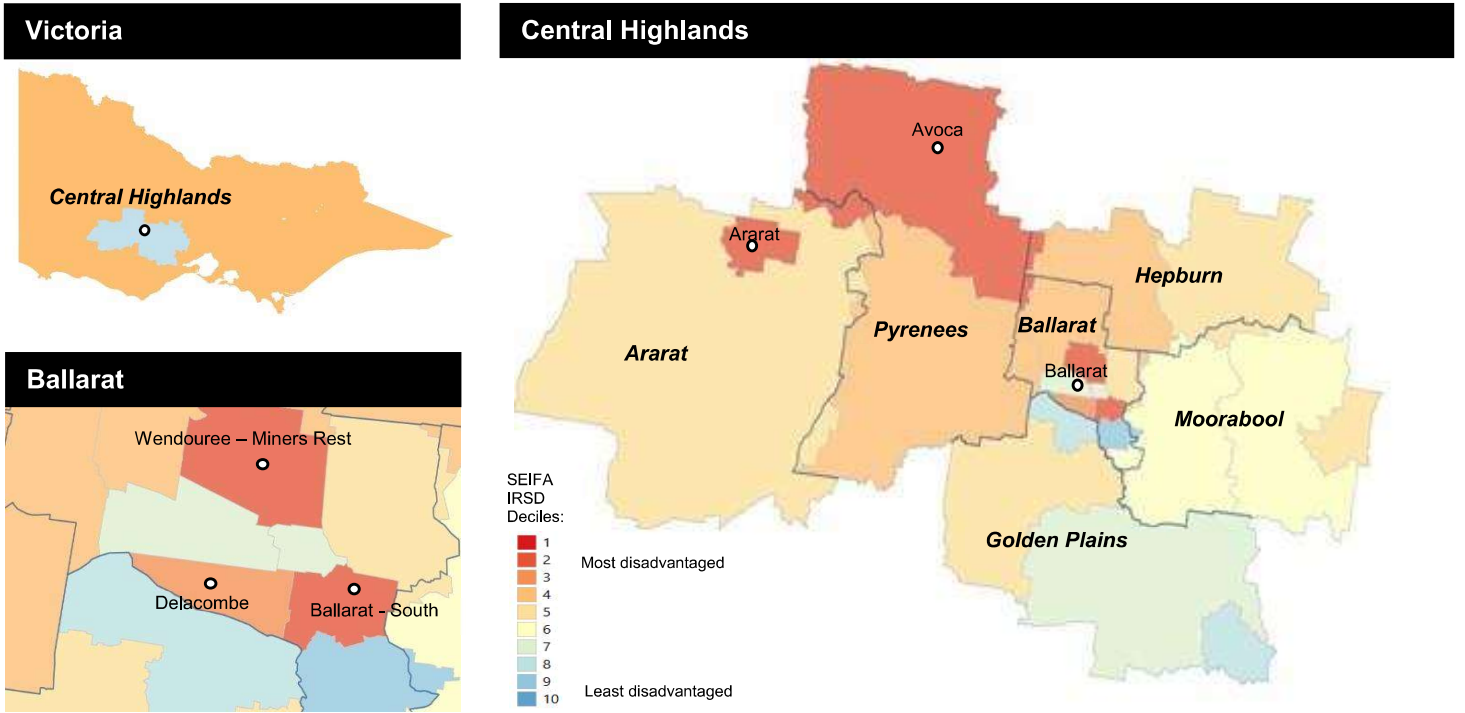


Infrastructure Victoria is investigating infrastructure investments in regional Victoria that builds on the economic strengths of a region, or that reduces disadvantage, primarily through providing greater access to services and economic opportunities. This fact sheet is focussed on reducing disadvantage, and should be read in conjunction with the accompanying framework for reducing disadvantage through infrastructure.

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide evidence that will inform problem definition for each of Victoria's nine regions through consultation with stakeholders. The project has a specific focus on **areas that experience relatively high levels of disadvantage** (ranked in the bottom 30% of the index of Socio-Economic Disadvantage, SEIFA) and this fact sheet provides **indicators showing poor outcomes for key demographic groups living in these areas**.

Infrastructure Victoria invites key stakeholders and service providers to make submissions that provide evidence on which infrastructure could make a difference in reducing disadvantage for the region.



The maps show a visual representation of the Central Highlands region based on Index of Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (SEIFA IRSD) data (2016). The red and orange shaded areas represent areas of high relative disadvantage.

## About the Central Highlands

The Central Highlands is 14,672 square kilometres in extent (covering 6 per cent of Victoria) and is characterised by several distinct areas. The eastern part of the region extends to the fringe of Melbourne and Geelong and includes the town of Bacchus Marsh. The western part borders the eastern extent of the Grampians National Park (which spans several regions), with Ararat being the main regional centre. The regional city of Ballarat is located towards the centre of the region.

The Central Highlands region comprises six Local Government Areas. Ararat, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Moorabool and Pyrenees.

Central Highlands is one of five regions that border metropolitan Melbourne, which has a strong influence on the region's population and economy. The areas in the east are within Melbourne's peri-urban fringe and experience high population growth and associated development pressures, impacting on some of the region's landscapes, agricultural, waterway and other environmental assets. The western areas of the region are more rural with smaller established towns, lower population growth and therefore fewer associated development pressures.

Source: Aither Central Highlands Regional Profile, March 2019

## Aboriginal Communities in Central Highlands

Infrastructure Victoria acknowledges the Central Highlands region includes the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung and Djab Warrung peoples and comprises important cultural heritage assets. The land of the Wadawurrung people is in Central Highlands, including Ballarat, Golden Plains, Moorabool and Beaufort. The land of the Djab Warrung people stretches from the south eastern edge of the Grampians National Park to the Pyrenees range, and between Penshurst and Mortlake in the south to Landsborough in the north. The land of the Djab Warrung people includes the Wimmera River and the Hopkins River.

Across the Central Highlands Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) play a central role in the provision of services and the promotion and protection of Aboriginal people's rights. This includes health, housing, law and justice, child and family welfare, child development, education, land management and heritage protection services and assistance. The Aboriginal population across Victoria is growing rapidly creating significant demand pressures on Aboriginal and other services in the region. To find out more about Aboriginal land and communities, services and regular cultural activities in the region see the Deadly Story website [deadlystory.com](http://deadlystory.com)

Infrastructure Victoria is interested to understand if there are infrastructure solutions for this region that can address disadvantage and help build health and prosperity for Aboriginal people.

## Disadvantage in the Central Highlands Region

Places of high disadvantage in the Central Highlands Region include the towns of Ararat and Avoca, as well as some suburbs of Ballarat (E.g. Sebastopol, Delacombe and Wendouree).

While these disadvantaged areas are all experiencing population growth, the towns of Ararat and Avoca feature an older population than the Australian average, and a higher proportion of elderly people living alone. They also feature almost twice the amount of people with a disability compared to the Victorian Average. Ararat has relatively high numbers of school leavers who are not in work or learning.

Conversely the surrounding suburbs of Ballarat feature a younger population, in line with the Victorian average. However the proportion of elderly people living alone is high, and these suburbs also feature a larger proportion of people with a disability and people requiring assistance with daily living.

Childhood education is an area of challenge in some areas, with almost a quarter of the children commencing primary school in Wendouree and Ararat being developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains.

## Demographics

Below is a selection of demographic statistics for the region. Evidence shows that for some key population groups (such as young children, students leaving school, older people, people with disabilities), if access to services is improved it can improve their life outcomes. For this reason, IV is focussing additional attention on a number of vulnerable groups.

LGA	Ballarat			Pyrenees	Ararat	
SA2 [town]	Ballarat South [Sebastopol, Mount Clear]	Delacombe [Delacombe, Smythes Creek]	Wendouree - Miners Rest [Wendouree, Miners Rest]	Avoca [Avoca]	Ararat [Ararat]	Victoria
Remoteness classification	Regional city			Regional town	Regional centre	
Population	24,232 ↑	7,082 ↑	14,633 ↑	3,303 ↑	8,301 ↑	5,926,624 ↑
0 – 4 years old	7%	7%	7%	4%	4%	6%
5 – 14 years old	11%	14%	12%	11%	10%	12%
15 – 24 years old	15%	15%	12%	8%	11%	13%
25 – 64 years old	50%	49%	47%	50%	52%	53%
Over 65	17%	16%	21%	27%	23%	16%
Over 75 Living Alone	38%	31%	31%	36%	31%	27%
Requires assistance with daily living	7%	6%	8%	8%	7%	5%
Disability pension (15 - 64)*	8%			11%	10%	5%
Aged pension*	70%			70%	69%	63%
Single parent families	24%	19%	22%	12%	18%	15%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Low English proficiency	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	4%
Social housing*	6%			1%	3%	4%

Sources: 2016 ABS Census, PHIDU

↑↓ Population change between 2011 and 2016

\* Statistics are taken from the LGA that the town sits in

## Outcomes

Below are a range of indicators that demonstrate the types and levels of disadvantage for key demographic groups in the region's most disadvantaged areas. See the Appendix for further information on indicators.

LGA	Ballarat			Pyrenees	Ararat	
SA2 [UCL town]	Ballarat South [Sebastopol, Mount Clear]	Delacombe [Delacombe, Smythes Creek]	Wendouree - Miners Rest [Wendouree, Miners Rest]	Avoca [Avoca]	Ararat [Ararat]	Victoria
<b>Place-based disadvantage</b>						
SEIFA IRSD Decile (1-10)	2	3	2	2	2	5
<b>ICT Indicator</b>						
No internet access	23%	17%	27%	32%	29%	17%
<b>Transport</b>						
Public transport access*		67%		8%	48%	51%
No car	9%	3%	10%	3%	5%	8%
<b>Early Years/Children</b>						
Kindergarten enrolment**		96%		92%	103%	93%
Developmentally vulnerable children	9%	15%	23%	6%	24%	10%
Children in jobless families*		14%		12%	13%	11%
<b>Young people</b>						
Early school leavers (15 – 24 years old) not in labour force/training/education	4%	4%	7%	3%	5%	3%
Early school leavers (20 – 30 years old) not finishing year 12	25%	29%	35%	31%	33%	17%
<b>Health</b>						
GP per 1000 population*		1.5		0.9	1	1.2
Life expectancy – male*		77.7		77.3	76.8	79
Life expectancy – female*		82.7		82.9	82	84
Poor dental health*		4%		7%	6%	5%
Satisfaction with health*		82%		79%	82%	84%
Preventable hospitalisations per 1000 population*		25.5		32	32.4	28.45
Mental health clients per 1,000*		18.5		15	26.7	14.52
<b>Households</b>						
Rental stress	16%	7%	13%	4%	8%	9%
Homelessness per 1,000*		4.1		1.5	2.5	3.3
<b>Crime</b>						
Offence rate per 100,000		10,660		5,725	10,861	7,422
<b>Economic &amp; Financial</b>						
Government support as main income source*		33%		41%	32%	26%
Unemployment rate	9%	6%	9%	7%	6%	7%
Labour participation rate	55%	62%	51%	47%	49%	60%
Individual income under \$400/week	26%	25%	26%	31%	23%	25%
Young people receiving unemployment benefit*		5%		4%	7%	3%
People receiving unemployment benefit long term*		6%		7%	6%	4%

■ 2 standard deviations from state average (~bottom 2.5%) ■ 1 standard deviation from state average (~bottom 16%)

\*Statistics are taken from the LGA that the town sits in ^May be more than 100 per cent due to enrolments from outside the local population.

The Victorian Government, through Regional Development Victoria, has established Regional Partnerships as part of a process for regional stakeholders such as local councils, business and community leaders to engage with Victorian government departments to highlight regional challenges and opportunities.

IV has drawn on initial consultations with stakeholders in the region, including the Regional Partnerships, to develop our understanding of the regions' concerns about infrastructure-related issues that could be impacting on regional disadvantage.

## What we have heard from Central Highlands stakeholders:

1. Many communities in the region have poor quality digital infrastructure and service.
2. Population growth is straining welfare and community services and facilities.
3. Housing costs are rising, and there is a lack of affordable and social housing, which is increasing homelessness and resulting in 50-70 families waiting on the public housing wait list.
4. Getting around the region, or accessing the larger centres of Ballarat, Ararat, Geelong and Horsham, is difficult and costly by public transport, which impacts on access to health and education services, as well as employment opportunities.

## ▶ Next steps

Infrastructure Victoria is now taking submissions from interested stakeholders. Please go to the [IV website](#) to make your submission.

The submission template includes the following questions.

- ▶ Have we captured the main issues of disadvantage in your region? If not can you provide further evidence?
- ▶ Can you provide evidence of an infrastructure barrier that is contributing to poor outcomes in this region? This could include (among other things) barriers related to:
  - transport,
  - access to digital services, and
  - need for new/upgraded facilities.
- ▶ Do you have ideas for infrastructure solutions to address disadvantage in your region, or exceptional examples of what's working well that could be duplicated in other areas?
- ▶ Can you provide us with business plans, service plans, program evaluations or other evidence to support your suggested solution?

Submissions close Friday 7 February 2020.

## Other areas in the Central Highlands region with below average SEIFA rankings.

### Towns in SEIFA Decile 4

Region	LGA	UCL (Town)	SA2	SA2 Population in UCL	SEIFA IRSD Decile
Central Highlands	Ballarat	Learmonth	Creswick – Clunes	318	4
	Hepburn	Clunes	Creswick – Clunes	1424	4
		Crewsick	Crewsick - Clunes	2745	4
	Pyrenees	Beaufort	Beaufort	1068	4
		Snake Valley	Beaufort	306	4

## Appendix: Outcome Data Measures

Table Measure	Full Measure	Source
<b>Place-based disadvantage</b>		
SEIFA IRSD Decile	Socio economic indicator (Socio-economic index for areas, index of relative disadvantage). Deciles are calculated from the SEIFA IRSD scores. The scores are split into 10 groups, or deciles, ranked 1 to 10. The first decile represents bottom 10% of the SEIFA scores while the tenth decile represents the top 10% of the SEIFA scores. ABS Catalogue 2033.0.55.001	ABS
<b>ICT Indicator</b>		
No internet access	% households with no access to internet - 2016 Census	ABS
<b>Transport</b>		
Public transport access	% population that has access to public transport - Objective counts and proximity to trains/bus/ferry - 2016 Census	ABS
No car	% households with no car - 2016 Census	ABS
<b>Early Years/Children</b>		
4 year old Kindergarten enrolment	% first year children enrolled in kindergarten - VCAMS 4-year old participation data	Data.Vic
Developmentally vulnerable children	% children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains - 2009-2018 Public Data Table SA2	AEDC
Children in jobless families	% children aged less than 15 years in jobless families - Social Health Atlas of Australia - Data by LGA - 2018: Families	PHIDU
<b>Young People</b>		
Early school leavers (15 – 24 years old) not in labour force/training/education	% school leavers (did not complete grade 10 or above), 15 – 24 years old, not in the labour force and/or further education/training (vocational or higher education) – 2016 Census	ABS
Early school leavers (20 – 30 years old) not finishing year 12	% school leavers (that left school before completing year 12), 20 – 30 years old – 2016 Census	ABS
<b>Health</b>		
GP per 1000 population	Number of General Practitioners per 1,000 population - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
Life expectancy - male	Life expectancy (years) male - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
Life expectancy - female	Life expectancy (years) female - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
Poor dental health	% people reporting poor dental health - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
Satisfaction with health	% population who were mostly or completely satisfied with their health (inverse of estimated number of people aged 15 years and over with fair or poor self-assessed health (modelled estimates) -- Social Health Atlas of Australia - Data by LGA – 2014-15	PHIDU
Preventable hospitalisations per 1,000 population	Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions (Potentially Preventable Hospitalisation) separations for all conditions per 1,000 population) - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
Mental health clients per 1,000	Mental health (registered clients per 1,000 population) - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
<b>Households</b>		
Rental stress	% households with rent payments greater than or equal to 30% of household income - 2016 Census	ABS
Homelessness per 1,000	Homeless people (estimated) per 1,000 population - 2015 Local Government Area (LGA) Statistical Profiles	DHHS
<b>Crime</b>		
Offence rate per 100,000	Offence rate per 100,000 population; objective crimes against the person in public or property (total crime rate) - Victorian Crime Statistics by LGA – Research Paper, August 2018	DPS
<b>Economic &amp; Financial</b>		
Government support as main income source	% estimated number of people aged 18 years and over who had government support as their main source of income in the last 2 years (2014) - Social Health Atlas of Australia - Data by LGA - 2018: Personal and financial stressors (modelled estimates)	PHIDU
Unemployment rate	% unemployment rate - 2016 Census	ABS
Labour participation rate	% labour participation rate - 2016 Census	ABS
Individual income under \$400/week	% individual income under \$400 per week - 2016 Census	ABS
Young people receiving unemployment benefit	% young people aged 16 to 24 receiving an unemployment benefit - Social Health Atlas of Australia - Data by LGA - 2018: Income support recipients	PHIDU
People receiving unemployment benefit long term	% people receiving an unemployment benefit long-term - Social Health Atlas of Australia - Data by LGA - 2018: Income support recipients	PHIDU