

Homelessness in North West Victoria

The Murray PHN North West sub-region covers three LGA areas - Buloke, Mildura and Swan Hill - and has an estimated total population of 84,500 people. Some rural towns within the North West, including Robinvale, have transient and migrating population groups, which means that official statistics such as those in the census can underestimate the actual residential population (Geografia, 2019).

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

Rank	LGA	Count			Rates per 1000		
		Homeless	Marginally housed	Total	Homeless	Marginally housed	Total
1	Swan Hill	239	192	431	11	9	20
2	Mildura	345	305	650	6	5	11
3	Buloke	10	18	28	2	3	4
Total		594	515	1109	7	6	13

*Murray PHN sub-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 North West sub-region²

Rank	LGA	Client count				Rate per 1000 people			
		Homeless	At risk	Not stated	Total	Homeless	At risk	Not stated	Total
1	Mildura	618	1195	440	2253	11	21	8	40
2	Swan Hill	231	298	95	624	11	14	4	29
3	Buloke	20	27	27	74	3	4	4	12
Total		869	1520	562	2951	10	18	7	35

*Murray PHN sub-region totals calculated using LGA level data. LGAs ranked by rate of total SHS clients (count).

In the North West sub-region, 13 per cent of all people recorded as experiencing homelessness in the 2021 ABS Census identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is higher than the catchment (10 per cent) and state (4 per cent).

The homelessness rate for people who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander was 21 per 1000 people in the North West sub-region. This was also higher than the rate for catchment (14 per 1000) and for state (17).

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

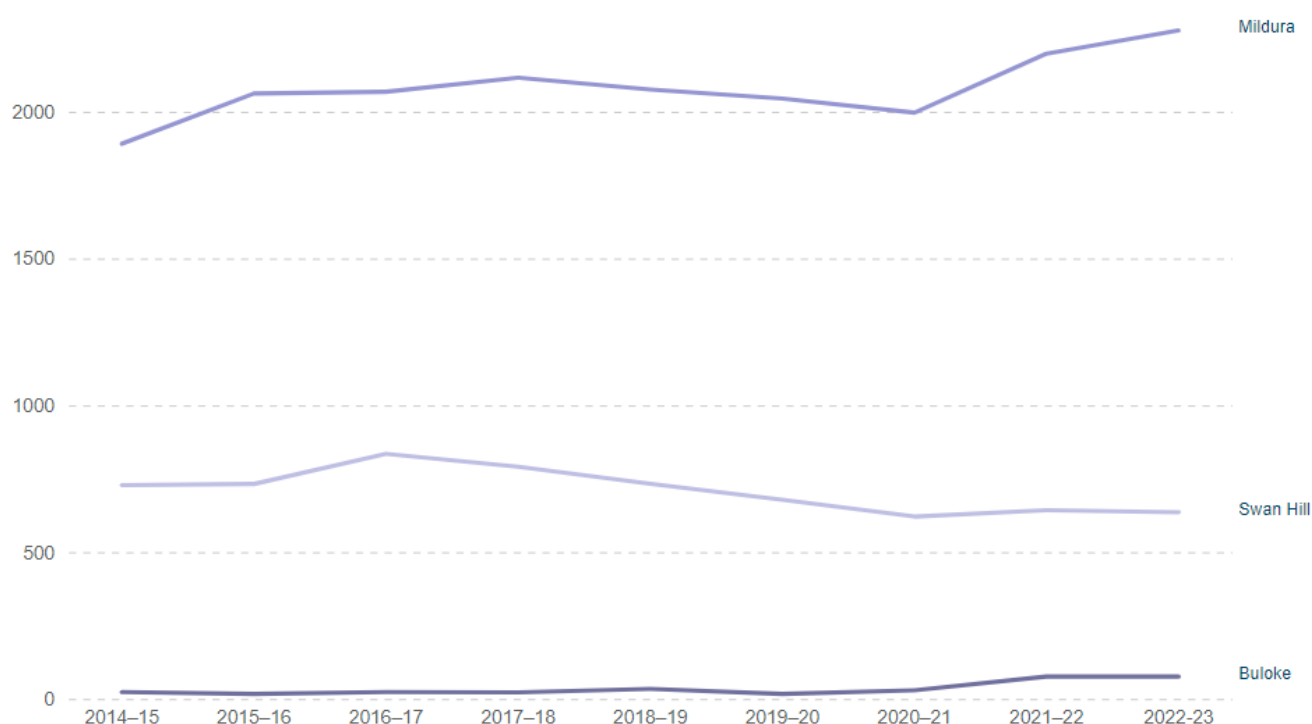


Table 3: Counts of people who are experiencing homelessness or marginally housed and have long-term health conditions in the North West sub-region³

	Buloke	Mildura	Swan Hill	Total
Arthritis	0	25	9	34
Asthma	3	51	17	71
Cancer (including remission)	0	13	3	16
Dementia (including Alzheimer's)	0	0	0	0
Diabetes (excluding gestational diabetes)	0	16	3	19
Heart disease (including heart attack or angina)	0	16	0	16
Kidney disease	0	4	0	4
Lung condition (including COPD or emphysema)	3	8	4	15
Mental health condition (including depression or anxiety)	3	61	17	81
Stroke	0	6	0	6
Any other long-term health condition(s)	3	34	12	49
No long-term health condition(s)	16	413	254	683
Not stated	0	91	106	197

³Murray 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 North West sub-region¹

	Buloke	Mildura	Swan Hill	Total
Arthritis	0	38	21	31
Asthma	107	78	39	64
Cancer (including remission)	0	20	7	14
Dementia (including Alzheimer's)	0	0	0	0
Diabetes (excluding gestational diabetes)	0	25	7	17
Heart disease (including heart attack or angina)	0	25	0	14
Kidney disease	0	6	0	4
Lung condition (including COPD or emphysema)	107	12	9	14
Mental health condition (including depression or anxiety)	107	94	39	73
Stroke	0	9	0	5
Any other long-term health condition(s)	107	52	28	44
No long-term health condition(s)	571	635	589	616
Not stated	0	140	246	178

*Murray PHN region totals calculated using LGA level data

Key findings from stakeholder consultations

Strengths

Two ACCHOs operate in North West Victoria: Mallee District Aboriginal Services located in Mildura, Swan Hill and Kerang, and Murray Valley Aboriginal Co-operative based in Robinvale, and which provide comprehensive and Culturally Safe primary healthcare for First Nations Communities.

Stakeholders recognised Sunraysia Community Health Services as a key health provider in the North West, commending its strong communication and collaboration with other services.

Gaps and opportunities

Stakeholders report that the sub-region faces significant challenges due to a shortage of GPs, particularly in Ouyen. Additionally, concerns were raised about GP availability, accessibility and affordability. Some clinics in the area were not taking new patients and/or were unable to offer bulk-billing, further limiting access to care.

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