

2025
**Active
Living**
CENSUS



**City of
Greater
Bendigo**

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 City of Greater Bendigo and was prepared by the Healthy Loddon Campaspe team.

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

Suggested citation: Healthy Loddon Campaspe (2026). *2025 Active Living Census –City of Greater Bendigo Topline Report*. <https://www.healthyloddoncampaspe.au/alc>

Contents

List of tables	i
Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	5
1.1. Background	5
1.2. Context.....	6
1.3. Research objectives.....	7
1.4. Methodology	7
1.4.1. Sample frame / distribution.....	8
1.4.2. Questionnaire	8
1.4.3. Enumeration period	9
1.4.4. Returns / response rate.....	9
1.4.5. Data file preparation	9
1.4.6. Sampling error / weighting.....	9
1.5. About this report.....	11
2. Respondent Profile	13
2.1. ABS population benchmarks	13
2.2. Health indicator population benchmarks	17
3. Movement Behaviours	20
3.1. Aerobic physical activity.....	20
3.2. Muscle strengthening activities.....	25
3.3. Active travel and travel to work or education	30
3.3.1. Walking	30
3.3.2. Cycling.....	35
3.3.3. Adult's travel to work or education	39
3.3.4. Children's travel to school	47
3.4. Recreational screen time	50
3.5. Sleep	55
3.6. Participation in desired level of physical activity	60
3.7. Barriers to physical activity participation.....	65
3.8. Sport, exercise and recreation participation	74
3.8.1. Participation in sport, exercise and recreation activities	74
3.8.2. Types of sport, exercise and recreation activities participated in.....	80
3.8.3. Facilities for sport, exercise and recreational activities	87
3.8.4. Travel to get to and from activities and their facilities	88
3.8.5. Quality and accessibility of facilities available for main activities	95
3.8.6. Quality and accessibility of specific facilities	97
3.9. Perceived ease of being physically active in local area.....	99
4. Diet	104
4.1. Food security	104
4.2. Fruit and vegetable consumption.....	108
4.2.1. Fruit consumption	109
4.2.2. Vegetable consumption.....	113
4.2.3. Barriers to fruit consumption	118
4.2.4. Barriers to vegetable consumption.....	126

4.3.	Water consumption	134
4.4.	Sugar-sweetened beverages.....	138
4.5.	Ease of access to healthy food locally	143
5.	Use of public facilities and open spaces	148
5.1.	Frequency of public open space use	148
5.2.	Frequency of footpath use	153
5.3.	Frequency of off-road walking and cycling track use.....	157
5.4.	Use of other public facilities or open spaces	162
5.4.1.	Types of public facilities or open spaces used	162
5.4.2.	Reasons for use of public facilities or open spaces	171
5.4.3.	Suggested improvements to encourage greater use of public facilities and open spaces	180
5.5.	Perceived safety in local area	184
5.5.1.	Adult safety in local area	184
5.5.2.	Children's safety in the local area	189
6.	Health and Wellbeing	193
6.1.	Self-reported health status.....	193
6.2.	Life satisfaction	197
6.3.	Perceived value to society	202
6.4.	Mental wellbeing	206
6.5.	Body mass index (BMI).....	211
7.	Risk behaviours.....	216
7.1.	Smoking	216
7.2.	Vaping	220
7.3.	Alcohol consumption.....	224
7.4.	Gambling.....	229
7.4.1.	Gambling frequency	229
7.4.2.	Types of gambling	233
Appendix A: Detailed description of weighting.....		237
Appendix B: Questionnaire		240
Appendix C: Detailed tables		241

List of tables

Table 2.1.1	Achieved sample composition, by sex and age.....	14
Table 2.1.2	Achieved sample composition by subregion	14
Table 2.1.2	Achieved sample distribution for demographic characteristics.....	15
Table 2.2.1	Health indicator population benchmarks	18
Table 3.1.1a	Aerobic physical activity by selected demographic groups	21
Table 3.1.1b	Aerobic physical activity by subregion	22
Table 3.1.2	Aerobic physical activity by selected health and behaviour characteristics	24
Table 3.2.1a	Muscle strengthening activities by selected demographic characteristics	26
Table 3.2.1b	Muscle strengthening activities by subregion	27
Table 3.2.2	Muscle strengthening activities by selected health and behaviour characteristics	29
Table 3.3.1.1a	Walking frequency by selected demographic characteristics	31
Table 3.3.1.1b	Walking frequency by subregion.....	32
Table 3.3.1.2	Walking frequency by selected health and behaviour characteristics	33
Table 3.3.2.1a	Cycling frequency by selected demographic characteristics	35
Table 3.3.2.1b	Cycling frequency by subregion.....	37
Table 3.3.2.2	Cycling frequency by selected health and behaviour characteristics	38
Table 3.3.3.1a	Adult's travel to work/education by selected demographic characteristics.....	41
Table 3.3.3.1b	Adult's travel to work/education by subregion	42
Table 3.3.3.2	Adult's travel to work/education by selected health and behaviour characteristics.....	44
Table 3.3.4.1a	Children's travel to school by selected demographic characteristics	47
Table 3.3.4.1b	Children's travel to school by subregion	48
Table 3.3.4.2	Children's travel to school by selected health and behaviour characteristics	49
Table 3.4.1a	Recreational screen time by selected demographic characteristics.....	51
Table 3.4.1b	Recreational screen time by subregion	52
Table 3.4.2	Recreational screen time by selected health and behaviour characteristics.....	54
Table 3.5.1a	Sleep by selected demographic characteristics	56
Table 3.5.1b	Sleep by subregion	57
Table 3.5.2	Sleep duration by selected health and behaviour characteristics	58
Table 3.6.1a	Participation in desired level of physical activity by selected demographic characteristics	60
Table 3.6.1b	Participation in desired level of physical activity by subregion	62
Table 3.6.2	Participation in desired level of physical activity by selected health and behaviour characteristics.....	63
Table 3.7.1	Barriers to physical activity participation.....	65
Table 3.7.2a	Top five barriers to physical activity participation by selected demographic characteristics	69
Table 3.7.2b	Top five barriers to physical activity participation by subregion	70
Table 3.7.3	Top five barriers to physical activity participation by selected health and behaviour characteristics	71

Table 3.8.1.1a	Participation in sport, exercise and recreational activities by selected demographic characteristics	75
Table 3.8.1.1b	Participation in sport, exercise and recreational activities by subregion	76
Table 3.8.1.2	Participation in sport, exercise and recreational activities by selected health and behaviour characteristics	78
Table 3.8.2.1	Activity types by frequency of participation.....	80
Table 3.8.2.2a	Top ten activities by selected demographic characteristics	82
Table 3.8.2.2b	Top ten activities by subregion	83
Table 3.8.2.3	Top ten activities by selected health and behaviour characteristics.....	84
Table 3.8.3	Main recreational facilities used by frequency of activity	88
Table 3.8.4.1a	Travel to and from main activities	90
Table 3.8.4.1b	Travel to and from main activities by subregion	91
Table 3.8.4.2	Travel to and from main activity facilities	93
Table 3.8.5.1	Quality of facilities by activity	95
Table 3.8.5.2	Accessibility of facilities by activity.....	96
Table 3.8.6.1	Quality ratings for most used facilities or spaces	97
Table 3.8.6.2	Accessibility ratings for most used facilities or spaces	98
Table 3.9.1a	Perceived ease of being physically active in local area by selected demographic characteristics.....	99
Table 3.9.1b	Perceived ease of being physically active in local area by subregion	101
Table 3.9.2	Perceived ease of being physically active in local area by selected health and behaviour characteristics	102
Table 4.1.1a	Adult food security by selected demographic characteristics	105
Table 4.1.1b	Adult food security by subregion.....	106
Table 4.1.2	Adult food security by selected health and behaviour characteristics	107
Table 4.2.1.1a	Fruit consumption by selected demographic characteristics	109
Table 4.2.1.1b	Fruit consumption by subregion.....	111
Table 4.2.1.2	Fruit consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics	112
Table 4.2.2.1a	Vegetable consumption by selected demographic characteristics	114
Table 4.2.2.1b	Vegetable consumption by subregion.....	115
Table 4.2.2.2	Vegetable consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics	116
Table 4.2.3.1	Barriers to fruit consumption	118
Table 4.2.3.2a	Top five barriers to fruit consumption by selected demographic characteristics	121
Table 4.2.3.2b	Top five barriers to fruit consumption by subregion.....	122
Table 4.2.3.3	Top five barriers to fruit consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics	123
Table 4.2.4.1	Barriers to vegetable consumption	126
Table 4.2.4.2a	Top five barriers to vegetable consumption by selected demographic characteristics	129
Table 4.2.4.2b	Top five barriers to vegetable consumption by subregion	130
Table 4.2.4.3	Top five barriers to vegetable consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics.....	131

Table 4.3.1.1a	Water consumption by selected demographic characteristics	135
Table 4.3.1.1b	Water consumption by subregion	136
Table 4.3.1.2	Water consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics.....	137
Table 4.4.1.1a	Sugar-sweetened beverage consumption by selected demographic characteristics	139
Table 4.4.1.1b	Sugar-sweetened beverage consumption by subregion	140
Table 4.4.1.2	Sugar-sweetened beverage consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics	141
Table 4.5.1a	Perceived ease of access to healthy food in local area by selected demographic characteristics	143
Table 4.5.1b	Perceived ease of access to healthy food in local area by subregion.....	145
Table 4.5.2	Perceived ease of access to healthy food in local area by selected health and behaviour characteristics	146
Table 5.1.1a	Frequency of public open space use by selected demographic characteristics	149
Table 5.1.1b	Frequency of public open space use by subregion	150
Table 5.1.2	Frequency of public open space use by selected health and behaviour characteristics	151
Table 5.2.1a	Frequency of footpath use by selected demographic characteristics.....	153
Table 5.2.1b	Frequency of footpath use by subregion	155
Table 5.2.2	Frequency of footpath use by selected health and behaviour characteristics.....	156
Table 5.3.1a	Frequency of off-road walking and cycling track use by selected demographic characteristics	158
Table 5.3.1b	Frequency of off-road walking and cycling track use by subregion	159
Table 5.3.2	Frequency of off-road walking and cycling track use by selected health and behaviour characteristics	161
Table 5.4.1.1	Types of public facilities or open spaces used by user types	162
Table 5.4.1.2a	Public facilities and open spaces by selected demographic characteristics	165
Table 5.4.1.2b	Public facilities and open spaces by subregion	167
Table 5.4.1.3	Public facilities and open spaces by selected health and behaviour characteristics	168
Table 5.4.2.1	Reasons for using public facilities or open spaces by user types	171
Table 5.4.2.2a	Top 10 reasons for using public facilities or open spaces by selected demographic characteristics	173
Table 5.4.2.2b	Top 10 reasons for using public facilities or open spaces by subregion	175
Table 5.4.2.3	Top 10 reasons for using public facilities or open spaces by selected health and behaviour characteristics	176
Table 5.4.2.4.	Reason for use of public facilities and open spaces by facility type	178
Table 5.4.3.1	Summary of improvements that would encourage more regular use of open spaces	181
Table 5.4.3.2	Improvements specific to towns.....	183
Table 5.4.3.3	Improvements specific to identified locations	183
Table 5.5.1.1a	Adult's perceived safety in local area by selected demographic characteristics	185
Table 5.5.1.1b	Adult's perceived safety in local area by subregion.....	186
Table 5.5.1.2	Adult's perceived safety in local area by selected health and behaviour characteristics	187

Table 5.5.2.1a	Children's perceived safety in local area by selected demographic characteristics..	189
Table 5.5.2.1b	Children's perceived safety in local area by subregion	190
Table 5.5.2.2	Children's perceived safety in local area by selected health and behaviour characteristics	191
Table 6.1.1a	Self-reported health status by selected demographic characteristics	193
Table 6.1.1b	Self-reported health status by subregion	195
Table 6.1.2	Self-reported health status by selected health and behaviour characteristics	196
Table 6.2.1a	Life satisfaction by selected demographic characteristics	198
Table 6.2.1b	Life satisfaction by subregion	199
Table 6.2.2	Life satisfaction by selected health and behaviour characteristics	200
Table 6.3.1a	Perceived value to society by selected demographic characteristics.....	202
Table 6.3.1b	Perceived value to society by subregion	204
Table 6.3.2	Perceived value to society by selected health and behaviour characteristics.....	205
Table 6.4.1a	Mental wellbeing by selected demographic characteristics.....	207
Table 6.4.1b	Mental wellbeing by subregion	208
Table 6.4.2	Mental wellbeing by selected health and behaviour characteristics	209
Table 6.5.1a	Body Mass Index by selected demographic characteristics	211
Table 6.5.1b	Body Mass Index by subregion.....	213
Table 6.5.2	Body Mass Index by selected health and behaviour characteristics	214
Table 7.1.1a	Smoking by selected demographic characteristics.....	216
Table 7.1.1b	Smoking by subregion	218
Table 7.1.2	Smoking by selected health and behaviour characteristics.....	219
Table 7.2.1a	Vaping by selected demographic characteristics	221
Table 7.2.1b	Vaping by subregion	222
Table 7.2.2	Vaping by selected health and behaviour characteristics	223
Table 7.3.1a	Risky alcohol consumption on single occasion by selected demographic characteristics	225
Table 7.3.1b	Risky alcohol consumption on single occasion by subregion.....	226
Table 7.3.2	Risky alcohol consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics	227
Table 7.4.1.1a	Gambling frequency by selected demographic characteristics	229
Table 7.4.1.1b	Gambling frequency by subregion	230
Table 7.4.1.2	Gambling frequency by selected health and behaviour characteristics	232
Table 7.4.2.1	Types of gambling.....	233
Table 7.4.2.2	Types of gambling by selected demographic characteristics and subregion	235
Table A1	Extent of missing values among weighting characteristics.....	238
Table A2	Greater Bendigo – Population benchmarks used for calibration	239
Table C1	Population by subregion	241
Table C1	Population by subregion - continued	242
Table C2	Health behaviours by subregion	243
Table C2	Health behaviours by subregion - continued	245
Table C2	Health behaviours by subregion - continued	247

Table C3	Activities – Walking.....	249
Table C3	Activities – Walking - continued.....	250
Table C4	Activities – Swimming.....	251
Table C4	Activities – Swimming - continued.....	252
Table C5	Activities – Fitness: Gym	253
Table C5	Activities – Fitness: Gym - continued	254
Table C6	Activities – Active play (at playground / play centre)	255
Table C6	Activities – Active play (at playground / play centre) - continued	256
Table C7	Activities – Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics	257
Table C7	Activities – Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics - continued	258

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%. This report presents the results collected from the 4,158 respondents from the City of Greater Bendigo. Compared to population benchmarks, females, children and adolescents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, those with a Bachelor level education or higher, larger households and those who are food insecure were over-represented. Weighting was applied at the LGA level so that results could be generalised to the Greater Bendigo 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 sex and age 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 Government Department of Health. Where VPHS data was unavailable, benchmark data was supplemented with information from the 2022 Australian National Health Survey (NHS).

City of Greater Bendigo respondents in the 2025 ALC generally demonstrated healthier behaviours compared to Victorian benchmarks, with comparable adherence to fruit and vegetable 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 engaged in risky alcohol consumption, self-reported their health as fair or poor, reported low levels of life satisfaction and were classed as overweight or obese.

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 69% meeting recommendations, while just under 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 seven respondents walking daily and one in eight cycling weekly. Walking and cycling were more common among males and children compared to females and adults, and walking was more common among children compared to adults. In contrast, recreational screen time was high across the sample, with over half exceeding recommended limits, particularly adolescents, although sex differences were minimal. Sleep adherence was comparatively stronger, with 69% meeting age-specific recommendations, with minimal differences seen between children and adults, however males were more likely than females to meet the sleep duration recommendation. Overall, health promoting movement behaviours were consistently less common among those who are neurodivergent, those with lower education, 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 most at risk 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 and poor health or disability particularly common among adults, and cost, safety and lack of support were reported as barriers more frequently 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.

Despite this, 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. Just over 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 more than 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 9% 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 more vulnerable members of the community, including 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 was more frequently noted as a barrier among females than males. Personal preference was more common among children, and cost, time and access to quality produce were more commonly reported among adults. 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, those who reported agreeing that it was easy to access health food locally were more likely to report more positive health and wellbeing, and more likely to meet health behaviour recommendations.

E5 Public facilities and open spaces

Respondents reported frequent use of public spaces and pedestrian infrastructure, though patterns varied by sex and age. Around half used public open spaces weekly, with higher use among children than adults and among males than females. Footpaths were used more often, with almost 71% of respondents using them weekly and this did not differ by sex or age. Off-road walking and cycling tracks were less commonly used, with just over one-third using them weekly and weekly usage more common among adult and males than children and females. Use of parks, sports grounds, swimming facilities and playgrounds was widespread, with children more engaged in sport, recreational and play-based facilities and adults more likely to use community gardens and halls. The most common reasons for using public facilities or open spaces included exercise or health and fitness (67%), socialising (63%), and fun or enjoyment (58%), with children more likely to use spaces for socialising, fun and sport, and adults more likely to use them for exercise, mental health, entertaining kids, time to themselves and time in nature. Perceptions of safety in the local area were generally high, with one-quarter of adults reporting always feeling safe, and 83% 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 (12%) 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 (11%), better lighting on streets, tracks, trails and facilities (11%), improved provision and quality of toilets and change rooms including better disability access (9%), enhanced accessibility to parks and public facilities (6%) and improved or more bicycles and lanes, and skate facilities (6%).

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, 14% reported low life satisfaction, 27% felt they were not valued by society, and 28% had poor mental wellbeing based on the WHO-5 index. In contrast, children's health ratings were markedly higher, with just 6% of parents or guardians reporting fair or poor health for their child. Obesity was more than twice as common among adults (29%) as among children (12%), indicating substantial health and wellbeing challenges among adults living in the City of Greater Bendigo and underscoring the need for targeted investment to support improved 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. Consistent patterns also emerged between poorer wellbeing and less favourable health behaviours and risk behaviours. 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. Current smokers were more likely to report fair or poor health and more likely to have poor mental wellbeing.

E7 Risk behaviours

Risk behaviours varied across the sample, with 58% of adult respondents reporting risky single-occasion alcohol consumption, 8% currently smoking, 4% currently vaping, and 37% gambling at least once in the past 12 months. Demographic patterns varied across the four risk behaviours. Smoking was more common among Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders, LGBTQIA+ people, those who have lower education and those who are financially worse off. Vaping was more common among younger adults, those born in Australia, those with lower education and those experiencing food insecurity. Risky alcohol consumption and gambling were most strongly patterned by sex, language and disability, with males, those who speak English as their main language and those not requiring help with daily activities showing higher prevalence of both. Additionally, young females 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 and poor mental wellbeing, and those who only sometimes feeling valued by society were more likely to current vape. Several clear links with other health behaviours also emerged. Current smoking rates were also higher among those who failed to meet the recommendations for fruit and vegetable intake, muscle strengthening exercise and screen time, and those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily. Risky alcohol consumption displayed a mixed pattern. Risky drinkers were less likely to meet aerobic physical activity recommendations, and weekly gamblers were less likely to meet the vegetable recommendations. 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 datasets.

¹ **Campostrini, 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 Shire of Campaspe 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.

This report presents the 2025 ALC results exclusively for residents from the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 244,952 residents aged 3 years and over, this represents an individual response rate of 3.4%. For the Greater Bendigo region specifically, there were 4,158 individual responses received, from the population of 117,254 individuals aged 3 years and up, making the response rate for Greater Bendigo 3.5%. 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 Greater Bendigo population distribution for age, sex, residents' household location, education, and other demographics and was therefore not entirely representative of the Greater Bendigo 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 Greater Bendigo 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 sex and age 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 for Greater Bendigo residents only, 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 Greater Bendigo 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 Greater Bendigo 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 Greater Bendigo 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 and males were under-represented in the achieved sample when compared to their proportions in the population. Child and adolescent respondents (3 to 11 years and 12 to 17 years) were over-represented in the survey, specifically among males in these age groups. Additionally, females aged 35 to 49 and 50 to 69 were also over-represented. Under-representation was most notable young adults 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=39, <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 subregion in which they lived. 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

views of the Greater Bendigo population. Further information regarding weighting is provided in Appendix A.

Table 2.1.1 Achieved sample composition, by sex and age

	ABS population ¹ (City of Greater Bendigo)		Active Living Census ² (unweighted)		ALC % as a % of the population
	N	%	N	%	%
Total sample	117,254		4,158		3.5
Sex					
Males	56,743	48.4	1,277	31.6	65.2
Females	60,515	51.6	2,769	68.4	132.6
Age					
3-11 years	13,735	11.7	664	16.3	139.0
12-17 years	9,026	7.7	485	11.9	154.5
18-34 years	25,715	21.9	543	13.3	60.7
35-49 years	21,973	18.7	853	20.9	111.6
50-69 years	29,787	25.4	1,083	26.6	104.6
70+ years	17,019	14.5	450	11.0	76.0
Sex and age					
Males, 3 to 11	7,057	12.4	320	25.2	202.6
Males, 12 to 17	4,648	8.2	248	19.5	238.4
Males, 18 to 34	12,536	22.1	106	8.4	37.8
Males, 35 to 49	10,467	18.4	180	14.2	76.8
Males, 50 to 69	14,193	25.0	264	20.8	83.1
Males, 70+	7,838	13.8	152	12.0	86.7
Females, 3 to 11	6,677	11.0	332	12.1	109.3
Females, 12 to 17	4,378	7.2	230	8.4	115.4
Females, 18 to 34	13,175	21.8	428	15.5	71.4
Females, 35 to 49	11,504	19.0	667	24.2	127.4
Females, 50 to 69	15,592	25.8	803	29.2	113.2
Females, 70+	9,178	15.2	294	10.7	70.4

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 City of Greater Bendigo

Table 2.1.2 Achieved sample composition by subregion

	ABS population ¹ (City of Greater Bendigo)		Active Living Census ² (unweighted)		ALC % as a % of the population
	N	%	N	%	%
Subregion					
Bendigo	5,488	4.7	249	6.0	128.8
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	6,084	5.2	184	4.4	85.9

East Bendigo	2,301	2.0	75	1.8	92.5
Epsom - Ascot	7,213	6.1	209	5.0	82.3
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	9,354	8.0	365	8.8	110.8
Golden Square	8,904	7.6	274	6.6	87.4
Huntly	3,797	3.2	125	3.0	93.5
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	11,673	9.9	317	7.7	77.1
Kennington	5,725	4.9	186	4.5	92.2
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	4,794	4.1	140	3.4	82.9
Maiden Gully	5,190	4.4	220	5.3	120.3
North Bendigo - California Gully	8,460	7.2	181	4.4	60.7
Strathdale	5,614	4.8	212	5.1	107.2
Strathfieldsaye	6,581	5.6	268	6.5	115.6
White Hills - Jackass Flat	5,254	4.5	214	5.2	115.6
Urban subtotal	96,432		3,219		
Elmore - Rural North	3,034	2.6	78	1.9	73.0
Heathcote and District	4,383	3.7	426	10.3	275.9
Marong - Rural West	4,468	3.8	129	3.1	81.5
Rural East	8,488	7.3	287	6.9	95.4
Rural subtotal	20,373		920		

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 City of Greater Bendigo

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 living in households with four or more people, or with very low, low or marginal food security were also over-represented. Groups that were under-represented include those who speak a main language other than English, who require help with daily activities, with low levels of education and those living in single-person households. These differences to the benchmarks indicate that results should be interpreted with caution when comparing to the Greater Bendigo general population despite the previously mentioned weighting applied.

Table 2.1.2 Achieved sample distribution for demographic characteristics

	ABS population ¹ (City of Greater Bendigo)		Active Living Census ² (unweighted)		ALC % as a % of the population
	n	%	n	%	%
Total sample	94,494		2,929		3.1
Country of birth					
Born overseas	10,639	12.0	304	10.4	86.9
Born in Australia	78,220	88.0	2,620	89.6	101.8

Main language					
Speaks other main language	5,808	6.5	88	3.0	46.3
Speaks English as main language	83,193	93.5	2,825	97.0	103.8
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status					
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	1,620	1.8	95	3.3	179.8
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	87,982	98.2	2,824	96.8	98.5
LGBTQIA+ Status³					
LGBTQIA+	-	-	219	7.5	-
Non-LGBTQIA+	-	-	2,695	92.5	-
Neurodivergent⁴					
Yes	-	-	311	10.9	-
No	-	-	1,998	70.1	-
Maybe	-	-	208	7.3	-
Not sure	-	-	332	11.7	-
Requires help with self-care, body movement or communication activities					
Requires help	7,198	8.1	187	6.4	79.3
Does not require help	81,684	91.9	2,726	93.6	101.8
Level of education					
Less than Bachelor level education	64,208	76.7	1,440	49.4	64.4
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	19,494	23.3	1,474	50.6	217.2
Employment status					
Unemployed/Retired	34,554	38.8	952	32.6	84.0
Employed	54,519	61.2	1,969	67.4	110.1
Household size					
1 person	13,374	28.7	487	16.7	58.0
2-3 people	23,063	49.5	1,562	53.4	108.0
4-5 people	8,896	19.1	781	26.7	140.0
More than 5 people	1,265	2.7	93	3.2	117.1
Household financial status⁴					
Just getting along, poor or very poor	-	-	885	30.4	-
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	-	-	2,027	69.6	-
Food security (last 12 months)⁵					
Very low food security	-	3.7	190	6.5	175.9
Low food security	-	5.8	299	10.3	176.7
Marginal food security	-	4.9	371	12.7	259.6
High food security	-	84.8	2,057	70.5	83.2

¹ Population benchmarks sourced from ABS Census 2021

² Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo

³ ABS 2022 estimates suggest 5.3% of the Victorian population is LGBTI+, estimates for the City of Greater Bendigo 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 City of Greater Bendigo 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 Greater Bendigo 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 and gambling participation was similar to Victorian benchmarks, other findings from the 2025 ALC indicated greater differences in the health and wellbeing of Greater Bendigo residents compared to state benchmarks. For example, there were fewer reports of engaging in health risk behaviours among ALC respondents including smoking, vaping and males consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily. Specifically, 7.8% of Greater Bendigo ALC respondents indicated that they currently engaged in smoking, and 4.2% 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 Greater Bendigo region. Daily sugar-sweetened beverage consumption was comparatively lower among ALC respondents (16.7%) than VPHS respondents (19.0%), with the difference more pronounced among males (16.0% compared to 23.4%). Conversely, a slightly larger proportion of Greater Bendigo females consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (17.5% compared to 14.9%).

A greater proportion of Greater Bendigo respondents to the 2025 ALC met the aerobic physical activity recommendations (24.7% 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 Greater Bendigo ALC respondents met the muscle strengthening recommendations of two or more sessions per week (53.1%) compared to the 2022 NHS respondents (24.5%). There are currently no comparable benchmark datasets, however among the 2025 ALC respondents, 43.5% met recreational screen time recommendations of three hours per day for adults and two hours per day for children and adolescents. Conversely, 68.5% of adult respondents met the sleep duration recommendations as outlined by the Sleep Health Foundation⁵.

When comparing Body Mass Index (BMI), Greater Bendigo ALC respondents were more likely to be overweight or obese (67.0%) 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 from Greater Bendigo 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 (57.6%) 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 Greater Bendigo ALC sample compared to the available benchmark data. A greater proportion of Greater Bendigo respondents reported their health as fair or poor (25.1%) compared to 2023 VPHS respondents (20.9%) and 2022 NHS respondents (13.0%). Similarly, a greater proportion of Greater

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>

Bendigo respondents recorded low to medium life satisfaction (35.1%) than those who participated in the VPHS 2023 (21.9%).

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=2,611	
% rating health as fair or poor (persons)	13.0	20.9	25.1	120.1
% rating health as fair or poor (females)	13.5	20.7	28.8	139.3
% rating health as fair or poor (males)	12.2	20.8	21.2	101.9
Body Mass Index (BMI)			n=2,018	
% overweight or obese range (BMI ≥25.0) (persons)	65.3	53.9	67.0	124.3
% overweight or obese range (BMI ≥25.0) (females)	58.8	47.5	62.9	132.4
% overweight or obese range (BMI ≥25.0) (males)	72.1	60.6	70.8	116.9
Aerobic physical activity recommendations			n=2,858	
% not meeting recommendations (persons)	28.2	47.1	24.7	52.4
% not meeting recommendations (females)	29.8	48.7	31.6	64.8
% not meeting recommendations (males)	26.2	45.2	17.5	38.6
Muscle strengthening recommendations			n=2,688	
% not meeting recommendations (persons)	75.5	-	46.9	62.1
% not meeting recommendations (females)	77.2	-	52.3	67.8
% not meeting recommendations (males)	74.1	-	41.3	55.8
Screen time recommendations			n=2,795	
% not meeting screen time recommendations (persons)	-	-	56.5	-
% not meeting screen time recommendations (females)	-	-	54.8	-
% not meeting screen time recommendations (males)	-	-	58.3	-
Sleep duration recommendations			n=2,775	
% not meeting sleep recommendations (person)	-	-	31.5	-
% not meeting sleep recommendations (females)	-	-	34.3	-
% not meeting sleep recommendations (males)	-	-	28.6	-
Fruit intake recommendations			n=2,885	
% not meeting fruit recommendations (persons)	55.3	63.3	61.0	96.4
% not meeting fruit recommendations (females)	53.0	61.1	60.5	99.0
% not meeting fruit recommendations (males)	58.2	65.5	61.6	94.0
Vegetable intake recommendations			n=2,857	
% not meeting vegetable recommendations (persons)	93.6	90.3	92.7	102.7
% not meeting vegetable recommendations (females)	90.6	88.5	90.0	101.7

% not meeting vegetable recommendations (males)	96.5	94.3	95.6	101.4
Smoking status		n=2,616		
% current smokers (persons)	11.1	13.9	7.8	55.8
% current smokers (females)	8.7	11.3	8.4	74.0
% current smokers (males)	14.0	16.7	7.2	43.2
Vaping status		n=2,606		
% current vapers (person)	3.9	7.2	4.2	58.9
% current vapers (females)	2.5	5.5	5.1	92.3
% current vapers (males)	5.1	8.9	3.4	38.3
Alcohol consumption (single occasion past 12 months)⁵		n=2,610		
% had more than 4 standard drinks (persons)	17.9	41.3	57.6	139.4
% had more than 4 standard drinks (females)	11.6	30.1	51.5	171.0
% had more than 4 standard drinks (males)	24.1	53.2	64.2	120.7
Gambling		n=2,609		
% gambling (person)	-	39.1	36.8	94.2
% gambling (females)	-	32.7	30.7	93.8
% gambling (males)	-	45.8	43.5	94.9
Sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) consumption		n=2,862		
% drinks SSB daily (persons)	-	19.0	16.7	88.0
% drinks SSB daily (females)	-	14.9	17.5	117.2
% drinks SSB daily (males)	-	23.4	16.0	68.3
Life satisfaction		n=2,600		
% rating satisfaction as low to medium (0 to 6) (persons)	-	21.9	35.1	160.1
% rating satisfaction as low to medium (0 to 6) (females)	-	21.8	37.7	173.0
% rating satisfaction as low to medium (0 to 6) (males)	-	21.6	32.2	149.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 more than 4 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 Greater Bendigo 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, 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 adult 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 Greater Bendigo respondents in the same age group who had met the recommendations was 75.3% and, overall, 69.0% 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 (75.3% compared to 43.1%), although the average minutes spent engaging in moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity per day was higher among children (228.2 minutes) than adults (179.4 minutes), reflecting the differences in the age-specific recommendations. A greater proportion of males met the aerobic physical activity recommendations (75.9%) and spent more time per day in moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic activity (234.4 minutes) than females (62.4%, 145.1 minutes).

Few differences were seen between respondents from each subregion (see Table 3.1.1b). A significantly higher proportion of residents from Strathfieldsaye (78.4%) met the aerobic physical activity recommendations compared to residents from Eaglehawk – Eaglehawk North – Sailors Gully (62.9%), Epsom – Ascot (64.2%), Golden Square (62.7%), Kangaroo Flat – Big Hill (63.5%) and Heathcote and District (65.6%). No differences in the average minutes per day engaged in moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic activity were seen by subregion.

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 Greater Bendigo 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 (53.5%) compared to non-Indigenous (69.7%)
- Neurodivergent (60.0%) compared to not (71.6%) and maybe (71.6%) neurodivergent
- Less than a Bachelor level education (73.7%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (81.0%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (66.2%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (80.3%)
- Requires help with daily activities (48.1%) compared to does not require help (71.2%)
- Low or very low (66.8%) food security compared to high food security (78.8%)

Table 3.1.1a Aerobic physical activity by selected demographic groups

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily minutes #
Total sample	3,824	31.0	69.0	189.0
Children	966	56.9	43.1	228.2
Adults	2,858	24.7	75.3	179.4
Males	1,177	24.1	75.9	234.4
Females	2,614	37.6	62.4	145.1
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	271	50.6	49.4	240.9
Males, 12 to 17	214	48.6	51.4	279.5
Males, 18 to 34	104	19.6	80.4	229.8
Males, 35 to 49	176	16.1	83.9	194.1
Males, 50 to 69	261	15.2	84.8	257.1
Males, 70+	151	20.0	80.0	220.8
Females, 3 to 11	272	63.6	36.4	188.2
Females, 12 to 17	196	65.8	34.2	212.2
Females, 18 to 34	420	32.3	67.7	129.5
Females, 35 to 49	656	32.8	67.2	129.9
Females, 50 to 69	783	27.4	72.6	145.6
Females, 70+	287	37.2	62.8	117.7
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	475	25.7	74.3	160.6
2 or 3 people	1,526	23.3	76.7	187.4
4 or 5 people	761	24.5	75.5	180.1
More than 5 people	93	39.3	60.7	137.9

Born overseas	329	31.6	68.4	174.4
Born in Australia	3,494	31.0	69.0	190.6
Speaks other main language	100	36.4	63.6	152.2
Speaks English as main language	3,713	30.8	69.2	190.2
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	137	46.5	53.5	164.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,684	30.3	69.7	190.0
LGBTQIA+	232	34.8	65.2	152.9
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,581	30.7	69.3	192.2
Neurodivergent	477	40.0	60.0	172.7
Not neurodivergent	2,569	28.4	71.6	196.7
Maybe	307	28.4	71.6	180.2
Not sure what neurodivergent means	392	34.0	66.0	184.4
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,396	26.3	73.7	184.8
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,452	19.0	81.0	163.5
Unemployed/Retired ²	928	27.0	73.0	178.6
Employed	1,926	23.4	76.6	180.0
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	853	33.8	66.2	161.6
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,995	19.7	80.3	189.3
Requires help with daily activities	339	51.9	48.1	167.2
Does not require help	3,477	28.8	71.2	191.3
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	479	33.2	66.8	176.7
Marginal food security	356	28.2	71.8	160.3
High food security	2,020	21.2	78.8	184.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.1.1b Aerobic physical activity by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily minutes #
Total sample	3,824	31.0	69.0	189.0
Subregion				
Bendigo	234	26.3	73.7	192.5
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	175	37.1	62.9	152.7
East Bendigo	65	27.2	72.8	245.2
Epsom - Ascot	187	35.8	64.2	152.1
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	342	27.8	72.2	186.1
Golden Square	257	37.3	62.7	164.9

Huntly	112	33.6	66.4	177.4
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	289	36.5	63.5	183.2
Kennington	172	26.8	73.2	201.7
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	128	31.9	68.1	181.2
Maiden Gully	204	29.2	70.8	186.8
North Bendigo - California Gully	171	31.8	68.2	178.6
Strathdale	197	29.3	70.7	208.0
Strathfieldsaye	240	21.6	78.4	222.0
White Hills - Jackass Flat	191	26.6	73.4	183.2
Urban subtotal	2,964	30.8	69.2	185.0
Elmore - Rural North	70	23.2	76.8	250.5
Heathcote and District	395	34.4	65.6	198.4
Marong - Rural West	121	29.3	70.7	200.5
Rural East	265	32.7	67.3	195.4
Rural subtotal	851	32.0	68.0	203.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Table 3.1.2 summarises aerobic physical activity participation by selected health and behaviour characteristics. All health and wellbeing indicators were associated with aerobic physical activity. Specifically, a lower proportion of those who self-reported their health to be fair or poor (54.2% vs 73.3%), have low to moderate life satisfaction (65.8% vs 80.8%), do not feel valued by society (68.9% vs sometimes [76.5%] and definitely feel valued [81.3%]), and have poor mental wellbeing (59.9% vs 81.5%) met the aerobic physical activity recommendations compared to their counterparts who reported more positive health and wellbeing indicators. Additionally, those who are overweight or obese (176.4 minutes) engaged in significantly fewer minutes per day in aerobic physical activity compared to those of normal weight or are underweight (211.4 minutes).

Differences in adherence to the aerobic physical activity recommendations were seen between those who did and did not report adherence to the muscle strengthening (86.4% of those who did compared to 57.8% of those who did not), screen time (75.3% vs 65.1%) and sleep (72.3% vs 63.8%) recommendations. In addition, those who did not meet the fruit intake recommendations (169.6 minutes) engaged in fewer average minutes per day of aerobic physical activity compared to those who did (214.1 minutes).

Smoking and risky alcohol consumption were the only two risk behaviours 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 (79.4%) and engaged in more average daily minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (200.2 minutes) compared to those who did not engage in risky alcohol consumption over the past 12 months (71.0% and 150.2 minutes). Conversely a lower proportion of those who are current smokers (65.9%) met the aerobic physical activity recommendations compared to those who are ex-smokers (78.9%).

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	3,824	31.0	69.0	189.0
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	670	45.8	54.2	110.0
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,764	26.7	73.3	208.8
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	832	34.2	65.8	143.6
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,732	19.2	80.8	198.0
Does not feel valued by society ²	589	31.1	68.9	171.6
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,286	23.5	76.5	171.3
Definitely feel valued by society	685	18.7	81.3	203.0
Poor mental wellbeing ²	803	40.1	59.9	114.6
Good mental wellbeing	2,055	18.5	81.5	205.3
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,433	27.7	72.3	176.4
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	997	28.1	71.9	211.4
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,931	32.4	67.6	169.6
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,870	29.1	70.9	214.1
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,340	31.0	69.0	187.7
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	424	30.8	69.2	209.6
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,783	42.2	57.8	141.8
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,577	13.6	86.4	241.5
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,012	34.9	65.1	179.1
Meets screen time recommendations	1,640	24.7	75.3	201.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,115	36.2	63.8	176.7
Meets sleep recommendations	2,534	27.7	72.3	195.3
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	488	36.9	63.1	164.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,285	29.9	70.1	192.4
Does not meet water recommendations	2,265	30.6	69.4	180.1
Meets water recommendations	1,456	31.6	68.4	201.6
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	155	34.1	65.9	173.2
Ex-smoker	983	21.1	78.9	194.0
Never smoked	1,441	25.3	74.7	168.0

Current vaper	76	31.9	68.1	203.9
Ex-vaper	191	22.6	77.4	216.2
Never vaped	2,303	24.1	75.9	172.8
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,382	20.6	79.4	200.2
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,193	29.0	71.0	150.2
Gambled	831	23.4	76.6	184.8
Never gambled	1,746	24.7	75.3	175.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 Greater Bendigo respondents in the same age group who had met the recommendations was 53.1% and, overall, 48.7% of respondents had met the above-mentioned muscle strengthening recommendations (see Table 3.2.1a). Adults were significantly more likely to meet the recommendations (53.1%) and spend more days per week engaging in muscle strengthening activities (1.9 days) compared to children (25.8%, 1.5 days). A greater proportion of males met the muscle strengthening recommendations (53.5%) and spent more days per week engaging in muscle strengthening activities (2.1 days) than females (44.0%, 1.7 days).

Few associations were seen between respondents from each subregion and adherence to the muscle strengthening recommendations (see Table 3.2.1b). A significantly higher proportion of residents from Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully (60.3%) met the muscle strengthening recommendations compared to residents from Bendigo (43.1%), Eaglehawk – Eaglehawk North – Sailors Gully (42.7%), Kangaroo Flat – Big Hill (44.4%), Maiden Gully (43.6%), North Bendigo – California Gully (44.4%), Heathcote and District (42.9%) and Marong – Rural West (40.1%). The same differences were seen by subregion regarding the average number of days per week that residents participated in muscle strengthening activities, except residents from Elmore – Rural North also averaged a significantly higher number of days per week (2.7) than other subregions.

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

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>

- Households with more than 5 people (36.4%) compared to 2-3 person households (56.5%)
- Neurodivergent (38.9%) compared to not neurodivergent (51.5%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (45.9%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (56.9%)
- Requires help with daily activities (37.7%) compared to no help required (49.7%)
- Low or very low food security (37.9%) compared to marginal (52.9%) or high (57.9%) food security

Table 3.2.1a Muscle strengthening activities by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average days per week #
Total sample	3,400	51.3	48.7	1.9
Children	713	74.2	25.8	1.5
Adults	2,687	46.9	53.1	1.9
Males	1,031	46.5	53.5	2.1
Females	2,343	56.0	44.0	1.7
Sex and age				
Males, 5 to 11	174	79.9	20.1	1.3
Males, 12 to 17	200	62.5	37.5	2.1
Males, 18 to 34	98	43.2	56.8	2.1
Males, 35 to 49	173	42.0	58.0	2.2
Males, 50 to 69	245	41.7	58.3	2.2
Males, 70+	141	37.6	62.4	2.3
Females, 5 to 11	165	82.4	17.6	1.1
Females, 12 to 17	167	72.5	27.5	1.6
Females, 18 to 34	394	56.8	43.2	1.6
Females, 35 to 49	627	58.0	42.0	1.5
Females, 50 to 69	740	48.2	51.8	1.9
Females, 70+	250	39.0	61.0	2.1
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	425	49.3	50.7	1.9
2 or 3 people	1,446	43.5	56.5	2.0
4 or 5 people	727	49.9	50.1	1.9
More than 5 people	86	63.6	36.4	1.2
Born overseas	297	50.3	49.7	1.9
Born in Australia	3,102	51.4	48.6	1.9
Speaks other main language	93	51.4	48.6	1.9

Speaks English as main language	3,296	51.2	48.8	1.9
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	118	56.0	44.0	1.6
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,280	51.1	48.9	1.9
LGBTQIA+	221	61.2	38.8	1.6
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,169	50.3	49.7	1.9
Neurodivergent	429	61.1	38.9	1.6
Not neurodivergent	2,293	48.5	51.5	1.9
Maybe	273	58.8	41.2	1.7
Not sure what neurodivergent means	338	51.9	48.1	1.9
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,309	48.0	52.0	1.9
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,372	43.6	56.4	2.0
Unemployed/Retired ²	845	44.4	55.6	2.1
Employed	1,838	48.3	51.7	1.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	794	54.1	45.9	1.8
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,884	43.1	56.9	2.0
Requires help with daily activities	247	62.3	37.7	1.6
Does not require help	3,147	50.3	49.7	1.9
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	448	62.1	37.9	1.4
Marginal food security	332	47.1	52.9	2.0
High food security	1,904	42.1	57.9	2.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.2.1b Muscle strengthening activities by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average days per week #
Total sample	3,400	51.3	48.7	1.9
Subregion				
Bendigo	217	56.9	43.1	1.7
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	155	57.3	42.7	1.8
East Bendigo	62	48.1	51.9	1.7
Epsom - Ascot	159	53.4	46.6	1.7
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	310	39.7	60.3	2.3
Golden Square	232	50.6	49.4	1.9
Huntly	97	57.7	42.3	1.5
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	253	55.6	44.4	1.7
Kennington	153	46.5	53.5	2.0
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	116	48.1	51.9	2.2

Maiden Gully	180	56.4	43.6	1.8
North Bendigo - California Gully	151	55.6	44.4	1.7
Strathdale	173	42.4	57.6	2.2
Strathfieldsaye	214	46.2	53.8	1.9
White Hills - Jackass Flat	173	50.1	49.9	1.8
Urban subtotal	2,645	50.8	49.2	1.9
Elmore - Rural North	59	37.0	63.0	2.7
Heathcote and District	343	57.1	42.9	1.7
Marong - Rural West	109	59.9	40.1	1.6
Rural East	236	49.1	50.9	2.1
Rural subtotal	747	53.0	47.0	1.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Table 3.2.2 summarises engagement in muscle strengthening activity by selected health and behaviour characteristics. Muscle strengthening activity was associated all health and wellbeing indicators, apart from BMI. Respondents with the following health and wellbeing indicators were significantly less likely to meet the muscle strengthening recommendations compared to their counterparts who reported more positive health and wellbeing:

- Fair or poor self-reported health (29.6%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (54.1%)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (43.4%) compared to high or very high life satisfaction (58.3%)
- Do not feel valued by society (47.4%) compared to definitely feel valued by society (60.3%)
- Poor mental wellbeing (37.8%) compared to good mental wellbeing (59.0%)

Additionally, the same respondents engaged in fewer average days per week of muscle strengthening activities.

Differences in adherence to the muscle strengthening recommendations were 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 (44.1% vs 54.6%), vegetable (48.0% vs 60.4%), water consumption (46.5% vs 52.9%), aerobic physical activity (23.3% vs 58.4%) and screen time (45.9% vs 52.7%) recommendations, as well as among those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (34.6% vs 51.2%).

Smoking and vaping were the only risk behaviours associated with engagement in muscle strengthening activities. A smaller proportion of those who are current smokers (34.8%) and current vapers (34.4%) met the muscle strengthening recommendations compared to those who are ex-smokers (57.0%), have never smoked (52.8%) or have never vaped (53.7%).

Table 3.2.2 Muscle strengthening activities by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Does not meet recommendation	Meets recommendation	Average days per week
	n	%	%	#
Total sample	3,400	51.3	48.7	1.9
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	621	70.4	29.6	1.2
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,436	45.9	54.1	2.1
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	783	56.6	43.4	1.6
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,629	41.7	58.3	2.1
Does not feel valued by society ²	545	52.6	47.4	1.7
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,220	47.6	52.4	1.9
Definitely feel valued by society	644	39.7	60.3	2.2
Poor mental wellbeing ²	755	62.2	37.8	1.4
Good mental wellbeing	1,932	41.0	59.0	2.2
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,333	49.4	50.6	2.1
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	898	44.8	55.2	1.9
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,789	55.9	44.1	1.7
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,594	45.4	54.6	2.2
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,014	52.0	48.0	1.8
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	342	39.6	60.4	2.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,033	76.7	23.3	1.0
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,327	41.6	58.4	2.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,780	54.1	45.9	1.8
Meets screen time recommendations	1,494	47.3	52.7	2.1
Does not meet sleep recommendations	998	53.9	46.1	1.8
Meets sleep recommendations	2,262	49.6	50.4	1.9
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	434	65.4	34.6	1.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,918	48.8	51.2	2.0
Does not meet water recommendations	2,040	53.5	46.5	1.8
Meets water recommendations	1,275	47.1	52.9	2.1
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	144	65.2	34.8	1.4
Ex-smoker	931	43.0	57.0	2.1

Never smoked	1,349	47.2	52.8	1.9
Current vaper	72	65.6	34.4	1.4
Ex-vaper	181	44.3	55.7	2.1
Never vaped	2,162	46.3	53.7	1.9
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,319	45.4	54.6	2.0
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,103	48.8	51.2	1.9
Gambled	780	49.6	50.4	1.9
Never gambled	1,642	45.3	54.7	2.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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

Approximately 13.9% of 2025 Greater Bendigo ALC respondents reported daily walking to get to and from places, 34.5% walked at least once a week but less than daily, 18.3% walked at least once a month but less than weekly and 33.3% 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, differences were seen between males and females with a larger proportion of males (16.1%) walking daily than females (11.4%). Walking frequency varied according to sex and age with no clear pattern or trend observable (see Table 3.3.1.1a).

Table 3.3.1.1b shows that there were significant differences seen in frequency of walking for transportation according to the residential subregion of respondents, with no clear pattern observed. Residents from Bendigo were the most likely to walk daily (29.1%) and residents from East Bendigo were the least likely to walk daily (3.8%). Infrequent walking (less than once a month) was more common among residents from rural subregions compared to urban subregions, however daily walking was comparable between urban and rural subregions. Lower proportionate frequency of walking to get to and from places was seen among the following demographic groups:

- 4-5 person households (9.3% daily) compared to single (18.3%) and 2-3 person (14.8%) households
- Born overseas (7.9% daily) compared to born in Australia (14.4%)

- Speaks a main language other than English (6.9% daily) compared to speaks English as main language (14.0%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (7.0% daily) compared to non-Indigenous (14.0%)
- Neurodivergent (28.6% weekly) compared to maybe neurodivergent (40.1%)
- Employed (11.8% daily) compared to unemployed/retired (17.0%)

Table 3.3.1.1a Walking frequency by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Daily	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a month
	n	%	%	%	%
Total sample	3,912	13.9	34.5	18.3	33.3
Children	993	14.2	37.6	15.4	32.8
Adults	2,894	13.6	33.7	19.1	33.6
Males	1,199	16.1	38.9	18.4	26.7
Females	2,671	11.4	30.6	18.4	39.7
Sex and age					
Males, 3 to 11	286	10.5	41.6	12.9	35.0
Males, 12 to 17	211	28.4	40.8	13.3	17.5
Males, 18 to 34	105	15.5	41.2	21.4	21.9
Males, 35 to 49	178	11.0	33.1	22.1	33.8
Males, 50 to 69	263	17.4	37.6	19.6	25.4
Males, 70+	151	18.6	40.7	16.0	24.7
Females, 3 to 11	287	5.9	32.8	20.2	41.1
Females, 12 to 17	195	18.5	35.9	14.9	30.8
Females, 18 to 34	427	11.3	26.8	21.2	40.7
Females, 35 to 49	663	6.4	26.0	20.1	47.5
Females, 50 to 69	796	13.6	33.2	16.9	36.3
Females, 70+	289	16.9	36.2	11.9	35.0
Demographic indicators					
Household size²					
1 person	478	18.3	38.5	15.1	28.1
2 or 3 people	1,548	14.8	32.0	19.6	33.5
4 or 5 people	772	9.3	34.1	21.0	35.7
More than 5 people	93	10.0	37.4	12.7	39.9
Born overseas	336	7.9	37.8	18.1	36.2
Born in Australia	3,574	14.4	34.2	18.2	33.1
Speaks other main language	104	6.9	49.4	16.0	27.6
Speaks English as main language	3,795	14.0	34.0	18.3	33.7
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	142	7.0	29.0	11.2	52.9
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,762	14.0	34.8	18.6	32.6

LGBTQIA+	238	15.9	35.0	17.8	31.3
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,659	13.4	34.6	18.3	33.6
Neurodivergent	490	11.7	28.6	20.8	38.8
Not neurodivergent	2,613	13.6	34.9	18.9	32.6
Maybe	318	11.7	40.1	16.7	31.6
Not sure what neurodivergent means	403	14.5	35.0	15.6	34.8
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,418	13.9	32.7	18.3	35.1
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,468	12.8	37.3	21.3	28.6
Unemployed/Retired ²	938	17.0	36.0	15.4	31.7
Employed	1,952	11.8	32.6	20.9	34.7
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	873	11.4	30.0	18.0	40.5
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,013	14.8	35.9	19.5	29.8
Requires help with daily activities	355	10.2	30.5	15.5	43.8
Does not require help	3,547	14.2	35.0	18.6	32.3
Food security (last 12 months)²					
Low or very low food security	488	14.0	30.0	17.0	39.1
Marginal food security	364	9.5	33.0	21.5	36.0
High food security	2,039	14.4	35.1	19.1	31.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.3.1.1b Walking frequency by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Daily	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a month
	n	%	%	%	%
Total sample	3,912	13.9	34.5	18.3	33.3
Subregion					
Bendigo	237	29.1	40.1	17.2	13.6
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	179	17.0	33.3	15.0	34.7
East Bendigo	69	3.8	49.0	9.9	37.4
Epsom - Ascot	189	6.7	36.2	23.2	33.9
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	351	13.0	45.3	20.1	21.5
Golden Square	261	10.8	31.2	20.6	37.5
Huntly	113	13.4	33.1	12.0	41.5
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	304	13.9	37.4	19.0	29.7
Kennington	176	10.9	31.5	22.1	35.5
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	130	19.1	31.5	16.7	32.7
Maiden Gully	204	10.4	30.8	16.8	42.0
North Bendigo - California Gully	176	10.2	33.3	19.0	37.5

Strathdale	202	13.3	39.6	16.6	30.5
Strathfieldsaye	246	14.2	38.6	21.2	26.0
White Hills - Jackass Flat	197	15.2	34.5	18.7	31.7
Urban subtotal	3,034	13.9	36.3	18.6	31.2
Elmore - Rural North	75	17.4	34.0	14.7	33.9
Heathcote and District	403	12.9	29.4	18.5	39.2
Marong - Rural West	122	23.0	13.7	7.6	55.7
Rural East	267	10.7	30.0	20.6	38.6
Rural subtotal	867	14.1	28.0	17.3	40.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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. All health and wellbeing indicators were significantly associated with walking frequency. Specifically, a lower proportion of those who self-reported their health as fair or poor (9.0% vs 14.9%) and poor mental wellbeing (8.8% vs 15.5%) reported daily walking for transportation compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing. Similarly, a lower proportion of those who reported low to moderate life satisfaction (27.4% vs 37.1%), do not feel valued by society (25.8% vs sometimes [35.3%] and definitely [38.9%]) and are overweight or obese (32.1% vs 41.6%) reported walking for transportation at least once a week, but not daily, compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing.

Walking frequency was also associated with all health behaviours. Daily walking for transportation was less common among those who did not meet the vegetable (13.0% vs 19.9%) and aerobic physical activity (8.1% vs 16.0%) recommendations compared to those who did. Weekly walking was less common among those who did not meet the fruit (32.2% vs 37.6%) and muscle strengthening (31.9% vs 39.4%) recommendations compared to those who did, as well as among those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (25.2%) compared to less than daily (36.6%). Additionally, infrequent walking (less than once a month) was more common among those who did not meet the screen time (35.7% vs 30.4%) and sleep (38.3% vs 31.1%) recommendations compared to those who did. Conversely, those who met the water recommendations were less likely to walk daily (10.0%) compared to those who did not (15.1%).

With regards to risk taking behaviours, current smokers were less likely to walk at least once a month (12.1%) compared to ex-smokers (21.9%), and a greater proportion of those who had not engaged in risky alcohol consumption over the past 12 months (37.7%) reported walking for transportation less than once a month compared to those who had (31.3%).

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	3,912	13.9	34.5	18.3	33.3
Health and wellbeing indicators					
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	681	9.0	22.7	20.6	47.7

Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,836	14.9	37.9	17.5	29.7
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	843	11.4	27.4	17.3	44.0
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,748	14.5	37.1	19.8	28.6
Does not feel valued by society ²	603	12.9	25.8	16.9	44.4
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,294	12.7	35.3	20.1	31.9
Definitely feel valued by society	690	15.4	38.9	19.0	26.7
Poor mental wellbeing ²	815	8.8	25.0	18.7	47.5
Good mental wellbeing	2,079	15.5	37.2	19.2	28.0
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,450	13.6	32.1	18.7	35.6
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,005	13.7	41.6	18.4	26.4
Health behaviour indicators					
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,960	12.9	32.2	18.1	36.8
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,903	14.8	37.6	18.4	29.1
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,390	13.0	35.3	18.5	33.3
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	433	19.9	29.7	17.8	32.5
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,263	8.1	25.9	17.9	48.1
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,536	16.0	38.7	18.6	26.7
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,789	13.4	31.9	18.7	36.1
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,591	13.7	39.4	19.3	27.6
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,040	12.1	33.0	19.2	35.7
Meets screen time recommendations	1,665	15.2	37.1	17.3	30.4
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,138	13.0	32.4	16.3	38.3
Meets sleep recommendations	2,566	13.7	36.2	19.1	31.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	497	13.0	25.2	16.9	45.0
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,353	13.6	36.6	18.5	31.3
Does not meet water recommendations	2,294	15.1	34.6	17.2	33.1
Meets water recommendations	1,479	10.0	35.2	20.8	34.0
Risk behaviour indicators²					
Current smoker	156	15.2	28.6	12.1	44.0
Ex-smoker	995	11.3	32.2	21.9	34.6
Never smoked	1,455	14.2	36.1	17.5	32.2
Current vaper	76	13.5	24.3	19.5	42.7
Ex-vaper	193	14.6	34.9	19.8	30.7
Never vaped	2,328	13.0	34.2	18.7	34.0

Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,394	13.2	34.7	20.9	31.3
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,207	13.3	32.8	16.1	37.7
Gambled	835	11.0	34.8	21.7	32.5
Never gambled	1,767	14.4	33.4	17.2	35.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

3.3.2. Cycling

Among Greater Bendigo 2025 ALC respondents, 12.2% reported cycling to get to and from places at least once a week, 15.9% cycled at least once a month but less than weekly, and the remaining 71.9% cycled to get to and from places less than once a month. Children (20.1% weekly) and males (18.2% weekly) reported cycling for transportation more frequently than adults (10.0%) and females (6.5%), with a greater variation between age groups among males (see Table 3.3.2.1a). There was also a large variation in frequency of cycling for transportation by subregion (see Table 3.3.2.1b). Residents from Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully (19.3%) were the most likely to cycle for transport weekly and residents from Huntly (5.0%) were the least likely to cycle for transport weekly.

A lower proportion of people from the following demographic groups reported cycling to get to and from places weekly:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (5.0%) compared to non-Indigenous (12.5%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (9.1%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (12.8%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (6.1%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (12.2%)
- Low or very low (5.8%) food security compared to high food security (11.8%)

Table 3.3.2.1a 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	3,838	12.2	15.9	71.9
Children	988	20.1	23.9	56.0
Adults	2,826	10.0	14.1	75.9
Males	1,182	18.2	19.5	62.3
Females	2,615	6.5	12.6	80.9
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	283	29.0	25.8	45.2
Males, 12 to 17	209	23.9	24.4	51.7
Males, 18 to 34	104	13.8	16.4	69.8
Males, 35 to 49	178	14.1	24.8	61.1
Males, 50 to 69	258	15.6	17.8	66.6

Males, 70+	145	19.5	12.6	67.9
Females, 3 to 11	287	17.4	26.8	55.7
Females, 12 to 17	195	6.2	14.4	79.5
Females, 18 to 34	423	4.7	11.2	84.1
Females, 35 to 49	659	4.3	12.1	83.6
Females, 50 to 69	776	5.1	11.1	83.7
Females, 70+	262	6.3	2.5	91.2

Demographic indicators

Household size²

1 person	447	13.6	10.4	76.0
2 or 3 people	1,519	8.8	13.6	77.7
4 or 5 people	767	10.3	18.0	71.7
More than 5 people	90	12.7	6.6	80.7
Born overseas	325	15.9	12.1	72.0
Born in Australia	3,512	11.8	16.4	71.8
Speaks other main language	101	20.7	14.2	65.1
Speaks English as main language	3,726	11.9	16.0	72.1
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	138	5.0	8.4	86.5
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,694	12.5	16.3	71.2
LGBTQIA+	234	13.2	13.0	73.7
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,594	12.0	16.3	71.7
Neurodivergent	486	9.2	15.8	75.0
Not neurodivergent	2,579	11.5	17.6	70.8
Maybe	316	17.7	13.3	69.0
Not sure what neurodivergent means	398	12.3	11.9	75.8
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,370	9.1	12.5	78.4
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,450	12.8	19.2	68.0
Unemployed/Retired ²	893	12.2	11.5	76.3
Employed	1,932	8.9	15.4	75.7
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	845	6.1	11.5	82.4
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,976	12.2	15.5	72.4
Requires help with daily activities	344	12.5	13.1	74.4
Does not require help	3,488	12.2	16.3	71.5

Food security (last 12 months)²

Low or very low food security	473	5.8	11.1	83.0
Marginal food security	357	8.1	11.8	80.1
High food security	1,994	11.8	15.5	72.7

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.3.2.1b Cycling frequency by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	At least once a week %	At least once a month %	Less than once a month %
Total sample	3,838	12.2	15.9	71.9
Subregion				
Bendigo	234	16.9	14.0	69.1
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	176	16.9	10.5	72.6
East Bendigo	69	10.6	18.5	71.0
Epsom - Ascot	186	11.3	16.8	71.9
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	345	19.3	18.0	62.8
Golden Square	257	6.5	24.7	68.8
Huntly	112	5.0	10.7	84.3
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	292	7.2	15.3	77.5
Kennington	174	16.3	10.7	73.0
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	124	7.6	13.5	78.9
Maiden Gully	202	15.9	10.3	73.8
North Bendigo - California Gully	171	9.9	11.8	78.3
Strathdale	199	15.4	11.2	73.4
Strathfieldsaye	242	9.0	28.0	63.0
White Hills - Jackass Flat	195	18.2	18.6	63.2
Urban subtotal	2,978	12.7	16.0	71.3
Elmore - Rural North	71	5.4	18.6	76.0
Heathcote and District	397	8.9	13.7	77.4
Marong - Rural West	120	5.4	10.2	84.4
Rural East	262	15.8	20.2	64.0
Rural subtotal	850	10.2	15.7	74.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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. All health and wellbeing indicators were significantly associated with cycling frequency. Specifically, a lower proportion of those who self-reported their health as fair or poor (2.8% vs 14.6%), low to moderate life satisfaction (5.2% vs 12.4%), do not or sometimes feels valued by society (7.2% and 7.5% vs definitely [17.6%]), poor mental wellbeing (4.3% vs 12.3%), and were overweight or obese (9.3% vs 16.5%) reported at least weekly cycling for transportation compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing.

Cycling frequency was also associated with most health behaviours. Specifically, weekly cycling for transportation was less common among those who did not meet the fruit (7.9% vs 17.3%), aerobic physical activity (6.2% vs 14.7%) and muscle strengthening (9.5% vs 14.1%) recommendations compared to those who did. Additionally, a lower proportion of those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (8.0%) reported transport related cycling at least once a week compared to those who

consumed sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily (13.0%). Further, a lower proportion of those who did not meet the sleep recommendations (12.3%) reported cycling for transportation at least once a month compared to those who met them (18.4%).

With regards to risk taking behaviours, a lower proportion of those who were current vapers (1.6%) and had gambled in the past 12 months (6.2%) cycled for transportation at least once a week compared to those who have never vaped (10.8%) or had not gambled (12.1%). A lower proportion of those who had not engaged in risky alcohol consumption (10.7%) cycled for transportation at least once a month compared to those who had engaged in risky alcohol consumption over the past 12 months (16.7%).

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	3,838	12.2	15.9	71.9
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	667	2.8	9.7	87.5
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,787	14.6	18.0	67.5
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	821	5.2	11.5	83.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,713	12.4	15.7	71.8
Does not feel valued by society ²	589	7.2	8.2	84.5
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,265	7.5	15.7	76.8
Definitely feel valued by society	677	17.6	17.9	64.5
Poor mental wellbeing ²	801	4.3	9.3	86.3
Good mental wellbeing	2,025	12.3	16.0	71.7
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,422	9.3	15.0	75.7
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	984	16.5	20.3	63.2
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,922	7.9	13.5	78.6
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,871	17.3	19.2	63.5
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,328	11.6	16.2	72.2
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	426	16.2	15.4	68.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,240	6.2	13.8	80.0
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,493	14.7	17.3	67.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,770	9.5	17.3	73.2
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,550	14.1	15.5	70.5
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,004	10.8	15.3	73.9

Meets screen time recommendations	1,635	13.1	17.8	69.1
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,121	9.9	12.3	77.9
Meets sleep recommendations	2,517	12.6	18.4	68.9
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	488	8.0	9.4	82.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,290	13.0	17.4	69.5
Does not meet water recommendations	2,244	13.3	15.6	71.1
Meets water recommendations	1,462	9.8	17.9	72.3
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	154	5.2	10.4	84.4
Ex-smoker	968	9.9	16.0	74.1
Never smoked	1,426	10.6	13.4	75.9
Current vaper	75	1.6	13.0	85.4
Ex-vaper	191	4.8	17.8	77.4
Never vaped	2,273	10.8	13.9	75.3
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,372	8.2	16.7	75.0
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,172	12.2	10.7	77.1
Gambled	817	6.2	13.9	79.9
Never gambled	1,729	12.1	14.4	73.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 (68.3%) was the most common method of travel, followed by active travel (10.7%), passenger in a private vehicle (7.5%), public transport (5.8%) and work or education at home (5.4%). Almost a quarter of respondents (22.2%) indicated that they did not engage in work or study. Table 3.3.3.1a 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, households with 4-5 people, people with higher education, not or maybe neurodivergent and those not requiring any help with daily activities. Active travel was more common among males, younger females and those with a Bachelor degree or higher level of education. Being a passenger in a private vehicle was more common among younger adults, households with 2-5 people, LGBTQIA+ people, are neurodivergent and who require help with daily activities. Public transport is more common among younger adults and LGBTQIA+ people. Work or study from home was more common among middle-age adults, those who speak English as their main language, are neurodivergent and those who have a Bachelor degree or higher level of education. No work or study was more common among older adults (likely retired), respondents from single person households, are not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, unsure what neurodivergent means, less than a Bachelor level education, require help with daily activities and who have high food security.

Differences in all travel methods were seen according to the residential subregion of respondents, apart from those who work or study from home (see Tab 3.3.3.1b).

Table 3.3.3.2 presents the results according to health and wellbeing indicators. The only indicators that were not associated with travel method for adults were life satisfaction, fruit consumption, muscle strengthening exercise and sleep. Driving was more common among the following people:

- Sometimes feel valued by society (72.4%) compared to those who do not feel valued (64.4%)
- Overweight or obese (72.7%) compared to normal weight or underweight (64.5%)
- Did not meet vegetable intake recommendations (69.4%) compared to met them (51.6%)
- Met screen time recommendations (72.2%) compared to not (65.0%)
- Met water consumption recommendations (79.3%) compared to not (63.3%)
- Ex-vaper (80.3%) compared to never vaped (67.2%)
- Engaged in risky alcohol intake (74.7%) compared to not (61.1%) over the past 12 months
- Gambled (74.4%) compared to never gambled (65.6%) over the past 12 months

Active travel was more common among the following people:

- Good, very good or excellent health (12.1%) compared to fair or poor health (7.2%)
- Normal weight or underweight (16.1%) compared to overweight or obese (8.4%)
- Met aerobic physical activity recommendations (12.8%) compared to not (4.5%)
- Did not meet water recommendations (11.8%) compared to met them (7.8%)

Those who sometimes feels valued by society (9.1%) and did not meet screen time recommendations (9.2%) were more likely to report being a passenger in a private vehicle compared to those who definitely feel valued by society (4.8%) and met the screen time recommendations (4.5%). Taking public transport was more common among those who did not meet screen time recommendations (7.2%) and have never smoked (7.1%) compared to those who met the screen time recommendations (3.6%) and are ex-smokers (2.9%). Those with poor mental wellbeing (8.5%) were more likely to work or study at home compared to those with good mental wellbeing (4.2%).

No work or study was more common among the following people:

- Met vegetable intake recommendations (39.1%) compared to not (21.1%)
- Did not meet screen time recommendations (26.2%) compared to met them (17.8%)
- Consumed sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily (24.3%) compared to consumed them daily (13.5%)
- Did not meet water recommendations (27.0%) compared to met them (12.8%)
- Never vaped (25.0%) compared to current (4.3%) and ex-vapers (6.3%)
- Did not engage in risky alcohol consumption (30.1%) compared to engaged in risky alcohol consumption (16.1%)
- Never gambled (24.2%) compared to gambled (18.4%).

Table 3.3.3.1a 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	2,897	68.3	7.5	10.7	5.8	5.4	22.2
Males	696	68.3	6.3	14.0	6.2	4.1	22.1
Females	2,180	68.3	8.8	7.6	5.3	6.7	22.4
Sex and age							
Males, 18 to 34	105	79.7	14.9	19.3	15.5	7.0	4.6
Males, 35 to 49	179	87.3	1.2	16.1	3.5	4.8	4.7
Males, 50 to 69	263	68.2	6.5	11.5	4.0	3.6	19.0
Males, 70+	149	31.8	1.2	8.9	1.5	0.2	69.8
Females, 18 to 34	427	77.0	14.8	11.3	11.1	8.5	9.5
Females, 35 to 49	665	84.3	7.5	6.5	4.5	8.3	5.9
Females, 50 to 69	798	63.5	4.5	6.7	1.6	5.9	27.2
Females, 70+	290	24.6	6.8	2.8	1.8	0.6	77.6
Demographic indicators							
Household size							
1 person	479	51.5	2.2	14.6	4.4	3.8	36.6
2 or 3 people	1,548	64.3	8.3	10.1	4.5	4.7	28.0
4 or 5 people	774	85.6	8.5	9.6	6.8	7.0	5.8
More than 5 people	93	65.7	10.3	12.3	20.8	10.6	5.7
Born overseas	301	66.6	6.1	9.2	11.8	3.1	23.5
Born in Australia	2,595	68.5	7.7	10.9	5.0	5.8	22.1
Speaks other main language	88	68.3	7.6	15.3	20.8	2.0	11.8
Speaks English as main language	2,798	68.3	7.5	10.5	5.1	5.6	22.7

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	92	72.6	19.3	9.2	7.8	12.6	8.9
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,802	68.2	7.1	10.7	5.7	5.2	22.8
LGBTQIA+	203	72.7	19.7	19.7	16.0	6.2	8.7
Non-LGBTQIA+	2,682	67.7	6.1	9.8	4.8	5.4	23.7
Neurodivergent	294	68.7	13.2	13.8	8.4	8.1	12.3
Not neurodivergent	1,990	70.1	6.4	9.1	4.7	5.6	21.8
Maybe	208	73.5	8.9	14.3	9.4	10.1	11.3
Not sure what neurodivergent means	330	59.2	5.2	9.1	4.8	2.3	34.2
Less than Bachelor level education	1,421	66.4	8.3	9.7	5.9	4.7	24.7
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,467	74.6	5.2	13.8	5.5	8.1	14.1
Just getting along, poor or very poor	875	69.5	7.3	9.3	6.6	5.1	21.2
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,012	67.7	7.7	11.5	5.3	5.6	22.9
Requires help with daily activities	181	52.4	17.3	5.6	9.6	4.7	33.2
Does not require help	2,709	69.7	6.7	11.1	5.4	5.5	21.3
Food security (last 12 months)							
Low or very low food security	489	72.1	8.5	12.1	7.8	4.5	16.0
Marginal food security	366	70.3	10.7	9.9	9.5	5.4	16.3
High food security	2,039	66.5	6.6	10.4	4.4	5.8	25.5

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

Table 3.3.3.1b Adult's travel to work/education by subregion

	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	2,897	68.3	7.5	10.7	5.8	5.4	22.2

Subregion							
Bendigo	189	49.6	11.2	31.2	15.5	7.8	23.2
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	131	74.2	10.7	11.0	8.0	7.6	20.4
East Bendigo	52	64.1	0.0	15.4	3.7	5.1	27.3
Epsom - Ascot	146	83.4	7.0	6.0	8.7	2.4	13.8
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	245	71.0	7.7	18.6	3.9	8.7	16.6
Golden Square	197	71.9	5.0	3.0	5.0	4.4	22.5
Huntly	82	84.2	5.5	5.0	3.3	2.8	8.8
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	224	55.0	6.1	8.8	6.3	3.7	36.1
Kennington	131	65.9	4.2	12.3	5.0	3.4	27.8
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	104	54.8	18.1	15.3	9.1	5.2	23.8
Maiden Gully	138	70.4	9.4	3.7	4.1	5.5	21.8
North Bendigo - California Gully	129	72.3	6.9	20.6	9.1	7.2	15.7
Strathdale	153	69.7	5.7	8.8	1.9	7.6	20.8
Strathfieldsaye	174	76.6	7.0	5.9	2.1	3.4	15.9
White Hills - Jackass Flat	148	76.2	6.4	11.7	4.8	2.7	19.6
Urban subtotal	2,243	68.5	7.6	11.9	6.3	5.3	21.5
Elmore - Rural North	49	73.7	17.4	3.5	16.0	3.4	11.2
Heathcote and District	312	61.4	5.5	5.3	1.6	6.5	29.1
Marong - Rural West	98	73.8	6.6	2.6	1.0	5.7	24.9
Rural East	189	73.3	7.2	9.3	5.4	6.0	23.3
Rural subtotal	648	67.9	7.4	5.9	4.2	5.9	24.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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	2,897	68.3	7.5	10.7	5.8	5.4	22.2
Health and wellbeing indicators							
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	624	65.5	8.9	7.2	5.7	8.2	24.1
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,979	70.2	6.7	12.1	5.2	4.7	21.1
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	846	71.7	6.2	9.3	5.8	6.0	19.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,746	67.8	8.1	11.6	5.3	5.3	23.2
Does not feel valued by society	604	64.4	6.9	10.2	7.3	5.7	24.9
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,293	72.4	9.1	10.0	4.7	5.8	18.9
Definitely feel valued by society	691	68.1	4.8	13.2	5.0	4.9	23.9
Poor mental wellbeing	817	72.4	6.8	8.1	4.8	8.5	20.4
Good mental wellbeing	2,080	66.6	7.8	11.7	6.2	4.2	23.0
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,312	72.7	5.4	8.4	3.5	5.8	20.9
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	700	64.5	7.1	16.1	8.2	5.3	22.7
Health behaviour indicators							
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,653	70.1	8.0	10.4	5.2	5.5	20.3
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,224	65.2	6.9	11.4	6.7	5.5	25.5
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,549	69.4	7.6	10.7	6.0	5.4	21.1
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	301	51.6	5.0	11.9	3.7	6.9	39.1
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	723	67.8	8.6	4.5	4.6	6.3	26.4

Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,126	68.4	7.0	12.8	6.1	5.3	20.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,271	70.3	7.9	10.3	6.7	6.8	19.0
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,408	67.9	7.1	10.8	5.3	4.5	23.6
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,447	65.0	9.2	9.6	7.2	5.8	26.2
Meets screen time recommendations	1,341	72.2	4.5	12.2	3.6	5.4	17.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	855	69.6	8.5	8.8	4.6	5.6	21.7
Meets sleep recommendations	1,912	67.3	6.6	11.3	6.0	5.5	23.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	405	74.5	9.0	8.4	6.8	7.9	13.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,448	67.0	7.0	11.1	5.4	5.1	24.3
Does not meet water recommendations	1,800	63.3	6.9	11.8	5.1	4.8	27.0
Meets water recommendations	1,022	79.3	8.3	7.8	6.6	7.0	12.8
Risk behaviour indicators							
Current smoker	157	61.6	7.2	14.3	8.2	3.3	21.2
Ex-smoker	993	69.8	6.5	8.1	2.9	5.4	23.1
Never smoked	1,458	69.2	8.3	12.4	7.1	6.2	21.4
Current vaper	76	75.6	9.6	12.8	6.3	10.5	4.3
Ex-vaper	193	80.3	13.7	11.7	9.2	6.4	6.3
Never vaped	2,330	67.2	6.6	10.5	4.9	5.3	25.0
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,396	74.7	6.4	10.5	5.2	5.4	16.1
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,206	61.1	8.9	11.2	5.8	6.1	30.1
Gambled	836	74.4	7.3	8.1	4.7	6.4	18.4
Never gambled	1,767	65.6	7.6	12.4	5.9	5.2	24.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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', 'my child does not attend school'. For all children who attend school, responses were recoded as 'car', 'public transport', 'active travel' for analysis and reporting purposes.

Overall, 66.2% of children were driven to school in a car, 19.7% took public transport and 24.5% engaged in active travel to and from school. Table 3.3.4.1a presents children's travel to school findings according to selected demographic characteristics. A greater proportion of male (71.0% vs 52.3%) and female (73.7% vs 59.6%) children aged 3 to 11 were driven in a car compared to their adolescent (12 to 17 years) counterparts. The opposite was seen for public transport, with male (4.2%) and female (4.6%) adolescents aged 12 to 17 years more likely to take public transport compared to male (4.2%) and female (4.6%) children aged 3 to 11 years. Those who do not require help with daily activities (21.7%) were also more likely to take public transport compared to those who do require help (9.9%). Active travel was more common among males (28.1%) than females (20.5%). No other demographic differences were seen by children's mode of travel to and from school.

Table 3.3.4.1b presents children's school travel mode according to subregion of residence with no clear observable pattern. Driving was most common among children from East Bendigo (93.8%) and least common among children from Bendigo (47.1%). Public transport was most common among children from Marong – Rural West (40.5%) and least common among children from East Bendigo (5.2%). Active travel was most common among children from Long Gully – West Bendigo – Ironbark (61.2%) and least common among children from Huntly (9.5%).

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

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Car %	Public transport %	Active travel %
Total sample	960	66.2	19.7	24.5
Males	485	64.0	19.8	28.1
Females	463	68.4	19.9	20.5
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	286	71.0	4.2	26.9
Males, 12 to 17	199	52.3	46.2	30.2
Females, 3 to 11	285	73.7	4.6	20.7
Females, 12 to 17	178	59.6	45.5	20.2
Demographic indicators				
Born overseas	31	57.8	15.6	30.0
Born in Australia	929	66.5	19.8	24.3
Speaks other main language*	13	61.3	14.5	31.6
Speaks English as main language	945	66.3	19.8	24.4
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	48	69.3	17.9	28.7
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	911	66.0	19.8	24.3
LGBTQIA+	31	48.2	35.1	29.5

Non-LGBTQIA+	929	66.8	19.2	24.3
Neurodivergent	189	71.1	19.1	23.3
Not neurodivergent	599	65.3	20.0	23.7
Maybe	103	62.7	17.1	32.8
Not sure what neurodivergent means	59	70.0	22.7	22.1
Requires help with daily activities	173	60.7	9.9	18.4
Does not require help	786	67.6	21.8	25.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 to 17 years living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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.

Table 3.3.4.1b Children's travel to school by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Car %	Public transport %	Active travel %
Total sample	960	66.2	19.7	24.5
Subregion				
Bendigo	45	47.1	15.3	39.7
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	42	67.2	18.0	33.4
East Bendigo	17	93.8	5.2	11.4
Epsom - Ascot	43	75.0	15.1	16.1
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	104	61.7	17.2	36.1
Golden Square	65	81.4	13.0	16.4
Huntly	31	81.3	5.9	9.5
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	75	65.7	25.6	21.6
Kennington	41	76.4	14.0	17.2
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	25	47.2	7.6	61.2
Maiden Gully	64	67.8	27.5	22.1
North Bendigo - California Gully	43	79.8	18.1	18.5
Strathdale	44	54.8	19.6	20.4
Strathfieldsaye	70	66.9	27.0	27.8
White Hills - Jackass Flat	47	70.3	10.0	27.5
Urban subtotal	756	68.1	17.7	25.6
Elmore - Rural North	14	57.6	27.6	29.1
Heathcote and District	88	58.1	23.2	12.8
Marong - Rural West	24	50.3	40.5	30.1
Rural East	76	63.2	27.5	25.1
Rural subtotal	202	59.1	27.1	20.5

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

² Small sample size so results should be interpreted with caution.

There were no associations between being driven by car to school and any of the health and wellbeing or health behaviour indicators (see Table 3.3.4.2).

Public transport use was associated with fruit, vegetable and screen recommendations, and sugar-sweetened beverage consumption. Specifically, a greater proportion of those who failed to meet the fruit (28.2% vs 15.9%), vegetable (21.3% vs 11.0%) and screen time (23.7% vs 14.6%) recommendations used public transport to get to and from school compared to their counterparts who met the respective recommendations. Those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily were also more likely to take public transport (34.8%) compared to those who did not (18.3%).

Active travel to and from school was associated with self-reported health, aerobic physical activity and screen time. A greater proportion of those who reported good, very good or excellent health (26.2%) engaged in active travel to get to and from school compared to those who reported fair or poor health (9.1%). Children who met the aerobic physical activity (33.7% vs 17.4%) and screen time (33.3% vs 19.8%) 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	960	66.2	19.7	24.5
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	52	68.0	27.7	9.1
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	817	64.9	19.3	26.2
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥ 25.0)	135	65.5	17.8	21.1
Normal range or underweight (BMI < 25.0)	293	62.2	26.4	25.4
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	296	68.8	28.2	23.9
Meets fruit intake recommendations	660	65.1	15.9	24.7
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	817	66.2	21.3	24.6
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	129	64.9	11.0	24.3
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	533	67.7	19.8	17.4
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	386	64.5	20.1	33.7
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	507	71.4	23.7	26.9
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	163	62.3	26.1	34.3
Does not meet screen time recommendations	571	65.1	23.7	19.8
Meets screen time recommendations	317	67.7	14.6	33.3
Does not meet sleep recommendations	275	65.3	21.9	21.2
Meets sleep recommendations	636	66.1	18.9	26.2

Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	83	54.9	34.8	29.0
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	862	67.0	18.3	24.2
Does not meet water recommendations	487	65.9	18.8	27.3
Meets water recommendations	439	66.0	20.2	21.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 to 17 years living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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. 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 3.4.1a 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, 42.0% of respondents met the screen time recommendations, and engaged in an average of five (5.0) hours per day in recreational screen time. Adults engaged in a greater average number of hours of recreational screen time per day than children (5.2 vs 4.6 hours). A higher proportion of adults (43.5%) also met their recreational screen time recommendation of three (3) hours per day compared to children (35.5%), whose recommendation is two (2) hours per day. No differences were seen between males and females overall. Both males and females aged 35 to 49 years were the most likely to have met the screen time recommendations.

Table 3.4.1b shows that residents from the Bendigo subregion were the least likely to meet the screen time recommendations (38.0%) and residents from Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully were the most likely to meet them (54.1%). Rural East residents spent the highest average number of hours per day engaging in screen time (5.6) whereas residents from Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully spent the lowest time per day in screen time (4.3 hours).

Adherence to the recreational screen time recommendations was also associated with a range of demographic characteristics. Specifically, people in the following groups were less likely to meet the screen time recommendations and may benefit the most from support to reduce their screen time:

- 2-3 person households (41.5%) compared to 4-5 person households (49.9%)
- Neurodivergent (32.0%) compared to not neurodivergent (45.0%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (40.6%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (53.2%)

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>

- Unemployed/retired (35.5%) compared to employed (48.0%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (35.3%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (48.1%)
- Require help with daily activities (26.7%) compared to no help required (43.6%)

Table 3.4.1a Recreational screen time by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average hours per day #
Total sample	3,724	58.0	42.0	5.0
Children	929	64.5	35.5	4.6
Adults	2,795	56.5	43.5	5.2
Males	1,146	60.3	39.7	5.2
Females	2,547	55.8	44.2	4.9
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	263	60.8	39.2	4.4
Males, 12 to 17	206	79.6	20.4	5.1
Males, 18 to 34	99	69.4	30.6	6.1
Males, 35 to 49	172	50.7	49.3	5.1
Males, 50 to 69	258	53.0	47.0	4.9
Males, 70+	148	62.4	37.6	5.2
Females, 3 to 11	258	54.3	45.7	3.9
Females, 12 to 17	190	68.4	31.6	5.1
Females, 18 to 34	402	58.0	42.0	5.2
Females, 35 to 49	638	46.8	53.2	5.0
Females, 50 to 69	777	54.8	45.2	4.9
Females, 70+	282	63.3	36.7	5.1
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	462	59.5	40.5	5.2
2 or 3 people	1,497	58.5	41.5	5.1
4 or 5 people	744	50.1	49.9	5.0
More than 5 people	89	58.3	41.7	6.4
Born overseas	320	58.6	41.4	5.5
Born in Australia	3,403	57.9	42.1	5.0
Speaks other main language	95	55.4	44.6	5.0
Speaks English as main language	3,617	58.1	41.9	5.8
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	135	56.3	43.7	5.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,586	58.1	41.9	5.0

LGBTQIA+	218	66.1	33.9	5.9
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,497	57.3	42.7	5.0
Neurodivergent	442	68.0	32.0	5.6
Not neurodivergent	2,517	55.0	45.0	4.8
Maybe	303	58.3	41.7	4.9
Not sure what neurodivergent means	383	62.5	37.5	5.5
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,365	59.4	40.6	5.2
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,424	46.8	53.2	4.8
Unemployed/Retired ²	908	64.5	35.5	5.5
Employed	1,883	52.0	48.0	4.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	835	64.7	35.3	5.8
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,951	51.9	48.1	4.8
Requires help with daily activities	326	73.3	26.7	5.7
Does not require help	3,393	56.4	43.6	5.0
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	461	61.7	38.3	5.6
Marginal food security	354	60.1	39.9	5.6
High food security	1,977	54.0	46.0	4.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.4.1b Recreational screen time by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average hours per day #
Total sample	3,724	58.0	42.0	5.0
Subregion				
Bendigo	228	62.0	38.0	4.8
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	163	59.3	40.7	5.0
East Bendigo	65	56.0	44.0	4.9
Epsom - Ascot	181	59.2	40.8	5.4
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	324	45.9	54.1	4.3
Golden Square	250	57.0	43.0	5.1
Huntly	110	58.6	41.4	5.0
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	279	66.6	33.4	5.5
Kennington	169	64.6	35.4	5.5
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	121	50.2	49.8	4.4
Maiden Gully	199	60.0	40.0	5.3
North Bendigo - California Gully	165	58.6	41.4	5.1
Strathdale	185	51.5	48.5	4.3

Strathfieldsaye	244	51.3	48.7	4.6
White Hills - Jackass Flat	187	56.8	43.2	4.9
Urban subtotal	2,870	57.3	42.7	4.9
Elmore - Rural North	70	61.4	38.6	6.1
Heathcote and District	398	60.3	39.7	5.2
Marong - Rural West	117	60.3	39.7	5.2
Rural East	260	60.4	39.6	5.6
Rural subtotal	845	60.4	39.6	5.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 were less likely to meet the screen time recommendations compared to their counterparts who reported more positive health and wellbeing:

- Fair or poor self-reported health (30.7%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (45.4%)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (38.7%) compared to high / very high life satisfaction (46.6%)
- Do not feel valued by society (33.5%) compared to sometimes (45.4%) and definitely (52.2%) feel valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (35.5%) compared to good mental wellbeing (46.9%)

Additionally, the same respondents also engaged in significantly more screen time, on average, per day (apart from those with low to moderate life satisfaction).

With regards to health behaviours, average screen time duration was associated with adherence to most of the recommendations, except for muscle strengthening activities and sleep. Likewise, associations between recreational screen time recommendations and all other health behaviour recommendations were seen, except for fruit and water consumption. Specifically, adherence to the recreational screen time recommendations was lower among those who failed to meet the vegetable (41.3% vs 50.9%), aerobic physical activity (33.8% vs 45.5%), muscle strengthening (39.4% vs 46.0%) and sleep (35.7% vs 46.0%) recommendations, as well as among those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (31.8% vs 43.8%).

Smoking and gambling were the only risk behaviours that were associated with recreational screen time. A smaller proportion of those who are current smokers (30.5%) and had gambled in the past 12 months (37.4%) met the muscle strengthening recommendations compared to those who are ex-smokers (44.6%), have never smoked (44.9%) or had not gambled in the past 12 months (47.4%). Likewise, average recreational screen time duration was higher among current smokers (6.3 hours per day) compared to those who had never smoked (4.9).

Table 3.4.2 Recreational screen time by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Does not meet recommendation	Meets recommendation	Average hours per day
	n	%	%	#
Total sample	3,724	58.0	42.0	5.0
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	664	69.3	30.7	5.9
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,730	54.6	45.4	4.8
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	824	61.3	38.7	5.4
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,717	53.4	46.6	5.0
Does not feel valued by society ²	592	66.5	33.5	5.6
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,272	54.6	45.4	5.1
Definitely feel valued by society	673	47.8	52.2	4.6
Poor mental wellbeing ²	800	64.5	35.5	5.6
Good mental wellbeing	1,995	53.1	46.9	5.0
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	976	56.2	43.8	5.2
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,422	59.3	40.7	4.8
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,888	60.2	39.8	5.4
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,819	55.1	44.9	4.6
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,258	58.7	41.3	5.1
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	417	49.1	50.9	4.0
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,206	66.2	33.8	5.5
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,446	54.5	45.5	4.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,734	60.6	39.4	5.2
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,541	54.0	46.0	4.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,118	64.3	35.7	5.2
Meets sleep recommendations	2,508	54.0	46.0	4.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	477	68.2	31.8	6.0
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,243	56.2	43.8	4.9
Does not meet water recommendations	2,226	58.9	41.1	5.2
Meets water recommendations	1,447	56.5	43.5	4.8
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	154	69.5	30.5	6.3
Ex-smoker	980	55.4	44.6	5.2
Never smoked	1,421	55.1	44.9	4.9

Current vaper	75	59.5	40.5	5.5
Ex-vaper	190	60.4	39.6	5.7
Never vaped	2,283	55.6	44.4	5.0
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,382	55.2	44.8	5.2
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,169	57.6	42.4	5.1
Gambled	824	62.6	37.4	5.4
Never gambled	1,728	52.6	47.4	5.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.5.1a, 3.5.1b and 3.5.2 present the average hours per night of sleep and adherence to the age-related recommendations according to selected demographic characteristics, residential subregion and health and behaviour characteristics.

Overall, 68.7% of respondents met the age-specific sleep recommendations and slept for 7.5 hours per night. On average, children slept significantly longer than adults (9.1 hours vs. 7.1 hours), although there was no difference in adherence to the recommendations. Males (71.4%) were more likely to meet the sleep recommendations than females (66.2%), although this difference was not reflected in average hours per night. When looking at sex by age group, both males and females aged 3 to 11 years slept longer, and a greater proportion of females aged 3 to 11 adhered to the sleep recommendations compared to those in older age groups.

When looking at sleep by subregion, respondents from Maiden Gully (78.0%) were the most likely to meet the recommendations and residents from Marong – Rural West were the least likely (59.2%). Respondents from Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully reported the longest average sleep duration (7.8 hours) while those from Long Gully – West Bendigo – Ironbark reported the shortest (7.1 hours).

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

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>

- Speaks English as main language (68.1%) compared to another main language (84.1%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (53.5%) compared non-Indigenous (69.4%)
- Less than Bachelor level education (66.5%) compared to Bachelor degree or above (75.0%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (58.1%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (74.0%)
- Marginal (60.8%), low or very low (57.2%) food security compared to high food security (73.5%)

Table 3.5.1a Sleep by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average hours per night #
Total sample	3,723	31.3	68.7	7.5
Children	948	30.2	69.8	9.1
Adults	2,775	31.5	68.5	7.1
Males	1,159	28.6	71.4	7.6
Females	2,536	33.8	66.2	7.4
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	278	26.3	73.7	9.6
Males, 12 to 17	208	32.7	67.3	8.4
Males, 18 to 34	97	21.6	78.4	7.3
Males, 35 to 49	172	31.6	68.4	7.0
Males, 50 to 69	257	30.7	69.3	7.1
Males, 70+	147	29.9	70.1	7.3
Females, 3 to 11	273	25.3	74.7	9.6
Females, 12 to 17	181	41.4	58.6	8.2
Females, 18 to 34	395	31.8	68.2	7.2
Females, 35 to 49	635	38.3	61.7	6.9
Females, 50 to 69	766	34.0	66.0	7.1
Females, 70+	286	33.3	66.7	7.1
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	467	34.0	66.0	7.2
2 or 3 people	1,482	29.9	70.1	7.1
4 or 5 people	734	33.8	66.2	7.0
More than 5 people	89	29.9	70.1	7.4
Born overseas	317	26.4	73.6	7.5
Born in Australia	3,405	31.8	68.2	7.5
Speaks other main language	95	15.9	84.1	7.5
Speaks English as main language	3,618	31.9	68.1	7.8

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	128	46.5	53.5	7.4
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,591	30.6	69.4	7.5
LGBTQIA+	210	35.8	64.2	7.1
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,504	30.9	69.1	7.5
Neurodivergent	443	34.8	65.2	7.6
Not neurodivergent	2,533	29.6	70.4	7.5
Maybe	302	35.3	64.7	7.8
Not sure what neurodivergent means	369	35.1	64.9	7.2
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,351	33.5	66.5	7.1
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,417	25.0	75.0	7.2
Unemployed/Retired ²	909	28.5	71.5	7.3
Employed	1,862	33.2	66.8	7.0
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	819	41.9	58.1	6.9
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,947	26.0	74.0	7.2
Requires help with daily activities	327	30.7	69.3	7.4
Does not require help	3,390	31.3	68.7	8.2
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	451	42.8	57.2	6.9
Marginal food security	345	39.2	60.8	7.0
High food security	1,976	26.5	73.5	7.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.5.1b Sleep by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average hours per night #
Total sample	3,723	31.3	68.7	7.5
Subregion				
Bendigo	225	32.5	67.5	7.4
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	157	40.7	59.3	7.4
East Bendigo	65	23.4	76.6	7.8
Epsom - Ascot	181	31.0	69.0	7.4
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	342	27.8	72.2	7.8
Golden Square	253	30.5	69.5	7.6
Huntly	110	30.7	69.3	7.7
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	287	32.2	67.8	7.4
Kennington	171	26.9	73.1	7.7
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	120	39.0	61.0	7.1
Maiden Gully	195	22.0	78.0	7.7

North Bendigo - California Gully	162	32.4	67.6	7.5
Strathdale	192	28.8	71.2	7.4
Strathfieldsaye	233	27.0	73.0	7.7
White Hills - Jackass Flat	184	32.1	67.9	7.4
Urban subtotal	2,877	30.5	69.5	7.5
Elmore - Rural North	71	34.7	65.3	7.3
Heathcote and District	392	32.3	67.7	7.5
Marong - Rural West	117	40.8	59.2	7.3
Rural East	257	32.2	67.8	7.4
Rural subtotal	2,877	33.6	66.4	7.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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. All health and wellbeing indicators were associated with sleep. Specifically, a lower proportion of those who self-reported their health to be fair or poor (58.9% vs 70.7%), have low to moderate life satisfaction (56.9% vs 73.9%), do not feel valued by society (55.2% vs sometimes [71.2%] and definitely [75.3%]), and have poor mental wellbeing (53.3% vs 74.7%) met the sleep recommendations compared to their counterparts who reported more positive health and wellbeing. In addition, those who are overweight or obese reported a shorter sleep duration (7.2 hours) compared to those who are normal weight or underweight (7.6 hours).

Differences in adherence to the sleep recommendations were also seen between those who did and did not report adherence to the aerobic physical activity (71.5% of those who did compared to 63.0% of those who did not), screen time (73.9% vs 64.8%), fruit (71.7% vs 66.4%) and vegetable (78.8% vs 67.8%) recommendations. Similarly, a lower proportion of those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages on a daily basis (60.3%) met the sleep recommendations compared to those who did not drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (70.3%). Those who did not meet the water recommendations reported a shorter sleep duration (7.4 hours) compared to those who do meet them (7.6 hours), while those who did meet the muscle strengthening recommendations sleep shorter on average (7.3 hours) compared to those who do not meet them (7.5 hours).

There were no associations between sleep duration or adherence to the sleep recommendations with any of the risk behaviours.

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	3,723	31.3	68.7	7.5
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	646	41.1	58.9	6.9
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,745	29.3	70.7	7.6

Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	810	43.1	56.9	6.9
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,712	26.1	73.9	7.2
Does not feel valued by society ²	580	44.8	55.2	6.8
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,267	28.8	71.2	7.1
Definitely feel valued by society	671	24.7	75.3	7.3
Poor mental wellbeing ²	784	46.7	53.3	6.7
Good mental wellbeing	1,991	25.3	74.7	7.3
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,415	33.6	66.4	7.2
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	979	28.5	71.5	7.6
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,863	33.6	66.4	7.2
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,843	28.3	71.7	7.8
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,251	32.2	67.8	7.5
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	425	21.2	78.8	8.1
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,196	37.0	63.0	7.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,453	28.5	71.5	7.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,720	32.9	67.1	7.5
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,541	29.2	70.8	7.3
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,965	35.2	64.8	7.4
Meets screen time recommendations	1,661	26.1	73.9	7.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	466	39.7	60.3	7.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,252	29.7	70.3	7.6
Does not meet water recommendations	2,225	31.6	68.4	7.4
Meets water recommendations	1,445	30.5	69.5	7.6
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	154	36.5	63.5	7.0
Ex-smoker	966	32.1	67.9	7.1
Never smoked	1,417	31.1	68.9	7.1
Current vaper	72	38.5	61.5	6.9
Ex-vaper	186	28.4	71.6	7.2
Never vaped	2,270	32.0	68.0	7.1
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,362	30.7	69.3	7.1
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,170	33.5	66.5	7.1
Gambled	809	36.3	63.7	7.1
Never gambled	1,724	29.4	70.6	7.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 (53.7%) indicated that they had *not* participated in activities as often as they would like (see Table 3.6.1a). Adults (60.9%) and females (60.0%) were more likely than children (25.6%) and males (47.4%) 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, those aged between 18 and 49 years were the most likely to report they had not participated in activities as often as they would like.

Table 3.6.1b shows that a greater proportion of respondents living in rural subregions (61.1%) reported not participating in activities as often as they would like compared to respondents living in urban subregions (51.6%). Overall, Epsom – Ascot residents (65.5%) were the most likely to report that they had not participated in as much physical activity as they would have liked over the past 12 months, whereas Kennington residents were the least likely (41.6%).

There were a number of 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 (67.8%) compared to single (51.8%) and 2-3 person (59.5%) households
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (70.1%) compared to non-Indigenous (53.2%)
- LGBTQIA+ (66.7%) compared to not LBTQIA+ (52.6%)
- Neurodivergent (60.5%) compared to not neurodivergent (51.7%)
- Employed (66.6%) compared to unemployed/retired (50.4%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (70.4%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (55.8%)
- Low (72.2%) or marginal (66.6%) food security compared to high food security (56.1%)

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

Unweighted base ¹	Yes	No
n	%	%

Total sample	3,918	46.3	53.7
Children	992	74.4	25.6
Adults	2,900	39.1	60.9
Males	1,200	52.6	47.4
Females	2,674	40.0	60.0
Sex and age			
Males, 3 to 11	286	75.5	24.5
Males, 12 to 17	211	80.1	19.9
Males, 18 to 34	105	47.5	52.5
Males, 35 to 49	179	34.3	65.7
Males, 50 to 69	263	42.8	57.2
Males, 70+	151	62.9	37.1
Females, 3 to 11	286	75.5	24.5
Females, 12 to 17	195	65.6	34.4
Females, 18 to 34	427	30.7	69.3
Females, 35 to 49	664	22.0	78.0
Females, 50 to 69	799	37.2	62.8
Females, 70+	290	48.3	51.7
Demographic indicators			
Household size²			
1 person	480	48.2	51.8
2 or 3 people	1,550	40.5	59.5
4 or 5 people	774	32.2	67.8
More than 5 people	93	33.8	66.2
Born overseas	335	45.6	54.4
Born in Australia	3,579	46.2	53.8
Speaks other main language	103	53.4	46.6
Speaks English as main language	3,800	46.0	54.0
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	142	29.9	70.1
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,767	46.8	53.2
LGBTQIA+	240	33.3	66.7
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,661	47.4	52.6
Neurodivergent	492	39.5	60.5
Not neurodivergent	2,615	48.3	51.7
Maybe	318	40.3	59.7
Not sure what neurodivergent means	404	49.2	50.8
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,423	39.4	60.6
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,468	38.0	62.0
Unemployed/Retired ²	941	49.6	50.4
Employed	1,955	33.4	66.6

Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	873	29.6	70.4
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,018	44.2	55.8
Requires help with daily activities	354	40.8	59.2
Does not require help	3,552	46.7	53.3
Food security (last 12 months)²			
Low or very low food security	488	27.8	72.2
Marginal food security	365	33.4	66.6
High food security	2,043	43.9	56.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.6.1b Participation in desired level of physical activity by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Yes %	No %
Total sample	3,918	46.3	53.7
Subregion			
Bendigo	236	53.8	46.2
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	179	46.7	53.3
East Bendigo	69	44.9	55.1
Epsom - Ascot	190	34.5	65.5
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	351	55.3	44.7
Golden Square	263	46.9	53.1
Huntly	113	46.8	53.2
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	303	47.4	52.6
Kennington	178	58.4	41.6
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	130	41.0	59.0
Maiden Gully	204	57.0	43.0
North Bendigo - California Gully	176	43.4	56.6
Strathdale	203	47.9	52.1
Strathfieldsaye	245	49.6	50.4
White Hills - Jackass Flat	197	45.6	54.4
Urban subtotal	3,037	48.4	51.6
Elmore - Rural North	75	43.3	56.7
Heathcote and District	405	38.7	61.3
Marong - Rural West	123	39.1	60.9
Rural East	268	37.5	62.5
Rural subtotal	871	38.9	61.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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, with associations seen across all health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, a greater proportion of those who self-reported their health to be fair or poor (77.6% vs 48.1%), have low to moderate life satisfaction (76.1% vs 54.0%), do not feel valued by society (74.1% vs sometimes [62.5%] and definitely [47.3%]), have poor mental wellbeing (83.9% vs 51.8%), and are overweight or obese (63.0% vs 43.0%) 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.

Preference to be more physically active was associated with all health behaviours, except for screen time and water consumption. Those who did not meet the fruit intake (60.4% vs 45.6%), vegetable intake (55.4% vs 36.4%), aerobic physical activity (64.3% vs 49.6%), muscle strengthening (63.5% vs 45.8%) and sleep duration (63.5% vs 48.9%) recommendations were more likely to report that they did not engage in as much physical activity as they wanted over the past 12 months. Similarly, a greater proportion of those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (68.2%) reported that they were not as active as they would have liked compared to those who did not drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (51.3%).

Results also revealed that current vapers (80.1%) were more likely to have not done activity as often as they would like compared to ex-vapers (57.3%) and those who have never vaped (61.7%). No other associations with risk behaviours were seen.

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 behaviours.

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

	Unweighted base ¹	Yes	No
	n	%	%
Total sample	3,918	46.3	53.7
Health and wellbeing indicators			
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	683	22.4	77.6
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,836	51.9	48.1
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	846	23.9	76.1
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,749	46.0	54.0
Does not feel valued by society ²	602	25.9	74.1
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,299	37.5	62.5
Definitely feel valued by society	690	52.7	47.3
Poor mental wellbeing ²	815	16.1	83.9
Good mental wellbeing	2,085	48.2	51.8

Overweight or obese (BMI ≥ 25.0)	1,451	37.0	63.0
Normal range or underweight (BMI < 25.0)	1,006	57.0	43.0
Health behaviour indicators			
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,961	39.6	60.4
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,907	54.4	45.6
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,396	44.6	55.4
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	432	63.6	36.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,263	35.7	64.3
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,538	50.4	49.6
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,789	36.5	63.5
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,594	54.2	45.8
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,043	44.6	55.4
Meets screen time recommendations	1,666	47.7	52.3
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,140	36.5	63.5
Meets sleep recommendations	2,568	51.1	48.9
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	497	31.8	68.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,357	48.7	51.3
Does not meet water recommendations	2,301	44.6	55.4
Meets water recommendations	1,477	48.0	52.0
Risk behaviour indicators²			
Current smoker	157	36.4	63.6
Ex-smoker	995	38.6	61.4
Never smoked	1,458	37.9	62.1
Current vaper	75	19.9	80.1
Ex-vaper	193	42.7	57.3
Never vaped	2,333	38.3	61.7
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,396	38.6	61.4
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,209	37.3	62.7
Gambled	837	35.3	64.7
Never gambled	1,769	39.7	60.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 (58.8%). Poor health or disability (28.1%), cost (27.1%) and lack of social support (25.6%) 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	
Too busy / not enough time	58.8
Poor health or disability	28.1
Cost	27.1
Lack of social support	25.6
Safety	17.2
Unsure about what activities are available	11.9
No cool or shaded areas to exercise locally during hot weather	8.0
Lack of transport	4.1
Preferred activity not on offer locally / at suitable time	4.0
Caring responsibilities	3.7
Lack of motivation / laziness	3.5
Personal or cultural reasons	2.3
Injury	2.0
Lack of footpaths / bike paths	1.2
Weather / seasonality	1.1
Distance	0.8
Tiredness / fatigue	0.7

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.7.2a), subregion of residence (see Table 3.7.2b) 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 were associated with 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 (46.0%)
- Neurodivergent (66.8%) or not neurodivergent (61.8%) compared to unsure what neurodivergent means (46.1%)

- Bachelor degree or higher (71.1%) compared to less than a Bachelor level education (57.1%)
- Employed (73.2%) compared to unemployed/retired (28.2%)
- Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (64.8%) compared to just getting along, poor or very poor (53.7%)
- Does not require help with daily activities (62.4%) compared to requires help (30.1%)
- Marginal food security (69.8%) compared to low or very low food security (52.6%)
- Residents of Flora Hill, Quarry Hill, Spring Gully, Golden Gully (66.8%), Kennington (68.7%), Strathdale (65.9%), Strathfieldsaye (68.0%) and Marong – Rural West (71.9%) compared to residents of Long Gully, West Bendigo, Ironbark (41.3%), Heathcote and District (44.6%)
- Good, very good or excellent health (63.0%) compared to fair or poor health (51.7%)
- Met aerobic physical activity recommendations (65.3%) compared to not (49.2%)
- Current (75.0%) or ex- (74.6%) vaper compared to never vaped (58.8%)
- Engaged in risky alcohol consumption in past 12 months (66.0%) compared to not (54.9%)

Likewise, many demographic characteristics, and health and behaviour indicators were associated with poor health or disability as a barrier to physical activity. The following respondent groups were more likely to report poor health or disability as a barrier to physical activity participation:

- Adults (29.3%) compared to children (17.1%)
- Born in Australia (29.3%) compared to born overseas (17.6%)
- English as main language (28.9%) compared to another main language (7.0%)
- LGBTQIA+ (42.2%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (26.5%)
- Neurodivergent (45.7%) or unsure what neurodivergent means (39.6%) compared to not (21.7%) or maybe (22.1%) neurodivergent
- Less than Bachelor level education (31.5%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (21.7%)
- Unemployed/retired (44.5%) compared to employed (23.2%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (35.9%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (24.7%)
- Requires help with daily activities (52.8%) compared to no help required (25.1%)
- Low or very low food security (37.7%) compared to high food security (26.2%)
- Fair or poor health (46.4%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (19.7%)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (36.3%) compared to high/very high life satisfaction (22.9%)
- Do not valued by society (36.0%) compared to sometimes (26.8%) and definitely (21.3%) feel valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (37.7%) compared to good mental wellbeing (23.8%)
- Did not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations (37.1%) compared to met them (22.9%)
- Did not meet screen time recommendations (30.8%) compared to met them (23.9%)

- Did not meet sleep recommendations (34.4%) compared to met them (23.9%)
- Did not consume risky amounts of alcohol (36.0%) compared to consumed risky amounts of alcohol in the past 12 months (23.1%)

In addition, residents from Elmore - Rural North (7.4%) and Strathfieldsaye (21.5%) were the least likely to report poor health or disability as a barrier to physical activity participation, significantly lower than residents from 12 other subregions (see Table 3.7.2b for specifics).

Cost as a barrier to physical activity was also associated with many 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 (39.3%) compared to adults (25.8%)
- Females (31.9%) compared to males (20.5%)
- LGBTQIA+ (41.1%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (25.7%)
- Neurodivergent (41.4%) compared to not (24.6%), maybe (26.6%) or unsure what neurodivergent means (25.1%)
- Less than Bachelor level education (27.7%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (20.1%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (37.7%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (17.6%)
- Requires help with daily activities (43.0%) compared to no help required (25.2%)
- Low or very low food security (48.2%) compared to marginal (28.2%) and high food security (15.8%)
- Do not feel valued by society (34.0%) compared to sometimes (24.3%) and definitely (15.6%) feel valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (31.5%) compared to good mental wellbeing (22.2%)
- Did not meet muscle strengthening recommendations (29.6%) compared to met them (21.5%)
- Ex-vaper (42.6%) compared to never vaped (23.7%)

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:

- Females (29.2%) compared to males (20.9%)
- LGBTQIA+ (45.8%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (23.4%)
- Neurodivergent (45.6%) or maybe neurodivergent (34.5%) compared to not (22.1%) or unsure what neurodivergent means (18.5%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (30.7%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (22.3%)
- Residents of North Bendigo - California Gully (36.7%) compared to Strathdale (15.5%)
- Fair or poor health (32.9%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (22.7%)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (34.5%) compared to high/very high life satisfaction (19.3%)

- Do not feel valued by society (35.6%) compared to sometimes (23.3%) and definitely (16.4%) feel valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (34.1%) compared to good mental wellbeing (20.3%)
- Did not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations (30.2%) compared to met them (22.9%)

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

- Females (21.7%) compared to (10.9%)
- Neurodivergent (24.4%) compared to unsure what neurodivergent means (10.7%)
- Bachelor degree or higher (23.3%) compared to less than Bachelor level education (15.5%)
- Never smoked (20.3%) compared to current smoker (10.3%)
- Ex-vaper (25.9%) or never vaped (17.4%) compared to current vaper (5.7%)

Table 3.7.2a 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	2,112	58.8	28.1	27.1	25.6	17.2
Children	254	46.0	17.1	39.3	24.8	15.7
Adults	1,849	60.2	29.3	25.8	25.7	17.4
Males	483	61.9	24.2	20.5	20.9	10.9
Females	1,609	56.2	30.9	31.9	29.2	21.7
Demographic indicators						
Born overseas	186	53.1	17.6	24.3	21.0	10.9
Born in Australia	1,925	59.5	29.3	27.4	26.1	17.9
Speaks other main language	56	56.1	7.0	39.6	25.5	8.2
Speaks English as main language	2,046	58.9	28.9	26.8	25.6	17.5
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	88	63.7	41.1	27.7	21.2	10.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,023	58.6	27.4	27.0	25.8	17.6
LGBTQIA+	162	59.2	42.2	41.1	45.8	22.0
Non-LGBTQIA+	1,941	59.2	26.5	25.7	23.4	16.6
Neurodivergent	288	66.8	45.7	41.4	45.6	24.4
Not neurodivergent	1,373	61.8	21.7	24.6	22.1	16.6
Maybe	189	61.8	22.1	26.6	34.5	17.5
Not sure what neurodivergent means	204	46.1	39.6	25.1	18.5	10.7
Less than Bachelor level education ²	892	57.1	31.5	27.7	26.3	15.5
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	951	71.1	21.7	20.1	24.2	23.3
Unemployed/Retired ²	502	28.2	44.5	26.6	25.7	14.7
Employed	1,345	73.2	23.2	25.5	25.8	18.5

Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	647	53.7	35.9	37.7	30.7	17.1
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,197	64.8	24.7	17.6	22.3	17.5
Requires help with daily activities	214	30.1	52.8	43.0	33.9	18.2
Does not require help	1,894	62.4	25.1	25.2	24.5	17.1
Food security (last 12 months)²						
Low or very low food security	378	52.6	37.7	48.2	31.4	19.5
Marginal food security	263	69.8	27.3	28.2	27.2	20.1
High food security	1,206	60.9	26.2	15.8	22.9	15.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.7.2b Top five barriers to physical activity participation by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Too busy / not enough time %	Poor health or disability %	Cost %	Lack of social support %	Safety %
Total sample	2,112	58.8	28.1	27.1	25.6	17.2
Subregion						
Bendigo	122	52.7	29.9	36.7	31.2	13.3
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	92	63.4	30.6	31.4	25.2	13.8
East Bendigo	37	64.8	21.4	29.0	34.5	19.1
Epsom - Ascot	118	60.8	28.8	24.5	23.0	16.8
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	165	66.8	25.9	30.3	25.2	20.6
Golden Square	145	54.4	23.8	33.0	29.2	19.7
Huntly	69	61.2	25.7	29.8	22.8	21.1
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	153	59.8	28.8	27.9	26.3	15.6
Kennington	77	68.7	23.7	24.2	35.0	15.9

Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	78	41.3	43.5	28.5	18.9	15.4
Maiden Gully	86	61.6	23.7	20.1	16.0	14.3
North Bendigo - California Gully	99	56.0	38.4	26.5	36.7	17.0
Strathdale	109	65.9	33.5	21.2	15.5	11.8
Strathfieldsaye	124	68.0	21.5	26.5	28.5	15.6
White Hills - Jackass Flat	112	58.9	26.3	30.3	25.2	15.3
Urban subtotal	1,586	60.1	28.5	28.2	26.0	16.2
Elmore - Rural North	42	56.2	7.4	15.6	37.0	8.1
Heathcote and District	252	44.6	28.0	25.5	23.0	21.0
Marong - Rural West	73	71.9	23.1	27.2	29.7	18.4
Rural East	152	61.2	29.8	21.3	20.7	22.2
Rural subtotal	519	54.5	25.9	23.4	24.6	19.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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	Too busy / not enough time	Poor health or disability	Cost	Lack of social support	Safety
	n	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	2,112	58.8	28.1	27.1	25.6	17.2
Health and wellbeing indicators						
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	556	51.7	46.4	31.1	32.9	15.2
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,363	63.0	19.7	25.4	22.7	18.0
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	669	56.3	36.3	29.8	34.5	16.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,002	64.5	22.9	22.6	19.3	17.6

Does not feel valued by society ²	466	55.8	36.0	34.0	35.6	16.8
Sometimes feel valued by society	859	62.5	26.8	24.3	23.3	18.0
Definitely feel valued by society	348	65.2	21.3	15.6	16.4	15.4
Poor mental wellbeing ²	693	59.1	37.7	31.5	34.1	17.2
Good mental wellbeing	1,156	61.0	23.8	22.2	20.3	17.4
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	933	63.4	29.4	23.6	26.0	14.6
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	454	58.5	23.6	29.6	27.0	20.2
Health behaviour indicators						
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,222	60.2	29.7	29.3	26.9	17.1
Meets fruit intake recommendations	864	56.9	24.8	23.0	23.8	17.7
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	1,891	59.2	28.2	27.5	26.1	17.1
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	176	54.3	23.0	18.6	17.7	20.6
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	790	49.2	37.1	30.8	30.2	15.6
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,273	65.3	22.9	24.6	22.9	18.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,131	60.1	28.1	29.6	28.6	17.1
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	746	60.6	27.5	21.5	22.7	17.6
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,121	57.1	30.8	29.4	27.8	16.8
Meets screen time recommendations	890	64.2	23.9	24.0	22.3	18.9
Does not meet sleep recommendations	705	58.7	34.4	27.2	27.1	17.4
Meets sleep recommendations	1,290	61.1	23.9	27.2	24.5	17.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	334	59.7	34.3	24.8	28.4	12.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	1,746	58.7	26.3	27.3	24.3	18.4

Does not meet water recommendations	1,292	57.3	29.8	27.2	25.0	16.0
Meets water recommendations	757	62.1	23.8	26.4	25.4	19.9
Risk behaviour indicators²						
Current smoker	109	51.7	37.9	34.9	24.4	10.3
Ex-smoker	635	61.8	30.2	22.9	24.2	15.3
Never smoked	941	62.3	26.3	26.6	27.1	20.3
Current vaper	60	75.0	27.9	27.8	28.7	5.7
Ex-vaper	124	74.6	29.8	42.6	32.6	25.9
Never vaped	1,496	58.8	28.6	23.7	24.9	17.4
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	899	66.0	23.1	24.3	24.5	15.2
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	782	54.9	36.0	27.7	27.4	20.8
Gambled	549	61.6	31.3	26.2	26.0	15.0
Never gambled	1,132	61.2	27.1	25.6	25.7	19.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 participate 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, 17.5% reported participating in at least one activity, 33.8% had participated in two to three activities and 21.9% had participated in four or more activities (see Table 3.8.1.1a). In the 2019 ALC, 8.5% of respondents reported they had not participated in any activities, whereas in 2025, 26.7% responded that they had not participated in any activities. This suggests that sport, exercise and recreation participation has 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 (29.3%) and females (30.8%) compared to children (16.0%) and males (22.4%) did not participate in any activities. Participation varied by sex and age, but in general, male and female children and adolescents were more likely to participate in sport and recreational activities than adults. Heathcote and District (42.3%) and Marong – Rural West (36.2%) residents were the most likely to not participate in any activities (Table 3.8.1.1b). The Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully subregion had the largest proportion of residents reporting that they participated in four or more activities for sport, exercise or recreation (30.9%).

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 (40.2%) compared to non-Indigenous (26.2%)
- Unsure what neurodivergent means (33.0%) compared to not neurodivergent (24.8%)
- Less than Bachelor level education (32.7%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (17.6%)
- Unemployed/retired (35.5%) compared to employed (26.0%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (43.0%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (21.7%)

- Requires help with daily activities (39.4%) compared to no help required (25.4%)
- Low or very low (45.8%) or marginal (34.5%) food security compared to high food security (22.9%)

Table 3.8.1.1a 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	3,946	26.7	17.5	33.8	21.9
Children	990	16.0	21.1	45.0	17.9
Adults	2,884	29.3	16.5	31.1	23.0
Males	1,195	22.4	15.7	34.7	27.2
Females	2,664	30.8	19.2	32.9	17.1
Sex and age					
Males, 3 to 11	285	15.4	18.6	46.7	19.3
Males, 12 to 17	207	15.0	19.3	44.9	20.8
Males, 18 to 34	105	23.3	15.1	36.0	25.6
Males, 35 to 49	178	17.8	11.0	35.7	35.5
Males, 50 to 69	263	25.4	15.8	27.9	30.9
Males, 70+	151	30.4	17.1	29.3	23.2
Females, 3 to 11	291	13.1	24.1	46.7	16.2
Females, 12 to 17	193	20.2	22.8	41.5	15.5
Females, 18 to 34	425	34.8	21.2	29.5	14.5
Females, 35 to 49	662	37.9	15.0	27.5	19.6
Females, 50 to 69	790	30.1	17.8	32.3	19.8
Females, 70+	288	35.2	18.0	32.8	14.0
Demographic indicators					
Household size²					
1 person	478	29.1	21.9	28.6	20.4
2 or 3 people	1,543	29.4	17.1	31.5	22.0
4 or 5 people	769	26.9	13.3	33.1	26.7
More than 5 people	91	44.0	11.5	22.1	22.4
Born overseas	337	31.9	16.3	24.1	27.7
Born in Australia	3,560	26.2	17.7	34.7	21.4
Speaks other main language	103	31.1	22.0	18.5	28.4
Speaks English as main language	3,781	26.5	17.4	34.3	21.8
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	141	40.2	20.6	23.0	16.2
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,750	26.2	17.3	34.3	22.3
LGBTQIA+	237	36.9	19.2	28.5	15.3

Non-LGBTQIA+	3,643	25.8	17.5	34.0	22.7
Neurodivergent	489	28.4	21.5	34.2	15.9
Not neurodivergent	2,605	24.8	16.8	35.4	23.0
Maybe	315	25.1	19.0	39.3	16.6
Not sure what neurodivergent means	401	33.0	16.4	23.3	27.3
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,413	32.7	16.7	28.7	21.9
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,461	17.6	16.4	38.9	27.1
Unemployed/Retired ²	935	35.5	17.3	27.3	20.0
Employed	1,944	26.0	16.2	33.1	24.7
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	869	43.0	15.8	22.5	18.7
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,003	21.7	16.9	35.8	25.6
Requires help with daily activities	349	39.4	20.8	29.2	10.6
Does not require help	3,536	25.4	17.1	34.2	23.3
Food security (last 12 months)²					
Low or very low food security	484	45.8	14.3	22.4	17.4
Marginal food security	364	34.5	15.5	34.5	15.5
High food security	2,032	22.9	17.5	33.1	26.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.8.1.1b Participation in sport, exercise and recreational activities by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	None %	One %	Two to three %	Four or more %
Total sample	3,946	26.7	17.5	33.8	21.9
Subregion					
Bendigo	236	23.4	20.3	34.4	21.9
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	177	24.4	19.6	32.4	23.5
East Bendigo	74	29.5	4.4	50.5	15.6
Epsom - Ascot	192	28.7	16.2	30.2	25.0
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	355	18.4	18.7	32.0	30.9
Golden Square	265	28.3	17.2	33.3	21.2
Huntly	115	29.2	16.9	34.3	19.7
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	305	35.3	16.0	29.4	19.4
Kennington	178	21.3	12.9	46.3	19.5
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	134	33.4	20.0	24.0	22.5
Maiden Gully	206	17.8	17.2	40.7	24.2
North Bendigo - California Gully	172	31.3	18.7	29.2	20.8
Strathdale	201	21.5	17.7	39.5	21.4
Strathfieldsaye	245	21.4	17.1	44.4	17.1

White Hills - Jackass Flat	205	17.3	19.6	40.4	22.7
Urban subtotal	3,060	25.1	17.4	35.3	22.2
Elmore - Rural North	75	30.1	22.2	24.8	22.9
Heathcote and District	403	42.3	18.9	22.3	16.5
Marong - Rural West	122	36.2	18.5	24.3	20.9
Rural East	271	18.3	14.7	40.2	26.8
Rural subtotal	871	32.8	17.9	28.3	20.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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. This was especially notable amongst respondents with the following health characteristics:

- Fair or poor self-rated health (48.8%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (22.0%)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (39.6%) compared to high/very high life satisfaction (26.0%)
- Do not feel valued by society (43.5%) compared to sometimes (28.3%) or definitely (21.5%) feel valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (44.1%) compared to good mental wellbeing (23.3%)
- Overweight or obese (30.2%) compared to normal weight or underweight (20.4%)

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 compared to their counterparts who met them:

- Fruit intake (32.4% vs 19.4%)
- Vegetable intake (27.2% vs 19.8%)
- Aerobic physical activity (42.9% vs 20.0%)
- Muscle strengthening exercise (32.8% vs 17.3%)
- Screen time (29.6% vs 22.2%)
- Sleep duration (32.8% vs 23.1%)
- Water consumption (28.9% vs 21.9%)

Additionally, those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (41.1%) were more likely to report not participating in any sport, exercise or recreation activities compared those who did not drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (24.1%). Current smokers (46.3%) and those who had not engaged in risky alcohol consumption (34.9%) 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 (30.2%), those who have never smoked (28.8%) and those who had consumed risky amounts of alcohol (27.6%).

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	3,946	26.7	17.5	33.8	21.9
Health and wellbeing indicators					
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	685	48.8	16.4	21.7	13.1
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,846	22.0	17.9	37.4	22.7
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	847	39.6	17.6	27.1	15.7
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,751	26.0	15.9	33.6	24.5
Does not feel valued by society ²	604	43.5	18.2	23.7	14.6
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,299	28.3	16.2	32.8	22.8
Definitely feel valued by society	691	21.5	15.3	36.4	26.8
Poor mental wellbeing ²	817	44.1	18.8	21.7	15.3
Good mental wellbeing	2,067	23.3	15.6	34.9	26.1
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥ 25.0)	1,452	30.2	16.7	31.6	21.6
Normal range or underweight (BMI < 25.0)	1,009	20.4	16.4	38.9	24.3
Health behaviour indicators					
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,952	32.4	17.6	29.1	20.9
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,887	19.4	17.2	40.1	23.4
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,367	27.2	17.4	33.5	21.9
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	433	19.8	17.4	38.6	24.2
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,249	41.9	19.3	25.9	12.9
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,521	20.0	16.5	37.4	26.1
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,771	32.8	18.7	32.0	16.6
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,584	17.3	15.2	37.6	29.9
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,023	29.6	17.0	33.6	19.8
Meets screen time recommendations	1,653	22.2	18.6	34.8	24.4
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,133	32.8	16.6	32.2	18.5
Meets sleep recommendations	2,542	23.1	18.3	35.2	23.3
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	490	41.1	14.4	28.8	15.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,335	24.1	18.2	34.7	23.0
Does not meet water recommendations	2,285	28.9	18.0	32.1	20.9
Meets water recommendations	1,464	21.9	16.8	37.6	23.7

Risk behaviour indicators ²					
Current smoker	158	46.3	15.2	19.8	18.7
Ex-smoker	996	30.2	18.1	30.2	21.5
Never smoked	1,460	28.8	15.6	34.0	21.6
Current vaper	76	37.1	20.2	27.2	15.5
Ex-vaper	193	27.7	18.4	32.1	21.8
Never vaped	2,335	30.9	16.2	31.5	21.4
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,398	27.6	17.0	33.8	21.5
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,210	34.9	15.9	28.1	21.1
Gambled	840	27.6	17.0	35.0	20.5
Never gambled	1,769	32.4	16.3	29.4	21.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 did 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 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 – 18.3%
- Swimming – 8.5%
- Fitness: Gym – 8.2%
- Active play (at playgrounds / play centres) – 6.6%
- Fitness: Indoor group activities / aerobics – 5.2%

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 (91.0%) and Australian rules football (86.4%), as well as strength and fitness related activities, such as weightlifting (87.8%), outdoor/personal training fitness (87.6%) and fitness: gym (86.8%). In contrast, activities with the greatest proportions of light participation included bushwalking/hiking (39.6%) and golf (32.5%).

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) versus organised sports that occur at least weekly or that require ongoing membership commitments (e.g., gyms, personal training), 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 would be 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	5,973	72.6	13.8	13.6
Walking	1,090	82.8	11.0	6.2
Swimming	510	68.0	14.3	17.6
Fitness: Gym	490	86.8	6.6	6.6
Active play (at playground / play centre)	380	60.0	24.4	15.7

Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics	312	86.6	9.5	3.9
Cycling: General cycling for recreation	251	58.7	23.9	17.4
Netball (indoor / outdoor)	249	85.1	11.6	3.2
Bush walking / Hiking	236	36.3	24.0	39.6
Jogging / running	231	77.0	11.5	11.5
Australian Rules Football (AFL)	207	86.4	6.9	6.7
Basketball (indoor / outdoor)	174	80.8	10.1	9.1
Soccer (indoor / outdoor)	154	91.0	5.4	3.6
Dancing / Ballet / Calisthenics	138	82.4	9.2	8.5
Tennis (indoor / outdoor)	134	67.4	13.4	19.2
Aqua aerobics	126	80.9	5.1	14.0
Cricket (all types)	106	75.6	11.9	12.5
Cycling: Mountain bike riding	105	46.5	33.3	20.3
Golf	98	46.6	21.0	32.5
Weightlifting / Body building	88	87.8	8.1	4.1
Fitness: Outdoor fitness / Personal training	75	87.6	8.1	4.3

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

Tables 3.8.2.2a, 3.8.2.2b and 3.8.2.3 provide an overview of the demographic characteristics, subregion of residence, 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 Australian Rules Football. In contrast, adults were more likely to take part in walking, gym and group fitness classes, recreational cycling, bushwalking/hiking and jogging/running. Sex associations were also evident. Females were more likely than males to participate in walking, swimming, gym, indoor group fitness classes and netball. Conversely, males were more likely to participate in recreational cycling, jogging/running and AFL. There were subregion associations with nine of the top 10 sports, exercise and recreational activities, with no difference in swimming participation seen according to residential subregion.

Many associations between participation in sport, exercise and recreation activities and demographic and risk behaviours were seen. There also appeared to be an association between some 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, perceived value to society, mental wellbeing, adherence to the screen time and sleep recommendations, and gambling behaviours.

Table 3.8.2.2a Top ten activities by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Walking	Swimming	Fitness: Gym	Active play	Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics	Cycling: General cycling for recreation	Netball (indoor / outdoor)	Bush walking / Hiking	Jogging / running	Australian Rules Football (AFL)
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	6,097	17.4	7.6	7.7	6.9	3.8	4.4	3.8	3.7	4.3	3.7
Children	1,583	3.4	13.8	3.2	13.4	0.6	2.9	8.4	0.8	1.0	10.0
Adults	4,424	21.6	5.9	8.9	5.0	4.7	4.8	2.4	4.5	5.3	2.0
Males	2,057	14.6	6.5	6.5	6.9	1.7	5.4	0.9	3.2	5.4	5.6
Females	3,923	21.1	8.8	9.3	6.7	6.3	3.1	7.0	4.3	3.2	1.6
Demographic indicators											
Household size²											
1 person	710	25.0	6.6	9.1	1.8	8.4	4.9	0.6	5.6	5.3	0.5
2 or 3 people	2,443	23.6	5.8	9.3	3.5	5.0	4.7	1.4	4.6	4.7	1.4
4 or 5 people	1,162	16.2	6.2	8.6	9.0	2.7	5.3	4.1	3.8	6.8	3.7
More than 5 people	105	19.3	0.8	5.8	8.6	3.4	1.0	13.2	4.1	1.5	5.6
Born overseas	484	13.1	5.5	7.9	12.3	3.6	4.2	0.6	4.2	6.8	1.1
Born in Australia	5,552	18.1	7.8	7.7	6.2	3.9	4.5	4.0	3.7	4.1	4.0
Speaks other main language	134	9.5	5.4	3.3	29.9	2.0	2.4	0.8	2.2	5.2	0.0
Speaks English as main language	5,894	17.9	7.7	7.9	6.0	3.9	4.5	3.8	3.8	4.3	3.9
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	162	19.4	7.0	7.6	4.8	0.6	1.5	5.7	1.8	3.6	7.1
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	5,872	17.6	7.6	7.8	6.9	3.9	4.5	3.6	3.8	4.4	3.6
LGBTQIA+	319	21.5	6.4	7.4	5.2	2.3	10.7	2.6	7.4	8.3	1.8
Non-LGBTQIA+	5,695	17.3	7.6	7.8	6.9	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.5	4.1	3.9
Neurodivergent	710	17.3	7.5	8.1	7.0	2.1	5.1	1.7	5.0	3.9	5.5
Not neurodivergent	4,180	17.2	7.8	8.0	6.7	4.6	4.0	4.5	3.6	4.5	3.6
Maybe	513	18.2	9.4	8.7	6.7	2.5	6.3	4.8	4.6	3.2	4.3

Not sure what neurodivergent means	517	16.7	5.6	5.6	7.5	2.1	4.8	1.1	2.6	5.0	3.0
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,846	22.1	5.6	8.2	5.7	4.5	4.7	2.3	4.3	4.5	2.1
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	2,565	20.3	6.6	10.5	3.5	5.4	5.0	2.7	5.1	7.2	1.8
Unemployed/Retired ²	1,361	27.2	5.6	7.7	5.9	6.2	5.6	0.5	4.6	1.5	0.3
Employed	3,054	19.0	6.0	9.4	4.6	4.1	4.4	3.3	4.4	7.1	2.8
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	987	21.4	5.8	8.7	9.3	4.4	2.7	1.4	4.4	4.3	1.5
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	3,420	21.6	5.9	8.9	3.4	4.9	5.6	2.8	4.5	5.7	2.3
Requires help with daily activities	426	16.5	14.0	6.6	13.0	3.3	6.0	0.7	1.9	2.2	3.7
Does not require help	5,596	17.7	7.1	7.8	6.3	3.9	4.3	3.9	3.8	4.5	3.8
Food security (last 12 months)²											
Low or very low food security	502	24.8	4.4	6.6	10.9	4.6	1.8	2.2	3.9	5.0	2.3
Marginal food security	493	16.9	5.9	8.9	6.8	4.1	4.7	3.3	4.9	4.0	2.5
High food security	3,420	21.6	6.2	9.4	3.5	4.9	5.4	2.3	4.6	5.6	1.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.8.2.2b Top ten activities by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Walking	Swimming	Fitness: Gym	Active play	Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics	Cycling: General cycling for recreation	Netball (indoor / outdoor)	Bush walking / Hiking	Jogging / running	Australian Rules Football (AFL)
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	6,097	17.4	7.6	7.7	6.9	3.8	4.4	3.8	3.7	4.3	3.7
Subregion											
Bendigo	401	16.6	9.2	7.4	3.2	7.1	5.1	3.1	2.3	7.4	2.3
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	273	19.6	5.0	10.6	4.9	3.4	8.3	3.9	3.9	1.6	1.2
East Bendigo	123	26.5	5.5	9.1	8.3	0.6	5.5	3.3	2.3	2.1	8.2

Epsom - Ascot	261	18.7	6.0	9.2	6.7	3.5	3.9	4.8	2.2	3.1	2.5
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	612	15.2	7.7	8.1	6.3	3.7	2.4	2.8	4.2	6.6	2.7
Golden Square	414	15.5	7.4	8.8	5.7	4.7	3.6	5.6	2.7	5.9	3.5
Huntly	166	17.5	9.7	6.1	8.4	3.0	3.1	4.5	2.0	1.7	5.1
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	432	23.4	8.1	6.9	9.5	4.3	5.2	1.3	3.9	4.0	2.0
Kennington	310	15.7	7.3	11.9	3.4	5.0	4.4	3.3	2.1	5.6	2.4
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	194	18.7	10.4	5.7	15.0	1.6	4.0	2.1	5.1	2.5	3.7
Maiden Gully	320	18.7	5.6	7.2	7.1	2.3	1.7	8.5	0.8	1.0	7.6
North Bendigo - California Gully	221	21.5	6.8	8.6	5.0	1.0	6.6	3.1	2.9	4.2	3.6
Strathdale	353	16.4	6.9	6.5	8.8	5.9	3.8	1.5	4.9	5.6	2.9
Strathfieldsaye	391	14.2	8.1	6.1	8.5	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.1	6.1	3.4
White Hills - Jackass Flat	325	19.6	9.3	6.8	6.9	0.7	8.7	2.3	2.7	4.3	2.4
Urban subtotal	4,796	18.0	7.6	7.9	6.9	3.7	4.6	3.6	3.2	4.5	3.2
Elmore - Rural North	110	13.3	12.6	1.2	13.0	0.3	1.7	5.4	5.6	4.7	13.3
Heathcote and District	511	17.1	9.6	9.1	6.6	5.8	1.9	3.2	6.6	2.2	3.1
Marong - Rural West	185	11.4	5.1	9.1	3.6	8.9	1.8	5.8	6.5	6.3	6.1
Rural East	474	14.8	5.8	5.7	6.0	2.3	5.5	5.5	4.6	3.6	6.4
Rural subtotal	1,280	15.1	7.8	7.0	6.6	4.3	3.3	4.7	5.7	3.6	5.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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	Cycling: General cycling for recreation	Netball (indoor / outdoor)	Bush walking / Hiking	Jogging / running	Australian Rules Football (AFL)
------------------------------	---------	----------	--------------	-------------	---	---	----------------------------	-----------------------	-------------------	---------------------------------

Total sample	6,097	17.4	7.6	7.7	6.9	3.8	4.4	3.8	3.7	4.3	3.7
Health and wellbeing indicators											
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	696	26.2	8.6	6.5	8.0	3.0	3.1	2.4	4.4	1.8	1.5
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	4,791	16.1	7.8	7.8	6.2	4.1	4.7	4.2	3.7	5.1	4.1
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	1,020	24.1	6.1	9.1	4.2	4.3	4.6	2.0	5.2	5.5	1.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	2,971	20.6	6.3	8.8	4.8	5.1	4.9	2.7	4.4	5.9	2.1
Does not feel valued by society ²	742	24.4	6.9	8.2	4.7	3.8	4.1	1.4	3.7	5.7	1.4
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,974	21.9	6.1	8.9	4.0	5.2	4.4	2.8	4.8	5.7	1.6
Definitely feel valued by society	1,260	19.1	6.1	9.2	5.6	5.2	6.1	2.9	5.0	5.9	2.8
Poor mental wellbeing ²	917	23.0	5.7	9.8	5.3	3.9	4.2	1.9	5.5	5.0	1.3
Good mental wellbeing	3,507	21.2	5.9	8.7	4.9	5.0	5.0	2.6	4.2	5.4	2.2
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	2,199	20.5	6.3	8.9	5.5	3.8	4.3	2.8	3.9	4.1	2.8
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,792	14.0	8.3	7.1	5.9	4.9	5.3	3.7	4.1	7.3	4.3
Health behaviour indicators											
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,666	19.9	6.8	8.0	6.1	3.8	3.5	3.0	3.6	4.5	3.3
Meets fruit intake recommendations	3,299	15.4	8.4	7.4	7.6	3.9	5.2	4.4	3.8	4.3	4.2
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	5,120	17.5	7.2	7.9	6.7	3.7	4.3	3.7	3.6	4.4	3.9
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	787	18.3	11.3	6.6	8.2	5.4	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.2	2.3
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,369	16.1	10.5	4.8	10.7	3.2	4.0	5.6	2.3	1.8	4.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	4,498	18.0	6.8	8.5	5.7	4.1	4.4	3.2	4.2	5.1	3.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	2,352	18.7	8.1	3.3	6.9	2.6	4.4	5.2	3.9	3.8	4.4
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	3,015	17.9	5.8	11.5	5.2	4.9	4.6	2.6	3.9	5.4	3.1
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,944	17.0	7.3	8.2	7.1	3.6	4.3	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.7

Meets screen time recommendations	2,766	18.5	8.0	7.4	6.0	4.4	4.6	3.8	3.9	5.5	3.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,581	19.9	6.5	8.8	6.1	3.9	4.4	3.3	3.7	3.2	4.1
Meets sleep recommendations	4,185	16.5	8.2	7.2	7.1	4.0	4.3	3.9	3.7	5.1	3.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	568	18.9	5.8	7.0	6.4	2.3	2.9	4.5	4.9	5.3	3.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	5,375	17.4	7.9	7.8	6.9	4.1	4.6	3.6	3.5	4.3	3.7
Does not meet water recommendations	3,430	19.9	8.0	6.8	7.6	3.7	4.5	2.4	3.8	4.0	2.6
Meets water recommendations	2,409	13.6	7.2	9.3	6.0	4.0	3.8	6.2	3.4	5.3	5.5
Risk behaviour indicators²											
Current smoker	163	20.0	7.7	9.2	5.8	1.5	2.9	4.7	6.1	5.7	1.3
Ex-smoker	1,545	21.4	5.7	8.6	5.5	4.8	5.7	2.5	3.8	5.6	2.4
Never smoked	2,305	21.9	6.4	9.1	3.9	5.3	4.4	2.3	5.2	5.8	1.6
Current vaper	98	22.1	9.2	13.2	3.4	2.7	0.5	3.0	3.6	6.2	5.5
Ex-vaper	273	13.3	4.6	8.8	6.8	2.5	3.3	9.9	3.3	8.0	6.9
Never vaped	3,621	22.7	6.3	8.8	4.4	5.2	5.2	1.6	4.9	5.5	1.2
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	2,198	19.7	6.2	9.3	5.0	4.1	4.6	3.4	4.0	6.7	2.7
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,805	24.5	6.3	8.2	4.1	6.2	5.3	1.1	5.6	4.3	0.8
Gambled	1,271	20.7	4.8	8.9	4.5	4.4	4.1	3.2	3.4	4.8	2.8
Never gambled	2,739	22.2	7.1	8.8	4.7	5.2	5.3	2.1	5.5	6.3	1.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 that Greater Bendigo 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 of daily or weekly users) 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 in Kangaroo Flat and Red Energy Arena in West Bendigo. People who use the following venues for their main activity were most likely to be heavy users (i.e., at least once per week):

- Strathfieldsaye Recreation Reserve, Strathfieldsaye (94.3%)
- Epsom Huntly Recreation Reserve, Huntly (89.6%)
- Red Energy Arena, West Bendigo (87.1%)
- Strathdale Park Sports Precinct, Strathdale (85.5%)
- Peter Krenz Leisure Centre, Eaglehawk (84.9%)

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

- Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park, Kangaroo Flat (23.3%)
- Ewing Park, Bendigo (22.7%)
- Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills (15.9%)
- Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk (15.5%)
- O'Keefe Rail Trail – Bendigo, Axedale, Heathcote (13.4%)

While lower participation rates may simply reflect the seasonal or naturally irregular nature of certain activities, or the smaller populations served by some facilities, 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 and more data used as a supplemental indicator.

Table 3.8.3 Main recreational facilities used by frequency of activity

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Heavy Once a week or more often %	Medium 1 to 3 times a month %	Light Less than once a month %
Top 20 facilities				
Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat	357	76.3	10.9	12.8
Red Energy Arena, West Bendigo	225	87.1	9.5	3.4
Lake Weeroona, Bendigo	208	66.1	25.5	8.4
Peter Krenz Leisure Centre, Eaglehawk	176	84.9	4.4	10.7
Greater Bendigo National Park - One Tree Hill, Strathfieldsaye	102	68.9	18.8	12.2
Bendigo East Swimming Pool, East Bendigo	94	79.2	10.1	10.7
O'Keefe Rail Trail – Bendigo, Axedale, Heathcote	82	75.2	11.4	13.4
Fernwood Fitness Bendigo, Kennington	80	73.0	17.5	9.5
Kennington Reservoir, Kennington	73	76.0	16.3	7.7
Bendigo Linear Trail, Bendigo	62	72.0	15.1	12.9
Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park, Kangaroo Flat	55	57.5	19.2	23.3
Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk	54	71.0	13.4	15.5
Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills	48	59.6	24.5	15.9
Strathfieldsaye Recreation Reserve, Strathfieldsaye	47	94.3	1.7	4.1
Epsom Huntly Recreation Reserve, Huntly	42	89.6	10.4	0.0
Paul Sadler Swimland, Bendigo	42	77.2	11.5	11.4
Lar Birpa Athletics Complex, Flora Hill	41	68.1	28.1	3.8
Strathdale Park Sports Precinct, Strathdale	41	85.5	6.8	7.7
Ewing Park, Bendigo	40	67.6	9.7	22.7
Barrack Reserve, Heathcote	39	81.2	11.3	7.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 forms of transport they used to travel to and from their main activities. Table 3.8.4.1a 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.

Overall, 65.6% of activities had been accessed via car, while 30.5% were accessed via active transportation, including 22.4% on foot and 8.0% via cycling. Few (1.3%) used public transport, taxis, or Uber to get to or from their main activities. As might 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 (97.3%)
- Netball (95.8%)
- Dancing / ballet / calisthenics (94.5%)
- Soccer (93.1%)
- Cricket (92.8%)

Of the main activities that residents had participated in, residents had travelled the furthest to go bush walking or hiking (32.4 kilometres on average). However, just 62.0% of people who had been bush walking or hiking had gotten there by car with 32.8% reporting walking. Among those who travelled by car to bush walking or hiking locations, the average distance was 47.7 kilometres. Residents had to travel the least distance for walking (3.1 kilometres), jogging/running (5.2 kilometres), recreational cycling (5.3 kilometres) and active play at playgrounds and play centres (5.4 kilometres), making these accessible activity options.

Table 3.8.4.1b provides an overview of travel modes to main activities by subregion of residence. Briefly, rural residents were slightly more likely to travel by car (67.6% vs 65.1%) and travelled a longer distance on average (16.1 kilometres vs 9.1 kilometres) to get to and from their main sport, exercise and recreation activities.

Table 3.8.4.1a Travel to and from main activities

	Unweighted base ¹	Car	Walking	Bicycle	Public transport / taxi / Uber	Average kilometres travelled ²
	n	%	%	%	%	#
Top 20 activities	5,832	65.6	22.4	8.0	1.3	10.5
Walking	1,066	28.9	67.9	0.1	1.3	3.1
Swimming	500	85.8	8.3	2.0	1.9	10.0
Fitness: Gym	478	78.6	11.8	3.0	1.6	6.5
Active play (at playgrounds / play centres)	365	58.0	35.3	3.7	2.1	5.4
Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics	310	86.0	7.1	0.3	0.5	8.7
Cycling: General cycling for recreation	240	7.5	2.2	87.0	0.0	5.3
Netball (indoor / outdoor)	248	95.8	2.6	0.0	0.7	17.7
Bush walking / Hiking	227	62.0	32.8	0.8	2.6	32.4
Jogging / running	226	36.0	53.9	2.1	2.2	5.2
Australian Rules Football (AFL)	201	88.8	7.9	2.5	0.8	12.2
Basketball (indoor / outdoor)	171	91.9	6.0	0.3	0.9	12.0
Soccer (indoor / outdoor)	151	93.1	4.3	2.2	0.5	7.4
Dancing / Ballet / Calisthenics	136	94.5	2.6	0.3	1.7	16.0
Tennis (indoor / outdoor)	133	87.9	5.9	6.2	0.0	7.6
Aqua aerobics	127	91.6	5.1	0.0	2.1	9.5
Cricket (all types)	100	92.8	5.7	0.0	1.5	8.0
Cycling: Mountain bike riding	104	31.3	1.8	66.3	0.0	10.0
Golf	97	97.3	0.8	0.0	0.3	18.1
Weightlifting / Body building	82	75.9	11.5	0.0	0.0	6.7
Fitness: Outdoor fitness / Personal training	75	81.5	7.9	6.5	2.8	8.3

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.8.4.1b Travel to and from main activities by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Car	Walking	Bicycle	Public transport / taxi / Uber	Average kilometres travelled ²
	n	%	%	%	%	#
Total sample	5,832	65.6	22.4	8.0	1.3	10.5
Subregion						
Bendigo	380	55.7	26.7	10.4	5.3	8.9
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	256	70.2	16.7	10.3	1.6	6.2
East Bendigo	112	65.0	23.8	7.0	0.9	4.8
Epsom - Ascot	258	76.5	18.6	3.8	0.2	9.0
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	585	62.3	21.6	12.2	1.1	7.4
Golden Square	401	75.1	17.0	4.6	0.8	6.0
Huntly	157	69.6	20.3	5.0	0.5	18.2
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	415	60.9	26.8	7.8	1.4	8.7
Kennington	293	68.7	20.2	5.3	1.3	7.5
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	192	58.8	26.9	5.9	6.2	13.4
Maiden Gully	310	69.8	24.6	4.9	0.0	10.6
North Bendigo - California Gully	213	67.2	22.4	9.1	0.4	8.2
Strathdale	346	55.1	30.8	12.7	0.2	8.6
Strathfieldsaye	379	66.7	23.2	6.3	1.3	7.9
White Hills - Jackass Flat	301	61.5	20.3	15.6	0.2	14.6
Urban subtotal	4,598	65.1	22.7	8.5	1.4	9.1
Elmore - Rural North	102	73.1	21.7	1.9	2.4	21.9
Heathcote and District	481	67.6	24.2	3.7	0.2	17.2
Marong - Rural West	177	73.8	12.0	2.8	2.3	16.8
Rural East	456	64.2	21.5	9.8	1.3	13.7
Rural subtotal	1,216	67.6	21.2	5.9	1.1	16.1

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 travel modes and distance that Greater Bendigo residents travelled to get to the most popular facilities/spaces. The facilities/spaces that residents most frequently reported driving by car were those that are used primarily for swimming, fitness and indoor sports, including:

- Paul Sadler Swimland, Bendigo (97.6%)
- Red Energy Arena, West Bendigo (97.1%)
- Fernwood Fitness, Kennington (94.6%)
- Epsom Huntly Recreation Reserve, Huntly (93.8%)
- Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat (92.9%)

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 (47.0%)

Cycling was reported as the main method of travel to get to the O'Keefe Rail Trail by just over half of respondents (55.6%), and to get to the Bendigo Linear Trail by 38.7%. Residents travelled furthest to get to Red Energy Arena (11.1 kilometres), Barrack Reserve (10.5 kilometres) and Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre (9.6 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	5,832	65.6	22.4	8.0	1.3	10.5
Top 20 facilities						
Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat	352	92.9	3.5	1.5	1.4	9.6
Red Energy Arena, West Bendigo	220	97.1	1.3	0.8	0.7	11.1
Lake Weeroona, Bendigo	206	71.4	21.1	0.5	6.8	5.1
Peter Krenz Leisure Centre, Eaglehawk	173	87.2	6.2	3.9	0.0	8.1
Greater Bendigo National Park - One Tree Hill, Strathfieldsaye	101	32.8	47.7	17.7	0.0	4.2
Bendigo East Swimming Pool, East Bendigo	93	85.0	8.7	3.0	3.3	6.5
O'Keefe Rail Trail – Bendigo, Axedale, Heathcote	81	16.7	27.4	55.6	0.0	3.5
Fernwood Fitness Bendigo, Kennington	78	94.6	3.3	0.0	0.0	8.0
Kennington Reservoir, Kennington	73	43.9	54.5	1.2	0.0	3.0
Bendigo Linear Trail, Bendigo	62	2.3	55.8	38.7	0.0	1.3
Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park, Kangaroo Flat	54	70.6	18.0	3.0	8.4	9.1
Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk	53	69.2	29.1	1.7	0.0	3.2
Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills	48	46.9	47.0	0.0	0.0	5.1
Strathfieldsaye Recreation Reserve, Strathfieldsaye	47	79.3	15.5	5.2	0.0	5.6
Epsom Huntly Recreation Reserve, Huntly	42	93.8	4.9	0.0	1.3	6.6
Paul Sadler Swimland, Bendigo	41	97.6	0.0	0.0	2.4	7.8
Lar Birpa Athletics Complex, Flora Hill	40	84.5	4.4	7.7	1.7	7.5
Strathdale Park Sports Precinct, Strathdale	41	83.0	17.0	0.0	0.0	4.3
Ewing Park, Bendigo	40	70.8	27.4	0.0	1.8	5.9
Barrack Reserve, Heathcote	39	84.8	13.3	1.8	0.0	10.5

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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, tennis and basketball. Some of these facilities also received high accessibility ratings, including fitness (gym and personal training) and golf. The lowest ratings for quality were received for team sports such as soccer, AFL and netball, and cycling – both mountain bike riding and general / recreational. Most of these facilities also received low accessibility ratings, except AFL. Reviewing the suggested improvements for cycling and traditional team sport facilities will go some way to understanding low quality and accessibility ratings for these facilities (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	1,023	32.5	67.5
Swimming	291	17.3	82.7
Fitness: Gym	434	17.6	82.4
Active play (at playgrounds / play centres)	169	30.6	69.4
Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics	302	10.1	89.9
Cycling: General cycling for recreation	196	46.5	53.5
Netball (indoor / outdoor)	112	44.5	55.5
Bush walking / Hiking	218	30.2	69.8
Jogging / running	214	22.2	77.8
Australian Rules Football (AFL)	49	50.2	49.8
Basketball (indoor / outdoor)	31	16.9	83.1
Soccer (indoor / outdoor)	31	56.1	43.9
Dancing / Ballet / Calisthenics	87	24.0	76.0
Tennis (indoor / outdoor)	93	13.8	86.2
Aqua aerobics	121	24.3	75.7
Cricket (all types)	48	35.5	64.5
Cycling: Mountain bike riding	77	51.1	48.9
Golf	91	12.6	87.4
Weightlifting / Body building	81	19.2	80.8
Fitness: Outdoor fitness / Personal training	69	14.5	85.5

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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	1,022	26.1	73.9
Swimming	290	21.3	78.7
Fitness: Gym	434	14.7	85.3
Active play (at playgrounds / play centres)	168	23.0	77.0
Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics	302	22.6	77.4
Cycling: General cycling for recreation	197	40.5	59.5
Netball (indoor / outdoor)	112	35.5	64.5
Bush walking / Hiking	216	32.1	67.9
Jogging / running	213	20.1	79.9
Australian Rules Football (AFL)	49	27.3	72.7
Basketball (indoor / outdoor)	31	22.9	77.1
Soccer (indoor / outdoor)	31	55.4	44.6
Dancing / Ballet / Calisthenics	87	23.7	76.3
Tennis (indoor / outdoor)	93	20.9	79.1
Aqua aerobics	121	24.6	75.4
Cricket (all types)	48	30.7	69.3
Cycling: Mountain bike riding	77	34.3	65.7
Golf	91	10.6	89.4
Weightlifting / Body building	80	19.2	80.8
Fitness: Outdoor fitness / Personal training	69	7.2	92.8

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 three facilities or spaces with the highest proportion of good and excellent ratings for quality were:

- La Birpa Athletics Complex, Flora Hill (95.3%)
- Fernwood Fitness Bendigo, Kennington (94.9%)
- Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills (93.5%).

Two of the three top ranked facilities or spaces for accessibility also aligned with the top ranked facilities for quality:

- Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills (95.9%)
- La Birpa Athletics Complex, Flora Hill (94.6%)
- Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk (93.3%)

Only one facility was rated as good or excellent in quality by fewer than half of respondents: Barrack Reserve in Heathcote (47.8%). In contrast, more than half of respondents rated all facilities and spaces as good or excellent for accessibility, with Epsom Huntly Recreation Reserve receiving the lowest accessibility rating (51.7%). Understanding how the community rates the facilities and spaces that they use 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 improvements. In turn, addressing 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 N	Very poor to average quality %	Good to excellent quality %
Top 20 facilities			
Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat	355	9.6	90.4
Red Energy Arena, West Bendigo	225	16.8	83.2
Lake Weeroona, Bendigo	208	15.5	84.5
Peter Krenz Leisure Centre, Eaglehawk	176	46.2	53.8
Greater Bendigo National Park - One Tree Hill, Strathfieldsaye	102	36.6	63.4
Bendigo East Swimming Pool, East Bendigo	94	26.3	73.7
O'Keefe Rail Trail – Bendigo, Axedale, Heathcote	81	18.1	81.9
Fernwood Fitness Bendigo, Kennington	80	5.1	94.9
Kennington Reservoir, Kennington	74	41.4	58.6
Bendigo Linear Trail, Bendigo	62	30.2	69.8
Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park, Kangaroo Flat	55	20.6	79.4

Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk	55	7.4	92.6
Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills	48	6.5	93.5
Strathfieldsaye Recreation Reserve, Strathfieldsaye	47	23.5	76.5
Epsom Huntly Recreation Reserve, Huntly	42	21.6	78.4
Paul Sadler Swimland, Bendigo	42	18.3	81.7
Lar Birpa Athletics Complex, Flora Hill	41	4.7	95.3
Strathdale Park Sports Precinct, Strathdale	41	16.0	84.0
Ewing Park, Bendigo	40	28.8	71.2
Barrack Reserve, Heathcote	39	52.2	47.8

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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	355	20.6	79.4
Red Energy Arena, West Bendigo	225	23.0	77.0
Lake Weeroona, Bendigo	208	15.7	84.3
Peter Krenz Leisure Centre, Eaglehawk	176	20.3	79.7
Greater Bendigo National Park - One Tree Hill, Strathfieldsaye	102	31.1	68.9
Bendigo East Swimming Pool, East Bendigo	94	27.1	72.9
O'Keefe Rail Trail – Bendigo, Axedale, Heathcote	81	21.7	78.3
Fernwood Fitness Bendigo, Kennington	80	11.5	88.5
Kennington Reservoir, Kennington	74	35.4	64.6
Bendigo Linear Trail, Bendigo	62	21.6	78.4
Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park, Kangaroo Flat	55	13.3	86.7
Lake Neangar, Eaglehawk	55	6.7	93.3
Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills	48	4.1	95.9
Strathfieldsaye Recreation Reserve, Strathfieldsaye	46	14.7	85.3
Epsom Huntly Recreation Reserve, Huntly	42	48.3	51.7
Paul Sadler Swimland, Bendigo	42	33.6	66.4
Lar Birpa Athletics Complex, Flora Hill	41	5.4	94.6
Strathdale Park Sports Precinct, Strathdale	41	8.0	92.0
Ewing Park, Bendigo	39	21.8	78.2
Barrack Reserve, Heathcote	39	38.7	61.3

¹ Base sizes include all activities mentioned by respondents aged 3 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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. Tables 3.9.1a and 3.9.1b provide a detailed overview of responses according to selected demographic characteristics. Overall, 69.9% reported agreeing that it is easy to be physically active in their local area, with the proportion being slightly higher among children (74.1%) and males (74.7%) compared to adults (68.8%) and females (65.7%), respectively. When looking at the responses by sex and age, females aged 3 to 11 years (80.1%) were more likely to report agreeing that it is easy to be physically active in the local area compared to females of all other ages groups (ranging from 57.3% to 68.9%). No differences by age were seen among males.

Overall, a greater proportion of urban respondents (73.8%) agreed that it was easy to be physically active in their local area than rural respondents (55.9%). Respondents from Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully were the most likely to agree (83.8%) that it was easy to be physically active in their local area, whereas respondents from Heathcote and District were the least like to (49.6%). 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 (61.7%) compared to 2-3 person households (73.2%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (56.2%) compared to not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (70.4%)
- LGBTQIA+ (53.6%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (71.4%)
- Neurodivergent (58.4%) compared to not neurodivergent (73.3%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (67.0%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (74.7%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (55.6%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (76.0%)
- Require help with daily activities (51.7%) compared to no help required (71.8%)
- Low or very low food security (48.2%) compared to marginal (64.7%) and high (76.3%) food security

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

	Unweighted base ¹	Strongly agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree / Disagree
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	3,917	69.9	18.8	11.3
Children	992	74.1	16.3	9.6
Adults	2,901	68.8	19.4	11.8
Males	1,200	74.7	16.9	8.4
Females	2,676	65.7	20.6	13.8
Sex and age				

Males, 3 to 11	286	73.4	18.9	7.7
Males, 12 to 17	211	74.9	15.2	10.0
Males, 18 to 34	105	74.7	17.7	7.7
Males, 35 to 49	179	69.1	21.4	9.5
Males, 50 to 69	263	75.6	15.5	8.8
Males, 70+	151	80.7	12.1	7.2
Females, 3 to 11	287	80.1	11.1	8.7
Females, 12 to 17	194	67.0	20.6	12.4
Females, 18 to 34	425	61.0	27.9	11.1
Females, 35 to 49	664	57.3	24.4	18.3
Females, 50 to 69	799	68.8	15.4	15.9
Females, 70+	293	68.9	17.9	13.2

Demographic indicators

Household size²

1 person	481	68.8	18.6	12.7
2 or 3 people	1,551	73.2	16.8	10.0
4 or 5 people	774	61.7	24.6	13.7
More than 5 people	92	59.4	21.0	19.6
Born overseas	337	70.8	19.3	9.9
Born in Australia	3,579	69.7	18.7	11.5
Speaks other main language	104	65.4	27.4	7.2
Speaks English as main language	3,801	70.0	18.5	11.5
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	140	56.2	28.7	15.1
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,770	70.4	18.4	11.2
LGBTQIA+	238	53.6	29.5	16.9
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,664	71.4	17.8	10.8
Neurodivergent	490	58.4	24.9	16.7
Not neurodivergent	2,617	73.3	16.5	10.2
Maybe	318	69.5	21.7	8.8
Not sure what neurodivergent means	404	68.6	20.2	11.1
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,424	67.0	21.1	11.9
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,467	74.7	14.0	11.3
Unemployed/Retired ²	942	69.8	18.4	11.7
Employed	1,955	68.1	20.0	11.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	872	55.6	27.4	17.0
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,019	76.0	15.0	9.0
Requires help with daily activities	354	51.7	24.8	23.5
Does not require help	3,554	71.8	18.2	10.0

Food security (last 12 months)²

Low or very low food security	488	48.2	31.6	20.2
Marginal food security	363	64.7	23.8	11.4

High food security	2,046	76.3	14.4	9.2
--------------------	-------	------	------	-----

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 3.9.1b Perceived ease of being physically active in local area by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Strongly agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree / Disagree
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	3,917	69.9	18.8	11.3
Subregion				
Bendigo	238	75.0	15.8	9.3
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	176	74.5	21.3	4.2
East Bendigo	69	64.0	19.1	16.8
Epsom - Ascot	189	71.8	15.4	12.8
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	351	83.8	9.2	7.0
Golden Square	261	74.9	15.2	9.9
Huntly	112	62.4	24.9	12.7
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	304	66.9	23.9	9.2
Kennington	179	80.1	15.1	4.8
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	130	62.9	25.7	11.4
Maiden Gully	206	63.4	24.4	12.2
North Bendigo - California Gully	176	72.2	22.0	5.8
Strathdale	204	80.5	12.9	6.6
Strathfieldsaye	245	80.4	12.4	7.2
White Hills - Jackass Flat	197	78.7	15.1	6.2
Urban subtotal	3,037	73.8	17.6	8.6
Elmore - Rural North	75	53.6	29.8	16.7
Heathcote and District	404	49.6	25.1	25.3
Marong - Rural West	123	51.6	26.6	21.8
Rural East	267	68.1	15.6	16.3
Rural subtotal	869	55.9	22.9	21.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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. Associations were seen between perceived ease of being physically active locally and all health and wellbeing indicators, except for BMI. Specifically, a lower proportion of those with fair or poor health (50.2% vs 75.1%), with low to moderate life satisfaction (54.5% vs 76.1%), who do not feel valued by society (53.6% vs sometimes [70.5%] and definitely [80.9%]), and have poor mental wellbeing (49.9% vs 76.3%), agree that it is easy to be physically active in their local area compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

Perceived ease of being physically active in the local area was also associated with all health behaviours, except for water consumption. Agreeance that it is easy to be physically active in the local area was lower

among respondents who did not meet the following recommendations, compared to their counterparts who met them:

- Fruit consumption (65.8% vs 75.2%)
- Vegetable consumption (69.2% vs 81.7%)
- Aerobic physical activity (55.8% vs 76.3%)
- Muscle strengthening activity (63.0% vs 78.2%)
- Screen time (67.9% vs 73.3%)
- Sleep duration (61.6% vs 74.7%)

Further, a lower proportion of those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (60.6%) perceived it to be easy to be physically active in their local area compared to those who did not (71.7%). Smoking was the only risk behaviour that was associated with perceived ease of being physically active in the local area. Fewer current smokers (58.4%) and those who have never smoked (66.4%) agreed that it is easy to be physically active locally compared to ex-smokers (73.2%).

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	3,917	69.9	18.8	11.3
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	682	50.2	27.4	22.4
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,838	75.1	16.5	8.5
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	844	54.5	27.4	18.0
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,752	76.1	15.2	8.7
Does not feel valued by society ²	602	53.6	27.4	19.1
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,299	70.5	19.3	10.2
Definitely feel valued by society	691	80.9	11.7	7.4
Poor mental wellbeing ²	816	49.9	31.0	19.2
Good mental wellbeing	2,085	76.3	14.8	8.9
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,451	69.8	18.3	11.9
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,007	74.3	16.8	8.9
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,958	65.8	20.1	14.1
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,910	75.2	16.9	7.9
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,395	69.2	19.2	11.6
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	433	81.7	11.9	6.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,267	56.8	25.8	17.4

Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,538	76.3	15.3	8.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,790	63.0	22.4	14.6
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,595	78.2	14.8	7.0
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,044	67.9	20.4	11.7
Meets screen time recommendations	1,669	73.3	16.7	10.0
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,140	61.6	25.4	13.0
Meets sleep recommendations	2,573	74.7	15.2	10.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	496	60.6	23.5	15.9
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,361	71.7	18.0	10.3
Does not meet water recommendations	2,301	69.4	19.5	11.2
Meets water recommendations	1,479	71.5	17.6	10.9
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	157	58.4	21.2	20.3
Ex-smoker	996	73.2	17.6	9.2
Never smoked	1,458	66.4	20.7	12.9
Current vaper	76	66.2	19.5	14.3
Ex-vaper	193	71.3	20.8	7.9
Never vaped	2,333	68.2	19.3	12.4
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,397	70.6	18.2	11.2
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,209	65.6	21.2	13.2
Gambled	839	68.8	18.9	12.2
Never gambled	1,768	68.4	19.7	11.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 sufficient volumes 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 10 questions 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.

Tables 4.1.1a and 4.1.1b provide a summary of food security among 2025 ALC Greater Bendigo respondents according to their demographic characteristics. Overall, 65.1% of respondents had high food security and 21.0% had low or very low food security (12.6% and 8.4%, respectively). Proportionate differences in food security were seen for all demographic characteristics. Specifically, very low food security was reported more frequently among respondents who are:

- Female (11.2%) compared to male (5.2%)
- Males 50- 69 years (5.8%) compared to males 70+ years (0.2%)
- Females 18- 34 years (18.2%) and 35- 49 years (14.0%) compared to females 50- 69 years (5.5%) and 70+ year (2.1%)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (21.4%) compared to non-Indigenous (7.8%)
- LGBTQIA+ (19.9%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (7.2%)
- Neurodivergent (18.4%) compared to not (5.7%) or maybe (7.6%) neurodivergent
- Less than a bachelor level education (10.2%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (2.4%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (22.1%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (0.7%)
- Require help with daily activities (22.0%) compared to no help required (7.2%)

In addition, residents from Long Gully – West Bendigo – Ironbark were the most likely to report very low food security (19.9%), whereas Elmore – Rural North residents were the least likely (1.5%). In general, a slightly higher proportion of rural residents (9.1%) reported very low food security than urban residents (8.1%).

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 4.1.1a 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	2,917	65.1	13.9	12.6	8.4
Males	699	70.3	13.0	11.4	5.2
Females	2,190	60.6	14.6	13.6	11.2
Sex and age					
Males, 18 to 34	106	53.3	25.1	12.6	9.0
Males, 35 to 49	179	64.2	15.7	15.3	4.7
Males, 50 to 69	263	78.3	7.0	8.8	5.8
Males, 70+	151	85.6	4.5	9.7	0.2
Females, 18 to 34	427	48.5	17.6	15.7	18.2
Females, 35 to 49	667	50.4	16.2	19.4	14.0
Females, 50 to 69	802	73.3	11.7	9.5	5.5
Females, 70+	294	79.9	11.0	6.9	2.1
Demographic indicators					
Household size					
1 person	485	66.5	11.7	12.7	9.1
2 or 3 people	1,556	70.7	12.5	9.4	7.4
4 or 5 people	779	58.7	15.5	15.9	9.9
More than 5 people	93	31.5	29.4	31.1	8.0
Born overseas	303	61.7	17.0	16.0	5.3
Born in Australia	2,614	65.5	13.5	12.2	8.8
Speaks other main language	88	32.8	25.9	32.1	9.2
Speaks English as main language	2,818	66.5	13.4	11.8	8.4
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	94	33.2	21.6	23.8	21.4
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,818	66.5	13.5	12.1	7.8
LGBTQIA+	212	41.2	18.5	20.3	19.9
Non-LGBTQIA+	2,693	67.6	13.4	11.8	7.2
Neurodivergent	304	41.3	21.2	19.0	18.4
Not neurodivergent	1,997	71.2	12.1	11.0	5.7
Maybe	208	56.6	21.2	14.6	7.6
Not sure what neurodivergent means	331	63.0	13.3	13.8	9.9
Less than Bachelor level education	1,436	60.4	14.7	14.7	10.2
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,472	80.5	11.7	5.4	2.4
Unemployed/Retired	950	65.5	11.3	13.9	9.3
Employed	1,965	64.9	15.4	11.9	7.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor	882	31.5	20.6	25.8	22.1
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,025	83.9	10.2	5.2	0.7
Requires help with daily activities	186	39.6	11.2	27.2	22.0

Does not require help	2,723	67.3	14.2	11.3	7.2
-----------------------	-------	------	------	------	-----

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

Table 4.1.1b Adult food security by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	High food security %	Marginal food security %	Low food security %	Very low food security %
Total sample	2,917	65.1	13.9	12.6	8.4
Subregion					
Bendigo	191	58.4	17.2	13.3	11.1
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	132	53.4	17.0	19.7	10.0
East Bendigo	52	62.2	9.4	14.5	13.8
Epsom - Ascot	148	61.2	18.0	12.9	8.0
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	245	84.0	9.1	2.3	4.6
Golden Square	198	67.6	17.2	10.4	4.9
Huntly	82	71.3	11.7	13.7	3.3
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	227	58.5	20.6	12.3	8.6
Kennington	135	76.4	7.5	12.0	4.0
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	105	41.1	12.4	26.6	19.9
Maiden Gully	138	75.9	12.5	6.8	4.8
North Bendigo - California Gully	129	44.9	15.8	24.7	14.6
Strathdale	153	79.3	9.5	6.2	4.9
Strathfieldsaye	173	73.2	7.2	11.3	8.2
White Hills - Jackass Flat	149	66.2	11.0	15.6	7.3
Urban subtotal	2,257	65.3	13.7	12.8	8.1
Elmore - Rural North	50	57.3	38.1	3.1	1.5
Heathcote and District	315	59.8	13.1	15.1	12.0
Marong - Rural West	98	61.2	15.0	16.7	7.1
Rural East	189	78.3	7.9	5.7	8.1
Rural subtotal	652	65.0	14.6	11.3	9.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and above living in the Greater Bendigo 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 most health and wellbeing indicators, apart from overweight and obesity. A greater proportion of those with fair or poor self-reported health (17.5% vs 6.0%), with low to moderate life satisfaction (18.0% vs 3.9%), poor mental wellbeing (16.1% vs 5.3%), and don't feel valued by society (20.5% vs sometimes [5.6%] and definitely [2.9%]) reported very low levels of food security compared to their counterparts with more positive wellbeing indicators.

Similarly, food security was associated with all health behaviour indicators. A greater proportion of those who did not meet the fruit (11.1% vs 4.2%) and vegetable (9.0% vs 0.4%) recommendations, as well as

muscle strengthening (10.3% vs 5.8%) and sleep (11.9% vs 6.3%) recommendations, and consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (15.7% vs 7.1%) reported very low food security compared to those meeting behavioural recommendations. Additionally, a greater proportion of those who did not meet the aerobic physical activity (17.6% vs 11.1%) and water consumption (13.8% vs 9.0%) recommendations reported low food security compared to those meeting the respective 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 (21.0%) and current (23.7%) vapers experienced very low food security compared to those who were ex-smokers (8.2%), had never smoked (7.5%) or had never vaped (7.1%).

Table 4.1.2 Adult food security by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	High food security %	Marginal food security %	Low food security %	Very low food security %
Total sample	2,917	65.1	13.9	12.6	8.4
Health and wellbeing indicators					
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	624	46.8	15.7	20.0	17.5
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,983	72.9	11.9	9.2	6.0
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	846	48.7	15.0	18.3	18.0
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,751	76.1	11.5	8.4	3.9
Does not feel valued by society	603	47.8	14.5	17.2	20.5
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,299	67.9	14.2	12.3	5.6
Definitely feel valued by society	691	83.6	8.4	5.1	2.9
Poor mental wellbeing	818	52.1	15.6	16.2	16.1
Good mental wellbeing	2,099	70.3	13.3	11.2	5.3
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,313	65.9	13.1	11.5	9.5
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	703	72.0	11.7	10.1	6.2
Health behaviour indicators					
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,653	58.4	15.5	15.0	11.1
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,229	75.9	11.1	8.9	4.2
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,553	63.3	14.4	13.3	9.0
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	302	91.2	5.0	3.4	0.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	724	55.9	15.6	17.6	10.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,131	68.2	13.0	11.1	7.7
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,272	59.0	13.4	17.2	10.3
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,413	71.8	13.4	9.1	5.8
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,448	62.6	15.0	12.9	9.6
Meets screen time recommendations	1,344	69.1	12.8	11.1	7.0
Does not meet sleep recommendations	855	55.4	17.4	15.2	11.9

Meets sleep recommendations	1,917	70.9	12.4	10.4	6.3
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	407	52.6	16.3	15.5	15.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,452	67.9	13.4	11.7	7.1
Does not meet water recommendations	1,805	64.2	13.5	13.8	8.5
Meets water recommendations	1,022	68.0	14.5	9.0	8.4
Risk behaviour indicators²					
Current smoker	158	44.7	12.7	21.6	21.0
Ex-smoker	995	67.4	13.5	10.9	8.2
Never smoked	1,459	68.7	12.8	10.9	7.5
Current vaper	76	37.8	20.1	18.4	23.7
Ex-vaper	193	51.4	17.7	13.8	17.0
Never vaped	2,333	69.5	12.0	11.3	7.1
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,395	66.4	12.1	12.3	9.2
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,211	66.1	14.2	11.3	8.4
Gambled	839	65.3	13.4	12.2	9.0
Never gambled	1,768	67.0	12.8	11.5	8.7

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and above living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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.

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 sex and age.

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

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>

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 4.2.1.1b, the average serves of fruit per day for residents of Greater Bendigo was 1.6 which is below the recommended daily intake, and less than half (45.2%) met the age-specific fruit intake recommendations. Among adults, just 39.0% of the 2025 Greater Bendigo sample met their recommendation, compared to 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 recommendations. These differences may reflect variations in methodology and data collection years, so comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

There was no difference in fruit consumption or adherence to the fruit recommendations between males and females. Children were more likely to meet their age-specific recommendations (68.3% vs 39.0%) and consumed more average serves per day (2.1 vs 1.4) than adults. When looking by sex and age, a greater proportion of male and female respondents 3 to 11 years met the fruit consumption recommendations and consumed a greater average number of serves of fruit compared to all other age ranges. Across Greater Bendigo subregions, residents of Strathfieldsaye (51.8%) were the most likely to meet daily fruit consumption requirements, and residents of Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark (18.6%) were the least likely. Average daily serves and proportion meeting the recommendations were similar among respondents from urban and rural residential subregions.

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

- Neurodivergent (35.3%) or are unsure what neurodivergent means (34.7%) compared to not (48.9%) or maybe (51.0%) neurodivergent
- Hold less than a Bachelor level education (36.9%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (46.1%)
- Employed (36.5%) compared to unemployed/retired (43.8%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (31.0%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (43.3%)
- Low or very low (24.2%) or marginal (31.4%) food security compared to high (45.4%) food security

In addition, a lower average number of serves of fruit was also reported among LGBTQIA+ people (1.3) compared to those who are not from the LGBTQIA+ community (1.6).

Table 4.2.1.1a Fruit consumption by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily serves #
Total sample	3,949	54.8	45.2	1.6
Children	1,064	31.7	68.3	2.1
Adults	2,885	61.0	39.0	1.4
Males	1,230	55.1	44.9	1.6
Females	2,684	54.7	45.3	1.5

Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	302	24.2	75.8	2.2
Males, 12 to 17	233	45.1	54.9	1.8
Males, 18 to 34	105	63.2	36.8	1.4
Males, 35 to 49	179	67.5	32.5	1.3
Males, 50 to 69	261	58.4	41.6	1.5
Males, 70+	150	57.9	42.1	1.6
Females, 3 to 11	309	24.6	75.4	2.2
Females, 12 to 17	206	41.3	58.7	1.9
Females, 18 to 34	426	65.5	34.5	1.3
Females, 35 to 49	660	68.0	32.0	1.2
Females, 50 to 69	794	55.2	44.8	1.5
Females, 70+	289	45.4	54.6	1.7
Demographic indicators				
Household size ²				
1 person	476	57.3	42.7	1.5
2 or 3 people	1,542	60.6	39.4	1.4
4 or 5 people	771	63.3	36.7	1.4
More than 5 people	93	63.7	36.3	1.2
Born overseas	330	56.0	44.0	1.5
Born in Australia	3,618	54.7	45.3	1.6
Speaks other main language	103	57.5	42.5	1.4
Speaks English as main language	3,834	54.7	45.3	1.6
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	144	60.2	39.8	1.4
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,801	54.7	45.3	1.6
LGBTQIA+	240	64.1	35.9	1.3
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,698	53.9	46.1	1.6
Neurodivergent	493	64.7	35.3	1.3
Not neurodivergent	2,653	51.1	48.9	1.6
Maybe	320	49.0	51.0	1.6
Not sure what neurodivergent means	396	65.3	34.7	1.4
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,415	63.1	36.9	1.4
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,462	53.9	46.1	1.6
Unemployed/Retired ²	935	56.2	43.8	1.5
Employed	1,946	63.5	36.5	1.4
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	861	69.0	31.0	1.2
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,015	56.7	43.3	1.5
Requires help with daily activities	361	54.7	45.3	1.5
Does not require help	3,580	54.9	45.1	1.6
Food security (last 12 months) ²				
Low or very low food security	483	75.8	24.2	1.1

Marginal food security	362	68.6	31.4	1.2
High food security	2,037	54.6	45.4	1.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 4.2.1.1b Fruit consumption by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily serves #
Total sample	3,949	54.8	45.2	1.6
Sex and age				
Bendigo	189	57.3	42.7	1.5
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	130	62.0	38.0	1.4
East Bendigo	52	63.9	36.1	1.5
Epsom - Ascot	146	70.2	29.8	1.2
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	243	50.8	49.2	1.7
Golden Square	196	59.3	40.7	1.5
Huntly	80	70.8	29.2	1.1
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	222	69.5	30.5	1.3
Kennington	133	55.2	44.8	1.5
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	102	81.4	18.6	1.2
Maiden Gully	138	68.6	31.4	1.3
North Bendigo - California Gully	129	59.6	40.4	1.5
Strathdale	153	54.1	45.9	1.5
Strathfieldsaye	174	48.2	51.8	1.6
White Hills - Jackass Flat	146	58.3	41.7	1.5
Urban subtotal	2,233	61.3	38.7	1.4
Elmore - Rural North	49	56.8	43.2	1.3
Heathcote and District	312	61.7	38.3	1.4
Marong - Rural West	96	64.1	35.9	1.4
Rural East	189	56.5	43.5	1.5
Rural subtotal	646	60.0	40.0	1.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the Greater Bendigo 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. Average daily serves of fruit were associated with all health and wellbeing, health behaviour and risk behaviour characteristics, except for screen time and alcohol recommendations. Similarly, adherence to the fruit consumption recommendations was associated with most health and wellbeing, health behaviour and risk behaviour characteristics, except for aerobic physical activity and screen time recommendations, vaping and alcohol consumption.

With regards to the health and wellbeing indicators, those with fair or poor self-reported health (24.7% vs 50.7%), with lower to moderate life satisfaction (30.6% vs 43.8%), poor mental wellbeing (27.8% vs

43.5%), never feel valued by society (26.3% vs sometimes [41.3%] and definitely [49.1%]), and are overweight or obese (39% vs 50%) 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 (41.9% vs 79.3%), muscle strengthening (38.6% vs 49.0%), sleep (41.3% vs 47.5%) and water consumption (40.8% vs 54.2%) recommendations, and those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (28.0% vs 48.5%) reported meeting the fruit consumption recommendations compared to those meeting the corresponding health behaviour recommendations.

Smoking and gambling were associated with adherence to the fruit consumption recommendations. Specifically, a lower proportion of respondents who are current smokers (17.0%) met the fruit consumption recommendations compared to those who were either ex-smokers (38.7%) or have never smoked (42.8%). Similarly, a lower proportion of those who had gambled (33.3%) met the fruit consumption recommendations compared to those who never gambled (42.6%). In addition, average serves of fruit were lower among current vapers (1.1%) and ex-vapers (1.3) compared to those who had never vaped (1.5%).

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	3,949	54.8	45.2	1.6
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	674	75.3	24.7	1.1
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,816	49.3	50.7	1.7
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	842	69.4	30.6	1.2
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,745	56.2	43.8	1.5
Does not feel valued by society ²	599	73.7	26.3	1.1
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,296	58.7	41.3	1.5
Definitely feel valued by society	688	50.9	49.1	1.6
Poor mental wellbeing ²	813	72.2	27.8	1.2
Good mental wellbeing	2,072	56.5	43.5	1.5
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,445	60.6	39.4	1.4
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,008	49.8	50.2	1.7
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,459	58.1	41.9	1.5
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	442	20.7	79.3	2.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,266	57.6	42.4	1.5
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,535	53.8	46.2	1.6
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,789	61.4	38.6	1.4
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,595	51.0	49.0	1.6
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,039	57.2	42.8	1.5

Meets screen time recommendations	1,668	52.0	48.0	1.6
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,137	58.7	41.3	1.5
Meets sleep recommendations	2,569	52.5	47.5	1.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	496	72.0	28.0	1.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,374	51.5	48.5	1.6
Does not meet water recommendations	2,325	59.2	40.8	1.5
Meets water consumption recommendations	1,492	45.8	54.2	1.7
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	157	83.0	17.0	0.9
Ex-smoker	994	61.3	38.7	1.4
Never smoked	1,451	57.2	42.8	1.5
Current vaper	76	72.0	28.0	1.1
Ex-vaper	192	68.0	32.0	1.3
Never vaped	2,325	59.4	40.6	1.5
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,393	63.4	36.6	1.4
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,204	57.2	42.8	1.5
Gambled	833	66.7	33.3	1.3
Never gambled	1,765	57.4	42.6	1.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 4.2.2.1a shows that on average, Greater Bendigo residents were consuming 2.2 daily serves of vegetables, well below the recommended serves per day for all ages. Overall, 91.4% of respondents did not meet the age- and sex-specific vegetable consumption recommendations. Among adults, 92.7% of the 2025 sample fell short of their recommended intake, compared with 87.1% 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 (7.3%) and males (6.1%) met the vegetable recommendations compared to children (13.6%) and females (11.1%). For both males and females, children aged 3-11 and older adults 70 years and above were more likely to meet the recommendations compared to adults aged 18 to 49 years. In addition, females 12 to 17 years and 50 to 69 years were also more likely to meet vegetable recommendations compared to those between the ages of 18 to 49 years. Table 4.2.2.1b shows that residents from urban and rural subregions were equally as likely to meet the recommendations (7.3%) and consumed the same average number of daily serves of vegetables (2.2). Residents of Marong, Rural West (12.4%) were the most likely to meet daily vegetable intake recommendations, while residents of Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully were the least likely to meet them (7.2%).

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

- 4-5 person (4.2%) or more than 5 person households (3.5%) compared to single (8.7%) and 2-3 person (8.8%) households
- Neurodivergent (5.3%) or are unsure what neurodivergent means (5.2%) compared to not neurodivergent (10.4%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (6.2%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (10.8%)
- Employed (5.8%) compared to unemployed/retired (10.1%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (2.8%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (9.8%)
- Marginal (2.7%) and low or very low (1.3%) food security compared to high food security (10.2%)

The average number of serves of vegetables was also lower among respondents from more than 5 person households, who speak a main language other than English, are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, LGBTQIA+, 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 low or very low food security compared to their respective counterparts.

Table 4.2.2.1a Vegetable consumption by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily serves #
Total sample	3,908	91.4	8.6	2.2
Children	1,051	86.4	13.6	2.4
Adults	2,857	92.7	7.3	2.2
Males	1,230	93.9	6.1	2.1
Females	2,678	88.9	11.1	2.3
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	302	81.5	18.5	2.4
Males, 12 to 17	233	97.9	2.1	2.4
Males, 18 to 34	104	99.2	0.8	1.7
Males, 35 to 49	179	97.6	2.4	2.1
Males, 50 to 69	261	97.7	2.3	2.1
Males, 70+	151	85.8	14.2	2.4
Females, 3 to 11	309	85.1	14.9	2.3
Females, 12 to 17	207	84.1	15.9	2.7
Females, 18 to 34	424	92.1	7.9	2.0
Females, 35 to 49	659	93.7	6.3	2.1
Females, 50 to 69	790	87.2	12.8	2.6
Females, 70+	289	83.8	16.2	2.8
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	475	91.3	8.7	2.1
2 or 3 people	1,519	91.2	8.8	2.3
4 or 5 people	769	95.8	4.2	2.1

More than 5 people	92	96.5	3.5	1.4
Born overseas	328	94.2	5.8	2.1
Born in Australia	3,579	91.1	8.9	2.2
Speaks other main language	102	95.2	4.8	1.6
Speaks English as main language	3,794	91.2	8.8	2.3
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	141	95.4	4.6	1.8
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,766	91.2	8.8	2.3
LGBTQIA+	234	94.2	5.8	1.9
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,667	91.1	8.9	2.3
Neurodivergent	486	94.7	5.3	1.9
Not neurodivergent	2,638	89.6	10.4	2.4
Maybe	314	93.4	6.6	2.1
Not sure what neurodivergent means	390	94.8	5.2	1.8
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,396	93.8	6.2	2.0
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,455	89.2	10.8	2.6
Unemployed/Retired ²	928	89.9	10.1	2.3
Employed	1,926	94.2	5.8	2.1
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	849	97.2	2.8	1.7
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,000	90.2	9.8	2.5
Requires help with daily activities	357	92.3	7.7	1.8
Does not require help	3,546	91.3	8.7	2.3
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	475	98.7	1.3	1.4
Marginal food security	357	97.3	2.7	1.7
High food security	2,023	89.8	10.2	2.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 4.2.2.1b Vegetable consumption by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily serves #
Total sample	3,908	91.4	8.6	2.2
Subregion				
Bendigo	187	90.6	9.4	2.1
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	127	93.1	6.9	2.0
East Bendigo	52	93.7	6.3	2.6
Epsom - Ascot	143	93.0	7.0	2.1
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	241	92.8	7.2	2.5
Golden Square	196	91.0	9.0	2.2
Huntly	81	96.2	3.8	2.0

Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	219	90.7	9.3	2.0
Kennington	133	91.6	8.4	2.4
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	102	98.8	1.2	1.9
Maiden Gully	136	93.9	6.1	2.0
North Bendigo - California Gully	128	96.0	4.0	2.0
Strathdale	147	88.4	11.6	2.6
Strathfieldsaye	173	89.6	10.4	2.5
White Hills - Jackass Flat	145	97.1	2.9	2.0
Urban subtotal	2,210	92.7	7.3	2.2
Elmore - Rural North	48	94.3	5.7	2.1
Heathcote and District	311	92.2	7.8	2.0
Marong - Rural West	96	87.6	12.4	2.4
Rural East	187	95.4	4.6	2.3
Rural subtotal	642	92.7	7.3	2.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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. Associations were seen between average daily serves of vegetables and all health and wellbeing, health behaviour and risk behaviour characteristics, except for risky alcohol consumption and gambling. Similarly, adherence to the vegetable consumption recommendations was associated with all health and wellbeing characteristics and most health behaviour characteristics, apart from aerobic physical activity.

Specifically, with regards to the health and wellbeing indicators, those with fair or poor self-reported health (2.6% vs 10.7%), with lower to moderate life satisfaction (4.6% vs 9.4%), poor mental wellbeing (3.2% vs 9.0%), never feel valued by society (4.4% vs definitely [11.7%]), and are overweight or obese (6.6% vs 13.0%) were significantly less likely to meet the vegetable consumption recommendations compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

A smaller proportion of those who did not meet the fruit (3.3% vs 15.2%), muscle strengthening (6.0% vs 9.5%), screen time (7.3% vs 10.4%), sleep (6.0% vs 10.1%), and water consumption (7.0% vs 11.8%) recommendations, and those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (2.8% vs 9.7%) reported meeting the vegetable consumption recommendations compared to those meeting the corresponding health behaviour recommendations. In addition, those who did not meet the aerobic physical activity recommendations consumed fewer average serves of vegetables per day (2.0) compared to those who did meet the aerobic physical activity recommendations (2.3).

Smoking was the only assessed risk behaviour associated with adherence to the vegetable consumption recommendations. Specifically, a lower proportion of respondents who are current smokers (1.6%) met the vegetable consumption recommendations compared to their counterparts who were ex-smokers (6.8%) or never smoked (9.2%). Additionally, current vapers consumed, on average, fewer serves of vegetables per day (1.6) compared to those who had never vaped (2.3).

Table 4.2.2.2 Vegetable consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Does not meet recommendation	Meets recommendation	Average daily serves
--	------------------------------	------------------------------	----------------------	----------------------

	n	%	%	#
Total sample	3,908	91.4	8.6	2.2
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	671	97.4	2.6	1.6
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,787	89.3	10.7	2.4
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	834	95.4	4.6	1.8
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,732	90.6	9.4	2.5
Does not feel valued by society ²	595	95.6	4.4	1.7
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,282	92.6	7.4	2.3
Definitely feel valued by society	685	88.3	11.7	2.6
Poor mental wellbeing ²	810	96.8	3.2	1.8
Good mental wellbeing	2,047	91.0	9.0	2.4
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,438	93.4	6.6	2.2
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,003	87.0	13.0	2.5
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,974	96.7	3.3	1.7
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,927	84.8	15.2	2.9
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,256	91.5	8.5	2.0
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,508	91.4	8.6	2.3
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,772	94.0	6.0	2.0
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,585	90.5	9.5	2.5
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,020	92.7	7.3	2.1
Meets screen time recommendations	1,655	89.6	10.4	2.5
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,128	94.0	6.0	2.0
Meets sleep recommendations	2,548	89.9	10.1	2.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	489	97.2	2.8	1.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,345	90.3	9.7	2.3
Does not meet water recommendations	2,321	93.0	7.0	2.1
Meets water recommendations	1,488	88.2	11.8	2.5
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	157	98.4	1.6	1.6
Ex-smoker	986	93.2	6.8	2.2
Never smoked	1,436	90.8	9.2	2.3
Current vaper	76	96.9	3.1	1.6
Ex-vaper	191	95.1	4.9	2.0
Never vaped	2,304	91.8	8.2	2.3
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,382	93.0	7.0	2.2

Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,193	91.4	8.6	2.3
Gambled	830	93.9	6.1	2.1
Never gambled	1,745	91.5	8.5	2.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 two (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 below provides a snapshot of the main barriers reported by 2025 Greater Bendigo ALC respondents. The main themes that emerged amongst those who provided a response as to why they have not met fruit consumption recommendations were cost (18.1%) and personal preferences (18.1%). Other relatively common barriers to increasing serves of fruit were access and quality (13.6%) and habit and routine (9.1%), while a further 8.7% stated that they had no particular reason for not meeting the recommended intake.

Table 4.2.3.1 Barriers to fruit consumption

Reasons	% (N=1,997)
Cost	18.1
Preferences	18.1
Access/quality	13.6
Habit/routine	9.1
No particular reason	8.7
Time	4.9
Diet/health restrictions	4.7
Satisfied with current intake/low appetite	4.7
Inconvenient to prepare	3.7
Other	1.8

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

Cost as a barrier to fruit consumption was associated with several demographic characteristics, residential subregion, health and wellbeing indicators and health behaviour indicators. Specifically, a greater proportion of the following respondents reported cost as a barrier to fruit consumption:

- Adults (19.1%) compared to children (11.3%)
- Females (23.0%) compared to males (13.2%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (42.2%) compared to non-Indigenous (17.0%)

- LGBTQIA+ (33.6%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (16.6%)
- Neurodivergent (26.2%) or unsure what neurodivergent means (25.1%) compared to not (14.3%) or maybe (13.8%) neurodivergent
- Less than a Bachelor degree or above (20.5%) compared to Bachelor education (13.8%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (36.3%) compared reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (7.7%)
- Require help with daily activities (29.9%) compared to no help required (16.9%)
- Low or very low food security (47.9%) compared with marginal (19.3%) and high (6.2%) food security
- Fair or poor self-reported health (30.3%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (15.2%)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (31.6%) compared to high/very high life satisfaction (12.8%)
- Does not feel valued by society (34.4%) compared to sometimes (15.1%) and definitely (10.4%) feel valued
- Poor mental wellbeing (30.8%) compared to good mental wellbeing (13.1%)
- Did not meet vegetable intake recommendations (18.7%) compared to met them (4.8%)
- Did not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations (23.1%) compared to met them (16.3%)
- Did not meet muscle strengthening recommendations (21.1%) compared to met them (14.3%)
- Did not meet sleep recommendations (26.2%) compared to met them (14.9%)

When looking at residential subregion, respondents who live in Heathcote and District (32.2%) were the most likely to report cost as a barrier to fruit consumption, and those who live in Maiden Gully were the least likely (6.7%).

Preference as a barrier to fruit consumption was associated with some demographics and health behaviours. No associations were seen with health and wellbeing indicators or risk behaviours. The following groups were more likely to report preference as a barrier and may benefit from targeted intervention:

- Children (37.7%) compared to adults (15.4%)
- Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (18.1%) compared to just getting along, poor or very poor (10.8%)
- High food security (19.8%) compared to low or very low (8.1%) and marginal (10.2%) food security
- Met sleep recommendations (20.7%) compared to did not (15.0%)
- Met water consumption (24.1%) compared to did not (16.5%)

Access or quality (including freshness, perishability, variety etc.) as a barrier to fruit consumption was only associated with age and residential subregion. A larger proportion of adults (15.0%) reported access/quality as a barrier compared to children (3.5%). Residents from Heathcote and District (24.5%) were also more likely to report access/quality as a barrier compared to residents from seven other subregions (see Table 4.2.3.2b for specifics).

Habit or routine as a barrier to fruit consumption was associated with some demographic characteristics, subregion of residence and health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, habit/routine was reported by a greater proportion of those from the follow demographic groups:

- Adults (10.0%) compared to children (2.9%)
- Not (10.3%) or maybe (19.3%) neurodivergent compared to neurodivergent (4.5%)
- High food security (12.2%) compared to low or very low food security (5.5%)
- High/very high life satisfaction (12.6%) compared to low to moderate life satisfaction (7.2%)
- Golden Square residents (15.1%) compared to Maiden Gully residents (2.6%)
- High/very high life satisfaction (12.6%) compared to low to moderate life satisfaction (7.2%)
- Definitely feel valued by society (15.2%) compared to do not feel valued by society (6.5%)

'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:

- Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (11.3%) compared to just getting along, poor or very poor (6.1%)
- Residents of White Hills, Jackass Flat (17.3%), Golden Square (14.7%) and Epsom - Ascot (13.8%) compared to Rural East (1.7%), Kennington (1.3%) and East Bendigo (1.0%)
- Good mental wellbeing (12.0%) compared to poor mental wellbeing (3.8%)
- Did not meet vegetable intake recommendations (9.0%) compared to met them (2.7%)

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 that would merit further investigation.

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

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Cost %	Preferences %	Access/quality %	Habit/routine %	No particular reason %
Total sample	1,997	18.1	18.1	13.6	9.1	8.7
Children	343	11.3	37.7	3.5	2.9	5.4
Adults	1,654	19.1	15.4	15.0	10.0	9.2
Males	587	13.2	17.5	12.0	10.1	11.0
Females	1,394	23.0	18.7	15.3	8.1	6.6
Demographic indicators						
Born overseas	179	17.8	19.6	12.2	13.3	5.1
Born in Australia	1,817	18.2	17.8	13.8	8.7	9.2
Speaks other main language	55	20.8	20.2	16.8	11.5	4.5
Speaks English as main language	1,935	18.1	17.6	13.6	9.1	9.0
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	78	42.2	11.7	7.9	4.2	7.8
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1,919	17.0	18.4	13.9	9.4	8.8
LGBTQIA+	152	33.6	23.9	14.8	5.5	14.4
Non-LGBTQIA+	1,838	16.6	17.4	13.6	9.5	8.1
Neurodivergent	300	26.2	22.6	11.7	4.5	10.1
Not neurodivergent	1,249	14.3	18.8	12.5	10.3	7.0
Maybe	160	13.8	18.3	14.1	19.3	8.9
Not sure what neurodivergent means	243	25.1	12.8	18.0	5.7	13.3
Less than Bachelor level education ²	871	20.5	14.4	15.7	9.3	9.4
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	777	13.8	18.7	12.6	12.7	8.8
Unemployed/Retired ²	483	18.9	13.8	16.1	8.5	8.7
Employed	1,168	19.2	15.9	14.6	10.7	9.5
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	596	36.3	10.8	15.3	7.9	6.1

Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,055	7.7	18.1	14.9	11.4	11.3
Requires help with daily activities	181	29.9	14.5	10.5	6.9	11.4
Does not require help	1,813	16.9	18.4	14.0	9.4	8.4
Food security (last 12 months)²						
Low or very low food security	366	47.9	8.1	12.5	5.5	8.2
Marginal food security	248	19.3	10.2	19.9	9.2	6.8
High food security	1,039	6.2	19.8	14.9	12.2	10.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 4.2.3.2b Top five barriers to fruit consumption by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Cost %	Preferences %	Access/quality %	Habit/routine %	No particular reason %
Total sample	1,997	18.1	18.1	13.6	9.1	8.7
Subregion						
Bendigo	121	17.0	16.0	14.2	7.3	10.5
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	91	17.5	15.2	10.8	10.9	12.0
East Bendigo	35	35.7	24.5	11.7	7.2	1.0
Epsom - Ascot	114	15.9	27.7	8.5	10.6	13.8
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	147	15.2	20.0	10.9	14.1	9.6
Golden Square	130	12.5	21.4	10.3	15.1	14.7
Huntly	66	18.7	15.4	18.0	6.5	15.2
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	165	13.6	15.1	13.9	7.3	4.5
Kennington	87	20.7	29.0	7.4	7.4	1.3
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	80	25.3	11.3	13.7	4.0	5.1
Maiden Gully	100	6.7	15.6	12.8	2.6	13.9

North Bendigo - California Gully	91	28.6	21.2	11.6	4.2	8.7
Strathdale	96	16.8	14.5	14.3	16.5	10.0
Strathfieldsaye	111	9.4	17.9	10.2	16.2	8.3
White Hills - Jackass Flat	106	18.6	11.3	12.4	10.6	17.3
Urban subtotal	1,540	16.8	18.1	12.0	9.5	10.1
Elmore - Rural North	35	12.1	10.1	8.1	16.3	8.2
Heathcote and District	219	32.2	16.4	24.5	6.8	4.8
Marong - Rural West	74	19.3	18.8	21.9	8.6	3.7
Rural East	123	13.2	23.4	14.9	6.3	1.7
Rural subtotal	451	23.0	18.1	19.8	7.9	4.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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	Cost	Preferences	Access/quality	Habit/routine	No particular reason
	n	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	1,997	18.1	18.1	13.6	9.1	8.7
Health and wellbeing indicators						
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	485	30.3	15.9	13.4	9.7	4.4
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,288	15.2	19.2	15.0	9.5	7.9
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	574	31.6	13.7	16.5	7.2	6.2
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	913	12.8	16.8	15.4	12.6	7.7
Does not feel valued by society ²	416	34.4	14.0	15.1	6.5	3.9
Sometimes feel valued by society	732	15.1	16.4	14.9	11.1	7.8
Definitely feel valued by society	337	10.4	16.6	19.3	15.2	10.3
Poor mental wellbeing ²	581	30.8	15.7	17.4	9.8	3.8

Good mental wellbeing	1,073	13.1	15.2	13.9	10.1	12.0
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	809	22.1	15.2	14.4	11.8	7.3
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	483	16.6	21.1	17.0	8.1	4.9
Health behaviour indicators						
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	1,888	18.7	17.9	13.3	8.9	9.0
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	86	4.8	27.1	27.8	16.5	2.7
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	683	23.1	21.6	13.5	8.2	7.6
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,248	16.3	16.4	13.9	9.7	9.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,028	21.1	20.0	13.9	10.6	7.5
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	761	14.3	17.5	15.1	7.9	11.0
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,095	19.5	19.0	14.5	9.0	7.6
Meets screen time recommendations	793	17.6	18.3	13.7	10.0	6.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	654	26.2	15.0	17.5	7.5	4.7
Meets sleep recommendations	1,209	14.9	20.7	12.7	10.0	8.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	337	21.0	17.3	13.9	13.8	6.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	1,615	18.0	18.8	14.0	8.2	7.6
Does not meet water recommendations	1,272	18.5	16.5	13.6	10.0	8.4
Meets water recommendations	652	19.1	24.1	15.5	7.9	4.9
Risk behaviour indicators²						
Current smoker	128	25.7	20.4	11.5	6.0	4.6
Ex-smoker	575	18.8	16.2	13.3	12.7	8.4
Never smoked	792	20.3	13.9	18.7	9.4	6.6
Current vaper	54	28.2	11.8	10.9	21.0	2.5
Ex-vaper	131	24.5	16.5	15.4	10.5	6.2

Never vaped	1,307	19.2	15.7	16.1	9.6	7.5
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	853	17.9	16.2	15.3	10.9	8.8
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	639	24.0	14.7	16.3	9.5	4.5
Gambled	529	19.0	14.6	16.1	11.8	7.5
Never gambled	964	21.2	16.2	15.4	9.4	6.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 below provides a snapshot of the main barriers reported by 2025 Greater Bendigo ALC respondents. The main themes that emerged were personal preferences (14.5%), cost (13.6%), lack of time (11.2%), being inconvenient to prepare (10.5%) and being satisfied with current intake (10.4%).

Table 4.2.4.1 Barriers to vegetable consumption

Reasons	% (¹ N=3,466)
Preferences	14.5
Cost	13.6
Time	11.2
Inconvenient to prepare	10.5
Satisfied with current intake/low appetite	10.4
No particular reason	7.1
Access/quality	6.8
Habit/routine	4.9
Diet/health restrictions	3.5
Other	2.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. Results are weighted to population benchmarks and exclude 'Not answered' / 'Not applicable' responses from base sizes.

Tables 4.2.4.2a, 4.2.4.2b 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 indicators, health behaviour indicators and risk behaviour characteristics of the sample. Solutions aimed at addressing the main barriers of desirability (personal preference), affordability, lack of time, inconvenience and current intake satisfaction are likely to be the most effective in increasing vegetable consumption.

Reporting of personal preferences as a barrier to vegetable consumption was associated with many demographic, residential subregion, health and wellbeing and health behaviour characteristics. No associations were seen with risk taking behaviours. Specifically, the following respondents were more likely to report personal preferences as a barrier to vegetable consumption:

- Children (36.4%) compared to adults (9.0%)
- Maybe neurodivergent (22.3%), compared to those who are not (13.9%) or are unsure what neurodivergent means (12.0%)
- Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (10.6%) compared to just getting along, poor or very poor (6.4%)
- High food security (10.6%) compared to low or very low food security (3.9%)
- High life satisfaction (10.8%) compared to low or moderate life satisfaction (6.5%)
- Normal weight range or underweight (16.9%) compared to overweight or obese (10.5%)
- Did not meet the aerobic physical activity recommendations (20.9%) compared to met them (11.5%)
- Did not meet the muscle strengthening recommendations (16.5%) compared to met them (10.6%)

In addition, Table 4.2.4.2b shows that Epsom – Ascot (18.7%) residents were the most likely to report preference as a barrier to vegetable consumption and Eaglehawk – Eaglehawk North – Sailors Gully residents were the least likely to do so (6.0%).

Cost as a barrier to vegetable consumption was also associated with many demographic characteristics, residential subregion, health and wellbeing indicators and health behaviours. The following groups were more likely to report cost as a barrier and may benefit from targeted intervention:

- Adults (15.6%) compared to children (5.9%)
- Females (17.5%) compared to males (9.8%)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (29.1%) compared to non-Indigenous people (12.9%)
- LGBTQIA+ (23.3%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (12.8%)
- Neurodivergent (20.7%) or unsure what neurodivergent means (18.6%) compared to not (11.1%) or maybe (9.0%) neurodivergent
- Less than a Bachelor level education (17.1%) compared to Bachelor degree or above (10.3%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (33.2%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (5.2%)
- Requires help with activities (23.3%) compared to does not require help (12.6%)
- Low or very low food security (49.8%) compared to marginal (17.4%) and high (3.1%) food security
- Fair or poor (27.7%) compared to good, very good or excellent (10.8%) self-reported health
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (27.6%) compared to high or very high life satisfaction (10.1%)
- Does not feel valued (29.7%) compared to sometimes (13.6%) and definitely (7.1%) feel valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (26.7%) compared to good mental wellbeing (10.8%)
- Did not meet fruit intake recommendations (18.1%) compared to met them (7.5%)
- Did not meet muscle strengthening recommendations (16.6%) compared to met them (11.5%)
- Did not meet sleep recommendations (20.2%) compared to met them (11.0%)

Additionally, residents from Heathcote and District (24.6%) were the most likely to report cost as a barrier to vegetable consumption whereas residents from Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully were the least likely (6.9%).

Time as a barrier to vegetable consumption was associated with a range of demographic characteristics, residential subregion, health and wellbeing indicators, and health behaviour indicators, but was not associated with 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 (12.5%) compared to children (6.3%)
- Bachelor degree or higher (16.1%) compared to less than Bachelor level education (11.4%)
- Employed (17.5%) compared to unemployed/retired (2.7%)
- Does not require help with daily activities (11.9%) compared to does require help (5.3%)
- Met screen time recommendations (14.2%) compared to did not meet them (9.9%)

Residents of Marong – Rural West (20.9%) were the most likely to report time as a barrier to vegetable consumption whereas residents of Long Gully – West Bendigo – Ironbark were the least likely (1.9%).

Reports of vegetables being “inconvenient to prepare” was associated with multiple demographic characteristics, residential subregion, as well as self-reported health and mental wellbeing. 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 simple vegetable preparation:

- Adults (11.7%) compared to children (5.9%)
- Females (12.4%) compared to males (8.7%)
- Speaks English as main language (10.9%) compared to another main language (1.3%)
- Neurodivergent (14.7%), not (10.4%) or maybe (17.0%) neurodivergent compared to unsure what neurodivergent means (4.4%)
- Bachelor degree or higher (17.4%) compared to less than a Bachelor level education (10.0%)
- Does not require help (11.2%) compared to requires help with daily activities (4.1%)
- High food security (12.7%) compared to low or very low food security (7.2%)
- Residents of Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully (14.8%) and Strathfieldsaye (16.5%) compared to residents of Heathcote and District (6.4%) and Marong – Rural West (5.9%)
- Fair or poor self-reported health (15.3%) compared to good, very good or excellent self-reported health (10.1%)
- Poor mental wellbeing (16.2%) compared to good mental wellbeing (9.7%)

Being satisfied with current intake was the fifth most common barrier to vegetable consumption, and was more frequently reported among the following groups:

- Adults (11.0%) compared to children (7.9%)
- Unemployed/retired (16.4%) compared to employed (8.1%)
- High food security (14.2%) compared to marginal (7.4%) and low or very low (3.7%) food security
- Residents in Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully (13.4%) compared to Maiden Gully (4.9%)
- Met sleep recommendations (12.2%) compared to not (7.7%)
- Never vaped (12.5%) compared to current vaper (2.7%)

Like the fruit consumption barriers, 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 Greater Bendigo population who consume sufficient vegetables for good health and wellbeing.

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

	Unweighted base ¹	Preferences	Cost	Time	Inconvenient to prepare	Satisfied with current intake / low appetite
	n	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	3,466	14.5	13.6	11.2	10.5	10.4
Children	911	36.4	5.9	6.3	5.9	7.9
Adults	2,555	9.0	15.6	12.5	11.7	11.0
Males	1,129	15.8	9.8	10.6	8.7	9.9
Females	2,337	13.1	17.5	11.9	12.4	10.9
Demographic indicators						
Born overseas	301	11.7	16.7	8.7	7.5	12.6
Born in Australia	3,164	14.8	13.3	11.5	10.9	10.1
Speaks other main language	96	7.6	21.4	5.8	1.3	8.5
Speaks English as main language	3,359	14.6	13.4	11.4	10.9	10.4
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	133	11.6	29.1	14.9	7.9	6.4
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,332	14.6	12.9	11.1	10.7	10.6
LGBTQIA+	209	12.1	23.3	11.8	15.8	8.4
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,250	14.7	12.8	11.2	10.0	10.4
Neurodivergent	449	17.4	20.7	14.3	14.7	7.1
Not neurodivergent	2,290	13.9	11.1	11.5	10.4	10.6
Maybe	288	22.3	9.0	15.3	17.0	11.7
Not sure what neurodivergent means	365	12.0	18.6	7.5	4.4	9.9
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,284	8.6	17.1	11.4	10.0	10.9
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,265	10.5	10.3	16.1	17.4	11.0
Unemployed/Retired ²	803	7.6	16.7	2.7	9.6	16.4
Employed	1,749	9.8	15.0	17.5	12.8	8.1
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	809	6.4	33.2	11.7	10.0	9.0

Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,738	10.6	5.2	12.9	12.7	12.0
Requires help with daily activities	325	19.6	23.3	5.3	4.1	7.3
Does not require help	3,136	13.9	12.6	11.9	11.2	10.7
Food security (last 12 months)²						
Low or very low food security	464	3.9	49.8	9.8	7.2	3.7
Marginal food security	341	10.1	17.4	17.1	14.2	7.4
High food security	1,748	10.6	3.1	12.4	12.7	14.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 4.2.4.2b Top five barriers to vegetable consumption by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Preferences	Cost	Time	Inconvenient to prepare	Satisfied with current intake / low appetite
	n	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	3,466	14.5	13.6	11.2	10.5	10.4
Subregion						
Bendigo	201	8.5	14.0	6.6	11.6	6.9
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	152	6.0	15.5	15.1	8.9	11.0
East Bendigo	59	7.6	24.4	19.6	13.1	6.7
Epsom - Ascot	170	18.7	12.7	9.6	10.0	6.9
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	304	15.7	6.9	13.6	14.8	13.4
Golden Square	241	14.0	10.0	10.4	9.1	11.0
Huntly	107	11.6	10.3	17.7	9.7	12.8
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	267	14.3	11.3	3.6	8.3	12.1
Kennington	151	18.4	19.4	11.0	7.9	13.1
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	118	7.0	21.5	1.9	13.4	12.3
Maiden Gully	186	11.7	10.1	17.8	10.6	4.9

North Bendigo - California Gully	161	11.7	16.2	16.0	10.3	10.3
Strathdale	163	19.4	7.5	9.6	12.9	13.4
Strathfieldsaye	219	17.6	11.5	6.8	16.5	5.9
White Hills - Jackass Flat	178	15.9	13.0	12.7	9.8	10.3
Urban subtotal	2,677	13.7	12.6	10.7	11.0	10.2
Elmore - Rural North	66	13.4	7.0	9.1	15.9	17.4
Heathcote and District	365	18.5	24.6	8.9	6.4	11.1
Marong - Rural West	110	17.3	14.5	20.9	5.9	7.7
Rural East	241	15.6	10.7	17.2	11.0	11.0
Rural subtotal	782	16.9	17.1	13.0	8.8	11.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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	Preferences	Cost	Time	Inconvenient to prepare	Satisfied with current intake / low appetite
	n	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	3,466	14.5	13.6	11.2	10.5	10.4
Health and wellbeing indicators						
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	641	16.9	27.7	11.1	15.3	9.3
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,417	15.7	10.8	11.7	10.1	11.6
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	777	6.5	27.6	14.4	14.4	10.1
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,510	10.8	10.1	11.6	11.2	12.5
Does not feel valued by society ²	552	9.2	29.7	11.5	12.2	11.5
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,148	8.4	13.6	14.4	12.6	11.2
Definitely feel valued by society	587	11.1	7.1	10.2	12.3	12.6

Poor mental wellbeing ²	769	10.0	26.7	15.6	16.2	8.4
Good mental wellbeing	1,786	8.6	10.8	11.1	9.7	12.1
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,308	10.5	16.9	13.5	12.1	11.3
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	851	16.9	12.7	11.1	13.4	13.4
Health behaviour indicators						
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,888	13.6	18.1	12.5	11.2	10.7
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,571	15.6	7.5	9.5	9.7	10.0
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,138	20.9	16.7	11.1	10.0	9.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,202	11.5	12.5	11.6	10.9	11.1
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,637	16.5	16.6	12.4	11.9	8.9
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,378	10.6	11.5	11.7	10.5	12.4
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,814	15.3	14.6	9.9	11.6	11.0
Meets screen time recommendations	1,444	13.9	13.2	14.2	9.9	9.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,036	13.1	20.2	12.1	11.5	7.7
Meets sleep recommendations	2,215	15.8	11.0	11.3	10.8	12.2
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	471	17.4	17.8	15.4	14.0	9.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,926	14.3	13.2	10.7	10.2	10.8
Does not meet water recommendations	2,106	13.5	14.6	11.0	10.7	11.1
Meets water consumption recommendations	1,269	17.6	12.7	12.7	11.1	9.7
Risk behaviour indicators²						
Current smoker	154	11.3	24.9	12.4	10.2	11.2
Ex-smoker	889	8.1	15.3	11.4	11.7	13.7
Never smoked	1,259	9.5	15.8	13.6	13.2	10.1
Current vaper	72	4.7	28.8	17.4	14.2	2.7

Ex-vaper	177	10.9	21.7	14.2	15.6	7.5
Never vaped	2,045	9.2	15.1	12.1	11.7	12.5
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,252	8.8	15.6	13.8	12.0	11.2
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,045	9.5	17.6	10.9	12.6	12.1
Gambled	757	9.0	17.0	12.9	12.1	11.8
Never gambled	1,541	9.2	16.0	12.5	12.4	11.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 sex and age. Water consumption was assessed according to both litres and cups per day, however for ease of comparison to the 2019 ALC results, 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, Greater Bendigo respondents reported drinking an average of 6.3 cups of water per day and 34.6% met their age- and sex- specific recommendations (see Table 4.3.1.1a). Adults reported drinking an average of 6.5 cups per day and 31.4% met the recommendation, which is more than in 2019, when the average was just 5.1 cups per day and 22.0% met the recommendation. A greater proportion of children (46.6%) and females (42.8%) met their respective water consumption recommendations compared to adults (31.4%) and males (26.0%). For both males and females, water consumption was lowest amongst older residents, with 96.7% and 78.1% of those over the age of 70 years, respectively, not meeting water recommendations. Table 4.3.1.1b indicates that residents of Kangaroo Flat – Big Hill were the least likely to meet recommended water intake, with only 23.2% doing so, and they also had the lowest average daily consumption (5.5 cups). In contrast, residents of Elmore – Rural North were the most likely to meet the recommendations (46.7%), while Strathfieldsaye recorded the highest average daily water consumption at 6.9 cups.

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

- From 2-3 person household (29.4%) compared to 4-5 person households (36.9%)
- Not sure what neurodivergent means (26.7%) compared to those who are not neurodivergent (36.6%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (30.2%) compared to a Bachelor degree or higher (35.7%)
- Unemployed/retired (19.1%) compared to employed (38.2%)

Respondents who require help with daily activities (5.1 vs 6.5 who do not) and those with low or very low food security (5.8 vs 6.7 with high food security) also reported consuming fewer cups of water on average per day, despite no difference in recommendation adherence.

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>

Table 4.3.1.1a Water consumption by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily cups #
Total sample	3,835	65.4	34.6	6.3
Children	1,006	53.4	46.6	5.6
Adults	2,829	68.6	31.4	6.5
Males	1,199	74.0	26.0	6.6
Females	2,629	57.2	42.8	6.0
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	298	58.7	41.3	5.2
Males, 12 to 17	214	43.9	56.1	6.7
Males, 18 to 34	103	64.4	35.6	8.8
Males, 35 to 49	176	75.3	24.7	7.6
Males, 50 to 69	260	84.3	15.7	6.3
Males, 70+	148	96.7	3.3	4.7
Females, 3 to 11	291	59.8	40.2	4.9
Females, 12 to 17	196	44.4	55.6	6.4
Females, 18 to 34	408	50.4	49.6	6.7
Females, 35 to 49	652	53.3	46.7	6.4
Females, 50 to 69	791	61.3	38.7	5.8
Females, 70+	291	78.1	21.9	5.2
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	474	71.9	28.1	5.9
2 or 3 people	1,507	70.6	29.4	6.5
4 or 5 people	756	63.1	36.9	6.9
More than 5 people	90	65.5	34.5	6.5
Born overseas	326	73.3	26.7	6.3
Born in Australia	3,508	64.6	35.4	6.3
Speaks other main language	99	71.0	29.0	7.3
Speaks English as main language	3,723	65.3	34.7	6.3
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	138	66.6	33.4	6.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,694	65.4	34.6	6.4
LGBTQIA+	219	64.2	35.8	6.3
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,606	65.4	34.6	6.3
Neurodivergent	456	64.1	35.9	6.1
Not neurodivergent	2,604	63.4	36.6	6.4
Maybe	306	62.0	38.0	6.1
Not sure what neurodivergent means	389	73.3	26.7	6.4
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,382	69.8	30.2	6.4

Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,440	64.3	35.7	6.9
Unemployed/Retired ²	926	80.9	19.1	5.5
Employed	1,900	61.8	38.2	7.1
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	847	70.5	29.5	6.2
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,973	67.4	32.6	6.7
Requires help with daily activities	349	71.0	29.0	5.1
Does not require help	3,481	64.8	35.2	6.5
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	469	73.5	26.5	5.8
Marginal food security	356	67.0	33.0	6.6
High food security	2,002	67.3	32.7	6.7

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 4.3.1.1b Water consumption by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily cups #
Total sample	3,835	65.4	34.6	6.3
Subregion				
Bendigo	229	64.6	35.4	6.6
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	171	62.7	37.3	6.0
East Bendigo	70	60.5	39.5	7.0
Epsom - Ascot	187	67.0	33.0	5.9
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	340	60.4	39.6	6.7
Golden Square	257	60.0	40.0	6.8
Huntly	113	61.3	38.7	6.4
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	293	76.8	23.2	5.5
Kennington	173	63.6	36.4	6.7
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	126	72.8	27.2	5.9
Maiden Gully	208	66.7	33.3	6.4
North Bendigo - California Gully	165	65.2	34.8	6.2
Strathdale	191	63.4	36.6	6.7
Strathfieldsaye	250	55.7	44.3	6.9
White Hills - Jackass Flat	190	66.9	33.1	6.7
Urban subtotal	2,963	64.9	35.1	6.4
Elmore - Rural North	74	53.3	46.7	7.8
Heathcote and District	404	71.7	28.3	5.5
Marong - Rural West	123	66.5	33.5	5.6
Rural East	264	65.2	34.8	6.8

Rural subtotal	865	67.1	32.9	6.1
-----------------------	------------	-------------	-------------	------------

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 Greater Bendigo ALC sample. Average daily cups of water were associated with self-reported health, life satisfaction, perceived value to society, fruit consumption, aerobic physical activity, muscle strengthening activities, sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and vaping.

With regards to the water consumption recommendation adherence, associations were seen with self-reported health and life satisfaction. Those with fair or poor self-reported health (23.4% vs 37.5%) or with lower to moderate life satisfaction (26.4% vs 33.9%) 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 (29.1% vs 41.3%) and vegetable (33.5% vs 47.3%) consumption recommendations, or muscle strengthening (31.3% vs 37.0%) recommendations, and who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (27.0% vs 35.9%) 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 lower proportion of respondents who never vaped (28.6%) met the water consumption recommendations compared with current vapers (50.7%) or ex-vapers (43.7%).

Table 4.3.1.2 Water consumption by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not meet recommendation %	Meets recommendation %	Average daily cups #
Total sample	3,835	65.4	34.6	6.3
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	671	76.6	23.4	5.5
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,780	62.5	37.5	6.6
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	835	73.6	26.4	6.0
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,732	66.1	33.9	6.8
Does not feel valued by society ²	595	73.4	26.6	5.9
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,287	67.3	32.7	6.7
Definitely feel valued by society	681	66.2	33.8	6.8
Poor mental wellbeing ²	810	72.0	28.0	6.1
Good mental wellbeing	2,019	67.1	32.9	6.7
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,435	67.5	32.5	6.6
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	999	61.4	38.6	6.7
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,924	70.9	29.1	6.1
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,893	58.7	41.3	6.7

Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,375	66.5	33.5	6.3
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	434	52.7	47.3	6.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,239	64.6	35.4	5.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,482	65.6	34.4	6.6
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,758	68.7	31.3	5.9
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,558	63.0	37.0	7.0
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,023	66.0	34.0	6.3
Meets screen time recommendations	1,650	63.8	36.2	6.5
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,125	65.8	34.2	6.1
Meets sleep recommendations	2,545	64.6	35.4	6.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	489	73.0	27.0	5.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,344	64.1	35.9	6.5
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	157	75.3	24.7	6.3
Ex-smoker	986	67.3	32.7	6.7
Never smoked	1,438	69.0	31.0	6.5
Current vaper	76	49.3	50.7	8.5
Ex-vaper	190	56.3	43.7	8.2
Never vaped	2,306	71.4	28.6	6.2
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,383	66.3	33.7	6.7
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,193	72.2	27.8	6.2
Gambled	829	67.7	32.3	6.7
Never gambled	1,747	69.4	30.6	6.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 16.7% of 2025 ALC adult respondents from Greater Bendigo who reported consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily. The proportion of Greater Bendigo adults (16.7%) consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily was higher than children (8.9%), and no difference was seen between males and females – contrary to the 2023 VPHS data indicating that males are 8.5% more likely than females to consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily. Daily consumption was highest among males aged 35 to 49 (19.1%) and females aged 18 to 34 (25.1%), and lowest among both males (5.7%) and females (4.7%) aged 3 to 11 years.

When looking by subregion of residence, a greater proportion of those living in rural areas reported consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily (17.4%) compared to those living in urban areas (14.3%). Residents from Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully were the least likely to report daily consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (5.9%).

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

- Speak English as their main language (15.3%) compared to another language (5.9%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (35.7%) compared to non-Indigenous (14.1%)
- Neurodivergent (21.2%) compared to not neurodivergent (13.2%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (18.2%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (11.8%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (22.9%) compared to reasonable comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (13.3%)
- Low or very low food security (25.0%) compared to high food security (13.5%)

Table 4.4.1.1a Sugar-sweetened beverage consumption by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Daily %	Weekly %	Monthly or less often %	Never %
Total sample	3,915	15.1	38.3	31.2	15.4
Children	1,030	8.9	38.3	34.0	18.7
Adults	2,862	16.7	38.4	30.3	14.5
Males	1,217	14.4	44.0	28.9	12.7
Females	2,660	15.6	33.1	33.4	18.0
Sex and age					
Males, 3 to 11	298	5.7	36.2	34.2	23.8
Males, 12 to 17	222	14.0	52.3	23.9	9.9
Males, 18 to 34	103	16.8	55.6	24.0	3.6
Males, 35 to 49	176	19.1	47.7	25.7	7.6
Males, 50 to 69	261	15.5	40.2	31.9	12.4
Males, 70+	152	12.3	34.8	31.2	21.7
Females, 3 to 11	295	4.7	31.5	37.6	26.1
Females, 12 to 17	201	13.4	39.8	38.3	8.5
Females, 18 to 34	410	25.1	44.2	25.1	5.6
Females, 35 to 49	654	20.1	36.1	32.6	11.1
Females, 50 to 69	794	12.2	23.5	36.8	27.5
Females, 70+	292	6.5	20.9	36.3	36.2
Demographic indicators					
Household size²					
1 person	478	16.7	30.2	29.2	23.9
2 or 3 people	1,529	15.2	36.3	33.1	15.4

4 or 5 people	760	17.7	46.1	26.8	9.4
More than 5 people	92	29.0	46.8	20.7	3.5
Born overseas	336	14.6	35.6	32.5	17.2
Born in Australia	3,577	15.2	38.7	31.0	15.2
Speaks other main language	103	5.9	47.4	37.0	9.8
Speaks English as main language	3,798	15.3	38.1	31.0	15.6
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	140	35.7	36.7	15.8	11.8
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,767	14.1	38.4	31.9	15.5
LGBTQIA+	223	22.5	43.3	25.9	8.3
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,677	14.5	37.9	31.7	15.9
Neurodivergent	468	21.2	35.5	29.4	13.9
Not neurodivergent	2,637	13.2	38.8	32.1	15.9
Maybe	313	19.5	37.7	30.0	12.8
Not sure what neurodivergent means	407	16.4	40.8	29.5	13.3
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,403	18.2	38.9	28.3	14.6
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,450	11.8	36.8	36.8	14.6
Unemployed/Retired ²	940	14.9	32.5	30.6	22.0
Employed	1,918	17.7	41.8	30.1	10.5
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	859	22.9	37.9	24.0	15.2
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,993	13.3	38.8	33.7	14.2
Requires help with daily activities	353	19.3	29.4	28.6	22.7
Does not require help	3,553	14.6	39.3	31.4	14.6
Food security (last 12 months)²					
Low or very low food security	478	25.0	39.4	22.3	13.3
Marginal food security	360	19.7	47.3	22.8	10.2
High food security	2,021	13.5	36.4	34.3	15.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 4.4.1.1b Sugar-sweetened beverage consumption by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Daily %	Weekly %	Monthly or less often %	Never %
Total sample	3,915	15.1	38.3	31.2	15.4
Subregion					
Bendigo	236	11.1	44.0	29.5	15.4
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	175	16.2	43.0	27.8	13.1
East Bendigo	70	24.1	38.5	20.7	16.6
Epsom - Ascot	191	23.9	35.3	28.5	12.3
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	344	5.9	32.5	42.1	19.4

Golden Square	260	13.0	34.4	39.4	13.2
Huntly	113	19.9	38.9	28.9	12.3
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	304	18.6	35.5	29.0	16.9
Kennington	180	11.5	33.2	35.1	20.2
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	128	20.7	42.4	28.1	8.8
Maiden Gully	209	11.3	42.7	30.5	15.5
North Bendigo - California Gully	170	16.2	41.4	28.8	13.6
Strathdale	200	8.5	36.7	34.9	19.9
Strathfieldsaye	254	13.1	40.9	30.2	15.7
White Hills - Jackass Flat	194	13.5	47.7	29.8	9.0
Urban subtotal	3,028	14.3	38.8	31.8	15.1
Elmore - Rural North	76	14.4	54.7	24.5	6.4
Heathcote and District	408	15.6	33.0	29.7	21.7
Marong - Rural West	123	23.8	35.3	29.2	11.7
Rural East	269	18.4	37.6	30.3	13.7
Rural subtotal	876	17.4	37.1	29.3	16.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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.

With regards to the health and wellbeing indicators, those with fair or poor self-reported health (27.2% vs 11.7%), with low to moderate life satisfaction (20.5% vs 14.5%), have poor mental wellbeing (25.0% vs 13.3%), never feel valued by society (24.3% vs sometimes [16.2%] and definitely [8.9%]), and who are overweight or obese (18.2% vs 10.1%) were significantly more likely to consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

Aerobic physical activity was the only health behaviour not associated with sugar-sweetened beverage intake. A greater proportion of those who did not meet the fruit (19.9% vs 9.3%), vegetable (16.0% vs 4.9%), muscle strengthening (19.2% vs 10.7%), screen time (17.8% vs 11.5%), sleep (19.0% vs 13.1%) and water consumption (16.7% vs 11.7%) recommendations reported daily consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages compared to those meeting the corresponding health behaviour recommendations.

Smoking was the only assessed risk behaviour associated with daily consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. Specifically, a greater proportion of respondents who currently smoke (32.8%) consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily compared to their counterparts who were ex-smokers (15.0%) or had never smoked (15.2%). Conversely, those who had never vaped (16.8%), had not engaged in risky alcohol intake over the past 12 months (19.1%) and had not gambled in the past 12 months (17.4%) were more likely to report *never* drinking sugar-sweetened beverages compared to those who were ex- (3.1%) or current (3.9%) vapers, engaged in risky alcohol consumption (11.5%) and had gambled (10.2%).

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

	Unweighted base ¹	Daily	Weekly	Monthly or less often	Never
	n	%	%	%	%

Total sample	3,915	15.1	38.3	31.2	15.4
Health and wellbeing indicators					
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	684	27.2	37.6	23.9	11.4
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,834	11.7	37.8	34.0	16.5
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	846	20.5	38.3	28.7	12.4
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,750	14.5	37.2	32.4	15.9
Does not feel valued by society ²	604	24.3	35.7	27.0	13.0
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,299	16.2	38.4	31.0	14.4
Definitely feel valued by society	689	8.9	38.2	35.9	16.9
Poor mental wellbeing ²	817	25.0	36.4	26.6	12.0
Good mental wellbeing	2,045	13.3	39.3	31.8	15.6
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,450	18.2	39.2	30.7	11.9
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,009	10.1	35.9	35.1	18.8
Health behaviour indicators					
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,952	19.9	38.3	29.0	12.8
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,918	9.3	38.6	33.8	18.3
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,397	16.0	39.6	30.4	14.0
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	437	4.9	27.7	39.1	28.3
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,257	18.1	37.0	29.0	15.8
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,516	13.9	39.1	32.1	14.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,776	19.2	38.8	28.6	13.4
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,577	10.7	40.5	34.1	14.7
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,049	17.8	38.4	30.1	13.6
Meets screen time recommendations	1,671	11.5	38.8	33.0	16.7
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,143	19.0	39.4	28.8	12.8
Meets sleep recommendations	2,575	13.1	38.1	32.7	16.2
Does not meet water recommendations	2,339	16.7	38.2	29.8	15.2
Meets water recommendations	1,494	11.7	39.5	33.0	15.8
Risk behaviour indicators²					
Current smoker	157	32.8	30.5	23.1	13.6
Ex-smoker	995	15.0	40.7	30.7	13.5
Never smoked	1,460	15.2	36.1	32.8	15.9
Current vaper	76	32.4	47.3	16.4	3.9
Ex-vaper	192	21.9	52.8	22.3	3.1
Never vaped	2,334	14.9	35.2	33.1	16.8

Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,398	17.7	39.9	30.9	11.5
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,208	14.9	34.2	31.8	19.1
Gambled	838	20.0	42.5	27.4	10.2
Never gambled	1,769	14.5	34.6	33.5	17.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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. Tables 4.5.1a and 4.5.1b provide a detailed overview of responses according to selected demographic characteristics. Overall, 72.1% reported agreeing that it is easy to access healthy food in their local area, with no significant difference between males and females, or adults and children. When looking at the responses by sex and age, 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 lower proportion of residents in Heathcote and District (36.0%) agreed that it was easy of access to healthy food in their local area compared to respondents from all other subregions (62.0% to 83.9%). Additionally, 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:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (57.8%) compared to non-Indigenous (72.7%)
- LGBTQIA+ (56.2%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (73.4%)
- Neurodivergent (58.3%) compared to not neurodivergent (75.4%), maybe neurodivergent (70.3%) or those who are unsure what neurodivergent means (72.7%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (69.2%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (80.0%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (55.6%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (80.7%)
- Require help with daily activities (57.4%) compared to no help required (73.7%)
- Low or very low food security (41.4%) compared to marginal (64.9%) and high (83.2%) food security

Table 4.5.1a 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	3,919	72.1	17.8	10.1
Children	992	73.1	17.5	9.4
Adults	2,903	71.8	17.9	10.3
Males	1,201	74.3	17.6	8.1
Females	2,677	70.4	18.0	11.6

Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	286	72.4	19.9	7.7
Males, 12 to 17	211	73.9	15.2	10.9
Males, 18 to 34	105	67.9	22.9	9.2
Males, 35 to 49	179	73.7	19.3	7.1
Males, 50 to 69	263	75.4	14.7	9.8
Males, 70+	152	82.1	13.6	4.3
Females, 3 to 11	287	76.0	15.0	9.1
Females, 12 to 17	194	70.6	20.6	8.8
Females, 18 to 34	426	65.6	22.9	11.5
Females, 35 to 49	664	65.3	21.6	13.1
Females, 50 to 69	799	73.7	14.0	12.4
Females, 70+	293	78.1	10.4	11.5
Demographic indicators				
Household size ²				
1 person	481	72.1	18.4	9.5
2 or 3 people	1,552	73.9	16.4	9.7
4 or 5 people	774	67.2	21.4	11.5
More than 5 people	93	74.1	13.7	12.2
Born overseas	337	73.8	13.7	12.5
Born in Australia	3,581	71.9	18.2	9.8
Speaks other main language	104	75.2	18.2	6.6
Speaks English as main language	3,803	71.9	17.8	10.3
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	141	57.8	30.8	11.5
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,771	72.7	17.2	10.0
LGBTQIA+	238	56.2	27.2	16.6
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,667	73.4	17.1	9.5
Neurodivergent	491	58.3	23.9	17.9
Not neurodivergent	2,616	75.4	16.0	8.6
Maybe	318	70.3	19.5	10.2
Not sure what neurodivergent means	404	72.7	19.2	8.1
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,426	69.2	20.0	10.8
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,468	80.0	11.3	8.6
Unemployed/Retired ²	943	72.9	17.0	10.1
Employed	1,956	71.2	18.4	10.4
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	873	55.6	27.9	16.5
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,021	80.7	12.5	6.8
Requires help with daily activities	356	57.4	22.5	20.0
Does not require help	3,554	73.7	17.2	9.0
Food security (last 12 months) ²				

Low or very low food security	488	41.4	36.9	21.7
Marginal food security	365	64.9	26.0	9.1
High food security	2,046	83.2	10.1	6.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 4.5.1b Perceived ease of access to healthy food in local area by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Strongly agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree / Disagree
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	3,919	72.1	17.8	10.1
Subregion				
Bendigo	237	73.1	21.0	5.8
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	177	68.9	23.9	7.2
East Bendigo	69	73.4	21.3	5.3
Epsom - Ascot	189	74.9	18.0	7.1
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	351	82.7	9.7	7.6
Golden Square	262	77.5	17.1	5.4
Huntly	113	83.4	13.2	3.5
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	304	74.7	18.7	6.7
Kennington	179	81.6	11.0	7.4
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	130	71.8	16.9	11.3
Maiden Gully	206	76.3	17.6	6.1
North Bendigo - California Gully	176	67.4	20.5	12.1
Strathdale	204	81.1	16.3	2.7
Strathfieldsaye	245	83.9	12.5	3.6
White Hills - Jackass Flat	197	78.0	13.8	8.2
Urban subtotal	3,039	76.8	16.5	6.7
Elmore - Rural North	75	63.2	19.5	17.4
Heathcote and District	404	36.0	29.5	34.6
Marong - Rural West	123	62.0	19.8	18.3
Rural East	267	78.8	13.6	7.6
Rural subtotal	869	55.3	22.3	22.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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. Agreeance that it is easy to access local healthy food was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Specifically, a lower proportion of those with fair or poor health (57.1% vs 76.3%), with low to moderate life satisfaction (58.4% vs 79.4%), who do not feel valued by society (56.8% vs sometimes [73.7%] and definitely [85.5%]), have poor mental wellbeing (59.0% vs 77.0%), and who are overweight or obese (72.2% vs 78.3%) agree that it is easy to

access healthy food in the local area compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

There were significant associations seen for most health behaviours, except for adherence to screen time and water recommendations, and daily sugar-sweetened beverage consumption. A smaller proportion of respondents who did not meet the following recommendations agree that it is easy to access healthy food locally, compared to their counterparts who did meet them:

- Fruit consumption (67.2% vs 78.2%)
- Vegetable consumption (70.9% vs 85.8%)
- Aerobic physical activity (67.8% vs 74.5%)
- Muscle strengthening activity (69.2% vs 76.6%)
- Sleep duration (65.5% vs 75.9%)

Smoking was the only risk behaviour associated with perceived ease of access to healthy food locally.

Specifically, proportionately fewer current smokers (59.0%) agreed that it is easy to access healthy food locally compared to ex-smokers (72.8%) and those who have never smoked (73.7%).

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	3,919	72.1	17.8	10.1
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	683	57.1	24.9	18.0
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,839	76.3	15.7	8.0
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	846	58.4	25.8	15.8
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,752	79.4	13.3	7.3
Does not feel valued by society ²	603	56.8	24.6	18.6
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,300	73.7	17.4	8.8
Definitely feel valued by society	691	85.5	10.4	4.1
Poor mental wellbeing ²	818	59.0	22.9	18.1
Good mental wellbeing	2,085	77.0	15.9	7.1
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,452	72.2	17.6	10.2
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,007	78.3	14.6	7.1
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,960	67.2	20.3	12.5
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,910	78.2	14.8	7.0
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,397	70.9	18.7	10.4

Meets vegetable intake recommendations	433	85.8	10.0	4.2
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,267	67.8	20.1	12.0
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,540	74.5	16.6	8.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,792	69.2	19.1	11.6
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,595	76.6	16.0	7.4
Does not meet screen time recommendations	2,046	70.5	18.6	10.8
Meets screen time recommendations	1,669	74.8	16.9	8.3
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,141	65.5	23.1	11.4
Meets sleep recommendations	2,574	75.9	15.2	9.0
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	496	66.7	21.0	12.3
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,363	73.5	17.2	9.4
Does not meet water recommendations	2,303	71.4	18.1	10.5
Meets water consumption recommendations	1,479	74.2	17.5	8.3
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	157	59.0	23.8	17.2
Ex-smoker	996	72.8	18.2	9.0
Never smoked	1,460	73.7	16.1	10.2
Current vaper	76	54.4	34.4	11.3
Ex-vaper	193	69.7	22.6	7.8
Never vaped	2,335	73.3	16.2	10.5
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,397	72.6	17.8	9.6
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,211	71.8	17.3	10.9
Gambled	839	72.9	17.7	9.4
Never gambled	1,770	71.9	17.5	10.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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.

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 available.

5.1. Frequency of public open space use

Overall, 50.4% of City of Greater Bendigo 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 59.6% of respondents reported being weekly users of public open space. Children (61.3%) and males (54.2%) were more likely to be weekly users of public open spaces compared to adults (47.5%) and females (46.2%). A greater proportion of both male and female children aged 3 to 11 years used public open spaces at least weekly compared to their older counterparts. When looking by residential subregion, residents from White Hills, Jackass Flat (67.0%) were the most likely to use public open spaces once a week or more, and a greater proportion of urban residents on average (53.0%) reported at least weekly use compared to rural residents (40.9%).

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:

- Neurodivergent (44.7%), not neurodivergent (49.6%), and unsure what neurodivergent means (49.8%) compared to maybe neurodivergent (62.7%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (45.4%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (54.4%)

- Just getting along, poor or very poor (40.7%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (51.1%)

Table 5.1.1a 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	3,633	50.4	27.4	22.3
Children	935	61.3	25.5	13.2
Adults	2,670	47.5	27.9	24.7
Males	1,122	54.2	26.6	19.2
Females	2,468	46.2	28.3	25.6
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	274	69.3	22.6	8.0
Males, 12 to 17	193	55.4	22.8	21.8
Males, 18 to 34	96	56.6	30.4	13.0
Males, 35 to 49	168	54.1	29.5	16.4
Males, 50 to 69	250	49.0	25.9	25.2
Males, 70+	137	46.6	25.2	28.2
Females, 3 to 11	277	62.8	31.0	6.1
Females, 12 to 17	178	50.6	24.2	25.3
Females, 18 to 34	383	42.4	35.3	22.3
Females, 35 to 49	615	45.3	28.2	26.5
Females, 50 to 69	740	44.7	22.8	32.6
Females, 70+	262	38.6	24.0	37.4
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	434	48.3	20.0	31.7
2 or 3 people	1,433	45.1	28.7	26.2
4 or 5 people	715	50.7	30.9	18.4
More than 5 people	85	54.8	24.6	20.5
Born overseas	304	50.0	25.6	24.4
Born in Australia	3,322	50.3	27.6	22.1
Speaks other main language	95	56.2	29.4	14.4
Speaks English as main language	3,520	50.0	27.4	22.6
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	133	37.3	30.4	32.3
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,488	50.8	27.3	21.9
LGBTQIA+	210	44.4	25.0	30.6
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,404	50.7	27.7	21.6
Neurodivergent	438	44.7	32.5	22.8

Not neurodivergent	2,453	49.6	28.9	21.4
Maybe	294	62.7	22.4	14.9
Not sure what neurodivergent means	374	49.8	21.2	29.0
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,299	45.4	27.6	27.0
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,364	54.4	29.0	16.6
Unemployed/Retired ²	855	47.8	23.6	28.5
Employed	1,813	47.3	30.1	22.7
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	798	40.7	27.6	31.7
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,864	51.1	28.1	20.8
Requires help with daily activities	322	46.0	26.0	28.1
Does not require help	3,301	50.7	27.6	21.7
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	445	41.6	28.9	29.5
Marginal food security	334	47.9	28.0	24.1
High food security	1,889	49.3	27.5	23.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 5.1.1b Frequency of public open space use by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Once a week or more often	< once a week, > once in the last 3 months	Less often / never
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	3,633	50.4	27.4	22.3
Subregion				
Bendigo	220	50.5	31.5	18.1
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	158	59.8	28.4	11.8
East Bendigo	68	44.3	44.7	11.0
Epsom - Ascot	182	50.8	27.4	21.8
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	330	61.3	25.6	13.1
Golden Square	242	50.4	25.1	24.5
Huntly	104	46.5	28.7	24.8
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	284	46.6	25.3	28.1
Kennington	164	58.2	23.7	18.0
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	122	46.0	25.1	28.9
Maiden Gully	191	46.9	28.2	24.9
North Bendigo - California Gully	155	50.0	25.8	24.3
Strathdale	190	54.7	27.4	17.9
Strathfieldsaye	226	52.3	34.8	12.9
White Hills - Jackass Flat	185	67.0	24.9	8.2

Urban subtotal	2,821	53.0	27.6	19.4
Elmore - Rural North	66	45.7	18.1	36.2
Heathcote and District	371	37.5	27.7	34.8
Marong - Rural West	114	43.3	23.9	32.7
Rural East	249	43.3	29.7	27.1
Rural subtotal	800	40.9	26.8	32.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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. A lower proportion of people with the following health and wellbeing indicators reported being weekly users of public open spaces:

- Fair or poor health (33.6%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (54.8%)
- Low to moderate life satisfaction (41.0%) compared to high or very high life satisfaction (50.7%)
- Does not (39.1%) or sometimes (48.1%) feels valued by society compared to definitely feel valued by society (55.0%)
- Poor mental wellbeing (37.4%) compared to good mental wellbeing (51.9%)
- Overweight or obese (44.6%) compared to normal weight or underweight (58.8%)

Similarly, public open space use was associated with all health behaviour indicators, except for vegetable intake. 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 (44.6% vs 57.4%)
- Aerobic physical activity (37.0% vs 56.0%)
- Muscle strengthening exercise (45.4% vs 54.1%)
- Screen time (46.3% vs 54.7%)
- Water consumption (47.8% vs 54.6%)

Additionally, those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (36.4%) were less likely to use public open spaces at least once per week compared to those who did not (52.6%), and a greater proportion of those who did not meet the sleep recommendations (26.3%) reported using public open spaces less than once in three months or never compared to those who met the sleep recommendations (20.6%). No associations were observed in public open space use according to participation in risk taking behaviours.

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	3,633	50.4	27.4	22.3
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	675	33.6	31.4	35.0
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,818	54.8	26.4	18.8
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	832	41.0	28.0	31.0
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,737	50.7	27.8	21.5
Does not feel valued by society ²	594	39.1	29.0	32.0
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,287	48.1	28.2	23.7
Definitely feel valued by society	684	55.0	26.2	18.7
Poor mental wellbeing ²	807	37.4	27.6	34.9
Good mental wellbeing	1,863	51.9	27.9	20.1
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,439	44.6	30.4	25.0
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	997	58.8	23.4	17.8
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,818	44.6	29.1	26.3
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,769	57.4	25.4	17.2
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,139	49.5	27.8	22.7
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	414	57.3	24.2	18.5
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,181	37.0	30.0	32.9
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,349	56.0	26.4	17.6
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,677	45.4	29.2	25.4
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,461	54.1	26.8	19.1
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,920	46.3	28.7	24.9
Meets screen time recommendations	1,563	54.7	26.5	18.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,080	47.5	26.2	26.3
Meets sleep recommendations	2,404	51.4	28.0	20.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	461	36.4	31.1	32.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,153	52.6	26.8	20.5
Does not meet water recommendations	2,160	47.8	28.3	23.9
Meets water recommendations	1,386	54.6	25.9	19.5
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	154	45.7	22.0	32.3
Ex-smoker	981	47.3	27.8	24.9
Never smoked	1,449	48.0	28.7	23.3

Current vaper	75	56.2	21.9	21.9
Ex-vaper	191	49.1	29.4	21.4
Never vaped	2,310	47.0	27.8	25.1
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,385	48.0	29.0	23.0
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,195	47.1	26.3	26.6
Gambled	829	45.8	29.0	25.2
Never gambled	1,752	48.6	27.1	24.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 Greater Bendigo residents who completed the 2025 ALC, 70.8% used footpaths in the area at least once per week (see Table 5.2.1a). Approximately 15.1% reported using footpaths less than once a month (infrequently). Usage has increased since 2019, when 66.3% of Greater Bendigo respondents reported using footpaths weekly or more, and 12.1% reported being using them infrequently. A greater proportion of females (17.1%) used footpaths infrequently compared to males (13.1%), however no difference in weekly usage was seen between sexes. 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 from rural subregions reported weekly footpath use (55.8%) compared to residents of urban subregions (75.0%). This suggests improving the access to, or usability of, footpaths in rural areas has the potential to increase use amongst residents.

Weekly usage was also less common amongst people from the following demographic groups:

- Unsure what neurodivergent means (63.1%) compared to maybe neurodivergent (76.4%) or not neurodivergent (71.9%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (67.4%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (78.9%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (64.0%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (73.4%)
- Require help with daily activities (58.5%) compared to no help required (72.0%)
- Low or very food security (62.5%) compared to high food security (72.6%)

Table 5.2.1a Frequency of footpath 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	3,637	70.8	14.0	15.1
Children	932	72.9	14.1	13.0
Adults	2,676	70.1	14.2	15.8
Males	1,122	72.9	13.9	13.1

Females	2,472	68.6	14.3	17.1
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	273	76.2	13.9	9.9
Males, 12 to 17	192	74.5	9.4	16.1
Males, 18 to 34	97	79.2	17.1	3.8
Males, 35 to 49	168	76.4	8.7	14.9
Males, 50 to 69	250	65.9	16.9	17.1
Males, 70+	138	68.6	13.9	17.5
Females, 3 to 11	276	68.1	19.6	12.3
Females, 12 to 17	178	73.6	9.6	16.9
Females, 18 to 34	384	72.7	15.7	11.7
Females, 35 to 49	616	65.9	18.0	16.1
Females, 50 to 69	738	68.5	10.3	21.2
Females, 70+	266	60.6	11.0	28.4
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	437	71.6	11.4	17.0
2 or 3 people	1,433	69.5	14.4	16.2
4 or 5 people	717	70.5	15.1	14.5
More than 5 people	86	69.2	15.7	15.0
Born overseas	305	68.0	16.5	15.5
Born in Australia	3,324	71.1	13.8	15.1
Speaks other main language	94	69.3	21.6	9.0
Speaks English as main language	3,523	70.8	13.8	15.4
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	133	58.5	18.4	23.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,490	71.3	13.9	14.8
LGBTQIA+	211	73.4	11.0	15.6
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,405	70.6	14.3	15.1
Neurodivergent	438	70.5	16.3	13.2
Not neurodivergent	2,453	71.9	14.0	14.1
Maybe	295	76.4	12.2	11.4
Not sure what neurodivergent means	373	63.1	14.9	22.0
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,302	67.4	15.0	17.5
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,366	78.9	11.5	9.6
Unemployed/Retired ²	860	66.8	13.8	19.4
Employed	1,813	71.8	14.4	13.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	799	64.0	16.0	20.0
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,867	73.4	13.2	13.5
Requires help with daily activities	321	58.5	17.4	24.1
Does not require help	3,303	72.0	13.8	14.3

Food security (last 12 months)²

Low or very low food security	446	62.5	16.9	20.6
Marginal food security	334	69.2	16.0	14.8
High food security	1,893	72.6	12.9	14.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 5.2.1b Frequency of footpath use by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Once a week or more often	< once a week, > once in the last 3 months	Less often / never
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	3,637	70.8	14.0	15.1
Subregion				
Bendigo	221	81.8	11.3	6.9
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	161	78.6	14.8	6.6
East Bendigo	68	71.2	7.9	20.9
Epsom - Ascot	182	66.2	22.9	10.9
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	329	85.4	7.9	6.7
Golden Square	242	77.6	12.9	9.4
Huntly	104	64.6	15.9	19.5
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	283	68.5	15.1	16.3
Kennington	165	76.0	11.3	12.8
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	121	66.8	19.2	14.0
Maiden Gully	193	60.2	17.4	22.4
North Bendigo - California Gully	156	74.3	7.9	17.8
Strathdale	190	84.5	9.2	6.2
Strathfieldsaye	226	73.9	18.9	7.2
White Hills - Jackass Flat	186	84.0	8.6	7.4
Urban subtotal	2,827	75.0	13.4	11.5
Elmore - Rural North	68	52.6	19.9	27.5
Heathcote and District	369	59.0	13.6	27.4
Marong - Rural West	114	52.2	13.5	34.2
Rural East	247	53.6	19.9	26.5
Rural subtotal	798	55.8	16.2	28.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 those who use footpaths once a week or more often was similar to that observed for open space use. That is, people reporting lower levels of health and wellbeing were less likely to be frequent users of footpaths. The proportion of weekly footpath use was lower among those reporting:

- Fair or poor health (57.1%) compared to good, very good or excellent health (74.0%)
- Lower to moderate life satisfaction (62.0%) compared to high or very high life satisfaction (73.7%)
- Does not feel valued by society (61.8%) compared to those who reported they sometimes (71.4%) or definitely (74.7%) feel valued by society
- Poor mental wellbeing (62.2%) compared to good mental wellbeing (73.6%)
- Overweight or obese (66.7%) compared to normal weight or underweight (79.6%)

Associations were seen according to all health behaviour indicators, apart from vegetable intake. Specifically, a lower proportion of those who did not meet the following health behaviour recommendations used footpaths once a week or more often:

- Fruit intake (66.3% vs 76.3%)
- Aerobic physical activity (58.2% vs 76.3%)
- Muscle strengthening exercise (67.3% vs 74.5%)
- Screen time (67.7% vs 74.3%)
- Sleep duration (65.6% vs 73.1%)
- Water consumption (68.6% vs 74.4%)

Additionally, those who reported drinking sugar-sweetened beverages daily (62.4%) were less likely to use footpaths at least once a week compared to those who do not (72.3%).

The only risk behaviour that was associated with footpath use was vaping. A greater proportion of those who have never vaped (16.6%) used footpaths in the local area infrequently compared to those who are ex-vapers (9.6%).

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	3,637	70.8	14.0	15.1
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	676	57.1	20.1	22.8
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,821	74.0	12.7	13.2
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	835	62.0	16.7	21.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,738	73.7	13.2	13.0
Does not feel valued by society ²	595	61.8	16.9	21.2
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,288	71.4	13.3	15.3
Definitely feel valued by society	685	74.7	14.1	11.2
Poor mental wellbeing ²	809	62.2	15.9	21.9
Good mental wellbeing	1,867	73.6	13.4	13.0
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,438	66.7	16.4	16.9

Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	996	79.6	10.3	10.0
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,821	66.3	16.0	17.7
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,767	76.3	11.8	11.9
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,139	70.2	14.4	15.5
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	414	76.8	11.8	11.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,180	58.2	19.8	22.0
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,353	76.3	11.9	11.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,677	67.3	15.2	17.4
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,463	74.5	13.0	12.5
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,920	67.7	14.5	17.8
Meets screen time recommendations	1,564	74.3	14.3	11.4
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,081	65.6	15.0	19.4
Meets sleep recommendations	2,404	73.1	14.0	13.0
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	460	62.4	18.7	18.9
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,158	72.3	13.3	14.5
Does not meet water recommendations	2,165	68.6	14.9	16.5
Meets water recommendations	1,385	74.4	13.1	12.5
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	153	64.2	15.4	20.5
Ex-smoker	983	68.7	13.9	17.4
Never smoked	1,453	71.3	14.7	14.1
Current vaper	75	69.8	14.5	15.7
Ex-vaper	192	73.2	17.2	9.6
Never vaped	2,313	69.3	14.1	16.6
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,385	71.2	14.3	14.5
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,199	67.8	14.5	17.7
Gambled	831	68.9	14.4	16.7
Never gambled	1,754	70.2	14.4	15.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 Greater Bendigo residents who completed the 2025 ALC, 35.9% reported using off-road walking and cycling tracks in the area at least once per week (see Table 5.3.1), which is roughly the same as was reported

in 2019. Weekly use was lower among females (29.4%) and children (30.6%) compared to males (42.5%) and adults (37.0%). A lower proportion of rural residents used off-road walking and cycling tracks at least once a week (30.3%) compared to urban residents (37.4%), however usage patterns differed by individual subregion (see Table 5.3.1b).

Weekly off-road walking and cycling track 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 (18.2%) compared to non-Indigenous (36.6%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (35.5%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (42.0%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (29.8%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (41.1%)
- Requires help with daily activities (25.0%) compared to no help required (36.8%)
- Low or very low food security (26.9%) compared to high (40.1%) food security

Table 5.3.1a 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	3,627	35.9	22.0	42.1
Children	928	30.6	25.5	43.9
Adults	2,670	37.0	21.3	41.6
Males	1,117	42.5	23.2	34.3
Females	2,467	29.4	20.8	49.8
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	272	34.2	25.7	40.1
Males, 12 to 17	191	36.6	23.6	39.8
Males, 18 to 34	97	48.4	23.0	28.6
Males, 35 to 49	167	44.3	25.7	29.9
Males, 50 to 69	249	39.9	24.1	36.0
Males, 70+	137	47.2	17.1	35.7
Females, 3 to 11	275	28.4	28.4	43.3
Females, 12 to 17	177	22.0	20.9	57.1
Females, 18 to 34	383	25.8	24.7	49.5
Females, 35 to 49	615	28.5	21.9	49.6
Females, 50 to 69	740	35.7	16.7	47.6
Females, 70+	263	30.2	11.6	58.2
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	436	38.8	13.8	47.4
2 or 3 people	1,430	39.4	20.0	40.6

4 or 5 people	715	32.3	27.2	40.4
More than 5 people	86	31.9	25.6	42.5
Born overseas	304	31.1	22.2	46.7
Born in Australia	3,315	36.3	22.0	41.7
Speaks other main language	94	31.1	24.7	44.2
Speaks English as main language	3,514	36.0	22.0	42.1
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	133	18.2	17.8	64.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,482	36.6	22.3	41.2
LGBTQIA+	211	30.7	19.4	50.0
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,396	36.4	22.2	41.4
Neurodivergent	438	30.6	21.4	48.0
Not neurodivergent	2,449	37.5	22.7	39.8
Maybe	294	37.9	28.0	34.1
Not sure what neurodivergent means	371	31.0	17.3	51.7
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,295	35.5	20.3	44.2
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,367	42.0	24.8	33.3
Unemployed/Retired ²	857	38.4	16.9	44.7
Employed	1,810	36.3	23.6	40.1
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	798	29.8	17.8	52.4
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,863	41.1	23.2	35.7
Requires help with daily activities	318	25.0	17.7	57.3
Does not require help	3,298	36.8	22.5	40.6
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	443	26.9	19.7	53.4
Marginal food security	335	37.7	21.1	41.2
High food security	1,889	40.1	21.9	38.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 5.3.1b Frequency of off-road walking and cycling track use by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Once a week or more often	< once a week, > once in the last 3 months	Less often / never
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	3,627	35.9	22.0	42.1
Subregion				
Bendigo	220	25.8	28.7	45.4
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	158	42.4	24.1	33.5
East Bendigo	68	41.2	21.2	37.6
Epsom - Ascot	181	28.0	28.2	43.8

Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	329	50.1	21.3	28.6
Golden Square	242	38.0	19.5	42.5
Huntly	104	19.1	19.1	61.8
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	282	37.1	18.3	44.6
Kennington	165	37.6	23.3	39.1
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	121	26.6	24.0	49.5
Maiden Gully	193	30.5	25.9	43.6
North Bendigo - California Gully	155	40.2	13.6	46.2
Strathdale	190	46.0	16.9	37.1
Strathfieldsaye	225	36.8	26.4	36.8
White Hills - Jackass Flat	184	48.9	17.5	33.6
Urban subtotal	2,817	37.4	21.9	40.6
Elmore - Rural North	67	37.0	20.3	42.6
Heathcote and District	370	23.3	21.7	55.0
Marong - Rural West	114	22.8	12.9	64.3
Rural East	247	41.6	28.7	29.7
Rural subtotal	798	30.3	22.5	47.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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.

Off-road walking and cycling track use was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators. Weekly use was less frequent among those who reported fair or poor health (20.5% vs 39.6%), low to moderate life satisfaction (28.4% vs 41.0%), do not or sometimes (29.8% and 36.1% vs definitely [45.5%]) feel valued by society, poor mental wellbeing (23.8% vs 42.9%) and overweight or obesity (34.3% vs 42.0%) compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing.

Similarly, off-road walking and cycling track use was associated with all health behaviours, except for water intake. Those who consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (23.6%) were less likely to report weekly track use compared to those who do not (37.9%). Additionally, respondents who failed to meet the following health behaviour recommendations were less likely to report weekly use of off-road walking and cycling tracks compared to those who do meet them:

- Fruit intake (30.1% vs 42.7%)
- Vegetable intake (35.2% vs 43.8%)
- Aerobic physical activity (17.1% vs 44.2%)
- Muscle strengthening exercise (27.5% vs 44.7%)
- Screen time (32.0% vs 40.6%)
- Sleep duration (31.6% vs 38.0%)

Smoking was the only risk behaviour associated with off-road walking and cycling track use. Specifically, current smokers (26.7%) were less likely to report at least weekly use compared to ex-smokers (40.8%).

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	3,627	35.9	22.0	42.1
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	674	20.5	18.5	61.0
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,813	39.6	23.0	37.4
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	831	28.4	17.4	54.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,737	41.0	23.2	35.8
Does not feel valued by society ²	593	29.8	16.3	54.0
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,285	36.1	23.0	40.9
Definitely feel valued by society	684	45.5	23.2	31.3
Poor mental wellbeing ²	805	23.8	17.6	58.6
Good mental wellbeing	1,865	42.9	22.9	34.2
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,439	34.3	22.2	43.5
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	991	42.0	25.0	32.9
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,819	30.1	22.0	47.9
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,760	42.7	22.5	34.8
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,132	35.2	22.3	42.6
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	413	43.8	21.5	34.8
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,179	17.1	22.0	60.9
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,348	44.2	22.1	33.7
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,673	27.5	22.3	50.2
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,463	44.7	22.5	32.8
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,915	32.0	22.2	45.8
Meets screen time recommendations	1,563	40.6	22.4	37.0
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,079	31.6	20.0	48.3
Meets sleep recommendations	2,397	38.0	23.2	38.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	460	23.6	17.9	58.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,148	37.9	22.8	39.3
Does not meet water recommendations	2,159	35.2	21.9	42.9
Meets water recommendations	1,380	36.6	22.6	40.9
Risk behaviour indicators²				

Current smoker	154	26.7	19.7	53.6
Ex-smoker	982	40.8	18.9	40.3
Never smoked	1,446	35.4	23.0	41.6
Current vaper	75	27.7	20.3	52.0
Ex-vaper	191	41.0	20.4	38.6
Never vaped	2,308	36.6	21.4	42.0
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,387	38.1	21.2	40.7
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,191	35.1	21.2	43.7
Gambled	832	36.3	22.1	41.6
Never gambled	1,747	37.2	20.6	42.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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, 7.1% 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 approximately 73.0% of respondents having used them. The next most common were sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms (49.3%), swimming pools or splash parks (46.8%), playgrounds (40.3%) and indoor sports, leisure and fitness centres (30.4%). This list remains similar to what was reported in 2019, except that community gardens are less popular now (ranked 6th) 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	3,392
Parks	73.0
Sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms	49.3
Swimming pools / splash parks	46.8
Playgrounds	40.3
Indoor sports / leisure / fitness centres	30.4
Community gardens	27.9
Halls / community centres	20.3

Hard courts (e.g., netball / tennis)	13.9
Skateparks / BMX	10.2
Other	8.6
After hours usage of education facilities (e.g., school, TAFE, university)	5.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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.

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 some differences by sex, with males more likely to use sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms, whereas females were more likely to use playgrounds. For all top facilities apart from halls/community centres and community gardens, usage was highest among both males and females aged 3 to 11 and lowest among males and females aged 70 years and above. Usage of all facilities differed between subregions demonstrating a need for tailored, localised action and engagement when it comes to facility additions, removals, or upgrades (refer to Table 5.4.1.2b for details).

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

Other notable differences include:

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

When looking at health and wellbeing indicators, associations were seen for seven of the top nine 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, indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres, hard courts and skateparks/BMX tracks

- Those with low to moderate life satisfaction and those who do not feel valued by society were less likely to use halls/community centre and hard courts
- Those with poor mental wellbeing were more likely to use swimming pools/splash parks
- Those who are overweight or obese were less likely to use playgrounds and skateparks/BMX tracks

When looking at health behaviour indicators, associations were seen in the usage of all top facilities, except for halls/community centres. Specifically:

- Those who do not meet fruit intake recommendations are less likely to use swimming pools/splash parks, playgrounds, indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres, hard courts and skateparks/BMX
- Those who do not meet vegetable intake recommendations are less likely to use parks and playgrounds
- Those who do not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations are less likely to use sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms, indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres and community gardens, however, they are more likely to use playgrounds
- Those who do not meet muscle strengthening recommendations were more likely to use playgrounds and skateparks/BMX, but less likely to use indoor sports/leisure/fitness centres
- Those who do not meet sleep or screen time recommendations are less likely to use hard courts
- Those who drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily are less likely to use skateparks/BMX
- Those who meet the water consumption recommendations were more likely to use six of the top nine facilities, except for parks, community gardens and halls/community centres, compared to those who do not.

When looking at risk behaviours, 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 and hard courts, 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, 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 5.4.1.2a 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	3,392	73.0	49.3	46.8	40.3	30.4	27.9	20.3	13.9	10.2
Children	893	71.1	63.1	69.9	66.8	40.2	22.6	14.2	23.0	24.3
Adults	2,473	73.7	45.4	40.9	33.3	27.6	29.5	21.7	11.2	6.4
Males	1,051	74.0	56.6	43.9	36.1	30.3	26.8	19.7	13.7	11.5
Females	2,297	72.4	42.3	49.6	44.6	30.2	29.1	20.7	13.6	8.9
Sex and age										
Males, 3 to 11	271	76.4	70.8	80.8	88.9	38.7	23.6	17.0	22.1	38.0
Males, 12 to 17	177	55.4	69.5	52.0	25.4	50.3	15.8	10.2	16.4	19.2
Males, 18 to 34	91	81.6	67.5	39.1	39.1	30.8	40.4	18.5	16.3	7.7
Males, 35 to 49	160	79.8	58.9	58.6	45.0	40.2	28.1	18.8	16.9	13.6
Males, 50 to 69	230	72.5	48.7	28.8	15.2	18.7	25.5	20.6	8.8	1.3
Males, 70+	119	65.7	29.9	16.8	9.3	16.4	19.0	28.0	5.1	1.3
Females, 3 to 11	271	79.3	53.9	82.7	89.7	37.3	31.0	12.5	24.4	23.6
Females, 12 to 17	161	64.0	60.2	46.0	27.3	37.3	14.3	16.8	29.8	6.2
Females, 18 to 34	370	75.5	42.5	49.1	51.1	31.3	35.5	15.8	13.9	9.4
Females, 35 to 49	581	75.2	51.1	55.3	54.1	30.8	26.0	20.8	15.3	12.2
Females, 50 to 69	665	71.7	30.7	37.7	23.1	25.5	30.0	25.2	6.1	2.0
Females, 70+	237	57.4	24.2	29.0	13.8	23.9	25.9	37.2	1.8	0.8
Demographic indicators										
Household size²										
1 person	388	67.8	26.1	31.4	14.4	21.5	29.6	29.5	5.1	2.0
2 or 3 people	1,315	74.7	39.9	36.9	25.2	25.7	30.8	19.6	8.2	3.9

4 or 5 people	686	75.1	64.6	54.1	54.9	34.2	26.1	20.7	17.8	13.8
More than 5 people	82	70.5	50.0	34.5	50.3	27.7	34.9	30.2	24.5	3.4
Born overseas	285	75.1	33.5	37.9	37.3	24.1	23.6	22.6	7.3	5.0
Born in Australia	3,100	72.9	50.9	47.8	40.7	30.9	28.4	19.9	14.4	10.8
Speaks other main language	92	70.6	24.7	28.0	49.6	18.5	22.6	23.0	8.3	1.6
Speaks English as main language	3,283	73.2	50.2	47.6	40.1	30.7	28.2	20.1	14.0	10.6
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	122	77.1	49.4	57.7	48.3	26.2	31.0	28.7	7.1	11.9
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,256	73.0	49.2	46.4	40.1	30.5	27.8	19.9	14.0	10.1
LGBTQIA+	196	83.4	36.8	48.2	40.0	31.0	35.8	25.7	14.2	10.0
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,178	72.4	50.2	46.7	40.5	30.2	27.3	19.7	13.7	10.3
Neurodivergent	419	79.0	49.4	58.8	48.2	32.8	38.4	21.9	9.9	14.8
Not neurodivergent	2,284	73.1	51.4	47.4	39.8	32.5	26.9	18.4	14.9	9.7
Maybe	289	82.9	48.4	53.3	50.1	32.5	32.6	24.9	19.2	17.6
Not sure what neurodivergent means	321	65.3	43.3	30.9	32.3	18.7	20.7	20.3	9.3	4.2
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,163	71.3	43.8	37.7	31.3	24.6	28.0	21.7	9.5	5.5
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,304	80.8	50.6	50.5	39.1	36.5	33.9	21.7	16.2	9.2
Unemployed/Retired ²	774	68.4	30.4	30.3	25.7	19.3	26.6	26.8	5.2	1.8
Employed	1,696	76.4	53.0	46.2	37.1	31.8	30.9	19.1	14.2	8.8
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	707	70.9	40.2	44.0	36.6	24.7	28.1	21.3	9.3	6.4
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,756	75.1	48.1	39.4	31.7	29.1	30.3	21.9	12.2	6.4
Requires help with daily activities	295	65.8	35.9	55.2	52.3	26.2	29.6	24.9	9.0	14.7
Does not require help	3,083	73.9	50.6	46.0	39.2	30.7	27.8	19.7	14.2	9.7
Food security (last 12 months)²										
Low or very low food security	392	69.6	42.3	40.2	39.3	22.1	27.8	23.9	8.2	7.0
Marginal food security	317	74.1	46.2	42.3	38.6	25.4	28.4	17.4	9.2	9.8
High food security	1,761	74.8	46.3	40.8	30.3	29.7	30.3	21.9	12.5	5.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 5.4.1.2b Public facilities and open spaces by subregion

	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	3,392	73.0	49.3	46.8	40.3	30.4	27.9	20.3	13.9	10.2
Subregion										
Bendigo	209	76.3	45.8	44.6	32.5	24.1	24.5	13.5	14.1	5.5
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	157	74.4	46.9	52.3	45.2	34.0	39.2	25.0	13.1	19.9
East Bendigo	66	81.0	45.3	50.4	38.2	28.4	34.5	20.4	14.2	10.9
Epsom - Ascot	170	73.1	54.1	38.4	37.0	23.9	33.5	9.7	13.6	8.2
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	313	81.6	54.2	56.0	42.5	40.9	36.1	21.7	18.9	16.2
Golden Square	227	72.0	50.3	50.8	44.3	36.8	29.5	16.7	16.4	8.1
Huntly	94	71.4	51.7	48.0	52.8	24.2	31.0	13.5	16.7	8.7
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	259	71.4	35.4	45.8	41.8	29.9	27.4	15.4	4.7	4.9
Kennington	159	75.6	45.7	49.5	40.2	37.6	24.0	15.2	13.8	9.6
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	113	68.8	34.6	38.6	31.1	23.2	28.5	22.0	5.9	5.4
Maiden Gully	175	69.0	65.8	51.6	53.1	35.1	17.6	21.4	21.1	12.2
North Bendigo - California Gully	150	77.1	47.4	48.1	37.0	22.4	25.5	17.7	10.8	10.5
Strathdale	177	75.9	54.7	49.6	33.5	39.6	29.4	13.5	20.7	15.7
Strathfieldsaye	218	71.5	60.0	48.1	47.8	31.3	30.6	18.5	11.9	4.8
White Hills - Jackass Flat	184	87.3	48.2	49.5	44.2	28.9	39.8	21.0	11.2	8.8
Urban subtotal	2,671	75.2	49.5	48.3	41.5	31.5	30.2	17.6	13.7	9.9
Elmore - Rural North	59	61.4	53.5	39.1	28.7	16.8	22.3	18.5	17.8	8.5

Heathcote and District	321	64.2	46.6	39.7	37.2	19.9	10.3	42.6	11.6	12.2
Marong - Rural West	100	56.2	48.9	32.8	27.0	29.7	20.9	30.6	12.9	5.3
Rural East	230	68.6	50.5	45.0	40.8	35.3	28.2	17.0	18.9	13.1
Rural subtotal	710	64.3	48.8	40.4	36.1	25.8	18.6	30.3	14.7	11.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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	3,392	73.0	49.3	46.8	40.3	30.4	27.9	20.3	13.9	10.2
Health and wellbeing indicators										
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	576	68.6	40.1	44.1	34.7	21.8	29.4	21.3	8.0	5.7
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,689	74.4	51.5	47.7	41.3	32.4	27.5	20.2	15.3	11.2
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	746	70.0	42.1	43.4	31.7	25.3	28.4	17.3	7.8	6.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,633	76.1	47.4	39.9	33.7	29.0	30.2	23.9	12.7	6.6
Does not feel valued by society ²	518	70.9	39.4	42.9	31.1	24.2	26.8	14.4	7.3	6.4
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,203	75.1	47.6	40.3	34.4	27.9	30.3	22.1	11.5	6.6
Definitely feel valued by society	656	75.3	47.9	41.0	32.0	30.9	31.2	28.0	14.1	6.3
Poor mental wellbeing ²	714	71.5	43.5	47.3	37.7	25.9	31.4	20.6	8.6	7.3
Good mental wellbeing	1,759	74.5	46.2	38.3	31.5	28.2	28.7	22.2	12.2	6.1
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,323	73.7	47.1	42.9	32.0	29.5	27.1	21.4	11.1	6.9
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	948	74.5	53.3	47.3	43.8	32.3	29.6	18.6	15.9	13.4
Health behaviour indicators										

Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,650	71.2	46.9	42.8	33.6	27.4	26.9	19.6	9.8	7.1
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,700	75.4	51.8	51.6	48.0	33.3	29.6	20.8	18.1	13.6
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,918	72.3	49.5	46.4	39.6	29.8	27.9	20.4	13.4	10.0
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	395	81.6	48.6	52.0	49.0	34.2	30.6	18.3	17.8	11.7
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,055	71.9	44.1	50.6	49.8	24.8	24.0	16.9	12.4	11.3
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,239	74.0	51.5	45.1	36.2	32.2	29.8	21.4	14.4	9.6
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,536	72.5	49.4	46.7	42.2	24.6	25.8	18.9	14.5	11.5
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,395	74.6	49.5	45.0	33.7	36.9	29.4	21.6	13.2	7.4
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,776	71.4	47.9	44.9	38.2	28.7	26.1	19.4	11.6	9.4
Meets screen time recommendations	1,479	75.4	50.8	49.1	41.5	31.8	30.4	20.6	15.8	10.1
Does not meet sleep recommendations	977	70.7	45.6	43.4	38.2	29.6	27.4	19.2	10.1	9.4
Meets sleep recommendations	2,281	74.7	51.2	48.7	41.0	30.4	28.1	20.1	15.3	10.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	416	67.6	42.2	41.9	36.2	26.1	34.0	15.8	10.8	6.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,959	74.1	50.4	47.7	41.0	30.9	27.0	21.0	14.2	10.8
Does not meet water recommendations	2,000	72.4	45.0	43.0	38.2	26.4	28.2	21.0	11.4	8.9
Meets water recommendations	1,310	75.1	57.9	54.3	44.9	37.3	27.8	18.8	18.1	12.5
Risk behaviour indicators²										
Current smoker	128	75.9	38.3	35.2	28.2	22.1	29.3	23.5	7.0	4.4
Ex-smoker	911	75.4	49.2	42.3	32.2	28.0	29.7	22.0	11.9	7.6
Never smoked	1,357	72.6	44.2	41.2	34.3	28.5	30.2	21.3	10.9	6.0
Current vaper	68	83.9	54.6	53.4	41.1	35.3	41.3	21.0	14.3	7.5
Ex-vaper	182	78.7	60.4	45.9	33.8	37.4	34.9	17.7	20.4	4.8
Never vaped	2,137	72.9	43.5	39.9	32.5	26.0	28.8	22.3	9.6	6.7

Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,295	75.3	52.4	42.1	34.1	32.0	30.0	19.9	14.0	7.6
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,096	72.1	36.5	39.9	31.7	22.0	29.9	24.2	6.9	5.2
Gambled	765	72.5	53.9	42.5	30.9	31.7	29.4	21.0	12.9	6.1
Never gambled	1,627	74.8	41.1	40.5	34.4	25.6	30.3	22.3	10.0	6.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 (66.7%), socialising with family or friends (62.6%) and for fun or enjoyment (57.6%). The next most frequently reported reasons were for mental health and wellbeing (37.1%), unstructured physical recreation activities (35.8%) and entertaining kids / watching kids' activities (31.5%).

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 (55.0%) and commuting (25.2%) more frequently compared to 2025 respondents (35.8% and 11.9%, 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 the 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.

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

	All respondents
	%
Unweighted base (n)¹	3,379
Exercise / health and fitness	66.7
Socialising with family / friends	62.6
For fun / enjoyment	57.6
For my mental health and wellbeing	37.1
Unstructured physical recreation activities	35.8
Entertaining kids / watching kids' activities	31.5
For time to myself	30.8
Exercising the dog	30.6
Getting back to nature	27.2
Organised sport (e.g., cricket or netball for a club)	25.0
Community event / performance	18.6
Commuting (i.e., to get from a to b)	11.9
Taking part in cultural activities or events on Country	5.6
Some other reason	3.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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, residential subregion, health and wellbeing characteristics, health behaviours and risk behaviours of users, full subgroup comparisons are shown below in Tables 5.4.2.2a, 5.4.2.2b and 5.4.2.3.

Children were more likely to use public facilities and open spaces for socialising with family/friends, fun/enjoyment 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 subregions and all additional demographic indicators (see Tables 5.4.2.2a and 5.4.2.2b for more detail). Likewise, there were differences in reasons for usage across all health and wellbeing indicators, health behaviours and risk behaviours (see Tables 5.4.2.3 for more detail).

Table 5.4.2.2a 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	For time to myself	Exercising the dog	Getting back to nature	Organised sport
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	3,379	66.7	62.6	57.6	37.1	35.8	31.5	30.8	30.6	27.2	25.0
Children	890	59.3	72.8	79.5	15.9	38.6	26.2	11.2	23.9	17.2	40.9
Adults	2,464	68.6	59.8	51.6	42.9	35.0	33.1	36.1	32.6	29.8	20.3
Males	1,046	70.4	59.4	58.6	37.3	38.4	26.9	31.7	29.8	27.0	29.2
Females	2,288	63.0	65.3	56.5	37.0	33.4	36.1	30.2	31.6	27.3	20.9
Sex and age											
Males, 3 to 11	270	56.3	73.0	89.6	14.8	45.2	35.6	10.0	19.3	20.0	43.3
Males, 12 to 17	175	72.6	70.9	61.7	13.1	33.7	4.0	12.0	25.1	6.9	55.4
Males, 18 to 34	91	74.8	70.4	64.4	47.0	46.4	23.0	48.6	40.5	31.0	26.2
Males, 35 to 49	160	75.6	63.2	55.0	41.9	42.3	50.2	34.5	39.0	31.3	33.1
Males, 50 to 69	228	70.5	47.4	47.2	43.5	29.2	20.7	34.4	28.9	28.2	20.4
Males, 70+	119	70.4	39.6	42.2	42.0	33.4	16.0	31.8	18.2	31.0	13.5
Females, 3 to 11	267	55.4	78.3	90.6	17.6	41.2	37.8	7.9	27.7	22.8	30.3
Females, 12 to 17	165	58.2	63.6	61.2	15.8	26.7	7.9	18.8	24.2	11.5	41.8
Females, 18 to 34	370	60.9	68.7	58.5	42.1	36.4	45.2	33.9	34.4	27.8	18.6
Females, 35 to 49	578	59.3	65.4	55.9	37.8	31.5	55.9	30.0	31.4	22.5	26.1
Females, 50 to 69	663	71.3	58.6	45.6	48.1	30.0	24.0	42.3	37.3	37.0	12.4
Females, 70+	235	68.2	57.8	32.0	35.5	33.0	19.2	27.4	20.8	30.6	8.8
Demographic indicators											
Household size²											
1 person	385	71.3	50.6	43.1	56.4	35.3	12.0	40.5	30.2	36.6	10.0
2 or 3 people	1,312	69.5	57.1	49.5	42.5	34.3	24.9	35.6	33.8	31.1	15.3

4 or 5 people	684	68.2	66.3	57.7	40.0	38.2	58.0	35.9	33.2	26.4	32.9
More than 5 people	81	52.1	78.2	66.0	22.3	22.0	41.1	28.4	21.4	14.6	34.2
Born overseas	281	58.5	56.5	55.7	36.1	30.5	26.9	33.7	16.7	30.0	7.6
Born in Australia	3,090	67.6	63.3	57.7	37.3	36.4	32.1	30.6	32.2	26.9	26.7
Speaks other main language	92	49.8	57.1	60.0	24.4	13.3	34.7	25.9	11.0	19.3	3.9
Speaks English as main language	3,270	67.4	62.9	57.4	37.7	36.8	31.5	31.1	31.5	27.5	25.7
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	120	47.5	60.5	62.0	29.7	24.2	37.7	30.2	34.9	22.1	20.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,245	67.5	62.7	57.3	37.6	36.3	31.4	31.0	30.5	27.4	25.0
LGBTQIA+	197	61.9	66.9	60.2	56.7	40.6	29.8	51.1	32.4	38.0	18.5
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,163	67.1	62.5	57.3	35.7	35.6	31.8	29.3	30.6	26.3	25.4
Neurodivergent	420	62.4	67.7	65.9	45.6	36.1	35.0	35.7	36.3	33.2	21.6
Not neurodivergent	2,281	69.9	64.3	57.1	34.4	36.1	32.1	28.3	31.5	25.1	26.3
Maybe	281	67.3	70.8	74.0	49.2	45.9	34.8	44.2	30.4	39.1	30.4
Not sure what neurodivergent means	317	58.7	48.6	45.7	34.9	29.9	26.1	30.1	24.4	23.8	19.3
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,155	65.9	56.5	48.7	42.1	31.8	30.8	34.6	30.3	27.6	19.3
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,303	76.6	69.6	60.5	45.1	44.8	40.1	40.6	39.5	36.4	23.5
Unemployed/Retired ²	767	65.0	52.9	44.7	42.7	33.3	24.7	34.3	24.7	31.0	10.8
Employed	1,694	70.5	63.3	55.1	42.9	35.9	37.4	36.9	36.6	29.2	25.2
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	700	58.0	56.2	46.8	42.6	27.5	36.5	35.9	30.3	24.5	17.5
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,755	74.0	61.6	54.1	43.1	38.8	31.5	36.1	33.8	32.5	21.8
Requires help with daily activities	294	51.2	60.7	60.0	38.1	32.3	31.1	22.2	19.3	21.5	14.0
Does not require help	3,071	68.3	62.9	57.3	37.1	36.2	31.7	31.8	31.9	27.7	26.0
Food security (last 12 months)²											
Low or very low food security	392	51.9	51.7	45.5	39.0	22.9	36.0	33.9	27.2	19.8	16.1
Marginal food security	310	66.5	66.0	52.6	43.2	33.9	30.6	35.6	36.0	31.9	18.5

High food security	1,759	74.3	61.0	53.3	44.0	39.0	32.8	36.9	33.6	32.5	22.0
--------------------	-------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 5.4.2.2b Top 10 reasons for using public facilities or open spaces by subregion

	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	For time to myself	Exercising the dog	Getting back to nature	Organised sport
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	3,379	66.7	62.6	57.6	37.1	35.8	31.5	30.8	30.6	27.2	25.0
Subregion											
Bendigo	211	73.0	57.8	54.6	30.6	36.7	26.2	29.6	29.3	20.8	19.4
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	154	66.5	64.4	60.0	38.8	42.4	35.0	31.0	38.1	39.8	29.4
East Bendigo	65	66.6	57.7	64.9	19.6	37.8	26.0	22.9	34.9	19.3	30.6
Epsom - Ascot	169	65.4	52.8	53.6	33.6	29.9	37.2	29.3	31.4	22.6	22.6
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	315	76.4	72.1	65.7	36.3	44.7	31.0	33.8	35.3	32.9	33.6
Golden Square	229	67.7	69.5	62.0	37.8	37.7	35.9	27.5	32.7	31.0	29.7
Huntly	93	58.2	74.4	69.6	46.5	38.8	45.8	39.6	28.3	35.9	34.5
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	254	57.6	52.4	45.2	38.9	43.3	30.1	31.8	25.0	28.6	17.7
Kennington	158	80.2	68.8	58.7	38.3	39.5	28.1	31.4	27.4	29.7	25.9
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	113	65.2	66.5	54.6	36.4	29.3	24.9	32.7	27.0	22.7	10.8
Maiden Gully	177	60.5	59.8	59.1	33.1	26.9	33.9	19.8	38.8	16.4	31.9
North Bendigo - California Gully	149	70.8	58.0	52.1	40.2	32.1	28.0	34.0	26.1	23.3	22.8
Strathdale	176	72.9	64.1	65.1	55.4	48.8	31.4	44.7	44.4	32.4	28.0
Strathfieldsaye	216	71.7	67.3	59.9	23.3	34.4	30.9	18.9	35.3	19.2	27.0
White Hills - Jackass Flat	182	76.9	57.9	61.2	45.5	29.7	30.5	41.3	33.0	23.9	18.0

Urban subtotal	2,661	69.0	62.7	58.4	37.3	37.2	31.6	31.2	32.5	26.8	25.2
Elmore - Rural North	57	78.6	53.5	60.8	26.8	26.6	20.2	21.2	16.0	16.8	11.7
Heathcote and District	319	49.9	66.3	56.4	36.3	28.6	33.2	32.6	24.2	30.9	23.0
Marong - Rural West	100	62.0	60.5	49.9	33.4	30.7	29.4	21.2	30.6	22.7	22.1
Rural East	232	59.5	61.2	50.3	39.3	33.8	32.5	30.5	21.1	31.6	31.5
Rural subtotal	708	57.5	62.6	54.0	35.9	30.3	31.1	29.2	23.2	28.6	24.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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	For time to myself	Exercising the dog	Getting back to nature	Organised sport
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	3,379	66.7	62.6	57.6	37.1	35.8	31.5	30.8	30.6	27.2	25.0
Health and wellbeing indicators											
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	574	50.7	57.0	49.2	36.1	28.5	36.6	32.1	29.3	22.0	16.3
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	2,690	70.9	63.8	59.6	37.6	37.9	30.8	30.7	31.3	28.5	27.6
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	745	59.8	53.0	44.8	44.1	30.7	33.4	37.3	30.9	25.9	16.5
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,634	73.3	62.7	55.0	42.6	37.2	33.6	35.7	33.9	31.9	22.8
Does not feel valued by society ²	519	60.5	50.1	46.4	45.0	33.6	34.6	35.8	30.8	27.2	16.3
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,201	68.8	60.9	50.6	40.0	33.5	32.6	34.2	35.0	27.4	20.0
Definitely feel valued by society	657	76.7	66.2	59.0	47.2	39.7	34.6	40.8	30.8	38.0	26.5
Poor mental wellbeing ²	708	56.2	61.5	49.5	45.1	32.7	40.2	36.7	31.5	26.0	19.7
Good mental wellbeing	1,756	73.6	59.1	52.5	42.0	35.9	30.3	35.9	33.0	31.3	20.6
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,320	65.9	59.5	51.4	39.4	32.1	32.9	32.9	33.2	26.0	24.5

Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	951	73.8	63.8	62.4	41.7	43.3	30.0	33.7	30.6	32.2	26.1
Health behaviour indicators											
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,644	62.2	57.7	51.3	37.6	31.9	31.2	32.7	30.3	26.0	22.5
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,695	71.7	67.9	64.7	36.8	40.4	32.2	28.8	31.4	28.6	27.2
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,903	66.0	61.8	56.7	37.2	34.8	31.5	31.2	31.3	26.4	25.1
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	398	73.6	69.6	66.5	37.3	47.4	34.3	29.3	27.4	35.3	23.8
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,050	47.1	62.8	58.3	28.2	29.1	37.2	23.4	25.7	20.6	20.7
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,232	74.5	62.6	56.7	41.2	38.5	29.2	34.1	32.9	29.9	26.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,529	57.9	61.0	57.9	30.4	33.9	33.3	28.5	28.3	21.6	26.4
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,392	78.9	63.2	53.6	47.2	38.3	29.4	36.4	34.9	33.9	24.9
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,769	64.0	61.4	56.8	36.8	33.6	28.4	30.5	30.0	25.7	23.8
Meets screen time recommendations	1,473	70.4	63.9	57.3	38.7	38.0	35.5	32.1	32.4	29.2	25.9
Does not meet sleep recommendations	975	64.3	57.0	54.7	37.6	30.3	31.8	29.5	30.6	25.3	24.0
Meets sleep recommendations	2,272	67.9	65.3	58.5	37.4	38.4	31.7	31.9	30.9	28.0	25.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	412	53.0	60.4	53.1	29.8	28.9	34.4	32.2	28.4	19.7	24.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,949	69.0	63.1	58.3	38.4	37.0	31.2	30.7	31.1	28.4	24.8
Does not meet water recommendations	1,988	63.9	59.5	54.9	37.2	34.8	31.3	31.8	29.3	27.3	21.1
Meets water recommendations	1,311	71.5	68.3	62.6	37.3	37.7	32.9	29.2	33.8	27.1	32.0
Risk behaviour indicators²											
Current smoker	126	63.4	60.4	56.1	45.9	26.6	25.8	29.3	23.6	30.0	13.9
Ex-smoker	911	72.5	57.2	53.7	43.1	35.3	33.9	38.0	37.7	30.1	22.2
Never smoked	1,358	67.3	61.6	49.3	42.9	36.7	34.0	36.3	30.7	30.3	20.4

Current vaper	69	69.7	60.5	58.7	39.2	34.3	43.1	31.0	24.5	21.4	25.3
Ex-vaper	182	76.0	73.4	62.6	48.4	42.7	26.2	36.7	49.6	34.0	31.2
Never vaped	2,136	67.9	57.8	49.7	42.6	34.5	33.8	36.6	31.1	30.0	19.1
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,297	71.9	63.2	53.4	41.9	34.1	34.3	35.5	36.4	26.3	25.4
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,094	65.0	54.9	49.1	45.0	37.3	32.1	37.8	28.1	35.6	14.1
Gambled	764	69.3	60.4	50.0	38.8	33.8	33.2	31.8	34.6	25.4	29.0
Never gambled	1,628	69.0	59.5	52.4	45.8	36.4	33.6	39.2	32.1	33.0	15.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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	For time to myself	Exercising the dog	Getting back to nature	Organised sport
	n	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base (n)	3,379	2,279	2,224	2,019	1,227	1,257	1,126	1,019	1,073	960	855
Facility type											
Parks	2,481	69.5	68.4	65.0	40.8	41.6	35.4	35.6	34.6	33.3	24.3
Sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms	1,629	74.0	72.3	65.9	36.7	45.2	38.3	31.5	36.6	27.6	44.1
Swimming pools / splash parks	1,707	72.9	73.5	71.1	38.6	45.5	44.5	32.4	34.2	29.5	33.0
Playgrounds	1,451	62.3	77.9	77.3	34.8	45.8	62.4	31.7	30.8	27.6	29.9

Indoor sports / leisure / fitness centres	1,099	85.0	75.9	71.1	43.0	47.3	37.6	35.2	37.9	31.7	42.8
Community gardens	953	76.4	77.1	72.1	50.2	51.5	41.6	46.5	38.3	44.9	23.5
Halls / community centres	710	68.7	80.1	67.2	44.7	44.7	33.8	39.4	33.6	36.6	30.4
Hard courts (e.g., netball / tennis)	500	83.6	83.3	77.9	42.0	55.5	43.6	35.4	38.2	32.9	63.6
Skateparks / BMX	388	71.6	85.1	86.9	39.7	61.0	56.1	33.7	35.5	37.8	47.8
After hours usage of education facilities	199	75.5	80.7	79.5	39.6	59.5	34.4	34.3	41.0	39.2	41.0
Other	271	73.4	50.9	53.0	54.5	50.9	18.9	43.9	32.6	48.4	21.8

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.5. Perceived safety in local area

In 2025, ALC respondents were asked about their perceived safety and security in the local area. The question was slightly different depending on whether it was adult's self-report or proxy report on behalf of their children/adolescents. Adult respondents were asked to self-report how often they feel safe and secure in their local area. Response options included 'always', 'most of the time', 'sometimes' and 'rarely'. For analysis purposes due to small sample numbers, 'sometimes' and 'rarely' options were combined. Adults were then asked to proxy report on their child's behalf, the extent to which they agree that their child is safe in their local area. Response options were 'definitely agree', 'somewhat agree', 'somewhat disagree', 'definitely disagree'. Responses were subsequently collapsed to create the binary categories of 'agree' or 'disagree'.

5.5.1. Adult safety in local area

Overall, 25.0% of adults reported always feeling safe in their local area, and 16.9% reported sometimes or rarely feeling safe. A lower proportion of females reported always feeling safe (16.1%) than males (34.7%). Among females, those aged 18 to 34 (11.6%) and 35 to 49 (13.6%) years were less likely to report always feeling safe compared to those aged 50 to 69 (18.8%) and 70 years and above (26.1%). No significant differences by age were seen among males. In general, a greater proportion of rural residents reported always feeling safe (29.8%) compared to those living in urban

subregions (23.8%). Elmore – Rural North residents were the most likely to report always feeling safe (49.3%) and North Bendigo – California Gully residents were the least likely (13.5%).

Perceived safety was associated with a range of demographic indicators, with a greater proportion of those in the following demographic groups reporting feeling safe only sometimes or rarely compared to their counterparts:

- LGBTQIA+ (27.8%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (15.9%)
- Neurodivergent (28.1%) compared to not neurodivergent (13.9%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (18.0%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (13.1%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (27.0%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (11.3%)
- Requires help with daily activities (32.1%) compared to no help required (15.6%)
- Low or very food security (36.6%) compared to marginal (18.7%) and high (10.1%) food security

Table 5.5.1.1a 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	2,903	25.0	58.1	16.9
Males	699	34.7	53.9	11.4
Females	2,182	16.1	62.0	21.9
Sex and age				
Males, 18 to 34	105	32.8	51.2	16.0
Males, 35 to 49	179	38.4	50.5	11.1
Males, 50 to 69	263	31.2	58.8	10.1
Males, 70+	152	38.6	53.4	8.0
Females, 18 to 34	427	11.6	58.5	29.9
Females, 35 to 49	665	13.6	64.3	22.1
Females, 50 to 69	798	18.8	63.2	18.0
Females, 70+	292	26.1	63.2	10.7
Demographic indicators				
Household size				
1 person	481	29.2	54.7	16.1
2 or 3 people	1,552	25.0	60.0	15.1
4 or 5 people	774	22.7	57.2	20.0
More than 5 people	93	26.4	51.2	22.4
Born overseas	300	28.0	59.0	12.9
Born in Australia	2,602	24.6	58.0	17.4
Speaks other main language	88	23.9	51.8	24.3

Speaks English as main language	2,805	25.0	58.3	16.6
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	92	15.4	53.3	31.2
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,808	25.4	58.3	16.3
LGBTQIA+	203	18.0	54.3	27.8
Non-LGBTQIA+	2,687	25.6	58.5	15.9
Neurodivergent	294	11.4	60.6	28.1
Not neurodivergent	1,993	27.2	58.9	13.9
Maybe	208	18.7	58.8	22.5
Not sure what neurodivergent means	332	28.6	53.7	17.7
Less than Bachelor level education	1,425	23.6	58.3	18.0
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,468	28.9	58.0	13.1
Unemployed/Retired	943	28.7	55.3	16.0
Employed	1,956	22.9	59.7	17.4
Just getting along, poor or very poor	874	19.1	53.8	27.0
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,019	28.1	60.6	11.3
Requires help with daily activities	181	18.8	49.1	32.1
Does not require help	2,715	25.5	59.0	15.6
Food security (last 12 months)				
Low or very low food security	489	10.3	53.0	36.6
Marginal food security	365	21.7	59.6	18.7
High food security	2,045	30.4	59.4	10.1

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

Table 5.5.1.1b Adult's perceived safety in local area by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Always %	Most of the time %	Sometimes or rarely %
Total sample	2,903	25.0	58.1	16.9
Subregion				
Bendigo	190	25.4	51.5	23.1
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	131	18.9	66.3	14.8
East Bendigo	52	20.0	51.6	28.4
Epsom - Ascot	146	21.9	52.1	26.0
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	245	32.4	57.6	9.9
Golden Square	197	21.0	63.5	15.5
Huntly	82	18.0	63.1	18.9
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	226	25.0	57.0	18.1
Kennington	132	30.0	61.4	8.6
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	104	21.5	57.2	21.4

Maiden Gully	138	31.4	50.9	17.6
North Bendigo - California Gully	129	13.5	54.2	32.3
Strathdale	153	20.1	62.1	17.8
Strathfieldsaye	174	30.7	56.3	13.0
White Hills - Jackass Flat	148	18.8	62.9	18.3
Urban subtotal	2,247	23.8	57.9	18.3
Elmore - Rural North	49	49.3	42.1	8.6
Heathcote and District	313	21.1	68.3	10.6
Marong - Rural West	99	28.2	60.2	11.7
Rural East	189	37.3	48.8	13.9
Rural subtotal	650	29.8	58.7	11.5

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

Feelings of 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 (28.5% vs 11.8%), low to moderate life satisfaction (24.2% vs 11.5%), don't feel valued by society (24.5% vs sometimes [15.5%] and definitely [7.8%]) and poor mental wellbeing (24.8% vs 13.7%) reported sometimes or rarely feeling safe in their local area, compared with their counterparts experiencing more positive health and wellbeing.

Perceived safety was also associated with many health behaviours. Specifically, a lower proportion of those who failed to meet the following health behaviour recommendations reported feeling always safe compared to those who did meet the recommendations:

- Fruit intake (21.5% vs 29.2%)
- Vegetable intake (24.3% vs 35.5%)
- Aerobic physical activity (19.7% vs 26.9%)

Additionally, a greater proportion of those who failed to meet the following health behaviour recommendations reported feeling safe sometimes or rarely compare to those who met the recommendations:

- Muscle strengthening (19.4% vs 13.4%)
- Sleep duration (21.5% vs 14.1%)
- Sugar-sweetened beverages (23.4% vs 15.3%)

There were no associated between reported feelings of safety in the local area and 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	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes or rarely
	n	%	%	%

Total sample	2,903	25.0	58.1	16.9
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	625	19.2	52.3	28.5
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,983	27.5	60.6	11.8
Life satisfaction – Low to moderate (0 to 6)	846	18.3	57.5	24.2
Life satisfaction – High/very high (7 to 10)	1,752	29.2	59.3	11.5
Does not feel valued by society	604	18.8	56.7	24.5
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,299	20.9	63.7	15.5
Definitely feel valued by society	691	41.6	50.6	7.8
Poor mental wellbeing	817	19.0	56.3	24.8
Good mental wellbeing	2,086	27.5	58.8	13.7
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥ 25.0)	1,314	26.1	58.4	15.5
Normal range or underweight (BMI < 25.0)	704	30.2	57.7	12.1
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,652	22.5	59.3	18.2
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,229	29.2	56.1	14.7
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,552	24.3	58.7	17.0
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	301	35.5	52.3	12.2
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	724	19.7	59.9	20.4
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,131	26.9	57.8	15.3
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,273	22.1	58.4	19.4
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,412	27.9	58.7	13.4
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,449	24.9	57.1	18.0
Meets screen time recommendations	1,344	26.0	59.2	14.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	855	22.4	56.1	21.5
Meets sleep recommendations	1,918	27.4	58.6	14.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	407	25.6	51.0	23.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,451	25.2	59.5	15.3
Does not meet water recommendations	1,803	26.5	57.4	16.1
Meets water recommendations	1,022	22.8	59.4	17.8
Risk behaviour indicators				
Current smoker	157	23.5	60.8	15.8
Ex-smoker	996	24.7	61.2	14.1
Never smoked	1,460	26.3	56.2	17.4
Current vaper	76	20.8	59.3	19.9

Ex-vaper	193	17.5	65.0	17.6
Never vaped	2,335	26.6	57.8	15.6
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,397	26.5	58.7	14.8
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,211	24.0	58.5	17.5
Gambled	838	24.7	58.4	16.8
Never gambled	1,771	25.9	58.6	15.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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, 82.9% 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 subregions (see table 5.5.2.1b), with parents from Marong, Rural West (37.6%) the most likely to disagree that their child was safe, whereas parents from Kennington (97.4%) were the most likely to agree that their child was safe in the local area. 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 (61.9%) compared to non-Indigenous (84.0%)
- Neurodivergent (74.7%) compared to not neurodivergent (84.7%) and unsure what neurodivergent means (91.3%)
- Requires help with daily activities (69.7%) compared to no help required (85.9%)

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

	Unweighted base ¹	Agree	Disagree
	n	%	%
Total sample	959	82.9	17.1
Males	485	84.5	15.5
Females	462	82.1	17.9
Sex and age			
Males, 3 to 11	286	83.9	16.1
Males, 12 to 17	199	85.4	14.6
Females, 3 to 11	285	84.2	15.8
Females, 12 to 17	177	78.5	21.5
Demographic indicators			
Born overseas	31	87.9	12.1
Born in Australia	928	82.7	17.3
Speaks other main language*	13	92.9	7.1

Speaks English as main language	944	82.7	17.3
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	48	61.9	38.1
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	910	84.0	16.0
LGBTQIA+	31	77.7	22.3
Non-LGBTQIA+ ²	928	83.1	16.9
Neurodivergent	189	74.7	25.3
Not neurodivergent	599	84.7	15.3
Maybe	103	82.1	17.9
Not sure what neurodivergent means	58	91.3	8.7
Requires help with daily activities	173	69.7	30.3
Does not require help	786	85.9	14.1

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 to 17 years living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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.

Table 5.5.2.1b Children's perceived safety in local area by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Agree	Disagree
	n	%	%
Total sample	959	82.9	17.1
Subregion			
Bendigo	45	73.5	26.5
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	41	83.2	16.8
East Bendigo	17	70.8	29.2
Epsom - Ascot	43	86.2	13.8
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	104	87.5	12.5
Golden Square	65	85.8	14.2
Huntly	31	81.0	19.0
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	74	63.6	36.4
Kennington	41	97.4	2.6
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	25	84.8	15.2
Maiden Gully	66	92.6	7.4
North Bendigo - California Gully	43	71.8	28.2
Strathdale	44	84.0	16.0
Strathfieldsaye	69	91.5	8.5
White Hills - Jackass Flat	47	76.3	23.7
Urban subtotal	755	82.7	17.3
Elmore - Rural North	14	93.4	6.6
Heathcote and District	88	84.0	16.0
Marong - Rural West	24	62.4	37.6
Rural East	76	87.9	12.1
Rural subtotal	202	83.6	16.4

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

² Small base sample size so results should be interpreted with caution.

Parent reported child safety was associated with perceived general health. A lower proportion of parents who reported their child to have fair or poor health (61.0%) agreed that their child was safe in the local area compared to those whose children have good, very good, or excellent health (84.4%). There were no significant associations between parent reported child safety and any of the health behaviour indicators.

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

	Unweighted base ¹	Agree	Disagree
	n	%	%
Total sample	959	82.9	17.1
Health and wellbeing indicators			
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	52	61.0	39.0
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	816	84.4	15.6
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	135	82.5	17.5
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	293	86.3	13.7
Health behaviour indicators			
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	295	79.2	20.8
Meets fruit intake recommendations	660	84.9	15.1
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	816	83.3	16.7
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	129	84.5	15.5
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	533	81.6	18.4
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	387	85.9	14.1
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	508	83.6	16.4
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	164	84.6	15.4
Does not meet screen time recommendations	571	83.2	16.8
Meets screen time recommendations	318	82.4	17.6
Does not meet sleep recommendations	274	83.1	16.9
Meets sleep recommendations	638	83.3	16.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	82	77.5	22.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	863	83.4	16.6
Does not meet water recommendations	487	83.4	16.6
Meets water recommendations	439	82.6	17.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 3 to 17 years living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 regarding 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. Data presented for self-reported health status and body mass index are based on responses of all residents aged 3 years and over, with weighting applied. Data presented for all other health and wellbeing indicators are based on responses of all residents aged 18 years and over 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
- 13.0% of those aged 15 years and over according to the 2022 NHS

Tables 6.1.1a and 6.1.1b show that the proportion of respondents who self-reported a lower level of health was 21.2%, and adults were slightly higher than the VPHS benchmark at 25.1%. Females were more likely to report their health as fair/poor (24.3%) than males (18.2%). Adults (25.1%) were more likely to report lower levels of health than children (6.1%). Residents from Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark (39.5%) were the most likely to report their health as fair or poor and residents from Elmore – Rural North (10.6%) were the least likely to report their health as fair or poor.

In relation to key demographic indicators, people from the following groups were more likely to report fair or poor general health:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (42.6%) compared to non-Indigenous (20.4%)
- Neurodivergent (34.7%) and unsure what neurodivergent means (28.1%) compared to not neurodivergent (17.4%) and maybe neurodivergent (16.0%)
- Less than Bachelor level education (26.8%) compared to Bachelor degree or above (19.1%)
- Unemployed/retired (31.0%) compared to employed (21.9%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (41.8%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (15.9%)
- Requires help with daily activities (40.3%) compared to does not require help (19.4%)
- Low or very low (45.1%) food security compared to marginal (30.6%) and high (17.7%) food security

Table 6.1.1a Self-reported health status by selected demographic characteristics

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

Total sample	3,535	21.2	35.7	43.1
Children	897	6.1	15.9	78.0
Adults	2,611	25.1	40.7	34.2
Males	1,089	18.2	36.3	45.5
Females	2,405	24.3	35.2	40.5
Sex and age				
Males, 3 to 11	262	4.6	14.1	81.3
Males, 12 to 17	185	11.9	15.1	73.0
Males, 18 to 34	90	24.1	44.0	31.8
Males, 35 to 49	163	18.1	48.3	33.6
Males, 50 to 69	250	21.7	39.2	39.1
Males, 70+	136	20.7	38.4	41.0
Females, 3 to 11	262	0.8	11.8	87.4
Females, 12 to 17	176	10.8	27.3	61.9
Females, 18 to 34	370	32.2	36.5	31.2
Females, 35 to 49	606	30.4	42.8	26.8
Females, 50 to 69	716	25.8	39.7	34.5
Females, 70+	262	25.2	37.3	37.5
Demographic indicators				
Household size²				
1 person	431	28.9	33.9	37.3
2 or 3 people	1,399	23.5	41.7	34.7
4 or 5 people	697	24.0	42.7	33.2
More than 5 people	81	40.5	38.3	21.2
Born overseas	298	22.9	42.8	34.3
Born in Australia	3,228	21.0	34.9	44.1
Speaks other main language	88	25.3	38.6	36.1
Speaks English as main language	3,428	21.1	35.5	43.4
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	128	42.6	36.7	20.7
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3,392	20.4	35.6	44.0
LGBTQIA+	209	30.3	46.3	23.3
Non-LGBTQIA+	3,304	20.4	34.8	44.8
Neurodivergent	427	34.7	31.6	33.7
Not neurodivergent	2,372	17.4	34.3	48.3
Maybe	286	16.0	44.4	39.7
Not sure what neurodivergent means	360	28.1	39.1	32.8
Less than Bachelor level education ²	1,263	26.8	41.7	31.5
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,340	19.1	37.9	43.0
Unemployed/Retired ²	841	31.0	36.4	32.6
Employed	1,765	21.9	43.0	35.1

Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	777	41.8	38.4	19.8
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,824	15.9	41.9	42.2
Requires help with daily activities	303	40.3	26.3	33.4
Does not require help	3,216	19.4	36.6	44.1
Food security (last 12 months)²				
Low or very low food security	430	45.1	40.4	14.5
Marginal food security	318	30.6	41.5	27.9
High food security	1,859	17.7	40.6	41.7

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 6.1.1b Self-reported health status by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Fair / Poor %	Good %	Very good / Excellent %
Total sample	3,535	21.2	35.7	43.1
Subregion				
Bendigo	214	22.4	39.8	37.8
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	149	12.6	41.8	45.6
East Bendigo	63	17.2	38.9	43.9
Epsom - Ascot	170	23.2	34.6	42.2
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	321	11.6	33.3	55.0
Golden Square	233	21.1	34.3	44.6
Huntly	103	17.4	37.2	45.4
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	279	27.5	34.1	38.4
Kennington	164	21.0	27.6	51.4
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	119	39.5	30.6	29.9
Maiden Gully	189	16.7	34.0	49.3
North Bendigo - California Gully	154	29.6	38.5	31.9
Strathdale	186	15.4	35.8	48.8
Strathfieldsaye	224	13.5	35.9	50.6
White Hills - Jackass Flat	175	19.9	31.6	48.5
Urban subtotal	2,743	20.4	35.0	44.7
Elmore - Rural North	65	10.6	43.0	46.4
Heathcote and District	363	27.0	38.2	34.8
Marong - Rural West	110	24.5	38.9	36.7
Rural East	246	24.1	35.5	40.3
Rural subtotal	784	24.1	38.0	38.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 (44.0% vs 14.8%), do not feel valued by society (42.5% vs sometimes [21.8%] and definitely [12.8%]), poor mental wellbeing (51.2% vs 12.7%) and were overweight or obese (27.6% vs 9.8%) 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 did meet them:

- Fruit intake (29.0% vs 11.6%)
- Vegetable intake (22.7% vs 6.1%)
- Aerobic physical activity (31.7% vs 16.7%)
- Muscle strengthening (30.4% vs 13.5%)
- Screen time (25.6% vs 15.5%)
- Sleep duration (27.1% vs 18.0%)
- Water consumption (24.9% vs 14.5%)

In addition, a greater proportion of respondents who report consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily (38.5%) self-reported their health to be fair or poor compared to those who do not consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (18.3%). A greater proportion of current smokers self-reported their health as fair or poor (38.7%) compared to those who have never smoked (21.9%), and a lower proportion of those who had gambled in the past 12 months self-reported very good/excellent health (29.9%) compared to those who had not gambled (36.8%).

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	3,535	21.2	35.7	43.1
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	845	44.0	39.7	16.3
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,750	14.8	41.1	44.0
Does not feel valued by society ²	601	42.5	37.1	20.4
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,297	21.8	45.7	32.6
Definitely feel valued by society	692	12.8	34.1	53.1
Poor mental wellbeing ²	817	51.2	37.3	11.6
Good mental wellbeing	1,794	12.7	42.3	45.0
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,451	27.6	41.0	31.4
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	1,009	9.8	30.9	59.3
Health behaviour indicators				

Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,773	29.0	38.6	32.4
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,717	11.6	32.1	56.4
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	3,058	22.7	36.9	40.4
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	400	6.1	25.6	68.3
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,144	31.7	31.2	37.1
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,290	16.7	38.0	45.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,631	30.4	34.9	34.8
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,427	13.5	38.5	48.1
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,867	25.6	37.3	37.1
Meets screen time recommendations	1,527	15.5	34.8	49.7
Does not meet sleep recommendations	1,046	27.1	39.2	33.7
Meets sleep recommendations	2,345	18.0	34.4	47.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	445	38.5	32.9	28.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	3,073	18.3	36.1	45.6
Does not meet water recommendations	2,099	24.9	36.1	38.9
Meets water recommendations	1,352	14.5	35.2	50.4
Risk behaviour indicators²				
Current smoker	157	38.7	45.0	16.3
Ex-smoker	994	26.7	39.8	33.5
Never smoked	1,453	21.9	40.7	37.4
Current vaper	76	40.4	39.1	20.6
Ex-vaper	192	23.1	46.0	30.9
Never vaped	2,326	24.6	40.1	35.3
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,394	23.9	41.1	35.0
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,205	26.8	40.0	33.2
Gambled	838	26.4	43.8	29.9
Never gambled	1,761	24.4	38.8	36.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 analysis, responses were 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

Overall, 14.2% of respondents aged 18 years and over recorded low life satisfaction. No differences in life satisfaction were seen between males and females, or by sex and age. However, a lower proportion of males 35 to 49 years reported very high life satisfaction (9.4%) compared to their counterparts. Among females, a lower proportion of those aged 18 through to 49 years (15.5% and 12.3%, respectively) reported very high life satisfaction compared to those aged 50 years and above (22.6-30.1%). Residents from North Bendigo – California Gully (22.7%) were more likely to report low levels of life satisfaction compared to residents from Strathdale (6.6%).

Residents from the following groups were more likely to report low levels of life satisfaction:

- Single person household (18.8%) compared to 2-3 person households (11.5%)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (32.6%) compared to non-Indigenous (13.4%)
- Neurodivergent (24.1%) compared to not neurodivergent (11.8%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (15.9%) compared to a Bachelor degree or higher (8.6%)
- Just getting along, poor, or very poor (27.2%), compared to those who are reasonably comfortable, very comfortable, or prosperous (7.2%)
- Low or very low food security (30.9%) compared to marginal (13.4%) or high (9.2%) food security

Table 6.2.1a 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	2,600	14.2	20.9	45.0	19.9
Males	640	13.3	18.9	46.6	21.2
Females	1,943	15.0	22.7	43.5	18.8
Sex and age					
Males, 18 to 34	91	10.1	18.7	43.9	27.4
Males, 35 to 49	163	18.4	18.5	53.7	9.4
Males, 50 to 69	250	14.4	19.6	44.4	21.6
Males, 70+	136	9.1	18.7	45.3	27.0
Females, 18 to 34	366	17.4	26.6	40.5	15.5
Females, 35 to 49	602	17.0	24.8	45.9	12.3
Females, 50 to 69	716	12.6	19.9	44.8	22.6
Females, 70+	259	11.2	15.9	42.8	30.1
Demographic indicators					
Household size					
1 person	431	18.8	23.8	38.4	18.9

2 or 3 people	1,390	11.5	19.7	46.5	22.3
4 or 5 people	696	16.2	21.5	46.6	15.7
More than 5 people	80	20.6	22.0	37.3	20.1
Born overseas	262	9.5	19.2	54.0	17.3
Born in Australia	2,336	14.8	21.0	43.9	20.3
Speaks other main language	74	13.1	17.5	54.5	14.8
Speaks English as main language	2,517	14.2	20.9	44.7	20.2
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	85	32.6	28.3	33.0	6.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,513	13.4	20.6	45.5	20.5
LGBTQIA+	175	23.7	27.2	39.8	9.4
Non-LGBTQIA+	2,414	13.3	20.0	45.6	21.1
Neurodivergent	250	24.1	28.3	35.7	11.9
Not neurodivergent	1,800	11.8	18.8	47.5	21.9
Maybe	185	20.2	22.8	43.6	13.4
Not sure what neurodivergent means	297	14.7	22.0	43.1	20.2
Less than Bachelor level education	1,260	15.9	21.1	43.5	19.4
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,332	8.6	19.5	50.1	21.8
Unemployed/Retired	837	15.6	20.0	39.4	25.0
Employed	1,759	13.5	21.3	47.9	17.3
Just getting along, poor or very poor	775	27.2	28.5	35.5	8.8
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,818	7.2	16.6	50.2	26.1
Requires help with daily activities	145	23.7	36.8	27.6	11.8
Does not require help	2,449	13.5	19.6	46.3	20.6
Food security (last 12 months)					
Low or very low food security	427	30.9	30.5	30.0	8.6
Marginal food security	315	13.4	27.7	42.3	16.6
High food security	1,855	9.2	16.5	50.2	24.2

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

Table 6.2.1b Life satisfaction by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Low (0-4) %	Medium (5-6) %	High (7-8) %	Very high (9-10) %
Total sample	2,600	14.2	20.9	45.0	19.9
Subregion					
Bendigo	166	11.3	22.1	45.3	21.3
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	109	12.3	18.4	46.5	22.8
East Bendigo	46	14.7	15.6	56.1	13.6
Epsom - Ascot	131	18.0	17.7	38.1	26.2

Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	225	13.7	13.9	54.2	18.1
Golden Square	169	13.2	23.2	48.0	15.6
Huntly	74	10.8	34.0	37.9	17.2
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	205	16.7	19.8	47.9	15.5
Kennington	124	18.0	16.2	44.8	21.1
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	95	17.4	26.6	43.3	12.6
Maiden Gully	129	8.9	20.5	39.3	31.3
North Bendigo - California Gully	114	22.7	33.5	30.4	13.5
Strathdale	138	6.6	20.5	47.0	25.9
Strathfieldsaye	161	12.0	13.8	48.6	25.5
White Hills - Jackass Flat	132	16.5	21.3	48.9	13.3
Urban subtotal	2,018	14.2	20.6	45.4	19.8
Elmore - Rural North	43	19.3	11.6	39.1	29.9
Heathcote and District	277	14.3	21.3	45.7	18.7
Marong - Rural West	86	9.3	34.1	44.3	12.3
Rural East	171	14.8	21.7	39.2	24.3
Rural subtotal	577	14.3	22.2	43.0	20.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 (30.5% vs 8.7%), do not feel valued by society (39.1% vs sometimes [7.1%] and definitely [0.9%]) and poor mental wellbeing (38.5% vs 2.6%) reported low life satisfaction compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

Life satisfaction was also associated with all health behaviour indicators, except for screen time and water intake. Respondents who did not meet the following health behaviour recommendations were more likely to report low life satisfaction compared to their counterparts who met them:

- Fruit intake (17.5% vs 9.0%)
- Vegetable intake (14.9% vs 6.7%)
- Aerobic physical activity (21.3% vs 11.6%)
- Muscle strengthening activity (17.9% vs 10.0%)
- Sleep duration (23.0% vs 9.7%)

In addition, a greater proportion of respondents who reported consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily (21.8%) reported low life satisfaction compared to those who did not consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (12.7%).

Table 6.2.2 Life satisfaction by selected health and behaviour characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Low (0-4)	Medium (5-6)	High (7-8)	Very high (9-10)
	n	%	%	%	%

Total sample	2,600	14.2	20.9	45.0	19.9
Health and wellbeing indicators					
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	621	30.5	31.1	30.7	7.7
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,974	8.7	17.5	49.9	23.8
Does not feel valued by society	598	39.1	30.3	23.1	7.5
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,297	7.1	22.9	53.7	16.3
Definitely feel valued by society	692	0.9	6.4	51.4	41.2
Poor mental wellbeing	813	38.5	34.8	25.4	1.4
Good mental wellbeing	1,787	2.6	14.3	54.3	28.8
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,310	14.0	21.0	47.1	18.0
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	702	11.6	16.8	47.8	23.8
Health behaviour indicators					
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,487	17.5	22.4	42.8	17.3
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,100	9.0	18.3	48.7	24.0
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,287	14.9	21.2	44.8	19.1
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	279	6.7	14.1	48.5	30.7
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	650	21.3	27.5	37.3	13.9
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,914	11.6	18.8	47.7	21.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,152	17.9	23.9	40.7	17.5
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,261	10.0	18.3	50.0	21.7
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,316	15.2	22.7	43.7	18.3
Meets screen time recommendations	1,225	12.5	18.1	47.6	21.7
Does not meet sleep recommendations	779	23.0	23.5	40.1	13.5
Meets sleep recommendations	1,743	9.7	19.1	48.1	23.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	360	21.8	21.6	41.0	15.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,236	12.7	20.7	45.8	20.8
Does not meet water recommendations	1,639	14.8	22.6	44.9	17.6
Meets water recommendations	928	12.8	16.7	45.9	24.6
Risk behaviour indicators					
Current smoker	158	20.4	20.5	39.9	19.2
Ex-smoker	988	12.2	22.0	49.0	16.7
Never smoked	1,447	14.7	20.0	42.9	22.4
Current vaper	75	25.2	21.0	40.9	12.9
Ex-vaper	192	14.3	20.4	48.3	17.0
Never vaped	2,317	13.6	21.0	44.9	20.5

Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,391	14.0	20.5	45.6	19.9
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,198	14.4	21.5	44.5	19.6
Gambled	837	16.7	19.3	45.1	19.0
Never gambled	1,752	12.6	21.8	45.1	20.4

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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, 26.8% of residents aged 18 years and over indicated that they do not feel valued by society. There were no differences according to sex. When looking by sex and age, there were also no differences in the proportion of respondents who do not feel valued by society, however a larger proportion of females aged 70 years and above reported that they definitely feel valued by society compared to all other age groups.

Across Greater Bendigo, not feeling valued by society was more common for residents of Kangaroo Flat – Big Hill (40.2%) and North Bendigo – California Gully (38.6%) compared to residents of Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully (19.7%), Golden Square (18.1%), Strathdale (16.4%), Strathfieldsaye (22.6%) and White Hills – Jackass Flat (21.6%).

Similar to life satisfaction, the following groups were more likely to indicate they do not feel valued by society:

- Neurodivergent (45.8%) compared to not (22.8%) or maybe (26.1%) neurodivergent and unsure what neurodivergent means (30.9%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (30.1%) compared to a Bachelor degree or higher (16.9%)
- Unemployed/retired (31.8%) compared to employed (24.3%)
- Just getting along, poor, or very poor (45.3%) compared to those who are reasonably comfortable, very comfortable, or prosperous (16.8%)
- Require help with daily activities (43.7%) compared to those who do not (25.6%)
- Low or very low food security (48.6%) compared to marginal (30.2%) or high (19.4%) food security

Table 6.3.1a Perceived value to society by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not feel valued %	Sometimes feel valued %	Definitely feel valued %
Total sample	2,596	26.8	49.0	24.2
Males	637	27.4	46.0	26.7

Females	1,942	26.2	51.9	21.9
Sex and age				
Males, 18 to 34	91	28.1	49.6	22.3
Males, 35 to 49	163	28.8	44.9	26.3
Males, 50 to 69	249	25.6	46.0	28.3
Males, 70+	134	27.8	42.9	29.3
Females, 18 to 34	369	29.1	51.7	19.1
Females, 35 to 49	600	27.6	53.3	19.1
Females, 50 to 69	716	24.5	53.0	22.5
Females, 70+	257	20.0	46.4	33.7
Demographic indicators				
Household size				
1 person	429	33.9	41.9	24.1
2 or 3 people	1,388	25.4	50.3	24.4
4 or 5 people	695	24.6	51.2	24.2
More than 5 people	81	35.0	42.8	22.2
Born overseas	262	25.3	41.8	32.9
Born in Australia	2,332	27.1	49.8	23.2
Speaks other main language	74	19.7	33.4	46.8
Speaks English as main language	2,513	27.1	49.5	23.4
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	86	42.8	46.1	11.1
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,508	26.2	49.1	24.8
LGBTQIA+	175	36.6	43.9	19.5
Non-LGBTQIA+	2,409	26.0	49.3	24.7
Neurodivergent	250	45.8	40.3	13.9
Not neurodivergent	1,796	22.8	50.5	26.8
Maybe	184	26.1	55.8	18.1
Not sure what neurodivergent means	296	30.9	45.3	23.9
Less than Bachelor level education	1,257	30.1	48.9	21.0
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,331	16.9	49.2	34.0
Unemployed/Retired	834	31.8	44.0	24.2
Employed	1,758	24.3	51.5	24.2
Just getting along, poor or very poor	772	45.3	41.6	13.1
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,817	16.8	53.0	30.3
Requires help with daily activities	144	43.7	37.0	19.3
Does not require help	2,446	25.6	49.8	24.6
Food security (last 12 months)				
Low or very low food security	428	48.6	42.0	9.3
Marginal food security	318	30.2	54.0	15.8
High food security	1,847	19.4	50.1	30.5

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

Table 6.3.1b Perceived value to society by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Does not feel valued %	Sometimes feel valued %	Definitely feel valued %
Total sample	2,596	26.8	49.0	24.2
Subregion				
Bendigo	167	33.3	45.7	21.0
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	109	26.1	44.3	29.5
East Bendigo	46	21.2	38.2	40.7
Epsom - Ascot	132	28.8	49.2	22.0
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	224	19.7	50.4	29.9
Golden Square	168	18.1	58.0	23.9
Huntly	72	27.0	48.3	24.7
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	205	40.2	38.2	21.6
Kennington	122	16.4	52.8	30.8
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	95	28.8	41.6	29.6
Maiden Gully	129	28.0	48.7	23.3
North Bendigo - California Gully	113	38.6	50.6	10.8
Strathdale	137	16.4	50.2	33.4
Strathfieldsaye	161	22.6	47.5	29.9
White Hills - Jackass Flat	132	21.6	54.6	23.8
Urban subtotal	2,012	26.3	48.2	25.5
Elmore - Rural North	43	26.5	54.1	19.4
Heathcote and District	278	29.8	53.2	17.0
Marong - Rural West	86	32.5	48.5	19.0
Rural East	172	25.5	50.0	24.5
Rural subtotal	579	28.6	51.7	19.6

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 (45.4% vs 20.6%), reported low life satisfaction (52.9% vs 12.6%), and poor mental wellbeing (51.9% vs 14.9%) do not feel valued by society compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators. Those who reported being overweight or obese were less likely to definitely feel valued by society (23.0%) compared to those in a normal weight range or are underweight (30.3%).

Perceived value by society was also associated with all health behaviour indicators, except for muscle strengthening and 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 met them:

- Fruit intake (32.4% vs 17.9%)
- Vegetable intake (27.8% vs 15.4%)
- Aerobic physical activity (33.8% vs 24.1%)
- Screen time (31.7% vs 20.5%)
- Sleep duration (37.1% vs 21.6%)

In addition, a greater proportion of respondents who reported consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily (39.2%) do not feel valued by society compared to those who did not consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (24.4%). A lower proportion of current smokers reported that they definitely feel valued by society (15.0%) compared to those who have never smoked (25.3%). Similarly, a lower proportion of current vapers (10.0%) reported that they definitely feel valued by society compared to those who have never vaped (25.6%).

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	2,596	26.8	49.0	24.2
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	621	45.4	42.3	12.3
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,969	20.6	51.1	28.3
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	842	52.9	42.0	5.1
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,745	12.6	52.8	34.6
Poor mental wellbeing	815	51.9	41.9	6.2
Good mental wellbeing	1,781	14.9	52.4	32.8
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,309	27.4	49.6	23.0
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	700	21.6	48.2	30.3
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,485	32.4	47.4	20.2
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,098	17.9	51.8	30.3
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,287	27.8	49.0	23.2
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	275	15.4	47.4	37.2
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	647	33.8	47.5	18.7
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,913	24.1	49.8	26.1
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,152	29.0	50.4	20.7
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,258	23.2	49.1	27.8
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,313	31.7	47.8	20.5
Meets screen time recommendations	1,224	20.5	50.8	28.7

Does not meet sleep recommendations	780	37.1	44.3	18.6
Meets sleep recommendations	1,738	21.6	51.6	26.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	360	39.2	47.8	13.0
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,232	24.4	49.2	26.3
Does not meet water recommendations	1,635	28.5	48.1	23.4
Meets water recommendations	928	22.7	51.2	26.1
Risk behaviour indicators				
Current smoker	158	31.9	53.1	15.0
Ex-smoker	985	27.7	47.7	24.6
Never smoked	1,445	25.4	49.3	25.3
Current vaper	76	27.9	62.1	10.0
Ex-vaper	193	27.3	53.3	19.5
Never vaped	2,310	26.7	47.7	25.6
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,387	24.9	51.2	23.9
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,197	29.3	46.1	24.6
Gambled	835	27.0	51.8	21.1
Never gambled	1,749	26.6	47.4	26.0

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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. Adult 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, 28.3% of Greater Bendigo 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 (55.1) than males (60.6). For males, a greater proportion of those aged 35 to 49 (29.9%) and 50 to 69 (28.1%) had poor mental wellbeing compared to those aged 70 and above (14.4%). For females, mental wellbeing differed across all age groups, with a larger proportion of those aged 18 to 34 (35.4%) and 35 to 49 (39.2%) indicating that they had poor mental wellbeing compared to those aged 50 to 69 (27.7%) and aged 70 years and above (23.1%). Across subregions, residents from Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully (64.1), Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully (61.4) and Strathdale (62.2) had higher average scores compared

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>

to residents from Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill (53.7), Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark (51.8), North Bendigo - California Gully (53.8), Heathcote and District (54.9) and Rural East (55.2).

WHO-5 results from Greater Bendigo respondents who belong to the following groups were more likely to indicate they had poor mental wellbeing:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders (46.8%) compared to non-indigenous residents (27.6%)
- Neurodivergent (41.9%) or maybe neurodivergent (39.5%) compared to those who are not neurodivergent (23.9%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (29.7%) compared to a Bachelor degree or higher (24.3%)
- Just getting along, poor, or very poor (46.2%) compared to those who are reasonably comfortable, very comfortable, or prosperous (18.6%)
- Require help with daily activities (40.5%) compared to those who do not (27.4%)
- Low or very low food security (43.9%) compared to marginal (32.0%) and high (22.8%) food security

Table 6.4.1a Mental wellbeing by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Poor mental wellbeing (≤50) %	Good mental wellbeing (51-100) %	Average score #
Total sample	2,929	28.3	71.7	57.8
Males	702	24.5	75.5	60.6
Females	2,192	32.5	67.5	55.1
Sex and age				
Males, 18 to 34	106	23.0	77.0	61.2
Males, 35 to 49	180	29.9	70.1	56.6
Males, 50 to 69	264	28.1	71.9	60.4
Males, 70+	152	14.4	85.6	65.2
Females, 18 to 34	428	35.4	64.6	52.3
Females, 35 to 49	667	39.2	60.8	51.7
Females, 50 to 69	803	27.7	72.3	58.4
Females, 70+	294	23.1	76.9	60.9
Demographic indicators				
Household size				
1 person	487	30.1	69.9	57.3
2 or 3 people	1,562	25.8	74.2	59.6
4 or 5 people	781	31.9	68.1	55.3
More than 5 people	93	32.6	67.4	52.5
Born overseas	304	24.0	76.0	58.5
Born in Australia	2,620	29.0	71.0	57.8

Speaks other main language	88	22.1	77.9	58.0
Speaks English as main language	2,825	28.7	71.3	57.8
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	95	46.8	53.2	45.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,824	27.6	72.4	58.4
LGBTQIA+	219	37.1	62.9	51.0
Non-LGBTQIA+	2,695	27.5	72.5	58.5
Neurodivergent	311	41.9	58.1	48.3
Not neurodivergent	1,998	23.9	76.1	60.4
Maybe	208	39.5	60.5	50.8
Not sure what neurodivergent means	332	29.9	70.1	57.4
Less than Bachelor level education	1,440	29.7	70.3	56.8
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,474	24.3	75.7	61.1
Unemployed/Retired	952	26.6	73.4	58.1
Employed	1,969	29.4	70.6	57.7
Just getting along, poor or very poor	885	46.2	53.8	47.1
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	2,027	18.6	81.4	63.7
Requires help with daily activities	187	40.5	59.5	45.7
Does not require help	2,726	27.4	72.6	58.7
Food security (last 12 months)				
Low or very low food security	489	43.9	56.1	45.7
Marginal food security	371	32.0	68.0	55.0
High food security	2,057	22.8	77.2	62.1

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

Table 6.4.1b Mental wellbeing by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Poor mental wellbeing (≤50) %	Good mental wellbeing (51-100) %	Average score #
Total sample	2,929	28.3	71.7	57.8
Subregion				
Bendigo	192	27.4	72.6	58.8
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	132	21.2	78.8	64.1
East Bendigo	52	25.4	74.6	60.0
Epsom - Ascot	149	24.8	75.2	58.7
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	246	24.8	75.2	61.4
Golden Square	198	27.4	72.6	58.8
Huntly	82	24.4	75.6	58.4
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	227	36.6	63.4	53.7
Kennington	135	27.3	72.7	58.2

Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	106	30.2	69.8	51.8
Maiden Gully	138	28.0	72.0	59.7
North Bendigo - California Gully	130	31.3	68.7	53.8
Strathdale	155	20.8	79.2	62.2
Strathfieldsaye	174	24.4	75.6	59.9
White Hills - Jackass Flat	149	29.8	70.2	57.8
Urban subtotal	2,929	27.4	72.6	58.5
Elmore - Rural North	50	38.2	61.8	59.6
Heathcote and District	316	29.6	70.4	54.9
Marong - Rural West	99	30.1	69.9	56.6
Rural East	190	33.4	66.6	55.2
Rural subtotal	655	31.7	68.3	55.7

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 (65.8% vs 21.1%), low life satisfaction (67.3% vs 13.3%), did not feel valued by society (62.5% vs sometimes [27.6%] and definitely [8.3%]), and were overweight or obese (34.1% vs 24.0%) reported poor mental wellbeing compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

Mental wellbeing was also associated with adherence to all health behaviour recommendations. Respondents who failed to meet the following health behaviour recommendations were more likely to report poor mental wellbeing compared to their counterparts who met them:

- Fruit intake (33.8% vs 20.4%)
- Vegetable intake (30.1% vs 12.6%)
- Aerobic physical activity (46.4% vs 22.7%)
- Muscle strengthening exercise (36.9% vs 19.9%)
- Screen time (33.3% vs 23.7%)
- Sleep duration (42.7% vs 22.4%)

In addition, a greater proportion of respondents who reported consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily (43.5%) also reported poor mental wellbeing compared to those who did not consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (26.2%). Those who did not meet the water consumption recommendations (56.6) also had a lower average WHO-5 score compared to those who did (60.2). A greater proportion of current smokers reported poor mental wellbeing (44.7%) compared to ex-smokers (29.1%). No other risk behaviours were associated with mental wellbeing.

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	2,929	28.3	71.7	57.8

Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	625	65.8	34.2	40.2
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,986	21.1	78.9	63.6
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	847	67.3	32.7	39.7
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,753	13.3	86.7	67.5
Does not feel valued by society	604	62.5	37.5	42.3
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,300	27.6	72.4	59.2
Definitely feel valued by society	692	8.3	91.7	72.1
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥ 25.0)	622	34.1	65.9	57.4
Normal range or underweight (BMI < 25.0)	1,396	24.0	76.0	62.1
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,654	33.8	66.2	54.5
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,231	20.4	79.6	63.1
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,555	30.1	69.9	57.0
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	302	12.6	87.4	67.6
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	725	46.4	53.6	47.2
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	2,133	22.7	77.3	61.4
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,273	36.9	63.1	53.1
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,415	19.9	80.1	62.8
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,450	33.3	66.7	55.2
Meets screen time recommendations	1,345	23.7	76.3	61.3
Does not meet sleep recommendations	856	42.7	57.3	50.1
Meets sleep recommendations	1,919	22.4	77.6	61.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	407	43.5	56.5	50.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,455	26.2	73.8	59.3
Does not meet water recommendations	1,807	30.7	69.3	56.6
Meets water recommendations	1,022	26.0	74.0	60.2
Risk behaviour indicators				
Current smoker	158	44.7	55.3	51.2
Ex-smoker	996	29.1	70.9	58.0
Never smoked	1,462	32.5	67.5	58.8
Current vaper	76	45.3	54.7	51.2
Ex-vaper	193	30.9	69.1	57.3
Never vaped	2,337	31.6	68.4	58.3
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,398	31.0	69.0	58.3

Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,212	33.5	66.5	57.2
Gambled	840	32.9	67.1	57.1
Never gambled	1,771	31.7	68.3	58.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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, 2.8% were classified as underweight, 35.0% healthy weight, 35.6% overweight and 26.6% obese. The average BMI across all Greater Bendigo respondents was 27.0. To identify opportunities for supporting improved health amongst Greater Bendigo residents, we have focused our reporting 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 26.6% of respondents within Greater Bendigo have a BMI that puts them in the obese range. This is similar to the 2019 ALC, whereby 26.5% of respondents were classified as obese according to their BMI.

Adults were more likely to be overweight (38.1%) or obese (28.9%) compared to children (19.5% and 11.7%, respectively). Males (43.5%) were more likely to be overweight than females (27.0%), but females (31.7%) were more likely to be obese than males (21.9%). When looking by sex and age, adult males aged 35 and above, and females aged 18 and above were more likely to be obese than their younger counterparts. Long Gully – West Bendigo – Ironbark had the greatest proportion of respondents classified as obese (44.9%) and Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully had the lowest proportion (14.9%). Rural respondents were slightly more likely to be obese (30.7%) than urban respondents (25.3%).

Obesity rates were associated with four demographic indicators, with respondents who have the following characteristics likely to benefit from targeted intervention:

- Neurodivergent (33.4%) or unsure what neurodivergent means (34.0%) compared to not neurodivergent (23.3%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (42.1%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (21.9%)
- Require help with daily activities (46.6%) compared to no help required (24.9%)
- Low or very low food security (43.4%) compared to high food security (24.5%)

Table 6.5.1a Body Mass Index by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Under weight	Healthy weight	Overweight	Obese	Average BMI
--	------------------------------	--------------	----------------	------------	-------	-------------

	n	%	%	%	%	#
Total sample	2,461	2.8	35.0	35.6	26.6	27.0
Children	443	13.0	55.8	19.5	11.7	19.8
Adults	2,018	1.3	31.8	38.1	28.9	28.2
Males	779	1.5	33.2	43.5	21.9	26.6
Females	1,672	4.4	36.9	27.0	31.7	27.4
Sex and age						
Males, 3 to 11	109	12.8	56.9	18.3	11.9	17.8
Males, 12 to 17	123	8.1	60.2	25.2	6.5	21.9
Males, 18 to 34	75	0.0	38.0	46.8	15.2	26.8
Males, 35 to 49	145	0.0	25.9	45.4	28.6	28.1
Males, 50 to 69	209	0.0	21.8	49.5	28.7	28.6
Males, 70+	118	0.0	35.8	44.7	19.5	27.0
Females, 3 to 11	106	19.8	40.6	17.0	22.6	18.4
Females, 12 to 17	105	11.4	65.7	17.1	5.7	21.6
Females, 18 to 34	279	5.8	39.8	20.7	33.7	28.2
Females, 35 to 49	471	1.2	30.5	29.2	39.0	29.3
Females, 50 to 69	530	1.2	34.2	31.8	32.8	28.6
Females, 70+	181	1.2	30.5	38.8	29.5	27.9
Demographic indicators						
Household size²						
1 person	342	1.2	38.2	31.1	29.5	27.9
2 or 3 people	1,064	0.8	31.6	41.4	26.2	27.9
4 or 5 people	547	2.2	28.7	35.9	33.1	28.8
More than 5 people	63	1.4	30.4	33.9	34.4	29.0
Born overseas	220	1.1	40.5	34.2	24.2	26.6
Born in Australia	2,240	3.0	34.3	35.8	26.9	27.1
Speaks other main language	68	0.0	54.1	20.3	25.6	27.1
Speaks English as main language	2,388	3.0	34.2	36.2	26.6	25.7
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	81	5.6	23.9	26.6	43.8	30.5
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,378	2.7	35.4	36.0	25.9	26.9
LGBTQIA+	147	3.6	28.0	34.5	33.9	28.9
Non-LGBTQIA+	2,307	2.8	35.6	35.7	25.9	26.9
Neurodivergent	286	3.1	35.8	27.7	33.4	27.6
Not neurodivergent	1,672	3.1	35.7	38.0	23.3	26.6
Maybe	189	5.8	28.6	33.5	32.1	27.0
Not sure what neurodivergent means	254	1.0	33.9	31.1	34.0	28.6
Less than Bachelor level education ²	943	1.5	30.5	37.7	30.3	28.4
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,070	0.4	35.4	39.6	24.6	27.4
Unemployed/Retired ²	649	0.7	32.9	35.2	31.2	28.4

Employed	1,367	1.5	31.1	39.6	27.8	28.0
Just getting along, poor or very poor ²	590	1.3	25.3	31.3	42.1	29.9
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,425	1.2	35.0	41.8	21.9	27.2
Requires help with daily activities	183	3.7	27.6	22.2	46.6	28.7
Does not require help	2,274	2.8	35.5	36.8	24.9	26.9
Food security (last 12 months)²						
Low or very low food security	314	1.5	26.1	29.0	43.4	30.3
Marginal food security	235	2.4	28.0	38.8	30.7	28.6
High food security	1,467	1.0	34.0	40.6	24.5	27.5

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 6.5.1b Body Mass Index by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Under weight %	Healthy weight %	Overweight %	Obese %	Average BMI #
Total sample	2,461	2.8	35.0	35.6	26.6	27.0
Subregion						
Bendigo	150	5.0	41.7	33.5	19.8	25.6
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	101	3.1	28.3	34.1	34.4	27.7
East Bendigo	47	1.6	34.9	43.1	20.4	27.4
Epsom - Ascot	110	1.6	24.8	43.8	29.9	28.5
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	233	6.1	37.7	41.4	14.9	25.4
Golden Square	174	1.8	43.2	23.5	31.4	26.7
Huntly	74	5.9	21.1	36.8	36.2	27.5
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	194	2.6	32.2	35.3	29.9	28.0
Kennington	119	5.4	47.2	25.6	21.8	26.1
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	83	0.0	28.3	26.9	44.9	29.9
Maiden Gully	110	3.6	32.0	42.7	21.6	26.8
North Bendigo - California Gully	109	0.7	33.8	34.1	31.4	27.5
Strathdale	135	4.6	44.9	33.3	17.2	26.1
Strathfieldsaye	159	0.0	41.6	38.5	19.8	26.1
White Hills - Jackass Flat	118	2.4	33.0	47.1	17.5	26.7
Urban subtotal	1,916	3.1	35.9	35.8	25.3	26.9
Elmore - Rural North	40	1.4	27.1	55.1	16.4	26.8
Heathcote and District	233	2.7	32.8	33.2	31.3	27.6
Marong - Rural West	78	1.8	35.9	24.8	37.5	27.7
Rural East	188	1.3	31.6	35.0	32.1	27.1
Rural subtotal	539	2.0	32.2	35.1	30.7	27.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 was associated with all health and wellbeing indicators (see Table 6.5.2). Specifically, a greater proportion of those with fair or poor health (56.1% vs 18.7%), low to moderate life satisfaction (38.5% vs 24.0%), do not feel valued by society (38.2% vs sometimes [28.5%] and definitely [20.5%]) and poor mental wellbeing (40.5% vs 23.7%) were classified as obese compared to their counterparts with more positive health and wellbeing indicators.

Obesity was also associated with adherence to most health behaviour recommendations, except for water consumption. A greater proportion of those who failed to meet the following recommendations were classified as obese compared to their counterparts who met them:

- Fruit intake (30.6% vs 20.8%)
- Vegetable intake (27.5% vs 16.3%)
- Aerobic physical activity (34.8% vs 23.4%)
- Muscle strengthening exercise (32.6% vs 21.4%)
- Screen time (29.6% vs 22.8%)
- Sleep duration (32.0% vs 23.7%)

Those who reported consuming sugar-sweetened beverages daily (42.9%) were also more likely to be obese compared to those who did not (23.6%). There was no risk behaviours associated with obesity.

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	2,461	2.8	35.0	35.6	26.6	27.0
Health and wellbeing indicators						
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	488	1.0	16.8	26.1	56.1	32.0
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,972	3.3	39.8	38.1	18.7	25.7
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6) ²	634	0.7	28.0	32.8	38.5	29.7
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,378	1.5	33.7	40.8	24.0	27.4
Does not feel valued by society ²	455	1.5	26.4	33.9	38.2	29.7
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,008	1.1	31.3	39.2	28.5	28.0
Definitely feel valued by society	546	1.3	38.1	40.1	20.5	26.9
Poor mental wellbeing ²	622	0.8	25.0	33.8	40.5	29.9
Good mental wellbeing	1,396	1.5	34.8	40.0	23.7	27.4
Health behaviour indicators						
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,292	2.0	31.4	36.0	30.6	28.1

Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,161	3.9	39.9	35.3	20.8	25.6
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,159	2.6	33.7	36.3	27.5	27.2
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	282	5.0	49.6	29.1	16.3	24.7
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	748	4.6	33.6	26.9	34.8	27.3
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,682	2.1	35.7	38.8	23.4	26.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,120	4.1	31.0	32.3	32.6	27.5
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,112	1.1	38.2	39.4	21.4	27.0
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,324	2.2	34.1	34.1	29.6	27.5
Meets screen time recommendations	1,074	3.3	36.0	37.9	22.8	26.6
Does not meet sleep recommendations	728	2.4	31.8	33.8	32.0	28.1
Meets sleep recommendations	1,666	3.1	36.7	36.6	23.7	26.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	315	2.0	23.4	31.7	42.9	30.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,144	3.0	37.1	36.3	23.6	26.5
Does not meet water recommendations	1,485	2.7	32.9	37.3	27.1	27.2
Meets water recommendations	949	2.9	39.0	32.3	25.8	26.7
Risk behaviour indicators²						
Current smoker	122	0.2	36.3	36.0	27.5	28.5
Ex-smoker	798	0.6	28.8	40.5	30.2	28.5
Never smoked	1,095	1.9	33.6	36.4	28.2	27.8
Current vaper	58	2.1	26.5	41.1	30.3	29.4
Ex-vaper	161	1.1	34.3	38.8	25.8	28.1
Never vaped	1,787	1.2	31.5	37.9	29.4	28.1
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,108	1.2	29.4	40.3	29.1	28.3
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	902	1.2	35.3	34.7	28.8	28.0
Gambled	674	0.7	25.3	41.6	32.4	28.8
Never gambled	1,337	1.5	36.0	35.7	26.8	27.8

¹ Base sizes include respondents living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 therefore represent 2025 ALC respondents aged 18 years and above living in the City of Greater Bendigo, and weighting has been applied.

7.1. Smoking

Adult respondents were asked to indicate their current smoking status using the following response options: '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 Greater Bendigo 2025 ALC sample was lower at 7.8% (see Table 7.1.1a). No differences in smoking rates were seen between males and females. There were also no differences among males by age group. Among females, those aged 35 to 49 (42.1%) and 50-69 (45.7%) were significantly more likely to be ex-smokers compared to those age 18 to 34 (27.0%) and 70 years and above (28.7%). Conversely, those aged 18 to 34 (63.6%) and 70 years and above (66.8%) were more likely to report never smoking compared to those aged 35 to 49 (48.8%) and 50 to 69 (46.0%) years. Across subregions, current smoking rates were lower amongst residents of Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully (2.2 and Strathdale (2.7%) than those from Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill (10.7%) and Heathcote and District (11.4%).

Current smoking rates were noticeably higher amongst members of the following groups:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (23.1%) compared to non-Indigenous (7.1%)
- LGBTQIA+ (16.2%) compared to not LGBTQIA+ (7.0%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (9.3%) compared to Bachelor degree or higher (3.1%)
- Just getting along, poor or very poor (12.8%) compared to reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous (5.0%)
- Low or very low food security (16.1%) compared to marginal (7.6%) or high (5.2%) food security

Table 7.1.1a Smoking by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹	Current smoker	Ex-smoker	Never smoked
	n	%	%	%
Total sample	2,616	7.8	39.8	52.4
Males	641	7.2	42.7	50.1
Females	1,956	8.4	37.1	54.6
Sex and age				

Males, 18 to 34	92	7.7	36.3	56.0
Males, 35 to 49	164	10.0	45.1	44.9
Males, 50 to 69	249	7.0	41.6	51.3
Males, 70+	136	3.6	49.4	47.0
Females, 18 to 34	369	9.4	27.0	63.6
Females, 35 to 49	605	9.1	42.1	48.8
Females, 50 to 69	720	8.3	45.7	46.0
Females, 70+	262	4.6	28.7	66.8
Demographic indicators				
Household size				
1 person	434	9.5	34.0	56.5
2 or 3 people	1,400	7.7	42.7	49.6
4 or 5 people	698	6.8	37.1	56.0
More than 5 people	81	8.4	42.0	49.6
Born overseas	266	11.0	39.0	50.0
Born in Australia	2,348	7.4	39.9	52.7
Speaks other main language	75	11.3	21.2	67.6
Speaks English as main language	2,531	7.6	40.5	51.9
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	85	23.1	41.9	35.0
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,527	7.1	39.8	53.1
LGBTQIA+	174	16.2	36.0	47.7
Non-LGBTQIA+	2,428	7.0	40.2	52.7
Neurodivergent	251	13.0	37.0	50.0
Not neurodivergent	1,810	6.4	41.6	52.0
Maybe	186	5.8	41.1	53.1
Not sure what neurodivergent means	296	10.3	36.7	53.0
Less than Bachelor level education	1,265	9.3	41.4	49.4
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,342	3.1	35.2	61.8
Unemployed/Retired	840	10.1	39.5	50.5
Employed	1,771	6.6	40.0	53.5
Just getting along, poor or very poor	777	12.8	40.2	47.0
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,829	5.0	39.6	55.4
Requires help with daily activities	147	13.2	37.6	49.1
Does not require help	2,461	7.3	40.0	52.7
Food security (last 12 months)				
Low or very low food security	429	16.1	37.0	46.9
Marginal food security	321	7.6	41.1	51.3
High food security	1,862	5.2	40.4	54.3

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

Table 7.1.1b Smoking by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Current smoker %	Ex-smoker %	Never smoked %
Total sample	2,616	7.8	39.8	52.4
Subregion				
Bendigo	166	7.4	38.3	54.3
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	109	2.2	45.0	52.7
East Bendigo	46	7.2	42.7	50.1
Epsom - Ascot	135	8.2	33.6	58.2
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	227	7.1	40.8	52.1
Golden Square	171	8.6	43.1	48.3
Huntly	74	4.3	31.2	64.5
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	206	10.7	34.5	54.8
Kennington	124	8.2	49.9	41.9
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	94	5.5	44.1	50.4
Maiden Gully	129	10.3	37.8	51.9
North Bendigo - California Gully	115	9.5	38.0	52.4
Strathdale	139	2.7	29.6	67.6
Strathfieldsaye	161	7.6	36.9	55.5
White Hills - Jackass Flat	134	4.2	45.0	50.8
Urban subtotal	2,030	7.2	39.2	53.6
Elmore - Rural North	43	15.0	26.5	58.4
Heathcote and District	277	11.4	48.6	40.0
Marong - Rural West	86	5.0	38.5	56.5
Rural East	174	6.1	39.1	54.8
Rural subtotal	580	9.4	42.2	48.5

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

Smoking was associated with some health and wellbeing indicators (see Table 7.1.2). Specifically, current smoking rates were higher among those who reported fair or poor health (11.9% vs 6.3%) and poor mental wellbeing (10.8% vs 6.3%) compared to their counterparts who reported more positive health and wellbeing.

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

- Fruit intake (10.6% vs 3.4%)
- Vegetable intake (8.4% vs 1.6%)
- Muscle strengthening exercise (10.5% vs 5.0%)
- Screen time (9.6% vs 5.4%)

In addition, those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (15.3%) were more likely to be current smokers compared to those who did not consume sugar-sweetened beverages daily (6.2%).

Smoking rates were higher among respondents who engage in other risk behaviours. Specifically, current or ex-vapers were more likely to be current or ex-smokers compared to those who had never vaped. Similarly, a higher proportion of those who engaged in risky alcohol consumption over the past 12 months were current or ex-smokers compared to those who had not engaged in risky alcohol consumption. Those who had gambled in the past 12 months were more likely to be ex-smokers compared to those who had not 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 n	Current smoker %	Ex-smoker %	Never smoked %
Total sample	2,616	7.8	39.8	52.4
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	624	11.9	42.5	45.5
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,980	6.3	39.3	54.4
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	845	9.1	39.1	51.8
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,748	7.1	40.4	52.5
Does not feel valued by society	601	9.3	41.2	49.5
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,298	8.5	38.8	52.7
Definitely feel valued by society	689	4.9	40.5	54.7
Poor mental wellbeing	817	10.8	36.2	53.0
Good mental wellbeing	1,799	6.3	41.6	52.1
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,313	7.0	44.1	48.8
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	702	8.2	37.2	54.5
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,495	10.6	40.3	49.1
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,107	3.4	39.6	57.0
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,302	8.4	40.5	51.1
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	277	1.6	35.7	62.7
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	650	10.7	34.7	54.5
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,929	6.7	41.6	51.7
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,158	10.5	36.8	52.7
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,267	5.0	43.0	52.1
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,323	9.6	39.5	50.9

Meets screen time recommendations	1,232	5.4	41.0	53.6
Does not meet sleep recommendations	783	8.9	40.4	50.7
Meets sleep recommendations	1,754	7.2	40.1	52.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	361	15.3	36.3	48.4
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,251	6.2	40.6	53.2
Does not meet water recommendations	1,649	8.6	39.1	52.3
Meets water recommendations	932	6.2	41.8	52.0
Risk behaviour indicators				
Current vaper	76	34.2	61.2	4.6
Ex-vaper	193	22.5	60.7	16.8
Never vaped	2,335	4.5	36.2	59.3
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,396	9.9	47.6	42.4
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,212	4.8	29.3	65.9
Gambled	840	9.3	48.3	42.4
Never gambled	1,769	6.9	34.9	58.2

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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: '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 2025 ALC Greater Bendigo sample was lower at 4.2% (see Table 7.2.1a). Vaping rates did not differ between males and females. When looking at vaping rates by a combination of sex and age, both males (9.9%) and females (10.6%) aged 18 to 34 years were more likely to currently vape compared to those aged 70 years and above (0.0%). However, females aged 35 to 49 years (5.2%) were also more likely to currently vape compared to those aged 70 years and above. Residents in Bendigo (7.7%) and Heathcote and District (2.4%) were more likely to currently vape compared to Strathdale (0.0%) and Marong, Rural West (0.0%).

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

- Born in Australia (4.6%) compared to born overseas (1.0%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (4.9%) compared to a Bachelor degree or higher (2.3%)
- Low or very low food security (8.6%) compared to or high food security (2.4%)

Table 7.2.1a Vaping by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Current vaper %	Ex-vaper %	Never vaped %
Total sample	2,606	4.2	10.7	85.0
Males	639	3.4	11.9	84.7
Females	1,949	5.1	9.6	85.3
Sex and age				
Males, 18 to 34	91	9.9	30.3	59.8
Males, 35 to 49	163	4.0	18.4	77.7
Males, 50 to 69	249	0.6	1.3	98.1
Males, 70+	136	0.0	0.8	99.2
Females, 18 to 34	369	10.6	22.3	67.1
Females, 35 to 49	604	5.2	8.0	86.8
Females, 50 to 69	715	1.7	2.6	95.7
Females, 70+	261	0.0	0.6	99.4
Demographic indicators				
Household size				
1 person	432	1.9	6.3	91.9
2 or 3 people	1,395	3.5	10.0	86.6
4 or 5 people	695	5.0	14.2	80.8
More than 5 people	81	19.1	14.8	66.1
Born overseas	265	1.0	10.3	88.7
Born in Australia	2,339	4.6	10.8	84.6
Speaks other main language	75	2.1	9.2	88.7
Speaks English as main language	2,522	4.3	10.7	84.9
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	85	18.7	22.0	59.3
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,519	3.6	10.2	86.1
LGBTQIA+	175	6.6	24.9	68.5
Non-LGBTQIA+	2,419	4.0	9.4	86.5
Neurodivergent	251	8.4	23.4	68.2
Not neurodivergent	1,803	3.4	9.8	86.9
Maybe	186	6.1	10.6	83.3
Not sure what neurodivergent means	295	3.9	8.6	87.5
Less than Bachelor level education	1,259	4.9	11.2	83.9
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,338	2.3	9.3	88.5
Unemployed/Retired	836	2.4	5.3	92.3
Employed	1,765	5.2	13.6	81.2
Just getting along, poor or very poor	778	5.9	10.6	83.5
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,819	3.3	10.9	85.8
Requires help with daily activities	147	3.5	5.0	91.5

Does not require help	2,453	4.3	11.2	84.5
Food security (last 12 months)				
Low or very low food security	430	8.6	15.9	75.4
Marginal food security	318	6.6	14.7	78.8
High food security	1,854	2.4	8.3	89.2

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

Table 7.2.1b Vaping by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Current vaper %	Ex-vaper %	Never vaped %
Total sample	2,606	4.2	10.7	85.0
Subregion				
Bendigo	166	7.7	11.5	80.8
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	108	6.1	9.5	84.4
East Bendigo	46	5.3	26.1	68.6
Epsom - Ascot	133	6.1	12.3	81.6
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	227	2.1	16.7	81.2
Golden Square	170	4.2	13.2	82.6
Huntly	74	5.5	5.5	87.3
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	204	3.3	8.1	88.6
Kennington	122	6.3	8.7	85.0
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	94	2.9	21.9	75.2
Maiden Gully	128	1.1	13.3	85.6
North Bendigo - California Gully	116	6.3	10.0	83.7
Strathdale	139	0.0	8.5	91.5
Strathfieldsaye	161	6.7	12.1	81.2
White Hills - Jackass Flat	133	2.8	13.2	84.0
Urban subtotal	2,021	4.3	12.2	83.5
Elmore - Rural North	43	20.8	3.4	75.7
Heathcote and District	277	2.4	5.5	92.1
Marong - Rural West	86	0.0	4.5	95.5
Rural East	173	2.9	6.5	90.6
Rural subtotal	579	4.1	5.4	90.4

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

The only health and wellbeing indicator associated with vaping status was perceived value to society (see Table 7.2.2). Specifically, a greater proportion of those who sometimes feel valued by society (5.4%) reported currently vaping, compared to those who definitely feel valued by society (1.8%).

There were no health behaviour indicators associated with current vaping status. However, a greater proportion of those who had met vegetable intake recommendations (91.2%) reported never vaping compared to those who had not met recommendations (84.4%). Similarly, a greater proportion of those who did not drink sugar-sweetened beverages daily (86.6%) never vaped compared to those who consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily (77.3%). Conversely, a greater proportion of those who did not meet water consumption recommendations (88.1%) have never vaped compared to those who met recommendations (77.9%).

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 (18.8%) or ex-vapers (31.3%) compared to those who had never smoked (0.4% and 3.4%, respectively). 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 risky 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 n	Current vaper %	Ex-vaper %	Never vaped %
Total sample	2,606	4.2	10.7	85.0
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	622	6.9	9.9	83.3
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,972	3.4	11.0	85.6
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	844	5.5	10.6	83.8
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,740	3.5	10.8	85.7
Does not feel valued by society	600	4.5	11.0	84.6
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,292	5.4	11.8	82.8
Definitely feel valued by society	687	1.8	8.7	89.5
Poor mental wellbeing	814	6.0	10.3	83.7
Good mental wellbeing	1,792	3.4	10.9	85.7
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,308	4.5	11.0	84.5
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	698	3.7	12.3	84.0
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,492	5.0	12.0	82.9
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,101	3.0	8.8	88.2
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,294	4.5	11.1	84.4
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	277	1.8	7.0	91.2
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	648	5.6	10.0	84.3
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,922	3.9	11.0	85.2

Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,155	5.9	9.9	84.2
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,261	2.7	11.1	86.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,318	4.5	11.7	83.8
Meets screen time recommendations	1,230	4.0	9.9	86.2
Does not meet sleep recommendations	781	5.1	9.6	85.3
Meets sleep recommendations	1,747	3.8	11.3	84.8
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	357	8.4	14.3	77.3
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,245	3.4	10.0	86.6
Does not meet water recommendations	1,644	3.1	8.8	88.1
Meets water recommendations	928	7.0	15.1	77.9
Risk behaviour indicators				
Current smoker	157	18.8	31.3	49.8
Ex-smoker	991	6.5	16.3	77.2
Never smoker	1,456	0.4	3.4	96.2
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,393	6.2	16.3	77.4
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,207	1.5	3.1	95.3
Gambled	836	7.1	14.6	78.3
Never gambled	1,764	2.6	8.5	88.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 Centre (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 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, 57.6% of all respondents 18 years and over reported engaging 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 Greater Bendigo therefore were more likely to engage in risky drinking behaviour than the benchmarks suggest for Victorian residents more broadly.

A greater proportion of males (64.2%) engaged in risky alcohol consumption in the last 12 months compared to females (51.5%) and among females, younger adults were more likely than older adults

to consume risky amounts of alcohol. Residents of Huntly (67.6%) and Maiden Gully (68.6%) were more likely to engage in risky alcohol consumption compared to residents of Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill (47.5%) and Marong - Rural West (46.0%).

Risky drinking over the past 12 months was more common among Greater Bendigo respondents from the following groups, suggesting that they may benefit from targeted intervention to reduce their alcohol consumption:

- 4-5 person households (66.1%) compared to 2-3 (56.9%) and single (45.9%) person households
- Born in Australia (58.9%) compared to born overseas (45.9%)
- English as main language (58.3%) compared to a language other than English (36.3%)
- Employed (64.1%) compared to unemployed/retired (45.0%)
- Does not require help with daily activities (58.9%) compared to requires help (38.7%)

Table 7.3.1a 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	2,610	57.6	42.4
Males	642	64.2	35.8
Females	1,950	51.5	48.5
Sex and age			
Males, 18 to 34	92	70.1	29.9
Males, 35 to 49	164	68.3	31.7
Males, 50 to 69	250	61.3	38.7
Males, 70+	136	57.4	42.6
Females, 18 to 34	369	55.2	44.8
Females, 35 to 49	604	59.8	40.2
Females, 50 to 69	718	49.2	50.8
Females, 70+	259	30.7	69.3
Demographic indicators			
Household size			
1 person	432	45.9	54.1
2 or 3 people	1,398	56.9	43.1
4 or 5 people	696	66.1	33.9
More than 5 people	81	52.4	47.6
Born overseas	265	45.9	54.1
Born in Australia	2,343	58.9	41.1
Speaks other main language	75	36.3	63.7
Speaks English as main language	2,526	58.3	41.7

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	85	64.3	35.7
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,522	57.3	42.7
LGBTQIA+	176	58.6	41.4
Non-LGBTQIA+	2,422	57.7	42.3
Neurodivergent	251	59.4	40.6
Not neurodivergent	1,808	59.0	41.0
Maybe	186	54.1	45.9
Not sure what neurodivergent means	296	58.4	41.6
Less than Bachelor level education	1,260	57.5	42.5
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,341	58.2	41.8
Unemployed/Retired	835	45.0	55.0
Employed	1,770	64.1	35.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor	776	55.3	44.7
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,825	58.8	41.2
Requires help with daily activities	145	38.7	61.3
Does not require help	2,458	58.9	41.1
Food security (last 12 months)			
Low or very low food security	429	59.7	40.3
Marginal food security	318	53.5	46.5
High food security	1,859	57.6	42.4

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

Table 7.3.1b Risky alcohol consumption on single occasion by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Risky alcohol consumption in past year	No risky alcohol consumption in past year
	n	%	%
Total sample	2,610	57.6	42.4
Subregion			
Bendigo	166	58.6	41.4
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	109	53.2	46.8
East Bendigo	46	58.8	41.2
Epsom - Ascot	134	55.1	44.9
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	226	59.2	40.8
Golden Square	171	54.6	45.4
Huntly	73	67.6	32.4
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	205	47.5	52.5
Kennington	124	56.0	44.0
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	93	57.4	42.6
Maiden Gully	129	68.6	31.4

North Bendigo - California Gully	116	49.6	50.4
Strathdale	139	64.0	36.0
Strathfieldsaye	161	62.4	37.6
White Hills - Jackass Flat	133	63.0	37.0
Urban subtotal	2,025	57.7	42.3
Elmore - Rural North	42	65.7	34.3
Heathcote and District	277	57.5	42.5
Marong - Rural West	86	46.0	54.0
Rural East	174	59.8	40.2
Rural subtotal	579	57.4	42.6

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

Risky alcohol consumption was not associated with any of the health and wellbeing indicators (see Table 7.3.2). The only health behaviour indicator that was associated with risky alcohol consumption was aerobic physical activity. Specifically, those who met the aerobic physical activity recommendations (60.3%) were more likely to engage in risky alcohol consumption compared to those who did not (49.1%).

Consistent with published literature, all other risk behaviours were associated with risky alcohol consumption. Current smokers (73.5%) and ex-smokers (68.8%), current vapers (84.5%) and ex-vapers (87.6%) and those who gambled in the past 12 months (70.9%) were more likely to consume risky amounts of alcohol compared to those who never smoked (46.6%), never vaped (52.4%) and never gambled (49.7%). As with the recommendation for smoking and 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	2,610	57.6	42.4
Health and wellbeing indicators			
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	623	54.8	45.2
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,976	58.6	41.4
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	844	56.9	43.1
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,745	58.4	41.6
Does not feel valued by society	599	53.8	46.2
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,297	60.3	39.7
Definitely feel valued by society	688	57.2	42.8
Poor mental wellbeing	815	55.7	44.3

Good mental wellbeing	1,795	58.4	41.6
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,308	61.3	38.7
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	702	54.8	45.2
Health behaviour indicators			
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,492	60.2	39.8
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,105	53.8	46.2
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,297	58.3	41.7
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	278	52.6	47.4
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	647	49.1	50.9
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,928	60.3	39.7
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,156	56.4	43.6
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,266	59.8	40.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,319	57.1	42.9
Meets screen time recommendations	1,232	59.4	40.6
Does not meet sleep recommendations	782	55.8	44.2
Meets sleep recommendations	1,750	58.9	41.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	360	61.7	38.3
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,246	56.8	43.2
Does not meet water recommendations	1,645	55.6	44.4
Meets water recommendations	931	62.4	37.6
Risk behaviour indicators			
Current smoker	158	73.5	26.5
Ex-smoker	992	68.8	31.2
Never smoker	1,458	46.6	53.4
Current vaper	76	84.5	15.5
Ex- vaper	193	87.6	12.4
Never vaper	2,331	52.4	47.6
Gambled	839	70.9	29.1
Never gambled	1,768	49.7	50.3

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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, 36.7% of Greater Bendigo ALC respondents reported having gambled at some time during the past 12 months. This figure is slightly higher than the 34.9% reported by 2019 ALC Greater Bendigo respondents, but slightly lower than the 39.1% reported in the 2023 VPHS.

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 Greater Bendigo residents who responded to the survey, 5.8% reported that they gamble every week (see Table 7.4.1a and Table 7.4.1b). Males were more likely than females to report weekly gambling (9.8% compared to 2.0%). Among males, no differences were seen between age groups, however a greater proportion of females aged 18 to 34 years (74.5%) reported never gambling compared to those aged 50 to 69 years (65.1%).

Weekly gambling rates did not differ according to residential subregion. However, residents from Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully (73.2%) were more likely to report never gambling compared to Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully (51.1%).

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

- Speaks English as main language (5.9%) compared to a different language (0.0%)
- Not LGBTQIA+ (6.3%) compared to LGBTQIA+ (0.7%)
- Not Neurodivergent (6.4%) or not sure what neurodivergent means (7.6%) compared to neurodivergent (1.4%)
- Less than a Bachelor level education (6.6%) compared to Bachelor degree or above (3.2%)
- Does not require help with daily activities (6.0%) compared to requires help (2.0%)

Table 7.4.1.1a Gambling frequency by selected demographic characteristics

	Unweighted base ¹ n	Weekly %	Monthly or less often %	Never gambled %
Total sample	2,611	5.8	30.9	63.3
Males	641	9.8	33.5	56.7
Females	1,951	2.0	28.7	69.3
Sex and age				
Males, 18 to 34	92	9.4	37.3	53.3
Males, 35 to 49	164	7.2	35.3	57.5
Males, 50 to 69	249	12.6	30.2	57.2
Males, 70+	136	8.4	32.4	59.1

Females, 18 to 34	369	0.8	24.7	74.5
Females, 35 to 49	603	1.6	29.3	69.1
Females, 50 to 69	720	3.0	31.9	65.1
Females, 70+	259	3.1	28.8	68.1
Demographic indicators				
Household size				
1 person	432	7.2	27.2	65.6
2 or 3 people	1,399	6.2	31.4	62.4
4 or 5 people	696	3.7	32.0	64.3
More than 5 people	81	9.3	30.6	60.1
Born overseas	265	3.7	19.8	76.5
Born in Australia	2,344	6.0	32.3	61.7
Speaks other main language	75	0.0	9.3	90.7
Speaks English as main language	2,527	5.9	31.8	62.3
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	85	11.0	40.8	48.2
Not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,523	5.5	30.5	63.9
LGBTQIA+	175	0.7	26.5	72.9
Non-LGBTQIA+	2,424	6.3	31.4	62.4
Neurodivergent	251	1.4	25.6	72.9
Not neurodivergent	1,809	6.4	32.4	61.2
Maybe	186	2.6	26.7	70.7
Not sure what neurodivergent means	296	7.6	32.4	60.1
Less than Bachelor level education	1,262	6.6	31.7	61.7
Holds a Bachelor degree or higher	1,340	3.2	28.5	68.3
Unemployed/Retired	836	5.0	25.2	69.8
Employed	1,770	6.2	34.0	59.9
Just getting along, poor or very poor	776	6.9	30.3	62.8
Reasonably comfortable, very comfortable or prosperous	1,826	5.1	31.3	63.6
Requires help with daily activities	145	2.0	29.9	68.2
Does not require help	2,459	6.0	31.0	62.9
Food security (last 12 months)				
Low or very low food security	429	6.7	31.2	62.1
Marginal food security	319	4.2	33.7	62.1
High food security	1,859	5.8	30.4	63.8

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

Table 7.4.1.1b Gambling frequency by subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Weekly	Monthly or less often	Never gambled
--	------------------------------	--------	-----------------------	---------------

	n	%	%	%
Total sample	2,611	5.8	30.9	63.3
Subregion				
Bendigo	166	5.8	27.6	66.6
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	109	9.4	39.6	51.1
East Bendigo	46	2.4	40.4	57.1
Epsom - Ascot	134	8.8	34.6	56.6
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	226	8.8	18.0	73.2
Golden Square	170	4.3	30.0	65.7
Huntly	73	1.2	45.3	53.5
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	206	6.2	23.1	70.7
Kennington	124	5.1	34.1	60.8
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	95	6.1	38.9	55.0
Maiden Gully	129	6.8	35.0	58.2
North Bendigo - California Gully	115	1.7	30.1	68.2
Strathdale	139	2.4	37.9	59.7
Strathfieldsaye	161	3.8	29.4	66.8
White Hills - Jackass Flat	133	5.3	29.2	65.5
Urban subtotal	2,026	5.6	31.0	63.4
Elmore - Rural North	42	1.8	31.2	67.0
Heathcote and District	277	6.8	31.7	61.5
Marong - Rural West	86	7.3	23.7	69.0
Rural East	174	6.8	32.6	60.6
Rural subtotal	579	6.4	30.8	62.9

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

No health and wellbeing indicators were associated with weekly gambling (see Table 7.4.1.2). However, those who were reported being overweight or obese (35.6%) were more likely to gamble monthly or less often than those with normal weight or underweight (26.9%). Conversely, who reported being of a normal weight or underweight (69.2%) were more likely to report having never gambled in the past 12 months compared to those who reported being overweight or obese (56.8%).

Weekly gambling differed according to vegetable intake, with those who failed to meet the recommendations being more likely to gamble on a weekly basis (6.1%) compared to those who did meet the recommendations (1.9%). Similar differences were observed for never gambling across other health behaviours. Specifically, never gambling was more common among those who met recommendations for fruit intake (69.0% vs 59.9%), screen time (68.4% vs 59.0%), and sleep duration (65.7% vs 58.4%).

Gambling was associated with all risk behaviours. Specifically, those who have never smoked (70.3%), never vaped (66.2%) and had not engaged in risky alcohol consumption in the past 12 months (74.9%) were more likely to *never gamble* compared to their counterparts who had engaged in the respective 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 (3.6%) 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	2,611	5.8	30.9	63.3
Health and wellbeing indicators				
Self-reported health - Fair or poor	623	7.6	31.0	61.4
Self-reported health - Good, very good, or excellent	1,976	5.2	31.0	63.8
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6)	844	6.3	31.6	62.1
Life satisfaction - High/very high (7 to 10)	1,745	5.5	30.9	63.6
Does not feel valued by society	598	7.9	29.5	62.7
Sometimes feel valued by society	1,298	5.4	33.6	60.9
Definitely feel valued by society	688	4.4	27.8	67.8
Poor mental wellbeing	815	6.9	30.6	62.4
Good mental wellbeing	1,796	5.2	31.1	63.7
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	1,309	7.6	35.6	56.8
Normal range or underweight (BMI <25.0)	702	3.9	26.9	69.2
Health behaviour indicators				
Does not meet fruit intake recommendations	1,493	6.9	33.2	59.9
Meets fruit intake recommendations	1,105	3.9	27.1	69.0
Does not meet vegetable intake recommendations	2,298	6.1	31.3	62.6
Meets vegetable intake recommendations	277	1.9	27.6	70.5
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	649	5.8	29.7	64.5
Meets aerobic physical activity recommendations	1,928	5.8	31.3	62.9
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	1,157	6.5	32.2	61.3
Meets muscle strengthening recommendations	1,265	4.8	30.0	65.2
Does not meet screen time recommendations	1,320	6.9	34.1	59.0
Meets screen time recommendations	1,232	4.5	27.0	68.4
Does not meet sleep recommendations	783	7.6	34.0	58.4
Meets sleep recommendations	1,750	5.0	29.2	65.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	360	6.6	37.9	55.5
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages less than daily	2,247	5.6	29.6	64.8

Does not meet water recommendations	1,646	6.6	29.6	63.8
Meets water recommendations	930	4.1	34.0	61.9
Risk behaviour indicators				
Current smoker	158	5.3	38.4	56.3
Ex-smoker	992	8.2	36.4	55.4
Never smoker	1,459	4.0	25.7	70.3
Current vaper	76	11.5	49.9	38.6
Ex- vaper	193	4.4	45.4	50.2
Never vaper	2,331	5.7	28.1	66.2
Had more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion	1,396	7.3	37.9	54.7
Has not had more than 4 standard drinks	1,211	3.6	21.5	74.9

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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 Greater Bendigo 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 add up to more than 100%. The lottery was the most common form of gambling, with 66.7% of respondents who gambled participating in it. The next most common were race betting (31.4%), electronic gaming machines (24.1%) and sports betting (22.7%).

Table 7.4.2.1 Types of gambling

Types of gambling	%	¹ N=840
Lottery	66.7	593
Race betting	31.4	224
Electronic gaming machines	24.1	193
Sports betting	22.7	140
Instant scratch tickets	12.1	120
Keno or bingo	5.3	44
Casino table games	6.6	41
Online casino games	1.5	12
Private betting	0.1	1

¹ Base sizes include respondents aged 18 years and over living in the City of Greater Bendigo. 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, sex, and subregion. Males were more likely to engage in race betting (38.9% vs 21.1%) and

sports betting (32.0% vs 10.5%) and females were more likely to use instant scratch tickets (18.5% vs 7.4%). 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 in gambling types were seen across multiple residential subregions. Marong – Rural West (84.7%) residents were more likely to participate in the lottery than Epsom – Ascot residents. Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully (46.3%) and Kennington (46.8%) residents were more likely to participate in the lottery than Long Gully - West Bendigo – Ironbark (12.9%) and Marong – Rural West (14.3%) residents. Electronic gaming machine use was most common among Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully (49.5%) residents and least common among Huntly (6.2%) residents. Sports betting was most common among Elmore – Rural North (60.0%) residents and least common among Marong – Rural West (8.0%) residents. Long Gully - West Bendigo – Ironbark (30.7%) and Heathcote and District (15.2%) residents were more likely to report using instant scratch tickets compare to Maiden Gully (2.7%) residents.

Table 7.4.2.2 Types of gambling by selected demographic characteristics and subregion

	Unweighted base ¹	Lottery	Race betting	Electronic gaming machines	Sports betting	Instant scratch tickets
	n	%	%	%	%	%
Total sample	840	66.7	31.4	24.1	22.7	12.1
Males	266	64.2	38.9	20.4	32.0	7.4
Females	570	69.7	21.1	29.2	10.5	18.5
Males, 18 to 34	45	37.2	35.5	35.8	58.3	13.5
Males, 35 to 49	63	61.1	52.4	11.1	48.9	7.1
Males, 50 to 69	103	80.0	37.7	16.9	16.8	5.4
Males, 70+	55	76.0	29.2	17.5	3.2	3.2
Females, 18 to 34	90	55.9	17.0	41.5	19.4	25.4
Females, 35 to 49	169	72.8	26.8	18.4	14.5	27.0
Females, 50 to 69	238	78.2	21.8	28.0	4.3	9.2
Females, 70+	73	66.0	15.7	31.0	2.2	13.8
Subregion						
Bendigo	55	69.4	28.9	15.8	20.9	16.0
Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	40	54.5	46.3	49.5	15.8	11.2
East Bendigo	14	46.3	44.5	19.5	43.6	13.3
Epsom - Ascot	42	49.9	45.6	31.7	42.5	7.9
Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	53	70.5	35.8	18.4	30.9	13.3
Golden Square	53	77.1	23.9	9.9	19.8	17.2
Huntly	30	80.9	19.7	6.2	15.3	4.3
Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	63	73.8	26.0	31.0	12.5	6.9

Kennington	43	74.4	46.8	15.4	18.6	11.2
Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	40	77.0	12.9	36.4	10.5	30.7
Maiden Gully	43	67.7	33.1	21.2	52.6	2.7
North Bendigo - California Gully	36	66.5	23.4	23.3	11.8	14.1
Strathdale	48	58.3	34.7	26.9	21.4	13.4
Strathfieldsaye	43	67.4	30.2	36.3	23.6	10.2
White Hills - Jackass Flat	45	70.3	23.1	23.4	9.7	7.2
Urban subtotal	648	67.2	31.8	25.4	23.1	11.8
Elmore - Rural North	11	38.6	46.6	12.0	60.0	14.8
Heathcote and District	95	64.8	30.9	18.5	19.0	15.2
Marong - Rural West	26	84.7	14.3	7.7	8.0	5.6
Rural East	58	64.1	29.4	28.6	19.5	12.3
Rural subtotal	190	64.5	30.0	19.7	21.6	13.2

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

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 sex and age 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 the City of Greater Bendigo can be seen in Table A2. Benchmarks for education and country of birth have been adjusted so that age by region totals are consistent across benchmarks.

Table A2 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

References

- Deville, J., C. Särndal and O. Sautory (1993). Generalized raking procedures in survey sampling. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 88(423), 1013-1020.
- Lumley, T. (2017) survey: analysis of complex survey samples. R package version 3.32. <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=survey>.
- R Core Team (2018). R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. <https://www.R-project.org/>.
- Valliant, R., J. Dever, and F. Kreuter (2013). Practical Tools for Designing and Weighting Survey Samples. New York: Springer.

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 (<i>please specify</i>) ☐ 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 (please specify)
A10	In which country were you born?	☐ Australia ☐ Other (please specify)
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 (please specify) ☐ 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	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:	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 (<i>please specify</i>)
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
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐

	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

[illegible]

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

Section E | Page 27

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)

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

[illegible]

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

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
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐ 	☐ 	☐ 	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐ 	☐ 	☐ 	☐
	☐ 	☐ 	☐ 	☐

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 subregion

	Total	Bendigo	Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	East Bendigo	Epsom - Ascot	Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	Golden Square	Huntly	Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	Kennington	Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base¹	4,158	249	184	75	209	365	274	125	317	186	140
Sex											
Males	48.8	53.4	44.6	57.0	45.0	47.6	41.9	38.8	51.2	53.5	45.9
Females	51.2	46.6	55.4	43.0	55.0	52.4	58.1	61.2	48.8	46.5	54.1
Age											
Males, 3 to 11	13.9	9.7	12.8	20.8	13.2	17.1	14.9	26.1	13.3	15.9	9.8
Males, 12 to 17	9.1	10.5	5.0	3.9	6.7	15.0	4.4	11.1	6.7	8.7	8.3
Males, 18 to 34	19.0	22.5	27.6	21.1	37.1	8.2	25.8	12.2	17.6	13.4	26.9
Males, 35 to 49	17.7	21.9	18.7	20.5	11.9	24.8	14.7	18.6	12.9	26.0	4.3
Males, 50 to 69	24.8	19.2	11.0	16.5	15.2	27.2	19.8	22.8	21.7	18.1	34.0
Males, 70+	15.4	16.2	24.9	17.2	16.0	7.8	20.5	9.3	27.8	18.0	16.6
Females, 3 to 11	12.6	7.5	8.6	18.2	15.8	19.1	12.8	15.2	12.3	7.0	8.8
Females, 12 to 17	8.4	5.2	11.7	2.5	5.0	7.0	8.0	7.3	7.2	8.6	4.7
Females, 18 to 34	24.7	33.9	27.9	23.2	37.8	24.0	29.8	28.9	22.8	29.9	38.7
Females, 35 to 49	20.1	13.2	19.0	24.8	18.7	17.7	22.3	22.1	15.9	22.8	19.6
Females, 50 to 69	24.4	28.6	22.2	16.1	18.6	25.9	23.9	21.5	26.4	20.9	22.3
Females, 70+	9.8	11.6	10.6	15.2	4.1	6.2	3.2	5.1	15.4	10.8	6.0

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

Table C1 **Population by subregion - continued**

	Maiden Gully	North Bendigo - California Gully	Strathdale	Strathfieldsaye	White Hills - Jackass Flat	Urban subtotal	Elmore - Rural North	Heathcote and District	Marong - Rural West	Rural East	Rural subtotal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base¹	220	181	212	268	214	3,219	78	428	129	287	922
Sex											
Males	58.9	40.6	55.0	48.2	49.5	48.7	56.3	45.6	36.4	57.3	49.1
Females	41.1	59.4	45.0	51.8	50.5	51.3	43.7	54.4	63.6	42.7	50.9
Age											
Males, 3 to 11	15.8	11.3	7.8	15.8	13.8	13.9	8.1	16.5	12.0	12.4	13.6
Males, 12 to 17	7.8	10.6	9.9	16.5	2.0	8.7	13.8	9.6	10.2	11.4	10.8
Males, 18 to 34	24.0	13.7	21.0	16.6	23.8	20.6	67.5	3.9	3.6	9.4	13.7
Males, 35 to 49	16.4	21.3	20.4	22.3	17.2	18.2	4.0	12.8	25.8	21.4	16.1
Males, 50 to 69	28.3	37.6	23.9	17.6	26.0	22.6	6.6	37.5	28.8	35.9	32.3
Males, 70+	7.6	5.6	16.9	11.2	17.2	16.0	0.0	19.7	19.7	9.4	13.6
Females, 3 to 11	24.3	11.6	8.8	15.4	14.8	13.3	15.5	8.7	8.4	11.8	10.1
Females, 12 to 17	10.0	8.3	11.7	11.7	9.0	8.1	7.4	5.9	8.0	18.0	9.5
Females, 18 to 34	13.7	30.8	21.5	23.1	33.3	28.0	15.8	10.7	17.6	11.1	12.4
Females, 35 to 49	18.6	21.7	14.0	22.9	15.6	18.8	21.7	26.7	27.0	21.4	24.9
Females, 50 to 69	23.2	18.7	28.7	19.1	19.3	22.9	22.9	34.5	21.3	29.7	30.0
Females, 70+	10.2	9.0	15.2	7.7	7.9	8.9	16.8	13.4	17.7	8.1	13.1

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

Table C2 **Health behaviours by subregion**

	Total	Bendigo	Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	East Bendigo	Epsom - Ascot	Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	Golden Square	Huntly
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base¹	4,158	249	184	75	209	365	274	125
Health and wellbeing								
General health - Fair / poor	21.2	25.2	14.4	22.4	25.2	12.8	25.3	20.8
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6 out of 10) ²	35.1	33.4	30.7	30.3	35.7	27.7	36.3	44.8
Does not feel valued by society ²	26.8	33.3	26.1	21.2	28.8	19.7	18.1	27.0
Poor mental wellbeing ²	28.3	27.4	21.2	25.4	24.8	24.8	27.4	24.4
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	62.2	53.3	68.6	63.5	73.6	56.3	55.0	73.0
Health behaviours								
Does not meet fruit recommendations	54.8	52.5	57.4	51.8	65.0	45.7	52.1	61.5
Does not meet vegetable recommendations	91.4	88.9	90.7	87.7	91.6	91.1	91.0	94.3
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	31.0	26.3	37.1	27.2	35.8	27.8	37.3	33.6
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	51.2	56.9	57.3	48.1	53.4	39.7	50.6	57.2
Does not meet screen recommendations	58.0	62.0	59.3	56.0	59.2	45.9	57.0	58.6
Does not meet sleep recommendations	31.3	32.5	40.7	23.4	31.0	27.8	30.5	30.7
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	15.1	11.1	16.2	24.1	23.9	5.9	13.0	19.9
Does not meet water recommendations	65.4	64.6	62.7	60.5	67.0	60.4	60.0	61.3
Other risk factors								
Current smoker ²	7.8	7.4	2.2	7.2	8.2	7.1	8.6	4.3
Current vaper ²	4.2	7.7	6.1	5.3	6.1	2.1	4.2	5.5
Consumed more than 4 standard drinks on at least one occasion in the last 12 months ²	57.6	58.6	53.2	58.8	55.1	59.2	54.6	67.6

Gambled in past 12 months ²	36.7	33.4	48.9	42.9	43.4	26.8	34.3	46.5
Food security								
Low or very low food security ²	21.0	24.4	29.6	28.3	20.9	6.9	15.3	17.0

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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 C2 **Health behaviours by subregion - continued**

	Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	Kennington	Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark	Maiden Gully	North Bendigo - California Gully	Strathdale	Strathfields aye	White Hills - Jackass Flat
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base¹	317	186	140	220	181	212	268	214
Health and wellbeing								
General health - Fair / poor	32.5	23.9	45.0	22.2	33.5	16.8	16.3	23.9
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6 out of 10) ²	36.6	34.2	44.1	29.5	56.2	27.1	25.8	37.8
Does not feel valued by society ²	40.2	16.4	28.8	28.0	38.6	16.4	22.6	21.6
Poor mental wellbeing ²	36.6	27.3	30.2	28.0	31.3	20.8	24.4	29.8
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	65.1	47.4	71.7	64.4	65.5	50.5	58.4	64.6
Health behaviours								
Does not meet fruit recommendations	62.3	51.6	73.0	58.9	56.2	49.9	41.6	53.6
Does not meet vegetable recommendations	90.3	89.9	95.0	93.1	95.4	85.9	88.6	94.6
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	36.5	26.8	31.9	29.2	31.8	29.3	21.6	26.6
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	55.6	46.5	48.1	56.4	55.6	42.4	46.2	50.1
Does not meet screen recommendations	66.6	64.6	50.2	60.0	58.6	51.5	51.3	56.8
Does not meet sleep recommendations	32.2	26.9	39.0	22.0	32.4	28.8	27.0	32.1
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	18.6	11.5	20.7	11.3	16.2	8.5	13.1	13.5
Does not meet water recommendations	76.8	63.6	72.8	66.7	65.2	63.4	55.7	66.9
Other risk factors								
Current smoker ²	10.7	8.2	5.5	10.3	9.5	2.7	7.6	4.2
Current vaper ²	3.3	6.3	2.9	1.1	6.3	0.0	6.7	2.8
Consumed more than 4 standard drinks on at least one occasion in the last 12 months ²	47.5	56.0	57.4	68.6	49.6	64.0	62.4	63.0

Gambled in past 12 months ²	29.3	39.2	45.0	41.8	31.8	40.3	33.2	34.5
--	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

Food security

Low or very low food security ²	20.9	16.0	46.4	11.6	39.3	11.2	19.6	22.8
--	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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 C2 **Health behaviours by subregion - continued**

	<i>Urban subtotal</i>	<i>Elmore - Rural North</i>	<i>Heathcote and District</i>	<i>Marong - Rural West</i>	<i>Rural East</i>	<i>Rural subtotal</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base¹	3,219	78	428	129	287	922
Health and wellbeing						
General health - Fair / poor	23.9	13.3	30.9	28.8	32.3	29.2
Life satisfaction - Low to moderate (0 to 6 out of 10) ²	34.8	30.9	35.6	43.3	36.5	36.4
Does not feel valued by society ²	26.3	26.5	29.8	32.5	25.5	28.6
Poor mental wellbeing ²	27.4	38.2	29.6	30.1	33.4	31.7
Overweight or obese (BMI ≥25.0)	61.0	71.5	64.5	62.3	67.1	65.8
Health behaviours						
Does not meet fruit recommendations	55.0	49.7	56.4	60.0	49.7	54.1
Does not meet vegetable recommendations	91.1	93.0	91.7	88.6	94.2	92.2
Does not meet aerobic physical activity recommendations	30.8	23.2	34.4	29.3	32.7	32.0
Does not meet muscle strengthening recommendations	50.8	37.0	57.1	59.9	49.1	53.0
Does not meet screen recommendations	57.3	61.4	60.3	60.3	60.4	60.4
Does not meet sleep recommendations	30.5	34.7	32.3	40.8	32.2	33.6
Drinks sugar-sweetened beverages daily	14.3	14.4	15.6	23.8	18.4	17.4
Does not meet water recommendations	64.9	53.3	71.7	66.5	65.2	67.1
Other risk factors						
Current smoker ²	7.2	15.0	11.4	5.0	6.1	9.4
Current vaper ²	4.3	20.8	2.4	0.0	2.9	4.1
Consumed more than 4 standard drinks on at least one occasion in the last 12 months ²	57.7	65.7	57.5	46.0	59.8	57.4

Gambled in past 12 months ²	36.6	33.0	38.5	31.0	39.4	37.1
--	------	------	------	------	------	------

Food security

Low or very low food security ²	21.0	4.7	27.1	23.8	13.8	20.4
--	------	-----	------	------	------	------

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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	Bendigo	Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	East Bendigo	Epsom - Ascot	Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	Golden Square	Huntly	Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	Kennington	Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities											
% of respondents undertaking activity	17.4	18.9	22.8	33.1	21.7	20.6	18.2	21.8	27.8	18.9	22.3
# respondents undertaking activity	1,116	77	56	27	47	102	63	25	78	53	41
Frequency of participation											
Heavy - Once a week or more	82.8	85.9	81.1	81.3	83.2	88.7	91.8	93.1	78.5	82.7	92.3
Medium - One to three times a month	11.0	12.2	10.3	18.7	7.4	5.2	6.6	5.2	14.7	4.0	4.7
Light - Less often	6.2	1.9	8.5	0.0	9.4	6.2	1.6	1.7	6.7	13.3	3.0
Travel mode											
Car	28.9	21.8	44.1	26.4	40.7	28.7	34.1	21.4	29.6	30.5	32.9
Walking	67.9	66.8	49.9	72.7	59.3	66.5	61.5	74.4	66.9	69.5	67.1
Bike	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public transport / taxi / Uber	1.3	10.9	6.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	1.8	0.6	0.0	0.9	0.0	1.7	4.4	4.2	3.6	0.0	0.0
Distance to activity											
Average distance travelled to activity	3.1	2.8	2.4	2.4	3.8	1.9	2.5	2.6	4.0	2.1	2.9
Facility quality rating											
Good, excellent	67.5	75.9	76.8	64.9	63.2	84.4	73.4	39.7	80.8	73.5	57.0
Average	25.4	18.2	20.9	35.1	30.8	12.6	24.0	52.9	17.1	19.2	38.4
Very poor, poor	7.0	5.9	2.2	0.0	6.0	3.0	2.6	7.4	2.1	7.3	4.5
Mean score (out of 5)	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.4	4.1	3.9	3.7
Facility accessibility rating											
Good, excellent	73.7	88.4	90.0	69.9	72.7	79.3	76.2	77.8	82.6	80.3	65.2
Average	18.5	9.2	5.1	28.0	21.2	14.8	20.8	10.3	14.6	17.8	29.8
Very poor, poor	7.9	2.3	4.9	2.0	6.0	5.9	3.0	11.9	2.8	1.9	5.0
Mean score (out of 5)	3.9	4.1	4.2	3.8	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.8	4.1	4.0	3.8

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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 on all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C3 Activities – Walking - continued

	Maiden Gully	North Bendigo - California Gully	Strathdale	Strathfieldsaye	White Hills - Jackass Flat	Urban subtotal	Elmore - Rural North	Heathcote and District	Marong - Rural West	Rural East	Rural subtotal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities											
% of respondents undertaking activity	25.4	25.3	19.8	19.0	23.5	18.0	17.7	22.4	13.9	19.0	15.1
# respondents undertaking activity	55	42	65	59	65	906	18	81	25	74	208
Frequency of participation											
Heavy - Once a week or more	71.0	84.5	80.1	88.8	84.7	83.4	97.5	77.4	80.9	76.0	79.5
Medium - One to three times a month	21.2	5.7	16.1	7.6	9.8	11.0	2.5	6.4	5.3	20.8	11.3
Light - Less often	7.8	9.8	3.8	3.6	5.5	5.6	0.0	16.2	13.8	3.2	9.3
Travel mode											
Car	18.5	20.5	11.7	14.9	35.7	27.6	53.0	42.1	48.2	25.0	35.9
Walking	80.0	75.5	88.3	85.1	63.1	69.6	47.0	56.3	45.2	66.8	59.2
Bike	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public transport / taxi / Uber	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.6
Other	1.4	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.6	6.6	6.7	4.3
Distance to activity											
Average distance travelled to activity	2.3	2.4	1.7	2.1	2.1	2.5	7.7	5.5	12.3	4.8	6.0
Facility quality rating											
Good, excellent	45.7	58.2	63.3	91.9	76.1	70.5	87.5	35.4	63.0	62.1	53.2
Average	27.8	38.1	26.3	3.9	18.9	23.3	5.2	43.8	30.4	34.7	35.8
Very poor, poor	26.5	3.7	10.4	4.2	5.0	6.2	7.2	20.8	6.6	3.2	11.0
Mean score (out of 5)	3.2	3.7	3.6	4.3	4.1	3.9	4.3	3.1	3.8	3.8	3.6
Facility accessibility rating											
Good, excellent	55.9	68.0	62.5	88.4	88.2	76.6	90.3	48.3	66.5	63.4	59.2
Average	15.8	21.8	32.2	7.5	9.9	16.7	9.7	29.3	19.3	28.8	26.7
Very poor, poor	28.3	10.2	5.3	4.2	1.9	6.6	0.0	22.4	14.3	7.7	14.1
Mean score (out of 5)	3.4	3.7	3.7	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.4	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.6

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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 on all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C4 Activities – Swimming

	Total	Bendigo	Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	East Bendigo	Epsom - Ascot	Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	Golden Square	Huntly	Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	Kennington	Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities											
% of respondents undertaking activity	7.6	9.2	5.0	5.5	6.0	7.7	7.4	9.7	8.1	7.3	10.4
# respondents undertaking activity	517	38	20	11	17	53	37	17	37	23	17
Frequency of participation											
Heavy - Once a week or more	68.0	65.6	64.8	62.4	90.8	63.0	81.9	81.0	52.7	69.2	87.9
Medium - One to three times a month	14.3	16.3	14.0	32.0	9.2	28.0	10.1	11.0	12.2	12.0	8.0
Light - Less often	17.6	18.1	21.3	5.6	0.0	9.0	8.0	8.0	35.1	18.8	4.1
Travel mode											
Car	85.8	62.3	69.6	62.0	94.6	92.3	88.0	71.9	71.9	85.0	91.2
Walking	8.3	27.0	17.4	38.0	5.4	0.0	10.2	10.8	19.9	5.9	0.0
Bike	2.0	10.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	8.2	0.0	0.0
Public transport / taxi / Uber	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	4.2	8.8
Other	2.1	0.0	13.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0	17.3	0.0	4.8	0.0
Distance to activity											
Average distance travelled to activity	10.0	6.1	2.3	4.5	9.4	5.1	4.0	12.4	2.9	5.5	12.9
Facility quality rating											
Good, excellent	80.9	80.9	72.6	77.9	82.3	93.5	88.9	100.0	90.8	92.8	74.1
Average	14.9	6.4	21.2	22.1	17.7	6.5	8.5	0.0	9.2	7.2	20.8
Very poor, poor	4.3	12.7	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.1
Mean score (out of 5)	4.1	4.0	3.6	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.0
Facility accessibility rating											
Good, excellent	77.6	72.1	86.6	72.2	89.7	83.4	86.5	89.2	90.6	77.1	53.1
Average	17.3	10.1	7.2	27.8	10.3	16.6	13.5	10.8	5.9	22.9	38.1
Very poor, poor	5.1	17.8	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.0	8.8
Mean score (out of 5)	4.0	3.8	3.9	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.3	3.5

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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 on all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C4 Activities – Swimming - continued

	Maiden Gully	North Bendigo - California Gully	Strathdale	Strathfieldsaye	White Hills - Jackass Flat	Urban subtotal	Elmore - Rural North	Heathcote and District	Marong - Rural West	Rural East	Rural subtotal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities											
% of respondents undertaking activity	5.6	6.8	6.9	8.1	9.3	7.6	12.6	9.6	5.1	5.8	7.8
# respondents undertaking activity	17	13	29	37	39	405	12	57	9	31	109
Frequency of participation											
Heavy - Once a week or more	81.9	37.5	76.7	77.6	69.5	70.4	35.3	55.8	100.0	66.8	59.9
Medium - One to three times a month	12.5	22.2	2.6	13.6	9.7	13.8	23.4	16.1	0.0	19.8	16.9
Light - Less often	5.6	40.3	20.7	8.9	20.8	15.9	41.3	28.2	0.0	13.4	23.2
Travel mode											
Car	100.0	100.0	92.6	93.9	97.3	85.9	80.4	88.2	60.6	89.7	85.1
Walking	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	7.9	19.6	10.9	4.0	4.3	9.7
Bike	0.0	0.0	4.1	0.0	2.7	2.4	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.4
Public transport / taxi / Uber	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	35.5	6.0	4.8
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Distance to activity											
Average distance travelled to activity	6.6	14.5	9.8	11.4	5.7	7.2	26.3	26.1	18.2	12.2	21.4
Facility quality rating											
Good, excellent	87.2	95.1	76.2	81.2	58.2	83.3	91.7	61.6	100.0	64.4	70.6
Average	12.8	4.9	22.6	15.5	40.2	14.1	8.3	17.9	0.0	29.3	18.2
Very poor, poor	0.0	0.0	1.2	3.3	1.6	2.6	0.0	20.4	0.0	6.3	11.2
Mean score (out of 5)	3.9	4.2	4.0	4.1	3.7	4.1	4.2	3.4	4.1	3.9	3.8
Facility accessibility rating											
Good, excellent	100.0	65.7	72.4	63.8	75.4	78.6	97.5	58.7	89.2	81.9	74.4
Average	0.0	22.3	27.6	28.2	21.9	17.1	2.5	25.4	10.8	14.7	17.3
Very poor, poor	0.0	11.9	0.0	8.1	2.7	4.3	0.0	15.9	0.0	3.4	8.3
Mean score (out of 5)	4.5	3.9	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.3	3.4	4.0	3.9	3.7

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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 on all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C5 Activities – Fitness: Gym

	Total	Bendigo	Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	East Bendigo	Epsom - Ascot	Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	Golden Square	Huntly	Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	Kennington	Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities											
% of respondents undertaking activity	7.7	7.4	10.6	9.1	9.2	8.1	8.8	6.1	6.9	11.9	5.7
# respondents undertaking activity	499	34	24	8	23	51	44	12	40	32	14
Frequency of participation											
Heavy - Once a week or more	86.8	95.2	85.1	100.0	90.7	89.5	81.2	92.9	71.4	81.9	89.2
Medium - One to three times a month	6.6	1.2	11.9	0.0	0.0	10.5	7.9	92.9	14.1	7.3	10.8
Light - Less often	6.6	3.6	3.0	0.0	9.3	0.0	10.9	3.5	14.4	10.8	0.0
Travel mode											
Car	78.6	56.0	74.6	92.4	78.5	70.2	80.4	89.6	84.6	56.3	68.4
Walking	11.8	38.9	20.6	7.6	21.5	17.3	5.4	10.4	3.4	14.7	16.1
Bike	3.0	2.4	4.7	0.0	0.0	5.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.4
Public transport / taxi / Uber	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7	5.1	0.0	2.5	0.0	6.1
Other	5.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	9.1	0.0	9.5	29.0	0.0
Distance to activity											
Average distance travelled to activity	6.5	3.1	4.4	5.0	4.8	4.0	4.8	8.2	6.9	5.2	4.0
Facility quality rating											
Good, excellent	83.0	89.6	62.8	100.0	77.2	92.9	76.6	64.7	71.0	75.7	55.9
Average	15.3	10.4	37.2	0.0	22.8	7.1	21.8	35.3	23.8	23.2	44.1
Very poor, poor	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	5.1	1.2	0.0
Mean score (out of 5)	4.2	4.6	3.8	4.6	4.2	4.3	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.3	3.7
Facility accessibility rating											
Good, excellent	85.1	97.0	90.0	100.0	70.1	84.1	79.2	73.3	74.1	84.5	60.3
Average	10.9	3.0	3.7	0.0	28.8	14.7	19.2	26.7	22.9	3.1	8.2
Very poor, poor	4.1	0.0	6.3	0.0	1.1	1.3	1.5	0.0	3.0	12.3	31.5
Mean score (out of 5)	4.2	4.5	4.1	4.6	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.1	3.5

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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 on all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C5 Activities – Fitness: Gym - continued

	Maiden Gully	North Bendigo - California Gully	Strathdale	Strathfieldsaye	White Hills - Jackass Flat	Urban subtotal	Elmore - Rural North	Heathcote and District	Marong - Rural West	Rural East	Rural subtotal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities											
% of respondents undertaking activity	7.2	8.6	6.5	6.1	6.8	7.9	1.2	9.1	9.1	5.7	7.0
# respondents undertaking activity	22	21	22	32	19	398	3	50	19	29	101
Frequency of participation											
Heavy - Once a week or more	94.6	78.3	98.9	95.7	86.6	87.6	43.9	86.1	82.1	81.9	83.3
Medium - One to three times a month	2.7	15.4	0.0	2.7	6.2	6.8	0.0	8.3	7.9	0.0	5.4
Light - Less often	2.7	6.3	1.1	1.6	7.2	5.6	56.1	5.6	10.1	18.1	11.3
Travel mode											
Car	98.6	98.3	88.3	79.0	67.2	77.0	100.0	85.8	89.9	83.5	86.0
Walking	1.4	0.0	1.0	12.4	0.0	12.0	0.0	11.3	2.2	15.3	10.7
Bike	0.0	1.7	7.5	0.0	22.1	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public transport / taxi / Uber	0.0	0.0	3.2	7.2	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	10.6	5.4	0.0	2.9	7.9	1.2	3.3
Distance to activity											
Average distance travelled to activity	7.2	7.1	5.4	7.2	7.1	5.5	27.8	10.2	13.7	9.6	11.1
Facility quality rating											
Good, excellent	95.2	82.1	92.2	94.3	68.9	80.5	78.1	93.9	92.1	98.8	94.9
Average	4.8	17.9	6.8	1.6	21.2	17.9	21.9	6.1	0.0	1.2	3.7
Very poor, poor	0.0	0.0	1.0	4.1	9.9	1.7	0.0	0.0	7.9	0.0	1.4
Mean score (out of 5)	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.5	4.0	4.2	4.3
Facility accessibility rating											
Good, excellent	95.2	95.4	81.8	92.1	74.1	83.7	78.1	89.3	85.3	98.8	91.5
Average	4.8	4.6	12.0	5.7	16.0	12.0	21.9	10.7	0.0	1.2	5.9
Very poor, poor	0.0	0.0	6.1	2.2	9.9	4.4	0.0	0.0	14.7	0.0	2.6
Mean score (out of 5)	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.5	4.1	4.3	4.4

¹Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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 on all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

*Five or fewer respondents reported participating in this activity, so results cannot be generalised to the broader population.

Table C6 Activities – Active play (at playground / play centre)

	Total	Bendigo	Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	East Bendigo	Epsom - Ascot	Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	Golden Square	Huntly	Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	Kennington	Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities											
% of respondents undertaking activity	6.9	3.2	4.9	8.3	6.7	6.3	5.7	8.4	9.5	3.4	15.0
# respondents undertaking activity	404	17	15	13	24	39	25	15	39	16	16
Frequency of participation											
Heavy - Once a week or more	60.0	86.7	38.1	57.4	72.7	83.9	70.7	39.6	59.0	64.6	32.5
Medium - One to three times a month	24.4	5.7	23.2	29.3	7.0	2.3	15.0	54.4	24.3	31.5	67.5
Light - Less often	15.7	7.6	38.7	13.3	20.3	13.8	14.3	6.1	16.7	3.9	0.0
Travel mode											
Car	58.0	54.4	85.6	86.8	69.9	57.4	87.7	78.2	71.7	58.6	27.3
Walking	35.3	22.2	14.4	6.6	23.1	29.0	8.6	14.9	22.3	22.5	59.3
Bike	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	13.6	3.6	0.0	4.0	18.9	0.0
Public transport / taxi / Uber	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0	6.9	2.1	0.0	13.4
Other	0.8	23.4	0.0	6.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Distance to activity											
Average distance travelled to activity	5.4	4.3	2.6	1.3	7.4	3.1	4.1	5.8	11.4	3.6	6.3
Facility quality rating											
Good, excellent	71.9	76.2	82.4	73.9	94.9	90.2	73.4	67.8	32.0	90.1	100.0
Average	22.5	23.8	11.6	20.0	3.8	9.8	26.6	32.2	62.3	9.9	0.0
Very poor, poor	5.6	0.0	6.0	6.1	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.7	0.0	0.0
Mean score (out of 5)	3.9	4.0	4.2	3.7	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.2	3.3	4.4	4.6
Facility accessibility rating											
Good, excellent	75.1	100.0	80.3	63.9	94.9	77.7	74.4	72.2	40.9	90.9	100.0
Average	22.0	0.0	19.7	20.0	3.8	17.9	25.6	25.9	51.5	9.1	0.0
Very poor, poor	2.9	0.0	0.0	16.2	1.3	4.5	0.0	1.9	7.6	0.0	0.0
Mean score (out of 5)	4.0	4.4	4.2	3.5	4.2	3.9	4.0	4.3	3.4	4.6	4.7

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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 on all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C6 Activities – Active play (at playground / play centre) - continued

	Maiden Gully	North Bendigo - California Gully	Strathdale	Strathfieldsaye	White Hills - Jackass Flat	Urban subtotal	Elmore - Rural North	Heathcote and District	Marong - Rural West	Rural East	Rural subtotal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities											
% of respondents undertaking activity	7.1	5.0	8.8	8.5	6.9	6.9	13.0	6.6	3.6	6.0	6.6
# respondents undertaking activity	11	11	32	20	25	318	13	35	7	28	83
Frequency of participation											
Heavy - Once a week or more	57.1	69.4	76.5	66.7	50.6	61.6	89.1	37.8	44.6	52.6	54.0
Medium - One to three times a month	26.8	30.6	14.3	23.3	34.2	25.8	0.0	24.6	35.8	18.2	18.2
Light - Less often	16.1	0.0	9.2	10.1	15.3	12.5	10.9	37.6	19.6	29.2	27.8
Travel mode											
Car	6.6	62.1	31.0	51.2	66.3	55.4	44.6	83.5	89.3	62.9	69.8
Walking	89.9	37.9	62.4	42.6	33.7	37.2	55.4	14.9	10.7	31.0	27.1
Bike	3.5	0.0	6.7	6.2	0.0	4.1	0.0	1.6	0.0	2.9	1.8
Public transport / taxi / Uber	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	1.3
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Distance to activity											
Average distance travelled to activity	3.1	2.8	3.3	3.3	4.0	5.0	6.0	6.8	10.5	7.2	7.1
Facility quality rating											
Good, excellent	32.7	76.6	84.5	83.5	83.7	73.8	81.5	59.8	69.3	55.6	63.4
Average	44.4	23.4	12.2	11.5	16.3	22.4	13.2	40.2	30.7	11.1	23.0
Very poor, poor	32.7	0.0	84.5	5.0	0.0	3.8	5.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	13.5
Mean score (out of 5)	3.1	3.9	4.2	4.0	4.3	4.0	4.0	3.6	4.1	3.2	3.6
Facility accessibility rating											
Good, excellent	53.8	92.8	98.0	81.6	84.3	78.0	42.3	63.8	69.3	69.2	61.1
Average	43.0	0.0	2.0	13.4	15.7	19.1	57.7	32.7	30.7	25.4	35.9
Very poor, poor	3.2	7.2	0.0	5.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	3.5	0.0	5.4	3.0
Mean score (out of 5)	3.5	4.3	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.1	3.5	3.6	4.2	3.8	3.7

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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 on all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

Table C7 Activities – Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics

	Total	Bendigo	Eaglehawk - Eaglehawk North - Sailors Gully	East Bendigo	Epsom - Ascot	Flora Hill - Quarry Hill - Spring Gully - Golden Gully	Golden Square	Huntly	Kangaroo Flat - Big Hill	Kennington	Long Gully - West Bendigo - Ironbark
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities											
% of respondents undertaking activity	3.8	7.1	3.4	0.6	3.5	3.7	4.7	3.0	0.3	5.0	1.6
# respondents undertaking activity	317	24	15	2*	14	32	21	9	24	23	7
Frequency of participation											
Heavy - Once a week or more	86.6	97.6	96.6	0.0	44.2	93.5	100.0	25.5	91.4	93.4	93.1
Medium - One to three times a month	9.5	1.3	3.4	100.0	55.8	6.5	0.0	50.7	8.6	4.2	6.9
Light - Less often	3.9	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.8	0.0	2.4	0.0
Travel mode											
Car	86.0	88.5	66.4	100.0	96.6	71.7	98.2	100.0	88.1	91.5	73.3
Walking	7.1	9.2	25.8	0.0	0.0	11.2	1.8	0.0	9.9	4.2	26.7
Bike	0.3	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0
Public transport / taxi / Uber	0.5	1.1	7.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	17.1	0.0	0.0	1.9	2.6	0.0
Distance to activity											
Average distance travelled to activity	8.7	11.7	3.1	7.0	8.1	3.1	8.0	4.6	5.4	5.0	30.0
Facility quality rating											
Good, excellent	89.2	93.9	57.1	50.0	86.7	89.2	95.0	92.2	91.8	100.0	79.9
Average	9.2	6.1	33.7	50.0	3.4	10.8	3.4	7.8	8.2	0.0	20.1
Very poor, poor	1.6	0.0	9.2	0.0	9.8	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mean score (out of 5)	4.3	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.6	4.6	4.3	4.7	4.4	4.1
Facility accessibility rating											
Good, excellent	77.0	31.0	78.4	100.0	86.7	72.2	91.8	48.3	89.6	89.1	72.6
Average	19.4	55.4	21.6	0.0	13.3	27.8	6.4	51.7	10.4	2.1	27.4
Very poor, poor	3.6	13.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	8.8	0.0
Mean score (out of 5)	4.1	3.2	4.2	4.0	4.3	4.1	4.4	3.9	4.5	4.2	4.1

¹ Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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 on all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

*Five or fewer respondents reported participating in this activity, so results cannot be generalised to the broader population.

Table C7 Activities – Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics - continued

	Maiden Gully	North Bendigo - California Gully	Strathdale	Strathfieldsaye	White Hills - Jackass Flat	Urban subtotal	Elmore - Rural North	Heathcote and District	Marong - Rural West	Rural East	Rural subtotal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total activities											
% of respondents undertaking activity	2.3	1.0	5.9	4.4	0.7	3.7	0.3	5.8	8.9	2.3	4.3
# respondents undertaking activity	16	3*	29	21	6	246	1*	37	15	18	71
Frequency of participation											
Heavy - Once a week or more	86.6	78.0	94.9	83.4	64.2	88.1	100.0	88.0	68.4	81.8	81.3
Medium - One to three times a month	13.4	0.0	2.5	6.7	0.0	8.8	0.0	5.9	24.2	8.6	11.5
Light - Less often	0.0	22.0	2.5	9.9	35.8	3.0	0.0	6.1	7.4	9.6	7.2
Travel mode											
Car	84.8	100.0	97.2	89.5	100.0	88.5	100.0	69.6	83.9	87.5	77.4
Walking	0.0	0.0	1.4	8.6	0.0	7.0	0.0	10.5	0.0	9.4	7.2
Bike	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public transport / taxi / Uber	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	15.2	0.0	1.4	2.0	0.0	3.5	0.0	20.0	16.1	3.0	15.4
Distance to activity											
Average distance travelled to activity	6.0	3.3	5.6	12.0	6.7	7.5	16.0	13.5	10.6	13.2	12.6
Facility quality rating											
Good, excellent	56.2	22.0	98.6	98.0	100.0	89.1	100.0	91.0	92.0	83.0	89.6
Average	29.6	78.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	8.8	0.0	9.0	8.0	17.0	10.4
Very poor, poor	14.3	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mean score (out of 5)	3.8	3.2	4.4	4.5	4.1	4.3	5.0	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.4
Facility accessibility rating											
Good, excellent	72.3	59.5	94.4	77.7	82.1	75.0	100.0	84.7	75.8	91.5	83.8
Average	27.7	40.5	0.0	22.3	17.9	21.3	0.0	8.3	24.2	8.5	12.7
Very poor, poor	0.0	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	7.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Mean score (out of 5)	4.0	3.6	4.2	4.2	3.9	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.2

¹Base sizes include all respondents aged 3 years and over living in the Greater Bendigo 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 on all participants in the nominated activity. All results are weighted to population benchmarks.

*Five or fewer respondents reported participating in this activity, so results cannot be generalised to the broader population.