Pathways in Place

Co-Creating Community Capabilities

Mapping community assets in Brimbank

Findings from a system scan of local supports for education, employment, and youth mental wellbeing

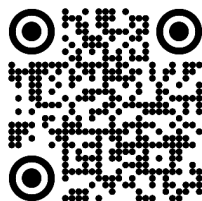Report prepared by Pathways in Place, Victoria University

Pathways in Place
Co-Creating Community Capabilities

A partnership between

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Griffith UNIVERSITY Queensland, Australia

Funded by

paulramsay FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIPS FOR POTENTIAL

For enquiries regarding this publication

If you have any queries about this publication, please contact the **Pathways in Place, Victoria University** team at pathwaysinplace@vu.edu.au, or use the QR code to visit our website.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people of the Kulin Nation who are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of University land. As we share our own knowledge practices within the University may we pay respect to the deep knowledge embedded within the Aboriginal community and their ownership of Country.

Pathways in Place: Co-Creating Community Capabilities is an innovative program of research and action that supports flourishing of children and young people. This Program is jointly delivered by Victoria University (Victoria, Australia), and Griffith University (Queensland, Australia) with funding generously provided by the Paul Ramsay Foundation.

The Program teams are each leading one of two complementary streams:

1. Early learning and development pathways (children and youth 0-15 y.o.), led by Griffith University in Logan
2. Pathways through education to employment (children and youth 15-24 y.o.), led by Victoria University in Brimbank

DARWIN

PERTH

ADELAIDE

BRISBANE

SYDNEY

MELBOURNE

HOBART

Introduction

Community asset mapping is a strength-based activity that focuses on identifying, locating, and cataloguing the existing assets within a particular area. This report presents findings from work conducted as part of the Program: *Mapping of Community Assets in Brimbank* [*] for Pathways in Place (www.pathwaysinplace.com.au).

The main purpose of this work was to provide a thorough understanding of the assets that currently exist in Brimbank to support youth educational attainment, employment, and mental wellbeing.

In this report, we primarily focus on:

- activities, programs, and services (and the organisations that deliver them), and
- community infrastructure.

All assets discussed throughout this report are located within the geographical boundaries of the City of Brimbank.

This report will be helpful to groups and organisations in Brimbank that support youth educational attainment, employment, and mental health and wellbeing.

The Pathways in Place team would like to know if and how groups and organisations use the information in this report. Please let us know if you use the report to inform your planning or decision-making at pathwaysinplace@vu.edu.au.

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[*]Community assets traditionally include the identification of people (i.e., stakeholders), physical assets (i.e., community infrastructure), and services. However, for the purposes of this Program, the identification and analysis of stakeholders was undertaken separately.
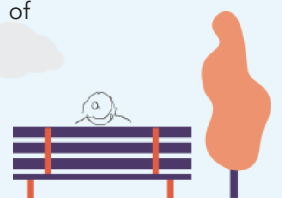
Our Approach

Our approach to mapping Brimbank's assets involved two stages:

- **Stage one:** we reviewed the findings from similar pieces of work previously conducted in Brimbank to ensure we weren't repeating existing work.
- **Stage two:** we collected, analysed and mapped existing community assets using a three-phase approach (planning, data collection/coding, and data analysis)[1] adapted from the academic literature.

Stage one: Building on previous work

The report we identified with the most similarities to our own was the _Brimbank Spatial Map of Physical and Social Infrastructure (Spatial Map)_[2]. The _Spatial Map_ reviewed Brimbank's community assets, social resources and physical infrastructure, reporting on the correlations between education and health outcomes, and the spatial distribution of critical community infrastructure across Brimbank's population health areas. The _Spatial Map_ was developed by Growing Brimbank project.

The findings from the _Spatial Map_ suggest that residents of Brimbank experiencing higher rates of socio-economic disadvantage had poorer health outcomes (e.g. St Albans North/Kings Park and St Albans South/Sunshine North)[2]. Conversely, relatively advantaged areas (e.g. Keilor Downs and Taylors Lakes) had greater concentrations of physical and natural features, which appeared to be associated with better health outcomes[2]. The _Spatial Map_ developed our understanding of the current social, cultural, and environmental climate of Brimbank as a whole. Given the broad focus of the _Spatial Map_, we found that a more targeted exploration of assets contributing to the education outcomes, employment opportunities, and mental wellbeing of young people was necessary.
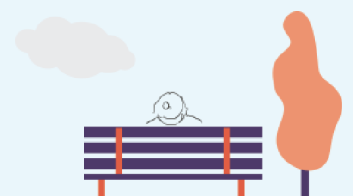
Stage two: Three-phase process

We used a three-phase mapping process adapted from the literature[1], which involved:

1. **Planning:** an extensive planning process to ensure the capture of as many of Brimbank's assets as possible;
2. **Data collection, storage, and coding:** a thorough and procedural data collection and coding process; and
3. **Analysis:** diverse analysis of the final data set.

We collected the data from May to June 2021. More information about the method we used for this activity can be found in our Community asset mapping snapshot: (https://www.pathwaysinplace.com.au/our-research).

If you would like us to send you a comprehensive outline of our approach, please get in touch with us at pathwaysinplace@vu.edu.au.
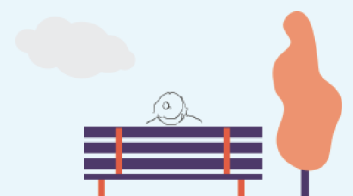
Findings

In total, we identified 280 education, employment and mental wellbeing assets that support young people in Brimbank. We classified each of the assets we identified into one of six broad categories (Table 1).

Table 1 – Six broad asset categories

Asset Category	Definition
Community groups & services	Both formal and informal organisations and groups that provide support, services and/or programs, including third-sector community organisations.
Coordination and network groups	Formal or informal groups of citizens or organisations that work together toward a common goal.
Educational institutions	Any institution or organisation primarily providing education services.
Government	Any asset directly related to or delivered by federal, state, or local government.
Health service providers	Organisations primarily focused on delivering mental wellbeing programs and services.

These categories are comprised of more specific subcategories (Table 2). These subcategories are depicted in the legends that accompany the spatial maps presented in Figures 2-4.
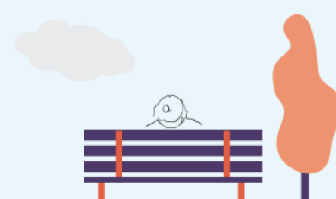
Table 2 – Asset categories and subcategories

Asset Category	Asset Subcategory
Community groups & services	• Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) - specific services • Range of supports • Youth-focused services • Other program/service • Child-youth and family services • Employment agencies
Coordination and network groups	• Local coordination/networking group
Educational institutions	• Employment, education & training services • Private secondary school • Public secondary school • Private tutoring providers • Religious secondary school • University campus • Registered training organisation
Government	• Federal government program/service • State government program/service • Local government program/service • Local government organisation • Community infrastructure
Health service providers	• Health-related services

We generated three separate maps detailing the spatial distribution of the education, employment, and mental wellbeing assets identified across the City of Brimbank. Figure 1 outlines Brimbank's population health areas and two main town centres – St Albans and Sunshine – while the final assets maps are displayed in Figures 2, 3 and 4, i.e., youth educational attainment assets (Figure 2), youth employment assets (Figure 3), and youth mental wellbeing assets (Figure 4).
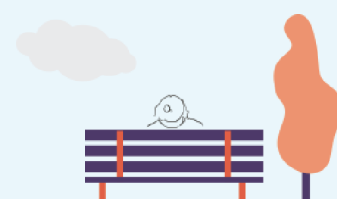
Figure 1 – Brimbank's population health areas and two major town centres

Figure 2 – Spatial distribution of educational attainment assets for youth across Brimbank's population health areas

Employment, education and training services

Private secondary school

Public secondary school

Religious secondary school

Private tutoring providers

University campus

Registered training organisation

CALD-specific services

Range of supports

Youth-focused services

Federal government program/service

State government program/service

Local coordination/networking group

Local government organisation

Local government program/service

Community infrastructure

St Albans Town Centre

Sunshine Town Centre
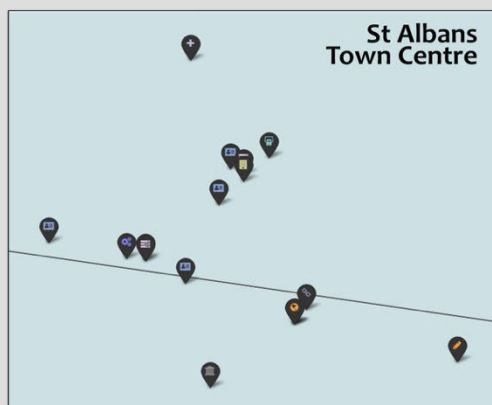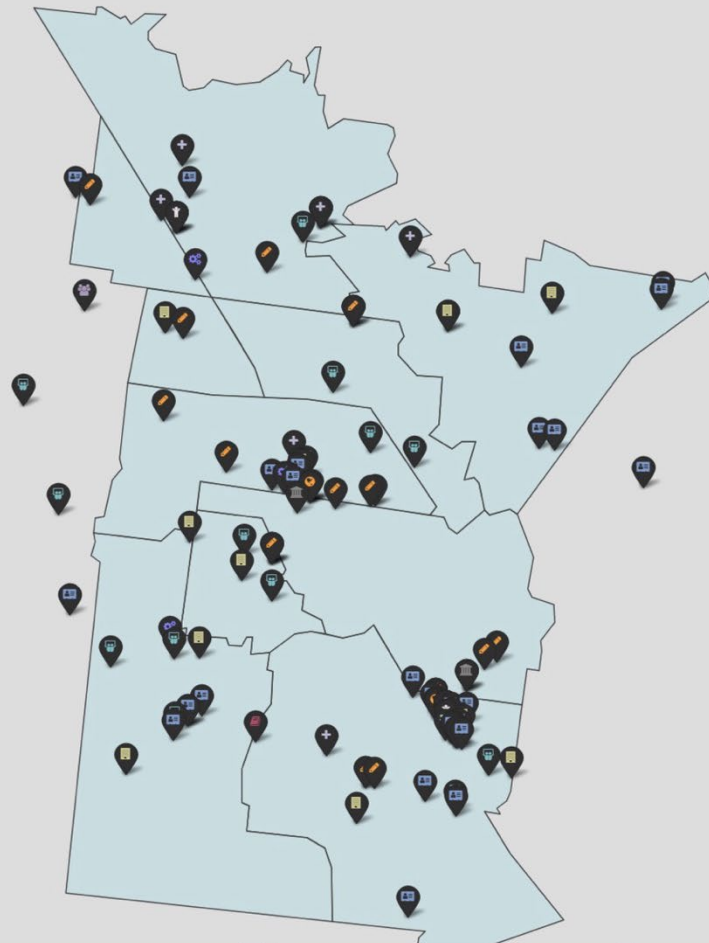
Figure 3 – Spatial distribution of employment assets for youth across Brimbank's population health areas

Employment agencies

Employment, education and training services

Public secondary school

Religious secondary school

University campus

Registered training organisation

CALD-specific services

Range of supports

Youth-focused services

Federal government program/service

State government program/service

Local coordination/networking group

Local government organisation

Local government program/service

Other program/service

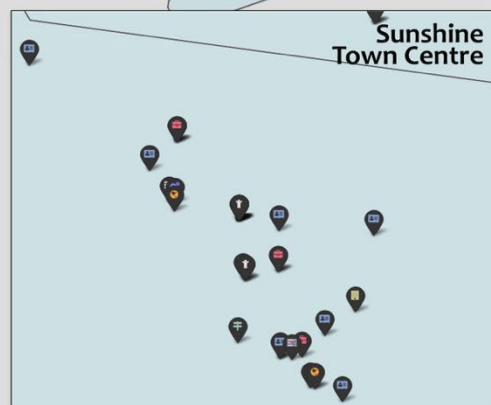Community infrastructure

St Albans Town Centre

Sunshine Town Centre

Figure 4 – Spatial distribution of mental wellbeing assets for youth across Brimbank's population health areas

Legend:
- Employment, education and training services
- Child, youth and family services
- Health-elated services
- Public secondary school
- Religious secondary school
- CALD-specific services
- Range of supports
- Youth-focused services
- Local government organisation
- Local government program/service
- Community infrastructure

St Albans Town Centre

Sunshine Town Centre
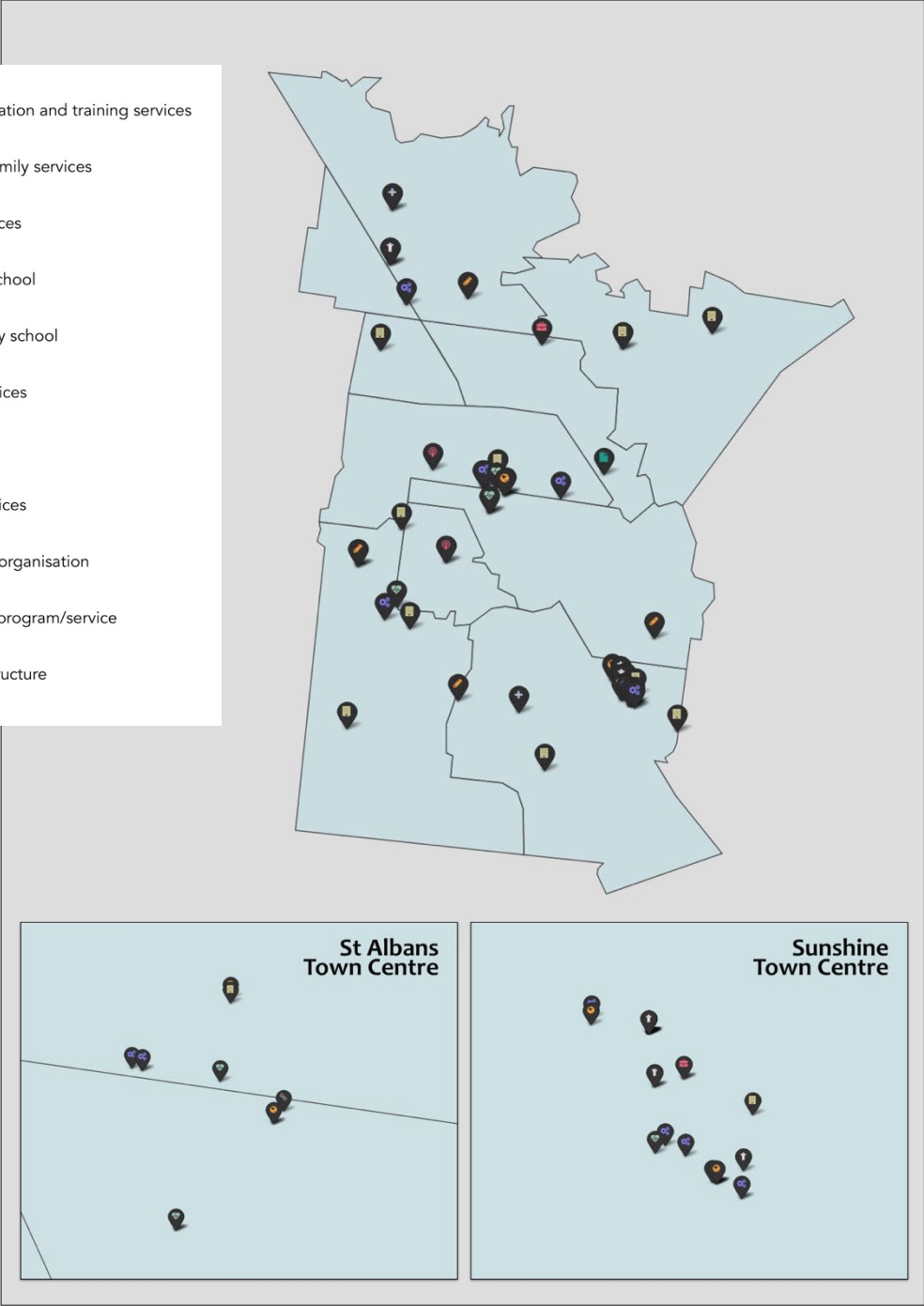
Analysis

As shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3, both educational and employment assets available for Brimbank's youth are heavily concentrated in the St Albans and Sunshine town centres. Some population health areas, such as Sydenham and Keilor Downs, have very few local education and employment services.

Of the three categories of assets available for youth that were our focus (education, employment, and mental wellbeing), mental wellbeing assets (Figure 4) were the least prevalent. Some population health areas like Delahey, Keilor, Keilor Downs, and Sydenham have very few local mental wellbeing assets.

The data presented in Figures 2–4 demonstrate significant variances in the spatial distribution of community assets across Brimbank's population health areas. In particular, the data suggest that Keilor Downs and Sydenham have substantially fewer assets available across all three focus areas than other localities in Brimbank.

Significantly, areas with the highest number of assets across the categories for education, employment, and mental wellbeing (St Albans North, Kings Park, St Albans South, Sunshine North, Ardeer, Albion, Sunshine, and Sunshine West) are, at the same time, over-represented in terms of rates of youth unemployment, lack of a home internet connection, and jobless families with children over 15 years of age [3].

Community groups and services accounted for most community assets identified (across organisations, infrastructure, programs, and services). This indicates the significant role the community sector plays in the systems that support the positive development of young people in Brimbank.
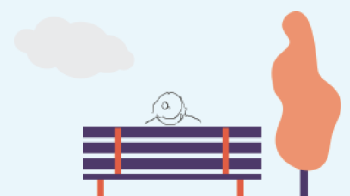
Conclusion

Community asset mapping is valuable for understanding a community's existing resources and identifying potential development areas. However, it is important to note the limitations of this approach. When taken in isolation, the data gathered through asset mapping lack the contextualisation required for a comprehensive picture of a situation within a community. Therefore, information from community asset mapping is more useful when it is combined with other data and evidence, such as population statistics and community identified needs. Communities are complex, so a diverse range of data, methods, and evidence is essential to identify existing strengths and needs.

References

1. Aicken C, Roberts H, Arai L. Mapping service activity: the example of childhood obesity schemes in England. *BMC Public Health*. 2010;10(310). doi:10.1186/1471-2458-10-310

2. AHPC. *The Brimbank Spatial Map of Physical and Social Infrastructure*. Melbourne: Australian Health Policy Collaboration; 2017.

3. Public Health Information Development Unit. *Social Health Atlas of Australia: Population Health Areas (Online).*; 2021.