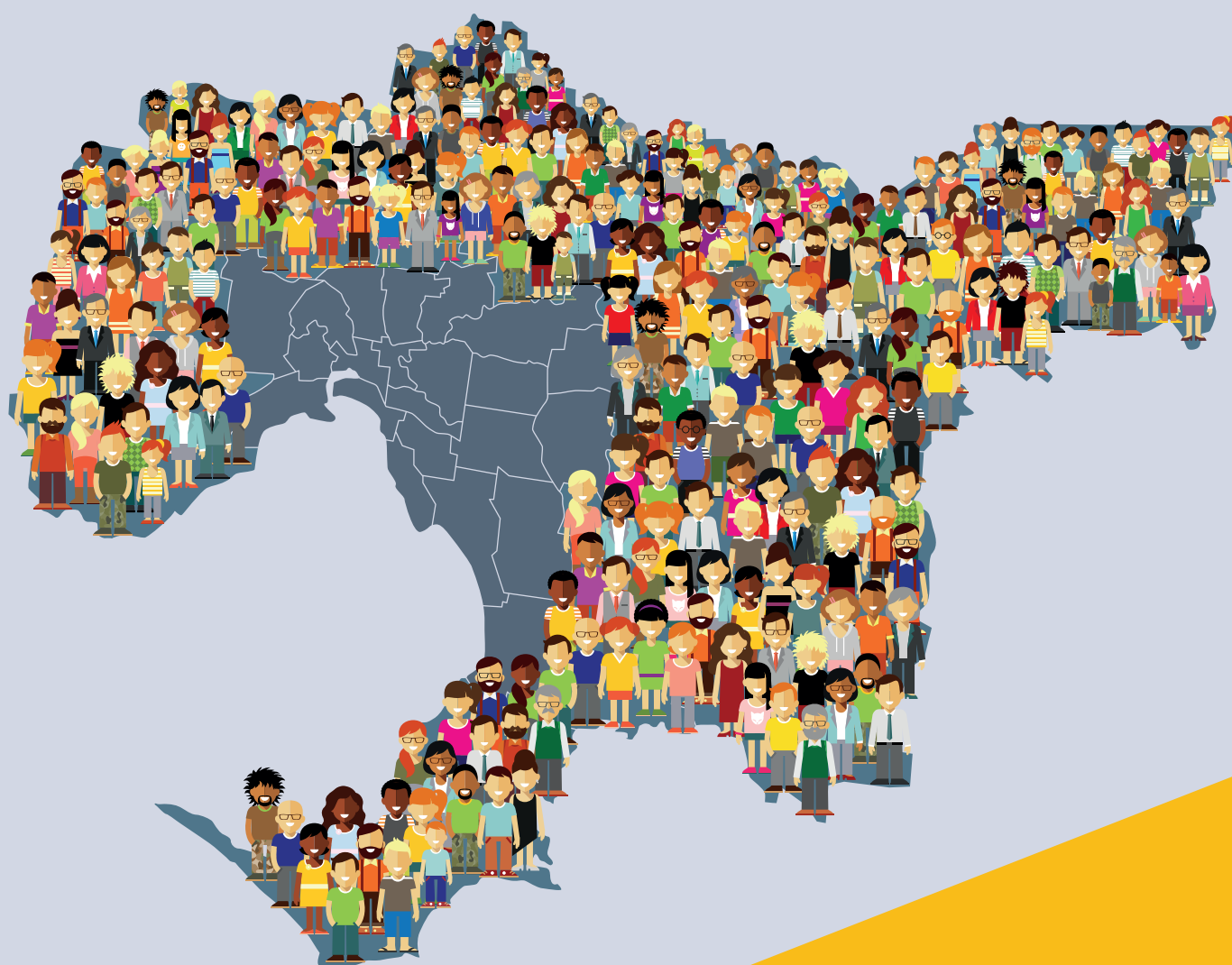# INTERFACE COUNCILS LIVEABILITY SNAPSHOT

SEPTEMBER 2017

INTERFACE
COUNCILS

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Executive Summary

The *Interface Councils Liveability Snapshot* is the precursor to the release of a complete liveability policy by the Interface Councils in 2018. This document has been developed to provide thorough insight into the current state of liveability within the Interface Councils region and to generate feedback that will be utilised in the forthcoming liveability policy.

Domains and Indicators

Unprecedented growth and changing demographics within Melbourne's outer suburbs has put increased pressure on services and infrastructure that have traditionally been underfunded within the Interface Councils region. To better understand the impact, Interface Councils have developed a set of liveability indicators under the established domains of public open space, housing, social infrastructure and services, employment, transport, walkability and food security. The aim of each domain and corresponding indicators is to put in place a mechanism to measure the progress of liveability. To do this, the Interface Councils have sourced regularly updated Local Government Area (LGA) data sets that can help assess and measure liveability throughout the region.

Liveability Findings

Key findings of the *Interface Councils Liveability Snapshot* suggest that there are significant gaps in liveability when compared with the rest of Melbourne. In many instances, the Interface Councils measure below the state and regional Victoria averages when assessing aspects of public transport, walkability, food security, housing and critical social services. The following are summary key findings of the liveability analysis to date:

Public Open Space
- Interface Councils average more public space per person than the rest of Melbourne
- Municipalities of the Interface Councils region average similar numbers of recreation sites to municipalities in middle Melbourne and more than the inner portions of Melbourne
- More hectares of parks and gardens are found within the Interface Councils region at 232.78ha compared to the average of 173.34ha

Housing
- Interface Councils have the highest levels of mortgage and rental stress as a region in Victoria, at 13.16% this is nearly double that felt throughout the rest of the Melbourne region
- Interface Councils rank 1.76% below the Victorian state average of social housing as a total percentage of dwellings, at 2.14%
- Fewer government-subsidised Commonwealth aged care spaces exist within the Interface Councils region than middle Melbourne

Employment
- Unemployment in the Interface Councils region is 1.4% higher than the Victorian average at 6.9%
- Interface Councils have the lowest employment self-sufficiency in the Melbourne region and rank below state and regional Victoria averages
- Residents in the Interface Councils region report having a better work-life balance than residents of middle and inner Melbourne

Social Infrastructure and Services
- The Interface Councils region has fewer pharmacies, dental service sites, Allied Health Services, general practice clinics and general practitioners per 1000 population than the rest of Melbourne and rank below the state average
- Residents in the Interface Councils region report a higher level of psychological distress than other areas of Melbourne
- Ambulance response times in the Interface Councils region for 'Code 1 responses' within 15 minutes occur less than 70% of the time, which is more than 15% lower than the rest of Melbourne

Transport
- Just over 55% of Interface Councils residents live near public transport, this is nearly 40% lower when compared to middle and metro Melbourne
- More people in the Interface Councils region are car dependent than anywhere else in Melbourne
- Almost one in five Interface Councils' residents have a two-hour daily commute to work, which is higher than middle and metro Melbourne

Walkability
- The Interface Councils region is considered as primarily car dependent and ranks poorly for overall walkability
- Residents have to rely on a vehicle in the majority of instances to access a grocery store
- Almost 85% of residents live within 400m of a public open space, but have limited access by foot to parks within a 400m radius

Food Security
- Interface Councils' residents are more likely to face food insecurity than people anywhere else in Melbourne
- Almost 50% of residents do not meet their dietary guidelines for either fruit or vegetables, this is higher than the state average and greater than in middle or metro Melbourne

Introduction

Home to more than 1.6 million residents,[1] the Interface Councils are a coalition of ten municipalities that form an urban ring around metropolitan Melbourne. Comprised of Cardinia Shire Council, City of Casey, Hume City Council, Melton City Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, City of Whittlesea, Wyndham City Council and Yarra Ranges Shire Council, the Interface Councils are vibrant and welcoming communities for people, in particular families, from all over Australia.

Melbourne is consistently considered one of the world's most liveable cities. Regularly ranked atop the Economist and Mercer Rankings, Melbourne is touted as a shining example of urban planning and liveability. However, beneath the international acclaim are service and infrastructure divides that have emerged between metropolitan and outer suburban Melbourne.

Over the past decade, the Interface Council region has significantly outpaced the rest of Melbourne in population growth. New residents have flocked to the outer suburbs for its affordability and proximity to the metropolitan area. Since 2006, the population within the Interface Council region has increased by nearly 43.25%[2] and further population growth of 11.60% is expected over the next four years.[3] The steady population increase has resulted in seven of the ten Interface Councils being regarded as Growth Areas – Cardinia, Casey, Hume, Melton, Mitchell, Wyndham and Whittlesea.

The rapid growth and chronic underfunding of the Interface Council region has elevated the strain on local infrastructure and increased the existing infrastructure deficit. Recently imposed rate capping by the State Government has forced local governments to undertake a variety of efficiency exercises in order to manage annual capital and operating commitments. These measures have helped to maintain existing infrastructure, but left little funding for much needed long-term capital investments in roads, recreational facilities, libraries and community spaces.

As local governments work to ensure basic provision of local infrastructure needs, the Interface Council region is also grappling to obtain adequate infrastructure commitments from the State of Victoria for schools, TAFE, aged care, hospitals and public transport capital investments. It is estimated that an injection of $9.8 billion will be needed over a 15-year period to close the infrastructure gap that currently differentiates the Interface areas from other parts of Melbourne by 50 per cent.[4] Ultimately, the provision of services that will be offered through these infrastructure projects will enhance the liveability within the Interface Council region and attract new business prospects, investments and jobs.

For residents of the Interface Council region, lacking infrastructure has led to longer commute times, sparse public transport services, overcrowded schools and limited access to community spaces and recreation facilities. Further population growth will continue to strain these assets and lower the liveability of communities within the Interface Council region. Service figures for mental health, family violence, physiotherapists, disability services, occupational therapists and psychologists show significant

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[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2016. *'Table 2. Estimated Resident Population, Local Government Areas', Victoria, data cube*. Retrieved September 3, 2017, from http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3218.02016?OpenDocument

[2] Australian Bureau of Statistics*, Table 2. Estimated Resident Population, Local Government Areas*, 2017.

[3] Australian Bureau of Statistics*, Table 2. Estimated Resident Population, Local Government Areas*, 2017., State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. (2016). *Victoria in Future 2016: Population and household projections to 2051*. pp. 13 – 14.

[4] Essential Economics. (2013). *One Melbourne or Two? Implications of Population Growth for Infrastructure and Services in Interface Areas.* Carlton. p. ii.

funding gaps between the Interface region and metropolitan Melbourne. It is estimated that an immediate injection of nearly a **quarter of a billion dollars** is needed to close the service gap.[5]

Understanding the impact of the Interface Council infrastructure deficit and service gaps has not been an easy issue for government to fully comprehend. Many see the Interface Council region as an extension of metropolitan Melbourne and in proximity to many amenities and services. However, the stark reality for many residents within Interface Council communities is a lack of access to reliable public transport or the ability to afford the time away from work and family to travel long distances for services. These factors have directly impacted the liveability of many Interface Council communities and illustrate the contrasting levels of services and infrastructure across Melbourne.

Continued sprawl and changing employment landscapes in the Interface Councils region has created a need for more local employment options for residents. The combination of the workforce becoming more skilled and the exit of employees through retirement is significantly altered the demand for jobs that cannot be found within the Interface Councils region.[6] Recent employment numbers indicate that unemployment remains higher in the Interface Councils than the state average.[7] As a result, many residents are either unable to participate in the workforce or face long commutes that often consume 1/12th of their day.[8]

Many of the challenges residents face in Interface Council communities are a direct result of rapid population growth, lagging service provisions and unfunded infrastructure needs. Mixed together, these three variables have inadvertently lowered aspects of liveability that are enjoyed by other suburbs within the Melbourne region.

What is Liveability?

Liveability definitions are plentiful among thought leaders, professionals and experts. Sue West and Marnie Badham provide a comprehensive definition of liveability in their Victoria Growth Areas Authority report, *A Strategic Framework for Creating Liveable New Communities* as:

> *"Being related to the attractiveness and particular amenities a community offers. This means things like fully grown tress, well designed open spaces and walking paths, environmentally sustainable public transport and access to education, recreation and health services. Liveability describes a place where people feel safe, connected to their community, and want to participate in the local economy through investment in business. Also important to liveability is the unique identity of a community defined by cultural development, landmarks, urban design, the developing local economy and the existing natural landscape."[9]*

Similar variations and themes emerge from a breadth of liveability definitions. However, at the heart of understanding a community's liveability is the ability to establish clear domains that broadly cover a

[5] Millar, R., Schneiders, B., & Lucas, C. (2017, July 2). *Outer suburbs deprived of as much as $250m in basic services*. Retrieved from The Age: http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/outer-suburbs- deprived-of-as-much-as-250m-in-basic-services-20170630-gx2878.html

[6] The Boston Consulting Group. (2015). Population Cohorts of Victoria: Fact Pack. Victoria. pp. 3 – 36.

[7] Department of Employment (2017). *Small Area Labour Markets, March 2017*

[8] Department of Human Health and Services. (2016). Geographical profiles and planning products. *2015 Local Government (LGA) Statistical Profiles*. Victoria. Retrieved from https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/Api/downloadmedia/%7B421FD5AF-610C-4451-8180-59EA2E4E41CE%7D

[9] West, S., & Badham, M. (2008). *A Strategic Framework for Creating Liveable New Communities.* p. 6.

series of measurable indicators. Generally, domains appear as overarching themes that are complimented by correlating indicators. In the State of Victoria, the application of domains and indicators are thoroughly explored in *How Liveable is Melbourne? Conceptualising and testing urban liveability indicators: Progress to date* report from Hannah Badland, Rebecca Roberts, Ian Butterworth and Billie Giles-Corti.[10] The *Interface Councils Liveability Snapshot* draws direction from this document to better understand the state of liveability in the Interface Councils region.

What Makes a Liveable Community?

Work to clearly define and measure liveability in Victoria has produced various opinions. International surveys by the Economist Intelligence Unit and Mercer present a comprehensive set of indicators that measure metropolitan Melbourne as a whole. The City of Melbourne evaluates and views liveable communities through population density, urban structure, built form, land use, public space and movement.[11/12] Alpine Shire Council has rebranded their Health and Wellbeing plan as a liveability plan through the lens of sustainability, community, opportunity and connectivity.[13] Similarly, Cardinia Shire Council have taken a more pragmatic approach to liveability and developed the defined liveability domains of active travel, education, employment, food, health and social services, housing and open space and places.[14]

Understanding Interface Liveability

At the beginning of each council term, municipalities are required to submit a Health and Wellbeing Plan to the State of Victoria. Generally, these reports are focused on a set of health and wellbeing priorities that align with overarching council plans for the four-year period. Among the Interface Councils, Health and Wellbeing Plans have varied in approaches and priorities. Many of the Interface Councils' Health and Wellbeing Plans cover aspects of liveability. However, these are not constant across each municipality due to varying approaches to setting and measuring priorities. As a result, it is often difficult to compare liveability between each Interface Council and with municipalities across Victoria.

Over the past five years, the Interface Councils have allocated significant resources to understand how population growth is impacting infrastructure and services throughout the Interface Councils region. *One Melbourne or Two?* identified a clear infrastructure deficit when contrasting inner Melbourne and the Interface Councils region. The recent findings of the *Interface Council Group Human Services Gap Analysis* outlines essential service gaps between the Interface Councils and the rest of Melbourne. Interface Councils' annual budget scorecards have provided detailed insight into reviewing funding deficits and highlighted consecutive funding shortfalls from 2012 to 2016 as well as the recent trend of slight surpluses in 2016/17 and 017/18. While new funding announcements are encouraging, the Interface Councils are concerned that continued cuts to allocations such as the Growing Suburbs Fund will have a profound impact on liveability in communities throughout the Interface Councils region, especially when considering the existing backlog.

[10] Badland, H., Roberts, R., Butterworth, I., & Giles-Corti, B. (2015). *How Liveabile is Melbourne? Conceptualising and testing urban liveability indicators: Progress to date.* Melbourne: The University of Melbourne.
[11] City of Melbourne. (2016). *Local Liveability Study: Establishing a Platform of Evidence to Shape Melbourne's Future.* Melbourne. pp. 5 – 79
[12] City of Melbourne. (2016). *Places for People: Establishing a Platform of Evidence to Shape Melbourne's Future.* Melbourne. pp. 6 – 75
[13] Alpine Shire. (2013). *Alpine Liveability Plan 2013 - 2017.* Bright: Alpine Shire Council. pp. 15 – 19.
[14] Cardinia Shire. (2017). *Cardinia Shire's DRAFT Liveability Plan.* Pakenham: Cardinia Shire Council. pp. 11 – 15.

The findings in these documents have been consistent in establishing a clear pattern of infrastructure deficits and service gaps within the Interface Councils region. Similar findings are echoed in the Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee of Parliament's inquiries on *Growing the Suburbs: Infrastructure and Business Development in Outer Suburban Melbourne* and *Liveability Options in Outer Suburban Melbourne*, which substantiate the evidence to support further infrastructure investments within Interface Council areas.

In an effort to mitigate service gaps and infrastructure deficits, Interface Councils have used Health and Wellbeing Plans as a tool help create more liveable communities. Each Interface Council has had varying degrees of success with enhanced liveability, particularly when grappling with service and infrastructure funding inequality. To begin the process of understanding the true state of liveability within the Interface Council region, the Interface Councils have agreed that a new approach of assessing liveability across Local Government Areas (LGAs) will help to set local community priorities, drive policy changes and assess funding priorities. The *Interface Councils Liveability Snapshot* is the first Interface Council liveability document to provide a comprehensive assessment of the true state of liveability in the Interface Councils region.

Approach to Interface Liveability

With the notion that every Victorian deserves access to jobs and services, no matter where they live, the *Interface Councils Liveability Snapshot* aims to draw attention to the growing gaps in liveability between the Interface Council region and the rest of Melbourne.

The Interface Councils have developed a set of liveability indicators under the established domains of public open space, housing, social infrastructure and services, employment, transport, walkability and food security.

The Interface Councils have identified key priority outcomes that align with seven liveability domains [see *Table 1*]. These priority outcomes are critical for future success of the Interface Councils region. Furthermore, the domains have been aligned with the leading research on liveability in Victoria and paired with priority outcomes that are geared towards meeting the objectives of *Victoria's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy* and *Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050*.

Overview of Domains and Corresponding Priority Outcomes

Domains	Priority Outcomes
Public Open Space	**Green Wedges** • Committed support to fund stewardship, protection and maintenance of Green Wedge spaces • Building communities that encourage active living in public spaces
Housing	**Services** • Further provision and investments in housing services that allow people to live with dignity and seek new opportunity
Employment	**Economic Development/Employment** • Support for local entrepreneurship, business development and jobs
Social Infrastructure & Services	**Community Infrastructure** • Enhanced community infrastructure that includes new builds, asset renewal and general maintenance **Education** • Improved education outcomes through the provision of additional schools for early, primary and secondary education **Services** • Closing of the service gap for Allied Health services, mental health services, family violence, housing and homelessness, alcohol and other drugs, aged care services and disability support • Increased support for seniors through building new modern aged care facilities and hospitals • Investments in connectivity and community cohesion through new libraries
Transport	**Public Transport** • Enhanced bus and rail services that improve access to employment opportunities, services and educational institutions • Car spaces that can help facilitate use of public transportation from train stations **Roads** • Funding for road and bridge improvements to reduce congestion, increase road safety and enhance productivity • Improved time declarations for travel
Walkability	**Roads** • Safe walking communities that are supported by a well-maintained road network **Public Transport** • Access to public transport and amenities that are within walking distance
Food Security	**Green Wedges** • Protection of Green Wedges as sources of healthy food cultivation

Table 1

Interface Liveability Domains & Indicators

Domains and indicators used for the purpose of the *Interface Councils Liveability Snapshot* primarily draw on *How liveable is Melbourne: Conceptualising and testing urban liveability indicators: progress to date*, the *Liveability Assessment Tool* developed by Hunter New England Population Health and feedback from Interface Councils on liveability focuses. *Table 2* outlines each domain and corresponding indicator for the purpose of the *Interface Councils Liveability Snapshot*.

Liveability Domains and Indicators

Domain	Indicator	
Public Open Space	• Average number of recreation sites • Number of Australian rules ovals • Public open space per person (m²) • Civic squares & promenades (ha) • Conservation reserves (ha)	• Natural & semi-natural open space (ha) • Parks & gardens (ha) • Recreation corridors (ha) • Public open space as a proportion of LGA
Housing	• Aged care residential places • Social housing as a percentage of total dwellings • Median weekly rent for 3-bedroom home	• Households with rental stress • Households with mortgage stress
Employment	• Unemployment rate • Employment self-sufficiency • Share of State labour force, local jobs and state unemployment	• People reporting adequate work-life balance • Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD)
Social Services & Infrastructure	• Pharmacies per 1,000 population • Dental service sites per 1,000 population • Allied health service sites per 1,000 population • General practice clinics per 1,000 population • General practitioners per 1,000 population • People reporting high/very high psychological distress	• Family violence incidents per 1,000 population • Percentage of Code 1 responses <= 15 minutes • People who attend a local community event • People who are members of a sports group • People who could definitely access community services and resources • Average number of pools
Transport	• Dwellings with no motor vehicle • People with at least 2-hour daily commute • Journeys to work by car • Percentage of people who live near public transport • Journeys to work by public transport • Number of Parking Spots at Metropolitan Train Stations	• Number of Taxi Ranks at Metropolitan Train Stations • Number of Bike Racks • Number of Bike Lockers • Number of Bike Cages • Overall Transit Walk Score®
Walkability	• Overall Walk Score® • Grocery Store Walk Score® • School Walk Score®	• Population within 400m of public open space • Park Walk Score®
Food Security	• People with food insecurity	• People who do not meet dietary guidelines for either fruit or vegetable consumption

Table 2

The Liveability Domains

The domains for the *Interface Councils Liveability Snapshot* have been selected to align with the leading research that is currently being undertaken to assess liveability in the Melbourne region. However, to give greater context to each domain and how they are specifically relevant to the Interface Councils region, this section provides broad background information and explains how indicators aim to capture the liveability aspects of each domain.

Public Open Space

Open space is an essential component of the modern urban landscape. The Victorian State Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) stipulates that open space is a location for participation in civic life and can help to:

- Improve psychological health and wellbeing
- Increase physical fitness
- Facilitate social interaction and cohesion
- Promote community pride
- Enhance child development through play[15]

The Victoria Planning Authority (VPA) suggest that open space can include parks, pathways, roadway greens, land for recreation, environmental purposes, a visual amenity, golf courses, cemeteries and other types of alternative use open spaces.[16] The Interface Councils are home to some of the most pristine open space within the Melbourne region and manage 90 per cent of Green Wedges in Victoria.[17] In addition to being stewards of Green Wedges, the Interface Councils are also some of the largest open space owners. Each Interface Council owns over 50 per cent of open space in their respected municipality and maintains large swathes of public space for recreational use, which results in significant operating commitments each year.

The 'Public Open Space' domain includes a series of indicators that provide a fulsome picture of how residents utilise open space within the Interface Councils region and how these essential urban elements compare to other LGAs in Melbourne.

Housing

During the next 35 years, 1.6 million dwellings will be constructed to meet the housing needs of Melbourne's growing population.[18] Population estimates anticipate Melbourne will grow to over 10 million residents by 2051.[19] To ensure that buyers and renters can continue to access affordable housing, the Victorian State Government has put forward a variety of initiatives through the plan *Home for Victorians: Affordability, access and choice*.

The Interface Councils encompass seven of Melbourne's growth areas. These areas are part of a plan to zone 100,000 lots for development by December 2018. New homebuyers who are purchasing in the Interface Councils region for the first time will be exempt from stamp duty on homes up to $600,000.

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[15] State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. (2015). Planning Practice Note 70: Open Space Strategies. Victoria, Australia: Environment, Land, Water and Planning. n.p.

[16] Victorian Planning Authority. (2017). *Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution.* Victoria State Government. p. 4

[17] State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land Water & Planning. (2017). *2017-2019 Growing Suburbs Fund: Application Guidelines.* Victoria State Government. p. 3.

[18] State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. (2017). *Metropolitan Planning Strategy: Plan Melbourne 2017-2050.* Brunswick: Impact Digital. p. 44.

[19] State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. (2016). *Victoria in Future 2016: Population and household projections to 2051. pp. 1 – 2.*

The State Government has also put plans in motion to establish a $1 billion Victorian Social Housing Growth Fund, build 6,000 new subsidised rentals, and renew 2,500 dwellings in the existing social housing portfolio.[20] The combination of increased zoned lots, stamp duty relief and additional social housing stock are central policies that will have a profound impact on sustaining an affordable housing market for all residents in the Interface Councils region.

Central to liveability is the provision of housing. Given the pivotal role that accessible and affordable housing plays in a vibrant and liveable community, the 'Housing' domain observes the state of financial stresses tied to housing, the current provision of social housing units and the availability of Commonwealth government-subsidised aged care spaces in the Interface Councils region.

Employment

At the heart of a liveable community is a workforce that has the ability to access local employment opportunities. The State of Victoria is currently undergoing a significant shift in the types of work people obtain and the number of people within the workforce. Currently, the Victorian labour force exceeds 3.25 million people,[21] with a recent decline due to people exiting the workforce through retirement. Furthermore, underemployment and job churn remains high among educated young workers. An increase in part-time work and a shift from manufacturing to service and high skilled jobs has also impacted the Victorian workforce. This has been most evident among male workers who live in more disadvantaged areas of Victoria.[22]

The Interface Council region plays a major role in Victoria's economic success. Over 25 per cent of Victoria's labour force live in the Interface Councils region. Almost half are employed within the 'Technical and Trade', 'Machinery Operators and Drivers' or 'Labourers' categories, which is approximately 10 per cent higher than the state average. Professionals and managers account for approximately 27 per cent of the work force and administrative/clerical or sales roles make up 25.55 per cent of the labour force. Of these active workforce participants, 60 per cent are full-time employees and 28.8 per cent work part-time.[23]

The 'Employment' domain considers the more finite aspects of the region's workforce by providing an understanding of how residents participate within the labour force. Interface Councils are benchmarked across Melbourne and Victoria to comprehend the state of the workforce in the region.

Social Services & Infrastructure

For many residents, local government acts as the frontline provider of many services that residents and businesses rely upon. These services are a vital component of creating and sustaining liveable communities. In Victoria, local government is responsible for overseeing and delivering the following social services:

- Health services (food safety, public pool safety, immunisation, maternal and child health)
- Community services (family and children's services, youth services, aged services, disability services, home and community care)
- Recreation and Culture (public libraries, sports and leisure centres, parks and public spaces, open spaces)

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[20] State of Victoria Department of Treasury and Finance. (2017). *Homes for Victorians: Affordability, access and choice.* Port Melbourne: State of Victoria. pp. 4 – 31.
[21] Department of Employment, 2007.
[22] The Boston Consulting Group, 2015. pp. 4- 28.
[23] Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2012). *2011 Census QuickStats*. Retrieved from http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/census.

- Emergency Management

The Interface Councils have seen a significant increase in child births and the utilisation of Maternal & Child Health Enrolment over the past three years.[24] The 2016 Census shows that over 410,000 families now call the Interface Councils region home, with just under two children per family.[25] DELWP Victoria projections from 2011 – 2021 anticipate that total household growth will be positive across all ten Interface Councils, averaging nearly 3% per year.[26] The combination of new families will put increased pressures on existing service providers, who are currently unable to meet the demands within the Interface Councils region. State and local services will continue to face challenges that place significant challenges on the delivery of health, education and social services that ensure families are able to enjoy a more liveable community.

Multiple indicators from a range of services have been included as part of the "Social Service & Infrastructure" domain. Each indicator measures aspects of service availability, service delivery and community infrastructure that impacts the social fabric of a community.

Transport and Walkability

The release of *Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050* has reaffirmed the Government's intent to achieve 20-minute neighbourhoods within metropolitan Melbourne. Set as a short-term action in the report's five-year implementation plan, DELWP has put forward clear steps to embed the 20-minute neighbourhood concept as a 'key goal' across government. Termed a 'Whole-of-government approach to a 20-minute neighbourhood', the action calls for:

- Identifying and undertaking flagship 20-minute neighbourhood projects with the metropolitan regions and the private sector to focus planning and implementation work
- Providing guidance to local government on embedding the 20-minute neighbourhood concept into local planning schemes
- Building community partnerships to help deliver 20-minute neighbourhoods
- Improving information and research to be shared with local government[27]

Through the work undertaken by the Heart Foundation (Victoria) and the Victorian Government, a 20-minute neighbourhood must:

- Be safe, accessible and well connected for pedestrians and cyclists to optimise active transport
- Offer high-quality public realm and open spaces
- Provide services and destination that support local living
- Facilitate access to quality public transport that connects people to jobs and higher-order services
- Deliver housing/population at densities that make local service and transport viable
- Facilitate thriving local economies.[28]

[24] Interface Councils. (2016). Internal Growth Survey, September 2016.

[25] Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *2016 Census QuickStats*. Retrieved from http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/census.

[26] State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. (2016). *Victoria in Future 2016: Population and household projections to 2051*. pp. 14 – 15.

[27] State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. (2017). *Five-year Implimentation Plan: Plan Melbourne 2017-2050.* Brunswick: Impact Press. p. 26.

[28] State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. (2017). *Metropolitan Planning Strategy: Plan Melbourne 2017-2050.* Brunswick: Impact Digital. p. 98.

At the centre of the 20-minute neighbourhood is the ability of residents to shop, work, learn, have local public transport and access services and amenities within 20-minutes of their home. Many of the more central municipalities of Melbourne have already achieved the desired goals of *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*. In contrast, neighbourhoods within the Interface Councils region are far from having the same level of access to essential services and amenities. This spatial disparity has become significantly evident in areas that are featuring a more urban feel, but do not have essential services, public transport, local jobs and vital amenities that contribute to the overall liveability for residents. As a result, many residents are dependent on the use of a vehicle and are unable to use active transportation to commute. This is having a profound impact the on socio-economic status and the overall health and wellbeing of residents in the Interface Councils Region.

Both the 'Walkability' and 'Transport' domains evaluate the state of how residents travel throughout their communities and Melbourne. More specifically, these indicators are a means to understand how residents of the Interface Councils region use their vehicles and how they engage in active transportation options such as walking and public transport use.

Food Security

Food insecurity is defined as the 'irregular access to safe, nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable food from non-emergency sources.'[29] The 2015 – 2019 *Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan* outlines the need for communities to enhance liveability by cultivating food environments that encourage healthy diets.[30] Across Victoria, food insecurity issues are becoming more prevalent. In 2016, Foodbank Victoria increased distribution by 31 per cent and nearly 134,000 people were assisted each month. Foodbank Victoria agencies have indicated that they were only able to meet the full demand for food relief 37 per cent of the time.[31]

Interface Councils have continually worked to provide a foundation for healthy living within their communities. Health and Wellbeing Plans of Interface Councils specifically focus on a range of healthy living goals, including those that are centred on cultivating healthy eating. While there are growing concerns regarding access to food for the most vulnerable people in Victoria, recent research suggests that the price of food across the Melbourne region is not significantly different. However, there is an increased concern that residents of outer suburbs may have poorer access to healthy food options. [32]

Melbourne is positioned in close proximity to a highly productive agriculture region, which is primarily located within the Interface Councils region and is known as the inner foodbowl. Combined with the outer foodbowl, the region can provide 82 per cent of vegetable and 13 per cent[33] of Melbourne's fruit needs. Many of the agricultural areas within the Interface Council region are located on optimal agriculture land in Cardinia, the Yarra Valley, Silvan/Monbulk, Werribee South and Mornington Peninsula. The increased demand for land in the region has impacted the viability of traditional and non-traditional agriculture entities that help to cultivate fresh food for the Interface Councils region and Melbourne.

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[29] Vic Health . (2009). *Ten ways local government can act on food security: Overview.* n.p.
[30] State of Victoria Department of Health and Human Services. (2015). *Victorian public health and wellbeing plan.* Melbourne: State of Victoria. p. 46.
[31] Foodbank Australia. (2016). *Foodbank Hunger Report.* Wiley. p. 40.
[32] Rossimel, A., Sun, H. S., Larsen, K., & Palermo, C. (2016). Access and affordability of nutritious food in metropolitan Melbourne. *Nutrition & Dietetics, 74*. pp. 13 – 17.
[33] Carey, R., Larsen, K., Sheridan, J., & Candy, S. (2016). *Melbourne's food future: Planning a resilient city foodbowl.* The University of Melbourne, Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab. p. 25.

Ensuring food security for the Interface Councils region will be an ongoing concern as Melbourne's population grows. However, in the context of this report, the 'Food Security' indicators evaluate access to healthy food options within the Interface Councils region.

The Indicators

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) produces an annual set of Local Government Area (LGA) statistical profiles. LGA profiles measure a broad range of population, health, social and service topics, which provide ongoing insight into the liveability of the Interface Councils region. These indicators have been incorporated and analysed for the *Interface Councils Liveability Snapsho*t. Further to this analysis, LGA data sets that are publicly available from other Victorian departments and agencies pertaining to public transportation, ambulance response times, recreation facilities and open space have been analysed to develop liveability indicators for this document. Employment and economic information from the Department of Employment and Id National Economic Indicators for each Victorian LGA have also been considered and assessed. Each dataset offers a greater understanding of how Interface Councils compare to other municipalities across Melbourne and Victoria, illustrating a comprehensive picture of liveability throughout all regions of Melbourne.

To properly assess aspects of walkability within LGAs, the centroid of each Statistical Area 1 (SA1) within the Melbourne region was analysed by Walk Score®. In the absence of state LGA data on walkability, Walk Score® measured walking routes to amenities within a five-minute walk (400m) for each SA1 centroid by analysing population density, block length and intersection density. More specific scores have also been produced to assess walkability to parks, schools, public transport and grocery stores. Walk Score® assigns a score out of 100, as shown in *Table 3* to determine walkability.

Walk Score® Ranking

Walk Score®	Description
90-100	Walker's Paradise – Daily errands do not require a car
70-89	Very Walkable – Most errands can be accomplished on foot
50-69	Somewhat Walkable – Some errands can be accomplished on foot
25-49	Car-Dependent – Most errands require a car
0-24	Car-Dependent – Almost all errands require a car

Source: Redfin Real Estate, 2017   *Table 3*

Each data set has been used to develop an indicator that allows consistent measurement for Interface Councils, Middle Melbourne, Metro Melbourne, Victoria (Regional) and Victoria. Portions of 'Public Open Space', 'Transport' and 'Walkability' analysis are limited to regional Melbourne and do not include a state-wide analysis. These groupings are noted in *Table 4*.

LGA Groupings

Local Government Area Grouping Name	Local Governments Included in Grouping
Interface Councils	Cardinia (S), Casey (C), Hume (C), Melton (C), Mitchell (S), Mornington Peninsula (S), Nillumbik (S), Whittlesea (C), Wyndham (C), Yarra Ranges (S)
Middle Melbourne	Banyule (C), Bayside (C), Boroondara (C), Brimpank (C), Darebin (C), Frankston (C), Glen Eira (C), Greater Dandenong (C), Hobsons Bay (C), Kingston (C), Knox (C), Manningham (C), Maroondah (C), Monash (C), Moonee Valley (C), Moreland (C), Whitehorse (C)
Melbourne Metro	Maribyrnong (C), Melbourne (C), Port Phillip (C), Stonington (C), Yarra (C)
Victoria (Regional)	Alpine (S), Ararat (RC), Ballarat (C), Bass Coast (S), Baw Baw (S), Benalla (RC), Buloke (S), Campaspe (S), Central Goldfields (S), Colac-Otway (S), Corangamite (S), East Gippsland (S), Gannawarra (S), Glenelg (S), Golden Plains (S), Greater Bendigo (C), Greater Geelong (C), Greater Shepparton (C), Hepburn (S), Hindmarsh (S), Horsham (RC), Indigo (S), Latrobe (C), Loddon (S), Macedon Ranges (S), Mansfield (S), Mildura (RC), Moira (S), Moorabool (S), Mount Alexander (S), Moyne (S), Murrindindi (S), Northern Grampians (S), Pyrenees (S), Queenscliffe (B), South Gippsland (S), Southern Grampians (S), Strathbogie (S), Surf Coast (S), Swan Hill (RC), Towong (S)
Victoria	**All** Government Areas in Victoria
Greater Melbourne	Banyule (C), Bayside (C), Boroondara (C), Brimpank (C), Cardinia (S), Casey (C), Darebin (C), Frankston (C), Glen Eira (C), Greater Dandenong (C), Hobsons Bay (C), Hume (C), Kingston (C), Knox (C), Manningham (C), Maribyrnong (C), Maroondah (C),), Melbourne (C), Mitchell (S), Monash (C), Moonee Valley (C), Mornington Peninsula (S), Moreland (C), Nillumbik (S), Port Phillip (C), Stonington (C), Whitehorse (C), Whittlesea (C), Wyndham (C), Yarra (C), Yarra Ranges (S)
*Due to limited data availability, some indicators only display findings for the Melbourne Region. These limitations are evident for a number of indicators under the domains for 'Public Open Space', 'Walkability' and 'Transport'. This grouping is titled 'Greater Melbourne'.	

Table 4

Liveability Findings

Interface Councils have continually worked to advance partnership opportunities with state and federal government on projects that align with the Interface Councils Group priorities and liveability objectives [as seen in *Table 1*]. While there is significant cooperation between all levels of government to advance a collective agenda by the Interface Councils, there remains a varying degree of disparity between the Interface Councils and the rest of Melbourne on certain aspects of liveability. Due to this reality, the *Interface Councils Liveability Snapshot* measures the liveability indicators of each municipality in Interface Councils group and provides a collective outlook as to how the rest of metropolitan Melbourne compares. It is in these details that levels of liveability can be closely analysed and understood appropriately.

Many indicators illustrate a clear pattern of lower liveability throughout the Interface Council region. This is particularly evident when evaluating indicators that pertain to service levels, transport, walkability, food security and employment domains. In contrast, open space is a significant strength for Interface Councils and indicate Melbourne's outer municipalities offer a unique urban experience with large parcels of open space. However, harnessing the value of these assets to create new economic opportunities will require new investment from all levels of government to build and maintain the appropriate infrastructure.

Public Open Space

Interface Councils perform relatively well in regards to the availability of public open space throughout the region. The region boasts the highest number of public open space per person and leads Melbourne when looking at overall hectares of promenades, conservation reserves, natural and semi-natural open space, parks and gardens, recreation corridors.

Average number of recreation sites

Grouping Name	Number of recreation sites
Interface Councils	75.60
Middle Melbourne	77.76
Melbourne Metro	62.00
Victoria (Regional)	54.21
Victoria	62.48

Source: Department Health and Human Services Sports and Recreation Facilities Data, 2016

Number of Australian rules ovals

Grouping Name	Number of Australian rules football ovals
Interface Councils	23.7
Middle Melbourne	22.71
Melbourne Metro	10.60
Victoria (Regional)	12.19
Victoria	15.81

Source: Department Health and Human Services Sports and Recreation Facilities Data, 2016

Public open space per person (m²)

Grouping Name	Public open space per person (m²)
Interface Councils	78.1
Middle Melbourne	52.1
Melbourne Metro	38.7
Greater Melbourne	57.7

Source: Victoria Planning Authority, Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution, 2017

Civic squares & promenades (ha)

Grouping Name	Civic squares & promenades
Interface Councils	1.31
Middle Melbourne	0.14
Melbourne Metro	2.5
Greater Melbourne	0.87

Source: Victoria Planning Authority, Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution, 2017

Conservation reserves (ha)

Grouping Name	Conservation reserves
Interface Councils	83.08
Middle Melbourne	36.16
Melbourne Metro	0
Greater Melbourne	45.17

Source: Victoria Planning Authority, Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution, 2017

Natural & semi-natural open Space (ha)

Grouping Name	Natural & semi-natural open space
Interface Councils	407.41
Middle Melbourne	366.92
Melbourne Metro	137.56
Greater Melbourne	343.74

Source: Victoria Planning Authority, Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution, 2017

Parks & gardens (ha)

Grouping Name	Parks & gardens
Interface Councils	232.78
Middle Melbourne	144.54
Melbourne Metro	152.38
Greater Melbourne	173.34

Source: Victoria Planning Authority, Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution, 2017

Recreation corridors (ha)

Grouping Name	Recreation corridors
Interface Councils	27.91
Middle Melbourne	14.43
Melbourne Metro	2.34
Greater Melbourne	16.75

Source: Victoria Planning Authority, Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution, 2017

Public open space as a proportion of LGA

Grouping Name	Public open space as a proportion of municipal area
Interface Councils	7.0%
Middle Melbourne	11.3%
Melbourne Metro	14.8%
Greater Melbourne	9.3%

Source: Victoria Planning Authority, Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution, 2017

Housing

The Interface Council region has a number of significant housing challenges that are evident when compared with middle and metro Melbourne, and the rest of Victoria.

Interface Councils' residents report the highest level of mortgage and rental stress in Victoria. Further complicating the matter is a lack of social housing, which is the lowest as a percentage of total dwellings in the Interface Councils region. Most concerning is that the Interface Councils region has the lowest average rent for a 3-bedroom apartment, but the highest rental stress rates.

Aged care spaces remain relatively low given the Interface Councils' growing population. Middle Melbourne continues to have more aged care residential spaces than Melbourne's fastest growing region.

Aged care residential places

Grouping Name	Aged care residential places
Interface Councils	854
Middle Melbourne	1,377
Melbourne Metro	631
Victoria (Regional)	341
Victoria	647

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Social housing as a percentage of total dwellings

Grouping Name	Social housing as a percentage of total dwellings
Interface Councils	2.14%
Middle Melbourne	3.62%
Melbourne Metro	8.90%
Victoria (Regional)	3.31%
Victoria	3.90%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Median weekly rent for 3-bedroom home

Grouping Name	Median weekly rent for 3-bedroom home
Interface Councils	$336
Middle Melbourne	$428
Melbourne Metro	$631
Victoria (Regional)	$263
Victoria	$340

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Households with rental stress

Grouping Name	Households with rental stress
Interface Councils	27.81%
Middle Melbourne	24.76%
Melbourne Metro	19.74%
Victoria (Regional)	24.08%
Victoria	25.10%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Households with mortgage stress

Grouping Name	Households with mortgage stress
Interface Councils	13.16%
Middle Melbourne	10.25%
Melbourne Metro	6.92%
Victoria (Regional)	12.06%
Victoria	11.40%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Employment

Unemployment remains higher in the Interface Councils region than the state average and well above the unemployment rate of middle and metro Melbourne. Regional Victoria unemployment rates are 1.4% below that of the Interface Councils region. Employment self-sufficiency[*] in the Interface Councils region is also well below the state average, indicating a lower level of local jobs provided in the region. In addition, the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) scores the Interface Councils region below middle and metro Melbourne, indicating a lower level of advantage.

*Employment self-sufficiency measure the number of local jobs provided in a particular geographic location against the number of residents in the labour force (including unemployed job seekers) in that location.

Unemployment rate

Grouping Name	Unemployment rate
Interface Councils	6.9%
Middle Melbourne	5.7%
Melbourne Metro	4.5%
Victoria (Regional)	5.5%
Victoria	5.8%

Department of Employment – Small Area Labour Markets, March 2017

Employment self-sufficiency

Grouping Name	Employment self-sufficiency
Interface Councils	62.5%
Middle Melbourne	80.8%
Melbourne Metro	250.6%
Victoria (Regional)	81.6%
Victoria	93.4%

Source: Department of Employment – Small Area Labour Markets, June 2016
Id National Economic Indicators – National Institute of Economic and Industry Research 2015/2016

Share of state labour force, local jobs and state unemployment

Grouping Name	Share of state labour force	Share of state job provision	Share of state unemployment
Interface Councils	25.8%	17.1%	30.3%
Middle Melbourne	41.3%	35.8%	40.5%
Melbourne Metro	10.0%	27.0%%	7.7%
Victoria (Regional)	22.9%	20.0%	21.6%

Source: Department of Employment – Small Area Labour Markets, March 2017
Id National Economic Indicators – National Institute of Economic and Industry Research 2015/2016

People reporting adequate work-life balance

Grouping Name	People reporting adequate work-life balance
Interface Councils	50.85%
Middle Melbourne	57.16%
Melbourne Metro	52.28%
Victoria (Regional)	47.93%
Victoria	53.10%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD)

Grouping Name	Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage
Interface Councils	1,014
Middle Melbourne	1,026
Melbourne Metro	1,034
Victoria (Regional)	979
Victoria	1,010

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Social Infrastructure and Services

Residents of the Interface Councils region have less pharmacies, dental service locations, general practitioners and Allied Health service sites per 1,000 people than the rest of Melbourne. Access to services such as libraries, neighbourhood centres and health centres remained comparable throughout Melbourne.

Ambulance response times in the Interface Councils region for 'Code 1 responses' within 15 minutes occur less than 70% of the time, which is more than 15% lower than the rest of Melbourne and slightly better than the state average. Family violence incidents are more likely to occur within the Interface Councils region, with nearly 14 incidents being reported per 1,000 people. Residents throughout the Interface Councils region also report higher levels of psychological distress than middle or metro Melbourne. The reported level of psychological distress also exceeds the state average and indicates a need for improved access to mental health and support services.

Participation in local community events sits at 53.38%, which is just below the state level of 55.7%. This participation rate is approximately 2.49% higher than middle Melbourne and 3.76% lower than metro Melbourne. Similar levels of participation in local sports groups are also comparable with the rest of Melbourne. The combination of these two indicators suggests that there are similar levels of community participation across Melbourne.

Pharmacies per 1,000 population

Grouping Name	Pharmacies per 1,000 population
Interface Councils	0.17
Middle Melbourne	0.23
Melbourne Metro	0.34
Victoria (Regional)	0.31
Victoria	0.20

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Dental service sites per 1,000 population

Grouping Name	Dental service sites per 1,000 population
Interface Councils	0.16
Middle Melbourne	0.34
Melbourne Metro	0.54
Victoria (Regional)	0.24
Victoria	0.30

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Allied health service sites per 1,000 population

Grouping Name	Allied health service sites per 1,000 population
Interface Councils	0.5
Middle Melbourne	0.9
Melbourne Metro	1.3
Victoria (Regional)	1.0
Victoria	0.9

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

General practice clinics per 1,000 population

Grouping Name	General practice clinics per 1,000 population
Interface Councils	0.21
Middle Melbourne	0.34
Melbourne Metro	0.52
Victoria (Regional)	0.49
Victoria	0.30

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

General practitioners per 1,000 population

Grouping Name	General practitioners per 1,000 population
Interface Councils	0.96
Middle Melbourne	1.19
Melbourne Metro	1.90
Victoria (Regional)	1.18
Victoria	1.20

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

People reporting high/very high psychological distress

Grouping Name	People reporting high/very high psychological distress
Interface Councils	13.55%
Middle Melbourne	11.66%
Melbourne Metro	10.58%
Victoria (Regional)	11.89%
Victoria	12.60%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Family violence incidents per 1,000 population

Grouping Name	Family violence incidents per 1,000 population
Interface Councils	13.80
Middle Melbourne	9.57
Melbourne Metro	9.32
Victoria (Regional)	14.59
Victoria	12.4

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Percentage of Code 1 responses <= 15 minutes

Grouping Name	% of Code 1 responses <= 15 mins
Interface Councils	69.65%
Middle Melbourne	85.28%
Melbourne Metro	87.76%
Victoria (Regional)	55.71%
Victoria	65.86%

Source: Ambulance Victoria's Performance: 2016/17 Quarter 4 (1st April 2017 to 30th June 2017)

People who attend a local community event

Grouping Name	People who attended a local community event
Interface Councils	53.38%
Middle Melbourne	50.89%
Melbourne Metro	57.14%
Victoria (Regional)	73.68%
Victoria	55.70%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

People who are members of a sports group

Grouping Name	People who are members of a sports group
Interface Councils	24.73%
Middle Melbourne	26.32%
Melbourne Metro	24.04%
Victoria (Regional)	34.74%
Victoria	26.50%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

People who could definitely access community services and resources

Grouping Name	People who could definitely access community services and resources
Interface Councils	84.96%
Middle Melbourne	84.17%
Melbourne Metro	86.12%
Victoria (Regional)	87.16%
Victoria	85.20%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Average number of pools

Grouping Name	Number of pools
Interface Councils	6.4
Middle Melbourne	6.41
Melbourne Metro	6.60
Victoria (Regional)	6.49
Victoria	6.47

Source: Department Health and Human Services Sports and Recreation Facilities Data, 2016

Transport

Access to public transport is dismal when compared to the services that are provided only mere kilometres away in middle Melbourne. Only 57.33% of residents live near public transport and the overall Transit Walk Score® indicates that there are few public transport options within close proximity to the centroids of SA1s in the Interface Councils region. Residents in the Interface Councils region are unsurprisingly less likely to travel to work by public transport and heavily rely on personal vehicles for travel to and from their place of employment. Almost one in five Interface Councils residents face a 2-hour commute to work each day. This far exceeds the travel times of middle and metro Melbourne.

Low public transportation usage is likely a combination of lack of proximity to homes, infrequent services times, poor connectivity between transport options, inadequate car parking spaces at train stations, as well as less bike storage facilities than those that are enjoyed by the rest of Melbourne. As a result, a clear link can be drawn with higher rates of car ownership throughout the Interface Councils region.

Dwellings with no motor vehicle

Grouping Name	Dwellings with no motor vehicle
Interface Councils	4.31%
Middle Melbourne	8.89%
Melbourne Metro	22.84%
Victoria (Regional)	5.98%
Victoria	8.70%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

People with at least 2-hour daily commute

Grouping Name	People with at least 2-hour daily commute
Interface Councils	17.13%
Middle Melbourne	13.33%
Melbourne Metro	5.68%
Victoria (Regional)	7.35%
Victoria	11.60%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Journeys to work by car

Grouping Name	Journeys to work by car
Interface Councils	73.47%
Middle Melbourne	65.13%
Melbourne Metro	42.84%
Victoria (Regional)	66.53%
Victoria	66.20%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Percentage of people who live near public transport

Grouping Name	People who live near public transport
Interface Councils	57.33%
Middle Melbourne	93.55%
Melbourne Metro	98.84%
Victoria (Regional)	29.59%
Victoria	73.90%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Journeys to work by public transport

Grouping Name	Journeys to work by public transport
Interface Councils	7.28%
Middle Melbourne	14.91%
Melbourne Metro	25.26%
Victoria (Regional)	1.52%
Victoria	11.10%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Number of parking spots at metropolitan train stations

Grouping Name	Number of parking spots
Interface Councils	1189.7
Middle Melbourne	1371.2
Melbourne Metro	501.0
Greater Melbourne	1178.5

Note: Mitchell, Melton and Mannigham do not have stations and are excluded from this analysis
Source: PTV Metropolitan Individual Train Station Profiles, 2017

Number of taxi ranks at metropolitan train stations

Grouping Name	Number of Taxi Ranks
Interface Councils	0.8
Middle Melbourne	1.8
Melbourne Metro	0.6
Greater Melbourne	1.3

Note: Mitchell, Melton and Mannigham do not have stations and are excluded from this analysis
Source: PTV Metropolitan Individual Train Station Profiles, 2017

Number of bike racks

Grouping Name	Number of bike racks
Interface Councils	14.2
Middle Melbourne	42.35
Melbourne Metro	12.20
Greater Melbourne	28.84

Note: Mitchell, Melton and Mannigham do not have stations and are excluded from this analysis
Source: PTV Metropolitan Individual Train Station Profiles, 2017

Number of bike lockers

Grouping Name	Number of bike lockers
Interface Councils	12.8
Middle Melbourne	38.18
Melbourne Metro	8.80
Greater Melbourne	25.66

Note: Mitchell, Melton and Mannigham do not have stations and are excluded from this analysis
Source: PTV Metropolitan Individual Train Station Profiles, 2017

Number of bike cages

Grouping Name	Number bike cages
Interface Councils	2
Middle Melbourne	1.82
Melbourne Metro	1.00
Greater Melbourne	1.75

Note: Mitchell, Melton and Mannigham do not have stations and are excluded from this analysis

Source: PTV Metropolitan Individual Train Station Profiles, 2017

Overall Transit Walk Score®

Grouping Name	Transit Score
Interface Councils	33.38
Middle Melbourne	48.84
Melbourne Metro	76.97
Greater Melbourne	46.48

Source: Redfin Real Estate, 2017

Walkability

Residents of the Interface Councils region have significantly less walkable neighbourhoods when contrasted with middle and metro Melbourne. The overall Walk Score® indicates that residents are virtually dependent on a vehicle in order to access services and amenities. Residents of the Interface Councils region also face substantial barriers when attempting to access a grocery store or a park by foot. While access to parks may be limited by walking, 84.3% of residents enjoy access to public open space within 400m. This is substantially higher than middle Melbourne and falls just below metro Melbourne at 85%. Walking to school remains attainable in some areas of the Interface Councils region. However, it is likely that most students would travel to school by vehicle, as schools generally fall outside of a 400m distance from statistical areas that average 400 residents.

The lack of access residents have to services and amenities by foot also suggests that communities within the Interface Councils region are less active. The dependence on a vehicle for daily needs would likely reduce physical activity levels and active leisure time within open space.

Overall Walk Score®

Grouping Name	Walk Score
Interface Councils	29.872
Middle Melbourne	55.477
Melbourne Metro	84.788
Greater Melbourne	49.775

Source: Redfin Real Estate, 2017

Grocery Store Walk Score®

Grouping Name	Grocery Score
Interface Councils	33.16
Middle Melbourne	57.18
Melbourne Metro	84.10
Greater Melbourne	51.77

Source: Redfin Real Estate, 2017

School Walk Score®

Grouping Name	Schools Score
Interface Councils	55.62
Middle Melbourne	78.77
Melbourne Metro	91.83
Greater Melbourne	72.22

Source: Redfin Real Estate, 2017

Population within 400m of public open space

Grouping Name	Population within 400m of public open space
Interface Councils	84.3%
Middle Melbourne	78.5%
Melbourne Metro	85.0%
Greater Melbourne	81.0%

Source: Victoria Planning Authority, Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution, 2017

Park Walk Score®

Grouping Name	Parks Score
Interface Councils	16.99
Middle Melbourne	64.37
Melbourne Metro	92.78
Greater Melbourne	51.13

Source: Redfin Real Estate, 2017

Food Security

Residents in the Interface Councils region are more likely to face food insecurity than anywhere else in Melbourne. The level of food insecurity surpasses the state and regional Victoria averages. The ability of residents in the Interface Councils region to meet daily dietary guidelines is slightly lower when equated with the levels found across the Melbourne region and higher than the state wide average.

People with food insecurity

Grouping Name	People with food insecurity
Interface Council	5.52%
Middle Melbourne	3.54%
Melbourne Metro	2.74%
Victoria (Regional)	5.15%
Victoria	4.60%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

People who do not meet dietary guidelines for either fruit or vegetable consumption

Grouping Name	People who do not meet dietary guidelines for either fruit or vegetable consumption
Interface Council	49.03%
Middle Melbourne	47.28%
Melbourne Metro	46.58%
Victoria (Regional)	50.50%
Victoria	48.60%

Source: Department of Health and Human Services 2015 Local Government Statistical Profiles

Liveability Indicators Summary

The indicators used to assess the state of liveability in the Interface Councils region reveal that significant liveability gaps exist between the Interface and the rest of Melbourne. Transport and walkability within the Interface Councils region highlights that amenities are needed within closer proximity to address issues such as food insecurity and access to employment. While only a short distance from the middle suburbs of Melbourne, the Interface Councils region has limited access to transport options and significantly less infrastructure at Metropolitan train stations to accommodate cyclists or those arriving by vehicle.

Higher levels of unemployment and few opportunities for local employment provide a greater understanding of why residents may commute longer than 2-hours per day. In addition to these personal pressures, residents endure higher levels of mortgage/rental stress. The combination of these factors could explain higher levels of psychological distress within the Interface Councils region. Complicating this matter further, are barriers to accessing services that assist with
mental wellbeing, overall health, public transport and employment.

Residents of the Interface Councils region are well positioned to take advantage of an array of public open spaces. This include conservation, recreation, natural/semi-natural open spaces, recreation facilities and pools. However, in order to unlock the value of these assets, government must commit to helping Interface Councils maintain and invest in new infrastructure that will create economic opportunity for the region.

The Future is Here: Building One Melbourne

Earlier this year, Melbourne was once again named the world's most liveable city by the Economist Intelligence Unit. Welcomed with great fanfare and celebration, Melbournians were reminded that their city was given top marks for the infrastructure, education and healthcare categories. Sadly, the recent liveability rankings do not paint the complete picture of Melbourne's true state. Everyday issues that impact the liveability of the average citizen are not being adequately addressed. The truth is, the Interface Councils region lags behind the rest of the Melbourne region when comparing basic health services, housing, access to public transport, walkable neighbourhoods, food security and employment opportunities.

Over the past five years, moderate progress has been made to make key investments within the Interface Councils region. Leaders from all levels of government acknowledge that there are significant service and infrastructure issues that need to be addressed. Regrettably, action on these needs has been slow to progress. As this *Interface Councils Liveability Snapshot* illustrates, liveability within the Interface Councils region does not compare to the levels achieved within the inner suburbs of Melbourne.
Given the findings of the *Interface Councils Liveability Snapshot*, a frank discussion must now occur on how to address the liveability challenges found in the Interface Councils region. It is through this collaborative discourse that meaningful and practical policy solutions can be developed towards building one Melbourne.

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Interface Councils represents the collective voice of City of Casey, Cardinia Shire Council, Hume City Council, Melton City Council, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, City of Whittlesea, Wyndham City Council and Yarra Ranges Shire Council.

The group of ten municipalities form a ring around outer metropolitan Melbourne. The Interface region includes seven growth area councils. In addition, Interface Councils manage 90% of Green Wedges, some of Melbourne's most important assets.

For more information contact our secretariat on (03) 8317 0111.

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