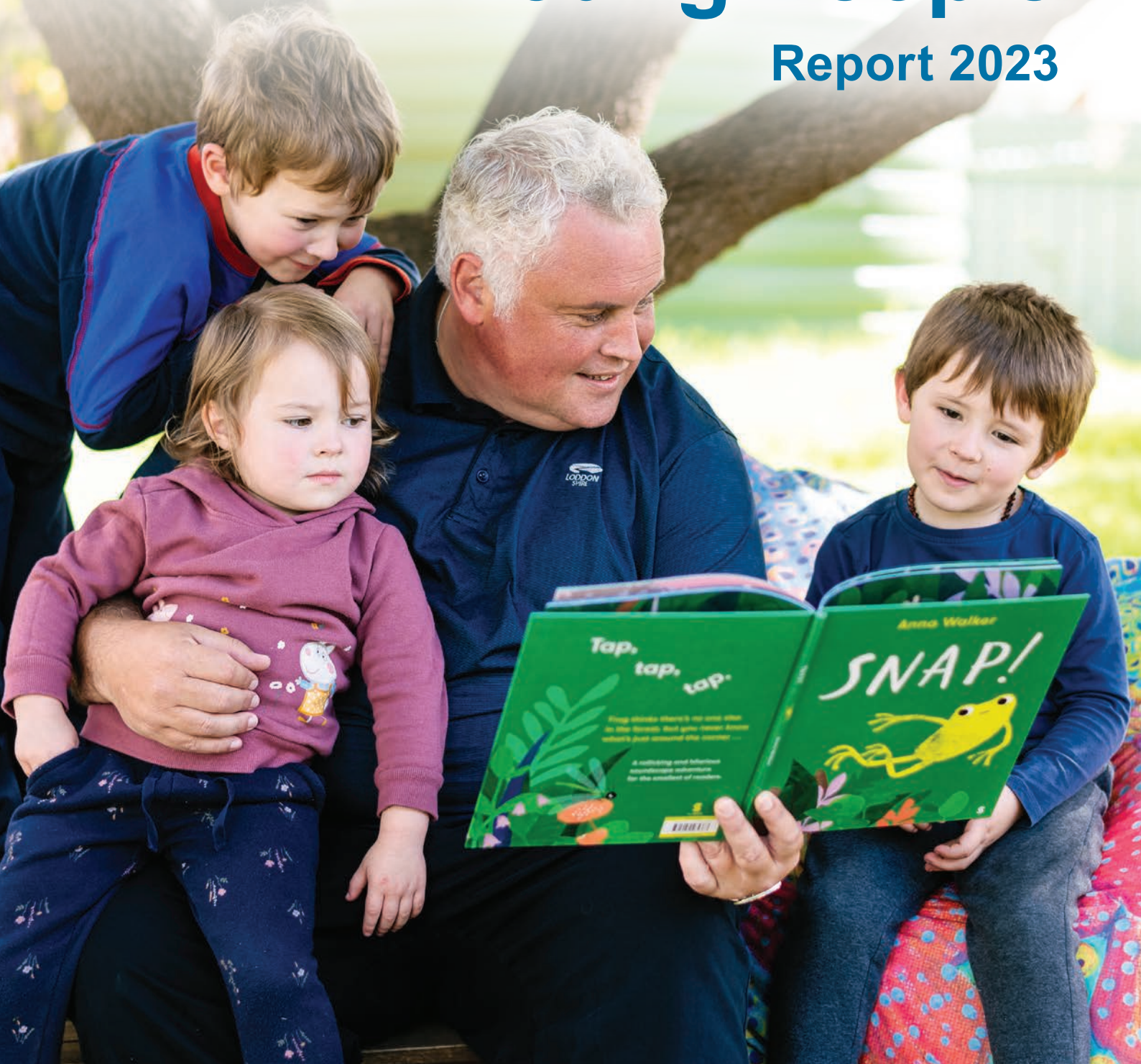




# The State of Loddon's Children and Young People Report 2023



# Acknowledgement of Country

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.





Bridgewater Run for Resilience 2023

*An excellent measure of how a community is doing is whether children and young people's wellbeing is improving because if it is not, it is hard to argue that life overall in that community is getting better.*

Eckersley, R. 2008

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*Local Logic Place*

*October 2023*

*[www.locallogicplace.com.au](http://www.locallogicplace.com.au)*



# Executive Summary

The State of Loddon's Children and Young People Report 2023 presents 74 data indicators related to the health and wellbeing, learning and participation of children and young people aged 0-24 years. The report highlights positive gains over time and areas of decline where greater focus and partnership is required.

## Where we are doing well

Compared to the Victorian average, fewer children/young people in the Loddon Shire are:

- absent from school in years 3, 6, 11, 12
- have parents that are concerned about their oral health on school entry

Also positively, more children/ young people in the Loddon Shire compared to Victoria are:

- living in homes with a motor vehicle
- receiving antenatal care within the first 10 weeks of their pregnancy
- achieving national standards in numeracy in years 5
- achieving national standards in literacy in years 3
- developmentally on track with language and cognitive skills
- developmentally on track with communication skills and general knowledge
- seen by an optometrist prior to school entry



## Areas for improvement

Compared to the Victorian average, more children/young people in the Loddon Shire are:

- experiencing family violence
- living in single parent homes (children aged under 15 years)
- living in jobless families
- living in families where the mother has low educational attainment
- living in households with health care cards
- being bullied in years 5-6
- being bullied in years 7-9
- reported to have emotional or behavioural difficulties at school entry
- reported to have high levels of family stress in the month prior to school entry
- reported to have one or more concerns with their speech and language prior to entry to school
- absent from school in years prep, 7, 9
- leaving school at year 10 or below, or not going to school (per 100 people aged 15 and older)

Also, compared to the Victorian average fewer children/young people in the Loddon Shire are:

- developmentally on track with social competence
- developmentally on track with physical health and wellbeing
- developmentally on track with emotional maturity
- attending kindergarten
- seen by a dentist prior to school entry
- actively read to/encouraged in their reading at home
- actively supported by their parent(s)/ caregiver(s) to support their learning at school
- participating in higher education after leaving secondary school
- engaged full time in secondary school at age 16
- achieving national standards in literacy in years 5, 7, 9
- achieving national standards in numeracy in year 3
- learning or earning at ages 15-24

The data contained in the State of Loddon's Children and Young People report forms a critical component of planning and advocacy conversations across our communities.

In presenting these indicators we acknowledge that numbers capture just one part of the unique story of our community. Examples, local knowledge and anecdotal data should also be considered in these planning conversations.



# What are the Time Trends Saying?

Time trend data has highlighted areas where the Loddon Shire is faring better, or less favourably compared to Victoria, and the data is improving over time and areas where Loddon Shire is faring better or less favourably than Victoria, and the data is worsening over time.

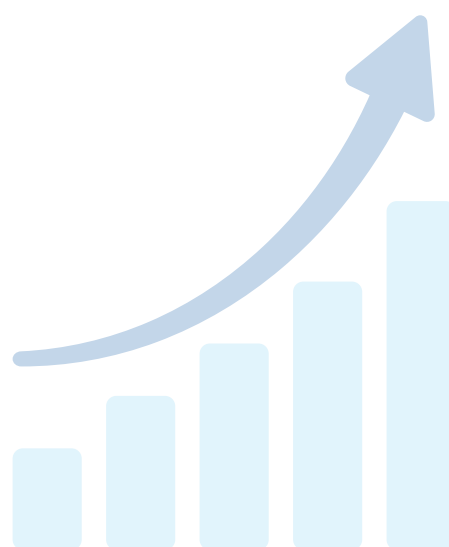
## Time trends improving in the following data

Loddon Shire is faring **better** than Victoria and time trends are **improving**:

- dwellings with no motor vehicle (2006-2021)
- proportion of women who did not attend antenatal care within the first 10 weeks (2016-2019)
- proportion of children at school whose parents are concerned about their oral health (2017-2021)
- average number of days absent per FTE Student - Year 3 (2015-2019)
- average number of days absent per FTE Student - Year 6 (2015-2019)
- average number of days absent per FTE Student - Year 11 (2015-2019)
- proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in literacy (Year 3) (2015-2019)
- proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in numeracy (Year 5) (2015-2019)

Loddon Shire is faring **the same** compared to Victoria, but time trends are **improving**:

- child protection substantiations\* per 1,000 eligible population, aged 0-17 years (2016-2023)
- children in out of home care\* per 1000 children aged 0-17 years (2016-2023)
- children vulnerable on two or more domains -AEDC (2012-2021)
- proportion of children at school entry reported to be in excellent or very good health (2017-2021)



Loddon Shire is faring **less favourably** than Victoria, but time trends are **improving** :

- single parent families with children less than 15 years (2006-2021)
- jobless families with children aged less than 15 years (2006-2021)
- children in families where the mother has low educational attainment (2006-2021)
- health care card holders (2006-2021)
- emotional maturity, developmentally on track-AEDC (2012-2021)
- proportion of children whose parents report one or more concerns with child speech and language on entry to school (2017-2021)
- smoking during pregnancy (2012-2019)
- proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in literacy (Year 7) (2015-2019)
- proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in numeracy (Year 3) (2015-2019)
- people who left school at Year 10 or below, or did not go to school (2011-2021)
- learning or Earning at ages 15 to 24\* (2016-2021)



Wedderburn Playgroup. Image: Goldfields Library Corporation



## Time trends worsening in the following:

Loddon Shire is faring **better** than Victoria, but time trends are **worsening**:

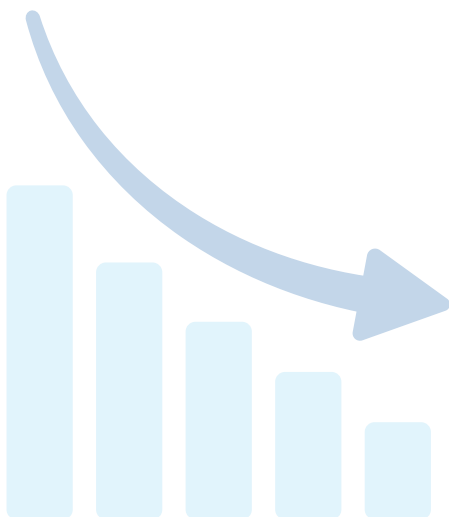
- language and cognitive skills, developmentally on track-AEDC (2012-2021)
- communication skills and general knowledge, developmentally on track-AEDC (2012-2021)
- proportion of children at school entry reported to have been seen by an optometrist in the year before entry to school (2017-2021)
- average number of days absent per FTE Student - Year 12 (2015-2019)

Loddon Shire is faring the **the same** compared to Victoria, but time trends are **worsening**:

- child is making good progress in adapting to the structure and learning environment of the school (2015-2021)
- proportion of children at school entry reported to have been seen by a paediatrician in the past year (2017-2021)
- low birth weight babies (2012-2019)

Loddon Shire is faring **less favourably** than Victoria, and time trends are **variable**:

- kindergarten participation rate (2016-2022)
- family violence incident rate per 100,000 population (2017-2022)



Loddon Shire is faring **less favourably** than Victoria, and time trends are **worsening**:

- proportion of children being bullied between years 5-6 (2014-2018)
- proportion of children being bullied between years 7-9 (2014-2018)
- social competence, developmentally on track-AEDC (2012-2021)
- physical health and wellbeing-AEDC (2012-2021)
- proportion of children at school entry reported to have been seen by a dentist in the past year (2017-2021)
- children at high risk of behavioural and emotional problems (2016-2020)
- proportion of children at school entry whose parents report high levels\* of family stress in the past month (2016-2020)
- children whose parent(s)/caregiver(s) are actively engaged with the school in supporting their child's learning (2015-2021)
- children who are regularly read to/encouraged in their reading at home (2015-2021)
- average number of days absent per FTE Student - PREP (2015-2019)
- average number of days absent per FTE Student - Year 7 (2015-2019)
- average number of days absent per FTE Student - Year 9 (2015-2019)
- proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in literacy (Year 5) (2015-2019)
- proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in literacy (Year 9) (2015-2019)
- full-time participation in secondary school education at age 16 (2006-2021)
- school leaver participation in higher education (2013-2021)

# Data Gaps

Data for the Loddon Shire could not be sourced for some domains of this report. The data limitations were experienced for a range of reasons:

- data unavailable at a local level
- data not current
- data unavailable due to confidentiality/small numbers recorded; and
- data is not systematically collected.

Good policy and planning relies on good data. To plan effective place based interventions, communities need a deeper understanding of the issues facing their children, young people and families.



*Kinder children attending a performance.*

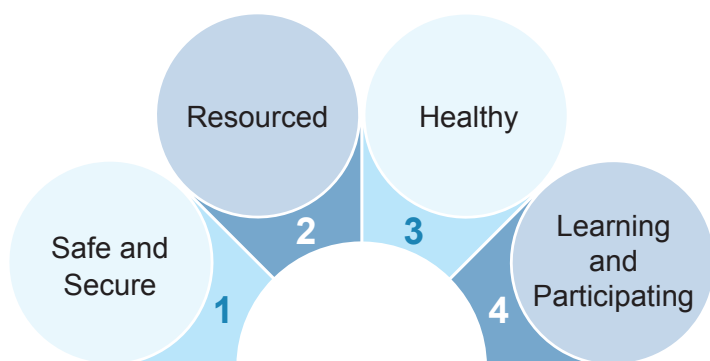
# Introduction

The State of Loddon's Children and Young People Report pulls together a total of seventy-four data indicators relating to the health and wellbeing of children and young people aged 0-24 years.

Understanding local data and trends over time is critical for communities as they plan for the best possible future for children, youth and families. Good and timely data at an LGA level is critical for:

- local decision making
- problem solving
- improving outcomes, processes and services; and
- measuring progress.

The four key domain areas of this report have been drawn on from ARACY's Nest Wellbeing Framework:



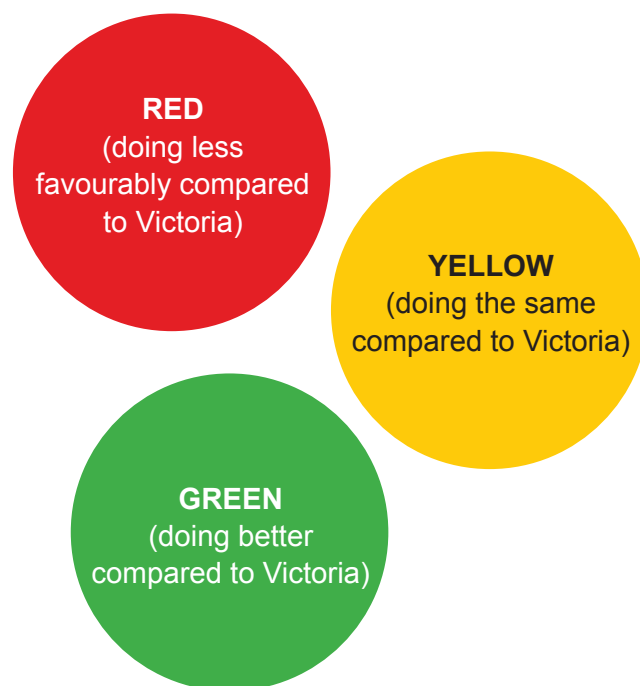
*The Nest is ARACY's wellbeing framework for children and young people aged 0 to 24 years. It's a way of thinking about the whole child in the context of their daily lives, viewing wellbeing in a way that brings together the different elements a child or young person needs in order to thrive.*

ARACY

## Report Format

Data is provided for each indicator for the Loddon Shire Local Government Area (LGA) level and at a Victorian level (where available).

The most recent Loddon Shire data available is provided alongside the Victorian rate (where available) with shading:



Wherever possible a time trend for Loddon Shire data has been provided to assist with understanding what is happening for children and young people and their families over time. The words 'time trend' shaded either green (doing better over time), yellow (variable/largely unchanged) or red (doing less favourably over time) to present the nature of the trend.

All data that is available in this report is either available publicly, or permission has been sought for its use.

# Our Community

The Loddon Shire is a municipality located within the Victorian food bowl. The Shire is 200km north of Melbourne and is within proximity to the major town centres of Bendigo, Kerang and Echuca, making it the perfect location to live or visit. Covering 6,696 km<sup>2</sup>, the Shire has a population of 7,759 (Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, 2021).

The municipality is a 'community of communities', comprising many small towns dispersed throughout the Shire including the towns of Bridgewater, Inglewood, Wedderburn, Korong Vale, Dingee, Mitiamo, Serpentine, Newbridge, Tarnagulla, Laanecoorie, Eddington, Boort, Pyramid Hill and other surrounding towns and communities. These townships are diverse but connected by our Council, which strengthens them as a whole.

## Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The 2021 Census revealed that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 2.2% of the population, this has increased since the 2016 Census (1.9%). This double that of the Victorian average (1%). At the time of the 2021 Census the median age for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people living in Loddon Shire was 25 years of age, significantly lower than the median age for the whole population (51 years of age).



## Country of Birth

At the time of the 2021 Census the country of birth of parents for Loddon (Local Government Area) was:

70.6% of people had both parents born in Australia (71.9% in 2016)

11.4% of people had both parents born overseas (10.1% in 2016)

3.8% had their father only born overseas and (3.7% in 2016)

2.9% had their mother only born overseas (2.5% in 2016)

Compared to 2016 there are less residents who had both parents born in Australia, showing a slight growth in cultural diversity.



## Family Composition

The ABS Census captured that in 2021 the composition of families in Loddon Shire were:

- 34% couple family with children (Vic 37.6%)
- 12.6% one parent family (Vic 15.2%)
- 1.4% 'other' family (Vic 1.7%)
- 51.8% couple family without children (Vic 37.6%)
- 26.1% of lone parents were male (Vic 19.1%)
- 76.3% of lone parents were females (Vic 80.9%)

Family Type	2011	2016	2021
Couple family with children	35%	33.8%	34%
One parent family	12.1%	12.7%	12.6%
Lone parent (female)	75%	72.7%	76.3%
Lone parent (male)	25%	27.3%	26.1%
Number of one parent families with children under 15 years	21.5%	20.1%	19.3%

The number of one parent families with children under 15 years and the number of couple family with children has shown a slight decrease between 2011-2021.

# Disadvantage

According to the ABS Census, 'Socio-economic advantage and disadvantage can be defined as people's access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society'.

The ABS captures the features of people living in the most advantaged and disadvantaged areas of Australia. It found that, on average, people in the most advantaged areas were middle aged with high levels of education, had high incomes and worked in skilled occupations. People living in the most disadvantaged LGA's on average were young, had high levels of housing rentals, had low rental costs and lower incomes (Source: ABS, SEIFA 2016).

*Low income can impact the safety of a child's environment, the quality and stability of their care, and the provision of appropriate housing, heating and clothing.*

(AIHW 2012; Warren 2017).



## Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) provides summary measures derived from the ABS Census of Population and Housing to gauge different aspects of socio-economic conditions by geographic area. Within SEIFA the ABS has developed four indexes to allow ranking of regions and areas, providing a method of determining the level of social and economic well-being in each region. Each of these indexes summarises different aspects of the socio-economic conditions of people living in an area and each is based upon a different set of social and economic information from the Census. The indexes are:

- 1 Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD)
- 2 Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD)
- 3 Index of Economic Resources (IER)
- 4 Index of Education and Occupation (IEO)

The first of these, the IRSD (sometimes noted as the IRSED), is one of the most commonly used SEIFA measures, and is the measure applied in this report. The IRSD focuses primarily on disadvantage, and is derived from Census variables, including low income, low educational attainment, unemployment, and dwellings without motor vehicles.

A lower score indicates that an area is relatively disadvantaged compared to an area with a higher score. All areas are then ordered from the lowest to highest score, then the area with the lowest score is given a rank of 1, the area with the second lowest score is given a rank of 2 and so on.

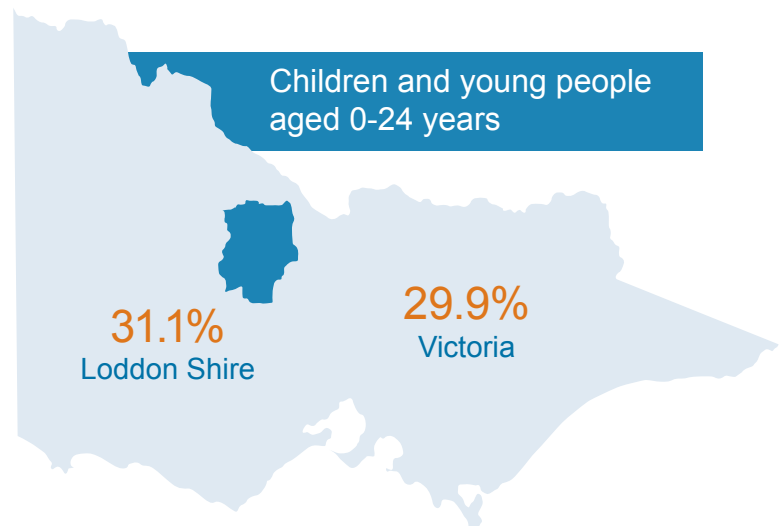
For example, for the 79 Victorian LGAs there are 79 ‘ranks’. **Review of the 2021 Census data indicates Loddon Shire is ranked 11, i.e. is the 11th most disadvantaged LGA within Victoria.**

Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD)						
Local Government Area	LGA Measure 2011	Rank among LGAs	LGA Measure 2016	Rank among LGAs	LGA Measure 2021	Rank among LGAs
<b>Loddon</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>942</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>948</b>	<b>11</b>

Whilst Loddon Shire’s IRSD LGA ranking has **improved**, the socio-economic score (measure) has only increased slightly between 2011-2021.

# Our Children & Young People

At the time of the 2021 ABS Census children and young people aged 0-24 years made up 31.3% of the Loddon Shire population, the same age cohort represented 29.9% of the Victoria population.



## Population

When comparing ABS Census data from 2011-2021 the Loddon Shire shows a declining 0-24 year population over time. Victoria in Future 2023 predicts continued decline across all under 25 age groups into 2036 except for the 0-4 year age group which is predicted to grow.

Age	2011	2016	2021	2036
0-4 years	408	335	317	370
5-9 years	444	405	373	350
10-14 years	436	451	469	370
15-19 years	404	413	387	330
20-24 years	195	230	264	250

(Source: ABS Census 2011, 2016, 2021, Victoria in Future 2023)

The under 25 age group has shown a decline in numbers in 2021 except for the 10-14 year and 20-24 year age groups which have shown an increase in 2021 compared to the 2011 and 2016 Census.

## Total Number of Birth Notifications

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
47	51	62	56	71	55

Source: Loddon Shire Council Maternal and Child Health Data



Domain

1

# Safe & Secure



Water fun at Little Lake Boort

Evidence has shown that children's access to supports and protection during the early years in particular will shape their outcomes as an individual and an adult (Moore, Arefadib, Deery, & West, 2017).

Research highlights the negative impacts of dysfunctional relationships. Parent stress, separation, divorce, and family conflict and violence (Kaspiew et al, 2017, OECD, 2019).

When a child is exposed to family violence along with multiple risk factors, such as socioeconomic disadvantage, parental mental ill health, and parental substance abuse, more extreme negative outcomes are likely (Casey et al. 2009; Campo 2015; Fergusson et al. 2006; Fulu et al. 2013).

Evidence also suggests that a strong mother-child relationship may be protective against the impact of domestic family violence (Buchanan, 2008; Miller-Graff, Cater, Howell, & Graham-Bermann, 2016).

Exposure to family violence alone does not mean a child will necessarily experience negative outcomes. With the right support, children exposed to family violence may have increased resilience later in life (Alaggia & Donohue 2018; Campo 2015; Jaffe et al. 2012).

Strengths-based practice, emphasising the assets and strengths within families, is a common strategy used to build and enhance protective factors and promote quality communication and engagement with families (Bromfield et al., 2012).

*Although what constitutes a family varies widely, the benefits of being part of a strong, stable and positive family are universal.*

AIHW, 2022

## Child protection substantiations\* per 1,000 eligible population, aged 0-17 years

A substantiation means there is sufficient reason (after an investigation) to believe the child has been, is being, or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	12.1 Per 1,000 eligible population <b>Victoria 2022/2023</b>	12.7 Per 1,000 eligible population <b>Loddon 2022/2023</b>
Loddon	34.1	22.5	23.9	6.4	12.7		

(Department of Families Fairness and Housing, 2023 - accessed 09/10/2023)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates of child protection substantiations between 2018-2023.

## Children in out of home care\* per 1000 children aged 0-17 years

Out-of-home care is overnight care for children aged under 18 who are unable to live with their families due to child safety concerns. \*Rates provided are as at June 30 of each year.

	30 June 2019	30 June 2020	30 June 2021	30 June 2022	30 June 2023	9.1 Per 1000 children aged 0-17 years <b>Victoria 30 June 2023</b>	9.9 Per 1000 children aged 0-17 years <b>Loddon 30 June 2023</b>
Loddon	17.7	19.1	15.7	14.1	9.9		

(Department of Families Fairness and Housing, 2023- accessed 09/10/2023)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates of children in out of home care between 2019-2023.

## Recorded family violence incidents in the Loddon Shire

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	121 Recorded incidents <b>Loddon Shire (2021/2022)</b>
Loddon Shire	91	120	105	137	121	

(Source: Crime Statistics Agency Victoria)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - variable rates of recorded family violence incidents between 2017/18 - 2021/22.

## Family violence incident rate per 100,000 population

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	1,373.5 Per 100,000 <b>Victoria 2021/2022</b>	1,567.7 Per 100,000 <b>Loddon Shire 2022</b>
Loddon Shire	1,198.2	1,574.8	1376.6	1,779.2	1,567.7		

(Source: Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - variable rates of family violence incidents per 100,000 people between 2017/18 - 2021/22.

## Family violence, affected family member present 0-17 years

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Loddon Shire	16	<3	11	13	9	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>Affected Family Members Aged 0-17 years</p> <p><b>Loddon Shire (2022)</b></p>

(Source: Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing number of family violence incidents where children aged 0-17 years were present between 2018-2022.

## Family violence, affected family member present 18-24 years

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Loddon Shire	16	12	14	7	13	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>Affected Family Members Aged 18-24 years</p> <p><b>Loddon Shire (2022)</b></p>

(Source: Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing number of family violence incidents where young people aged 18-24 years were present between 2018-2022.

## Victim Reports Aged 0-24 years

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Loddon Shire	28	23	25	18	42	<p><b>42</b></p> <p>Victim Reports Aged 0-24 years</p> <p><b>Loddon Shire (2022)</b></p>

(Source: Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates of victim reports aged 0-24 years between 2018-2022. Whilst the overall trend across years was declining it is important to note the reports doubling in 2022 compared to the year before.

## Alleged Offender Incidents Aged 10-17 years

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Loddon Shire	10	12	8	7	19	<b>19</b> Alleged Offender Incidents Aged 10-17 years <b>Loddon Shire (2022)</b>

(Source: Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates of alleged offender incidents by children aged 0-17 years between 2018-2022.

## Alleged Offender Incidents Aged 18-24 years

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Loddon Shire	36	20	39	20	14	<b>14</b> Alleged Offender Incidents Aged 18-24 years <b>Loddon Shire (2022)</b>

(Source: Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates of alleged offender incidents by young people aged 18-24 years between 2018-2022.

## Proportion of children at school entry whose parents report an alcohol or drug related problem in the family

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
Loddon Shire	2.3%	7.0%	5.6%	3.9%	NDP	<b>3.5%</b> <b>Victoria 2021</b>	NDP NDP (NDP, less than 5) <b>Loddon Shire 2022</b>

(Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ), Department of Education and Training)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates between 2017 and 2021 of proportion of children at school entry whose parents report a family history of alcohol or drug related problems.



## Children and young people are safe in their community

Research demonstrates the important influence the local environment has on the capacity of families to raise their children in ways that promote good developmental outcomes (Goldfeld S, Woolcock G, Katz I, Tanton R, Brinkman S, O'Connor E, et al. 2015).

Healthy neighbourhoods generally involve quality housing, services, green spaces, and strong social connections. High neighbourhood quality is associated with a wide range of positive child outcomes, including positive physical and mental health, higher educational attainment, and lower rates of child maltreatment and youth justice involvement (Dupere et al. 2010; Edwards & Bromfield 2010; Mingh et al. 2017; Webb et al. 2017; White & Cunneen 2015).

Those living in public housing developments are more likely to be exposed to more crime, high unemployment, or other social issues within a concentrated area (Weatherburn D, Lind B, Ku S. , 1999).

Early involvement in crime and delinquency is an important risk factor for life-course persistent offending (Loeber & Farrington, 2000).

Perceived crime in the neighbourhood may contribute to parental perceptions of their surroundings, and in turn limit interaction and use of public space (Evans G, Ferguson K. 2011).

Children's personal perceptions of safety and their behaviour can also be influenced by neighbourhood safety (Goldfeld et al. 2017; Queensland Child and Family Commission 2018).

## Crime reported incidents where the victim was a child or young person aged between 0-24 years

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Loddon Shire	28	23	25	18	42

**42**

Victim Reports  
Aged 0-24 years  
**Loddon Shire  
(2022)**

(Source: Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates of victim reports aged 0-24 years between 2018-2022. Whilst the overall trend across years was declining it is important to note the reports doubling in 2022 compared to the year before.

## Crime reported incidents where the alleged offender was a child or young person aged between 0-17 years

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Loddon Shire	10	12	8	7	19

**19**

Alleged Offender  
Incidents Aged  
10-17 years  
**Loddon Shire  
(2022)**

(Source: Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates of alleged offender incidents by children aged 0-17 years between 2018-2022.

## Crime reported incidents where the alleged offender was a child or young person aged between 18-24 years

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Loddon Shire	36	20	39	20	14

**14**

Alleged Offender  
Incidents Aged  
18-24 years  
**Loddon Shire  
(2022)**

(Source: Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates of alleged offender incidents by young people aged 18-24 years between 2018-2022.

## Children and young people are secure at school

Research suggests that strong and supportive relationships with family and friends tend to reinforce and contribute to children and young people's sense of positive wellbeing, with experiences such as bullying, exclusion and conflict having the opposite effect (Boyden, J. and Mann, G. 2005).

Bullying can have substantial impacts on victims, perpetrators and witnesses, as well as the broader social environment (ReachOut Australia 2017; Rigby & Johnson 2016).

Australian research indicates that bullying tends to peak during the early to middle primary years, and again just prior to the transition to secondary school (Slee, P.T. & Skrzypiec, G. 2016).

Bullying, including cyber bullying, has a significant impact on school attendance (Reid 2010; Stone and Stone 2011).

The evidence has shown that bullying is more common among children:

- with disability
- from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, or children who have intersex variations (Australian Education Authorities 2019; Rigby & Johnson 2016).

Research indicates that children's social engagement and wellbeing in the primary grades can establish patterns of school engagement and motivation that have long-term consequences for students' learning (Hamre & Pianta 2001).

Australian principals identified that addressing bullying is critical to ensure a safe school climate (Mills et al. 2019).



## Proportion of children who report being bullied years 5 & 6 combined

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
Loddon Shire	20.7%	30.2%	13.2%	39.2%	39.6%	15.9% <b>Victoria 2018</b>	39.6% <b>Loddon Shire 2018</b>

(Source: Student Attitudes to School Survey, Department of Education and Training)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates of children who report being bullied in years 5 & 6 combined from 2014-2018.

## Proportion of children who report being bullied years 7 to 9

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
Loddon Shire	18.0%	21.8%	13.9%	29.8%	24.0%	17.5% <b>Victoria 2018</b>	24.0% <b>Loddon Shire 2018</b>

(Source: Student Attitudes to School Survey, Department of Education and Training)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates of children who report being bullied between years 7-9 from 2014-2018.





Domain

2

## Resourced



International evidence has recognised that social inequities in the conditions in which people are born, grow, live and work have a fundamental influence on their health, wellbeing, quality and length of life – the so-called ‘social determinants of health’ (World Health Organisation, 2020).

Family disadvantage is defined as a lack of access to resources enabling a minimum style of living and participation in the society within which one belongs (Capellari & Jenkins, 2007). Growing up in a family receiving social assistance is a marker for compromised long-term development (Weitof et al. 2008).

Low-income households are more likely to be headed by a parent who does not have a partner and/or who shares the care of the child with a parent living in another household; a parent

with low educational attainment; an unemployed parent; a parent in the low-wage market; a divorced parent; or a young parent (Waldfoegel & Washbrook, 2011).

Research has shown that young people aged 18–26 are almost twice as likely to need welfare if their parents have a history of receiving welfare (Cobb-Clark et al. 2017; Select Committee on Intergenerational Welfare Dependence 2019).

AIFS research has shown that children who experienced family, neighbourhood or school disadvantage, or a combination of the three, are likely to have poorer cognitive and social outcomes; and that this effect is stronger the longer that children experience these forms of disadvantage (Warren and Edwards, 2017).

*Reliance on government support is often associated with long-term poverty, social exclusion and other adverse outcomes for recipients and their children.*

Wilkins 2019

# Families Are Financially Secure

## Single parent families with children less than 15 years

	2006	2011	2016	2021	18.2% Victoria 2021	19.3% Loddon Shire 2021
Loddon Shire	7.3%	21.5%	20.1%	19.3%		

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2011, 2016 and 2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates of single parent families with children less than 15 years from 2006-2021.

## Jobless families with children aged less than 15 years

	2006	2011	2016	2021	9.9% Victoria 2021	16.0% Loddon Shire 2021
Loddon Shire	20.1%	19.2%	15.2%	16.0%		

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2011, 2016, 2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates of jobless families with children less than 15 years from 2006-2021.

## Children in families where the mother has low educational attainment

	2016	2021	10.8% Victoria 2021	15.9% Loddon Shire 2021
Loddon Shire	18.0%	15.9%		

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2016, 2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates of children in families where the mother has low educational attainment between 2016-2021.

## \*Percentage of children (aged under 16 years) in low income, welfare-dependent families

	2006	2011	2016	2021	9.3% Victoria 2021	15.5% Loddon Shire 2021
Loddon Shire	27.9%	31.2%	31.7%	15.5%		

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021)

**Time trend** Unavailable due to change in indicator.

- \* Families included are those with children under 16 years.
- \* From 2016– with incomes under \$37,378 p.a. in receipt of the Family Tax Benefit (A) (whether receiving income support payments or not).
- \* From 2021 Families included are those with children under 16 years of age, with the household head not in the workforce, and with incomes under \$28,485 p.a. in receipt of the Family Tax Benefit (A) (whether receiving income support payments or not).

## \*Health Care Card holders

	2011	2016	2021		
Loddon Shire	12.4%	11.0%	9.6%	<b>7.7%</b> <b>Victoria</b> <b>2021</b>	<b>9.6%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2021</b>

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2011, 2016 and 2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing proportions of Health Care Card Holders between 2011-2021.

\* As a percentage of all people aged 0-64 years.

## Dwellings with no motor vehicle

	2006	2011	2016	2021		
Loddon Shire	4.5%	5.3%	4.5%	3.1%	<b>7.5%</b> <b>Victoria</b> <b>2021</b>	<b>3.1%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2021</b>

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2006, 2011, 2016 & 2021)



**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing proportions of dwellings with no motor vehicle between 2006-2021.

## Teenage Birth - Aggregate 2 year rate\* (per 1,000)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		
Loddon Shire	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.56	<b>8.2</b> (Per 1,000) <b>Victoria</b> <b>2020</b>	<b>8.56</b> (Per 1,000) <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2020</b>

(Source/s: (1) Victoria. Department of Health. Consultative Council on Obstetric & Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity (CCOPMM). Deidentified custom report via Safer Care Victoria)

\* The rate equals the number of live births to women younger than 20 years in the two-year period Jan 2019-Dec 2020, by LGA, per 1,000 women aged 13-19 residing in that LGA.

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - rates of live births to women aged under 20 years unchanged between 2016-2020.

## Children and young people are securely housed

Secure housing tenure gives people a sense of autonomy, certainty and control that leads to lower levels of stress and increases residential stability. It has been found to affect the mental health of parents and family stability, which is associated with children attending fewer schools and having better educational performance and rates of school completion (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute [AHURI], 2006).

Preschool and school-aged children experiencing homelessness are more likely to experience mental health problems than housed children, and some evidence suggests that homeless children are more likely to have physical

disability, emotional or behavioural problems than housed children (Bassuk et al. 2015; Clair 2018).

Early evidence has shown widespread impact resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic on the experiences of Australian renters in the private rental market indicating that peoples employment, ability to pay rent, living environment and risk of eviction were affected (Baker et al., 2020a).

Improved housing affordability is often associated with better health, academic achievement and school engagement for children (Clair 2018).

### Percentage of low-income households (households in bottom 40% of income distribution) with rental stress\*

	2006	2011	2016	2021		
Loddon Shire	15.6%	18.2%	22.0%	20.0%	25.1% Victoria 2021	20.0% Loddon Shire 2021

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2006, 2011, 2016 & 2021)



**Time trend** No trending available as new mortgage affordability variable used for 2021.

\* This data comprises households in the bottom 40% of the income distribution (those with less than 80% of median income), spending more than 30% of their income on rent.

### Percentage of low-income households (households in bottom 40% of income distribution) with mortgage stress\*

	2006	2011	2016	2021		
Loddon Shire	12.4%	13.3%	10.9%	8.3%	8.8% Victoria 2021	8.3% Loddon Shire 2021

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2006, 2011, 2016 & 2021)



**Time trend** No trending available as new rental affordability variable used for 2021.

\* This data comprises households in the bottom 40% of income distribution (those with less than 80% of median equivalised income), spending more than 30% of income on mortgage repayments.

Domain

3

# Healthy



## Children are developing well by age six

The years from birth to age 5 have been identified as the most important developmental period during childhood (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

The capacity for change in human skill development and neural circuitry is highest early in life and decreases over time, with critical periods during early childhood when particular skills and abilities are more readily acquired (Knudsen et al. 2006).

Early shared reading builds receptive vocabulary and learning skills (Shahaeian et al., 2018).

Research has shown that brain development in the first years of life lays the foundation for language development, literacy acquisition, cognitive processes, emotional development, self-regulation and problem-solving skills and has a lasting impact on health, future learning and life success (McCain & Mustard 1999; Shonkoff & Phillips 2000).

*The ‘family, school, community and broader society, as well as the children’s own attributes, are seen to contribute to the child’s development in complex interacting ways over time’*

Sanson et al 2002

### Physical health and wellbeing, developmentally on track

	2012	2015	2018	2021	81.1% Victoria 2021	79.7% Loddon Shire 2021
Loddon Shire	80.0%	71.6%	77.6%	79.7%		

(Source: AEDC 2012-2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - declining between 2012-2021.

### Social competence, developmentally on track

	2012	2015	2018	2021	77.8% Victoria 2021	71.2% Loddon Shire 2021
Loddon Shire	84.0%	76.1%	76.1%	71.2%		

(Source: AEDC 2012-2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - declining between 2012-2021.

### Emotional maturity, developmentally on track

	2012	2015	2018	2021	78.4% Victoria 2021	74.6% Loddon Shire 2021
Loddon Shire	69.3%	74.6%	77.6%	74.6%		

(Source: AEDC 2012-2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - improving between 2012-2021.

### Language and cognitive skills, developmentally on track

	2012	2015	2018	2021	82.6% Victoria 2021	83.1% Loddon Shire 2021
Loddon Shire	86.7%	85.1%	80.6%	83.1%		

(Source: AEDC 2012-2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - declining between 2012-2021.



### Communication skills and general knowledge, developmentally on track

	2012	2015	2018	2021	79.0% Victoria 2021	83.1% Loddon Shire 2021
Loddon Shire	80.0%	76.1%	70.1%	83.1%		

(Source: AEDC 2012-2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - improving between 2012-2021.



## Vulnerable on two or more domains

	2012	2015	2018	2021		
Loddon Shire	10.7%	9.0%	16.4%	10.2%	10.2% Victoria 2021	10.2% Loddon Shire 2021

(Source: AEDC 2012-2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - improving between 2012-2021.

## Proportion of children whose parents report one or more concerns with child speech and language on entry to school

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		
Loddon Shire	25.2%	26.0%	18.8%	26.8%	17.4%	16.4% Victoria 2021	17.4% Loddon Shire 2021

(Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ), Department of Education and Training)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates between 2017 and 2021 of children reported to have difficulties with speech and/or or language on entry to school.



## Children visit a maternal and child health nurse

The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Service is a free universal service available to all families with children from birth to school age.

The MCH Service provides a comprehensive and focused approach for the promotion, prevention and early identification of the physical, emotional and social factors affecting young children and their families. The MCH Service supports child

and family health, wellbeing and safety, focusing on maternal health and father-inclusive practice as a key enabler to optimise child learning and development (Maternal and Child Health Service Guidelines, 2021).

### Proportion of infants receiving a maternal and health service home consultation

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	
Loddon Shire	102%	102%	95%	101%	100%	<b>100%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2022-2023</b>

(Source: Loddon Shire Council)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - consistent number of infants receiving a maternal and child health home consultation from 2018-2023.

### Proportion of children attending the 3.5 year ages and stages visit

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	
Loddon Shire	102%	61%	57%	58%	100%	<b>100%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2022-2023</b>

(Source: Loddon Shire Council)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increase in the number of children attending 3.5-year ages and stages visit from 2018-2023.

It is important to note that the pandemic impacted on the ability of families to attend appointments in 2020 and 2021.





## Children and young people are healthy

Health is related to an individual's environment and circumstances such as where they live, their education level, income and living conditions along with their access to and use of health services (WHO 2017).

Young children from households with lower income and maternal education have an increased risk of chronic health conditions later in childhood (Spencer et al., 2022a).

Widespread benefits of physical activity are evident across childhood, including improved health and better social and emotional adjustment. Further, children that engage in more physical activity have lower health expenditure (Nguyen et al., 2022).

Children with the highest levels of physical activity and lowest screen time typically have the highest levels of health-related quality of life (del Pozo-Cruz et al., 2019).

Screen use and social media activity is related to staying up later at night and shorter sleep duration for young people (Chaput, J. P., Gray, C. E., Poitras, V. J., Carson, V., Gruber, R., Olds, T. et al. 2016).

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, factors such as cultural identity, family and kinship, country and caring for country, knowledge and beliefs, language and participation in cultural activities and access to

traditional lands are also key determinants of health and wellbeing (AIHW and NIAA 2020).

Early childhood offers a crucial 'window of opportunity' for investment and early intervention, not only to prevent or reduce adverse outcomes but to maximise the life chances of children and young people so that they can thrive (Emerson, Fox and Smith, 2015).

Adolescence also represents a vital period for development, in which biological and psychosocial changes present a 'window of vulnerability' through which pathways can be set – positively or negatively – towards lifelong health outcomes (Viner, Ross, Hardy et al, 2015).

The weight of a baby at delivery (birthweight) is widely accepted as a key indicator of infant health and can be affected by a number of factors, including the age, size, health and nutritional status of the mother, pre-term birth, and tobacco smoking during pregnancy (Laws PJ, Grayson N, Sullivan EA, 2004).

A baby is defined as having a low birthweight if they are born weighing less than 2,500 grams. Low birthweight is generally associated with poorer health outcomes, including increased risk of illness and death, longer periods of hospitalisation after birth, and increased risk of developing significant disabilities (AIHW, 2012).

## Low birth weight babies

	2012-2014	2017-2019		
Loddon Shire	4.2%	6.8%	<b>6.7%</b> <b>Victoria</b> <b>2017-2019</b>	<b>6.8%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2017-2019</b>

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU based on data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increase in the number of low-birth-weight babies between 2012-2019.

Antenatal care is associated with positive child and maternal health outcomes, with regular antenatal care visits in the first trimester (before 14 weeks' gestational age), leading to fewer interventions in late pregnancy and positive outcomes for child health (AIHW, 2018).

## Proportion of women who did not attend antenatal care within the first 10 weeks

	2016-2018	2017-2019		
Loddon Shire	56.9%	48.2%	<b>49.4%</b> <b>Victoria</b> <b>2017-2019</b>	<b>48.2%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2017-2019</b>

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU based on data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)



**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increase in the number of women attending antenatal care within the first ten weeks between 2016-2019.

Women who smoke tobacco during pregnancy are more likely to experience pre-term birth, placental complications and perinatal death of their baby (WHO 2013).

Smoking cessation during pregnancy is key in reducing the risk of complications during pregnancy and birth as well as reducing adverse health outcomes for the baby. Cessation at later stages of pregnancy will still improve health outcomes for the baby, including improved fetal growth (AIHW 2021; Miyazaki et al. 2015).

Maternal smoking during pregnancy is a major risk factor that can adversely affect infant health, increasing the likelihood of low birth weight, pre-term birth, foetal and neonatal death, and SIDS (Norton, Cherastidtham and Mackey 2018).

## Smoking during pregnancy

	2012-2014	2017-2019		
Loddon Shire	41.3%	16.7%	<b>8.0%</b> <b>Victoria</b> <b>2017-2019</b>	<b>16.7%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2017-2019</b>

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU based on data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decrease in the number of mothers smoking during pregnancy between 2012-2019.

Breast milk contains all the requirements necessary for a baby's development for the first 6 months and remains the most important part of the baby's diet, with the addition of appropriate solid foods, until around 12 months. Breast milk continues to provide a valuable source of nutrition and immunological protection for 2 years and beyond (ABA 2013).

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended as evidence suggests it has health, nutritional and developmental benefits for infants, including:

- protection against infectious diseases, including gastrointestinal illness, respiratory tract infections and middle ear infections
  - protection against overweight and obesity
  - reduced risk of type 1 and type 2 diabetes
  - reduction in malocclusion (misalignment) in baby teeth
  - improved cognitive development (Victora et al. 2016).
- reduced risk of sudden infant death
  - reduced risk of necrotising enterocolitis (a condition with high risk of fatality)

### Proportion of children fully breast fed on discharge from hospital

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
Loddon Shire	61%	75%	51%	<b>51%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2021-2022</b>

(Source: Maternal and Child Health Service, Loddon Shire Council)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates of children fully breastfed on discharge from hospital.

### Proportion of children fully breast fed at 3 months of age

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
Loddon Shire	15%	36%	44%	<b>44%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2021-2022</b>

(Source: Maternal and Child Health Service, Loddon Shire Council)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates of children fully breastfed at 3 months of age.

### Proportion of children fully breast fed at 6 months of age

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
Loddon Shire	3%	16%	37%	<b>37%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2021-2022</b>

(Source: Maternal and Child Health Service, Loddon Shire Council)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates of children fully breastfed at 6 months of age.

## Proportion of children at school entry reported to be in excellent or very good health

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		
Loddon Shire	81.6%	82.1%	79.5%	90.5%	84.2%	84.3% Victoria 2021	84.2% Loddon Shire 2021

(Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ), Department of Education and Training)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates between 2017 and 2021 of children reported to be in excellent or very good health on entry to school.

## Proportion of children at school entry reported to have been seen by a GP in the past year

	2016	2017		
Loddon Shire	70.3%	76.4%	78.4% Victoria 2017	76.4% Loddon Shire 2017

(Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ), Department of Education and Training)

**Time trend** Unavailable

## Proportion of children at school entry reported to have been seen by a paediatrician in the past year

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		
Loddon Shire	13.4%	13.8%	10.9%	11.1%	10.5%	10.6% Victoria 2021	10.5% Loddon Shire 2021

(Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ), Department of Education and Training)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates between 2017 and 2021 of children reported to have been seen by a paediatrician in the year before entry to school.

## Proportion of children at school entry reported to have been seen by an optometrist in the past year

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		
Loddon Shire	19.1%	25.3%	13.1%	24.6%	17.5%	14.3% Victoria 2021	17.5% Loddon Shire 2021

(Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ), Department of Education and Training)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates between 2017 and 2021 of children reported to have been seen by an optometrist in the year before entry to school.



Most dental diseases are largely preventable. Early preventive strategies include:

- parental counselling about diet
- establishing sound oral hygiene practice, including the appropriate use of fluorides
- regular oral health check-ups (COAG 2015).

### Proportion of children at school entry whose parents are concerned about their oral health

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	15.9% Victoria 2021	8.8% Loddon Shire 2021
Loddon Shire	19.0%	13.0%	19.4%	14.4%	8.8%		

(Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ), Department of Education and Training)



**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates between 2017 and 2021 of parents concerned about their child's oral health on entry to school.

### Proportion of children at school entry reported to have been seen by a dentist in the past year

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	43.6% Victoria 2021	40.4% Loddon Shire 2021
Loddon Shire	64.5%	67.7%	48.4%	55.2%	40.4%		

(Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ), Department of Education and Training)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates between 2017 and 2021 of children reported to have been seen by a dentist in the year before entry to school.

### People aged 0 to 14 years who reported they had asthma \*ASR per 100

	2021	6.4 Victoria 2021	7.2 Loddon Shire 2021
Loddon Shire	7.2		

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing)

**Time trend** Unavailable - new question in the 2021 ABS Census.

\* Indicator detail: This variable describes whether a person aged 0 to 14 years has been told by a doctor or nurse that they have asthma.

This variable is derived from responses to the long-term health conditions question. It counts the number of people who marked 'Asthma' on the Census form.

The data are comprised of people aged 0 to 14 years who reported that they have had asthma, expressed as an indirectly standardised rate per 100 people aged 0 to 14 years (URP, 2021), based on the Australian standard.

## People aged 0 to 14 years who reported they had any other long term health conditions \*ASR per 100

	2021	3.8	4.1
Loddon Shire	4.1	<b>Victoria 2021</b>	<b>Loddon Shire 2021</b>

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing)

**Time trend** Unavailable - new question in the 2021 ABS Census.

\* Indicator detail: This variable describes whether a person has been told by a doctor or nurse that they have a long-term health condition that is not:

- arthritis
- asthma
- cancer (including remission)
- dementia (including Alzheimer's)
- diabetes (excluding gestational diabetes)
- heart disease (including heart attack or angina)
- kidney disease
- lung condition (including COPD) or emphysema
- mental health condition (including depression or anxiety)
- stroke.

This variable does not indicate whether a person has multiple long-term health conditions. This variable is derived from responses to the long-term health conditions question. It counts the number of people who marked 'Any other long-term health condition(s)'.

The data are comprised of people 0 to 14 years who reported that they have a long-term health condition, expressed as an indirectly standardised rate per 100 people aged 0 to 14 years (URP, 2021), based on the Australian standard.





*Kinder children at play.*

## Children & young people have good mental health and wellbeing

The wellbeing of children and young people affects their immediate quality of life and how happy and productive they are today, but also shapes the future wellbeing of the population as a whole and this impacts everyone (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011).

A child or young person's wellbeing is influenced by everything around them and the different experiences and needs they have at different times in their lives. This includes their individual circumstances, the support they get from their family and community, and the services that support them (Scottish Government, 2018).

The middle years are a time when many students experience new and sometimes difficult emotions. The prevalence of anxiety and depression increase (The Centre for Adolescent Health, 2018), and half of all mental health problems are apparent by age fourteen (Kessler et al, 2005).

The evidence shows that a higher proportion of children who experience mental health problems in childhood also experience these difficulties in adolescence (O'Connor, Romaniuk, Gray, & Daraganova, forthcoming).

Children with common emotional or behavioural problems, not necessarily at clinical levels, have shown lower academic achievement in

the primary school years compared with those without these difficulties, particularly among boys (Mundy et al., 2017).

Research suggests that the more worries children have, the more likely they are to become anxious or depressed (Brown, Teufel, Birch, & Kancheria, 2006).

High levels of screen-based activities during childhood, however, also have detrimental effects on aspects of children's wellbeing (Caroli, Argentieri, Cardone, & Masi, 2004; Laurson, Lee, Gentile, Walsh, & Eisenmann, 2014).

High parental conflict in the early years is also associated with more emotional and behavioural difficulties (Giallo et al., 2022).

Recent Australian research has found that children now worry about coping with stress, school or study problems, and their mental health (Carlisle et al., 2018).

Early mental health intervention is most important for the 3% to 6% of children that do experience consistently high mental health problems from early to late childhood (Lewis et al., 2020; Vella et al., 2018).

## Children at high risk of behavioural and emotional problems

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		
Loddon Shire	9.2%	6.0%	5.9%	7.2%	15.8%	7.4% Victoria 2020	15.8% Loddon Shire 2020

(Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ), Department of Education and Training)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates between 2016 and 2020 of children reported to have emotional and behavioural difficulties at entry to school.

## Proportion of children at school entry whose parents report high levels\* of family stress in the past month

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		
Loddon Shire	10.4%	8.8%	3.8%	11.3%	13.4%	10.0% Victoria 2020	13.4% Loddon Shire 2020

(Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ), Department of Education and Training)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates between 2016 and 2020 of proportion of children at school entry whose parents report high levels of family stress in the past month.

\* Number of children at school entry whose parents report high levels of family stress in the past month (based on the question 'Sometimes, families have times when there is more stress/pressure than usual. Overall, how would you rate your own family's stress level over the last month?' Answers are on a 5 point scale and this indicator counts responses in the highest two categories). Examples of 'stressors' include: separation and divorce of parents, death of friend or relative, move to new house, parent(s) change of job, parents loss of job, new baby in house, remarriage of parent(s), serious illness of parent(s), serious illness of sibling(s), history of abuse to parent, history of abuse to child(ren), alcohol or drug related problem in family, history of mental illness of parent, child witness to violence, parent witness to violence, gambling problem in family.

\*\* The SEHQ is a critical source of information relating to the types of stressors experienced by children in the 12 months prior to the questionnaire being completed. Children were more likely to have been affected by a stressful event or family issue in the twelve months prior to the SEHQ if they were from a one parent family, Aboriginal family, from the most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas or from a rural/regional area.

## People aged 0 to 14 years who reported they had a mental health condition (including depression or anxiety) \*ASR per 100

	2021		
Loddon Shire	1.7	2.0 Victoria 2021	1.7 Loddon Shire 2021

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU based on the ABS Census of Population and Housing)



**Time trend** Unavailable - new question in the 2021 ABS Census.

\* Indicator detail: This variable describes whether a person aged 0 to 14 years has been told by a doctor or nurse that they had a mental health condition (including depression and anxiety).

This variable is derived from responses to the long-term health conditions question. It counts the number of people who marked 'Mental health condition (including depression and anxiety)' on the Census form.

The data are comprised of people aged 0 to 14 years who reported that they have had a mental health condition (including depression and anxiety), expressed as an indirectly standardised rate per 100 people aged 0 to 14 years (URP, 2021), based on the Australian standard.



Domain

# 4

## Learning & Participating



*Boort District P-12 students launch Boort Adventure Bingo.*

### Families are supportive of their children's learning

Research identifies that high-quality family and community involvement with schools increases the likelihood of students' attendance (Sheldon 2007).

Children born into poverty have less access to material basics and participate less frequently in their community over the span of childhood than their more socially advantaged peers (Sollis & Edwards, 2022).

Parents are critical for a student's academic engagement and performance (Wang M-T, Eccles J, 2012, Borgonovi F, Montt G. 2012).

Research has shown that higher grades and scores, improved school retention, completion and graduation rates, lower drop-out figures and an upward trend in postsecondary enrolments are associated with parent engagement in formal education (Emerson et al, 2012).

When parents engage with their children's learning, particularly out of school, attendance increases, behaviour in school improves, homework return rates go up and, overall, children's achievement tends to improve (Goodall, 2018).

*The level of respect the family has for education is seen as a role model for students.*

Demir & Karabeyoglu, 2016

## Child is making good progress in adapting to the structure and learning environment of the school

	2015	2018	2021		
Loddon Shire	97.0%	92.5%	96.7%	<b>96.8%</b> <b>Victoria</b> <b>2021</b>	<b>96.7%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2021</b>

(Source: AEDC 2015-2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decrease in number of children making good progress in adapting to the structure and learning environment of the school.

## Children whose parent(s)/caregiver(s) are actively engaged with the school in supporting their child's learning

	2015	2018	2021		
Loddon Shire	95.5%	86.6%	93.3%	<b>94.4%</b> <b>Victoria</b> <b>2021</b>	<b>93.3%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2021</b>

(Source: AEDC 2015-2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decrease in number of children whose parent(s)/caregiver(s) are actively engaged with the school in supporting their child's learning.

## Children who are regularly read to/encouraged in their reading at home

	2015	2018	2021		
Loddon Shire	92.4%	80.6%	88.3%	<b>90.7%</b> <b>Victoria</b> <b>2021</b>	<b>88.3%</b> <b>Loddon Shire</b> <b>2021</b>

(Source: AEDC 2015-2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decrease in number of children who are regularly read to/encouraged in their reading at home.



## Children and young people attend school

School attendance is influenced by a complex range of factors relating to the individual student's engagement and wellbeing, their family and community context, and the school (Kearney 2020; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) 2021; Childs and Lofton 2021).

Data suggests that students' attendance patterns established in early primary school carry through to the later years of primary school (Daraganova et al. 2014).

Research identifies that high-quality family and community involvement with schools increases the likelihood of students' attendance (Sheldon 2007).

Students in the early years of compulsory schooling, students transitioning through secondary school, students in remote locations or socio-economically disadvantaged areas and Indigenous students are most at risk for absences of at least a month or more over the schooling year (ACARA, 2018; Hancock, Shepherd, Lawrence, & Zubrick, 2013).

Children in care are less likely to continue their education beyond the minimum age requirement and are more likely to attend numerous different schools with lower attendance rates overall (Osborn and Bromfield 2007).

*“The major opportunity for preventing poor attendance is at the point of entry to preschool, pre-primary and Year 1...setting the expectation and pattern about attendance early may offer the best long-term sustainable approach to addressing poor attendance...Beyond this, individual treatment and targeting will need to be tailored to circumstances”.*

Zubrick, 2014

## Children attend kindergarten

Quality early childhood education and positive relationships with early childhood professionals are linked to improved outcomes in areas that matter for success later in life, including those related to language, literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional wellbeing (Tayler, C. 2016).

Two years of high- quality kindergarten is a proven strategy for lifting children's outcomes across all learning domains (Fox, S., & Geddes, M. 2016).

Additionally, the research shows that two years of kindergarten has an even stronger positive effect on children from disadvantaged backgrounds (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network & Duncan, G.J. 2003).

The best outcomes for children come about through combining sustained positive parenting with high-quality early childhood education (Pascoe, S. & Brennan, D. 2017).

### Kindergarten participation rate

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
Loddon Shire	75.3%	81.2%	103.9%	95%	91%	83%	91%	92% Victoria 2022	91% Loddon Shire 2022

(Source: Children's Services On Line (CHISOL) accessed on VCAMS, Loddon ECE Profile Report 2021, 2022)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - variable trend in the kindergarten participation rate between 2016-2022.

Data provided below is for the average number of days absent per full-time equivalent (FTE) student government primary and secondary schools (including Special).

### Average number of days absent per FTE Student - PREP

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	14.4	14.9	16.4	17.6	20.7	16.4 Victoria 2019	20.7 Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: Cases21, DET)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increase in average number of days prep students were absent between 2015-2019.

### Average number of days absent per FTE Student - Year 3

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	15.0	13.8	13.9	10.7	13.1	15.7 Victoria 2019	13.1 Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: Cases21, DET)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decrease in average number of days year three students were absent between 2015-2019.



## Average number of days absent per FTE Student - Year 6

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	17.1	19.0	15.5	15.8	12.2	17.3 Victoria 2019	12.2 Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: Cases21, DET)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decrease in average number of days year six students were absent between 2015-2019.



## Average number of days absent per FTE Student - Year 7

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	19.0	15.8	22.6	15.7	19.8	18.4 Victoria 2019	19.8 Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: Cases21, DET)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increase in average number of days year seven students were absent between 2015-2019.

## Average number of days absent per FTE Student - Year 9

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	25.0	21.0	24.7	21.1	26.8	23.8 Victoria 2019	26.8 Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: Cases21, DET)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increase in average number of days year nine students were absent between 2015-2019.

## Average number of days absent per FTE Student - Year 11

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	2.2	22.8	21.9	21.5	16.5	18.3 Victoria 2019	16.5 Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: Cases21, DET)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decrease in average number of days year eleven students were absent between 2015-2019.



## Average number of days absent per FTE Student - Year 12

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	18.2	21.0	19.1	21.6	12.0	15.9 Victoria 2019	12.0 Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: Cases21, DET)



**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decrease in average number of days year twelve students were absent between 2015-2019.



## Students achieve national minimum standards in literacy and numeracy

Literacy involves 'students listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts' (ACARA 2019a).

Numeracy encompasses 'the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students need to use mathematics in a wide range of situations' (ACARA 2019a).

Children whose parents read to them every day at 2–3 years old had on average higher Year 3 NAPLAN reading scores, than children whose

parents read to them less frequently (Yu & Daraganova 2015).

School factors that affect literacy and numeracy outcomes can include:

- quality of schooling
- availability of interventions and support
- student commitment
- proximity of the school and other educational facilities to students' homes (ACARA 2015).

### Proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in literacy (Year 3)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	91.8%	94.4%	95.0%	95.7%	97.4%	96.6% Victoria 2019	97.4% Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: NAPLAN, VCAMS)



**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates of year three students who achieved national minimum standards in literacy between 2015-2019.

### Proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in literacy (Year 5)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	97.7%	98.6%	94.3%	95.1%	94.4%	95.9% Victoria 2019	94.4% Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: NAPLAN, VCAMS)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates of year five students who achieved national minimum standards in literacy between 2015-2019.

### Proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in literacy (Year 7)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	97.1%	97.0%	97.2%	98.4%	93.4%	95.7% Victoria 2019	93.4% Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: NAPLAN, VCAMS)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates of year seven students who achieved national minimum standards in literacy between 2015-2019.

### Proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in literacy (Year 9)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	93.9%	91.7%	92.1%	98.5%	88.9%	92.4% Victoria 2019	88.9% Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: NAPLAN, VCAMS)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates of year nine students who achieved national minimum standards in literacy between 2015-2019.

### Proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in numeracy (Year 3)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	94.5%	97.1%	96.7%	100.0%	93.6%	96.4% Victoria 2019	93.6% Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: NAPLAN, VCAMS)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates of year three students who achieved national minimum standards in numeracy between 2015-2019.

### Proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in numeracy (Year 5)

	2015	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	97.6%	98.7%	100.0%	100%	96.4% Victoria 2019	100.0% Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: NAPLAN, VCAMS)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates of year five students who achieved national minimum standards in numeracy between 2015-2019.



### Proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in numeracy (Year 7)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	100%	98.5%	98.5%	98.4%	98.4%	95.7% Victoria 2019	98.4% Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: NAPLAN, VCAMS)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - largely unchanged rates of year seven students who achieved national minimum standards in numeracy between 2015-2019.



### Proportion of students who achieve national minimum standards in numeracy (Year 9)

	2015	2017	2018	2019		
Loddon Shire	98.5%	100%	98.4%	98.4%	96.2% Victoria 2019	98.4% Loddon Shire 2019

(Source: NAPLAN, VCAMS)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - largely unchanged rates of year nine students who achieved national minimum standards in numeracy between 2015-2019.





## Young people complete secondary school

In adolescence, schoolwork and homework often become more demanding (Raising Children Network, 2019), and balancing school, family and extracurricular demands can become challenging (Hardy, 2003).

The transition from primary to secondary school is considered to be an important turning point in young people's lives, often requiring them to make new friends and adapt to new school settings, routines and academic expectations (Hanewald, 2013).

Research has shown poorer outcomes for young people who do not complete Year 12. For example, non-completion of Year 12 has been shown to be correlated with their having longer periods not participating in education, employment or training (Stanwick, Forrest & Skujins 2017).

Those who have completed Year 12 are more likely to continue with further education or training and have a more successful transition into the workforce (ABS 2011).

### Full-time participation in secondary school education at age 16

	2006	2011	2016	2021		
Loddon Shire	84.2%	85.5%	74.2%	80.6%	88.5% Victoria 2021	80.6% Loddon Shire 2021

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2011, 2016 & 2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decrease in full time participation in secondary school at age 16 between 2006-2021.

### People who left school at Year 10 or below, or did not go to school

	2011	2016	2021		
Loddon Shire	39.9	34.1	28.7	21.0 (ASR per 100) Victoria 2021	28.7 (ASR per 100) Loddon Shire 2021

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decreasing rates per 100 people aged 15 years and over who left school at year 10, or below, or did not go to school.

\* The data comprise people who left school at Year 10 or below, or did not go to school, expressed as an indirectly standardised rate per 100 people aged 15 years and over (usual resident population, 2021), based on the Australian standard. Five-year age groups were available for age-standardisation.

## Young people have successful transition from secondary school

Young people are particularly vulnerable in making the transition from school to further education or work. Some factors that can make this transition more difficult include:

- low educational outcomes
- the use of drugs and alcohol
- a dysfunctional family life
- health issues
- insufficient secure housing or homelessness

- welfare dependency
- and a lack of understanding of education and career pathways (Briggs et al. 2012; State Training Board of Western Australia 2013).

Not participating in either employment or education can contribute to future unemployment, lower incomes and employment insecurity (de Fontenay et al. 2020; Pech et al. 2009).

### Young people aged 16-21 receiving an unemployment benefit

	2022		
Loddon Shire	5.7%	2.8% Victoria June 2022	5.7% Loddon Shire June 2022

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2021)

**Time trend** Not available.

\* In 2006 and 2011 and 2016 Census the age range differed, so comparisons could not be made across these years.

### School leaver participation in higher education

	2013	2016	2021		
Loddon Shire	43.1%	37.3%	38.5%	57.5% Victoria 2021	38.5% Loddon Shire 2021

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2011, 2016, 2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - decrease in school leaver participation in higher education between 2013-2021.

### Learning or Earning at ages 15 to 24\*

	2016	2021		
Loddon Shire	75%	80.6%	87.5% Victoria 2021	80.6% Loddon Shire 2021

(Source: Compiled by PHIDU from ABS Census 2016, 2021)

**Time trend** Loddon Shire - increasing rates of young people aged 15-24 who are learning or earning between 2016-2021.

In 2006 and 2011 Census the age range was 15-19 so comparisons could not be made across these years.

\* This data comprise the number of 15 to 24-year-old people who were engaged in school, work or further education/training, expressed as a proportion of all those aged 15 to 24 years.

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