



Healthy food environment

Moreland City Council Health Profile

December 2020

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Overview

Food environments are the physical, social, economic, cultural and political factors that either help or hinder people's access to good quality food (National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health, 2015). The availability and ease of access to food, the relative cost of healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables, prevalence and exposure to food advertising, the appeal of time saving convenience foods, and social and cultural norms all influence our diets. The combination of these factors give rise to the different food environments experienced in different locations and population groups.

Eating a healthy and balanced diet is crucial for health and can be a protective factor against chronic diseases. In conjunction with regular physical activity, eating well can help maintain a healthy body weight which reduces the risk of obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other chronic conditions (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020). Eating a wide variety of foods also assists with having enough energy and nutrients for function, growth and repair of the body (Eat for Health, 2017).

There are barriers to healthy eating that can be present and contribute to the under consumption of healthy foods (World Health Organisation, 2020). These barriers have a significant impact to healthy eating and may include living in a low-income household, social isolation, living with a disability or chronic illness, limited access to transport, migrant and refugee status, and housing stress or homelessness. Addressing these barriers can help improve food environments and increase access to nutritionally appropriate foods (Heart Foundation, 2017).

Moreland context

Three quarters of Moreland's population are located within 1 km of a source of fresh food. However, there are pockets with very low access such as Oak Park (<4%), Hadfield and Glenroy (<50%). These areas are also among the most disadvantaged in Moreland which makes them a priority for supporting more fresh healthy food options.

Food security refers to the ability to always access healthy, affordable culturally appropriate food. The reasons for people lacking food security relate not only to distance from food outlets, but also a lack of culturally appropriate food options, limited financial resources and transport options, lack of motivation or knowledge about a nutritious diet and mobility or mental health issues. Residents from Glenroy and Fawkner reported being more food insecure (6-9.5%) than the average Moreland resident (3.1%). Loss of income and jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant rise in the number of Moreland residents experiencing food insecurity as well as the severity. At the same time food supply chains were disrupted reducing the availability of food relief. Climate change events such as the 2019-2020 bushfires also disrupt food supplies and lead to increased food prices. Residents already experiencing food insecurity are disproportionately impacted by these events, as are those not eligible for government support, such as international students.

Moreland has considerable food growing skills and assets, with 47% of residents growing their own food as well as over 25 communal food growing sites. Studies have shown that residents who grow their own food are more likely to have a higher vegetable and fruit intake (The Australia Institute, 2014). Locally grown and distributed food was an important source of diverse and healthy food for those who needed it most during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the priority groups of women and low-income earners.

The health profile data relating to healthy food indicates that socioeconomic disadvantage is an underlying cause of unhealthy diets and food insecurity. A targeted multipronged response is required, which works in concert with other programs addressing inequality and disadvantage.

In summary, key issues include:

- Low compliance with fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines.
- Rising food insecurity, particularly in Fawkner, Glenroy and Brunswick East.
- Low levels of accessibility to fresh food within walking distance in Gowanbrae and Oak Park.

- High consumption of unhealthy food and drinks for Aboriginal Victorians, with poor diet being a leading cause of disease burden.
- Increases in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events may impact food security, affordability and safety.

Key insights

Healthy food consumption

- Half of adults in Moreland do not meet the recommended guidelines for fruit and vegetable consumption, however this is slightly lower than the averages for the North Division (52.2%) and for Victoria overall (51.7%).
- Nearly one in five (19.5%) of adults in Moreland eat take-away meals or snacks more than one time per week. This is higher than for the North Division (14.4%) and Victoria (15.2%).
- 9.4% of adults in Moreland consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily. This is consistent to North Division (9.5%) and slightly lower than Victoria (10.1%).

Food availability and accessibility

- Three quarters (74.1%) of dwellings in Moreland are within 1km of a supermarket. When compared with nearby LGAs, Moreland performs similarly: Darebin (66.8%), Moonee Valley (73.5%), and Maribyrnong (81.4%).
- Nearly all dwellings in Brunswick (98.1%) and Brunswick East (95.8%) are within 1km of a supermarket, whereas only very small portions of Gowanbrae (3.0%) and Oak Park (3.5%) have such close access to supermarkets, and less than half of households in Hadfield do (47.6%).

Food insecurity

- In 2019, 4.5% of Moreland residents had experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months. This is **higher** than in 2017 (3.2%) but consistent with 2015 (4.5%). Fawkner reported the highest instance of food insecurity (13.4%) followed by Glenroy (11.5%) and Brunswick East (8.3%).
- A recent COVID-19 community survey indicated that 15% of residents were somewhat or very concerned (4%) about their ability to afford food in the next four weeks (MCC 2020).

Food production

- In 2019, 40.5% of Moreland residents reported producing some of their own food through a home fruit or vegetable garden. Coburg North (60.7%), Coburg (59.1%), and Pascoe Vale South (53.2%) have the highest instances of residents who produce some of their own food.

Healthy food consumption

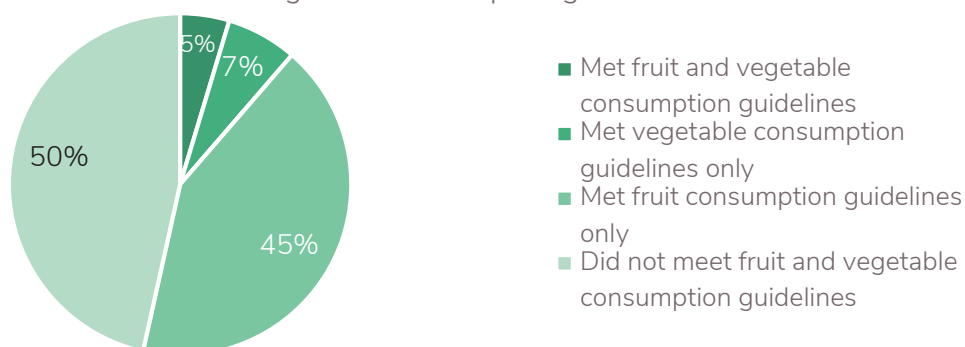
Measure: Compliance with fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines

5% of adults in Moreland meet the fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines, which is higher than in North Division (3.8%) and Victoria (3.6%). 7.2% of adults meet only the guidelines for vegetables, 45.3% of adults meet only the guidelines for fruit, and 50% of adults do not meet the guidelines for vegetables and fruit.

Table. Proportion of adults who meet the compliance with fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines

Level of compliance	Moreland	North Division ¹	Victoria
Met fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines	5.0%	3.8%	3.6%
Met vegetable consumption guidelines only	7.2%	5.6%	5.4%
Met fruit consumption guidelines only	45.3%	43.1%	43.2%
Did not meet fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines	50.0%	52.2%	51.7%

Compliance with fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines in Moreland



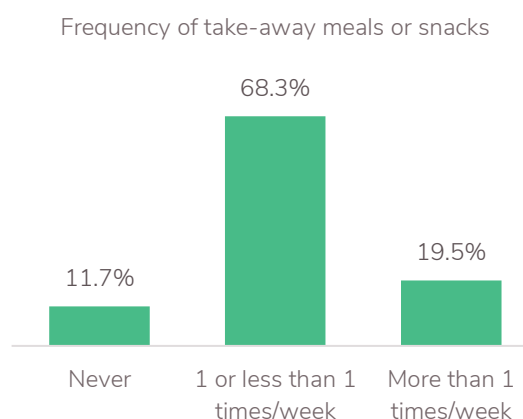
Source: Victoria Population Health Survey 2017

Measure: Consumption of take-away meals or snacks

Nearly one in five (19.5%) of adults in Moreland eat take-away meals or snacks more than one time per week. This is higher than for the North Division (14.4%) and Victoria (15.2%).

Table. Proportion of adults who eat take-away meals or snacks more than one time per week

Frequency	Moreland	North Division	Victoria
Never	11.7%	15.4%	14.9%
1 or less than 1 times/week	68.3%	69.5%	69.1%
More than 1 times/week	19.5%	14.4%	15.3%



Source: Victoria Population Health Survey 2017

¹ North division is: Moreland, Hume, Darebin, Whittlesea, Banyule, and Nillumbik

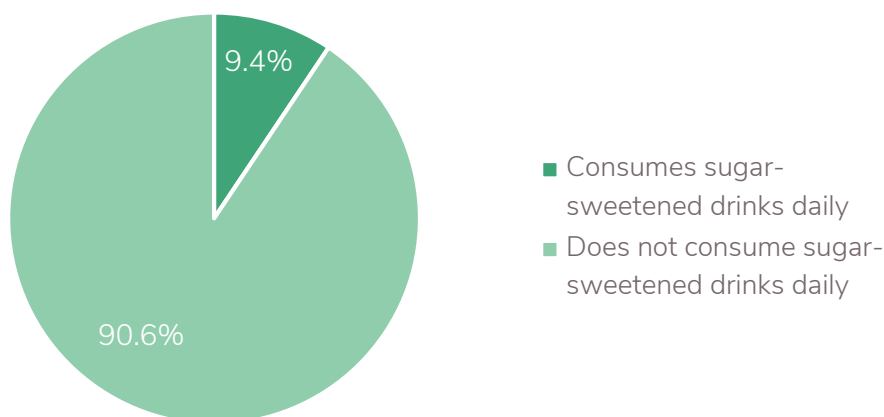
Measure: Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages

9.4% of adults in Moreland consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily. This is consistent to North Division (9.5%) and slightly lower than Victoria (10.1%).

Table. Proportion of adults who consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily

Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages	Moreland	North Division	Victoria
Consumes sugar-sweetened drinks daily	9.4%	9.5%	10.1%
Does not consume sugar-sweetened drinks daily	90.6%	90.5%	89.9%

Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages in Moreland



Source: Victoria Population Health Survey 2017



PRIORITY GROUPS

Poor diet is a leading cause of the disease burden for all Victorians, with dietary risk factors more pronounced for Aboriginal Victorians. For example, 41 per cent of energy intake for Aboriginal adults in Victoria comes from unhealthy foods and drinks. (Korin Korin Balit Djak, 2017).

Access to nutritionally dense foods impacts the overall health of women. Women who have lower incomes are more likely to be unable to afford nutritionally dense foods to sustain a healthy diet. Inadequate nutrition in pregnant women is a health concern and has been associated with poor pregnancy outcomes including low birth weight and gestational diabetes.



PANDEMIC

Edible gardening contributed to diverse and healthy diets during the COVID-19 Pandemic (2020 Pandemic Gardening Survey, Sustain: The Australian Food Network).

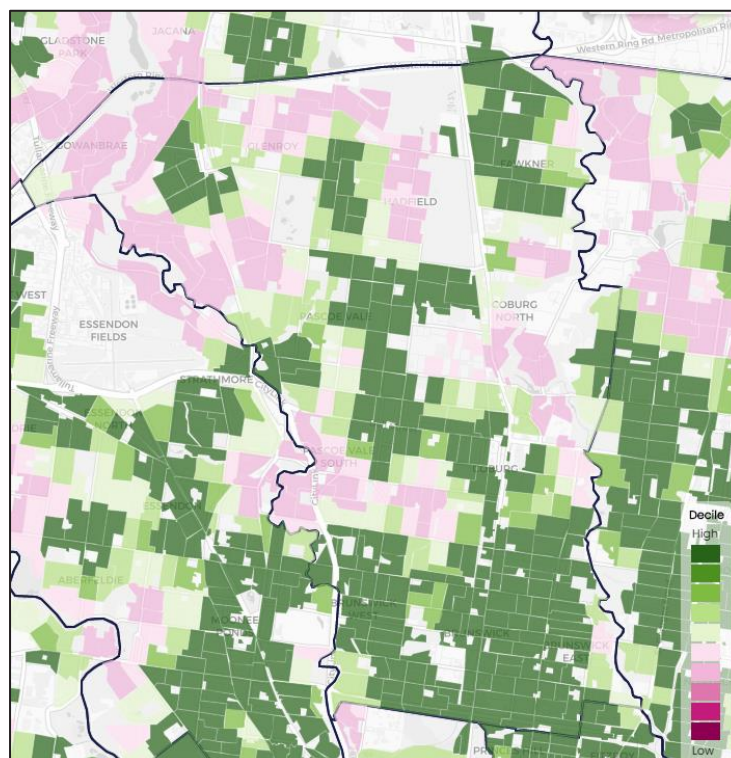
Food availability & accessibility

Measure: Dwellings with access to fresh food within easy walking distance

Nearly three quarters (74.1%) of dwellings in Moreland are within 1km of a supermarket. Suburbs with the highest percentage of dwellings within 1km of a supermarket are Brunswick (98.1%), Brunswick East (95.8%), and Brunswick West (93.7%). Suburbs with the lowest percentage of dwellings within 1km of a supermarket are Gowanbrae (3.0%), Oak Park (3.5%), and Hadfield (47.6%). When compared with nearby LGAs, Moreland has a higher proportion of dwellings within 1km of a supermarket than neighbouring Darebin (66.8%), a very similar proportion of Moonee Valley (73.5%), and a lower proportion than Maribyrnong (81.4%).

Table. Percentage of dwellings within 1km of a supermarket.

Suburb	% within 1km
Brunswick	98.1%
Brunswick East	95.8%
Brunswick West	93.7%
Coburg	72.8%
Coburg North	66.8%
Fawkner	82.8%
Glenroy	52.4%
Gowanbrae	3.0%
Hadfield	47.6%
Oak Park	3.5%
Pascoe Vale	80.9%
Pascoe Vale South	47.9%
Moreland	74.1%



Source: Australian Urban Observatory 2018

Table. Percentage of dwellings within 1km of a supermarket by LGA

LGA	Moreland	Moonee Valley	Darebin	Maribyrnong
% within 1km	74.1%	73.5%	66.9%	81.4%

Source: Australian Urban Observatory 2018



PANDEMIC

Food relief has been an important part of the pandemic response to ensure that those most vulnerable in the community have access to food. International students are one sub-group that have been particularly impacted by the pandemic and lack of social support. This has left many with limited accessibility to culturally safe, appropriate and affordable food (Moreland City Council, 2020).

Edible gardening has provided an accessible source of culturally appropriate nutritious food for households, including those on low incomes (2020 Pandemic Gardening Survey, Sustain: The Australian Food Network).



CLIMATE CHANGE

Sustainable food systems assist in mitigating emissions and provisions the consumption of fresh food. Ensuring food availability and access has co-benefits for population and environmental health such as reduced waste and landfill and correct nutrition to support a healthy life (Department of Health & Human Services 2017).

Food security

Measure: Residents who experience food insecurity

In 2019, 4.5% of Moreland residents had experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months. This is **higher** than in 2017 (3.2%) but consistent with 2015 (4.5%). Fawkner reported the highest instance of food insecurity (13.4%) followed by Glenroy (11.5%) and Brunswick East (8.3%).

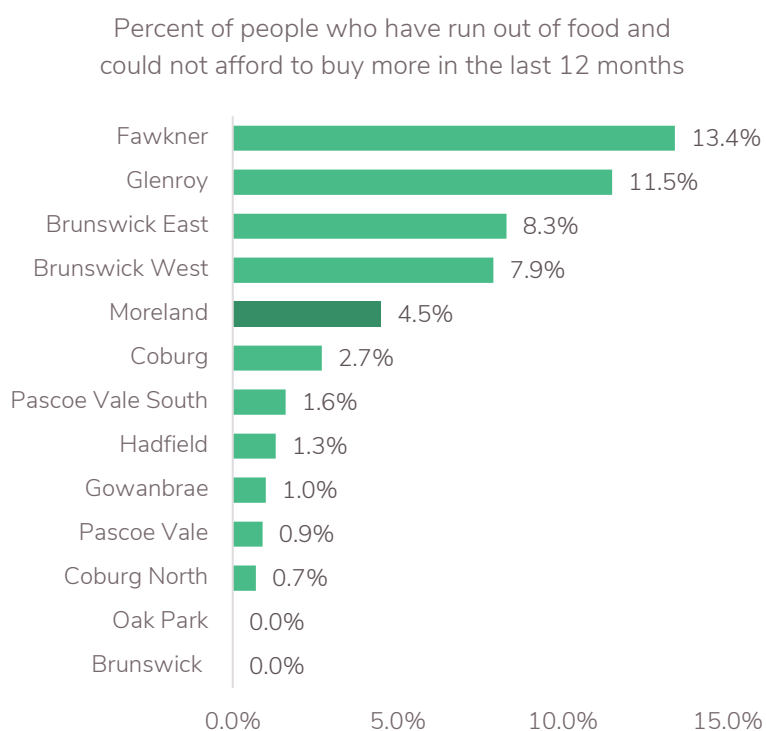
Table. People who have run out of food and could not afford to buy more in the last 12 months

Experience of food insecurity	%
Has experienced food insecurity	4.5%
Has not experienced food insecurity	94.5%
Could not say	1.0%

Source: MCC Household Survey 2019

Table. People who have run out of food and could not afford to buy more in the last 12 months by suburb

Suburb	%
Brunswick	0.0%
Brunswick East	8.3%
Brunswick West	7.9%
Coburg	2.7%
Coburg North	0.7%
Fawkner	13.4%
Glenroy	11.5%
Gowanbrae	1.0%
Hadfield	1.3%
Oak Park	0.0%
Pascoe Vale	0.9%
Pascoe Vale South	1.6%
Moreland	4.5%



Source: MCC Household Survey 2019



PANDEMIC

According to an MCC Covid-19 community survey, 15% of respondents reported being somewhat concerned (11%) or very concerned (4%) about their ability to afford food in the next four weeks (MCC 2020).

There was concerning rise in food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic (VicHealth 2020). Data from community service providers in Moreland has highlighted food relief as the most prevalent need in the community, with a high number of requests coming from international students and the CALD community, and with specific requests for dietary restrictions and culturally appropriate food (Moreland City Council 2020).

Edible Gardening is a source of good food for those that need it most with 45% of surveyed low-income gardeners reporting growing more than 30 percent of their own food during the

COVID-19 pandemic (2020 Pandemic Gardening Survey, Sustain: The Australian Food Network)



CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change increases the frequency and severity of extreme weather events which impacts food security (World Health Organisation 2020).



PRIORITY GROUPS

Women have higher rates of food insecurity than men. Women are more likely to experience difficulties in acquiring appropriate food which can be attributed to inequalities in income and the pay gap seen between men and women. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience higher rates of food insecurity when compared non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (Women's Health Victoria 2017).

Aboriginal adults in Victoria are more than three times as likely to have experienced food insecurity than non-Aboriginal Victorians (Korin Korin Balit Djak 2017).

LGBTQIA+ adults experience food insecurity at a higher rate than non-LGBTQIA+ (Victorian Agency for Health Information, 2017).

Food production

Measure: Residents who produce some of their own food

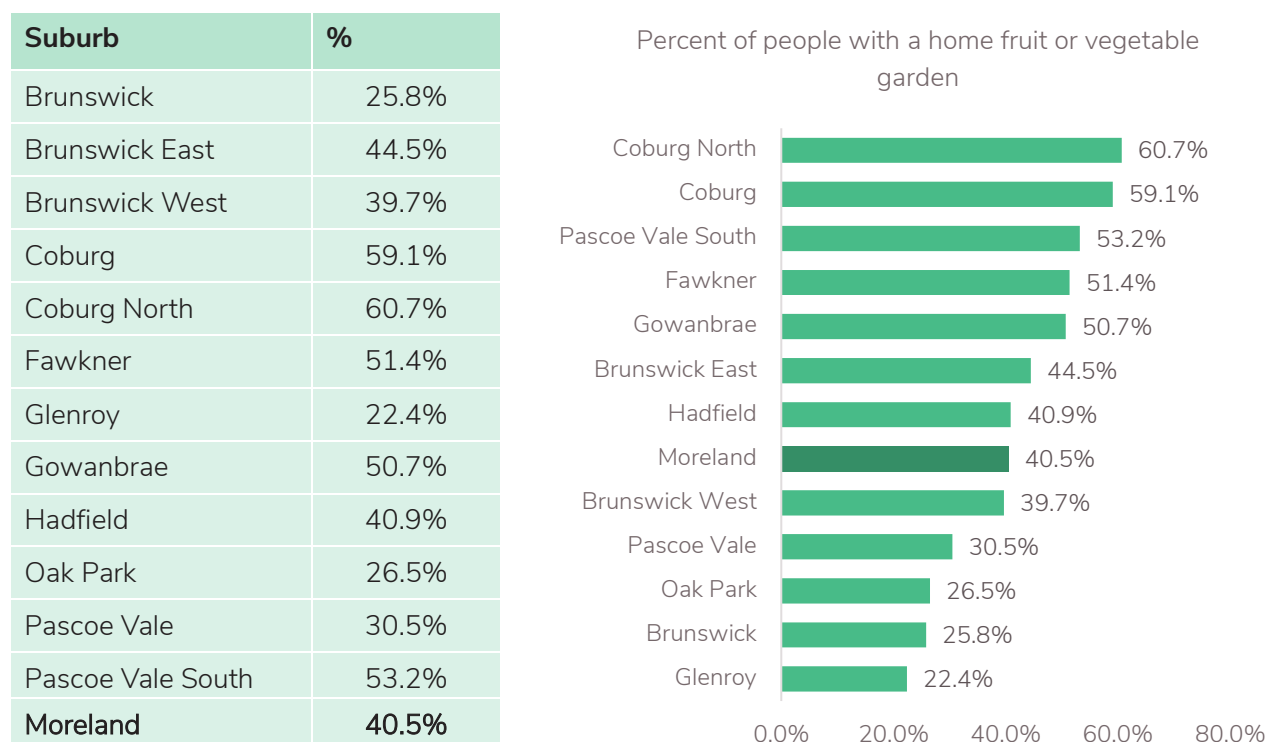
In 2019, 40.5% of Moreland residents reported producing some of their own food through a home fruit or vegetable garden. Coburg North (60.7%), Coburg (59.1%), and Pascoe Vale South (53.2%) have the highest instances of residents who produce some of their own food.

Table. People with a home fruit or vegetable garden

Households with home fruit or vegetable gardens	%
Yes, household has a home fruit or vegetable garden	40.5%
No, household does not have a home fruit or vegetable garden	58.7%
Can't say	0.8%

Source: MCC Household Survey 2019

Table. People with a home fruit or vegetable garden by suburb



Source: MCC Household Survey 2019



PANDEMIC

Edible gardening contributed to: a sense of focus and reduced anxiety, and to connecting with family and neighbours through food sharing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Home gardeners also reported increasing their edible food growing activities (2020 Pandemic Gardening Survey, Sustain: The Australian Food Network).



CLIMATE CHANGE

Global food production and the agricultural industry contribute significantly to the impact of climate change. Unsustainable food systems present challenges of meeting the demand for high-quality diets for the growing population and supporting ecosystem resilience. With inadequate food production a rise may be seen in malnutrition and chronic conditions caused by poor nutrition (EAT - Lancet Commission, 2019).

Food affordability



PANDEMIC

7% of respondents to the VicHealth Coronavirus Impact Survey stated at some point during the pandemic they had run out of food and could not afford to buy more (increase of 3%). There was also a reliance from many (23%) on cheaper alternatives that were not considered 'healthy' (VicHealth, 2020).



CLIMATE CHANGE

Victoria's climate projections include: more heat extremes, decrease in annual rainfall and increased fire danger (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2019). These projections will create strain on the farming and agricultural industries, impacting local Victorian produce. Food affordability may therefore be impacted and see costs rise for local produce as local supply decreases. Inequalities to access of nutritious food may increase in frequency due to the higher cost (Department of Health and Human Services, 2019)



PRIORITY GROUPS

Food affordability is a significant issue in women's health. In some disadvantaged communities up to 25% of people are unable to purchase food when they run out. Women, especially those from low-income households or single-parent households often suffer the most in being able to purchase a sufficient amount of food. (Women's Health Victoria, 2017)

Data Sources

For a full list of references, please refer to the [Moreland Health & Wellbeing Profile 2020](#)

Australian Urban Observatory

The Australian Urban Observatory is a digital platform that transforms complex urban data into easily understood liveability maps across Australia's 21 largest cities. The Observatory maps key liveability indicators found to be associated with health and wellbeing and provides a clear understanding of the liveability of cities.

The most recent data is 2018.

Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provides advice on health and climate change.

EAT - Lancet Commission, 2019

EAT is the science-based global platform for food system transformation. Summary Report: Healthy Diets From Sustainable Food Systems

Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027

Korin Korin Balit-Djak follows the government's commitment to self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians commissioned by the Department of Health and Human Services. This research and discussion has underpinned a new policy platform for health, wellbeing and safety.

Sustain: The Australian Food Network

Every Seed I Plant is a wish for Tomorrow Findings and Action Agenda from the 2020 Pandemic Gardening Survey of over 9,000 home food gardeners from across Australia.

Victorian Population Health Survey 2017

The Victorian Population Health Survey (VPHS) provides an annual assessment of the health status and wellbeing of adults living in Victoria and provides data for key population health indicators.

The most recent data is 2017.

VicHealth Coronavirus Victorian Wellbeing Impact Study 2020

A survey of 2,000 Victorian adults to explore how their health and wellbeing was affected during the first lockdown of 2020. The survey covered general wellbeing, social connection, healthy eating, physical activity, financial hardship, smoking, alcohol consumption, as well as working and home life.

The most recent data is from 2020.

Victorian Agency for Health Information 2017

Safer Care Victoria and VAHI were created as a part of government reforms to improve quality and safety across Victoria's public healthcare system.

Moreland City Council: Understanding community need in a pandemic 2020

Qualitative data collected and analysed from community service providers during the COVID-19 pandemic to understand level of service provision, community need, and organisational.

The most recent data is October 2020.

Women's Health Victoria: Serving up inequality report 2017

This paper explores various aspects of women's health relating to food. These include the impacts of nutritional deficiency, the links between nutrition and chronic disease and women's food-related behaviours.

World Health Organization 2020

The World Health Organization is a specialised agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health. It has declared climate change the biggest threat to health in the 21st century.