Inner North catchment: an overview

The Inner North catchment includes the cities of Melbourne, Yarra, Moonee Valley and Moreland and has a population of almost half a million people. With the majority of the catchment within 8km of the CBD it has good access to transport, health services and amenities. While population growth will continue to 2021, only in the City of Melbourne is it expected to be significant and remain much higher than the State average into the future.

Cultural diversity is high across the catchment compared to Victorian averages, with 37% of people born overseas. The City of Melbourne has a very high number of new settler arrivals (although only 1% of these are for humanitarian reasons). The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is lower than the State average.

Despite median incomes being close to or higher than the Victorian average and low rates of mortgage and rental stress, there are a number of indicators suggesting socio-economic disadvantage.

- With the exception of Yarra, the proportion of people reporting poor health is higher across the catchment than the state average.
- Gaming losses are high in both Melbourne and Moonee Valley, but low or average in Yarra and Moreland.
- Yarra ranks 12th in the State for unemployment.
- Very high proportion of social housing (except in Moreland), and Melbourne has the highest rate of new dwelling approvals.
- Total number of offences per 1000 population is higher across the whole catchment than the Victorian average, and very high in both Yarra and Melbourne.
- High rates of alcohol and marijuana use by 15 – 17 year olds.

Melbourne and Yarra share a number of common characteristics, including very high offending rates, a much higher proportion of young adults (15 - 44 years); consistently high scores in almost all indicators relating to alcohol and illicit drugs and a high proportion of people seeking professional help for mental health problems. The city attraction of people into the city and the concentration of accommodation around the Universities possibly explain some of these characteristics.

Moreland also stands out for people reporting high levels of psychological distress and adolescents who report being recently bullied. While it has a high rate of registered mental health clients per 1000 population, it has a lower rate of MHCSS clients. Moreland is also the only LGA area within the Inner North catchment where less than 85% of the population believe there are good facilities and services.

Priorities for the Inner North catchment

1. Client need
   Responding to a diverse client population and improving our understanding of the client profile and service needs for:
   - Ageing drug users
   - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
   - Culturally and linguistically diverse groups
   - People who are homeless or people with housing issues
   - Young people (with a particular focus on the student group)
   - GLBTIQ
   - People with a dual diagnosis

2. Understanding the impacts of the service changes:
   a) Concern around the loss of certain service approaches that were relevant to the local population:
      - Harm reduction focus
      - Safe spaces / casual drop in centres
      - Opportunistic intervention & motivational enhancement practice
   b) Potential redirection of resources away from the Inner North
MOONEE VALLEY (pop 113,256)

Moonee Valley is located in Melbourne’s north-west. Population growth has been considerably below average and future projections are around average. Age distribution in this area is relatively average.

Moonee Valley is diverse; a quarter of people were born in a non-English speaking country and more than 30% speak a language other than English at home. The unemployment rate is below average, household income is above average and mortgage and rental stress are low. That said, the percentage of social housing is the third highest in the State.

Moonee Valley has the third highest rate of gaming machine losses per head of adult population among our 14 LGAs in the North and West catchments ($766.2pp/year compared with the state average of $549.5). There are some AOD risks to note in the 15-17 year olds in this area, with higher than average rates of 15-17 year olds who drank alcohol and smoked tobacco in the past 30 days, who have ever used marijuana and other illegal drugs. The overall smoking rate is higher than average – especially among males. Total offences and drug use & possession offences are slightly higher than average.

MELBOURNE (pop 105,376)

The City of Melbourne is made up of the CBD and some inner suburbs, including the social housing estates around Kensington and the University precincts. Per annum population growth has been very strong over the last 10 years and this is forecast to continue. Rates of new settler arrivals are around three times the Victorian average but only 1% of these are humanitarian arrivals. The area has a very youthful population with around 72% of people aged between 15-44 years. 54% of people were born overseas and 43% speak a language other than English at home. The most commonly spoken languages other than English are Mandarin, Cantonese and Indonesian.

While it has the highest number of new dwelling approvals per 1000 population in the State it is also ranked 6th for social housing.

The rate of total offences is the highest in the state and drug offences are the second highest. Some of this may reflect activity in the city rather than resident behaviour per se. Looking at the relevant AOD measures across the whole of the North & West catchments Melbourne has our highest rate of alcohol-related ambulance call outs, serious road injuries during high alcohol hours, alcohol-related assaults, pharmaceutical ambulance rates, illicit drug-related ambulance rates and total ED presentations for illicit drugs. Melbourne has an extremely high rate of child protection orders at 19.4 per 1000.

MORELAND (pop 156,180)

Moreland is located in inner north Melbourne, around 5km from the CBD. Per annum growth has been lower than average since 2002 but is projected to be above average through to 2022. Residents aged 25-44 are overrepresented compared to the state average, as are those aged 85+, while other age groups are underrepresented.

Moreland is culturally diverse, with 36% of people born overseas and 42% speaking a language other than English at home. The percentage of persons reporting fair or poor health is relatively high. While the level of psychological distress is high, the lifetime prevalence rates for anxiety and depression are close to average and the proportion of people seeking assistance for a mental health problem is one of the lowest in our catchments. However, Moreland has the highest rate of registered mental health clients across the whole North & West catchments.

Rates of smoking and drinking alcohol at levels likely to cause short term harm are relatively low. The ADIS rate for treatment episodes of care relating to pharmaceuticals is high for the 15-24 year olds, males and females. There are some risky behaviours in the 15-17 year olds relating to AOD use, with Moreland reporting the third highest rate of 15-17 year olds who have ever used marijuana across all 14 of our LGAs.

YARRA (pop 80,593)

The city of Yarra is located in inner-east Melbourne. Per annum population growth has been around average but is projected to increase to 2022. Almost half the population are adults aged 25-44 years. Cultural diversity in Yarra is similar to the Victorian average. The percentage of social housing is the highest in the state.

Yarra is an area of significant concern in the AOD statistics. It has the third highest rate of drug crime and the fourth highest rate of overall crime across the whole of Victoria. The area consistently scores in the top 3 highest rates across our North & West catchments for almost all indicators relating to alcohol and illicit drugs, and for many of those relating to pharmaceuticals. Yarra has your highest rate of registered Drug and Alcohol clients (11.1 per 1000) as well as the second highest rate of registered mental health clients across our North & West catchment areas.

Typical measures of geographical access are good, 100% of the population live near to public transport, and there is a high distribution of GP and allied health and other community services.

Yarra residents are the highest seekers of assistance for professional help for a mental health problem and males have a high life time prevalence of depression and anxiety (24.1%) compared to the Victorian average of 14.6%.