

# Measuring Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRH) in Rural Australia

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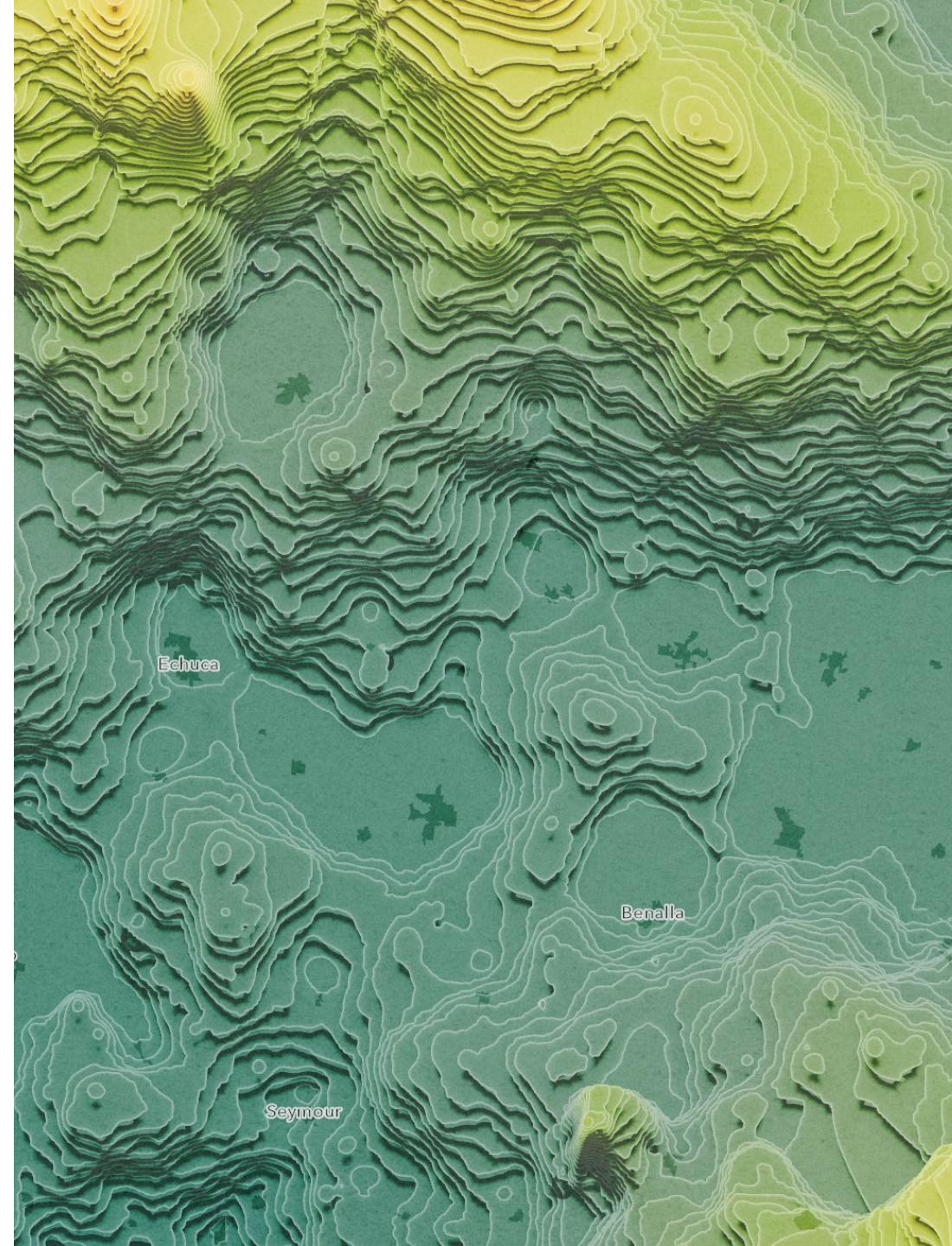
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**DRH** DEAKIN  
RURAL  
HEALTH



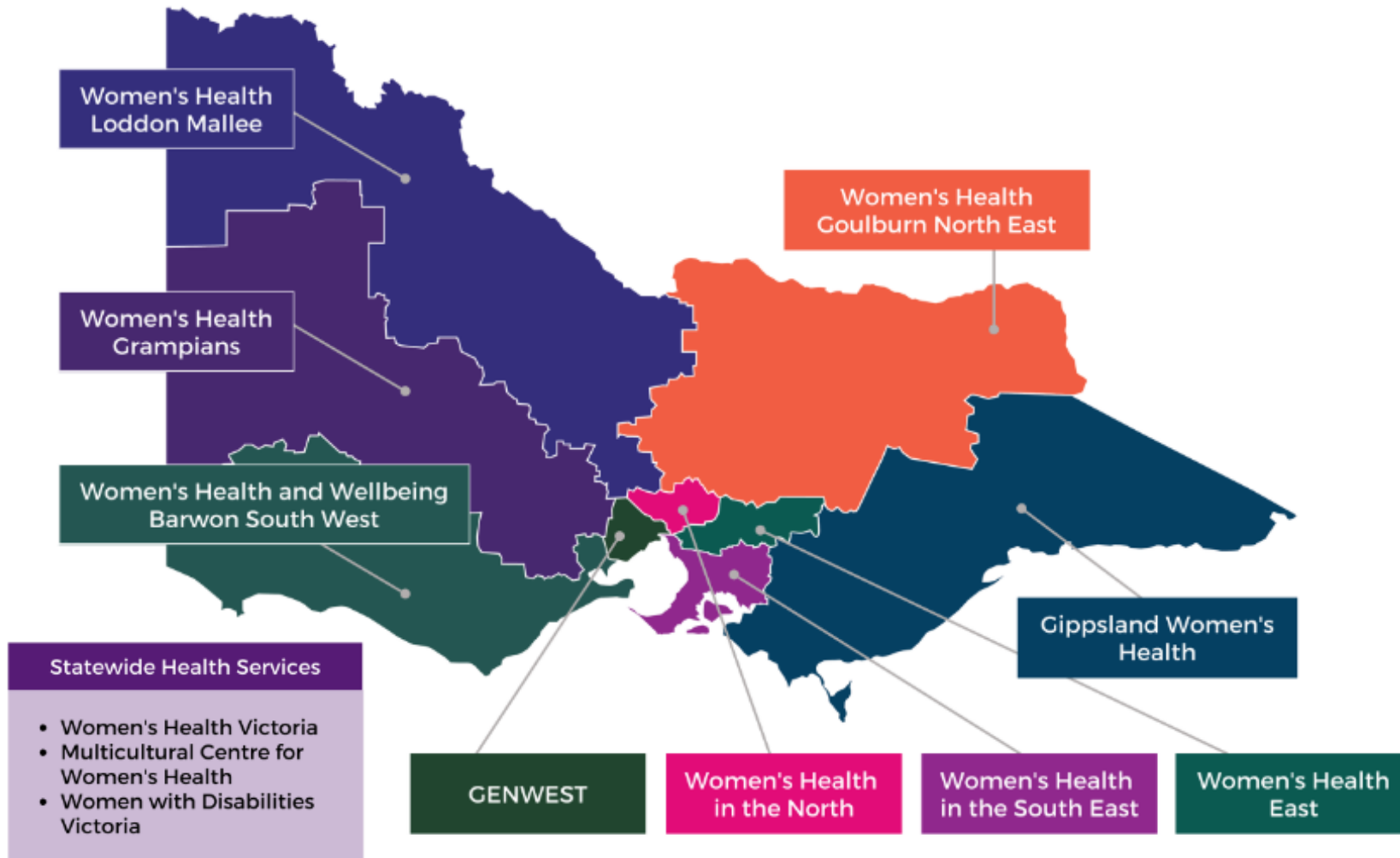
**WOMEN'S HEALTH  
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Barwon South West



# Understanding local SRH access



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## Research aims

- 1) To understand the barriers and facilitators to SRH service access in a rural context.
- 2) Spatial analysis to identify SRH service gaps that can support strategic planning and advocacy.

Health services	Definition	Example of services
<b>Health promotion and prevention</b>	Improving health and preventing ill health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immunisation (e.g., HPV vaccination)</li> <li>• Cancer screening (e.g., cervical, breast)*</li> <li>• STI screening</li> <li>• Disease prevention programs</li> </ul>
<b>Primary healthcare</b>	First contact with the health system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GP practice* (e.g., contraception, medical termination, HBV/HIV s100)</li> <li>• Community health (e.g., maternal health, lactation consultant)</li> <li>• Allied health (e.g., pelvic floor physiotherapy, continence services)</li> <li>• Pharmacy* (e.g., dispensing of contraception and M2Step)</li> </ul>
<b>Specialist care</b>	Provides services for those with specific or complex conditions or issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referred medical specialist services (e.g., urogynaecology, gynaecology, and reproductive endocrinology fertility services)*</li> <li>• Diagnostic services (ultrasound*, pathology collection centre)</li> </ul>
<b>Hospitals</b>	Services provided to admitted and non-admitted patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inpatient</li> <li>• Outpatient clinics</li> <li>• Maternity services*</li> </ul>

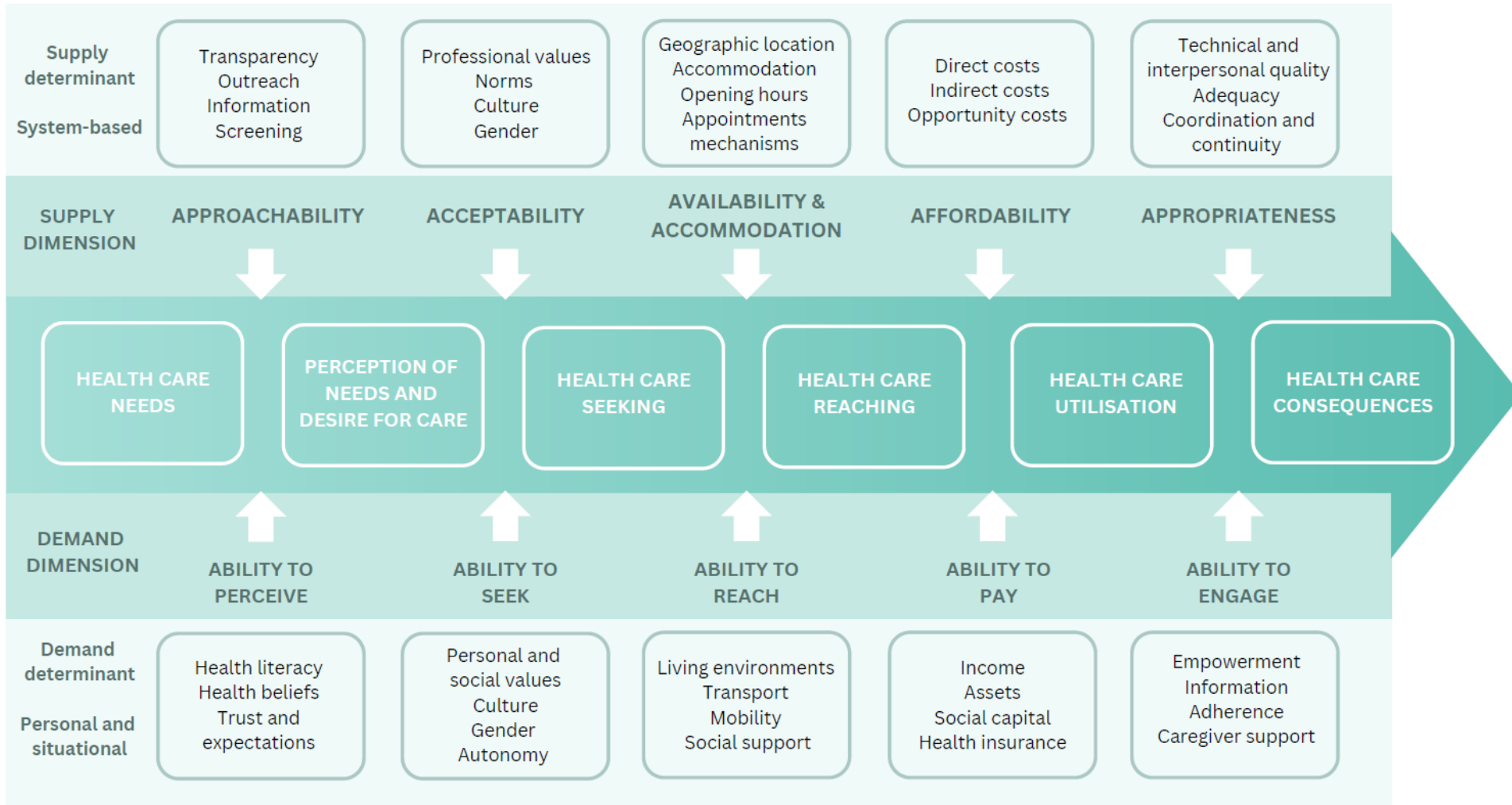
\*National data



# Access to healthcare



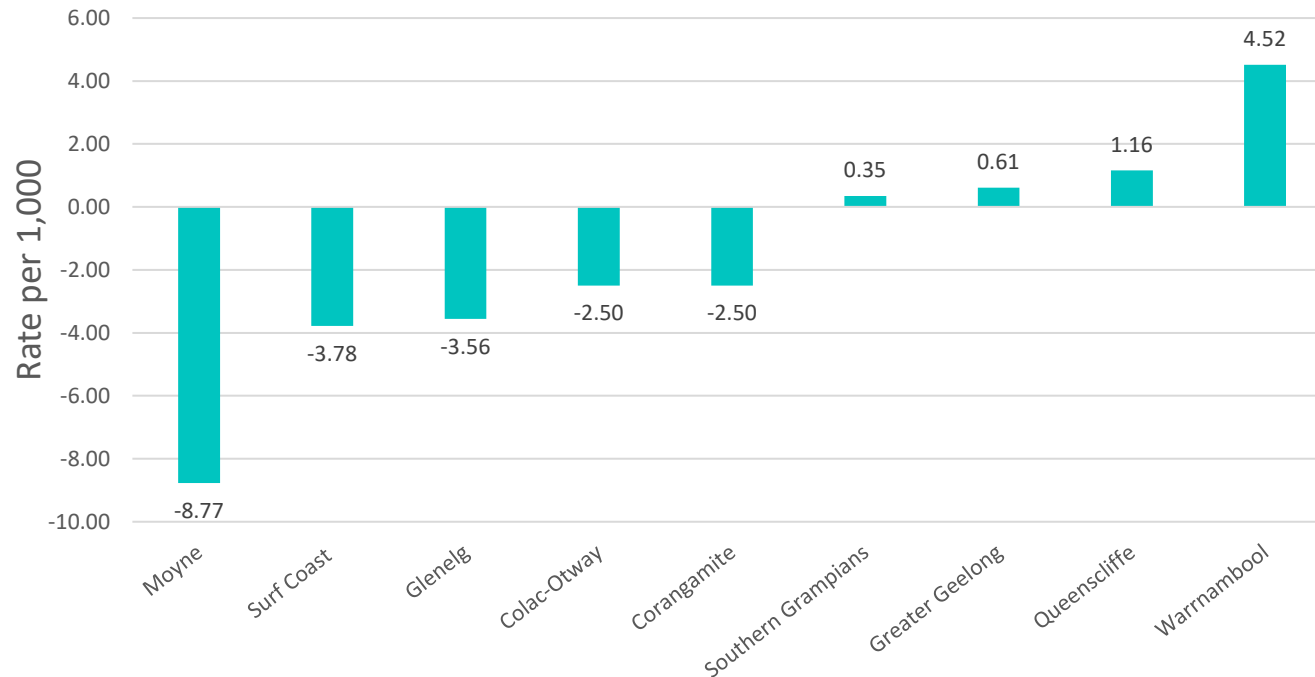
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International	Priorities
WHO Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To expand contraceptive <b>access</b>, choice and method mix through research and development.</li> </ul>
United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A world with <b>equitable and universal access</b> to quality education at all levels, to health care and social protection, where physical, mental and social well-being are assured.</li> </ul>
National	Priorities
National Women's Health Strategy (2020-2030)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase <b>access</b> to sexual and reproductive health care information, diagnosis, treatment and services.</li> <li>Support <b>enhanced access</b> to maternal and perinatal health care services.</li> </ul>
National Action Plan for Endometriosis (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target diagnostic delay and <b>promote early access</b> to intervention, care, and treatment options.</li> <li>Improve the affordability, <b>accessibility</b> and national consistency of management and care options throughout Australia.</li> </ul>
National STI Strategy (2018–2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure <b>equitable access</b> to prevention programs and resources, testing and treatment in a variety of settings.</li> </ul>
State	Priorities
Victorian Sexual and Reproductive Health and Viral Hepatitis Strategy (2022-30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support skill development to provide culturally safe, appropriate and informed services that recognise, respect and seek to address <b>barriers to access</b>.</li> <li>Promote use of the nurse practitioner and pharmacist workforce models to <b>increase access</b> and service delivery options as prescribers and dispensers.</li> </ul>
Victorian Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan (2022-30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service provision: <b>increasing access</b> to person-centred sexual and reproductive health services for all Victorians.</li> </ul>

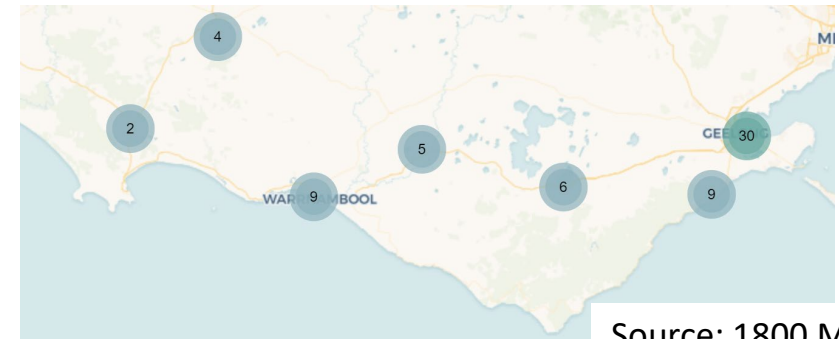
# Local data limitations

Differences in patient and provider rates\* by LGA (2022)



\* Rate equals the number of claims for MBS Item 35503 – Intrauterine contraceptive device

- Limited data available in smaller spatial units
- Variability in LGA sizes across the region
  - Largest 6,654 km<sup>2</sup> and smallest 11 km<sup>2</sup>
  - Largest population ~271,057 and smallest 3,276



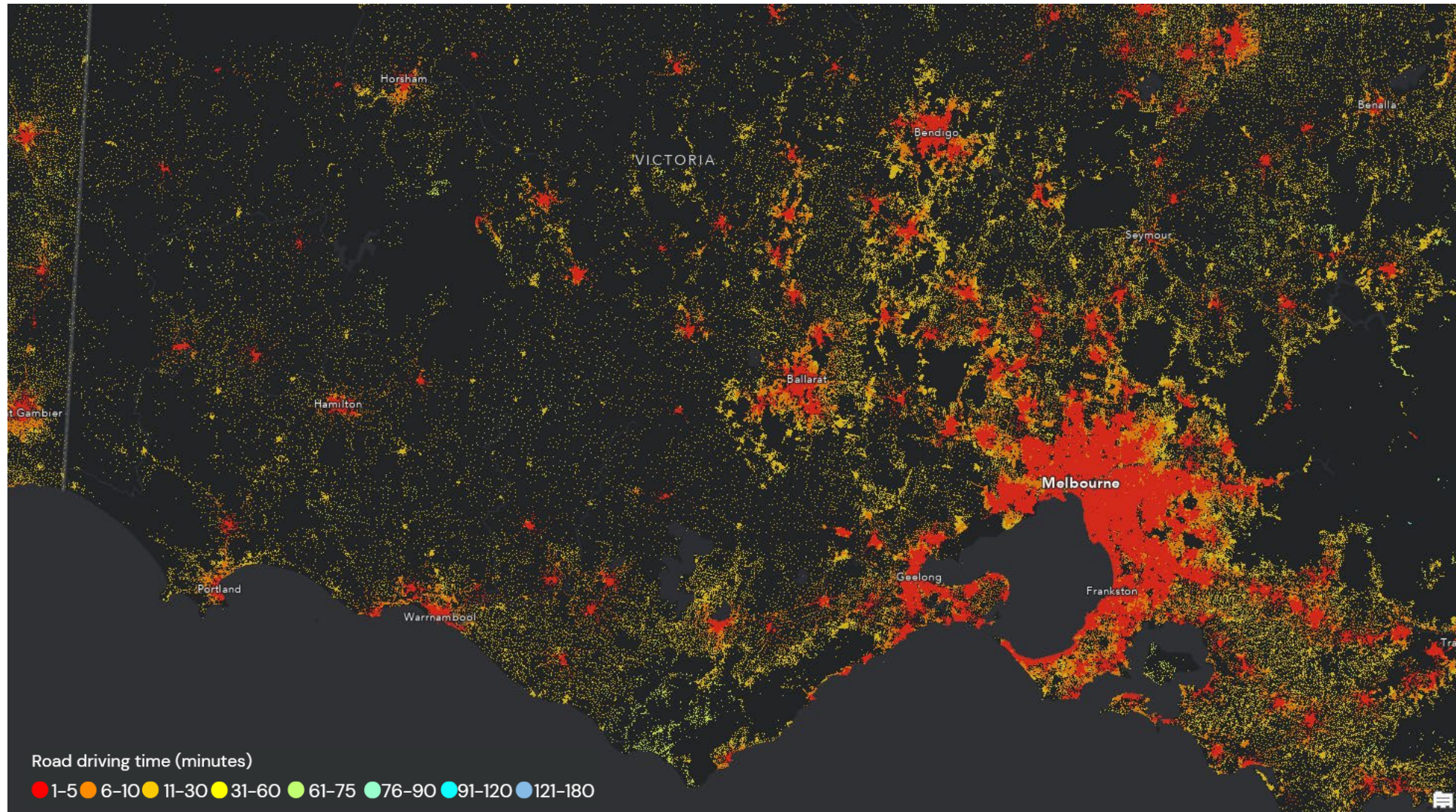
Source: 1800 My Options



# Local spatial analysis – General practice locations



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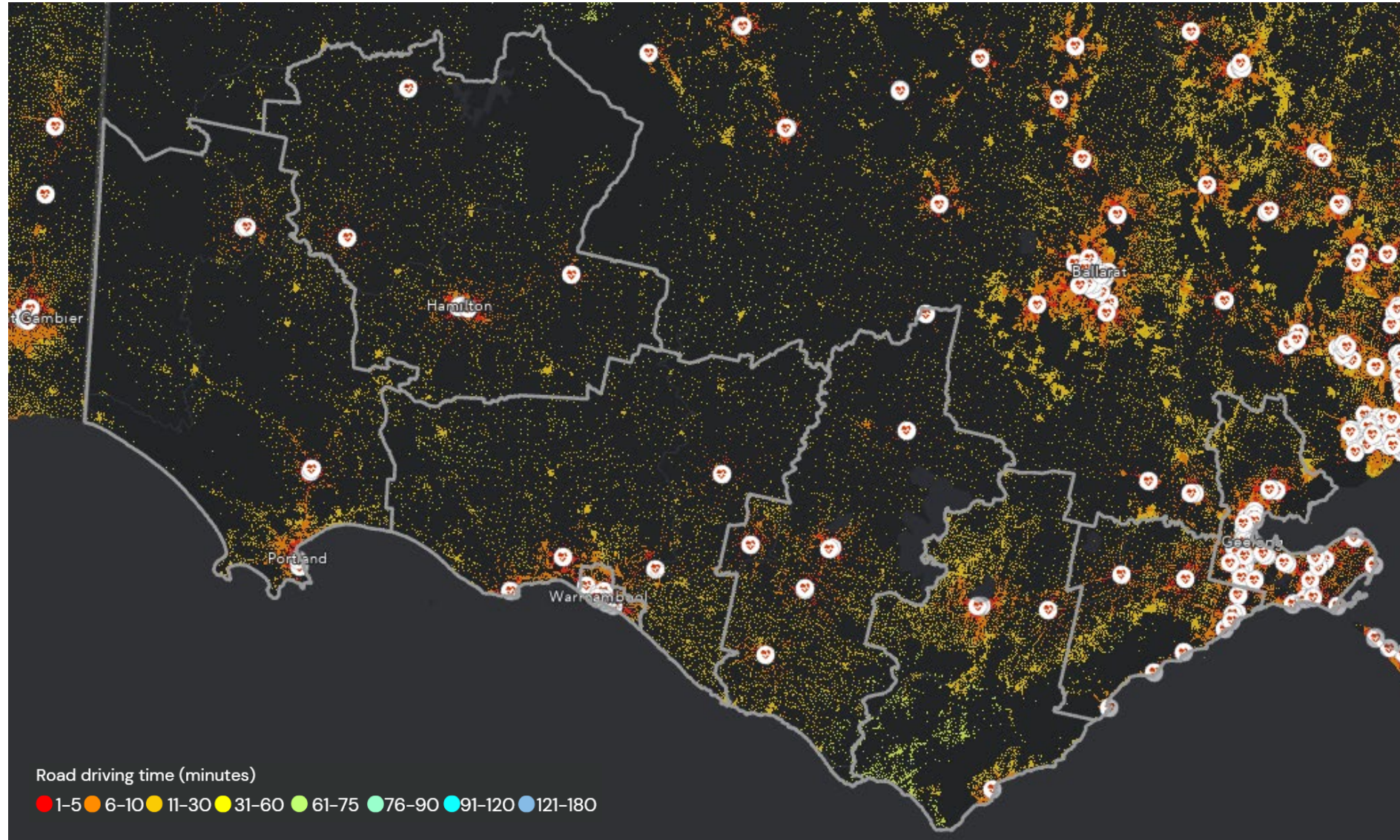




# Local spatial analysis – General practice locations



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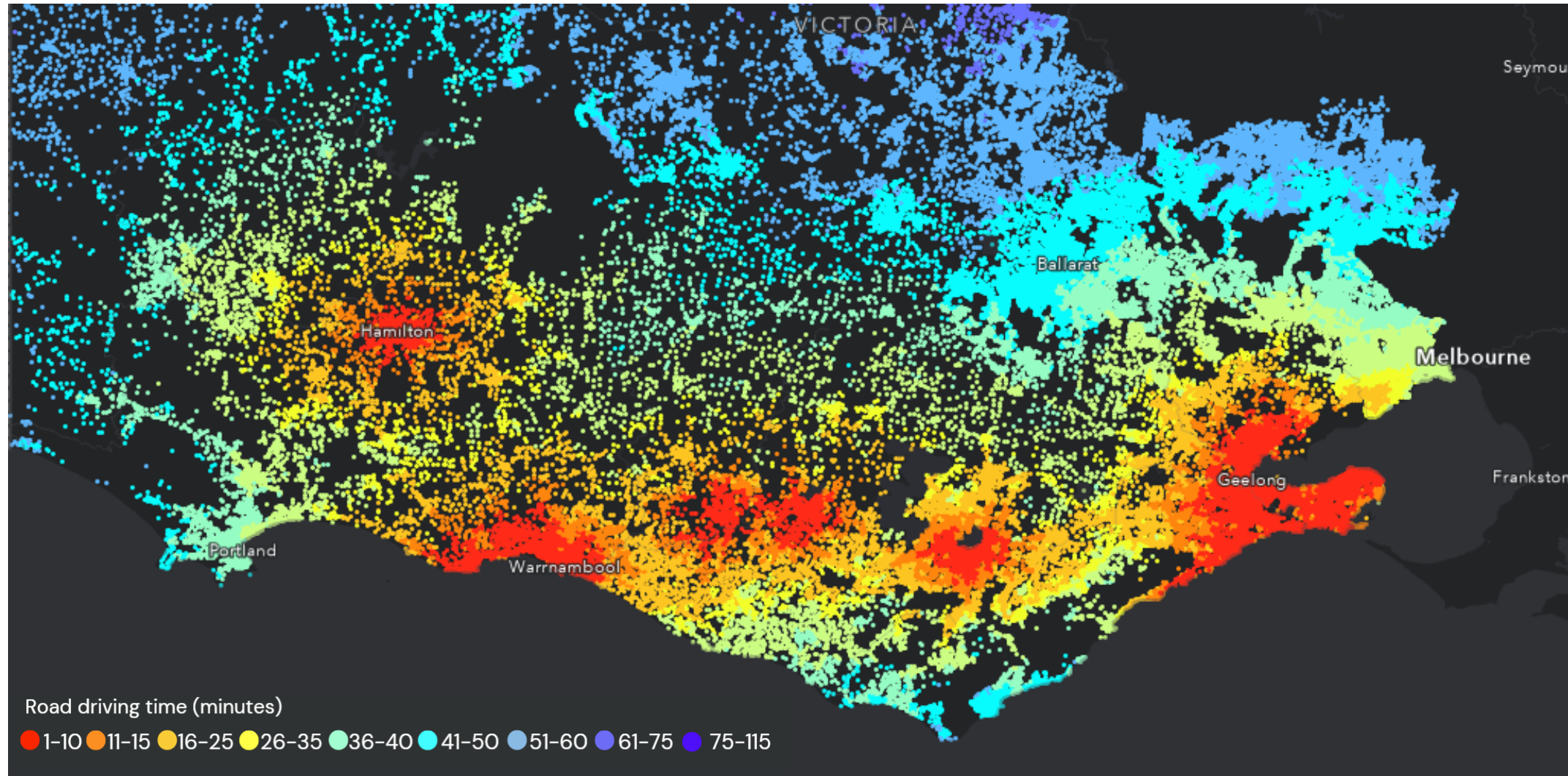




# Local spatial analysis – Long acting reversible contraception (Intrauterine device)



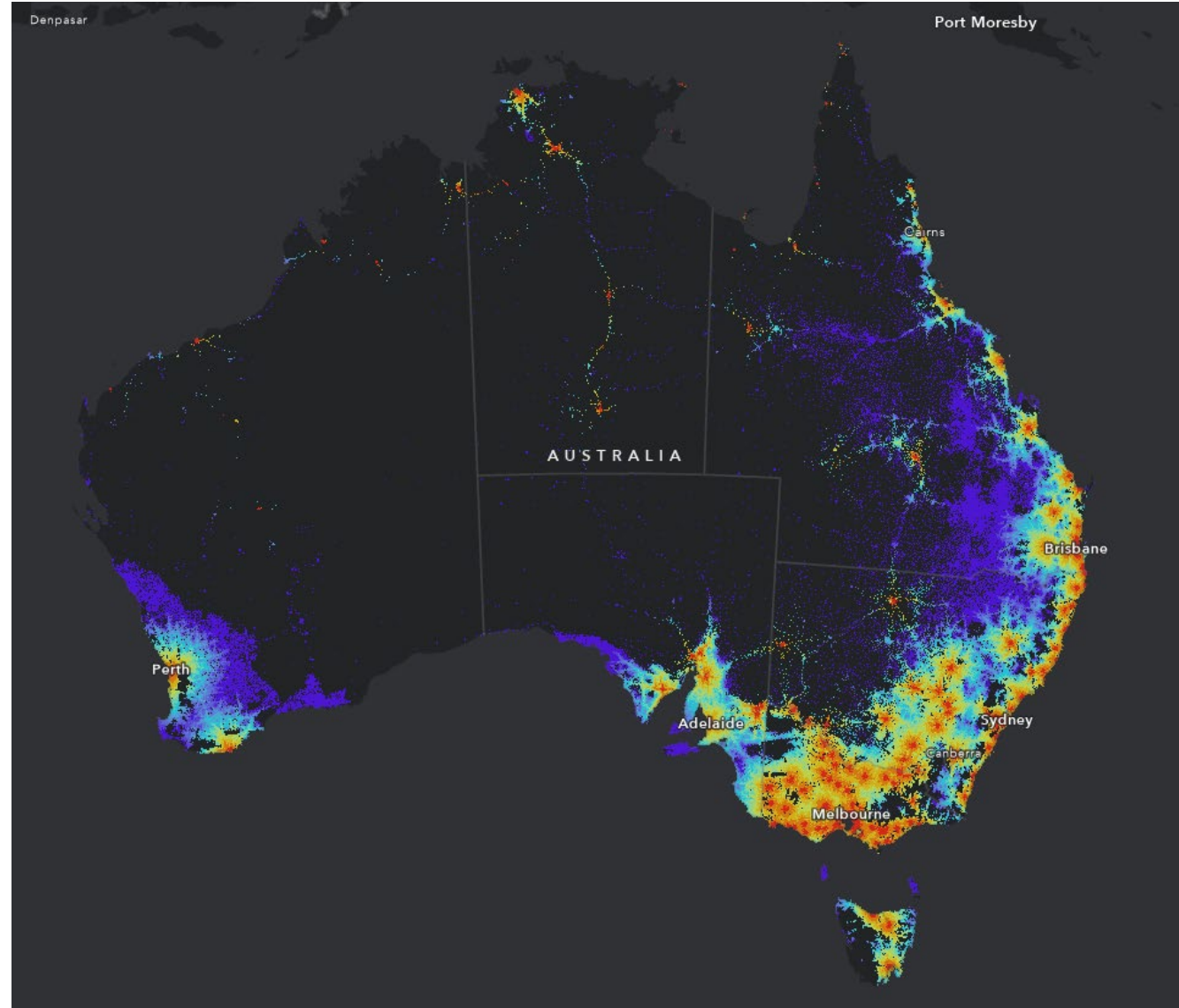
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# National spatial analysis – Sexual health service



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# Future directions and limitations



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- Practitioner
- Hospital
- Pharmacist
- Pregnancy Options Counsellor
- Imaging



## Data availability

- National health service data
- Capability to analyse nationally

## Data limitations

- Gaps in service-level offerings
- Siloed data (state-held)

# References

Wood SM, Alston L, Beks H, Mc Namara K, Coffee NT, Clark RA, et al. The application of spatial measures to analyse health service accessibility in Australia: a systematic review and recommendations for future practice. BMC Health Services Research. 2023 Apr 1;23(1):330.

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Health system overview [Internet]. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. [cited 2022 Aug 4]. Available from: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/health-system-overview>





# Questions?



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