

## HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2025-2028

# Richmond Valley LGA

Richmond Valley **Local Government Area** (LGA) is on the Traditional Lands of the Bundjalung Nation in the Northern Rivers region of NSW. The LGA extends from the coastline at Evans Head, along the floodplains of the Richmond River beyond Casino, and spreads across to the foothills of the Great Dividing Range. It neighbours Kyogle, Lismore, Ballina and Clarence Valley LGAs. Richmond Valley LGA is part of the Northern NSW Local Health District and is part of the Richmond Valley-Hinterland SA3 however has some overlap with Richmond Valley-Coastal SA3. Agriculture and manufacturing are Richmond Valley LGA's major industries and employers. In 2025, Richmond Valley LGA continues to rebuild physically and emotionally following the severe flooding events of 2022. Many people lost their homes and or livelihoods - \$250 million in production, mostly in agriculture and manufacturing, was lost over the following 2 years. The area's demographic structure and geographic location presents specific health challenges, particularly in the areas of service access, healthy ageing and chronic disease prevention and management.



## Demographics

### Population:

23,542 people, Projected to increase by 2% by 2031 (compared to 5% increase North Coast)

### Population density:

8 residents per km<sup>2</sup> (17 per km<sup>2</sup> North Coast)



**7%** identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (6% North Coast)



Median age **46** (47 North Coast, 39 NSW)



**24%** aged 65 years or over, projected to increase by 12% by 2031 (increase 18% North Coast and 29% NSW)



Language other than English most spoken at home is Bundjalung (0.3%).



## Children and young people's health



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



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



Nearly **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 above the NSW and Australian rates.

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

**94%** of 2-year-old children (92% NSW and Australia).

**98%** of 5-year-old children (94% NSW and Australia).

## Older people

**61%** 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.

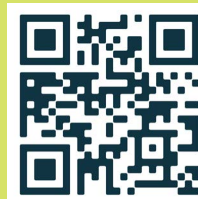
**48%** of survey\* respondents reported the ageing population is one of the most serious health concerns in the community.

**56%** of survey\* respondents found accessing services for older people difficult.

**Opportunity:** Increase support and education regarding available services for people as they age and for ageing relatives or people in their care.

**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 partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal peoples, families and communities. Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation provides services to the Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yaegl people of Richmond Valley, Clarence Valley, Kyogle and Tweed Heads LGAs. The Richmond Valley Clinic is based in Casino and includes outreach to Box Ridge, Muli Muli, Tabulam and Kyogle.

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

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

Aboriginal peoples' responses when asked "what kind of programs would you like more of to keep your community healthy and strong"

- Exercise and fitness
- Family planning
- Women's health
- Men's health

## Social determinants

**79 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 **8 per 1,000** people (NSW 4 per 1,000 people).

Reduced 14% since 2021.

Just over **9 in 10** survey respondents noted housing availability as a concern for the community.

There is limited availability of affordable housing in the Bellingen LGA. Adequate access to affordable housing is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Median total weekly personal income is **\$578** (\$652 North Coast, NSW \$813).

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

Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) score **924**, (Australia 1,000).

Indicates a greater disadvantage compared to the Australian average (1,000). These social determinants influence health outcomes for the communities living in Richmond Valley.

### Homelessness:

**2 in 1,000**

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

**2 in 1,000**

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

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

The 2022 floods impacted 3000 properties and left 450+ homes uninhabitable and 1,000+ people displaced. Many continue with insecure housing and in temporary accommodation.

\*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

2 in 7 people have 2 or more chronic conditions.

The highest presence of 8 different chronic conditions (asthma, chronic kidney disease, renal failure, CHD, stroke, type II diabetes, depression and osteoporosis) in the North Coast region by a substantial amount and is the LGA with the highest presence of chronic conditions.

The most common chronic conditions are anxiety, osteoarthritis, asthma.

## Cancer screening participation:

**38%** National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NSW 40%)

**61%** BreastScreen Australia (NSW 50%)

**43%** National Cervical Screening Program (NSW 46%).

**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 <sup>2</sup>	
Richmond Valley	NSW	Richmond Valley	NSW
<b>14%</b>	12%	<b>23%</b>	18%
Physical activity <sup>1</sup>		Inadequate fruit intake	
Richmond Valley	NSW	Richmond Valley	NSW
<b>80%</b>	77%	<b>51%</b>	55%
Obese		Overweight (not obese)	
Richmond Valley	NSW	Richmond Valley	NSW
<b>41%</b>	31%	<b>33%</b>	34%

<sup>1</sup> aged 15 years and over, who did not meet 2014 physical activity guidelines

<sup>2</sup> 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 and enhance preventative health programs, strategies, and care teams through partnerships, helping reduce the prevalence and impact of chronic conditions.

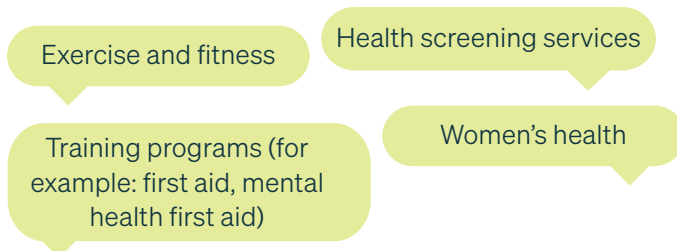
## The most diagnosed cancers:

1. Bowel cancer
2. Urogenital cancer
3. Breast cancer.

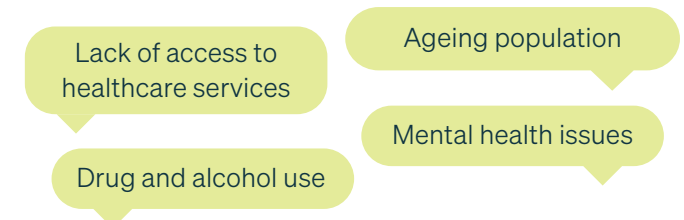
The cancer with the highest death rate is respiratory cancer (35 per 100,000)

## 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:

**2 in 10** people needed to access a mental health service but couldn't

**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.

**Opportunity:** Explore and implement innovative approaches to strengthen prevention, treatment and mental health support programs suited to a rural area.

The top challenges to access mental health services:

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

The rate of suicide deaths (17 per 100,000 population) in Richmond Valley-Coastal (19 per 100,000 population) and in Richmond Valley-Hinterland are higher than NSW (11 per 100,000 population).

**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 Richmond Valley LGA

Casino and District Memorial Hospital is a rural community hospital providing 24-hour emergency care, some inpatient and surgical services including palliative care and some outreach allied health and nursing services.

Community health centres Casino Community Health, Coraki Campbell HealthOne, and Evans Head HealthOne provide various primary and allied health services.



**5** general practices



For every full time GP there are **1,000** patients



**6** dental practitioners



**21** general practitioners



**7** pharmacies

**Opportunity:** Continue to work in partnership to support recruitment and retention of the healthcare workforce.

## Access to primary and community health services

**62%** of ED presentations are for lower urgency care (52 % North Coast, 48% NSW).

Many residents need to travel outside of the region to Lismore, Gold Coast, or even further to Sydney to receive appropriate medical care.

After-hours GP use in Richmond Valley - Hinterland SA3 (which includes Richmond Valley LGA) is **11%** (Australia 17%).

Barriers to accessing primary care include:

- Long wait time for appointment
- Difficulty getting an appointment
- Cost
- Lack of services.

**Opportunity:** Enhance access to primary care services for lower urgency needs by continuing to work in partnership to support the 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 Richmond Valley LGA, please scan the QR code:

If you have any questions please email [Betterhealth@hnc.org.au](mailto:Betterhealth@hnc.org.au)

