

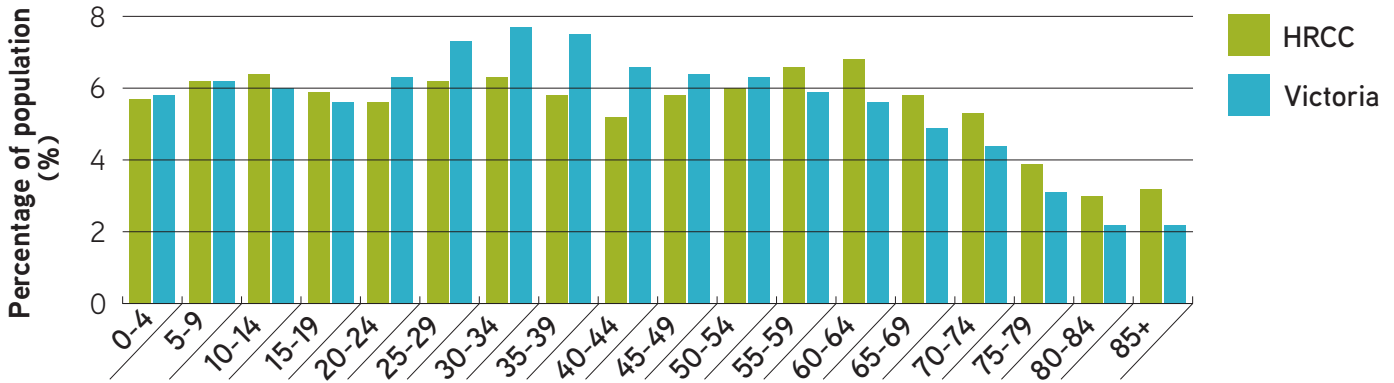


Horsham Municipal Early Years Plan

Data Snapshot 2024–2028

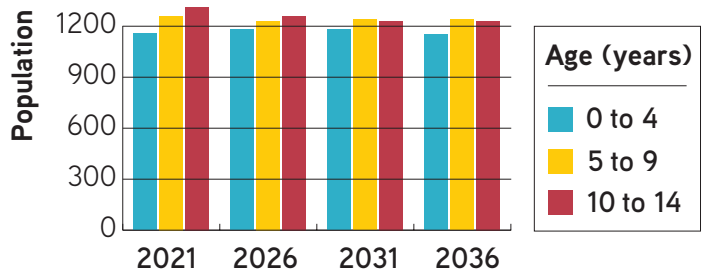
Horsham Rural City Council population

Age Profile – 2021

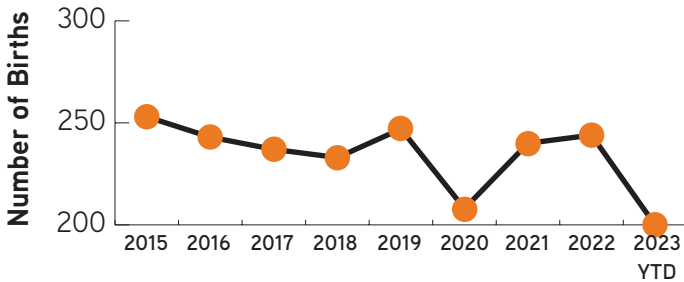


- Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) population is 0.3% of Victoria's total; median age Horsham 41, Victoria 38¹
- Total HRCC population 2021 Census – 20,429² compared to Victoria 6.503 million
- Percentage of population aged 0-10 is slightly less than rest of Victoria and the percentage aged in older years, above the state average.

Projected population change HRCC



Birth rates in Horsham



Our birth rates

After an increase during COVID 19, the overall early years population in HRCC is predicted to fall slightly over the next decade.³

Birthrates dropped to 208 in 2020, before increasing to 240 and 244 over the following two years during COVID 19. They are predicted to decline slightly in coming years (see table).

With ABS predictions based on historical data, these figures don't take into account potential population increases (including increased births) that may eventuate from several mining and renewable energy projects scheduled to begin over the next decade. These developments could potentially create 1000s of jobs and construction of hundreds of new houses.⁴

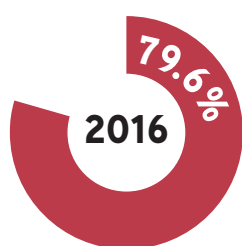
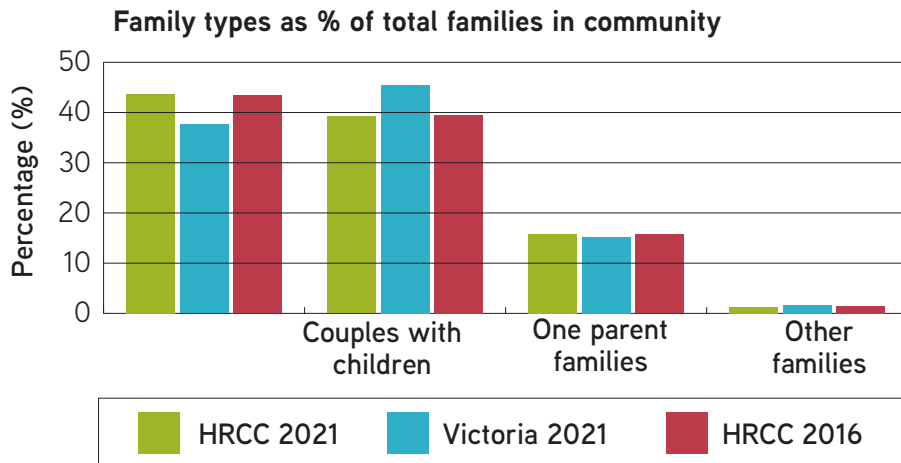
The average number of births over the past 9 years was 234 annually.

In Horsham 13.8% of women aged 20-24 have given birth, compared to 5.4% across all of Victoria. The rate of young women in HRCC aged 15-19, who have given birth has dropped from 22 in 2011 to 9 in 2021.⁵

What HRCC families look like

HRCC has about 6% less couples with children, and 6 % more couples with no children, than the rest of Victoria. It has just over half a percent more one-parent families than the State.⁶

The percentage of both couples with and without children has changed very little since 2016.



Both parents born in Australia 2016.



Both parents born in Australia 2021.

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Nearly 80 per cent of HRCC people had both parents born in Australia, which is nearly double the 42.4% figure for Victoria in 2021. More than 95% of households speak only English.

Horsham continues to be a destination for new migrant arrivals with 7.6% of the non-Australian born residents arriving in the previous two years. The population includes 183 people from India and 114 from the Philippines. It is critical to provide support to new families to reduce their isolation, which can be linked to poor health outcomes.

First Nations Children

- Aged 0-4 years – 44 or 12.2% of ATSI population in HRCC
- Aged 5-14 years 92 or 27% of ATSI population in HRCC
- The median ATSI age in HRCC is 21 years, compared to Victoria, 24 years⁷



1.9% of HRCC's population are ATSI

Our children's health

A child's first 1000 days are critical for their future. Poor nutritional, mental and physical health can all impact on a child's ability to learn, live to full potential and be resilient throughout life.

A total of 97.7% of HRCC children were fully immunised at two years, and 97.5% at five years in 2018. However the LGA still has high rates of smoking in pregnancy. During 2017-2019 16.3% of women smoked in pregnancy, compared to the Victorian average of 8%.⁸



Our family experiences

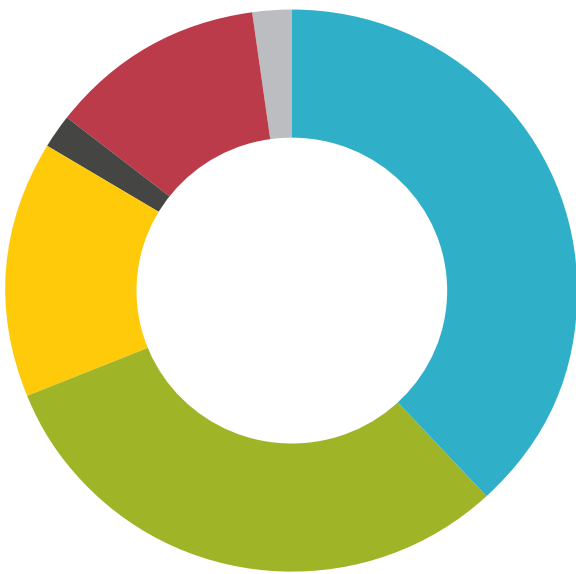
Family life, living conditions and any traumatic experiences all have lasting impacts on children and their health, wellbeing and learning throughout life.

HRCC rates slightly below average for economic disadvantage, economic resources, advantage and disadvantage and education and occupation on the Socio-Economic Indexes For Areas (SEIFA) Index⁹. As in many towns there are pockets of greater advantage and disadvantages throughout the municipality. The number of people with a bachelor's degree is nearly half the level of Victoria and it has less people working as professionals than Victoria. Median weekly household income is \$1351, much less than the Victorian average of \$1759.¹⁰

HRCC continues to experience high rates of family violence (FV). In 2022-23 police reported 592 family incidents in the municipality. In 44.4% of cases a child was present as a witness or a victim. Horsham's incident rate per 100,000 people is 2902, significantly higher than the Victorian average of 1632.

The region now has a designated multi-agency FV response through the Orange Door which supports families and children affected by FV.¹¹

There were higher levels of stress rates for families of children entering school in the municipality than in both Victoria and non-Metro areas: HRCC 15%; non-metro 11.2% and Victoria 9%¹². In 2020 7.1% of HRCC families were low-income welfare dependent and 16.1% of children were living in these families.¹³



Recorded Abuse Types at Incidents

38.2% Verbal Abuse	1.9% Sexual Abuse
30.8% Emotional Abuse	12.2% Other Abuse
14.8% Physical Abuse	2.1% Economic Abuse

Supporting our families

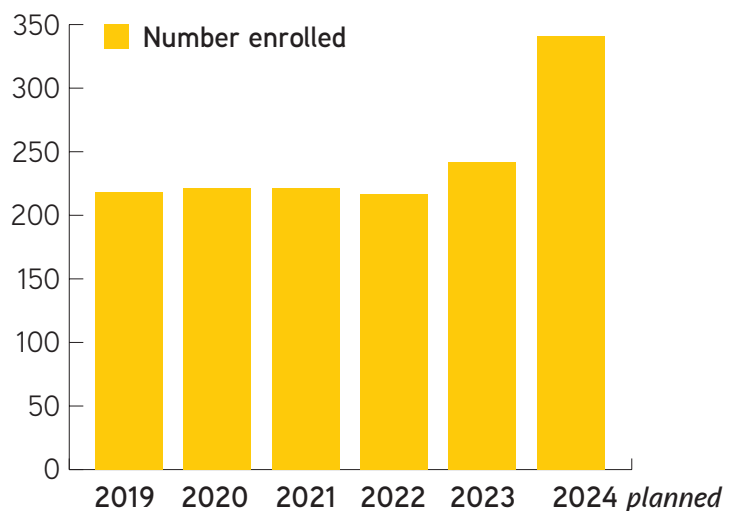
A major issue raised by parents and agencies during our engagement was the challenges in recruiting to vital health, caring, education and support roles for families. The Grampians region has high level needs for roles including counsellors, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, social workers, general practitioners and nurses – including mental health and practice.¹⁴

There are also shortages of childcare places and concerns that increased hours for kindergarten in coming years is expected to create new challenges.

A 2022 By Five report found:

- 300 children on childcare waiting lists across the Wimmera
- 34 job vacancies in early childhood and 84 positions needed to meet regional demand¹⁵

HRCC total children enrolled in 3 and 4 year old kindergarten

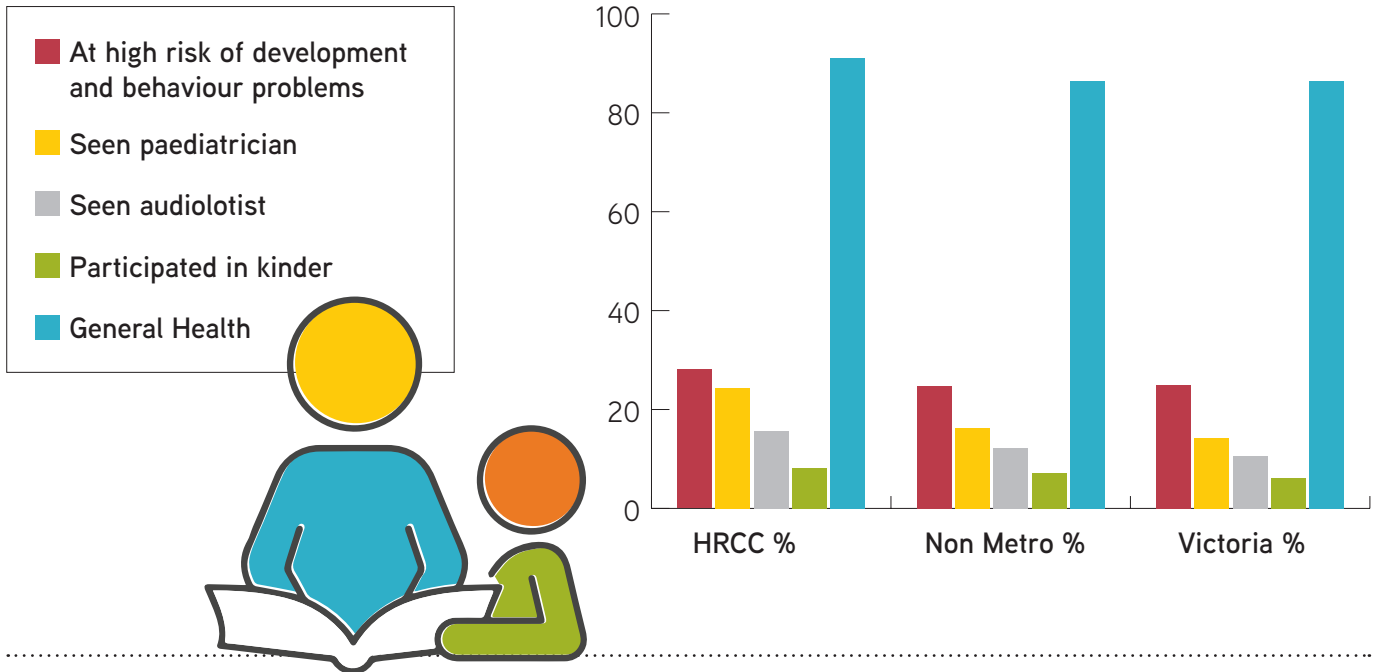


Our children's learning

Lack of support staff and services can create major challenges for young people's ability to thrive at both kindergarten and school.

Speech and language concerns on school entry were identified for 20% of HRCC children compared to 16.4% in Victoria.

There were more children in prep with intellectual, developmental delay or a learning disability - HRCC 12.6%; Non-metro 9.3%; Victoria 8.2%. The municipality also had higher levels than Victoria and Australia for children with 1 or 2 vulnerabilities in prep.¹⁶ There were no significant changes from the 2015 results.¹⁷



Community supports

Being part of a supportive and welcoming community can have positive influences on children. HRCC is committed to social connection and providing effective open spaces for children, as outlined in the various strategic planning documents. It also boasts higher than average volunteering rates.

Volunteering in the past 12 months

HRCC 24.1% Victoria 14.2%¹⁸

Unpaid care to other children

HRCC 7.7% compared to Victoria 5.5%¹⁹



Data reference

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