

2019-20 PLV Annual Statistical Survey

Early Years Literacy Programs Summary Report

Report

This report documents and presents data from Public Libraries Victoria's (PLV) 2019-20 Annual Statistical Survey, highlighting results for early years (EY) literacy programs offered across Victoria in the public library sector.

Since 2015-16 Victorian public libraries have reported on their EY literacy programs offered within their services. These questions were aligned with the 10 key performance indicators described in the *SLV/PLV Reading and Literacy for All: Quality Indicators for Early Years Literacy Programs in Victorian Public Libraries*.

Measure	Indicator
Quality	1. % of Victorian public library services with early years literacy services that meet the minimum standards described by the quality indicators.
	2. Average number of hours of early years literacy programs delivered in Victorian public libraries each week.
	3. Feedback from family members and carers and satisfaction with libraries' early years literacy programs.
Uptake	4. Average number of children participating in early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries each week.
	5. Average number of adult family members or carers participating in early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries each week.
	6. Turnover rate (loans per collection item) for board books, picture books and ebooks for pre-school age children.
Reach	7. % of pre-school children aged 0 to 6 years who regularly participate in early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries.
Impact	8. % of pre-school age children aged 0 to 6 years who are read to every day.
	9. % of children who start school 'at risk' or 'developmentally vulnerable' in the domains of language and communication.
	10. % of Foundation (Prep) students whose literacy levels in school entry are assessed as being at or above standard.

The 2019-20 survey is the fifth time that libraries have reported on their EY programs and the unique contribution of Victoria's public library network to improving literacy standards and school readiness across the state. Full or partial data on EY collections and programs was collected from 44 of the 47 Victorian municipal public library services (excluding Bayside, Goldfields and Towong).

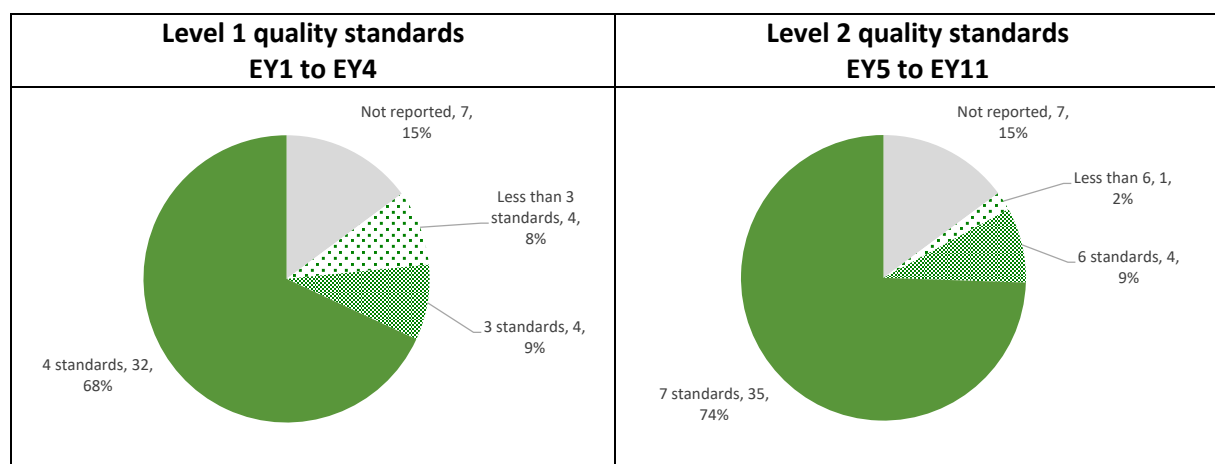
Summary

Early Years Literacy Indicators		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Trend
1.	% of Victorian public library services with EY literacy services that meet the minimum standards described by the indicators	72%	77%	68%	↘
2.	Average number of hours of EY literacy programs delivered each week	574	646	650	↗
3.	Satisfaction with libraries' EY literacy programs	9.0	8.8	8.9	→
4.	Average number of children participating in EY literacy programs in public libraries each week	16,467	16,722	16,850	↗
5.	Average number of adult family members or carers participating in EY literacy programs in public libraries each week	11,799	12,012	11,804	→
6.	Turnover rate for board books, picture books and ebooks for pre-school age children	8.4	8.4	8.7-10.2 estimate	↗
7.	% of children aged 0 to 5 years who regularly participate in EY literacy programs in Victorian public libraries	3.5%	3.4%	3.4%	→
9.	% of children who start school 'at risk' or 'developmentally vulnerable' in the domains of language and communication	-	15.4%	-	→

1. % of libraries with EY literacy programs meeting minimum standards

PLV's annual statistical survey captures information about the quality of early years literacy services provided by Victorian public libraries. All 47 metropolitan and regional library services and corporations are encouraged to conduct an audit and self-assessment of their early years literacy programs against the standards described in the *Reading and Literacy for All Framework*. Thirty nine libraries reported having undertaken a self-assessment between June 2018 and September 2020.

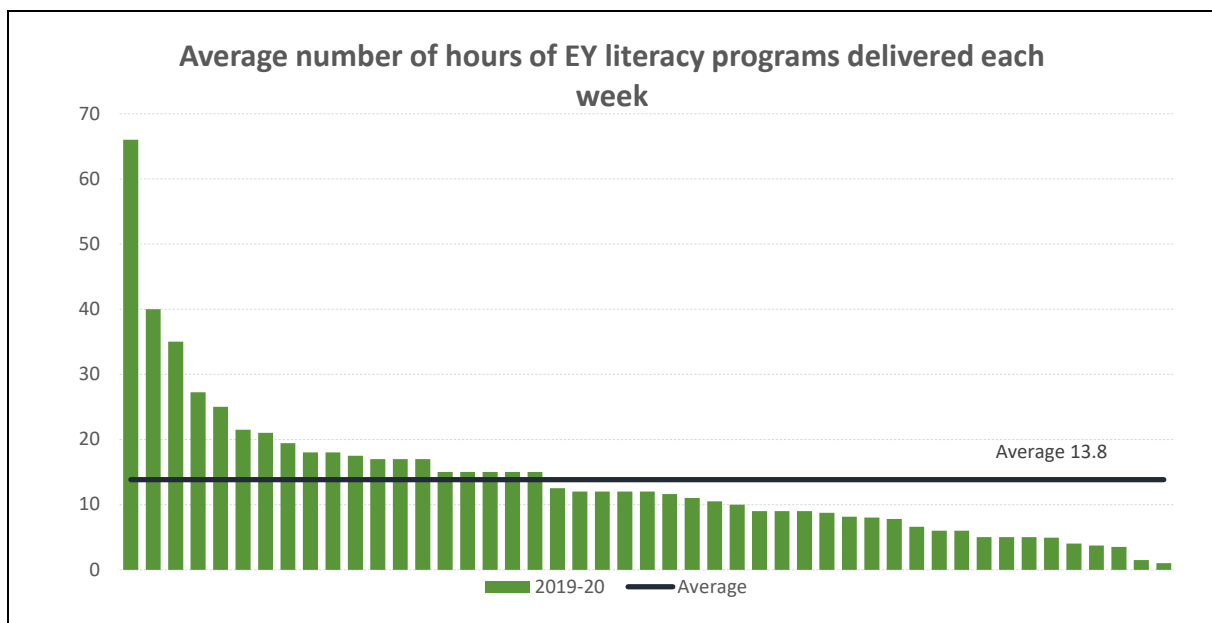
The results show that 32 of the 47 Victorian public library services (68%) fully met or exceeded the requirements of the four Level 1 quality standards (EY1 to EY4) and 35 library services (74%) fully met or exceeded the requirements of the seven Level 2 quality standards (EY5 to EY11). These results are slightly below the results reported in 2018-19 (36 with all Level 1 standards and 38 with Level 2 standards), primarily due to the lower level of reporting in 2019-20.



Overall, 32 of the 47 libraries (68%) fully met or exceeded the minimum requirements for all 11 quality standards in 2019-20. Another four libraries (9%) fully met or exceeded the minimum requirements for 9 of the 11 quality standards.

2. Average number of hours of EY literacy programs delivered

In the 2019-20 survey, 45 library services reported on the number of hours of EY literacy programs they deliver each week. Including additional information on two other library services, it is estimated that in 2019-20, 650 hours of EY literacy programs were delivered each week by public libraries across Victoria. This is a 0.6% increase on the 646 hours per week reported in 2018-19, and 21% above the 539 hours in 2016-17.



On average this represents 13.8 hours of EY programs conducted by each library service each week. In practice this ranged from 66 hours in Eastern and more than 20 hours per week in six other library services (West Gippsland, Yarra Plenty, Hume, Goldfields, Wyndham and Mitchell) to fewer than five hours per week in six single LGA library services (Darebin and five small libraries in rural and remote Victoria). The number of hours of EY programming is influenced by the number of library branches, the space available for EY programs in each branch, the demographics of the local population (e.g. % of young families) and library staffing.

3. Satisfaction rating on the library's EY literacy programs

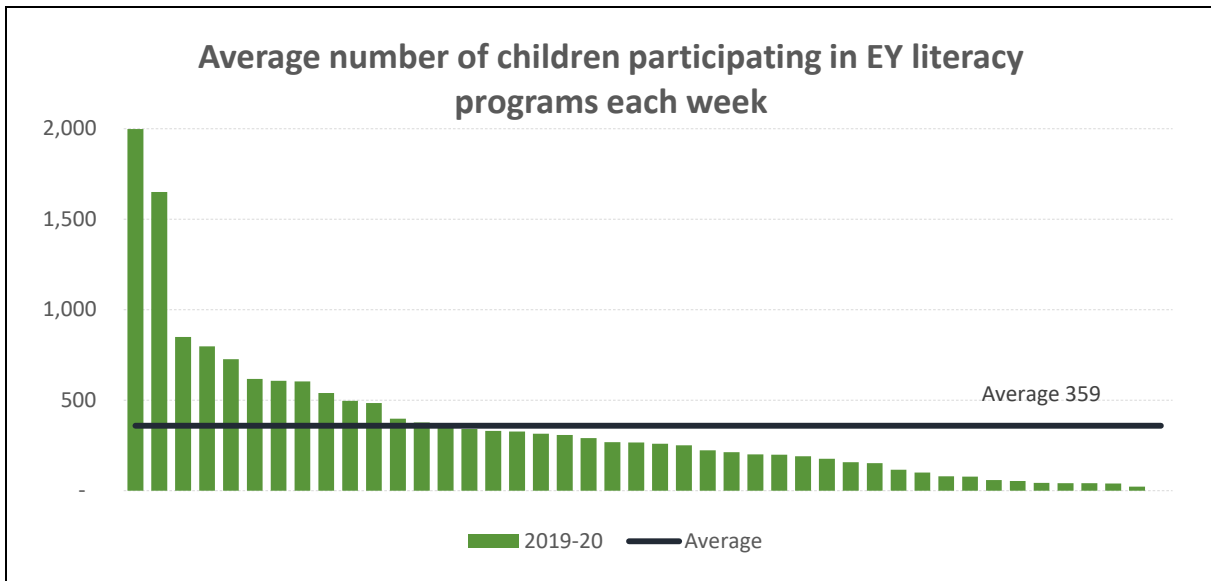
In 2019-20 only 10 of the 47 libraries were able to report on overall satisfaction with their library's EY literacy programs (vs 13 in 2018-19). Two of these reported a 'very good' satisfaction rating. The other eight had an average satisfaction rating of 8.9 out of 10. Satisfaction ratings have consistently been between 8.8 and 9.0 for the past five years. Ideally, more library services would collect data on overall satisfaction with their EY literacy programs.

4. Average number of children participating in EY literacy programs

In 2016-17 Victorian public libraries reported an average 15,160 children participating in EY literacy programs each week. In 2017-18 this increased 9% to 16,467 participants per week. In 2018-19 this increased a further 2% to an estimated 16,722 participating children per week. Based on the 2019-20

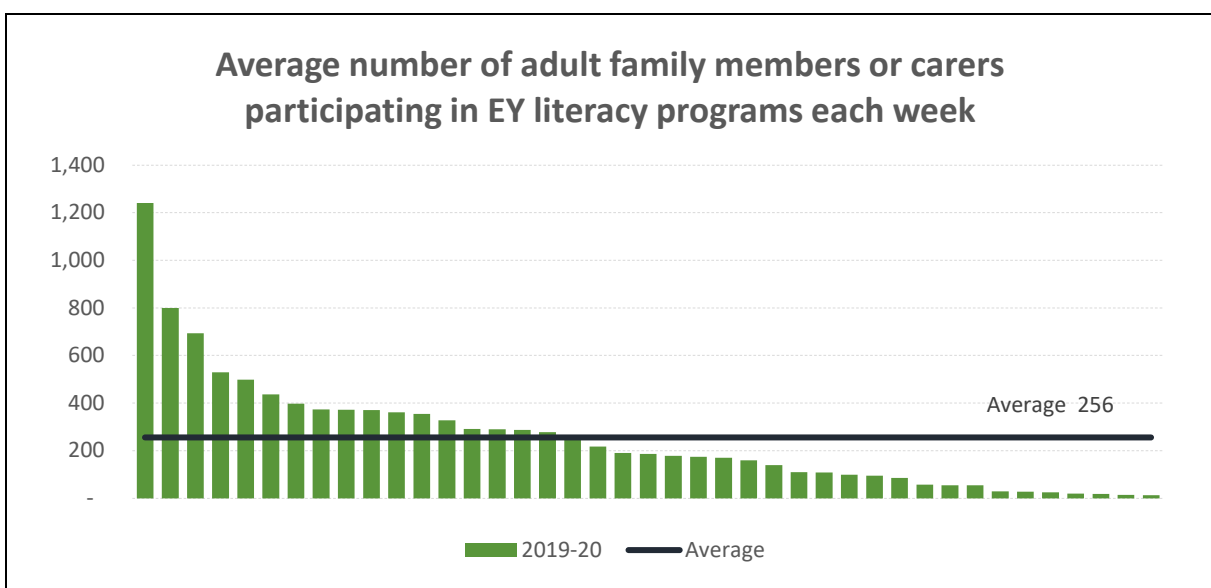
survey, it is estimated that 16,850 children participated in libraries' EY programs each week (+1%). This is based on pre-COVID figures. No onsite programs were held in libraries from late March 2020 to the end of June 2020.

On average, 359 pre-school age children participate in EY programs in each library service, with Eastern and Yarra Plenty each hosting more than 1,500 children per week. Seven other library services have between 500 and 850 children attending EY programs each week (Geelong, West Gippsland, Brimbank, Wyndham, Hume, Moonee Valley, Monash). Eleven library services have fewer than 150 children participating in EY programs each week. All of these are in regional and rural areas with relatively small populations and nine are single LGA library services.



5. Average number of family members/carers participating in EY programs

In providing EY literacy programs for the children, libraries also provide support to adult family members and carers of those children.

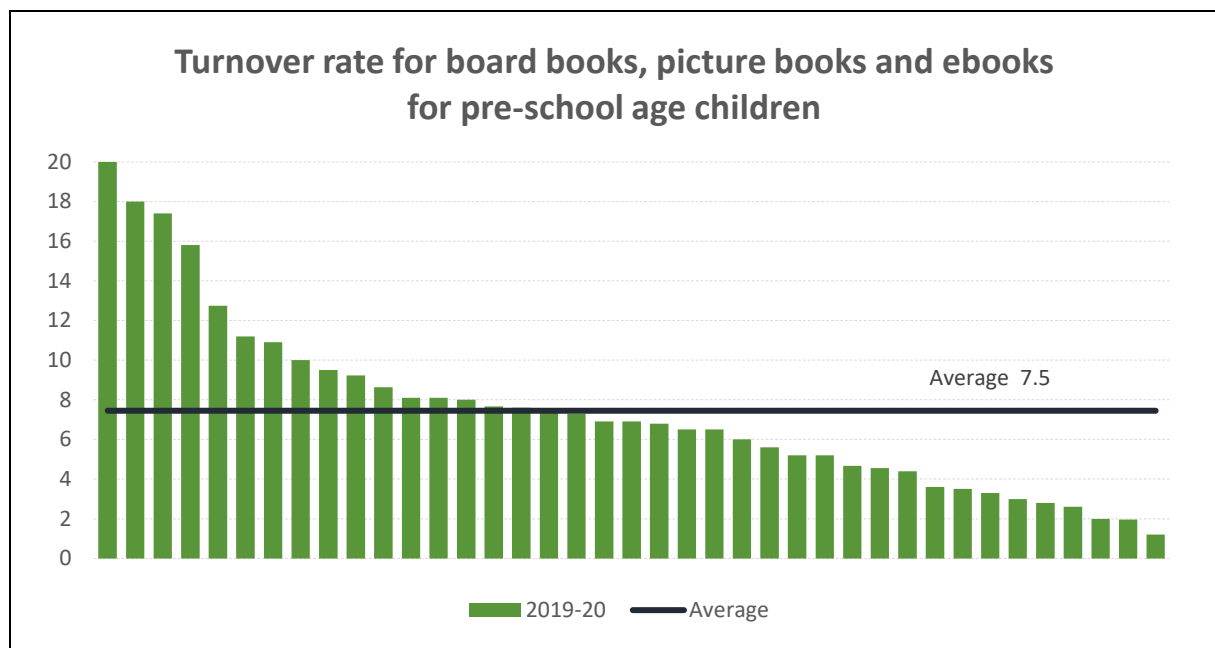


In 2019-20 it is estimated that 11,804 adult family members and carers participated in EY programs each week. This is a 2% decrease on the 2018-19 result, but in line with the results in 2017-18. This equates to an average of 256 adults per library service, ranging from more than 1,200 at Eastern and 800 at Yarra Plenty to fewer than 30 per week in the seven smallest library services. On average the adults bring 1.4 children to the libraries' EY literacy programs.

6. Turnover rate for board books, picture books and ebooks for pre-school age children

Libraries are asked to report on the turnover rate of their early years' collections, including board books, picture books and ebooks that were available for pre-school children. Thirty eight of the 47 library services reported data, however several of these were only able to provide data for some of the items within the category (e.g. physical items only).

The average number of loans per collection item has increased from 7.6 in 2015-16 to 8.2 in 2016-17 and 8.4 in 2017-18 and 2018-19. In 2019-20 turnover dropped to 7.5 loans per item. However, this included a period of up to 14 weeks in some libraries where collection items were not being borrowed due to COVID restrictions. Accounting for this, the true turnover rate in 2019-20 is likely to be somewhere between 8.7 and 10.2 loans per item. Across the library sector turnover of children's items ranged from a high of 20 loans per item per year to 1.2 loans per item. Libraries with lower turnover figures were more likely to be in rural or regional areas.



7. % of pre-school age children aged 0 to 5 years who regularly participate in EY literacy programs at the library

Latest data from the ABS indicates that there were approximately 494,700 children aged 5 years or less living in Victoria in 2019. While it is acknowledged that some of these children are attending school, and therefore less likely to be participating in library literacy programs, on average this indicates that around 3.4% of children aged 5 years or less attend library EY literacy programs each week. This proportion has been fairly stable over the past few years as the population increases and Victorian public libraries work to increase engagement with young families and support early years literacy development.

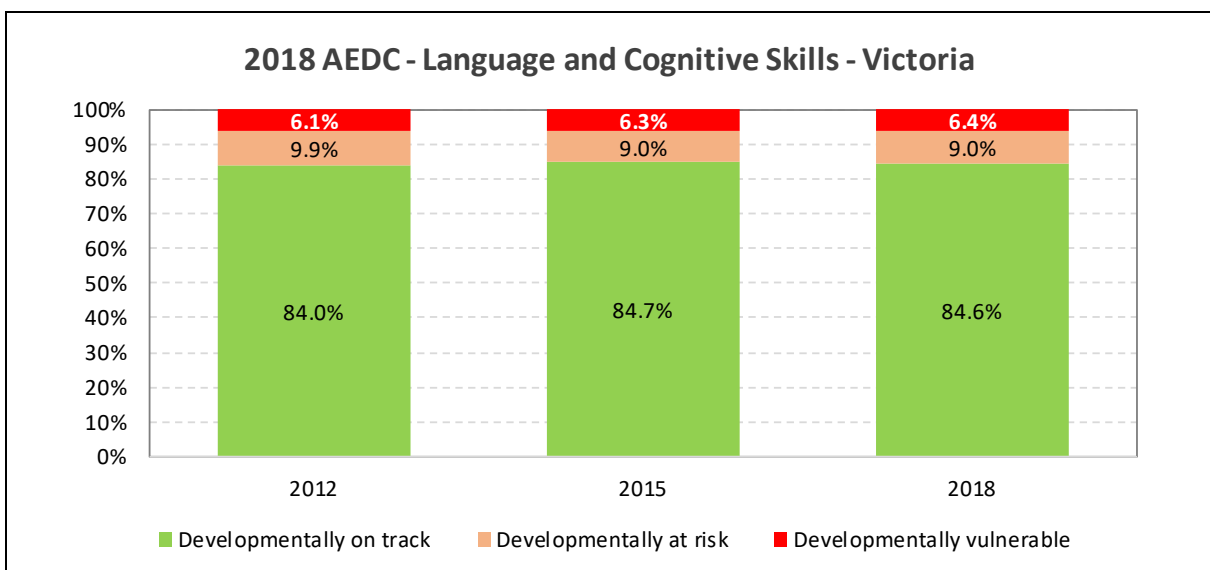
9. % of children who start school ‘at risk’ or ‘developmentally vulnerable’ in the domains of language and communication

The 2018 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) measures the development of children in Australia in their first year of full-time school. AEDC data is collected every three years and assesses children’s readiness for school across five domains closely linked to health, education and social outcomes. Libraries can play a particular role in supporting development in one of these domains – language and cognitive skills.

Against each domain children are assessed as being either developmentally ‘on track’, ‘at risk’ or ‘vulnerable’. For example, the language and cognitive skills domain looks at children’s basic literacy, advanced literacy, basic numeracy, and interest in literacy, numeracy and memory.

Children developmentally on track	Children will be interested in books, reading and writing, and basic math; capable of reading and writing simple sentences and complex words. Will be able to count and recognise numbers and shapes.
Children developmentally at risk	Have mastered some but not all of the following literacy and numeracy skills: being able to identify some letters and attach sounds to some letters, show awareness of rhyming words, know writing directions, being able to write their own name, count to 20, recognise shapes and numbers, compare numbers, sort and classify, and understand simple time concepts. Children may have difficulty remembering things, and show a lack of interest in books, reading, maths and numbers, and may not have mastered more advanced literacy skills such as reading and writing simple words or sentences.
Children developmentally vulnerable	Experience a number of challenges in reading/writing and with numbers; unable to read and write simple words, will be uninterested in trying, and often unable to attach sounds to letters. Children will have difficulty remembering things, counting to 20, and recognising and comparing numbers; and usually not interested in numbers.

The AEDC results for children commencing school in Victoria show that in terms of language and cognitive skills there was no significant change between 2015 and 2018. The proportions of children ‘on track’, ‘at risk’ and ‘vulnerable’ were very much the same as they were in 2015. One in every 16 school starters is considered developmentally ‘vulnerable’, with a further one in 11 ‘at risk’ – in effect, meaning that one in every six children starting school is not ‘school’ready’ in terms of language and cognitive skills.



The AEDC publishes survey results by state and LGA, with data calculated to suburb level within LGA. <https://www.aedc.gov.au/resources>. The following table shows the 2018 results by Victorian LGA for the language and cognitive skills domain.

LGA	'On track'	'At risk'	'Vulnerable'
Nillumbik (S)	93.3	4.8	1.8
Bayside (C)	93.1	4.3	2.6
Whitehorse (C)	92.9	4.4	2.7
Boroondara (C)	92.5	5.7	1.8
Glen Eira (C)	91.7	6.6	1.7
Port Phillip (C)	91.7	6.1	2.2
Macedon Ranges (S)	91.4	5.3	3.3
Banyule (C)	90.8	6.0	3.2
Stonnington (C)	90.7	6.6	2.7
Mansfield (S)	90.2	7.3	2.4
Monash (C)	90.1	6.3	3.5
Moonee Valley (C)	89.8	6.6	3.6
Moyne (S)	88.9	5.8	5.3
Kingston (C) (Vic.)	88.7	7.2	4.1
Maribyrnong (C)	88.1	8.6	3.3
Knox (C)	88.1	7.5	4.4
Wangaratta (RC)	88.0	8.3	3.7
Darebin (C)	87.9	7.0	5.1
Surf Coast (S)	87.9	8.6	3.6
Manningham (C)	87.8	7.5	4.7
Hepburn (S)	87.6	6.2	6.2
Moorabool (S)	87.4	9.8	2.8
Alpine (S)	87.2	3.2	9.6
Yarra (C)	86.9	7.7	5.4
Moreland (C)	86.3	7.4	6.3
Greater Geelong (C)	86.2	7.5	6.2
Corangamite (S)	86.2	6.9	6.9
Murrindindi (S)	86.2	8.1	5.7
Cardinia (S)	85.5	8.4	6.0
Ballarat (C)	85.5	7.5	7.0
Maroondah (C)	85.3	8.7	6.0
Hobsons Bay (C)	85.3	8.0	6.7
Melbourne (C)	85.3	9.7	5.1
Frankston (C)	85.2	8.9	5.9
Warrnambool (C)	84.8	6.7	8.5
Yarra Ranges (S)	84.7	8.9	6.4
Golden Plains (S)	84.5	7.9	7.6
Towong (S)	84.5	8.6	6.9
Glenelg (S)	84.1	9.0	6.9
Whittlesea (C)	83.8	9.7	6.5
Mornington Peninsula (S)	83.7	9.9	6.4
Indigo (S)	83.5	7.2	9.3
South Gippsland (S)	83.2	8.9	7.8
Horsham (RC)	83.0	8.3	8.7

LGA	'On track'	'At risk'	'Vulnerable'
Greater Bendigo (C)	82.9	9.2	7.9
Buloke (S)	82.7	11.5	5.8
Southern Grampians (S)	82.6	10.8	6.6
Colac-Otway (S)	82.6	11.1	6.3
Casey (C)	82.6	10.2	7.2
Baw Baw (S)	82.3	8.8	8.8
Strathbogie (S)	82.1	10.7	7.1
Wyndham (C)	81.9	10.5	7.6
Benalla (RC)	81.5	11.8	6.7
Mitchell (S)	81.4	10.8	7.8
Loddon (S)	80.6	7.5	11.9
Melton (C)	80.5	11.9	7.5
Mildura (RC)	80.5	9.0	10.5
Moira (S)	80.3	13.1	6.7
Bass Coast (S)	80.2	13.8	6.1
Brimbank (C)	79.3	10.9	9.8
Gannawarra (S)	79.2	13.5	7.3
Northern Grampians (S)	78.8	12.5	8.7
East Gippsland (S)	78.8	13.4	7.8
Campaspe (S)	78.7	12.4	8.9
Swan Hill (RC)	78.6	13.8	7.6
Wodonga (C)	78.2	13.8	8.0
Greater Dandenong (C)	77.7	12.8	9.5
Wellington (S)	77.6	11.6	10.8
Latrobe (C) (Vic.)	76.5	11.6	12.0
Pyrenees (S)	76.4	15.3	8.3
Hume (C)	75.8	12.6	11.5
Greater Shepparton (C)	75.7	10.8	13.5
Hindmarsh (S)	75.0	21.9	3.1
West Wimmera (S)	75.0	15.0	10.0
Mount Alexander (S)	72.8	19.9	7.3
Yarriambiack (S)	72.7	18.2	9.1
Central Goldfields (S)	72.4	15.0	12.6
Ararat (S)	72.0	13.6	14.4
Queenscliffe (B)	na	na	na

The next AEDC will be in 2021, with results released in 2022.