

Homelessness in Goulburn Valley

The Goulburn Valley sub-region comprises five LGAs and has a population of approximately 170,000 people (by LGA). Several communities in the Goulburn Valley have been affected by natural disasters in recent years, including floods in Shepparton and Rushworth in 2022, which displaced many residents causing property damage and homelessness, creating pressure on local housing stock availability and increasing rent causing forced relocation.

Table 1: People who are experiencing homelessness or marginally housed by LGA across the Goulburn Valley sub-region¹

| Rank | LGA | Count | | | Rates per 1000 | | |
|--------------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------|
| | | Homeless | Marginally housed | Total | Homeless | Marginally housed | Total |
| 1 | Greater Shepparton | 415 | 494 | 909 | 6 | 7 | 13 |
| 2 | Strathbogie | 27 | 57 | 84 | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| 3 | Murrindindi | 36 | 64 | 100 | 2 | 4 | 7 |
| 4 | Moirā | 81 | 100 | 181 | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| 5 | Mitchell | 117 | 110 | 227 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| Total | | 676 | 825 | 1501 | 4 | 5 | 9 |

*Murray PHN region totals calculated using LGA level data. LGAs ranked by rate of total homelessness and marginally housed (count).

Table 2: SHS clients by LGA across the Goulburn Valley sub-region²

| Rank | LGA | Client count | | | | Rate per 1000 people | | | |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------|------------|-------------|----------------------|---------|------------|-----------|
| | | Homeless | At risk | Not stated | Total | Homeless | At risk | Not stated | Total |
| 1 | Greater Shepparton | 826 | 1035 | 148 | 2009 | 12 | 15 | 2 | 30 |
| 2 | Moirā | 195 | 212 | 76 | 483 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 16 |
| 3 | Mitchell | 200 | 358 | 85 | 643 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 13 |
| 4 | Strathbogie | 20 | 66 | 10 | 96 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 8 |
| 5 | Murrindindi | 32 | 72 | 16 | 120 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 8 |
| Total | | 1273 | 1743 | 335 | 3351 | 7 | 10 | 2 | 19 |

*Murray PHN region totals calculated using LGA level data. LGAs ranked by rate of total SHS clients.

In the Goulburn Valley sub-region, eight per cent of all people recorded as experiencing homelessness in the 2021 ABS Census identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is slightly lower than the catchment (10 per cent), but higher than the state (four per cent).

The homelessness rate for people who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander was 11 per 1000 people in the Goulburn Valley sub-region. This is lower than the rate for the catchment (14 per 1000) and for state (17).

Figure 1: Trend of SHS client count for the Goulburn Valley sub-region by LGA - July 2014 to June 2023³

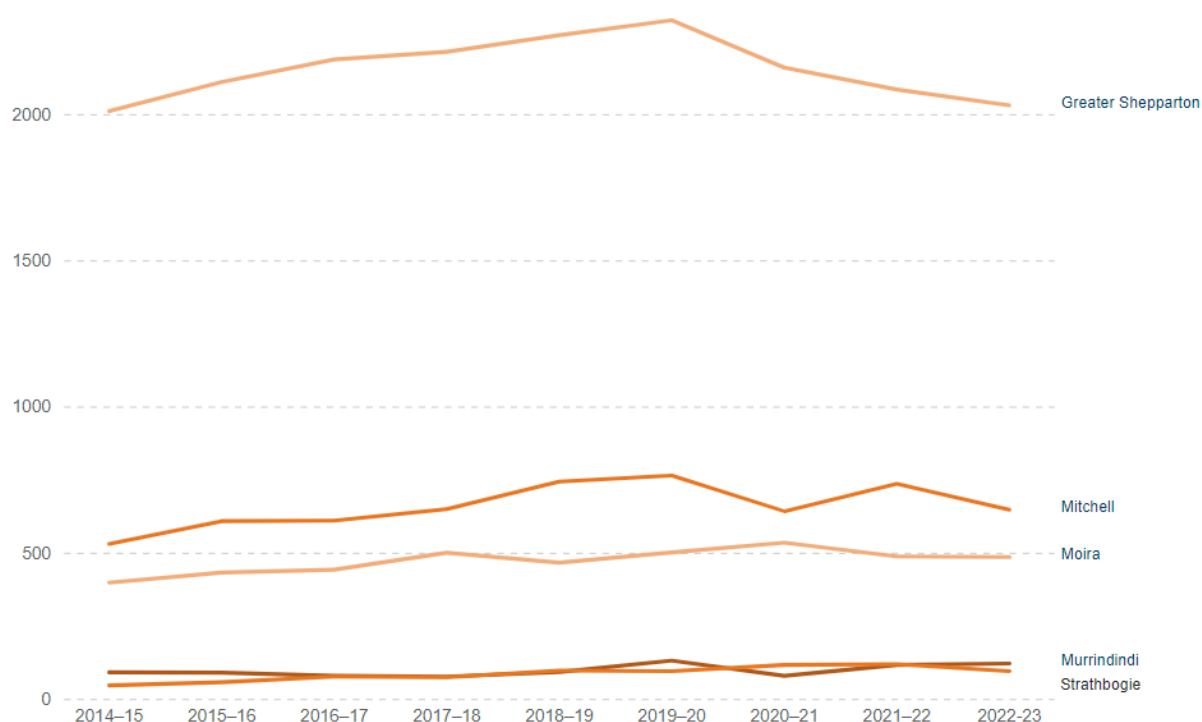


Table 3: People who are experiencing homelessness or marginally housed and have long-term health conditions in the Goulburn Valley sub-region (by count)¹

| | Greater Shepparton | Mitchell | Moira | Murrindindi | Strathbogrie | Total |
|---|--------------------|----------|-------|-------------|--------------|-------|
| Arthritis | 50 | 13 | 18 | 3 | 0 | 84 |
| Asthma | 55 | 30 | 17 | 4 | 3 | 109 |
| Cancer (including remission) | 9 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 21 |
| Dementia (including Alzheimer's) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Diabetes (excluding gestational diabetes) | 38 | 4 | 15 | 8 | 3 | 68 |
| Heart disease (including heart attack or angina) | 18 | 4 | 11 | 9 | 4 | 46 |
| Kidney disease | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Lung condition (including COPD or emphysema) | 18 | 7 | 9 | 0 | 5 | 39 |
| Mental health condition (including depression or anxiety) | 100 | 44 | 23 | 9 | 11 | 187 |
| Stroke | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 14 |
| Any other long-term health condition(s) | 51 | 17 | 13 | 3 | 0 | 84 |
| No long-term health condition(s) | 552 | 116 | 89 | 63 | 60 | 880 |
| Not stated | 145 | 36 | 33 | 15 | 12 | 241 |

¹Murray PHN sub-region totals calculated using LGA level data

Table 4: Rates per 1000 of people who are experiencing homelessness or marginally housed and have long-term health conditions in the Goulburn Valley region (per 1000 people)¹

| | Greater Shepparton | Mitchell | Moira | Murrindindi | Strathbogie | Total |
|---|--------------------|----------|-------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| Arthritis | 55 | 57 | 99 | 30 | 0 | 56 |
| Asthma | 61 | 132 | 94 | 40 | 36 | 73 |
| Cancer (including remission) | 10 | 0 | 44 | 40 | 0 | 14 |
| Dementia (including Alzheimer's) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Diabetes (excluding gestational diabetes) | 42 | 18 | 83 | 80 | 36 | 45 |
| Heart disease (including heart attack or angina) | 20 | 18 | 61 | 90 | 48 | 31 |
| Kidney disease | 0 | 0 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Lung condition (including COPD or emphysema) | 20 | 31 | 50 | 0 | 60 | 26 |
| Mental health condition (including depression or anxiety) | 110 | 194 | 127 | 90 | 131 | 125 |
| Stroke | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 60 | 9 |
| Any other long-term health condition(s) | 56 | 75 | 72 | 30 | 0 | 56 |
| No long-term health condition(s) | 607 | 511 | 492 | 630 | 714 | 586 |
| Not stated | 160 | 159 | 182 | 150 | 143 | 161 |

*Murray PHN sub-region totals calculated using LGA level data

Key findings from stakeholder consultations

Strengths

The ACCHO operating in the Goulburn Valley sub-region is Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative Limited located in Mooroopna, which provides comprehensive and Culturally Safe care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities. The flexible service model at Rumbalara includes community transport to and from appointments and extended clinic hours, which were strengths noted by stakeholders.

Stakeholders noted the Care Finder program run by Wintringham in Shepparton as a high-quality service for the Goulburn Valley. The program, commissioned by Murray PHN, supports vulnerable older people in accessing aged care services.

GV Health's 'Jabba the Bus' COVID-19 outreach model was also highlighted as effectively reaching people experiencing homelessness for vaccinations during the COVID pandemic. This model could provide an exemplar or be adapted for general healthcare outreach.

Another service identified by stakeholders as an important service was Beyond Housing's Tenancy Support which provides important tenancy support across North East Victoria and the Goulburn Valley, helping people sustain their private tenancies. The service was considered a possible opportunity for future capacity building activities.



Gaps and opportunities

Limited number of bulk-billing services in the Goulburn Valley sub-region is leading to affordability issues for patients, with fewer options available, especially in smaller towns.

While Beyond Housing plays a critical role in the supply and management of community housing and tenancy support, the scope of its resourcing was perceived by stakeholders to be limited. Some services perceived that Beyond Housing has reduced its scope of services over time, noting that the service no longer has the capacity or mandate to assist clients in finding new housing, which limits support capabilities.

GV Health reported that a major barrier to providing high level of patient care is the lack of accommodation options at the point of discharge, such as refugees experiencing homelessness and temporary accommodation. This is leading to patients being discharged back into homelessness and subsequently returning to the hospital.

References

1. Source: ABS (2021). Public data: accessible to all audiences
2. Source: AIHW (2022-23). Public data: accessible to all audiences
3. Source: AIHW (2014-23). Public data: accessible to all audiences