

Murrumbidgee and Riverina

Young people, mental health, transport and housing were key issues that arose in Murrumbidgee and Riverina. For young people, homelessness is a key problem, but early intervention and programs to ensure connectedness need to be part of the solution. This needs to start early yet the cost and availability of childcare in the region mean that it is inaccessible for many. And there is nothing available after hours for shift workers to access.

In Murrumbidgee distance and isolation can be a significant barrier to accessing employment, services or health care. Here you need a car, but the cost of maintaining a car can be prohibitive with the cost of registration and insurance, particularly for people doing it tough who may need this access the most.

This region needs more social and affordable housing and better maintenance for the social housing that exists. There should be more mixed housing with a percentage of real affordable housing in new developments.

Stronger inpatient and community based mental health services that can meet the demand that is in the community were also identified as vital.

Cost of living

- Latest figures show the average annual personal income in the region was \$40,077, which was over \$10,000 less than the state average
- In the year to July 2015 an average yearly electricity bill cost \$2,600 which is over \$500 more than the equivalent in Sydney and Newcastle
- Latest median weekly rental figures for 2 bedroom dwellings range from \$185 in Tumut/Tumbarumba, \$190 in the Upper Murray, \$200 in Griffith/Murrumbidgee, \$220 in Albury, to \$235 in Wagga Wagga
- Latest figures show Local Government rate assessments in the region ranged from \$173 in the Murrumbidgee, \$458 in Tumbarumba, \$568 in Cootamundra, \$570 in Tumut, \$783 in Griffith, \$818 in Wagga Wagga, to \$997 in Albury, against a rural average of \$531



Children and young people

- One in four children in Murrumbidgee LGA are developmentally vulnerable according to the Australian Early Development Census
- Latest figures show 65 in every 1000 children were involved in risk of significant harm reports and nearly 15 in 1000 were in out-of-home care

“ There needs to be investment in young people’s mental health and early intervention. ”

- Despite having some of the highest rates of vulnerable children, there are no Sustaining NSW Families nurse home-visiting sites in Murrumbidgee
- 8,679 children in the region living below the poverty line, with a child poverty rate of over 16% that is above the average of the state. The Urana LGA, with 27.2%, has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the state
- In 2014-15, 157 young people aged 15-24 were hospitalised due to intentional self-harm

Dental wait list

- 245 children and 1787 adults are on the NSW public dental waiting list
- Only 49.2% of children age 5-6 years are free of dental caries

“ Bad teeth and bad nutrition are big issues in this community. ”

- On average, children age 5-6 years have 2.32 decayed, missing or filled teeth

Social Housing wait list

- Latest figures show there were a total of 4,484 social housing units in the region, with 1,380 people still waiting for housing
- In the 12 months to 30 June 2015 716 people were housed, with expected waiting times for those still on the list ranging from 2 years in Wagga Wagga and Tumut, up to 5 years in Albury and Griffith and much of the region, and as much as 10 years in Cootamundra

“ Youth homelessness is a big concern here, particularly finding appropriate housing for young people. ”