

5.6 Family violence supplementary analysis

This paper has been compiled by AOD Catchment Based Planning to present an initial overview of available data related to family violence and AOD in the North and West of Melbourne. Data on family violence can be difficult to access, so there are instances in this paper where national or international statistics have been used. To get an understanding of the scale and scope of family violence in our catchment areas, this paper looks at rates of family incidents, emergency department data, children's court data, victims assistance programs, hazards in the L17s (Victoria Police risk assessments) and other items that catchment planning has managed to access to further pad out this picture.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) presents a framework of solutions that focuses on increasing the available evidence informing violence-prevention approaches.

This paper speaks to the WHO framework by:

- Providing a tool for communication and advocacy
- Enhancing the integration of violence prevention into the Victorian AOD service agenda
- Strengthening data collection and research into violence and its interplay with AOD service responses in North West Melbourne.

The North Western Melbourne AOD Service system further adheres to the WHO recommendations by:

- Providing parenting support and life skills training
- Working to reduce the harmful use of alcohol, and
- Taking action to promote service access for both victims and perpetrators.

In 2016, the Royal Commission into Family Violence tabled 227 recommendations, many of which clearly emphasised the need to address 'silos' in service provision and the need for enhanced cross-sector collaboration between AOD, mental health and family violence. AOD services across the North and West of Melbourne are committed to providing quality client care and to responding fully to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. In order to do this effectively, it is necessary to understand the breadth of currently available and relevant data.

This is the basis for the compilation of a family violence specific analysis paper, which has been called for by service providers and broader stakeholders over the last catchment based planning period.

Family violence and AOD

The relationship between family violence and AOD is complex and multifaceted. It has been described as a ‘reciprocal and bi-directional relationship’ meaning that either problem (the presence of violence or substance use) increases the risk of the other.

The research shows conclusively that AOD use (particularly alcohol) increases the incidence and severity of family violence.

In Australia, alcohol is involved in 40% of all cases of violence, and drugs in 1.8% of cases (ADIVA Report).

In the absence of available data in Victoria, we have drawn on New South Wales police data, which shows that 41% of domestic assault incidents were flagged as alcohol-related (Grech & Burgess, 2011). International estimates are around 25-45% for alcohol involvement, and 12% for illicit drug involvement.

Male-to-female violence and alcohol (ADIVA Report):



On any drinking day

8x more likely to experience **any violence**
11x more likely to experience **severe violence**

In a domestic partnership, mutual substance use increases the risk of experiencing domestic violence.

Any illicit drug use in a domestic relationship

doubles the risk of violence.



On heavy drinking days

18x more likely to experience **any violence**
19x more likely to experience **severe violence**

Family violence and AOD in Australia (ADIVA report):

Significant influences on a person’s risk of experiencing family violence:



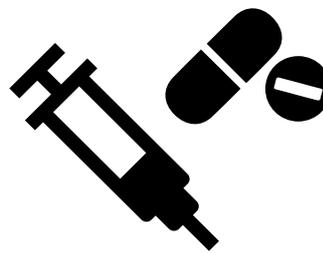
Income below \$25,000

3.6x
more likely to experience
family violence



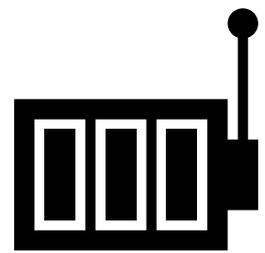
Daily drinking

8.6x
more likely to experience
family violence



Drug dependence

7.9x
more likely to experience
family violence



Gambling

5.2x
more likely to experience
family violence

Family violence in our catchments

LGAs with the highest rates of family incidents:

Hume	1,478.6
Melton	1,468.1
Whittlesea	1,452.3
Wyndham	1,182.6
Brimbank	1,105.0



Steepest increases in rates of FV incidents:

Wittlesea
Nillumbik



Catchment with the highest average rates of family violence

North West

Information obtained from the Victims Assistance Program and the Victims of Crime helpline shows that over the last 5 years there has been:

52%

increase across the state in the number of **people seeking help for family violence.**

But the DHHS region Metropolitan North has had the largest increase over the last 5 years:

150%

increase in the number of **new clients accessing Victims Assistance Program for family violence.**

Intersection of other services with AOD

It is difficult to draw conclusions from AOD services data in relation to AOD service intersections with child and family services. When we look at referral data to get a sense of the links between service systems, we see that only 1.19% of clients were referred from 'other community/health services' (which includes family services) and 0.16% of AOD clients were referred out to family services from the AOD service system.

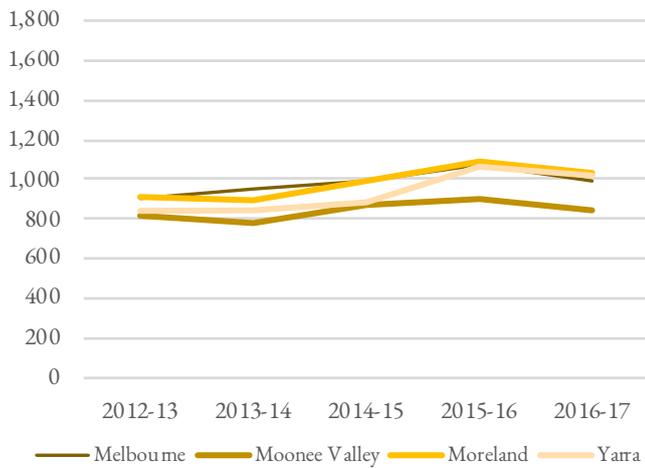
It is important to collect data appropriately to ensure we understand our clients' needs, the scale and scope of service system interaction, and to allow us to measure the effectiveness of the system in responding to client complexity. Fortunately, these referral figures present an opportunity for improvement in terms of the way we collect and record data, and in allowing us to track the progress of our service system responses.

Rates of family violence

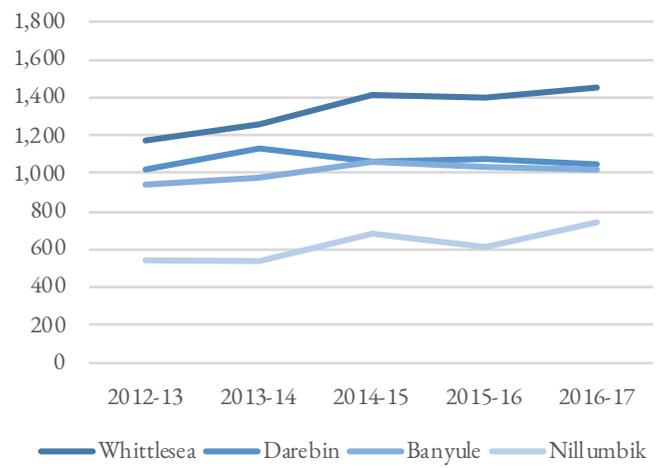
Family incident rates per 100,000 population by local government area. These graphs are based on data accessed from the Crimestastics website, which compiles Victoria Police data on the L17 Risk Assessment and Risk Management reports.

We can see from the graphs in Figure 1 that there are some significant differences in family violence rates between catchments and Local Government Areas.

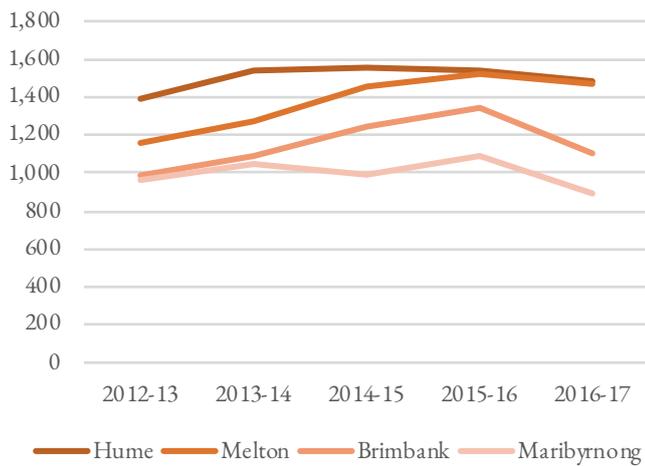
Inner North Melbourne



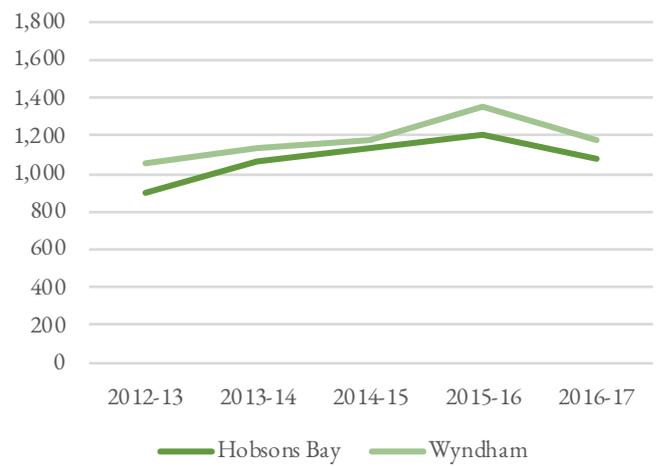
North Melbourne



North West Melbourne



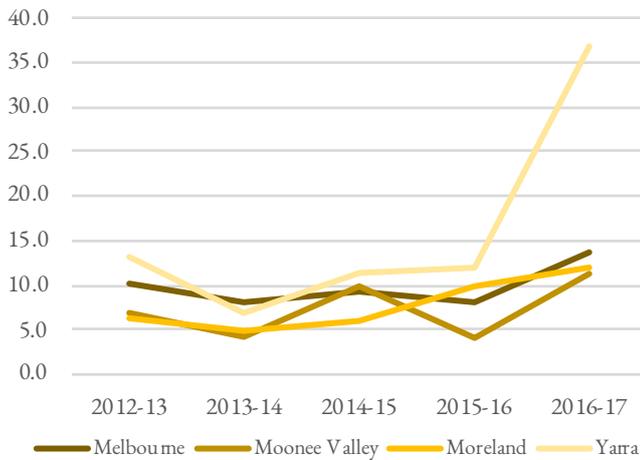
South West Melbourne



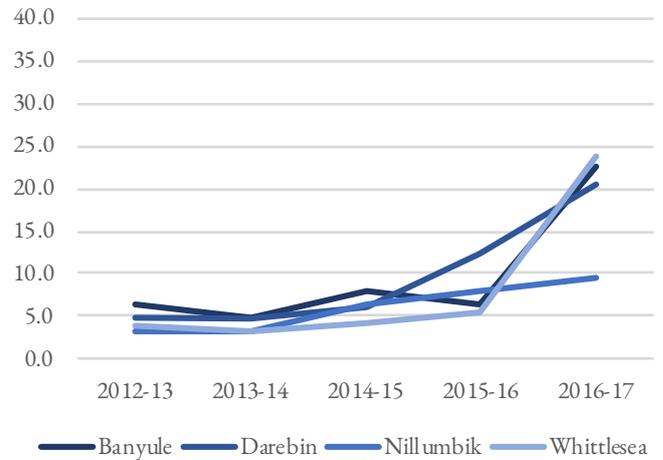
Family violence emergency department

It's important to note that data from the Victorian Emergency Minimum Dataset is dependent on hospital location rather than client postcode. As a result, data can be skewed by location of incident, and hospital demand levels at a given time. We can see evidence of this in Yarra (Inner North catchment) where there are a comparatively high number of public emergency departments.

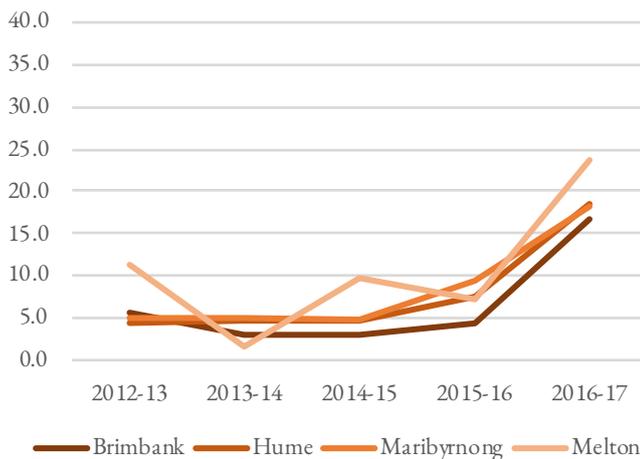
Inner North Melbourne



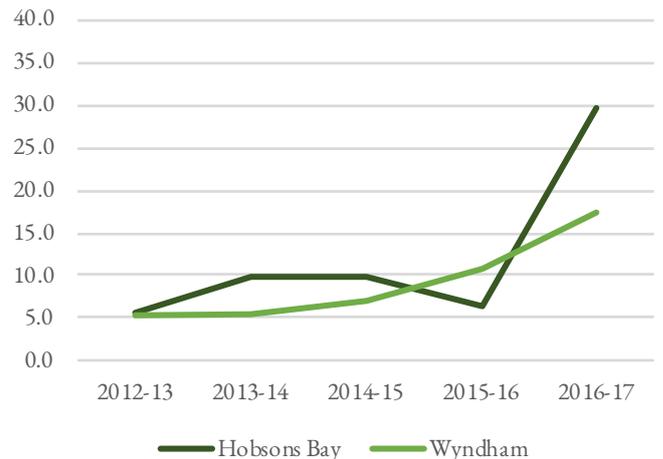
North Melbourne



North West Melbourne



South West Melbourne



Child safety

It is estimated that 94% of Children’s Court cases have their origin in family violence and that in most, if not all of these cases, drug or alcohol dependence is a factor (Personal communication, Children’s Court of Victoria, 2018). From the available data, we estimate that 40% of substantiated cases of child abuse are alcohol-related. 12% of clients are noted as living with their own or their partner’s children (1,915/15,504). We know that this 12% represents a significant underestimate because of child protection reporting and the consequences for parents in certain situations if dependent children are disclosed.



233,795
49,315
20,000

In Australia in a 12 month period:

Children were subject to notifications (2016-2017 data).

of these were substantiated (21.1%).

children were victims of substantiated alcohol-related child abuse (Laslett et al, 2010).



73,203
15,488
12,354
2,423

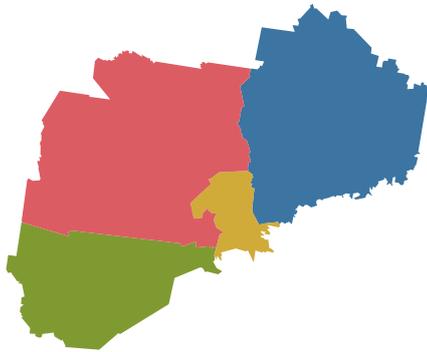
In Victoria in a 12 month period:

children were subject to notifications (2016-2017 data).

of these were substantiated,

were placed on orders.

of these children in Victoria were Aboriginal.



In our catchment areas:

Brimbank, Hume and Melton all have higher than state average rates of:

child protection investigations child protection substantiations and child FIRST assessments

(these are rates per 1,000 eligible population so age demographics and population growth corridors are controlled for).

North & West Metro Region LGAs	Child protection investigations	Child protection substantiations	Child FIRST assessments
Banyule (C)	13.6	5.9	7.8
Brimbank (C)	24.0	16.3	10.9
Darebin (C)	14.9	8.2	8.7
Hobsons Bay (C)	15.2	9.1	6.2
Hume (C)	21.3	12.0	14.2
Maribyrnong (C)	15.3	9.6	7.5
Melbourne (C)	16.2	9.4	5.1
Melton (C)	26.1	16.7	11.0
Moonee Valley (C)	8.1	5.3	4.6
Moreland (C)	12.0	7.2	9.1
Nillumbik (S)	6.9	3.5	3.5
Whittlesea (C)	16.5	7.7	10.4
Wyndham (C)	20.9	12.1	7.5
Yarra (C)	16.7	6.9	9.7
Victoria	19.4	11.4	10.1