



Active & green living

Moreland City Council Health Profile

Version 2

December 2020

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Overview

Active living is a lifestyle that incorporates movement and physical activity into daily life and is extremely beneficial to an individual's physical and mental health (Better Health Channel, 2018). This includes:

- Reduced risk of chronic diseases (heart disease, stroke, diabetes and certain cancers)
- Improved muscular and cardiovascular fitness
- Reduced risk of obesity
- Improved mental health
- Increased levels of happiness and quality of life
- Ageing well (World Health Organisation, 2018).

Local government has a significant role in creating environments for active living and developing local policies and programs that enable community members to live a more active life. This includes transport infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling, safe and accessible local parks, sporting and leisure facilities and programs that reduce sedentary behaviour.

Healthy neighbourhoods have a well-distributed network of natural areas, as well as walkable and attractive public open spaces that allow the community to meet, play and connect. The mix of open space can be formal or informal, natural or man-made, sporting or passive, but they all help meet a community's recreational, sporting, play and social needs. Parks and open spaces are important for physical and mental health and provide places for physical activity, social interaction, community connections and wellbeing (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020).

Access to parks and open space has impacts on health and wellbeing, including:

- Residents with a larger neighbourhood park within 1600m engage in 150 minutes more recreational walking per week than those with smaller parks.
- Walkers exercising in urban parks report greater happiness and lower anger and depression scores.
- Adults with a wide range of green spaces around their home report 37% lower hospitalisation rates and 16% lower self-report rates of heart disease or stroke (Heart Foundation, 2017).

Opportunities for active living are essential for better physical, mental and social wellbeing outcomes for Moreland's community.

Moreland context

Less than half (47%) of all adults in Moreland met the physical activity guidelines, which is slightly lower than the average for Victoria (51%). While a quarter of adults participate in organised physical activity, such as sport, a much higher percentage (71%) participate in non-organised physical activity, such as walking or cycling. Two thirds of Moreland's community (66.5%) use recreation, exercise or leisure services, with the most commonly used being passive open space (31.6%), walking tracks (30.4%), and council run aquatic and leisure centres (20.4%). This highlights the importance of infrastructure to support both formal and informal recreation that meets the needs of our diverse community, including parks and open space near people's homes.

Less than half (42%) of households in Moreland are within 400m of a public open space that is larger than 1.5 hectares, with Brunswick (24.7%) and Hadfield (26.1%) having the lowest proportion of households. However, 81% of dwellings are within 400 metres of public open space of any size. Since COVID-19 there has been an increase in use of parks and paths for physical activity, with 71% of respondents to the Moreland Secondary Impact Assessment 2020 survey reporting walking more. 45% also said they will use parks, nature reserves and playgrounds more often compared to their usage pre-COVID times.

Tree canopy covers 10.8% of the municipality with Gowanbrae (6.8%), Fawkner (8.4%), and Brunswick (9.3%) having the lowest cover. Urban areas with a low percentage of tree canopy cover are more at risk

to creating an urban heat island and populations in these areas are more likely to experience heat-related stress and mortality. With climate change predications of more higher heat days, this is an important consideration for the health of our community.

In summary, key issues include:

- Less than half of adults met the physical activity guidelines
- A slightly lower proportion of adults participate in organised physical activity than Victoria. Impacts of COVID-19 have disproportionately affected participation for women and girls, seniors, people with disability and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.
- The majority of adults participate in non-organised physical activity such as walking and cycling, with increases in use of paths and parks since COVID-19
- Brunswick and Hadfield have low proportions of large public open space within 400 metres of homes
- Tree canopy cover is lowest in Gowanbrae, Fawkner, and Brunswick

Key insights

Physical Activity

- Fewer than half (47%) of adults in Moreland met the physical activity guidelines in 2017. This is slightly lower than the average proportion for Victoria (51%).
- One quarter (24.6%) of adults in Moreland participate in an organised physical activity. This is slightly lower than the proportion of adults who participate in organised physical activity in Victoria (28.7%).
- Seven in ten adults in Moreland participate in non-organised physical activity, with walking (45.8%) as the most common form of non-organised physical activity. The cycling rate in Moreland (22.1%) is nearly double the average for Victoria (11.8%).

Equitable access to open space

- Less than half (42%) of households in Moreland are within 400m of a public open space that is larger than 1.5 hectares according to the Australian Urban Observatory 2018. This is lower than nearby Local Government Areas including Darebin (50%), and Moonee Valley (52%).
- However, according to the Victorian Planning Authority 2017, 81% the population of Moreland lived within 400m of public open space of any size, which is consistent with the average for Greater Melbourne (81%).
- At the suburb level, Gowanbrae (97%) and Coburg North (81%) had the highest number of dwellings within 400 meters of public open space larger than 1.5 hectares. Brunswick (25%) and Hadfield (26%) had the lowest average percentage in 2018.

Access and affordability of sporting & recreation infrastructure

- In 2018, the average distance to a playground was 460 meters in Moreland. This is a shorter distance than Hume (808m) and Darebin (521m). At the suburb level, the lowest average distance to a playground was in Brunswick East (299.5m) and Coburg (389.5m). With Glenroy (587m) and Coburg North (510.2) having the highest average distance to a playground.
- In 2019, 73% of people in Moreland reported using at least one recreation, exercise and/or leisure service. The most commonly used services were passive open space (31.6%), walking tracks (30.4%), and Moreland City Council run aquatic and leisure centres (20.4%).
- Whilst all residents in Moreland have access to an aquatic facility within 5km of their home, 98% have access to one facility within 3km of their home.
- Moreland has six aquatic facilities: Brunswick Baths, Coburg LC, Coburg O/D, Fawkner LC, Oak Park LC, and Pascoe Vale O/D. This is the highest number of aquatic facilities per LGA in Greater Melbourne, tied with Yarra City Council. Moreland also has a substantially lower population per facility than the Greater Melbourne average, and likewise has a very low area per facility when compared to the Greater Melbourne average.

Tree canopy cover

- In 2019, Moreland had a total of 10.8% canopy cover in 2019 according to the Moreland 2020 Canopy report. Suburbs with the lowest canopy cover were Gowanbrae (6.8%), Fawkner (8.4%), and Brunswick (9.3%). Suburbs with the highest canopy cover were Hadfield (12.6%) and Brunswick West (12.2%).
- According to the Living Melbourne Technical Report (The Nature Conservancy and Resilient Melbourne, 2019), Moreland has 20.2% cover of vegetation (canopy plus shrub) between 0.3 meters to 3 meters and 3 meters to 15+ meters in height. When compared with neighbouring LGAs, Moreland performs lower than neighbouring Darebin (24.0%) and Moonee Valley (21.4%) but higher than Maribyrnong (16.9%).

Physical activity

Measure: Proportion of adults in compliance with physical activity guidelines

46.7% of adults in Moreland met the physical activity guidelines in 2017. This is a slightly lower proportion than for the North Division (50.4%) and for Victoria (50.9%).

Table. Proportion of adult population, compliance with physical activity guidelines

Level of physical activity	Moreland	North Division	Victoria
Sedentary	1.3%	3.0%	2.5%
Insufficient	50.2%	43.8%	44.1%
Met Guidelines	46.7%	50.4%	50.9%

Proportion fo adults who meet the physical activity guidelines



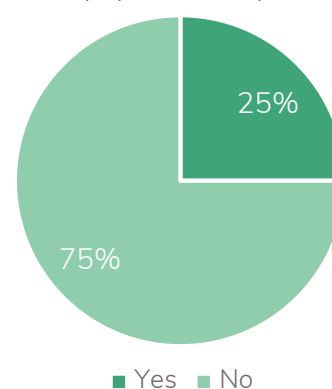
Source: Victorian Population Health Survey 2017

Measure: Participation in organised physical activity

One quarter (24.6%) of adults in Moreland participated in an organised physical activity in 2015. This is slightly lower than the proportion of adults who participate in organised physical activity in Victoria (28.7%).

Type of organised physical activity	Moreland	Victoria
Organised by a fitness, leisure or indoor sports centre	8.9%	9.2%
Organised by a sports club or association	9.2%	9.8%
Participation in any organised physical activity	24.6%	28.7%

Participation in an organised physical activity



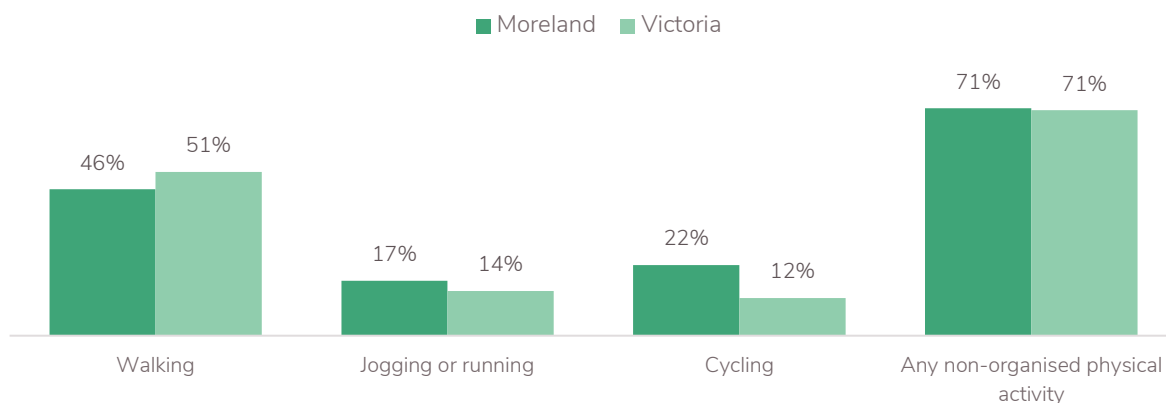
Source: VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015

Measure: Participation in non-organised physical activity

Seven in ten adults in Moreland participate in non-organised physical activity, with walking (45.8%) as the most common form of non-organised physical activity. The cycling rate in Moreland (22.1%) is nearly double the average for Victoria (11.8%).

Type of non-organised physical activity	Moreland	Victoria
Walking	45.8%	51.2%
Jogging or running	17.2%	14.0%
Cycling	22.1%	11.8%
Any non-organised physical activity	71.1%	70.5%

Participation in types of non-organised physical activity



Source: VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015



PANDEMIC

80% of respondents to the Moreland City Council Secondary Impact Assessment 2020 survey reported that they increased their physical activities during COVID-19 restrictions, with more than two thirds of respondents (71%) reporting walking more, one third (33%) doing more exercises using home gym or cardio equipment, and a quarter (23%) engaging in more outdoor exercises. Among those who have been doing more physical activities during COVID-19 restrictions, the majority (83%) felt that they would continue these activities when restrictions are lifted.

Most respondents to the VicHealth Coronavirus Impact Survey were able to continue being active but there were some limiting factors (VicHealth 2020). The pandemic has reduced access to sport and recreational facilities as well as limited participation in group settings. The barriers to participation have resulted in less engagement with physical activity and lower social connectedness.

Participation in community sport and active recreation has changed as a result of Covid-19 with participation rates of some groups disproportionately affected and inequalities amplified. Respondents to the Return to Play survey felt that the pandemic will have a negative impact on women and girls (56%), seniors over 65 years (57%), people with disability (54%) and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage (67%).



CLIMATE CHANGE

Physical Activity contributes to increasing levels of active transport, which is an important way individuals can reduce their own emissions. However, current physical activity will be challenged as the climate continues to change. An increase in high heat days can make it

difficult to meet recommended activity levels; pollution will create harder environments for people to exert energy outside, especially those with respiratory problems; and unsafe waterways, beaches and rivers that have blue-green algal blooms will prevent many from swimming as a form of physical activity (Better Health Channel, 2019).



PRIORITY GROUPS

Women face unique barriers to physical activity and meeting the recommended levels of physical activity. Caring responsibilities, perceptions of safety and a lack of sporting facilities that have been created with women in mind are all significant challenges that impede on activity levels and participation (Women's Health in the North, 2020). 1 in 3 women aged 25 and older believed that sporting clubs are not welcoming to people like them (VicHealth, 2019). Cost is also a major consideration for women when participating in sport. Mothers will often consider sport and recreation a luxury for themselves as it costs to participate and the associated cost of having their children looked after (VicHealth, 2019).

As females progress into adulthood they are much more likely to stop or reduce their participation in sport and active recreation. More than two-thirds of Australian females have low activity levels or are sedentary. Participation rates in sport and active recreation also decrease significantly during the transition from teen to adult (VicHealth 2019).

People within the LGBTQIA+ community were less likely to be members of sports groups (Victorian Agency for Health Information, 2017). Many factors contribute to this but it was identified that many perceive sports clubs to not be inclusive and felt uncomfortable in those environments.

Equitable access to open space

Measure: Dwellings within 400m of public open space larger than 1.5 hectares

Less than half (42%) of households in Moreland are within 400m of a public open space that is larger than 1.5 hectares according to the Australian Urban Observatory 2018. This is lower than nearby Local Government Areas including Darebin (50%), and Moonee Valley (52%). However, according to the Victorian Planning Authority 2017, 81% the population of Moreland lived within 400m of public open space of any size, which is consistent with the average for Greater Melbourne (81%).

At the suburb level, Brunswick (24.7%) and Hadfield (26.1%) have the lowest proportion of dwellings within 400m of public open space larger than 1.5 hectares, with approximately three quarters of dwellings not meeting the measure. Conversely, Gowanbrae (96.6%) and Coburg North (80.5%) have a much higher proportion of dwellings within 400m of public open space larger than 1.5 hectares.

Note: Moreland Open Space Strategy (MOSS) and Moreland's A Park Close to Home framework seek to provide quality open space within 500m of all residential properties and 300m to all activity centre properties. Those areas that do not have access to open space within these distances are open space gap areas. This health brief uses a different framework to measure access to public open space within 400m of all dwellings.

Table. Proportion of dwellings within 400m of public open space larger than 1.5ha by suburb in 2018

Area	%
Brunswick	24.7%
Brunswick East	48.8%
Brunswick West	39.6%
Coburg	28.5%
Coburg North	80.5%
Glenroy	28.3%
Gowanbrae	96.6%
Fawkner	50.2%
Hadfield	26.1%
Oak Park	48.1%
Pascoe Vale	63.1%
Pascoe Vale South	54.2%
Moreland	41.5%

Source: Australian Urban Observatory 2018

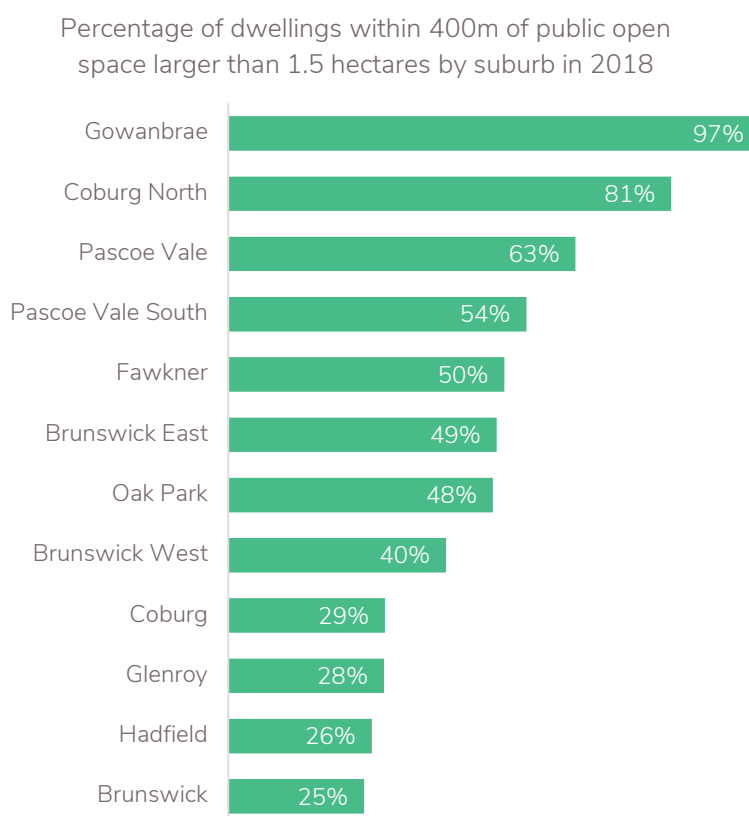


Table. Proportion of dwellings within 400m of public open space larger than 1.5ha in 2018

Area	Moreland	Darebin	Moonee Valley	Hume
Percentage	41.5%	50.2%	52.4%	66.1%

Source: Australian Urban Observatory 2018

Measure: Dwellings within 400m of public open space of any size

Table. Proportion of dwellings within 400m of public open space of any size in 2017

Area	Moreland	Darebin	Moonee Valley	Hume	Greater Melbourne
Percentage	81.0%	76.8%	76.7%	86.8%	81.0%

Source: Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) 2017

Map. Open space network highlighting gaps in Moreland that are not within 400m of public open space



Source: Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) 2017



PANDEMIC

12% of respondents from the VicHealth COVID-19 survey reported that a contributing factor to their decrease in physical activity during the pandemic was due to not having a suitable park or path for physical activity outside (VicHealth, 2020).

45% of respondents from the Moreland City Council Secondary Impact Assessment survey said they believe they will use parks, nature reserves and playgrounds more often compared to their usage pre-COVID times.



URBAN CHANGE

The Moreland community has one of the lowest rates of access to public open space in the Melbourne Metropolitan area and forecasted population growth will put additional pressure on Moreland's public open space provision. Many residents do not have walkable distance to

parks and there are several significant access gaps across the municipality (Moreland City Council, 2017).

Access and use of sporting & recreation infrastructure

Measure: Participation in recreation, exercise and/or leisure services

In 2019, 73% of people in Moreland reported using at least one recreation, exercise and/or leisure service. The most commonly used services were walking tracks (33.9%), passive open space (32.7%), and active open spaces (32.7%).

Table. Participation in recreation, exercise and/or leisure services 2019

Recreation, exercise, or leisure service	% of people who use each service
Yes, does use recreation, exercise and/or leisure services	72.7%
Walking tracks	33.9%
Passive open space (e.g. parks, gardens and open space)	32.7%
Active open spaces (e.g. sports ovals, sportsgrounds)	24.8%
Bicycle paths	24.1%
Moreland City Council run aquatic and leisure centres	22.1%
Children's playgrounds	19.2%
Sports clubs	13.7%
Privately run gyms or health clubs	12.6%
Recreation & leisure facilities outside of Moreland	12.5%
Privately run sports activities (e.g. dancing, martial arts)	6.3%
Waterways	4.0%
Outdoor gym equipment	3.6%
Golf course	3.4%
Privately run swim clubs	2.3%
Athletic centres	1.9%
None, do not use recreational, exercise, and/or leisure services	27.3%

Source: MCC Household Survey 2019

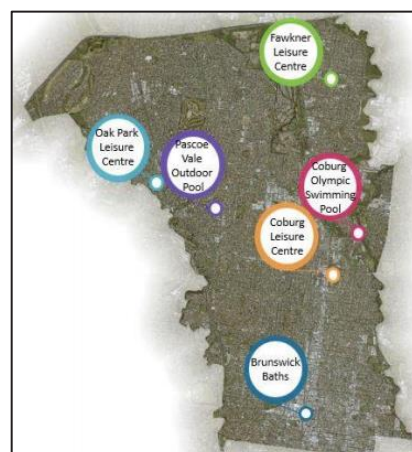
Measure: Access to aquatic facilities

Moreland has six aquatic facilities: Brunswick Baths, Coburg LC, Coburg O/D, Fawkner LC, Oak Park LC, and Pascoe Vale O/D. This is the highest number of aquatic facilities per LGA in Greater Melbourne, tied with Yarra City Council.

Table. Number of and access to aquatic facilities by LGA

LGA	# of aquatic facilities	Population per facility	Area per facility
Moreland	6	28,682	849m
Darebin	2	77,511	2,672m
Moonee Valley	4	30,724	1,077m
Maribyrnong	1	87,255	3,121m

Source: Moreland City Council Aquatic and Leisure Strategy Background Review Paper; Moreland City Council Aquatic and Leisure Strategy



Measure: Average distance to a playground

In 2018, the average distance to a playground was 460 meters in Moreland. This is a shorter distance than Hume (808m) and Darebin (521m). At the suburb level, the lowest average distance to a playground was in Brunswick East (299.5m) and Coburg (389.5m). With Glenroy (587m) and Coburg North (510.2) having the highest average distance to a playground.

Table. Average distance to a playground in 2018 by suburb.

Area	Average in meters
Brunswick	456m
Brunswick East	300m
Brunswick West	403m
Coburg	399m
Coburg North	510m
Fawkner	498m
Glenroy	587m
Gowanbrae	510m
Hadfield	487m
Oak Park	501m
Pascoe Vale	478m
Pascoe Vale South	504m
Moreland	460m

Glenroy	587
Coburg North	510
Gowanbrae	510
Pascoe Vale South	504
Oak Park	501
Fawkner	498
Hadfield	487
Pascoe Vale	478
Brunswick	456
Brunswick West	403
Coburg	399
Brunswick East	300

Source: Australian Urban Observatory 2018

Table. Average distance to a playground in 2018 by LGA

Area	Moreland	Darebin	Moonee Valley	Hume
Average in meters	460m	521m	499m	808m

Source: Australian Urban Observatory 2018



PANDEMIC

Restrictions surrounding usage of sporting and recreational facilities during the pandemic created barriers to access due to risk of spreading the virus.

Tree canopy cover

Measure: Percent tree canopy cover

Multiple sources exist that calculate tree canopy cover across Moreland. This profile draws on data from the Moreland 2020 Canopy report for total canopy cover at the LGA level and suburb levels, and on the Living Melbourne report to contextualise canopy cover in Moreland with neighbouring areas.

In 2019, Moreland had a total of 10.8% canopy cover in 2019 according to the Moreland 2020 Canopy report. Suburbs with the lowest canopy cover were Gowanbrae (6.8%), Fawkner (8.4%), and Brunswick (9.3%). Suburbs with the highest canopy cover were Hadfield (12.6%) and Brunswick West (12.2%).

According to the Living Melbourne Technical Report (The Nature Conservancy and Resilient Melbourne, 2019), Moreland has 20.2% cover of vegetation (canopy plus shrub) between 0.3 meters to 3 meters and 3 meters to 15+ meters in height. When compared with neighbouring LGAs, Moreland performs lower than neighbouring Darebin (24.0%) and Moonee Valley (21.4%) but higher than Maribyrnong (16.9%).

Table. Percentage of tree canopy cover for Moreland suburbs in 2019

Suburb	Total
Brunswick	9.3%
Brunswick East	11.1%
Brunswick West	12.2%
Coburg	11.2%
Coburg North	11.9%
Fawkner	8.4%
Glenroy	10.3%
Gowanbrae	6.8%
Hadfield	12.6%
Oak Park	11.8%
Pascoe Vale	10.7%
Pascoe Vale South	11.0%
Moreland	10.8%

Suburb	Percentage
Hadfield	12.6%
Brunswick West	12.2%
Coburg North	11.9%
Oak Park	11.8%
Coburg	11.2%
Brunswick East	11.1%
Pascoe Vale South	11.0%
Moreland	10.8%
Pascoe Vale	10.7%
Glenroy	10.3%
Brunswick	9.3%
Fawkner	8.4%
Gowanbrae	6.8%

Source: Moreland's 2020 Canopy report by Player Piano Data Analytics

Table. Percentage cover of canopy plus shrub vegetation between .30m-3m and 3m-15+m in height by LGA

Area	Moreland	Darebin	Moonee Valley	Maribyrnong
Green cover	20.2%	24.0%	21.4%	16.9%

Source: The Nature Conservancy and Resilient Melbourne 2019



CLIMATE CHANGE

Urban areas with a low percentage of tree canopy cover are more at risk to creating an urban heat island (UHI), meaning the built environment holds and absorbs heat and results in higher temperatures for that area. Populations in areas with low tree canopy cover are more likely to experience heat-related stress and mortality within the population (Cool Communities, 2018). Tree cover provides benefits to both community and environmental health due to absorption of CO₂ from the atmosphere and emissions reduction.

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.

Better Health Channel 2019

The Better Health Channel is a Government of Victoria initiative to provide health and medical information to improve the health and wellbeing of people and the communities they live in.

Cool communities: Urban trees, climate and health 2018

A review of urban heat island effect in partnership with Curtin University and the World Health Organisation.

Living Melbourne: Our Metropolitan Urban Forest Technical Report 2019

The purpose of this technical support document produced by the Nature Conservancy and Resilient Melbourne is to provide the evidence base that underpins the Living Melbourne strategy. Section 6 of the Report provides analyses of the vegetation across metropolitan Melbourne by height and distribution, the public accessibility of our open space assets, and the associated biodiversity modelling. The data that was used from the Report includes the, Percentage cover of vegetation between 0 m and 15+ m in height within the existing urban area of Melbourne by metropolitan region.

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.

VicHealth Females and physical activity 2019

Research demonstrating the way that physical activity looks different for females. Most females don't participate in enough physical activity to benefit their health and wellbeing.

VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015

The VicHealth Indicators Survey is a Victorian community wellbeing survey which focuses on the social determinants of health. The survey is based on core questions related to individual and community health and wellbeing, critical to inform decisions about public health priorities.

The most recent data is 2015.

VicSport Return to Play Survey 2020

The Return to Play: Participation and Inclusion Survey was developed to understand how participation in community sport and active recreation may have changed as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19), with particular reference to targeted population groups.

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.

Victorian Population Health Survey 2017

The Victorian Population Health survey is conducted by the Department of Health. While it is usually conducted annually, data at the LGA level is not released in every year. Data relates to health behaviours, health screening, health conditions, lifestyle factors, exercise and nutrition. The most recent data is 2017.

Women's Health in the North 2020

Women's Health in the North (WHIN) is the women's health service in the northern metropolitan region of Melbourne. They provide health information and education to women and organisations and create innovative resource materials.