



BELCONNEN COMMUNITY PROFILE



every child thriving
aracy

Belconnen Community Profile - A Village for Every Child

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Why have we made this profile?

The Belconnen - A Village for Every Child initiative recognises that children are at the heart of community and that every child deserves the best start to life. The first few years of life are critical to a child's development. Positive experiences during early childhood (pre-birth to 5 years) promote strong social, emotional and cognitive development, as well as overall health and wellbeing.

The long-term goal of this initiative is to transform early childhood systems across Belconnen and the ACT. It acknowledges that it takes a village to raise a child and therefore provides the support structures to bring families, communities, child and family support providers, and government agencies to collaborate, to identify and address the issues facing young families.

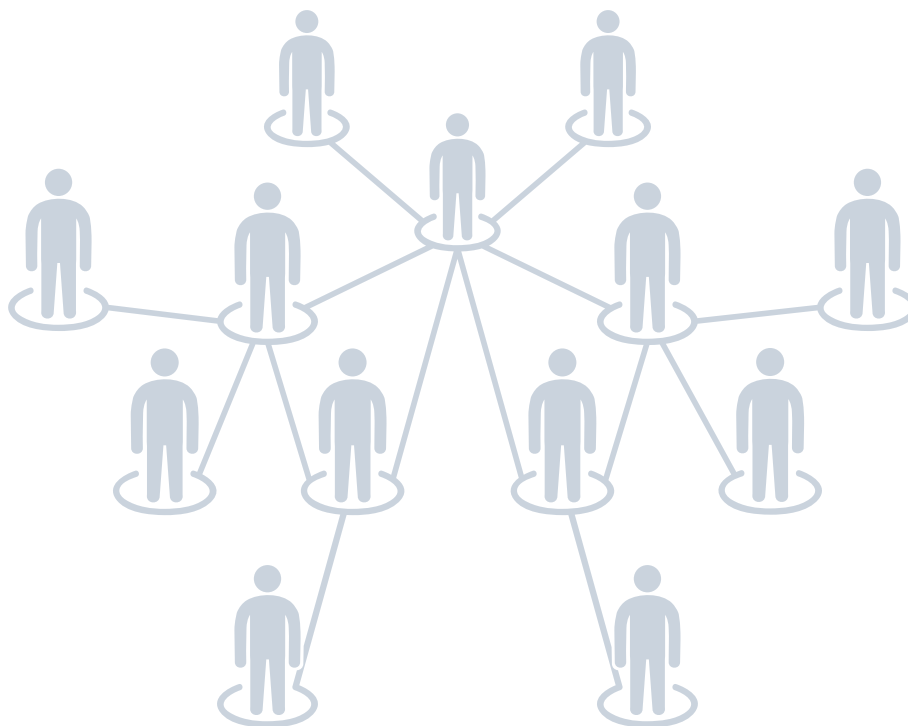
By working together, our community is stronger, more connected and better placed to meet the needs of children and families.

To be able to do this effectively we need to understand the children and families and their needs, hopes and aspirations. This profile brings together two sets of data - one, the voices of people living in Belconnen and the other, evidence collected by governments and research organisations.



What's the purpose of the profile?

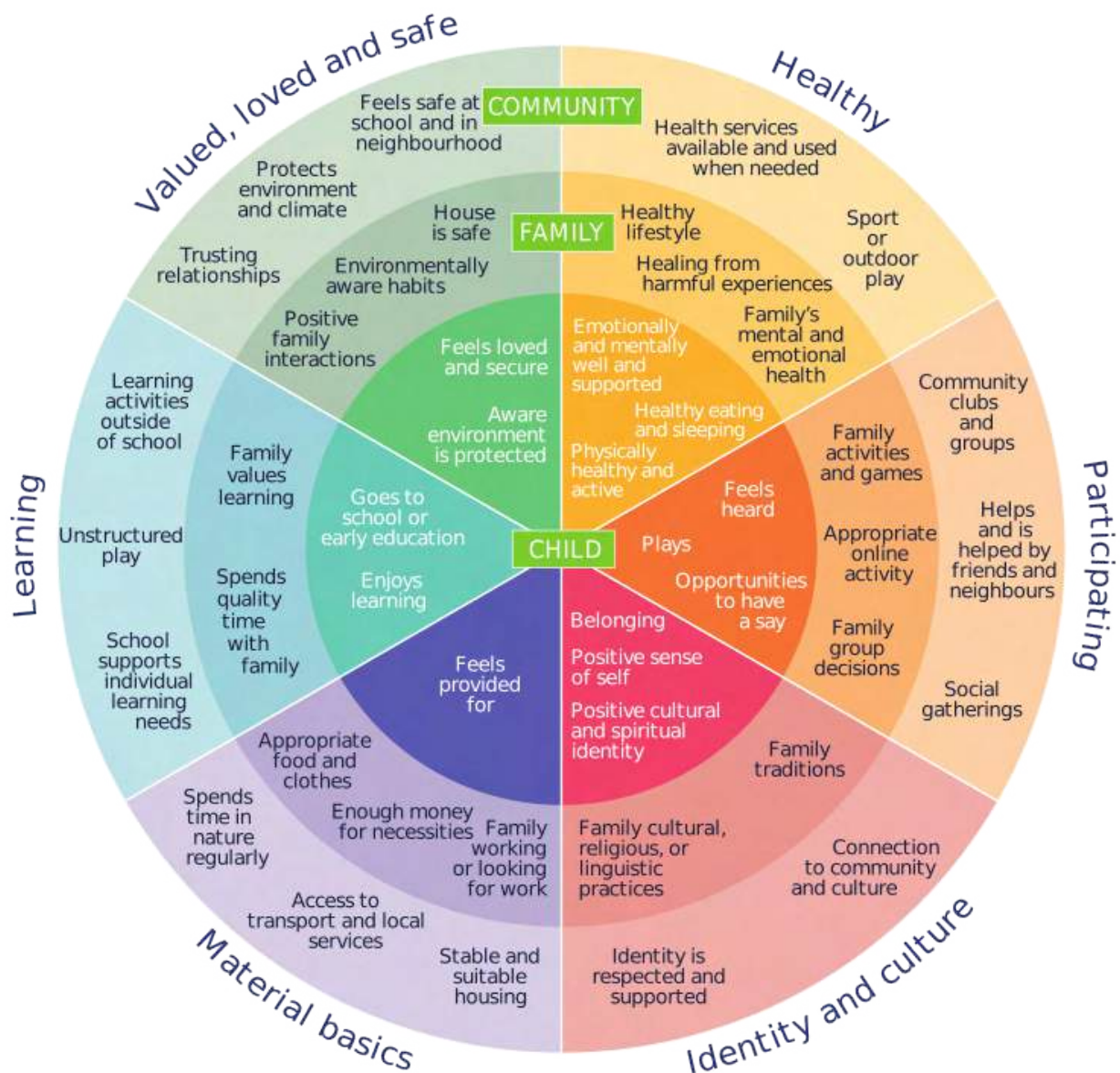
- ✔ To help us understand 'place' - insight into what the community wants and needs
- ✔ Understanding what the data is telling us about the community and what the community is saying about the data
- ✔ To share the voice and story of Belconnen families
- ✔ To provide evidence to support planning, activities and service delivery where and how it is needed for this community
- ✔ To assist in having a deep and insightful consultation with the community
- ✔ To help advocate for regional-level data collection and sharing
- ✔ To pilot and trial a way to deep dive into the data at a regional level and in a collaborative way



How have we framed the data?

The Nest

The Nest is Australia's wellbeing framework for children and young people aged 0 to 24 years, developed by ARACY. The Nest conceptualises wellbeing as six interconnected domains that support each other to help children and young people reach their highest potential. To have everything they need for the best start in life, a child or young person needs to be adequately resourced in all six domains. The Nest was developed by ARACY, informed by the voices of over 4,000 children, young people and experts. We have used The Nest to frame all the data in the profile as well as the Community Conversations. The Wellbeing Wheel (shown below) provides examples against the six domains of the Nest.



AEDC Data

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a nationwide data collection of early childhood development at the time children commence their first year of full-time school. The AEDC highlights what is working well and what needs to be improved or developed to support children and their families by providing evidence to support health, education and community policy and planning. The data is a key driver of the work Village does, so it is also a main focus across this profile.

Meeting the Needs of the Community with Better Data

Using available data, this project aims to tell the story of children in Belconnen to give a picture of their wellbeing across our community. This will inform how and where we need to focus our efforts to make a better Belconnen.

The information presented in this report has been used because it best reflects the available data that we know contributes to or is a risk factor for children's wellbeing and healthy development. It may also reflect what the community is telling us is important for Belconnen's children.

Community Voice

In late 2022, Village held its first round of community consultations with service providers, schools, Early Learning Education and Care (ECEC) services and families in Belconnen.

In mid-2023 Village held its second round in the form of an online survey to the broader Belconnen community. The community conversations were about hearing the community's perceptions on child wellbeing and to collect first-hand experiences and viewpoints regarding the future aspirations, challenges, and possibilities for parents and children aged 0-5.

The top themes and some quotes from community are shared in each section of this report.

Artwork Story

The beautiful domain artwork that you will see throughout this publication was drawn by Nina, a six year old from Belconnen, at a local community workshop.



About Belconnen

Belconnen is a region of Canberra, ACT, positioned in the north-west, 7km from Canberra's CBD. It consists of 27 suburbs, including the new suburbs of Strathnairn and Macnamara (Ginninderry cross border development), on the western edge.

Belconnen is one of the largest regions in the ACT, providing homes to 105, 872 (2021) people. The community is culturally rich with 24.0% of people speaking a language other than English at home and the likelihood that this will grow. 2.1% of people in Belconnen identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.



19,256

children aged between 0-19 years, of these 6,279 children are between 0-4 years old.

Over **25,000** people speak language other than English.

13,196

families are with dependent children aged 0-24 years.

Future Population of Belconnen

Belconnen's population is projected to grow from 106,061 (2021) to 175,826 by 2060. In 2021, it was 23.4% of the ACT's population and is projected to remain the largest region in the ACT.

Ginninderry (in West Belconnen) will see the greatest growth, though the suburbs of Belconnen and Bruce are among the top ten suburbs in the ACT for projected growth. Growth is influenced by new land release, development and an ageing population.

By June 2060, ACT's population is projected to reach approximately 784,000. Of note is the rate of growth of Belconnen's neighbouring region of Molonglo Valley (including the suburb of Whitlam) which has the highest growth rate in Canberra of 5.3%. The expansion of Molonglo Valley and Ginninderry, as they wait for infrastructure and service development, means that many families are currently accessing schools and services in Belconnen.



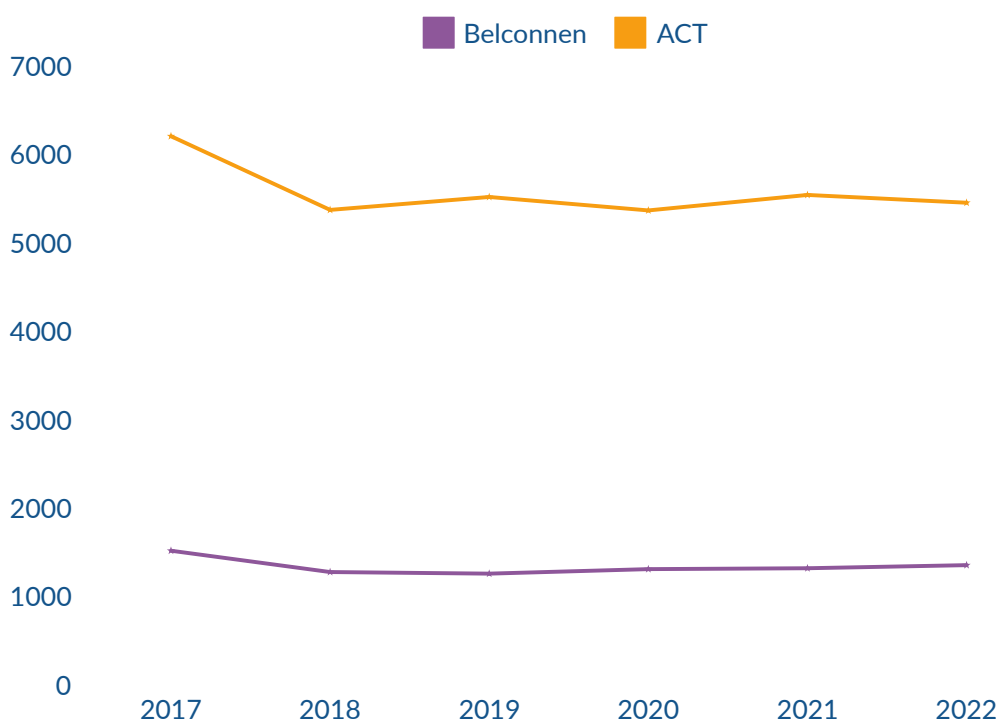
Children of Belconnen

There are multiple factors that influence the wellbeing of children, including physical and mental health, socio economic outcomes, learning and educational outcomes and material wellbeing. Wellbeing is strongly determined by the quality of family and school life, and the community and neighbourhood in which they live. Children are shaped by relationships with parents and carers, peers and other adults. Other physical and social aspects of their environment also matter, including providing resources for child wellbeing. When family wellbeing is high, parents can give children the support and stability they need.

In Belconnen there are 6,279 children aged 0-4 years and 6,713 aged 5-9 year-olds and 6,264 10 -14 year olds. A total of 19,256 children are under 15 years of age.

In 2022, there were 1,359 births in Belconnen. This is 24.9% of ACT births.

Number of births in Belconnen and ACT - 2017 to 2022



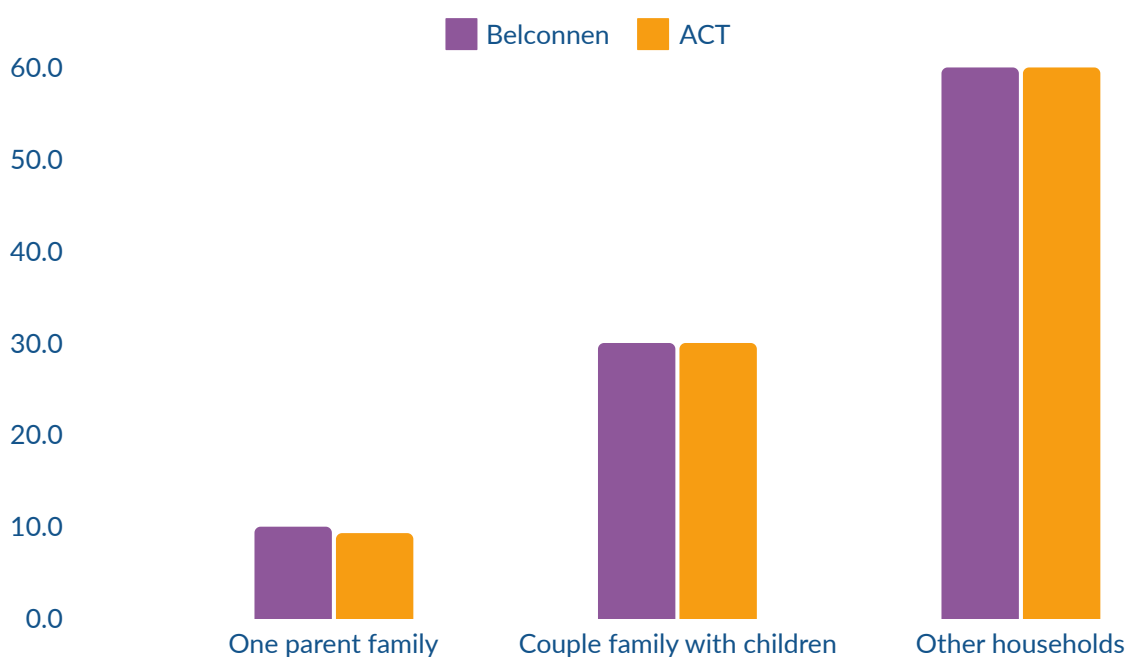
Source: ABS 2022, 33010DO002, Births, Australia 2022 Table 2.8

Families in Belconnen

For most children, their family offers them love, support and a sense of belonging. While what constitutes a family can vary widely, the benefits of being part of a strong and positive family unit are more universal. A strong and positive family unit can help children form social networks, provide children with resources, care and a safe place to learn and explore; further, it can teach children about the world and the rules that govern it. Families are also considered to be an important determinant of how children view quality of life.

Most Australian children are healthy, safe and doing well. However, childhood is also a time of vulnerability, and a child's outcomes can vary depending on where they live and their family circumstances - including health, education, social support, household income and finance, parental employment, housing, and justice and safety.

Household composition 2021



Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS - Time-series table profile T14

In Belconnen, 40.0% of households had dependent children. In Belconnen, 30.0% of households were couple families with children, compared to 30.8% for the ACT as a whole. One parent families comprised 10.0% of all households, compared to 9.3% for the ACT.

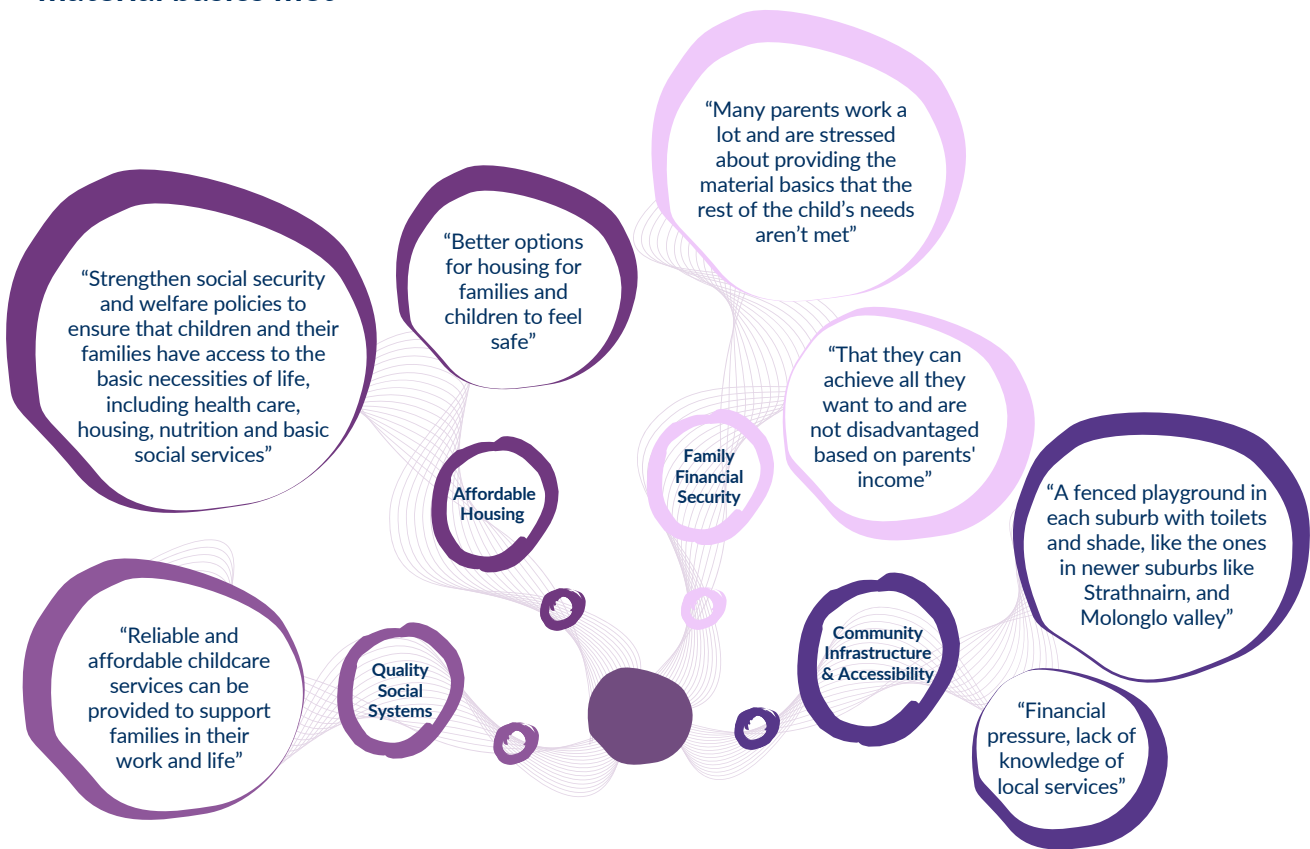
Between 2011 and 2021, the proportion of households with children has declined slightly, while the proportion of lone person households has increased.

Material Basics

Children and young people who have material basics have the material things they need. They live in suitable, secure, stable housing, with appropriate clothing, nutritious food, clean water and clean air. They have access to transport, to required local services (e.g. plumbing) and to open spaces in nature. Their family has enough money for necessities. They have the material items needed to develop as an active member of society such as school supplies, suitable technology or sporting equipment.



What our community is saying is important for Belconnen's children to have their material basics met



In Belconnen: **25 %** of rental households have rent payment greater than 30% of household income

4.1 % of families with children in Belconnen have weekly income less than \$650, compared with 3.3% in the ACT

Housing Affordability

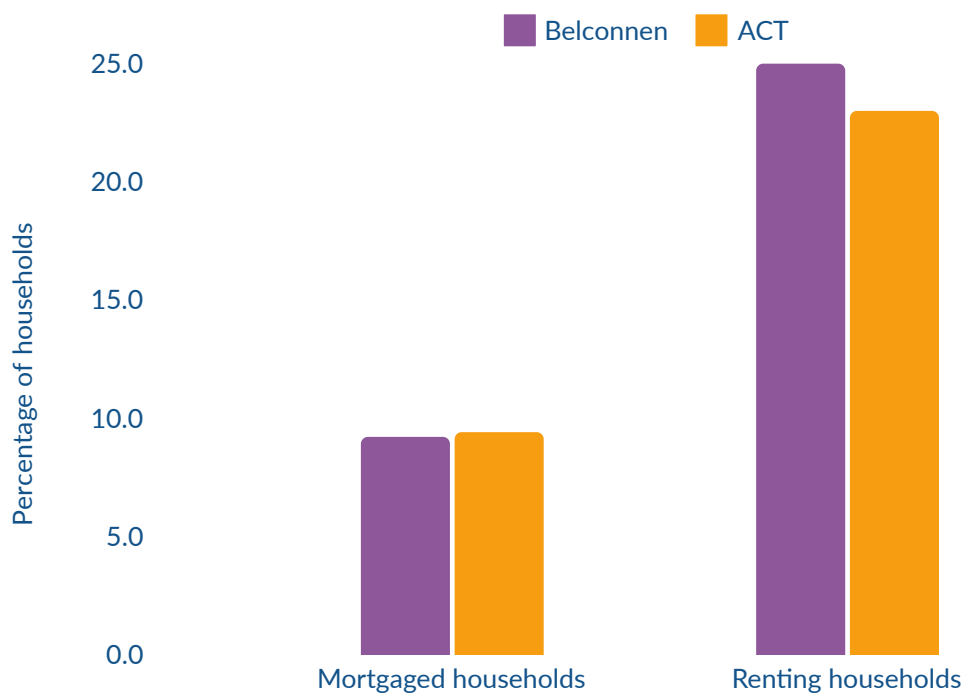
Did you know?

In 2021, 25.0% of renting households and 9.20% of mortgaged households spent more than 30% of their household income on rent or mortgage repayments.

Why is this important?

When households spend more of their income on housing, they have less available to spend on other needs, such as food, electricity, transport, healthcare and education. Lower income households who spend more than 30% of their income on housing are described as being in housing stress.

Households where housing costs are more than 30% of household income - 2021



Source: ABS Data by Region 2021 - Belconnen & ACT

Parental Employment Status

Did you know?

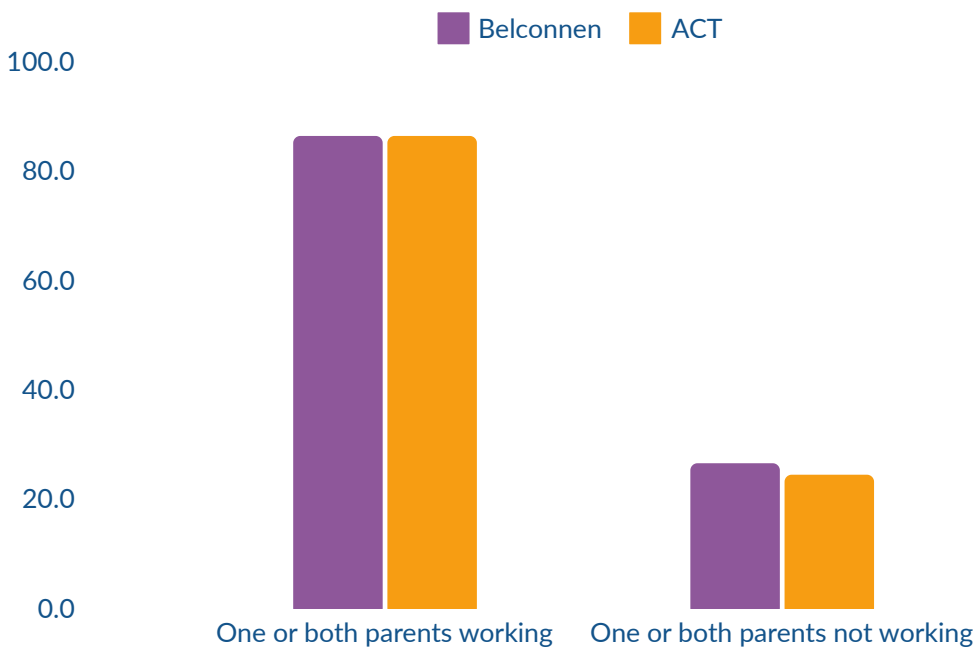
In 2021 in Belconnen, 84.4% of families with children had one or both parents working.

For couple families with children, this was 91.2%, compared to 64.3% for one parent families.

Why is this important?

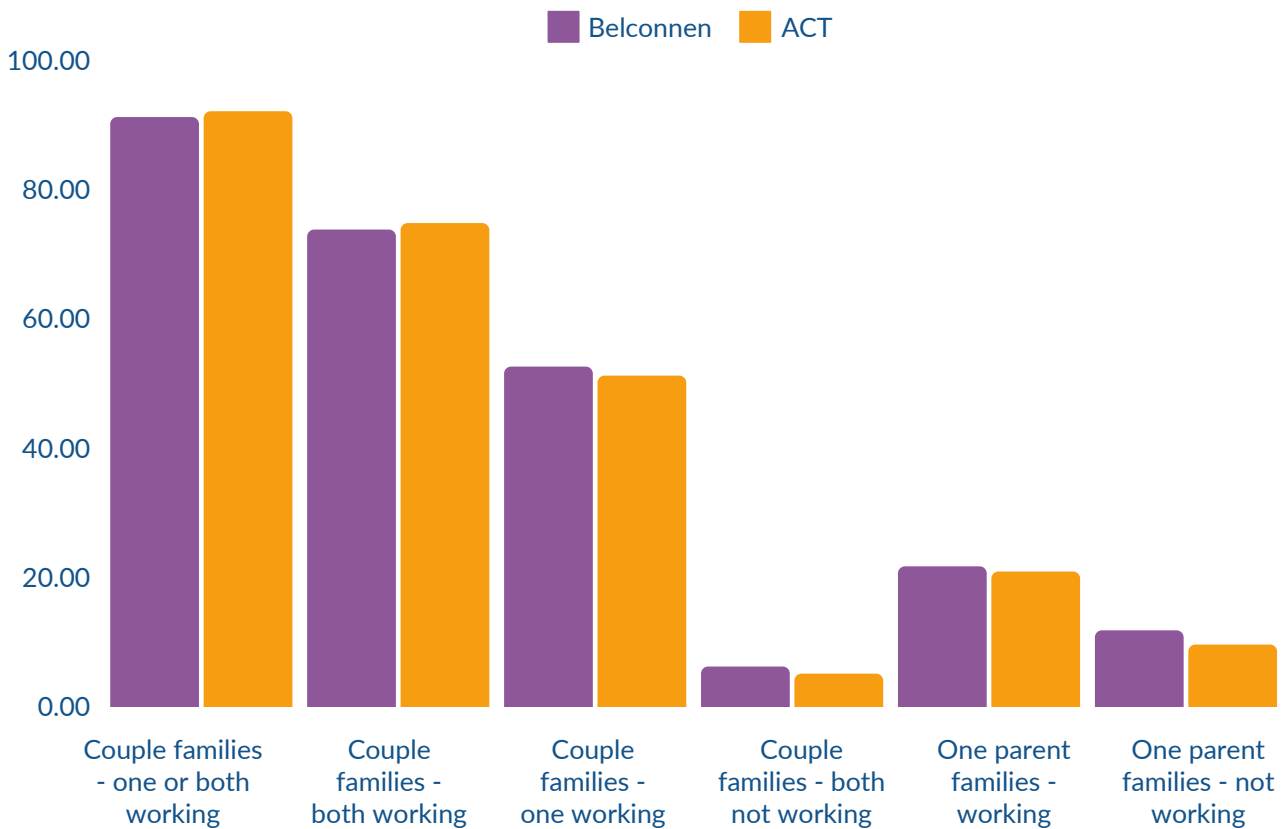
Psychological stress caused by unemployment has a strong impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing. Parental unemployment has significant impact on the wellbeing of children. Parent employment status impacts on family income which has an impact on a family's ability to pay for household essentials.

Employment status - families with children - 2021



Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS - Time-series profile T30c

Employment status - families with children - 2021



Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS - Time-series profile T30c

Household Income

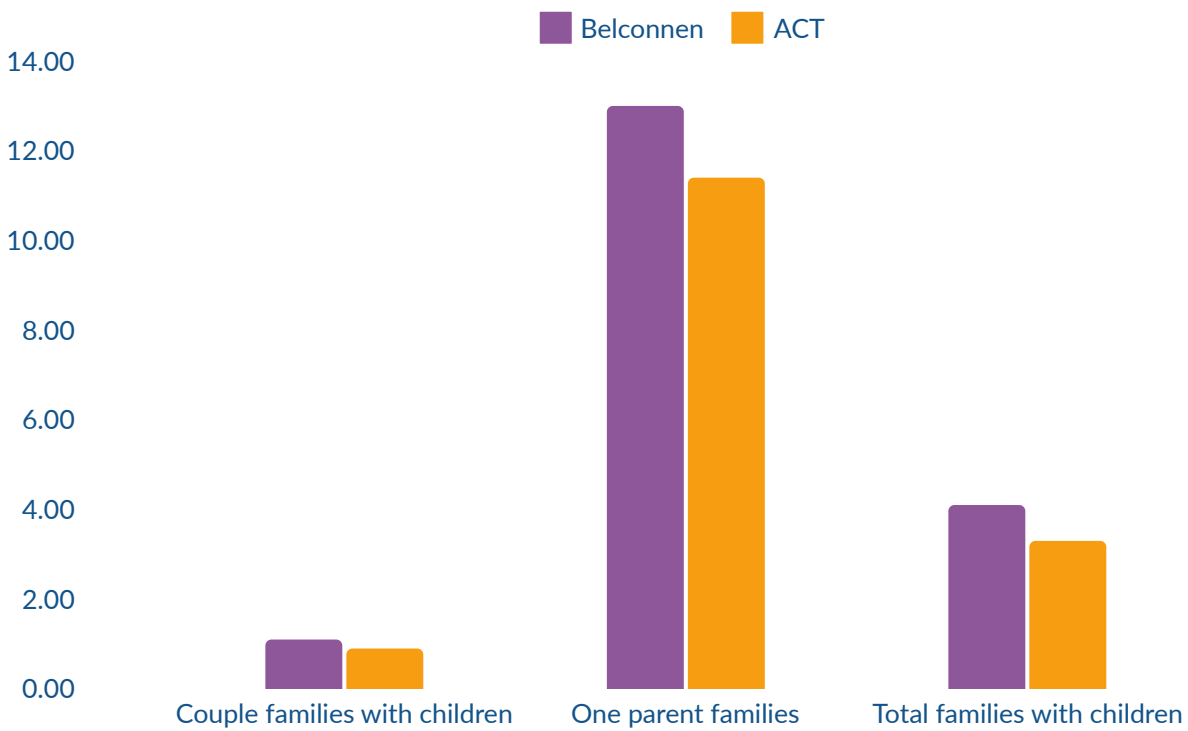
Did you know?

In Belconnen, 4.1% of families with children have a weekly household income less than \$650, compared with 3.3% of families with children in the ACT. For one parent families, this was 13.0%, compared to 11.4% for the ACT. Having a lower household income disproportionately affects one parent families.

Why is this important?

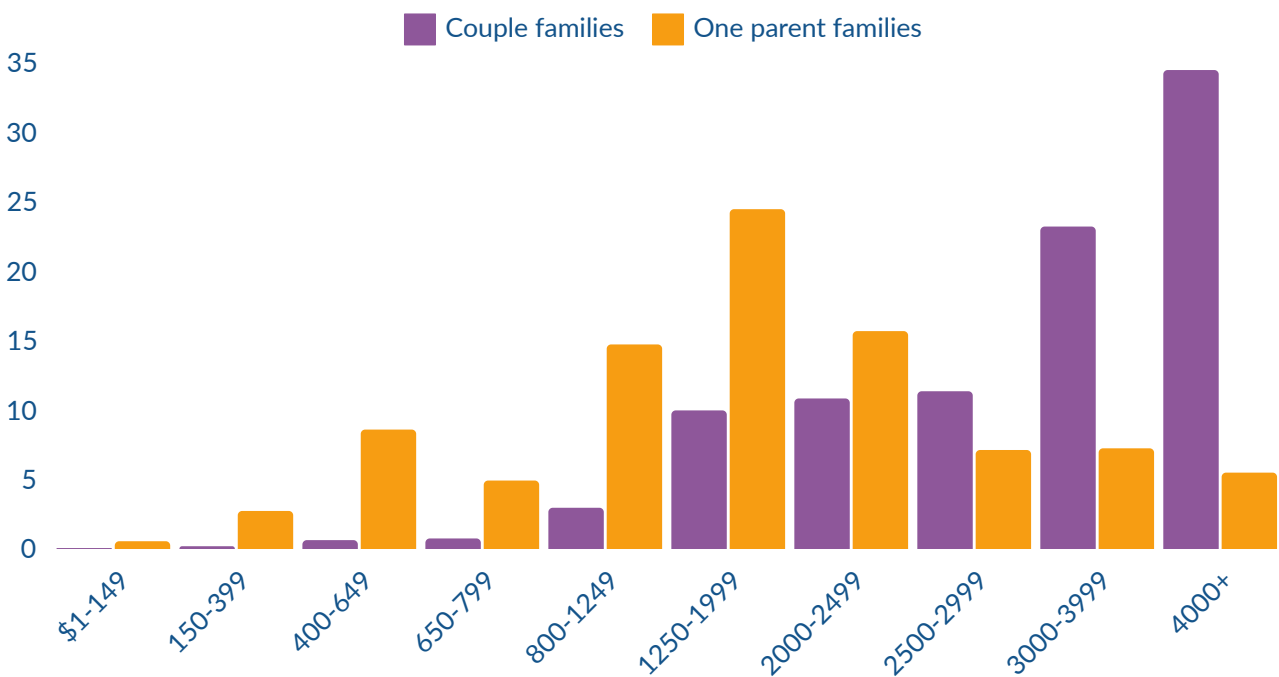
Households with lower incomes have less money available to spend on essential needs such as housing, food, electricity, transport, healthcare and education.

Percentage of families with children with household income less than \$650 per week



Source: ABS Data by Region

Percentage of couple families with children by weekly household income - Belconnen



Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS - Time Series Profile - Table T30c

Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage

The Socio-economic Index for Area (SEIFA) is the relative measure of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage using census data. It is a summary measure which combines income, education, employment, occupation, housing and family structure to summarise the socio-economic characteristics of an area. It is collected and reported at a suburb level. A low score indicates relatively greater disadvantage and lack of advantage in general and a high score indicates relative lack of disadvantage and greater advantage in general.

It is important to note that area measures like SEIFA mask individual circumstances. The ACT has highly diverse suburbs with advantaged households in close proximity to disadvantaged households. It may mask individuals living in those suburbs and not report accurately on the levels of disadvantage. The ABS developed an alternative measure called the Socio-Economic Indexes for Individuals (SEIFI) which in 2006 estimates more than 28,000 Belconnen residents are falling in the category of most disadvantaged 20% of all Australians. SEIFI more accurately reflects individual circumstances in the ACT. There is no current SEIFI data.

The table below shows the SEIFA Index for Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage decile within the ACT for each Belconnen suburb. This means that Aranda and Weetangera are among the most socioeconomically advantaged suburbs in the ACT (in the 9th decile) compared to Charnwood, Florey and Holt, which are in the most disadvantaged (1st decile).

Aranda	9	Evatt	4	Higgins	2
Weetangera	9	Fraser	4	Latham	2
Lawson	8	Kaleen	4	Macgregor	2
Bruce	7	Flynn	4	Page	2
Cook	6	Belconnen	3	Scullin	2
Hawker	6	Dunlop	3	Charnwood	1
Strathnairn	6	Macquarie	3	Florey	1
Giralang	5	Melba	3	Holt	1
McKellar	5	Spence	3		

Healthy

Healthy children and young people have their physical, mental, and emotional health needs met. All their developmental health needs are provided for in a timely way. They receive appropriate health services, including preventative measures to address potential or emerging physical, emotional and mental health concerns.



What our community is saying is important for Belconnen's children to be healthy



4.1%

of ACT mothers reported smoking at any time during pregnancy, a rate that has been declining since 2001, *ACT Maternal Perinatal Data Collection, 2021*

62.2%

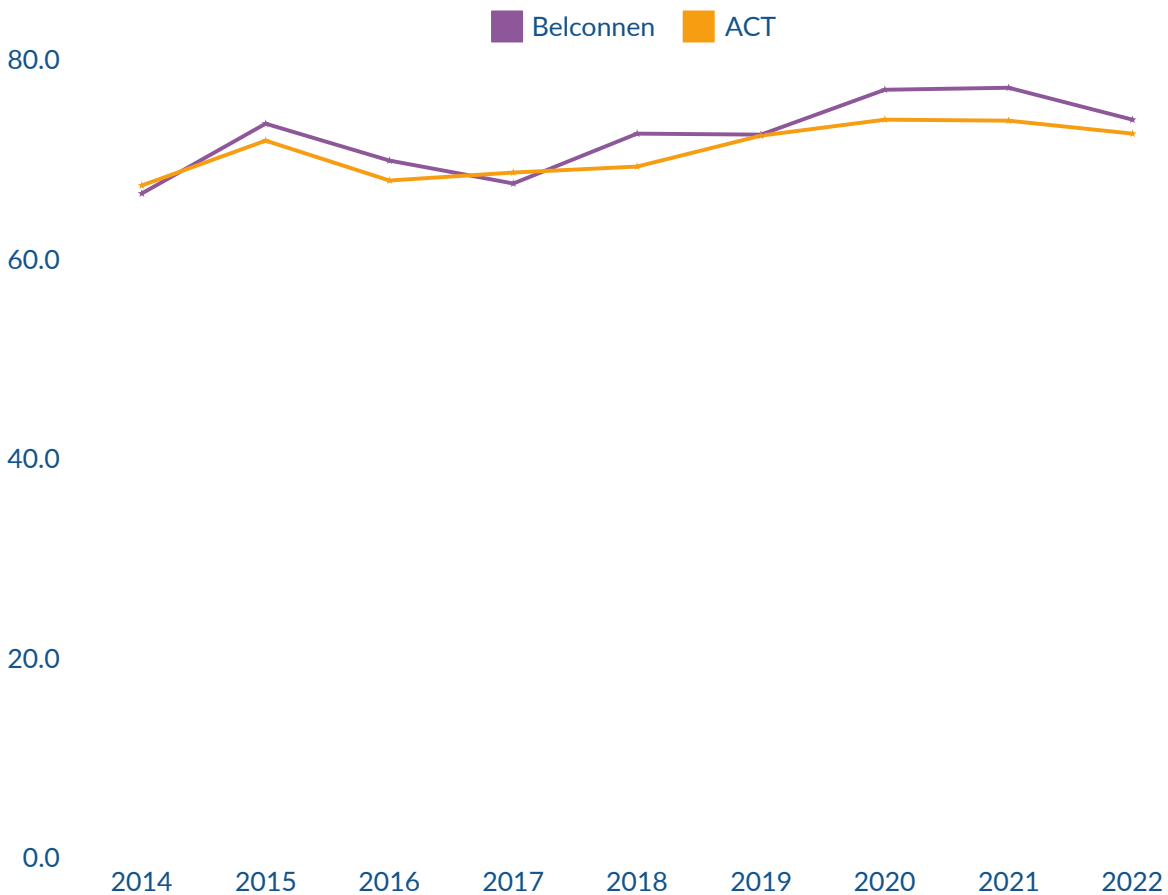
of Belconnen children in 2021 were developmentally on track on the physical health and wellbeing domain of the AEDC which is lower than the ACT average of 70.4% and the national average of 78.5% *Australian Early Development Census, 2021*

4.3%

of Belconnen children are not eating any serves of vegetables, *ACT Kindergarten Health Check, 2022*

Kindergarten Health Check: Fruit Intake

Percentage of Kindergarten children meeting the recommended number of serves of fruit each day by region - 2014 to 2022 (%)



Source: ACT Kindergarten Health Check, 2022 (unpublished)

Did you know?

In 2022, 74.0% of Belconnen Kindergarten children met the daily fruit recommendation, which is similar to the ACT average of 72.6%. This figure has increased slightly from 66.6% since 2014.

Why is this important?

Fruit provides vitamins, minerals and fibre that keep kids healthy and strong, helping to protect them against diseases. It is recommended that kindergarten children eat 1.5 serves of fruit a day.

Kindergarten Health Check: Vegetable Intake

Did you know?

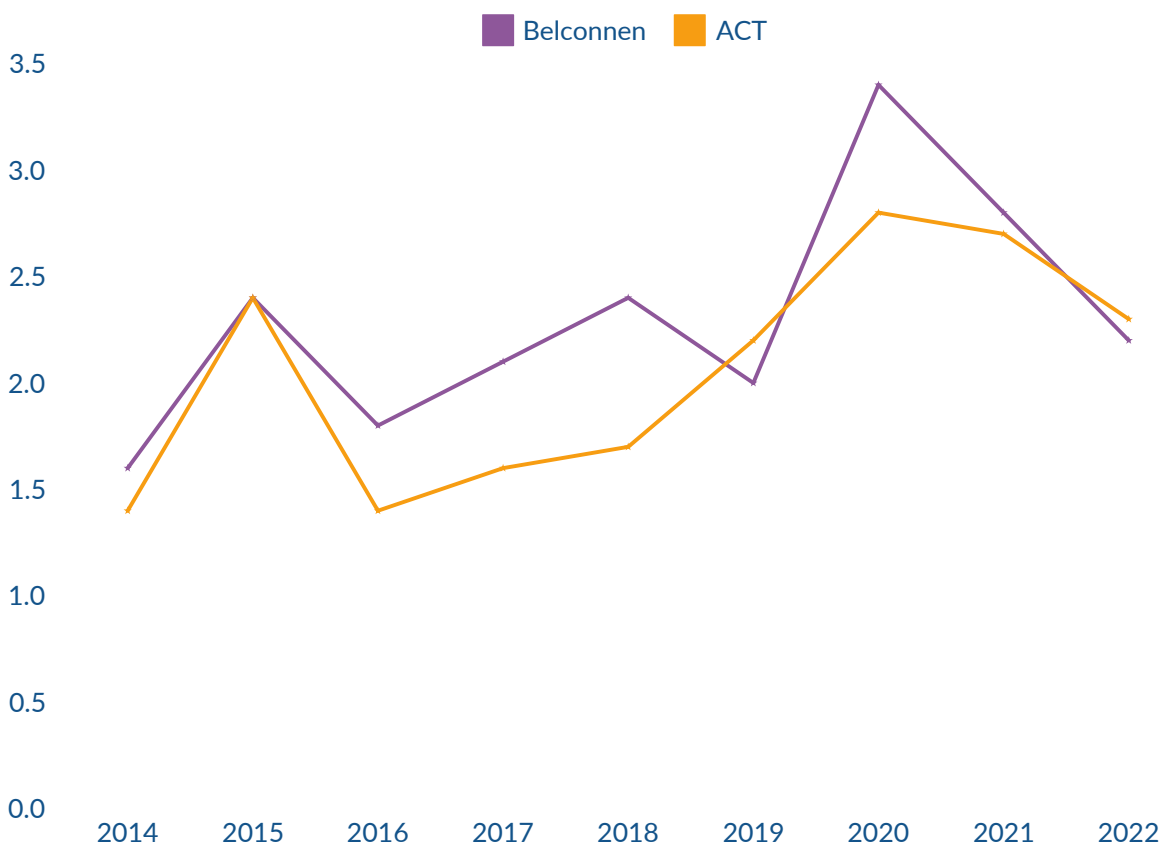
Only 2.2% of kindergarten children in Belconnen are meeting the recommended serves of vegetables each day, slightly lower than the ACT average of 2.3%.

This has declined in recent years, with Belconnen seeing an increase in vegetable intake during COVID-19 and then a decline back to pre-COVID levels.

Why is this important?

Establishing healthy eating patterns as a child is essential to forming good dietary habits that help prevent negative health outcomes during childhood and later in life.

Percentage of Kindergarten children meeting the recommended number of serves of vegetables each day by region - 2014 to 2022 (%)



Source: ACT Kindergarten Health Check, 2022 (unpublished)

Kindergarten Health Check: Social and Emotional Difficulties

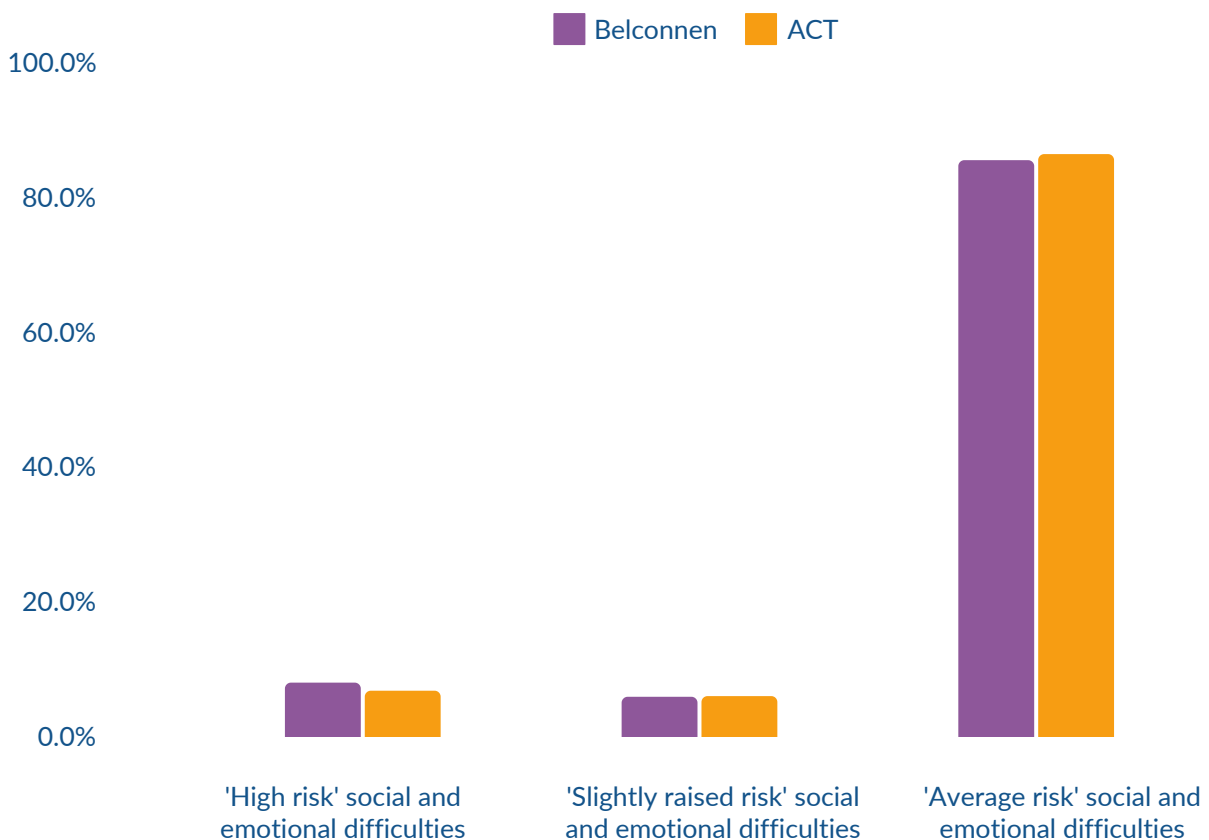
Did you know?

In 2022, 8.0% of Belconnen Kindergarten children were at high risk of social and emotional difficulties, this is higher than the ACT average of 6.8%.

Why is this important?

Social and emotional development is important to children's overall development. Social and emotional development is also a key aspect of children's learning and school experiences.

Percentage of Kindergarten children by Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire results and region - 2022 (%)



Source: ACT Kindergarten Health Check, 2022 (unpublished)

Kindergarten Health Check: Vision

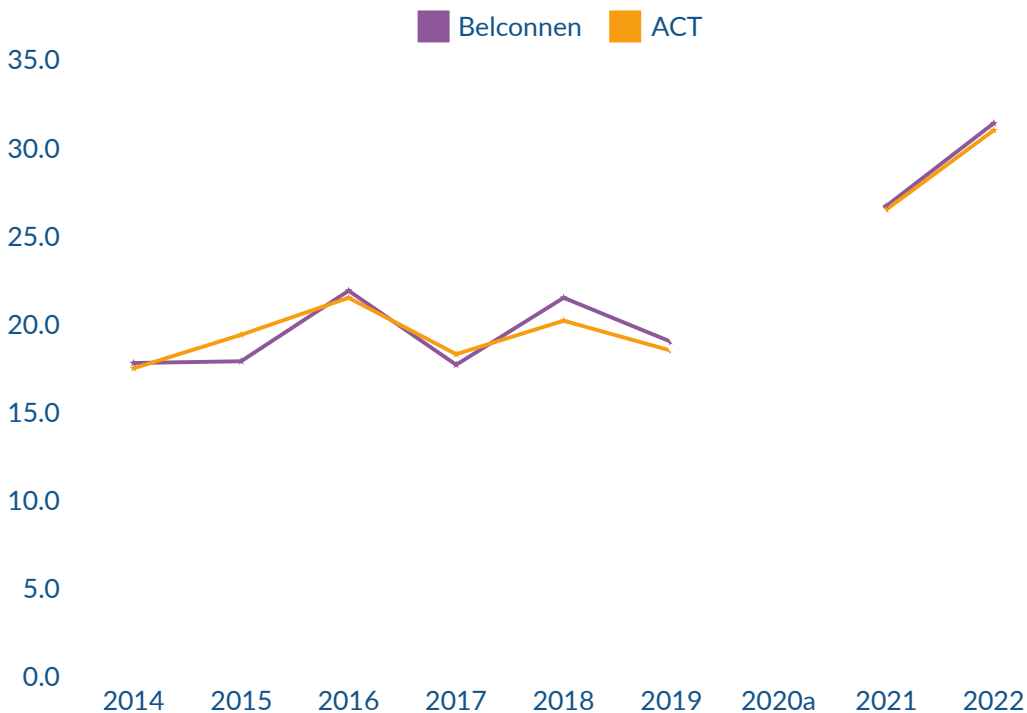
Did you know?

In Belconnen, 31.4% of kindergarten children who had a vision test were referred on to an optometrist. This percentage has increased from 17.8% in 2014.

Why is this important?

Good vision is critical to children's development and learning. Regular vision screening can help detect any potential issues and ensure early intervention.

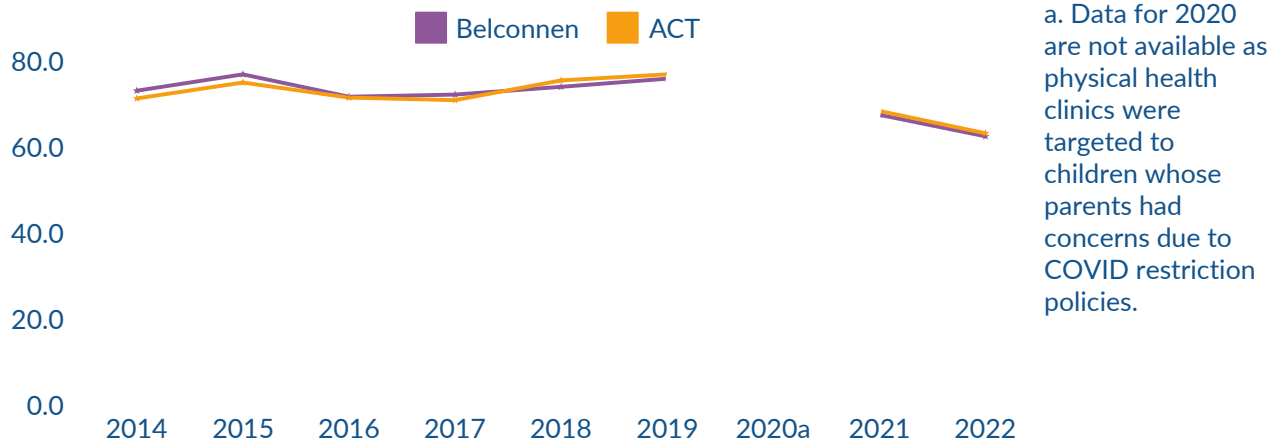
Percentage of Kindergarten children in Belconnen and ACT with Kindy Health Check vision results as referred - 2014 to 2022 (%)



a. Data for 2020 are not available as physical health clinics were targeted to children whose parents had concerns due to COVID restriction policies.

Source: ACT Kindergarten Health Check, 2022 (unpublished)

Percentage of Kindergarten children who passed the Kindy Health Check vision test by region - 2014 to 2022 (%)



Source: ACT Kindergarten Health Check, 2022 (unpublished)

Kindergarten Health Check: Screen Time

Did you know?

In 2022, 8.9% of Belconnen Kindergarten children engaged in excessive screen use (more than 4 hours outside of school).

A further 14.9% are engaging in 2-4 hours screen time, with 75.6% having the recommended less than 2 hours of screen time (outside of school) per day.

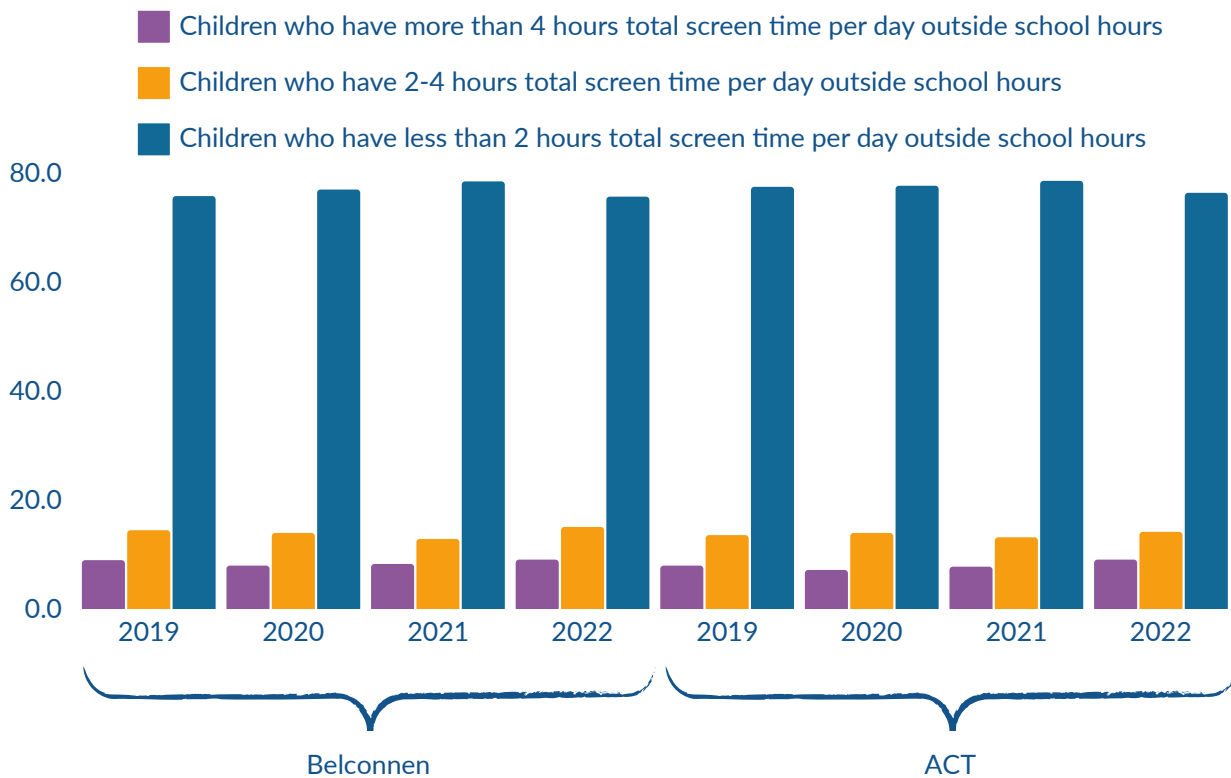
Why is this important?

Screen time and digital technology are now part of life for Australians. The time your child spends watching TV and using computers, gaming consoles, smart toys, tablets and smartphones can be part of a healthy lifestyle.

It's all about making sure:

- ✓ children enjoy plenty of healthy, fun activities, participating in active play and recreation, sports, hobbies, chores and jobs while maintaining good quality sleep and limiting screen time and prolonged sitting.
- ✓ when children do use screens, they watch or use quality content and avoid prolonged sitting; and
- ✓ maintain good quality sleep.

Percentage of Kindergarten children by screen time on a school day and region - 2019 to 2022 (%)



Source: ACT Kindergarten Health Check, 2022 (Unpublished)

Vaccinations

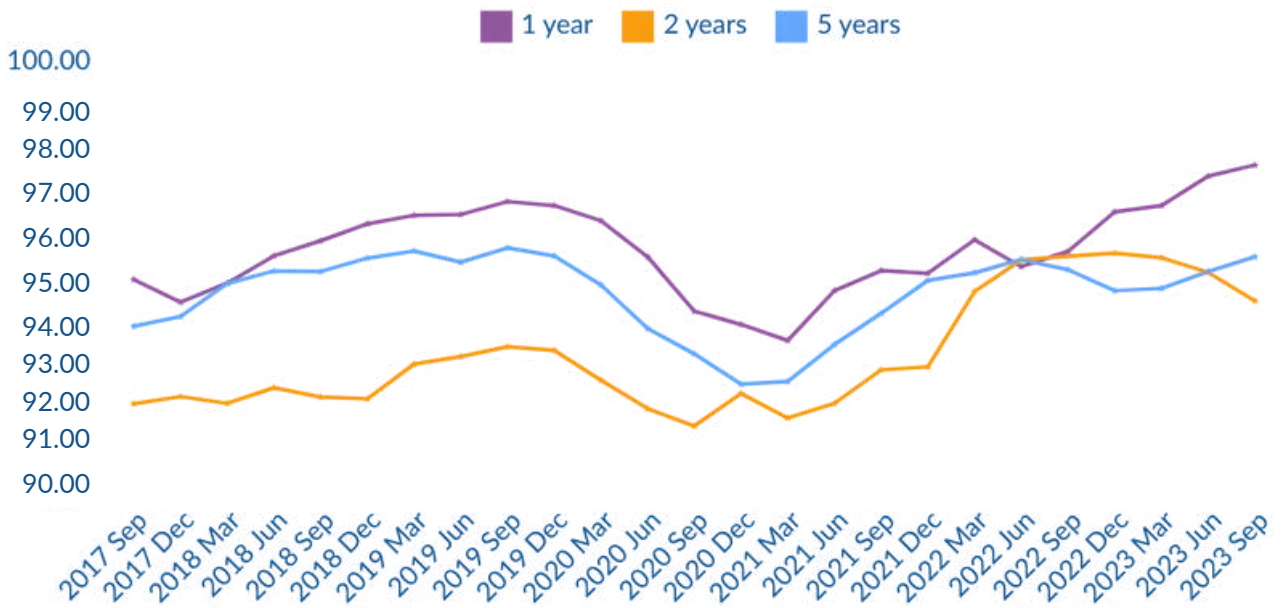
Did you know?

In Belconnen in 2023, 97.6% of children were fully vaccinated at 12 months, compared to 94.6% fully vaccinated at 2 years of age and 95.6% fully vaccinated at 5 years. The percentage of children in Belconnen who are fully vaccinated at age 5 years has remained relatively stable at about 95%, aside from a slight decline in 2020-2021 which has now recovered.

Why is this important?

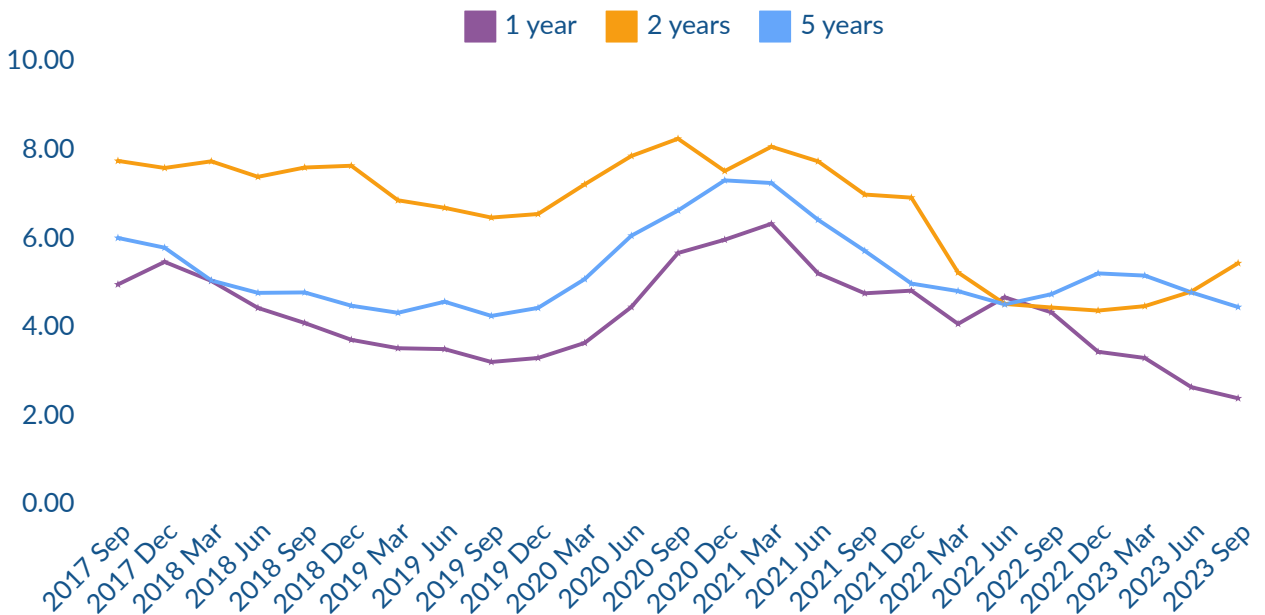
Immunisation is one of the best ways you can protect yourself, your children, your community and future generations from infectious diseases. Vaccination saves lives. Diseases such as tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough caused thousands of children to die every year in the 1950s. These diseases are now less common and it is rare for anyone to die from them in Australia.

Percentage of children in Belconnen who are fully vaccinated, 12 month rolling average by age - 2017 to 2023 (%)



Source: Department of Health and Aged Care - ACT childhood immunisation coverage data by SA3
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/act-childhood-immunisation-coverage-data-by-sa3>

Percentage of children in Belconnen who are not fully vaccinated, 12 month rolling average by age - 2017 to 2023 (%)



Source: Department of Health and Aged Care - ACT childhood immunisation coverage data by SA3
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/act-childhood-immunisation-coverage-data-by-sa3>

Positive Sense of Identity and Culture

Having a positive sense of identity and culture is central to the wellbeing of all children and young people. This is important for all, regardless of background, but in Australia, it is especially so for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. It encompasses having spiritual needs met, a sense of cultural connectedness, belonging and acceptance at home and in the community – and confidence that their identity, culture and community is respected and valued. It involves feeling safe and supported in expressing one’s identity, regardless of gender, sexuality, culture or language.



What our community is saying is important for Belconnen's children to have a positive sense of identity and culture



24%

of people in Belconnen speak a language other than English in their home

5.3%

of Belconnen kindergarten children identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in 2021

Languages Spoken at Home

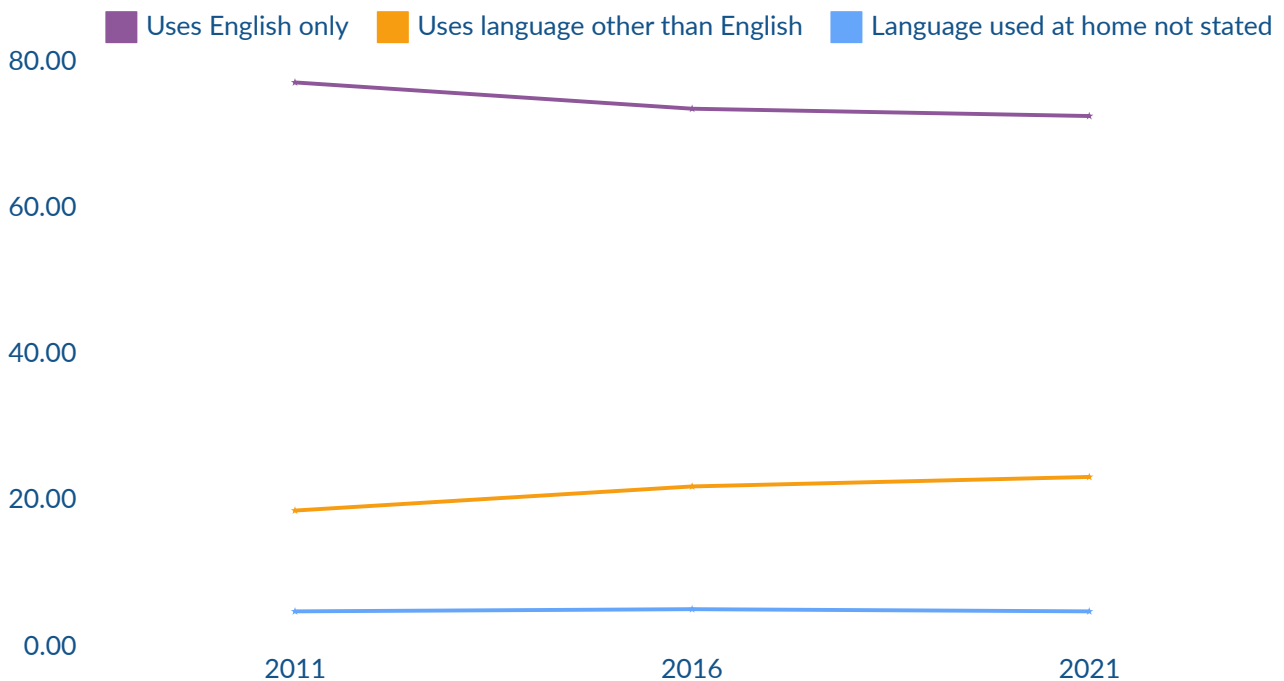
Did you know?

In 2021 in Belconnen, 24.0% of the population spoke a language other than English at home compared to 24.6% in the ACT. These figures have increased from 18.4% and 18.1% in 2011.

Why is this important?

The way Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) children and their families access services may be different from non-CALD families. Belconnen is becoming more culturally diverse, so more culturally safe services are required.

Language spoken at home (2011 - 2021 - Belconnen)



Source: Census of Population and Housing, ABS – Time Series Profile – Belconnen - Table T10

Top 10 Languages Other Than English Spoken at Home

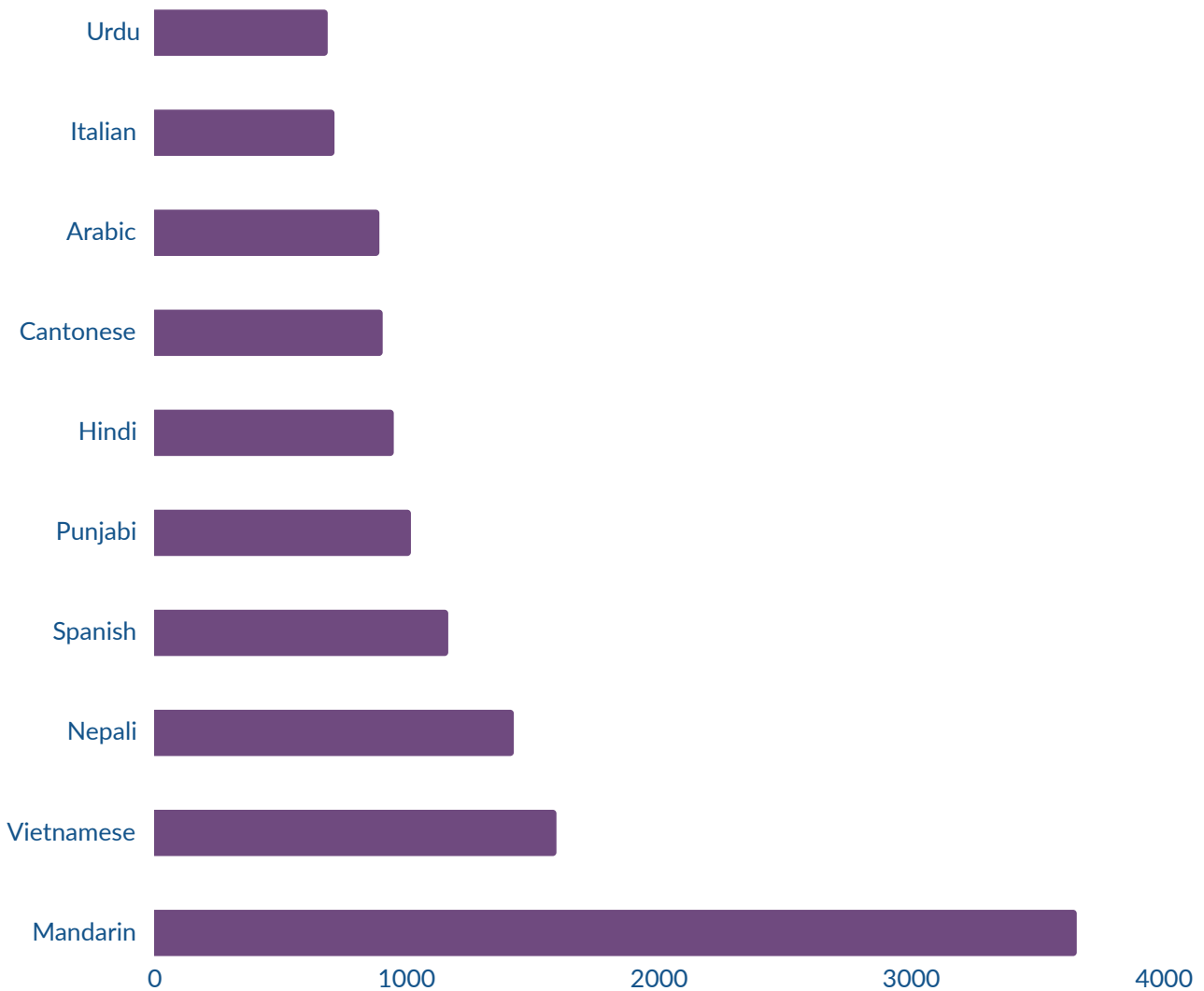
Did you know?

In Belconnen, 75.12% of people speak English at home. Mandarin is the next most commonly spoken language at home (3.4%), followed by Vietnamese (1.5%), Nepali (1.3%), Spanish (1.1%) and Punjabi (1.1%). These numbers are similar to the rest of the ACT.

Why is this important?

Knowing what languages are spoken helps us understand how to connect and communicate more effectively and help people connect into their community.

Top 10 languages other than English spoken at home -Belconnen



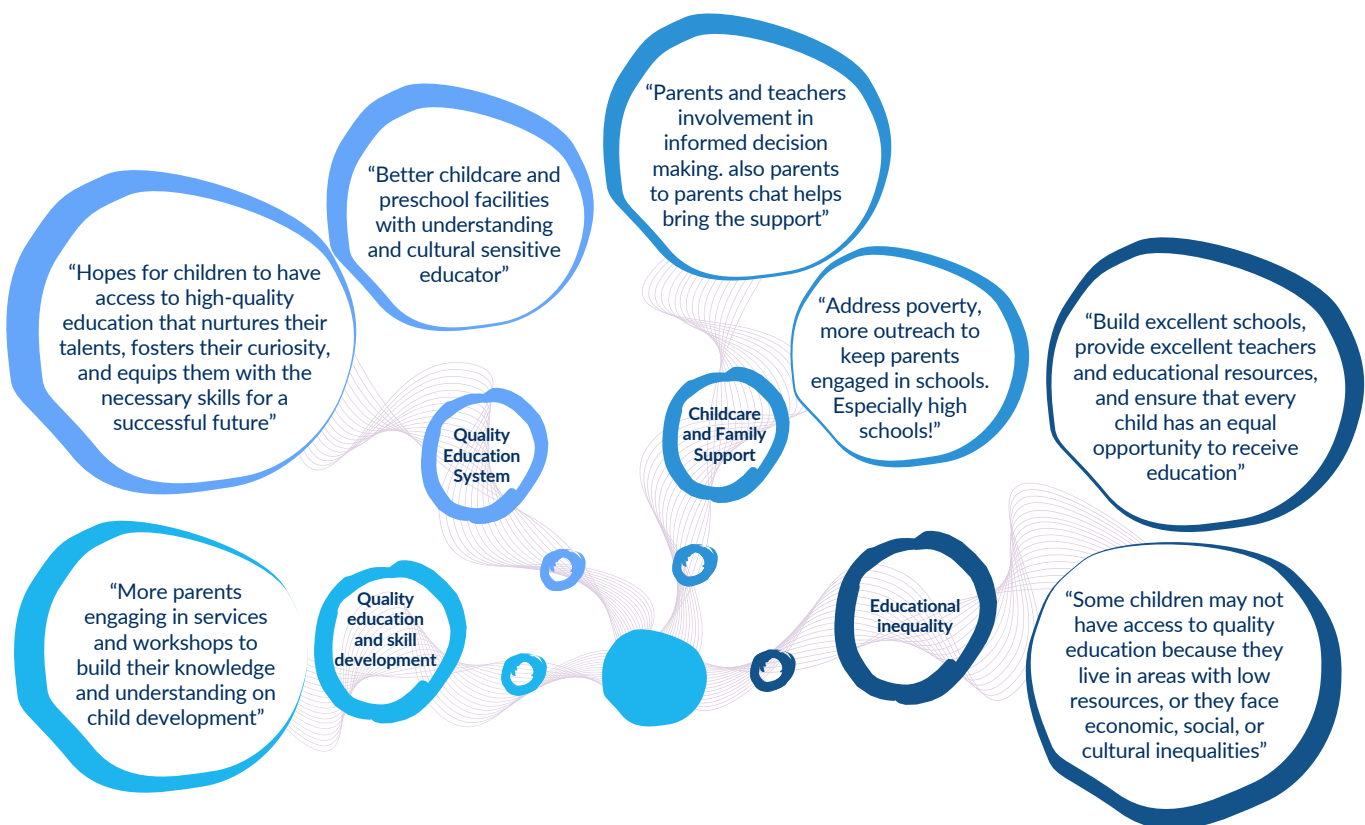
Source: Census of Population and Housing, ABS – General Community Profile – Belconnen – Table G13c

Learning

Children and young people learn through a variety of experiences within the classroom, the home and the community in which they live. Their individual learning needs are addressed to allow them to realise their full learning potential. Families are engaged in their child's learning. Children and young people are supported and encouraged to learn in a wide variety of settings, including formal education. They have opportunities to participate in a breadth of experiences where their learning is valued and supported by their family and in the wider community.



What our community is saying is important for Belconnen's children to have a positive sense of identity and culture



30.5 %

of children in Belconnen are developmentally vulnerable on one or more AEDC domains, which is higher than ACT (26.7%) and Australia (22.1%)

ACT Preschool Enrolments

Did you know?

In 2021, 346 children in Belconnen attended a 4 year old preschool for fewer than 15 hours per week with 1,322 attending 15 hours or more.

This equates to 79.0% of children attended preschool for more than 15 hours per week. This is the same as the level for the ACT. Attendance rates have been consistent over the last 10 years. Ninety percent of preschools in Belconnen were rated as exceeding National Quality Standard with the remaining 10 per cent meeting the Standard. This is higher than the ACT where 78.8% were exceeding the Standard and 18.8% were assessed as meeting the Standard.

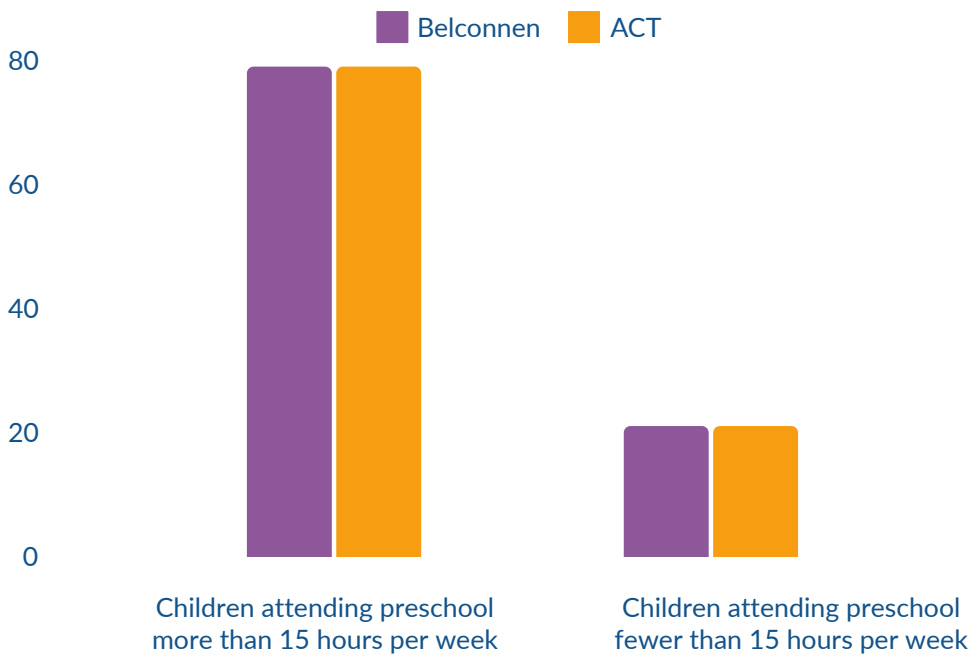
In 2020, the ACT Education Directorate commenced delivery of the quality early childhood education for three year-olds initiative (3 year-old initiative) which provides two free days per week of quality early childhood education for three year-olds experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage. In 2024, universal access to free, quality early childhood education for three year-olds (Three-year-old preschool) commenced, providing up to 300 hours per year for all eligible three year-old children in the ACT.

Why is this important?

Research using Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data shows that children who attend preschool are less likely to be developmentally vulnerable across all five developmental domains upon starting school and those who stand to benefit the most are disadvantaged children. Here are 6 long term benefits of early childhood education in preschool:

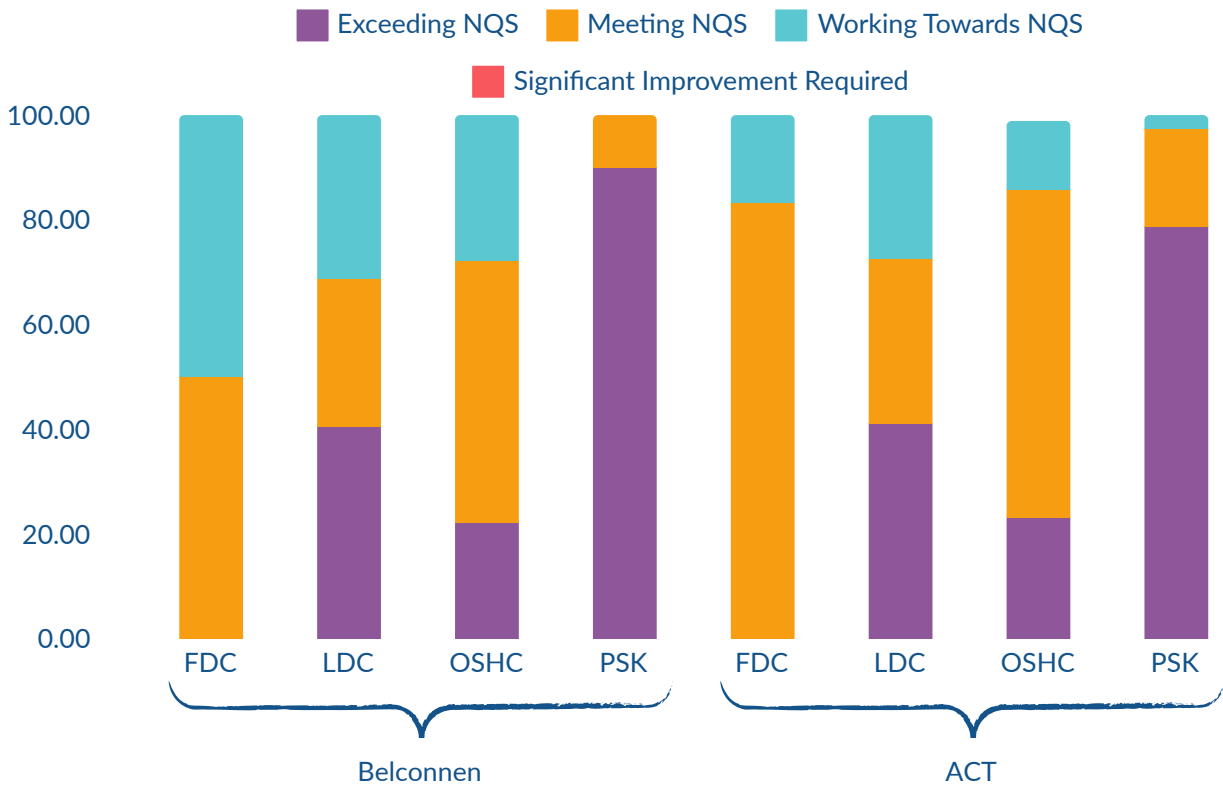
- ① Cognitive and Social Development
- ② Improved Social Interaction
- ③ Learn New Routines
- ④ Improved Academic Performance
- ⑤ Learn to Become Independent
- ⑥ Improved Health, Wellbeing & Resilience

Percentage of children attending preschool per week by hours and region - 2021 (%)



Source: ABS Data By Region, 2023

Percentage of ECEC services by ACECQA overall ratings, sub-type and region - as at 1 January 2024 (%)



Source: Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2024

NAPLAN

Did you know?

The data demonstrates that for 2022 there was a high percentage of students who met or exceeded NAPLAN literacy standards per year level in the ACT. The rate dropped significantly with increasing year level. The largest disparity is seen in writing, where the percentage of students who met or exceeded the NAPLAN literacy standard was 97.5% for year 3 students and 87.4% for year 9 students.

Why is this important?

NAPLAN helps governments, education authorities and schools to see whether young Australians are reaching important literacy and numeracy goals.

It provides information about how education programs are working, areas for improvement, and which schools need support in the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. It can support school improvement by enabling teachers to monitor their students' progress against the national measure, to identify strengths and areas to improve in teaching programs. It provides additional information to support teacher judgement about progress in a child's level of literacy and numeracy attainment.



Highest Year of School Completed

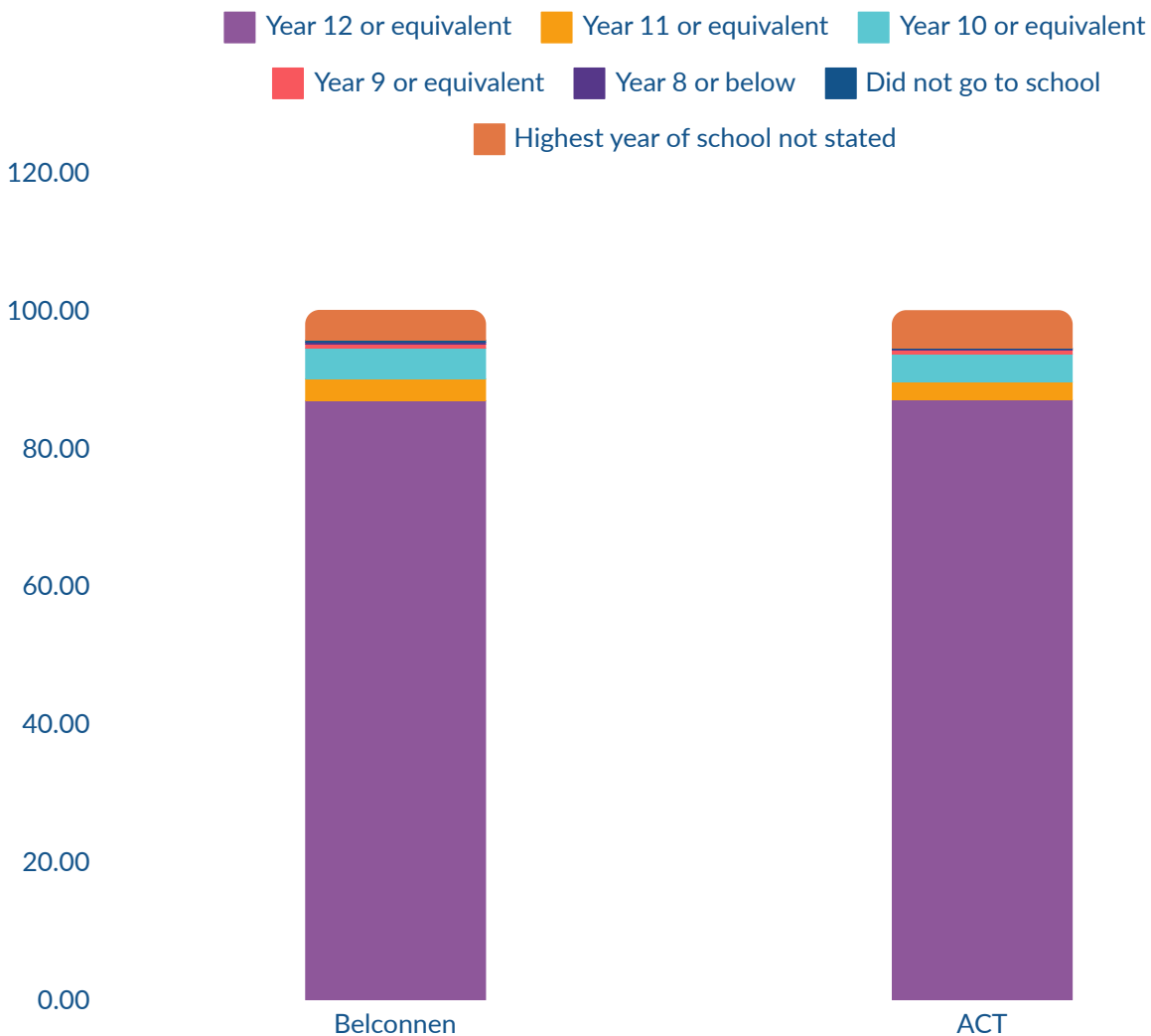
Did you know?

In Belconnen, 86.8% of people aged 20-24 completed year 12 or equivalent. This is almost identical to the ACT (86.9%).

Why is this important?

Those who complete year 12 are substantially more likely to be employed. They are also more likely to work full-time and in higher-skilled occupations than early school leavers.

Percentage of 20 to 24 year-olds by highest school qualification by region - 2021 (%)



Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS – General Community Profile – Belconnen and ACT – Table G16

Participating

Participating is about children and young people having a voice, being listened to, and being taken seriously within their family and community. It means having a say in decisions that impact them. It means being empowered to speak out and express themselves. Participating includes involvement with peers and groups through a variety of activities, including online communities. Participating means being an active member of society.



What our community is saying is important for Belconnen's children to feel heard and participate



Approximately 150 playgrounds in Belconnen

with most homes within 400 metres of a local playground (2021)

635

Children library borrowers aged 0-5 years in Belconnen from January to May in 2023

Attendance at Playgroups

Did you know?

Over 5500 children attended playgroups in the ACT in 2022-23.

Why is this important?

Playgroups provide families with a supportive environment to build connections and form friendships. Coming together, connecting with other families and sharing experiences supports the mental health of both parents and children.

ACT Libraries

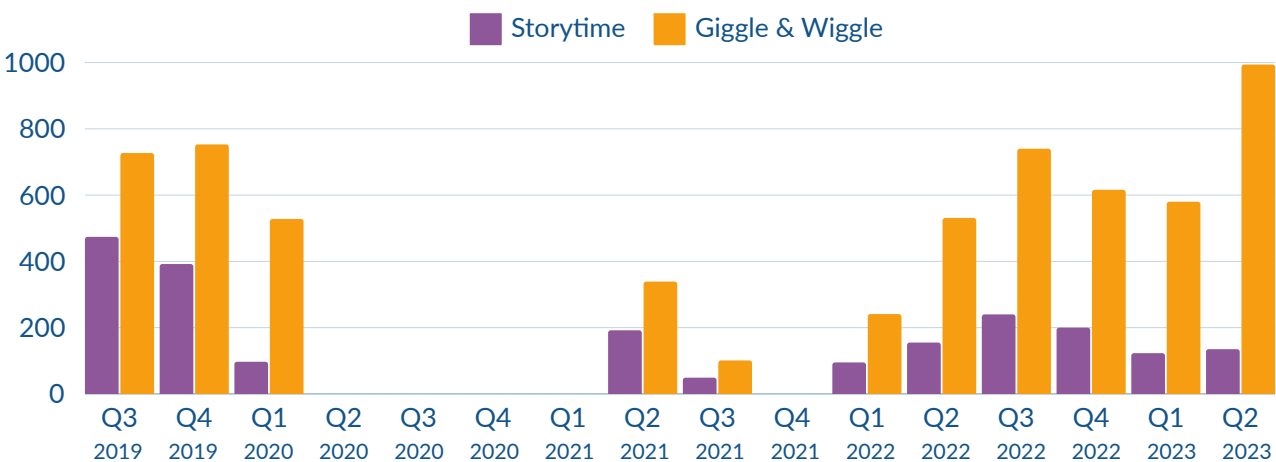
Did you know?

Libraries ACT offers a range of programs and services for children and families. In Belconnen, at Kippax and Belconnen Libraries, Storytime and Giggle and Wiggle are two popular programs. Attendance changes from 2019 to 2022 demonstrate the impact of Covid, but also tell us that the numbers are increasing back to pre-covid levels.

Why is this important?

Attending Libraries and participating in activities like Giggle and Wiggle and Storytime assist with language development, maths, social skills and support reading and learning.

Attendances at early childhood library programs 2019-2023



Source: ACT Libraries (unpublished)

Attendance at Creative and Cultural Venues

Did you know?

In the ACT in 2022, 82.2% of 5-14 year olds attended at least one cultural venue or event, compared to 80.1% nationally. This has decreased from 2017-18 when 97.3% of children had attended a cultural venue or event.

Why is this important?

Participating in creative and cultural events supports children in their learning and development, including developing their imagination and creativity, confidence, communication and social skills.

Participation in Creative and Cultural Activities

Did you know?

In the ACT, 53.7% of 5-14 year olds participated in one or more creative activities. Eighty three per cent of children aged 5-14 reported reading for pleasure. This was the highest of any state or territory.

Source: ABS Cultural participating and attendance survey 2021-22.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/cultural-and-creative-activities/2021-22>

Playgrounds

Did you know?

Belconnen has approximately 150 play spaces located in the suburbs and around Lake Ginninderra. It also has green corridors, sporting ovals and play equipment attached to local shops and schools.

There are over 500 playgrounds in the ACT, with 6.7 playgrounds per 1000 children aged under 15. Most homes are within 400 metres of a local playground.

The ACT also has a number of indoor play spaces of which some offer sensory time.

Why is this important?

Access to safe outdoor play spaces, including playgrounds, can have positive physical, educational, social and cognitive benefits for children. Other outcomes such as enhanced sense of community and a place for family time offer benefits for the whole family.

Source: ACT Play Space Strategy.

<https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/public-land/public-spaces-and-facilities/play-spaces>

Satisfaction with Parks, Playgrounds & Play Spaces

Did you know?

Canberrans have a high level of satisfaction with parks, playgrounds and play spaces in the ACT.

Why is this important?

Community satisfaction with parks and playgrounds offers an important insight, as the benefits of a satisfactory community park space present the opportunity for children to engage in healthy stimulating play in a safe environment building on community and child wellbeing and enabling a stronger sense of community identity. Spaces like this present opportunities for connection and recreational community-led activities.

Source: Play Space Strategy – What We Heard Report, May 2022.

[https://hdp-au-prod-app-act-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-](https://hdp-au-prod-app-act-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/8016/5239/8946/Play_Space_Strategy_What_We_Heard_Report_May_2022.pdf)

[2.amazonaws.com/8016/5239/8946/Play_Space_Strategy_What_We_Heard_Report_May_2022.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-act-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/8016/5239/8946/Play_Space_Strategy_What_We_Heard_Report_May_2022.pdf)



Valued, Loved and Safe

Being valued, loved, and safe means having loving, trusting relationships with family and friends. It involves a child or young person feeling valued by teachers and other adults in their life, knowing that they are important to others and that others are caring and supportive of them. It involves feeling safe at home, in the community and online. Safety also means feeling safe about their future, which includes the knowledge that the environment and climate are a priority and are being protected.



What our community is saying is important for Belconnen's children to feel valued, loved and safe



In the ACT in 2020-21

2410

children had received child protection services.
(Child Protection Australia 2020-21, AIHW)

Child Protection

Did you know?

In 2021-22, just under two and a half thousand children and young people were receiving child protection services in the ACT, with 20% aged 1-4 years. The rate of children aged 1-4 years receiving child protection services in the ACT was 9 times greater for Indigenous children (487 per 1,000) than non-Indigenous (17.5 per 1,000). Over a third of children receiving family intensive support in the ACT were under the age 5 years.

Grandparent Care

Did you know?

In the ACT grandparent care is becoming more common, with 22.2% of Belconnen children receiving some form of grandparent care in the year prior to Kindergarten (2021).

Why is this important?

Despite the high rates of grandparent involvement in child rearing, little is known about the impact of grandparent involvement on children's mental and physical health outcomes.

Early childhood experts are encouraging Australians to follow the wisdom and knowledge gained from other countries where strong grandparent-child relationships can deliver reciprocal benefits.

Research using AEDC data shines a spotlight on the importance of intergenerational support networks, and recognises the valuable role of grandparents, with children who experienced "Grandparent" care being significantly less likely to be vulnerable in their development.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Did you know?

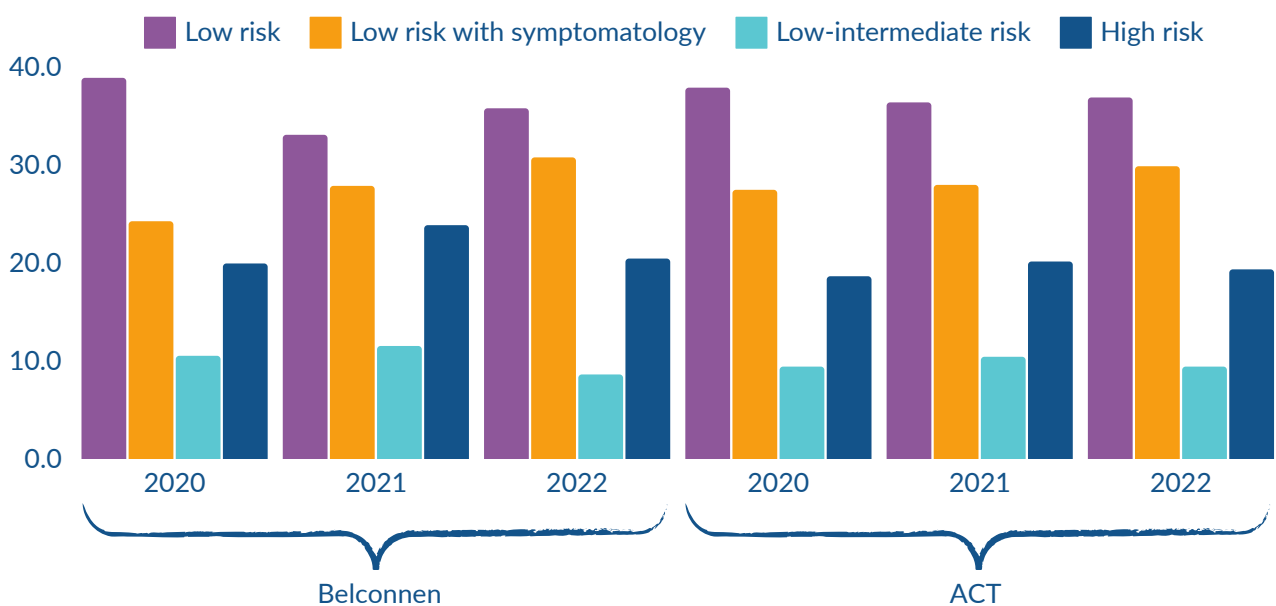
In 2022, 29% of ACT kindergarten children were identified as being at risk due to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Working with parents and families, these children were referred to their doctor for child and strength-based approaches to prevention and early intervention, supporting positive future outcomes for the child.

Why is this important?

Exposure to ACEs can result in developmental delays, lower educational attainment and social and emotional maladjustment. The greater the number of ACEs a child is exposed to (regardless of the particular combination of ACEs), the greater their risk of developing chronic and cardiovascular conditions in adulthood, such as stroke, respiratory disease, diabetes, and cancer. There is also greater probability of health risk behaviours and problematic social functioning.

Adding ACEs questions to the KHC questionnaire greatly improves early identification and intervention for children at risk, with better life-long prospects for these children, reduced health burden and costs throughout life, and reduced intergenerational transmission of adversity.

Percentage of Kindergarten children by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) risk rating and region - 2020 to 2022 (%)



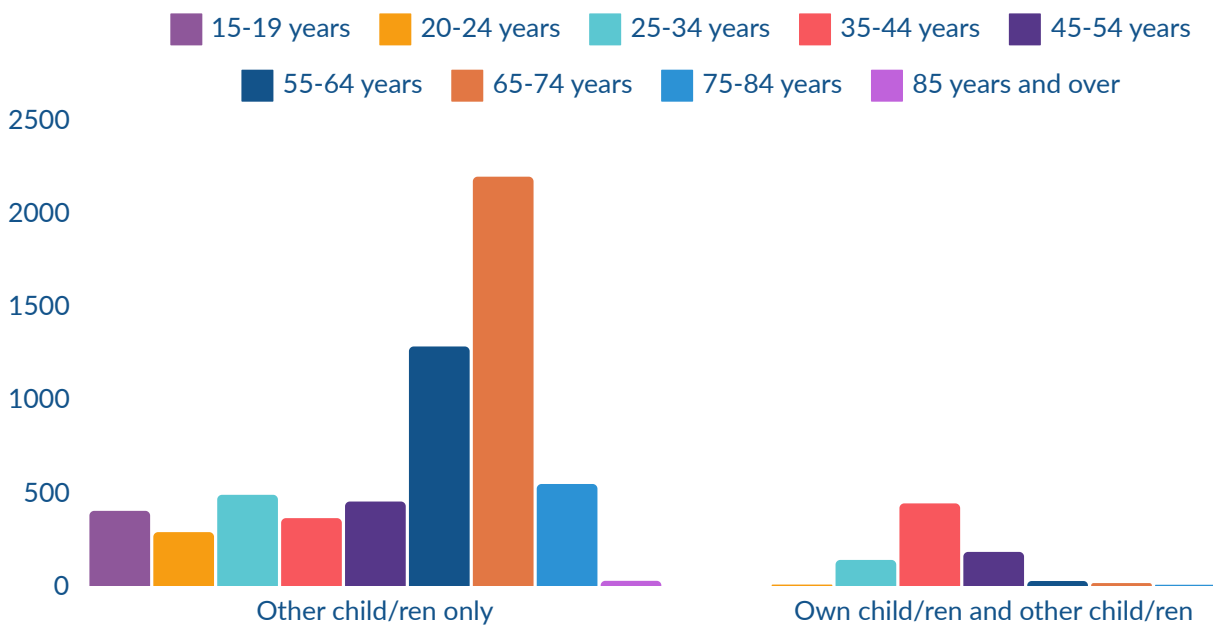
Source: ACT Kindergarten Health Check, 2022 (unpublished)

Carers of Children Who Are Not Their Own

Did you know?

In 2021, over 6800 people in Belconnen provided unpaid care to a child who was not their own. The majority of these carers were aged over 55.

Number of persons providing care for a child/children not their own by age range - 2021



Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS - General Community Profile - Belconnen and ACT - Table G26

Sense of Belonging at School

Did you know?

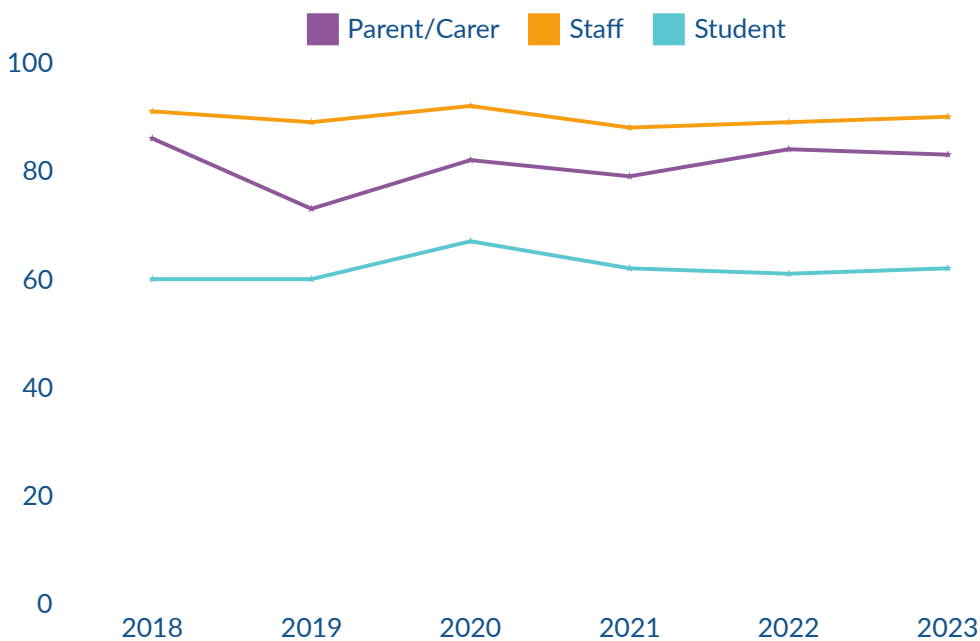
The data shows the ebbs and flows of staff, students' and parents'/carers' sense of belonging or connection to their school in the ACT. In 2023, 62% of students reported a strong identification with their school, compared to 83% of parents/carers and 90% of staff.

For students, strong identification with their school was highest among primary school students at 74%, compared to 69% for college students, 58% for high school students and 54% for students attending P-10 schools.

Why is this important?

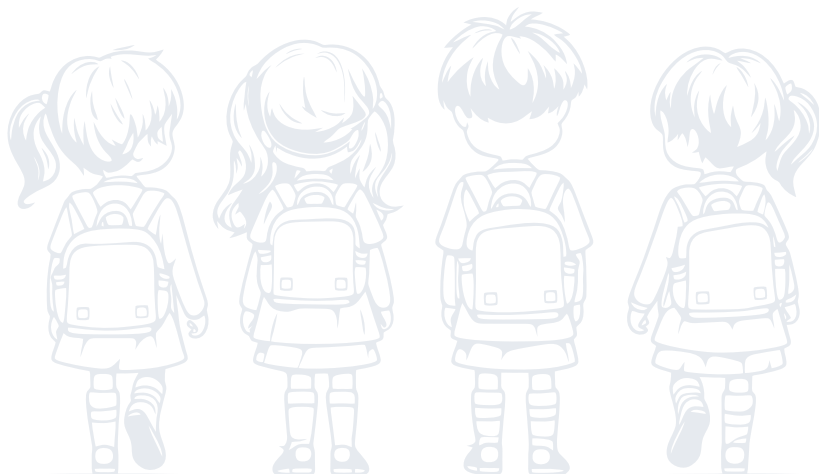
A child's sense of belonging or connection to school is related to their academic achievement and well-being. According to the Australian Education Research Organisation, a positive relationship with the school community can shape a student's emotional, behavioural, and cognitive engagement with schooling and influence academic outcomes.

Percentage of survey respondents reporting strong identification with their school 2018 - 2023



Source: ACT School Satisfaction Survey.

https://www.education.act.gov.au/about-us/policies-and-publications/publications_a-z



Australian Early Development Census

The **Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)** collects national data on the developmental health and wellbeing of all children starting school. The first data collection was in 2009 and it has been collected every 3 years since then, with the next census in 2024. It consists of approximately 100 questions across five key domains, which are closely linked to child health, education and social outcomes. These include **physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills** (school-based) and **communication skills and general knowledge**. The AEDC provides important information for communities, governments and schools to support planning and service provision. The early environments and experiences children are exposed to shape their development.

Research shows that investing time, effort and resources in children's early years, when their brains are developing rapidly, benefits children and the whole community. Early developmental gains support children through their school years and beyond.

Developmentally On-track On All Five Domains

Did you know?

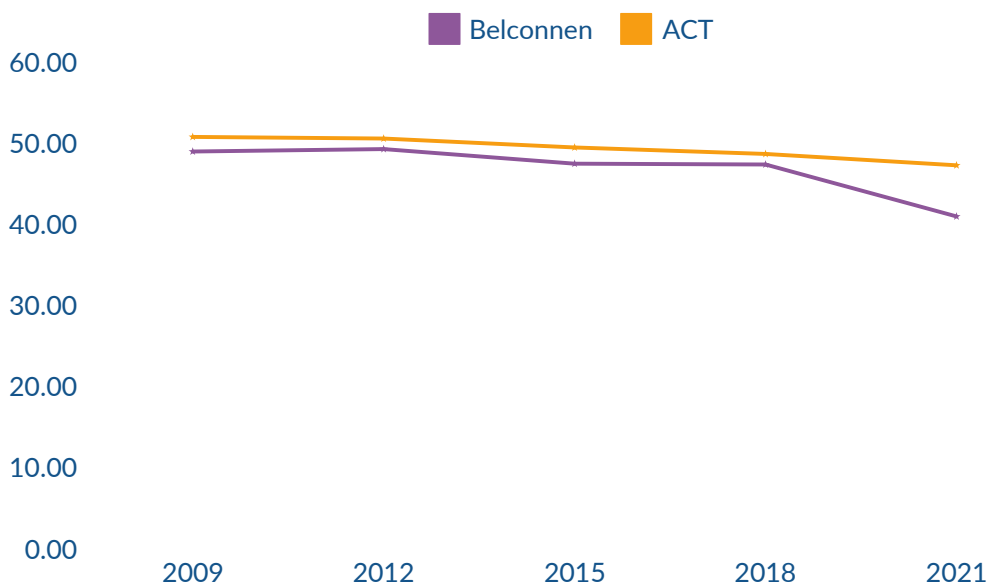
In 2021, 41% of children in Belconnen were on track on all five AEDC domains (OT5) compared to 47.3% for the ACT. This is a significant decrease from the 2018 Belconnen result (47.4%). Belconnen is experiencing some of lowest levels of children developmentally on track, with a statistically significantly decline in Belconnen children on track on all five AEDC domains (OT5) between 2018 and 2021.

Why is this important?

The AEDC domains have been shown to predict children's later outcomes in health, wellbeing and academic success. The results clearly tell us there continues to be an increased need for early childhood supports and services in the Belconnen.

Children with a positive early childhood experience are more likely to achieve higher educational attainment, demonstrate high self-esteem and social development, and have fewer social and health problems.

Percentage of children developmentally on track on all five domains (OT5) in Belconnen and ACT - 2009 to 2021



Source: AEDC 2021, 33010DO002, Births, Australia 2022 Table 2.8

Developmentally Vulnerable on AEDC Domains

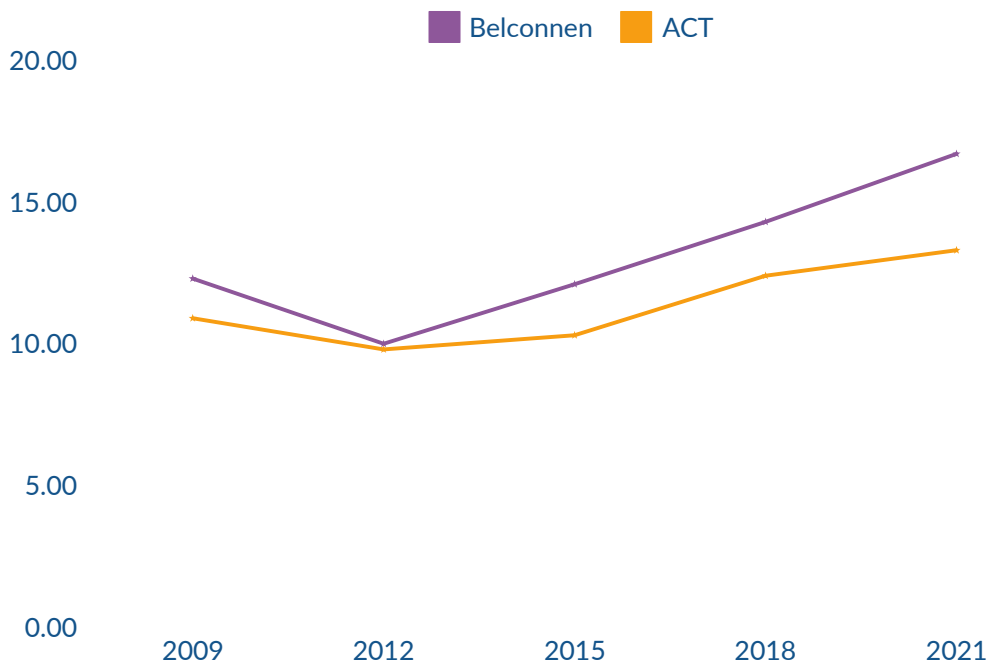
Did you know?

Belconnen children are experiencing some of the highest levels of developmental vulnerability, with developmental vulnerability on two or more domains increasing statistically significantly between 2018 and 2021. The developmental vulnerability experienced in Belconnen is higher than the ACT and Australia.

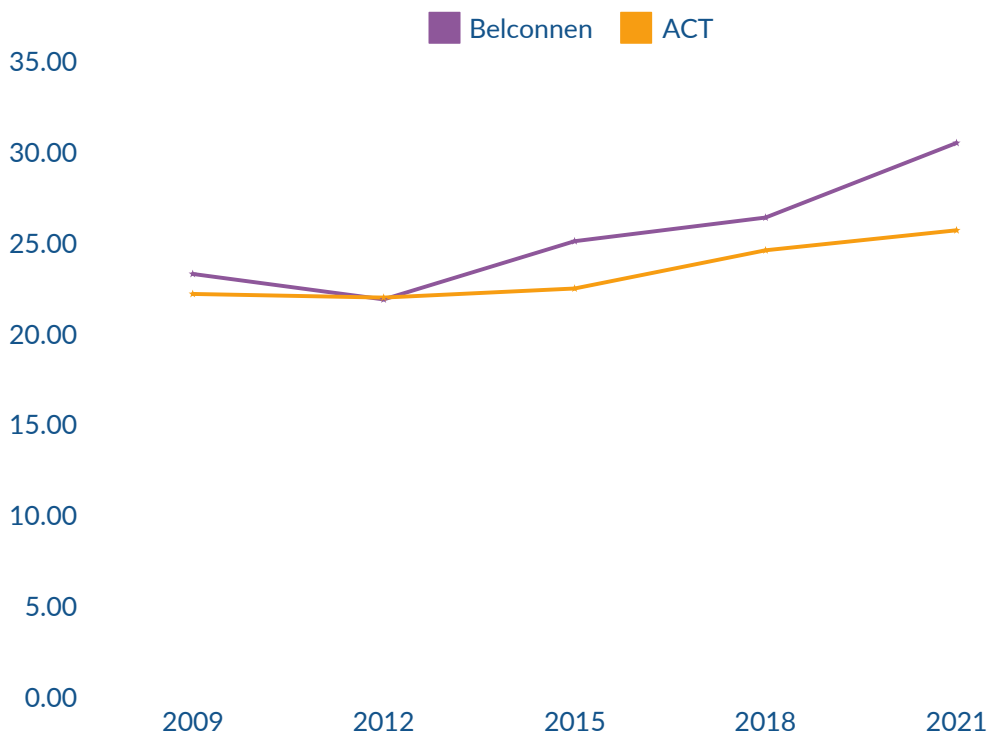
Why is this important?

The AEDC domains have been shown to predict children's later outcomes in health, wellbeing and academic success. The results clearly tell us there continues to be an increased need for early childhood supports and services in the Belconnen.

Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (DV2) in Belconnen and ACT - 2009 to 2021



Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) (DV1) in Belconnen and ACT - 2009 to 2021



Source: AEDC 2021, 33010DO002, Births, Australia 2022 Table 2.8

Language and Cognitive Skills

Did you know?

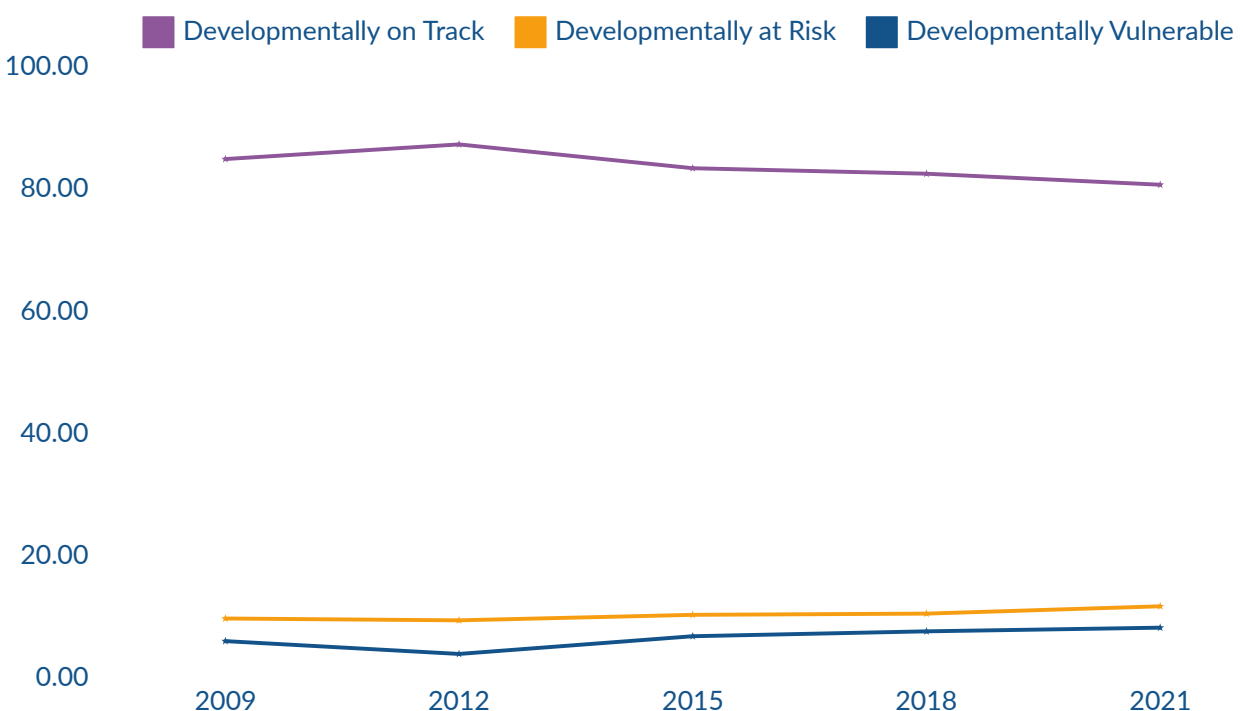
In 2021 Belconnen had a higher number of children developmentally vulnerable and at risk on the Language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain compared to the ACT.

Why is this important?

Children in Belconnen are at higher risk of experiencing challenges in emerging literacy and numeracy as well as difficulty with memory and a lack of interest in books, reading, maths and numbers.

Belconnen would benefit from parent and carer information on activities and ways to support child development, alongside high quality early education services and supports.

Percentage of children developmentally on track, developmentally at risk and developmentally vulnerable in Language and Cognitive Skills (school-based) in Belconnen - 2009 to 2021



Source: Australian Early Development Census Data Explorer, downloads 80001-Belconnen time series tables Table 2, published: <https://www.aedc.gov.au/data-explorer/>

Communication Skills and General Knowledge

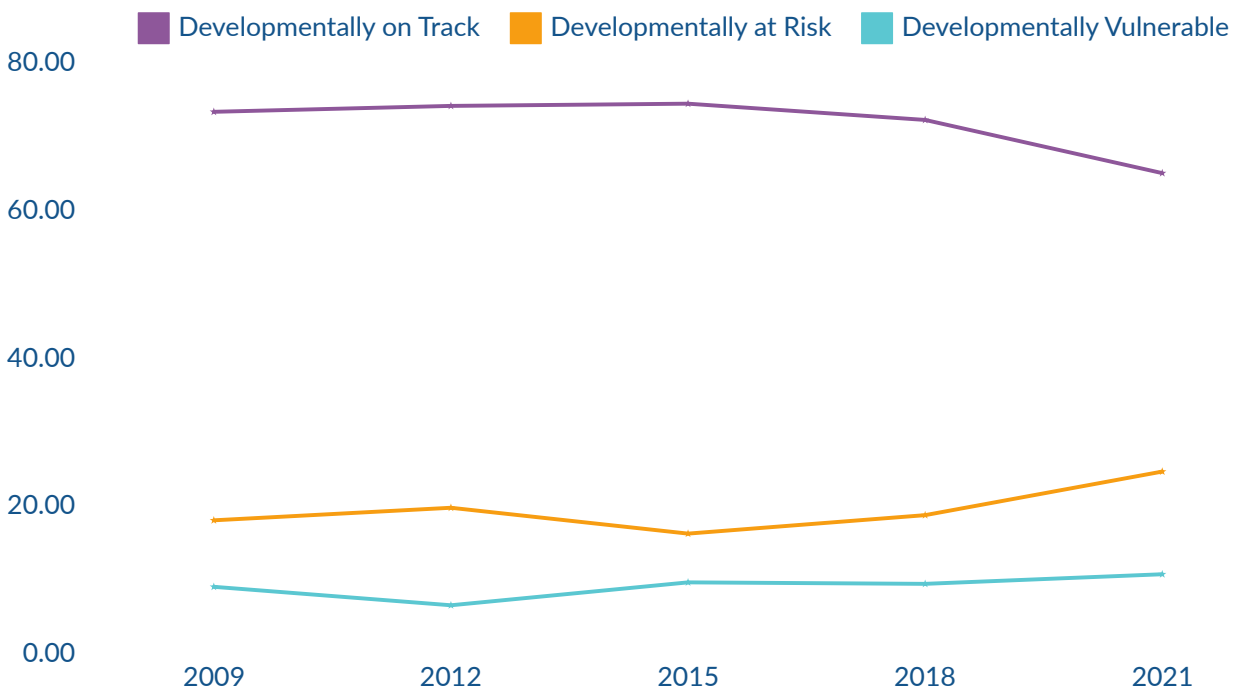
Did you know?

In 2021 Belconnen had a higher number of children developmentally vulnerable and at risk on the Communication skills and general knowledge domain compared to the ACT.

Why is this important?

Children in Belconnen are at higher risk of experiencing challenges in talking, understanding and being understood, as well as story telling and basic general knowledge. Belconnen would benefit from parent and carer information on activities and ways to support child development, alongside high quality early education services and supports.

Percentage of children developmentally on track, developmentally at risk and developmentally vulnerable in Communication skills and general knowledge in Belconnen - 2009 to 2021



Source: Australian Early Development Census Data Explorer, downloads 80001-Belconnen time series tables Table 2, published: <https://www.aedc.gov.au/data-explorer/>

Physical Health and Wellbeing

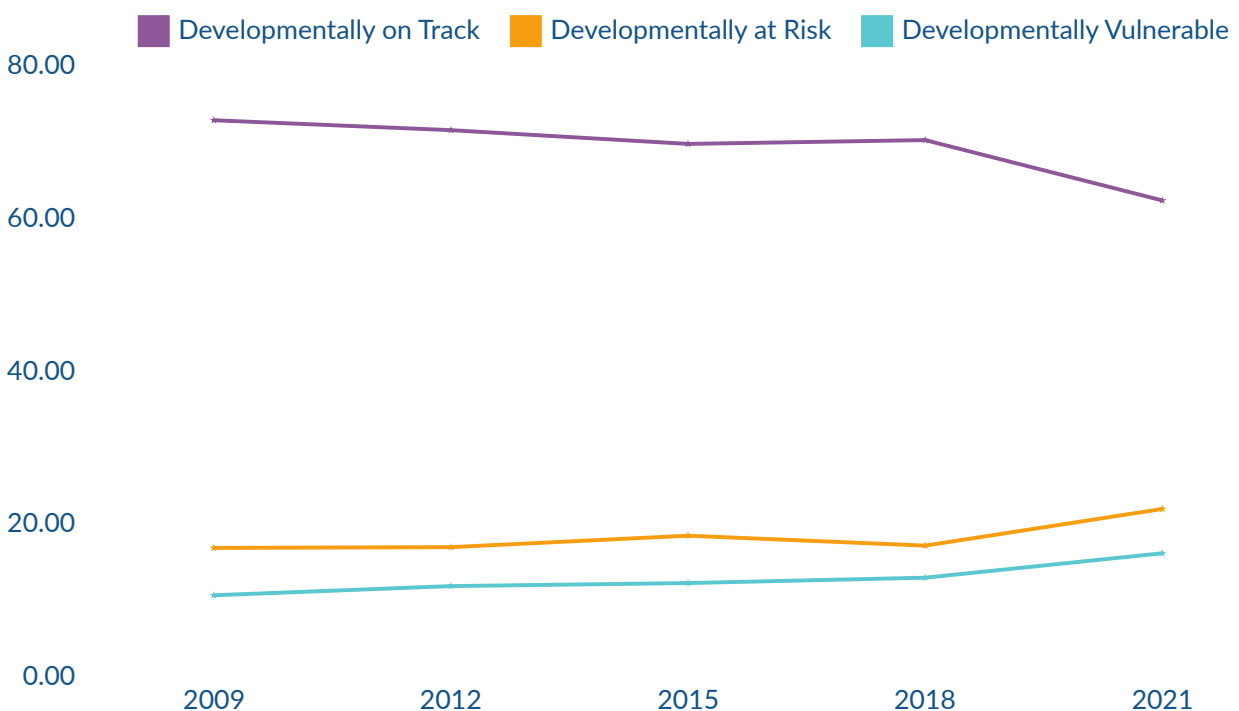
Did you know?

Whilst the majority of Belconnen children are developmentally on track, 16.0% of Belconnen children were developmentally vulnerable on the physical health and wellbeing domain of the AEDC. This is higher than the ACT average of 12.8% and 9.8% nationally.

Why is this important?

A strong sense of physical and psychological wellbeing enables children to confidently and optimistically engage and respond to others and the environment around them. The development of motor skills (gross motor, fine motor, perceptual motor) affords children greater autonomy and independence. Healthy lifestyles that balance sound nutrition, physical activity, personal safety and rest also underpin the development of children's physical wellbeing.

Percentage of children developmentally on track, developmentally at risk and developmentally vulnerable in Physical Health and Wellbeing in Belconnen - 2009 to 2021



Source: AEDC 2021, 33010DO002, Births, Australia 2022 Table 2.8

Social Competence

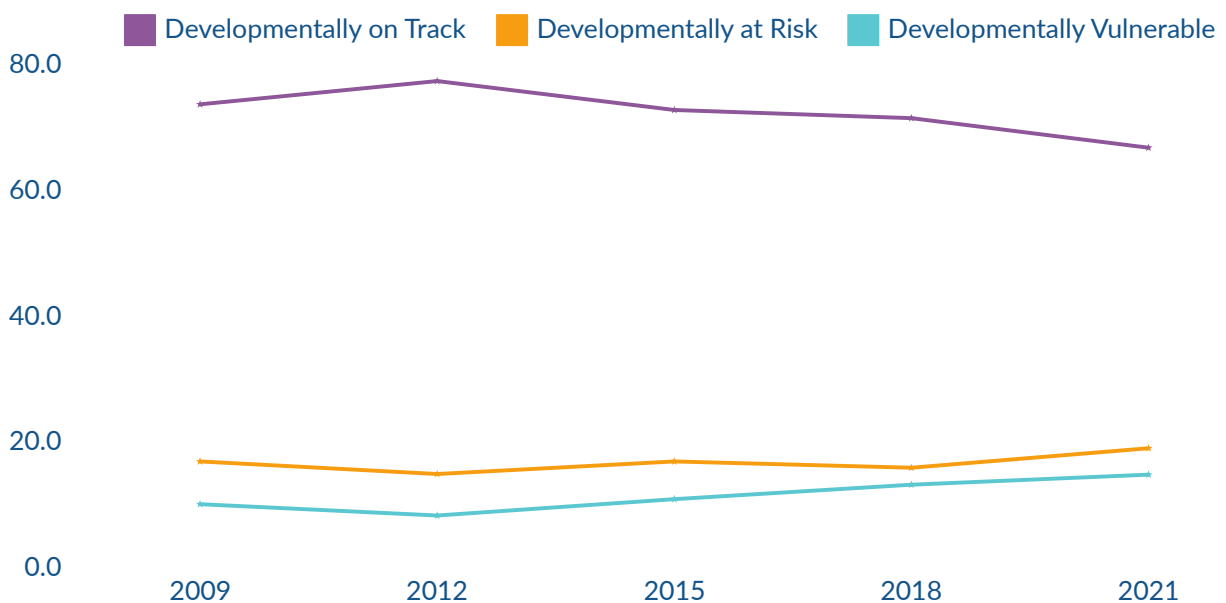
Did you know?

In 2021, 14.6% of Belconnen children were developmentally vulnerable on the social competence domain of the AEDC, compared to 12.2% in the ACT and 9.6% nationally.

Why is this important?

Being socially competent enables children to get along with other children, respect adults, help others and follow routine. This facilitates children building strong relationships with peers and adults contributing a sense of belonging and feeling valued and loved.

Percentage of children developmentally on track, developmentally at risk and developmentally vulnerable in Social Competence in Belconnen - 2009 to 2021



Source: AEDC 2021, 33010DO002, Births, Australia 2022 Table 2.8

Emotional Maturity

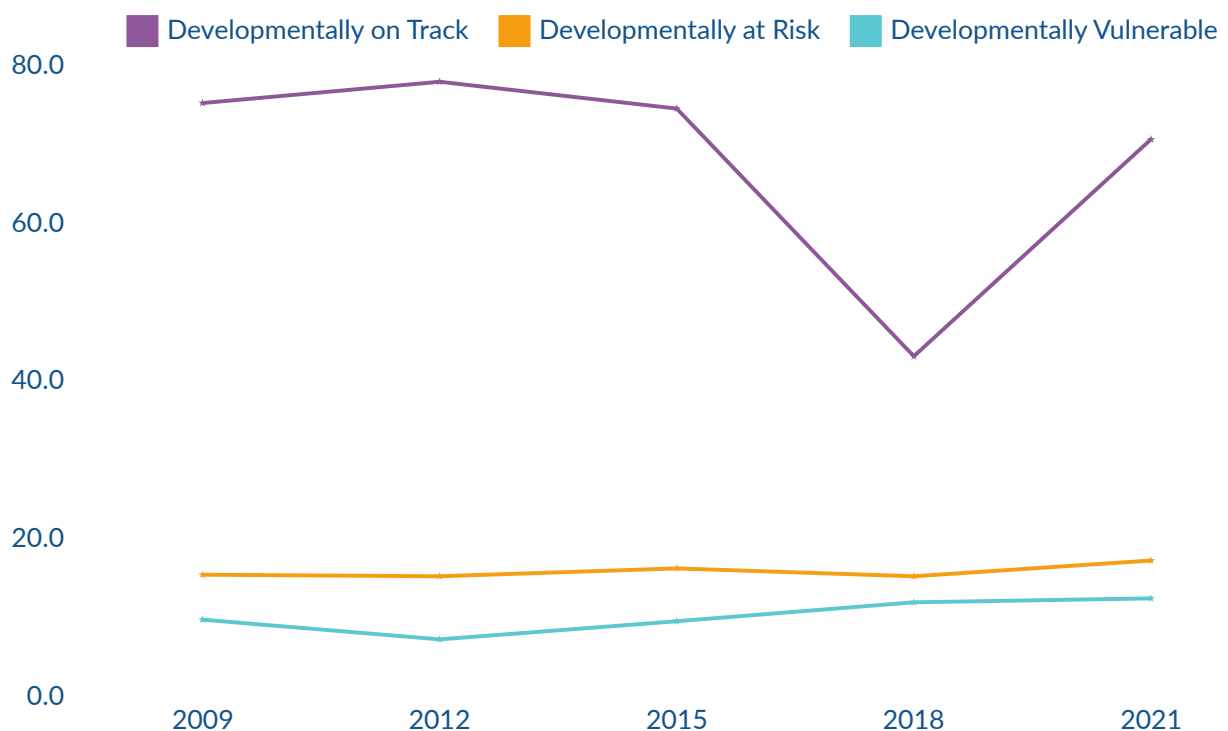
Did you know?

In 2021, 12.3% of Belconnen children were developmentally vulnerable on the emotional maturity domain of the AEDC, compared to 10.3% in the ACT and 8.5% nationally.

Why is this important?

Emotional maturity supports children to manage the demands of the social and learning environments. It enables children to form relationships with their peers, recover from disappointment or sadness (building resilience), overcome frustration, and express anger in socially acceptable ways.

Percentage of children developmentally on track, developmentally at risk and developmentally vulnerable in Emotional Maturity in Belconnen - 2009 to 2021



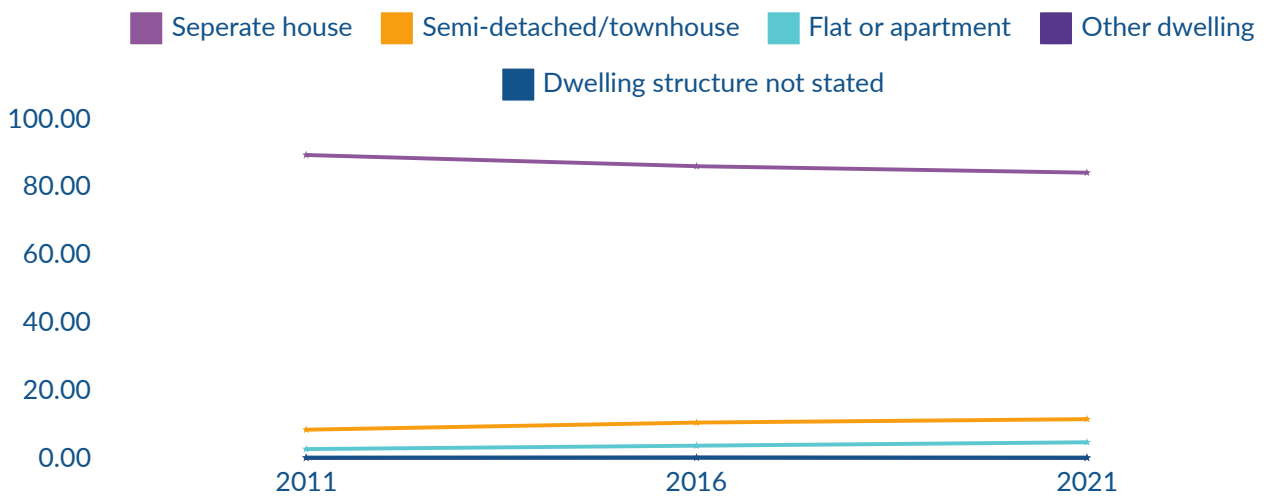
Source: AEDC 2021, 33010DO002, Births, Australia 2022 Table 2.8

Appendix

Additional graphs for each of the domains are shown below. These provide additional insights into Belconnen.

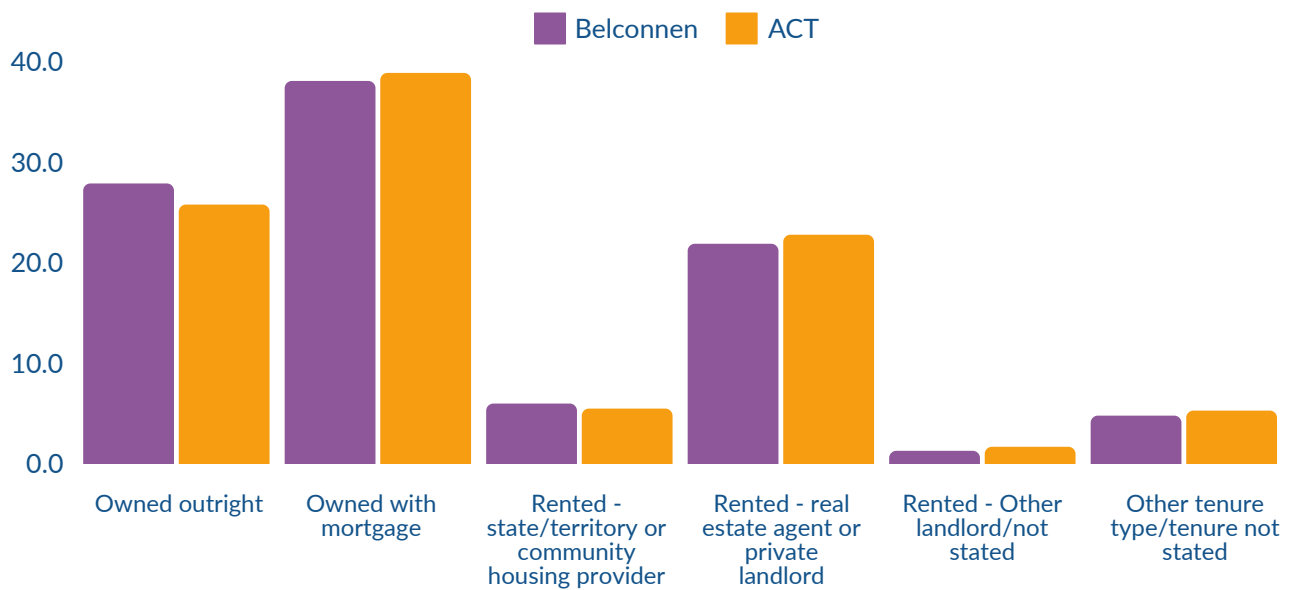
Material Basics

Dwelling type of family households with children - 2011 to 2021



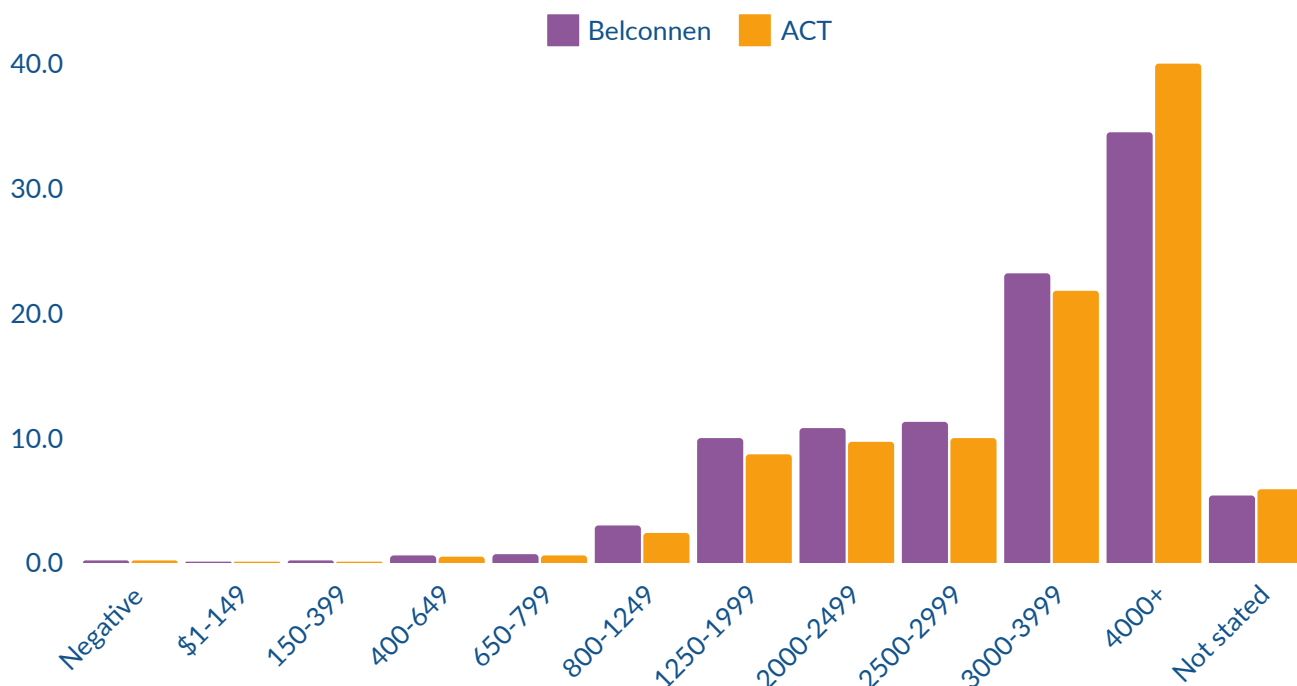
Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS – Time Series Profile – Table T14

Percentage of dwellings by tenure type in Belconnen and ACT - 2021



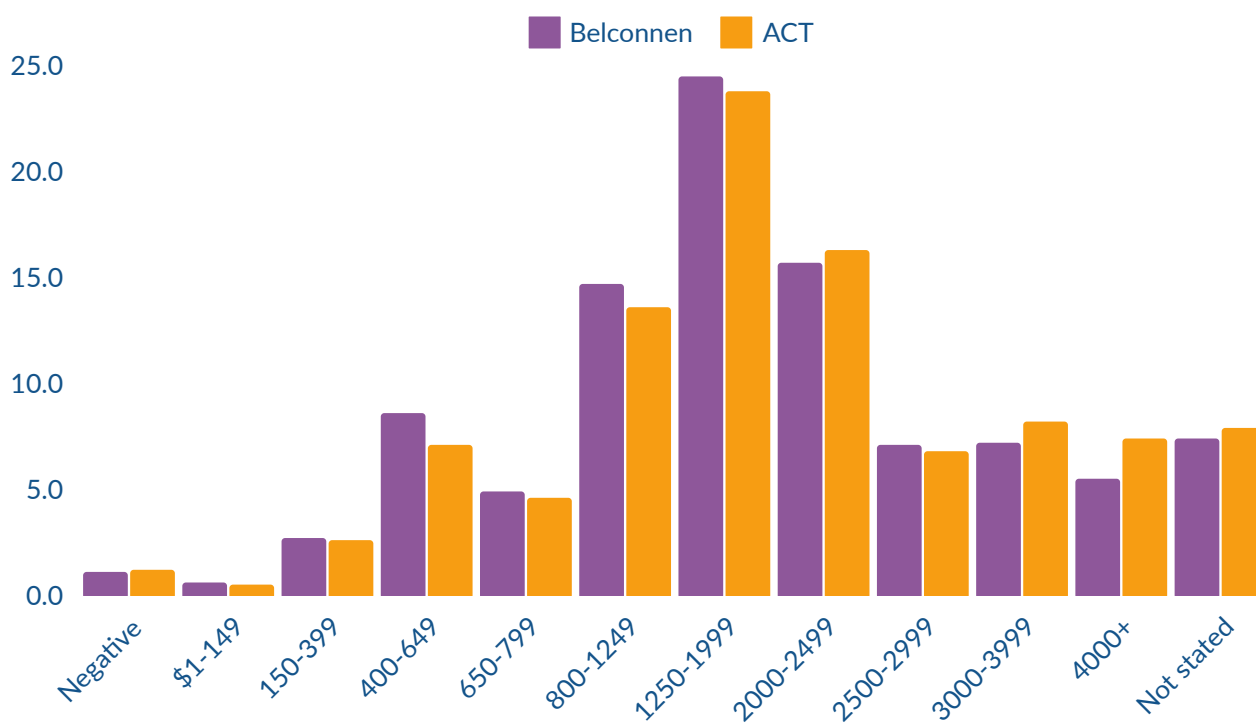
Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS – Time Series Profile Table T18

Percentage of couple families with children by weekly household income



Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS - Time Series Profile - Table T30

Percentage of one parent families by weekly household income



Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS - Time Series Profile - Table T30

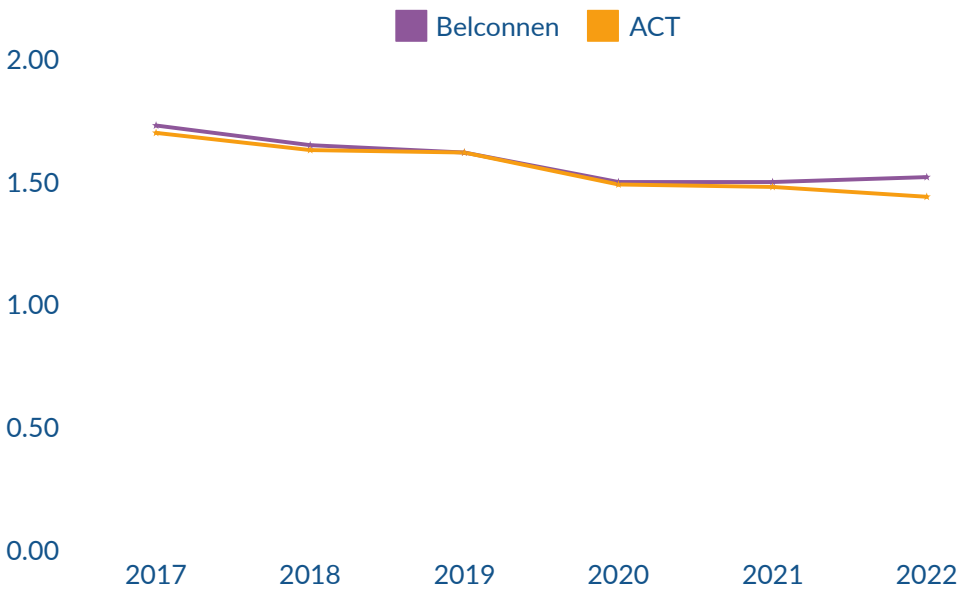
Housing suitability in Belconnen - 2016 to 2021



Source: ABS Data by Region

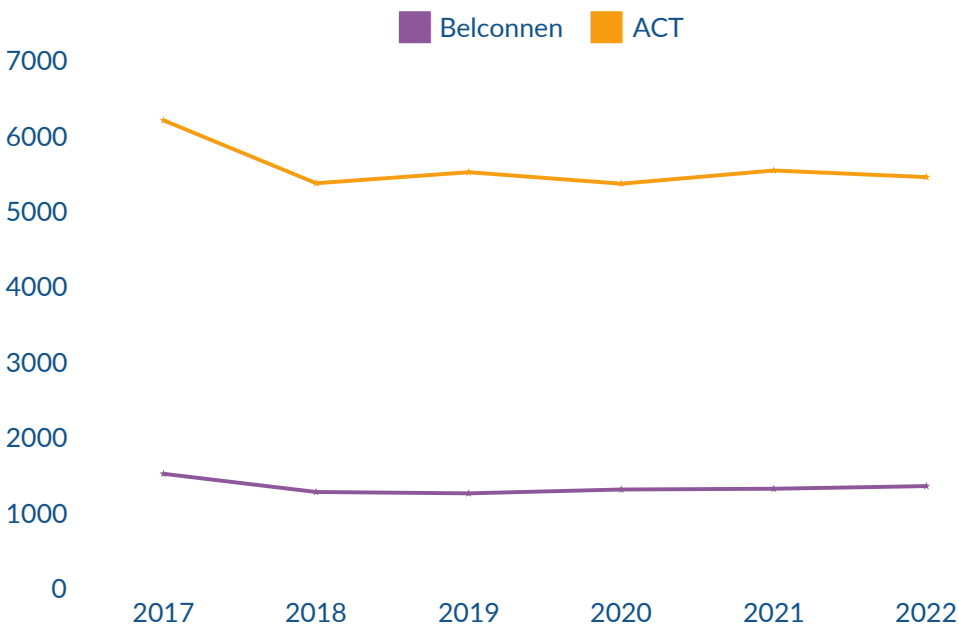
Healthy

Birth rate of females aged 15 to 49 years in Belconnen and ACT - 2017 to 2021 (per 1,000)



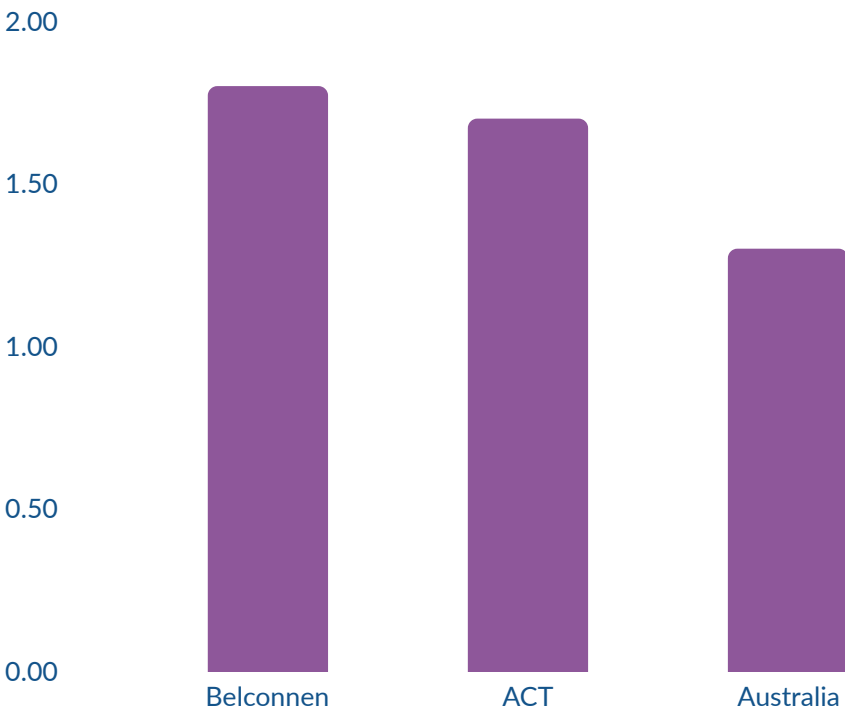
Source: ABS, 2022, 33010DO002, Births, Australia 2022 Table 2.8

Number of births in Belconnen and ACT - 2017 to 2022



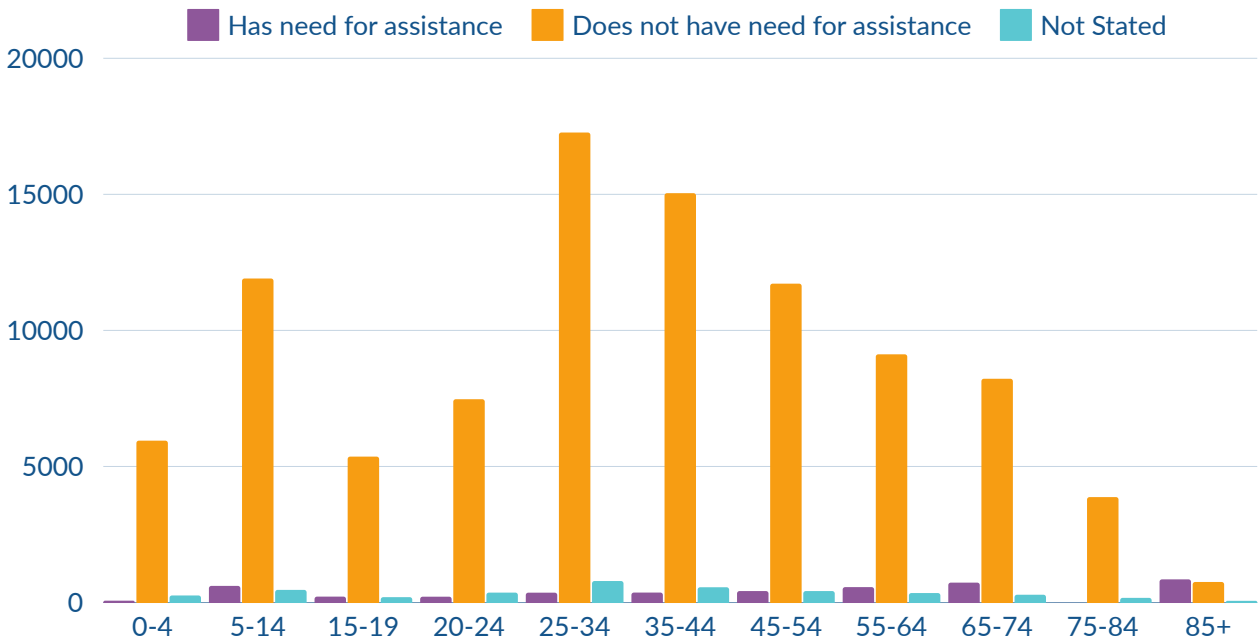
Source: ABS, 2022, 33010DO002, Births, Australia 2022 Table 2.8

Percentage of babies born at or after term with Apgar score of less than 7 at 5 minutes by region - 2019 to 2021 (%)



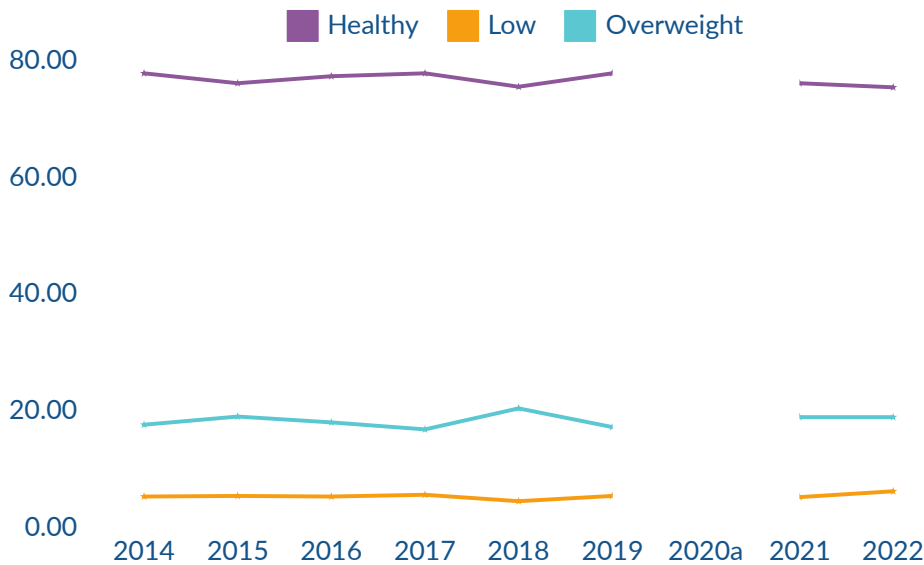
Source: AIHW analysis of National Perinatal Data Collection (AIHW 2023, National Core Maternity Indicators. Cat. PER 95. AIHW: Canberra; Table PIO4)

Number of people in Belconnen who have a need for assistance with core activities by age group - 2021



Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS - General Community Profile, Belconnen, Table G18

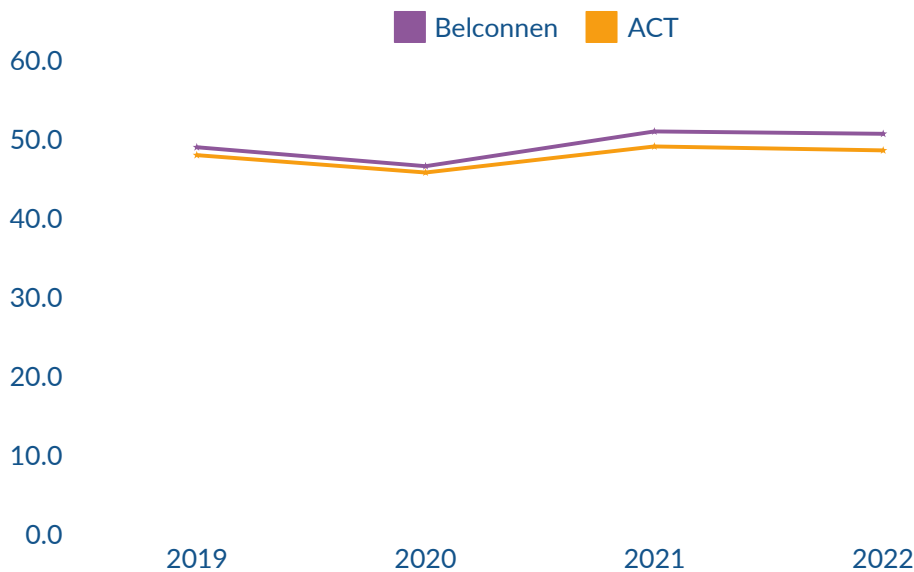
Percentage of kindergarten children in Belconnen and ACT with a Body Mass Index in the health range - 2014 to 2022 (%)



a. Data for 2020 are not available as physical health check clinics were targeted to children who parents had concerns due to COVID restriction policies

Source: ACT Kindergarten Health Check, 2022

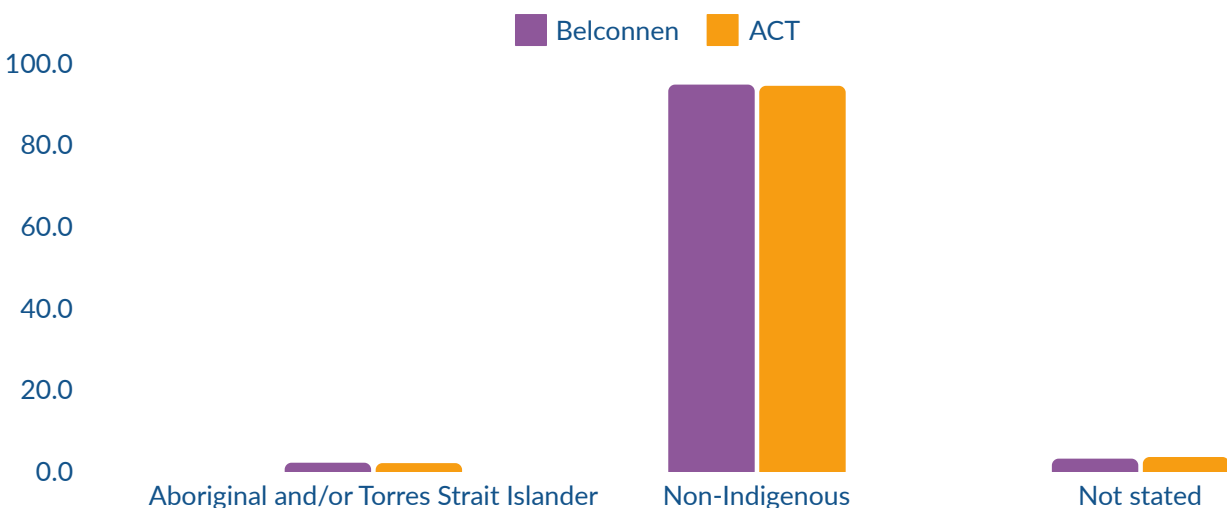
Percentage of children who are physically active for at least one hour over the past week, by region - 2019 to 2022 (%)



Source: ACT Kindergarten Health Check, 2022 (Unpublished)

Positive Sense of Identity and Culture

Percentage of all individuals identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in Belconnen and ACT - 2021



Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile – Belconnen and ACT, Table I01

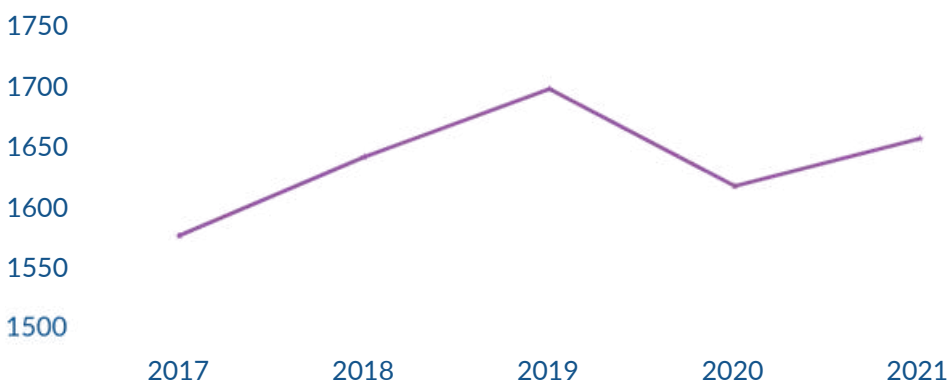
Percentage of children aged 0 to 4 years identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in Belconnen and ACT - 2021



Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile – Belconnen & ACT, Table I01

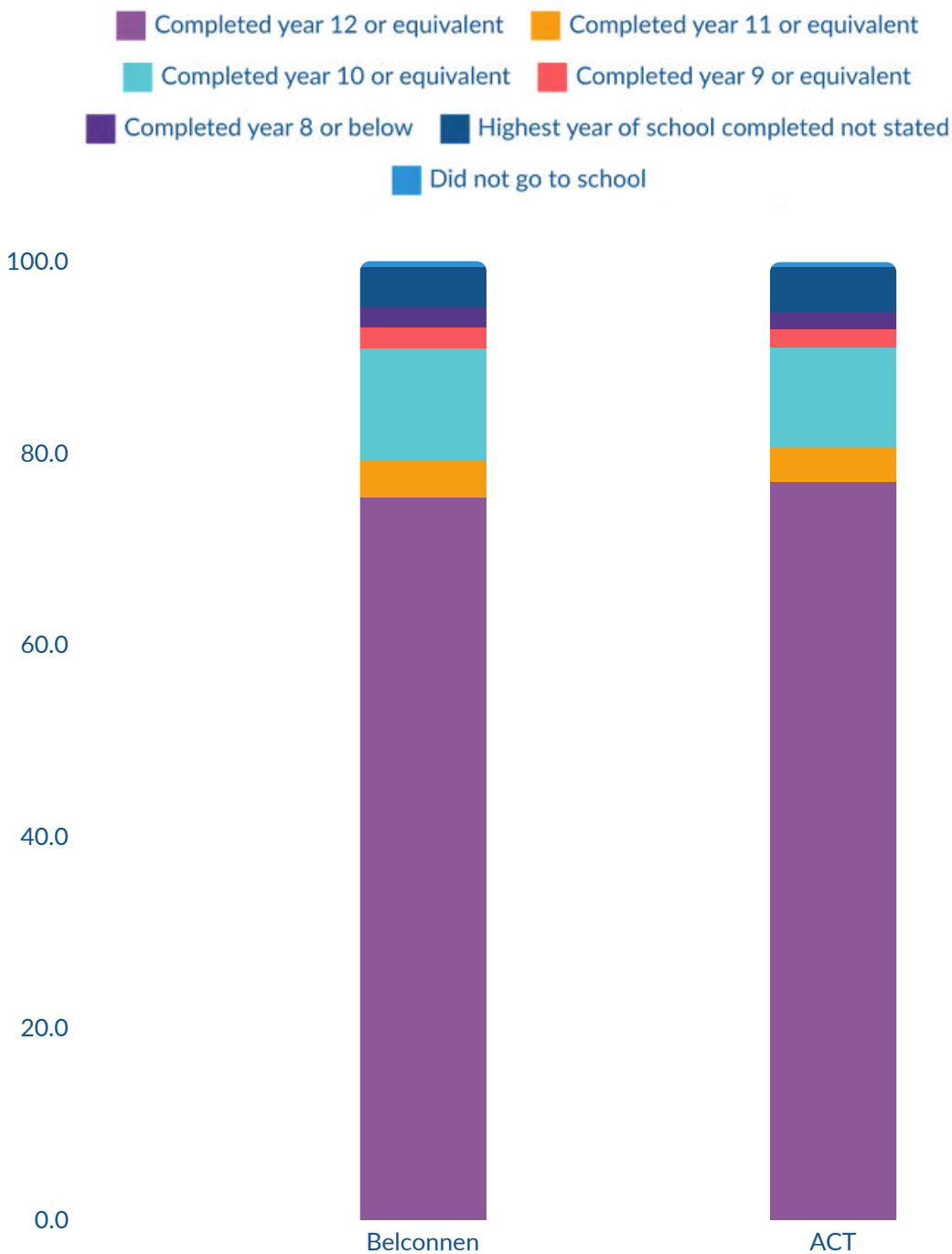
Learning

Number of children attending preschool in Belconnen - 2017 to 2021



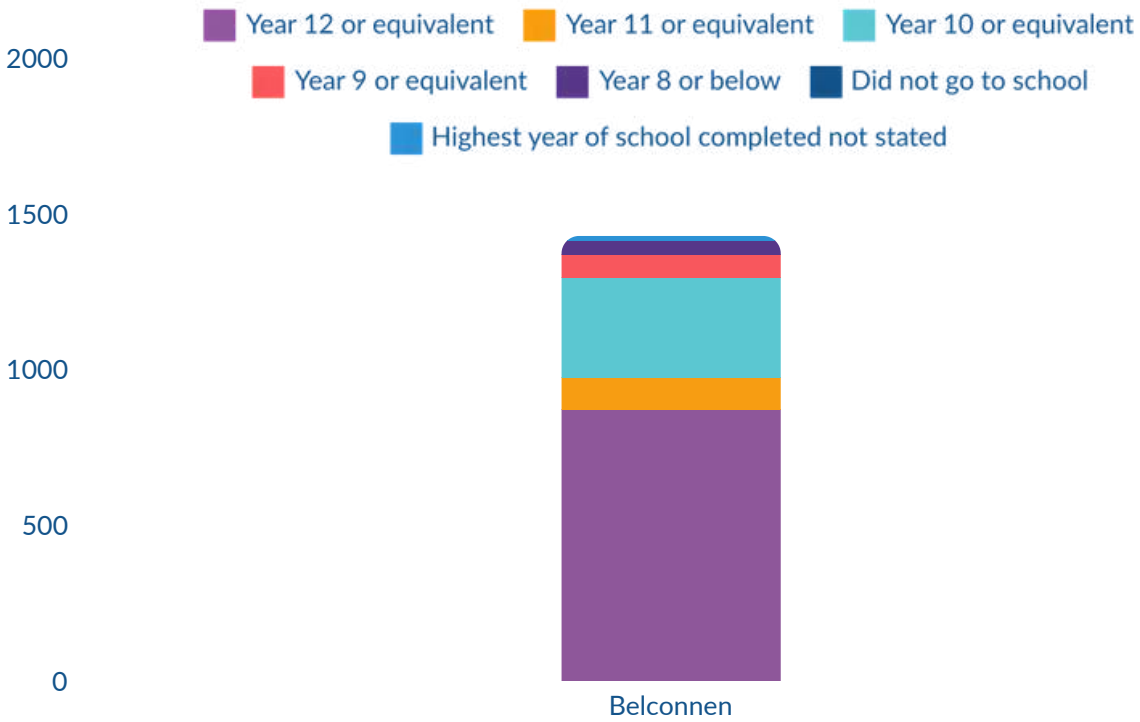
Source: ABS, 2022, 33010DO002, Births, Australia 2022 Table 2.8

Percentage of persons no longer in school by highest year of school completed and region - 2021 (%)



Source: Data by Region, ABS 2023 - Belconnen and ACT)

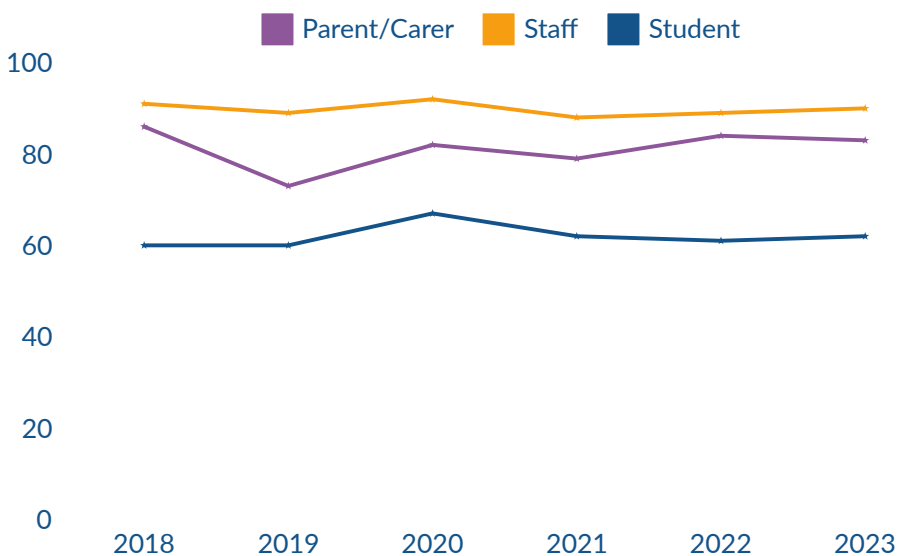
Number of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons no longer at school in Belconnen by highest school qualification - 2021



Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, ABS - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile - Belconnen SA3 - Table I07

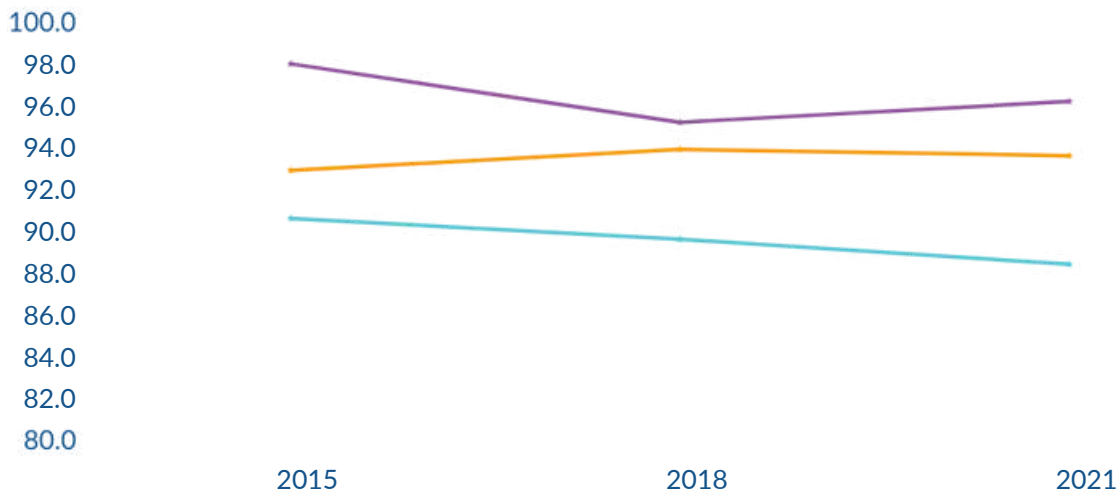
Valued, Loved and Safe

Percentage of survey respondents reporting strong identification with their school 2018 - 2023

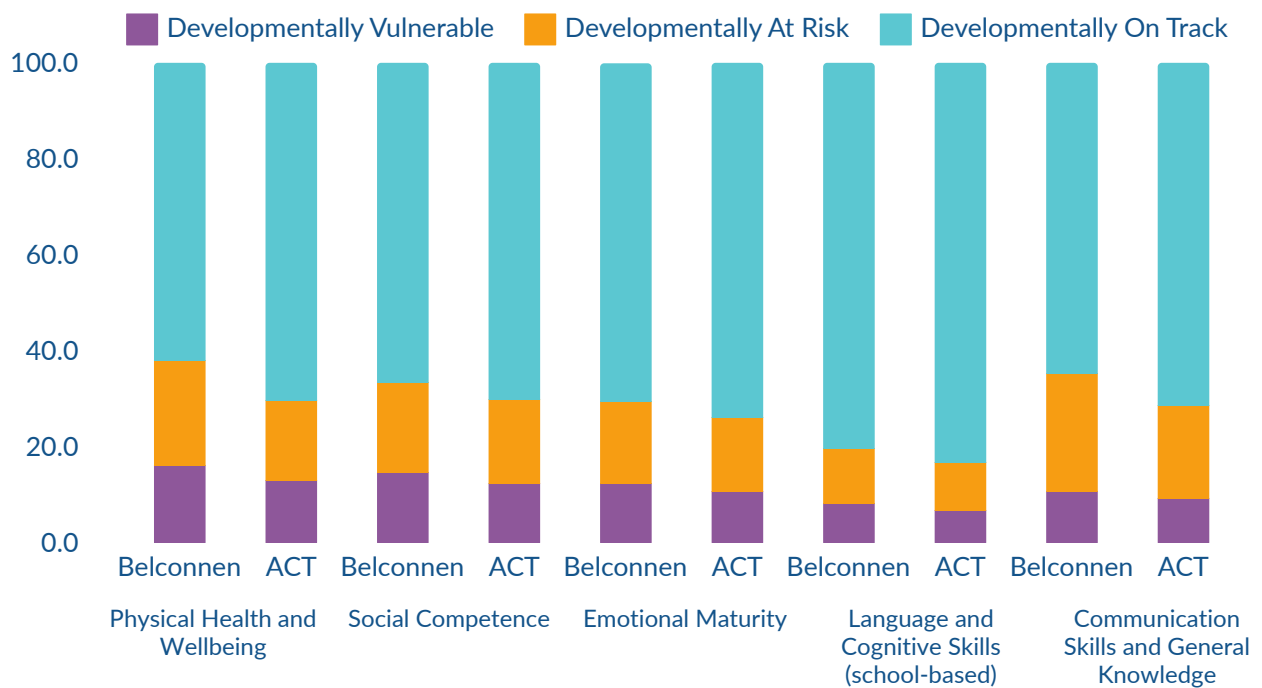


AEDC transition to school indicators in Belconnen - 2015 to 2021

- Child is making good progress in adapting to the structure and learning environment of the school (somewhat true/very true)
- Child has parent(s)/caregiver(s) who are actively engaged with the school in supporting their child's learning (somewhat true/very true)
- Child is regularly read to/encouraged in his/her reading at home (somewhat true/very true)



AEDC domain percentage children developmentally on track, developmentally at risk, developmentally vulnerable in Belconnen and ACT - 2021



Source: AEDC 2021, 33010DO002, Births, Australia 2022 Table 2.8

Glossary

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience. This includes parent separation, child abuse, neglect, or significant household challenges including family violence, parents who are incarcerated, imprisoned, or have significant mental health or addiction problems.
ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.
ACECQA overall rating	ACECQA issues ratings across 7 quality standards to indicate the quality of early childhood education and care services. Based on performance in these 7 areas, ACECQA will issue an overall rating of the service ranging from 'significant improvement required' to 'excellent'.
Adverse childhood experience	See 'ACE'.
Apgar score	A score out of 10 indicating the health of a newborn baby given at 1 and 5 minutes after their birth, where a higher score is better. The Apgar score is calculated based on the baby's colour, heart rate, reflexes, breathing rate, and muscle tone.
Australian Early Developmental Census (AEDC)	Since 2009, Australia has conducted the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) every three years. The AEDC tracks how well children's development is supported in the first five years of life across five areas, or domains, physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills (school-based) and communication skills and general knowledge.
Birth rate	The number of live births per 1000 women who are of child-bearing age.
BMI	Body Mass Index. This is a way of measuring whether people are in a healthy weight range for their height. A high BMI suggests a person is overweight, while a low BMI suggests a person is underweight. A healthy BMI range will vary according to age, ethnicity, and other factors.
Both parents not working	Includes parents who are either unemployed or not in the labour force.

Child	The definition of a child varies. In the context of caring for children who are not their own, a child is someone aged under 15. In the context of households or families with children, a child is a person aged under 15, or a dependent student aged up to 25. In the context of AEDC data, a child is a person in their first year of full-time school.
Core activity need for assistance	When a person needs assistance in their day to day lives with self-care, mobility and/or communication due to a long-term health condition, disability, or advanced age.
Creative activities	In this research, creative activities included singing, playing a musical instrument, dancing, art and craft, creative writing, and creating digital content.
Cultural activities	In this research, cultural activities included creative activities, screen-based activities, and reading for pleasure.
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care. This includes all long daycares, preschools, and family daycares. These services provide care and education to infants and children before formal schooling.
Family with children	Includes families with children aged under 15 and/or dependent students aged up to 25.
FDC	Family day care
Household with children	Households with children aged under 15 years and dependent students up to 25 years.
LDK	Long day care.
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy.
Not in the labour force	People who were performing unpaid home duties, caring for children, retired, voluntarily inactive, permanently unable to work, in jail, trainee teachers, or volunteering.
NQS	National Quality Standards. These are the 7 quality areas important for children's learning and wellbeing which early childhood education and care services are assessed on.
OSHC	Outside of school hours care.
Other landlord type	Homes being rented through residential parks including caravan parks, defence housing, and employer-provided accommodation.
Other tenure type	Homes occupied rent-free or under a life-tenure.

Owned with mortgage	Includes homes being purchased under a shared equity scheme.
Play space	A play space is an area that gives people the ability to play and provides an opportunity to participate in diverse structured and unstructured forms of play.
Preschool	The year before full-time schooling.
PSK	Preschool/Kindergarten.
Private landlord	Homes being rented from a parent, other relative, or other person.
Social housing	Housing rented from a state/territory government or community housing provider.
SDQ	Strengths and difficulties questionnaire. A brief screening questionnaire about the behaviour of children that provides an indication of the social and emotional wellbeing of the child.
Strengths and difficulties questionnaire	See 'SQQ'.
Tenure type	This describes whether a home is owned, mortgaged, or rented by a household, or occupied under another arrangement.
Term	A baby is considered born at term if they have been born at 37 weeks or later into the pregnancy.
Unemployed	People who were not employed and looking for work.
AEDC: adapting to school	Child is making good progress in adapting to the structure and learning environment of the school.
AEDC: Communication Skills and General Knowledge	Children's communication skills and general knowledge based on broad developmental competencies and skills measured in the school context.
AEDC: Developmentally At Risk	Children are facing challenges in some aspects of their development.
AEDC: Developmentally On Track	Children are considered to be developing well.

AEDC: Developmentally On Track on Five Domains (OT5)

The percentage of children who are developmentally on track on 5 AEDC domains. OT5 is one of the summary indicators (see 'Summary indicators' definition). This was first introduced as a national AEDC summary indicator in 2021. Note: In considering the proportion of children who are developmentally on track on all 5 domains, it is important to note that the percentage of children not on track on all 5 domains includes: - children who have a developmentally vulnerability on one or more domain(s) - children who are at risk in their development on one or more domain(s) - those missing a domain score on one or more domain(s) due to the teacher not being able to answer at least 75 per cent of the items relevant to a domain.

AEDC: Developmentally Vulnerable

Children are facing some significant challenges in their development. As such, it is desirable to see the percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable decrease with each new AEDC collection cycle.

AEDC: Developmentally Vulnerable on One or more Domain(s) (DV1)

The percentage of children who are classified as developmentally vulnerable on one or more AEDC domain(s). DV1 is one of the Summary Indicators (see 'Summary indicators' definition).

AEDC: Developmentally Vulnerable on Two or more Domains (DV2)

The percentage of children who are classified as developmentally vulnerable on 2 or more AEDC domains. DV2 is one of the Summary Indicators (See 'Summary indicators' definition).

AEDC: DV1

See 'AEDC Developmentally Vulnerable on One or more Domain(s)'.

AEDC: DV2

See 'AEDC Developmentally Vulnerable on Two or more Domains'.

AEDC: Emotional Maturity

Children's pro-social and helping behaviours, and absence of anxious and fearful behaviour, aggressive behaviour and hyperactivity and inattention.

AEDC: Language and Cognitive Skills (school-based)

Children's basic literacy, interest in literacy, numeracy and memory, advanced literacy, and basic numeracy.

AEDC: OT5

See 'AEDC Developmentally On Track on Five Domains'.

AEDC: parent actively engaged

Child has parent(s)/caregiver(s) who are actively engaged with the school in supporting their child's learning.

AEDC: Physical Health and Wellbeing

Children's physical readiness for the school day, physical independence, and gross and fine motor skills.

AEDC: read to at home

Child is regularly read to/encouraged in his/her reading at home.

AEDC: Social Competence

Children's overall social competence, responsibility and respect, approach to learning and readiness to explore new things.

AEDC: Summary Indicator

The AEDC has 3 summary indicators that collectively can be used to monitor trends in child development. Two of these summary indicators measure developmental vulnerability across the domains and help identify groups of children who are most vulnerable and inequities in early years systems (see 'developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) (Vuln 1 or DV1)' and 'developmentally vulnerable on 2 or more domains (Vuln 2 or DV2)'). The third summary indicator, 'developmentally on track on 5 domains (OT5)', is a strengths-based indicator that helps identify where things are working well and what is working to support children's holistic development.





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