



HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2025-2028

Tweed LGA

Tweed **Local Government Area (LGA)**, located in the Northern Rivers region of NSW on the Traditional Lands of the Bundjalung Nation, is part of the Tweed Valley SA3 region and the Northern NSW Local Health District. It borders Byron, Lismore, Kyogle LGAs, and Queensland. The LGA features diverse landscapes, including World Heritage-listed Gondwana rainforests, wetlands, estuaries, and national parks, which are culturally, environmentally, and scenically significant. Tweed's natural beauty and proximity to the Gold Coast Airport make it a popular tourist destination. Major industries include hospitality, trade, and healthcare sectors. The region's location on the Queensland border offers both opportunities and challenges, particularly in managing health ageing and chronic disease prevention.



Demographics

Population:

97,386 people. This is the largest population in the North Coast and is projected to increase by 6% by 2031 (compared to 5% increase North Coast).

Population density:

74 residents per km² (17 per km² North Coast)



4% identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (6% North Coast)



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



27% aged 65 years or over, projected to increase by 27% by 2031 (increase 18% North Coast and 29% NSW)



5% of the population is born in non-English speaking countries (1% North Coast, 19% NSW, 16% Australia).



Children and young people's health



Just over **1 in 5** children assessed as vulnerable in one or more areas of early childhood development.



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

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

Child immunisation rates

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

88% of 1-year-old children (94% in NSW and Australia).

86% of 2-year-old children (92% NSW and Australia).

90% of 5-year-old children (94% NSW and Australia).

Older people

58% of people aged 65 years and over have at least one long-term health condition.

3% of the population live with dementia (2% NSW and Australia).

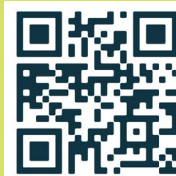
Higher than NSW and Australian rates and is expected to increase as the 65 years and over population increases.

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

47% 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.



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

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 operates Bugalwena General Practice in Tweed Heads South and provides services to Aboriginal communities in the Tweed LGA.

22% of people had an Aboriginal health check in Tweed Valley 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:

Exercise and fitness

Art and cultural programs

Support with daily living / personal care

Training programs

Health screening services

Social determinants

74 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).

Decreased 13% from 2021.

Tweed LGA has limited availability of affordable housing. Of the **132** rental properties available **0** properties 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 **\$658** (\$652 North Coast, NSW \$813).

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

Social isolation can increase health risks.

Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) score **989**, (Australia 1,000).

Indicates a slightly greater disadvantage compared to the Australian average (1,000).

Opportunity: Improve support for people facing homelessness and domestic violence by integrating services and strengthening partnerships with providers.

Homelessness:

5 in 1,000

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

3 in 1,000

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

The 2022 floods affected areas within the Tweed LGA and damaged over 2,100 resulting in 1,600 residents displaced. Current numbers of those displaced, homeless or experiencing flood-related housing insecurity are not known.

*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 5 people have 2 or more chronic conditions.

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

Cancer screening participation:

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

53% BreastScreen Australia (NSW 50%)

47% National Cervical Screening Program (NSW 46%).

The most diagnosed cancers:

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

The cancers with the highest death rate are respiratory and upper gastrointestinal (both 25 per 100,000).

Risks:

Current smoking		Alcohol consumption ²	
Tweed	NSW	Tweed	NSW
17%	12%	25%	18%
Physical activity ¹		Inadequate fruit intake	
Tweed	NSW	Tweed	NSW
73%	77%	55%	55%
Obese		Overweight (not obese)	
Tweed	NSW	Tweed	NSW
33%	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

Opportunity: Strengthen and enhance preventative health programs, strategies, and care teams through partnerships, helping reduce the prevalence and impact of chronic conditions.

When you were asked...

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

Exercise and fitness

Health screening services

Women's health

Support with daily living/personal care

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

Mental health issues

Ageing population

Lack of access to healthcare services

Drug and alcohol use

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.



Just over **1 in 10** residents in Tweed Valley SA3, accessed GP mental health services.

The top challenges to access mental health services:

- cost
- lack of services
- difficulty organising appointments.

In Tweed Valley SA3, the rate of suicide deaths (18 per 100,000 people). The rate is nearly double the rate of 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.

Opportunity: Strengthen partnerships with community organisations to plan for, respond to, and support community to recover from environmental disasters.

Healthcare in Tweed LGA

Tweed Valley Hospital received a \$723.3 million redevelopment to better serve the growing Tweed-Byron community. The expansion increases capacity and adds additional services, with the aim to address issues such as lower urgency emergency department presentations and gaps in specialised care.

Murwillumbah District Hospital is a community hospital providing emergency care and a range of medical, nursing and surgical services.

Community health centres such as Banora Point Child and Family Health, Kingscliff Community Health, Murwillumbah Community Health, Pottsville HealthOne, and Tweed Heads Community Health offer a range of primary and allied health services.

Tweed LGA faces unique challenges to accessing healthcare due to the differing healthcare systems between New South Wales and Queensland, with residents often accessing services across the border, which can lead to confusion and delays. The movement of residents between states also strains both healthcare systems, making it difficult to accurately assess access to care and manage the overall demand.

Access to primary and community health services

51% of survey respondents found it difficult to access a GP when they needed.

40% of ED presentations are for lower urgency care (52 % North Coast, 48% NSW).

After-hours GP attendances rate in Tweed Valley SA3 is **11%** (Australia 17%).

-  **21** general practices
-  **126** general practitioners
-  For every full time GP there are **909** patients
-  **25** pharmacies
-  **83** dental practitioners


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.

Barriers to accessing primary care include:

- Long wait times for appointments
- Difficulty getting 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.

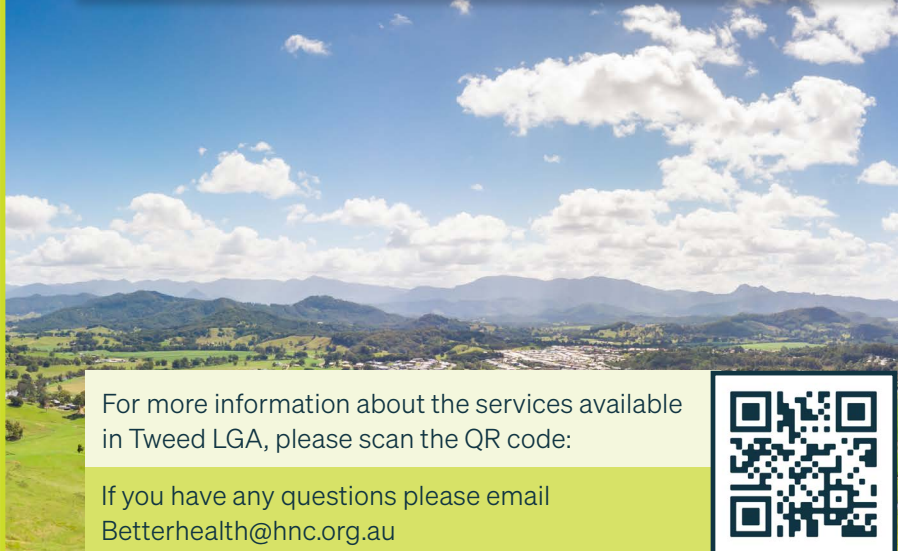
Scan the QR code to go to the Healthdirect website.



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 Tweed LGA, please scan the QR code:

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

