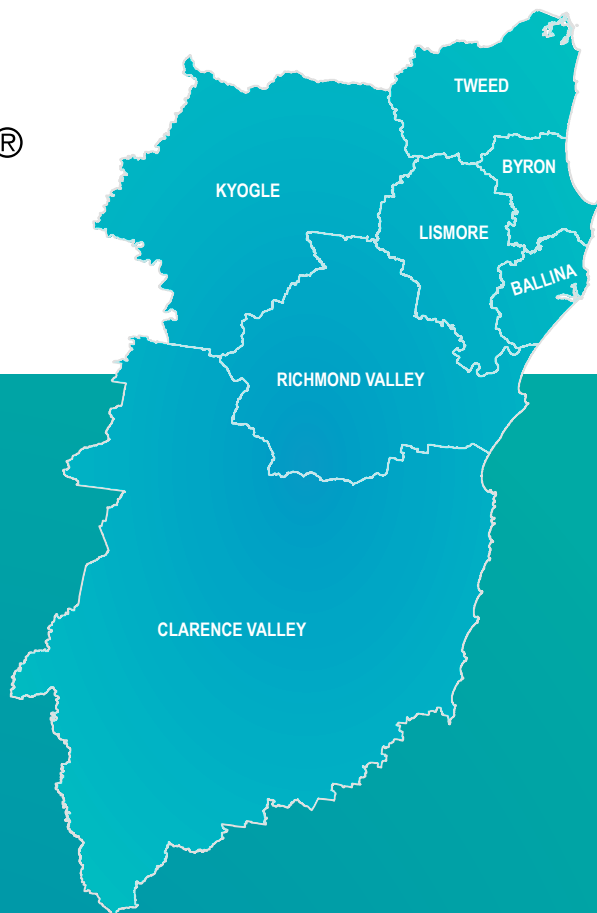


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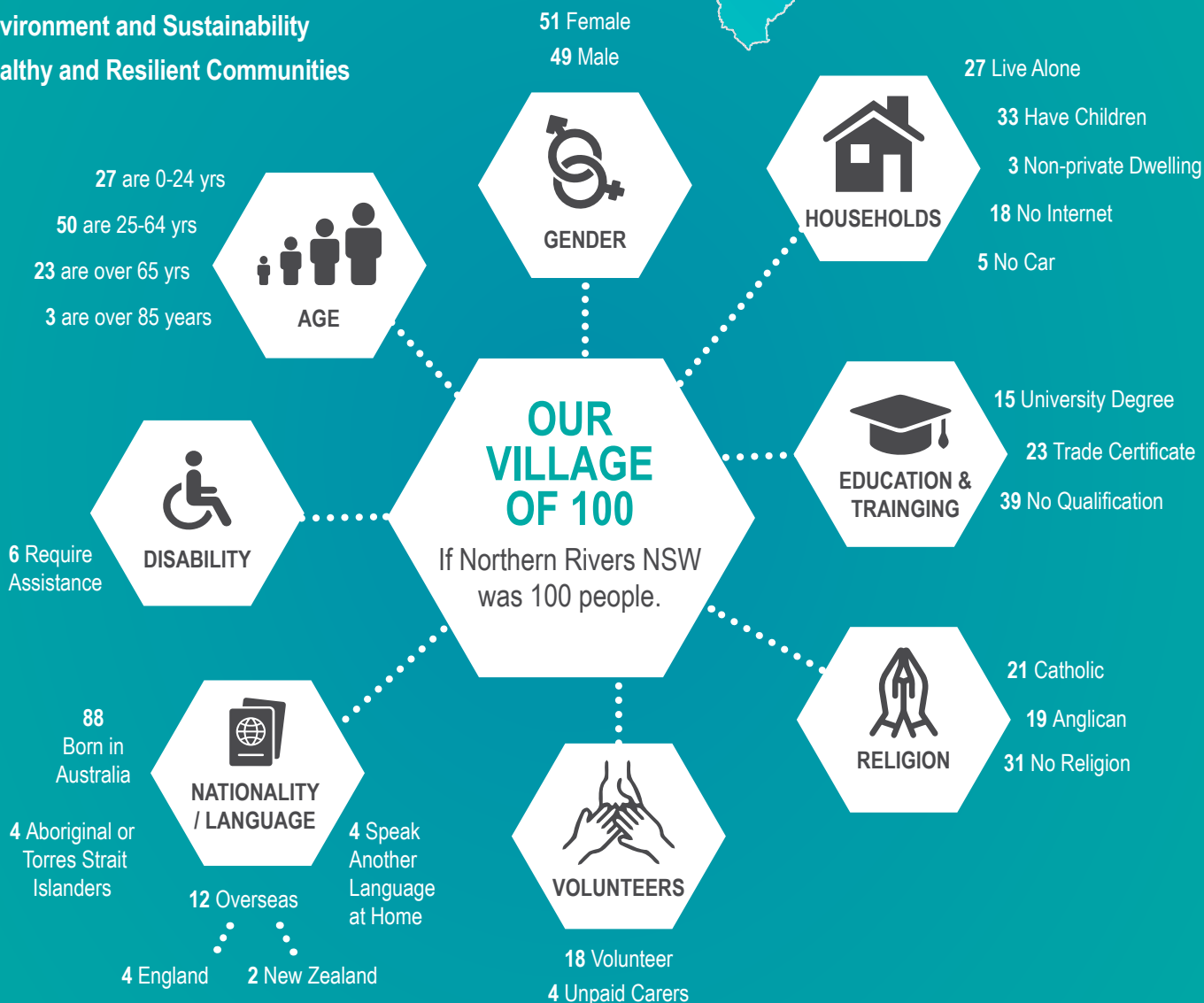
2022



Introducing Northern Rivers Vital Signs

The Northern Rivers is a diverse region, home to over 300,000 people. There's a lot to love, but we've experienced many challenges too. This Vital Signs report is a snapshot of community vitality and resilience. It outlines the strengths, challenges and needs across the seven Local Government Areas that span the region, in the following indicators:

- Housing and Homelessness
- Education and Employment
- Environment and Sustainability
- Healthy and Resilient Communities



Northern Rivers Population: 310,666 (2021)

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Access to safe, affordable housing that meets the diverse needs of a community is a key measure of a successful and equitable community.

Housing supply, rental and mortgage stress are key issues in our region.

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES



Almost 1 in 4 households have **weekly incomes below \$650**.

NR: 23.5% NSW: 16.1% AU: 16.3%



Median Weekly Household Income is \$1034. Around **one third lower** than in NSW (\$1481) or Australia (\$1431).

HOUSE PRICES & MARKET

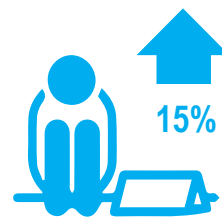


The median house price **increased by 28%** from one year ago. (Sep. 2020-Sep. 2021)



Only 0.7% of rental properties were vacant in Feb 2022. There are 6,261 residences listed on AirBNB, of which 87% are entire homes or apartments.

HOMELESSNESS



The homeless population **grew by 15%** over five years, three times the growth rate of the region's total population. **1,496 people were homeless** on Census night in 2016.

HOUSING STRESS



1 out of 10 households with a mortgage experience housing stress.



4 out of 10 households that rent experience housing stress.

<1% **Less than 1%** of listed rental properties **are affordable** to households on income support payments.

7% **Only 7%** of listed rental properties **are affordable** to households living on minimum wage.

A CRISIS AT HOME

The Northern Rivers community has long experienced housing and homelessness issues, and these have been exacerbated by recent events including bushfires, a global pandemic, and multiple significant floods in the early months of 2022.



Photo: Alex Clarke

Whilst recovery work is already commencing, there is an urgent need to work with community members to better understand housing and homelessness needs, and to support organisations in prioritising and coordinating response. The Northern Rivers Community Foundation is undertaking a strategic research project, aiming to bring the private and public sector together, with the community to work towards regional housing and homelessness solutions. We look forward to sharing the findings with our community for a stronger, more equitable future.

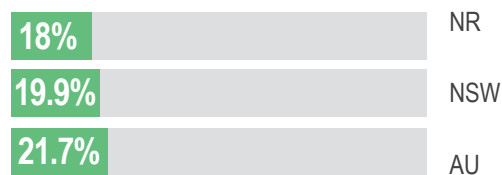
EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

Thriving and resilient communities offer flexible, affordable opportunities for learning throughout life, providing pathways to meaningful employment.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

More developmentally on track, with fewer developmental vulnerabilities than NSW or Australia.

ONE OR MORE DEVELOPMENTAL VULNERABILITIES



Children aged 4 - 5 yrs enrolled in early childhood education.



6 in 10

NSW & Australia 5 in 10

However, a much higher proportion of children attend less than 15 hours of early childhood education a week.



28.5%

NSW: 11.0% AU: 16.6%

EDUCATION

Less people graduate Year 12 or with bachelor degrees, but a higher proportion of students receive vocational qualifications.

 **37.8%** **Year 12**
(NSW: 52.1% AU: 51.9%)

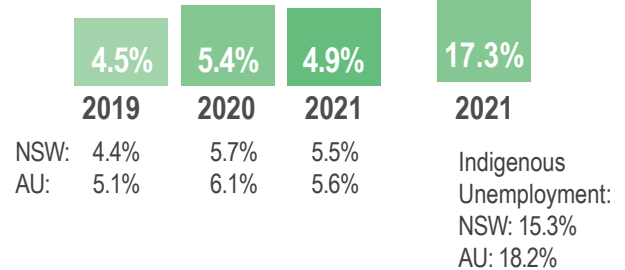
 **14.8%** **Bachelor Degree**
(NSW: 23.4% AU: 22%)

 **22.9%** **Trade Qualification**
(NSW: 18.1% AU: 18.8%)

UNEMPLOYMENT



Recent unemployment rates in Northern Rivers are lower than NSW and/or Australia. (Sep. 2021)



EMPLOYMENT



Almost **1 in 2** employed residents in Northern Rivers work in part-time jobs, 10% more than NSW.
(NR: 45.1% NSW: 34.9% AU: 36.1%)



69%

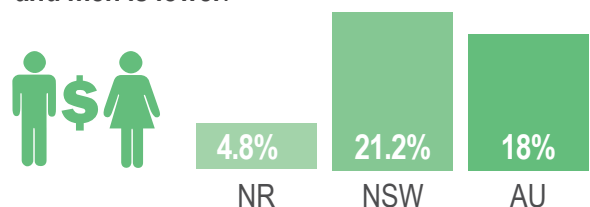
69% of Northern Rivers residents **live and work in the same LGA.**



Health Care & Assistance and Retail Trade employ almost **1 in 3** Northern Rivers residents.

PAY GAP

Both women and men are **paid less per hour** than NSW or Australia but the **pay gap between women and men is lower.**



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



3 out of 4 15-19 year olds are **engaged in education or employment.**

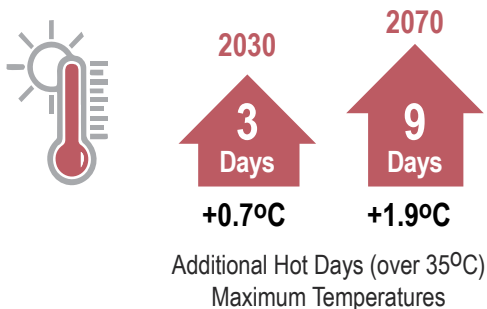
Source data available at nrnf.org.au/vital-signs.

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Our economy, social connectivity and cultural identity are reliant upon the region's natural resources. How we manage and protect these systems determines their sustainability and our own.

WEATHER & CLIMATE

Maximum temperatures, rainfall and fire-weather risk are all projected to worsen in the Northern Rivers by 2070, increasing the risk of weather related disasters.



WASTE & RECYCLING



Waste per household is higher in the Northern Rivers (24.04 kg per household per week) than NSW (21.88kg).



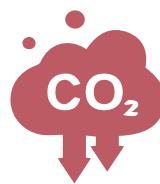
Nearly **60% of Northern Rivers waste is recycled** (44% in NSW), with approximately **5kg per person per week going to landfill**.

RENEWABLE ENERGY



1 in 2 dwellings have solar installations, compared to 1 in 3 for NSW.

EMISSIONS



57% of emissions are from electricity and 12% from agriculture. All regions except Kyogle (27.1%) and Richmond Valley (17.3%) have **lower emissions than NSW** (16.4%) and AU average (16.9%).

BUSHFIRES AND FLOODS

The Northern Rivers NSW has experienced catastrophic bushfires and flood events in recent years that have had significant impact environmentally, economically and socially.

The impact of the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires in the Northern Rivers was 8,120 km² of burnt land, 39% of all land in the region. Clarence Valley and Richmond Valley were disproportionately affected in terms of burnt land. The economic impact was \$370.3 million.

Our region is currently recovering from the February and March 2022 flooding, where numerous rainfall and river height records were broken. In response, the Northern Rivers Community Foundation, in partnership with the Byron Community Centre, launched the Flood Relief Fund to offer quick response grants of up to \$10,000 to community organisations to provide flood relief and



recovery for the Northern Rivers. Within six weeks of the floods, almost a million dollars in grant funding was distributed to more than 100 community organisations supporting recovery efforts on the ground across the region. Find out more here: nrcf.org.au/grants/flood-relief-grant-recipients/.

We recognise the longer term impacts that weather and climate will have on our region, and will continue to support our communities through grant programs focusing on recovery, resilience and regeneration.

HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Community connection, expression and participation builds a healthy and vibrant community, and contributes to people's health, wellbeing and sense of place.

HEALTH RISK FACTORS – ADULTS



Northern Rivers residents are at higher risk of health-related characteristics such as obesity, sedentary behaviour and higher alcohol consumption than NSW or Australia.



Northern Rivers residents recorded higher rates of psychological distress compared to NSW or Australia. (Rate per 100 residents aged 18+)

(Regional NSW: 13.1% NSW: 12.4% AU: 12.9%)

HEALTH RISK FACTORS – CHILDREN



Child immunisation rates are lower in the Northern Rivers (91.8%) than NSW or Australia.

Fully immunised at 5 years
Regional NSW 95.8%
NSW 94.6%
Australia 94.7%

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM (ROSH)



1 in 3 children aged 0-5 yrs are considered vulnerable (4,483)

47% of the vulnerable group are expected to have a ROSH report in the future compared to the NSW average of 34%.



1 in 8 children aged under-15 yrs
1 in 6 children aged 15-18 yrs are affected by **mental illness**.

7.9%

Children at risk of harm
Northern NSW District 79
NSW 63.

Rate per 1,000 population of children and young people involved in risk of significant harm (ROSH).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC RATING



The region is **more socioeconomically disadvantaged** than NSW or Australia.

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Ranking
Northern Rivers: 948 NSW: 1011 AU: 1003

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Domestic violence incidents increased between 2020 and 2021, while the NSW rate remained stable.

	2020	2021
NR:	386.6	417.9
NSW:	395.2	393.4

Domestic violence incidents (per 100,000)

COMMUNITY STRENGTH

Residents are more likely to volunteer or provide unpaid care to people with a disability than residents of NSW or Australia.



Unpaid care to people with a disability
NSW: 11.6% AU: 11.3%
% of 15+ year olds



Volunteering
NSW: 18.1% AU: 19%
% of 15+ year olds

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

Our Northern Rivers community has a lot to be proud of. While we face many challenges, we are ready to start difficult conversations towards a better future for our region. Our community spirit is strong and we encourage you to use the information in this report to start conversations about how you, along with your community, can make a difference and be a changemaker for a stronger and better Northern Rivers region.

ASK THE QUESTIONS

- What issues do I care about?
- What surprised me?
- How can I make a difference?

GET INVOLVED

Give: Find out how you can donate or volunteer your time at nrcf.org.au/get-involved/

Learn More: Visit nrcf.org.au/VitalSigns to learn more and find out more and keep up to date with new findings.

NRCF will use the Vital Signs report and the feedback we receive to focus our grant making on the most important issues for our community.



Statistics presented in this report we believe will have been impacted by the 2022 floods are indicated by this icon.

WHAT'S NEXT

This is just the starting point. We will continue to measure the vitality of our communities, share insights and support our communities working towards improvement. NRCF will use the Vital Signs report to focus our grant making on the most important issues for our community.

A second Vital Signs report is planned with the release of the 2021 Census data, from June 2022. This will provide benchmarking opportunities and help us to better understand the impacts of significant events such as bushfires, the global pandemic, 2022 Floods, Federal and Local Government Elections., as well as the wider changes in our region over time.

CONTACT NRCF

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Web: nrcf.org.au

Postal Address: PO Box 304 Clunes NSW, 2480

LOCAL CONNECTS TO GLOBAL

The United Nations has adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030.

Our Vital Signs report is relevant to the following goals:



Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations around the world that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Our thanks go to the Toronto Foundation for developing and sharing the Vital Signs concept. Community Foundations Australia manages the licensing of Vital Signs within Australia. The Vital Signs® Trademark is used with permission from Community Foundations of Canada.

Every effort has been made to use the most up to date, local and accurate information available at the time of publication. We look forward to updating the report as new data becomes available. NRCF is not liable for any loss suffered through the use of any information contained in this report.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of Bundjalung Country where we work, across the region of the Northern Rivers, and pay respect to their Elders, past present and emerging.

The Northern Rivers Community Foundation would like to thank those organisations who have assisted and contributed to this report, including Social Futures, Momentum Collective, North Coast Community Housing and North Coast Community Gateway. With special thanks to the Vasudhara Foundation for making this project possible.

