

6 EASTERN VICTORIA

6.1 OVERVIEW

There are two statistical divisions covering Eastern Victoria (Map 1). They are Gippsland and East Gippsland.

Gippsland has a population of 159 500 and there are three subdivisions. The La Trobe Valley (population 73 500) is the only major urban area. It includes the cities of Traralgon, Morwell and Moe. South Gippsland and West Gippsland are predominantly rural communities with populations of 52 400 and 33 600 respectively.

East Gippsland stretches from the Gippsland Lakes to the New South Wales border. Wellington Shire (population 40 000) includes Sale. East Gippsland (population 40 000) includes Bairnsdale and Orbost.

Table 6.1 compares the rate of homelessness in Eastern Victoria, Western Victoria and Melbourne. There were 962 homeless people in Eastern Victoria and the rate was 40 per 10 000, slightly higher than the rate in Western Victoria (36 per 10 000) and similar to the rate in metropolitan Melbourne (41 per 10 000).

6.1 NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE AND RATE PER 10 000 OF THE POPULATION, EASTERN VICTORIA, WESTERN VICTORIA AND MELBOURNE

	Eastern Victoria	Western Victoria	Melbourne
Number	962	1980	14 568
Rate	40	36	41

Source: Census of Population and Housing 2006; SAAP Client Collection 2006; National Census of Homeless School Students 2006.

6.2 EASTERN VICTORIA

There were 591 homeless people in Gippsland and the rate of homelessness was 37 per 10 000 (Table 6.2). The rate was similar in Gippsland's three subdivisions—the La Trobe Valley, West Gippsland and South Gippsland—but there were more homeless people in the La Trobe Valley which has a larger population.

In East Gippsland, the rate of homelessness was 46 per 10 000. There were 260 homeless people in East Gippsland Shire where the rate was 64 per 10 000, compared with 111 in Wellington Shire where the rate was 28 per 10 000.

6.2 NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE AND RATE PER 10 000 OF THE POPULATION, GIPPSLAND AND EAST GIPPSLAND

	Gippsland			Total	East Gippsland		Total
	La Trobe Valley	West Gippsland	South Gippsland		East Gippsland	Wellington Shire	
Number	285	122	184	591	260	111	371
Rate	39	36	35	37	64	28	46

Source: Census of Population and Housing 2006; SAAP Client Collection 2006; National Census of Homeless School Students 2006.

Table 6.3 shows the proportion of people in different sectors of the homeless population. In Gippsland, 41 per cent were staying with friends or relatives. One-quarter (26 per cent) were in SAAP/THM accommodation, and 18 per cent were in improvised dwellings or sleeping rough.

In East Gippsland, one-quarter (27 per cent) of the homeless were with other households, one-third (31 per cent) were in SAAP/THM accommodation, and another one-third (30 per cent) were in improvised dwellings. These were probably rudimentary shacks where people were living in rural poverty, but one census collector reported people living in a cave.

6.3 PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION, GIPPSLAND AND EAST GIPPSLAND

Percentage

	Gippsland				East Gippsland		
	La Trobe Valley	West Gippsland	South Gippsland	Total	East Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Total
Boarding house	15	18	12	15	11	13	12
SAAP/THM	35	23	14	26	31	32	31
Friends/relatives	39	53	35	41	27	27	27
Improvised dwellings	11	6	39	18	31	28	30
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Number

	Gippsland				East Gippsland		
	La Trobe Valley	West Gippsland	South Gippsland	Total	East Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Total
Boarding house	42	22	23	87	30	15	45
SAAP/THM	101	28	25	154	80	35	115
Friends/relatives	112	65	65	242	70	30	100
Improvised dwellings	30	7	71	108	80	31	111
	285	122	184	591	260	111	371

Source: Census of Population and Housing 2006; SAAP Client Collection 2006; National Census of Homeless School Students 2006.

6.3 MARGINAL RESIDENTS OF CARAVAN PARKS

There were 45 people in boarding houses in East Gippsland (Table 6.3), but 152 marginal residents of caravan parks (Table 6.4). If marginal residents of caravan parks are included in the homeless population, then the rate of homelessness increases from 46 to 65 per 10 000 in East Gippsland.

Similarly, there were 87 boarding house residents in Gippsland, but 188 marginal residents of caravan parks. If marginal residents of caravan parks are included in the homeless population, then the rate of homelessness increases from 37 to 49 per 10 000 in Gippsland.

6.4 HOMELESS PEOPLE AND MARGINAL RESIDENTS OF CARAVAN PARKS, GIPPSLAND AND EAST GIPPSLAND

	Gippsland				East Gippsland		
	La Trobe Valley	West Gippsland	South Gippsland	Total	East Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Total
Homeless	285	122	184	591	260	111	371
Rate per 10 000	39	36	35	37	64	28	46
Caravan	52	47	89	188	113	39	152
Total	337	169	273	779	373	150	523
Rate per 10 000	46	50	52	49	93	37	65

Source: Census of Population and Housing 2006; SAAP Client Collection 2006; National Census of Homeless School Students 2006.

There are many communities across the country where caravans are used as an alternative to boarding houses, and it is relevant to consider this when making planning decisions at the local level.