



HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2025-2028

Byron LGA

Located in the Northern Rivers region of NSW, Byron **Local Government Area (LGA)** is on the traditional lands of the Bundjalung people. Byron LGA shares boundaries with 3 other LGAs – Lismore, Tweed and Ballina. The Byron LGA communities are diverse, embracing both traditional and alternative philosophies and lifestyles. Byron LGA is a well-known tourist destination (tourism is the main source of revenue for the LGA), which can have a significant effect on availability and accessibility of healthcare services. Byron LGA is one of the most socio-economically advantaged LGAs, however there are complex social issues (for example, people experiencing homelessness).



Demographics

Population:

36,126 people, 7% of the North Coast population. Projected to increase by 6% by 2031 (compared to 5% increase North Coast)

Population density:

66 residents per km² (17 per km² North Coast)



2% identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (6% North Coast)



Median age **43** (47 North Coast, 39 NSW)

Lowest across the North Coast LGAs

7% of population born in non-English speaking countries (1% North Coast, 19% NSW, 16% Australia)



19% aged 65 years or over, projected to increase by 22% by 2031 (increase 18% North Coast and 29% NSW)



Children and young people's health

Just over 1 in 10 children were assessed as vulnerable in one or more areas of early childhood development.

Child immunisation rates

Full immunisation rates for children are considerably below the NSW and Australian rates.

67% of 1-year-old children (94% in NSW and Australia).

66% of 2-year-old children (92% NSW and Australia).

73% of 5-year-old children (94% NSW and Australia).

Opportunity: Understand reasons for low immunisation rates and work with community and healthcare providers on improvement strategies.

Older people

47% of people aged 65 years and over have at least one long-term health condition.

2% of the population live with dementia (2% NSW and Australia).
Expected to increase as the 65 years and over population increases.

50% of survey* respondents reported the ageing population is one of the most serious health concerns in the community.

71% of survey* respondents found accessing services for older people difficult.

Challenges included a lack of services and difficulty in organising services.

Did you know: Care finders is a free service. It exists to support vulnerable people who have no one else who can support them to learn about, apply for and set up support services.

Scan the QR code to visit the Care finders website.



Aboriginal health and wellbeing

Healthy North Coast works in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal peoples, families and communities. Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service provides services to the Aboriginal communities across the LGA.

23% of people had an Aboriginal health check in Richmond Valley- Coastal SA3.

Connection to country and culture is key for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples social and emotional wellbeing. Programs that Aboriginal peoples identified to help keep Aboriginal communities healthy and strong:

- Art and cultural programs
- Yarning circles
- Women's health
- Men's health
- Exercise and fitness

Social determinants

41 per 1,000 people need assistance due to age or severe disability (75 per 1,000 North Coast, 58 per 1,000 NSW).

Domestic and family violence rate of **3 per 1,000** people (NSW 4 per 1,000 people).

The second lowest in the North Coast region.

Byron LGA has limited availability of affordable housing. Of the **121** rental properties available, **0** properties were affordable to singles or couples on minimum wage or receiving benefits or pensions.

Adequate access to affordable housing is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Median total weekly personal income is **\$764** (\$652 North Coast, NSW \$813).

Byron LGA has the highest average personal income in the North Coast.

27% single or lone households (25% NSW) and 9% group homes (4% NSW).

Social isolation can increase health risks.

Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) score **1,021**, (Australia 1,000).

Homelessness:

6 in 1,000

people experience homelessness (4 in 1,000 in North Coast and NSW, 9 in 1,000 in Australia).

5 in 1,000

people at risk of homelessness (4 in 1,000 in North Coast and NSW, 7 in 1,000 in Australia).

Following the 2022 floods, approximately 830 people remain in emergency and temporary accommodation sites. Further numbers of those displaced, homeless or experiencing flood-related housing insecurity are not currently known.

Opportunity: Partner with community organisations and government departments to successfully plan for, respond to and recover from environmental disasters.

Opportunity: Enhance support by integrating services for individuals experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. Targeted outreach programs and stronger partnerships with domestic violence services could address the health needs of vulnerable populations in the region.

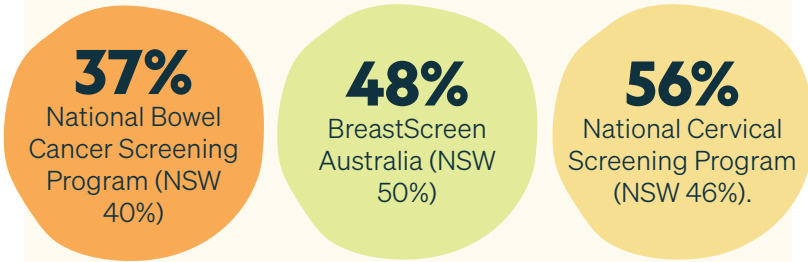
*Throughout this document 'survey' refers to the 2024 Better Health Community survey undertaken as part of the Health Needs Assessment 2025-28 consultation process

Preventative health and chronic disease

Just under 1 in 10 people have 2 or more chronic conditions.

The most common chronic conditions are anxiety, asthma and depression.

Cancer screening participation:



The most diagnosed cancers:

1. Skin cancer
2. Urogenital cancer
3. Lymphohematopoietic cancer.

The cancer with the highest death rate is lymphohematopoietic cancer (29 per 100,000).

Opportunity: Promote cancer screening activities, partnered with local health promotion units and screening services to educate community on the importance of participating in cancer screening activities.

Risks:

Current smoking		Alcohol consumption ²	
Byron	NSW	Byron	NSW
21%	12%	23%	18%
Physical activity ¹		Inadequate fruit intake	
Byron	NSW	Byron	NSW
73%	77%	52%	55%
Obese		Overweight (not obese)	
Byron	NSW	Byron	NSW
30%	31%	23%	34%

¹ aged 15 years and over, who did not meet 2014 physical activity guidelines

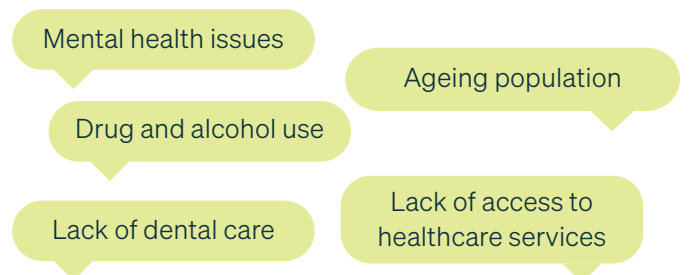
² estimated number of persons aged 15 years and over who consumed 5 or more standard alcoholic drinks on any day in the last 12 months at least monthly

When you were asked...

What kind of programs would you like more of, to keep you and your community healthy and strong?



Which do you see as the most serious health concerns in your community?



Mental health

What you have shared about your experiences with mental health:



1 in 10 people needed to access a mental health service but couldn't.



6 in 10 people reported mental health as one of the most serious health concerns in the community.



6 in 10 found it difficult to access a psychologist, counsellor or social worker.

The top challenges to access mental health services:

- Cost
- Used all sessions of their mental health treatment plan
- Lack of services.

In Richmond Valley-Coastal SA3, the rate of suicide deaths is 17 per 100,000 population (11 per 100,000 population NSW).

Over 1 in 5 people in the Northern NSW local health district (LHD) area, have experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress.

Just over 1 in 10 residents in Richmond Valley-Coastal SA3, accessed GP mental health services (highest in the region).

Did you know: Medicare Mental Health Centres can help you access the local mental health services and supports that are right for you. No referral needed, access by phoning 1800 595 212.

Healthcare in Byron LGA

Byron Central Hospital provides emergency care and a range of medical, nursing and surgical services.

Byron Central Hospital Ambulatory Care Unit, provides various nursing, allied and educational health services.

This is the LGA's only community health centre.



20 general practices



70 general practitioners



For every full time GP there are **667** patients



10 pharmacies



42 dental practitioners

Access to primary and community health services

60% of ED presentations are for lower urgency care (52 % North Coast, 48% NSW).

After-hours GP attendances rate in Richmond Valley-Coastal SA3 is **5%** (Australia 17%).

There is limited access to after-hours GP services. This may contribute to higher use of the Emergency Department.

Opportunity: Improve access to primary care services for lower urgency care needs.

Barriers to accessing primary care include:

- Difficulty getting an appointment
- Long wait time for an appointment
- Cost.

Did you know: If you need medical advice and care, call Healthdirect for free, 24/7 on 1800 022 222 and speak to a registered nurse. They can also connect you or your children with virtual health care services, so you can receive care from wherever you are.



Scan the QR code to go to the Healthdirect website.

Healthy North Coast commissioned services

HNC commissions a range of community-based services to address local health needs. These include:

- Aboriginal health
- Alcohol & Other Drugs
- Mental health
- Youth specific
- Integrated Team Care.

For more information about the services available in Byron LGA, please scan the QR code:

If you have any questions please email Betterhealth@hnc.org.au

