

# Paediatricians in primary schools

Cass Beckham - Truganina South Primary School, VIC

Vicki Haynes - Truganina South Primary School, VIC

Anna Cartwright - Paediatric registrar, Werribee Mercy  
Hospital School Outreach Clinic Program, VIC

# PAEDIATRICIANS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

City of Wyndham, Victoria

**Vicki Haynes:**

Community Hub Leader, Truganina South Primary School

**Cass Beckman:**

Assistant Principal Truganina South Primary School

**Anna Cartwright:**

Paediatric registrar, Werribee Mercy Hospital School Outreach  
Clinic Program



# The School Outreach Program

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- Partnership between North-West Primary Health Network and Community Hubs Australia
- Aims to provide families with access to specialist medical care who otherwise may not have received it
- Set up in the three Community Hubs in Wyndham, VIC
- Support for families with any developmental, speech, behavioural, emotional concerns for their children
- Multi-disciplinary case conferencing



Mercy Health

*Care first*



'Balit Yirramboi'

Dohertys Creek P-9 College  
TRUGANINA





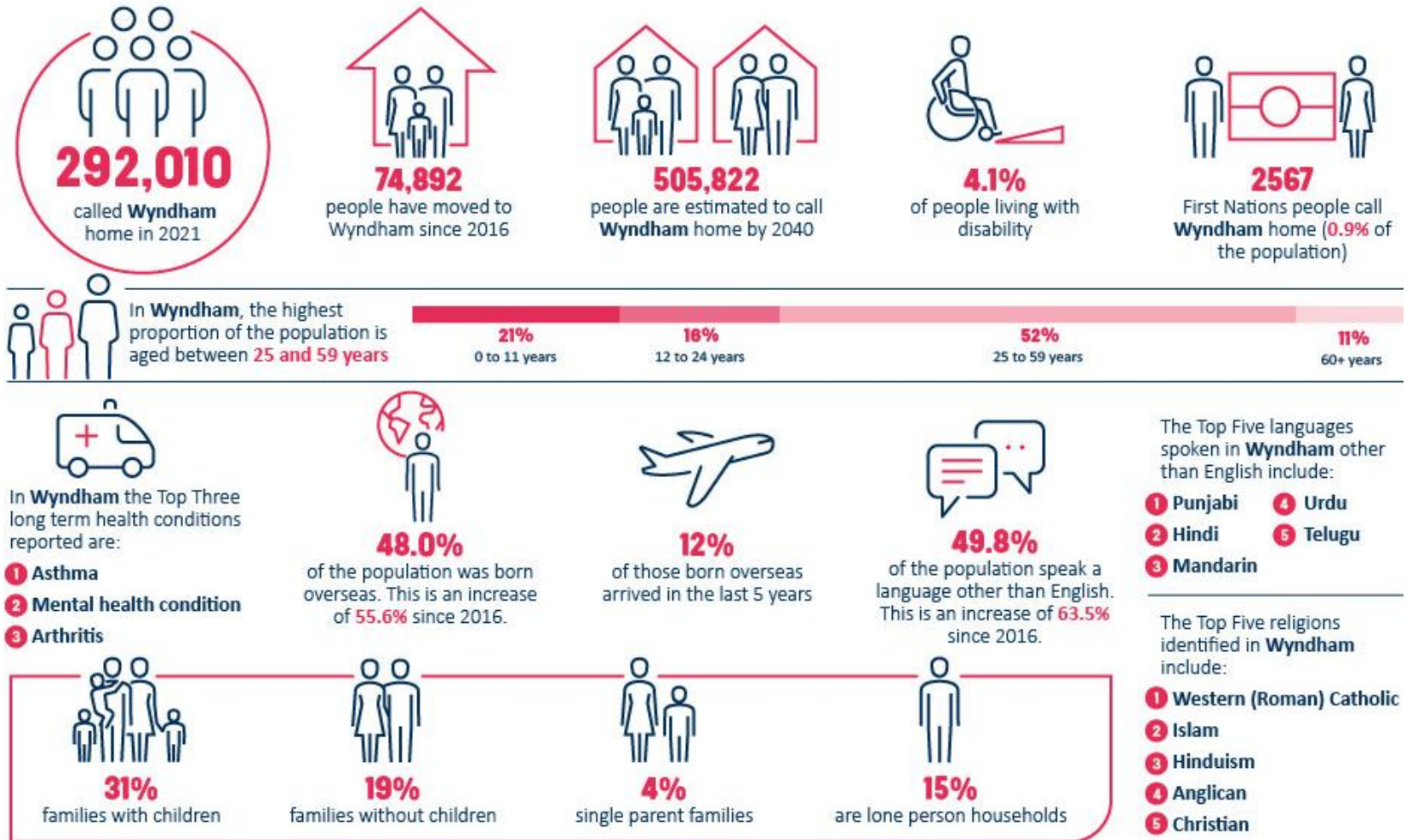
# The Hubs

- Safe, familiar environment
- Access to services for families
- Introduces new families to our Community Hub
- Consultation rooms set up in the Hub or appropriate space in the school



# Wyndham City

- Median Age: 31
- 25.5% of the population 0-14 years old
- Fastest growing region in the country 2019-2022
- Multicultural demographic



1. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). QuickStats: Salisbury East (SA). Retrieved from <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/SAL22883>

2. Wyndham City Council. (n.d.). Snapshot Wyndham. [Online] Available at: <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/snapshot-wyndham> (Accessed: May 23, 2023)

# Strengths

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- Reduces **barriers** to paediatric care
- **Earlier intervention** improves long term outcomes
- **Comfortable/ familiar** environment
- **Reduces** school absences for appointments
- **Immediate feedback** to, and from, teachers & school allied health staff
- With parents consent, the **school** can also request referral to the clinic



# Challenges

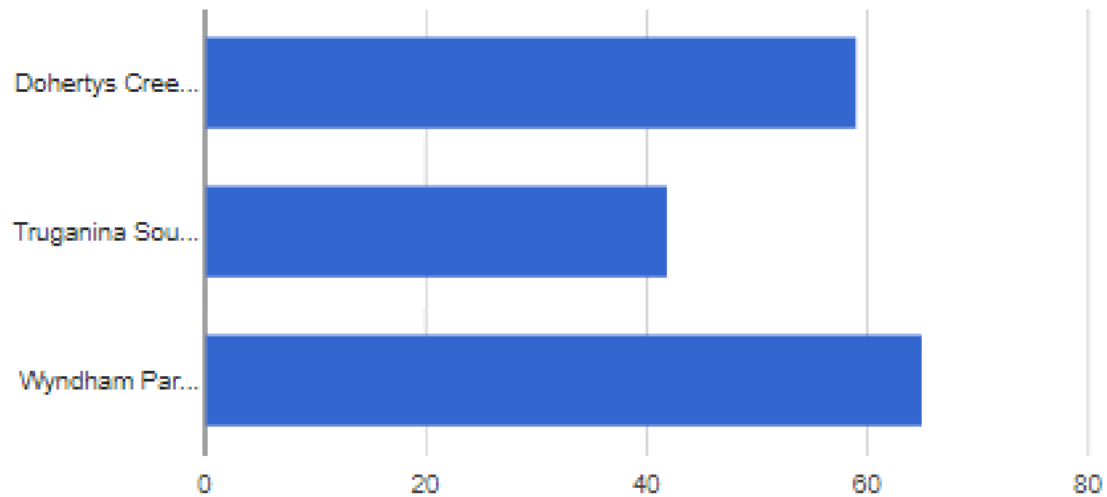
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- Access to **timely allied health or diagnostic** services in the community
- Appropriate **spaces** to review & examine patients
- Appropriate **equipment**
- **Maintaining engagement** with some vulnerable patients
- Referrals exceeding the clinics **capacity** in some schools



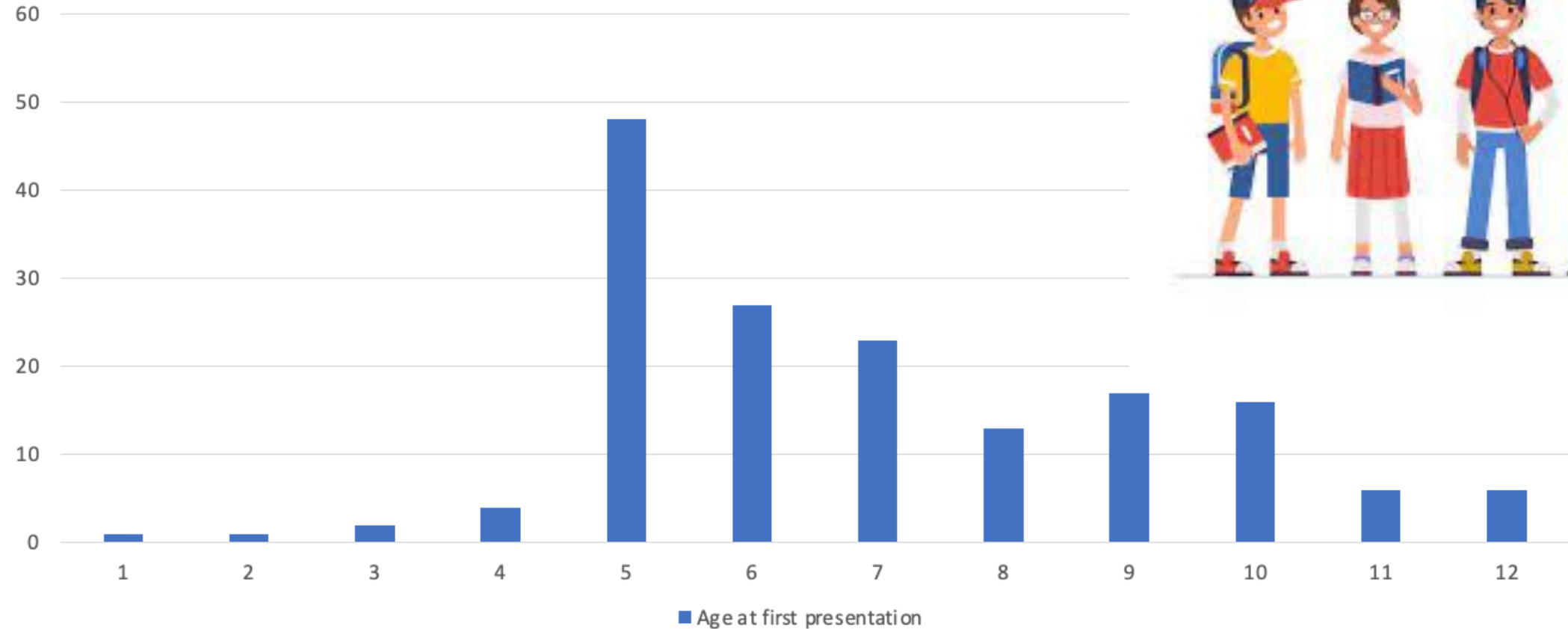
# Clinic Snapshot

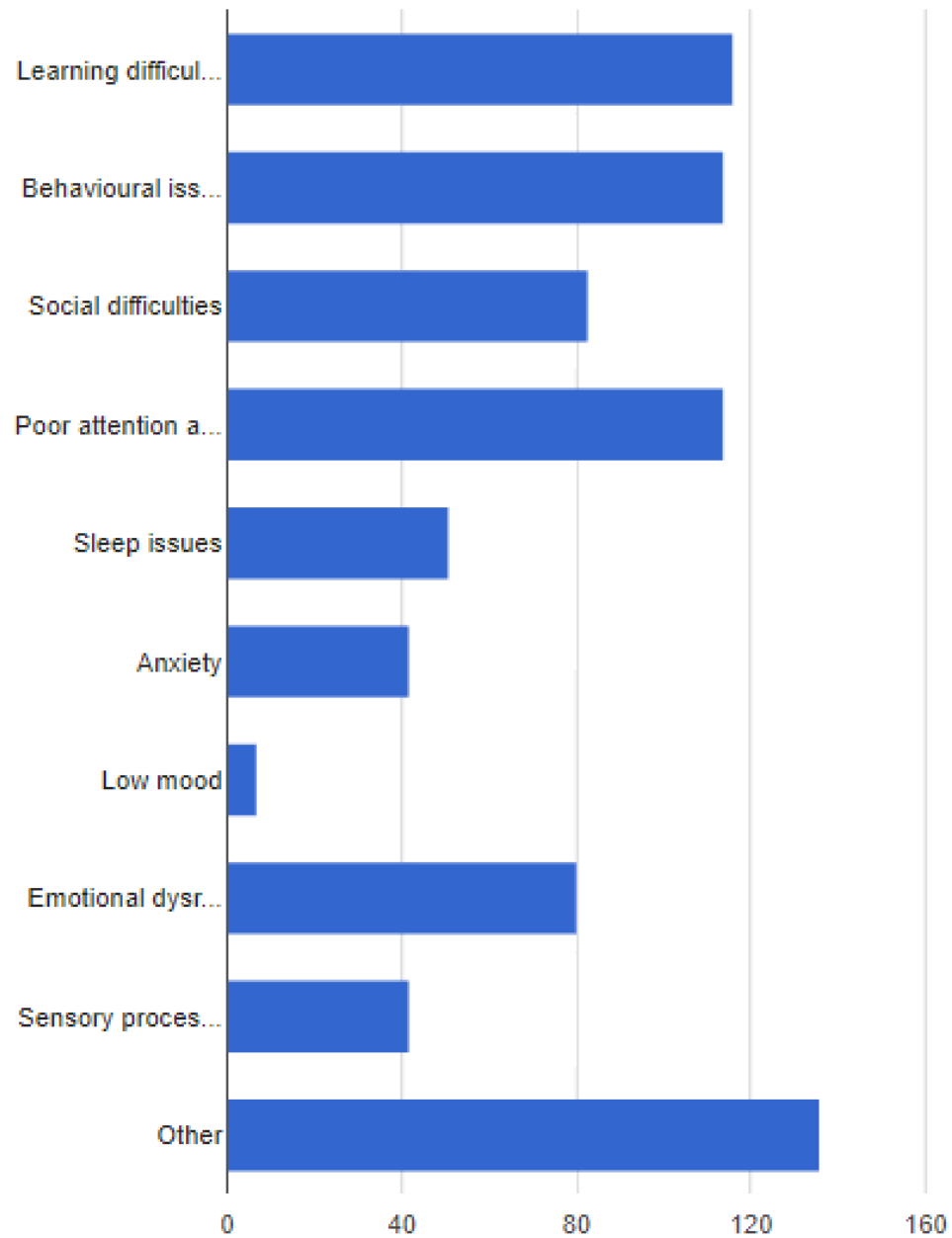
- More than **160** children seen so far





# Age at First Presentation

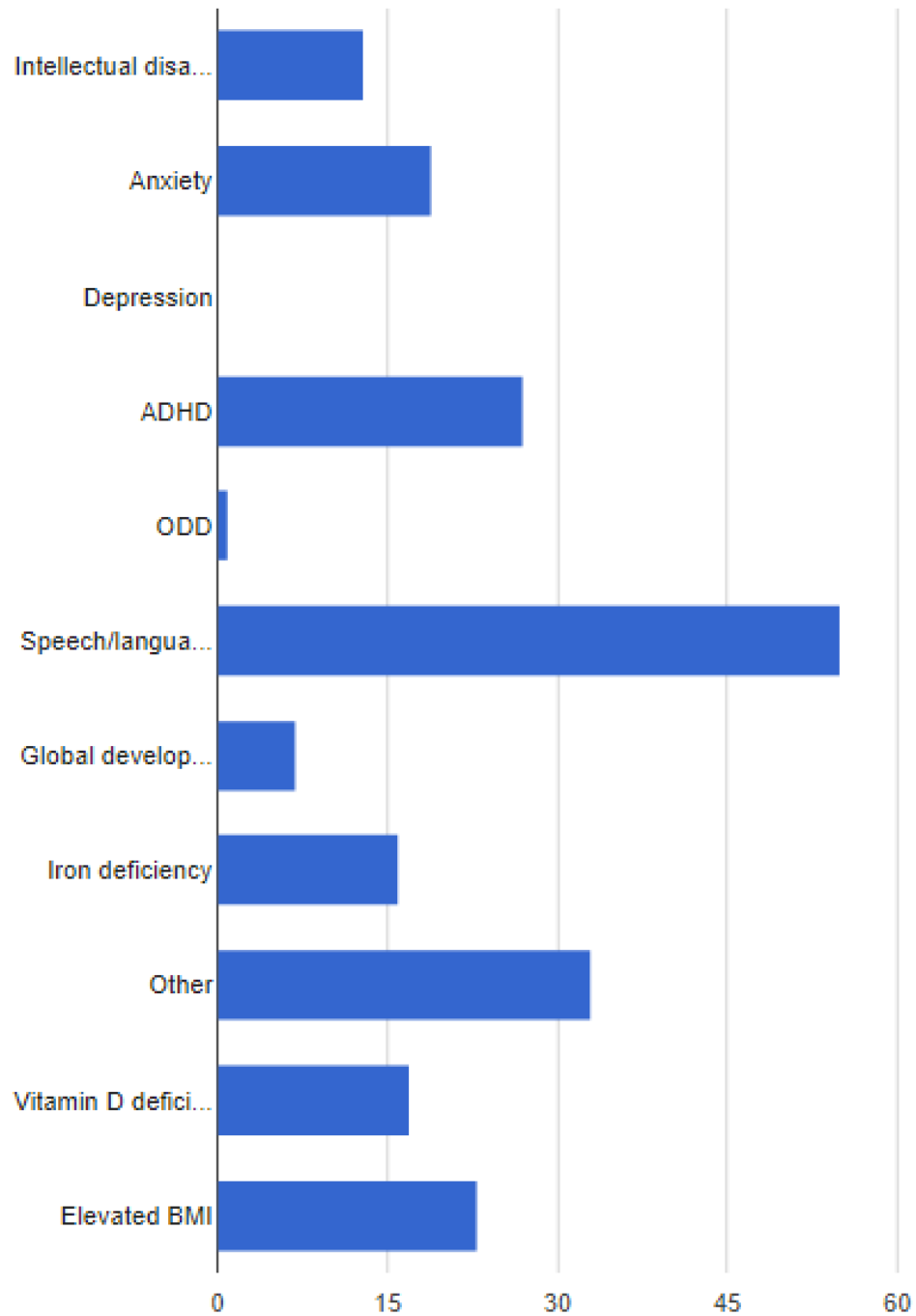




# Symptoms

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# Diagnoses

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# What have we been able to do?

- **Health education**
- Link patients with **NDIS** or community **allied health**
- **Developmental** monitoring
- Refer for appropriate cognitive, speech or Autism **assessments**
- Treat **medical** issues
- Treat **developmental & psychiatric** issues
- Work closely with the schools to optimise care





# Why are Paediatricians in schools valuable?

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- Opportunities to share how the child is at home and at school.
- Strengthens the home-school partnership.
- Invites families into an environment where they feel safe and supported.
- Child does not miss out on attending school.
- Can closely monitor the effects of any medication.



## Werribee Mercy Hospital

### Director of Paediatrics:

Dr Kathy McMahon

### Paediatricians:

Dr Chantal Westgarth

Dr Mehreen Majeed

Dr Sarah Chapman

Paediatric registrar

### Admin Staff:

Christy Jeromson

## Community Hubs Australia: Hub Coordinators

Louise Holley: Wyndham Park  
Primary School

Morwenna Petaia: Doherty's Creek  
P-9 College

Vicki Haynes: Truganina South  
Primary School

## School Staff:

### Truganina South Primary

Principal : Linda Danese

Assistant Principal : Cass Beckman

Wellbeing teachers: Alex Wren/ Pel  
Zeybek

### Wyndham Park Primary

Principal: John Eskander

Leading teacher: Madhura Krupashankar

### Doherty's Creek P-9

Principal: Tami-Jo Ritcher

Speech pathologist: Thea Canonigo

And all of the teaching staff, speech  
pathologists, school councillors

## North Western Melbourne Primary Health care Network

