Hobsons Bay

Health Profile Summary

April 2025



HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL

Acknowledgment of Country

Council acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of these municipal lands and waterways, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



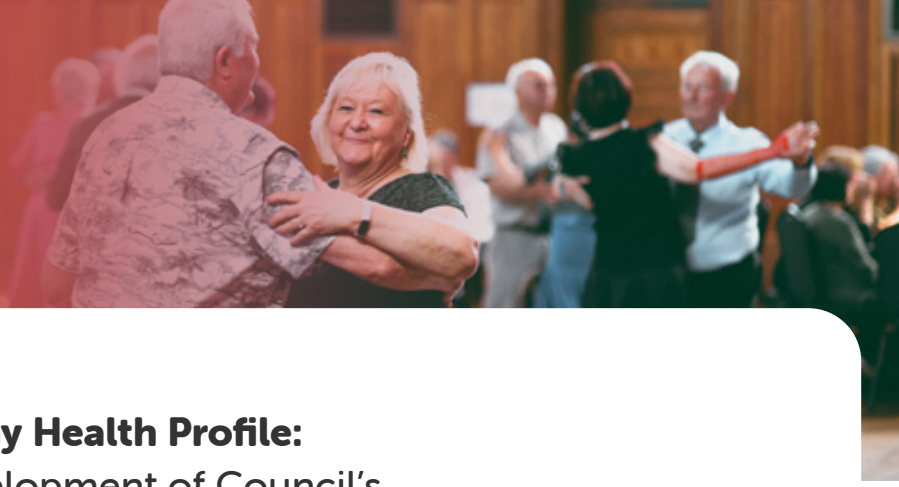


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Introduction

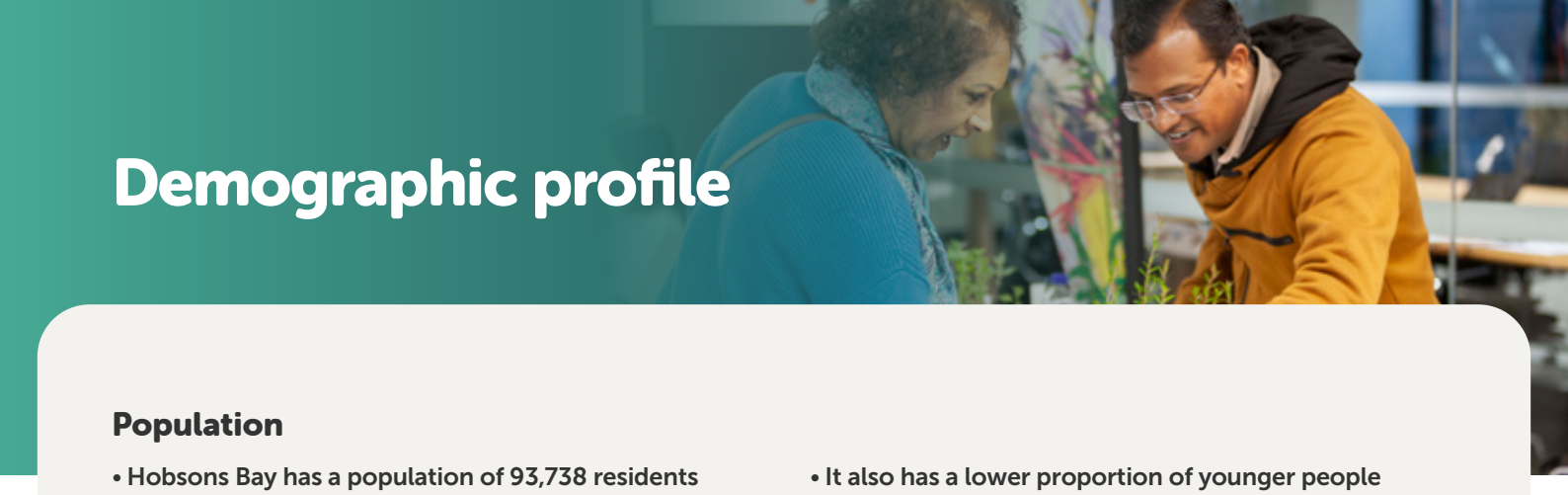


The purpose of the **Hobsons Bay Health Profile: Summary** is to support the development of Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. This summary presents the key health and wellbeing data and research on the Hobsons Bay community. More detail is provided in the comprehensive **Hobsons Bay Health Profile**, including references for all data.

Please visit www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au for more information.







Demographic profile

Population

- **Hobsons Bay has a population of 93,738 residents** (June 2023).
- **Hobsons Bay has a higher proportion of older people** aged 60 years or above, compared to Greater Melbourne
- **It also has a lower proportion of younger people** aged 12 to 34 years, compared to Greater Melbourne.
- **There is expected to be an additional 11,000 residents in the next 10 years**, with half of this growth expected to occur in the 70+ years cohort (52%)

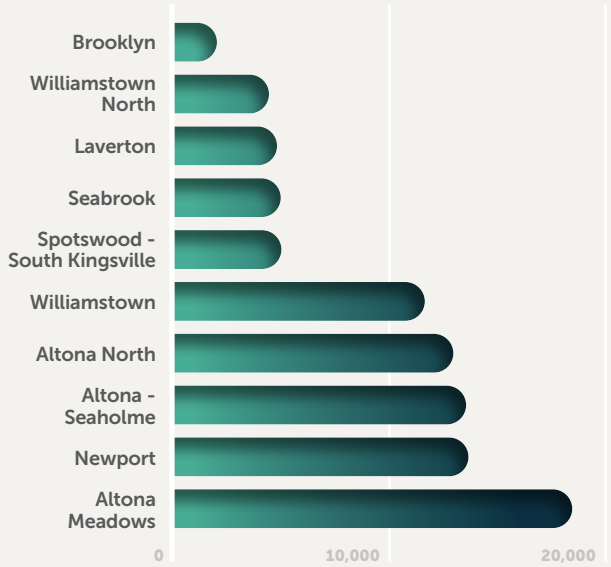


Figure 1: Suburb population

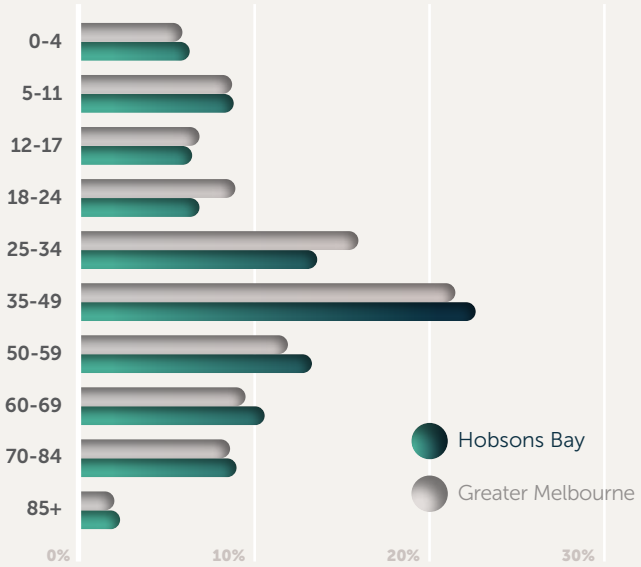


Figure 2: Age profile

Cultural and language diversity

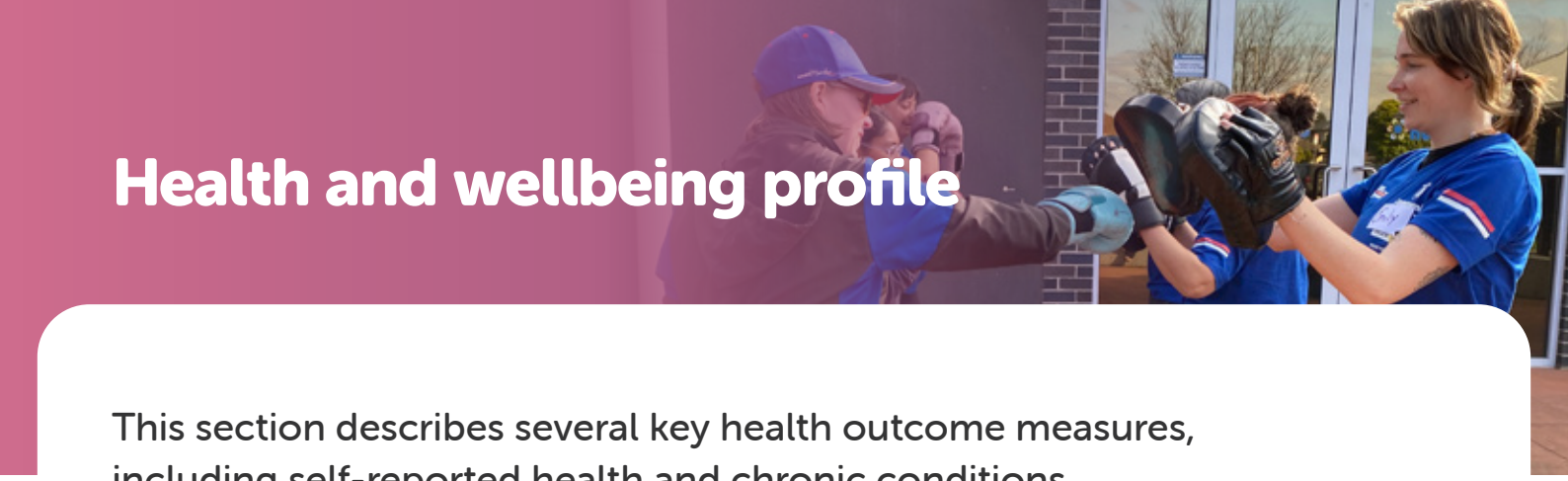
- **We have 628 First nation residents** (0.7 per cent of the total population, the same as the Greater Melbourne average).
- **Just over one-quarter of our residents (27.1%) speak a language other than English at home** (compared to 34 per cent in Greater Melbourne).
- **The top three languages** (other than English) are Arabic (3.0%), Greek (2.5%) and Vietnamese (2.1%).
- **A total of 3,744 residents have difficulty speaking English** (representing 4.1 per cent of the population), which is lower than the Melbourne average of 5.4 per cent.
- **A total of 30 per cent were born overseas** (compared to 36 per cent in Greater Melbourne).
- **The top three countries of birth** (other than Australia) are the United Kingdom (4.2%), India (2.7%), and New Zealand (2.1%).

Need for assistance

- **A total of 5,812 residents need help with day-to-day activities** (representing 6.4 per cent of the population), which is higher than the Melbourne average of 5.5 per cent.

Disadvantage

- **Altona Meadows, Altona North and Laverton are the most disadvantaged suburbs in Hobsons Bay**, based on data collected in the 2021 Census. They have higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage, compared to Greater Melbourne and Victoria.
- **The median weekly household income in Hobsons Bay is $1,972**, compared to $1,901 in Greater Melbourne. The lowest median weekly income is in Laverton ($1,579) and the highest is in Newport West ($2,735).



Health and wellbeing profile

This section describes several key health outcome measures, including self-reported health and chronic conditions.

Physical health

- **More people in Hobsons Bay indicated they had excellent or very good health** (47.8%), compared to Greater Melbourne (39.6%). Data for Greater Melbourne shows no difference between women and men in how they report their health status.
- **Women are more likely to have a long-term health condition** (33%), compared to men (29%).
- **First Nations residents are more likely to have a long-term health condition** (40%), compared to non-First Nation residents (32%).
- In Hobsons Bay, **young women are more likely to have a sexually transmitted infection** compared to young men up until the age of 25. However, **older men recorded much high rates of STIs**, compared to older women.
- **More women tend to have asthma**, and in Hobsons Bay the rate of asthma is higher for both women and men, when compared to the Metro West region.

Mental health

- **Mental health was the most common long-term chronic health condition** in Hobsons Bay, and higher than the rate in Greater Melbourne.
- **Women are more likely to experience mental ill health** in Hobsons Bay. Compared to men, women have higher rates of mental health conditions (1,005 vs 666 per 10,000 population); anxiety or depression (36% vs 16%) and psychological distress (15% vs 9%).
- **Women are more likely to be admitted to hospital as a result of self-harm**. Data from 2021 shows 6,667 self-harm admissions for Hobsons Bay residents, including 4,665 for females (70%) and 2,002 for males (30%). Compared with 2020, female admissions increased by 10 per cent (up 437) and male admissions decreased by 3 per cent (down 61).
- Compared to men, **women were more likely to seek professional health** for a mental health problem (24.1% vs 8.5%).
- Data also shows **women are more likely to experience high or very high levels of psychological distress** across Greater Melbourne.
- **Psychological distress is higher among young people** in Hobsons Bay, when compared to Western Melbourne and Victoria overall.





Modifiable risk factors

The Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing defines health risk factors as 'attributes, characteristics or exposures that increase the likelihood of a person developing a disease or health disorder'. Modifiable risk factors (also referred to as 'lifestyle risk factors') can be addressed through individual behaviour, although these are constrained to some degree by the social determinants of health (see pages 8 to 11, below).

- **Over half of the adult population (18 years and over) in Hobsons Bay is overweight or obese** (52%). However, the rate of people who are overweight or obese in Hobsons Bay is very similar to the rate in Greater Melbourne. Data for greater Melbourne indicates that men are more likely to be overweight or obese, compared to women.
- **Hobsons Bay has a slightly higher rate of people at risk of alcohol related disease or injury**, compared to Greater Melbourne (12.5% vs 11.8%). Data for Greater Melbourne shows men have more than double the rate of risk of harm from alcohol than women (16.5% vs 7.4%).
- **Around one in ten people smoke** in Hobsons Bay (slightly below the rate in Greater Melbourne), while **one in 20 people vape** (slightly above the rate in Greater Melbourne).
- **Six in ten adults in Hobsons Bay do not do the recommended amount physical activity** per week (59.8%). However, more adults in Hobsons Bay meet the physical activity guidelines, compared to the Greater Melbourne (39.4% vs 34.8%).
- **Almost one in three adults in Hobsons Bay sit for eight or more hours a day** (29.4%), similar to the rate in Greater Melbourne (29.8%). Greater Melbourne data also shows that men are more likely to sit for eight or more hours per day, compared to women (31.6% vs 27.9%).
- **One-third of Hobsons Bay residents (33.2%) consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily or several times per week**. This is almost identical to the rate in Greater Melbourne (33.6%). Greater Melbourne data also indicates men consume sugar-sweetened beverages at substantially higher rates than women (40.8% vs 26.6%).
- Compared to a decade earlier, **a smaller proportion of children in Western Melbourne are eating the recommended serves of fruit** (i.e. 1.5 to 2 pieces per day, depending on age), falling from 80 per cent in 2013 to 70 per cent in 2023.







Social determinants of health

Council's integrated social policy framework, **A Fair Hobsons Bay for All 2024-28**, identified eleven social determinants of health for Hobsons Bay. These are based on research and data, engagement with priority populations, current and emerging issues, and the demographic profile of the Hobsons Bay community.

Early childhood

Children are particularly vulnerable to the social determinants of health. The first eight years of life is when children develop many capabilities and competencies, and inequities experienced during early childhood have a major role in shaping health in later life.

- **Around one in six children in Hobsons Bay (16%) are vulnerable in one or more key development areas**, e.g. emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills.
- **Altona Meadows** (20%), **Altona North-Brooklyn** (18%) and **Spotswood-South Kingsville** (17%) are the suburbs with the highest proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable.
- **In 2021, 3.8 per cent of mothers in Hobsons Bay smoked at any time during pregnancy** (41 of 1,066 females who gave birth). However, this was a lower than the average for North Western Melbourne (5.7%).
- In the Western Melbourne region, **Hobsons Bay (32%) had the highest proportion of infants being fully breastfed at 6 months** in 2017-18 (the most recent available data), higher than the rate for Victoria (22%). However, this proportion had fallen from 43 per cent in 2014-15.
- **Immunisations rates for five-year-olds are on par with Greater Melbourne** (95% fully vaccinated for Hobsons Bay and Greater Melbourne).
- **There has been a decline in the percentage of two-year-olds who are immunised**, dropping from 94 per cent in 2021 to 91 per cent in 2024. Compared to the North West Melbourne region, more children at each of the key ages are immunised.

Community, social and family connections

High-quality social connections are essential our mental and physical health and wellbeing. People who experience loneliness are more likely to also experience chronic disease, depression, social anxiety and poorer wellbeing.

- **Around 22 per cent of Hobsons Bay residents have indicated they feel lonely**, slightly lower than the average for Greater Melbourne (24%).
- Although half of all Hobsons Bay residents feel valued by society (50.3%), **one in seven residents never, or not often, feel valued by society** (14.5%). Data for Greater Melbourne indicates men are less likely to feel valued by society.
- Victorian data shows that **young people aged 18-34 experience the highest levels of loneliness**. Around one in three people aged 18-24 years (32.1%) and one in four young people aged 25-34 years (26.0%) say they are lonely.
- Over the years, **women's involvement in volunteering has consistently been higher than men**. However, the gap in 2021 was the smallest since 2006. Volunteering rates are below the Hobsons Bay average for residents in the lowest income quartile, those born overseas and people who have a need for assistance.

Education and life-long learning

Higher levels of education are strongly associated with life expectancy, morbidity, health behaviours. They play an important role in health by shaping opportunities, employment, and income.

- **Women below the age of 55 years in Hobsons Bay are more likely to have a Bachelor or higher degree**, compared to men in the same age group (55% vs 42%). However, women above 55 years are less likely to hold Bachelor or higher degrees.
- **The following groups are less likely to have a Bachelor or higher degree:** residents who speak a language other than English, First Nation residents, and people who need assistance.
- **Only 11 per cent of residents with a Bachelor or higher degree had a long-term health condition**, compared to 31 per cent of the general population.

Employment and income

Unemployment can have a substantial impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing. At the same time, participating in quality work helps to protect health and a positive sense of identity. Employment also provides the opportunity for social interaction and improves access to services, facilities and resources to maintain wellbeing.

- **Young people in Melbourne's West have significantly higher rates of unemployment,** compared to the general population of the area.
- Around 1,700 young people in Hobsons Bay (0-17 years) **are living in a household where no one works**.
- **Altona Meadows (4%) had the highest proportion of people accessing JobSeeker payments**, while Williamstown (2%) had the lowest rate.
- **In 2021, there were 11,372 people living in low-income households** in Hobsons Bay (13.2%), a similar proportion to Greater Melbourne (13.4%). This includes 1,464 children and 1,368 young people.
- **People living in low-income households are substantially more likely to have one or more long-term health conditions**, compared to people in the highest income quartile (47% vs 20%).
- **Older people are also the fastest growing cohort within low-income households**, increasing from just over one-third in 2016 to almost half of all low-income households in 2021.

Housing

Access to affordable, suitable and secure housing is fundamental to health and wellbeing. There are direct aspects of housing that can impact health outcomes including overcrowding, build quality of the dwelling, and its ability to regulate temperature. Insecure and unaffordable housing (and, more acutely, homelessness) increase stress and may may lead to frequent relocations, impacting schooling, employment and community connections.

- There were **297 people counted as homeless on Census night 2021**.
- In 2021, more than **eight in ten low-income households in Hobsons Bay were experiencing rental stress** (83%).
- An estimated **1,671 households have an unmet need for affordable housing** in Hobsons Bay. This represents 4.8 per cent of all households compared to 6.1 per cent for Greater Melbourne.
- There are **11,068 applications on the public housing waiting and transfer list** for the two broadbands (or offices) that cover Hobsons Bay. Data shows a steady increase in demand for public housing, leading to longer waiting times for applicants.





Transport and walkability

The walkability of neighbourhoods is an important influence on physical activity, health outcomes, sustainability and social connectedness. Walkable neighbourhoods provide alternatives to driving. In turn, this supports increased walking, cycling and active transport use which improves levels of physical activity and reduces chronic disease outcomes.

- Out of the nine inner-city local government areas, **Hobsons Bay (0.1 out of 10) clearly scored lowest on the Australian Urban Observatory's walkability score**, whereas the City of Melbourne had the highest score (9.9).
- The 2020 Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA) reported that **30 per cent of trips in Hobsons Bay were completed by active transport** (walking, public transport or cycling), compared to 28 per cent across Greater Melbourne.
- Data from the 2021 Census shows that **low-income households in Hobsons Bay are less likely to own a car**, compared to all households (7% vs 21%). Newly arrived residents are also less likely to own a car, compared to all residents (6% vs 4%).

Food security

Food insecurity is defined as inadequate access to food, inadequate supply of food or the inappropriate use of food. Some of the main reasons people experience food insecurity include a lack of quality food outlets like fruit and vegetable shops, high food prices, being in financial stress, lacking a variety of food in the diet, promotion of unhealthy foods, and lack of knowledge in shopping and preparing nutritious food.

- **Hobsons Bay residents were less likely to run out of food and not afford to buy more** in the past year, compared to the average for Greater Melbourne (6% vs 8%).
- **Young women aged 18-24 years in Greater Melbourne had the highest rate of running out of food** (14%), followed by women aged 45-54 years (10%). Women were also more likely to worry about running out of food, when compared to men (10% vs 8%).
- Among similar local government areas, **Hobsons Bay has highest average distance to a supermarket or greengrocer** (976.4 metres). However, it also had the highest average distance to a fast-food outlet (1,206.7 metres).

Health Services

Lower availability of health services can be a health risk factor and contributor to poorer resident health. Good access to primary health services such as a General Practitioner (GP) is important to reducing the prevalence and the onset of chronic illnesses.

- A Mental Health Needs Assessment conducted by the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network found that in Hobsons Bay:
  - there was a **healthcare workforce shortage** for GPs, psychologists, nurses and midwives
  - **out of pocket costs for Medicare-subsidised mental health services are above the national average**, indicating there may be some barriers to seeking care in the community
  - **residents have low use rates of 'Head to Health' and 'CareInMind' services** compared with other LGAs, as well as low utilisation of Medicare-subsidised nursing and Aboriginal health services.
- **More than one in five residents of Hobsons Bay (21.7%) did not see a GP when needed**, a higher rate than in Greater Melbourne (18.8%).
- The **main reason provided for not seeing a GP was that they could not get an appointment** when needed (24.7%), followed by cost (20.5%).
- **One in three residents of Hobsons Bay avoided or delayed visiting a dentist** because of the cost (33.2%), a similar rate to Greater Melbourne (32.0%).
- **Avoidable hospital admissions for dental care have increased among Hobsons Bay residents**, from 72.9 per 100,000 population in 2017-18 to 90.4 per 100,000 population in 2020-21.

Safety

Everyone has a right to feel safe and respected and live free from violence, harassment and bullying. Being the victim of violence, harassment and bullying can affect wellbeing and quality of life. Violence against women is a serious and widespread problem in Australia and affects all socioeconomic groups and communities.

- **In 2024, there were 1,077 reported family violence incidents** in Hobsons Bay, a 12 per cent increase on the previous year.
- Family violence is a gendered issue, with **women accounting for 75 per cent of all affected family members** in 2024. In addition, children were present as a witness or victim in 30 per cent of all family violence incidences.
- **Family incidents that were (or probably) attributed to alcohol consumption are considerably higher** in Hobsons Bay, compared to Greater Melbourne (202 per 100,000 people vs 105 per 100,000 people).
- **Hobsons Bay residents experienced slightly lower rates of discrimination and racism**, compared to residents across Melbourne.
- In Hobsons Bay in 2023, **18.4 per cent of children in years 7 to 9 reported being bullied**, slightly higher than the Victorian average of 16.9 per cent.

The built and natural environment

The environments in which people live, work, study, and recreate have a big impact on their physical activity, healthy eating, safety, and wellbeing.

- Out of eight similar inner city local government areas, **Hobsons Bay received the lowest score on the Australian Urban Observatory's Social Liveability Index** (5.5 out of a possible 16, compared to the City of Melbourne's high score of 11).
- **Williamstown and Newport had the highest Social Liveability scores** among the Hobsons Bay neighbourhoods (6.4 out of a possible 16), and Seaholme had the lowest score (3).
- **One in four residents in Altona Meadows are not within a walkable distance (<400m) to open space**. By contrast, every resident in Newport East is within 400 metres of accessible open space.
- **In 2023-24, $46.9 million was lost on electronic gaming machines** (EGMs) in Hobsons Bay, fuelled by the highest rate of EGM density in metropolitan Melbourne.

Health impacts of climate change

Climate change has been recognised by the World Health Organisation as the biggest health threat currently facing humanity. Addressing the health and wellbeing impacts of climate change is a priority at all levels of government. As well as the higher incidences of natural disasters, climate change impacts our health directly through higher temperatures, rising sea levels, and more frequent floods, droughts and bushfires. Climate change also impacts health indirectly through air quality, food security, ecological and land use change, and mental health impacts.

- **The following areas that have been identified as more vulnerable to the health impacts of climate change:** Altona Meadows, Seabrook and Laverton, as well as the industrial areas of Altona North and South Kingsville.
- **Canopy coverage in Hobsons Bay is amongst the lowest in Melbourne.** In 2018, Hobsons Bay had an estimated 6 per cent of canopy coverage, compared to 15 per cent in Greater Melbourne around 26 per cent in the Melbourne's eastern suburbs.





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