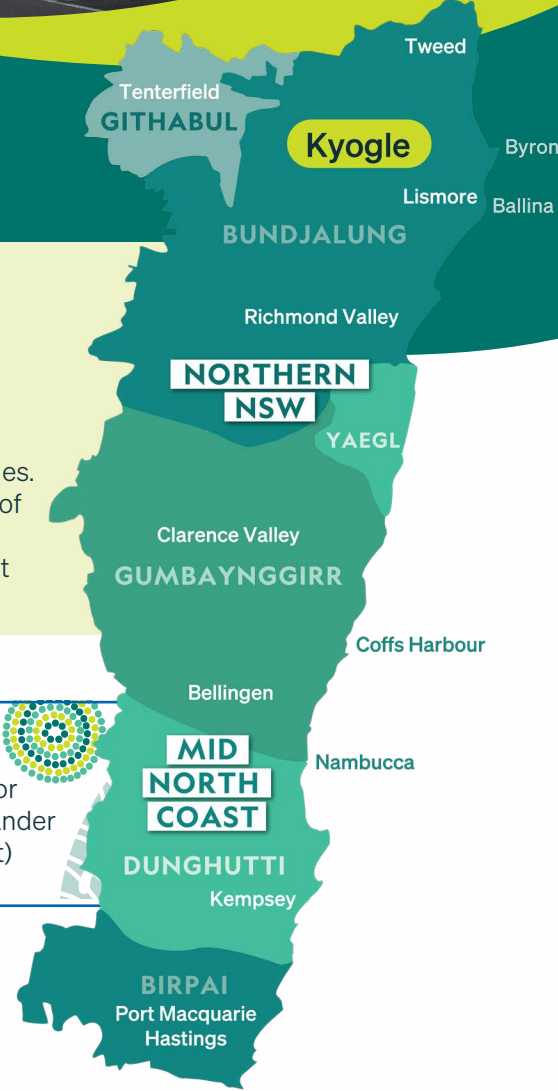




HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2025-2028

Kyogle LGA

Kyogle **Local Government Area (LGA)**, located in the Northern Rivers region of NSW, sits on the Traditional Lands of the Bundjalung Nation. It is part of the Northern NSW Local Health District and the Richmond Valley-Hinterland SA3. Covering 3,589 square kilometres, Kyogle LGA borders Tweed, Lismore, Richmond Valley, Clarence Valley, and Tenterfield. The area includes state forests, national parks, rural living, and farming regions. The 2017 and 2022 floods, along with the 2019/2020 bushfires, severely affected local communities. Kyogle also faces significant healthcare access challenges due to a shortage of practitioners and its remote location. The LGA is working to build community resilience in preparation for future extreme weather events and more frequent environmental disasters.



Demographics

Population:

9,359 people, 2% of the North Coast population. Projected to increase by 2% by 2031 (compared to 5% increase North Coast)

Population density:

3 residents per km² (17 per km² North Coast)



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



Median age **52** (47 North Coast, 39 NSW)



26% aged 65 years or over, projected to increase by 25% by 2031 (increase 18% North Coast and 29% NSW)



Children and young people's health



1 in 3 children assessed as vulnerable in one or more areas of early childhood development.



2 in 5 found it difficult to access a local GP for a child in their care.



More than **1 in 2** found it difficult to access a specialist doctor 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 the same as or below the NSW and Australian rates.

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

80% of 2-year-old children (92% NSW and Australia).

85% 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

49% 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.

59% of survey* respondents reported the ageing population is one of the most serious health concerns in the community.

40% of survey* respondents found accessing services for older people difficult.

Challenges were lack of awareness 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 Medical Services across the region to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal peoples. In Kyogle LGA, Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation and Rekindling the Spirit provide services to the Aboriginal communities in Kyogle. These partnerships focus on culturally appropriate care, chronic disease management, and addressing social determinants of health.

There is currently limited information available regarding Aboriginal peoples in Kyogle, which has made it challenging to fully understand the needs and cultural context. Healthy North Coast has committed to conducting an Aboriginal deep dive to better understand the needs of the Aboriginal communities in the region. This aims to increase understanding and support future planning.

28% of people had an Aboriginal health check in Richmond Valley- Hinterland SA3.

Highest in the North Coast.

Social determinants

75 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).

Less than **1%** of people report very low proficiency in English (5% NSW).

71% survey respondents indicated housing availability as a concern in the community.

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

Median total weekly personal income is **\$520** (\$652 North Coast, NSW \$813).

32% 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 **921**, (Australia 1,000).

Out of the 12 LGAs in the North Coast region, Kyogle is placed tenth out of the twelve LGAs, indicating that people living in the Kyogle LGA face greater levels of disadvantage when compared to some of the other LGAs in the North Coast region.

Homelessness:

2 in 1,000

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

4 in 1,000

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

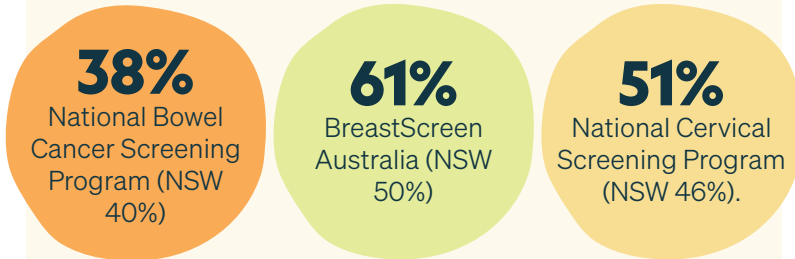
*Throughout this document 'survey' refers to the 2024 Better Health Community survey undertaken as part of the Health Needs Assessment 2025-28 consultation process

Preventative health and chronic disease

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

The most common chronic conditions are anxiety and osteoarthritis.

Cancer screening participation:



The most diagnosed cancers:

1. Urogenital cancer
2. Respiratory cancer
3. Skin cancer.

The cancer with the highest death rate is respiratory cancer (54 per 100,000).

Risks:

Current smoking		Alcohol consumption ²	
Kyogle	NSW	Kyogle	NSW
17%	12%	28%	18%
Physical activity ¹		Inadequate fruit intake	
Kyogle	NSW	Kyogle	NSW
79%	77%	61%	55%
Obese		Overweight (not obese)	
Kyogle	NSW	Kyogle	NSW
41%	31%	33%	34%

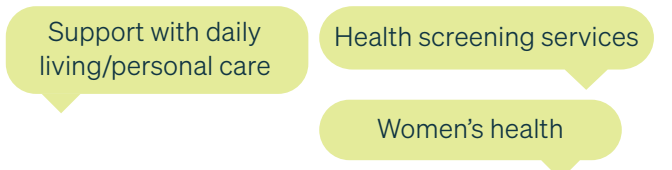
¹ aged 15 years and over, who did not meet 2014 physical activity guidelines

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

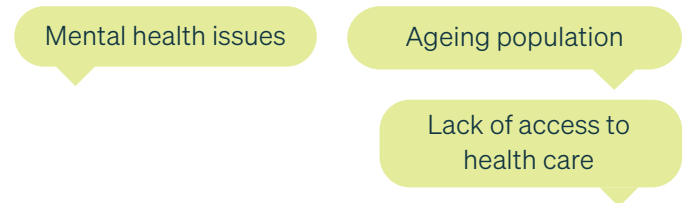
Opportunity: Strengthen preventative health programs, and provide education opportunities in partnership with LHDs and community organisations to ensure early intervention and prevention for chronic disease.

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:



Nearly **5 in 10** people needed to access a mental health service but couldn't.



Over **4 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.



Over **2 in 10** people in the Northern NSW LHD area, experience high or very high levels of psychological distress.



2 in 10 Richmond Valley – Hinterland SA3 residents accessed GP mental health.

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.

The top challenges to access mental health services:

- cost
- long distance from home
- lack of services.

In Richmond Valley-Hinterland SA3, rate of suicide deaths 20 per 100,000 population (11 per 100,000 population NSW).

People who lost homes and businesses and those who have been displaced for longer than 6 months as a result of the 2022 floods have a higher risk of experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Healthcare in Kyogle LGA

The distribution of GPs in the North Coast region is uneven, with Kyogle having one of the lowest FTE rates. The area is vulnerable to workforce changes, and community feedback highlights difficulties in booking GP appointments and limited access to after-hours services. These issues likely contribute to higher rates of preventable hospitalisations and emergency department visits for lower urgency conditions.

Kyogle Multi-Purpose Service and Bonalbo Multi-Purpose Service are both rural community facilities combining health, aged care and emergency services.

Kyogle Community Health, Bonalbo Community Health and Urbenville Community Health (Tenterfield LGA) provide a range of nursing, allied and health education services.



2 general practices



6 general practitioners



For every full time GP there are **1,429** patients



3 pharmacies



3 dental practitioners

Access to primary and community health services

74% of ED presentations are for lower urgency care (52 % North Coast, 48% NSW).

After-hours GP attendances rate in Richmond Valley-Hinterland SA3 is **5%** (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 for appointments
- Difficulty getting an appointment
- Lack of practitioners/services.

48% of survey participants found it difficult to see a GP. 16% of people needed to see a medical specialist but could not (2% North Coast).

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

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 Kyogle LGA, please scan the QR code:

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

