

North West catchment: an overview

The North West Melbourne catchment includes the cities of Maribyrnong, Brimbank, Melton and Hume and is home to over 560,000 people. A significant challenge for the catchment will continue to be its significant growth, most pronounced in the growth corridors of Hume and Melton, as well as Maribyrnong (to a lesser extent). Only in the City of Brimbank will growth be minimal. Melton in particular also has a very high proportion of children (under 18 years). The catchment is characterised by its significant cultural diversity and high proportion of new settler arrivals. In Brimbank, almost 50% of the population are born overseas.

There is a high overall level of disadvantage as evidenced by:

- Low household incomes (except for Melton which is similar to the average)
- High unemployment rates
- High gaming machine losses
- High levels of mortgage and rental stress (except for Maribyrnong)
- High rates of family incidents (except Maribyrnong)
- High rates of total offences.

There are also a number of indicators suggesting poor health, particularly related to young people. In some areas, the rates of drug use in young people are among the highest in the State. In Hume 28.6% of 15-17 year olds have used other illegal drugs compared to a state average of 3% and 14% of children are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (compared to a state average of 9.5%).

Catchment wide issues include:

- High rates of reported fair or poor health
- High rates of reported high/very high levels of psychological distress (in all except Maribyrnong)
- Higher proportion of children with emotional or behavioural problems at school and adolescents who report being recently bullied (Melton and Hume only)
- High rates of young people drinking alcohol
- High rates of young people using marijuana (in all except Hume).

There is some evidence of service access challenges across the catchment, which become more pronounced with increasing distance from the city. Service use rates for Mental Health Community Support Services (MHCSS) and Alcohol and Drug (AOD) services are lower than average in both Hume and Melton. The rate of registered mental health clients is similar across the catchment, but slightly higher in Hume. The usage rates of General Practitioners are amongst the highest in State even though there are a lower than an average number of general practitioners per 1000 population (particularly in Hume and Melton).

Priorities for the North West catchment

1. Growth corridor

Responding to strong population growth and a need for responsive resources to address emerging trends. Hotspots: Melton & Sunbury.

- Poor infrastructure: transport
- Limited service availability: location, choice, specialists
- Lack of prescribing GPs

2. Service / sector collaboration

- Opportunities for cross sector collaboration for problem solving & innovation
- Enhanced service coordination

3. Client need: Specific client groups require local planning attention.

Service access issues identified for:

- Culturally & linguistically diverse groups
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Complexity in the client group:

- Culturally & linguistically diverse groups
- Young people
- Gambling and family-violence related need
- Clients with medical co-morbidities

MELTON (pop 117,982)

Melton is an urban fringe municipality west of Melbourne's CBD. It has a very high population growth rate projected to continue to 2031. It has the highest unemployment rate in the whole of the North & West, and the third highest in Victoria.

Melton has a relatively young population (24% aged 0-14years), and the North & West's highest proportion of 15-17 year olds who drank alcohol in the past 30 days (58.7% compared to 24.7% in the state). Young people's main substances of choice appear to be alcohol, tobacco and marijuana.

The population at risk of short term harm from alcohol is relatively low but overall smoking rates are second highest in the State. There is a high incidence of family violence including where alcohol was involved (especially for the 18-24year olds).

Melton has the highest rate of psychological distress in the State but the proportion of people seeking professional help for a mental health problem is lower than average (10.2% compared to 12.4% in the state). This suggests an access issue further evidenced by the low rates of GPs and pharmacists per 1000 of the population.

Melton has the lowest female life expectancy across all catchments at 82.3years (state average 84.4) and the highest percentage of residents reporting type 2 diabetes (8.5%, state average 4.8%).

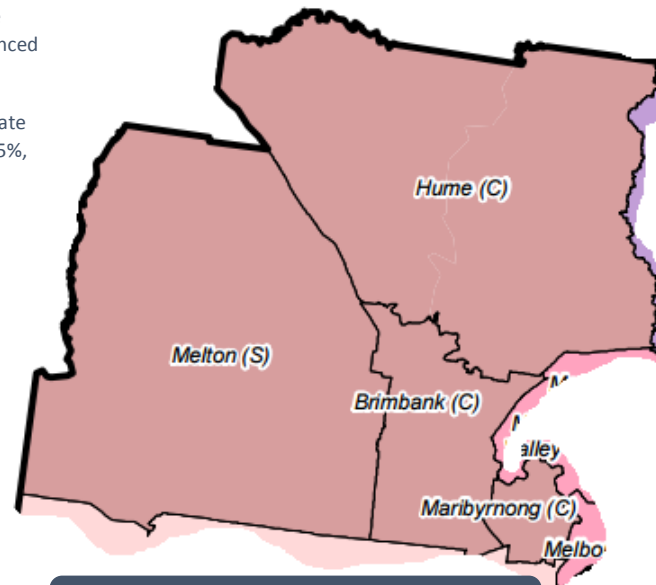
(pop 177,994) HUME

Hume is an urban fringe municipality with very strong projected population growth, and a relatively young population – 38% are under the age of 25. It has a high level of cultural diversity (43% of residents speak a language other than English at home). While the rate of new settler arrivals is only slightly above average the proportion who are humanitarian is 38% - the 3rd highest of all Victorian LGAs.

Unemployment is higher than average, rental stress is the highest in the state and mortgage stress is the second highest. The area has the highest percentage of one parent families and low income families with children in Victoria. Over 14% of children are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (compared with the state average of 9.5%). The rate of psychological distress is the third highest of all LGAs but use of professional support for a mental health issue is slightly lower than average (11.2%; state average 12.4%). Poor health for women is second highest in Victoria and people sleeping less than seven hours a day is the highest in the State.

Hume has an extremely high percentage of 15-17 year olds who have used 'other illegal drugs' a rate almost 10 times the state average (28.6% compared with 3%). It also has a high female smoking rate and high rate of pharmaceutical ED presentations in females.

The rate of GPs, allied health services and pharmacies among the general population is well below the state average. However, residents in Hume have the highest rate of general practitioner attendance in Victoria.



NORTH WEST CATCHMENT

BRIMBANK (pop 193,668)

Located about 20km from Melbourne's CBD, Brimbank is a city of socioeconomic extremes.

It is our most culturally diverse LGA across the 14 in the North & West catchments with the second highest proportion of people born in a non-English speaking country in Victoria. 15% of people speak Vietnamese at home, and 13% have low English proficiency.

Of the 14 LGAs in our 4 catchments, Brimbank has the highest level of disadvantage, highest rate of gaming machine losses, lowest percentage of people who feel safe walking alone on the street at dark, poorest self-reported health status, lowest percentage of people who think there are good services and facilities in the LGA (77.7%, equal with Maribyrnong, compared to state average of 85.2%). There is a high rate of developmental vulnerability in children, and mortgage and rental stress are among the highest in the state. It also has comparatively lower number of general practitioners per 1000 population but a high level of attendance.

There is a high incidence of alcohol-related serious road injuries and young peoples' AOD risk taking behaviours, and above average rates of both drug offences and total offences.

(pop 76,589) MARIBYRNONG

Located directly to the west of Melbourne's CBD, Maribyrnong is densely populated with high projected population growth and a proportion of 25-44year olds that is well above average. Over 10% of residents were born in Vietnam, and almost half speak a language other than English at home.

Gaming machine losses are the 3rd highest of all Victorian LGAs, drug offences are the 5th highest and total crime is well above average. Unemployment rates are also high.

Looking across the relevant AOD indicators across our four North & West catchments, Maribyrnong emerges as a 'hot spot', featuring in the top 3 for 29/60 measures we have available – especially around pharmaceuticals and illicit drugs. The lifetime prevalence of anxiety and depression for men is high (18.2 compared to 14.6 in the state), however, the proportion of people seeking professional help for a mental health issues is slightly lower than the average (11.2 compared to 12.4 for the state). The area has the lowest percentage of people who believe there are good facilities and services in the LGA across our 4 catchments.