

Swan Hill Rural City

Selected findings



The Rural City of Swan Hill lies within the Loddon Mallee Victorian health region and is part of the Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership. Swan Hill is located 340km North-West of Melbourne and as of June 30 2007, had a population of 21,566¹ with adults comprising 74.2% of the population, compared with 77.1% for Victoria². Approximately one-third of the residents (33.1%) were aged 50 years or older compared with 30.9% for Victoria. There was a greater percentage (39.6%) of low income households (combined annual income of less than \$33,500) compared with 30.6% for Victoria³. Female Life Expectancy at birth in 2006 was 83.3 years, which was similar⁴ to the Victorian figure of 84.3 years, however male Life Expectancy at birth in 2006 was 77.5 years, lower⁴ than the Victorian figure of 80.0 years⁵.

The Victorian Population Health Survey is an annual state-wide survey that the Department of Health undertakes to collect information on the health of the adult Victorian population (18 years or older). This is the first time that the sample size has been expanded to allow detailed analysis at the local government area level.

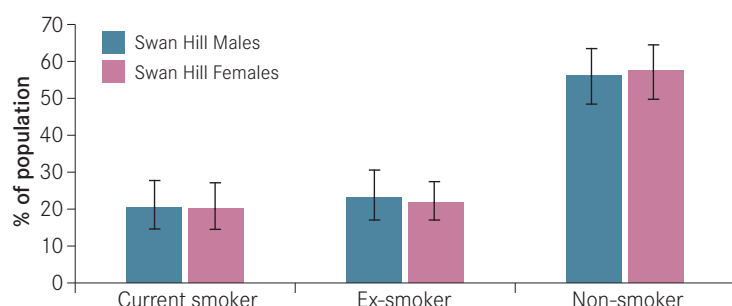
This fact sheet presents major findings from the 2008 survey. For more information see:

www.health.vic.gov.au/healthstatus/vphs.htm

Smoking status

Current smokers are defined as those who smoke daily or occasionally. Smoking patterns between the Rural City of Swan Hill and Victoria were similar⁶. In 2008, 20.5% of males and 20.2% of females in the Rural City of Swan Hill were classified as current smokers compared with 21.4% and 16.9% respectively for Victoria.

Smoking status, 2008

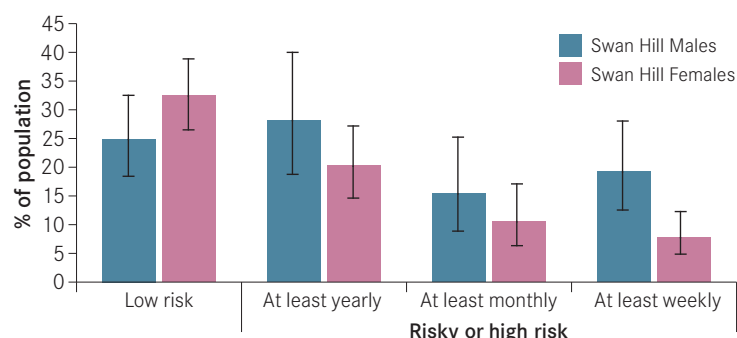


Alcohol consumption⁷

The *Australian Alcohol Guidelines*⁸ specify the risks of short and long-term alcohol-related harm by level of alcohol consumption in males and females.

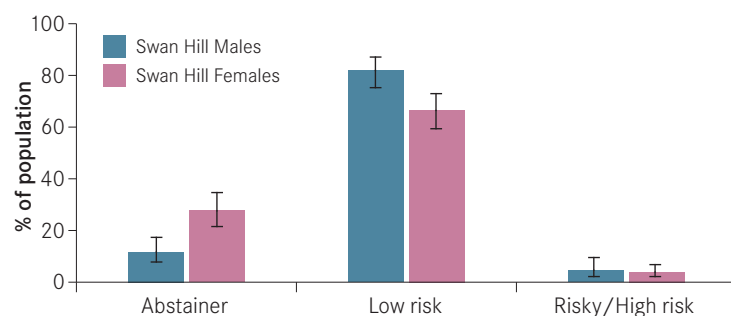
The patterns of alcohol consumption were similar between the Rural City of Swan Hill and Victoria for both males and females. However, females in the Rural City of Swan Hill were more likely to be classified as abstainers from alcohol (27.7%) compared with males in the Rural City of Swan Hill (11.7%). Males in the Rural City of Swan Hill were also more likely to consume alcohol at a low risk level for long-term harm (82.0%) compared with females in the Rural City of Swan Hill (66.6%).

Percentage of persons at short-term risk of alcohol-related harm, 2008



Note: abstainers are not included in the assessment of short-term risk levels.

Percentage of persons at long-term risk of alcohol-related harm, 2008

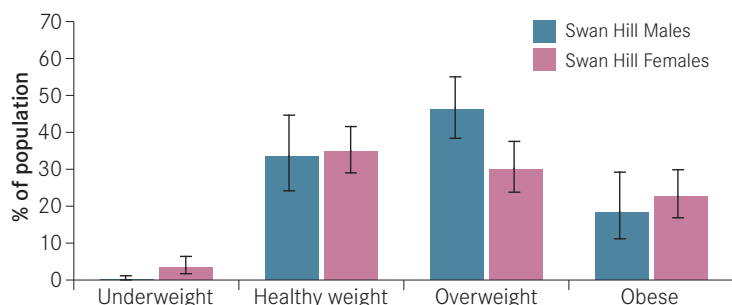


Overweight and obesity

Being overweight or obese is an important risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, certain cancers, sleep apnoea and osteoarthritis. It is typically measured by calculating a person's Body Mass Index (BMI), which is their weight in relation to their height⁹.

In 2008, 46.3% of males and 30.0% of females in the Rural City of Swan Hill were overweight, similar to Victorian males and females (39.9% and 24.2% respectively). Less than one in five males (18.4%) and 22.5% of females in the Rural City of Swan Hill were obese, also similar to Victorian males and females (17.3% and 16.1% respectively). Males in the Rural City of Swan Hill were also more likely to be overweight compared with females in the Rural City of Swan Hill.

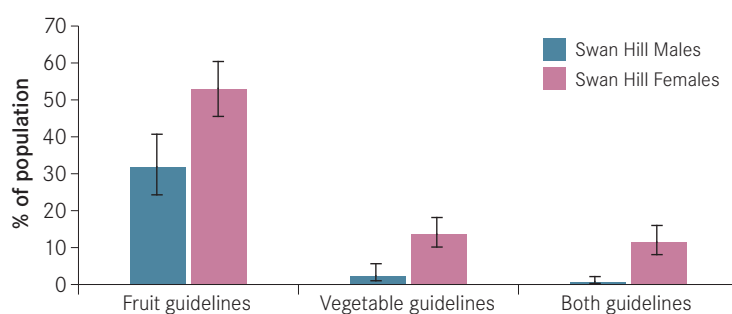
Percentage of overweight and obesity in adults, 2008



Nutrition

In 2008, 13.6% of females and 2.4% of males in the Rural City of Swan Hill met the dietary guidelines¹⁰ for vegetable consumption, similar to Victorian females and males (10.7% and 5.0% respectively). More than half of females (52.9%) and 31.7% of males in the Rural City of Swan Hill met the dietary guidelines for fruit consumption, also similar to Victorian females and males (53.5% and 41.0% respectively). Females in the Rural City of Swan Hill were also more likely to meet the dietary guidelines for consumption of fruit, vegetables and combined fruit and vegetables compared with males in the Rural City of Swan Hill.

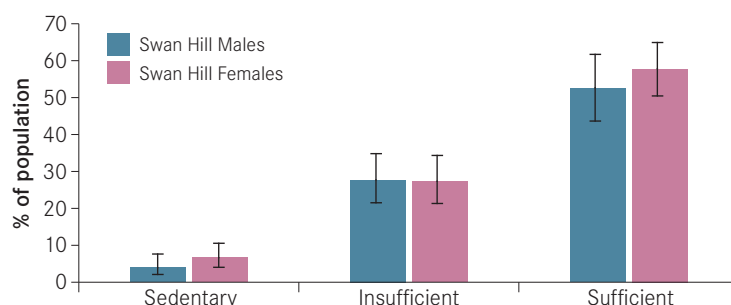
Percentage of adults who met guidelines for the number of serves of fruit and/or vegetables per day, 2008



Physical Activity

In 2008, 52.5% of males and 57.8% of females in the Rural City of Swan Hill met the physical activity guidelines¹¹, similar to Victorian males and females (61.0% and 59.7% respectively). There were no differences in physical activity levels between the Rural City of Swan Hill and Victoria overall or between males and females in the Rural City of Swan Hill.

Levels of physical activity, 2008

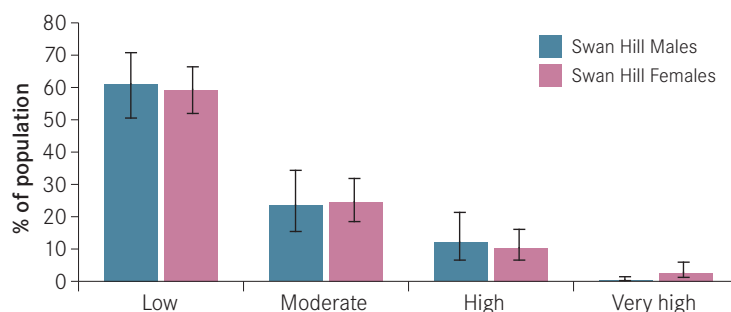


Psychological distress

Poor mental health is a significant risk factor for poor health outcomes. The Kessler 10 (K10) scale is a set of ten questions designed to categorise the level of psychological distress over a four week period.

In 2008, 61.1% of males and 59.3% of females in the Rural City of Swan Hill were classified as having a low level of psychological distress, similar to Victorian males and females (65.3% and 59.7% respectively). There were no differences in distress levels between the Rural City of Swan Hill and Victoria overall or between males and females in the Rural City of Swan Hill.

Levels of psychological distress, 2008



For more information please refer to the full report of the 2008 Victorian Population Health Survey at www.health.vic.gov/healthstatus/vphs.htm

1. Service Planning, Department of Health (DH).

2. ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics), 2007.

3. ABS, 2006 national census.

4. LGA estimates are considered to be higher or lower than the Victorian estimate based on statistical significance, determined by comparing the 95% confidence intervals (CI) between estimates. Where the 95% CI of estimates do not overlap there is strong evidence that the estimates are different. Where they overlap, the estimates are deemed to be similar.

5. Health Intelligence Unit, DH.

6. The LGA estimates are age-adjusted to the 2006 Victorian population.

7. The 2008 VPHS survey questions on alcohol consumption captured the risks of alcohol-related-harm based on the current 2001 Australian Alcohol Guidelines. New guidelines were released in March 2009 and will be reflected in the 2009 VPHS.

8. NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Council) 2001.

9. BMI Reference: WHO 2000, *Obesity: Preventing and Managing the Global Epidemic*, WHO Technical Report Series 894, World Health Organisation (WHO), Geneva.

10. The **Dietary Guidelines for Australian Adults** recommend five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit daily for adults, aged 19 years and older, to ensure a healthy diet. NHMRC 2003. For persons aged 12 to 18 years, the recommendations are for three serves of vegetables and three serves of fruit.

11. The **National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians** recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on most, preferably all days in persons aged 19 years and over. DoHAC (Department of Health and Aged Care) 1999, Canberra.