

Measuring and  
monitoring the  
liveability of the 21  
largest cities in  
Australia

# City Liveability Scorecard for Geelong: 2024

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Tao, Y., Both, A., Gudes, O., Papaix, B., Rivera Villicana, J. & Davern, M. (2025). City Liveability Scorecard for Geelong 2024: Measuring and monitoring the liveability of the 21 largest cities in Australia. Australian Urban Observatory, RMIT University, Melbourne.

<https://doi.org/10.25439/rmt.30041032>

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# About this report

This report is one of a series of 2024 City Liveability Scorecard Reports presenting indicators and maps measuring the liveability of Australia's 21 largest cities. The first two series of Liveability Scorecards were based on 2018 and 2021 indicator results. This third series of City Liveability Scorecards is based on 2024 indicator results.

Australian Urban Observatory City Liveability Scorecards measure and monitor city-level liveability averages over time. More detailed neighbourhood, suburb, and Local Government Area results across Australian cities are available online at [auo.org.au](http://auo.org.au).



Liveability Index



Walkability



Social Infrastructure



Transport



Food



Alcohol



Public Open Space



Employment



Housing



# Liveability Index

## Rationale

The economic, social, environmental and health co-benefits of urban liveability are recognised by all levels of government in Australia and globally<sup>[3]</sup>. Liveable communities are safe, socially cohesive, inclusive and environmentally sustainable<sup>[4]</sup>. They have affordable housing linked via public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to employment, education, shops, services, public open space and social, cultural and recreational opportunities<sup>[3]</sup>.

## What we measured

The Liveability Index is underpinned by over a decade of research. It combines six domains of liveability found to be associated with health and wellbeing outcomes: walkability; access to social infrastructure; public transport; larger public open space; affordable housing; and local employment.

## Results

Across Australia's largest 21 cities, the cities with the highest liveability scores are:

### Rank 1

**Canberra**

### Rank 2

**Sydney**

### Rank 3

**Geelong**



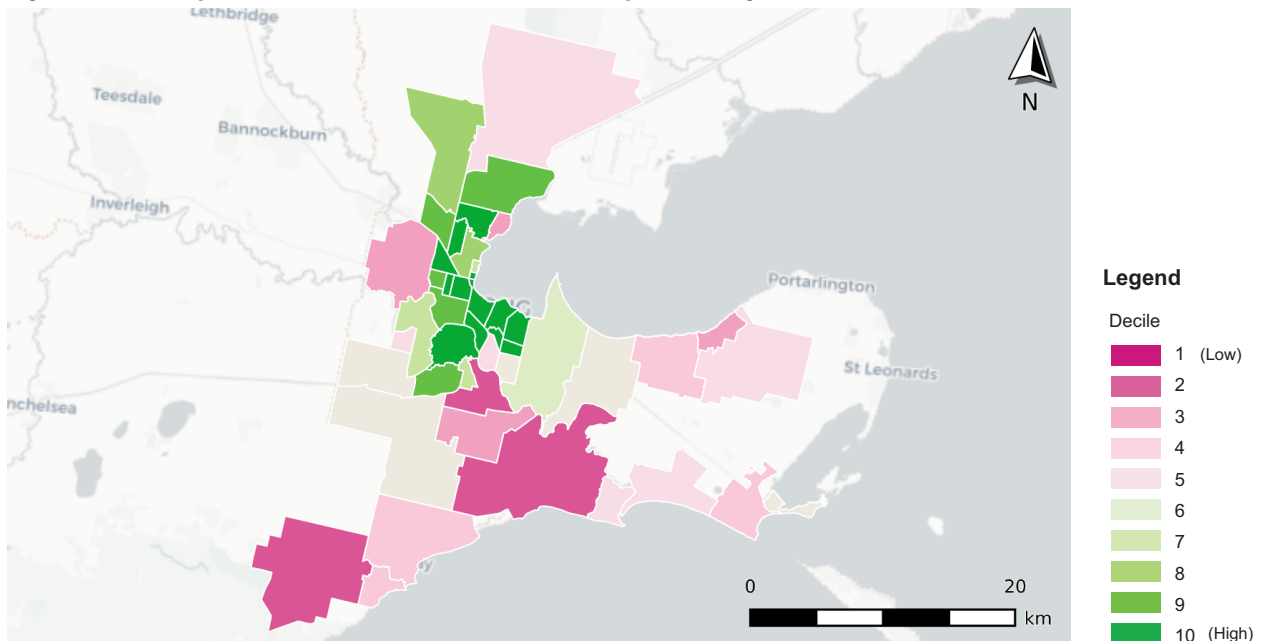
The Liveability Index score for residences across the city of Geelong is:

**99.6**

In comparison, the national average is **98.4**.

A closer analysis of liveability index across the suburbs of Geelong reveals wide variation over the city.

**Figure 1. Liveability Index scores for suburbs across the city of Geelong**





# Walkability

## Rationale

Walkability measures the ease and safety of walking in an area. Neighbourhoods that have shops and services to walk to, small blocks, good street connectivity, and higher population density are more walkable<sup>[5]</sup>. Walkable neighbourhoods discourage driving and encourage active travel resulting in higher levels of walking and cycling. The benefits of a physically active life are well established in reducing chronic disease and maintaining health and wellbeing<sup>[6]</sup>.

## What we measured

Walkability for Transport is calculated as a composite index, with 0 being the national average, that includes access to daily living destinations (something to walk to), dwelling density (population needed to supply services and destinations), and street connectivity (a way to get there) within a reasonable walking distance of home. Walkability scores across all 21 Australian cities range from a minimum of -2.1 to a maximum of 0.7.

## Results

Of Australia's largest 21 cities, the greatest walkability is found in:

**Rank 1**

**Sydney**

**Rank 2**

**Melbourne**

**Rank 3**

**Adelaide**

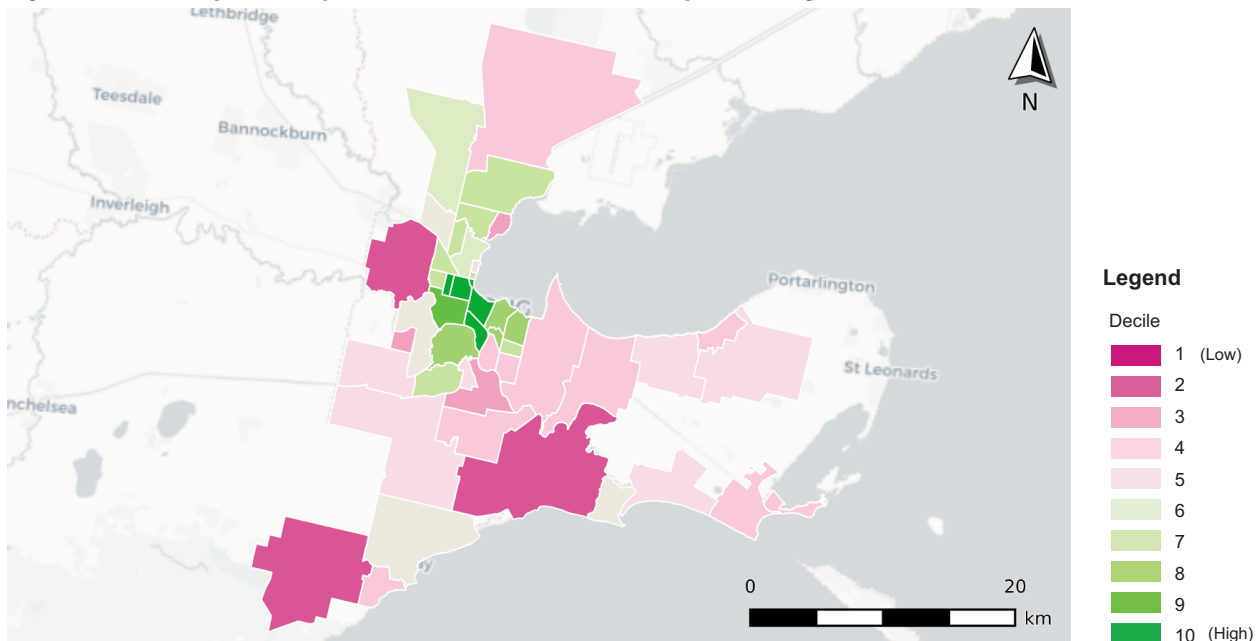


The walkability score for residences across the city of Geelong is:

-0.9

A closer analysis of walkability across the suburbs of Geelong reveals wide variation over the city.

**Figure 2. Walkability for transport across suburbs across the city of Geelong**





# Social Infrastructure

## Rationale

Social infrastructure refers to essential community services and resources<sup>[7]</sup>. Ready access to a wide range of different types of social infrastructure is important for the creation and ongoing development of healthy communities. The availability of well-planned social infrastructure supports liveable communities by promoting increased physical activity<sup>[8]</sup>, wellbeing<sup>[7]</sup>, increased satisfaction with the local community<sup>[9]</sup>, improving social interactions and mental health outcomes<sup>[10]</sup>. Social infrastructure is a key component of liveability.

## What we measured

The Social Infrastructure Index includes access to 16 types of social infrastructure at various recommended distances from dwellings. It includes access to childcare facilities, community centres, libraries, aged care facilities, pharmacies, family and community healthcare, dentists and general practitioners, sporting facilities, swimming pools, outside school hours childcare, primary and secondary schools, museums or galleries, and cinemas and theatres.

## Results

Across Australia's largest 21 cities, a wider mix of social infrastructure is available in

### Rank 1

**Sydney**

### Rank 2

**Melbourne**

### Rank 3

**Adelaide**



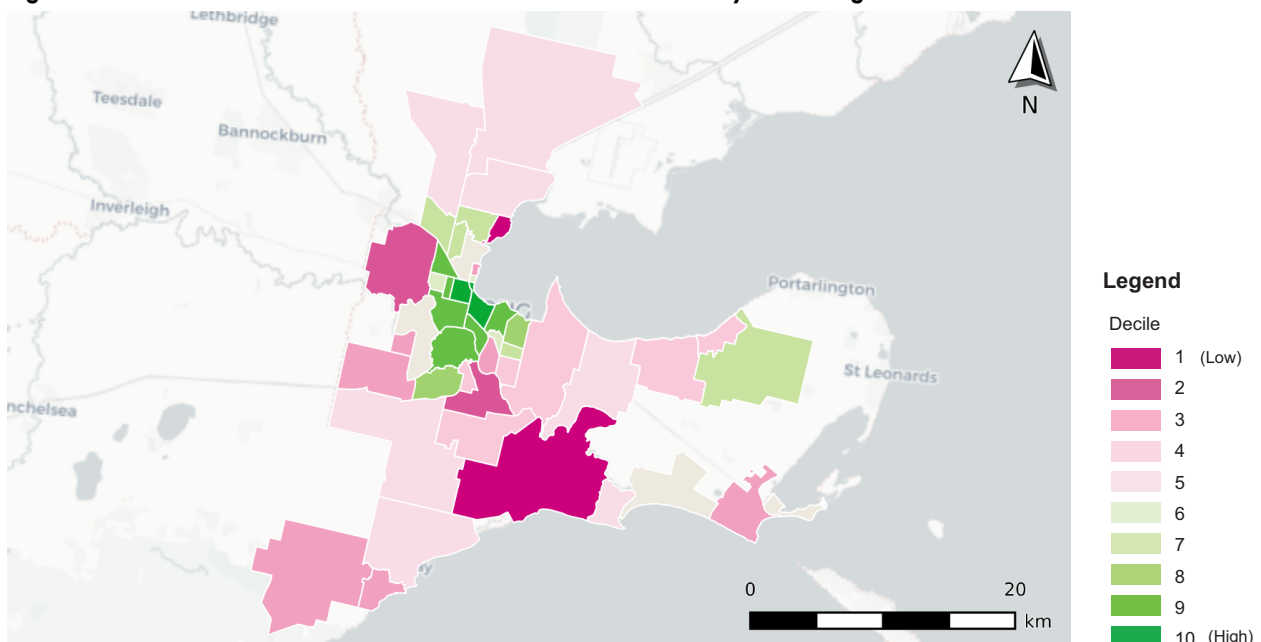
The Social Infrastructure Index score for residences across the city of Geelong is:

4.6 out of a total of 16.

In comparison, the national average is 4.3.

A closer analysis of access to social infrastructure across the suburbs of Geelong reveals wide variation over the city.

Figure 3. Social Infrastructure Index results across suburbs of the city of Geelong.





# Public Transport

## Rationale

People living close to public transport are more likely to use it, less dependent on cars and more likely to achieve physical activity requirements<sup>[6]</sup>. Living within 400m of a public transport stop with a service every 30 minutes encourages more walking<sup>[11]</sup>. It supports sustainability and people with restricted mobility, including young people, older adults, people with disabilities and people who don't own cars to access services, education and jobs.

## What we measured

We measured access to bus, train, and tram stops with an average service interval of no more than 30 minutes between the weekday hours of 7 am and 7 pm. Access was measured as the percentage of dwellings with a regular service within 400m of any of these stops based on a walkable road network distance.

## Results

Across Australia's largest 21 cities, access to regular public transport is available to more residents living in

### Rank 1

**Sydney**

### Rank 2

**Adelaide**

### Rank 3

**Wollongong**



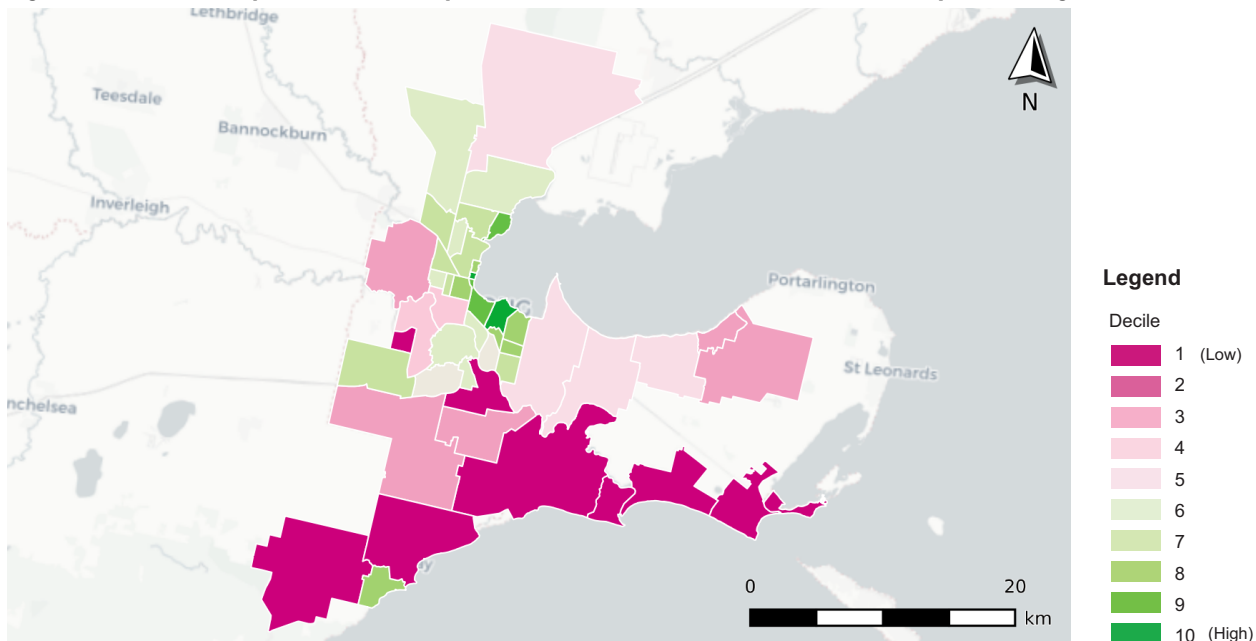
The percentage of households across the city of Geelong with access to frequent public transport is:

**37.0%**

In comparison, the national average is **37.2%**.

A closer analysis of access to frequent public transport across the suburbs of Geelong reveals wide variation over the city.

**Figure 4. Access to Frequent Public Transport within 400m across the suburbs of the city of Geelong**





# Food

## Rationale

Supermarkets supports healthy eating and provide access to affordable fresh fruit and vegetables. People living within a short walk of a supermarket are more likely to walk or cycle instead of driving<sup>[6,12]</sup>. Increases in physical activity through active transport modes like walking and cycling, also reduce chronic disease risk and traffic congestion. In disadvantaged areas, living within 800m of a supermarket reduces the risk of overweight and obesity<sup>[13]</sup>.

## What we measured

We measured the average distance to a healthy food outlet (supermarket or greengrocer). Distances were calculated according to a pedestrian accessible road network.

## Results

Of the 21 largest cities in Australia, the average distance to a supermarket is lowest in

### Rank 1

**Launceston**

### Rank 2

**Canberra**

### Rank 3

**Sydney**

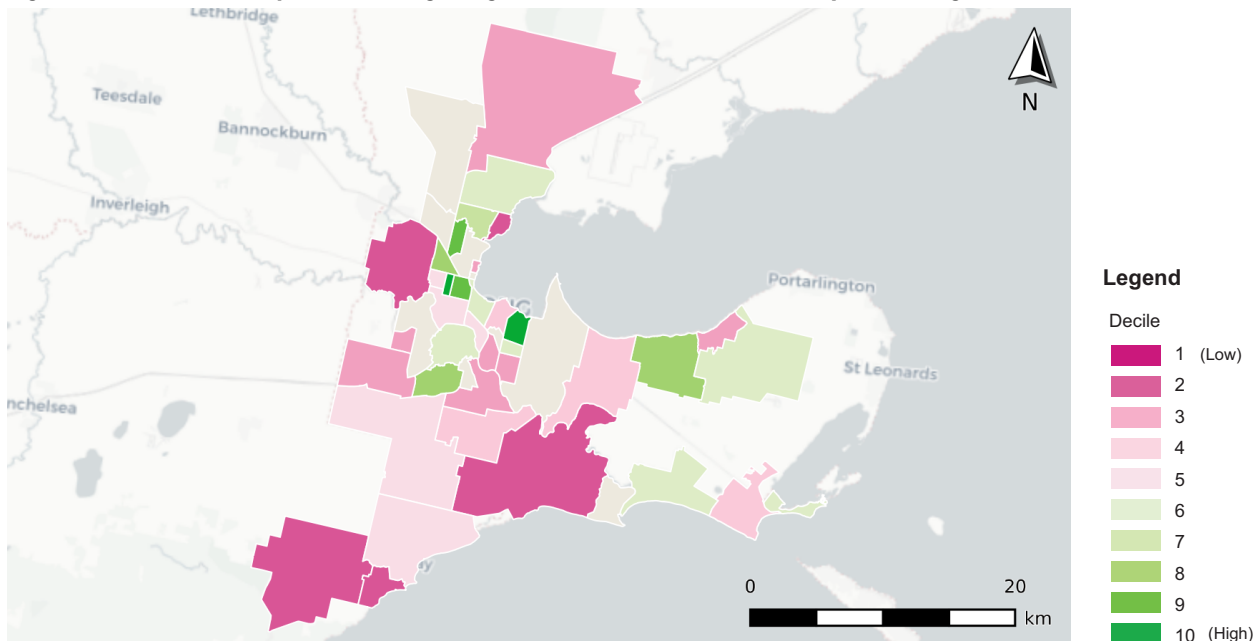
The average distance to a supermarket or greengrocer for residences in the city of Geelong is:

**1397.0 metres.**

In comparison, the national average is **1485.8 metres.**

A closer analysis of access to healthy food outlets across the suburbs of Geelong reveals wide variation over the city.

**Figure 5. Distance to a supermarket or greengrocer for suburbs across the city of Geelong**





# Alcohol

## Rationale

Increased access to alcohol has been linked to harmful alcohol consumption and alcohol-related violence<sup>[14,15]</sup>. Furthermore, alcohol outlets are more likely to be located in more disadvantaged areas<sup>[16]</sup>. For those living in disadvantaged areas where there are fewer alcohol outlets, there appears to be a protective affect with enhanced self-reported health<sup>[16]</sup>.

## What we measured

The average distance to off-license alcohol outlets which includes bottle shops and supermarkets where alcohol can be purchased and taken to another premise for consumption. Distances were calculated from individual dwellings using a pedestrian accessible road network.

## Results

Across Australia's largest 21 cities, the average distance to an off-license alcohol outlet is furthest in

**Rank 1**

**Townsville**

**Rank 2**

**Cairns**

**Rank 3**

**Mackay**



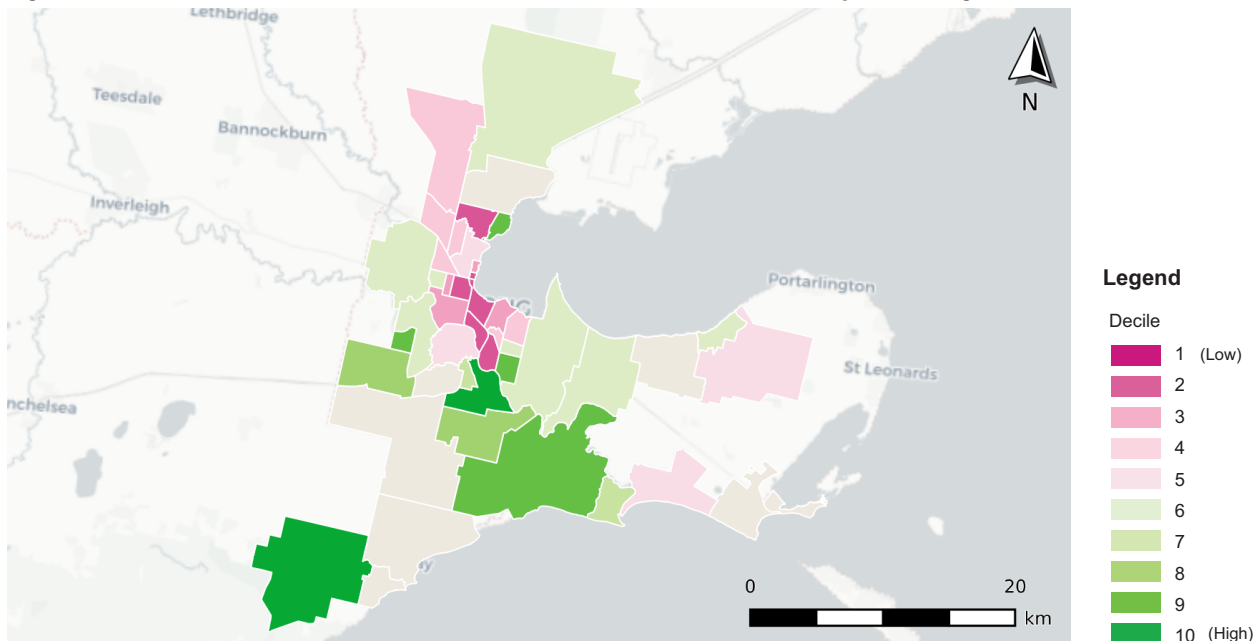
The average distance to an off-license alcohol outlet across the suburbs of the city of Geelong is:

866.6 metres.

In comparison, the national average is 1398.1 metres.

A closer analysis of access to alcohol outlets across the suburbs of Geelong reveals wide variation over the city.

Figure 6. Distance to an off-license alcohol outlet across the suburbs of the city of Geelong





# Public Open Space

## Rationale

Public open space includes parks, open areas and places where people can congregate for active and passive recreation and enjoyment. Parks are one form of public open space that usually include grassed areas, gardens, and some green recreational space. Public open spaces support both the physical and mental health of people living nearby. Green public open spaces also support ecosystems, ecology and biodiversity of an area<sup>[17]</sup> and provide cooling effects mitigating urban heat island effects.

## What we measured

Large Public Open Space was defined as urban parks greater than or equal to 1.5 hectares, since larger parks have been shown to support physical activity. Access was measured as the percentage of dwellings within 400m based on a walkable road network distance.

## Results

Across Australia's largest 21 cities, living within 400m of public open space of 1.5 hectares is available to more residents living in

### Rank 1

**Canberra**

### Rank 2

**Bendigo**

### Rank 3

**Newcastle Maitland**



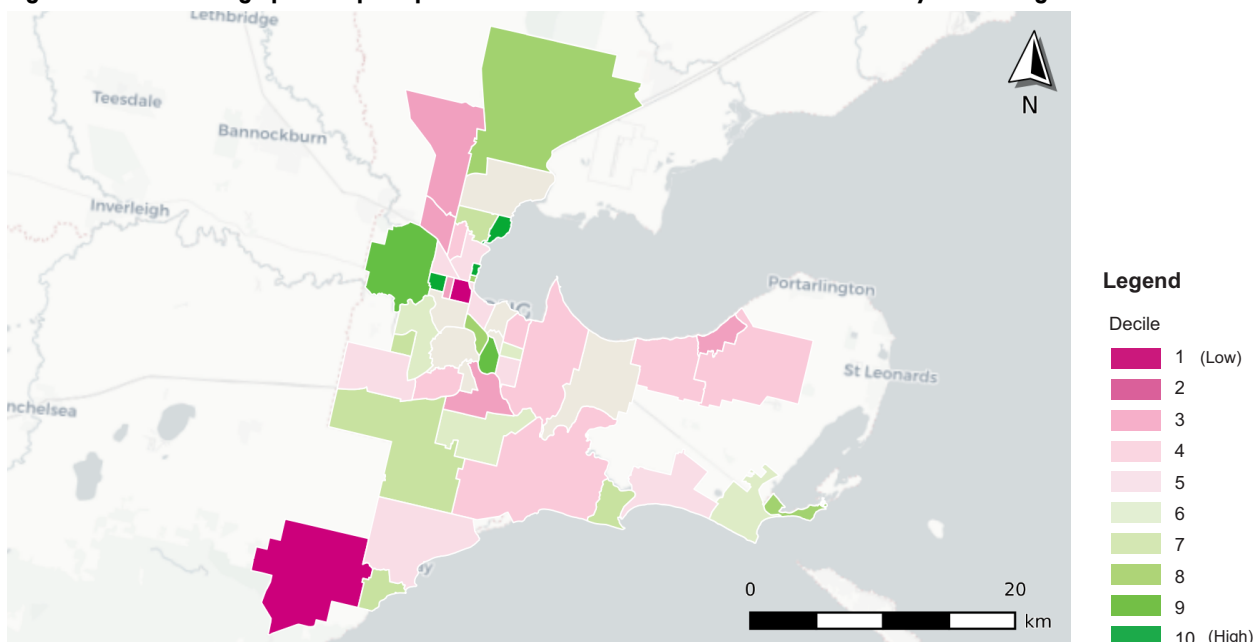
**The percentage of residences with access to Large Public Open Space within 400m across the city of Geelong is:**

**36.3%**

**In comparison, the national average is 41.8%.**

A closer analysis of access to large public open space across the suburbs of Geelong reveals wide variation over the city.

**Figure 7. Access to large public open space within 400m across the suburbs of the city of Geelong**





# Employment

## Rationale

Accessible employment is a social determinant of health, providing people with financial resources to support themselves and their families. Access to local employment reduces vehicle kilometres travelled, travel time and traffic congestion on city roads. It also increases the likelihood of people using active transport such as walking, cycling and public transport, and has been associated with improved self-reported health<sup>[18]</sup>. Access to local employment with shorter travel times has the potential to support work-life balance and is associated with a reduced risk of obesity<sup>[19]</sup>.

## What we measured

We measured access to local employment as the percentage of residents living in an Australian Bureau of Statistics' Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1), and working within a Statistical Area Level 3 (SA3). On average, SA1 areas represent approximately 400 people while SA3 areas represent between 30,000 and 130,000 people.

## Results

Across Australia's largest 21 cities, more local employment is available in

### Rank 1

**Townsville**

### Rank 2

**Toowoomba**

### Rank 3

**Mackay**



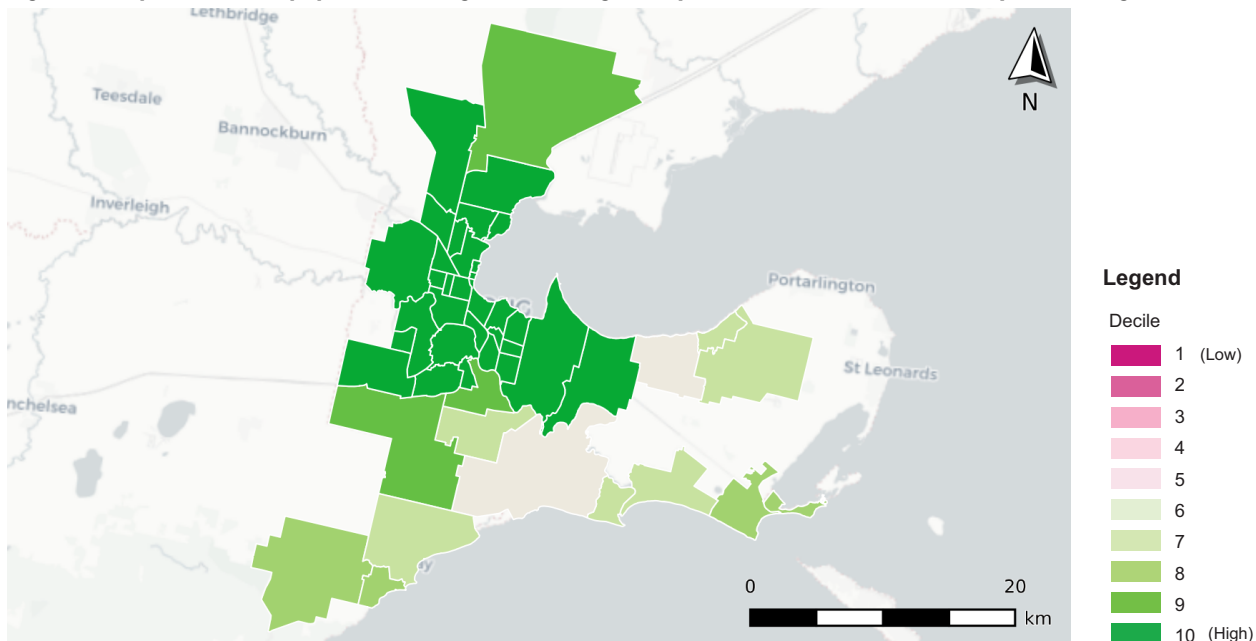
**The proportion of the population living and working locally in the city of Geelong is:**

**66.2%**

**In comparison, the national average is 55.7%.**

A closer analysis of employment across the suburbs of Geelong reveals wide variation over the city.

**Figure 8. Proportion of the population living and working locally across the suburbs of the city of Geelong**





# Housing

## Rationale

Housing is a key social determinant of health. Decent and affordable housing supports families by providing safe, stable, and healthy shelter. Affordable housing frees up family finances for use on healthcare and food, and supports physical and mental health and wellbeing. Housing affordability stress is associated with poorer self-reported health, higher community dissatisfaction, and residents feeling unsafe. Affordable housing frees up family finances for use on health care, food, education and recreation, and supports physical and mental health and wellbeing<sup>[20]</sup>.

## What we measured

Housing affordability was measured according to housing stress and represents any household spending more than 30% of their household income on housing costs.

## Results

Across Australia's largest 21 cities, housing stress is most common in

### Rank 1

**Bendigo**

### Rank 2

**Launceston**

### Rank 3

**Adelaide**



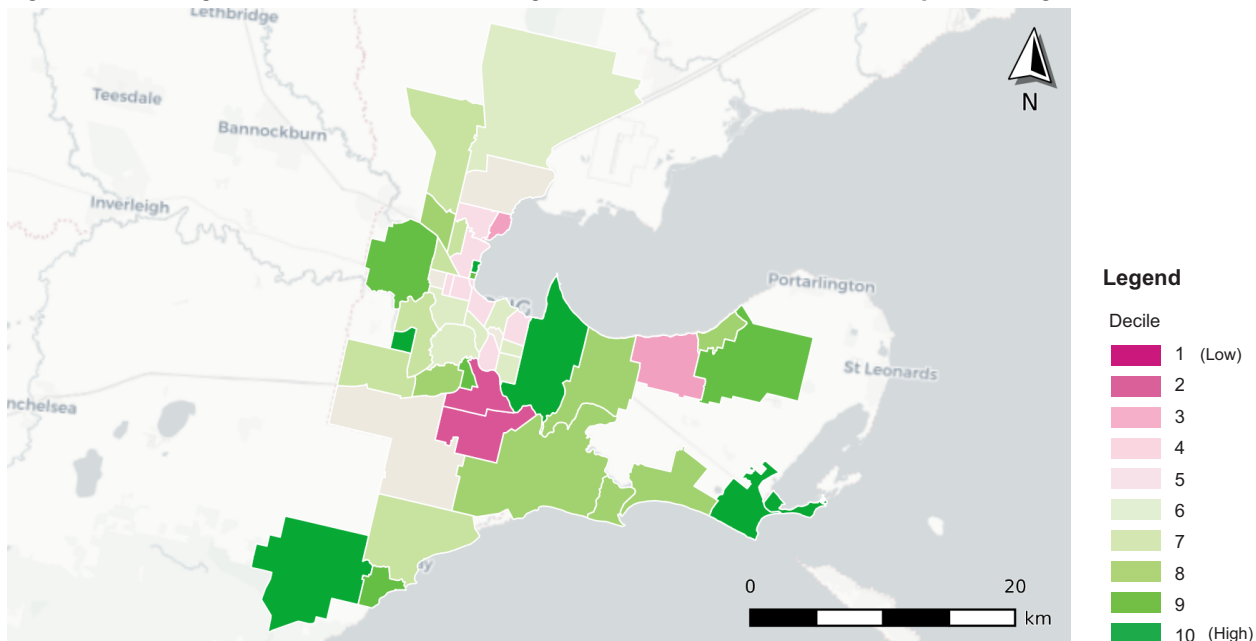
**The percentage of households across the city of Geelong spending more than 30% of income on housing is:**

**27.6%**





**In comparison, the national average is 30.4%.**

A closer analysis of housing affordability across the suburbs of Geelong reveals wide variation over the city.

**Figure 9. Percentage of households under housing stress across the suburbs of the city of Geelong**



# Summary for Geelong

Indicator		Brief Description	Value	Liveability change since 2021	
Liveability		Liveability Index	See map		
Walkability		Walkability Index	See map		
Social Infrastructure Index		Social Infrastructure Index	4.6		Better
Public Transport		Percentage living within 400m to regular public transport	37.0%		Similar*
Food Environment		Average distance to closest healthy food outlet (supermarket or greengrocer)	1397.0m		Similar*
Alcohol Environment		Average distance to closest off-license alcohol outlet	866.6m		Worse
Public Open Space		Percentage living within 400m of public open space of 1.5 hectares	36.3%		Better
Local Employment		Percentage of employed people living and working in the same SA3	66.2%		Similar*
Housing Affordability		Percentage of households spending more than 30% of income on housing costs	27.6%		Similar*

\* Similar = less than 10% difference change since 2021.

Note: Liveability and Walkability changes over time have not been presented because they are constructed as relative rankings within their time periods.

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# Appendix (list of AUO measures available)

## **Walkability**

[Walkability - Australian Urban Observatory \(auo.org.au\)](http://auo.org.au)

Average distance to closest activity centre  
Average dwelling density per hectare  
Average street connectivity per square kilometre  
Average number of daily living destinations present (0-3) within 1600 m  
Walkability for Transport Index

## **Social Infrastructure**

[Social Infrastructure - Australian Urban Observatory \(auo.org.au\)](http://auo.org.au)

Health Infrastructure subdomain  
Education Infrastructure subdomain  
Community and Sport Infrastructure subdomain  
Cultural Infrastructure subdomain  
Average distance to closest GP clinic  
Average distance to closest GP clinic with bulk-billing  
Average distance to closest playground

## **Transport**

[Transport - Australian Urban Observatory \(auo.org.au\)](http://auo.org.au)

Average distance to closest public transport stop  
Percentage of dwellings within 400 m of a bus stop  
Average distance to closest train station  
Average distance to closest bus stop with a regular 15-minute weekday service  
Average distance to closest bus stop with a regular 30-minute weekday service  
Average distance to closest bus stop with a regular 45-minute weekday service  
Percentage of people aged 15 years and over using active transport to travel to work  
Percentage of people aged 15 years and over using public transport to travel to work  
Percentage of people aged 15 years and over using private vehicle/s to travel to work

## **Food**

[Food - Australian Urban Observatory \(auo.org.au\)](http://auo.org.au)

Percentage of dwellings without any food outlet within 3.2km  
Percentage of dwellings within 1km of a supermarket  
Average distance to closest fast food outlet

## **Alcohol**

[Alcohol - Australian Urban Observatory \(auo.org.au\)](http://auo.org.au)

Average number of on-licence alcohol outlets within 400m  
Average number of off-licence alcohol outlet within 800m  
Average distance to closest on-licence alcohol outlet  
Average distance to closest off-licence alcohol outlet

## **Public Open Space**

[Public Open Space - Australian Urban Observatory \(auo.org.au\)](http://auo.org.au)

Average distance to closest public open space  
Percentage of dwellings within 400 m or less of public open space  
Average distance to closest public open space larger than 1.5 hectares  
Percentage of dwellings within 400 m of public open space larger than 1.5 hectares  
Percentage of dwellings within 400 m or less distance of any local park (> 0.4 to. <= 1 ha)  
Percentage of dwellings within 800 m of less distance of any neighbourhood park (>1 ha to <= 5 ha)  
Percentage of dwellings within 400 m of less distance of a neighbourhood recreation park (> 0.5 ha)  
Average distance to closest public open space with a nearby public toilet (within 100 m)

## **Employment**

[Employment - Australian Urban Observatory \(auo.org.au\)](http://auo.org.au)

Percentage of employed persons living and working in the same SA3

## **Housing\***

[Housing - Australian Urban Observatory \(auo.org.au\)](http://auo.org.au)

Percentage of dwellings that are government owned or community housing  
Percentage of households in the bottom 40% of incomes spending more than 30% of income on housing costs  
Percentage of rental households in the bottom 40% of incomes spending more than 30% of income on housing costs  
Percentage of mortgaged households in the bottom 40% of incomes spending more than 30% of income on housing costs  
Percentage of rental or mortgaged households in the bottom 40% of incomes spending more than 30% of income on housing costs  
Percentage of households spending more than 30% of household income on housing costs

\*Additional specialist housing indicators available

## **ABS Demographics**

AUO-Cities-Indicators-March-2023.pdf [page 4-6]  
March 2023-21 cities, 115 indicators, 2 Time Periods (2016 - 2021)



