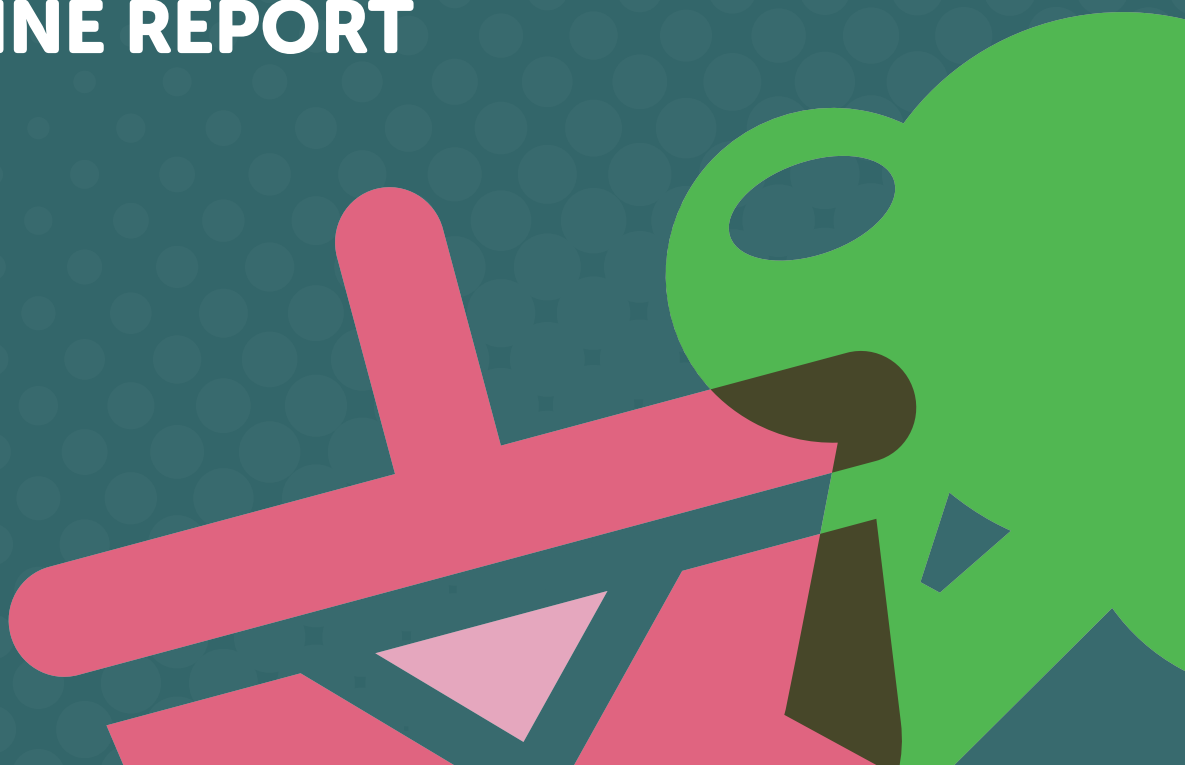


2025
**Active
Living**
CENSUS



Loddon Campaspe region

TOPLINE REPORT



The Active Living Census is a core component of the Healthy Loddon Campaspe initiative, funded by the Victorian Government.

This report presents the topline findings for the Loddon Campaspe region and was prepared by the Healthy Loddon Campaspe team.

For more information, visit www.healthyloddoncampaspe.au/alcl

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Executive Summary

E1 Background and methodology

The 2025 Active Living Census (ALC) was conducted by the City of Greater Bendigo (CoGB) on behalf of the Healthy Loddon Campaspe (HLC) initiative. HLC is funded by the Victorian Government and aims to improve health outcomes across the Loddon Campaspe region.

A non-probabilistic self-selection survey approach was used. All residents across the Loddon Campaspe region were eligible to participate, and a broad promotional campaign was undertaken to encourage widespread awareness and engagement. The survey was administered primarily online (with a limited number of hard copies), with the aim of reaching as many community members as possible between May 26 and July 6, 2025. For each participating Local Government Area (LGA), the table below shows the number of survey responses alongside the total population of residents aged 3 years and over.

		
Population: 117,254 Response: 4,158	Population: 49,830 Response: 890	Population: 37,565 Response: 1,052
		
Population: 19,766 Response: 859	Population: 13,167 Response: 643	Population: 7,570 Response: 642

* Population benchmarks for residents aged 3 years and over sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2021 Census data

The total number of responses received was 8,244. Among a residential population of 245,157 people aged 3 years and over, this represents an overall response rate of 3.4%. A Topline Report will be available for each participating LGA, allowing localised results analysis.

This report presents the results collected from the 8,244 respondents from the Loddon Campaspe region. Compared to population benchmarks, females, children and adolescents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and those with a Bachelor level education or higher were over-represented. Weighting was applied at the LGA level so that results could be generalised to the Loddon Campaspe population. The weighting benchmarks used for adults in the 2025 ALC were age by education, sex, and country of birth, while children (aged 3 to 17) were weighted by age and sex only.

E2 Health indicator population benchmarks

The 2025 ALC incorporated several established health measures to enable comparisons with the broader Victorian adult population aged 18 and over. The most relevant benchmark data for Victoria was sourced from the 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey (VPHS), conducted by the Victorian Department of Health. Where VPHS data was unavailable, benchmark data was supplemented with information from the 2022 Australian National Health Survey (NHS).

Participants in the 2025 ALC generally demonstrated healthier behaviours compared to Victorian benchmarks, with comparable adherence to fruit and vegetable consumption recommendations, fewer reports of engaging in health risk behaviours such as smoking, vaping, gambling and consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, and a smaller proportion failing to meet physical activity and muscle strengthening recommendations. Conversely, a comparatively higher proportion of 2025 ALC respondents self-reported their health as fair or poor, reported low levels of life satisfaction and were classed as overweight or obese compared to Victorian benchmarks.

E3 Movement behaviours

The 2025 ALC survey incorporated items designed to assess 24-hour movement behaviours among Loddon Campaspe residents aged three years and older. This enables an evaluation of adherence to age-specific recommendations established by government and non-government expert bodies to support optimal health and wellbeing.

Overall, respondents showed strong adherence to aerobic physical activity recommendations, with 70% meeting recommendations, while around half met the muscle-strengthening recommendations. Across both behaviours, adults were more likely than children to achieve recommended levels, and males consistently reported higher participation than females. Active travel patterns varied, with around one in six respondents walking daily and one in eight cycling weekly. Walking and cycling were more common among males than females and among children and adolescents compared to adults. In contrast, recreational screen time was high among all respondents, with over half exceeding recommended limits, particularly adolescents, although sex differences were minimal. Adherence to sleep recommendations was comparatively higher, with roughly 70% meeting age-specific recommendations and minimal differences were seen between children and adults or between males and females. Overall, health promoting movement behaviours were consistently less common among those who are neurodivergent, those experiencing financial stress, food insecurity, and those requiring help with daily activities. The positive correlation seen between these movement behaviours and health and wellbeing outcomes further highlights the need for greater investment in health policy and promotion to assist our marginalised community members to be more active.

Adults and females were more likely than children and males to report that they were not as active as they would like to be. These respondents also identified a range of barriers to participation, with lack of time particularly common among adults and cost- and safety-related barriers more frequently reported by females. Because these groups have expressed a desire to be more active, understanding the key reasons for their insufficient activity is essential for informing targeted efforts to better support them.

Perceptions of the local environment for physical activity were generally positive, with around 70% of respondents agreeing that it was easy to be active where they live. Children and males were more likely than adults and females to hold this view. These respondents also tended to be more physically active; however, it is unclear whether they are more active because their local area supports physical activity, or whether they perceive their area as supportive because they are already active.

E4 Diet

Overall, the diet-related findings from the 2025 ALC highlight significant challenges across the population, particularly in relation to food security and vegetable intake. Around one-third of respondents experienced some level of food insecurity, with higher rates among groups already facing broader health and social disadvantages. Approximately one-third of respondents consumed the recommended volume of water per day, while almost one in seven reported consuming

sugar-sweetened beverages daily. Adherence to fruit and vegetable consumption recommendations was low, with less than half meeting the fruit recommendations and just 10% meeting the vegetable recommendations. Adherence to the recommendations was lower among adults than children, and males were less likely to meet the vegetable recommendations than females. Food insecurity was higher and fruit and vegetable consumption was consistently lower among vulnerable members of the community, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders, neurodivergent people, those with lower education, and who are financially insecure.

Barriers to eating enough fruit and vegetables were widely reported, with the most common being personal preferences, cost and limited access to high-quality produce. Cost and inconvenience to prepare vegetables were more frequently noted as barriers among females than males. Perceptions of ease of access to healthy food in the local area were generally positive with no significant difference seen between males and females or across age groups. Like physical activity, individuals who reported that it was easy to access healthy food locally were more likely to report better health and wellbeing and were more likely to meet recommended health behaviours.

E5 Public facilities and open spaces

Respondents reported frequent use of public spaces and pedestrian infrastructure, though patterns varied by age and sex. Around half used public open spaces weekly, with higher use among children than adults and slightly higher use among males than females. Footpaths were used more often, with over 70% of respondents, particularly children, using them weekly. Off-road walking and cycling tracks were less commonly used, with only one-third using them weekly (females less so than males). Use of parks, sports grounds, swimming facilities and playgrounds was widespread. Children tended to use more recreational and play-based facilities and adults more were likely to use community gardens and halls. The most common reasons for using public facilities or open spaces included exercise or health and fitness (66%), socialising (62%), and fun or enjoyment (56%), with children more likely to use spaces for unstructured play and adults more likely to use them for exercise, mental health, and time in nature. Perceptions of safety in the local area were generally high, with 32% of adults reporting always feeling safe, and 86% of parents agreeing that their child is safe in their local area.

Suggestions for improvements most commonly related to walking tracks and footpaths, with around one in eight respondents (13%) indicating they would be more likely to use public facilities and open spaces if footpaths were increased, upgraded, extended or better connected to parks, tracks and trails. Other commonly identified suggestions included more or improved exercise equipment and facilities (12%), better lighting on streets, tracks, trails and facilities (9%), improved provision and quality of toilets and change rooms including better disability access (8%), enhanced accessibility to parks and public facilities (7%) and an increase in local events and activities, particularly those that are low-cost or free (7%).

E6 Health and wellbeing indicators

The 2025 ALC asked all respondents to report their (or their child's) general health status and provide height and weight measurements to calculate BMI, while adults also self-reported their life satisfaction, perceived value to society, and mental wellbeing. Among adults, one quarter (25%) rated their health as fair or poor, 13% reported low life satisfaction, 25% felt they were not valued by society, and 27% had poor mental wellbeing based on the WHO-5 index. In contrast, children's health ratings were markedly higher, with only 5% of parents or guardians reporting fair or poor health for their child.

Obesity was three times more likely among adults (30%) compared to children (10%), indicating substantial health and wellbeing challenges among adults living in the Loddon Campaspe region and underscoring the need for targeted investment to support improvements in population health.

Across all five indicators, marginalised and disadvantaged groups consistently reported poorer outcomes, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, LGBTQIA+ individuals, neurodivergent people, those with lower levels of education, people experiencing financial stress or food insecurity, and those requiring help with daily activities. Respondents with fair or poor self-rated health, low life satisfaction, lower perceived value to society, poor mental wellbeing or who were overweight or obese were consistently less likely to meet recommendations for fruit and vegetable intake, physical activity, sleep and screen time, and were more likely to consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily. Those with fair or poor health, low life satisfaction, who do not feel valued by society and have poor mental wellbeing were more likely to be current smokers. Those with low life satisfaction and do not feel valued by society were more likely to be current vapers. Those who were obese were more likely to report gambling over the past 12 months.

E7 Risk behaviours

Risk behaviours varied across the 2025 ALC sample, with 58% of adult respondents reporting risky single-occasion alcohol consumption, 7% currently smoking, 4% currently vaping, and 35% gambling at least once in the past 12 months. Demographic patterns varied across the four risk behaviours. Smoking and vaping were consistently more common among those who are financially worse off and experiencing food insecurity, whereas risky alcohol consumption and gambling were most strongly patterned by sex and language, with males and those who speak English as their main language showing higher prevalence of both. Additionally, young adults were more likely to engage in risky alcohol consumption over the past 12 months.

Current smoking rates were high among respondents with fair or poor self-rated health, low life satisfaction, lower perceived value to society, poor mental wellbeing or overweight/obesity, and those with low life satisfaction and perceived value to society were more likely to current vape. Those who reported being overweight or obese were also more likely to have gambled in the past 12 months.

Across the four risk behaviours, several clear links with other health behaviours emerged. Current smoking rates were also higher among those who failed to meet the recommendations for fruit intake, aerobic physical activity, muscle strengthening exercise, and screen time. Current vapers were less likely to meet the fruit intake recommendations and more likely to drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily. Risky alcohol consumption displayed a mixed pattern. Risky drinkers were less likely to meet fruit and vegetable intake recommendations but were more likely than non-risky drinkers to meet aerobic physical activity recommendations. Weekly gambling was associated with less water consumption, and those who reported never gambling were more likely to meet the recommendations for fruit, vegetable, screen time and sleep and less likely to consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily. The four risk behaviours also showed clear clustering. Current smokers, vapers and those who had engaged in risky alcohol consumption all had higher rates of engaging in the other risk behaviours. Weekly gamblers were also more likely to engage in risk alcohol consumption. These overlapping patterns reinforce that risk behaviours tend to co-occur, particularly among more disadvantaged groups and among those experiencing poorer health and wellbeing.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Active Living Census (ALC) is a population health survey which provides locally and regionally relevant, reliable and valid data on the health behaviours, activity levels, preferences and needs of the Loddon Campaspe population. The data collected enables evidence-based planning for local health and recreation services and a better understanding of the health behaviours, needs and preferences of the local community. First completed in 2014 within the City of Greater Bendigo, the 2019 ALC was expanded to capture data from residents across all six Local Government Areas (LGAs) within the Loddon Campaspe region: City of Greater Bendigo, Mount Alexander Shire, Central Goldfields Shire, Loddon Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire and Campaspe Shire.

The ALC is integral to the Healthy Loddon Campaspe (HLC) initiative which aims to improve health outcomes across the Loddon Campaspe region and “make health everyone’s business”. The HLC model includes an overarching governance structure providing strategic oversight of the initiative, a local and regional Health Broker workforce, activation projects and using a data and research driven approach. The ALC provides the data required to:

- Provide a snapshot of current data as a benchmark for evaluating the success of local initiatives, including those introduced by HLC
- Inform targeted efforts and investment for activation projects and health broker policy work
- Increase coordination between groups across the community, and a heightened focus on evidence-based priorities
- Increase opportunities to attract projects and initiatives to the region, including informing grants and funding proposals
- Provide valid and reliable evidence to drive ongoing change across the region
- Allow for analysis to draw comparisons between different demographics
- Provide data for researchers to use in their own work, which often leads to new opportunities

Not only does the ALC capture data on behavioural risk factors to better understand the priority areas for targeted public health intervention, but it also captures in-depth, contextual information from residents about where and how these efforts could be targeted. Notably, the ALC addresses the key priorities for quality risk factor surveillance that were highlighted by The World Alliance for Risk Factor Surveillance in 2015¹, including the use of appropriate measures, sampling and data collection methodologies to enable reliable, robust and meaningful data to be collected and analysed in a way that meets the needs of the data users (e.g., community groups, program planners, policy makers etc.) and allows for comparisons with other key datasets to be made.

The 2025 ALC provides a much needed 6-year follow-up on the 2019 Loddon Campaspe region wide ALC, and an 11-year follow-up on the 2014 City of Greater Bendigo ALC. A separate report will explore changes over time using these three datasets.

¹ **Camprostrini, S., McQueen, D., Taylor, A., & Daly, A.** (2015). *World Alliance for Risk Factor Surveillance White Paper on Surveillance and Health Promotion*. AIMS Public Health, 2(1), 10–26. <https://doi.org/10.3934/publichealth.2015.1.10>

1.2. Context

The Loddon Campaspe region encompasses six local government areas across the geographic centre of Victoria: about 60 to 120 minutes' drive from Melbourne. The population includes approximately 253,152 people, approximately 112,862 occupied households, and covers 19,027 square kilometres. The region includes the City of Greater Bendigo, Mount Alexander Shire, Central Goldfields Shire, Loddon Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire and Campaspe Shire Councils, with regional centres including Bendigo, Gisborne, Castlemaine, Kyneton, Echuca, and Maryborough, small towns, and rural areas.



Data from the 2019 ALC showed that residents in the Loddon Campaspe region reported higher levels of health risk behaviours compared to Victorian benchmarks, including sugar-sweetened beverage consumption (VPHS 2014²) and excessive alcohol consumption (VPHS 2016³). Additionally, lower levels of life satisfaction were recorded compared to the Victorian average (VPHS 2016 and NHS 2017-18⁴), and a greater proportion of ALC respondents were overweight or obese according to their Body Mass Index (calculated based on self-reported height and weight) compared to 2016 VPHS respondents.

In comparison, smoking rates were lower amongst Loddon Campaspe residents compared to the Victorian average (VPHS 2016 and NHS 2017-18), however it is unclear whether the differences reflect the general decline in smoking over the years or whether they reflect a meaningful difference within the region. Adherence to the physical activity recommendations was greater amongst ALC

² Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). *Victorian population health survey 2014: Modifiable risk factors contributing to chronic disease in Victoria*. Victorian Government. <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/victorian-population-health-survey-2014-modifiable-risk-factors>

³ Department of Health and Human Services. (2018, July). *Victorian Population Health Survey 2016: Selected survey findings* (ISBN 978-0-7311-7323-5; ISSN 2206-7434). Victorian Government. <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/survey/vahi.vic.gov.au+11>

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2018, December 12). *National Health Survey: First results, 2017–18 financial year* (Cat. No. 4364.0.55.001). <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/health-conditions-and-risks/national-health-survey/2017-18>

respondents compared to the 2016 VPHS respondents, however the questions used to determine adherence differed, so these differences should be interpreted with caution.

In addition to these differences in health behaviours and outcomes amongst residents in the Loddon Campaspe region compared to state-wide averages, the Loddon Campaspe population is growing at a fast rate, with notable changes being experienced by many communities in this region since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Moreover, changes to population distribution, daily living routines and habits, inflation, and climate change over the recent years will have undoubtedly had an impact on the population including their health behaviours (e.g., healthy eating and physical activity), and their preferences and needs to live a healthy lifestyle. Thus, the 2025 ALC provides essential data to adequately understand these changes that have not been captured via other means.

Results for each LGA are available in their standalone Topline Reports. This report presents the results for all respondents of the 2025 ALC across the whole Loddon Campaspe region. In some places, data from the 2019 ALC and 2025 ALC have been compared but for the most part, this report presents only data from the 2025 survey. The 2019 ALC reports can be accessed at: [2019 Active Living Census | Healthy Loddon Campaspe](#)

1.3. Research objectives

The 2025 ALC was designed to measure current physical activity levels, recreation, and health behaviours and trends in the Loddon Campaspe region. The main objectives for the 2025 ALC were to:

- Address gaps in current available data (i.e. Department of Health Community Profiles, Victorian Population Health Survey, National Health Survey)
- Benchmark against other relevant data sets by providing relevant, reliable and valid health data at a local area level that is not currently available from other sources
- Assist the planning, development and enhancement of public spaces, open spaces and recreation facilities
- Better understand the barriers people face to being active and meeting health recommendations, to inform future policies and initiatives
- Allow for comparisons to be made between different demographics (age, sex, LGA, etc.) and subregions within an LGA
- Provide results specific to each LGA to ensure that strategies developed from the data are locally driven
- Identify subgroups within the population requiring further targeting / investigation
- Provide data to support the evaluation of health and wellbeing initiatives conducted in local areas

1.4. Methodology

The principal requirement of the 2025 ALC was to provide an opportunity for all Loddon Campaspe residents to have the opportunity to participate in the survey. The project utilised a non-probability sampling design, whereby the survey was promoted across the Loddon Campaspe region via a comprehensive campaign, including via print, television, radio, and social media methods. The in-

scope population for the survey was all children and adolescents (aged from 3 to 17 years) and adults aged 18 years and over living in one of the six LGAs across the region.

1.4.1. Sample frame / distribution

The 2025 ALC was primarily conducted online via the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) platform called Qualtrics. All residents aged over 13 years were eligible to complete the survey. Additionally, parents and guardians were invited to provide proxy responses on behalf of children aged 3 to 17 years. The survey was promoted with an integrated advertising and communications campaign via radio, television, print, and social media in the Loddon Campaspe region before and during the enumeration period. More than 1,600 TV ads were aired, reaching over 3 million viewers, alongside 373 radio spots and 36 media articles across 16 outlets. Digital promotion generated nearly 2 million social media impressions and 198,000 engagements, supported by extensive organic posts shared by 145 community groups and 70 sporting clubs. Hard-copy materials included over 54,000 postcards, 2,000 posters, 120 large corflute signs, and 20 A2 signs, with targeted mailbox drops delivering postcards to more than 34,700 households across 280+ towns and suburbs. Direct promotion also included two subscriber emails, council communication channels, and on-the-ground activities such as café sessions, voucher giveaways, a promotional truck and Footy Record advertising. All advertising collateral contained a QR code and URL that would take residents directly to the online survey.

A limited number of hard copy questionnaire booklets (n=1000) were printed and distributed at key community locations (e.g., libraries, community houses) in attempt to reach community members living in more rural and remote areas, those with limited internet connectivity, and those who required assistance with completing the survey.

Case study: A case study was conducted to explore the uptake and experience completing a shortened version of the survey among neurodivergent people. The shortened survey contained only the items that were essential for the impact evaluation of the broader HLC initiative. Hard copies were distributed via relevant stakeholders, with some choosing to complete it during a supported session and others choosing to take it home to complete in their own time.

1.4.2. Questionnaire

The 2025 ALC remained comparable with the 2019 survey, however it was updated in accordance with the HLC monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) plan, as well as adaptations made to: 1) allow for comparisons against State-wide and National surveys, 2) allow establishment of adherence to national behavioural recommendations, and 3) capture data regarding current state and local priority areas (e.g., food insecurity, vaping). Finalisation of the survey design and development was a collaborative effort between Healthy Loddon Campaspe, and a working group of representatives across each of the six Loddon Campaspe LGAs.

Survey testing: A test–retest reliability study was carried out to assess the newly developed survey items among adult residents of the Loddon Campaspe region. Participants, recruited through social media and HLC's usual communication channels, completed the same online survey twice, one week apart. In total, 122 participants provided complete responses for both rounds. The findings demonstrated strong reliability, with a high level of agreement across demographics, nutrition, physical activity, and health risk behaviour measures. This consistency indicates that the survey captures stable and reproducible information, minimising measurement error and respondent bias.

Following the test–retest study, the full 2025 ALC survey was pilot tested with participants from outside the catchment area to identify any issues and gather additional feedback on completing the form. Insights from this pilot were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire (see Appendix B).

1.4.3. Enumeration period

The Active Living Census (ALC) was open for participation from 26 May to 6 July 2025. In the lead-up to the survey, a comprehensive marketing campaign commenced in April across the Loddon Campaspe region. This included television, radio, print media, and social media advertisements aimed at raising awareness of the ALC and encouraging broad community engagement. To further boost participation, a prize draw was offered, featuring 143 prizes valued at over \$12,000. These strategies supported a self-selection approach designed to maximise community reach and survey responses.

1.4.4. Returns / response rate

In total, 8,244 individual responses to the 2025 Active Living Census were received by the close of the enumeration period. This comprised 7,913 online completions and a further 331 individual responses through the paper-based version of the survey. Based on the regional population of 245,157 residents aged 3 years and over, this represents an individual response rate of 3.4%. While this proportion is modest, it is important to note that the 2025 ALC was not designed as a true census-style survey, and despite the extension of the media campaign, it is unlikely that all residents were aware of or able to participate.

Campaign analytics provide further context for this response level. During the enumeration period, there were 20,950 survey link clicks with a 33% completion conversion rate, alongside 2,167 QR code scans (yielding 77 completions; 3.6% conversion). The ALC communications campaign achieved strong regional visibility, with over 1,600 TV ads reaching 3.1 million viewers, 373 radio ads, 36 local media articles, nearly 2 million social media impressions, and more than 54,000 pieces of hard copy collateral delivered across towns and suburbs. This extensive promotional reach highlights both the scale of effort to raise awareness and the inherent challenges of achieving high completion rates for a voluntary, non-mandatory survey of this length.

1.4.5. Data file preparation

Survey responses were collected through three sources: online submissions, hard copy surveys, and shortened case study surveys. Hard copy and case study responses were manually entered into the online survey platform to ensure consistent formatting. All three datasets were then downloaded and merged into a single master data file. Open-ended and 'other specify' responses were coded systematically to enable quantitative analysis. Partial responses were included in the final dataset if respondents had completed up to the end of Section B, which captured core information required for the Healthy Loddon Campaspe (HLC) impact evaluation.

1.4.6. Sampling error / weighting

As with most surveys of this type, the achieved sample distribution differed from the Loddon Campaspe population distribution for age, sex, residents' household location, education, and other demographics and was therefore not representative of the Loddon Campaspe population (see Section 2.1 below for further details). This suggests that sampling error influenced the achieved sample, potentially due to differential response rates across demographic and geographic groups. Factors

such as disability, limited internet access, lower English proficiency, or reduced motivation or capacity to complete a survey may have affected participation across age, sex, education and location.

Furthermore, sampling error may have occurred due to the nature of the survey itself. The survey was focussed on 'active living' and contained questions on use of public facilities, open spaces, and walking and cycling tracks, and participation in various health behaviours. Thus, non-active residents may not have perceived the survey as being relevant to them and may have been less likely to respond as a result. Likewise, active residents may assume they don't need to complete the survey as they are already 'active enough'. Despite efforts in pre-survey communications to encourage participation across all activity levels, the survey should be considered as a sample of residents who self-selected to participate. Therefore, results from the 2025 ALC may not accurately reflect the attitudes and behaviours of the population of all Loddon Campaspe residents.

Sampling error was partially controlled using GREG (generalised regression) weighting, which calibrated the sample to align with ABS population benchmarks. This method adjusts the influence of individual respondents by increasing the weight of under-represented groups and decreasing the weight of over-represented groups, thereby improving the accuracy and representativeness of results. For the 2025 ALC, adult respondents were weighted by age, education, sex, and country of birth, while children (aged 3 to 17 years) were weighted by age and sex only. All benchmarks and weights were calculated separately for each LGA. Weighting was applied to enable results to be generalised to the broader Loddon Campaspe population or analysed at the individual LGA level. Further details on the weighting methodology are provided in Appendix A.

1.5. About this report

This report presents findings from the 2025 ALC, with results shown for all respondents and, where relevant, by key subgroups. It begins with an overview of participant demographics in Section 2, followed by movement behaviours and dietary habits in Section 3 and 4, and an overview of use, quality and accessibility of public facilities and open spaces in Section 5. The report then presents findings on health and wellbeing indicators in Section 6, concluding with Section 7 providing an examination of risk-taking behaviours.

Appendices are presented at the end of the document, and provide further information on the report for the following areas:

- Appendix A – Weighting and missing data handling
- Appendix B – The questionnaire
- Appendix C – Detailed tables

Due to the nature of hardcopy forms, some respondents did not answer or did not provide a logical response (e.g., responded 'Yes' and 'No' to age) to all questions. Only 'valid' responses, unless otherwise stated, have been included in the base size when calculating results. That is, all 'Not answered', 'Not applicable' and 'Skipped by design' responses were excluded from analysis. A small number of responses were received from residents outside the Loddon Campaspe region and were excluded from the results. Additionally, a small proportion of respondents did not provide enough information to identify their LGA. These responses were included in the overall analysis but excluded from LGA-level reporting.

The 2025 ALC results are subject to non-sampling error, which may affect data quality and interpretation. These errors can result from inaccurate reporting (e.g., recall bias, misinterpretation of questions, or incorrect survey completion) as well as social desirability bias or reluctance to disclose certain behaviours. Additionally, differential non-response among specific population subgroups can lead to bias. As noted earlier, parents were permitted to complete the survey on behalf of their children, which may introduce further inaccuracies. As a result, the findings may not fully represent all residents of the Loddon Campaspe region. Given these limitations, the survey results should be interpreted with caution and considered alongside other data sources and within the broader policy context.

Please note that due to rounding, results in tables may not sum to 100%. Standard notation in tables includes the following:

- 'n' – base size or number of respondents used when calculating results
- '%' – proportion of responses within the base size

Throughout the report, detailed tables are provided giving a breakdown of responses by a range of demographic and health characteristics. It may be noted that the bases for particular subgroups (e.g. sex) do not sum to the base for the total sample. This is due to missing responses for the question used to derive the sub-group (that is, for this example, if individuals did not provide their sex or the sex provided did not fall into the 'male' or 'female' category, they were not used for analysis as there were too few responses to make robust statistical comparisons).

Significance testing was conducted at the 99% confidence level. Survey-weighted analyses were performed using Stata's survey procedures (svy commands), with linearised variance estimation to account for weighting. Associations between categorical variables were first examined using design-

adjusted chi-square tests. Where overall associations were statistically significant, post-hoc comparisons were conducted using survey-weighted regression models appropriate to the outcome type, and differences between groups were assessed using predicted probabilities. For continuous variables, survey-weighted means were estimated and compared across groups using design-adjusted methods.

In tables, cell colouring is used to indicate the presence of significant differences in proportions or mean scores between the subgroups of interest (at the 99% level of confidence). For the tables in this report, subgroups are going down the left side of the table. So, significance testing compares results down the column for each group rather than across the rows. As demonstrated in the example table below, purple highlighted cells represent a significantly *higher* result compared to the corresponding blue shaded cells which reflect a significantly *lower* result by comparison. Grey highlighted cells represent *both* a significantly greater and significantly lower result than other shaded comparisons.

In the example table below, there were no significant differences recorded between males and females. In the sex grouping significant differences were observable amongst males in different age groups. For example, looking at the Result 3 column, males aged 18 to 34 years (54.1%), 35 to 49 years (55.7%) and 50 to 69 years (52.9%) were significantly more likely to provide this response than males aged 70 years and above (42.5%). Result 1 column shows that males aged 18 to 34 years (10.4%) are significantly less likely to provide this response than males aged 70 years and above (17.6%). Additionally, males aged 35 to 49 (14.5%) are both more likely to provide this response than males aged 18 to 34 years and less likely to provide this response than males aged 70 years and above.

Table Example

	Unweighted base n	Result 1 %	Result 2 %	Result 3 %
Total sample	8,547			
Sex and age				
Males	3,122	17.9	35.0	52.8
Females	5,035	18.2	34.6	53.5
Males, 18 to 34	957	10.4	32.2	54.1
Males, 35 to 49	1,722	14.5	37.9	55.7
Males, 50 to 69	2,496	16.7	37.2	52.9
Males, 70+	1,358	17.6	35.0	42.5

Row percentages
(may not sum to 100% due to rounding)

2. Respondent Profile

The respondent profile, or the achieved sample distribution, for the 2025 ALC was measured across a range of demographic characteristics. The extent to which the achieved sample distribution (i.e., the composition of survey respondents) matches the Loddon Campaspe population distribution indicates how representative the pool of respondents is to the resident population.

If the percentage of respondents in a particular group (e.g., people aged 70 years and over) from the 2025 ALC sample is greater than the percentage of this group in the population, this respondent group is 'over-represented' in the achieved sample (see Table 2.1.1). Conversely, a respondent group is 'under-represented' if the achieved sample has a lower percentage of respondents in this group when compared to the population distribution. Data in Section 2.1 are unweighted and provided for all age groups where available.

In Section 2.2, unweighted respondent characteristics for a range of health indicators are compared to available population benchmarks. Due to the limited availability of comparable health benchmarks for children, this section compares weighted results to health indicators for respondents aged 18 years and over only.

2.1. ABS population benchmarks

Table 2.1.1 shows the population distribution of residents aged 3 years and over in the Loddon Campaspe region sourced from the 2021 ABS Census. These are compared to the distribution of respondents achieved in the 2025 ALC. When interpreting the achieved sample distribution as a proportion of the ABS population distribution, a percentage below 100% indicates that a respondent group is under-represented in the achieved sample, while a percentage above 100% indicates a respondent group is over-represented.

For the 2025 ALC, females were over-represented in the achieved sample when compared to their proportions in the population. Both male and female child and adolescent respondents (3 to 11 years and 12 to 17 years) were also over-represented in the survey. Under-representation was most notable amongst young adult males and females aged 18 to 34 years. Note that ABS benchmarks do not include any alternate sex categories so a comparison for respondents falling into the "Other" category in the ALC (n=80, 1%) is not available. Throughout the report, only the two main sex classifications are used for subgroup comparisons due to the small base size for the other category.

The over-representation of females and under representation of young adult respondents is relatively common for population health surveys, particularly those conducted using an online survey. One example is the 2016 VPHS conducted via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) with a stratified random sample of Victorian residents. The 2016 VPHS achieved sample had an over-representation of females (57.2% in achieved sample vs 51.1% in Victorian population), and an under-representation of respondents aged 18 to 24 years (7.0% in achieved sample vs 12.8% in Victorian population).

In addition to age and gender, the distribution of respondents also differed from that of the population dependent upon the Local Government Area (LGA) in which they lived. Residents from Loddon Shire, Central Goldfields Shire and Mount Alexander Shire were the best represented in the sample, while residents in Macedon Ranges Shire and Campaspe Shire were under-represented. The proportion of participating respondents from City of Greater Bendigo most closely matched their representation in the Loddon Campaspe region.

To correct for the under and over-representation of particular subgroups of respondents, results have been weighted by location, age, sex and (for respondents aged 18 years and over) education and country of birth. Survey results provided in Section 3 of this report onwards are based on weighted results ensuring they most closely reflect the opinions of the Loddon Campaspe population. Further information regarding weighting is provided in Appendix A.

Table 2.1.1 Achieved sample composition

Age group	ABS population ¹ (Loddon Campaspe Region)		Active Living Census ² (unweighted)		ALC % as a % of the population
	N	%	N	%	
Total sample	245,157	100.0	8,244	100	-
Sex					
Males	119,970	48.9	2,564	31.9	65.3
Females	125,180	51.1	5,464	68.1	133.2
Age					
3-11 years	27,729	11.3	1,378	17.1	150.9
12-17 years	18,967	7.7	1,137	14.1	182.8
18-34 years	45,658	18.6	879	10.9	58.5
35-49 years	45,341	18.5	1,712	21.2	114.5
50-69 years	68,196	27.8	2,088	25.8	93.0
70+ years	39,261	16.0	886	11.0	68.5
Sex and age					
Males, 3 to 11	14,220	11.9	672	26.4	221.5
Males, 12 to 17	9,793	8.2	583	22.9	278.9
Males, 18 to 34	22,655	18.9	154	6.0	32.0
Males, 35 to 49	21,678	18.1	333	13.1	72.2
Males, 50 to 69	33,026	27.6	507	19.9	72.1
Males, 70+	18,593	15.5	300	11.8	75.9
Females, 3 to 11	13,510	10.8	682	12.6	116.2
Females, 12 to 17	9,176	7.3	538	9.9	135.6
Females, 18 to 34	22,998	18.4	714	13.1	71.4
Females, 35 to 49	23,656	18.9	1,365	25.1	132.9
Females, 50 to 69	35,170	28.1	1,556	28.6	101.9
Females, 70+	20,670	16.5	578	10.6	64.5
Location					
Central Goldfields Shire	13,167	5.4	643	7.8	144.4
City of Greater Bendigo	117,254	47.8	4,158	50.4	105.5
Loddon Shire	7,570	3.1	642	7.8	251.2
Macedon Ranges Shire	49,830	20.3	890	10.8	53.2
Mount Alexander Shire	19,766	8.1	859	10.4	128.6
Shire of Campaspe	37,565	15.3	1,052	12.8	83.3

¹ Population benchmarks sourced from ABS Census 2021, population aged 3 years and above

² Base sizes include respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region

Additional demographic characteristics with available population benchmarks were also collected in the 2025 ALC and the comparative distribution of respondents aged 18 years and over are presented in Table 2.1.2.

Results revealed an over-representation of respondents with a Bachelor degree or higher (this has been adjusted during weighting). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, those who are employed and those living in households with four or more people were also over-represented. Groups that were under-represented include people born overseas, those who speak a main language other than English, those who require help with daily activities and those living in single-person households. These differences to the benchmarks indicate that results should be interpreted with caution when comparing to the Loddon Campaspe general population despite the previously mentioned weighting applied.

Table 2.1.2 Achieved sample distribution for demographic characteristics

Age group	ABS population ¹ (Loddon Campaspe Region)		Active Living Census ² (unweighted)		ALC % as a % of the population
	n	%	n	%	
Total sample	198,457	100	5,565	100	-
Country of birth					
Born overseas	23,959	12.9	629	11.3	87.8
Born in Australia	161,121	87.1	4,921	88.7	101.8
Main language					
Speaks other main language	9,933	5.4	124	2.2	41.5
Speaks English as main language	175,493	94.6	5,409	97.8	103.3
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status					
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	3,056	1.6	138	2.5	155.6
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	184,199	98.4	5,407	97.5	99.1
LGBTQIA+ Status³					
LGBTQIA+	-	-	399	7.2	-
Non-LGBTQIA+	-	-	5,128	92.8	-
Neurodivergent⁴					
Yes	-	-	532	10.0	-
No	-	-	3,813	71.4	-
Maybe	-	-	383	7.2	-
Not sure	-	-	610	11.0	-
Requires help with self-care, body movement or communication activities					
Requires help	14,568	7.9	321	5.8	73.4
Does not require help	170,708	92.1	5,214	94.2	102.3
Level of education					
Less than Bachelor level education	133,755	76.5	2,733	49.4	64.6
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	41,073	23.5	2,800	50.6	215.4

Employment status					
Unemployed/retired	74,185	39.9	1,707	30.8	77.1
Employed	111,687	60.1	3,840	69.2	115.2
Household size					
1 person	27,389	28.2	860	15.5	54.9
2-3 people	48,445	50	2,918	52.5	105.0
4-5 people	18,610	19.2	1,588	28.6	148.9
More than 5 people	2,511	2.6	190	3.4	131.5
Household financial status ⁴					
Just getting along, poor or very poor	-	-	1,658	29.9	-
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	-	-	3,879	70.1	-
Food security (last 12 months) ⁵					
Very low food security	-	3.7	338	5.9	160.5
Low food security	-	5.8	496	8.7	150.1
Marginal food security	-	4.9	700	12.3	250.6
High food security	-	84.8	4,011	70.5	83.1

¹ Population benchmarks sourced from ABS Census 2021

² Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region

³ ABS 2022 estimates suggest 5.3% of the Victorian population is LGBTI+, estimates for the Loddon Campaspe region are not available

⁴ Population benchmark data not available

⁵ Australian sample of adults living outside of a capital city from the 2022 National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey, estimates for the Loddon Campaspe region are not available

* Totals in subgroups don't sum to base due to invalid responses being excluded from analysis

2.2. Health indicator population benchmarks

Table 2.2.1 provides a summary of how the 2025 ALC population compared to available benchmarks for a range of health and wellbeing indicators. Throughout the report, ALC estimates are compared to the 2022 NHS data and the 2023 VPHS where available. These comparisons are indicative only as the methodology used for each study varied and this has the potential to influence results.

Although adherence to fruit and vegetable recommendations was similar to Victorian benchmarks, other findings from the 2025 ALC indicated greater differences in the health and wellbeing of Loddon Campaspe residents compared to state benchmarks. For example, there were fewer reports of engaging in health risk behaviours among ALC respondents including smoking, vaping, gambling and consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily. Specifically, 7.2% of ALC respondents indicated that they currently engaged in smoking, and 3.8% indicated that they currently engaged in vaping compared to 13.9% and 7.2% of 2023 VPHS respondents, respectively. Because of the two-year time gap between surveys, it is uncertain whether this difference reflects a general decline in smoking and vaping rates over recent years or is due to lower rates specifically in the Loddon Campaspe region. The proportion of ALC respondents who indicated that they had gambled at least once in the year prior to survey completion was slightly lower than VPHS respondents (34.9% compared to 39.1%). Daily sugar-sweetened beverage consumption was comparatively lower among ALC respondents (15.4%) than VPHS respondents (19.0%), with the difference more pronounced among males (16.0% compared to 23.4%).

A greater proportion of respondents to the 2025 ALC met the aerobic physical activity recommendations (23.7% failed to meet the recommendations) compared to the 2023 VPHS respondents (47.1), however the proportion was more comparable to respondents in the 2022 NHS (28.2%). Additionally, a significantly higher proportion of ALC respondents met the muscle strengthening recommendations of two or more sessions per week (52.7%) compared to the 2022 NHS respondents (24.5%). There are currently no comparable benchmark datasets, however among the 2025 ALC respondents, 47.6% met recreational screen time recommendations of three hours per day for adults and two hours per day for children and adolescents. Conversely, 69.6% of adult respondents met the sleep duration recommendations as outlined by the Sleep Health Foundation⁵.

When comparing Body Mass Index (BMI), ALC respondents were more likely to be overweight or obese (66.5%) than VPHS respondents (53.9%), although the proportion was similar to the 2022 NHS respondents (65.3%). BMI was calculated using self-reported height and weight and should be interpreted cautiously due to potential reporting bias. BMI itself is also a limited measure of overweight and obesity as it does not account for body composition or fat distribution. A greater proportion of ALC respondents reported to have consumed four (females), or five (males), or more standard drinks on at least one occasion in the last 12 months and therefore be at greater risk of harm (58.1%) than those who responded to the VPHS 2023 (41.3%) or NHS 2022 (17.9%).

Health and wellbeing measures indicate poorer self-reported health and lower life satisfaction in the ALC sample compared to the available benchmark data. A greater proportion of ALC respondents reported their health as fair or poor (25.3%) compared to 2023 VPHS respondents (20.9%) and 2022 NHS respondents (13.0%). Similarly, a greater proportion of ALC respondents recorded low to medium life satisfaction (34.0%) than those who participated in the VPHS 2023 (21.9%).

⁵ Sleep Health Foundation 2015. Sleep needs across the lifespan. Blacktown: Sleep Health Foundation. <https://irp.cdn-website.com/0da81f14/files/uploaded/Sleep-Needs-Across-Lifespan.pdf>

Table 2.2.1 Health indicator population benchmarks

Health and wellbeing indicators	Population benchmark (VIC)		Active Living Census ¹ (weighted)	ALC % as a % of the population ⁴
	NHS ²	VPHS ³		
Self-reported health status			n=4,971	
% rating health as fair or poor (persons)	13.0	20.9	25.3	120.9
% rating health as fair or poor (females)	13.5	20.7	26.7	129.2
% rating health as fair or poor (males)	12.2	20.8	23.6	113.2
Body Mass Index (BMI)			n=3,768	
% overweight or obese range (BMI ≥25.0) (persons)	65.3	53.9	66.5	123.3
% overweight or obese range (BMI ≥25.0) (females)	58.8	47.5	62.1	130.8
% overweight or obese range (BMI ≥25.0) (males)	72.1	60.6	70.4	116.2
Aerobic physical activity recommendations			n=5,428	
% not meeting recommendations (persons)	28.2	47.1	23.7	50.4
% not meeting recommendations (females)	29.8	48.7	29.1	59.7
% not meeting recommendations (males)	26.2	45.2	18.2	40.2
Muscle strengthening recommendations			n=5,071	
% not meeting recommendations (persons)	75.5	-	47.3	62.6
% not meeting recommendations (females)	77.2	-	50.9	65.9
% not meeting recommendations (males)	74.1	-	43.5	58.7
Screen time recommendations			n=5,329	
% not meeting screen time recommendations (persons)	-	-	52.4	-
% not meeting screen time recommendations (females)	-	-	51.0	-
% not meeting screen time recommendations (males)	-	-	53.7	-
Sleep duration recommendations			n=5,305	
% not meeting sleep recommendations (person)	-	-	30.4	-
% not meeting sleep recommendations (females)	-	-	31.7	-
% not meeting sleep recommendations (males)	-	-	28.8	-
Fruit intake recommendations			n=5,495	
% not meeting fruit recommendations (persons)	55.3	63.3	59.5	94.1
% not meeting fruit recommendations (females)	53.0	61.1	59.2	96.9
% not meeting fruit recommendations (males)	58.2	65.5	59.8	91.3
Vegetable intake recommendations			n=5,447	
% not meeting vegetable recommendations (persons)	93.6	90.3	91.3	101.1
% not meeting vegetable recommendations (females)	90.6	88.5	88.5	100.0
% not meeting vegetable recommendations (males)	96.5	94.3	94.2	99.9
Smoking status			n=4,987	

% current smokers (persons)	11.1	13.9	7.2	51.5
% current smokers (females)	8.7	11.3	7.4	65.6
% current smokers (males)	14.0	16.7	7.0	41.9
Vaping status		n=4,965		
% current vapers (person)	3.9	7.2	3.8	53.1
% current vapers (females)	2.5	5.5	4.6	83.9
% current vapers (males)	5.1	8.9	3.0	34.2
Alcohol consumption (single occasion past 12 months) ⁵		n=4,981		
% had 4 or more standard drinks (persons)	17.9	41.3	58.1	140.7
% had 4 or more standard drinks (females)	11.6	30.1	53.0	176.2
% had 5 or more standard drinks (males)	24.1	53.2	63.6	119.6
Gambling		n=4,978		
% gambling (person)	-	39.1	34.9	89.4
% gambling (females)	-	32.7	29.2	89.3
% gambling (males)	-	45.8	41.2	89.9
Sugar-sweetened beverage consumption		n=5,459		
% drinks SSB daily (persons)	-	19.0	15.4	81.3
% drinks SSB daily (females)	-	14.9	15.0	100.5
% drinks SSB daily (males)	-	23.4	16.0	68.3
Life satisfaction		n=4,947		
% rating satisfaction as low to medium (0 to 6) (persons)	-	21.9	34.0	155.5
% rating satisfaction as low to medium (0 to 6) (females)	-	21.8	34.5	158.2
% rating satisfaction as low to medium (0 to 6) (males)	-	21.6	33.3	154.0

¹ Base size includes respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Based on National Health Survey 2022

³ Based on Victorian Population Health Survey 2023 (VPHS 2017 for alcohol and gambling)

⁴ Comparison made to VPHS, unless data not available

⁵ Based on at least monthly consumption; interpreted as consuming 5 or more drinks at least 12 times in the last 12 months. This measure is not directly comparable to single occasion risk

3. Movement Behaviours

In 2021, the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing⁶ released updated *Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for all Australians*. These guidelines outline recommendations for aerobic activity, muscle-strengthening exercises, sedentary behaviour and (for children and adolescents) sleep.

To assess how residents of the Loddon Campaspe region align with these recommendations and engage in healthy behaviours more broadly, respondents were asked a series of questions about their movement behaviours. These questions covered aerobic physical activity, muscle strengthening exercises, active travel, recreational screen time, sleep, sport and recreation participation, barriers to being active, and perceptions of how easy it is to be active locally.

Results presented in this section reflect all respondents (unless otherwise noted) and weighting has been applied.

3.1. Aerobic physical activity

The *Australian Guidelines* recommend that children aged 3-5 years should be physically active for at least 180 minutes each day, with at least 60 minutes spent in energetic play. Children and adolescents aged 5-17 years should engage in at least 60 minutes of aerobic physical activity daily, incorporating a variety of moderate and vigorous-intensity activities. Adults aged 18-64 years are advised to accumulate 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week, or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity per week, or an equivalent combination of both. For older adults aged 65 years and over, it is recommended that they engage in physical activity for at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity on most, preferably all, days. However, because “most days” cannot be measured precisely, the recommendations for those aged 18–64 years have been applied to all adult respondents, including those aged 65 and above.

The 2022 NHS indicated that 71.8% of Victorians aged 18 years and above had participated in sufficient aerobic physical activity. The equivalent proportion of ALC respondents in the same age group who had met the recommendations was 76.3% and, overall, 70.4% of respondents had met the above-mentioned aerobic physical activity recommendations (see Table 3.1.1). Adults were significantly more likely to meet the recommendations compared to children (76.3% compared to 46.4%), although the average minutes spent engaging in moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity per day was higher among children (241.7 minutes) than adults (183.3 minutes). A greater proportion of males met the aerobic physical activity recommendations (76.0%) and spent more time per day in moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic activity (235.0 minutes) than females (65.0%, 155.7 minutes).

Some differences were seen between respondents from each LGA. A significantly higher proportion of residents from Macedon Ranges Shire (74.7%) met the aerobic physical activity recommendations compared to residents from the Greater Bendigo (69.0%). Loddon Shire residents spent more time (245.7 minutes), on average, engaging in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity than residents from Greater Bendigo (189.0 minutes), Macedon Ranges (189.5 minutes) and Central Goldfields (180.6 minutes) Shires.

⁶ Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, 2021. Physical activity and exercise guidelines for all Australians. Canberra, Australia. <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-all-australians>

Proportionately fewer respondents with the following demographic characteristics met the aerobic physical activity recommendations, and may benefit from targeted physical activity programs:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (52.8%) compared to non-Indigenous (71.0%)
- Neurodivergent (60.6%) compared to not (72.9%) and maybe (69.3%) neurodivergent, and unsure what neurodivergent means (69.7%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (74.2%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (82.5%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (67.8%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (80.7%)
- Requires help with daily activities (48.4%) compared to does not require help (72.4%)
- Marginal (71.2%) and low or very low (68.3%) food security compared to high food security (79.4%)

Table 3.1.1 Aerobic physical activity by selected demographic groups

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily minutes #
Total sample	7,555	29.6	70.4	194.7
Children	2,127	53.6	46.4	241.7
Adults	5,428	23.7	76.3	183.3
Males	2,347	24.0	76.0	235.0
Females	5,136	35.0	65.0	155.7
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	580	46.3	53.7	271.9
Males, 12 to 17	497	46.4	53.6	274.0
Males, 18 to 34	150	14.8	85.2	293.8
Males, 35 to 49	325	16.9	83.1	200.1
Males, 50 to 69	498	17.2	82.8	234.2
Males, 70+	297	23.0	77.0	185.2
Females, 3 to 11	560	58.5	41.5	212.0
Females, 12 to 17	461	65.7	34.3	204.0
Females, 18 to 34	699	30.9	69.1	140.2
Females, 35 to 49	1,342	28.6	71.4	130.9
Females, 50 to 69	1,519	26.3	73.7	159.6
Females, 70+	555	33.2	66.8	138.8
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,824	31.0	69.0	189.0
Macedon Ranges Shire	816	25.3	74.7	189.5
Shire of Campaspe	968	31.8	68.2	205.1
Mount Alexander Shire	805	28.1	71.9	213.9
Central Goldfields Shire	566	30.4	69.6	180.6

Loddon Shire	576	28.3	71.7	245.7
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	832	26.7	73.3	157.4
2 or 3 people	2,851	22.3	77.7	190.4
4 or 5 people	1,552	23.7	76.3	186.6
More than 5 people	187	33.4	66.6	156.6
Born overseas	693	28.3	71.7	178.3
Born in Australia	6,856	29.8	70.2	196.9
Speaks other main language	139	38.7	61.3	144.6
Speaks English as main language	7,389	29.3	70.7	195.8
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	210	47.2	52.8	176.2
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,331	29.0	71.0	195.3
LGBTQIA+	461	31.0	69.0	172.4
Non-LGBTQIA+	7,064	29.4	70.6	196.6
Neurodivergent	904	39.4	60.6	175.7
Not neurodivergent	5,094	27.1	72.9	201.5
Maybe	599	30.7	69.3	193.0
Not sure what neurodivergent means	729	30.3	69.7	191.9
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,660	25.8	74.2	189.2
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,749	17.5	82.5	167.6
Unemployed/retired ²	1,665	26.6	73.4	167.0
Employed	3,755	22.2	77.8	192.1
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,610	32.2	67.8	173.2
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,803	19.3	80.7	188.7
Requires help with daily activities	639	51.6	48.4	177.6
Does not require help	6,900	27.6	72.4	196.4
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	817	31.7	68.3	192.5
Marginal food security	676	28.8	71.2	167.9
High food security	3,928	20.6	79.4	184.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 3.1.2 summarises aerobic physical activity participation by selected health and behaviour characteristics. Aerobic physical activity was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, a lower proportion of those who self-reported their health to be fair or poor (54.1% vs 74.8%), have low to moderate life satisfaction (65.8% vs 82.4%), do not feel valued by society (67.8% vs sometimes [77.2%] and definitely [82.4%]), have poor mental wellbeing (60.2% vs 82.4%), and are overweight or obese (71.5% vs 77.0%) met the aerobic physical activity recommendations compared to their counterparts who reported more positive health and wellbeing.

Differences in adherence to the aerobic physical activity recommendations was seen between those who did and did not report adherence to the muscle strengthening (87.5% of those who did compared to 58.6% of those who did not), screen time (76.4% vs 66.2%) and sleep (72.9% vs 65.5%) recommendations. Alcohol consumption was the only risk behaviour that was associated with aerobic physical activity participation. Contrary to most published literature, a greater proportion of those who engaged in risky alcohol consumption met the aerobic physical activity recommendations (79.3%) and engaged in more average daily minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (205.1 minutes) compared to those who did not engage in risky alcohol consumption over the past 12 months (72.0% and 152.0 minutes).

Table 3.1.2 Aerobic physical activity by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily minutes #
Total sample	7,555	29.6	70.4	194.7
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,243	45.9	54.1	111.7
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,531	25.2	74.8	216.5
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,509	34.2	65.8	155.8
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,348	18.5	81.5	196.8
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,065	32.2	67.8	166.8
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,390	22.8	77.2	182.5
Definitely feel valued by society	1,403	17.6	82.4	198.5
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,437	39.8	60.2	121.3
Good mental wellbeing	3,991	17.6	82.4	207.0
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,621	28.5	71.5	172.7
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,979	23.0	77.0	228.1
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,686	30.9	69.1	170.7
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,821	27.7	72.3	224.1
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,548	30.0	70.0	193.7
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	887	24.9	75.1	210.7
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,589	41.4	58.6	146.4
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,987	12.5	87.5	242.1
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,869	33.8	66.2	180.7
Meets screen time recommendations	3,341	23.6	76.4	209.7
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,127	34.5	65.5	190.6
Meets sleep recommendations	5,117	27.1	72.9	195.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	888	33.6	66.4	178.9

Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,619	28.9	71.1	197.4
Does not meet water recommendations	4,537	29.9	70.1	181.6
Meets water recommendations	2,811	28.7	71.3	218.5
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	291	32.7	67.3	183.9
Ex-smoker	1,905	23.2	76.8	193.0
Never smoked	2,697	23.1	76.9	175.3
Current vaper	137	30.6	69.4	190.2
Ex-vaper	336	22.5	77.5	217.3
Never vaped	4,399	23.6	76.4	178.9
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,689	20.7	79.3	205.1
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,200	28.0	72.0	152.0
Gambled	1,510	23.9	76.1	185.3
Never gambled	3,378	23.6	76.4	181.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

3.2. Muscle strengthening activities

The *Australian Guidelines*⁷ recommend that children aged 3-5 years engage in activities that develop strength as part of their daily active play. Children and adolescents aged 5-17 years should include muscle and bone strengthening activities on at least three days per week. Adults aged 18-64 years are advised to perform muscle strengthening activities on at least two days per week, and the same recommendation applies to older adults aged 65 years and over, with additional emphasis on maintaining strength and balance. As there is no specific number of days per week of muscle strengthening activities recommended for children younger than age five (5), Tables 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 below present data for all respondents aged 5 years and above.

The 2022 NHS indicated that 24.5% of Victorians aged 18 years and above had engaged in muscle strengthening activities at least twice per week. The equivalent proportion of ALC respondents in the same age group who had met the recommendations was 52.7% and, overall, 48.3% of respondents had met the above-mentioned muscle strengthening recommendations (see Table 3.2.1). Adults were significantly more likely to meet the recommendations (52.7%) and spend more days per week engaging in muscle strengthening activities (2.0 days) compared to children (25.3%, 1.5 days). A greater proportion of males met the muscle strengthening recommendations (51.4%) and spent more days per week engaging in muscle strengthening activities (2.0 days) than females (45.2%, 1.8 days).

Few differences were seen between respondents from each LGA. A significantly higher proportion of residents from Macedon Ranges Shire (52.3%) met the muscle strengthening recommendations compared to residents from Campaspe Shire (42.0%) and Loddon Shire (40.6%). There were no

⁷ Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, 2021. Physical activity and exercise guidelines for all Australians. Canberra, Australia. <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-all-australians>

significant differences across LGAs in the average number of days per week that residents participated in muscle strengthening activities.

Proportionately fewer respondents with the following demographic characteristics met the muscle strengthening recommendations, and may benefit from targeted programs:

- Neurodivergent (38.0%) or maybe neurodivergent (40.9%) compared to not neurodivergent (50.6%) or unsure what neurodivergent means (49.6%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (42.9%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (57.7%)
- Requires help with daily activities (36.5%) compared to no help required (49.2%)
- Low or very low food security (39.1%) compared to marginal (50.1%) or high (56.7%) food security

Table 3.2.1 Muscle strengthening activities by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average days per week #
Total sample	6,661	51.7	48.3	1.9
Children	1,591	74.7	25.3	1.5
Adults	5,070	47.3	52.7	2.0
Males	2,005	48.6	51.4	2.0
Females	4,599	54.8	45.2	1.8
Sex and age				
Males, 5 to 11	365	78.7	21.3	1.3
Males, 12 to 17	456	67.5	32.5	1.9
Males, 18 to 34	142	46.3	53.7	2.0
Males, 35 to 49	317	42.1	57.9	2.1
Males, 50 to 69	453	44.2	55.8	2.1
Males, 70+	272	41.7	58.3	2.3
Females, 5 to 11	350	77.8	22.2	1.3
Females, 12 to 17	401	75.2	24.8	1.6
Females, 18 to 34	655	56.1	43.9	1.6
Females, 35 to 49	1,274	52.4	47.6	1.7
Females, 50 to 69	1,426	47.9	52.1	2.0
Females, 70+	493	44.1	55.9	2.0
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,400	51.3	48.7	1.9
Macedon Ranges Shire	728	47.7	52.3	2.0
Shire of Campaspe	842	58.0	42.0	1.7
Mount Alexander Shire	709	51.8	48.2	1.9
Central Goldfields Shire	480	49.8	50.2	1.9

Loddon Shire	502	59.4	40.6	1.7
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	758	53.0	47.0	1.8
2 or 3 people	2,660	44.7	55.3	2.0
4 or 5 people	1,475	48.6	51.4	1.9
More than 5 people	172	54.1	45.9	1.6
Born overseas	632	49.6	50.4	1.9
Born in Australia	6,022	52.1	47.9	1.9
Speaks other main language	127	48.4	51.6	1.9
Speaks English as main language	6,511	51.8	48.2	1.9
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	179	57.4	42.6	1.7
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	6,472	51.5	48.5	1.9
LGBTQIA+	436	54.6	45.4	1.8
Non-LGBTQIA+	6,199	51.4	48.6	1.9
Neurodivergent	809	62.0	38.0	1.6
Not neurodivergent	4,496	49.4	50.6	1.9
Maybe	523	59.1	40.9	1.8
Not sure what neurodivergent means	633	50.4	49.6	1.9
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,458	48.4	51.6	1.9
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,597	44.3	55.7	2.0
Unemployed/retired ²	1,512	45.4	54.6	2.1
Employed	3,549	48.3	51.7	1.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,490	57.1	42.9	1.7
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,565	42.3	57.7	2.1
Requires help with daily activities	470	63.5	36.5	1.5
Does not require help	6,177	50.8	49.2	1.9
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	750	60.9	39.1	1.5
Marginal food security	640	49.9	50.1	1.9
High food security	3,672	43.3	56.7	2.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 3.2.2 summarises engagement in muscle strengthening activity by selected health and behaviour characteristics. Muscle strengthening activity was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Respondents with the following health and wellbeing indicators engaged in muscle strengthening activities on significantly fewer days per week, on average, compared to their counterparts who report more positive health and wellbeing:

- Fair or poor self-reported health (1.2) compared to good, very good or excellent health (2.0)

- Low to moderate life satisfaction (1.6) compared to high or very high life satisfaction (2.1)
- Does not (1.7) or sometimes feels valued by society (1.8) compared to definitely feels valued by society (2.3)
- Poor mental wellbeing (1.4) compared to good mental wellbeing (2.2)
- Overweight or obese (1.8) compares to normal weight or underweight (2.1)

Additionally, the same respondents were proportionately less likely to meet the muscle strengthening recommendations, with the exception of those who were overweight or obese (no difference seen).

Differences in adherence to the muscle strengthening recommendations was seen between those who did and did not report adherence to all health behaviour recommendations, except for sleep.

Specifically, adherence to the muscle strengthening recommendations was lower among those who failed to meet the fruit (43.8% vs 53.5%), vegetable (47.2% vs 58.7%), water consumption (45.8% vs 53.0%), aerobic physical activity (21.8% vs 58.0%) and screen time (44.8% vs 52.6%) recommendations, as well as among those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (36.1% vs 50.1%).

Smoking was the only risk behaviour that was associated with engagement in muscle strengthening activities. A smaller proportion of those who are current smokers (36.5%) met the muscle strengthening recommendations compared to those who are ex-smokers (54.6%) or have never smoked (52.6%).

Table 3.2.2 Muscle strengthening activities by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average days per week #
Total sample	6,661	51.7	48.3	1.9
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,145	68.9	31.1	1.2
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	4,827	47.5	52.5	2.0
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,411	57.1	42.9	1.6
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,125	42.9	57.1	2.1
Does not feel valued by society ²	981	54.9	45.1	1.7
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,250	48.9	51.1	1.8
Definitely feel valued by society	1,308	38.7	61.3	2.3
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,345	62.7	37.3	1.4
Good mental wellbeing	3,725	41.5	58.5	2.2
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,424	51.1	48.9	1.8
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,758	46.2	53.8	2.1
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,392	56.2	43.8	1.7

Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,231	46.5	53.5	2.1
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	5,838	52.8	47.2	1.8
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	726	41.3	58.7	2.3
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,016	78.2	21.8	1.0
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,560	42.0	58.0	2.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,423	55.2	44.8	1.7
Meets screen time recommendations	2,987	47.4	52.6	2.1
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,878	54.4	45.6	1.8
Meets sleep recommendations	4,534	50.4	49.6	1.9
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	791	63.9	36.1	1.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	5,778	49.9	50.1	1.9
Does not meet water recommendations	4,061	54.2	45.8	1.8
Meets water recommendations	2,421	47.0	53.0	2.1
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	274	63.5	36.5	1.6
Ex-smoker	1,775	45.4	54.6	2.0
Never smoked	2,516	47.4	52.6	1.9
Current vaper	128	57.2	42.8	1.7
Ex-vaper	323	49.2	50.8	2.1
Never vaped	4,099	47.3	52.7	1.9
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,533	46.2	53.8	2.0
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,032	50.1	49.9	1.8
Gambled	1,415	48.6	51.4	1.9
Never gambled	3,145	47.4	52.6	1.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

3.3. Active travel and travel to work or education

Respondents were asked about their travel behaviours, including how often they walk or cycle to get to and from places, and their usual mode of travel to work or education. These questions were newly added to the 2025 ALC to reflect growing awareness of the environmental and public health benefits of reducing private vehicle use in favour of public transport and active travel. Walking frequency response options ranged from daily to less often than once every three months and were grouped into four categories: daily, at least weekly, at least monthly, and less frequent. Cycling responses were grouped into weekly, monthly, and less frequent categories. These groupings reflect the distribution of responses in the 2025 ALC sample. The question on travel mode to work or education was adapted from the ABS Census to allow comparison with the broader population.

3.3.1. Walking

Daily walking to get to and from places was reported by 15.9% of 2025 ALC respondents, 36.3% walked at least once a week but less than daily, 17.6% walked at least once a month but less than weekly and 30.2% walked to get to and from places less than once a month. For the most part, this was the same between children and adults, however a slightly larger proportion of children (39.5%) walked for transport at least once a week compared to adults (35.4%). Differences were seen between males and females with a larger proportion of males (18.6%) walking daily than females (13.0%). Walking frequency varied according to age and sex with no clear pattern or trend observable (see Table 3.3.1.1).

When looking at frequency of walking for transportation by LGA, respondents from the City of Greater Bendigo were the least likely to do so daily (13.9%) and most likely to do so less than once a month (33.3%). Lower proportionate frequency of walking to get to and from places was seen among the following demographic groups:

- 4-5 person households (10.1% daily) compared to single (20.8%) and 2-3 person (17.2%) households
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (7.4% daily) compared to non-Indigenous (16.0%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (33.9% weekly) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (39.6%)
- Employed (13.2% daily) compared to unemployed/retired (20.1%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (30.8% weekly) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (37.8%)
- Requires help with daily activities (29.5% weekly) compared to no help required (36.9%)
- Low or very low food security (29.5% weekly) and marginal food security (10.8% daily) compared to high food security (37.5% weekly, 17.3% daily)

Table 3.3.1.1 Walking frequency by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Daily %	At least once a week %	At least once a month %	Less than once a month %
Total sample	7,755	15.9	36.3	17.6	30.2
Children	2,195	16.6	39.5	15.8	28.0
Adults	5,506	15.5	35.4	18.2	30.9
Males	2,404	18.6	38.8	16.9	25.7
Females	5,263	13.0	33.9	18.5	34.6
Sex and age					
Males, 3 to 11	601	11.6	43.5	13.6	31.4
Males, 12 to 17	506	26.6	40.5	14.8	18.0
Males, 18 to 34	153	17.7	38.7	21.9	21.8
Males, 35 to 49	330	12.6	35.2	24.4	27.9
Males, 50 to 69	504	19.7	39.3	15.9	25.1

Males, 70+	297	24.0	37.0	11.8	27.3
Females, 3 to 11	593	12.0	36.1	20.0	31.9
Females, 12 to 17	465	19.9	37.7	14.7	27.6
Females, 18 to 34	712	11.2	29.8	19.9	39.2
Females, 35 to 49	1,359	7.3	32.0	23.4	37.3
Females, 50 to 69	1,546	14.1	35.8	16.5	33.6
Females, 70+	560	21.6	36.3	11.8	30.2
LGA					
City of Greater Bendigo	3,912	13.9	34.5	18.3	33.3
Macedon Ranges Shire	840	15.6	39.9	18.9	25.7
Shire of Campaspe	992	16.9	37.7	17.7	27.6
Mount Alexander Shire	819	20.4	38.5	13.5	27.6
Central Goldfields Shire	589	21.1	33.9	15.3	29.7
Loddon Shire	603	23.0	30.7	13.3	33.1
Demographic indicators					
Household size²					
1 person	844	20.8	37.7	13.7	27.7
2 or 3 people	2,893	17.2	34.7	16.9	31.1
4 or 5 people	1,576	10.1	35.4	23.4	31.1
More than 5 people	188	10.5	35.3	15.9	38.3
Born overseas	703	16.0	39.8	14.6	29.6
Born in Australia	7,042	15.8	35.9	18.0	30.3
Speaks other main language	145	11.9	44.6	18.5	24.9
Speaks English as main language	7,579	15.9	36.1	17.6	30.4
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	224	7.4	32.7	10.3	49.6
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,509	16.0	36.4	17.9	29.6
LGBTQIA+	468	18.0	36.5	16.0	29.5
Non-LGBTQIA+	7,249	15.6	36.3	17.8	30.3
Neurodivergent	928	13.4	32.8	18.5	35.2
Not neurodivergent	5,197	16.0	36.6	17.9	29.4
Maybe	621	13.5	38.6	17.7	30.2
Not sure what neurodivergent means	756	15.0	35.5	18.0	31.4
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,701	15.5	33.9	17.4	33.1
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,785	15.6	39.6	20.4	24.4
Unemployed/retired ²	1,677	20.1	37.5	12.3	30.1
Employed	3,818	13.2	34.2	21.2	31.4
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,642	13.0	30.8	17.3	38.9
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,849	16.8	37.8	18.6	26.8
Requires help with daily activities	666	12.7	29.5	13.3	44.4
Does not require help	7,066	16.1	36.9	18.1	28.9

Food security (last 12 months)²					
Low or very low food security	831	12.5	29.5	17.2	40.7
Marginal food security	692	10.8	32.1	22.7	34.5
High food security	3,974	17.3	37.5	17.6	27.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 3.3.1.2 provides a comprehensive overview of walking frequency by health and behaviour characteristics. Walking frequency was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, a lower proportion of those who self-reported their health as fair or poor (8.2% vs 17.3%), low to moderate life satisfaction (10.2% vs 17.2%), does not or sometimes feels valued by society (11.9% and 14.0% vs definitely [19.5%]) and has poor mental wellbeing (9.3% vs 17.9%) reported daily walking for transportation compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing. Similarly, a lower proportion of those who are overweight or obese (33.0%) reported walking for transportation at least once a week, but not daily, compared to their counterparts who are not overweight or obese (42.7%).

There were differences in walking frequency according to all health behaviours, except for water consumption. Daily walking for transportation was less common among those who did not meet the fruit (13.8% vs 18.0%) and vegetable (15.0% vs 22.6%) recommendations compared to those who did. Walking for transportation less than once a month was more often reported among those who did not meet the fruit (35.1% vs 24.9%), aerobic physical activity (44.8% vs 24.3%), muscle strengthening (33.9% vs 25.3%), screen time (32.8% vs 27.7%) and sleep (34.4% vs 28.3%) recommendations, and those who drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (41.8% vs 28.4%) compared to their counterparts who did not meet the respective recommendations or did not drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily.

With regards to risk taking behaviours, a greater proportion of those who had not engaged in risky alcohol consumption over the past 12 months (34.9%) reported walking for transportation less than once a month compared to those who had (29.6%). Oppositely, a greater proportion of those who had engaged in risky alcohol consumption (19.9% vs 14.6%) and had gambled (21.0% vs 15.9%) over the past 12 months reported walking to get to and from places at least once a month compared to those who had not.

Table 3.3.1.2 Walking frequency by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Daily	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a month
	n	%	%	%	%
Total sample	7,755	15.9	36.3	17.6	30.2
Health and wellbeing indicators					
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,266	8.2	25.3	18.8	47.7
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,698	17.3	39.5	16.8	26.4
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,534	10.2	29.6	16.9	43.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,385	17.2	38.5	18.2	26.0
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,090	11.9	27.6	15.6	45.0

Sometimes feel valued by society	2,413	14.0	37.4	19.1	29.5
Definitely feel valued by society	1,418	19.5	39.5	17.4	23.7
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,457	9.3	28.1	18.2	44.3
Good mental wellbeing	4,094	17.9	38.1	18.2	25.8
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,660	14.9	33.0	18.2	33.9
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	2,002	16.4	42.7	16.4	24.5
Health behaviour indicators					
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,751	13.8	32.8	18.3	35.1
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,895	18.0	40.0	17.2	24.9
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,678	15.0	36.4	18.1	30.4
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	910	22.6	34.6	15.5	27.3
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,452	9.5	27.6	18.1	44.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	5,043	18.3	39.6	17.8	24.3
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,604	14.5	32.6	19.0	33.9
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	3,017	15.9	40.9	18.0	25.3
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,925	14.0	34.9	18.3	32.8
Meets screen time recommendations	3,397	17.1	38.0	17.2	27.7
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,173	15.8	32.1	17.7	34.4
Meets sleep recommendations	5,194	15.5	38.5	17.7	28.3
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	901	13.8	27.9	16.5	41.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,736	15.9	37.9	17.9	28.4
Does not meet water recommendations	4,604	16.3	36.0	16.9	30.8
Meets water recommendations	2,853	14.1	36.7	20.0	29.2
Risk behaviour indicators²					
Current smoker	298	16.9	30.5	12.5	40.1
Ex-smoker	1,928	13.4	34.8	20.1	31.7
Never smoked	2,729	15.9	36.6	16.6	30.9
Current vaper	139	11.2	28.4	20.2	40.2
Ex-vaper	340	11.6	32.7	20.3	35.5
Never vaped	4,455	15.5	36.1	17.3	31.1
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,715	14.5	36.1	19.9	29.6
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,235	15.9	34.7	14.6	34.9
Gambled	1,526	13.8	36.1	21.0	29.0
Never gambled	3,418	15.6	35.2	15.9	33.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

3.3.2. Cycling

Among 2025 ALC respondents, 12.5% reported cycling to get to and from places at least once a week, 16.2% cycled at least once a month but less than weekly, and the remaining 71.3% cycled to get to and from places less than once a month. Children (22.5% weekly) and males (17.6% weekly) reported cycling for transportation more frequently than adults (9.9%) and females (7.3%), with a greater variation between age groups among males (see Table 3.3.2.1).

When looking at frequency of cycling for transportation by LGA, respondents from Macedon Ranges and Central Goldfields were among the least likely to report doing so at least once a week, whereas Mount Alexander Shire residents were the most likely. A greater proportion of people from the following demographic groups reported cycling to get to and from places less than once a month (infrequently):

- 2-3 person households (77.5%) compared to 4-5 person households (72.2%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (81.4%) compared to non-Indigenous (71.0%)
- Those unsure what neurodivergent means (77.1%) compared to not neurodivergent (70.4%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (79.3%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (67.2%)
- Unemployed/retired (79.5%) compared to employed (74.5%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (83.0%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (72.6%)
- Marginal (81.1%), low or very low (83.1%) food security compared to high food security (73.3%)

Table 3.3.2.1 Cycling frequency by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	At least once a week %	At least once a month %	Less than once a month %
Total sample	7,566	12.5	16.2	71.3
Children	2,180	22.5	25.1	52.3
Adults	5,335	9.9	14.0	76.2
Males	2,364	17.6	19.0	63.4
Females	5,115	7.3	13.7	79.0
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	599	31.6	26.2	42.2
Males, 12 to 17	502	26.0	25.0	48.9
Males, 18 to 34	152	14.5	20.0	65.5
Males, 35 to 49	329	17.1	25.5	57.3
Males, 50 to 69	490	11.8	15.9	72.3
Males, 70+	280	15.9	8.3	75.8
Females, 3 to 11	589	20.5	28.8	50.6
Females, 12 to 17	460	6.5	18.3	75.2
Females, 18 to 34	706	5.3	11.8	82.9
Females, 35 to 49	1,348	5.3	13.4	81.3

Females, 50 to 69	1,503	6.0	11.5	82.6
Females, 70+	483	4.9	3.4	91.7
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,838	12.2	15.9	71.9
Macedon Ranges Shire	820	9.3	17.3	73.4
Shire of Campaspe	971	14.5	15.3	70.3
Mount Alexander Shire	789	21.5	17.1	61.4
Central Goldfields Shire	565	9.7	14.4	75.9
Loddon Shire	583	10.8	18.6	70.6
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	774	11.6	11.2	77.2
2 or 3 people	2,808	9.6	13.0	77.5
4 or 5 people	1,565	9.6	18.2	72.2
More than 5 people	183	10.9	7.0	82.0
Born overseas	682	14.4	15.4	70.2
Born in Australia	6,878	12.3	16.2	71.5
Speaks other main language	142	21.3	16.0	62.7
Speaks English as main language	7,399	12.3	16.2	71.5
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	219	9.9	8.7	81.4
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,329	12.5	16.5	71.0
LGBTQIA+	460	15.4	14.1	70.5
Non-LGBTQIA+	7,080	12.2	16.5	71.3
Neurodivergent	924	13.3	15.2	71.5
Not neurodivergent	5,114	12.2	17.4	70.4
Maybe	618	16.1	15.4	68.6
Not sure what neurodivergent means	743	9.4	13.4	77.1
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,589	9.0	11.7	79.3
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,736	12.5	20.4	67.2
Unemployed/retired ²	1,568	10.9	9.6	79.5
Employed	3,765	9.4	16.1	74.5
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,584	5.8	11.2	83.0
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,745	12.0	15.4	72.6
Requires help with daily activities	645	15.2	12.2	72.7
Does not require help	6,909	12.3	16.6	71.1
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	811	6.0	10.9	83.1
Marginal food security	673	5.7	13.1	81.1
High food security	3,847	11.7	14.9	73.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 3.3.2.2 provides a comprehensive overview of cycling frequency by health and behaviour characteristics. Cycling frequency was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, a lower proportion of those who self-reported their health as fair or poor (4.4% vs 14.4%), low to moderate life satisfaction (6.2% vs 11.4%), does not or sometimes feels valued by society (6.9% and 8.4% vs definitely [14.5%]), has poor mental wellbeing (5.8% vs 11.5%), and were overweight or obese (8.7% vs 17.0%) reported at least weekly cycling for transportation compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing.

There were differences in cycling frequency according to most health behaviours. Specifically, weekly cycling for transportation was less common among those who did not meet the fruit (9.2% vs 16.4%), vegetable (11.9% vs 16.9%), and aerobic physical activity (7.2% vs 14.6%) recommendations compared to those who did. Conversely, a lower proportion of those who met the sleep recommendations (9.9%) reported cycling for transportation at least once a week compared to those who do not (13.3%).

With regards to risk taking behaviours, a lower proportion of those who were ex vapers (5.4%) and had gambled in the past 12 months (6.0%) cycled for transportation at least once a week compared to those who never vaped (10.3%) or had not gambled (11.8%). A lower proportion of those who had not engaged in risky alcohol consumption (10.9%) cycled for transportation at least once a month compared to those who had engaged in risky alcohol consumption over the past 12 months (15.7%).

Table 3.3.2.2 Cycling frequency by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	At least once a week %	At least once a month %	Less than once a month %
Total sample	7,566	12.5	16.2	71.3
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,227	4.4	10.2	85.4
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,569	14.4	17.7	67.8
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,485	6.2	11.6	82.2
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,283	11.4	14.8	73.8
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,052	6.9	9.8	83.3
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,346	8.4	14.4	77.2
Definitely feel valued by society	1,373	14.5	16.4	69.1
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,428	5.8	10.0	84.2
Good mental wellbeing	3,907	11.5	15.5	73.0
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,590	8.7	14.6	76.7
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,949	17.0	19.8	63.3
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,665	9.2	13.2	77.6
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,799	16.4	19.6	64.0

Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,527	11.9	16.6	71.4
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	881	16.9	13.3	69.9
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,404	7.2	15.0	77.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,927	14.6	16.6	68.7
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,554	10.8	15.9	73.3
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,924	13.1	16.7	70.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,833	11.1	14.8	74.1
Meets screen time recommendations	3,317	13.5	17.8	68.7
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,124	9.9	13.3	76.8
Meets sleep recommendations	5,070	13.3	17.5	69.3
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	882	7.3	11.0	81.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,571	13.4	17.1	69.5
Does not meet water recommendations	4,482	13.0	16.0	71.0
Meets water recommendations	2,803	11.1	16.8	72.1
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	295	10.6	13.5	75.9
Ex-smoker	1,871	9.1	14.5	76.4
Never smoked	2,636	10.1	13.1	76.8
Current vaper	138	6.3	18.9	74.8
Ex-vaper	337	5.4	16.7	77.9
Never vaped	4,308	10.3	13.1	76.6
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,661	9.5	15.7	74.8
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,136	10.1	10.9	79.0
Gambled	1,482	6.0	14.4	79.6
Never gambled	3,312	11.8	13.3	74.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

3.3.3. Adult's travel to work or education

Driving (66.9%) was the most common method of travel, followed by active travel (9.9%), passenger in a private vehicle (6.4%), public transport (6.3%) and work or education at home (5.8%). Almost a quarter of respondents (23.4%) indicated that they did not engage in work or study. Table 3.3.3.1 presents the results regarding methods of travel to work or education among adults, according to selected demographic characteristics. Briefly, driving was most common among younger adults, residents of Greater Bendigo, households with multiple people, people with higher education, maybe neurodivergent, not requiring any help with daily activities and with marginal, low or very low food security. Active travel was more common among males, younger adults, residents of Greater Bendigo

and Mount Alexander, LGBTQIA+ and neurodivergent people, and those with a Bachelor degree or higher level of education.

Table 3.3.3.2 presents the results according to health and wellbeing characteristics. Travel methods were associated with most health and wellbeing indicators except life satisfaction, mental wellbeing, fruit consumption, muscle strengthening exercise, sleep and smoking in adults. Driving was more common among the following people:

- Sometimes feel valued by society (72.5%) compared to those who do not (60.8%) or definitely (66.4%) feel valued
- Overweight or obese (70.4%) compared to normal weight or underweight (63.0%)
- Did not meet vegetable intake recommendations (68.2%) compared to met them (51.8%)
- Consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (75.4%) compared to not (65.3%)
- Met water consumption recommendations (77.9%) compared to not (62.5%)
- Met screen time recommendations (70.1%) compared to not (63.7%)
- Current (79.2%) or ex (79.2%) vaper compared to never vaped (65.9%)
- Engaged in risky alcohol intake (74.3%) compared to not (58.4%) over the past 12 months
- Gambled (73.1%) compared to never gambled (64.6%) over the past 12 months

Active travel was more common among the following people:

- Good, very good or excellent health (10.7%) compared to fair or poor health (6.5%)
- Normal weight or underweight (14.6%) compared to overweight or obese (7.4%)
- Met the aerobic physical activity recommendations (11.4%) compared to not (5.0%)
- Never gambled (11.2%) compared to gambled (6.9%) in the past 12 months

Table 3.3.3.1 Adult's travel to work/education by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Drive %	Passenger in private vehicle %	Active travel %	Take public transport %	Work or study at home %	Do not work/study %
Total sample	5,512	66.9	6.4	9.9	6.3	5.8	23.4
Males	1,283	64.9	5.3	12.5	7.0	4.4	25.5
Females	4,185	69.0	7.5	7.3	5.5	7.0	21.3
Sex and age							
Males, 18 to 34	153	78.9	15.0	22.1	14.1	6.3	3.2
Males, 35 to 49	331	84.0	3.7	16.9	9.8	6.3	3.4
Males, 50 to 69	504	69.0	4.0	9.4	5.4	4.3	21.3
Males, 70+	295	30.3	1.9	6.5	1.7	1.3	68.9
Females, 18 to 34	712	79.5	12.5	9.7	8.7	7.1	9.7
Females, 35 to 49	1,362	81.9	6.9	6.5	6.5	11.4	5.3
Females, 50 to 69	1,547	66.6	4.2	7.5	3.7	5.7	23.1
Females, 70+	564	26.7	6.6	3.0	1.4	1.0	74.3
LGA							
City of Greater Bendigo	2,897	68.3	7.5	10.7	5.8	5.4	22.2
Macedon Ranges Shire	565	64.1	5.9	6.1	11.3	9.7	25.1
Shire of Campaspe	680	69.9	4.4	9.1	1.0	2.4	22.9
Mount Alexander Shire	602	60.0	6.8	16.0	10.9	7.3	26.3
Central Goldfields Shire	378	69.1	4.1	9.6	1.6	1.7	22.5
Loddon Shire	390	64.2	4.9	9.1	1.3	4.7	26.4
Demographic indicators							
Household size							
1 person	842	50.7	2.5	11.9	3.7	3.0	41.1

2 or 3 people	2,897	62.3	6.8	9.4	5.3	5.4	28.5
4 or 5 people	1,578	84.2	7.6	10.0	8.6	7.4	6.2
More than 5 people	190	69.9	7.1	7.6	13.5	10.9	7.9
Born overseas	626	61.3	6.7	12.6	12.6	5.9	24.3
Born in Australia	4,879	67.7	6.4	9.5	5.3	5.8	23.3
Speaks other main language	124	68.6	5.9	18.1	19.1	2.5	8.9
Speaks English as main language	5,365	66.9	6.4	9.7	5.9	5.9	23.8
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	135	71.5	13.3	9.7	7.2	8.9	15.3
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	5,364	66.8	6.2	9.9	6.2	5.7	23.6
LGBTQIA+	380	64.7	15.9	18.5	5.5	6.4	16.3
Non-LGBTQIA+	5,102	67.1	5.4	9.1	14.8	5.8	24.1
Neurodivergent	514	66.7	10.2	14.8	10.1	9.5	14.5
Not neurodivergent	3,802	68.2	5.6	8.6	6.1	6.1	22.4
Maybe	383	74.9	5.3	11.0	9.3	10.0	12.9
Not sure what neurodivergent means	607	59.8	5.3	9.0	2.8	1.5	34.5
Less than Bachelor level education	2,705	65.6	7.1	9.0	5.0	4.8	25.5
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,787	70.9	4.6	12.4	9.9	8.8	16.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor	1,644	68.1	6.7	8.8	5.2	5.4	22.0
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,853	66.3	6.2	10.5	6.8	6.0	24.1
Requires help with daily activities	313	44.2	12.5	8.0	7.1	3.6	41.6
Does not require help	5,183	68.6	6.0	10.0	6.2	6.0	22.0
Food security (last 12 months)							
Low or very low food security	832	71.0	7.1	11.4	7.1	5.5	17.2
Marginal food security	693	74.8	9.7	7.6	7.8	5.1	16.0
High food security	3,980	64.4	5.6	9.9	5.8	6.0	26.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Table 3.3.3.2 Adult's travel to work/education by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Drive %	Passenger in private vehicle %	Active travel %	Take public transport %	Work or study at home %	Do not work/study %
Total sample	5,512	66.9	6.4	9.9	6.3	5.8	23.4
Health and wellbeing indicators							
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,154	65.7	7.8	6.5	5.5	7.4	25.4
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	3,791	68.5	5.8	10.7	6.2	5.3	22.5
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	1,538	69.7	6.0	8.8	6.3	5.5	21.5
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,386	66.9	6.5	9.9	5.9	6.0	24.2
Does not feel valued by society	1,089	60.8	6.3	9.3	6.4	6.5	28.5
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,414	72.5	7.5	8.7	6.4	5.8	19.4
Definitely feel valued by society	1,423	66.4	4.3	11.5	5.4	5.1	25.0
Poor mental wellbeing	1,458	69.2	7.5	8.1	5.6	7.3	22.9
Good mental wellbeing	4,054	66.1	6.0	10.5	6.5	5.2	23.6
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,380	70.4	5.7	7.4	4.6	5.8	23.1
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,370	63.0	5.4	14.6	8.8	6.8	23.8
Health behaviour indicators							
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,113	68.7	6.8	9.2	6.2	5.5	21.8
Meets fruit intake recommendations	2,357	64.1	5.9	11.0	6.4	6.4	25.8
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	4,796	68.2	6.6	9.9	6.3	5.7	22.2

Meets vegetable intake recommendations	628	51.8	4.5	9.4	5.4	6.9	37.2
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,332	66.1	7.4	5.0	3.9	5.8	28.0
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,075	66.8	6.1	11.4	7.0	5.9	22.2
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,439	68.8	7.0	9.4	6.4	6.6	20.9
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,614	66.3	6.0	10.4	6.7	5.6	24.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,644	63.7	8.1	9.9	5.3	5.4	27.2
Meets screen time recommendations	2,665	70.1	4.2	9.5	7.0	6.5	19.7
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,558	69.5	6.9	8.0	4.7	6.3	22.1
Meets sleep recommendations	3,727	65.3	6.1	10.5	6.8	5.7	24.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	735	75.4	8.5	6.9	4.8	5.8	15.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	4,698	65.3	5.9	10.4	6.5	5.9	25.0
Does not meet water recommendations	3,481	62.5	6.0	10.2	5.9	5.8	27.7
Meets water recommendations	1,881	77.9	7.1	8.6	6.6	5.9	13.3
Risk behaviour indicators							
Current smoker	300	61.8	6.6	14.5	8.3	3.7	21.9
Ex-smoker	1,928	67.7	5.1	7.9	4.9	6.0	24.7
Never smoked	2,733	68.3	7.3	10.4	6.9	6.1	22.6
Current vaper	139	79.2	8.7	10.0	8.3	8.1	6.1
Ex-vaper	340	79.2	11.4	11.0	9.3	6.2	6.6
Never vaped	4,461	65.9	5.8	9.4	5.7	5.8	25.9
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,721	74.3	6.1	9.6	6.9	6.0	17.1
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,234	58.4	6.7	9.7	5.1	5.7	32.1

Gambled	1,525	73.1	6.4	6.9	4.6	4.5	21.1
Never gambled	3,427	64.6	6.4	11.2	7.0	6.6	24.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

3.3.4. Children's travel to school

Parents were asked to report their child's method of travel to get to and from school. Response options included 'they are driven to or from school in a car', 'public transport with an adult present', 'public transport without an adult present', 'walk or ride with an adult present', 'walk or ride without an adult present', 'other', and 'my child does not attend school'. For all children who attend school, responses were recoded as 'car', 'public transport', or 'active travel' for analysis and reporting purposes.

Overall, 62.9% of children were driven to school in a car, 24.3% took public transport and 25.2% engaged in active travel to and from school. Table 3.3.4.1 presents children's travel to school findings according to selected demographic characteristics. A greater proportion of male (70.6% vs 48.5%) and female (69.4% vs 53.6%) children aged 3 to 11 were driven in a car compared to their adolescent (12 to 17 years) counterparts (males: 48.5%, females: 53.6%). Children from Loddon Shire were the least likely to be driven to school in a car (37.1%) compared to all other LGAs (ranged from 56.4% to 66.2%). LGBTQIA+ children (43.3%) were less likely to be driven to school in a car compared to those who are not LGBTQIA+ (63.6%).

Public transport use similarly differed according to age by sex; however, findings were the opposite to car use with a significantly greater proportion of adolescent males (52.8% vs 7.5%) and females (51.0% vs 8.3%) using public transport compared to children. Children from Mount Alexander (35.8%) and Loddon Shire (45.8%) were the most likely to use public transport to get to and from school, and children from Greater Bendigo were the least likely to use public transport (19.7%). A greater proportion of LGBTQIA+ children (51.0%) and children who do not require help with daily activities (27.1%) use public transport compared to those who are not LGBTQIA+ (23.5%) and require help with daily activities (10.9%).

Active travel differed by sex, with males (28.4%) more likely to engage in active travel (walking and/or cycling) to get to and from school compared to females (21.7%), however there were no differences between age groups. Children from Loddon Shire were the least likely to actively travel to and from school (14.8%). Those who are unsure what neurodivergent means were less likely to engage in active travel to and from school (17.1%) compared to those who report maybe being neurodivergent (33.1%). A lower proportion of children who require help with daily activities (19.1%) engage in active travel to and from school compared to those who do not require help (26.4%).

Table 3.3.4.1 Children's travel to school by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Car %	Public transport %	Active travel %
Total sample	2,050	62.9	24.3	25.2
Males	1,047	62.1	24.8	28.4
Females	977	63.5	24.3	21.7
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	601	70.6	7.5	28.1
Males, 12 to 17	446	48.5	52.8	28.9
Females, 3 to 11	588	69.4	8.3	22.7
Females, 12 to 17	389	53.6	51.0	20.0
LGA				

City of Greater Bendigo	960	66.2	19.7	24.5
Macedon Ranges Shire	251	58.1	29.6	28.5
Shire of Campaspe	299	65.8	23.4	25.7
Mount Alexander Shire	206	56.4	35.8	24.5
Central Goldfields Shire	183	64.5	23.3	20.7
Loddon Shire	151	37.1	45.8	14.8
Demographic indicators				
Born overseas	67	56.7	31.6	29.7
Born in Australia	1,983	63.2	24.1	25.0
Speaks other main language*	17	62.9	11.4	24.9
Speaks English as main language	2,027	62.9	24.4	25.2
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	81	69.1	22.6	22.7
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1,967	62.7	24.3	25.3
LGBTQIA+	64	43.3	51.0	27.0
Non-LGBTQIA+	1,984	63.6	23.5	25.1
Neurodivergent	384	66.4	25.5	24.4
Not neurodivergent	1,294	62.2	24.8	24.7
Maybe	216	59.8	19.1	33.1
Not sure what neurodivergent means	117	67.2	25.9	17.1
Requires help with daily activities	351	61.2	10.9	19.1
Does not require help	1,697	63.3	27.1	26.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 to 17 years living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

* Significance testing not conducted due to small base size.

No differences in travelling to and from school via car were seen for any of the health and wellbeing indicators or health behaviours (see Table 3.3.4.2). Public transport use differed by fruit, vegetable, screen and sleep recommendations. Specifically, a greater proportion of those who fail to meet the fruit (33.2% vs 21.0%), vegetable (25.7% vs 17.4%), screen time (29.7% vs 18.3%) and sleep duration (29.8% vs 22.7%) recommendations used public transport to get to and from school compared to their counterparts who meet the respective recommendations. Active travel to and from school differed according to self-reported health, aerobic physical activity and screen time. A greater proportion of those who reported good, very good or excellent health (26.8%) engage in active travel to get to and from school compared to those who reported fair or poor health (7.2%). Children who met the aerobic physical activity (34.2% vs 17.2%) and screen time (30.5% vs 22.7%) recommendations were more likely to actively travel to and from school compared to those who failed to meet the recommendations.

Table 3.3.4.2 Children's travel to school by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Car %	Public transport %	Active travel %
Total sample	2,050	62.9	24.3	25.2
Health and wellbeing indicators				

Self-reported health - Fair or poor	91	61.4	36.8	7.2
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,772	62.2	23.9	26.8
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	263	61.5	22.9	21.6
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	595	58.1	30.8	26.9
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	591	64.4	33.2	21.4
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,450	62.3	21.0	26.7
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	1,753	62.9	25.7	25.3
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	265	61.5	17.4	25.9
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,071	63.3	24.7	17.0
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	878	62.3	24.5	34.2
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,087	66.7	29.0	26.5
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	344	59.2	31.5	31.5
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,173	61.9	29.7	22.7
Meets screen time recommendations	707	64.4	18.3	30.5
Does not meet sleep recommendations	557	61.5	29.8	22.2
Meets sleep recommendations	1,396	63.0	22.7	26.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	151	56.4	33.8	28.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	1,867	63.2	23.7	25.1
Does not meet water recommendations	1,055	62.7	24.5	26.0
Meets water recommendations	913	62.6	24.2	24.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 to 17 years living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

3.4. Recreational screen time

The *Australian Guidelines*⁸ recommend that children aged 3-5 years engage in no more than one (1) hour per day of screen time. For children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 years, they should limit their recreational screen time to no more than two (2) hours per day, excluding time spent on educational activities. For adults aged 18 years and above, there are no Government screen time recommendations, however there are established recommendations based on a harmonised meta-analysis of data from over one million adults. This review found that recreational screen time in excess of three (3) hours per day was associated with an increased risk of detrimental health implications.

⁸ Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, 2021. Physical activity and exercise guidelines for all Australians. Canberra, Australia. <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-all-australians>

Therefore, a cut-off of three hours per day was used to differentiate adult ALC respondents who met/did not meet the screen time recommendations.

Table 3.4.1 presents a summary of the findings regarding screen time recommendation adherence and the average number of hours spent engaging in recreational screen time per day, according to selected demographic characteristics. Overall, 45.7% of respondents met the age-specific screen time recommendations. Adults engaged in a greater average number of hours of recreational screen time per day than children (4.9 vs 4.5 hours). A higher proportion of adults (47.6%) also met their recreational screen time recommendation of 3 hours per day compared to children (37.5%), whose recommendation is 2 hours per day. No differences were seen between males and females overall. However, when looking by both sex and age, findings were quite varied. For males, a greater proportion of children and those in the older age groups met the recommendations, but for females, it was those aged 35 to 49 who were the most likely to meet the recommendations. Residents from Greater Bendigo were the least likely to meet the screen time recommendations and engaged in the highest average number of hours of recreational screen time per day.

Differences in adherence to the recreational screen time recommendations were also seen according to a range of demographic characteristics. Specifically, people in the following groups are less likely to meet the screen time recommendations and need the most support to reduce their screen time:

- LGBTQIA+ (37.0%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (46.4%)
- Neurodivergent (34.8%) or not sure what neurodivergent means (40.7%) compared to not neurodivergent (49.3%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (45.1%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (55.1%)
- Unemployed/retired (41.0%) compared to employed (51.2%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (41.3%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (50.9%)
- Require help with daily activities (30.8%) compared to no help required (47.1%)
- Low or very low food security (40.5%) compared to high food security (50.0%)

Table 3.4.1 Recreational screen time by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average hours per day #
Total sample	7,364	54.3	45.7	4.9
Children	2,035	62.5	37.5	4.5
Adults	5,329	52.4	47.6	4.9
Males	2,280	55.6	44.4	4.9
Females	5,017	52.9	47.1	4.8
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	548	54.9	45.1	4.0
Males, 12 to 17	487	74.5	25.5	4.9
Males, 18 to 34	147	63.6	36.4	5.4

Males, 35 to 49	310	48.7	51.3	5.3
Males, 50 to 69	493	52.9	47.1	5.0
Males, 70+	295	52.4	47.6	4.5
Females, 3 to 11	523	52.4	47.6	4.0
Females, 12 to 17	451	73.8	26.2	5.6
Females, 18 to 34	680	55.6	44.4	5.0
Females, 35 to 49	1,312	44.2	55.8	4.7
Females, 50 to 69	1,500	50.8	49.2	4.9
Females, 70+	551	55.8	44.2	4.6
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,724	58.0	42.0	5.0
Macedon Ranges Shire	804	48.6	51.4	4.8
Shire of Campaspe	948	52.5	47.5	4.5
Mount Alexander Shire	780	54.2	45.8	4.8
Central Goldfields Shire	557	49.0	51.0	4.5
Loddon Shire	551	54.3	45.7	5.0
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	817	55.7	44.3	4.8
2 or 3 people	2,811	53.4	46.6	4.9
4 or 5 people	1,514	48.8	51.2	5.1
More than 5 people	181	49.6	50.4	5.1
Born overseas	669	50.7	49.3	5.0
Born in Australia	6,687	54.8	45.2	4.9
Speaks other main language	129	55.5	44.5	5.9
Speaks English as main language	7,207	54.2	45.8	4.8
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	208	54.0	46.0	4.9
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,145	54.3	45.7	4.9
LGBTQIA+	442	63.0	37.0	5.6
Non-LGBTQIA+	6,893	53.6	46.4	4.8
Neurodivergent	863	65.2	34.8	5.7
Not neurodivergent	4,958	50.7	49.3	4.6
Maybe	591	58.1	41.9	4.9
Not sure what neurodivergent means	713	59.3	40.7	5.2
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,602	54.9	45.1	5.0
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,711	44.9	55.1	4.6
Unemployed/retired ²	1,636	59.0	41.0	5.2
Employed	3,683	48.8	51.2	4.8
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,575	58.7	41.3	5.6
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,739	49.1	50.9	4.6

Requires help with daily activities	618	69.2	30.8	5.6
Does not require help	6,732	52.9	47.1	4.8
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	791	59.5	40.5	5.4
Marginal food security	671	54.7	45.3	5.3
High food security	3,859	50.0	50.0	4.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 3.4.2 summarises recreational screen time engagement by selected health and behaviour characteristics. Recreational screen time was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators, except for BMI. Respondents with the following health and wellbeing indicators spent significantly more hours per day using screens for recreation, on average, compared to their counterparts who reported more positive health and wellbeing:

- Fair or poor self-reported health (5.6 vs 4.6)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (5.3 vs 4.7)
- Does not feel valued by society (5.4 vs 4.5)
- Poor mental wellbeing (5.6 vs 4.7)

Additionally, the same respondents (plus those who are overweight or obese) were proportionately less likely to meet the screen time recommendations.

With regards to health behaviours, average screen time duration differed according to adherence to most of the recommendations, except for muscle strengthening activities and sleep. Likewise, differences in adherence to the recreational screen time recommendations were seen between those who did and did not report adherence to all health behaviour recommendations, except for water consumption. Specifically, adherence to the recreational screen time recommendations was lower among those who failed to meet the fruit (42.6% vs 49.0%), vegetable (44.9% vs 53.2%), aerobic physical activity (37.0% vs 49.2%), muscle strengthening (41.5% vs 48.5%) and sleep (41.3% vs 48.5%) recommendations, as well as among those who drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (33.3% vs 47.6%).

Smoking and gambling were the only risk behaviours that were associated with recreational screen time. A smaller proportion of those who are current smokers (33.7%) and had gambled in the past 12 months (43.0%) met the recreational screen time recommendations compared to those who are ex-smokers (49.9%), have never smoked (48.9%) or had not gambled in the past 12 months (50.9%). Likewise, average recreational screen time duration was higher among current smokers (5.9 hours per day) compared to those who were ex-smokers (4.9) or had never smoked (4.8).

Table 3.4.2 Recreational screen time by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average hours per day #
Total sample	7,364	54.3	45.7	4.9

Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,235	62.7	37.3	5.6
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,467	51.3	48.7	4.6
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,505	56.8	43.2	5.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,327	49.1	50.9	4.7
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,068	61.1	38.9	5.4
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,381	50.2	49.8	4.9
Definitely feel valued by society	1,385	45.4	54.6	4.5
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,434	61.0	39.0	5.6
Good mental wellbeing	3,895	49.1	50.9	4.7
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,602	55.2	44.8	5.0
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,943	51.7	48.3	4.7
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,615	57.4	42.6	5.2
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,707	51.0	49.0	4.5
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,410	55.1	44.9	4.9
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	863	46.8	53.2	4.1
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,351	63.0	37.0	5.3
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,859	50.8	49.2	4.7
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,498	58.5	41.5	5.1
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,913	50.8	49.2	4.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,135	58.7	41.3	5.0
Meets sleep recommendations	5,069	51.5	48.5	4.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	874	66.7	33.3	5.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,479	52.4	47.6	4.7
Does not meet water recommendations	4,469	55.4	44.6	5.0
Meets water recommendations	2,772	51.7	48.3	4.5
Risk behaviour indicators ²				
Current smoker	295	66.3	33.7	5.9
Ex-smoker	1,899	50.1	49.9	4.9
Never smoked	2,672	51.1	48.9	4.8
Current vaper	138	57.9	42.1	4.9
Ex-vaper	335	54.2	45.8	5.1
Never vaped	4,375	51.3	48.7	4.9
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,684	51.1	48.9	4.9

Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,179	52.7	47.3	5.0
Gambled	1,505	57.0	43.0	5.2
Never gambled	3,351	49.1	50.9	4.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

3.5. Sleep

In 2015, the Sleep Health Foundation⁹ released a report recommending sleep durations for different age groups, highlighting that sleep needs to support good health generally decrease with age. The recommendations are as follows:

Age group	Hours per night
3 to 5 years	10 to 13
6 to 13 years	9 to 11
14 to 17 years	8 to 10
18 to 64 years	7 to 9
65 years and above	7 to 8

Tables 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 present the average hours per night of sleep and adherence to the age-specific recommendations according to selected demographic characteristics and health and behaviour characteristics. Overall, 70% of ALC respondents met their age-specific sleep recommendations and slept an average of 7.5 hours per night.

On average, children slept longer than adults (9.2 hours vs. 7.1 hours), and males slept slightly more than females (7.6 hours vs. 7.5 hours), although there was no difference in adherence to the recommendations. When looking at sex by age group, both males and females aged 3 to 11 years slept longer, and a greater proportion adhered to the sleep recommendations compared to those in older age groups. No differences in sleep time or recommendation adherence were seen according to LGA or country of birth.

The following demographic groups were less likely to meet their respective age-related sleep recommendations:

- Speaks English as main language (69.7%) compared to another main language (82.6%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (57.8%) compared to non-Indigenous (70.3%)
- Neurodivergent (62.7%) or maybe neurodivergent (63.8%) compared to not neurodivergent (71.7%)
- Less than Bachelor level education (67.5%) compared to Bachelor degree or above (75.8%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (58.9%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (75.0%)

⁹ Sleep Health Foundation 2015. Sleep needs across the lifespan. Blacktown: Sleep Health Foundation. <https://irp.cdn-website.com/0da81f14/files/uploaded/Sleep-Needs-Across-Lifespan.pdf>

- Marginal (61.2%), low or very low (55.8%) food security compared to high food security (74.7%)

Table 3.5.1 Sleep by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Does not meet recommendation	Meets recommendation	Average hours per night
	n	%	%	#
Total sample	7,411	30.0	70.0	7.5
Children	2,106	28.6	71.4	9.2
Adults	5,305	30.4	69.6	7.1
Males	2,310	28.7	71.3	7.6
Females	5,037	31.2	68.8	7.5
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	586	24.6	75.4	9.7
Males, 12 to 17	491	34.1	65.9	8.4
Males, 18 to 34	140	24.5	75.5	7.3
Males, 35 to 49	314	34.9	65.1	7.0
Males, 50 to 69	487	28.7	71.3	7.2
Males, 70+	292	26.3	73.7	7.3
Females, 3 to 11	563	24.5	75.5	9.7
Females, 12 to 17	443	34.8	65.2	8.3
Females, 18 to 34	673	31.5	68.5	7.1
Females, 35 to 49	1,318	33.5	66.5	7.0
Females, 50 to 69	1,483	30.9	69.1	7.1
Females, 70+	557	30.6	69.4	7.2
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,723	31.3	68.7	7.5
Macedon Ranges Shire	824	27.3	72.7	7.6
Shire of Campaspe	960	31.2	68.8	7.5
Mount Alexander Shire	802	26.4	73.6	7.5
Central Goldfields Shire	556	31.7	68.3	7.4
Loddon Shire	546	31.3	68.7	7.5
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	817	33.1	66.9	7.1
2 or 3 people	2,801	28.4	71.6	7.2
4 or 5 people	1,502	32.9	67.1	7.0
More than 5 people	179	29.9	70.1	7.2
Born overseas	666	26.3	73.7	7.5
Born in Australia	6,738	30.5	69.5	7.5
Speaks other main language	132	17.4	82.6	7.7

Speaks English as main language	7,254	30.3	69.7	7.5
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	202	42.2	57.8	7.5
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,198	29.7	70.3	7.5
LGBTQIA+	433	35.4	64.6	7.1
Non-LGBTQIA+	6,949	29.6	70.4	7.6
Neurodivergent	865	37.3	62.7	7.6
Not neurodivergent	5,017	28.3	71.7	7.6
Maybe	599	36.2	63.8	7.7
Not sure what neurodivergent means	693	30.3	69.7	7.3
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,577	32.5	67.5	7.1
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,710	24.2	75.8	7.2
Unemployed/retired ²	1,637	27.6	72.4	7.2
Employed	3,657	31.8	68.2	7.1
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,549	41.1	58.9	6.8
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,740	25.0	75.0	7.3
Requires help with daily activities	627	32.0	68.0	8.1
Does not require help	6,769	29.8	70.2	7.5
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	774	44.2	55.8	6.8
Marginal food security	662	38.8	61.2	6.9
High food security	3,861	25.3	74.7	7.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 3.5.2 summarises sleep duration by selected health and behaviour characteristics. Sleep duration was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, a lower proportion of those who self-reported their health to be fair or poor (59.9% vs 72.4%), have low to moderate life satisfaction (57.8% vs 75.1%), do not feel valued by society (57.4% vs sometimes [71.1] and definitely [77.1%]), have poor mental wellbeing (55.0% vs 75.3%), and are overweight or obese (68.1% vs 73.9%) met the sleep recommendations compared to their counterparts who reported more positive health and wellbeing.

Differences in adherence to the sleep recommendations was also seen between those who did and did not report adherence to the aerobic physical activity (72.2% of those who did compared to 64.7% of those who did not), screen time (73.2% vs 67.1%), fruit (73.6% vs 67.0%) and vegetable (79.2% vs 69.1%) recommendations. Similarly, a lower proportion of those who drink sugar-sweetened beverages on a daily basis (59.1%) met the sleep recommendations compared to those who do not drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (71.7%).

Gambling was the only risk behaviour that was associated with sleep. A lower proportion of adults who gambled in the past 12 months met the sleep recommendations (65.1%) compared to those who did not gamble (71.6%).

Table 3.5.2 Sleep duration by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Does not meet recommendation	Meets recommendation	Average hours per night
	n	%	%	#
Total sample	7,411	30.0	70.0	7.5
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,211	40.1	59.9	7.0
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,534	27.6	72.4	7.7
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,481	42.2	57.8	6.9
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,328	24.9	75.1	7.2
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,054	42.6	57.4	6.8
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,363	28.9	71.1	7.1
Definitely feel valued by society	1,393	22.9	77.1	7.3
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,412	45.0	55.0	7.3
Good mental wellbeing	3,893	24.7	75.3	6.8
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,597	31.9	68.1	7.2
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,965	26.1	73.9	7.7
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,576	33.0	67.0	7.2
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,792	26.4	73.6	7.9
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,431	30.9	69.1	7.5
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	889	20.8	79.2	8.0
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,361	35.3	64.7	7.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,883	27.8	72.2	7.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,494	31.2	68.8	7.6
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,919	27.9	72.1	7.3
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,807	32.9	67.1	7.5
Meets screen time recommendations	3,397	26.8	73.2	7.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	856	40.9	59.1	7.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,544	28.3	71.7	7.6
Does not meet water recommendations	4,489	29.6	70.4	7.5
Meets water recommendations	2,798	30.5	69.5	7.6
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	292	38.7	61.3	6.9
Ex-smoker	1,881	30.3	69.7	7.1
Never smoked	2,672	29.8	70.2	7.1

Current vaper	133	36.4	63.6	6.9
Ex-vaper	328	32.6	67.4	7.1
Never vaped	4,363	30.1	69.9	7.1
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,655	30.4	69.6	7.1
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,186	31.0	69.0	7.1
Gambled	1,482	34.9	65.1	7.0
Never gambled	3,351	28.4	71.6	7.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

3.6. Participation in desired level of physical activity

Before asking more detailed questions about participation in specific activities, all respondents were first asked whether they had been as physically active as they would have liked over the past 12 months. This section focuses on describing the demographic, health, and wellbeing characteristics of those who reported lower-than-desired activity levels. The next section will then explore the *reasons* why they were not as active as they wished. Because these individuals have already expressed an interest in being more active, supporting them to increase their participation could lead to quick gains in overall activity rates among residents.

A little over half of all respondents (54.8%) indicated that they had not participated in activities as often as they would like. Adults (62.4%) and females (59.6%) were more likely than children (24.8%) and males (49.8%) to indicate they had not participated in physical activities as often as they would have liked in the last 12 months. Amongst both males and females, the age group most likely to report they had not participated in activities as often as they would like were those aged between 18 and 69 years. Across the LGAs there were no significant differences recorded in the proportion of respondents who would like to participate in physical activity more often, with similar proportions of residents wanting to increase participation in each area.

There were, however, subgroups of respondents that were more likely to indicate they had not participated in as much physical activity as they would have liked when compared to others. These include:

- 4-5 person households (70.6%) compared to single (55.5%) and 2-3 person (59.9%) households
- LGBTQIA+ (63.6%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (54.0%)
- Neurodivergent (61.3%) compared to not neurodivergent (52.9%)
- Employed (68.4%) compared to unemployed/retired (51.0%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (72.7%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (57.1%)
- Low (74.7%) or marginal (72.2%) food security compared to high food security (57.3%)

Table 3.6.1 Participation in desired level of physical activity by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	No %	Yes %
Total sample	7,769	54.8	45.2
Children	2,192	24.8	75.2
Adults	5,521	62.4	37.6
Males	2,408	49.8	50.2
Females	5,270	59.6	40.4
Sex and age			
Males, 3 to 11	603	23.5	76.5
Males, 12 to 17	506	21.1	78.9
Males, 18 to 34	153	59.6	40.4
Males, 35 to 49	331	67.2	32.8
Males, 50 to 69	504	60.9	39.1
Males, 70+	298	40.1	59.9
Females, 3 to 11	588	23.7	76.3
Females, 12 to 17	465	31.0	69.0
Females, 18 to 34	712	70.6	29.4
Females, 35 to 49	1,361	76.4	23.6
Females, 50 to 69	1,550	63.6	36.4
Females, 70+	567	49.5	50.5
LGA			
City of Greater Bendigo	3,918	53.7	46.3
Macedon Ranges Shire	839	54.0	46.0
Shire of Campaspe	997	57.1	42.9
Mount Alexander Shire	822	56.8	43.2
Central Goldfields Shire	587	57.1	42.9
Loddon Shire	606	56.8	43.2
Demographic indicators			
Household size²			
1 person	846	55.5	44.5
2 or 3 people	2,901	59.9	40.1
4 or 5 people	1,578	70.6	29.4
More than 5 people	190	65.4	34.6
Born overseas	704	57.4	42.6
Born in Australia	7,053	54.5	45.5
Speaks other main language	144	52.6	47.4
Speaks English as main language	7,592	54.9	45.1
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	233	65.0	35.0

Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,524	54.5	45.5
LGBTQIA+	470	63.6	36.4
Non-LGBTQIA+	7,258	54.0	46.0
Neurodivergent	930	61.3	38.7
Not neurodivergent	5,197	52.9	47.1
Maybe	621	58.5	41.5
Not sure what neurodivergent means	759	54.3	45.7
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,711	61.8	38.2
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,790	64.2	35.8
Unemployed/retired ²	1,689	51.0	49.0
Employed	3,822	68.4	31.6
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,644	72.7	27.3
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,860	57.1	42.9
Requires help with daily activities	667	56.7	43.3
Does not require help	7,078	54.7	45.3
Food security (last 12 months)²			
Low or very low food security	832	74.7	25.3
Marginal food security	692	72.2	27.8
High food security	3,988	57.3	42.7

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 3.6.2 summarises preference to be more physically active by selected health and behaviour characteristics. Preference to be physically active was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, a greater proportion of those who self-reported their health to be fair or poor (78.9% vs 48.4%), have low to moderate life satisfaction (76.5% vs 55.5%), do not feel valued by society (74.3% vs sometimes [64.5%] and definitely [48.5%]), have poor mental wellbeing (81.9% vs 55.0%), and are overweight or obese (63.1% vs 45.8%) did not engage in as much physical activity over the past 12 months as they would have liked compared to their counterparts who reported more positive health and wellbeing.

Differences in desire to be more physically active were seen between those who did and did not report adherence to the aerobic physical activity (5.2% of those who did compared to 64.4% of those who did not), muscle strengthening exercise (47.5% vs 64.3%), sleep duration (51.1% vs 62.9%), fruit (46.2% vs 62.2%), vegetable (37.8% vs 56.5%) and water consumption (51.4% vs 56.9%) recommendations. Similarly, a greater proportion of those who drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (66.1%) reported a desire to be more physically active compared to those who do not drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (53.0%). Results also revealed that current vapers (80.3%) were more likely to have not done activity as often as they would like compared to ex-vapers (61.5%) and those who have never vaped (62.1%).

Understanding the motivations and barriers related to participating in physical activity among groups with poorer health and wellbeing is strategically important. First, these individuals have already signalled a desire to be more active, making them an engaged audience with the potential for

immediate gains if their needs are supported. Second, increasing activity levels within these groups offers substantial health benefits, given their existing lower health status and undesirable behaviours.

Table 3.6.2 Participation in desired level of physical activity by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	No	Yes
	n	%	%
Total sample	7,769	54.8	45.2
Health and wellbeing indicators			
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,270	78.9	21.1
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,706	48.4	51.6
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,539	76.5	23.5
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,392	55.5	44.5
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,087	74.3	25.7
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,423	64.5	35.5
Definitely feel valued by society	1,424	48.5	51.5
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,465	81.9	18.1
Good mental wellbeing	4,065	55.0	45.0
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,661	63.1	36.9
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	2,007	45.8	54.2
Health behaviour indicators			
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,756	62.2	37.8
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,903	46.2	53.8
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,673	56.5	43.5
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	910	37.8	62.2
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,457	64.4	35.6
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	5,046	51.2	48.8
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,607	64.3	35.7
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	3,025	47.5	52.5
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,927	55.7	44.3
Meets screen time recommendations	3,404	54.5	45.5
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,174	62.9	37.1
Meets sleep recommendations	5,204	51.1	48.9
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	903	66.1	33.9

Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,746	53.0	47.0
Does not meet water recommendations	4,619	56.9	43.1
Meets water recommendations	2,852	51.4	48.6
Risk behaviour indicators²			
Current smoker	300	67.8	32.2
Ex-smoker	1,928	61.8	38.2
Never smoked	2,741	62.8	37.2
Current vaper	138	80.3	19.7
Ex-vaper	340	61.5	38.5
Never vaped	4,472	62.1	37.9
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,721	63.7	36.3
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,243	61.3	38.7
Gambled	1,527	65.4	34.6
Never gambled	3,435	61.3	38.7

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

3.7. Barriers to physical activity participation

Respondents who indicated they had not participated in physical activity as frequently as they would like were asked to indicate the reasons why this was the case, from a list provided in within the survey. Table 3.7.1 summarises the barriers to physical activity participation, in order from most to least commonly reported. Being too busy or not having enough time was the main reason for not doing as much activity as desired (58.9%). Poor health or disability (26.8%), cost (26.4%) and lack of social support (24.9%) were also common barriers to engaging in physical activity as much as they would like.

Table 3.7.1 Barriers to physical activity participation

	%
Unweighted base (n)¹	4,145
Too busy / not enough time	58.9
Poor health or disability	26.8
Cost	26.4
Lack of social support	24.9
Safety	15.6
Unsure about what activities are available	12.1
No cool or shaded areas to exercise locally during hot weather	7.4
Lack of motivation / laziness	4.4
Lack of transport	4.0

Caring responsibilities	4.0
Preferred activity not on offer locally / at suitable time	3.7
Personal or cultural reasons	2.8
Injury	2.1
Weather / seasonality	1.5
Distance	1.3
Lack of footpaths / bike paths	1.3
Tiredness / fatigue	0.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

The top five reported barriers to physical activity participation were analysed further according to demographic characteristics (see Table 3.7.2) and health and wellbeing indicators (see Table 3.7.3).

Reports of being too busy or not having enough time as a barrier to physical activity differed according to several demographics, health behaviours and risk behaviours. Specifically, a greater proportion of the following respondents reported being too busy or not having enough time as a barrier to physical activity participation:

- Adults (60.2%) compared to children (44.9%)
- Not neurodivergent (63.0%) compared to unsure what neurodivergent means (52.3%)
- Bachelor degree or higher (70.0%) compared to less than a Bachelor level education (57.0%)
- Employed (74.1%) compared to unemployed/retired (24.6%)
- Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (64.4%) compared to just getting along, poor or very poor (54.2%)
- Does not require help with daily activities (62.0%) compared to requires help (27.5%)
- Good, very good or excellent health (64.1%) compared to fair or poor health (49.1%)
- High/very high life satisfaction (65.2%) compared to low to moderate life satisfaction (54.7%)
- Sometimes (65.0%) or definitely (63.7%) feels valued by society compared to does not feel valued by society (51.7%)
- Met aerobic physical activity recommendations (64.1%) compared to not (50.8%)
- Met screen time guidelines (64.4%) compared to not (55.4%)
- Never smoked (62.4%) compared to current smoker (49.6%)
- Current (74.6%) or ex- (75.3%) vaper compared to never vaped (58.8%)
- Engaged in risky alcohol consumption in past 12 months (65.3%) compared to not (55.0%)

Likewise, there were many differences in reports of poor health or disability as a barrier to physical activity according to demographic characteristics, and health and behaviour indicators. The following respondent groups were more likely to report poor health or disability as a barrier to physical activity participation:

- Adults (27.7%) compared to children (16.9%)

- English as main language (27.2%) compared to another main language (9.2%)
- LGBTQIA+ (37.0%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (25.8%)
- Neurodivergent (42.5%) or unsure what neurodivergent means (34.8%) compared to not (21.1%) or maybe (25.5%) neurodivergent
- Less than Bachelor level education (29.1%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (23.2%)
- Unemployed/retired (43.5%) compared to employed (21.5%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (32.9%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (24.3%)
- Requires help with daily activities (55.3%) compared to no help required (24.0%)
- Low or very low food security (33.6%) compared to high food security (26.0%)
- Fair or poor health (47.3%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (18.0%)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (36.0%) compared to high/very high life satisfaction (21.9%)
- Not feeling valued by society (37.0%) compared to sometimes (24.5%) and definitely (22.0%) feeling valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (37.7%) compared to good mental wellbeing (22.1%)
- Overweight or obese (29.5%) compared to normal or underweight (21.2%)
- Did not meet the aerobic physical activity recommendations (36.8%) compared to met them (21.1%)
- Did not meet screen time recommendations (29.2%) compared to met them (23.3%)
- Did not meet sleep recommendations (30.9%) compared to met them (24.2%)
- Did not consume risky amounts of alcohol (35.9%) compared to consumed risky amounts of alcohol in the past 12 months (21.6%)

Cost as a barrier to physical activity also differed according to most demographic, health and wellbeing indicators. A greater proportion of the following respondents reported cost to be a barrier to engaging in as much physical activity as they would like:

- Children (38.3%) compared to adults (25.3%)
- Females (32.2%) compared to males (18.9%)
- Residents of Greater Bendigo (27.1%), Macedon Ranges (27.5%), Campaspe (24.6%) and Mount Alexander (27.8%) Shires compared to residents of Loddon Shire (14.3%)
- LGBTQIA+ (41.6%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (25.1%)
- Neurodivergent (38.6%) or maybe neurodivergent (35.7%) compared to not (23.9%) or unsure what neurodivergent means (22.2%)
- Less than Bachelor level education (27.2%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (20.4%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (39.0%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (16.3%)
- Requires help with daily activities (41.3%) compared to no help required (25.0%)

- Low or very low food security (48.9%) compared to marginal (30.8%) and high food security (16.0%)
- Fair or poor health (32.2%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (24.2%)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (32.6%) compared to high/very high life satisfaction (20.5%)
- Not feeling valued by society (36.0%) compared to sometimes (24.5%) and definitely (13.5%) feeling valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (33.0%) compared to good mental wellbeing (21.0%)
- Did not meet fruit intake recommendations (29.3%) compared to met them (21.7%)
- Did not meet vegetable intake recommendations (26.8%) compared to met them (17.9%)
- Did not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations (30.6%) compared to met them (23.6%)
- Did not meet muscle strengthening recommendations (28.5%) compared to met them (22.1%)
- Current smoker (36.5%) compared to ex-smoker (24.2%)

Lack of social support was the fourth most common barrier to physical activity, which was reported by a greater proportion of respondents from the following groups:

- LGBTQIA+ (46.1%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (22.9%)
- Neurodivergent (43.5%) or maybe neurodivergent (31.2%) compared to not (22.2%) or unsure what neurodivergent means (18.0%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (30.4%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (21.3%)
- Requires help with daily activities (38.4%) compared to no help required (23.6%)
- Low or very low food security (32.7%) compared to high food security (22.0%)
- Fair or poor health (31.8%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (22.4%)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (32.4%) compared to high/very high life satisfaction (20.1%)
- Not feeling valued by society (33.7%) compared to sometimes (24.5%) and definitely (14.7%) feeling valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (34.3%) compared to good mental wellbeing (19.6%)
- Did not meet fruit intake recommendations (28.2%) compared to met them (19.5%)
- Did not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations (30.7%) compared to met them (21.9%)
- Did not meet muscle strengthening recommendations (28.3%) compared to met them (21.1%)
- Drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (31.8%) compared to not (23.3%)

The fifth most common physical activity barrier was safety with differences seen between key demographic groups, weight status, smoking and gambling. A greater proportion of the following respondents reported safety as a barrier to engaging in as much physical activity as they would like:

- Females (19.0%) compared to (11.3%)

- Residents of Greater Bendigo (17.2%) and Central Goldfields (21.3%) Shires compared to Campaspe Shire (9.2%)
- Born in Australia (16.7%) compared to overseas (7.4%)
- Speak English as main language (15.8%) compared to another language (6.1%)
- Neurodivergent (22.9%) compared to not (15.1%) or unsure what neurodivergent means (9.7%)
- Bachelor degree or higher (19.1%) compared to less than Bachelor level education (14.0%)
- Employed (17.0%) compared to unemployed/retired (11.0%)
- Normal or underweight (18.9%) compared to overweight or obese (12.9%)
- Never smoked (16.9%) compared to current smoker (9.9%)
- Never gambled (17.3%) compared to gambled (11.8%) in past 12 months

Table 3.7.2 Top five barriers to physical activity participation by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Too busy / not enough time %	Poor health or disability %	Cost %	Lack of social support %	Safety %
Total sample	4,145	58.9	26.8	26.4	24.9	15.6
Children	559	44.9	16.9	38.3	25.0	17.7
Adults	3,565	60.2	27.7	25.3	24.9	15.3
Males	989	59.2	24.1	18.9	21.9	11.3
Females	3,109	59.0	28.8	32.2	27.2	19.0
LGA						
City of Greater Bendigo	2,112	58.8	28.1	27.1	25.6	17.2
Macedon Ranges Shire	433	60.2	24.3	27.5	22.5	15.0
Shire of Campaspe	524	60.0	29.3	24.6	28.2	9.2
Mount Alexander Shire	455	62.9	24.1	27.8	19.1	18.0
Central Goldfields Shire	298	49.2	24.3	25.5	26.2	21.3
Loddon Shire	323	50.2	21.0	14.3	26.7	11.7
Demographic indicators						
Born overseas	405	59.5	23.7	27.7	23.0	7.4
Born in Australia	3,734	58.9	27.2	26.1	25.2	16.7
Speaks other main language	81	59.2	9.2	39.2	24.7	6.1
Speaks English as main language	4,046	58.9	27.2	26.1	24.9	15.8
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	133	60.1	39.9	30.3	30.8	13.1
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	4,003	58.8	26.3	26.3	24.6	15.7
LGBTQIA+	303	51.2	37.0	41.6	46.1	21.0
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,818	59.9	25.8	25.1	22.9	15.1
Neurodivergent	544	54.3	42.5	38.6	43.5	22.9

Not neurodivergent	2,698	63.0	21.1	23.9	22.2	15.1
Maybe	345	64.5	25.5	35.7	31.2	19.5
Not sure what neurodivergent means	401	52.3	34.8	22.2	18.0	9.7
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,711	57.0	29.1	27.2	25.4	14.0
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,841	70.0	23.2	20.4	23.8	19.1
Unemployed/retired ²	894	24.6	43.5	24.8	26.6	11.0
Employed	2,665	74.1	21.5	25.5	24.2	17.0
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,242	54.2	32.9	39.0	30.4	15.5
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,312	64.4	24.3	16.3	21.3	15.2
Requires help with daily activities	380	27.5	55.3	41.3	38.4	16.4
Does not require help	3,755	62.0	24.0	25.0	23.6	15.5
Food security (last 12 months)²						
Low or very low food security	659	56.7	33.6	48.9	32.7	16.4
Marginal food security	511	61.4	25.3	30.8	26.0	18.2
High food security	2,390	61.3	26.0	16.0	22.0	14.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 3.7.3 Top five barriers to physical activity participation by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Too busy / not enough time %	Poor health or disability %	Cost %	Lack of social support %	Safety %
Total sample	4,145	58.9	26.8	26.4	24.9	15.6
Health and wellbeing indicators						
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,032	49.1	47.3	32.2	31.8	13.9

Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,713	64.1	18.0	24.2	22.4	16.1
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,219	54.7	36.0	32.6	32.4	15.2
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,988	65.2	21.9	20.5	20.1	14.8
Does not feel valued by society ²	842	51.7	37.0	36.0	33.7	16.4
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,633	65.0	24.5	24.4	24.5	15.4
Definitely feel valued by society	738	63.7	22.0	13.5	14.7	12.0
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,246	56.2	37.7	33.0	34.3	15.0
Good mental wellbeing	2,319	62.5	22.1	21.0	19.6	15.5
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,706	61.5	29.5	24.0	27.4	12.9
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	916	61.0	21.2	27.6	23.9	18.9
Health behaviour indicators						
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	2,368	60.5	27.9	29.3	28.2	15.9
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,720	57.3	24.8	21.7	19.5	14.9
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,676	59.7	26.4	26.8	25.1	15.2
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	375	57.2	27.8	17.9	20.0	20.0
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,509	50.8	36.8	30.6	30.7	15.5
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,514	64.1	21.1	23.6	21.9	15.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,224	58.6	27.5	28.5	28.3	15.6
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,421	62.8	24.4	22.1	21.1	16.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,117	55.4	29.2	28.1	26.8	14.8
Meets screen time recommendations	1,828	64.4	23.3	24.5	22.8	16.7
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,308	59.0	30.9	29.2	28.1	16.2

Meets sleep recommendations	2,636	60.1	24.2	24.7	23.6	15.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	590	59.1	30.9	30.5	31.8	13.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,500	59.1	25.8	25.3	23.3	16.1
Does not meet water recommendations	2,605	59.0	28.1	26.6	25.3	14.5
Meets water recommendations	1,408	60.5	23.1	25.1	23.3	17.8
Risk behaviour indicators²						
Current smoker	215	49.6	32.4	36.5	22.6	9.9
Ex-smoker	1,245	61.4	29.8	24.2	24.9	14.2
Never smoked	1,778	62.4	25.3	25.0	25.6	16.9
Current vaper	109	74.6	24.9	34.9	28.1	9.3
Ex-vaper	226	75.3	25.1	34.9	29.7	20.3
Never vaped	2,892	58.8	28.0	24.0	24.5	15.1
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,801	65.3	21.6	24.4	24.7	14.1
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,433	55.0	35.9	27.4	25.7	17.0
Gambled	1,019	59.3	28.7	23.1	24.1	11.8
Never gambled	2,213	61.9	26.9	26.9	25.7	17.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

3.8. Sport, exercise and recreation participation

Respondents were asked whether they had participated in any physical activities for sport, exercise, or recreation in the 12 months prior to completing the survey. Those who answered “yes” were then asked how many such activities they had taken part in. From a list of 60 predefined activity categories, respondents could select up to five activities. Because the survey captured only respondents’ top five activities, these may not represent all activities they may have participated in. Therefore, when interpreting participation rates for each of the 60 activities, these should be viewed as the proportion of the population who consider the activity to be one of their main activities.

For each activity selected, respondents were asked a series of follow-up questions, including how frequently they participated in the past 12 months and details about the facility, venue, or place where they most often took part. This included the facility’s name, location, quality, accessibility, how respondents travelled there, and the distance travelled. While this report focuses on identifiable facilities, venues, and places, some highly used facility types (i.e., footpaths) do not appear in the analysis because they are not named and cannot be identified in the same way as venues included in subsequent sections.

3.8.1. Participation in sport, exercise and recreation activities

All respondents were asked to list up to five activities they had participated in over the past 12 months. Overall, 71.9% reported participating in at least one activity and 21% had participated in four or more activities. In the 2019 ALC, 9.9% of respondents reported they had not participated in any activities, whereas in 2025, 28.1% responded that they had not participated in any activities. This suggests that activity levels have decreased over the past six years, with a greater proportion of residents reporting inactivity on this occasion. This section focuses on the demographic, health and wellbeing characteristics of inactive respondents (i.e., those who had not participated in any activities). Understanding the characteristics of residents who belong to the least active groups in the community provides a solid foundation for effectively addressing the needs of these groups.

Overall, a greater proportion of adults (31.4%) and females (30.2%) compared to children (14.6%) and males (25.7%) did not participate in any activities. Participation varied by age and sex, but in general, male and female children, adolescents and elderly were more likely to participate in sport and recreational activities than young to middle aged adults. A greater proportion of residents of Campaspe (39.4%) and Central Goldfields (34.0%) Shires did not participate in any activities compared to residents of Greater Bendigo (26.7%), Macedon Ranges (22.6%) and Mount Alexander (24.5%) Shires.

When looking at demographic indicators, a greater proportion of respondents from the following groups reported not participating in any sport, exercise or recreation activities over the past 12 months:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (44.7%) compared to non-Indigenous (27.6%)
- Unsure what neurodivergent means (38.6%) compared to not (25.4%) or maybe (25.1%) neurodivergent
- Less than Bachelor level education (35.4%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (19.3%)
- Unemployed/retired (36.4%) compared to employed (28.9%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (44.4%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (24.7%)

- Low or very low food security (49.5%) compared to marginal (38.1%) or high (25.4%) food security

Table 3.8.1.1 Participation in sport, exercise and recreational activities by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	None %	One %	Two to three %	Four or more %
Total sample	7,855	28.1	17.2	33.7	21.1
Children	2,202	14.6	18.9	46.4	20.1
Adults	5,505	31.4	16.6	30.6	21.4
Males	2,403	25.7	16.0	33.1	25.2
Females	5,270	30.2	18.3	34.4	17.2
Sex and age					
Males, 3 to 11	605	12.9	19.1	47.6	20.5
Males, 12 to 17	501	13.0	16.1	45.1	25.7
Males, 18 to 34	153	28.0	13.9	33.4	24.8
Males, 35 to 49	329	19.2	16.2	30.0	34.6
Males, 50 to 69	502	31.1	14.1	29.4	25.4
Males, 70+	299	35.5	18.4	26.6	19.5
Females, 3 to 11	604	13.9	19.0	48.7	18.5
Females, 12 to 17	460	17.4	22.4	44.2	15.9
Females, 18 to 34	708	38.7	19.1	26.8	15.4
Females, 35 to 49	1,357	32.2	16.8	31.5	19.5
Females, 50 to 69	1,542	29.3	18.3	34.0	18.3
Females, 70+	570	36.2	15.6	35.5	12.7
LGA					
City of Greater Bendigo	3,946	26.7	17.5	33.8	21.9
Macedon Ranges Shire	845	22.6	16.3	36.5	24.7
Shire of Campaspe	1,009	39.4	16.7	28.0	15.8
Mount Alexander Shire	834	24.5	16.4	37.8	21.3
Central Goldfields Shire	600	34.0	16.6	34.4	15.0
Loddon Shire	621	30.8	22.9	27.6	18.8
Demographic indicators					
Household size²					
1 person	848	35.2	20.0	28.8	16.1
2 or 3 people	2,893	31.3	16.9	30.6	21.2
4 or 5 people	1,570	28.1	14.8	32.7	24.3
More than 5 people	188	42.4	12.7	21.3	23.6
Born overseas	704	32.8	13.0	27.5	26.7
Born in Australia	7,040	27.5	17.6	34.5	20.4

Speaks other main language	143	33.7	19.8	18.5	28.0
Speaks English as main language	7,578	28.0	17.0	34.1	20.9
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	223	44.7	18.3	20.1	16.9
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,515	27.6	17.0	34.1	21.3
LGBTQIA+	470	32.6	18.4	31.2	17.8
Non-LGBTQIA+	7,239	27.6	17.0	33.9	21.5
Neurodivergent	927	31.6	18.2	32.2	18.1
Not neurodivergent	5,189	25.4	16.9	35.8	22.0
Maybe	617	25.1	19.8	37.4	17.7
Not sure what neurodivergent means	754	38.6	15.0	23.7	22.6
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,703	35.4	16.6	28.2	19.8
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,776	19.3	16.7	37.8	26.2
Unemployed/retired ²	1,686	36.4	16.9	28.6	18.1
Employed	3,805	28.9	16.5	31.6	23.1
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,636	44.4	16.0	21.3	18.3
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,847	24.7	16.9	35.4	23.0
Requires help with daily activities	665	41.0	18.7	26.7	13.6
Does not require help	7,059	26.9	16.9	34.3	21.9
Food security (last 12 months)²					
Low or very low food security	829	49.5	14.9	20.5	15.1
Marginal food security	690	38.1	18.1	28.8	15.0
High food security	3,975	25.4	16.8	33.5	24.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Respondents who reported lower levels of health and wellbeing were also more likely to indicate they had not participated in any activities (see Table 3.8.1.2). This was especially notable amongst respondents with the following health characteristics:

- Fair or poor self-rated health (53.0%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (22.8%)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (42.6%) compared to high/very high life satisfaction (28.0%)
- People who do not feel valued by society (44.8%) compared to sometimes (31.7%) or definitely (24.1%) feel valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (46.0%) compared to good mental wellbeing (25.9%)
- Overweight or obese (33.0%) compared to normal weight or underweight (20.8%)

A greater proportion of respondents who failed to meet the following health behaviour recommendations were also more likely to indicate that they had not participated in any activities:

- Fruit intake (33.8% vs 20.9%)
- Vegetable intake (28.6% vs 20.5%)

- Aerobic physical activity (42.7% vs 21.8%)
- Muscle strengthening exercise (35.0% vs 19.0%)
- Screen time (30.0% vs 25.9%)
- Sleep duration (34.6% vs 24.8%)
- Water consumption (29.4% vs 24.4%)

Additionally, those who drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (43.0%) were more likely to report not participating in any sport, exercise or recreation activities compared those who do not drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (25.7%). Current smokers (44.3%) and those who had not engaged in risky alcohol consumption (36.8%) were more likely to report that they had not participated in any sport, exercise or recreation activities over the past 12 months compared to ex-smokers (30.9%), those who have never smoked (32.9%) and those who had consumed risky amounts of alcohol (30.2%).

Table 3.8.1.2 Participation in sport, exercise and recreational activities by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	None %	One %	Two to three %	Four or more %
Total sample	7,855	28.1	17.2	33.7	21.1
Health and wellbeing indicators					
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,276	53.0	14.9	19.9	12.1
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,735	22.8	17.5	37.6	22.1
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,546	42.6	17.8	24.7	14.9
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,397	28.0	15.6	33.6	22.7
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,092	44.8	16.0	24.3	14.9
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,425	31.7	16.2	31.6	20.5
Definitely feel valued by society	1,428	24.1	17.2	34.4	24.3
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,461	46.0	17.3	22.6	14.2
Good mental wellbeing	4,044	25.9	16.4	33.6	24.1
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,666	33.0	16.6	30.5	20.0
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	2,012	20.8	16.1	38.9	24.2
Health behaviour indicators					
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,745	33.8	17.0	29.6	19.6
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,881	20.9	17.3	38.7	23.0
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,640	28.6	17.1	33.3	21.1
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	911	20.5	18.5	39.1	21.9
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,443	42.7	18.7	25.7	12.9
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	5,016	21.8	16.3	37.2	24.7

Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,578	35.0	18.1	30.6	16.3
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	3,006	19.0	14.9	37.9	28.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,900	30.0	17.4	33.4	19.2
Meets screen time recommendations	3,383	25.9	16.9	34.3	22.9
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,163	34.6	17.1	30.5	17.7
Meets sleep recommendations	5,168	24.8	17.4	35.3	22.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	893	43.0	16.5	24.1	16.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,722	25.7	17.2	35.3	21.8
Does not meet water recommendations	4,601	29.4	18.1	32.1	20.3
Meets water recommendations	2,837	24.4	15.4	37.5	22.7
Risk behaviour indicators²					
Current smoker	301	44.3	19.8	20.0	15.8
Ex-smoker	1,936	30.9	17.1	29.5	22.5
Never smoked	2,746	32.9	15.5	32.9	18.6
Current vaper	139	39.9	19.6	26.0	14.5
Ex-vaper	340	27.0	15.0	31.8	26.2
Never vaped	4,482	33.2	16.5	30.7	19.5
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,729	30.2	16.5	32.2	21.1
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,248	36.8	16.5	28.4	18.3
Gambled	1,533	31.4	16.4	33.0	19.2
Never gambled	3,441	33.7	16.5	29.4	20.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

3.8.2. Types of sport, exercise and recreation activities participated in

As noted earlier, respondents were asked to list up to five activities they had participated in during the 12 months prior to the survey. Because the survey only captured their top five activities, it does not include information about any additional activities they may have undertaken. Therefore, this section should be interpreted as providing insight into the most common primary activities reported by residents, rather than a complete record of all activities they may have engaged in.

Table 3.8.2.1 shows the number of respondents who had participated in each of the top 20 activities. Using all activities mentioned as the base, the Table shows how frequently respondents had participated in the activity they named amongst their top five.

Of the activities people had participated in, the five most common included:

- Walking – 16.6%
- Swimming – 7.6%

- Fitness: Gym – 7.9%
- Active play (at playgrounds / play centres) – 5.9%
- Fitness: Indoor group activities / aerobics – 4.5%

Participation frequency was classified as *heavy* when respondents took part in an activity at least weekly, *medium* when participation occurred one to three times per month, and *light* when it occurred less than once a month. Activities with the highest rates of heavy participation were typically team sports, including soccer (91.2%), Australian Rules Football (86.5%) and netball (85.6%). High levels of heavy participation were also reported for weightlifting (90.7%) and gym-based fitness (87.6%). In contrast, activities with the greatest proportions of light participation included bushwalking/hiking (41.0%), golf (26.6%), and cycling, including both general recreational cycling (20.4%) and mountain biking (20.3%).

What is unclear from these results is the extent to which the frequency of participation is a function of the activity itself, such as activities that are unstructured general recreation (e.g., bush walking and recreational cycling) versus organised sports that occur at least weekly, and the extent to which frequency of participation varies for respondent-driven reasons. To fully understand the motivations for participation in each activity, further research is required.

Table 3.8.2.1 Activity types by frequency of participation

	Unweighted base ¹	Heavy	Medium	Light
		Once a week or more often	1 to 3 times a month	Less than once a month
	n	%	%	%
Top 20 activities				
Walking	1,926	84.2	10.5	5.4
Swimming	1,013	69.1	16.0	14.9
Fitness: Gym	857	87.6	7.5	4.9
Active play (at playgrounds / play centres)	718	62.9	21.0	16.1
Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics	631	85.2	9.5	5.3
Netball (indoor / outdoor)	563	85.6	10.7	3.6
Australian Rules Football (AFL)	518	86.5	5.9	7.6
Bush walking / Hiking	483	37.3	21.7	41.0
Jogging / running	463	80.1	12.2	7.7
Cycling: General cycling for recreation	431	57.7	21.9	20.4
Basketball (indoor / outdoor)	352	82.1	10.2	7.6
Soccer (indoor / outdoor)	348	91.2	5.2	3.6
Tennis (indoor / outdoor)	337	70.4	11.9	17.7
Dancing / Ballet / Calisthenics	326	79.8	8.5	11.8
Cricket (all types)	226	78.9	11.7	9.4
Aqua aerobics	213	79.2	6.7	14.1
Golf	182	54.6	18.7	26.6

Fitness: Outdoor fitness / Personal training	169	79.4	16.1	4.5
Weightlifting / Body building	167	90.7	6.7	2.5
Cycling: Mountain bike riding	167	49.2	30.5	20.3

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Tables 3.8.2.2 and 3.8.2.3 provide an overview of the demographic characteristics, health and wellbeing indicators, health behaviours and risk behaviours of respondents who engaged in each of the top ten most common sport, exercise and recreation activities.

Overall, children were more likely than adults to participate in swimming, active play, netball and AFL. In contrast, adults were more likely to take part in walking, gym and group fitness classes, bushwalking/hiking, jogging/running, and recreational cycling. Gender differences were also evident. Females were more likely than males to participate in walking, swimming, indoor group fitness classes and netball, while males were more likely to participate in Australian Rules Football (AFL) and recreational cycling.

Associations were seen between all demographic characteristics and risk behaviours, most health and wellbeing indicators, health behaviours, and the types of sport, exercise, or recreational activities people engaged in. However, no such association was evident for life satisfaction, mental wellbeing, or adherence to the screen time and sleep recommendations.

Table 3.8.2.2 Top ten activities by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Walking	Swimming	Fitness: Gym	Active play	Fitness: Indoor group activities / aerobics	Netball	Australian Rules Football (AFL)	Bush walking / Hiking	Jogging / running	Cycling: General for recreation
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	11,977	16.6	7.6	7.9	5.9	4.5	3.7	3.8	4.3	4.2	4.1
Children	3,665	3.0	14.6	2.2	11.4	0.7	7.9	10.5	0.9	1.0	2.4
Adults	8,138	20.9	5.5	9.6	4.3	5.7	2.3	1.8	5.3	5.2	4.6
Males	4,002	14.6	6.6	7.3	5.6	2.0	0.5	5.9	3.8	4.9	5.1
Females	7,760	19.2	8.5	8.7	6.2	7.3	6.9	1.5	4.8	3.6	2.9
LGA											
City of Greater Bendigo	6,097	17.4	7.6	7.7	6.9	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	4.3	4.4
Macedon Ranges Shire	1,411	14.9	9.4	8.9	4.2	6.1	2.4	2.4	5.6	4.5	3.4
Shire of Campaspe	1,320	14.6	6.0	7.3	7.3	4.0	5.8	6.3	2.6	3.6	3.3
Mount Alexander Shire	1,416	19.8	6.7	6.6	4.2	4.7	1.7	2.6	6.9	5.4	5.9
Central Goldfields Shire	842	17.2	6.1	10.8	5.6	4.4	5.0	5.9	4.7	2.1	3.1
Loddon Shire	891	14.6	6.3	5.2	4.1	3.7	7.5	6.5	2.7	3.7	2.4
Demographic indicators											
Household size²											
1 person	1,185	26.7	6.1	8.7	1.6	8.0	0.7	0.3	7.0	4.2	5.5
2 or 3 people	4,355	22.5	5.0	9.3	3.2	5.5	1.3	1.4	5.6	5.0	4.8
4 or 5 people	2,360	15.8	6.5	10.8	7.4	5.2	3.9	3.3	4.0	6.0	3.9
More than 5 people	231	14.9	2.8	7.6	6.1	2.4	12.1	3.5	6.2	3.9	2.1
Born overseas	1,041	15.6	6.4	8.3	8.3	5.0	0.3	0.5	5.4	8.3	4.5
Born in Australia	10,810	16.9	7.7	7.9	5.6	4.4	3.9	4.2	4.2	5.6	4.1
Speaks other main language	187	11.2	7.3	4.1	24.4	3.2	0.8	-	2.2	24.4	2.5
Speaks English as main language	11,643	16.9	7.6	8.0	5.5	4.5	3.6	3.9	4.4	5.5	4.2

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	272	16.9	5.9	7.1	5.9	0.6	5.7	7.7	1.6	5.9	1.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	11,577	16.8	7.6	8.0	5.9	4.6	3.5	3.7	4.4	5.9	4.2
LGBTQIA+	667	19.0	6.0	7.7	3.5	6.1	1.5	1.7	8.5	3.5	9.8
Non-LGBTQIA+	11,150	16.6	7.7	8.0	6.1	4.4	3.7	3.9	4.1	6.1	3.7
Neurodivergent	1,319	13.3	8.3	6.9	6.9	3.7	1.5	4.5	6.4	6.9	4.5
Not neurodivergent	8,281	17.0	7.6	8.1	5.4	4.8	4.2	3.8	4.1	5.4	3.9
Maybe	997	15.3	10.1	9.9	7.6	2.8	4.2	4.0	5.4	7.6	5.3
Not sure what neurodivergent means	935	16.9	4.9	6.4	6.8	3.8	1.5	3.4	3.2	6.8	3.9
Less than Bachelor level education ²	3,393	21.9	4.8	9.7	4.7	5.3	2.2	1.9	5.1	4.7	4.5
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	4,718	18.8	7.1	9.4	3.4	6.3	2.3	1.8	6.0	3.4	4.8
Unemployed/retired ²	2,320	27.0	5.0	8.1	4.5	6.9	0.4	0.2	5.2	4.5	5.3
Employed	5,802	18.1	5.8	10.2	4.2	5.1	3.1	2.6	5.4	4.2	4.3
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,833	21.3	6.0	9.4	6.5	5.0	2.0	2.0	5.5	6.5	2.4
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	6,281	20.7	5.3	9.6	3.5	5.9	2.4	1.8	5.3	3.5	5.4
Requires help with daily activities	815	12.6	14.0	5.9	12.7	4.7	0.9	3.6	3.0	1.7	4.3
Does not require help	11,011	17.1	7.1	8.1	5.4	4.5	3.7	3.8	4.4	4.5	4.1
Food security (last 12 months)²											
Low or very low food security	826	22.9	5.4	8.1	8.8	3.9	2.8	3.1	5.2	3.9	2.4
Marginal food security	854	19.2	5.7	10.3	5.5	5.6	4.7	2.5	5.9	3.4	3.3
High food security	6,442	20.8	5.5	9.7	3.4	5.9	1.8	1.6	5.3	5.6	5.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 3.8.2.3 Top ten activities by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Walking	Swimming	Fitness: Gym	Active play	Fitness: Indoor group activities / aerobics	Netball	Australian Rules Football (AFL)	Bush walking / Hiking	Jogging / running	Cycling: General for recreation
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	11,977	16.6	7.6	7.9	5.9	4.5	3.7	3.8	4.3	4.2	4.1
Health and wellbeing indicators											
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,226	23.3	8.3	8.3	6.3	5.2	2.4	1.7	4.0	1.5	4.0
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	9,527	15.4	7.9	7.8	5.5	4.5	3.8	4.2	4.5	5.0	4.2
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,816	21.5	6.3	10.3	3.9	5.2	2.0	1.7	6.0	4.9	4.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	5,491	20.1	5.7	9.2	4.2	6.0	2.3	1.8	5.3	5.7	4.8
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,249	21.8	7.2	10.4	3.9	5.5	1.4	1.3	5.1	4.4	4.7
Sometimes feel valued by society	3,596	20.9	5.5	9.6	4.1	5.7	2.7	1.6	5.8	5.2	4.1
Definitely feel valued by society	2,446	19.2	5.6	8.9	4.3	6.1	2.2	2.4	5.3	6.7	5.6
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,650	21.5	6.3	9.3	5.0	4.9	2.0	1.6	5.8	4.6	4.3
Good mental wellbeing	6,488	20.7	5.3	9.7	4.1	5.9	2.3	1.9	5.2	5.3	4.6
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	3,880	19.8	6.1	10.4	5.1	4.8	2.5	2.4	4.8	3.6	4.4
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	3,589	13.3	8.3	6.9	5.0	5.1	3.5	4.1	4.8	7.3	5.0
Health behaviour indicators											
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	5,072	18.5	6.5	8.7	5.3	4.4	2.9	3.1	4.6	4.7	3.7
Meets fruit intake recommendations	6,636	15.3	8.6	7.3	6.5	4.7	4.1	4.4	4.1	3.9	4.4
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	10,023	16.8	7.2	8.2	5.8	4.2	3.6	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.1
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	1,582	17.1	9.7	6.2	6.6	7.1	3.4	2.5	4.6	4.1	4.1
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,724	14.0	11.3	5.1	9.0	3.4	5.5	5.0	2.9	1.9	3.3

Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	8,766	17.7	6.5	8.7	5.0	4.9	3.0	3.4	4.8	4.9	4.3
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	4,806	16.9	8.3	3.9	6.1	3.4	5.0	4.8	4.5	3.4	4.2
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	5,576	17.5	5.8	11.6	4.4	5.6	2.5	2.7	4.7	5.4	4.1
Does not meet screen time recommendations	5,670	16.5	7.3	8.4	5.8	4.5	3.4	3.9	4.2	3.7	3.7
Meets screen time recommendations	5,511	17.5	7.8	7.6	5.5	4.8	3.7	3.7	4.6	5.2	4.6
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,899	18.1	6.7	9.4	6.6	4.3	3.4	3.9	4.2	3.7	3.9
Meets sleep recommendations	8,407	16.3	7.9	7.4	5.4	4.8	3.6	3.8	4.5	4.6	4.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	1,032	19.8	6.1	8.5	4.7	2.8	3.7	4.7	4.6	3.9	2.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	10,646	16.5	7.8	7.9	6.0	4.8	3.5	3.7	4.3	4.4	4.3
Does not meet water recommendations	6,811	18.9	7.7	6.8	6.0	4.6	2.4	2.8	4.3	3.9	4.3
Meets water recommendations	4,637	12.9	7.5	10.2	5.8	4.6	5.6	5.4	4.3	5.0	3.6
Risk behaviour indicators²											
Current smoker	325	19.9	6.6	9.7	7.1	2.7	3.1	1.1	9.3	3.9	4.4
Ex-smoker	2,948	21.1	5.4	9.2	4.3	5.9	1.9	2.3	4.5	5.5	4.8
Never smoked	4,079	20.1	6.1	9.8	3.7	6.0	2.4	1.5	6.0	5.7	4.7
Current vaper	174	20.6	7.1	15.5	6.3	1.6	3.9	6.4	5.0	3.9	3.3
Ex-vaper	513	10.3	4.1	10.3	5.9	3.6	7.2	5.6	6.6	7.3	2.6
Never vaped	6,631	21.8	6.0	9.2	3.9	6.2	1.6	1.2	5.4	5.4	5.0
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	4,182	18.5	5.4	10.1	4.1	5.0	3.0	2.6	4.8	6.2	4.2
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	3,156	23.8	6.6	8.6	4.2	7.0	1.0	0.5	6.7	4.4	5.5
Gambled	2,185	20.0	4.6	10.6	4.0	4.9	2.7	3.2	3.5	4.5	3.6
Never gambled	5,156	20.8	6.5	8.9	4.2	6.3	2.0	1.0	6.6	6.1	5.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

3.8.3. Facilities for sport, exercise and recreational activities

Table 3.8.3 presents the top 20 facilities respondents identified as places where they participate in their main activities. For each facility, the table shows how frequently users engage in the associated activity. This highlights which facilities are used most often (those with a high proportion people who use them at least weekly) and where there may be opportunities to increase usage (facilities where users participate monthly or less).

The two most often used facilities for respondents' main activities were Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat and Red Energy Arena, Bendigo. People who use the following venues for their main activity were more likely to be heavy users of the facility:

- Buffalo Sports Stadium, Woodend (95.5%)
- Red Energy Arena, West Bendigo (87.3%)
- Boort Park, Boort (84.7%)
- Peter Krenz Leisure Centre, Eaglehawk (84.6%)
- Castlemaine Botanic Gardens, Castlemaine (82.0%)

Some of the facilities that were commonly used for main activities but frequented less often (used less than once a month) included:

- Echuca War Memorial Aquatic Centre, Echuca (26.3%)
- Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park (23.1%)
- Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk (15.1%)
- Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills (14.9%)
- Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat (13.5%)

While lower participation rates may simply reflect the seasonal or naturally irregular nature of certain activities, or the smaller populations served by some facilities (such as those in small towns), it is still valuable to explore opportunities to increase how often these facilities and spaces are used. However, the small sample sizes for some facilities may limit how well these findings represent the broader population, so results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 3.8.3 Main recreational facilities used by frequency of activity

	Unweighted base ¹	Heavy Once a week or more often	Medium 1 to 3 times a month	Light Less than once a month
	n	%	%	%
Top 20 facilities				
Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat	417	74.1	12.5	13.5
Red Energy Arena, West Bendigo	238	87.3	9.2	3.5
Lake Weeroona, Bendigo	216	66.5	25.1	8.4
Peter Krenz Leisure Centre, Eaglehawk	184	84.6	4.3	11.1
Maryborough Sports & Leisure Centre, Maryborough	144	79.6	14.9	5.5
Castlemaine Botanic Gardens, Castlemaine	117	82.0	13.9	4.1
Kyneton Toyota Sports & Aquatic Centre, Kyneton	108	75.1	13.1	11.7
Bendigo East Swimming Pool, Bendigo East	104	80.5	9.3	10.3
Greater Bendigo National Park - One Tree Hill, Strathfieldsaye	102	68.9	18.8	12.2
Echuca War Memorial Aquatic Centre, Echuca	85	65.8	7.9	26.3
O'Keefe Rail Trail – Bendigo, Axedale, Heathcote	83	74.4	12.3	13.3
Fernwood Fitness, Kennington	82	73.3	17.3	9.4
Kennington Reservoir, Kennington	73	76.0	16.3	7.7
Gisborne Fitness & Aquatic Centre, Gisborne	72	75.8	14.7	9.5
Boort Park, Boort	71	84.7	9.6	5.7
Buffalo Sports Stadium, Woodend	66	95.5	4.5	-
Bendigo Linear Trail, Bendigo	62	72.0	15.1	12.9
Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk	56	71.8	13.1	15.1
Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park, Big Hill	56	57.9	19.0	23.1
Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills	49	56.0	29.1	14.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

3.8.4. Travel to get to and from activities and their facilities

Respondents were asked about the main forms of transport they used to travel to and from their main activities. Table 3.8.4.1 summarises the transport modes used for each activity. Because respondents may use different forms of transport for different activities, and because the transport questions referred specifically to travel for each activity, the base for this analysis is all activities reported rather than all respondents.

Approximately 66.2% had been accessed via car while around 29% were accessed via active transportation, including 22.2% on foot and 7.3% via cycling. Few (1.1%) used public transport, taxis, or Uber to get to or from their main activities. As may be expected, where the activity is also a mode of transport (walking or cycling), respondents often mentioned accessing their activity via this same mode. The following activities were almost always accessed via car:

- Golf (95.5%)
- Netball (94.3%)
- Basketball (92.4%)
- Dancing / ballet / calisthenics (92.1%)
- Cricket (92.0%)
- Soccer (91.6%)

Of the main activities that residents had participated in, residents had travelled the furthest to go bush walking or hiking (28.1 kilometres on average). However, just 67.9% of people who had been bush walking or hiking had gotten there by car with 28.5% reporting walking. Among those who travelled by car to bush walking or hiking locations, the average distance was 38.3 kilometres. Residents had to travel the least distance for walking (4.2 kilometres), active play (5.6 kilometres) and jogging or running (5.7 kilometres), making these accessible activity options.

Table 3.8.4.1 Travel to and from main activities

	Unweighted base ¹	Car	Walking	Bicycle	Public transport / taxi / Uber	Average kilometres travelled ²
	n	%	%	%	%	#
Top 20 activities	11,463	66.2	22.2	7.3	1.1	12.0
Walking	1,873	29.2	67.7	0.1	1.0	4.2
Swimming	994	86.4	6.3	2.7	1.8	12.9
Fitness: Gym	829	79.3	12.6	2.3	0.9	7.9
Active play (at playgrounds / play centres)	683	62.8	30.3	3.5	2.1	5.6
Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aero	628	81.1	11.9	1.4	0.6	9.1
Netball (indoor / outdoor)	557	94.3	4.6	0.1	0.6	15.5
Australian Rules Football (AFL)	507	85.9	9.8	2.8	0.8	13.7
Bush walking / Hiking	473	67.9	28.5	0.4	1.4	28.1
Jogging / running	451	39.8	50.1	1.4	1.4	5.7
Cycling: General cycling for recreation	411	10.0	2.6	84.8	0.1	8.1
Basketball (indoor / outdoor)	348	92.4	5.0	1.3	0.9	12.6
Soccer (indoor / outdoor)	344	91.6	5.5	1.4	1.4	11.5
Tennis (indoor / outdoor)	336	86.7	7.0	5.6	0.3	8.0
Dancing / Ballet / Calisthenics	318	92.1	3.7	1.9	1.5	14.1
Cricket (all types)	219	92.0	5.1	2.0	1.0	12.3
Aqua aerobics	214	84.7	6.6	0.8	2.5	11.0
Golf	180	95.5	2.2	-	0.1	14.5
Fitness: Outdoor fitness / Personal training	164	74.3	15.9	3.5	2.1	7.4
Weightlifting / Body building	158	67.8	17.6	0.2	-	5.2
Cycling: Mountain bike riding	164	38.3	1.7	57.9	-	11.6

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² The unweighted base for kilometres travelled differs from mode of transport base because it is a separate variable, and some respondents did not provide a response to this question.

Table 3.8.4.2 shows the average travel distance to get to particular facilities was 12 kilometres. Across the LGAs, residents of Loddon Shire travelled the furthest on average to access their activities (19 kilometres), followed by residents of Campaspe Shire (14.9 kilometres). Residents of Central Goldfields Shire (70.5%) were also the most likely to travel by car to reach the facilities they used for their main activities, followed closely by Campaspe Shire residents (70.2%). In contrast, Loddon Shire residents were the most likely to walk as their primary mode of travel (26.6%), despite the greater distances they reported.

The facilities/spaces that residents most frequently reported driving by car were those that are used primarily for fitness and indoor sports, including:

- Maryborough Sports & Leisure Centre, Maryborough (97.5%)
- Red Energy Arena, West Bendigo (97.2%)
- Fernwood Fitness, Kennington (94.6%)
- Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat (92.7%)
- Echuca War Memorial Aquatic Centre, Echuca (91.2%)

Conversely, residents most frequently reported walking to the following facilities/spaces that are typically used for more unstructured recreational activities:

- Bendigo Linear Trail, Bendigo (55.8%)
- Kennington Reservoir, Kennington (54.5%)
- Greater Bendigo National Park – One Tree Hill, Strathfieldsaye (47.7%)
- Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills (44.1%)

Cycling was commonly reported as the main method of travel to get to the O’Keefe Rail Trail (55.0%), followed by Bendigo Linear Trail (38.7%). Residents were travelling furthest to get to Gisborne Fitness & Aquatic Centre (13.5 kilometres), Echuca War Memorial Aquatic Centre (13.5 kilometres) and Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre (13 kilometres).

Table 3.8.4.2 Travel to and from main activity facilities

	Unweighted base ¹	Car	Walking	Bicycle	Public transport / taxi / Uber	Average kms travelled
	n	%	%	%	%	#
Total sample	11,463	66.2	22.2	7.3	1.1	12.0
LGA						
City of Greater Bendigo	5,832	65.6	22.4	8.0	1.3	10.5
Macedon Ranges Shire	1,361	65.9	23.1	6.3	0.7	11.2
Shire of Campaspe	1,288	70.2	19.5	5.4	1.4	14.9
Mount Alexander Shire	1,369	63.3	22.1	10.1	0.9	15.2
Central Goldfields Shire	788	70.5	20.3	5.2	1.3	15.3
Loddon Shire	825	65.5	26.6	4.0	0.3	19.0
Top 20 facilities						
Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat	411	92.7	3.1	1.4	1.6	13.0
Red Energy Arena, West Bendigo	233	97.2	1.3	0.8	0.7	12.0
Lake Weeroona, Bendigo	212	71.7	20.8	0.5	6.8	5.5
Peter Krenz Leisure Centre, Eaglehawk	181	87.7	6.0	3.7	-	8.1
Maryborough Sports & Leisure Centre, Maryborough	139	97.5	0.7	1.2	0.2	11.3
Castlemaine Botanic Gardens, Castlemaine	116	81.4	14.7	3.9	0.0	5.4
Kyneton Toyota Sports & Aquatic Centre, Kyneton	108	86.5	7.1	5.7	0.7	10.6
Bendigo East Swimming Pool, Bendigo East	103	84.7	9.5	2.7	3.1	9.3
Greater Bendigo National Park - One Tree Hill, Strathfieldsaye	101	32.8	47.7	17.7	-	4.2
Echuca War Memorial Aquatic Centre, Echuca	85	91.2	1.4	0.4	7.0	13.5
O'Keefe Rail Trail – Bendigo, Axedale, Heathcote	82	17.5	27.1	55.0	-	5.0
Fernwood Fitness, Kennington	80	94.6	3.2	-	-	8.4
Kennington Reservoir, Kennington	73	43.9	54.5	1.2	-	3.0
Gisborne Fitness & Aquatic Centre, Gisborne	72	90.1	2.8	-	-	13.5

Boort Park, Boort	71	77.7	19.8	1.7	0.8	12.8
Buffalo Sports Stadium, Woodend	65	83.4	10.0	6.6	-	8.5
Bendigo Linear Trail, Bendigo	58	2.3	55.8	38.7	-	1.3
Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk	55	70.0	28.4	1.6	-	3.2
Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park, Big Hill	55	70.8	17.9	3.0	8.3	9.3
Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills	49	50.2	44.1	-	-	8.7

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

3.8.5. Quality and accessibility of facilities available for main activities

Respondents rated the quality and accessibility of the facilities they used for each activity on a five-point scale: *Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, and Very Poor*. For analysis, the ratings were grouped into two categories: *Average, Poor, and Very Poor* were combined into one group, and *Good and Excellent* were combined into another. Tables 3.8.5.1 and 3.8.5.2 present these results according to facilities where people engage in the most reported activities.

The highest quality ratings were received for the facilities or spaces where people participated in fitness related activities (gym, group activities and personal training), golf, dancing and weightlifting. These facilities also received the highest accessibility ratings, except for those used for dancing. Instead, facilities used for active play were rated as highly accessible.

The lowest ratings for quality were received for general and recreational cycling, mountain bike riding, netball and football. Accessibility ratings differed, with facilities used for general or recreational cycling, soccer and cricket seen to be least accessible. Examining the recommended improvements to cycling and traditional team sport facilities can help explain the low ratings these facilities received for quality and accessibility (refer to Section 5.4).

Table 3.8.5.1 Quality of facilities by activity

	Unweighted base ¹	Very poor to average quality	Good to excellent quality
	N	%	%
Top 20 activities			
Walking	1,894	30.9	69.1
Swimming	1,001	26.3	73.7
Fitness: Gym	850	15.9	84.1
Active play (at playgrounds / play centres)	701	24.4	75.6
Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics	632	11.4	88.6
Netball (indoor / outdoor)	560	44.7	55.3
Australian Rules Football (AFL)	513	41.7	58.3
Bush walking / Hiking	476	26.8	73.2
Jogging / running	460	28.0	72.0
Cycling: General cycling for recreation	414	46.7	53.3
Basketball (indoor / outdoor)	351	22.0	78.0
Soccer (indoor / outdoor)	346	43.4	56.6
Tennis (indoor / outdoor)	338	23.5	76.5
Dancing / Ballet / Calisthenics	321	19.1	80.9
Cricket (all types)	226	38.9	61.1
Aqua aerobics	214	22.0	78.0
Golf	182	13.7	86.3
Fitness: Outdoor fitness / Personal training	168	10.2	89.8
Cycling: Mountain bike riding	166	41.1	58.9
Weightlifting / Body building	164	19.1	80.9

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Table 3.8.5.2 Accessibility of facilities by activity

	Unweighted base ¹	Very poor to average access	Good to excellent access
	N	%	%
Top 20 activities			
Walking	1,890	25.3	74.7
Swimming	1,000	24.6	75.4
Fitness: Gym	848	14.4	85.6
Active play (at playgrounds / play centres)	700	19.9	80.1
Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics	628	16.7	83.3
Netball (indoor / outdoor)	560	32.2	67.8
Australian Rules Football (AFL)	513	33.9	66.1
Bush walking / Hiking	473	34.7	65.3
Jogging / running	457	23.6	76.4
Cycling: General cycling for recreation	414	42.1	57.9
Basketball (indoor / outdoor)	351	24.8	75.2
Soccer (indoor / outdoor)	345	38.0	62.0
Tennis (indoor / outdoor)	338	27.3	72.7
Dancing / Ballet / Calisthenics	321	26.7	73.3
Cricket (all types)	225	37.9	62.1
Aqua aerobics	214	18.4	81.6
Golf	182	11.1	88.9
Fitness: Outdoor fitness / Personal training	168	7.3	92.7
Cycling: Mountain bike riding	166	41.1	58.9
Weightlifting / Body building	163	13.9	86.1

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

3.8.6. Quality and accessibility of specific facilities

Tables 3.8.6.1 and 3.8.6.2 shows the quality and accessibility ratings provided for the top 20 facilities, venues and places respondents had used for their main activities in the last 12 months.

The five facilities or spaces with the highest proportion of good and excellent ratings for quality were:

- Fernwood Fitness, Kennington (95.0%)
- Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills (93.9%)
- Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat (90.8%)
- Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk (90.7%)
- Lake Weeroona, Bendigo (84.3%)

The top three ranked facilities or spaces for accessibility aligned with the top ranked facilities for quality, however the fourth and fifth differed, as follows:

- Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills (96.2%)
- Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk (93.5%)
- Fernwood Fitness, Kennington (88.7%)
- Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park, Big Hill (86.1%)
- Echuca War Memorial Aquatic Centre, Echuca (84.7%)

The facilities or spaces with the lowest proportion of respondents rating them as good or excellent in quality are:

- Gisborne Fitness & Aquatic Centre, Gisborne (45.5%)
- Peter Krenz Leisure Centre, Eaglehawk (55.1%)
- Maryborough Sports & Leisure Centre, Maryborough (56.5%)
- Kennington Reservoir, Kennington (58.6%)
- Buffalo Sports Stadium, Woodend (61.2%)

Overall accessibility ratings were generally more positive than quality ratings for facilities and spaces where people engage in sports, exercise and recreational activities. Different facilities were among the five facilities with the lowest proportion of respondents rating them as good or excellent in accessibility, as follows:

- Kennington Reservoir, Kennington (64.6%)
- Maryborough Sports & Leisure Centre, Maryborough (67.3%)
- Greater Bendigo National Park – One Tree Hill, Strathfieldsaye (68.9%)
- Bendigo East Swimming Pool, Bendigo East (72.4%)
- Kyneton Toyota Sports & Aquatic Centre, Kyneton (73.3%)

Understanding which facilities and spaces receive the lowest ratings from users helps identify where improvements to quality and accessibility are most needed. Importantly, gathering this feedback ensures that future investments align with actual community needs, rather than relying solely on usage patterns or assumptions about what people value. This helps avoid misdirected spending and supports more effective, targeted upgrades. In turn, addressing these user-identified issues can increase participation, reduce

barriers to access, and contribute to a more positive and inclusive overall user experience. More nuanced feedback and suggested improvements to facilities and spaces are presented in Section 5.4.3.

Table 3.8.6.1 Quality ratings for most used facilities or spaces

	Unweighted base ¹	Very poor to average quality	Good to excellent quality
	N	%	%
Top 20 facilities			
Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat	415	9.2	90.8
Red Energy Arena, West Bendigo	238	16.5	83.5
Lake Weeroona, Bendigo	216	15.7	84.3
Peter Krenz Leisure Centre, Eaglehawk	184	44.9	55.1
Maryborough Sports & Leisure Centre, Maryborough	145	43.5	56.5
Castlemaine Botanic Gardens, Castlemaine	117	19.0	81.0
Kyneton Toyota Sports & Aquatic Centre, Kyneton	108	21.4	78.6
Bendigo East Swimming Pool, Bendigo East	104	26.9	73.1
Greater Bendigo National Park - One Tree Hill, Strathfieldsaye	102	36.6	63.4
Echuca War Memorial Aquatic Centre, Echuca	85	18.4	81.6
O'Keefe Rail Trail – Bendigo, Axedale, Heathcote	82	19.0	81.0
Fernwood Fitness, Kennington	82	5.0	95.0
Kennington Reservoir, Kennington	74	41.4	58.6
Gisborne Fitness & Aquatic Centre, Gisborne	72	54.5	45.5
Boort Park, Boort	71	32.3	67.7
Buffalo Sports Stadium, Woodend	66	38.8	61.2
Bendigo Linear Trail, Bendigo	62	30.2	69.8
Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk	57	9.3	90.7
Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park, Big Hill	56	21.2	78.8
Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills	49	6.1	93.9

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Table 3.8.6.2 Accessibility ratings for most used facilities or spaces

	Unweighted base ¹	Very poor to average access	Good to excellent access
	N	%	%
Top 20 facilities			
Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat	415	19.3	80.7
Red Energy Arena, West Bendigo	238	22.5	77.5
Lake Weeroona, Bendigo	216	15.9	84.1
Peter Krenz Leisure Centre, Eaglehawk	184	20.5	79.5
Maryborough Sports & Leisure Centre, Maryborough	145	32.7	67.3

Castlemaine Botanic Gardens, Castlemaine	117	18.6	81.4
Kyneton Toyota Sports & Aquatic Centre, Kyneton	108	26.7	73.3
Bendigo East Swimming Pool, Bendigo East	104	27.6	72.4
Greater Bendigo National Park - One Tree Hill, Strathfieldsaye	102	31.1	68.9
Echuca War Memorial Aquatic Centre, Echuca	85	15.3	84.7
O'Keefe Rail Trail – Bendigo, Axedale, Heathcote	82	22.5	77.5
Fernwood Fitness, Kennington	82	11.3	88.7
Kennington Reservoir, Kennington	74	35.4	64.6
Gisborne Fitness & Aquatic Centre, Gisborne	72	21.9	78.1
Boort Park, Boort	71	24.9	75.1
Buffalo Sports Stadium, Woodend	66	16.2	83.8
Bendigo Linear Trail, Bendigo	62	21.6	78.4
Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk	57	6.5	93.5
Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park, Big Hill	56	13.9	86.1
Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills	49	3.8	96.2

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

3.9. Perceived ease of being physically active in local area

Respondents were asked about their perceived ease of being physically active in their local area, with response options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Table 3.9.1 provides a detailed overview of responses according to selected demographic characteristics. Overall, 69.7% reported agreeing that it is easy to be physically active in their local area, with the proportion being slightly higher among children (74.4%) and males (74.3%) compared to adults (68.5%) and females (65.7%), respectively. When looking at the responses by age and sex, both males and females aged 3 to 11 years were the most likely to report agreeing that it is easy to be physically active in the local area.

A greater proportion of respondents from Macedon Ranges Shire (73.2%) agreed that it was easy to be physically active in their local area compared to respondents from Central Goldfields (61.4%) and Loddon (63.2%) Shires. The following demographic groups were less likely to agree that it was easy to be physically active in their local area and may benefit from targeted interventions to increase awareness of opportunities for local physical activity:

- 4-5 person households (62.9%) compared to 2-3 person households (71.8%)
- LGBTQIA+ (55.7%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (70.9%)
- Neurodivergent (57.6%) compared to not neurodivergent (73.1%) and unsure what neurodivergent means (69.0%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (66.5%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (74.5%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (52.0%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (76.9%)
- Require help with daily activities (49.2%) compared to no help required (71.6%)
- Low or very low food security (44.6%) compared to marginal (57.8%) or high (76.7%) food security

Table 3.9.1 Perceived ease of being physically active in local area by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Strongly agree/ Agree %	Neutral %	Strongly disagree / Disagree %
Total sample	7,776	69.7	18.9	11.5
Children	2,197	74.4	15.8	9.8
Adults	5,525	68.5	19.6	12.0
Males	2,408	74.3	17.8	7.9
Females	5,280	65.7	19.9	14.4
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	602	78.2	15.0	6.8
Males, 12 to 17	508	75.8	15.6	8.6
Males, 18 to 34	153	72.3	19.9	7.7
Males, 35 to 49	331	67.7	21.8	10.4
Males, 50 to 69	505	75.2	17.1	7.7
Males, 70+	296	77.6	15.8	6.6
Females, 3 to 11	592	76.1	15.0	8.9
Females, 12 to 17	465	66.4	18.5	15.2
Females, 18 to 34	710	58.7	26.6	14.7
Females, 35 to 49	1,361	61.8	20.9	17.3
Females, 50 to 69	1,550	68.8	16.1	15.1
Females, 70+	574	68.6	19.8	11.7
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,917	69.9	18.8	11.3
Macedon Ranges Shire	840	73.2	15.1	11.7
Shire of Campaspe	997	67.8	23.1	9.1
Mount Alexander Shire	829	70.2	15.4	14.5
Central Goldfields Shire	588	61.4	27.3	11.3
Loddon Shire	605	63.2	20.3	16.5
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	849	68.4	20.5	11.1
2 or 3 people	2,905	71.8	17.1	11.1
4 or 5 people	1,578	62.9	23.5	13.5
More than 5 people	187	61.6	22.3	16.1
Born overseas	706	71.0	19.1	9.9
Born in Australia	7,061	69.4	18.9	11.7
Speaks other main language	145	63.5	23.0	13.4
Speaks English as main language	7,601	69.8	18.8	11.4

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	221	60.9	26.2	12.9
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,534	70.0	18.6	11.4
LGBTQIA+	471	55.7	22.4	21.9
Non-LGBTQIA+	7,266	70.9	18.5	10.6
Neurodivergent	930	57.6	21.6	20.8
Not neurodivergent	5,204	73.1	17.0	9.9
Maybe	621	66.4	23.0	10.6
Not sure what neurodivergent means	758	69.0	21.0	10.0
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,710	66.5	21.4	12.1
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,791	74.5	14.3	11.2
Unemployed/retired ²	1,691	67.5	20.0	12.5
Employed	3,823	68.9	19.4	11.7
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,644	52.0	29.0	18.9
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,864	76.9	14.7	8.4
Requires help with daily activities	665	49.2	24.8	26.0
Does not require help	7,091	71.6	18.3	10.1
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	832	44.6	32.8	22.6
Marginal food security	692	57.8	27.3	14.9
High food security	3,993	76.7	14.6	8.7

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 3.9.2 presents the findings by selected health and behaviour characteristics. Perceived ease of being physically active was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, a lower proportion of those with fair or poor health (46.1% vs 76.1%), with low to moderate life satisfaction (52.6% vs 76.7%), who do not feel valued by society (50.4% vs sometimes [69.4%] and definitely [83.8%]), have poor mental wellbeing (48.3% vs 76.1%), and who are overweight or obese (69.9% vs 75.0%) agree that it is easy to be physically active in their local area compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

Agreement that it is easy to be physically active in the local area was also lower among respondents who did not meet the following recommendations, compared to their counterparts who met them:

- Fruit consumption (64.7% vs 75.5%)
- Vegetable consumption (68.8% vs 81.3%)
- Aerobic physical activity (55.0% vs 76.1%)
- Muscle strengthening activity (62.3% vs 77.9%)
- Screen time (67.4% vs 72.9%)
- Sleep duration (60.8% vs 74.2%)

Further, a lower proportion of those who consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily perceive it to be easy to be physically active in their local area. Among risk behaviours, fewer current smokers (60.1%) and those who have never smoked (66.7%) agreed that it is easy to be physically active locally compared to ex-

smokers (72.3%). For alcohol consumption, a higher proportion of those who had not engaged in risky drinking in the past 12 months (14.2%) disagreed with the statement compared to those who had (10.7%).

Table 3.9.2 Perceived ease of being physically active in local area by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Strongly agree/ Agree %	Neutral %	Strongly disagree / Disagree %
Total sample	7776	69.7	18.9	11.5
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,270	46.1	30.2	23.7
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,715	76.1	15.6	8.3
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,540	52.6	27.3	20.0
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,397	76.7	15.3	8.0
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,088	50.4	25.6	24.0
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,423	69.4	21.3	9.3
Definitely feel valued by society	1,427	83.8	10.3	5.9
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,458	48.3	29.8	21.8
Good mental wellbeing	4,067	76.1	15.7	8.2
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,661	69.9	18.4	11.7
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	2,009	75.0	15.7	9.3
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,754	64.7	20.6	14.6
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,912	75.5	16.4	8.0
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,698	68.8	19.5	11.8
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	909	81.3	11.9	6.8
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,462	55.0	26.0	19.0
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	5,050	76.1	15.5	8.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,607	62.3	22.5	15.2
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	3,026	77.9	14.2	7.9
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,931	67.4	19.7	12.9
Meets screen time recommendations	3,411	72.9	17.4	9.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,175	60.8	25.1	14.0
Meets sleep recommendations	5,215	74.2	15.7	10.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	900	59.8	24.3	15.9
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,761	71.4	18.0	10.7
Does not meet water recommendations	4,625	69.1	19.4	11.4

Meets water recommendations	2,856	71.6	17.4	10.9
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Risk behaviour indicators²

Current smoker	299	60.1	21.3	18.5
Ex-smoker	1,931	72.3	18.9	8.8
Never smoked	2,743	66.7	19.6	13.7
Current vaper	139	66.6	19.6	13.7
Ex-vaper	340	70.5	20.0	9.5
Never vaped	4,473	68.3	19.5	12.2
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,725	70.4	18.9	10.7
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,243	65.6	20.2	14.2
Gambled	1,533	70.1	19.3	10.5
Never gambled	3,428	67.5	19.5	13.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

4. Diet

The following section summarises the findings regarding a range of dietary factors that respondents were asked about. This includes food security, fruit and vegetable consumption and barriers to consuming a sufficient amount of fruit and vegetables, water intake, sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and perceived ease of access to healthy food in the local area. Results in this section are for all respondents, unless otherwise indicated, and weighting has been applied.

4.1. Food security

Food security was measured using the valid and widely used 10-item USDA food security module¹⁰. Respondents were asked a series of questions (10) regarding their experiences over the 12 months prior to survey completion. Questions focused on worrying about food running out, food not lasting and inability to afford more, affordability of balanced meals, cutting meal size or skipping meals due to lack of money, eating less than felt needed, hunger due to inability to afford food, weight loss due to lack of food, and frequency of these experiences. Respondents were categorised as having high food security if they provided no indications of food-access problems or limitations, and marginal food security if they reported some concern or anxiety about food sufficient but little or no actual change in diet or food intake. Conversely, respondents were categorised as having low food security if they reported a reduced quality and/or variety of their diet, and very low food security if they reported disrupted eating patterns and reduced intake.

Table 4.1.1 provides a summary of food security among 2025 ALC respondents according to their demographic characteristics. Overall, 68.9% of respondents had high food security and 17.9% had low or very low food security. Proportionate differences in food security were seen for all demographic characteristics. Specifically, very low food security was reported more frequently among respondents who are:

- Females (8.9%) compared to males (6.0%)
- Young adults (males 11.5% and females 16.5%) compared to older adults (males 1.9% and females 1.7%)
- Residents of Greater Bendigo (8.4%), Campaspe (11.5%) and Central Goldfields (10.1%) compared to Macedon Ranges (3.4%) and Mount Alexander (3.7%) Shires
- Born in Australia (8.0%) compared to born overseas (4.2%)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (24.9%) compared to non-Indigenous (7.0%)
- LGBTQIA+ (15.1%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (6.8%)
- Neurodivergent (16.3%) compared to not (5.5%) or maybe (7.4%) neurodivergent
- Less than a bachelor level education (9.3%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (2.1%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (20.7%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (0.6%)
- Require help with daily activities (21.2%) compared to no help required (6.5%)

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. (2012). U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module: Three-Stage Design, With Screeners. September 2012 Revision. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/survey-tools>

Table 4.1.1 Adult food security by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	High food security %	Marginal food security %	Low food security %	Very low food security %
Total sample	5,545	68.9	13.2	10.4	7.5
Sex and age					
Males	1,289	73.5	11.5	9.0	6.0
Females	4,205	65.0	14.7	11.4	8.9
Males, 18 to 34	154	54.9	21.1	12.5	11.5
Males, 35 to 49	332	64.0	16.1	12.6	7.3
Males, 50 to 69	505	80.1	8.9	5.8	5.2
Males, 70+	298	85.6	4.4	8.1	1.9
Females, 18 to 34	713	48.8	19.2	15.6	16.5
Females, 35 to 49	1,365	59.5	17.3	13.6	9.6
Females, 50 to 69	1,555	76.3	10.4	8.3	4.9
Females, 70+	572	81.5	11.0	5.8	1.7
LGA					
City of Greater Bendigo	2,917	65.1	13.9	12.6	8.4
Macedon Ranges Shire	565	79.0	11.4	6.2	3.4
Shire of Campaspe	681	63.3	14.3	10.9	11.5
Mount Alexander Shire	609	78.2	12.6	5.4	3.7
Central Goldfields Shire	380	66.2	11.4	12.4	10.1
Loddon Shire	393	70.2	12.9	10.3	6.7
Demographic indicators					
Household size					
1 person	851	66.8	12.9	10.6	9.7
2 or 3 people	2,912	75.0	11.2	8.0	5.8
4 or 5 people	1,586	62.1	15.9	13.0	8.9
More than 5 people	189	38.4	24.7	23.9	13.1
Born overseas	628	70.1	14.0	11.7	4.2
Born in Australia	4,914	68.9	13.0	10.2	8.0
Speaks other main language	124	44.8	19.2	27.1	8.9
Speaks English as main language	5,401	69.6	13.0	9.9	7.4
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	137	32.4	19.9	22.9	24.9
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	5,393	70.1	12.9	10.0	7.0
LGBTQIA+	392	52.1	18.8	13.9	15.1
Non-LGBTQIA+	5,125	70.5	12.6	10.1	6.8
Neurodivergent	525	47.9	19.4	16.3	16.3
Not neurodivergent	3,811	74.1	11.5	8.9	5.5
Maybe	383	57.7	21.3	13.6	7.4
Not sure what neurodivergent means	609	65.3	12.5	12.6	9.6
Less than Bachelor level education	2,728	64.1	14.3	12.3	9.3

Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,798	83.1	10.2	4.6	2.1
Unemployed/retired	1,704	71.3	9.9	11.0	7.8
Employed	3,836	67.7	14.9	10.0	7.3
Just getting along, poor or very poor	1,655	34.4	21.6	23.3	20.7
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,876	86.9	8.8	3.6	0.6
Requires help with daily activities	320	44.9	11.3	22.6	21.2
Does not require help	5,210	70.7	13.3	9.5	6.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and above living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Table 4.1.2 provides an overview of food security according to selected health and behaviour characteristics of the 2025 ALC sample. Food security was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators, except for BMI. A greater proportion of those with fair or poor self-reported health (15.4% vs 5.5%), with low to moderate life satisfaction (17.1% vs 3.1%), poor mental wellbeing (16.5% vs 4.1%), and don't feel valued by society (16.5% vs sometimes [6.9%] and definitely [2.2%]) reported very low levels of food security compared to their counterparts with more positive wellbeing indicators.

Similarly, except for water intake, food security was associated with all other health behaviour indicators. A greater proportion of those who did not meet the fruit (10.3% vs 3.5%) and vegetable (8.1% vs 0.6%) recommendations, as well as muscle strengthening (8.9% vs 5.8%), screen time (8.7% vs 5.7%) and sleep (12.2% vs 5.2%) recommendations, and consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (14.8% vs 6.2%) reported very low food security compared to those meeting behavioural recommendations.

Smoking and vaping were the only two risk behaviours that were associated with food security. A larger proportion of respondents who are current smokers (23.3%) and current (20.4%) or ex- (18.6%) vapers experienced very low food security compared to those who were ex-smokers (7.7%) or never smoked (6.2%) or had never vaped (6.4%).

Table 4.1.2 Adult food security by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	High food security	Marginal food security	Low food security	Very low food security
	n	%	%	%	%
Total sample	5,594	68.9	13.2	10.4	7.5
Health and wellbeing indicators					
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,158	52.3	15.9	16.4	15.4
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	3,802	75.6	11.2	7.7	5.5
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	1,543	51.5	15.4	16.0	17.1
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,395	79.3	10.7	6.7	3.3
Does not feel valued by society	1,088	50.8	16.0	16.7	16.5
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,424	70.3	12.7	10.1	6.9
Definitely feel valued by society	1,426	86.2	8.6	3.0	2.2
Poor mental wellbeing	1,460	52.4	16.1	15.0	16.5
Good mental wellbeing	4,085	75.2	12.1	8.6	4.1
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,384	70.7	12.3	9.4	7.6
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,377	74.5	11.0	7.2	7.3

Health behaviour indicators					
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,116	62.5	14.2	13.0	10.3
Meets fruit intake recommendations	2,371	79.0	11.2	6.3	3.5
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	4,812	67.2	13.8	10.9	8.1
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	628	92.0	5.0	2.5	0.6
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,335	60.1	15.8	14.1	10.1
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,086	71.8	12.1	9.3	6.8
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,441	63.3	14.0	13.8	8.9
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,622	74.4	12.6	7.3	5.8
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,647	66.3	13.7	11.3	8.7
Meets screen time recommendations	2,674	72.6	12.5	9.0	5.9
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,559	58.3	16.7	12.8	12.2
Meets sleep recommendations	3,738	74.8	11.4	8.6	5.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	736	54.5	17.7	13.0	14.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	4,716	71.8	12.2	9.7	6.2
Does not meet water recommendations	3,497	69.5	12.4	10.8	7.3
Meets water recommendations	1,882	69.4	14.6	8.1	7.9
Risk behaviour indicators ²					
Current smoker	300	43.9	15.6	17.2	23.3
Ex-smoker	1,931	70.9	12.4	9.0	7.7
Never smoked	2,744	72.2	12.1	9.6	6.2
Current vaper	139	41.9	20.5	17.1	20.4
Ex-vaper	340	52.1	16.4	12.9	18.6
Never vaped	4,474	72.8	11.5	9.3	6.4
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,723	69.4	12.1	10.4	8.0
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,246	70.1	12.7	9.3	7.9
Gambled	1,533	70.1	12.7	9.5	7.7
Never gambled	3,429	69.5	12.2	10.1	8.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and above living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

4.2. Fruit and vegetable consumption

The Australian Dietary Guidelines¹¹ recommend daily servings of fruit and vegetables for each age group to support health and wellbeing. One serve of vegetables equals ½ cup cooked vegetables or 1 cup of salad vegetables, and a serve of legumes or beans is ½ cup cooked, dried, or canned beans, peas, or lentils. One serve of fruit equals 1 medium piece, 2 small pieces, or 1 cup of diced fruit.

¹¹ National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) Australian Dietary Guidelines. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/the-australian-dietary-guidelines>

For vegetables, children aged 3 should have 2.5 serves, ages 4-8 should have 4.5 serves, and ages 9-11 should have 5 serves. Females aged 12 and over require 5 serves, while males need 5 serves at age 70+, 5.5 serves at ages 12-18 and 51-70, and 6 serves at ages 19-50. For fruit, children aged 3 should have 1 serve, ages 4-8 should have 1.5 serves, and everyone aged 9 and over should have 2 serves. The table below contains the detailed recommendations by age and sex.

Recommended daily consumption	Fruit	Vegetables
Toddlers and children		
Boys and girls 3 years	1	2.5
Boys and girls aged 4 to 8 years	1.5	4.5
Boys and girls aged 9 to 11 years	2	5
Adolescents		
Girls aged 12 to 18 years	2	5
Boys aged 12 to 18 years	2	5.5
Adults		
Women aged 19 years and over	2	5
Men aged 19 to 50 years	2	6
Men aged 51 to 70 years	2	5.5
Men aged over 70 years	2	5

4.2.1. Fruit consumption

As shown in Table 4.2.1.1, the average serves of fruit per day for residents of Loddon Campaspe was 1.6 which is below the recommended daily intake, and less than half (47.0%) meet the age-specific fruit intake recommendations. Among adults, 40.5% of the 2025 ALC sample met their recommendation, compared with 48.0% in the 2019 ALC. In addition, 36.7% of adults in the 2023 VPHS and 44.7% in the 2022 NHS Victoria-wide samples met the fruit consumption guidelines. These differences may reflect variations in methodology and data collection years, so comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

A greater proportion of children, adolescents and older adults aged 70 years and above met the fruit consumption recommendations compared to adults aged 18 to 69 years. No differences were seen between males and females. Across the participating LGAs, residents of Mount Alexander Shire were the most likely to meet daily fruit consumption requirements (56.3%), with the proportion being significantly greater than respondents from all other council areas (proportion ranging from 42.8% to 45.2%), except for Macedon Ranges Shire (51.1%).

A lower proportion of people from the following demographic groups reported consuming the recommended serves of fruit and may benefit from targeted intervention:

- 4-5 people households (35.9%) compared to 2-3 person households (42.5%)
- Neurodivergent (38.4%) or are unsure what neurodivergent means (38.4%) compared to not (49.6%) or maybe (53.1%) neurodivergent
- Hold less than a Bachelor level education (38.2%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (46.9%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (31.1%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (45.2%)
- Low or very low food security (22.1%) compared to marginal (35.0%) or high (46.2%) food security

A lower average number of serves of fruit was also reported among ALC respondents who are LGBTQIA+ and employed, in addition to the above noted groups (see Table 4.2.1.1 for details).

Table 4.2.1.1 Fruit consumption by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily serves #
Total sample	7,826	53.0	47.0	1.6
Children	2,331	28.2	71.8	2.2
Adults	5,495	59.5	40.5	1.5
Males	2,456	53.0	47.0	1.6
Females	5,295	53.0	47.0	1.6
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	634	20.0	80.0	2.4
Males, 12 to 17	543	41.2	58.8	1.9
Males, 18 to 34	152	63.9	36.1	1.4
Males, 35 to 49	331	66.7	33.3	1.4
Males, 50 to 69	502	57.3	42.7	1.5
Males, 70+	294	54.3	45.7	1.6
Females, 3 to 11	632	19.2	80.8	2.3
Females, 12 to 17	490	39.8	60.2	1.8
Females, 18 to 34	708	64.9	35.1	1.3
Females, 35 to 49	1,355	63.2	36.8	1.3
Females, 50 to 69	1,542	58.0	42.0	1.5
Females, 70+	568	42.4	57.6	1.8
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,949	54.8	45.2	1.6
Macedon Ranges Shire	841	48.9	51.1	1.8
Shire of Campaspe	1,001	55.9	44.1	1.5
Mount Alexander Shire	831	43.7	56.3	1.8
Central Goldfields Shire	598	57.2	42.8	1.5
Loddon Shire	606	56.6	43.4	1.5
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	842	59.5	40.5	1.4
2 or 3 people	2,885	57.5	42.5	1.5
4 or 5 people	1,574	64.1	35.9	1.4
More than 5 people	189	56.6	43.4	1.4
Born overseas	701	51.4	48.6	1.6
Born in Australia	7,118	53.3	46.7	1.6
Speaks other main language	144	52.4	47.6	1.5
Speaks English as main language	7,654	53.0	47.0	1.6

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	222	59.1	40.9	1.5
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,589	52.8	47.2	1.6
LGBTQIA+	472	59.7	40.3	1.4
Non-LGBTQIA+	7,320	52.4	47.6	1.6
Neurodivergent	938	61.6	38.4	1.4
Not neurodivergent	5,258	50.4	49.6	1.7
Maybe	624	46.9	53.1	1.8
Not sure what neurodivergent means	745	61.6	38.4	1.4
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,692	61.8	38.2	1.4
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,782	53.1	46.9	1.6
Unemployed/retired ²	1,681	56.3	43.7	1.5
Employed	3,803	61.2	38.8	1.4
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,620	68.9	31.1	1.2
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,858	54.8	45.2	1.6
Requires help with daily activities	680	52.5	47.5	1.6
Does not require help	7,126	53.1	46.9	1.6
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	821	77.9	22.1	1.1
Marginal food security	686	65.0	35.0	1.3
High food security	3,980	53.8	46.2	1.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 4.2.1.2 provides a summary of fruit consumption according to selected health and behaviour characteristics of the 2025 ALC sample. Associations were seen between average daily serves of fruit and all health and behaviour indicators, except for gambling. Similarly, associations were seen between adherence to the fruit consumption recommendations and all health and behaviour characteristics, except for aerobic physical activity recommendations adherence.

Specifically, with regards to the health and wellbeing indicators, those with fair or poor self-reported health (28.1% vs 52.0%), with lower to moderate life satisfaction (30.7% vs 45.4%), poor mental wellbeing (27.8% vs 45.3%), does not feel valued by society (28.9% vs sometimes [40.9%] and definitely [50.2%]), and are overweight or obese (39.7% vs 53.9%) were significantly less likely to meet the fruit consumption recommendations compared to their counterparts with more positive wellbeing indicators.

A smaller proportion of those who did not meet the vegetable (43.9% vs 77.2%) and water consumption (43.3% vs 55.2%) recommendations, as well as muscle strengthening (40.4% vs 50.0%), screen time (43.5% vs 49.6%) and sleep (41.8% vs 49.6%) recommendations, and consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (27.9% vs 50.2%) reported meeting the fruit consumption recommendations compared to those meeting the corresponding health behaviour recommendations.

All assessed risk behaviours were associated with adherence to the fruit consumption recommendations. Specifically, a lower proportion of respondents who are current vapers (26.1%) and smokers (23.1%) met the fruit consumption recommendations compared to those who had never vaped (41.9%) and were either ex-smokers (41.0%) or never smoked (42.6%). Similarly, a lower proportion of those who had gambled (34.9%) and had consumed more than four standard drinks on a single occasion (37.3%) met the fruit

consumption recommendations compared to those who never gambled (43.6%) and had not have more than four standard drinks (45.2%) in the past 12 months.

Table 4.2.1.2 Fruit consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily serves #
Total sample	7,826	53.0	47.0	1.6
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,252	71.9	28.1	1.2
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,658	48.0	52.0	1.7
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,528	69.3	30.7	1.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,382	54.6	45.4	1.6
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,078	71.1	28.9	1.2
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,412	59.1	40.9	1.5
Definitely feel valued by society	1,422	49.8	50.2	1.7
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,449	72.2	27.8	1.2
Good mental wellbeing	4,046	54.7	45.3	1.6
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,651	60.3	39.7	1.5
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	2,008	46.1	53.9	1.7
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,822	56.1	43.9	1.5
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	929	22.8	77.2	2.3
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,462	56.0	44.0	1.5
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	5,045	52.2	47.8	1.7
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,609	59.6	40.4	1.4
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	3,015	50.0	50.0	1.7
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,922	56.5	43.5	1.5
Meets screen time recommendations	3,400	50.1	49.9	1.7
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,167	58.2	41.8	1.5
Meets sleep recommendations	5,203	50.4	49.6	1.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	903	72.1	27.9	1.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,765	49.8	50.2	1.7
Does not meet water recommendations	4,660	56.7	43.3	1.5
Meets water recommendations	2,881	44.8	55.2	1.8
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	299	76.9	23.1	1.1
Ex-smoker	1,925	59.0	41.0	1.5

Never smoked	2725	57.4	42.6	1.5
Current vaper	137	73.9	26.1	1.1
Ex-vaper	338	65.8	34.2	1.3
Never vaped	4,453	58.1	41.9	1.5
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,711	62.7	37.3	1.4
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,233	54.8	45.2	1.6
Gambled	1,519	65.1	34.9	1.4
Never gambled	3,418	56.4	43.6	1.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

4.2.2. Vegetable consumption

Table 4.2.2.1 shows that on average, Loddon Campaspe residents were consuming 2.3 daily serves of vegetables, well below the recommended serves per day for all ages. Overall, 90.3% of respondents did not meet the age- and sex-specific vegetable consumption guidelines. Among adults, 91.3% of the 2025 sample fell short of their recommended intake, compared with 86.7% in the 2019 sample, indicating a slight decline in vegetable consumption over the past six years. The 2023 VPHS and 2022 NHS Victorian results are similar to the 2025 ALC findings, with 90.3% and 93.6% of adults, respectively, not meeting the vegetable intake recommendations.

A lower proportion of adults (8.7%) and males (7.0%) met the vegetable recommendations compared to children (13.7%) and females (12.3%). For both males and females, the age groups with the largest proportion meeting the vegetable recommendations are 3-11 and 70 years and above.

Across the participating LGAs, residents of Macedon Ranges Shire were the most likely to meet daily vegetable consumption recommendations (13.6%), with the proportion being significantly greater than respondents from the City of Greater Bendigo (8.6%). Shire of Campaspe (8.1%) and Central Goldfields Shire (6.7%). Similarly, respondents from Macedon Ranges Shire and Mount Alexander Shire consumed a higher daily average number of serves of vegetables compared to residents from all the other Council areas.

A lower proportion of people from the following demographic groups reported consuming the recommended serves of vegetables:

- 4-5 person households (5.5%) compared to single (10.7%) and 2-3 person (10.0%) households
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (3.8%) compared to non-Indigenous (9.9%)
- Neurodivergent (6.6%) or are unsure what neurodivergent means (6.3%) compared to not neurodivergent (11.0%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (7.5%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (12.3%)
- Employed (7.0%) compared to unemployed/retired (12.1%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (3.7%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (11.2%)
- Marginal (3.3%), low or very low (1.5%) food security compared to high food security (11.4%)

The average number of serves of vegetables was also lower among respondents from single and 4-5 person households, who speak a main language other than English, are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait

Islander, neurodivergent or are unsure what neurodivergent means, hold less than a bachelor level education, are just getting along, poor or very poor, require help with daily activities and have marginal, low or very low food security compared to their respective counterparts.

Table 4.2.2.1 Vegetable consumption by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily serves #
Total sample	7,747	90.3	9.7	2.3
Children	2,300	86.3	13.7	2.6
Adults	5,447	91.3	8.7	2.3
Males	2,457	93.0	7.0	2.2
Females	5,290	87.7	12.3	2.4
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	634	82.9	17.1	2.5
Males, 12 to 17	543	96.3	3.7	2.6
Males, 18 to 34	151	99.4	0.6	1.8
Males, 35 to 49	330	97.6	2.4	2.1
Males, 50 to 69	503	96.6	3.4	2.1
Males, 70+	296	83.5	16.5	2.4
Females, 3 to 11	633	83.5	16.5	2.5
Females, 12 to 17	490	85.1	14.9	2.6
Females, 18 to 34	707	93.7	6.3	2.0
Females, 35 to 49	1,354	90.5	9.5	2.4
Females, 50 to 69	1,539	85.4	14.6	2.6
Females, 70+	567	81.4	18.6	2.8
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,908	91.4	8.6	2.2
Macedon Ranges Shire	826	86.4	13.6	2.6
Shire of Campaspe	998	91.9	8.1	2.1
Mount Alexander Shire	827	88.9	11.1	2.7
Central Goldfields Shire	595	93.3	6.7	2.0
Loddon Shire	593	89.0	11.0	2.3
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	839	89.3	10.7	2.1
2 or 3 people	2,857	90.0	10.0	2.4
4 or 5 people	1,560	94.5	5.5	2.2
More than 5 people	187	93.2	6.8	1.9
Born overseas	693	92.3	7.7	2.2
Born in Australia	7,047	90.0	10.0	2.3
Speaks other main language	142	95.1	4.9	1.8
Speaks English as main language	7,578	90.1	9.9	2.3

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	213	96.2	3.8	1.7
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,524	90.1	9.9	2.3
LGBTQIA+	460	91.8	8.2	2.2
Non-LGBTQIA+	7,261	90.1	9.9	2.3
Neurodivergent	915	93.4	6.6	2.1
Not neurodivergent	5,236	89.0	11.0	2.4
Maybe	614	90.4	9.6	2.4
Not sure what neurodivergent means	736	93.7	6.3	1.9
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,666	92.5	7.5	2.1
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,762	87.7	12.3	2.8
Unemployed/retired ²	1,665	87.9	12.1	2.3
Employed	3,772	93.0	7.0	2.2
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,600	96.3	3.7	1.7
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,831	88.8	11.2	2.5
Requires help with daily activities	668	92.4	7.6	1.9
Does not require help	7,062	90.1	9.9	2.4
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	808	98.5	1.5	1.4
Marginal food security	677	96.7	3.3	1.8
High food security	3,955	88.6	11.4	2.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 4.2.2.2 provides a summary of vegetable consumption according to selected health and behaviour characteristics of the 2025 ALC sample. Consumption of average daily serves of vegetable was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Similarly, adherence to the vegetable consumption recommendations was associated with all health and behaviour characteristics, apart from aerobic physical activity recommendation adherence and smoking. Specifically, with regards to the health and wellbeing indicators, those with fair or poor self-reported health (4.3% vs 11.6%), with lower to moderate life satisfaction (5.5% vs 10.9%), poor mental wellbeing (4.7% vs 10.2%), never feel valued by society (5.1% vs sometimes [8.7%] and definitely [13.5%]), and are overweight or obese (8.3% vs 13.2%) were significantly less likely to meet the vegetable consumption recommendations compared to their counterparts with more positive wellbeing indicators.

A smaller proportion of those who did not meet the fruit (4.2% vs 16.0%) and water consumption (8.5% vs 12.6%) recommendations, as well as muscle strengthening (7.1% vs 10.8%), screen time (8.3% vs 11.3%) and sleep (6.9% vs 11.2%) recommendations, and consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (3.4% vs 10.8%) reported meeting the vegetable consumption recommendations compared to those meeting the corresponding health behaviour recommendations.

All assessed risk behaviours, except for smoking, were associated with adherence to the vegetable consumption recommendations. Specifically, a lower proportion of respondents who are ex vapers (4.4%), had gambled (6.5%), and had consumed more than four standard drinks on a single occasion (7.7%) met the vegetable consumption recommendations compared to their counterparts who had never vaped (9.8%), never gambled (10.4%) and had not had more than four standard drinks (10.9%) in the past 12 months.

Table 4.2.2.2 Vegetable consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily serves #
Total sample	7,747	90.3	9.7	2.3
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,241	95.7	4.3	1.8
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,608	88.4	11.6	2.5
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,509	94.5	5.5	1.8
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,363	89.1	10.9	2.5
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,064	94.9	5.1	1.8
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,396	91.3	8.7	2.3
Definitely feel valued by society	1,414	86.5	13.5	2.7
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,437	95.3	4.7	1.9
Good mental wellbeing	4,010	89.8	10.2	2.4
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,635	91.7	8.3	2.2
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,997	86.8	13.2	2.7
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,774	95.8	4.2	1.8
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,957	84.0	16.0	3.0
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,441	91.8	8.2	2.0
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,994	89.7	10.3	2.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,575	92.9	7.1	2.1
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,990	89.2	10.8	2.5
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,884	91.7	8.3	2.2
Meets screen time recommendations	3,374	88.7	11.3	2.5
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,144	93.1	6.9	2.1
Meets sleep recommendations	5,164	88.8	11.2	2.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	894	96.6	3.4	1.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,702	89.2	10.8	2.4
Does not meet water recommendations	4,653	91.5	8.5	2.2
Meets water recommendations	2,875	87.4	12.6	2.6
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	299	94.1	5.9	1.9
Ex-smoker	1,909	92.2	7.8	2.3
Never smoked	2,702	89.6	10.4	2.4
Current vaper	137	95.1	4.9	1.7
Ex-vaper	337	95.6	4.4	2.0

Never vaped	4,416	90.2	9.8	2.3
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,690	92.3	7.7	2.2
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,216	89.1	10.9	2.4
Gambled	1,509	93.5	6.5	2.1
Never gambled	3,389	89.6	10.4	2.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

4.2.3. Barriers to fruit consumption

Respondents who did not consume at least 2 serves of fruit per day were asked separately to provide the main reason why they do not consume the recommended amount. Table 4.2.3.1 provides a snapshot of the main barriers reported by 2025 ALC respondents. The main themes that emerged amongst those who provided a response as to why they have not met fruit consumption recommendations were personal preferences (19.0%) and cost (17.4%). Other relatively common barriers to increasing serves of fruit were access and quality (13.1%) and habit and routine (9.2%), while 8.3% stated that they had no particular reason for not meeting the recommended intake.

Table 4.2.3.1 Barriers to fruit consumption

Reasons	% (¹ N=3,826)
Personal preferences	19.0
Cost	17.4
Access/quality	13.1
Habit/routine	9.2
No particular reason	8.3
Satisfied with current intake	5.6
Diet/health restriction	5.2
Time	4.2
Inconvenient to prepare	4.0
Other	1.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Tables 4.2.3.2 and 4.2.3.3 present a breakdown of the top five most common barriers to fruit consumption according to demographic, health and wellbeing, health behaviour and risk behaviour characteristics of the sample. Solutions aimed at addressing the main barriers of desirability (personal preference), affordability, access and habit formation are likely to be the most effective in increasing fruit consumption.

Reporting of personal preferences as a barrier to fruit consumption differed according to age, education, financial security, food security, and adherence to the water and sleep recommendations. Specifically, a greater proportion of the following respondents reported personal preferences as a barrier to fruit consumption:

- Children (38.2%) compared to adults (16.6%)
- Those with a Bachelor degree or above (20.8%) compared to less than a Bachelor education (15.3%)
- Those who are reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (19.0%) compared to those who are just getting along, poor or very poor (12.6%)
- Those with high food security (19.5%) compared to those with low or very low food security (10.5%)
- Those who didn't meet the aerobic physical activity recommendations (22.4%) compared to those who did (17.6%)
- Those who met the water recommendations (24.1%) compared to those who did not (17.7%)
- Those who met the sleep recommendations (21.3%) compared to those who did not (15.7%)

Cost as a barrier to fruit consumption differed according to many demographics, health and wellbeing, and health behaviours. No differences were seen according to risk behaviours. The following groups were more likely to report cost as a barrier and may benefit from targeted intervention:

- Females (21.8%) compared to males (13.0%)
- Adults (18.4%) compared to children (9.9%)
- Residents of Campaspe Shire (21.7%) compared to Mount Alexander Shire (11.2%)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (38.0%) compared to non-Indigenous people (16.7%)
- LGBTQIA+ (33.0%) compared to not LBTQIA+ (16.0%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (20.8%) compared to Bachelor degree or above (10.1%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (35.8%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (7.2%)
- Requires help with daily activities (27.2%) compared to no help required (16.5%)
- Low or very low food security (47.3%) compared to marginal (23.0%) and high (6.6%) food security
- Fair or poor (26.2%) compared to good, very good or excellent (15.1%) self-reported health
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (27.8%) compared to high or very high life satisfaction (13.3%)
- Does not feel valued (31.6%) compared to sometimes (15.7%) or definitely feel valued by society (9.8%)
- Poor mental wellbeing (28.1%) compared to good mental wellbeing (13.5%)
- Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily (24.1% vs 16.3%)
- Did not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations (21.8% vs 15.9%)
- Did not meet muscle strengthening recommendations (20.0% vs 14.0%)
- Did not meet sleep recommendations (22.6% vs 15.3%)

Access or quality (including freshness, perishability, variety etc.) as a barrier to fruit consumption only differed according to age and level of education. A larger proportion of adults (14.2%) and those with less than a Bachelor level education (15.3%) reported access/quality as a barrier compared to children (4.9%) and those with a Bachelor degree or higher (10.3%).

Differences in habit or routine being reported as a barrier to fruit consumption were seen for some demographic characteristics. Specifically, habit/routine was reported as a barrier by a greater proportion of those from the following demographic groups:

- Adults (10.0%) compared to children (3.1%)
- Not (10.6%) or maybe (15.2%) neurodivergent compared to neurodivergent (4.3%)
- Bachelor degree or higher (13.7%) compared to less than Bachelor level education (8.9%)
- Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (11.7%) compared to just getting along, poor or very poor (7.4%)
- High food security (12.4%) compared to low or very low food security (4.7%)
- High/very high life satisfaction (12.1%) compared to low to moderate life satisfaction (7.9%)
- Ex-smokers (13.2%) compared to current smokers (5.5%).

'No particular reason' was the fifth most common response when asked to report barriers to fruit consumption. A greater proportion of respondents with the following characteristics cited 'no particular reason' for not consuming the recommended serves of fruit:

- Residents of Loddon Shire (15.1%) compared to Mount Alexander (4.9%) and Central Goldfields (5.4%)
- Not sure what neurodivergence means (12.8%) compared to maybe neurodivergent (5.6%)
- Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (10.7%) compared to just getting along, poor or very poor (5.1%)
- Sometimes feels valued by society (8.1%) compared to does not feel valued by society (4.1%)
- Good mental wellbeing (10.7%) compared to poor mental wellbeing (4.3%)
- Never vaped (7.5%) compared to current vaper (1.7%)
- Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion (8.4%) compared to not (4.7%)

While this research provides insight into potential target populations, it did not look specifically at how these barriers could be overcome. This is an area which would merit further investigation.

Table 4.2.3.2 Top five barriers to fruit consumption by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Personal preferences %	Cost %	Access / quality %	Habit / routine %	No particular reason %
Total sample	3,827	19.0	17.4	13.1	9.2	8.3
Children	709	38.2	9.9	4.9	3.1	6.4
Adults	3,118	16.6	18.4	14.2	10.0	8.5
Males	1,107	17.6	13.0	13.1	10.2	9.6
Females	2,680	20.4	21.8	13.4	8.2	7.1
LGA						
City of Greater Bendigo	1,997	18.1	18.1	13.6	9.1	8.7
Macedon Ranges Shire	375	20.1	14.3	10.0	9.0	8.4
Shire of Campaspe	481	17.0	21.7	15.0	9.1	7.8
Mount Alexander Shire	354	24.4	11.2	11.1	12.9	4.9
Central Goldfields Shire	312	24.0	18.8	15.3	8.2	5.4
Loddon Shire	308	15.4	14.1	15.8	6.2	15.1
Demographic indicators						
Born overseas	361	17.7	17.7	16.5	9.3	7.8
Born in Australia	3,465	19.0	17.4	12.8	9.2	8.4
Speaks other main language	71	19.0	22.8	13.5	11.0	8.2
Speaks English as main language	3,745	18.8	17.3	13.1	9.2	8.3
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	121	13.1	38.0	8.4	5.8	6.7
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,697	19.1	16.7	13.3	9.4	8.3
LGBTQIA+	274	18.7	33.0	14.9	5.9	11.8
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,533	18.9	16.0	13.1	9.6	7.9
Neurodivergent	539	20.2	23.0	11.3	4.3	9.8
Not neurodivergent	2,426	19.3	15.5	13.2	10.6	7.1
Maybe	293	23.5	15.2	14.9	15.2	5.6

Not sure what neurodivergent means	447	14.8	21.2	14.3	6.0	12.8
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,657	15.3	20.8	15.3	8.9	8.8
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,451	20.8	10.1	10.3	13.7	7.7
Unemployed/retired ²	869	14.0	18.8	15.0	9.4	6.6
Employed	2,245	17.7	18.1	13.8	10.3	9.4
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,101	12.6	35.8	16.2	7.4	5.1
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,012	19.0	7.2	12.9	11.7	10.7
Requires help with daily activities	315	14.9	27.2	11.2	5.7	8.4
Does not require help	3,504	19.3	16.5	13.3	9.6	8.2
Food security (last 12 months)²						
Low or very low food security	632	10.5	47.3	14.1	4.7	6.7
Marginal food security	448	13.5	23.0	19.1	8.3	7.1
High food security	2,036	19.5	6.6	12.8	12.4	9.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 4.2.3.3 Top five barriers to fruit consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Personal preferences	Cost	Access / quality	Habit / routine	No particular reason
	n	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	3,827	19.0	17.4	13.1	9.2	8.3
Health and wellbeing indicators						
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	874	17.4	26.2	15.5	8.6	5.4
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,512	20.2	15.1	13.6	10.1	7.5
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,040	14.9	27.8	15.9	7.9	6.7
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,763	18.3	13.3	14.6	12.1	7.2

Does not feel valued by society ²	740	16.3	31.6	14.4	7.8	4.1
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,386	16.3	15.7	14.8	11.0	8.1
Definitely feel valued by society	678	19.6	9.8	16.9	12.9	8.3
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,030	17.2	28.1	16.8	9.4	4.3
Good mental wellbeing	2,088	16.2	13.5	12.8	10.3	10.7
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,506	17.7	19.0	15.8	10.7	7.4
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	888	21.8	15.2	17.1	10.3	4.2
Health behaviour indicators						
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,588	18.9	17.9	12.9	9.1	8.5
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	195	22.0	9.2	22.0	12.0	4.0
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,284	22.4	21.8	13.8	8.0	7.6
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,402	17.6	15.9	13.1	9.9	8.6
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,009	21.0	20.0	15.2	9.7	7.1
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,383	18.0	14.0	12.5	9.5	9.9
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,038	20.3	17.9	14.8	9.5	7.4
Meets screen time recommendations	1,577	18.2	17.6	11.7	9.3	7.4
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,201	15.7	22.6	15.0	8.5	7.7
Meets sleep recommendations	2,375	21.3	15.3	12.8	9.7	7.0
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	619	19.2	24.1	13.8	10.1	4.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,117	19.3	16.3	13.3	9.2	8.0
Does not meet water recommendations	2,480	17.7	17.8	13.4	9.8	7.8
Meets water recommendations	1,191	24.1	18.0	13.9	8.3	6.5
Risk behaviour indicators²						
Current smoker	227	21.0	27.3	16.8	5.5	3.8

Ex-smoker	1,100	17.0	17.4	13.5	13.2	7.8
Never smoked	1,490	16.3	19.0	16.0	9.1	6.9
Current vaper	99	17.0	27.9	10.3	17.9	1.7
Ex-vaper	224	17.9	24.7	17.0	8.1	5.2
Never vaped	2,483	17.0	17.9	15.2	10.3	7.5
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,644	18.2	17.2	15.0	11.1	8.4
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,171	15.1	22.3	15.1	9.4	4.7
Gambled	954	17.4	16.2	16.1	11.3	8.5
Never gambled	1,858	16.8	21.0	14.5	9.9	6.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

4.2.4. Barriers to vegetable consumption

Respondents who did not consume the recommended serves of vegetables per day were asked separately to provide the main reason why they do not consume the recommended amount. Table 4.2.4.1 provides a snapshot of the main barriers reported by 2025 ALC respondents. The main themes that emerged amongst those who provided a response as to why they have not met vegetable consumption recommendations were personal preferences (13.9%), cost (12.2%), being inconvenient to prepare (11.3%), being satisfied with current intake (10.8%) and lack of time (10.8%).

Table 4.2.4.1 Barriers to vegetable consumption

Reasons	% (¹ N=6,819)
Food preferences	13.9
Cost	12.2
Inconvenient to prepare	11.3
Satisfied with current intake	10.8
Lack of time	10.8
No particular reason	7.2
Access/quality (freshness, perishability, variability)	6.7
Habit/routine	4.9
Diet/health restriction	3.5
Other	2.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Tables 4.2.4.2 and 4.2.4.3 present a breakdown of the top five most commonly reported barriers to vegetable consumption according to demographic, health and wellbeing, health behaviour and risk behaviour characteristics of the sample. Solutions aimed at addressing the main barriers of desirability (personal preference), affordability, inconvenience, current intake satisfaction and lack of time are likely to be the most effective in increasing vegetable consumption.

Reporting of personal preferences as a barrier to vegetable consumption differed according to a range of demographic, health and wellbeing, and health behaviour characteristics, but did not differ according to any risk-taking behaviours. Specifically, a greater proportion of the following respondents reported personal preferences as a barrier to vegetable consumption:

- Children (37.8%) compared to adults (8.0%)
- Born in Australia (14.5%) compared to born overseas (9.7%)
- Neurodivergent (16.2%) or maybe neurodivergent (22.1%), compared to those who are not (13.8%) or are unsure what neurodivergent means (10.1%)
- Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (9.3%) compared to just getting along, poor or very poor (5.8%)
- Require help with daily activities (21.5%) compared to those who don't (13.2%)
- High food security (9.1%) compared to low or very low food security (4.1%)
- Good, very good or excellent self-rated health (15.3%) compared to fair or poor health (10.1%)

- Normal weight range or underweight (16.2%) compared to overweight or obese (10.1%)
- Met the fruit recommendations (15.9%) compared to not (12.4%)
- Did not meet the aerobic physical activity recommendations (20.4%) compared to met them (11.1%)
- Did not meet the muscle strengthening recommendations (16.1%) compared to met them (9.5%)
- Did not meet the screen time recommendations (15.4%) compared to met them (12.4%).

Cost as a barrier to vegetable consumption differed according to many demographics, health and wellbeing, health behaviours and risk behaviours. The following groups were more likely to report cost as a barrier and may benefit from targeted intervention:

- Females (16.1%) compared to males (8.5%)
- Adults (13.8%) compared to children (5.6%)
- Residents of Greater Bendigo (13.6%) and Campaspe Shire (14.6%) compared to Mount Alexander Shire (8.7%) and Macedon Ranges Shire (8.5%)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (24.6%) compared to non-Indigenous people (11.8%)
- LGBTQIA+ (20.8%) compared to not LBTQIA+ (11.5%)
- Neurodivergent (18.1%) or unsure what neurodivergence means (15.7%) compared to not neurodivergent (10.4%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (15.7%) compared to Bachelor degree or above (8.2%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (31.4%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (4.2%)
- Require help with daily activities (18.1%) compared to no help required (11.7%)
- Low or very low food security (49.5%) compared to moderate (18.8%) and high (2.8%) food security
- Fair or poor (22.7%) compared to good, very good or excellent (10.1%) self-reported health
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (24.7%) compared to high or very high life satisfaction (9.1%)
- Does not feel valued (26.5%) compared to sometimes (13.3%) or definitely (5.1%) feel valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (25.0%) compared to good mental wellbeing (9.4%)
- Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily (17.7%) compared to less than daily (11.5%)
- Did not meet fruit intake recommendations (16.4%) compared to met them (6.9%)
- Did not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations (15.4%) compared to met them (11.2%)
- Did not meet muscle strengthening recommendations (15.3%) compared to met them (10.1%)
- Did not meet sleep recommendations (17.9%) compared to met them (9.9%)
- Current smoker (25.2%) compared to ex-smoker (14.3%) or never smoked (13.2%)
- Current vaper (31.3%) or ex-vaper (22.6%) compared to never vaped (12.9%).

Inconvenience to prepare as a barrier to vegetable consumption differed according to a number of demographic characteristics, as well as mental wellbeing and fruit intake. The following groups were more likely to report inconvenience as a barrier to vegetable consumption and may benefit from targeted intervention to improve knowledge and skills regarding easy vegetable preparation:

- Adults (12.6%) compared to children (6.0%)
- Females (12.8%) compared to males (9.9%)
- Speaks English as main language (11.6%) compared to another main language (1.1%)
- Non-Indigenous people (11.5%) compared to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (6.3%)
- Neurodivergent (15.8%) or maybe neurodivergent (16.6%), compared to those who are unsure what neurodivergent means (8.8%)
- Bachelor degree or higher (16.6%) compared to less than a Bachelor level education (11.4%)
- Employed (14.1%) compared to unemployed/retired (9.7%)
- Does not require help (11.9%) compared to requires help with daily activities (4.9%)
- High (13.4%) or marginal (15.3%) food security compared to low or very low food security (8.2%)
- Poor mental wellbeing (16.9%) compared to good mental wellbeing (10.9%)
- Did not meet the fruit intake recommendations (13.1%) compared to met them (9.6%)

Being satisfied with current intake was reported as a barrier to vegetable consumption more frequently among the following groups:

- Adults (12.0%) compared to children (6.1%)
- Residents in Macedon Ranges Shire (13.9%) compared to Campaspe Shire (7.9%)
- Unemployed/retired (17.5%) compared to employed (9.3%)
- Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (13.2%) compared to just getting along, poor or very poor (9.6%)
- High (14.3%) or marginal (10.9%) food security compared to low or very low food security (4.5%)
- Good mental wellbeing (13.1%) compared to poor mental wellbeing (9.2%)
- Met aerobic physical activity recommendations (12.0%) compared to not (9.1%)
- Met sleep recommendations (12.4%) compared to not (8.4%)
- Never vaped (12.7%) compared to ex-vaper (6.4%) or current vaper (6.2%)

Time as a barrier to vegetable consumption differed according to a range of demographic, health and wellbeing, and health behaviour characteristics, but did not differ according to any risk-taking behaviours. A greater proportion of respondents with the following characteristics cited time as a reason for not consuming the recommended serves of vegetables:

- Adults (12.2%) compared to children (4.8%)
- Residents of Greater Bendigo (11.2%) compared to Loddon Shire (6.1%)
- Neurodivergent (15.2%) compared to not sure what neurodivergent means (7.3%)
- Bachelor degree or higher (15.8%) compared to less than Bachelor level education (11.1%)
- Employed (16.5%) compared to unemployed/retired (3.4%)
- Does not require help with daily activities (11.2%) compared to does require help (6.3%)
- Poor mental wellbeing (16.1%) compared to good mental wellbeing (10.7%)
- Did not meet fruit recommendations (12.3%) compared to met them (8.8%)

- Met screen time recommendations (12.9%) compared to not (9.7%)

Like the barriers to fruit consumption, this research provides insight into potential target populations, however it did not look specifically at how these barriers could be overcome. Again, this is an important area for further research to identify the most appropriate and efficacious strategies to increase the proportion of the Loddon Campaspe population who consume sufficient vegetables for good health and wellbeing.

Table 4.2.4.2 Top five barriers to vegetable consumption by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Personal preferences %	Cost %	Inconvenient to prepare %	Satisfied with current intake %	Lack of time %
Total sample	6,819	13.9	12.2	11.3	10.8	10.8
Children	2,003	37.8	5.6	6.0	6.1	4.8
Adults	4,816	8.0	13.8	12.6	12.0	12.2
Males	2,257	14.9	8.5	9.9	10.1	9.4
Females	4,562	12.9	16.1	12.8	11.6	12.1
LGA						
City of Greater Bendigo	3,466	14.5	13.6	10.5	10.4	11.2
Macedon Ranges Shire	690	14.7	8.7	12.9	13.9	10.9
Shire of Campaspe	900	12.4	14.6	12.1	7.9	9.4
Mount Alexander Shire	708	14.1	8.5	10.8	12.5	12.3
Central Goldfields Shire	546	10.9	12.4	12.7	8.8	9.8
Loddon Shire	509	13.1	9.6	8.6	12.0	6.1
Demographic indicators						
Born overseas	616	9.7	13.1	12.1	11.5	10.9
Born in Australia	6,198	14.5	12.1	11.2	10.7	10.7
Speaks other main language	130	6.3	21.7	1.1	7.9	7.1
Speaks English as main language	6,667	14.1	12.0	11.6	10.9	10.8
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	201	12.2	24.6	6.3	9.0	11.6
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	6,609	14.0	11.8	11.5	10.9	10.7
LGBTQIA+	399	12.2	20.8	15.6	12.5	12.7
Non-LGBTQIA+	6,399	14.1	11.5	11.0	10.6	10.6
Neurodivergent	838	16.2	18.1	15.8	9.5	15.2
Not neurodivergent	4,538	13.8	10.4	10.5	10.7	10.8
Maybe	543	22.1	11.4	16.6	11.4	13.2

Not sure what neurodivergent means	686	10.1	15.7	8.8	9.4	7.3
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,425	7.5	15.7	11.4	11.6	11.1
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,374	9.8	8.2	16.6	13.0	15.8
Unemployed ²	1,426	7.6	13.8	9.7	17.5	3.4
Employed/retired	3,382	8.3	13.9	14.1	9.3	16.5
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,507	5.8	31.4	11.4	9.6	13.2
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,296	9.3	4.2	13.3	13.2	11.7
Requires help with daily activities	606	21.5	18.1	4.9	10.4	6.3
Does not require help	6,199	13.2	11.7	11.9	10.8	11.2
Food security (last 12 months)²						
Low or very low food security	786	4.1	49.5	8.2	4.5	12.2
Marginal food security	640	8.4	18.8	15.3	10.9	14.2
High food security	3,386	9.1	2.8	13.4	14.3	11.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 4.2.4.3 Top five barriers to vegetable consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Personal preferences %	Cost %	Inconvenient to prepare %	Satisfied with current intake %	Lack of time %
Total sample	6,819	13.9	12.2	11.3	10.8	10.8
Health and wellbeing indicators						
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,172	10.1	22.7	14.4	9.9	11.7
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	4,840	15.3	10.1	11.4	11.2	11.1
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,398	7.4	24.7	14.4	9.8	15.0
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	2,899	8.5	9.1	12.8	13.1	11.3
Does not feel valued by society ²	988	8.8	26.5	14.6	12.4	11.7

Sometimes feel valued by society	2,125	7.6	13.3	12.8	10.6	14.2
Definitely feel valued by society	1,186	8.4	5.1	13.3	14.1	10.4
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,358	9.4	25.0	16.9	9.2	16.1
Good mental wellbeing	3,458	7.5	9.4	10.9	13.1	10.7
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,370	10.1	14.3	13.2	11.4	12.2
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,690	16.2	10.5	13.5	14.3	11.5
Health behaviour indicators						
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,579	12.4	16.4	12.7	11.7	12.3
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,222	15.9	6.9	9.6	9.8	8.8
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,218	20.4	15.4	12.1	9.1	10.1
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,330	11.1	11.2	11.3	12.0	11.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,262	16.1	15.3	13.2	9.7	12.3
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,577	9.5	10.1	11.3	12.8	10.9
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,473	15.4	12.8	12.3	11.2	9.7
Meets screen time recommendations	2,923	12.4	11.9	10.9	10.9	12.9
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,956	12.9	17.9	12.1	8.4	11.8
Meets sleep recommendations	4,464	14.9	9.9	11.6	12.4	10.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	846	14.4	17.7	14.0	9.4	12.3
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	5,834	14.1	11.5	11.1	11.3	10.7
Does not meet water recommendations	4,193	13.4	13.1	11.3	11.9	10.9
Meets water recommendations	2,427	16.2	11.2	12.1	9.3	11.3
Risk behaviour indicators²						
Current smoker	286	8.7	25.2	11.1	10.7	11.7
Ex-smoker	1,693	7.8	14.3	13.6	12.7	11.6
Never smoked	2,353	8.0	13.2	13.4	11.5	13.4

Current vaper	128	7.9	31.3	16.8	6.2	12.8
Ex-vaper	313	8.9	22.6	18.1	6.4	17.9
Never vaped	3,871	7.9	12.9	12.6	12.7	12.0
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,406	8.6	14.4	13.4	10.9	13.5
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,922	7.1	15.0	13.1	13.3	11.2
Gambled	1,378	8.8	13.2	13.1	12.9	11.8
Never gambled	2,944	7.5	15.3	13.4	11.3	13.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

4.3. Water consumption

Water consumption recommendations have been outlined in the Nutrient Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand, published by the National Health and Medical Research Council¹². The table below provides a summary of these recommendations which differ according to age and sex. The following results are aligned to the recommendations for cups per day.

	Litres	Cups
3 years	1.0	4
4-8 years	1.2	5
9-13 years, male	1.6	6
9-13 years, female	1.4	5.5
14-18 years, male	1.9	7.5
14-18 years, female	1.6	6
19 years and above, male	2.6	10
19 years and above, female	2.1	8

Overall, respondents reported drinking an average of 6.3 cups of water per day and 32.6% met their age- and sex- specific recommendations (see Table 4.3.1.1). Adults reported drinking an average of 6.5 cups per day and 29.5% met the recommendation, which is more than in 2019, when the average was just 4.9 cups per day and 20.7% met the recommendation. A lower proportion of adults (29.5%) than children (44.9%) met their respective water consumption recommendation. For both males and females, water consumption was considerably lower amongst older residents aged over 70 years, with 93.7% and 75.8% respectively not meeting water recommendations. Younger respondents were comparatively more likely to meet recommendations with the proportion not meeting the recommendation being lowest for males (50.3%) and females (53.3%) aged 12-17 years. Across the LGAs, a lower proportion of residents of Mount Alexander Shire met the recommendations (24.5%) compared to residents of the City of Greater Bendigo (34.6%), Campaspe Shire (34.1%) and Central Goldfields Shire (33.7%).

Proportionate differences in adherence to the water consumption recommendations was seen among some of the demographic groups. Specifically, adherence was lower among respondents who are:

- One-person (23.5%) or 1-2 person (27.5%) households compared to 4-5 person households (36.4%)
- Born overseas (24.3%) compared to born in Australia (33.7%)
- Unsure what neurodivergent means (25.7%) compared to those who are neurodivergent (37.8%), maybe neurodivergent (35.6%) or not neurodivergent (33.6%)
- Unemployed/retired (18.6%) compared to employed (35.3%)

¹² National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, New Zealand Ministry of Health (2017). Nutrient Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council. <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/nutrient-reference-values-australia-and-new-zealand-including-recommended-dietary-intakes>

Respondents who require help with daily activities also reported consuming fewer cups of water on average per day, despite no difference in recommendation adherence.

Table 4.3.1.1 Water consumption by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily cups #
Total sample	7,582	67.4	32.6	6.3
Children	2,197	55.1	44.9	5.5
Adults	5,385	70.5	29.5	6.5
Males	2,387	75.8	24.2	6.6
Females	5,180	59.3	40.7	6.0
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	616	58.5	41.5	5.1
Males, 12 to 17	504	49.7	50.3	6.5
Males, 18 to 34	150	62.8	37.2	9.0
Males, 35 to 49	324	78.8	21.2	7.4
Males, 50 to 69	498	83.3	16.7	6.6
Males, 70+	295	93.7	6.3	5.1
Females, 3 to 11	598	61.5	38.5	4.8
Females, 12 to 17	464	46.7	53.3	6.2
Females, 18 to 34	689	51.9	48.1	6.6
Females, 35 to 49	1,338	55.6	44.4	6.4
Females, 50 to 69	1,527	64.4	35.6	5.8
Females, 70+	564	75.8	24.2	5.2
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,835	65.4	34.6	6.3
Macedon Ranges Shire	817	69.5	30.5	6.3
Shire of Campaspe	982	65.9	34.1	6.2
Mount Alexander Shire	814	75.5	24.5	5.9
Central Goldfields Shire	575	66.3	33.7	6.4
Loddon Shire	559	71.0	29.0	6.4
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	827	76.5	23.5	5.9
2 or 3 people	2,835	72.5	27.5	6.4
4 or 5 people	1,537	63.6	36.4	6.9
More than 5 people	181	66.4	33.6	6.6
Born overseas	685	75.7	24.3	6.2
Born in Australia	6,891	66.3	33.7	6.3
Speaks other main language	139	74.2	25.8	6.8
Speaks English as main language	7,416	67.2	32.8	6.3

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	208	70.2	29.8	5.5
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,365	67.2	32.8	6.3
LGBTQIA+	441	62.2	37.8	6.7
Non-LGBTQIA+	7,112	67.7	32.3	6.2
Neurodivergent	878	62.2	37.8	6.3
Not neurodivergent	5,137	66.4	33.6	6.3
Maybe	598	64.4	35.6	6.3
Not sure what neurodivergent means	722	74.3	25.7	6.3
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,625	71.1	28.9	6.4
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,741	68.5	31.5	6.7
Unemployed/retired ²	1,656	81.4	18.6	5.6
Employed	3,720	64.7	35.3	6.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,586	72.6	27.4	6.2
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,783	69.3	30.7	6.6
Requires help with daily activities	655	71.1	28.9	5.2
Does not require help	6,913	67.0	33.0	6.4
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	796	72.9	27.1	6.0
Marginal food security	674	67.0	33.0	6.5
High food security	3,909	70.4	29.6	6.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 4.3.1.2 provides a summary of water consumption according to selected health and behaviour characteristics of the 2025 ALC sample. Associations were seen between average cups of water consumed and self-reported health, perceived value to society, mental wellbeing, fruit consumption, aerobic physical activity, muscle strengthening activities, screen time, sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and vaping.

Water consumption recommendation adherence was also associated with self-reported health, life satisfaction and BMI. Those with fair or poor self-reported health (24.5% vs 34.5%), with lower to moderate life satisfaction (25.6% vs 31.3%) and are overweight or obese (39.5% vs 34.9%) were significantly less likely to meet the water consumption recommendations compared to their counterparts with more positive wellbeing indicators. A smaller proportion of those who did not meet the fruit (27.7% vs 38.2%) and vegetable (31.7% vs 41.8%) consumption recommendations, or muscle strengthening (28.8% vs 35.1%) recommendations, and consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (23.2% vs 34.1%) reported meeting the water consumption recommendations compared to those meeting the corresponding health behaviour recommendations. The only risk behaviour that was associated with water consumption was vaping. Specifically, a greater proportion of respondents who were ex vapers (40.1%) and current vapers (42.0%) met the water consumption recommendations compared to those who had never vaped (27.6%).

Table 4.3.1.2 Water consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Does not meet recommendation	Meets recommendation	Average daily cups
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	n	%	%	#
Total sample	7,582	67.4	32.6	6.3
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,243	75.5	24.5	5.8
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,581	65.5	34.5	6.4
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,510	74.4	25.6	6.1
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,358	68.7	31.3	6.6
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,063	72.6	27.4	6.0
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,396	70.1	29.9	6.6
Definitely feel valued by society	1,411	69.8	30.2	6.6
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,435	73.5	26.5	6.1
Good mental wellbeing	3,950	69.3	30.7	6.6
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,630	70.5	29.5	6.5
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,985	65.1	34.9	6.5
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,671	72.3	27.7	6.1
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,870	61.8	38.2	6.5
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,634	68.3	31.7	6.3
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	909	58.2	41.8	6.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,413	68.2	31.8	5.6
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,935	67.0	33.0	6.6
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,543	71.2	28.8	5.9
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,940	64.9	35.1	6.9
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,875	68.8	31.2	6.1
Meets screen time recommendations	3,366	65.5	34.5	6.6
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,144	66.5	33.5	6.3
Meets sleep recommendations	5,143	67.4	32.6	6.3
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	892	76.8	23.2	5.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,683	65.9	34.1	6.4
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	299	76.6	23.4	6.2
Ex-smoker	1,910	69.3	30.7	6.6
Never smoked	2,698	71.1	28.9	6.4
Current vaper	138	58.0	42.0	7.7
Ex-vaper	336	59.9	40.1	7.7

Never vaped	4,412	72.4	27.6	6.3
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,692	69.4	30.6	6.6
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,210	72.6	27.4	6.3
Gambled	1,512	71.4	28.6	6.6
Never gambled	3,382	70.4	29.6	6.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

4.4. Sugar-sweetened beverages

According to the 2023 VPHS, 19.0% of Victorian adults consume sugar-sweetened drinks (soft drink, cordials, sports drinks or caffeinated energy drinks) daily, which is higher than the 15.4% of 2025 ALC adult respondents from the Loddon Campaspe region who reported consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily. The proportion of adults (15.4%) consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily was higher than children (7.1%), and no difference was seen between males and females – contrary to the 2023 VPHS data indicating the males are more likely than females to consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily. Daily consumption was highest among males aged 35 to 49 (21.9%) and females aged 18 to 34 (23.1%), and lowest among both males (4.7%) and females (3.3%) aged 3 to 11 years.

Across the local government areas, the proportion of respondents consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily was higher amongst residents of Central Goldfields (20.5%), Campaspe (17.7%), Greater Bendigo (15.1%) and Loddon (14.3%) compared to Mount Alexander (6.4%) and Macedon Ranges residents (8.6%).

A higher proportion of respondents from the following demographic groups reported consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily and would benefit from public health intervention to reduce their intake:

- Living in 4-5 person households (18.5%) compared to 2-3 person households (13.4%)
- Speak English as their main language (13.8%) compared to another language (6.3%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (33.6%) compared to non-Indigenous (13.0%)
- Neurodivergent (18.9%) or are unsure what neurodivergent means (17.2%) compared to not neurodivergent (11.4%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (17.3%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (10.1%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (22.3%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (11.9%)
- Marginal (20.9%), low or very low food security (24.2%) compared to high food security (12.2%)

Table 4.4.1.1 Sugar-sweetened beverage consumption by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Daily %	Weekly %	Monthly or less often %	Never %
Total sample	7,771	13.7	36.6	32.0	17.6
Children	2,259	7.1	38.9	36.4	17.7

Adults	5,459	15.4	36.2	30.8	17.5
Males	2,431	14.0	40.7	29.4	16.0
Females	5,255	13.4	32.7	34.7	19.3
Sex and age					
Males, 3 to 11	622	4.7	33.5	36.7	25.1
Males, 12 to 17	520	10.3	57.1	26.7	5.9
Males, 18 to 34	150	18.4	50.3	24.1	7.3
Males, 35 to 49	326	20.9	42.4	28.2	8.4
Males, 50 to 69	500	14.5	39.7	30.4	15.5
Males, 70+	300	12.2	32.2	28.8	26.8
Females, 3 to 11	610	3.3	28.6	43.0	25.1
Females, 12 to 17	476	12.1	44.1	36.3	7.5
Females, 18 to 34	693	23.1	43.9	26.5	6.5
Females, 35 to 49	1,344	15.8	35.2	34.9	14.1
Females, 50 to 69	1,533	11.7	24.4	36.3	27.7
Females, 70+	571	5.2	22.0	35.3	37.5
LGA					
City of Greater Bendigo	3,915	15.1	38.3	31.2	15.4
Macedon Ranges Shire	842	8.6	35.6	33.4	22.4
Shire of Campaspe	1,003	17.7	36.2	31.1	15.1
Mount Alexander Shire	836	6.4	26.9	40.5	26.2
Central Goldfields Shire	591	20.5	41.5	23.7	14.3
Loddon Shire	584	14.3	38.1	32.0	15.5
Demographic indicators					
Household size²					
1 person	837	16.0	28.1	31.0	24.9
2 or 3 people	2,875	13.4	34.0	33.2	19.4
4 or 5 people	1,554	18.5	43.5	27.3	10.7
More than 5 people	187	21.7	46.4	21.5	10.3
Born overseas	705	10.3	31.2	34.6	23.9
Born in Australia	7,058	14.1	37.4	31.7	16.9
Speaks other main language	143	6.3	40.8	39.4	13.5
Speaks English as main language	7,598	13.8	36.6	31.9	17.7
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	221	33.6	35.2	18.4	12.8
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,528	13.0	36.8	32.5	17.8
LGBTQIA+	454	16.7	42.5	26.4	14.4
Non-LGBTQIA+	7,278	13.4	36.3	32.5	17.8
Neurodivergent	910	18.9	38.6	28.3	14.2
Not neurodivergent	5,220	11.4	37.1	32.4	19.1
Maybe	617	18.3	32.7	35.8	13.2

Not sure what neurodivergent means	759	17.2	38.5	31.7	12.5
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,668	17.3	37.7	28.2	16.8
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,770	10.1	32.0	38.4	19.5
Unemployed/retired ²	1,687	13.2	30.7	31.1	25.0
Employed	3,762	16.6	39.2	30.6	13.6
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,616	22.3	35.5	24.8	17.4
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,827	11.9	36.7	33.8	17.6
Requires help with daily activities	670	18.4	27.0	30.0	24.6
Does not require help	7,083	13.2	37.6	32.2	17.0
Food security (last 12 months)²					
Low or very low food security	817	24.2	38.7	23.8	13.3
Marginal food security	685	20.9	41.4	23.6	14.1
High food security	3,950	12.2	34.5	34.0	19.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Daily consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators, except for aerobic physical activity and alcohol consumption. Specifically, those with fair or poor self-reported health (23.7% vs 11.0%), with lower to moderate life satisfaction (21.4% vs 12.4%), poor mental wellbeing (22.5% vs 12.7%), do not feel valued by society (24% vs sometimes [14.7%] and definitely [8.9%]), and are overweight or obese (16.8% vs 8.5%) were significantly more likely to consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily compared to their counterparts with more positive wellbeing indicators.

A greater proportion of those who did not meet the fruit (18.8% vs 8.1%), vegetable (14.7% vs 4.7%) and water consumption (15.6% vs 9.8%) recommendations, as well as the muscle strengthening (17.0% vs 10.4%), screen time (16.9% vs 10.1%) and sleep (18.4% vs 11.4%) recommendations, reported daily consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages compared to those meeting the corresponding health behaviour recommendations.

Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages daily was associated with all assessed risk behaviours. Specifically, a greater proportion of respondents who currently vape (29.8%), currently smoke (28.4%) and gambled in the past 12 months (18.7%) consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily compared to their counterparts who had never vaped (14.1%), were ex-smokers (13.6%) or had never smoked (14.9%) and had not gambled (13.6%). Additionally, those who did not engage in risky alcohol consumption (22.6%) were more likely to report never drinking sugar-sweetened beverages compared to those who had engaged in risky alcohol consumption (14.0%).

Table 4.4.1.2 Sugar-sweetened beverage consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Daily %	Weekly %	Monthly or less often %	Never %
Total sample	7,771	13.7	36.6	32.0	17.6
Health and wellbeing indicators					
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,272	23.7	38.8	24.9	12.6

Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,705	11.0	35.9	34.1	18.9
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,541	21.4	34.9	28.9	14.8
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,395	12.4	36.4	32.4	18.8
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,087	23.8	34.6	26.7	14.9
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,424	14.7	36.9	31.3	16.9
Definitely feel valued by society	1,427	8.9	35.3	35.1	20.7
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,458	22.5	35.9	28.1	13.6
Good mental wellbeing	4,001	12.7	36.3	31.9	19.1
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,660	16.8	37.7	30.9	14.6
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	2,011	8.5	33.4	36.2	21.9
Health behaviour indicators					
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,736	18.8	38.1	28.7	14.4
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,932	8.1	34.8	35.9	21.1
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,697	14.7	37.8	31.6	15.9
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	917	4.7	26.2	36.9	32.2
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,452	15.6	36.8	31.3	16.3
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	5,005	12.9	36.7	32.4	17.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,588	17.0	37.6	30.3	15.1
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,982	10.4	38.0	33.8	17.8
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,942	16.9	38.1	29.1	15.8
Meets screen time recommendations	3,411	10.1	35.9	35.3	18.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,182	18.4	38.3	29.1	14.3
Meets sleep recommendations	5,218	11.4	36.1	33.7	18.8
Does not meet water recommendations	4,685	15.6	36.3	30.3	17.8
Meets water recommendations	2,890	9.8	37.8	35.3	17.2
Risk behaviour indicators²					
Current smoker	299	28.4	34.1	24.2	13.3
Ex-smoker	1,933	13.6	35.8	33.8	16.8
Never smoked	2,743	14.9	36.1	30.3	18.7
Current vaper	138	29.8	44.3	19.8	6.2
Ex-vaper	339	21.0	48.2	26.6	4.2
Never vaped	4,476	14.1	34.3	32.2	19.3
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,726	16.8	37.9	31.4	14.0
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,243	13.3	33.0	31.2	22.6
Gambled	1,531	18.7	40.8	29.4	11.1

Never gambled	3,431	13.6	33.1	32.3	21.0
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¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

4.5. Ease of access to healthy food locally

Respondents were asked about their perceived ease of accessing healthy food in their local area, with response options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Table 4.5.1 provides a detailed overview of responses according to selected demographic characteristics. Overall, 72.9% reported agreeing that it is easy to access healthy food in their local area, with no difference seen between males and females, or adults and children. When looking at the responses by age and sex, both males and females aged 70 years and above were the most likely to report agreeing that it is easy to access healthy food in the local area.

A greater proportion of respondents from Macedon Ranges Shire (79.4%) and Mount Alexander Shire (78.0%) agreed that it was easy to access healthy food in their local area compared to respondents from Greater Bendigo (72.1%), Campaspe (68.9%), Central Goldfields (62.7%) and Loddon (62.3%) Shires. A lower proportion of people from the following demographic groups agree that it is easy to access healthy food locally and may benefit from targeted interventions to increase awareness of how to access local healthy food:

- 4-5 person households (68.7%) compared to 2-3 person households (75.7%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (54.1%) compared to non-Indigenous (73.5%)
- LGBTQIA+ (58.6%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (73.9%)
- Neurodivergent (60.4%) compared to not neurodivergent (76.2%) or those who are unsure what neurodivergent means (70.6%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (70.1%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (81.9%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (54.2%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (82.9%)
- Require help with daily activities (57.3%) compared to no help required (74.3%)
- Low or very low food security (39.5%) compared to marginal (63.4%) or high (83.7%) food security

Table 4.5.1 Perceived ease of access to healthy food in local area by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Strongly agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree / Disagree
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	7,781	72.9	17.3	9.8
Children	2,198	71.7	18.2	10.1
Adults	5,530	73.2	17.1	9.7
Males	2,412	74.6	17.3	8.2
Females	5,282	71.7	17.3	11.0
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	602	72.4	19.5	8.1

Males, 12 to 17	508	73.4	15.8	10.8
Males, 18 to 34	153	64.7	26.8	8.5
Males, 35 to 49	331	70.0	21.1	9.0
Males, 50 to 69	505	77.6	13.4	9.0
Males, 70+	300	83.0	12.8	4.2
Females, 3 to 11	592	74.1	16.6	9.3
Females, 12 to 17	466	66.8	21.9	11.2
Females, 18 to 34	711	63.2	24.6	12.2
Females, 35 to 49	1,361	70.2	18.6	11.1
Females, 50 to 69	1,550	75.8	12.2	11.9
Females, 70+	574	83.2	9.0	7.9
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,919	72.1	17.8	10.1
Macedon Ranges Shire	840	79.4	13.6	7.0
Shire of Campaspe	998	68.9	21.5	9.5
Mount Alexander Shire	828	78.0	12.0	10.0
Central Goldfields Shire	589	62.7	24.1	13.2
Loddon Shire	607	62.3	17.5	20.2
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	850	73.2	19.1	7.7
2 or 3 people	2,907	75.7	14.9	9.4
4 or 5 people	1,578	68.7	20.4	10.8
More than 5 people	189	69.4	18.3	12.3
Born overseas	707	74.4	14.1	11.5
Born in Australia	7,065	72.7	17.6	9.6
Speaks other main language	145	72.1	18.2	9.7
Speaks English as main language	7,606	72.9	17.3	9.8
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	222	54.1	30.8	15.1
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	7,538	73.5	16.9	9.6
LGBTQIA+	471	58.6	24.4	17.1
Non-LGBTQIA+	7,272	73.9	16.8	9.2
Neurodivergent	931	60.4	22.1	17.4
Not neurodivergent	5,204	76.2	15.4	8.4
Maybe	621	69.0	19.4	11.6
Not sure what neurodivergent means	758	70.6	20.6	8.8
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,715	70.1	19.4	10.4
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,792	81.9	10.5	7.6
Unemployed/retired ²	1,695	74.2	15.7	10.2
Employed	3,824	72.6	17.9	9.5

Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,646	54.2	29.4	16.4
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,868	82.9	10.8	6.2
Requires help with daily activities	668	57.3	23.3	19.4
Does not require help	7,093	74.3	16.7	8.9
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	832	39.5	36.6	23.9
Marginal food security	694	63.4	27.0	9.6
High food security	3,995	83.7	10.3	6.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 4.5.2 presents the findings by selected health and behaviour characteristics. Ease of access to healthy food locally was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, a lower proportion of those with fair or poor health (58.3% vs 77.3%), with low to moderate life satisfaction (59.7% vs 80.7%), who do not feel valued by society (57.3% vs sometimes [74.8%] and definitely [86.7%]), have poor mental wellbeing (59.9% vs 78.2%), and who are overweight or obese (73.6% vs 79.2%) agree that it is easy to access healthy food in their local area compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

Ease of access to healthy food locally was associated with all health behaviours, except for water consumption. Agreeance that it is easy to access healthy food in the local area was lower among respondents who did not meet the following recommendations, compared to their counterparts who met them:

- Fruit consumption (69.1% vs 77.8%)
- Vegetable consumption (71.7% vs 86.9%)
- Aerobic physical activity (67.7% vs 75.3%)
- Muscle strengthening activity (70.2% vs 76.4%)
- Screen time (70.8% vs 75.8%)
- Sleep duration (66.1% vs 76.7%)

Further, a lower proportion of those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (67.0%) perceived it to be easy to access healthy food in their local area compared to those who did not (74.1%). Among risk behaviours, fewer current smokers (62.6%) agreed that it is easy to access healthy food locally compared to ex-smokers (74.9%) and those who have never smoked (74.0%). Similarly, a lower proportion of those who are current vapers (57.6%) perceived it to be easy to access healthy food locally compared to those who have never vaped (74.7%). No differences were seen according to alcohol consumption or gambling in the past 12 months.

Table 4.5.2 Perceived ease of access to healthy food in local area by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Strongly agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree / Disagree
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	7,781	72.9	17.3	9.8
Health and wellbeing indicators				

Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,272	58.3	25.9	15.9
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,716	77.3	14.8	7.8
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,542	59.7	24.9	15.4
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,399	80.7	13.1	6.3
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,090	57.3	25.2	17.5
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,424	74.8	17.2	8.0
Definitely feel valued by society	1,428	86.7	9.0	4.3
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,461	59.9	23.5	16.6
Good mental wellbeing	4,069	78.2	14.7	7.0
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,664	73.6	17.0	9.4
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	2,010	79.2	12.6	8.2
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,758	69.1	19.4	11.5
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,914	77.8	14.5	7.7
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,702	71.7	18.2	10.1
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	911	86.9	7.9	5.1
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,465	67.7	20.2	12.1
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	5,053	75.3	16.0	8.7
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,612	70.2	18.8	11.0
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	3,027	76.4	15.4	8.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,937	70.8	18.0	11.2
Meets screen time recommendations	3,411	75.8	16.5	7.7
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,179	66.1	22.9	11.1
Meets sleep recommendations	5,217	76.7	14.5	8.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	901	67.0	20.9	12.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,766	74.1	16.6	9.3
Does not meet water recommendations	4,630	72.6	17.6	9.8
Meets water recommendations	2,857	74.9	16.1	9.0
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	300	62.6	22.7	14.7
Ex-smoker	1,932	74.9	16.7	8.3
Never smoked	2,746	74.0	16.5	9.5
Current vaper	139	57.6	30.1	12.3
Ex-vaper	340	68.9	21.9	9.2
Never vaped	4,478	74.7	16.1	9.3

Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,726	73.4	17.5	9.1
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,247	74.0	16.3	9.8
Gambled	1,533	74.5	17.5	8.1
Never gambled	3,433	73.1	16.8	10.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

5. Use of public facilities and open spaces

This section presents usage data related to public spaces including open spaces, footpaths, and off-road walking and cycling tracks, and facilities. To ensure residents were using comparable definitions of the spaces, the following descriptions were provided to all respondents:

***Public open spaces** include all land which is freely accessible that people can visit for recreation, relaxation and socialising, including organised sporting activities and informal play (e.g. your local park, oval or playground). Public open spaces also include 'green spaces', which include areas of natural or cultural heritage value, habitat corridors, some easements, and open water / wetlands (e.g. lakes, state forests, national parks).*

***Off-road walking and cycling tracks** are signed paths / tracks that are not accessible to cars and provide connections between townships, major suburban areas and surrounding open space networks. Footpaths are paved sidewalks, generally found in urban areas. This question is not referring to informal tracks, such as animal tracks or unpaved road reserves.*

The frequency of use of public spaces was measured using a 7-point frequency scale: 'Daily', '4 to 6 times a week', '1 to 3 times a week', '2 to 3 times a month', 'Once a month', 'Once or twice in the last 3 months' and 'Less often'. Respondents answering these questions were categorised into three distinct groups for the purpose of reporting: once per week or more, 1 to 3 times a month, less than once a month. To highlight the biggest potential for gains in use of public spaces, we focus on residents who are non-users.

This section also presents data related to a broader list of public facilities and open spaces that residents have used in the last 12 months, their reasons for use of these public facilities and open spaces, and suggested improvements that would encourage greater use of public facilities and open spaces in the region.

Results in this section are provided for residents aged 3 years and over unless otherwise specified. At the time of reporting, there were no known recent benchmarks available for public open space use amongst Victorian residents. External benchmark data is therefore not reported for results presented in this section. Comparisons to the 2019 ALC, conducted with residents of the Loddon Campaspe, are made where possible.

5.1. Frequency of public open space use

Overall, 50.1% of respondents reported using public open spaces at least once per week. This has decreased compared to the results obtained in the 2019 ALC, in which 58.7% of respondents reported being weekly users of public open space. Consistent with 2019, children (63.5%) were more likely to be weekly users of public open spaces compared to adults (46.6%), and this was the same for both males and females. Additionally, males (53.2%) were more likely than females (47.0%) to use public open spaces once a week or more. No differences were seen between LGAs.

People from the following demographic groups were less likely to use public open spaces at least once per week, reinforcing the need to consider the barriers to the use of public open space amongst the more vulnerable members of the community:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (32.7%) compared to non-Indigenous (50.6%)
- LGBTQIA+ (40.8%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (50.8%)
- Neurodivergent (44.4%) and unsure what neurodivergent means (45.3%) compared to maybe neurodivergent (56.3%)

- Less than a Bachelor level education (43.7%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (55.4%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (40.4%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (49.8%)
- Requires help with daily activities (42.6%) compared to does not require help (50.7%)
- Low or very low food security (38.5%) compared to high food security (49.1%)

Table 5.1.1 Frequency of public open space use by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Once a week or more often	< once a week, > once in the last 3 months	Less often / never
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	7,207	50.1	26.2	23.7
Children	2,058	63.5	24.3	12.2
Adults	5,089	46.6	26.8	26.6
Males	2,243	53.2	26.3	20.5
Females	4,874	47.0	26.1	27.0
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	574	71.9	21.1	7.0
Males, 12 to 17	465	56.4	24.3	19.3
Males, 18 to 34	142	52.3	37.3	10.4
Males, 35 to 49	307	52.7	29.5	17.9
Males, 50 to 69	474	49.7	24.3	26.1
Males, 70+	269	45.6	23.6	30.8
Females, 3 to 11	566	68.2	26.1	5.7
Females, 12 to 17	424	50.7	25.6	23.7
Females, 18 to 34	649	42.9	32.9	24.2
Females, 35 to 49	1,263	46.7	25.3	28.0
Females, 50 to 69	1,437	44.1	23.0	32.8
Females, 70+	509	38.1	21.3	40.5
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,633	50.4	27.4	22.3
Macedon Ranges Shire	771	51.3	23.4	25.3
Shire of Campaspe	946	46.1	26.6	27.3
Mount Alexander Shire	778	54.3	25.9	19.8
Central Goldfields Shire	540	50.0	25.6	24.3
Loddon Shire	539	45.2	26.6	28.2
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	765	46.0	21.8	32.3
2 or 3 people	2,697	45.4	25.8	28.8

4 or 5 people	1,450	48.8	31.2	20.0
More than 5 people	172	51.7	26.7	21.7
Born overseas	639	50.6	23.8	25.6
Born in Australia	6,549	49.9	26.5	23.6
Speaks other main language	133	52.8	28.9	18.3
Speaks English as main language	7,036	49.9	26.2	23.9
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	210	32.7	32.2	35.1
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	6,971	50.6	26.0	23.3
LGBTQIA+	429	40.8	29.5	29.7
Non-LGBTQIA+	6,734	50.8	26.0	23.2
Neurodivergent	839	44.4	30.1	25.5
Not neurodivergent	4,870	51.1	26.1	22.8
Maybe	576	56.3	28.4	15.3
Not sure what neurodivergent means	703	45.3	24.2	30.5
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,480	43.7	27.3	29.1
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,595	55.4	25.5	19.1
Unemployed/retired ²	1,541	45.7	22.3	32.0
Employed	3,543	47.1	29.0	23.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,506	40.4	25.8	33.7
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,574	49.8	27.3	22.9
Requires help with daily activities	618	42.6	23.6	33.8
Does not require help	6,565	50.7	26.5	22.8
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	769	38.5	28.4	33.2
Marginal food security	639	45.2	26.9	27.9
High food security	3,677	49.1	26.4	24.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Public open space use was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators (see Table 5.1.2). A lower proportion of people with the following health and wellbeing indicators reported being weekly users of public open spaces:

- Fair or poor health (30.3%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (55.1%)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (38.3%) compared to high or very high life satisfaction (50.3%)
- Does not feel valued by society (36.3%) compared to sometimes (48.1%) or definitely (52.6%) feels valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (35.7%) compared to good mental wellbeing (51.2%)
- Overweight or obese (43.1%) compared to normal weight or underweight (58.4%)

Similarly, public open space use was associated with all health behaviour indicators. Specifically, a lower proportion of those who failed to meet the following recommendations were weekly users of public open spaces compared to their counterparts who met the respective recommendations:

- Fruit intake (42.5% vs 58.3%)
- Vegetable intake (49.3% vs 57.4%)
- Aerobic physical activity (37.2% vs 55.1%)
- Muscle strengthening exercise (43.8% vs 54.7%)
- Screen time (46.8% vs 53.3%)
- Sleep duration (46.2% vs 51.6%)

Additionally, those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (36.9%) were less likely to use public open spaces at least once per week compared to those who did not (52.0%).

Limited differences were observed in public open space use for risk taking behaviours, and the findings contradict those of other health behaviours. Infrequent or no use of public open spaces (i.e., less than once a month) was higher among those who have never vaped (27.4%) and did not engage in risky alcohol consumption in the past 12 months (29.5%) compared to those who were ex-vapers (18.3%) and had engaged in risky alcohol consumption (24.6%).

Given the health benefits associated with use of open space, strategies to encourage use of open spaces should consider people who fail to meet established health behaviour recommendations and have poor health and wellbeing. Further research is needed to understand reasons why these groups of people are not using public open spaces frequently.

Table 5.1.2 Frequency of public open space use by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Once a week or more often	< once a week, > once in the last 3 months	Less often / never
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	7,207	50.1	26.2	23.7
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,250	30.3	28.4	41.3
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,651	55.1	25.8	19.1
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,515	38.3	28.8	32.8
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,353	50.3	26.1	23.7
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,069	36.3	25.8	38.0
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,394	48.1	28.2	23.8
Definitely feel valued by society	1,404	52.6	26.1	21.4
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,443	35.7	27.8	36.6
Good mental wellbeing	3,646	51.2	26.4	22.4
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,630	43.1	28.7	28.2
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,981	58.4	23.9	17.7
Health behaviour indicators				

Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,481	42.5	28.5	29.0
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,618	58.3	23.9	17.8
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,177	49.3	26.6	24.1
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	857	57.4	23.3	19.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,297	37.2	27.9	34.9
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,673	55.1	25.6	19.2
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,374	43.8	28.1	28.0
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,762	54.7	25.4	19.9
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,677	46.8	26.6	26.6
Meets screen time recommendations	3,201	53.3	26.4	20.3
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,044	46.2	25.8	28.1
Meets sleep recommendations	4,882	51.6	26.5	21.9
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	838	36.9	29.9	33.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,331	52.0	25.7	22.3
Does not meet water recommendations	4,337	47.7	26.5	25.8
Meets water recommendations	2,671	54.6	26.0	19.4
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	296	45.7	21.8	32.5
Ex-smoker	1,904	47.7	25.8	26.4
Never smoked	2,701	45.6	28.4	26.0
Current vaper	138	55.6	16.7	27.7
Ex-vaper	337	54.6	27.1	18.3
Never vaped	4,407	45.3	27.3	27.4
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,700	48.5	26.9	24.6
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,197	43.6	26.9	29.5
Gambled	1,508	43.9	29.5	26.6
Never gambled	3,389	47.9	25.4	26.7

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

5.2. Frequency of footpath use

Amongst residents who complete the 2025 ALC, 71.1% used footpaths in the area at least once per week (see Table 5.2.1), and 15.3% reported using footpaths less than once a month. Weekly footpath use was higher among children (76.3%) than adults (69.7%). No differences were seen between males and females. For both males and females, the groups with the lowest proportion who used footpaths at least weekly were those aged

50 to 69 and 70 or above. A lower proportion of residents of Loddon Shire (59.0%) used footpaths weekly than residents of any of the other participating Councils (70.1% to 74.6% of respondents). This suggests improving the access to or usability of footpaths in the area has the potential to increase use amongst residents.

Weekly usage was lower amongst people from the following demographic groups:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (56.7%) compared to non-Indigenous (71.5%)
- Unsure what neurodivergent means (62.9%) compared to not (72.1%) or maybe (76.2%) neurodivergent
- Less than a Bachelor level education (66.4%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (79.5%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (63.6%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (72.8%)
- Requires help with daily activities (60.4%) compared to no help required (72.0%)
- Low or very low food security (58.1%) compared to high (72.8%) or marginal (69.6%) food security

Table 5.2.1 Frequency of footpath use by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Once a week or more often %	< once a week, > once in the last 3 months %	Less often / never %
Total sample	7,224	71.1	13.6	15.3
Children	2,053	76.3	12.2	11.6
Adults	5,110	69.7	14.1	16.3
Males	2,245	71.2	14.3	14.6
Females	4,889	70.8	13.1	16.1
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	574	77.4	11.8	10.8
Males, 12 to 17	461	77.6	10.6	11.8
Males, 18 to 34	144	71.5	21.2	7.4
Males, 35 to 49	307	72.9	12.7	14.5
Males, 50 to 69	475	69.0	13.8	17.2
Males, 70+	272	65.5	15.3	19.2
Females, 3 to 11	562	75.0	14.8	10.1
Females, 12 to 17	427	74.7	10.4	14.8
Females, 18 to 34	651	71.4	14.9	13.7
Females, 35 to 49	1,267	72.0	16.2	11.7
Females, 50 to 69	1,430	68.4	10.9	20.8
Females, 70+	525	65.4	8.8	25.8
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,637	70.8	14.0	15.1
Macedon Ranges Shire	775	72.2	13.2	14.5
Shire of Campaspe	950	70.1	14.5	15.5

Mount Alexander Shire	783	74.6	10.1	15.3
Central Goldfields Shire	538	71.9	14.0	14.2
Loddon Shire	541	59.0	13.8	27.2
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	774	71.7	11.9	16.4
2 or 3 people	2,699	68.1	14.1	17.7
4 or 5 people	1,457	72.0	14.8	13.2
More than 5 people	174	68.3	16.0	15.8
Born overseas	642	72.8	10.9	16.2
Born in Australia	6,561	70.9	13.8	15.2
Speaks other main language	132	70.6	18.8	10.6
Speaks English as main language	7,051	71.0	13.5	15.5
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	209	56.7	17.4	26.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	6,987	71.5	13.5	15.0
LGBTQIA+	432	75.8	9.9	14.3
Non-LGBTQIA+	6,747	70.7	13.9	15.4
Neurodivergent	840	71.4	14.7	14.0
Not neurodivergent	4,871	72.1	13.3	14.7
Maybe	579	76.2	13.2	10.7
Not sure what neurodivergent means	700	62.9	16.1	21.0
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,494	66.4	15.3	18.3
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,598	79.5	10.6	10.0
Unemployed/retired ²	1,559	66.5	12.7	20.8
Employed	3,543	71.3	14.8	13.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,510	63.6	15.5	20.8
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,586	72.8	13.3	13.9
Requires help with daily activities	619	60.4	14.0	25.6
Does not require help	6,577	72.0	13.6	14.4
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	769	58.1	18.6	23.3
Marginal food security	640	69.6	15.0	15.4
High food security	3,695	72.8	12.7	14.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

The profile of non-users of footpaths was similar to that observed for open space use. That is, people reporting lower levels of health and wellbeing were less likely to be weekly users of footpaths. The proportion of weekly use was particularly low for those reporting:

- Fair or poor health (54.6%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (75.5%)

- Low to moderate life satisfaction (62.9%) compared to high or very high life satisfaction (73.1%)
- Does not feel valued by society (59.8%) compared to sometimes (71.9%) or definitely (74.9%) feel valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (64.1%) compared to good mental wellbeing (72.0%)
- Overweight or obese (66.2%) compared to normal weight or underweight (78.7%)

Differences were seen according to all health behaviour indicators. Specifically, a lower proportion of those failing to meet the following health behaviour recommendations used footpaths at least once a week:

- Fruit intake (66.2% vs 76.7%)
- Vegetable intake (70.3% vs 79.2%)
- Aerobic physical activity (60.5% vs 75.5%)
- Muscle strengthening exercise (66.4% vs 75.3%)
- Screen time (68.3% vs 73.8%)
- Sleep duration (66.5% vs 73.4%)
- Water consumption (68.6% vs 75.9%)

Additionally, those who reported drinking sugar-sweetened beverages daily (62.4%) were less likely to use footpaths weekly compared to those who do not (72.5%). No risk behaviours were associated with weekly footpath use. However, a greater proportion of those who had not consumed risky amounts of alcohol in the past 12 months used footpaths less than once a month (18.8%) compared to those who had (14.6%).

Table 5.2.2 Frequency of footpath use by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Once a week or more often	< once a week, > once in the last 3 months	Less often / never
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	7,224	71.1	13.6	15.3
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,254	54.6	18.8	26.7
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,670	75.5	12.1	12.4
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,521	62.9	15.1	21.9
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,363	73.1	13.4	13.6
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,074	59.8	15.3	24.9
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,401	71.9	13.7	14.3
Definitely feel valued by society	1,409	74.9	13.1	12.0
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,443	64.1	13.1	22.8
Good mental wellbeing	3,667	72.0	14.5	13.5
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,634	66.2	16.8	17.0
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,987	78.7	9.3	12.0

Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,490	66.2	15.8	18.0
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,622	76.7	11.1	12.2
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,187	70.3	14.0	15.7
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	858	79.2	10.4	10.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,299	60.5	16.2	23.3
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,684	75.5	12.6	11.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,377	66.4	14.9	18.7
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,771	75.3	12.9	11.8
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,687	68.3	13.7	18.1
Meets screen time recommendations	3,205	73.8	14.1	12.1
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,051	66.5	15.5	18.0
Meets sleep recommendations	4,890	73.4	12.6	13.9
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	837	62.4	16.6	21.0
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,349	72.5	13.1	14.4
Does not meet water recommendations	4,350	68.6	14.3	17.0
Meets water recommendations	2,675	75.9	12.6	11.5
Risk behaviour indicators ²				
Current smoker	294	65.2	15.9	18.9
Ex-smoker	1,907	69.4	14.9	15.8
Never smoked	2,718	70.4	13.1	16.5
Current vaper	138	69.1	18.3	12.6
Ex-vaper	338	72.1	15.9	12.0
Never vaped	4,423	69.4	13.6	17.0
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,701	69.8	15.6	14.6
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,213	69.5	11.7	18.8
Gambled	1,516	69.0	15.7	15.4
Never gambled	3,396	70.0	13.1	17.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

5.3. Frequency of off-road walking and cycling track use

Amongst residents who completed the 2025 ALC, 34.1% used off-road walking and cycling tracks in the area at least once per week (see Table 5.3.1). Weekly use was lower among females (29.4%) compared to males (39.0%). When looking at age and sex, females aged 12-17 (25.5%) and 18-34 (25.5%) years were less likely to

use off-road tracks weekly compared to females aged 50-69 years (32.7%). Loddon Shire residents (26.2%) were the least likely to use off-road walking and cycling tracks, and Mount Alexander Shire residents (41.9%) were the most likely to be weekly users.

Weekly usage was also lower amongst people from the following demographic groups, suggesting that they may benefit from targeted promotion efforts:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (17.7%) compared to non-Indigenous (34.6%)
- Neurodivergent (28.4%) and unsure what neurodivergent means (28.3%) compared to not neurodivergent (35.7%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (31.9%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (41.0%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (26.4%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (38.4%)
- Requires help with daily activities (23.2%) compared to no help required (35.0%)
- Low or very low food security (21.7%) compared to high (38.0%) or marginal (31.8%) food security

Table 5.3.1 Frequency of off-road walking and cycling track use by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Once a week or more often	< once a week, > once in the last 3 months	Less often / never
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	7,171	34.1	22.8	43.1
Children	2,043	32.4	27.1	40.6
Adults	5,067	34.3	21.9	43.8
Males	2,229	39.0	23.7	37.3
Females	4,852	29.4	21.9	48.7
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	572	37.6	28.2	34.1
Males, 12 to 17	460	34.0	28.9	37.1
Males, 18 to 34	143	40.4	26.7	32.8
Males, 35 to 49	304	39.8	29.8	30.5
Males, 50 to 69	472	38.1	21.0	40.9
Males, 70+	266	40.6	15.6	43.8
Females, 3 to 11	558	30.1	28.5	41.4
Females, 12 to 17	424	25.5	21.1	53.5
Females, 18 to 34	650	25.5	23.3	51.2
Females, 35 to 49	1,262	30.2	25.5	44.3
Females, 50 to 69	1,425	32.7	19.5	47.9
Females, 70+	506	28.8	11.8	59.4
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,625	35.9	22.0	42.1

Macedon Ranges Shire	774	31.5	26.2	42.4
Shire of Campaspe	938	28.9	20.5	50.6
Mount Alexander Shire	774	41.9	24.4	33.7
Central Goldfields Shire	529	34.8	23.6	41.6
Loddon Shire	531	26.2	17.6	56.3
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	760	34.0	17.3	48.7
2 or 3 people	2,678	36.2	20.0	43.8
4 or 5 people	1,451	31.1	28.3	40.6
More than 5 people	173	30.1	21.4	48.5
Born overseas	638	35.2	21.5	43.3
Born in Australia	6,515	34.0	23.0	43.0
Speaks other main language	130	33.0	26.1	40.8
Speaks English as main language	7,005	34.0	22.7	43.2
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	209	17.7	20.0	62.3
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	6,937	34.6	22.9	42.5
LGBTQIA+	430	34.6	19.9	45.4
Non-LGBTQIA+	6,701	34.1	23.0	42.9
Neurodivergent	837	28.4	24.6	47.0
Not neurodivergent	4,857	35.7	23.0	41.2
Maybe	576	37.4	25.8	36.8
Not sure what neurodivergent means	694	28.3	19.9	51.8
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,456	31.9	20.8	47.3
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,598	41.0	25.2	33.8
Unemployed/retired ²	1,533	35.8	15.5	48.7
Employed	3,530	33.5	25.2	41.3
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,494	26.4	19.5	54.2
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,565	38.4	23.2	38.4
Requires help with daily activities	611	23.2	15.2	61.6
Does not require help	6,538	35.0	23.5	41.5
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	764	21.7	20.2	58.1
Marginal food security	635	31.8	23.4	44.8
High food security	3,665	38.0	22.2	39.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Use of off-road walking and cycling track was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Weekly use was less frequent among those who reported fair or poor health (18.0% vs 38.4%), low to moderate life

satisfaction (26.1% vs 38.4%), do not feel valued by society (26.8% vs sometimes [33.8%] and definitely [42.2%]), poor mental wellbeing (22.0% vs 39.4%) and overweight or obesity (31.0% vs 41.5%) compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing.

Use of off-road walking and cycling track was associated with all health behaviours, except for water intake. Those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (22.0%) were less likely to report weekly track use compared to those who did not (35.9%). Additionally, respondents who fail to meet the following health behaviour recommendations are less likely to report weekly use of off-road walking and cycling tracks compared to those who do meet them:

- Fruit intake (27.7% vs 40.8%)
- Vegetable intake (33.1% vs 43.0%)
- Aerobic physical activity (18.1% vs 40.8%)
- Muscle strengthening exercise (26.3% vs 41.4%)
- Screen time (31.4% vs 36.7%)
- Sleep duration (29.1% vs 36.2%)

There were no associations between frequency of off-road track use and engagement in risk behaviours.

Table 5.3.2 Frequency of off-road walking and cycling track use by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Once a week or more often	< once a week, > once in the last 3 months	Less often / never
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	7,171	34.1	22.8	43.1
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,240	18.0	18.8	63.1
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,628	38.4	23.8	37.7
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,505	26.1	19.4	54.6
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,339	38.4	23.0	38.6
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,061	26.8	17.8	55.4
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,381	33.8	23.5	42.7
Definitely feel valued by society	1,400	42.2	22.3	35.4
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,435	22.0	19.5	58.5
Good mental wellbeing	3,632	39.4	22.9	37.7
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,612	31.0	23.2	45.9
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,976	41.5	25.0	33.5
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,470	27.7	23.6	48.7
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,592	40.8	22.4	36.8
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,144	33.1	23.3	43.6

Meets vegetable intake recommendations	853	43.0	20.4	36.6
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,287	18.1	21.6	60.3
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,655	40.8	23.4	35.7
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,364	26.3	22.9	50.8
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,750	41.4	23.8	34.8
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,659	31.4	21.9	46.7
Meets screen time recommendations	3,188	36.7	24.1	39.2
Does not meet sleep recommendations	2,032	29.1	24.1	46.7
Meets sleep recommendations	4,862	36.2	22.5	41.3
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	834	22.0	19.2	58.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,301	35.9	23.5	40.6
Does not meet water recommendations	4,317	33.4	22.6	44.0
Meets water recommendations	2,657	35.0	23.7	41.3
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	295	28.0	19.8	52.2
Ex-smoker	1,895	36.7	19.4	43.9
Never smoked	2,687	33.7	23.7	42.6
Current vaper	138	30.0	19.6	50.5
Ex-vaper	337	38.1	21.2	40.8
Never vaped	4,383	34.2	21.9	43.9
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,694	34.9	23.0	42.1
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,178	33.7	20.1	46.2
Gambled	1,497	32.5	23.4	44.1
Never gambled	3,374	35.5	20.8	43.7

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

5.4. Use of other public facilities or open spaces

All respondents were asked to indicate the other types of public facilities or open spaces they had used in the last 12 months from a list provided. As the prior question asked about frequency of use of public open spaces more broadly, footpaths and off-road walking or cycling tracks, these were excluded from the list of other facilities or open spaces provided. Overall, 7.4% of respondents indicated that they had not used any other types of public facilities or open spaces in the last 12 months. These respondents were subsequently excluded from the following analysis looking at types of public facilities or open spaces used and reasons for use of public facilities and open spaces.

5.4.1. Types of public facilities or open spaces used

Of the other types of public facilities and open spaces listed, parks were the most common with 71.9% of respondents having used them. The next most common were sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms (48.7%), swimming pools or splash parks (43.8%), playgrounds (37.6%) and indoor sports, leisure and fitness centres (30.5%). This list remains similar to that reported in 2019, except that community gardens are less popular now (ranked 7th) compared to 2019 (ranked 4th).

Table 5.4.1.1 Types of public facilities or open spaces used by user types

	All respondents
	%
Unweighted base (n)¹	6,738
Parks	71.9
Sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms	48.7
Swimming pools / splash parks	43.8
Playgrounds	37.6
Indoor sports / leisure / fitness centres	30.5
Halls / community centres	26.5
Community gardens	26.5
Hard courts (e.g., netball / tennis)	14.8
Skateparks / BMX	12.1
Other	7.9
After hours usage of education facilities (e.g., school, TAFE, university)	4.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

For the top nine, analysis was conducted regarding the demographic characteristics of users and their health and wellbeing, health behaviour and risk behaviour indicators. 'Other' and 'after hours usage of education facilities' were not explored further due to the small base sample size.

There were differences by age for all locations except for parks. Children were more likely to use all locations commonly utilised for physical activity, whereas adults were more likely to use halls/community centres and community gardens. There were also clear differences by sex, with males more likely to use sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms and skateparks/BMX tracks, whereas females were more likely to use swimming pools/splash parks and playgrounds. For all top facilities apart from halls/community centres, usage was highest among both males and females aged 3 to 11 and lowest among males and females aged 70 years and above. Facility usage differed between LGAs demonstrating a need for tailored, localised action and engagement when it comes to facility additions, removals, or upgrades (refer to Table 5.4.1.2 for details).

Usage of all top facilities except for halls/community centres was consistently higher among those with a Bachelor degree or higher. Similarly, usage of all facilities except for halls/community centres and community gardens was higher among those who are employed.

Other notable differences include:

- Those from single person households are less likely to use most facilities, except for parks, halls/community centres and community gardens
- Those born overseas are less likely to use sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms, and playgrounds
- LGBTQIA+ people are less likely to use sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms, playgrounds and skateparks/BMX tracks, and more likely to use parks and halls/community centres
- Those who are neurodivergent or maybe neurodivergent are more likely to use parks, swimming pools/splash parks, playgrounds, indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres, community gardens and skateparks/BMX tracks. Conversely, those who are not neurodivergent are more likely to use hard courts (e.g., tennis/netball courts).
- Those who require help with daily activities are more likely to use swimming pools/splash parks, playgrounds and skateparks/BMX tracks, and less likely to use sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms
- Those with low or very low food security are less likely to use parks and indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres and more likely to use playgrounds

When looking at health and wellbeing indicators, differences were seen in usage of four of the top facilities, except for parks and community gardens. Specifically:

- Those with fair or poor self-rated health were less likely to use sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms, playgrounds, indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres, hard courts and skateparks/BMX tracks
- Those with low to moderate life satisfaction were less likely to use indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres and hard courts
- Those who do not feel valued by society are less likely to use sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms, indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres, halls/community centres and hard courts
- Those with poor mental wellbeing were more likely to use swimming pools/splash parks and less likely to use indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres
- Those who are overweight or obese were less likely to use sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms, swimming pools/splash parks, playgrounds, hard courts and skateparks/BMX tracks

Use of all top facilities, except for halls/community centres and community gardens, was higher among those who meet the fruit intake recommendations compared to those who do not. Those who meet the water consumption recommendations were more likely to use each of the top facilities, except for parks, halls/community centres and community gardens, compared to those who do not. Conversely, those who do not meet the water consumption recommendations were more likely to use halls/community centres. Those who meet the sleep recommendations and drink sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily are more likely to use swimming pools/splash parks, indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres and hard courts. Additionally, those who drink sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily are more likely to use skateparks/BMX tracks. Those who meet the screen time recommendations are more likely to use parks, sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms, and hard courts compared to those who do not. Those who meet the aerobic physical activity recommendations are more likely to use sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms, indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres and hard courts, and less likely to use playgrounds compared to those who do not meet them. Those who meet the muscle strengthening recommendations are more likely to use indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres and community gardens, and less likely to use playgrounds and skateparks/BMX tracks compared to those who do not meet them.

When looking at risk behaviours, current vapers are more likely to use swimming pools/splash parks and community gardens, and those who are ex-vapers are more likely to use sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms

and hard courts, compared to those who have never vaped. A greater proportion of those who engaged in risky alcohol consumption used sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms, indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres, hard courts and skateparks/BMX tracks, and less likely to use halls/community centres, than those who did not engage in risky alcohol consumption over the past 12 months. Those who engaged in gambling were more likely to use sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms, and less likely to use halls/community centres than those who did not engage in gambling over the past 12 months.

Future research could focus on understanding the specific drivers for, and barriers to, using specific facilities with the aim of increasing use across the broader population.

Table 5.4.1.2 Public facilities and open spaces by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Parks	Sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms	Swimming pools / splash parks	Playgrounds	Indoor sports / leisure / fitness centres	Community gardens	Halls / community centres	Hard courts (e.g., netball / tennis)	Skateparks / BMX
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	6,738	71.9	48.7	43.8	37.6	30.5	26.5	26.5	14.8	12.1
Children	1,979	70.0	65.6	68.8	65.0	43.0	21.3	21.3	27.5	27.8
Adults	4,705	72.5	44.1	37.5	30.3	27.0	27.9	27.8	11.4	8.0
Males	2,115	73.3	53.0	40.6	32.7	30.3	25.7	25.8	14.6	13.9
Females	4,538	70.8	44.6	47.0	42.4	30.7	27.5	27.2	15.0	10.4
Sex and age										
Males, 3 to 11	570	76.8	72.2	81.6	86.5	44.0	23.9	22.6	24.8	45.6
Males, 12 to 17	437	52.5	72.5	51.5	26.2	50.6	14.5	19.8	27.1	21.9
Males, 18 to 34	135	80.6	62.5	38.0	35.2	32.5	35.5	20.3	18.0	12.8
Males, 35 to 49	293	77.8	58.3	56.2	45.2	37.3	27.3	18.5	18.7	17.8
Males, 50 to 69	431	77.1	43.1	28.4	16.3	19.8	25.0	27.1	9.8	2.6
Males, 70+	239	63.1	31.7	10.9	4.7	16.7	23.3	39.6	1.9	0.5
Females, 3 to 11	556	78.5	59.1	80.1	87.3	40.0	26.8	20.9	29.0	25.1
Females, 12 to 17	389	62.6	59.6	47.7	30.7	38.2	16.6	21.9	32.0	8.3
Females, 18 to 34	627	73.6	43.9	44.1	48.1	25.3	31.3	21.4	12.3	10.5
Females, 35 to 49	1,199	74.4	54.9	56.6	53.9	37.9	25.6	26.7	19.9	16.9
Females, 50 to 69	1,279	69.9	33.6	35.1	21.1	25.8	30.2	29.1	6.2	1.9
Females, 70+	464	56.8	22.5	23.4	12.7	23.1	25.4	48.8	1.9	0.5
LGA										
City of Greater Bendigo	3,392	73.0	49.3	46.8	40.3	30.4	27.9	20.3	13.9	10.2
Macedon Ranges Shire	726	73.6	47.4	45.8	35.7	39.3	28.9	30.7	16.9	13.7
Shire of Campaspe	865	67.2	49.3	36.8	38.2	21.2	20.1	30.9	14.0	14.8

Mount Alexander Shire	745	81.9	40.9	40.8	34.1	25.0	28.8	40.9	16.9	15.5
Central Goldfields Shire	512	61.6	50.1	35.6	28.0	39.9	24.9	23.5	13.0	14.4
Loddon Shire	498	55.3	65.7	40.4	30.9	16.5	15.8	41.2	17.3	3.7
Demographic indicators										
Household size²										
1 person	690	71.0	26.0	28.5	11.4	24.1	30.7	33.3	5.6	3.1
2 or 3 people	2,454	72.8	39.5	31.9	22.9	23.4	28.4	27.1	8.3	4.5
4 or 5 people	1,392	73.4	60.7	52.9	51.6	36.2	25.1	26.6	18.5	17.1
More than 5 people	165	66.9	50.3	33.3	43.2	22.7	30.4	24.6	21.4	7.3
Born overseas	598	75.3	35.8	40.8	29.7	29.2	25.4	28.1	11.2	10.2
Born in Australia	6,120	71.6	50.1	44.2	38.5	30.5	26.6	26.1	15.1	12.3
Speaks other main language	127	69.6	27.4	38.2	50.4	21.5	19.4	27.9	7.8	6.6
Speaks English as main language	6,573	72.0	49.2	44.0	37.3	30.7	26.7	26.4	14.9	12.2
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	191	75.1	47.3	50.7	44.6	24.5	27.2	26.4	8.0	13.8
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	6,520	71.8	48.7	43.7	37.5	30.7	26.5	26.4	15.0	12.1
LGBTQIA+	398	79.3	32.9	42.9	29.9	24.3	34.2	35.3	11.7	7.5
Non-LGBTQIA+	6,298	71.5	49.9	44.0	38.4	31.0	25.9	25.7	15.0	12.5
Neurodivergent	789	77.6	47.2	56.3	46.6	30.9	33.0	25.5	11.3	18.1
Not neurodivergent	4,558	72.2	50.5	43.7	37.4	32.4	26.0	25.7	16.6	11.1
Maybe	562	81.5	48.1	56.6	51.9	35.3	29.7	31.0	18.5	22.7
Not sure what neurodivergent means	599	61.6	47.2	28.9	27.0	20.2	20.2	24.5	8.0	6.7
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,216	69.8	42.8	33.4	27.6	23.4	26.5	26.9	9.1	7.1
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,474	80.2	47.9	48.7	37.9	37.1	31.5	29.9	17.5	10.5
Unemployed/retired ²	1,387	67.1	29.7	25.0	19.3	20.6	25.3	33.1	3.9	1.5
Employed	3,311	75.2	51.1	43.6	35.7	30.2	29.1	25.1	15.0	11.1
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,325	69.4	41.5	38.2	33.2	24.2	26.7	25.5	9.4	7.9

Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,365	74.1	45.4	37.2	29.1	28.5	28.4	28.8	12.3	8.0
Requires help with daily activities	558	68.9	35.4	53.2	52.4	25.7	28.3	30.2	11.5	17.7
Does not require help	6,151	72.2	49.8	43.1	36.5	30.9	26.4	26.1	15.1	11.7
Food security (last 12 months)²										
Low or very low food security	664	65.8	42.3	36.4	36.8	21.4	25.5	24.4	9.2	9.4
Marginal food security	593	73.8	48.7	43.8	37.3	26.4	28.2	25.2	12.6	11.7
High food security	3,441	74.1	43.8	36.7	27.6	28.6	28.4	28.9	11.7	7.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 5.4.1.3 Public facilities and open spaces by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Parks	Sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms	Swimming pools / splash parks	Playgrounds	Indoor sports / leisure / fitness centres	Community gardens	Halls / community centres	Hard courts (e.g., netball / tennis)	Skateparks / BMX
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	6,738	71.9	48.7	43.8	37.6	30.5	26.5	26.5	14.8	12.1
Health and wellbeing indicators										
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,057	68.3	38.2	40.2	31.7	20.3	25.5	27.1	8.1	7.9
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,405	72.8	51.4	44.9	38.7	32.8	26.8	26.7	16.5	12.9
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,335	70.2	43.9	39.5	30.6	23.4	27.5	25.0	8.9	9.0
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,163	73.7	44.5	36.7	29.8	28.7	28.0	29.4	12.5	7.1
Does not feel valued by society ²	915	69.5	37.2	38.6	27.6	22.3	25.7	21.5	8.5	7.7
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,238	73.6	47.5	37.6	32.4	27.6	28.5	26.6	11.0	8.0
Definitely feel valued by society	1,348	73.4	44.4	36.8	27.7	29.6	28.7	35.8	14.5	7.3
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,263	72.1	42.7	42.5	34.2	22.1	28.1	25.2	8.9	10.0

Good mental wellbeing	3,442	72.7	44.6	35.6	28.9	28.9	27.8	28.7	12.3	7.2
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,422	72.0	44.9	38.4	29.9	28.2	25.8	27.7	10.9	8.4
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,885	74.2	50.7	46.3	39.1	33.0	28.3	26.5	17.8	13.3
Health behaviour indicators										
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,171	70.1	45.8	39.8	31.2	27.0	24.7	25.5	11.1	9.2
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,469	74.1	51.6	48.8	44.6	33.9	28.4	27.0	18.6	15.1
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	5,753	71.9	49.1	43.7	37.4	30.0	26.4	26.1	14.5	11.9
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	821	74.3	46.6	47.1	40.2	33.5	28.7	29.0	16.6	13.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,044	69.8	44.6	47.0	46.7	24.8	24.2	24.1	12.0	12.7
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,463	73.0	50.3	42.8	34.0	32.4	27.2	26.8	15.8	11.6
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,095	71.2	48.3	43.4	39.6	24.7	23.9	25.6	15.2	13.1
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,641	72.7	49.1	42.8	31.3	36.4	28.6	27.4	14.6	9.4
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,400	69.7	46.2	42.1	35.7	28.9	26.4	25.8	13.0	11.7
Meets screen time recommendations	3,034	74.4	51.1	45.6	38.4	31.7	26.6	26.6	16.1	11.6
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,858	70.4	45.8	39.8	36.0	27.0	25.4	23.9	11.5	12.6
Meets sleep recommendations	4,624	73.1	50.2	45.6	38.1	31.4	26.9	27.1	16.1	11.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	749	66.5	44.3	37.5	32.5	25.1	26.1	22.6	9.8	8.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	5,953	72.8	49.2	44.8	38.4	31.2	26.6	27.0	15.4	12.6
Does not meet water recommendations	4,025	72.2	44.5	40.8	35.7	26.8	26.2	27.8	12.7	10.2
Meets water recommendations	2,530	72.2	57.2	50.7	41.8	37.5	26.6	23.3	18.6	15.6
Risk behaviour indicators²										
Current smoker	256	78.2	40.6	36.4	34.1	25.0	30.8	31.1	11.3	15.6
Ex-smoker	1,758	73.4	46.2	39.7	29.6	28.9	28.4	28.6	11.5	7.7

Never smoked	2,517	71.4	43.5	36.5	30.2	25.9	27.6	27.2	11.3	7.0
Current vaper	130	80.9	55.7	52.0	43.7	39.1	43.0	27.6	18.2	13.8
Ex-vaper	321	78.0	61.7	44.0	33.6	34.9	33.6	25.9	20.2	8.7
Never vaped	4,061	71.7	42.0	36.5	29.2	25.5	26.9	28.3	10.1	7.5
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,517	73.0	50.9	38.9	31.4	30.7	27.9	25.7	14.3	9.3
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,010	72.1	35.0	36.2	28.6	21.8	28.4	31.3	7.1	5.8
Gambled	1,394	71.3	52.8	37.7	28.6	29.8	27.5	24.6	12.5	7.0
Never gambled	3,130	73.3	39.8	37.9	31.1	25.5	28.5	29.9	10.7	8.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

5.4.2. Reasons for use of public facilities or open spaces

Regardless of how frequently they had used the areas, all respondents were asked to provide the reasons why they had used public facilities and open spaces in their area in the past 12 months.

The top three reasons for use of public facilities and open spaces were each selected by over half of all respondents: for exercise or health and fitness (65.5%); socialising with family or friends (62.1%) and for fun or enjoyment (56.2%). The next most frequently reported reasons were for mental health and wellbeing (35.7%), unstructured physical recreation activities (34.2%) and entertaining kids / watching kids' activities (31.2%).

The top three main reasons reported for using public facilities and open spaces were the same as those reported in the 2019 ALC, with a similar frequency reporting these reasons. However, respondents to the 2019 ALC reported using public facilities or open spaces for unstructured physical recreation activities (53.4%) and commuting (24.3%) more frequently compared to 2025 respondents (34.2% and 11.6%, respectively). *'For my mental health and wellbeing'* and *'taking part in cultural activities or events on Country'* were added as response options in 2025 reflecting to increased awareness of the importance of mental health, wellbeing and cultural participation. These findings suggest that reasons for using public facilities and open spaces shift over time, highlighting the importance of regularly checking in with residents to ensure their needs are being met and that any barriers to use are identified and addressed.

Full data from comparable demographic subgroups, health and wellbeing indicators, and health and risk behaviours are available in Table 5.4.2.2 and Table 5.4.2.3.

Table 5.4.2.1 Reasons for using public facilities or open spaces by user types

	All respondents
	%
Unweighted base (n)¹	6,695
Exercise / health and fitness	65.5
Socialising with family / friends	62.1
For fun / enjoyment	56.2
For my mental health and wellbeing	35.7
Unstructured physical recreation activities	34.2
Entertaining kids / watching kids' activities	31.2
Exercising the dog	29.9
For time to myself	28.6
Organised sport	27.3
Getting back to nature	26.6
Community event / performance	19.4
Commuting (i.e., to get from a to b)	11.6
Taking part in cultural activities or events on Country	5.7
Some other reason	3.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

For the top ten reasons reported in the ALC, analysis was conducted regarding the demographic characteristics, health and wellbeing characteristics, health behaviours and risk behaviours of users, full subgroup comparisons are shown below in Tables 5.4.2.2 and 5.4.2.3.

Children were more likely to use public facilities and open spaces for socialising with family/friends, fun/enjoyment, unstructured physical recreation activities and organised sport. Adults were more likely to use public facilities and open spaces for exercise/health and fitness, mental health and wellbeing, entertaining kids/watching kids' activities, exercising the dog, time to themselves and getting back to nature. Males were more likely to use public facilities and open spaces for exercise/health and fitness and organised sport, whereas females were more likely to use them for socialising with family/friends and entertaining kids/watching kids' activities. Differences in use of public facilities and open spaces for various reasons were seen across LGAs and all additional demographic indicators (see Table 5.4.2.2 for more detail). Likewise, there were differences in reasons for usage for all health and wellbeing indicators, health behaviours and risk behaviours (see Tables 5.4.2.3 for more detail).

Table 5.4.2.2 Top 10 reasons for using public facilities or open spaces by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Exercise / health and fitness	Socialising with family / friends	For fun / enjoyment	For my mental health and wellbeing	Unstructured physical recreation activities	Entertaining kids / watching kids' activities	Exercising the dog	For time to myself	Organised sport	Getting back to nature
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	6,695	65.5	62.1	56.2	35.7	34.2	31.2	29.9	28.6	27.3	26.6
Children	1,972	59.8	75.0	80.7	17.3	40.6	24.0	23.3	10.9	46.6	16.5
Adults	4,669	66.9	58.6	49.5	40.6	32.5	33.4	31.8	33.5	21.9	29.3
Males	2,098	68.1	59.0	56.4	34.9	34.5	26.0	29.2	27.9	30.3	25.3
Females	4,513	63.0	65.0	55.8	36.7	33.9	36.3	30.6	29.5	24.5	27.8
Sex and age											
Males, 3 to 11	569	58.5	75.5	90.3	16.0	46.4	33.3	20.8	7.7	49.9	18.5
Males, 12 to 17	434	67.7	73.2	66.1	17.2	38.1	4.8	24.2	14.7	57.6	11.0
Males, 18 to 34	133	68.6	66.6	61.3	39.8	40.7	26.0	34.7	41.0	28.6	26.0
Males, 35 to 49	292	72.6	58.1	56.7	41.5	38.5	53.4	36.6	33.3	35.3	31.1
Males, 50 to 69	426	70.3	51.1	45.8	40.6	25.5	19.9	31.0	34.2	19.0	28.4
Males, 70+	234	67.5	46.0	36.6	37.2	27.9	12.9	24.4	24.3	14.8	25.7
Females, 3 to 11	550	55.5	78.5	90.6	16.6	42.6	36.5	22.9	6.6	39.7	20.6
Females, 12 to 17	393	62.7	69.5	64.3	20.5	29.1	6.6	27.9	19.9	43.0	12.5
Females, 18 to 34	622	55.4	68.3	57.5	38.3	35.0	47.5	29.9	30.7	20.2	26.3
Females, 35 to 49	1,194	64.3	66.8	57.1	38.5	34.5	60.0	32.7	32.4	32.9	27.2
Females, 50 to 69	1,277	71.0	57.6	44.0	48.2	31.9	21.5	37.0	40.3	13.4	36.2
Females, 70+	454	65.3	53.0	32.7	36.6	29.0	19.5	22.4	28.1	11.2	32.6
LGA											
City of Greater Bendigo	3,379	66.7	62.6	57.6	37.1	35.8	31.5	30.6	30.8	25.0	27.2
Macedon Ranges Shire	719	70.3	60.9	59.5	34.1	37.2	30.4	33.5	25.6	32.9	27.9
Shire of Campaspe	860	54.4	61.8	48.7	24.9	26.1	34.3	23.7	23.4	29.7	16.9

Mount Alexander Shire	733	68.6	67.4	59.5	51.6	39.7	31.6	31.0	34.7	21.1	44.1
Central Goldfields Shire	510	65.1	55.5	46.6	38.2	28.1	24.5	28.6	27.7	27.5	19.3
Loddon Shire	494	57.6	60.4	55.6	28.0	23.3	26.1	21.6	24.0	33.8	17.6
Demographic indicators											
Household size²											
1 person	682	70.9	46.3	43.2	50.9	33.1	11.5	33.4	38.6	10.6	35.5
2 or 3 people	2,439	67.6	56.7	46.3	40.6	32.2	25.1	32.9	33.2	17.0	30.3
4 or 5 people	1,384	65.1	66.5	57.1	38.3	33.8	57.7	30.7	32.0	34.3	25.9
More than 5 people	160	57.9	69.5	61.9	22.8	25.0	44.9	20.2	30.3	37.0	18.5
Born overseas	593	61.9	53.1	54.8	38.8	30.2	27.5	26.8	34.2	15.3	35.9
Born in Australia	6,083	65.9	63.2	56.3	35.4	34.8	31.7	30.3	28.0	28.7	25.5
Speaks other main language	127	50.8	53.8	61.2	23.3	18.4	36.0	12.3	26.3	8.6	21.7
Speaks English as main language	6,531	65.8	62.4	56.1	36.1	34.7	31.1	30.4	28.7	27.8	26.7
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	188	42.8	63.5	62.9	30.9	22.7	35.0	29.5	28.3	21.8	23.5
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	6,481	66.2	62.1	55.9	35.9	34.6	31.2	29.9	28.7	27.4	26.7
LGBTQIA+	398	64.3	62.8	61.9	55.1	39.7	25.6	33.1	47.7	15.7	42.1
Non-LGBTQIA+	6,255	65.6	62.2	55.7	34.4	33.9	31.8	29.7	27.3	28.2	25.5
Neurodivergent	789	57.9	66.2	66.6	42.4	38.7	34.1	31.6	32.1	25.4	33.3
Not neurodivergent	4,545	68.1	63.2	56.2	34.4	34.6	31.1	30.5	27.9	29.1	25.5
Maybe	547	66.1	67.8	69.8	40.1	43.2	41.0	32.6	31.8	27.1	33.2
Not sure what neurodivergent means	590	59.1	53.6	41.1	31.6	24.0	26.7	24.1	26.7	23.6	19.6
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,189	63.8	55.9	45.6	38.2	28.5	30.7	29.3	32.1	20.1	26.3
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,466	75.3	66.2	60.0	47.1	43.3	40.6	38.6	37.2	26.7	37.3
Unemployed/retired ²	1,366	66.2	51.1	39.3	40.3	28.4	21.9	26.3	29.6	11.9	28.3
Employed	3,297	67.3	62.3	54.4	40.7	34.5	38.9	34.5	35.3	26.7	29.8

Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,309	55.6	53.7	42.7	38.5	25.9	36.9	30.5	31.7	18.2	24.1
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,347	72.4	61.1	52.9	41.6	35.7	31.7	32.5	34.4	23.7	31.8
Requires help with daily activities	550	47.3	61.9	62.5	32.1	30.4	30.8	20.3	21.4	15.4	20.5
Does not require help	6,117	66.9	62.2	55.7	36.1	34.6	31.3	30.7	29.3	28.3	27.1
Food security (last 12 months)²											
Low or very low food security	663	49.5	51.4	42.4	35.5	20.9	38.6	24.4	30.8	18.0	19.2
Marginal food security	583	63.2	62.5	53.0	40.2	28.4	34.8	36.6	34.8	20.6	30.1
High food security	3,418	71.9	59.8	50.7	41.9	36.1	31.9	32.8	33.9	23.1	31.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table 5.4.2.3 Top 10 reasons for using public facilities or open spaces by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Exercise / health and fitness	Socialising with family / friends	For fun / enjoyment	For my mental health and wellbeing	Unstructured physical recreation activities	Entertaining kids / watching kids' activities	Exercising the dog	For time to myself	Organised sport	Getting back to nature
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	6,695	65.5	62.1	56.2	35.7	34.2	31.2	29.9	28.6	27.3	26.6
Health and wellbeing indicators											
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,051	49.0	56.0	44.9	35.9	26.1	35.3	27.6	28.2	18.4	22.4
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	5,402	69.3	63.4	58.7	36.0	36.5	30.4	30.4	29.0	29.7	27.7
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,326	58.1	55.1	43.8	40.3	27.4	34.4	30.1	32.9	20.5	25.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,159	71.0	59.9	52.1	41.2	35.2	33.1	32.5	34.0	22.8	31.5
Does not feel valued by society ²	910	59.0	46.5	43.3	40.5	28.1	31.7	30.2	32.9	16.4	26.1
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,229	66.3	60.6	49.3	39.4	31.6	34.8	33.4	33.6	23.0	26.8
Definitely feel valued by society	1,349	74.3	64.4	54.7	43.9	38.3	32.8	30.2	34.8	25.0	37.3
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,253	55.0	57.9	44.5	40.5	29.9	40.9	31.4	30.4	21.7	25.6

Good mental wellbeing	3,416	71.4	58.9	51.4	40.7	33.5	30.5	32.0	34.6	21.9	30.7
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,409	64.0	58.6	50.0	37.7	30.0	32.1	30.3	30.6	24.5	26.6
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,889	73.8	64.2	60.1	38.5	42.0	31.7	31.7	31.2	29.6	31.8
Health behaviour indicators											
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,148	62.0	58.1	50.0	36.2	31.0	31.4	30.4	29.6	24.6	25.3
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,452	68.9	66.6	63.1	35.0	37.9	31.5	29.7	27.6	29.9	28.0
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	5,712	64.4	61.5	55.5	35.5	33.7	31.6	30.2	28.8	27.7	25.9
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	823	74.8	68.7	62.9	37.0	39.9	30.5	28.9	28.1	25.1	32.7
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,029	46.7	62.9	56.9	26.1	29.1	33.0	24.4	20.7	24.3	20.5
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,434	72.7	61.9	55.9	39.6	36.2	30.9	32.1	32.0	28.2	28.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,067	56.0	60.7	55.7	29.4	32.9	31.9	28.4	25.2	28.6	21.6
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,629	77.9	62.5	53.9	45.1	36.1	30.9	32.7	35.1	27.4	33.3
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,367	63.3	61.8	55.4	35.1	32.8	28.1	28.9	28.3	25.7	25.1
Meets screen time recommendations	3,021	68.2	62.2	56.2	37.2	35.3	35.1	31.8	29.4	28.8	28.3
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,844	61.0	57.8	52.1	34.6	28.6	32.7	29.3	26.9	24.9	23.3
Meets sleep recommendations	4,597	67.4	64.0	57.7	36.3	36.9	30.8	30.6	29.5	28.3	28.0
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	742	50.6	57.7	48.9	26.3	24.7	32.2	27.3	27.2	25.0	15.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	5,919	67.6	62.9	57.3	37.1	35.7	31.2	30.3	28.9	27.7	28.2
Does not meet water recommendations	3,995	64.1	60.2	54.0	34.6	32.1	30.7	29.3	28.5	24.2	26.2
Meets water recommendations	2,521	68.4	66.0	60.8	38.2	38.2	33.3	31.7	29.3	33.5	27.5
Risk behaviour indicators²											
Current smoker	253	59.1	54.7	55.5	45.1	30.1	31.8	28.2	30.0	15.0	31.0

Ex-smoker	1,755	69.8	57.4	51.0	42.0	33.0	35.2	35.3	34.5	23.8	30.8
Never smoked	2,509	66.0	60.1	47.4	39.6	33.3	32.5	29.5	33.9	21.5	28.7
Current vaper	129	65.5	62.2	60.3	44.4	35.3	44.0	33.8	34.7	24.3	22.8
Ex-vaper	320	76.0	70.7	59.8	44.4	41.2	35.1	42.5	35.1	36.0	31.1
Never vaped	4,050	66.2	57.2	47.8	40.4	32.0	32.8	30.5	33.6	20.3	29.8
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,508	69.3	61.2	50.8	40.3	31.3	34.8	33.2	32.9	27.8	27.3
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,006	64.0	55.0	47.3	41.8	35.2	31.6	29.7	35.3	13.6	33.2
Gambled	1,389	67.9	59.0	48.1	36.0	31.6	31.4	32.6	30.2	28.3	24.4
Never gambled	3,122	66.7	58.5	50.0	43.7	33.6	34.6	31.4	35.8	18.5	32.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Respondents were only asked to provide their reasons for using any public facilities or open spaces generally, rather than provide reasons for using each specific facility type. Despite this, links have been drawn between facility types and reasons for use to provide an indication of why each location is being used. Table 5.4.2.4 below presents these findings.

Table 5.4.2.4. Reason for use of public facilities and open spaces by facility type

	Unweighted base ¹	Exercise / health and fitness	Socialising with family / friends	For fun / enjoyment	For my mental health and wellbeing	Unstructured physical recreation activities	Entertaining kids / watching kids' activities	Exercising the dog	For time to myself	Organised sport	Getting back to nature
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base (n)	6,695	4,420	4,446	4,031	2,393	2,448	2,210	2,017	1,895	1,991	1,837
Facility type											
Parks	4,770	68.8	67.1	62.9	40.0	40.4	35.4	34.5	33.2	26.0	32.6
Sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms	3,431	73.0	73.0	63.8	35.1	43.1	38.5	34.7	28.5	48.8	25.7

Swimming pools / splash parks	3,344	72.6	75.1	71.5	38.0	45.0	45.2	33.1	30.1	35.6	29.9
Playgrounds	2,865	61.4	77.8	75.8	33.7	44.6	62.6	29.2	28.2	33.3	26.9
Indoor sports / leisure / fitness centres	2,203	85.0	73.3	69.7	42.7	45.8	37.0	36.7	31.5	45.1	31.1
Community gardens	1,750	75.0	76.3	69.4	49.2	48.6	37.9	39.8	44.8	25.0	44.7
Halls / community centres	1,835	66.9	77.0	62.5	41.0	44.1	33.6	31.6	34.5	32.6	34.0
Hard courts (e.g., netball / tennis)	1,179	81.3	81.6	77.1	41.2	54.4	45.0	35.8	31.6	67.5	30.6
Skateparks / BMX	928	67.8	80.3	85.1	36.6	55.1	57.4	34.5	27.0	49.3	31.9
Other	514	72.4	53.3	57.4	53.7	48.3	20.0	37.2	38.3	20.8	46.9
After hours usage of education facilities	372	69.0	84.1	76.0	40.3	56.6	37.4	32.5	30.8	44.6	35.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

5.4.3. Suggested improvements to encourage greater use of public facilities and open spaces

All respondents were asked to answer a fully open-ended question about improvements that would encourage them to use public facilities and open spaces more often. In total, 54% of respondents were able to provide suggestions for improvement that would increase their use of local facilities and spaces.

Table 5.4.3.1 lists the main themes that emerged in response to the question in the first column alongside the proportion who provided improvement suggestions under each theme. The last two columns provide more detailed descriptions of the improvement suggestions provided along with the proportion of those who provided an improvement suggestion whose response fell under this category. Proportions provided in the last column may sum to more than the proportion provides for the associated theme due to respondents having provided multiple improvement suggestions under the same category.

The findings for this section are currently being updated and will be included in this report as soon as they become available

Table 5.4.3.1 Summary of improvements that would encourage more regular use of open spaces

[illegible]

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Respondents who offered suggestions for improvement to public facilities and open spaces were asked where they would like to see these improvements made.

The findings for this section are currently being updated and will be included in this report as soon as they become available

As mentioned above, these suggestions were completely respondent-driven (unprompted) meaning they directly reflect current user views regarding improvements that would encourage increased use of public facilities and open spaces.

[illegible]

agree', 'somewhat agree', 'somewhat disagree', 'definitely disagree'. Responses were collapsed to create the binary categories of 'agree' or 'disagree'.

5.5.1. Adult safety in local area

Overall, 31.9% of adults reported always feeling safe in their local area, and 13.8% reported sometimes or rarely feeling safe. A greater proportion of females reported feeling safe sometimes or rarely, and among both males and females, those aged 18 to 34 were the most likely to report sometimes or rarely feeling safe. Differences in safety were seen between LGAs, with residents from Central Goldfields Shire the most likely to report sometimes or rarely feeling safe (26.0%), whereas residents from Macedon Ranges Shire were the least likely to report sometimes or rarely feeling safe (5.8%).

Differences in perceived safety were seen for most demographic indicators, with a greater proportion of those in the following demographic characteristics reporting feeling safe only sometimes or rarely compared to their counterparts:

- 4-5 person households (16.9%) compared to 2-3 person households (11.9%)
- Born in Australia (14.4%) compared to born overseas (9.0%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (31.0%) compared to non-Indigenous (13.2%)
- LGBTQIA+ (22.6%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (13.0%)
- Neurodivergent (25.7%) and maybe neurodivergent (22.7%) compared to not neurodivergent (10.5%) and unsure what neurodivergent means (16.2%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (15.4%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (9.0%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (24.2%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (8.4%)
- Requires help with daily activities (30.4%) compared to no help required (12.6%)
- Low or very food security (35.7%) compared to marginal (17.9%) or high (7.3%) food security

Table 5.5.1.1 Adult's perceived safety in local area by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Always %	Most of the time %	Sometimes or rarely %
Total sample	5,528	31.9	54.3	13.8
Males	1,287	41.7	47.8	10.4
Females	4,196	22.8	60.7	16.5
Sex and age				
Males, 18 to 34	153	34.4	46.6	19.0
Males, 35 to 49	331	38.3	50.1	11.6
Males, 50 to 69	504	41.4	49.5	9.1
Males, 70+	299	50.7	44.0	5.3
Females, 18 to 34	712	17.9	57.4	24.7

Females, 35 to 49	1,362	18.5	64.3	17.2
Females, 50 to 69	1,549	25.7	61.5	12.8
Females, 70+	573	34.3	58.2	7.5
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	2,903	25.0	58.1	16.9
Macedon Ranges Shire	566	47.0	47.3	5.8
Shire of Campaspe	680	27.4	57.4	15.2
Mount Alexander Shire	606	41.8	51.2	7.0
Central Goldfields Shire	380	24.8	49.2	26.0
Loddon Shire	393	49.1	43.4	7.5
Demographic indicators				
Household size				
1 person	850	34.1	52.4	13.4
2 or 3 people	2,904	34.7	53.5	11.9
4 or 5 people	1,578	25.2	57.9	16.9
More than 5 people	190	31.4	48.7	19.9
Born overseas	625	37.7	53.2	9.0
Born in Australia	4,894	31.0	54.6	14.4
Speaks other main language	124	23.6	51.6	24.8
Speaks English as main language	5,380	32.1	54.4	13.5
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	135	16.1	52.9	31.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	5,380	32.4	54.4	13.2
LGBTQIA+	381	26.8	50.6	22.6
Non-LGBTQIA+	5,115	32.3	54.7	13.0
Neurodivergent	514	21.2	53.1	25.7
Not neurodivergent	3,805	34.2	55.3	10.5
Maybe	383	21.9	55.3	22.7
Not sure what neurodivergent means	610	31.5	52.2	16.2
Less than Bachelor level education	2,713	29.7	55.0	15.4
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,790	38.0	53.0	9.0
Unemployed/retired	1,693	37.4	50.3	12.3
Employed	3,823	28.9	56.5	14.6
Just getting along, poor or very poor	1,646	21.6	54.2	24.2
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,865	37.1	54.5	8.4
Requires help with daily activities	314	19.7	49.9	30.4
Does not require help	5,196	32.7	54.7	12.6
Food security (last 12 months)				
Low or very low food security	833	11.6	52.8	35.7
Marginal food security	693	24.0	58.1	17.9
High food security	3,992	38.7	54.0	7.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Perceived safety was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators, except for overweight and obesity. A greater proportion of those with self-reported fair or poor health (22.5% vs 10.4%), low to moderate life satisfaction (23.1% vs 8.5%), don't feel valued by society (23.8% vs sometimes [12.4%] and definitely [6.0%]) and poor mental wellbeing (21.7% vs 10.8%) reported sometimes or rarely feeling safe in their local area, compared with their counterparts experiencing more positive health and wellbeing.

Perceived safety was associated with many health behaviours. Specifically, those who failed to meet the following health behaviour recommendations reported feeling safe less frequently than those who did meet the recommendations:

- Fruit intake (15.7% vs 10.3%)
- Vegetable intake (13.8% vs 9.0%)
- Aerobic physical activity (17.4% vs 12.3%)
- Sleep duration (19.0% vs 10.7%)

Conversely, a greater proportion of those who meet the water consumption recommendations (16.3%) report sometimes or rarely feeling safe compared to those who do not meet the water consumption recommendations (12.0%). Those who drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (19.7%) are more likely to report sometimes or rarely feeling safe compared to those who do not (12.4%).

There were no differences in reported feelings of safety in the local area according to risk behaviours, suggesting that safety may be unrelated to personal risk taking. This, however, does not account for the risk-taking behaviours of others in their local area.

Table 5.5.1.2 Adult's perceived safety in local area by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Always %	Most of the time %	Sometimes or rarely %
Total sample	5,528	31.9	54.3	13.8
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,160	21.9	55.6	22.5
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	3,800	35.9	53.6	10.4
Life satisfaction – Low to moderate (0 to 6)	1,542	22.5	54.4	23.1
Life satisfaction – High/very high (7 to 10)	3,396	37.4	54.1	8.5
Does not feel valued by society	1,092	20.0	56.2	23.8
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,423	28.5	59.2	12.4
Definitely feel valued by society	1,425	51.2	42.8	6.0
Poor mental wellbeing	1,460	23.4	54.9	21.7
Good mental wellbeing	4,068	35.1	54.1	10.8
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,386	33.1	55.0	11.9

Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,377	38.9	50.9	10.3
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,113	29.5	54.9	15.7
Meets fruit intake recommendations	2,370	35.7	53.9	10.3
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	4,805	30.7	55.5	13.8
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	630	44.5	46.6	9.0
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,336	25.2	57.4	17.4
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,083	34.0	53.7	12.3
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,441	29.2	55.9	14.9
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,623	33.8	54.5	11.7
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,650	31.5	53.7	14.9
Meets screen time recommendations	2,673	32.8	55.2	12.1
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,561	27.1	53.9	19.0
Meets sleep recommendations	3,739	34.9	54.4	10.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	738	26.1	54.1	19.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	4,709	33.2	54.4	12.4
Does not meet water recommendations	3,493	33.4	54.6	12.0
Meets water recommendations	1,880	29.2	54.5	16.3
Risk behaviour indicators				
Current smoker	300	26.0	56.4	17.6
Ex-smoker	1,933	32.2	56.5	11.3
Never smoked	2,743	33.3	52.1	14.6
Current vaper	139	27.2	50.7	22.1
Ex-vaper	340	24.7	61.5	13.8
Never vaped	4,476	33.3	53.6	13.1
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,724	32.7	54.9	12.4
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,247	31.8	53.3	14.9
Gambled	1,533	31.1	54.5	14.4
Never gambled	3,431	33.0	53.9	13.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

5.5.2. Children's safety in the local area

Overall, 85.9% of parents agreed that their child is safe in their local area. No differences in child safety were seen between males and females, or children and adolescents. Differences in child

safety were seen between LGAs, with parents from Central Goldfields Shire the least likely to agree that their child was safe (73.1%), whereas parents from Macedon Ranges and Loddon Shire were the most likely to report that their child was safe in the local area (91.3%). The findings largely align with the results regarding adults' self-reported feelings of safety.

Additional demographic indicators where notable differences in agreeance that their child was safe in the local area include:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (70.3%) compared to non-Indigenous (86.5%)
- Neurodivergent (77.7%) compared to not neurodivergent (88.1%) and unsure what neurodivergent means (92.1%)
- Requires help with daily activities (75.1%) compared to no help required (88.1%)

Table 5.5.2.1 Children's perceived safety in local area by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Agree %	Disagree %
Total sample	2,053	85.9	14.1
Males	1,048	87.4	12.6
Females	979	85.2	14.8
Sex and age			
Males, 3 to 11	600	87.7	12.3
Males, 12 to 17	448	87.0	13.0
Females, 3 to 11	589	86.9	13.1
Females, 12 to 17	390	82.5	17.5
LGA			
City of Greater Bendigo	959	82.9	17.1
Macedon Ranges Shire	250	91.3	8.7
Shire of Campaspe	298	88.8	11.2
Mount Alexander Shire	210	89.3	10.7
Central Goldfields Shire	183	73.1	26.9
Loddon Shire	153	90.7	9.3
Demographic indicators			
Born overseas	67	84.5	15.5
Born in Australia	1,986	85.9	14.1
Speaks other main language*	17	87.9	12.1
Speaks English as main language	2,030	85.9	14.1
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	80	70.3	29.7
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1,971	86.5	13.5
LGBTQIA+	65	80.7	19.3
Non-LGBTQIA+ ²	1,987	86.0	14.0
Neurodivergent	385	77.7	22.3

Not neurodivergent	1,298	88.1	11.9
Maybe	216	85.1	14.9
Not sure what neurodivergent means	115	92.1	7.9
Requires help with daily activities	350	75.1	24.9
Does not require help	1,703	88.1	11.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 to 17 years living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

* Significance testing not conducted due to small base size.

Parent reported child safety differed according to perceived general health. A lower proportion of parents who reported their child to have fair or poor health (62.0%) agreed that their child was safe in the local area compared to those whose children have good, very good, or excellent health (87.7%).

Differences in perceived safety were also seen according to fruit consumption, aerobic physical activity and muscle strengthening exercises. Specifically, those who failed to meet the fruit (80.0% vs 88.1%), aerobic physical activity (83.8% vs 88.7%) and muscle strengthening (85.9% vs 87.9%) recommendations reported feeling safe less frequently than those who did meet the recommendations.

Table 5.5.2.2 Children's perceived safety in local area by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Agree %	Disagree %
Total sample	2,053	85.9	14.1
Health and wellbeing indicators			
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	91	62.0	38.0
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,774	87.7	12.3
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	263	85.8	14.2
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	595	88.8	11.2
Health behaviour indicators			
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	592	80.0	20.0
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,452	88.1	11.9
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	1,757	86.3	13.7
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	264	87.4	12.6
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,072	83.8	16.2
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	881	88.7	11.3
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,090	85.9	14.1
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	345	87.9	12.1
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,175	84.6	15.4
Meets screen time recommendations	710	87.6	12.4
Does not meet sleep recommendations	558	83.6	16.4

Meets sleep recommendations	1,401	86.8	13.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	150	79.6	20.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	1,873	86.3	13.7
Does not meet water consumption recommendations	1,058	86.7	13.3
Meets water consumption recommendations	915	85.6	14.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 to 17 years living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

6. Health and Wellbeing

Respondents were asked a range of questions relating to their health and wellbeing. These included questions related to their self-reported health status, mental wellbeing, life satisfaction, perceived value to society and their body mass index. Most data presented in this section is based on responses of all residents aged 18 years and over (unless otherwise specified) and weighting has been applied. Questions in this section are standardised and frequently used health measures taken from the Victorian Population Health Survey and the World Health Organisation.

6.1. Self-reported health status

Self-reported health is a common measure of the general health status of Australians. Respondents are asked to rate their health on a 5-point scale as either 'excellent', 'very good', 'good', 'fair' or 'poor'. Recent Victorian population benchmarks have shown the proportion of the respondents identifying as having lower levels of general health (rating their health as 'fair' or 'poor') are:

- 20.9% of those aged 18 years or over according to the 2023 VPHS conducted on behalf of the Victorian Government Department of Health
- 13.0% of those aged 15 years and over according to the 2022 NHS, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

Table 6.1.1 shows that the proportion of respondents who self-reported a lower level of health closely reflected the VPHS benchmark at 21.2%. However, the 2022 NHS indicated that fewer Victorians self-identified as having 'fair' or 'poor' health suggesting that the health of Loddon Campaspe residents is poorer. There were no significant differences in self-reported levels of health amongst males and females, however, adults were more likely to report lower levels of health than children (25.3% vs 5.1%). No differences were seen between residents from different LGAs.

In relation to key demographic indicators, people from the following groups were more likely to self-report lower levels of health:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (44.4%) compared to non-Indigenous (20.6%)
- LGBTQIA+ (30.8%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (20.3%)
- Neurodivergent (34.5%) and unsure what neurodivergent means (29.1%) compared to not neurodivergent (16.6%) and maybe neurodivergent (21.0%)
- Less than Bachelor level education (27.6%) compared to Bachelor degree or above (18.1%)
- Unemployed/retired (30.7%) compared to employed (22.3%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (41.3%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (16.9%)
- Requires help with daily activities (40.8%) compared to does not require help (19.4%)
- Low or very low food security (44.7%) compared to marginal (32.3%) and high (18.8%) food security

Table 6.1.1 Self-reported health status by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Fair / Poor	Good	Very good / Excellent
	n	%	%	%

Total sample	7,017	21.2	35.5	43.3
Children	1,988	5.1	18.7	76.1
Adults	4,971	25.3	39.8	34.9
Males	2,191	19.7	36.1	44.2
Females	4,741	22.7	35.0	42.3
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	555	3.2	17.8	79.0
Males, 12 to 17	449	8.8	18.8	72.4
Males, 18 to 34	134	25.5	39.3	35.2
Males, 35 to 49	295	19.3	46.4	34.3
Males, 50 to 69	475	23.9	40.7	35.5
Males, 70+	272	25.5	38.0	36.4
Females, 3 to 11	543	0.8	15.2	84.0
Females, 12 to 17	417	10.8	24.9	64.3
Females, 18 to 34	622	32.4	35.4	32.2
Females, 35 to 49	1,219	25.1	44.5	30.4
Females, 50 to 69	1,394	24.2	38.6	37.2
Females, 70+	522	25.4	33.9	40.7
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	3,535	21.2	35.7	43.1
Macedon Ranges Shire	764	17.4	35.4	47.2
Shire of Campaspe	917	24.6	36.9	38.5
Mount Alexander Shire	751	23.3	31.6	45.1
Central Goldfields Shire	524	24.0	34.9	41.1
Loddon Shire	526	17.8	37.9	44.3
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	767	30.5	34.5	35.1
2 or 3 people	2,632	24.2	40.1	35.7
4 or 5 people	1,401	24.2	41.6	34.1
More than 5 people	165	28.5	43.5	28.0
Born overseas	630	21.1	38.1	40.8
Born in Australia	6,361	21.1	35.2	43.7
Speaks other main language	121	26.2	36.6	37.3
Speaks English as main language	6,852	21.1	35.4	43.4
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	196	44.4	37.0	18.7
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	6,789	20.6	35.4	44.0
LGBTQIA+	422	30.8	39.1	30.1
Non-LGBTQIA+	6,539	20.3	35.2	44.4
Neurodivergent	819	34.5	32.4	33.1

Not neurodivergent	4,699	16.6	34.0	49.4
Maybe	554	21.0	39.0	40.0
Not sure what neurodivergent means	677	29.1	42.9	28.0
Less than Bachelor level education ²	2,411	27.6	40.7	31.7
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,536	18.1	37.3	44.6
Unemployed/retired ²	1,535	30.7	36.3	33.0
Employed	3,422	22.3	41.7	36.0
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,461	41.3	38.8	19.9
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,490	16.9	40.3	42.8
Requires help with daily activities	593	40.8	25.1	34.1
Does not require help	6,387	19.4	36.4	44.2
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	735	44.7	39.6	15.6
Marginal food security	610	32.3	41.5	26.2
High food security	3,615	18.8	39.6	41.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Self-reported health was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, a greater proportion of respondents who reported low to moderate life satisfaction (45.1% vs 15.0%), do not feel valued by society (43.0% vs sometimes [23.1%] and definitely [12.7%]), poor mental wellbeing (50.8% vs 14.0%) and were overweight or obese (28.3% vs 9.9%) also self-reported their health to be fair or poor compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

Self-reported health was also associated with all health behaviour indicators. Respondents who failed to meet the following health behaviour recommendations were more likely to self-report their health as fair or poor compared to their counterparts who met them:

- Fruit intake (28.6% vs 12.6%)
- Vegetable intake (22.3% vs 9.0%)
- Aerobic physical activity (33.0% vs 16.3%)
- Muscle strengthening (29.1% vs 14.3%)
- Screen time (25.0% vs 17.3%)
- Sleep duration (27.6% vs 17.8%)
- Water consumption (23.6% vs 16.0%)

In addition, a greater proportion of respondents who reported consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily (36.7%) self-reported their health to be fair or poor compared to those who did not consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (18.7%).

A greater proportion of current smokers self-reported their health as fair or poor (41.5%) compared to ex-smokers (26.1%) and those who have never smoked (22.6%). A lower proportion of current vapers (22.7%) and those who gambled in the past 12 months (30.7%) self-reported their health as

very good or excellent compared to those who had never vaped (35.8%) and had not gambled in the past 12 months (37.2%).

Table 6.1.2 Self-reported health status by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Fair / Poor %	Good %	Very good / Excellent %
Total sample	7,017	21.2	35.5	43.3
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,540	45.1	38.5	16.4
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,389	15.0	40.4	44.6
Does not feel valued by society ²	1,085	43.0	37.0	20.1
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,419	23.1	44.6	32.3
Definitely feel valued by society	1,424	12.7	33.2	54.1
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,455	50.8	38.2	10.9
Good mental wellbeing	3,516	14.0	40.5	45.5
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,664	28.3	41.7	30.0
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	2,013	9.9	28.5	61.5
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,386	28.6	39.0	32.4
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,524	12.6	31.8	55.6
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	6,026	22.3	36.7	41.0
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	838	9.0	28.4	62.7
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,228	33.0	33.2	33.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,546	16.3	36.7	47.0
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	3,285	29.1	35.3	35.6
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,688	14.3	37.5	48.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	3,579	25.0	36.7	38.3
Meets screen time recommendations	3,123	17.3	35.1	47.6
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,979	27.6	39.6	32.8
Meets sleep recommendations	4,766	17.8	34.2	48.0
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	809	36.7	37.4	25.9
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	6,127	18.7	35.4	45.9
Does not meet water recommendations	4,229	23.6	36.7	39.6
Meets water recommendations	2,595	16.0	33.4	50.6
Risk behaviour indicators²				

Current smoker	297	41.5	40.9	17.7
Ex-smoker	1,924	26.1	40.7	33.1
Never smoked	2,732	22.6	38.9	38.5
Current vaper	137	37.3	40.0	22.7
Ex-vaper	338	22.8	46.7	30.5
Never vaped	4,456	25.0	39.2	35.8
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,712	24.2	41.0	34.7
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,236	26.8	38.1	35.2
Gambled	1,528	27.9	41.5	30.7
Never gambled	3,412	23.9	38.9	37.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

6.2. Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction was measured by asking adult respondents how satisfied they feel about life in general. Responses were provided on a scale of 0 to 10, where zero means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'completely satisfied'. For the purpose of analysis, responses have been combined into four main categories:

- Ratings of 0 to 4 represent 'low' life satisfaction
- Ratings of 5 to 6 represent 'medium' life satisfaction
- Ratings of 7 to 8 represent 'high' life satisfaction
- Ratings of 9 to 10 represent 'very high' life satisfaction

For the purpose of identifying the most vulnerable groups within the population, our analysis focuses on those with low life satisfaction.

Overall, 13.3% of respondents aged 18 years and over recorded low life satisfaction. No differences were seen between males and females. When looking by age and sex, a greater proportion of males 35 to 49 years reported low life satisfaction (18.2%) compared to their counterparts aged 70 years and above (8.4%). Among females, a greater proportion of those aged 18 through to 69 years reported low life satisfaction compared to those aged 70 years and above. Residents from Greater Bendigo (14.2%) were more likely to report low levels of life satisfaction compared to residents from Loddon Shire (8.5%).

Residents were more likely to record low levels of life satisfaction if they belong to the following demographic groups:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (28.1%) compared to non-Indigenous (12.9%)
- LGBTQIA+ (28.8%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (11.9%)
- Neurodivergent (30.8%) or maybe neurodivergent (19.8%) compared to those who are not neurodivergent (9.9%) and who are unsure what neurodivergent means (14.1%)

- Less than a Bachelor level education (14.9%) compared to a Bachelor degree or higher (8.7%)
- Just getting along, poor, or very poor (25.6%), compared to those who are reasonably comfortable, very comfortable, or prosperous (7.0%)
- Require help with daily activities (27.3%) compared to those who do not (12.4%)
- Low or very low food security (31.3%) compared to marginal (17.3%) or high (8.1%) food security

Table 6.2.1 Life satisfaction by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Low (0-4) %	Medium (5-6) %	High (7-8) %	Very high (9-10) %
Total sample	4,947	13.3	20.8	45.6	20.4
Males	1,173	13.1	20.2	45.4	21.3
Females	3,737	13.1	21.4	46.0	19.5
Sex and age					
Males, 18 to 34	135	12.3	24.2	41.5	21.9
Males, 35 to 49	295	18.2	19.5	53.8	8.5
Males, 50 to 69	474	13.5	20.4	42.9	23.1
Males, 70+	269	8.4	17.8	44.5	29.4
Females, 18 to 34	616	17.2	24.4	45.3	13.1
Females, 35 to 49	1,210	13.6	21.7	50.5	14.2
Females, 50 to 69	1,393	12.2	18.8	44.7	24.3
Females, 70+	518	6.7	21.3	41.4	30.6
LGA					
City of Greater Bendigo	2,600	14.2	20.9	45.0	19.9
Macedon Ranges Shire	512	14.6	17.7	46.1	21.7
Shire of Campaspe	625	11.7	25.1	46.6	16.7
Mount Alexander Shire	547	11.1	17.9	50.5	20.4
Central Goldfields Shire	335	11.5	20.8	39.3	28.3
Loddon Shire	328	8.5	25.9	42.5	23.1
Demographic indicators					
Household size					
1 person	765	15.7	26.2	39.1	19.0
2 or 3 people	2,620	12.5	18.5	45.8	23.2
4 or 5 people	1397	13.4	22.6	48.7	15.4
More than 5 people	159	15.7	19.4	44.2	20.7
Born overseas	552	11.7	15.7	52.4	20.2
Born in Australia	4,386	13.4	21.4	44.7	20.4
Speaks other main language	103	14.7	18.8	49.0	17.6

Speaks English as main language	4,824	13.3	20.7	45.5	20.5
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	124	28.1	32.8	32.8	6.2
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	4,814	12.9	20.4	46.0	20.8
LGBTQIA+	345	28.8	22.0	38.8	10.5
Non-LGBTQIA+	4,572	11.9	20.5	46.3	21.3
Neurodivergent	447	30.8	21.8	38.1	9.2
Not neurodivergent	3,413	9.9	18.9	48.0	23.3
Maybe	341	19.8	27.4	41.7	11.2
Not sure what neurodivergent means	548	14.1	23.9	44.8	17.3
Less than Bachelor level education	2,399	14.9	21.6	43.9	19.6
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,527	8.7	18.1	50.7	22.5
Unemployed/retired	1,524	14.5	20.0	39.7	25.8
Employed	3,412	12.7	21.1	48.7	17.6
Just getting along, poor or very poor	1,456	25.6	29.3	36.3	8.8
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,477	7.0	16.3	50.4	26.3
Requires help with daily activities	265	27.3	36.8	26.7	9.2
Does not require help	4,665	12.4	19.6	46.9	21.1
Food security (last 12 months)					
Low or very low food security	736	31.3	31.9	30.5	6.3
Marginal food security	606	17.3	25.2	41.6	15.9
High food security	3,596	8.1	17.1	50.0	24.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Life satisfaction was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators, except for BMI. Specifically, a greater proportion of respondents who reported fair or poor health (31.4% vs 7.2%), do not feel valued by society (37.6% vs sometimes [7.3%] and definitely [1.2%]) and poor mental wellbeing (37.8% vs 2.4%) reported low life satisfaction compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

Life satisfaction was also associated with all health behaviours, except for water intake. Respondents who failed to meet the following health behaviour recommendations were more likely to report low life satisfaction compared to their counterparts who met them:

- Fruit intake (16.8% vs 7.9%)
- Vegetable intake (13.9% vs 5.0%)
- Aerobic physical activity (21.4% vs 10.6%)
- Muscle strengthening (16.6% vs 10.3%)
- Screen time (15.7% vs 10.5%)
- Sleep duration (21.5% vs 9.3%)

In addition, a greater proportion of respondents who reported consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily (19.4%) reported low life satisfaction compared to those who did not consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (12.1%).

Smoking and vaping were the only two risk behaviours that were associated with life satisfaction. A greater proportion of current smokers reported low life satisfaction (21.3%) compared to ex-smokers (11.6%). Similarly, a greater proportion of current vapers (26.7%) reported low life satisfaction compared to those who have never vaped (12.5%).

Table 6.2.2 Life satisfaction by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Low (0-4) %	Medium (5-6) %	High (7-8) %	Very high (9-10) %
Total sample	4,947	13.3	20.8	45.6	20.4
Health and wellbeing indicators					
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,153	31.4	29.5	33.0	6.1
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	3,776	7.2	17.8	49.8	25.1
Does not feel valued by society	1,085	37.6	30.6	25.5	6.3
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,420	7.3	23.8	53.9	14.9
Definitely feel valued by society	1,420	1.2	5.9	49.2	43.7
Poor mental wellbeing	1,456	37.8	34.0	26.6	1.6
Good mental wellbeing	3,491	2.4	14.9	54.0	28.7
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,376	13.5	20.4	46.9	19.2
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,374	10.0	17.2	48.0	24.8
Health behaviour indicators					
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	2,803	16.8	22.5	43.1	17.6
Meets fruit intake recommendations	2,107	7.9	17.8	49.8	24.5
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	4,297	13.9	21.2	45.9	19.0
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	575	5.0	15.3	45.2	34.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,199	21.4	27.1	37.6	13.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	3,658	10.6	18.6	48.4	22.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,211	16.6	23.8	42.9	16.6
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,326	10.3	17.4	49.1	23.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,390	15.7	21.5	44.4	18.4
Meets screen time recommendations	2,442	10.5	19.8	47.6	22.1
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,416	21.5	24.4	40.8	13.3
Meets sleep recommendations	3,393	9.3	18.5	48.5	23.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	654	19.4	27.6	36.4	16.5

Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	4,282	12.1	19.5	47.3	21.1
Does not meet water recommendations	3,169	13.4	22.1	44.8	19.7
Meets water recommendations	1,699	11.9	17.5	48.8	21.8
Risk behaviour indicators					
Current smoker	296	21.3	23.9	39.6	15.1
Ex-smoker	1,914	11.6	22.0	46.7	19.7
Never smoked	2,720	13.5	19.4	45.6	21.5
Current vaper	137	26.7	24.1	38.8	10.4
Ex-vaper	338	15.4	23.9	48.5	12.2
Never vaped	4,435	12.5	20.3	45.6	21.6
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,707	13.3	21.4	45.5	19.7
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,219	13.2	19.9	45.9	21.1
Gambled	1,522	14.7	21.2	44.2	19.9
Never gambled	3,396	12.5	20.5	46.4	20.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

6.3. Perceived value to society

Respondents were also asked whether they feel valued by society. They could select one of four responses 'No, not at all', 'Not often', 'Sometimes' or 'Yes, definitely'. For the purpose of analysis, the first two response options ('No, not at all' and 'Not often') have been combined to form one category representing people who do not feel valued by society.

Overall, 25.1% of residents aged 18 years and over indicated that they do not feel valued by society. There were no differences according to sex. For males, the only difference observed was that a lower proportion of those aged 18 to 34 (21.5%) definitely feel valued by society compared to those aged 70 and above (37.1%). For females, perceived value to society differed across all age groups, with the largest proportion indicating that they do not feel valued being those aged 18 to 34 (29.3%) and the largest proportion indicating that they definitely feel valued being those aged 70 and above (36.2%).

Across the LGAs, feeling valued by society was more common for residents of Loddon Shire (35.5%) than those who reside in City of Greater Bendigo (24.2%). A greater proportion of those living in Campaspe Shire (52.5%) sometimes feels valued by society compared to those living in Loddon Shire (40.2%).

Respondents from the following demographic groups were more likely to indicate they do not feel valued by society:

- One-person (31.8%) compared to 2-3 person (24.3%) and 4.5 person (22.6%) households
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (39.8%) compared to respondents that aren't Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (24.5%)
- LGBTQIA+ (39.7%) compared to those who do not (23.6%)

- Neurodivergent (45.6%) compared to maybe neurodivergent (30.1%), not neurodivergent (20.9%) and who are unsure what neurodivergent means (26.5%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (27.8%) compared to a Bachelor degree or higher (17.1%)
- Unemployed/retired (30.1%) compared to employed (22.4%)
- Just getting along, poor, or very poor (40.2%) compared to those who are reasonably comfortable, very comfortable, or prosperous (17.2%)
- Require help with daily activities (47.9%) compared to those who do not (23.5%)
- Low or very low food security (46.3%) compared to marginal (32.1%) or high (18.2%) food security

Table 6.3.1 Perceived value to society by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not feel valued %	Sometimes feels valued %	Definitely feels valued %
Total sample	4,949	25.1	48.5	26.5
Males	1,172	24.3	47.4	28.3
Females	3,740	25.3	49.9	24.8
Sex and age				
Males, 18 to 34	135	26.4	52.1	21.5
Males, 35 to 49	295	24.0	49.7	26.3
Males, 50 to 69	473	25.6	47.6	26.8
Males, 70+	269	20.9	42.0	37.1
Females, 18 to 34	621	29.3	50.1	20.6
Females, 35 to 49	1,211	24.4	54.3	21.4
Females, 50 to 69	1,390	25.1	48.5	26.3
Females, 70+	518	19.9	43.9	36.2
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	2,596	26.8	49.0	24.2
Macedon Ranges Shire	513	25.5	46.5	28.0
Shire of Campaspe	625	21.4	52.5	26.1
Mount Alexander Shire	543	20.3	48.9	30.8
Central Goldfields Shire	334	26.0	43.8	30.2
Loddon Shire	338	24.3	40.2	35.5
Demographic indicators				
Household size				
1 person	763	31.8	44.6	23.5
2 or 3 people	2,618	24.3	47.4	28.3
4 or 5 people	1,398	22.6	53.4	24.0
More than 5 people	164	28.0	42.9	29.2

Born overseas	555	25.4	44.9	29.8
Born in Australia	4,382	24.9	49.1	26.0
Speaks other main language	103	20.2	37.6	42.3
Speaks English as main language	4,823	25.1	48.8	26.1
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	125	39.8	50.9	9.2
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	4,815	24.5	48.4	27.0
LGBTQIA+	344	39.7	41.7	18.6
Non-LGBTQIA+	4,571	23.6	49.1	27.2
Neurodivergent	447	45.6	38.1	16.3
Not neurodivergent	3,408	20.9	50.1	28.9
Maybe	340	30.1	53.8	16.0
Not sure what neurodivergent means	546	26.5	47.9	25.6
Less than Bachelor level education	2,398	27.8	48.6	23.5
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,529	17.1	48.4	34.6
Unemployed/retired	1,525	30.1	42.8	27.1
Employed	3,412	22.4	51.5	26.1
Just getting along, poor or very poor	1,456	40.2	45.9	13.9
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,477	17.2	49.9	32.9
Requires help with daily activities	265	47.9	37.3	14.8
Does not require help	4,665	23.5	49.2	27.3
Food security (last 12 months)				
Low or very low food security	736	46.3	46.0	7.7
Marginal food security	611	32.1	49.6	18.3
High food security	3,591	18.2	49.0	32.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Perceived value to society was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, a greater proportion of respondents who reported fair or poor health (42.5% vs 19.1%), reported low life satisfaction (50.1% vs 12.0%), poor mental wellbeing (48.9% vs 14.5%), and were overweight or obese (26.0% vs 19.4%) do not feel valued by society compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

Feeling valued by society was also associated with all health behaviour indicators, except for water intake. Respondents who failed to meet the following health behaviour recommendations were more likely to report not feeling valued by society compared to their counterparts who did meet the recommendations:

- Fruit intake (29.6% vs 17.7%)
- Vegetable intake (25.8% vs 13.8%)
- Aerobic physical activity (33.7% vs 22.1%)
- Muscle strengthening (28.2% vs 21.2%)

- Screen time (29.6% vs 20.1%)
- Sleep duration (34.3% vs 20.5%)

In addition, a greater proportion of respondents who reported consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily (38.2%) did not feel valued by society compared to those who did not consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (22.4%).

A lower proportion of current smokers reported definitely feeling valued by society (16.1%) compared to ex-smokers (27.0%) and those who have never smoked (27.4%). Similarly, a lower proportion of current vapers (11.4%) and ex-vapers (19.4%) reported definitely feeling valued by society compared to those who have never vaped (27.9%). A greater proportion of those who engaged in risky alcohol consumption over the past 12 months (50.9%) reported sometimes feeling valued by society compared to those who had not (45.2%).

Table 6.3.2 Perceived value to society by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not feel valued %	Sometimes feels valued %	Definitely feels valued %
Total sample	4,949	25.1	48.5	26.5
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,154	42.5	44.2	13.3
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	3,774	19.1	49.9	31.0
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	1,537	50.1	44.4	5.5
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,388	12.0	50.7	37.3
Poor mental wellbeing	1,455	48.9	44.4	6.7
Good mental wellbeing	3,494	14.5	50.3	35.2
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,375	26.0	48.1	25.8
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,374	19.4	47.0	33.7
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	2,804	29.6	48.3	22.2
Meets fruit intake recommendations	2,108	17.7	49.3	32.9
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	4,299	25.8	49.0	25.2
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	575	13.8	46.7	39.6
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,199	33.7	46.8	19.5
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	3,659	22.1	49.4	28.5
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,214	28.2	50.5	21.3
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,326	21.2	48.1	30.7
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,391	29.6	47.4	23.0
Meets screen time recommendations	2,443	20.1	50.3	29.6

Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,418	34.3	45.8	19.8
Meets sleep recommendations	3,392	20.5	49.9	29.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	660	38.2	46.5	15.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	4,278	22.4	49.0	28.6
Does not meet water recommendations	3,170	25.3	48.4	26.3
Meets water recommendations	1,700	22.9	49.7	27.4
Risk behaviour indicators				
Current smoker	298	32.1	51.8	16.1
Ex-smoker	1,916	24.8	48.2	27.0
Never smoked	2,717	24.4	48.2	27.4
Current vaper	139	32.9	55.7	11.4
Ex-vaper	339	28.0	52.6	19.4
Never vaped	4,432	24.3	47.7	27.9
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,707	23.8	50.9	25.3
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,220	26.8	45.2	28.0
Gambled	1,525	23.7	50.8	25.6
Never gambled	3,394	25.8	47.2	27.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

6.4. Mental wellbeing

Mental wellbeing was assessed using the globally recognised, valid WHO-5 mental wellbeing index¹³. Respondents were asked to indicate how they had been feeling over the last two weeks in response to five statements. Response options were 'all of the time' (5), 'most of the time' (4), 'more than half of the time' (3), 'less than half of the time' (2), 'some of the time' (1) and 'at no time' (0). The scores on each of the five questions are summed and then multiplied by four to get a final score out of 100, with lower scores indicating poorer mental wellbeing. A score below 50 is an indicator of poor mental wellbeing and suggests the possible presence of a mental health condition (e.g., depression).

Overall, 27.3% of residents aged 18 years and over were classified as having poor mental wellbeing. The average score differed between males and females, with females having a lower average (56.9) than males (60.7). For males, the only difference observed was that a greater proportion of those aged 35 to 49 (31.3%) had poor mental wellbeing compared to those aged 70 and above (19.8%). For females, mental wellbeing differed across all age groups, with a larger proportion of those aged 18 to 34 (33.2%) and 35 to 49 (34.9%) indicating that they have poor mental wellbeing compared to those aged 50 to 69 (24.9%) and aged 70 years and above (17.0%). Across the LGAs, poor mental wellbeing was more common for residents of Greater Bendigo (28.3%), Macedon Ranges (28.4%)

¹³ **World Health Organization** (2024). The World Health Organization-Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5). Geneva: World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/WHO-UCN-MSD-MHE-2024.01>

and Campaspe (28.9%) than those who reside in Central Goldfields (17.7%) and Loddon (18.8%) Shires.

Respondents from the following demographic groups were more likely to indicate they have poor mental wellbeing:

- One-person (32.1%) and 4-5 person (30.9%) households compared to 2-3 person households (24.3%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (44.2%) compared to respondents that aren't Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (26.9%)
- LGBTQIA+ (41.0%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (26.1%)
- Neurodivergent (46.4%) or maybe neurodivergent (42.3%) compared to those who are not neurodivergent (22.3%) and are unsure what neurodivergent means (28.5%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (29.0%) compared to a Bachelor degree or higher (22.9%)
- Just getting along, poor, or very poor (44.8%) compared to those who are reasonably comfortable, very comfortable, or prosperous (18.5%)
- Require help with daily activities (47.5%) compared to those who do not (25.9%)
- Low or very low food security (48.3%) compared to marginal (33.3%) or high (20.8%) food security

Table 6.4.1 Mental wellbeing by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Poor mental wellbeing (≤50)	Good mental wellbeing (51-100)	Average score
	n	%	%	#
Total sample	5,565	27.3	72.7	58.6
Males	1,294	25.7	74.3	60.7
Females	4,213	28.8	71.2	56.9
Sex and age				
Males, 18 to 34	154	25.7	74.3	60.3
Males, 35 to 49	333	31.3	68.7	56.2
Males, 50 to 69	507	26.3	73.7	60.7
Males, 70+	300	19.8	80.2	65.1
Females, 18 to 34	714	33.2	66.8	52.9
Females, 35 to 49	1,365	34.9	65.1	54.0
Females, 50 to 69	1,556	24.9	75.1	59.7
Females, 70+	578	17.0	83.0	63.6
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	2,929	28.3	71.7	57.8
Macedon Ranges Shire	566	28.4	71.6	58.7
Shire of Campaspe	683	28.9	71.1	58.4

Mount Alexander Shire	610	25.3	74.7	59.0
Central Goldfields Shire	381	17.7	82.3	63.7
Loddon Shire	396	18.8	81.2	62.8
Demographic indicators				
Household size				
1 person	860	32.1	67.9	57.1
2 or 3 people	2,918	24.3	75.7	60.5
4 or 5 people	1,588	30.9	69.1	56.1
More than 5 people	190	29.7	70.3	55.3
Born overseas	629	23.6	76.4	60.7
Born in Australia	4,921	28.0	72.0	58.3
Speaks other main language	124	22.3	77.7	59.0
Speaks English as main language	5,409	27.6	72.4	58.6
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	138	44.2	55.8	46.2
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	5,407	26.9	73.1	59.0
LGBTQIA+	399	41.0	59.0	49.5
Non-LGBTQIA+	5,128	26.1	73.9	59.5
Neurodivergent	532	46.4	53.6	46.0
Not neurodivergent	3,813	22.3	77.7	61.5
Maybe	383	42.3	57.7	50.0
Not sure what neurodivergent means	610	28.5	71.5	58.4
Less than Bachelor level education	2,733	29.0	71.0	57.6
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,800	22.9	77.1	61.6
Unemployed/retired	1,707	28.0	72.0	58.7
Employed	3,840	27.1	72.9	58.6
Just getting along, poor or very poor	1,658	44.8	55.2	48.2
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,879	18.5	81.5	64.0
Requires help with daily activities	321	47.5	52.5	42.9
Does not require help	5,214	25.9	74.1	59.6
Food security (last 12 months)				
Low or very low food security	834	48.3	51.7	45.1
Marginal food security	700	33.3	66.7	54.3
High food security	4,011	20.8	79.2	62.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Mental wellbeing was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators (see Table 6.4.2). Specifically, a greater proportion of respondents who reported fair or poor health (61.7% vs 20.2%), reported low life satisfaction (64.8% vs 13.1%), did not feel valued by society (60.0% vs sometimes [28.1%] and definitely [7.8%]), and were overweight or obese (32.7% vs 23.6%) reported poor mental wellbeing compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

Mental wellbeing was also associated with all health behaviour indicators, except for water intake. Respondents who failed to meet the following health behaviour recommendations were more likely to report poor mental wellbeing compared to their counterparts who did meet them:

- Fruit intake (33.4% vs 18.9%)
- Vegetable intake (28.6% vs 14.9%)
- Aerobic physical activity (46.3% vs 21.8%)
- Muscle strengthening (36.3% vs 19.4%)
- Screen time (32.5% vs 22.9%)
- Sleep duration (41.1% vs 21.9%)

In addition, a greater proportion of respondents who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (40.5%) reported poor mental wellbeing compared to those who did not consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (25.5%). A greater proportion of current smokers reported poor mental wellbeing (45.0%) compared to ex-smokers (29.7%) and those who have never smoked (29.4%).

Table 6.4.2 Mental wellbeing by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Poor mental wellbeing (≤50) %	Good mental wellbeing (51-100) %	Average score #
Total sample	5,565	27.3	72.7	58.6
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,162	61.7	38.3	42.1
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	3,809	20.2	79.8	64.2
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	1,546	64.8	35.2	40.9
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,401	13.1	86.9	67.7
Does not feel valued by society	1,093	60.0	40.0	43.7
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,426	28.1	71.9	59.0
Definitely feel valued by society	1,430	7.8	92.2	72.1
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,388	32.7	67.3	58.1
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,380	23.6	76.4	62.4
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	3,118	33.4	66.6	55.3
Meets fruit intake recommendations	2,377	18.9	81.1	63.6
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	4,816	28.6	71.4	57.8
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	631	14.9	85.1	67.7
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,338	46.3	53.7	47.9
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,090	21.8	78.2	61.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,444	36.3	63.7	53.6

Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,627	19.4	80.6	63.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,654	32.5	67.5	56.0
Meets screen time recommendations	2,675	22.9	77.1	61.5
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,562	41.1	58.9	51.1
Meets sleep recommendations	3,743	21.9	78.1	62.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	738	40.5	59.5	51.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	4,721	25.5	74.5	59.9
Does not meet water recommendations	3,502	28.9	71.1	58.2
Meets water recommendations	1,883	24.8	75.2	59.9
Risk behaviour indicators				
Current smoker	301	45.0	55.0	51.0
Ex-smoker	1,936	29.7	70.3	58.7
Never smoked	2,750	29.4	70.6	59.6
Current vaper	139	38.8	61.2	53.7
Ex-vaper	340	36.1	63.9	54.8
Never vaped	4,486	29.7	70.3	59.3
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,729	29.6	70.4	58.9
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,252	31.8	68.2	58.4
Gambled	1,535	31.7	68.3	58.0
Never gambled	3,439	30.1	69.9	59.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

6.5. Body mass index (BMI)

The 2025 ALC asked respondents to report their height and weight as a means of calculating their Body Mass Index (BMI). It was made clear that providing a response to this question was optional, and as such, response numbers are lower than for other indicators. Overall, 3.4% were classified as underweight, 35.0% healthy weight, 34.4% overweight and 27.3% obese. To identify opportunities for supporting improved health amongst Loddon Campaspe residents, we have focussed our analysis on the proportion of respondents whose BMI fell into the obese range (BMI of ≥ 30). However, health promotion activities should also address individuals across the full BMI spectrum, from healthy weight to overweight to obese, to encourage healthy behaviours at all stages and help prevent progression to higher BMI classifications.

The latest available benchmark, the 2022 NHS, indicated that 30.3% of Victorians aged 18 years and over were obese, compared to 22.8% in the 2023 VPHS. The 2025 ALC data suggests that 27.3% of respondents within the Loddon Campaspe region have a BMI that puts them in the obese range. This is a very slight increase compared to the 2019 ALC, whereby 26.9% of respondents were classified as obese according to their BMI.

Adults were more likely to be overweight (36.7%) or obese (29.7%) compared to children (18.3% and 10.3%, respectively). Males (39.7%) were more likely to be overweight than females (28.5%), but no difference in obesity rates were seen. When looking by age and sex, older males aged 50 and above, and females aged 18 and above were more likely to be obese than their younger counterparts. Residents from Campaspe (33.5%), Central Goldfields (33.8%), Loddon (33.4%) and Greater Bendigo (26.5%) were all more likely to be obese compared to residents from Mount Alexander Shire (17.6%).

Obesity rates differed according to several demographic indicators, with respondents who have the following characteristics likely to benefit from targeted intervention:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (46.0%) compared to non-Indigenous (26.8%)
- Unsure what neurodivergent means (35.8%) compared to not neurodivergent (24.2%)
- Less than Bachelor level education (32.8%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (21.2%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (37.7%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (26.0%)
- Require help with daily activities (42.4%) compared to no help required (26.2%)
- Low or very low food security (41.0%) compared to marginal (30.1%) or high (27.2%) food security

Table 6.5.1 Body Mass Index by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Under weight %	Healthy weight %	Overweight %	Obese %	Average BMI #
Total sample	4,701	3.4	35.0	34.4	27.3	27.1
Children	912	14.0	57.5	18.3	10.3	19.4
Adults	3,768	1.8	31.7	36.7	29.7	28.2
Males	1,461	2.7	32.3	39.7	25.3	27.1
Females	3,213	4.1	38.1	28.5	29.3	27.0
Sex and age						
Males, 3 to 11	212	15.2	54.1	17.7	13.0	17.5
Males, 12 to 17	258	9.3	65.0	19.2	6.5	21.1
Males, 18 to 34	109	2.7	40.2	41.6	15.5	26.3
Males, 35 to 49	253	2.3	30.3	43.6	23.8	27.7
Males, 50 to 69	394	0.4	22.0	41.9	35.7	29.4
Males, 70+	229	1.0	29.1	44.3	25.6	28.1
Females, 3 to 11	216	19.1	48.5	17.4	15.0	17.6
Females, 12 to 17	226	12.0	63.1	18.8	6.1	21.5
Females, 18 to 34	453	4.5	37.4	28.8	29.4	27.7
Females, 35 to 49	927	1.2	35.4	29.5	33.9	28.4
Females, 50 to 69	1,030	1.9	33.5	31.2	33.4	28.4
Females, 70+	351	1.6	37.4	31.1	29.9	27.6

LGA						
City of Greater Bendigo	2,472	2.8	35.1	35.5	26.5	27.0
Macedon Ranges Shire	497	4.1	36.7	32.8	26.4	26.6
Shire of Campaspe	560	4.0	32.2	30.3	33.5	27.9
Mount Alexander Shire	513	4.0	40.5	37.9	17.6	26.3
Central Goldfields Shire	362	2.4	28.3	35.5	33.8	28.1
Loddon Shire	297	3.3	30.1	33.2	33.4	27.8
Demographic indicators						
Household size ²						
1 person	575	0.9	36.1	32.1	30.8	28.1
2 or 3 people	1,999	1.7	30.9	38.5	28.8	28.2
4 or 5 people	1,077	2.6	31.8	34.6	31.0	28.2
More than 5 people	114	0.7	26.9	42.2	30.2	28.6
Born overseas	478	3.5	32.9	41.9	21.6	26.6
Born in Australia	4,213	3.3	35.3	33.4	28.0	27.1
Speaks other main language	93	4.3	48.4	21.4	25.9	25.4
Speaks English as main language	4,588	3.3	34.7	34.7	27.3	27.1
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	122	8.5	21.9	23.6	46.0	30.4
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	4,565	3.2	35.4	34.6	26.8	27.0
LGBTQIA+	298	3.9	30.5	35.7	30.0	28.1
Non-LGBTQIA+	4,377	3.3	35.5	34.2	27.0	27.0
Neurodivergent	519	4.3	35.1	28.6	32.1	27.1
Not neurodivergent	3,175	3.5	36.0	36.3	24.2	26.7
Maybe	366	4.3	35.2	30.2	30.2	26.7
Not sure what neurodivergent means	459	1.1	31.2	31.9	35.8	29.0
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,775	2.1	28.7	36.4	32.8	28.7
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,978	0.9	40.1	37.8	21.2	26.8
Unemployed/retired ²	1,157	2.1	30.9	34.4	32.6	28.7
Employed	2,603	1.6	32.1	38.0	28.3	27.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	1,073	3.3	25.3	33.8	37.7	29.3
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,686	1.1	34.7	38.2	26.0	27.6
Requires help with daily activities	315	8.5	26.8	22.3	42.4	28.0
Does not require help	4,370	3.0	35.6	35.2	26.2	27.0
Food security (last 12 months) ²						
Low or very low food security	518	5.2	24.8	29.0	41.0	29.7
Marginal food security	446	2.1	28.9	38.9	30.1	28.4
High food security	2,797	1.0	33.6	38.2	27.2	27.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Obesity rates were associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, a greater proportion of those with fair or poor health (55.4% vs 19.6%), low to moderate life satisfaction (39.9% vs 25.0%), not feeling valued by society (40.7% vs sometimes [28.8%] and definitely [22.4%]) and poor mental wellbeing (39.5% vs 25.6%) were classified as obese compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

Obesity rates also differed dependent on adherence to the health behaviour recommendations, with obesity recorded among a greater proportion of those who failed to meet the following recommendations compared to those who did meet them:

- Fruit intake (31.2% vs 22.0%)
- Vegetable intake (28.2% vs 16.7%)
- Aerobic physical activity (37.4% vs 23.6%)
- Muscle strengthening exercise (32.2% vs 23.0%)
- Screen time (30.5% vs 23.8%)
- Sleep duration (32.0% vs 24.7%)

Those who reported consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily (44.1%) were also more likely to be obese compared to those who did not (24.6%). The only risk behaviour that was associated with obesity was gambling, with those who had gambled over the past 12 months (35.6%) more likely to be obese compared to those who had not (26.4%).

Table 6.5.2 Body Mass Index by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Under weight %	Healthy weight %	Overweight %	Obese %	Average BMI #
Total sample	4,701	3.4	35.0	34.4	27.3	27.1
Health and wellbeing indicators						
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	897	2.9	15.0	26.7	55.4	31.8
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	3,801	3.5	40.5	36.4	19.6	25.8
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,132	2.6	26.2	31.3	39.9	29.7
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	2,618	1.4	34.3	39.3	25.0	27.5
Does not feel valued by society ²	806	2.2	25.1	32.1	40.7	29.7
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,817	1.9	31.1	38.2	28.8	28.0
Definitely feel valued by society	1,126	1.3	38.3	38.0	22.4	27.2
Poor mental wellbeing ²	1,095	3.1	23.6	33.8	39.5	29.6
Good mental wellbeing	2,673	1.2	35.1	38.0	25.6	27.6
Health behaviour indicators						
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	2,394	2.4	30.0	36.4	31.2	28.2
Meets fruit intake recommendations	2,265	4.6	41.3	32.1	22.0	25.7

Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	4,060	3.2	34.0	34.6	28.2	27.3
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	572	4.6	45.2	33.5	16.7	24.9
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,360	4.4	29.3	29.0	37.4	27.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	3,240	3.0	37.3	36.1	23.6	26.8
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,167	4.0	31.3	32.5	32.2	27.5
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,016	2.2	37.6	37.1	23.0	27.0
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,415	3.2	33.3	33.0	30.5	27.5
Meets screen time recommendations	2,130	3.1	36.8	36.3	23.8	26.7
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,312	2.9	31.1	34.0	32.0	28.0
Meets sleep recommendations	3,250	3.6	37.0	34.7	24.7	26.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	571	1.8	22.3	31.9	44.1	30.3
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	4,118	3.6	37.0	34.8	24.6	26.5
Does not meet water recommendations	2,885	3.4	33.1	36.1	27.4	27.3
Meets water recommendations	1,730	3.2	39.2	30.7	26.9	26.6
Risk behaviour indicators²						
Current smoker	228	2.0	35.4	34.5	28.0	28.0
Ex-smoker	1,507	0.8	27.9	38.6	32.7	28.8
Never smoked	2,027	2.5	34.3	35.6	27.6	27.8
Current vaper	99	1.2	26.8	41.1	30.9	28.8
Ex-vaper	285	0.9	36.3	35.9	27.0	28.0
Never vaped	3,360	1.9	31.4	36.6	30.1	28.2
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,120	1.1	30.9	38.1	29.9	28.3
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,636	2.7	33.1	34.9	29.4	27.9
Gambled	1,191	0.5	24.2	39.7	35.6	29.3
Never gambled	2,563	2.5	36.1	35.0	26.4	27.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

7. Risk behaviours

The following section contains the findings related to engagement with risk behaviours, including smoking, vaping, excessive alcohol consumption and gambling. These questions were only asked of adults, aged 18 years and above due to government mandated age restrictions for these behaviours. Results in this section are therefore for 2025 ALC respondents aged 18 years and above, and weighting has been applied.

7.1. Smoking

Adult respondents were asked to indicate their current smoking status using the following response options: smoking 'daily', 'occasionally', 'not currently smoking but used to', 'tried a few times but never smoked regularly', or 'never smoked'. As per benchmarks used in the 2022 NHS and the 2023 VPHS, current smokers included those who reported that they smoke daily or occasionally, while ex-smokers include those who used to smoke but do not currently or have tried a few times, as distinct to those who have never smoked.

Compared to the 2023 VPHS, which reported the proportion of current smokers as 13.9%, the proportion of current smokers in the Loddon Campaspe region according to the 2025 ALC was lower at 7.2% (see Table 7.1.1). No differences in smoking rates were seen between males and females. There were also no differences among males by age group. Among females, current smoking rates were significantly higher for those aged 18-34 (9.4%), 35-49 (8.0%) and 50-69 (7.0%) compared to those age 70 years and above (3.6%). Across the LGAs, current smoking rates were lower amongst residents of Macedon Ranges Shire (2.6%) than those from Mount Alexander Shire (9.9%), Loddon Shire (9.8%), Shire of Campaspe (8.8%), and City of Greater Bendigo (7.8%).

Current smoking participation rates were noticeably higher amongst members of marginalised population groups. Specifically, respondents from the following groups had proportionately higher rates of smoking:

- One-person households (12.0%) compared to 2-3 person households (6.0%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (22.6%) compared to non-Indigenous (6.7%)
- LGBTQIA+ (14.1%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (6.5%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (8.6%) compares to Bachelor degree or higher (3.2%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (12.5%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (4.4%)
- Requires help with daily activities (14.4%) compares to no help required (6.7%)
- Low or very low food security (16.0%) compared to marginal (8.9%) or high (4.5%) food security

Table 7.1.1 Smoking by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Current smoker	Ex-smoker	Never smoked
	n	%	%	%

Total sample	4,987	7.2	39.6	53.3
Males	1,178	7.0	42.3	50.7
Females	3,771	7.4	37.1	55.5
Sex and age				
Males, 18 to 34	136	9.0	35.4	55.6
Males, 35 to 49	297	7.1	41.6	51.3
Males, 50 to 69	471	7.7	43.1	49.2
Males, 70+	274	4.4	46.2	49.4
Females, 18 to 34	623	9.4	28.0	62.6
Females, 35 to 49	1,223	8.0	41.0	51.0
Females, 50 to 69	1,399	7.0	43.7	49.3
Females, 70+	526	3.6	30.5	65.9
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	2,616	7.8	39.8	52.4
Macedon Ranges Shire	511	2.6	39.3	58.1
Shire of Campaspe	624	8.8	38.7	52.4
Mount Alexander Shire	554	9.9	44.3	45.8
Central Goldfields Shire	337	8.5	33.4	58.1
Loddon Shire	345	9.8	38.7	51.5
Demographic indicators				
Household size				
1 person	771	12.0	37.2	50.8
2 or 3 people	2,638	6.0	40.5	53.5
4 or 5 people	1,406	7.1	39.1	53.9
More than 5 people	166	7.0	38.5	54.4
Born overseas	560	8.4	42.0	49.7
Born in Australia	4,415	6.9	39.3	53.9
Speaks other main language	104	12.8	22.1	65.1
Speaks English as main language	4,859	7.0	39.9	53.0
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	123	22.6	46.2	31.2
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	4,853	6.7	39.4	53.9
LGBTQIA+	344	14.1	36.0	49.8
Non-LGBTQIA+	4,606	6.5	40.0	53.5
Neurodivergent	449	11.6	38.9	49.5
Not neurodivergent	3,436	5.9	40.1	54.1
Maybe	342	10.8	39.8	49.4
Not sure what neurodivergent means	544	8.0	40.6	51.4
Less than Bachelor level education	2,416	8.6	40.5	50.9
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,545	3.2	37.0	59.7
Unemployed/retired	1,537	8.6	39.4	52.0

Employed	3,435	6.4	39.6	53.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor	1,466	12.5	40.2	47.3
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,500	4.4	39.2	56.4
Requires help with daily activities	268	14.4	37.3	48.2
Does not require help	4,697	6.7	39.7	53.6
Food security (last 12 months)				
Low or very low food security	740	16.0	36.9	47.1
Marginal food security	613	8.9	39.5	51.6
High food security	3,622	4.5	40.3	55.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Smoking was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators (see Table 7.1.2). Specifically, current smoking rates were higher among those who reported fair or poor health (11.5% vs 5.5%), low to moderate life satisfaction (9.4% vs 5.9%), does not or sometimes feels valued by society (9.1% and 7.6% vs definitely [4.3%]), and poor mental wellbeing (10.5% vs 5.7%) compared to their counterparts who reported more positive health and wellbeing. In addition, a greater proportion of those who were overweight or obese reported being ex-smokers (44.2% vs 35.4%), and a lower proportion of those who were overweight or obese never smoked (49.4%) compared to those who were normal weight or underweight (57.1%).

Current smoking rates were higher amongst respondents who did not meet the following health behaviour recommendations compared to those who met them:

- Fruit intake (9.2% vs 4.0%)
- Aerobic physical activity (9.5% vs 6.1%)
- Muscle strengthening (9.7% vs 5.1%)
- Screen time (9.2% vs 5.1%)

In addition, those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (13.0%) were more likely to be current smokers compared to those consumed sugar-sweetened beverages less frequently (6.0%). Those who met the vegetable consumption recommendations (61.2%) were more likely to have never smoked compared to those who did not meet the vegetable intake recommendations (52.3%).

Smoking rates were higher among respondents who engage in all other risk behaviours. Specifically, those who are current (32.6%) or ex-vapers (21.1%) were more likely to be current or ex-smokers compared to those who had never vaped (4.5%). Similarly, a higher proportion of those who engaged in risky alcohol consumption or who gambled over the past 12 months were current or ex-smokers compared to those who had not engaged in risk alcohol consumption or gambled. Strategies aimed at reducing smoking rates should therefore be considered in conjunction with strategies aimed at addressing other risk behaviours.

Table 7.1.2 Smoking by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Current smoker	Ex-smoker	Never smoked
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	n	%	%	%
Total sample	4,987	7.2	39.6	53.3
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,159	11.5	41.0	47.5
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	3,794	5.5	39.3	55.2
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	1,541	9.4	39.1	51.5
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,389	5.9	39.9	54.2
Does not feel valued by society	1,089	9.1	39.1	51.8
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,417	7.6	39.4	53.0
Definitely feel valued by society	1,425	4.3	40.4	55.3
Poor mental wellbeing	1,461	10.5	38.4	51.1
Good mental wellbeing	3,526	5.7	40.1	54.2
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥ 25.0)	2,385	6.3	44.2	49.4
Normal range or underweight (BMI < 25.0)	1,377	7.5	35.4	57.1
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	2,817	9.2	39.5	51.3
Meets fruit intake recommendations	2,132	4.0	40.2	55.8
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	4,332	7.4	40.3	52.3
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	578	4.6	34.2	61.2
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,211	9.5	38.5	51.9
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	3,682	6.1	39.8	54.0
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,229	9.7	37.4	53.0
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,337	5.1	41.2	53.7
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,412	9.2	38.6	52.2
Meets screen time recommendations	2,454	5.1	41.3	53.7
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,424	8.9	39.2	51.9
Meets sleep recommendations	3,421	6.2	39.9	53.9
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	664	13.0	35.2	51.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	4,311	6.0	40.5	53.6
Does not meet water consumption recommendations	3,197	7.7	38.9	53.3
Meets water consumption recommendations	1,710	5.7	41.8	52.5
Risk behaviour indicators				
Current vaper	139	32.6	63.7	3.8
Ex-vaper	340	21.1	64.4	14.6
Never vaped	4,481	4.5	36.1	59.4

Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,724	8.9	46.8	44.4
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,251	4.8	29.7	65.5
Gambled	1,532	9.4	46.2	44.4
Never gambled	3,436	6.0	36.0	58.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

7.2. Vaping

Using the same question wording as for smoking, adult respondents were asked to indicate their current vaping status using the following response options: vaping 'daily', 'occasionally', 'not currently vaping but used to', 'tried a few times but never vaped regularly', or 'never vaped. As per benchmarks used in the 2022 NHS and the 2023 VPHS for smoking, current vapers included those who reported that they vape daily or occasionally, while ex-vapers include those who used to vape but do not currently or have tried a few times, as distinct to those who have never vaped.

Compared to the 2023 VPHS, which reported the proportion of current vapers as 7.2%, the proportion of current vapers in the Loddon Campaspe region according to the 2025 ALC was lower at 3.8% (see Table 7.2.1). No differences in vaping rates were seen between males and females. When looking at vaping rates by a combination of age and sex, among both males and females, those aged 18 to 34 years were the most likely to currently vape compared to those aged 50 years and above. No significant differences in vaping rates were seen according to the LGA that respondents lived in.

Respondents from the following groups had proportionately higher rates of vaping, and would benefit from targeted intervention:

- Born in Australia (4.1%) compared to born overseas (1.1%)
- Neurodivergent (8.0%) compared to not neurodivergent (2.8%)
- Employed (4.9%) compared to unemployed/retired (1.8%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (6.0%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (2.7%)
- Low or very low food security (8.0%) compared to or high food security (2.3%)

Table 7.2.1 Vaping by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Current vaper %	Ex-vaper %	Never vaped %
Total sample	4,965	3.8	8.9	87.3
Males	1,175	3.0	9.3	87.7
Females	3,753	4.6	8.5	86.8
Sex and age				
Males, 18 to 34	135	10.2	27.5	62.3

Males, 35 to 49	295	4.2	14.4	81.4
Males, 50 to 69	470	1.2	3.8	95.0
Males, 70+	275	0.1	1.1	98.7
Females, 18 to 34	622	10.5	21.0	68.4
Females, 35 to 49	1,217	4.8	8.1	87.1
Females, 50 to 69	1,390	1.7	2.4	95.9
Females, 70+	524	-	0.5	99.5
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	2,606	4.2	10.7	85.0
Macedon Ranges Shire	509	2.6	7.0	90.3
Shire of Campaspe	622	5.0	6.6	88.4
Mount Alexander Shire	549	2.7	9.0	88.3
Central Goldfields Shire	334	3.4	6.7	90.0
Loddon Shire	345	3.1	7.1	89.8
Demographic indicators				
Household size				
1 person	767	3.5	5.4	91.1
2 or 3 people	2,628	2.9	8.6	88.5
4 or 5 people	1,400	4.5	10.9	84.5
More than 5 people	164	14.2	12.5	73.3
Born overseas	557	1.1	7.8	91.1
Born in Australia	4,396	4.1	9.1	86.9
Speaks other main language	104	1.5	8.1	90.4
Speaks English as main language	4,838	3.8	8.9	87.3
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	123	12.7	20.1	67.2
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	4,834	3.6	8.6	87.9
LGBTQIA+	344	6.4	20.3	73.3
Non-LGBTQIA+	4,587	3.6	7.9	88.5
Neurodivergent	449	8.0	18.1	73.9
Not neurodivergent	3,419	2.8	7.9	89.2
Maybe	342	8.2	13.8	77.9
Not sure what neurodivergent means	543	3.9	7.3	88.7
Less than Bachelor level education	2,405	4.3	9.4	86.4
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,535	2.6	7.6	89.8
Unemployed/retired	1,530	1.8	4.3	93.9
Employed	3,420	4.9	11.3	83.8
Just getting along, poor or very poor	1,461	6.0	11.0	83.0
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,484	2.7	7.8	89.5
Requires help with daily activities	267	4.0	5.3	90.7
Does not require help	4,679	3.8	9.1	87.0

Food security (last 12 months)				
Low or very low food security	741	8.0	15.6	76.4
Marginal food security	605	6.4	11.9	81.7
High food security	3,607	2.3	6.7	91.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

The only two health and wellbeing indicators associated with vaping status were life satisfaction and perceived value to society (see Table 7.2.2). Specifically, a greater proportion of those with low to moderate life satisfaction (5.7%) and those who do not (5.1%) and sometimes (4.4%) feel valued by society reported currently vaping, compared to those with high/very high life satisfaction (2.8%) and definitely feel valued by society (1.7%).

Similarly, there were only two health behaviour indicators that were associated with vaping status. A greater proportion of those who failed to meet the fruit consumption recommendations (4.6%) currently vape compared to those who met them (2.4%). A greater proportion of those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (7.2%) currently vape compared to those who did not drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (3.1%).

Vaping rates were higher among respondents who engage in all other risk behaviours. Specifically, those who are current smokers were more likely to be current or ex-vapers compared to those who had never smoked. Similarly, a higher proportion of those who engaged in risky alcohol consumption or who gambled over the past 12 months were current or ex-vapers compared to those who had not engaged in risk alcohol consumption or gambled. Strategies to reduce vaping rates should therefore be implemented alongside approaches that address other related risk behaviours.

Table 7.2.2 Vaping by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Current vaper	Ex-vaper	Never vaped
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	4,965	3.8	8.9	87.3
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,152	5.7	8.0	86.3
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	3,779	3.2	9.2	87.6
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	1,534	5.7	10.3	84.0
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,376	2.8	8.2	88.9
Does not feel valued by society	1,079	5.1	10.0	84.9
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,410	4.4	9.7	85.9
Definitely feel valued by society	1,421	1.7	6.5	91.8
Poor mental wellbeing	1,454	4.8	10.4	84.7
Good mental wellbeing	3,511	3.4	8.2	88.5
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,373	3.8	9.1	87.1
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,371	2.9	10.7	86.4

Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	2,806	4.6	9.9	85.5
Meets fruit intake recommendations	2,122	2.4	7.5	90.1
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	4,312	3.9	9.5	86.6
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	578	2.0	4.3	93.7
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,203	4.7	8.5	86.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	3,669	3.3	9.1	87.5
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,223	4.5	9.4	86.1
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,328	3.1	8.9	88.0
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,403	4.3	9.4	86.3
Meets screen time recommendations	2,445	3.4	8.5	88.1
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,419	4.4	9.5	86.1
Meets sleep recommendations	3,405	3.4	8.6	88.0
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	660	7.2	12.2	80.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	4,293	3.1	8.3	88.6
Does not meet water recommendations	3,185	3.1	7.6	89.3
Meets water recommendations	1,701	5.4	12.3	82.3
Risk behaviour indicators				
Current smoker	294	17.7	26.6	55.6
Ex-smoker	1,927	6.1	14.4	79.4
Never smoker	2,739	0.3	2.4	97.3
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,715	5.7	12.9	81.4
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,240	1.3	3.4	95.4
Gambled	1,528	5.7	11.2	83.1
Never gambled	3,420	2.8	7.6	89.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

7.3. Alcohol consumption

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) uses a measure of excessive alcohol consumption to identify individuals who are at risk of alcohol-related injury on a single occasion. The risk associated with excessive drinking includes risk of death or injury due to road transport accidents, falls, drowning, assault, suicide and acute alcohol toxicity. People are classified as being at risk due to the acute effects of excess alcohol consumption if they have consumed more than four standard drinks on a single occasion in the past 12 months. To assess risk of harm in the 2025 ALC, respondents aged over 18 years were asked how often they had consumed more than four standard

drinks in a day. Respondents who reported having more than four standard drinks on a single occasion in the past 12 months were classified as being at risk according to NHMRC guidelines.

Overall, 58.1% of all respondents 18 years and over reported they had engaged in risky drinking behaviour in (at least) one sitting in the last 12 months, which is over the guideline for 'at risk' alcohol consumption. This compares to benchmarks of 17.9% for respondents to the 2022 NHS and 41.3% for respondents of the 2023 VPHS, respectively. Respondents from the Loddon Campaspe region therefore were more likely to engage in risky drinking behaviour than the benchmarks suggest for Victorian residents more broadly.

A greater proportion of males (63.6%) engaged in risky alcohol consumption in the last 12 months compared to females (53.0%) and for both males and females, younger adults were more likely than older adults to consume risky amounts of alcohol. No differences were seen according to LGA of residence.

Demographic factors that were associated with risky alcohol consumption include, household size, country of birth, main language spoken, employment and disability status. A greater proportion of those from the following demographic groups engaged in risky drinking over the past 12 months and would benefit from targeted intervention to reduce their alcohol consumption:

- 4-5 person households (66.8%) compared to 2-3 (57.1%) and single (46.1%) person households
- English as main language (58.5%) compared to a language other than English (40.3%)
- Employed (64.7%) compared to unemployed/retired (45.3%)
- Does not require help with daily activities (59.3%) compared to does require help (40.7%)

Table 7.3.1 Risky alcohol consumption on single occasion by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Risky alcohol consumption in past year	No risky alcohol consumption in past year
	n	%	%
Total sample	4,981	58.1	41.9
Males	1,178	63.6	36.4
Females	3,766	53.0	47.0
Sex and age			
Males, 18 to 34	136	71.3	28.7
Males, 35 to 49	296	69.8	30.2
Males, 50 to 69	472	64.6	35.4
Males, 70+	274	51.1	48.9
Females, 18 to 34	623	59.2	40.8
Females, 35 to 49	1,222	61.7	38.3
Females, 50 to 69	1,398	50.1	49.9
Females, 70+	523	31.4	68.6
LGA			
City of Greater Bendigo	2,610	57.6	42.4

Macedon Ranges Shire	511	56.7	43.3
Shire of Campaspe	624	60.5	39.5
Mount Alexander Shire	553	56.8	43.2
Central Goldfields Shire	337	61.6	38.4
Loddon Shire	346	61.0	39.0
Demographic indicators			
Household size			
1 person	768	46.1	53.9
2 or 3 people	2,637	57.1	42.9
4 or 5 people	1,404	66.8	33.2
More than 5 people	166	56.0	44.0
Born overseas	559	54.3	45.7
Born in Australia	4,410	58.6	41.4
Speaks other main language	104	40.3	59.7
Speaks English as main language	4,854	58.5	41.5
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	123	63.6	36.4
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	4,848	57.9	42.1
LGBTQIA+	345	56.8	43.2
Non-LGBTQIA+	4,601	58.4	41.6
Neurodivergent	449	54.8	45.2
Not neurodivergent	3,434	59.8	40.2
Maybe	341	51.6	48.4
Not sure what neurodivergent means	545	62.2	37.8
Less than Bachelor level education	2,412	57.9	42.1
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,543	59.1	40.9
Unemployed/retired	1,531	45.3	54.7
Employed	3,435	64.7	35.3
Just getting along, poor or very poor	1,465	56.6	43.4
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,496	58.9	41.0
Requires help with daily activities	266	40.7	59.5
Does not require help	4,694	59.3	40.5
Food security (last 12 months)			
Low or very low food security	741	59.9	40.1
Marginal food security	609	56.9	43.1
High food security	3,619	57.9	42.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

There were no differences in risky alcohol consumption according to any of the health and wellbeing indicators (see Table 7.3.2). The only three health behaviour indicators that were associated with risky alcohol consumption were fruit and vegetable intake and aerobic physical activity. Specifically,

a greater proportion of those who did not meet the fruit (61.3%) and vegetable (59.1%) recommendations engaged in risky alcohol consumption over the past 12 months compared to those who did meet the fruit (53.3%) and vegetable (49.5%) recommendations. Conversely, those who did meet the aerobic physical activity recommendations (60.6%) were more likely to engage in risky alcohol consumption compared to those who did not (50.7%).

Consistent with published literature, all other risk behaviours were associated with risky alcohol consumption. Current smokers (71.8%), ex-smokers (68.6%), current vapers (86.1%), ex-vapers (84.1%) and those who gambled in the past 12 months (71.8%) were more likely to consume risky amounts of alcohol compared to those who never smoked (48.4%), never vaped (54.2%) and never gambled (50.8%). As with the recommendation for vaping, strategies to reduce alcohol consumption should be paired with measures that address other related risk behaviours.

Table 7.3.2 Risky alcohol consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Risky alcohol consumption in past year	No risky alcohol consumption in past year
	n	%	%
Total sample	4,981	58.1	41.9
Health and wellbeing indicators			
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,158	55.6	44.4
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	3,790	58.9	41.1
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	1,540	59.5	40.5
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,386	57.6	42.4
Does not feel valued by society	1,087	55.3	44.7
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,418	61.1	38.9
Definitely feel valued by society	1,422	55.7	44.3
Poor mental wellbeing	1,458	56.3	43.7
Good mental wellbeing	3,523	58.9	41.1
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥ 25.0)	2,380	60.2	39.8
Normal range or underweight (BMI < 25.0)	1,376	56.1	43.9
Health behaviour indicators			
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	2,815	61.3	38.7
Meets fruit intake recommendations	2,129	53.3	46.7
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	4,328	59.1	40.9
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	578	49.5	50.5
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,208	50.7	49.3
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	3,681	60.6	39.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,230	56.7	43.3

Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,335	60.5	39.5
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,409	57.6	42.4
Meets screen time recommendations	2,454	59.2	40.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,425	57.5	42.5
Meets sleep recommendations	3,416	58.2	41.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	662	63.6	36.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	4,307	57.1	42.9
Does not meet water recommendations	3,193	57.1	42.9
Meets water recommendations	1,709	60.9	39.1
Risk behaviour indicators			
Current smoker	301	71.8	28.2
Ex-smoker	1,930	68.6	31.4
Never smoker	2,744	48.4	51.6
Current vaper	139	86.1	13.9
Ex- vaper	340	84.1	15.9
Never vaper	4,476	54.2	45.8
Gambled	1,531	71.8	28.2
Never gambled	3,439	50.8	49.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

7.4. Gambling

Two gambling related questions were asked in the 2025 ALC. The first gambling-related question asked respondents how often, if at all, they had gambled in the last 12 months. Overall, 34.9% of ALC respondents reported having gambled at some time during the past 12 months. This is slightly lower than respondents of the 2023 VPHS which reported the proportion of people who gambled in the past 12 months as 39.1%.

The second gambling-related question asked those who had gambled at some time in the past 12 months, which type/s of gambling that they had engaged in. A list of nine (9) different gambling types was provided, as well as an option to report an 'other' type of gambling if it wasn't included in the list.

7.4.1. Gambling frequency

Of the Loddon Campaspe residents who responded to the survey, 5.5% reported that they gambled every week over the past 12 months (see Table 7.4.1.1). Males were more likely than females to report weekly gambling (9.1% compared to 2.2%). Among males, no differences were seen between age groups, however among females weekly gambling rates were higher for those aged 50 years and over compared to those aged 18 to 34 years. Weekly gambling rates did not differ according to residential LGA. However, residents from Mount Alexander Shire (79.8%) were the most likely to report never gambling compared to all other LGAs (proportion ranging from 56.3% to 69.8%).

Respondents from the following groups had proportionately higher rates of weekly gambling, and would benefit from targeted intervention:

- Single person households (8.6%) compared to 4-5 person households (3.3%)
- Speaks English as main language (5.7%) compared to a different language (0.0%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (6.3%) compared to Bachelor degree or above (3.3%)
- Does not require help with daily activities (5.7%) compared to does require help (2.5%)

Table 7.4.1.1 Gambling frequency by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Weekly %	Monthly or less often %	Never gambled %
Total sample	4,978	5.5	29.4	65.1
Males	1,179	9.1	32.1	58.8
Females	3,761	2.2	27.0	70.8
Sex and age				
Males, 18 to 34	136	9.8	35.4	54.8
Males, 35 to 49	297	5.5	35.0	59.4
Males, 50 to 69	472	10.8	32.3	56.9
Males, 70+	274	9.0	26.9	64.2
Females, 18 to 34	623	0.6	22.4	77.0
Females, 35 to 49	1,218	1.6	27.9	70.4
Females, 50 to 69	1,398	3.3	29.6	67.2

Females, 70+	522	3.8	27.7	68.5
LGA				
City of Greater Bendigo	2,611	5.8	30.9	63.3
Macedon Ranges Shire	509	3.0	27.2	69.8
Shire of Campaspe	623	8.1	33.1	58.9
Mount Alexander Shire	555	5.0	15.2	79.8
Central Goldfields Shire	337	6.0	37.8	56.3
Loddon Shire	343	6.9	28.1	65.0
Demographic indicators				
Household size				
1 person	769	8.6	28.4	63.1
2 or 3 people	2,637	5.9	29.0	65.1
4 or 5 people	1,400	3.3	31.3	65.4
More than 5 people	166	5.1	25.0	70.0
Born overseas	558	3.5	18.8	77.7
Born in Australia	4408	5.7	31.0	63.3
Speaks other main language	104	0.0	11.0	89.0
Speaks English as main language	4,851	5.7	29.9	64.5
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	123	10.5	36.4	53.1
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	4,846	5.4	29.2	65.4
LGBTQIA+	345	2.9	20.8	76.3
Non-LGBTQIA+	4,599	5.8	30.1	64.1
Neurodivergent	449	3.1	20.7	76.1
Not neurodivergent	3,432	5.7	29.4	64.9
Maybe	342	4.8	27.4	67.8
Not sure what neurodivergent means	545	7.2	35.7	57.1
Less than Bachelor level education	2,411	6.3	31.0	62.7
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,542	3.3	24.9	71.8
Unemployed/retired	1,532	5.8	25.1	69.1
Employed	3,431	5.4	31.7	62.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor	1,466	6.3	29.4	64.4
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,492	5.1	29.5	65.4
Requires help with daily activities	266	2.5	29.3	68.3
Does not require help	4,692	5.7	29.4	64.8
Food security (last 12 months)				
Low or very low food security	741	5.8	27.8	66.4
Marginal food security	610	5.5	30.4	64.0
High food security	3,615	5.5	29.7	64.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

The only health and wellbeing indicators associated with gambling frequency were overweight and obesity. Specifically, those who reported being overweight or obese were more likely to report being weekly gamblers (7.6%) compared to those in the normal or underweight range (2.9%).

Weekly gambling differed according to water consumption, with those failing to meet the recommendations being more likely to gamble on a weekly basis (6.2%) compared to those who do meet the recommendations (3.6%). Similar differences were observed for never gambling across other health behaviours. Specifically, never gambling was more common among those meeting recommendations for fruit intake (70.1% vs 61.9%), vegetable intake (75.5% vs 64.2%), screen time (68.8% vs 61.4%), and sleep duration (67.4% vs 60.5%). Additionally, those who did not consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily were more likely to never gamble (66.5% vs 57.4%).

Differences were seen according to infrequent and never gambling across all risk behaviours. In addition, weekly gambling was more prevalent among those who engaged in risky alcohol consumption (7.3%) compared to those who did not (3.0%) over the past 12 months.

Table 7.4.1.2 Gambling frequency by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Weekly %	Monthly or less often %	Never gambled %
Total sample	4,978	5.5	29.4	65.1
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	1,156	6.5	32.2	61.3
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	3,788	5.3	28.5	66.2
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	1,537	5.8	31.4	62.8
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	3,385	5.4	28.7	65.9
Does not feel valued by society	1,083	7.0	26.2	66.8
Sometimes feel valued by society	2,416	5.3	31.6	63.1
Definitely feel valued by society	1,424	4.7	29.1	66.2
Poor mental wellbeing	1,457	5.9	30.4	63.8
Good mental wellbeing	3,521	5.4	29.0	65.6
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥ 25.0)	2,379	7.6	33.7	58.7
Normal range or underweight (BMI < 25.0)	1,375	2.9	23.9	73.1
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	2,814	6.1	31.9	61.9
Meets fruit intake recommendations	2,127	4.2	25.7	70.1
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	4,326	5.6	30.2	64.2
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	576	3.1	21.4	75.5
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,207	4.9	30.2	64.9
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	3,681	5.5	29.2	65.3

Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,227	5.4	30.0	64.6
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	2,333	4.9	29.4	65.7
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,410	5.9	32.7	61.4
Meets screen time recommendations	2,450	5.2	26.0	68.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,423	6.8	32.6	60.5
Meets sleep recommendations	3,414	4.8	27.8	67.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	663	6.3	36.3	57.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	4,303	5.2	28.2	66.5
Does not meet water recommendations	3,193	6.2	29.1	64.7
Meets water recommendations	1,705	3.6	30.7	65.7
Risk behaviour indicators				
Current smoker	301	7.4	38.3	54.3
Ex-smoker	1,930	6.9	33.8	59.3
Never smoker	2,741	4.3	24.9	70.8
Current vaper	139	13.0	39.1	47.8
Ex- vaper	340	3.6	40.4	56.0
Never vaper	4,473	5.4	27.9	66.7
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,725	7.3	35.9	56.8
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	2,245	3.0	20.5	76.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

7.4.2. Types of gambling

Table 7.4.2.1 below provides a summary of the proportion of respondents who engaged in various types of gambling over the past 12 months, ranked in order from most to least popular. Respondents could report participating in as many different types of gambling as they engaged in. Therefore, the proportions do not add up to 100%. The most common form of gambling was lottery with 67.0% of respondents who engaged in gambling participating in the lottery. The next most common were race betting (28.6%), electronic gaming machines (22.6%) and sports betting (20.6%).

Table 7.4.2.1 Types of gambling

Types of gambling	%	n (¹ N=1,533)
Lottery	67.0	1,065
Race betting	28.6	399
Electronic gaming machines	22.6	348
Sports betting	20.6	252
Instant scratch tickets	11.4	210
Keno or bingo	5.4	82

Casino table games	5.8	71
Online casino games	2.2	25
Private betting	1.4	10

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Table 7.4.2.2 provides an overview of participation in the top five most common types of gambling by age, age and sex, and LGA. Males were more likely than females to engage in race betting (33.5% vs 22.1%) and sports betting (27.8% vs 11.0%), and females were more likely than males to use electronic gaming machines (28.0% vs 18.6%) and instant scratch tickets (15.8% vs 8.1%). Older males and females were more likely to participate in the lottery and less likely to engage in sports betting than their younger counterparts. Differences by LGA were only seen for race betting and electronic game machine use. Respondents from Greater Bendigo (31.4%) and Loddon Shire (42.6%) were more likely to engage in race betting than respondents from Campaspe Shire (23.2%) and Mount Alexander Shire (12.9%). Respondents from Greater Bendigo (24.1%) and Campaspe Shire (22.4%) were more likely to use electronic gaming machines than respondents from Macedon Ranges Shire (9.4%).

Table 7.4.2.2 Types of gambling by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Lottery	Race betting	Electronic gaming machines	Sports betting	Instant scratch tickets
	n	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	1,533	67.0	28.6	22.6	20.6	11.4
Males	477	64.9	33.5	18.6	27.8	8.1
Females	1,046	69.9	22.1	28.0	11.0	15.8
Males, 18 to 34	65	39.7	34.9	34.5	61.7	14.1
Males, 35 to 49	114	53.3	39.8	15.2	46.6	6.3
Males, 50 to 69	195	76.9	34.8	14.8	14.4	7.1
Males, 70+	103	75.6	23.6	15.7	5.5	6.7
Females, 18 to 34	143	53.3	20.9	42.8	20.5	18.4
Females, 35 to 49	335	71.0	28.4	23.2	18.1	23.3
Females, 50 to 69	435	78.5	21.7	23.7	4.1	9.7
Females, 70+	133	69.4	13.1	26.9	2.2	13.4
LGA						
City of Greater Bendigo	840	66.7	31.4	24.1	22.7	12.1
Macedon Ranges Shire	126	71.3	30.4	9.4	19.4	6.6
Shire of Campaspe	246	68.9	23.2	22.4	15.8	13.4
Mount Alexander Shire	93	64.6	12.9	32.8	19.3	9.9
Central Goldfields Shire	124	60.7	24.3	19.1	24.7	13.9
Loddon Shire	104	54.7	42.6	20.3	13.9	12.1

Appendix A: Detailed description of weighting

Sample surveys are a commonly used tool for making inferences about a population using responses from just a subset of it. To be able to do so, however, requires a probability sample – one in which every element of the population has a known, non-zero chance of selection. Since some units in the population may not have a chance of selection (such as people who do not have a telephone in the case of telephone surveys) and there may be different rates of response across unit characteristics (such as young people who are less likely to respond), many sample surveys yield subsets that imperfectly cover their target populations. This occurs even with the best possible sample design and data collection practices (Valliant *et al.*, 2013). In such situations, weighting can reduce the extent of any biases introduced through non-coverage or non-response.

The approach for deriving weights generally consists of the following steps:

1. Compute a design weight for each respondent as the inverse of their chance of selection
2. Adjust the design weights so they match population distributions across a range of respondent characteristics.

The first step is essential in providing the statistical framework necessary for making population inferences from a sample survey. The second step aims to reduce non-response bias and to ensure that survey estimates are consistent with other sources (such as published results from the ABS Census of Population and Housing).

Each step will now be covered in turn.

Design weights

The design weights account for the different probabilities that respondents have of being selected to take part in the survey. Each respondent's weight is the inverse of their probability of selection,

$$d_k = \frac{1}{p_k}.$$

For the 2025 ALC, all households in the six LGAs, and all household members aged 3 years and over were in-scope for the survey, so all respondents get a design weight of 1.

Calibrating to population benchmarks

To ensure that estimates made from the dataset are representative of the target population, the design weights are adjusted so that they match external benchmarks of key demographic parameters likely to be correlated with the survey outcomes and propensity to participate. The benchmarks used for the adults in the 2025 ALC were age by education, sex and country of birth, while children (aged 3 to 17) were weighted by age and sex only. All benchmarks and weights were calculated separately for each LGA.

The method for calibrating the design weights was generalised regression weighting (GREG weighting) which uses non-linear optimisation to minimise the distance between the design and calibrated weights subject to the weights meeting the benchmarks. Following calibration to the population benchmarks, extremely large weights were capped to limit variance inflation, and the weights were subsequently recalibrated so that benchmark alignment was maintained.

Refer to Lumley (2017) for more details on the implementation of regression calibration in R (R Core, 2018) and to Valliant *et al.* (2013) for a more general treatment of weighting and estimation for sample surveys.

Treatment of missing values

The regression weighting approach requires that there are no missing values across the adjustment variables or values other than those for which there are reliable benchmarks. Like most surveys, however, some respondents did not provide answers to the questions required for weighting (see Table A1).

Imputation was performed using the Amelia package in R. Five imputed datasets were created, and the modal imputed value was used as the final value for any missing cell. The imputation process is expected to have a negligible impact on weighted estimates made from the dataset.

Table A1 **Extent of missing values among weighting characteristics**

Questionnaire item	Not stated		Related weighting characteristic(s)
	n	%	
A1. What Shire or Council area do you live in?	Nil	0	All benchmarks
B1. Firstly, how old are you?	166	2.0	All benchmarks
B2. Which of the following best describes your current sex identity?	218	2.6	Sex
B6. In which country were you born?	162	1.97	Country of birth
B7. What is the highest level of education you have completed?	140	2.24	Age by education
Total number of respondents with one or more missing values for weighting items	336	4.08	

Not stated consists of Don't know, Refused or Other responses.

Benchmarks

The benchmarks used for weighting across each LGA can be seen in Tables A2.1-6. Benchmarks for education and country of birth have been adjusted so that age by region totals are consistent across benchmarks.

Table A2.1 Greater Bendigo – Population benchmarks used for calibration

Benchmark category		Population proportion ¹
Age group	Education	%
3 to 9	-	13.0
14 to 17	-	8.6
18 to 34	Has Bachelors	5.2
	No Bachelors	17.0
35 to 49	Has Bachelors	6.2
	No Bachelors	12.5
50 to 69	Has Bachelors	5.3
	No Bachelors	19.6
70+	Has Bachelors	1.7
	No Bachelors	11.0
Age	Sex	
3 to 17	Male	11.1
	Female	10.5
18+	Male	37.6
	Female	40.8
Age	Country of birth	
3 to 17	-	21.6
18+	Australia	69.4
	Other	9.0

¹ Population benchmarks sourced from ABS Census 2021

Table A2.2 Macedon Ranges – Population benchmarks used for calibration

Benchmark category		Population proportion ¹
Age group	Education	%
3 to 9	-	14.1
14 to 17	-	9.5
18 to 34	Has Bachelors	3.7
	No Bachelors	11.8
35 to 49	Has Bachelors	9.2
	No Bachelors	12.1
50 to 69	Has Bachelors	8.5
	No Bachelors	18.8
70+	Has Bachelors	2.6
	No Bachelors	9.5
Age	Sex	
3 to 17	Male	12.1
	Female	11.5
18+	Male	37.5
	Female	38.8
Age	Country of birth	
3 to 17	-	23.7
18+	Australia	63.4
	Other	12.9

¹ Population benchmarks sourced from ABS Census 2021

Table A2.3 Campaspe – Population benchmarks used for calibration

Benchmark category		Population proportion ¹
Age group	Education	%
3 to 9	-	12.1
14 to 17	-	8.8
18 to 34	Has Bachelors	3.0
	No Bachelors	14.8
35 to 49	Has Bachelors	3.7
	No Bachelors	12.8
50 to 69	Has Bachelors	3.7
	No Bachelors	25.2
70+	Has Bachelors	1.0
	No Bachelors	14.9
Age	Sex	
3 to 17	Male	10.8
	Female	10.1
18+	Male	38.9
	Female	40.2
Age	Country of birth	
3 to 17	-	20.9
18+	Australia	71.7
	Other	7.5

¹ Population benchmarks sourced from ABS Census 2021

Table A2.4 Mount Alexander – Population benchmarks used for calibration

Benchmark category		Population proportion ¹
Age group	Education	%
3 to 9	-	9.8
14 to 17	-	7.4
18 to 34	Has Bachelors	2.8
	No Bachelors	10.8
35 to 49	Has Bachelors	8.6
	No Bachelors	10.0
50 to 69	Has Bachelors	12.0
	No Bachelors	21.2
70+	Has Bachelors	5.1
	No Bachelors	12.4
Age	Sex	
3 to 17	Male	9.1
	Female	8.1
18+	Male	41.3
	Female	41.5
Age	Country of birth	
3 to 17	-	17.2
18+	Australia	70.1
	Other	12.7

¹ Population benchmarks sourced from ABS Census 2021

Table A2.5 Central Goldfields – Population benchmarks used for calibration

Benchmark category		Population proportion ¹
Age group	Education	%
3 to 9	-	10.5
14 to 17	-	7.9
18 to 34	Has Bachelors	2.1
	No Bachelors	13.6
35 to 49	Has Bachelors	11.8
	No Bachelors	2.1
50 to 69	Has Bachelors	28.0
	No Bachelors	3.3
70+	Has Bachelors	19.1
	No Bachelors	1.6
Age group	Sex	
3 to 17	Male	9.5
	Female	8.9
18+	Male	39.9
	Female	41.8
Age group	Country of birth	
3 to 17	-	18.4
18+	Australia	72.4
	Other	9.2

¹ Population benchmarks sourced from ABS Census 2021

Table A2.6 Loddon – Population benchmarks used for calibration

Benchmark category		Population proportion ¹
Age group	Education	%
3 to 11	-	11.4
12 to 17	-	8.9
18 to 34	Has Bachelors	2.6
	No Bachelors	12.0
35 to 49	Has Bachelors	3.4
	No Bachelors	7.8
50 to 69	Has Bachelors	4.0
	No Bachelors	31.1
70+	Has Bachelors	1.2
	No Bachelors	17.5
Age	Sex	
3 to 17	Male	9.8
	Female	10.5
18+	Male	43.3
	Female	36.4
Age	Country of birth	
3 to 17	-	20.3
18+	Australia	8.9
	Other	70.8

¹ Population benchmarks sourced from ABS Census 2021

References

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Appendix B: Questionnaire

2025
**Active
Living**
CENSUS



Census Booklet

Help shape a healthier
tomorrow!



Introduction

This survey asks you questions about your health and wellbeing, recreational activities, and use of public open spaces and facilities. This will help us to plan programs, services and infrastructure that meets the needs of the community.

You may find some of these questions to be personal or sensitive. Please be assured that your answers are confidential and anonymous – no individual will be identifiable from the data provided to us.

We strongly encourage you to complete all questions. However, if there are any questions you would prefer not to answer, please leave these blank.



Section A – Demographic Questions

This first set of questions asks you about your household and personal demographic situation.

You may find some of these questions to be personal or sensitive. Please be assured that your answers are confidential and anonymous – no individual will be identifiable from the data provided to us.

We strongly encourage you to complete all questions. However, if there are any questions you would prefer not to answer, please leave these blank.

A1	What Shire or Council area do you live in?	☐ Central Goldfields Shire ☐ Greater Bendigo ☐ Loddon Shire ☐ Macedon Ranges Shire ☐ Mount Alexander Shire ☐ Shire of Campaspe	
A2	What is the suburb or town of your residence?		
A3	What is the postcode of your residence?		
A4	Including yourself, how many people currently live in your household?	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6	☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12+
A5	What is your age?	years old	
A6	Which of the following best describes your current gender identity?	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Gender diverse / Non-binary / Self-described / Other ☐ Prefer not to say	
A7	What sex were you assigned at birth?	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Something else (please specify) ☐ Prefer not to say	
A8	Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? <i>We are asking how you identify so that we can better plan programs, services and public spaces to meet the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.</i>	☐ No Skip to A9 ☐ Yes, Aboriginal ☐ Yes, Torres Strait Islander ☐ Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	

A8a	Do you use an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation for health and wellbeing care?	☐ Yes Skip to A9 ☐ No
A8b	Why not?	
A9	Is English your main language?	☐ Yes ☐ No <i>(please specify)</i>
A10	In which country were you born?	☐ Australia ☐ Other <i>(please specify)</i>
A11	Do you currently identify as LGBTQIA+?	☐ Yes ☐ No
A12	What is the highest level of education you have completed?	☐ Bachelor Degree or higher ☐ TAFE / trade school / diploma ☐ Completed Year 12 ☐ On the job training ☐ Have not finished year 12 and no longer in school ☐ Still in school
A13	In the last week, did you have a job of any kind?	☐ Yes, work for payment or profit ☐ Yes, but currently on holidays, on paid leave, on strike or temporarily stood down ☐ Yes, unpaid work in a family business ☐ Yes, other unpaid work <i>(please specify)</i> ☐ No, do not have a job
A14	Given your current needs and financial responsibilities, would you say that you and your family are...	☐ Prosperous (well off) ☐ Very comfortable ☐ Reasonably comfortable ☐ Just getting along ☐ Poor ☐ Very poor
A15	Which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your household in the last 12 months?	☐ Enough of the kinds of food we want to eat ☐ Enough but not always the kinds of food we want ☐ Sometimes not enough to eat ☐ Often not enough to eat

A16	<i>For these statements, please tell us whether the statement was often true, sometimes true, or never true for your household in the last 12 months:</i>	Often true	Sometimes true	Never true
A16a	We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.	☐	☐	☐
A16b	The food we bought just didn't last, and we didn't have money to get more.	☐	☐	☐
A16c	We couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.	☐	☐	☐
Skip to Question A21 if you selected "never true" for all statements in Question A16 AND "enough" foods in Question A15				
A17	In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?	☐ Yes ☐ No Skip to A18		
A17a	How often did this happen?	☐ Almost every month ☐ Some months but not every month ☐ Only 1 or 2 months		
A18	In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?	☐ Yes ☐ No		
A19	In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because there wasn't enough money for food?	☐ Yes ☐ No		
Skip to Question A21 if you responded "no" to Questions A17, A18 and A19				
A20	In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?	☐ Yes ☐ No Skip to A21		
A20a	How often did this happen?	☐ Almost every month ☐ Some months but not every month ☐ Only 1 or 2 months		
A21	Do you ever need someone to help you with, or be with you for, self-care activities, body movement activities and/or communication activities? (choose all that apply)	☐ No ☐ No, I do not need help with daily activities, however I have been diagnosed with a disability ☐ Yes, need help with self-care activities ☐ Yes, need help with body movement activities ☐ Yes, need help with communication activities		
A22	Are you covered by any of these concession cards? (choose all that apply)	☐ Health Care Card ☐ Pensioner Concession Card ☐ Commonwealth Seniors Health Card ☐ Veterans Affairs Treatment Entitled Card ☐ None of these		

Section B – Movement and nutrition behaviours

The next set of questions asks about your movement and nutrition behaviours.

B1	How many serves of vegetables, legumes or beans do you usually eat each day? <i>A 'serve' of vegetables is 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables or 1 cup of salad vegetables and a serve of legumes or beans is 1/2 cup of cooked, dried or canned beans, peas or lentils.</i> 	serves
B2	How many serves of fruit do you usually eat each day? <i>A 'serve' is 1 medium piece or 2 small pieces of fruit or 1 cup of diced pieces.</i> 	serves
B3	Health experts say that you should eat at least 5 serves of vegetables a day. If you don't do this, what is the main reason why not?	
B4	Health experts say you should eat at least 2 serves of fruit a day. If you don't do this, what is the main reason why not?	
B5	How many litres or cups of water do you usually drink in a day?	litres cups
B6	How often do you consume cordial, soft drinks, flavoured mineral water, energy or sports drinks?	☐ Every day ☐ Several times per week ☐ About once a week ☐ About once a fortnight ☐ About once a month ☐ Less often than once per month ☐ Never

B7	During the last 7 days, on how many days did you do vigorous physical activities like heavy lifting, digging, aerobics, or fast bicycling?	☐ None Skip to B9 ☐ 1 day ☐ 2 days ☐ 3 days ☐ 4 days ☐ 5 days ☐ 6 days ☐ Every day				
B8	How much time did you usually spend doing vigorous physical activities on one of those days?	hours minutes				
B9	During the last 7 days, on how many days did you do moderate physical activities like carrying light loads, bicycling at a regular pace, doubles tennis, or brisk walking?	☐ None Skip to B11 ☐ 1 day ☐ 2 days ☐ 3 days ☐ 4 days ☐ 5 days ☐ 6 days ☐ Every day				
B10	How much time did you usually spend doing moderate physical activities on one of those days?	hours minutes				
B11	How often do you do physical activities in your own time that strengthen your muscles (i.e. activities that are not carried out as part of your job)? <i>This includes resistance training such as free weights, using weight machines and exercises like push ups / sit ups along with other tasks you may do around the home such as lifting, carrying or digging. Include all such activities even if you have included them before.</i>	days per week days per month <i>(if less than once a month, record 0)</i>				
B12	During the last 7 days, what do you estimate was the average time per day you spent on screens (e.g., TV, computer, digital tablets) in your free time? Do not include time on screens for work or education.	hours minutes				
B13	During the last 7 days, on average, how much time did you sleep per night?	hours minutes				
B14	Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
B14a	I feel that accessing healthy food and drinks in my local area is easy for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B14b	I feel that being physically active in my local area is easy for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B15	How often do you feel safe and secure in your local area?			☐ Always ☐ Most of the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely				
B16	How often do you walk or cycle to get to and from places?	Daily	4-6 times a week	1-3 times a week	2-3 times a month	Once a month	Once or twice in last 3 months	Less often
B16a	Walk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B16b	Cycle	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B17	During most weeks, how do you travel to your place of work or education? (choose all that apply)			☐ Public transport ☐ Car – as a driver ☐ Car – as a passenger ☐ Truck ☐ Taxi or ride-share service ☐ Motorbike or motor scooter ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walk only ☐ Work/school at home ☐ Other (please specify) ☐ I don't work/not studying				
B18	In the last 12 months, have you participated in physical activities as often as you would like?			☐ Yes Skip to C1 ☐ No				
B19	What are the reasons why you have not done physical activities as often as you would like? (choose all that apply)			☐ Too busy / not enough time ☐ Lack of social support (e.g., no encouragement, no one to go with) ☐ Personal or cultural reasons (please name) ☐ Safety (e.g., poor lighting, remote venue / facility) ☐ Unsure about what activities are available ☐ No cool or shaded areas to exercise locally during hot weather ☐ Poor health / medical condition ☐ Disability ☐ Lack of transport ☐ Cost ☐ Other reason (please specify) 				

Section C – Recreation behaviours, and use of public facilities and open spaces

Next we want to hear about your recreation and use of public facilities and open spaces. This will help us to plan for and improve facilities and spaces to suit you.

C1	In the last 12 months, did you take part in any physical activities for sport, exercise or for recreation?	☐ Yes ☐ No Skip to C45				
C2	In the last 12 months, how many physical activities did you take part in for sport, exercise, or for recreation?	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 or more				
C3	Please select the main physical activity you have taken part in over the last 12 months from the list of physical activities on page 10 and record the number.					
C4	If "other", please specify which is the main physical activity you have taken part in over the last 12 months.					
C5	Approximately, how many times in total have you done this activity during the last 12 months? (including practice or training)	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice every 3 months ☐ Less often				
C6	What is the name of the facility, venue, or place where you took part in this activity most often?					
C7	What is the name of the suburb or town where the facility, venue or place is located?					
C8	How would you rate the quality and accessibility of the facility, venue or place where you took part in this activity?	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
C8a	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C8b	Accessibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C9	How did you get to this activity?	☐ Public transport ☐ Taxi / Uber ☐ Car ☐ Motorbike or motor scooter ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walked ☐ Other (please specify) 				

List of physical activities

No.	Physical activity	No.	Physical activity
1	Active play (at playgrounds / play centre)	30	Golf
2	Air sports / aviation / drone racing / hang-gliding	31	Gymnastics
3	Aqua aerobics	32	Hockey (indoor / outdoor)
4	Archery	33	Horse racing / harness racing
5	Athletics / track and field	34	Horse riding / equestrian activities / polo
6	Australian rules football (AFL)	35	Jogging / running
7	Badminton	36	Lawn bowls
8	Baseball	37	Martial arts / tai chi
9	Basketball (indoor / outdoor)	38	Minigolf
10	Billiards / snooker / pool	39	Motor sports (cars and bikes)
11	Bocce / boules / pétanque	40	Netball (indoor / outdoor)
12	Boxing	41	Orienteering
13	Bush walking / hiking	42	Rock climbing / abseiling / caving
14	Caneball	43	Rugby league / rugby union / touch football
15	Canoeing / kayaking / rowing / dragon boating / paddle boarding	44	Sailing
16	Carpet bowls	45	Shooting sports
17	Cheerleading	46	Roller sports / inline hockey / roller derby / roller skating
18	Cricket (all types)	47	Skateboarding / scooting
19	Croquet	48	Soccer (indoor / outdoor)
20	Cycling: Mountain bike riding	49	Squash / racquetball
21	Cycling: BMX	50	Swimming
22	Cycling: Road and sport cycling	51	Sword sports / fencing / kendo / swordcraft
23	Cycling: General cycling for recreation or transport	52	Table tennis
24	Dancing / ballet / calisthenics	53	Tennis (indoor / outdoor)
25	Fishing	54	Tenpin bowling
26	Fitness: Gym	55	Triathlons / ironmans
27	Fitness: Indoor group activities / aerobics / Zumba / yoga / pilates	56	Volleyball (all types)
28	Fitness: Outdoor fitness / personal training / group activities	57	Walking
29	Frisbee / boomerang throwing	58	Water-skiing / power boating
		59	Weight lifting / body building
		60	Other

C10	How many kilometres do / did you travel to get to this activity?	km				
Skip to C19 if you have not taken part in any more physical activities						
C11	Please select the physical activity you have taken part in second most often over the last 12 months from the list of physical activities on page 10 and record the number.					
C12	If "other", please specify which physical activity you have taken part in second most often over the last 12 months.					
C13	Approximately, how many times in total have you done this activity during the last 12 months? (including practice or training)	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice every 3 months ☐ Less often				
C14	What is the name of the facility, venue, or place where you took part in this activity most often?					
C15	What is the name of the suburb or town where the facility, venue or place is located?					
C16	How would you rate the quality and accessibility of the facility, venue or place where you took part in this activity?	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
C16a	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C16b	Accessibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C17	How did you get to this activity?	☐ Public transport ☐ Taxi / Uber ☐ Car ☐ Motorbike or motor scooter ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walked ☐ Other (please specify) 				
C18	How many kilometres do / did you travel to get to this activity?	km				
C19	Thank you for providing those details regarding the physical activities that you took part in most often over the last 12 months. Is there anything else that you would like to let us know about your participation in these activities, or in regard to any additional physical activities that you also took part in? (for example, travel requirements, cost, facilities/venues/locations, availability and accessibility of options etc.)					

C20	If you mentioned that you took part in more than two physical activities over the past year, would you like to answer some more questions about those extra activities?	☐ Yes ☐ No Skip to C45				
C21	Please select the physical activity you have taken part in third most often over the last 12 months from the list of physical activities on page 10 and record the number.					
C22	If "other", please specify which physical activity you have taken part in third most often over the last 12 months.					
C23	Approximately, how many times in total have you done this activity during the last 12 months? (including practice or training)	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice every 3 months ☐ Less often				
C24	What is the name of the facility, venue, or place where you took part in this activity most often?					
C25	What is the name of the suburb or town where the facility, venue or place is located?					
C26	<i>How would you rate the quality and accessibility of the facility, venue or place where you took part in this activity?</i>	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
C26a	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C26b	Accessibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C27	How did you get to this activity?	☐ Public transport ☐ Taxi / Uber ☐ Car ☐ Motorbike or motor scooter ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walked ☐ Other (please specify) 				
C28	How many kilometres do / did you travel to get to this activity?	km				
Skip to C45 if you have not taken part in any more physical activities						
C29	Please select the physical activity you have taken part in fourth most often over the last 12 months from the list of physical activities on page 10 and record the number.					
C30	If "other", please specify which physical activity you have taken part in fourth most often over the last 12 months.					

C31	Approximately, how many times in total have you done this activity during the last 12 months? (including practice or training)	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice every 3 months ☐ Less often				
C32	What is the name of the facility, venue, or place where you took part in this activity most often?					
C33	What is the name of the suburb or town where the facility, venue or place is located?					
C34	How would you rate the quality and accessibility of the facility, venue or place where you took part in this activity?	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
C34a	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C34b	Accessibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C35	How did you get to this activity?	☐ Public transport ☐ Taxi / Uber ☐ Car ☐ Motorbike or motor scooter ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walked ☐ Other (please specify) 				
C36	How many kilometres do / did you travel to get to this activity?	km				
Skip to C45 if you have not taken part in any more physical activities						
C37	Please select the physical activity you have taken part in fifth most often over the last 12 months from the list of physical activities on page 10 and record the number.					
C38	If "other", please specify which physical activity you have taken part in fifth most often over the last 12 months.					
C39	Approximately, how many times in total have you done this activity during the last 12 months? (including practice or training)	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice every 3 months ☐ Less often				

C40	What is the name of the facility, venue, or place where you took part in this activity most often?							
C41	What is the name of the suburb or town where the facility, venue or place is located?							
C42	How would you rate the quality and accessibility of the facility, venue or place where you took part in this activity?	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent		
C42a	Quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
C42b	Accessibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
C43	How did you get to this activity?	☐ Public transport ☐ Taxi / Uber ☐ Car ☐ Motorbike or motor scooter ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walked ☐ Other (please specify) 						
C44	How many kilometres do / did you travel to get to this activity?	km						
C45	In the last 12 months, how often have you used the following in your area?	Daily	4-6 times a week	1-3 times a week	2-3 times a month	Once a month	Once or twice in last 3 months	Less often / never
C45a	Public open spaces	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C45b	Off-road walking and cycling tracks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C45c	Footpaths	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C46	Which of the following types of public facilities or open spaces have you used in your area in the last 12 months? (choose all that apply)	☐ Swimming pools / splash parks ☐ Indoor sports / leisure / fitness centres ☐ Sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms ☐ Halls / community centres ☐ After hours usage of education facilities (e.g., school, TAFE, university) ☐ Parks ☐ Community gardens ☐ Hard courts (e.g., netball / tennis) ☐ Skateparks / BMX ☐ Playgrounds ☐ Other (please specify) ☐ Have not used public facilities and open spaces in my area in the last 12 months Skip to C48						

C47	What are the reasons why you have used public facilities and open spaces in your area in the last 12 months? (choose all that apply)	☐ Exercise / health and fitness ☐ Socialising with family / friends ☐ For fun / enjoyment ☐ Commuting (i.e., to get from a to b) ☐ Exercising the dog ☐ Organised sport (e.g., cricket or netball for a club) ☐ Unstructured physical recreation activities (e.g., going for a walk, playing ball games with friends) ☐ For time to myself ☐ For my mental health and wellbeing ☐ Getting back to nature ☐ Entertaining kids / watching kids' activities ☐ Community event / performance ☐ Taking part in cultural activities or events on Country ☐ Some other reason (please specify)
C48	What improvements would encourage you to use public facilities and open spaces more often?	
C49	Where would you like to see these improvements made? (e.g., name of facility, venue or place)	



Section D – General health and risk behaviours

This last set of questions asks about your general health and risk-taking behaviours.

You may find some of these questions to be personal or sensitive. Please be assured that your answers are confidential and anonymous - no individual will be identifiable from the data provided to us.

We strongly encourage you to complete all questions. However, if there are any questions you would prefer not to answer, please leave these blank.

D1	How tall are you without shoes? (height in centimetres) – <i>OPTIONAL</i>	cm					
D2	What is your weight without clothes or shoes? (weight in kilograms) – <i>OPTIONAL</i>	kg					
D3	In general, would you say your health is...	☐ Excellent ☐ Very good ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor					
D4	<i>Please indicate for each of the five statements which is closest to how you have been feeling over the last two weeks.</i>						
		All of the time	Most of the time	More than half of the time	Less than half of the time	Some of the time	At no time
D4a	I have felt cheerful and in good spirits	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D4b	I have felt calm and relaxed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D4c	I have felt active and vigorous	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D4d	I woke up feeling fresh and rested	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D4e	My daily life has been filled with things that interest me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D5	Overall, how satisfied are you with life as a whole these days? <i>This question asks about how satisfied you feel about life in general on a scale from 0 to 10. 0 means you feel 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'completely satisfied'.</i>	☐ 0 - Not at all satisfied ☐ 6 ☐ 1 ☐ 7 ☐ 2 ☐ 8 ☐ 3 ☐ 9 ☐ 4 ☐ 10 - Completely satisfied ☐ 5					
D6	Do you feel valued by society?	☐ No, not at all ☐ Not often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Yes, definitely					
Complete D7 to D10 only if age 18 years or above							
D7	Which of the following best describes your smoking status?	☐ Smoke daily ☐ Smoke occasionally ☐ Don't smoke now, but used to ☐ Tried a few times but never smoked regularly ☐ Never smoked					

D8	Which of the following best describes your vaping status?	☐ Vape daily ☐ Vape occasionally ☐ Don't vape now, but used to ☐ Tried a few times but never vaped regularly ☐ Never vaped
D9	In the last 12 months, how often did you have more than four (for women) or five (for men) standard drinks in a day?	☐ Every day ☐ 3-6 days a week ☐ 1-2 days a week ☐ 1-3 days a month ☐ Less than once a month ☐ Never
D10	In the last 12 months, how often did you gamble?	☐ Every day ☐ 3-6 days a week ☐ 1-2 days a week ☐ 1-3 days a month ☐ Less than once a month ☐ Never Skip to D11
D10a	In the last 12 months, what type/s of gambling did you participate in? (choose all that apply)	☐ Casino table games ☐ Online casino games ☐ Sports betting ☐ Race betting ☐ Electronic gaming machines ☐ Keno or bingo ☐ Instant scratch tickets ☐ Lottery ☐ Private betting ☐ Other (please specify)
D11	Do you have any other comments or feedback about what would help you and/or your family be healthier and more active?	

Section E – Children

E1	Do you have any children aged 17 or younger living with you at least 50% of the time?	☐ Yes ☐ No Skip to end of survey
E2	How many children aged between 3-17 years live with you at least 50% of the time?	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ More than 5
Answer the following questions for up to five children between 3-17 years of age, starting with the oldest first		
Child number →		1
E3	What is your child's age?	years old
E4	Which of the following best describes your child's current gender identity?	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Gender diverse / Non-binary / Self-described / Other ☐ Prefer not to say
E5	What sex was your child assigned at birth?	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Something else (please specify) ☐ Prefer not to say
E6	Does your child identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? <i>We are asking how you identify so that we can better plan programs, services and public spaces to meet the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.</i>	☐ No Skip to E7 ☐ Yes, Aboriginal ☐ Yes, Torres Strait Islander ☐ Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
E6a	Does your child use an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation for health and wellbeing care?	☐ Yes Skip to E7 ☐ No
E6b	Why not?	
E7	Is English your child's main language?	☐ Yes ☐ No (please specify)
E8	In which country was your child born?	☐ Australia ☐ Other (please specify)

Child number →		1
E9	Does your child currently identify as LGBTQIA+?	☐ Yes ☐ No
E10	What is the highest level of education your child has completed?	☐ Bachelor Degree or higher ☐ TAFE / trade school / diploma ☐ Completed Year 12 ☐ On the job training ☐ Has not finished year 12 and no longer in school ☐ Still in school ☐ Has not started school
E11	Does your child ever need someone to help them with, or be with them for, self-care activities, body movement activities and/or communication activities? (choose all that apply)	☐ No ☐ No, my child does not need help with daily activities, however they have been diagnosed with a disability ☐ Yes, need help with self-care activities ☐ Yes, need help with body movement activities ☐ Yes, need help with communication activities
The next set of questions asks about your child's movement and nutrition behaviours.		
E12	How many serves of vegetables, legumes or beans does your child usually eat each day? A 'serve' of vegetables is 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables or 1 cup of salad vegetables and a serve of legumes or beans is 1/2 cup of cooked, dried or canned beans, peas or lentils.	serves 
E13	How many serves of fruit does your child usually eat each day? A 'serve' is 1 medium piece or 2 small pieces of fruit or 1 cup of diced pieces.	serves 
E14	Health experts say children should eat at least 5 serves of vegetables a day. If they don't do this, what is the main reason why not?	
E15	Health experts say children aged 4-8 years should eat at least 1.5 serves of fruit a day and children aged 9 years and over should eat at least 2 serves of fruit a day. If they don't do this, what is the main reason why not?	

	2	3	4	5
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
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	serves	serves	serves	serves
	serves	serves	serves	serves

Child number →		1
E16	How many litres or cups of water does your child usually drink in a day?	litres cups
E17	How often does your child consume cordial, soft drinks, flavoured mineral water, energy or sports drinks?	☐ Every day ☐ Several times per week ☐ About once a week ☐ About once a fortnight ☐ About once a month ☐ Less often than once per month ☐ Never
E18	During the last 7 days, on how many days does your child do vigorous physical activities like heavy lifting, digging, aerobics, or fast bicycling?	☐ None Skip to E20 ☐ 1 day ☐ 2 days ☐ 3 days ☐ 4 days ☐ 5 days ☐ 6 days ☐ Every day
E19	How much time did your child usually spend doing vigorous physical activities on one of those days?	hours minutes
E20	During the last 7 days, on how many days did your child do moderate physical activities like carrying light loads, bicycling at a regular pace, doubles tennis, or brisk walking?	☐ None Skip to E22 ☐ 1 day ☐ 2 days ☐ 3 days ☐ 4 days ☐ 5 days ☐ 6 days ☐ Every day
E21	How much time did your child usually spend doing moderate physical activities on one of those days?	hours minutes
E22	How often does your child do physical activities in their own time that strengthens their muscles (i.e. activities that are not carried out as part of their job)? <i>This includes resistance training such as free weights, using weight machines and exercises like push ups / sit ups along with other tasks they may do around the home such as lifting, carrying or digging. Include all such activities even if you have included them before.</i>	days per week days per month (if less than once a month, record 0)

	2	3	4	5
	litres	litres	litres	litres
	cups	cups	cups	cups
	hours minutes	hours minutes	hours minutes	hours minutes
	hours minutes	hours minutes	hours minutes	hours minutes
	days per week	days per week	days per week	days per week
	days per month	days per month	days per month	days per month

Child number →		1
E23	In the last 7 days, what do you estimate was the average time per day your child spent on screens (e.g., TV, computer, digital tablets) in their free time? Do not include time on screens for work or education.	hours minutes
E24	During the last 7 days, on average, how much time did your child sleep per night?	hours minutes
E25	<i>Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:</i>	
E25a	I feel that accessing healthy food and drinks in my local area is easy for my child	☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
E25b	I feel that being physically active in my local area is easy for my child	☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
E26	To what extent do you agree that your child is safe in your local area?	☐ Definitely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Definitely disagree
E27	<i>How often does your child walk or cycle to get to and from places?</i>	
E27a	Walk	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice in last 3 months ☐ Less often
E27b	Cycle	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice in last 3 months ☐ Less often

	2	3	4	5
	hours minutes	hours minutes	hours minutes	hours minutes
	hours minutes	hours minutes	hours minutes	hours minutes
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
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	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐

Child number →		1
E28	Thinking about most weeks during the school term, which of the following ways does your child go to and/or from school? (choose all that apply)	☐ They are driven to or from school in a car ☐ Public transport with an adult present (e.g., bus, train, tram, ferry) ☐ Public transport without an adult present (e.g., bus, train, tram, ferry) ☐ Walk or ride (e.g., bike, scooter, skateboard) with an adult present ☐ Walk or ride (e.g., bike, scooter, skateboard) without an adult present ☐ Other (please specify) ☐ My child does not attend school
E29	In the last 12 months, has your child taken part in physical activities as often as they would like?	☐ Yes Skip to E31 ☐ No
E30	What are the reasons why your child has not done physical activities as often as they would like? (choose all that apply)	☐ Too busy / not enough time ☐ Lack of social support (e.g., no encouragement, no one to go with) ☐ Personal or cultural reasons (please name) ☐ Safety (e.g., poor lighting, remote venue / facility) ☐ Unsure about what activities are available ☐ No cool or shaded areas to exercise locally during hot weather ☐ Poor health / medical condition ☐ Disability ☐ Lack of transport ☐ Cost ☐ Other reason (please specify)
Next we want to hear about your child's recreation and use of public facilities and open spaces. This will help us to plan for and improve facilities and spaces to suit them.		
E31	In the last 12 months, did your child take part in any physical activities for sport, exercise or for recreation?	☐ Yes ☐ No Skip to E75
E32	In the last 12 months, how many physical activities did your child take part in for sport, exercise, or for recreation?	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ More than 4

[illegible]

Child number →		1
E33	Please select the main physical activity your child has taken part in over the last 12 months from the list of physical activities on page 10 and record the number.	
E34	If "other", please specify which is the main physical activity your child has taken part in over the last 12 months.	
E35	Approximately, how many times in total has your child done this activity during the last 12 months? (including practice or training)	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice every 3 months ☐ Less often
E36	What is the name of the facility, venue, or place where your child took part in this activity most often?	
E37	What is the name of the suburb or town where the facility, venue or place is located?	
E38	<i>How would you rate the quality and accessibility of the facility, venue or place where your child took part in this activity?</i>	
E38a	Quality	☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent
E38b	Accessibility	☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent
E39	How did your child get to this activity?	☐ Public transport ☐ Taxi / Uber ☐ Car ☐ Motorbike or motor scooter ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walked ☐ Other (please specify)

[illegible]

Child number →		1
E40	How many kilometres did your child travel to get to this activity?	km
Skip to Question E49 if your child has not taken part in any more physical activities		
E41	Please select the physical activity your child has taken part in second most often over the last 12 months from the list of physical activities on page 10 and record the number.	
E42	If "other", please specify which physical activity your child has taken part in second most often over the last 12 months.	
E43	Approximately, how many times in total has your child done this activity during the last 12 months? (including practice or training)	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice every 3 months ☐ Less often
E44	What is the name of the facility, venue, or place where your child took part in this activity most often?	
E45	What is the name of the suburb or town where the facility, venue or place is located?	
E46	How would you rate the quality and accessibility of the facility, venue or place where your child took part in this activity?	
E46a	Quality	☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent
E46b	Accessibility	☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent
E47	How did your child get to this activity?	☐ Public transport ☐ Taxi / Uber ☐ Car ☐ Motorbike or motor scooter ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walked ☐ Other (please specify)

[illegible]

Child number →		1
E48	How many kilometres did your child travel to get to this activity?	km
E49	Thank you for providing those details regarding the main physical activities that your child took part in most often over the last 12 months. Is there anything else that you would like to let us know about their participation in these activities, or in regard to any additional physical activities that your child also took part in? (for example, travel requirements, cost, facilities/venues/locations, availability and accessibility of options etc.)	
Skip to Question E75 if your child has not taken part in any more physical activities		
E50	If you mentioned that your child took part in more than two physical activities over the past year, would you like to answer some more questions about those extra activities?	☐ Yes ☐ No Skip to E75
E51	Please select the physical activity your child has taken part in third most often over the last 12 months from the list of physical activities on page 10 and record the number.	
E52	If "other", please specify which physical activity your child has taken part in third most often over the last 12 months.	
E53	Approximately, how many times in total has your child done this activity during the last 12 months? (including practice or training)	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice every 3 months ☐ Less often
E54	What is the name of the facility, venue, or place where your child took part in this activity most often?	
E55	What is the name of the suburb or town where the facility, venue or place is located?	
E56	How would you rate the quality and accessibility of the facility, venue or place where your child took part in this activity?	
E56a	Quality	☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent
E56b	Accessibility	☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

Child number →		1
E57	How did your child get to this activity?	☐ Public transport ☐ Taxi / Uber ☐ Car ☐ Motorbike or motor scooter ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walked ☐ Other (please specify)
E58	How many kilometres did your child travel to get to this activity?	km
Skip to Question E75 if your child has not taken part in any more physical activities		
E59	Please select the physical activity your child has taken part in fourth most often over the last 12 months from the list of physical activities on page 10 and record the number.	
E60	If "other", please specify which physical activity your child has taken part in fourth most often over the last 12 months.	
E61	Approximately, how many times in total has your child done this activity during the last 12 months? (including practice or training)	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice every 3 months ☐ Less often
E62	What is the name of the facility, venue, or place where your child took part in this activity most often?	
E63	What is the name of the suburb or town where the facility, venue or place is located?	
E64	How would you rate the quality and accessibility of the facility, venue or place where your child took part in this activity?	
E64a	Quality	☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent
E64b	Accessibility	☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

[illegible]

Child number →		1
E65	How did your child get to this activity?	☐ Public transport ☐ Taxi / Uber ☐ Car ☐ Motorbike or motor scooter ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walked ☐ Other (please specify)
E66	How many kilometres did your child travel to get to this activity?	km
Skip to Question E75 if your child has not taken part in any more physical activities		
E67	Please select the physical activity your child has taken part in fifth most often over the last 12 months from the list of physical activities on page 10 and record the number.	
E68	If "other", please specify which physical activity your child has taken part in fifth most often over the last 12 months.	
E69	Approximately, how many times in total has your child done this activity during the last 12 months? (including practice or training)	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice every 3 months ☐ Less often
E70	What is the name of the facility, venue, or place where your child took part in this activity most often?	
E71	What is the name of the suburb or town where the facility, venue or place is located?	
E72	How would you rate the quality and accessibility of the facility, venue or place where your child took part in this activity?	
E72a	Quality	☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent
E72b	Accessibility	☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

[illegible]

Child number →		1
E73	How did your child get to this activity?	☐ Public transport ☐ Taxi / Uber ☐ Car ☐ Motorbike or motor scooter ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walked ☐ Other (please specify)
E74	How many kilometres did your child travel to get to this activity?	km
E75	In the last 12 months, how often has your child used the following in your area?	
E75a	Public open spaces	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice in the last 3 months ☐ Less often / Never
E75b	Off-road walking and cycling tracks	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice in the last 3 months ☐ Less often / Never
E75c	Footpaths	☐ Daily ☐ 4-6 times a week ☐ 1-3 times a week ☐ 2-3 times a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Once or twice in the last 3 months ☐ Less often / Never

[illegible]

Child number →		1
E76	Which of the following types of public facilities or open spaces has your child used in your area in the last 12 months? (choose all that apply)	☐ Swimming pools / splash parks ☐ Indoor sports / leisure / fitness centres ☐ Sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms ☐ Halls / community centres ☐ After hours usage of education facilities (e.g., school, TAFE, university) ☐ Parks ☐ Community gardens ☐ Hard courts (e.g., netball / tennis) ☐ Skateparks / BMX ☐ Playgrounds ☐ Other (please specify) ☐ Have not used public facilities and open spaces in my area in the last 12 months Skip to E78
E77	What are the reasons why your child has used public facilities and open spaces in your area in the last 12 months? (choose all that apply)	☐ Exercise / health and fitness ☐ Socialising with family / friends ☐ For fun / enjoyment ☐ Commuting (i.e., to get from a to b) ☐ Exercising the dog ☐ Organised sport (e.g., cricket or netball for a club) ☐ Unstructured physical recreation activities (e.g., going for a walk, playing ball games with friends) ☐ For time to myself ☐ For my mental health and wellbeing ☐ Getting back to nature ☐ Entertaining kids / watching kids' activities ☐ Community event / performance ☐ Taking part in cultural activities or events on Country ☐ Some other reason (please specify)
E78	What improvements would encourage your child to use public facilities and open spaces more often?	

	2	3	4	5
	☐	☐	☐	☐
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	☐ 	☐ 	☐ 	☐

Child number →		1
E79	Where would you like to see these improvements made? (e.g., name of facility, venue or place)	
<i>This last set of questions asks about your child's general health. You may find these questions to be personal or sensitive. Please be assured that your answers are confidential and anonymous – no individual will be identifiable from the data provided to us. We strongly encourage you to complete all questions. However, if you would prefer not to answer, please leave these blank.</i>		
E80	How tall is your child without shoes? (height in centimetres) – OPTIONAL	cm
E81	What is your child's weight without clothes or shoes? (weight in kilograms) – OPTIONAL	kg
E82	In general, would you say your child's health is...	☐ Excellent ☐ Very good ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor



	2	3	4	5
	cm	cm	cm	cm
	kg	kg	kg	kg



The Healthy Loddon Campaspe initiative is supported by the Victorian State Government





Appendix C: Detailed tables

Table C1 Population by LGA

	Total %	Central Goldfields Shire %	Greater Bendigo %	Loddon Shire %	Macedon Ranges Shire %	Mount Alexander Shire %	Shire of Campaspe %
Unweighted base¹	8,244	643	4,158	642	890	859	1,052
Sex							
Males	49.2	49.5	48.8	54.5	47.9	50.7	49.9
Females	50.8	50.5	51.2	45.5	52.1	49.3	50.1
Age							
Males, 3 to 11	13.5	11.5	13.9	10.5	15.7	10.0	12.5
Males, 12 to 17	9.3	8.6	9.1	7.8	10.4	8.1	9.4
Males, 18 to 34	13.3	10.2	19.0	13.7	4.3	8.0	10.8
Males, 35 to 49	16.8	11.6	17.7	9.7	17.5	19.1	14.8
Males, 50 to 69	28.8	31.7	24.8	34.1	30.8	34.7	33.7
Males, 70+	18.4	26.4	15.4	24.2	21.3	20.1	18.9
Females, 3 to 11	12.4	10.4	12.6	12.2	13.4	9.7	12.1
Females, 12 to 17	8.5	7.7	8.4	10.4	9.2	6.8	8.6
Females, 18 to 34	21.3	21.5	24.7	15.6	12.5	19.5	24.7
Females, 35 to 49	21.4	15.3	20.1	12.9	30.0	18.3	18.5
Females, 50 to 69	25.9	30.7	24.4	37.7	27.4	30.6	22.4
Females, 70+	10.6	14.4	9.8	11.1	7.5	15.1	13.6

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from the base sizes.

Table C2 Health behaviours by LGA

	Total	Central Goldfields Shire	Greater Bendigo	Loddon Shire	Macedon Ranges Shire	Mount Alexander Shire	Shire of Campaspe
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base¹	8,244	643	4,158	642	890	859	1,052
Health and wellbeing							
General health - Fair / poor	21.2	24.0	21.2	17.8	17.4	23.3	24.6
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6 out of 10) ²	34.1	32.1	35.0	34.4	32.2	29.0	36.9
Does not feel valued by society ²	25.0	25.7	26.7	24.1	25.2	20.4	21.6
Poor mental wellbeing ²	27.3	17.7	28.3	18.8	28.4	25.3	28.9
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	61.6	69.3	62.2	66.6	59.1	55.5	64.0
Health behaviours							
Does not meet fruit recommendations	53.0	57.2	54.8	56.6	48.9	43.7	55.9
Does not meet vegetable recommendations	90.3	93.3	91.4	89.0	86.4	88.9	91.9
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	29.6	30.4	31.0	28.3	25.3	28.1	31.8
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	51.7	49.8	51.2	59.4	47.7	51.8	58.0
Does not meet screen recommendations	54.3	49.0	58.0	54.3	48.6	54.2	52.5
Does not meet sleep recommendations	30.0	31.7	31.3	31.3	27.3	26.4	31.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	13.7	20.5	15.1	14.3	8.6	6.4	17.7
Does not meet water recommendations	67.4	66.3	65.4	71.0	69.5	75.5	65.9
Other risk factors							
Current smoker ²	7.2	8.5	7.8	9.8	2.6	9.9	8.8
Current vaper ²	3.8	3.4	4.2	3.1	2.6	2.7	5.0
Consumed more than 4 standard drinks on at least one occasion in the last 12 months ²	58.1	61.6	57.6	61.0	56.7	56.8	60.5
Gambled in past 12 months ²	34.9	43.7	36.7	35.0	30.2	20.2	41.1
Food security							
Low or very low food security ²	17.9	22.5	21.0	17.0	9.6	9.1	22.4

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from the base sizes.

² Reported only by respondents aged 18 years and over.

Table C3 Activities – Walking

	Total	Central Goldfields Shire	Greater Bendigo	Loddon Shire	Macedon Ranges Shire	Mount Alexander Shire	Shire of Campaspe
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities	11,977	842	6,097	891	1,411	1,416	1,320
% of respondents undertaking activity	16.6	17.2	17.4	14.6	14.9	19.8	7.3
# respondents undertaking activity	1,972	122	1,116	113	190	253	178
Frequency of participation							
Heavy - Once a week or more	84.2	74.8	82.8	88.4	88.8	83.3	86.0
Medium - One to three times a month	10.5	19.8	11.0	8.4	8.0	11.9	7.6
Light - Less often	5.4	5.4	6.2	3.2	3.2	4.8	6.4
Travel mode							
Car	29.2	29.4	28.9	14.8	25.0	42.4	28.0
Walking	67.7	69.8	67.9	81.6	73.9	54.5	65.3
Bike	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.0
Public transport / taxi / Uber	1.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	2.4
Other	2.0	0.8	1.8	3.1	0.9	3.0	4.3
Distance to activity							
Average distance travelled to activity	4.2	3.9	3.1	3.4	4.2	9.9	4.1
Facility quality rating							
Good, excellent	69.1	51.0	67.5	62.5	76.2	73.2	67.8
Average	24.4	40.8	25.4	32.2	18.5	19.8	26.4
Very poor, poor	6.6	8.2	7.0	5.3	5.3	7.0	5.8
Mean score (out of 5)	3.9	3.5	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.8
Facility accessibility rating							
Good, excellent	74.7	58.7	73.7	72.0	78.9	73.9	79.8
Average	18.8	38.4	18.5	23.9	17.2	18.4	14.5
Very poor, poor	6.5	2.8	7.9	4.1	3.9	7.6	5.7
Mean score (out of 5)	3.9	3.7	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.0

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region who had participated in the nominated activity. Frequency of participation and all average / mean rating results exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses due to the derived nature of the variable. Travel mode and rating scale results are based from all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C4 Activities – Swimming

	Total	Central Goldfields Shire	Greater Bendigo	Loddon Shire	Macedon Ranges Shire	Mount Alexander Shire	Shire of Campaspe
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities	11,977	842	6,097	891	1,411	1,416	1,320
% of respondents undertaking activity	7.6	6.1	7.6	6.3	9.4	6.7	6.0
# respondents undertaking activity	1030	60	517	69	152	136	96
Frequency of participation							
Heavy - Once a week or more	69.1	55.0	68.0	85.4	72.2	63.0	72.4
Medium - One to three times a month	16.0	32.3	14.3	6.6	16.2	25.6	12.2
Light - Less often	14.9	12.7	17.6	8.0	11.6	11.3	15.5
Travel mode							
Car	86.4	90.4	85.8	90.0	92.0	77.2	78.3
Walking	6.3	6.3	8.3	7.8	2.4	10.3	4.1
Bike	2.7	0.0	2.0	1.2	2.6	10.8	1.7
Public transport / taxi / Uber	1.8	1.0	1.9	0.0	0.5	0.5	6.7
Other	2.8	2.3	2.1	0.9	2.5	1.3	9.2
Distance to activity							
Average distance travelled to activity	12.9	13.2	10.0	32.8	13.0	21.1	16.6
Facility quality rating							
Good, excellent	73.7	60.5	80.9	65.9	63.3	67.3	78.9
Average	21.5	33.8	14.9	30.0	31.9	23.3	17.4
Very poor, poor	4.8	5.8	4.3	4.1	4.7	9.4	3.7
Mean score (out of 5)	3.9	3.8	4.1	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.0
Facility accessibility rating							
Good, excellent	75.4	72.7	77.6	58.1	74.6	68.2	76.6
Average	20.0	23.7	17.3	26.3	22.3	22.8	22.5
Very poor, poor	4.6	3.7	5.1	15.6	3.1	9.0	0.9
Mean score (out of 5)	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.5	4.0	3.9	4.1

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region who had participated in the nominated activity. Frequency of participation and all average / mean rating results exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses due to the derived nature of the variable. Travel mode and rating scale results are based from all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C5 Activities – Fitness: Gym

	Total	Central Goldfields Shire	Greater Bendigo	Loddon Shire	Macedon Ranges Shire	Mount Alexander Shire	Shire of Campaspe
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities	11,977	842	6,097	891	1,411	1,416	1,320
% of respondents undertaking activity	7.3	9.5	8.2	4.3	7.2	4.5	6.6
# respondents undertaking activity	870	80	499	38	102	64	87
Frequency of participation							
Heavy - Once a week or more	87.6	97.5	86.8	64.7	93.3	83.3	78.7
Medium - One to three times a month	7.5	2.4	6.6	31.2	4.1	11.4	16.3
Light - Less often	4.9	0.2	6.6	4.1	2.6	5.3	5.0
Travel mode							
Car	79.3	99.4	78.6	64.2	74.5	85.6	80.5
Walking	12.6	0.6	11.8	34.3	16.5	8.0	13.8
Bike	2.3	0.0	3.0	0.0	2.5	2.3	0.3
Public transport / taxi / Uber	0.9	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Other	4.9	0.0	5.0	1.6	6.5	4.1	4.4
Distance to activity							
Average distance travelled to activity	7.9	7.7	6.5	32.6	9.0	11.4	5.7
Facility quality rating							
Good, excellent	84.1	78.1	83.0	67.0	89.5	90.0	78.9
Average	14.4	21.0	15.3	32.1	10.5	6.3	17.7
Very poor, poor	1.5	0.9	1.6	0.9	0.0	3.7	3.3
Mean score (out of 5)	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.0	4.3	4.1	4.1
Facility accessibility rating							
Good, excellent	85.6	79.9	85.1	76.1	90.5	83.0	83.6
Average	11.5	17.6	10.9	23.9	8.3	13.2	14.5
Very poor, poor	2.9	2.5	4.1	-	1.2	3.8	1.9
Mean score (out of 5)	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.4	4.1	4.1

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region who had participated in the nominated activity. Frequency of participation and all average / mean rating results exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses due to the derived nature of the variable. Travel mode and rating scale results are based from all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C6 Activities – Active Play

	Total	Central Goldfields Shire	Greater Bendigo	Loddon Shire	Macedon Ranges Shire	Mount Alexander Shire	Shire of Campaspe
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities	11,977	842	6,097	891	1,411	1,416	1,320
% of respondents undertaking activity	6.3	6.4	6.6	4.7	4.5	5.2	9.1
# respondents undertaking activity	757	54	404	42	64	73	120
Frequency of participation							
Heavy - Once a week or more	62.9	68.4	60.0	49.3	61.0	76.2	70.5
Medium - One to three times a month	21.0	17.3	24.4	18.1	16.4	17.1	15.6
Light - Less often	16.1	14.3	15.7	32.5	22.6	6.6	13.9
Travel mode							
Car	62.8	78.4	58.0	56.7	63.1	72.1	73.3
Walking	30.3	5.5	35.3	34.0	29.2	19.5	22.9
Bike	3.5	-	3.7	0.0	4.7	4.3	2.3
Public transport / taxi / Uber	2.1	5.1	2.1	1.8	3.0	0.8	1.1
Other	1.3	11.0	0.8	7.5	0.0	3.4	0.3
Distance to activity							
Average distance travelled to activity	5.6	4.2	5.4	12.3	5.0	4.5	7.6
Facility quality rating							
Good, excellent	75.6	76.0	71.9	59.0	85.8	71.6	82.3
Average	20.3	19.9	22.5	23.0	13.2	24.2	17.4
Very poor, poor	4.1	4.1	5.6	18.0	0.9	4.2	0.3
Mean score (out of 5)	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.5	4.1	3.9	4.0
Facility accessibility rating							
Good, excellent	80.1	86.4	75.1	83.9	91.6	72.1	88.1
Average	17.6	12.0	22.0	6.7	8.4	23.6	10.9
Very poor, poor	2.3	1.6	2.9	9.3	0.0	4.4	1.0
Mean score (out of 5)	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.2	3.9	4.1

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region who had participated in the nominated activity. Frequency of participation and all average / mean rating results exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses due to the derived nature of the variable. Travel mode and rating scale results are based from all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C7 Activities – Fitness: Indoor group activities / aerobics

	Total	Central Goldfields Shire	Greater Bendigo	Loddon Shire	Macedon Ranges Shire	Mount Alexander Shire	Shire of Campaspe
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities	11,977	842	6,097	891	1,411	1,416	1,320
% of respondents undertaking activity	5.3	4.3	5.2	3.7	6.7	5.8	5.8
# respondents undertaking activity	639	36	317	33	95	82	76
Frequency of participation							
Heavy - Once a week or more	85.2	90.5	86.6	81.4	83.0	88.5	81.5
Medium - One to three times a month	9.5	5.8	9.5	8.6	10.5	6.5	11.4
Light - Less often	5.3	3.7	3.9	10.0	6.4	5.0	7.1
Travel mode							
Car	81.1	83.1	86.0	73.0	70.9	81.7	91.1
Walking	11.9	13.6	7.1	20.7	21.5	9.6	2.4
Bike	1.4	0.0	0.3	0.0	3.3	2.3	0.6
Public transport / taxi / Uber	0.6	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	2.3	1.8
Other	5.0	3.3	6.2	6.3	4.3	4.1	4.1
Distance to activity							
Average distance travelled to activity	9.1	25.2	8.7	18.3	8.7	5.7	6.8
Facility quality rating							
Good, excellent	88.6	92.2	89.2	80.5	84.1	91.2	96.8
Average	10.5	3.3	9.2	18.2	15.9	8.8	3.2
Very poor, poor	0.9	4.5	1.6	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mean score (out of 5)	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.7
Facility accessibility rating							
Good, excellent	83.3	97.5	77.0	86.1	82.7	92.3	94.8
Average	11.7	2.5	19.4	11.6	6.5	6.5	4.7
Very poor, poor	5.1	0.0	3.6	2.3	10.8	1.2	0.5
Mean score (out of 5)	4.2	4.4	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.5

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region who had participated in the nominated activity. Frequency of participation and all average / mean rating results exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses due to the derived nature of the variable. Travel mode and rating scale results are based from all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C8 Activities – Netball

	Total	Central Goldfields Shire	Greater Bendigo	Loddon Shire	Macedon Ranges Shire	Mount Alexander Shire	Shire of Campaspe
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities	11,977	842	6,097	891	1,411	1,416	1,320
% of respondents undertaking activity	4.8	7.7	4.1	11.22	3.19	1.84	6.74
# respondents undertaking activity	577	65	252	100	45	26	89
Frequency of participation							
Heavy - Once a week or more	85.6	81.2	85.1	80.8	92.1	87.9	84.3
Medium - One to three times a month	10.7	12.3	11.6	15.6	4.5	7.4	11.9
Light - Less often	3.6	6.5	3.2	3.6	3.4	4.7	3.7
Travel mode							
Car	94.3	97.8	95.8	86.5	98.2	67.9	93.9
Walking	4.6	1.1	2.6	13.5	1.8	29.5	5.0
Bike	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0
Public transport / taxi / Uber	0.6	1.1	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1
Other	0.5	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Distance to activity							
Average distance travelled to activity	15.5	10.5	17.7	17.1	9.7	4.8	17.3
Facility quality rating							
Good, excellent	55.3	40.0	55.9	74.9	60.8	90.7	40.7
Average	29.5	18.5	32.7	21.4	21.8	7.8	36.9
Very poor, poor	15.2	41.5	11.4	3.7	17.4	1.5	22.5
Mean score (out of 5)	3.5	3.2	3.6	4.1	3.6	4.0	3.3
Facility accessibility rating							
Good, excellent	67.8	52.6	67.8	75.5	77.4	80.7	60.1
Average	22.8	28.2	26.2	21.4	3.4	17.8	27.4
Very poor, poor	9.5	19.2	6.0	3.1	19.1	1.5	12.5
Mean score (out of 5)	3.7	3.6	3.7	4.1	3.7	3.8	3.6

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region who had participated in the nominated activity. Frequency of participation and all average / mean rating results exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses due to the derived nature of the variable. Travel mode and rating scale results are based from all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C9 Activities – Australian Rules Football (AFL)

	Total	Central Goldfields Shire	Greater Bendigo	Loddon Shire	Macedon Ranges Shire	Mount Alexander Shire	Shire of Campaspe
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities	11,977	842	6,097	891	1,411	1,416	1,320
% of respondents undertaking activity	4.39	9.14	3.43	6.85	2.83	3.04	7.27
# respondents undertaking activity	526	77	209	61	40	43	96
Frequency of participation							
Heavy - Once a week or more	86.5	95.0	86.4	91.6	83.6	75.5	87.9
Medium - One to three times a month	5.9	2.7	6.9	3.3	4.4	14.5	3.8
Light - Less often	7.6	2.3	6.7	5.1	12.1	10.0	8.3
Travel mode							
Car	85.9	78.0	88.8	86.6	77.6	82.1	88.6
Walking	9.8	9.2	7.9	11.1	20.2	5.5	8.5
Bike	2.8	6.3	2.5	1.5	0.0	10.5	2.0
Public transport / taxi / Uber	0.8	0.7	0.0	0.8	0.0	1.9	1.0
Other	0.7	5.7	0.8	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0
Distance to activity							
Average distance travelled to activity	13.7	8.4	12.2	15.4	6.9	14.1	22.9
Facility quality rating							
Good, excellent	58.3	50.3	62.0	62.4	56.2	47.9	55.7
Average	29.3	39.2	25.7	28.6	32.7	23.4	34.1
Very poor, poor	12.5	10.5	12.3	9.0	11.1	28.7	10.3
Mean score (out of 5)	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.5	3.1	3.5
Facility accessibility rating							
Good, excellent	66.1	53.5	70.8	80.8	59.9	45.6	66.2
Average	24.9	34.6	21.0	18.5	28.7	30.0	28.3
Very poor, poor	9.0	12.0	8.1	0.7	11.4	24.5	5.5
Mean score (out of 5)	3.7	3.6	3.8	4.1	3.6	3.3	3.7

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region who had participated in the nominated activity. Frequency of participation and all average / mean rating results exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses due to the derived nature of the variable. Travel mode and rating scale results are based from all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C10 Activities – Bush walking / Hiking

	Total	Central Goldfields Shire	Greater Bendigo	Loddon Shire	Macedon Ranges Shire	Mount Alexander Shire	Shire of Campaspe
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities	11,977	842	6,097	891	1,411	1,416	1,320
% of respondents undertaking activity	4.12	3.09	4.0	2.24	5.53	6.78	2.27
# respondents undertaking activity	494	26	244	20	78	96	30
Frequency of participation							
Heavy - Once a week or more	37.3	53.6	36.3	48.9	32.9	38.6	44.4
Medium - One to three times a month	21.7	11.9	24.0	5.3	21.1	23.4	18.5
Light - Less often	41.0	34.6	39.6	45.8	46.0	38.0	37.2
Travel mode							
Car	67.9	29.6	62.0	32.1	85.0	58.2	82.5
Walking	28.5	70.4	32.8	56.9	15.0	33.2	16.6
Bike	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.9
Public transport / taxi / Uber	1.4	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0
Other	1.7	0.0	1.8	11.0	0.0	5.4	0.0
Distance to activity							
Average distance travelled to activity	28.1	14.5	32.4	12.7	29.4	18.1	36.1
Facility quality rating							
Good, excellent	73.2	51.3	70.0	55.6	76.9	79.6	83.3
Average	22.2	40.7	23.8	44.4	18.5	20.0	15.3
Very poor, poor	4.5	8.0	6.2	0.0	4.6	0.4	1.5
Mean score (out of 5)	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.0
Facility accessibility rating							
Good, excellent	65.3	51.2	68.2	70.8	60.0	5.1	65.0
Average	26.2	40.7	24.5	24.2	27.5	22.0	28.9
Very poor, poor	8.5	8.2	7.3	5.0	12.5	73.0	6.1
Mean score (out of 5)	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.7	4.0	3.7

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region who had participated in the nominated activity. Frequency of participation and all average / mean rating results exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses due to the derived nature of the variable. Travel mode and rating scale results are based from all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C11 Activities – Jogging / running

	Total	Central Goldfields Shire	Greater Bendigo	Loddon Shire	Macedon Ranges Shire	Mount Alexander Shire	Shire of Campaspe
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities	11,977	842	6,097	891	1,411	1,416	1,320
% of respondents undertaking activity	3.92	2.02	3.84	3.25	5.03	5.37	3.18
# respondents undertaking activity	469	17	234	29	71	76	42
Frequency of participation							
Heavy - Once a week or more	80.1	96.6	77.0	93.6	82.5	72.3	91.9
Medium - One to three times a month	12.2	2.6	11.5	1.3	13.0	20.7	8.1
Light - Less often	7.7	0.8	11.5	5.1	4.5	7.0	0.0
Travel mode							
Car	39.8	22.2	36.0	54.5	47.1	36.5	44.5
Walking	50.1	37.0	53.9	35.3	41.2	53.1	54.8
Bike	1.4	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0
Public transport / taxi / Uber	1.4	0.0	2.2	1.3	1.1	0.0	0.0
Other	7.4	40.8	5.7	8.9	10.6	7.7	0.6
Distance to activity							
Average distance travelled to activity	5.7	1.2	5.2	11.4	5.5	3.1	11.4
Facility quality rating							
Good, excellent	72.0	40.2	77.4	53.9	64.2	78.3	68.0
Average	19.3	19.9	17.3	46.1	25.8	17.2	10.3
Very poor, poor	8.7	39.9	5.4	0.0	10.0	4.5	21.7
Mean score (out of 5)	3.9	3.2	4.0	3.8	3.7	4.0	3.7
Facility accessibility rating							
Good, excellent	76.4	39.4	80.0	72.2	71.5	83.8	71.3
Average	17.9	23.4	17.9	27.8	23.0	4.9	17.0
Very poor, poor	5.7	37.2	2.2	0.0	5.6	11.3	11.6
Mean score (out of 5)	4.0	3.3	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.1	4.0

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region who had participated in the nominated activity. Frequency of participation and all average / mean rating results exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses due to the derived nature of the variable. Travel mode and rating scale results are based from all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C12 Activities – Cycling: General cycling for recreation

	Total	Central Goldfields Shire	Greater Bendigo	Loddon Shire	Macedon Ranges Shire	Mount Alexander Shire	Shire of Campaspe
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities	11,977	842	6,097	891	1,411	1,416	1,320
% of respondents undertaking activity	3.7	2.1	4.2	2.2	3.1	4.7	2.7
# respondents undertaking activity	438	18	255	20	44	66	35
Frequency of participation							
Heavy - Once a week or more	57.7	62.3	58.7	51.8	56.5	57.6	53.5
Medium - One to three times a month	21.9	12.3	23.9	5.6	14.7	24.2	28.3
Light - Less often	20.4	25.4	17.4	42.6	28.8	18.2	18.1
Travel mode							
Car	10.0	0.0	7.5	10.3	18.4	12.6	8.0
Walking	2.6	4.0	2.2	0.0	3.0	3.8	1.8
Bike	84.8	96.0	87.0	75.7	76.0	83.2	89.4
Public transport / taxi / Uber	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0
Other	2.5	0.0	3.4	14.0	2.6	0.0	0.7
Distance to activity							
Average distance travelled to activity	8.1	8.3	5.3	18.0	5.3	26.7	0.8
Facility quality rating							
Good, excellent	53.3	28.5	54.1	72.2	40.1	55.9	76.6
Average	30.5	67.5	26.9	18.5	50.7	17.9	17.0
Very poor, poor	16.2	4.0	19.1	9.3	9.2	26.2	6.4
Mean score (out of 5)	3.4	3.2	3.4	4.1	3.3	3.4	3.8
Facility accessibility rating							
Good, excellent	57.9	38.6	58.9	88.0	52.2	61.1	61.5
Average	26.5	61.4	21.5	8.6	39.7	24.9	20.3
Very poor, poor	15.6	0.0	19.6	3.4	8.1	14.0	18.2
Mean score (out of 5)	3.5	3.7	3.5	4.2	3.5	3.7	3.4

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Loddon Campaspe region who had participated in the nominated activity. Frequency of participation and all average / mean rating results exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses due to the derived nature of the variable. Travel mode and rating scale results are based from all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.