

INCLUSION: HOUSING AND DIGITAL

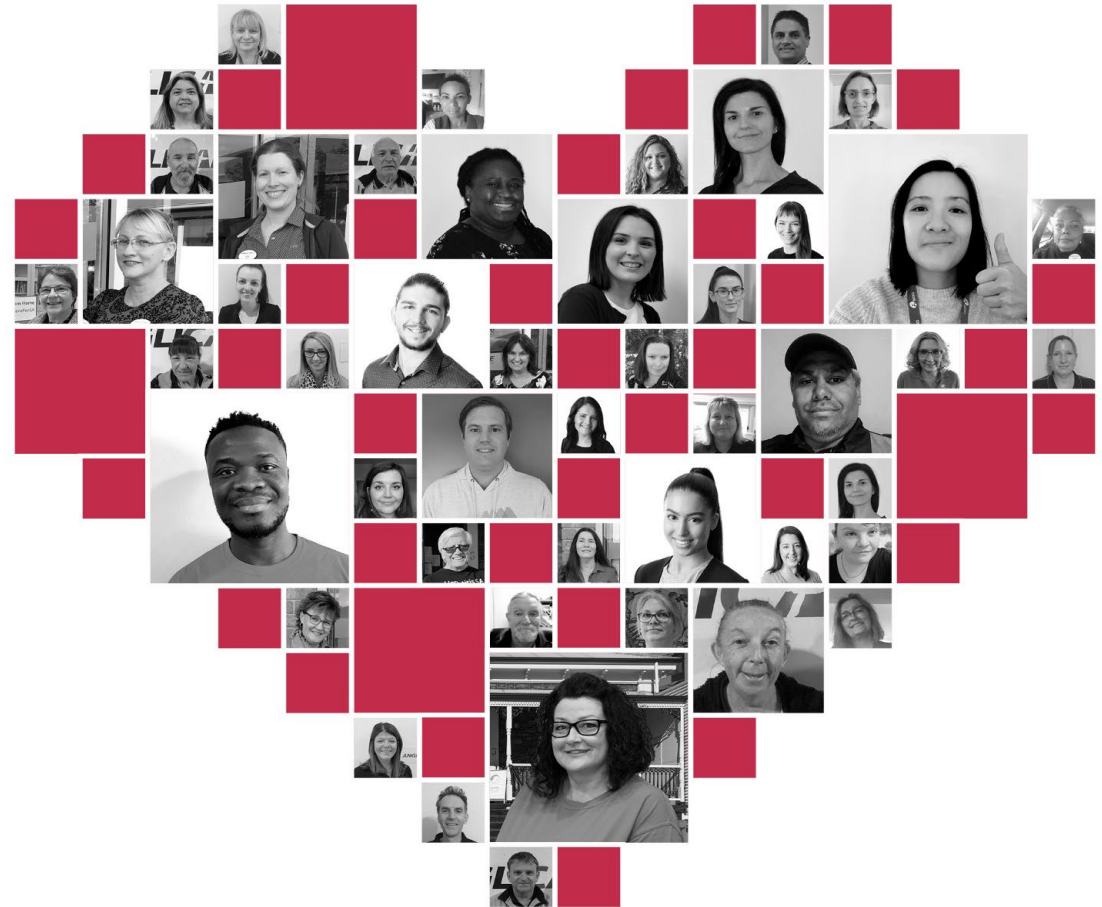
Dr Rebecca Tooher, Director Policy and Advocacy



I acknowledge we are meeting on the traditional country of the Narungga (Nharangga) community and pay my respect to Elders, past, present and future. I recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land and acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Narungga (Nharangga) people living today.

Justice, opportunity and shared wealth for all South Australians

The South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS) is the independent peak body for the non-government social, health and community services sector in South Australia



Today's presentation

What SACOSS has been hearing from regional stakeholders and community members

What does the data tell us about what we've been hearing?

What SACOSS is calling for in response

WHAT HAVE WE HEARD FROM PEOPLE LIVING IN REGIONAL AREAS?



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Regional Listening Tour March – May 23

LGAs VISITED

- Peterborough (and residents from Goyder)
- Yorke Peninsula
- Copper Coast
- Port Pirie
- Orroroo-Carrieton

PEOPLE WE TALKED TO

- Library and community centre staff
- Council staff
- Staff from local organisations including regional bodies and welfare service providers
- Members of the community including aged pensioners, jobseekers, young mothers

Keys to the digital world project funded by the LGA and AuDA - Exploring the role of libraries and community centres in regional areas to improve digital inclusion.

COST OF LIVING

In LEGATUS areas



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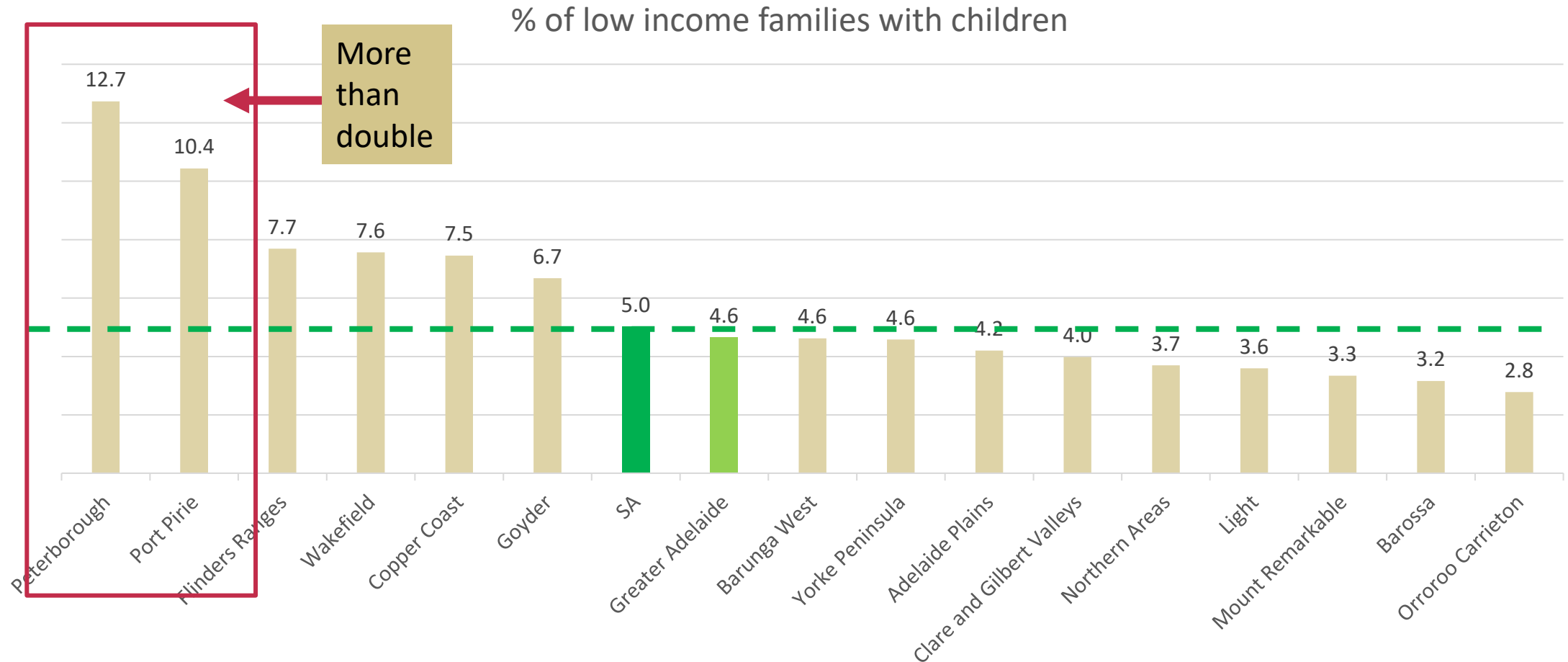
What have we heard from people in the regions?



People in some communities are doing it really tough

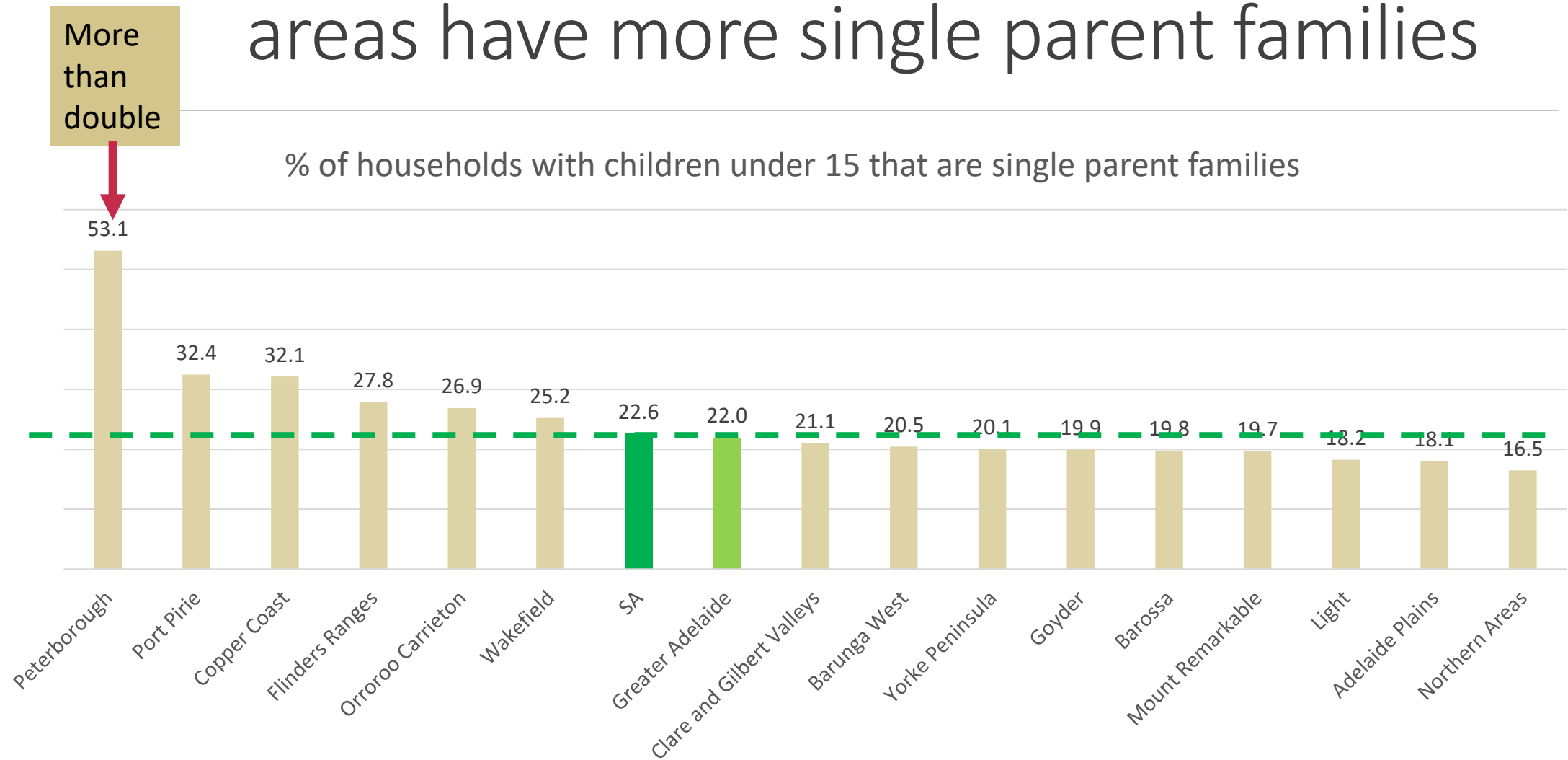
- Increase in people experiencing poverty and unemployment
- In some areas there is really only one key employer (the Council)
- People are struggling with access to basic services like banking and government services
- Food choices in local supermarkets can be limited and expensive and increasing numbers of people are using food relief services such as Foodbank
- Childcare is difficult to access in some areas reducing ability of mainly mothers to rejoin the workforce

Nearly half of LEGATUS Councils have more low income families experiencing poverty



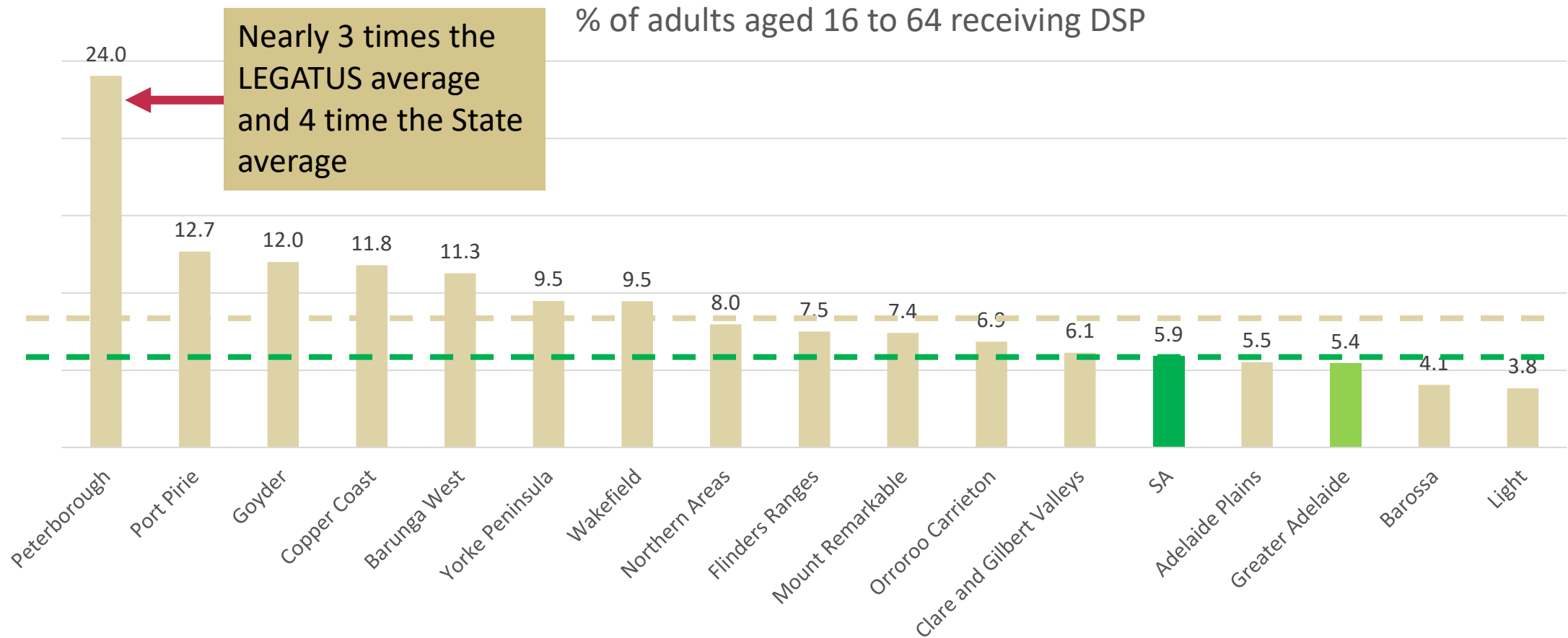
Source: Social Health Atlas SA by LGA 2023 (PHIDU, Torrens University)

In households with kids under 15 some areas have more single parent families



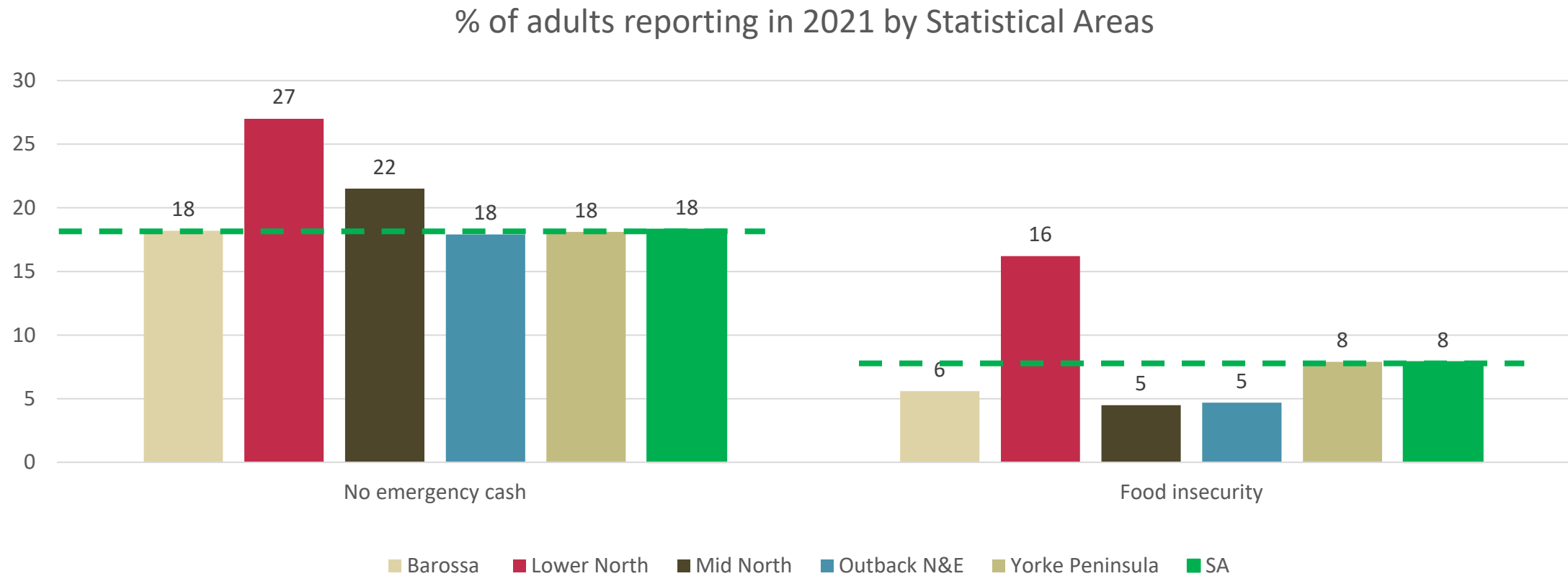
Source: Social Health Atlas SA by LGA 2023 (PHIDU, Torrens University)

More people receiving a disability support pension and in some areas this is much higher



Source: Social Health Atlas SA by LGA 2023 (PHIDU, Torrens University)

More people in the lower north report financial and food insecurity



Source: South Australian Population Health Survey – Wellbeing SA

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In LEGATUS areas



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What have we heard from people in the regions?

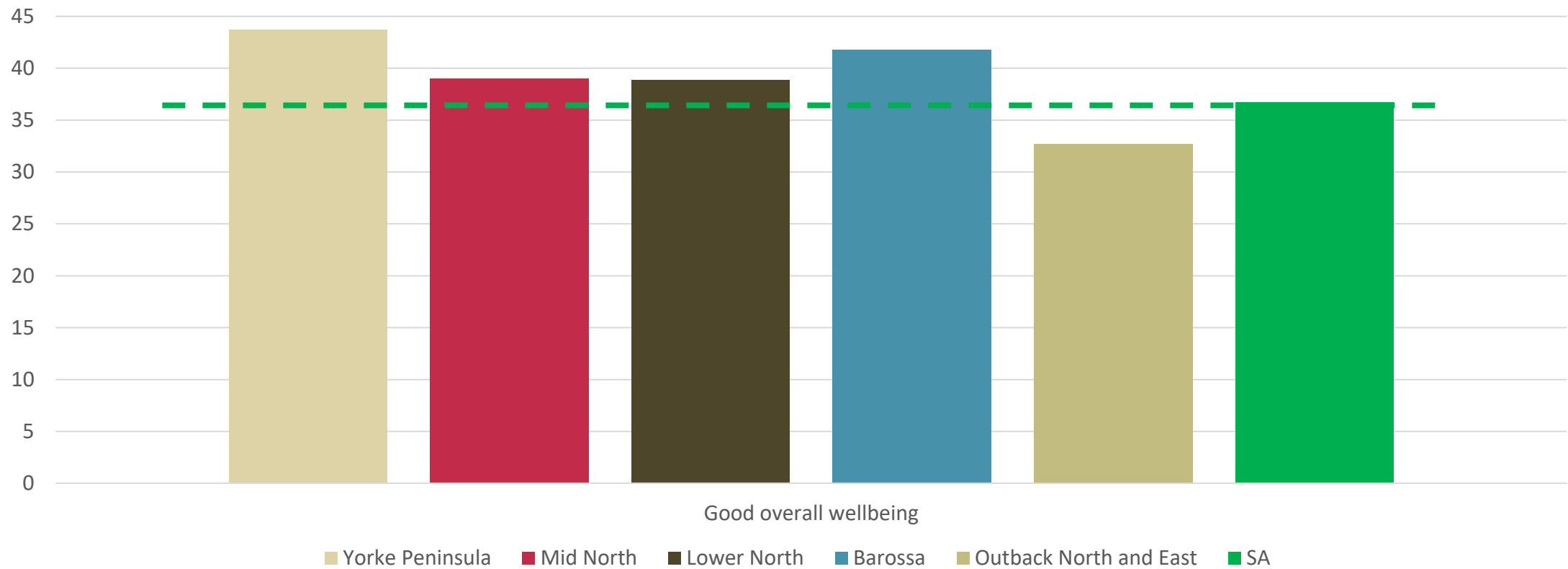


Health and social services can be very difficult to access

- Wait times for GPs is a problem and many do not offer bulk-billing
- There is a lack of nursing, mental health and alcohol and other drug services
- More people are turning to telehealth to try to manage their health concerns
- PATS (Patient Assistance Transport Service) can be difficult to access for some people and can restrict the choice of practitioner available
- There are limited opportunities to address wellbeing in some communities (e.g. walking trails, health promotion programs, gyms)

Self-reported wellbeing is about the same as the rest of the state

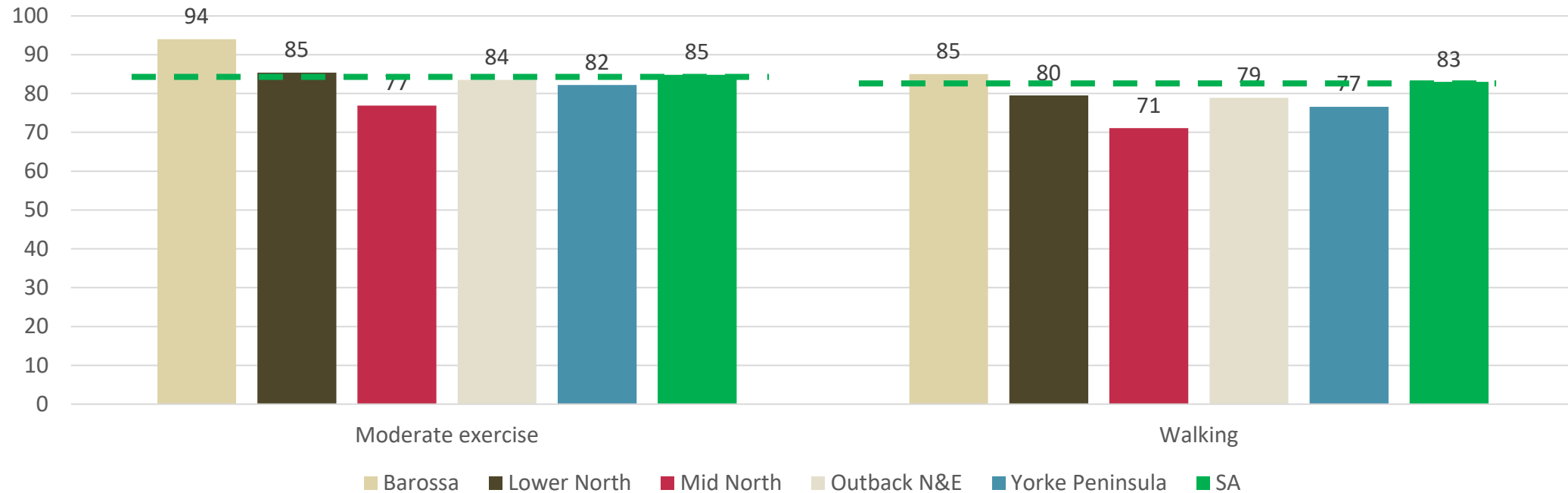
% of adults reporting good or better wellbeing in 2021 by Statistical Areas



Source: South Australian Population Health Survey – Wellbeing SA

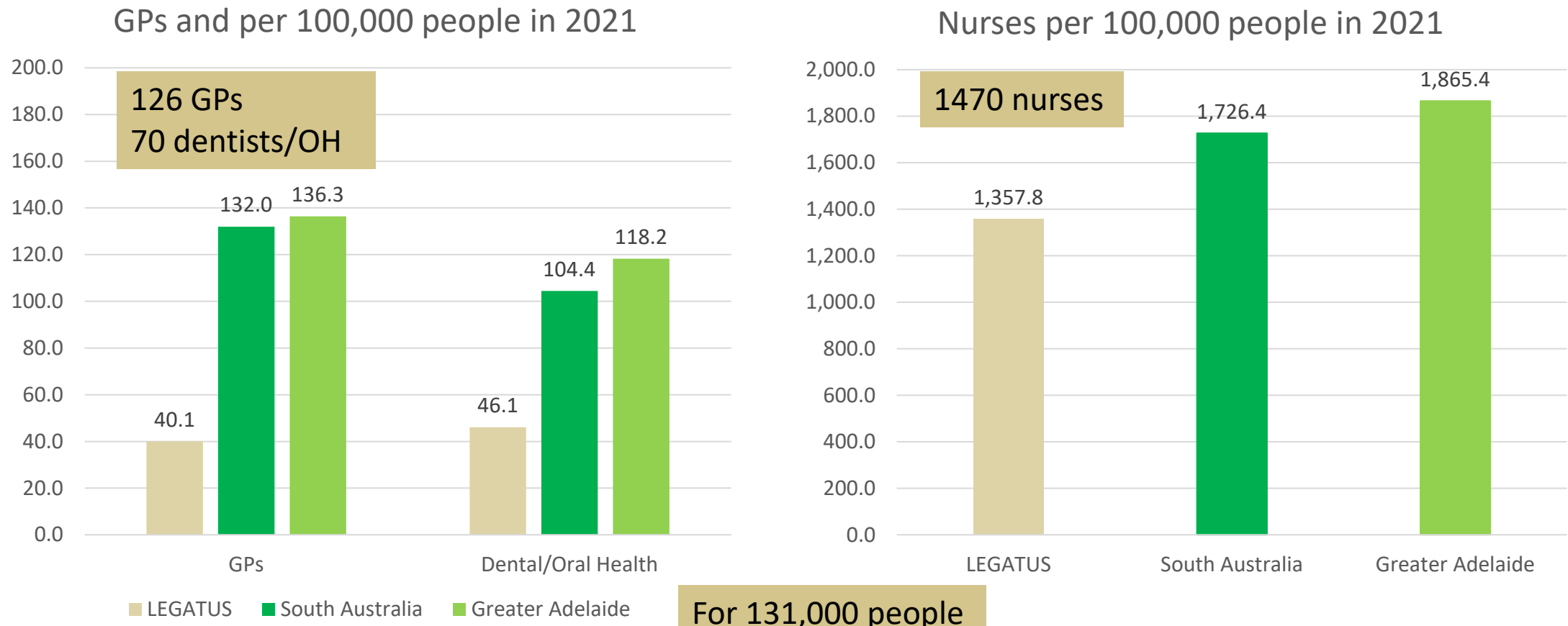
People are exercising about the same, though a bit less in the mid-north

Proportion of adults reporting moderate exercise and walking each week in 2021 by Statistical Areas



Source: South Australian Population Health Survey – Wellbeing SA

There are fewer healthcare practitioners per head of population than in Adelaide or across the State



Source: Social Health Atlas SA by LGA 2023 (PHIDU, Torrens University)

HOUSING STRESS

In LEGATUS areas



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What have we heard from people in the regions?



There is a widespread housing shortage across all areas

- There is a shortage of private, social and affordable rental housing across most areas
- Mortgage stress was also starting to make an impact and forcing difficult choices about prioritising which household bills to pay (energy, food etc.)
- Lack of housing is impacting on the ability of the regions to attract and retain essential staff
- Lack of affordable housing options is forcing many young people to stay at home longer than would be preferred

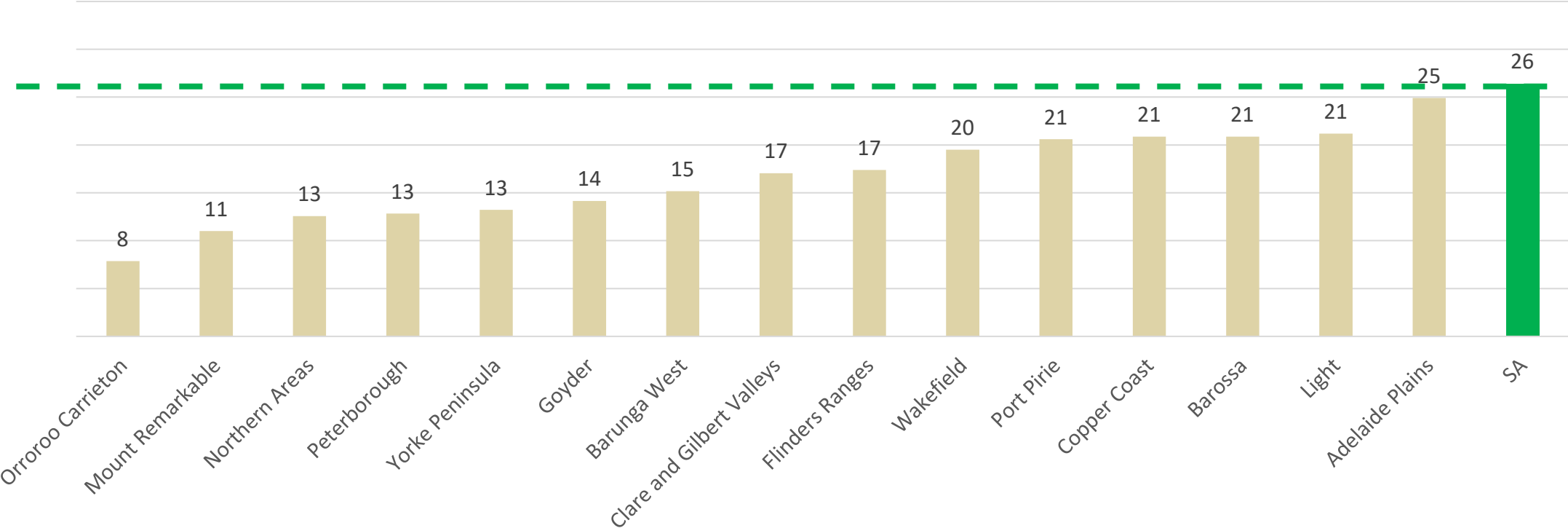
There are more houses owned outright, fewer renters and people with mortgages

	Barossa-Yorke-Mid-North	South Australia
Owned Outright	43%	33%
Owned with Mortgage	32%	36%
Renters	20%	28%
Other	5%	4%

Source: ABS 2021 Census

Low income households had been relatively protected from housing stress

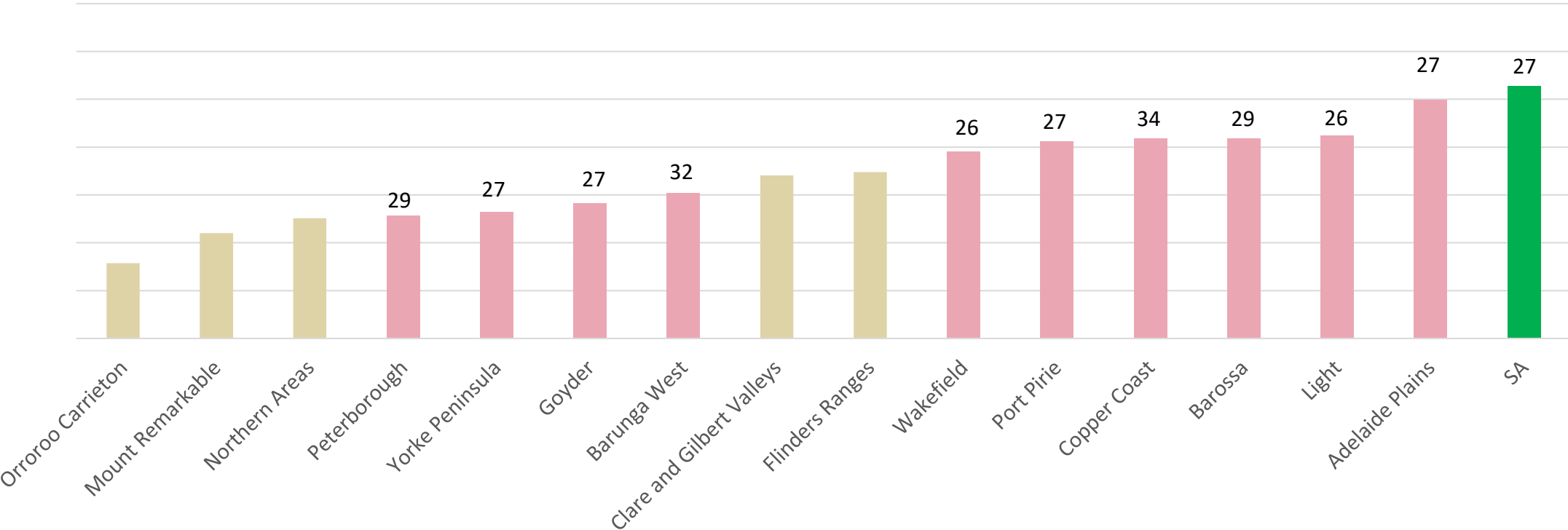
% of low income households experiencing financial stress from mortgage or rent in 2021



Source: Social Health Atlas SA by LGA 2023 (PHIDU, Torrens University)

But rental stress is the larger part of this and is above or around the state average in many places

% of low income households experiencing financial stress from mortgage or rent in 2021



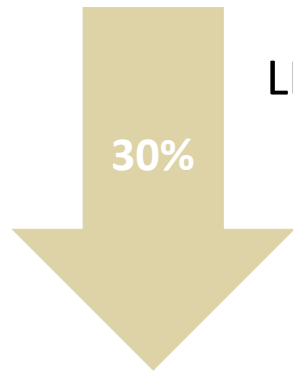
Source: Social Health Atlas SA by LGA 2023 (PHIDU, Torrens University)

There's been a marked decline in rental availability over the last few years

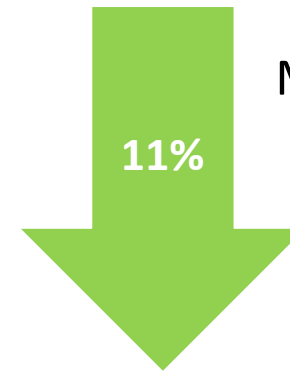
985
newly tenanted properties

2018

14495
newly tenanted properties



LEGATUS Councils



Metro Adelaide

690
newly tenanted properties

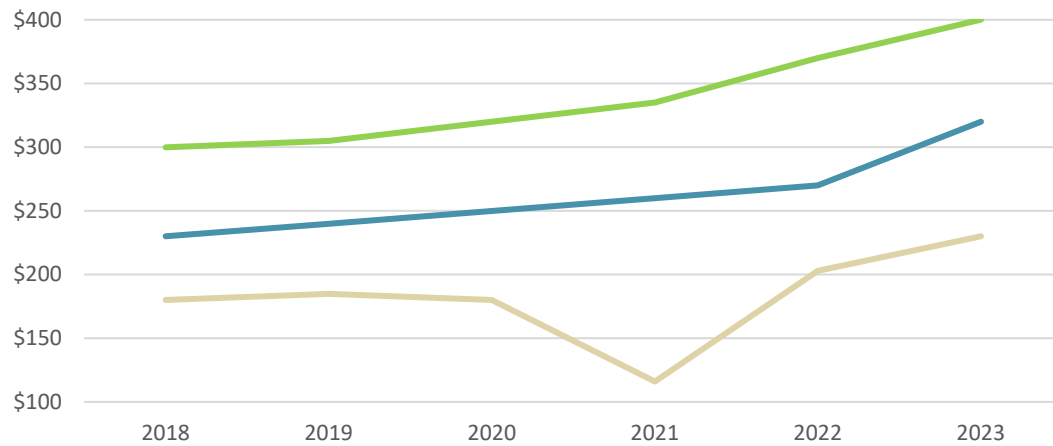
2023

12885
newly tenanted properties

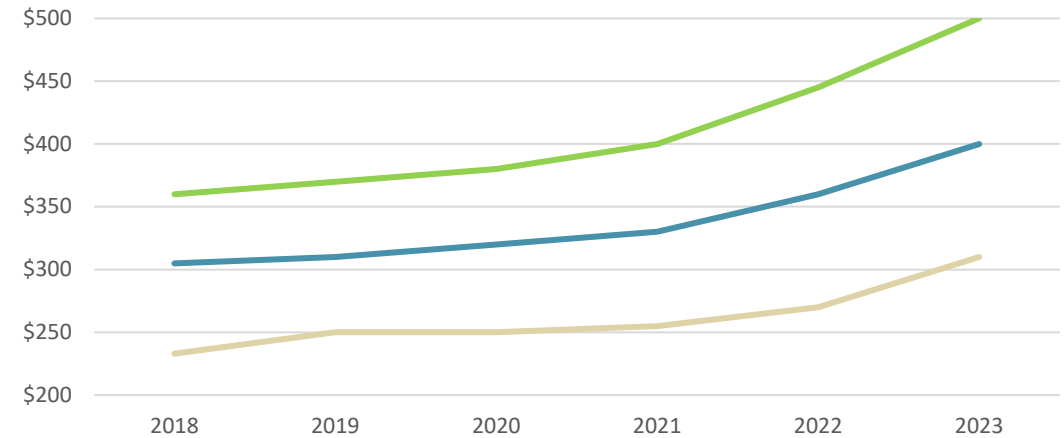
Source: DHS Private Rental Report – March Quarter New Rentals

Rental prices have also gone up well above inflation

2-bed unit



3-bed house



Barossa Yorke and Mid-North Metro Adelaide

Barossa Yorke & Mid-North Metro Adelaide

Since 2022

19% ↑

13% ↑

8% ↑



7%

11% ↑

15% ↑

12% ↑

Since 2018

39% ↑

28% ↑

33% ↑



18%

31% ↑

33% ↑

39% ↑

Source: DHS Private Rental Report – March Quarter New Rentals

People living on low incomes could be paying up to 77% of their income in Barossa and 56% in Yorke & Mid-North on the rent

	Total Income	2-bed unit % of Income		3 bed house % of income	
		Barossa	Yorke & Mid-North	Barossa	Yorke & Mid-North
Single JobSeeker	\$414.40	77%	56%		
Single Age Pensioner	\$589.50	54%	39%		
Single Minimum Wage	\$812.60	39%	28%		
Single Parent JobSeeker – 2 children	\$717.70	45%	33%	43%	56%
Single Parent Minimum Wage – 2 children	\$1,196.33	27%	20%	26%	33%

Source: SACOSS/DHS

DIGITAL INCLUSION

In LEGATUS areas

Two staff members at a time would allow us to run classes, but then, we would still need the space
School and community librarian

[A larger regional library] is just not a place [my clients] would go, it's very modern, very busy, very large
Community worker

Purchased a laptop ten years ago, by the time I learned how to use it, it was beyond repair
Age Pensioner



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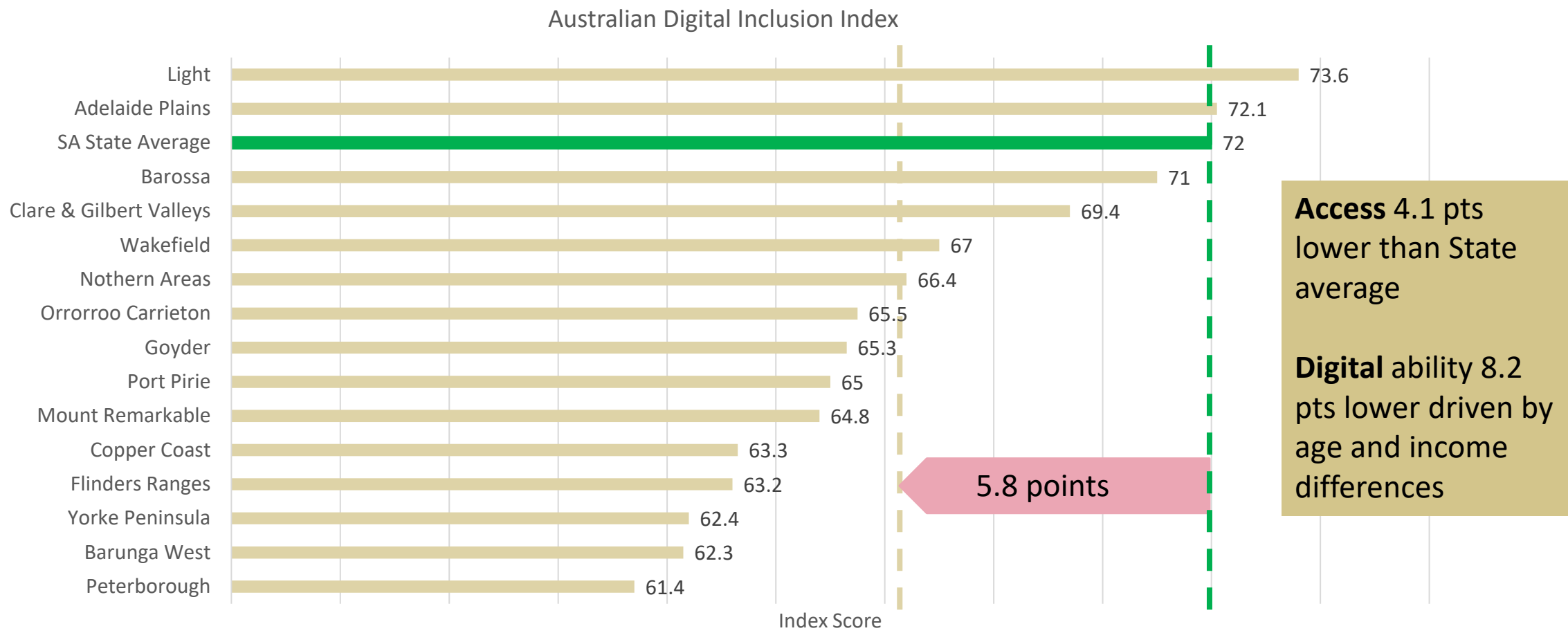
What have we heard from people in the regions?



Digital exclusion is a real problem especially in smaller communities

- People feel pressured to go online to access basic services in places where F2F services have been withdrawn (e.g. bank, Services SA office)
- Older people struggle most with ability to use their devices effectively and fear online scams
- Jobseekers struggle most with paying for devices that work and for data to access the internet
- Small communities rely on libraries and community centres to be their one-stop digital inclusion hub

Digital inclusion is lower in most LEGATUS LGAs



Source: ADII/SACOSS

WHAT IS SACOSS DOING TO SUPPORT THE REGIONAL AGENDA?



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Advocacy

ON HOUSING

- Calling for more social and affordable housing to be built including in regional areas
- Calling for rental reform to improve the conditions for renters
 - Limiting rent rises to CPI
 - Abolish no cause evictions
 - Introduce minimum energy efficiency standards
 - Allow pets (in most cases)
 - Benchmark Commonwealth Rent Assistance to actual rents

ON COST OF LIVING

- Reform the concessions system so that concessions are provided on an equitable basis to those that need it the most
- Arguing for consumer protections to limit price rises for energy, water and telecommunications (essential services) and ensure equitable access
- Calling for the Commonwealth government to Raise the Rate of the jobseeker allowance

Advocacy

ON WELLBEING

- Calling for an increased proportion of the health budget to be spent on health promotion and prevention to stop people from getting sick in the first place
- Developing a workforce strategy that will address improved access to health and social care workers in regional areas
- Developing a People's Health Voice to create a mechanism for the community to raise systemic health issues regarding access and responsiveness with the government

ON DIGITAL INCLUSION

- Calling for a statewide (and national) digital inclusion strategy
- Highlighting the need for digital inclusion programs to address affordability and access as well as development of digital capabilities
 - Permanent funding for digital skills classes and drop-in support
 - Funding for mobile and outreach digital inclusion services
 - Free wifi should be available in every community
 - Targeted device and data loan programs

And finally....

- How could SACOSS support your efforts to make a difference to the people doing it toughest in your communities?
- How could you invite the community to join you in developing the solutions to these challenges?

THANKYOU

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