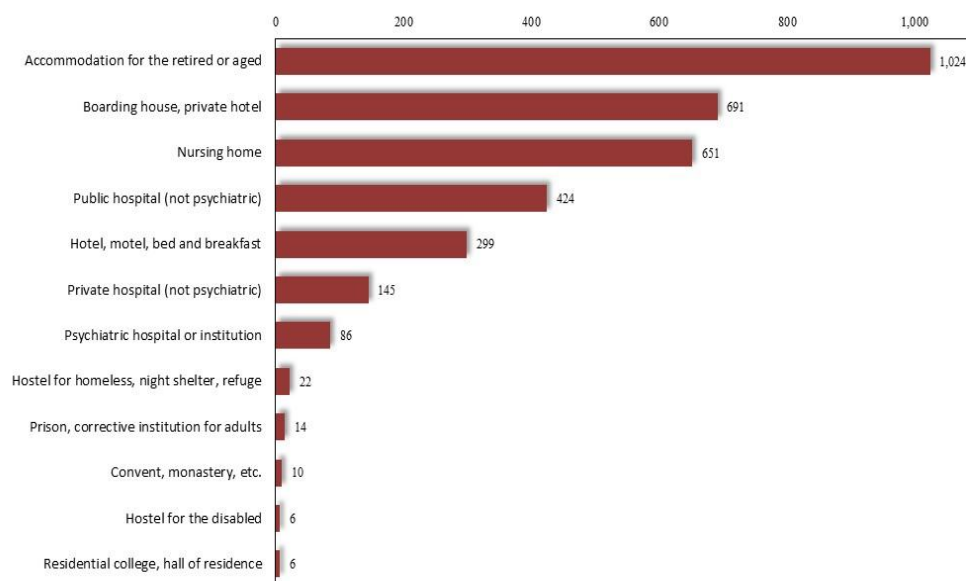
<sup>13</sup> Based upon median household incomes minus rental costs, recorded in the 2021 Census, which were adjusted using equivalence scales to accommodate differing costs for households of varying size and structure. The resulting 'equivalized' incomes were used to determine the proportion of households of each composition which were living in poverty, using a criterion set at the equivalent of a single person in receipt of \$322 gross weekly income - 40 per cent of the median weekly gross individual income in Victoria in 2021 - after paying rent. These calculations do not include multi-family households or the very small number of unclassified family types.

## Non-Private Accommodation

In 2021, 3,390 residents of Greater Dandenong resided in non-private dwellings, 30% of them in retirement accommodation, 20% in boarding houses, 19% in nursing homes, 13% in public hospitals and 9% in hotels or motels (diagram right).



Number of persons by type of non-private accommodation: Greater Dandenong, 2021

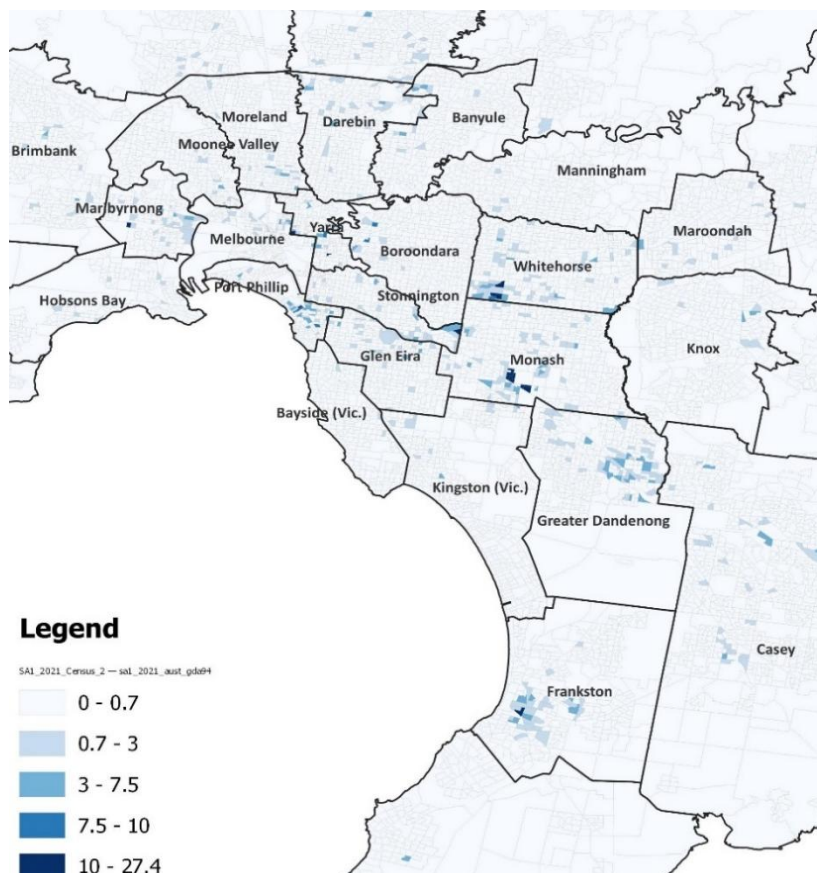


## Boarding Houses

The proportion of residents who live in boarding houses is higher in certain municipalities - such as Whitehorse, Monash, Stonnington, Greater Geelong, and Greater Dandenong – and generally, in specific localities within those areas.

Per cent of residents who live in boarding houses: metropolitan Melbourne, 2021

In addition, a substantial - though unknown - number of local dwellings function as boarding houses, though they may not be counted as such in the Census or registered for this purpose.

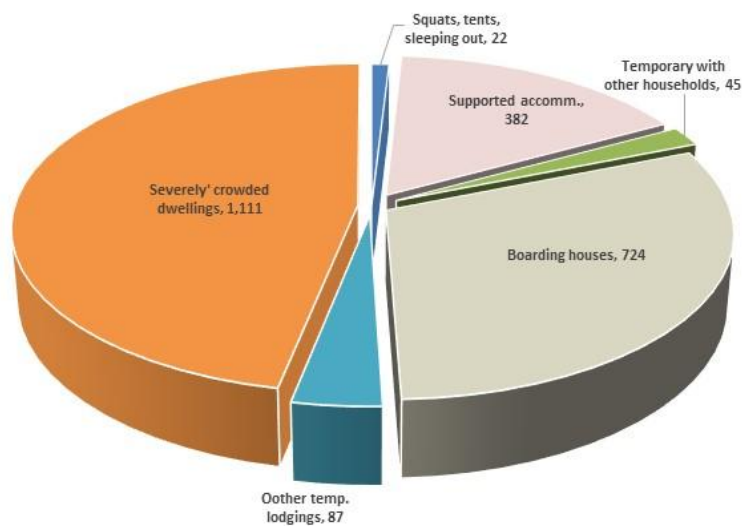




## Homelessness

In 2021, 2,366 people in Greater Dandenong were homeless. By the definition applied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, this number includes those without homes, living in substandard accommodation, enduring 'severely overcrowded' conditions, or in insecure tenure. This number represents 1.5% of the municipal population - the highest proportion in the State and over four times the Victorian level of 0.35%. Moreover, the number of homeless people in Greater Dandenong has soared by 851, or 56%, during the past decade.

Most of these residents were living in severely overcrowded dwellings (46%) or in boarding houses (31%), with lesser numbers in supported accommodation, temporary arrangements with friends or elsewhere, else in squats, tents or sleeping out (diagram, below).



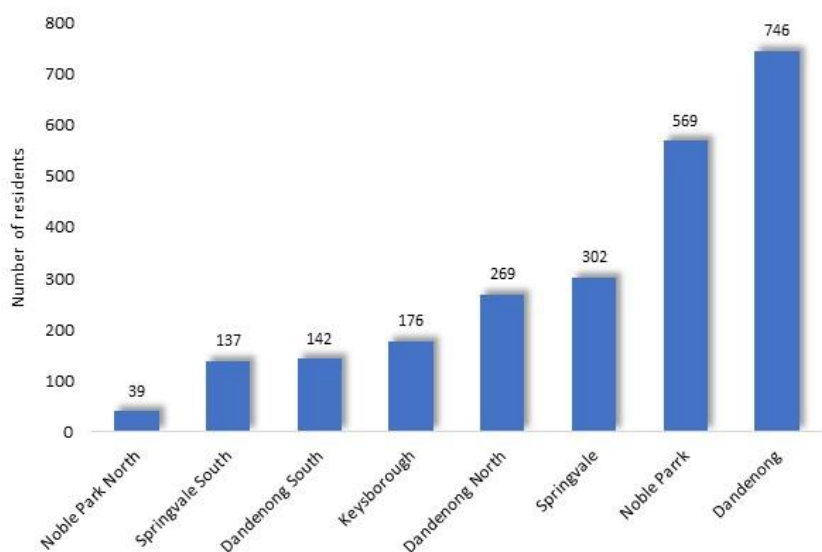
Percent of homeless persons, by type of shelter: residents of Greater Dandenong, 2021

Almost two-thirds (62%) were male and 38% female; while 17% were aged 0-14, 19% were 15-24, 59% were 25-64 and 5% over 65 years.

### Suburban Trends

Homeless residents resided largely in Dandenong and Noble Park, with lesser numbers in Keysborough, Noble Park North or Springvale South.

Number of homeless persons by suburb: Greater Dandenong 2021



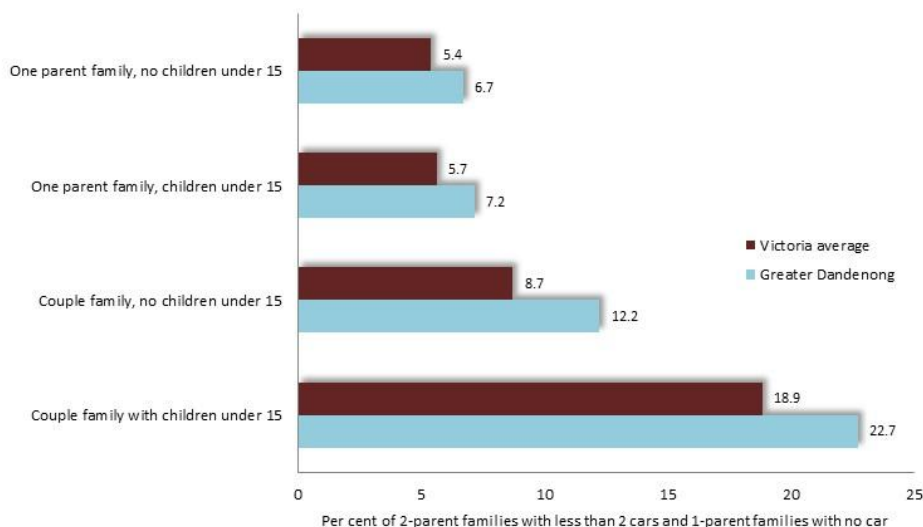
## Transport

### Car Ownership

The findings of the 2021 Census provide a glimpse of differences in levels of access to private transport among different family types. At this time, 23% of two-parent families with young children (<15 years) had either one or no cars (that is, fewer cars than parents), compared with 18% of such families across Melbourne.



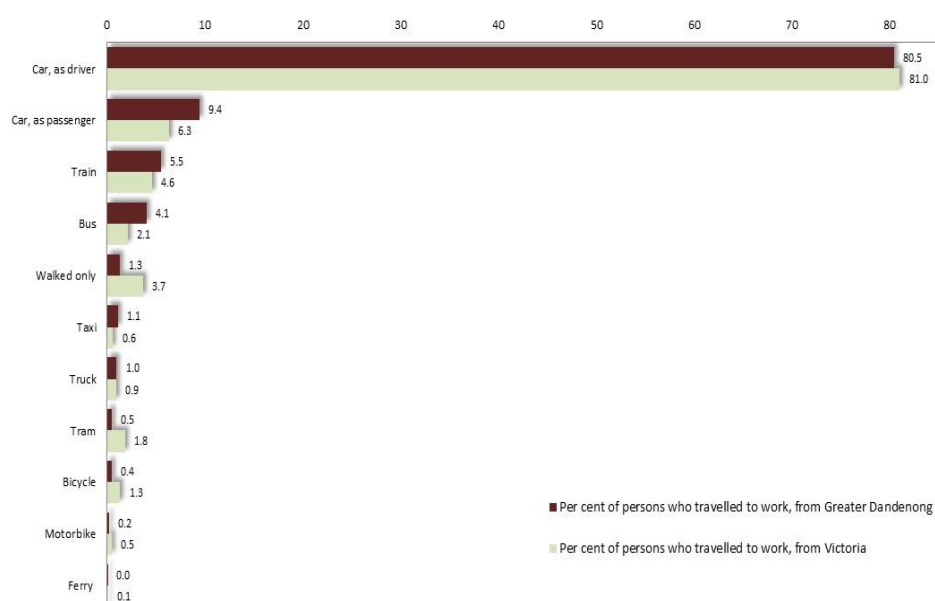
Per cent of families with one or no car (two-parent) or no car (one-parent):  
Greater Dandenong and Victoria, 2021



Among one-parent families with children aged less than 15, 6.7% of those in Greater Dandenong, and 5.4% across Victoria, had no car.

### Mode of Travel to Work

The 2021 Census found that more than four-fifths (80.5%) of residents of Greater Dandenong who travel to work, journeyed by car – either as a driver or passenger. A further 11% travelled by train, 4% by bus and 1.4%



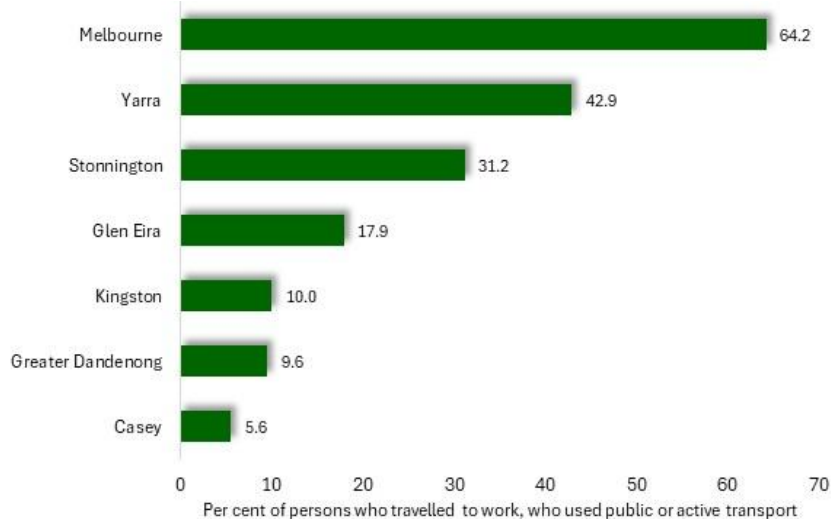
walked only to work.<sup>14</sup>

Mode of travel to work:  
Greater Dandenong and Victoria, 2021

These patterns are broadly similar to those across Victoria, though more local residents travel by car or bus, and fewer use other modes of transport.

<sup>14</sup> Many workers use more than one mode of transport, with the consequence that the sum of the percentages featured in the diagram exceeds 100

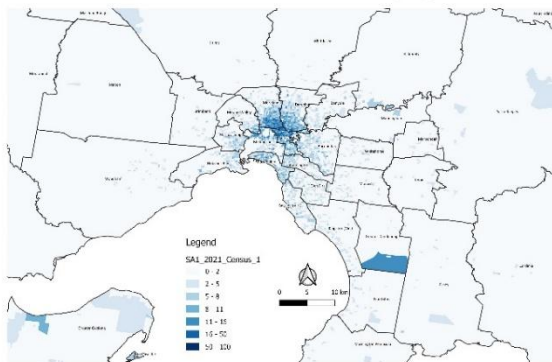
Per cent of residents who travelled to work solely by active or public transport: selected municipalities, 2021



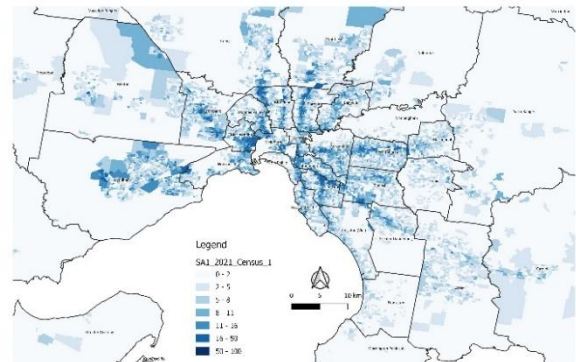
The proportion of residents who journey to work solely by public or active (walking only or cycling) transport, declines with increasing distance from central Melbourne. For example, among municipalities extending from the CBD across the south-east metropolitan area, the percentage of employed residents

who had used active transport to travel to work at the time of the Census diminished from over 64% in Melbourne, to less than 5% in Casey. The maps below illustrate geographic differences in transport modes.

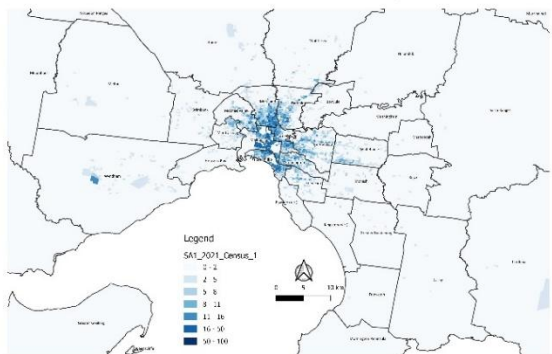
Per cent of Persons who Travelled to Work by Bicycle



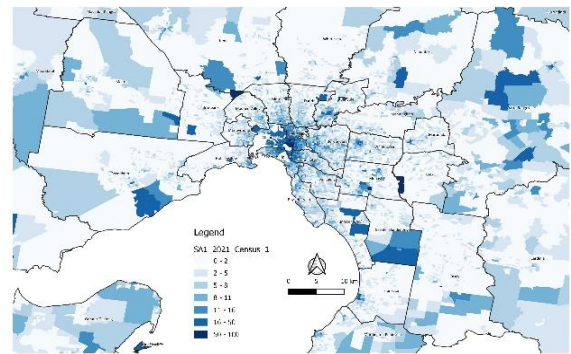
Per cent of Persons who Travelled to Work by Train



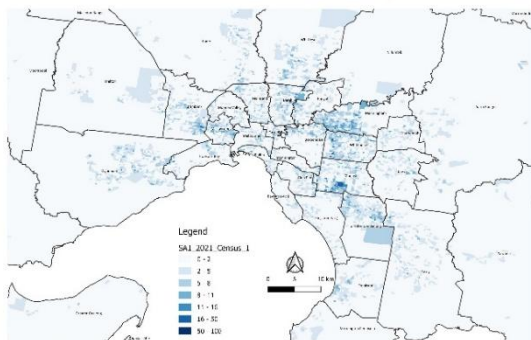
Per cent of Persons who Travelled to Work by Tram



Per cent of Persons who Travelled to Work by Walking Only



Per cent of Persons who Travelled to Work by Bus



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## Social Inclusion

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A number of surveys have been conducted about general levels of satisfaction with life, connection with family and friends, affiliation with the community, feelings of trust in others, multiculturalism, and being heard or able exert an influence upon events of importance to them. Some surveys are conducted at a local level, supplying insights into local conditions. Others are undertaken at a state-wide or national level, but owing to their larger number of participants, are able to shed light upon variations in perceptions and experiences among people of different ages, sex and socioeconomic circumstances.



Some of these findings, and their relation to conditions in Greater Dandenong, are recounted here.

### Local Studies

#### *Social Trust, Value and Connection*

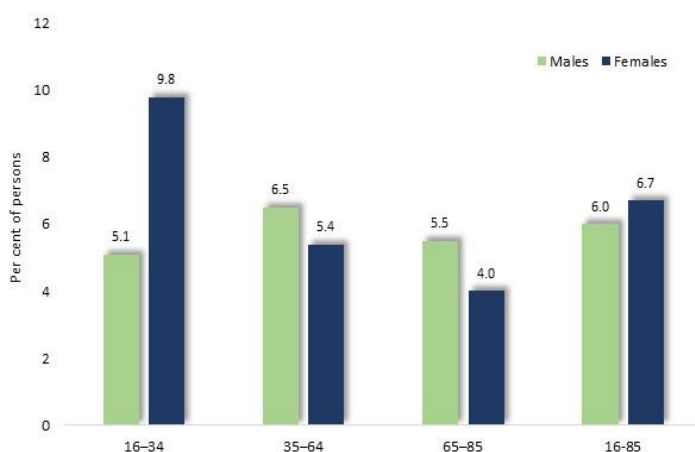
The 2020 Victorian Population Health Survey found that residents of Greater Dandenong scored relatively low in their perceptions of trust, feeling valued by society and contact with friends and family. These are set out in the accompanying table.

<b>Feeling of Trust: most people could be trusted 'never' or 'not often'</b>	3rd highest in Victoria at 22.2% and substantially higher than Victorian average (14.2%)
<b>I feel valued by society: 'never' or 'not often'</b>	3rd highest in Victoria, at 17.1% Victoria (11%)
<b>Has no close friends or family that they talk to regularly</b>	highest in Victoria, at 9.3%, and double the Victorian average (4.3%)

In the later, 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey, 17.6% of Greater Dandenong survey participants declared that they felt valued by society 'not often' or 'not at all' – higher than the metropolitan result of 14.4%.

### National Trends

The 2020/21 National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing provides some suggestion of how measures of social connection vary with age and sex, which may hold some relevance here. It found that 6.3% of people aged 16-85 years - including similar proportions of women and men - felt that they received 'fair' or 'poor'

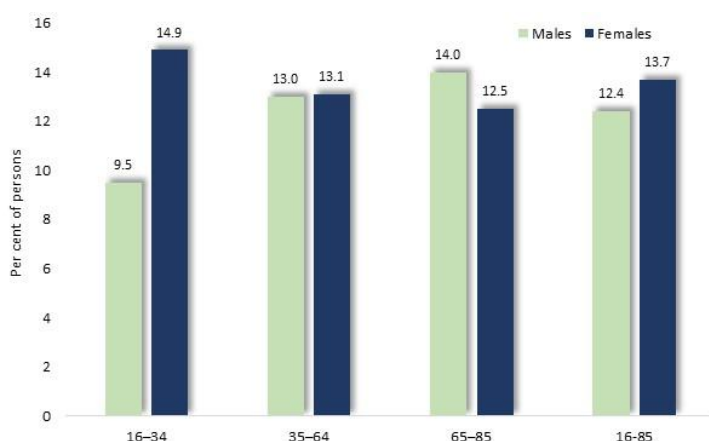
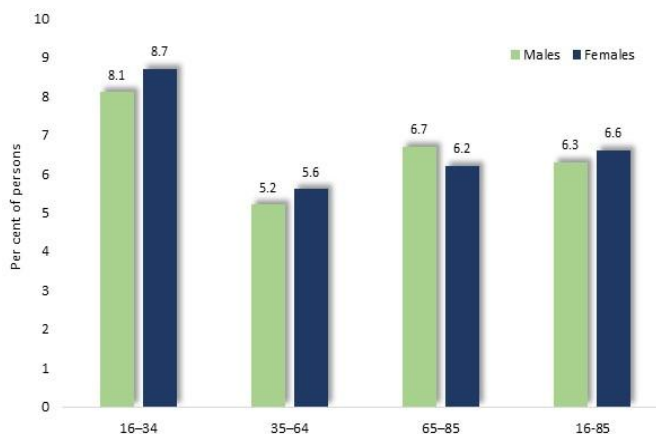


support from friends or family. Notably, among those aged 16-34 years, the prevalence of such limited perceived support was twice as high among women, at 9.8%, as among men, at 5.1%.

Perceptions of limited support from families, by sex and age: Australia, 2020

The survey also determined that 6.3% of participants felt 'fair' or 'poor' confidence in having their say about social issues. The prevalence of such concerns was similar for males and females, and highest among younger people, at 8.4%.

Perceptions of 'fair' or 'poor' confidence in having your say about social issues: Australia, 2020



Finally, the survey inquired about participants' perceptions of connection with the community, finding that 12.9% of Australians aged 16-85 years felt a 'fair' or 'poor' sense of being part of a community.

Perceptions of 'fair' or 'poor' connection with the community: Australia, 2020

The results differed little with age and sex, with the exception that, among people aged 16-34 years, nearly 15% of women, compared with 9.5% of men, felt such limited connection with a wider community.

### Acceptance of Cultural Diversity

The 2023 Population Health Survey found that 10.3% of Greater Dandenong residents felt that multiculturalism did not, or not often, make life in their area better – higher than the metropolitan average of 7.2% and Victorian figure of 8.1%.

The proportion of residents who expressed this view ranged from its highest level of over 16% in localities of little cultural diversity such as Loddon, Central Goldfields and Pyrenees, to about 3% in culturally diverse Maribyrnong, Port Phillip and Yarra.

### Discrimination and Attitudes to Birthplace and Religious Groups

The 2023 Population Health Survey also determined that 15.3% of residents had experienced discrimination, defined broadly by the question: 'In the past 12 months, have you experienced discrimination or have been treated unfairly by others?' This finding was similar to that Victoria (15.8%).

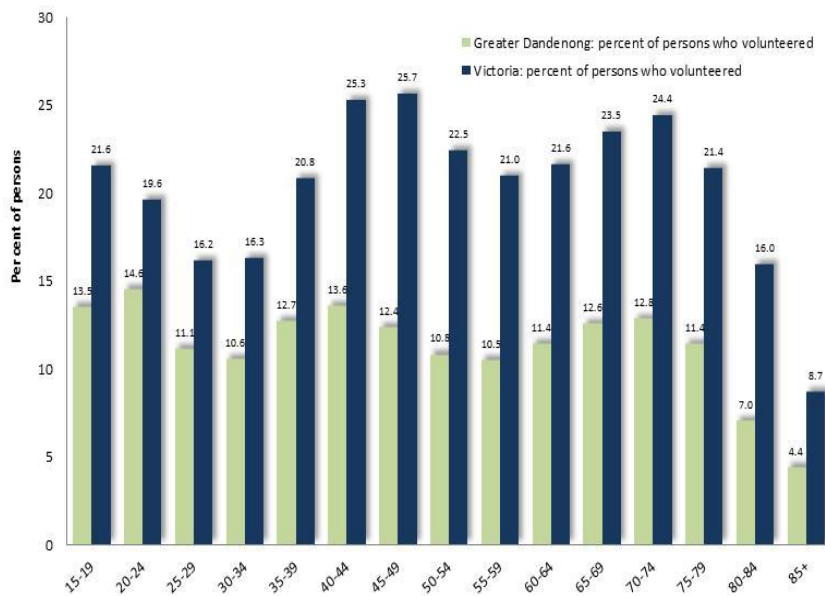
The proportion of residents who acknowledged the experience of such discrimination was highest, at about 20%, in Melbourne, Maribyrnong, Melton and Brimbank, and lowest, at 7.4%, in Mansfield.



## Volunteering



The 2021 Census found that 7.6% of Greater Dandenong residents – numbering 9,300 people - had volunteered at some time in the previous 12 months – the second lowest rate in Victoria, and half the State average of 14.2%. The proportion of residents who volunteered varied moderately with age, and was highest among young people, those of middle age, and residents in their early older age.



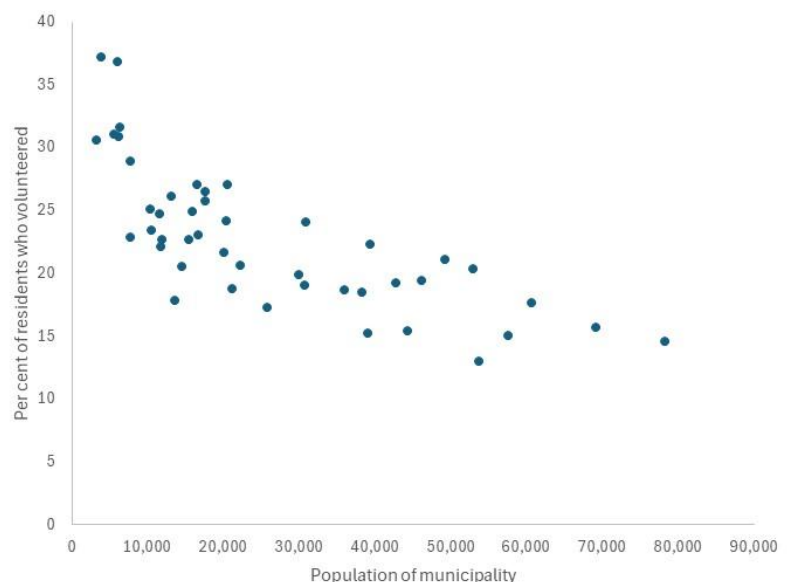
Percentage of residents who volunteered in the previous year, by age and sex: Greater Dandenong and Victoria, 2021

Educational attainment exhibits a clear association with the likelihood of volunteering, with 8.7% of Greater Dandenong residents with at least year 11 or 12 education having volunteered in the previous 12 months, compared with 5.3% of those who completed year 10 or less, echoing a similar trend across Victoria.

Among rural municipalities, volunteering rates tend to rise with declining municipal population, with the result that localities such as Buloke and West Wimmera have the highest rates of volunteering, exceeding 35% of residents.

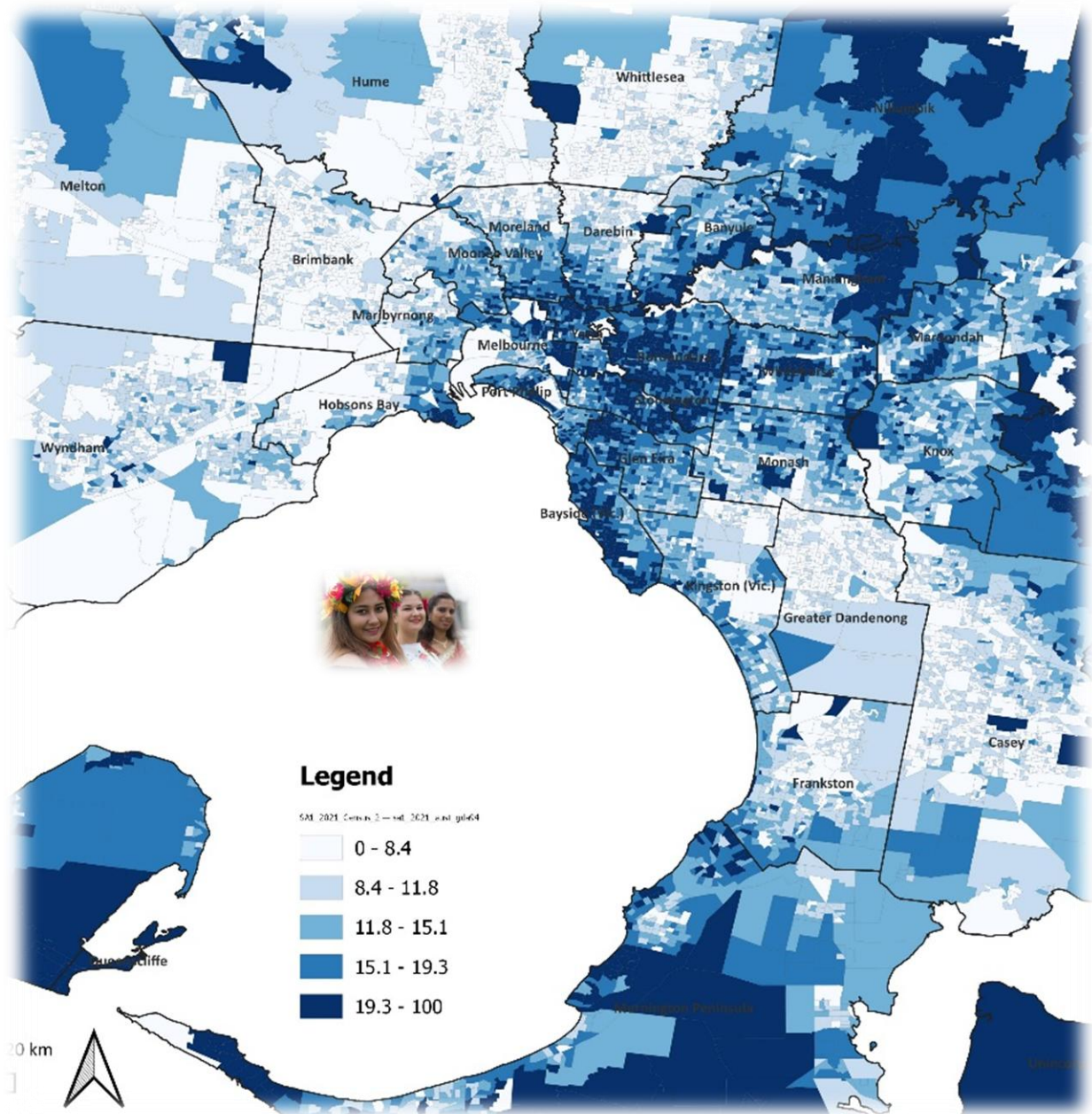
The association between volunteering levels and municipal population for rural Victorian municipalities, is shown in the accompanying chart.

Volunteering rates and municipal population: rural municipalities, Victoria, 2021



The map below illustrates the prevalence of volunteering among people in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Notably volunteering is most prevalent among residents of inner-urban localities and regional areas.

Per cent of Residents who had Volunteered in the Previous 12 months: metropolitan Melbourne, 2021



### *Value of unpaid productive activity*

Research conducted by the Adelaide University<sup>15</sup> generated an estimate of the value of volunteering in Australia equivalent to \$35 billion in 2024. Adjustment for the relative populations of Australia and Greater Dandenong, gives an estimated value of volunteering in Greater Dandenong of \$153 million in the same year.

<sup>15</sup> Volunteering was estimated as worth \$25.4 billion to the Australian economy in 2010: O'Dwyer, L, The Real Value of Volunteering, The University of Adelaide, 2013, p.2. This figure has been adjusted for inflation to 2024.

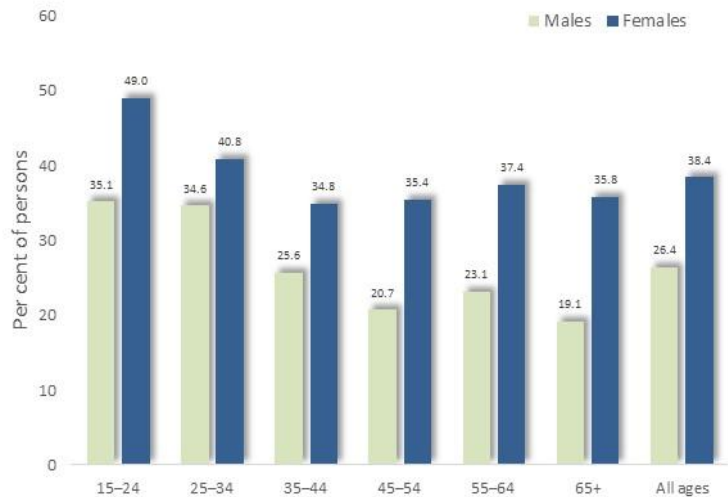
## Arts and Culture

The 2021/22 Cultural Participation and Attendance Survey, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics among Australians aged 15 years or more, inquired about participation in, or attendance at, cultural and creative activities, such as drama, singing, dancing, visual arts, writing, craft, fashion and website-related activities.

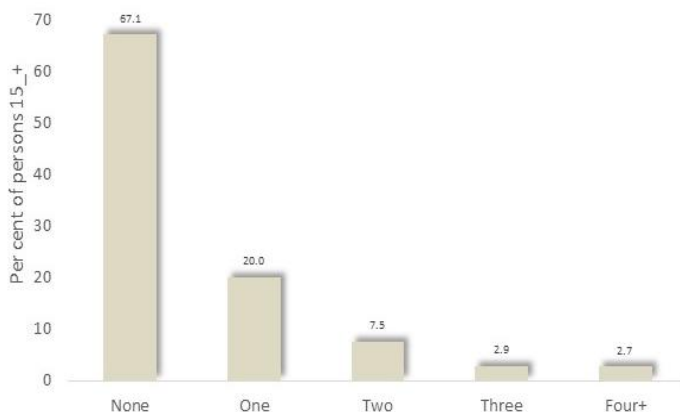


### Participation

About a third (32%) of Victorians had engaged in such activities in the previous year, including 25% of males and 39% of females. Levels of participation tended to decline among adolescents and young adults before stabilizing from the 30s to older age.



Participation in cultural and creative activities by age and sex: Victoria, 2021/22



Among those who participated in such activities, most engaged on one occasion during the previous 12 months, with smaller numbers participating two or more times.

Participation in cultural and creative activities by number of occasions: Victoria, 2021/22

### Participation Rates by Type of Activity

The charts presented here depict the proportion of women and men of various ages who participated in selected types of cultural activity. In most instances, levels of participation decline with age, except for craft activities, where participation remains relatively stable across the lifespan.

In a further trend, rates of participation in drama, dancing, visual art, crafts and fashion or interior design is markedly higher among women than men - most particularly in dancing and crafts, where rates of participation are about three times higher among women than men.

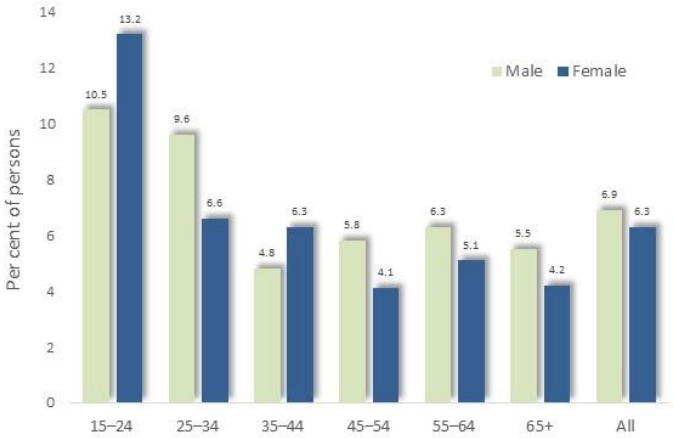
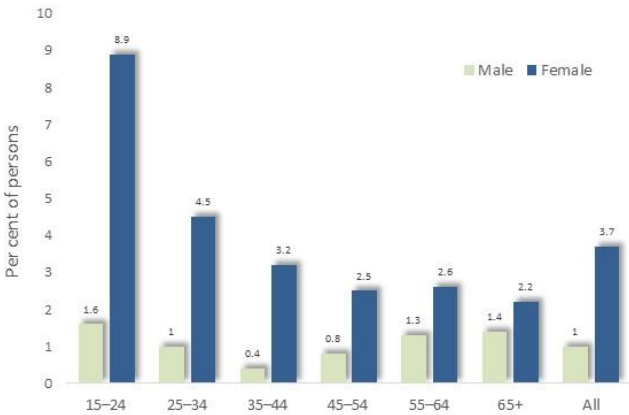
In the two notable exceptions, levels of participation in writing are similar among women and men, while engagement in design of websites and computer games is twice as popular among men than women.

*Performing in a drama, comedy, musical or variety act*



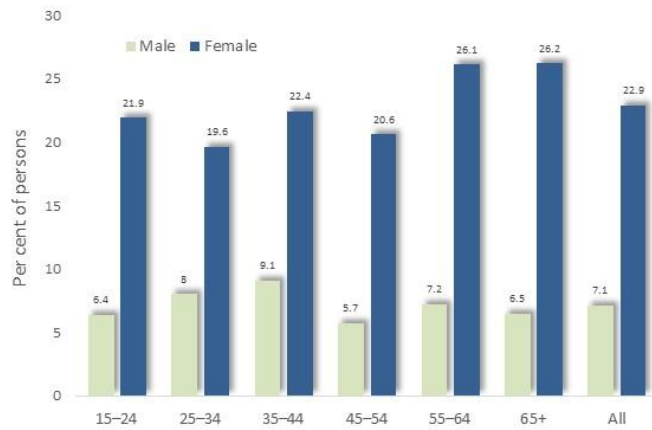
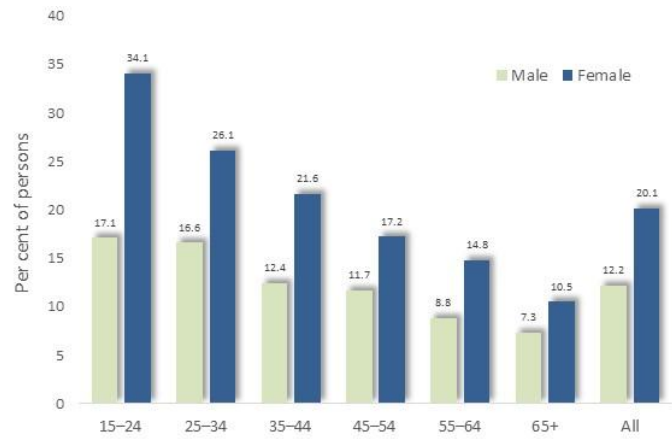
*Singing or playing a musical instrument*

*Dancing*



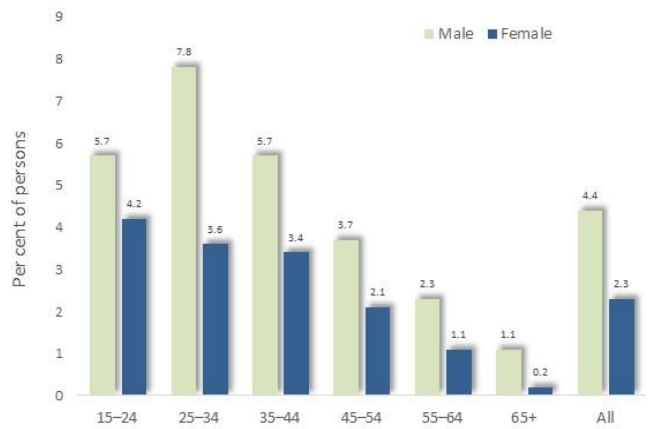
*Writing*

### *Visual art activities*



### *Craft activities*

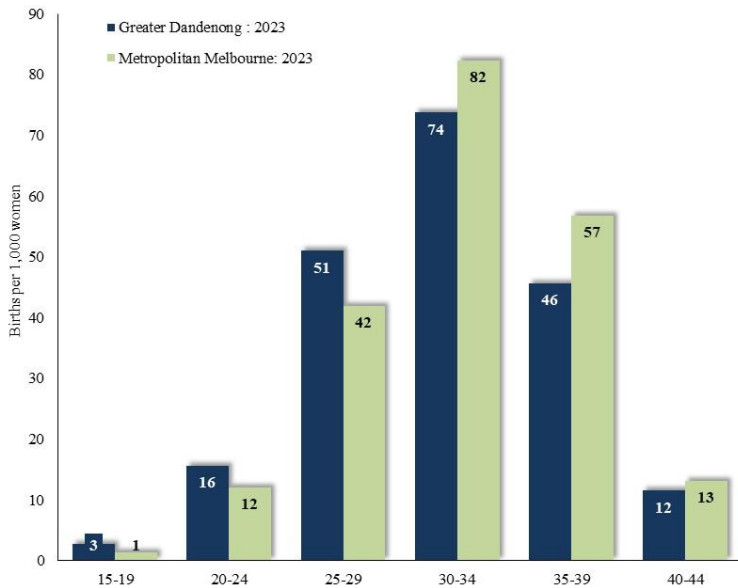
### *Designing websites, computer games or interactive software*



### *Fashion, interior or graphic design*



## Sex Differences in Social Conditions and Outcomes



### Early Childbirth

Birth rates among younger women in Greater Dandenong are substantially higher than in Melbourne.

For some young women, early childbirth may be related to limited educational and vocational options.

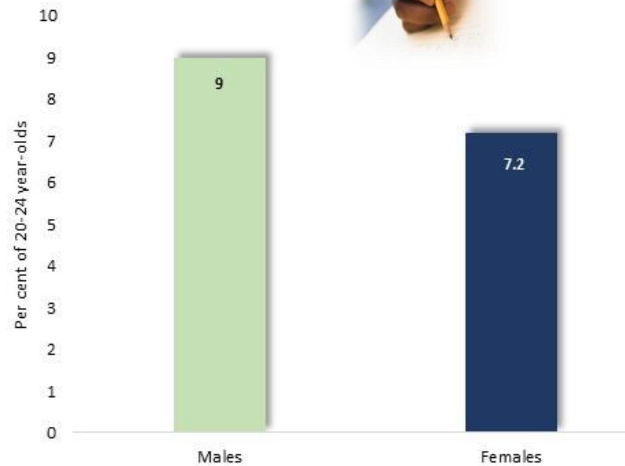
Per cent of women who had given birth, by age: Metropolitan Melbourne and Greater Dandenong, 2023



### Early School Leaving

Young men in Greater Dandenong are more likely to leave school early than women of the same age.

Per cent of persons aged 20 to 24 years who had left school before completing year 11, by sex: Greater Dandenong, 2021

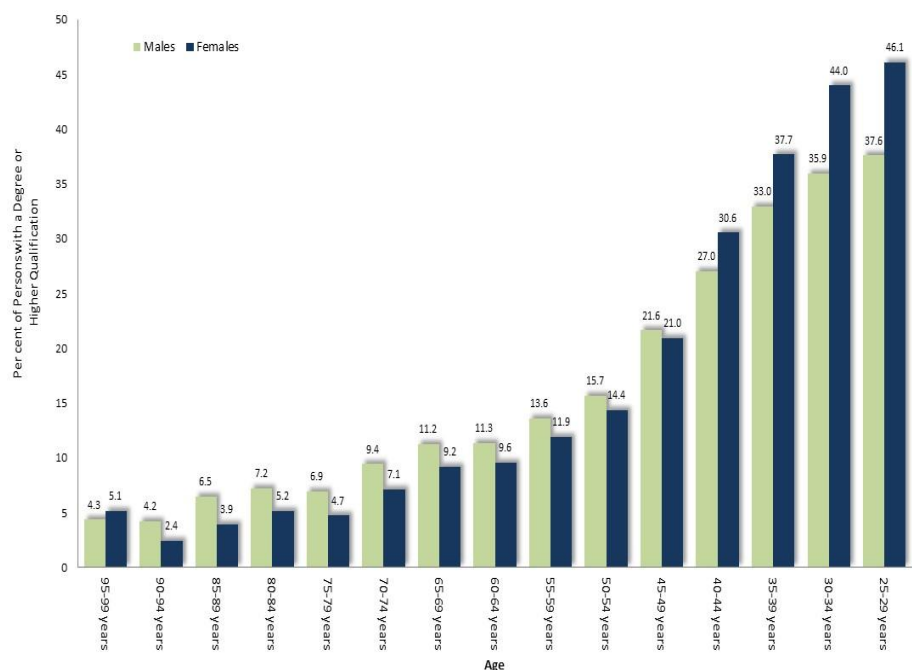


### Tertiary Qualifications

The 2021 Census revealed that among people aged 25-29 years, 46% of women and 38% of men held a degree.

Per cent of persons who hold a tertiary qualification, by sex and age: Greater Dandenong, 2021

Women aged 25-29 years are about ten times more likely to hold a degree than those born 60 years earlier.

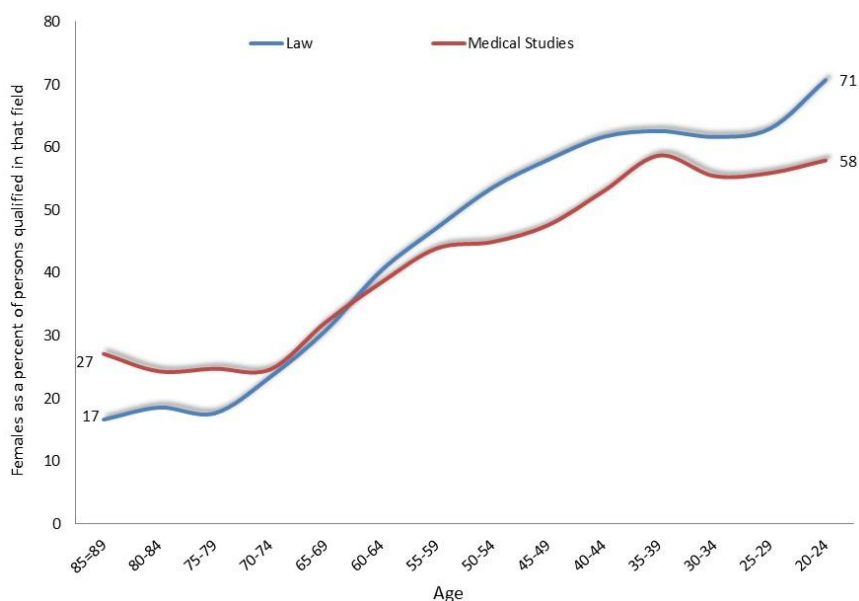


## Fields of Qualification

Women as a percentage of persons with tertiary qualifications in medicine and law, by age: Victoria, 2021

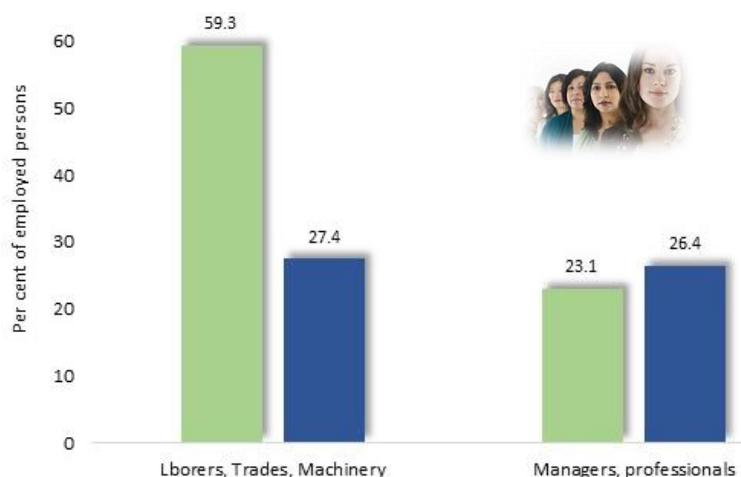
The rising proportion of women with tertiary medical and legal qualifications, with decreasing age, reflects increasing engagement of women in these vocations over the previous 65 years.

Similar rises, though generally less pronounced, have occurred in the representation of women in scientific, engineering, accounting, management and other fields.



## Paid Employment

The 2021 Census found that among persons aged 15 years or more in Greater Dandenong, 61% of men (green columns) were in paid employment, compared with 49% of women.



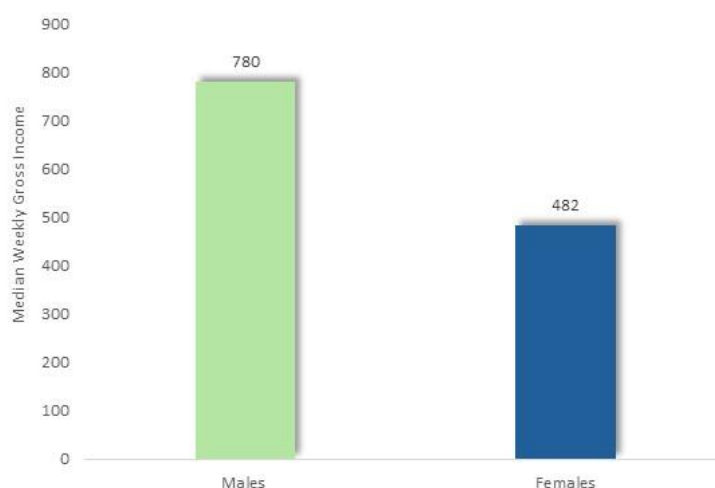
Per cent of persons in paid employment who were employed as managers or professionals, by sex: Greater Dandenong, 2021

The Census also revealed that 59% of men in paid employment worked as tradespersons, labourers or machinery operators, compared with 27% of women. Conversely, over 26% of women in paid work were employed as managers or professionals, compared with 23% of employed men.

## Incomes

In 2021, median weekly individual gross incomes stood at \$780 among males - 64% higher than the corresponding level among women, of \$482 p.w.

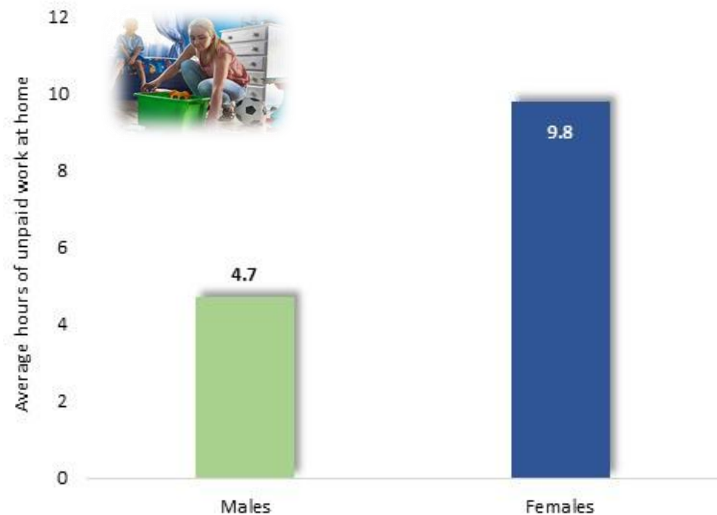
Median weekly gross individual income among persons aged 15 years or more, by sex: Greater Dandenong, 2021



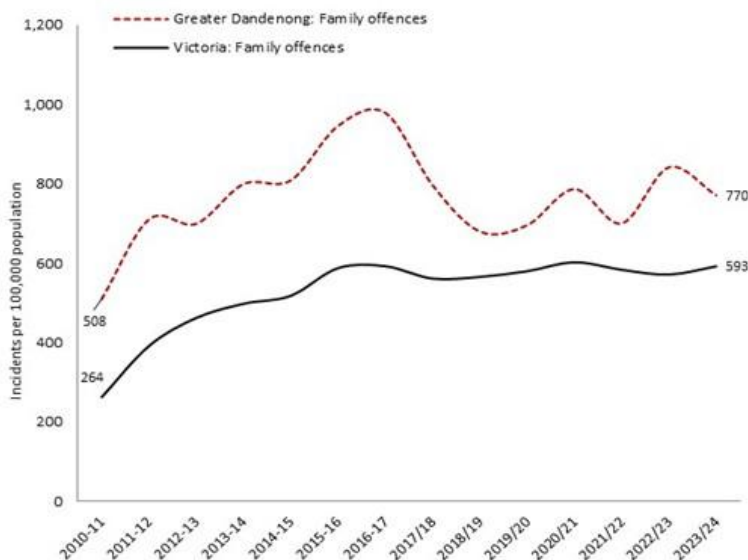
## Unpaid Work at Home

In 2021, 20-79-year-old males performed an average of 4.7 hours of unpaid work at home, less than half the corresponding average among women, of 9.8 hours.

Average hours of unpaid work performed each week, by sex: Greater Dandenong, 2021



## Family Violence



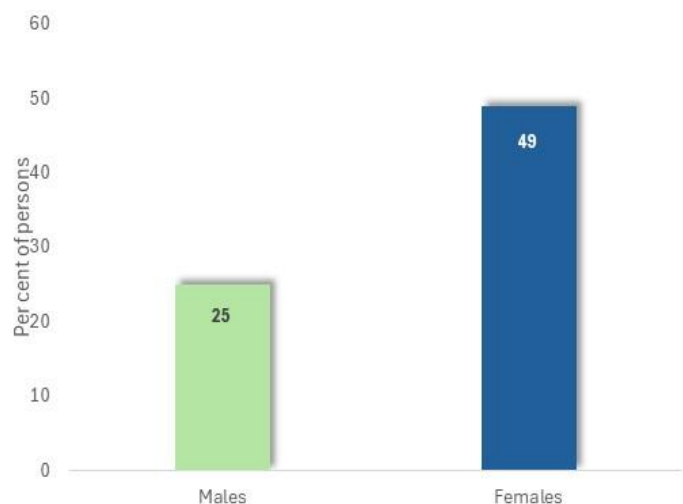
In 2023/24, the rate of incidents of family violence recorded by police was the second highest in Melbourne and 30% more than the Victorian rate. Women accounted for 76% of victims of such crimes.

Number of recorded victims of alleged family violence incidents, by sex: Greater Dandenong, 2023/24

## Perceptions of Personal Safety

A 2023 survey conducted by the Department of Government Services, found that, among residents of Greater Dandenong, 25% of men and 49% of women felt 'unsafe' or 'extremely unsafe' when walking alone at night in their neighborhood.

Percent of persons who felt unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood at night, by sex: Greater Dandenong, 2023

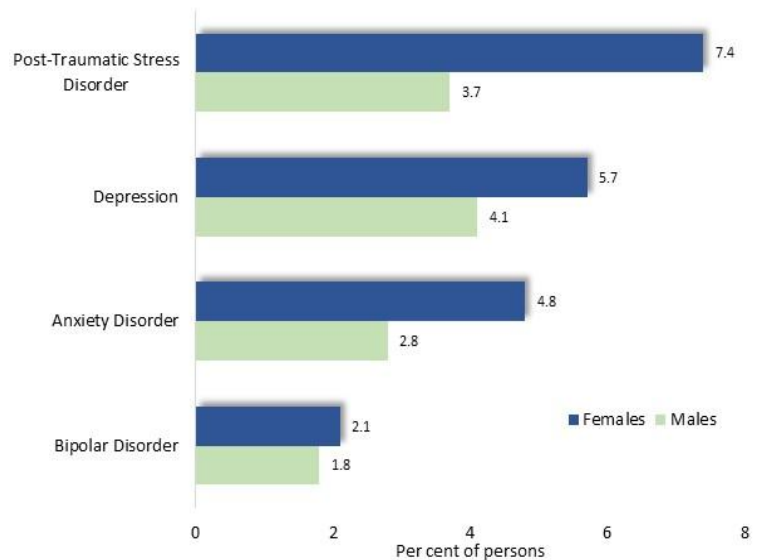


## Mental Health

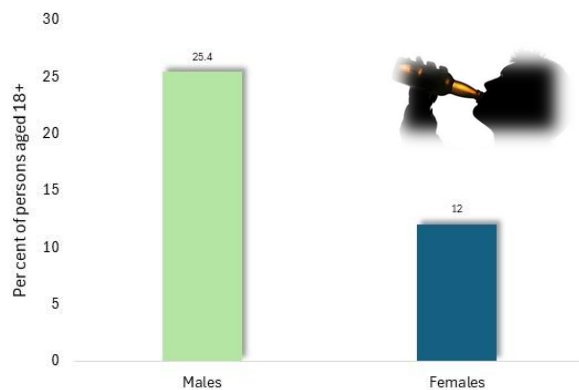
The 2022 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing found that the prevalence of post-traumatic stress, depression and anxiety is higher among women than men.

Prevalence of mental health disorders, by sex:  
Australia, 2022

Similarly, the 2021 Census found that 7.7% of females and 5.3% of males in Greater Dandenong were experiencing mental health conditions – such as anxiety or depression.



## Alcohol Consumption



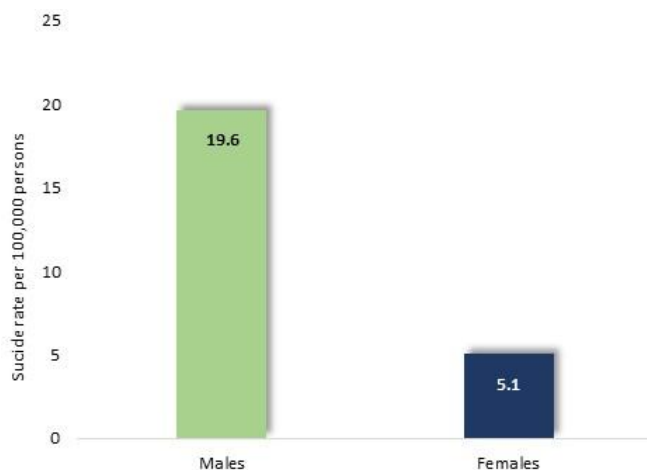
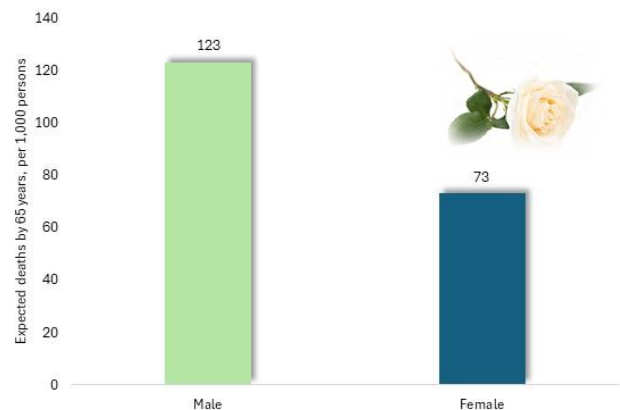
The 2022 National Health Survey revealed that nearly 18% of Australian adults were at risk of long-term harm, exceeding guidelines and consuming more than 10 drinks in the previous week. Men were more than twice as likely to be exposed to such risk as women, with nearly 26% of males risking long-term harm, compared with 12% of females.

Per cent of adults at lifetime risk of alcohol-related harm, by sex: Australia, 2022

## Mortality

Mortality rates among males tend to be higher than among females throughout the lifespan. Based on mortality rates in Australia in 2021-23, 123 males per 1,000 would be expected to die by 65 years, compared with 73 females.

Number of persons expected to be deceased by age 65, per 1,000 individuals, by sex: Australia: 2021-23 (age-specific mortality rates)



## Suicide

In 2020, the suicide rate among Australians was 18.6 per 100,000 persons among males and 5.1 among females – reflecting an enduring disparity between male and female rates.

Suicide rate (per 100,000) by sex: Australia, 2020

## Health and Socioeconomic Disadvantage

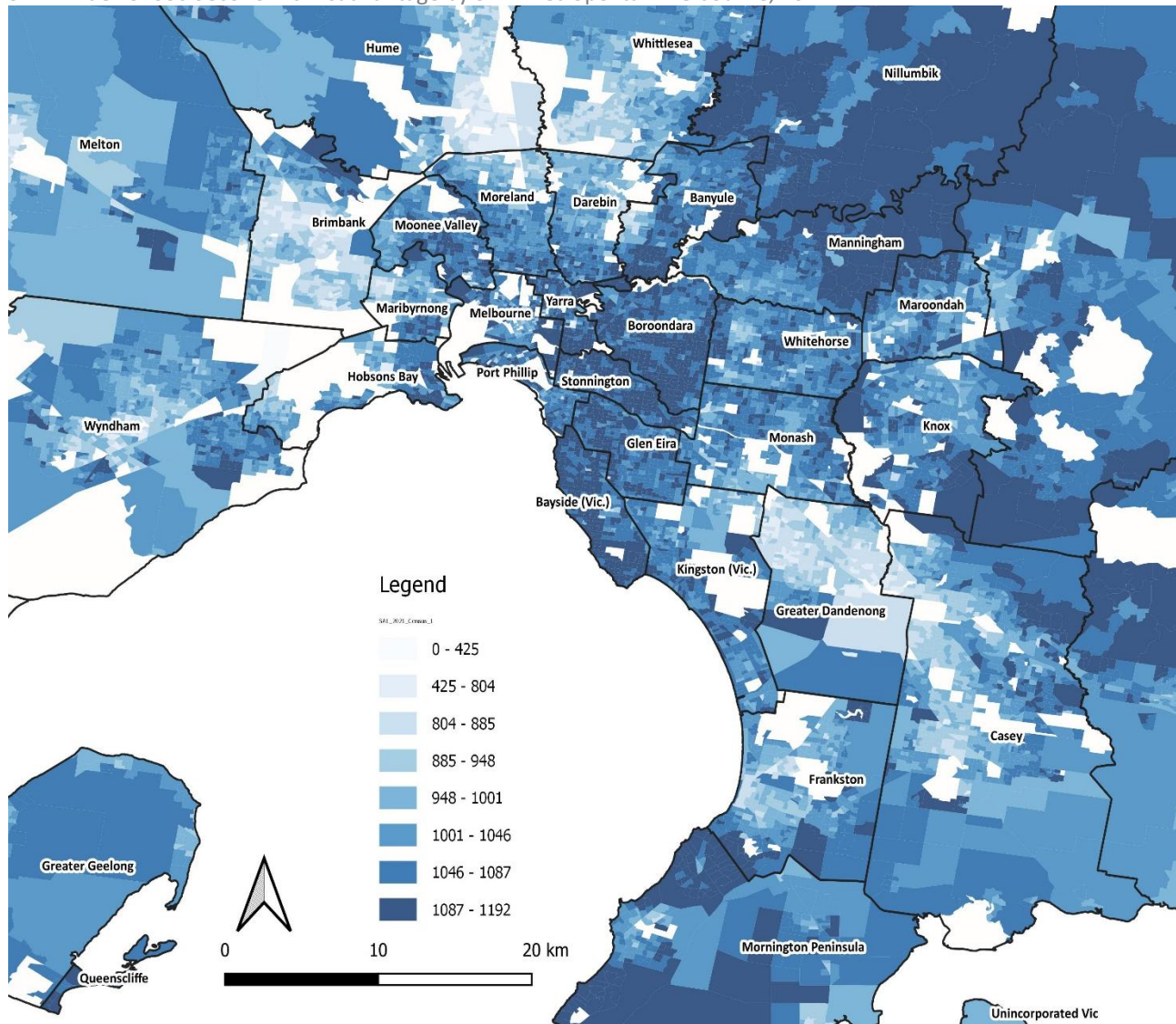
Conditions such as unemployment, limited fluency in the use of spoken English, low incomes, homelessness, and employment in menial – often low-paid - occupations are among those which contribute to the overall burden of socioeconomic disadvantage among communities.



In light of these and other circumstances, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has ranked Greater as the most disadvantaged municipality in Victoria on the 2021 Commonwealth Government Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, matching its ranking on the same index 20 years earlier.

The accompanying map illustrates the distribution of socioeconomic disadvantages, measured by this index for SA1 areas, across metropolitan Melbourne, with the pale shaded areas depicting the highest levels of disadvantage.

SIEFA Index of Socioeconomic Disadvantage by SA1: metropolitan Melbourne, 2021





Comparisons between overall conditions among the most socioeconomically disadvantaged five Victorian communities<sup>16</sup>, and the least disadvantaged communities<sup>17</sup>, reveal a wide range of distinctions between them, in health and wellbeing outcomes for their residents, throughout the lifespan.

Among the most disadvantaged municipalities, the proportion of families with children where no parent is in paid work is 67% greater than among the most advantaged communities<sup>1</sup>, rates of child abuse substantiation are eight times higher<sup>2</sup>, and levels of interaction with child and family support services three times greater<sup>3</sup>. Reflecting such circumstances, the proportion of prep children in the most disadvantaged municipalities who were identified as developmentally vulnerable in the 2021 Early Development Index was three times that in the least disadvantaged communities.

By adolescence, young people in the most disadvantaged communities are nearly twice as likely to acknowledge that they have no-one to turn to for advice<sup>4</sup>, birthrates among 15-19-year-olds are fifteen times higher<sup>5</sup>, and the proportion of 20-24-year-olds who had left school before completing year 11 is over three times higher than those in the most advantaged communities<sup>6</sup>.

Measures of nutrition among the most disadvantaged communities show that the proportion of residents who do not meet vegetable consumption guidelines is 49% higher than for the least disadvantaged<sup>7</sup>, while the percentage of residents who consume sugar-sweetened drinks daily is 2.5 times higher<sup>8</sup>, and food insecurity (the experience of running out of food and not being able to afford more) is three times more prevalent<sup>9</sup>.

In the realm of physical activity, the proportion of residents who lead a sedentary lifestyle is 84% higher in the most disadvantaged communities<sup>10</sup>, and daily smoking among adults 2.5 times more prevalent<sup>11</sup>.

Recent surveys of engagement and satisfaction with community life, document similarly unfavourable results for the more disadvantaged communities, with the proportion of their residents who have no close friends to talk with regularly 74% higher than those in the most advantaged communities<sup>12</sup>, the percentage of people who feel that people cannot be trusted ever or seldom is 68% higher<sup>13</sup>, and the proportion who do not feel valued by society, 61% higher<sup>14</sup>. People among the least advantaged fifth of the population are half as likely to participate in arts and cultural activities as those in the most advantaged segment of society.<sup>27</sup>

Measures of mental health, reveal a 44% higher rate of dissatisfaction with life<sup>15</sup> and 43% greater prevalence of loneliness<sup>16</sup> than among those in the least disadvantaged communities, while the proportion of residents who have been registered clients of mental health institutions is 79% higher<sup>17</sup>. The prevalence of illicit drug use is greater among more socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals, according to the 2019 National Drug Strategy Survey, and the rate of ambulance attendances for illicit drug incidents in 2023 was 56% higher in the most disadvantaged communities<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Central Goldfields, Greater Dandenong, Brim bank, Latrobe, Hindmarsh

<sup>17</sup> Bayside, Boroondara, Nillumbik, Stonnington, Surf Coast

While gambling-related problems afflict all communities, the number of electronic gambling machines per 1,000 residents in the most disadvantaged communities is four times higher than in the least disadvantaged, while losses per adult in 2023/24 were seven times greater.

Measures of physical health show that the prevalence of lung conditions is nearly three times higher in the most disadvantaged five Victorian communities, diabetes mellitus twice as widespread<sup>19</sup>, obesity 71% more prevalent<sup>20</sup>, poor dental health 69% more common<sup>21</sup> and the proportion of residents in the least disadvantaged communities who rate their health as 'poor' or 'fair' is 69% greater<sup>22</sup>. In middle age (45-64 years) the proportion of residents in the most disadvantaged communities who are living with disability is nearly four times more than among those in the least disadvantaged localities<sup>23</sup>.

Finally, by older age, residents of the more disadvantaged communities are twice as likely to depend upon a Centrelink income as those in the most advantaged localities<sup>24</sup>, their prevalence of disability at 65 or more is 45% higher<sup>25</sup>, and rates of avoidable mortality (up to aged 74) are twice the level experienced in the least disadvantaged communities<sup>26</sup>.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> 1 Census 2021; 2 Dept Human Services; 3 Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (DEECD) 2013; 4 2012 Dept Education and Early Childhood Devt. Adolescent Profiles; 5 Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages 2023; 6 Census, 2021; 7 Victorian Population Health Survey 2017; 8 Victorian Population Health Survey 2023; 9 Victorian Population Health Survey 2023; 10 Victorian Population Health Survey 2023; 11 Victorian Population Health Survey 2023; 12 Victorian Population Health Survey 2020; 13 Victorian Population Health Survey 2020; 14 Victorian Population Health Survey 2023; 15 Victorian Population Health Survey 2020; 16 Victorian Population Health Survey 2023; 17 Victorian Population Health Survey 2023; 18 Turning Point 2023; 19 Census 2021; 20 Victorian Population Health Survey 2023; 21 Victorian Population Health Survey 2023; 22 Victorian Population Health Survey 2023; 23 Census 2021; 24 Centrelink Australian Government Data; 25 Census 2021; 26 PHIDU Torrens University 2022; 27 Cultural and creative activities, 2021–22, ABS 2023; 28 Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission, 2024

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## Family Violence and Violence Against Women

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Violence within families, including the abuse of children, cannot be measured with accuracy. However, random surveys of the general population offer the best available method for gauging the prevalence of the such violence.



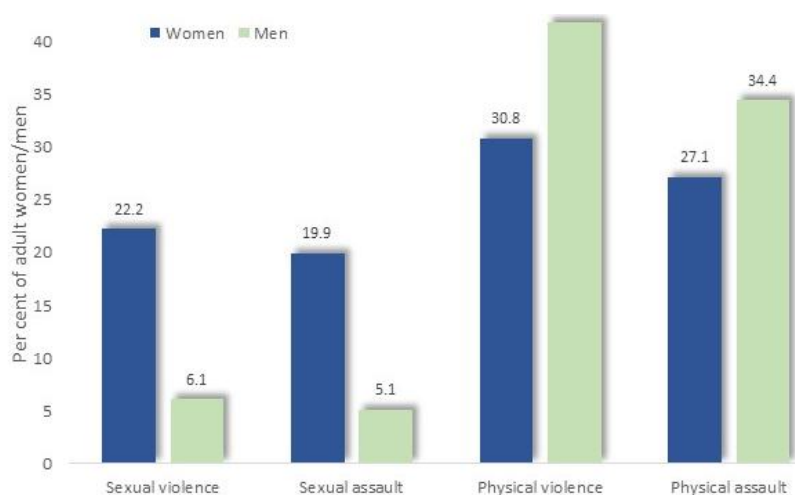
One of the most important of these surveys is the 2021 Personal Safety Survey, conducted among 11,905 Australian adults.

### Physical and Sexual Assault

#### Since age 15

One-fifth (19.9%) of adult women had been *sexually assaulted* since age 15 (compared with 5.1% of men), with 19.8% of women sexually assaulted by a male and 0.6% by a female.

Thirty-four per cent of men and 27% of women had been *physically assaulted* since age 15. Among women, 24% had been assaulted by males and 7% by females.<sup>19</sup>

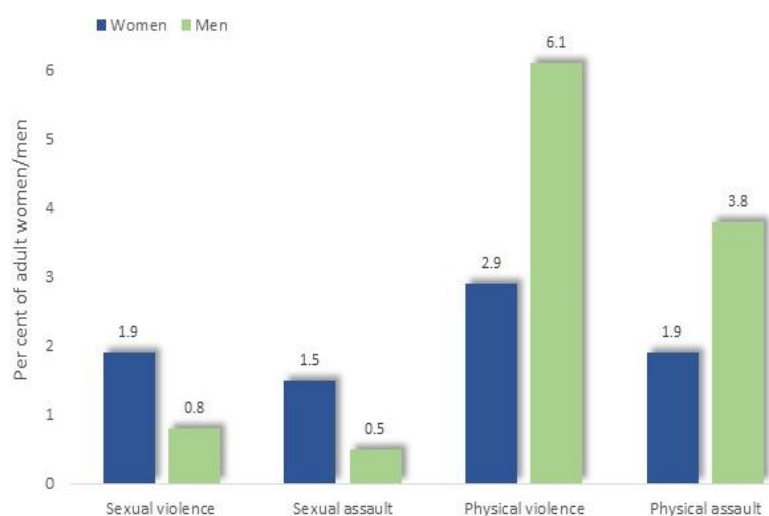


Per cent of persons who had experienced violence **since age 15**, by sex and type of violence: Australia, 2021/22

#### In past 12 months

In the previous 12 months, 1.5% of women had been *sexually assaulted* (compared with 0.5% of men) and 1.9% *physically assaulted*, compared with 3.8% of men.

Per cent of persons who had experienced violence **in the previous 12 months**, by sex and type of violence: Australia, 2021/22



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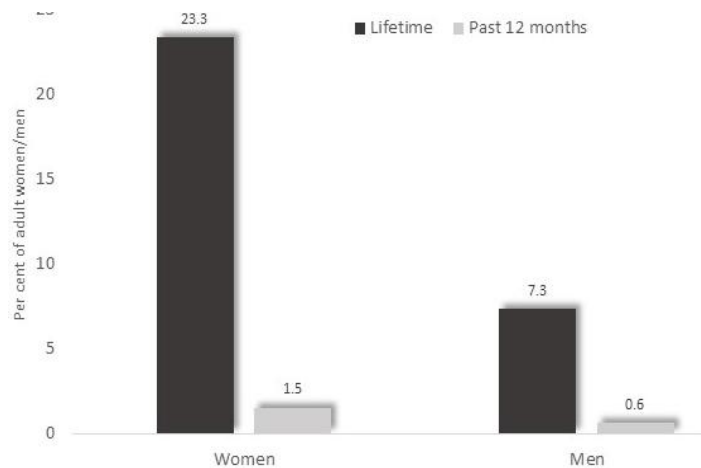
<sup>19</sup> The proportions of women assaulted by men and by women exceeds the total, of 27%, as some women had been assaulted by a man as well as by a woman.

## Intimate Partner Violence

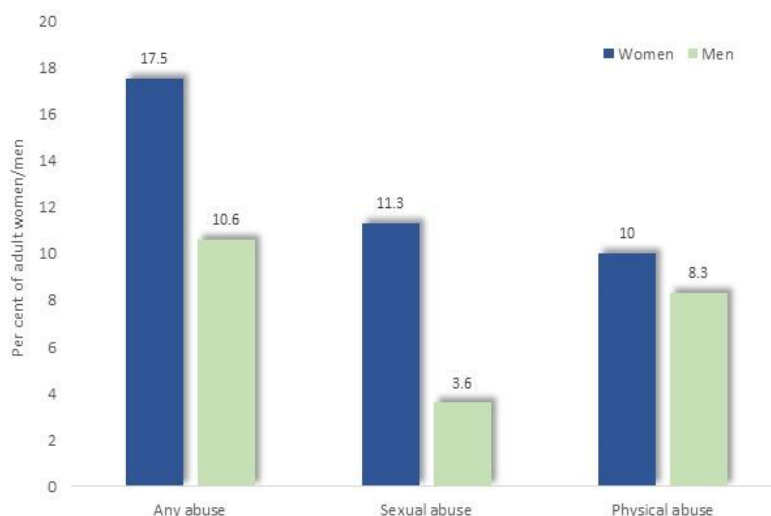
Intimate partner violence had been experienced since age 15 by 23.3% of women and 7.3% of men.

During the previous 12 months, 1.5% of women and 0.6% of men had experienced intimate partner violence.

Per cent of persons who had experienced intimate partner violence, by sex and time-span: Australia, 2021/22



## Child Abuse



One in seven (14%) people, including nearly 18% of women and 11% of men, stated that they had been abused before age 15.

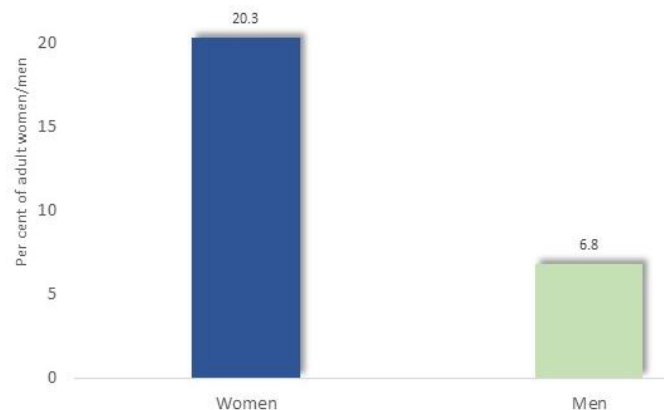
Eleven per cent of women had been sexually abused, compared with 3.6% of men, and 10% were physically abused, compared with 8.3% of men.

Per cent of persons who had been abused before the age of 15, by sex and type of abuse: Australia, 2021/22

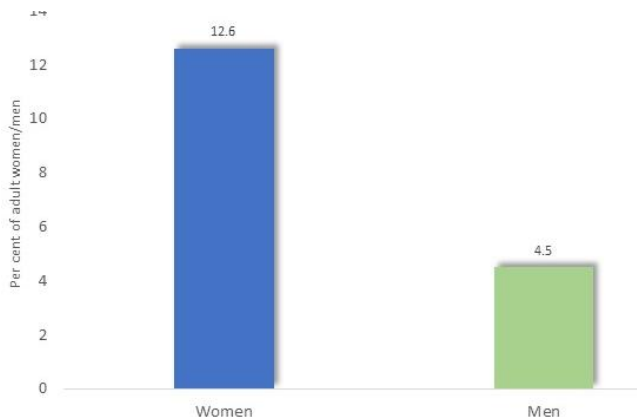
## Stalking

As with intimate partner violence and sexual assault, women predominated among those who had experienced stalking, with 20.3% of women and 6.8% of men reporting that they had been stalked at some time since the age of 15.

Per cent of persons who had been stalked since age 15, by sex: Australia, 2021/22



## Sexual Harassment

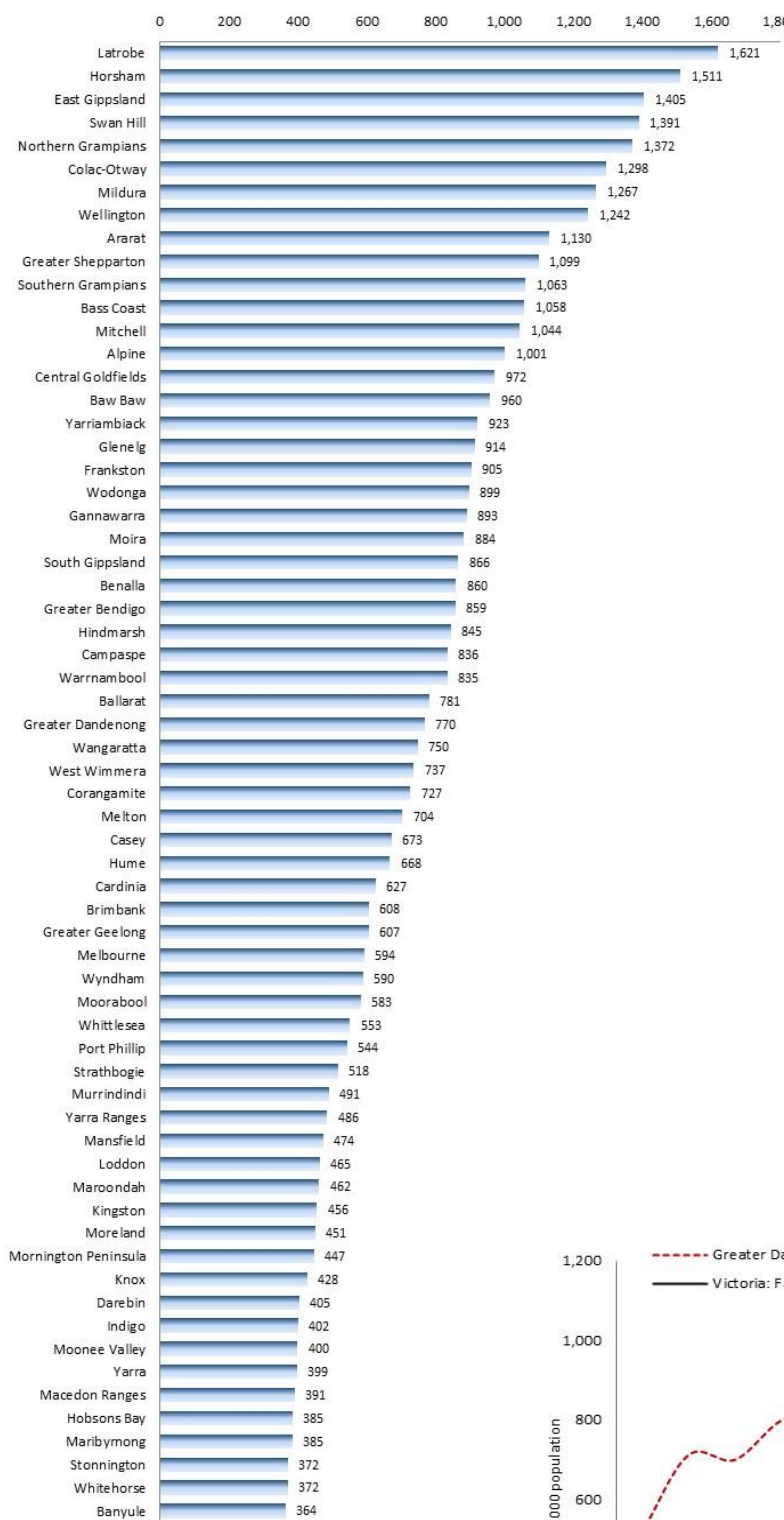


During the previous 12 months, 12.6% of women had been sexually harassed - nearly three times the corresponding proportion of males, of 4.5%.

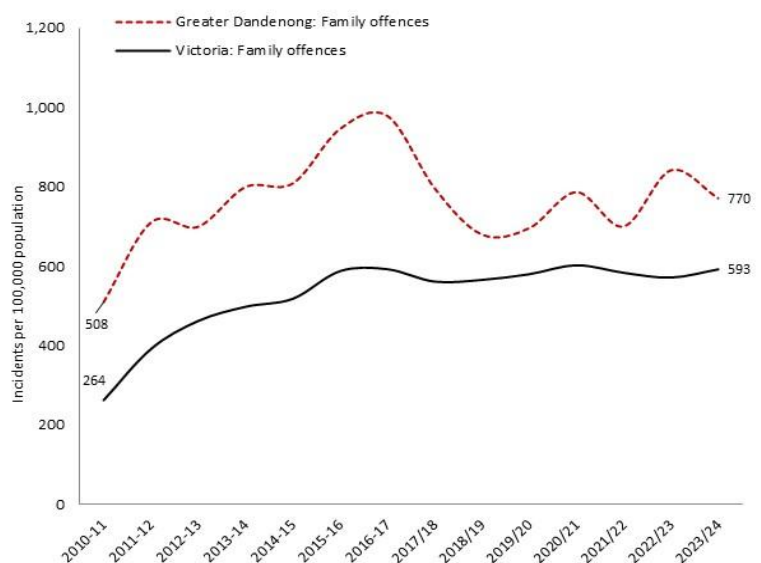
12.2% of women had been harassed by a male and 1.1% by a female.

Per cent of persons who had been sexually harassed during the previous 12 months, by sex: Australia, 2021/22

## Local Measures of the Incidence of Family Violence and Child Abuse



Rate of alleged violent offences, per 100,000 population: Greater Dandenong and Victoria, 2023/2024



Local measures of the incidence of family violence and child abuse are less reliable than population surveys, since they only reflect those instances of violence which reach the attention of responsible agencies, such as the police, the courts and child protection authorities.

Family-related alleged violent offences, 2023/24 [per 100,000 residents], by municipality

The rate of family-related alleged violent offences (per 100,000 residents) in Greater Dandenong, stood at 770 per 100,000 residents in 2023/24 – the second highest rate in Melbourne and 30% more than the State level. Women accounted for 76% of these incidents.

The rate of such offences had risen in Greater Dandenong by 51% since 2010/11, and by 125% across Victoria in this period (diagram, below).



## Crime and Safety

### Rate Comparison

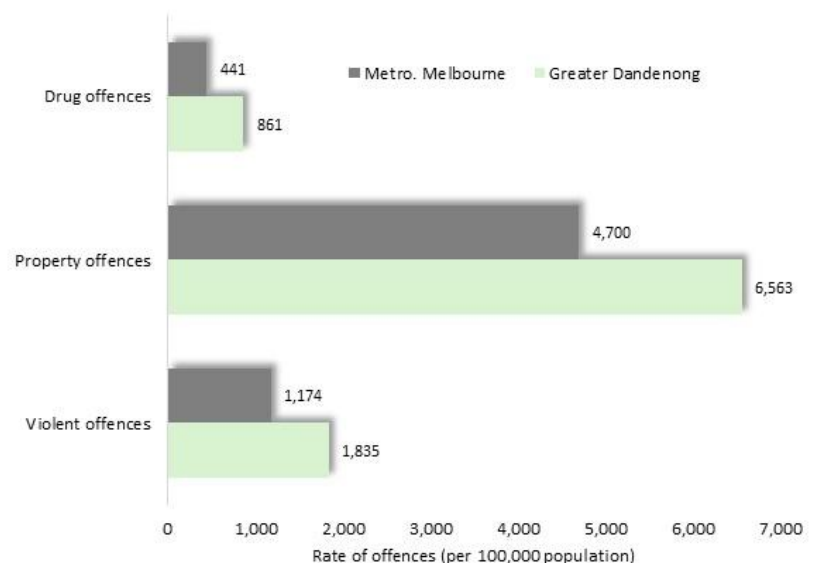
In the 19 years since 2004/5, the rate of police-recorded violent crime in Greater Dandenong has risen by 82% and drug offences increased by 71%, while the level of property offences declined by 2%.



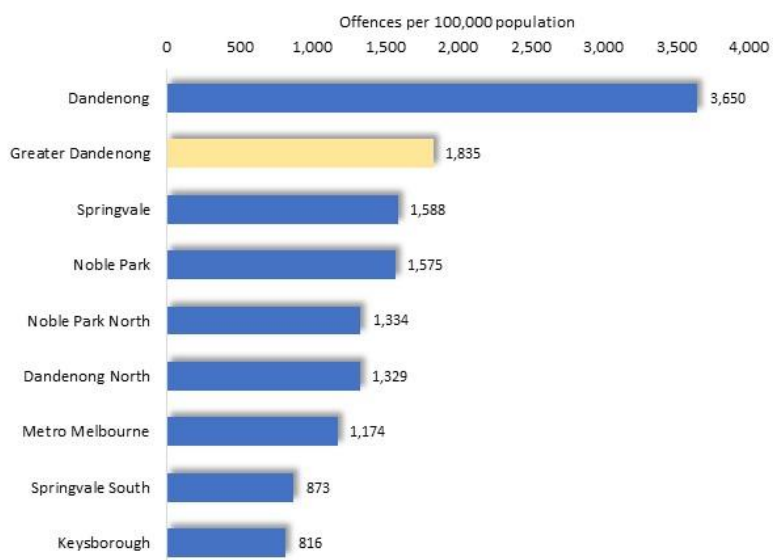
The year to June 2024 though, saw little change in rates of alleged offences, with declines in rates of violent offences of 1% and of drug offences by 4%, coupled with a 6% rise in property offences and no significant change in the overall offence rate.

In 2023/24, alleged offence rates in Greater Dandenong were 56% higher than metropolitan Melbourne for violent offences, 95% higher for drug offences, 40% higher for property offences and 52% higher in its overall rate of offences.

Crime rates: Greater Dandenong and metropolitan Melbourne, 2023/24 (police-recorded alleged offences, per 100,000 population)



The local rates of violent offences and of drug offences were each the second highest in the metropolitan area, outside the CBD.



Crime rates vary widely within Greater Dandenong.

In 2023/24, the rate of violent offences in Dandenong was twice the municipal average, while the rates in Keysborough and Springvale South were less than half the municipal level and a quarter the rate in Dandenong (diagram left).

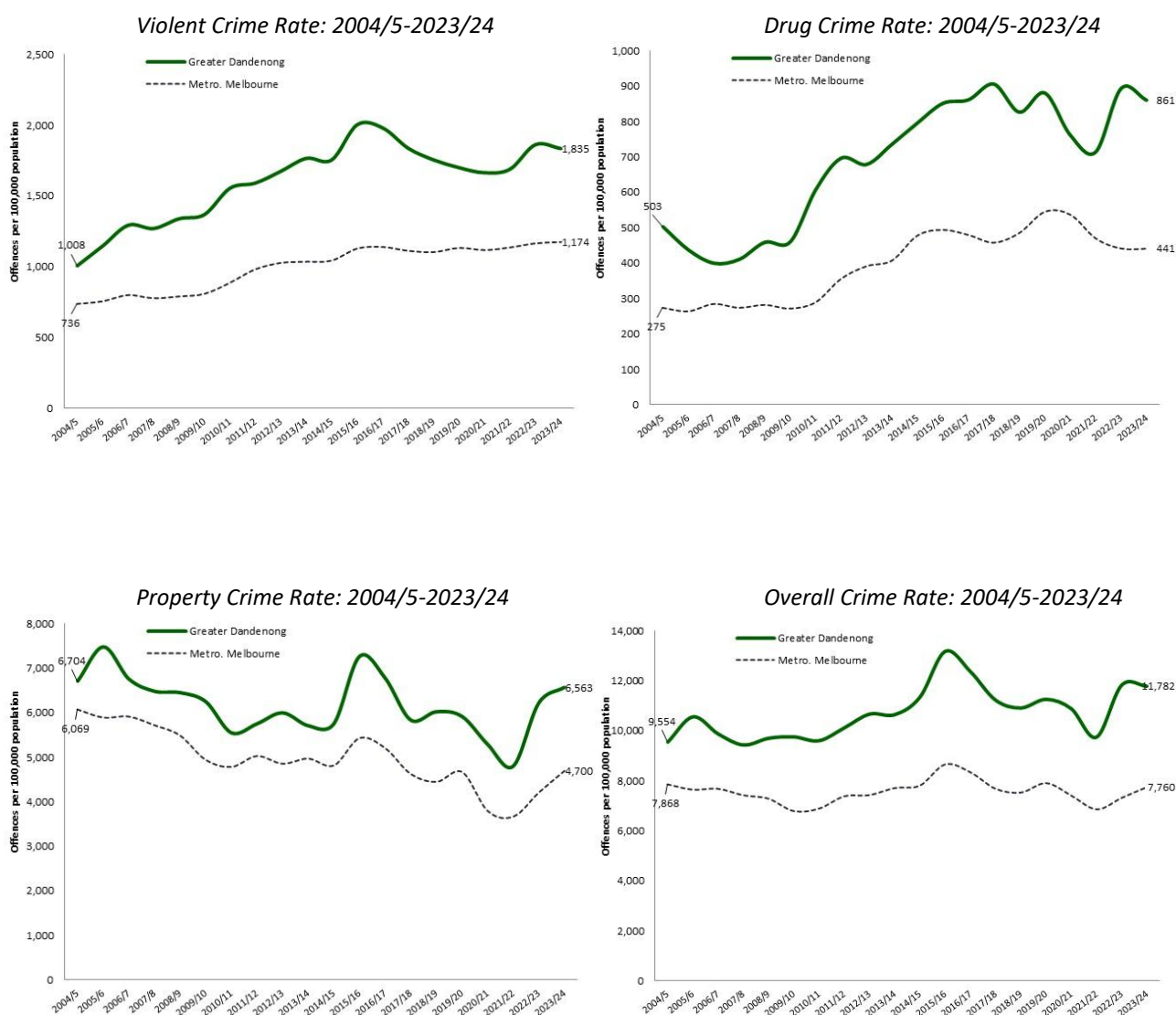
Violent crime rates: Greater Dandenong Suburbs, 2023/24

## Crime Trends

Since 2004, violent crime rates have escalated by 82%, compared with 60% across Melbourne, while overall rates of crime have risen by 23% - compared with a 1% metropolitan decline in such rates. However, in recent years, rates of recorded crime in Greater Dandenong, within these categories, have been relatively stable.



For perspective, changes in rates of violent crime and drug offences in Greater Dandenong and metropolitan Melbourne, during the period 2004/5 to 2023/24, are illustrated below.



Notably, most of these rates have stalled or declined after a rise in the past few years.

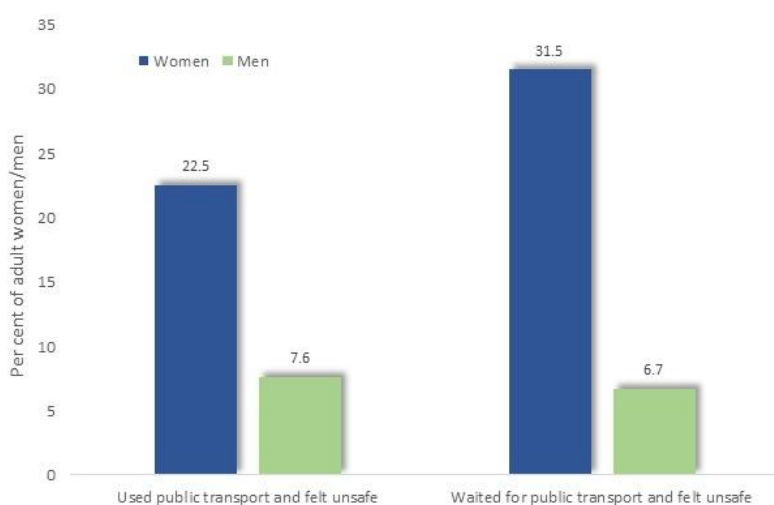
## Personal Safety

### Local Survey Results

A 2023 survey conducted by the Department of Government Services, found that, among residents of Greater Dandenong, 25% of men and 49% of women felt 'unsafe' or 'extremely unsafe' when walking alone at night in their neighborhood. An earlier, 2015 VicHealth survey, found that the proportion of residents who felt unsafe walking alone in their neighborhoods at night was the highest in Victoria.

### The 2022/23 Personal Safety Survey

Perceptions of personal safety when using public transport alone after dark, as well as walking near their home alone at night, were the subject of inquiries featured in the 2021/22 Personal Safety Survey conducted among Australian adults.



*While Using Public Transport after Dark*  
Women were three times more likely than men to feel unsafe while using public transport alone after dark, and over four times more likely to feel unsafe while waiting for public transport after dark.

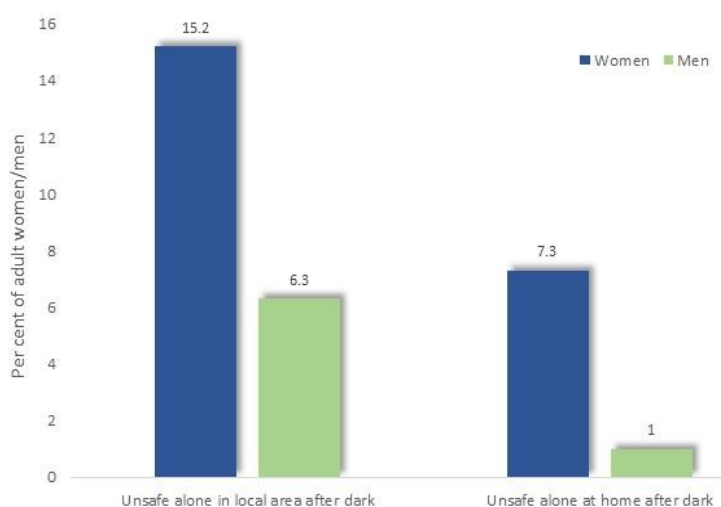
Per cent of persons who felt unsafe while using public transport by sex: Australia, 2021/22

### While Alone after Dark

Women were over twice as likely to report apprehensions about their personal safety at night, with 15.2% declaring that they felt unsafe walking alone in their local area after dark, compared with 6.3% of males.

Further, 7.3% of women and 1% of men, felt concerns for their personal safety while alone at home after dark.

Per cent of persons who felt unsafe after dark: Australia, 2021/22



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## Physical Health

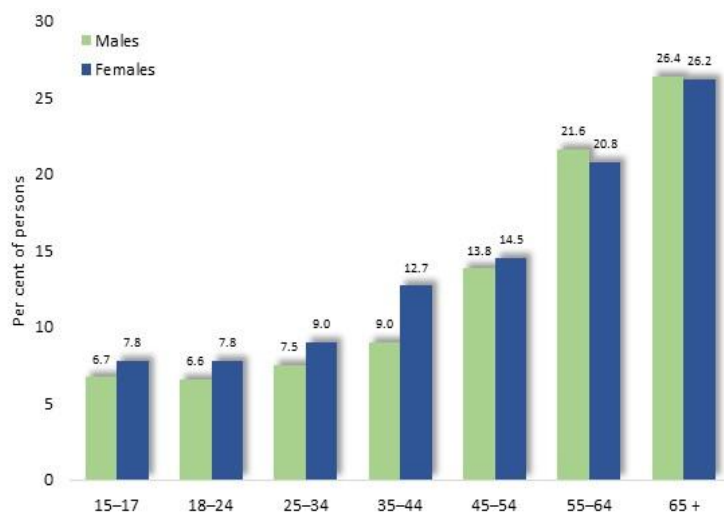
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### Self-assessed Health

In the 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey, 17% of Greater Dandenong residents rated their overall health as 'fair' or 'poor', slightly less than the metropolitan level of 20%.

The 2022 National Health Survey examined differences in self-reported health by age and sex – information not available from the local-area survey. Such assessments of health were most favourable among younger people, with fewer than one in ten of those aged less than 35 years rating their health unfavourably. The prevalence of 'fair' or 'poor' self-assessed health though, rose among people in their middle and older age, to 26% among those aged 65 years or more.



Overall self-assessments of health differed little between women and men in each age group.

Per cent of persons with 'fair' or 'poor' self-assessed health, by age: Australia, 2022

### Dental Health

The 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey found that 22%, or just over one-fifth, of Greater Dandenong residents assessed their dental health as 'fair' or 'poor' – the same as for Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne.

Sixty-nine per cent of residents stated that they had delayed or avoided dental treatment, owing to the cost – also much the same figure as for Victoria, at 67.5%.

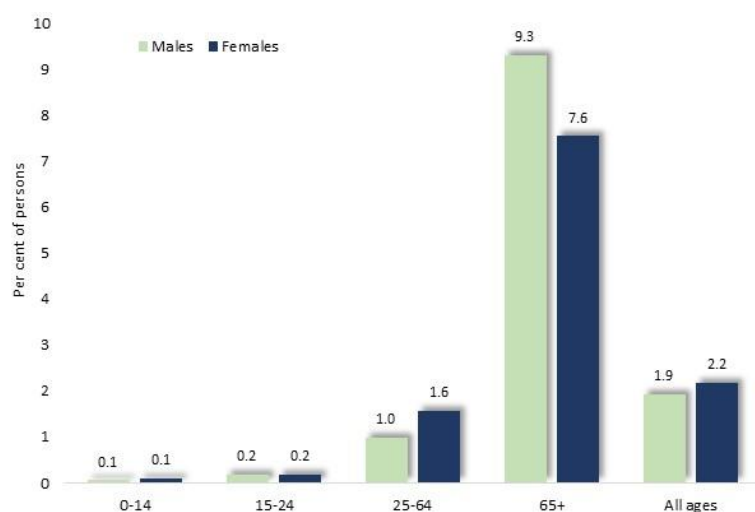
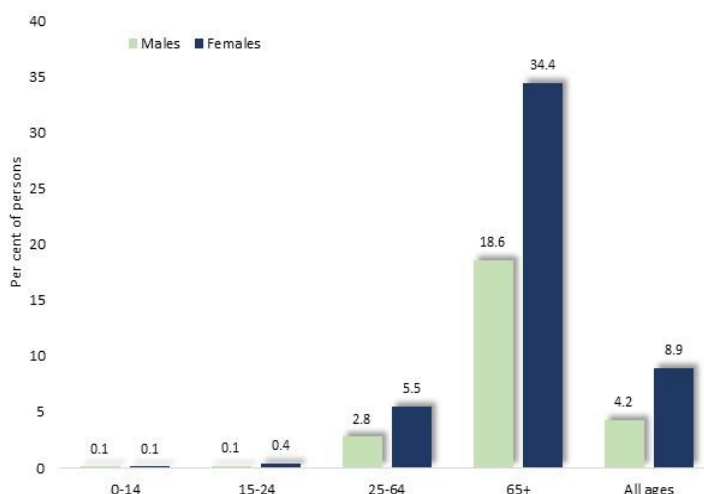
### Chronic Illness

In 2021, for the first time, the Census featured questions that inquired whether respondents were currently experiencing any of a selection of seven broad categories of chronic illnesses. The results for Greater Dandenong residents are summarized here, with consideration of variations in the prevalence of chronic illness by age and sex.

## Arthritis

Affecting about 7% of residents, arthritis is most prevalent among older residents of Greater Dandenong, and about twice as common among women than men.

Per cent of residents with arthritis, by sex and age:  
Greater Dandenong, 2021



## Cancer

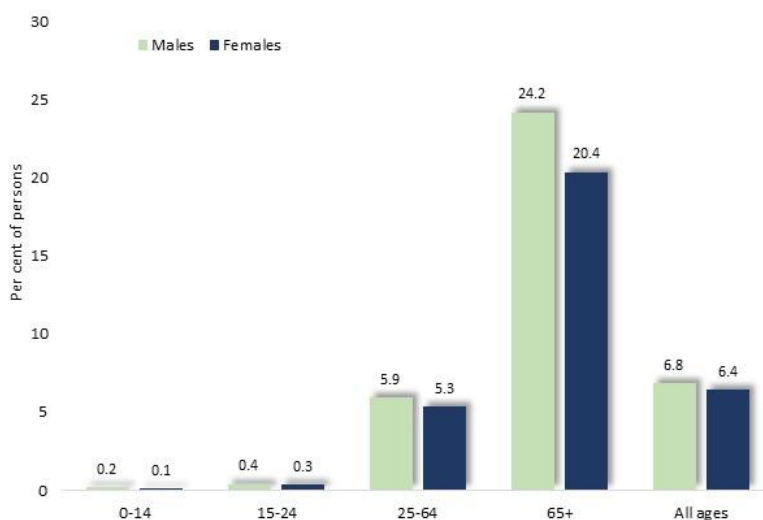
Approximately 2% of residents – including similar proportions of women and men – stated that they were living with cancer. As with arthritis, the prevalence of cancer was age-related, reaching its peak among older residents.

Per cent of residents with Cancer, by sex and age: Greater Dandenong, 2021

## Diabetes Mellitus

Nearly 7% of residents stated that they had diabetes mellitus – including over 5% of people of working age, and more than 20% of residents aged 65 or more. Its prevalence was slightly higher among males.

Per cent of residents with diabetes, by sex and age: Greater Dandenong, 2021

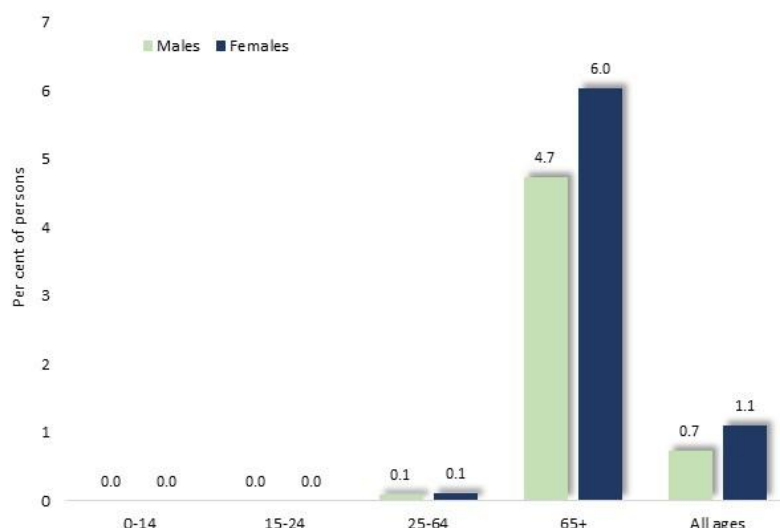




## Dementia

The Census findings indicated that dementia affects approximately 1% of residents, including slightly more women than men. Dementia was largely confined to residents aged 65 years or more, among whom it afflicted approximately 5.4% of residents.

Per cent of residents with dementia, by sex and age: Greater Dandenong, 2021



## Asthma



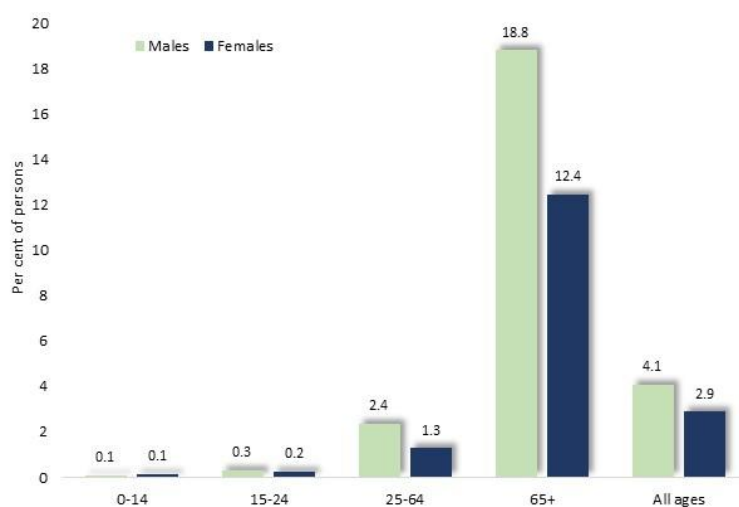
The prevalence of asthma was relatively uniform across the lifespan and similar among women and men. Among children it was more widespread among boys than girls, affecting 7.2% of males aged 0 to 14 years, and 4.7% of females of this age.

Per cent of residents with asthma, by sex and age: Greater Dandenong, 2021

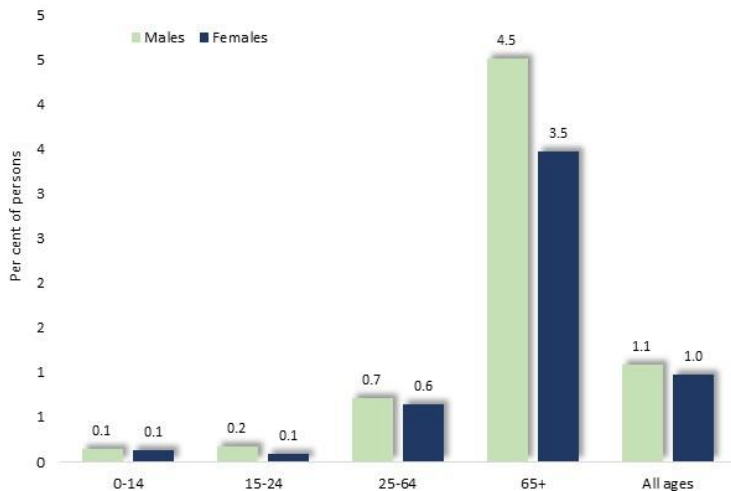
## Heart Disease

The findings of the 2021 Census indicated that approximately 3.5% of Greater Dandenong residents had heart disease. Its prevalence rose steeply with age, to 15% of people aged 65 or more, and it was most widespread among men.

Per cent of residents with heart disease, by sex and age: Greater Dandenong, 2021



## Kidney Disease



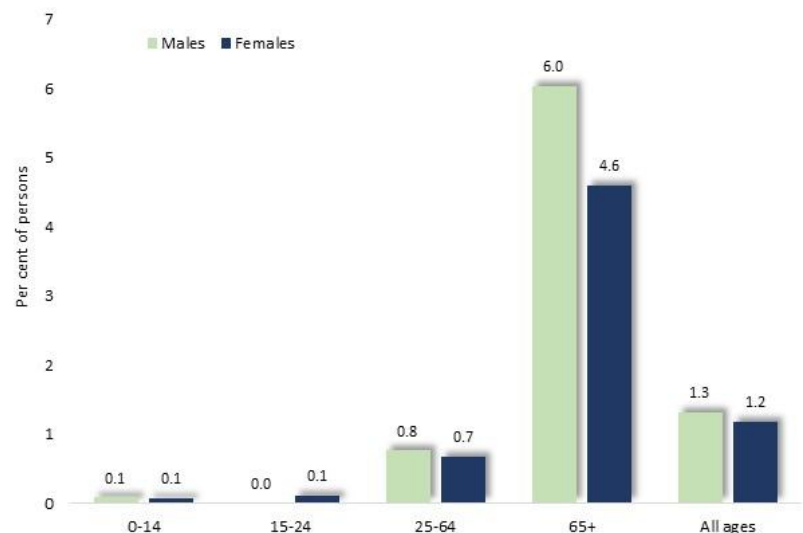
Kidney disease affected approximately 1% of residents, most of them in their older age, and similar proportions of men and women.

Per cent of residents with kidney disease, by sex and age: Greater Dandenong, 2021

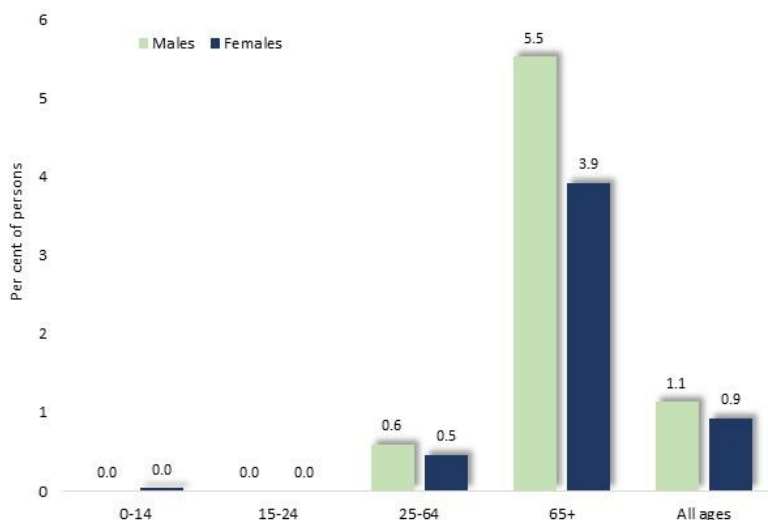
## Lung Disease

Lung diseases, including chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases such as emphysema and bronchiectasis, were recorded among approximately 1% of residents, chiefly those in their older age.

Per cent of residents with arthritis, by sex and age: Greater Dandenong, 2021



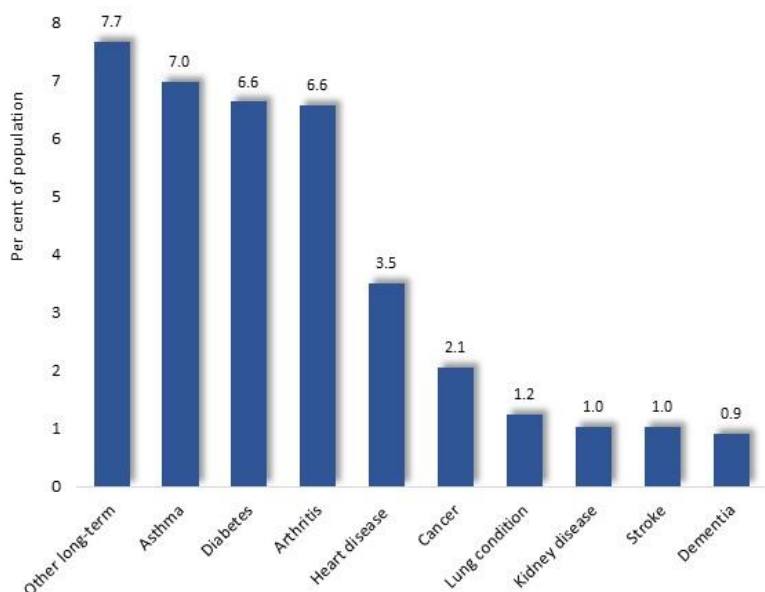
## Stroke



About 1% of residents stated that they were living with the effects of stroke. Here too, those affected with such conditions were largely in their older age, where males predominated.

Per cent of residents with stroke, by sex and age: Greater Dandenong, 2021

### Chronic Illnesses: All ages



This and two accompanying charts, further below, illustrate the prevalence of these chronic conditions among Greater Dandenong residents.

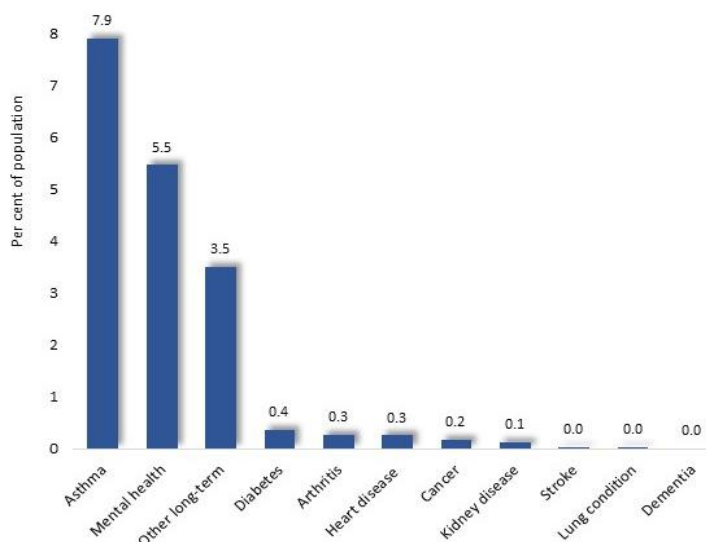
Asthma, diabetes mellitus and arthritis are the most common, each affecting over 6 % of residents.

Prevalence of selected chronic illnesses: persons of all ages, Greater Dandenong, 2021

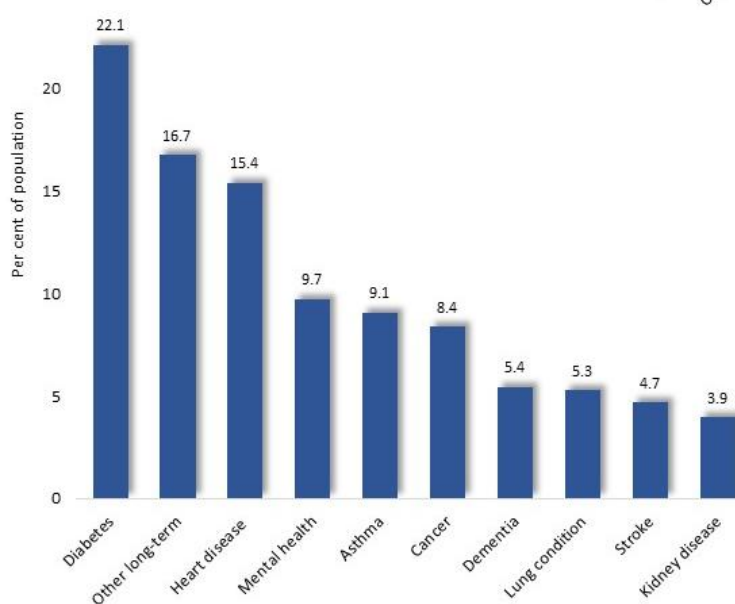
### Chronic Illnesses: persons aged 15-24

Among young people though, asthma and mental health conditions predominate.

Prevalence of selected chronic illnesses: persons aged 20-24, Greater Dandenong, 2021



### Chronic Illnesses: persons aged 65 or more



By contrast, among people aged 65 years or more, these chronic conditions afflict an appreciable number of Greater Dandenong residents. Most prevalent among them are diabetes mellitus and heart disease, which each affect at least one in six older residents.

Prevalence of selected chronic illnesses: persons aged 65+, Greater Dandenong, 2021

## Exercise, Sport and Physical Recreation

### Local Measures of Physical Activity



Some surveys paint a picture of physical activity among residents of Greater Dandenong.

The 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey found that 20% of adults in Greater Dandenong did not do any moderate to vigorous physical activity in the previous week – higher than the municipal figure of 15.2% and Victorian proportion of 16.8%.

Most other information is based on national surveys which inform us about levels of physical recreation among women and men of different ages and sex.

### Physical Activity among the General Population

The 2022 National Health Survey explored patterns of physical recreation, finding that the percentage of people who did not meet physical activity guidelines was similar among males and females, at 72.7% and 77.8% respectively, and differed little with age.

The proportion of people who did not meet guidelines for physical activity was highest among people born overseas, those who spoke languages other than English at home, people with limited educational attainments and those living in conditions of socioeconomic disadvantage.

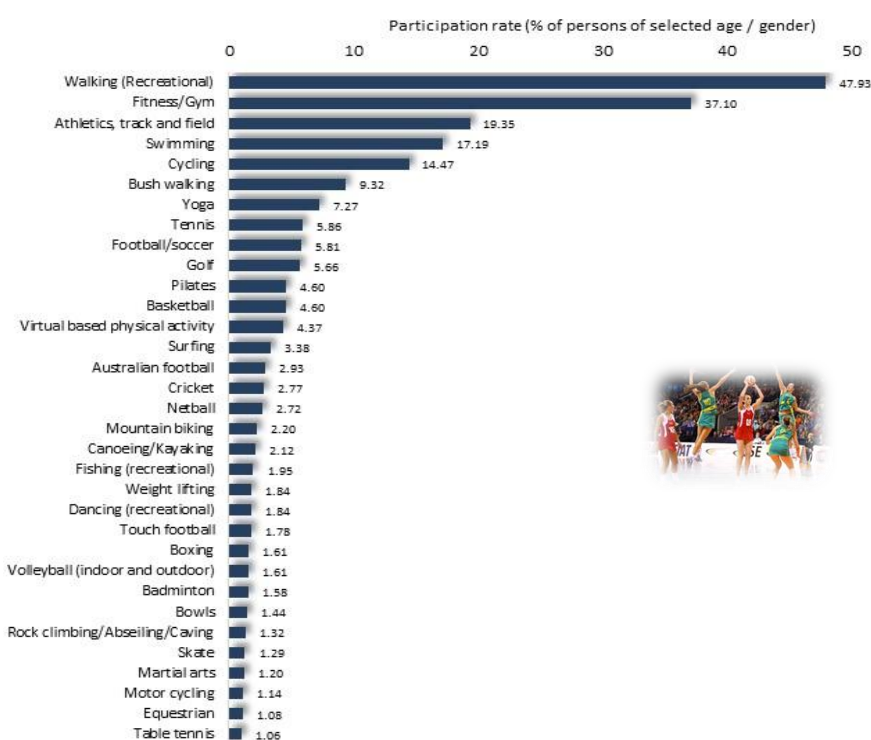
### Popular Sport and Physical Recreation

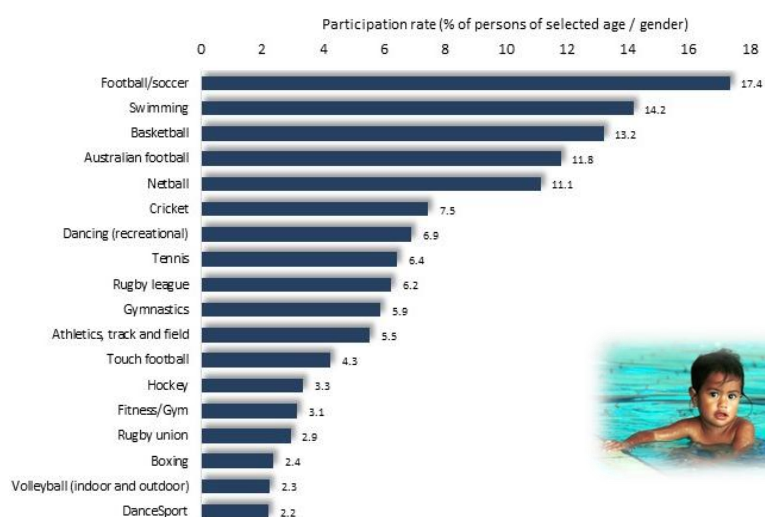
The 2021 Ausplay Sports Participation Survey documented the participation of Australians in a range of sporting and physical recreation pursuits, focusing upon activities during the previous 12 months. While results at a municipal level were not generated by the survey, its findings shed light upon the way in which patterns of participation in sport and physical recreation vary with age and sex.

#### All age groups

Popular physical pastimes among Australians include walking – accounting for nearly half of those surveyed – as well as fitness, athletics, swimming and cycling.

Per cent of persons of all ages who participate in sport by type of activity: persons of all ages, Australia, 2021





### Persons aged 12-14 years

Children aged 12 to 14 years are most inclined towards sporting activities, such as soccer, swimming, basketball, Australian football and netball – each accounting for the participation of at least 10% of people in this age group.

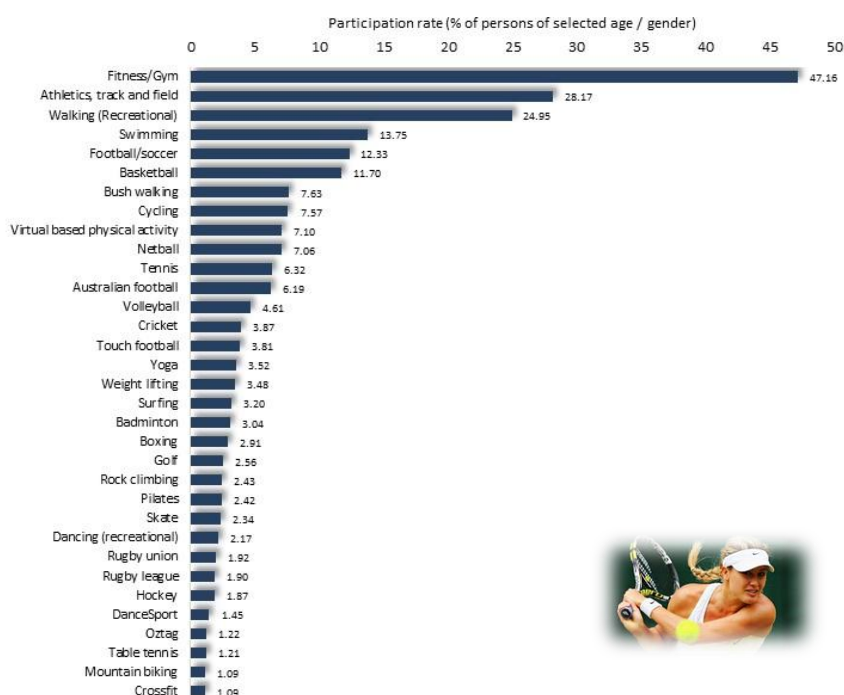


Per cent of persons who participate in sport, by type of activity: persons aged 12-14, Australia, 2021

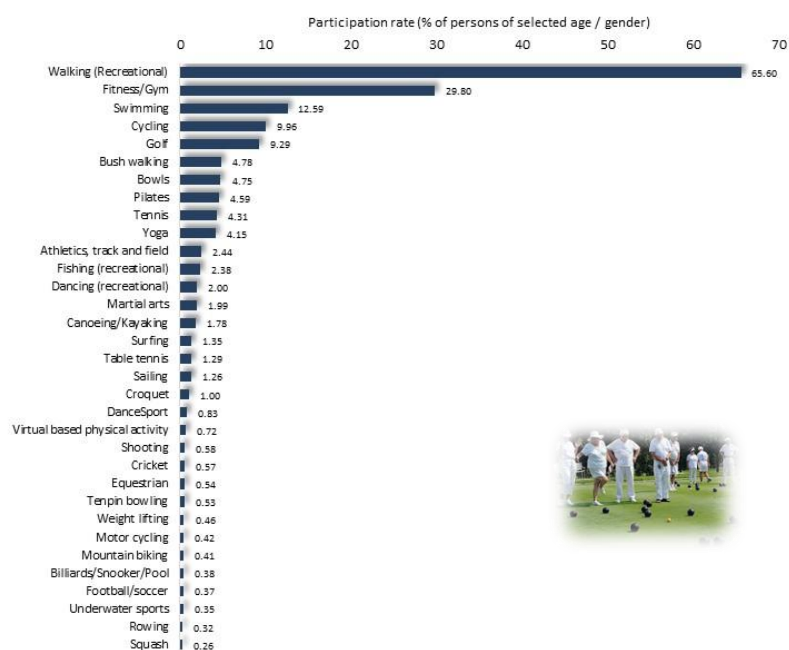
### Persons aged 18-24 years

Among young people, fitness, athletics, swimming, basketball, soccer and walking rose to prominence among their favoured sporting and physical recreation activities. Each attracted the participation of over a fifth of all young Australian adults, including nearly half in the case of fitness and gym.

Per cent of persons who participate in sport, by type of activity: persons aged 18-24, Australia, 2021



### Older people, aged 65 or more



Walking, fitness, swimming and cycling, remain popular among older people. They are joined by activities such as golf, bowls, Pilates, yoga and fishing - sports which chiefly attract people in their middle or older age.

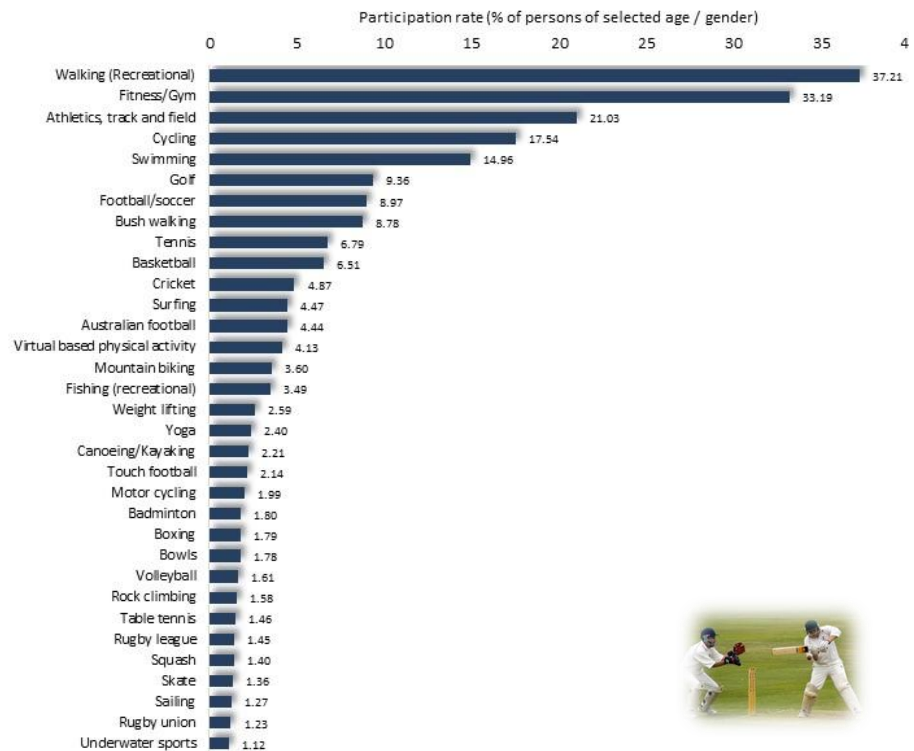
Per cent of persons who participate in sport and physical recreation, by type of activity: persons aged 65+, Australia, 2021



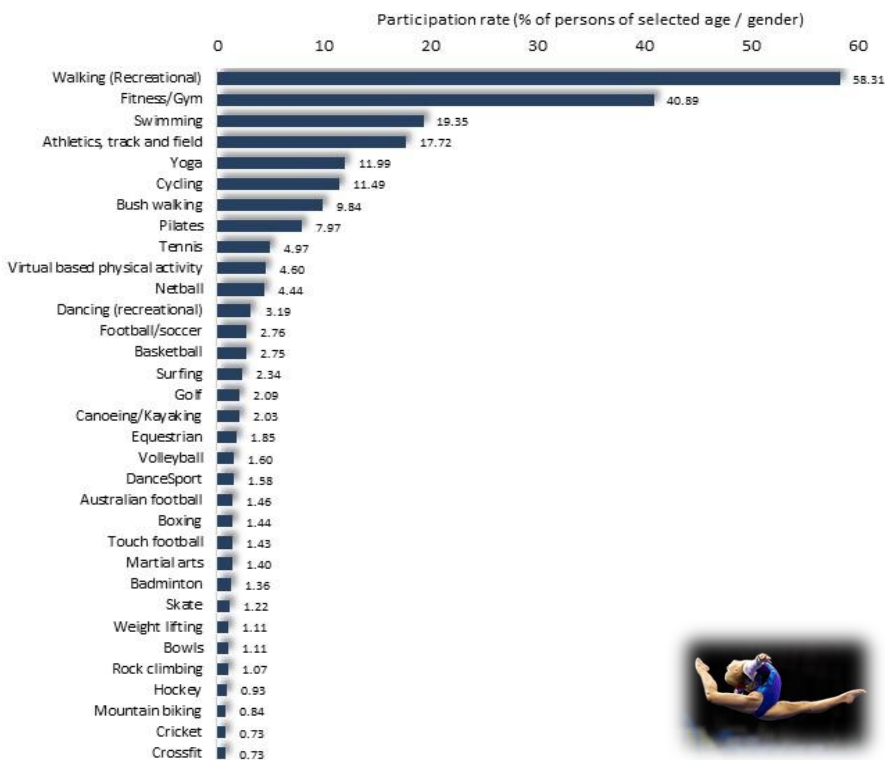
## Males

Aside from age, there are also wide differences in participation in sport and physical recreation, between women and men. Among males overall, walking, fitness or gym, athletics, cycling, swimming, golf, soccer, basketball and cricket are among the most popular

Per cent of males who participate in sport and physical recreation, by type of activity: Australia, 2021



## Females



A similar pattern is seen among women, with walking, fitness, athletics and cycling among the most widespread activities. Others, more popular among females, include yoga, Pilates, netball, dancing and equestrian sports.

Per cent of females who participate in sport and physical recreation, by type of activity: Australia, 2021

## Participation in Popular Sports, by Age and Sex

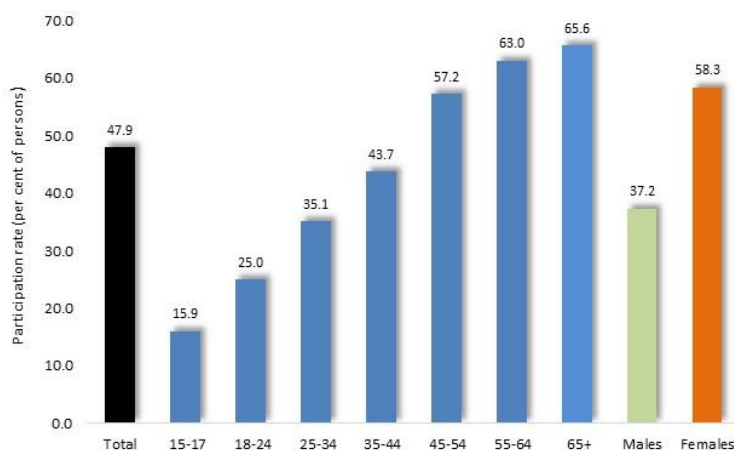
The 2021 Ausplay Survey also documented variations in the prevalence of sport and physical recreation pursuits among people of different ages. Examples of these trends, as they apply to some of the more popular activities, are presented here.

### *Walking (recreational)*

The proportion of Australians who engage in walking for exercise rises with age, from about one in six teenagers, to two-thirds of people aged 65 years or more.

Walking is decisively more popular among females than males.

Per cent of persons who participate in walking, by age and sex: Australia, 2021



### *Fitness/Gym*



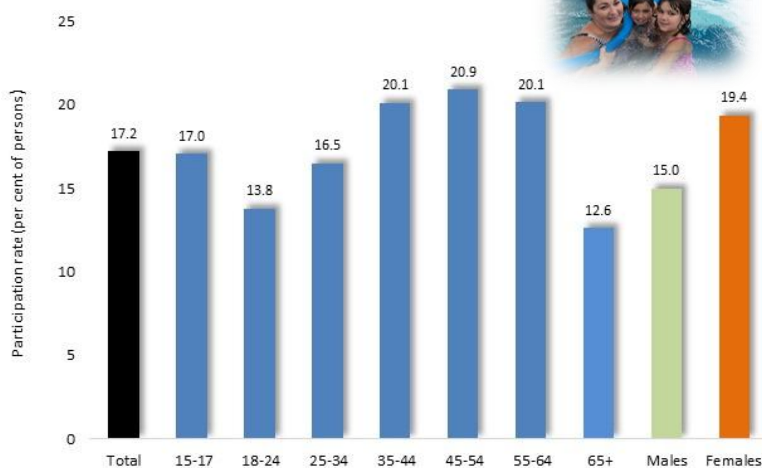
Levels of participation in fitness or gym are more stable across the lifespan, rising to 42% among young adults, then declining moderately with age to 30% among people aged 65 or more.

Per cent of persons who participate in fitness or gym, by age and sex: Australia, 2021

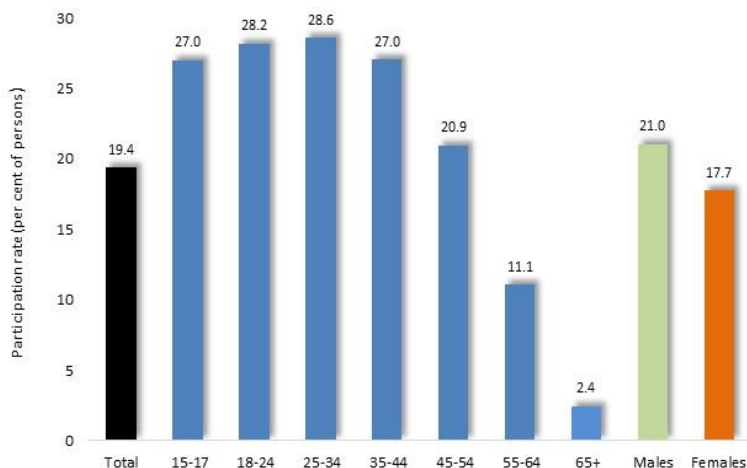
### *Swimming*

Similarly, swimming is enjoyed by about one-fifth of people in most age ranges, retaining its popularity among those aged 65 years or more.

Per cent of persons who participate in swimming, by age and sex: Australia, 2021



## Athletics, Track and Field



Athletics is popular among young and middle-aged people, before receding in older age.

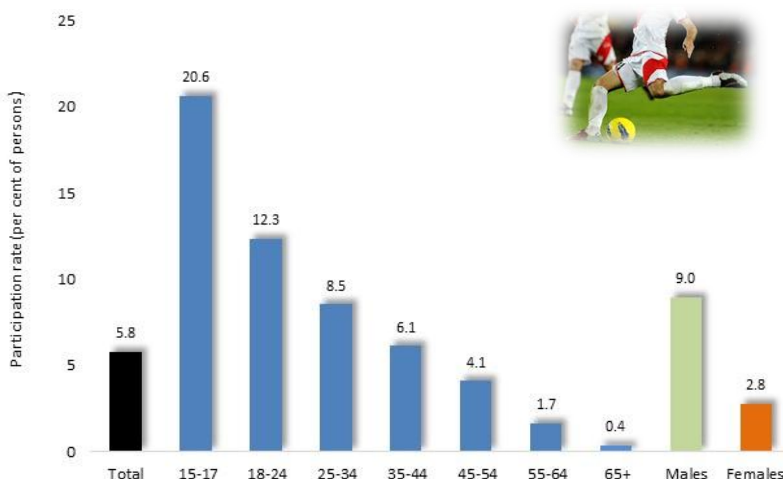
Per cent of persons who participate in athletics, by age and sex: Australia, 2021

## Soccer

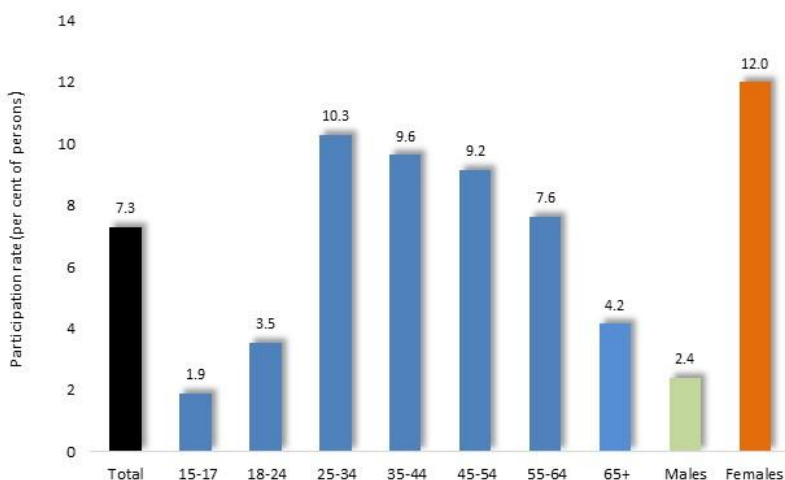
Soccer is popular among teenagers, with about one-fifth participating in this sport. Its popularity wanes steadily though, with rising age.

Levels of participation in soccer are about three times higher among men than women.

Per cent of persons who participate in soccer, by age and sex: Australia, 2021



## Yoga



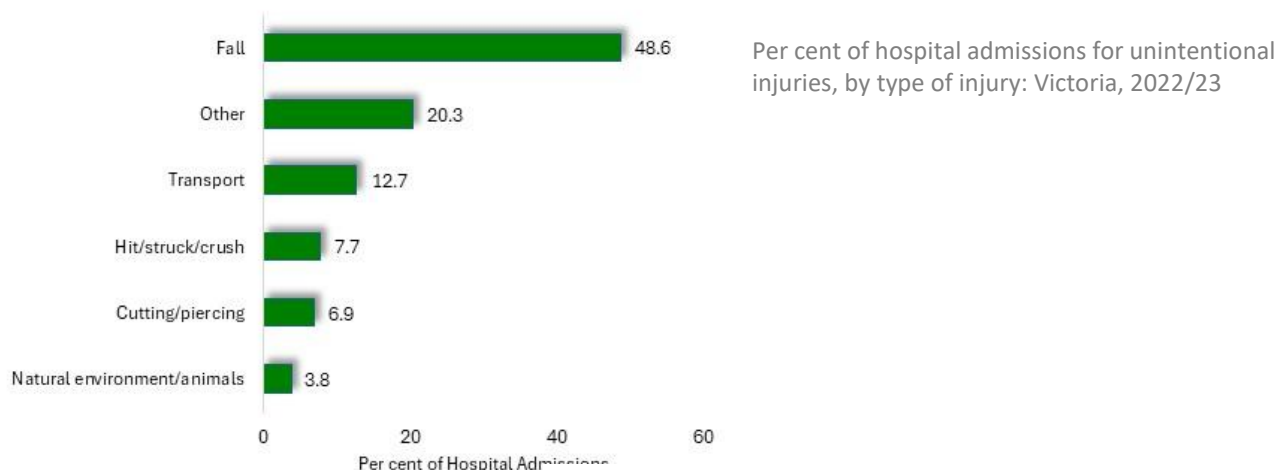
Yoga rises to the peak of its popularity among young adults, with substantial levels of participation persisting among people in their older age.

This activity is about five times more popular among women than men.

Per cent of persons who participate in yoga, by age and sex: Australia, 2021

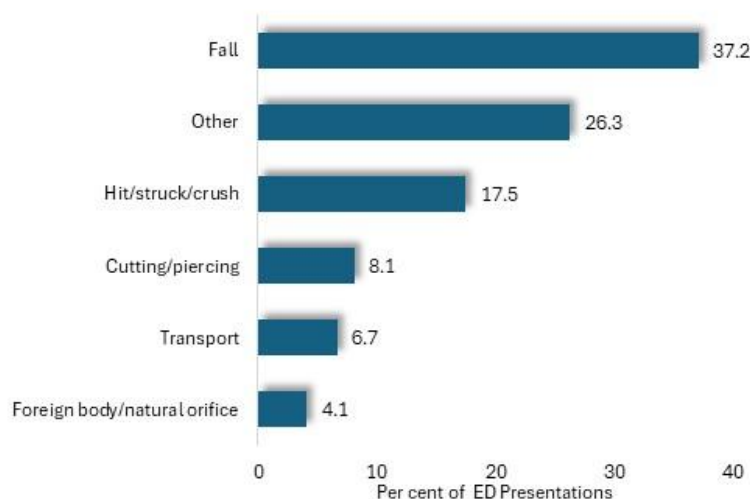
## Fall-related Injuries

In 2022/23, falls were the primary cause of unintentional injury in Victoria, accounting for 49% of hospital injury admissions, numbering approximately 28,800.



Falls also represented 37% of injury-related emergency department (ED) presentations, numbering about 44,000.<sup>20</sup>

Per cent of ED presentations for unintentional injuries, by type of injury: Victoria, 2022/23



Among Victorian children aged 0-14 years in

2022/23, falls were the primary cause of both hospital admissions (42%) and ED presentations (44%) for unintentional injury.

For young people aged 15-24 years, falls were the second most common reason for injury-related hospital admissions (18.8%) and ED presentations (24%). Falls were the main cause hospital-treated injury among 25-64-year-olds (at 31% of admissions), and of ED presentations for injuries (28%).

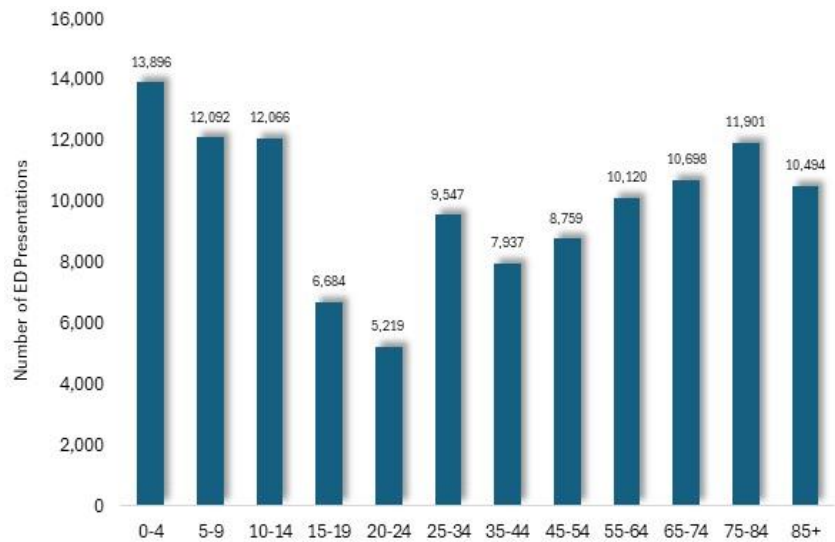
Finally, falls accounted for more than three-quarters (78%) of hospital injury admissions among people aged 65 or more, and more than half of such ED presentations (61%).

Nearly half (45%) of all unintentional injuries among older adults occurred in the home, while fracture of the lower limb accounted for nearly one-fifth (19%) of these incidents.

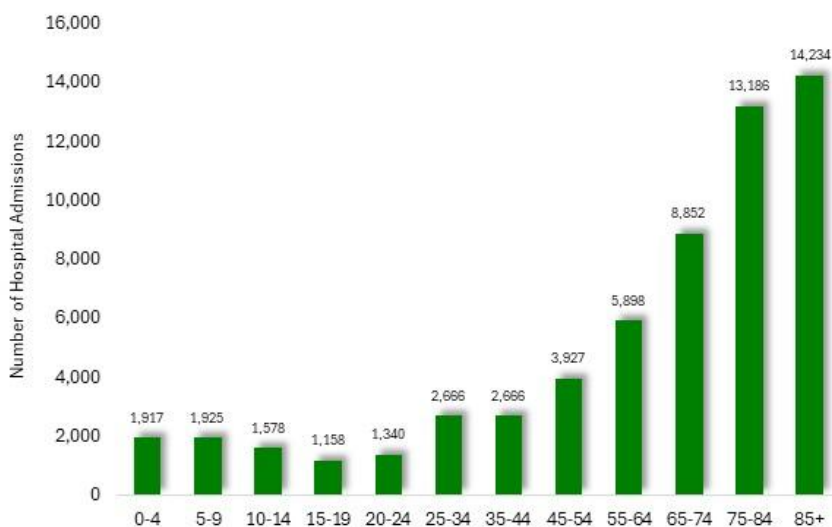
<sup>20</sup> Hayman J., and Berecki-Gisolf J., (2024). Unintentional hospital-treated injury Victoria, 2022/23. E-Bulletin Edition 29. Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit. Monash University Accident Research Centre, Clayton, Victoria.

In 2022/23, the number of ED presentations for falls across Victoria declined from a peak among young children, to its lowest level among young adults, before rising with increasing age.

Number of ED presentations for falls, by age: Victoria, 2022/23



On the other hand, the number of hospital admissions for falls was relatively low among children and younger adults, increasing steeply throughout middle and older age.



Number of hospital admissions for falls, by age: Victoria, 2022/23

Among people aged 85 or more, over 14,000 hospital admissions for falls were recorded in 2022/23 - equivalent to nearly one in ten people of that age.

The most common setting for injury-related hospital admissions is the home (accounting for about a quarter for most ages and nearly half (45%) among older people). Young people, aged 15-24-years, are a notable exception to this trend, among whom sporting activity is the most common context for injury, accounting for a fifth of injury-related hospital admissions.



## Falls in Greater Dandenong

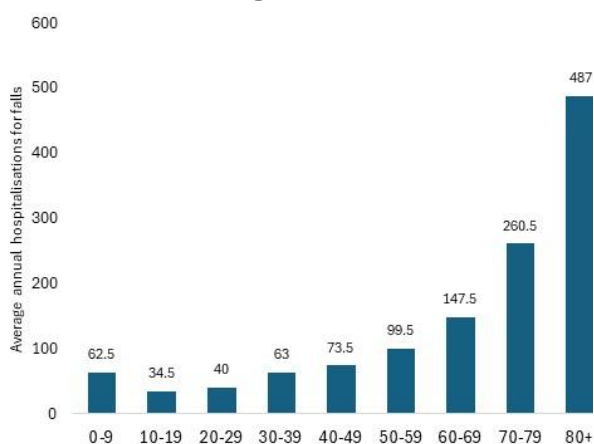
More localized information is available for the two-year period 2021/22-2022/23. During this time, residents of Greater Dandenong experienced an average of 1,268 hospitalisations for falls, per year – an average annual rate of 796 hospitalisations per 100,000 residents - the 30<sup>th</sup> highest rate of hospitalisation for falls injuries in Victoria.<sup>21</sup>

The accompanying chart illustrates the annual rate of hospital admissions for falls among Victorian municipalities, during this period.

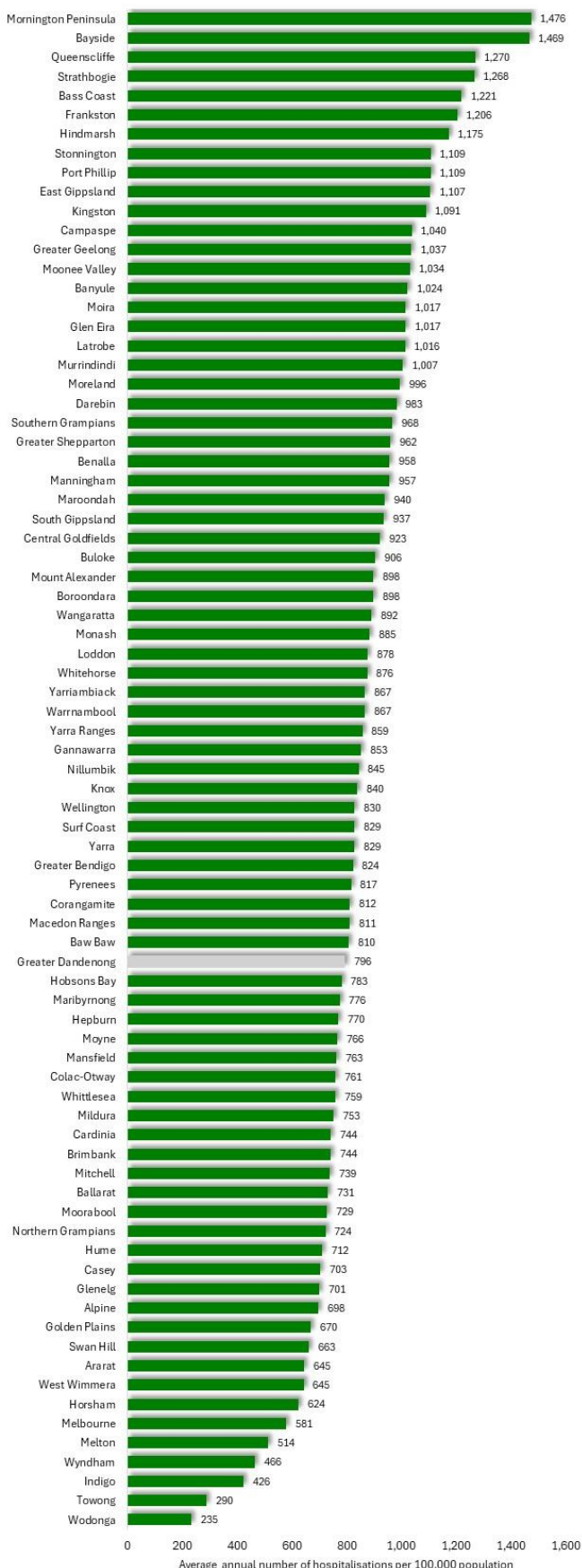
Average annual rate of hospital admissions for falls, per 100,000 population: Victorian municipalities, 2021/22-2022/23

Matching the State-wide distribution of such hospital admissions, over half (59%) of all residents who were hospitalised for falls in 2021/22-2022/23 were aged 70 or more (diagram, below).

Average annual number of hospital admissions for falls: Greater Dandenong, 2021/22-2022/23



Among them, over two thirds (68%) were women.



<sup>21</sup> Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit, Injury Atlas. [vicinjuryatlas.org.au/about/visu/](http://vicinjuryatlas.org.au/about/visu/)

## Disability

The 2021 Census inquired as to whether respondents had a disability requiring them to obtain daily assistance with mobility, communication or personal care. For the purpose of convenience here, such persons are referred to as people with disabilities.

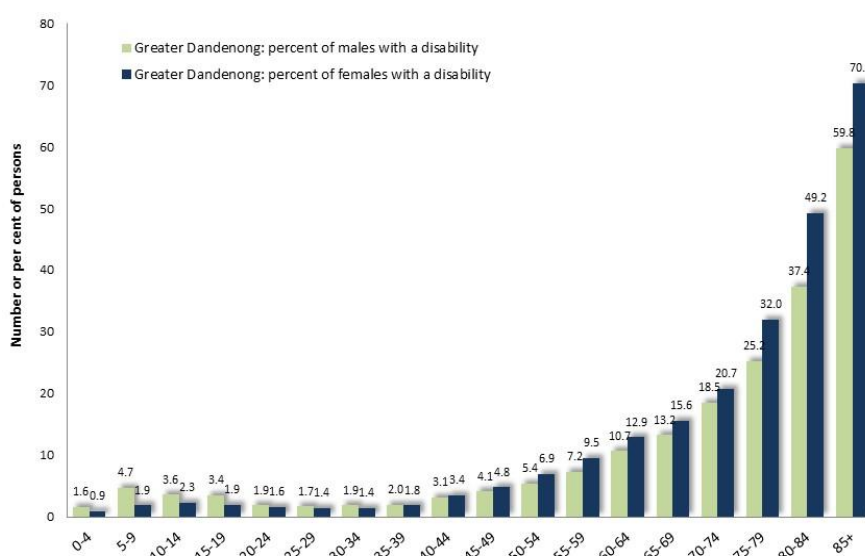


Within Greater Dandenong, 11,473 residents, or 7.7% of the municipal population, recorded that they had such a disability, somewhat higher than the Victorian level of 6.2%.

### Age

The prevalence of severe or profound disability rises markedly with age, from less than 2% among those aged 20-39, rising to 15% of those aged 65-69, and 66% of those over 85 years.

Prevalence of disability by age: Greater Dandenong and metropolitan Melbourne, 2021



About 4,500 residents, or about two-fifths (39%) of people with a disability, are aged less than 65.

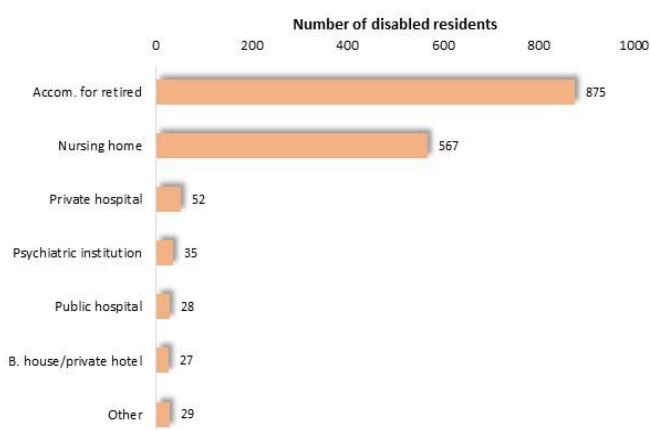
### Sex

Females account for 56% of Greater Dandenong residents with a disability and males for 44%. For younger residents, males predominate among those with a disability, while among people aged over 75 years, women form a majority, due to their greater longevity.

### Birthplaces

The number of people of each birthplace who have a severe or profound disability reflects the range of local birthplaces well as the differing age profiles of residents of these birthplaces.

Thirty per cent of disabled residents were born in Australia, 9.4% in Vietnam, 5.2% in Cambodia, 4.5% in Italy, and 4.3% in Greece.



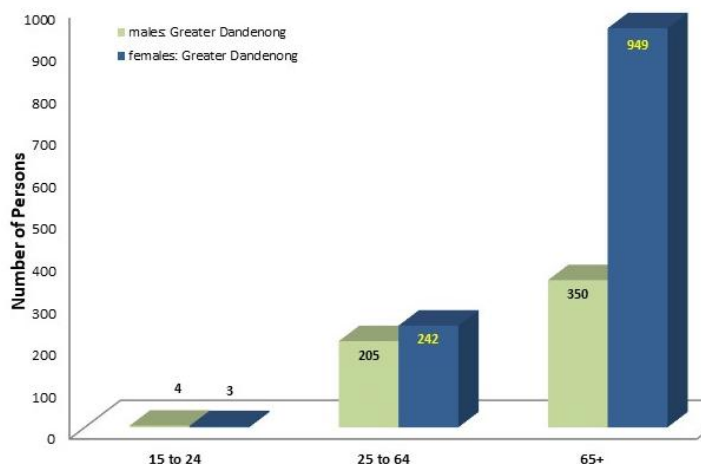
### Living at Home and non-Private Accommodation

Of all disabled persons in Greater Dandenong, 85% reside in private dwellings and 15% in non-private settings such as a nursing homes or other age accommodation. Of those living at home, 14% or 1,165, live alone.

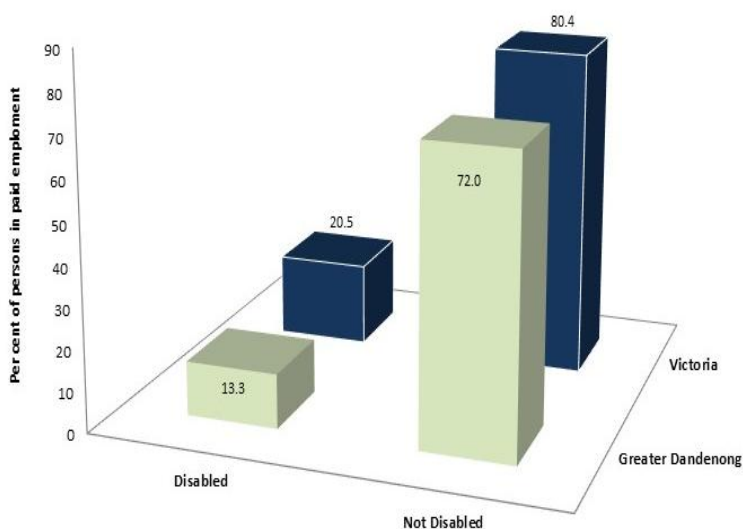
Number of disabled residents who reside in non-private accommodation, by type: Greater Dandenong, 2021

Number of lone persons with a disability, by age: Greater Dandenong, 2021

The number of disabled people who are living alone, rises steeply with age. Among those aged over 64 years, approximately two-thirds are women.



## Employment



The findings of the 2021 Census reveal that 13% of disabled 25-64-year-olds in Greater Dandenong, were in paid employment, compared with 72% of those without a disability.

Rates of employment among disabled people of this age, were substantially lower than corresponding levels across Melbourne.

Per cent of persons with a disability, by employment status: Greater Dandenong, 2021

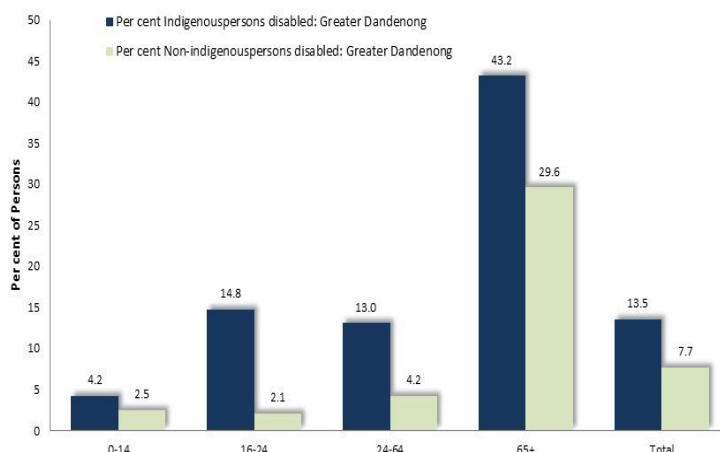
## Incomes

At \$389 per week, median personal gross incomes among disabled residents aged 15 years or more, were 57% of those among non-disabled people.

## Disability among Indigenous Residents

Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Greater Dandenong in 2021, 13.5% were disabled – about twice the rate among non-indigenous residents. This is a disparity which recurs in most municipalities.

Per cent of persons with a disability, by Indigenous status and age: Greater Dandenong, 2021

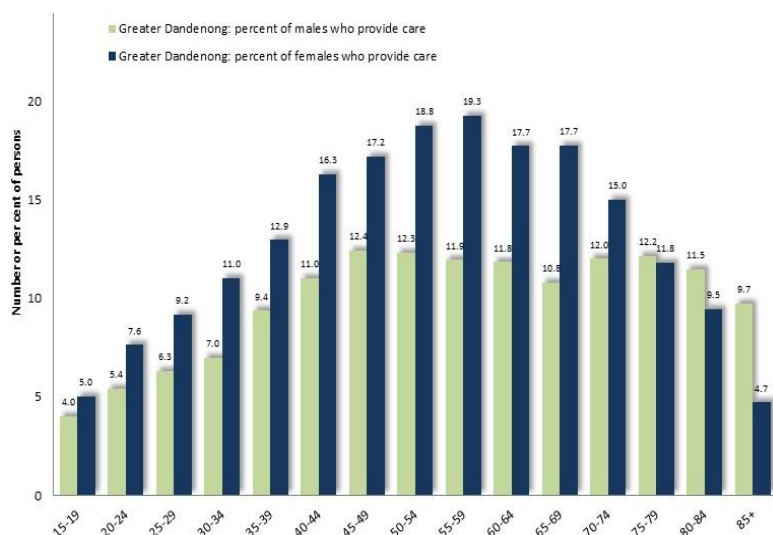
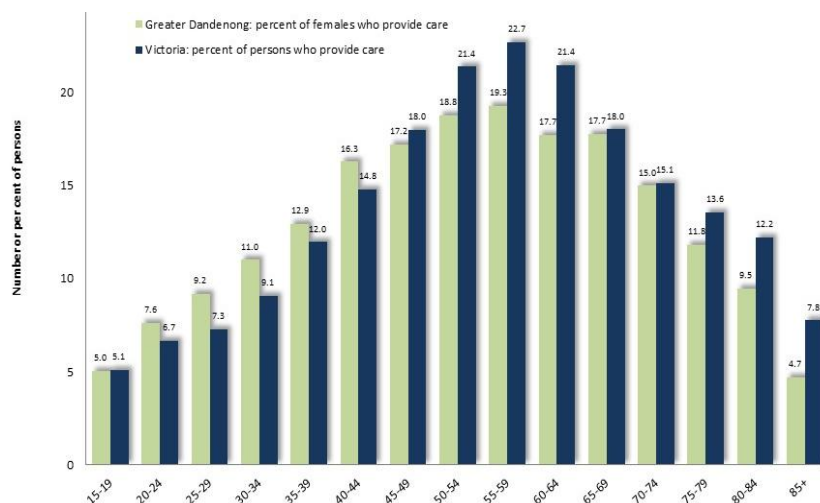


## Carers

The 2021 Census recorded that 11.2% of residents provided unpaid care for a person with a disability, chronic medical condition or age-related conditions – slightly lower than the State figure of 13.8%.

The highest proportions of residents who provide care are seen among those in their later middle age, largely reflecting the age and health of their parents.

Proportion of residents who provided unpaid care for others, by age: Greater Dandenong and Victoria, 2021



Among Greater Dandenong residents, 13.1% of females provided such care, compared with 9.3% of males.

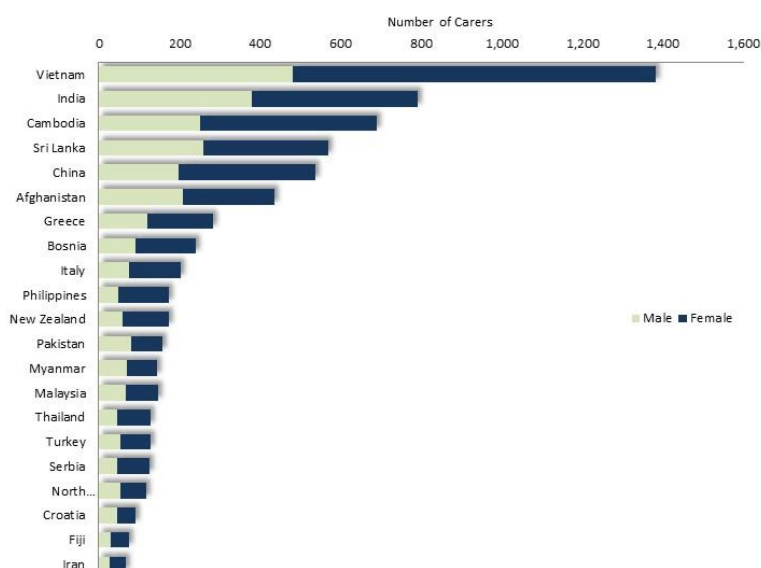
Females account for 58% of those who provide unpaid care for people with a disability or long-term health condition.

Proportion of residents who provided unpaid care for others, by age and sex: Greater Dandenong, 2021

Among residents who provide care, 41% were born in Australia, 12% in Vietnam, 7% in India, 6% in Cambodia and 5% in Sri Lanka.

The number of women and men who provide care (aside from those born in Australia) is shown at right.

Number of carers by sex and birthplace: Greater Dandenong, 2021



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## Nutrition

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A succession of recent surveys has inquired into the dietary habits of Australians, largely concerned with the consumption of fruit, vegetables and high-calorie foods or beverages.

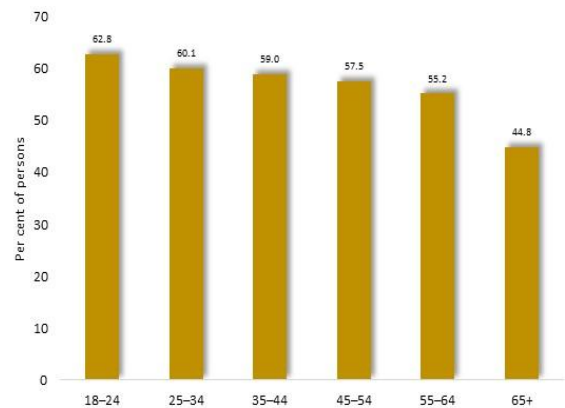
### Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

#### *Fruit Consumption*

The 2017 Victorian Population Health survey found that 38% of Greater Dandenong residents met fruit consumption guidelines, almost matching the Victorian level of 43%. A lesser proportion, 38%, of residents from the most disadvantaged municipalities met fruit guidelines, compared with 46% among those of the least disadvantaged localities.

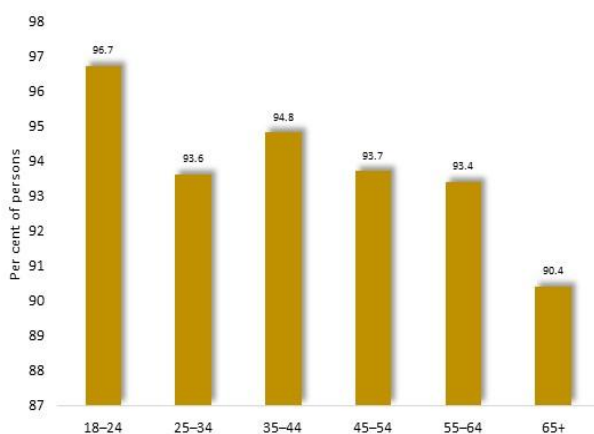
National surveys have explored some of the characteristics of people who consume insufficient dietary nutrients. The 2022 Australian Health Survey found that the proportion of people who did not consume sufficient fruit declined with age, from 63% among people aged 18-24, to 45% among those aged 65 years or more.

Per cent of persons who consume insufficient fruit to meet national guidelines, by age: Australia, 2022



The prevalence of insufficient dietary intake of fruit was highest among Australian-born residents, people living in socioeconomic disadvantage and those with limited formal education.

#### *Vegetable Consumption*



The 2022 National Health Survey found that 93.7% of Australian adults did not consume sufficient vegetables to meet dietary guidelines – a proportion which declined with increasing age, though even by the age of 65 years, fewer than 10% of people were consuming an adequate diet of vegetables.

Per cent of persons who consume insufficient vegetables to meet national guidelines, by age: Australia, 2022



## Consumption of Sugar-sweetened Drinks

### Local Survey Findings

The 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey found that 34% of Greater Dandenong residents consumed sugar-sweetened drinks at least daily – the same proportion as for Victoria.

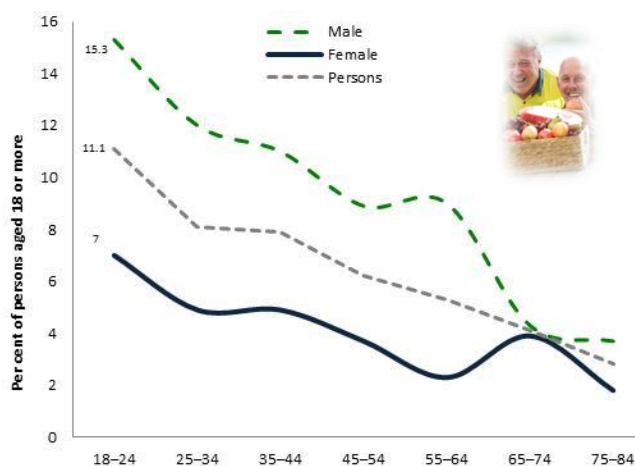
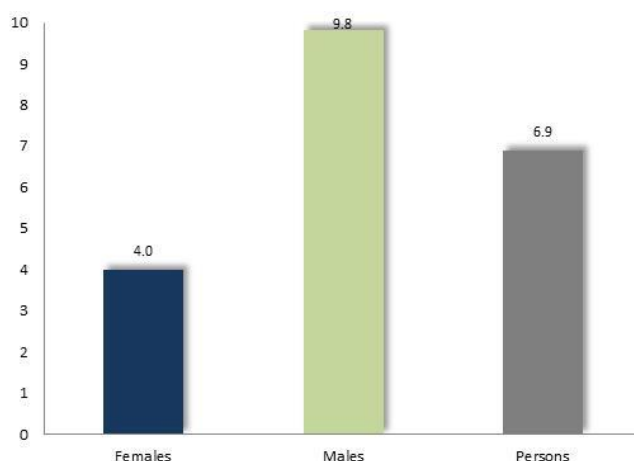
Overall, the proportion of people who consumed such beverages daily was approximately a third higher in the most socioeconomically disadvantaged five Victorian municipalities, at 37%, than among those living in the least disadvantaged localities, at 29%.

### National Trends

National surveys show that sugar-sweetened drinks are most popular among males and younger people.

The 2018 National Health Survey determined that approximately one in ten (9.8%) males consumed two or more metric cups per day of selected sugar-sweetened drinks, more than twice the corresponding proportion of women, of 4%.

Per cent of persons who consume two or more cups of sugar-sweetened drinks daily, by sex: Australia, 2018



The accompanying diagram depicts the percentage of adults who consume two or more cups per day of sugar-sweetened drinks. From its peak of just over 11% among young adults, this proportion declines with age.

Per cent of persons who consume two or more cups of sugar-sweetened drinks daily, by age: Australia, 2018

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## Food Insecurity

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Food insecurity is a term generally applied to a lack of continuous, reliable access to nutritious food. Its contributing causes include low incomes; rising costs of housing and utilities; household financial crises; transport limitations; inadequate household storage or food preparation facilities; lack of skill or confidence in shopping, budgeting or preparing food; as well as psychological, physical or mental impairments.

At least one in twenty households are experiencing food insecurity at any given time, a persistent condition for some, and recurring or transient for others.

Surveys indicate that food insecurity is most prevalent among low-income households, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, unemployed people, renters, refugees and asylum-seekers, those with chronic illnesses, mental health conditions or drug problems, homeless people and those living in remote communities.

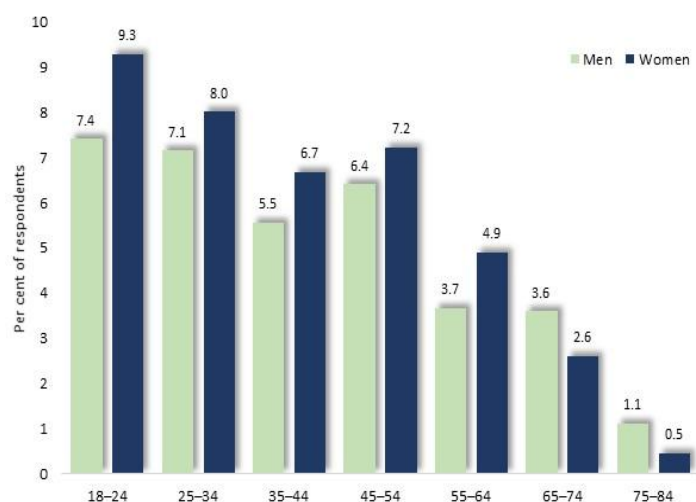
### Prevalence of Food Insecurity

The 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey found that 11.8% of Greater Dandenong residents had run out of food and not been able to afford more, at some time in the previous 12 months – substantially higher than the metropolitan average of 7.5% and the fifth highest level in Melbourne.

The proportion of people who had run out of food and not been able to afford more during the previous 12 months, stood at 4% in the least disadvantaged communities and 10.8% among the most disadvantaged

The earlier, 2020 Population Health Survey, generated similar results, finding that 13% of residents of Greater Dandenong had run out of money to buy food at some time during the previous 12 months, the highest level in Victoria and more than twice the state-wide figure of 6%.

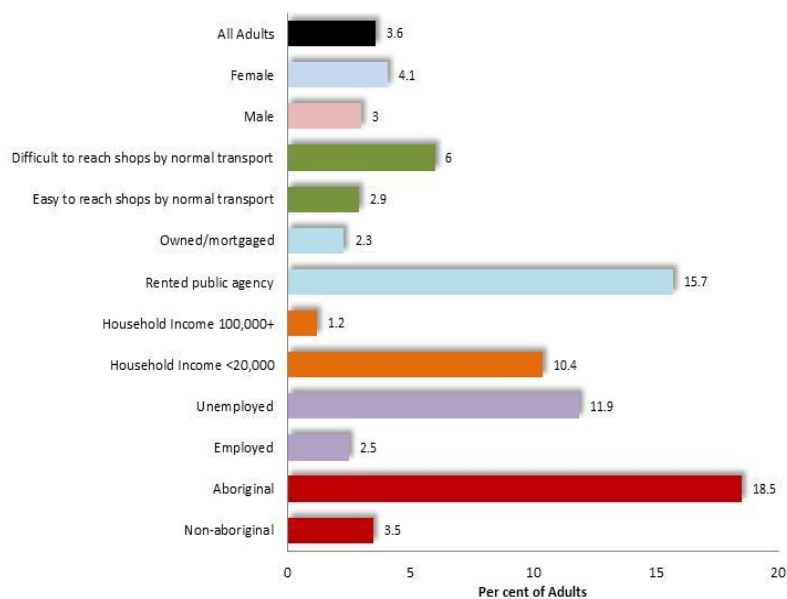
The same survey found that, across Victoria, the proportion of people who ran out of money for food approached ten per cent among people aged 18-24, declining with age to fewer than 1% among those aged 75 years or more.



Prevalence of Food Insecurity by Age and Sex:  
Victoria, 2020 Population Health Survey

Earlier still, the 2014 Victorian Population Health Survey investigated the relationship between food insecurity and social and economic conditions. In relation to socioeconomic disadvantage, such food insecurity was recorded among:

- 11.9% of unemployed people, compared with 2.5% of those in paid employment;
- 15.7% of people residing in government-owned accommodation, compared with 2.5% of those who owned or were purchasing their accommodation; and
- 10.4% of persons in households on annual incomes below \$20,000, in contrast to 1.2% of those with incomes exceeding \$100,000 (Accompanying diagram).



The prevalence of food insecurity among selected segments of the community, from the findings of the 2014 survey, is illustrated at left.

Prevalence of food insecurity by adults within selected segments of the community: Victoria, 2014 (Victorian Population Health Survey)

# Obesity

Obesity, resulting from the deposition of fat where energy intake exceeds requirements, contributes to diabetes mellitus, hypertension, stroke, cardiovascular disease, gout, sleep apnea, breast and endometrial (uterine) cancer and gall bladder disease.



## Local Measures of Obesity

The 2023 Population Health Survey documented self-reported obesity – a method which tends to underestimate the prevalence of obesity – finding that 17% of adults in Greater Dandenong were obese, lower than the Victorian level of 23%. Across the State, the proportion of residents who were obese ranged from 36% in Pyrenees and Yarriambiack, to 10% in Melbourne and Stonnington.

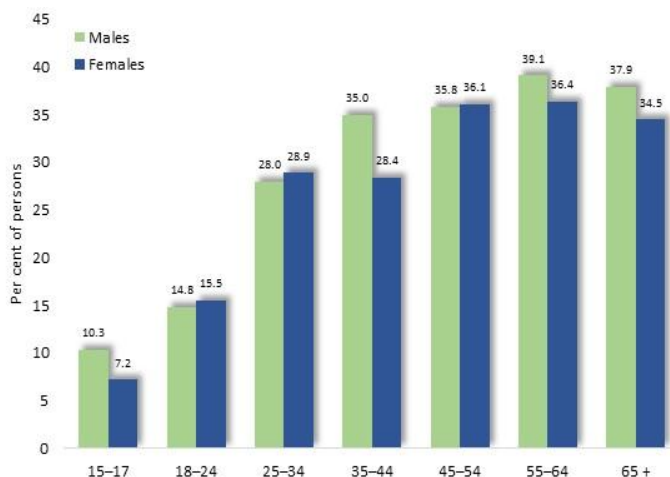
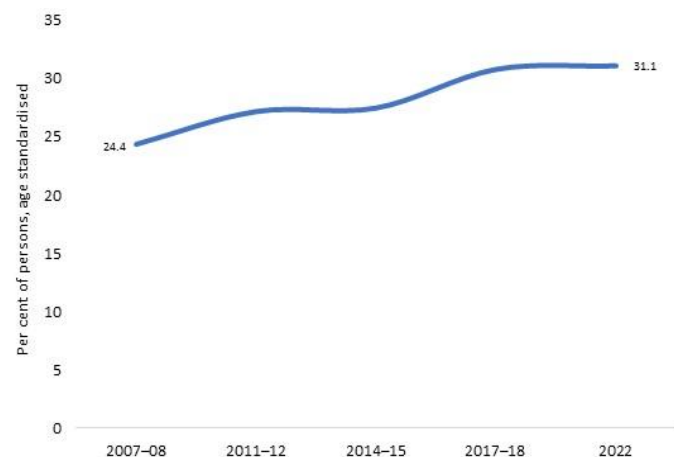
Notwithstanding the findings for Greater Dandenong, the prevalence of obesity was generally higher in the more socioeconomically disadvantaged municipalities, with over 26% of residents of the most disadvantaged five municipalities<sup>22</sup> obese, compared with 15% of those in the least disadvantaged municipalities

## National Studies

National investigations shed light upon differences in the prevalence of obesity over time as well as by age and sex.

The 2022 National Health Survey found that 31% of adults were obese - a marked rise from 24% in 2007/8.

Per cent of persons who are obese (age-standardised): Australia, 2007/8 to 2022



The prevalence of obesity rose steeply with age, from 9% of 15-17-year-olds and 15% among those aged 18-24, to about a third of people in their middle and older ages.

Rates of obesity were slightly higher among males than females.

Per cent of persons who are obese, by age: Australia, 2022

<sup>22</sup> Based on the 2021 SIEFA Index of Socioeconomic Disadvantage

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## Diabetes Mellitus

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Diabetes mellitus is a condition characterized by high blood sugar. There are two major types of diabetes. Type 1, otherwise known as ‘juvenile onset’ or ‘insulin-dependent’ diabetes, generally appears during pubescence and is usually managed by insulin injection. Accounting for 85% of diabetes mellitus, Type 2 or ‘late onset’ diabetes, is most prevalent among people who are overweight, engage in a sedentary lifestyle or have a family history of the disease, and is generally treated with a blend of exercise and dietary modification.

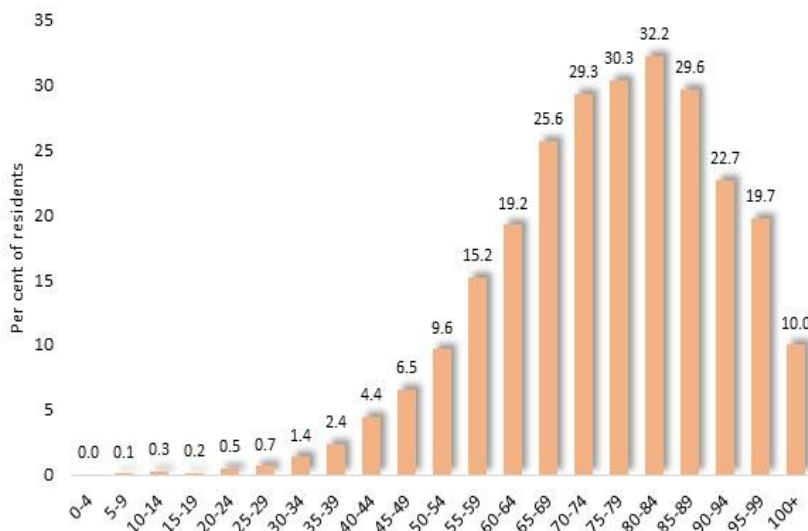


The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) reports that 5.1% of Australians have doctor-diagnosed diabetes, a figure which reaches 19% among those aged 80-84. Diabetes type 2 was the underlying cause of 6,000 deaths in 2022, and an associated cause of 21,000 deaths. It represented the eleventh largest cause of ill-health in Australia, accounting for 2.2% of the burden of disease in Australia, and a cost to society estimated at \$3.4 billion p.a.<sup>23</sup>

### Local Conditions

The 2021 Census found that approximately 9,700 people in Greater Dandenong, or 6.6% of its residents, including similar proportions of women and men, had doctor-diagnosed diabetes mellitus – slightly higher than the Victorian rate.

Its prevalence rose from less than 1% among those aged less than 30 years, to nearly a third (32.2%) among residents aged 80-84 years, before declining among older residents.



Per cent of persons with diabetes mellitus by Age: Greater Dandenong, 2021

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<sup>23</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024). Diabetes: Australian facts. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 17 June 2024



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## Cancer

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Each year, cancer accounts for approximately 310 deaths each year within Greater Dandenong - almost a third of all mortality in this municipality<sup>24</sup>. While more detailed information about cancer in this municipality is unavailable, national and state-wide data furnish a glimpse of contemporary trends.



### Cancer Diagnosis

More common cancers in Australia are those of the bladder, breast, colon, kidney, lung, skin, ovaries, bowel, pancreas, prostate, thyroid and uterus<sup>25</sup>.

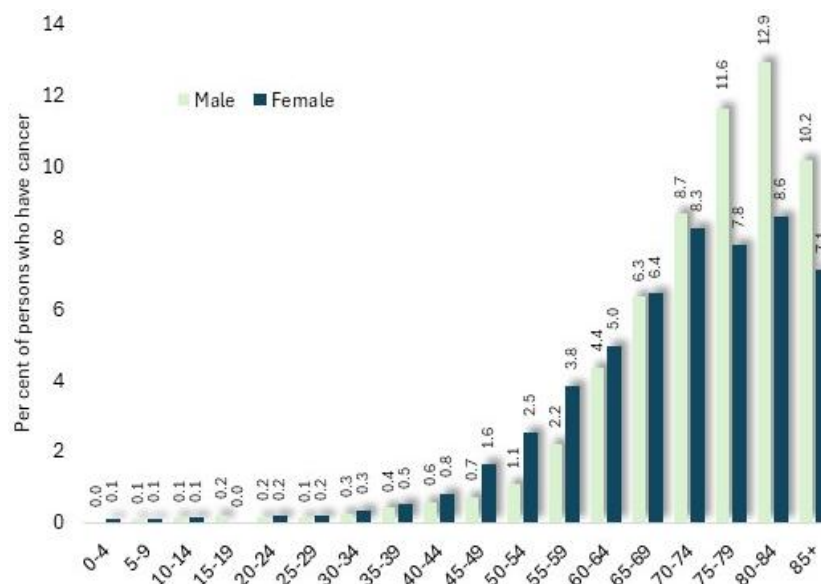
A substantial proportion of the population will be diagnosed with cancer at some time in their lives, with a half of males and a third of females receiving such a diagnosis by the age of 85<sup>26</sup> - similar to the US National Cancer Institute determination that approximately 42% of men and 38% of women will be diagnosed with an invasive cancer during their lifetimes.<sup>27</sup>

The Australian Cancer Council reports that socioeconomically disadvantaged localities featured higher rates of diagnosis for many types of cancer, including an incidence at least 50% higher for lung, cervical, liver, head and neck cancers<sup>28</sup>

### Living with Cancer

In the 2021 Census, approximately one in fifty (2.1%) Greater Dandenong residents stated that they were living with cancer, including 1.9% of males and 2.2% of females. The prevalence of cancer rose steeply with age, from 0.2% among residents aged 15-24 years to about 8% among those aged 65 or more.

Per cent of residents who are living with cancer, by age: Greater Dandenong, 2023



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<sup>24</sup> Estimated from Australian mortality trends reported in Causes of Deaths Australia, 2023 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024) and population estimates from Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2023, Australian Bureau of Statistics: 3218.0, 2024)

<sup>25</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2024. Cancer Data in Australia. Aust Govt

<sup>26</sup> Cancer Council of Australia, 2015

<sup>27</sup> Grunau, G.L., Gueron, S., Pornov, B. and Lin, S. (2018). The Risk of Cancer Might be Lower Than We Think. Alternatives to Lifetime Risk Estimates. Rambam Maimonides Med J. 2018 Jan 29, Vol. 9, No. 1

<sup>28</sup> Cancer Australia, 2022

**Mortality**

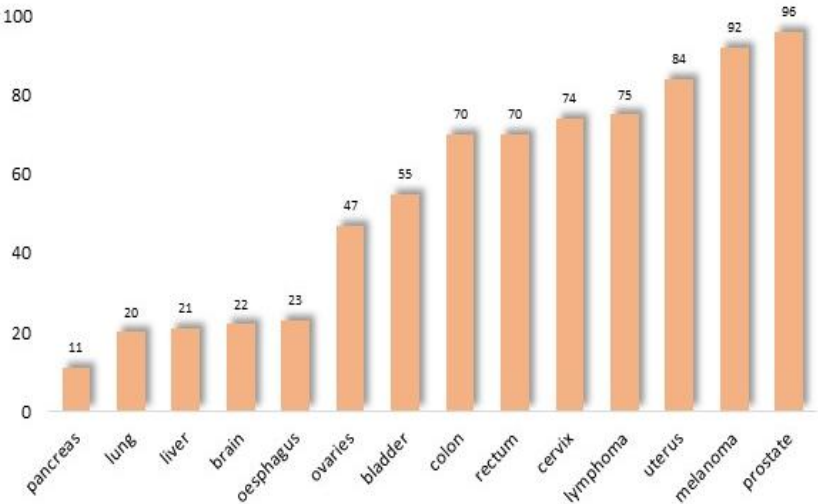
In 2023, 12,700 Victorians died as a result of cancer, representing a rate of 1.9 deaths per 1,000 persons<sup>29</sup>. By 2024, the age standardized mortality rate was 2.4 per 1,000 persons for males and 1.57 for females<sup>30</sup>.

**Surviving Cancer**

For the years 2016-2020, around 71% of people diagnosed with cancer survived five years after diagnosis, compared with 55% in the period 1991-1995<sup>31</sup>.

Rates of survival in 2021 were highest, at 70% or more, for cancers of the colon, rectum, cervix, uterus and prostate, as well as melanoma. Survival prospects were lower for cancers of the liver, lung, pancreas, brain and oesophagus, at approximately 20%<sup>32</sup>.

Survival rates by selected cancer type: Australia, 2021



Importantly though, the Australian Cancer Council advises that, for any particular individual, the prospect of survival depends upon a variety of circumstances, such as the particular type of cancer, its stage of advancement at the time of diagnosis, treatment and others<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Causes of Death, Australia. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024  
<sup>30</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2024. Cancer Data in Australia. Aust Govt  
<sup>31</sup> Australian Cancer Council, 2024  
<sup>32</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2021). Cancer Data in Australia  
<sup>33</sup> Australian Cancer Council, 2024

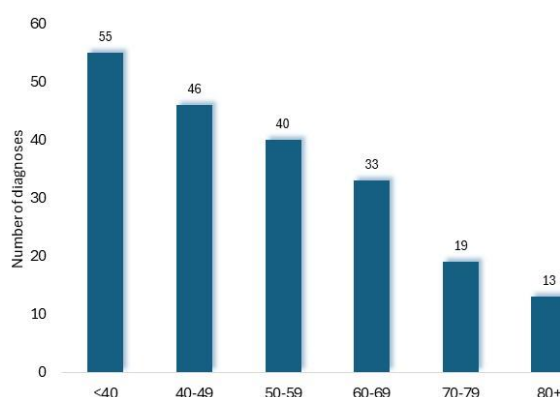
## Cervical Cancer and its Detection

Most cervical cancers are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). Most (70-90%) cervical cancers are squamous cell carcinomas, originating in the cells of the outer surface of the cervix, while the balance are largely adenocarcinomas, which have their origin in the cells of mucous-producing glands within the cervix.<sup>34</sup>

In 2022, cervical cancer was diagnosed at a rate of 4.5 per 100,000 females, accounting for 0.6% of all cancer diagnoses and 0.5% of cancer-related deaths.

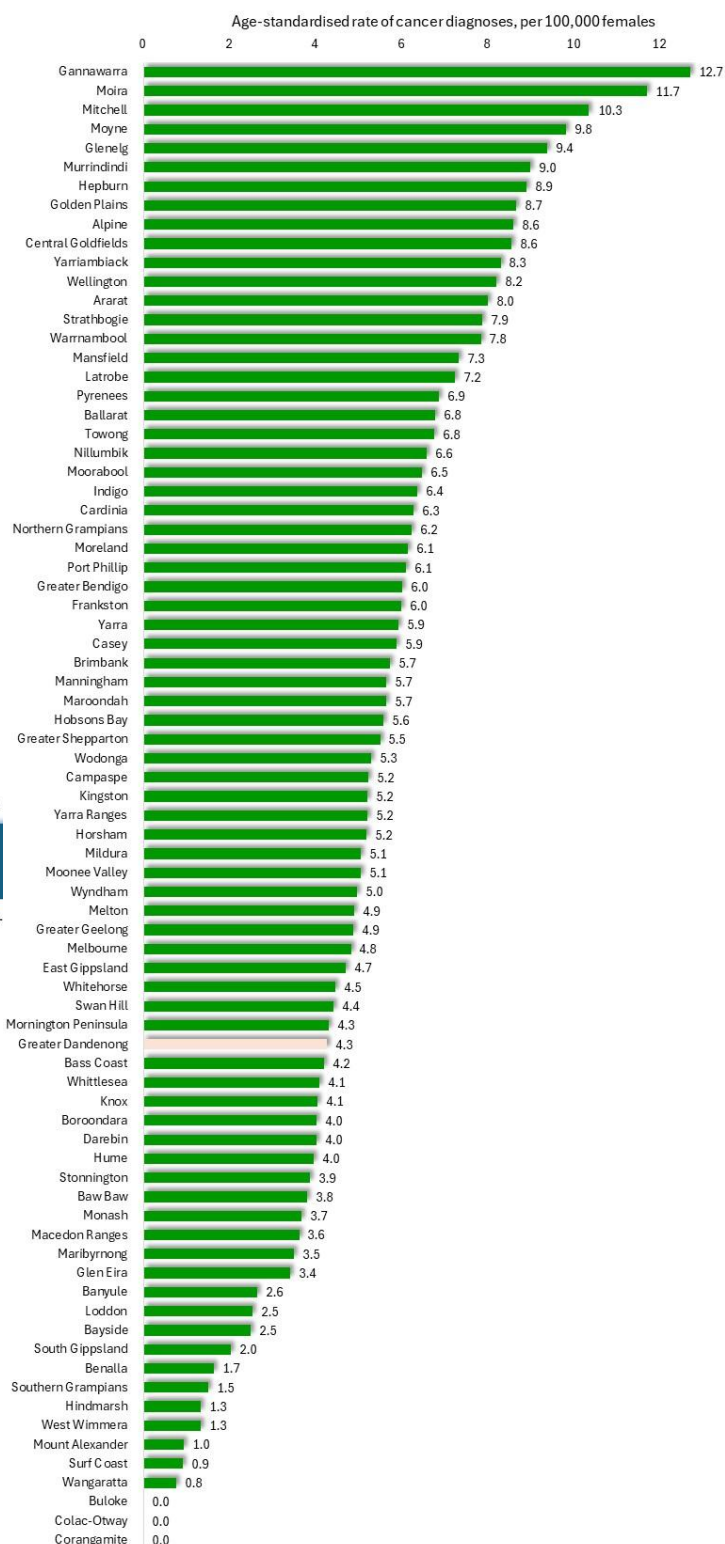
The Victorian Cancer Council reports that 206 Victorian women were diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer in 2022, nearly half (49%) of them aged less than 50 (diagram below).

Diagnoses of cervical cancer: Victoria, 2022



The rate of diagnosis of cervical cancer varies widely among the municipalities of Victoria (diagram, right).<sup>35</sup>

Age-standardised rate of cervical cancer diagnoses, per 100,000 females: Victoria, 2018-22



<sup>34</sup> Cancer Research UK (2024). Types and Grades of Cervical Cancer.

<sup>35</sup> However, owing to the relatively small numbers of incidents in each municipality, these rates may vary over time due to chance alone.

## Early Detection

The use of pap smears, coupled with HPV vaccination, assist in early detection and prevention of invasive cervical cancer, and have contributed to a halving of its incidence in the past 40 years<sup>36</sup> as well as a rise in the proportion of women who survive for five years or more after a diagnosis of cervical cancer, from 65% in 1982-86 to 77% in 2017-21.<sup>37</sup>

Under the National Cervical Screening Program, women aged 25-74 are encouraged to participate in screening for pre-cancerous developments and cervical cancer.<sup>38</sup>

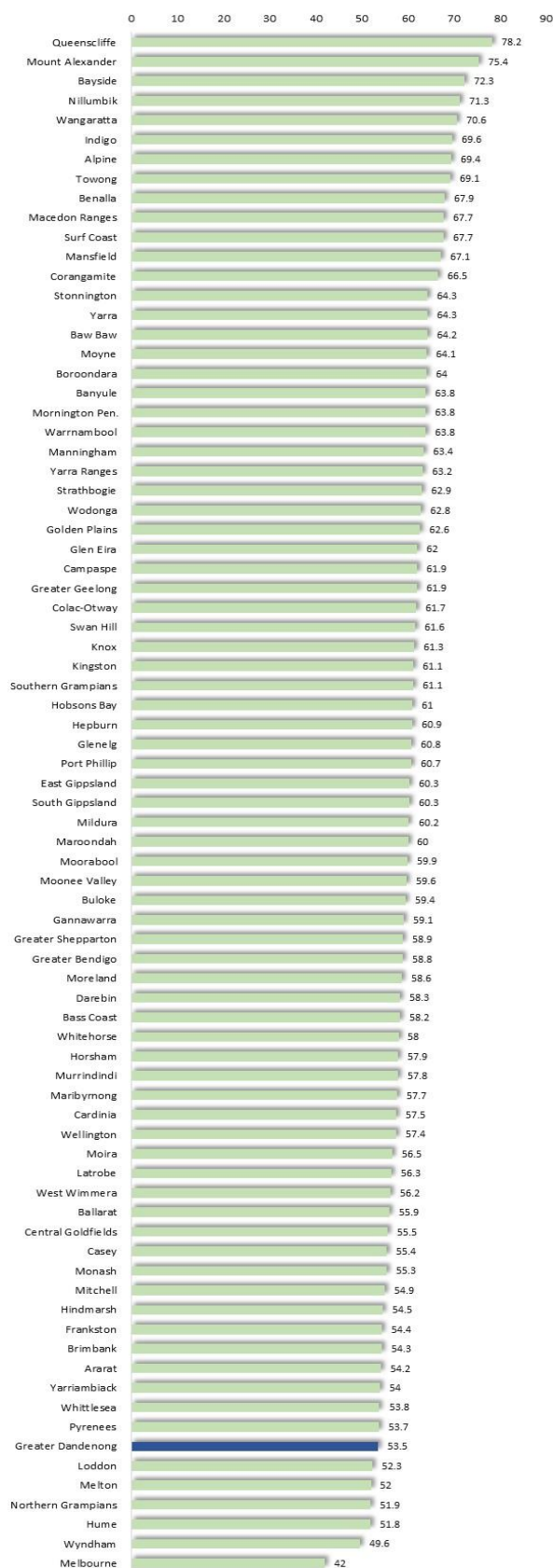
This program aims to eliminate cervical cancer as a significant national health problem, by 2035.<sup>39</sup>

In 2018-22, approximately 68% of eligible women were participating in this program, with rates higher among those aged 25-29 years (at 79%) and lower among those aged 70-74 (35%).

Within Victoria, 62% of eligible women participated in the program, including 65% in south-east Melbourne.<sup>40</sup>

The Victorian Cytology Registry provided information about estimated rates of cervical cancer screening, by municipality, for 2015. At this time, rates recorded in Greater Dandenong were among the lowest in Victoria.

Estimated rates of cervical screening among women, by municipality: Victoria, 2015



<sup>36</sup> Victorian Cancer Registry, 2024

<sup>37</sup> Cancer Australia (2-14). Cervical Cancer in Australian Statistics. Australian Government and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023). Cancer screening programs: quarterly data

<sup>38</sup> Australian Dept. Health and Aged Care. (2024). National Cervical Screening Program

<sup>39</sup> Australian Centre for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer

<sup>40</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023). Cancer screening programs: quarterly data

# Smoking

Smoking is responsible for various respiratory and cardiovascular afflictions, including emphysema and chronic bronchitis, heart attacks, aneurisms and stroke; and is linked to a higher incidence of pancreatic, lung, bladder and cervical cancer.



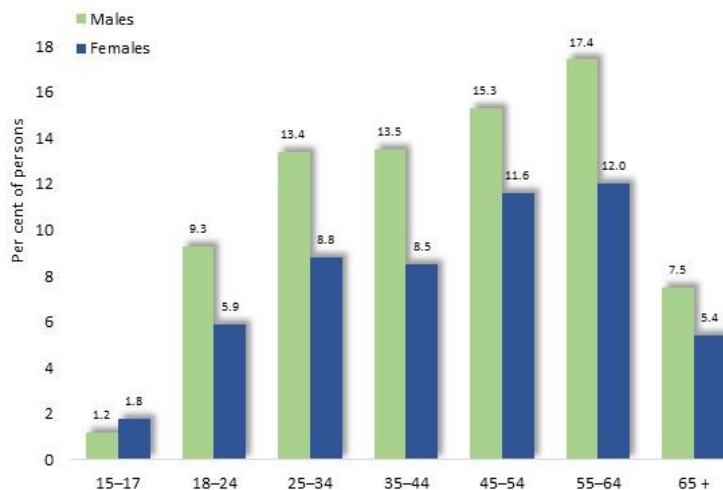
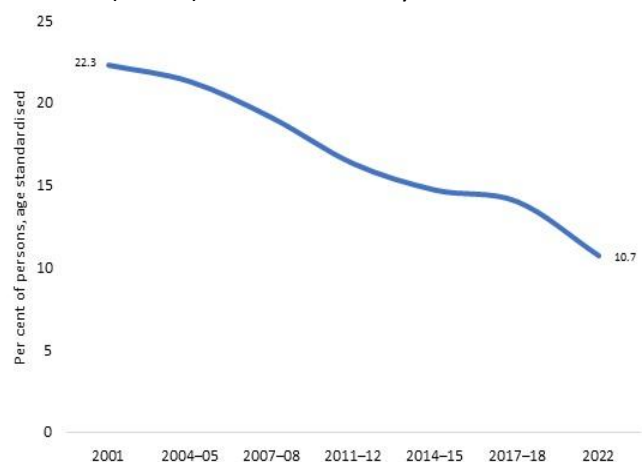
## Local Prevalence of Smoking

The 2022 Cancer Victoria Survey revealed that 13.4% of residents were daily smokers, higher than the Victorian prevalence of 10.9%. Across Victoria, this survey found that the prevalence of daily smoking ranged from 16.6% in Swan Hill, to 5.6% in Boroondara.

## National Surveys

The 2022 National Health Survey found that just over one ten (10.7%) adults were daily smokers – about a third of the corresponding figure of 29%, recorded in 1995, and about half the prevalence of 22% in 2001.

Per cent of persons who smoke daily (age-standardized):  
Australia, 2001 to 2022



The 2022 survey found that smoking was more common among men than women (at 7.5% and 5.4% respectively), and rose steeply with age, before declining among people aged 65 years or more.

Per cent of adults who smoke daily, by age:  
Australia, 2022

Daily smoking was most widespread among Australian-born people - at 12%, compared with 8.4% among those born overseas; people who speak English at home - at 11.3%, compared with 7.2% of those who spoke another language; the most disadvantaged fifth of the adult population - at 18.1%, compared with 5.4% among the least disadvantaged residents; and people with education to year 11 or less - at 23%, compared with 3.8% among people with a bachelor's degree.



## E-cigarette Use

E-cigarettes simulate tobacco smoking, with a battery-operated vaping device taking the place of burning tobacco to heat up a liquid which is then inhaled by the user as a vapor.

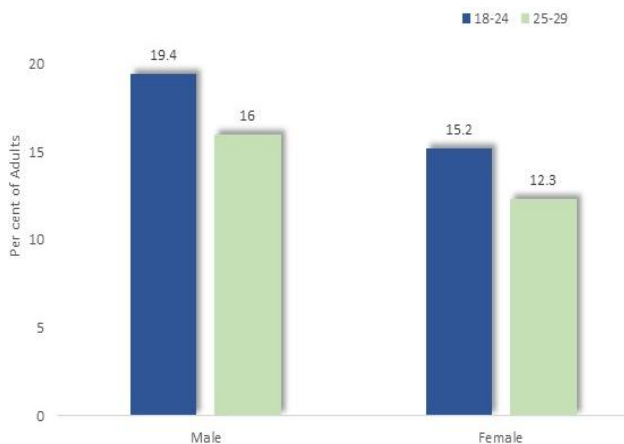
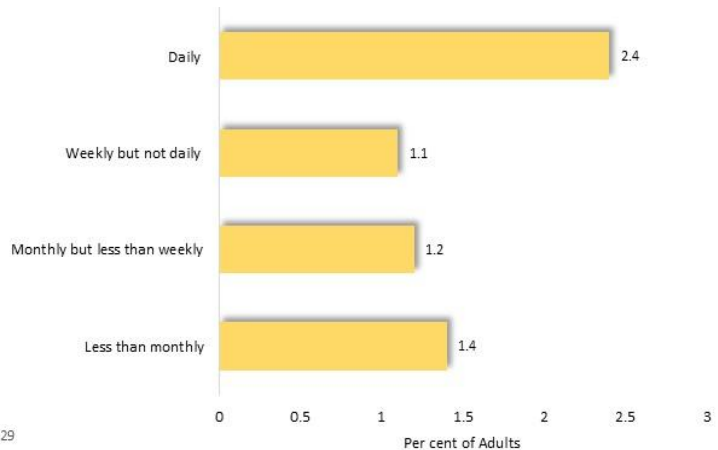
The practice of e-cigarette use, or ‘vaping’, has attracted wide concern in recent years, owing to its adverse health impacts, and its escalating popularity among younger people and women.

Findings of the 2022 *Victorian Smoking and Health Survey*, a recent investigation into e-cigarette use, are briefly recounted here.<sup>41</sup>

### Prevalence of Use

The survey found that one in five Victorian adults had ever used e-cigarettes, one in ten used them at least annually, and one in thirty weekly or daily.

Per cent of adults who use e-cigarettes, by frequency of use: Victoria, 2022



The use of e-cigarettes was most widespread among young adults, particularly males, with 19% of 18-24-year-old males and 15% of females the same age, currently using these products.

Per cent of adults who currently use e-cigarettes, by sex and age: Victoria, 2022

### Prevalence among Segments of the Community

The survey found that vaping was most prevalent in inner-metropolitan municipalities, such as Yarra, Melbourne, Moreland and Stonnington, with rates of participation in vaping around 10%. Among Greater Dandenong residents, 4.3% of adults engaged in vaping, lower than the Victorian level of 6.1%.

Vaping was five times more popular among adults whose highest level of educational attainment was year 11, than among those with a degree (5.7% vs 1.4%, respectively).

### Health issues

Health authorities have voiced concern about the rapid uptake of e-cigarettes among young people, owing to their potential to encourage people to take up tobacco smoking; the prospect of nicotine addiction and overdose; that the liquid inside the e-cigarette may contain a variety of noxious substances including arsenic, benzene, and lead; the prospect of lung damage and cancer, harm to internal organs and oral health problems; and the risk of vapes exploding or catching fire, causing burns to the face and elsewhere.

<sup>41</sup> Bayly, M, Mitropoulos, E., Durkin, S. and Scollo, M. (2022). E-cigarette use and Purchasing Behavior among Victorian Adults: finding from the 2018-19 and 2022 Victorian Smoking and Health Surveys. Cancer Council, Victoria. Melbourne.

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## Alcohol Consumption

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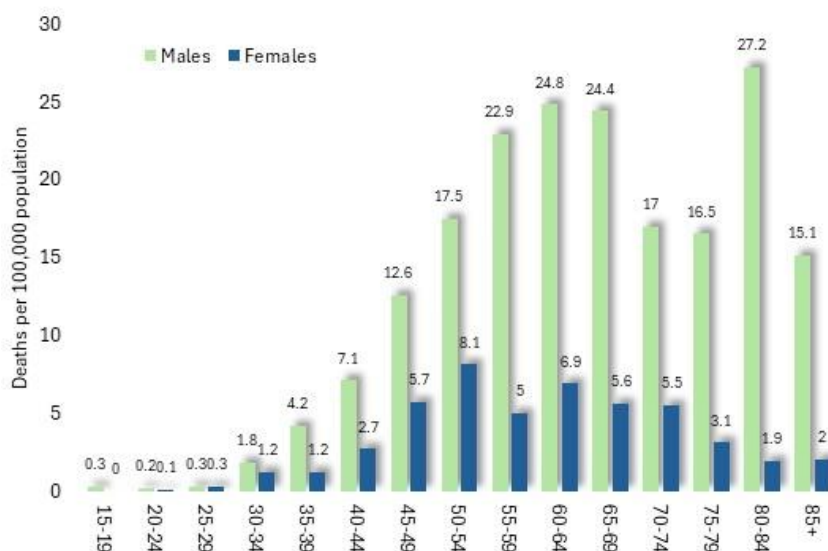
### Effects and Costs of Alcohol Consumption



Alcohol consumption contributes to a variety of health conditions; among them: disorders of the liver; cardiovascular disease; central nervous system conditions; cancers of the mouth, larynx, oesophagus, gastrointestinal system, breast and liver; and serious foetal developmental defects. Alcohol use during pregnancy contributes to impaired childhood physical and mental development, learning difficulties, abuse and neglect and problems in adolescence.

Alcohol consumption contributes significantly to mortality, injury and ill-health, assault, reduced productivity and other harms.

In 2017, alcohol was directly or indirectly responsible for 16 deaths per 100,000 Australians, including 25 per 100,000 among males and 7 per 100,000 among females. Most deaths occurred in middle- and older-age<sup>42</sup>.



Alcohol-related deaths per 100,000 persons, by sex and age: Australia, 2017

About three-quarters of such deaths are due to mental disorders, and others from liver disease, alcohol toxicity, heart conditions and other causes.<sup>43</sup>

The 2022/23 National Drug Strategy Household Survey found that, in the previous 12 months, 21% of Australians aged 14 or more had been verbally or physically abused or put in fear by someone under the influence of alcohol. The 2021/22 Personal Safety Survey determined that 47% of women who had been assaulted by a man, believed alcohol or another substance was involved in the most recent incident.

The estimated cost of alcohol misuse to Australia was estimated was \$66.8 billion in 2017–2018 – the equivalent of \$86 billion in 2024 – due largely to reduced workplace productivity, crime, health-care expenses and road accidents<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Deaths due to Harmful Alcohol Consumption in Australia. ABS, 2018

<sup>43</sup> Deaths due to Harmful Alcohol Consumption in Australia. ABS, 2018

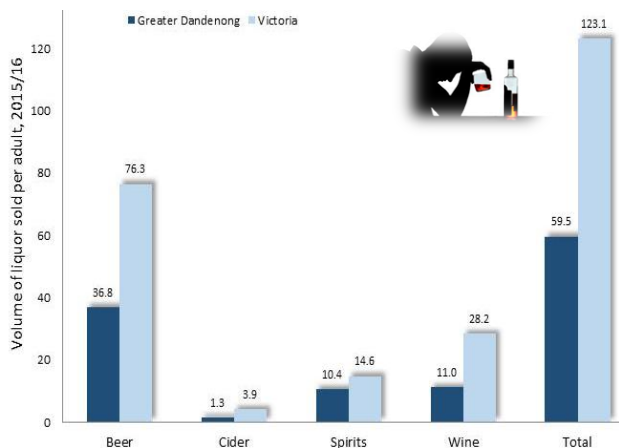
<sup>44</sup> Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs. Aust Institute of Health and Welfare 2024

## Local Patterns of Alcohol Consumption

Local measures indicate that overall levels of alcohol consumption are lower in Greater Dandenong than the metropolitan average, though harms arising from alcohol abuse in this community are substantial.

The 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey found that 7.9% of adults in Greater Dandenong consumed alcohol to an extent likely to risk long-term harm – a figure substantially lower than the metropolitan average of 12.6% and Victorian level of 13.1%.

In 2017, the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation released details of the volume of



alcohol sold in each Victorian municipality during 2015/16. These data similarly showed that volumes of beer, cider and wine sold, per adult in Greater Dandenong were each substantially lower than the Victorian average and among the lowest in the State (diagram left).

Volume of liquor sold per adult: Greater Dandenong and Victoria, 2015/16

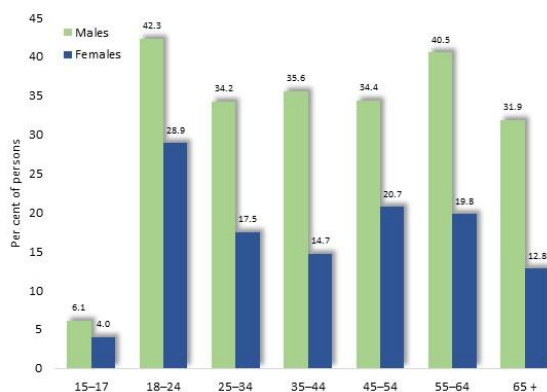
The profile of local harm associated with alcohol may not necessarily match consumption patterns though. Measures of the social and health impacts of excessive alcohol consumption, published by Turning Point, record levels of the impact of alcohol upon Greater Dandenong residents that exceed metropolitan levels.

- The rate of ambulance attendances for alcohol intoxication (with or without other substances) in Greater Dandenong during 2022/23 was 13% higher than metropolitan levels.
- Similarly, the rate of local ambulance attendances relation to acute effects of alcohol consumption in the same year, was 16% greater than the metropolitan average.
- The rate of family violence incidents in Greater Dandenong recorded by police in 2021/2, where alcohol was appeared to be involved, was 23% higher than the metropolitan level.
- And the rate of mortality due to circumstances associated with alcohol use in Greater Dandenong in 2021 was also 12% higher than the metropolitan rate.

## National Patterns of Alcohol Consumption

The 2022 National Health Survey found that 13.1% of adults, or about one in eight, were consuming alcohol to an extent which exposed them to lifetime risk of harm, representing a pronounced reduction from 18.6% in 2001.

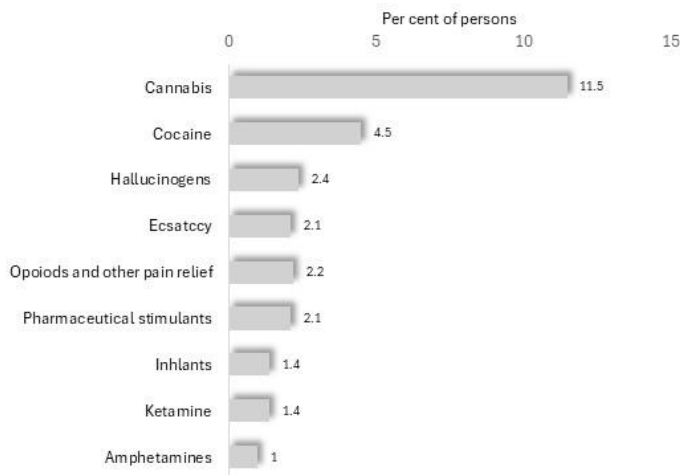
Per cent of persons who consume alcohol to an extent which leads to a lifetime risk of harm to health: Australia, 2001-2022



The prevalence of high-risk consumption of alcohol was greater among Australian-born residents, those with limited education and more disadvantaged residents.

## Illicit Drug Use

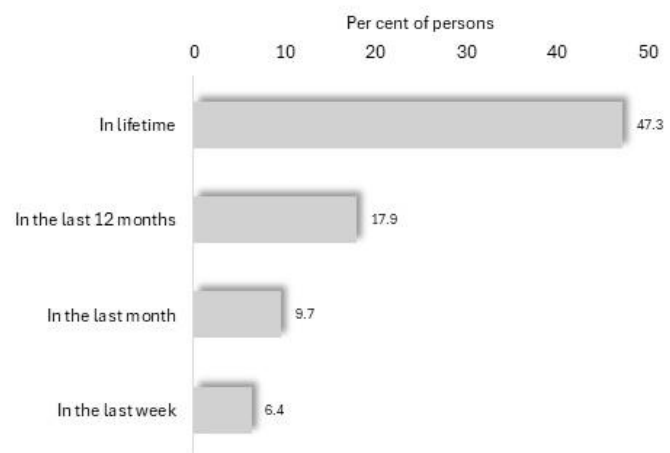
The 2022/23 National Drug Strategy Household Survey found that nearly one in five (17.9%) Australians aged 14 or more had used illicit drugs during the previous year (including the misuse of pharmaceuticals). Most popular illicit drugs were cannabis, consumed by just over one in ten (11.5%) Australians, and cocaine, used by 4.5%.



Illicit drug use in the previous year, by type of drug: persons aged 14 years or more, Australia, 2022/23

The prevalence of illicit drug use declined steeply with increasing frequency: nearly half (48%) of Australians had used illicit drugs at some time, about a fifth in the previous year, approximately one in ten in the past month and a little over one in twenty in the previous week (chart at right).

Prevalence of Illicit drug use in the previous year, by frequency of use: persons aged 14 years or more, Australia, 2022/23

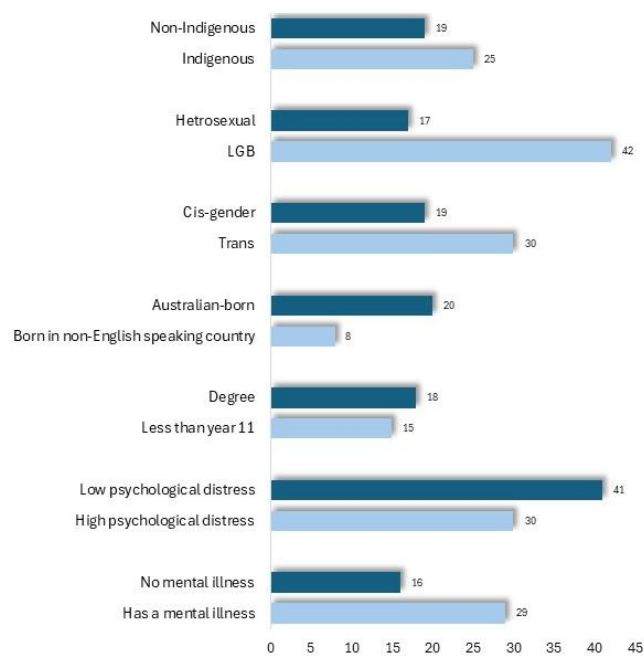


The proportion of people who had used illicit drugs in the previous year reached its peak among younger people, before declining with rising age.

Prevalence of Illicit drug use in the previous year, by age and sex: Australia, 2022/23



In exploring patterns of illicit drug use among the Australian community, the survey found that its prevalence varied widely with conditions such as mental illness, English fluency and sexual orientation, though less so with other circumstances, such as education.



Differences in the proportion of people who had used illicit drugs in the previous 12 months, by selected social or personal characteristics, are illustrated in the accompanying chart.

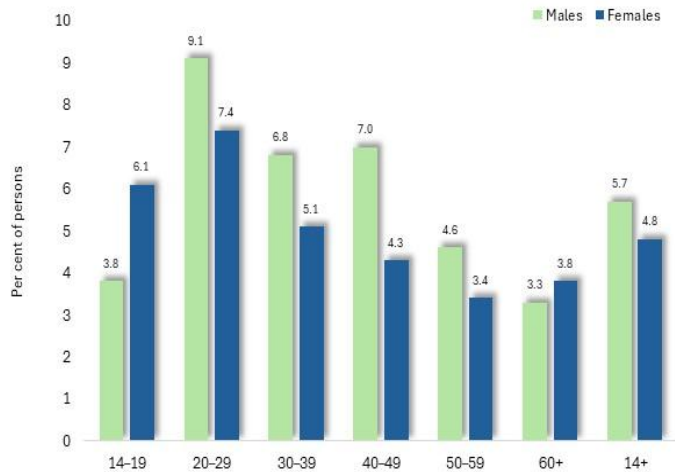
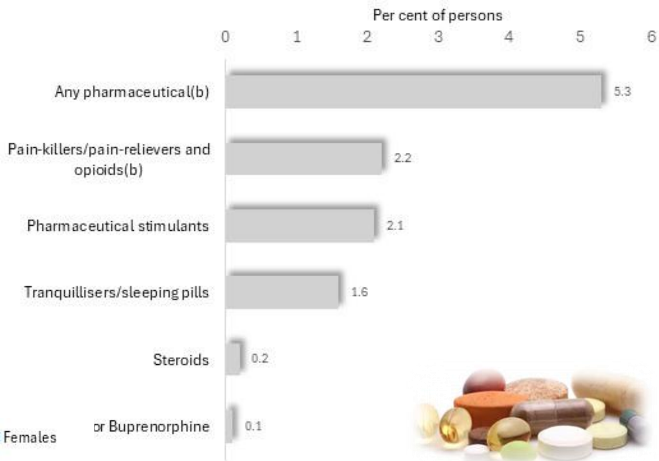
Prevalence of recent illicit drug use, by selected social characteristics: persons aged 14 years or more, Australia, 2022/23

**Pharmaceuticals**

The survey found that about one in twenty (5.3%) Australians aged 14 or more had illicitly used pharmaceuticals in the previous year, including 5.7% of males and 4.8% of females.

Pain killers (including opioids), stimulants and tranquillizers were each misused by about 2% of people.

Recent use of pharmaceuticals by type of drug: persons aged 14 years or more, Australia, 2022/23



The survey showed that the misuse of pharmaceuticals rises from teenage years to early adulthood, before declining with increasing age.

Recent use of pharmaceuticals by age and sex: Australia, 2022/23

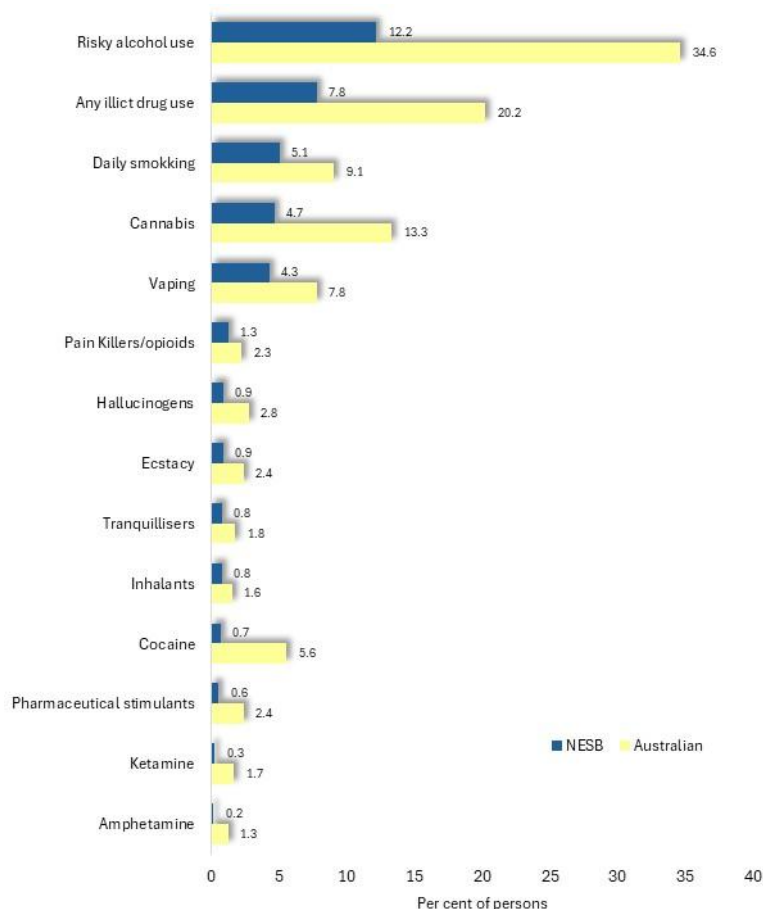
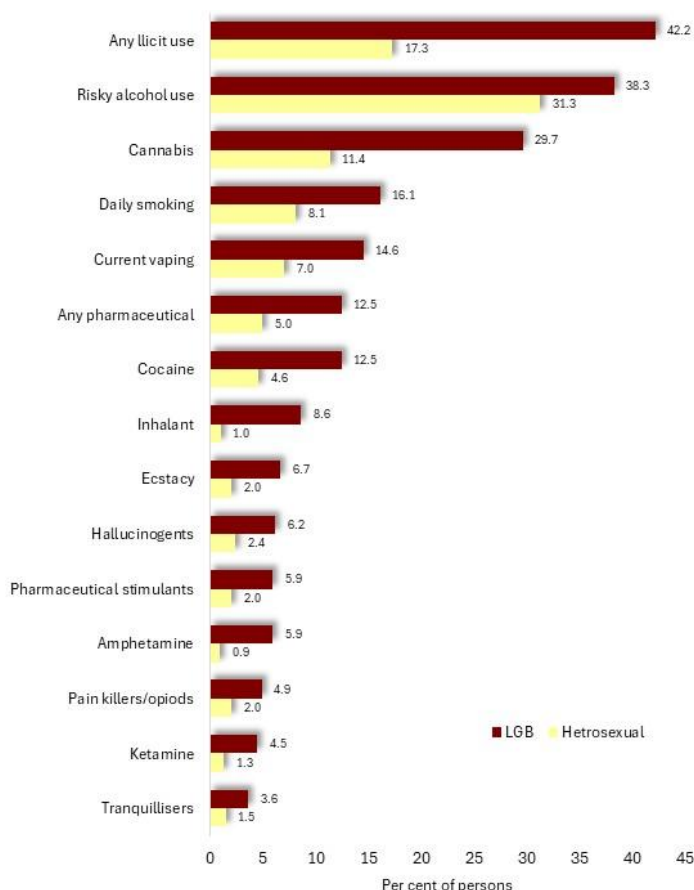
## Drug Use among Segments of the Community

### Lesbian Gay and Bisexual

Among people who identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB), the prevalence of illicit drug use in the previous 12 months, as well as daily smoking, e-cigarette use and risky alcohol consumption, was markedly higher than among those who identified as heterosexual.

For example, illicit drug use was 2.5 times more prevalent among LGB survey participants.

Prevalence of recent drug use by type of drug and LGB status: Australia, 2022/24



### Overseas-born people

The proportion of Australian-born survey participants who used illicit drugs in the previous 12 months was higher than for people born in countries where English is not the main spoken language.

Indeed, illicit drug use was nearly three times more widespread among Australian-born people, than among those from non-English-speaking countries.

Prevalence of recent drug use, by type of drug and birthplace: Australia, 2022/24



### Local Measures of Illicit Drug Use

Local measures of incidents involving the use of illicit drugs indicate that the prevalence of their misuse is higher than metropolitan levels.

**Illicits:** In 2021/22, the rate of hospital admission for conditions related to ingestion of any illicit drug in Greater Dandenong was 5% lower than the metropolitan level, though in 2022/23 the rate of ambulance attendances for medical emergencies relating to illicit drugs was 48% higher than the metropolitan level.

**Amphetamines:** The rate of ambulance attendances in 2022/23 in Greater Dandenong, for incidents involving use of crystal meth or any methamphetamine, were 108% and 87% higher than the metropolitan average, respectively. For each of these drug categories, the rate of attendances in Greater Dandenong was the highest in Victoria outside the central metropolitan municipalities of Melbourne, Yarra and Port Phillip.

**Cannabis:** In 2022/23, the local rate of ambulance attendance for cannabis ingestion exceeded the metropolitan average by 101%.

**Heroin:** Rates of ambulance attendances for consequences of heroin use and for heroin overdose in 2022/23 were 97% or 114% higher than for metropolitan Melbourne, respectively. In 2021/22, hospital admission rates for heroin use were approximately twice metropolitan levels.

**Pharmaceuticals:** The rate of ambulance attendance for medical consequences of pharmaceutical drug use in Greater Dandenong in 2022/23 was 11% higher than Melbourne metropolitan levels.

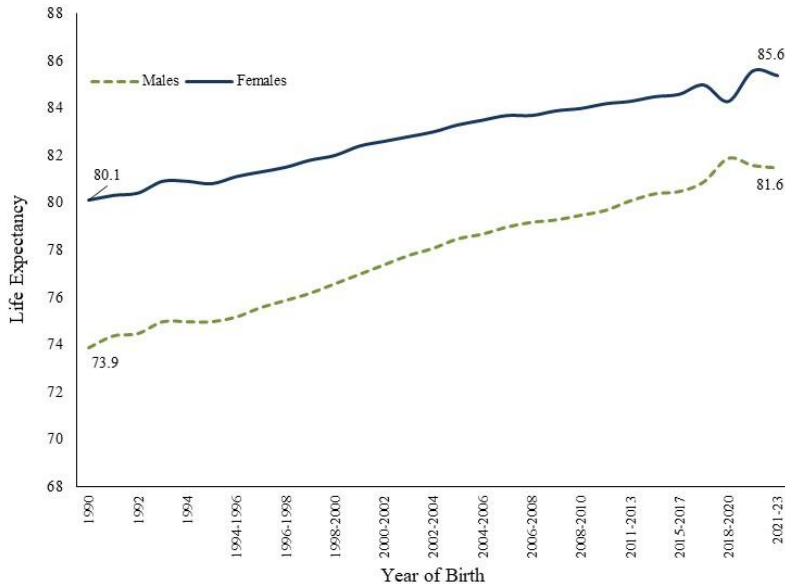
	Greater Dandenong	Metropolitan Melbourne	CGD: per cent higher or lower than Metro Melbourne
<b>Alcohol</b>			
Ambulance attendance, Alcohol intoxication (w/without other substances) . Rate per 100,000 pop., 2022/23	396.8	351.6	13
Ambulance attendance, Alcohol only (Intoxication) Rate per 100,000 pop., 2022/23	329.7	285.4	16
Hospital admission, Alcohol Rate per 100,000 pop., 2021/22	590.7	578.7	2
Rate of FV incidents associated with definite or likely alcohol consumption 2021/22, per 100,000 pop.	127	104	23
Rate of deaths connected to alcohol consumption, per 100,000 population, 2021	140	125	12
Rate of Assaults during high alcohol hours (per 100,000 pop., 2021/22	107	73	47
<b>Amphetamines</b>			
Ambulance attendance, Amphetamines (any) Rate per 100,000 pop., 2022/23	116.6	62.5	87
Ambulance attendance, Amphetamines (crystal) Rate per 100,000 pop., 2022/23	65.9	31.7	108
Hospital admission, Amphetamines Rate per 100,000 pop., 2021/22	107.3	96.6	11
<b>Heroin</b>			
Ambulance attendance, Heroin (any) Rate per 100,000 pop., 2022/23	72.7	36.9	97
Ambulance attendance, Heroin (overdose) Rate per 100,000 pop., 2022/23	28.1	13.1	114
Hospital admission, Heroin Rate per 100,000 pop., 2021/22	8.8	4.4	101
<b>Illicit Drugs</b>			
Ambulance attendance, Illicit Drugs Rate per 100,000 pop., 2022/23	294.3	199.3	48
Hospital admission, Illicit Drugs Rate per 100,000 pop., 2021/22	231.0	243.7	-5
<b>Pharmaceuticals</b>			
Ambulance attendance, Pharmaceutical Drugs (any) Rate per 100,000 pop., 2022/23	155.7	140.1	11
Hospital admission, Illicit Drugs (any) Rate per 100,000 pop., 2021/22	217.2	202.9	7

# Mortality

## Life Expectancy

Life expectancy from birth provides an indication of physical health. In the 1880s, Australian life expectancy from birth was 47 years among males and 51 among females.

By 2023, life expectancy had reached 83.4 years in Victoria – with women’s life expectancy four years greater than for men.<sup>45</sup>



Life expectancy by sex: Victoria, 1990 to 2023

For the period 2021-23, life expectancy in Greater Dandenong was estimated at 83.6 (including 85.6 among women and 81.6 among men), the same as the Victorian level<sup>46</sup>.

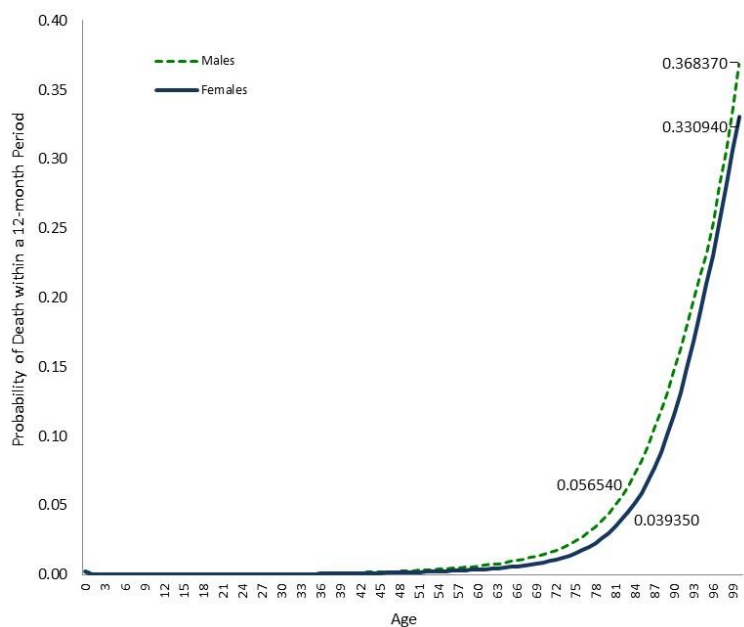
In 2023, 1,062 residents of Greater Dandenong died, representing a standardized mortality rate of 5.4 – slightly higher than the Victorian rate of 5.2<sup>47</sup>.

## Mortality Rates

Australian mortality rates remain below 10 per 1,000 persons, or 1%, in all age groups to 64 years. Above that age, rates rise steeply.

The diagram at right depicts the age-specific probability of death within a year, for males and females in Australia, in 2020-2023<sup>48</sup>. By the mid-90s, the probability of death within 12 months is about a third.

Probability of death within a year, by age and sex: Australia, 2021-23



<sup>45</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024). Life Expectancy 2021-23

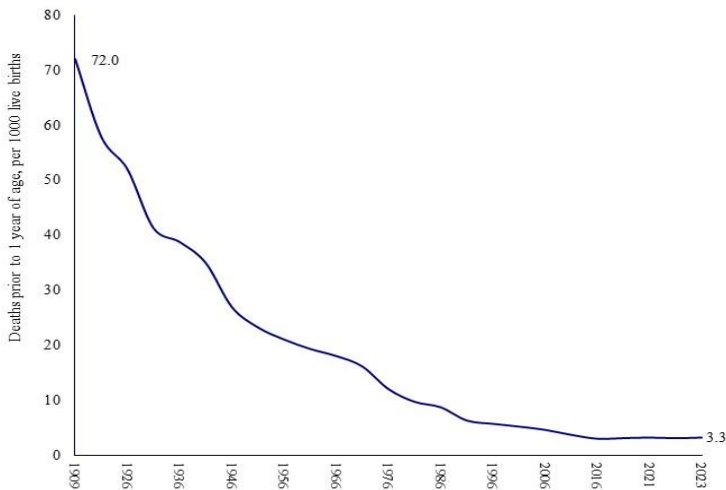
<sup>46</sup> Public Health Institute Development Unit (2024), Torrens University Australia

<sup>47</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2024. Deaths Australia, 2023.

<sup>48</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), Life Tables 2020-2023, States, Territories and Australia

### Mortality Trends

Improvements in health care, nutrition, hygiene, road safety and other conditions, have contributed to a marked decline in death rates across Australia in the past half century. Between 1980 and 2023, national mortality rates declined by over 60% among people aged less than 25.<sup>49</sup>



Infant mortality rate: Australia, 1909 to 2023

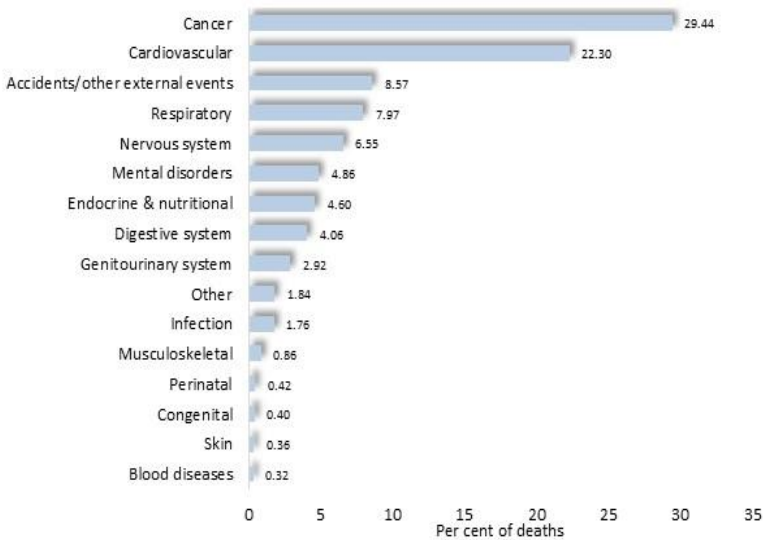
Still more pronounced has been the decrease in infant mortality in Australia, with rates falling from 250 per 1,000 in 1850, to 104 by the opening years of the twentieth century, before plunging to 3.3 by 2023<sup>50</sup>. These declines are attributed to conditions such as reduced exposure to infection through milk, food, water, sewerage; better education and hygiene; improved nutrition

and housing; an increasing tendency to delay birth, coupled with longer birth intervals; and improved medical care and maternal counselling.

### Causes of Death

In 2023, cancer accounted for nearly a third (29%) of deaths in Victoria and cardiovascular disease for over one-fifth.

Percent of deaths due to selected major causes: all ages, Victoria, 2023



In that year, major causes of death in Victoria among 1-14-year-olds, included transport accidents, lung infection, drowning and cancers. With increasing age, external causes preponderated, with suicides, transport accidents, accidental poisoning, assault, drowning accounting for well over half of all mortality among 15-24-year-olds. By middle age, cardiovascular disease, liver disorders, cancer and suicides are major causes of death, while among people aged 85 years or more, dementia, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and falls account for nearly a half of all mortality.

<sup>49</sup> Deaths Australia, 2023, Australian Bureau of Statistics

<sup>50</sup> Deaths Australia, 2023. Australian Bureau of Statistics

## Mental Health and Psychological Wellbeing



### Local Measures Prevalence of Mental Health Conditions – the 2021 Census

The 2021 Census recorded mental health conditions among 6.5% of residents, lower than the Victorian figure, of 9.5%.

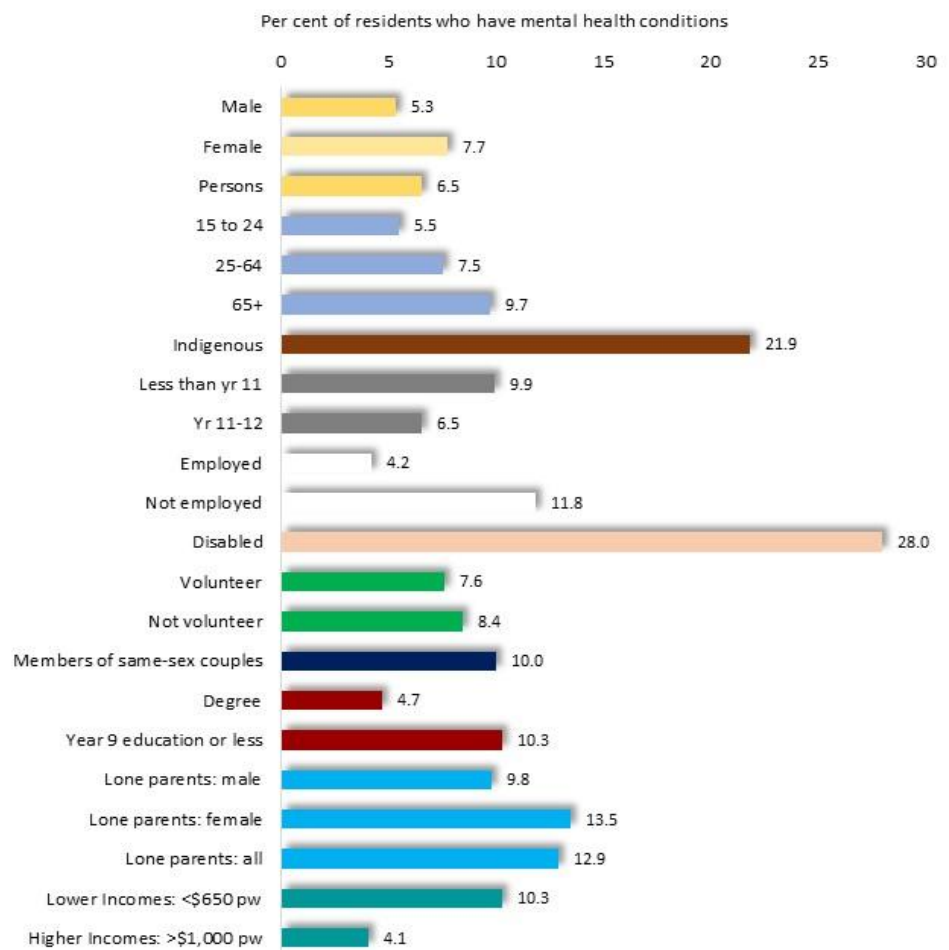


The Census also found that 7.7% of females and 5.3% of males aged 15 years or more in this municipality were experiencing a mental health condition - echoing a disparity observed in the results of other Australian investigations.

Prevalence of mental health conditions by age and sex: Greater Dandenong and Victoria, 2021

The prevalence of mental health conditions was higher among people with limited formal education, older people, members of same-sex-attracted couples or of lone-person households, and lower income earners (diagram right).

Prevalence of mental health conditions by selected variables: Greater Dandenong, 2021



## Local Level Surveys

### *Psychological Stress*



The 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey found that one-fifth (20.7%) of Greater Dandenong residents were experiencing 'high' or 'very high' levels of personal stress, slightly higher than the Victorian level of 18.8%. Within Melbourne, the highest prevalence was recorded in Brimbank and Frankston, at 27% and the lowest in Bayside, at 9.5%.

The survey found that 15% of Greater Dandenong residents had sought assistance for psychological concerns at some time in the previous year, less than the corresponding Victorian figure of 20%.

### *Life Satisfaction*

The 2023 survey also inquired about levels of satisfaction with life, finding that 5.3% of residents felt 'low' levels of satisfaction – slightly less than the State-wide level of 6.5%. Across metropolitan Melbourne, levels of life satisfaction were highest in Frankston and Brimbank, just over 10%, and lowest in Boroondara, at 3%.

### *Social Isolation and Loneliness*

In response to inquiries featured in the subsequent 2023 Population Health Survey, 33% of Greater Dandenong respondents indicated that they were lonely – substantially more than the metropolitan result of 23.5% and the highest level in Victoria.

Aside from Greater Dandenong, the prevalence of loneliness was highest in Frankston and Brimbank, and lowest in Bayside and Indigo.

The earlier, 2020 Population Health Survey, found that 9.3% of Greater Dandenong residents had no close friends or family whom they talked to regularly – the highest level in the state, and about twice the corresponding Victorian level of 4.7%.

### *Resilience*

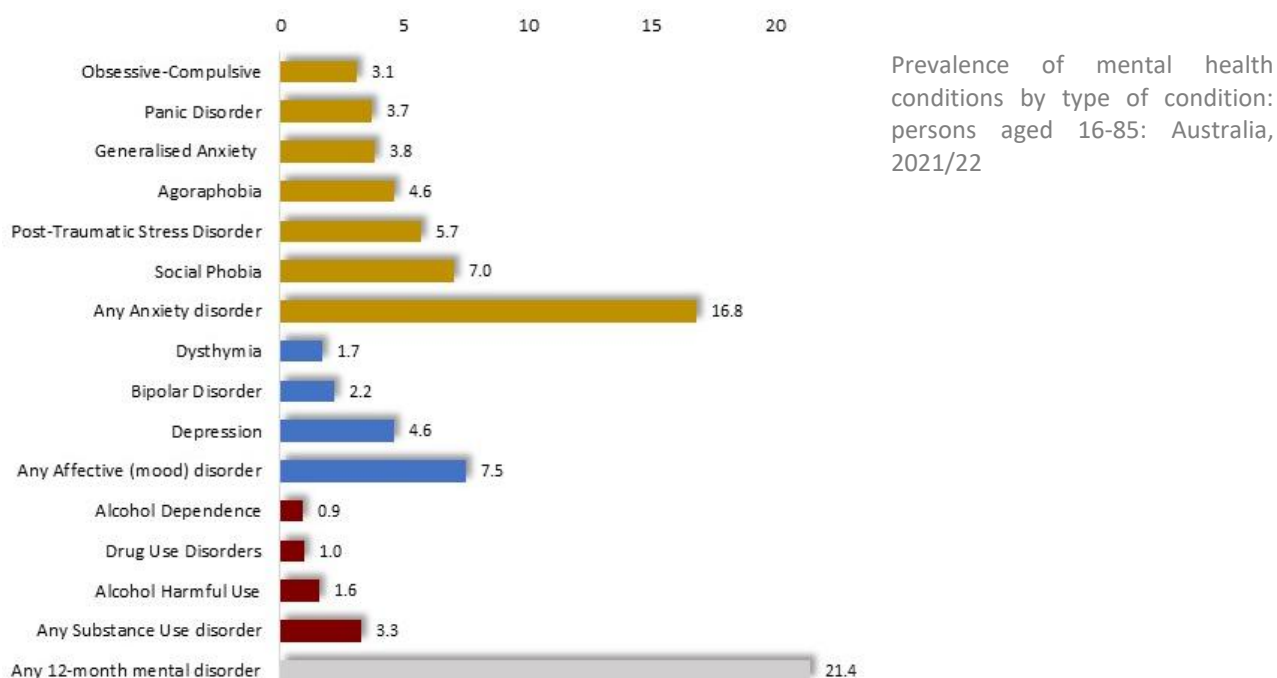
Resilience was measured by a question in the 2015 VicHealth Indicators Survey which sought to determine respondents' ability to cope with adversity and setbacks. With scores between 0 and 8, the average for residents of Greater Dandenong stood at 5.5 – less than the Melbourne average of 7.8 and the lowest score in Victoria.

Resilience scores across Victoria varied little with age or sex but were lower among people on low incomes, with limited education, unemployed, single persons, LGBTI or disabled.

## National Survey Results

At a national level, further details concerning the prevalence of mental health conditions are supplied by the findings of the 2020-21 National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Over one-fifth (21.4%) of survey participants aged 16-85 years, stated that they had experienced a mental disorder in the previous 12 months.



Among them, nearly 17% cited an anxiety disorder, such as post-traumatic stress, acrophobia or social phobia; 7.5% a mood disorder, such as depression; and 3.3% a substance abuse disorder relating to the consumption of alcohol or other drugs.

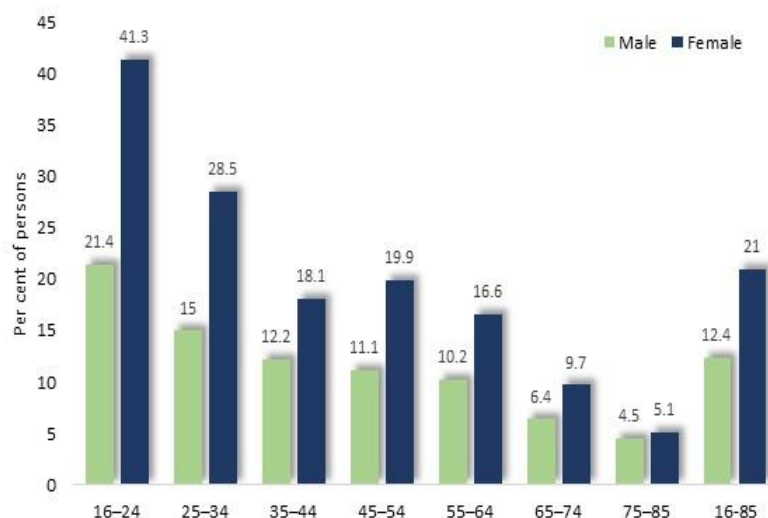
### Anxiety Disorders

The experience of anxiety disorders within the previous 12 months was recorded by 21% of female survey participants and 12% of males.

The prevalence of anxiety disorders by age and sex: Australia, 2021/22

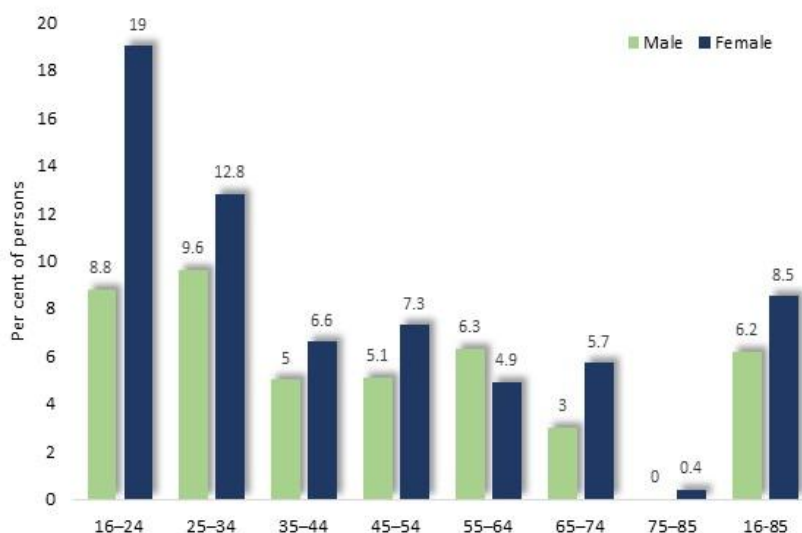
The prevalence of such conditions was highest among younger people - at 41% among females and 21% for males, and declined with age.

Conditions such as panic disorder, agoraphobia, social phobia, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder were approximately twice as prevalent among women as men.





### Affective, or mood, disorders



Overall, 7.5% of 16-85-year-old participants in the 2020-21 National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing stated that they had experienced a mood disorder (chiefly depression) in the previous 12 months, including 8.5% of women and 6.2% of males.

The prevalence of mood disorders by age and sex: Australia, 2021/22

The prevalence of mood disorders declined markedly with age among women, from 19% among 16-24-year-olds to less than 1% among those aged 75 years or more. By contrast, the prevalence of mood disorders among males was more stable across the lifespan.

### Substance-use disorders

Substance-use disorders were acknowledged by 3.3% of survey participants aged 16-85 years during the previous 12 months, and their prevalence was higher among men (4.4%) than women (2.3%).

The prevalence of substance-use disorders by age and sex: Australia, 2021/22



Such conditions were most widespread among younger people, afflicting approximately 13% of 16-24-year-old males and about 7% of females.

## Loneliness

Loneliness, where a person has a lesser number or quality of relationships than they desire<sup>51</sup>, is different to social isolation, where an individual has few relationships and social contacts. For some people may find themselves contentedly isolated from other people, with few social contacts, yet without experiencing loneliness, while others may spend much of their time among others, but experience a lonely, isolated and unfulfilled existence.<sup>52</sup>

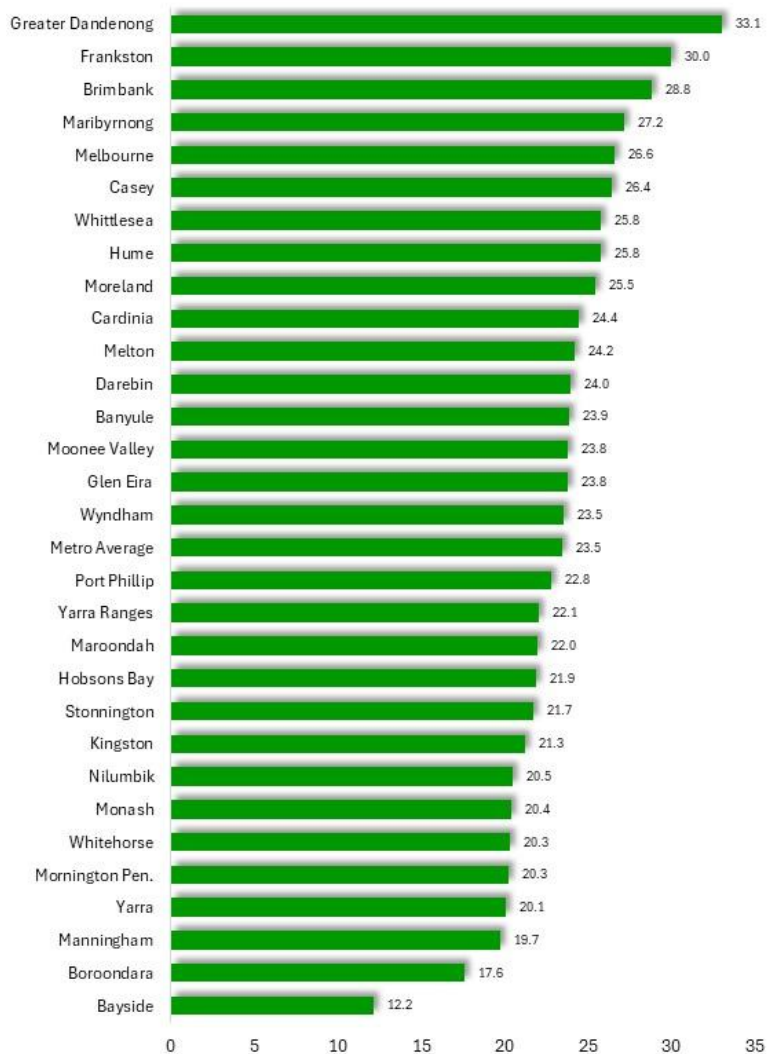
The absence of close, meaningful or intimate relationships is termed 'emotional loneliness', and insufficient social contact or connections - termed 'social loneliness'. For many, experiences of loneliness may be brief and occasional, though others may experience loneliness most or all of the time<sup>53</sup>.

### Prevalence

A 2022 study by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that approximately 16% of Australians aged 15 years or more were experiencing loneliness, a result which was slightly lower among women than men (at 15% and 17% respectively) but differed little across the life span<sup>54</sup>.

The 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey incorporated, for the first time, a sequence of questions about loneliness. Among Greater Dandenong respondents 33% indicated in their responses to these questions that they were lonely – substantially more than the metropolitan result of 23.5%, and the highest level in Victoria.

Percentage of adults experiencing loneliness, by municipality: Victoria, 2023



<sup>51</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024). Social Isolation and Loneliness. AIHW; Needleman, J. and Power, M.J. (1994). Social Support and Depression in Three Groups of Psychiatric Patients and a Group of Medical Controls. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology: The International Journal for Research in Social and*; Powell, A. (2023). How Social Isolation and Loneliness can Shorten Life. *The Harvard Gazette*. 2023

<sup>52</sup> Hawkey, L.C. and Cacioppo, J.T. (2013). Loneliness Matters: a theoretical and empirical review of consequences and mechanisms. *Ann Behav Med*, Vol. 40, No. 2; Powell, A. (2023). How Social Isolation and Loneliness can Shorten Life. *The Harvard Gazette*. 2023

<sup>53</sup> Campaign to End Loneliness. (2020). The Psychology of Loneliness: Why it matters and what we can do. *The Campaign to End Loneliness*.

<sup>54</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024). Social Isolation and Loneliness. AIHW

## *Effects of Loneliness*

A variety of studies point to an association between loneliness and ill-health, including elevated blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, immune impairment and a higher mortality rate, coupled with a higher prevalence of psychological conditions such as depression, stress, poor sleep quality, low self-esteem and life satisfaction, negative feelings, as well as lack of optimism, purpose and hope<sup>55</sup>.

One investigation, which traced older people over four years, found that those who were lonely or socially isolated were more likely than others to die.<sup>56</sup> Some lonely people may withdraw from social contact, often harbouring feelings of anxiety, abandonment and low self-esteem<sup>57</sup>, thereby increasing their social isolation<sup>57</sup>.

## *Factors which Influence Loneliness*

Most inquiries show only minor differences in the prevalence of loneliness among people of differing sex, age, education level or income. However, the lack of a close, fulfilling, personal relationship with a partner or among of friends, or the loss of such a relationship, increases the probability of loneliness.

Changes in living arrangements may also exert an impact, with transfer from a private home to an aged care facility associated with increased levels of loneliness<sup>58</sup>, though the departure of children from their family home generally has little influence upon the prevalence of loneliness among their parents<sup>59</sup>.

Illness and disability – such as cognitive decline, chronic pain, urinary incontinence, hearing loss and reduced mobility – may curtail social participation and accentuate social isolation, often leading to loneliness<sup>60</sup>.

In addition, people with low levels of social trust or self-esteem, or who experience social anxiety, may be accompanied by a heightened risk of loneliness<sup>61</sup> (6, 19, 16, 18), while some other personal attributes, such as extraversion, appear to exert a protective effect against this condition<sup>62</sup>.

## *Social Participation*

Social networks or participation in social groups, religious communities or voluntary work, also forestall loneliness, especially if the social relationships include at least one close, fulfilling friendship<sup>63</sup>.

Pet ownership has been found to alleviate depression and loneliness among older adults<sup>64</sup>.

Social media may embody attributes as well as liabilities, keeping some in touch with family and friends and enabling young people to form connections with their peers<sup>65</sup> yet accentuating loneliness among those for whom it supplants more authentic and meaningful personal interactions.

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<sup>55</sup> Beutel, M.E., Iein, E.M., Barhler, E., Reiner, I., Junger, Cl., Michal, M., Wiltink, J., Wild, P.S., Munzel, T., Lackner, K.J. and Tibubos, A.N. (2017). Loneliness in the General Population: Prevalence, determinants and relation to mental health. BMC; Needleman, J. and Power, M.J. (1994). Social Support and Depression in Three Groups of Psychiatric Patients and a Group of Medical Controls. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology: The International Journal for Research in Social and Genetic Epidemiology and Mental Health Services*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 46-51; Van Tilburg, T. (2020). Social, Emotional and Existential Loneliness: a test of the multidimensional concept. *The Gerontologist*, Vol. 61, No. 7, pp. 335-344; Yanguas, J., Pinazo-Henandis, S., and Tarazona-Santabalbina, F. J. (2018). The Complexity of Loneliness. *Acta Biomedica*, Vol. 89 No. 2, pp. 302-314; Campaign to End Loneliness. (undated). Facts and Statistics about Loneliness. Campaign to End Loneliness.

<sup>56</sup> Powell, A. (2023). How Social Isolation and Loneliness can Shorten Life. *The Harvard Gazette*. 2023

<sup>57</sup> Powell, A. (2023). How Social Isolation and Loneliness can Shorten Life. *The Harvard Gazette*. 2023; Campaign to End Loneliness. (2020). *The Psychology of Loneliness: Why it matters and what we can do*. The Campaign to End Loneliness.

<sup>58</sup> Barrjakova, M., Gafarnero, A. and d 'Hombres, B. (2023). Risk Factors for Loneliness: a literature review. *Social Science and Medicine*, Vol. 334, October 2023

<sup>59</sup> Duncan, A., Kiely, D., Masakayan, A., Peters, A., Seymour, R., Twomey, C. and Vu, L.L. (2021). Stronger Together: Loneliness and social connectedness in Australia. *Curtain University and Bankwest*

<sup>60</sup> Duncan, A., Kiely, D., Masakayan, A., Peters, A., Seymour, R., Twomey, C. and Vu, L.L. (2021). Stronger Together: Loneliness and social connectedness in Australia. *Curtain University and Bankwest*; Donovan, N.J. and Blazer, D. (2020). Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Review and Commentary of a National Academies Report. *National Academies Press*, 2020, US; Qualter, P. (undated). *The BBC Loneliness Experiment*. University of Manchester.

<sup>61</sup> Beuecker, S., Mees, M., Jaap, J.A. and Luhman, M. (20024). Loneliness and the Big Five Personality Traits: a meta-analysis. *European Journal of Personality*. Vol. 34, No. 1: Campaign to End Loneliness. (2020). *The Psychology of Loneliness: Why it matters and what we can do*. The Campaign to End Loneliness; Campaign to End Loneliness. (undated). Facts and Statistics about Loneliness. Campaign to End Loneliness; Badcock, J.C., Holt-Lunstad, J. Garcia, E., Bombaci, P. and Lim, M.H. (2022). Positional Statements on Addressing Social Isolation and Loneliness and the power of Human Connection. *Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection*.

<sup>62</sup> Barrjakova, M., Gafarnero, A. and d 'Hombres, B. (2023). Risk Factors for Loneliness: a literature review. *Social Science and Medicine*, Vol. 334, October 2023; Donovan, N.J. and Blazer, D. (2020). Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Review and Commentary of a National Academies Report. *National Academies Press*, 2020, US.

<sup>63</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024). Social Isolation and Loneliness. AIHW; Barrjakova, M., Gafarnero, A. and d 'Hombres, B. (2023). Risk Factors for Loneliness: a literature review. *Social Science and Medicine*, Vol. 334, October 2023.

<sup>64</sup> Donovan, N.J. and Blazer, D. (2020). Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Review and Commentary of a National Academies Report. *National Academies Press*, 2020, US

<sup>65</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024). Social Isolation and Loneliness. AIHW

# Suicide

## Suicide Rates



Each year in Australia, approximately one person in 1,000 takes their own life.

Suicide rate by age, Australia, 2020

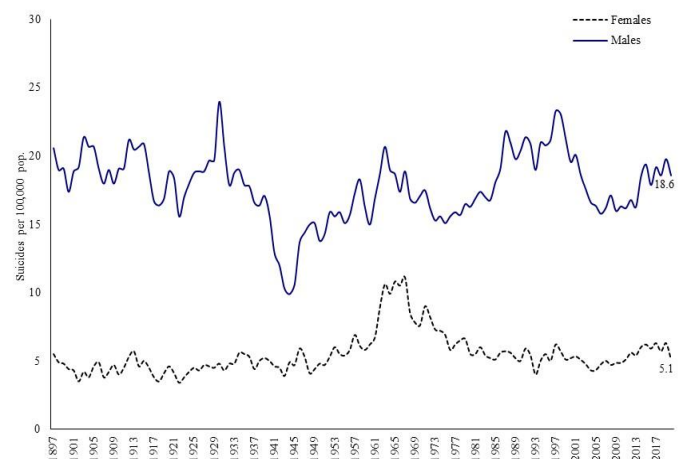
In 2020, male suicide rates stood at 18.6 per 100,000 – over three times higher than the corresponding female rate of 5.1 per 100,000. Suicide rates also vary with age but are highest among elderly males.

The suicide rate among females has remained fairly steady in the past century or so, aside from a rise in the 1960s. The male rate on the other hand, rose in 1926-30, declined during World War Two, then rose again in the period 1986-2000, before subsiding to its present level.

## Causes of Suicide

A variety of factors contribute to suicide, including personally traumatic events, psychological resilience, mental health conditions, chronic illness, unemployment and others.

Explanations advanced by researchers include a lesser fear of death and sensitivity to pain among males, a higher prevalence of impulsive-aggressive tendencies<sup>66</sup>, an unwillingness to acknowledge or communicate their own distresses<sup>67</sup>, limited range of social support and connection<sup>68</sup>, a reluctance to seek help<sup>69</sup>, lack of awareness of, or confidence in, support services<sup>70</sup>, and a propensity to select more lethal methods of suicide<sup>71</sup>.



<sup>66</sup> Poynton-Smith, E. (undated). Why is the Suicide Rate Higher among Men than Women? Patterns of Action Dissertation, University of Nottingham

<sup>67</sup> Goldney, R.D., Fisher, L.J., Wilson, D.H., & Cheok, F. (2002). Mental health literacy of those with major depression and suicidal ideation: an impediment to help seeking. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behaviour*, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 394-403.

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<sup>69</sup> Galdas, P., Cheater, F. and Marshall, P. (2005). Men and Health-seeking Behaviour: a literature review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. Vol. 49, Issue 6.

Hines, L.A., Goodwin, L., Jones, M., Hull, L., Wessely, S., Fear, N.T. and Rona, R.J. (2014). Factors Affecting Help Seeking for Mental Health Problems After Deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan. *Psychiatry Online* 1 Jan 2014

<sup>70</sup> Bruffaerts, R., Demyttenaere, K., Hwang, I., et al. (2011). Treatment of suicidal people around the world. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 199(1), 64-70.

<sup>71</sup> Joiner, T. E. (2005). Why people die by suicide. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Joiner, T.E. (2011). *Lonely at the top - The high cost of men's success*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Schumacher, H. (2019). In countries around the world, women are more likely to be diagnosed with depression and to attempt suicide. So why is the male suicide rate still several times higher than female? BBC Future, 18 March 2019.