

Chapter 1
Introduction

Chapter 1 Introduction

Needs assessment process

Capital Health Network (CHN), ACT's Primary Health Network, completed the 2024 Health Needs Assessment following review of the needs assessment process and implementing an updated, iterative approach. This needs assessment builds on previous versions by updating and incorporating recently released data, seeking input through ongoing stakeholder consultations and introducing a new prioritisation process. A mix of quantitative and qualitative data has been analysed to understand the health and service needs for the ACT.

Data

A review of public data sources was undertaken to ensure that the most up to date data was included in this needs assessment. Data used in previous needs assessments was refreshed where required and efforts were made to identify new and emerging data sources.

Data was analysed at a national, state/territory and regional level to understand how the ACT compares to national levels, other states and territories and other PHNs, while allowing trends to be identified. Where available, data at a Statistical Area 3 (SA3) level was used and analysed. This allowed comparison between regions within the PHN borders, to determine the unique challenges and needs for communities living in those regions. This assists CHN to identify needs and gaps that may be addressed by commissioning within the ACT.

Data was included from a range of sources, including:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)
- PHIDU Social Health Atlas of Australia (PHIDU)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework
- Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) data
- Local general practice data shared with CHN.

Consultation

CHN developed a Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the needs assessment to ensure a broad range of stakeholders were identified across the 9 priority areas. Throughout 2023 and 2024, CHN completed a range of consultations to understand health and service needs. These consultations were completed with stakeholders, including:

- CHN's councils – Community Advisory Council (CAC), Clinical Council (CC) and General Practice Advisory Council (GPAC)
- CHN's commissioned service providers
- ACT Health
- Canberra Health Services (CHS)
- General practitioners and general practice staff
- Peak representative bodies and consumer representative organisations
- Health and community service providers
- Primary care consumers

In 2024, CHN launched MySay – a new community engagement platform. This was implemented to invite community insights and feedback across CHN's different business units and projects, allowing stakeholders and community members to engage in different ways. Feedback was received for this needs assessment, and the platform will continue to be used for future iterations.

Triangulation and prioritisation

After synthesis and triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data gathered, a list of needs was developed in each of CHN's nine priority areas. Where indicated, these needs underwent a prioritisation process to determine the relative priority of each need. The prioritisation process was based on Queensland Commonwealth Partnership's Joint Regional Needs Assessment Framework and Implementation Toolkit (1). Criteria deemed relevant for CHN were chosen and are shown in Figure 1 and outlined below.

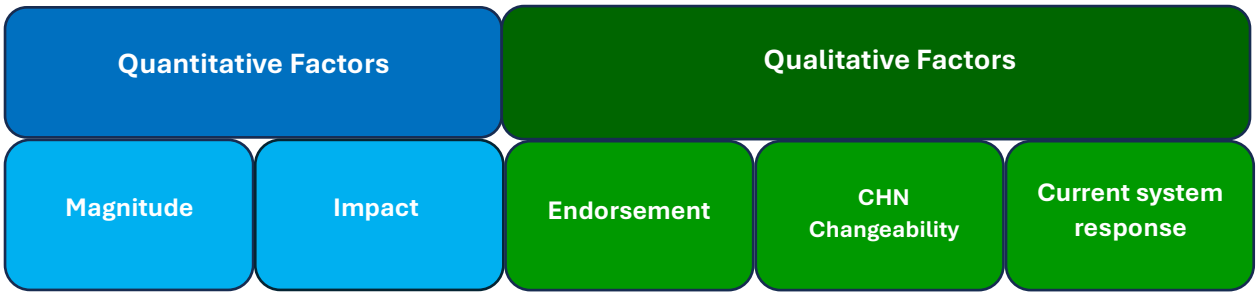


Figure 1: Criteria for prioritisation of needs

- *Magnitude* – what is the size, including incidence and prevalence, of the issue?
- *Impact* – what effect does the issue has on the population, including burden of disease?
- *Endorsement* – is this believed to be an issue through the subjective endorsement of it based on the professional expertise and wisdom of the participants?
- *CHN changeability* – does the issue relate to, or is likely to have, a response that falls within the remit of CHN?
- *Current system response* – will the issue be adequately addressed by the current system response?

Weightings were applied following application of the prioritisation criteria, and results were run through the prioritisation matrix outlined in Figure 2 that determined the level of priority for each need.

		Qualitative Factors		
		Highest rating	Medium rating	Lowest rating
Quantitative Factors	Highest rating	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
	Medium rating	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
	Lowest rating	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5

Figure 2: Prioritisation matrix

Evaluation

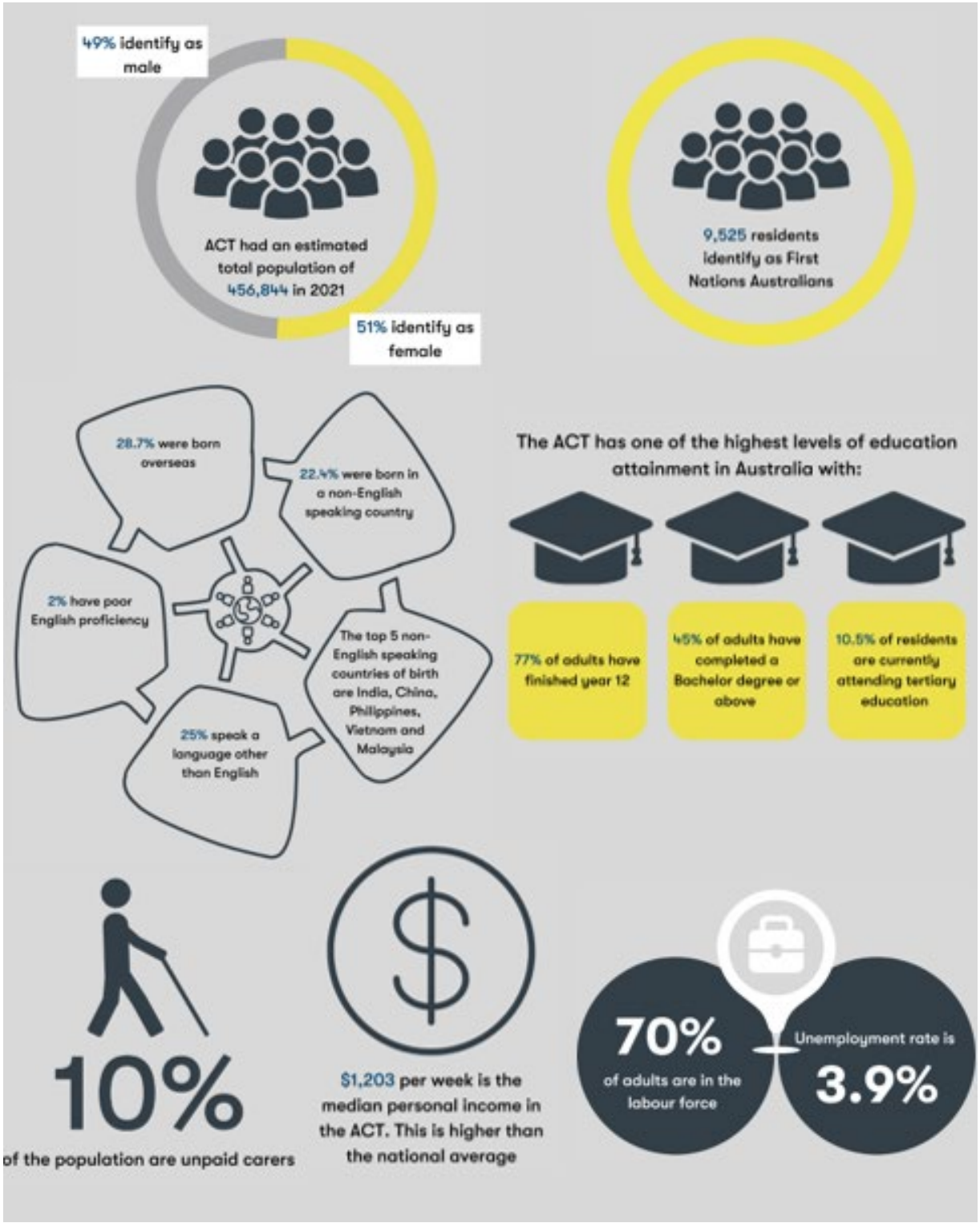
An evaluation process will inform future needs assessments following submission of the 2024 needs assessment. Key areas including data collection, stakeholder engagement and utilisation of CHN staff and subject matter experts will be discussed, with a commitment to ongoing improvements across the needs assessment process.

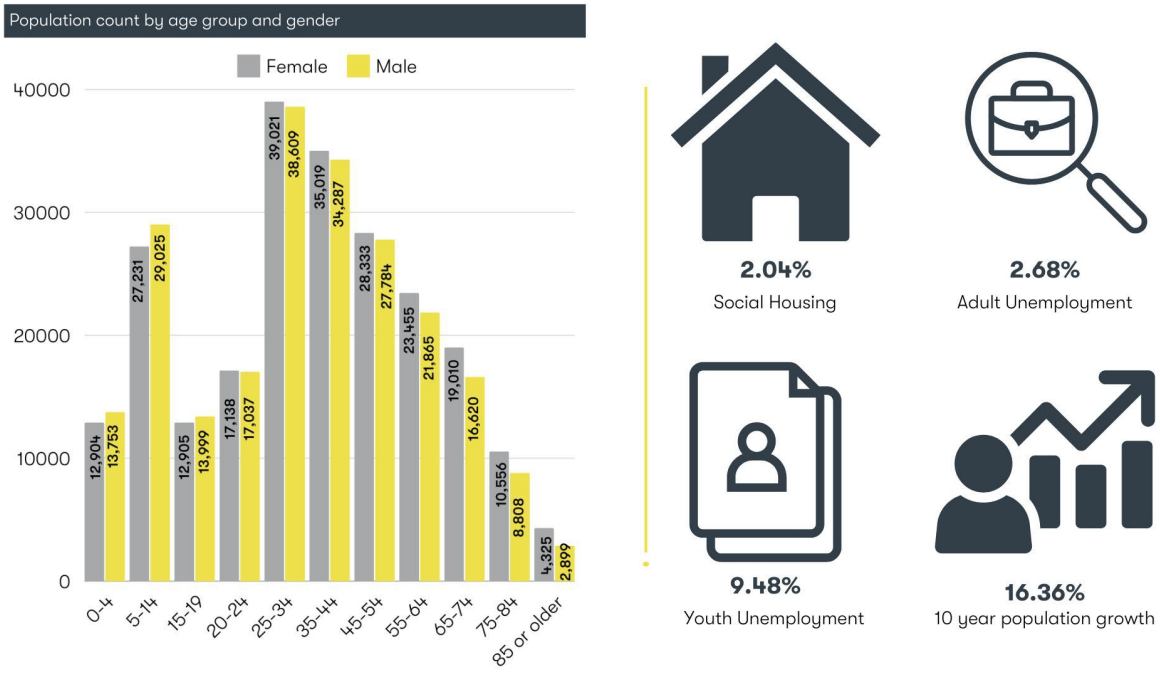
Limitations and improvements

Several limitations and improvements have already been identified through the process and flagged for future needs assessment processes, as set out below.

- A lack of available data for subsets of the ACT population was identified, including many populations at risk of poor health outcomes. Ongoing efforts to gather, share and utilise robust data to inform health and service needs is recommended.
- A commitment to utilise SA3 data where available, to understand the unique needs and challenges in different regions of the ACT. Endeavours to improve methods of benchmarking and like-comparisons to similar PHNs throughout Australia will be pursued in future iterations.
- Improve service mapping capabilities, to understand the available services throughout the ACT and share this data with healthcare providers and consumers where possible.
- Increased collaboration and data sharing with ACT Health, to build on the relationship between organisations and work together to address key health and service needs.
- Ongoing efforts to complete comprehensive engagement with stakeholders throughout the ACT, with a focus on vulnerable and hard to reach population groups. Methods to increase the number of approaches used to engage with stakeholders are being investigated, with the launch of MySay in 2024 envisioned to increase these capabilities.

ACT regional overview





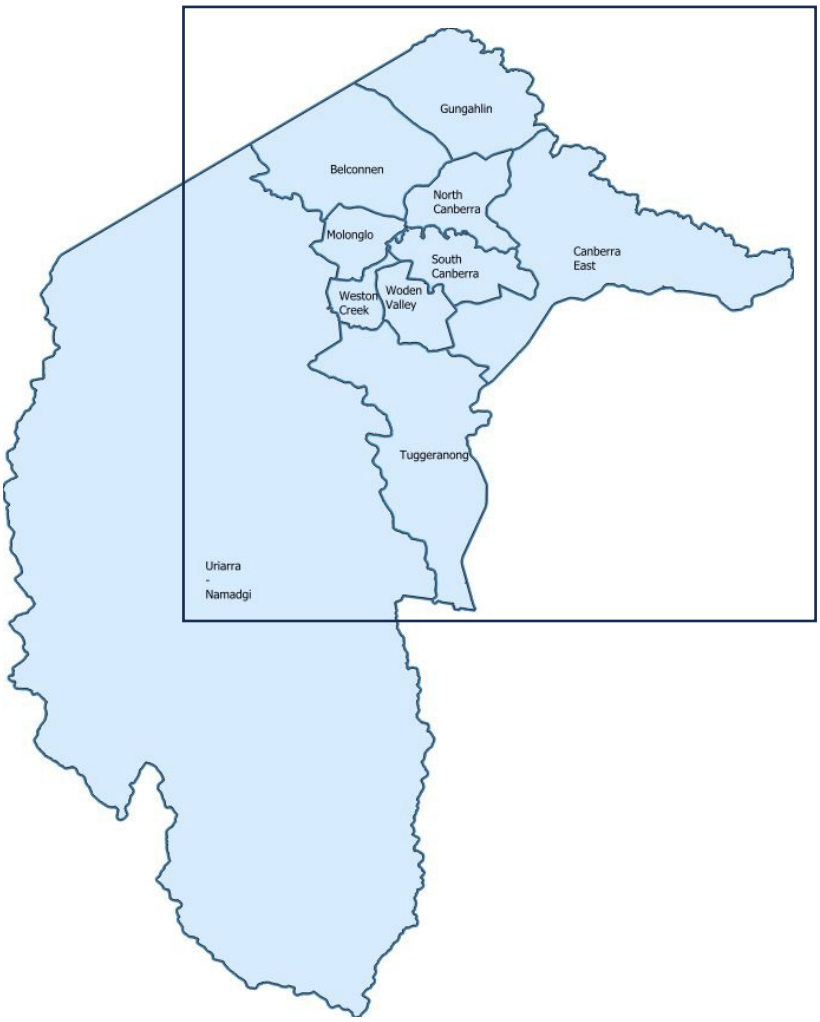


Figure 3: Map of ACT with SA3 regions

The Australian Capital Territory is made up of 10 Statistical Area 3 (SA3) regions – Belconnen, Canberra East, Gungahlin, North Canberra, South Canberra, Tuggeranong, Weston Creek, Woden Valley, Molonglo and Uriarra Namadgi. The Uriarra Namadgi region is largely made up of national parks and has a small population (624 people). Maps throughout this document will be displayed as the region depicted in the inset in Figure 3.

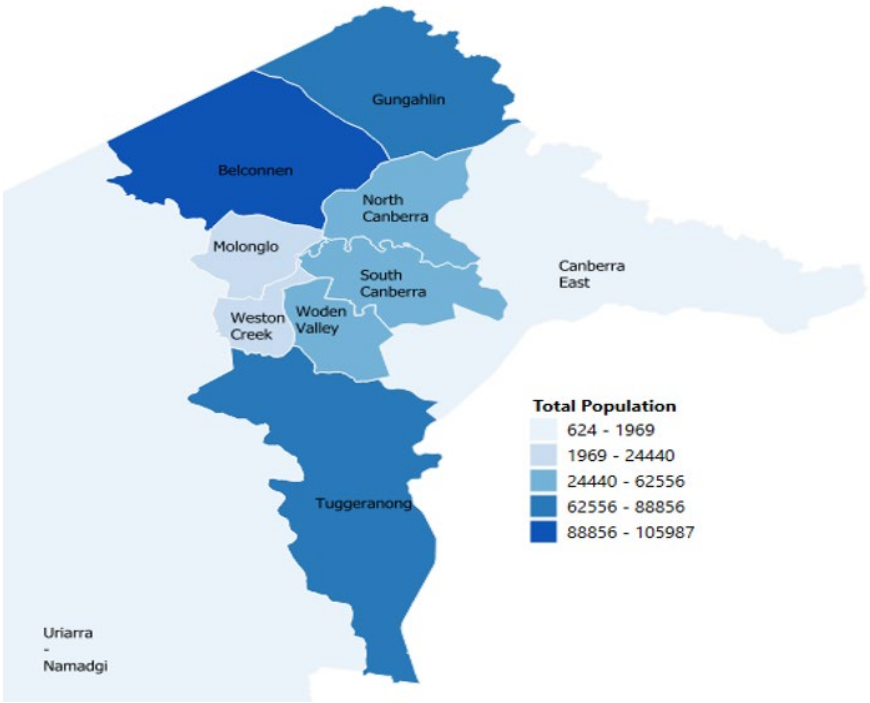


Figure 4: Population by SA3 region, 2022 (PHIDU)

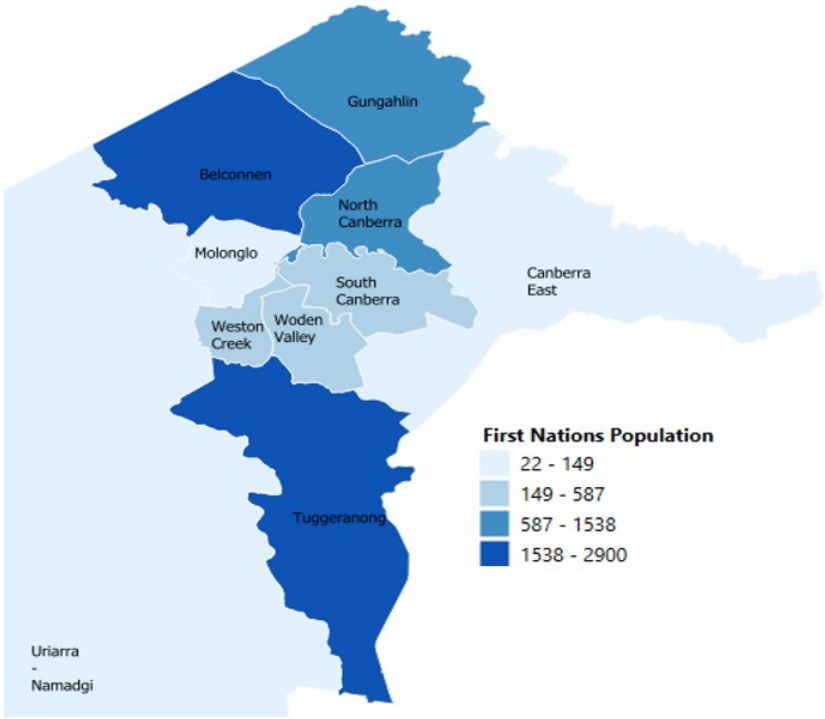


Figure 5: First Nations population by SA3 region, 2021 (PHIDU)

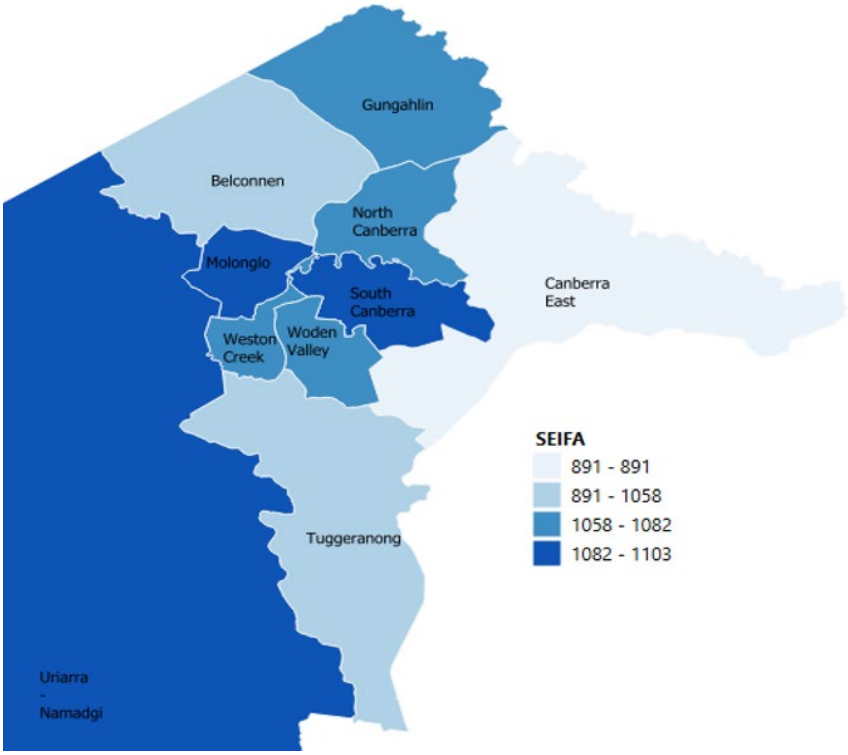


Figure 6: SEIFA index scores by SA3 region, 2021 (PHIDU)

By population, the largest regions of the ACT are Belconnen (105,987 people), Tuggeranong (88,856) and Gungahlin (88,413) (2). A total of 62.3% of the ACT population live in these three regions.

There is a spread of First Nations people throughout the ACT. Of the 9,525 First Nations people living in the ACT in 2021, 30.4% lived in Tuggeranong, 24.6% in Belconnen and 16.1% in Gungahlin (2).

According to the SEIFA Index of relative socioeconomic disadvantage, the ACT experiences low levels of disadvantage overall. The Territory has a SEIFA score of 1071, compared the baseline of 1000 for Australia. Barring Canberra East (891), all other SA3 regions have a SEIFA score of above 1000, with South Canberra (1103) and Molonglo (1100) experiencing the lowest levels of disadvantage (2). When looking at SA2 level, there are pockets of disadvantage within each SA3 region. Namely Charnwood (985), Canberra East (839), Richardson (992) and Namadgi (968) which scores lower than baseline score of 1000 for Australia (3).

Reference list

1. Queensland Commonwealth Partnership (2024), Joint Regional Needs Assessment Framework Implementation Toolkit, Queensland Commonwealth Partnership | Queensland Health
2. PHIDU (2024), Social Health Atlas of Australia: Australian Capital Territory, Data Workbooks - Phidu (torrens.edu.au)
3. Australian Bureau of statistics (2024), Census 2021, Census | Australian Bureau of Statistics