



The Geelong Project

At-Risk-of-Homelessness Data from SNS II, 2013

BACKGROUND

The Geelong Project (TGP) has been implementing the enhanced Students Needs Survey (SNS) across the government secondary schools in North Geelong and Geelong Bellarine education catchments. This survey includes the *MacKenzie At-Risk-of-Homelessness scale* (ARHS) and applies a score of 1-10 to young people who complete the questions.

A score of 9-10 on the ARHS indicator is high risk and a score of 7-8 is risk indicated. The ARHS indicator has been used five times to date. In 1997 it was first used, with a large sample in five States and nine communities. About 1% of respondents were identified at high risk and another 4% at what was then called medium risk. Some communities were a little lower and more disadvantaged communities were a little higher. It was also used in the Adolescent Health and Well-being Surveys in Victoria for a sample of secondary students across the state. In 2008, it was used in the Nillumbik-Banyule area, a somewhat less disadvantaged area than others.

In the Geelong pilot at the end of 2011 (before The Geelong Project was funded), the SNS had a response rate of 52% and the profile was higher than Nillumbik-Banyule. The latest data is from the enhanced SNS (version II) currently being completed by Geelong schools. The risk profile is somewhat higher although some schools in the most disadvantaged area of the North Geelong catchments have yet to complete the survey. The 2013 data collection is more robust than the earlier pilot and reflects a greater level of disadvantaged youth in the catchment. These figures have been used to calculate the extent of need across the two education catchments involved in TGP to date.

It has been assumed that students that have been previously screened will be re-identified and they will not have to be screened. A score of between 7-10 indicates a level of risk of homelessness and these are the young people who The Geelong Project identifies, screens and begins intensive holistic case support with (for their multiple and diverse set of individual and/or family issues that place them at risk). The issues identified vary and the complexity of the family work conducted by the team of case workers is individually tailored for each client family member who is supported in the project. Prevalent risk factors such as; family violence, family breakdown, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health, recently leaving home or couch surfing, unstable housing and education disengagement are identified through the SNS and subsequent screening interviews conducted by the case workers.

Table 1: Existing Catchment of Schools and enrolment numbers

SCHOOL	SYSTEM	ENROLMENT
Lara Secondary College	State	787
Bellarine Secondary College	State	1102
Geelong High School	State	900
Newcomb Secondary School	State	900
Western Heights Secondary College	State	1600
North Geelong Secondary College	State	650
Northern Bay P-12 (secondary only)	State	600
Nelson Park School (disability)	State	350
Alternative Settings (ex-school)	Other	479
Total youth population		7368
At-Risk Population	7%	516

The at-risk profile overall and school by school is the best predictor of the population of at-risk students within the catchment and the recently analysed data from the SNS II indicates a 7% at-risk population in the Geelong region. A further breakdown of the percentages attached to the 2 levels of risk and past results, when utilising this indicator, are below.

Table 2: At-risk of homelessness profile

	SAR Survey (1997)	SAR Survey (2008)	SNS pilot (Nov 2011)	Enhanced SNS (Aug-Sept 2013)
No & low risk (0-6)	95.0	96.1	95.3	93.0
Risk indicated (7-8)	4.0	2.9	3.5	5.6
High Risk (9-10)	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.4

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