

# **Knox Community Health and Wellbeing Profile**

**2025**

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# Knox Health & Wellbeing Data

## Key data points

### Demographics

- Total population of 161,770 in 2023
- 21% of residents aged 0-17 years
- 24% of residents aged 60 years and over
- 40 is the median age
- Knox has a higher proportion of residents aged 50 and over compared to Greater Melbourne.

### Households and Housing

- There are 58,965 households
- 48% of households are families with one or more children
- 21% of households accommodate a lone person
- 11% are older couples without children
- 144 same-sex couple households
- The median weekly household income of \$1,866 is the same as the Greater Melbourne average
- 8 in 10 households in Knox have at least one spare bedroom in 2021
- 61,950 dwellings in Knox, 2,865 more than 2016
- 82% of dwellings are single detached houses compared to 84% in 2016
- 1 in 6 dwellings is an apartment, unit or terrace, an increase from 1 in 8 in 2011
- 80% of homes are within 400m of public open space

### *Social and Affordable Housing*

- 96% ten-year increase in Knox median house price to 2021 outpacing the 34% increase in median household income, highlighting a widening affordability gap
- 77% the proportion of social housing need that can be met with existing local social housing and affordable private rentals in 2021
- 13% of households experience rental or mortgage stress
- 2.7% of new lettings in the year to June 2024 were affordable to low-income households
- In the year to June 2024, the number of new private lettings fell by 13.4%.

### Cultural Diversity

- 33% of residents were born overseas
- 29% of people speak a language other than English at home
- A growing number of residents were born in China, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Philippines and Vietnam
- 1025 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in Knox, representing the second largest population of First Nations people in Melbourne's eastern metropolitan region.

### Priority Populations

- 9,170 (6% of people) require assistance in their day-to-day lives due to disability, long-term health condition or old age
- Ageing population with a higher-than-average share of population in all age groups over 65 years

- 18,300 (11.5%) of Knox residents live in a low-income household (bottom 20% of incomes in Australia)
- 57.3% of Knox adults living in low-income households are women
- 17,400 people were living in poverty<sup>1</sup> in 2021, most (32%) living in single parent households
- 11.5% of Knox residents lived in poverty in 2021, a reduction from 12% in 2016 and lower than the Greater Melbourne average (13.3%)
- 2% of dwellings are public housing
- 430 the estimated number of homeless people in Knox, an increase of 12% since 2016
- \$586 per adult taken from the community in electronic gaming machine losses in 2022-23, higher than the metropolitan average of \$548
- 7.7% of adults have run out of food and could not afford to buy more in the last 12 months.
- 28% worry about food insecurity.

### **Economy**

- Knox contributes 2.1% to the Victorian economy
- 14,859 businesses
- 83,477 total jobs in Knox
- Disadvantage: Knox's socio-economic disadvantage score is lower than that of Greater Melbourne, Knox residents also report lower rates of disengaged youth in 2011, 2016, and 2021 censuses
- Age Pension: Knox has 58% of residents receiving the age pension, reflecting the community's ageing population.

### **Employment & Education**

- 30% of employed people live and work in Knox
- 28% of people have a bachelor's degree or higher
- Job type: Professionals 23.5%
- Job type: Technicians and Trades 14.4%
- More Knox residents work in health care and social assistance than any other industry
- 79% of young people aged 15-24 years are fully engaged in study or paid work
- 6% school leavers aged 15-24 years left school early. This compares to 12% in 2006
- 3% unemployment rate in September 2023
- Knox performs better than Greater Melbourne and Melbourne – Outer East in terms of children 'on track' in all five domains of early childhood development.

### **Health, Wellbeing & Lifestyle**

- 56% of adults do not eat enough fruit and vegetables
- 34.9% of adults engage in physical activity at least five days per week
- 64% of adults undertake low or no moderate to vigorous physical activity each week
- 43.6% of adults sit for at least six hours or more per day
- 61.3% of adults are considered overweight or obese. The rate of obesity (29%) is significantly higher than the Victorian average (23%)
- 37% of adults rate their health as very good or excellent in 2023, compared to 41% in 2020
- 9% of adults are daily smokers, down from 16% in 2020
- 36% of adults drink soft drink daily/several times per week
- 8.9% of adults drink more than ten standard drinks per week or more than four standard drinks on one day, putting them at increased risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury
- 34% of females did not participate in sport or physical recreation in 2022-23 in Victoria compared with 17% of males
- Asthma rates in Knox (8.9%) are higher than the Greater Melbourne average (7.9%)

- Knox has a higher percentage of overweight and obese adults (61.3%) compared to Victoria, with 29% classified as obese (state average is 23%)
- 35% of Knox adults in 2023 consumed the recommended level of fruits and only 4% consumed the recommended level of vegetables
- Knox reports lower rates of daily tobacco smoking, smoking/vaping, and increased risks of alcohol-related disease or injury compared to Victoria
- 8.9% of residents aged 18 and over are at increased risk for alcohol-related diseases and injuries, which is below the state average of 13.1%.

### **Moving around Knox**

- Active transport use (cycling and walking) in Knox is lower than in Metropolitan Melbourne, indicating a reliance on cars for commuting
- 39% of Knox households are within 400m of regular public transport compared to the Greater Melbourne average of 49%
- 58% of people travel to work in a private car and 4% take public transport, walk or cycle
- 80% of all weekday trips from Knox (to work, school, shop etc) are made by car and 20% by public or active transport (cycling or walking)
- 84% of all weekend travel from Knox is by car, 7 percentage points higher than the Melbourne average. Weekend car use has reduced by 10 percentage points since 2010
- 13% of all weekend trips from Knox are made on foot or bicycle compared with 18% for metropolitan Melbourne
- Walking and cycling are increasing in Knox but remain lower than Greater Melbourne.

### **Mental Health and Social Inclusion**

- 8.7% of residents have a diagnosed mental health condition
- 16% of adults experience high/very high psychological distress in their day-to-day lives, down from 28% in 2020; this is lower than the State average of 19%
- 72.9% of adults rated their satisfaction with life as 'high' or 'very high' but the rate of 'high' life satisfaction (44.5%) is significantly lower than the Victorian average (50.7%)
- 20.8% of adults have sought professional help for a mental health-related problem in the last year
- Knox has lower rates of psychological distress (15.6%) compared to Victoria but a slightly higher percentage (8.7%) of residents with diagnosed mental health conditions compared to Greater Melbourne (8.1%)
- From 2017 to 2021, the annual average suicide/self-inflicted injury rate in Knox for individuals aged 45-74 was 14.2%, higher than Greater Melbourne and Melbourne Outer East
- 47% of adults definitely agreed that they feel valued by society
- 24.4% of adults reported experiencing loneliness
- 13.1% of residents reported doing some form of voluntary work
- 1 in 3 adults in Knox show low support for gender equity in relationships. This result aligns with the state average of 36%
- 64% of adults definitely believe that multiculturalism makes their life better, up from 59% in 2020
- 24.4% of adults (18+) in Knox experienced loneliness in 2023, higher than the rate of Victoria.

### **Environment**

- 1 in 4 houses have a solar installation
- 18% of Knox's total area is under tree canopy cover compared to the metropolitan average of 16% and the Eastern Region average of 27%

- 14.6 tonnes of greenhouse emissions generated per capita in 2021, a decrease of 2% compared to the previous year
- Greenhouse gas emissions in Knox are higher than the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action average
- 0.44 tonnes of landfill waste per household in 2022
- 8kg per household decline in waste generation from 2021 to 2022
- 141 kilolitres of water used annually per household
- 1.2° Celsius increase in average annual temperature in Knox between 1965-2023
- Knox's biodiversity programs have re-vegetated 24 hectares of land in Knox since 2009.

### **Community Safety**

- 1242 reported family violence incidents per 100,000 population in 2023. This is higher than the Melbourne average of 1164 incidents per 100,000 people
- 655 the number of drug-related criminal incidents per 100,000 population compared to the Melbourne average of 424 in 2023
- 1 in 6 adults in Knox believe that most people can never or often not, be trusted
- 52% of adults felt safe walking in their neighbourhood at night
- 34% women that felt safe walking in their neighbourhood at night compared to 71% of men
- In 2024, Knox had a lower crime rate (45.6 per 1,000) compared to Victoria (58.6 per 1,000).
- Perceptions of safety in Knox were lower (52.2%) in 2017 compared to Victoria (56.3%).

# 1. Introduction

The Knox Community Health and Wellbeing Profile 2025 provides a statistical overview of a community facing both strengths and challenges related to health and wellbeing. The purpose of this Community Health and Wellbeing Profile is to provide a comprehensive overview of health status, needs, and determinants of health for Knox. It serves as an important tool to inform public health planning, policy development, and resource allocation.

In Knox, community members support multiculturalism, have a strong early childhood development, slightly lower disadvantage score than Greater Melbourne and a lower overall crime rate than Victoria. However, it is important to acknowledge that crime rate is on the rise in both the local area and across the state and there are pockets of disadvantage in Knox. There are significant health and social issues including sedentary behavior, food insecurity, mental health challenges, family violence, and cost of living pressures.

Applying an intersectional gender lens to community health and wellbeing is vital in understanding and addressing inequity. This means recognising different factors that intersect with and influence health outcomes such as gender, age, sexuality, identity, disability, language, and ethnicity.

Addressing health and social issues as well as inequity will require a holistic approach, considering the broader social, environmental, and economic factors that influence the daily lives of residents, particularly those in more disadvantaged areas. This comprehensive understanding of community health trends can help guide future health, social, and urban planning initiatives in Knox.

## 1.1 Profile Summary Structure

The Knox City Council Community Health and Wellbeing Profile Summary 2025 is structured around the social determinants of health, which are key factors influencing the health and wellbeing of the community. These include education, income, employment, food security, housing, early childhood development, social infrastructure, access to health and social services. Gendered data and First Nations data is provided where possible. The profile is organized into the following sections:

### Knox Population:

- This section provides a general demographic profile of the Knox community, outlining key population characteristics such as age, household composition, gender, cultural diversity and disability.

### Social and Economic Status of Knox Population:

- This section highlights the social and economic indicators that impact health and wellbeing in Knox, including education, employment, socio-economic disadvantage, income levels, disengaged youth and early childhood development. It underscores how these factors shape the conditions for individuals and families in Knox.

### Health Status of Knox Population:

- A summary of the health status of the community, including self-reported health, mental health and wellbeing, and rates of chronic illness and disease. It identifies key health challenges, such as higher rates of mental health issues, and lower rates of chronic diseases compared to other areas.



Health Risks and Behaviours of Knox Population:

- This section covers various health behaviours that affect wellbeing, including nutrition and weight, physical activity, food insecurity, alcohol consumption, drug use, gambling, smoking and vaping and active transport. It also touches on broader issues like family violence, as well as crime, social inclusion, and the overall sense of community connection.

Health Environments and Liveability in Knox:

- This section examines the social and physical environments that influence health and wellbeing, including aspects like housing stress, homelessness, walkability, access to open space, and food security. It highlights challenges such as limited public transport access, lack of healthy food options in certain suburbs, the alcohol environment and the impact of social isolation and safety perceptions on overall health.

The summary reflects the interconnected nature of these factors and their influence on the health and wellbeing of Knox residents, providing a comprehensive overview of the community's health needs and challenges.

## 2. Knox Population

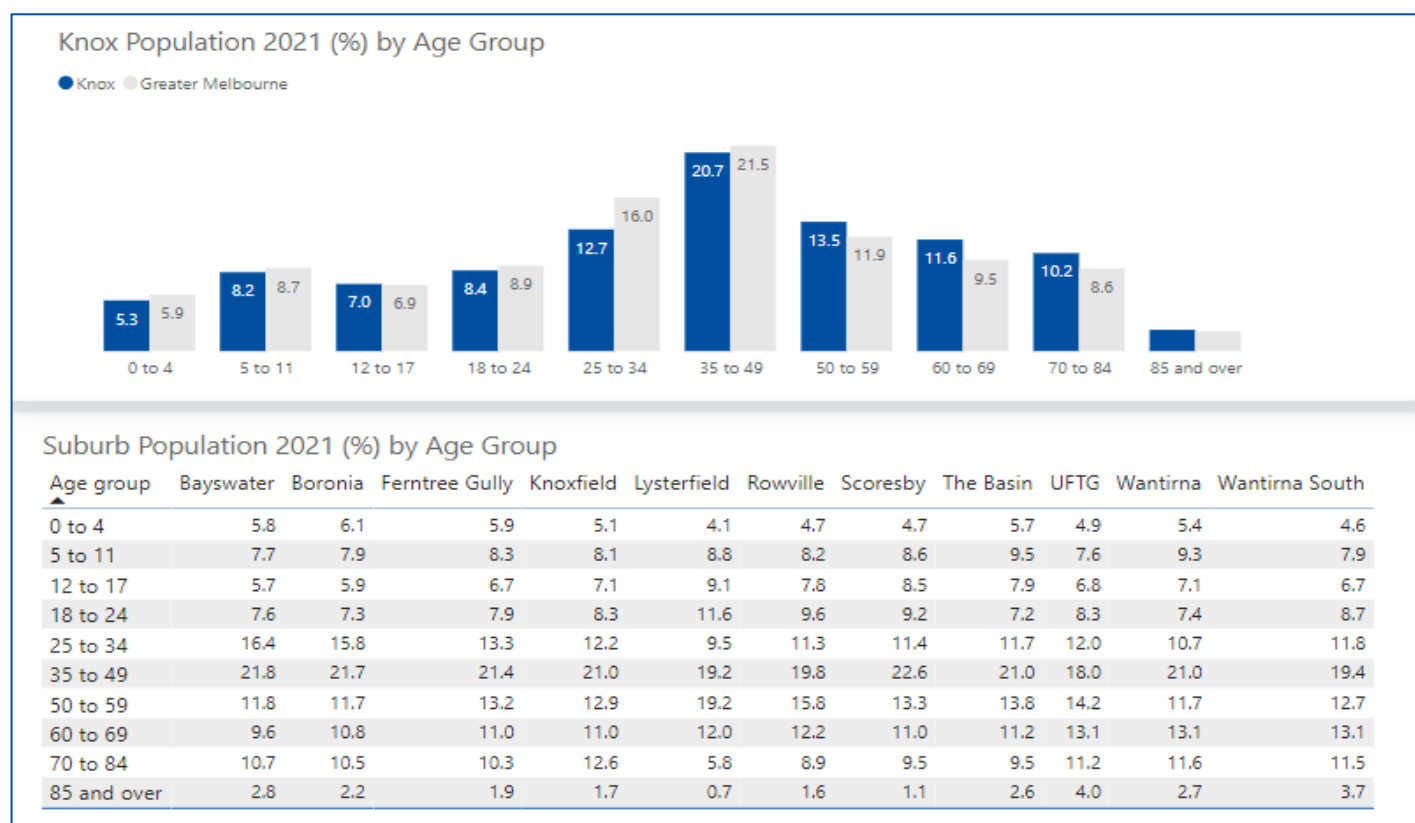
In 2023, the population of Knox was estimated to be 161,766. This represents a growth of 2,217 people from the previous estimate in 2022 (an annual growth rate of 1.3%). This section highlights the key elements of the Knox population that are important from a health and wellbeing perspective and includes the forecast changes in the age and household structure over the next decade.

### 2.1 Age Structure

The age structure of people living in Knox compared to Greater Melbourne shows a higher proportion of people in the older age brackets; 50-59, 60-69, 70-84 and 85 and above. Among the older age groups, the 60-69 age group contributes 13.5% to the Knox population, which is the highest proportion across the community. Apart from the 12-17 years age group (where Knox marginally exceeded Greater Melbourne), Greater Melbourne has consistently exceeded Knox for people 49 years or younger. Among First Nations population, there were more people between the ages of 15-24 in Knox (23.1%) compared with the rest of Victoria (18.2%).

The suburbs of Knox with a higher proportion of older people of 60 years and above are Wantirna South and Upper Ferntree Gully. Both suburbs have 28.3% of their population aged 60 years and above. Bayswater and Wantirna South have the lowest number of children 17 years and under with 19.2% each. The Basin has the highest proportion across Knox of children 17 years and under at 23%.

In the 2021 census, the median age of Knox residents was 40 years which is slightly higher than the Victorian median age of 38 years. However, the Knox median age for First Nations residents was 25, lower than the Victorian average. For all age groups until 40-44 years, Knox has a lower percentage than Victoria. The biggest difference in those aged less than 40 years was in the 25-29 years age group where they made up 6% of the Knox population, but 7.3% of the Victorian population [1].



## 2.2 Forecast Age Structure

The forecasted age structure of Knox between 2021 and 2026 shows notable trends, particularly in the 0-4 and 5-11 age groups. Many suburbs in Knox are expected to experience a decline in these age groups. However, Upper Ferntree Gully has a projected growth of 32.5% in the 0-4 age group, which is an increase from 114 to 151 children. This growth is significant but should be viewed in the context of its low starting population.

For older age groups, such as 70-84 and 85 and over, several suburbs are expected to see some growth. Lysterfield is projected to experience a dramatic increase of 97.4% in its population aged 85 and over, growing from 39 to 77 people. In contrast, Wantirna South will experience a decline of -10.7% in its 85 and over population, largely due to a higher-than-average increase in the younger 0-17 age group.

Looking ahead to the period between 2026 and 2036, a broader trend emerges where most suburbs are forecast to experience growth in the 0-4 and 5-11 age groups. Wantirna South is expected to lead this growth, with increases of 30.5% in the 0-4 age group and 28.0% in the 5-11 age group.

When looking at those aged 85 and over, all Knox suburbs will see growth, with The Basin projected to have the highest increase of 75.4%, though this increase is from a low base, growing from 44 to 76 people over the decade. Boronia is projected to experience the lowest growth in this population group with 10.4%.

Forecast Population Change by Age Group 2021-2026

Age Group	Total Knox	Bayswater	Boronia	Ferntree Gully	Knoxfield	Lysterfield	Rowville	Scoresby	The Basin	UFTG	Wantirna	Wantirna South
0 to 4	-7.7	-4.3	-9.7	-15.1	-14.7	-3.1	-9.4	1.5	-15.8	32.5	-5.0	2.9
5 to 11	-5.0	-9.0	-7.6	-0.7	-9.7	-9.0	-6.8	-19.2	-16.4	-12.7	-1.3	6.0
12 to 17	3.1	6.7	7.7	4.5	-3.6	-4.7	-4.9	-6.9	-1.9	1.4	14.2	13.5
18 to 24	1.8	12.8	8.9	3.7	0.9	-14.2	-5.0	-0.9	3.6	-5.6	14.5	0.3
25 to 34	2.8	6.0	0.2	2.0	6.3	-4.5	1.9	2.8	-3.1	9.8	12.2	1.7
35 to 49	4.7	10.6	8.8	4.3	4.2	-3.5	-2.6	-3.4	-3.1	6.5	10.9	10.7
50 to 59	-2.8	0.8	3.3	-0.2	-9.6	-13.9	-8.2	1.9	0.6	0.8	1.7	-1.8
60 to 69	0.9	5.6	-4.3	0.2	-0.1	17.9	11.0	-0.2	-1.0	5.8	-14.9	-4.3
70 to 84	11.1	-0.2	7.4	8.2	-1.4	40.3	15.1	15.4	20.4	13.1	15.0	15.1
85 and over	11.5	1.3	26.6	14.6	44.7	97.4	15.1	44.1	29.5	0.0	3.3	-10.7

Forecast Population Change by Age Group 2026-2036

Age Group	Total Knox	Bayswater	Boronia	Ferntree Gully	Knoxfield	Lysterfield	Rowville	Scoresby	The Basin	UFTG	Wantirna	Wantirna South
0 to 4	10.8	16.1	2.8	3.7	20.3	-0.7	4.6	14.3	2.6	-0.7	20.6	30.5
5 to 11	4.3	8.3	-4.9	-4.3	4.4	-2.2	-1.4	9.6	-9.8	6.4	12.0	28.0
12 to 17	2.9	0.3	-4.8	0.6	4.9	-7.0	-2.4	-5.0	-10.2	-10.2	9.8	26.8
18 to 24	9.4	13.7	4.4	4.4	13.3	-3.7	0.8	8.8	-1.2	-6.4	20.5	32.5
25 to 34	10.9	17.0	3.8	4.5	19.8	-6.2	4.1	17.7	5.1	0.0	21.6	29.8
35 to 49	11.4	16.2	5.7	5.5	18.0	1.8	5.5	11.0	2.0	7.5	20.3	27.7
50 to 59	7.6	19.6	11.3	4.9	12.8	-10.1	-4.2	7.8	-7.8	-7.1	20.9	25.4
60 to 69	0.7	8.7	4.1	3.7	3.2	-9.4	-5.8	0.3	0.2	0.6	-0.2	4.8
70 to 84	11.2	4.8	-1.3	3.4	-1.0	58.8	30.2	10.9	8.4	18.7	-3.5	17.1
85 and over	22.8	16.5	10.4	26.2	22.1	42.9	28.3	63.5	75.4	19.1	28.7	18.3

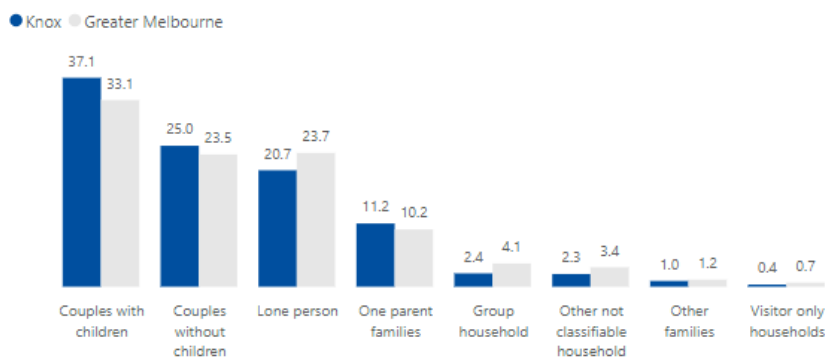
## 2.3 Households Structure

Knox has a higher proportion of couples with children, couples without children, and one-parent families compared to Greater Melbourne. Specifically, the percentage of Knox households made up of couples with children is 4% higher than the Greater Melbourne average.

Family structures within Knox suburbs vary significantly. Lysterfield has the highest proportion of households consisting of couples with children, with 54.1% of households falling into this category. In contrast, Bayswater has the lowest proportion of couples with children, at just 27.6%. Additionally, Bayswater has the highest percentage of lone person households, which make up 27.6% of its total households, while Lysterfield has the lowest proportion of lone person households, at only 10.3%.

Knox's First Nations population have a higher percentage of one parent families (32.1%) compared with Knox' non-Indigenous population (14.6%).

Knox Households 2021 (%) by Type



Households by Suburb & Type, 2021 (%)

Household Type	Bayswater	Boronia	Ferntree Gully	Knoxfield	Lysterfield	Rowville	Scoresby	The Basin	Upper Ferntree Gully	Wantirna	Wantirna South
Couples with children	27.6	27.9	33.2	35.6	54.1	45.2	41.9	37.6	34.0	40.6	40.4
Couples without children	23.9	24.5	24.2	26.6	23.7	25.7	23.0	27.0	26.5	27.2	24.6
Group household	3.6	3.3	2.6	2.4	0.7	1.6	2.5	1.8	2.3	1.9	2.1
Lone person	27.6	27.3	23.3	20.5	10.3	14.8	17.1	18.6	23.1	16.7	19.6
One parent families	12.7	12.2	12.6	11.3	8.5	9.9	12.1	10.8	10.3	10.6	10.0
Other families	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.6	0.8	1.0
Other not classifiable household	3.0	3.0	2.6	2.1	2.0	1.5	2.4	2.9	1.8	2.0	1.8
Visitor only households	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.4

## 2.4 Forecast Households Structure

The forecasted household structure in Knox between 2021 and 2026 indicates that there will be an increase in couples without dependents. Lysterfield is projected to record the highest increase in this category, with a growth rate of 13.2%, while Knoxfield is forecast to have the lowest increase at 1.6%.

Between 2026 and 2036, the growth trend for couples without dependents is expected to continue across all Knox suburbs, maintaining positive growth rates throughout the decade. In contrast, for couples with dependent children, Lysterfield is projected to experience a decline of -2.8% between 2026 and 2036, reflecting a shift in household composition.

Lone person households are forecasted to see significant growth, especially in Wantirna South, where the increase is projected to be 23.4%. Boronia will experience the lowest growth in this category, with forecast increase of 6.1%.

Forecast Change by Household Type 2021-2026

Household Type	Total Knox	Bayswater	Boronia	Ferntree Gully	Knoxfield	Lysterfield	Rowville	Scoresby	The Basin	UFTG	Wantirna	Wantirna South
Couple families with dependents	1.8	6.6	4.5	2.6	-0.1	-4.4	-2.4	1.2	-2.8	4.5	5.8	4.3
Couples without dependents	4.5	4.5	2.8	3.3	1.6	13.2	7.2	5.3	4.7	11.5	2.6	3.6
Lone person households	5.3	4.9	4.4	5.2	5.7	21.5	7.7	-0.1	7.7	4.8	6.1	2.9
One parent family	3.9	8.7	4.5	4.9	1.3	-1.0	-1.3	4.0	0.1	7.5	9.3	3.8
Other families	3.2	6.2	4.0	4.0	1.4	-1.4	1.6	-0.1	-2.1	-0.2	7.4	3.5
Group households	3.8	6.3	3.1	1.6	0.9	13.8	2.6	4.9	10.2	3.3	6.7	4.1

Forecast Change by Household Type 2026-2036

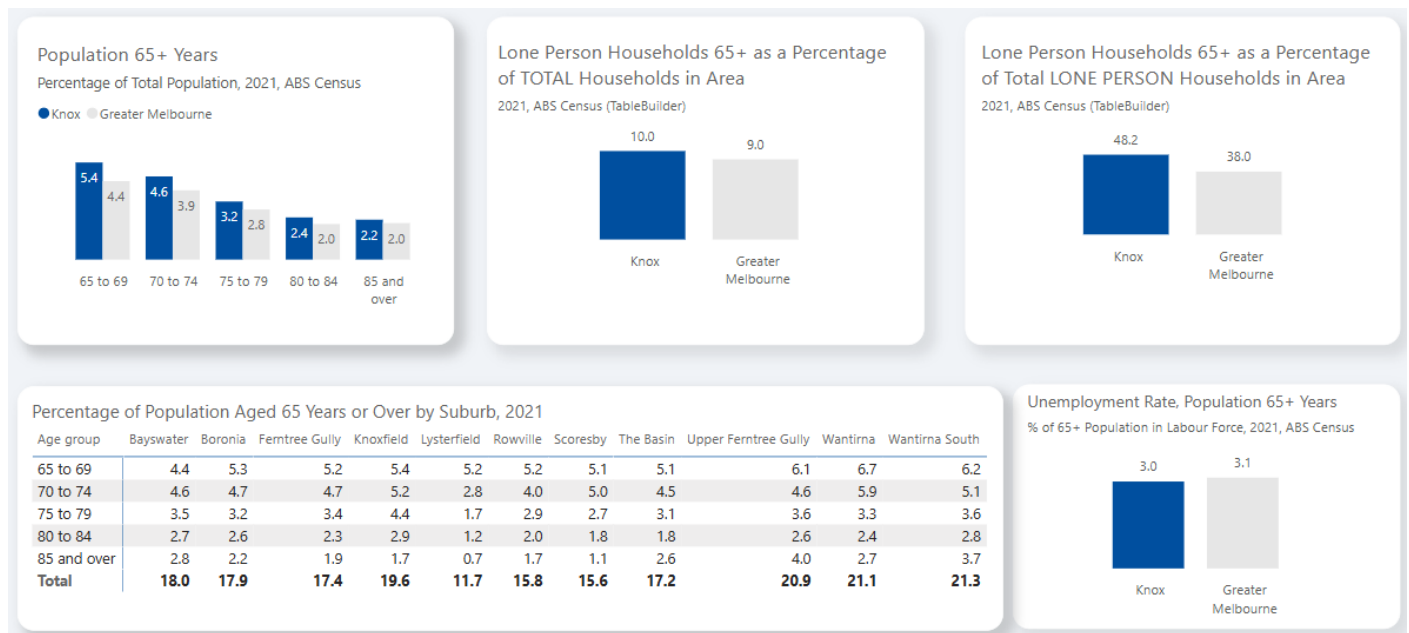
Household Type	Knox Total	Bayswater	Boronia	Ferntree Gully	Knoxfield	Lysterfield	Rowville	Scoresby	The Basin	UFTG	Wantirna	Wantirna South
Couple families with dependents	9.2	16.4	6.2	4.9	15.2	-2.8	1.4	10.0	0.0	2.9	17.7	24.7
Couples without dependents	8.4	12.8	3.9	4.9	7.9	11.7	9.0	7.6	3.1	6.1	7.3	17.1
Lone person households	12.0	13.6	6.1	7.4	10.1	20.1	15.8	15.4	6.8	14.3	13.4	23.4
One parent family	10.2	15.9	7.7	5.9	12.9	-0.8	4.6	10.8	3.9	-2.3	18.5	22.7
Other families	9.2	14.5	4.5	4.2	12.2	1.1	3.2	16.8	-0.3	2.7	12.6	22.5
Group households	9.8	16.3	4.1	5.0	13.3	6.7	3.1	11.1	5.1	-0.8	16.7	26.8

## 2.5 Population 65+ Years

Knox has a higher proportion of residents aged 65 years and above compared to Greater Melbourne. Within Knox, Wantirna South has the highest percentage of people aged 65 and over, at 21.3%, while Scoresby has the lowest proportion of this age group at 15.6%.

In terms of lone-person households, Knox exceeds Greater Melbourne, with 10% of households being lone-person households compared to 9% in Greater Melbourne. Notably, a larger share of these lone-person households in Knox are occupied by people aged 65 and over, with 48.2% of lone-person households in Knox housing seniors, compared to 38.0% in Greater Melbourne.

Despite these differences in household structure, the proportion of residents aged 65 and over who remain in the labour force is nearly the same in both Knox and Greater Melbourne, with 3.0% of Knox residents aged 65+ still employed, compared to 3.1% in Greater Melbourne.

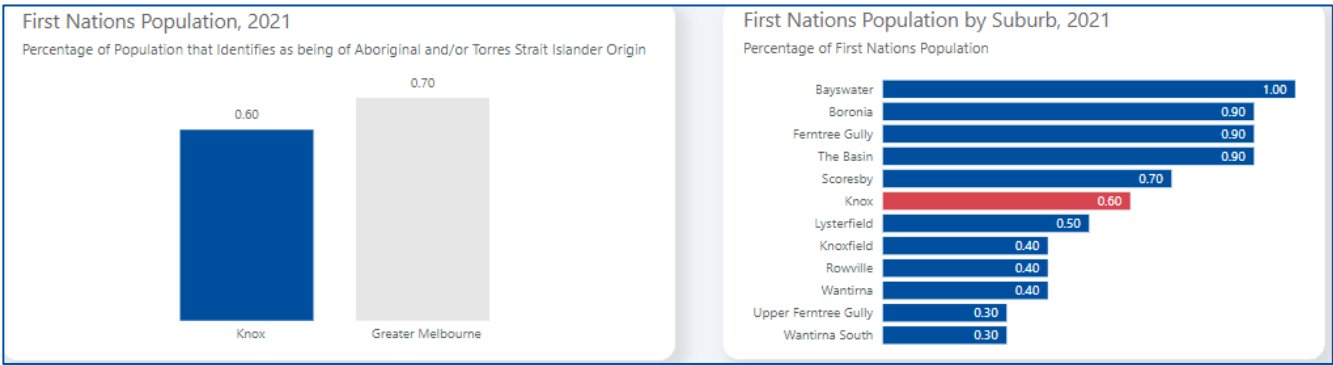


## 2.6 First Nations Population

First Nations refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a group. In the 2021 Census, 0.60% of Knox's population identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, which is slightly lower than the 0.70% of Greater Melbourne. However, there has been a 38% increase in First Nations population in Knox from 2016 to 2021, and Knox has the second largest First Nations population in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

Among Knox's suburbs, Bayswater has the highest proportion of First Nations people, at 1% (116 people). All other suburbs in Knox have less than 1% First Nations people. The suburbs with the lowest population of First Nations people are Wantirna South and Upper Ferntree Gully, both at 0.30%.

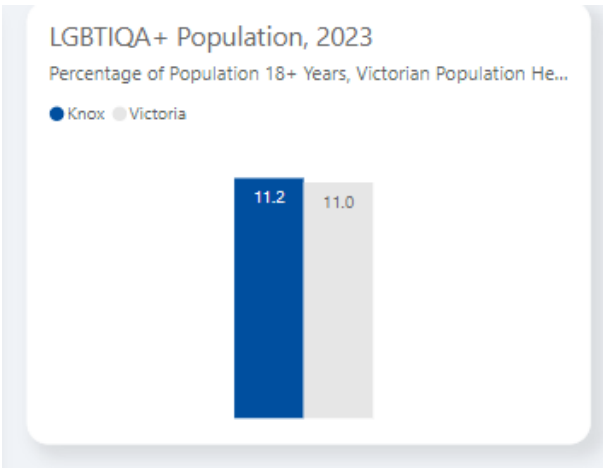
These figures highlight the varying proportions of First Nations people across different suburbs within Knox, with Bayswater having a notably higher percentage compared to the rest of the region.



2.7. LGBTIQ+ Population

LGBTQIA+ refers to members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual communities. We recognise that some community members use a different acronym, however for the purposes of this document we are using the definition found in the Victorian LGBTQIA+ Inclusive language guide [2].

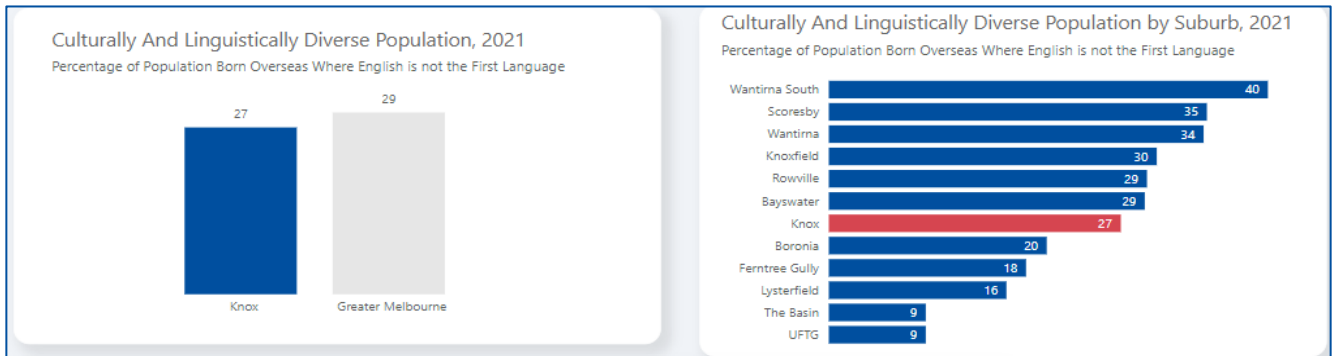
The LGBTQIA+ communities Knox and Victoria have nearly identical proportions, with 11.2% of Knox residents identifying as LGBTQIA+, compared to 11.0% in the wider Victorian population. This indicates that LGBTQIA+ communities in Knox are represented similarly to the state average. There are data gaps around health and wellbeing of Knox’s LGBTQIA+ communities, which indicates the need to focus on this cohort in future research projects.



2.8 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Population

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) refers to people for whom English is not their principal language, or who have a background that is not Anglo-Saxon. According to the 2021 Census, 27% of people in Knox were born overseas where English is not their first language, which is slightly lower than the 29% in Greater Melbourne. Among the suburbs in Knox, Wantirna South has the highest percentage of CALD residents, at 40%. In contrast, The Basin and Upper Ferntree Gully have the lowest CALD populations in Knox, each with 9%.

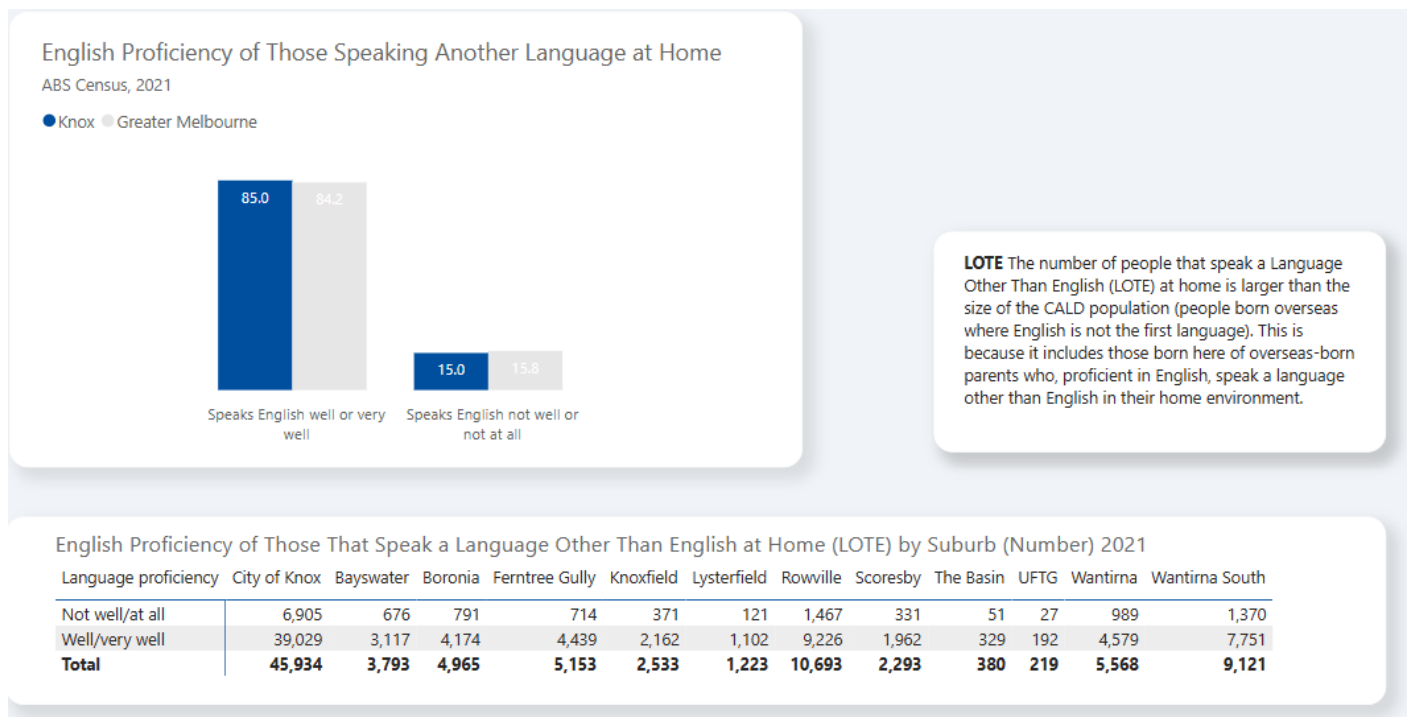
These figures reflect the diverse cultural composition within Knox, with Wantirna South being the most culturally diverse, while The Basin and Upper Ferntree Gully have comparatively smaller CALD communities.



## 2.9 Low English Proficiency

Low English proficiency refers to a person's self-assessed proficiency in spoken English where they have identified they use a main language other than English at home. [3] Knox has a slightly lower percentage of residents with low English proficiency compared to Greater Melbourne, with 15% of Knox residents not speaking English well or at all, compared to 16% in Greater Melbourne. Among the suburbs in Knox, Upper Ferntree Gully has the fewest residents with low English proficiency, totalling just 27 people. On the other hand, Rowville has the highest number of residents with limited English proficiency, with 1,467 individuals not speaking English well or at all.

Additionally, Rowville also has the largest number of residents who speak another language at home and are proficient in English, totalling 9,226 people.

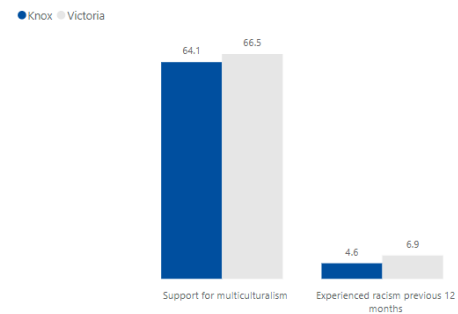


## 2.10 Support for Multiculturalism

The 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey (VPHS) found that 64.1% of Knox residents aged 18 and over “definitely agreed” with the statement: “multiculturalism makes life in my area better”. This is slightly lower than the overall

Victorian population at 66.5%. Furthermore, 4.6% of Knox residents reported experiencing racism, which is lower than Victoria at 6.9%.

Support for Multiculturalism & Experience of Racism, 2023  
Percentage of Population 18+ Years, Victorian Population Health Survey

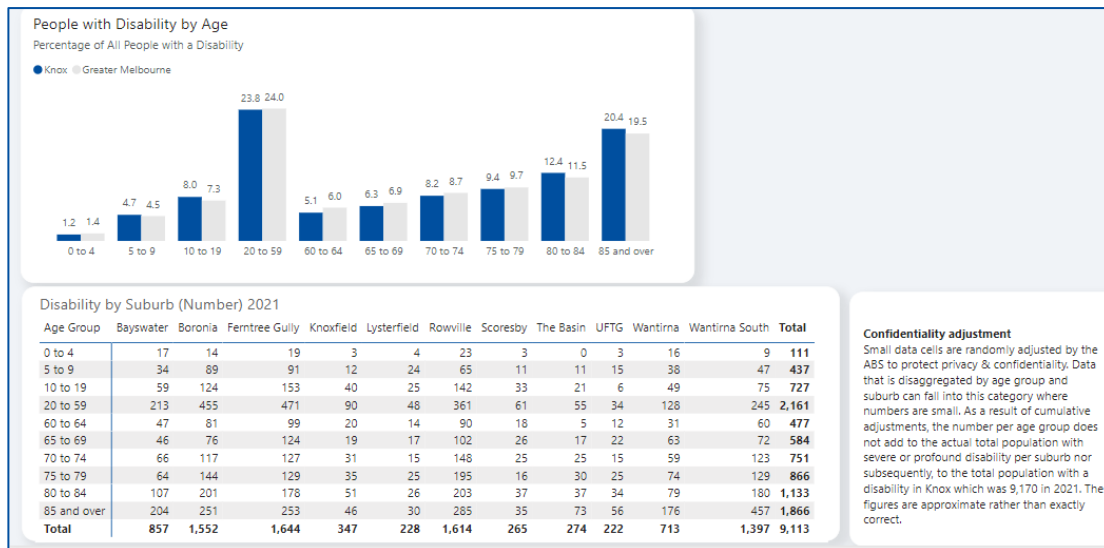


**Note** Support for multiculturalism indicator is based on the percentage of population that definitely agree that 'Multiculturalism makes life in my area better.'

## 2.11. People with Disability

People with disability includes, but are not restricted to, those who have long-term physical, mental, cognitive, intellectual or sensory impairments. People with disability have specific needs, priorities and perspectives based on their individual identities including their gender, age, sexuality, race and cultural background, and can face additional barriers and inequities. [4]

The age profile of people with disabilities in Knox is similar to that in Melbourne, with about a quarter of individuals aged 20-59 years and another 20% being 85 years and older. This underscores the higher prevalence of disability among elderly residents. In terms of specific suburbs, Ferntree Gully had the highest number of people with disabilities, totaling 1,644. In contrast, Upper Ferntree Gully had the lowest number, with 222 individuals reporting a disability.



## 2.12. Carers

Carers are people who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue or who are frail aged [5]. In the City of Knox, 13.3% of the population aged 15 or over were providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long term illness or old age in 2021. 6,994 of these carers were male and 10,504 were female.



## 3. Socio-Economic Status

There is a close relationship between people's health and the circumstances in which they grow, live, work, play and age. [6] The social and economic status of a population plays a significant role in shaping their health and well-being with lower an individual's socioeconomic position, the higher their risk of poor health [7]

This section highlights key socio-economic indicators for Knox, including:

- **Education:** Levels of educational attainment, including the percentage of residents without post-school qualifications.
- **Employment:** Employment status and the share of the working-age population in various employment categories.
- **Low-Income Households:** The proportion of households in Knox with incomes below the poverty line, as well as the density of low-income households across the region.
- **Income Support:** The percentage of residents reliant on government income support, such as the age pension or disability support pensions.
- **Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD):** A measure that assesses the relative disadvantage of areas based on factors such as income, education, and employment.
- **Disengaged Youth:** The percentage of young people aged 15-24 who are not in education, employment, or training, indicating a potential risk to future social and economic integration.
- **Early Childhood Development:** The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a national assessment conducted every 3 years to examine how children have developed by the time they start school. It looks at 5 areas of early childhood development: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills (school-based), and communication skills and general knowledge.

### 3.1 Education

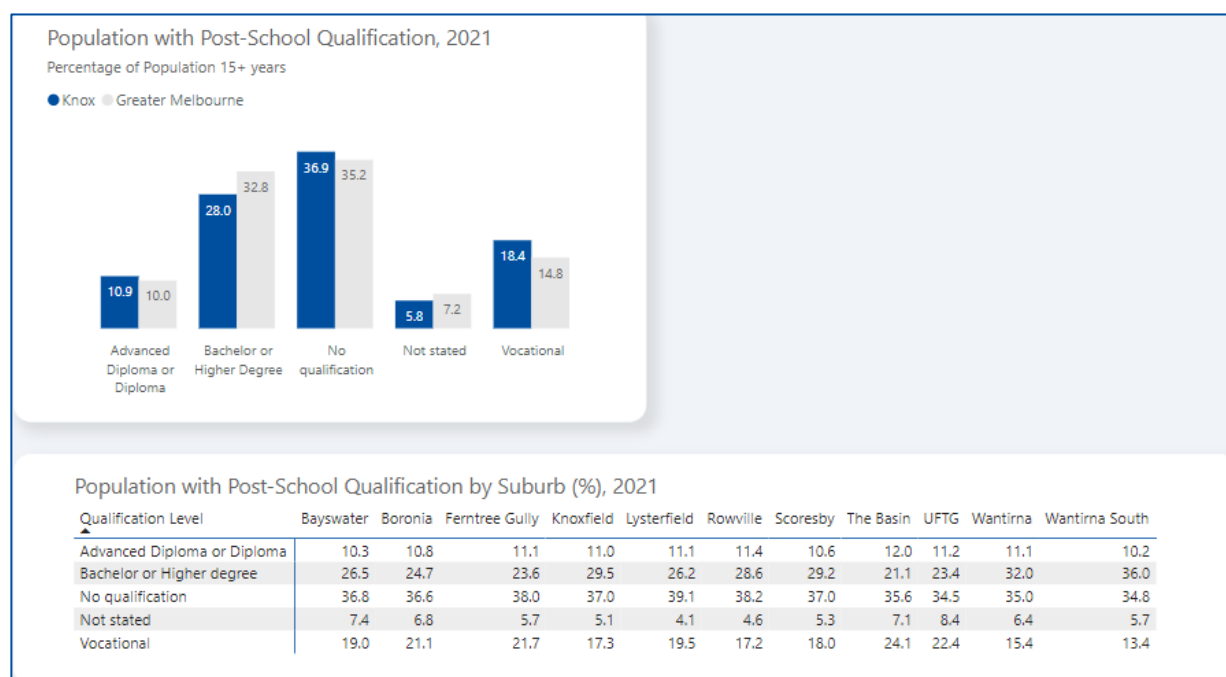
Knox has a higher percentage of people aged 15 and over with vocational qualifications at 18.4% compared to Greater Melbourne at 14.8%. However, Greater Melbourne has a higher proportion of residents with bachelor's degrees or higher at 32.8%, while Knox stands at 28.0%. In contrast, Knox has a higher share of individuals with no qualifications at 36.9%, compared to 35.2% in Greater Melbourne.

In 2021, there was a higher percentage of females at 52.1% than males at 48.6% who completed year 12 or equivalent in Knox with both percentages higher than the state estimate for females at 45.3% and males at 39.5%. [8]

Knox's First Nations population have a higher percentage of people who have left school before year 11 at 39% compared with Knox's non-Indigenous population at 22.5% and 6.4% of First Nations Knox residents held a degree compared with 22.3% of non-Indigenous residents. Compared with First Nations Victorian numbers, Knox's First Nations residents overall have higher secondary, vocational education and university attendance. [1]

: Suburb-specific trends:

- Wantirna South has the highest percentage of residents (36.0%) and The Basin having the lowest percentage of residents (21.1%) with a bachelor's degree or higher
- Lysterfield has the largest percentage of residents without post-school qualifications, at nearly 40% (39.1%)
- Upper Ferntree Gully has the lowest percentage of residents with no qualifications at 34.5%.



These trends suggest that while Knox generally has a higher proportion of residents with vocational qualifications, there are notable differences across suburbs in terms of higher education attainment and the prevalence of people without qualifications. There are more women compared to men who completed year 12 or equivalent and higher percentage of First Nations population who left school before year 11 compared with Knox's non-Indigenous population.

## 3.2 Employment

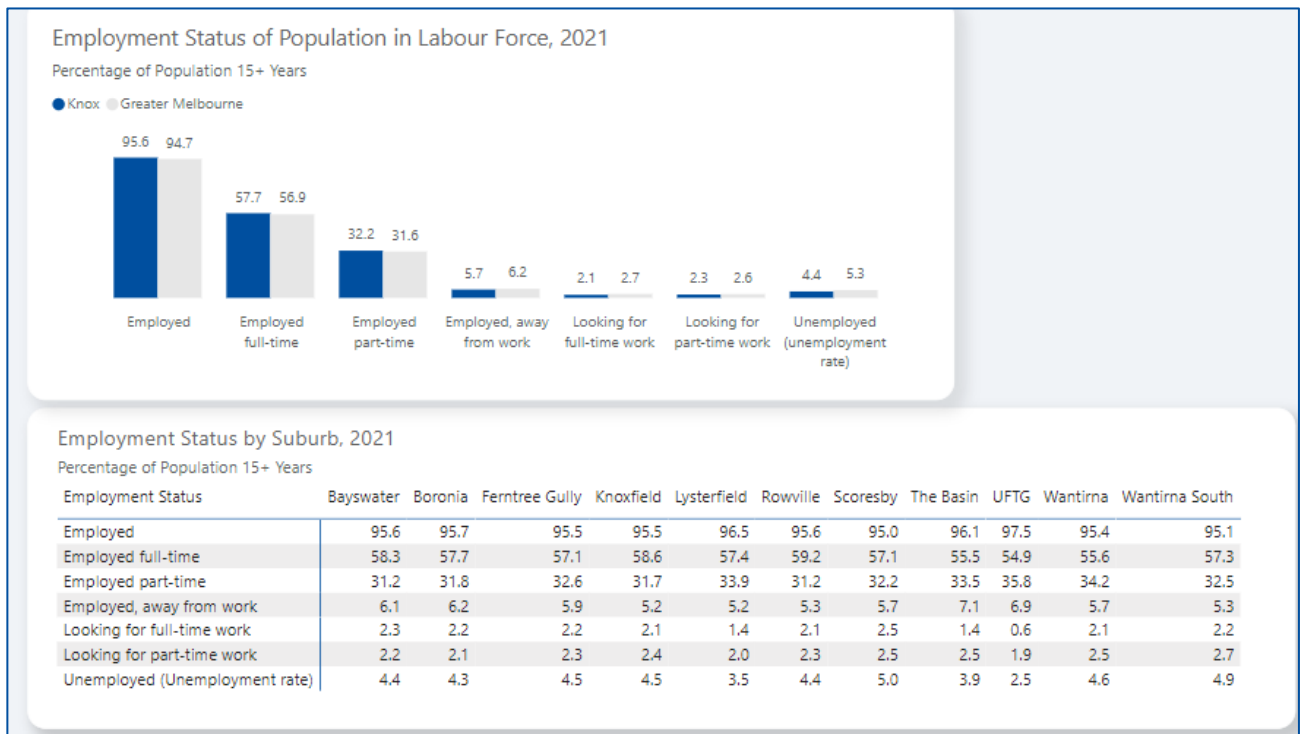
In 2021, Knox had a slightly higher employment rate than Greater Melbourne, with 95.6% of Knox residents aged 15 and over employed, compared to 94.7% in Greater Melbourne. This resulted in a lower unemployment rate in Knox at 4.4%, compared to 5.3% in Greater Melbourne.

In Knox, the percentage of full-time employees that were female was 44.2% compared to 70.3% of males and the percentage of part time employees that were female was 44.7% compared to only 20.6% males. [8]

First Nations population in Knox have a lower employment rate of 49.5% compared to 52.0% in Victoria. The unemployment rate for First Nations residents was higher at 7.6% than non-Indigenous residents at 4.4%.

Suburb-specific trends:

- Upper Ferntree Gully having the highest employment rate at 97.5% and the lowest unemployment rate at 2.5%
- Scoresby has the lowest employment rate at 95.0% and the highest unemployment rate at 5.0%.



These figures indicate that, overall, Knox has a strong employment rate, with some variation across suburbs. Upper Ferntree Gully stands out as having particularly high employment, while Scoresby experiences slightly higher levels of unemployment compared to other suburbs in Knox. First Nations population in Knox have lower employment rates than non-Indigenous population in Knox and compared to Victoria. There are higher percentage of men in full time employment and lower percentage of men in part time employment compared to women in Knox.

### 3.3 Low Income Households

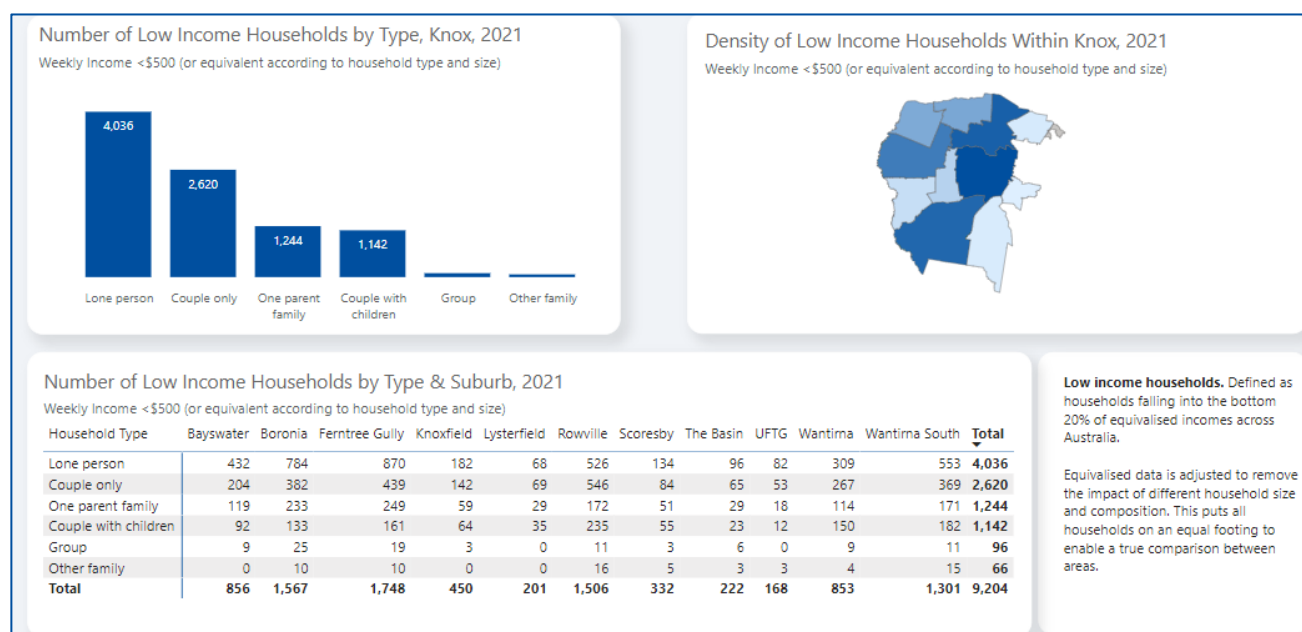
In Knox, lone-person households represent the largest group of low-income households, totalling 4,036. Among different household types, other family households have the fewest low-income households in the area.

In 2021, there was 47.1% of females and 31.9 % of males earning below the minimum weekly wage and 32.9% of females and 46.2% of males earning above the minimum weekly wage. These figures along with employment data above indicate men have a higher wage than women in Knox which impact women's employment security, average weekly earnings, career progression and economic position at retirement. [8]

For First Nations population the median weekly personal income is at \$667 compared to, \$798 for non-indigenous population in Knox.

Suburb-specific trends:

- Ferntree Gully has the highest number of low-income households in Knox, with 1,748 households
- Lysterfield has the lowest number of low-income households, with just 201, and has the lowest density of such households in Knox.

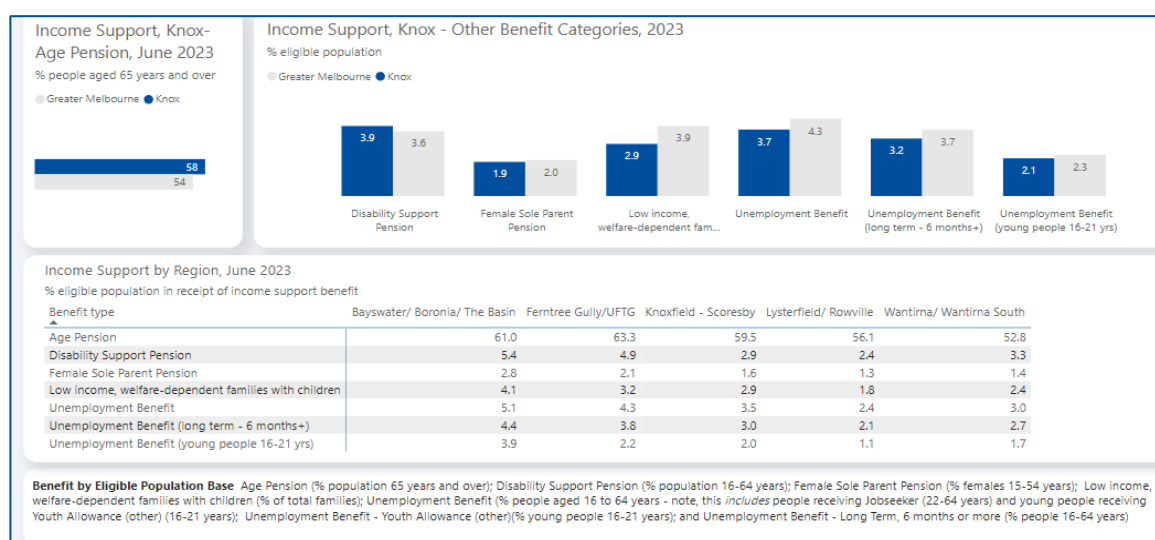


## 3.4 Income Support

In 2023, Knox had a higher percentage of residents aged 65 and over receiving the aged pension (58%) compared to Greater Melbourne (54%). Knox also had a higher proportion of residents on disability support pensions at 3.9%, compared to 3.6% in Greater Melbourne. However, for five other income support categories—such as female sole parent pensions and unemployment benefits—Knox had a lower proportion of residents depending on these supports than Greater Melbourne.

Suburb-specific trends:

- The Ferntree Gully/Upper Ferntree Gully area had the highest percentage of seniors receiving the age pension at 63.3%, while the Wantirna/Wantirna South area had the lowest at 52.8%, nearly 10 percentage points lower
- For disability support pensions, the Bayswater/Boronia/The Basin area had the highest rate at 5.4%, while the Lysterfield/Rowville area had the lowest at 2.4%.

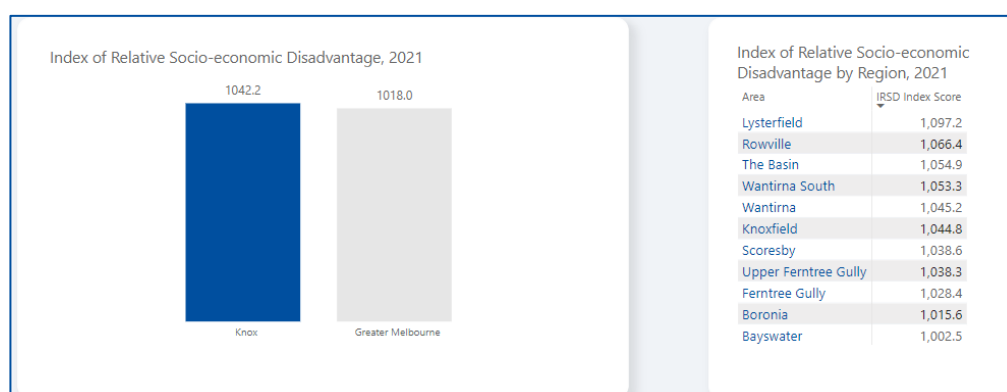


### 3.5 Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD)

In 2021, Knox LGA had a lower disadvantage score than Greater Melbourne, with an Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) value of 1,042.2 compared to 1,018.0 for Greater Melbourne. A higher IRSD value indicates less disadvantage.

Suburb-specific trends:

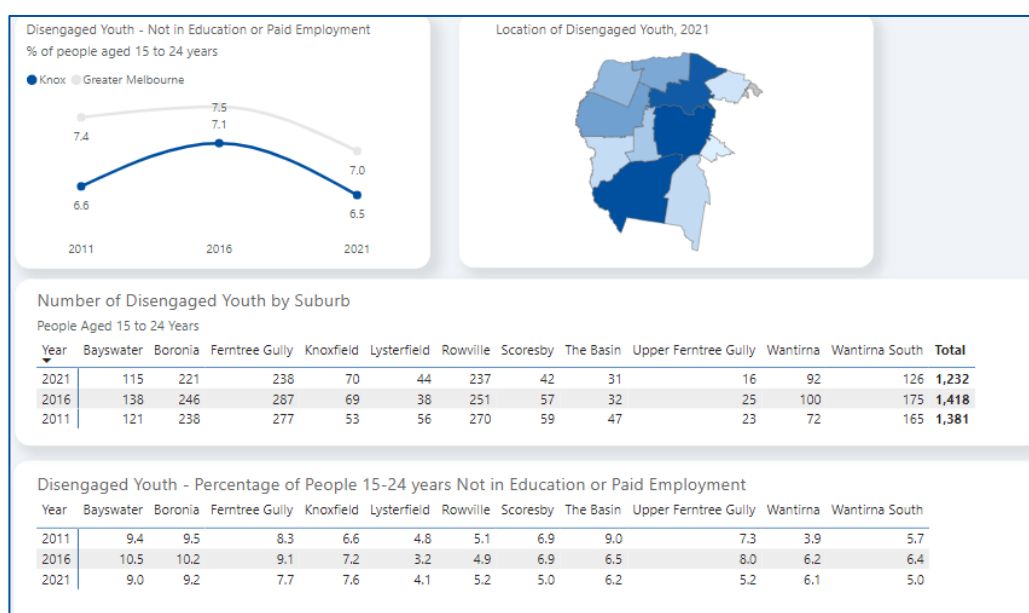
- Lysterfield had the least disadvantage, with an IRSD value of 1,097.2
- In contrast, Bayswater was the most disadvantaged suburb, with the lowest IRSD value of 1,002.5.



### 3.6 Disengaged Youth

Knox has consistently reported lower rates of disengaged youth compared to Greater Melbourne over the past three censuses (2011, 2016, and 2021). The highest rate of youth disengagement in Knox was 7.1% in 2016, while Greater Melbourne's highest was 7.5% in the same year. Both areas have seen an overall decline in youth disengagement. In 2021, the rates of youth disengagement in Knox varied across suburbs:

- Boronia had the highest youth disengagement rate in Knox at 9.2%, while Lysterfield had the lowest at 3.2%.
- However, from 2016 to 2021, youth disengagement increased in three suburbs within Knox: Knoxfield (increase of 0.4%), Lysterfield (increase of 0.9%), and Rowville (increase of 0.3%).



3.7 Early Childhood Development

The 2021 Census data reveals that Knox outperforms both Greater Melbourne and Melbourne Outer East in early childhood development, particularly in the proportion of children who are "on track" across all five domains (listed on page 19).

- Knox scored 61.1% of children being on track in all five developmental areas, surpassing Greater Melbourne (58.0%) and Melbourne Outer East (60.3%)
- Knox also has a lower percentage of vulnerable children, with 9.4% compared to 9.7% in Greater Melbourne, though it is slightly higher than Melbourne Outer East (7.9%).
- Suburb-specific trends: Wantirna/Wantirna South recorded the highest score for children on track in all areas, with 66.24%.
- Knoxfield/Scoresby had the lowest score at 51.76%, which is about 15 percentage points lower than Wantirna/Wantirna South
- For children vulnerable in two or more areas, the Bayswater/Boronia/The Basin area had the highest percentage at 12.85%, while Knoxfield/Scoresby had the lowest at 6.47%.



4. Health Status

Health status encompasses an individual's overall physical health as well as mental and social wellbeing, including psychological health and the presence of chronic diseases. [9]

This section presents data on:

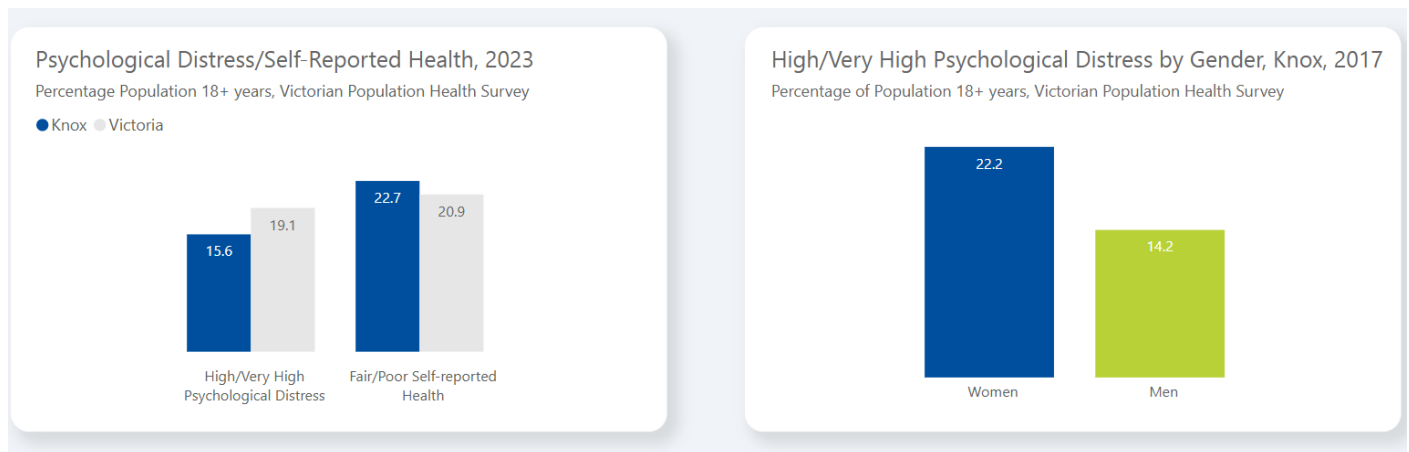
- Self-reported health: How residents perceive their overall health
- Mental health and well-being: Rates of mental health conditions, suicide and self-inflicted injury and general psychological well-being

- Chronic illnesses and diseases: Rates of chronic conditions in Knox by gender where available compared to Greater Melbourne, Melbourne – Outer East, and Victoria.

## 4.1 Mental Health and Wellbeing

In 2023, Knox had a lower percentage of residents experiencing high or very high psychological distress at 15.6% compared to Victoria at 19.1%. However, Knox had a slightly higher share of residents reporting fair or poor self-reported health at 22.7% than Victoria, which stood at 20.9%. For Knox's First Nations population, 15.1% of residents had mental health conditions.

In the 2017/18 data, females in Knox reported higher rates of mental and behavioural problems at 22.3% compared to Greater Melbourne at 21.9% but lower than Melbourne – Outer East at 22.9%. A similar trend was observed for males in these regions. Women experienced very high psychological distress at 22.2% compared to 14.2% for men in Knox. [10]



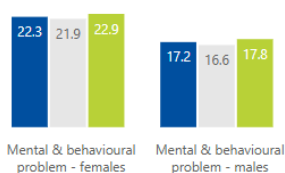
### Suburb-specific trends:

- In the Bayswater/Boronia/The Basin, 25.5% of females reported 'mental and behavioural problems', the highest percentage in Knox. Wantirna/Wantirna South had the lowest at 20.1% (2017-2018).
- For males, the Bayswater/Boronia/The Basin also had the highest percentage of mental and behavioural problems at 20.0%, while Rowville/Lysterfield and Wantirna/Wantirna South both recorded 15.5%, the lowest.
- The Bayswater/Boronia/The Basin had the highest percentage of residents aged 15 and over reporting fair or poor self-assessed health at 13.4%, compared to Wantirna/Wantirna South, which had the lowest at 10.3%.
- Ferntree Gully/Upper Ferntree Gully had the highest percentage of people experiencing high or very high psychological distress at 13.9%, while Wantirna/Wantirna South again had the lowest at 11.6%.

### Mental & Behavioural Problems by Gender, 2017-18

Percentage of Population ALL ages, PHIDU modelled estimates

● Knox ● Greater Melbourne ● Melbourne- Outer East



**Note** Suburb level data on psychological distress and self-assessed health in the tables below is not directly comparable with Psychological Distress and Self-Reported Health data drawn from the Victorian Population Health Survey on the previous tab (neither 2023, the most recent survey, or 2017, the last where data was provided by gender). The suburb data below, though old, is the latest small area data available (modelled estimates by PHIDU, the Public Health Information Development Unit, Torrens University) and is included as *indicative of suburb variation only*.

### Mental Health Issues by Region (%) 2017-18, PHIDU

Mental health issue	Bayswater/ Boronia/ The Basin	Ferntree Gully/UFTG	Knoxfield - Scoresby	Lysterfield/ Rowville	Wantirna/ Wantirna South
Fair/Poor self-assessed health (15+ years)	13.4	12.3	10.9	11.1	10.3
High/very high psychological distress (18+years)	13.6	13.9	12.9	12.0	11.6
Mental & behavioural problems - females (all ages)	25.5	23.9	20.6	20.5	20.1
Mental & behavioural problems - males (all ages)	20.0	18.7	15.8	15.5	15.5

### Mental Health Issues by Region (Number) 2017-18, PHIDU

Mental health issue	Bayswater/ Boronia/ The Basin	Ferntree Gully/UFTG	Knoxfield - Scoresby	Lysterfield/ Rowville	Wantirna/ Wantirna South
Fair/Poor self-assessed health (15+ years)	4,415	2,961	1,422	3,743	2,926
High/very high psychological distress (18+years)	4,289	3,203	1,646	4,047	3,039
Mental & behavioural problems - females (all ages)	5,233	3,585	1,717	4,531	3,446
Mental & behavioural problems - males (all ages)	3,923	2,740	1,301	3,359	2,526

## 4.2 Long Term Mental Health Condition

In 2021, Knox had a slightly higher percentage of people with a diagnosed mental health condition at 8.7% compared to Greater Melbourne at 8.1%. For mental health conditions ever diagnosed (the rate per 10,000), females had a higher rate of 1057.24 compared to 665.77 for males in Knox.

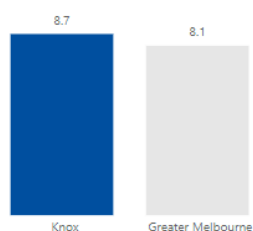
Suburb-specific trends:

- Upper Ferntree Gully had the highest rate at 12.0%, while Lysterfield had the lowest at 6.6%.

### Population with a Diagnosed Mental Health Condition(%)

2021

Long Term Health Condition ABS Census



### Diagnosed Mental Health Condition by Suburb (%), 2021

Health Condition	Bayswater	Boronia	Ferntree Gully	Knoxfield	Lysterfield	Rowville	Scoresby	The Basin	Upper Ferntree Gully	Wantirna	Wantirna South
Mental health condition	10.3	11.0	10.3	8.1	6.6	6.9	6.9	11.4	12.0	7.0	7.3

### Diagnosed Mental Health Condition by Suburb (Number) 2021

Health Condition	Bayswater	Boronia	Ferntree Gully	Knoxfield	Lysterfield	Rowville	Scoresby	The Basin	Upper Ferntree Gully	Wantirna	Wantirna South	Total
Mental health condition	1,267	2,606	2,810	622	434	2,317	416	511	303	989	1,501	13,776



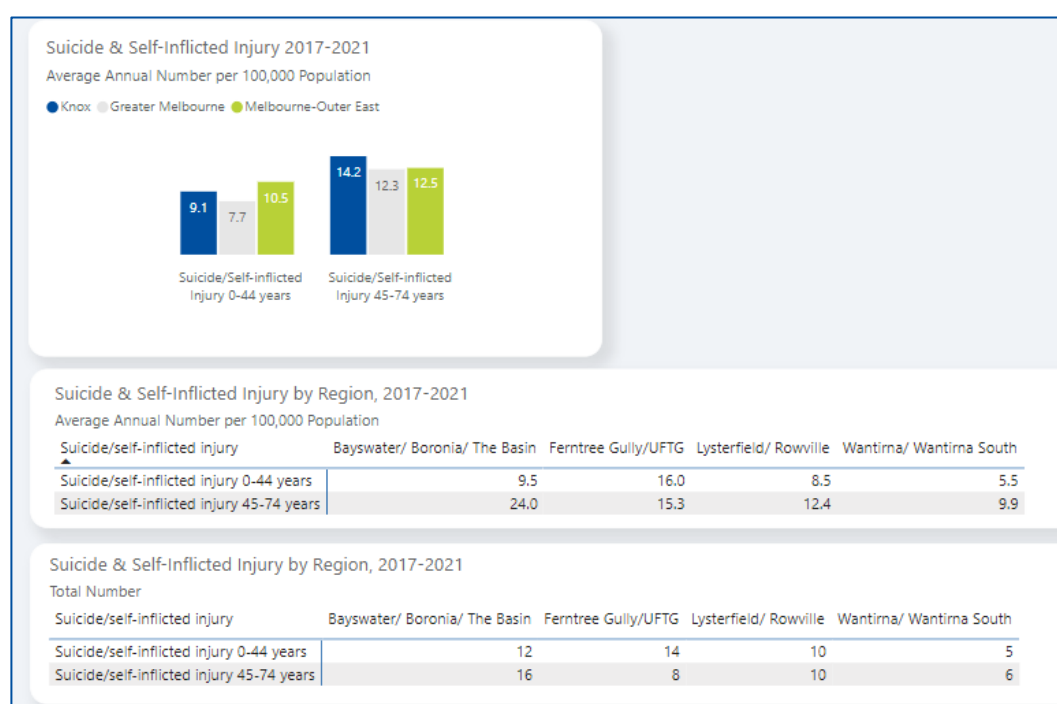
### 4.3 Suicide and Self-Inflicted Injury

Between 2017 and 2021, Knox had a higher annual average rate of suicide and self-inflicted injury for people aged 45-74 (14.2 per 100,000) compared to both Greater Melbourne and Melbourne – Outer East. For those aged 0-44, Knox's rate was also higher (9.1) than Melbourne (7.7), but lower than Melbourne – Outer East (10.5).

Women are more likely to self-harm than men, and young women represent a significant proportion of self-harm-related hospitalisations. [8] In 2021 there was higher rate of self-harm for females at 0.86 rate per 1,000 compared to males at 0.47. Hospital admission numbers for self-harm in 2021 also reflect this disparity, with 70 admissions for females and 37 for males. [8]

Suburb specific trends:

- Bayswater/Boronia/The Basin had the highest rate for residents aged 45-74, at 24.0 per 100,000,
- Wantirna/Wantirna South had the lowest rate for residents aged 45-74, at 9.9 per 100,000.



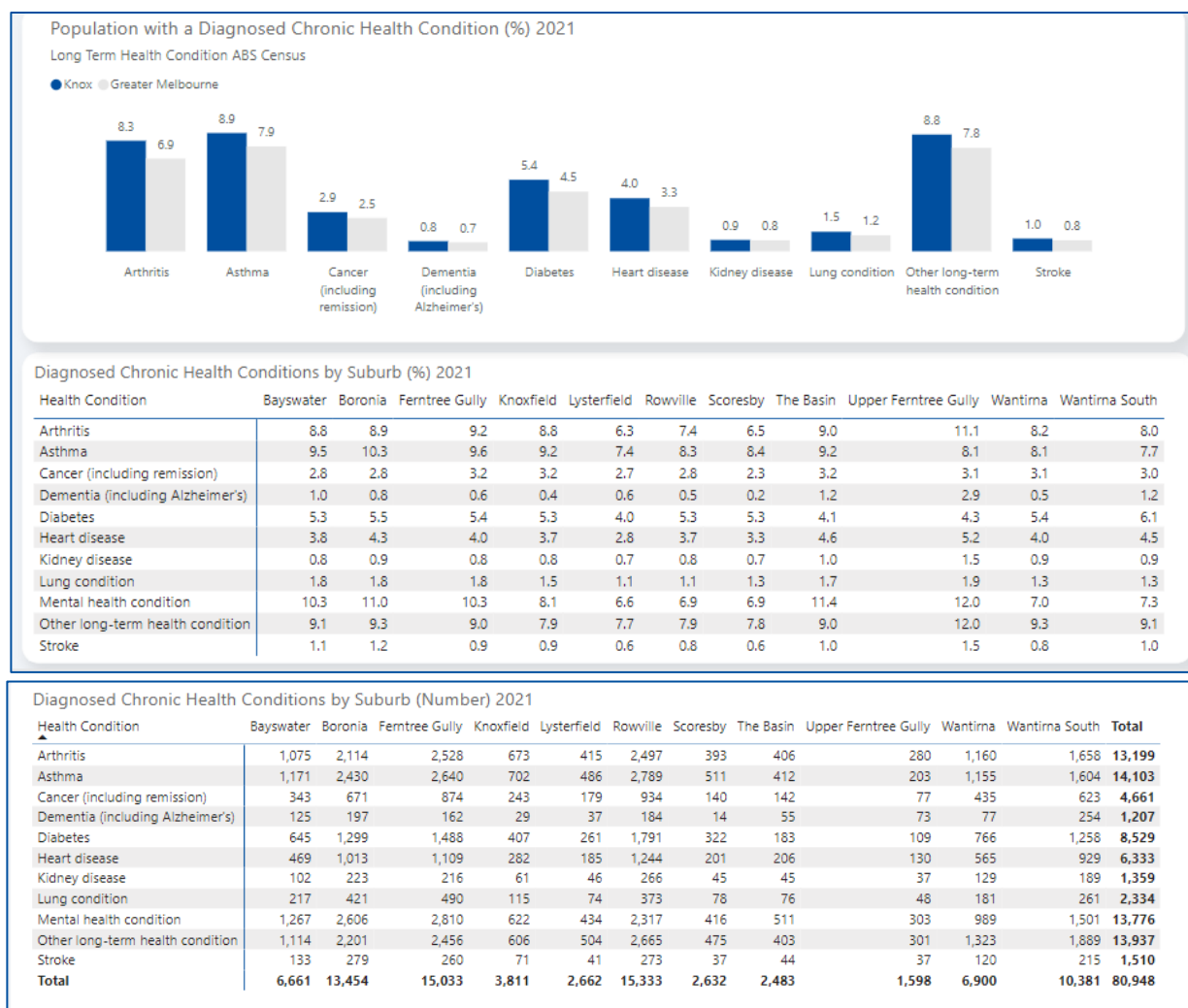
### 4.4 Chronic Disease and Illness

Knox has consistently had a higher percentage of residents with chronic health conditions compared to Greater Melbourne. These conditions include arthritis, asthma, cancer, dementia, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, lung conditions, and stroke.

- Asthma is the most common chronic condition in Knox, affecting 8.9% of residents, compared to 7.9% in Greater Melbourne. Asthma affected 12.2% of First Nations residents in the 2021 census.
- Arthritis is also more prevalent in Knox, with 8.3% of residents affected, compared to 6.9% in Greater Melbourne. Arthritis affected 6.1% of First Nations Knox residents.

### Suburb-specific trends:

- Boronia has the highest asthma rate at 10.3%, while Lysterfield has the lowest at 7.4%.
- For long-term health conditions overall, Upper Ferntree Gully recorded the highest rate at 12.0%, while Lysterfield again had the lowest at 7.7%.



Women have a higher prevalence of chronic disease and live more years of life with a disability from chronic disease than men. Knox has higher rate per 10,000 of women with arthritis, asthma and dementia, and higher rate per 10,000 of men with diabetes and heart disease.

- Arthritis: females at 1062.54 and males at 585.71. These rates are above the metro east region and Victorian state estimates.
- Asthma: females at 960.77 and males at 810.88.
- Dementia: females at 92.41 and males at 57.61.
- Diabetes: females at 476.2 and males at 597.9.
- Heart Disease: females at 307.9 and males at 491.4.

For more detailed rates of chronic disease and its impact based on gender in Knox, refer to the [Women's Health Atlas Chronic Disease Factsheet](#)

## 5. Health Risks and Behaviours

This section focuses on behaviours, factors and influences which impact health, including:

- Nutrition and weight
- Physical activity
- Food insecurity
- Alcohol and drugs
- Gambling
- Smoking and vaping (including e-cigarettes)
- Active transport
- Family violence
- Crime rates
- Public trust and community connection

### 5.1 Nutrition and Weight

The 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey and data from the Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU) reveal significant trends in dietary habits in Knox:

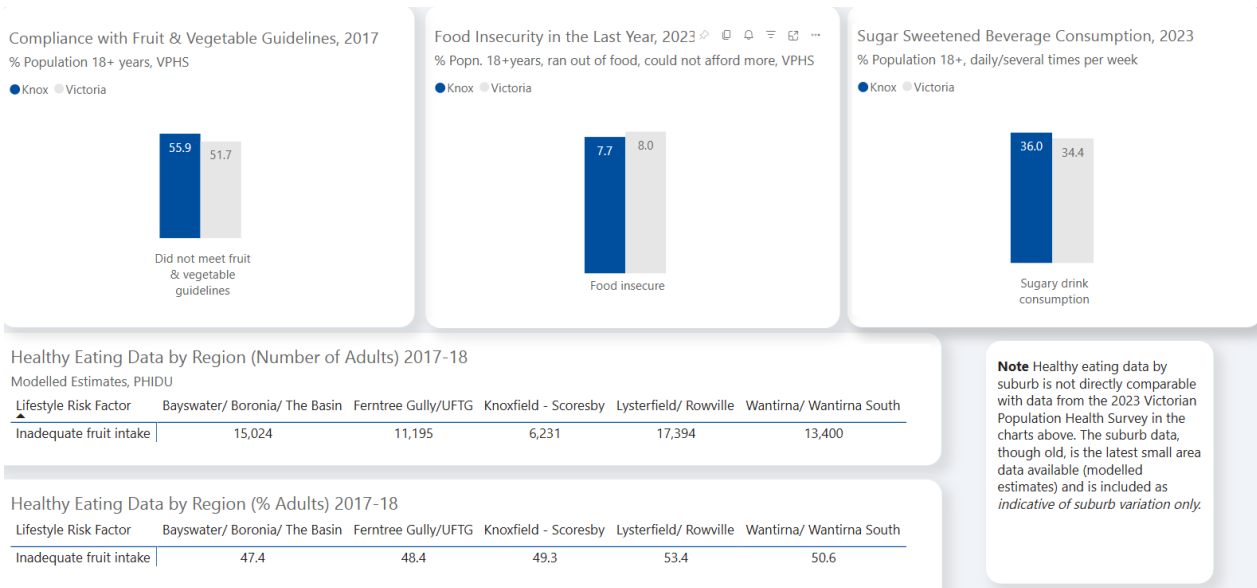
- 55.9% of Knox residents did not meet the recommended fruit and vegetable intake levels as per the 2017 guidelines. This is higher than the statewide figure of 51.7%, indicating that a larger proportion of Knox residents are failing to meet the recommended dietary guidelines compared to the broader Victorian population
- 36.0% of Knox residents consume more sugary drinks than recommended, which is higher than the 34.4% recorded for Victoria, indicating a slightly greater prevalence of sugary drink consumption in Knox.

The 2017 Victorian Population Health Survey reveals gender trends in dietary habits in Knox:

- The daily fruit consumption guidelines met for females was at 46.4% and for men at 33.0%
- The daily vegetable consumption guidelines met for females was at 4.8% and for men at 2.5%.

Suburb-specific trends:

- Lysterfield /Rowville had the highest percentage of adults with inadequate fruit intake at 53.4%
- Bayswater/Boronia/The Basin had the lowest percentage of adults with inadequate fruit intake at 47.4%.

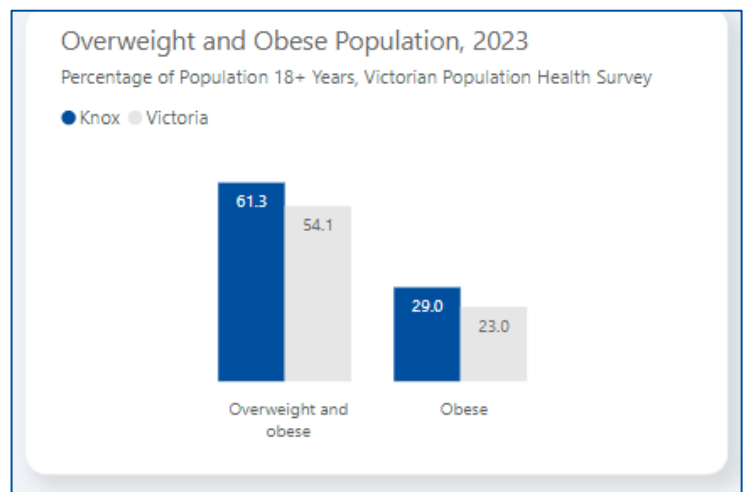


- 61.3% of Knox residents aged 18 and over are classified as overweight or obese, which is significantly higher than the state average of 54.1%
- Within this group, 29% of Knox residents are classified as obese, compared to the 23% state average, indicating a more severe obesity issue in the area.

#### Suburb-specific trends 2017/18:

- The Bayswater/Boronia/The Basin area and Ferntree Gully/Upper Ferntree Gully had the highest percentage of obese adults at 31.1%
- Wantirna/ Wantirna South had the lowest percentage of obese adults at 23.5%.

It is important to consider the effects which poor body image and dieting can have on both physical and mental health and be considerate of language and attitudes when discussing 'healthy eating' and 'weight'. Using terms such as nutrient poor foods instead of unhealthy foods can aid to remove the negative association often formed with phrases.



## 5.2 Physical Activity

The 2023 Victorian Population and Health Survey (VPHS) shows that 15% of Knox residents don't do any physical activity, and 49% do some, but less than 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week, that means 64% of Knox residents don't meet the Australian physical activity guidelines each week. The proportion of people who do no activity is slightly lower than the Victoria wide level at which is 17%, but the proportion of people who do some activity, but less than 150 minutes, is slightly higher than the Victorian average of 47%. This means that Knox is on par with the Victorian average of the total proportion of people who do not reach the recommended guidelines.

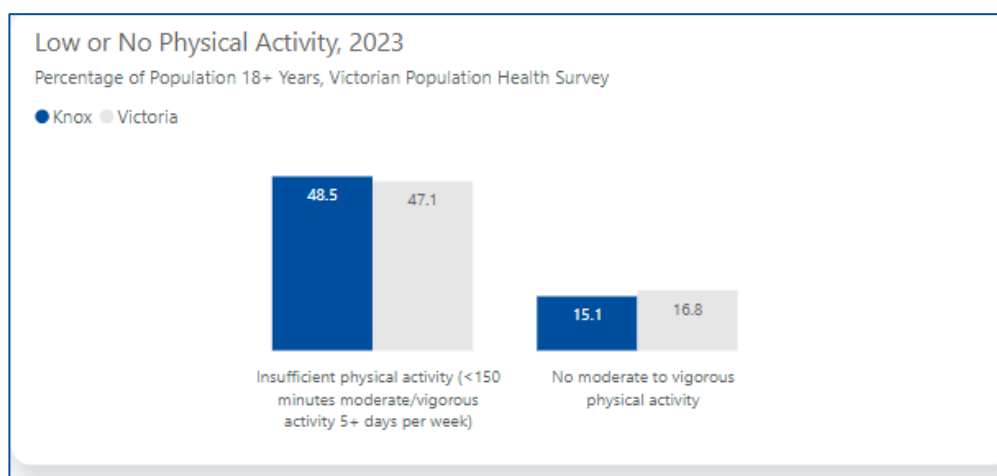
As well as being physically active, the Australian Physical Activity Guidelines highlight the importance of reducing time spent being inactive or sitting. The proportion of Knox residents aged 18+ years who spend eight or more hours sitting still is 18.9% [11], while this is lower than the Victorian average of 22.0% [11], it is important to work to reduce this number.

In 2019, the percentage of women in Knox who met the Australian Physical Activity Guidelines was 48.7%, which is lower than the percentage of men who met the guidelines at 53.0% [8]. The factors that may contribute to this difference includes barriers which women report facing including caring responsibilities, fear of judgement and perception of safety, among others. Addressing these barriers is important to increase the percentage of women in Knox who do meet the physical activity guidelines.

Suburb-specific trends:

- Wantirna/ Wantirna South had the lowest percentage of adults with little or no exercise in previous week at 67.2% followed by Lysterfield/ Rowville at 67.7%
- Bayswater/ Boronia/ The Basin had the highest percentage of adults with little or no exercise in previous week at 69.8% followed by Ferntree Gully/ Upper Ferntree Gully and Knoxfield – Scoresby at 68.4%.

These figures indicate that while Knox faces broader health challenges related to inactivity, some suburbs, such as Bayswater, Boronia and The Basin, exhibit poorer outcomes in levels of physical activity.



### 5.3 Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is where the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable food in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain and can result in people accessing food relief services.

The Knox Food Relief Taskforce administered a survey in September 2023 to better understand the lived experience and profile of residents accessing food relief, their patterns of help-seeking and areas of concern. In total, 235 surveys responses were collected from 11 local food relief agencies. Knox survey findings include:

- 70% cut back on quality and variety of food due to cost in previous 12 months
- 44% skipped meals due to not being able to buy enough food
- 23% went without food for a day or longer due to not being able to buy enough food
- 56% were accessing food relief because their Centrelink payments were insufficient to cover the rent, food and bills
- 33% were accessing food relief because their wage was insufficient to cover the rent, food and bills
- 44% had started using food relief in that calendar year
- 56% expect that they will need to access food relief indefinitely
- More than half of the people accessing food relief were aged 35 to 60 years.

Furthermore, survey findings reveal experiences of hardship among Knox community members who face multiple disadvantages:

- a significantly higher number of women were accessing food relief – women represented double the number of men accessing food relief
- One quarter of respondents have a disability and need help with daily activities
- Almost one third of respondents live alone, while 20% were single parents with dependent children and another 20% were couples with dependent children
- 20% provided unpaid care to someone with a disability
- 34% were living in private rental properties, while 14% were living in social or public housing.

### 5.4 Alcohol & Drugs

Alcohol and drug use poses a threat to the health and wellbeing of Knox residents as it's use is a major cause of preventable disease, illness and death.

In the 2021/22 period, Knox experienced a higher rate of alcohol-related hospitalisations compared to Metropolitan Melbourne. Knox recorded a rate of 71.3 hospitalisations per 10,000 residents, whereas Metropolitan Melbourne recorded a rate of 58.6 per 10,000. This indicates a significant health burden related to alcohol use in Knox. On the other hand, Knox reported lower rates of hospitalisations due to illicit drugs and pharmaceuticals compared to the metropolitan area, suggesting that while alcohol-related issues are more prevalent, other drug-related health issues are less prominent in Knox, but still present.

According to the 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey, Knox has lower rates of alcohol-related disease or injury compared to the broader state of Victoria. Specifically, 8.9% of Knox residents aged 18 and over are at increased risk for alcohol-related diseases or injury, which is lower than the 13.1% rate across Victoria.

#### Suburb-specific trends:

- Ferntree Gully/ Upper Ferntree Gully reported the highest percentage of adults with harmful alcohol use at 15.3%, followed by Bayswater, Boronia and The Basin at 15.1%
- Knoxfield – Scoresby reported the lowest percentage of adults with harmful alcohol use at 11.0% followed by Lysterfield/ Rowville at 11.4% and then Wantirna/ Wantirna South at 11.7%.

Findings suggest that Ferntree Gully/ Upper Ferntree Gully face higher rates of risky health behaviours, including harmful alcohol use, while Knoxfield and Scoresby have lower rates of these issues.



## 5.5 Gambling

Financial losses from gambling can negatively impact the health and wellbeing of people in a variety of ways including stress, depression and reduced sleep.

Knox residents faced greater financial losses from electronic gaming machines (EGMs) than Metropolitan Melbourne. On average, Knox adults lost \$586.24 per person to EGMs, which is higher than the \$548.12 per adult lost across Metropolitan Melbourne. This highlights a greater prevalence of gambling-related harm in the region.

In 2023-24, Knox residents lost \$76 million on EGMs, with the total loss across all forms of legal gambling estimated at \$191 million [12].

- Peer pressure plays a significant role in gambling, with younger men gambling to fit in and older individuals, particularly the socially isolated, turning to pokies as a safe space [12].
- During COVID, middle-aged women were found to have increasingly engaged in online gambling [12].
- Those on lower incomes tend to experience greater harm from gambling [12].



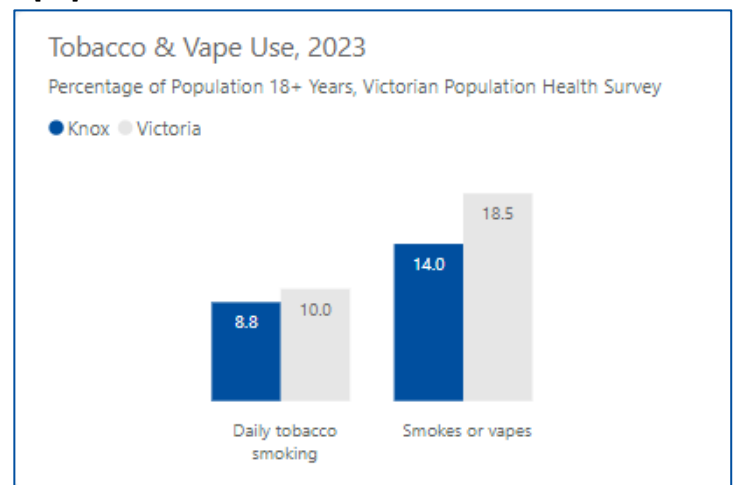
## 5.6 Smoking & Vaping (including e-cigarettes)

Smoking and vaping (including e-cigarettes) can negatively affect health in a variety of ways and contributes to the burden of disease Knox residents experience. Reducing harm from smoking and vaping among Knox residents is an important part of increasing the Knox community's ability to thrive.

According to the VPHS in 2023, the proportion of the Knox population who smoked tobacco daily is 8.8% per 100,000 people, this is slightly higher than the Northern Eastern Public Health Unit's (NEPHU) average proportion at 8.3% per 100,000. According to the same source, the proportion of the Knox population who vaped daily was 2.6% per 100,000 people, compared to the NEPHU average of 4.8% [14].

Suburb-specific trends:

- Data from 2017/18 indicates that Bayswater, Boronia and The Basin had the highest percentage of current male smokers at 22.2% while Lysterfiels/ Rowville had the lowest at 11.7%
- For females, Bayswater, Boronia and The Basin again had the highest percentage of current female smokers at 14.9% and Lysterfield/ Rowville had the lowest at 7.9%.



This indicates that certain areas of Knox, especially Bayswater, Boronia and The Basin, have a more significant issue with smoking for both males and females.

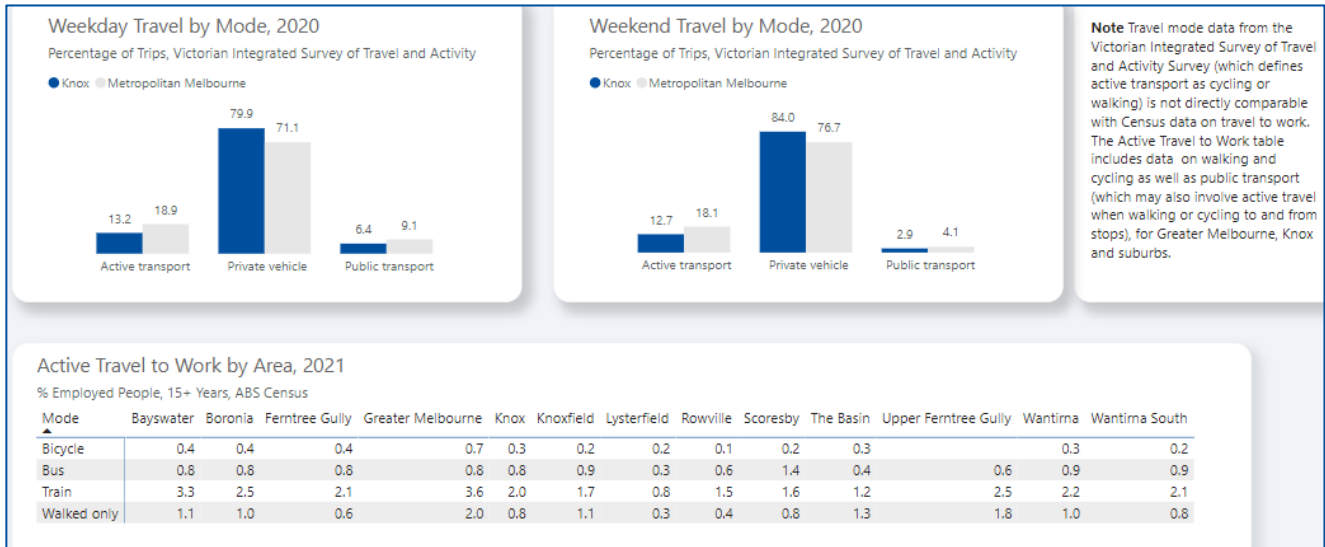
## 5.7 Active Transport

Active travel offers significant environmental and health benefits for communities and should be considered in all planning activities [15] to ensure the Knox community has the infrastructure to enable them to participate in active travel where possible.

- Active transport, including walking and cycling, is generally less common in Knox compared to Metropolitan Melbourne. Only 13.2% of Knox residents engage in active transport during weekdays, compared to 18.9% in Metropolitan Melbourne. The trend is similar on weekends, with 12.7% of Knox residents using active transport compared to 18.1% across the metropolitan area
- Knox had a slightly higher percentage of residents using active transport to commute to work in 2021 (1.1%) compared to Greater Melbourne (0.9%)
- Among the suburbs in Knox, Bayswater, Boronia, and Ferntree Gully had the highest rates of cycling to work, each at 0.4%. In contrast, Rowville had the lowest rate, with only 0.1% of residents commuting by bicycle
- The percentage of residents walking to work was higher than cycling. Upper Ferntree Gully had the highest walking-to-work rate at 1.8%, while Lysterfield had the lowest at 0.3%.

In Knox 27.0% of females experienced limitations in transport compared to 9.0% of males.





## 5.8 Family Violence

Family violence can have immediate and ongoing effects on health and wellbeing. These health outcomes can be serious and long-lasting, and can affect an individual's physical and mental health, which have effects on many other areas of life including employment and education, relationships, and financial and housing stability.

The incidence of family violence in Knox recorded 12.2 incidents per 1,000 which is higher than the rates for Metropolitan Melbourne at 11.6 per 1,000 in 2022-23. Within the same year there were 1,970 family violence incidents reported, 95 emergency department patients treated for family violence related injuries and 1,019 victims (including 61 children) issued with Family Violence Intervention Orders.

Family violence affected 1,444 female family members, and 496 male family members, with the most affected age group being 35-44 years with 477 occurrences, followed by 25-34 years with 399 occurrences in the year ending September 2024.

First Nations people, especially women and children experience significantly high rates of and impacts from family violence relative to the non-indigenous population. [16] First Nations Females in Knox also have a higher number of reported incidents of family violence at 44 compared to First Nations males at 15, which is higher than the metro east region for females at 28.3 and for males at 10.4. [8] . Family violence against First Nations people is perpetrated by both non-First Nations and First Nations people. Family violence is not, and never has been, part of First Nations cultures. [8]

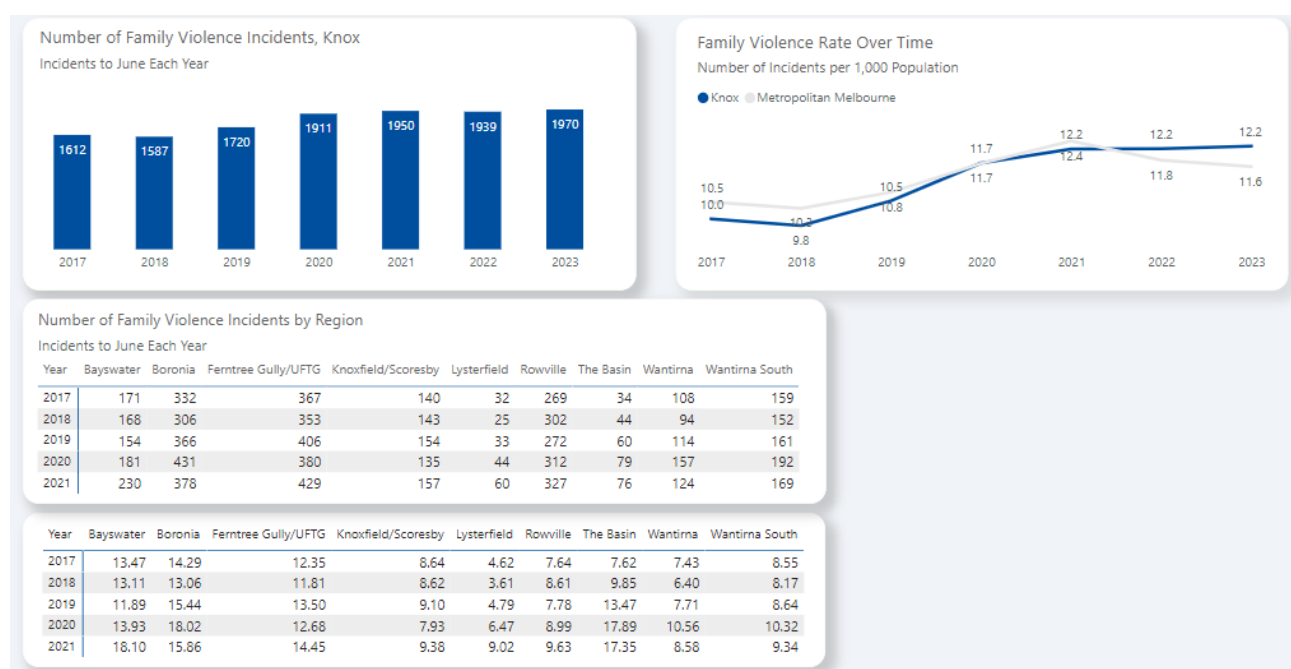
These statistics highlight the significant number of women and children in Knox experiencing family violence. The National Community Attitudes Survey (2021) reveals a concerning trend in Melbourne's eastern region with only 28% of women and 44% of men support gender equality in intimate relationships, with the region reporting the second-lowest level of support for gender equality in Victoria. [17]

Suburb-specific trends:

- In 2020, Boronia had the highest family violence rate in Knox, with 18.02 incidents per 1,000 residents.
- Lysterfield recorded the lowest rate that year, with 6.47 incidents per 1,000 residents

- By 2021, Bayswater surpassed Boronia, reporting the highest rate of family violence in Knox at 18.10 per 1,000 residents
- Wantirna had the lowest incidence of family violence in 2021, with a rate of 8.58 per 1,000 residents.

This data highlights substantial variation in family violence across Knox, with Boronia and Bayswater with the highest rate of family violence and Lysterfield with the lowest rates. Overall, Knox has experienced consistently higher rates of family violence compared to metropolitan Melbourne.



## 5.9 Crime

According to data from the Crime Statistics Agency (CSA), Knox had a lower crime rate than Victoria in both 2022 and 2024. However, both Knox and Victoria saw an increase in crime rates during this period:

- In 2022, Knox's crime rate was 40.3 per 1,000 residents
- By 2024, the crime rate in Knox increased to 45.6 per 1,000 residents
- In comparison, Victoria's crime rate rose from 51.7 per 1,000 in 2022 to 58.6 per 1,000 in 2024, this lower crime rate in Knox compared to Victoria doesn't erase the need to respond to the issue due to the large impacts it can have on community health and wellbeing.

Suburb-specific trends:

- In 2022, Bayswater had the highest crime rate in Knox, with 57.2 per 1,000 residents
- Lysterfield had the lowest crime rate at 17.4 per 1,000 residents
- By 2024, Wantirna South surpassed Bayswater to become the suburb with the highest crime rate in Knox, with a rate of 70.8 per 1,000 residents
- Lysterfield maintained its position as the suburb with the lowest crime rate, which decreased to 14.0 per 1,000 in 2024.

The total criminal incidents in Knox rose by 8.6% in the year ending September 2024. In 2023, there was 7,187 criminal incidents, while in 2024 there were 7,802 [18].

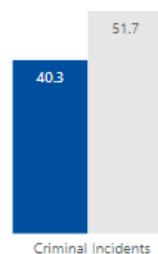
- The most common place for a crime to be committed in Knox was in the home, then street/lane/footpath, then shopping complex. The most common offence was theft from a motor vehicle, then theft from a retail store. These subgroups all trended up in 2024 [18]
- There was a downward trend in 2024 in the amount of crime in Boronia, but it is still the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest suburb for crime, following Wantirna South then Ferntree Gully [18]
- The most common age groups for alleged offenders in Knox were 10-17 years and 45+ years, both recording 729 alleged offenders for the year ending September 2024. There were 2,857 alleged male offenders, and 861 alleged female offenders [18]
- The most common age group for victim reports was 55+ years with 931 reports, followed by 35-44 years with 864 victim reports. There were 2,310 male victim reports, 1,872 female victim reports, and 2,073 organisation victim reports in the year ending September 2024 [18].

This data shows that while Knox's overall crime rate remains lower than Victoria's, the crime rate is on the rise in both the local area and across the state. The crime rate varies significantly across suburbs, with Wantirna South and Bayswater having higher rates, while Lysterfield consistently shows the lowest crime figures.

### Crime Rate, 2022

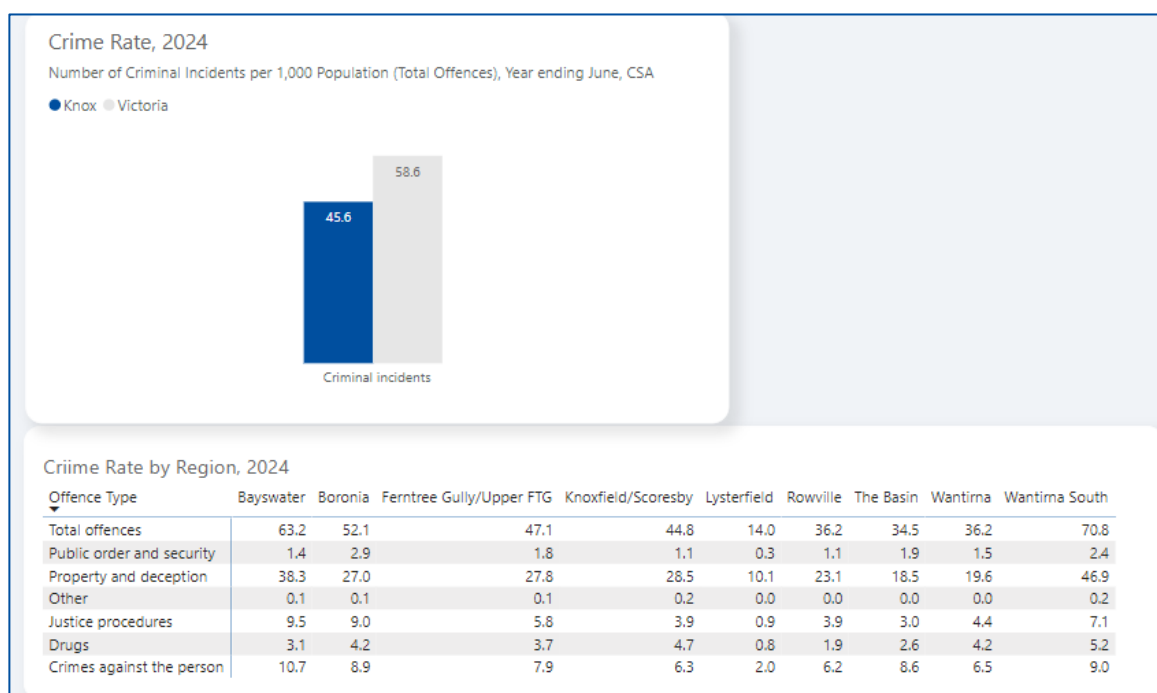
Number of Criminal Incidents per 1,000 Population (Total offences), Year ending September, CSA

● Knox ● Victoria



### Crime Rate by Region, 2022

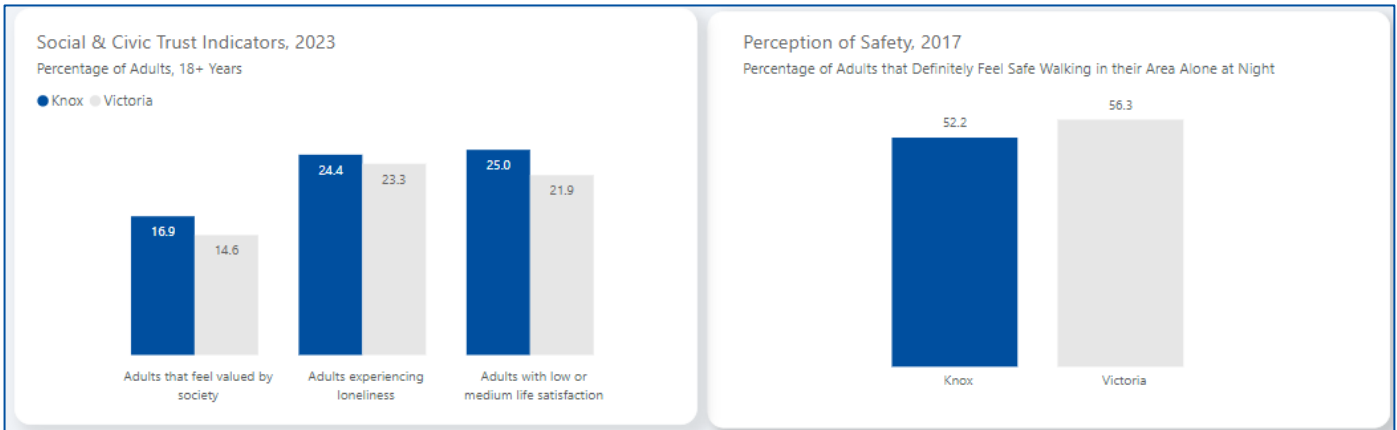
Offence Type	Bayswater	Boronia	Ferntree Gully/Upper FTG	Knoxfield/Scoresby	Lysterfield	Rowville	The Basin	Wantirna	Wantirna South
Total offences	57.2	47.8	40.9	37.1	17.4	28.9	38.0	36.5	53.4
Public order and security	3.5	2.9	1.8	1.5	0.6	1.0	1.9	2.3	2.5
Property and deception	28.0	22.7	22.5	22.2	9.7	16.0	16.9	17.9	29.1
Other	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1	4.0
Justice procedures	10.2	9.5	5.8	5.2	3.2	4.6	6.3	5.6	7.0
Drugs	4.6	4.1	2.4	2.8	0.8	1.0	3.7	5.3	3.8
Crimes against the person	10.5	8.6	8.4	5.4	2.9	6.0	9.3	5.2	7.1



## 5.10 Public trust and community connection

Perceived safety, loneliness, and life satisfaction all impact the health and wellbeing of Knox residents, with figures showing a higher level of loneliness and lower life satisfaction compared to the state averages. Additionally, the perception of safety in Knox is notably lower, indicating a potential area for community and public health interventions.

- In 2017, Knox residents reported a lower perception of safety compared to the state average. Specifically, only 52.2% of Knox residents felt safe walking in the street at night, which is lower than the 56.3% statewide figure for Victoria
- In 2015, 28.0% of females in Knox reported feeling safe while walking alone at night, this is significantly lower than the 67.8% of males who reported feeling unsafe while walking at night. It is also lower than both the Metro East Region Estimate of 36.8% and Victoria State estimate of 44.0% of females who feel safe walking alone at night. This reduction in perceived safety can limit participation in community life and increase social exclusion, therefore should be addressed, including through improved infrastructure [8]
- In 2023, nearly 24.4% of adults aged 18 and over in Knox reported experiencing loneliness, which is slightly higher than the statewide average of 23.3% for Victoria. This indicates a significant portion of the adult population in Knox faces social isolation
- Additionally, 25.0% of adults in Knox reported experiencing low to medium life satisfaction, which is higher than the 21.9% reported across Victoria. This suggests that more Knox residents experience lower levels of life satisfaction compared to the broader Victorian population.



## 6. Health Environments and Liveability

An environment that enables social connectivity and active living is essential for promoting positive health outcomes for the residents of Knox. This section highlights key areas in the social and physical environment that influence health, well-being, and overall quality of life.

- **Social Environment:**  
Several social factors, such as homelessness, housing affordability, and housing stress, are critical determinants of health in Knox. These issues significantly affect residents' well-being, with housing instability and financial strain leading to poorer mental and physical health outcomes. Addressing homelessness and making housing more affordable can greatly improve health and reduce stress for the community.
- **Physical Environment:**  
The physical environment plays an equally important role in health outcomes. Key factors include:
  - Walkability and safety for pedestrians, which affect residents' ability to engage in physical activity safely and conveniently
  - Access to open spaces for recreation, mental health benefits, and social interaction
  - Availability of food, particularly in terms of access to fresh, nutritious and affordable options, which impacts overall health
  - The alcohol environment, which influences substance abuse rates and alcohol-related harm.
  - Public transport access, which can improve mobility and reduce stress related to commuting, while encouraging active transport
  - Overall liveability and the availability of social infrastructure, such as community centers, public facilities, and health services, which support residents' physical, mental, and social well-being.

By addressing these elements, Knox can create a healthier, more sustainable environment for its residents. Improved infrastructure, better housing, and access to food and open spaces are key to enhancing the quality of life and supporting better health outcomes for the community.

## 6.1 Homelessness

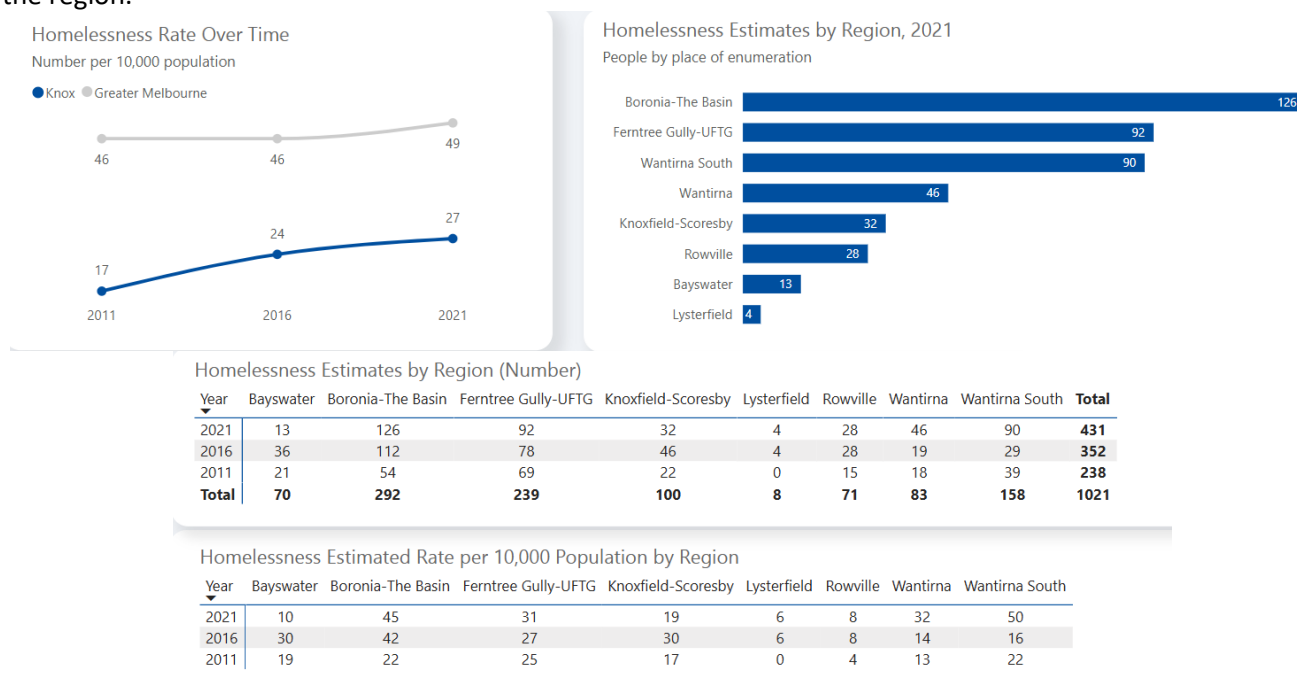
Between 2011 and 2021, Knox consistently reported lower rates of homelessness compared to Greater Melbourne. In 2021, the rate of homelessness in Knox was 27 per 10,000 population, which is less than half the rate for Greater Melbourne (49 per 10,000). Despite this, the homelessness rate in Knox has been on a steady rise over the past decade. In 2011, the rate was 17 per 10,000, which increased to 24 per 10,000 in 2016 and further to 27 per 10,000 in 2021.

There is a correlation between family violence and homelessness, in 2022-23 there were 925 clients who sought homelessness services due to family violence in Knox. This is the number of reported services accessed and does not represent the number of people who cannot access services due to other barriers.

Homelessness rates vary significantly across different suburbs in Knox, in 2021:

- Boronia/The Basin had the highest estimated rate per 10,000 for homelessness at 45, followed by Ferntree Gully/ Upper Ferntree Gully at 32 and Knoxfield-Scoresby at 19
- Lysterfield had the lowest estimated rate per 10,000 for homelessness at 6, followed by Rowville at 8 and Bayswater at 10.

This increasing trend in homelessness within Knox highlights an ongoing issue that needs attention, especially in areas like Boronia and The Basin where the numbers are notably higher. The rising homelessness rate is a significant concern for local services and infrastructure and addressing it could improve both social outcomes and public health in the region.



## 6.2 Housing

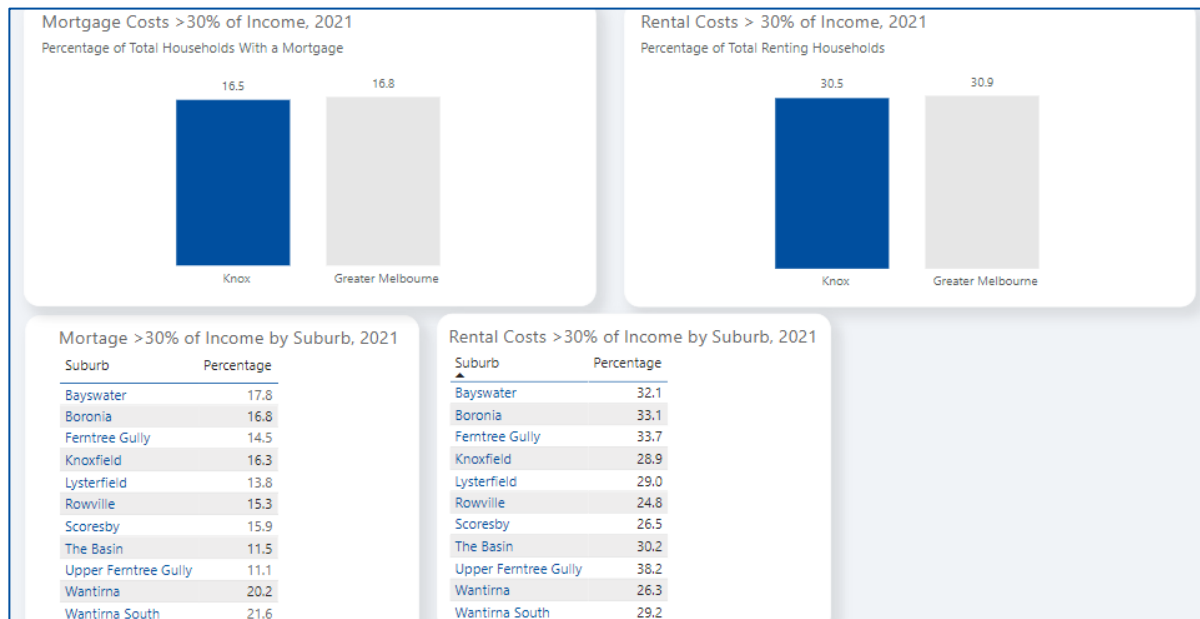
Knox and Greater Melbourne have similar proportions of households with mortgages and those renting. Specifically, 16.5% of households in Knox have a mortgage, compared to 16.8% in Greater Melbourne. Similarly, 30.5% of households in Knox are renting, while 30.9% in Greater Melbourne are renting.

There are, however, discrepancies between Knox's First Nations population and non-Indigenous population renting – with almost half (49.6%) of First Nations population renting, compared with less than a quarter (21.3%) of non-Indigenous population renting.

Households that spend more than 30% of their income on mortgage payments or rent are considered to be in mortgage or rental stress (AHURI, 2019). In Knox, 13.4% households are in mortgage stress, which is higher than the Greater Melbourne average of 12.7%. In Knox, 26.4% of households are in rental stress. This is only 0.04% lower than the Greater Melbourne average (26.8%).

#### Suburb-specific trends:

- Among Knox suburbs, Wantirna South has the highest percentage of mortgage stress at 21.6%. Upper Ferntree Gully has the lowest proportion of households experiencing mortgage stress at 11.1%.
- Upper Ferntree Gully has the highest percentage of households in rental stress at 38.2%
- Rowville has the lowest percentage of rental stress at 24.8%.



3.5% of all households in Knox have an unmet need for affordable housing, compared to 6.1% for greater Melbourne. The household type that are most in need of affordable housing are families.

### How many households are in need of affordable housing?

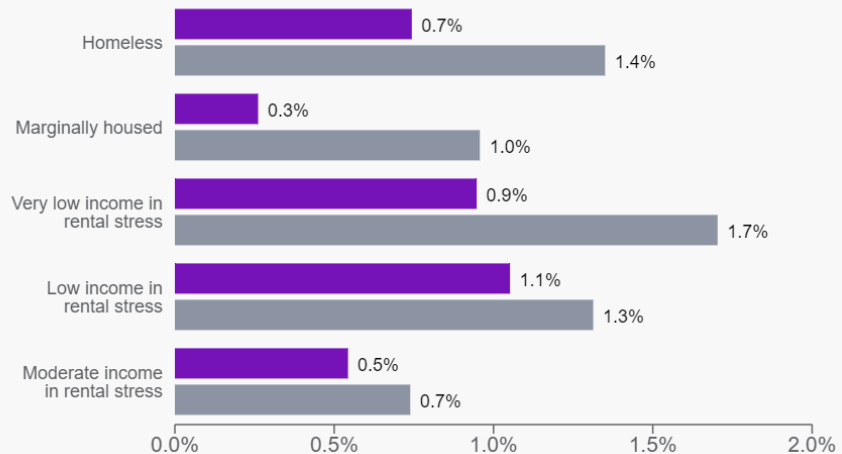
Households unable to access market priced rental housing, 2021

Percent Number

**2,037** households

(3.5%) are in need of affordable housing in City of Knox

City of Knox Greater Melbourne



Source: ABS Estimating Homelessness 2021 and ABS Census 2021.

## 6.3 Walkability, Safety for Pedestrians and Open Space Access

According to the walkability map for Knox, there is significant variation in the walkability of different suburbs:

Most Walkable Suburbs:

- Wantirna, Boronia, and Bayswater are identified as the most walkable suburbs in Knox. These areas offer easy access to a variety of services and amenities, allowing residents to meet their daily needs without the reliance on cars or public transport.

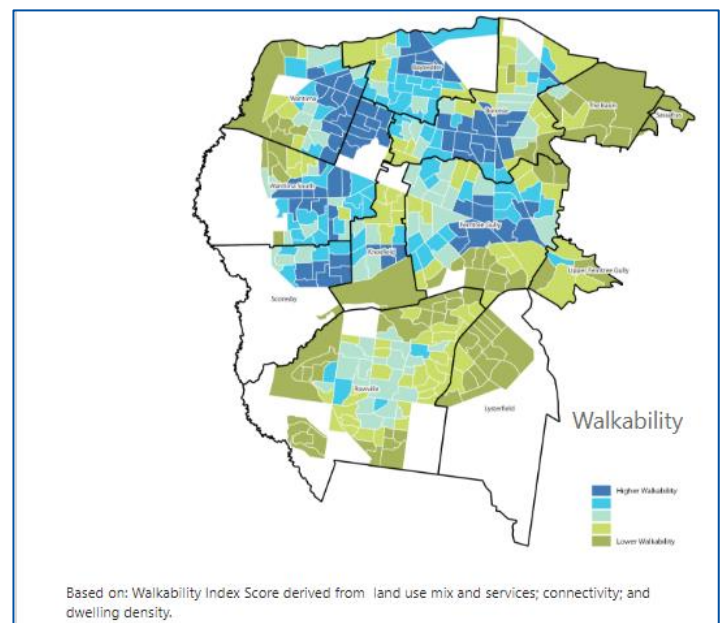
Least Walkable Suburbs:

- In contrast, Lysterfield, The Basin, and Upper Ferntree Gully are the least walkable suburbs. In these areas, most services are not within walking distance, requiring residents to depend on cars or public transport to access essential services.

Safety for Pedestrian:

In terms of safety for pedestrians, the situation varies across Knox:

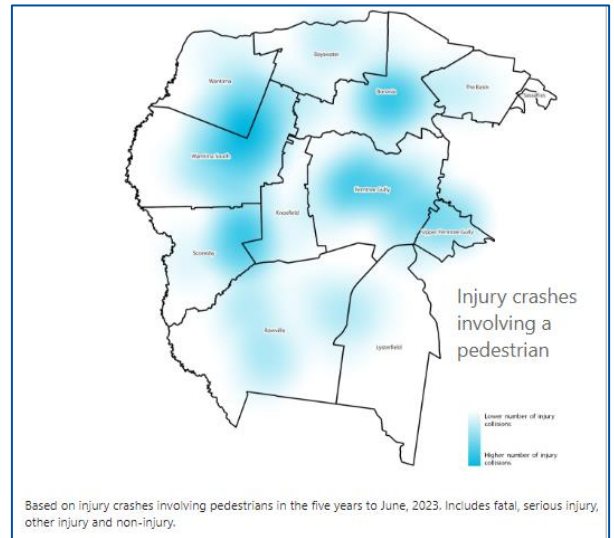
- Wantirna South, Ferntree Gully, and Boronia report higher rates of pedestrian-related crashes and collisions. This suggests that these suburbs may have a higher risk for pedestrians' safety





- On the other hand, Lysterfield, The Basin, and Bayswater are identified as the safest suburbs, with fewer recorded pedestrian-related incidents or crashes.

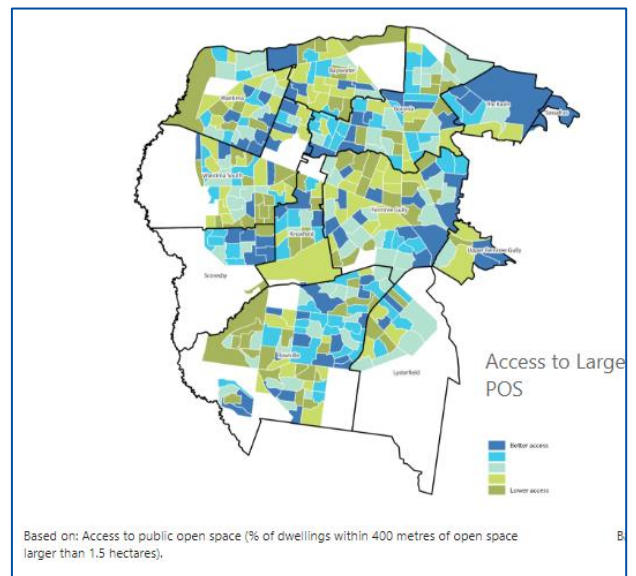
These findings suggest that there are significant disparities in both walkability and safety for pedestrians across Knox, with some suburbs offering more accessible and safer environments for pedestrians than others. Addressing the issues of pedestrian safety and walkability—particularly in less walkable and higher-risk areas—could improve overall health and safety for residents in Knox.



#### Public Open Spaces:

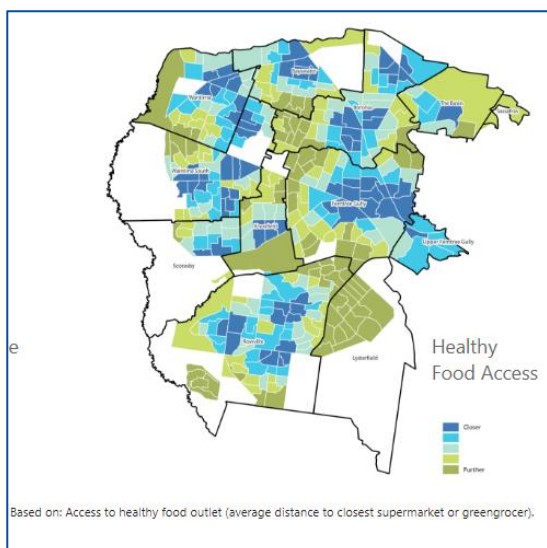
- The Basin and Boronia are identified as suburbs with the best access to public open spaces in Knox. These areas offer more readily accessible green spaces for residents to enjoy, supporting physical and mental well-being
- In contrast, Bayswater has the lowest level of access to public open spaces in the area, suggesting that residents in this suburb may have fewer opportunities for outdoor recreation and community gathering.

These findings highlight disparities in access to essential resources like public open spaces and enhancing public open space access in areas like Bayswater could help foster healthier, more sustainable communities.



## 6.4 Food Access

In terms of proximity to supermarkets and greengrocers in Knox Ferntree Gully has the closest proximity and Lysterfield has the furthest.



In terms of access to food relief, in 2022 Knox City Council surveyed 21 emergency food relief providers to collect data on food availability and trends. The survey found that:

- 7 services provided eat-in meals
- 10 services provided take-away meals
- 8 services provided grocery packs
- 9 services provided a community pantry
- 4 services provided vouchers.

Amongst the eat-in meal providers, dinner was available every weekday and take-away meals most days, with approximately 1,200 meals served or distributed each week. Pantries were accessible across various business hours, mostly on weekdays and provided just under 400 grocery packs or pantry visits a week.

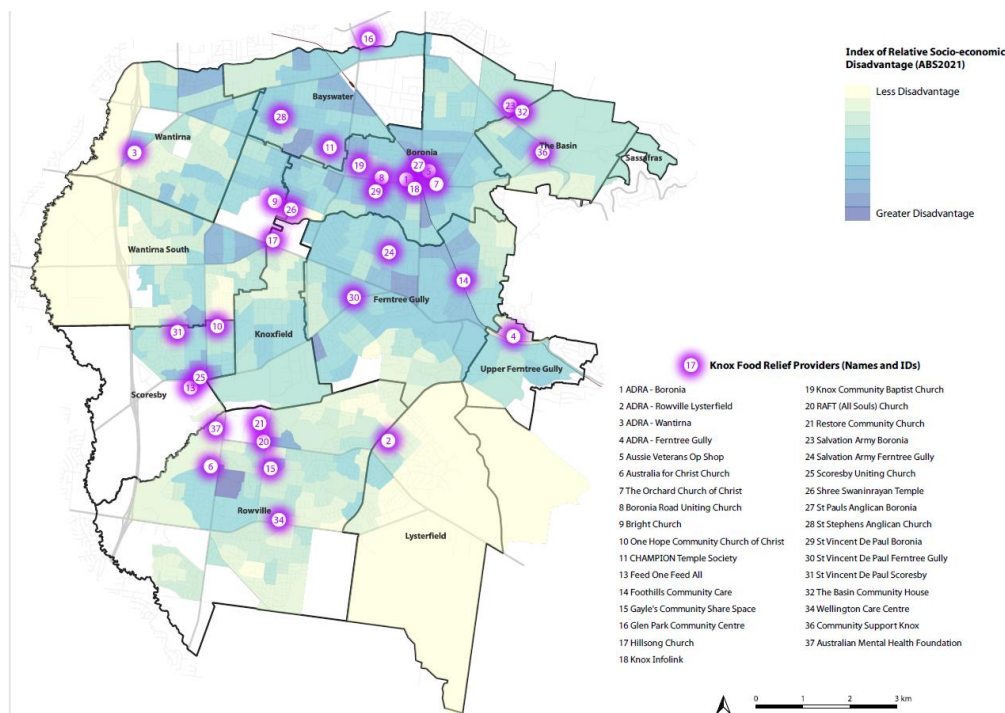
Services sourced their food from a range of places:

- Church groups received food donations from their congregation, then filled the gaps by purchasing items from the supermarket with tithing money
- Many services received donations, of produce or money through local businesses, schools and fundraising activities
- Some providers also sourced food from Foodbank, SecondBite and Ozharvest.

In 2024, the number of known providers exceeded 35, with an additional 22 Knox schools registered with the Foodbank Breakfast Program. By May 2024, each week Knox food relief providers were:

- serving or distributing more than 2,000 cooked meals – 167% increase in less than two years
- assisting with over 2,200 grocery packs or pantry visits – 550% increase in less than two years.

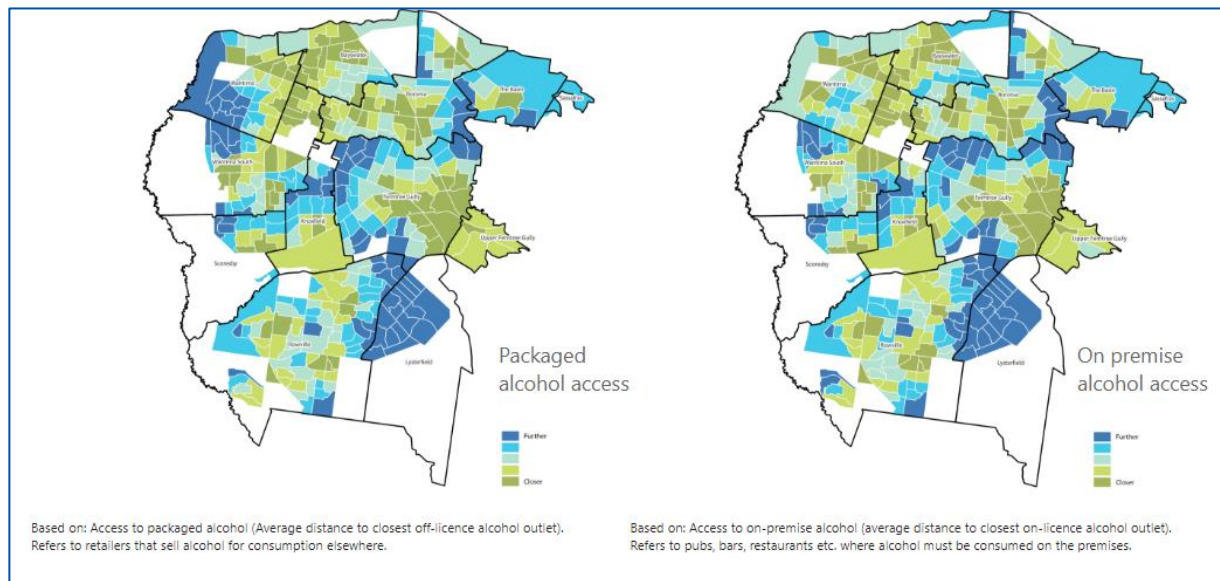
These findings highlight disparities in access to essential resources like healthy and affordable food across Knox. Improving access to healthy and affordable food in areas in Knox could help foster healthier, more sustainable communities.



## 6.5 Accessibility of Alcohol

- Lysterfield has lowest access to both on-premise (e.g., pubs, clubs, restaurants) and off-premise (packaged liquor stores) alcohol outlets compared to other suburbs in Knox. This suggests that alcohol availability is less prevalent in Lysterfield
- Suburbs like Ferntree Gully, Upper Ferntree Gully, Boronia, and Bayswater have the highest access to alcohol outlets. These areas are likely to have more accessible options for purchasing or consuming alcohol.

This disparity in alcohol outlet density across Knox indicates that alcohol accessibility could vary significantly depending on the suburb, potentially impacting residents' health and social dynamics.



## 6.6 Local Employment and Public Transport

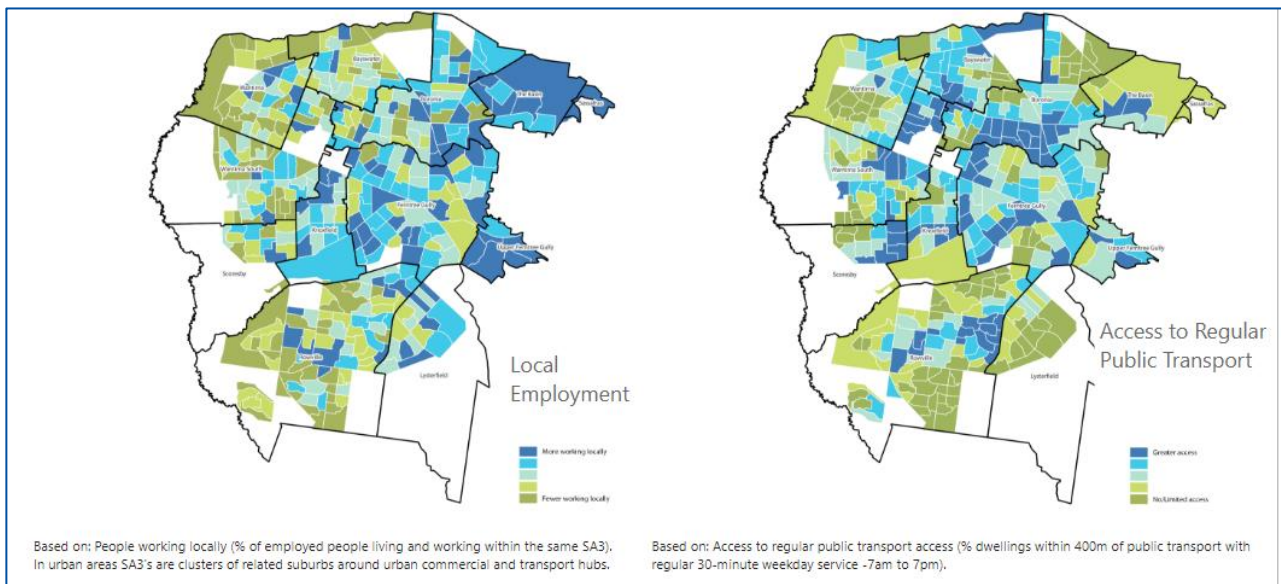
### Local Employment:

- The Basin and Upper Ferntree Gully have the highest rates of local employment. These areas have significantly more residents working within their own suburbs, likely indicating a strong local job market or better access to employment opportunities within these regions
- Wantirna, Wantirna South, Bayswater, and Scoresby have lower levels of local employment, meaning that residents in these areas may need to commute further for work, possibly impacting their work-life balance and local economic dynamics.

### Public Transport Access:

- Boronia has the highest access to regular public transport, making it easier for residents to commute and travel across the region. Bayswater, Wantirna South, and Ferntree Gully also benefit from good public transport services
- Lysterfield has the lowest access to regular public transport, which could lead to higher dependency on private vehicles, possibly affecting mobility, particularly for those without access to a car. The Basin also has low access to public transport, which could pose similar challenges for residents.

This information highlights significant regional disparities in terms of employment opportunities and transport access, with some areas of Knox being better served than others. These factors can play a key role in shaping the livability and social connectedness of communities within Knox.



## 6.7 Liveability and Social Infrastructure

The Urban Liveability Index Score provides a broader measure of liveability, factoring in not only social infrastructure but also walkability, public transport access, public open space, housing affordability, and local employment. The data shows that:

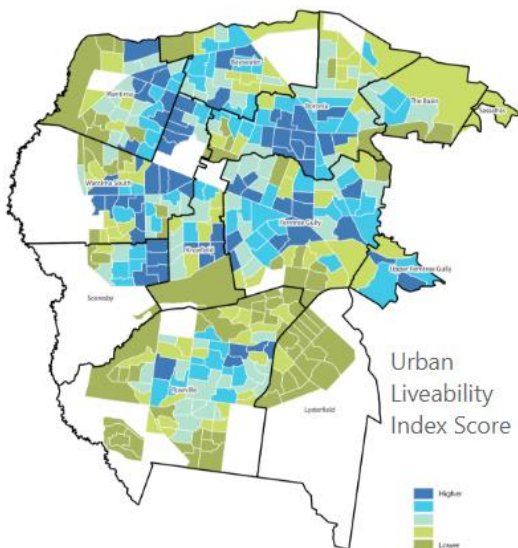
- Boronia and Ferntree Gully rank highest in Knox for urban liveability, meaning these suburbs are likely to offer a higher quality of life for residents, with better access to key services, amenities, and overall liveability factors
- The Basin and Lysterfield are identified as the lowest performers in terms of urban liveability within Knox, which may suggest that these areas could benefit from improvements in various aspects such as transport, walkability, public services, and affordable housing to enhance residents' quality of life.

The Social Infrastructure Index Score is based on availability of key social infrastructure services such as community services, healthcare facilities, recreational amenities, and other essential services that support residents' well-being. The data shows that:

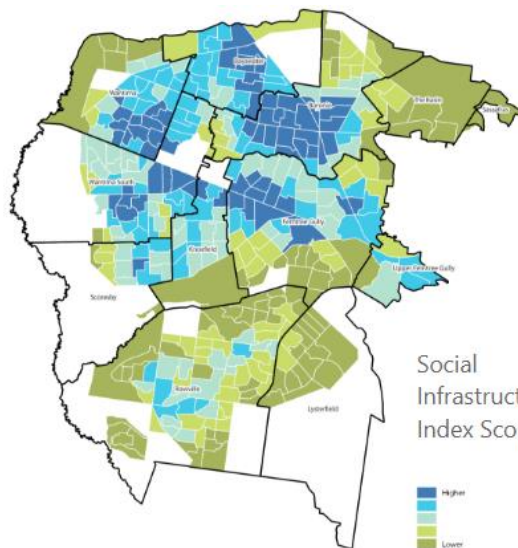
- Boronia has the highest social infrastructure index score in Knox, suggesting that it offers the most robust social infrastructure to its residents
- Lysterfield and The Basin have the lowest scores for social infrastructure, indicating that these suburbs may face challenges related to access to community services, resources, and amenities, which could affect the overall quality of life for residents.

This data highlights important regional disparities in the availability of overall urban liveability and social infrastructure within Knox, with some areas offering more comprehensive services and amenities compared to others. These factors significantly influence residents' daily lives and their overall well-being. [18]





Based on: Composite indicator score based on measures related to key aspects of local liveability including Social Infrastructure, Walkability, Public Transport, Public Open Space, Housing Affordability, and Local Employment.



Based on: Composite indicator score based on availability of key social infrastructure services such as health, education, early childhood, community support, community development, culture, sport & recreation, parks and emergency services.

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