

Multicultural populations in North East Victoria

The North East (NE) sub-region has a long history of migrant and refugee settlement. Following World War II, migrant camps in Benalla and Bonegilla (near Wodonga) were the arrival points for more than half of the displaced persons who made Australia their home (NAA). Between 1947 and 1971, more than 300,000 migrants passed through the Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre, and the Benalla Migrant Camp housed about 60,000 migrants between 1949-1967.

The NE has migrants from more than 80 different birth countries, and stakeholders noted the growth of population of people of Indian and Filipino ancestry. The sub-region has also become home to emerging communities of humanitarian entrants from countries including Bhutan and Nepal, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Burundi, Iraq, Iran and Syria, supported by the Australian Government's Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP). Within the NE, Albury and Wodonga are key regional humanitarian settlement locations.

Key service providers in the NE sub-region include Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council, North East Multicultural Association, Gateway Health, Red Cross, Uniting and the Albury-Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau.

Demographics of CALD population across the North East sub-region

The NE sub-region is made up of seven local government areas (LGAs) including Albury (NSW). The total population of the sub-region is 190,661 people, of which 6.5 per cent were born overseas in predominantly non-English speaking countries.

Figure 1: Population born in NES countries in the North East sub-region by LGA¹

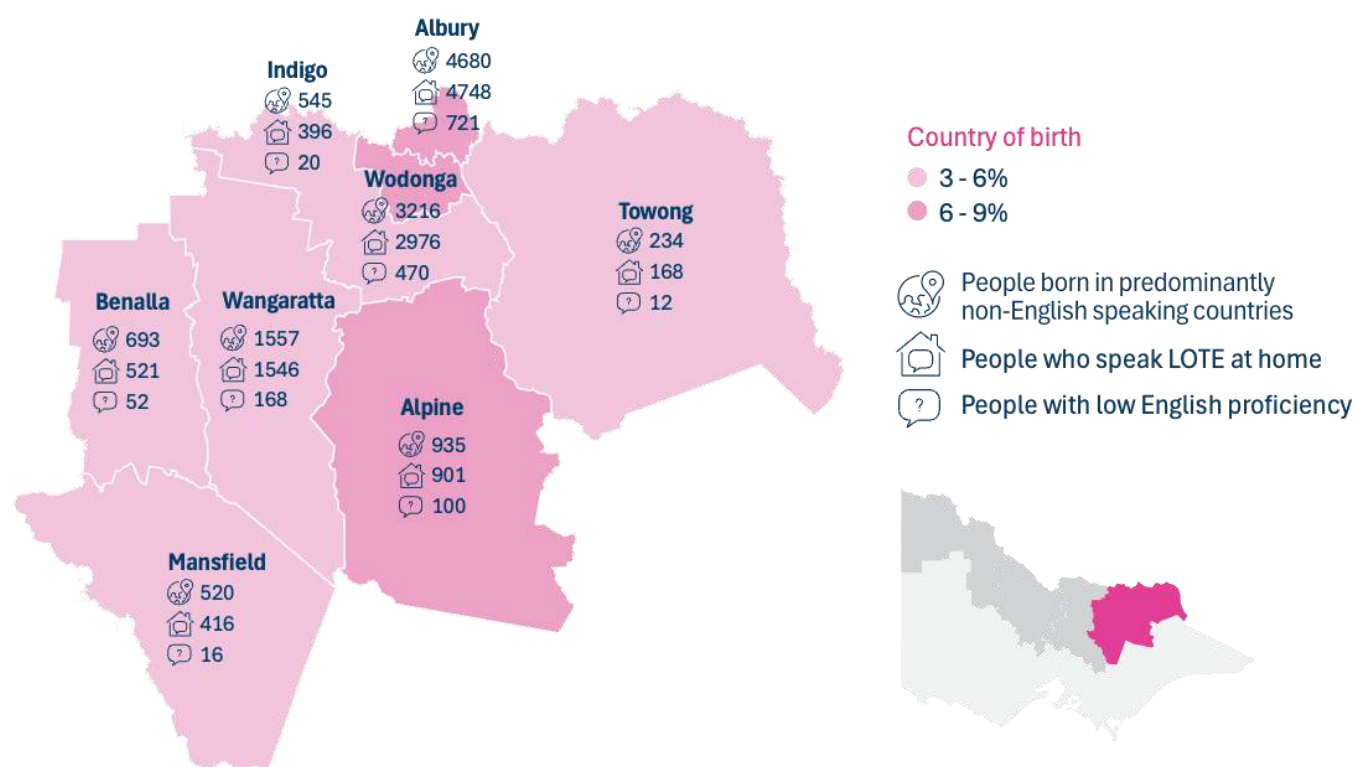


Table 1 - People born in predominantly non-English speaking countries in the North East sub-region by LGA (by proportion of LGA population) ¹

Rank	LGA	Count	Proportion of all overseas born	Proportion of LGA population	Proportion of Murray PHN region total born NES
1	Albury	4680	67.2%	8.3%	8.9%
2	Wodonga	3216	66.0%	7.4%	6.1%
3	Alpine	935	51.4%	7.1%	1.8%
4	Wangaratta	1557	59.0%	5.2%	3.0%
5	Mansfield	520	45.9%	5.1%	1.0%
6	Benalla	693	51.4%	4.8%	1.3%
7	Towong	234	47.5%	3.8%	0.4%
8	Indigo	545	37.5%	3.1%	1.0%

Key insights about languages spoken in NE:

- Total of 11,672 people speak a language other than English (LOTE) at home
- This is 6.1 per cent of all residents in the NE sub-region and 21.1 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 North East 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	Albury	4748	8.5%	8.6%
2	Wodonga	2976	6.9%	5.4%
3	Alpine	901	6.8%	1.6%
4	Wangaratta	1546	5.2%	2.8%
5	Mansfield	416	4.1%	0.8%
6	Benalla	521	3.6%	0.9%
7	Towong	168	2.7%	0.3%
8	Indigo	396	2.3%	0.7%

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

Rank	Language	Speaks LOTE	Proportion of LOTE speakers in the NE region
1	Nepali	1138	9.7%
2	Punjabi	1099	9.4%
3	Italian	1079	9.2%
4	Mandarin	558	4.8%
5	German	503	4.3%
6	Swahili	463	4.0%
7	Tagalog	425	3.6%
8	Filipino	359	3.1%
9	Vietnamese	330	2.8%
10	Hindi	322	2.8%

Table 4 - People with low English proficiency in North East sub-region by LGA (by proportion of LOTE speakers)¹

Rank	LGA	Count	Proportion of LOTE speakers	Proportion of LGA population	Proportion of Murray PHN region total low proficiency
1	Wodonga	470	16.1%	1.1%	4.9%
2	Albury	721	15.5%	1.3%	7.5%
3	Alpine	100	11.6%	0.8%	1.0%
4	Wangaratta	168	11.0%	0.6%	1.8%
5	Benalla	52	11.0%	0.4%	0.5%
6	Towong	12	8.2%	0.2%	0.1%
7	Indigo	20	5.9%	0.1%	0.2%
8	Mansfield	16	4.2%	0.2%	0.2%

Table 5 - Top 10 language groups with low English proficiency the North East sub-region (by Count)¹

Rank	Language	Count	Proportion of language speakers
1	Nepali	385	34.1%
2	Swahili	157	33.8%
3	Mandarin	122	21.7%
4	Italian	121	11.3%
5	Vietnamese	109	32.6%
6	Punjabi	92	8.4%
7	Non-verbal, so described	64	78.0%
8	Lao	40	30.8%
9	Cantonese	38	27.3%
9	Thai	38	15.3%

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

Albury	1	Nepali	Mansfield	1	German
	2	Punjabi		2	Mandarin
	3	Mandarin		3	French
	4	Tagalog		4	Spanish
	5	Swahili		5	Italian
Alpine	1	Italian	Towong	1	German
	2	German		2	Spanish
	3	Filipino		3	Filipino
	4	French		4	Auslan
	5	Mandarin		5	Punjabi
Benalla	1	Punjabi	Wangaratta	1	Italian
	2	Mandarin		2	Nepali
	3	Arabic		3	Thai
	4	German		4	Filipino
	5	Malayalam		5	Punjabi
Indigo	1	Italian	Wodonga	1	Swahili
	2	German		2	Nepali
	3	French		3	Vietnamese
	4	Thai		4	Punjabi
	5	Dutch		5	Mandarin

Key health issues of the CALD population across North East sub-region

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

Health condition	Self-reports per 1000 people	
	Speaks LOTE at home	Total population
Arthritis	62	109
Asthma	52	102
Cancer	23	36
Dementia	10	8
Diabetes	51	50
Heart disease	35	51
Kidney disease	9	11
Lung condition	10	24
Mental health condition	50	111
Stroke	9	12
Other long-term condition	72	87
No long-term health condition(s)	732	539

¹Crude 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

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

Health condition	Top 10 language groups North East sub-region									
	Nepali	Punjabi	Italian	Mandarin	German	Swahili	Tagalog	Filipino	Vietnamese	Hindi
Arthritis	49	0	202	16	157	0	14	19	0	9
Asthma	33	6	67	38	50	0	85	50	18	37
Cancer (including remission)	4	0	75	14	38	0	16	0	0	0
Dementia (including Alzheimer's)	3	0	28	5	34	0	0	0	0	0
Diabetes (excluding gestational diabetes)	59	12	111	25	82	22	33	31	0	50
Heart disease (including heart attack or angina)	13	0	100	7	105	0	0	0	0	0
Kidney disease	5	0	29	0	18	0	12	0	0	9
Lung condition (including COPD or emphysema)	11	0	32	0	24	0	0	0	0	0
Mental health condition (including depression or anxiety)	58	5	97	27	107	0	26	14	0	22
Stroke	0	0	32	0	34	0	0	0	0	0
Any other long-term health condition(s)	73	11	120	30	135	0	71	42	21	25
No long-term health condition(s)	771	956	438	851	459	935	741	816	948	835

*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 NE region (see main report for further details):

- Mental health and trauma
- Women's and reproductive health
- Infectious diseases
- Chronic pain
- Family violence
- Neurodevelopmental conditions in children
- Disability.

Service strengths, gaps and opportunities

Strengths

- Gateway Health is a key primary health provider for CALD communities in the North East, offering services in Wodonga, Wangaratta and Myrtleford, including a multicultural clinic in Wodonga providing refugee health assessments and refugee health nurses
- The WOMHEN (Workforce of Multilingual Health Educators' Network) Project provides bilingual health educators in Wodonga. 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
- Several organisations and groups in the NE sub-region provide health and ancillary services to refugee and migrant populations. These include:
 - HSP services are provided by Red Cross in Albury and by Uniting VicTas in Wodonga
 - Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) services are delivered across Albury and Wodonga by the Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau (case management services) and the Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council (AWECC) (community capacity building activities)
 - The Albury-Wodonga Multicultural Interagency Network (MIN) facilitates information sharing between agencies and services across various sectors
 - Voluntary organisations, including the Murray Valley Sanctuary Refugee Group (MVSRG), play a vital role in refugee sponsorship, community support and navigation.

Gaps and opportunities

- Several organisations play a role in providing settlement support, health and ancillary services to CALD communities in the NE region. The interstate, cross-border context in Albury-Wodonga has resulted in a competitive funding and operational environment, and led to duplication, inefficiencies and service navigation challenges for consumers
- Opportunity to support coordination and collaboration between various service providers working in the health and settlement support space.

References

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