The Rural City of Mildura lies within the Loddon Mallee Victorian health region and is part of the Northern Mallee Primary Care Partnership. Mildura is located 540km North-West of Melbourne and as of June 30 2007, had a population of 52,353 with adults comprising 72.3% of the population, compared with 77.1% for Victoria. More than three out of ten residents (31.8%) were aged 50 years or older compared with 30.9% for Victoria. There was a greater percentage (39.2%) of low income households (combined annual income of less than $33,500) compared with 30.6% for Victoria. Life Expectancy at birth in 2006 was 82.9 years for females and 77.0 years for males, lower than the Victorian figure. The Australian Alcohol Guidelines specify the risks of short and long-term alcohol-related harm by level of alcohol consumption in males and females.

In 2008, females in the Rural City of Mildura were more likely to consume alcohol at least monthly at a risky or high risk level for short-term harm (16.6%) compared with Victorian females (10.4%). More than one in five males in the Rural City of Mildura (21.8%) consumed alcohol at least weekly at a risky or high risk level for short-term harm, higher than Victorian males (13.6%). Females in the Rural City of Mildura were more likely to be classified as abstainers from alcohol (21.2%) compared with males in the Rural City of Mildura (9.2%).

The Victorian Population Health Survey is an annual state-wide survey that the Department of Health undertakes to collect information on the health of the adult Victorian population (18 years or older). This is the first time that the sample size has been expanded to allow detailed analysis at the local government area level.

This fact sheet presents major findings from the 2008 survey. For more information see: www.health.vic.gov.au/healthstatus/vphs.htm

**Smoking status**

Current smokers are defined as those who smoke daily or occasionally. Smoking patterns between the Rural City of Mildura and Victoria were similar. In 2008, 17.3% of males and 19.7% of females in the Rural City of Mildura were classified as current smokers compared with 21.4% and 16.9% respectively for Victoria.

**Alcohol consumption**

The Australian Alcohol Guidelines specify the risks of short and long-term alcohol-related harm by level of alcohol consumption in males and females.

In 2008, females in the Rural City of Mildura were more likely to consume alcohol at least monthly at a risky or high risk level for short-term harm (16.6%) compared with Victorian females (10.4%). More than one in five males in the Rural City of Mildura (21.8%) consumed alcohol at least weekly at a risky or high risk level for short-term harm, higher than Victorian males (13.6%). Females in the Rural City of Mildura were more likely to be classified as abstainers from alcohol (21.2%) compared with males in the Rural City of Mildura (9.2%).

**Percentage of persons at short-term risk of alcohol-related harm, 2008**

Note: abstainers are not included in the assessment of short-term risk levels.

**Percentage of persons at long-term risk of alcohol-related harm, 2008**

For more information see: www.health.vic.gov.au/healthstatus/vphs.htm
Overweight and obesity

Being overweight or obese is an important risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, certain cancers, sleep apnoea and osteoarthritis. It is typically measured by calculating a person’s Body Mass Index (BMI), which is their weight in relation to their height.8

In 2008, 39.8% of males in the Rural City of Mildura were overweight, similar to Victorian males (39.9%), however 29.1% of males in the Rural City of Mildura were obese, higher than Victorian males (17.3%). More than one in four females in the Rural City of Mildura were overweight (26.2%), whilst 20.8% were obese, similar to Victorian females (24.2% and 16.1% respectively).

### Percentage of overweight and obesity in adults, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mildura Males</th>
<th>Mildura Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underweight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obese</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Physical Activity

In 2008, 63.5% of males and 54.8% of females in the Rural City of Mildura met the physical activity guidelines11, similar to Victorian males and females (61.0% and 59.7% respectively). There were no differences in physical activity levels between the Rural City of Mildura and Victoria overall or between males and females in the Rural City of Mildura.

### Levels of physical activity, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mildura Males</th>
<th>Mildura Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sedentary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Insufficient</td>
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<td>Sufficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Psychological distress

Poor mental health is a significant risk factor for poor health outcomes. The Kessler 10 (K10) scale is a set of ten questions designed to categorise the level of psychological distress over a four week period.

In 2008, 65.2% of males and 59.6% of females in the Rural City of Mildura were classified as having a low level of psychological distress, similar to Victorian males and females (65.3% and 59.7% respectively). The percentage of males in the Rural City of Mildura classified as having a high level of psychological distress (13.8%) was higher than Victorian males (7.3%).

### Levels of psychological distress, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mildura Males</th>
<th>Mildura Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very high</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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For more information please refer to the full report of the 2008 Victorian Population Health Survey at [www.health.vic.gov/healthstatus/vphs.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov/healthstatus/vphs.htm)

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3. ABS, 2006 national census.
4. LGA estimates are considered to be higher or lower than the Victorian estimate based on statistical significance, determined by comparing the 95% confidence intervals (CI) between estimates. Where the 95% CI of estimates do not overlap there is strong evidence that the estimates are different. Where they overlap, the estimates are deemed to be similar.
5. Health Intelligence Unit, DH.
6. The LGA estimates are age-adjusted to the 2006 Victorian population.
7. The 2008 VPHS survey questions on alcohol consumption captured the risks of alcohol-related-harm based on the current 2001 Australian Alcohol Guidelines. New guidelines were released in March 2009 and will be reflected in the 2009 VPHS.
8. NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Council) 2001.
10. The Dietary Guidelines for Australian Adults recommend five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit daily for adults, aged 19 years and older, to ensure a healthy diet. NHMRC 2003. For persons aged 12 to 18 years, the recommendations are for three serves of vegetables and three serves of fruit.
11. The National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on most, preferably all days in persons aged 19 years and over. DoHAC (Department of Health and Aged Care) 1999, Canberra.

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