GREATER MELBOURNE
VitalSigns™
2022

LORD MAYOR'S CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

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WELCOME TO GREATER MELBOURNE

VitalSigns™ 2022

Vital Signs reports take the pulse of our city, greater Melbourne. These reports help us identify what can be improved and what can be celebrated. We live in a world affected by the COVID pandemic and climate change. We also live in a city with a reputation for being socially and economically inclusive.

This is the fourth Vital Signs report produced by Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation. It is a fresh take on the Vital Signs report as it provides insights into the ways the critical challenges facing our city are interacting. For example, we can see that climate resilience depends on climate safe housing, urban greening, access to public transport, disaster preparedness, and a sense of community, not only on support during heatwaves and awareness of climate risks. We can also see that post COVID, a group of younger women in the West and North of Melbourne have not regained employment in the same way as people in other parts of Melbourne. This needs attention. We continue to see the lack of affordable housing as a real challenge for our city in spite of so much good will and funding being applied. Across these issues, there are complex social and economic factors at play.

These insights will help the Foundation, charities and policy makers come up with new solutions to address these issues. We hope the insights encourage collaboration across sectors.

Foundations like ours can support collaborative work and be a safe place to share ideas about next steps. We look forward to hearing from you.

Catherine Brown

Dr Catherine Brown OAM
Chief Executive Officer

For more information about the Foundation visit **lmcf.org.au**

Learn more about VitalSigns, visit **lmcf.org.au/MelbVitalSigns**

GREATER MELBOURNE VITAL SIGNS 2022 SNAPSHOT

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

WHAT WE CAN CELEBRATE

Melbourne ranks 9th globally for proportion of people working in jobs broadly associated with sustainability [3]

Globally, Australia ranks number one in gender equality in education [6]

Health Care & Social Assistance is Greater Melbourne's largest employment sector, supporting an estimated 264,064 jobs [7]

WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE

Who is employed, future focused employment, and employment security (reducing casualisation) [4,5]

Globally, Australia ranks only 75th in women's economic participation [6]

Job security, support for the growing and vitally important caring economy

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

WHAT WE CAN CELEBRATE

The Victorian Government Big Housing Build committing $5.3 billion to build 12,300 social and affordable units with a minimum 7-star NatHERS rating over the next four years [8]

Pandemic responses showed that we can address homelessness and housing affordability (in the short term) [10]

WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE

Continued investment to maintain social housing to adequate levels and increase supply of social housing [9]

Greater investment in long-term early intervention to prevent entry into and entrenchment in homelessness [11]

CLIMATE CHANGE

WHAT WE CAN CELEBRATE

Over the 2020/21 financial year, renewable energy sources accounted for approximately 29.4 % of Victoria's electricity generation, up from 24.3 % in 2019/20 [12]

The technological and economic case for a cost-effective transition has been made across many economic sectors [14]

80% of Australians accept climate change is happening, are concerned about it, and want to take meaningful action [16]

WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE

Ensuring that the transition to a post-carbon and environmentally sustainable future maintains momentum but does not come at the cost of economic opportunity for the most disadvantaged [13]

Further development of the wellbeing, circular, social, and regenerative economic approaches to reduce material extraction, diversify and localise economies, improve the way we live in cities, and create jobs [15]

If we want to achieve the 1.5°C target, then steep emissions reductions by 2030 are crucial [17]

HEALTHY & RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

WHAT WE CAN CELEBRATE

Melbourne ranks 20th globally for its all-round progress on implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals [18]

63.3% of Greater Melbourne residents have access to public open space of 1.5Ha or larger within 500m [20]

Internationally, Melbourne has been ranked 6th among 80 cities for citizens' access to healthcare [22]

WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE

Transformative changes must be embraced to implement the SDGs, in particular their integration with climate resilience and adaptation [1,2,19]

Equitable distribution to ensure everyone has access to public open and green spaces across all of Melbourne [21]

Access to healthcare needs to be equitably distributed and accessible [23]

IF GREATER MELBOURNE WERE A GROUP OF

100 PEOPLE

WE WOULD BE

Greater Melbourne has much to celebrate. It is home to 4.9 million people, many living in vibrant and growing local centres. Melbourne can be described as a city of many villages. We are Australia's most culturally diverse city, with people from more than 200 countries.

The last two years have been the toughest public health challenge Greater Melbourne's communities have ever experienced and its flow-on effects will be felt for years to come. Yet amongst the struggles there are many stories of resilience, community care, and creative and shared responses. Healthcare workers went above and beyond in caring for and supporting us. We learned that we can house all those without homes, and that the health of any economy depends directly upon the health of communities. Victoria has started a Treaty process with First Nations and governments at all levels are now working to reduce emissions by 2030.

To realise the promises that these kinds of strengths offer in co-creating a thriving Melbourne for all, we need to tackle the challenges that undermine these strengths; in particular, climate change and economic inequality. Through connecting community resilience, climate change action, an inclusive economy, affordable housing, and health equity, together we can strengthen communities to become more healthy, sustainable, and adaptive into the future. [1,2]

Almost **24** are under 19 years of age

37 speak a language other than English at home

8 suffer a mental health condition (including depression or anxiety)

15 are over 65

35 are in a couple with no children

17 live in places above urban density thresholds that meet the World Health Organisation's threshold for physical activity target.

47 parent as a couple

Only **20** have access to a fresh food market or supermarket within 500m

5 need help in their day-to-day lives due to disability

15 are single parent families

25 suffer at least one long-term health condition

1 is Indigenous

63 have access to public open space of 1.5Ha or larger within 500m

12 volunteer with a community organisation

48 have access to regularly running public transport (> 20 mins)

70 live in a family household

25 live alone

26 are at primary school

26 are attending some form of tertiary education

67 do unpaid domestic work

30 own a house

30 rent

43 live in places that are considered walkable
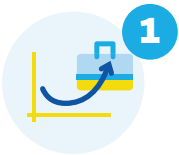
20 are at secondary school

These stats are taken from the ABS 2021 census, Healthy & Sustainable Cities scorecard for Melbourne, idCommunity community profile for Melbourne, The Australian Urban Observatory

EMPLOYMENT

Sustainable Development Goals

1 NO POVERTY

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Snapshot

1

COVID-19 had **increased unemployment** during the height of the pandemic, however overall, **the city has recovered.**

2

However, females in Melbourne's West **remain unemployed at almost double the national rate** of unemployment even in the post COVID-19 recovery period.

3

And **young women** (15-24 years old) in Melbourne's West, North-West and South-East **remain unemployed in the post COVID-19 recovery period at 3 – 4.5 times the national rate of unemployment.**

A three-year snapshot, taken from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data, ending in the most recent data point March 2022, and beginning in March 2019 shows the impact COVID-19 had on jobs overall in Greater Melbourne [1].

Figure 1. Greater Melbourne Unemployment Rate (ABS 2022)

GREATER MELBOURNE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
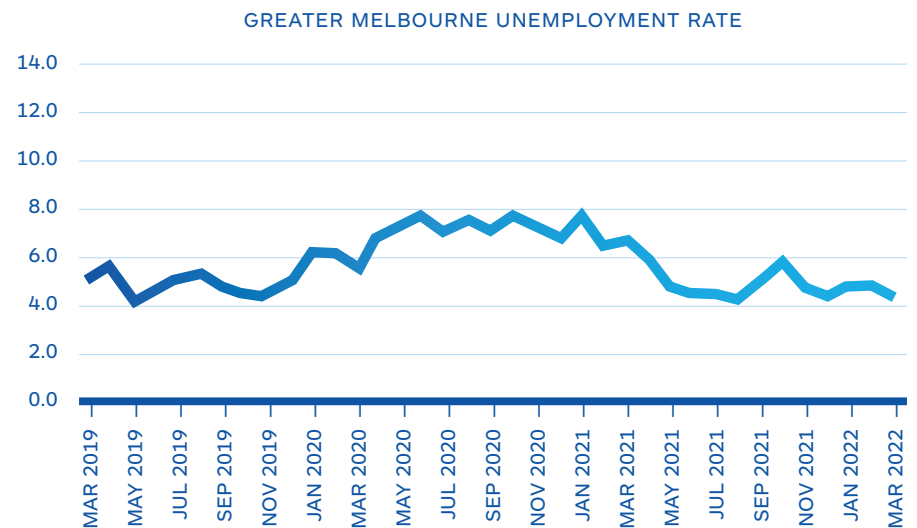
Three distinct patterns are discernible from this depiction. Through the period of March 2019 to March 2020 unemployment averaged 5.1%. Through March 2020 to March 2021 that average increased to 7.1%, with a peak of 7.7%, which was experienced in three separate months (June 2020, October 2020, and January 2021). Then again, the most recent 12-month stretch saw the average rate of unemployment decline to 5% with a small but notable rise to 5.8% in October 2021 in the wake of Victoria's last period of government-mandated lockdown.

COVID-19 had a sustained moderate effect on unemployment, which the city has since largely recovered from. However, digging deeper into demographic groups indicates that some groups have experienced unemployment more acutely than the average Melburnian.

The ABS Labour Force data indicates the average unemployment rate for all Greater Melbourne from March 2019 to March 2022 was 5.7% [1]. If one takes a closer look at the regions of Greater Melbourne, we see that some areas have experienced more unemployment than others

Table 1 Average Unemployment Rate March 2019-2022

Region	Average Unemployment Rate March 2019-March 2022
210 Melbourne- North West	7.7
213 Melbourne- West	7.0
212 Melbourne- South East	6.4
Greater Melbourne	5.7
206 Melbourne- Inner	5.3
207 Melbourne- Inner East	5.2
209 Melbourne- North East	5.1
208 Melbourne- Inner South	4.2
211 Melbourne- Outer East	4.2

Three regions North West Melbourne, West Melbourne and South East Melbourne have had average unemployment rates over the three-year period greater than for the whole of Greater Melbourne.

Figure 2 Average unemployment rates in Greater Melbourne, South East Melbourne, North West Melbourne and West Melbourne [1]
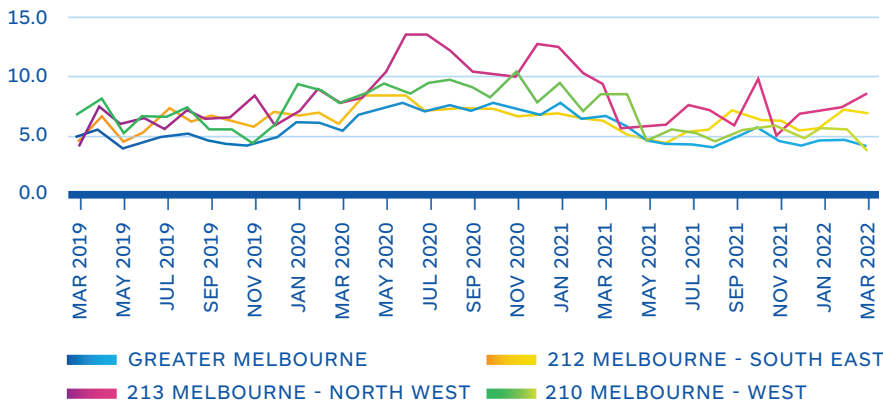
Figure 2 above, shows the trend for each region against the whole of Greater Melbourne. Treating the 12-month period from March 2019 to February 2020 as 'pre-COVID-19', March 2020 to February 2021 as 'COVID-19' and the period of March 2021 to March 2022 as 'COVID-19 Recovery' we can take the average unemployment rate of those periods to identify how significant the impact was on these regions of Melbourne.

Table 2 below demonstrates the extent to which those areas are impacted.

Table 2 All Ages – By Region [2]

	Pre COVID-19		COVID-19		COVID-19 Recovery	
	Unemployment	Difference from Greater Melbourne	Unemployment	Difference from Greater Melbourne	Unemployment	Difference from Greater Melbourne
South East Melbourne	6.2%	1.1%	7.3%	0.2%	5.9%	0.9%
West Melbourne	6.6%	1.5%	8.8%	1.7%	5.7%	0.7%
North West Melbourne	6.2%	1.1%	10.3%	3.2%	6.6%	1.6%

Not only were these areas experiencing increased unemployment through the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also true that they have not yet recovered to the same degree.

Australia's national rate of unemployment is 3.9% [1]

5.7 per cent

The average unemployment rate for all Greater Melbourne from March 2019 to March 2022 was 5.7% [1]
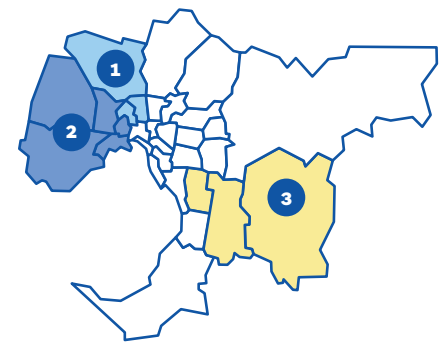
NORTH WEST MELBOURNE

WEST MELBOURNE

SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE

had average unemployment rates greater than the whole of Greater Melbourne

(March 2019- March 2022) [1]

Looking at the same periods of time for females in the West, North West and South East of Greater Melbourne shows that females in these regions have been even more affected.

Table 3 Females- All Ages – By Region [3]

	Pre COVID-19		COVID-19		COVID-19 Recovery	
	Unemployment	Difference from Greater Melbourne	Unemployment	Difference from Greater Melbourne	Unemployment	Difference from Greater Melbourne
South East Melbourne	7.0%	1.9%	7.8%	0.7%	6.8%	1.8%
West Melbourne	7.9%	2.8%	10.5%	3.4%	7.5%	2.5%
North West Melbourne	8.0%	2.9%	11.7%	4.6%	6.9%	1.9%

Once again, for women in the most impacted regions of Greater Melbourne, the rate of unemployment was more severe during the height of COVID-19 and, while the rate of unemployment during the COVID-19 recovery period is marginally better than the pre-COVID-19 figures, women remain less employed than the average for the whole of Greater Melbourne. **Indeed, the figure of 7.5% for women in Melbourne's Western region is almost double the current national rate of unemployment at 3.9%.**[1]

Atomising this cohort again to look at specific age groups, one can see that younger females in these regions are acutely affected by economic conditions that put pressure on employment.

Table 4 Females – 15 to 24 – By Region

	Pre COVID-19		COVID-19		COVID-19 Recovery	
	Unemployment	Difference from Greater Melbourne	Unemployment	Difference from Greater Melbourne	Unemployment	Difference from Greater Melbourne
South East Melbourne	6.0%	0.9%	18.3%	11.2%	14.7%	9.7%
West Melbourne	11.8%	6.7%	21.2%	14.1%	18.1%	13.1%
North West Melbourne	5.1%	0.0%	15.7%	8.6%	12.3%	7.3%

What is evident in this group is that for the South East and North West regions unemployment was in line with the average for Greater Melbourne. However not only were young females in the South East and North West hurt through the COVID-19 period in terms of employment opportunities, those groups have seen only slight improvement during the recovery period. **Indeed, young females in these areas of Melbourne are unemployed at a rate roughly between 3 and 4.5 times the national rate of unemployment.**

This comparison with the national rate is pertinent as the overall rate of unemployment is depicted as positive. In fact, this figure is not only positive but is historically low and is typically used to demonstrate the strength of Australia's overall economic recovery 'post-COVID-19'. To put this figure in perspective, Australia as a national community is painted as having roughly 1 in every 25 people involuntarily out of work. Inside the communities of Melbourne's West however, for young women that figure is closer to 1 in 5.

Looking at the same figures for all females 45 years and over in these regions, the impact is less severe.

Women in Greater Melbourne's **NORTH WEST** **WEST** **SOUTH EAST** experience **HIGHER UNEMPLOYMENT RATES**

1 IN 5 YOUNG WOMEN in Melbourne's West are involuntarily out of work

Women in Melbourne's Western region are **UNEMPLOYED AT ALMOST DOUBLE** the current national rate

7.5 per cent

3.9 per cent

Table 5 Females – 45 years and over – By Region

| | Pre COVID-19 | | COVID-19 | | COVID-19 Recovery | |
	Unemployment	Difference from Greater Melbourne	Unemployment	Difference from Greater Melbourne	Unemployment	Difference from Greater Melbourne
South East Melbourne	8.9%	3.8%	4.8%	-0.3%	4.2%	-0.9%
West Melbourne	3.9%	-1.2%	8.6%	3.5%	5.9%	0.8%
North West Melbourne	14.4%	9.3%	11.5%	6.4%	4.8%	-0.3%

Part of the story is that in Melbourne's West and North West the effects of COVID-19 were felt more acutely during the 2020-21 period. However, one area of relative success is that each of these areas exhibits a rate of unemployment comparable to the average rate of unemployment for all of Greater Melbourne.

Figure 3 below indicates the severity of unemployment in these regions (South East Melbourne excepting) for females over 45 years of age prior to and during the COVID-19 period. The trend lines demonstrate the severity of the fluctuations in unemployment over time. From June 2021 onwards these regions have demonstrated impressive recovery whereby females over 45 years of age are employed at a rate comparable to or slightly better than the rate for all Greater Melbourne.

Figure 3 Women 45 years+ and unemployment rate [3]

Legend:
- GREATER MELBOURNE
- 210 MELBOURNE - NORTH WEST
- 213 MELBOURNE - SOUTH EAST
- 213 MELBOURNE - WEST
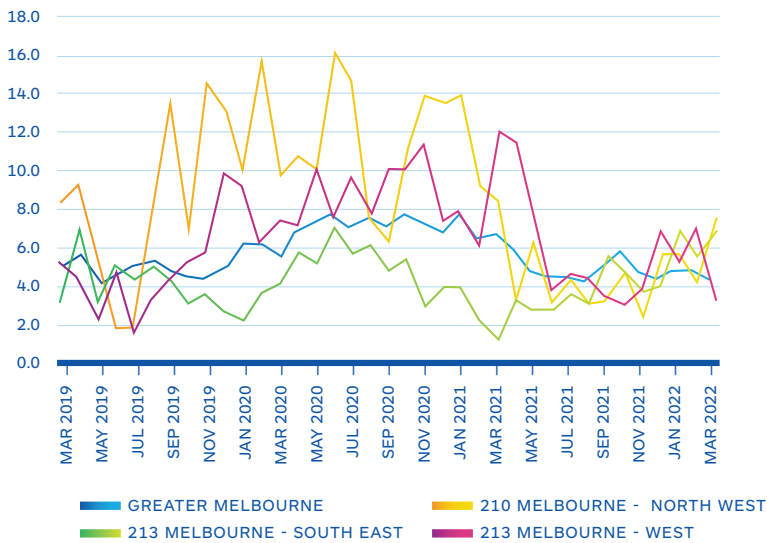
Conclusion

The overall picture for Greater Melbourne is therefore mixed. Average rates of unemployment in the past 12 months, a period that could be referred to as a period of recovery from COVID-19, look in line with national averages. Moreover, the national unemployment rate, currently at 3.9% and for Greater Melbourne at 4.4%, are historically low numbers and this would seem like some cause for celebration. However, these rates are not experienced uniformly across Australia and certainly not uniformly across different regions of Melbourne. In particular, the West and North West of Melbourne, and to a lesser extent the South East of Melbourne, have experienced outsized rates of unemployment by comparison to the rest of Greater Melbourne. Moreover, females in those regions are disproportionately unemployed, with the most significantly affected age cohort being young women between 15 and 24 years old.
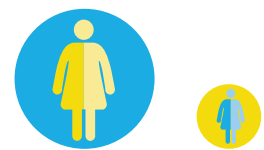
Females over 45 in Melbourne's

WEST **NORTH WEST**

are employed at a rate COMPARABLE TO SLIGHTLY BETTER than Greater Melbourne
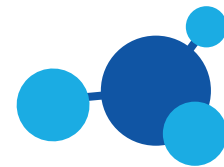
THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 AND UNEMPLOYMENT

were felt more acutely during the 2020-21 period in Greater Melbourne's West and North West

WOMEN BETWEEN 15 AND 24

in Melbourne's West, North West and South East are significantly more affected by unemployment

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Sustainable Development Goals

1 NO POVERTY

5 GENDER EQUALITY

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Snapshot

1

A renter earning a median wage and paying rent at the median would be **paying 47.7% of their after-tax wage in rent.**

2

The same person earning a median wage saving 15% of their gross income would take **10.7 years to save a deposit for a median-priced house in Melbourne.**

3

Total number of **homeless people reduced by 32.7% in 2021 but now is rising.**

Housing affordability is a well-documented subject, especially in the context of the Greater Melbourne property market. This focus is often centred around the prices of the most expensive homes, or the difficulties of first home buyers entering the market.

There are however, some meaningful and practical ways of quantifying the severity of housing affordability in a way that makes the issue more easily understood.

According to Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV), the weekly median rent for a house in Melbourne in 2021 was $445. This represents the lowest median figure for renting a house in any of the capital cities. As a stand-alone statement, this might sound like a positive for Melbourne, however when we compare this with the median wage of a Melburnian, a starker picture is painted.

The level of housing vulnerability and lack of affordability, link in part, to Melbourne's homelessness situation. The graph below shows a 4-year snapshot of the total number of people experiencing homelessness or individuals considered at-risk of becoming homeless.

Figure 5 People without homes or individuals considered at-risk of becoming homeless [4]
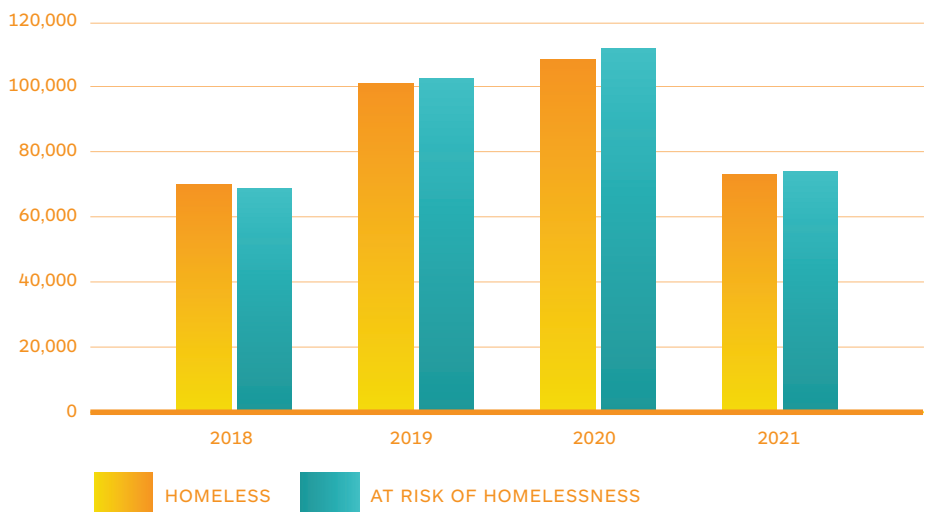
Legend: HOMELESS — AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

What we see in Figure 5, is a sharp increase in people experiencing homelessness from 2018 to 2019 and again a slight increase in 2020. The drop in those numbers for the 2021 year is likely attributable to support programs in place to provide shelter and/or quarantine in the face of COVID-19 vulnerabilities.

The upward trend from 2018 to 2020, coupled with the level of housing unaffordability, is notable in the context of government support provided through the COVID-19 period. It potentially points to an issue with homelessness that is likely to return to 2020 levels in the absence of dedicated COVID-19 related government support or indeed continue the trend of the 2018 – 2020 period and continue to worsen.

The nature of the decline in homelessness during 2021 potentially speaks to several things. An optimistic view might contend that the emergency measures, taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrate an ability to make an impact on the issue of homelessness, if only in the short term. Longer term there is a concern about the availability of affordable housing for people who are at-risk of homelessness. Affordable housing should be well located near public transport, shops, services, schools,green space, and even jobs.

One indicator of this is The University of Melbourne's Housing Access Rating Tool (HART)*. This tool rates every part of Greater Melbourne and Geelong in terms of its under-utilised land which could be used for housing. It is estimated that maximising this under-utilised land could generate 30,000 affordable housing units over a 10-year period from 2019-2029.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report identifies locations in Greater Melbourne that could be used to fast-track the development of affordable housing [5].

* msd.unimelb.edu.au/research/projects/current/transforming-housing/affordable-housing-tools/
  housing-access-rating-tool-hart

The median rent for a house in Melbourne in 2021 was

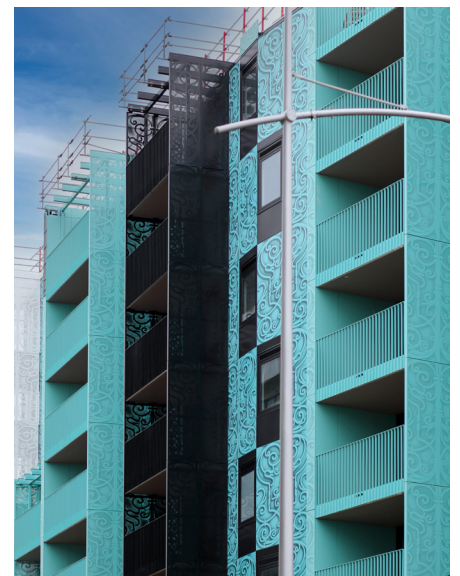# $445
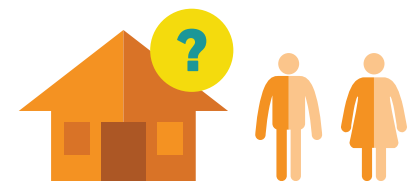
HOMELESSNESS IS LIKELY TO RETURN TO 2020 LEVELS

in the absence of dedicated COVID-19 related government support and improved housing affordability

Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing

Launch Housing recently opened Viv's Place, Australia's first supportive housing initiative for women and their children who have experienced family violence. It is a 60-unit apartment complex in Dandenong providing safe and secure accommodation. Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation was the very first philanthropic funder for the project providing $900,000 in two instalments.

Viv's Place is the first of its kind in Australia and will help to prevent the next generation of homelessness by keeping children with their families. The apartment complex has been designed to nurture a supportive and vibrant community. Residents have access to cultural and educational activities, and communal spaces such as a playground, courtyards and community gardens.

Viv's Place provides safe homes and a nurturing and welcoming community. Safe and secure housing creates the base in which families will enjoy healthy, stable and productive lives and a place for a community to thrive.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Sustainable Development Goals

1 NO POVERTY
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION
14 LIFE BELOW WATER
15 LIFE ON LAND

Snapshot

1

The average annual **temperature in Victoria has been above the long-term average** each year since 1995.

2

Per capita carbon emissions have been declining in Victoria sharply since 2010 despite a corresponding increase in total carbon emissions.

3
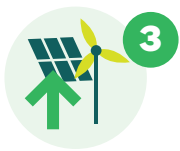
The seven years between 2013 – 2020 saw **Victoria's share of renewable energies double.**

4
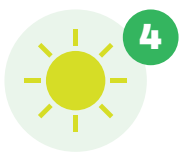
Lack of tree cover in Greater Melbourne is **contributing to increasingly to severe heat islands.**

The overall temperature change over time in Australia is outlined in Figures 6 and 7. Melbourne is trending hotter.

Figure 6 Australia's average temperature change from 1910-2020 [6]

AUSTRALIA'S CLIMATE HAS WARMED SINCE NATIONAL RECORDS BEGAN IN 1910. THE OCEANS SURROUNDING AUSTRALIA HAVE ALSO WARMED

SEA SURFACE TEMPERATURE
AUSTRALIAN SURFACE AIR TEMPERATURE
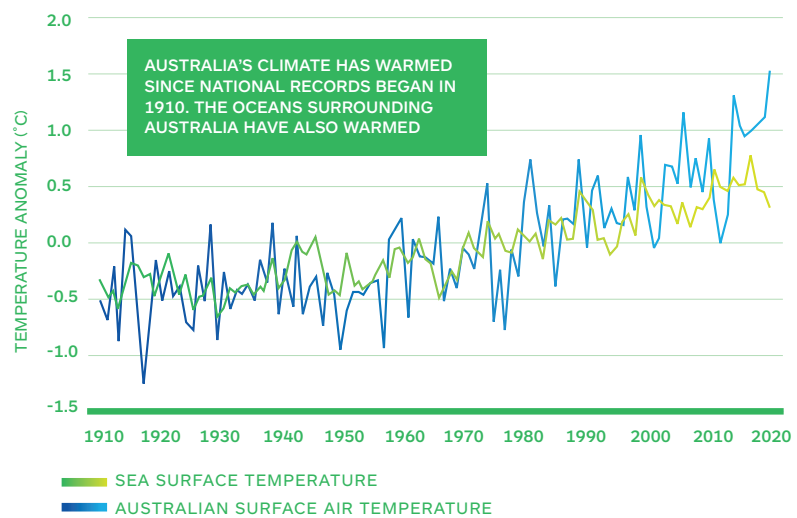
Figure 7 Annual mean temperature anomaly Victoria (1910 - 2020) [6]

YEAR   Based on a 30-year climatology (1961-1990)
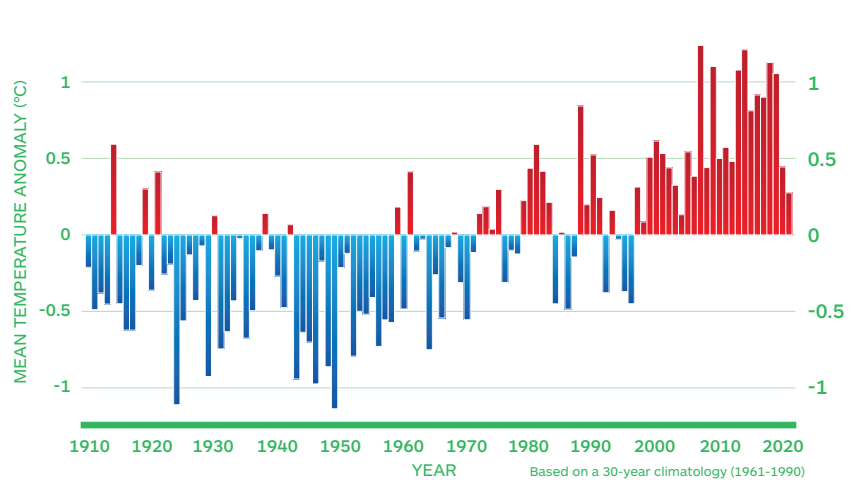
The above figures demonstrate the relatively rapid rise in air temperature and sea surface temperature from approximately 1970 onward. Each graph shows the trend for Australia and Victoria, and provides context for Melbourne's overall climate state and moreover heat as a specific climactic factor of community vulnerability.

Climate Change

There is some 'good' news on this front. Per capita emissions, as shown on the graph below, are declining significantly in Victoria.

**Figure 8 Per Capita Emissions in Victoria by Year [7]**
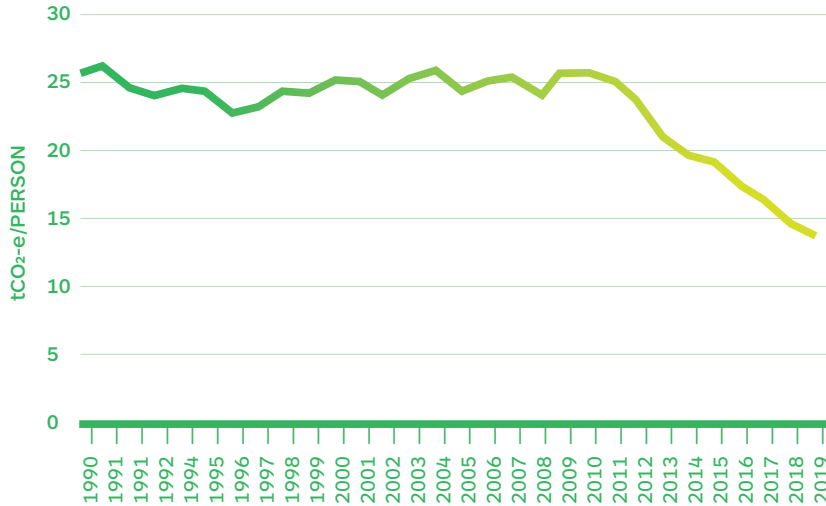
This is likely attributable to subsidies for residential solar programs, increased green energy availability from energy providers and possibly the cumulative effect of certain individual choices.

Nevertheless, while our emissions per capita decline, because Greater Melbourne is rapidly growing, overall emissions are increasing. Indeed, the city's population has been growing at approximately between 2% and 6% since 2012 and grew 2.68% and 3% in COVID-19 affected 2020 and 2021 respectively.

This population growth pressure not only impacts the utilisation of emissions-producing energy sources, but also impacts public infrastructure and housing, and, if not well planned, on the availability of open and green space.

The graph below reinforces that Victoria's share of renewable energy sources is increasing and this bodes well for the phasing out of non-renewable energy sources to reduce carbon emissions.

Figure 9 Percentage Share of Renewable Energy Sources in Victoria [7]
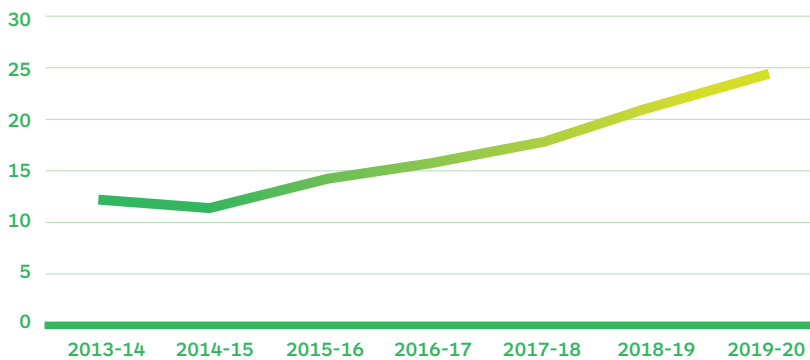
These measures potentially point to important behavioural changes by consumers who are simultaneously opting to use more renewable energy and reducing their carbon footprint. [7]
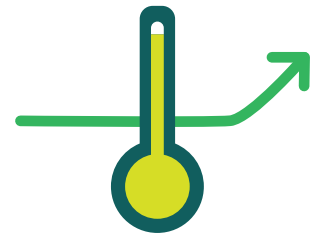
Australia's climate and surrounding oceans have

WARMED SINCE NATIONAL RECORDS BEGAN

Consumers are opting to use more

RENEWABLE ENERGY TO

reduce their carbon footprint

Since the 1970s there has been a

## RAPID RISE IN AIR AND SEA SURFACE TEMPERATURE [6]

One of the most concerning impacts of increasing heat is the severity of heat islands within Greater Melbourne's urban landscapes[8]. Various elements contribute to overall heat vulnerability.

Figure 10 shows the percentage of tree cover by region across Greater Melbourne. Especially pronounced is the lack of tree cover in Melbourne's West, an area that is also currently identified as socioeconomically vulnerable on a variety of other indicators.[8]
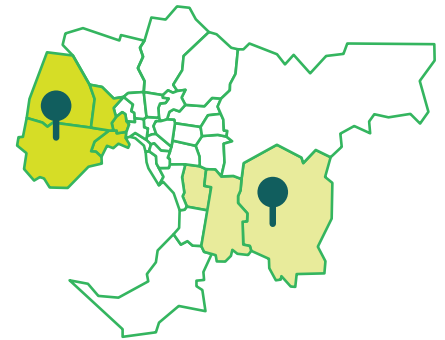
Figure 10 2018 % urban tree cover in Melbourne by region [8]
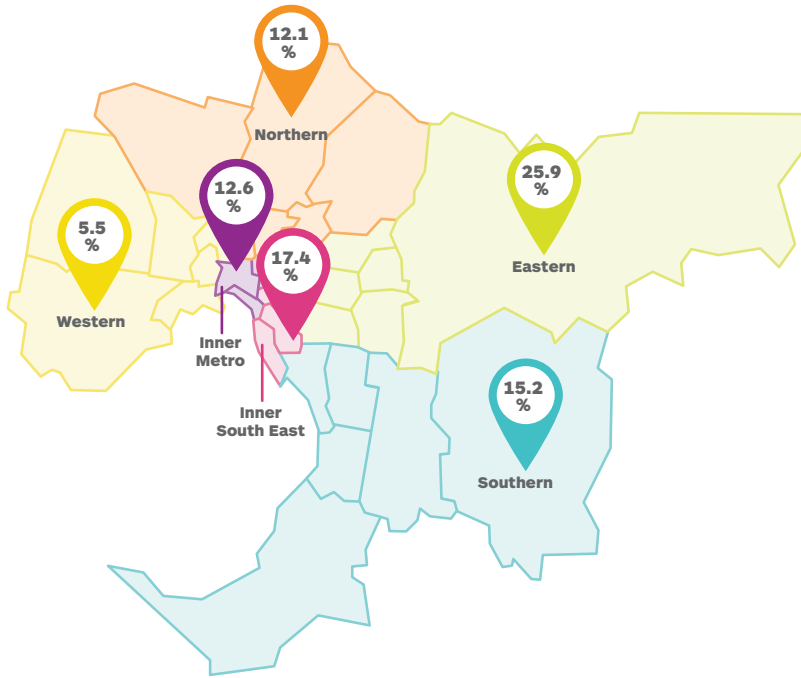
Figure 11 Heat vulnerability distribution across Greater Melbourne [8]

5.5 per cent
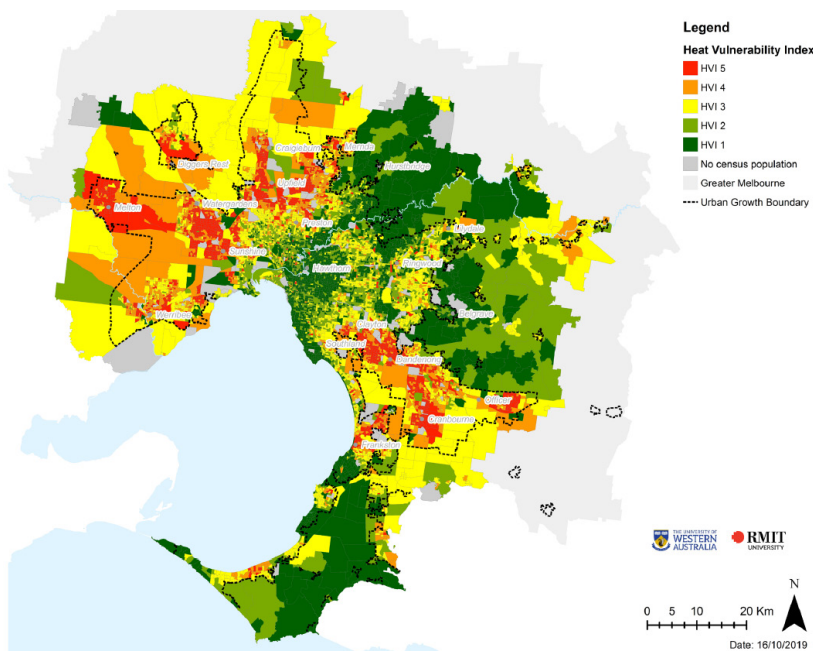
Tree coverage in Greater Melbourne's West is only 5.5%

WEST MELBOURNE

SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE

are more vulnerable to the impact of increasing heat than other areas of Greater Melbourne

Figure 11 colour codes Greater Melbourne by what is called Heat Vulnerability Index (HVI) [8]. This index uses the following criteria to determine the vulnerability to heat of a population in a particular area:

- % tree cover in the area

- % roads as a sensitivity indicator, as roads retain heat in the urban environment.

- population density (persons per square km), as denser populations are more sensitive heat-related health complications.

- % population of people >= 65 years old

- % population of people <= 4 years old

Figure 11 also indicates that lower socioeconomic communities in Melbourne's West, and to some extent the South East, are more vulnerable to the impact of increasing heat than other areas of Greater Melbourne.

Climate Safe and Energy Efficient Homes

Low-income families, pensioners, and other vulnerable people are under pressure from rising energy costs and paying electricity and gas bills. Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is funding initiatives that directly increase the energy efficiency and climate resilience of vulnerable households such as subsidy or retrofit programs.

The Foundation is supporting the Brotherhood of St Laurence to provide vulnerable households with energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, efficient heating and cooling, and rooftop solar to protect them from extreme cold and heat. These households have residents who are low-income individuals with pre-existing health conditions that make them at risk of temperature-related health impacts. These upgrades not only protect the residents from health-related health issues but also helps to reduce the cost of living and reduce emissions.

The Foundation also funded Renew for its policy work in collaboration with many other organsiations to increase energy efficiency requirements of new housing under The National Construction Code.

HEALTHY & RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Sustainable Development Goals

5 GENDER EQUALITY

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

**13** CLIMATE ACTION

Snapshot

1

Food accessibility in parts of Greater Melbourne is highly car dependent, further entrenching inequities and negative environmental and social impacts.

2

Large swathes of Melbourne's **West and North** are in the **bottom quartile for access to $2000 in case of an emergency.**

3

Melbourne's **West and North** are in the **bottom quartile for access to** General Practice (GP) **medical care.**

4
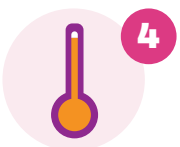
Greater Melbourne has already become warmer and drier, and **faces more hot days greater than 35°C**, and heatwaves.

The concept of a 'resilient' community is multifaceted. Resilience can take a variety of forms and, as such, it is important to look at a range of indicators. One of the most recognised suites of resilience indicators are the social, ecological, and cultural determinants of health.[11]

Jesuit Social Service's most recent Dropping Off The Edge report[9] found six of Victoria's 10 locations of highest disadvantage are in the Greater Melbourne area, with the remainder being in regional Victoria. The report also found that the local government areas (LGAs) facing the most persistent and multi-layered disadvantage across Greater Melbourne were clustered in Melbourne's North West and South East [9]:

- Broadmeadows
- Campbellfield
- Dandenong
- Doveton
- Meadow Heights
- St Albans - North
- Kings Park
- St Albans – South
- Thomastown
- Lalor

Disadvantage in this context is indicated by a myriad of aspects too numerous to list. However, the LGAs that ranked as most disadvantaged scored in the top 5% for at least eight of the indicators, including:
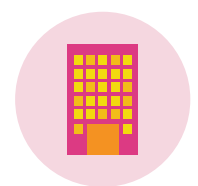
Unemployment

Rates of Family Violence

Housing Stress

Public Housing

Education levels and access

Teen pregnancy

Air Quality

Access to healthy, affordable, sustainable food

One essential component of community resilience is physical and mental health. This can be measured by way of preventative metrics such as access to food and the type of nutrition the community is likely to obtain, or by way of responsive metrics such as access to healthcare and medicine.

On the issue of food accessibility, the key for communities is the ease of access to healthy, affordable options, including supermarkets, local greengrocers, and community food gardens.

A Melbourne University study investigated this feature across regions of Greater Melbourne [12]. It highlighted that food access is highly car dependent in many parts of Greater Melbourne. High levels of car dependence can risk further entrenching disadvantage and adding additional problems for lower socioeconomic families, such as vehicle running costs and environmental impacts.

This final point is a salient one considering the Heat Vulnerability Index, which acknowledges that areas with more roads face greater heat island effects and therefore making people even more vulnerable in times of extreme heat.

Walkability

Figure 12 shows walking accessibility of Melbourne's West and demonstrates areas such as Werribee and Melton are especially inaccessible on this metric. The darker shaded areas on the map are more walking accessible. [13]

Figure 12 Walkability of Western Melbourne [13]

Walking Accessibility

VERY LOW   VERY HIGH
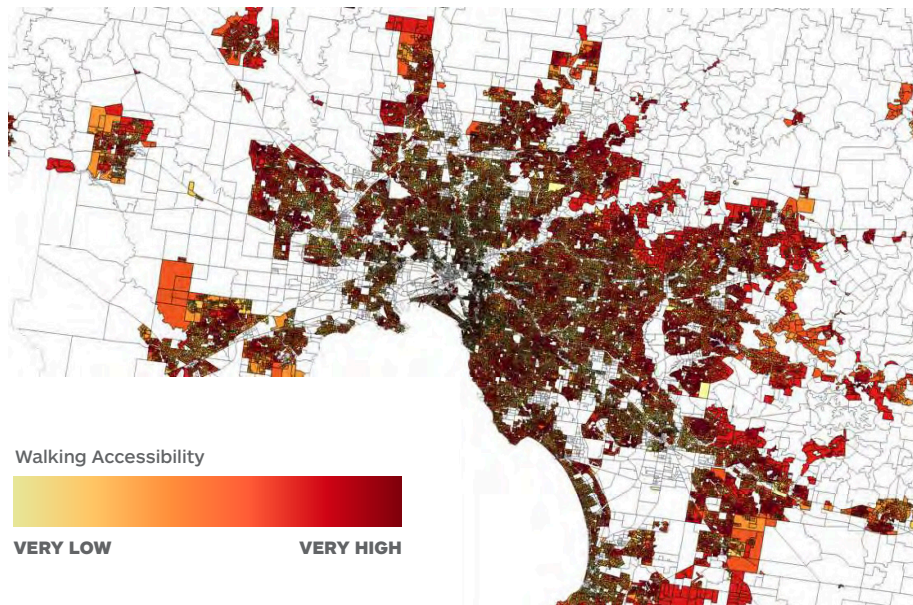
As envisaged by Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 [14], our shared goal should be a city made of 20-minute neighbourhoods where public and active transport options, health and legal services, green space, schools, shops and preferably jobs are accessible within 20 minutes of where people live. Central Melbourne will continue to be a vibrant hub for certain industries and especially a place for everyone to celebrate and enjoy arts and sports events.

Melbourne's North West and South East face the **most persistent** **and** **multi-layered** **DISADVANTAGE**
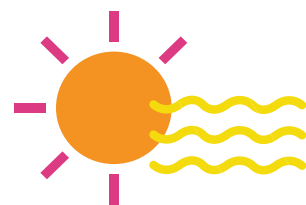
Areas with more roads face

GREATER HEAT ISLAND EFFECTS making people even more vulnerable in times of extreme heat

Access to $2000 In Case of Emergency

Figure 13 below, from the Jesuit Social Services' Dropping Off the Edge 2021 report [9] show the areas of Melbourne with the greatest proportion of residents who do not have access to $2000 in case of emergency.

Figure 13 Distribution of access to $2000 in case of emergency [9]
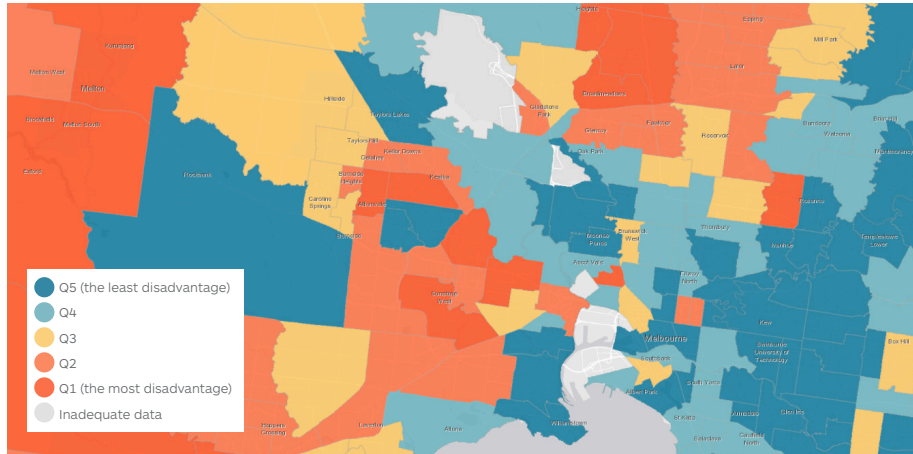
Areas of Melbourne's West and North West are vulnerable to a $2000 emergency, the cost of repairing a broken down car or an uninsured accident. Moreover, even if only a portion of that amount was incurred in the emergency, these communities are more likely to be forced to make difficult choices between repairing the vehicular emergency, paying rent, or another aspect of living costs, such as food.

Given that many communities, access to healthy and affordable food is highly car-dependent, the precarious nature of these communities' access and financial profile means that they are extremely vulnerable to food insecurity.

Where communities lack access to healthy, affordable food, it is also fair to conclude they are at greater risk of falling into poor health. The following graphics give some indication of the proportion of adults whose health might be impacted by a lack of food security.

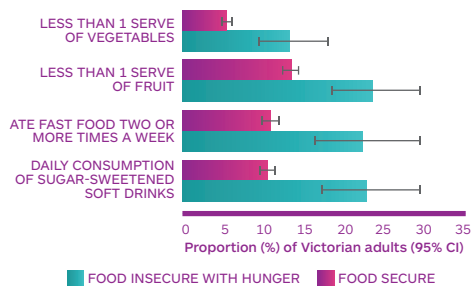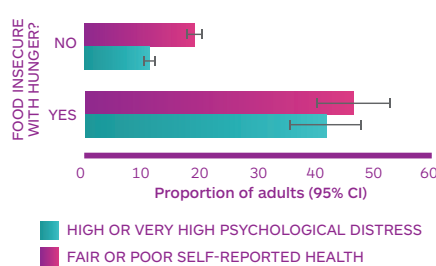**Figure 14 Indicators of diet, by food insecurity status [10]**

Figure 15 Health outcomes, by food insecurity status [10]

Adults impacted by hunger and or food insecurity are much more likely to have high psychological distress or poor self-reported health.

Therefore, another part of strengthening community resilience is ensuring access to the type of healthcare that will allow them to improve and monitor their health and address any declines in or challenges to their health.

Greater Melbourne's

WEST **NORTH WEST**

are the greatest proportion of residents who do not have access to $2000 in case of an emergency

Communities that lack access to healthy, affordable food are at greater risk of falling into

POOR HEALTH

Adults impacted by hunger or food insecurity are more likely to have

high psychological distress or poor self-reported health

General Practitioner Access in Greater Melbourne

Figure 16 shows General Practitioner accessibility across Greater Melbourne. Red areas indicate the areas is in the lower quartiles for access.

Figure 16 GP access across Greater Melbourne [9]

Legend:
- Q5 (the least disadvantage)
- Q4
- Q3
- Q2
- Q1 (the most disadvantage)
- Inadequate data
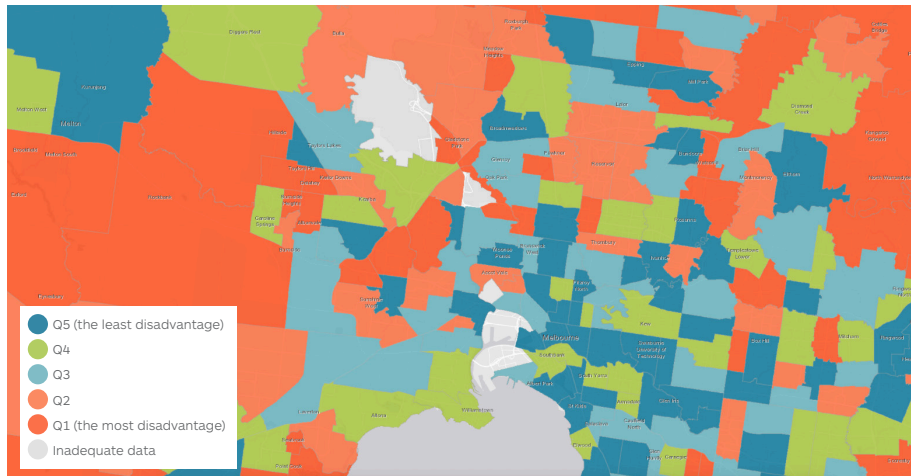
Communities in the West and North West of Greater Melbourne have the least access to General Practitioners. Access to this primary layer of healthcare is also related to the car dependency issue further entrenching disadvantage, and contributing to environmental and climate change impacts. There are many opportunities to address the multifaceted causes of disadvantage, while also increasing climate change resilience.

Communities in Greater Melbourne's

WEST **NORTH WEST**

have the

LEAST ACCESS TO GENERAL PRACTITIONERS [9]

Access to healthcare is

RELATED TO THE CAR DEPENDENCY

in the West and North West of Greater Melbourne

Western Melbourne Jobs and Skills Collaborative

Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation supports the Western Melbourne Jobs and Skills Collaboration; a joint venture by Centre for Policy Development Ltd and Brotherhood of St Laurence's Social Policy and Research Centre. The 5-10 year project will enable regional Western Melbourne job seekers, who are facing disadvantage, to more readily seek employment opportunities. In the post-COVID recovery, this work aims to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for diverse regional industries, employers and job seekers.

Mobilising Climate Just and Resilient Communities in the West

The Foundation is supporting Jesuit Social Services' Centre for Just Places to bring together a range of community and health organisations across the West to identify and act on climate justice. They have collectively identified a suite of issues these organisations and their communities face in acting on climate justice and will work to the current absence of strong governance.
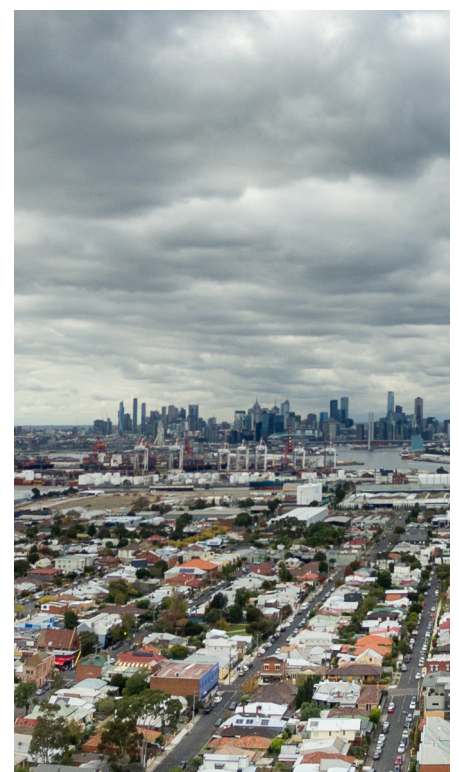
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We acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we live and work. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and acknowledge their continuing connections to culture, community, land and sea.

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