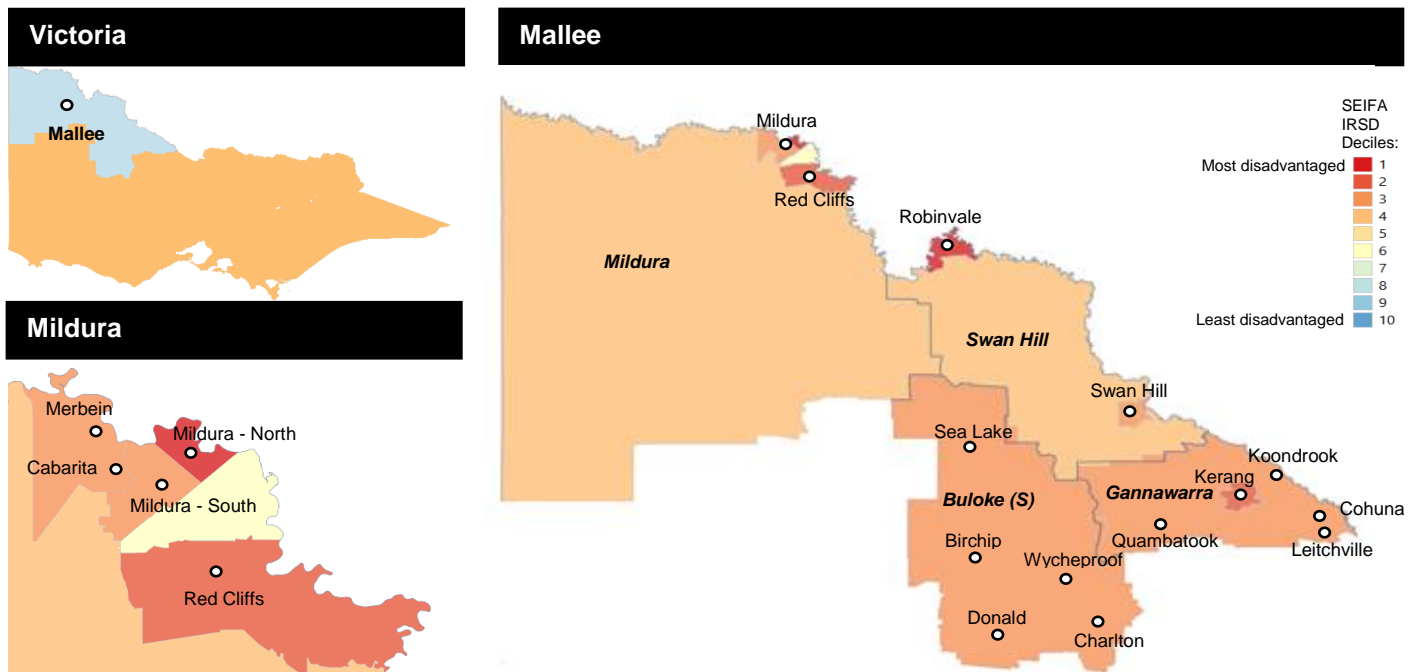


Infrastructure Victoria is investigating infrastructure investment in regional Victoria that builds on the economic strengths of a region, or that reduces disadvantage, primarily through providing greater access to services and economic opportunities. This fact sheet is focussed on reducing disadvantage, and should be read in conjunction with the accompanying framework for reducing disadvantage through infrastructure.

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide evidence that will inform the problem definition for each of Victoria's nine regions through consultation with stakeholders. The project has a specific focus on **areas that experience relatively high levels of disadvantage** (ranked in the bottom 30% of the index of Socio-Economic Disadvantage, SEIFA) and this fact sheet provides **indicators showing poor outcomes for key demographic groups living in these areas**.

Infrastructure Victoria invites key stakeholders and service providers to make submissions that provide evidence on which infrastructure could make a difference in reducing disadvantage for the region.



The maps show a visual representation of the Mallee region based on Index of Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (SEIFA IRSD) data (2016). The red and orange shaded areas represent areas of high relative disadvantage.

## About the Mallee Region

The Mallee region is 45,000 square kilometres in extent (covering 17 per cent of Victoria) and is characterised by predominantly rural areas. The southern part of the region extends to the Wimmera incorporating agricultural towns such as Donald. The northern part forms part of the New South Wales-Victorian border along the Murray River, with Mildura being the main regional centre in the far north of the region. The western reaches of the region border South Australia and primarily consist of agricultural land and national parks. The region consists of two regional centres, these being Mildura and Swan Hill.

The Mallee region comprises four Local Government Areas: Mildura, Swan Hill, Gannawarra and Buloke.

The Mallee region is one of Victoria's more remote regions occupying the north west corner of the state and borders both New South Wales and South Australia. The Mallee region does not border metropolitan Melbourne and therefore the region's population and economy are not directly influenced by the benefits and pressures associated with being adjacent to Melbourne's peri-urban fringe.

Source: *Aither Mallee Regional Profile, March 2019*

## Aboriginal Communities in Mallee:

Infrastructure Victoria acknowledges the Mallee region includes the traditional lands of the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee, being Latji Latji, Ngintait and Nyeri Nyeri Traditional Owners, and the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk peoples, and comprises important cultural heritage assets. The lands of the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee are located in the north west at the junction of the Victorian, New South Wales and South Australian borders, and stretches east to Mildura and south to Ouyen and Pinnaroo. The land of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk people is held in the Mallee region south of Ouyen and Pinnaroo to Edenhope and Stawell, and extends north into the Wimmera Southern Mallee region.

Across the Mallee region Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) play a central role in the provision of services and the promotion and protection of Aboriginal people's rights. This includes health, housing, law and justice, child and family welfare, child development, education, land management and heritage protection services and assistance. The Aboriginal population across Victoria is growing rapidly creating significant demand pressures on Aboriginal and other services in the region. To find out more about Aboriginal land and communities, services and regular cultural activities in the region see the Deadly Story website [deadlystory.com](http://deadlystory.com)

Infrastructure Victoria is interested to understand if there are infrastructure solutions for this region that can address disadvantage and help build health and prosperity for Aboriginal people.

## Disadvantage in Buloke, Gannawarra and Swan Hill

All local government areas in the Mallee region have towns experiencing high levels of disadvantage (e.g. Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Cohuna, Kerang, Swan Hill), with Robinvale being one of the most disadvantaged towns in the state. Most of the smaller towns are declining in population size. However, there is some population growth occurring in larger towns such as Cohuna, Kerang and Swan Hill.

While Robinvale features a younger age profile, compared to the Victorian state average, all other towns have a much proportion of older people.

In all of these disadvantaged towns, there is a significant proportion of households that had no access to the internet in 2016. They also have indicators showing poor health outcomes with the rate of preventable hospitalisations being significantly higher than the Victorian average

In Robinvale the proportion of school leavers aged between 14 and 25 years not in the workforce or in education and training is double the state average.

## Demographics – Buloke, Gannawarra and Swan Hill

Below is a selection of demographic statistics for the region. Evidence shows that for some key population groups (such as young children, students leaving school, older people, people with disabilities), if access to services is improved it can improve their life outcomes. For this reason, IV is focussing additional attention on a number of vulnerable groups.

LGA	Buloke	Gannawarra		Swan Hill		
SA2 [UCL town]	Buloke [Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake, Wycheproof]	Gannawarra [Barham - Koondrook, Cohuna, Leitchville, Quambatook]	Kerang [Kerang]	Robinvale [Robinvale]	Swan Hill [Swan Hill]	Victorian Average
Remoteness classification	Regional towns – remote <sup>^</sup>	Regional towns - remote <sup>^</sup>	Regional town	Regional town – remote <sup>^</sup>	Regional centre	
Population	6,202 ↓	6,653 ↑	3,890 ↑	3,313 ↓	10,907 ↑	5,926,624 ↑
0 – 4 years old	4%	5%	5%	7%	7%	6%
5 – 14 years old	12%	11%	11%	14%	12%	12%
15 – 24 years old	9%	10%	10%	12%	13%	13%
25 – 64 years old	47%	47%	45%	53%	48%	53%
Over 65	28%	27%	29%	15%	20%	16%
Over 75 Living Alone	31%	29%	32%	27%	34%	27%
Requires assistance with daily living	7%	6%	8%	5%	6%	5%
Disability pension (15 - 64)*	10%	10%		8%		5%
Aged pension*	64%	71%		69%		63%
Single parent families	12%	10%	15%	16%	17%	15%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	1%	2%	2%	8%	4%	1%
Low English proficiency	0%	0%	0%	9%	2%	4%
Social housing*	3%	3%		7%		4%

Sources: ABS Census, PHIDU

↑↓: Population change between 2011 and 2016

\* Statistics are taken from the LGA that the town sits in

<sup>^</sup> remote - over 60 minutes from a regional city or centre

## Outcomes – Buloke, Gannawarra and Swan Hill

Below are a range of indicators that demonstrate the types and levels of disadvantage for key demographic groups in the region's most disadvantaged areas. See the Appendix for further information on indicators.

LGA	Buloke		Gannawarra		Swan Hill		Vic Average
SA2 [UCL town]	Buloke [Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake, Wycheproof]	Gannawarra [Barham - Koondrook, Cohuna, Leitchville, Quambatook]	Kerang [Kerang]	Robinvale [Robinvale]	Swan Hill [Swan Hill]		
<b>Place-based disadvantage</b>							
SEIFA IRSD Decile (1-10)	3	3	2	1	3		5
<b>ICT Indicator</b>							
No Internet Access	31%	29%	32%	38%	27%		17%
<b>Transport</b>							
Public Transport access*	7%	9%			38%		51%
No Car	6%	4%	7%	9%	8%		8%
<b>Early Years/Children</b>							
Kindergarten enrolment*^	95%	94%			87%		93%
Developmentally vulnerable children	17%	10%	9%	15%	16%		10%
Children in jobless families*	11%	12%			13%		11%
<b>Young People</b>							
School leavers (14 - 25 years old) not in labour force/training/education	2%	3%	4%	6%	3%		3%
Early school leavers (20 – 30 years old) not finishing year 12	29%	37%	38%	27%	31%		17%
<b>Health</b>							
GP per 1,000 population*	1.3	1.1			1.2		1.2
Life expectancy – male*	76.9	78.5			77.3		79
Life expectancy - female	83.8	84.6			83.7		84
Poor dental health*	8%	4%			6%		5%
Satisfaction with health*	84%	84%			84%		84%
Preventable hospitalisations per 1,000 population*	43.7	47.3			39.2		28.5
Mental health clients per 1,000*	11.8	14.9			17.9		14.5
<b>Households</b>							
Rental stress	3%	4%	7%	10%	10%		9%
Homelessness per 1,000*	1.3	1.7			7.9		3.3
<b>Crime</b>							
Offence rate per 100,000*	3,733	5,388			11,810		7,422
<b>Economic &amp; Financial</b>							
Government support as main income source*	33%	33%			33%		26%
Unemployment rate	4%	4%	6%	7%	5%		7%
Labour participation rate	54%	56%	50%	52%	59%		60%
Individual income under \$400/week	29%	29%	26%	23%	22%		25%
Young people receiving unemployment benefit*	4%	3%			4%		3%
People receiving unemployment benefit long term*	6%	6%			5%		4%

■ 2 standard deviations from state average (~bottom 2.5%) ■ 1 standard deviation from state average (~bottom 16%)

\*Statistics are taken from the LGA that the town sits in ^May be more than 100 per cent due to enrolments from outside the local population

## Disadvantage in Mildura

The regional City of Mildura and the surrounding smaller towns of Merbein, Cabarita and Redcliffs are all experiencing population growth as well as high levels of disadvantage. Unlike many other disadvantaged towns across the Victoria, these places are not aging, with the age profile being similar to the state average.

In the northern part of Mildura almost one in four families are single parent families. Mildura and the nearby towns also have a much higher proportion of Aboriginal people.

There are number of poor outcomes for young people in Mildura and the surrounding towns, with a much higher proportion of young people not in work or learning and a significant proportion of people aged under 30 years who have not completed year 12. Access to the internet is poor and the proportion of people who are clients of mental health services is much higher than the state average. The proportion of people receiving unemployment benefits long term is double the state average.

## Demographics – Mildura

Below is a selection of demographic statistics for the region. Evidence shows that for some key population groups (such as young children, students leaving school, older people, people with disabilities), if access to services is improved it can improve their life outcomes. For this reason, IV is focussing additional attention on a number of vulnerable groups.

LGA	Mildura				
SA2 [UCL town]	Merbein [Cabarita, Merbein]	Mildura - North [Mildura]	Mildura - South [Mildura]	Red Cliffs [Red Cliffs]	Victorian Average
Remoteness classification	Regional towns	Regional city		Regional town	
Population	4,773 ↑	18,065 ↑	14,552 ↑	5,878 ↑	5,926,624 ↑
0 – 4 years old	6%	7%	6%	6%	6%
5 – 14 years old	13%	12%	12%	13%	12%
15 – 24 years old	12%	13%	12%	12%	13%
25 – 64 years old	50%	50%	49%	51%	53%
Over 65	19%	18%	20%	18%	16%
Over 75 Living Alone	22%	31%	31%	33%	27%
Requires assistance with daily living	7%	7%	7%	6%	5%
Disability pension (15 - 64)*	9%				5%
Aged pension*	73%				63%
Single parent families	16%	24%	18%	17%	15%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	4%	5%	4%	3%	1%
Low English proficiency	1%	3%	3%	1%	4%
Social housing*	6%				4%

Sources: ABS Census, PHIDU

↑↓: Population change between 2011 and 2016

\* Statistics are taken from the LGA that the town sits in

## Outcomes – Mildura

Below are a range of indicators that demonstrate the types and levels of disadvantage for key demographic groups in the region's most disadvantaged areas. See the Appendix for further information on indicators.

LGA	Mildura				
SA2 [UCL town]	Merbein [Cabarita, Merbein]	Mildura - North [Mildura]	Mildura - South [Mildura]	Red Cliffs [Red Cliffs]	Vic Average
<b>Place-based disadvantage</b>					
SEIFA IRSD Decile (1-10)	3	1	3	2	5
<b>ICT Indicator</b>					
No Internet Access	26%	27%	25%	27%	17%
<b>Transport</b>					
Public Transport access*	53%				51%
No Car	5%	10%	7%	6%	8%
<b>Early Years/Children</b>					
Kindergarten enrolment*^	89%				93%
Developmentally vulnerable children	4%	16%	14%	14%	10%
Children in jobless families*	17%				11%
<b>Young People</b>					
School leavers (14 - 25 years old) not in labour force/training/education	6%	6%	4%	5%	3%
Early school leavers (20 – 30 years old) not finishing year 12	41%	35%	31%	37%	17%
<b>Health</b>					
GP per 1,000 population*	1.2				1.2
Life expectancy – male*	77.5				79
Life expectancy – female*	82.8				84
Poor dental health*	4%				5%
Satisfaction with health*	81%				84%
Preventable hospitalisations per 1,000 population*	26.2				28.5
Mental health clients per 1,000*	24				14.5
<b>Households</b>					
Rental stress	6%	16%	11%	7%	9%
Homelessness per 1,000*	4.9				3.3
<b>Crime</b>					
Offence rate per 100,000*	11,547				7,422
<b>Economic &amp; Financial</b>					
Government support as main income source*	37%				26%
Unemployment rate	7%	10%	7%	7%	7%
Labour participation rate	59%	53%	56%	57%	60%
Individual income under \$400/week	26%	26%	25%	24%	25%
Young people receiving unemployment benefit*	7%				3%
People receiving unemployment benefit long term*	8%				4%

■ 2 standard deviations from state average (~bottom 2.5%) ■ 1 standard deviation from state average (~bottom 16%)

\*Statistics are taken from the LGA that the town sits in ^May be more than 100 per cent due to enrolments from outside the local population

The Victorian Government, through Regional Development Victoria, has established Regional Partnerships as part of a process for regional stakeholders such as local councils, business and community leaders to engage with Victorian government departments to highlight regional challenges and opportunities.

IV has drawn on initial consultations with stakeholders in the region, including the Regional Partnerships, to develop our understanding of the regions' concerns about infrastructure-related issues that could be impacting on regional disadvantage.

## What we have heard from Mallee stakeholders:

1. Primary health provision is not available or accessible to some people in the Mallee, which leads to presentations to hospital that could have been prevented with earlier intervention.
2. Transport to employment and training opportunities outside of Mallee's main towns is either non-existent or poorly timetabled.
3. Digital connectivity in many areas is either patchy or non-existent.
4. Fewer resources are available to provide services to declining rural populations and there are limited public transport options to provide access to services.

## ► Next steps

Infrastructure Victoria is now taking submissions from interested stakeholders. Please go to the [IV website](#) to make your submission.

The submission template includes the following questions.

- Have we captured the main issues of disadvantage in your region? If not can you provide further evidence?
- Can you provide evidence of an infrastructure barrier that is contributing to poor outcomes in this region? This could include (among other things) barriers related to:
  - transport,
  - access to digital services, and
  - need for new/upgraded facilities.
- Do you have ideas for infrastructure solutions to address disadvantage in your region, or exceptional examples of what's working well that could be duplicated in other areas?
- Can you provide us with business plans, service plans, program evaluations or other evidence to support your suggested solution?

Submissions close Friday 7 February 2020.

## Other areas in the Mallee region with below average SEIFA rankings.

Towns in SEIFA Decile of 4					
Region	LGA	UCL (Town)	SA2	SA2 Population in UCL	SEIFA IRSD Decile
Mallee	Indigo	Murrayville	Mildura Region	211	4
		Ouyen	Mildura Region	1043	4
	Mildura	Underbool	Mildura Region	183	4
	Swan Hill	Lake Boga	Swan Hill Region	796	4
		Manangatang	Swan Hill Region	239	4
		Nyah	Swan Hill Region	251	4
		Nyah West	Swan Hill Region	467	4
		Woorinen South	Swan Hill Region	273	4

## Appendix: Outcome Data Measures

Table Measure	Full Measure	Source
<b>Place-based disadvantage</b>		
SEIFA IRSD Decile	Socio economic indicator (Socio-economic index for areas, index of relative disadvantage). Deciles are calculated from the SEIFA IRSD scores. The scores are split into 10 groups, or deciles, ranked 1 to 10. The first decile represents bottom 10% of the SEIFA scores while the tenth decile represents the top 10% of the SEIFA scores. ABS Catalogue 2033.0.55.001	ABS
<b>ICT Indicator</b>		
No internet access	% households with no access to internet - 2016 Census	ABS
<b>Transport</b>		
Public transport access	% population that has access to public transport - Objective counts and proximity to trains/bus/ferry - 2016 Census	ABS
No car	% households with no car - 2016 Census	ABS
<b>Early Years/Children</b>		
4 year old Kindergarten enrolment	% first year children enrolled in kindergarten - VCAMS 4-year old participation data	Data.Vic
Developmentally vulnerable children	% children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains - 2009-2018 Public Data Table SA2	AEDC
Children in jobless families	% children aged less than 15 years in jobless families - Social Health Atlas of Australia - Data by LGA - 2018: Families	PHIDU
<b>Young People</b>		
Early school leavers (15 – 24 years old) not in labour force/training/education	% school leavers (did not complete grade 10 or above), 15 – 24 years old, not in the labour force and/or further education/training (vocational or higher education) – 2016 Census	ABS
Early school leavers (20 – 30 years old) not finishing year 12	% school leavers (that left school before completing year 12), 20 – 30 years old – 2016 Census	ABS
<b>Health</b>		
GP per 1000 population	Number of General Practitioners per 1,000 population - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
Life expectancy - male	Life expectancy (years) male - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
Life expectancy - female	Life expectancy (years) female - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
Poor dental health	% people reporting poor dental health - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
Satisfaction with health	% population who were mostly or completely satisfied with their health (inverse of estimated number of people aged 15 years and over with fair or poor self-assessed health (modelled estimates) -- Social Health Atlas of Australia - Data by LGA – 2014-15	PHIDU
Preventable hospitalisations per 1,000 population	Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions (Potentially Preventable Hospitalisation) separations for all conditions per 1,000 population) - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
Mental health clients per 1,000	Mental health (registered clients per 1,000 population) - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
<b>Households</b>		
Rental stress	% households with rent payments greater than or equal to 30% of household income - 2016 Census	ABS
Homelessness per 1,000	Homeless people (estimated) per 1,000 population - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
<b>Crime</b>		
Offence rate per 100,000	Offence rate per 100,000 population; objective crimes against the person in public or property (total crime rate) - Victorian Crime Statistics by LGA – Research Paper, August 2018	DPS
<b>Economic &amp; Financial</b>		
Government support as main income source	% estimated number of people aged 18 years and over who had government support as their main source of income in the last 2 years (2014) - Social Health Atlas of Australia - Data by LGA - 2018: Personal and financial stressors (modelled estimates)	PHIDU
Unemployment rate	% unemployment rate - 2016 Census	ABS
Labour participation rate	% labour participation rate - 2016 Census	ABS
Individual income under \$400/week	% individual income under \$400 per week - 2016 Census	ABS
Young people receiving unemployment benefit	% young people aged 16 to 24 receiving an unemployment benefit - Social Health Atlas of Australia - Data by LGA - 2018: Income support recipients	PHIDU
People receiving unemployment benefit long term	% people receiving an unemployment benefit long-term - Social Health Atlas of Australia - Data by LGA - 2018: Income support recipients	PHIDU