



Gender & Disaster Australia

Ipswich

DISASTER CONTEXT

Socio-demographics from
a gendered perspective





Ipswich



The Local Government Area (LGA) of Ipswich.

From <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA33960>





INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Area (LGA) of Ipswich City Council is located in southeast Queensland, 40 km south-west of Brisbane. The Ipswich City Council LGA extends over 1,090 km² and includes 7,500 heritage-protected sites and about 600 parks and reserves.¹ The LGA is located on the floodplains of the Brisbane River and the Bremer River, which is part of the much larger Brisbane River catchment and its water levels are influenced by tides from Moreton Bay.²

The traditional owners of the lands are the Jagera, Yuggera and Ugarapul People, who are part of the Yagara/Yugara Language Group. The area is known as Tulumur in the Yagara language.³ An accord was developed in 1995, by which Ipswich City Council committed to reconciliation. The accord guided how the council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities would work together on shared issues. The Indigenous Accord 2020-2025 contains specific actions and recognises rights of the Traditional Owners, such as "the rights to be a central stakeholder in decision-making about the lands, regions, places and natural resources of Ipswich".⁴

The Ipswich LGA has a population of 229,208.⁵ It is the fastest-growing city in Queensland and one of the top 10 in Australia. It also has South-East Queensland's youngest population, with a median age of 33.⁶ For the year ending June 2021, the LGA's Gross Regional Product was \$12.02 billion.⁷ The main industries by employment are healthcare and social assistance (18.2%), education and training (11.6%), manufacturing (10.9%), public administration and safety (10.4%) and retail trade (9.8%). The LGA includes 11,895 local businesses.⁸

Disasters in the Ipswich LGA include floods, bushfires, severe thunderstorms, heatwaves, tropical cyclones and east coast lows. The bushfire danger period extends from August to December, and danger is exacerbated if a relatively wet summer/autumn is followed by a cold, dry winter and a warm spring. The natural bushlands of Camira, Carole Park, Pine Mountain, Kholo, Marburg Range, Ripley Valley, Walloon and Springfield are prone to bushfires. Earthquakes are possible in the city, although the risk is not high. The most recent earthquakes in the region were in 1990 (two events) and in 1992.⁹

The region is susceptible to floods as it is located on the Bremer and Brisbane rivers. The majority of the city of Ipswich is located on the lower Bremer River floodplain while the Brisbane River forms the north-eastern boundary. The most recent flooding event was the February 2022 floods, when the Ipswich gauge read 12.76 metres AHD.¹⁰ Several climate drivers (including La Niña and wet weather conditions since 2021) created high levels of soil saturation and a flooding event with unprecedented volumes of rain.¹¹

Several studies have been conducted on floods since 2010, particularly on the 2011 floods. In 2010-2011, the strongest La Niña pattern since 1974 created major flooding across Queensland in the aftermath of Tropical cyclone Yasi. There was significant flooding in Brisbane city and surrounding areas, including Ipswich. Seventy-eight percent of Queensland was severely affected, 35 people died and more than 29,000 homes and businesses were damaged.¹²

1 https://www.shapeyouripswich.com.au/download_file/898/578

2 <https://edoc.ipswich.qld.gov.au/objective/download.php?id=A3739033&ext=pdf&env=iccecm>

3 <https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/live/our-community/indigenous>

4 <https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/live/our-community/indigenous>; https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/132023/ICC-Indigenous-Accord_2020_Web.pdf

5 <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA33960>

6 https://www.shapeyouripswich.com.au/download_file/898/578; <https://www.businessipswich.com.au/why-do-business-in-ipswich/economic-profile/>

7 <https://edoc.ipswich.qld.gov.au/objective/download.php?id=A3739033&ext=pdf&env=iccecm>

8 <https://www.businessipswich.com.au/why-do-business-in-ipswich/economic-profile/>

9 https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/134080/LDMP_2021_A4_5.pdf

10 AHD = Australian Height Datum, the point that sets mean sea level as zero elevation

<http://www.bom.gov.au/water/awid/id-17.shtml>; <https://edoc.ipswich.qld.gov.au/objective/download.php?id=A3739033&ext=pdf&env=iccecm>

11 https://www.shapeyouripswich.com.au/download_file/view/2392/976

12 Fitzgerald, G., Toloo, G., Baniahmedi, S., Crompton, D., & Tong, S. (2019). Long-term consequences of flooding: a



Hasleton et al., 2013 looked at the intervention of four teams of NSW mental health staff during the 2011 floods. The teams worked in different locations, including in Ipswich (at the Evacuation Centre and recovery centres, and at Ipswich Hospital). Various lessons were learned when intervening after a disaster, including in terms of team briefing: being flexible, being prepared for the emergency response and relieving fatigued local staff; and education and training, particularly related to disaster mental health.¹³

Another study (Brockie & Miller 2017) explored the way social capital, the impact of life and the experience of previous disasters facilitate resilience¹⁴ in older adults who experienced the 2011 and 2013 floods in the city of Ipswich. Older adults tend to be more vulnerable to the short- and long-term consequences of disasters. The study showed that the majority of people interviewed saw themselves as survivors rather than victims and linked this resilience to social capital and previous disaster experience. The study emphasises the need to build strong and healthy resilient communities, as well as initiatives that enhance social cohesion, trust and social capital within local communities.

A third study (Gorman-Murray et al., 2017) focuses on the experience of LGBT people in the 2011 floods. The study showed that LGBT people faced discrimination and inhibited access to assistance and that being marginalised from social, political and economic resources makes LGBT people more vulnerable to disasters. Respondents in Ipswich said that there was little to no information on how to evacuate in many of the suburbs (especially once power was out) and that they would have been more comfortable accessing LGBT-specific support services. However, the authors also argue that disasters can also reveal the resilience and specific coping mechanisms of some marginalised groups, and along with community building, this can provide capabilities to bounce back.¹⁵

Another study (De Leo et al., 2013) compares the suicide rates following the 2011 floods to the 11 years prior for Ipswich and Toowoomba (a town 88 km west of Ipswich which was also severely affected). There was no significant increase in suicide rates during the six months after the disaster, which might be explained by the strong level of social support and care during this period, helping create a sense of belonging. However, the authors suggest that the floods can increase mental health problems and have a delayed effect on suicide, and they emphasise the need for continuing to monitor suicidal behaviors and providing adequate support.¹⁶

A more recent study (Fitzgerald et al., 2019) focuses on the long-term health effects of the 2011 floods for people who were living in affected areas six years later. The results confirmed that flood victims may experience worse health outcomes than the general population and were more likely to score their health negatively than people who were not impacted. They also had higher reported rates of trauma, injury and mental illnesses. More than a quarter said that they still experience some adverse health effects from the disaster. The authors point out that when people are not satisfied with recovery operations and perceive injustice in insurance and compensation arrangements, their health issues may be aggravated, and they recommend early recognition and intervention to reduce secondary effects.¹⁷

Finally, Irajifar et al. (2016) examined the impact of urban form (land use, population density, building type and diversity) on the reconstruction progress in the months after the 2010 floods in Brisbane and Ipswich. The results showed that population density is positively correlated to disaster resilience.

The progress of reconstruction increases from low, medium to high densities, but does not show the same behaviour in very low and very high densities.

case study of the 2011 Queensland floods. *The Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 34(1), 35-40.

13 Hasleton, K., Allan, J., Stevens, G., Hegner, R., & Kerley, D. Mental health deployment to the 2011 Queensland floods: lessons learned. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* 28(3), 35-40.

14 The authors define resilience as a dynamic process of maintaining successful adaptation after the exposure to potentially traumatic life events.

15 Gorman-Murray, A., Morris, S., Keppel, J., McKinnon, S., & Dominey-Howes, D. (2017). Problems and possibilities on the margins: LGBT experiences in the 2011 Queensland floods. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24(1), 37-51.

16 De Leo, D., Too, L. S., Kölves, K., Milner, A., & Ide, N. (2013). Has the suicide rate risen with the 2011 Queensland floods?. *Journal of loss and trauma*, 18(2), 170-178.

17 Fitzgerald, G., Toloo, G., Baniahmadi, S., Crompton, D., & Tong, S. (2019). Long-term consequences of flooding: a case study of the 2011 Queensland floods. *The Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 34(1), 35-40.



It suggests that medium-high density is the most resilient type of area in urban contexts similar to Brisbane or Ipswich. The authors also note that median family income is the non-urban variable that impacts the most on resilience, more than any of the built environment variables.¹⁸



DISASTER BACKGROUND

Kind of disasters affecting this region/city: severe storms and tropical cyclones, flooding, severe weather events, heatwaves, bushfires, and landslides.

Past disasters include:¹⁹

EVENT NAME	HAZARD TYPE(S)
February 2022 floods (Ipswich 16.72m AHD)	Floods
January 2013 Cyclone Oswald (Ipswich 13.90m AHD)	Floods
January 2011 floods (Ipswich 19.25m AHD)	Floods
November 2010 Queensland floods 2010/2011	Floods

Recent major disaster: February 2022 floods

- Fatalities: 0
- People displaced:²⁰
 - o Community recovery hubs were opened at Ipswich city and at Goodna
 - o Up to 410 residents attended the Ipswich Evacuation centre at its peak
 - o Queensland's Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy provided temporary accommodation to 108 residents of Ipswich
 - o By 13 April 2022, 14 residents were still accessing temporary accommodation
 - o By 26 September 2022, 15,777 Ipswich residents had been provided assistance grants to the value of \$6,292,063
- Properties and infrastructure affected:²¹
 - o 600 dwellings damaged (including 550 houses, 15 industrial buildings and 2 schools)
 - o Almost 300 businesses damaged
 - o More than 250 vehicles damaged
 - o Unquantified losses to livestock and livelihood
 - o Riverbanks destroyed
 - o Landslips occurred in several part of Ipswich city
- Insurance statistics: On 14 November 2022, the Insurance Council of Australia had received 4,997 claims for Ipswich property, to a value of \$127,249,084.²²

¹⁸ Irajifar, L., Sipe, N., & Alizadeh, T. (2016). The impact of urban form on disaster resiliency: A case study of Brisbane and Ipswich, Australia. *International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment*, 7(3), 259-275.

¹⁹ Unless specified, all the information comes from these sources: <http://hardenup.org/be-aware/your-area/ipswich>; <https://edoc.ipswich.qld.gov.au/objective/download.php?id=A3739033&ext=pdf&env=iccecm>

²⁰ https://www.shapeyouripswich.com.au/download_file/view/2392/976

²¹ https://www.shapeyouripswich.com.au/download_file/view/2392/976

²² https://www.shapeyouripswich.com.au/download_file/view/2392/976



ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

- Ipswich LGA is ranked: ²³
 - o 221 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 41th percentile (out of 100, where 100 is most advantaged)



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND HOMELESSNESS

- Housing affordability
 - o Median rent: \$330/week (QLD: \$365/week|Aus: 375/week)²⁴
 - o Renter households where rent payments are greater than 30% of household income: 30.8% (QLD: 32.3% | Aus: 32.2)²⁵
 - o For a household on the median income for Ipswich LGA (around \$85,000)²⁶, rental accommodation is classed as "Acceptable" for postcodes 4303, 4304 and 4305, and "Moderately Unaffordable" for postcodes 4300, 4301, 4306 and 4340.²⁷
 - o Homelessness:²⁸
 - o In 2021-22, 1,776 people accessed Specialist Homelessness Services in the LGA of Ipswich, equating to 0.48% of the population, or 48 per 10,000
 - o 674 of these were men (37 per 10,000) and 1102 were women (60 per 10,000)



MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health conditions (any): 11.8% (QLD: 9.6% | Aus: 8.8)²⁹

In Statistical Area 3 Ipswich Inner (in which the city of Ipswich sits), there were 112 deaths between 2017 and 2021.³⁰

Age-standardised suicide rate (2017-2021) for Statistical Area 4 (SA4)³¹ Ipswich, the state of Queensland, and Australia as a whole:³²

Area	Ipswich	Queensland	Australia
Age-standardised suicide rate per 100,000 population	17.1	15.6	12.6
Rate for males	27.6	24.3	19.2
Rate for females	6.9	7.2	6.1

²³ <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2033.0.55.0012016?OpenDocument> (third data cube LGA Indexes, SEIFA 2016)

²⁴ <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/310>

²⁵ <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/310>

²⁶ Weekly income x 52; weekly income data available at: <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/310>

²⁷ <https://sgsep.com.au/projects/rental-affordability-index>

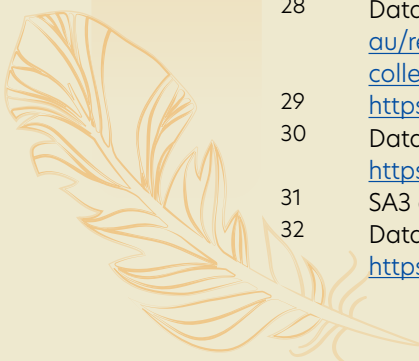
²⁸ Data cube: SHSC geographical location of client—LGA. Available here: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/shsc-data-cubes/contents/specialist-homelessness-services-collection-shsc-data-cubes>

²⁹ <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA33620>

³⁰ Data table: 2021 National Mortality Database - Suicide (table 11 for SA3), available at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/data/data-downloads>

³¹ SA3 and SA4 areas can be found here: <https://sosearch.com.au/australian-sa-printable-maps/>

³² Data table: 2021 National Mortality Database - Suicide (table 10 for SA4), available at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/data/data-downloads>





GENDER EQUALITY

*Lone parent status*³³

- Lone-parent families (Ipswich LGA): 19.0% (QLD: 16.8% |Aus: 15.9%) – 81.1% female-led (QLD: 80.0%|Aus: 80.4%)

*Mothers' index*³⁴

- Ipswich is ranked 19 out of 74 LGAs in QLD, where 1 is the 'best place for a mother to live'.

*Unpaid care*³⁵

- Unpaid domestic work
 - o 53,019 men did more than 5 hours of unpaid domestic work per week compared to 81,002 women
- Unpaid assistance to a person with a disability
 - o 13455 men compared to 20859 women provided unpaid assistance
- Unpaid childcare
 - o 35057 men compared to 48481 women provided childcare (whether for their own child or other children)

Violence against women

- In 2022, in the Ipswich division:³⁶
 - o 604 sexual offences were recorded (compared to 706 in 2021)
 - o 2,824 domestic violence protection orders were breached (compared to 2,245 in 2021).

³³ <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA33620>

³⁴ 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 74 (1 being the best place for a mother to live) to give the overall Mothers Index rank for each LGA in QLD. <https://apo.org.au/node/63692>

³⁵ ABS General Community Profile for LGA Ipswich, Tables G24-G26, available here: <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/community-profiles/2021/310>

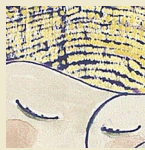
³⁶ <https://mypolice.qld.gov.au/ipswich/queensland-crime-statistics/>

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR IPSWICH LGA COMPARED TO QUEENSLAND AND AUSTRALIA³⁷**

	Ipswich LGA	Queensland	Australia
Median age	33	38	38
Indigenous status	5.5%	4.6%	3.2%
Both parents born in Australia	52.5%	53.4%	26.3%
Non-English language used in household	16.4%	15.6%	10.0%
With university education	15.5%	21.9%	26.3%
Year 10 as highest qualification	12.9%	11.9%	10%
Part-time workers	27.0%	30.5%	31.2%
Unemployed	6.7%	5.5%	5.1%
Personal income	\$795/week	\$787/week	\$805/week
Household income	\$1,668/week	\$1,675/week	\$1746/week
Rate of people on Disability Support Pension per 10,000 population ³⁸	391	309	296

³⁷ Unless otherwise stated, all data in this table comes from: <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA33960>

³⁸ <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://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA24780>) state (<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/2>), and country (<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/AUS>) multiplied by 10,000



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