



Safe environment

Moreland City Council Health Profile

December 2020

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Overview

Environments are surroundings in which we find ourselves every day. Safe home, work, learning, play and public space environments impact many aspects of life, health and wellbeing. Ensuring safety for all regardless of age, gender or background is important for creating better health outcomes for Moreland's community.

Perception of safety is a large factor in reaching optimal health. If perceived safety is low for an individual, they are less likely to participate in community events, engage in active transport and use public transport (Safe Communities, 2015). For example, if parents have a poor perception of safety in the local community, they are less likely to let children walk or ride to school or play outside in parks and playgrounds. All these activities are important for producing healthy communities and healthy people as well as boosting community wellbeing. Crime rates contribute to perceived community safety (OECD, Better Life Index, 2020), in areas with low crime rates people feel safer which enhances wellbeing and encourages participation.

Safe home environments are incredibly important for every individual's health and wellbeing and supporting these safe environments will continue to be a priority area. Family violence is a hugely concerning issue that contributes to poor health outcomes. It is a predominately gendered issue with 1 in 4 women experiencing intimate partner violence and since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic the impact has increased further (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2020). Family violence occurs in a range of situations and is not limited to heterosexual relationships, with research showing that same-sex relationships have very similar rates of family violence. Children are also significantly impacted by family violence as it causes damage to their development, physical, social, emotional and psychological wellbeing (Domestic Violence Victoria, 2019).

Racism is an ongoing issue and dramatically impacts health and wellbeing. The effects of racism limit many people from living fulfilling lives by their definition. It creates job limitations, unfairly distributed resources, lower levels of social engagement and contributes to many mental health issues (VicHealth, 2014). Racism can be:

- Internalised: racist attitudes that shape an individual's beliefs or ideologies
- Interpersonal: interactions between people that display racial discrimination
- Systemic: access to resources and dominance of race in society (VicHealth, 2014).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have long endured racism in Australia. Over half of young Aboriginal Australians (12-26 years) in Victoria have experienced raced based discrimination (VicHealth, 2014). In conjunction with this, many systemic and oppressive behaviours have severely impacted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's health (Australian Indigenous Doctor's Association, 2017). Other people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are also exposed to racism which leads to poor environments for many to live their life in. Health impacts range from high-risk factors for mental health conditions, increased likelihood of physical health problems, poorer child and maternal health outcomes (low birth weight, higher rates of gestational diabetes) and greater risk of community violence (VicHealth, 2014).

Moreland's commitment to safe environments is to ensure that all feel safe, welcome and can access what they need when they need it. Without safe environments, many people, especially those within Moreland's priority groups have inequitable access to services as well as daily opportunities. Supporting safe home, work and play opportunities and environments for all yields better health benefits.

Moreland context

The rate of reported family violence incidents per 100,000 population in Moreland was higher than the rate for Greater Melbourne in 2019 (1,064 and 926 respectively). Since the start of the pandemic there has been an increase in the severity of reported incidents of family violence. Mostly female family members are affected, often related to violence by current or former intimate partners. Family violence disproportionately affects priority groups, with Victorian Aboriginal women 45 times more likely to

experience family violence. Other groups at higher risk of family violence impacts include young women, women with a disability, young women, those living outside major cities, women and girls from diverse cultural backgrounds and LGBTQIA+ adults. Issues contributing to these groups' vulnerability may include social isolation, less accessible services and community or family pressures (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019).

The strongest predictors of attitudes supportive of violence against women were low level of support for gender equality and a low level of understanding of the behaviours representing violence against women (Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, 2017). One third of Moreland residents have a low gender equality score, with a higher proportion of males scoring lower than females. Gender equality has been impacted by the pandemic with women disproportionately affected by unemployment, financial stress and increases in caring responsibilities.

Racism and discrimination negatively affect health outcomes, with priority groups including women, LGBTQIA+ adults, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culturally and linguistically diverse communities most impacted. Racism has increased since Covid-19.

In 2020, there were a total of 11,058 criminal incidents in Moreland, which is slightly lower than the rate for the North West Metro Region. Most Moreland residents (92%) felt safe in their area during the day, however this decreases to only 72% at night. Women are particularly impacted, and this influences their ability to participate fully in the community.

In summary, key issues include:

- Family violence against women and their children remains high despite the Victorian Government's substantial investment for prevention and response.
- Promoting healthier masculinities is growing to engage men and boys about gender equality and respectful relationships.
- Racism and discrimination, which has been exacerbated since COVID-19.
- Perceived safety in public places and at night, especially for women.

Key insights

Perception of safety

- In 2018, 92% of people felt safe in their area during the day, and 72% of people felt safe in their area during the night.

Crime incidents

- In 2020, there were a total of 11,058 criminal incidents in Moreland, which is a 0.6% increase from 2019.
- The rate of criminal incidents per 100,000 population was 5,860 in Moreland, which is lower than the rate for the North West Metro Region with 6,688.

Family violence

- There were 1,977 reported incidents of family violence in Moreland in 2019.
- The rate of family violence per 100,000 population in Moreland (1,064) is higher than the rate for Greater Melbourne (926) but lower than the rate for North West Metro Region (1,109).
- Mostly female family members are affected, often related to violence by current or former intimate partners. In 2019, the proportion of affected family members was 71% female.

Low gender equality score

- One third (32.7%) of Moreland residents have a low gender equality score, which is consistent with the low gender equality score for the Inner Metro Region (32.1%).
- A higher proportion of male residents (39.3%) have a low gender equality score than female residents (26.4%).

Racism

- There is an absence of reliable data quantifying experiences of racism in Moreland.
- Experiences of racism have increased three-fold during the COVID-19 pandemic according to the Victoria Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission 2020.

Perceptions of safety

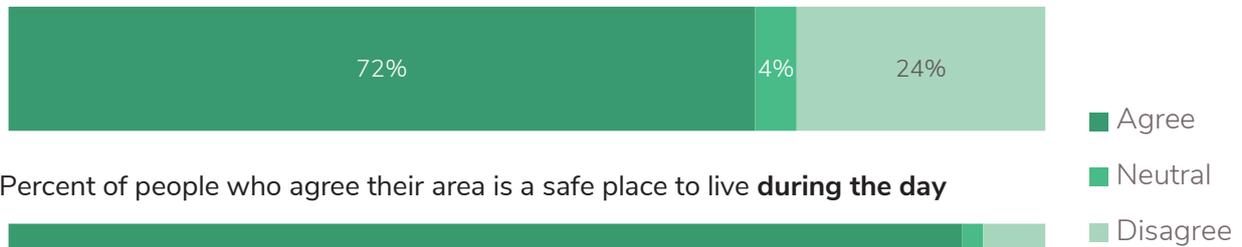
Measure: Perceptions of safety during the day & night

In 2018, 92% of people in Moreland agreed they felt safe during the day in their area, and 72% agreed they felt safe at night in their area.

Table. Percent of people who agree their area is a safe place to live during the day and night

Year	% who feel safe during the day	% who feel safe at night
2018	92%	72%
2016	92%	71%
2014	94%	71%
2012	91%	77%

Percent of people who agree their area is a safe place to live **at night**



Percent of people who agree their area is a safe place to live **during the day**



Source: Moreland City Council Community Indicator Survey 2018



PANDEMIC

Perceptions of safety influenced many lifestyle changes during the pandemic. 17% of respondents from the VicHealth survey (2020) stated that the reason they had reduced their physical activity level was because they did not feel safe to exercise outside.



PRIORITY GROUPS

Perceptions of safety dictates many women's ability to participate in the community. Women are less likely to live active lives if their perception of community safety is low. In Moreland, 26% of women compared to 68% of men felt 'Very safe' or 'Safe' when walking alone in the local area at night (VicHealth Community Indicators Survey, 2015).

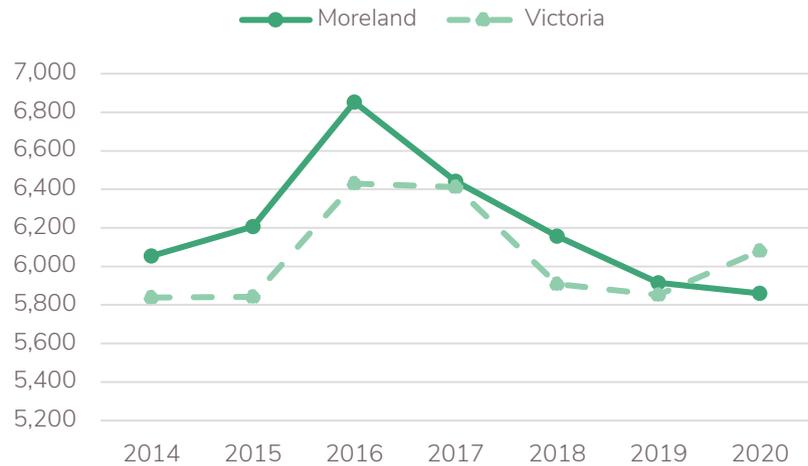
Crime rates

Measure: Crime incidents

In 2020, there were a total of 11,058 criminal incidents in Moreland, which is a 0.6% increase from 2019. The rate per 100,000 population was 5,860 in Moreland, which is lower than the rate for the North West Metro Region with 6,688.

Table. Criminal incidents per 100,000 population by year in Moreland

Year	Criminal Incidents per 100,000
2020	5,860
2019	5,916
2018	6,156
2017	6,441
2016	6,853
2015	6,207
2014	6,053



Source: Victoria Crime Statistics Portal, Criminal Incidents – Moreland Year ending June 2020



PANDEMIC

Crime rates have been altered as a result of the pandemic. A decrease has been experienced in non-family violence related assaults, burglary and break in offences and shop steal offences, however, there has been a significantly higher rate of domestic violence offences reported during the lockdown periods. (Victorian Crime Statistics Agency, 2020)

Family violence

Measure: Family violence rates

The Victorian Crime Statistics Agency defines a family incident as an incident attended by Victoria Police where a Risk Assessment and Risk Management Report (also known as an L17 form) was completed. According to this definition, there were **1,977 reported incidents of family violence** in Moreland in 2019.

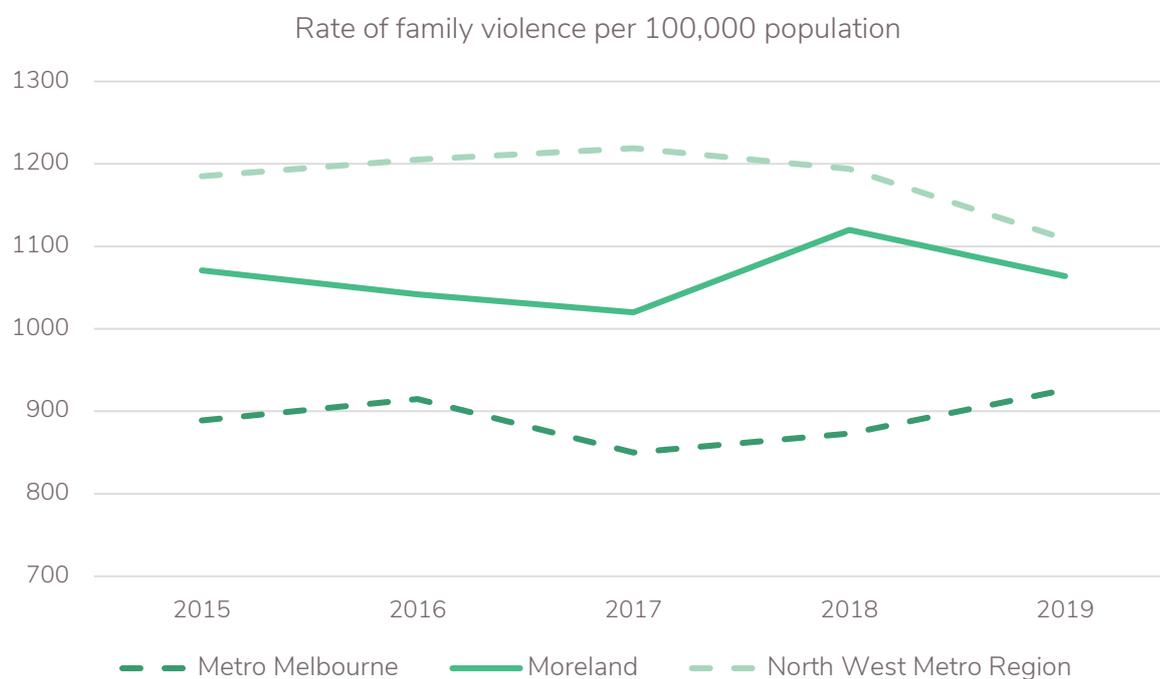
The rate of family violence per 100,000 population in Moreland (1,064) is higher than the rate for Greater Melbourne (926) but lower than the rate for North West Metro Region (1,109).

Mostly female family members are affected, often related to violence by current or former intimate partners. In 2019, the proportion of affected family members was 71% female.

For further details of affected family members by sex, age and types of family violence view [Moreland City Council Family Violence Brief](#).

Table. Family violence rate per 100,000 population

Year	Moreland	North West Metro Region	Greater Melbourne
2019	1,064	1,109	926
2018	1,120	1,194	873
2017	1,020	1,219	850
2016	1,042	1,205	915
2015	1,071	1,185	889

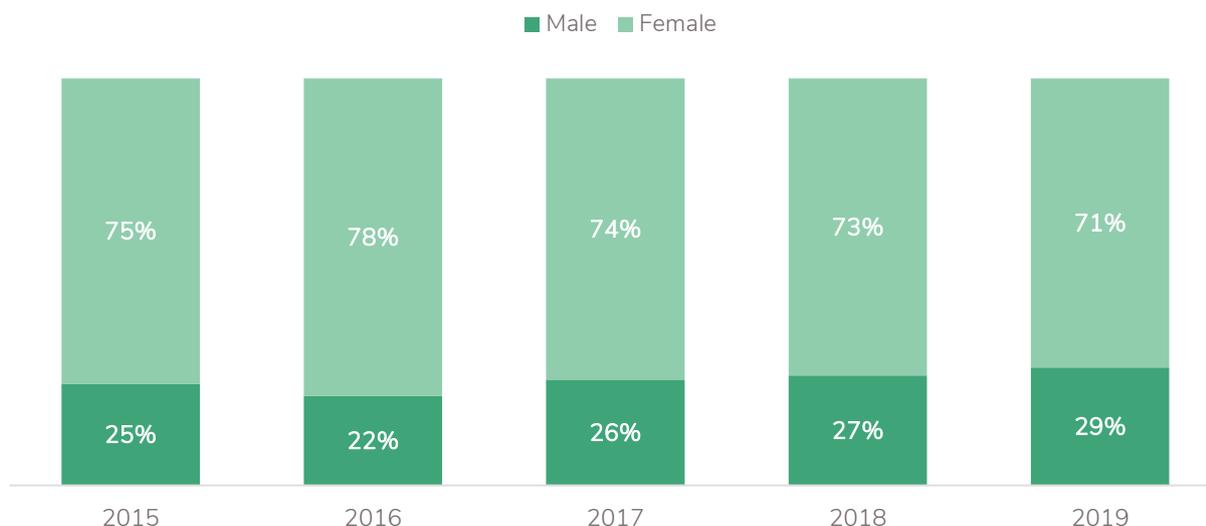


Source: The Crime Statistics Agency 2019 (Calendar year).

Table. Family violence incidents by sex (victim)

Year	Males		Females	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2019	567	29%	1,408	71%
2018	543	27%	1,490	73%
2017	470	26%	1,329	74%
2016	396	22%	1,399	78%
2015	454	25%	1,340	75%

Proportion of affected family members by sex



Source: The Crime Statistics Agency 2019 (Calendar year)



PANDEMIC

In the Inner North West region, one in ten women reported experiencing intimate partner violence since the pandemic began, of which 33.1% said they had never experienced violence from their partner before and 53.1% reported that the violence had increased in frequency and severity (Inner North West Primary Care Partnership, 2020). However, it is not certain whether Moreland has seen the same increase in family violence incidents. Data from the Crime Statistics Agency suggest a decrease of 3.7% between June 2019 and June 2020, which covers several months of the pandemic period.



PRIORITY GROUPS

Most instances of family violence are against women. Concerningly, 1 in 5 Australian women have experienced sexual violence and on average 1 woman in Australia is killed by her intimate partner every week. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience higher rates of violence when compared to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. 3 in 5 indigenous women have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner since age 15 (Victorian Government, 2020).

A significantly higher amount of LGBTQIA+ adults experienced forms of family violence compared to non-LGBTQIA+ adults. 13.4% of LGBTQIA+ had experienced family violence in the last 2 years as opposed 5.1% for non-LGBTQIA+ adults (Victorian Agency for Health Information, 2017).

It is estimated that Victorian Aboriginal women are 45 times more likely to experience family violence than non-Aboriginal women (Korin Korin Balit-Djak).

Low gender equality score

Measure: Low gender equality score

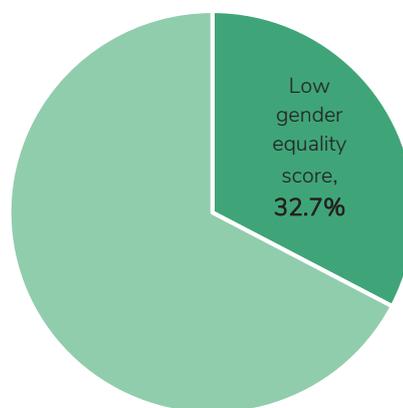
The ability to participate in equal and respectful relationships is an important contributing factor in mental health and wellbeing and negative attitudes to the opposite sex are frequently linked to the experience of intimate partner violence.

In the 2015 VicHealth Indicators survey asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with two statements designed to indicate attitudes around gender equality. These were: "Men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household" and "Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship". Respondents who stated they strongly agreed or agreed with these statements had low levels of gender equality.

One third (32.7%) of Moreland residents have a low gender equality score, which is consistent with the low gender equality score for the Inner Metro Region (32.1%). A higher proportion of male residents (39.3%) have a low gender equality score than female residents (26.4%).

Table. Low gender equality score by gender

Gender	Moreland	Inner Metro Region
Male	39.3%	40.9%
Female	26.4%	23.4%
Other	Sample too small	Sample too small
Total	32.7%	32.1%



Source: VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015



PANDEMIC

The pandemic has caused many to return to traditional gender roles due to factors such as higher unemployment in females (Women's Health in the North, 2020). The increase in violence against women is compounded by these traditional roles as well as increased financial stress, social isolation and less access to support.

Racism

Measure: Reports of racism

Racism comes in many forms. From overt acts of violence and aggression, to regular persistent incidents of casual racism, to the systems and structures that perpetuate racism and in themselves act in a discriminatory manner. Racism has a negative effect on health both directly and indirectly, from harmful physical health effects including diseases and conditions as well as racially motivated assaults, to systemic racism which serves to maintain or exacerbate the unequal distribution of opportunity across ethnic groups (Cohealth 2017). There is an absence of reliable data quantifying experiences of racism in Moreland.



PANDEMIC

There has been an increase in racism relating to COVID-19, with 3 times increase in reports of racism (Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, 2020). Many young Victorians have expressed concern about returning to 'normal life' as 85% of young Victorians reported having a direct experience of racial discrimination (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2020).

According to the COVID-19 Racism Incident Report, Asians in Australia have experienced many racist incidents relating to the pandemic, including international students (Asian Australian Alliance 2020).

The absence of data illustrating the increase in racial abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic shows Australia needs to do better at recording and monitoring racism (Australian Human Rights Commission 2020).



PRIORITY GROUPS

Many women face judgement due to their race and religion. Racism is a barrier to many women accessing services they need or want. Racism can prevent many women from being physically active in public therefore leading to poorer health outcomes and weakening their support systems (VicHealth Gender Equality Health and Wellbeing 2017-19).

34% of LGBTIQ+ survey participants had endured discrimination in the previous year, compared with 16% of others - though fewer than one in ten (9%) of the incidents experienced by LGBTIQ+ persons were reported to any authority (Victorian Population Health Survey 2017).

The latest Australia-wide Mapping Social Cohesion survey reveals that at a national-level while support for multiculturalism remains high, there are some areas in which negative attitudes towards immigration remain relatively high and communities report experiencing racism and discrimination (Scanlon Foundation, 2019).

Noise



PANDEMIC

Noise complaints have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is likely due to the increased number of people working from home and otherwise spending more time at home (MCC internal data 2020).

Environmental health inspections



CLIMATE CHANGE

Environmental Health Inspections will become increasingly pertinent in managing the indirect impacts of climate change in particular managing both food and water-borne diseases.

Higher heat days and increasing temperatures will heighten food safety challenges. Bacteria such as salmonella thrives in hotter spaces and leads to a greater risk of food poisoning so it is important to continue the close monitoring of food process and education surrounding food safety (Food Safety Information Council, 2016).

Bacteria in swimming pools are also likely to increase due to climate change so again it is important for regular environmental health checks of such facilities to ensure there is minimal bacteria that can cause infection within the community (Better Health Channel, 2017).

Data sources

For a full list of references, please refer to the [Moreland Health & Wellbeing Profile 2020](#)

Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing 2016

The ABS Census of Population and Housing is a nationwide census of all households and residents. It is conducted every five years. The census collects data about the population including age, gender, relationships within households, usual residence, country of birth, language spoken at home, ancestry, education, employment, wages and religion. It also collects a small amount of household data.

The most recent data is 2016.

Australian Human Rights Commission 2020

Where's all the data on COVID-19 racism? An opinion piece from Mr Chin Tan, Race Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission 2020.

Better Health Channel 2017

The Better Health Channel is a Government of Victoria initiative to provide health and medical information to improve the health and wellbeing of people and the communities they live in.

Centre for Multicultural Youth: Young Multicultural Victorians during COVID-19

The Centre for Multicultural Youth is a not-for-profit organisation that provides data, knowledge and support to people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Cohealth Racism. It's a health problem blog 2017

A blog post from the Chief Executive blog discussing racism as a health problem in Victoria.

COVID-19 Coronavirus Racism Incident Report, Asian Australian Alliance 2020

The COVID-19 Incident Report is a collaboration between the Asian Australian Alliance, media side Being Asian Australian and Osmond Chiu, Research Fellow at the Per Capita Thinktank. The report discusses some of the trends, issues, observations, and makes recommendations based on survey results of experiences of racism during the pandemic.

The most recent data is 2020.

Food Safety Information Council 2016

The Food Safety Information Council is a health promotion charity and a national voice for science-based, consumer-focused food safety information in Australia.

Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027

Korin Korin Balit-Djak follows the government's commitment to self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians commissioned by the Department of Health and Human Services. This research and discussion has underpinned a new policy platform for health, wellbeing and safety.

Inner North West Primary Care Partnership COVID-19 and mental health: Environmental scan 2020

The purpose of this environmental scan is to provide an overview of research and policy on COVID-19 and mental health to identify gaps and reduce duplication in the mental health space.

The most recent data is 2020.

Moreland City Council Community Indicator Survey 2018

The Moreland Community Indicators Survey is a bi-annual survey undertaken by Moreland City Council which asks residents to rate their level of agreement (or disagreement) with various statements. The data gathered concerns residents' perceptions of such issues as Council services, their local area, public transport, housing, economic circumstances, the environment and parks. The most recent data is 2018.

Scanlon Foundation 2019

The Scanlon Foundation supports ongoing longitudinal research into the indicators of social cohesion. Mapping Social Cohesion Report, 2019.

VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015

The VicHealth Indicators Survey is a Victorian community wellbeing survey which focuses on the social determinants of health. The survey is based on core questions related to individual and community health and wellbeing, critical to inform decisions about public health priorities.

The most recent data is 2015.

VicHealth Coronavirus Victorian Wellbeing Impact Study 2020

A survey of 2,000 Victorian adults to explore how their health and wellbeing was affected during the first lockdown of 2020. The survey covered general wellbeing, social connection, healthy eating, physical activity, financial hardship, smoking, alcohol consumption, as well as working and home life.

The most recent data is from 2020.

VicHealth Applying a gender lens in the workplace 2016

A tool to provide guidance on applying a gender lens in the workplace. It forms part of a suite of tools developed from the experiences of Monash City Council and Link Health and Community in their journey to create and support gender equity and prevent violence against women as part of the Generating Equality and Respect program.

Victoria Crime Statistics Agency 2020

Data comes from the Victorian Police Crime Statistics database, North West Metro Region.

The most recent data is from year ending June 2020.

Victorian Agency for Health Information 2020

Safer Care Victoria and VAHI were created as a part of government reforms to improve quality and safety across Victoria's public healthcare system.

Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission 2020

The Community Reporting Tool (CRT) was created in June 2019 to make it easier for people to make a short, direct and confidential report about racism, discrimination, hate speech and religious vilification or to raise concerns about breaches of their human rights. The most recent data is from 2020.

Victorian Population Health Survey 2017

The Victorian Population Health Survey collects quality information at the State, regional and local government area levels about the health, lifestyle and wellbeing of adult Victorians aged 18 years and over. The most recent data is 2017.

VicHealth Gender equality, health and wellbeing strategy 2017-19

VicHealth's vision for gender equality about finding and delivering solutions that build the social, economic, political and cultural foundations that enable women and girls to participate fully and equally in all aspects of their lives.