

# VitalSigns®

Discover the heartbeat  
of our community

ALBURY/WODONGA BORDER REGION  
VIC & NSW MAY 2024



BORDER **TRÜST**  
Your Community Foundation

# >> BORDER REGION

Our region includes six Local Government Areas across Victoria and NSW.

## ABOUT

Border Trust is an independent Community Foundation. We activate the power of giving by connecting the generosity of donors with local not-for-profit organisations, funding projects that create positive change, now and in the future.



## OUR REGION

Our region includes six Local Government Areas (LGAs) across the NSW and Victorian border that have been significantly impacted by natural disasters - Albury, Federation, Indigo, Greater Hume, Towong and Wodonga.

This VitalSigns project, in addition to our community engagement activities, builds our understanding of the community's strengths, trends and areas of greatest need and provides metrics that assist us to measure our readiness, resilience or recovery from the impacts of natural disasters and climate change.

In addition to understanding our region's demographics, we group data into seven key themes:

- Understanding Education
- Economic & Employment Factors
- Physical & Mental Health
- Safety & Domestic Violence
- Housing Security
- Food Security
- Environment, Waterways & Landscapes

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Border Trust acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their enduring connections to land, waterways and community. We pay our respects to elders past and present.

# OVERVIEW

We activate the power of giving for lasting impact across five areas.

## AREAS OF IMPACT

Border Trust is 100% place-based and focused on building community capacity across the border region. We take the time to understand local needs and to measure the impact that we, with our donors and grant recipients, make.



### CLIMATE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Communities are equipped to anticipate, prepare for, and manage the diverse impacts of a changing climate.



### COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

The development of regional leaders enhances the community's ability to tackle local challenges and opportunities.



### COMMUNITY CONNECTION & WELLBEING

A welcoming, connected and inclusive community provides the foundation for a vibrant region and positively impacts individual and community well-being.



### DISASTER RECOVERY, RESILIENCE & READINESS

Our region's ability to prepare for, withstand, and recover from natural disasters enhances the safety, health, and economic prosperity of Border communities.



### COMMUNITY EQUITY

Access to necessities like food, shelter, education, work, and healthcare enables all to participate in and contribute to a thriving region.

## NATURAL DISASTERS

2001

## SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Towong Fires **2003**

**2004** Border Trust Established

Region Wide Drought **2006**

**2008** Global Financial Crisis

Black Saturday Fires **2009**

Local Floods **2018**

Black Summer Fires **2019/20**

Albury Wodonga & Federation Floods **2022**

**2020/21** COVID-19 Border Closures

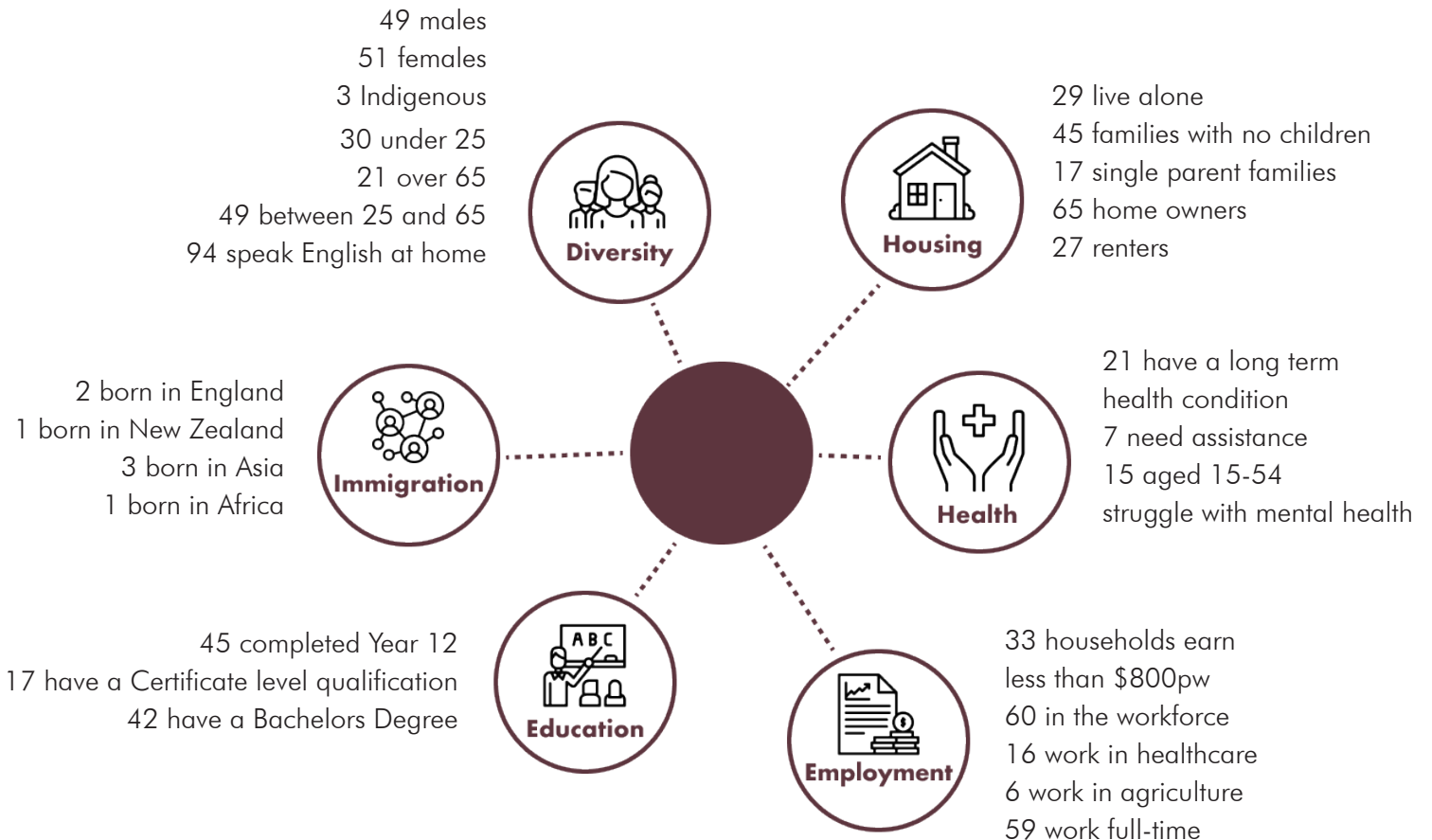
**2023** Cost of Living Crisis



# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Our Village - if the Border Region was 100 people

Our region has a population of 148,095 people. In our village of 100 people, 1 person represents almost 1500 people.



### PHILANTHROPY makes a positive difference, now and into the future.

We're a generous community and the potential for donations to make a positive difference is huge. In our region, it is estimated that \$7.4 billion will be transferred between generations from 2026 to 2035, involving almost 8,956 households and averaging \$827,936 per household. If each household donated just 1%, equivalent to \$8,279, we would collectively raise \$74 million.

Local philanthropy will play an important role in the future of our region. Imagine if just 1% of this wealth was gifted to stay local. By giving to Border Trust, donations are invested, then distributed as grants to local community groups and not-for-profit organisations to fund life-changing initiatives, now and into the future.





# UNDERSTANDING EDUCATION

Global research shows that a student’s ability to succeed with studies are negatively impacted by climate change. Direct effects include destruction and degradation of infrastructure such as school buildings, while indirect effects include increased displacement from homes which our communities are experiencing.



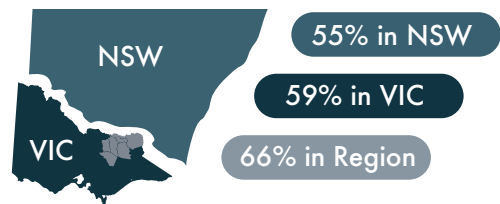
## Early Childhood

94% of early childhood education places are at centres rated as meeting or exceeding National Quality Standards.



10.7% of children are developmentally vulnerable on 2 or more domains, in comparison to 10.2% for VIC and 10.5% in NSW.

## 4 & 5 years olds enrolled in pre-school



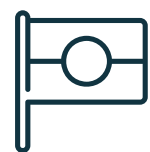
## High School Completions

45% of adults in our region have completed high school, significantly lower than Victoria (61.8%) and New South Wales (58.9%). 34% of Indigenous persons aged 15 years or older have completed year 12 or equivalent.



## Workforce Qualifications

The highest level of education for 42% of the workforce is a Cert III or IV, while 24% of employed adults have a bachelor’s degree.



## University Participation

In 2023, La Trobe University had 405 students enrolled at the Albury-Wodonga campus, 78.8% of which studied full-time. In 2022, 53.8% were the first in their family to attend university.

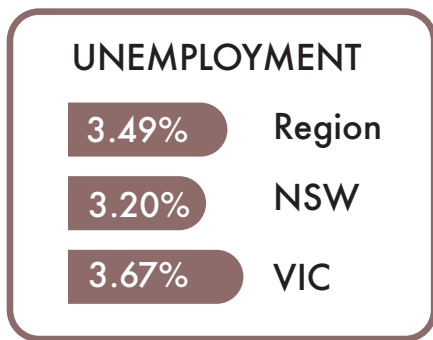




# ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT



The top industry of employment in our region is Health Care and Social Assistance (16.4%), this is consistent with the top industry for both NSW (14.3%) and VIC (14.1%).



56.6% of employees work full-time.



On average, household incomes in the region have grown less than the states (44.7% for VIC and 47.9% for NSW).



The community reports that lack of accommodation, and our regional location impacts the ability to attract and retain staff.

Households in our region with a total weekly income less than \$1500 a week (57%), is almost double that of Victoria (34.5%) and NSW (33.9%).



17% of adults and young people in our region volunteer, higher than the rates in Victoria (13.4%) and New South Wales (13%).

Crops account for 55% of gross agricultural value across the region. Of the livestock produced, sheep and lamb account for 79%.



Our changing climate will have **ECONOMIC** impacts, as our region becomes hotter and dryer the production of food in a profitable and sustainable manner becomes more challenging.



# PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Disasters such as bushfires negatively impact a range of short-term health outcomes, from respiratory conditions through to mental health. The impact of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis have placed further demands on services.



Across our region, there are just under 40 General Practitioners per 10,000 residents. This varies substantially across the LGAs, from 10.68 in Greater Hume to 79.2 in Towong.



Over 90% of 5 year olds in our region have had all of their mandatory vaccinations.



2018 data for our region shows that a higher rate of residents consume at least 2 standard drinks each day, more than their respective state averages. Members of our community also have higher rates of smoking in comparison to the states.

In comparison to NSW and VIC, our region has a higher percentage of persons under 55 with at least one long-term health condition (18.3%). For these residents, the largest proportion suffer from a mental health condition.



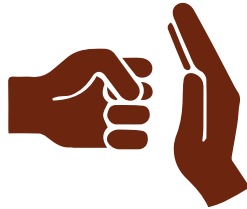
Our region has a higher prevalence of youth suicide ideation (7-11%), in comparison to NSW (6%) and Victoria (5%).

Across the community as a whole, the rate of self-harm hospitalisations have decreased since 2018.



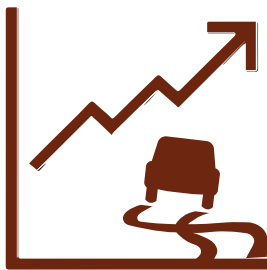


# SAFETY & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Since 2018 sexual offences (rates per 100,000) have increased in Albury, Greater Hume, Wodonga & Indigo. The number of Apprehended Violence Order breaches also increased in all of these LGAs.

Federation & Towong have rates substantially lower than NSW and VIC.



In comparison to the States, our region has a higher rate (per 10,000 persons) of motor vehicle theft. This is predominantly the result of increases over time in Albury and Wodonga.

Region 22.65

VIC 16.72

NSW 15.05

While there have been decreases in the number of criminal incidents related to property damage, it still accounts for the highest rate of criminal incidents across our region.



## RATE PER 10,000 PERSON

Towong  
19.4

VIC  
48.67

NSW  
59.33

REGION  
80.18

Albury  
126.68

In our region the rate of family **VIOLENCE** (46.7 per 10,000 people) is higher than both NSW (41.1) and Victoria (32.3).

This is particularly concerning with research showing that rates of domestic violence increase during natural disasters such as bushfires and floods, which our community are prone to experiencing.





# HOUSING SECURITY



On average across the region, house prices have increased 32% from 2017 to 2021. Since 2011 weekly rent has increased 39% on average.

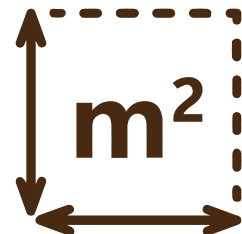


3 in 10 households rental payments exceed 30% of the household income.



1 in 10 households mortgage repayments exceed 30% of the household income.

12% of households reported living in a suitably sized dwelling. Most have at least 1 bedroom spare, while in Albury, Wodonga & Greater Hume, 1 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons report requiring at least one more bedroom.



In the 2019 fires, **60 HOMES** in Towong were destroyed or damaged, with many families still displaced from this event.

An additional 35 camping and recreation sites were also destroyed.

The community reports that barriers to rebuilding after natural disasters include slow turn-arounds for building permits as well as lack of tradesman and building supplies.



As at the last census, there were almost 500 homeless persons across the region. According to Specialist Homelessness Services who support people in our region experience housing insecurity, 60% of their clients were female and around 30% were under 24.



# FOOD SECURITY

Over 2.5M hectares in our region (66%) are dedicated to food production. In the 2019 fires, 926 hectares of field crops were destroyed and over 6000 livestock lost in Towong.

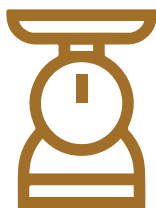


Across Australia, cost of living was the largest contributor to hardship for **FOOD** insecure households. In 2022 64% of households stated this as a cause of hardship, with this jumping to 79% in 2023.



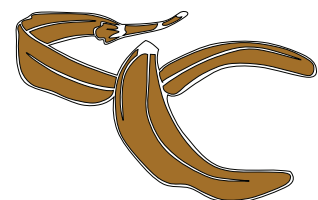
The Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare supported over 5,500 families last financial year with food relief, along with providing relief to over 109 organisations.

Over 27,000 volunteer hours helped ensure that FoodShare could provide the support that our communities needed.



Since 2018, the total kgs of food distributed by FoodShare in Towong has increased 24x, from 924 to 23,395 in 2022.

Through their sustainability project, the Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare also diverted almost 50,000kg of food waste from landfill.






# ENVIRONMENT, WATERWAYS & LANDSCAPES

The mighty Murray River, Australia’s longest, is a central part of life in our region, forming the border between Victoria and NSW and touching all six of our regions LGAs.

**WATERWAYS** account for almost 3% of area across our region.


Our landscape is dominated by agricultural use, while 12% of land in the region is dedicated to conservation, 22% is open to public use and less than 1% used for urban intensive purposes.

In the past 20 years there have been 7 significant environmental disasters, ranging from drought through to fires and flooding.




**Average Days 35°+**

Federation	~ 23.5
Greater Hume	~ 10.5
Albury	~ 9.4
Wodonga	~ 8.5
Indigo	~ 8.1
Towong	~ 2.1




**Average Annual Rainfall**

Towong	~ 1,072mm
Indigo	~ 800mm
Wodonga	~ 767mm
Albury	~ 692mm
Greater Hume	~ 679mm
Federation	~ 468mm



**Average Days of Frost**

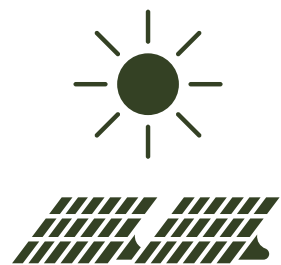
Towong	~ 36.8
Greater Hume	~ 20.9
Indigo	~ 20.8
Wodonga	~ 14.4
Albury	~ 10.3
Federation	~ 7.6



**Tree Coverage**

Towong	~ 49%
Indigo	~ 26%
Albury	~ 19%
Greater Hume	~ 19%
Wodonga	~ 18%
Federation	~ 7%

While installations of solar hot water systems peaked in 2018, the number of household solar panel installations installed in our region has continued to see significant growth.



Across our region the population density varies considerably. In Albury there are 185 people per km<sup>2</sup>. Almost twice as many as Wodonga which is the next most populated at 100 people per km<sup>2</sup>. This then drops right down to 2 people in the Greater Hume Shire, and less than 1 in Towong.

# VitalSigns Report 2024

## Connecting the dots for community.

Border Trust is excited to launch this VitalSigns project and share our findings with our donors, supporters and community.

While this project helps us to understand elements of our region, we are aware that other data exists that is not yet publicly available.

Our next step is to engage further with community, local agencies and government to collect data and research and include this on our VitalSigns platform, so it is easily accessible.

## Activating the power of giving for lasting impact across our region.

The VitalSigns project helps our understanding of local needs and informs where funding and support is directed.

This project provides benchmark data from which we can measure impact, not just across our 5 impact areas, but also across the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

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VitalSigns is a community-driven data program used by community foundations around the world to measure the vitality of their communities and identify significant trends in a range of quality-of-life areas.

We acknowledge with appreciation the work of the Toronto Foundation that has developed and shared the VitalSigns concept. The VitalSigns trademark is used with permission from Community Foundations of Canada.

Community Foundations Australia (CFAustralia) is the peak body for Community Foundations in Australia. CFAustralia manages licensing of the VitalSigns program in Australia by agreement with Community Foundations of Canada.

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**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



**COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS AUSTRALIA**

To see the details of the full Border Trust VitalSigns project, and find references for data noted in this report, please visit the project dashboard at;  
[www.bordertrust.org.au](http://www.bordertrust.org.au)