

Community Health and Wellbeing

Wellness (as Opposed to Illness) Data

Traditional measures of population health such as those developed through burden of disease methodology can more accurately be described as 'illness' measures insofar as they focus on the impact of health problems, or amount of ill health, in the population being considered. Indicators of community health and wellbeing now exist to augment burden of disease studies, and their focus on community strengths/capacities (or 'wellness') is important in offsetting the 'deficit' (illness) approach often implied by burden of disease studies.

Community Indicators Victoria (CIV) is part of an international indicators movement that has grown over the last few decades and has gained considerable momentum in recent years in the Victorian context.¹ CIV is located at the McCaughey Centre, School of Population Health, University of Melbourne, and reports on the health and wellbeing of Victorian communities using an integrated set of indicators. The indicators (around 80 in total) are linked to measures designed to identify and communicate the social, economic, environmental (natural and built), cultural and democratic life of communities – the five 'pillars' of community health and wellbeing. The framework of indicators was determined through extensive consultation with government (local and state), academics, and other communities of interest – a process that also involved a review of relevant national and international literature.

- Healthy, safe and inclusive communities. Indicators include self-reported health status, sense of community connection, child health status and perceptions of safety.
- Dynamic resilient local economies. Indicators include the skill base of the local workforce, employment rates, income distributions, educational qualifications, and sense of work-life balance.
- Sustainable built and natural environments. Indicators include housing affordability, transport accessibility, sustainability of energy use,

biodiversity and air quality, and water and waste management.

- Culturally rich and vibrant communities. Indicators include opportunities to participate in arts, cultural and leisure activities, and acceptance of cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Democratic and engaged communities. Indicators include opportunities for civic engagement and participation in decision-making structures and bodies.

The following selected indicators and their measures were generated through the CIV reporting facility (unless otherwise noted) for the WMSR LGAs, using the North and West Metropolitan Region (NWMR) as the overall comparator.² Included are measures of self-reported health status, sense of community connectedness, levels of social support, perceptions of safety, levels of food security, sense of work/life balance, participation in arts and cultural activities, acceptance of cultural diversity, opportunities for citizen engagement, and participation in decision-making structures and bodies. These measures are based on findings from a specifically designed CIV survey administered in 2007.³

The discussion also includes measures of housing affordability, household income, educational attainment, and labour force participation, as derived from existing datasets such as those available through the ABS Census of Population and Housing (i.e. community profiles series). In some cases, data relevant to these measures can be found elsewhere in this report; and these have been indicated in the text as applicable.

² Around 30 indicators of community health and wellbeing are discussed in this report. Many CIV indicators are yet to be measured since available data sources are still being explored. The CIV reporting facility was accessed in January 2009.

³ The CIV survey instrument was developed because not all of the 80 or so indicators in the framework had readily available measures that could be used. Households were randomly selected for participation and trained interviewers conducted the survey (in English) from January to April 2007. Around 24,000 Victorians completed the survey. The sampling process ensured a minimum of 300 respondents aged 18 years or more in each of the 79 Victorian LGAs.

¹ See Community Indicators Victoria at http://www.communityindicators.net.au/about_us.

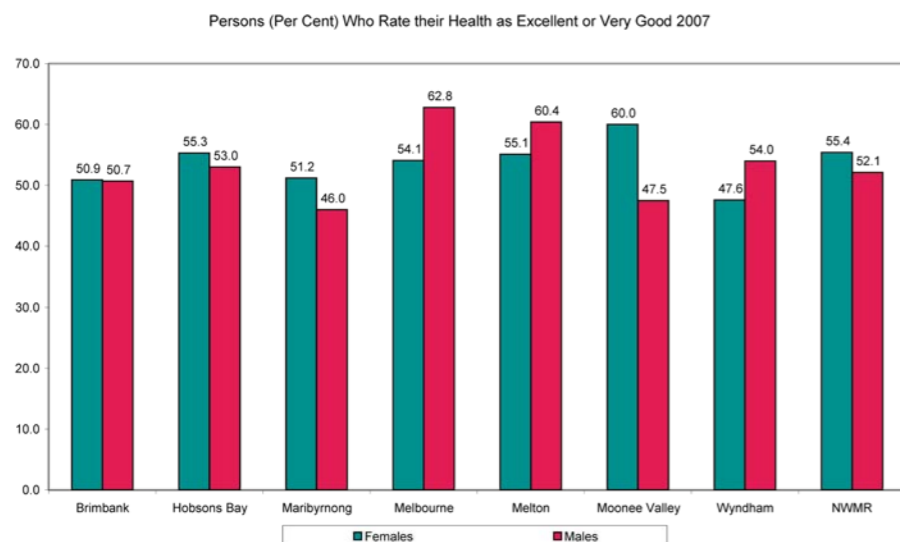
Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities

Self-reported Health

According to CIV, 'Self-reported health assessments have been found to be a powerful predictor of future health care use and mortality, independent of other medical, behavioural or psychosocial risk factors. Wellbeing can be defined in many ways, but most observers treat it as at least partly a subjective, psychological concept.'

Self-reported health was measured through the CIV survey. Respondents were asked to rate their health as excellent, very good, fair or poor. The results for the WMSR LGAs (for excellent or very good) show that:

- Females in Moonee Valley are most likely to rate their health as excellent or very good, whereas females in Wyndham are least likely to do so.
- Females in Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley (especially) are more likely than their male counterparts to rate their health as excellent or very good, whereas females in Melbourne, Melton and Wyndham are less likely than their male counterparts to do so. (Brimbank showed no gender differences in responses to the question.)

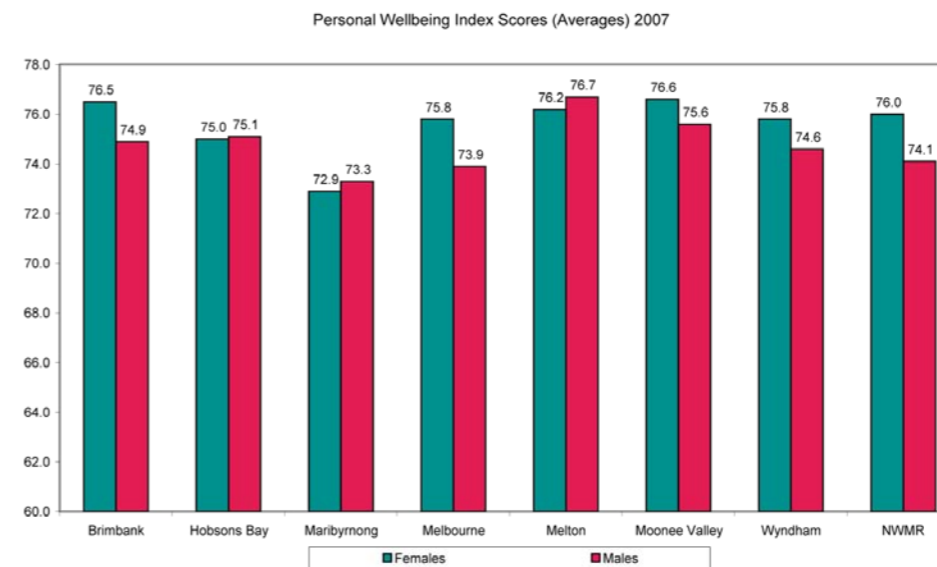


Subjective Wellbeing

Subjective wellbeing is about feeling good and being satisfied with things in life in general. Subjective wellbeing was measured through the CIV survey using the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index (AUWBI). Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with their lives on a number of domains resulting in an aggregated Personal Wellbeing Index ranging from 0 to 100.

Normative data from the AUWBI suggest that the average Personal Wellbeing Index for Australians is around 75.0. The results for the WMSR LGAs show that:

- Females in Brimbank and Moonee Valley scored highest on the Personal Wellbeing Index, whereas females in Maribyrnong scored lowest.
- Females in Brimbank, Melbourne, Moonee Valley and Wyndham scored higher than their male counterparts on the Personal Wellbeing Index, whereas females in Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong and Melton scored lower than their male counterparts.

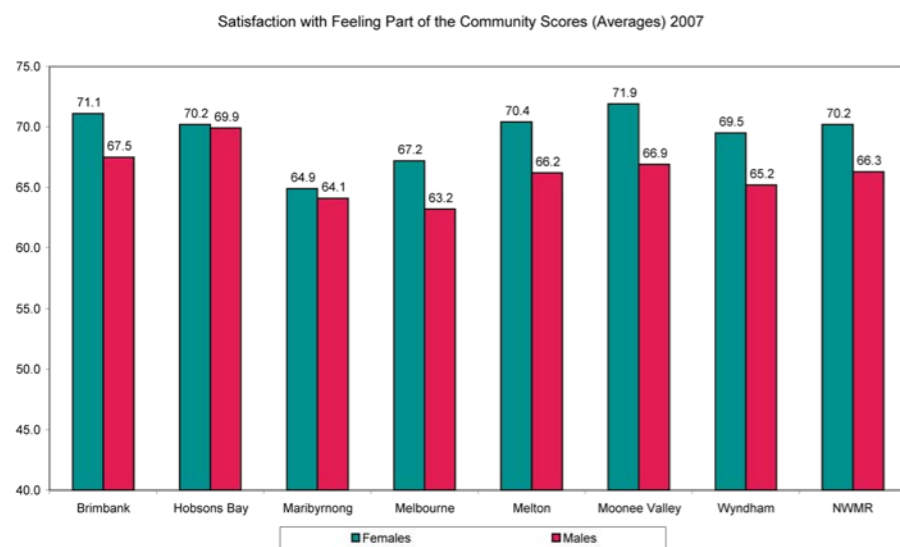


Community Connectedness

According to CIV, ‘Community strength is found in the human relations that people draw upon for identity, interaction and support. A strong community is one where people understand and work towards sustainability and is inclusive of their most disadvantaged groups. To do this people need to be involved, feel capable of working through issues and feel supported by their fellow citizens.’

Community connectedness was measured through the CIV survey. Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with feeling part of their community and answers were recorded according to a 0–100 range. Normative data from the AUWBI indicates that the national average score for feeling part of the community is around 70.0. The results for the WMSR LGAs show that:

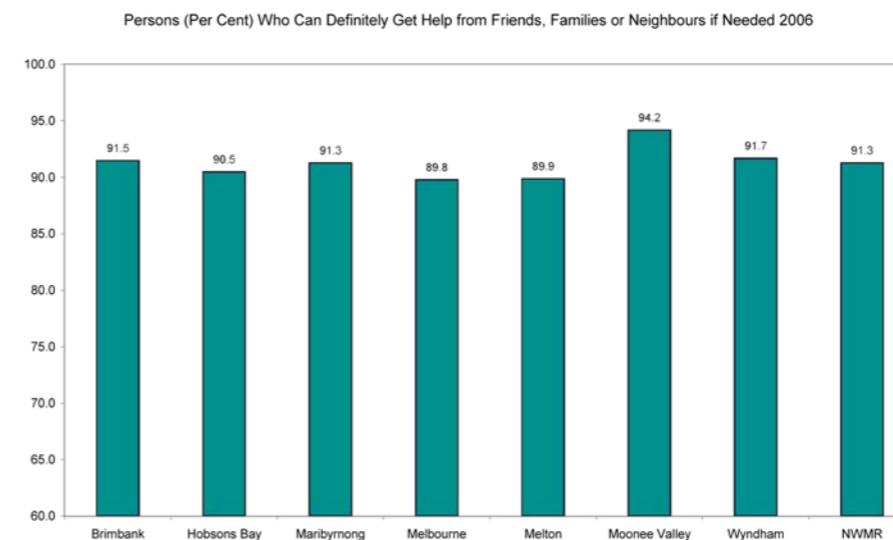
- Females in Brimbank and Moonee Valley scored highest on feeling part of the community, whereas females in Maribyrnong scored lowest.
- Across the sub-region, females scored higher than their male counterparts on feeling part of the community (especially in Moonee Valley).



Social Support

According to CIV, ‘Close personal networks can be sources of benefits such as confidence, emotional support, practical help, contacts, resources and other forms of assistance.’ Social support across Victoria has been measured through the (former) Department for Victorian Communities (DVC) *Community Strength Survey* (2006). Respondents were asked if they could get help from friends, family or neighbours when they needed it, either definitely, sometimes or not at all.

The results (sex-disaggregated data are not available) show that residents in Moonee Valley are most likely to be able to get help if needed from friends, families or neighbours, whereas those in Melbourne are least likely to be able to do so (see also Melton).



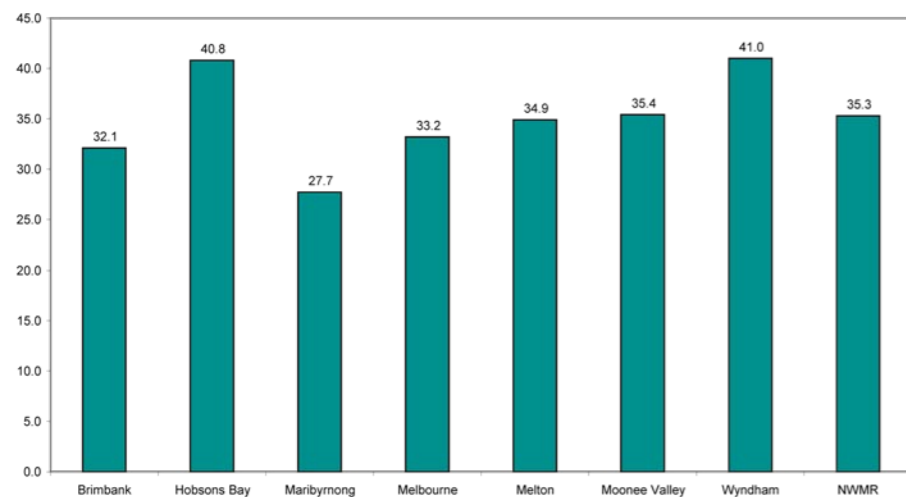
Volunteering

The proportion of volunteers in the community can indicate levels of community engagement/connectedness and social cohesion; although it is important to note that rates are influenced by factors such as age, gender, cultural and linguistic background, and the prevailing socio-economic climate.⁴

Volunteering rates are of interest not only to health planners. Economic analysts are also keenly aware of the significant contribution of voluntary activity to the economy.

Volunteering in the community was measured through the DVC Community Strength Survey in 2006. Respondents were asked if they helped out as a volunteer, either definitely, sometimes or not at all. The results (sex-disaggregated data are not available) show that people in Wyndham are most likely to help out as volunteers (see also Hobsons Bay) whereas people in Maribyrnong are least likely to do so.

Persons (Per Cent) Who Definitely Helped Out as Volunteer 2006



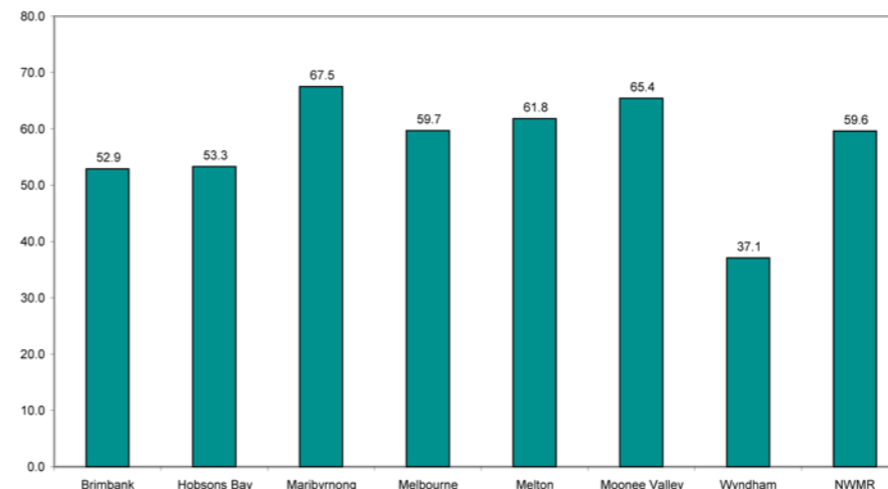
Child Health Assessments

Child health assessments evaluate development at particular ages. Factors assessed include growth, physical movement, behaviour, play, hearing, vision, and behavioural interactions. Child health assessments can also promote awareness of public health interventions such as immunisation programs.

Assessments are routinely undertaken by Maternal and Child Health Services (MCHS). Ten visits are anticipated according to key ages and stages until a child reaches 3.5 years of age. Data are then collated on a financial year basis by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The most recent year collected is for the 2006–2007 financial year. Figures refer to the rate of participation of children eligible for assessment at 3.5 years.

The information shows that Maribyrnong has the highest rate of participation of children eligible for assessment at 3.5 years of age, whereas Wyndham has the lowest.

Rate (Per Cent) of Participation of Children Eligible for Health Assessment at 3.5 Years 2006-2007



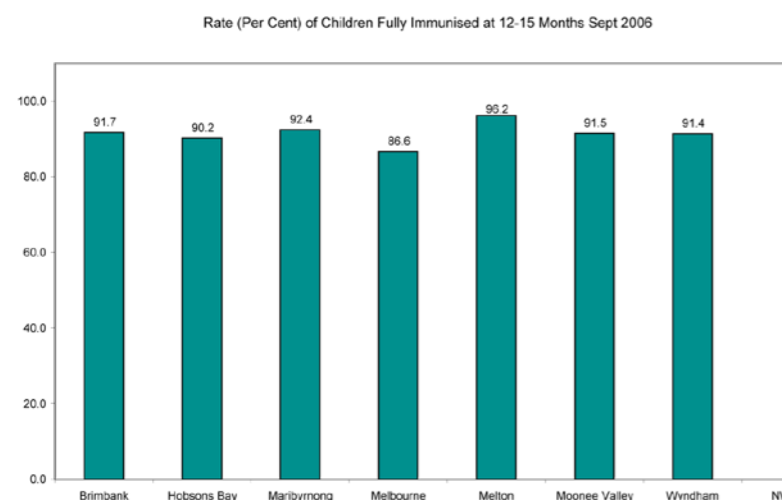
⁴ Empirical studies typically measure volunteering in its 'formal' sense; that is, volunteering done through recognised organisations or structures. Such studies fail to capture a range of informal (even 'spontaneous') expressions of voluntary activity that occur 'extra-institutionally' in culturally and linguistically diverse communities e.g. through kinship networks or social relationships. Data gathering instruments can also work against an accurate measure of volunteering in diverse communities since the term might not have resonance within certain cultures. On volunteering within diverse communities, see Australian Multicultural Foundation and Volunteering Australia (2007) National Survey of Australian Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds, Volunteering Australia: Melbourne at http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/html/s02_article/article_view.asp?id=2931.

Child Immunisation

According to CIV, ‘Proper and timely immunisation effectively protects children from a host of debilitating and sometimes deadly childhood diseases and is most effective when a high proportion of the population has been immunised. Immunisation has been repeatedly demonstrated in both research trials and in the field to be one of the most effective medical interventions we have to prevent disease.’

The Australian Childhood Immunisation Register collates information on a quarterly basis about the number of children fully immunised at 12–15 months of age, expressed as a percentage of children aged 12–15 months at the end of the previous quarter. The most recent quarter available is September 2006.

The information shows that Melton has the highest proportion of children who are fully immunised at 12–15 months of age, whereas Melbourne has the lowest.



Perceptions of Safety

According to CIV, ‘Neighbourhoods perceived as safe foster community participation, encourage physical activity and community connectedness, and add to the health and wellbeing of local residents and visitors.’

Perceptions of safety have been measured in four ways through the CIV survey. Respondents were asked to rate how safe they felt when home alone during the day/at night and when walking alone in their local area during the day/at night.⁵ The results are presented below.

Home Alone During the Day and at Night

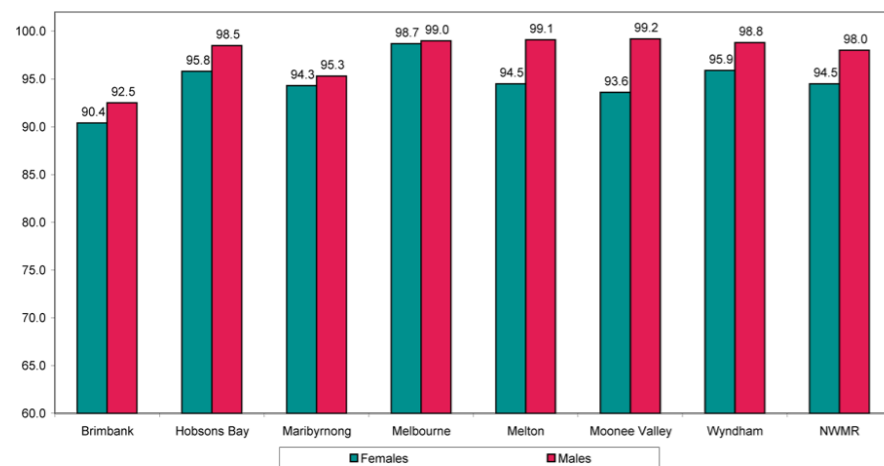
- Females in Melbourne are most likely to feel safe or very safe when at home alone during the day and at night, whereas females in Brimbank are least likely to do so.
- Across the sub-region, females are less likely than males to feel safe or very safe when at home alone during the day and at night in all LGAs – especially in Moonee Valley (during the day) and Wyndham (at night).

Walking Alone During the Day and at Night

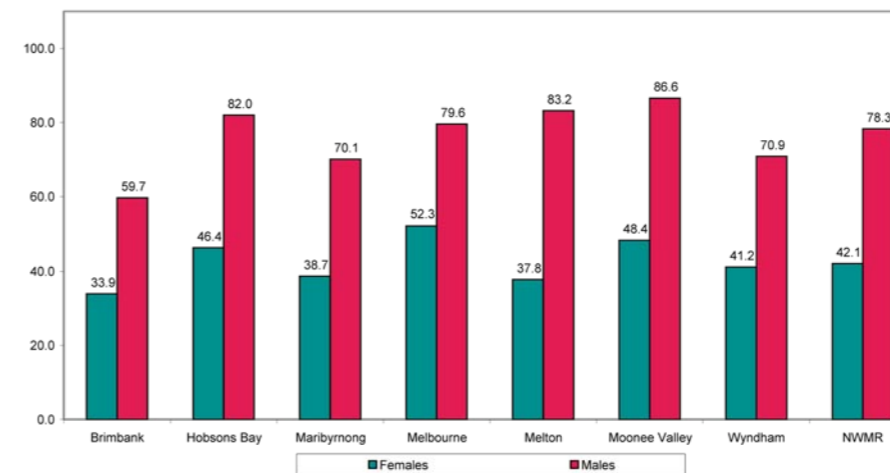
- Females in Hobsons Bay are most likely to feel safe or very safe walking alone during the day, whereas females in Brimbank are least likely to do so. Meanwhile, females in Melbourne are most likely to feel safe walking alone at night, whereas females in Brimbank are least likely to do so.
- Across the sub-region, females are less likely than males to feel safe or very safe walking alone during the day, especially in Brimbank. Females are also much less likely than males to feel safe or very safe walking alone at night in all LGAs (see Melton in particular).

⁵ It is likely that the survey construed the notion of safety in its ‘traditional’ sense (i.e. as safety from external others) and did not capture respondents’ sense of safety from internal threats in the home (as in the case of family violence).

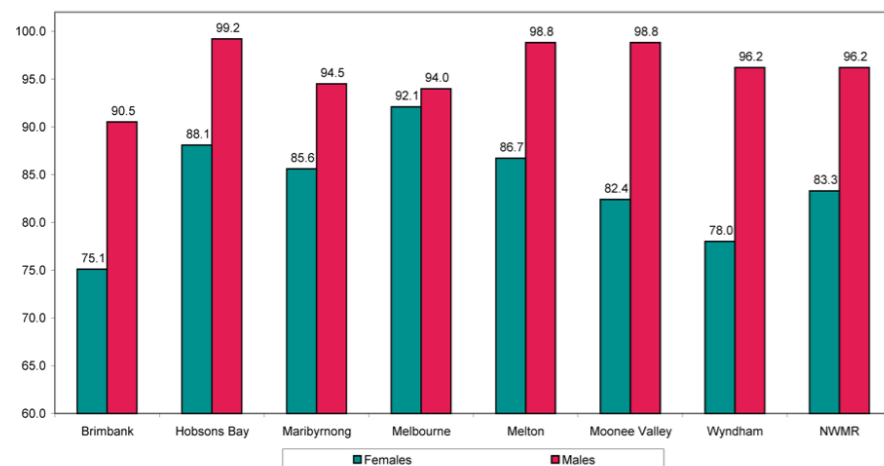
Persons (Per Cent) Who Feel Safe or Very Safe When Home Alone During the Day 2007



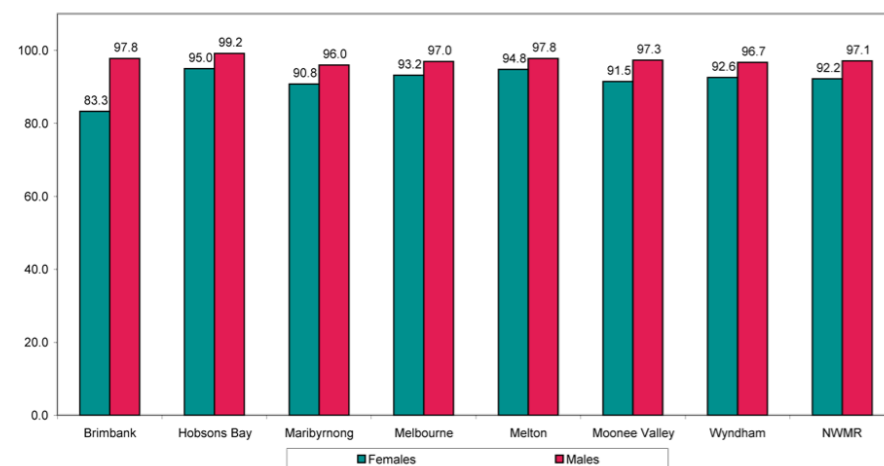
Persons (Per Cent) Who Feel Safe or Very Safe Walking Alone in the Local Area at Night 2007



Persons (Per Cent) Who Feel Safe or Very Safe When Home Alone at Night 2007



Persons (Per Cent) Who Feel Safe or Very Safe Walking Alone in the Local Area During the Day 2007



Crime

Crime levels within a community can have a bearing on personal security and the 'attractiveness' of an area (for example, its liveability or general amenity). Crime is often associated with poverty, exclusion and high need for support services.

Crime statistics are produced annually by Victoria Police. Summaries of offences are reported per 100,000 population to enable comparisons across different areas.

The tables below include the rate of recorded crimes against the person and property for the financial years 2006–2007 and 2007–2008.⁶ The information shows that Melbourne had a significantly high rate (per 100,000 population) of recorded crimes against both persons and property for 2006–2007 and 2007–2008.

	Recorded Crimes Against the Person Rate per 100000 Population		
	2006–2007	2007–2008	% Change
Brimbank	925.3	843.1	-8.9
Hobsons Bay	872.4	790.4	-9.4
Maribyrnong	1005.4	924.4	-8.0
Melbourne	3650.3	3516.0	-3.7
Melton	892.3	801.3	-10.2
Moonee Valley	766.5	750.3	-2.1
Wyndham	797.4	560.2	-29.7

	Recorded Crimes Against Property Rate Per 100000 Population		
	2006–2007	2007–2008	% Change
Brimbank	6005.9	6758.1	12.5
Hobsons Bay	5390.2	6406.3	18.9
Maribyrnong	8993.9	9776.6	8.7
Melbourne	29979.9	27408.1	-8.6
Melton	4434.5	4696.7	5.9
Moonee Valley	6007.0	5899.7	-1.8
Wyndham	7093.0	5267.0	-25.7

⁶ Figures have been sourced directly from Victoria Police. See Corporate Statistics, Victoria Police, Crime Statistics: Summary of Offences Recorded, at http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=782, accessed December 2008. Rates have been calculated using estimated resident population figures as at 30 June 2007 obtained from the ABS Cat. No. 3101.0. The % change column is the percentage change in the rate per 100,000 population from 2006–2007. Crimes against the person include homicide, rape, sex (non rape), robbery, assault, abduction/kidnap. Recorded incidents of family violence are reported separately. See below, 'Family Violence Incidents'.

Family Violence Incidents

Family violence brings with it a range of long-term health and wellbeing consequences for those affected by it. The experience of family violence has an impact on victims/survivors as well as perpetrators and others exposed to it (for example, children). The ‘privatised’ sphere within which family violence occurs – and the broader societal ‘silence’ around it – further compounds its negative effects. Studies show that those who are subjected to family violence are more likely to experience low self esteem, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and post traumatic stress disorder, and are at higher risk of mental health disorders and physical health conditions.

Family violence statistics are produced annually by Victoria Police. Summaries of recorded family violence incidents per 100,000 population are available to enable comparisons across different areas.

The table below includes the rate of recorded family violence incidents for the financial years 2006–2007 and 2007–2008.⁷ The information shows that Brimbank had the highest rate (per 100,000 population) of recorded family violence incidents for 2006–2007 and 2007–2008.

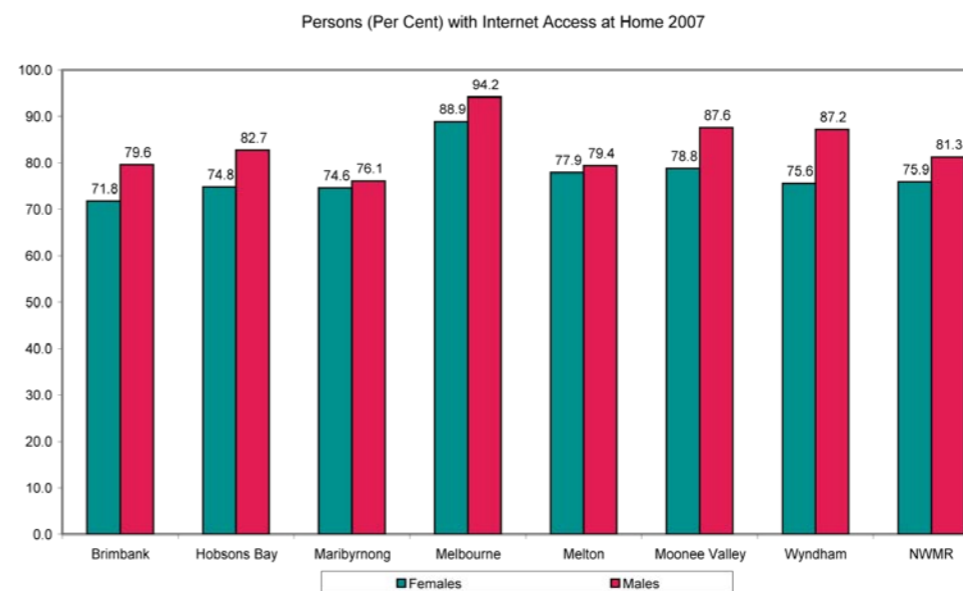
	Recorded Family Violence Incidents Rate Per 100000 Population								
	2006–2007			2007–2008			% Change		
	Family Violence Incidents	Where Charges Laid	Where IVO Applied	Family Violence Incidents	Where Charges Laid	Where IVO Applied	Family Violence Incidents	Where Charges Laid	Where IVO Applied
Brimbank	815.5	226.6	205.4	805.1	210.5	186.1	-1.3	-7.1	-9.4
Hobsons Bay	701.5	159.2	168.6	598.7	112.2	140.3	-14.7	-29.5	-16.8
Maribyrnong	583.6	113.4	108.9	386.3	87.0	78.1	-33.8	-23.3	-28.2
Melbourne	550.4	152.6	120.0	502.8	104.8	86.3	-8.6	-31.3	-28.1
Melton	655.0	166.8	168.1	652.9	165.9	149.5	-0.3	-0.6	-11.1
Moonee Valley	480.5	144.3	129.1	520.1	135.1	136.9	8.2	-6.4	6.1
Wyndham	575.9	113.8	159.5	543.2	82.8	172.9	-5.7	-27.2	8.4

Home Internet Access

According to CIV, ‘Access to information allows residents, students and other sector interests to address their information and resource needs. Information is vital to the building of strong knowledge economies.’

Access to home internet was measured through the CIV survey. Respondents were asked to indicate if the internet could be accessed from their dwelling. The results show that:

- Females in Melbourne are most likely to have internet home access, whereas females in Brimbank are least likely to.
- Across the sub-region, females are less likely to have access to home internet compared with their male counterparts (see Wyndham in particular).



⁷ Figures have been sourced directly from Victoria Police. See Corporate Statistics, Victoria Police, Crime Statistics: Summary of Offences Recorded, at http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=782, accessed December 2008. Rates have been calculated using estimated resident population figures as at 30 June 2007 obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Cat. No. 3101.0. The % change column is the percentage change in the rate per 100,000 population from 2006–2007.

Destinations of School Leavers

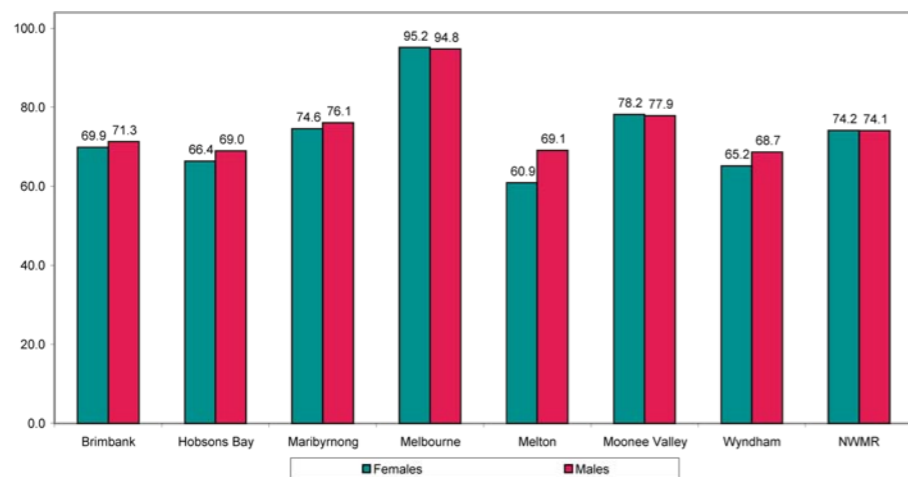
CIV measures the destinations of school leavers through the activities of young people who have left school. The population of school leavers can be categorised as follows:

- Fully engaged school leavers who are involved in full-time work or non-school study.
- Disengaged school leavers who are not involved in any work or study activities.
- The remaining school leavers, defined as partly engaged.

Data obtained from customised Census tables describe the level of engagement in employment and study of 15–19 year olds not attending school. The percentages of fully engaged school leavers across the WMSR LGAs are shown below. The information suggests that:

- Female school leavers aged 15–19 years in Melbourne are most likely to be fully engaged in work or non-school study activities, whereas their counterparts in Melton are least likely to be so.
- There are little or no gender differences in full engagement of young persons across most LGAs. The exception is Melton, where female school leavers are less likely than their male counterparts to be engaged in full-time work or non-school study.

School Leavers (Per Cent) Aged 15-19 Fully Engaged in Full-time Work or Non-School Study 2006

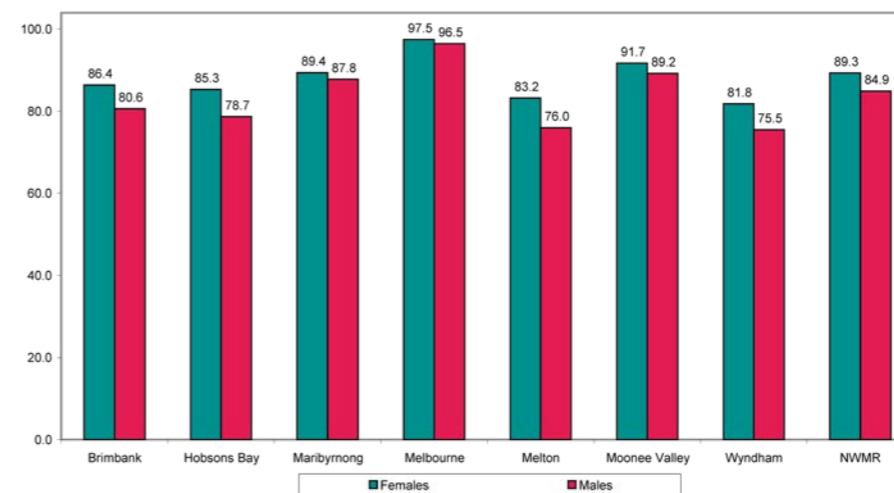


School Retention

The proportion of young people aged 20–24 years with at least Year 12-level education completion can serve as a useful measure of school retention in a given area. CIV uses information from the most recent Census to arrive at this measure. The information shows that:

- Females aged 20–24 years in Melbourne are most likely to have completed their Year 12 education or higher, whereas their counterparts in Wyndham are least likely to have done so.
- Across the sub-region, females aged 20–24 years are more likely than their male counterparts to have completed their Year 12 education or higher.

Persons (Per Cent) Aged 20-24 With Year 12-level Education Completion or Higher 2006



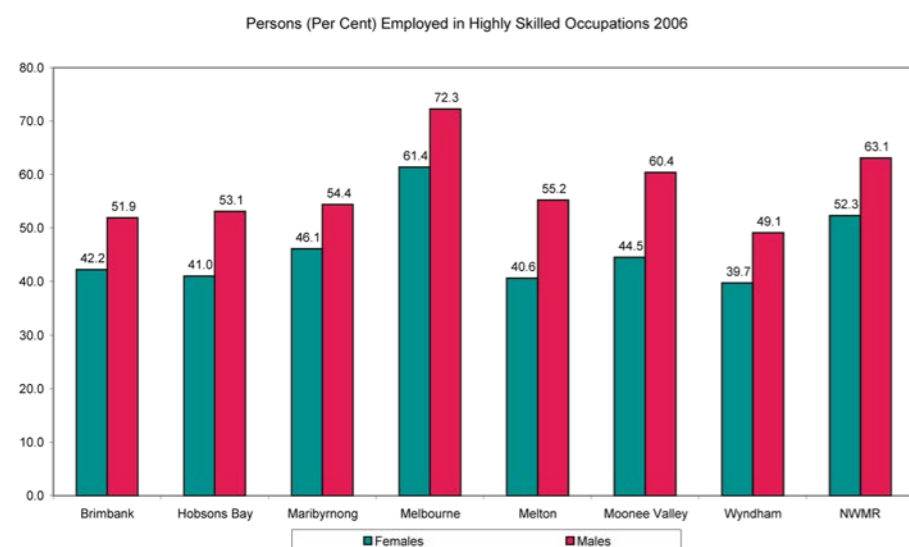
Dynamic and Resilient Local Economies

Highly-skilled Workforce

A highly skilled workforce is an essential component of a strong local economy. For this indicator, highly skilled has been defined as occupations with Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) Skill Levels 1–3.⁸

CIV has collated data relevant to the skill level of the local workforce (i.e. those working in the local area) using customised ABS Census tables. The information is expressed as the proportion of the local workforce (i.e. persons aged 15 years or more in paid employment) in highly skilled occupations. The information shows that:

- Females in paid employment working in Melbourne are most likely to be in highly skilled occupations, whereas their counterparts in Wyndham are least likely to be so.
- Females in paid employment working in all WMSR LGAs are less likely than their male counterparts to be in highly skilled occupations.

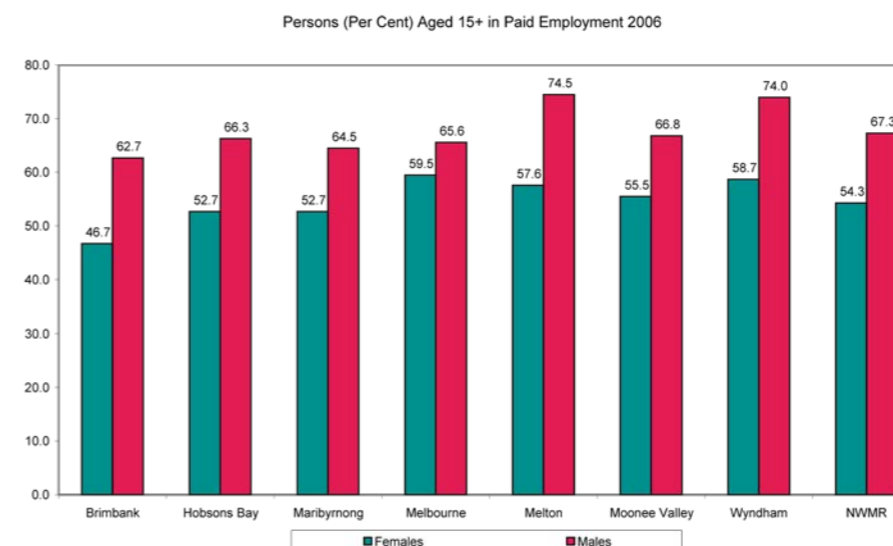


⁸ Skill Level 1 is commensurate with a bachelor degree or higher qualification. At least five years of relevant experience can substitute for the formal qualification. In some instances relevant experience and/or on-the-job training might be required in addition to the formal qualification. Skill Level 2 is commensurate with an AQF Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma or Diploma. At least three years of relevant experience can substitute for the formal qualification. In some instances relevant experience and/or on-the-job training might be required in addition to the formal qualification. Skill Level 3 is commensurate with an AQF Certificate IV, or AQF Certificate III including at least two years of on-the-job training. At least three years of relevant experience can substitute for the formal qualifications listed above. In some instances relevant experience and/or on-the-job training might be required in addition to the formal qualification.

Employment Rate

According to CIV, 'Employment for all is an important social goal . . . Employment gives people the opportunity to make lifestyle choices and is associated with levels of personal satisfaction. Insufficient employment opportunities might lead to a decline in health and skill levels of unemployed people, family breakdowns and increasing crime rates.' CIV has collated data relevant to the employment status of those aged 15 years or more using figures from the most recent ABS Census.⁹ The information shows that:

- Females in Melbourne are most likely to be in paid employment, whereas their counterparts in Brimbank are least likely to be so.
- Across the sub-region, females are less likely than males to be in paid employment.

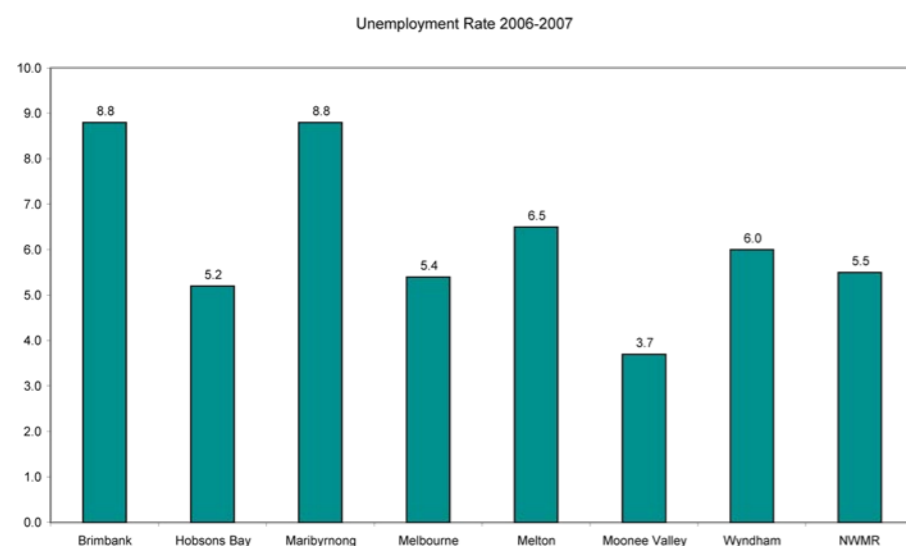


⁹ Readers can compare these CIV results with figures contained in Volume 1: Social Profile of this report (see 'Labour Force Status'). Figures can vary slightly between the two because CIV has excluded from the denominator (i.e. persons aged 15 years or more) those who did not state their labour force status on Census night. 'Employed full-time' indicates that a person worked 35 hours or more in all jobs during the week leading to the Census. 'Employed part-time' indicates that a person worked less than 35 hours in all jobs during the week leading to the Census, including if the number of hours worked was only one. 'Unemployed looking for work' indicates that a person was not employed full-time or part-time but was available to start work in the week leading to the Census. Several criticisms have been made about these definitions. One major criticism is that the count of those unemployed is not an accurate reflection of everyone who is actually wanting and looking for appropriate employment. This is because a person need only to work as little as one hour a week to be counted as employed, even if they spent more time looking for more appropriate employment. The definitions therefore do not capture under-employment as a sub-set of unemployment.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate is based on the proportion of persons in the labour force (not the population as a whole) who are unemployed and looking for work.

CIV has calculated the unemployment rate of LGAs by aggregating figures for Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) as published by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).¹⁰ The reference period is the 2006–2007 financial year (based on the June quarter 2007).¹¹ The information shows that Brimbank and Maribyrnong have the highest unemployment rate, whereas Moonee Valley has the lowest.



Local Employment

According to CIV, 'Local employment is integral to a sustainable society. Local employment contributes to making the municipality a desirable place to live and reduces economic leakage. People who live and work in an area are more likely to shop locally and become embedded in the local community, contributing to community building.' In addition, local employment has environmental benefits and can help workers to attain better work-life balance.

CIV has collated figures relevant to local employment (i.e. the proportion of employed persons who live in the area) using data from the last Census. The information shows that:

- Females aged 15 years or more in paid employment working in Melbourne are most likely to be living in the same LGA, whereas their counterparts in Maribyrnong are least likely to be doing so.
- Across the sub-region, females aged 15 years or more in paid employment are more likely than their male counterparts to be working and living in the same LGA.



¹⁰ DEEWR figures are 'smoothed' to minimise variability inherent in estimates at the SLA level.

¹¹ As noted by CIV, 'The smoothed series for each June Quarter effectively gives the average number of unemployed and unemployment rate across the whole of the year ending June (i.e. the financial year).' Readers can refer to Volume 1: Social Profile of this report unemployment rates at the SLA level for the 2007–2008 quarters (see 'Unemployment Rates').

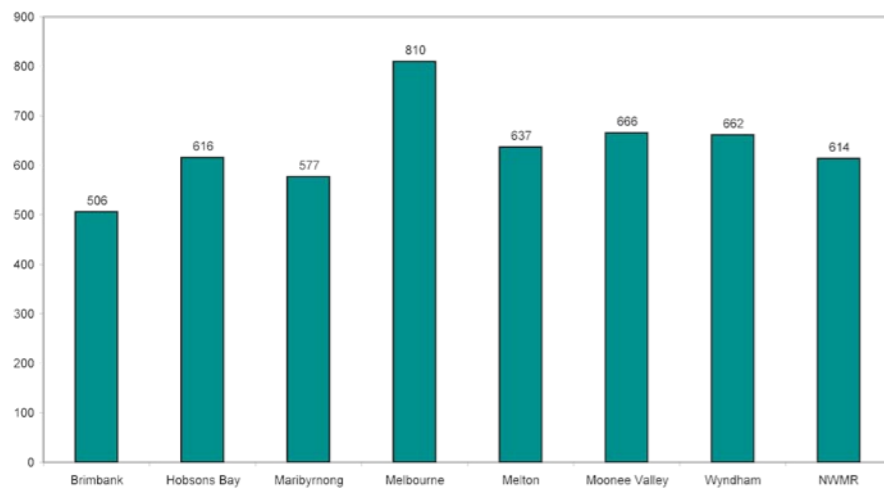
Income

Income is an important indicator of community wellbeing because many of life's basic needs (for example, food, water, shelter, education, and health care) must be purchased and/or have associated costs.

CIV measures the economic status of communities through the median equivalised gross weekly household income as derived from household income data collected at the last Census. Equivalised household income, as defined by the ABS, is the total household income 'adjusted by the application of an equivalence scale to facilitate comparison of income levels between households of differing size and composition, reflecting the requirement of a larger household to have a higher level of income to achieve the same standard of living as a smaller household.'¹²

The information shows that households in Melbourne have the highest median equivalised gross weekly income, whereas households in Brimbank have the lowest.

Median Equivalised Gross Weekly Household Income (Dollars) 2006

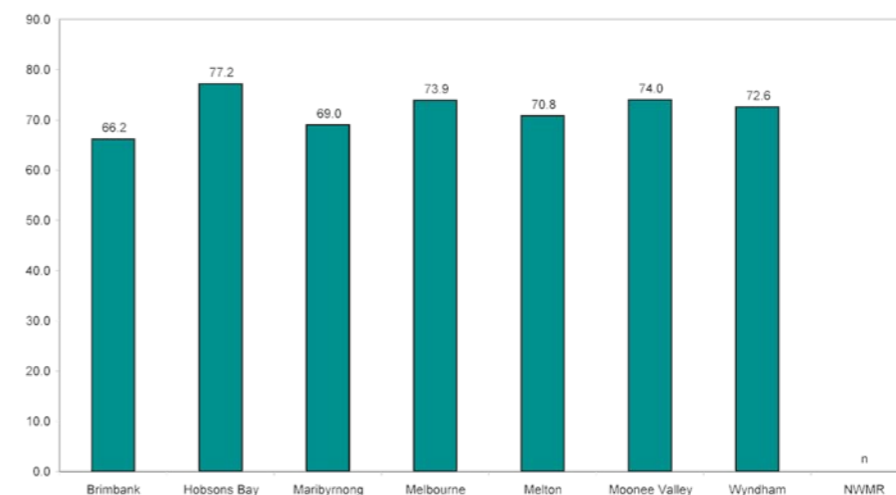


Financial Stress

There are several other ways to explore economic status as an indicator of community wellbeing. One of these is through the concept of financial stress. Financial stress across Victoria has been measured through DVC's *Community Strength Survey* (2006). Respondents were asked if they could raise a moderate sum of money (i.e. \$2,000) in two days to deal with an emergency, such as having to pay for an unexpected bill.

The results (sex-disaggregated data are not available) show that residents in Hobsons Bay are most likely to be able to raise \$2,000 in an emergency, whereas those in Brimbank are least likely to be able to do so.

Persons (Per Cent) Able to Raise \$2000 in Two Days in an Emergency 2006



¹² See ABS Census Dictionary, Cat. No. 2901.0 Latest Issue Release 11:30 a.m. (Canberra time) 17/11/06 at <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/A390E2529EC00DFECA25720A0076F6C6?opendocument>.

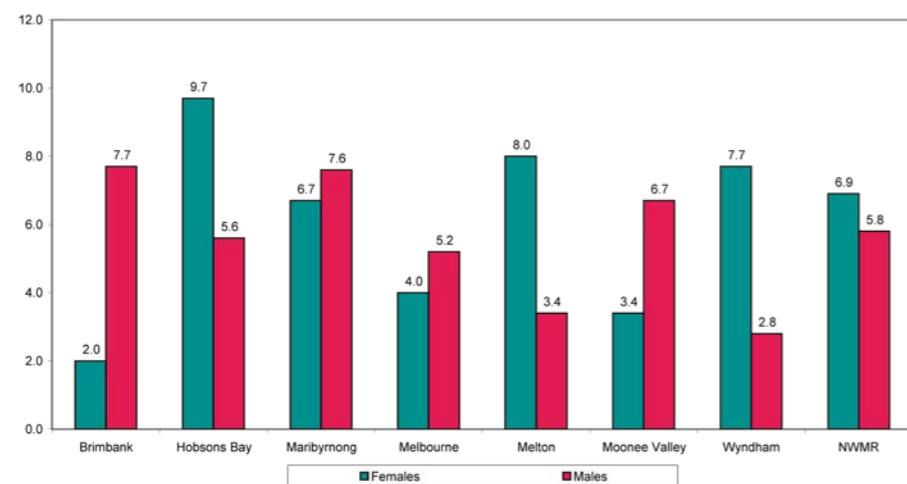
Food Security

Another way to explore economic status is through the concept of food security – or more accurately, food insecurity. According to CIV, people can be at risk of poor nutrition and diet (not to mention social exclusion) because of their financial incapacity to purchase food.¹³

Food insecurity has been measured through the CIV survey. Respondents were asked if there had been any times in the preceding 12 months when they had run out of food and could not afford to buy more. The results show that:

- Females in Hobsons Bay are most likely to have experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months, whereas females in Brimbank are least likely to have done so.
- The most significant gender differences in food insecurity occur in Hobsons Bay, Melton and Wyndham (with females more likely than males to have experienced it) and Brimbank and Moonee Valley (with males more likely than females to have experienced it).

Persons (Per Cent) Who Ran Out of Food in the Last 12 Months and Could Not Afford to Buy More 2006



¹³ See above, 'Health and Lifestyle Behaviours', for further discussion on the association between socio-economic disadvantage and poor nutrition.

Educational Qualifications

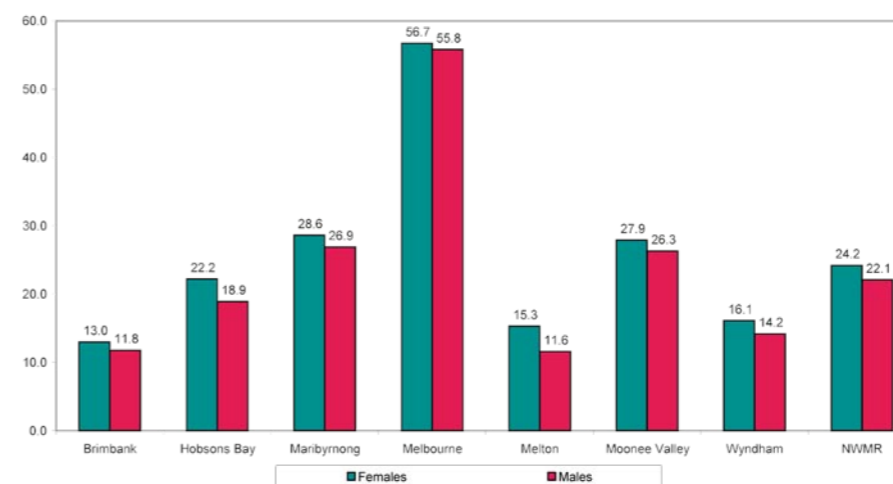
According to CIV, 'Education is an essential component of community wellbeing, enabling humans to develop their intellectual potential and maximising their capacity to deal with all aspects of life. The education and skills base of residents influences their capacity to gain employment and contributes to equity and the opportunity to make lifestyle choices. The educational qualifications of residents also contribute to the capacity of communities to engage in the emerging knowledge economy.'

CIV measures educational qualifications based on data from the last Census. The results have been derived from information about the attainment of non-school qualifications of persons aged 25 years or more. CIV acknowledges that some people aged 15–24 years will have attained a non-school qualification; however, the majority of this cohort is still in the process of completing their education. (See 'Destinations of School Leavers' and 'School Retention' for the study/work details and qualifications achieved of those aged 15–24 years.) The information compiled by CIV therefore refers to persons aged 25 years or more and is presented below.¹⁴

Persons Aged 25 Years and Over with a Bachelor Degree or Higher Qualification

- Females aged 25 years or more in Melbourne are most likely to have attained a Bachelor Degree or higher qualification, whereas their counterparts in Brimbank are least likely to have done so.
- Across the sub-region, females aged 25 years or more are more likely than their male counterparts to have attained a Bachelor Degree or higher qualification.

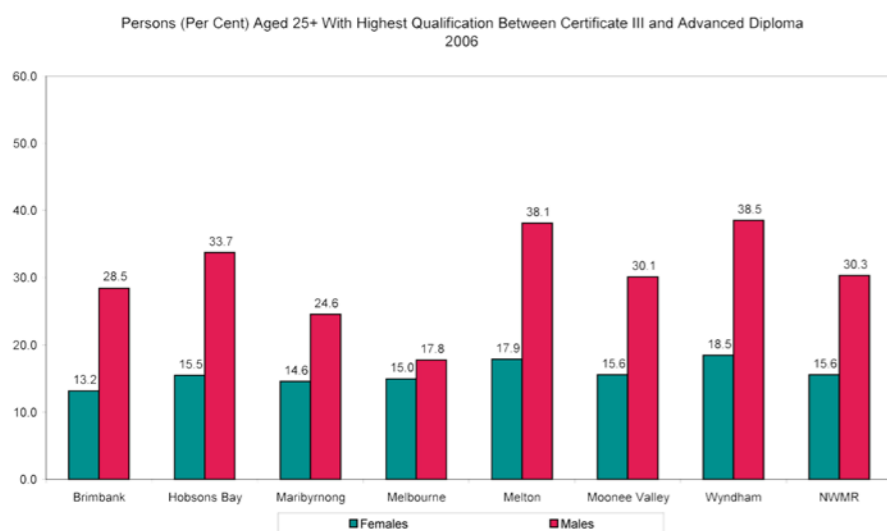
Persons (Per Cent) Aged 25+ With a Bachelor Degree or Higher Qualification 2006



¹⁴ Readers can compare these CIV results with figures contained Volume 1: Social Profile of this report (see 'Levels of Post-secondary Education Attainment'). Figures vary between the two because the CIV results exclude persons aged less than 25 years. CIV has also excluded from the denominator those who did not state or inadequately described their non-school educational qualifications.

Persons Aged 25 Years and Over with Highest Qualification Between Certificate III and Advanced Diploma

- Females aged 25 years or more in Wyndham are most likely to have a highest qualification between Certificate III and Advanced Diploma, whereas their counterparts in Brimbank are least likely to have done so.
- Across the sub-region, females aged 25 years or more are less likely than their male counterparts to have a highest qualification between Certificate III and Advanced Diploma.



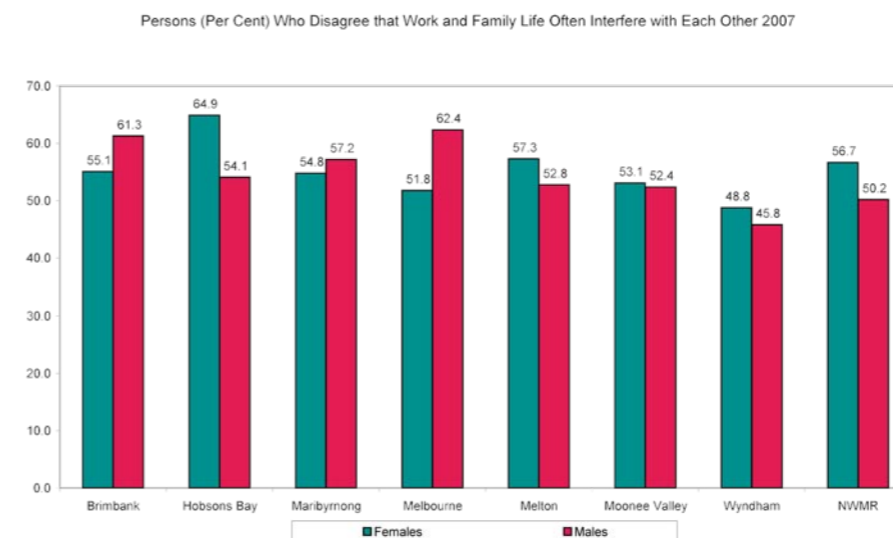
Adequate Work-life Balance

According to CIV, 'work-life balance is the maintenance of a balance between responsibilities at work and at home. When work-life balance is achieved, people feel that they have attained the best possible quality of life.'

Work-life balance was measured through the CIV survey. Employed respondents were asked whether they agreed that 'their work and family life often interfere with each other.' In other words, the responses were highly subjective given the notion of what counts as 'interference' can vary enormously from person to person.

The results are for the proportion of respondents who disagreed with the statement, and show that:

- Employed females in Hobsons Bay are most likely to feel that they have a good balance of work and life, whereas their counterparts in Wyndham are least likely to do so.
- Employed females in Brimbank, Maribyrnong and Melbourne are less likely than their male counterparts to feel they have a good balance of work and life. By contrast, employed females in Hobsons Bay, Melton and Wyndham are more likely than their male counterparts to feel they have a good balance of work and life. There are less significant gender differences in the results for Moonee Valley.



Sustainable Built and Natural Environments

Housing Affordability

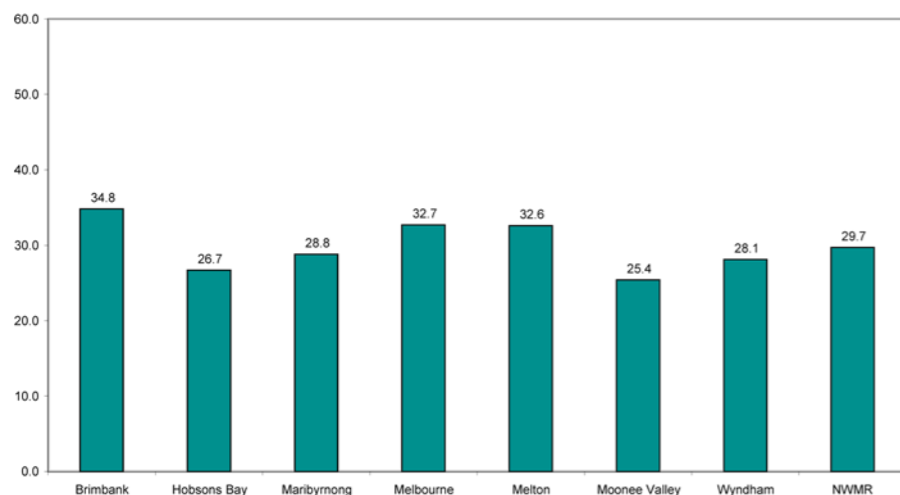
Housing affordability has a major influence on community wellbeing. When housing costs are high relative to income, then residents have less capacity to meet other essential needs (including health care).

While rising housing costs affect those purchasing their homes, those hit hardest are people on low incomes trapped in the private rental market and/or trying to secure public housing (itself in ever-diminishing supply). The latest ABS Survey of Income and Housing 2005-2006 has found that Victorian households with incomes of \$35,000 or less per annum are most likely to be experiencing stress (i.e. spending more than 30.0% of gross income on housing costs) in the current rental market.¹⁵ Government subsidies can help to offset some of the costs for low income households; however, the fact remains that rental costs continue to rise at a much faster rate than available subsidies. This means an increasing number of low income households renting in stress with an increasing number of their occupants at risk of homelessness.¹⁶

CIV has calculated two different measures of housing affordability using data from the last Census.¹⁷ These relate to the proportion of renting households spending 30.0% or more of gross household income on rental costs, and the proportion of households with mortgages spending 30.0% or more of gross household income on repayments. The information shows that:

- Renting households in Brimbank are most likely to be experiencing stress associated with rental costs, whereas households in Moonee Valley are least likely to be doing so.
- Households with mortgages in Melbourne are most likely to be experiencing stress associated with repayments whereas households in Moonee Valley are least likely to be doing so (see also Hobsons Bay).

Households (Per Cent) Spending > 30.0% of Gross Household Income on Rent 2006

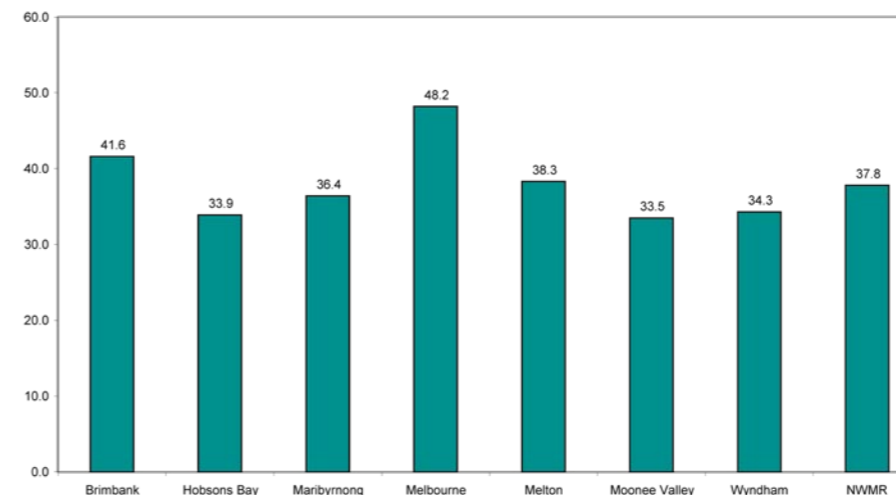


¹⁵ The survey was conducted on a sample of dwellings throughout Australia from July 2005 to June 2006. These dwellings were selected through a stratified, multistage cluster design. The sample excluded non-private dwellings (such as hospitals, institutions, nursing homes, hotels, hostels, etc) and dwellings in collection districts defined as very remote. Information was collected from all persons aged 15 years or more in the selected households. Computer assisted interviewing was used to conduct household and personal interviews. As far as possible, interviews were spread equally over the enumeration period. Information from 9,961 households was included in the final estimates. See ABS Household Income and Income Distribution Australia 2005-06 Cat. No. 6523.0 Latest Issue Released at 11:30 a.m. (Canberra time) 02/08/07 at <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6523.02005-06?OpenDocument>, accessed in December 2008.

¹⁶ See Anglicare Victoria http://www.anglicarevic.org.au/index.php?pageID=6825&merchant_id=0.

¹⁷ Readers can also refer to 'Housing Stress' in Volume 1: Social Profile of this report for more on housing stress in the WMSR.

Households (Per Cent) Spending > 30.0% of Gross Household Income on Loan Repayments 2006



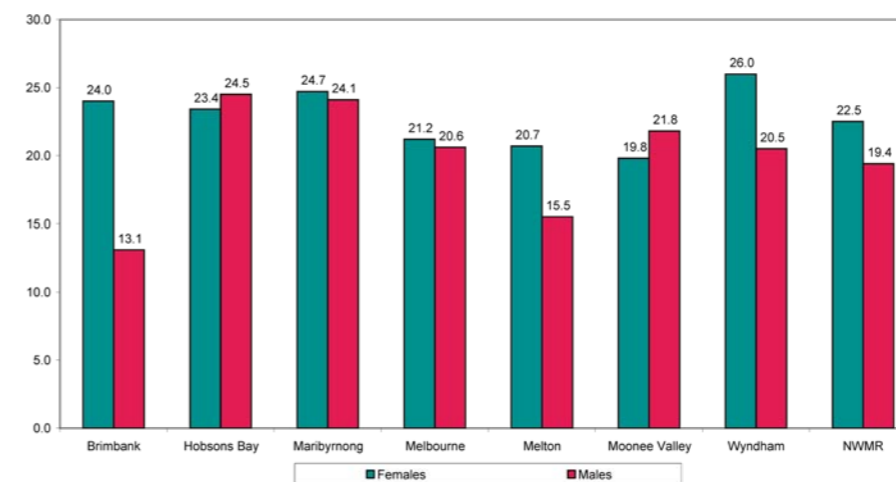
Transport Limitations

According to CIV, 'Safe, reliable affordable transport is a key determinant of people's opportunities to access health services and programs, education and secure employment. It is especially important for the elderly to have access to public transportation. Limitation in regards to transport is related to social isolation and also has a relationship with sedentary lifestyles.'

People's experiences of transport limitations were measured through the CIV survey. Respondents were asked whether they had experienced transport limitations in the preceding 12 months. The results show that:

- Females in Wyndham were most likely to have experienced transport limitations in the last 12 months, whereas females in Moonee Valley were least likely to have done so.
- Females in Brimbank, Melton and Wyndham were much more likely than their male counterparts to have experienced transport limitations in the last 12 months. (There were little or no gender differences in the experience of transport limitations for the remaining LGAs.)

Persons (Per Cent) Experiencing Transport Limitations in the Last 12 Months 2007



Public Transport Patronage

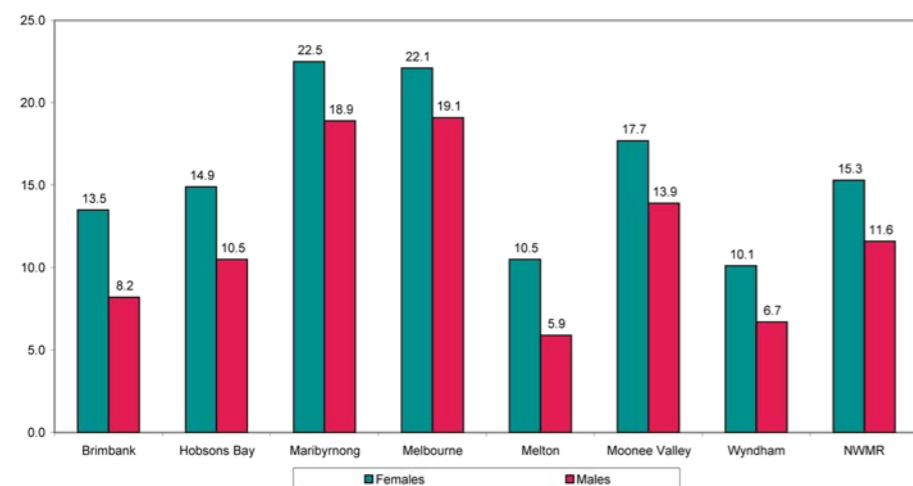
Public transport is an important indicator of a sustainable environment. The provision of adequate and affordable public transport can make a positive difference to the environment (e.g. reduction in road accidents, traffic congestion and air pollution) as well as improve people’s access to services. Adequate and affordable public transport is particularly important for those without private vehicles and who would otherwise experience difficulties with getting to where they need to go (e.g. younger people, the elderly, those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage).

CIV measures public transport patronage through the number of persons who used public transport to travel to work on the day of the most recent Census. Public transport includes train, bus, ferry or tram – as a single method or in combination with other methods (including private transport). Patronage is, of course, dependent on availability. Lower rates of patronage can indicate lack of available public transport options in under-served areas such as outer metropolitan LGAs.

The information shows that:

- Employed females in Maribyrnong were most likely to have travelled to work using public transport on Census day, whereas their counterparts in Melton and Wyndham were least likely to have done so.
- Across the sub-region, employed females were more likely than their male counterparts to have travelled to work using public transport on Census day.

Employed Persons (Per Cent) Who Used Public Transport to Travel to Work on Census Day 2006



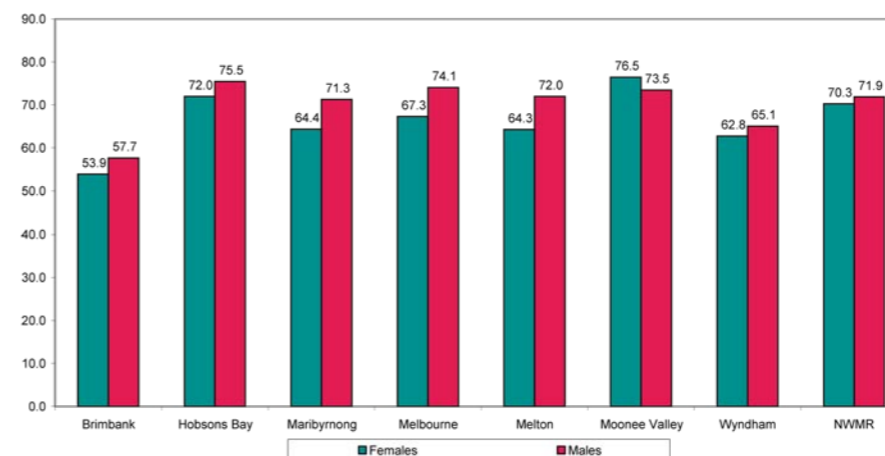
Culturally Rich and Vibrant Communities Arts and Cultural Activities

According to CIV, ‘Art and culture are aspects of community identity, and social life. They are integral in forming national identity, community networks and preserving social knowledge’. Moreover, ‘Participation builds social cohesion and connectedness, thereby reducing isolation. Through building a collective identity, event and cultural facilities also build community strength. Community and cultural events provide a range of socially inclusive activities that contribute to overall community wellbeing.’

The opportunity to participate in arts and cultural activities was measured through the CIV survey. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, ‘There are enough opportunities in your local area for you to participate in arts and related activities’. The results (for those who agreed) show that:

- ◆ Females in Moonee Valley are most likely to feel that they have enough opportunities to participate in arts and related activities in the local area, whereas females in Brimbank are least likely to do so.
- ◆ Across the sub-region, females are less likely than males to feel that they have enough opportunities to participate in arts and related activities in the local area.

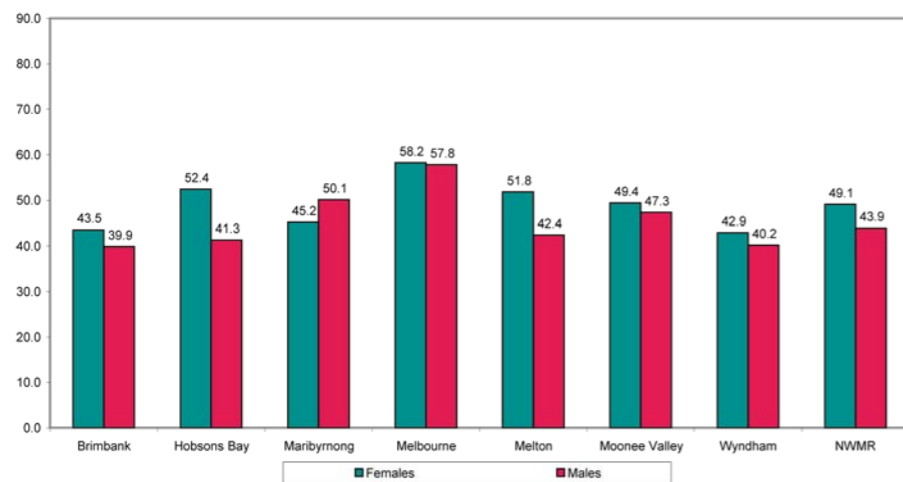
Persons (Per Cent) Who Agree that There are Enough Opportunities to Participate in Arts and Related Activities in the Local Area 2007



The CIV survey also asked respondents if they had participated in arts and related activities in the last 12 months. The results show that opportunities to participate in arts and related cultural activities do not always translate into actual participation, with lower rates across all LGAs (for females and males). The results also show that:

- Females in Melbourne are most likely to have participated in arts and related activities in the last 12 months, whereas females in Wyndham are least likely to have done so.
- For most LGAs, females are more likely than males to have participated in arts and related activities in the last 12 months. The exceptions are Maribyrnong, where the reverse is the case, and Melbourne, where little gender differences exist.

Persons (Per Cent) Participating in Arts and Related Activities in the Last 12 Months 2007



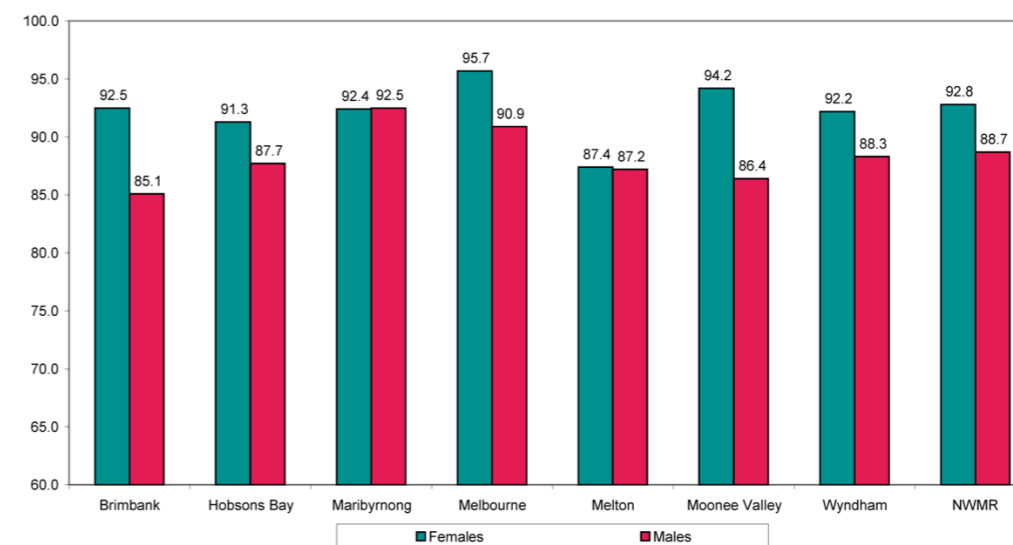
Acceptance of Cultural Difference

Migrants play a key role in building strong communities. Their contribution to the economic, social and cultural fabric of life means that the heterogeneity of community identity and belonging is constantly being re-envisioned.

Opinions on cultural diversity were measured through the CIV survey. Respondents were asked if they agreed with the statement, 'It is a good thing for society to be made up of people from different cultures.' The results (for those who agreed) show that:

- Females in Melbourne are most likely to agree that cultural diversity is a good thing for society, whereas females in Melton are least likely to do so.
- For most LGAs, females are more likely than males to agree that cultural diversity is a good thing for society – particularly in Brimbank and Moonee Valley. The exceptions are Maribyrnong and Melton with little gender differences in the responses.

Persons (Per Cent) Who Feel that Cultural Diversity is a Good Thing for Society 2007



Democratic and Engaged Communities

Citizen Engagement

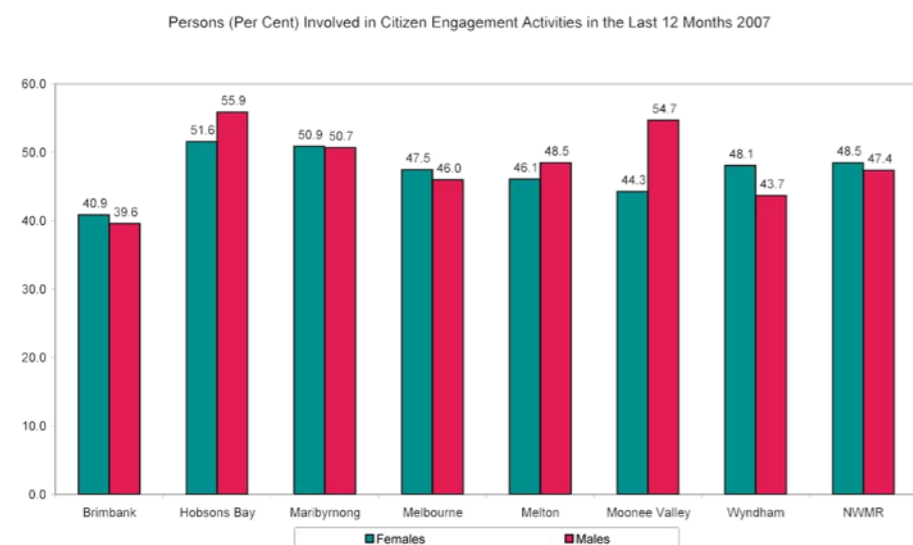
Citizen engagement encompasses activities such as public consultation and the involvement in decision-making and local governance processes. Through engagement, citizens acquire a sense of empowerment, and political efficacy, and gain greater control of their destinies.

The participation of Victorians in different types of citizen engagement was measured through the CIV survey. Respondents were asked if they had done any of the following types of activities in the last 12 months:

- Attended a town meeting, public hearing or public affairs discussion group.
- Met with, called or sent a letter to any local politician.
- Joined a protest or demonstration, or signed a petition.

The results (of those who said 'yes') show that:

- Females in Hobsons Bay are most likely to have been involved in citizen engagement activities in the last 12 months (see also Maribyrnong), whereas females in Brimbank are least likely to have done so.
- Females in Wyndham are more likely than their male counterparts to have been involved in citizen engagement activities in the last 12 months. Meanwhile, females in Hobsons Bay and Moonee Valley are less likely than their male counterparts to have done so. There are little or no gender differences in responses for Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Melbourne and Melton.

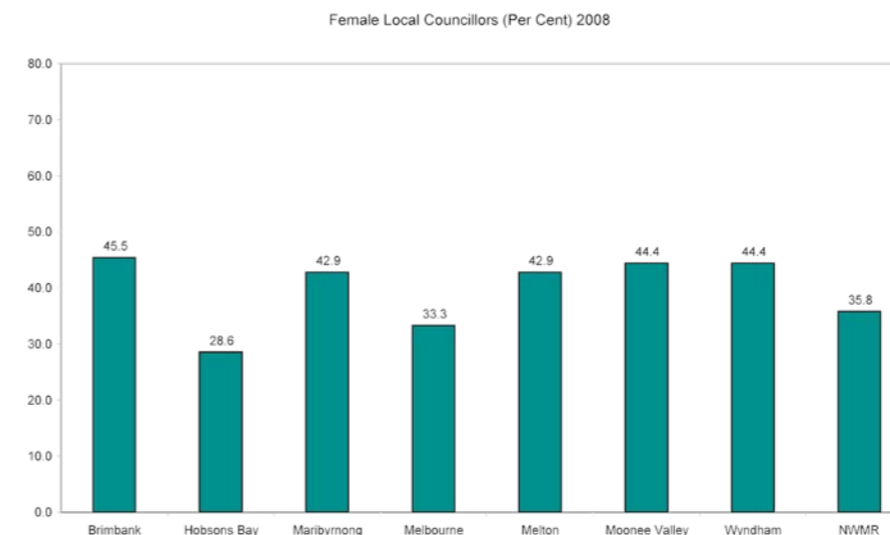


Female Local Councillors

As the tier of government closest to the community, local government gives citizens important opportunities for participation in formal political decision-making processes and leadership. As equal citizens, women have a critical role to play in contributing to decisions that impact on their communities. The number of female local councillors can act as a measure of just how representational local democracy really is.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) provides an analysis of council election results at the conclusion of the council election period. In November 2008, all Victorian councils went to the polls on the same day. The information presented below includes the number of local female councillors in the WMSR LGAs (expressed as a percentage of the total number of councillors in each LGA) after the 2008 elections.¹⁸ The information can be compared with figures from the previous 2004 and 2005 elections – the last time elections in Victoria were split.¹⁹ The information shows that:

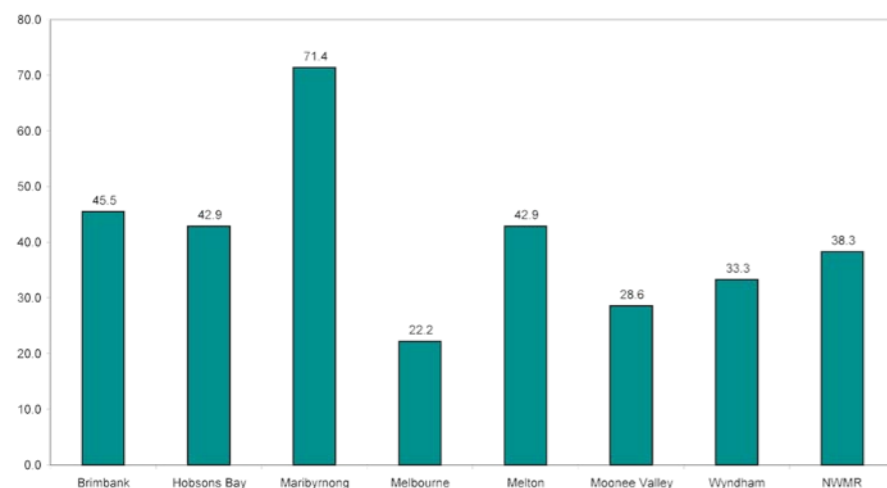
- Across the sub-region, female local councillors comprise less than one half of the total number of councillors.
- The LGA with the highest representation of female local councillors is Brimbank, whereas the LGA with the lowest is Hobsons Bay.
- There is some variation in the LGAs in terms of the proportion of female local councillors between the two election periods. The proportion has fallen in Hobsons Bay and Maribyrnong but risen in Melbourne, Moonee Valley and Wyndham. The proportion has remained the same in Brimbank and Melton.



¹⁸ 2008 figures have been sourced directly from MAV <http://www.mav.asn.au/CA256C2B000B597A/page/Council+Information-Council+Elections?OpenDocument&1=20-Council+Information~&2=10-Council+Elections~&3=->, accessed January 2009.

¹⁹ Results for the split elections of 2004/2005 were generated by the CIV reporting facility.

Female Local Councillors (Per Cent) 2004/2005

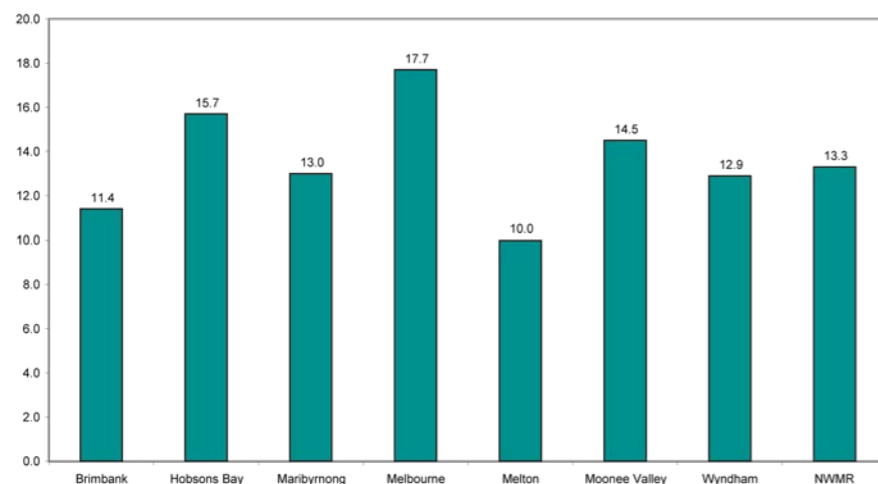


Membership to Local Community Organisations

The number of people elected to decision-making positions in local community organisations can act as another measure of citizen engagement as it indicates the level of participation in local governance outside of the formal political system.

This form of citizen engagement has been measured through the DVC *Community Strength Survey* in 2006. Respondents were asked if they were on a decision-making board or committee, such as a corporate board, school council, sports club committee, church committee, body corporate or resident action group. The results (sex-disaggregated data are not available) show that people in Melbourne are most likely to be members of decision-making boards or committees, whereas people in Melton are least likely to be so.

Persons (Per Cent) Who are Members of Decision-making Boards or Committees 2006



www.whwest.org.au

Produced by Women's Health West

Editors Dr Robyn Gregory, Katherine Koesasi
 Layout Nicola Harte
 Copyright © WHW 2009
 ISBN 978-0-9585404-2-1