

Multicultural populations in the Goulburn Valley

The Goulburn Valley has a rich history of pre- and post-war migration, driven largely by employment in the productive agricultural sector in the region. In recent years, Greater Shepparton has become a key regional settlement location under the Australian Government's Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) with refugees and other humanitarian entrants of various nationalities including Syrian, Afghani, Iraqi, South Sudanese, Malaysian, Sri Lankan and others having settled in the Goulburn Valley. The growth corridor in Mitchell Shire was also noted for its rapidly growing diverse population, including a large Indian population in the Wallan area.

The Goulburn Valley has also become a key employment region for workers engaged under the Commonwealth's PALM scheme, with approximately 1500 (in peak season) workers - mostly from Fiji, Samoa and Papua New Guinea - filling critical workforce shortages, mainly in the region's agricultural sector.

Key service providers in the Goulburn Valley (GV) sub-region include Primary Care Connect and Intereach. HSP support services are subcontracted by AMES Australia and delivered in Shepparton by Uniting VicTas, and Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) services are delivered by the region's multicultural peak body, the Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District.

Country of birth

The Goulburn Valley sub-region is made up of five local government areas (LGAs) and has a total population of 175,063 people, of which 17,235 (9.8%) were born overseas in predominantly non-English speaking (NES) countries.

Figure 1 Population born in NES countries in the Goulburn Valley sub-region by LGA¹

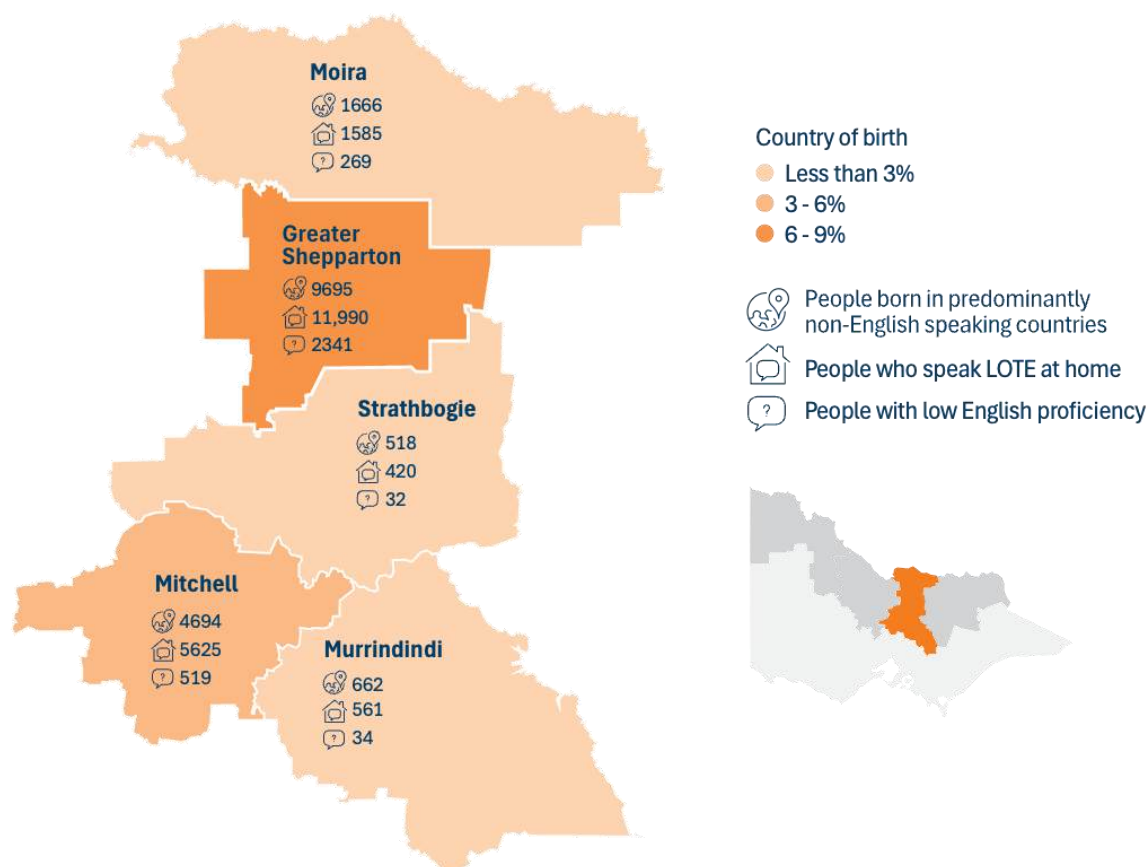


Table 1 - People born in predominantly non-English speaking countries in the Goulburn Valley sub-region by LGA (by proportion of LGA population)¹

Rank	LGA	Count born in NES country	Proportion of all overseas born	Proportion of LGA population	Proportion of Murray PHN region total born NES
1	Greater Shepparton	9695	82.0%	14.2%	18.5%
2	Mitchell	4694	65.0%	9.5%	8.9%
3	Moira	1666	56.2%	5.5%	3.2%
4	Strathbogrie	518	47.2%	4.5%	1.0%
5	Murrindindi	662	40.0%	4.4%	1.3%

Languages spoken

Key insights about languages spoken in GV:

- Total of 20,181 people speak a LOTE at home
- This is 11.5 per cent of all residents in the GV sub-region and 36.5 per cent of all people who speak a LOTE across the Murray PHN catchment.

Table 2 - People who speak a LOTE at home in the Goulburn Valley sub-region by LGA (by proportion of LGA population)¹

Rank	LGA	Count	Proportion of LGA population	Proportion of all Murray PHN region LOTE speakers
1	Greater Shepparton	11990	17.5%	21.7%
2	Mitchell	5625	11.4%	10.2%
3	Moira	1585	5.2%	2.9%
4	Murrindindi	561	3.7%	1.0%
5	Strathbogrie	420	3.7%	0.8%

Table 3 - Top 10 languages spoken at home in the Goulburn Valley sub-region (by count of persons)¹

Rank	Language	Count	Proportion of LOTE speakers in GV sub-region
1	Punjabi	2890	14.3%
2	Italian	1837	9.1%
3	Arabic	1743	8.6%
4	Mandarin	1158	5.7%
5	Hazaraghi	826	4.1%
6	Turkish	696	3.4%
7	Malayalam	612	3.0%
8	Tagalog	504	2.5%
9	Greek	501	2.5%
10	Hindi	494	2.4%

English proficiency

Table 4 - People with low English proficiency in Goulburn Valley sub-region by LGA

(by proportion of LOTE speakers within each LGA)¹

Rank	LGA	Count	Proportion of LOTE	Proportion of LGA population	Proportion of Murray PHN region total
1	Greater Shepparton	2341	19.7%	3.4%	24.5%
2	Moirā	269	17.8%	0.9%	2.8%
3	Mitchell	519	9.5%	1.0%	5.4%
4	Strathbogie	32	9.1%	0.3%	0.3%
5	Murrindindi	34	6.3%	0.2%	0.4%

Table 5 - Top 10 language groups with low English proficiency the Goulburn Valley sub-region

(by Count)¹

Rank	Language	Count	Proportion of language speakers
1	Mandarin	437	37.5%
2	Arabic	405	23.4%
3	Punjabi	363	12.6%
4	Hazaraghi	295	36.1%
5	Italian	214	11.7%
6	Turkish	152	22.2%
7	Malay	127	28.0%
8	Dari	104	44.8%
9	Albanian	97	20.0%
10	Non-verbal, so described	91	67.4%

Table 6 - Top 5 languages spoken in each LGA in the Goulburn Valley sub-region (by Count)¹

Greater Shepparton	1	Punjabi
	2	Arabic
	3	Italian
	4	Hazaraghi
	5	Mandarin
Mitchell	1	Punjabi
	2	Italian
	3	Hindi
	4	Arabic
	5	Mandarin
Moira	1	Italian
	2	Mandarin
	3	Punjabi
	4	Malay
	5	Tagalog
Murrindindi	1	Italian
	2	German
	3	Greek
	4	Mandarin
	5	Punjabi
Strathbogie	1	Mandarin
	2	Italian
	3	Filipino
	4	Thai
	5	Polish

Table 7 - Self-reported rates of long-term health conditions in the Goulburn Valley sub-region by people who speak a LOTE at home compared to the whole population (rate per 1000 people)¹

Health condition	Rate of self-report per 1000 people	
	Speaks LOTE at home	Total population
Arthritis	59	114
Asthma	48	97
Cancer	14	35
Dementia	7	8
Diabetes	56	55
Heart disease	29	49
Kidney disease	8	12
Lung condition	7	24
Mental health condition	42	102
Stroke	8	12
Other long-term condition	61	83
No long-term health condition(s)	752	542

*Crude rates are not adjusted for age profiles of the populations which may vary substantially and explain differences between groups.

Cells highlighted red indicate higher rates of ill health compared to whole population

Long term health conditions

Table 8 - Self-reported rates of long-term health conditions in the Goulburn Valley sub-region for the 10 most common spoken languages
(rate per 1000 people)¹

Health condition	Top 10 language groups Goulburn Valley sub-region									
	Punjabi	Italian	Arabic	Mandarin	Hazaraghi	Turkish	Malayalam	Hindi	Tagalog	Greek
Arthritis	12	223	38	14	41	135	5	22	50	140
Asthma	19	76	71	24	10	122	29	53	50	70
Cancer (including remission)	1	58	9	7	0	13	0	6	0	22
Dementia (including Alzheimer's)	0	31	3	0	6	0	0	0	0	22
Diabetes (excluding gestational diabetes)	29	136	53	22	30	98	34	55	65	102
Heart disease (including heart attack or angina)	9	103	18	9	4	53	0	8	8	82
Kidney disease	2	27	3	0	5	4	7	0	12	12
Lung condition (including COPD or emphysema)	0	28	4	0	4	6	0	0	0	12
Mental health condition (including depression or anxiety)	7	94	42	9	23	118	10	6	22	96
Stroke	0	34	2	0	0	16	0	0	6	24
Any other long-term health condition(s)	19	107	85	24	56	119	18	22	54	86
No long-term health condition(s)	894	449	733	889	832	583	863	832	800	535

*Crude rates are not adjusted for age profiles of the populations which may vary substantially and explain differences between groups.

Cells highlighted red indicate higher rates of ill health compared to whole population

Other health issues

Stakeholders reported the following health issues were concerns within culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in the Goulburn Valley sub-region:

- Mental health
- Chronic pain
- Family violence
- Reproductive health
- Infectious diseases.

Service strengths, gaps and opportunities

Strengths

- The Refugee Health Program and Health Systems Navigators programs are both available in the GV sub-region
- Primary Care Connect, which deliver the Refugee Health Program and the Health Systems Navigators program, were noted to provide culturally safe services, employing bilingual/bicultural workers and providing a range of health and social services
- Workforce of Multilingual Health Educators' Network (WOMHEN project) provides bilingual health educators in Shepparton. Initially focused on COVID education and vaccinations, it has expanded to cover other health topics, including reproductive health, mental health and prevention of gender-based violence
- Cross-sector collaboration and advocacy has helped to build more consistent referral pathways between settlement and health services.

Gaps and opportunities

- Inconsistent access to on-site and telephone interpreters in primary healthcare services
- Mental health services are difficult to access with long wait times for initial appointments
- Opportunity to provide more health service navigation support for priority groups such as PALM scheme workers and older CALD people with low English proficiency.

References

1. Source: ABS (2021). Public data: accessible to all audiences