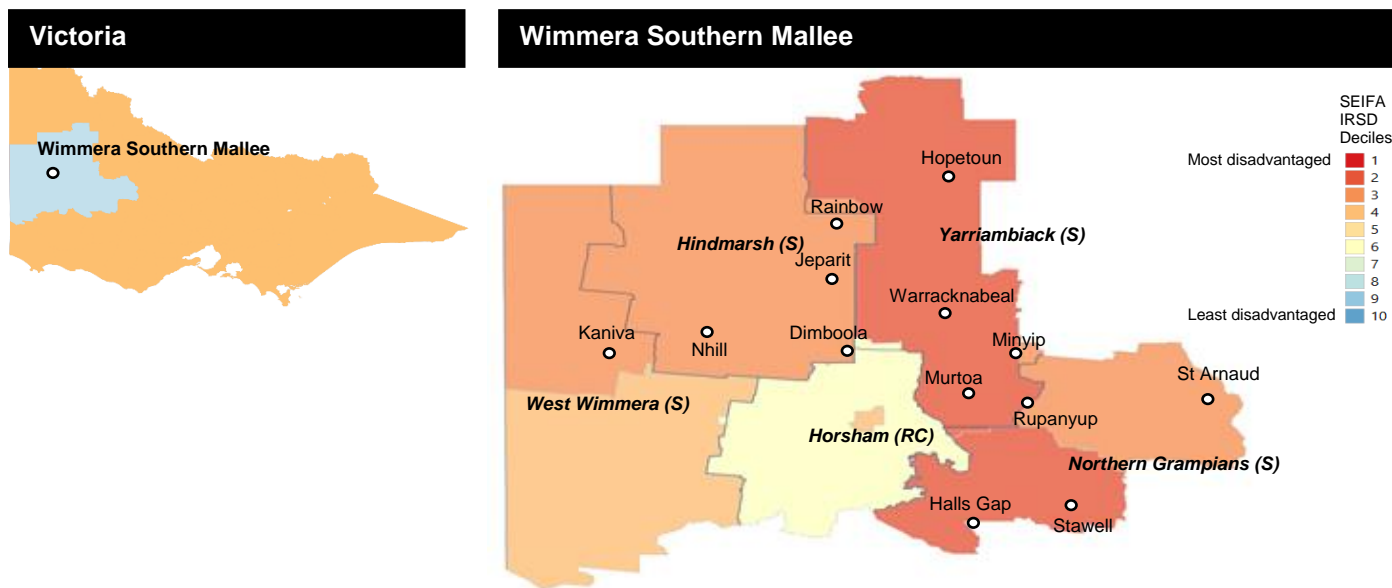


Infrastructure Victoria is investigating infrastructure investment in regional Victoria that builds on the economic strengths of a region, or that reduces disadvantage, primarily through providing greater access to services and economic opportunities. This fact sheet is focussed on reducing disadvantage, 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 Wimmera Southern 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 Wimmera Southern Mallee Region

The Wimmera Southern Mallee region is 33,900 square kilometres (15 per cent of Victoria) and is predominantly rural. The northern part of the region extends to the Mallee incorporating agricultural towns such as Hopetoun. The region's south includes the Grampians and Mount Arapiles area, both of which are important tourist destinations. The western parts of the region border South Australia and are primarily agricultural land and national parks. Horsham is the region's major regional centre.

Wimmera Southern Mallee comprises five Local Government Areas: Horsham, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack and Northern Grampians.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee region is one of Victoria's more remote regions, bordering South Australia. The Wimmera Southern Mallee region is far from metropolitan Melbourne and therefore the region's population and economy are not influenced by the benefits and pressures associated with being adjacent to Melbourne's peri-urban fringe.

Source: Aither Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Profile, March 2019

Aboriginal Communities in Wimmera Southern Mallee

Infrastructure Victoria acknowledges the Wimmera Southern Mallee region includes the traditional lands of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk peoples and sections of the land of the Dja Dja Warrung people, Taungurong people and the Yorta Yorta people, and comprises important cultural heritage assets. The land of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk people stretches from Ouyen in the Mallee region in the north to skirt the Grampians and includes Stawell and Ararat in the south, and spans from the Victorian-South Australian border to Birchip and the southern tip of Lake Tyrrell in the east. The land of the Dja Dja Warrung people is located in the east of the Wimmera Southern Mallee region near St Arnaud and continues east into the Loddon Campaspe region.

Across the Wimmera Southern 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

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 the Wimmera Southern Mallee Region:

A large number of small towns across the region are experiencing disadvantage (eg Nhill, Rainbow, Dimboola, Kaniva, Halls Gap, Stawell, St Arnaud, Hopetown, Murtoa, Warracknabeal). Most of these towns are also declining in size and have ageing populations. The proportion of people on a disability pension living in these towns is much higher than the state average. For example Yarriambiack has three times the state average of people receiving the disability pension.

Household access to the internet is poor across the region, with almost a third of households in St Arnaud not having access.

Across most towns approximately one third of school leavers aged under 30 years did not complete year 12. A range of indicators also show poor health outcomes in most of these towns. For example, male life expectancy is much lower than the state figure in the Shire of Northern Grampians' towns. A higher than average proportion of people living in these towns also report having poor dental health. The rate of preventable hospitalisations in the Shire of Hindmarsh is almost double the Victorian average.

Demographics

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	Hindmarsh (S)	West Wimmera (S)	Northern Grampians (S)		Yarriambiack (S)	
SA2 [UCL town]	Nhill Region [Dimboola, Jeparit, Nhill, Rainbow]	Nhill Region [Kaniva]	Stawell [Halls Gap, Stawell]	St Arnaud [St Arnaud]	Yarriambiack [Hopetown, Minyip, Murtoa, Rupanyup, Warracknabeal]	Victorian Average
Remoteness classification	Regional towns – remote [^]	Regional town – remote [^]	Regional towns	Regional town – remote [^]	Regional towns – remote [^]	
Population	6,888 ↓	6,888 ↓	8,096 ↓	3,351 ↓	6,623 ↓	5,926,624 ↑
0 – 4 years old	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%
5 – 14 years old	10%	10%	11%	10%	11%	12%
15 – 24 years old	10%	10%	11%	9%	10%	13%
25 – 64 years old	48%	48%	51%	49%	47%	53%
Over 65	26%	26%	24%	28%	28%	16%
Over 75 Living Alone	30%	30%	32%	31%	32%	27%
Requires assistance with daily living	7%	7%	5%	8%	9%	5%
Disability pension (15 - 64)*	11%	8%	13%		15%	5%
Aged pension*	68%	60%	74%		66%	63%
Single parent families	11%	11%	14%	13%	15%	15%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Low English proficiency	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	4%
Social housing*	1%	1%	4%		2%	4%

Sources: ABS Census, PHIDU

↑↓: Population change between 2011 and 2016

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

[^] remote - over 60 minutes from a regional city or centre

Outcomes

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	Hindmarsh (S)	West Wimmera (S)	Northern Grampians (S)		Yarriambiack (S)	
SA2 [UCL town]	Nhill Region [Dimboola, Jeparit, Nhill, Rainbow]	Nhill Region [Kaniva]	Stawell [Halls Gap, Stawell]	St Arnaud [St Arnaud]	Yarriambiack [Hopetown, Minyip, Murtoa, Rupanyup, Warracknabeal]	Vic Average
Place-based disadvantage						
SEIFA IRSD Decile (1-10)	3	3	2	3	2	5
ICT Indicator						
No Internet Access	29%	29%	27%	31%	29%	17%
Transport						
Public Transport access*	21%	9%	39%		8%	51%
No Car	5%	5%	7%	8%	6%	8%
Early Years/Children						
Kindergarten enrolment*	88%	95%	121%		84%	93%
Developmentally vulnerable children	14%	14%	9%	12%	12%	10%
Children in jobless families*	13%	11%	12%		16%	11%
Young People						
School leavers (14 - 25 years old) not in labour force/training/education	3%	3%	4%	5%	5%	3%
Early school leavers (20 – 30 years old) not finishing year 12	33%	33%	35%	30%	29%	17%
Health						
GP per 1,000 population*	1.1	1.3	1.2		0.7	1.2
Life expectancy – male*	77.7	76.7	75.7		78.1	79
Life expectancy – female*	83.6	85	82.8		84.8	84
Poor dental health*	11%	6%	9%		11%	5%
Satisfaction with health*	82%	82%	81%		82%	84%
Preventable hospitalisations per 1,000 population*	56	39.7	31.7		37.1	28.5
Mental health clients per 1,000*	14.5	12.6	20		13.1	14.5
Households						
Rental stress	3%	3%	7%	5%	3%	9%
Homelessness per 1,000*	0.6	1.2	3		0.4	3.3
Crime						
Offence rate per 100,000*	6,136	4,226	9,099		8,146	7,422
Economic & Financial						
Government support as main income source*	30%	30%	36%		30%	26%
Unemployment rate	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	7%
Labour participation rate	52%	52%	52%	53%	49%	60%
Individual income under \$400/week	28%	28%	26%	29%	27%	25%
Young people receiving unemployment benefit*	4%	2%	6%		6%	3%
People receiving unemployment benefit long term*	6%	4%	7%		6%	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 Wimmera Southern Mallee stakeholders:

1. Health and safety outcomes in the region are negatively impacted by limited public transport options, especially for young people accessing key health and welfare services.
2. The region has some of the poorest results for early childhood development benchmarks in Victoria, with a lack of access to early years programs.
3. Digital infrastructure is not equally provided across the region. Outside Horsham the access, speed and cost of internet are often poor.
4. The lack of access to, and frequency of, public transport in Western Victoria is contributing to social isolation and compromises economic development in rural areas.
5. Small rural councils are unable to provide adequate services or maintain infrastructure to adequate standards due to declining populations and ageing infrastructure.
6. Households have limited access to affordable energy, with energy sector growth limited by grid capacity, regulation and poorly integrated development.
7. The region does not have specific housing for families escaping family violence, transitional and crisis housing is fully occupied and does not meet the essential needs for protection.
8. The lack of social housing in the region means pathways to sustainable and long-term housing for women and families are absent.

► 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 Wimmera Southern 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
Wimmera Southern Mallee	Horsham	Horsham	Horsham	15630	4
	West Wimmera	Edenhope	West Wimmera	687	4
		Goroke	West Wimmera	218	4

Appendix: Outcome Data Measures

Table Measure	Full Measure	Source
Place-based disadvantage		
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
ICT Indicator		
No internet access	% households with no access to internet - 2016 Census	ABS
Transport		
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
Early Years/Children		
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
Young People		
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
Health		
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
Households		
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
Crime		
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
Economic & Financial		
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