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## **G21: THE STATE OF THE REGION'S CHILDREN**

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# Acknowledgements

Sources of data:

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Victoria Police Corporate Statistics Department

# Introduction

The G21 Geelong Region Alliance is a body that works collaboratively to identify, develop and deliver major regional projects that address the objectives of the Geelong Region Plan and make a real difference to the lives of Geelong region people, now and in the future.<sup>1</sup> G21 has membership from a range of independent organisations with a shared vision for the Geelong region. The alliance primarily supports the municipalities of Colac Otway, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast. It is also committed to, along with the Victorian Government and more than 150 community and business organisations, securing a bright and sustainable future for the region. There are eight pillars through which regional issues and projects are developed. The pillar which is supporting this initiative is the Health and Wellbeing Pillar.<sup>2</sup>

The aim of this report is to profile the young people of the G21 Region, specifically children aged 0 to 8 years. In a rapidly growing, key region of the state of Victoria, children aged 0 to 8 years comprise 11.2% of the population. This report focuses upon a wide range of data that considers children from birth to eight years old and their parents. This data has been drawn from federal, state and local government departments as well as independent bodies.

In some cases, data has been cited in this report to age groups above eight years of age. This is due to data collection processes focussing on wider age ranges that are unable to be divided into the preferred 0 to 8 year age range. Additionally, in most cases data has been used that is cited on a Local Government Area (LGA) by Local Government Area basis. However, in some instances, data has only been available on a larger regional basis such as Barwon South West or Grampians regions. This is generally due to the government instrumentality operating within these geographical parameters and data collected by said instrumentality is only available on a regional basis. For example, the data for Early Intervention Services (table 13c) provided by VCHWS is limited to Barwon South West and Grampians regions and is not available at an LGA level. Also, some comparison with other regions (Central Highlands and Loddon) has been undertaken for AEDI data which will be apparent to the reader as they progress through the report.

Section A of the report comprises three introductory parts then commentary on key indicators is provided in the section B. The final, section C of the report details the data underlying section B, and that broadly covers issues such as diversity, family structures, physical health, crime and safety, illness and injury, child abuse, social health and development, parental support and community life. In each section, data has been gathered and in some cases, brief commentary has been made to outline any trends evident.

Some of the key findings that can be drawn from the data contained within the report are:

- Whilst it is projected that there will be significant population growth in the G21 Region (31.7%) in the twenty years from 2006 to 2026, this growth is not reflected in the age range 0 to 8 years. It is projected the number of 0 to 8 year old children will increase from 30,477 to 37,494 (23.0%). Also, and importantly, it is projected that the proportion of the total population in the G21 Region that is aged 0 to 8 years will decrease from 11.3% to 10.5%. This indicates that it is proposed that young children are forming less of the G21 Region's population, over the next twenty years to 2026.
- Over 94% of children living in the Region are born in Australia with a small number of refugee children.
- The Region has a higher representation of Indigenous children than the State as a whole.
- More than 4 in 5 families are two parent families
- 91% of babies are fully immunised at 15 months however full immunisation decreases to 82% at 6 years of age.
- There is a decreasing trend of children visiting any form of dental service between 2006 and 2009.
- Almost 95% of parents agree or strongly agree that their neighbourhood in the Barwon South West Region is a safe place to live.
- 65 children were recorded as victims of crime in the financial year 2009/10 in the G21 Region.
- Over 83% of Prep and Year One students are meeting literacy benchmarks. This result increases to over 90% by the completion of Year Two.
- There is a 100% take up of 'at birth' Maternal Health Nurse visits which decline to 58.5% at the 3.5 year consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> G21 Website 'What We Do', <<http://www.g21.com.au>>, retrieved 10 January 2011.

<sup>2</sup> G21 Health and Wellbeing Strategic plan 2009-2012 p. 7.

## SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

### 1 The Region's Children: An Introduction

This section considers the core numbers relating the population segment of the G21 Region aged 0 to 8 years. It outlines the age structure of children in the Region as well as the distribution of males and females. Projected population changes over the next twenty years are also considered. It should be noted that, as different datasets have been used in this section, for example 2006 Census data and 2008 DEECD datasets, the population numbers may differ.

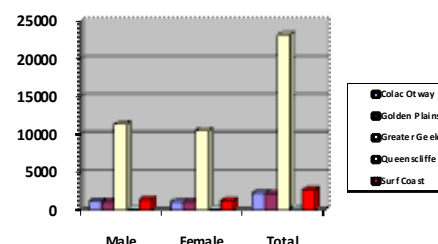
**TABLE 1a POPULATION PROFILES: GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN AGED 0-8 YEARS at 30 JUNE 2008: STATE, G21 REGION AND LGAs<sup>3</sup>**

The percentage of children aged 0-8 years in the G21 Region is the same as that of the whole of Victoria and for rural Victoria. There are variations within the G21 Region. The proportion of children aged 0-8 years in the Borough of Queenscliffe is lowest within the G21 Region, and is also much lower than in Victoria and rural Victoria. The proportion of children aged 0-8 years in the Shire of Colac-Otway and the City of Greater Geelong is comparable, but lower than the proportion of this age group of children in Victoria and rural Victoria. The proportion of children aged 0-8 years in Golden Plains Shire and Surf Coast Shire is higher than the Victorian and rural Victorian proportions of this age group of children.

Area	Total Population	Children 0-8 Years (N)	Children 0-8 Years (%)
Victoria	5,313,823	595,545	11.2%
Victoria Rural	1,420,792	159,829	11.2%
G21	278,668	31,089	11.2%
Colac Otway	21,448	2,321	10.8%
Golden Plains	17,681	2,309	13.1%
Greater Geelong	211,841	23,164	10.9%
Queenscliffe	3,256	254	7.8%
Surf Coast	24,442	3,041	12.4%

**TABLE 1b SEX DISTRIBUTION 0-8 YEARS: STATE, G21 REGION AND LGAs<sup>4</sup>**

Area	Total Children 0-8 Years	Boys		Girls	
Victoria	526,529	285,445	54.2%	241,084	45.8%
G21	29,444	15,246	51.8%	14,198	48.2%
Colac Otway	2,286	1,182	51.7%	1,104	48.3%
Golden Plains	2,225	1,110	49.9%	1,115	50.1%
Greater Geelong	21,959	11,397	51.9%	10,562	48.1%
Queenscliffe	260	130	50.0%	130	50.0%
Surf Coast	2,714	1,427	52.6%	1,287	47.4%



Across the G21 Region in most LGAs, boys outnumber girls. The critical mass in the City of Greater Geelong is the key reason for the difference where 51.9% of children aged 0 to 8 are boys. Surf Coast LGA has the greatest disparity between the sexes, again in favour of boys and Golden Plains LGA is the only area where there are more girls than boys. The G21 Region does have a closer parity in terms of numbers of both sexes when compared with the State of Victoria and in all cases the State has a larger ratio of boys to girl.

**TABLES 1c AND d: AGE STRUCTURE AND DISTRIBUTION FOR BOYS AND GIRLS 0-8 YEARS: STATE AND G21 REGION<sup>5</sup>**

Area	Total Children 0-8 Years	Total Girls 0-8 Years	Girls < 1 Year	Girls 1 Year	Girls 2 Years	Girls 3 Years	Girls 4 Years	Girls 5 Years	Girls 6 Years	Girls 7 Years	Girls 8 Years
Victoria	595,545	241,084	30,917	29,520	29,740	29,425	29,668	30,165	30,860	30,789	30,259
G21	29,444	14,198	1,512	1,482	1,519	1,579	1,599	1,558	1,619	1,660	1,670

Area	Total Children 0-8 Years	Total Boys 0-8 Years	Boys < 1 Year	Boys 1 Year	Boys 2 Years	Boys 3 Years	Boys 4 Years	Boys 5 Years	Boys 6 Years	Boys 7 Years	Boys 8 Years
Victoria	595,545	285,445	32,284	31,070	31,184	31,176	30,950	32,077	31,802	32,418	32,484
G21	29,444	15,246	1,577	1,644	1,622	1,653	1,691	1,718	1,741	1,778	1,822

<sup>3</sup> Source: DEECD, (2010) for each LGA listed. These totals are based on 30 June 2008 and differ from those used later in this report. These are the most up to date population figures available as at the time of compilation.

<sup>4</sup> Source: 2006 ABS Census data. DEECD, (2010) provides total population of children aged 0-8 years for each LGA listed as at 30 June 2008 and these figures are provided in table 1a. DEECD data does not distinguish between males and females thus the above Census data has been used. The 2008 figures have also been included in the above table as bracketed amounts for information purposes and to refer to the data in 1a. In most cases following 2006 Census data has been used unless otherwise advised.

<sup>5</sup> Source: ABS Census 2006



**TABLE 1e: POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS AS AT 2010: G21 REGION AND LGAs<sup>6</sup>**

	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026
Children 0-8 years Colac - Otway	2,355	2,279	2,288	2,317	2,345
Children 0-8 years Golden Plains	2,285	2,372	2,401	2,413	2,487
Children 0-8 years Greater Geelong	22,741	25,140	27,448	28,092	28,786
Children 0-8 years Queenscliffe	275	258	249	247	239
Children 0-8 years Surf Coast	2,821	3,126	3,356	3,508	3,637
<b>Children 0-8 years G21</b>	<b>30,477</b>	<b>33,175</b>	<b>35,742</b>	<b>36,577</b>	<b>37,494</b>
<b>Total population G21 Region</b>	<b>269,988</b>	<b>291,181</b>	<b>312,202</b>	<b>333,752</b>	<b>355,267</b>

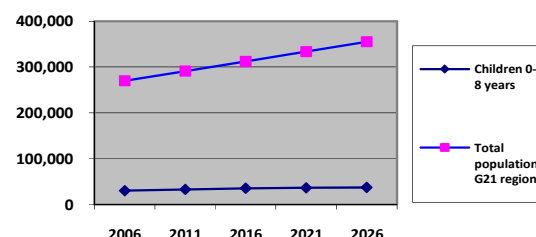


Table 1a shows the estimated total population and children aged 0-8 years for the G21 Region at 30 June 2008, as 278,668 and 31,089, respectively. Compared with the above table, it would appear that the total population of G21 Region has increased over two years (2006-2008), as has the number of children aged 0-8 years. The above table shows an overall projected increase in the numbers of children in this age group, in line with estimated increases in the total population. However the different population trends for each LGA within the G21 Region needs to be taken into account when considering the overall G21 trends and projections. The graph shows a steep growth of the total population in the G21 Region, while the population of children 0-8 years is increasing slightly. This would suggest an ageing population that needs attention as much as the young children in the region.

### DID YOU KNOW???

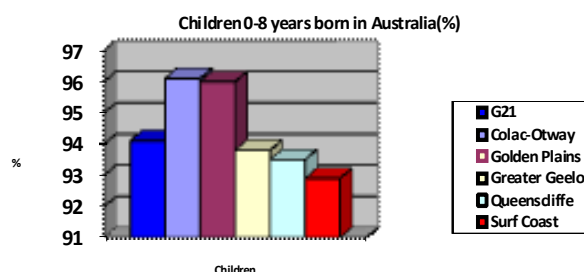
- There are more boys than girls in the G21 Region.
- It is projected that the number of children in all LGAs except for Queenscliffe will grow over the next twenty years.

## 2 Diversity amongst our Children

Diversity means developing a community that is inclusive of people with differing characteristics, ideas and world-views. A diverse community fosters mutual respect, value difference and promotes cross cultural understanding.<sup>7</sup> This section focuses upon where children in the G21 Region are born, whether they are indigenous Australians and the level of children in our Region that require assistance in their daily lives to complete core activities. The chapter also details religious preferences and the language that is spoken in the home.

**TABLE 2a PLACE OF BIRTH CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS<sup>8</sup>**

Area	Total Children 0-8 Years	Born in Australia (N)	Born in Australia (%)	Born elsewhere (N)	Born elsewhere (%)	Not stated (N)	Males born in Australia (N)	Females born in Australia (N)
Victoria	561,903	503,785	89.7%	30,333	5.4%	27,785	290,558	271,345
G21	29,444	27,704	94.1%	666	2.2%	1074	14,326	13,378



The data in this table demonstrates that most children that live in the G21 Region were born in Australia. Across the Region, 94.1% of children were born in Australia. Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast LGAs have a percentage representation in this category that is below the regional average (93.8%, 93.5% and 92.9% respectively). The graph above confirms that Colac Otway and Golden Plains LGAs are both higher than the regional average. Greater Geelong provides a significant proportion of the numbers of children in the Region born overseas (83%) thus Greater Geelong is the only LGA above the Region's representation of children born overseas. All other LGAs are below the percentage of the G21 result.

<sup>6</sup> Source: DEECD, (2010) for each LGA listed. G21 regional data calculated from LGA data.

<sup>7</sup> Source: <http://www.ncsu.edu/diversity/benefits/>

<sup>8</sup> Source: ABS Census data 2006

**TABLE 2b INDIGENOUS CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS COMPARED WITH ALL CHILDREN AGED 0-8 YEARS: STATE AND G21 REGION<sup>9</sup>**

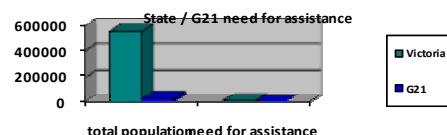
Area	Total children 0-8 Years <sup>10</sup>	Indigenous Children 0-8 Years (N)	Indigenous Children 0-8 Years (%)
Victoria	556,791	6,650	1.19
G21 <sup>11</sup>	29,445	404	1.37

The proportion of Indigenous children 0-8 years in G21 Region is greater than their representation in the Victorian population, although there are variations within the LGAs comprising the G21 Region. Within the G21 Region, Colac-Otway has the highest proportion of Indigenous children aged 0-8 years (1.62%), followed by Greater Geelong (1.46%), both of which are also substantially higher than the proportion of Indigenous children 0-8 years in Victoria. The numbers of Indigenous children of this age group in Queenscliffe is so small that they have been suppressed. The proportion of Indigenous children 0-8 years in Golden Plains (1.17%) comes closest to their representation in Victoria as a whole.



**TABLE 2c CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS WITH A NEED FOR ASSISTANCE WITH CORE ACTIVITIES<sup>12</sup>**

	Total persons 0-8 with a Need For Assistance (NFA) with core activities		
LGA	Total pop aged 0-8	No. with a NFA	% total with a NFA
Victoria	554,968	7,770	1.4
G21	29,444	506	1.73



This table has used the criterion of people ‘with a need for assistance (NFA) with core activities’ to signify some form of disability. In Victoria, the proportion of children aged 0-8 years with a NFA is 1.4%. In the G21 Region, this number is higher (1.73%) than the state average. This measure is ‘derived from the Census questions, ‘Does the person ever need someone to help with, or be with them for self care activities?’, ‘Does the person ever need someone to help with, or be with them for, body movement activities?’, ‘Does the person ever need someone to help with, or be with them for, communication activities?’, and ‘What are the reasons for the need for assistance or supervision shown in questions 20, 21 and 22?’ (as per above).

People who need assistance in their day to day lives with any or all of the following activities are defined as requiring support with self-care, body movements or communication – because of a disability, long-term health condition, or old age. Persons under the age of 40 (including infants) are only included if their stated reason for need for assistance was something other than ‘old or young age’. Information provided by these questions may be used in the planning of local facilities, services such as day-care and occasional care and in the provision of information and support to carers. They help in understanding the way individuals and families balance their paid work with other important aspects of their lives, such as family and community commitments.

**TABLE 2d RELIGION: ALL PERSONS IN THE FIVE LGAs<sup>13</sup>**

	RELIGION: ALL PERSONS <sup>14</sup>				
	Christian	Buddhist	Other religions <sup>15</sup>	No religion	Not stated
Victoria	2,985,804	132,634	219,397	1,007,414	550,311
G21	167,313	1,724	2,465	56,322	29,027

The G21 population is overwhelmingly Christian, followed by those who indicated they have ‘no religion’ and then ‘not stated’. The figures in Table 2d, while small, do show adherents of Buddhism and (grouped under ‘other religions’), Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles, 2010

<sup>10</sup> Note that there are different totals provided for all children 0-8 years in Victoria, and in each LGA, in the same ECCP report. For Victoria, the numbers are 595,545 and 556,791, respectively. For Colac-Otway, 2,321 and 2,287, respectively. For Golden Plains, 2,309 and 2,224, respectively. For Greater Geelong, 23,164 and 21,961 respectively. For Queenscliffe, 254 and 260, respectively. For Surf Coast, 3,041 and 2,713 respectively. Therefore, based on these differences, the G21 regional population for children aged 0-8 years also differs, as 31,089 and 29,445, respectively.

<sup>11</sup> These figures do not include Queenscliffe.

<sup>12</sup> Source: ABS Census 2006

<sup>13</sup> Source: ABS Census 2006

<sup>14</sup> The top five categories indicated by respondents are recorded above. Excluding ‘supplementary codes’.

<sup>15</sup> Other religions includes Hindu, Islam, Judaism, Other religions

**TABLE 2e REFUGEE CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS AND PLACE OF BIRTH: STATE AND G21 REGION : FAMILY TAX BENEFIT A AND B<sup>16</sup>**

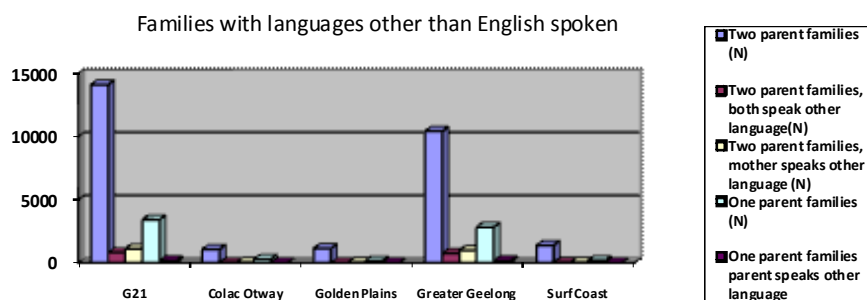
	AFGHANISTAN, ISLAMIC STATE OF	BURMA	CONGO	CONGO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF	DJIBOUTI	ERITREA	ETHIOPIA	LIBERIA	SOMALIA	SUDAN	THAILAND	Total
<b>G21 Total FTB A</b>	<20	<b>58</b>	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	<b>57</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>G21 Total FTB B</b>	<20	<b>58</b>	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	<b>55</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>161</b>

Within the G21 Region, the children who are deemed to be refugees living in families receiving Centrelink payments (Family Tax Benefit A and Family Tax Benefit B) come from Burma, Sudan and Thailand. While other countries (particularly from the African continent) and Afghanistan are represented, the numbers in the G21 area are relatively small. The data would suggest a need to investigate the availability of services for children who may have experienced or witnessed torture and other violence in their countries of origin, and the disappearance or death of their family members. Also the children and their families' experiences as refugees fleeing home countries and transitional experiences including stays in camps and detention centres overseas and in Australia would need to be taken into account in regard to the provision of suitable services to support community inclusion, opportunities and 'success' in pre-school, school and in the community for the children, and employment and education and training opportunities for parents/carers. Availability of English language and literacy courses would assist community inclusion while also recognising that many immigrants (including refugees) are multilingual, well-educated and qualified, and literate.

**TABLE 2f TWO PARENT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS: LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH SPOKEN<sup>17</sup>**

LGA	TWO PARENT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS				ONE PARENT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS			
	Total two parent families with children 0-8 years	Total two parent families where both parents speak other language (N)	Total two parent families where both parents speak other language (%)	Total two parent families where mother speaks other language (N)	Total two parent families where mother speaks other language (%)	Total one parent families with children 0-8 years	Total one parent families where parent speaks other language (N)	Total one parent families where parent speaks other language (%)
Victoria	279,376	59,475	21.3	69,207	24.8	56,716	11,302	19.9
G21	14,108	808	5.73	1,099	7.8	3,413	172	5.04

The proportion of two parent families in the G21 Region (5.73%) where both parents speak a language other than English is significantly lower than their representation in Victoria. This representation in G21 is primarily made up of two parent families living in Greater Geelong (7.2%), although even these proportions do not come close to the numbers in Victoria overall. Similarly, the two parent families where the mother speaks a language other than English show the same patterns when comparing the G21 Region and LGAs with Victoria overall. In this case, the proportion of two parent families where the mother speaks a language other than English shows a slightly higher representation in Victoria (24.8%) compared with the proportions of two parent families where both parents speak a language other than English (21.3%). The proportion for G21 of two parent families where only the mother speaks a language other than English is 7.8%, again much lower than the Victorian rate (24.8%). Greater Geelong with 9.4% is the highest representation of such families in the G21 Region.



### DID YOU KNOW???

- **Burma provides more of the G21 Region refugees than any other country.**
- **The average number of children with a need for assistance to complete core activities is higher in the G21 Region than the Victorian average.**

### CRITICAL QUESTIONS

- **How do we support indigenous children in the G21 Region?**
- **What processes do we have in place for refugees in the G21 Region?**

<sup>16</sup> Source: Centrelink (2010). For further explanation on Family tax benefit, see table 3(e)

<sup>17</sup> Source: ABS 2006 Census data

### 3 The Region's Families

Through family we find ourselves as we give and receive support. Family brings out the best and worst in each of us. As we yield to and serve others, we learn to love them and ourselves in the process.<sup>18</sup> This section summarizes the roles that families play in the G21 Region and considers, what makes up families? The information in this section considers the way that families can be structured which differs depending upon the number of parents, the number of children and whether those children are from existing or previous relationships. This section will also provide a snapshot of family transport, disadvantage and family income to deliver an overview of the Region's families.

**TABLE 3a MEASURING DISADVANTAGE: LGAs WITHIN G21 REGION<sup>19</sup>**

The data in table 3a known as the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSED) is compiled by the ABS as part of the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), and derived from the Census of Population and Housing. The IRSED allows identification of geographic areas that are relatively disadvantaged.

The Census data that are used to derive IRSED include:

- Low income
- Low educational attainment
- High unemployment
- Proportion of the workforce in relatively unskilled occupations.

Area	IRSED Score	Rank out of 204
Victoria	1010	N/A
Colac Otway	967	18
Golden Plains NW	1,011	114
Golden Plains SE	1,038	149
Greater Geelong	993	38
Queenscliffe	1,049	67
Surf Coast	1,065	74

The ABS places the following two caveats on understanding these IRSED data. Firstly, that the ABS standardises the IRSED scores for Census Collection Districts (CDs) so that the average IRSED score across Australia is 1000 and the middle two-thirds of IRSED scores will fall between 900 and 1100. This means that the ABS has applied a normal distribution to the data, using the score of 1000 as the mean or average. As with the conventional understanding of the distribution of scores in a normal distribution, two thirds of the scores (67%) fall on either side of the mean. Hence as explained above, the scores of 900 and 1100 are the upper and lower limits of the two thirds of scores that cluster around the mean. Therefore if we look at the table above, using this explanation, it can be noticed that all the IRSED scores for the LGAs within G21 lie within the two thirds around the mean (some above the mean of 1000, and some below it). Only Colac-Otway and Greater Geelong have IRSED scores below the 1000 mean, but still are above the lower score (900) of the two thirds clustering around the mean score. The other LGAs (Golden Plains, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast) are above the mean, while being under the upper limit of 1100 of the scores of two thirds clustering around the mean.

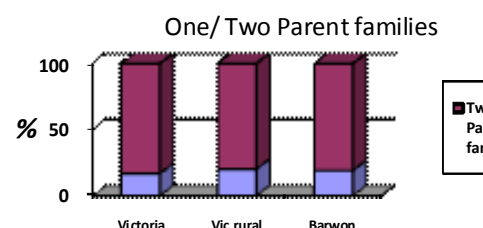
Secondly, while a low IRSED score indicates that the LGA is more disadvantaged than another with a higher score, there is no particular score below which an area is classified as disadvantaged and above which it is classified as not disadvantaged.

It seems that these scores are rankings and not intended to indicate that one LGA is necessarily better off than another. However, if we look at the rankings out of 204 LGAs in Victoria, we can see that most of the LGAs (except Golden Plains) within G21 are well under the 102 mid-point of 204 ranking. Colac-Otway's relatively low score compared with other LGAs perhaps indicates a greater level of disadvantage which may be better understood from the other indicators below – for example, family income, or whether families are two parents, single parents, in paid work or not.

**TABLE 3b FAMILY TYPE: TWO PARENT AND ONE PARENT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0-8 YEARS: STATE AND G21 REGION AS AT 2006<sup>20</sup>**

Area	Two parent families (N)	Two parent families (%)	One parent families (N)	One parent families (%)
Victoria	279,376	83.1	56,716	16.9
Victoria Rural	71,490	79.7	18,202	20.3
Barwon South West Region	18,462	80.8	4,379	19.2

Two parent families remain the dominant family form in Victoria. There are variations within the rural area, and G21 Region. (The proportion of two parent 'intact', 'step' and 'blended' families is in Tables 3f and 3g below.) Two parent families in G21 (80.5%) are of a lower proportion than in Victoria overall (83.1%), but higher when compared with Rural Victoria (79.7%). Golden Plains (88.8%) and Surf Coast (88.7%) are the LGAs with the highest proportion of two parent families in G21 Region (with corresponding proportions for one parent families: 11.2% and 11.3%, respectively), with Greater Geelong being the lowest for two parent families (78.7%: comparable with Rural Victoria). One parent families in G21 are correspondingly higher (19.5%) when compared with Victoria overall (16.9%), and lower than in Rural Victoria (20.3%).



<sup>18</sup> Source: <http://valuesfamily.com/important/>

<sup>19</sup> Source: DEECD, (2010) for each LGA listed. Explanation taken from same document.

<sup>20</sup> Source: DEECD, (2010) for each LGA listed.

**TABLE 3c CHILD SUPPORT RECIPIENTS WITH CHILDREN: STATE AND FEDERAL ELECTORATES.<sup>21</sup>**

Area	Paying parents			Receiving parents			Eligible children receiving		
	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
Victoria	132,824	130,168	132,578	138,978	141,130	145,041	218,101	219,028	225,180
Corangamite electorate	3,370	3,153	3,187	3,951	3,725	3,614	6,197	5,857	5,797
Corio electorate	4,879	4,732	4,792	5,218	5,095	4,993	8,216	7,982	7,923

Child support data is based upon postcode information and is published under the Federal Parliamentary electorates. As the majority of the G21 Region falls within the Corangamite and Corio electorates, these are provided. It should be noted that data based upon the age of each child was not available for publication.

**TABLE 3d FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0-8 YEARS WITH ACCESS TO A CAR: STATE AND G21 REGION.<sup>22</sup>**

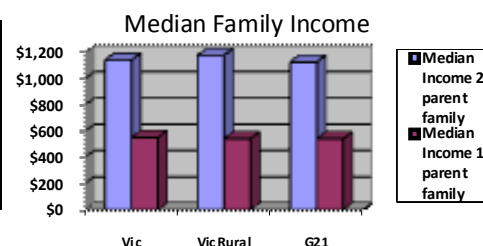
Area	Families with access to a car (N)	Families with access to a car (%)	Families without a car (N)	Families without a car (%)
Victoria	317,468	94.5%	10,786	3.2%
G21	16,598	94.7%	565	3.2%

The ability of the population to source services and employment is strongly influenced by access to transport. The number of motor vehicles per household quantifies access to private transport. There are three major reasons for a different share

of motor vehicles per household, the age structure of the population and household type, which influences the size of the household and the number of adults present; access to public transport; and household income, which can influence the amount of money available to purchase motor vehicles.<sup>23</sup> Golden Plains, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast all have higher numbers of families with at least one car than Greater Geelong and Colac Otway. This may be indicative of the ability for families around the Greater Geelong and Colac Otway municipalities to access services such as schools, doctors and supermarkets either by public transport or on foot and the higher availability of public transport options.

**TABLE 3e MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: ONE AND TWO PARENT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0-8 YEARS: STATE AND G21 REGION<sup>24</sup>**

Area	Two parent families (N)	Two parent families (Median weekly income)	One parent families (N)	One parent families (Median weekly income)
Victoria	279,376	\$1,339	56,716	\$551
Victoria Rural	71,495	\$1,176	18,202	\$541
G21	14,106	RANGE: \$1,125-\$1,492	3,413	RANGE: \$541-\$637



There is a disparity between the median weekly income for two parent and one parent families: for Victoria as a whole and for rural Victoria. It was not possible to specify a median weekly income for G21 from the component LGAs because the figures are available as median incomes for each LGA. However, it is possible to specify a range of median incomes within G21. The difference between the highest and lowest median weekly income for two and one parent families in G21 Region: for two parent families, this is \$367, and for one parent families, this is \$96.

**TABLE 3f CENTRELINK FAMILY ASSISTANCE OFFICE FAMILY TAX BENEFIT 2009-10 12 (FTB(A) ELIGIBILITY (CUSTOMER) AND FTB(B) ELIGIBILITY (CUSTOMER) AND POSTCODE (RESIDENTIAL) FOR CUSTOMER, AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD 0 - 8 YRS<sup>25</sup>**

**Family Tax Benefit:** FTB is received by approximately 80-85% of families with dependent children. It should, therefore, be viewed differently to other Centrelink payments. Whereas income support payment data can identify segments of the population considered to be disadvantaged, FTB data does not fit that criterion. Where a tabulation shows FTB customers on the maximum rate, these generally have family incomes of less than \$42,559 (2008/09). Note, however, that there is an additional group of customers with incomes less than \$42,559 who do not receive the maximum rate due to their receipt of maintenance income and the operation of the maintenance income test. Information shown here in regard to FTB Part A & Part B refers only to fortnightly instalment customers paid directly by Centrelink. It excludes an approximate additional 10% who are paid through an ATO lump sum and/or a Centrelink lump sum. This information represents the current population at a point in time and does not represent the total eligible population for the financial year. Where the tabulation shows FTB Part A and B separately, approximately three-quarters of customers will appear in both categories as they will be in receipt of both payments.

FTB(A) eligible (customer)	Greater Geelong	11,059	70.5%
	Queenscliffe	136	0.87%
	Surf Coast	1,219	7.8%
	Colac-Otway	1,443	9.2%
	Golden Plains	1,828	11.7%
	Total: G21	15,685	100.0%
FTB(B) eligible (customer)	Greater Geelong	9,457	72.2%
	Queenscliffe	99	0.76%
	Surf Coast	978	7.5%
	Colac-Otway	1,137	8.7%
	Golden Plains	1,421	10.9%
	Total: G21	13,092	100.0%

<sup>21</sup> Source: [www.csa.gov.au](http://www.csa.gov.au)

<sup>22</sup> Source: ABS Census 2006. Information provided by direct request to ABS 13 January 2011.

<sup>23</sup> ID Consulting website taken from Surf Coast Shire profile 'How many cars do we own?' retrieved 13 January 2011, <<http://profile.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=222&pg=116&gid=10&type=enum>>.

<sup>24</sup> Source DEECD, (2010) for each LGA listed.

<sup>25</sup> Source: Centrelink (2010) **Family Tax Benefit Part A:** Helps customers with the costs of raising children. **Family Tax Benefit Part B:** Provides extra assistance to single parents and families with one main income. This includes circumstances where one parent chooses to stay at home or balance some paid work with caring for children

**TABLE 3g ALL INTACT, STEP AND BLENDED TWO PARENT FAMILIES WITH OTHER OR NO OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT: G21 REGION AND LGAs<sup>26</sup>**

	INTACT FAMILIES WITH OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT (N)	INTACT FAMILIES WITH OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT (%)	STEP FAMILIES WITH OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT (N)	STEP FAMILIES WITH OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT (%)	BLENDED FAMILIES WITH OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT (N)	BLENDED FAMILIES WITH OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT (%)	TOTAL TWO PARENT FAMILIES WITH OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT
G21	164	83.7	23	11.7	9	4.6	196
Colac-Otway	11	78.6	3	21.4	0	0	14
Golden Plains	16	72.7	3	13.6	3	13.6	22
Greater Geelong	127	84.7	17	11.3	6	4.0	150
	INTACT FAMILIES WITH NO OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT (N)	INTACT FAMILIES WITH NO OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT (%)	STEP FAMILIES WITH NO OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT (N)	STEP FAMILIES WITH NO OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT (%)	BLENDED FAMILIES WITH NO OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT (N)	BLENDED FAMILIES WITH NO OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT (%)	TOTAL TWO PARENT FAMILIES WITH NO OTHER CHILDREN PRESENT
G21	26,997	89.6	1,954	6.5	1,192	3.9	30,143
Colac-Otway	2,010	89.5	140	6.2	95	4.2	2,245
Golden Plains	2,118	89.7	152	6.4	92	3.9	2,362
Greater Geelong	20,142	89.2	1,504	6.7	924	4.1	22,570
Queenscliffe	249	92.9	14	5.2	5	1.9	268
Surf Coast	2,478	91.8	144	5.3	76	2.8	2,698

#### **DID YOU KNOW???**

- The G21 Region has a higher percentage of one parent families than the Victorian average.
- The G21 Region has the same average numbers of families that have access to a car as the State despite having less accessibility to public transport than Melbourne resident

<sup>26</sup> Source: ABS Census 2006 There was an additional category in the ABS data under couples with children: 'Other couples with other children present': (Colac-Otway: n = 9, Golden Plains: n = 15; Greater Geelong: n = 77; Queenscliffe: n = 0; Surf Coast: n = 4. G21 Total N = 105). Queenscliffe and Surf Coast have nil result in all categories for this measure.

## SECTION B: A REVIEW ON THE G21 REGION

The purpose of this section is to provide an analytical commentary of the range of data provided in Section C. There are ten topics that follow in this report and these topics form the elements of data that have been considered. The data suggests that the G21 Region can be considered to be performing well or at the same level as the State averages in six of these topic areas. There are also four topic areas where improvement is needed to bring G21 in line with or above the State average.

The six areas that either meet or are above state figures are: Mental /emotional health (Section 5), Injuries and death (7), Development and learning (9), Community life (10), and Maternal Support (11).

The five areas performing below state averages are: Physical health (4), Crime and safety (6), Child Abuse (8), Development and learning (9) and Parenting factors (11) and Parents (12).

### WHAT ARE WE DOING WELL?

As indicated above, there are six areas in which G21 is performing well. These will be addressed individually:

- 1. Mental/emotional health:** The key element of this section is behaviourally focussed. All LGAs that are measured indicate that the percentage of children in the G21 Region that are developmentally vulnerable or at risk is below the national and state average (Table 5a). Consequently, the percentage of children 'on track' is above the national and state average. Parental reports on children's behaviour and well being when they commence school produce a series of indicators that are all equal to or better than the state (5c). The data for children aged four to twelve that indicates 'normality' shows a decreasing trend in this area and the Region has dropped from above state average in 2006 to below in 2009 (5b).
- 2. Injuries and death:** It is difficult to draw conclusions in this subject area on a state against region perspective. The positive element within the data across the three categories considered shows that the number of injuries and bone fractures are decreasing annually and deaths are rare. There has been a 10% drop in injuries and a 22% drop in fractures. Whilst no death of a child is acceptable, it should be noted that the number of deaths, though the actual numbers are unable to be provided, is low (Tables 7a,b, c).
- 3. Development and learning:** The amount of data considered in this section of the report is extensive and the positives outweigh the areas that require improvement. The G21 Region has a similar result to the state average in five year old children in their first year of school that are defined as socially vulnerable (9a). This result is impacted by the large critical mass in COGG which is slightly, but not significantly, above the state average. The result for language and cognitive skills in the same age group is again slightly below the State average yet COGG is above (9b). The Region is doing well in this age group when considering the communication and general knowledge domain (9c). As a Region we are also doing well with children who have speech and language difficulties, again below the state average which may be in part explained by the strong results in kindergarten participation (9i-k).

An area that has inconsistent results is the reading accuracy of children. Prep and Year One students in the Barwon South West Region consistently are above the state average over a five year measure (2004 – 2009) however by Year Two, Barwon South West students fall below the state average.

Across the Grampians Region, Years Prep, One and two are consistently below the state average (9e-g). Student absence days, which are measured on an LGA by LGA basis, indicate mixed results with Colac-Otway and Surf Coast Shires consistently over the State average and COGG, Golden Plains and Queenscliffe below the average over a four year measure (2006 -2009) (9k-m).

- 4. Community life:** Again, a diverse set of measures has been incorporated into this category. Children in the region are more likely to get the recommended amount of daily physical activity in comparison to the State's children (10a) and children have excellent access to internet with three in four children having an internet connection which compares similarly to other Victorian children (10f). Almost eighty percent of parents of children aged under 13 years in the G21 Region indicate that they agree or strongly agree that the space provided for children to play and interact with their environment is satisfactory. This is below the state average of 85.9%. Playgroup participation is strong across the G21 Region (10c) and children who use the internet or other electronic media is above the state average and compare equally with rural Victoria (10e).
- 5. Maternal support:** The results for children who receive an initial maternal and child health home consultation is outstanding (13a). Once the child reaches 3.5 years of age, the take up of the scheduled health check designed

for this age, falls dramatically but matches the State's result. Interestingly, the 3.5 year health check has a stronger take-up across rural Victoria than in the G21 Region (13b). Early intervention services in the Barwon South West and Grampians Regions are generally over and above the State average (13c) and there is a demonstrated usage of family services that are available and childcare facilities (13d, e).

6. **Parents:** This area, like others has strengths and areas for improvement but in general, is performing well. The key message is based around income and employment. Two parent families in the G21 Region are employed at similar levels to other parents in the state and unemployment levels are slightly lower yet one parent families demonstrate the opposite trend (12a, b). Parents are not as well educated as other parents across the state as demonstrated by the number of parents who had not completed Year 12 or its equivalent (12c0). The number of families that rely on public housing for more than 12 months compares similarly to the state and the level of rental/ mortgage stress is also comparable to the state average. Finally, the issue of a lack of disposable income is apparent in the G21 Region, more specifically, Barwon South West and Grampians as more families in these two regions are more likely to run out of food and cannot afford to purchase more than other parents across the state (12f).

## WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER?

There are four areas that require focus and attention:

1. **Physical health:** The first noticeable area where G21 falls below the state averages is immunisations of children. We are slightly below the state performance for 12 month immunisations, slightly above at 24 month and fall well below at 60/72 month results (4c). Hospital admissions for asthma have steadily increased over a five year period. In 2004-05, all LGAs were below the state average and by 2008-09, the numbers of admissions had risen by 21% and two LGAs, COGG and Golden Plains were above the state average (4f). Asthma and dental caries are generally the two major causes for hospital admissions along with Chronic tonsillitis and chronic mucoid otitis media (4g). Whilst the data relating to the numbers of children visiting a dentist are not available, a key assumption is that many are not visiting a dentist based upon this result. Most dental visits are to private dentists and there is a low percentage of usage of school dental services. Children whose parents use alcohol and tobacco during pregnancy is higher in G21 than rural Victoria which is in turn higher than the state average (4n). Child physical vulnerability across G21 is generally below the state average with only Colac Otway having a result that is adverse (4o) and this is reflected in a range of indicators focussed upon five year old children starting school. There are more Colac Otway children measured in this category than the state average which is unlike the other LGAs in which children are below the state average which is the desired outcome. Rates of diabetes amongst 0 to 8 year olds are not significantly higher than the state average. Illnesses that could have prevented by immunisation have not been compared to regions other than between Barwon South West and Grampians and Barwon has a higher proportion which is dictated by critical mass. Other areas that require ongoing attention are instances of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, which have decreased mainly due to increased awareness of the probable causes. Victorian data indicates that children in lower socio-disadvantaged areas are more likely to suffer obesity and this should be considered in these areas of disadvantage in the G21 region even though data is not available to support this.
2. **Crime and safety and Child abuse:** These two sections have been grouped together as there is a common theme. The key element of the child safety measure is how safe parents feel for their children in the G21 Region. This measure indicates that parents in the Region do not feel that their neighbourhood is as safe as others across the state. Parents from rural Victoria have a higher rating than the state average (6a). Similar to the injury and death category, crimes perpetrated upon children is unacceptable and the data shows that most incidences occur in the City of Greater Geelong (6b-c). The child abuse measure (8a-d) is difficult to comment upon as only one of the four sources of data was available to be included in this report due to confidentiality provisions. What can be ascertained is that the G21 Region has a lower child protection notification rate than the State.
3. **Parenting factors:** The incidences of violence perpetrated on mothers and children are strong reasons for this being an area of focus (11f, g). In both categories, Barwon South West and Grampians Regions show results over the state and rural Victorian averages. Parents in the G21 Region with mental illnesses also are higher than the state and rural averages (11d). A positive in this category is that children in the G21 Region are more likely to be breastfed at 3 and 6 months than in other regions across the state (11b). Physical activity recommendations, for parents and mothers in the G21 Region was unable to be determined as data was only available at state level as was data considering postnatal depression than other mothers across the state.



## SECTION C: UNDERLYING DATA

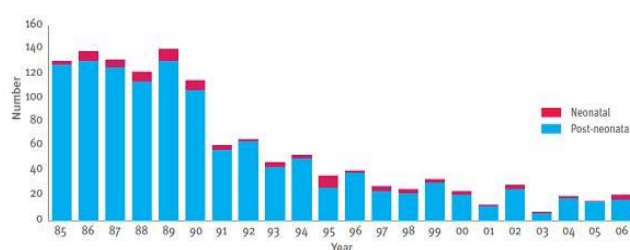
### 4 Physical Health

Physical health is the overall condition of a living organism at a given time, the soundness of the body, freedom from disease or abnormality, and the condition of optimal well-being. People want to function as they are designed, but environmental forces can attack the body or the person may have genetic malfunctions. The main concern in health is preventing injury and healing damage caused by injuries and biological attacks.<sup>27</sup> This section provides a detailed look at physical health issues that impact upon children in the G21 Region such as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and child mortality, diabetes, asthma, vaccinations, anaphylaxis and obesity. It also considers the role of parents in supporting the physical health of children.

**TABLE 4a PRENATAL AND INFANT HEALTH: SIDS RATES: STATE<sup>28</sup>**

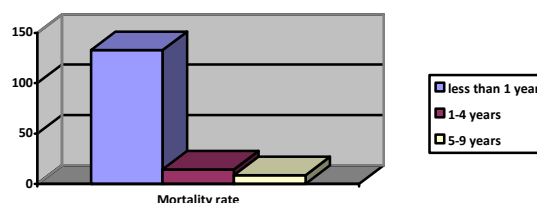
The data provided below demonstrates the reducing rates of SIDS in the Victorian community. Data at regional/ LGA is unavailable due to the low numbers and confidentiality provisions.

	Deaths from SIDS			
	1990	2000	2005	2008
<b>Victoria (number)</b>	104	26	18	16
<b>Victoria (per 100 live births)</b>	1.56	0.44	0.35	0.30



**TABLE 4b PRENATAL AND INFANT HEALTH: CHILD MORTALITY RATES (29 DAYS TO 8 YEARS): STATE 2006**

Victoria	Child mortality (N)	Child mortality (rate per 100,000)
<b>29 days to 364 days</b>	84	132.9
<b>1-4 years</b>	35	14.4
<b>5-9 years</b>	27	8.6



**TABLE 4c IMMUNISATIONS AND ILLNESS: CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS WHO ARE FULLY IMMUNISED: STATE, G21 REGION AND LGA (2008-09)<sup>29</sup>**

Local Government Area	12 -< 15 months			24 -< 27 months			72-<75 months (60-<63 months from January 2008)		
	Total aged 12-<15 Mths	Fully immunised	% fully immunised	Total aged 24-<27 mths	Fully immunised	% fully immunised	Total aged 72-<75 mths	Fully immunised	% fully immunised
<b>Victoria</b>	<b>70,569</b>	<b>64,850</b>	<b>91.9</b>	<b>69,989</b>	<b>65,560</b>	<b>93.7</b>	<b>65,477</b>	<b>55,078</b>	<b>84.1</b>
G21	3,529	3,210	91.0	3,458	3,270	94.6	3,406	2,788	81.9
Colac-Otway	245	229	93.5	282	263	93.3	245	194	79.2
Golden Plains	230	217	94.3	250	244	97.6	275	221	80.4
Greater Geelong	2,673	2,419	90.5	2,551	2,408	94.4	2,512	2,072	82.5
Queenscliffe	25	24	96	33	30	90.9	23	17	73.9
Surf Coast	356	321	90.2	342	325	95.0	351	284	80.9

<sup>27</sup> Source: <http://www.school-for-champions.com/health/whatis.htm>

<sup>28</sup> Graph & data taken from <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/vcams/children/1-5deaths syndrome.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> Source: Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR)

Inspection of the above table indicates the following:

(a) for children 12 to < 15 months old (2008-09)

Three of the LGAs in G21 Region (Colac Otway, Golden Plains and Queenscliffe) have a higher proportion of children of this age group immunised (93.5%, 94.3% and 96%, respectively), compared with Victoria (91.9%). Greater Geelong and Surf Coast have a lower proportion of children immunised (90.5% and 90.2%, respectively), when compared with Victoria (91.9%).

Additional information contained in the ECCP report (2010) on immunisation for each LGA provides a ranking of LGAs in Victoria in regard to the percentages of children fully immunised. A rank of 1 is given to the LGA with the highest percentage of children of this age group who were immunised.

For this age group, out of 79 LGAs, the rankings:

Colac Otway: 23; Golden Plains: 14; Greater Geelong: 65; Queenscliffe: 4; Surf Coast: 66

(a) for children 24 to < 27 months old (2008-09)

Golden Plains, Greater Geelong and Surf Coast (97.6%, 94.4% and 95.0%, respectively) have higher proportions of children in this age group who have been immunised compared with Victoria (93.7%). Colac Otway and Queenscliffe (93.3% and 90.9%, respectively) have lower proportions of children in this age group who have been immunised compared with Victoria (93.7%).

Additional information contained in the ECCP report (2010) on immunisation for each LGA provides a ranking of LGAs in Victoria in regard to the percentages of children fully immunised. A rank of 1 is given to the LGA with the highest percentage of children of this age group who were immunised.

For this age group, out of 79 LGAs, the rankings: Colac Otway: 52; Golden Plains: 7; Greater Geelong: 38; Queenscliffe: 72; Surf Coast: 29

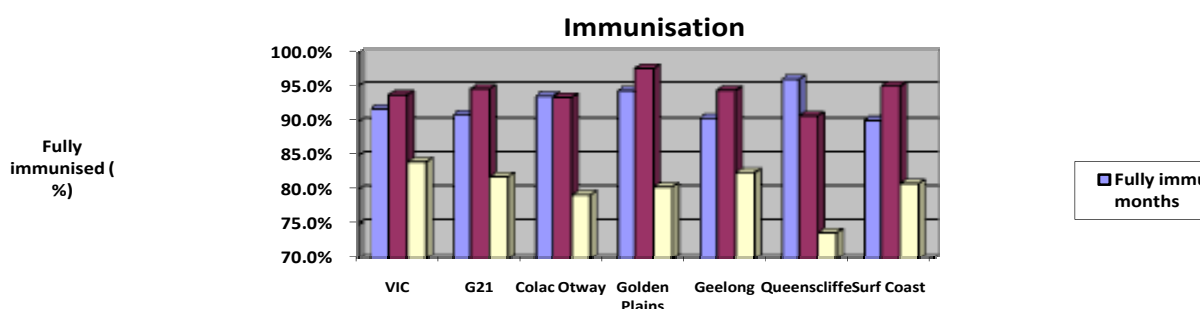
(b) for children 60 to < 63 months old (2008-09)

All the LGAs in the G21 Region have lower proportions of children of this age group immunised compared with Victoria (84.1%). One could argue that this is one area that could be improved across the LGAs in G21.

Additional information contained in the ECCP report (2010) on immunisation for each LGA provides a ranking of LGAs in Victoria in regard to the percentages of children fully immunised. A rank of 1 is given to the LGA with the highest percentage of children of this age group who were immunised.

For this age group, out of 79 LGAs, the rankings: Colac Otway: 69; Golden Plains: 63; Greater Geelong: 53; Queenscliffe: 78; Surf Coast: 62

In summary, the above table and associated information suggest that while some of the LGAs within the G21 Region show relatively high compliance with immunising infants, as the children get older, they are less likely to be immunised, when compared with the proportions in Victoria, and also compared across all LGAs in Victoria (through the rankings above).



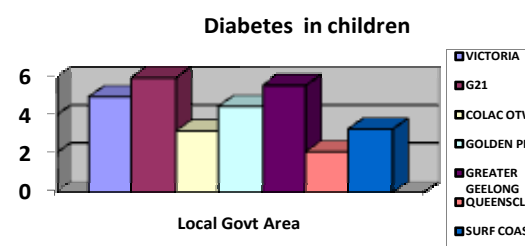
**CASE STUDY:** Andrew and Sue have three children aged 6 and 3 and live in the G21 region. They have lived in the region all their lives and have a long standing relationship with their doctor who they have discussed immunisation benefits with. They are internet savvy and have also researched the benefits of immunisation. They are aware of the government benefits provided to parents when they immunise their child. Their friends Paul and Shani do not believe that immunisation is a good idea but like over 80 percent of G21 parents they have immunised both their children because their research indicates that there is a benefit to their children in being immunised.

**TABLE 4d RATE OF VACCINE-PREVENTABLE ILLNESS FOR CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS: STATE AND REGIONS.**

Area	Vaccine-preventable illness 2009 (N)	Vaccine-preventable illness 2009 (%)	Vaccine-preventable illness 2010 (N)	Vaccine-preventable illness 2010 (%)
Victoria	2645	100%	2113	100%
Barwon South West	162	6.1%	168	8.0%
Grampians	110	4.2%	128	6.1%

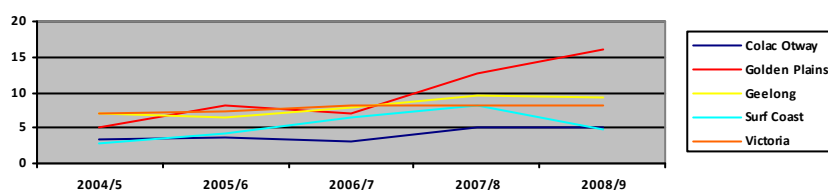
**TABLE 4e INCIDENCE OF DIABETES FOR CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2008: STATE, G21 REGION AND LGAs<sup>30</sup>**

Area	Children (0-8) N	Diabetes in children 0-8 years (N)	Diabetes in children 0-8 years (%)
Victoria	595,545	429	0.07%
G21	31,089	37	0.11%
Colac-Otway	2,321	N/A	
Golden Plains	2,309	N/A	
Greater Geelong	23,164	N/A	
Queenscliffe	254	N/A	
Surf Coast	3,041	N/A	



**TABLE 4f HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS FOR ASTHMA FOR CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS: STATE AND EACH LGA<sup>31</sup>**

	2004-05 Hospital admissions for asthma (N)	2004-05 Rate per 1000	2005-06 Hospital admissions for asthma (N)	2005-06 Rate per 1000	2006-07 Hospital admissions for asthma (N)	2006-07 Rate per 1000	2007-08 Hospital admissions for asthma (N)	2007-08 Rate per 1000	2008-09 Hospital admissions for asthma (N)	2008-09 Rate per 1000
Colac-Otway	8	3.3	9	3.8	7	3.0	12	5.1	12	5.2
Golden Plains	11	5.2	18	8.2	16	7.0	29	12.6	37	16.0
Greater Geelong	156	7.0	149	6.6	178	7.8	219	9.6	215	9.3
Surf Coast	7	2.7	11	4.1	18	6.4	24	8.2	15	4.9
Victoria	4,006	7.1	4,203	7.4	4,650	8.1	4,765	8.2	4,849	8.1



**CASE STUDY:** Alice is a single mother living in a rural town in the northern area of the G21 region. Alice is a single mother of twin daughters aged 6. Her brother Max lives in suburban Geelong with his wife and infant son. One of Alice's daughters, Sam, has been suffering Asthma since birth which has progressively become more severe as she has grown and receives ongoing medical treatment to control attacks. In 2008-09, Sam was admitted to hospital for asthma on two occasions. Max's son Hugo is also developing minor symptoms of Asthma but has not had to be hospitalised at this stage. Alice doesn't know if living in this rural environment is impacting on Sam's Asthma but Sam is more likely to be hospitalised for asthma than Hugo.

<sup>30</sup> LGA data not available due to small sample size. Also, population data from 30 June 2008 and diabetes data from 31 December 2008. Unable to match data from same date.

<sup>31</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles for each LGA, 2010. Figures for Queenscliffe have been suppressed due to the small numbers (confidentiality provisions).

**TABLE 4g HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS FOR ANAPHYLAXIS FOR CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS: STATE AND G21 REGION**

'Anaphylaxis is a generalised allergic reaction, which often involves more than one body system (e.g. skin, respiratory, gastro-intestinal, and cardiovascular). A severe allergic reaction usually occurs within 20 minutes of exposure to the trigger and can rapidly become life threatening' (Anaphylaxis Australia, 2007).

There were 292 anaphylaxis hospitalisations in Victorian children in 2006–07, representing a rate of 24.7 per 100,000 children.

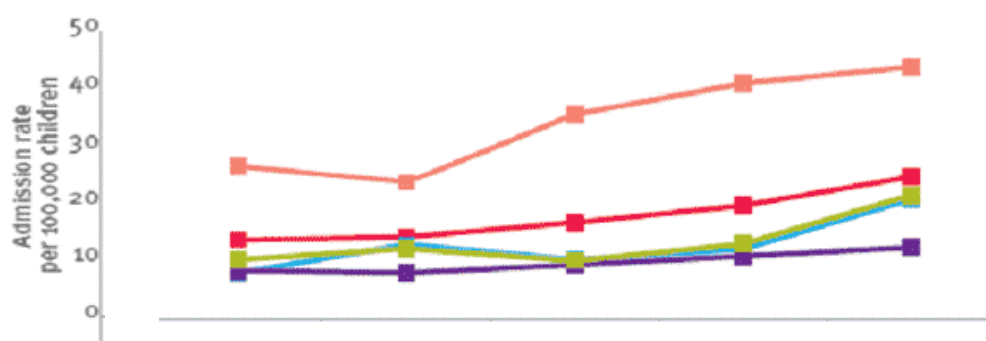
Figure 1 shows the rate (per 100,000 children) of anaphylaxis hospitalisations in Victorian children from 2002–03 to 2006–07.

Area	Hospital admissions for anaphylaxis (N) 2007/8	Hospital admissions for anaphylaxis (N) 2008/9	Hospital admissions for anaphylaxis (N) 2009/10
Barwon South West Region	4	5	7

Anaphylaxis hospitalisation rates are consistently higher in males than in female\* and are highest in children aged 0–4 years. Anaphylaxis hospitalisation rates also appear to be showing an increasing trend\*\*, rising from 13.8 (per 100,000 children) in 2002–03 to 24.7 (per 100,000 children) in 2006–07 (figure 1).

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
<b>0-4 years</b>	26.7	23.8	35.6	40.8	43.6
<b>5-9 years</b>	10.4	12.3	10.2	13.1	21.5
<b>10-14 years</b>	8.5	8.1	9.5	11.0	12.5
<b>15-17 years</b>	8.1	13.0	10.4	12.2	20.8
<b>All ages</b>	13.8	14.3	16.8	19.7	24.7

Figure1: Anaphylaxis hospital admission rate per 100,000 children, by age group, Victoria, 2002–03 to 2006–07



Source: DEECD analysis of Victorian Admitted Episode Dataset and ABS 2008a

\* Of the 292 anaphylaxis hospitalisations in Victorian children in 2006–07, 179 were for males (a rate of 29.52 per 100,000) and 113 were for females (a rate of 19.65 per 100,000).

\*\* An increasing trend has also been shown in other studies. A recent study in the Australian Capital Territory examined the records of 1489 children aged between 0–5 years and showed an increase of food anaphylaxis in this cohort from 5 to 37 children between 1995 and 2006. There were similar trends in age-adjusted Australian hospitalisation rates for anaphylaxis in children aged 0–4 years (Mullins 2007).

**TABLE 4h TOP FIVE LEADING CAUSES OF HOSPITALISATION FOR CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS: STATE AND EACH LGA<sup>32</sup>**

**COLAC-OTWAY AND VICTORIA**

There are no data provided specifically for Colac-Otway but only for Barwon South West Region in the ECCP report. No explanation is provided in the ECCP report for this but it is assumed that it is due to small numbers or other easily identifiable data.

**GOLDEN PLAINS AND VICTORIA**

	<b>HOSPITALISATIONS: GOLDEN PLAINS (N)</b>	<b>RATE PER 1000 CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS GOLDEN PLAINS</b>	<b>HOSPITALISATIONS VICTORIA (N)</b>	<b>RATE PER 1000 CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS VICTORIA</b>
Asthma unspecified	37	16.0	4,717	7.9
Chronic mucoid otitis media	19	8.2	1,849	3.1
Chronic tonsillitis	19	8.2	2,518	4.2
Dental caries unspecified	18	7.8	3,736	6.3
Routine and ritual circumcision	11	4.8	1,213	2.0

As identified above in the rates of hospitalisation for asthma in Golden Plains, this is the most common cause of hospitalisation; and is significantly higher than for Victoria overall. However, the other common reasons for hospital admissions for children 0-8 years are also higher than the rates for Victoria, in most cases, being double the Victorian rate. Chronic ear, nose and throat infections (mucoid otitis media and tonsillitis) are the second and third causes listed. The fact that children in this LGA are being admitted to hospital for 'dental caries' is probably cause for concern, due to the claims of direct correlations between dental health and general health. It is also unusual that this is the only LGA in G21 where 'routine and ritual circumcision' is one of the top five reasons for hospital admissions, which is also double the rate for Victoria.

**GREATER GEELONG AND VICTORIA**

	<b>HOSPITALISATIONS: GREATER GEELONG (N)</b>	<b>RATE PER 1000 CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS GREATER GEELONG</b>	<b>HOSPITALISATIONS VICTORIA (N)</b>	<b>RATE PER 1000 CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS VICTORIA</b>
Dental caries unspecified	204	8.8	3,736	6.3
Asthma unspecified	203	8.8	4,717	7.9
Other pret infant >=32 but <37 compl wk	161	7.0	4,567	7.7
Chronic tonsillitis	139	6.0	2,518	4.2
Chronic mucoid otitis media	138	6.0	1,849	3.1

The two top causes for hospital admissions for children 0-8 years in Greater Geelong are for 'dental caries unspecified' and 'asthma unspecified', and these rates are higher than for Victoria overall. That dental caries is the top reason for hospital admission amongst this group of children is a significant concern with possible implications for their general health. As with Golden Plains, chronic tonsillitis and chronic otitis media are amongst the top five causes for hospital admissions but in Greater Geelong, these causes are the last two of the five. However, the rates for admission are significantly higher than for Victoria overall. The third highest reason for admission is of pre term infants. This cause for hospital admission also appears for Surf Coast (below) but as the fourth reason out of five.

<sup>32</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles for each LGA, 2010.

## QUEENSLIFFE AND VICTORIA

There are no data provided specifically for Queenscliffe but only for Barwon South West Region in the ECCP report. No explanation is provided in the ECCP report for this but it is assumed that it is due to small numbers or other easily identifiable data.

## SURF COAST AND VICTORIA

	HOSPITALISATIONS: SURF COAST (N)	RATE PER 1000 CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS SURF COAST	HOSPITALISATIONS VICTORIA (N)	RATE PER 1000 CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS VICTORIA
Dental caries unspecified	23	7.6	3,736	6.3
Chronic tonsillitis	17	5.6	2,518	4.2
Chronic mucoid otitis media	17	5.6	1,849	3.1
Other pret infant >=32 but <37 compl wk	16	5.3	4,567	7.7
Asthma unspecified	13	4.3	4,717	7.9

Like Greater Geelong, 'dental caries unspecified' a top reason for hospital admission in Surf Coast. However unlike Greater Geelong, asthma is the lowest of five reasons for hospital admissions in Surf Coast (it was the equal top for Greater Geelong). However compared with Victoria, the rate for Surf Coast is higher. As with other LGAs for which data were provided, chronic tonsillitis and chronic otitis media also appear in Surf Coast as amongst the top five reasons for hospital admissions. As with Greater Geelong, pre term infants were admitted to hospital but unlike Greater Geelong, this the fourth out of five top reasons for admission.

## OVERALL FOR G21

Overall, for the five LGAs in G21 where data were provided, the admissions for dental caries, asthma and ear, nose and throat conditions is of concern. The connections between dental health of these children and their overall health, as well as correlations to ear, nose and throat infections should be investigated. Also where data has been provided, the admission of pre term infants in two LGAs as amongst the top five causes for hospital admissions in G21 Region should be further investigated.

**TABLE 4i CHILDREN AGED 6 MONTHS TO 12 YEARS WHO HAVE VISITED THE DENTIST IN THE TWELVE MONTHS OF 2006 AND 2009 BY LOCATION OF DENTAL SERVICE: STATE, RURAL VICTORIA AND BARWON SOUTH WESTERN REGION (PERCENTAGES ONLY)<sup>33</sup>**

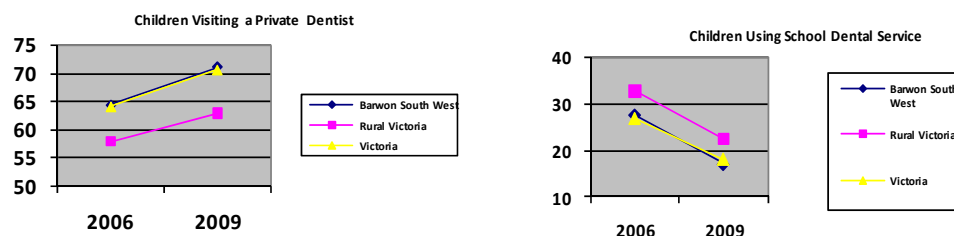
	BARWON SOUTH WEST 2006 (%)	BARWON SOUTH WEST 2009 (%)	RURAL VICTORIA 2006 (%)	RURAL VICTORIA 2009 (%)	VICTORIA 2006 (%)	VICTORIA 2009 (%)
Private dentist	64.4	71.1	57.9	62.9	64.1	70.7
School dental service	27.8	17.2	32.9	22.6	27.1	18.2
Other government or public dentist	6.8	9.6	6.8	10.7	7.5	8.7
Dental hospital	1.0	2.0	1.7	3.4	0.9	2.0
Other/don't know/refused	0.0	0.1	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.4

In addition to the above information, the Early Childhood Community Profile report for the Barwon South West Region (in comparison with Rural Victoria and the whole of Victoria) states that according to the 2009 Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey (VCHWS): 57.5% of children aged six months to 12 years in Victoria reported they had visited a dentist in the past twelve months, in comparison with 59.5% in 2006. The 2009 rate of reported attendance at the dentist is slightly lower than for 2006 but is not statistically significant. 62.3% of children aged six months to 12 years in Barwon South West Region reported they had visited a dentist in the past twelve months, in comparison with 58.8% in 2006. The 2009 rate is higher than for 2006 but is not statistically significant.

27.1% of children aged six months to 12 years in Barwon South West Region reported they had not visited a dentist in the past twelve months, in comparison with 30.7% in 2006. The 2009 rate of reported non-attendance at the dentist is slightly lower than for 2006 but is not statistically significant.

<sup>33</sup> Source, Early Childhood Community Profiles for each LGA, 2010.

While these data for Barwon South West Region on use of dental services suggests that there has been a slight improvement in children six months to 12 years (compared with Victoria), the data from previous tables on top five causes of hospital admissions that include dental caries challenges the extent of access to and use of dental services in the Region. However, these data are for the Barwon South West Region as a whole that includes the five LGAs in G21 as well as other LGAs. Data for each LGA would refine these patterns to better understand the differences within each LGA. Furthermore, these data include children older than 8 years which may also influence the patterns and the conclusions that can be drawn.



**TABLE 4j CHILDREN AGED SIX MONTHS TO 12 YEARS BY MAIN REASONS FOR VISITING THE DENTIST FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS OF 2006 AND 2009: STATE, RURAL VICTORIA AND BARWON SOUTH WESTERN REGION (PERCENTAGES ONLY)<sup>34</sup>**

	BARWON SOUTH WEST 2006 (%)	BARWON SOUTH WEST 2009 (%)	RURAL VICTORIA 2006 (%)	RURAL VICTORIA 2009 (%)	VICTORIA 2006 (%)	VICTORIA 2009 (%)
Check up	71.0	71.9	71.0	75.3	73.4	76.4
Fillings	10.4	9.2	9.5	7.7	7.0	6.8
Tooth removed	3.2	3.6	4.2	3.6	2.9	3.0
Braces/orthodontics	2.7	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.6	3.2
Injury to mouth/teeth	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.4	2.3
Toothache or a sore mouth	4.1	6.3	3.5	4.3	2.9	3.3

According to the Early Childhood Community Profile 2010 for the Barwon South West Region, the most common reason for children attending a dentist in 2009 was for a check up (71.9% of children). Other reasons that children aged six months to twelve years attended the dentist in 2009 included fillings (9.2%) and for braces or orthodontic work (3.2%).

While these data are for Barwon South West Region and appear to show a majority of respondents indicating that their main reason for attending the dentist was for a check up (2006, 2009), the rates are lower when compared with Victoria overall, as well as with Rural Victoria for 2009. It is also unclear what the connection is between these data and the previous table on what sort of dental services are used, and the tables on top five causes for hospital admissions of which dental caries is included.

**TABLE 4i CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS WHO ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE**

Analysis of data from the first wave of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)\* found that just over one in six (17.3 per cent) of the Victorian 4–5-year-olds were overweight and around one in 17 (5.7 per cent) were obese. Victorian preschoolers were slightly more likely than preschoolers from the whole Australian sample to be overweight or obese (23 per cent of Victorian children compared with 20.7 per cent in Australia) (data reported in DHS 2006).

Analysis of LSAC data also shows that Indigenous children, children from CALD backgrounds and socioeconomically disadvantaged children are more likely to have heavier BMI status (particularly boys).

Preschoolers in the lowest fifth of the population for social disadvantage have ‘nearly 50 per cent higher odds’ of being in a heavier category of BMI, compared with preschoolers in the top fifth of the population (Wake et al. 2006, reported in Royal Children’s Hospital, Policy Brief no. 7, 2007).

Recent research has analysed routine health check data to investigate the influence of SES and secular trends on changes in weight status between young preschoolers at aged 2 and 3.5 years in Victoria\*\*. This research found that there was no upward trend in the proportion of children becoming overweight or obese. However, a higher proportion of the most disadvantaged children became overweight or obese, compared to the least disadvantaged.<sup>35</sup>

The low number of cases in the G21 Region makes it impossible to provide an analysis of trends and due to confidentiality provisions, the data is unable to be released.

<sup>34</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Source: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/vcams/children/6-1aoverweightandobese.htm>

**TABLE 4m CHILDREN 5-6 YEARS WHO TRAVEL TO SCHOOL<sup>36</sup>**

The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children Report 2009-10 provides data examining the method of travel to school by Australian children. This commentary is extracted directly from the report:

'5 to 6 year old children are mostly driven to and from school everyday (49 per cent) and 18 per cent of children rode or walked on at least six trips (to or from school) per week. Only 6 per cent of children used public transport on at least six trips per week. The remaining study children used a mixture of modes of transport to get to and from school not covered by these other categories (31 per cent of children).'

The type of transport used to get to and from school could be influenced by a range of factors including the distance from home to school, the other responsibilities of the child's parents (especially work), the safety of the neighbourhood and the maturity of the child. The majority of parents reported living five kilometres or less from the study child's school. Fifty-eight per cent of children live within three kilometres of their school and around 71 per cent of live within five kilometres of their school.'

We have been unable to obtain localised data to compliment this commentary and are unable to elaborate further on how this data compares to the G21 Region.

**TABLE 4n CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS WHOSE PARENTS ABUSE DRUGS/ALCOHOL: STATE, G21 REGION AND LGAs**

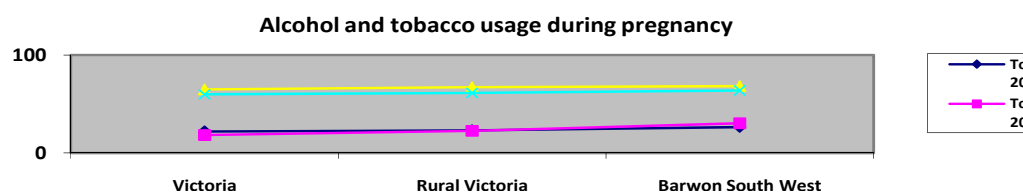
The information available through the Early Childhood Community Profiles for each of the five Local Government Areas in G21 covers estimates based on mothers' reports to the Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey (2006, 2009) on their use of tobacco and alcohol during pregnancy. The information has been provided for Victoria, Rural Victoria and Barwon South West Region. It has not been provided for each LGA of interest to the G21 Region. The following table has been constructed from the percentages provided in the ECCP report for Barwon South West Region, for Rural Victoria and for Victoria as a whole.

**TABLE 4n(1) PROPORTION OF MOTHERS REPORTING THEIR USE OF TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL DURING PREGNANCY (2006, 2009): VICTORIA, RURAL VICTORIA AND BARWON SOUTH WEST<sup>37</sup>**

	Tobacco 2006 (%)	Tobacco 2009 (%)	Alcohol 2006 (%)	Alcohol 2009 (%)
Victoria	22.1	18.3	64.8	59.8
Rural Victoria	23.2	22.5	67.1	61.2
Barwon South West	26.4	30.3	68.2	63.8

The ECCP report commenting on these data acknowledges there is some slight variation between the reporting years, 2006 and 2009, in the proportions of mothers reporting that they have used tobacco and/or alcohol, and claiming that these differences are not statistically significant. Nor are

the differences observed between the Victorian, rural and regional figures. However, it is worth noting that the proportion of mothers in Barwon South West who reported using tobacco during pregnancy in 2009 (30.3%) is almost double the rate in Victoria (18.3%). The rates of alcohol use during pregnancy are less disparate although Barwon South West has a higher rate in both 2006 and 2009 compared with Victoria and Rural Victoria.



<sup>36</sup> Source: [http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/pubs/Documents/lac\\_annual\\_report\\_200910/sec6.htm](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/pubs/Documents/lac_annual_report_200910/sec6.htm)

<sup>37</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles for each LGA, 2010.



**TABLE 4o PROPORTION OF FIVE YEAR OLD CHILDREN IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF FULL TIME SCHOOL (2009) DEFINED AS PHYSICALLY VULNERABLE UNDER AEDI: AUSTRALIA, STATE AND LGAs WITHIN G21, LODDON AND CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGION WITH AGGREGATED REGIONAL DATA.<sup>38</sup>**

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	AVERAGE SCORE	DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE (below the 10 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	DEVELOPMENTALLY AT RISK (between the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE OR AT RISK (%)	ON TRACK (between the 25 <sup>th</sup> and 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	ON TRACK (above the 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	ON TRACK (between 25 <sup>th</sup> and 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile or above 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile) (%)
Colac-Otway	241	9.2	10.8	26.1	36.9	20.7	42.3	63
Golden Plains	271	10.0	6.6	5.9	12.5	19.2	68.3	87.5
Greater Geelong	2,300	10.0	6.3	10.2	16.5	22.9	60.6	83.5
Surf Coast	341	10.0	4.7	3.5	8.2	24.6	67.2	91.8
G21 Average <sup>39</sup>		9.8	7.1	11.4	18.5	21.9	59.6	81.5
Central Goldfields	112	9.0	17.0	23.2	40.2	19.6	40.2	59.8
Greater Bendigo	1,055	9.6	7.5	12.9	20.4	23.2	56.4	79.6
Loddon	89	10.0	11.2	11.2	22.4	15.7	61.8	77.5
Macedon Ranges	524	9.6	6.5	15.5	22.0	20.6	57.4	78.0
Mount Alexander	190	9.6	8.4	8.9	17.3	30.0	52.6	82.6
Loddon/ Bendigo Average <sup>40</sup>		9.6	10.1	14.3	24.4	21.9	53.7	75.6
Ararat	118	10.0	14.4	10.2	24.6	11.9	63.6	75.5
Ballarat	979	9.6	8.9	10.8	19.7	23.0	57.3	80.3
Hepburn	138	10.0	3.6	10.9	14.5	23.9	61.6	85.5
Moorabool	345	10.0	5.8	10.4	16.2	26.1	57.7	83.8
Central Highlands Average		9.9	8.2	10.6	18.8	21.2	60.0	81.2
Victoria	57,500	10.0	7.7	11.7	19.4	20.8	59.9	80.7
Australia	245,400	9.6	9.3	13.0	22.3	21.7	56.0	77.7

**REGIONAL COMPARISON:** Data included in the above is provided to compare aggregated Ballarat (Central Highlands), Bendigo (Loddon) and G21 Regions. This comparison demonstrates that five year old children in the G21 Region had slightly higher average AEDI scores than Bendigo and lower than Ballarat. This translates into a higher percentage of children in the G21 Region being considered 'On Track' when compared to the same group in Bendigo and Ballarat Regions. Correspondingly, a higher percentage of children in the Loddon and Central Highlands Regions are considered physically vulnerable at age five than in the G21 Region. The above data demonstrates that the greatest difference within this measure is at the end of both elements i.e. the greatest gap is between children below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile and above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

<sup>38</sup> Source: AEDI Community Profile (2010) for four LGAs. No report is available for Queenscliffe due to the small numbers of children aged five and in their first year of full time school in 2009.

<sup>39</sup> The method used to provide regional scores was using a simple averaging formula i.e. add the scores from the LGAs within the region and divide by the number of LGAs. So, for G21 below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, (10.8+6.6+6.3+4.7)/4=7.1%

<sup>40</sup> The method used to provide regional scores was using a simple averaging formula i.e. add the scores from the LGAs within the region and divide by the number of LGAs. So, for Bendigo/Loddon below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, (17.0+7.5+11.2+6.5+8.4)/5=10.1%

**G21 REGION COMMENT;** Of the four LGAs for which data were provided, there are both positive and negative patterns for the LGAs when compared with Victoria and Australia in regard to five year olds and their 'physical vulnerability' defined through AEDI

- Three of the four LGAs have an average score that is the same as for Victoria (10.0) and that is higher than for Australia (9.6)
- Three of the four LGAs have fewer children rated as 'developmentally vulnerable' compared with the Victorian (7.7) and Australian (9.3) percentages
- Three of the four LGAs have fewer children rated as 'developmentally at risk' compared with the Victorian (11.7) and Australian (13.0) percentages
- Three of the four LGAs have more children rated as 'on track: above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile' compared with the Victorian (59.9) and Australian (56.0) percentages

Overall, if the 'developmentally vulnerable' and 'developmentally at risk' percentages are combined, the proportions of children who are assessed as being cause for concern in regard to their 'physical vulnerability', two out of four LGAs have fewer than 20% of five year olds in this group (Golden Plains: 12.5%; Greater Geelong: 16.5%) and one of the four, Surf Coast, has fewer than 10 per cent of five year olds in this group (Surf Coast: 8.2%). This compares favourably with both the Victorian (19.4) and Australian (22.3%) percentages of children vulnerable or at risk on the physical vulnerability criterion. Of course, the complementary assessment of children 'on track' (combining those between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentile and above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile), shows that most of the children in the LGAs in G21 are doing well.

- Colac Otway has a lower average score (9.2) compared with the other LGAs, Victoria (10.0) and Australia (9.6)
- Colac Otway has more children (10.8%) rated as 'developmentally vulnerable' compared with the other LGAs, Victoria (7.7%) and Australia (9.3%)
- Colac Otway has a very many more children (26.1%) rated as 'developmentally at risk' compared with the other LGAs, Victoria (11.7%) and Australia (13.0%)
- Colac Otway has fewer (42.3%) five year old children rated as 'on track: above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile' compared with the Victorian (59.9%) and Australian (56.0%) percentages.

Overall, if the 'developmentally vulnerable' and 'developmentally at risk' percentages are combined, the proportions of children who are assessed as being cause for concern in regard to their 'physical vulnerability', only Colac-Otway has a significant proportion of five year olds assessed as vulnerable or at risk (36.9%). This proportion is much higher than the Victorian (19.4%) and Australian (22.3%) percentages of children vulnerable or at risk on the physical vulnerability criterion. Therefore the proportion of children as being 'on track' (combining those between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentile and above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile) is correspondingly lower when compared with the other LGAs in G21 and with Victoria (80.7%) and Australia (77.7%). Nonetheless, 63% of children in Colac Otway are 'on track'.

**TABLE 4p PROPORTION OF FIVE YEAR OLD CHILDREN IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF FULL TIME SCHOOL (2009)  
PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUB-DOMAINS UNDER AEDI: AUSTRALIA, STATE AND LGAs WITHIN G21,  
LODDON AND CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGION WITH AGGREGATED REGIONAL DATA.<sup>41</sup>**

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	PHYSICAL READINESS FOR SCHOOL DAY (below 10 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	PHYSICAL INDEPENDENCE (below 10 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	FINE AND GROSS MOTOR SKILLS (below 10 <sup>th</sup> percentile)
Colac-Otway	241	11.2	7.1	19.1
Golden Plains	271	8.1	5.9	6.3
Greater Geelong	2,300	9.9	7.4	5.4
Surf Coast	341	6.7	3.5	3.2
<b>G21 Average</b>		<b>9.0</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>
Central Goldfields	112	19.6	11.6	12.5
Greater Bendigo	1,055	12.6	6.4	6.4
Loddon	89	7.9	10.1	9.0
Macedon Ranges	524	8.2	6.9	8.6
Mount Alexander	190	7.9	6.3	8.9
<b>Loddon/ Bendigo Average<sup>42</sup></b>		<b>11.2</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>9.1</b>
Ararat	118	10.2	8.5	9.3
Ballarat	979	11.4	7.5	6.4
Hepburn	138	10.9	7.2	0.7
Moorabool	345	12.2	4.3	3.8
<b>Central Highlands Average<sup>43</sup></b>		<b>11.2</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>5.1</b>
Victoria	57,500	10.4	7.6	6.6
Australia	245,400	9.9	8.6	6.7

<sup>41</sup> Source: AEDI Community Profile (2010) for four LGAs. No report is available for Queenscliffe due to the small numbers of children aged five and in their first year of full time school in 2009.

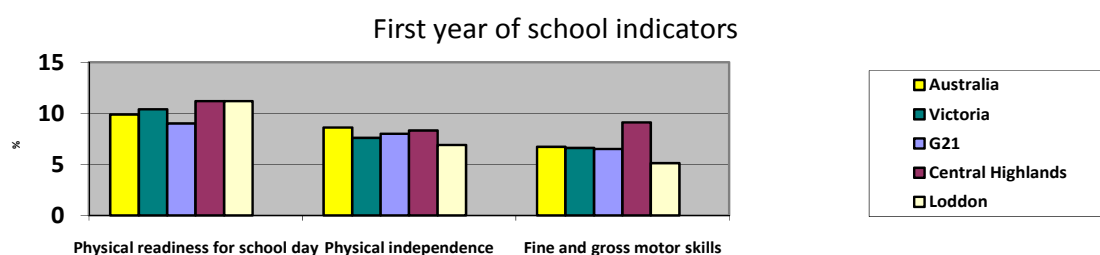
<sup>42</sup> The method used to provide regional scores was using a simple averaging formula i.e. add the scores from the LGAs within the region and divide by the number of LGAs. So, for Bendigo/Loddon below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, (17.0+7.5+11.2+6.5+8.4)/5=10.1%.

<sup>43</sup> Data for Pyrenees LGA was not publicly available.

**REGIONAL COMPARISON:** Data included in the above table is provided to compare aggregated Ballarat (Central Highlands), Bendigo (Loddon) and the G21 Regions. The G21 Region compares favourably to Loddon and Central Highlands in two of these measures, particularly the lower percentile of physical readiness for school day. G21 Region five year olds are also well placed in terms of physical independence than Loddon children and slightly better than Central Highlands children. G21 children have a higher rate of fine and gross motor skills issues than Central Highlands however, it is important to note that this data is impacted by the very low numbers of children rated below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile in Hepburn.

**G21 REGION COMMENT:** Of the four LGAs for which data were provided, there are both positive and negative patterns for the LGAs when compared with Victoria and Australia in regard to five year olds and their 'physical health and wellbeing' defined through AEDI:

- Three of the four LGAs have fewer children rated as being 'below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile' in their 'physical readiness for the school day', compared with the Victorian (10.4) and Australian (9.9) percentages
- All four LGAs have fewer children rated as being 'below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile' in their 'physical independence', compared with the Victorian (7.6) and Australian (8.6) percentages. In particular, Surf Coast and Golden Plains have significantly fewer children who are below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, even compared with the other LGAs in G21 Region.
- Three of the four LGAs have fewer children rated as 'being below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile' in their 'fine and gross motor skills', compared with the Victorian (6.6) and Australian (6.7) percentages
- Colac Otway has more children (11.2) rated as 'below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile' on 'physical readiness for the school day' compared with the other LGAs, Victoria (10.4) and Australia (9.9)
- Colac Otway has more children (19.1) rated as 'below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile' on 'fine and gross motor skills', compared with the Victorian (6.6) and Australian (6.7) percentages



### DID YOU KNOW???

- The number of deaths from SIDS in Victoria has decreased significantly since 1990.
- G21 Children who are fully immunised by 75 months is well below the Victorian average.
- Hospital admissions for asthma have significantly increased across G21.

### CRITICAL ISSUES

- What is being done about increasing asthma levels?
- What is being done about the falling rate of immunisation?
- The level of mothers who smoke or drink alcohol during pregnancy is high in the G21 Region.

## 5 Mental and Emotional Health

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) defines mental and emotional health as 'the capacity of individuals and groups to interact with one another and the environment, in ways that promote subjective well-being, optimal development and the use of cognitive, affective and relational abilities'. A diverse range of social, environmental, biological and psychological factors can impact on an individual's mental health. In turn, people can develop symptoms and behaviours that are distressing to themselves or others, and interfere with their social functioning and capacity to negotiate daily life. These symptoms and behaviours may require treatment or rehabilitation, including hospitalisation.<sup>44</sup> This section of the report focuses on children's mental and emotional health and considers three key issues. It draws upon the feedback of parents and benchmarks developed by DEECD to determine whether a child exhibits emotional vulnerability or behavioural difficulties.

**TABLE 5a PROPORTION OF FIVE YEAR OLD CHILDREN IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF FULL TIME SCHOOL (2009) DEFINED AS EMOTIONALLY VULNERABLE UNDER AEDI EMOTIONAL MATURITY DOMAIN: AUSTRALIA, STATE AND LGAs WITHIN G21, LODDON AND CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGION WITH AGGREGATED REGIONAL DATA.<sup>45</sup>**

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN <sup>46</sup>	AVERAGE SCORE	DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE (below the 10 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	DEVELOPMENTALLY AT RISK (between the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE OR AT RISK (%)	ON TRACK (between the 25 <sup>th</sup> and 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	ON TRACK (above the 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	ON TRACK (between 25 <sup>th</sup> and 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile or above 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile) (%)
Colac-Otway	241	8.7	7.1	12.4	19.5	27.4	53.1	80.5
Golden Plains	265	9.2	6.8	12.8	19.6	17.7	62.6	80.3
Greater Geelong	2,283	8.8	7.8	15.6	23.4	23.2	53.4	76.6
Surf Coast	341	9.0	5.9	12.3	18.2	19.9	61.9	81.8
G21 Average		8.9	6.8	13.3	20.1	22.1	57.8	79.9
Central Goldfields	112	8.3	20.5	12.5	33.0	28.6	38.4	67.0
Greater Bendigo	1,055	8.5	12.0	14.9	26.9	26.4	46.8	73.2
Loddon	89	8.8	12.5	13.6	26.1	20.5	53.4	73.9
Macedon Ranges	524	8.7	6.9	17.6	24.5	22.0	53.4	75.4
Mount Alexander	189	9.4	7.4	11.6	19.0	21.2	59.8	81.0
Loddon/ Bendigo Average <sup>47</sup>		8.7	11.9	13.9	25.8	23.7	50.4	74.1
Ararat	118	9.0	7.6	13.6	21.2	21.2	57.6	78.8
Ballarat	979	8.7	8.5	17.5	26.0	24.3	49.6	73.9
Hepburn	138	8.8	5.8	16.1	21.9	23.4	54.7	78.1
Moorabool	345	8.8	6.2	13.5	19.7	26.1	54.3	80.4
Central Highlands Average <sup>48</sup>		8.8	6.8	15.2	22.0	23.8	54.1	77.9
Victoria	57,223	8.7	8.3	14.5	22.8	24.5	52.8	77.3
Australia	244,383	8.7	8.9	15.5	24.4	25.4	50.2	75.6

<sup>44</sup> Source: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/nhpa/mentalhealth/index.cfm>

<sup>45</sup> Source: AEDI Community Profile (2010) for four LGAs. No report is available for Queenscliffe due to the small numbers of children aged five and in their first year of full time school in 2009.

<sup>46</sup> The numbers of children in Australia, Victoria, Golden Plains and Greater Geelong differ in this table on emotional maturity and the previous tables (4o and 4p) with data from AEDI recording physical vulnerability.

<sup>47</sup> The method used to provide regional scores was using a simple averaging formula i.e. add the scores from the LGAs within the region and divide by the number of LGAs. So, for Bendigo/Loddon below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, (17.0+7.5+11.2+6.5+8.4)/5=10.1%.

<sup>48</sup> Data for Pyrenees LGA was not publicly available.

**REGIONAL COMPARISON:** The data included above is provided to compare aggregated Ballarat (Central Highlands), Bendigo (Loddon) and G21 Regions. The G21 region compares favourably to Loddon and Central Highlands Regions for children who are defined as emotionally vulnerable. The percentage of G21 children who are 'on track' is above both Loddon and Central Highlands and those in the most vulnerable category, below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, are significantly higher in Loddon than both Central Highlands and G21, which are both at 6.8% of children. G21 is below the state and national averages for children most vulnerable and above the state and national averages for children who are 'on track.'

**G21 REGION COMMENT:** Of the four LGAs for which data were provided, there are both positive and negative patterns for the LGAs when compared with Victoria and Australia in regard to five year olds and their 'emotional vulnerability' defined as 'emotional maturity' through AEDI:

Two of the four LGAs have an average score that is equivalent to the Victorian (8.7) and Australian (8.7) average scores. Colac Otway has a comparable score to that of Victoria or Australia.

All four LGAs have fewer children defined as 'developmentally vulnerable' compared with the Victorian (8.3) and Australian (8.9) percentages.

Three of the four LGAs have fewer children defined as 'developmentally at risk' compared with the Victorian (14.5) and Australian (15.5) percentages. Greater Geelong has more children rated as 'developmentally at risk' compared with the other LGAs in G21, but the proportions for Greater Geelong are comparable with percentages for Australia overall (15.5), although higher than the Victorian rate (14.5).

More five year olds in the four G21 LGAs are assessed to be 'on track: above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile' compared with the Victorian (52.8%) and Australian (50.2%) percentages.

It is surprising that Golden Plains and Surf Coast where fewer children have been rated as developmentally vulnerable or at risk on physical vulnerability and health and wellbeing, that more are rated as 'emotionally vulnerable'. The average scores for these two LGAs are higher than for Victoria (8.7) and Australia (8.7).

Overall, if the proportions of children assessed as 'developmentally vulnerable' or 'at risk' are combined, the proportions of children in the G21 LGAs are generally comparable with those for Victoria (22.8%) and Australia (24.4%). Only Greater Geelong (23.4%) has a proportion of children in this group that is higher than for Victoria, but lower than for Australia. Overall, the corresponding proportions of children assessed as being 'on track' (between 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentiles, or above 50<sup>th</sup> percentile) suggest that these are comparable to Victoria and Australia.

**TABLE 5b PROPORTION OF CHILDREN AGED FOUR TO TWELVE YEARS WHO COMPLETED THE STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE (SDQ) WITHIN THE VCHWS (2006 and 2009) AND RATED ACCORDING TO EMOTIONAL OR BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES: STATE AND BARWON SOUTH WEST REGION<sup>49</sup>**

	BARWON SOUTH WEST REGION 'of concern' (%)	BARWON SOUTH WEST REGION 'borderline' (%)	BARWON SOUTH WEST REGION 'normal' (%)	VICTORIA 'of concern' (%)	VICTORIA 'borderline' (%)	VICTORIA 'normal' (%)
2006	6.5	6.4	84.7	5.3	5.7	83.9
2009	4.9	6.6	81.3	5.4	5.2	83.5

The overall 'normality' of children aged four to twelve years in Barwon South West and in Victoria is the main message from this table. Whether there would be any variations for each LGA in the G21 depends on whether such data are available. It is unclear what is being assessed as 'of concern' or 'borderline' emotional or behavioural difficulties.

<sup>49</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profile for each LGA, 2010.

**TABLE 5c PARENTAL REPORT ON CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR AND WELLBEING AT THEIR START OF SCHOOL (2008): STATE, BARWON SOUTH WEST REGION AND LGAs (PERCENTAGES ONLY)<sup>50</sup>**

	TROUBLE PAYING ATTENTION AND COMPLETING AN ACTIVITY	TEMPER TANTRUMS	DISPLAYS AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR	PLAYS WELL WITH OTHER CHILDREN	RESISTS OR SOMETIMES REFUSES TO GO TO SCHOOL	GENERALLY HAPPY	SLEEPS WELL THROUGH THE NIGHT
Victoria (usually/often)	3.2	3.3	1.6	89.6	1.9	95.8	89.0
Victoria (sometimes)	31.9	36.4	15.3	6.9	9.4	2.1	8.0
Barwon South West (usually/often)	3.5	3.7	1.6	90.8	1.7	96.4	89.4
Barwon South West (sometimes)	31.1	36.7	15.4	6.3	8.4	1.8	7.8
Colac-Otway (Usually/often)	2.3	3.1	np	91.5	2.3	96.5	91.1
Colac-Otway (sometimes)	32.4	40.1	14.8	5.8	9.2	1.9	7.0
Golden Plains (usually/often)	2.5	3.4	np	91.6	np	95.9	88.3
Golden Plains (sometimes)	33.8	36.6	16.8	6.4	8.2	2.3	9.3
Greater Geelong (usually/often)	3.8	4.4	1.8	89.7	1.3	95.5	88.1
Greater Geelong (sometimes)	30.7	37.6	16.6	6.8	8.6	2.0	8.6
Queenscliffe (usually/often)	np	np	np	95.0	np	100.0	90.0
Queenscliffe (sometimes)	27.5	37.5	np	np	np	np	np
Surf Coast (usually/often)	2.6	np	np	95.0	2.0	98.5	92.2
Surf Coast (sometimes)	29.9	32.8	14.4	3.2	6.4	np	5.8

The items highlighted in this table (the columns in grey shading) have been chosen to indicate the overall normality of children's behaviour when they start school, as reported by their parents. These columns are where the highest proportions of children cluster: in 'playing well with other children', 'generally happy', and 'sleeps well through the night', whether 'usually/often', or 'sometimes'. If seeking reasons to identify problems amongst small children, we can find them in the remaining columns: 'trouble paying attention and completing an activity', 'temper tantrums', 'displays aggressive behaviour', 'resists or sometimes refuses to go to school', whether 'usually/often' or 'sometimes'. For these 'problem behaviours', we see the predominance of 'sometimes' rather than 'usually/often', which would seem to be more 'normal' for children of this age group, and possibly for all people. (It is unclear what 'aggressive behaviour' means in this context – if it is violence displayed to others, it may need further investigation and intervention/prevention.)

#### **DID YOU KNOW???**

- The G21 Region has more children that are considered of concern and borderline for emotional or behavioural difficulties than the state average.
- On an LGA BY LGA basis, the G21 Region is above the state and national average for children who are on track for emotional vulnerability.

<sup>50</sup> Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (2008) in Early Childhood Community Profile for each LGA, 2010.

## 6 Crime and Safety

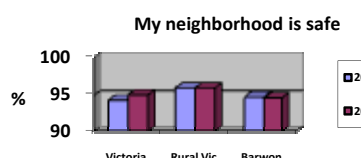
This section discusses crime and safety. When children are exposed to violence, it negatively impacts upon their development. Children have trouble with school, emotions and cognition as well as an increase in depression and anxiety and violence and crime can even result in future substance abuse. There is an increased risk of aggression, conflicts with those around them and difficulty trusting the people in their lives.<sup>51</sup> The key indicators that are used in this section look at data on cases of crime and assault, children who are involved in intervention orders and children with parents in the justice system.

The information available through the Early Childhood Community Profiles for each of the five Local Government Areas in G21 generally covers reports by parents of children aged from birth to twelve years of age, regarding the level of perceived safety in the neighbourhoods. The information has been provided for Victoria, Rural Victoria and Barwon South West Region. It has not available for each LGA within the G21 Region.

**TABLE 6a PROPORTION OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN (BIRTH TO 12 YEARS) WHO 'AGREED' OR 'STRONGLY AGREED' THAT THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD WAS SAFE (2006, 2009): VICTORIA, RURAL VICTORIA AND BARWON SOUTH WEST<sup>52</sup>**

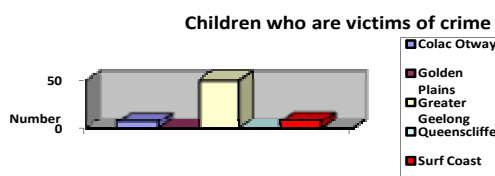
While there is some slight variation in the proportions of parents agreeing with the level of perceived safety of their neighbourhoods between 2006 and 2009, these differences are not significant.

Area	2006 (%)	2009 (%)
Victoria	94.4	95.1
Rural Victoria	96.0	96.0
Barwon South West	94.8	94.7



**TABLE 6b CHILDREN ARE WHO RECORDED AS VICTIMS OF CRIME FINANCIAL YEAR 2009/10<sup>53</sup>**

Area	Victims(N)
G21	65
Colac-Otway	7
Golden Plains	0
Greater Geelong	50
Queenscliffe	0
Surf Coast	8



The following are numbers of children who were victims of crime in the financial year 2009/10. Children's exposure to crime can have short and long-term effects that can hinder their lives. Childhood exposure to violence and crime can have effects that occur right away and those that linger or don't appear until later. 'Children suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome may have flashbacks and can end up feeling suicidal,' says Healthy Children. Children are at a higher risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system due to their often-learned violent behaviour. Violence and crime can also deteriorate a child's self-esteem leading to self-destructiveness and aggressive behaviours towards others. This can even lead to school shootings, says NCCEV.<sup>54</sup> The data demonstrates that most instances (77%) of children who are exposed to crime occur in the Greater Geelong LGA within the G21 Region. Recorded cases have also occurred in Surf Coast and Colac Otway LGAs.

<sup>51</sup> Source: <http://www.livestrong.com/article/158824-the-effect-of-crime-violence-on-the-school-child/#ixzz1DKNeoMM9>

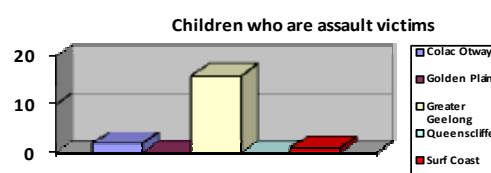
<sup>52</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Data produced by Corporate Statistics, Victoria Police on 24 December 2010. Data was extracted from LEAP on 18 July 2010 and is subject to variation (as advised by Victoria Police).

<sup>54</sup> Martinez, E., 2010, *The Effect of Crime & Violence on the School Child*, Livestrong website, 'http://www.livestrong.com/article/158824-the-effect-of-crime-violence-on-the-school-child/' viewed 5 January 2011.

**TABLE 6c CHILDREN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF ASSAULT 2009/10<sup>55</sup>**

Area	VICTIMS (N)
G21	19
Colac-Otway	2
Golden Plains	0
Greater Geelong	16
Queenscliffe	0
Surf Coast	1



The table outlines the details of the numbers of children who were victims of assault in the financial year 2009/10. This data does not indicate if multiple instances of assault have occurred against one child thus it is assumed that 19 instances of assault occurred against 19 children in the G21 Region.

**TABLE 6d CHILDREN WHO ARE PART OF A PROTECTION ORDER**

There has been a substantial increase in the number of care and protection orders across Australia since 1997. This increase may be attributable to a greater awareness of abuse and neglect and to the cumulative effect of a growing number of children who enter care at an early age and are on orders until they are 18 years of age (AIHW 2008).

In 2006–07, there were 6179 children aged 0–17 years on care and protection orders in Victoria, a rate of 5.2 per 1000 children. Of these 623 were Indigenous representing a rate of 47.6 per 1000 children (AIHW 2008). Indigenous children in Victoria were nine times more likely to be on a care and protection order than all children. Across Australia, Indigenous children were 5.6 times more likely than all children to be on a care and protection order (AIHW 2008).

Figure 1 shows that there appears to be a small increasing overall trend in the rate of care and protection orders for all children in Victoria, from 30 June 2001 to 30 June 2007. The rate of care and protection orders in Indigenous children has declined from 2006 to 2007. However, the rate remains much higher in Indigenous children than in all children (figure 4.16).<sup>56</sup>

**Rate (per 1000) of children aged 0–17 years on a care and protection order, Victoria, 30 June 2001 to 30 June 2007.**

Source: AIHW 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008

**TABLE 6e CHILDREN WITH PARENTS IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

The Department of Justice- Corrections Victoria is unable to provide detailed data of children with parents in the justice system. The data is only available at a state level and it is self reported by the parents. As at 13 February 2011 there were 4,492 prisoners in Victoria and of those prisoners, 2,283 self-reported at reception into the prison that they had children.<sup>57</sup>

Further to this the following has been extracted from the DEECD Website<sup>58</sup>: 'Very little work has been done in Victoria to assess and address the outcomes for children whose parents are involved in the criminal justice system. However, there is evidence to show that the prison population is both culturally and linguistically diverse and that Indigenous persons are significantly overrepresented. This is likely to have an impact on children from these backgrounds.'

<sup>55</sup> Data produced by Corporate Statistics, Victoria Police on 24 December 2010. Data was extracted from LEAP on 18 July 2010 and is subject to variation (as advised by Victoria Police).

<sup>56</sup> Commentary taken directly from <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/vcams/parents/20-2childprotectionorders.htm>

<sup>57</sup> Data from email received from Corrections Victoria 22/02/11

<sup>58</sup> Source: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/vcams/parents/24-4criminaljusticesystem.htm>



In 2003 Corrections Victoria undertook a snapshot analysis of female prisoner files and found that of all women imprisoned (as at 16 June 2003) 62.4 per cent were identified as having at least one child of dependent age at the time they entered prison. Of these women, 18.1 per cent were from CALD backgrounds and 3.6 per cent were Indigenous. In addition, the study findings suggest that sole parents/mothers may be overrepresented among the women's prison population with 50.7 per cent of the women with children identifying as single, never married, separated or divorced.

The study also looked at the current living arrangements of the children of these women and found that 11 per cent of the children were in the care of the Department of Human Services (data provided by Corrections Victoria, 2007).'

## DID YOU KNOW???

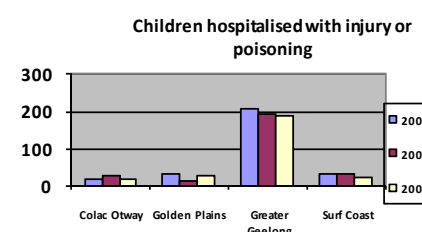
- Almost 95% of parents in the Barwon South West Region agree or strongly agree that their neighbourhood is safe

# 7 Injuries and Death

In 2004, Kidsafe SA indicated that 'Injuries are the leading cause of death in Australian children aged one to fourteen, accounting for nearly half of all deaths in this age group. More children die of injury than die of cancer, asthma and infectious diseases combined.'<sup>59</sup> This section uses three sources of data to review the number of incidences of hospitalisations for injuries and poisoning, bone fractures and deaths.

**TABLE 7a FREQUENCY OF HOSPITALISATION (EXCLUDING SAME-DAY ADMISSIONS) FOR INJURIES AND POISONING (ALL INTENTS), VICTORIAN CHILDREN AGED 0-8 YEARS, 2007-2009<sup>60</sup>**

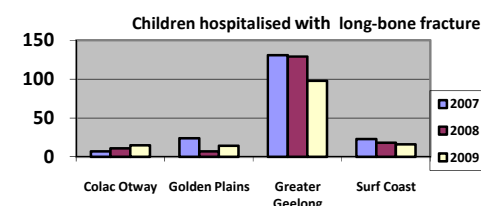
Area	2007 (N)	2007 (%)	2008 (N)	2008 (%)	2009 (N)	2009 (%)
<b>Victoria</b>	3,784		3,552		3370	
<b>G21</b>	290		266		259	
Colac-Otway	17	5.8%	28	10.6%	20	7.7%
Golden Plains	33	11.4%	15	5.6%	28	10.8%
Greater Geelong	209	72.1%	192	72.1%	187	72.2%
Surf Coast	31	10.7%	31	11.7%	24	9.3%



The data for hospitalisations for injury and poisoning indicates that both the State and the G21 Region have experienced a decrease in admissions. Geelong consistently contributes 72% of the cases and across the other three LGAs, there are fluctuations in the number of cases (noting that no data was able to be published for Queenscliffe).

**TABLE 7b FREQUENCY OF HOSPITALISATION (INCLUDING SAME-DAY ADMISSION) FOR UNINTENTIONAL LONG BONE FRACTURES, VICTORIAN CHILDREN AGED 0-8 YEARS, 2007-2009.<sup>61</sup>**

Area	2007 (N)	2007 (%)	2008 (N)	2008 (%)	2009 (N)	2009 (%)
<b>Victoria</b>	2288		2211		2104	
<b>G21</b>	185		165		143	
Colac-Otway	7	3.8%	11	6.7%	15	10.5%
Golden Plains	24	13.0%	7	6.0%	14	9.8%
Greater Geelong	131	70.8%	129	78.1%	98	68.5%
Surf Coast	23	12.4%	18	10.9%	16	11.2%



The data for long bone fractures indicates that as a State and a Region, the number of admissions has decreased between 2007 and 2009. This trend is reflected in Surf Coast and Greater Geelong's figures. Colac-Otway has demonstrated an increase and Golden Plains has no clear trend. Greater Geelong contributes the majority of cases based upon the critical mass of the municipality.

<sup>59</sup> Source: <http://www.gtp.com.au/kidsafesa/inewsfiles/inews.61635.1.pdf>

<sup>60</sup> Source: Victorian Admitted Episodes Dataset 2007-2009 via Victorian injury Surveillance Unit. This data set excludes same-day admissions, deaths and transfers within and between hospitals. It does not indicate if multiple admissions for one child are included thus it has been assumed that each 209 admissions equates to 209 children. Data for Queenscliffe not provided as 'Cell counts of less than 5 have been suppressed as per VISU policy.'

<sup>61</sup> Source: Victorian Admitted Episodes Dataset 2007-2009 via Victorian injury Surveillance Unit. This data set includes same-day admissions, deaths and transfers within and between hospitals. It does not indicate if multiple admissions for one child are included thus it has been assumed that each 131 admissions equates to 131 children

**TABLE 7c DEATH FROM INJURY AND POISONS (ALL INTENTS), VICTORIAN CHILDREN AGED 0-8 YEARS, 2004-2006.<sup>62</sup>**

Area	2004 (N)	2005 (N)	2006 (N)
Victoria	18	25	16
Colac-Otway	0	0	np <sup>63</sup>
Golden Plains	0	0	0
Greater Geelong	0	0	np
Queenscliffe	0	0	0
Surf Coast	0	np	0

This data indicates that there have been only a small number of instances of deaths by injury and poisoning across the G21 Region. There are three cells noted as having data that cannot be provided so it is assumed that there were instances of death by injury or poisoning occurring. Due to the small numbers this data has been suppressed.

### DID YOU KNOW???

- There has been a steady decrease in numbers of injuries and poisonings to children in the last three years.

**CASE STUDY:** Mike and Nika are parents of three children Andy, aged 8, Juliet, 5, and Lola, 2. They live on a farm approximately 20 kilometres north of Winchelsea. They run sheep and alpacas on the property and use the land for crops, usually canola and wheat. The property has several dams used to water the livestock. In the course of running the farm, they use many chemicals. Mike and Nika are very conscious of involving their children in the farm activities and hope that they will take over the farm when they are adults. As part of farm life, there are many hazards including chemicals, open water dams and machinery. Mike and Nika consistently reinforce how to deal with the hazards, particularly with Andy as he has shown an interest in his parents work. Mike and Nika's children have never suffered injury and poisoning due to their parents diligence around the property

## 8 Child Abuse

'Child maltreatment refers to any non-accidental behaviour by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e., neglect) and commission (i.e., abuse).'<sup>64</sup> This section uses the term 'child abuse' rather than child 'child maltreatment' and considers four measures to provide a picture of child abuse across the G21 Region. It uses child notifications as the first data set and a commentary is provided outlining some key definitions. The section then considers data on children on care and protection orders and ends with information on children in out of home care. The data in this section is intended to facilitate discussion on what is occurring and possible measures to reduce instances of child abuse.

**TABLE 8a CHILD PROTECTION NOTIFICATIONS, RENOTIFICATIONS AND SUBSTANTIATIONS OF ALL CHILDREN AGED 0-8 YEARS, 2008-09<sup>66</sup>**

LGA	Total notifications (N)	Total renotifications (N)	Total renotification rate	Total substantiations (N)
Victoria	17,688	5,526	31.2	4,177
G21	861	248	28.8	260+ <sup>65</sup>
Colac-Otway	82	19	23.2	17
Golden Plains	34	6	17.6	7
Greater Geelong	726	217	29.9	236
Queenscliffe	3	1	33.3	np
Surf Coast	16	5	31.3	np

<sup>62</sup> Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Death Unit record File (ABS-DURF) via Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit. This data set includes same-day admissions, deaths and transfers within and between hospitals. It does not indicate if multiple admissions for one child are included thus it has been assumed that each 131 admissions equates to 131 children. Note also that the period used for this data is from 2004-2006 which was the most recent data available at the time of the production of this report

<sup>63</sup> Data noted 'np' not provided as 'Cell counts of less than 5 have been suppressed as per VISU policy.'

<sup>64</sup> Source: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/rs6/rs6.html>

<sup>65</sup> This is an incomplete total due to the numbers of substantiations for Queenscliffe and Surf Coast being withheld to protect confidentiality.

<sup>66</sup> Source: DHS 2009, Client and Service Information System (CRIS database), Children, Youth and Families Division, unpublished

Substantiation rate (substantiations as a percentage of notifications):

Victoria: 23.6%      Colac Otway: 20.7%      Golden Plains: 20.6%      Greater Geelong: 32.5%

Research into child protection statistics indicates that certain caveats are necessary in ascertaining their meaning:

What constitutes grounds for 'notification'? That is, what is defined as 'child abuse', as this differs in various jurisdictions in Australia and overseas. Are notifications accepted for what is called 'neglect' compared with notifications for 'physical abuse' or 'sexual abuse'? Research indicates that in contemporary child protection, there is greater emphasis given to 'physical and sexual abuse' with relatively little to 'neglect' (problems associated with poverty and disadvantage, often less easily subjected to 'forensic' assessment and more intractable). Consideration also needs to be given to the proportion of 'physical abuse' notifications that are 'inappropriate parental discipline' as opposed to cruelty and violent assaults on children by parents and carers.

What counts as a 'notification'? That is, in some jurisdictions, a notification is when a call is made to a child protection agency, while in others it may mean a categorisation of a notification is made after an initial assessment and allocation of the referral, or other variations. In some jurisdictions for example in the UK, due to performance indicators regarding response times to 'notifications', these may be defined differently within the organisation and within procedures while still allowing some discretion in categorising a 'notification', to be able to manage the work within existing resources.

What counts as 'substantiation'? This may range from a decision made on the basis of the initial notification with no further action, to a single visit to a family/child with no further action, to a full investigation that may lead to any further forms of intervention. The exercise of discretion by practitioners, necessary and essential in the context of a family and the particular circumstances, may not lead to predictable or certain outcomes following assessment/investigation of a 'notification' as assumed will be achieved by increased proceduralisation. This feature of professional practice is the topic of much research in the social sciences, sociology and social work.

The research also indicates that increased proceduralisation (as 'policing of families') tends to be unhelpful as prevention and support services are not offered (because they are not available, not available to families unless they meet particular criteria, not easily arranged due to barriers such as waiting lists and costs, or because the timeframes for assessment/investigation, intervention and change may not be realistic in all cases due to the complexity of different families and their circumstances.) Hence, the re-notification rates should take account the complexity of problems being experienced by families and the consequences for the care and protection of children, and the extent of service provision and time allowed to achieve change.

**TABLE 8b CHILDREN ON CARE AND PROTECTION ORDERS AS AT 30 JUNE 2010**

AREA	CHILDREN ON CARE AND PROTECTION ORDERS (N)
Victoria	2,989
G21	Unavailable

**TABLE 8c CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME CARE LIVING WITH FAMILY MEMBERS AS AT 30 JUNE 2010**

AREA	CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME CARE WITH FAMILY MEMBERS (N)
Victoria	1,203
G21	Unavailable

**TABLE 8d CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME CARE AS AT 30 JUNE 2010**

AREA	CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME CARE (N)
Victoria	2,413
G21	Unavailable

## 9 Development and Learning, Social Development

This section focuses upon a variety of data that regards the social development of children. Child social development involves 'learning the values, knowledge and skills that enable children to relate to others effectively and to contribute in positive ways to family, school and the community. This kind of learning is passed on to children directly by those who care for and teach them, as well as indirectly through social relationships within the family or with friends, and through children's participation in the culture around them. Through their relationships with others and their growing awareness of social values and expectations, children build a sense of who they are and of the social roles available to them. As they develop socially, children both respond to the influences around them and play an active part in shaping their relationships.'<sup>67</sup> Social development is measured in this section by indicators such as a child's ability to verbally and literally communicate at school levels Prep, Years One and Two. It also is developed by a child's introduction to peer environments such as kindergarten. School absence is also used to show the impact of absences from the social and learning spheres on children.

**TABLE 9a FIVE YEAR OLD CHILDREN IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF FULL TIME SCHOOL (2009) DEFINED AS SOCIALLY VULNERABLE UNDER AEDI SOCIAL COMPETENCE DOMAIN: AUSTRALIA, STATE AND LGAs WITHIN G21, LODDON AND CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGION WITH AGGREGATED REGIONAL DATA.<sup>68</sup>**

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN <sup>69</sup>	AVERAGE SCORE	DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE (below the 10 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	DEVELOPMENTALLY AT RISK (between the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE OR AT RISK (%)	ON TRACK (between the 25 <sup>th</sup> and 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	ON TRACK (above the 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	ON TRACK (between 25 <sup>th</sup> and 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile or above 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile) (%)
Colac-Otway	241	9.2	13.3	10.4	23.7	27.0	49.4	76.4
Golden Plains	271	9.6	7.0	10.7	17.7	18.8	63.5	82.3
Greater Geelong	2,300	9.2	8.3	15.7	24	22.7	53.3	76
Surf Coast	341	9.6	3.5	13.8	17.3	22.6	60.1	82.7
<b>G21 Average</b>		<b>9.4</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>56.6</b>	<b>79.4</b>
Central Goldfields	112	8.8	15.2	20.5	35.7	23.2	41.1	64.3
Greater Bendigo	1,054	9.2	11.2	13.9	25.1	23.0	51.8	74.8
Loddon	88	9.6	14.6	12.4	27.0	15.7	57.3	73.0
Macedon Ranges	524	9.4	8.0	15.6	23.6	21.8	54.6	76.4
Mount Alexander	189	9.4	7.4	11.6	19.0	21.2	59.8	81.0
<b>Loddon/ Bendigo Average<sup>70</sup></b>		<b>9.3</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>73.9</b>
Ararat	118	9.4	6.8	13.6	20.4	22.0	57.6	79.6
Ballarat	977	9.2	9.8	15.6	25.4	22.5	52.1	74.6
Hepburn	138	9.0	8.0	19.6	27.6	26.8	45.7	72.5
Moorabool	345	9.4	4.9	10.5	15.4	25.3	59.3	84.6
<b>Central Highlands Average<sup>71</sup></b>		<b>9.3</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>53.7</b>	<b>77.9</b>
Victoria	57,488	9.4	8.4	14.0	22.4	22.2	55.4	77.6
Australia	244,356	9.2	9.5	15.2	24.7	22.8	52.6	75.4

<sup>67</sup> Source: <http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/uploads/2009/09/social-development-overview.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> Source: AEDI Community Profile (2010) for four LGAs. No report is available for Queenscliffe due to the small numbers of children aged five and in their first year of full time school in 2009.

<sup>69</sup> The numbers of children in Australia, Victoria, Golden Plains and Greater Geelong differ in this table on emotional maturity and the previous tables (4o and 4p, 5a) with data from AEDI recording physical vulnerability and emotional vulnerability.

<sup>70</sup> The method used to provide regional scores was using a simple averaging formula i.e. add the scores from the LGAs within the region and divide by the number of LGAs. So, for Bendigo/Loddon below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, (17.0+7.5+11.2+6.5+8.4)/5=10.1%.

<sup>71</sup> Data for Pyrenees LGA was not publicly available.

**REGIONAL COMPARISON:** Data included in the above is provided to compare aggregated Ballarat (Central Highlands), Bendigo (Loddon) and G21 Regions. There are a greater proportion of five year old children in the G21 Region that are considered on track with their social vulnerability, when compared to Central Highlands Region and Loddon Region children, despite the average AEDI score being very similar across all three Regions. Loddon has a higher proportion of children that are developmentally vulnerable and below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile and Central Highlands has the smallest proportion in the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile. G21 results are well above state and national averages for children being on track and slightly below the state average. G21 is well above the national average.

**G21 REGION COMMENT:** Of the four LGAs for which data were provided, there are both positive and negative patterns when compared with Victoria and Australia in regard to five year olds and their 'social vulnerability' defined as 'social competence' through AEDI:

- The average scores for all LGAs in G21 are comparable with the Victorian (9.4) and Australian (9.2) scores, with some G21 LGAs scoring equivalent to the Australian score (Colac Otway, Greater Geelong), and some slightly higher (Golden Plains, Surf Coast).
- While the proportion of children in Colac Otway assessed as 'developmentally vulnerable' (13.3%) (i.e. below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile) is higher than for the other LGAs in G21, and also for Victoria (8.4%) and Australia (9.5%), overall, when combining the proportions of children as 'developmentally vulnerable' or 'at risk', Colac Otway (23.7%) is comparable with Greater Geelong (24%), and Victoria (22.4%) and Australia (24.7%). Golden Plains (17.7%) and Surf Coast (17.3%) are similar in the proportions of children as 'developmentally vulnerable' or 'at risk', and lower than for Victoria and Australia.

The complementary data on children who are 'on track' (when combining those between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, and above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile), show that the LGAs within G21 are comparable with the Victorian (77.6%) and Australian (75.4%) percentages. In fact, Golden Plains and Surf Coast have a higher proportion of children 'on track' compared with Victoria and Australia as a whole

**TABLE 9b PROPORTION OF FIVE YEAR OLD CHILDREN IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF FULL TIME SCHOOL (2009) LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS UNDER AEDI SCHOOL-BASED DOMAIN: AUSTRALIA, STATE AND LGAs WITHIN G21, LODDON AND CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGION WITH AGGREGATED REGIONAL DATA <sup>72</sup>**

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN <sup>73</sup>	AVERAGE SCORE	DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE (below the 10 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	DEVELOPMENTALLY AT RISK (between the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE OR AT RISK (%)	ON TRACK (between the 25 <sup>th</sup> and 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	ON TRACK (above the 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	ON TRACK (between the 25 <sup>th</sup> and 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile or above the 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile) (%)
Colac-Otway	241	9.6	5.0	8.7	13.7	24.1	62.2	86.3
Golden Plains	266	10.0	3.4	6.4	9.8	15.8	74.4	90.2
Greater Geelong	2,293	9.6	5.3	11.2	16.5	18.1	65.4	83.5
Surf Coast	333	9.6	3.3	8.1	11.4	13.8	74.8	88.6
G21 Average <sup>74</sup>		9.7	4.3	8.6	12.9	18.0	69.2	87.2
Central Goldfields	112	9.6	9.8	9.8	19.6	22.3	58.0	80.3
Greater Bendigo	1,055	9.6	7.5	10.7	18.2	20.2	61.6	81.8
Loddon	89	9.6	3.4	12.4	15.8	11.2	73.0	84.2
Macedon Ranges	523	9.6	3.3	7.1	10.4	17.6	72.1	89.7
Mount Alexander	180	9.6	6.7	12.8	19.5	19.4	61.1	80.5
Loddon/ Bendigo Average <sup>75</sup>		9.6	6.1	10.6	16.7	18.1	65.2	83.3
Ararat	118	9.6	8.9	14.0	22.9	24.9	52.3	87.2
Ballarat	975	9.6	7.0	10.9	17.9	17.7	64.4	82.1
Hepburn	137	9.6	3.6	9.5	13.1	23.4	63.5	86.9
Moorabool	344	9.6	5.5	5.2	10.7	16.6	72.7	89.3
Central Highlands Average <sup>76</sup>		9.6	6.3	9.9	16.2	20.7	63.2	83.9
Victoria	57,425	9.6	6.1	9.9	16	18.5	65.5	84
Australia	244,981	9.2	8.9	14.0	22.9	24.9	52.3	77.2

**REGIONAL COMPARISON:** Data included in the above table is provided to compare aggregated Ballarat (Central Highlands), Bendigo (Loddon) and G21 Regions. The average AEDI score for this measure is consistent across all three Regions with G21 being minimally higher. G21 children are more likely to be 'on track' for language and cognitive skills than Central Highlands and Bendigo children. G21 children are well below the other regions for developmental vulnerability. G21 Region is well above both state and national averages for children that are 'on track' for language and cognitive skills.

**G21 REGION COMMENT:** Of the four LGAs for which data were provided, there are both positive and negative patterns when compared with Victoria and Australia in regard to five year olds and their 'language and cognitive skills: school based domain' defined through AEDI:

- The average scores for the LGAs in G21 are comparable with the Victorian (9.6) and Australian (9.2) scores. Golden Plains is slightly higher in comparison with the other LGAs (10.0). All four LGAs have average scores higher than for Australia.

<sup>72</sup> Source: AEDI Community Profile (2010) for four LGAs. No report is available for Queenscliffe due to the small numbers of children aged five and in their first year of full time school in 2009.

<sup>73</sup> The numbers of children in Australia, Victoria, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong and Surf Coast differ in this table on emotional maturity and the previous tables (4o and 4p, 5a, 9a) with data from AEDI recording physical vulnerability, emotional vulnerability and social competence.

<sup>74</sup> No data are available for Queenscliffe due to the small numbers of children aged five and in their first year of full time school in 2009.

<sup>75</sup> The method used to provide regional scores was using a simple averaging formula i.e. add the scores from the LGAs within the region and divide by the number of LGAs. So, for Bendigo/Loddon below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, (17.0+7.5+11.2+6.5+8.4)/5=10.1%.

<sup>76</sup> Data for Pyrenees LGA was not publicly available.

- All four LGAs have lower proportions of children identified as 'developmentally vulnerable' compared to Victoria (6.1%) and Australia (8.9%). Only Greater Geelong has a higher proportion of children 'developmentally at risk' (11.2%) compared with Victoria (9.9%), but lower than for Australia (14.0%). Overall, the four LGAs have comparable or lower proportions of children who are 'developmentally vulnerable' or 'at risk', with Greater Geelong (16.5%) similar to the proportion in Victoria (16%), but lower than for Australia (22.9%). The proportions of children who are 'developmentally vulnerable' or 'at risk' for the other LGAs in G21 are lower than for Victoria or Australia.
- Complementary data on the children assessed as being 'on track' (if combining those between 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentiles, and those above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile) shows that the proportion of children in the LGAs in G21 are higher than for Australia (77.2%) and comparable to or higher than for Victoria (84%).

**TABLE 9c FIVE YEAR OLD CHILDREN IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF FULL TIME SCHOOL (2009) COMMUNICATION AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE DOMAIN AEDI: AUSTRALIA, STATE AND LGAs WITHIN G21, LODDON AND CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGION WITH AGGREGATED REGIONAL DATA <sup>77</sup>**

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN <sup>78</sup>	AVERAGE SCORE	DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE (below the 10 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	DEVELOPMENTALLY AT RISK (between the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE OR AT RISK (%)	ON TRACK (between the 25 <sup>th</sup> and 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	ON TRACK (above the 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	ON TRACK (between the 25 <sup>th</sup> and 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile or above the 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile)
Colac-Otway	241	8.1	12.0	28.6	40.6	14.1	45.2	59.3
Golden Plains	271	10.0	6.3	11.1	17.4	15.9	66.8	82.7
Greater Geelong	2,300	9.4	7.7	14.8	22.5	19.3	58.2	77.5
Surf Coast	341	10.0	2.9	10.3	13.2	17.0	69.8	86.8
G21 Average		9.4	7.2	16.2	23.4	16.6	60.0	76.6
Central Goldfields	112	8.8	12.5	14.3	26.8	24.1	49.1	73.2
Greater Bendigo	1,055	9.4	8.9	16.2	25.1	18.4	56.5	74.9
Loddon	89	9.4	11.2	16.9	28.1	14.6	57.3	71.9
Macedon Ranges	524	9.4	5.2	16.8	22.0	21.0	57.1	78.1
Mount Alexander	190	9.4	6.3	12.6	18.9	21.1	60.0	81.1
Loddon/ Bendigo Average <sup>79</sup>		9.3	8.8	15.4	24.2	19.8	56.0	75.8
Ararat	118	10.0	6.8	15.3	22.1	17.8	60.2	78.0
Ballarat	978	9.4	5.5	16.9	22.4	18.6	59.0	77.6
Hepburn	138	9.4	3.6	15.9	19.5	20.3	60.1	80.4
Moorabool	346	10.0	4.9	13.9	18.8	19.7	61.6	81.3
Central Highlands Average <sup>80</sup>		9.7	5.2	15.5	20.7	19.1	60.2	79.3
Victoria	57,492	9.4	8.3	15.0	23.3	17.5	59.2	76.7
Australia	245,380	9.4	9.2	15.8	25	20.2	54.8	75

<sup>77</sup> Source: AEDI Community Profile (2010) for four LGAs. No report is available for Queenscliffe due to the small numbers of children aged five and in their first year of full time school in 2009.

<sup>78</sup> The numbers of children in Australia, Victoria, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong and Surf Coast differ in this table on emotional maturity and the previous tables (4o and 4p, 5a, 9a, 9b) with data from AEDI recording physical vulnerability, emotional vulnerability and social competence.

<sup>79</sup> The method used to provide regional scores was using a simple averaging formula i.e. add the scores from the LGAs within the region and divide by the number of LGAs. So, for Bendigo/Loddon below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, (17.0+7.5+11.2+6.5+8.4)/5=10.1%.

<sup>80</sup> Data for Pyrenees LGA was not publicly available.

**REGIONAL COMPARISON:** Data included in the above table is provided to compare aggregated Ballarat (Central Highlands), Bendigo (Loddon) and G21 Regions. G21 children are well below children in the Central Highlands Region for communication and general knowledge and G21 children are above Loddon Region children. Central Highlands is also below G21 with children that are considered developmentally vulnerable and Loddon is above G21. G21 Region is below state and national averages for developmental vulnerability. In comparing state and national average against G21 for children who are 'on track,' G21 is slightly below the Victorian average and is above the national average.

**G21 REGION COMMENT:** Of the four LGAs for which data were provided, there are both positive and negative patterns for the LGAs when compared with Victoria and Australia in regard to five year olds and their 'communication and general knowledge' defined through AEDI:

The average scores for two of the four LGAs (Golden Plains and Surf Coast) are higher than for Victoria (9.4) and Australia (9.4). Greater Geelong has an average score equivalent to Victoria and for Australia. Colac Otway has a lower average score (8.1).

Colac Otway has a higher proportion of children (12.0%) assessed as 'developmentally vulnerable', compared with Victoria (8.3%) and Australia (9.2%). Of the four LGAs in G21 for which data were provided, Surf Coast has the lowest proportion of children assessed as 'developmentally vulnerable' (2.9%).

Colac Otway has a higher proportion of children (28.6%) assessed as 'developmentally at risk', compared with Victoria (15%) and Australia (15.8%). Of the four LGAs in G21 for which data were provided, Surf Coast has the lowest proportion of children assessed as 'developmentally vulnerable' (10.3%).

Overall, when combining the proportions of children 'developmentally vulnerable' or 'at risk', Colac Otway (40.6%) has just under double the proportions in Victoria (23.3%). In Greater Geelong, just under a quarter of children are 'developmentally vulnerable' or 'at risk' (22.5%).

Overall, when combining the proportions of children assessed as being 'on track', only Golden Plains (82.7%) and Surf Coast (86.8%) are substantially higher than for Victoria (76.7%) and Australia (75%).

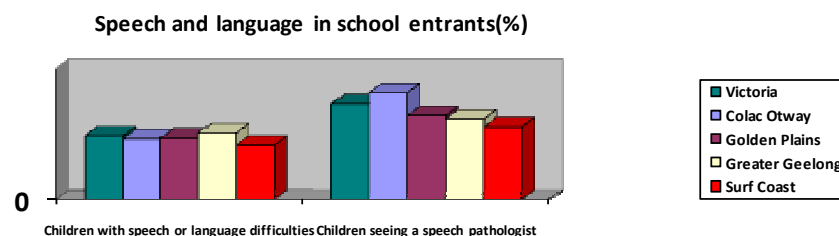
**CASE STUDY:** Mary lives in suburban Geelong and has recently lost her husband after a lengthy illness. Her only form of income is Centrelink benefits and she is struggling to provide for her four children. Having migrated from an Eastern European country four years ago, she has limited English and relies on her children for communicating in public. Two of the children have been rated as being vulnerable under AEDI domains yet are being supported at school by their teachers to develop skills that will lift their language, cognitive and communication skills. Mary understands the benefits of the programs that are being implemented at school and is working with her pre-school children to help them make the transition to school.



**TABLE 9d PARENTS WHO REPORTED IN THE SCHOOL ENTRANT HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE (2008) THAT THEIR CHILD IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF SCHOOL HAS DIFFICULTY WITH SPEECH AND LANGUAGE: STATE, G21 REGION AND LGAs<sup>81</sup>**

	CHILDREN REPORTED TO HAVE DIFFICULTIES WITH SPEECH OR LANGUAGE (N)	CHILDREN REPORTED TO HAVE DIFFICULTIES WITH SPEECH OR LANGUAGE (%)	CHILDREN SEEING A SPEECH PATHOLOGIST (N)	CHILDREN SEEING A SPEECH PATHOLOGIST (%)
Victoria	7,867	14.6	1,738	22.1
Barwon South West	587	14.4	122	20.9
Grampians	450	17.8	92	20.5
Colac-Otway	37	13.9	9	24.7
Golden Plains <sup>82</sup>	36	14.1	7	19.3
Greater Geelong	348	15.3	64	18.5
Queenscliffe <sup>83</sup>	-	-	-	-
Surf Coast	40	12.4	7	16.7

Despite the relatively high scores for Golden Plains (19.3%) and Surf Coast (16.7%) on the AEDI criterion of 'language and cognitive skills' (Table 9b), there is still a relatively high proportion of children seeking help from a speech pathologist. However the proportions are lower than for Victoria (22.1%). It is not clear whether the proportions of children from other LGAs seeing a speech pathologist depend on service access and take up, rather than actual need for speech therapy.



<sup>81</sup> Source: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (2008) in Early Childhood Community Profiles for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>82</sup> Golden Plains is with the Grampians Region. Hence these data are included for the Grampians. It is not possible to calculate the total for G21 region as the raw figures are not available for each LGA.

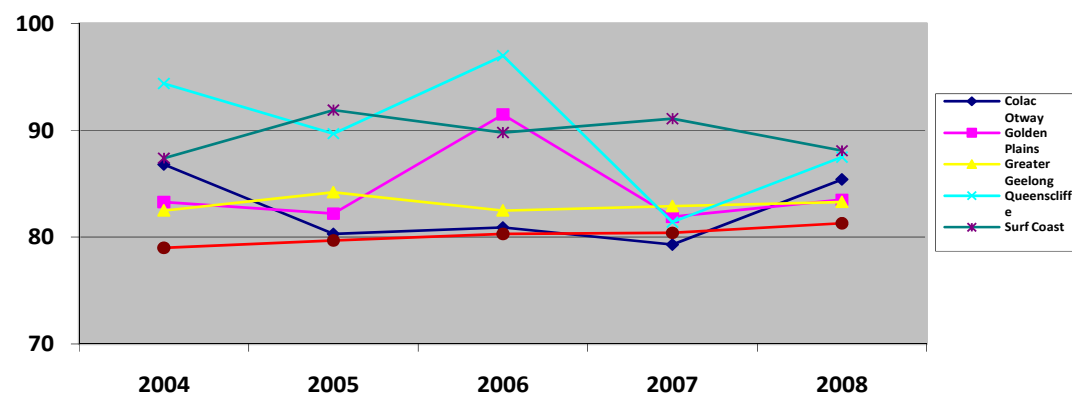
<sup>83</sup> Figures not provided for Queenscliffe, only for Barwon South West.

**TABLE 9e PERCENTAGE OF PREP STUDENTS ENROLLED IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN VICTORIA (2004-2008) ACHIEVING A READING ACCURACY SCORE OF 90% OR MORE ON LEVEL 5 TEXTS: STATE, BARWON SOUTH WEST, GRAMPIANS AND LGAs<sup>84</sup>**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Victoria	79.0	79.7	80.3	80.4	81.3
Barwon South West	84.0	84.1	84.0	83.5	84.3
Grampians	77.1	76.5	78.3	74.8	78.1
Colac-Otway	86.8	80.3	80.9	79.3	85.4
Golden Plains <sup>85</sup>	83.3	82.2	91.5	81.9	83.5
Greater Geelong	82.5	84.2	82.5	82.9	83.3
Queenscliffe <sup>86</sup>	94.4	89.7	97.0	81.4	87.5
Surf Coast	87.4	91.9	89.8	91.1	88.1

For Prep students, while the five LGAs in G21 have better scores in 2008 compared with Victoria overall, this graph shows the trends over the five years from 2004. The trend for Victoria overall is steady improvement. All the LGAs in G21 show fluctuations over the five years (unlike for Victoria). However unlike the other LGAs in G21, Surf Coast is the only LGA showing a decline in 2008.

**Literacy Grade Prep ( Level 5)**



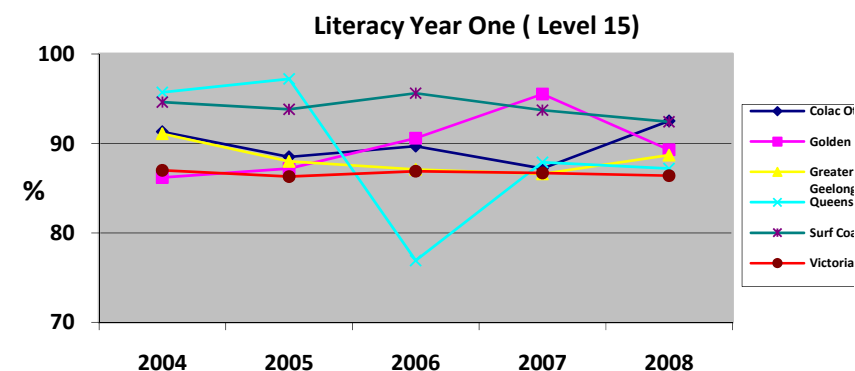
<sup>84</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profile for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>85</sup> Golden Plains is with the Grampians Region. Hence these data are included for the Grampians. It is not possible to calculate the total for G21 region as the raw figures are not available for each LGA.

<sup>86</sup> Figures not provided for Queenscliffe, only for Barwon South West.

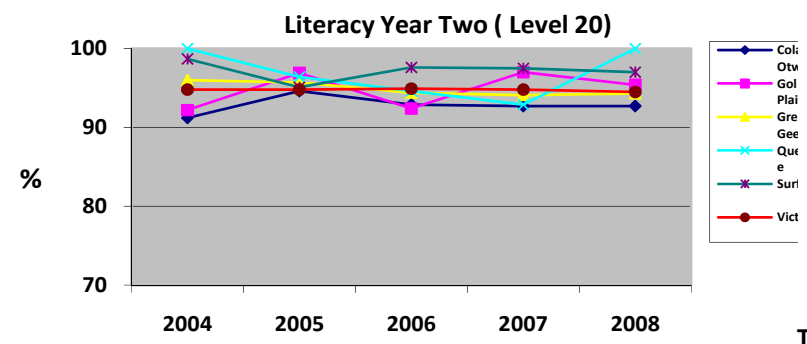
**TABLE 9f PERCENTAGE OF YEAR 1 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN VICTORIA (2004-2008) ACHIEVING A READING ACCURACY SCORE OF 90% OR MORE ON LEVEL 15 TEXTS: STATE, BARWON SOUTH WEST, GRAMPPIANS AND LGAs<sup>87</sup>**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Victoria	87.0	86.3	86.9	86.7	86.4
Barwon South West	90.5	88.6	87.9	87.4	88.6
Grampians	84.9	85.2	83.6	85.5	83.9
Colac-Otway	91.3	88.5	89.7	87.2	92.5
Golden Plains <sup>88</sup>	86.2	87.2	90.6	95.5	89.3
Greater Geelong	91.1	88.0	87.1	86.6	88.7
Queenscliffe	95.7	97.2	76.9	87.9	87.2
Surf Coast	94.6	93.8	95.6	93.7	92.4



**TABLE 9g PERCENTAGE OF YEAR 2 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN VICTORIA (2004-2008) ACHIEVING A READING ACCURACY SCORE OF 90% OR MORE ON LEVEL 20 TEXTS: STATE, BARWON SOUTH WEST, GRAMPPIANS AND LGAs<sup>89</sup>**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Victoria	94.8	94.8	94.9	94.8	94.5
Barwon South West	95.6	95.2	94.7	94.0	94.2
Grampians	93.9	94.1	93.5	93.1	92.9
Colac-Otway	91.2	94.6	92.9	92.7	92.7
Golden Plains <sup>90</sup>	92.2	96.9	92.4	97.0	95.4
Greater Geelong	96.0	95.7	94.4	94.1	94.3
Queenscliffe	100.0	96.4	94.6	92.9	100.0
Surf Coast	98.7	95.1	97.6	97.5	97.0



<sup>87</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profile for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>88</sup> Golden Plains is in the Grampians Region. Hence these data are included for the Grampians. It is not possible to calculate the total for G21 region as the raw figures are not available for each LGA.

<sup>89</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profile for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>90</sup> Golden Plains is in the Grampians Region. Hence these data are included for the Grampians. It is not possible to calculate the total for G21 region as the raw figures are not available for each LGA.

### ABLE 9h KINDERGARTEN PARTICIPATION RATE FOR CHILDREN ENROLLED IN 4 YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN: STATE, G21 REGION AND LGAs (2005-2009)<sup>91</sup>

These rates of kindergarten enrolments of four year olds for the five LGAs in G21 that are higher than for Victoria are very positive. In cases such as Queenscliffe where the participation rate is significantly higher than the actual number of children in the LGA, it is asserted that children that reside outside the LGA are attending these kindergartens in the Borough of Queenscliffe.

	2005 (%)	2006 (%)	2007 (%)	2008 (%)	2009 (%)
Victoria	92.7	91.4	91.8	92.4	92.7
G21 <sup>92</sup>	89.5	92.2	90.3	94.1	96.1
Colac-Otway <sup>93</sup>	100.8	100.0	106.1	99.2	102.8
Golden Plains	71.4	95.2	83.0	84.7	97.4
Greater Geelong	89.7	91.3	89.2	94.6	94.5
Queenscliffe <sup>94</sup>	203.8	160.0	231.8	194.4	188.9
Surf Coast	81.1	85.9	82.6	87.6	94.6

### TABLE 9i LGAs AND 4 YEAR OLD ENROLMENTS 2005-2009 (NUMBER)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Victoria					
G21	2,876	3,022	3,033	3,122	3,247
Colac-Otway	260	246	259	250	256
Golden Plains	165	218	200	211	223
Greater Geelong	2,166	2,251	2,238	2,330	2,400
Queenscliffe	53	40	51	35	51
Surf Coast	232	267	285	296	317

### LGAs and 3 YEAR OLD AS AT 30 JUNE PREVIOUS YEAR BEFORE ENROLLING IN KINDERGARTEN 2005-2009

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Victoria					
G21	3,215	3,276	3,360	3,319	3,379
Colac-Otway	258	246	244	252	249
Golden Plains	231	229	241	249	229
Greater Geelong	2,414	2,465	2,508	2,462	2,539
Queenscliffe	26	25	22	18	27
Surf Coast	286	311	345	338	335

<sup>91</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profile for each LGA, 2010. The explanatory note given by the Early Childhood Community Profile 2010 is that 'children do not necessarily attend kindergarten in the LGA in which they reside, therefore these participation rates should be interpreted with caution.'

<sup>92</sup> G21 rates calculated by totalling the numbers of 4 year old children enrolled in kindergarten for all five LGAs for each year, totalling the numbers of 3 year olds the preceding year for all five LGAs for each year, and dividing the total number of 4 year old children enrolled for the five LGAs for each year by the total number of 3 year olds the preceding year for the five LGAs for each year.

<sup>93</sup> Colac-Otway's participation rate is sometimes greater than 100%. The explanatory note given by the Early Childhood Community Profile 2010 is that 'children do not necessarily attend kindergarten in the LGA in which they reside, therefore these participation rates should be interpreted with caution.'

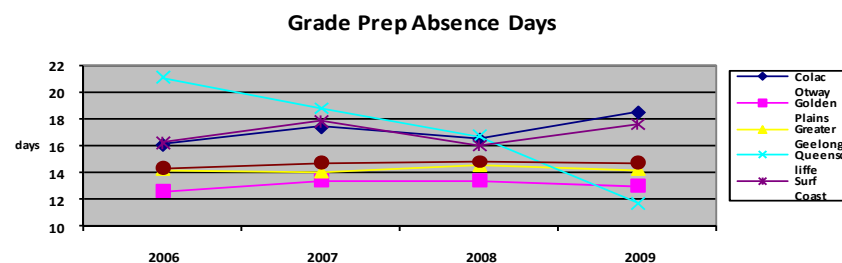
<sup>94</sup> Queenscliffe's participation rates are all greater than 100%. The explanatory note given by the Early Childhood Community Profile 2010 is that 'children do not necessarily attend kindergarten in the LGA in which they reside, therefore these participation rates should be interpreted with caution.'

**TABLE 9j KINDERGARTEN PARTICIPATION RATE FOR CHILDREN ENROLLED IN 4 YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN: STATE, G21 REGION AND LGAs 2009<sup>95</sup>**

Local Government Area	Total Enrolments (includes repeat enrolments)	1st year only enrolments	4 year old population	Participation Rate (%)	KFS enrolments
Victoria	62,365	59,740	64,462	92.7	17,202
G21	3,388	3,247	3,379	96.1	977
Colac-Otway (S)	263	256	249	102.8	94
Golden Plains (S)	229	223	229	97.4	69
Greater Geelong (C)	2,524	2,400	2,539	94.5	747
Queenscliffe (B)	51	51	27	188.9	12
Surf Coast (S)	321	317	335	94.6	55

**TABLE 9k AVERAGE ABSENCE DAYS OF PREP STUDENTS ENROLLED IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN VICTORIA (2006-2009): STATE AND LGAs<sup>96</sup>**

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Victoria	14.3	14.7	14.8	14.7
Colac-Otway	16.1	17.4	16.5	18.5
Golden Plains	12.6	13.4	13.4	13.0
Greater Geelong	14.2	14.0	14.5	14.2
Queenscliffe	21.1	18.8	16.7	11.7
Surf Coast	16.2	17.8	16.0	17.6



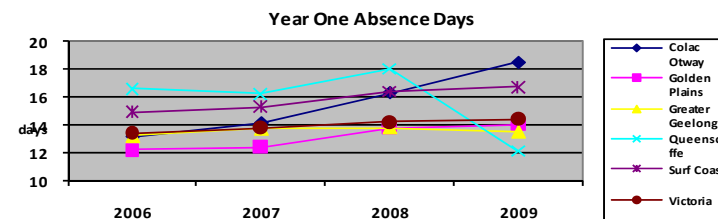
There are no indicators as to what is an acceptable number of absence days at Grade Prep level. Also, there is no data available that outlines the reasons for the absence. Each LGA exhibits differing trends in this measure. Greater Geelong has a consistent level of absence days which is around 14 days over the five year period. Queenscliffe's Prep students have had a significant reduction in absence days and Colac Otway, Golden Plains and Surf Coast are all trending upwards in the number of days that Prep's are absent from school. This data, when compared to the State average for Grade Prep students, shows that only Greater Geelong has a similarity to the State average. Golden Plains is the only LGA in the G21 Region that compares favourably to the state average and all other LGAs are above the State average (other than Queenscliffe's 2009 result). Queenscliffe has exhibited an increase in absence days between 2006 and 2008 with a large drop in 2009. Whether this drop is an anomaly will be clarified with 2010 results.

<sup>95</sup> Source: DEECD, Legislation and Regulation Reform Branch of Office for Children, 2009, Statewide Overview Report

<sup>96</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profile for each LGA, 2010.

**TABLE 9I AVERAGE ABSENCE DAYS OF YEAR ONE STUDENTS ENROLLED IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN VICTORIA: STATE AND LGAs<sup>97</sup>**

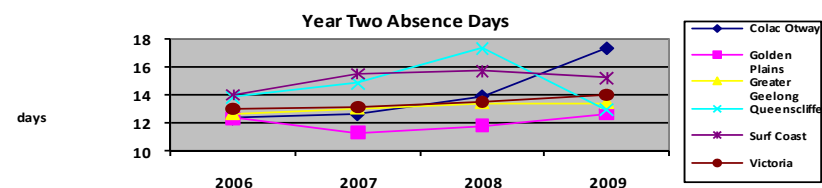
	2006	2007	2008	2009
Victoria	13.4	13.8	14.2	14.4
Colac-Otway	13.1	14.1	16.3	18.5
Golden Plains	12.2	12.4	13.8	14.0
Greater Geelong	13.2	13.7	13.8	13.5
Queenscliffe	16.6	16.2	18.0	12.1
Surf Coast	14.9	15.3	16.4	16.7



There are no clear indicators as to what is an acceptable number of absence days at Year One level. Also, there is no clear data available that outlines the reasons for the absence. Each LGA exhibits differing trends in this measure. The State average has been slowly increasing over the four year measurement period and this is mirrored in most LGAs in the G21 Region. Colac Otway, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong and Surf Coast have all had an increase of Year One absence days between 2006 and 2009. Greater Geelong's small increase provides the most consistent result and this follows the State average. It would be considered a trend in Colac Otway, Golden Plains and Surf Coast that the numbers of absence days are increasing. Queenscliffe has exhibited an increase in absence days between 2006 and 2008 with a large drop in 2009. Whether this drop is an anomaly will be clarified with 2010 results.

**TABLE 9m AVERAGE ABSENCE DAYS OF YEAR TWO STUDENTS ENROLLED IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN VICTORIA: STATE AND LGAs<sup>98</sup>**

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Victoria	13.0	13.1	13.5	14.0
Colac-Otway	12.3	12.6	13.9	17.3
Golden Plains	12.3	11.3	11.8	12.6
Greater Geelong	12.6	13.0	13.4	13.4
Queenscliffe	13.8	14.8	17.3	12.9
Surf Coast	14.0	15.5	15.7	15.2



There are no clear indicators as to what is an acceptable number of absence days at Year Two level. Also, there is no clear data available that outlines the reasons for the absence. Each LGA exhibits differing trends in this measure. The State average has been slowly increasing over the four year measurement period and this is mirrored in most LGAs in the G21 Region. Colac Otway has a high increase in Year two absence days and, Greater Geelong and Surf Coast have had smaller increases of Grade Two absence days between 2006 and 2009. Greater Geelong's small increase provides the most consistent result and this follows the State average. It would be considered a trend in Colac Otway, Golden Plains and Surf Coast that the numbers of absence days are increasing. Queenscliffe has exhibited an increase in absence days between 2006 and 2008 with a large drop in 2009. Whether this drop is an anomaly will be clarified with 2010 results.

<sup>97</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profile for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>98</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profile for each LGA, 2010.

### **DID YOU KNOW???**

- The G21 Region is below the Victorian and national average for five year old children in their first year of school that are developmentally vulnerable or at risk with language and cognitive skills.
- Grades Prep and One children in the Barwon South West Region are above Victorian average for reading. Grade Two they fall below average.
- Kindergarten participation in the G21 Region is above the Victorian average.

### **CRITICAL ISSUES**

- Why do G21 children fall below the literacy benchmarks during Year Two?
- Why is there an increasing trend of Grade Prep, One and Two students being absent from school?

CASE STUDY: Peter's wife Allison recently left him and their children. Peter is now struggling to cope with the demands of parenting as he had worked excessively long hours to meet the family's financial commitments and generally spent more time at work than at home. Their two children, Robyn age 9 and Maggie age 6, miss their mother and are demonstrating signs of anxiety at school which is impacting on their school results. Both children are reluctant to go to school and Peter is not making his girls go to school if they don't want to. Allison was diligent in making the girls read every night but this no longer occurs. The girls are missing school and their reading results are slipping...

## 10 Community Life

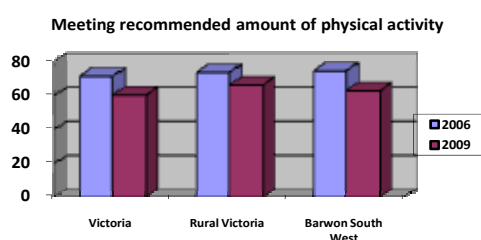
Community life plays an important role and is an extension of a child's social development. This section uses information and data to consider the children of the G21 Region and their interaction outside the home and school. Participation in physical activity, playgroups, arts and culture all are components of community life and are discussed. Also, access to information is viewed as an element of community life thus family access to the internet is included.

**CASE STUDY:** Julie and David have two children, Luke aged 7 and Tracey aged 5. Both children are active and love playing sport. Luke plays tennis and receives coaching weekly at his local tennis courts. He also plays soccer on weekends. Luke loves nothing more than playing cricket with his dad when he gets home from school. Tracey doesn't enjoy playing sport and prefers to read and play computer games. Julie has convinced Tracey that playing sport is fun and she is now doing dancing lessons and learning to swim. Tracey doesn't actually see this as sport rather just having fun.

**TABLE 10a PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATING IN THE RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY EVERY DAY<sup>99</sup>**

The information available through the Early Childhood Community Profiles (ECCP) for each of the five G21 Local Government Areas, covers the proportion of children and young people aged five to twelve years who do the recommended amount of physical activity every day (Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey (VCHWS 2006, 2009). The information has been provided for Victoria, Rural Victoria and Barwon South West Region. It has not been provided for each LGA of interest to the G21 Region. The following table has been constructed from the percentages provided in the ECCP report for Barwon South West Region, for Rural Victoria and for Victoria as a whole.

	2006 (%)	2009 (%)
Victoria	71.2	60.3
Rural Victoria	73.5	66.2
Barwon South West	74.4	62.8



According to analysis provided in the ECCP (2010) report, the proportion of children (5 to 12 years) in Barwon South West Region who do the recommended amount of physical activity every day is significantly lower in 2009 (62.8%), compared with the proportions in 2006 (74.4%). The report adds that:

'Based on the 2009 VCHWS survey results, the proportion of children aged five to 12 years who were reported to do the recommended amount of physical activity every day in Barwon South West Region (62.8%) was lower, but not significantly different to the proportion reported in Rural Victoria (66.2%) and higher, but not significantly different to the proportion across Victoria (60.3%).'

The information available through the Early Childhood Community Profiles for each of the five Local Government Areas in G21 covers the proportion of parents with children aged under 13 years who live in neighbourhoods with good parks, playgrounds or play spaces (Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey (2006, 2009)). The information has been provided for Victoria and the Barwon South West Region. It has not been provided for each LGA of interest to the G21 Region. The following table has been constructed from the percentages provided in the ECCP report for Barwon South West Region, for Rural Victoria and for Victoria as a whole.

**TABLE 10b PROPORTION OF PARENTS WITH CHILDREN AGED UNDER 13 YEARS WHO HAVE 'AGREED' OR 'STRONGLY AGREED' THAT THEY LIVE IN NEIGHBOURHOODS WITH GOOD PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS OR PLAY SPACES: BARWON SOUTH WEST<sup>100</sup>**

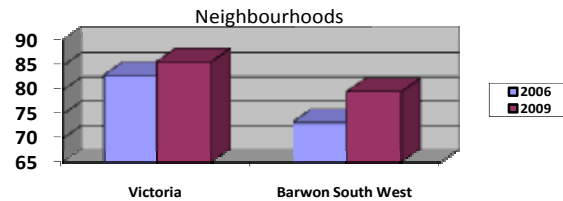
	2006 (%)	2009 (%)
Victoria	83.1	85.9
Barwon South West	73.3	79.7

These data for the Barwon South West Region may be compared with that for Victoria as a whole. According to the ECCP report (2010), the higher proportion of parents in Victoria as a whole who indicated agreement that they had access to good parks, playgrounds and play spaces (85.9% in 2009) is significantly higher when compared with those who responded in 2006 (83.1%). However, the comparison between 2006 and 2009 responses for the Barwon South West Region indicates that these are not significantly different; but they are significantly lower when compared with the responses for all parents in Victoria.

<sup>99</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>100</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles for each LGA, 2010.





CASE STUDY: Lien lives in a poor suburb in Geelong with her partner and their baby boy, Lanh. Their house is adjacent to a playground where young adults gather and socialise both during the day and at night. Melissa worries about their safety as their fence is regularly damaged or has graffiti on it. The playground area is also damaged by the groups that gather and is often littered with rubbish. Lien does not think that the local playground areas are safe as the young adults are not adequately supervised. As a result Lien and her friends who are also mothers are limited to socialising in their own homes or at the local playgroup of which they are active members.

**TABLE 10c PARTICIPATION IN PLAYGROUPS BY G21 REGION AND LGAs<sup>101</sup>**

	PLAYGROUPS (N)	SESSIONS (N)	VENUES (N)	FAMILIES (N)	CHILDREN (N)
G21	105	215	-	1,711	2,455
Colac -Otway	13	14	4	124	170
Golden Plains	12	17	ns	145	262
Greater Geelong	66	149	28	1,182	1,667
Queenscliffe	1	1	ns	17	18
Surf Coast	13	34	5	243	338

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER PLAYGROUP IN EACH LGA**

G21	Colac Otway	Golden Plains	Greater Geelong	Queenscliffe	Surf Coast
23.4	13.1	21.8	25.3	18.0	26.0

Playgroups are for babies, toddlers and preschoolers and their parents or caregivers. Around 50,000 children from 40,000 families go to a playgroup across Victoria at community venues such as maternal and child health centres, kindergartens, halls, community centres, primary schools and aged care facilities. Playgroups are informal, low cost and run by the parents and caregivers in them. Adults stay with their children at playgroup which gives them the chance to meet other people going through similar experiences and ease the isolation that can come with caring for young children. Families can be gently introduced to community, health and support services while they are at playgroup.<sup>102</sup>

**TABLE 10d: INVOLVEMENT IN ARTS AND CULTURE<sup>103</sup>**

The data collected for this measure is captured on a state by state basis and the areas measured are: playing a musical instrument, singing, dancing and drama. The data is sourced via a 2009 ABS survey thus does not include all children within the age grouping of this survey as it considers 5 to 14 year olds. 32.4% of Victorian children participate in these activities. Also 71.4% of Victorian children visited a public library, a museum or art gallery or attended a performing arts event. The breakdown of percentage of Victorian children that have participated or been involved in each activity in 2009 is provided below.

Played a musical instrument (% of Vic children 5-14 years)	Singing	Dancing	Drama	Visited a public library	Visited a museum or art gallery	Attended a performing arts event
17.3%	6.3%	14.5%	5.4%	53.0%	41.3%	37.9%

<sup>101</sup> Source: Playgroup Victoria, 2 September 2010

<sup>102</sup> Source: Playgroup: What is it? , <http://www.playgroup.org.au/Playgroup.aspx>, retrieved 11 January 2011

<sup>103</sup> Source: ABS, Children's participation in cultural and leisure activities, retrieved 25 January 2011 , [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/691D5CEBE88905BCCA25765C0019E8D2/\\$File/49010\\_Apr%202009.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/691D5CEBE88905BCCA25765C0019E8D2/$File/49010_Apr%202009.pdf)

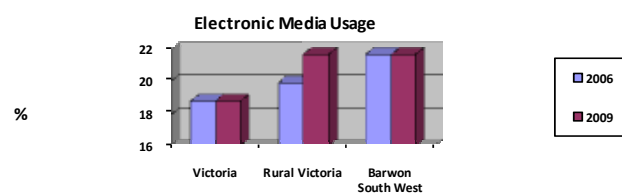
**TABLE 10e PROPORTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGED FIVE TO TWELVE YEARS WHO USE ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR MORE THAN TWO HOURS PER DAY: VICTORIA, RURAL VICTORIA AND BARWON SOUTH WEST REGION<sup>104</sup>**

	2006 (%)	2009 (%)
Victoria	18.8	18.8
Rural Victoria	19.9	21.7
Barwon South West	20.9	21.7

The information available through the Early Childhood Community Profiles (ECCP) for each of the five Local Government Areas in G21 covers the proportion of children and young people aged five to twelve years who use electronic media for more than two hours every day (Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey (2006, 2009)). Electronic media includes TV, computers, computer games or gaming consoles. The information has been provided for Victoria, Rural Victoria and Barwon South West Region. It has not been provided for each LGA of interest to the G21 Region. The following table has been constructed from the percentages provided in the ECCP report for Barwon South West Region, for Rural Victoria and for Victoria as a whole.

computers, computer games or gaming consoles. The information has been provided for Victoria, Rural Victoria and Barwon South West Region. It has not been provided for each LGA of interest to the G21 Region. The following table has been constructed from the percentages provided in the ECCP report for Barwon South West Region, for Rural Victoria and for Victoria as a whole.

The proportion of children across Victoria in both survey years has not changed. The differences reported for Barwon South West Region for the two survey years is not significant, although it has increased slightly in 2009. The proportion of children reported in 2009 who use electronic media for more than two hours per day in Barwon South West Region is comparable to Rural Victoria, although higher than for Victoria, although, according to the ECCP report, this is not a significant difference.

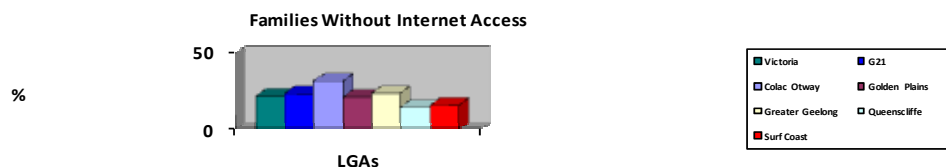


**TABLE 10f FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0 TO 8 YEAR WITH AN INTERNET CONNECTION<sup>105</sup>**

AREA	FAMILIES (N)	FAMILIES WITH INTERNET ACCESS (N)	FAMILIES WITH INTERNET ACCESS (%)	FAMILIES WITH NO INTERNET ACCESS (N)	FAMILIES WITH NO INTERNET ACCESS (%)
Victoria	336,092	255,209	75.9%	73,952	22.0%
G21	17,522	13,108	74.8%	4,124	23.5%
Colac-Otway	1,326	874	65.9%	431	32.5%
Golden Plains	1,281	988	77.1%	274	21.4%
Greater Geelong	13,232	9,851	74.4%	3,147	23.7%
Queenscliffe	141	120	85.1%	21	14.8%
Surf Coast	1,542	1,275	82.7%	251	16.2%

It is widely accepted that broadband internet access is an essential requirement to participate in the so-called 'new economy' and households with only dial-up or no internet service are increasingly being left behind in the information age. Increasingly fast internet access is required for accessing essential information and undertaking domestic and non-domestic business as both government and the private sector are increasingly conducting their business, or aspects of it, on-line.<sup>106</sup>

Across the G21 Region, there is a significant difference in both families with and without internet access. Colac-Otway Shire is well below both the regional and state average and Queenscliffe and Surf Coast are both well above. No commentary on trends can be provided as this data has only been collected once during the 2006 ABS Census.



<sup>104</sup> Source: Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey in Early Childhood Community Profiles, 2010

<sup>105</sup> Source: ABS Census 2006. Information provided by direct request to ABS 13 January 2011.

<sup>106</sup> ID Consulting website taken from Surf Coast Shire profile 'What type of internet do we have?' retrieved 13 January 2011, <<http://profile.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=222&pg=116&gid=10&type=enum>>.

### DID YOU KNOW???

- G21 children get more physical activity than other Victorian children.
- G21 families are below the Victorian average for families with internet access.

### CRITICAL ISSUES

- G21 children spend more time in front of electronic media than the average Victorian child.
- More G21 parents don't agree or strongly agree that they have good parks, playgrounds or playspaces compared to the Victorian average.

**CASE STUDY:** Two families live next to each other in Colac and both have children attending a local primary school. Lisa and Patrick's son Timmy and Trevor and Alicia's son Mackenzie are both in grade One. Lisa and Patrick have broadband internet and Timmy uses their home computer to do his homework such as preparing his show and tell. He also uses the computer for school project work. Lisa and Patrick both use the internet for work and understand the risks of excessive computer use and supervise Timmy's use and the amount of time he spends on the computer. Trevor and Alicia cannot afford to purchase a computer for home and any computer use is done at work. They believe that the school should provide computer access for Mackenzie but he rarely completes school project work. They do however allow Mackenzie to spend unlimited time playing with his portable computer game.

## 11 Parenting Factors

The final three sections of this report focus on parents. The importance of the role that parents play in raising their child cannot be understated. This section looks at parental influence upon a child. Issues such as breastfeeding, how infants are placed when sleeping, parental physical activity levels, mental health and family violence are the issues considered.

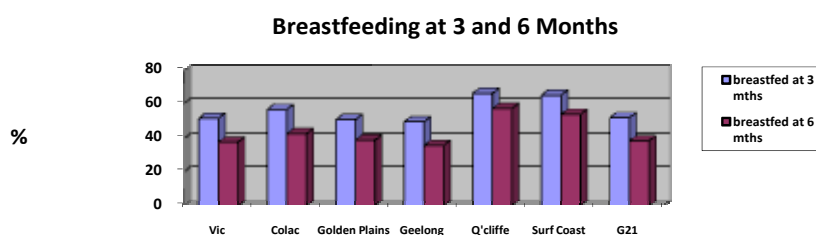
**TABLE 11a INFANTS SLEEPING ON THEIR BACKS**

Area	Sleeping on his/her back	Sleeping on his/her side	Sleeping on his/her tummy	Any other position
Victoria	89.3%	7.5%	2.5%	0.7%

Countries which have implemented public health campaigns to promote the use of the supine (on the back) sleep position for infants have reduced their rates of sudden infant death (SID). The 83% decline in Australia's Sudden Infant Death Syndrome rate has been directly linked to parents using the Safe Sleeping recommendation which supports babies being placed on their back to sleep.<sup>107</sup> The data in this table is taken from the Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey 2006 which was undertaken with 5000 completed interviews.

**TABLE 11b BREASTFEEDING RATES: CHILDREN FULLY BREASTFED AT 3 AND 6 MONTHS, 2008-09<sup>108</sup>**

LGA	Infant record cards	Fully breastfed at 3 months (N)	Fully breastfed at 3 months (%)	Fully breastfed at 6 months (N)	Fully breastfed at 6 months (%)
Victoria	72,182	37,102	51.4	27,325	37.9
G21	3,576	1,852	51.8	1,380	38.6
Colac-Otway	281	159	56.6	120	42.7
Golden Plains	215	109	50.7	84	39.1
Greater Geelong	2,695	1,335	49.5	968	35.9
Queenscliffe	35	23	65.7	20	57.1
Surf Coast	350	226	64.6	188	53.7



<sup>107</sup> Source: SIDS and Kids Website, *Safe Sleeping For Babies*, [http://www.sidsandkids.org/wp-content/uploads/SafeSleeping\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.sidsandkids.org/wp-content/uploads/SafeSleeping_Brochure.pdf), taken from a pamphlet produced by Queensland Government, Queensland Health, retrieved 6 January 2011.

<sup>108</sup> Source:

**TABLE 11c PARENTS MEETING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The National Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults should engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity on at least five days per week. The 2007 Victorian Population Health Survey found that 64.4 per cent of parents and carers with children aged under 18 years had undertaken sufficient physical activity during the previous week. The proportion of adults who were not parents of children under 18 undertaking sufficient physical activity was similar at 66.2 per cent.

The proportion of parents and carers undertaking sufficient physical activity was marginally lower in 2007 than in 2006 and 2005, however, the differences are not statistically significant and future data will be needed to determine any trends. Data was not available at a regional level at the time of compilation of this report.

**TABLE 11d CHILDREN AGED 0 TO 12 YEARS WHOSE PARENTS AT RISK OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS<sup>109</sup>**

The information available through the Early Childhood Community Profiles for each of the five Local Government Areas in G21 covers the proportion of parents assessed as being at risk of psychological distress (Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey, 2006, 2009). The Kessler 6 test is used to measure the psychological health of the child's main caregiver. A score of 19 or more on this assessment means that an individual is at high risk of psychological distress. The information has been provided for Victoria, Rural Victoria and Barwon South West Region. It has not been provided for each LGA of interest to the G21 Region. The following table has been constructed from the percentages provided in the ECCP report for Barwon South West Region, for Rural Victoria and for all Victoria.

	2006 (%)	2009 (%)
Victoria	2.9	3.7
Rural Victoria	2.9	4.2
Barwon South West	2.2	2.9
Grampians <sup>110</sup>	2.7	3.3

The analysis of these data in the ECCP report on the Barwon South West Region, states:

*'In the Barwon South West Region, more main carers of children aged 0 to 12 years were classified as being of high risk of psychological distress in 2009 (2.9%) as compared to 2006 (2.2%), but as the relative standard error for these estimates are between 25-50%, these figures should be used with caution.'*

Based on the 2009 VCHWS, the proportion of main carers of children aged 0 to 12 years in the Barwon South West Region, who were classified as being of high risk of psychological distress (2.9%) was lower, but not significantly different to that reported across Rural Victoria (4.2%) and lower, but not significantly different to that reported across Victoria (3.7%).' (emphasis added)

Commentary in the ECCP report on the Grampians Region, states: 'In the Grampians Region, more main carers of children aged 0 to 12 years were classified as being of high risk of psychological distress in 2009 (3.3%) as compared to 2006 (2.7%), but as the relative standard error for these estimates are between 25-50%, these figures should be used with caution.'

	PARENTS WITH A HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS (N)	PARENTS WITH A HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS (%)
Victoria	1,394	2.6
Rural Victoria	537	3.4
Barwon South West	115	2.8
Grampians	95	3.8
Colac-Otway	np	np
Golden Plains	8	3.3
Greater Geelong	78	3.4
Queenscliffe <sup>111</sup>	-	-
Surf Coast	9	2.7

Based on the 2009 VCHWS, the proportion of main carers of children aged 0 to 12 years in the Grampians Region, who were classified as being of high risk of psychological distress (3.3%) was lower, but not significantly different to that reported across Rural Victoria (4.2%) and lower, but not significantly different to that reported across Victoria (3.7%).'

Additional information in the ECCP report (2010) on events contributing to family stress includes numbers and proportions of parents with a history of mental illness

Is 'psychological distress' the same as 'mental illness'? If the 'main carers' are being assessed, these are usually mothers. It may be

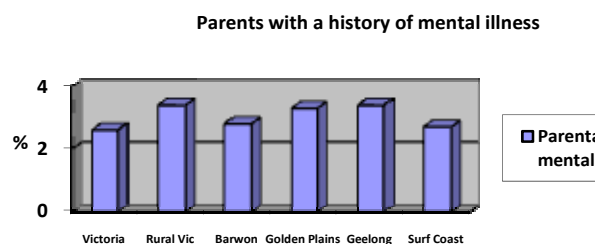
beneficial to investigate the contexts and conditions under which women who are assessed as or reported as 'distressed' or 'mentally ill' are caring for their children. For example, family violence, isolation and discrimination, economic insecurity, material poverty, children with disabilities, and so on, and to provide or develop appropriate support services that are NOT related to child protection agendas. Otherwise the willingness to participate in such services may be compromised due to the mothers' fear that their children may be removed from their care.

<sup>109</sup> Source: Child Health and Wellbeing Survey, in Early Childhood Community Profiles, 2010

<sup>110</sup> Golden Plains is with the Grampians Region. Hence these data are included for the Grampians. It is not possible to calculate the total for G21 region as the raw figures are not available for each LGA.

<sup>111</sup> Data is only available for Barwon South West in comparison with Rural Victoria and Victoria.

	History of abuse to parent (N)	History of abuse to parent (%)
Victoria	1,145	2.1
Rural Victoria	455	2.8
Barwon South West	96	2.4
Grampians	66	2.6
Colac-Otway	7	2.7
Golden Plains	6	2.5
Greater Geelong	70	3.1
Queenscliffe <sup>112</sup>	-	-
Surf Coast	np	np



**TABLE 11e MOTHERS WITH POSTNATAL DEPRESSION**

The 'blues', or brief episodes of depressed mood and tearfulness, occur in 50–70 per cent of women within one to ten days of childbirth (NSW Health 1994). The presence of the 'blues' in the immediate post-partum period is related to the subsequent development of postnatal depression (Cooper & Murray 1998). Ten to 15 per cent of women will suffer a major depressive episode within the first 3–6 months after childbirth (O'Hara 1987). Post-partum psychosis affects about two women per thousand deliveries and the risk of recurrence in subsequent deliveries is very high (Boyce & Stubbs 1994). Risk factors for a depressive disorder following childbirth are predominantly psychosocial, such as marital conflict, the absence of personal support from spouse, family and friends, difficulties with the infant (pre-term, reflux, physical problems) and stressful life events. A previous psychiatric history, especially a previous depressive episode, is also a risk factor, particularly if there are obstetric complications during delivery (Cooper & Murray 1998).<sup>113</sup> Data at a regional level was unavailable other than a DHS report that indicated that a VCAMS statement that: In Victoria, the prevalence of postnatal depression among women in the three to nine months after birth has been measured as approximately 15 per cent, based on three State-wide surveys of mothers at five to nine months after birth in Victoria.<sup>114</sup> Reference to the GP Association of Geelong and their Better Outcomes in Mental Health (BOMHi) Program indicates that there is a small number (< 15) cases in Geelong and that data is only available from July 2010.

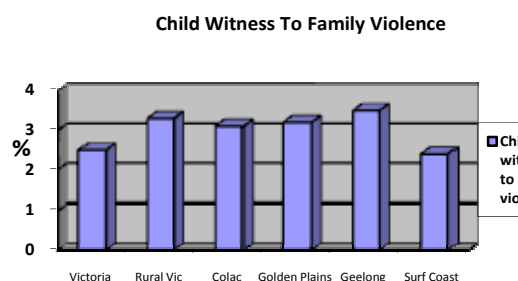
**TABLE 11f MOTHERS EXPOSED TO PARTNER VIOLENCE**

It is assumed that these data refer to violence in the home, from men to women (as the research shows that well over 90% of violence in the home is from men to women.) It is difficult to know the extent to which these figures are underreported. While no violence to women or children in the home should be tolerated or accepted, it is probably realistic to expect that there will always be some form of violence between people who wish to achieve dominance or control over each other. Families are no exception to this, with male power and dominance over women, and adult power over dependent children. Hence a range of services including community education, prevention, personal and economic support and safety/refuges, and criminal justice options are made available.

**TABLE 11g CHILDREN EXPOSED TO FAMILY VIOLENCE**

There are two tables included in this section as partial indicators of children's exposure to family violence. The first table is 'child was a witness to family violence' and the second table is 'history of abuse to children'. Both sets of data are included as a 'family stress' indicator in the ECCP report.

	Child was a witness to family violence (N)	Child was a witness to family violence (%)
Victoria	1,352	2.5
Rural Victoria	532	3.3
Barwon South West	117	2.9
Grampians	84	3.3
Colac-Otway	8	3.1
Golden Plains	8	3.2
Greater Geelong	80	3.5
Queenscliffe <sup>115</sup>	-	-
Surf Coast	8	2.4



<sup>112</sup> Data is only available for Barwon South West in comparison with Rural Victoria and Victoria.

<sup>113</sup> [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/8E0E3BC67E3962AFC25712B0080235F/\\$File/nhpa2.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/8E0E3BC67E3962AFC25712B0080235F/$File/nhpa2.pdf)

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/vcams/parents/19-1postnataldepression.htm>

<sup>115</sup> Data is only available for Barwon South West in comparison with Rural Victoria and Victoria.

As with the previous table on history of abuse to parent, children witnessing violence in the home is undesirable yet probably an ongoing feature of family life. The desirable outcome would be that no children are witnesses to violence in the home. However, to take account of what is both desirable and realistic, a range of preventive and supportive services are essential.

	HISTORY OF ABUSE TO CHILDREN (N)	HISTORY OF ABUSE TO CHILDREN (%)
Victoria	509	0.9
Rural Victoria	199	1.23
Barwon South West	47	1.1
Grampians	41	1.6
Colac-Otway	np	-
Golden Plains	np	-
Greater Geelong	27	1.2
Queenscliffe <sup>116</sup>	-	-
Surf Coast	5	1.7

It is unclear how these data relate to the previous tables on child protection notifications, substantiations and re-notifications. As with previous remarks about violence within families, it is undesirable and unacceptable, yet probably a continuing feature of family life. A range of preventive, supportive and protective services would be necessary to achieve what is desirable as well as attend to the realities of family life and inequalities of power between family members, of which children are least powerful (physically, economically, socially and politically).

## DID YOU KNOW???

- Mothers and children in the G21 Region are more likely to be exposed to family violence than other Victorian families.
- Parents in the G21 Region are below the state average and rural Victorian average for having mental difficulties.
- Breastfeeding rates are higher in the G21 Region than for Victoria.

## CRITICAL ISSUES.

- What are we doing to reduce the level of violence in our families?
- What support is available to children whose parents have mental difficulties?
- What can we do to further improve the levels of breastfeeding?

# 12 Parents

This second section on parents examines information that is related to quality of life and financial support for children. Issues such as employment status, educational attainment, housing including the use of housing support programs and rental/mortgage stress, and disposable income are all provided to deliver an overview of how parents in the G21 Region provide for their children.

**TABLE 12a EMPLOYMENT STATUS: PROPORTION OF TWO PARENT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0-8 YEARS WHO ARE IN PAID LABOUR, UNPAID LABOUR (INVOLVED WITH THE CARE OF CHILDREN IN THE HOME), OR NOT IN PUBLIC PAID LABOUR ('UNEMPLOYED'): STATE, BARWON SOUTH WEST REGION, AND LGAs<sup>117</sup>**

	BOTH PARENTS IN PAID LABOUR FORCE (%)	BOTH PARENTS UNEMPLOYED OR NOT IN PAID LABOUR FORCE (%)	ONE PARENT IN PAID LABOUR, ONE NOT IN PAID LABOUR FORCE (%)	OTHER <sup>118</sup> (%)
Victoria	52.3	3.9	35.0	4.3
Rural Victoria	54.3	2.9	34.1	4.1
Barwon South West	54.2	3.7	33.7	4.1
Grampians	56.2	3.8	31.7	4.1
Colac-Otway	50.7	2.8	37.4	4.8
Golden Plains	51.7	3.1	36.1	4.5
Greater Geelong	60.7	0.0	26.2	0.0
Surf Coast	55.8	1.5	34.9	2.9

<sup>116</sup> Data is only available for Barwon South West in comparison with Rural Victoria and Victoria.

<sup>117</sup> Source: ABS Census 2006, in Early Childhood Community Profile for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>118</sup> 'Other' includes: One parent employed, other parent unemployed and one parent unemployed and other not in labour force

It is assumed that 'parent not in labour force' refers to parents who are full time child carers. This usually means mothers. Compared with Victoria, Colac-Otway has a greater proportion of two parents in the paid labour force. Also compared with Victoria, Colac-Otway has a smaller proportion of two parents, both of whom are unemployed or not in the labour force. Golden Plains has a smaller proportion of two parents in the paid labour force. Also compared with Victoria, Golden Plains has a smaller proportion of two parents, both of whom are unemployed or not in the labour force. Greater Geelong has a smaller proportion of two parents in the paid labour force. Also compared with Victoria, Greater Geelong has a smaller proportion of two parents, both of whom are unemployed or not in the labour force. Queenscliffe has a greater proportion of two parents in the paid labour force. Due to small numbers, the ABS did not derive the percentage of two parent families with children aged 0-8 years in Queenscliffe where both parents are unemployed or not in the labour force. Surf Coast has a greater proportion of two parents in the paid labour force. Also compared with Victoria, Surf Coast has a smaller proportion of two parents, both of whom are unemployed or not in the labour force.

Rankings of LGAs out of 79: proportion of two parent families with neither in the labour force (a rank of 1 = LGA with highest percentage of two parent families with neither parent in the labour force) Colac-Otway: 31 ; Greater Geelong: 45; Golden Plains: 50; Surf Coast: 76; Queenscliffe: 0 ( not ranked);

**TABLE 12b EMPLOYMENT STATUS: PROPORTION OF ONE PARENT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGED 0-8 YEARS WHO ARE IN PAID LABOUR, UNPAID LABOUR (INVOLVED WITH THE CARE OF CHILDREN IN THE HOME), OR NOT IN PUBLIC PAID LABOUR ('UNEMPLOYED'): STATE, BARWON SOUTH WEST REGION, AND LGAs<sup>119</sup>**

	Parent in paid labour force (%)	Parent unemployed (%)	Parent not in paid labour force (%)
Victoria	41.7	7.4	48.9
Barwon South West	40.9	8.7	49.1
Grampians	39.8	7.5	50.7
Colac-Otway	47.5	6.9	45.6
Golden Plains <sup>120</sup>	42.1	5.7	52.1
Greater Geelong	38.1	8.8	51.7
Queenscliffe	59.1	0.0	40.9
Surf Coast	49.7	4.0	46.2

Compared with Victoria, Colac-Otway has a greater proportion of one parent families in the paid labour force. Also compared with Victoria, Colac-Otway has a smaller proportion of one parent families who are unemployed or not in the labour force.

Compared with Victoria, Golden Plains has a greater proportion of one parent families in the paid labour force. Also compared with Victoria, Golden Plains has a smaller proportion of one parent families, who are unemployed or not in the labour force.

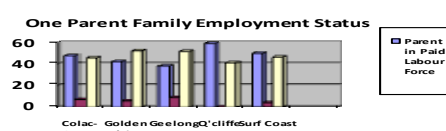
Compared with Victoria, Greater Geelong has a smaller proportion of one parent families in the paid labour force. Also compared with Victoria, Greater Geelong has a greater proportion of one parent families, who are unemployed or not in the labour force.

Compared with Victoria, Queenscliffe has a greater proportion of one parent families in the paid labour force. Due to small numbers, the ABS did not derive the percentage of one parent families with children aged 0-8 years in Queenscliffe where the parent is unemployed or not in the labour force.

Compared with Victoria, Surf Coast has a greater proportion of one parent families in the paid labour force. Also compared with Victoria, Surf Coast has a smaller proportion of one parent families, who are unemployed or not in the labour force.

Rankings of LGAs out of 70: proportion of one parent families with the parent unemployed (a rank of 1 = LGA with highest percentage of one parent families with the parent unemployed. NOTE: RANKS WERE NOT ASSIGNED TO LGAs WHERE THE NUMBER OF ONE PARENT FAMILIES IN THE AREA WITH THE PARENT UNEMPLOYED WAS LESS THAN FIVE.)

Greater Geelong: 16; Colac-Otway: 40; Golden Plains: 59; Surf Coast: 69, Queenscliffe: a rank was not assigned, because the number of one parent families in the area with the parent unemployed was less than five.



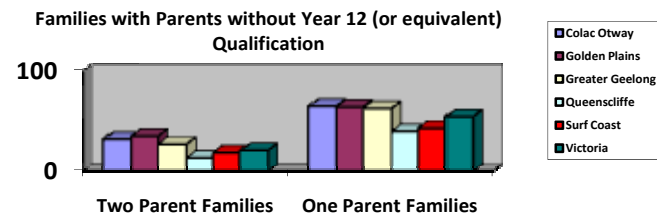
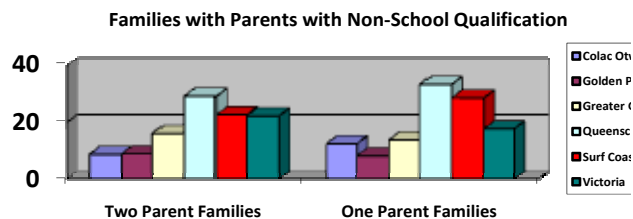
<sup>119</sup> Source: ABS Census 2006, in Early Childhood Community Profile for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>120</sup> Golden Plains is with the Grampians Region. Hence these data are included for the Grampians. It is not possible to calculate the total for G21 region as the raw figures are not available for each LGA.

**TABLE12c PARENTAL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (FAMILIES WITH CHILDRED AGED 0-8 YEARS)**

LGA Name	Couple families where both parents had <u>not</u> attained Year 12 or its equivalent			One-parent families where the parent had <u>not</u> attained Year 12 or its equivalent			Couple families where both parents have a non-school qualification			One-parent families where parent has a non-school qualification		
	Total Couple families	Number	Percentage	Total one-parent families	Number	Percentage	Total Couple families	Number	Percentage	Total One-parent families	Number	Percentage
Victoria	279,377	59,172	21.2	56,717	31,041	54.7	279,377	62,362	22.3	56,717	10,104	17.8
Colac-Otway	1,067	347	32.5	261	170	65.1	1,067	95	8.9	262	33	12.6
Golden Plains	1,135	399	35.2	143	92	64.3	1,135	103	9.1	143	12	8.4
Greater Geelong	10,418	2,841	27.3	2,813	1,765	62.7	10,417	1,687	16.2	2,814	390	13.9
Queenscliffe	124	17	13.7	20	8	40.0	120	35	29.2	21	7	33.3
Surf Coast	1,369	257	18.8	176	76	43.2	1,368	311	22.7	175	50	28.6

Studies have shown that parental, particularly maternal, educational levels are closely related to child health whether measured by nutritional status or infant and child mortality.<sup>121</sup> In the G21 Region, three LGAs are above or well above the Victorian average of two parent families that have at least one parent that does not have a year 12 qualification. In Queenscliffe and Surf Coast LGAs, they have a higher prevalence of two parent families in which both parents have Year 12 qualifications than across Victoria. This result is also reflected in one parent families.



<sup>121</sup> Source: Cochrane, S., Leslie, J., O'Hara, D., 1982, Parental Education and Child Health: Intracountry Evidence, Health and Policy Education, Vol. 2 pp. 213-250.



**TABLE12d FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 0-8 YEARS WHO ARE PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS: ALLOCATIONS AND RETENTION BY FINANCIAL YEAR BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DEECD REGIONS AND RURAL/METRO VICTORIA, 2006-07 TO 2007-08, VICTORIA<sup>122</sup>**

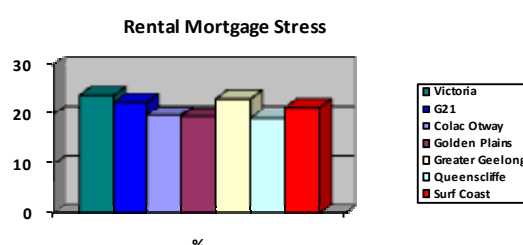
LGA	Households allocated (confidentialised)	Households remaining 12 months after allocation	Proportion remaining 12 months after allocation
Victoria	2,164	1,890	87.3
G21 <sup>123</sup>	167+	143+	85.6% (approximate)
Colac-Otway (S)	25	20	80.0
Greater Geelong (C)	142	123	86.6

Explanatory notes provided by DHS Victoria, Office of Housing: 'Based on LGA of house location. As there is a 12 month lag between the numerator and denominator data for this indicator, the most current financial year will always be one year prior to the reporting period.'

The numbers of households in Golden Plains, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast are too small to be reported due to confidentiality reasons. Also these are only the houses allocated and where tenants remained for two financial years. The data do not tell us how many residents/households are in public housing in each LGA.

**TABLE 12e RENTAL/MORTGAGE STRESS (INCOME SPENT ON HOUSING).<sup>124</sup>**

Area	Total families (N)	Families in a dwelling that is being rented or purchased (N)	(Families in a dwelling that is being rented or purchased %)	Families housing cost as a percentage of household income less than 30% (N)	Families housing cost as a percentage of household income less than 30% (%)	Families housing cost as a percentage of household income 30% or more (N)	Families housing cost as a percentage of household income 30% or more (%)
Victoria	336,092	281,973	83.9%	167,207	49.8%	80,201	23.9%
G21	17,522	15,007	85.6%	9,308	53.1%	3,935	22.5%
Colac-Otway	1,326	1,101	83.0%	706	53.2%	262	19.8%
Golden Plains	1,281	1,065	83.1%	669	52.2%	250	19.5%
Greater Geelong	13,232	11,446	86.5%	7,094	53.6%	3,065	23.2%
Queenscliffe	141	116	82.3%	71	50.3%	27	19.1%
Surf Coast	1,542	1,279	82.9%	768	49.8%	331	21.5%



The definition from the Australian Parliamentary library for Mortgage Stress indicates that 'based on data from the 2001 Census, more than one in ten Australian homebuyers are experiencing 'mortgage stress', defined in this *Research Note* as a situation in which homebuyers are paying 35 per cent or more of their income on home loan repayments.

'The basis for the above definition of mortgage stress is the general rule that financial institutions will not allow a household to take out a housing loan if the monthly home loan repayment, calculated over a 25 year term, exceeds one-third of monthly

household income. While it is acknowledged that not all households paying 35 per cent or more of their income in loan repayments are necessarily experiencing stress (indeed, some homebuyers, especially those on higher incomes, may be voluntarily paying more than 35 per cent), mortgage stress in this paper refers particularly to the high risk that a stressful situation might arise.<sup>125</sup> It should be noted that the data available from the 2006 ABS Census has reduced the percentage of household income from 35% to 30% and whilst this is not strictly measuring rental/ mortgage stress, it provides a picture of how families with children aged 0-8 are coping with rental or mortgage payments.

The data indicates that across the G21 Region, in general most families are faring as well as or better than all families across Victoria when considering the appropriation of income to rent or mortgage repayments. All LGAs have a percentage of families above the state average of families with children aged 0 to 8 years that are contributing less than 30% of household income and all LGAs are below the state average of families that are paying over 30% of household income as rent or as mortgage payment.

<sup>122</sup> Source: DHS Victoria, Office of Housing

<sup>123</sup> The totals for G21 are only approximations as the data for Golden Plains, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast has been withheld due to small numbers.

<sup>124</sup> Source: ABS Census 2006. Information provided by direct request to ABS 13 January 2011.

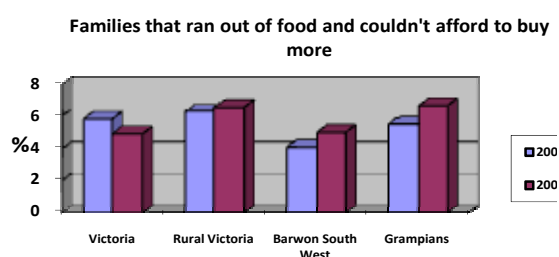
<sup>125</sup> Source: Kryger, T., 2003, *Mortgage Stress*, Parliament of Australia: Parliamentary Library, retrieved 6 January 2011, <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/Pubs/RN/2003-04/04rn16.htm>.

**CASE STUDY:** Theodore and Roman are partners and parents of five year old Alex who recently commenced schooling at a local private school. They live in an area of Geelong considered higher socio-economic and own a previously successful local I.T. business. The business has been struggling due to the recent financial crisis and they are in financial difficulty, having trouble paying their mortgage whilst trying to maintain their lifestyle. Payments to the mortgage are taking up over fifty percent of the income that they are earning and this is starting to place pressure on their relationship. They have started arguing over expenses.

**TABLE 12f DISPOSABLE INCOME**

The following data (while not 'disposable income'), indirectly indicates the levels of poverty and the lack of disposable income. The data have been derived from information in the ECCP report (2010) based on the Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey (2006 and 2009): item: proportion of children 0-12 years from a household that ran out of food in the past twelve months and could not afford to buy more: Barwon South West and Grampians, Rural Victoria, and Victoria.

	2006 (%)	2009 (%)
Victoria	5.8	4.9
Rural Victoria	6.3	6.6
Barwon South West	4.1	5.0
Grampians <sup>126</sup>	5.5	6.7



While the proportion of families with children 0-12 years in Victoria that could not afford to buy more food has decreased as reported in 2006 and 2009, this has not been the case for rural Victoria and two of the regions of interest to G21. The proportion for rural Victoria has increased slightly in the reported figures for 2006 and 2009. However the proportions seem much higher for Barwon South West Region and the Grampians with increases reported for 2009 compared with 2006.

**TABLE 12g CHILDREN ACCESSING SUPPORTED ACCOMODATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAAP) ASSISTANCE 2008-09<sup>127</sup>**

Data for this measure shows that the two most pertinent are the numbers of accompanying children of parents seeking SAAP assistance and the support periods by client group. The numbers of females with children aged 0 to 17 are the dominant group measured in this topic who seek assistance. Barwon South West and Grampians are two Regions that have the smallest number of cases. Other comparable regions are Gippsland and Hume. Metropolitan regions provide the highest number of cases.

Area	Couples with children (N)	Couples with children (% of state)	Male with children (N)	Male with children (% of state)	Female with children (N)	Female with children (% of state)
Victoria	2600	100%	900	100%	14700	100%
Barwon South West	154	5.9%	36	4.0%	840	5.7%
Grampians	122	4.7%	48	5.3%	742	5.0%

## DID YOU KNOW???

- G21 two parent families are more likely to have both parents in the workforce compared to the Victorian average.
- G21 one parent families are less likely to have that parent in the workforce compared the Victorian average
- Levels of rental/ mortgage stress are higher in the G21 Region than across Victoria.

## CRITICAL ISSUES:

- What is being done to address rental/mortgage stress in the G21 Region?

<sup>126</sup> Golden Plains is with the Grampians Region. Hence these data are included for the Grampians. It is not possible to calculate the total for G21 region as the raw figures are not available for each LGA.

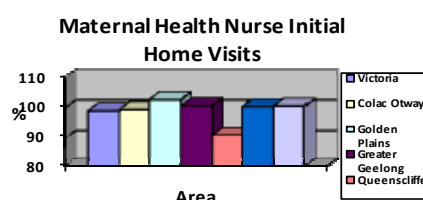
<sup>127</sup> Source: AIHW Government-funded specialist homelessness services, SAAP National data Collection annual report 2008-09: Victoria supplementary tables.

## 13 Maternal Support

The final section of this report again focuses on parenting, in particular, support for mothers. The data being considered here outlines uptake of the maternal and child health service, early intervention services, uptake of advice support mechanisms and access to other family services such as child care and government programs.

**TABLE 13a CHILDREN RECEIVING AN INITIAL MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH HOME CONSULTATION, 2008/09<sup>128</sup>**

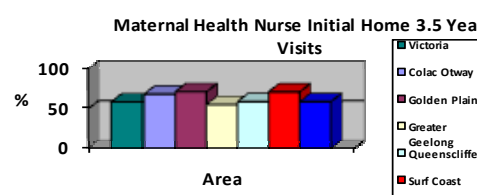
LGA	Receiving home consultation	Total infants aged 0 to 1 year	Consultation received (%)
Victoria	68,919	69,664	98.9
Rural Victoria	16,732	17,144	97.6
G21	3,335	3,319	100.5
Colac-Otway	268	270	99.3
Golden Plains	194	189	102.6
Greater Geelong	2,544	2,529	100.6
Queenscliffe	30	33	90.9
Surf Coast	299	298	100.3



Some of the percentages of children receiving an initial maternal and child health consultation are greater than 100%. However the ECCP report does not explain why this is (i.e. how more children are recorded as receiving home consultations, than are recorded as residing in the LGA). There is an assumption that in the cases where the number of visits exceeds the number of infants, either the consultation is occurring for infants residing outside the boundaries of the LGA or there is a small data tracking error. In all cases the numbers of visits either closely meets or exceeds the numbers of infants in each LGA. Queenscliffe's percentage is lower than the other LGAs however this is due to the lower critical mass of infants rather than a disparity reflected in visits against infants.

**TABLE 13b CHILDREN RECEIVING AN 3.5 YEAR MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CHECK, 2008-09<sup>129</sup>**

LGA	Attending 3.5 year ages and stages visit	Average <sup>130</sup> children aged 3 to 5 years	% attend 3.5yr visit
Victoria	39,213	67,261	58.3
Rural Victoria	10,823	17,169	63.0
G21	1,973	3,369	58.6
Colac-Otway	179	265	67.6
Golden Plains	145	206	70.4
Greater Geelong	1,396	2,529	55.2
Queenscliffe	31	53	58.5
Surf Coast	222	316	70.3



There is a considerable difference across the G21 Region of the percentage of children aged 3.5 years who are presented to a Maternal Health Worker. The G21 average of 58.6% is impacted significantly by the result in the Greater Geelong LGA which has the greatest number of infants in the region and also the lowest percentage of children who undergo this check. At the upper end of the result are children in the Golden Plains and Surf Coast LGAs who in both cases exceed 70% of children that have the 3.5 year health check. The G21 Region is marginally above the state average and an area of focus to lift this result could be achieved by an increased take-up of the service by parents in the Greater Geelong LGA.

**CASE STUDY:** Pippa has just returned home from hospital with her new baby Sarah. This is Pippa and her husband Adam's first child and they have spent a considerable amount of money on furnishing the baby's nursery. Pippa has a wide support network with her parents living nearby and a strong group of friends in town. A few days after coming home, she is called by the maternal health nurse who wants to schedule a home visit. The nurse visits the home and provides Pippa with literature and gives her advice into what support she can provide. Pippa instantly develops rapport with Kate, the MCH Nurse and becomes an advocate for the service. Pippa takes baby Sarah to the Nurse for the scheduled visits and is very happy with the advice and services that the Nurse provides. She is also happy that the Nurse is receptive to a telephone call when baby Sarah develops a minor medical ailment and the Nurse provides support to Pippa.

<sup>128</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>129</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>130</sup> This table was taken from the G21 data request compiled into an Excel file. It is unclear what is meant by the column heading. This needs clarification and correction.

**TABLE 13c EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES<sup>131</sup>**

Note: according to the data sets document, these data are available through the DEECD (Early Childhood Community Profiles Report, 2010). However, on reviewing the ECCP document, there are no specific items directly describing 'early intervention services'. One could argue that some of the early intervention and non-intrusive services have been summarised elsewhere in this report: namely, social services such as access to playgroups, kindergartens and maternal and child health services. There are also data that indicate levels of early use of preventive health services (such as dental care and immunisations). Additionally, the substantial data available on children and their families, and its level of detail offers opportunities for 'early intervention' by identifying areas where individual children and their families may be experiencing difficulties (for example, the AEDI data). In addition to the above, the ECCP report (2010) provides some data that could be indicative of access to 'early intervention'.

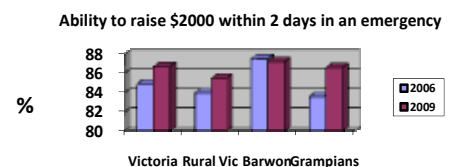
**Children aged 0-12 years from families with parents or carers who reported that they are able to get support from families, friends and neighbours when needed (Barwon South West/Grampians, Rural Victoria and Victoria) (VCHWS 2006, 2009)**

	2006 (%)	2009 (%)
<b>Victoria</b>	94.4	95.2
Rural Victoria	95.1	95.3
Barwon South West	95.6	93.9
Grampians <sup>132</sup>	95.9	96.5



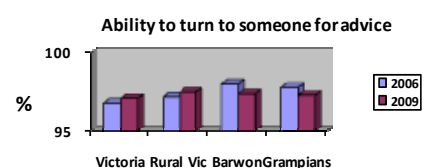
**Percentage of parents of children aged 0-12 years who reported being able to raise \$2000 within 2 days in an emergency (Barwon South West/Grampians, Rural Victoria and Victoria) (VCHWS 2006, 2009)**

	2006 (%)	2009 (%)
<b>Victoria</b>	84.9	86.7
Rural Victoria	84.0	85.5
Barwon South West	87.5	87.2
Grampians <sup>133</sup>	83.6	86.6



**Percentage of parents of children aged 0-12 years who reported having someone to turn to for advice when having problems (Barwon South West/Grampians, Rural Victoria and Victoria) (VCHWS 2006, 2009)**

	2006 (%)	2009 (%)
<b>Victoria</b>	96.8	97.1
Rural Victoria	97.2	97.5
Barwon South West	98.0	97.4
Grampians <sup>134</sup>	97.8	97.3



<sup>131</sup> Source: Early Childhood Community Profiles for each LGA, 2010.

<sup>132</sup> Golden Plains is with the Grampians Region. Hence these data are included for the Grampians. It is not possible to calculate the total for G21 region as the raw figures are not available for each LGA.

<sup>133</sup> Golden Plains is with the Grampians Region. Hence these data are included for the Grampians. It is not possible to calculate the total for G21 region as the raw figures are not available for each LGA.

<sup>134</sup> Golden Plains is with the Grampians Region. Hence these data are included for the Grampians. It is not possible to calculate the total for G21 region as the raw figures are not available for each LGA.

**TABLE 13d ACCESS TO CHILD CARE**

Attendance at a quality preschool program is considered to have a number of benefits for children, including better intellectual development and independence, sociability and concentration, cognitive development in the short term, and preparation for success in school (AIHW, 2005). Participation in quality early child education programs contributes to optimal child development, cognitive development and early school success. As at the date of compilation of this report, data was not available for this indicator according to DEECD however, we have been able to obtain some information from the 5 local government areas in the Region which can be used for comparative purposes.<sup>135</sup>

Area	Child care centre places	Family day care	????
Colac- Otway			
Golden Plains			
Great Geelong			
Queenscliffe			
Surf Coast <sup>136</sup>	115 <sup>137</sup>	110 children	
G21 Region			

**TABLE 13e USE OF FAMILY SERVICES (INNOVATIONS, CHILDFIRST ETC)**

In the 2005–06 financial year, 22,878 Victorian families accessed family services. Parenting, relationship and behaviour issues were the most frequent issues identified by the families who accessed Family Services, followed by issues relating to mental health, (and equally) family violence and financial/household concerns.<sup>138</sup> Further data has not been able to be sourced at either a more localised level or for other programs.

#### Child FIRST

Strengthening earlier intervention for vulnerable families continues to progress with the statewide roll-out of Child FIRST (Child and Family Information, Referral and Support Teams) providing an accessible intake to Family Services within a sub-regional catchment. These teams will be operational in 16 catchments in 2008. The final 8 Child FIRST sites will commence in 2009, across 24 sub-regional catchments, to complete the statewide roll-out of Child FIRST.<sup>139</sup>

#### DID YOU KNOW???

- In the G21 Region, the initial maternal health nurse check has over a 100% take up rate. This then drops to less than 60% at the 3 ½ year check-up.
- Over 94% of mothers can get support from friends and family in the Barwon South West Region when they need it.

<sup>135</sup> [http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/vcams/services/31-2educationalprogram\\_.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/vcams/services/31-2educationalprogram_.htm)

<sup>136</sup> As at March 1 2011

<sup>137</sup> ABC Torquay 45 places, Kids Club Torquay 70 places.

<sup>138</sup> Source: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/vcams/services/34-1supportservices.htm>

<sup>139</sup> Source: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/vcams/services/34-1supportservices.htm>

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