



Gender & Disaster Australia

Eurobodalla

DISASTER CONTEXT

Socio-demographics from
a gendered perspective





Eurobodalla



Map of the Eurobodalla Local Government Area (LGA).

Source: <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA12750>





INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Area (LGA) of Eurobodalla sits in the South Coast region of New South Wales. The geography of the area is mountainous and coastal, facing onto the Tasman Sea and only 150 km away from Canberra. Eurobodalla is serviced by two main highways but has no railways or major seaports. In 2004, a local newsletter in the town of Rosedale reported that 10% of the Eurobodalla LGA is urban settlement; 20% is productive farmland, 30% is state forest, and the remaining 40% is national park.¹ In 2021, the population of Eurobodalla was 40,593.² Its population is ageing, with a median age of 54, and a significantly higher rate of people receiving the Disability Support Pension than elsewhere in New South Wales and Australia.³ The largest industry sector of employment is health care and social assistance, followed closely by construction.⁴ The agricultural sector is a relatively small industry in Eurobodalla, and its size as an employer is declining,⁵ but the size of the sector's land coverage means it remains an integral industry in the shire. The total value of agricultural output in the Eurobodalla LGA in 2021/21 was \$23 million. Nearly half (49.1%) of the value of this output came from a single commodity: milk, while a further 32.6% came from livestock slaughtering.⁶ This indicates the importance of livestock farming to Eurobodalla's agricultural sector.

Hazards and disasters have come to characterise life in Eurobodalla, which recently suffered 10 disasters in 28 months when the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-2020 were followed by nine declared floods.⁷ While the physical and environmental impacts of this series of disasters are detailed below, Eurobodalla's Bushfire Recovery Plan emphasises the wellbeing

impact of such regular and concentrated disaster experiences and the need for specific social recovery.⁸ This included the need for an ongoing outreach program, mental health support for young people, and community recovery in children's and youth services and community care for the elderly and people with disabilities. The Climate Council's recent study of the impact of climate-fuelled disasters on the mental health of Australians did not look at Eurobodalla specifically, but did include data from a Eurobodalla resident who connected the difficulty sustaining mental health and physical wellbeing after the "huge trauma" of the floods to the "lumberingly slow and ineffectual" government response to climate change.⁹ Social equity challenges were mentioned in the Eurobodalla Shire's Disaster Recovery Report, where the New South Wales and Australian governments are called upon to aid in upgrading local roads, bridges, and other infrastructure in rural areas.¹⁰ For example, as noted below, timber bridges were common in Eurobodalla and were largely destroyed by flooding and the process of replacing them with concrete bridges was expensive and challenging.

Multiple studies have used Eurobodalla as a case study to explore disaster response and management issues. In 2009, a prescient study of risk management strategies used by tourism businesses in Eurobodalla found that bushfire was only the seventh highest risk registered by tourism businesses in 2009; economic recession, cost of petrol, and owner/manager illness or incapacity were the top three. Only 65% of businesses had risk management plans related to disasters and climate change was low on business-owners'

1 <https://web.archive.org/web/20070906075433/http://www.netspeed.com.au/rosedale/Rosedale-1204.pdf>

2 <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA12750>

3 See Demographic Information below.

4 <https://profile.id.com.au/eurobodalla/industries>

5 <https://economy.id.com.au/eurobodalla/employment-by-industry>

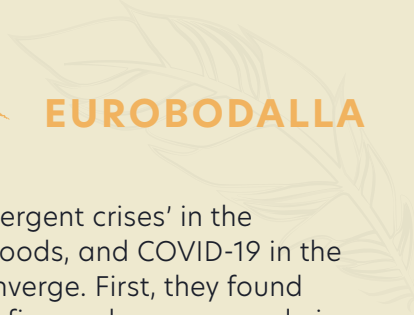
6 <https://economy.id.com.au/eurobodalla/value-of-agriculture>

7 Eurobodalla Shire Council, Disaster Recovery Report to Council. Available at: https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/222596/Report-to-Council-Infrastructure-recovery-and-resilience.pdf

8 Eurobodalla Bushfire Recovery Plan. Available at: https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/160477/Eurobodalla-Recovery-Plan.pdf

9 Climate Council. (2023). Summary of results from national study of the impact of climate-fuelled disasters on the mental health of Australians. Available at: <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2023-01/apo-nid321371.pdf>

10 Eurobodalla Shire Council, Disaster Recovery Report to Council. Available at: https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/222596/Report-to-Council-Infrastructure-recovery-and-resilience.pdf



agendas.¹¹ Fergie et al.'s (2020) anthropological study of 'convergent crises' in the Eurobodalla LGA examined the prolonged crisis of bushfires, floods, and COVID-19 in the shire and asked what happens in communities when crises converge. First, they found that living with dangerously smoky air in the aftermath of bushfire made many people in Eurobodalla more "aware breathers", which then readied them for COVID-19 restrictions. Further, they found that "grandparent-families' (holiday households composed of permanent retiree residents and their children and grandchildren joining them for the holidays) were central in fire survival and were then fractured along household lines during the pandemic, disrupting established support and recovery networks.¹² Finally, Ogie et al.'s (2022) content analysis of the #RecoverSouthCoast hashtag that was used to organise Twitter support following the 2019-2020 bushfires on the south coast of New South Wales focused on three LGAs including Eurobodalla. They found that Twitter use can support bushfire recovery in a number of ways, including by coordinating support relating to: post-disaster reconstruction and infrastructure services, donations and financial support, mental health and emotional support, environmental health, business and economic activities, animal welfare, information support, solidarity and social cohesion and insurance claims.¹³



DISASTER BACKGROUND

Kind of disasters affecting this region/town: Bushfires, storms, floods

| Event name | Hazard type(s) |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Black Summer bushfires, 2019-2020 | Bushfire |
| Flood, February 2020 | Flood |
| Flood, July 2020 | Flood |
| Flood, August 2020 | Flood |
| Flood, October 2020 | Flood |
| Flood, December 2020 | Flood |
| Flood, March 2021 | Flood |
| Flood, May 2021 | Flood |
| Flood, December 2021 | Flood |
| Flood, February 2022 | Flood |

11 Dickson, T. (2009). An Exploration of Risk Management Strategies in Regional Tourism Businesses: The Case of the Eurobodalla Region. In *Crisis Management in the Tourism Industry: Beating the odds?* (pp. 187-205). Ashgate Publishing Limited.

12 Fergie, D., Lucas, R., & Harrington, M. (2020). Take My Breath Away: Transformations in the Practices of Relatedness and Intimacy through Australia's 2019-2020 Convergent Crises. *Anthropology in Action*, 27(2), 49-62.

13 Ogie, R., Moore, A., Dilworth, T. L., James, S., & Amirghasemi, M. (2022). #RecoverSouthCoast: How twitter can support and hinder recovery. *The Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 37(4), 104-110.





Recent major disaster: Black Summer bushfires, 2019-2020

- Fatalities
 - 3 in Eurobodalla¹⁴
 - The Eurobodalla Shire Council's submission to the Senate Inquiry into the 2019-2020 bushfire season said the three lives were lost in remote, rural areas of the LGA and that the individuals had stayed to defend their properties¹⁵
- People displaced:
 - More than 9,000 people evacuated;¹⁶ the Eurobodalla Shire Council's submission to the Senate Inquiry into the 2019-2020 bushfire season reported that nine and a half thousand people registered through three evacuation centres but that many more made use of the various public reserves, golf courses, and clubs that opened informally as evacuation centres¹⁷
- Properties and infrastructure affected:
 - 510 homes, 78 facilities, and 882 outbuildings destroyed¹⁸
 - Lengthy losses of power leading to loss in other critical infrastructure including communications, water, and sewerage systems; more than 2,000 timber power poles burnt to the ground in south-east NSW, many of them in Eurobodalla. This left power lines strewn across roadways and private property¹⁹
 - More than 2,000 major road repairs initiated over the course of the bushfire recovery and flooding²⁰
 - 490 km of Council roads were impacted by fallen or hazardous trees; 150 road signs and thousands of guideposts had to be replaced²¹
 - 90.5% of state forests and 90.6% of National Park land in Eurobodalla burnt²²
 - 18 timber bridges destroyed or significantly damaged; 17 had to be fully replaced and were replaced with concrete bridges. This construction effort was impeded by the subsequent flooding as temporary structures were repeatedly washed away²³

¹⁴ <https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/council/committees/eurobodalla-disaster-relief-fund-management-committee/eurobodalla-disaster-relief-fund>

¹⁵ Eurobodalla Shire Council submission to the Australian Senate Inquiry into the 2019-2020 bushfire season, available here: <https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=85a96005-5fb7-453e-a440-162dfd921b16&subId=680329>

¹⁶ <https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/council/committees/eurobodalla-disaster-relief-fund-management-committee/eurobodalla-disaster-relief-fund>

¹⁷ Eurobodalla Shire Council submission to the Australian Senate Inquiry into the 2019-2020 bushfire season, available here: <https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=85a96005-5fb7-453e-a440-162dfd921b16&subId=680329>, p. 12

¹⁸ <https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/council/committees/eurobodalla-disaster-relief-fund-management-committee/eurobodalla-disaster-relief-fund>

¹⁹ https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/222596/Report-to-Council-Infrastructure-recovery-and-resilience.pdf, p. 31

²⁰ Eurobodalla Shire Council, Disaster Recovery Report to Council. Available at: https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/222596/Report-to-Council-Infrastructure-recovery-and-resilience.pdf

²¹ <https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/community/bushfire-recovery/restoring-our-infrastructure>

²² <https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/council/committees/eurobodalla-disaster-relief-fund-management-committee/eurobodalla-disaster-relief-fund>

²³ Eurobodalla Shire Council, Disaster Recovery Report to Council. Available at: https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/222596/Report-to-Council-Infrastructure-recovery-and-resilience.pdf, p. 16



- o Large numbers of stock and native fauna were lost²⁴
- o The bushfires disrupted the peak visitor period in Eurobodalla, causing significant impacts on business and tourism; up to 15 commercial businesses were also destroyed or damaged and it was estimated the bushfires cost the LGA's economy around \$130 million in trade and 900 jobs²⁵
- Insurance statistics:
 - o In its submission to the Senate Inquiry, the Eurobodalla Shire Council reported that up to one third of affected people were not insured²⁶
 - o Under-insurance was a significant problem for bushfire-affected areas along the south coast; the ABC reported that people in the area tend to be low-income earners who could not afford full insurance and the Eurobodalla Shire Council urged residents to take time with their insurance claims and not accept low offers²⁷
- Other notable facts:
 - o The extent of the bushfire devastation followed by such intensive rainfall led to further disasters in the form of landslides²⁸
 - o The existing emergency services facilities for the Incident Management Team and Emergency Operations Centre during the bushfires were judged to be "well below ideal" and the Batemans Bay SES building was destroyed. In early 2022, the NSW Government provided a grant to allow new construction of an emergency services precinct²⁹
 - o The Eurobodalla Bushfire Recovery Plan reports significant adverse health impacts of the bushfires, particularly the mental health of the community; Council advocacy resulted in the opening of a Headspace youth mental health centre in May 2020³⁰
 - o A significant proportion of ratepayers in Eurobodalla are non-residents, i.e., their properties are holiday homes. A letter from the Mayor to these non-resident ratepayers resulted in more than 80 holiday homes becoming available for emergency housing after the bushfires³¹

24 Eurobodalla Bushfire Recovery Plan. Available at: https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/160477/Eurobodalla-Recovery-Plan.pdf

25 Eurobodalla Bushfire Recovery Plan. Available at: https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/160477/Eurobodalla-Recovery-Plan.pdf

26 Eurobodalla Shire Council submission to the Australian Senate Inquiry into the 2019-2020 bushfire season, available here: <https://www.qph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=85a96005-5fb7-453e-a440-162dfd921b16&subId=680329>

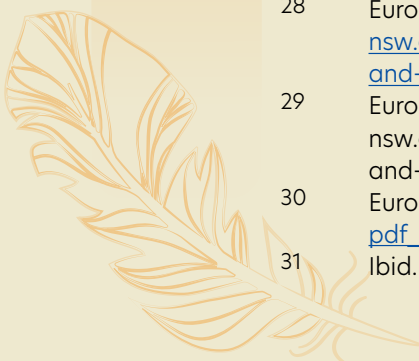
27 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-14/nsw-bushfires-leave-many-without-home-insurance-struggling/11863094>

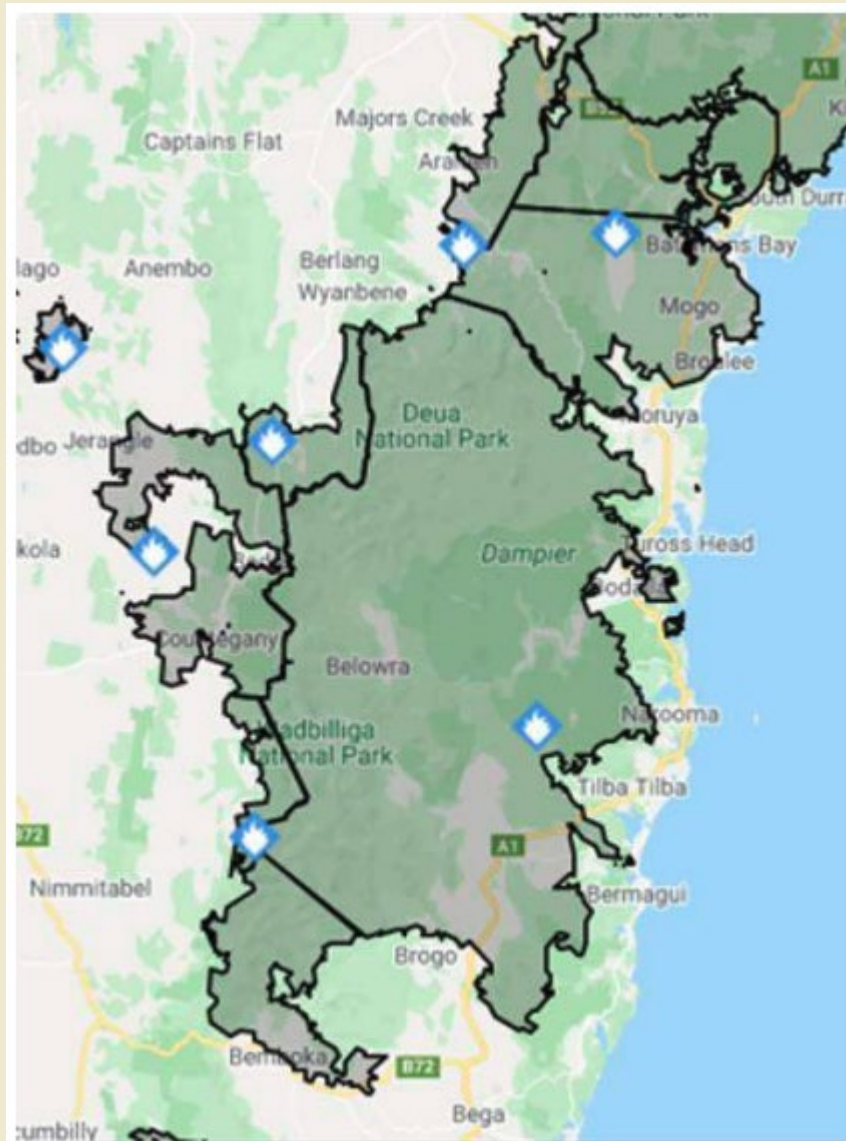
28 Eurobodalla Shire Council, Disaster Recovery Report to Council. Available at: https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/222596/Report-to-Council-Infrastructure-recovery-and-resilience.pdf

29 Eurobodalla Shire Council, Disaster Recovery Report to Council. Available at: https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/222596/Report-to-Council-Infrastructure-recovery-and-resilience.pdf, p. 28

30 Eurobodalla Bushfire Recovery Plan. Available at: https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/160477/Eurobodalla-Recovery-Plan.pdf, p.7

31 Ibid.





Approximate fire impacted area of Eurobodalla³²



ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

- Eurobodalla LGA is ranked:³³
 - o 228 out of 544 LGAs in Australia (where 544 is most advantaged)
 - o in the 5th decile (out of 10, where 10 is most advantaged)
 - o In the 42nd percentile (out of 100, where 100 is most advantaged)

³² Eurobodalla Shire Council, Disaster Recovery Report to Council. Available at: https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/222596/Report-to-Council-Infrastructure-recovery-and-resilience.pdf, p.5

³³ This ranking comes from the ABS Local Government Area Indexes, available here: <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2033.0.55.0012016?OpenDocument>



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND HOMELESSNESS

- Housing affordability in Eurobodalla:
 - Median rent: \$325/week (NSW: \$420/week | Aus: \$375/week)
 - Renter households where rent payments are greater than 30% of household income: 40.7% (NSW: 35.5% | Aus: 32.3%)
 - According to the Rental Affordability Index, for households on the median income in Eurobodalla (approx. \$60,000), rental affordability in most of the postcodes in the Eurobodalla LGA is classed 'Severely unaffordable'. Data is not available for postcode 2545, one of the most populated postcodes in the LGA.³⁴
- Homelessness³⁵
 - In 2021-22, 726 people accessed Specialist Homelessness Services in the LGA of Eurobodalla, equating to 1.8% of the population, or 179 per 10,000
 - 304 of these were men (153 per 10,000) and 422 were women (204 per 10,000)



MENTAL HEALTH

- Mental health conditions (any): 10.6% (NSW: 8% | Aus: 8.8%)³⁶
- Suicide rates in Statistical Area 3 (SA3) Kimberley and Statistical Area 4 (SA4) New South Wales - Outback (North), in which the Eurobodalla LGA sits (2017-2021):³⁷

| Area | SA3 South Coast | SA4 Capital Region | NSW | Australia |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|------|-----------|
| Age-standardised suicide rate per 100,000 population | 21.5 | 15.1 | 11.2 | 12.6 |
| Rate for males | n/a | 23.7 | 17.1 | 19.2 |
| Rate for females | n/a | 6.6 | 5.4 | 6.1 |

³⁴ <https://sgsep.com.au/projects/rental-affordability-index>

³⁵ Data cube: SHSC geographical location of client—LGA. Available here: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/shsc-data-cubes/contents/specialist-homelessness-services-collection-shsc-data-cubes>

³⁶ <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA12750>

³⁷ All suicide rate stats come from Data table: 2021 National Mortality Database - Suicide, Table NMD S10 and S11, available at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/data/data-downloads>



GENDER EQUALITY

- Lone parent status
 - 15.2% one-parent families (NSW: 15.8%), of which 78.7% are female-led (NSW: 81%)³⁸
- Mothers' Index³⁹
 - Eurobodalla LGA ranked 113 out of 152 LGAs, where 1 is the best place in New South Wales for a mother to live
- Unpaid work⁴⁰
 - Unpaid domestic work: 10,934 women did more than 5 hours of unpaid domestic work per week, compared to 7,831 men
 - Unpaid care: 2,795 women provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, health condition, or due to old age, compared to 1,900 men
 - Unpaid childcare: 9,939 women provided unpaid childcare, compared to 2,838 men
- Violence against women:⁴¹
 - In 2022, there were 225 incidents of domestic violence related assault recorded in Eurobodalla, a rate of 577.6 per 100,000 population. This was the second highest rate of major offence (and third highest rate of any offence) in the LGA and has increased by 6% over the last 5 years.
 - In 2022, there were 35 incidents (89.9 per 100,000) of sexual assault and 47 (120.7 per 100,000) other sexual offences recorded in Eurobodalla (the national rate of 121 per 100,000 in 2021 is indicative only as it is drawn from different data)⁴²
 - In 2022, there were 218 breaches of an apprehended violence order recorded in Eurobodalla, a rate of 559.7 per 100,000 population. This was the third highest rate of all offences recorded, and has increased by 20% over the last 5 years.
 - In 2022, there were 328 incidents of intimidation, stalking, and harassment recorded in Eurobodalla, a rate of 842.1 per 100,000 population. Although this offence is not always gendered, it often is. This was the highest rate of any offence recorded in Eurobodalla in 2022 and has increased by 4.9% over the last 5 years.

³⁸ <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA12750>

³⁹ The Mothers' Index consists of composite scores from five different indicators relating to maternal wellbeing (maternal health, children's wellbeing, educational status, economic status and socio-economic disadvantage), with each indicator given equal weighting. Scores were sorted from low to high and ranked from 1 to 152 (1 being the best place for a mother to live) to give the overall Mothers Index rank for each LGA in New South Wales. Full table available at <https://apo.org.au/node/63692>, p. 30.

⁴⁰ ABS General Community Profile for LGA Eurobodalla, Tables G24-G26, available here: <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/community-profiles/2021/LGA12750>

⁴¹ NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, LGA crime table for Eurobodalla, available here: https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_crime_stats/bocsar_lgaexceltables.aspx

⁴² <https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/sexual-assaults-increase-tenth-year-row>

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

| | LGA Eurobodalla ⁴³ | New South Wales | Australia |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Median age | 54 | 39 | 38 |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander | 6.1% | 3.4% | 3.2% |
| Both parents born in Australia | 64.2% | 43.7% | 45.9% |
| Non-English language used in household | 5.6% | 29.5% | 24.8% |
| With university education | 16.8% | 27.8% | 26.3% |
| Year 10 as highest qualification | 14.4% | 10.6% | 10.0% |
| Labour force participation | 45% | 58.7% | 61.1% |
| Working part-time | 40.4% | 29.7% | 31.2% |
| Unemployment | 4.1% | 4.9% | 5.1% |
| Median weekly personal income | \$618 | \$813 | \$805 |
| Median weekly household income | \$1167 | \$1829 | \$1746 |
| Rate of people on Disability Support Pension per 10,000 population (measured at LGA and state level) ⁴⁴ | 555 | 294 | 296 |

⁴³ <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA12750>

⁴⁴ <https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/dss-payment-demographic-data>; calculated by dividing number of DSP recipients listed in March 2021 spreadsheet by population of LGA (<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA27450>) and state (<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/1>), and country (<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/AUS>) in 2021, multiplied by 10,000



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