

Community Wellbeing

Defining wellbeing

People's aspirations for their community have been found to be similar across Victoria regardless of socio-economic status. Indicators of community wellbeing are often correlated – higher levels of feeling safe are often found in communities with high levels of participation and inclusion.

Health

Life expectancy is generally lower in regional areas than in Melbourne. This reflects geographic factors such as isolation, economic factors such as higher risk work activities in primary sectors, and social factors such as education and risk behaviours.

Challenges

The geography of rural areas can create issues of distance and isolation. Where these are combined with access difficulties – to services, activities or social opportunities – then problems such as depression or boredom can arise. Of particular concern in some areas is the male youth suicide rate.

Volunteering

Volunteering provides a major contribution to service provision, transport, environmental management and community wellbeing in regional Victoria. In areas of population decline, numbers of volunteers are often reduced, placing stress on volunteer organisations such as charity groups, sporting clubs and environmental groups.

An integrated picture of Community Wellbeing

Participation

Participation by people in their community can involve activities such as: volunteering; membership of social, sporting or service clubs; or civic involvement through participation in decision making bodies or activities. Higher levels of participation are positively correlated with community wellbeing.

Safety

Feelings of safety are correlated to community wellbeing. Safety can be reflected in people's perceptions. It can also be measured through indicators such as crime rates. Another aspect of safety, related to community health is road safety.