

VitalSigns®

Taking the pulse of our community

Thorpdale 2020 Report

Welcome to Thorpdale's first **Vital Signs**, a snapshot of how our community is faring in key quality of life areas: Health & Wellbeing, Education & Learning, Economy, Environment and Belonging.

Using credible data combined with people's lived experiences, the goal of this report is to build a better understanding of challenges and opportunities in Thorpdale and its surrounding communities. This understanding is vital to making our community a better place for everyone, now and forever.

We acknowledge the Gunaikurnai and we pay our respects to Elders past and present, whose knowledge and wisdom have ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices, shaping and caring for this precious land and ensuring its abundance. We aim to work respectfully with all people and to encourage a lighter footprint on the land, to ensure that it remains environmentally, economically, and aesthetically sustainable.

If Thorpdale was a village of 100 people:

28 Aged 0-24

22 Aged 25-44

32 Aged 45-64

16 Aged 65-79

2 Aged 80+

17 Born overseas

83 Born in Australia

4 Speak a language other than English at home

22 Work full-time

18 Work part-time

25 Volunteer

12 Unpaid Carer for a person with a disability

6 Work from home

47 Earn less than \$650 per week

1 Earn more than \$3000 per week

8 Live alone

49 Women

51 Men

3 One parent family

What you love about where you live



"I love how everyone helps each other out and are very friendly. People are quick to share their knowledge and lend a helping hand."

"I love Thorpdale's community spirit. I've never known a town to come together during hard times."

"Thorpdale's school and kinder community is amazing, and I love that my children get to attend."

"The friendliness of people living in the town. Services offered: yoga, kid's activities, spud fest etc. Lovely school."

"The rolling hills and delicious spuds are all part of the attraction to the area."

"I love being part of our local playgroup and Thorpdale kinder. Keeps me connected to the community."

"Quiet, scenic, friendly, supportive community."

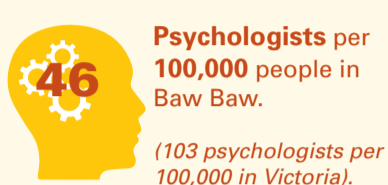
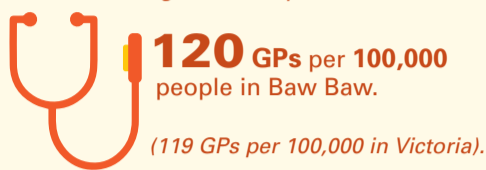
HEALTH & WELLBEING

Without good physical and mental health, we cannot thrive as individuals or as a community. Our health is shaped by many factors including our lifestyle and access to services.

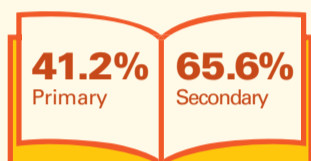
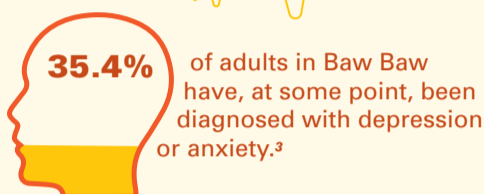
The data shows that mental health, alcohol consumption and family violence are vital issues for our community. Our health behaviours are contributing to our rates of obesity.

Access

There are more GPs per head of the population in Baw Baw in comparison to Victoria, but access to psychologists is more of a challenge for many of our residents.¹



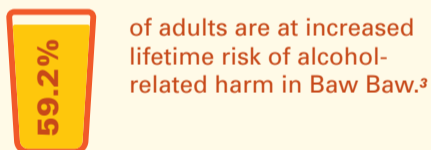
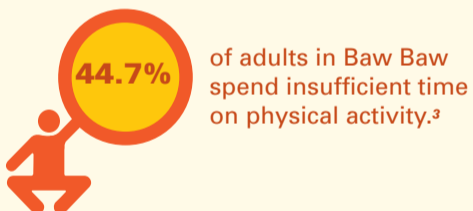
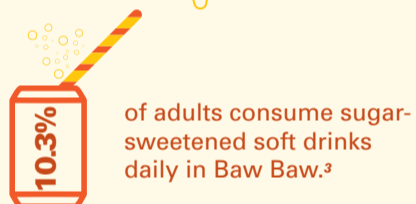
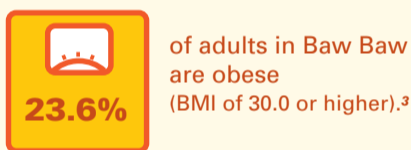
Mental Health



of school teachers, principals and support staff surveyed by the AEU Mental Health Survey in 2019, said they had students with mental health issues in the classes they teach.⁴

If you, or anyone you know needs support: Beyond Blue **1300 224 636**. Lifeline **13 11 14**.

Health Behaviours



Family Violence

Baw Baw's rate of family violence incidents is **37%** higher than Victoria's.⁵

The Orange Door (orangedoor.vic.gov.au) is a new free service for adults, children and young people who are experiencing, or who have experienced family violence.

Family and domestic violence support lines: Respect National Hotline **1800 737 732**. Women's Crisis Line **1800 811 811**. The Orange Door **1800 319 354**. Men's Referral Service **1300 766 491**.

Source. ¹ PHN Gippsland Population Health Planning Hub. ² General Practice Health Of The Nation 2018, RACGP. ³ Victorian Population Health Survey 2017. ⁴ Australian Education Union (Vic) Submission to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. ⁵ Crime Statistics Agency, Family Incident Rate.

Building skills around mental health

In 2017, Year 9 students at Mirboo North Secondary College told coordinator Rebecca Woodall during student forums that they enjoyed gaining Level 2 First Aid, but couldn't understand why they didn't offer Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), so they could be of help to their peers who were having tough times.

"Teachers completed a two day training course with Latrobe Regional Hospital, then they conducted training sessions with the Year 9 and Year 11's as part of their Community Breakout Program. Many parents also took up the opportunity to receive free MHFA training at school," said Rebecca.

"By 2020, the senior student body from Year 9-12 will have received the MHFA training, breaking down stigmas around mental health, giving them confidence to check in with their peers and equipping them with knowledge of where they can access help if needed."

Rebecca Woodall
Mirboo North Secondary College

EDUCATION & LEARNING

Access to Education is vital to health and wellbeing and empowers children and adults.

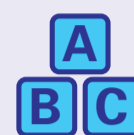
Our district provides us with many educational opportunities including early learning, school and life-long learning. The data shows that not as many of our young people go on to tertiary education, but those who do have a high rate of participation in vocational education and training.

Early Learning

Access to high-quality preschool programs is a proven strategy for lifting outcomes for all children.



Two-thirds of 3 year olds in Australia participate in some form of early education, and there is near-universal enrollment in preschool for 4 year olds.⁶



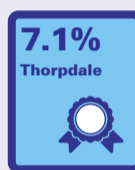
From 2022, three-year-olds in Baw Baw will have access to five hours of subsidized kindergarten per week, increasing to 15 hours by 2029.



20% of children entering primary school in Baw Baw have vulnerabilities in one or more domains of school readiness (Victoria 19.9%).⁷

Educational Attainment and Pathways

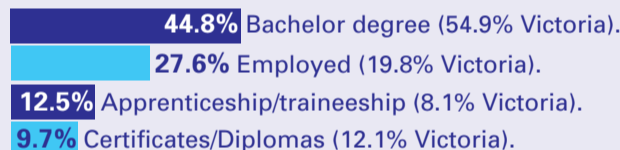
The Census gives a snapshot of educational attainment in our community, which reflects our socio economic make up.⁸



Completed Diploma
Advanced Diploma.⁸

Completed a Bachelor Degree or above.⁸

Baw Baw's school leavers have a higher rate of participation in Apprenticeships and Traineeships⁹



In Australia employment outcomes are strongly linked to education¹⁰

80% with a Bachelor degree or above are employed.

75% with an Advanced Diploma or Diploma are employed.

44% Year 11 or below are employed.

Lifelong Learning



Access to affordable community based lifelong learning is a strength within our community. Opportunities for formal and informal education, training and learning through local organisations including the CFA, CWA, Arts organisations, U3A, and other groups improves skills and builds social cohesion.

Source. ⁶ Preschool-Two Years are Better Than One, Mitchell Report No. 03/2016. ⁷ Public Health Information Development Unit 2015. ⁸ ABS Census 2016. ⁹ On Track 2018 Survey Results, Victoria State Government-Education and Training. ¹⁰ Counting the cost of lost opportunity in Australian education, summary paper, Mitchell Report No. 02/2017.

Getting Qualified with the CFA

The CFA is a registered training organisation (RTO), which means that most of the skills and knowledge that volunteers acquire lead to accredited qualifications.

"Every new active member must complete 'minimum skills' training for firefighters before they can attend a fire, and this can take up to six months," says secretary and firefighter Rose Hill. "Over 6 Tuesday nights across a year, a CFA instructor conducts training here in Thorpdale, but we also go out with a group of CFA's in the Strzelecki area for accredited burnout drills and skill-sharing exercises."

Some of these skills could be general firefighting, fire safety awareness, community education and engagement, administrative tasks, endorsed truck license, first aid, leadership training, communications, wildfire behaviour, and suppression, map reading, radio communications, and fire ground safety.



Thorpdale CFA

ECONOMY

Economic viability and sustainability is vitally important for building strong rural communities.

While the number of jobs in our region has grown, it has not grown as fast as Victoria's, but our unemployment rate is lower. Many of us run our own businesses, or are self employed.

Thorpdale Community Snapshot

Where we work ¹¹



(top five employment sectors)

How we work ¹¹



(hours worked-employed people 15 years and over)



19.5% self employed (owner manager of incorporated or unincorporated enterprise) (13.7% Victoria). ¹¹

\$1,133 Median Weekly Household Income. ¹²

Employment

Annual average jobs growth rate, 2008-2018 ¹³



The number of jobs in Baw Baw have increased.

Unemployment rate (2018) ¹⁴



The youth unemployment rate is 12.1% in Baw Baw (13.87% Victoria). ¹³

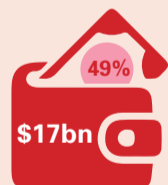
Industry



Of the estimated 105,677 people who work in Gippsland, 14.5% work in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector. It is the region's biggest employer. Jobs in this sector increased by 20.65% between 2011 and 2016. ¹⁴



The manufacturing sector in Gippsland has seen a steep decline in jobs but this sector still contributes 15% of our region's gross revenue (the largest amount of any sector). ¹⁴



Over \$17 billion is spent each year in the Gippsland region, 49% of this is spent with suppliers located outside of the region (a 10% shift could result in 4,200 new jobs and \$1.4bn new money into the economy). ¹⁵

Source. ¹¹ ABS Census 2016. ¹² ABS QuickStats, State Suburb Data, 2016. ¹³ Regional Development Victoria, Regional Snapshot. ¹⁴ Baw Baw Shire Council Economy Profile. ¹⁵ GROW Gippsland Regional Action Plan October 2018.

Business expo showcases 'hidden' products & services

Mirboo North & District Community Bank recently held their Business Expo, giving businesses and tradesmen a chance to promote their products and services to people in the district.

Businesses that attended on the night were surveyed, identifying current challenges for running their enterprise. Feedback included finding and hiring appropriate local staff, access to staff training, business networking, and obstacles for their customers included distance. Many said that lack of visibility without a shopfront was a factor.



"I am in the process of securing a retail space in the town, but this has taken two years to consider. I have inspected many buildings, but size and having access to toilet facilities have been lacking. I would also like space to expand, so I could take on more clients or offer space to allied health professionals," said Caroline Cox from Clarity Skin Care, who attended.

Caroline Cox
Clarity Skin Care

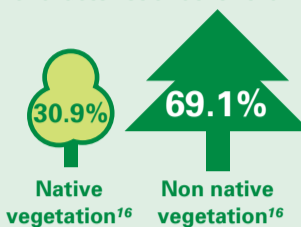
ENVIRONMENT

Our environment is vital to our health, quality of life and survival. How we manage and protect the ecosystems and resources that surround us, determines their sustainability as well as our own.

The natural environment is one of the reasons we love where we live. Maintaining our region's biodiversity and managing the impact of climate change is a priority for our community.

Biodiversity

Thorpdale is located in the Strzelecki Ranges Bioregion. Bioregions help us to better identify and protect an area based on its geographic and natural characteristic rather than its administrative boundaries.



The Strzelecki Ranges Bioregion is one of the most cleared bioregions in Australia.

About 84% of plants, 83% of mammals, and 45% of birds are found only in Australia. ¹⁷

Changes to the landscape, native habitat as a result of human activity have put many of our unique species at risk.



There are an estimated 5,000-15,000 Strzelecki Gum (Eucalyptus Strzeleckii) remaining. Threats include grazing, weed invasion and clearing. ¹⁸

Preserve Our Forests successfully lobbied against logging in coupes near Mirboo North, preventing the destruction of a significant habitat which threatened the Greater Glider and other native species.

Energy, Waste, Water

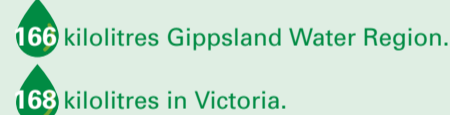
Energy generation in Australia



In Thorpdale around 23% of dwellings have Photovoltaic installations (solar). ^{20/21}

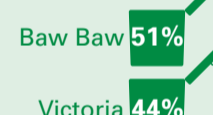
Water

Average annual residential water supplied (2016-2017). ²²



Waste

Recyclables and organics kerbside diversion rate. ²³



Climate Change

Climate change is the most significant environmental challenge facing us. As an important agricultural region, Baw Baw's economy, and its farmers, are particularly vulnerable to its impact which is predicted to include:



Source. ¹⁶ Findings by Bioregion, Victorian Environmental Assessment Council. ¹⁷ Department of the Environment and Energy, Biodiversity Information. ¹⁸ National Recovery Plan for the Strzelecki Gum, Department of the Environment and Energy. ¹⁹ Australian Energy Update 2019, Department of Environment and Energy. ²⁰ Australian PV Institute. ²¹ ABS Census 2016. ²² National Performance Report: Urban Water Utilities, Department of Meteorology. ²³ Victorian Local Government Annual Waste Services Workbook, 2017-18, Sustainability Victoria.

Farmers helping us all become more sustainable

Emma Germano is a third generation Mirboo North local farmer. The Managing Director of her family's mixed vegetable and livestock farm, Emma is also Vice-President of the Victorian Farmers Federation Horticulture Group.

In terms of climate change and environmental debates she feels farmers are not being empowered to leverage their land and their unique set of land management skills.



Emma Germano

"Farmers operate on 50% of Australia's land mass. The Government is missing a huge opportunity when it comes to rewarding farmers for good environmental practices. Currently there are next to no incentives for farmers to move to sustainable farming."

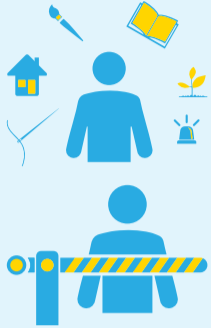
Emma feels that it is vital that all farmers are part of the grassroots conversations that we need to have around how food is produced and how we use our land sustainably.

BELONGING

How we participate in the life of our community and our connections to the people around us help to develop a sense of belonging, which is vital to building healthy, inclusive communities.

Wellbeing is a strength across our region and, while there are barriers to belonging, most feel that people in their neighbourhood are willing to help each other.

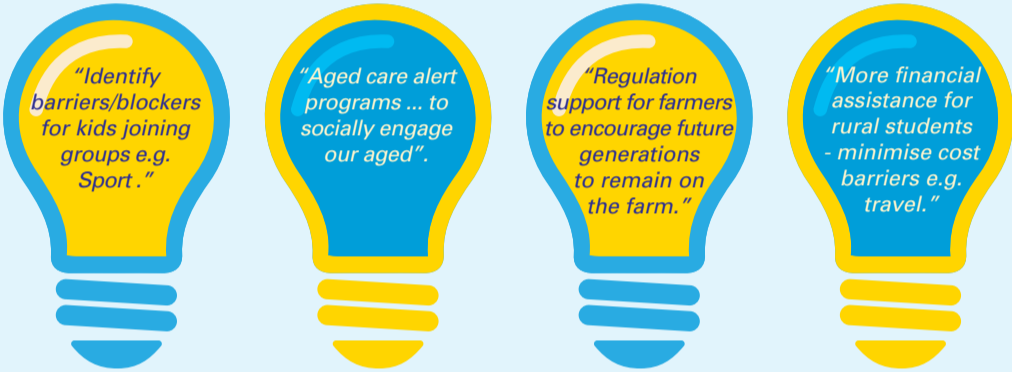
Community Voices



People in our community find their connections in a wide variety of places, including volunteering for a local organisation, helping at the school, or as a member of a local arts, historical, sporting, environmental or music group.

While belonging is a strength in our community, barriers to belonging include: Being single or not having any children, being older, being a newcomer to the community, mental health, physical isolation, and lack of public transport.

At our Thorpdale community forum, you told us what you would like to see.



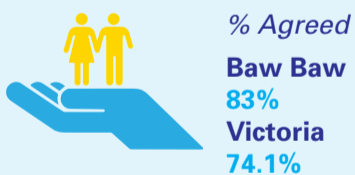
Belonging in Our Region

Subjective Wellbeing ²⁴



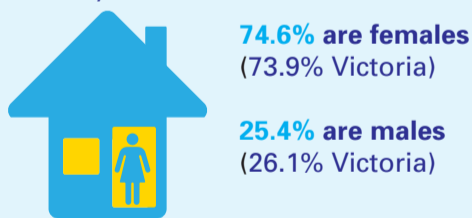
The subjective wellbeing index measures life satisfaction in a number of areas, including feeling part of your community. Responses are combined and converted to a personal wellbeing index where 0 is completely dissatisfied and 100 is completely satisfied.

People around here are willing to help their neighbours ²⁴



Social isolation

Around 1 in 5 older Australians are socially isolated. In Baw Baw 38% of people aged over 75 years live alone, of which: ²⁵



²⁴ VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015. ²⁵ LGA Statistical Profile 2015.

Enhancing community connection among seniors

Mirboo North's dedicated volunteer community bus service provides important social connection and accessible transportation for senior citizens in Mirboo North.

The bus is used regularly by the Mirboo North Senior Citizens Club, who organise regular shopping trips to Midvalley Shopping Centre in Morwell.

"The bus service is very unique as it can pick residents up directly from home, providing residents with an opportunity to go to some local shopping and have some lunch together afterwards," said Margaret Peters, regular user of the service.

"You'd be hard pressed to find another service that provides a kerbside service, it helps those who are not quite as able as others to continue to be independent. If we didn't have this service, many residents would have to rely solely on family and friends for transport."

Mirboo North Community Bus

Why did we produce this report?

The Mirboo North & District Community Foundation and the Mirboo North & District Community Bank are proud to present you with the first Vital Signs report for our region. This is the first major collaborative project of both organisations who have a shared vision to foster strength and prosperity for the communities in our District.

We are hoping that this project will lead to a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities before us as a community. This report is merely a starting point from which further discussion will enable us to target our community's resources to those areas.

How to use this report:

This report is to get you thinking and chatting with your friends, family and work colleagues. Discuss questions like:

- What issues do you care about?
- What data surprises you?
- What would you do to make a difference?
- Will this data change the focus of your community organisation?

How can you get involved?



Tell us what you or your community organisation thinks. How should we make the most of our opportunities or tackle our challenges?



Offer your time and expertise to tackle initiatives that improve our community outcomes.

About the Mirboo North & District Community Foundation

Our vision is a healthy, vibrant and resilient community working together to tackle our challenges and celebrate our successes. We work towards this vision through managing our 'Future Fund' of over \$6.2M, investing in the community through grants (more than \$1.3M so far), directing donations to key community projects and building capacity and skills across the district.

We also facilitate a shared understanding of our needs through community planning initiatives, support local people to develop local solutions and encourage the giving of time, money and skills back to the community.

About the Mirboo North & District Community Bank

The Mirboo North & District Community Bank is a community owned company which not only delivers full banking services to its customers, but it also distributes around 80% of its profits back to the communities in our district through a diverse range of community investment programs (the other 20% are distributed to our local shareholders).

Our customers have enabled us to distribute more than \$1M back to our communities in less than 9 years since opening. This Community Bank model is unique and a way for small communities to not only retain banking services for their town but to also make their community more sustainable. Our motto is: "Banking is our Business, Community is our Purpose."

Contact

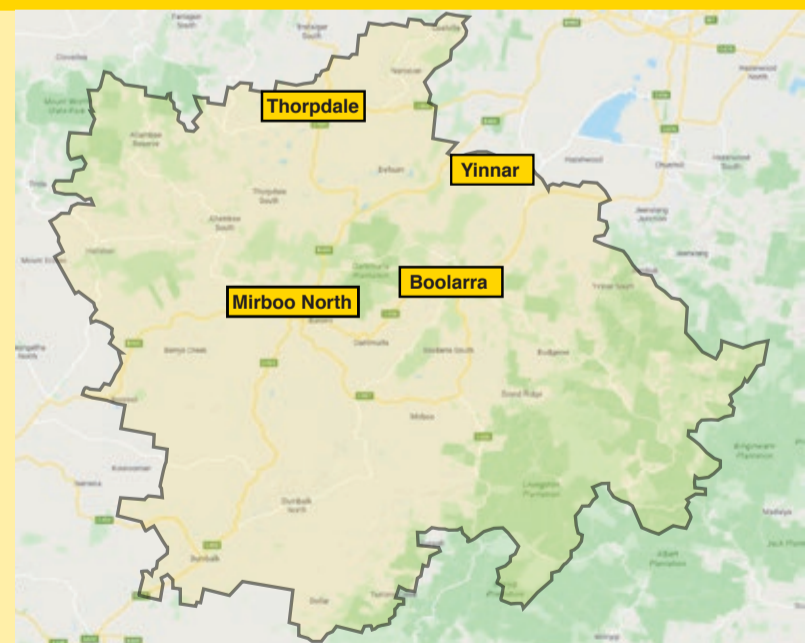
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Our Vital Signs District



Map data ©2020 Google

A word about the data:

While we have endeavoured to use local data wherever possible, much of the data used in this report is only available at a Local Government Authority (LGA) or larger population level. Data relating to Thorpdale in this report, generally encompasses the town and surrounding communities.

Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations around the world that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. With special thanks to the Toronto Foundation for developing and sharing the Vital Signs concept. Australian Community Philanthropy manages the licensing of Vital Signs within Australia. The Vital Signs® Trademark is used with permission from Community Foundations of Canada.