Finding his smile again

Scott’s story

Over many years, Scott’s experiences of family violence affected his confidence, self-esteem and oral health. As he became less confident in his smile, he began avoiding conversations and withdrew from social connections that had once been an important part of his life.

After leaving the relationship, Scott began rebuilding his life with support from his GP and was referred to IPC Health’s Dental Services. His goal was simple but deeply important: to smile again with confidence. Scott says the care he received from the dental team helped him feel respected, understood and hopeful about what was possible. Following significant dental treatment, including extractions, restorative work and dentures, he regained something he thought he had lost forever.

“Believe,” Scott says when asked what he would tell someone putting off dental treatment because they feel embarrassed or think it’s too late. “That’s what IPC Health gave me, belief in myself, that they’re there to actually give back what we’ve lost.

“The impact has been life changing.”

Preventable Dental Hospital admissions are estimated at $6,000 each.

Funding community dental relieves pressure on hospitals and the Victorian Health budget.

> **“It’s given back hope and goals and so much to look forward to that I’ve missed out on. The confidence that a smile and teeth bring can’t be overlooked.**
>
> **Scott, IPC Health Dental client**

For more than a year, Scott had been attending a local swimming pool each morning but rarely spoke to anyone. Since completing his treatment, he has become more confident, started conversations, made new friends and rediscovered the sense of connection he had been missing. “I walk out of there every day now happy and energised,” he says.

Today, Scott sees his smile as much more than oral health. It represents confidence, hope and a renewed sense of self. “I’m so grateful to your service that it’s given back hope and goals and so much to look forward to that I’ve missed out on,” he says. “The confidence that a smile and teeth bring can’t be overlooked.”

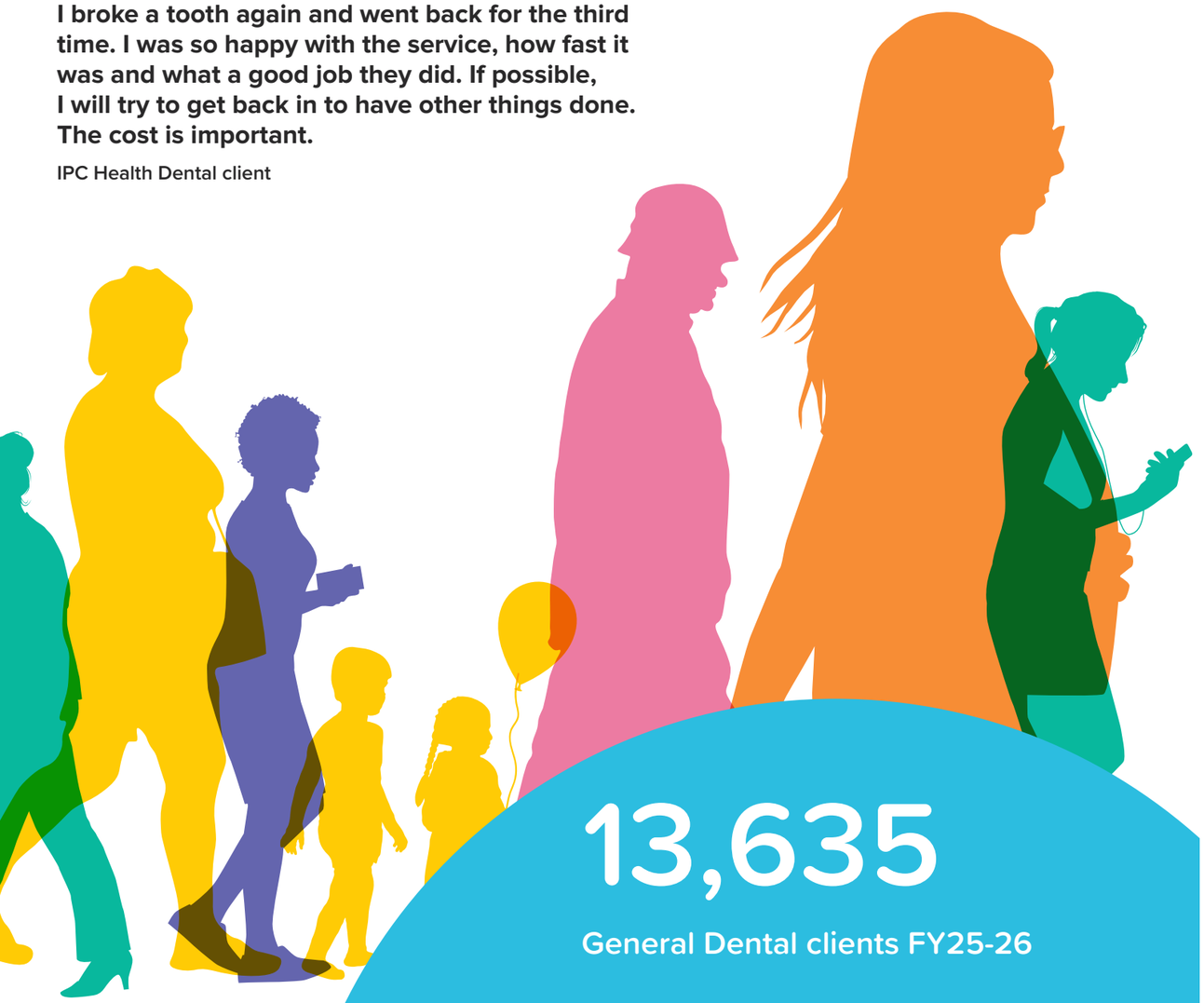
> At current levels, funding stretches to roughly one course of care per eligible adult every seven and a half years.
>
> *Victorian Oral Health Alliance, State Budget analysis 2025–26*



> **“The impact has been life changing.**
>
> **Scott, IPC Health Dental client**

As a pensioner, I can't really afford to go to a normal dentist. I've already been twice to the IPC dentist, and they are really good at what they do. I broke a tooth again and went back for the third time. I was so happy with the service, how fast it was and what a good job they did. If possible, I will try to get back in to have other things done. The cost is important.

IPC Health Dental client



13,635

General Dental clients FY25-26

10,004

People waiting for General Dental

22.4 months

Average wait for General Dental

14%

of clients engaged with 2+ services

Dental wait times are increasing.

The short to mid-term solution is State Government funding for more dental chairs. Mid to longer term, the Federal Government needs to include dental care as part of Medicare bulk billing. It is widely recognised that dental care IS healthcare.

Dental funding has stagnated over the past decade, but we continue our advocacy.

In FY25-26 we supported 13,635 dental clients - people who can't afford the costs of private dental care and whose health is suffering as a result. We hear heartbreaking stories every day of people who are in pain, who can't eat properly, who no longer socialise, due to dental issues. And grateful clients tell us about the transformational impact of timely dental care.

Recently, IPC Health client Scott told us:

"Fixing my teeth has given me back hope and goals and so much to look forward to that I've missed out on. The confidence that a smile and teeth bring can't be overlooked."

Over 10,000 Victorians waiting in IPC Health catchment area

LGA / IPC Health Campus	Population	SEIFA	Waiting	30+ months	Longest wait
Brimbank / St Albans	196,046	913	**9,533**	**1,108**	**46.9 months**
Wyndham / Hoppers Crossing, W'm Vale	308,623	1006	**5,096**	**1,211**	**43.9 months**
Hobsons Bay / Wyndham Vale	93,738	1021	**364**	**131**	**40.9 months**
Total waiting for general dental care			**10,004**	**2,450**	

12,454

DWAUs funded this year - the same funding for 10 years despite pop growth

10,004

People waiting for general dental care, up 20% in thirteen months

2,450

Victorians in Melbourne's west have waited 30+ months. The longest wait is 4 years.

51

Dental Chairs required to meet our LGA's demand. 22 are funded.



For the first time since I was 13, I can eat without pain and I feel like myself again. I'm so grateful.

- Jess



"Facing months without front teeth is going to pressure my mental health.

I really feel myself isolating away from people."

IPC Health dental client, waiting for general care and dentures

Why this matters

89,200

preventable hospitalisations across Australia in 2024-25

1 in 3

Australian adults report feeling uncomfortable about the appearance of their teeth.

10.4%

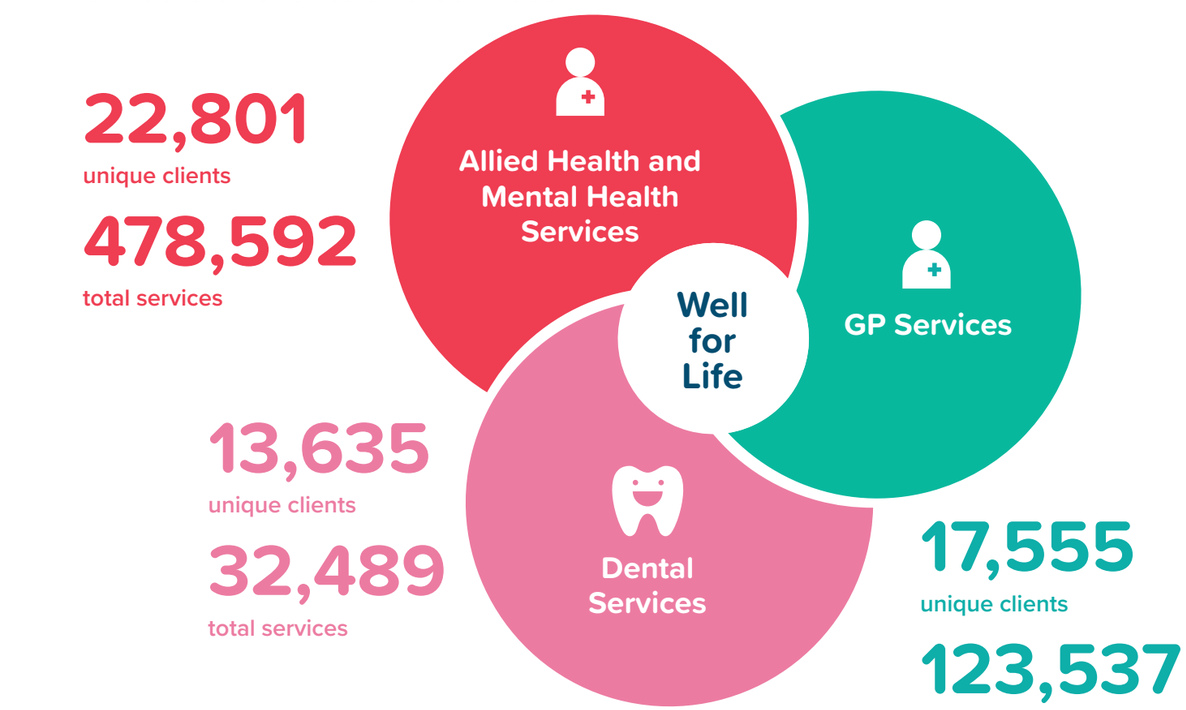
of Brimbank residents experienced food insecurity, a recognised risk factor for poor oral health.

Our impact in numbers

Unique clients **50,142**

Total services **478,592**

Numbers of clients and services



Clients using more than one service **21%**

Well for Life: Year One

Improving wellbeing across Melbourne's west

Every day, the 550+ staff of IPC Health support some of Victoria's fastest-growing and most diverse communities across our six campuses and in the community.

Across Melbourne's west, rapid population growth, cultural diversity, rising rates of chronic disease, housing pressures and cost-of-living challenges are increasing demand for accessible, culturally-responsive healthcare.

This complexity is why integrated care matters. Our Patient Reported Outcomes Measures demonstrate the effectiveness of our holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to health and wellbeing support.

Overall wellbeing improved

63.3 → 67.9

Average wellbeing score before and after participation in IPC Health programs and services, which is statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

44%
of clients with challenged wellbeing improved to a higher wellbeing category during their engagement with IPC Health.

35%
of clients with compromised wellbeing improved to normal wellbeing.

87%
of clients already experiencing normal wellbeing maintained their wellbeing.

Listening to Melbourne's west

How are people across our community really doing, and what do they need to be Well for Life?

Well for Life is about more than the people who come through our doors. It is about the health and wellbeing of the whole community.

In 2025, IPC Health commissioned its first independent community sentiment survey, hearing from 925 adults across the six local government areas we serve. They told us how satisfied they are with life, what worries them most and what they need to stay well.

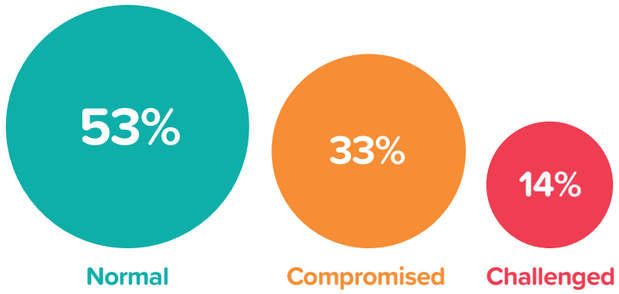
Their answers give us a benchmark. We will track these measures over time to understand changing community needs and to guide where we focus our services, partnerships and advocacy.

Our community's wellbeing

68.5

out of 100

Average personal wellbeing score, on par with the national average of 68*

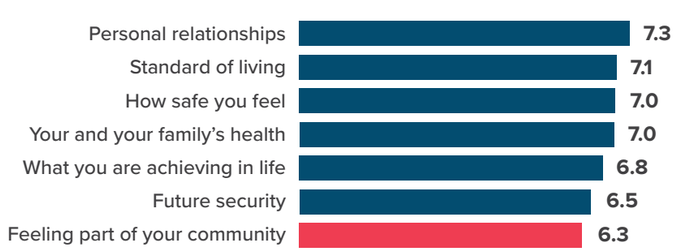


Almost half (47%) of adults in our community are living with wellbeing below the normal range.

Feeling part of the community is our lowest-rated area of life

Only half (51%) are satisfied with feeling part of their community, and almost 1 in 5 (19%) rated it 4 out of 10 or lower.

Average satisfaction, score out of 10



Closing the gap

Clients who completed wellbeing assessments started below the community average. After taking part in our programs and services, their average rose close to the community level.



Average score out of 10 (6.0–7.0 shown)†

What do we need to be well for life?

We asked people, in their own words, what they need to be well for life. Their answers reflect the Well for Life approach: physical, mental and social health, supported by affordable care close to home.

% of people who mentioned each theme



> **Affordable access to health care for every stage of life.**
> Survey respondent, Melton

Money and health top our worries

Asked to name their single biggest concern, almost a third named a financial pressure (30%) and 1 in 4 a health issue (25%).

Single biggest concern

- **Financial pressures** 30% combined
- **Health** 25% combined
- **Other**

Top 8 of 22 life areas shown. Each person chose one area as their biggest concern.

What else we heard

27%
found it difficult or very difficult to meet essential living costs, such as housing, food, energy and healthcare, in the past 12 months.

84%
feel confident they can help prevent or reduce problems with their own health and wellbeing, a strong foundation for prevention.

45–64
year olds reported the lowest wellbeing of any age group, averaging 6.57 out of 10.

About the data: IPC Health Community Sentiment Tracking, benchmark wave (2025). Online survey of 1,863 Victorians conducted by an independent research agency; results shown are for the 925 adults living in Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moorabool and Wyndham, weighted. Wellbeing is measured with the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI), which averages satisfaction with seven areas of life, each rated 0–10; normal wellbeing is 7.0 or higher, compromised 5.0–6.9 and challenged below 5.0.

* Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, Survey 42 (2025): personal wellbeing 68 out of 100.

† Client scores are from PWI assessments with 433 clients (see 'Integrated care makes a differeso the comparison is indicative. Open-ended answers were grouped into themes, and people could mention more than one. Figures may not add due to rounding.nce'); client and community results were collected differently,