Populations living outside major cities
Why Compare?

• Overall, people living outside major cities experience worse health status than their urban counterparts.

• Many people who live outside major cities are of Indigenous background (21 per cent of Indigenous Australians live in remote areas compared to 2 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians) and are also more likely to be of lower socioeconomic status.
Defining Rural and Remote Populations

Rural and remote describes those areas situated outside of any city or metropolitan (urban) area that has a population greater than 100,000 people.

The rural and remote areas of Australia comprise of a range of environments, including large regional centres, coastal settlements, small inland towns, farms and outback Australia.
Populations living outside of Australia’s major cities

- Approximately **70%** of Australians live in **metropolitan** areas (urban)
  Eg: Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, etc
Approximately **26%** of the population live in regional centres.

E.g:
Only about 3% of the population live in remote areas of Australia.

E.g:
For the sake of this course

The population living "inside major cities" relates to those living in cities classified as ‘major cities’ according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In Victoria, this includes Melbourne and Geelong.
For the sake of this course

‘Those living outside major cities’ relates to those in or near regional centres (such as Hobart, Darwin, Bendigo and Ballarat) and very rural areas (such as Genoa and Murrayville; note that, unlike other states, Victoria contains no ‘very remote’ areas).
Characteristics

Compared with urban populations, Australians living outside major cities experience the following:

- Lower life expectancy (LE ↓ as level of remoteness ↑)
- Higher rates of morbidity and mortality
- Higher BOD from both fatal and non-fatal causes
- Higher rates of CVD, T2DM, some cancers (particularly lung cancer) and obesity (particularly in women);
- Higher rates of mental health conditions such as depression and suicide (particularly men and youth)

(Think about what the risk factors for these conditions are)
Characteristics cont...

- Higher rates of communicable disease (a disease that is capable of being spread from one person to another).
  Eg:

- Higher morbidity and mortality across all age groups as a result of accidents
  Eg:

- Higher incidence of dental carries in children and adolescents

- Higher rates of maternal mortality
Factors affecting health status

A number of factors contribute to poorer health outcomes due to the location in which people live.

• **Biological** – BODY WEIGHT
• **Sociocultural** – SES, SOCIAL ISOLATION, ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE
• **Environmental** – GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION, INFRASTRUCTURE
Biological – Body Weight

• Overweight and obesity levels are higher in rural and remote areas.
• This puts people in rural and remote areas at higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease and increased risk of heart attack and stroke.
• The percentage of low birth weight infants is higher in remote and very remote areas (8.4 per cent) compared to national rates of 6 per cent.
• Infants born in remote areas or areas of high socioeconomic disadvantage were 30-40% more likely to be of low birth weight.
Sociocultural - SES

- Limited opportunities for education and employment account for part of this difference.
Sociocultural – Social isolation

- Social isolation results from a lack of contact with other people such as family, neighbours and friends.
- Rates of community participation and feelings of being part of a community, but may still be socially isolated – why?
Sociocultural – Access to Healthcare

- Less likely to have access to health care services like hospitals, specialists, MRI machines etc.
- May have to travel long distances
- More likely to be of low SES and therefore less income to access these services
Potentially life-saving stroke treatment regional Australia's missing out on

Environmental – Geographic location

- Access to fresh, healthy food
- Increased exposure to risk factors such as workplace and farming injuries
- Increased morbidity and mortality from motor vehicle accidents
Environmental – Geographic location

- Access to health care facilities (have to travel long distances)
- Increased incidence of skin cancers due to sun exposure
- Impact of phenomenon such as drought and flood
Infrastructure

- Access to health care facilities
- Funding for health care facilities
- Health promotion aimed at rural and remote populations.
“Outback depression situation near crisis point”

“The ongoing stress of trying to stay on the land during a crippling drought has been tough on families across outback Australia. With the stress triggering depression and even suicide, doctors are warning the situation is reaching crisis point.” (2007)

http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2007/s1925070.htm
Your Turn!

Complete question 10 from worksheet 3.1.5
Complete work requirement