

## APPENDIX 1 WHAT IS COMMUNITY WELLBEING?

### Defining wellbeing

'Community wellbeing is the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural and political conditions identified by individuals and their communities as essential for them to flourish and fulfill their potential (Wiseman and Brasher, 2008: 358)<sup>1</sup>

'Determinants of health may be biological, behavioural, sociocultural, economic, and ecological. Broadly, the determinants of health can be divided into four, core categories: nutrition, lifestyle, environment, and genetics, which are like four pillars of the foundation'. ([www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com))

Wellbeing is important to Local Government and the community as it enables residents to fully participate in education, employment, and within their community. A good level of wellbeing is essential for a strong economy and enables residents to live active, healthy, rewarding, and socially connected lives' (Shoalhaven City Council Briefing Notes)

The notion of wellbeing covers the individual wellbeing of community members and overall 'community wellbeing'. The concept of **community wellbeing** extends the ambition beyond individual 'physical, mental and emotional' health (and her or his experience of 'health, happiness and prosperity') to the diverse needs of the community, envisaged by the principles of the NSW *Local Government Act 1993*.

This strategy addresses the factors contributing to individual wellbeing and, collectively, the notion of community wellbeing. One among many!

### Factors contributing to wellbeing – developing the Foundations and Domains of the CWB Plan

The eight Foundations (and accompanying Domains) that underpin the Shoalhaven Community Wellbeing (CWB) Strategy are based on a literature review and the outcomes of the engagement strategy undertaken (including surveys conducted for this strategy and existing work). Originally, a draft list of 'themes' was based on this work, the first stakeholder workshop and initial interviews with external and internal stakeholders. Several draft themes ('the long list') were discussed with council staff and a tentative short list of four key themes and potential priority areas formed the basis of subsequent community, internal and external stakeholder input. In turn, subsequent steps in the preparation of the CWB Plan led to the final foundations and domains.

### What the literature tells us

The literature review built upon an initial list provided by the council and ranged from international through to local sources, and covered government, non-government, and university sectors. Sources address health and wellbeing from both an individual and community perspective, acknowledging our personal make-up and needs, and our role as social beings. It draws on the longstanding nature-nurture debate in understanding the human condition and the dynamic interchange between people and their environment. This dual focus is clear in the survey work and indicator development undertaken by Shoalhaven City Council, other government agencies and the university sector.

This plan adopts the World Health Organisation's (WHO) position that individual wellbeing is not just the absence of disease or illness, but "a complex combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional and social health factors", including 'good mental health, high life satisfaction, and a sense of meaning or purpose'. (WHO 1949)

Maslow's hierarchy of individual needs is one ideal expression of the path to self-fulfilment, ranging from basic physiological needs (such as food) through psychological needs to self-actualisation needs (see Figure 1). 'Flourishing' and 'thriving' are other words for this ambition.

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<sup>1</sup> Wiseman J. and Brasher K. 'Community Wellbeing in an Unwell World: Trends, Challenges and Possibilities'. Journal of Public Health Policy 29(3): 358

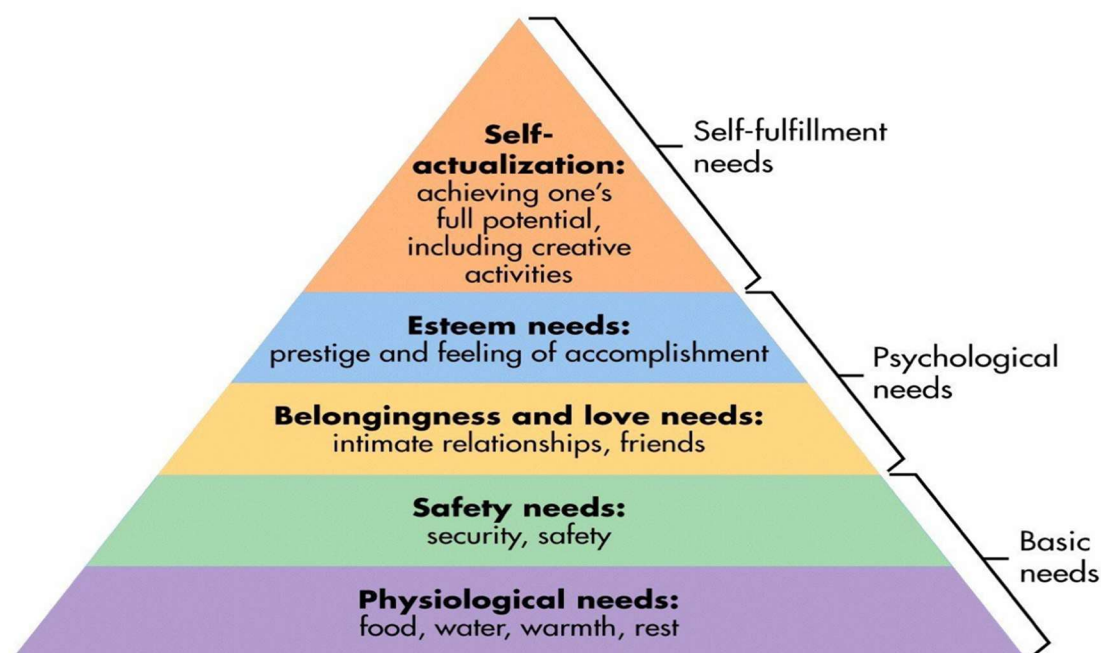


Figure 1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs  
Source: MacLeod S. (2018) 'Maslow's hierarchy of needs' **Simply Psychology**.

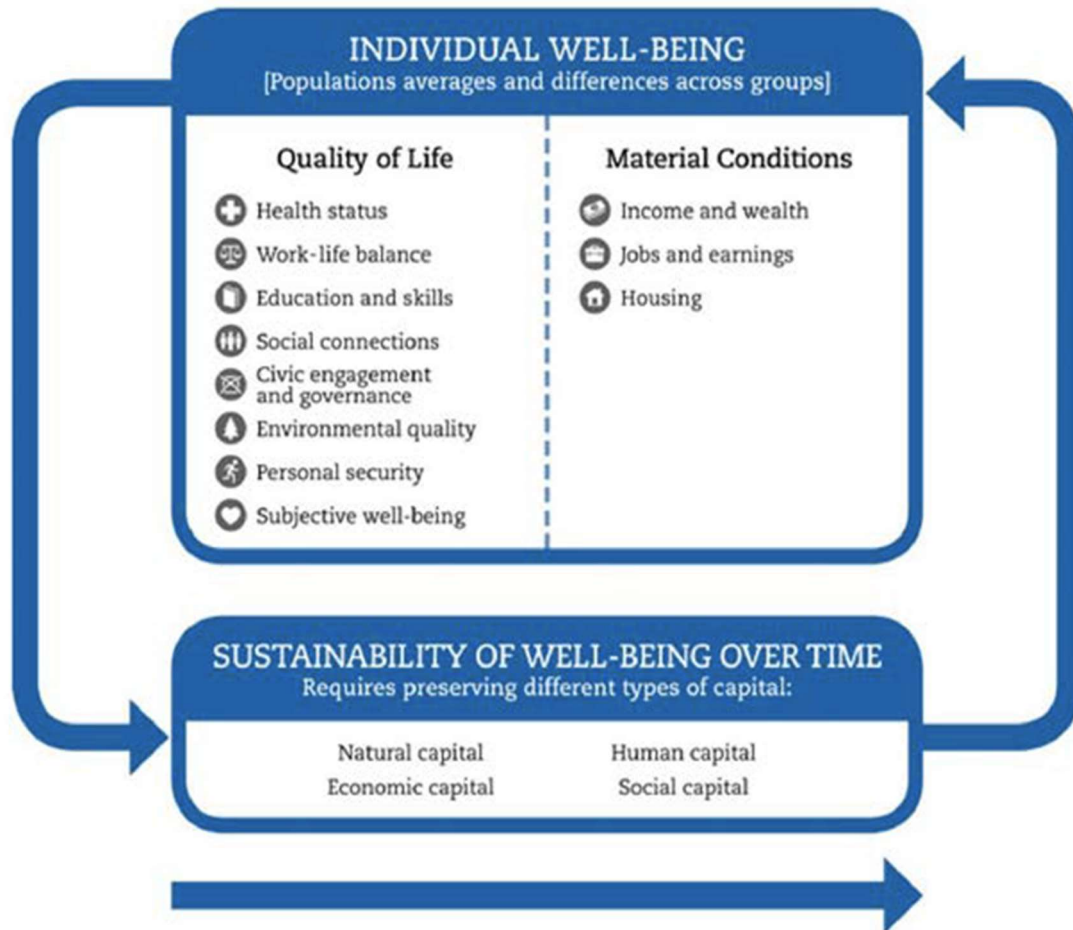
What are the external or contextual factors that contribute to individual and community health and wellbeing? The nature and scope of individual action is influenced by life circumstances such as 'activity space' (where you have spent your time), family circumstances, education, and employment opportunities. One significant model, building on the WHO definition and expressing the breadth of factors influencing individual health and wellbeing, is the 'Social Determinants of Health' – acknowledging individual genetics and focussing on broader society-based determinants such as lifestyle and social networks and, more broadly, to social and cultural factors. This is summarised in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2 summarises these 'determinants', commencing with individual characteristics such as age, sex, hereditary and lifestyle factors. Significance is placed on immediate social and community networks, extending to broader contextual determinants such as education, housing and employment, all set within general economic, social and environmental conditions.



Figure 2 The Social Determinants of Health (Source; Jeevankuruvilla.blogspot.com)

Figure 3 presents the interplay of such individual and social determinants (or influences) in a different format, also emphasising the significant matters for sustaining wellbeing over time. Both figures reinforce the need to consider this complex interplay of individuals and environment.



Source: OECD (2011), *How's Life?: Measuring Well-Being*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264121164-en>.

Figure 3 Individual wellbeing and social determinants

Extensive and intensive research and education on 'healthy built environments' has occurred, (particularly in Australia) over the last decade, commencing in NSW with the establishment of the Premier's Council for Active Living' and moving to 'Active Living NSW', under the banner of the NSW Ministry of Health's 'Healthy Eating and Active Living' (HEAL) strategy.<sup>2</sup> A wealth of research has demonstrated the relationship between wellbeing, active living and healthy eating.<sup>3</sup> A number of guides, aimed at local government strategic planning processes and planning and development proposals provide checklists and advice to inform council consideration of health impacts<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> NSW Ministry of Health (2018) Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy

<sup>3</sup> Kent J.L. and Thompson S. (2019) Planning Australia's Healthy Built Environments. Routledge; numerous publications by Professor Billie Giles-Corti

<sup>4</sup> NSW Ministry of Health (2020) Healthy Built Environment Checklist: a guide for considering health in development policies, plans and proposals, Sydney, NSW MOH

(<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/urbanhealth/Publications/healthy-built-enviro-check.pdf>)

NSW Ministry of Health (2020) Embedding liveability within the IP&R Framework. Sydney, NSW MOH  
[https://www.healthactivebydesign.com.au/images/uploads/ALNSW\\_PCAL\\_IPR\\_web\\_content\\_copy.pdf](https://www.healthactivebydesign.com.au/images/uploads/ALNSW_PCAL_IPR_web_content_copy.pdf)

One project, ‘Liveability and Local Government’<sup>5</sup> summarised the collective finding of this research. This is shown in the following figure:



Figure 4: Key Elements of Liveability  
Active Living NSW (2020). Liveability and Local Government: 4

<sup>5</sup> NSW Ministry of Health (2021) Liveability and Local Government

As a result, the literature provides solid ground for communal action, particularly for government (in partnership with other sectors) to promote individual and community wellbeing.

The role of local government was also a key component of the literature review, from theoretical discourse through to policy and practice case studies: by their direct action, regulation and persuasion (including partnerships and education). Governments can (and do) enable key outcomes detailed in the eight foundations underpinning this strategy:

- Vibrant communities where everyone can participate and connect
- Lifelong learning and helping each other
- Safe and prepared communities
- Healthy and active communities
- Transport connections to access our community's opportunities
- Sustainable natural and built environments
- Housing that meets the community's needs
- Resilient local economies and inclusive economic opportunities

## Further Reading

### 1. International

Building Better Beautiful Commission (UK) (2020) Living with Beauty: promoting health, wellbeing and sustainable growth

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/861832/Living\\_with\\_beauty\\_BBBBC\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861832/Living_with_beauty_BBBBC_report.pdf)

Kent J. L. and Thompson S. (2019) Planning Australia's Healthy Built Environments. Routledge

MacLeod S. (2018) 'Maslow's hierarchy of needs' Simply Psychology

Mental Health Foundation (UK) What is wellbeing, how can we measure it and how can we support people to improve it? <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/blog/what-wellbeing-how-can-we-measure-it-and-how-can-we-support-people-improve-it>

New Zealand Treasury (2019) Measuring Wellbeing: the LSF Dashboard  
<https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/higher-living-standards/measuring-wellbeing-lsf-dashboard>

Public Health England (2017) Improving people's health through spatial planning  
<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2017/07/06/improving-peoples-health-through-spatial-planning/>

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

Wiseman J. and Brasher K. 'Community Wellbeing in an Unwell World: Trends, Challenges and Possibilities'. Journal of Public Health Policy 29(3): 358

World Health Organisation. The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion  
<https://www.who.int/teams/health-promotion/enhanced-wellbeing/first-global-conference>



## 2. National

Australian Department of Health. Primary Health Networks

<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PHN-Home>

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2019. Poor Diet. Accessed at

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/food-nutrition/poor-diet/contents/dietary-guidelines>

City Futures Research Centre (2015) Literature Review: Healthy Built Environments – a review of the literature Note: a comprehensive list of references, with updates

<https://cityfutures.be.unsw.edu.au/research/city-wellbeing/city-wellbeing-resources/literature-review/>

Heart Foundation (2018) Healthy Active by Design

[https://www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au/images/uploads/ALNSW\\_AR3Healthy-Food-and-the-Built-Environment-FINAL.pdf](https://www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au/images/uploads/ALNSW_AR3Healthy-Food-and-the-Built-Environment-FINAL.pdf)

Infrastructure Australia (2018) Planning Liveable Cities: a place-based approach to sequencing infrastructure and growth

([https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-06/ifa\\_225232\\_planning\\_liveable\\_cities\\_report\\_2018\\_fa\\_web\\_lr.pdf](https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-06/ifa_225232_planning_liveable_cities_report_2018_fa_web_lr.pdf))

## 3. State Government

NSW State Health Plan (<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/statehealthplan/Publications/NSW-state-health-plan-towards-2021.pdf>) Note: includes a range of key strategies e.g. NSW Ageing Strategy 2016 – 2020

NSW DPIE (2021) Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041 <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/Illawarra-Shoalhaven/Illawarra-Shoalhaven-Regional-Plan-2041>

NSW DPIE (2020) A Regional Approach to Sustainability in the Illawarra Shoalhaven

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Reports/A-Regional-Approach-to-Sustainability-in-the-IS.pdf?la=en>

NSW DPIE (2021) Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041 <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/Illawarra-Shoalhaven/Illawarra-Shoalhaven-Regional-Plan-2041>

NSW Government Architect (2019) Aligning Movement and Place

<https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/other/framework-better-placed-aligning-movement-and-place-2019-06-27.pdf>

NSW Government Architect (2017) Better Placed... an integrated design policy for the built environment in NSW

<https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/strategy-documents/better-placed-a-strategic-design-policy-for-the-built-environment-of-new-south-wales-2017.pdf>

NSW Government Architect (2019) Draft Urban Design Guidelines for Regional NSW

(<https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/design-guides/draft-urban-design-guide-for-regional-nsw-2018-10-02.pdf>)

NSW Government Architect (2018) Greener Places: an urban green infrastructure design framework

(<https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/discussion-papers/greener-places-discussion-draft-2017-11.pdf>)

NSW Ministry of Health (2020,) Embedding liveability within the IP&R Framework.

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NSW Ministry of Health (2020). Liveability and Local Government

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NSW Ministry of Health (2018), NSW Healthy Planning Recourse No.2' Creating Walkable

Neighbourhoods' <https://irp.cdn-website.com/541aa469/files/uploaded/AR2-CreatingWalkNeighbourhoods2.pdf>

NSW Ministry of Health (2019), NSW Healthy Planning Recourse No.3' Healthy Food and the Built Environment' <https://irp.cdn-website.com/541aa469/files/uploaded/Healthy-Food-and-the-Built-Environment-FINAL4.pdf>

NSW Ministry of Health (2018) South Eastern NSW Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan (<https://www.coordinare.org.au/assets/Main-Site/Uploads/Resources/publications/Suicide-Prevention-Plan-FINAL-Nov2018-Web.pdf>)

NSW Ministry of Health (2017) Strategic Directions for Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District 2017-2020

<https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Health%20Plans/ISLHDSstrategicDirections.pdf>

Office of Open Space and Parklands (NSWDPE) (2019) Everyone can play: a guideline to create inclusive play spaces.

(<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Guidelines/everyone-can-play-guideline-2019-02-20.pdf?la=en>)

University of Canberra (2020) Regional Wellbeing Survey

<https://www.regionalwellbeing.org.au>

Victorian Department of Health (January 2013) Guide to municipal public health and wellbeing planning. Victorian Department of Health <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/guide-to-municipal-public-health-and-wellbeing-planning>

## 5. Local Government

Cessnock City Council (2017) Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017- 21

[https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Cessnock+City+Council+\(2017\)+Health+and+Wellbeing+Plan+2017-+21&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Cessnock+City+Council+(2017)+Health+and+Wellbeing+Plan+2017-+21&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8)

Eurobodalla Shire Council (2020) Aboriginal Action Plan 2020-2024

[https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Cessnock+City+Council+\(2017\)+Health+and+Wellbeing+Plan+2017-+21&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Cessnock+City+Council+(2017)+Health+and+Wellbeing+Plan+2017-+21&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8)

Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation of Councils, Strategic Regional Priorities

<https://www.isjo.org.au>

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (2018) Community Needs Assessment

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (2018) District Data Profile [https://facs-web.squiz.cloud/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/725845/Illawarra-Shoalhaven-District-Data-Profile.pdf](https://facs-web.squiz.cloud/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/725845/Illawarra-Shoalhaven-District-Data-Profile.pdf)

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District - Health Care Services Plan 2020-30

<https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Health%20Plans/Final%20Health%20Care%20Services%20Plan%202020-2030.pdf>

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (2017) Strategic Directions for Illawarra LHD 2017-2020

<https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Health%20Plans/ISLHDStrategicDirections.pdf>

Illawarra Shoalhaven Sport and Active Recreation Plan 2018-2023

<https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-04/illawarra-shoalhaven-regional-sport-and-active-recreation-plan.pdf>

Kiama council health plan 2019-21 <https://www.kiama.nsw.gov.au/Services/People-and-community/Health/Kiama-Health-Plan>

Latrobe City Council (2017) Living Well Latrobe: Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021

[https://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Council/Media\\_and\\_Publications/Major\\_Council\\_Publications/Publications\\_Library/living\\_well\\_latrobe\\_-\\_municipal\\_public\\_health\\_and\\_wellbeing\\_plan\\_%28mphwp%29\\_2017-2021](https://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Council/Media_and_Publications/Major_Council_Publications/Publications_Library/living_well_latrobe_-_municipal_public_health_and_wellbeing_plan_%28mphwp%29_2017-2021)

Northern Rivers Food Project

<https://www.northernriversfood.org>

Warringah Shire Council (2013) Warringah Council's Youth Strategy 2013-2023

<https://www.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/policies-register/youth-strategies/youth-strategies/youthstrategyfinal2013.pdf>

Wollondilly Shire Council (2020) Wilton Health and Wellbeing Strategy

<https://www.wollondilly.nsw.gov.au/planning-and-development/growth-in-wollondilly/wilton-new-town/>



## APPENDIX 2 THE PLACES AND THE POPULATION

### The area

The Shoalhaven is a large Local Government Area (LGA) on the southern coast of New South Wales. The size of the council area prompts a split, often referred to as North, South and Central (with a satellite administrative centre in the south, at Ulladulla). In an alternative categorisation, the council's Community Infrastructure Plan 2017- 2036<sup>1</sup> has five strategic planning areas, with Nowra, Berry and Bomaderry as part of a northern area, Callala, Culburra Beach and surrounds as a separate area and three areas in the south. The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (LHD) Community Needs Assessment<sup>2</sup> also has an alternative split, into 5 areas. In more detail:

- The LGA covers over 4,500km<sup>2</sup>, with beautiful coastline (100 beaches) and forest, and is home to over 100,000 residents living in 49 settlements, each with their own unique identities character and lived experiences (recently captured in Council's Area Character Statements<sup>3</sup>)
- Seventy-four percent of the land area is national park, leaving 25-30% of land to meet the community's needs for all development purposes, including agriculture, employment/commercial/industrial/etc, as well as residential
- There are 275 threatened species and 16 threatened ecological communities, outlined in council's Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040 (LSPS): 44
- Over 90% of respondents to council's LSPS Survey agreed that land-use planning priorities should include providing jobs and training close to home, adapting to natural hazards, protecting and enhancing neighbourhoods, celebrating with events and public art. Over 80% agreed on the need for affordable housing<sup>4</sup>.

Differences between places is a distinct feature of the Shoalhaven, bringing with it varying attributes and problem issues: from gentrification and a proliferation of short-term rental accommodation in some suburbs to housing stress and unemployment in others. The following map, prepared as basic research data for the community engagement report (prepared for the Community Wellbeing Plan), highlights just five of the places in the LGA and indicates similarities and differences. For example,

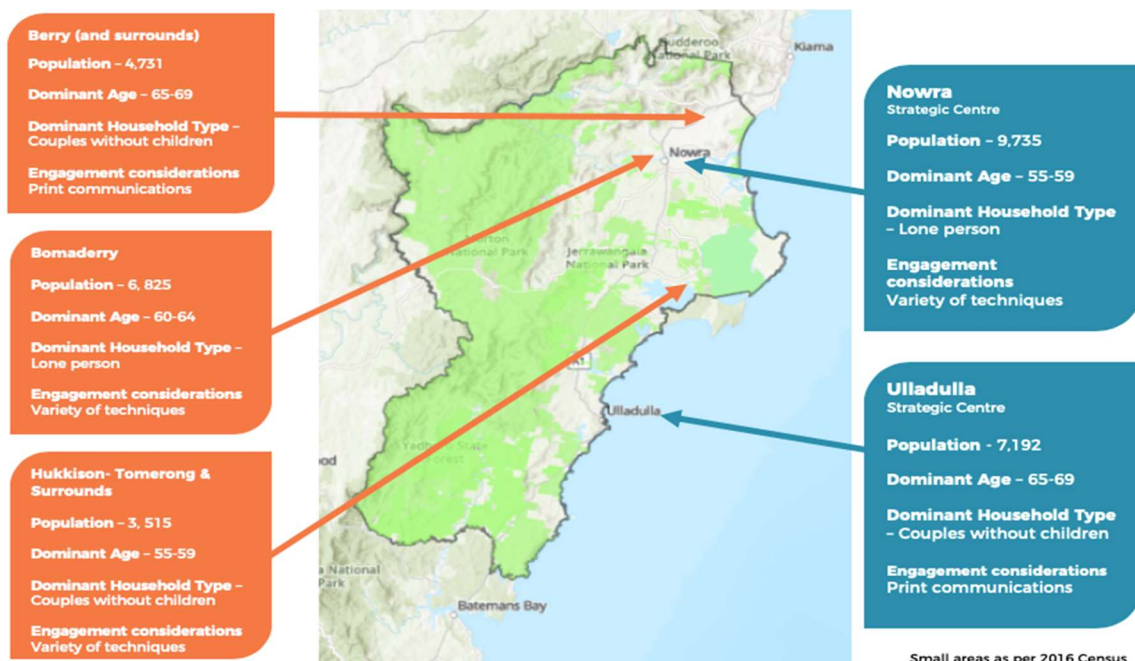


Figure 1 Places and people in the Shoalhaven

<sup>1</sup> Shoalhaven City Council. Community Infrastructure Plan 2017- 2036

<sup>2</sup> The Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD Community Needs Assessment (revised in May 2018)

<sup>3</sup> Shoalhaven City Council (2020) Guiding Future Growth: Shoalhaven Character Assessments

<sup>4</sup> Shoalhaven City Council (2021). Local Strategic Planning Statement Survey

from Berry (and surrounds) with an older demographic and couples, through to lone persons in Nowra and Bomaderry. The Community Engagement Report is a supplementary document to the Community Wellbeing Strategy. An indication of the implications for engagement approaches is also shown in the figure. The COVID pandemic restricted the approach to an on-line format rather than the place-specific approach initially envisioned.

## The population

As indicated above, by the snapshot view, one focus of the Community Wellbeing Plan is 'people and places'. The mixed character of places is matched by the varying make-up of the population, their characteristics and wellbeing related issues. For instance, from other statistics from the engagement report:

- The Shoalhaven is home to a relatively large indigenous population (5.5%) compared to 2.9% average of wider NSW<sup>5</sup>
- The community is ageing, with most people aged over 65 years
- 12.1% of the community have completed a university degree compared to the 23.4% in NSW
- 19.4% don't have access to the internet from home
- Of the LGA's 38,909 strong labour force, 30,153 (77.5%) also work in the area
- Despite an average SEIFA<sup>6</sup> rating, the weekly median household income (\$922) for the Shoalhaven LGA is well below that of the state (\$1486), with 27.9% of households in Shoalhaven earning less than \$650 while only 6.8% earn more than \$3000
- Crime in Shoalhaven has remained relatively stable or has declined over a 5-year period except for fraud, drug offences and bail related offences (Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research)
- Some areas experience higher rates of housing stress and homelessness. According to the NSW Council of Social Service, there is a 10+ year waiting period for 2-bedroom social housing rentals. 10.7 children out of 1000 have been placed in out of home care across the council area (<https://www.ncoss.org.au>).

## The workforce

- Of the LGA's 38,909-strong labour force, 77.5% (30,153) also work in the area
- \$11.4 billion annual economic output
- 93% local workers live in the Shoalhaven, while 7% commute
- 7,400 – 11,400 jobs need to be created by 2036<sup>7</sup>

Figure 2 (overleaf) presents other 2016 census data from council's Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040

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<sup>5</sup> National Census 2016

<sup>6</sup> Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a product developed by the ABS that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census. See Shoalhaven Community Infrastructure Plan 2017- 2036

<sup>7</sup> LSPS p. 29

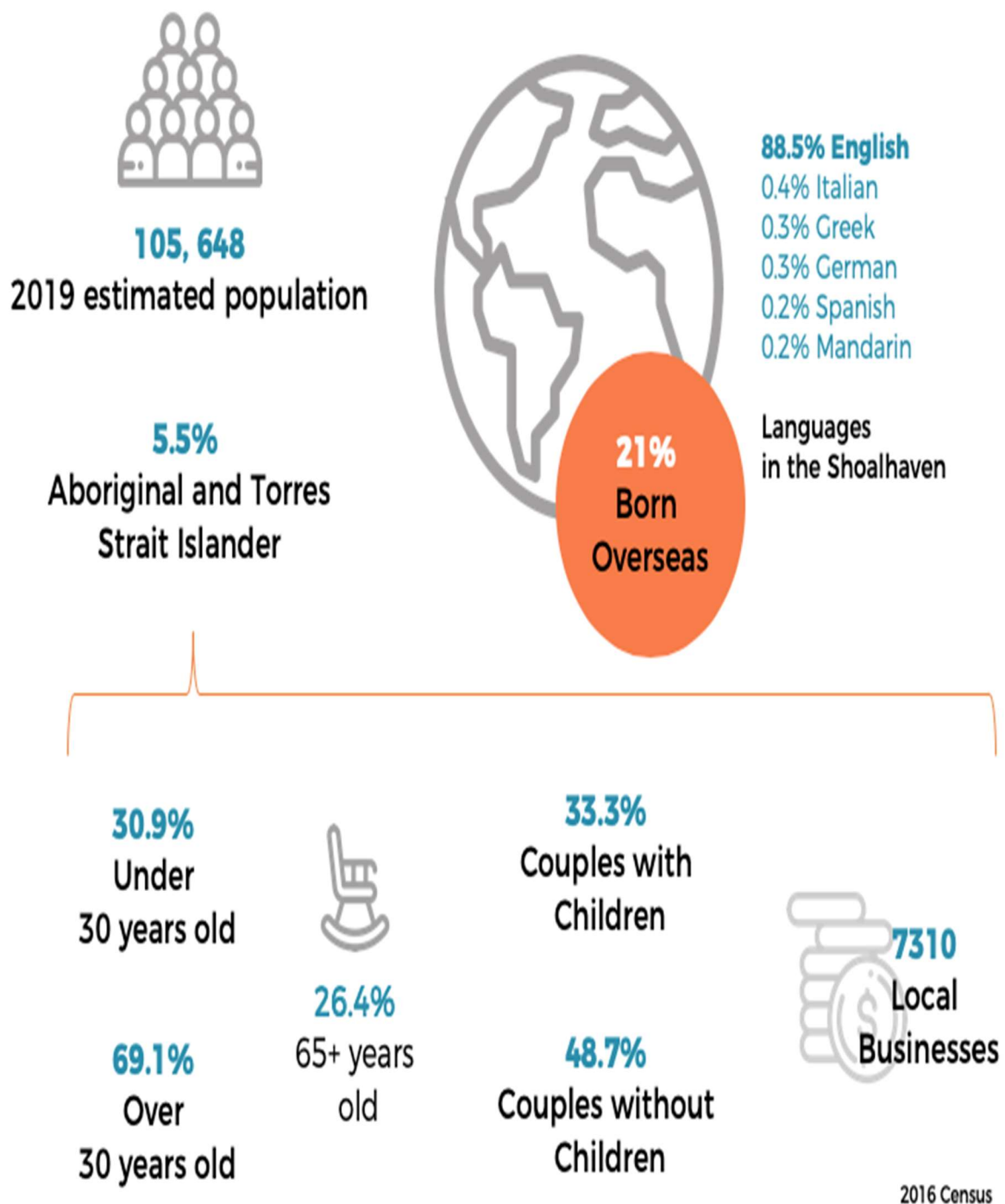


Figure 2: A snapshot of the population of the Shoalhaven population  
**Source:** Shoalhaven City Council LSPS, 2040

## Community values: Community Strategic Plan<sup>8</sup> Themes

The council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP), based on survey work and council research and analysis, focusses on four key themes:

- Resilient, safe and inclusive communities
- Sustainable, liveable environments
- Prosperous communities
- Responsible governance

The CSP and other council documents, such as the Local Strategic Planning Statement<sup>9</sup> (LSPS), state that the community of Shoalhaven value 'wellbeing' in relation to the following:

- Local community – The people of Shoalhaven value their local communities. They know that a connected community is a strong community that is better able to respond and adapt to challenges and roadblocks
- The natural environment – The community value the rich natural landscape of the Shoalhaven region. They see the cultural, scenic and heritage value of the natural landscape, as well as its enrichment of the health of the local community
- Local places – The Shoalhaven LGA is made up of many settlements of varying sizes each with their own distinct character valued by the locals. The community want to protect and enhance the village feel of these settlements while creating vibrant spaces for the community to gather
- Good governance – The community value local leadership that keeps the community informed and involved in decision-making processes on issues that affect them
- Local economy – The Shoalhaven community value the strengthening of the local economy to create a diverse and robust economy that can support the activities of the local community and provide local employment opportunities.

## Health of the population

The size and dispersed nature of communities of the LGA is an important consideration when engaging in the Shoalhaven. This dispersal means that health and wellbeing vary across the council area, with towns and villages experiencing varying levels of advantage and disadvantage. Areas more densely populated are better serviced than others, creating uneven gaps in provision and access. For example:

- There is a significant proportion of people who need assistance in their day-to-day lives (7.7% of the total population)<sup>10</sup>
- While Aboriginal hospitalisation for the Illawarra/ Shoalhaven mirrors the general population, there is a very significant spike for dialysis and a distinctly higher rate for mental disorders and respiratory disease<sup>11</sup>

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (LHD) Community Needs Assessment<sup>12</sup> (revised in May 2018), using data from the Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU), analyses need at the Population Health Area (PHA) level. Shoalhaven has eight PHAs. The needs assessment provides some key insights. e.g. high social disadvantage areas also have high health disadvantage. Shoalhaven has some areas that are the most disadvantaged in the district, however these areas also have very low population density. See Figure 3, below.

This snapshot picture of community health needs to be read in conjunction with the Community Engagement Survey prepared for this plan (provided as a separate document).

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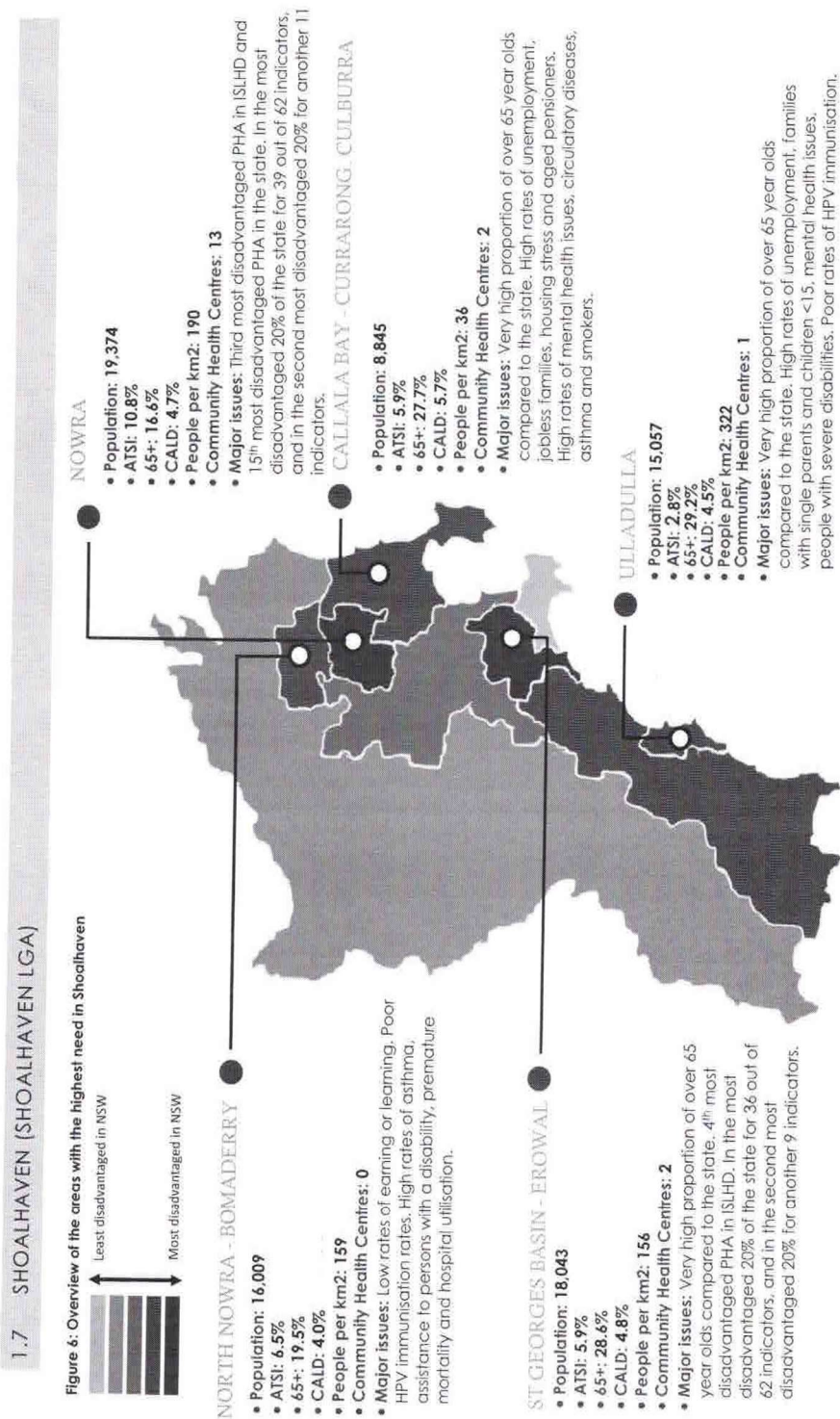
<sup>8</sup> Shoalhaven City Council Community Strategic Plan 2032

<sup>9</sup> Shoalhaven City Council (2021) Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040

<sup>10</sup> National Census 2016

<sup>11</sup> Healthstats.nsw.gov.au

<sup>12</sup> The Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD Community Needs Assessment (revised in May 2018)



Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Community Needs Assessment

Figure 3 Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD (2018) Community Needs Assessment

## Happiness Index

Council's 2020 Satisfaction Survey<sup>13</sup> included questions about community happiness (for the sixth year). The following highlights from this survey indicate the opportunities to engage the community on matters like community connections and resilience. It is important to note that this report was completed in June 2020 meaning the results should be considered in the context of Covid-19. Some key findings were:

- Above average happiness – The Personal Wellbeing Index score for the Shoalhaven is 84.6 in 2020 (a 1.5% increase since 2018) and remains above the national standard of 75.7
- Stable happiness – Since the first survey in 2014 overall community happiness has remained stable with the only significant change being a 0.2% increase in 'feeling part of the community' between 2018 and 2020. All other indicators have remained the same across the six years of the survey
- Tight families – The highest ranked indicator for the Shoalhaven in 2020 is personal relationships (91% satisfaction) while 'feeling part of your community' is the lowest ranked at 78% satisfaction. This indicates that while family and friend groups are close, this connection does not necessarily extend to the wider community
- A liveable place – 81% of respondents agree that the Shoalhaven is a liveable place.

Although not a question as part of the happiness index, the survey reported a significant decline in community satisfaction with disaster response. This is expected to be a result of the recent bushfires and flood experienced in the LGA and can be reasonably assumed to have an impact on community wellbeing

## Mental Health

The South-Eastern Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan<sup>14</sup> notes that the Shoalhaven has the highest prevalence of mental illness at 15.40% of the adult population. Within the Region, a greater burden is borne by the Aboriginal community and those living in rural areas. The Region also has among the highest rates of suicide.

The NSW Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025<sup>15</sup> summarises the determinants of Aboriginal health and sets Goals, Strategic Directions and Actions for addressing Aboriginal mental health and wellbeing. It is a companion document to this Shoalhaven Community Wellbeing Plan.

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<sup>13</sup> Council CSP (2020) Community Satisfaction Survey

<sup>14</sup> SENSW (July 2020) South-eastern NSW Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan  
<https://www.coordinare.org.au/assets/Main-Site/Uploads/Resources/publications/Suicide-Prevention-Plan-FINAL-Nov2018-Web.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> NSW Ministry of Health (2020). NSW Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025.