



**Domain 2:
Victorians are Safe and Secure**

Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership
www.lhpcp.org.au



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Individuals and organisations whose data and advice is utilised and referred to throughout the report.



The history, culture, diversity and value of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised, acknowledged and respected.



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SNAPSHOT OF KEY FINDINGS - DOMAIN 2: VICTORIANS ARE SAFE & SECURE

Compared with state average in **Lower Hume** there were higher rates of:

- Substantiated child abuse
- Family violence incidents with children involved
- Sexual offences
- Hospitalisation due to external causes

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Victoria experienced higher rates of:

- Substantiated child abuse
- Children in out of home care
- Hospitalisation due to assault
- Homelessness

Outcome 2.1 Victorians live free from abuse and violence

Indicator 2.1.1: Reduce prevalence and impact of abuse and neglect of children

2.1.1.1 Rate of children who were the subject of child abuse and neglect substantiation

The impact of child abuse can have life-long consequences and result in poorer mental and physical health. In Australia, statutory child protection is the responsibility of the state and territory governments. In Victoria, DHHS is responsible for child protection and provides care and protection to vulnerable children who have been, or are at risk of being, abused, neglected, or otherwise harmed, or whose parents are unable to provide adequate care or protection. Concerns of suspected child abuse or neglect can be reported to the statutory child protection service by a family member, member of the public or a professional. Child protection intake services screen incoming reports to determine whether further action is required. Reports that are deemed to require further action and are classified as a 'child protection notification' are investigated. Following an investigation the child protection service determines if the report is 'substantiated', indicating that a child may be at significant risk of harm.²³

Child abuse substantiation per 1,000 children aged 0-17 years is provided in Table 1. The rate of substantiated child abuse increased by 13% across Victoria from 2009/10 to 2010/11. Murrindindi Shire remained slightly below state average for substantiated child abuse per 1,000 population despite a 45% increase, whilst Mitchell Shire experienced a 23% increase and maintained higher rates of reported child abuse (Table 1).¹³

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Indigenous Australians were subject to traumatic experiences resulting from past policy including the forcible removal of children (known as the Stolen Generations). Long-term impacts remain, including social, physical and psychological impacts for those directly involved, as well as their families and communities. Child protection issues continue to be very significant for Indigenous communities, reflecting this history of trauma and stressors that have impacted on parents, parenting skills and communities. Issues such as substance abuse, poverty and family violence are also key factors. In responding to situations in which Indigenous children are at risk, all states and territories have adopted the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle that requires that where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are removed from their family, the following order of preference for their placement should be followed:

- The child's extended family;
- The child's Indigenous community;
- Other Indigenous Australians.

Barriers to this principle include a shortage of foster and kinship carers, issues of support for kinship carers and inconsistency in child protection decision making.⁶¹

For Indigenous children throughout Australia aged 0-17 years old the rate of substantiated child protection notifications was 40 per 1,000; which is 6.7 times the rate for non-Indigenous children (6 per 1,000). In Victoria substantiated child protection notifications for Indigenous children were even more common at 67 per 1,000 population; 7.4 times more likely than non-Indigenous children in Victoria. Nationally the most common reasons for substantiated child protection notifications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years were neglect and emotional abuse (both 38%) compared with 21% and 46% of substantiations respectively for non-Indigenous children (Table 2).⁶¹

Nationally Indigenous children were 9.5 times as likely as non-Indigenous children to be receiving out-of-home care (52.5 per 1,000 compared with 5.5 per 1,000). Whilst in Victoria Indigenous children were 13 times more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to be receiving out-of-home-care (71.5 per 1,000 compared to 5.5 per 1,000). 66% of Indigenous children in out-of-home care were placed with either a relative/kin or an Indigenous carer or in other Indigenous care throughout Australia, compared to 57% in Victoria (Table 2). Young Indigenous people aged 10–17 years who were in the child protection system in 2014–15 were more likely to be under youth justice supervision at some time in the same year: 14% of

Indigenous males and 7% of Indigenous females compared with 6% of non-Indigenous males and 2% of non-Indigenous females.⁶¹

A connection exists between higher rates of 'neglect' and lower socio-economic status, alcohol and substance abuse and malnutrition or 'failure to thrive'. A recent Inquiry in Victoria has found that family violence (often categorised as 'emotional abuse'), in combination with parental alcohol and/or drug abuse, is the leading cause for Aboriginal children's entry into out-of-home care. Of the Aboriginal children reviewed, 88% were impacted by family violence and 87% were affected by a parent with alcohol or substance abuse issues. The Inquiry also found that the child protection system had failed to preserve, promote and develop cultural safety and connection for Aboriginal children in out-of-home care.⁶¹

Table 1: Rate of substantiated child abuse per 1,000 population, 2009/10 & 2010/11

Mitchell		Murrindindi		Victoria	
2009/10	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11
8	10	3	6	6	7

Source: Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System, 2017.

Table 2: Rate of substantiated child abuse and children (0-17 years) in out of home care by Indigenous status, 2014-15

	Victoria		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	Non-Indigenous children	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	Non-Indigenous children
Rate of substantiated child protection notification [#]	67	9	40	6
Reason for substantiated child protection notification				
Neglect	**	**	38%	21%
Emotional abuse	**	**	38%	46%
Sexual abuse	**	**	14%	9%
Rate of children in out of home care [#]	72	6	53	6
Proportion of Indigenous child placements with relatives, kin or other Indigenous caregiver	57%	**	66%	**

Source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework Report, 2017. **Not available. [#]Per 1,000 population.

Indicator 2.1.2: Reduce prevalence and impact of family violence

2.1.2.1 Rate of incidents of family violence recorded by police

Family violence causes substantial physical and psychological harm, particularly to women and children. It can destroy families and undermine communities. People who experience family violence are at greater risk of mental health disorders and their health and wellbeing are likely to be affected in both the short- and long-term. Experiencing family violence, including witnessing family violence, can have harmful effects on children's and young peoples' physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social development.²³

Police reporting of family violence increased by 19% across Victoria from 2012/13 to 2016/17 (from 1,028 to 1,262 incidents per 100,000 population). The rate of police recorded family violence incidents in 2012/13 was higher than state and regional average across Mitchell Shire, and increased by a further 35% by 2016/17. Murrindindi Shire experienced a 20% increase in the rate of police reported family violence incidents from 2012/13 to 2016/17 and remained below state and regional average (Table 3).¹⁹ However, it must be noted that police reporting of family violence is only one indicator and does not provide the full story in terms of the impact of family violence within a community, as a lot of cases go unreported.

Police recorded family violence incidents within Mitchell Shire were more likely than the state average to have children or young people involved as other parties (41%). Incidents recorded in Murrindindi were also slightly more likely than average to involve children and young people despite a small decrease from 2012 to 2017 (Table 3).¹³

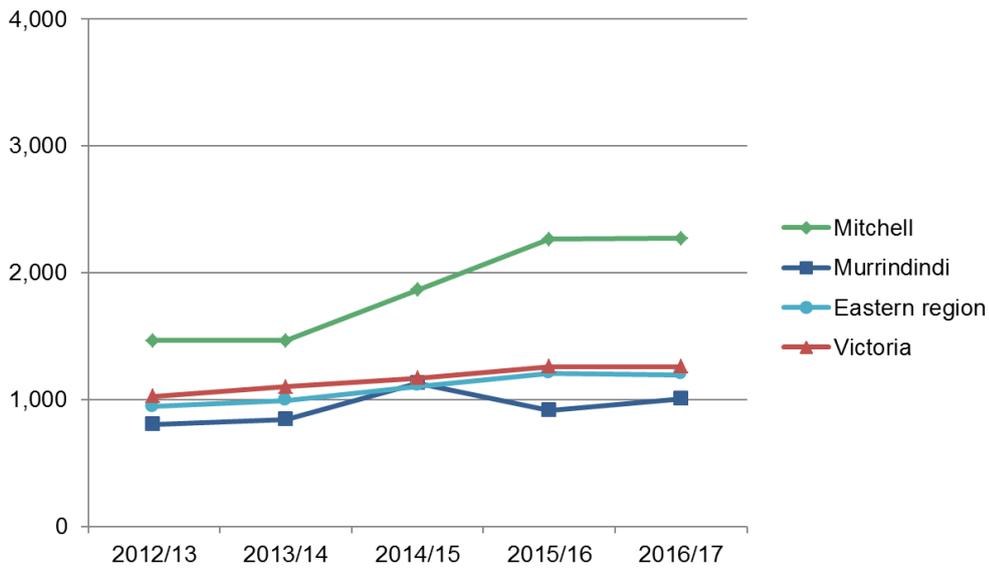
The 2016 Personal Safety Survey found that women were almost 3 times as likely to experience violence by a partner as men, and that there has been no reduction in the prevalence of violence against women between 2005 and 2012. It is well established that the unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women, referred to as gender inequality, is a key factor contributing to violence against women. The 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey found that understanding of non-physical forms of abuse were less likely to be considered as violence against women. Moreover people tended to view characteristics of individual men as primary causes of violence, which goes against the evidence which concludes that violence is a learned social behaviour, influenced by external factors such as social norms, media and laws. As such it is essential to address attitudes and social norms underpinning violence to prevent violence against women before it occurs.^{63, 64}

Table 3: Police recorded family violence incidents, 2012/12 & 2016/17

	Mitchell		Murrindindi		Eastern region		Victoria	
	2012/13	2016/17	2012/13	2016/17	2012/13	2016/17	2012/13	2016/17
Rate of FV incidents recorded by police [#]	1,466	2,270	801	1,004	947	1,197	1,028	1,262
Number of FV incidents recorded by police	547	926	108	139	14,961	19,621	58,960	77,721
Proportion of FV incidents where children and young people were involved as other parties	41%	41%^	39%	36%^	**	**	33%	29%

Source: Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, 2017. Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System, 2017. ^2014/15. **Not available. #per 100,000 population.

Figure 1: Rate of family violence incidents recorded by police per 100,000 population 2012 – 2017



Source: Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, 2017

2.1.2.2 Family Violence Index (to be determined)

In 2014, the Victorian Government commissioned Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety to develop a family violence index. The index will bring together data from across the fields of crime, justice, health, education and our community to create a single indicator of family violence.²³

Indicator 2.1.3: Increase community safety

2.1.3.1 Proportion of adults experiencing at least one incident of sexual violence since the age of 15 years

Sexual violence can have harmful and lasting consequences for victims/survivors, families and communities. The impacts include immediate and long-term physical and psychological and social consequences. Sexual assault is one of the most underreported categories of crime to the police. Thus self-report, while underestimating the extent of sexual violence, is the most robust measure available for monitoring.²³

Across Australia in 2012 an estimated 17% of women aged 18 years and over self-reported having experienced sexual assault since the age of 15, and 4% of men. Both men and women were more likely to have experienced sexual assault by someone they knew than by a stranger.⁴³

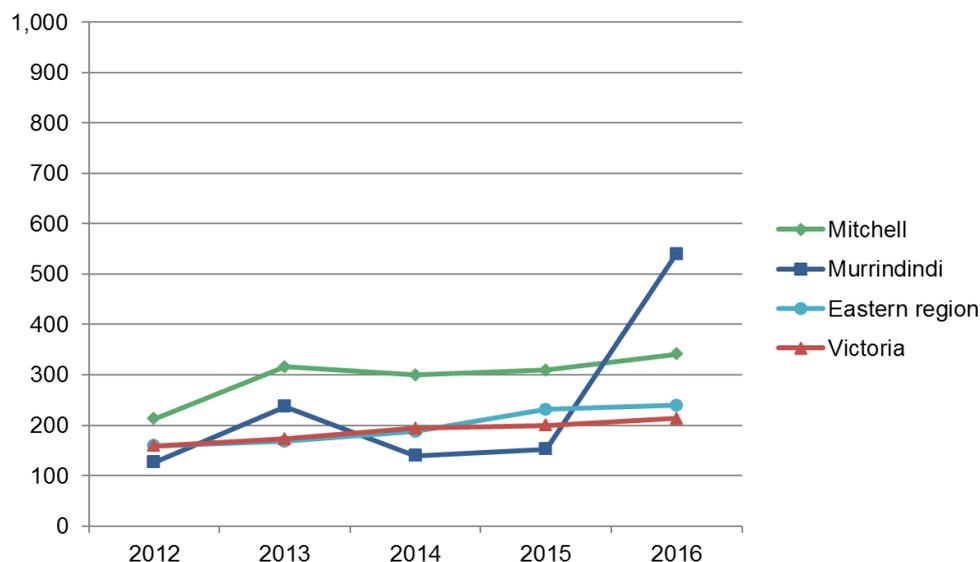
Although not the preferred measure, the rate of sexual offences recorded by police is presented in Table 4 due to a lack of self-reported data at LGA level. The rate of sexual offences recorded by police from 2012-2016 identifies a consistent increase in incidents across all areas. The sexual offence rate increased by 26% across Victoria from 2012 to 2016 and by 34% across the Eastern region. Mitchell Shire experienced a 38% increase in the sexual offence rate whilst Murrindindi Shire increased by 76% to reach 540 offences per 100,000 population in 2016.¹⁹

Table 4: Sexual offence rate per 100,000 population, 2012 & 2016

Mitchell		Murrindindi		Eastern region		Victoria	
2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016
213	341	127	540	159	240	159	214

Source: Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, 2017.

Figure 2: Sexual offence rate per 100,000 population, 2012 & 2016



Source: Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, 2017

2.1.3.2 Hospitalisation rate due to assault

The measure of the hospitalisation rate due to assault contributes to understanding of the levels of community safety and wellbeing.²³

Hospital admissions due to injury, poisoning and other external causes across all hospitals decreased slightly across Victoria from 2011/12 to 2012/13. Similarly Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires experienced a decrease, although their rates remained above state average. Males were consistently more likely to be admitted to hospital for injury, poisoning or other external factors than females, with males in Murrindindi having a significantly higher rate of hospitalisation (Table 5)^{9, 14}

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

22% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over reported they were a victim of physical or threatened violence in the last 12 months in the 2014/15 Social Survey, which was 2.8 times the rate for non- Indigenous Australians (8%). Actual physical violence was reported by 13% of Indigenous Australians.⁶¹

After adjusting for differences in the age structure of the two populations, Indigenous Australians were hospitalised for assault at 14 times the rate of non-Indigenous Australians. Indigenous females were 30 times more likely to have been hospitalised for assault as non-Indigenous females, and Indigenous males were 9 times more likely as non-Indigenous males. Indigenous hospitalisation rates for assault were highest in remote and very remote areas (22 and 21 per 1,000 respectively) compared with inner regional areas (3 per 1,000) and major cities (4 per 1,000).⁶¹

Indigenous female family violence related hospitalisation rates were 32 times the rate of non-Indigenous females in 2014/15. Indigenous males were 23 times more likely than non-Indigenous males to be hospitalised due to a family violence incident. The most common injuries requiring hospitalisation were open wounds (29%) and fractures (28%). Home was the most common place of occurrence of the assault for Indigenous females (63%). The majority (63%) of Indigenous prisoners had been incarcerated due to violence related offences and offences that cause harm in 2016.⁶¹

Indigenous Australians who were unemployed were more likely to report being a victim of physical or threatened violence than those who were employed (30% compared with 19% respectively). Those who had experienced being without a permanent place to live were twice as likely to report being a victim (31%) compared with those who had not (16%); and those living in a household in the lowest income quintile (26%) were more likely to report being a victim compared with those in the highest two quintiles (19%).⁶¹

In 2014/15, 58% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over reported they trusted the police from their local area and 46% trusted police from outside their local area. This was lower than the levels of trust in other sectors such as 81% of people trusting their doctor.⁶¹

Table 5: Admissions for injury, poisoning and other external causes all hospitals ASR per 100,000 population

	Mitchell		Murrindindi		Goulburn region		Victoria	
	2011/12	2012/13	2011/12	2012/13	2011/12	2012/13	2011/12	2012/13
All persons	3,028	2,598	3,443	2,781	2,990	**	2,757	2,279
Males	**	2,856	**	3,058	**	**	**	2,426
Females	**	2,336	**	2,515	**	**	**	2,131

Source: Public Health Information Development Social Health Atlas, 2017. **Not available.

2.1.3.3 Proportion of adults feeling safe walking in their street at night

Neighbourhoods perceived as safe foster community participation, encourage physical activity, community connectedness, and add to the health and wellbeing of local residents and visitors. Perception of neighbourhood safety is a measure of the social capital of a community. Research demonstrates that built environment and neighbourhood design and maintenance, have a high impact on perceptions of safety.²³

The proportion of people that feel safe walking alone decreased from 2011 to 2015 across Victoria, with walking alone after dark experiencing a larger decrease (approximately 20%). In 2015 a slightly lower proportion of people living in Mitchell Shire reported feeling safe walking alone during the day (90%) compared to state average (93%). However those living in Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires were more likely to report feeling safe walking alone after dark (64%, 73%) than state average (55%) in 2015 (Table 6). Males were significantly more likely to report feeling safe walking alone both during the day and after dark than women. Older people also felt less safe compared with all Victorians.^{3, 4}

Additional data collected in 2014 confirms that people living in Murrindindi Shire and the Goulburn and Ovens Murray region are more likely to feel safe walking alone after dark when compared to state average, whilst Mitchell Shire is similar to the Victorian average (Table 7).⁷

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Indigenous females were less likely to feel safe walking alone in their local area after dark (51%) than Indigenous males (83%). Indigenous females were also less likely to feel safe at home alone after dark (79%) compared with Indigenous males (95%).⁶¹

Table 6: Proportion of people agree that feel safe walking alone, 2011 & 2015

	Mitchell		Murrindindi		Victoria	
	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015
During the day	97%	90%	98%	94%	97%	93%
After dark	84%*	64%	94%	73%	70%	55%

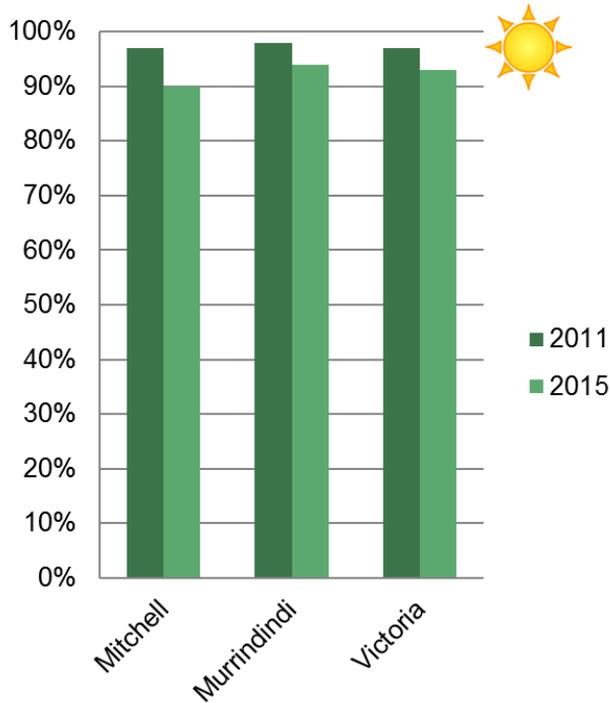
Source: Vichealth Indicators Survey, 2011 & 2015. *RSE between 25-50% and should be interpreted with caution.

Table 7: Perception of safety walking alone down their street after dark, 2014

	Mitchell	Murrindindi	Goulburn and Ovens Murray region	Victoria
Don't feel safe	14%	9.8%*	14%	19%
Sometimes feel safe	15%	3.3%*	11%	17%
Yes definitely feel safe	66%	81%	69%	61%

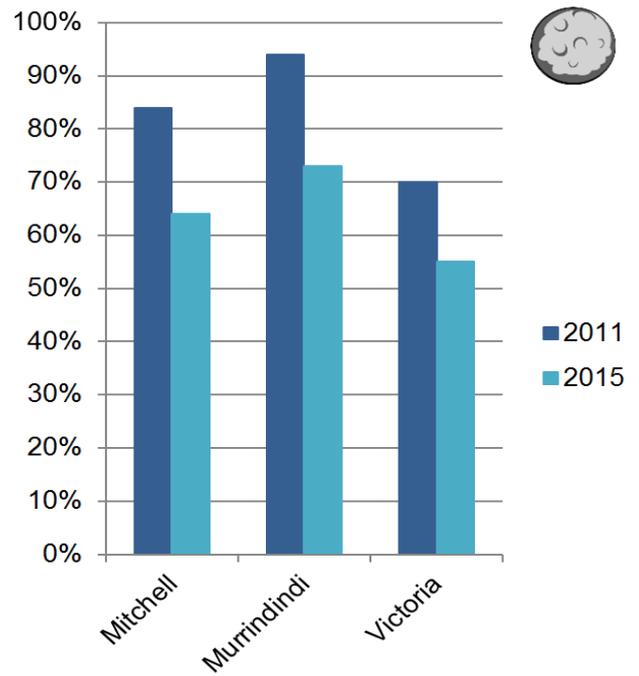
Source: Victorian Population Health Survey, 2014. *RSE between 25-50% and should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 3: Proportion of people that feel safe walking alone during the day, 2011 & 2015



Source: VicHealth Indicators Survey, 2011 & 2015.

Figure 4: Proportion of people that feel safe walking alone after dark 2011 & 2015



2.1.3.4 Proportion of adults experiencing at least one incident of crime in the past 12 months

Crime impacts personal and community safety, wellbeing, security, the attractiveness of an area for recreation, and on general amenity. The incidence of crime is both a cause and symptom of low quality of life, and is associated with poverty and exclusion. Self-reported experience of crime assesses the prevalence of the experience of crime in communities, only some of which is reported to the police.²³

In 2014 approximately 7% of adults across Victoria had experienced at least one incident of crime in the previous twelve months, which was similar to the national average. A further 1% of Victorians reported experiencing two or more incidents of crime in the previous twelve months which was substantially less than the national average (7%).⁴⁴

The proportion of adults experiencing at least once incident of crime in the previous twelve months is not available at LGA level. Therefore the offence rate per 100,000 population extracted from Victoria Police records is provided.

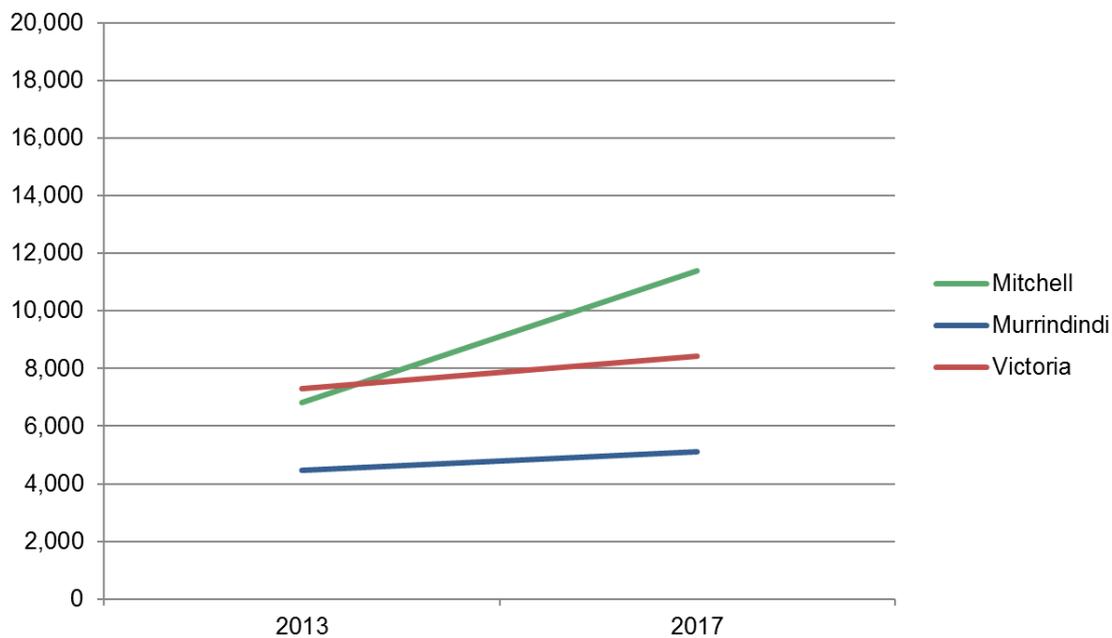
The offence rate per 100,000 population increased across Victoria as well as Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires from 2013-2017 (Figure 5). Mitchell Shire exceeded the state average offence rate in 2017, with theft the most prevalent offence recorded followed by a large increase in breaches of orders (includes breaches to family violence order, intervention order, bail conditions or other orders). The offence rate across Murrindindi Shire remained less than state average in 2017. Theft was also the most common offence committed in Murrindindi Shire followed by burglary/break and enter (Table 8).¹⁹

Table 8: Offence rate per 100,000 population by offence category 2013-2017

	Mitchell		Murrindindi		Victoria	
	2013	2017	2013	2017	2013	2017
Theft	1,417	2,800	1,054	1,235	2,548	3,073
Breaches of orders	480	2,135	**	**	414	930
Assault and related offences	1,064	1,059	586	513	642	711
Property damage	914	932	468	455	819	700
Burglary/break and enter	702	669	430	549	827	868
Sexual offences	**	**	**	462	154	218
Weapons and explosive offences	**	**	542	**	186	258
Total offences	6,816	11,398	4,482	5,119	7,301	8,825

Source: Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, 2017. **Not available.

Figure 5: Offence rate per 100,000 population 2013-2017



Source: Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, 2017.

2.1.3.5 Rate of victimisation due to crimes recorded by police

Self-reported experience of crime and official crime statistics monitor crime in Victoria. There is a significant shortfall in the crime counts of police recorded crime, compared with crime reported in ‘crime experience’ surveys.²³

A victim report is counted when an individual, business or organisation reports that they have been a victim of one or more criminal offences to Victoria Police. A victim report involves only one victim but can involve multiple offences and alleged offenders. An individual, business or organisation can be counted as a victim more than once within the reference period. If there are multiple victims related to a criminal event, each will have their victim report counted once in the figures.¹⁹

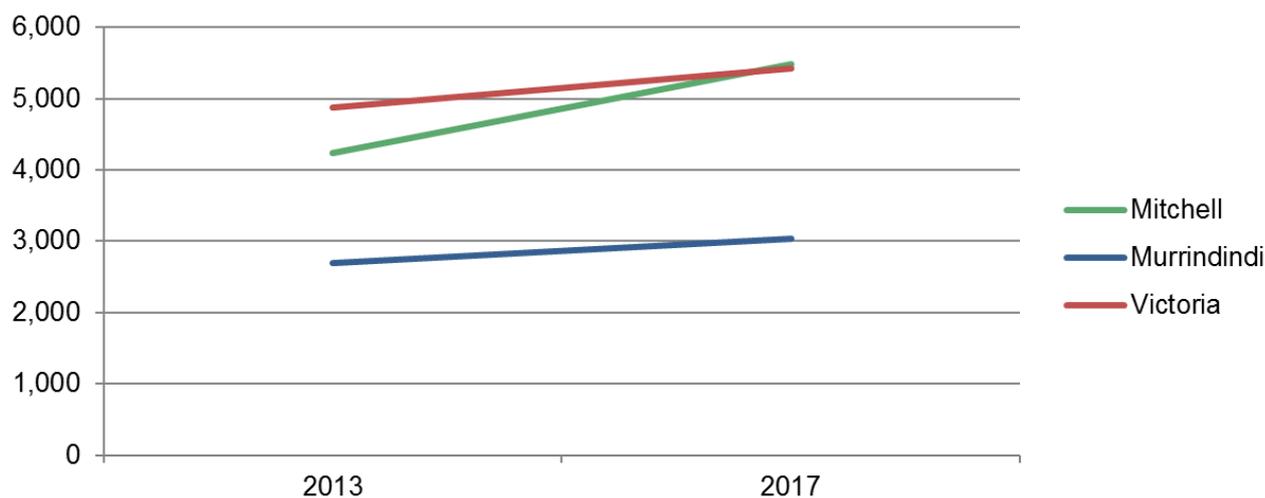
The victimisation rate increased by 10% across Victoria from 4,869 per 100,000 population in 2013 to 5,423 in 2017. The rate increased by 11% across Murrindindi, although remained below state average at 3,040 victim reports per 100,000 population in 2017. A 23% increase in the victimisation rate across Mitchell Shire meant that in 2017 there were slightly more victim reports completed per population when compared to state average (Table 9, Figure 6).¹⁹

Table 9: Victimisation rate due to crimes per 100,000 population 2013-2017

Mitchell		Murrindindi		Victoria	
2013	2017	2013	2017	2013	2017
4,238	5,487	2,701	3,040	4,869	5,423

Source: Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, 2017.

Figure 6: Victimisation rate per 100,000 population 2013-2017



Source: Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, 2017.



Summary Outcome 2.1: Victorians live free from abuse and violence

Rates of substantiated child abuse, police reported family violence and total crime have increased across Victoria and the Lower Hume catchment over the past few years. Despite limitations with the data available it is clear that people continue to be subject to abuse and violence and that the health and safety of communities would be improved with a reduction in unsocial behaviour and crime.

The rate of substantiated child abuse in Murrindindi Shire was below state average in 2009/10 and unfortunately doubled by 2010/11 bringing it closer to the Victorian average. The rate of substantiated child abuse in Mitchell Shire increased and remained higher than state average in 2010/11. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children throughout Victoria were 7.5 times more likely than non-Indigenous children to have had a substantiated child protection notification and 12 times more likely to be receiving out of home care.^{13, 61}

A 19% increase in police reporting of family violence occurred across Victoria from 2012 to 2017, with a 20% and 35% rise experienced across Murrindindi and Mitchell Shires respectively. In 2016/17 rates of family violence recorded by police were almost two times more prevalent in Mitchell Shire than state average. Moreover, family violence incidents in Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires more commonly involved children and young people, which is known to be damaging to social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physical development.^{13, 19}

Poor police recording of Aboriginality inhibits understanding of the prevalence of family violence in Aboriginal communities; however we do know that in Victoria family violence and parent alcohol/drug use are the leading reasons why Aboriginal children are receiving out of home care (88% and 87% respectively). Moreover, Indigenous females were 32 times more likely to be admitted to hospital as a result of family violence than non-Indigenous females, and Indigenous males 23 times more likely than non-Indigenous males.⁶¹

An increase in the rate of sexual offences recorded by police was also observed across Victoria and Lower Hume from 2012 to 2016, with a significantly higher increase experienced within Murrindindi Shire. As a result police recorded incidents of sexual assault were higher per population across both Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires in 2016 when compared to Victoria.¹⁹

The total number of criminal offences per population was 23% higher than state average across Mitchell Shire in 2017. The top offences recorded in Mitchell Shire in 2017 were theft, breaches of orders and assault. The crime rate in Murrindindi Shire remained below the state average despite an increase from 2013 to 2017. Theft, burglary/break and enter and assault were the most commonly reported offences in Murrindindi during 2017. The victimisation rate also increased over the past four years, while Indigenous Australians were 2.8 times more likely to be a victim of physical or threatened violence than non-Indigenous Australians in 2014/15.^{19, 61}

In 2012/13 hospital admissions due to injury, poisoning and other external causes remained higher than state average across Lower Hume. Males were more likely than females to be admitted to hospital as a result of injury, poisoning or other external factors. Indigenous Australians were hospitalised for assault at 14 times the rate of non-Indigenous Australians with Indigenous females 30 times more likely than non-Indigenous females, and Indigenous males 9 times as likely as non-Indigenous males.^{9, 61}

Murrindindi residents were slightly more likely than people living in Mitchell Shire to feel safe walking alone during the day. Both Mitchell and Murrindindi populations were more likely to feel safe walking alone after dark when compared to the average across Victoria. Indigenous females were less likely to feel safe walking alone in their local area after dark (51%).^{7, 61}

Table 10: Summary of violence and abuse indicators

	Mitchell	Murrindindi	Goulburn & Ovens Murray region	Victoria
Child abuse rate# (2010/11)	10	6	**	7
Family violence rate## (2016/17)	2,270	1,004	1,197	1,262
Proportion of family violence incidents where children and young people were involved as other parties (2014/15)	41%	36%	**	29%^^^
Sexual offence rate## (2016)	341	540	240^	214
Hospital admissions due to injury & other external factors## (2012/13)	2,598	2,781	**	2,279
% feel safe walking alone after dark (2015)	64%	73%	**	55%
% feel safe walking alone down their street after dark (2014)	66%	81%	69%	61%
Offence rate## (2017)	11,398	5,119	**	8,825
Victimisation rate## (2017)	5,487	3,040	**	5,423

Source: Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, 2017. Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System, 2017. Public Health Information Development Social Health Atlas, 2017. Vichealth Indicators Survey, 2015. Victorian Population Health Survey, 2014. #per 1,000 population. ## per 100,000 population. ^Eastern region. ^^2016/17. **Not available.

Outcome 2.1

Victorians live free from abuse and violence



Indicator 2.1.1: Reduce prevalence and impact of abuse and neglect of children



The rate of substantiated child abuse was higher than state average within Mitchell Shire in 2011.

Although below state average the rate of substantiated child abuse increased by a larger proportion within Murrindindi from 2010-2011.



The rate of substantiated child protection notifications was 7 times more likely for Indigenous children when compared to non-Indigenous children.

Indigenous children in out of home care in Victoria are less likely to be placed with an Indigenous caregiver when compared to the national average.



Indicator 2.1.2: Reduce prevalence and impact of family violence

From 2012-2017, Police recording of family violence incidents increased by:

35% Mitchell Shire **20%** Murrindindi Shire **19%** across Victoria



The rate of family violence incidents recorded by police was 44% higher than state average in Mitchell Shire in 2017.



Over one third of family violence incidents recorded by police across Lower Hume had children or young people involved as other parties.

Outcome 2.1

Victorians live free from abuse and violence



Indicator 2.1.3: Increase community safety



A larger increase in the sexual offence rate was observed across Lower Hume from 2012 to 2016, resulting in a rate double that of the Victorian average in Murrindindi.



Males were more likely to be admitted to hospital for injury, poisoning or other external factors in 2012/13.



Indigenous Australians were hospitalised for assault at 14 times the rate of non-Indigenous Australians.

Indigenous females were 32 times more likely than non-Indigenous females to be hospitalised due to family violence in 2014/15, and Indigenous males were 23 times more likely than non-Indigenous males.



73% of adults in Murrindindi Shire felt safe walking alone after dark compared to 64% in Mitchell and 55% across Victoria.



Mitchell Shire exceeded state average offence rate in 2017.



Theft was the most common offence recorded across Mitchell, Murrindindi and Victoria.

Outcome 2.2: Victorians have suitable and stable housing

Indicator 2.2.1: Decrease homelessness

2.2.1.1 Proportion of people who met the statistical definition of homelessness

Adequate housing meets peoples' essential needs for shelter, security and privacy. Shelter is recognised throughout the world as a basic human right. Homelessness is one of the most potent examples of disadvantage in the community, and one of the most important markers of social exclusion.²³

Estimates of homelessness derived from the 2016 Census identified that approximately 106 people living within Mitchell Shire and 36 people in Murrindindi Shire were thought to be homeless. The number of people estimated to be homeless within Seymour reduced from 70 in 2011 to 41 in 2016, although predictions for the surrounding Seymour Region increased from 4 in 2011 to 26 in 2016 (Table 11, Figure 7).

Characteristics of the homeless population across Australia:

- 58% males, 42% females.
- Highest rate of homelessness in the 19-24 age range, 16% aged 65-74.
- 44% is people living in severely overcrowded dwellings.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 20% of the homeless population.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

In 2014/15, Indigenous Australians were more than twice as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to have experienced homelessness (29% compared with 13%) and 41% of Indigenous Australians had experienced not having a permanent place to live. The main reasons were family/friend/relationship problems (17%) and tight housing/rental market/not enough housing (7%). Indigenous Australians accounted for 28% of the homeless population in 2011 (based on the ABS definition of homelessness). Three-quarters of Indigenous homelessness is due to living in severely crowded dwellings while the remainder includes people living in supported accommodation for the homeless (12%); people in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out (6%); and people staying temporarily in other households (4%). In 2011, 42% of Indigenous homeless people were under 18 years.⁶¹

In 2014/15, 24% of those accessing specialist homelessness services were Indigenous Australians. The rate of service use for Indigenous clients was 8.7 times the non-Indigenous rate (693 compared with 80 per 10,000). The majority of Indigenous clients were women (62%) and almost a quarter (23%) of all Indigenous clients were children aged 0–9 years. Domestic/family violence was the main reason (24%) for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients seeking specialist homelessness services. Indigenous clients (34%) were more likely than non-Indigenous clients (24%) to be presenting as a single person with children.⁶¹

In 2014/15, 21% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons were living in overcrowded households compared with 6% of non-Indigenous Australians; overcrowding was more common in remote areas. 29% of Indigenous adults lived in homes that were owned or being purchased by a household member (referred to here as home owners). This comprised 10% who owned their homes outright and 19% with a mortgage. A further 35% lived in a property rented through social housing (26% in non-remote areas); and 32% lived in private rentals. In contrast, 69% of non-Indigenous adults were home owners.⁶¹

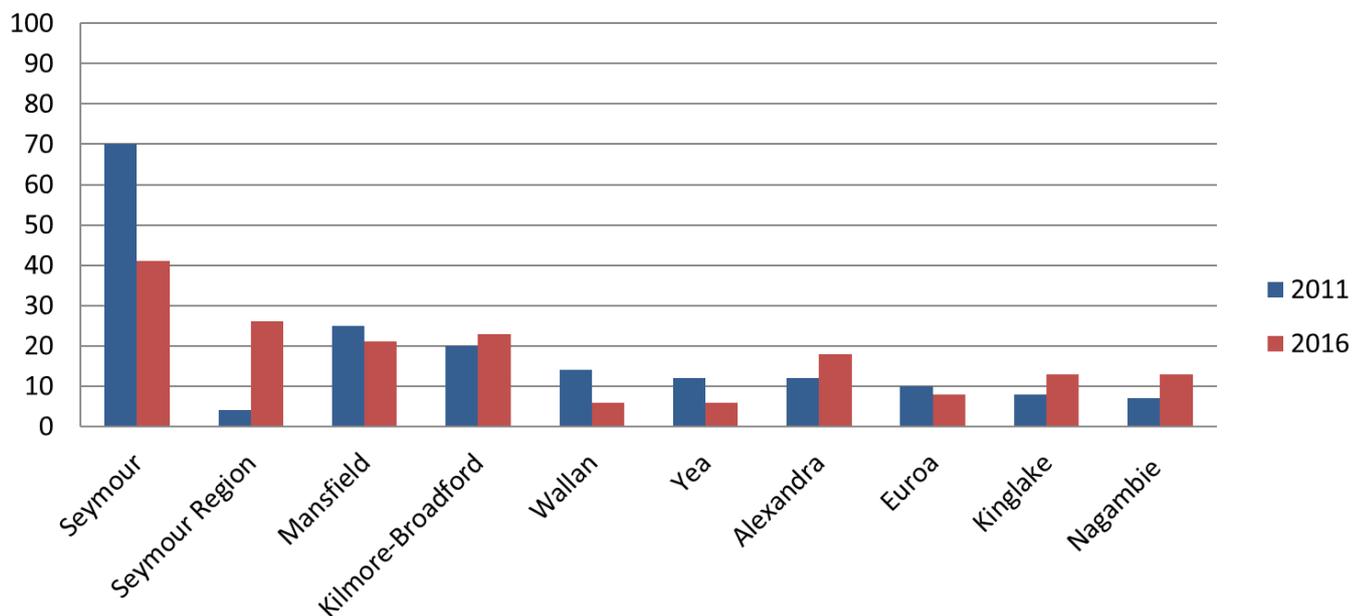
In 2014/15, around one-quarter (26%) of Indigenous households were living in dwellings with major structural problems (including problems such as sinking/moving foundations, sagging floors, wood rot/termite damage and roof defects) compared to 14% of non-Indigenous households.⁶¹

Table 11: Estimated homelessness, 2011 & 2016

	2011	2016
Alexandra	12	18
Euroa	10	8
Kilmore-Broadford	20	23
Mansfield	25	21
Nagambie	7	13
Seymour	70	41
Seymour Region	4	26
Upper Yarra Valley	0	0
Yea	12	6
Upper Goulburn Valley Total	160	163
Kinglake	8	13
Wallan	14	6

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing: estimating homelessness, 2011 & 2016

Figure 7: Estimated homelessness across the Upper Goulburn Valley catchment, 2011 & 2016



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing: estimating homelessness, 2011 & 2016

Social housing

Social housing includes short and long-term rental housing that are owned and run by the government or not-for-profit organisations. Social housing includes public housing and community housing. Public housing is for people on low incomes who have experienced homelessness, family violence or have other special needs. Community housing provides specialised housing depending on the needs and preferences of the family or individual e.g. people with a disability, women, singles and older people.

The Victorian Housing Register consists of applications for both public and community housing across two categories:

Priority access, for people

- Who are homeless and receiving support
- Are escaping or have escaped family violence
- With a disability or significant support needs
- With special housing needs

Register of interest, for all eligible applicants to register their interest in social housing. Eligibility for social housing includes people who live in Victoria and:

- Are an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- Don't earn or own more than the current social housing income and assets limits
- Don't own or part-own a property.⁵³

Table 12: Public housing waiting list Goulburn (Seymour) region, 2017

	Priority access	Register of interest	Total
March 2017	53	166	219
June 2017	55	166	221

Source: DHHS, Social Housing, 2017.

Insecure housing

People that live in caravans, cabins, houseboats, tents, sleepers out and other improvised homes are considered to be living in insecure housing. Across Victoria from 2011 to 2016 the proportion of people living in insecure housing reduced to 0.1% living in caravans, cabins and houseboats and 0.01% living in improvised homes, tents and sleepers out. The rate of people within Mitchell Shire living in caravans, cabins and houseboats was similar to state average, although did not see a decline from 2011 to 2016. However, the proportion of people living in improvised homes, tents and sleepers outs reduced from 0.2% in 2011 to 0.02% in 2016. The proportion of people experiencing insecure housing was significantly higher in Murrindindi Shire in 2016 despite a slight reduction from 2011. In 2016 1.3% of people living in Murrindindi Shire lived in a caravan, cabin or houseboat and a further 0.4% lived in an improvised home, tent or sleepers out.^{1, 2}

Table 13: Insecure housing, 2011-2016

	Mitchell		Murrindindi		Victoria	
	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016
Caravan, cabin, houseboat	0.30%	0.30%	1.70%	1.30%	0.20%	0.10%
Improvised home, tent, sleepers out	0.20%	0.02%	0.60%	0.40%	0.02%	0.01%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2011 & 2016.



Summary Outcome 2.2: Victorians have suitable and stable housing

Homeless estimates identify 142 people within Lower Hume were thought to be homeless in 2016. Seymour and the Seymour Region had a high proportion of homelessness for the catchment. Furthermore, a total of 219 people across the Goulburn (Seymour) region were on the waiting list for social housing as at June 2017, of which 53 were classified as priority access. The proportion of people living in insecure housing was significantly higher in Murrindindi shire when compared to state average in 2011 and 2016. All of these people represent an extremely vulnerable population and are likely to have poor health outcomes.

Outcome 2.2

Victorians have suitable and stable housing



Indicator 2.2.1: Decrease homelessness

142 people were estimated to be homeless in 2016 across Lower Hume catchment, the majority of which was within Seymour and the Seymour Region.

 **1/4** of homelessness across the catchment was within Lower Hume, the majority of which was within Seymour.

 Indigenous Australians are more than twice as likely to experience homelessness as non-Indigenous Australians.

 **1/4** of people accessing specialist homelessness services in 2014/15 were Indigenous.

 Domestic violence is the most common reason for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians accessing specialist homeless services.

 **219** people were on the waiting list for social housing in 2017.

 **1.7%** of people in Murrindindi Shire were living in insecure housing, compared to **0.32%** across Mitchell Shire and **0.11%** throughout Victoria.

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