



HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2025-2028

Lismore LGA

Located in the Northern Rivers region of NSW, Lismore **Local Government Area (LGA)** is on the Traditional Lands of the Bundjalung Nation. Lismore LGA is part of the Northern NSW Local Health District and Richmond Valley – Hinterland SA3. Its diverse landscape includes mountains, world heritage-listed rainforests and fertile flood plains making for productive agricultural and tourist industries.

Lismore LGA shares boundaries with 5 other LGAs – Kyogle, Tweed, Byron, Ballina and Richmond Valley. It is the health, services and education hub for the LGA and surrounding LGAs. Lismore is one of the 4 regional cities in the North Coast region.

As of 2025, the Lismore area continues to rebuild physically and emotionally following the severe flooding events of 2022. The strength and resilience exemplified by the communities within the Lismore LGA are a remarkable asset, demonstrating the ability to prepare and recover from environmental disasters.

Note, in many instances data is not available for periods after the 2022 floods. The impact of these events must be considered when looking at health status, housing, economy/employment and life of the Lismore communities.



Demographics

Population:

44,334 people, 8% of the North Coast population. Projected to increase by 3% by 2031 (compared to 5% increase North Coast)

Population density:

34 residents per km² (17 per km² North Coast)



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



Median age **44**
(47 North Coast, 39 NSW)



In the 2021 census, **2 in 10** people were aged 65 years or older. This is expected to increase by 22% (18% increase North Coast and 29% increase NSW).



Children and younger persons health



Nearly **1 in 4** children in Lismore LGA were assessed as vulnerable in one or more areas of early childhood development.

Opportunity: Work in partnership to understand reasons for low immunisation rates and work with community and healthcare providers on improvement strategies. Continue to partner to improve education, support, community and peer-based services for children and families.

Child immunisation rates

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

90%

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

85%

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

93%

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

Older people

57% 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.

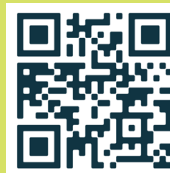
59% of survey* respondents found accessing services for older people difficult.

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

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. Rekindling the Spirit provides a number of culturally safe and appropriate health and wellbeing programs for Aboriginal communities in the Lismore LGA. These include allied health services, general practice, maternal and child health, women's and men's groups, youth programs and social and emotional wellbeing support.

28% of people had an Aboriginal health check in Richmond Valley - Hinterland 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
- Women's health
- Support with daily living/personal care
- Employment programs
- Community health education events

Social determinants

71 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 **5 per 1,000** people (NSW 4 per 1,000 people).

Decreased 12% from 2021.

Adequate access to affordable housing is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. There is limited availability of affordable housing in the Lismore LGA. Of the **67** rental properties available in the Lismore area:

- 0** were affordable to singles or couples on Jobseeker or Youth Allowance
- 8** were affordable by a couple with 2 children on minimum wage and receiving family tax benefits (FTB) A and B
- 2** were affordable by a single person on minimum wage
- 3** were affordable by a couple on Age Pension
- 2** were affordable by a single person on Age Pension.

Median total weekly personal income is **\$685** (\$652 North Coast, NSW \$813).

30% single or lone households (25% NSW) and 5% group homes (4% NSW).

Social isolation can increase health risks.

Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) score **966**, (Australia 1,000).

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

Homelessness:

5 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).

Social determinants



More than two years on from the 2022 floods, as of September 2024 approximately 830 people remained in emergency and temporary accommodation sites. Further numbers of those displaced, homeless or experiencing flood-related housing insecurity are not currently known. 24% of survey respondents expressed concern about climate change, highlighting its growing impact on community resilience and housing stability.

Preventative health and chronic disease

1 in every 5 people have 2 or more chronic conditions.

The most common chronic conditions are anxiety and osteoarthritis.

Cancer screening participation:

38%

National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NSW 40%)

56%

BreastScreen Australia (NSW 50%)

47%

National Cervical Screening Program (NSW 46%).

The most diagnosed cancers:

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

The cancer with the highest death rate is respiratory cancer (45 per 100,000).

Risks:

Current smoking		Alcohol consumption ²	
Lismore	NSW	Lismore	NSW
18%	12%	20%	18%
Physical activity ¹		Inadequate fruit intake	
Lismore	NSW	Lismore	NSW
80%	77%	58%	55%
Obese		Overweight (not obese)	
Lismore	NSW	Lismore	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

Opportunity: strengthen preventive health programs, including cancer screening initiatives. Enhance support for populations with additional vulnerabilities, including people experiencing homelessness and people with disabilities.

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

Community health education events

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

Mental health issues

Lack of access to healthcare services

Ageing population

Drug and alcohol use

Lack of dental care

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.



Over **2 in 10** in the Northern NSW local health district (LHD) area, experience high or very high levels of psychological distress.



1 in 10 residents in Richmond Valley-Hinterland SA3, accessed GP mental health services.

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).

Mental health

The top challenges to access mental health services:

-  cost
-  difficult to organise
-  lack of services.

In Richmond Valley-Hinterland SA3, the rate of suicide deaths (1 per 5,000 people) (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: Strengthen preventive health programs and partnerships with community organisations to plan, respond, and support community mental health and recover from environmental disasters.

Healthcare in Lismore LGA

Lismore Community Health based at Lismore Base Hospital offers a range of nursing and allied health services.

Lismore Base Hospital provides a range of services including emergency care, surgery and specialised treatments.



10 general practices



59 general practitioners



For every full time GP there are **833** patients



13 pharmacies



27 dental practitioners

Access to primary and community health services

More than 1 in 2 people found it difficult to see a GP when they needed.

Nearly 1 in 5 people who needed to see a specialist could not see one.

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
-  cost
-  difficulty getting an appointment.

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 Lismore LGA, please scan the QR code:

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

