

Central Coast Socioeconomic Review

REPORT

Prepared for the Central Coast Council



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prepared by .id

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Table of contents

1. Executive summary.....	4
2. Introduction and purpose of report.....	5
3. Demographic overview	6
3.1 Population and age structure.....	6
3.2 Diversity	10
3.3 Educational qualifications	12
3.4 Households and dwellings.....	13
3.4.1 Distribution of dwellings within Central Coast	14
3.4.2 Recent residential development activity.....	14
3.4.3 Household characteristics.....	16
3.5 Population and dwelling forecasts, 2021-2031	19
4. Economic and employment overview	21
4.1 Gross Regional Product (GRP)	21
4.2 Employed residents	22
4.3 Local jobs and businesses.....	23
4.4 Industries of employment.....	25
4.5 Labour force participation	26
4.6 Recent unemployment and labour force statistics	28
4.7 JobSeeker.....	31
5. Income and expenses overview	33
5.1.1 Median household income	33
5.1.2 Household income quartiles	34
5.1.3 Recent individual income statistics	36
5.1.4 Sources of income	37
5.1.5 Income and expenses over time	39
5.1.6 Wage Price Index	41
5.1.7 Inflation	42
6. Housing tenure and housing costs.....	43
6.1 Tenure type by Ward	44
6.2 Housing costs – mortgage	45
6.3 Households in mortgage stress	46
6.4 Housing costs – rent	47
6.5 Households in rental stress	48
7. Socioeconomic disadvantage – SEIFA	49
7.1 SEIFA maps by ward	51
8. Summary of findings.....	57

1. Executive summary

A socioeconomic review of the Central Coast Council area and its wards reveals that over time, the Central Coast's population is growing, albeit slowly, ageing, improving education levels and improving in terms of employed residents. Some disturbances to the job market and labour force were recorded since Covid-19 impacted Australia.

Central Coast had a higher proportion of low-income households than Regional New South Wales or Greater Sydney. However, over time the proportion of households classified as "low-income" declined, and at the same time, an improvement to individual income occurred.

Housing stress in the form of mortgage stress has been declining on the Central Coast but remains high compared to Regional New South Wales. Rental stress is more prevalent on the Central Coast than in Regional New South Wales or Greater Sydney. The proportion of households in rental stress has also increased over time, disproportionately among Central Coast's wards.

The SEIFA index of socioeconomic disadvantage shows that the Central Coast is less disadvantaged than Regional New South Wales, but more so than Greater Sydney.

Within the LGA, an assessment of socioeconomic characteristics shows that the Budgewoi Ward and Gosford West Ward measure below LGA averages for many socioeconomic metrics, including those which can directly influence the ability to pay council rates (such as unemployment rates, median income), and in Budgewoi ward's case - housing stress and socioeconomic disadvantage.

Wards which the socioeconomic review found to be less disadvantaged from a socioeconomic perspective are the Gosford East and The Entrance Wards, with the Wyong Ward being close to the LGA average overall.

2. Introduction and purpose of report

The Central Coast Council is undertaking a review of the council rating structure. Part of that process involves understanding the community and residents' socioeconomic status and their capacity to pay.

This report provides a complete socioeconomic review of Central Coast's population with analysis of changing demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. A ward-level approach is also included to represent how characteristics vary within the Central Coast accurately. Some areas are better off socioeconomically than others, and describing this will help the council better understand where an ability to pay higher levels of rates could be challenging or not.

The report is broken down into five sections:

- ▢ Demographic overview
- ▢ Economic and employment overview
- ▢ Income and Expenses overview
- ▢ Housing tenure and housing costs
- ▢ Socioeconomic disadvantage – SEIFA

Wherever possible, the report presents information at the sub-LGA level, to reveal nuances and differences in characteristics. Central Coast wards (see map 1) are used to illustrate these sub-LGA differences.

The report utilises several economic and demographic datasets. Most of the information is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR).

A summary of findings also includes an index that assesses the socioeconomic characteristics of each Central Coast ward in relation to relevant socioeconomic indicators. This index can be used to inform further work into the ability of residents living in those wards to pay or service different council rates scenarios.



Map 1 – Central Coast Council boundary and wards boundaries

3. Demographic overview

3.1 Population and age structure

Central Coast's population has been growing at an average annual rate of 0.7% since 2010. Each year, this growth equates to 2,000-3,000 new residents in the local government area (LGA). The latest published population statistics (as at June 30th 2020) estimate Central Coast's population at 345,809, a 0.6% increase from the previous year. However, growth

rates on the Central Coast have been lower than that of Regional New South Wales (0.8% p/a) or Greater Sydney (1.7% p/a).

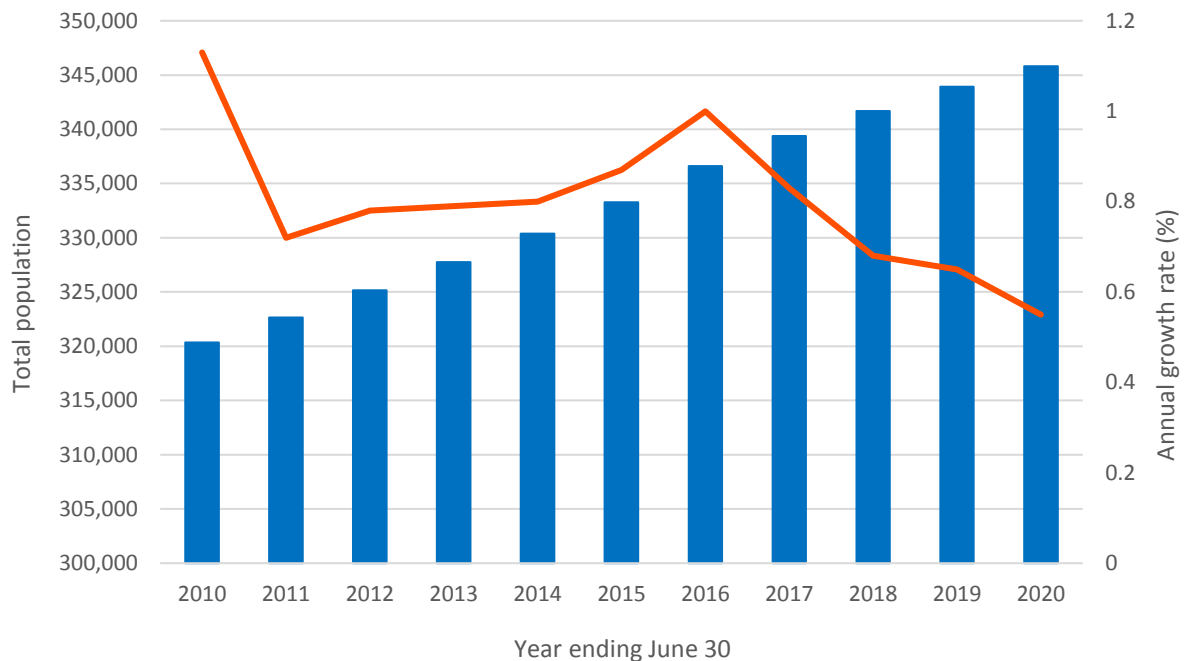


Chart 1 – Estimated resident population (ERP) and population growth rates, Central Coast 2010-2020 (source: ABS)

The median age of Central Coast residents is increasing over time. In 2020, the median age of residents was 42.1 years, compared to 41.7 years in 2015. The latest age structure information for 2020 shows that most of Central Coast's population is aged 45 years and older, as seen in chart 2.

The population of Central Coast is ageing:

- 18.6% of residents are aged 0-14 years, a 0.3% decrease since 2015.
- 60.5% of residents are aged 15-64 years, a 0.7% decrease since 2015.
- 21.1% of residents are aged 65 years or older, a 1.3% increase since 2015.

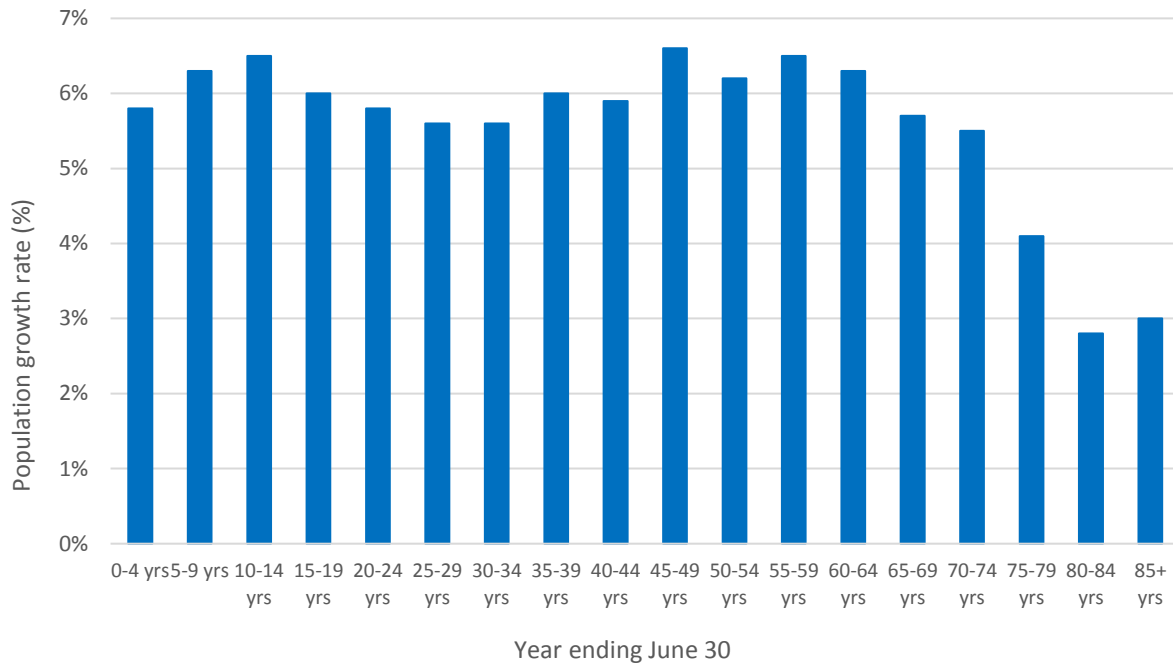


Chart 2 – Age structure of Central Coast's population, 2020 (source: ABS)

The Gosford East and Gosford West Wards have the highest median age, both at 44 years. The Wyong Ward is the youngest, with a median age of 39 years.

Ward	Median age
Budgewoi Ward	42 years
Gosford East Ward	44 years
Gosford West Ward	44 years
The Entrance Ward	41 years
Wyong Ward	39 years

Table 1 – Median age of Central Coast's wards, 2016 (source: ABS)

Within the Central Coast, population growth has not been evenly distributed, and some wards recorded higher population growth rates than others. For example, the Budgewoi and Wyong Wards' population grew by an average 0.8% per annum between 2015 and 2020. In contrast, the population of Gosford East and The Entrance Wards grew by an average 0.5% per year in the same period.

In the 2019-2020 period, all wards recorded a lower growth rate than in previous years, except for the Gosford West Ward, which registered a population growth rate of 1.2%.

By 2020, the Wyong Ward was the largest ward with 73,391 residents with the highest total growth between 2019 and 2020, while The Entrance Ward had the lowest population (65,679) and the smallest population growth between 2019 and 2020, see table 1 and chart 3.

Ward	Population 2015	Population 2020	Population growth	Average annual growth rate
Budgewoi Ward	66,762	69,931	3,169	0.8%
Gosford East Ward	65,502	67,658	2,156	0.5%
Gosford West Ward	66,295	69,198	2,903	0.7%
The Entrance Ward	63,925	65,679	1,754	0.5%
Wyong Ward	70,007	73,391	3,384	0.8%
Central Coast	333,264	345,809	12,545	0.60%

Table 2 – Population growth by ward, 2015-2020 (source: ABS)

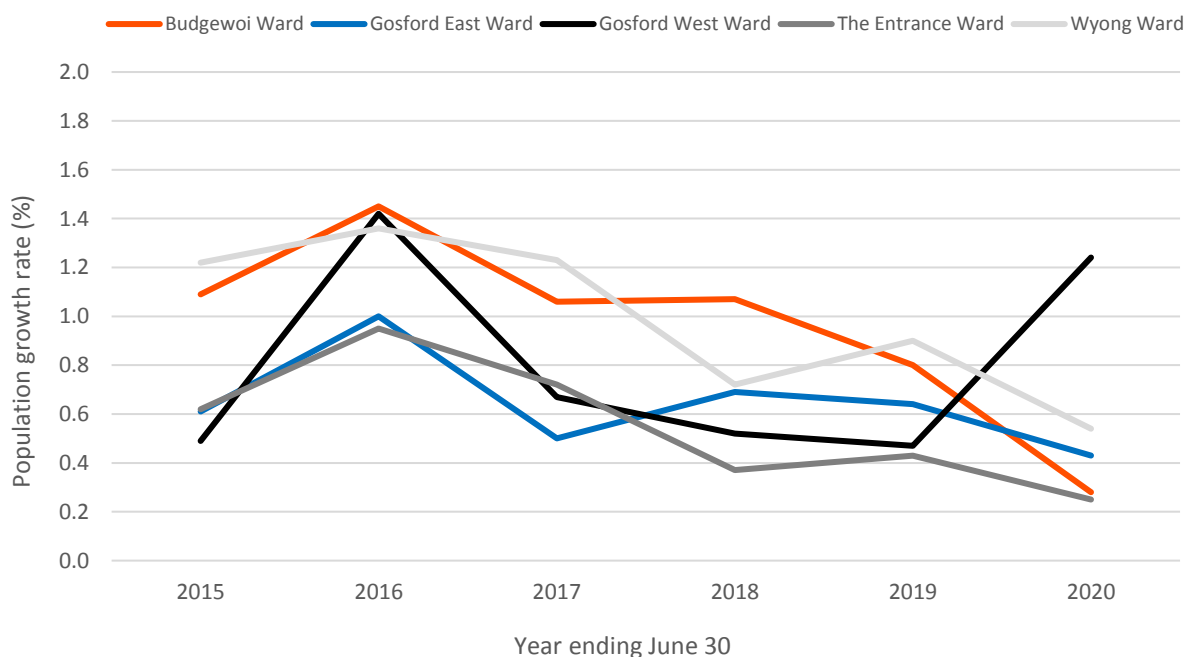


Chart 3 – Population growth rates by ward, 2015-2020 (source: ABS)

3.2 Diversity

Overseas arrivals information shows how diverse Central Coast's population is and to what degree the Central Coast is housing recent arrivals to Australia. The number of recent overseas arrivals in an area is often determined by housing affordability, employment opportunities and pre-existing communities located in the area.

Almost 15% of Central Coast's population was born overseas. In 2016, this was a total of 47,950 residents. By comparison, Central Coast's total overseas born statistics are higher than that of Regional New South Wales (11.2%) but lower than Greater Sydney, where almost 37% of residents are born overseas.

Within Central Coast, the Gosford West Ward has the highest proportion of residents born overseas at 17.5%. This is followed by the Gosford East Ward (16.9%) and the Wyong Ward (15.4%). The Budgewoi Ward has the lowest proportion of overseas-born residents with 11.3%.

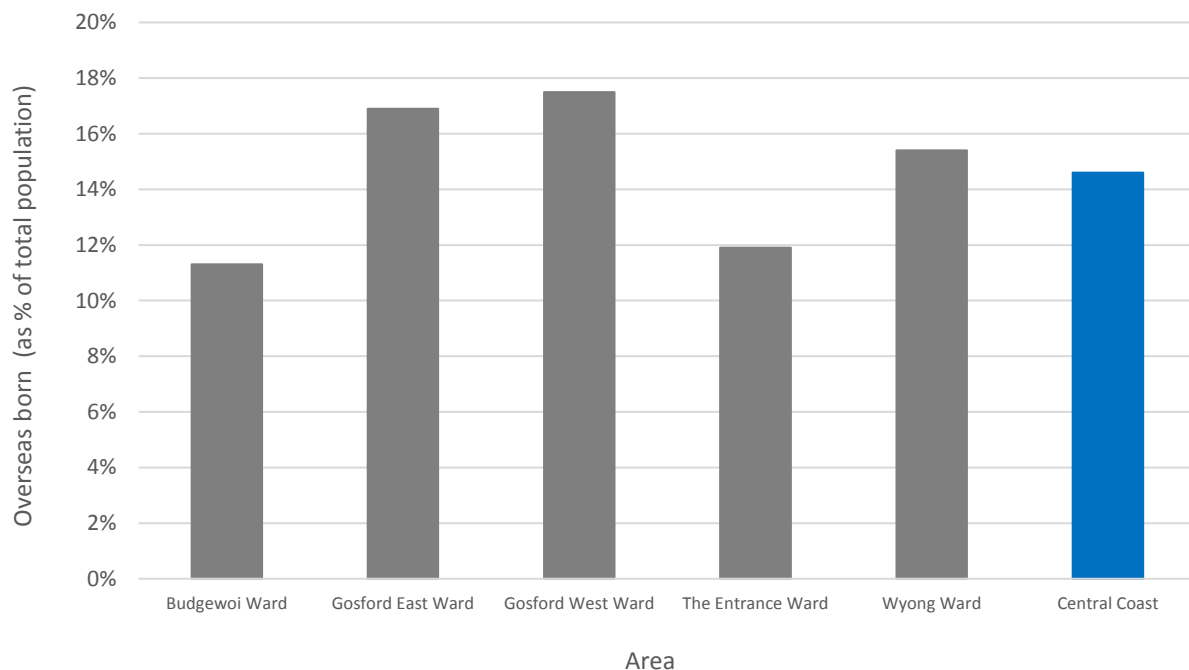


Chart 4 – Overseas born population within Central Coast, 2016 (source: ABS)

Most of Central Coast's overseas-born population arrived in Australia during the 1961-1970 period. Almost 17% of the area's overseas-born population came during that period. In terms of recent arrivals, almost 10% of Central Coast's overseas born population arrived in Australia in the past five years, that is in the 2011-2016 period (this information is derived from the 2016 Census). This is a lower than the recent arrivals statistics for Greater Sydney (21%) or

Regional New South Wales (15%), indicating that the Central Coast has not been as popular a destination for recent arrivals.

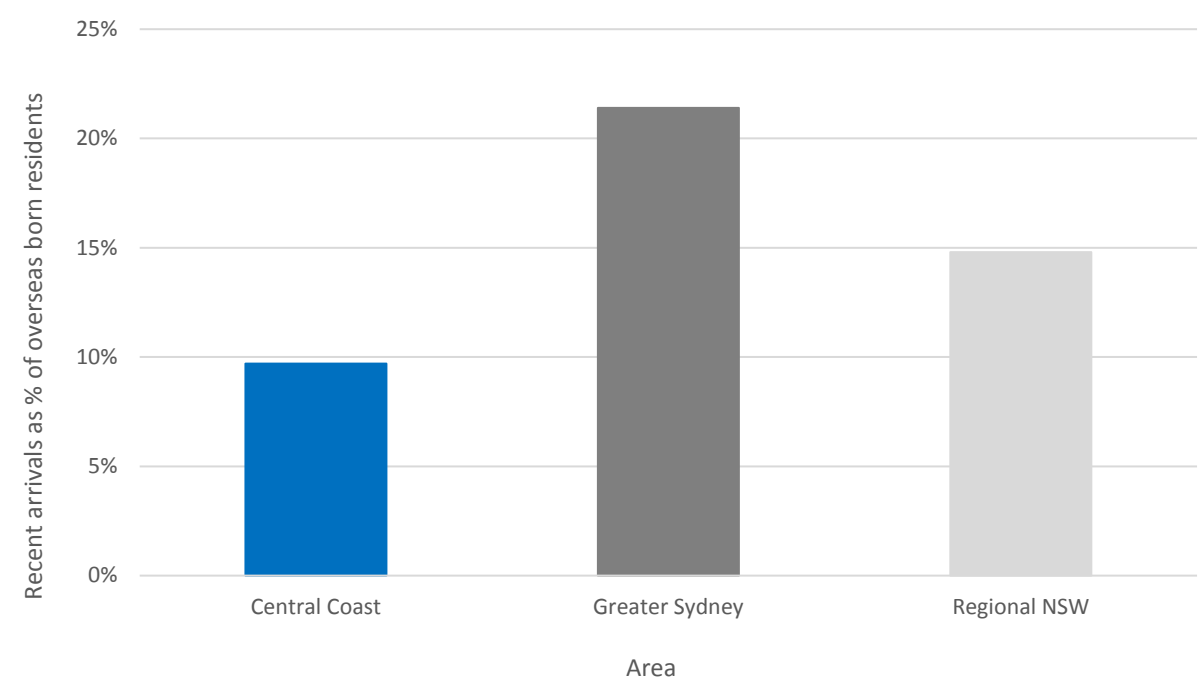


Chart 5 – Recent arrivals as a proportion of all overseas-born residents, 2016 (source: ABS)

Within Central Coast, the Gosford West Ward had the highest proportion of recent arrivals (12.4%), followed by the Wyong Ward (10.2%). The Budgewoi Ward has the lowest proportion of recent arrivals (5.5%).

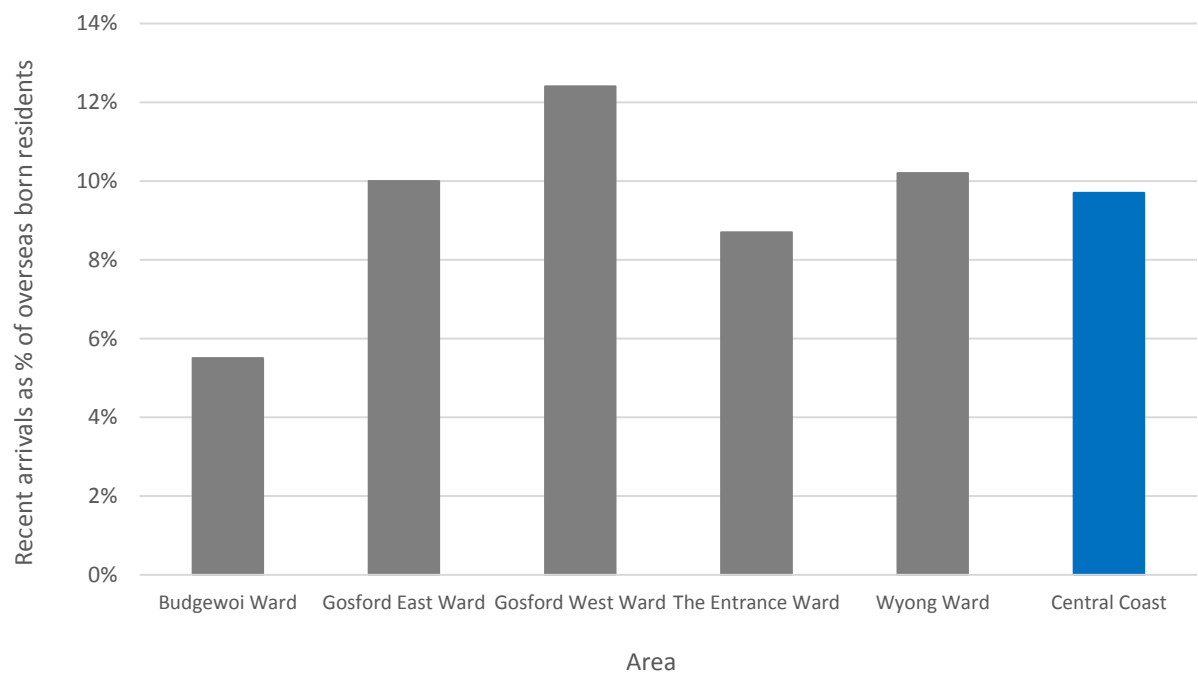


Chart 6 - Recent arrivals as proportion of all overseas born residents within Central Coast, 2016 (source: ABS)

3.3 Educational qualifications

Educational Qualifications relate to education outside of primary and secondary school and are one of the most critical indicators of socioeconomic status. With other data sources, such as employment status, income and occupation, educational qualifications statistics help evaluate the area's economic opportunities and socioeconomic status and identify skill gaps in the labour market.

Most Central Coast residents with an educational qualification (outside of primary/secondary school) have a vocational qualification. This is followed by Bachelor or Higher Degree qualifications and Advanced Diplomas/Diplomas.

The proportion of Central Coast residents with a Bachelor or Higher degree is lower than in Greater Sydney or Regional New South Wales. On the other hand, Central Coast has a higher proportion of residents with vocational qualifications than the benchmark areas. A higher proportion of residents have no qualification in Central Coast than in Greater Sydney or Regional New South Wales.

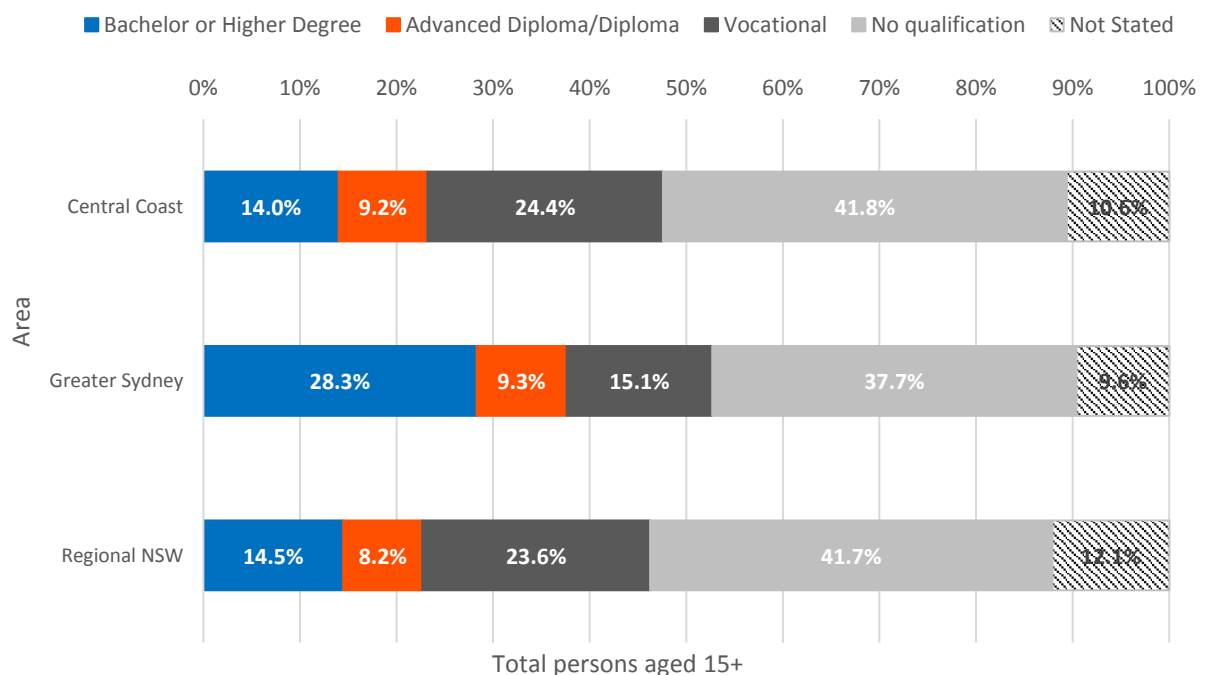


Chart 7 – Educational qualification statistics for Central Coast and benchmark areas, 2016 (source: ABS)

Within Central Coast, the Gosford East Ward has the highest proportion of residents with a Bachelor or Higher Degree or Advanced Diploma/Diploma. The Budgewoi Ward has the highest proportion of vocational qualifications and the lowest proportions of Bachelor/Higher

Degree or Advanced Diploma/Diploma qualifications. The Budgewoi Ward also had the highest proportion of residents aged over 15 with no educational qualification.

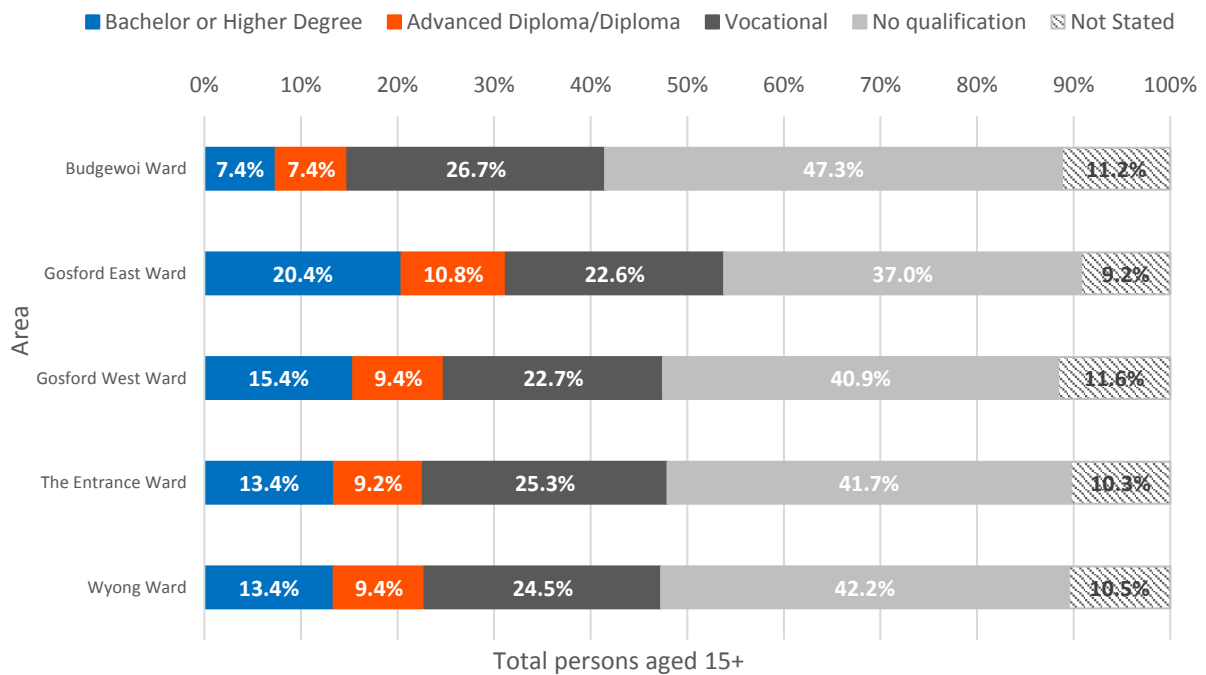


Chart 8 - Educational qualification statistics for Central Coast wards, 2016 (source: ABS)

3.4 Households and dwellings

Along with understanding the socioeconomic characteristics of Central Coast residents, assessing the council rating structure also requires insight into the household composition of the area. Household characteristics reveal if certain parts of the LGA are more “vulnerable” or “at-risk” by having a higher proportion of older lone person households, or one-parent families with younger children – characteristics that may make paying additional rates more difficult.

This section describes household characteristics by ward and also the changes to the number of dwellings, which is a proxy for rateable properties. In demographics, a household is an occupied dwelling, whereas a dwelling is a structure where people can live, but it may be occupied or unoccupied. For example, in 2016, there were 144,592 dwellings on the Central Coast. Of these, 127,190 were occupied (88%) and 17,224 were unoccupied (12%). Occupancy rates have slightly increased since 2011, when 86.9% of Central Coast dwellings were occupied.

3.4.1 Distribution of dwellings within Central Coast

Table 3 shows the number of dwellings by ward between 2011 and 2016 and the change in occupancy rate between the two census periods. The Wyong Ward experienced most new dwellings built between 2011 and 2016 (1,640 new dwellings), followed by the Budgewoi Ward.

Occupancy rates increased everywhere between 2011 and 2016 with the Gosford East Ward experiencing the highest occupancy rate increase while the Wyong Ward has the highest occupancy rate in 2016 (93.1%), even though this rate is a slight decrease from 2011 when 93.6% of all dwellings in the ward were occupied. However, occupancy rates can vary between places and be consistently low in some places, such as coastal areas, as those dwellings are only occupied seasonally by owners. Suburbs such as The Entrance, Avoca Beach, Copacabana or MacMasters Beach have vacancy rates as high as 37%, indicating they are holidaying areas that are likely more occupied seasonally.

Ward	Dwellings 2011	Dwellings 2016	Dwellings change 2011- 2016	Occupancy rate 2011	Occupancy rate 2016	Occupancy rate change 2011-2016
Budgewoi Ward	27,299	28,528	+1,229	89.1%	90.0%	+0.9%
Gosford East Ward	28,267	28,848	+581	83.1%	84.4%	+1.3%
Gosford West Ward	30,586	31,543	+957	86.8%	87.5%	+0.6%
The Entrance Ward	27,880	28,522	+643	84.5%	85.3%	+0.8%
Wyong Ward	25,431	27,072	+1,640	93.6%	93.1%	-0.5%
Central Coast	139,468	144,592	+5,124	87.3%	88.0%	+0.7%

Table 3 – Dwelling growth and occupancy rate characteristics in Central Coast, 2011-2016 (source: ABS)

3.4.2 Recent residential development activity

Recent residential development statistics show that development activity of new dwellings on the Central Coast was higher in the 2-3 years before the Covid-19 pandemic affecting Australia. Building approval statistics in charts 9 and 10 show the highest approvals for new

dwellings in 2018, driven by 1,145 new dwellings approved in the Gosford West Ward. In the last year of available data, 2021, the Wyong Ward recorded the highest number of approvals for new dwellings. Overall, there are on average 1,520 new dwellings approved on the Central Coast each year in the past five years.

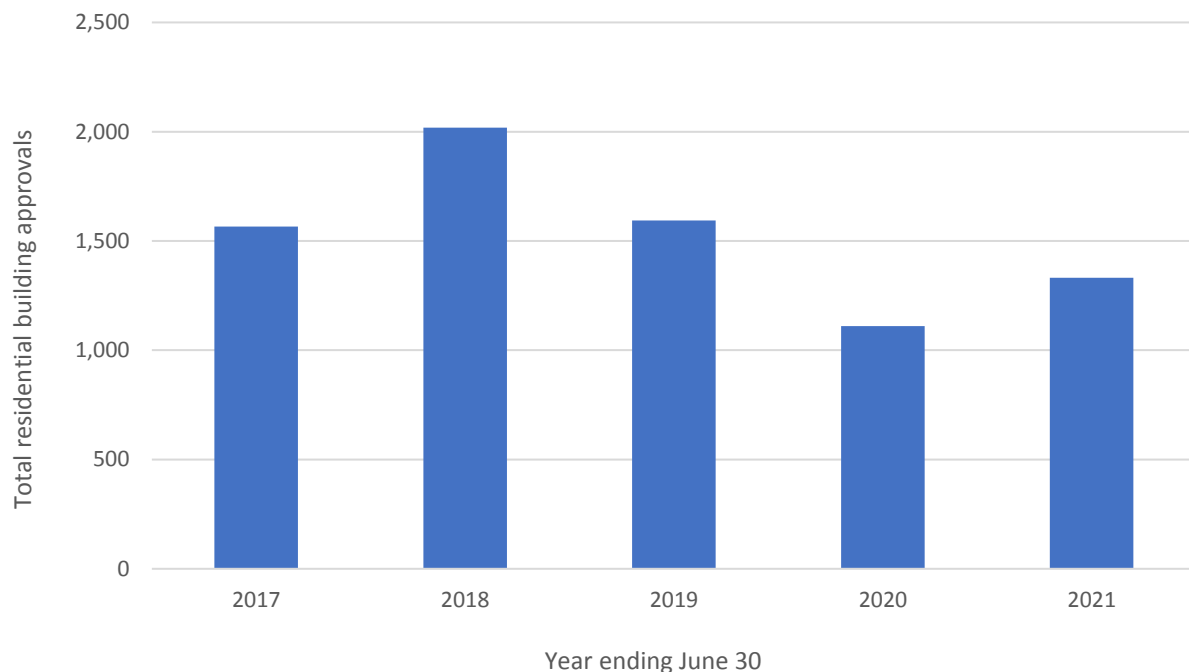


Chart 9 – Residential building approvals for new dwellings, Central Coast, 2017-2021 (source: ABS)

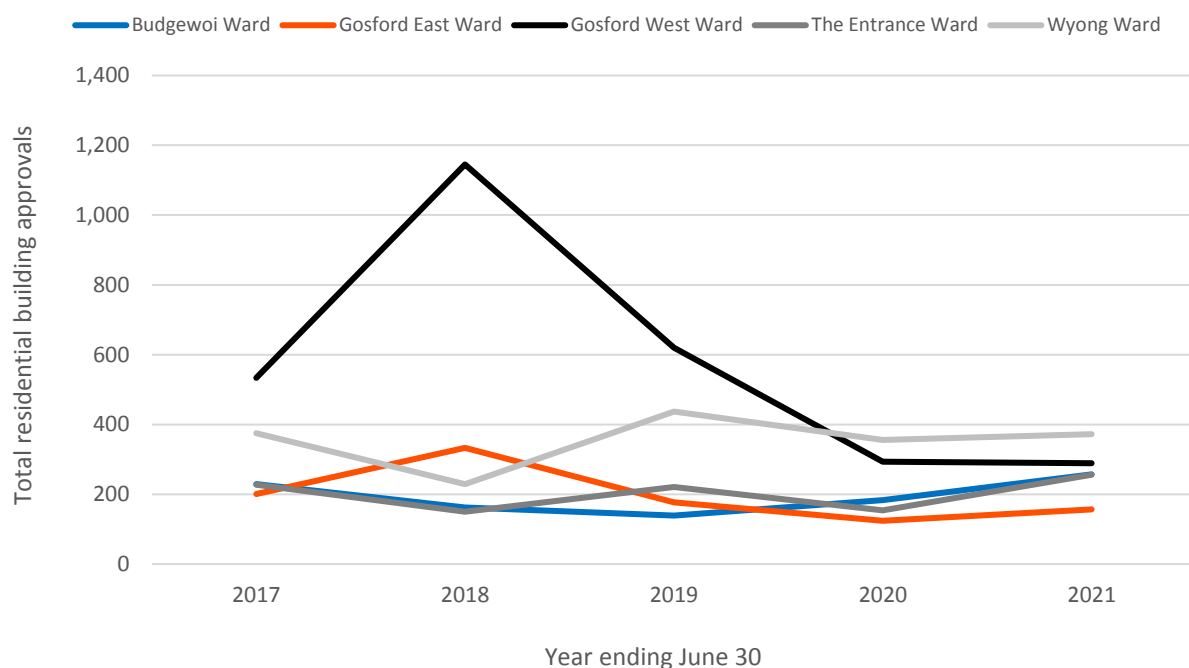


Chart 10 – Residential building approvals for new dwellings by ward, 2017-2021 (source: ABS)

3.4.3 Household characteristics

Household composition on the Central Coast shows that the dominant household types are couples with children, couples without children and lone person households. In 2016, the household composition of Central Coast was:

- ▣ Couples with children - 28.3% of all households
- ▣ Couples without children – 25.2% of all households
- ▣ Lone person households – 25.1% of all households
- ▣ One parent families – 12.7% of all households.
- ▣ Group households – 2.9% of all households

When assessing households' ability to pay increased rates, certain household types could be more financially vulnerable than others. For example, households like one-parent families with young children, older couples without children or older lone persons may have limited income or competing expenses.

The following three charts illustrate the proportion of household types that may be more vulnerable to rates increases than others.

- ▣ The Budgewoi Ward has the highest proportion of one-parent families with young children, followed by the Wyong Ward. The Gosford East Ward has the lowest proportion of one-parent families with young children.
- ▣ Over time, the proportion of one-parent families with young children as a share of all households has decreased in all wards.

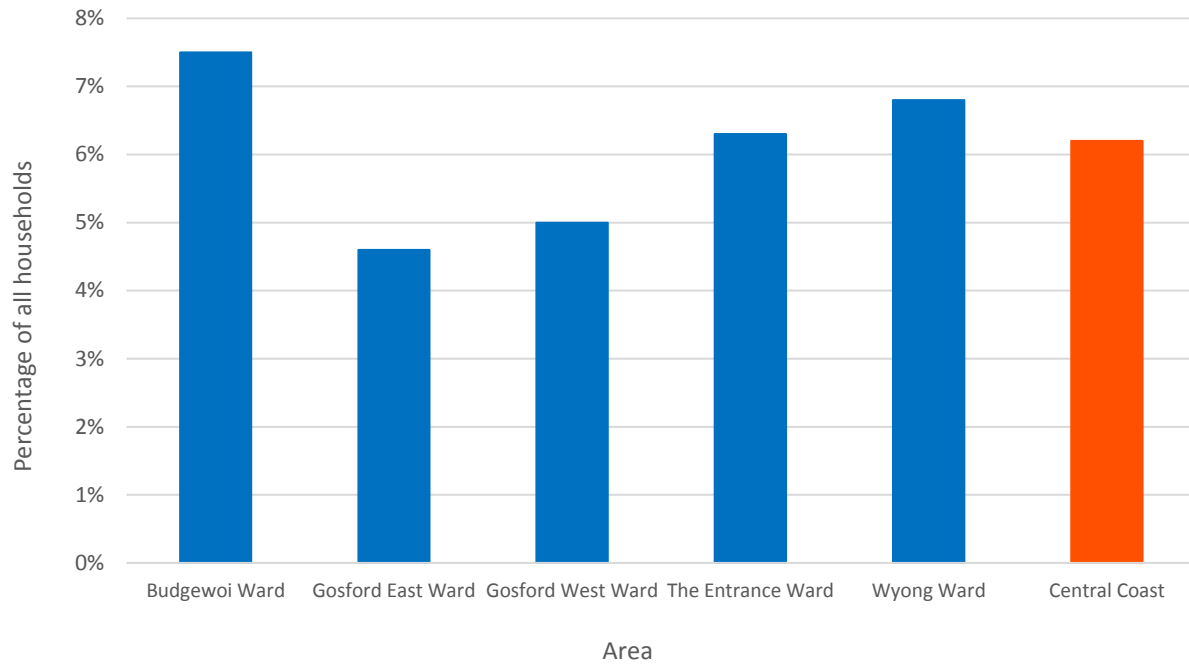


Chart 11 – One parent families with young children, by ward, 2016 (source: ABS)

➤ The Gosford East Ward has the highest proportion of older couples without children (sometimes referred to as “empty nesters”), followed by the Budgewoi Ward. The Wyong Ward has the lowest proportion of older couples without children.

➤ Over time, the proportion of older couples without children as a share of all households has increased in all wards, with the largest increase in the Gosford East Ward.

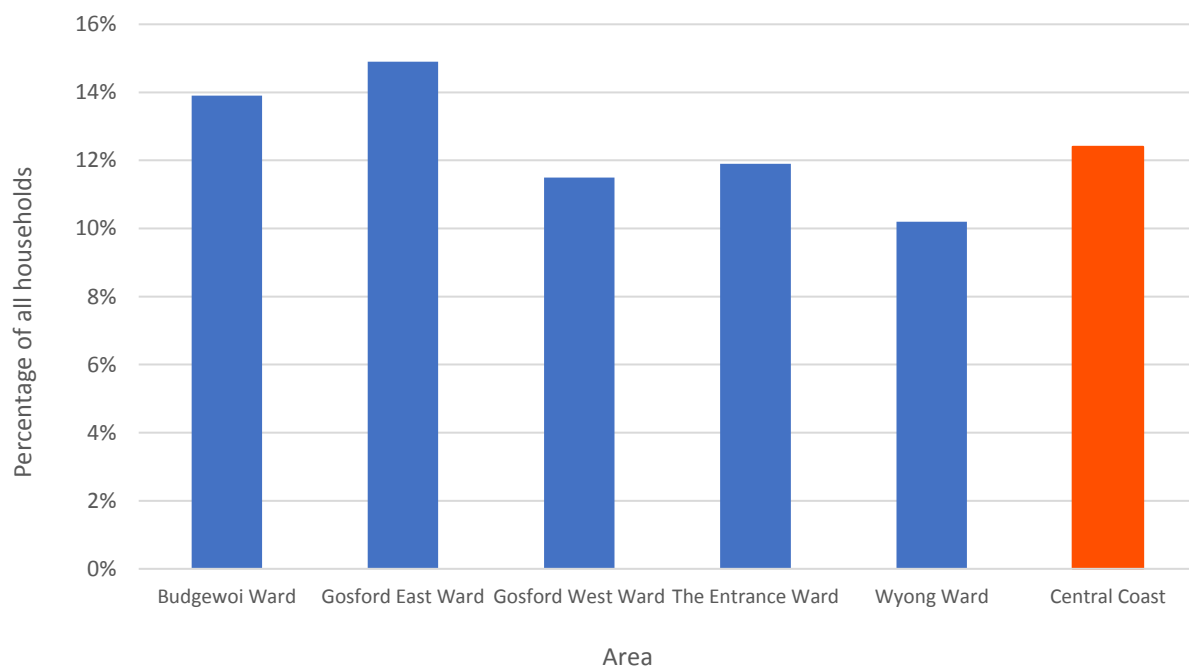


Chart 12 – Older couples without children, by ward, 2016 (source: ABS)

- The Gosford West Ward has the highest proportion of older lone person households on the Central Coast, while the Gosford East Ward has the lowest proportion.
- Over time, the proportion of older lone person households has decreased in all Central Coast wards.

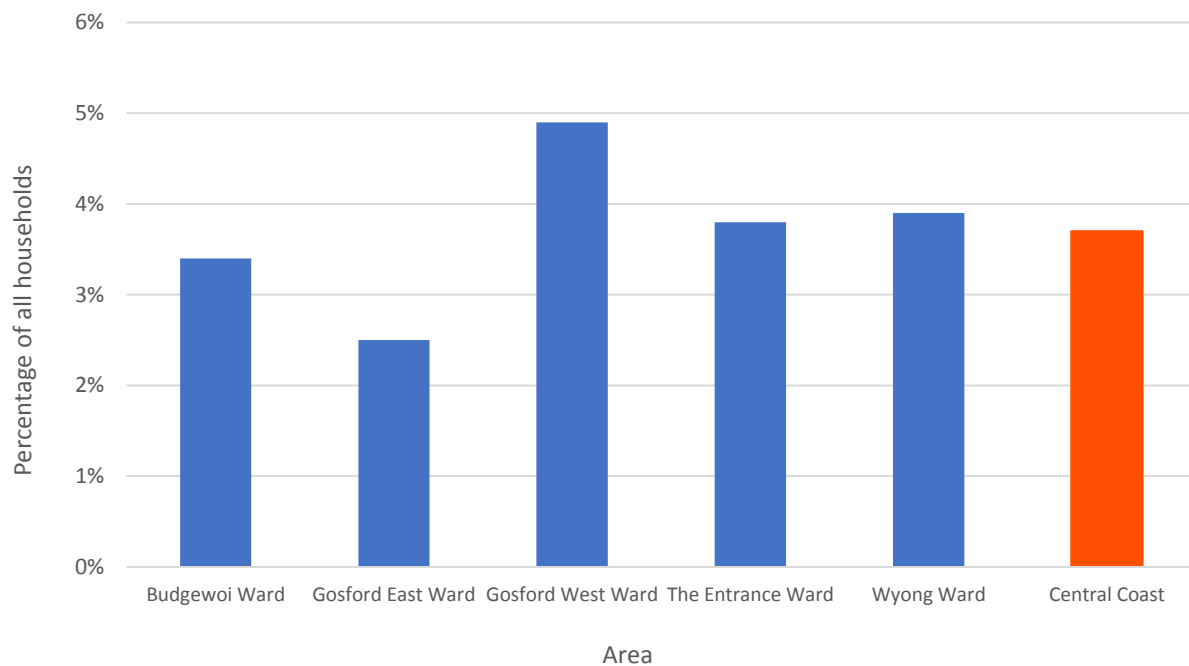


Chart 13 – Older lone person households, by ward, 2016 (source: ABS)

A summary of household types deemed more at risk of financial burden and increased costs (table 4) shows that wards such as the Budgewoi Ward, The Entrance Ward and Wyong Ward have higher proportions of two “vulnerable” household types, compared to the LGA average (highlighted in red).

On the other hand, the Gosford East and Gosford West wards have a higher than average proportion for only one of the household types deemed at risk of financial burden and increased costs.




Ward	One parent families with children	Older couples without children	Older lone person households
Budgewoi Ward	7.5%	13.9%	3.4%
Gosford East Ward	4.6%	14.9%	2.5%
Gosford West Ward	5.0%	11.5%	4.9%
The Entrance Ward	6.3%	11.9%	3.8%
Wyong Ward	6.8%	10.2%	3.9%
Central Coast	6.2%	12.4%	3.7%

Table 4 – Summary of vulnerable household proportions by ward (source: ABS)

3.5 Population and dwelling forecasts, 2021-2031

For its proposal to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (IPART), Central Coast Council is exploring several options regarding changes to rates. These changes, especially the “Maintain Special Variation (SV) scenario” looks to maintain the current rate base from 2021/22 out to 2031. Population and household forecasts, from Central Coast’s forecast.id tool (<https://forecast.id.com.au/central-coast-nsw>), show that population and dwelling growth in Central Coast will occur mainly in the Wyong Ward and Budgewoi Ward.

The forecasted 2021 population of Central Coast (354,918) is expected to increase by 39,099 residents in a ten-year period, resulting in 394,017 residents in 2031. In addition, the above-average growth assumed for the Wyong Ward and Budgewoi Ward will result in more dwellings and more residents living there by 2031. Tables 5 and 6 present these population and dwelling forecasts.

-  The Wyong Ward will grow at an average 1.8% per annum between 2021 and 2031. This will result in a total population of growth of 15,535 residents.
-  The Budgewoi Ward will grow at an average 1.7% per annum between 2021 and 2031, resulting in 13,212 more residents.
-  On the other hand, the population of the Gosford East Ward will only increase by 768 residents between 2021 and 2031.

Ward	Population 2021	Population 2031	Population growth 2021-2031	Avg. annual growth rate
Budgewoi Ward	71,577	84,789	+ 13,212	+1.7% p/a
Gosford East Ward	67,534	68,302	+ 768	+0.1% p/a
Gosford West Ward	69,410	74,080	+4,670	+0.7% p/a
The Entrance Ward	66,211	71,125	+4,914	+0.7% p/a
Wyang Ward	80,186	95,721	+15,535	+1.8% p/a
Central Coast	354,918	394,017	+39,099	+1.1% p/a

Table 5 – Population forecasts for Central Coast wards, 2021-2031 (source: forecast.id)

- Over 19,000 new dwellings will be constructed on the Central Coast between 2021 and 2031, with an average annual growth rate of 1.2%.
- The Wyong Ward will record the highest levels of new dwellings, which will result in the population growth noted in table 5. Over 6,200 new dwellings will be constructed in the Wyong Ward between 2021 and 2031.
- The Budgewoi Ward will also record above-average levels of dwelling construction, with 5,600 new dwellings assumed here between 2021 and 2031.
- On the other hand, areas such as the Gosford East Ward will grow at a lower average rate of 0.4% p/a in terms of new dwellings.

Ward	Dwellings 2021	Dwellings 2031	Dwellings growth 2021-2031	Avg. annual growth rate
Budgewoi Ward	30,967	36,567	+ 5,600	+1.7% <i>p/a</i>
Gosford East Ward	30,351	31,546	+ 1,195	+0.4% <i>p/a</i>
Gosford West Ward	33,388	36,646	+ 3,258	+0.9% <i>p/a</i>
The Entrance Ward	29,675	32,468	+ 2,793	+0.9% <i>p/a</i>
Wyong Ward	30,705	36,927	+ 6,222	+1.9% <i>p/a</i>
Central Coast	155,086	174,154	+19,068	+1.2% <i>p/a</i>

Table 6 – Dwelling forecasts for Central Coast wards, 2021-2031 (source: forecast.id)

4. Economic and employment overview

4.1 Gross Regional Product (GRP)

Central Coast's Gross Regional Product (GRP) as at 2020 is estimated to be \$15.52 billion, which represents 2.48% of the State's GSP (Gross State Product). The GRP has been growing at an average annual rate of 2.5% per annum five years before 2020. The Central Coast experienced strong growth between 2015 and 2017 when the GRP grew by 3-4% per annum.

However, growth declined slightly in 2018 and 2019 and as the Covid-19 pandemic impacted Australia, GRP between 2019 and 2020 decreased by 0.87%. This decrease was higher than that experienced by New South Wales (-0.57%). Chart 14 illustrates the past ten years of GRP on the Central Coast.

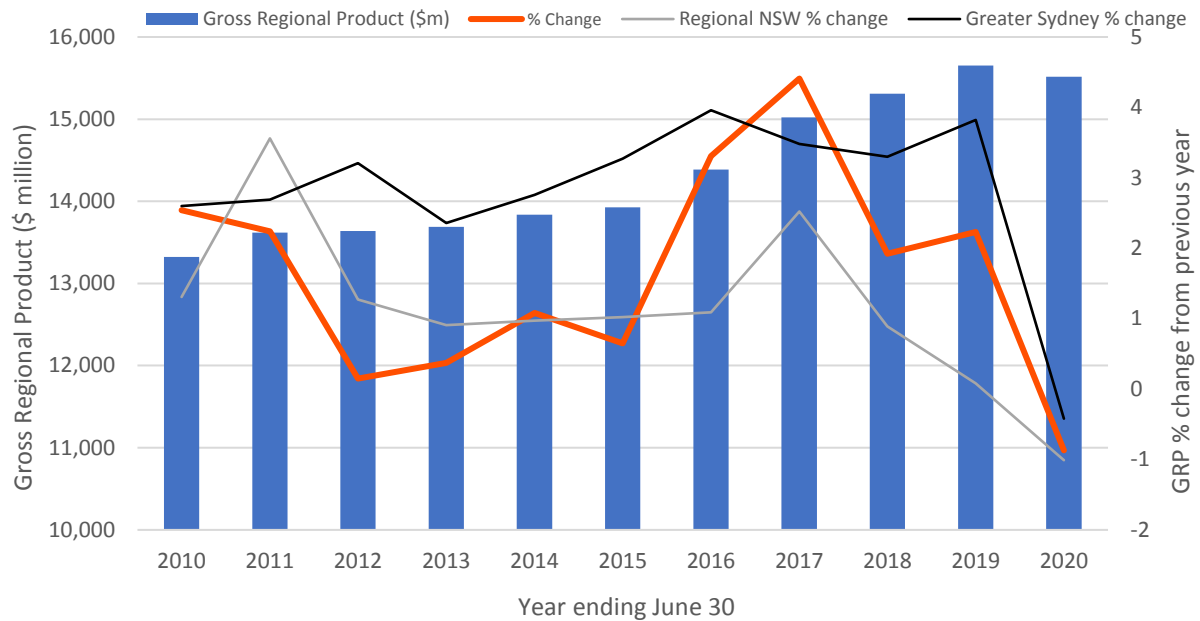


Chart 14 – Gross Regional Product on the Central Coast, 2010-2020 (source: NIEIR)

4.2 Employed residents

A growing number of employed residents can indicate a growing economy, or a growing residential population, supplying labour to other areas. Employed residents may have a workplace anywhere, inside or outside the Central Coast. The dataset presented in chart 15 is derived from the NIEIR microsimulation model, based on the ABS labour force survey.

During the 2010-2020 period, the number of employed Central Coast residents grew by 0.7% per annum. The highest levels of growth in recent years occurred between 2016 and 2018 (see chart 15). This was followed by a slight decline and then a more severe 3.6% decline in the number of employed residents in 2020, a loss of 5,770 employed residents. This decline was higher on the Central Coast than in New South Wales overall, where the reduction in employed residents in 2020 was only 0.1%.

Information presented in charts 18 and 19 showing recent unemployment figures by ward provides a more local view of employment characteristics.

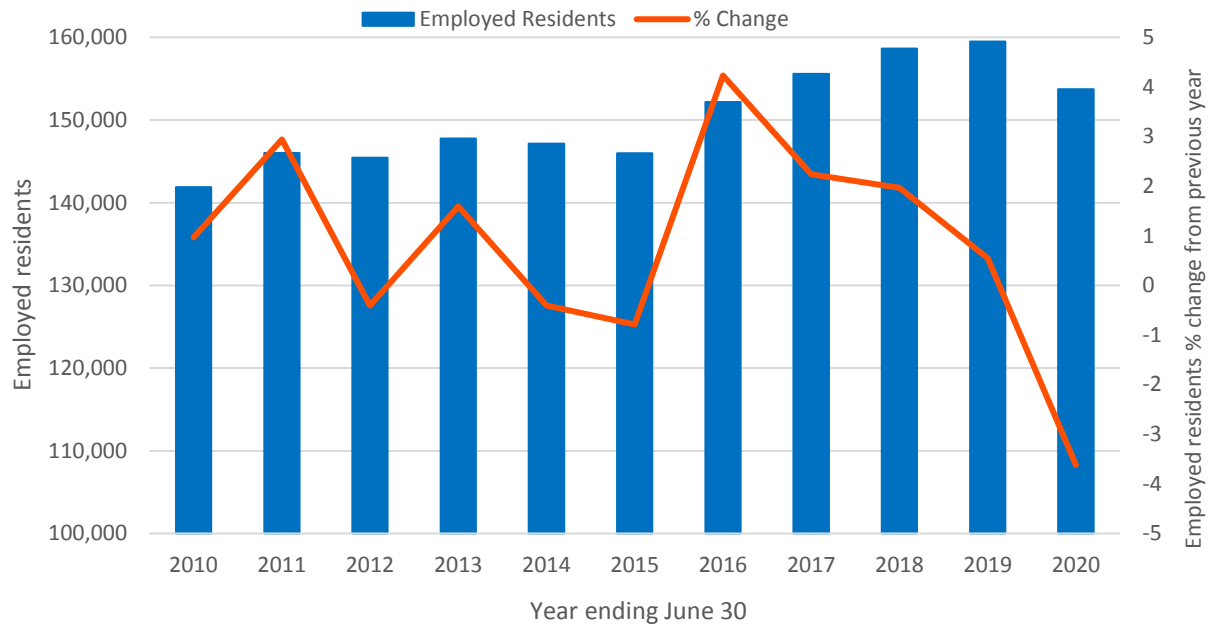


Chart 15 – Employed residents on the Central Coast, 2010-2020 (source: NIEIR)

4.3 Local jobs and businesses

Local employment shows the estimated number of jobs on the Central Coast. The dataset is derived from the NIEIR microsimulation model based on the ABS labour force survey. It is generally higher than the figure provided by Census, because it is updated every year and is not subject to Census undercount. A count of jobs is one of the most fundamental economic indicators of the size of the local economy, and increasing numbers of jobs generally represent a growing economy. However, jobs are not necessarily full-time, and the value of a job varies across areas.

During the 2010-2020 period, the number of local jobs on the Central Coast grew by 1.1% per annum. As with employed residents, the highest levels of growth in local jobs occurred in 2016 before a growth decline. In 2020, the number of local jobs decreased by 1,590, a 1.3% decline from the previous year. This was a more significant decline in local jobs than the loss of local jobs in New South Wales, which was 0.04% in 2020.

Finally, in 2010, Central Coast jobs made up 3.18% of all jobs in New South Wales. By 2020, that decreased to 3.0%.

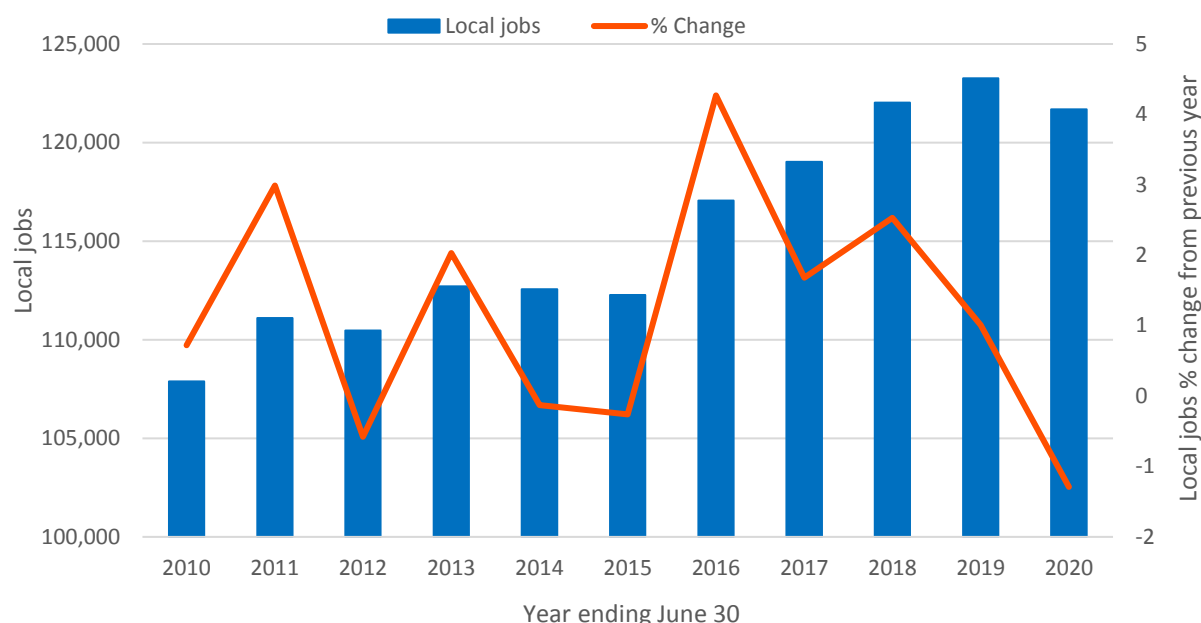


Chart 16 – Local jobs on the Central Coast, 2010-2020 (source: NIEIR)

There were 24,546 registered businesses on the Central Coast in 2020, and 56% of them were non-employing businesses (for example - sole traders and registered ABNs, which are part of larger enterprises), with 42% being businesses with 1-19 employees. The total number of local businesses in 2020 increased by 328 from the previous year. However, most new businesses in 2022 were registered non-employing businesses.

Between 2019 and 2020, 97% of newly registered businesses on the Central Coast were non-employing businesses, and in the same period, Central Coast lost two businesses with 200 or more employees and eight businesses with 20-199 employees.







In terms of businesses by industry, the Construction industry had the most significant number of total registered businesses on the Central Coast, comprising 23.7% of all total registered businesses, compared to 16.0% in New South Wales. Since 2019, the largest increase in number of registered businesses was for the “Health Care and Social Assistance” industry (+92 businesses, with 74 of these being non-employing) and “Professional, Scientific and Technical Services” (+71 businesses, with 62 of these being non-employing).

Industries with the most significant number of registered business decline since 2019 were the “Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing”, “Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services” and “Accommodation and Food Services” industries, all with a loss of 22-25 businesses in one year.

4.4 Industries of employment

Industries of employment information, especially when assessed through the lens of Covid-19 impacts, illustrate if some wards within Central Coast are more vulnerable from an employment stability of residents perspective. For example, an area with a high proportion of residents employed in “Health Care and Social Assistance” would be considered less vulnerable to employment instability than a ward where many employed residents worked in the “Retail Trade” or “Accommodation and Food Services” industries.

Table 7 illustrates the top five industries of employment for Central Coast’s five wards. Then, using the “COVID-19 Economic Outlook Tool” on Central Coast Council’s economy.id website (<https://economy.id.com.au/central-coast-nsw/covid19-quarter-impacts>), industries which have been positively or negatively impacted by Covid-19 are highlighted. This analysis aims to show which wards have a high proportion of residents employed in vulnerable industries (highlighted in red) or industries that have grown since Covid-19 (highlighted in green). The results illustrate which wards could be at higher risk of employment instability, especially during economically uncertain times driven by the Covid-19 pandemic.

-  The highest employing industry in each Central Coast Ward was “Health Care and Social Assistance”, which grew during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, at least three of the top five employing industries in each ward were negatively impacted by Covid-19.
-  In the Budgewoi Ward, at least 41.5% of employed residents work in the most negatively impacted industries.
-  At least 29.5% of employed residents work in the most negatively impacted industries in the Gosford East Ward.
-  At least 27.5% of employed residents work in the Gosford West Ward in the most negatively impacted industries.
-  At least 32.5% of employed residents work in the most negatively impacted industries in The Entrance Ward.
-  At least 28.7% of employed residents work in the most negatively impacted industries in the Wyong Ward.

Budgewoi Ward	Gosford East Ward	Gosford West Ward	The Entrance Ward	Wyong Ward
Health Care and Social Assistance 14.9%	Health Care and Social Assistance 15.9%	Health Care and Social Assistance 15.9%	Health Care and Social Assistance 14.7%	Health Care and Social Assistance 16.0%
Construction 13.0%	Construction 11.8%	Retail Trade 10.5%	Construction 12.6%	Retail Trade 11.4%
Retail Trade 13.0%	Retail Trade 10.0%	Construction 10.0%	Retail Trade 11.7%	Construction 9.9%
Accommodation and Food Services 7.9%	Education and Training 9.8%	Education and Training 7.1%	Education and Training 8.5%	Accommodation and Food Services 7.4%
Manufacturing 7.6%	Accommodation and Food Services 7.7%	Accommodation and Food Services 7.0%	Accommodation and Food Services 8.2%	Education and Training 7.2%

Table 7 – Top industries of employment by ward and the **positive** or **negative** impact of Covid-19 on those industries (source: ABS 2016)

4.5 Labour force participation

Labour force participants are defined as those aged 15 years and over who have a full-time or part-time job or did not have a job but were actively looking for and available to start work. The participation rate is defined as this population divided by the total population aged 15 or more and provides a measure of how local residents participate in the employment market.

Low participation rates generally apply to areas with high retired or student populations, while high participation rates indicate areas with good access to jobs and a high working-age population.

On the Central Coast, labour force participation rates vary by ward. For example, the Gosford East Ward and The Entrance Ward have the highest labour force participation rates, whereas the Budgewoi Ward has the lowest participation rates. The labour force participation rates in Greater Sydney are higher than Regional New South Wales. As mentioned, the age structure of these areas and employment opportunities are the likely reason for this.

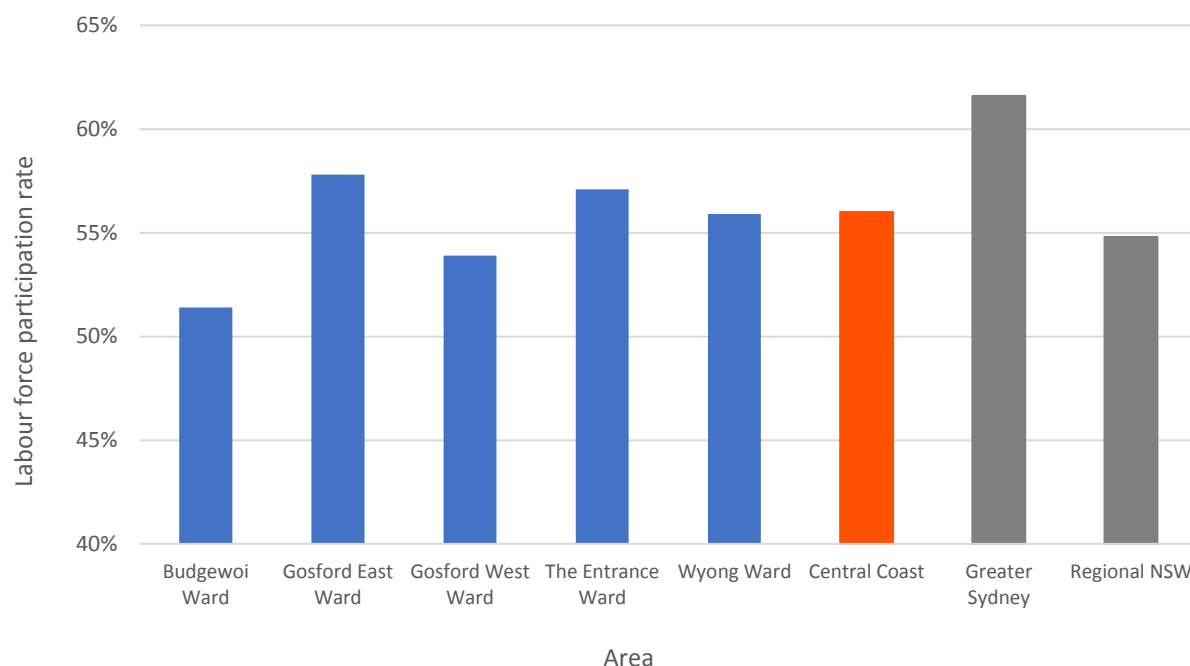


Chart 17 – Labour force participation rates, 2016 (source: ABS)

Over time, the labour force participation rates among Central Coast wards remained similar. The Gosford West Ward recorded the largest increase between 2011 and 2016 (+0.3%) and the Wyong Ward, the largest decrease (-1.6%). With the Wyong Ward, the labour force actually grew by 2,042 between 2011 and 2016. Still, ageing in place and increased migration of older residents contributed to the decreasing participation rate, meaning that more people who aren't employed or looking for work migrated to the ward.

Ward	2011 Participation rate	2016 Participation rate	Change 2011-2016
Budgewoi Ward	51.2%	51.4%	+0.2%
Gosford East Ward	57.9%	57.8%	-0.1%
Gosford West Ward	53.6%	53.9%	+0.3%
The Entrance Ward	57.2%	57.1%	-0.1%
Wyong Ward	57.5%	55.9%	-1.6%
Central Coast	55.9%	56.0%	+0.1%
Greater Sydney	61.7%	61.6%	-0.1%
Regional NSW	56.4%	54.8%	-1.6%

Table 7 – Labour force participation rates, 2016 (source: ABS)

4.6 Recent unemployment and labour force statistics

While the information in the section provides Census-based labour force participation rates from 2016, recent labour force and unemployment statistics provide an up-to-date view of unemployment characteristics, which in many places around Australia have changed significantly during the period since the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the economy.

Annual data for the 10 years to 2021 shows that Central Coast's unemployment rate has remained relatively stable. The rate was highest in 2016 (6.8%) and has decreased slightly since then, with the June 2020 unemployment rate being the lowest in the ten years (4.7%). This may have been influenced by some Covid-19 stimulus responses or government schemes such as JobKeeper.

Within Central Coast, The Gosford East Ward has had consistently low unemployment rates over the past ten years, as seen in chart 19. In contrast, the Budgewoi Ward, Wyong Ward and Gosford West Ward have higher unemployment rates than the Central Coast average over the past ten years, as seen in chart 18.

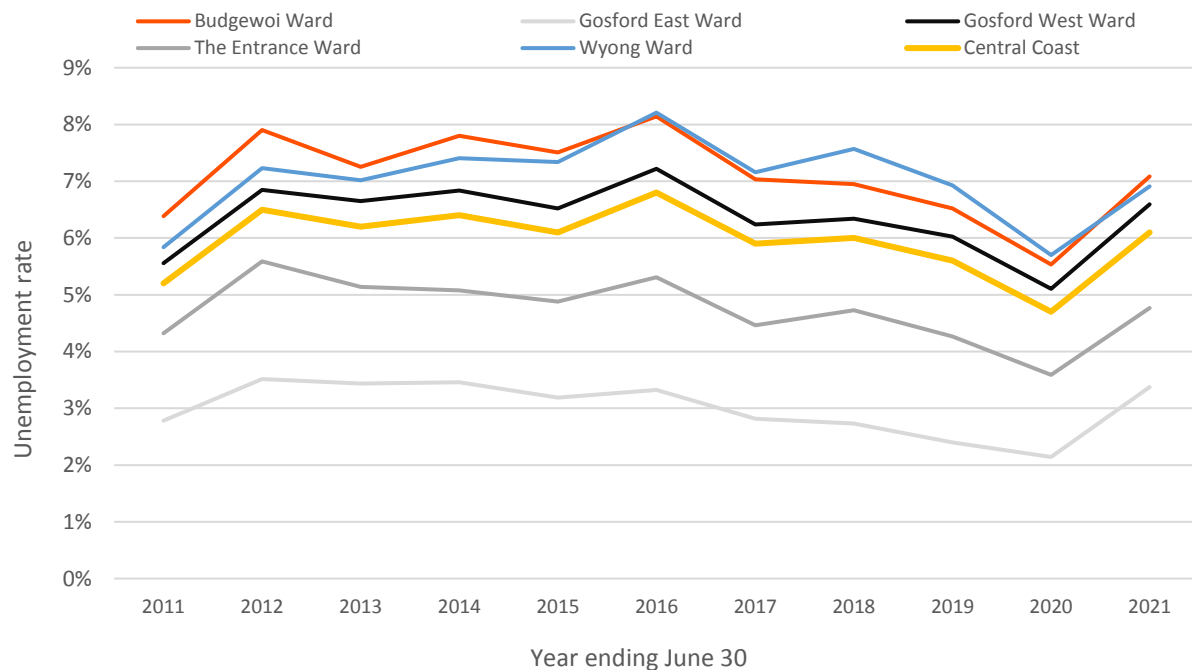


Chart 18 – Unemployment rates for wards in Central Coast, 2011-2021 (source: Department of Employment, Small Area Labour Markets)

Central Coast's labour force grew by 21,502 between 2011 and 2021, an average annual growth rate of 1.4%. However, within Central Coast, while labour force totals increased in all wards, only the Budgewoi Ward's labour force grew by a percentage higher than the LGA average, 2.6% per annum.

Ward	2011 Total Labour Force	2021 Total Labour Force	Change 2011-2021	Avg. annual % change
Budgewoi Ward	19,617	25,964	+6,347	+2.6%
Gosford East Ward	27,262	30,750	+3,488	+1.1%
Gosford West Ward	32,700	37,616	+4,916	+1.3%
The Entrance Ward	21,873	24,198	+2,325	+0.9%
Wyong Ward	30,786	35,212	+4,426	+1.2%
Central Coast	132,238	153,740	+21,502	+1.4%

Table 8 – Labour force by ward, 2011-2021 (source: Department of Employment, Small Area Labour Markets)

A more detailed assessment of recent labour force and unemployment statistics shows how different parts of the Central Coast have been affected by Covid-19 and associated economic impacts. Chart 19 and table 9 show quarterly unemployment rates since September 2019 and the total labour force between September 2019 and September 2021.

In terms of wards with the lowest and highest unemployment levels, the rankings remain the same as for the longer-term rates shown in chart 19. In the 2019-2021 period, unemployment rates decreased to June/August 2020 before increasing again. The peak unemployment rate on the Central Coast was in March 2021, when 6.1% of Central Coast's labour force was unemployed.

The small area labour markets data is smoothed by four quarters of data, so events in a quarter may not present themselves in data until a year later. This would explain the "delayed" increase in unemployment rates in the data seen in chart 20.

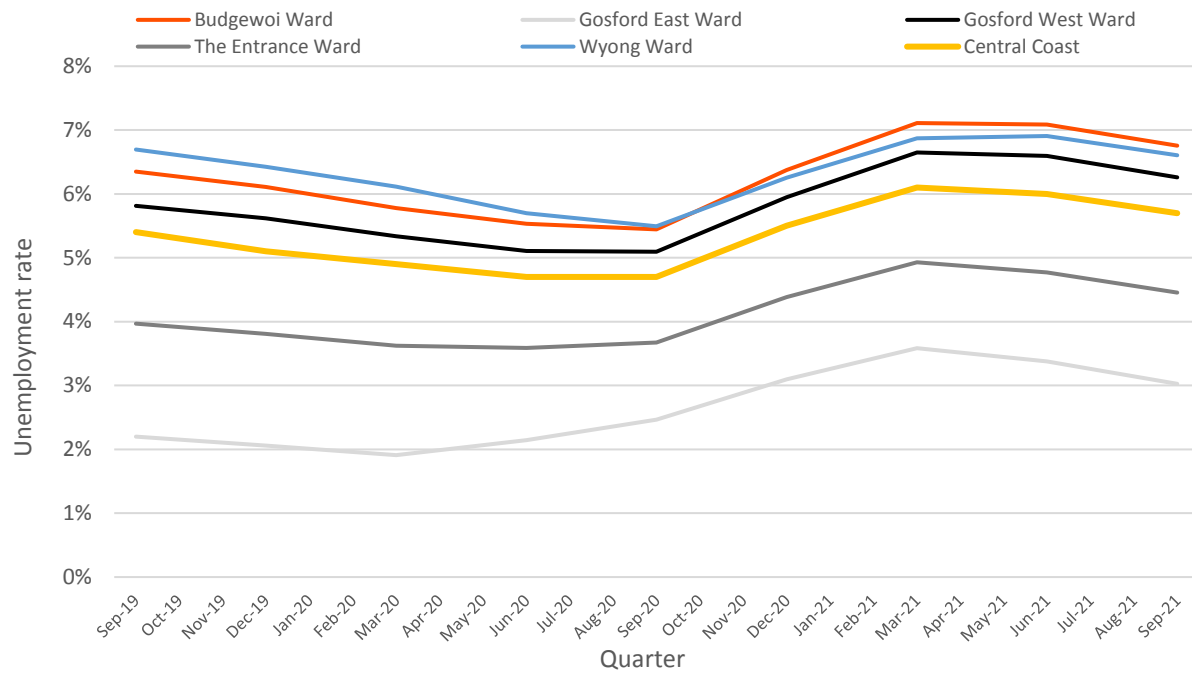


Chart 19 – Recent unemployment rates for wards in Central Coast, September 2019-September 2021 (source: Department of Employment, Small Area Labour Markets)

Labour force totals have been decreasing since September 2019. Central Coast's labour force decreased from 167,950 in September 2019, to 161,741 in September 2021, a 3.7% loss. Within Central Coast, The Entrance Ward and Wyong Ward experienced the highest labour force losses in this period, whereas the Budgewoi Ward had the lowest recorded losses both as total and as percentage. Chart 21 and table 9 illustrate these recent labour force statistics.

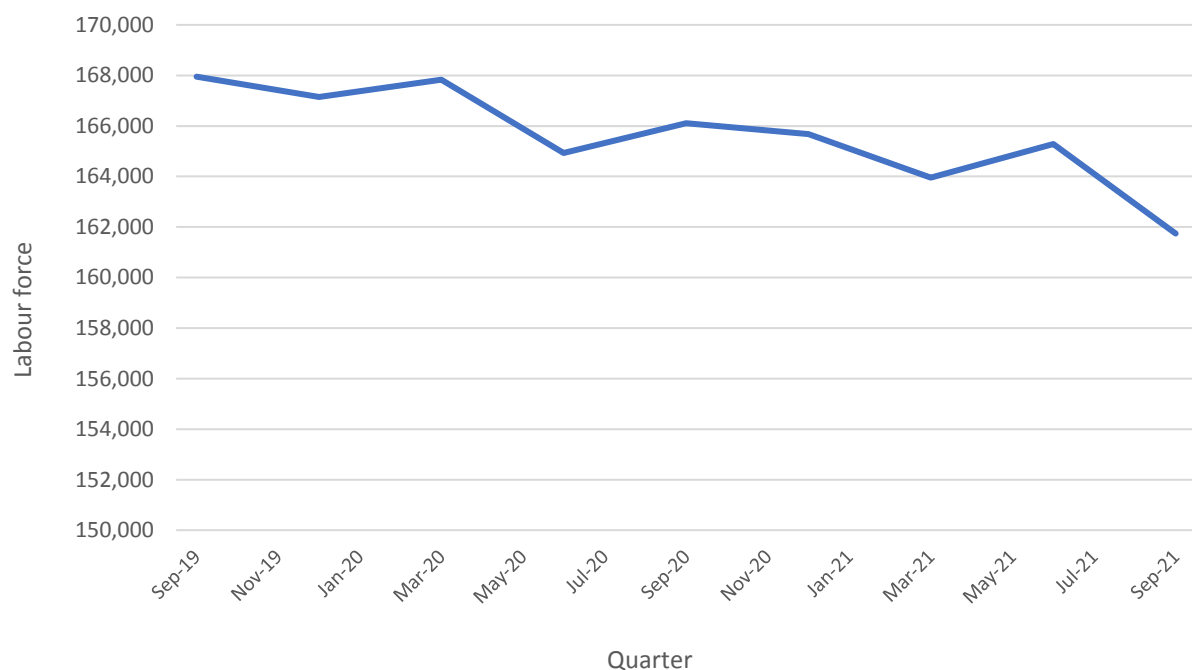


Chart 20 – Recent labour force statistics for Central Coast, September 2019-September 2021 (source: Department of Employment, Small Area Labour Markets)

Ward	Sep. 2019 Labour Force	Sep. 2020 Labour Force	Sep. 2021 Labour Force	Change Sep. 2019-Sep. 2021	Avg. annual % change
Budgewoi Ward	26,109	26,043	25,407	-702	-1.4%
Gosford East Ward	31,247	30,896	30,094	-1,153	-1.9%
Gosford West Ward	37,975	37,746	36,808	-1,167	-1.5%
The Entrance Ward	24,828	24,356	23,682	-1,146	-2.3%
Wyong Ward	36,059	35,462	34,452	-1,607	-2.3%
Central Coast	167,950	166,107	161,741	-6,209	-1.9%

Table 9 – Recent labour force statistics for wards in Central Coast, September 2019-September 2021 (source: Department of Employment, Small Area Labour Markets)

4.7 JobSeeker

JobSeeker statistics provide a way of assessing employment hardship or the level of unemployment in an area. Since Covid-19, JobSeeker uptake has increased all over Australia. To be eligible for JobSeeker, participants must be unemployed and looking for work, though certain activity criteria have been relaxed during the COVID-19 period.

Over time, uptake decreased in parts of the country where industries and local employment providers recovered, whereas in areas that are still experiencing financial difficulty, JobSeeker levels remain high. JobSeeker rates are a valuable, frequently updated measure of socioeconomic disadvantage in an area and should be assessed in conjunction with the 2016 Census SEIFA indexes (see section 7).

Central Coast's JobSeeker statistics are closely related to Regional New South Wales'. The uptake experienced the most significant increase between March 2020 and May 2020, when the JobSeeker rate increased from 9.8% to 11.8%. During this period, the number of JobSeeker recipients on the Central Coast increased by 10,962.

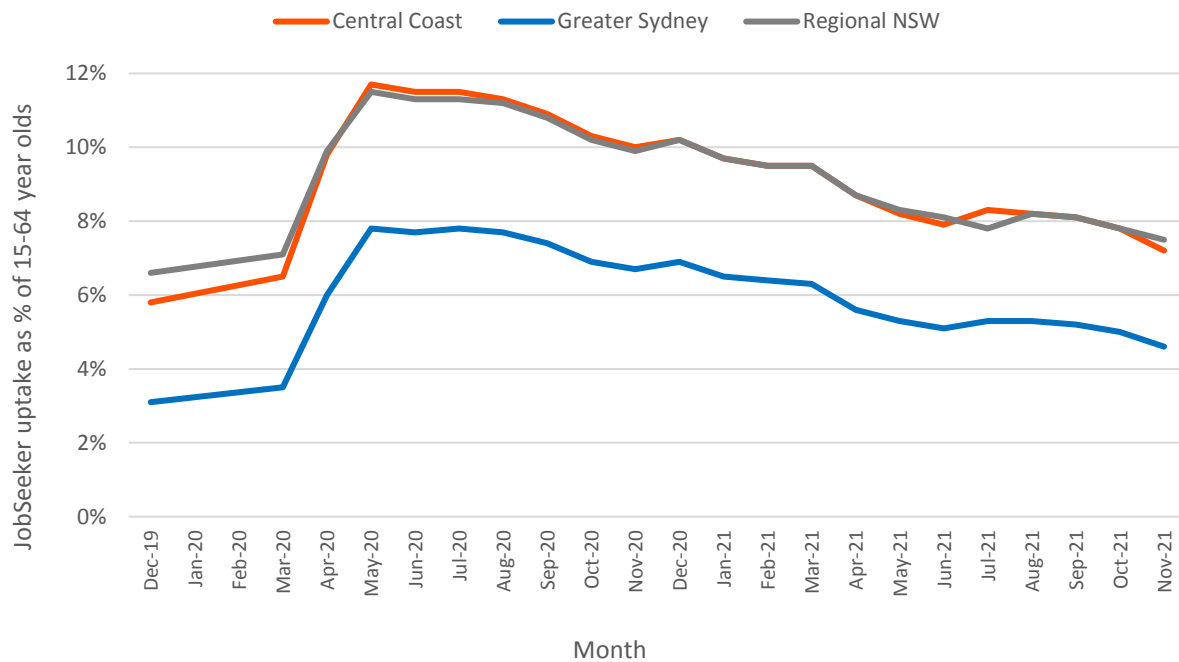


Chart 21 – JobSeeker statistics for Central Coast and benchmark areas, Dec. 2019 – Nov. 2021 (source: Department of Social Services)

Within Central Coast, JobSeeker uptake was highest in the Gosford West Ward. JobSeeker rates here peaked at 15.1% in May 2020. The latest JobSeeker data shows a decrease in JobSeeker uptake by November 2021. The Wyong Ward also recorded above average rates of JobSeeker uptake since December 2019.

On the other hand, the Entrance Ward and Gosford East Ward had JobSeeker rates below that of the Central Coast since Covid-19 impacted Australia.

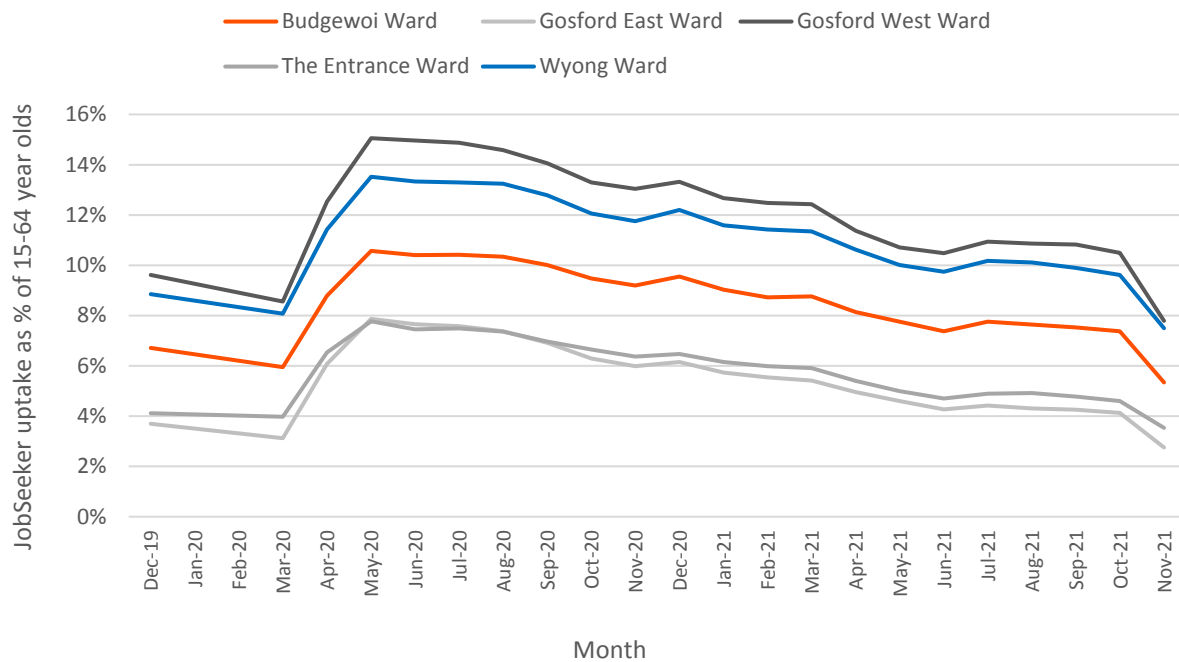


Chart 22 – JobSeeker statistics for Central Coast wards, Dec. 2019 – Nov. 2021 (source: Department of Social Services)

5. Income and expenses overview

Household Income is one of the most important indicators of socioeconomic status. In the context of council rates and understanding residents' ability to pay or service increasing rates expenses, income and expenses data informs whether Central Coast residents are struggling with income availability or may not be capable of affording increased expenses such as rates.

5.1.1 Median household income

Median household income information can show the variance of incomes within an LGA. Although section 5.1.5 illustrates income and expenses information over time for Central Coast, the information in this section shows the difference by Ward and over time.

As at the 2016 Census, the Gosford East Ward and Wyong Ward had the highest median household incomes on the Central Coast. On the other hand, the Budgewoi Ward and the Gosford West Ward had the lowest median household incomes and were lower than the median incomes for Central Coast.

Three wards had median household income levels below the LGA median (Budgewoi, Gosford West and The Entrance). However, since 2011, Budgewoi Ward's median household levels improved in relation to the LGAs. In contrast, the median income of Gosford West and The Entrance wards did not increase at the same level as the LGA.

Ward	2011 median household income	2016 median household income	Change 2011-2016	% change 2011-2016
Budgewoi Ward	\$867	\$1,102	+\$235	+27.1%
Gosford East Ward	\$1,186	\$1,457	+\$271	+22.8%
Gosford West Ward	\$943	\$1,169	+\$226	+24.0%
The Entrance Ward	\$998	\$1,179	+\$281	+18.1%
Wyong Ward	\$1,111	\$1,339	+\$228	+20.5%
Central Coast	\$1,000	\$1,256	+\$256	+25.6%

Table 10 – Median household income by ward, 2011-2016 (source: ABS)

5.1.2 Household income quartiles

Household income levels are not comparable over time because of the influences of economic change such as wage level fluctuations and inflation. Nevertheless, the income quartile method is a powerful and objective way of looking at income data and how it is changing.

Almost 30% of Central Coast's households are in the lowest household income quartile. This is higher than Greater Sydney (21%) but lower than the proportion of Regional New South Wales low income households (32%).

Within Central Coast, the Budgewoi and Gosford West Wards have the highest percentages of low-income households (33% and 32%, respectively), whereas the Gosford East and Wyong Ward have the lowest rates of low-income households (both with 26%).

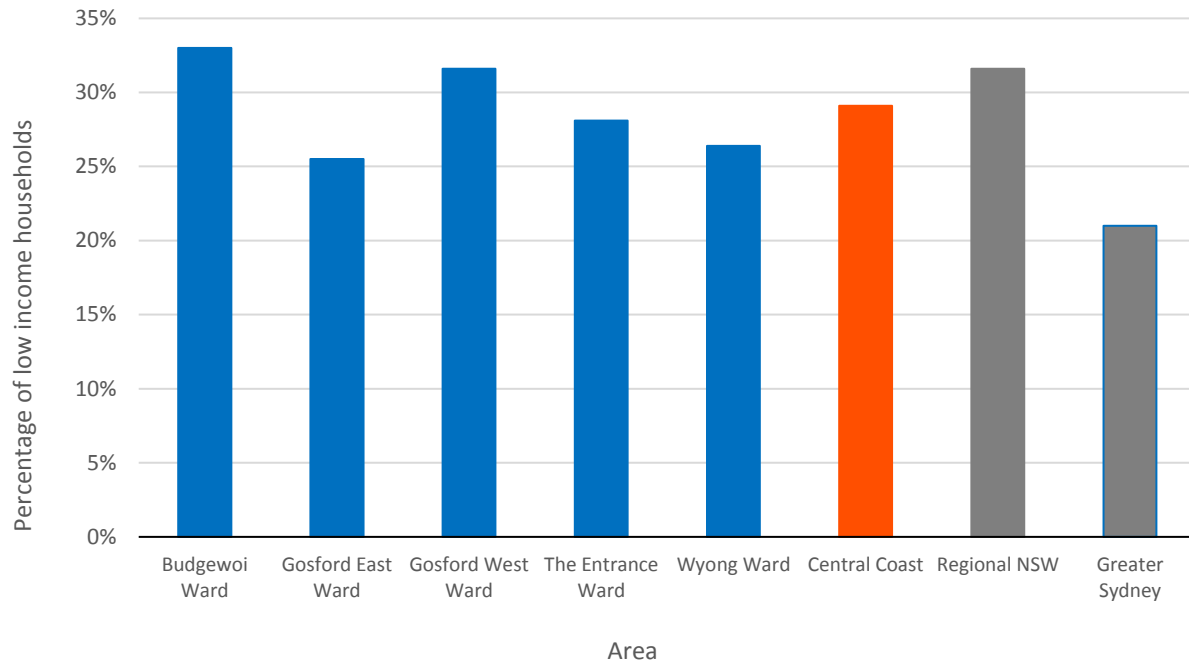


Chart 23 – Percentage of low-income households, 2011-2016 (source: ABS)

Over time, household income levels on the Central Coast have improved. Between 2011 and 2016, there was a 3.5% decrease in the lowest and medium-lowest income households and a 3.5% increase in the medium highest and highest quartiles, as seen in chart 24. For definitions of quantile, group dollar ranges over time, visit this page:

<https://profile.id.com.au/central-coast-nsw/household-income-quartiles>

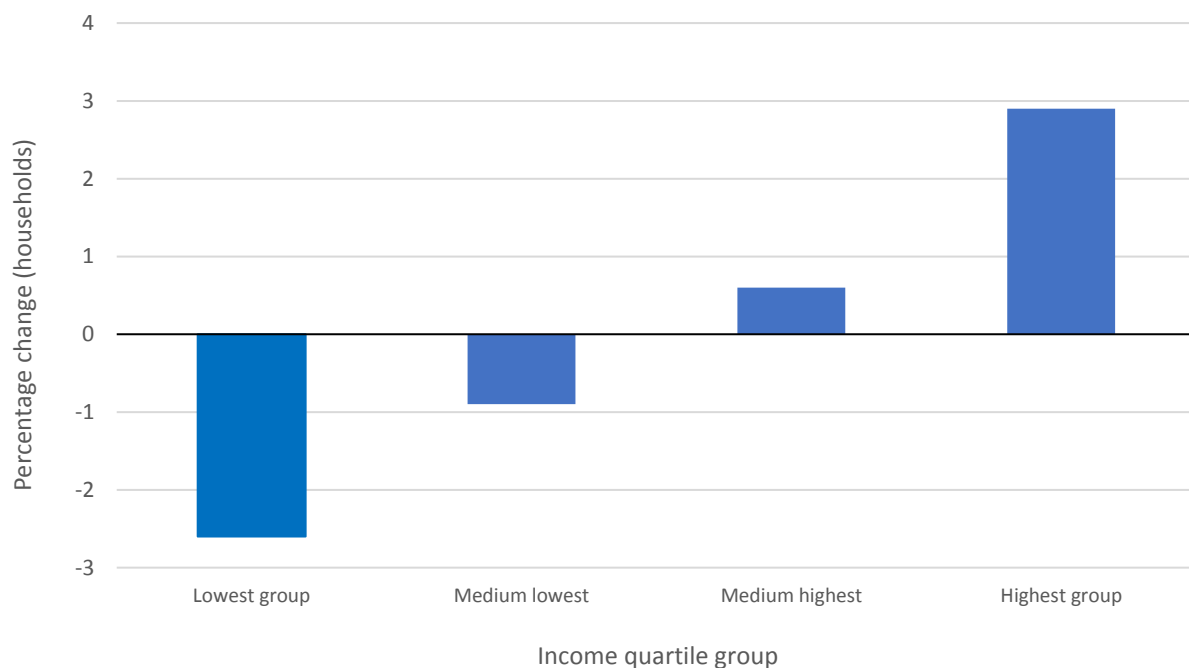







Chart 24 – Change in household income quartiles, Central Coast LGA, 2011-2016 (source: ABS)

The five wards within the Central Coast LGA recorded different changes to household income quartiles over time.

-  The Budgewoi Ward recorded a decline in the lowest and highest quartiles but increased the medium lowest and medium highest quartiles.
-  The Gosford East Ward recorded declines in the lowest, medium lowest and medium highest quartiles and increased the highest household income quartile.
-  The Gosford West Ward also recorded declines in the lowest, medium lowest and medium highest quartiles and increased the highest household income quartile.
-  The Entrance Ward declined the lowest and medium lowest quartiles and an increase in the medium highest and highest household income quartiles.
-  The Wyong Ward recorded declines in the lowest and highest quartiles and increases in the medium lowest quartile, with a slight increase in households in the medium highest income quartile.

5.1.3 Recent individual income statistics

Recent individual income statistics show that while the Central Coast personal income levels are lower than Greater Sydney's, they have improved in relation to Regional New South Wales' median personal income statistics. In 2014-15, Central Coast's median personal income was 98.6% of Regional New South Wales' median. By 2018-19, Central Coast's median personal income was 98.8% of Regional New South Wales' median, illustrating some improvement.

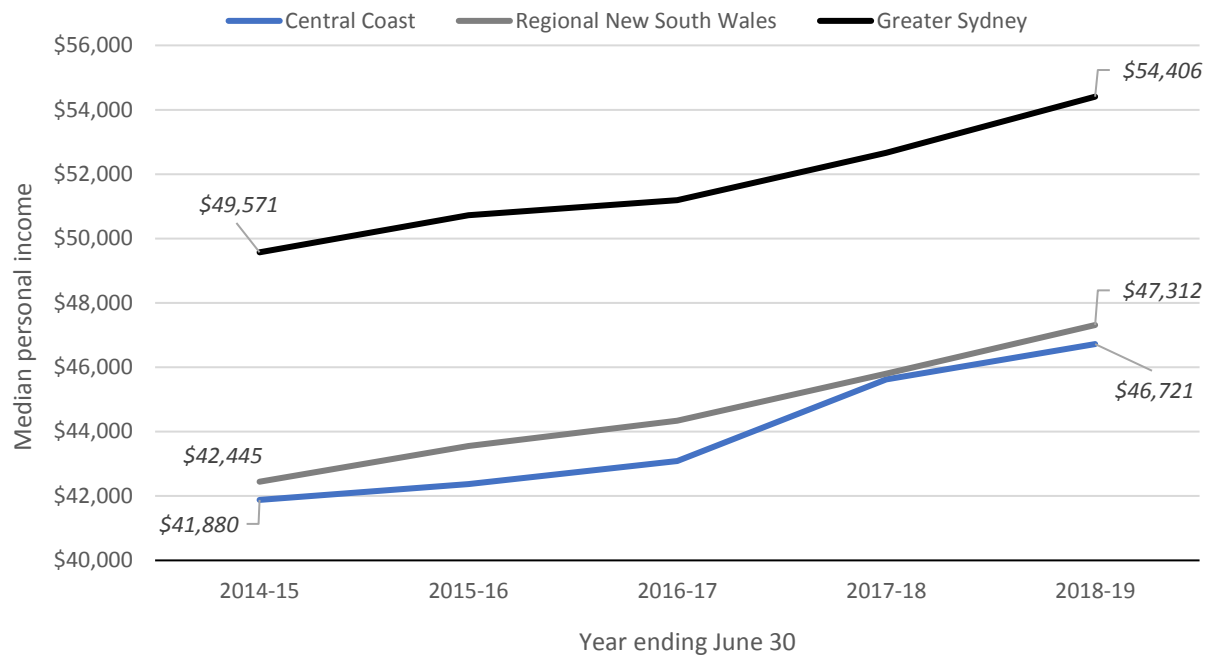


Chart 25 – Recent median individual income statistics, Central Coast and benchmarks, 2014-2019 (source: ABS).

5.1.4 Sources of income

Household disposable income measures the amount of income available to an average household in the area. It varies depending on the jobs held by the residents, the amount of property and business income, and cash benefits provided by the government, which are related to the socioeconomic status of the area. For example, areas with high unemployment, large numbers of retirees and others out of the workforce may have a high cash benefits component.

The findings provide insight into the sources of income and how much residents have available to spend in the area, which is essential in the council rates context. However, the information is not available at geographic levels smaller than LGAs. This dataset should be viewed in conjunction with the next section – “Income and expenses over time”.

Over time, property income and superannuation have decreased in share as sources of household income. In contrast, wages and salaries have increased, suggesting a higher proportion of residents earning wages and salaries over time, a positive indicator of income available to spend. An expenses component of this, presented in the next section, provides a complete overview of the relationship between income and expenses in Central Coast over time.

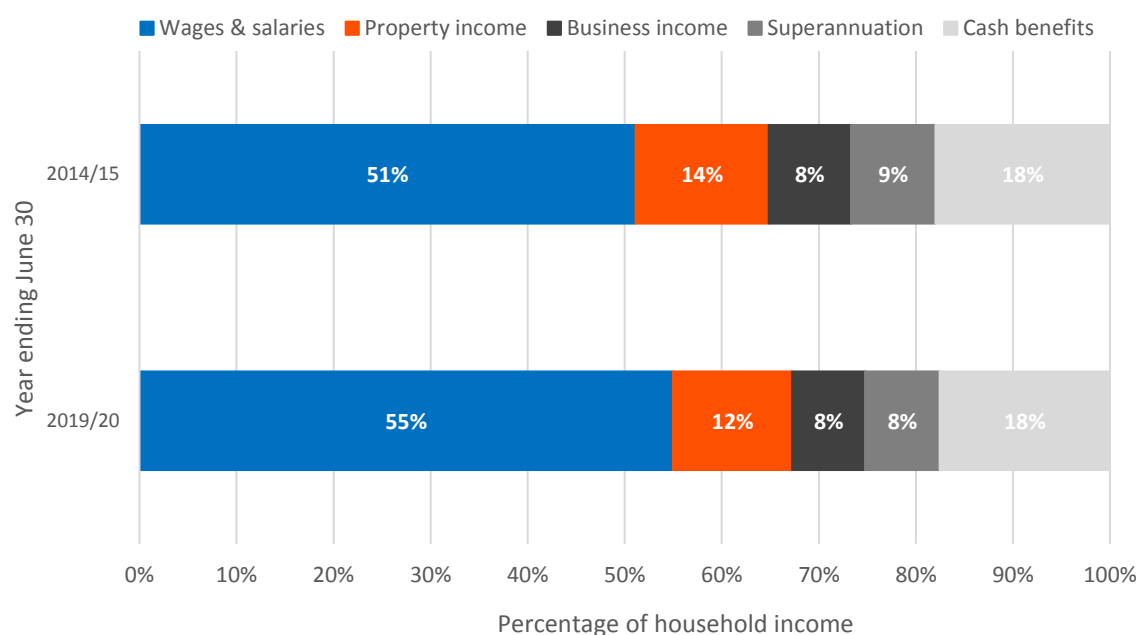


Chart 26 – Sources of income per household for Central Coast over time, 2014-15 and 2019-20 (source: NIEIR)

Wages and salaries are a more significant source of income in Central Coast than Regional New South Wales, but lower than that of Greater Sydney, as illustrated in chart 27. Business income is also a less significant source of income on the Central Coast than in Regional New South Wales or Greater Sydney. Conversely, cash benefits make up 18% of household income on the Central Coast, a percentage higher than in Regional New South Wales (16%) or Greater Sydney (8%).

Over time, cash benefits have decreased in share as a source of income in Greater Sydney and Regional New South Wales but remained the same on the Central Coast. This is also reflected in the “ratio of cash benefits to tax paid” statistics. This measure illustrates if cash benefits per household are higher or lower than the total income tax paid. For example, on the Central Coast in 2019/20, “the ratio” was 1.28, down from 1.45 in 2014/15 meaning less cash benefits than tax paid per household. In the same period, the ratio decreased from 1.29 to 1.14 in Regional New South Wales and from 0.51 to 0.43 in Greater Sydney (meaning more tax paid than cash benefits received in Greater Sydney).

For Central Coast, this change is a positive indicator meaning that although a higher ratio of cash benefits to tax paid still exists, it is decreasing.

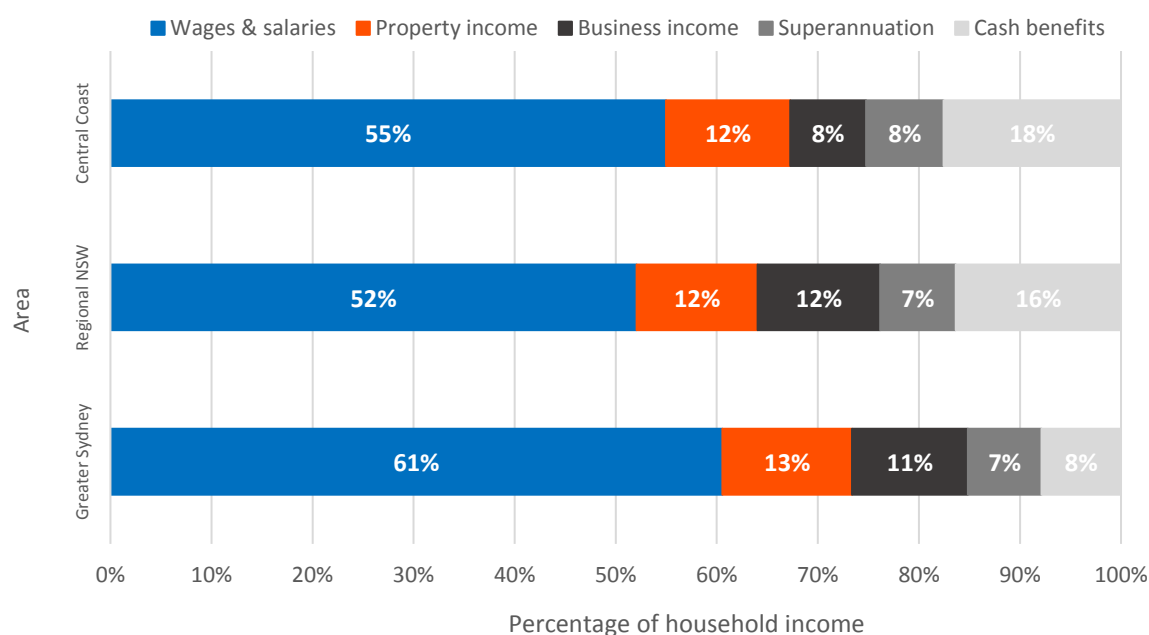


Chart 27 – Sources of income per household for Central Coast and benchmark areas, 2019-20 (source: NIEIR)

5.1.5 Income and expenses over time

Analysis of household income and expenditure over time is valuable when assessing an area's ability to pay council rates. As with sources of household income data presented in the previous section, household expenditure is modelled based on a set of expenditure items collected every five years in the ABS Household Expenditure Survey.

Household expenditure is a useful measure of the economic resources available to households in the area and where their income is spent. For example, areas with good public transport infrastructure and access to jobs may spend less on transport and more on discretionary spending such as entertainment. Conversely, more disadvantaged areas may spend a higher proportion of their income on food and transport. An examination of the distribution of household spending per household provides insight into the area's socioeconomic status.

Total disposable household income has decreased over time on the Central Coast, as have expenditure totals, resulting in increased net savings per household between 2015 and 2020. This is presented in charts 28 and 29, where net savings totals are compared to Regional New South Wales and Greater Sydney.

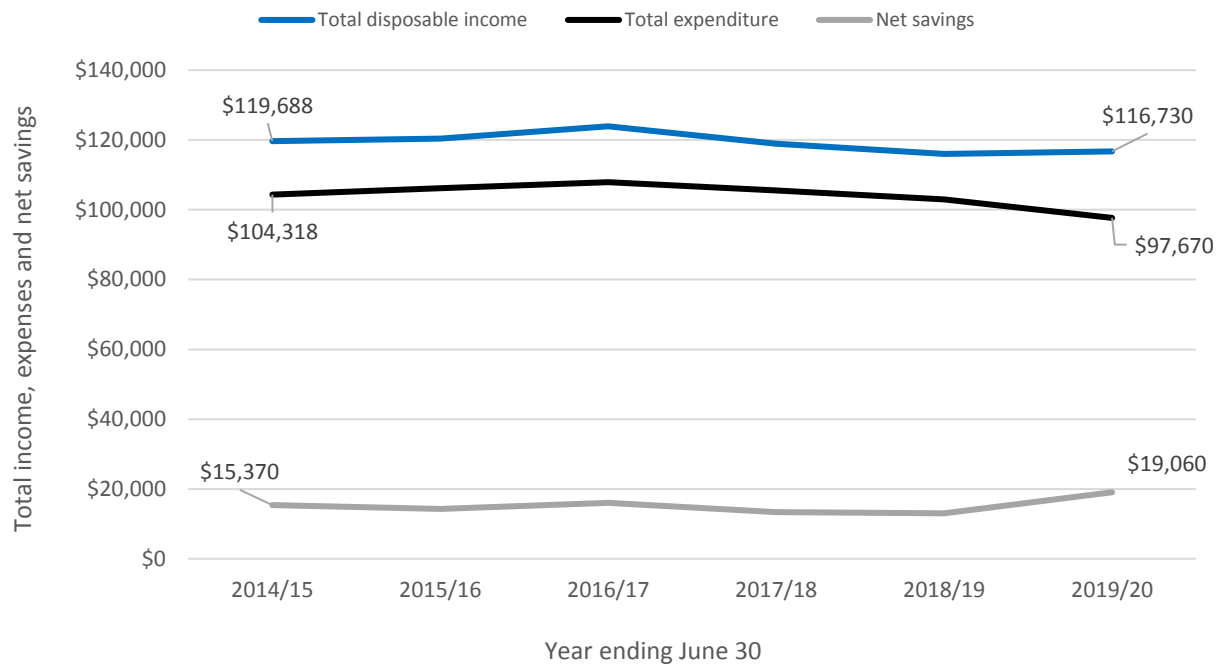


Chart 28 – Total income, expenditure and net savings for Central Coast, 2014/15 – 2019/20 (source: NIEIR)

Net savings estimates for Central Coast show an increase over time as total expenditure decreased. This increase in net savings is similar to the pattern in Greater Sydney, where the same increase occurred in the past two years of data. Regional New South Wales, on the other hand, has a net savings decrease over time, as the increase in total expenditure exceeded that of income.

This data suggests that Central Coast households are in a better position financially over time. However, some more recent data beyond 2019/20 would show whether Covid-19 and associated economic and employment impacts have affected household income statistics.

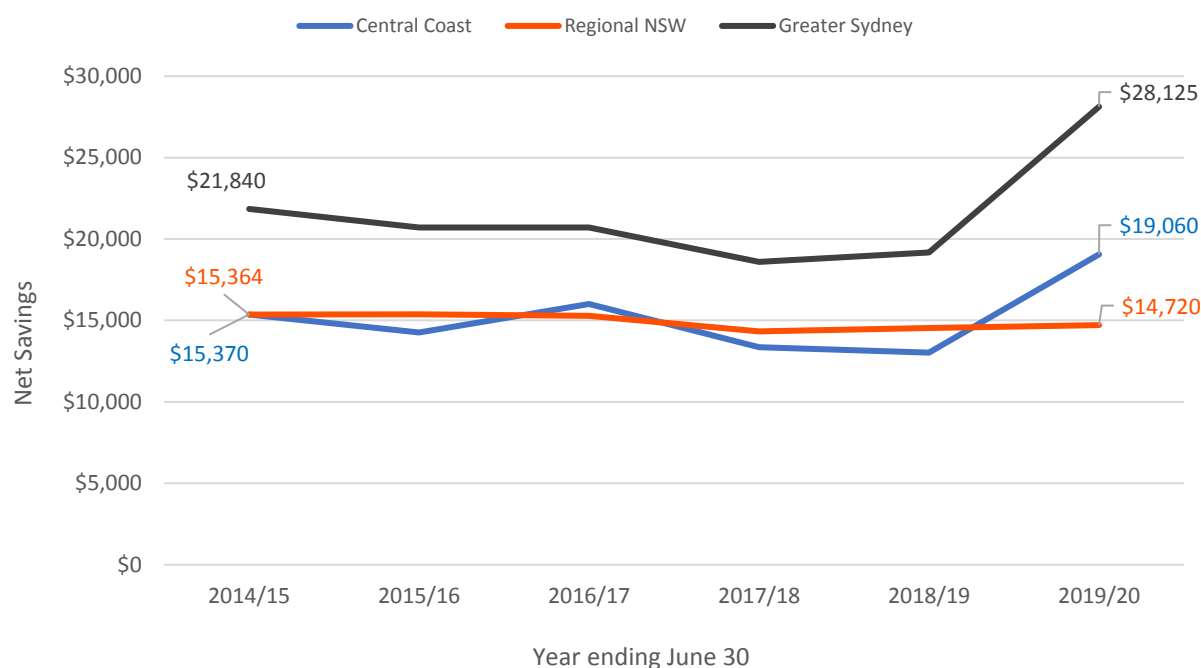


Chart 29 – Net savings, Central Coast and benchmark areas (2014/15 – 2019/20) (source: NIEIR)

A full breakdown of expenditure by type is available on the Central Coast Council economy.id website (<https://economy.id.com.au/central-coast-nsw/household-expenditure>). However, two expenditure items are of interest in the analysis of council rates: housing and utilities.

- ▣ Housing expenditure on the Central Coast made up 23.7% of all expenses in 2019/20, up from 21.5% in 2014/15.
- ▣ Utilities expenditure remained at 3.3% of all household expenses in 2019/20 as it did in 2014/15.

5.1.6 Wage Price Index

The wage price index (WPI) covers wage and salary costs. It measures the change in the price between the current period and the base period. The wage price indexes show how prices have changed relative to a reference base of the financial year 2008/09 = 100.0. The information is published at State and Territory levels and is not available for the Central Coast LGA.

Wages in New South Wales continue to moderate, with the Wage Price Index estimated at 1.5% in the year to June 2021, similar to trends in Australia overall.

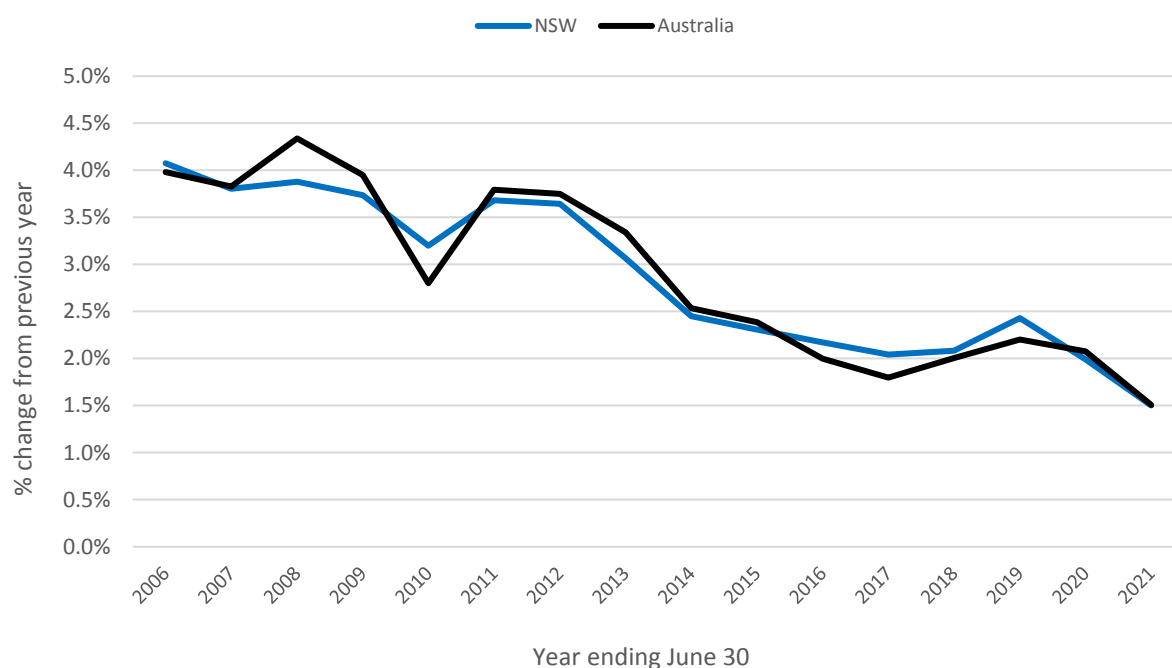


Chart 30 – Wage Price Index (WPI) for New South Wales and Australia, 2006-2021 (source: ABS)

5.1.7 Inflation

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is an indicator of the inflation rate run by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It measures the changing price of a fixed basket of goods and services purchased by the average household in 8 capital cities around Australia. This is combined into an index number, calculated quarterly, and the percentage change for the year to the latest quarter is shown.

In the context of this report, this figure can provide insight as to whether the value of money over time is increasing (decrease in CPI) or decreasing (increase in CPI). When there is an upward change in the CPI, there has been an increase in the average change in prices over time. This eventually leads to adjustments in the cost of living and income (presumably so that income is adjusted to meet a higher cost of living). This process is referred to as indexation.

In the year to June 2021, the CPI for Sydney increased by 4.1%. During the same period, the CPI for the eight capital cities in Australia increased by 3.8%.

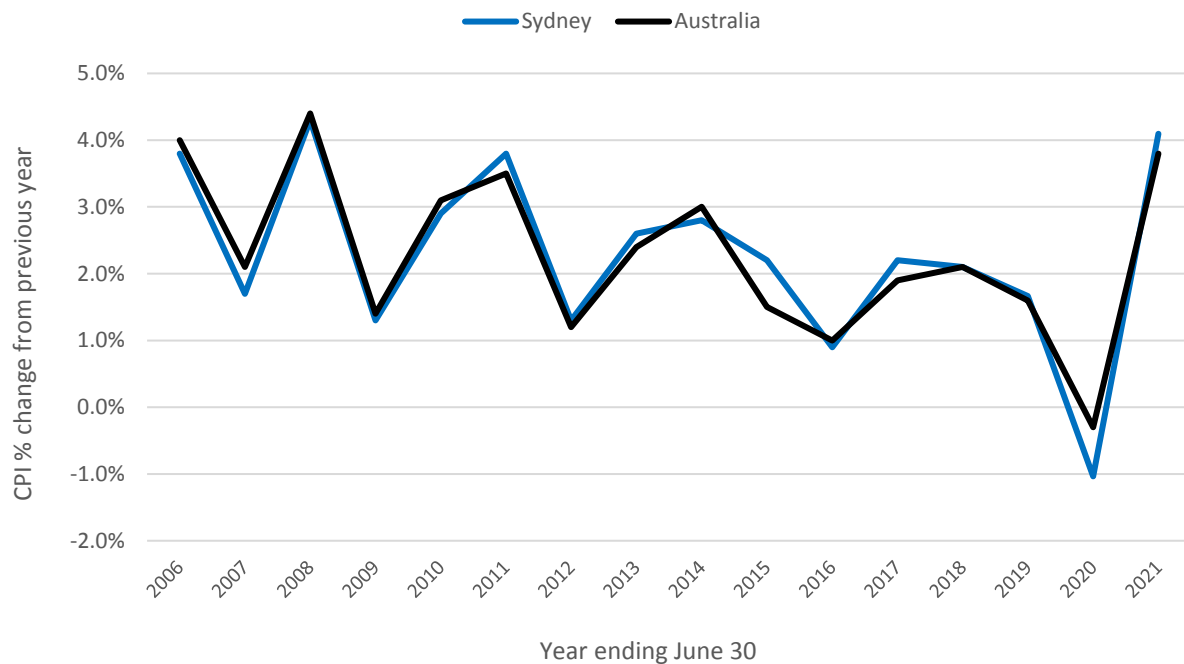


Chart 31 – Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Sydney and Australia, 2006-2021 (source: ABS)

6. Housing tenure and housing costs

Understanding the characteristics of housing on the Central Coast from a tenure perspective provides insight into whether some parts of the LGA have a high proportion of housing that is owned outright, mortgaged, or rented. Households with a mortgage would experience a council rates increase as an added property-related cost. Households that rent may experience a council rates increase as an increase in rental costs, as landlords pass on the expense of the increased rates to tenants.

This section assesses mortgage and rental payments by ward. Also, it presents mortgage and rental stress statistics to highlight wards with higher than average proportions of households that already find covering housing costs (mortgage or rent) difficult and may have difficulty paying higher housing costs due to rates increases.






6.1 Tenure type by Ward

Housing tenure data provides insights into an area's socioeconomic status and its role in the housing market. For example, a high concentration of private renters may indicate a transient area attractive to young singles and couples. In contrast, a concentration of homeowners means a more settled area with mature families and empty-nesters. Tenure can also reflect built form, with a significantly higher share of renters in high-density housing and a substantially more significant proportion of homeowners in separate houses. However, this is not always the case.

In conjunction with other socioeconomic status indicators, tenure data helps analyse housing markets and housing affordability.

On the Central Coast, a third of all households are fully-owned. The percentage of fully-owned households (33.4%) slightly decreased from 2011, when 33.6% of households were fully-owned. A similar proportion of households (32.5%) are mortgaged and this tenure type percentage decreased since 2011 (33.2%). Private renting tenure (21.9%) of all households also decreased since 2011 (22.1%). The proportion of "not stated" responses in the 2016 Census increased by 1.3% from 2011, so identifying patterns in tenure type is somewhat hindered by this (i.e. decreases in tenure type may not be actual).

Within Central Coast, there are differences in tenure type by ward:

-  The Gosford East Ward has the highest proportion of fully-owned households (38.9%). In addition, this tenure type increased by 0.9% since 2011.
-  The Wyong Ward had the lowest proportion of fully-owned households (28.7%). This tenure type has decreased by 1.0% since 2011.
-  The Wyong Ward had the highest proportion of mortgaged households (36.7%), however, this tenure type decreased by 1.9% since 2011.
-  The Gosford West Ward had the lowest proportion of mortgaged households (27%). This tenure type has decreased by 0.6% since 2011.
-  The Gosford West Ward had the highest proportion of privately rented households (27.5%). This tenure type has increased by 0.7% since 2011.

- On the other hand, the Gosford East Ward had the lowest proportion of privately rented households (15.4%). This tenure type has decreased by 1.1% since 2011.

Ward	Fully-owned	Mortgage	Renting (private)
Budgewoi Ward	36.0%	32.3%	21.6%
Gosford East Ward	38.9%	35.2%	15.4%
Gosford West Ward	32.7%	27.0%	27.5%
The Entrance Ward	32.3%	33.2%	22.6%
Wyong Ward	28.7%	36.7%	21.3%
Central Coast	33.4%	32.5%	21.9%

Table 11 – Tenure type by ward, 2016 (source: ABS)

6.2 Housing costs – mortgage

In 2016, 41,342 households on the Central Coast had a mortgage. The median weekly mortgage repayment was \$410, a decrease from \$424 in 2011. Mortgage payments can vary over time if variables such as interest rates decrease and affect mortgage repayment totals by reducing them.

Within the Central Coast LGA, households in the Gosford East Ward and The Entrance Ward had higher median mortgage payments than the LGA. This can reflect the type of area and residential property values there. The Budgewoi Ward and Wyong Ward, on the other hand, had lower median mortgage repayments than the LGA. Weekly payments increased over time in the Budgewoi Ward. Still, they decreased in the Wyong Ward, again indicative of lower housing prices or mortgages that may have been established during periods of better lending conditions (such as lower interest rates).

Ward	2011 Median mortgage repayment (p/week)	2016 Median mortgage repayment (p/week)	Change 2011-2016
Budgewoi Ward	\$351	\$376	+\$25
Gosford East Ward	\$459	\$469	+\$10
Gosford West Ward	\$405	\$403	-\$2
The Entrance Ward	\$419	\$419	\$0
Wyong Ward	\$412	\$398	-\$14
Central Coast	\$424	\$410	-\$14

Table 12 – Median weekly mortgage repayments, by ward, 2016 (source: ABS)

6.3 Households in mortgage stress

Mortgage Stress is defined as per the NATSEM (National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling) model as households in the lowest 40% of incomes paying more than 30% of their usual gross weekly income on home loan repayments. Housing affordability is a significant social problem. Many households struggle to afford to buy their dwelling and others buying but spend a large proportion of their income to service the mortgage.

Understanding mortgage stress provides a good indicator of the likely locations where people have difficulties meeting their commitments. In the context of this report, this information reveals if some parts of Central Coast have residents who are less likely to be able to cover increased expenses such as council rates increase.

In 2016, 9.9% of households with a mortgage experienced mortgage stress. This percentage represents 4,096 households. There was a decline of households in mortgage stress from 2011 when 12.2% of Central Coast households with a mortgage were in mortgage stress.

Within the LGA, the Budgewoi Ward had the highest proportion of households in mortgage stress in 2016 – 10.1%. There were 824 households in mortgage stress in the Budgewoi Ward in absolute numbers. This is followed by the Wyong Ward, where 8.8% of households with a mortgage experienced mortgage stress. The Gosford East Ward had the lowest percentage of households in mortgage stress, 6.5%.

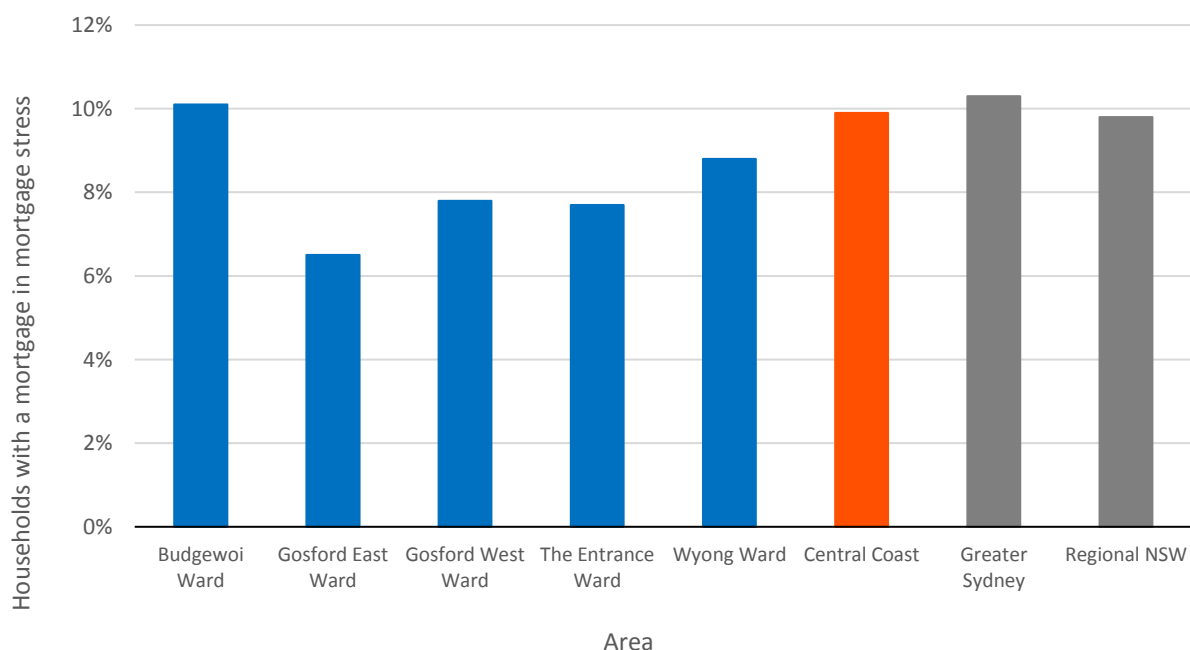


Chart 32 – Households with a mortgage in mortgage stress, 2016 (source: ABS)

Over time, mortgage stress declined on the Central Coast and in the benchmark areas (Greater Sydney, Regional NSW). The percentage of mortgage-stress households in the entire Central Coast LGA decreased by 2.3% between 2011 and 2016, resulting in 812 fewer households in mortgage stress. Greater Sydney's proportion of households in mortgage stress declined by 1.3% and Regional NSW's by 1.6%.

6.4 Housing costs – rent

In 2016, 32,709 households on the Central Coast rented. The median weekly rental payment was \$352, an increase of \$78 from \$273 in 2011. This 29% increase was higher than the rental payment increase in Regional New South Wales (28%) or Greater Sydney (24%).

Within the Central Coast LGA, households in the Gosford East and Gosford West Wards and Wyong Ward had higher median rental payments than the LGA. This can reflect the type of area and residential property available for rent there. The Budgewoi Ward and The Entrance Ward, on the other hand, had lower median rental payments than the LGA.

Weekly payments increased over time in all wards, with the highest percentage increases of rent payments in the Gosford West Ward (+32%) and Wyong Ward (+31%). While median household income on the Central Coast has increased by 25% since 2011, the impact of increased rental payments is best assessed through rental stress analysis (section 6.5).

Ward	2011 Median rental payment (p/week)	2016 Median rental payment (p/week)	Change 2011-2016	% Change 2011-2016
Budgewoi Ward	\$261	\$336	+\$75	+29%
Gosford East Ward	\$312	\$404	+\$92	+29%
Gosford West Ward	\$269	\$355	+\$86	+32%
The Entrance Ward	\$273	\$350	+\$77	+28%
Wyong Ward	\$270	\$354	+\$84	+31%
Central Coast	\$273	\$352	+\$78	+29%

Table 13 – Median weekly rental payments, by ward, 2016 (source: ABS)

6.5 Households in rental stress

Like mortgage stress, rental stress is defined as households in the lowest 40% of incomes, paying more than 30% of their usual gross weekly income on rent.

In 2016, 35.7% of households that rent experienced rental stress. This percentage represents 11,692 households. In addition, there was an increase of households in mortgage stress from 2011 when 34.4% of Central Coast households that rent were in rental stress.

Within the LGA, the Budgewoi Ward had the highest proportion of households in rental stress in 2016 – 38.5%. In absolute numbers, there were 2,322 households in rental stress in the Budgewoi Ward. This is followed by The Entrance Ward where 35.4% of households that rent experienced rental stress (2,245 households). The Gosford East Ward had the lowest percentage of households in rental stress, 27.2%, a total of 1,170 households.

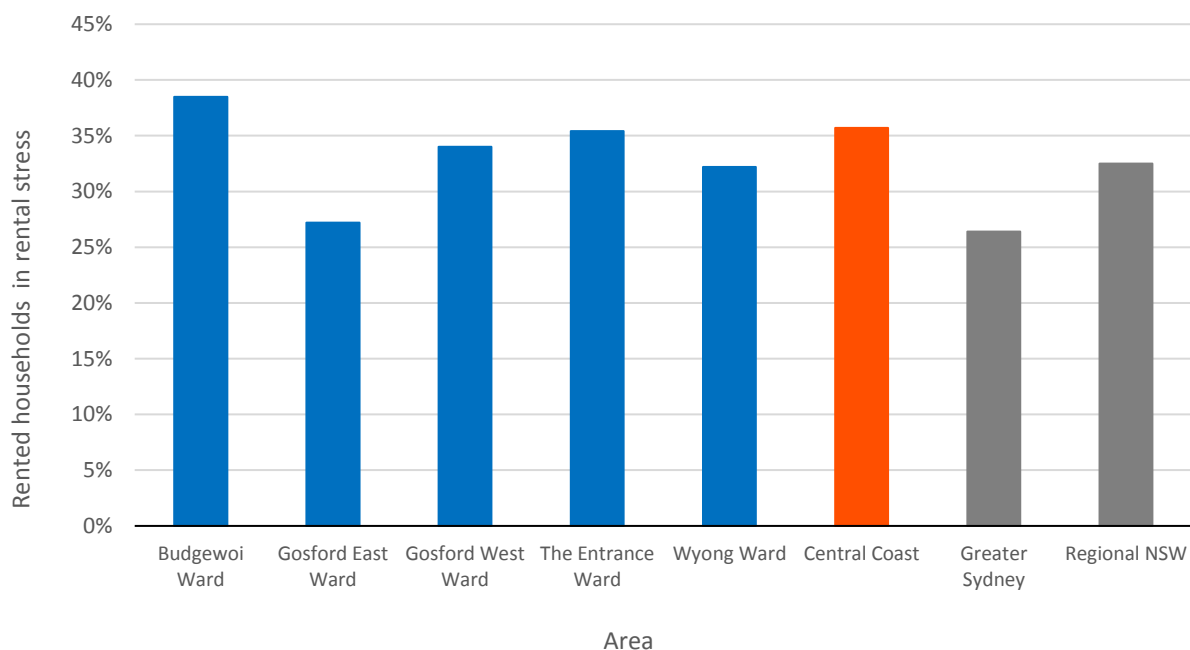


Chart 33 – Households which rent in rental stress, 2016 (source: ABS)

Over time, rental stress increased on the Central Coast and in the benchmark areas (Greater Sydney, Regional NSW). Most wards within the Central Coast have higher rates of rental stress than all of Regional New South Wales and Greater Sydney.

The percentage of households in rental stress in the entire Central Coast LGA increased by 1.3% between 2011 and 2016, resulting in 704 more households in rental stress. Greater

Sydney's proportion of households in rental stress increased by 1.3% and Regional NSW's by 2.9%.

This information suggests that increased rent could exacerbate rental stress differently within the Central Coast as a proxy of landlords passing on rates increases to tenants.

7. Socioeconomic disadvantage – SEIFA

The SEIFA index of disadvantage (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas) is the most commonly used aggregate measure of socioeconomic disadvantage at the local level. This index is derived from the relative proportions of 16 Census characteristics, for more information see: <https://profile.id.com.au/central-coast-nsw/topic-notes#seifa-indexes>.

Higher scores indicate less disadvantage while lower scores indicate more disadvantage. For example, the Central Coast Council area has a SEIFA index of 989, which when ranked among all local government areas of New South Wales, puts it at 86th most disadvantaged of 130 local government areas.

A score of 989 indicates that Central Coast is more disadvantaged than the national (1002) and New South Wales (1001) averages but less disadvantaged than the Regional New South Wales index of 971.

Within Central Coast, the SEIFA index varies between wards. A comparison of SEIFA index scores and percentiles is presented in table 14 and chart 34. A percentile indicates the approximate position of an area in a ranked list of Australia's suburbs and localities. It is meant to indicate where the area sits within the whole nation. A higher number indicates a higher socioeconomic status. For instance, a percentile of 20 for the Budgewoi Ward indicates that approximately 20% of Australia's suburbs have a SEIFA index lower than this area (more disadvantaged), while 80% are higher (less disadvantaged).

The Gosford East Ward is the least disadvantaged ward in the LGA with an index of 1,044 which is higher than the LGA average and the Regional New South Wales and Greater Sydney SEIFA index. The Entrance Ward was the only other ward on the Central Coast with a SEIFA index higher than the LGA's (995).

The Budgewoi Ward and Gosford West Ward had the lowest SEIFA index scores, meaning they are the most disadvantaged wards in the LGA. Budgewoi Ward's index of 945 means that 20% of Australia's suburbs are more disadvantaged. The Gosford West Ward's index score of 980 means that 34% of Australia's suburbs are more disadvantaged.

Ward	2016 Index	Percentile
Budgewoi Ward	945	20 th
Gosford East Ward	1,044	73 rd
Gosford West Ward	980	34 th
The Entrance Ward	995	42 nd
Wyong Ward	982	35 th
Central Coast	989	39th
Greater Sydney	1,018	56th
Regional NSW	971	26th

Table 14 – SEIFA index of disadvantage, by ward, 2016 (source: ABS)

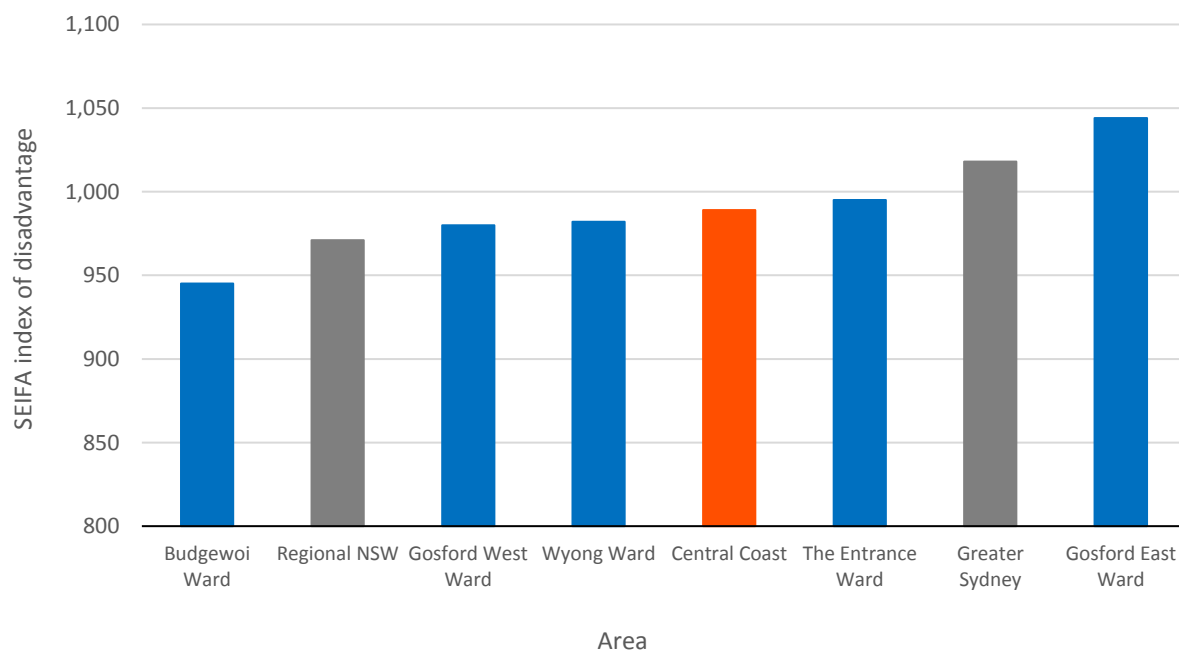
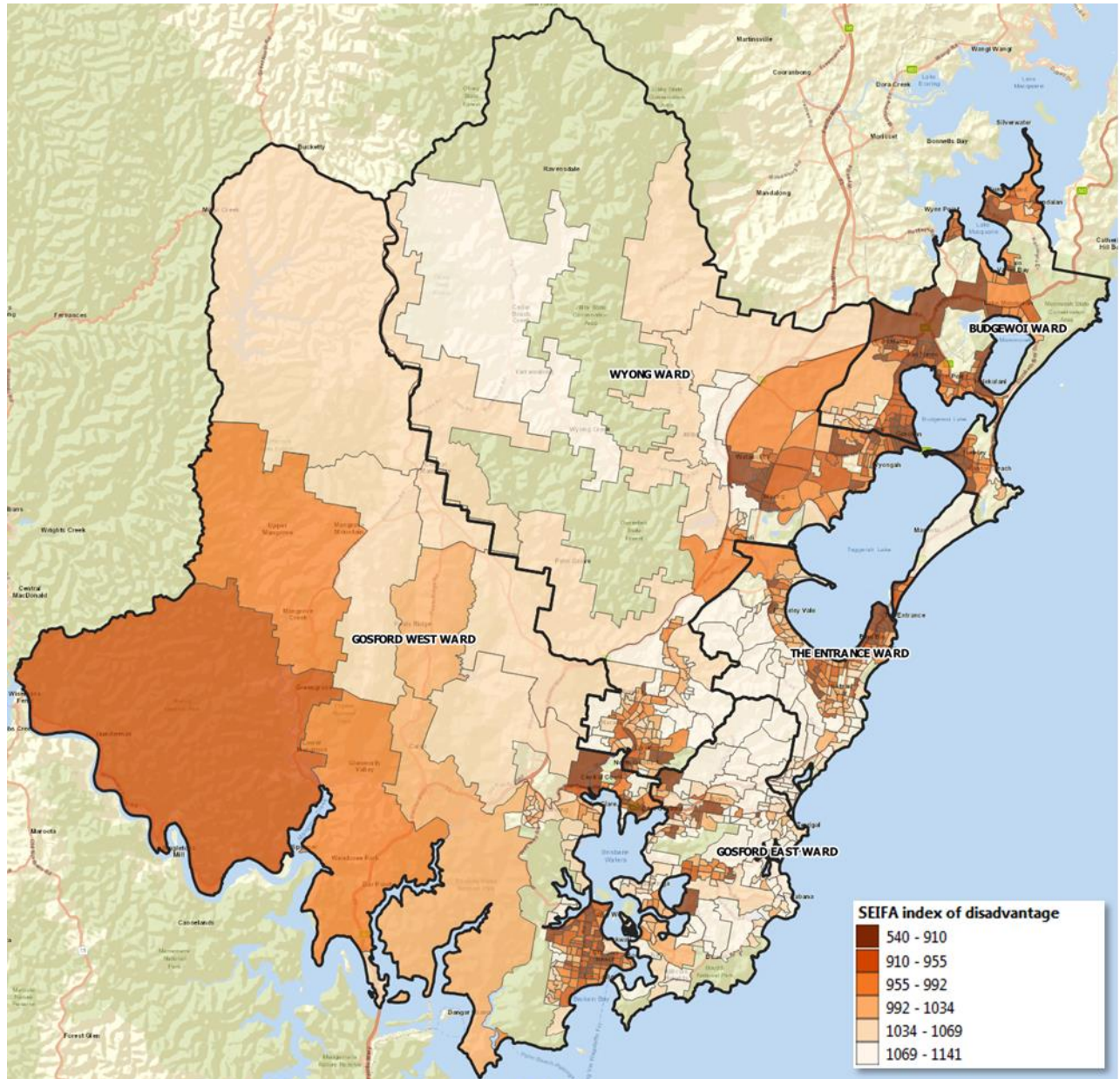


Chart 34 – SEIFA index of disadvantage, by ward, ranked from most to least disadvantaged, 2016 (source: ABS)

7.1 SEIFA maps by ward

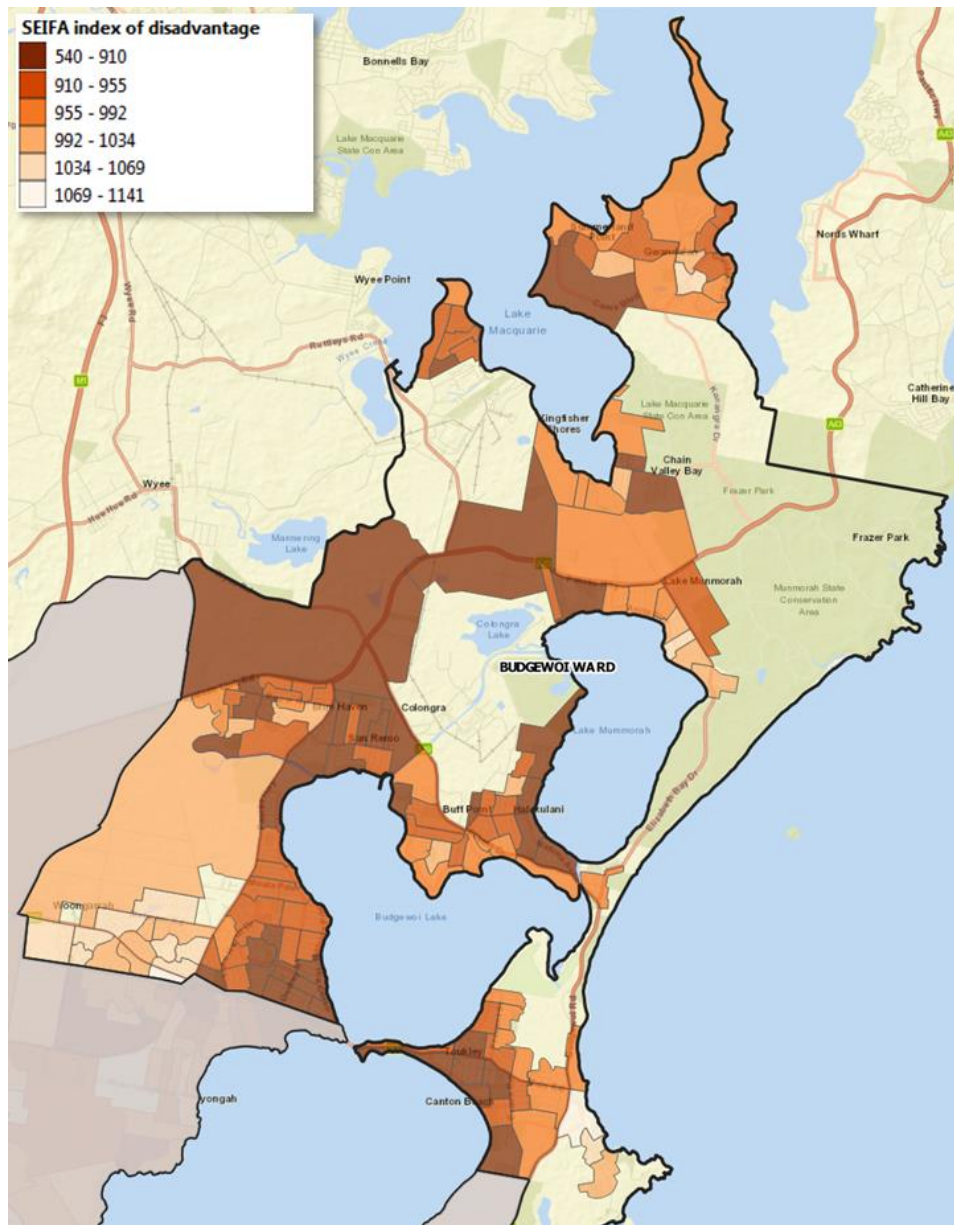
Maps 2-7 illustrate SEIFA index scores for neighbourhoods within each Central Coast Ward.



Map 2 – SEIFA index of disadvantage for Central Coast, 2016 (source: ABS)



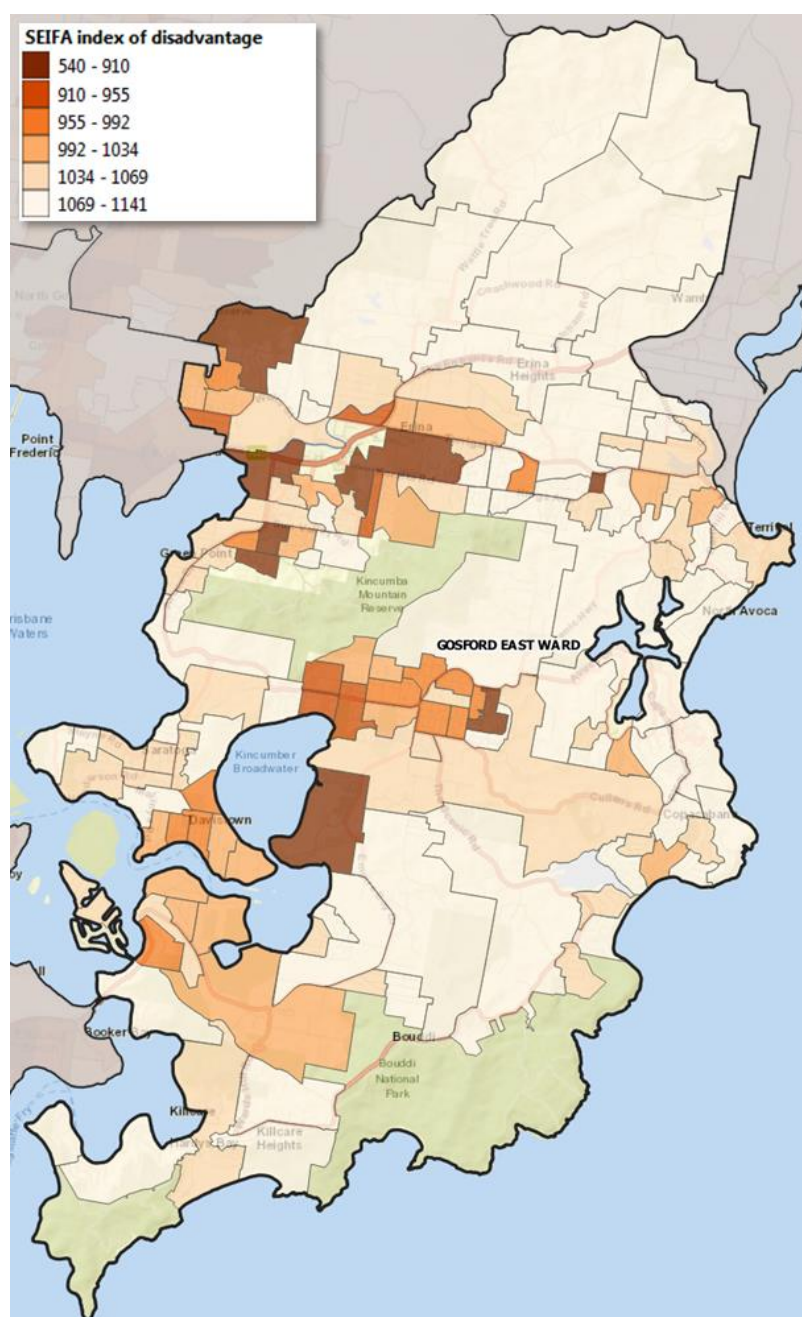
Within Central Coast, the communities and neighbourhoods with the lowest SEIFA index scores are scattered throughout the LGA, with the most significant pockets being in the central and western parts of the Budgewoi ward, the northern part of The Entrance Ward and the eastern and southern parts of the Gosford West Ward



Map 3 – SEIFA index of disadvantage for the Budgewoi Ward, 2016 (source: ABS)

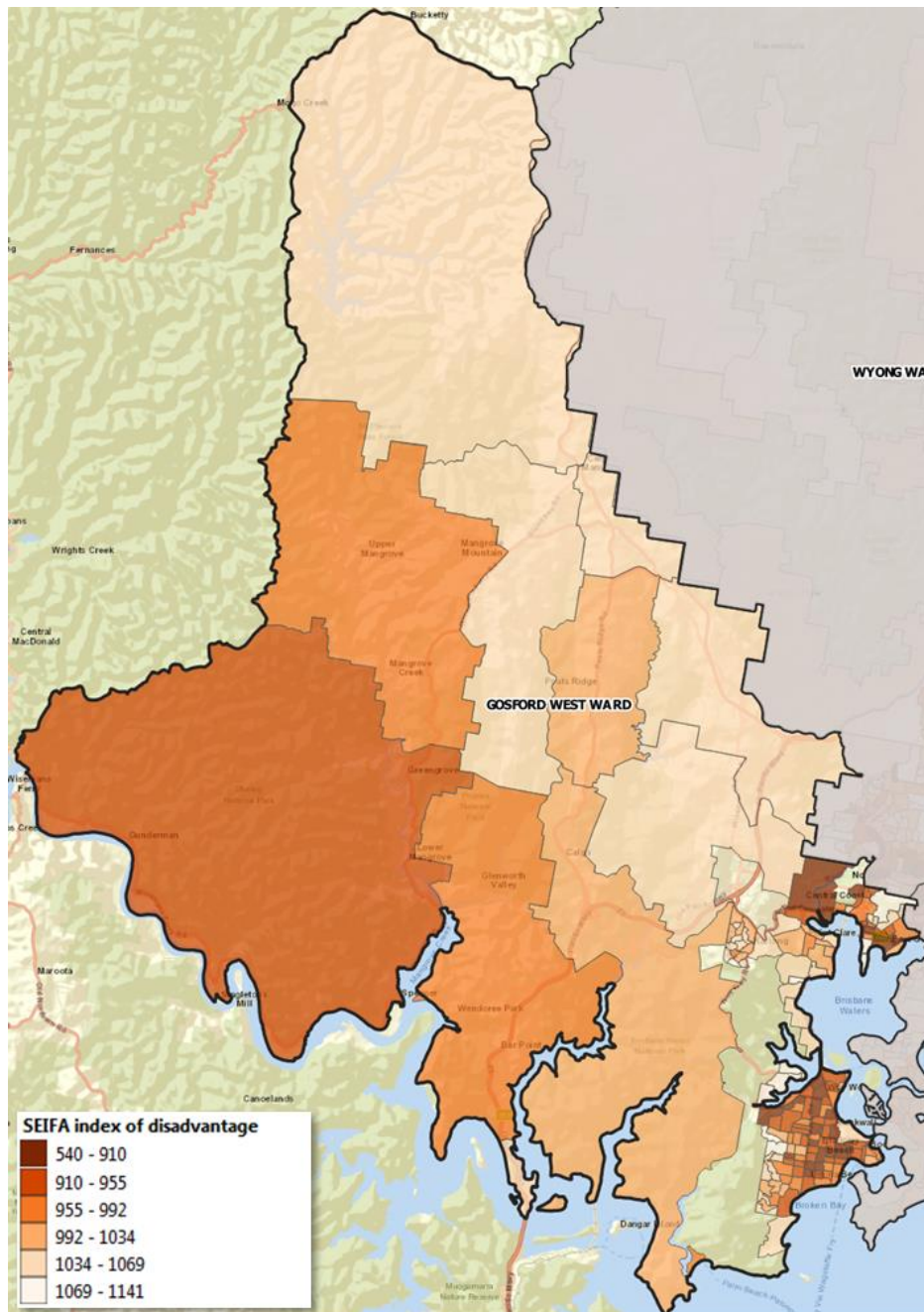


Within the Budgewoi Ward, areas with the highest levels of disadvantage (lowest SEIFA scores) are in Doyalson, San Remo and Halekuani, and Gorokan, Toukley Cannon Beach.



Map 4 – SEIFA index of disadvantage for the Gosford East Ward, 2016 (source: ABS)

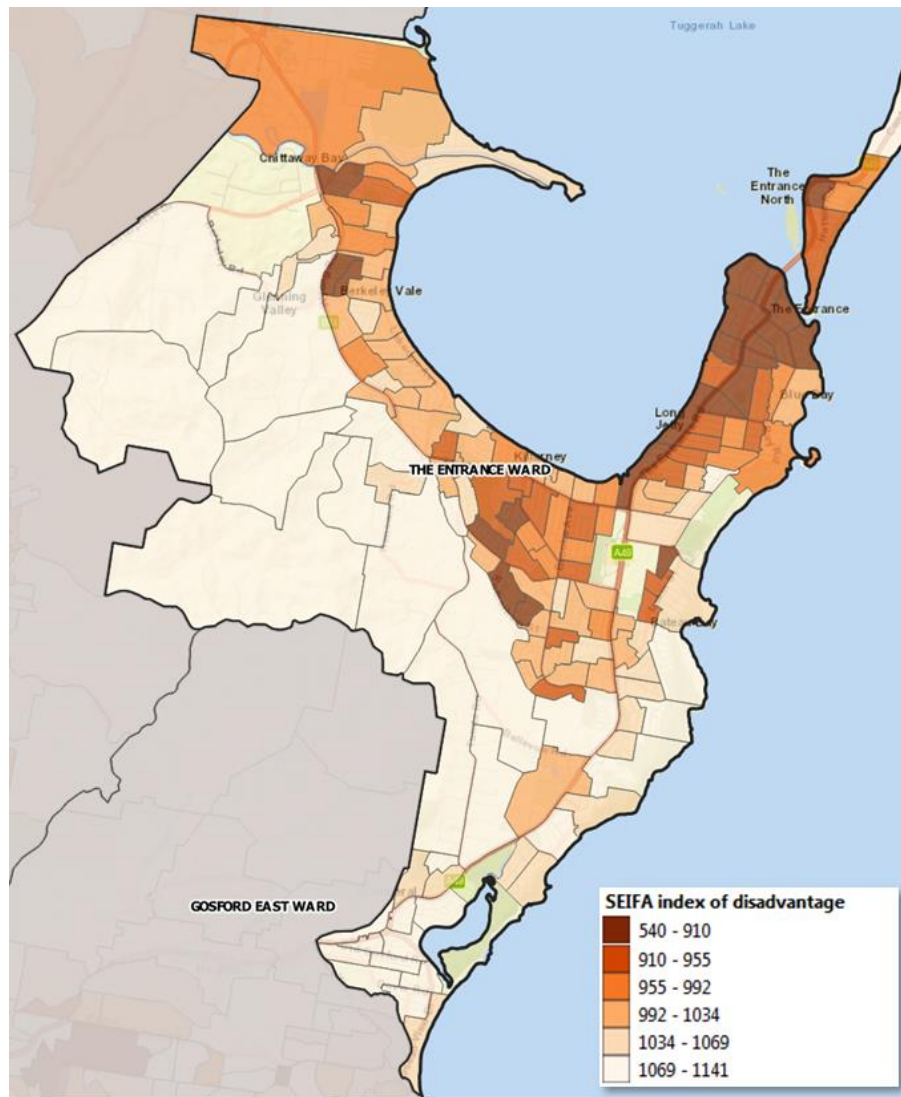
- Within the Gosford East Ward, areas with the highest levels of disadvantage (lowest SEIFA scores) are in Erina, Green Point and Kincumber South.



Map 5 – SEIFA index of disadvantage for the Gosford West Ward, 2016 (source: ABS)

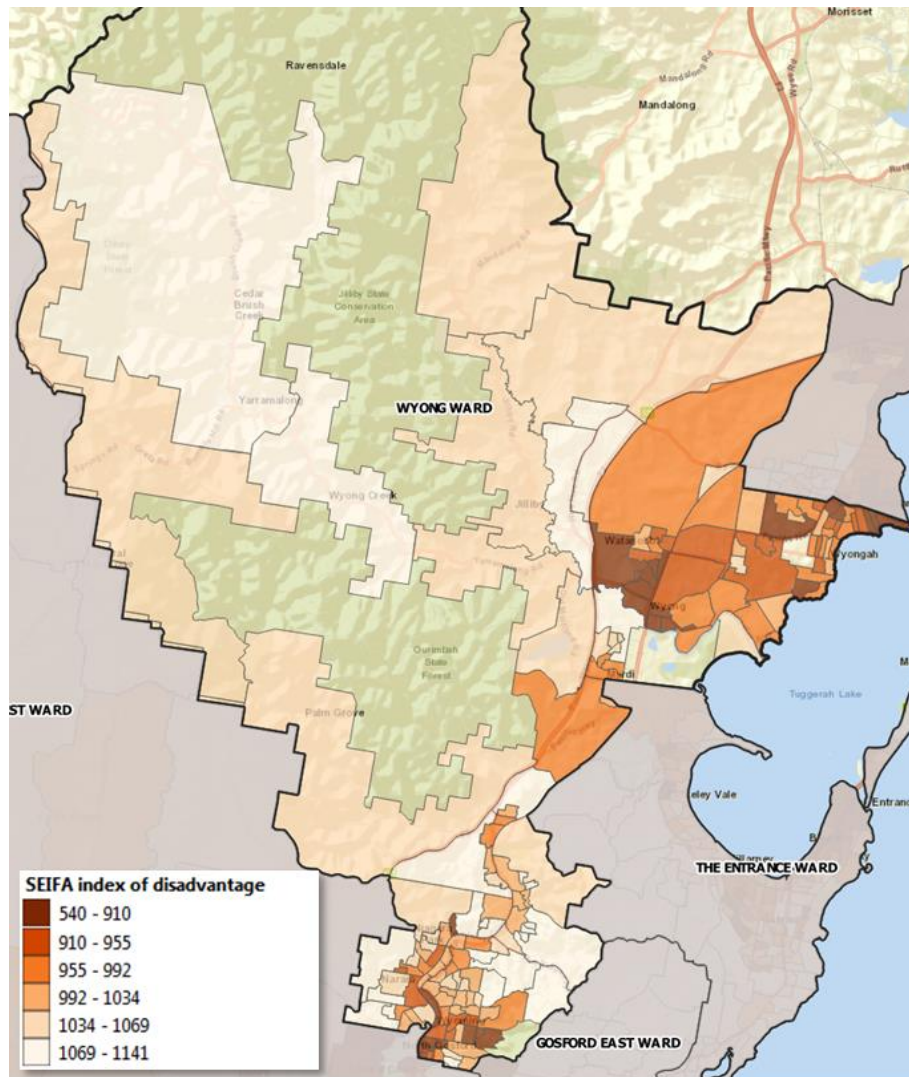


Within the Gosford West Ward, areas with the highest levels of disadvantage (lowest SEIFA scores) are in West Gosford, Gosford and East Gosford and Woy Woy, Blackwall and Ettalong Beach.



Map 6 – SEIFA index of disadvantage for The Entrance Ward, 2016 (source: ABS)

- ▼ Within The Entrance Ward, areas with the highest levels of disadvantage (lowest SEIFA scores) are in Blue Bay, Long Jetty and Tumby Umbi.



Map 7 – SEIFA index of disadvantage for the Wyong Ward, 2016 (source: ABS)






Within the Wyong Ward, areas with the highest levels of disadvantage (lowest SEIFA scores) are in Wyong, Wadalba and Gorokan, and Wyoming and North Gosford.


8. Summary of findings

The Socioeconomic review of residents and households on the Central Coast highlight areas where the LGA may be more or less socioeconomically disadvantaged than benchmark areas (Regional New South Wales and Greater Sydney). The report also highlights which areas within the Central Coast are more disadvantaged than others. In the context of council rates and rating structure reviews, this information will help council experts understand which parts of the LGA may have more difficulty servicing higher rates costs.

Demographic summary

-  Population growth on the Central Coast has been slower than in Regional New South Wales or Greater Sydney. However, the population still increases by 2,000-3,000 residents per year, with the Wyong Ward and Budgewoi Ward recording highest rates of recent population growth. These wards are also forecast to grow at rates above the LGA average in the next ten years.
-  The Central Coast population has been ageing over time, with a higher proportion of residents aged over 65 in 2016 than in 2011. Within the LGA, the Wyong Ward and The Entrance Ward experienced the highest increases of residents aged over 65 years.
-  Educational Qualifications, one of the most important indicators of socioeconomic status, shows that the proportion of residents with no qualifications is higher on the Central Coast than in Regional New South Wales or Greater Sydney. High proportions of residents with no educational qualifications can impact residents' financial stability and socioeconomic status. Within Central Coast, the Budgewoi Ward had the highest levels of residents with no educational qualifications.

Economic and employment summary

-  The Central Coast's economy, as indicated by GRP statistics, shows reasonable levels of growth before 2019, followed by a decrease in growth and a decline in GRP in 2020.

- Employed residents totals have been growing steadily over the past decade but decreased in 2020, likely a result of Covid-19's impact on the Australian economy. A similar pattern was also recorded for local jobs, where above-average local job growth was recorded in the past five years, with a loss of local jobs in 2020.
- Labour force participation increased over time, a positive socioeconomic indicator. Labour force growth has been highest in the Budgewoi Ward and lowest in The Entrance Ward. Recent statistics show that the unemployment rate has been steady, with a slight increase in 2021. Wards such as the Wyong Ward and Budgewoi Ward have unemployment rates higher than the LGA average.
- Other unemployment indicators relevant in the context of understanding residents' capacity to pay council rates include JobSeeker statistics. On the Central Coast, JobSeeker figures increased in early 2020, as was the case in most of Australia. The uptake rates remained high for more than a year but are now declining each month. The uptake rate was similar to that of Regional New South Wales. Within the Central Coast, the Gosford West Ward and Wyong Ward recorded the highest levels of JobSeeker uptake.

Income and expenses summary

- A higher proportion of Central Coast households are low-income households than Regional New South Wales and Greater Sydney. However, the trend over time is positive, where more households are moving from low-income categories into medium and highest income categories.
- Recent individual income statistics show that Central Coast is below the Regional New South Wales and Greater Sydney medians, but has been gaining on the Regional New South Wales median income in recent years. Within the LGA, the Budgewoi ward and Gosford West Ward had the highest proportions of low-income households.
- LGA-level net savings statistics show little change in the levels of net savings on the Central Coast in recent years, until 2020, when net savings, like in many places across Australia, increased (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/household-impacts-covid-19-survey/latest-release#income-and-savings>).

Housing tenure and housing costs summary

- Mortgage stress levels on the Central Coast are lower than in Regional New South Wales or Greater Sydney and have decreased over time. The Budgewoi Ward had the highest levels of mortgage stress, whereas the Gosford East Ward had the lowest.
- On the other hand, Rental stress increased over time and indicates more pressure on some residents and households to cover housing costs. The Budgewoi Ward had the highest levels of rental stress, and the Gosford East Ward, the lowest.

Socioeconomic disadvantage index summary

- The SEIFA index of disadvantage shows that the Central Coast is less disadvantaged than Regional New South Wales, but more so than Greater Sydney.
- Within the LGA, the Budgewoi Ward, Gosford West Ward, the Wyong Ward had higher levels of disadvantage than the LGA, whereas The Entrance Ward and Gosford East Wards, had lower levels of disadvantage.

The matrix presented on the next page is a summary of findings. For each ward within the Central Coast, an assessment is made against 12 metrics used in this report. Where a ward's statistics for a particular metric indicate an area as being more socioeconomically disadvantaged than the LGA average, the content is highlighted as **red**. Conversely, it is **green**.

This enables a visual and concise way of assessing what each ward's statistics say about the socioeconomic characteristics of the area. This information can then be translated to analysis regarding rating structure reviews.

Statistics such as "population aged 65+" do not suggest that having an older population is a disadvantage, but that having an above-average proportion of residents aged over 65 years could mean those residents are affected more adversely by rates increases if they are retired and on limited incomes

Socioeconomic Metric ↓	Ward Name				
	Budgewoi Ward	Gosford East Ward	Gosford West Ward	The Entrance Ward	Wyong Ward
Population aged 65+	Above LGA average Trend: ↑	Same as LGA Trend: ↑	Above LGA average Trend: ↑	Below LGA average Trend: ↑	Below LGA average Trend: ↑
No Qualifications	Above LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Above LGA average Trend: ↓
Vulnerable households (see section 3.4.3)	Above LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↑	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓
Employment in Covid-vulnerable industries	Above LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Above LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓
Labour force participation	Below LGA average Trend: ↑	Above LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↑	Above LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓
Unemployment rates	Above LGA average Trend: ↑	Below LGA average Trend: ↑	Above LGA average Trend: ↑	Below LGA average Trend: ↑	Above LGA average Trend: ↑
JobSeeker	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Above LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Above LGA average Trend: ↓
Median household income	Below LGA average Trend: ↑	Above LGA average Trend: ↑	Below LGA average Trend: ↑	Above LGA average Trend: ↑	Above LGA average Trend: ↑
Low income households	Above LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Above LGA average Trend: ↑	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓
Mortgage Stress	Above LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓
Rental Stress	Above LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓	Below LGA average Trend: ↓
Socioeconomic disadvantage	Below LGA average Trend: n/a	Above LGA average Trend n/a	Below LGA average Trend: n/a	Above LGA average Trend n/a	Below LGA average Trend: n/a

