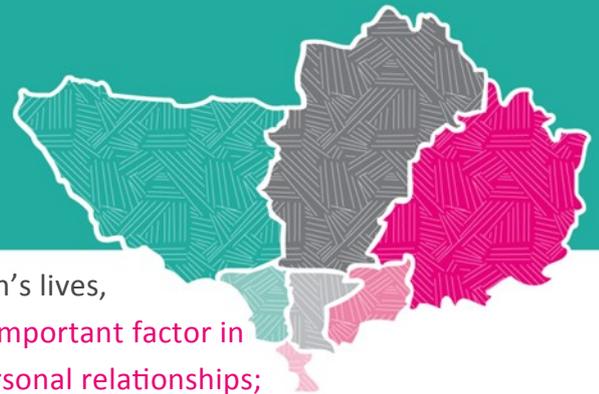


# Northern Metropolitan Region (NMR)



WOMEN'S HEALTH  
IN THE NORTH  
voice • choice • power

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SNAPSHOT 2016



Sexual and reproductive health has a defining impact on women's lives, beginning at puberty and continuing past menopause. 'It is an important factor in shaping how women develop and maintain meaningful interpersonal relationships; appreciate their bodies; interact with others; express affection, love, and intimacy; and by choice, bear children'.<sup>1</sup> This snapshot illustrates the sexual and reproductive health outcomes experienced by the 437,016<sup>2</sup> women living in the northern metropolitan region of Melbourne.

### Birth rates

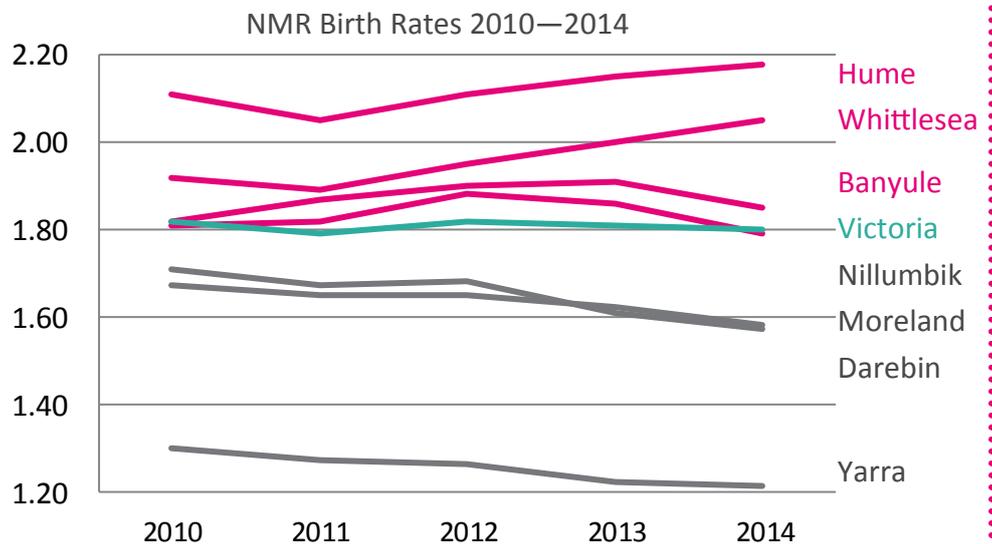
13,849

babies were born to  
NMR residents in 2014.<sup>3</sup>



This is 1,329 more babies than the those born in 2010.

Whittlesea had 3,149 births and Hume had 3,070.



Three local government areas (LGAs)—Hume, Whittlesea and Banyule have higher birth rates than the Victorian rate.

### Teenage Pregnancy



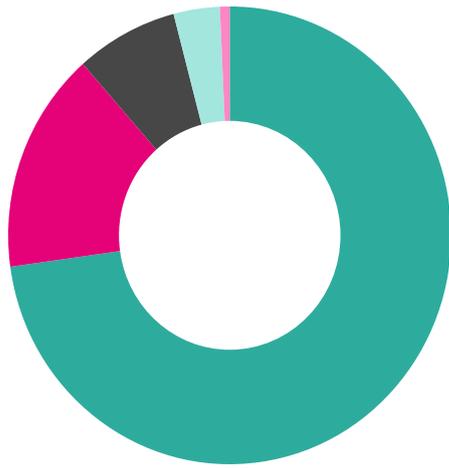
In 2011, five LGAs had 15 to 19-year-old birth rates that were higher than the Melbourne average 7.3 per 1,000 young women. Hume had 10.3; Whittlesea 10.1; Yarra 9.6; Darebin 9.1 and Moreland 8.4 per 1,000 women. Teenage pregnancy can have long term health, social, educational and financial implications.<sup>5</sup>



51% of Australian women experience an unplanned pregnancy.<sup>6</sup>

**Fertility management** 70.8%<sup>7</sup> of Australian women use a form of contraception, with the combined oral contraceptive pill being the most frequently prescribed method. Women need to be educated about and have access to long acting reversible contraception (LARC) and termination services in the northern region.

## Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's)



2014 NMR STI Notifications

Chlamydia is the most reported STI with 70% of the total notifications in the NMR. Gonorrhoea formed 16% of notifications, Hepatitis B—newly acquired & unspecified 7%, Syphilis 3% and HIV 1%.<sup>8</sup>

## Hepatitis B

Five LGAs have a prevalence of chronic hepatitis B which is higher than the Victorian prevalence rate of 1.06%.

Currently 1.37% of the population in Darebin; 1.28% in Yarra; 1.2% in Whittlesea, 1.14% in Moreland; and 1.07% in Hume are living with chronic hepatitis B.<sup>9</sup>



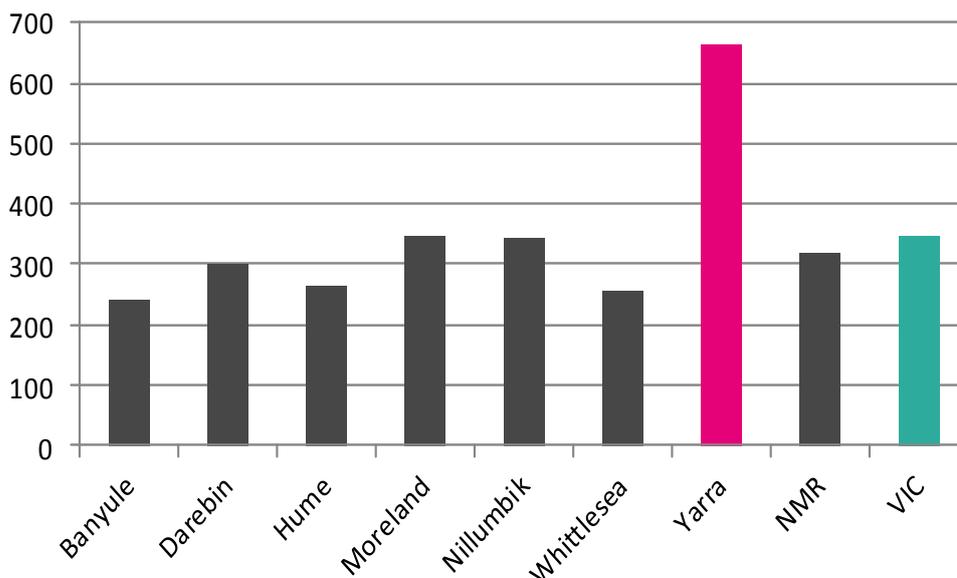
Hepatitis B causes inflammation of the liver and can lead to liver cirrhosis and cancer.<sup>10</sup>

Nearly half of all Australian women don't take STIs into consideration when thinking about contraception.<sup>11</sup>

Chlamydia is often asymptomatic and when left untreated can result in infertility.<sup>12</sup>

In 2014 **3,088** cases of chlamydia were diagnosed in the northern metropolitan region in 2014, 142 more than in 2013.<sup>13</sup> This is a notification rate of 340.3 per 100,000 women in comparison to 300.3 per 100,000 men. The Victorian rate was 348.4 per 100,000.

2014 NMR Chlamydia Rates per 100,000



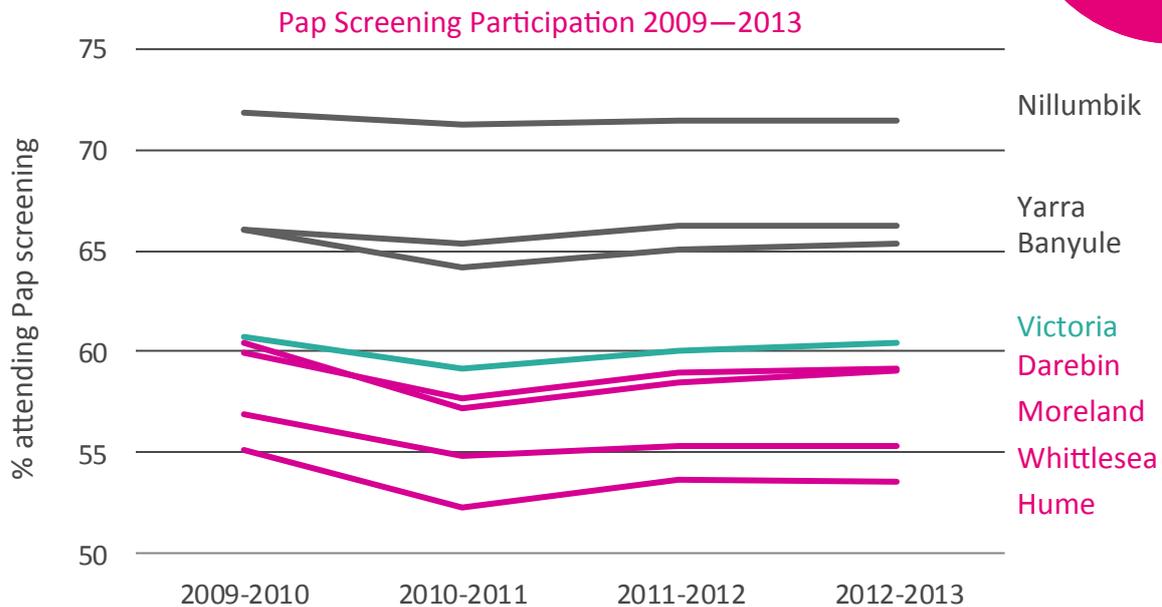
49% of NMR diagnoses in 2014 were aged less than 25 years old.

Yarra had the highest notification rate of 663.54 per 100,000 which is almost double the Victorian rate of 348.4 per 100,000. It is commonly understood that chlamydia is under-diagnosed due to people not undertaking asymptomatic screening; therefore the above rates are expected to only form the tip of the iceberg.

## Pap Screening

It is recommended that women have a Pap test every two years. 60.4% of Victorian women had a Pap test between 2012-2013, in Hume only 53.5% of women attended, in Whittlesea 55.3%, Moreland 59.1% and Darebin 59.2%.<sup>14</sup>

90%  
of women who  
develop cervical  
cancer did not have  
regular Pap tests.<sup>15</sup>

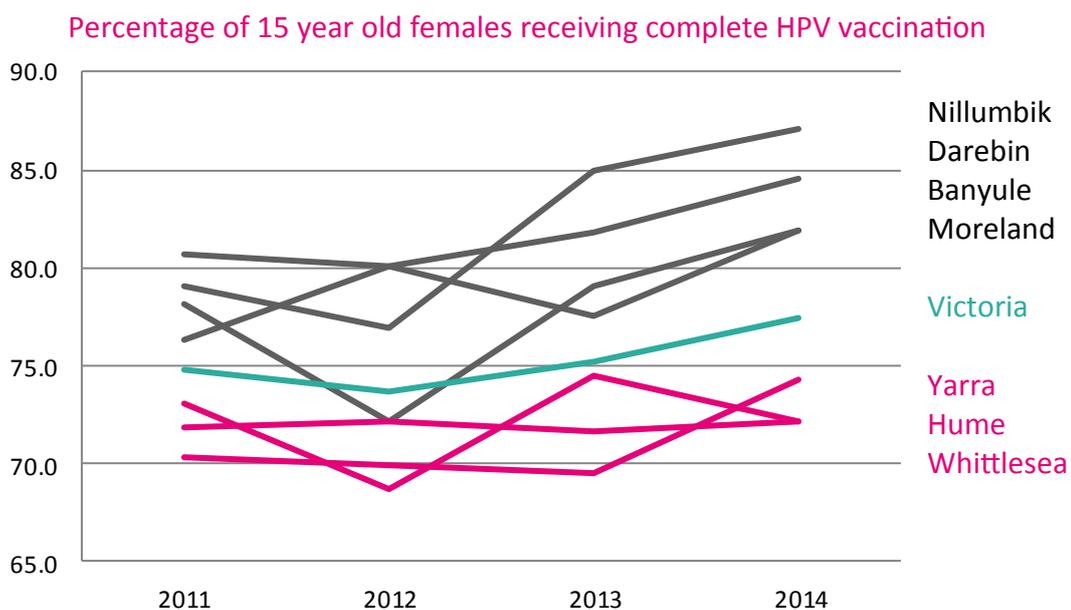


Four LGAs have Pap screen coverage rates that are lower than the Victorian rate.

## HPV (human papilloma virus) Immunisation

In 2014 **77.6%** of 15 year old girls and **68.9%** of 15 year old boys in the NMR received complete HPV Immunisation. This is slightly higher than the Victorian rate of 77.4% and 67.8% respectively.<sup>16</sup>

Receiving the complete three dosages of the vaccination provides protection against cancers including cervical, penile and anal; as well as genital warts.

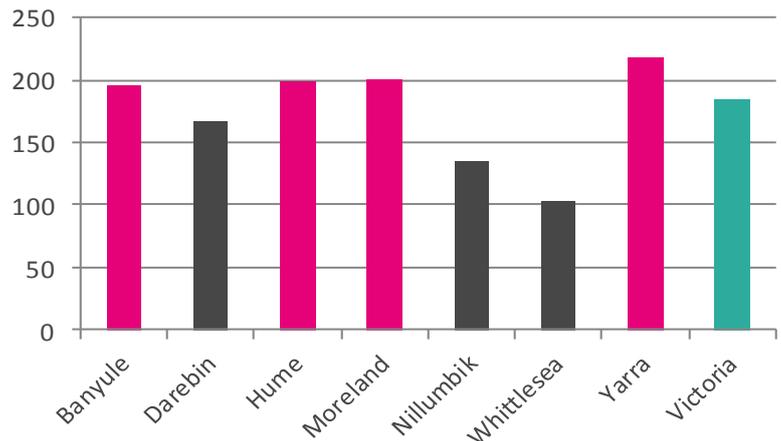


Three LGAs have HPV vaccination coverage rates that are lower than the Victorian rate.

**Sexual Offences** include sexting, pornography and child pornography, as well as rape and indecent assault.

In the NMR **30 sexual assault offences were recorded by police every week** on average in 2014-15.<sup>17</sup> 78% of victims were female and 93% of alleged offenders were male. 45% of female victims were aged less than 25.

**2014-2015 Sexual Assault (rape) and Sexual Assault (other) recorded offences rate per 100,000**



**Four LGAs have sexual assault rates that are higher than the Victorian rate.**

## Female Genital Cutting (FGC)

The NMR is home to a significant population of women who are from communities where FGC is traditionally practiced.<sup>18</sup>

FGC is a harmful traditional practice which has no health benefits.

Refer to WHIN's [FGC factsheet](#) for more info on FGC.

## WHIN advocates for a northern metropolitan region where:

- Women and service providers are educated about and have a developed understanding of women's sexual and reproductive health.
- Sexual and reproductive health services are appropriate and accessible.
- Women are free to express their sexuality without experiencing ill-health, discrimination or abuse.

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