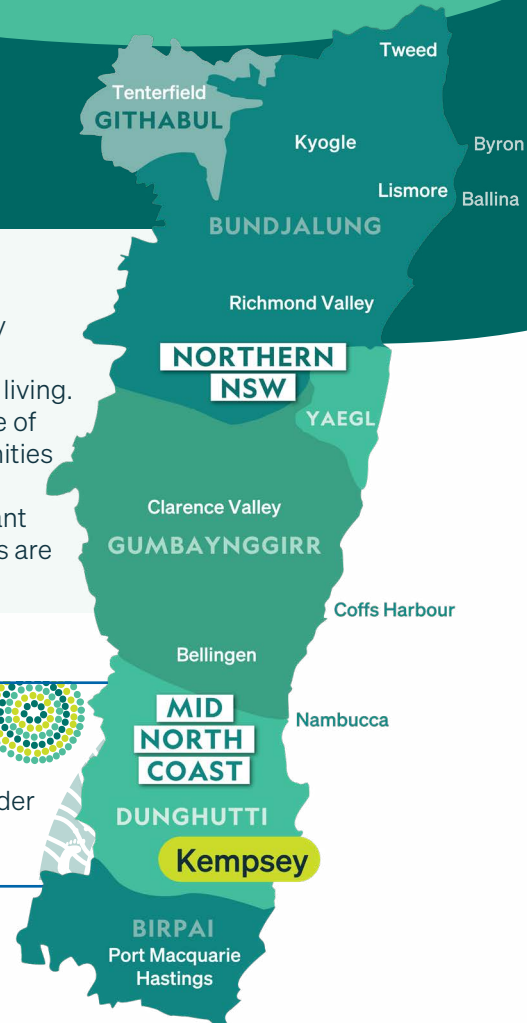


HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2025-2028

Kempsey LGA

Located in the Mid North Coast region of New South Wales, Kempsey **Local Government Area (LGA)** sits on the Traditional Lands of the Dughutti Nation. Kempsey LGA is part of the Mid North Coast Local Health District and Kempsey – Nambucca SA3. The region's diverse landscape includes coastal areas, rural farmlands, and hinterland regions, offering a mix of natural beauty and country living. The town of Kempsey serves as the main administrative and commercial centre of the LGA. The Macleay River, a prominent feature of the area, provides opportunities for fishing, boating, and other recreational activities. With a high proportion of Aboriginal peoples and a substantial prevalence of chronic disease, it's important to recognise the diversity within the community and ensure that health services are culturally safe and tailored to meet local needs.



Demographics

Population:

30,688 people, 6% of the North Coast population. Projected to increase by 3% by 2031 (compared to 5% increase North Coast)

Population density:

9 residents per km² (17 per km² North Coast)



13% identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (6% North Coast)



Median age **48** (47 North Coast, 39 NSW)



25% aged 65 years or over, projected to increase by 18% by 2031 (increase 18% North Coast and 29% NSW)



Children and young people's health



2 in 7 children assessed as vulnerable in one or more areas of early childhood development.



1 in 2 found it difficult to access a local GP for a child in their care.

Opportunity: Work in partnership to improve education, support, community and peer-based services for children and families.

Child immunisation rates

Full immunisation rates for children are similar as or above the NSW and Australian rates.

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

91% of 2-year-old children (92% NSW and Australia).

97% of 5-year-old children (94% NSW and Australia).

Older people

62% 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.

54% 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. Durri Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service provides services to the Aboriginal communities across the LGA and to neighbouring communities.

28% of people had an Aboriginal health check in Kempsey - Nambucca SA3.

Highest in the North Coast.



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:

Exercise and fitness

Parenting programs

Employment programs

Women's health

Health screening services

Quit smoking / vaping.

Opportunity: Collaborate with Aboriginal communities across Kempsey to co-design culturally appropriate services that address specific health needs.

Social determinants

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

Highest in North Coast.

Domestic and family violence rate of **12 per 1,000** people (NSW 4 per 1,000 people).

Increased 30% from 2021. Highest in North Coast.

Affordable housing is limited in the Kempsey LGA. Of **51** rental properties:

0 were affordable for singles or couples on Jobseeker, Youth Allowance, or Age Pension.

20 were affordable for a couple with 2 children on minimum wage and Family Tax Benefits A and B.

1 was affordable for a single person on minimum wage or a couple on Age Pension.

Median total weekly personal income is **\$550** (\$652 North Coast, NSW \$813).

29% single or lone households (25% NSW) and 3% group homes (4% NSW).

Social isolation can increase health risks.

Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) score **903**, (Australia 1,000).

Lowest in North Coast.

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.

Homelessness:

5 in 1,000

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

8 in 1,000

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

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

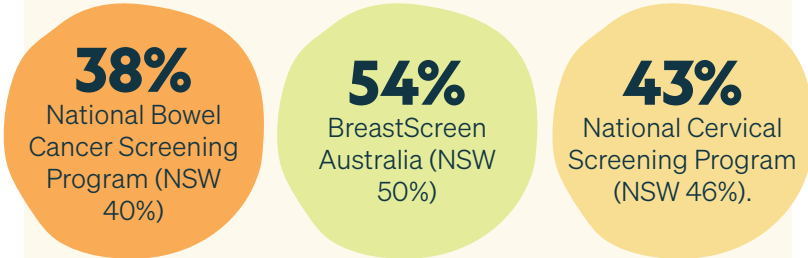
Preventative health and chronic disease

1 in every 4 people have 2 or more chronic conditions.

The most common chronic conditions are osteoarthritis and anxiety.

Kempsey LGA ranks second in the North Coast region for chronic kidney disease, renal failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and type II diabetes.

Cancer screening participation:



The most diagnosed cancers:

1. Urogenital cancer
2. Skin cancer
3. Breast cancer.

The cancer with the highest death rate is upper gastrointestinal cancer (50 per 100,000).

Risks:

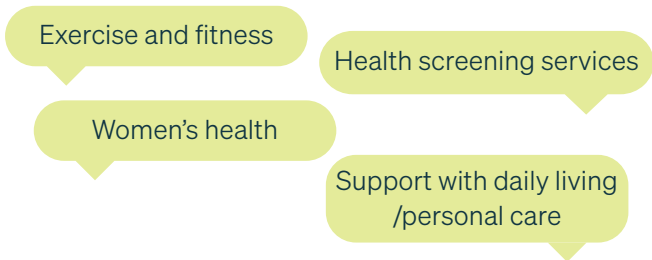
Current smoking		Alcohol consumption ²	
Kempsey	NSW	Kempsey	NSW
18%	12%	24%	18%
Physical activity ¹		Inadequate fruit intake	
Kempsey	NSW	Kempsey	NSW
82%	77%	61%	55%
Obese		Overweight (not obese)	
Kempsey	NSW	Kempsey	NSW
39%	31%	34%	34%

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.



5 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.



Nearly **2 in 10** people in the Mid North Coast experience high or very high levels of psychological distress.



1 in 10 Kempsey-Nambucca SA3 residents accessed GP mental health services.

The top challenges to access mental health services:

- Cost
- Lack of services.

In Kempsey-Nambucca SA3, the rate of suicide deaths (19 per 100,000) (11 per 100,000 population NSW).

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.

Opportunity: Explore and implement innovative approaches to strengthen prevention, treatment and mental health support programs suited to a rural area. This should include increased education and support for community members and healthcare providers, and access to digital based services.

Healthcare in Kempsey LGA

The Kempsey District Hospital is an 81-bed level three facility with a level four 24-hour Emergency Department and various specialist services, including general medicine, surgery, obstetrics, mental health, drug and alcohol, renal dialysis, and rehabilitation.

Kempsey Community Health and South West Rocks Community Health provide a range of community, allied and educational health services and programs.



Access to primary and community health services

56% of ED presentations are for lower urgency care (52 % North Coast, 48% NSW).

After-hours GP attendances rate in Kempsey – Nambucca SA3 is **4%** (Australia 17%).

Access to after-hours GP services remains a challenge and may contribute to higher ED admissions.

Barriers to accessing primary care include:

- long wait times
- difficulty getting an appointment
- cost
- lack of services.

Opportunity: Enhance digital health services and education to improve inclusive access to care, particularly in rural areas. Continue to work in partnership to support recruitment and retention of the healthcare workforce.

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 Kempsey LGA, please scan the QR code:

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

