



**Sunraysia Community Health Services Ltd**

# **PROTECTING VICTORIA'S VULNERABLE CHILDREN INQUIRY SUBMISSION**

**29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2011**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Childhood trauma, abuse and neglect are among the most significant factors impacting on child health, well-being and development. Abuse experienced in childhood can result in a wide range of long and short-term consequences. In addition to physical harm, abused children can develop ongoing mental health and behavioural issues (Early Childhood Community Profile, 2006).

According to the 2008 Social Indicators Report, 2007 Department of Human Services data indicate that Mildura region had a rate of 17.2/1000 substantiated cases of child maltreatment, compared with 5.7/1000 for Melbourne. Hence, the rate continues to exceed three times the state average.

As a consequence of this finding, several local agencies, whose core business included a key aim of reducing the incident of child abuse and/or the number of re-notifications of child maltreatment to the Department of Human Services' Child Protection Unit (DHSCPU), joined together to form the Child Safety & Wellbeing Operational Group (CSWOG). This group includes representatives from DHS Child Protection, MRCC Community Development, Maternal and Child Health, Northern Mallee Family Services (NMFS), Sunraysia Community Health Services Inc., the Best Start program, DHS Office of Housing (OOH) and the Victoria Police (VicPol).

An initial aim of the CSWOG was to collect and analyse data to gain insight into what factors contributed to the increased rate of substantiated child maltreatment cases in the Mildura region. The CSWOG has focussed on root causes of maltreatment, with the aim of developing a more preventative rather than reactive approach.

One key objective was to undertake a feasibility study in July 2010, to identify the gaps of the current universal, primary and adult parenting/early intervention child service system outlining the preferred course of action through its recommendations. Key agencies were invited through an 'Expression of Interest' process to be the lead agency in further developing the Parenting Unit model and the preparation of a business plan. Sunraysia Community Health Services Inc. (SCHS) is that lead agency and has commenced work through engagement and commitment with relevant key stakeholders.

A Family Centre Reference Group (FCRG) was formed to develop the model. By examining the latest available data of the Mildura Region, and then examining the local well-researched causal and correlational factors underlying child maltreatment, purely focusing on the area encompassing Mildura LGA and plus Robinvale, existing services provision and identified gaps provides a template for a proposed Family Centre model. This project is being conducted at a time of growing demand on limited government funding and concurrent increasing pressure on service providers to demonstrate effectiveness and achievement of service/program objectives.

The key finding from the Feasibility Study was that any future bid to establish a parenting unit in the Mildura and Northern Mallee Primary Care Partnership (NMPCP) catchment is underpinned by a clear articulation of the client base, as well as the required resources and expected outcomes. Central to this is an ability to accurately determine the current (and likely projected) demand for parenting support services, including determination of the number of families requiring support and the type and level of support that is required. These requirements necessitate the

development and consistent application of appropriate, comprehensive and robust assessment protocols and eligibility criteria. In view of the additional needs (e.g. mental health, substance abuse, relationship counselling) that many parents present with, it is suggested that this assessment process should also incorporate identification of these additional needs and facilitation of referral to appropriate supporting services.

One of the important factors in determining the physical location for a parenting unit is that it must be capable of meeting the needs of its **local** community. In looking to the future, there is a view among some stakeholders that at the local government level, thinking about how to best support parents needs to be '**place-based**'. (Feasibility of a Parenting Unit Concept – Final Report)

*We need to work out how local areas can respond to family needs. It's about what's there already and how to integrate additional levels of support to parents*

**Universal family support and parenting services** provide general information, advice and support for all parents. **Targeted services** support parents in meeting the extra, or additional needs of children and young people, when they require more support than universal services can offer.

Similarly, the distinction needs to be made between **preventive services** and **treatment services**, with the former appropriately located in communities where parents live and the latter located on a site that has access to all the required skilled resources and can be reached by parents and their children.

In the Northern Mallee PCP catchment, the issue is to locate the treatment services in a location where the ancillary cultural and emotional supports are not prevented from interacting and supporting the parents and children in the service – such as occurs when services in Bendigo, Melbourne or Adelaide need to be utilised. As most families are already experienced in accessing Mildura for birthing services, is it reasonable to assume that accessing a parent support service in Mildura can be facilitated and achieved?

A **community based** parenting unit is viewed as more appropriate by stakeholders and one which promotes a more holistic approach to service delivery. It is a non-clinical, less formal environment. Many regard the community based workforce as more in touch with the needs of families, better connected with their local communities, and more knowledgeable about other relevant services.

*There will be more trust in the model and it will be more widely accepted if it is community based rather than as part of a hospital...but it can still sit near a hospital.*

Importantly, a community based setting is seen to help break down the stigma associated with the provision of parenting support services and in doing so helps to normalise the process. In turn, such an approach is regarded as facilitating improved service access, better engagement of clients once in the service and ultimately, facilitating more effective outcomes for families. Moreover, a holistic approach is seen as providing an opportunity to identify other relevant issues within the family (e.g. financial hardship, mental health issues, family violence) that can impact upon parenting capability.

**2. *Strategies to enhance early identification of, and intervention targeted at, children and families at risk including the role of adult, universal and primary services. This should include consideration of ways to strengthen the capability of those organisations involved.***

Strategically from an operational/service system perspective, community consultation has resulted in deducing the following significant findings; which are paramount in further developing a service system model which will enhance and strengthen a collective model at adult, universal and primary level of service care.

- Mildura has a high rate of single parent families; 22.8% compared to the rest of Victoria which is 16.9%.
- Substantiated child maltreatment rates for the Mildura area in 2008 continues to exceed three times the state average. (Mildura Social Indicators Report 2008, DHS data 2007)
- Levels of education for single parents in particular are lower than the state average.
- Mildura has one of the highest rates of teenage births to Indigenous women.
- 5.9% of children aged 0-8 years are Indigenous, the second highest rate in the state.
- Non-English speaking families in Mildura are double the rural average.
- 76% of all substantiated child abuse cases in the area involved mothers aged 15-23 years at the birth of the first child.
- The Mildura region has the 3rd highest incidence of family violence in the state of Victoria.
- More than 15% of Australian women and 10% of men will suffer perinatal or postnatal depression. With an annual birth rate of nearly 1000 births in the Mildura region this equates to approximately 150 mothers and 100 fathers (PANDA).
- Mildura has the 4th highest rate of teenage childbearing in the state.
- Teenage Childbearing is often related to increased adverse health, social and economic outcomes for those parents and their children.
- The early childhood community profile in 2006 highlighted that the Mildura area exhibited lower rates of Breast feeding, Maternal & Child Health participation, Kindergarten participation, Literacy skills amongst primary school children.
- Due to the high rates of family mobility and transience social cohesion is affected, creating isolation and lack of support for families.

The above statistics are indicators of adverse health, social and economic outcomes for children in childhood and later life.

(As reported by Child Maltreatment Operational Group statistical report November 2008 and Mildura Social Indicators report by Tony Vinson, 2008.)

**2.1 What is the appropriate role of adult, primary and universal services in responding to the needs of children and families at risk of child abuse and neglect? Please provide comment in relation to any of the services listed below or any additional services that you regard as relevant to this Term of Reference.**

From the finding of the Mildura Social Indicators report (2008), which led to the commissioning of the “Feasibility of a Parent Unit Concept Report” (2010), a Family Centre Reference Group has now been established which is in the process of developing a proposed service model based upon well founded and supportive evidence that will build, strengthen and enhance on indentified service delivery gaps.

- Established a sustainable model, incorporating existing services based on a collectively partnership agreements across universal and primary sectors.
- Referral pathways consolidation.
- Build upon the comprehensive skill base in the identification of children and families ‘at risk’ as pertaining to submission cohort.
- Under the Community Engagement Framework Governance, scope exists to increase the capacity of current and new partnerships in the provision of family based systems in indentifying and assisting in the prevention of at the risk cohort’ i.e. preventative health promotion, link education sector to Mental Health.

**2.2 How might the capacity of such services and the capability of organisations providing those services be enhance to fulfill this role?**

- Proposed Service Model of Delivery would identify a central point of contact therefore consolidating the following processes: intake; referral; and follow-up care co ordination. This is a very important point for vulnerable families when entering into a service system, which at times may inhibit presentation. With this proposed model in place and a skilled workforce , this will allow for capacity building, streamlining of services and enhance main streaming of secondary consultant into the service system.
- Initially a project worker will be employed to identify and work along side Northern Mallee Primary Care Partnership (NMPCP) to further enhance existing partnerships and build upon new alliances with relevant stakeholders. This can be transferrable to accommodated any shift in Federal Government policy.

- Consistent training across sectors, which many demonstrated examples exist at a local level e.g. (NMPCP approach to ASSIST training, Bridges to Poverty, Service Co-ordination training etc.)
- Across stakeholder groups there was a broad agreement for a need for improved integration, coordination and collaboration between existing families support services. Together with the sharing of information and consistency in service, practice, effective service coordination and integration is recognized as important in achieving the best outcomes for families

***2.3 What strategies should be given priority in relation to immediate, medium and longer term priorities?***

- Immediate – Service co-ordination, knowledge of this particular aspect of the service system
- Medium – Establish a sustainable centralized Family Centre model for initial contact and care co-ordination in a Primary Community setting which incorporates existing services based on an integrated partnership model. Endorsed by the Community Engagement Framework
- Long – Family Centre to deliver services that are currently not provided locally (i.e. Tweddle), as well as allow co-location of services (i.e. C+MH & immunization).

FROM LITTLE THINGS BIG THINGS GROW

***2.4 What are the most cost-effective strategies to enhance early identification of, and intervention targeted at, children and families at risk?***

- Encourage shared communication (when appropriate) across sectors ie Courts, Child Protection, Drug Treatment, Midwifery, C+MH.
- Raise profile of this overlooked area of the service system, and the benefits in improving the current service system.
- Raise the skill level of staff involved at any first point of contact.

# **APPENDIX 1**

## **Mildura Social Indicators Report 2008**

### **Community Engagement Framework**

Mildura Rural City Council

Researchers: Dr Haydn Aarons & Brigitte Glossop

Principal Consultant: Professor Tony Vinson AM

# Mildura Social Indicators Report 2008



**COMMUNITY**  
Engagement Framework

Researchers: Dr Haydn Aarons & Brigitte Glossop  
Principal Consultant: Professor Tony Vinson AM



Mildura Rural City Council



## FOREWORD

It is not uncommon for local authorities to aspire to build strong, healthy communities. There are three things that distinguish Mildura Rural City Council's ambitions in this regard and which provide grounds for confidence that it will be especially successful in its endeavours. They are:

- (i) the integration of community development planning with a range of local government functions rather than positioning community concerns as an abstract pursuit on the margins of 'real' local government business;
- (ii) the creation of planning bodies that bring together community stakeholders and local government to identify regional strengths and deficiencies and to plan remedial action where needed; and
- (iii) using systematically gathered data, to guide the choice of community priorities and community strengthening activities and to monitor progress in achieving community objectives.



The present publication testifies to the seriousness of Council's commitment to basing its social planning on tangible evidence. In 2006 *Mildura Social Indicators* presented data on the general profile of the region, the presence of different forms of social distress, health problems and strengths, community safety, the structure of the regional economy, the educational progress of young people and qualifications of adults, and the use made of cultural repositories (essentially the Art Gallery and local libraries).

The picture that emerged from that data review has assisted in the region's dealings with other levels of government and has attracted the interest of other regional councils, particularly in Victoria. More importantly, the data has encouraged discussion between different local organisations and branches of government services leading to a range of new, collaborative community initiatives. Some of these are aimed at reducing what are considered to be problems of one kind or another; others relate more to expanding life opportunities where previously they have been in short supply or not accessed by sections of the Mildura community. As I prepare this *Foreword* I have by me a publication titled *Hope Project, 2008* which testifies to the imaginativeness of the Arts Centre Board, a number of local bodies and especially Mildura Primary School in exhibiting and publishing the work of Koori students. The success of this initiative has brought joy to many people; the project also exemplifies ways in which hitherto under-utilised collaborations can enrich people's lives and build organisational and person-to-person connections for further community endeavours.

It was always hoped that the sequel to the 2006 indicators would introduce refinements to the initial collection and the local La Trobe University staff have done an excellent job in this regard. *Mildura Social Indicators, 2008* is a tribute to the University's professionalism and provides an opportunity to check the accuracy of the picture obtained in 2006 and note any new insights afforded by the data. I have no doubt that the document will stimulate continuing constructive efforts to attain Council's ultimate goal of "Making this the most liveable, people friendly community in Australia."

Tony Vinson  
Professor Emeritus; Patron, Mallee Family Care

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Research Notes**

This version of the Mildura Social Indicators has seen some changes to the measures that made up the indicators in the 2006 version. Some measures have been excluded and others included as better and more appropriate data became available. Other indicators have been omitted from this latest document but may re-enter the study as more reliable statistics become available in the future. The major differences are listed below and other minor instances of change are described throughout the text where relevant.

### *Omissions*

- “Low Birth Weight” – data not statistically significant at this point in time
- “Exercise” – data not statistically significant at this point in time
- Section 5 “Community Safety” – extant measures replaced with “Crimes Against the Person”, “Crimes Against Property”, and “Road Trauma”

### *Changes*

- “Social Cohesion” – change in the type of data collected, exclusion of the ‘sociable recreation’ measure, replaced with Volunteering and Unpaid Assistance to Those With a Disability, two new measures from the 2006 census.
- “Occupational Accidents” – previous data included “all” farm and non-farm accidents measured against labour force participation. 2008 data now measures only accidents that are occupationally related.
- Data for the “Unemployment” section (New Start allowance) and “Disability/Sickness Payment” was restricted in accordance with Centrelink’s privacy policies.
- “Computer and Internet Use/Access” measure replaced with Internet Access and Connection Type, two new measures from the 2006 census.
- “Incomplete Education/Training 17 – 24 year olds” has included those who have completed year 12 but are not in any other training or education.
- “Library Borrowings” – has been changed to measure use of the library through library visits.

### *Localities*

Readers should note that some of the localities in this iteration of the Mildura Social Indicators have changed slightly since the first publication in 2006. This iteration has carried over many of the previous geographic locales from the first publication in the interests of replication and added new ones so that there now exists some overlap between localities.

- “Greater Red Cliffs” is the large aggregation of localities inclusive of “Red Cliffs Proper” a number of townships and farming districts indicated by the plain yellow colouring on the map. Greater Red Cliffs also includes the entire locales of the Millewa and the Mallee Track, which appear as independent localities within the study.
- “Red Cliffs Proper” includes the township of Red Cliffs and immediate surrounds.
- Similarly, Nangiloc/Colignan is also incorporated within the Mildura Central category, while appearing as a separate locale. This is also in the interest of replication.
- Other locale categories, for special measures such as occupational categories (Mildura – Central and Mildura – Rural) follow the pattern of the previous Mildura Social Indicators that set these localities to avoid unnecessarily complicated data. The locales are roughly divided between more rural (Mildura – Rural) and town areas (Mildura – Central).

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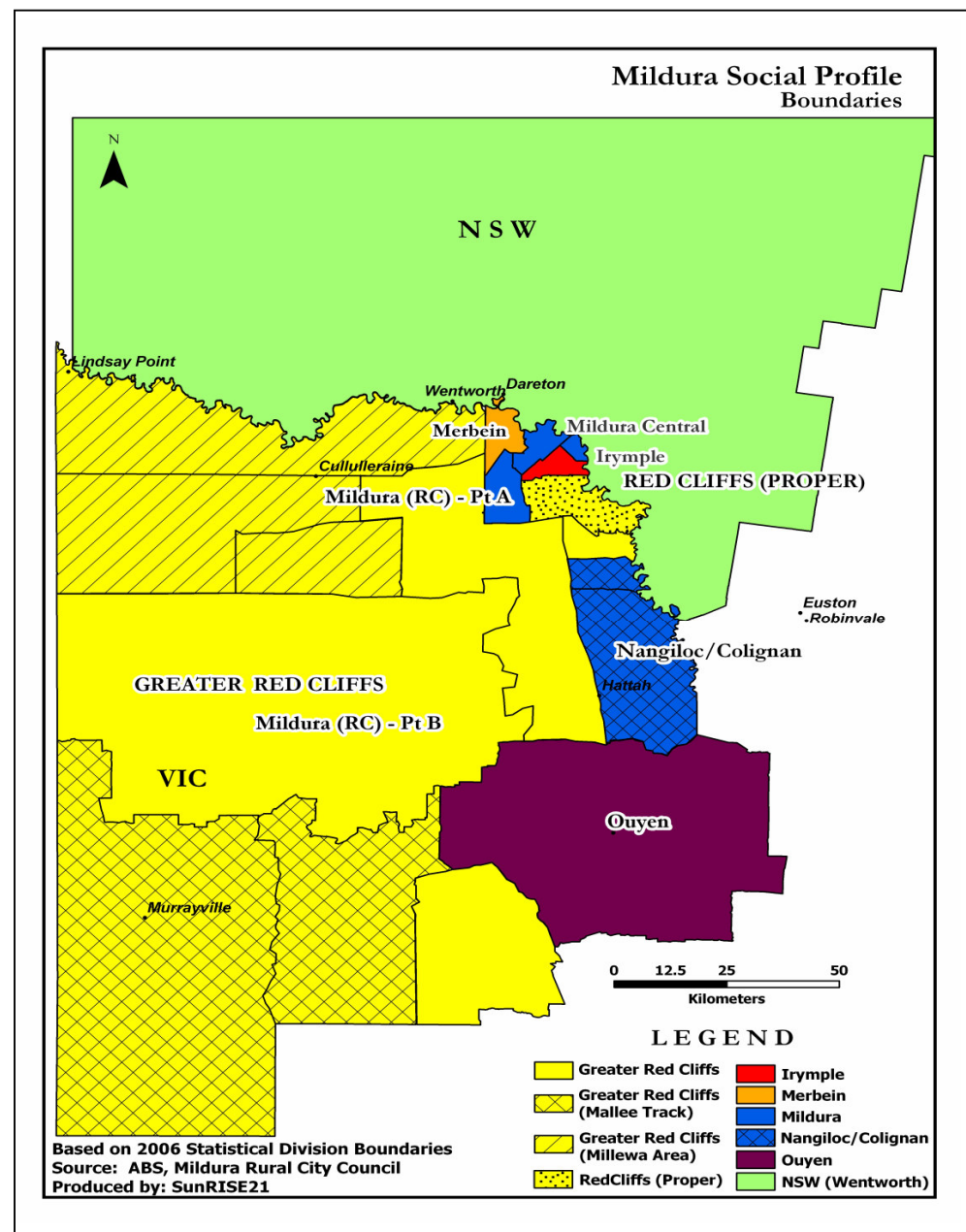
<b>INDICATOR</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>
<i>1. Overview of the Region</i>	
Age/Gender profile	ABS
An Aging Population	ABS
Backgrounds of Arrivals	ABS
Family Structures	ABS
Country of Birth	ABS
Stability of Population	ABS
<i>2. Social Distress</i>	
Family Income	ABS
Rental Stress	ABS
Home Purchase Stress	ABS
Lone Person Households	ABS
<i>3. Health</i>	
Childhood Accidents	Monash University
Immunisation Cover	Medicare
Disability/Sickness Payment	Centrelink
Occupational Accidents	Monash University
Psychiatric Hospital Admissions	DHS
<i>4. Community Engagement</i>	
Individuals Isolated by Language	ABS
Profile of Group	DIMIA
Education	DIMIA
Social Cohesion	ABS
<i>5. Community Safety</i>	
Child Maltreatment	Department of Human Services, Victoria
Crimes Against the Person	Police Victoria, Mildura
Crimes Against Property	Police Victoria, Mildura
Road Trauma	Police Victoria, Mildura
<i>6. Economic</i>	
Occupations	ABS
Occupational Categories	ABS
Types of Businesses	ABS
Employment Within Business Categories	ABS
Long Term Unemployment	Centrelink
Unemployment	ABS
Taxable Income	Australian Tax Office
Tourism	Mildura Tourism Inc.
Internet Connection/Access	ABS
<i>7. Education</i>	
Attendance at Pre-School	ABS
Incomplete Education/Training (17-24 Year Olds)	ABS
Overall Education	ABS
Post Schooling Qualifications	ABS
<i>8. Cultural Indicators</i>	
Art Gallery	Mildura Art Gallery
Library Visits and Membership	Mildura Council's Library Service
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While many of the indicators presented did not report substantial change since the first Mildura Social Indicators, the 2008 version has witnessed a few key changes that may warrant closer attention. As the Mildura Social Indicators is a document that relies solely on quantitative data, we summarize the main changes in terms of the more substantial increases and decreases of rate, proportion and or amount, as a quick guide to the key areas of interest.

- **An Ageing Population:** the rate of residents in the region who are 80 years and over has increased by 14% from 1996 to 2006
- **Rental Stress:** the rate of households that are experiencing rental stress has increased since 2001 by between 3.7% and 14.7% as an aggregate range inclusive of all the localities
- **Childhood Accidents:** continue to climb for every year studied and the municipality still experiences rates over twice that of Melbourne and Regional Victoria
- **Farm Accidents:** significant reduction, however the municipality overall is still above of Regional Victoria
- **Psychiatric Hospital Admissions:** a seemingly significant reduction, but really a reflection of the changes in the provision of mental health services since the first Mildura Social Indicators (2006)
- **Community Engagement:** the region saw an increase in arrivals from Afghanistan and India. Most new arrivals from overseas are Muslim.
- **Volunteering** is significantly higher in the region than in Melbourne, significantly higher in more rural localities (such as the Mallee Track) than in built up areas (such as Mildura Central)
- **Types of Businesses:** the percentage of agricultural businesses has doubled in Mildura Central and Property and Business Services have dramatically increased across the region.
- **Employment within Business Categories:** some significant drift away from agricultural work throughout the region, margins greatest in Greater Red Cliffs and Wentworth.
- **Incomplete Education/Training:** just on a third (32.9%) of the municipality's 17 – 24 year olds have not completed year 12 or are attending school, university, or TAFE.

Zone	Locality	Postcode
Irymple	Irymple	3498
Merbein	Merbein	3505
Merbein	Merbein South	3505
Mildura Central	Mildura	3500
Mildura Central	Nichols Point	3501
Mildura Central	Koorlong	3501
Mildura Central	Hattah	3501
Mildura Central	Kiamal	3501
Mildura Central (in NSW)	Gol Gol	2738
Mildura Central (in NSW)	Buronga	2739
Mildura Central (in NSW)	Dareton	2717
Mildura Central/Nangiloc Colignan	Colignan	3494
Mildura Central/Nangiloc Colignan	Nangiloc	3494
Wentworth	Wentworth	2648
Ouyen	Ouyen	3490
Ouyen/Mallee Track	Walpeup	3507
Greater Red Cliffs/Red Cliffs Proper	Red Cliffs	3496
Greater Red Cliffs	Carwarp	3494
Greater Red Cliffs	Iraak	3494
Greater Red Cliffs	Cardross	3496
Greater Red Cliffs/Millewa	Cullulleraine	3496
Greater Red Cliffs/Millewa	Meringur	3496
Greater Red Cliffs	Merrinee	3496
Greater Red Cliffs/Millewa	Werrimull	3496
Greater Red Cliffs	Linga	3509
Greater Red Cliffs/Mallee Track	Underbool	3509
Greater Red Cliffs/Mallee Track	Cowangie	3506
Greater Red Cliffs	Yelta	3505
Greater Red Cliffs	Yarrara	3496
Greater Red Cliffs	Karadoc	3496
Greater Red Cliffs	Nowingi	3494
Greater Red Cliffs	Boinka	3490
Greater Red Cliffs	Tutye	3490
Greater Red Cliffs/Mallee Track	Murrayville	3512
Greater Red Cliffs	Patchewollock	3491
Greater Red Cliffs	Baring	3491



## SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF REGION

### AGE / GENDER PROFILE

The distribution of males and females across Mildura's sub-regions is, as it was for the 2006 social indicators report, mostly within the range + or – 2% of Regional Victoria's profile (49.2% males and 50.8 females). There exist some exceptions however. Again Wentworth is slightly above this range with 51.9% males and 48.1% females. New regions added to the Mildura Social Indicators for 2008 Mallee Track (51.4% males and 48.6% females) Millewa (53.2% males and 46.8% females) and Nangiloc/Colignan (57.4% males and 42.6% females) all to various degrees display a larger proportion of males to females also.

Overall the age distribution for the region follows a similar pattern to the pattern reported in the 2006 indicators with Ouyen again displaying the most variance against the sub-regions, regional Victoria and Melbourne. The Mallee Track also demonstrates a similar pattern to Ouyen throughout.

The range of the percentages of toddlers (under 5 years of age) has remained the same since 2006 from 4.8% to 7.9% to 3.9% to 7% but this range overall has slightly decreased. The Mallee Track has the smallest percentage of children under 5 (3.9%) and conversely the highest percentage of older people in the region (23.2%), closely followed by Ouyen (22.4%). With the exception of Greater Red Cliffs (7.3% - 5.1%), Ouyen (4.8% - 5.4%), and Merbein (7.2% - 5.5%) which all demonstrate some changes since the 2006 report, the remaining sub-regions were more or less consistent with regional Victoria and Melbourne for the very youngest age category. For the school age categories (5 – 19 years) the latest pattern is more or less consistent with the pattern displayed in the 2006 report. But for the Mallee Track (20.5%), again Ouyen (21.0%) has the lowest percentage of people in this age group in the region. Merbein (25.1%) and Irymple (26.2%) were again at the upper end of the range.

The percentage of the population in Regional Victoria aged 65 years or over has increased to 16% from 14.2% in the 2006 report. Greater Red Cliffs is the only sub-region in the district to be within + or – 1% of the figure for regional Victoria with an increase of 3.5% from the 2006 indicator. The other regions, with the extreme exceptions of the Mallee Track (23.2%) and Ouyen (22.4% up from 19.5%) demonstrate figures closer to the Melbourne figure and below, well below in the case of Nangiloc/Colignan (8.4%), with the proportions of other localities, that have not changed significantly, falling between Regional Victoria and Melbourne. In the middle category of 20 – 44 years Ouyen (23.0% from 27.4%) again, along with the Mallee Track (24.1%) has the lowest proportion of 20 to 44 year olds. For 45 – 64 year olds Ouyen however ranks 5<sup>th</sup> behind other regions and is much closer to the regional Victorian figure than it was in the 2006 report. Again Ouyen and the Mallee Track have the greatest proportion of people in the middle to later stages of life.

Of the over 65's the number of women is proportionally higher than men in all of the localities in the region with the exception of Nangiloc/Colignan which has over double the percentage of males to females, a finding that has to be accompanied with some caution due to the very low numbers in that category.

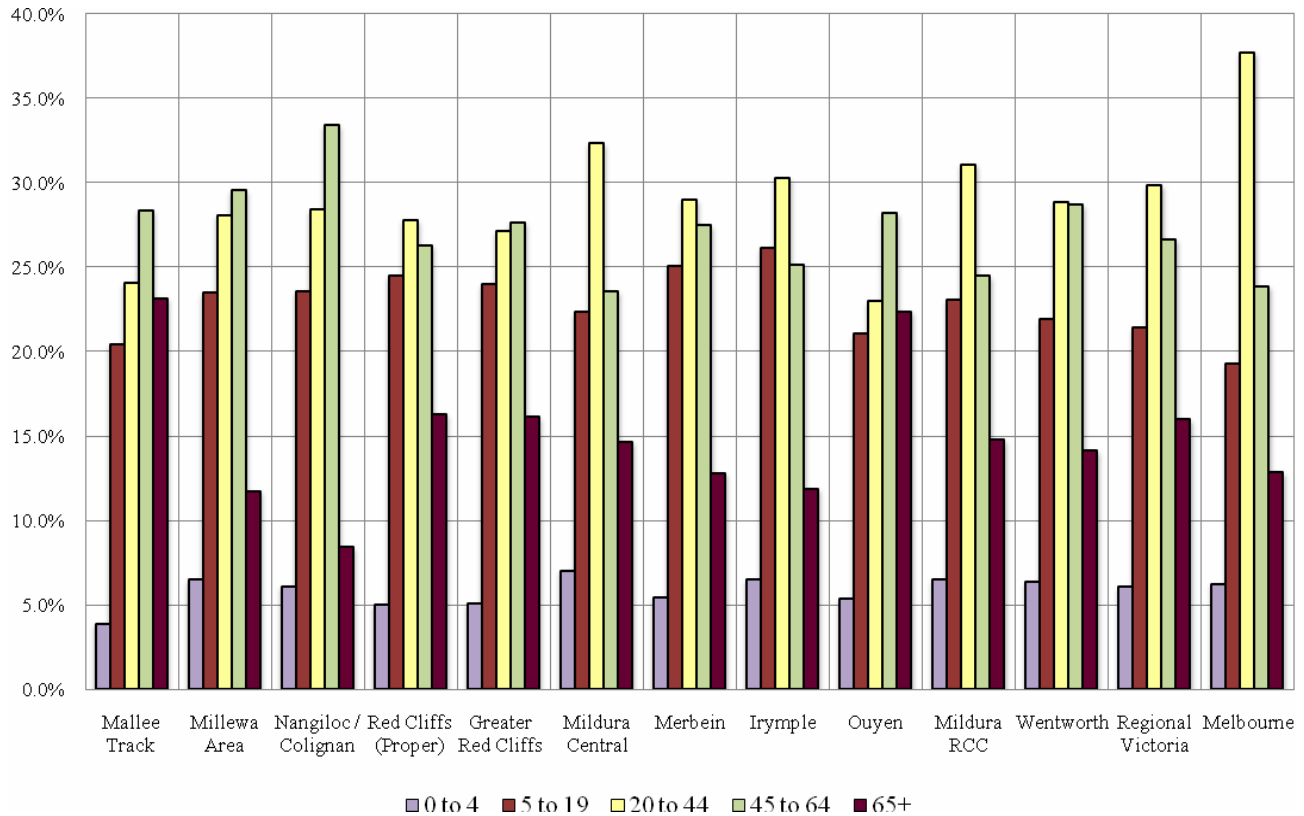
TABLE 2: AGE DISTRIBUTION ACROSS MILDURA LOCALITIES

	Mallee Track	Millewa Area	Nangiloc/Colignan	Red Cliffs (Proper)	Greater Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irymple	Ouyen	Mildura RCC	Wentworth	Regional Victoria	Melbourne
0 to 4	3.9%	6.5%	6.1%	5.0%	5.1%	7.0%	5.5%	6.5%	5.4%	6.5%	6.4%	6.1%	6.3%
5 to 19	20.5%	23.5%	23.6%	24.5%	24.0%	22.4%	25.1%	26.2%	21.0%	23.1%	21.9%	21.4%	19.3%
20 to 44	24.1%	28.1%	28.4%	27.8%	27.2%	32.3%	29.0%	30.3%	23.0%	31.1%	28.9%	29.9%	37.7%
45 to 64	28.4%	29.6%	33.4%	26.3%	27.7%	23.6%	27.5%	25.2%	28.2%	24.5%	28.7%	26.7%	23.9%
65+	23.2%	11.7%	8.4%	16.3%	16.1%	14.7%	12.8%	11.9%	22.4%	14.8%	14.1%	16.0%	12.8%
Total	772	477	605	4,598	6,828	35,608	4,763	5,739	1,492	49,817	6,780	1,333,437	3,592,592

Source: Table B04 2006 Census of Population and Housing



FIGURE 1: AGE DISTRIBUTION ACROSS MILDURA LOCALITIES



Source: Table B04 2006 Census of Population and Housing

TABLE 3: GENDER DISTRIBUTION ACROSS MILDURA LOCALITIES

	Mallee Track	Millewa Area	Nangiloc/Colignan	Red Cliffs (Proper)	Greater Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irymple	Ouyen	Mildura RCC	Wentworth	Regional Victoria	Melbourne
Males	51.4%	53.2%	57.4%	49.3%	49.9%	48.5%	50.4%	50.4%	50.4%	48.9%	51.9%	49.2%	49.0%
Females	48.6%	46.8%	42.6%	50.7%	50.1%	51.5%	49.6%	49.6%	49.6%	51.1%	48.1%	50.8%	51.0%
Total Persons	772	477	605	4,598	6,828	35,608	4,763	5,739	1,492	49,817	6,780	1,333,437	3,592,590

Source: Table B04 2006 Census of Population and Housing

## AN AGING POPULATION

The proportion of Mildura residents aged 80 years and over for the decade between 1996 and 2006 has increased steeply from 42% to 56.3%. The proportion of those residents aged 85 years and over has also increased by over 10% throughout this decade. Mildura residents aged 80 years and over make up 4% of the total population.

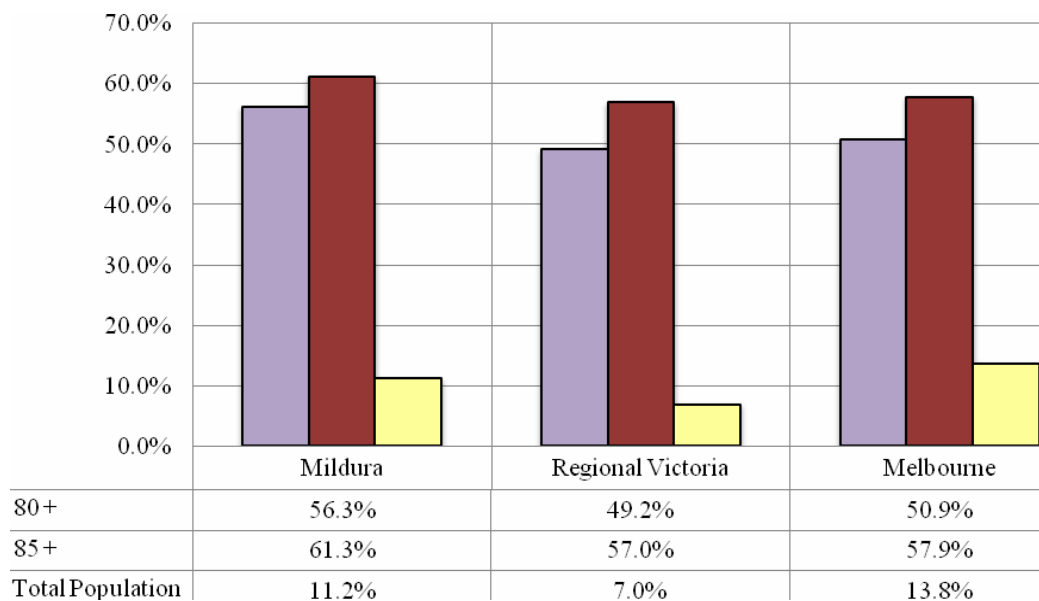
TABLE 4: TEN YEAR COMPARISON OF RESIDENTS AGED 80+ & 85+ YEARS OF AGE

	1996	2006	Increase
80 years +	1,262 persons	1,972 persons	56.3%
85 years +	532 persons	859 persons	61.5%
All ages	44,801 persons	49,818 persons	11.2%

Source: Table c94 2006 Census of Population and Housing; Table B03 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

A substantial change from the 2006 report is the rate of increase of the proportion of people aged over 80 years of age residing in Mildura now exceeds that of both Regional Victoria and Melbourne perhaps increasing demand for services to the elderly.

FIGURE 2: COMPARISON OF RATE OF INCREASE BETWEEN 2001 AND 2006 CENSUSES X AGE GROUPS



## BACKGROUNDS OF ARRIVALS

### Age

From 2001 to 2006, 7934 people of all ages took up residence in Mildura Municipality. This represents an increase of around 17% from the years 1996 to 2001. A similar proportion of people arrived in Mildura from other states and territories (46.2%) to the previous report (45.2%). The remainder arrived from overseas (8%, an increase of 3% from 2001). Considering age groups, 84.4% of those who took up residence in Mildura Municipality within the last five years were under 55 years of age compared with 67.2% of the longer term Mildura residents, a comparable rate to 2001 (86.4%). 15.6% of the new arrivals from 2001 to 2006 were 55 years and older compared with 32.7% of longer term residents (up from 13.6% in 2001). 3.4% of arrivals were 75 years old (up from 2.3% in 2001) or over while 8.4% of the longer term residents were 75 years of age and over. The increase in aged residents is again a local phenomenon.

### Income

This section is based on incomes of longer term Mildura residents and recent arrivals to the region who lived outside the region in 2001. Again a higher proportion of local residents (69%) had incomes below \$600 than people who lived outside the region in 2001, with the exception of those who lived in other regions of Victoria five years earlier, excluding Melbourne (59.2%). The overall proportion of those in the region who have incomes below \$600 a week has fallen since the 2006 social indicators (averaged out at 73.8% in 2001 compared with 65.7% in 2006). Conversely the proportion of people earning over \$1000 a week has increased overall (averaged out at 7.4% in 2001 compared with 12.8% in 2006). Again a higher proportion of longer term residents displayed higher rates of lower incomes (69%) than recent arrivals from Melbourne (59.2%) or overseas (64.6%).

TABLE 5: INDIVIDUAL WEEKLY INCOMES IN 2006 X PLACE OF RESIDENCE IN 2001

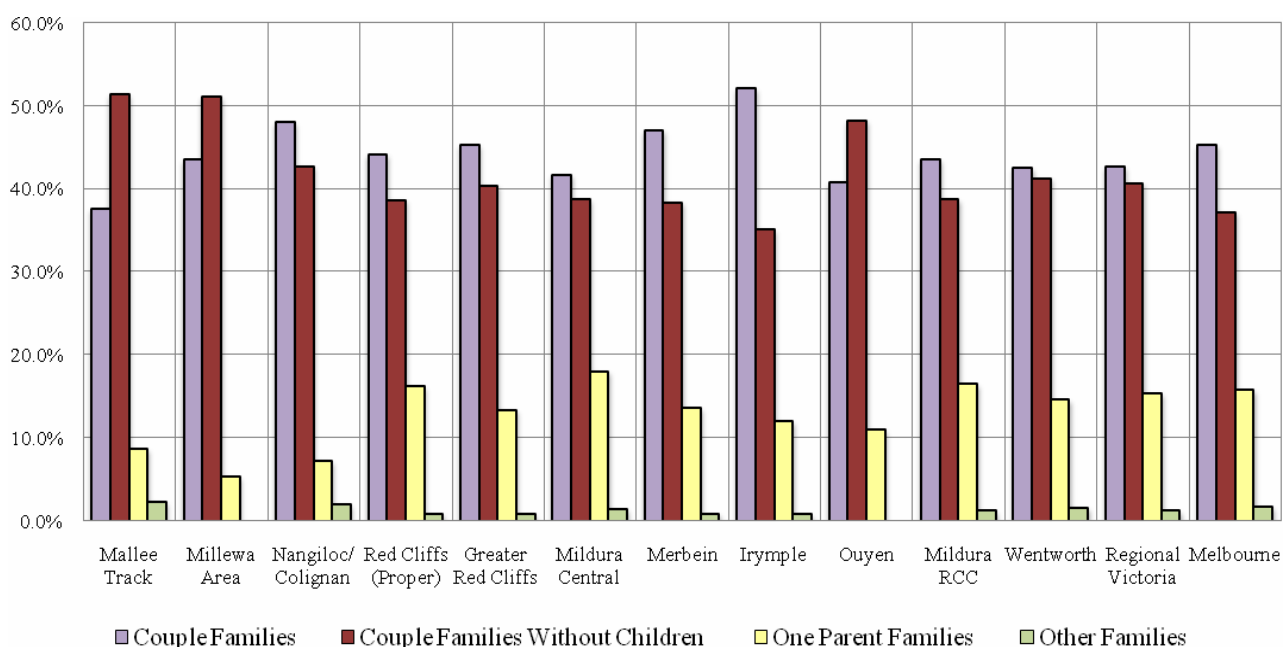
	<b>Below \$600.0</b>	<b>\$600-\$999.0</b>	<b>\$1,000 +</b>
Mildura	69.0%	21.0%	10.0%
Other states	63.6%	23.0%	13.4%
Melbourne	59.2%	24.9%	15.9%
Overseas	64.6%	18.6%	16.8%
Elsewhere	72.4%	19.8%	7.8%

Source: 2006 Census of Housing and Population – Special Run

## FAMILY STRUCTURES

In the 2006 report the type of family structure for Ouyen residents (46.7% couple without children) reflected the middle to late stage of life that many residents in that locality had attained. Ouyen is again amongst the localities that have the highest proportion of couple families without children (48.3%) but is behind Mallee Track (51.4%) an area that is also characterised by a higher proportion of people in the later stages of life, and Millewa residents (51.1%). The proportion of couple families without children in Wentworth (41.3%) is closer to the regional Victorian figure (40.7%) than it was in the previous report (43.3% compared with 38.9%) reflecting a general increase in the proportion of older people in regional Victoria. Greater Red Cliffs (45.3%), Irymple (52.1%), and Merbein (47.1%) again have higher proportions of families with children than does regional Victoria. Nangiloc/Colignan (48%) also claims a higher proportion of this type of family structure consistent with its higher proportion of people in the 20 – 44 year category. Mildura Central and the Municipality as a whole (Mildura RCC) again have a slightly increased proportion of single parent families than regional Victoria (18.1% and 16.5% to 15.4% compared with 17.1% and 15% to 14.6% for the 2006 report).

FIGURE 3: FAMILY STRUCTURES ACROSS MILDURA



Source: Table B24 2006 Census of Population and Housing

## COUNTRY OF BIRTH

The country of birth of the region's residents has displayed little significant change since the last report with only minor fluctuations due to some arrivals to the district of people born overseas. Figures for the Australian born are very near to or above the figure for Regional Victoria and again well above Melbourne. Residents in the Mallee Track and the Millewa who were born in Australia are above the figure for Regional Victoria also. Of interest is the figure for Nangiloc/Colignan, a significant minority of whose residents were born elsewhere overseas. This locality has a marginally lower proportion of residents born in Australia compared with the other localities in the region.

TABLE 6: COUNTRY OF BIRTH BY LOCALITIES

	Mallee Track	Millewa Area	Nangiloc/Colignan	Red Cliffs (Proper)	Greater Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irymple	Ouyen	Mildura RCC	Wentworth	Regional Victoria	Melbourne
Total	769	474	606	4,598	6,825	35,615	4,763	5,739	1,493	49,817	6,780	1,333,438	3,592,588
Australia	90.1%	89.7%	75.7%	86.0%	88.1%	83.2%	86.7%	85.6%	90.2%	84.2%	87.9%	84.3%	64.2%
United Kingdom	2.7%	1.3%	1.2%	2.3%	2.1%	1.9%	1.6%	1.3%	1.7%	1.9%	1.7%	3.7%	4.6%
Italy	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	1.2%	1.5%	1.4%	2.3%	0.0%	1.5%	1.0%	0.7%	2.1%
Turkey	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	1.2%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.4%
New Zealand	0.5%	0.6%	3.5%	0.9%	0.7%	1.1%	1.0%	0.9%	0.5%	1.0%	0.8%	0.9%	1.5%
Greece	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%	0.2%	0.5%	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%	0.2%	1.5%
Germany	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.5%	0.6%
Croatia	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%
Polynesia	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.7%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.1%	0.8%
India	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	1.4%
Other	6.6%	5.9%	17.2%	7.9%	6.8%	9.2%	7.7%	7.8%	7.4%	8.7%	7.6%	9.2%	22.6%
Indigenous	3	16	18	75	108	1,549	137	72	12	1,432	612	15,924	14,127
Indigenous %	0.4%	3.4%	3.0%	1.6%	1.6%	4.3%	2.9%	1.3%	0.8%	2.9%	9.0%	1.2%	0.4%

Source: Table c25c 2006 Census of Population and Housing; Table c128 2006 Census of Population and Housing

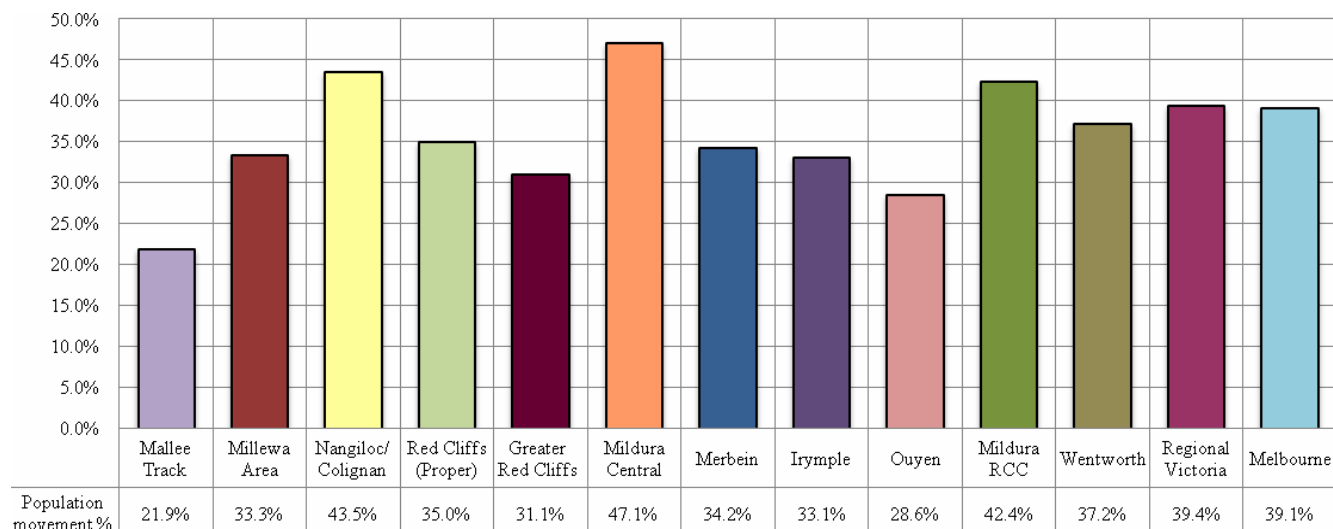
## STABILITY OF POPULATION

According to Vinson and Cooper<sup>1</sup> the residential stability of households is a contributory factor to communication and connection between people. Non-stability and a particular level of household movement, the authors add, affect social cohesion. Consistent with the previous report the table below reports data for individuals and not households. Most of the localities within the region as well as the proportions of population movement for Regional Victoria and Melbourne have all maintained very similar patterns since the last report. The exceptions are Irymple (38.3% between 1996 and 2001 compared to 33.1% for 2001 – 2006) Merbein (41.1% for 1996 – 2001 compared to 34.2% for 2001 – 2006) and Greater Red Cliffs (34.8% for 1996 – 2001 compared to 31.1% for 2001 – 2006). The new additions to the social indicators project (Mallee Track, Millewa, and Nangiloc/Colignan) vary quite considerably between themselves and against the figures for the region, Regional Victoria, and Melbourne.

TABLE 7: POPULATION STABILITY 2006 CENSUS

	Mallee Track	Millewa Area	Nangiloc/Colignan	Red Cliffs (proper)	Greater Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irymple	Ouyen	Mildura RCC	Wentworth	Regional Victoria	Melbourne
Same Address 2001	564	286	294	2,680	4,272	16,406	2,798	3,412	950	25,246	3,743	717,079	1,913,946
Different Address 2001	158	143	226	1,442	1,927	14,591	1,456	1,691	380	18,581	2,213	465,722	1,226,360

FIGURE 4: POPULATION MOVEMENT 2001-2006



Source: Table b38 2006 Census of Population and Housing

<sup>1</sup> Mildura Social Indicators 2006 pg 11

## SECTION 2: SOCIAL DISTRESS

### FAMILY INCOME

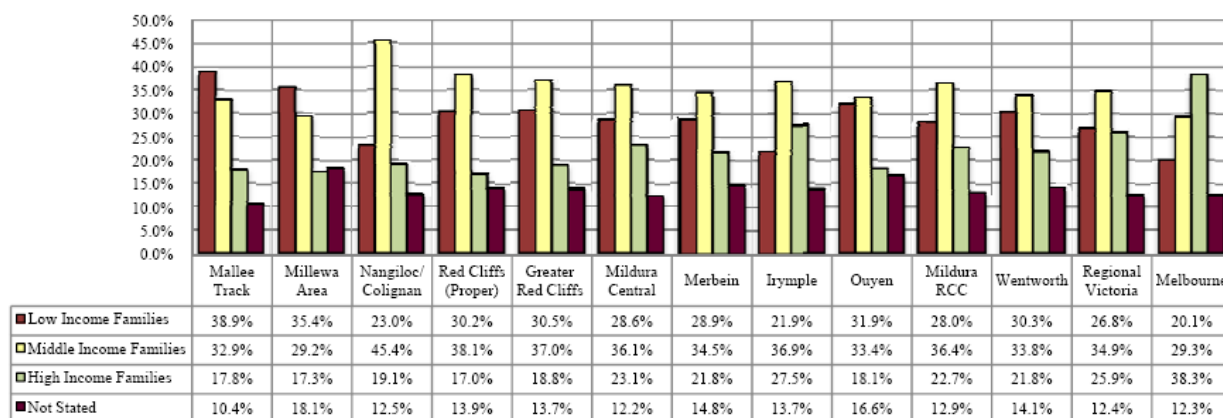
“Low income is interwoven with the influence of other forms of disadvantage. It can be the consequence of factors like mental illness, crime and child maltreatment. Much recent research has emphasised the importance of relative inequality of income and people’s consciousness of their comparative position rather than the direct effects of material standards”<sup>2</sup>.

The previous social indicators measured low family income at below \$600 per week. The present iteration has indexed income against inflation for the five years since 2001 and presents an accurate figure of below \$650 per week for the updated social indicators based on the \$600 mark. The higher income bracket of \$1200 or more per week has risen to \$1400.

Again the region’s localities have a higher proportion of families on a low family income compared with Melbourne. The range between the Melbourne figure and the sub-regions has increased with the introduction of the Mallee Track (20.1% to 38.9% compared with 22% to 35.9% (Wentworth) in 2001). With the exceptions of Irymple and Nangiloc/Colignan, the rest of the localities were below the rates expressed for 2001 but further from the Regional Victorian figure for low income families. Some family incomes in the Mallee Track (38.9%) and the Millewa (35.4%) exceeded the Regional Victorian figure by quite a high margin.

While Mildura’s sub-regions, with the exceptions of Ouyen and Greater Red Cliffs, have experienced a slight increase in the proportion of families who earn a high income as measured here, the figure for regional Victoria and Melbourne has also increased. The proportion of families who earn a high income for the new additions of Mallee Track, Millewa, and Nangiloc/Colignan are generally below the other subregions, somewhat below Regional Victoria and well below Melbourne.

FIGURE 5: FAMILY INCOMES BY LOCALITIES



Source: Table B26 2006 Census of Population and Housing

<sup>2</sup> Mildura Social Indicators 2006 pg 12

## RENTAL STRESS

The previous social indicators report established the widely used figure of 30% of income ratio to measure housing stress<sup>3</sup>. Housing stress leads to a range of further complications to wellbeing and is an important measure to assess how households cope, and also to predict associated problems and disadvantage. This iteration of the social indicators repeats two measures of housing stress common to many Australians: rental stress and home purchase stress.

Rental stress has increased for all studied localities since the last report, including regional Victoria and Melbourne. This form of housing stress is again more prevalent than home purchase stress. Of note, the region's localities have experienced increases in rental stress from between 3.7% (Ouyen) to 14.7% (Merbein) since 2001, with the other localities recording not insignificant rises in rental stress between these points. The new additions to the social indicators were significantly below the figures for the other localities studied. The general increase in the proportion of people experiencing rental stress is worthy of closer attention given its coupling to the increasing cost of living, which could possibly point to a raft of increased disadvantage and social exclusion.

TABLE 8: HOME RENTAL STRESS

	Mallee Track	Millewa Area	Nangiloc/ Collignan	Red Cliffs (proper)	Greater Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irymple	Ouyen	Mildura RCC	Wentworth	Regional Victoria	Melbourne
Rent as a % of income													
Households	26	36	95	373	429	4,300	286	296	95	5,018	573	108,282	319,841
Unable to determine income	11.5%	25.0%	20.0%	14.5%	14.0%	14.7%	17.1%	13.2%	15.8%	14.5%	17.3%	12.9%	12.7%
Low- <25%	76.9%	66.7%	58.9%	39.7%	42.9%	42.3%	37.1%	46.6%	64.2%	42.2%	50.3%	44.9%	46.0%
Medium- 20-30%	11.5%	0.0%	0.0%	12.3%	12.4%	9.0%	10.8%	8.1%	8.4%	9.4%	7.5%	9.1%	8.7%
High- >30%	0.0%	8.3%	21.1%	33.5%	30.8%	33.9%	35.0%	32.1%	11.6%	33.8%	25.0%	33.2%	32.6%
% households <\$649, high stress	0.0%	0.0%	59.3%	37.2%	53.3%	64.6%	58.1%	64.5%	20.5%	63.0%	46.0%	62.3%	75.2%

Source: ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing Special Run

<sup>3</sup> Mildura Social Indicators 2006 pg 13



## HOME PURCHASE STRESS

The proportion of households that experienced home purchase stress was again significantly lower than the proportion of residents who experienced rental stress. However the table below reports an overall increase in home purchase stress for all localities studied since 2001. While Melbourne residents recorded the highest percentage change in home rental stress between the reports of 6.4% (17.4% in 2001 compared with 23.8 in 2006), the region's localities reported increases between 2.3% (Greater Red Cliffs) and 6.2% (Mildura Central).

TABLE 9: HOME PURCHASE STRESS WHERE INCOME IS KNOWN

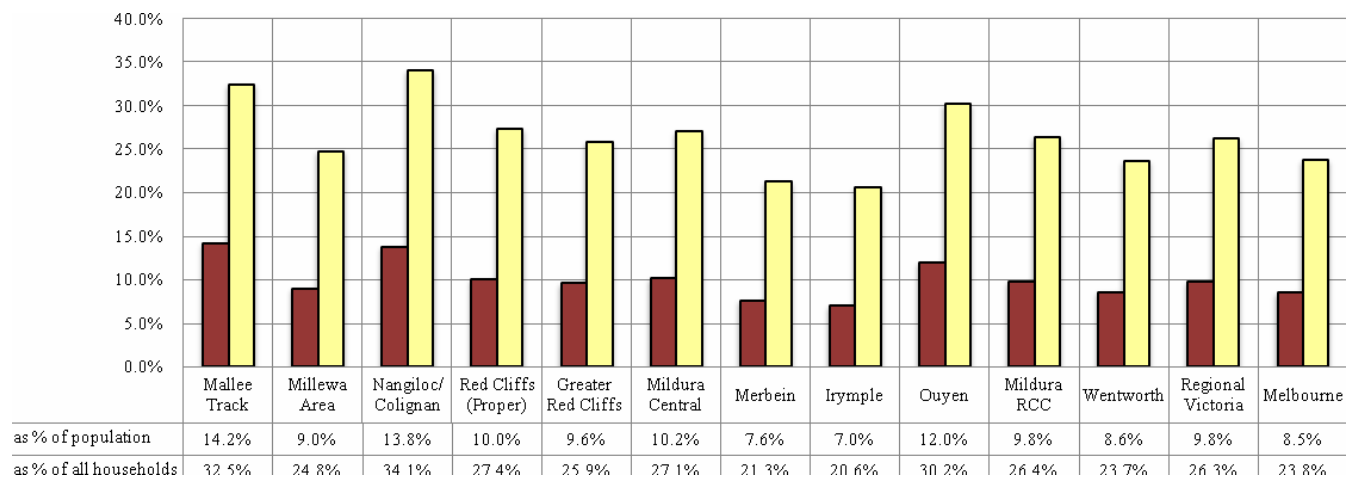
	Mallee Track	Millewa Area	Nangiloc/Colignan	Red Cliffs (proper)	Greater Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irymple	Ouyen	Mildura RCC	Wentworth	Regional Victoria	Melbourne
% of income													
Total purchase	36	38	54	590	900	4,338	708	813	118	6,187	815	167,613	466,934
Unable to determine income	27.8%	42.1%	38.9%	18.5%	21.6%	16.8%	22.3%	18.5%	27.1%	17.6%	22.8%	17.7%	16.7%
Low- <25%	47.2%	34.2%	38.9%	56.4%	52.8%	54.1%	52.1%	55.7%	56.8%	54.4%	52.1%	55.0%	50.2%
Medium- 20-30%	8.3%	15.8%	0.0%	7.5%	6.3%	9.0%	5.8%	7.9%	2.5%	8.3%	6.1%	8.2%	9.3%
High- >30%	16.7%	7.9%	22.2%	17.6%	19.2%	20.2%	19.8%	18.0%	13.6%	19.7%	18.9%	19.1%	23.8%

Source: ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing Special Run

## LONE PERSON HOUSEHOLDS

The proportion of lone person households has not changed dramatically since the last report with only very minor fluctuations in the percentages of people residing alone across all of the localities. Of note however are the higher proportions of lone person households in the Mallee Track and the Nangiloc/Colignan regions.

FIGURE 6: SPREAD OF SINGLE PERSON HOUSEHOLDS ACROSS MIDLURA'S SUB-REGIONS (2006 CENSUS)



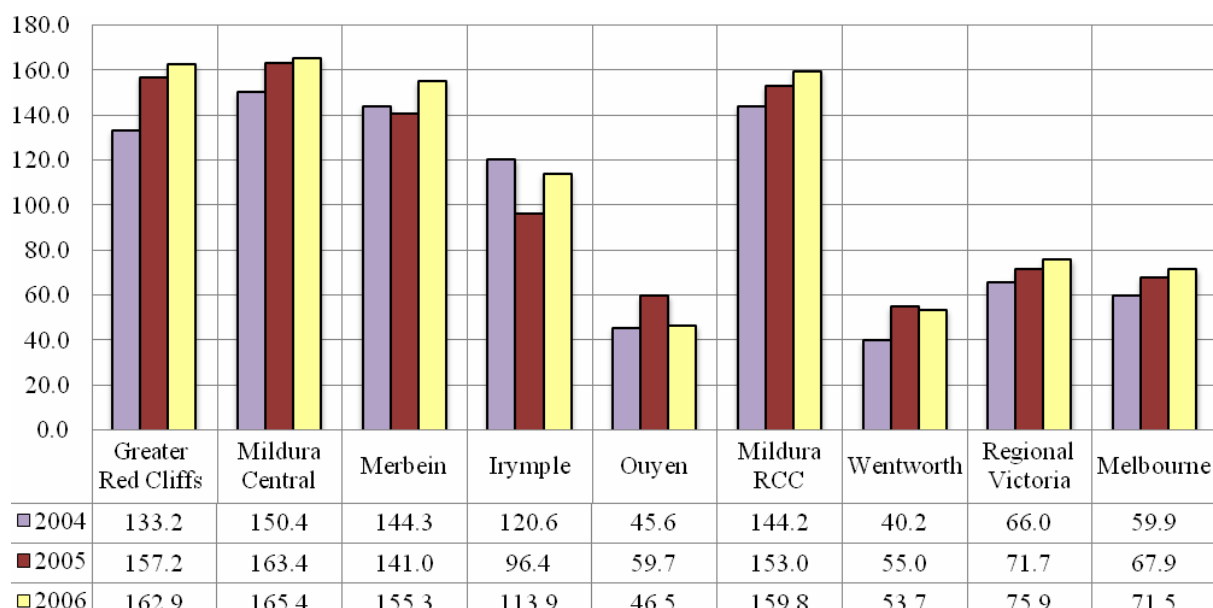
Source: Table B30 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Table B04 2006 Census of Population and Housing

## SECTION 3: HEALTH<sup>4</sup>

### CHILDHOOD ACCIDENTS<sup>5</sup>

A range of factors such as low income, single parent families, limited education and unemployment are all related to the rate of childhood (0 – 18 years) accidents in a given locality<sup>6</sup>. While the number of childhood accidents has increased incrementally across all the localities studied, with the exception of Ouyen and Wentworth, the proportional pattern between childhood accidents in the region's localities and the rest of the state up to 2006<sup>7</sup> has not changed. The Mildura region still records substantially higher incidents of childhood accidents to the rest of the state.

FIGURE 7: RATE OF CHILDHOOD ACCIDENTS OVER THREE YEARS JANUARY 2004 - DECEMBER 2007 (RATE PER 1,000)



Source: Victorian Injury Surveillance and Applied Research Accident Research Centre Monash University 2008, Table B04 2006 Census of Population Housing

<sup>4</sup> There have been some changes made to the indicators in this section since the Mildura Social Indicators 2006, please refer to the Research Notes section for a description.

<sup>5</sup> Population increase/decreased factored in from 2001 Census.

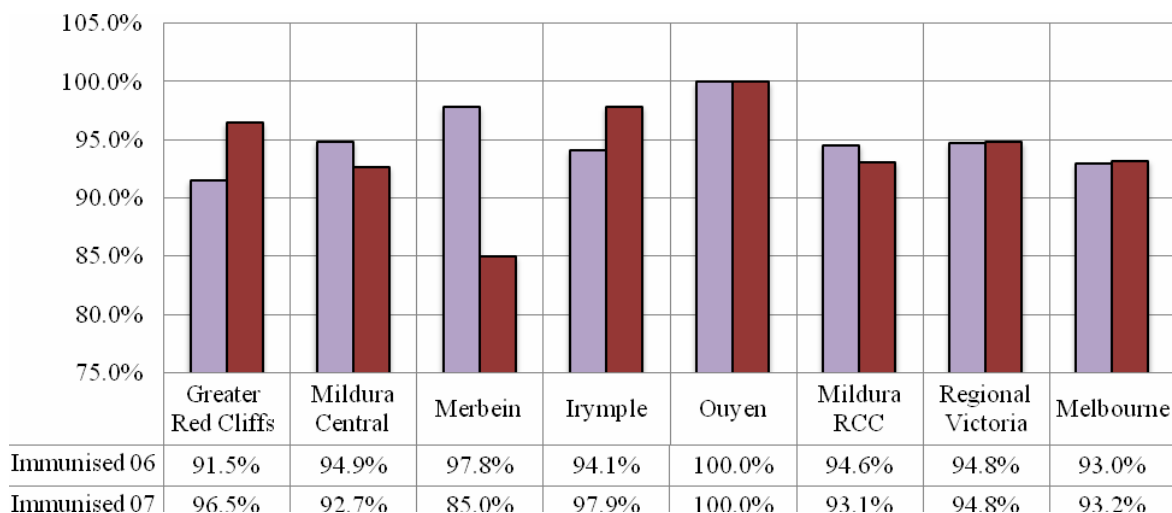
<sup>6</sup> Mildura Social Indicators pg 16

<sup>7</sup> Victorian Injury Surveillance and Applied Research Accident Research Centre has changed its timeframe for data collection from the financial year to the calendar year.

## IMMUNISATION COVER<sup>8</sup>

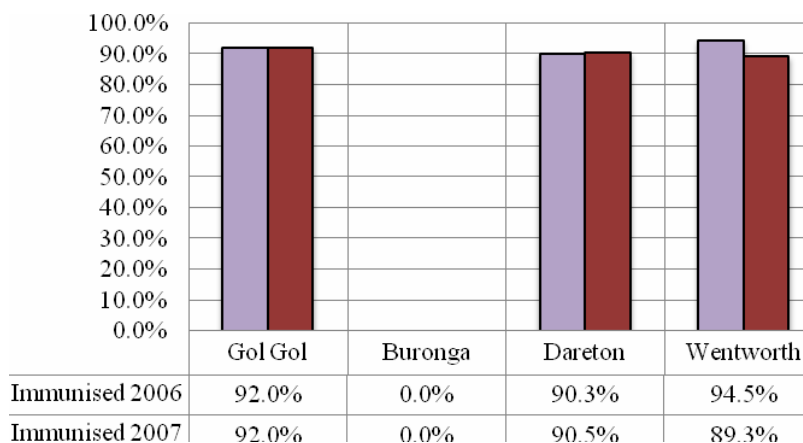
The immunisation of children for the region compares well with Regional Victoria and Melbourne, as it did in the previous social indicators. Among the key changes is an increase in the rate of children immunised who live in Ouyen, up from 84% in 2005 to 100% in 2007. The figure for Merbein however has decreased from near 98% in 2006 to 85% in 2007. The New South Wales localities, itemised separately from the Victorian localities for this indicator, are quite close to the Regional Victorian and Melbourne rates.

FIGURE 8: CHILDREN IMMUNISED 2006-2007



Source: Medicare Australia (Victoria), Australian Childhood Register - Coverage Report 2006-2007

FIGURE 9: CHILDREN IMMUNISED 2006-2007NSW



Source: Medicare Australia, (NSW), Immunisation Coverage Rates by Division of General Practice 2006-2007

\*No percentages have been produced for postcodes with less than 100 children.

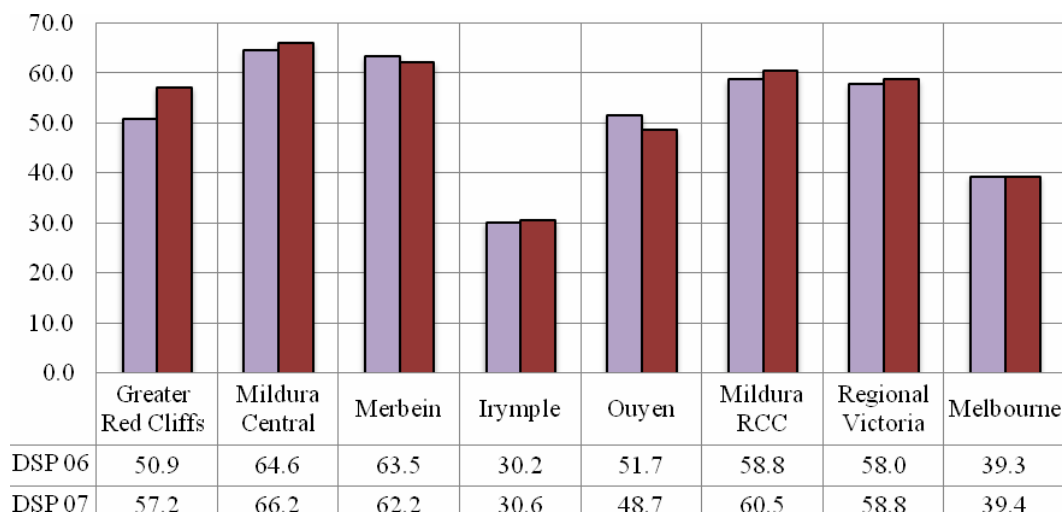
<sup>8</sup> Data from NSW Medicare do not receive the level of breakdown as Victoria does as there is minimal immunisation service delivered through councils. As the NSW assessment and age categories are different, an appropriate comparison has been provided in a separate table.

## DISABILITY/SICKNESS PAYMENT<sup>9</sup>

This indicator again combines data for disability support pension and sickness allowance as one means of assessing the individual health of residents living in the region's localities and also the Mildura community's wellbeing in comparison to Regional Victoria and Melbourne. 'Briefly, sickness allowance is available to Australian residents (or newly arrived migrants after 104 weeks in Australia) who are temporarily incapacitated for work or full-time study. Recipients must have a job or full-time study to which they can return. A disability support pension is available to Australian residents of ten years standing who are aged 16 years or over. The beneficiaries must have a physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment assessed at 20 points or more and be unable to work for at least the next two years as a result of impairment and be unable to undertake vocational or educational training that would equip them for work within two years'<sup>10</sup>.

In both 2006 and 2007, the rates of disability/sickness payments in three of the sub-areas of Mildura fell below that of Regional Victoria, with two slightly exceeding and Mildura RCC almost equalling that of Regional Victoria. This is in contrast to the 2005 figures where four of the sub-area figures fell below the Regional Victoria figure. Notwithstanding, all locations and sub-regions with the exception of Melbourne, have seen a dramatic decrease in figures from 2005. Melbourne in the previous report displayed substantially lower figures than all other locations and sub-areas with the exception of Ouyen, this current report shows Melbourne figures to be once again below all other locations with the exception of Irymple for both years. Nonetheless, caution must be exercised when reviewing the most recent findings expressed below. Due to the issues of privacy, numbers below 20 in some of the smaller postcodes within the raw data were not available and therefore averages were estimated.

FIGURE10: DISTRIBUTION OF DISABILITY PENSIONS AND SICKNESS ALLOWANCES - RATES PER 1,000



Source: Centrelink Unpublished Data, 2008

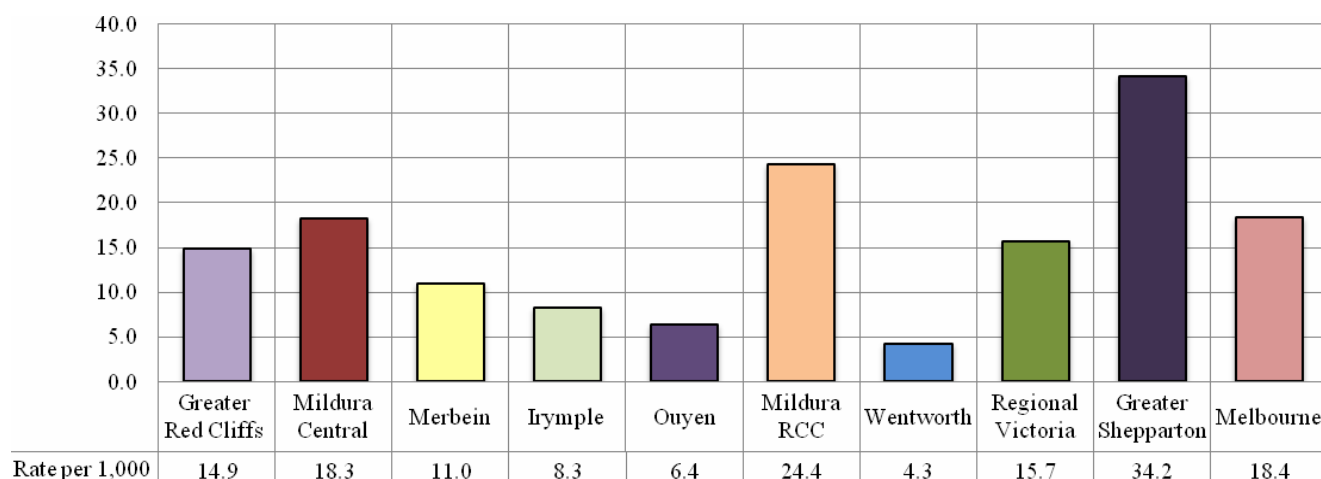
<sup>9</sup> Data provided by Centrelink was specific to Victoria only therefore the separate sub-area of Wentworth is absent and in this instance the locality of Mildura Central does not include New South Wales measures.

<sup>10</sup> Mildura Social Indicators 2006 pg 18

## OCCUPATIONAL ACCIDENTS<sup>11</sup>

As was the case for the first social indicators this section uses data based on hospital treatment records from January 2004 to December 2006. Again the results have been averaged and expressed as a rate per 1,000 in the farm and non-farm labour force.

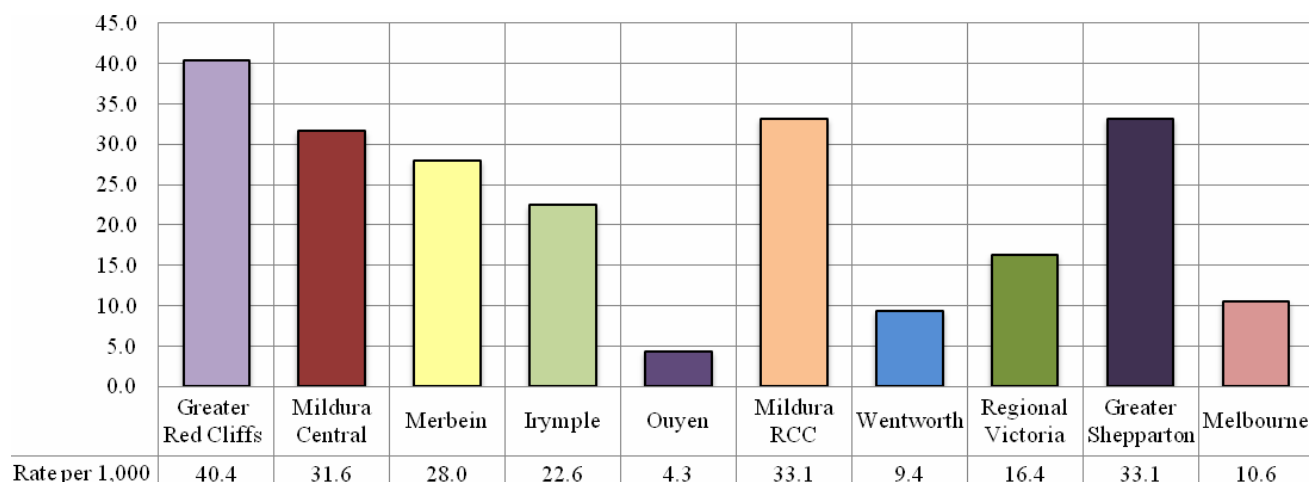
**FIGURE 11: AVERAGE RATE OF FARM ACCIDENTS OVER PERIOD JANUARY 2004 - DECEMBER 2006 (RATE PER 1,000 PEOPLE IN FARM LABOUR FORCE)**



Source: Victorian Injury Surveillance and Applied Research Accident Research Centre Monash University 2008, Table B42 2006 Census of Population and Housing

Since the last social indicators report there has been a significant reduction in farm accidents for the region, Regional Victoria, and localities surrounding Melbourne. The reductions are greatest in Irymple (30.3), Wentworth (12.7), and Mildura Central (11.7) and are perhaps the result of targeted campaigns and initiatives designed to improve safety. Turning to non-farm accidents, the updated table reports that many of the region's figures are still over two and up to nearly four times the amount of Melbourne and at times still more than doubling that of Regional Victoria.

**FIGURE 12: AVERAGE RATE OF NON-FARM ACCIDENTS OVER PERIOD JANUARY 2004 - DECEMBER 2006 (RATE PER 1,000 PEOPLE IN NON-FARM LABOUR FORCE)**



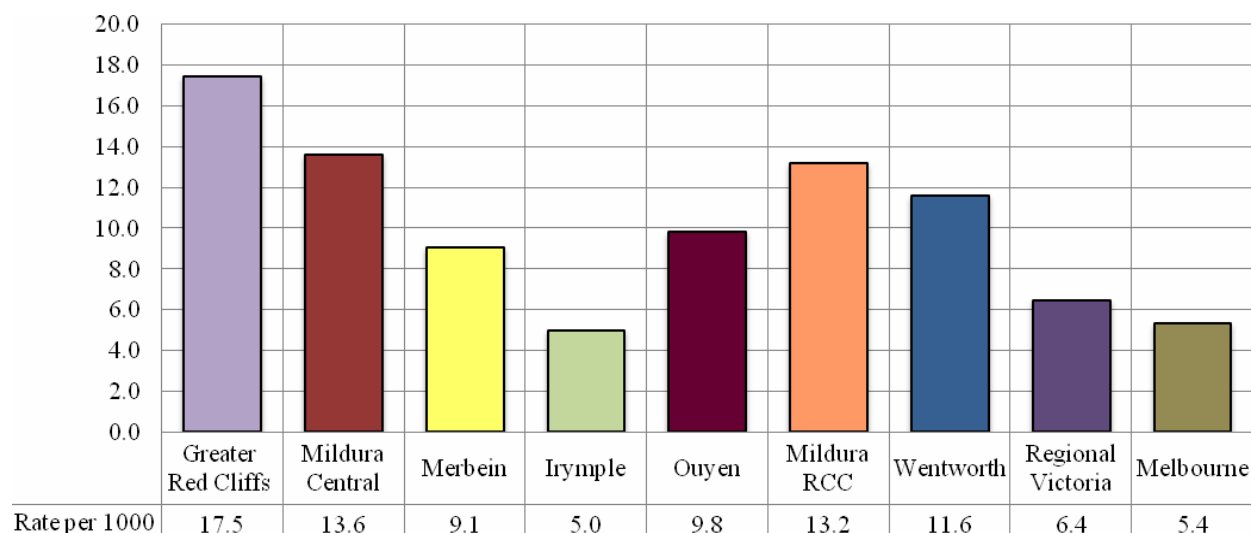
Source: Victorian Injury Surveillance and Applied Research Accident Research Centre Monash University 2008, Table B42 2006 Census of Population and Housing

<sup>11</sup> Please refer to Research Notes for changes to this indicator

## PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS

The previous authors noted the consistent relationship between admissions to hospital for mental illness, socio-economic status, and unemployment<sup>12</sup>. With the exception of Greater Red Cliffs all of the localities studied have seen a significant reduction of psychiatric hospital admissions since 2003. This may be due to a number of factors such as changes associated with what type of mental illnesses hospitals treat and administer, outreach services that do not require admission, and other organisations providing similar community based services in the region that also do not count as admissions. The reductions notwithstanding, the region still records higher levels of admission than Regional Victoria and Melbourne, as it did in the previous report. Sometimes this figure is more than double the Regional Victorian figure. Irymple is the exception here.

FIGURE 13: RATE PER 1,000 PSYCHIATRIC ADMISSIONS ACROSS MILDURA'S SUB-REGIONS (2006-2007)



Source: Department of Human Services 2006-2007

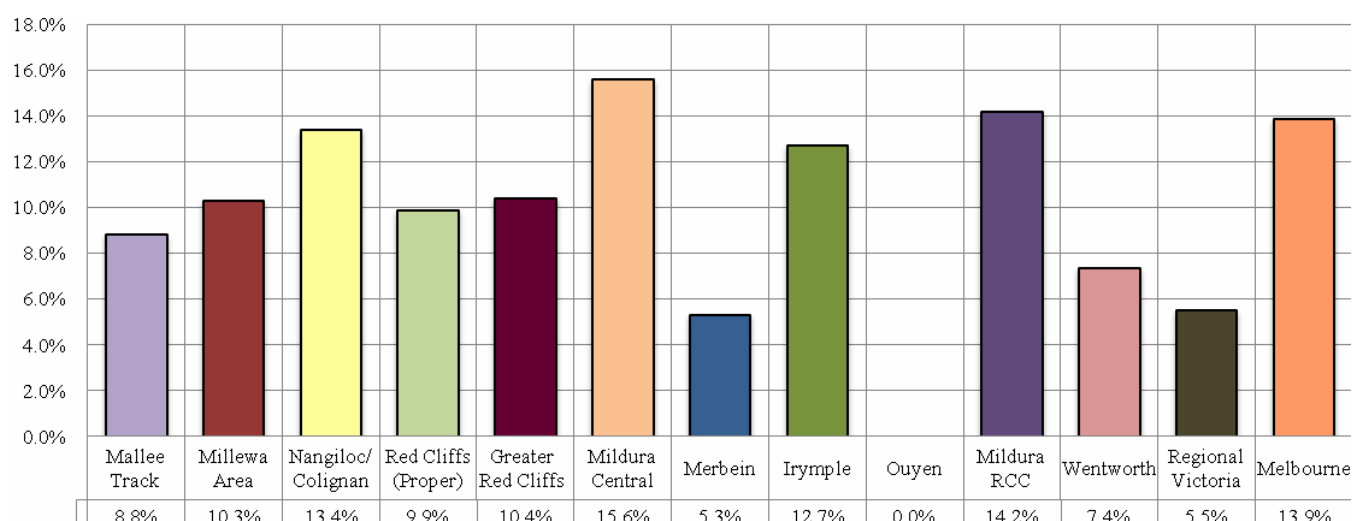
<sup>12</sup> Mildura Social Indicators 2006 pg 20

## SECTION 4: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### INDIVIDUALS ISOLATED BY LANGUAGE

The addition of the Mallee Track, Millewa, and Nangiloc/Colignan areas to the social indicators has revealed a not insignificant minority of residents who might be isolated by language. In the case of Nangiloc/Colignan this is roughly consistent with the proportion of people who have arrived from overseas (see page 6) since the last census. Figures from the other sub-regions suggest some minor reductions in isolation by language might have occurred in Greater Red Cliffs, Merbein, and Ouyen – which records no residents as isolated by language. The other sub-regions have remained the same or very close to the mark set in the previous report.

*FIGURE 14: INDIVIDUALS ISOLATED BY LANGUAGE ACROSS SUB-REGIONS (2006 CENSUS) ENGLISH NOT VERY WELL/AT ALL. AS % TOTAL POPULATION*



Source: Table B11 2006 Census of Population and Housing

## PROFILE OF GROUP

This updated report has again used data from the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) to report on new arrivals to Mildura from overseas between January 1 2005 and January 1 2008. Data from the DIMIA informs us that arrivals to the region between the specified dates were born in the following countries, belonged to the following religions, and spoke the following languages in the table below.

Some changes have occurred to the countries of birth of recent arrivals since 2005 as reported in the previous Mildura Social Indicators. The top four countries of birth for recent arrivals include four new listings: Afghanistan, India, South Africa, and Iraq. Part of this change might reflect broader geo-political changes that impact upon immigration patterns such as the military conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Another factor associated with this change is the attraction of skilled migrants to the region that have arrived from India and South Africa. Accompanying these changes is the increasing proportion of Muslims, among other religious groups, who are settling in the area (54.4% of total arrivals from 2000 – 2005 compared with 73.1%). A further change is the introduction of new language groups to the region such as Dari, a dialect of Persian spoken by Afghanis, Farsi, Hazaragi, and Hindi.

TABLE 10: CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW ARRIVALS

Country of birth % (Total = 242)		Religion % (Total known = 134)		Major Language % (Total known = 192)	
Afghanistan	31.4	Islam	73.1	Dari	34.4
India	8.7	Catholic/Western Catholic	6.0	English	24.0
South Africa	8.7	Christian (nfd)	6.0	Arabic	7.8
Iraq	7.0	Buddhism	4.5	Turkish	4.7
United Kingdom	7.0	Hinduism	4.5	Hazaragi	3.6
Philippines	5.4	Ancestor Veneration	0.7	Farsi (Persian)	3.1
Turkey	4.5	Catholic (nec)	0.7	Hindi	2.6
Iran	3.7	No Religion (nfd)	0.7	African Languages, n	2.1
Sri Lanka	2.1	Orthodox (nfd)	0.7	Kurdish	1.6
Thailand	2.1	Other Protestant (nfd)	0.7	Romanian	1.6
Others	17.7	Others	2.2	Others	14.6
Birthplace unknown	1.6				

## EDUCATION

The years of education completed for recent arrivals was again available for only under half of the total figure 95/242 (39.2%). The educational levels of recent arrivals from overseas for this report closely match those from the previous report in terms of the proportions who had six years or less (29.7% compared with 35.7%), seven to ten years (21.7% compared with 21.2%) and over ten years of education (42.9% compared with 43.1%)



## SOCIAL COHESION

Measures for this dimension of the Mildura Social Indicators have changed since the last report as a result of changes to the census since 2001. The Australian Bureau of Statistics have introduced two measures of social cohesion to the census that will provide reliable and statistically significant data on this issue into the future. The two measures are volunteering and unpaid assistance to those with a disability, both indicating the level of care in the community.

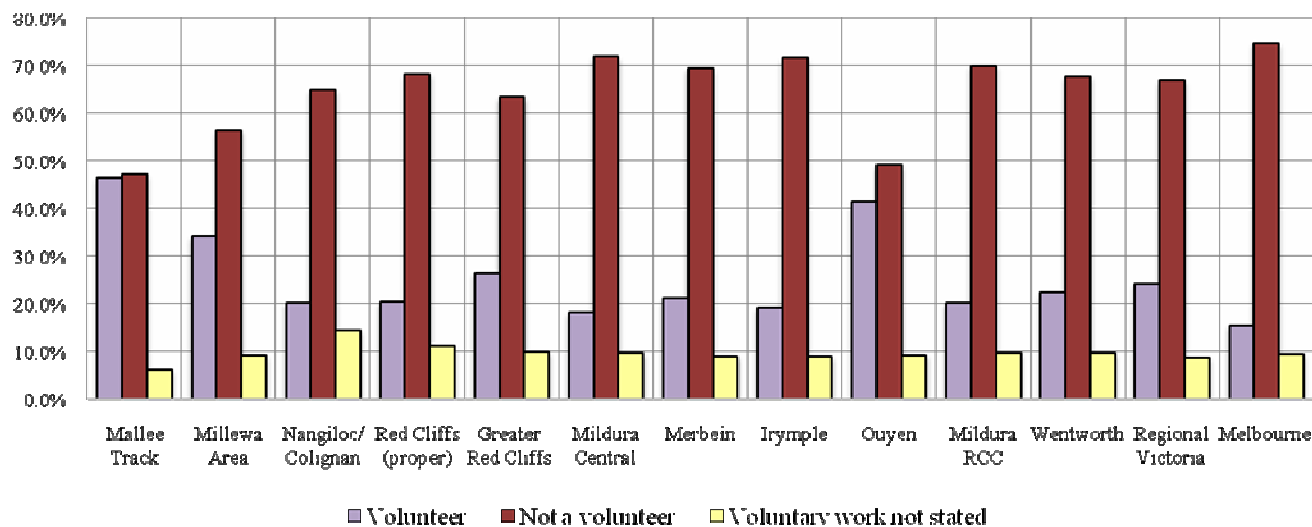
The proportion of those undertaking voluntary work across the region's localities is significantly above that of Melbourne, substantially so in some localities such as the Mallee Track, Ouyen, and the Millewa, perhaps reinforcing the importance of this form of social cohesion in more isolated areas. The lower rates of volunteering are consistent with areas that are more 'urban' or built up in character such as Mildura Central and Irymple.

TABLE 11 VOLUNTEERING BY SUB-REGIONS, REGIONAL VICTORIA AND MELBOURNE

	Mallee Track	Millewa Area	Nangiloc/ Colignan	Red Cliffs (proper)	Greater Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irymple	Ouyen	Mildura RCC	Wentworth	Regional Victoria	Melbourne
Volunteer	46.5%	34.2%	20.4%	20.5%	26.6%	18.3%	21.3%	19.2%	41.5%	20.2%	22.4%	24.2%	15.6%
Not a volunteer	47.2%	56.6%	65.0%	68.3%	63.4%	71.9%	69.6%	71.7%	49.2%	70.1%	67.8%	67.0%	74.8%
Voluntary work not stated	6.3%	9.3%	14.6%	11.2%	9.9%	9.7%	9.1%	9.04%	9.4%	9.7%	9.7%	8.8%	9.56%

Source: Table B18 2006 Census of Population and Housing

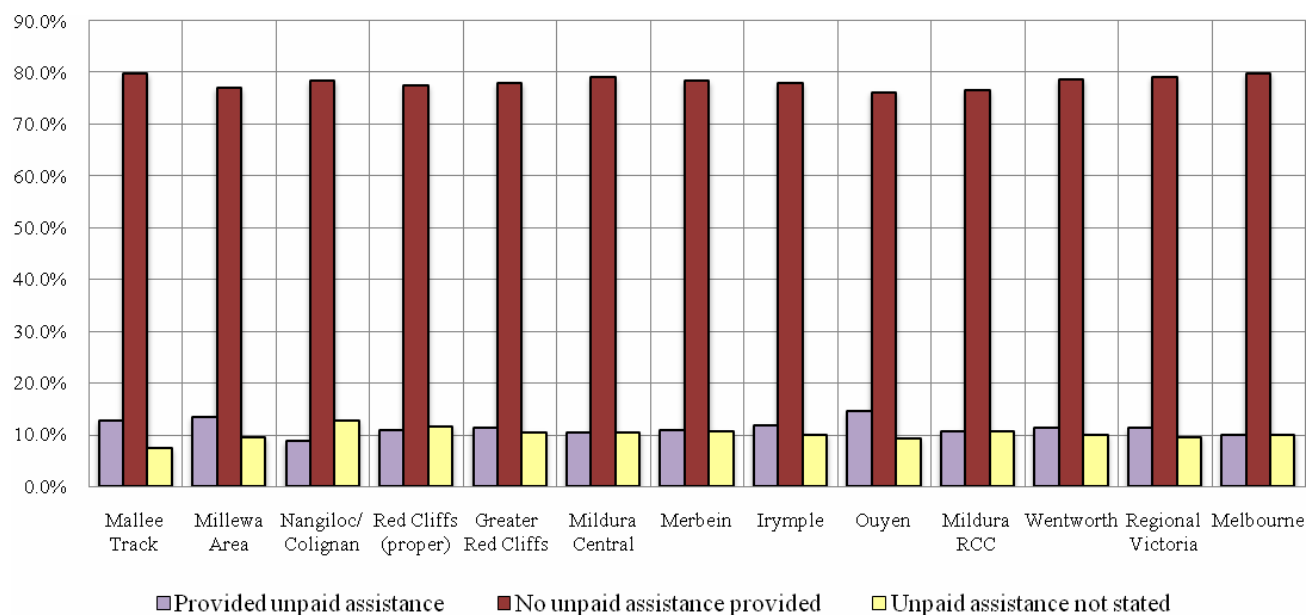
FIGURE 15: VOLUNTEERING BY SUB-REGIONS, REGIONAL VICTORIA, AND MELBOURNE



Source: Table B18 2006 Census of Population and Housing

The level of unpaid assistance to people with a disability is more equal between the region's localities, Regional Victoria, and Melbourne. However the more isolated areas of the Mallee track, the Millewa, and Ouyen again record a higher proportion than less isolated and built up areas.

**FIGURE 16: UNPAID ASSISTANCE TO A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY BY SUB-REGION, REGIONAL VICTORIA AND MELBOURNE**



Source: Table B20 2006 Census of Population and Housing

## SECTION 5: COMMUNITY SAFETY<sup>13</sup>

With the exception of child maltreatment, the indicators for community safety have changed since the last Mildura Social Indicators report. The new measures draw on key indicators of community safety to reflect the more common crimes and road dangers that communities experience. The data used for this section is drawn from Victoria Police and is reported through the police service's own Response Zones of: Werrimull, Underbool, Murrayville, Red Cliffs, Greater Mildura, Merbein, Ouyen, Mildura RCC (Police Service Area). Greater Mildura inclusive of Irymple and Nichols Point, excludes the New South Wales communities of Gol Gol, Buronga and Dareton.

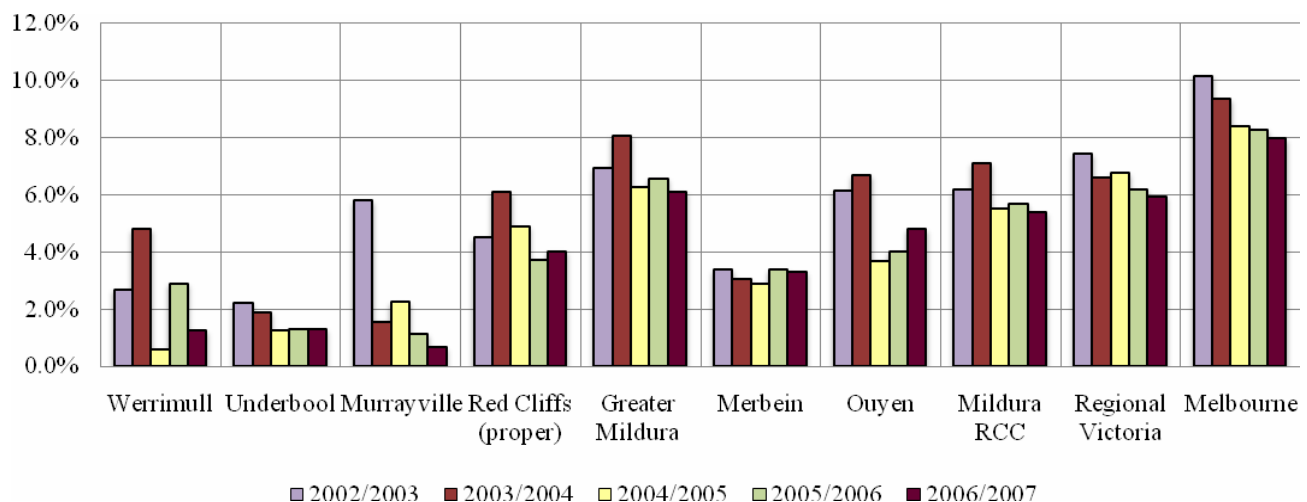
### CHILD MALTREATMENT

Child maltreatment is influenced by particular socio-economic conditions such as employment rates and income<sup>14</sup>. This iteration of the Mildura Social Indicators uses Department of Human Services (VIC) data from 2007 to assess the comparative rate of substantiated cases of child maltreatment in the municipality against the Melbourne rate. Again due to the sensitive nature of this data and the constraints of its use, individual rates for localities will not be published. Substantiated cases of child maltreatment for Melbourne since 2002 have fallen slightly to 5.7 instances per 1,000 children. The Mildura figure, based on the municipality as a whole, is just on three times that of Melbourne at 17.2 instances per 1,000 children. Again this area of community safety warrants closer attention from the Community Engagement Framework Governance Group.

### CRIME AGAINST PROPERTY

From 2002/2003 the greater majority of the region's localities record lower rates for crimes against property than for Regional Victoria and Melbourne. A general pattern for all localities studied is a decreasing rate of recorded crimes against property from 2002 to 2007, with the exception of Merbein, rates for which have remained steady over the five year period. Greater Mildura (equated to Mildura Central) has the highest rate of crimes against property for the region, throughout the time-frame analysed.

FIGURE 17: CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY



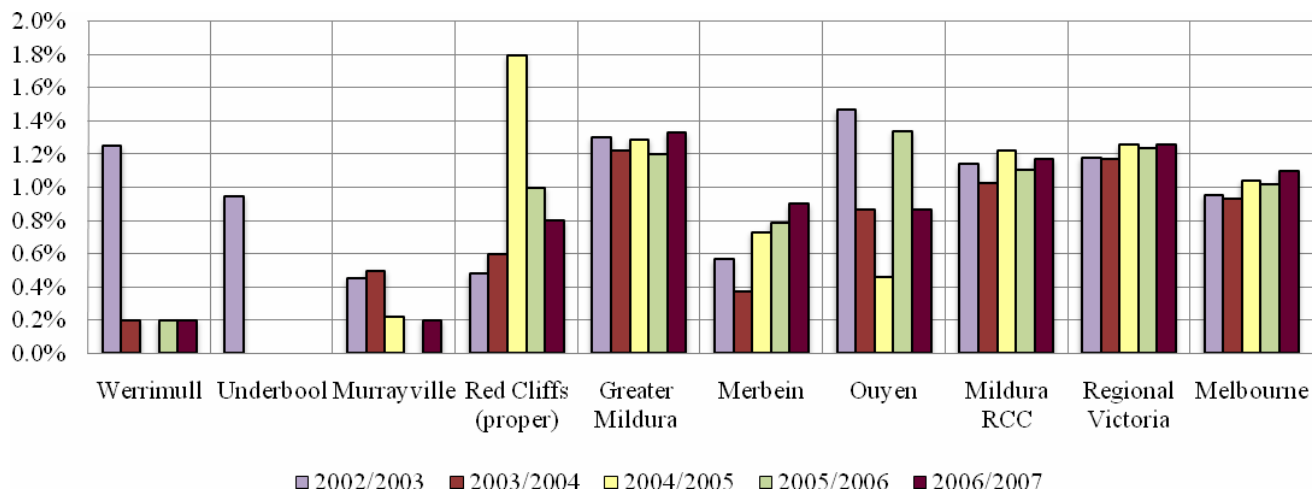
Source: Victoria Police, Mildura

<sup>13</sup> The measures that were used for this section of the Mildura Social Indicators 2006 have changed, please refer to the Research Notes for a description.

<sup>14</sup> Mildura Social Indicators 2006 pg 25

## CRIME AGAINST PERSON

FIGURE 18: CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON

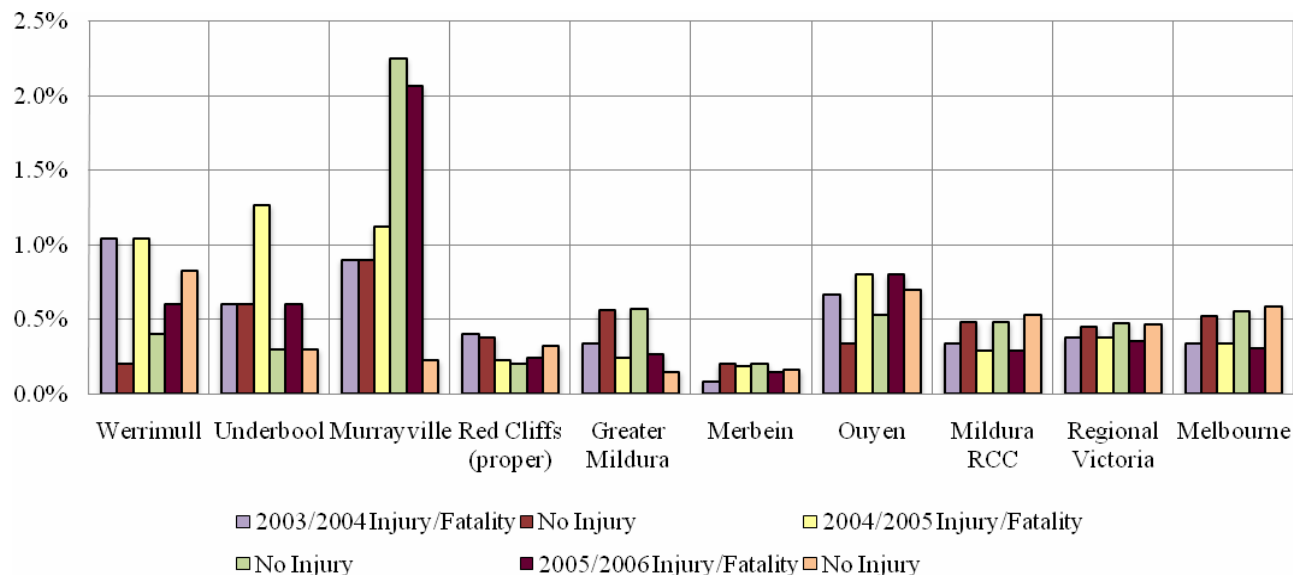


Source: Victoria Police, Mildura

Crimes against the person are calculated against the populations of the various localities and indicate that most localities are relatively safe. Regional Victoria has the highest rate of crimes against the person, matched by the Greater Mildura region, which both generally exceed the rate for Melbourne. The other localities in the region have recorded lower rates for crimes against the person than Regional Victoria and Melbourne over the five year period.

## ROAD TRAUMA

FIGURE 19: ROAD TRAUMA AS INJURY AND FATALITY AND NO INJURY



Source: Victoria Police, Mildura

Road trauma represents a significant cause of death and disability in Australia. Indeed this particular community safety issue severely affects not only the direct victims of road accidents, but also whole communities where accidents take place. The standout figure here is for the Murrayville region which has consistently recorded injury/fatality and non-injury road trauma between two and near four times that of Melbourne and Regional Victoria. The figures, quite high in Ouyen and Werrimull periodically, perhaps point to the dangers of travelling on long open roads, inexperience, and other factors.

## SECTION 6: ECONOMIC

### OCCUPATIONS

The previous report drew on ABS data to explore the occupational patterns of the Mildura region by defining broad occupational categories across aggregated regional localities of Mildura – Rural, Mildura – Central and compared them with figures for Victoria. This method provides meaningful details about occupations without overly data intensive tables and reports; the present section replicates this scheme. There are some minor changes to the way the data has been collected by the ABS therefore the categories below are a close approximation to the categories in the previous report rather than an exact replication. These changes do not compromise the analysis however and a clear picture of the most recent occupational patterns is able to be produced.

### OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES

Mildura – Central and Victoria record similar proportions of occupational categories again with some minor changes and a couple of more substantial differences. Mildura – Central has a steady decrease of managers over the decade from 1996 to 2006, however the figure remains above the Victorian average (as was reported in the previous report, managers in Mildura – Rural are mostly farmers who manage their own properties). While the proportion of professionals has slightly risen in Mildura – Central it has not kept pace with the general Victorian figure which is just over six percent higher, which is also the proportional difference for labourers between Mildura - Central and Victoria. Other occupational categories are more or less similar between Mildura – Central and Victoria. The occupational categories for Mildura – Rural reflect the dominant industries in this region such as agriculture and therefore explain the lower figures for professionals, technicians and trade workers, clerical and sales workers.

TABLE 12: PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES IN OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES<sup>15</sup> (MILDURA CENTRAL AND RURAL)

	Mildura - Rural			Mildura - Central			Victoria		
	1996	2001	2006	1996	2001	2006	1996	2001	2006
Managers	41.5%	40.3%	42.4%	18.9%	16.9%	14.9%	13.9%	13.6%	13.5%
Professionals	8.1%	8.8%	9.7%	13.0%	14.0%	14.6%	17.9%	19.6%	20.7%
Technicians and trade workers (b)	7.1%	6.5%	7.4%	13.2%	13.7%	14.2%	15.1%	14.3%	14.0%
Comm. and personal service workers	5.1%	5.1%	5.5%	7.0%	8.2%	8.6%	7.1%	7.7%	8.4%
Clerical and admin. Workers	5.5%	5.9%	5.5%	11.7%	11.8%	11.9%	15.8%	15.3%	14.8%
Sales workers	3.7%	4.2%	3.6%	10.6%	10.8%	11.6%	9.5%	10.2%	10.2%
Mach. Operators and drivers	6.2%	6.3%	5.4%	6.5%	6.6%	6.6%	8.2%	7.4%	6.6%
Labourers	19.8%	20.4%	19.0%	15.8%	15.6%	15.7%	9.7%	9.8%	9.9%
Inadequately described/Not stated	2.8%	2.4%	1.5%	3.1%	2.2%	1.8%	2.7%	2.1%	2.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Table T26 2006 Census of Population and Housing

<sup>15</sup> 'Occupation' was coded to the 2006 Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). This has replaced the 1996 Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) Second Edition. Data for 1996 and 2001 have been concurred. In 1996 and 2001 'Technicians and trades workers' includes Engineering, Information and Communications Technology and Science Technicians and Tradespersons.

## TYPES OF BUSINESSES

The previous social indicators report used data from the Small Business Register (Australian Bureau of Statistics) to record the variety of industries that small business in the region is involved in. The ABS has ceased to collect this data via the Small Business Register therefore an exact replication is impossible. However comparable data was available through the Australian Business Register (ABS) and can lend some empirical evidence to the structure of business activity in the region for this iteration of the indicators. We urge caution when interpreting the following statistics however.

Not surprisingly the region is dominated by businesses involved in the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector, which also includes horticulture. Perhaps the most important changes since the last report affect Mildura Central. This region has seen a 12.6% increase in businesses enter the agricultural industry, with comparable reductions in the percentages of businesses trading in the construction (-5.8%) and retailing (-5.1%) industries. Businesses involved in Property and Business Services has also risen sharply since the last report with an almost sixfold increase in the proportion of businesses trading in this sector (3% in 2001 compared with 17.7% in 2006). Indeed Businesses recorded under the Property and Business Services has increased dramatically across all of the sub-regions perhaps pointing to changing economic conditions and opportunities.

TABLE 13: PROPORTIONS OF BUSINESSES WITHIN MILDURA SUB-REGIONS

	Greater Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irymple	Ouyen	Mildura RCC	Wentworth	Regional Victoria	Melbourne
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	68.0%	25.7%	61.3%	45.1%	67.4%	38.5%	62.6%	28.5%	2.8%
Construction	6.6%	13.3%	8.8%	17.4%	4.7%	11.8%	5.3%	16.6%	15.2%
Retail Trade	4.6%	12.7%	4.9%	3.8%	9.3%	10.1%	5.3%	10.9%	11.3%
Finance & Insurance	1.7%	5.3%	1.5%	2.2%	1.2%	3.9%	2.3%	3.8%	8.0%
Transport & Storage	3.1%	4.5%	6.4%	5.4%	4.7%	4.6%	3.1%	5.3%	6.3%
Property & Business Services	6.3%	17.7%	6.9%	12.0%	2.3%	13.6%	6.1%	15.0%	29.3%
Personal & Other Services	1.4%	2.9%	1.5%	1.6%	1.2%	2.5%	1.5%	2.4%	2.9%
Manufacturing	2.3%	3.8%	3.4%	4.3%	0.0%	3.7%	1.5%	4.5%	6.5%
Health & Community Services	0.9%	4.2%	1.0%	0.9%	2.3%	3.1%	0.8%	3.2%	4.9%
Wholesale Trade	2.3%	3.1%	1.5%	3.8%	2.3%	2.9%	3.1%	3.0%	5.3%
Cultural & Recreational Services	0.3%	1.4%	0.5%	1.1%	0.0%	1.1%	2.3%	1.7%	2.6%
Education	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.5%	0.9%
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	1.1%	3.6%	1.0%	1.6%	2.3%	2.7%	5.3%	3.4%	2.5%
Communication Services	1.1%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	2.3%	0.8%	0.0%	0.9%	1.3%
Electricity, Gas, & Water Supply	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Mining	0.0%	0.2%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.8%	0.2%	0.1%

Source: Australian Business Register June 2003 – June 2006, ABS, special request.

## EMPLOYMENT WITHIN BUSINESS CATEGORIES

Overall the proportional patterns for employment have not changed greatly since the last report, yet some important changes have emerged within employment since 2001. Again the major proportion of employment in Mildura's more rural areas is in agriculture. Not surprisingly this business type provides over half the total employment opportunities for Mallee Track (50.9%) Millewa (58.8%) and Nangiloc/Colignan (65%), substantially more than other sub-regions and Regional Victoria. Conversely these regions are well below other localities, with the exceptions of Ouyen and Wentworth (a pattern similar to the previous report) in the other major business categories of manufacturing, retail trade, health care and social assistance. Though the ways in which the ABS categorise businesses has changed (Industry of employment was coded to the 2006 Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), this coding has replaced the 1993 ANZSIC first edition on which this section was based in the first Mildura Social Indicators report), there are signs of a changing economy in the region's more rural areas, perhaps as drought and other constraints take their toll. Many of the localities have experienced a shrinking of the agriculture sector, Greater Red Cliffs and Wentworth the most prominent (40.7% to 28.2% and 35.2% to 23.9% respectively) as people move away from rural areas and/or, alternative forms of work/employment.

TABLE 14: PROPORTION OF WORKFORCE X EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES WITHIN MILDURA'S SUB-REGIONS

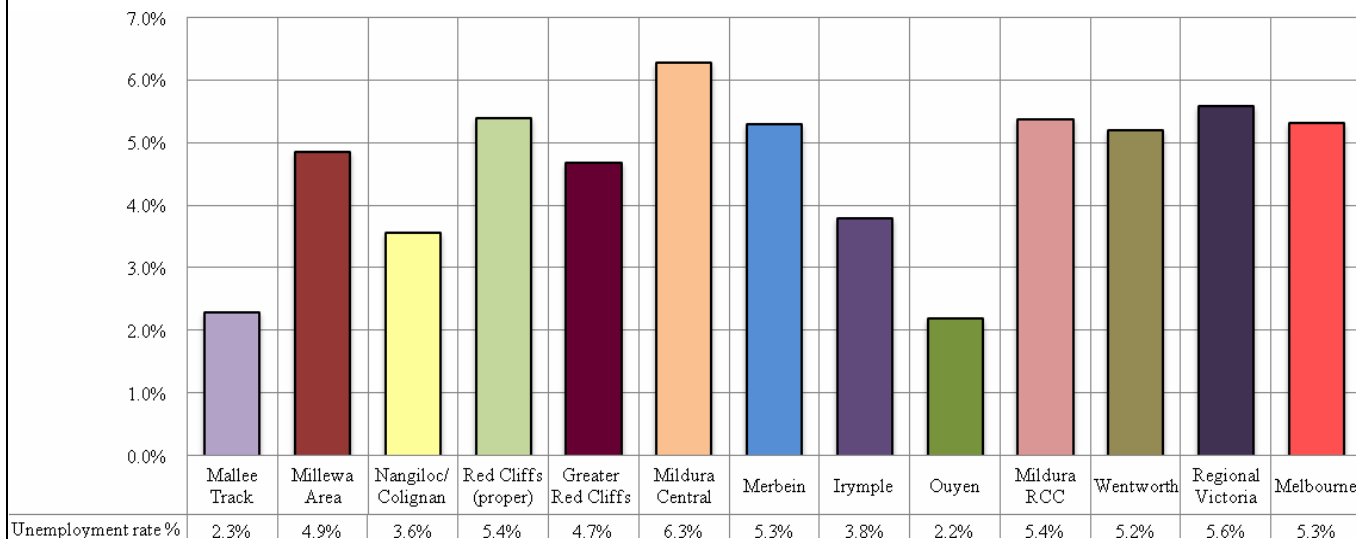
	Mallee Track	Millewa Area	Nangiloc/Colignan	Red Cliffs (Proper)	Greater Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irymple	Ouyen	Mildura RCC	Wentworth	Regional Victoria	Melbourne
Agriculture Forestry and Fishing	50.9%	58.8%	65.0%	22.1%	28.2%	9.6%	17.5%	13.2%	31.1%	13.3%	23.9%	9.2%	0.6%
Mining	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	1.5%	0.4%	1.3%	0.6%	0.2%
Manufacturing	0.8%	1.3%	1.9%	16.2%	12.1%	9.4%	12.8%	12.0%	2.5%	10.5%	7.6%	11.8%	12.9%
Elec., gas, water & waste services	0.8%	3.3%	0.0%	1.2%	1.1%	1.3%	1.4%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.5%	1.3%	0.7%
Construction	2.3%	1.3%	2.2%	5.2%	4.5%	7.0%	7.4%	7.8%	4.9%	6.7%	6.7%	8.2%	7.3%
Wholesale trade	3.1%	3.8%	3.5%	4.1%	3.8%	3.9%	2.4%	3.6%	1.6%	3.5%	4.3%	3.3%	5.5%
Retail trade	5.4%	7.1%	1.9%	10.4%	9.0%	13.9%	11.1%	13.8%	10.3%	13.4%	8.3%	12.2%	11.4%
Accommodation & food services	2.8%	2.5%	1.9%	5.1%	4.4%	7.2%	5.8%	5.2%	3.7%	6.3%	7.4%	6.3%	5.6%
Transport, postal & warehousing	5.4%	3.8%	1.3%	3.6%	3.8%	4.6%	6.0%	5.0%	6.0%	4.6%	4.1%	4.2%	4.7%
Information media & telecom.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%	0.5%	1.1%	0.0%	1.0%	0.8%	1.3%	2.5%
Financial & insurance services	0.8%	0.0%	1.9%	1.3%	1.0%	2.2%	1.4%	1.5%	0.4%	1.9%	1.5%	2.0%	4.8%
Rental, hiring & real estate ser.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	1.3%	0.7%	1.2%	0.0%	1.0%	0.9%	1.1%	1.4%
Professional, scientific & tec. Ser.	3.1%	2.5%	2.2%	1.6%	1.4%	3.9%	2.0%	3.1%	0.9%	3.2%	2.9%	3.7%	8.3%
Administrative & support ser.	1.0%	0.0%	6.3%	5.4%	3.9%	3.9%	3.4%	4.1%	0.4%	3.9%	3.3%	2.6%	3.5%
Public admin. & safety	2.6%	2.9%	0.0%	3.6%	3.3%	5.3%	4.4%	4.0%	4.9%	5.0%	4.8%	5.8%	4.9%
Education & training	11.6%	9.2%	1.9%	6.7%	7.1%	7.8%	7.2%	7.0%	9.6%	7.6%	6.5%	7.9%	7.6%
Health care & social assistance	5.7%	2.5%	2.2%	6.0%	6.3%	10.3%	8.8%	8.5%	14.9%	9.8%	7.3%	11.4%	10.0%
Arts & recreation services	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.5%	0.4%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	1.2%	1.7%
Other services	1.5%	1.3%	0.0%	2.5%	2.5%	3.1%	2.6%	3.3%	1.3%	2.9%	2.7%	3.5%	3.6%
Inadeq. described/ Not stated	2.3%	0.0%	6.9%	3.2%	4.3%	2.9%	3.1%	2.9%	1.8%	2.9%	3.3%	2.3%	2.7%

Source: Table B42 2006 Census of Population and Housing

## UNEMPLOYMENT

While unemployment rates have lowered across all of the localities since the last census in 2001 Mildura Central (6.3%) is slightly above the rate for Regional Victoria (5.6%) and Melbourne (5.3%). Other localities such as Merbein, Mildura RCC, and Wentworth, are again quite near the rate of unemployment for Regional Victoria and Melbourne. The new additions of Mallee Track, Millewa, and Nangiloc/Colignan are below the Regional Victorian and Melbourne rates.

FIGURE 20: COMPARATIVE RATES OF UNEMPLOYMENT (2006)



Source: Table B41 2006 Census of Population and Housing

New Start recipients are again reviewed as a means of assessing the state of protracted unemployment (unemployed for 2+ years) in the region compared with the rate for Victoria. With the exception of Irymple and Ouyen, the other localities in the region all exceed the state rate, some, such as Mildura Central, considerably. For the localities studied, the comparisons from the 2001 figures for unemployment suggest the percentage of the workforce who receive New Start benefits has approximately doubled since 2001, again with the exception of Irymple and Ouyen. The percentage of New Start recipients who have been out of work for 2 or more years has increased since 2001 also.

TABLE 15: RECIPIENTS OF NEW START ALLOWANCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT FOR 2+ YEARS (2006)

	Greater Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irymple	Ouyen	Mildura RCC	Victoria
% of work-force 2006	6.6%	8.4%	7.1%	3.3%	4.0%	7.2%	4.6%
% of New Start Recipients (2006)	51.1%	49.7%	48.1%	49.5%	50.0%	49.8%	45.0%

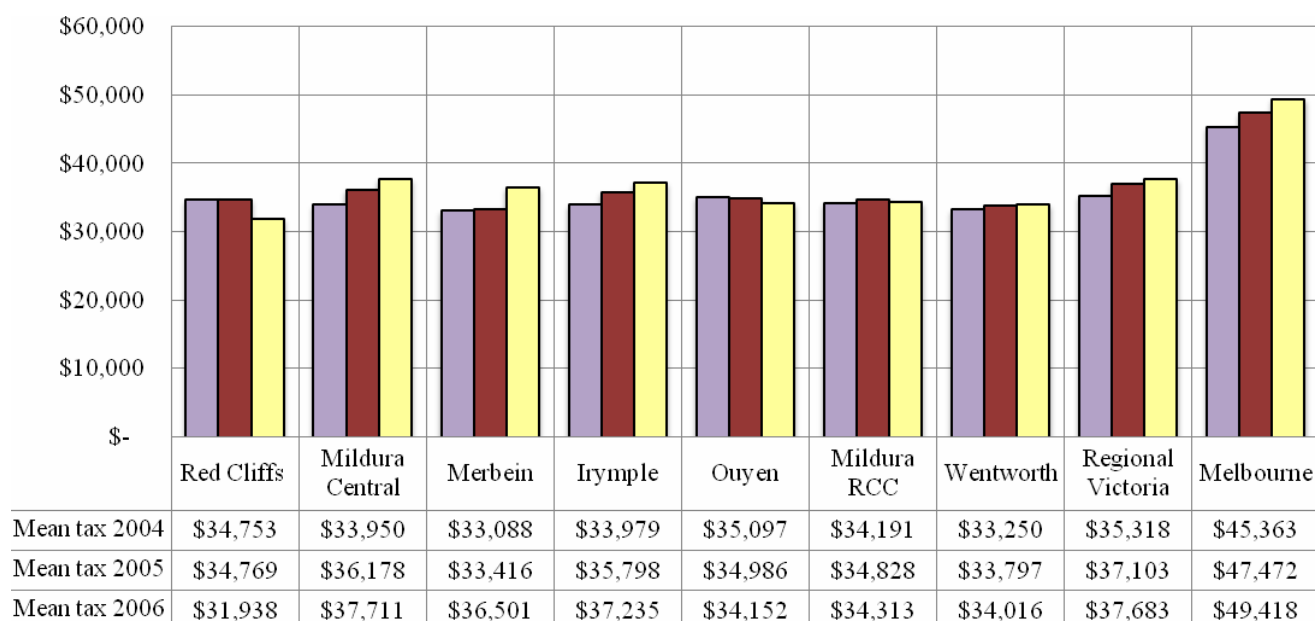
Source: Centrelink 2008, Table B41 2006 Census of Population and Housing



## TAXABLE INCOME

Data concerning taxable incomes for the period between 2004 and 2006 again see the region's taxable incomes well below that of Melbourne's as they were in the 2006 indicators. This is to be expected as Melbourne, like other metropolitan areas, is home to the most extreme incomes derived from quite a different economic base. The taxable incomes of all the regions in the district, with the exception of Greater Red Cliffs and Ouyen, have increased since 2003. Since 2003 however the gap between the lowest (Wentworth) and the highest (Melbourne) taxable incomes has increased from just under \$12,000 to over \$17,000 (Greater Red Cliffs - Melbourne). The difference between the lowest taxable incomes in the region compared to that for Regional Victoria has also increased since 2003 by over \$1300 between Greater Red Cliffs and Regional Victoria.

FIGURE 21: TAXABLE INCOME DISTRIBUTION ACROSS MILDURA LOCALITIES



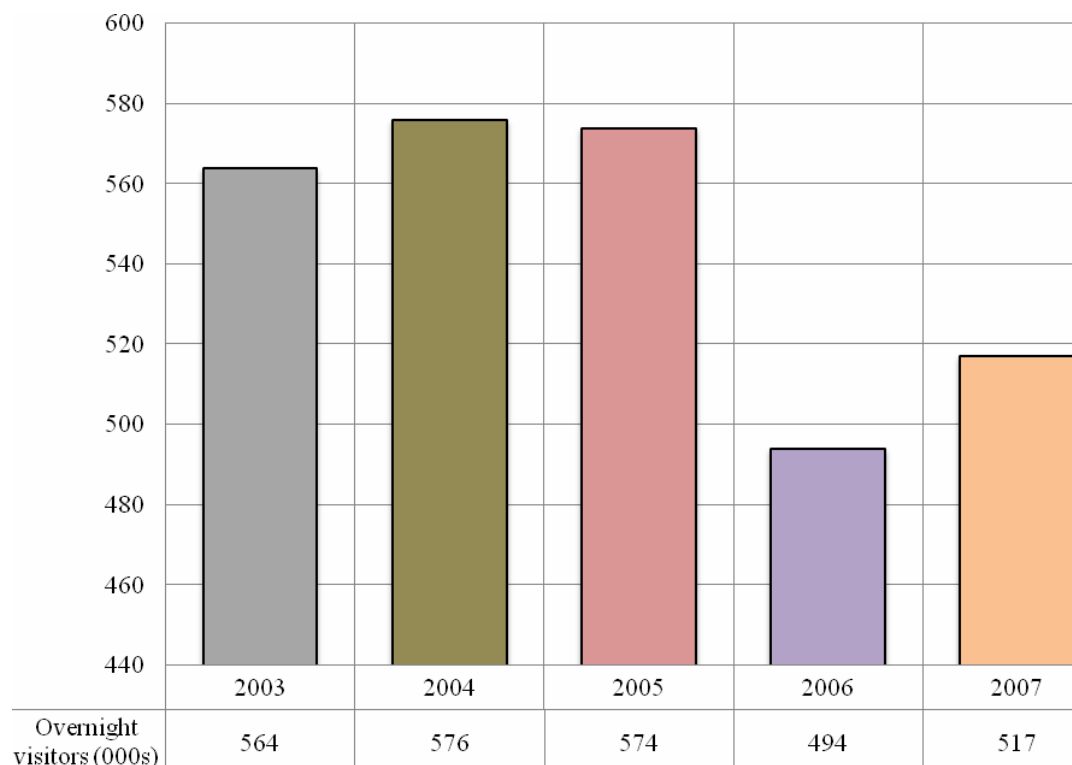
Source: ATO Taxation statistics 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06.

## TOURISM (Mildura region)

The previous social indicators reported tourism statistics for the entire Murray region which incorporated regions outside the district. This iteration of the social indicators has refined the measures for this section of the report by concentrating on the Mildura region so as to provide readers with more relevant data. This section employs three measures of tourist activity in the region since 2003: domestic overnight visitors, domestic visitor nights, and domestic day-trip visitation.

Despite some minor growth in 2004 the proceeding years since then have seen a slight decline (about 10%) in the number of domestic overnight visitors to 2007.

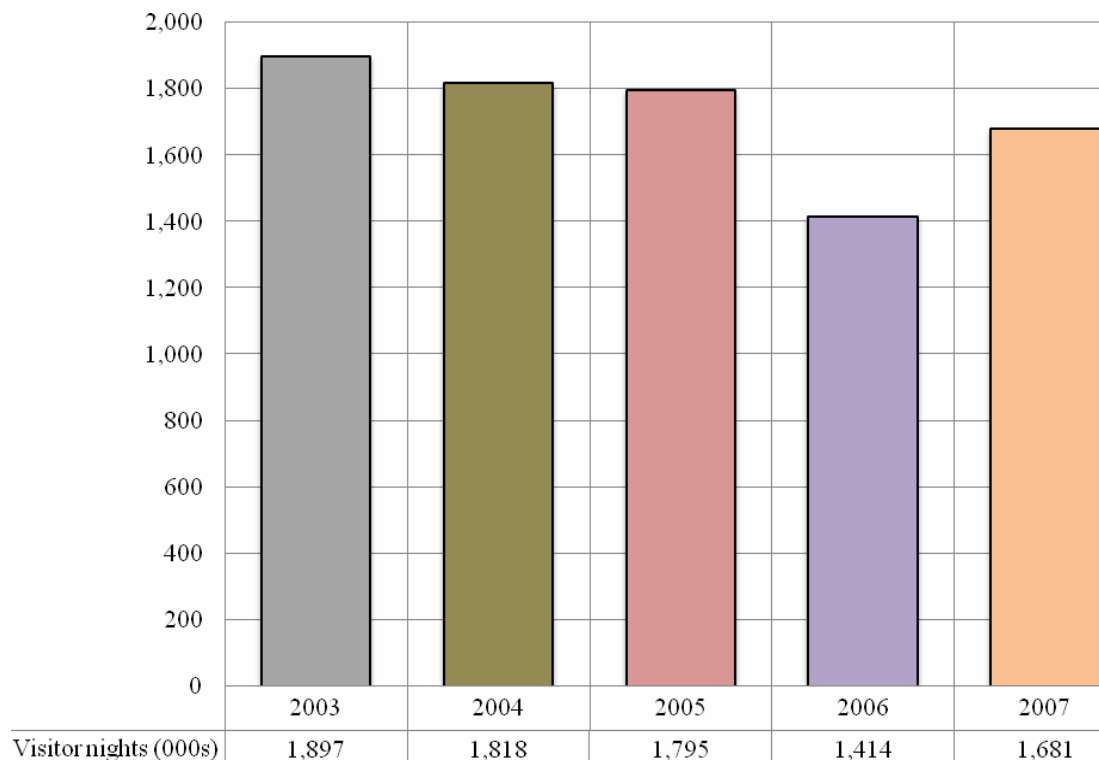
FIGURE 22: DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT VISITORS (000s)



Source: Mildura Tourism Inc. <http://www.visitmildura.com.au/latest-research.html>

After a more substantial decline in 2006, 2007 figures for domestic visitor nights have recovered to achieve a figure closer to those recorded between 2003 and 2005.

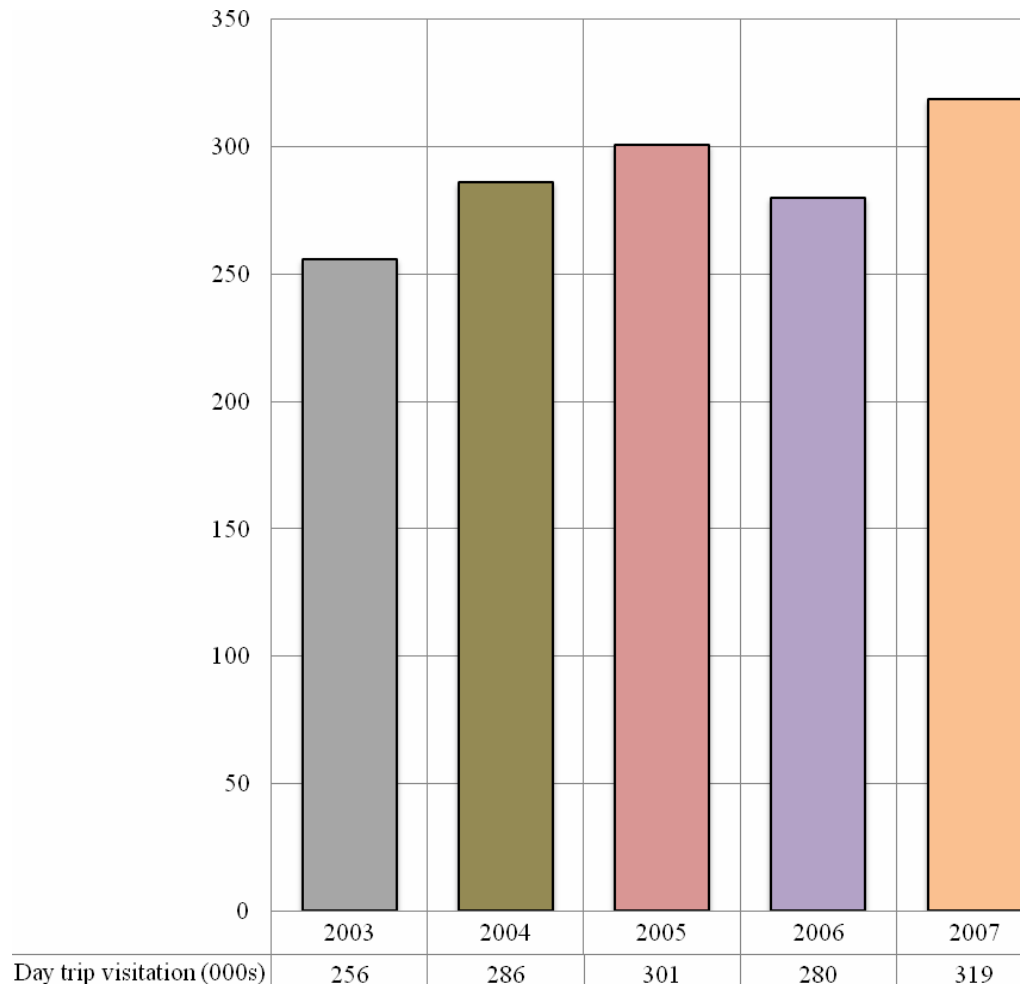
*FIGURE 23: DOMESTIC VISITOR NIGHTS (000s)*



Source: Mildura Tourism Inc. <http://www.visitmildura.com.au/latest-research.html>

Domestic day-trip visitation to and about the region has witnessed a 20% increase overall since 2003 with continuous growth since that time.

*FIGURE 24: DOMESTIC DAY-TRIP VISITATION (000s)*



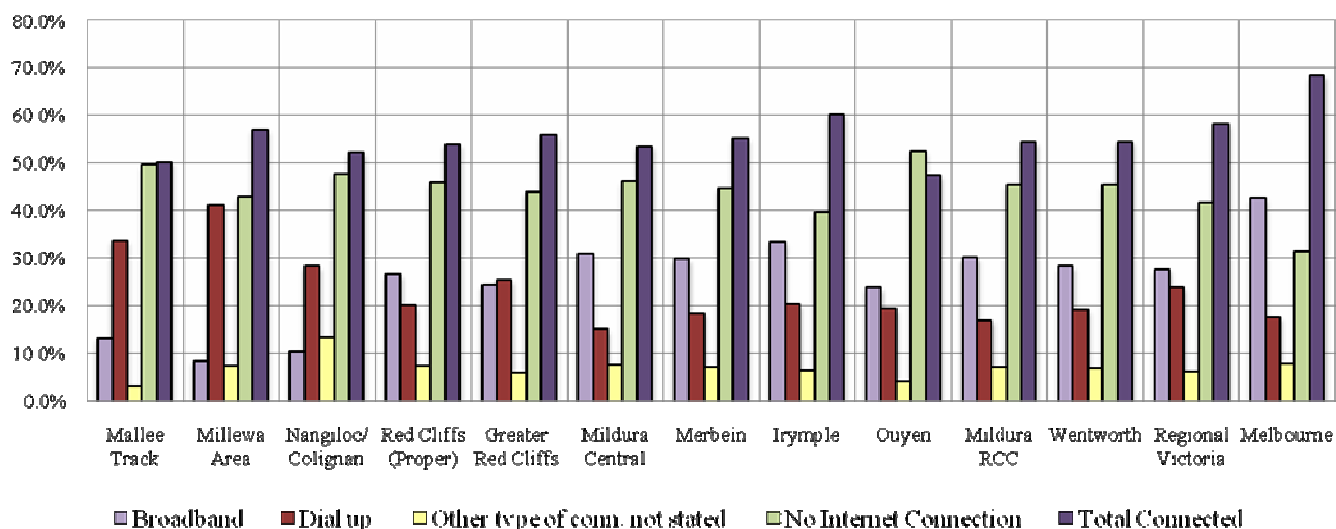
Source: Mildura Tourism Inc. <http://www.visitmildura.com.au/latest-research.html>

## INTERNET CONNECTION/ACCESS

As was the case for other measures derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics used in this document, the way in which the ABS measure computer use has also changed since the 2001 census. Computer use is now more simply stated as internet access for this iteration of the social indicators reflecting this change and measures the type of internet connection contained within a dwelling. The importance of access to the internet cannot be understated as Australia embraces the information economy. It is vital that regional and rural Australia 'get online' to not only participate in this change but also to combat other issues that regional and rural Australians face, such as social isolation.

The table below displays the percentage of households connected to the internet and the type of connection they have. The average figure for internet connection in the region is approximately 15% below that of Melbourne (54.5% compared with 68.4%) and slightly below that of Regional Victoria. Melbourne has substantially more households with a broadband connection, although this may be the result of greater availability, while some of the region's localities are reliant on slower dial-up connections.

FIGURE 25: INTERNET ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS ACROSS SUB-REGIONS



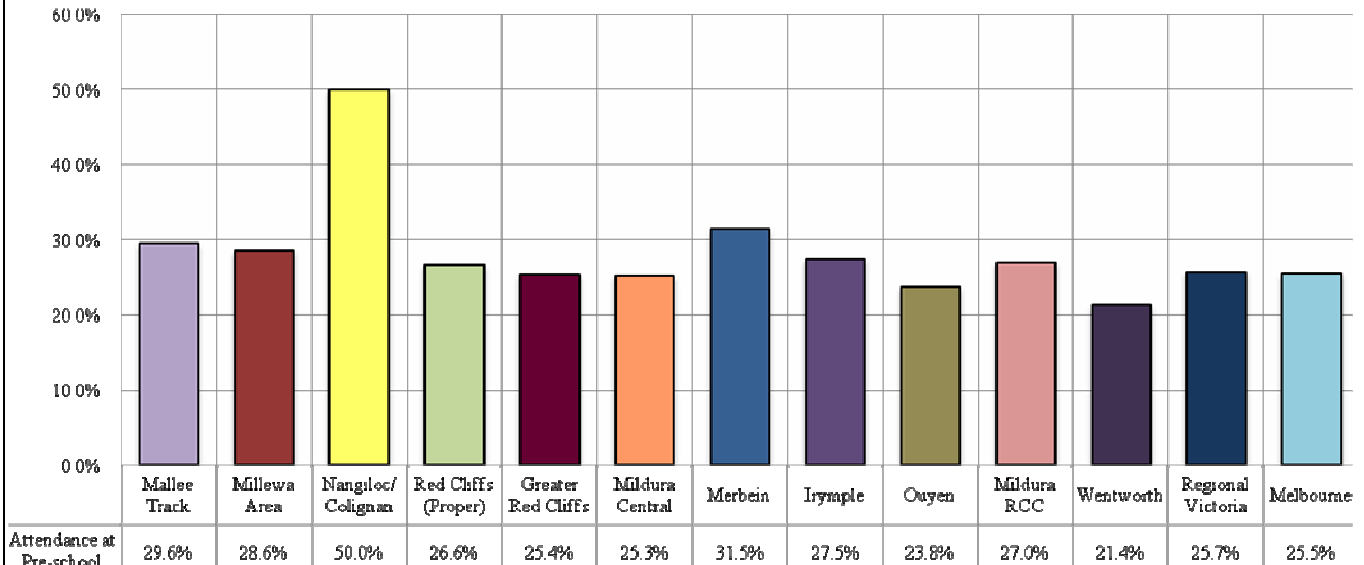
Source: Table c86 2006 Census of Population and Housing

## SECTION 7: EDUCATION

### ATTENDANCE AT PRE-SCHOOL

Attendance rates at pre-school are again measured using data from the census that includes infants from the ages of 0 to 4. The 2006 figures match those of 2001 in that the rates of attendance at pre-school across the sub-regions is slightly above or below that for Regional Victoria and Melbourne. The excessive figure for Nangiloc/Colignan is a result of far fewer actual numbers in these age categories skewing the percentage data and should be interpreted with caution.

*FIGURE 26: PROPORTION OF PRE-SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ACROSS MILDURA'S SUB-REGIONS (CALCULATED ON BASIS NUMBER 0-4 YEAR OLDS)*



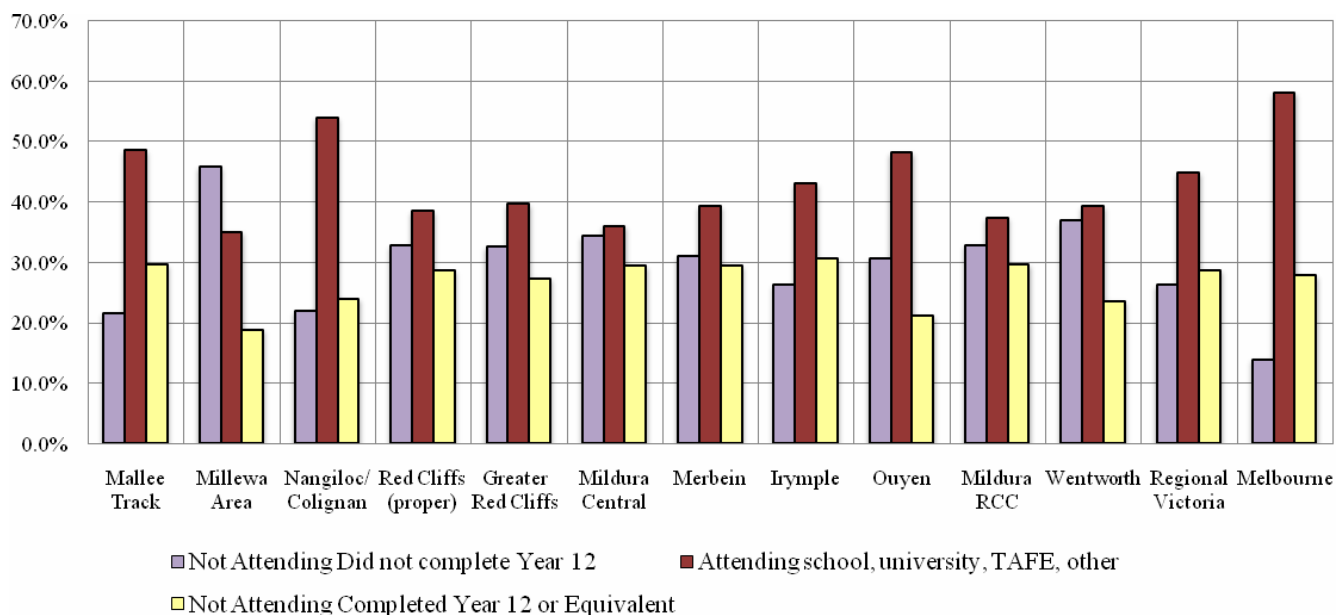
Source: Table b14 2006 Census of Population and Housing

## INCOMPLETE EDUCATION/TRAINING (17-24 YEAR OLDS)

The previous social indicators set a benchmark of incomplete education and training by identifying “the number of 17 – 24 year olds who are neither completing the VCE and not in further education and training”<sup>16</sup>. Educational attainment is an important factor in successful participation in the workforce. This section of the current iteration of the social indicators reflects a slight change to the way in which the ABS measure educational attainment since the 2001 census. As a result we now have the means to be able to ascertain who has completed year 12 in addition to those who have not for the stated age cohort, thereby gaining a more accurate picture of educational attainment in the region.

The key statistic here, due to the importance placed on completing the VCE, is “not attending did not complete year 12” for which the region’s average is over twice that of Melbourne, but nearer to the Regional Victorian figure, some variation of educational attainment, as it is considered here, exists between the localities also.

*FIGURE 27: PROPORTION 17-24 YEAR OLDS NEITHER COMPLETING VCE NOR UNDERTAKING FURTHER SCHOOLING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (CENSUS 2006)*



Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing Special Run

<sup>16</sup> Mildura Social Indicators 2006 pg 37

## OVERALL EDUCATION

The following table indicates the overall levels of education within each of the localities for the region against Regional Victoria and Melbourne. The first indicators report tabled these figures for everyone over the age of 15 years but deduced from this group those still completing their education as well as those who had not stated their educational level in the census. The following table follows this format.

The table shows a consistent pattern with the data recorded in the previous social indicators for overall education in that there remains a marked difference in the rates of high school completion between Melbourne and Regional Victoria entailing the localities within the region (48.2% compared with 30.6% in 2001; 53.8% compared with 34.8% in 2006). Despite the fact that overall rates of completing high school have risen for all of the localities studied, the rates of completion are proportionally similar between Melbourne and Regional Victoria five years later. The year 12 rate in Melbourne is again double that of Merbein, Greater Red Cliffs, and Ouyen, and despite the rate for Wentworth being below half that of Melbourne for completion of year 12, it has shown some improvement since 2001 (20.5% in 2001 compared with 28.3% in 2006).

At the other end of the educational attainment scale, some improvement in the rates of education can be seen between 2001 and 2006 when comparing those who completed year 9 and below, however the disparities between Melbourne and Regional Victoria are still quite close to 2001 figures (20.4% compared with 27.1% in 2001 and 16.9% compared with 23.1% in 2006). Very similar rates were recorded for Mildura's sub-regions again for this level of overall education when compared with Melbourne (Irymple, Mallee Track, Millewa, Wentworth, Mildura Central, Merbein, and Ouyen exceeded the Melbourne figure between 1.5 and 1.7 times, Greater Red Cliffs 1.8 times).

**TABLE 16: LEVEL OF SCHOOLING ATTAINED BY RESIDENTS OVER 15 EXCLUDING THOSE STILL AT SCHOOL**

	Mallee Track	Millewa Area	Nangiloc/Colignan	Red Cliffs (proper)	Greater Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irymple	Ouyen	Mildura RCC	Wentworth	Regional Victoria	Melbourne
Year 12 or equivalent	25.3%	29.4%	30.2%	24.7%	24.8%	32.1%	26.8%	30.3%	23.8%	30.3%	28.3%	34.8%	53.8%
Year 11 or equivalent	23.3%	23.3%	20.3%	18.8%	19.7%	17.1%	19.1%	19.3%	21.8%	18.1%	16.6%	19.1%	13.9%
Year 10 or equivalent	23.1%	19.3%	26.1%	25.6%	25.1%	24.1%	26.2%	25.8%	24.9%	24.3%	28.2%	23.1%	15.5%
Year 9 or equivalent	13.7%	13.8%	12.1%	15.4%	14.7%	11.7%	13.4%	11.2%	13.9%	12.2%	13.7%	11.4%	6.8%
Year 8 or equivalent	14.6%	14.1%	11.3%	14.3%	14.7%	13.9%	14.1%	12.7%	15.0%	14.1%	12.5%	11.1%	8.6%
Did not go to school	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%	0.4%	0.7%	0.6%	0.9%	0.7%	0.5%	1.5%

\*Also excludes "not stated" respondents

Source: Table B15 2006 Census of Population and Housing



## POST-SCHOOLING QUALIFICATIONS (WHOLE POPULATION)

With the exception of Wentworth (3.9% in 2001 compared with 4.8% in 2006), all localities including Regional Victoria and Melbourne have experienced a slight decrease in the proportion of the whole population that have degrees. The differences in proportions between Melbourne, Regional Victoria and Mildura's sub-regions however are very similar to the 2001 differences in that the proportion of degree holders in Melbourne is again double and sometimes more than triple the region's localities. Regional Victoria is again slightly ahead of the sub-regions on this measure. A similar pattern again occurs for Post-graduate degrees, graduate diplomas and graduate certificates. Figures for the Millewa area are above Regional Victoria and even exceed Melbourne for graduate diplomas and graduate certificates, and exceed the Regional Victorian figure for postgraduate degrees. Postgraduate degree holders are proportionally higher in Nangiloc/Colignan than they are for Regional Victoria also.

TABLE 17: POST-SCHOOLING QUALIFICATIONS (WHOLE POPULATION)

	Mallee Track	Millewa Area	Nangiloc/Colignan	Red Cliffs (proper)	Greater Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irmpole	Ouyen	Mildura RCC	Wentworth	Regional Victoria	Melbourne
Postgraduate Degree	0.0%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.9%	2.7%
Grad Diploma/Grad Cert.	0.8%	2.1%	0.0%	0.8%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%	0.6%	1.2%	1.6%
Degree	4.4%	3.8%	3.1%	3.5%	3.6%	5.5%	3.5%	4.8%	4.3%	5.0%	4.8%	6.3%	11.6%
Diploma	2.5%	1.7%	5.0%	3.2%	3.3%	3.9%	3.2%	4.0%	3.6%	3.7%	3.7%	4.9%	6.2%
Certificate	10.5%	10.9%	10.7%	11.9%	11.7%	12.8%	12.8%	13.1%	11.6%	12.7%	13.0%	14.8%	11.5%
Not Applicable	81.9%	80.1%	80.2%	80.5%	80.4%	76.4%	79.2%	76.8%	79.1%	77.2%	77.6%	71.9%	66.4%

Source: Table B39 2006 Census of Population and Housing

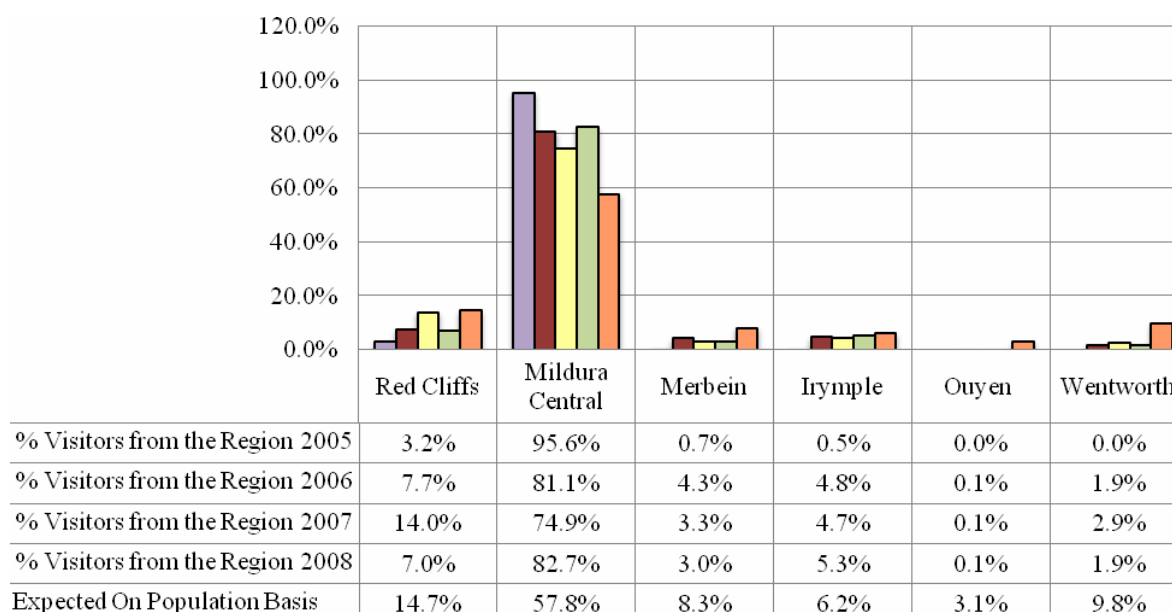
## SECTION 8: CULTURAL INDICATORS

The first social indicators sought to collect data on cultural opportunities afforded people living in the region to assess Mildura Rural City Council's plan for cohesive development<sup>17</sup>. Two cultural indicators were sought in the first social indicators: visits to the City Art Gallery and library borrowings. Professor Tony Vinson qualified the findings in the previous report by alerting readers to the limitations of the data used to indicate cultural opportunities. These limitations still exist and a similar caution must be exercised when reviewing the most recent findings expressed below. An added limitation for the 2007 figures is a technical problem concerning the gallery's computer storage of data. The loss of some data was permanent and therefore impacts upon the spread of visitors to the gallery across the region's localities. Further, the measures for library use have changed to better reflect the holistic usage of this facility in the community.

### ART GALLERY

Despite these difficulties a similar pattern to the 2004 data is apparent for the data between 2005 and 2008. Again the overwhelming majority of visitors to the city gallery are from the Mildura Central locality (67.3% in 2004 compared to 82.7% in 2008). Visitors from the region show an increase for Mildura Central and a decrease of visitors from other localities within the district since 2004. Again this might serve to highlight the possible consideration of outreach and educational activities to further engage residents outside of the Mildura Central region.

FIGURE 28: PROPORTION OF VISITORS TO ART GALLERY FROM SUB-REGIONS AND PROPORTIONS EXPECTED ON A POPULATION BASIS



Source: Mildura Regional Rural Council - Art Gallery

(2008) Mildura Arts Centre, Arts and Culture Strategy, 2008-2011 and Beyond (Draft), April.

<sup>17</sup> Mildura Social Indicators 2006 pg 40

## LIBRARY VISITS and MEMBERSHIP<sup>18</sup>

The measures for library use have been updated to reflect the diverse services that the Council's libraries offer the Mildura community. The previous authors made mention of the fact that over 40% of Australians aged between 15 to 74 years visit all kinds of libraries at least once a year, making libraries the second most attended cultural venue after cinemas<sup>19</sup>. Mildura's libraries received over a quarter of a million visits between 2006 and 2007. The average visiting rate per capita across the region (5.6) was close to the state average (6.8) and includes virtual visits (visits via the internet (these lower rates are to be expected given the lower rates of internet connection in homes see page 30)), and visits to remote sections of the region and to people with mobility difficulties such as those with a disability via the mobile unit. The community's library service covers a distance of over 22,000 kms<sup>2</sup>, amongst the highest in the state.

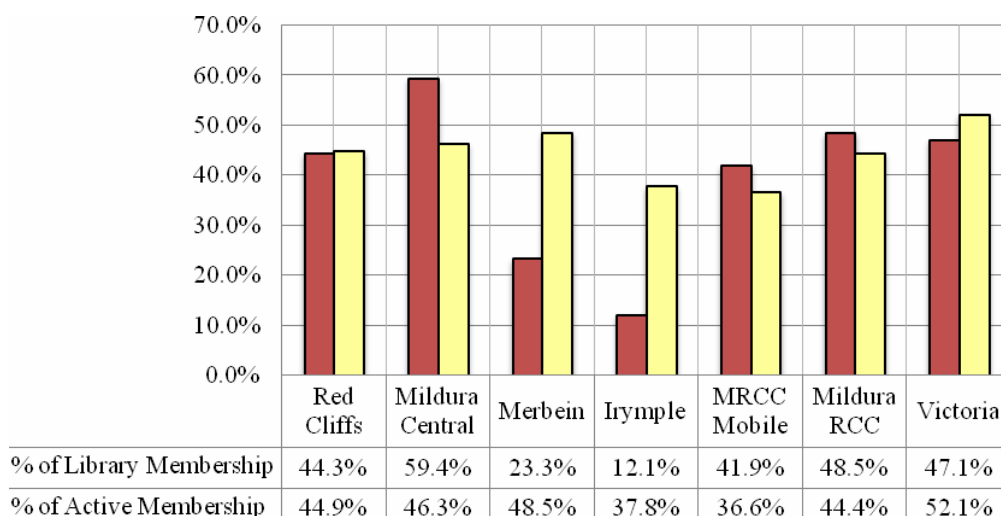
TABLE 18 ACTUAL AND VIRTUAL LIBRARY VISITS 2006 – 2007

Visits	Red Cliffs	Mildura Central	Merbein	Irymple	MRCC Mobile	Mildura RCC	Victoria
Actual number of visits	20211	207787	15073	16048	10143	269262	27147593
Virtual number of visits						34596	6249405
Total number of visits						303858	33396998
Actual per capita	4.4	5.8	3.2	2.8	2.7	4.9	5.5
Virtual per capita						0.6	1.3
Total visits/per capita						5.6	6.8

Source: Mildura Rural City Council Library Service 2008

The proportion of people who are members of the library fluctuate from locality to locality, with some above or well below the state average such as they are in Merbein and Irymple. The proportion of people who are members of the library throughout the municipality however, exceeds the state average. Of those who are members, a range of rates below that for the state, are active members, i.e. borrowed an item between 2006 and 2007.

FIGURE 29: LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP AS A PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION AND ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS



Source: Mildura Rural City Council Library Service 2008

<sup>18</sup> The data for this section has changed since the Mildura Social Indicators 2006, please see the Research Notes section for a description

<sup>19</sup> Mildura Social Indicators 2006 pg 41

## SECTION 9: ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

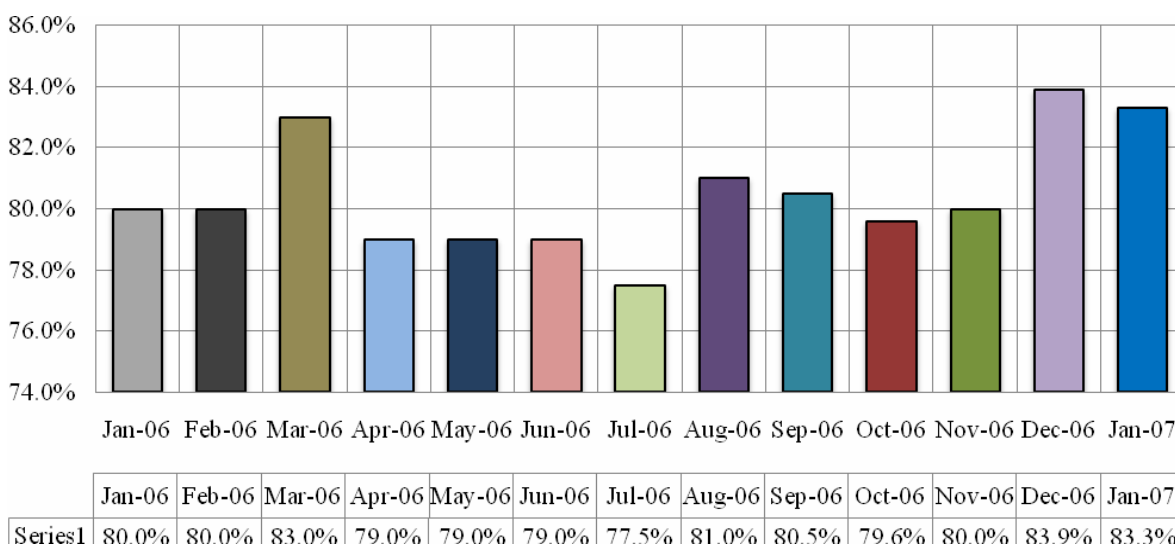
The environmental indicators for this iteration of the social indicators are the same as were presented in the last report: Community Kerbside Recycling Service, the number of tonnes of green waste diverted from landfill, and the Service Eco-Recycle.

TABLE 19: ANNUAL TARGETS AND/OR BEST PRACTICE KPI 07/08<sup>20</sup>

Total tonnes of waste deposited to Mildura Landfill	< 30,000 tonnes per annum
Tonnes of domestic waste collected from Kerbside Service	< 11,000 tonnes per annum
Tonnes of contaminated waste from the Kerbside Recycling Service deposited to Mildura Landfill	< 15% of total collected
Tonnes of domestic material collected from Kerbside Recycling Service	4,200 tonnes per annum
Cost of Kerbside Recycling	\$50.00 per tenement per annum
Service Eco-Recycle Best Practice Target	\$200 per tonne collected
Community Kerbside Recycling Service participation rate	90%
Tonnes of steel recycled from Mildura Landfill	300 tonnes per annum
Number of chemical containers diverted from all waste facilities	14,000 drums per annum
Litres of oil diverted from Mildura Landfill	3,000 litres of Oil per annum
Tonnes of green waste diverted from Mildura Landfill	7,000 tonnes per annum
Number of car tyres diverted from Mildura Landfill	1,200 tonnes per annum
Tonnes of concrete diverted from Mildura Landfill	2,000 tonnes per annum
Number of schools participating in School Recycling Program	25 schools in total (10 participating)

Source: Mildura Rural City Council - Environmental Services

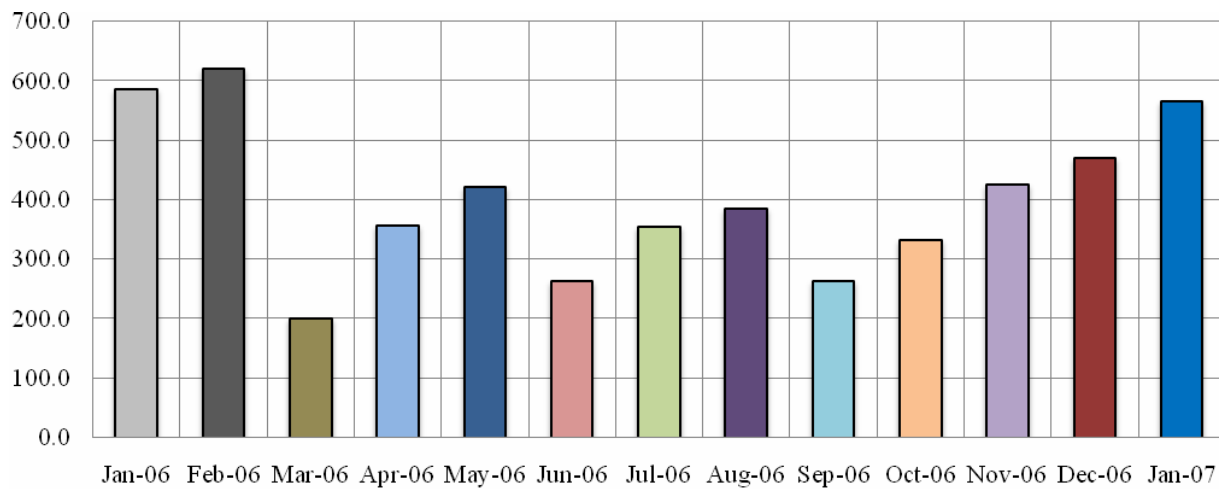
The Community Kerbside Recycling Service produced an increased participation rate of three percent from January 2006 to January 2007. While this is a small increase, the participation rate is generally very high for the Municipality.



<sup>20</sup> Annual targets and/or best practice kpi 05/06 remains the same – subject to review late 2008

FIGURE 30: COMMUNITY KERBSIDE RECYCLING SERVICE PARTICIPATION RATE

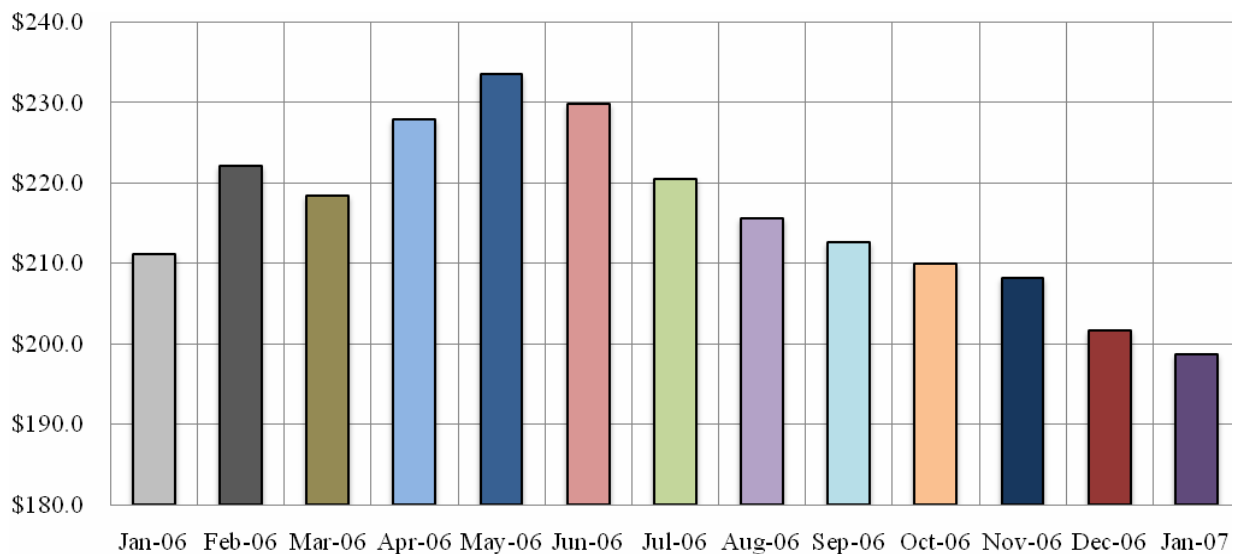
The average amount of green waste for the year January 2006 to January 2007 fell from 550 tonnes to just over 400 tonnes.



	Jan-06	Feb-06	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07
Series1	585.5	620.9	200.6	356.8	420.8	262.7	354.3	386.2	262.8	333.1	426.2	470.9	565.9

FIGURE 31: TONNES OF GREEN WASTE DIVERTED FROM MILDURA LANDFILL

The best practice target for Service Eco-Recycling is \$200 per tonne collected. The average for the year January 2005 to January 2006 was \$226.90, the corresponding average for the year January 2006 to January 2007 was \$215.70.



	Jan-06	Feb-06	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07
Series1	\$211.	\$222.	\$218.	\$228.	\$233.	\$229.	\$220.	\$215.	\$212.	\$210.	\$208.	\$201.	\$198.

FIGURE 32: SERVICE ECO-RECYCLE BEST PRACTICE TARGET

# **APPENDIX 2**

## **MILDURA RURAL CITY COUNCIL**

Feasibility of a Parenting Unit Concept

**Final Report**

July 2010

Impact Consulting Group

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# 1. Executive Summary and Recommendations

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## The Mildura Context

The concept of a parenting unit had been under consideration and discussed by the maternity staff of Mildura Base Hospital from about 1994. Mothers requiring intensive support in the care of their babies were sent to Bendigo, Melbourne or Adelaide to receive the required support, removing them from family and community supports in Mildura, Robinvale or other areas of residence.

The concept was developed into a proposal for a distinct service and by July 1999 initial funding of approximately \$500,000 was forthcoming from a new Victorian Government initiative, the **Maternity Services Enhancement Strategy**.

Consequently, a Parenting Unit operated in the Mildura Rural City auspiced through the Mildura Base Hospital, catering predominantly for children, families and carers with children aged up to 2 years, primarily on discharge from hospital. The service was closed in 2004 due to cessation of government funding.

## The Policy Context

Early parenting services in Victoria have essentially been focused upon vulnerable families with the intensive and specialised parenting support necessary to assist them to care for and nurture their child. Vulnerable children and their families refer to families that require support to prevent risk factors developing and further specialist services or tertiary level services being required, and/or are involved with tertiary service and are in need of intensive parenting support in order to build capacity to care for their child in the home.

In 2009 – 2010, the Victorian Government developed a **Victorian Early Parenting Strategy** for services providing specialist support to vulnerable children and families from pregnancy to pre-school. Victorian Early Parenting Centres and Parenting Assessment and Skill Development Services have been involved in the consultations to support the strategy's development. It presents a shift from universal access to targeted services for vulnerable families and children<sup>1</sup>.

The changes reflect a need to improve referral and information sharing processes with other services involved with vulnerable children and families, particularly services which are also undergoing significant change such as child protection, family services, out of home care, disability, mental health, maternity services, maternal and child health and early childhood development services

Stage 1 of the **Strategy** sets out three key focus areas for change, which will provide a platform to achieve this vision:

- strengthen the integration of early parenting services within the Victorian child and family service system;

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<sup>1</sup> **Supporting parents, supporting children: A Victorian early parenting strategy, 2010 – Stage 1: Building the foundation to change**, Department of Human Services, June 2010

- enhance the range of early parenting services to effectively respond to the changing needs of vulnerable children and their families; and
- build service and workforce capacity to continue to promote service quality and innovation.

The **Strategy** emphasises the range of services that must be available to families, noting<sup>2</sup> that they must

Seek to engage all family members, including encouraging fathers to participate in services and to take an active role in caring for their child, when in the child's best interests. Group programs will be explored particularly for reunification purposes and in improving community linkages for often socially isolated families. Attention will also be given to strategies that support families to continue to have parenting support after the completion of a program.

It also notes<sup>3</sup>

The multitude of issues facing vulnerable families also requires a comprehensive and integrated service response that often cannot be achieved through one service alone. The most effective way of improving outcomes for children will increasingly require a collaborative and coordinated service response between early parenting services, child and family services, ACCOs and other health and community services.

Implementation of the **Victorian Early Parenting Strategy** has the potential to resolve many of the service needs of the population residing in the Northern Mallee Primary Care Partnership catchment. However, the financial and human resources must be allocated by the Victorian Government such as to directly benefit the catchment, recognising the geographic cohesiveness of the catchment and the standing of the communities in the Mildura municipality and the Robinvale district.

The **Strategy** supports the contention that parenting services for Mildura and Robinvale families must be local if they are to be relevant to local needs. The community and Government recognise that the provision of tertiary maternity services is necessary and consequently, the Mildura Base Hospital provides maternity services for a broad geographical catchment, with the closest equivalent services being located at a distance of 400 kilometres. Similarly, parenting services need also to be provided within the same, broad geographic parameters.

## Population

### Mildura Rural City Council

Mildura City's total population is projected to increase by about 4000 over the next 16 years. The early years population, however, is projected to increase slightly and then decline over the period to 2016, with an overall fall predicted to be 98 children.

There is an alternative view presented in the **Early Years Statistical Profile** that the population projections underestimate the true population change in Mildura, not accounting for the flow of

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<sup>2</sup> ibid, 24

<sup>3</sup> ibid, 15



individuals and families that reside in the area to gain employment in the horticultural and tourism industries.

Area	2006	2011	2016	2026	Increase/ Decrease
Mildura City Part A (SLA) Total Population	47,911	49,581	50,594	52,461	4,550
Mildura City Part B (SLA) Total Population	3,610	3,770	3,540	3,061	-549
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,521</b>	<b>53,351</b>	<b>54,134</b>	<b>55,522</b>	<b>4,001</b>
Mildura City Part A (SLA) 0-4 years population	3,145	3,217	3,160	3,087	-58
Mildura City Part B (SLA) 0-4 years population	211	181	156	171	-40
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,356</b>	<b>3,398</b>	<b>3,316</b>	<b>3,258</b>	<b>-98</b>

#### **Referrals from Mildura Rural City Maternal and Child Health**

The level of referrals from Mildura Rural City's Maternal and Child Health Service is low, although it is possible that the referral of children is effectively a referral of the carer, given the interdependency between parents and young children.

The criteria that are utilised by Maternal and Child Health nurses needs to be clarified and standardised to establish whether referrals that are based on a detailed assessment of the carer and/or the child could benefit from the operation of a Parenting Unit. Of note are:

- the referral of only one case to the Breast Feeding Clinic in 2008 – 2009 and two cases in 2009 – 2010;
- the relatively strong reliance on general practitioners for carer referral;
- the small numbers of carers (6) referred to the enhanced maternal and child health service, compared to the larger number referred to maternal and child health support;
- the higher number of referrals to potentially specialist services at the Mildura Base Hospital and the Sunraysia Community Health Centre, a possible reflection of the need for parenting support without an assessment of the outcome of the referral in resolving the presented issues;
- the small numbers referred to Early Intervention and Child First, totalling 7 and 12 cases respectively across the two time periods; and
- the stronger use referrals to allied health services such as audiology, physiotherapy, dental services, optometry, speech pathology, etc, in 2009 – 2010 than in 2008 – 2009, with the reason being a growth in the incidence of presented issues and/or a greater availability of Mildura based services and/or a change in referral patterns of maternal and child health nurses.

### **Child Maltreatment**

The child maltreatment rate for the Mildura area in 2002 was 29 substantiated cases per 1000 population, a rate almost three times the State average, placing the Mildura region as the seventh highest of all Victorian local government areas.

According to the **2008 Social Indicators Report**, substantiated cases of child maltreatment for Mildura, is nearly three times that of Melbourne, at 17.2 instances per 1,000 children.

There were a reported 78 sexual assault and 69 family violence cases involving children aged 0-8 years that were managed by the Mallee Sexual Assault and Family Violence Unit. All but twenty cases involved children from Mildura Central (112) and Red Cliffs (15).

Of all substantiated child abuse in the Mildura area, 60 per cent involve children aged 0 – 9 years. Nearly half of all the substantiated cases of child abuse in the area involve the emotional abuse or neglect of children in this age group. Indigenous children are over represented in substantiations, more than 30 per cent of the total, whilst representing only 6 per cent of the 0 - 8 years population. The overall rate for indigenous children is 196 / 1000 compared to 29/ 1000 for the total population<sup>4</sup>.

### **Robinvale**

According to the 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, Robinvale has a population of 2,214 and an estimated regional population of 3,965. However, estimates of the size of the Robinvale catchment are between 6,000-8,000 people, with an influx of a further 2,000 people during harvest. The large discrepancy between census data and the estimated population implies that the community may be severely under- serviced by government programs and services.

Robinvale has a younger age profile, with children aged between 0-14 years constituting 23.7 per cent of the population compared with 19.3 per cent in Victoria. Robinvale has a higher proportion of one parent families (18.5 per cent) compared with 15.4 per cent in Victoria.

In Robinvale, 13 per cent of residents are from an indigenous background, compared with 0.6 per cent for the whole of Victoria as stated in the 2006 Census data. Residents include second and third generation Italians and there are substantial numbers of Pacific Islanders. Since the 1990s there has been a steady stream of primarily Asian immigrants to the area.

Other indicators are that<sup>5</sup>:

- after Maternal & Child Health visits stop, Robinvale parents often have little contact with formal services prior to their children attending pre-school;
- many parents are not aware of what is available to them within existing services and facilities;
- antenatal service providers in the area note that women in Robinvale require more support;
- healthy eating and oral health are issues,
- there are known language difficulties in the community, particularly with young children commencing primary school;

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4 Community Engagement Framework, Child Safety and Well being Operational Group (CSWOG): **Statistical Report**, March 2010

5 **Robinvale Family Centre Feasibility Study**, So Great Committee and Swan Hill Rural City Council, nd, 13

- family violence is seen as an issue;
- teenage pregnancies in Robinvale are an issue and are often a 'lifestyle choice';
- there is an urgent need for a mother's meeting place in the town centre, accessible to all cultural groups, particularly Asian, Tongan and indigenous;
- the more disconnected and vulnerable people in the community often find services inaccessible either through lack of transport or because they do not feel welcome; and
- child care is in short supply, particularly for children under one year old.

## The Issues

There is broad agreement across the stakeholder groups on the need for the provision of parenting support services for Mildura and the NMPCP catchment. What is at issue is what such a service should look like, where it should be located, and what type of services it should offer in order to achieve the desired outcomes for effective parenting to families with young children.

Key themes elicited in the course of stakeholder consultations include:

- the historical perspective;
- recognising the dimensions of the parenting space;
- determining service demand and assessing level of need;
- meeting the needs of CALD and indigenous families;
- defining the characteristics of a parenting support service;
  - the physical location;
  - the auspice arrangement;
  - the service focus;
- the suite of services and delivery mode;
- understanding the current service system;
- service coordination and integration; and
- workforce issues.

The closure of the parenting unit is seen by some stakeholders to have contributed to a disaggregation and fragmentation of services and even some competition across service providers. Further, stakeholders also acknowledge that there is still some residual feeling in the community regarding the role of the Mildura Base Hospital from when the parenting unit was closed.

However, there is broad agreement among stakeholders that relations between the Hospital and community based services have improved in recent years. This is important since both the Hospital and community based services are seen to have a role to play in the any future development of parenting support services in the region.

For both **CALD** and **indigenous communities**, stakeholders believe that it is important to de-stigmatise and normalise parenting support services in order to overcome access and engagement barriers. Location of these services in the community (versus the clinical setting of a hospital) is considered to be one way of achieving this. Finding creative and innovative ways of facilitating access to parenting support services by these communities is seen as the way forward.

## **Demand and Location**

There is concern as to how well current demand for parenting support services is known and understood. This lack of clarity is not helped by the fact that there is no central repository of relevant data. Rather, this data is held by a range of sources and is not expected to be easily extracted as it is likely to have been collected over different periods of time, and in varying detail and formats.

The **Victorian early parenting strategy** identifies the need to develop a common data set and reporting requirements to inform future service planning and allow for greater sharing of information within the early parenting services system

**Universal family support and parenting services** provide general information, advice and support for all parents. **Targeted services** support parents in meeting the extra or additional needs of children and young people, when they require more support than universal services can offer. The former are appropriately located in communities where parents live and the latter located on a site that has access to all the required skilled resources and can be reached by parents and their children.

In the Northern Mallee PCP catchment, the real issue is to locate the treatment services in a location where the ancillary cultural and emotional supports are not prevented from interacting and supporting the parents and children in the service – such as occurs when services in Bendigo, Melbourne or Adelaide need to be utilised. As most families are already experienced in accessing Mildura for birthing services, it is reasonable to assume that accessing a parent support service in Mildura can be facilitated and achieved.

A community based setting for the service would break down the stigma associated with the provision of parenting support services and normalise the process. It would facilitate improved service access, better engagement of clients once in the service and more effective outcomes for families. A holistic approach provides an opportunity to identify other relevant issues within the family (e.g. financial hardship, mental health issues) that can impact upon parenting capability.

There is broad agreement that ideally, a parenting unit, however configured, should have the capability to fulfil multiple purposes: to inform, educate, support, up skill and facilitate (where required) connections and linkages with other services. Importantly, the support received must be useful and transferable to the home environment. Above all, whatever the suite of services and programs provided, stakeholders are unanimous in their belief that they must be founded on a strong evidence base.

## **Developing a Business Case**

A **Business Case** for day stay services would acknowledge the specific service structures and issues in different towns, the projects and initiatives that have been developed in response to locally identified need, as well as the State and Commonwealth Government initiatives and programs running in these towns.

Importantly, a Business Case will assist in identifying how locally developed and State Government programs and initiatives intersect and interface with the parenting space. Consequently, there can

be greater assurance that the development of treatment services would provide effective and efficient delivery to families.

### **Co-ordination and Integration**

Primary Care Partnerships (PCPs) provide a potential solution to the issue of co-ordination and integration. The Northern Mallee Primary Care Partnership (NMPCP) comprises a wide range of member agencies including core members such as hospitals, community health, local government and divisions of general practice as well as other agencies such as area mental health, drug treatment and disability services.

**PCP Working together, Achieving more** (July 2005, DHS) states that 'PCPs provide the ideal platform for initiatives that require effective collaboration and coordinated effort, not only across primary health care services but also with other health and community groups'. This project presents an opportunity to trial the extension and application of the PCP framework and existing tools into the children and family services space. Many of the key players in the region operate in both health and children and family services domains.

### **Form of Practice**

Increasing the capacity of the maternity workforce to work with families who have complex needs will improve the effectiveness of programs and engagement with those most at risk. The learning's from family support and parenting practice must be embedded in the forms of practice utilised in delivering services. Identification and sharing of good practice in Mildura and beyond develops a greater degree of inter-agency collaboration and communication, promoting reflective practice for practitioners and supporting the workforce in their interactions with children and parents.

There is significant collective skill and expertise sitting in existing specialist parenting units, in universal services such as Maternal and Child Health and in a wide range of community based services. More innovative and creative ways of harnessing this expertise and skill is needed to ensure provision of the most appropriate support in order to improve outcomes for families.

### **Leadership**

In the United Kingdom, the **Leeds Family Support and Parenting Strategy**<sup>6</sup> is holistic, aiming to help parents, families and communities to take a lead role in helping their children and young people in the best way. In the Strategy, family support is concerned with the creation and improvement of local services, activities and facilities that support parents in bringing up their children. These services will have outcomes such as relieving stress, improving confidence and self esteem and increasing capacity for parents to provide for their children from pregnancy to adulthood.

Mildura cannot replicate the service framework for Leeds, a city with a population of over 750,000, but it can borrow ideas. The concept of a **Parenting Commissioner**, to provide leadership and support to all aspects of the Northern Mallee's family support and parenting provision framework, would highlight the issue of parenting and act as a rallying point for the deliberation of service options and the marshalling of actions to achieve service outcomes.

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<sup>6</sup> Children Leeds: **Every Parent Matters: Family support and parenting strategy**, July 2009

## Potential Models

There is a strong view that Mildura and the broader NMPCP catchment does not need a 'one stop shop' where parents attend and are referred to other services, as there can be progression to over servicing. A Parenting Unit needs to have substance and parents need to gain from its services, be educated and be able to use what they learn in everyday life.

A Parenting Unit should be a place for parents to attend with or without their children, to access resources and be able to communicate their concerns and issues to a skilled person who is able to deal directly with the matters and work with the parents to devise a pathway to meet their needs.

The model for the Unit needs to be clear about definitions and boundaries and the range of services to be provided. The evidence base for the provision of services needs to be transparent and accurate.

Overall, the key features of an effective parenting support service should be:

- underpinned by a holistic model/approach rather than an illness/medical model;
- based in the community, rather than in a hospital;
- staffed by a multidisciplinary team, but with access to specialist staff as required;
- capable of delivering a broad suite of services tailored to the needs of families; and
- a capacity to provide innovative and flexible delivery modes e.g. internet, podcasts, telephone, individual and group based and in-home based services.

## Staged Options

We believe that a unitary approach will **not** resolve the key issues in the Northern Mallee catchment and that a multi pronged framework is appropriate, to take account of the launch of the **Victorian Early Parenting Strategy**, the need to secure significant financial resources in the short to medium term and the importance of establishing a framework that is sustainable into the long term.

Consequently, we support a staged process to achieve the following:

1. adoption of the framework set out in the **Victorian Early Parenting Strategy**, with an emphasis on the achievement of all of the key tasks identified to strengthen existing systems and programs operating in the Northern Mallee PCP catchment, ie
  - development of a common data set and reporting requirements to inform future service planning and allow for greater sharing of information within the Northern Mallee early parenting services system;
  - review of current referral processes to and from Northern Mallee early parenting services to streamline and simplify referrals and improve coordination between services;
  - introduction of a coordinated intake system for Early Parenting Centre services and an analysis of the benefits of centralising these intake processes to prioritise services to vulnerable children and their families in the Northern Mallee catchment;
  - development of a protocol in the Northern Mallee catchment to enhance access pathways to and from Early Parenting Centre services, including moving to a requirement for professional referrals; and
  - adoption of State based registration requirements and practice evidence for early parenting services, when established.

2. preparation of a **Business Case to support the early implementation of day stay services** by one of the existing Early Parenting Centres operating in Victoria; and
- 3, planning and further investigation of **Option 5: A specialist parenting unit co-located with other early childhood services**, that would lead to development of one or more integrated services hubs in which various services such as child care, kindergartens, and maternal and child health services can be co-located in an effort to promote a more seamless service system.

**The Victorian Government should be approached immediately, to seek financial and operational support to undertake the first and second staged options.**

**Mildura Rural City Council should ensure that within the context of the Mildura Municipal Early Years Plan, the option is incorporated to ensure that Council gives consideration to the establishment of one or more integrated service hubs in the municipality.**

**Swan Hill Rural City Council should ensure that development of an integrated service hub in Robinvale is operationally articulated with the delivery of early years parenting services.**

## **Recommendations**

1. Adopt the framework contained in the **Victorian early parenting strategy** to support the effective implementation of the required suite of parenting services in the Northern Mallee catchment and initiate a direct presentation on the findings of this review to the Victorian Early Parenting Strategy Reference Group.
2. Extend the service coverage of the Northern Mallee Primary Care Partnership to encompass service provision for the early years population, covering children, their parents and the family, resulting in the development and expansion of existing service integration and co-ordination tools, instruments, frameworks and processes to be applied by services supporting children in their early years in the NMPCP catchment.
3. Establish and maintain collaboration with specialised health services working in the Northern Mallee catchment, to ensure that the needs of infants and children are met and services are effectively co-ordinated for their family, in the best interests of the child.
4. Given the commitment of the Victorian Government's **Victorian Early Parenting Strategy** to the completion of a services analysis to focus upon future service provision within rural areas and growth corridors, the NMPCP and the Mildura Rural City Council advocate for the consideration and inclusion of the findings of this report in the analysis.
5. Secure funding from the Victorian Government to establish a common data set and reporting requirements for all services providing early parenting services, with the utilisation of the Northern Mallee catchment as a test site for urban, rural and remote communities and itinerant, indigenous, newly arrived CALD, young parent and families with special need children population segments.
6. Secure funding from the Victorian Government to support the role of the Northern Mallee Primary Care Partnership in introducing a co-ordinated intake system for EPC services and

enhancement of access pathways (incorporating professional referrals), as a pilot initiative that can be applied across Victoria, as supported in the **Victorian Early Parenting Strategy**.

7. Secure funding from the Victorian Government to commission the preparation of a financial and operational Business Case for the provision of Day Stay Centre Support in Mildura to parents serviced by the NMPCP catchment, by an external service provider, on the basis that location in Mildura will be optimal for families living outside the main urban area in the catchment and that day stay services would be best located in the community with an affiliation/linkage with the Mildura Base Hospital.

8. Establish the role of **Commissioner for Children** in the Northern Mallee Primary Care Partnership catchment, to work with the Mildura Best Start Partnership and the Robinvale Early Years Networks and provide leadership on all matters concerning the well being and development of children in their early years, including the articulation of key issues and concerns to decision makers, funding bodies and service providers in the Northern Mallee catchment, Victoria and nationally.

9. Ensure that the Mildura Best Start Partnership and the Robinvale Early Years Network maintain an acknowledged role in the promotion of early years programs and outcomes, to plan, initiate, monitor and evaluate the development, implementation and ongoing provision of services and initiatives that promote quality outcomes for early years development and functioning.

10. Following the preparation of a Business Case, allocate the responsibility for the oversight of new Parenting Service developments to the Commissioner for Children, working with the Mildura Best Start Partnership and the Robinvale Early Years Networks, to prepare a specification for a Day Stay Service and convene discussions with potential providers on the development of one or more proposals for consideration by potential local (Mildura Rural City, Swan Hill Rural City and Wentworth Shire Council), State (Victoria, New South Wales and South Australian Governments) and Commonwealth Government funding agencies.

11. As matter of urgency, and in line with the directions of the **Victorian Early Parenting Strategy**, give priority to the provision of early parenting centre services to indigenous and CALD families, with the objective of

- improving the relevance, cultural appropriateness and accessibility of parenting centre services for newly emerging communities and particularly for refugee families experiencing family disruption and personal trauma;
- partnering with the Mildura Aboriginal Corporation and the Murray Valley Aboriginal Co-operative to ensure that appropriate early parenting support is available to meet the needs of indigenous families; and
- harmonising teenage pregnancy rates for individuals to Statewide levels.