

RESEARCH SUMMARY

A snapshot of health and wellbeing in Hobsons Bay

Our health is determined by much more than genes and lifestyle decisions. It is determined by the circumstances in which we are born, grow, live, work and age. Our health and wellbeing is therefore shaped by the people in our lives, our community and the place in which we live.

Through its various functions, local governments play a major role in protecting, improving and promoting the health of its residents. As the closest level to the community, local governments work to understand the populations they serve and ensure all residents are provided with an environment which allows everyone to equally achieve the best personal health and wellbeing possible.

This research summary is aimed at providing information about the social and environmental conditions that affect the health and wellbeing of Hobsons Bay residents.

What is meant by the term ‘social determinants of health’?

It is now widely accepted that ill health in populations is due to a range of social, environmental and behavioural factors.

The social determinants of health are the conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources. The social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities - the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within populations (World Health Organisation, 2008).

The social determinants of health model recognises that the environment in which people live and work does not always give individuals the opportunities they need to be able to act on achieving the best levels of health and wellbeing possible.

Being the closest arm of government to the community, local government has an important role to play in understanding the populations they serve, ensuring that their communities are provided with built, natural, social, economic and cultural environments which allow them to maximise their health and wellbeing.

The following research summaries have been developed to provide an understanding of the social and environmental conditions that affect the health and wellbeing of the Hobsons Bay community including:

- Access to Nutritious Food
- Access to Transport
- Affordable Housing
- Ageing Population
- Children's Health and Wellbeing
- Climate Change
- Social Inclusion
- Community Safety
- Cultural Diversity
- Disability
- Education and Employment
- Gender Equity
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Young People's Experiences
- First Peoples of Hobsons Bay

What do we know about residents' health in Hobsons Bay?

The health issues experienced by residents of Hobsons Bay are common across the North Western Metropolitan Region (NWMR) and many can be prevented through increased accessibility to health services and infrastructure, increased access to information, and changes in lifestyle behaviours.

Key issues include poor diet, obesity and insufficient physical activity. These are all indicators that there are proportions of the Hobsons Bay population who are at risk for chronic disease, including diabetes and heart disease.

Mental health also remains a key issue in Hobsons Bay, with the rate of psychiatric

hospitalisations increasing for young people aged 10 to 17 years.

In Hobsons Bay, the life expectancy for someone born in 2011-2015 was 80.8 years for males and 84.8 years for females. These figures were both slightly lower than the Victorian average (81.4 years and 85.2 years respectively) (Department of Health and Human Services, 2018).

The remainder of this section outlines a range of data which describe the health and wellbeing of Hobsons Bay residents, including risk factors, chronic health conditions, hospitalisations, and availability of health services.

Risk factors

Our modern lifestyle has led to an increase in risk factors which lead to chronic, and mostly preventable, disease in our society. Chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes are now major causes of ill health and death within developed populations (Egger, 2009).

According to the Victorian Population Health Survey 2014 (Department of Health and Human Services, 2016), in relation to Hobsons Bay residents the following are the risk factors for negative health outcomes:

Risk factor 1: Poor diet

The recommended daily adult intake of vegetables is five serves per day, and fruit is two serves per day.

The percentage of Hobsons Bay residents who met the vegetable consumption guidelines was just 7.1 per cent, although higher than the rate for both the NWMR (5.7 per cent) and Victoria (6.4 per cent). A much greater proportion (53.6 per cent) met fruit consumption guidelines, also higher

than the rate for the NWMR (48.4 per cent) and Victoria (47.8 per cent). Overall, however, just 3.2 per cent of Hobsons Bay residents met both fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines.

Risk factor 2: Obesity

More than half of Hobsons Bay's adult population (51.6 per cent) are considered to be pre-obese (overweight) or obese, marginally higher than the rate for the NWMR (50.5 per cent) and Victoria (50 per cent). A substantially higher proportion of adult males (59.3 per cent) in the NWMR are pre-obese or obese, compared to 42 per cent of adult females. However, both are slightly above the rate for Victoria (58.8 per cent and 41.5 per cent respectively).

Risk factor 3: Physical inactivity

On average, less than half (43.7 per cent) of Hobsons Bay residents engage in sufficient weekly exercise, i.e. at least 150 minutes and/or two sessions per week. This rate was higher than the NWMR (39 per cent) and Victoria (41.4 per cent). While the proportion of Hobsons Bay residents who sit during work hours is above the state average (54.7 per cent vs 49.6 per cent), so too is the proportion of people who walk as part of their job (20 per cent vs 16 per cent).

Walking or cycling for transport (especially trips to school, work, the shops or the train station) provides an opportunity for incidental exercise. A total of 14.8 per cent of Hobsons Bay residents cycle for transport at least once per week, notably higher than the rate for the NWMR (8.3 per cent) and Victoria (6.5 per cent). While a higher proportion of residents (44.1 per cent) walk for transport at least once per week, this is lower than the NWMR rate (46 per cent) but higher than the state average

(42.2 per cent). Note that these figures exclude walking and cycling predominantly for recreation or exercise purposes.

Finally, residents of Hobsons Bay spend more time in sedentary activity, with 40.7 per cent of residents sitting for at least six hours on an average weekday, higher than both the NWMR (39 per cent) and Victoria (38.2 per cent).

Risk factor 4: Excessive alcohol consumption

Regular excessive consumption of alcohol gives people a higher risk of chronic ill health and premature death. Just over 60 per cent of adults in Hobsons Bay have an increased lifetime risk of alcohol-related harm, higher than both the NWMR (53.6 per cent) and Victoria (59.2 per cent).

Excessive alcohol consumption can also cause short term problems such as violence, risk taking behaviour, road trauma and injury. In Hobsons Bay, 46.2 per cent of people are at increased risk of alcohol-related injury on a single occasion, higher than the rate for both the NWMR (38 per cent) and Victoria (42.5 per cent). In the NWMR, a substantially higher proportion of adult males (49.5 per cent) have an increased risk of alcohol-related injury on a single occasion, when compared to females (27.1 per cent).

Risk factor 5: Smoking

A total of 11.8 per cent of the Hobsons Bay population are current smokers, lower than the NWMR rate (13.1 per cent) and the Victorian rate (13.1 per cent). A slightly higher percentage of Hobsons Bay residents are ex-smokers (25.3 per cent) when compared with the NWMR (23.8 per cent) and the Victorian average (24.8 per

cent). Curiously, Hobsons Bay has a higher rate of occasional smokers (4.4 per cent), when compared to the NWMR (3.9 per cent) and Victoria (3.4 per cent).

Chronic health conditions

Chronic diseases are likely to increase as the population ages as well as in disadvantaged areas. This is linked to income and therefore the opportunity to access better health care, secure adequate and secure housing, and access education and nutritious food (World Health Organisation, 2003).

Access to these things (in addition to improving diet and being more physically active) ensures that populations are less likely to engage in the factors that increase the risk for chronic disease including poor diet, physical inactivity, tobacco smoking and excess alcohol consumption (Department of Health, 2012).

The following major chronic health issues experienced by Hobsons Bay residents are outline below. Unless otherwise stated, all data in this section is drawn from the Victorian Population Health Survey 2014.

Diabetes

A total of 4.8 per cent of Hobsons Bay residents have Type 2 Diabetes, lower than the rate for the NWMR (6 per cent) and Victoria (5.3 per cent). However, the rate increased by 50 per cent between 2008 and 2014, notably higher than the Victorian increase of just ten per cent over the same period.

Heart disease

The prevalence of heart disease is lower in Hobsons Bay (6 per cent) than in the NWMR (7.5 per cent) and Victoria (7.2 per

cent). However, the rate increased by 15.3 per cent between 2008 and 2014, higher than the Victorian increase of 7.5 per cent over the same period.

Cancer

A total of 6.7 per cent of Hobsons Bay residents had been diagnosed with cancer in 2014, on par with the rate for the NWMR (6.8 per cent). This represents a 9.5 per cent decline between 2008 and 2014, while the Victorian rate increased by 12.1 per cent over the same period.

Asthma

The most recent data for Hobsons Bay from 2011-12 reveals that 11.6 per cent of residents experience asthma, slightly higher than the Victorian average of 10.9 per cent (Department of Health, 2014). A higher proportion of females (12.7 per cent) are affected, compared to males (10.4 per cent).

Mental health

A total of 8.9 per cent of Hobsons Bay residents experience high or very high levels of psychological distress, notably lower than the rate for the NWMR (13.2 per cent) and Victoria (12.6 per cent). This represents an 18.3 per cent decline in Hobsons Bay, compared to a 10.5 per cent increase across Victoria over the same period. Similarly, 17.2 per cent of Hobsons Bay residents experienced anxiety or depression, a significantly lower rate than for the NWMR (22.5 per cent) and Victoria (24.2 per cent).

Approximately 17.4 per cent of Hobsons Bay residents sought professional help for a mental health problem in the past 12 months, higher than the rate for the NWMR

(15.1 per cent) and Victoria (16 per cent). The rate in Hobsons Bay increased substantially by 33.8 per cent between 2008 and 2014, albeit slightly lower than the Victorian rate (40.3 per cent) over the same period.

The rate of psychiatric hospitalisations increased for young people aged 10 to 17 years (7.87 per 1,000 to 9.06 per 1,000) between 2010-11 and 2015-16 (VAHI, 2018).

Hospitalisations

Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions (ACSCs) are those conditions for which hospital admission could be prevented by interventions in primary care. All data on ACSCs are drawn from the Victorian Health Information Surveillance System (VHISS) (Department of Health and Human Services, 2018).

The total number of admissions for ACSCs in Hobsons Bay in 2017-18 was 2,670. The standardised rate per 1,000 persons for Hobsons Bay was 27.13, a reduction from 30.76 per 1,000 persons in 2010-11. It was also lower than the rate for the NWMR (30.37) and Victoria (29.41).

Over half of these admissions (1,410) were for chronic conditions. Again, the standardised rate per 1,000 persons (14.26) was lower than the rate recorded in 2010-11 (16.88). It was also lower than the rate for the NWMR (15.57) but similar to Victorian rate (14.46).

In 2017-18, iron deficiency anaemia rated as the most common cause of admission to hospital for residents in Hobsons Bay. This

represents a change since 2010-11 when complications from diabetes was the most common cause.

Other common reasons for admission into hospital for Hobsons Bay residents included cellulitis, congestive cardiac failure and complications from diabetes. More than half (53 per cent) of total hospital bed days for the year were allocated to managing chronic disease, demonstrating the impact that chronic diseases have on our hospital care system.

Availability of health services

Lower availability of health services in a region can be seen as a health risk factor and contributor to poorer resident health. Good access to primary health services such as General Practitioners (GPs) are important to reducing the prevalence and the onset of chronic illnesses.

The number of health services in the Western Metropolitan region is considerably lower than in other parts of Melbourne and Victoria. Given the population growth in the region and the ageing of the population, this will increase the demand placed on already overstretched health services.

For example, there were 482,865 non-referred attendances (NRA) in Hobsons Bay SA3¹ during 2016-17 (Department of Health, 2018), provided by 102 GPs. These services were equivalent to the work of 76 full-time doctors. Therefore, Hobsons Bay SA3 had 1.15 GPs per 1,000 residents or the equivalent of 0.86 full-time GPs per 1,000 residents. By way of comparison, the Victorian average was 1.40 GPs per 1,000

¹ Hobsons Bay SA3 is an ABS geography that covers a similar area to the LGA, but does not include Laverton.

residents and the equivalent of 0.98 full-time GPs per 1,000 residents.

This may explain why Hobsons Bay residents access relatively fewer GP services. In 2016-17, the rate was 5,466 services accessed per 1,000 residents, compared to the Victorian rate of 6,156 services accessed per 1,000 residents.

Between 2007-08 and 2017-18, the number of NRA services accessed increased by 63.5 per cent, compared to population growth of 11.5 per cent over the same period.

Perceptions of health

According to the Victorian Population Health Survey 2014:

- 81.6 per cent of Hobsons Bay residents rate their own health as good, very good or excellent, higher than the rates for the NWMR (76.8 per cent) and Victoria (79.3 per cent)
- Hobsons Bay (17.5 per cent) recorded a lower rate for residents who rate their health as fair or poor, compared to both the NWMR (22.6 per cent) and Victoria (20.3 per cent)

Health checks

According to the Victorian Population Health Survey 2014:

- Hobsons Bay had a slightly lower proportion (68.2 per cent) of women who had a mammogram in the previous two years, compared to the NWMR (72.2 per cent) and Victoria (73 per cent)
- 76.5 per cent of women reported having had a Pap smear test during their lifetime, lower than the rate for the NWMR (81.2 per cent) and Victoria

(83.1 per cent). Of these people, a lower proportion of Hobsons Bay residents (69.5 per cent) had a test within the previous two years, compared to both the NWMR (72.6 per cent) and Victoria (72.1 per cent).

- Almost one-half (46.7 per cent) of Hobsons Bay residents had an examination to detect bowel cancer in the previous five years, on par with Victoria (46.1 per cent) but higher than the NWMR rate (42.5 per cent). Similarly, almost two-thirds of eligible Hobsons Bay residents (66.2 per cent) had completed and returned the Faecal Occult Blood Test kit (as part of the National Bowel Cancer Screening program), notably higher than both the NWMR (58.7 per cent) and Victoria (59.9 per cent).
- Rates for blood pressure (78.8 per cent), cholesterol (61.5 per cent), and blood sugar (52.6 per cent) checks in the previous two years are broadly in line with the Victorian averages.

Cause of death

Between 2010 and 2014, there were a total of 479 deaths in Hobsons Bay that were considered as 'avoidable mortality' (Department of Health, 2018). This translates to a standardised rate of 119.99 per 100,000 persons, higher than rates for the NWMR (105.19) and Victoria (106.75).

Ischaemic heart disease was the leading cause of avoidable mortality in Hobsons Bay with 98 deaths. Other leading causes of death related to colorectal cancer (43), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (38), and cerebrovascular diseases (38).

What government policies relate to improving health and wellbeing outcomes?

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Government has a range of health strategies and action plans. In addition the Minister for Health administers a range of legislation. Specific Commonwealth plans and legislation are further explored within the individual Research Summaries.

Other key areas of note that are led by the Commonwealth Government include the national public health insurance scheme, Medicare. The aim of Medicare is to ensure that all Australians have access to free or low-cost medical, optometry, midwifery and hospital care, and in special circumstances, allied health.

The Commonwealth also manages policy in relation to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) which provides a range of medicines at a reduced cost.

In 2019 the Commonwealth Government will establish a My Health Record for all Australians. This record will provide an individual personal online summary of key health information which can be viewed online by record holders and their health professionals. If people do not want a My Health Record they are able to opt out.

The Commonwealth also established Primary Health Networks (PHNs) in 2015. The aim of these Networks are to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services. The PHN for Hobsons Bay is the North Western PHN.

State

Like the Commonwealth Government, the Victorian State Government has a range of health policies and action plans which are further explored in individual Research Summaries.

The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* exists to protect and improve public health and wellbeing. This act requires the State Government to develop a Public Health and Wellbeing Plan as well as requiring councils to develop a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015–19 outlines the government's key priorities to improve the health and wellbeing of Victorians.

Its six key health and wellbeing priorities are:

- healthier eating and active living
- tobacco free living
- reducing harmful alcohol and drug use
- improving mental health preventing violence and injury
- improving sexual and reproductive health

Regional

The Better Health Plan for the West 2011-21, led by Western Health, aims to improve health services in the west with a particular focus on better resources and workforce issues.

Preventing Violence Together, led by Women's Health West, has been designed as an enabling and coordinating action plan for organisations in the Western Metropolitan region of Melbourne to prevent violence against women.

The Health West Partnership (Primary Care Partnership) exists to support and improve the planning, coordination and delivery of health and community services in Melbourne's western areas of Brim bank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton and Wyndham. It also focuses on improving prevention and early intervention for chronic diseases.

What is Council's role in relation to health and wellbeing?

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, Council is required to 'protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within the municipality'.

Council undertakes this by enforcing public health standards, providing immunisation services, and ensuring the municipality is in a clean and sanitary condition.

Council also has a role in creating an environment which promotes and supports the good health of residents, primarily through municipal public health and wellbeing planning and land use planning.

Municipal public health and wellbeing planning includes understanding the health status of the population and partnering with service providers in the municipality to achieve good health outcomes for residents. Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is integrated within the Hobsons Bay 2030 Community Vision and the Council Plan 2017-21, as the guiding documents for the organisation.

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