



*'Partners in Health'*

**Health and Wellbeing  
Community Consultations 2008**

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## **Introduction**

Over the period from April to July 2008 44 focus group consultations were held in 17 towns throughout the Wimmera to gather information for the Wimmera Primary Care Partnership (Wimmera PCP) and local Council's to feed into the development of Municipal Public Health Plan's and the Wimmera PCP's Wellbeing Plan. Approximately 520 people were involved in the consultations, which targeted four groups - early years, youth, seniors and the general community.

The aim of the consultations was to gather information and seek community input that can be used to inform these plans. The plans focus is on strategies to improve overall community health and wellbeing, so having an understanding of what contributes to health and wellbeing and what could be done to enhance health and wellbeing was the focus of the consultations.

At each session people were generally asked three questions:

- What is good about where you live?
- What has a positive effect on your health and wellbeing? and
- What could be done to improve your wellbeing?

Apart from using the World Health Organisations' (WHO) definition of health and asking people to think about economic, social, natural and built environmental factors, no specific prompts were given, and a facilitated discussion occurred on the above questions.

A number of the consultation sessions were held in conjunction with consultations being conducted as part of the Wimmera Aged Care Strategy being prepared by Vivien Clark from Clark Phillips and Associates. The consultations that occurred at various schools throughout the area were conducted in partnership with Wimmera Regional Youth Affairs Network (RYAN) and their Youth in Action program.

Contact with the various groups was made either through the Councils or via contact details given by the Councils or the Wimmera PCP. The following people from respective agencies assisted in either participating in the consultations or providing contact details: Christine Piccone (Wimmera Southern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN)), Alois Kneibess (Nexus), Jodie Matthews (Nexus), Chris Solley (Yarriambiack Shire Council (YSC)), Judy Drage (YSC), Faye Smith (YSC), Angela Murphy (Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC)), Judy Harrington (HRCC), Debbie MacInness (HRCC), Cindy Francis (HRCC), Amanda Munn (West Wimmera Shire Council (WWSC)), Rob Rattray (WWSC), Heidi Gajic (WWSC), Jenny Ackland (WWSC), Mandi Stephan (WWHS), Peter Smith (Hindmarsh Shire Council (HSC)), Joanne Thomas (HSC), Phil King (HSC), Mandi Stewart (Wimmera PCP), Geoff Witnitz (Wimmera PCP), Donna Bridge (Wimmera PCP), Carolyn Russell (Wimmera PCP) Anne Pekin (Harrow Bush Nursing Centre) and Dr Natasha Pavlin (Goolum Goolum).

### **What affects health and wellbeing?**

Throughout the consultation many factors were identified however those listed below were generally identified in every session. The link between the economy, environment (predominantly rain, climate) and community was emphasised on many occasions. This connection seems especially strong in smaller communities.

### **Social factors affecting health and wellbeing**

- Social interaction – meeting and doing things with others in the community
- Community engagement, involvement and belonging
- Sense of contribution
- Volunteering and keeping busy
- Being involved in groups
- Avoiding isolation
- Safety – community and personal
- Activities
- Events

### **Economic factors affecting health and wellbeing**

- Having positive looking and vibrant communities
- Financial security
- Access to information and knowing where to go for help or to find out about resources and services
- Access to services including health services, transport and shopping
- Work life balance
- Business diversity

### **Environmental factors affecting health and wellbeing**

- Clean air
- Climate and rain
- Sunsets, sunrises and big skies, stars
- Open space
- The natural environment – eg mountains, waterways, areas of bush

### **Accessible urban environments**

- Pedestrian safety was raised frequently in Horsham
- Quality of footpaths was also raised in areas such as Horsham and Minyip, Warracknabeal and Dimboola. This affects all especially people with children and the elderly
- Spaces to sit
- People look at the urban environment in terms of access, footpaths, lighting, access to services and shops as factors that affect the choice of where to live. People want urban environments that enable good access. This is important everywhere but especially relevant in larger centres such as Horsham.

### **Factors that were consistently mentioned as having a negative effect on people's health and wellbeing**

- Drought and the lack of rain. In many areas, especially in Yarriambiack Shire this issue really stood out. Many people referred to the link between the "health" of farms and the "health" of the community – both in terms of businesses and socially
- Rising fuel costs makes it difficult for business, limits activities especially for people in smaller communities who have to travel to a larger centre for activities and services and increases isolation for people (especially women) living on farms
- Distance and lack of transport options
- Lack of services

### **What's good about where you live?**

This question was asked at each consultation session. Detailed responses for each town are included in the full consultation notes however some general themes emerged:

- Sense of community
- Friendly people and knowing others
- Welcoming people
- A caring community – many people gave examples that during illness or some personal hardship others in the community looked after them – eg cooking meals, looking after pets, cleaning the house, stocking the fridge. Sometimes this help was quite unexpected. This experience and knowledge that others care was constantly cited as being a benefit of the various communities.
- A sense of safety
- Knowing neighbours
- Places were often described as being small, quiet and peaceful
- Relaxed place
- Environmental features – eg open skies, sunsets, views, mountains, bush
- Facilities – eg shopping, health, educational
- Activities and community groups
- No commuting
- Getting involved in activities and groups

### **What can be done to improve health and wellbeing?**

The following is a summary of some of the suggestions that were raised throughout the area. In many instances common themes emerged but were expressed in different ways in different communities. The full consultation notes from each session for each municipality are attached and should be read as well for specific suggestions or issues that are relevant to that Shire.

## **Drought**

The drought was constantly cited as a factor affecting the health and wellbeing of farmers, families and whole communities. The success of farming businesses is intrinsically linked to the success of other businesses in many of the towns and the general outlook of the community. At one consultation in Hopetoun a comment was made that "*we need help to have hope and to continue to be positive.*"

Due to climate change the need for business diversification was raised to decrease the weather dependence of the local economy. The need to improve the economies of some towns was highlighted and the issue of skills, workforce and retention of youth were raised.

## **Information**

The need for up to date information about services, groups and resources was continually raised throughout the area. Knowledge of services or where to access information was also cited as a factor that contributes to wellbeing. Some examples of this include:

- Information in the welcome kit for new residents to Edenhope was out of date in terms of people's contact details. Information for new residents was also mentioned at Dimboola and Warracknabeal
- Students at St Brigid's College, Horsham, seeking more information on sexual health, safe sex and the effects of alcohol
- Information on the availability of the community transport car at Warracknabeal
- The need for more information on stress management at Goroke
- Information on mental health services at Edenhope
- Information on vision support services was discussed at Harrow and Murtoa
- Information on the times of various medical services and visiting specialists. Because there seems to be a level of change of service, personnel and days of provision there seems to be uncertainty or different levels of awareness of what services are available.

In many smaller towns people often mentioned that there was an assumption that because the towns were small everyone knows everyone and everything that is on. This isn't the case especially for new people moving to towns. Agencies and community groups need to continually promote their activities and services. It was also mentioned that it is especially important to promote community and health services.

### **Social activities**

In all consultations the importance of social activities and events was reinforced as a major factor that contributes to health and wellbeing irrespective of the location of the town or the age group consulted. Social activities give people something to do, provide a way for people to meet and interact with others in the community, create an opportunity for learning and self-fulfilment, reduce isolation and contribute to a sense of community. Supporting community activities and events and assisting community groups with events are considered to be important initiatives, which Councils and other agencies currently do. Many communities raised the issue of isolation for people on farms as a concern and having activities that include this group was highlighted.

### **Supporting existing services and activities**

In many communities people mentioned how lucky they were to have many of the services they need in their town – eg Dimboola, Rainbow, Harrow, Minyip, Murtoa, Hopetoun and Horsham. It is important to acknowledge what is there and working well and to continue to support this eg Harrow Bush Nursing Centre. Closely linked to this is the importance of volunteers in small rural communities and the need to acknowledge and support the work of volunteers. Without volunteers many of the services that are provided would not be viable.

In terms of activities some suggested improvements were:

- Exercise programs. A number of communities highlighted the need for exercise programs, particularly Warracknabeal, Dimboola, Edenhope, Natimuk, Kaniva, and Goroke. Many people with small children indicated that it is very difficult to go to exercise programs as childcare is either not available or difficult to get and the time of classes (especially evenings) makes it difficult to attend. It was suggested that it

would be good to have day time exercise programs that either women could do with children or where childcare is available.

- Men's exercise programs
- Educational activities – eg learning programs, workshops
- Social activities held in local halls
- Occasional programs both relating to exercise and to learning

With rising fuel costs and increasing economic hardship, locally accessible activities will become increasingly important.

There are many activities being undertaken by groups and in some instances rules and regulations of the various groups restricts their potential audience – eg age barriers associated with senior citizens groups or with groups such as Rotary and Apex. Sharing of resources – an example of this is the Hopetoun Senior Citizens group have many resources in their clubrooms – eg a billiard table that could be used by other groups, if there was better co-operation. Community calendars and ways of groups co-operating better were other suggestions.

How to welcome newcomers to towns and communities was also frequently raised. “Whole of community” events that are not necessarily associated with a specific group were often suggested as a way for new residents to meet others in the community.

### **Activities for youth**

Activities for young people who aren't into sport came up in many places including Minyip, Gorokey, Edenhope, Horsham, and Patchewollock.

In each community where school students were interviewed the issue of having things to do to alleviate boredom was the main issue mentioned. In the absence of things to do many kids turn to alcohol and drugs to alleviate boredom. Some suggestions for activities were movies, a kid's space, and activity programs.

After schools hours activities programs were generally identified as being a good thing and also offering some non-traditional physical activities – eg lawn bowls, gymnastics. Issues of transport will need to be considered as part of this.

### **Transport**

Transport was one of the key issues identified during the consultations. This was a major issue that was raised in many groups, especially with regard to:

- Number of volunteer drivers
- Access to Wimmera Volunteers mini-bus
- Need for co-ordination of transport with medical services, eg the bus to Edenhope from Apsley gets in every morning close after 9am but the doctors surgery doesn't open till 11 am
- Timing of the Naracoorte to Horsham bus – not enough time in Horsham to do business, shopping and go to appointments
- General availability and timing of public transport

Concerns with transport were raised mostly by the elderly and by young people. With an ageing population and a reduction in medical services in the various communities people need to travel to larger centres such as Horsham, Edenhope, Nhill or Naracoorte to access services.

### **Transport assistance**

The DHS transport assistance that is available for people was generally referred to as difficult to get, problematic to fill out forms with not very much financial assistance in return.

### **Health services**

There were different levels of satisfaction or concern expressed regarding access to medical services throughout the Wimmera. In particular areas of concern were loss of doctors (especially those that have been in an area for a long time) and continuity of care. The following issues were raised:

- Loss of speech pathologist at Kaniva, Warracknabeal, Hopetoun and Patchewollock
- Better co-ordination of transport and medical visits

- Weekend medical treatment at Warracknabeal. Despite having four doctors, only one works on weekends and many people reported travelling to Horsham for medical assistance on weekends
- Concern with the level of treatment offered at the hospital at Warracknabeal – eg it doesn't offer emergency or acute care
- Minyip only has a doctors service 1.5 days/week – an increased level of service was considered desirable
- Should have a doctor (s) based at Kaniva
- No dentist at Kaniva
- A call for more doctors at Edenhope
- There was a high level of praise for the various district health nurses and a call for increased level of resourcing for this service
- Maternal and Child Health services were well used and supported. In many of the smaller communities the M&CH nurse may only visit every fortnight. While some people were happy contacting the phone support service others indicated that they didn't feel comfortable with this and the lack of frequent face to face visits meant that some issues or concerns went unaddressed.
- Lowan Health counselling service in Edenhope and Harrow was considered to provide an important service, but is stopping
- Increased respite for people that are carers
- Difficult for women in isolated communities such as Patchewollock to travel long distances to centres such as Mildura and Horsham when in labour – and also then difficulties with being sent home if they went into hospital too early

There was also positive feedback on services in towns such as Ouyen, Hopetoun, Rainbow, Dimboola, Horsham and Harrow. Preventative health activities offered by agencies such as Dunmunkle Health Services and Harrow Bush Nursing Service were highlighted.

### **Mental health**

Loss of mental health counselling services in Edenhope and Harrow was raised as a concern by these communities. Goroke, Edenhope, Minyip, Horsham, Warracknabeal and Natimuk also raised concerns about the provision of mental health services.

## **Men's health**

Men's Sheds are seen as a great initiative that have a positive affect on health and wellbeing by creating a welcoming neutral space for men to meet, develop support networks, learn new skills and make a useful community contribution. Many communities that didn't have a shed wanted one eg Natimuk, Kaniva, Goroke and Hopetoun. Funding for Men's Sheds such as running costs was suggested as an action that could occur.

In many areas women raised concern about men's health and in particular the impact the drought is having on farmer's workloads – more work feeding sheep etc, getting home late and general stress levels. Many women expressed concern about men's health.

## **Housing**

The need for appropriate and affordable housing stock in the various townships was raised by many, especially in terms of people being able to move into a dwelling that is smaller, has less maintenance requirements and has good physical access. Housing diversity was raised in towns such as Natimuk, Hopetoun, Horsham, Goroke, Harrow, and Warracknabeal.

## **Childcare**

The need for improved childcare services, especially flexible and occasional care, was highlighted in many communities such as Rainbow, Natimuk, Edenhope, Kaniva, Hopetoun, Rupanyup, Dimboola, Harrow and Patchewollock. In some instances the operating hours of child care centres made it difficult for parents to drop their kids off at childcare and then travel to another town to work. The "Take a Break" program that operates in Warracknabeal, Rupanyup and Murtoa was very popular and provided for occasional care that enabled parents to attend to business, attend appointments or do shopping etc.

## **Education**

Positive health messages regarding healthy eating, drinking water and exercising were reflected in people's feedback. Many of the suggestions made in terms of actions to

improve wellbeing were based around personal actions regarding healthy eating and exercise. In some instances access to quality and affordable fruit and vegetables was raised in Horsham, Warracknabeal and Kaniva. However a number of people mentioned that with the opening of small fruit and vegetable shops in these towns affordability and quality has improved.

### **Parking and access**

The issue of car parking was raised primarily in Horsham at all consultations held there. The main concerns were for elderly people and people with young children, both in terms of finding parking in a central location and then being able to undertake their business and return to their car within the parking time available. In a number of instances feedback was received that parking inspectors in Horsham were unsympathetic.

Pedestrian access and safety, especially some concerns with the central part of Horsham not being friendly for pedestrian traffic was raised again, particularly with older people and those with young children.

Disabled parking and the need for disabled car parking spaces in areas close to key shops and facilities in the Horsham CBD was also raised as a concern.

The quality and availability of footpaths was raised in many towns throughout the Wimmera including Horsham, Warracknabeal, Edenhope, Dimboola, and Minyip. While there was awareness, especially in the small towns, of capacity to deal with this issue it was still continually raised as a factor that needs to be addressed. People noted that as the population ages this will continue to be of concern. Suitability of footpaths also impacts on the use of gophers with issues such as parking and paths being raised in relation to the use of gophers.

There were also varying suggestions for improvements to walking and bicycle trails such as the Mt Arapiles Bike Trail, a new pedestrian bridge over the Wimmera River in Horsham, an extended walking track at Lake Wallace in Edenhope and a walking track in Kaniva.

Access to public transport was also raised – i.e. steep steps on some buses.

## Gardening

Having a garden and gardening were frequently mentioned as having a positive effect on health and wellbeing. Difficulties with maintaining gardens with water restrictions was also raised, in some instances community gardens were suggested or providing information about drought tolerant gardening or courses. Carting water in buckets was often referred to as leading to injury for older people.

Rising costs of fruit and vegetables and fuel and an inability to have a large vegetable garden is having a combined negative effect.

Having the main streets of towns looking green was often cited as a positive thing.

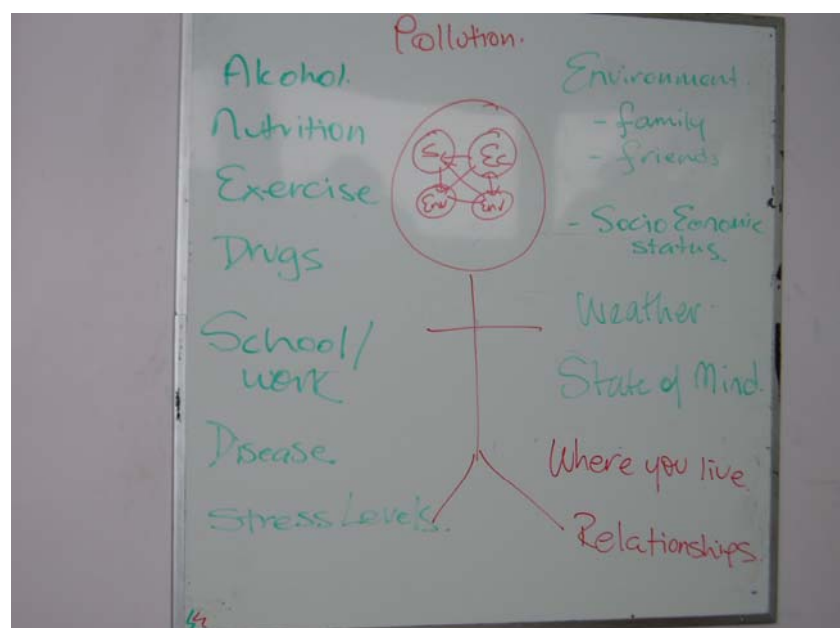
## Infrastructure

A number of specific infrastructure issues were raised in the consultations including:

- A potable water supply – Minyip and Harrow
- Poor mobile phone coverage in Harrow, Goroke and Apsley – the concern with this was safety and being able to call for assistance in the event of an emergency.
- Sewerage in Harrow

## Links and connections

In many small communities there are connections and linkages that exist – changing the days of service or the route of a postal service may have unintended consequences.



# **Municipal Public Health Plan Consultations**

## **HINDMARSH SHIRE**

**Nhill College**

**20 June 2008**

The session took place with nine Year 9 students as part of the Wimmera RYAN's Youth in Action program. Christine Piccone of the Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN facilitated the session.

### **What do you do to stay well, healthy and happy?**

Parties, hang out with friends, exercise, sport, go have fun with friends, socialise, sleep, go out with friends, be around friends and family, go to church, entertainment, friends, sleep, have a bath.

### **Can you think of ways to improve your health, wellness and happiness?**

Keep doing what I'm doing, eat less, have even more fun with friends, exercise more, more social events, play a sport, get outside more, socialise more, more sport, get involved with the community, no computer games, more sleep.

### **What is good about where you live? What do you like about it?**

It's pretty safe, good people, it's safer than big towns, friendly, everyone knows everyone, Mallee fowls, it's safe unlike a big city, all my friends live close, pretty safe, feels safe, I like knowing everyone, very good facilities for a small town, friends live near, freedom.

**What do you see as issues about where you live?**

Thieves, drought, paedophiles – I'm not joking, far away from big shops, litter, not enough things for young people to do, getting bored, not enough places to work, not enough facilities, need more shops, youth get bored and there isn't anywhere to go when you don't play sport, school is too far for walking so I jog, not enough employment opportunities, not enough shops, problems with new manager at



supermarket where a lot of young people work, - they are quitting and nowhere else to work part time.

**What are some possible solutions that could happen in your community?**

I dunno, more social events, bowling alley, maccas, shopping mall, more facilities for young people, more social events (Freeza's), more shops, do more things as a community, a youth centre established that is open on the weekend, I do not know, some dancing events other than duck and jazz which is just for adults, new boss for IGA, more social events, transport to other events in the region i.e. Nexus Friday night live, foam parties, other towns Freeza's, bring back the school fete, convert the neighbourhood house into a youth friendly place where we could go on Friday nights to chill out, use computers and just have a space that is fun and safe, convert a shop in main street to a youth resource centre – hang out place that we can go to, a shop is used for drought relief, why not have one where we can go.

## Rainbow Mothers Group

1 July 2008

The consultation was held at one of the monthly meetings of the Rainbow mothers group. 10 mothers and their children were involved in the session.

### What's good about living in Rainbow?

- Lucky to still have a range of educational facilities from kinder through to secondary school and adult education
- Sports facilities including a swimming pool
- Shops including supermarket, pharmacy and bakery
- Can walk everywhere in town
- Have a doctor – shared with Jeparit, comes for half a day every day
- Have a hospital – has seven acute beds, 10 nursing beds, 10 hostel beds, and two accident and emergency beds
- Rainbow is a caring community, neighbours will help
- Have a varied of visiting allied health services including:  
speech pathologist, masseuse, optometrist, occupational therapist. But lack a physiotherapist for post operative care and pain management
- Have a maternal and child health service. Guaranteed to be in Rainbow once a month and by appointment at the Rainbow hospital and is very helpful on the phone
- Mothers group meets once a month – M&CH nurse usually attends this and often have guest speakers. Group is a resource for parents. Also have a toy library
- Have a playgroup once a week
- Rainbow is safe for kids



- Good activities for kids including sports, scouts and learning group activities
- There is currently a five-day a week childcare service but this will cease at the end of 2009
- Its size – its small
- People are welcoming and friendly
- People introduce themselves if you are new

### **What has a positive effect on your health and wellbeing?**

- Having services available in Rainbow so you don't have to go to Horsham
- Have everything here except for birthing facilities (have to go to Horsham or Mildura)
- Weather/rain
- Getting out and doing things
- There is a gym in Rainbow with very competitive rates
- Entertainment and pubs
- Safe to walk around town
- Home help/meals on wheels and district nursing service all help keep people keep well and help them remain in the community
- There is a waiting list for the nursing home
- DHS used to own units near the hospital but these have now been sold
- Having the main street looking good and the green grass

### **What could happen to improve your health and wellbeing?**

- More childcare in Rainbow – existing service will cease, there is a new three day in-venue service starting up soon, but many think this will not be enough. *This was the key issue raised.*
- Funding to maintain services and buildings
- Assistance for community groups to access funding etc
- Emergency/occasional child care
- Information on services
- Important to have groups for people to meet
- Not everyone has family in Rainbow so having a childcare service is very important
- Men's health – concerns that many men work long hours and need support

## **Dimboola Men's Outdoor Group**

**2 July 2008**

The consultation occurred as part of one of the monthly sessions of the Men's Outdoor Group, with five men in attendance.

### **What has a positive effect on your health and wellbeing?**

- Rain
- Fellowship – mixing with people
- Exercise – eg walking, mentioned that some people choose to sit at home and not do anything
- Important to keep moving
- Being happy
- Exercise

### **What's good about living in Dimboola?**

- Small town – no hustle and bustle
- Good sports clubs – eg bowls, football, hockey, netball
- Nice and quiet
- Family connections
- Have got nearly everything you'd need here
- Doctors
- Hospital – has visiting allied health services. Five beds at the hospital
- Ambulance – fully staffed ambulance station and volunteer ambulance
- Many community groups – eg senior citizens, Lions, Probus, Rotary
- Day Centre at the hospital does activities – tends to be used more by women
- Are well cared for in Dimboola
- Footpaths are not so good – two gophers have tipped over
- Bus trips

### **What about this group?**

- Group has been meeting for the last three months
- Mainly undertake clean up activities and then have a BBQ
- All people in the group are mates
- Concerned in some ways they are doing a “young persons job”
- Has about 17 members
- Have painted bollards, stained furniture
- Tends to be manual work
- Jobs get given to them by the Council
- Chance to meet new people and become friends

### **Dimboola Playgroup**

**7 July 2008**

The consultation took place at one of the weekly sessions of the playgroup; six women were at the session.

### **What's good about living in Dimboola?**

- Its quiet
- Good community
- People are friendly
- There are a lot of other young families
- It's cheap
- The facilities are great eg: swimming pool, new playground, schools (two primary and one high school), hospital, doctors, chemist, police, ambulance service
- Churches
- Community and service groups – about 90 committees in town
- It's good for kids
- A lot has happened in the last five to seven years and the town has a positive attitude

### **What has a positive effect on your health and wellbeing?**

- Stress levels – managing stress
- Family and friends
- Having a caring community around you – i.e. people in Dimboola look after you if you're not well – make a casserole etc
- Fresh air
- Open spaces
- Sunsets
- Being able to go for a walk
- The Wimmera River and associated recreational activities
- There is a doctor in town and various visiting health services
- Maternal and Child Health Service is good and is a good source of information/contacts
- Rain

### **What could be done to improve health and wellbeing?**

- Fitness programs provided during the day that have childcare available. Programs for both adults and kids. There is yoga and pilates at the hospital but it takes place at night, which isn't practical with kids. Other programs at the hospital tend to be a bit gentle.
- Not enough childcare – difficult to leave kids in care at Dimboola and make it into Horsham in time for work.
- Promote services and information that is available in Dimboola – very important for people who are new to the town.
- Being able to get involved in groups like the town committee is difficult to do with children

## **Nhill Playgroup**

**15 July 2008**

The consultation took place at one of the weekly sessions of the Nhill Playgroup. Eight women were involved in the consultation.

### **What's good about living in Nhill?**

- Moving back to Nhill you appreciate what is available
- Safe – no drugs etc at schools
- Community support for people undergoing hardship
- Living is cheaper
- There are opportunities in a small town/have to make things happen
- Playgroup is good – just as important for the parents as it is the kids
- The M&CH nurse (Mandi Stephan) is very good – provides a good service and has very useful information and contacts.
- Having the playgroup on the day when Mandi is at the M&CH centre was very good as it gave people the opportunity to visit her and then other mums would look after their kids. Would also ask questions casually of Mandi. Now the playgroup day is on a different day to when Mandi is at Nhill because the kinder days changed and the playgroup day had to change.
- Access to doctors at the moment is good (was not so good a couple of years ago)
- There is no difference between the level of service provided at the Nhill hospital for people that are private versus public patients – this means you are well looked after.
- There is centre based and family day care providers in Nhill (some have had difficulties accessing child care – most at the session used family or didn't use day care). Have to book in well in advance.
- Can get all the basic things you need in Nhill
- Quiet a lot of clubs and sporting groups
- Neighbourhood House offers classes and programs eg aerobics

### **What has a positive effect on your wellbeing?**

- Happiness
- Community support for people undergoing hardship
- Having a place in the community – a sense of belonging
- Good for raising kids
- When living on the farm sometimes difficult to get in and do the things you want to
- There are men's health nights/activities in Nhill
- Harvesting affects ability to exercise (and everything else!)
- Not interested in going to exercise/sport at night when you have kids (too difficult and disruptive)

### **What could be done to improve wellbeing?**

- Additional M&CH support
- Co-ordination of playgroup days with M&CH days
- Three year old preschool
- More information from the Shire on services that are available
- Indoor play centre (like in Horsham) would also attract people from other nearby areas to come to Nhill
- The variety of food in Nhill is not good for people that have special dietary requirements – eg gluten free. Have to go shopping for this in Horsham. Supermarket in Nhill sometimes gets small quantities in but they often go quickly.
- Availability of some baby products – eg certain types of nappies and formula is limited in Nhill.
- Food is substantially cheaper in Horsham – i.e. it is cheaper to travel to Horsham (despite the cost of fuel) and buy food than it is to shop locally. People can't afford to shop locally
- Greater choice of provider of childcare
- Important for kids to have the opportunity to socialise with different kids and to develop social skills – playgroup and kinder helps this

## **Rainbow Lions**

**23 July 2008**

Consultation took place at a meeting of the Rainbow Lions Club with 17 people involved in the consultation.

### **What's good about living in Rainbow and district?**

- Safe and secure community
- Caring and friendly community – everybody says hello and waves
- Clear skies – bright stars
- Make a positive out of a negative
- Resourceful community
- Able to initiate our own activities
- Beauty of the landscape
- Sky trees, light, stars
- Security – safety in home and environment
- No traffic
- Support from community if personal problems or difficulties arise
- Easy to join groups
- Continuity between friends – same people in various clubs/sporting organisations etc (sometimes this can be negative)
- Easy to keep pets
- Space
- Freedom for children
- Good education – small classes, easy to get help, care for individuals
- Good hospital, dentist, chemist
- Good sporting facilities for the young

### **What has a positive effect on your wellbeing?**

- Fresh air – no smog
- Local doctor
- Our own hospital

- Our own chemist
- Able to contact people immediately for assistance at any hour
- Youth that are running our businesses, are willing to have a go and set up a business in our town
- Initiatives taken by our Town Committee for water harvesting – leading to the green gardens/medians in the main street
- Interactions with all members of the generations through mums group, playgroup, kinder, Lions, sporting clubs, Senior Citizens, dance clubs, Neighborhood House
- New life – eg babies being born in the community
- Pipeline – possibility of lakes filling in the future
- Keeping active – physically and mentally
- Exercise
- Gardening
- Community in general
- Socialising with others
- Interaction between people in a small community
- Play cards
- Don't sit at home alone
- Holidays

### **What could be done to improve wellbeing?**

- Good footpaths/less angle on new footpaths
- Street lighting
- Keep the freight trains running due to the dangers of increased road traffic
- Support community planning/building and maintaining community assets
- Retain control of community assets
- More community funding for small community events – support from Shire and other grant funding agencies
- Increase water storages/harvesting options for watering of gardens and sports grounds
- Improve childcare availability
- Support vehicle to transport community members to specialist appointments

- Encourage local business to support each other and encourage the community to shop locally
- Support farmers sustainability for all changes of weather
- Mobile blood bank – if it came here people would donate blood
- Rain has a positive effect
- Trains are very important - minimise impact of increased truck traffic
- Opportunities for young people to return/stay in community (including women)
- Less bureaucratic “bullshit” – bring back the street stall – good way to involve people, a fundraiser, and an important community meeting point
- Health regulations for community stalls are over the top
- Increased funding for pre school centre – more hours for children and for three year olds
- Gatherings for women on farms - living on a farm can be isolating for women
- Improved policing
- Enhanced capacity at doctors – feel there needs to be an extra 0.5 EFT doctor, also enough work for another 0.5 EFT pharmacist
- Transport for community members who need to commute out of town for medical services
- Should be community use of the community bus

# **Municipal Public Health Plan Consultations**

## **HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL**

### **Natimuk Consultation Session**

**24 April 2008**

The consultation session was run at the Natimuk Council offices and was attended by six Natimuk residents, the Mayor Pam Clarke, Melissa Morris and Vivien Clark and was held as part of the Wimmera Aged Care Strategy.

#### **What does wellbeing mean?**

- A sense of community
- Activities
- Staying in the community here in Natimuk
- A caring community – people who can care for and about you
- Friends
- A safe environment
- A good health service
- Interests
- Shops (but need a garage)
- Having facilities nearby – school, preschool etc
- Chemist is important – picking up prescriptions
- Family
- Belonging

#### **What's good about living in Natimuk?**

- Knowing people
- Being safe/people to help
- Contentment
- The idea of staying here in the Natimuk community throughout life
- A connection to the place

- Family connections keep people here – eg my son/daughter/grandchildren live here
- Sense of community
- Chatting to people - a half hour walk becomes a one hour walk with all the chats
- Diversity of population – traditional families that have lived here for generations, newer residents, climbers, visitors – eg international visitors
- Activities – eg the Nati frinj
- Natimuk is not a dying community – it has new life
- Arts activities, the Goat Gallery, exhibitions
- Realising what others do
- The health facility is important – provides a service to the town and also offers an employment opportunity for residents
- Community support of health facility
- Good neighbours
- Good facilities and services – two doctors, school, library
- Gym club, sports facilities
- Sharing
- We are very lucky
- Home help/handyman support services – support from HRCC is good
- Small caring community
- My livelihood is here
- Having family nearby means that I can stay here in my home

**“There isn’t one person in Natimuk who I wouldn’t trust”**

**“You get old when you stop having fun, it has nothing to do with age”**

### What could be done to improve wellbeing?

- Rain!
- Gardens are very important to people. It is difficult to keep gardens alive and also difficult for some to water their gardens with buckets – hurts back and knees. Is there an option to develop a community garden or to have some landscaping courses/seminars to show people how to have water efficient gardens, or to landscape without a lawn.
- Keep your sense of humour
- Activities are important – is there an opportunity to have classes and activities happening in Natimuk – eg U3A classes, HUB classes, neighbourhood house

### Housing

- People need to think about this themselves/ pre plan
- Where can people from surrounding areas go if they want to move off the farm and want to live in Natimuk – there aren't many smaller places (but people still have a lot of stuff)
- There is the hostel
- Maybe four or five smaller units would be good. There isn't a diversity of housing stock
- Discussed the complex in Mt Gambier and Sunnyside
- Having some community areas/gardens
- Some are happy to stay in their houses and feel they have the support to maintain them
- Units in Arapiles Court (which is now private) are too small – bedsits, need more space than that



## **Safety**

- Distance from Horsham and time it takes for an ambulance to get to Natimuk is a concern/fear for some
- Night time is a concern for some – fear of being lonely or if unwell
- Safety Link – call through to Ballarat and provides support from neighbours or people in the community
- Confident Living sessions – Cr Pam Clarke volunteered to come out and run a session, could be done through the CWA or the senior citizens
- Assessment of in-home safety – eg rails and mats

## **Activities**

- Thought a Men's Shed would be a good thing but have it more for whole of community use. There are lots of men who have skills that could be shared with others. Mentoring skills. A place where you might be able to get a chair mended.

## **Transport**

- Transport into Horsham is very important
- There isn't enough time (with the existing bus) for doing things in Horsham – eg getting to appointments, services, shopping etc
- Transport is important for getting to appointments and services
- Is there a possibility for a community bus or use of the hospital bus? People would be willing to pay
- Possibility of a car pool or drivers that would be willing to take people into town. There is a man in town that used to do that but he is getting older.

## **Other**

- Carer's payment form is complicated and difficult. Need advocacy through local members for carers.
- Some younger families have left – very important to keep families here. Suggested things such as the bike track or pool to attract people.
- West Wimmera Health Service are running a community needs analysis for possibility of a medical centre/community health centre

- Fuel – need to have a garage in Natimuk – a number of people work in areas west of Natimuk so going to Horsham is inconvenient
- Some husbands are starting to get Alzheimer's. Systems/support needed.

### **Where will you be in?**

#### **Three years**

- Remain in present home as long as possible, but register with Shire for gardening and home services (80 yrs)
- Same as now
- Move to a smaller place/travelling/volunteerism

#### **10 years**

- Remain as bright mentally and physically as possible, at home, or small unit, or (if still living) go into care
- Down sized
- Off our present place and in a smaller place with small garden – not close living
- Volunteerism/travel

#### **20 years**

- Who knows?
- Retirement village
- Sunnyside type accommodation

## **Horsham Community Meals**

**24 April 2008**

The consultation session was run at the Thipatiy Café by Vivien Clark and Melissa Morris with support from Jenny Hill (HRCC). The consultation took place by discussing the questions at small tables and on a one-on-one basis and was also part of the Wimmera Aged Care Strategy consultations.

### **What do you like about living in Horsham?**

- Quiet streets
- Number of older people
- Street lights
- Good bus service but could be better
- Volunteers visit in the home/take people shopping (Wimmera Volunteers)
- Swimming pool is good
- Good schooling
- People are friendly
- Feeling safe in my own house
- Cheaper than other areas
- Good shopping
- Entertainment
- Availability of shows in Horsham
- More to do (than other areas)
- Back up and support
- Public transport options are good – bus and taxi
- Strong church connection
- Strong community with lots of organisations
- Plenty of doctors
- Love living in Horsham
- Friendship



- Bowls and activities – eg carpet bowls, tenpin etc
- The Country Music Festival
- Lots of restaurants (a good range of prices)
- Bus trips/day trips
- Senior Citizens group
- Good facilities at the hospital
- Caring groups in Horsham – a way to getting to know others
- Good Council facilities – i.e. the gardener and handyman service
- Lutheran and Village Life are good facilities
- Have plenty of health care facilities – access to the hospital, district nurses. The chemists are always helpful
- Good neighbours
- Live two miles out from town but the bus goes past – it's cheap and very good
- The bus drops you off at your house – Old Hamilton Road
- Friends - neighbours
- Community meals – it's a good meal and good to meet together
- Wonderful neighbours and friends
- Three lots of five generations
- Groups – RSL, Legacy, Home League, Thipatiy Cafe, Eat Alone, Arthritis Backup, Birthdays
- Get groceries delivered
- Have a good relationship with the bank
- Home Help provides help with odds and ends around the house

### **What has a positive effect on your wellbeing?**

- The weather, sunshine
- Supporting people in the home
- Having someone to call on if you need help (she has this)
- Entertainment
- Having a positive attitude
- Being fit and active – walking, walking my dog, going for walks near the river
- Gardening

- Being involved in clubs and groups
- Sports and activities
- Being active and busy makes you feel good
- There is a good choice of places to eat/restaurants
- Volunteer activities
- Getting together
- Sports and Community Club is a great asset in town
- The plaza (cheap meals on a Tuesday)
- Meals on Wheels
- Good neighbours
- Senior Citizens group
- Craft groups
- Volunteer
- Go to seniors two times per week – indoor bowls and other activities
- Family
- Keeping in touch with family
- Balanced community
- Neighbours to assist

### **Can you think of ways to improve your wellbeing?**

#### **Parking, access and transport**

- More disabled parking areas
- Free car parks for senior citizens in a central location
- Parking attendant with compassion for older people
- Short term parking is very limited
- There is not enough car parking at the hospital on Baillie Street – the staff park in it
- Much more free parking for the elderly people within walking distance of the shops
- More pedestrian crossings for the elderly (eg like the ones in Mildura)
- Looking to the future - better footpaths would be of assistance to the elderly
- Better footpaths and security lighting
- Speed humps to slow people down

- Can't drive – need to get out of the house

### **Activities**

- Involved in groups
- Going out for lunch
- Getting out and talking with people
- Visiting the elderly
- Don't like eating alone
- Keep in contact with family
- Make our own fun
- Sharing skills – eg woodcutting

### **Other**

- Good food
- Exercise
- Get blood pressure checks at the plaza
- Can't think of anything to make it better
- Lower the price of alcohol!
- Quicker service for the taxi card
- Council should organise the volunteer program rather than Wimmera Volunteers
- Need for public toilets in Hamilton Street where the new shops are
- Recycle bins – put the bins out/big bins full
- Help with gardens – work for the dole?
- Horsham North – clean it up
- Slow down hoons – Police don't act - have reported P-platers
- Police to walk the beat
- I'm too independent for a village

### **Other comments**

- Motorbikes in the bush
- Hoons never seem to get caught – slow hoons down
- Drunkenness/bad behaviour

- “A little noise and I’m awake”
- Locked up at night
- Can’t leave windows open in summer
- Horsham North – agents let houses out to people that “blow in and blow out”
- People need to value what they have got
- There are good parks in Horsham but people don’t use them
- Trees/shrubs hanging over fences

### **Horsham Forum**

**28 April 2008, 6pm**

16 people attended the forum that took place in conjunction with the Wimmera Aged Care Strategy. The forum was advertised and letters sent to community groups in Horsham. The forum was held at the Roberts Avenue Council building.

### **What affects your wellbeing?**

- Health
- Support from family
- Money
- Good support networks
- Leisure options
- Interaction with other people
- Family – grandchildren
- Physical environment – eg footpaths
- Accommodation that is affordable and available
- Medical support
- Friendships
- Shops
- Education
- Personal environment – eg job
- State of happiness
- Climate
- Positive attitude in yourself

- Activities - eg old time dancing
- Arts Council has good shows
- Walking and bike riding
- Gardening
- Transport – eg a good bus service
- Reading, radio
- Internet

### **What's good about living in Horsham?**

- Has everything you need – eg bowls, churches, shops, health services
- Arts Council shows
- Easy to build networks and relationships
- Choice of activities and groups
- Family support is here
- Wimmera Volunteers have a car to take people to Ballarat
- Close enough to Melbourne/Adelaide (and a bus service to these areas)
- Not too big
- Safety – very safe during the day, low crime rate
- Family is here and that has been an attractor
- Some feel safe walking round Horsham at night
- Some know neighbours – this varied from some that said they have good neighbours to others that sad they live in a neighbourhood where they feel their neighbours would help
- A friendly place
- Some noise issues
- Feel safe in the neighbourhood
- Opportunities for volunteering
- Aquatic Centre
- Lutheran Rest Home
- Nice parks eg May Park

### **What could be done to improve wellbeing?**

### **Access, parking and transport issues**

- Narrow streets eg the new Firebrace Street redevelopment – regiments people. Pedestrian safety is an issue.
- Concerns with the exits from the Coles car park to McLachlan Street – people driving through parking bays. Also difficult to see when leaving Coles car park into Roberts Avenue when the bus is there.
- Concerned with safety and ease of getting out of cars in front of Fig Tree café where there is the barricade along the street
- Some streets don't have footpaths or lighting – difficult/dangerous at night
- One lady purposefully looked for street lighting and footpaths when she chose where to live
- Affordability of sport – eg if you have a number of kids
- Car parking
- Public transport hours of operation don't really suit the workforce – if this was changed and people caught the bus to work their would be less of a problem with car parking
- More parking spaces in the CBD
- Cater better for gophers
- More disabled parking – strategically place them near key services eg banks, chemists, post office
- Aged care should be in the centre of Horsham, needs to have access to public transport
- Better parking near the hospital
- Suitability of transport for people in wheelchairs – some stops have been recently upgraded



## Other

- More access to specialised medical care – have to go to Melbourne. Eg should get oncologists to visit here
- Funding for the elderly to have outings – subsidized outings
- Information for the elderly to help with their planning
- Service for looking after people at home while carers are away or ill
- Support for people who have been terrorised in their own home
- More assistance for going to Ballarat for medical treatment
- Educational programs – computer classes
- Help for maintaining home lights, locks etc
- Volunteers expenses should be covered
- Conservation of water – better planned gardens – HUB, U3A could do courses
- Create housing for the future – eg need to look at house designs and accessibility of housing
- Home deliveries for groceries
- More disability residential units – lack thereof creates pressures on families and services
- Ageing volunteers – need more volunteers
- Sustainable housing utilities
- Workplaces need to make work more exciting for volunteers
- A method for elderly to have contact with others on a regular basis
- Information available for help and assistance or let organisations know where information can be obtained
- Aged care facilities
- Width of supermarket aisles
- Difficult to maintain bowling greens in current drought –assistance for sporting clubs

## **Horsham North Consultation Session**

**28 April 2008**

The consultation session was run at the Horsham North Community Action Centre and was attended by six residents, Melissa Morris and Vivien Clark. The session was held jointly with the Wimmera Aged Care Strategy consultations.

### **What does wellbeing mean?**

- Giving to the community
- Doing things together
- Having a break
- Setting your own agenda
- Making a better place
- Volunteering
- Getting out and meeting others
- Interaction
- True friends
- Support networks
- Horsham Community Action Centre
- Activities
- Sense of belonging

### **What could be done to improve wellbeing?**

- Night time contact for those with mental illness
- Reassurance at night or in times of anxiety – need someone with compassion that is able to provide support
- Need for support for those in genuine need (not those who are don't have a job because they don't want to, example of injustice between access to needles between diabetics and drug users)
- On going support for people with mental illness – one-on-one
- Employment
- Greater range of physical activity opportunities

- Call centre/visiting centre for people in the evenings

### **Issues**

- Kids wandering the street late at night – mainly weekends
- Not enough support networks
- Lack of justice/injustice in the way people are treated and in government policy
- Turnover of staff in Grampians Community Health Centre makes it difficult to establish good support and trust
- Baby bonus – considered to be a breeding program
- Need to differentiate between people that are genuinely unemployed and those that don't want a job

### **Horsham Community Day Centre**

**28 April 2008**

The session was facilitated by Vivien Clark and Melissa Morris and was attended by 20 people at the Day Centre at Wimmera Base Hospital. The consultation was also part of the Wimmera Aged Care Strategy consultations.

### **What does wellbeing mean? What contributes to your wellbeing?**

- Good eating/diet
- Going out and having a meal with others
- Feeling safe
- Laughter
- Exercise
- Fluids
- Social outings/socialising
- Coming to the Day Centre
- Gardening
- Participating in hobbies – eg craft, jigsaws etc

### **What's good about living in Horsham?**

- Good shopping
- Parks and gardens

- Hospital and doctors are good
- The day centre is fantastic
- Entertainment
- Schools, Ballarat Uni, TAFE
- Card afternoons – eg CWA, Senior Citizens, Day Centre
- Eat Alone lunches every month
- Getting out and meeting people
- Employment opportunities
- Good for families
- Family was a big attractor for some to move here
- Hospital services were another attractor
- Some had moved to Horsham from other towns in the Wimmera but they are still relatively close to their family
- Educational facilities attract younger people and help develop skills for the future

### **Can you think of ways to improve your wellbeing?**

#### **Access**

- Footpaths need repair. Because of the drought they are very uneven – reference to Selkirk Drive, Wilson Street
- Difficult to drive gophers on footpaths that are uneven
- Roads are bumpy in Horsham
- It is difficult as a pedestrian to cross many of the roads in Horsham
- Ramps into some pubs, shops etc are either non-existent or inadequate
- Should be more parking at the hospital
- Should be more disabled toilets, the one in Roberts Avenue isn't wide enough
- More public seating

#### **Activities and social connections**

- More cultural activities – eg theatre to attract people to Horsham
- Activities for teenagers – dances, skate bowl, rock-climbing
- Organise activities for kids

- Internet café
- Would be good to have people to drop in on me and have a cup of tea
- A visiting program – volunteers who go to peoples homes and visit
- Should be more promotion of the day centre in Horsham – there is a waiting list but generally only a few vacancies each day
- The day centre is my friendly contact
- Computer for the day centre so we can email and learn about computers

### **Housing**

- There should be more units in the city area – a diversity of accommodation for younger people and students
- More affordable housing

### **Personal and Community Safety**

- Safety Link – not everyone has it or can afford it. It doesn't necessarily work if you are in the backyard or a distance from the house,
- Not everyone knows their neighbours, some do – but they wouldn't think they could call on them in they needed to
- Could have a community contact program for emergencies. Some have a system worked out with their neighbours
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Increase police patrols

### **Comments on home modifications**

- Have put in gas heating – its easier than wood
- Ramps in houses
- Railings etc
- Need to make my bathroom more accessible



## **Impacts of drought**

- Have put in water tanks but they're still empty!
- There has been an increase in hay fever because of the drought
- People have to make more effort with their gardens (carting buckets) and the day centre staff have noticed an increase in shoulder and back injuries
- Falling trees because of the drought
- Uneven driveways because of the drought

## **Horsham North Playgroup**

**2 June 2008**

**Eight people**

The consultations took place with one-on-one discussions during a weekly session of the Horsham North Playgroup in Robin Street, Horsham.

## **What affects health and wellbeing? What's good about living in Horsham?**

- Economic factors have an effect on health and wellbeing
- Volunteering has a good effect on wellbeing
- Exercise – being able to walk places is important
- Chose to live in Horsham North as you are close to many facilities and services
- Having a garden has an effect on health and wellbeing
- Important to have gardens looking good
- Access to doctors when you need them
- Happy kids – having happy kids is very important
- Being able to access appropriate medical facilities – e.g. speech therapist and specialist children's services. It is easy and quick to access these in Horsham
- Aquatic Centre is good
- Healthy eating
- Mental stimulation
- Important to have activities for kids – keep them socialising – and for parents too
- Kids Capers is good but expensive if you have a number of kids
- Entertainment
- Botanical gardens are well used – good playground and free

- Mini maestros at the musical academy
- Kinder gym for one to three year olds
- Money plays a big role in being able to do things
- Kids need to make their own fun
- What is there for teenage girls to do – shopping? Boys have skate park
- Exercise and physical activity
- Being able to talk about how you are going is important
- Excited by Mt Arapiles Bike Trail
- Friends and family
- Getting in the outdoors
- Simple things in life
- Having new projects/challenges

#### **What could be done to improve wellbeing?**

- Having a playgroup co-ordinator is important – means that there are good activities for kids
- Learning life skills
- Learning how to budget and manage finances
- Things for mums to do without kids
- More council run play groups in proper facilities
- Affordable activities for kids
- Important to make Horsham a place that attracts professionals and people with medical backgrounds
- More information on what's on what facilities and available services
- Safe cycling options – highway is very dangerous
- Mt Arapiles Bike Trail – off road is important especially with little kids

#### **Horsham First Time Mothers Group**

**10 June 2008**

The consultation was held at a meeting of the first time mothers group at the HRCC Council offices in Horsham co-ordinated by Judy Harrington from HRCC. Eight people were at the session.

### **What's good about living in Horsham?**

- Its safe
- Everything is close
- Close network and community
- Friendly (sort of)
- Quiet
- Quick to get home after work – no traffic
- People visit
- Mothers group is good

### **What affects your health and wellbeing?**

- A supportive home and family
- Economic factors
- Flexible work environment
- Juggling – time/tasks/ability to do exercise
- Entertainment/shopping
- Enough sleep
- Sport
- Having a happy baby
- Staying involved
- Activities
- General personal health

### **What could be done to improve health and wellbeing?**

#### **Parking, access and traffic**

- It is more difficult to park and go shopping etc with children. It takes longer to get into and out of the car and with short term metered parking it is sometimes difficult to park, do what you need to do and get back into the car within one hour. The parking inspector is considered to be unsympathetic, and examples were given of him giving people tickets when they were loading kids into the car and the meter has expired.
- Parking availability was also a concern
- Footpaths – there are many bumpy footpaths

- Safety is an issue – crossing the street safely in the central area of Horsham is sometimes a concern – crossing O’Callaghans Parade near the BP station was highlighted as well
- Suggest an additional pedestrian bridge near Weir Park so that there is a walking loop in town along the river, with lighting so it can be used in the evenings and early in the evening in winter

### **Other**

- A fenced safe playground area
- Better choice of fruit and vegetables – at the moment there is limited choice of fruit and vegetables – in terms of variety, quality and price
- Newspapers are a good tool for getting information from
- Use HRCC website for distributing information
- A Country Target store would be good
- There isn’t much variety in terms of children’s shoes
- A space for people to be able to meet casually and for kids to play
- Late night trading would be good
- A café at the art gallery
- Some people were aware of the parents room at the M&CH centre at Roberts Avenue but another one elsewhere in town would be good – a place where you can breastfeed, change nappies and heat up a bottle
- Concern was raised about the lavender planted near the intersections in Horsham – concern for people that are allergic to bees who have to wait to cross the street.

### **Horsham College**

**10 June 2008**

Seven Year 10 students (all girls) were involved in the consultation. Christine Piccone (Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN), Alois Kniebeiss and Jodie Matthews from Nexus and Melissa Morris were involved in the consultation which happened jointly with the Wimmera Regional Youth Affairs Networks’ Youth in Action program.

### **What do you do to stay well, healthy and happy?**

- Exercise when I am not busy
- Try and eat well, eat healthy food
- Exercise my animals, walk my dog
- Work out at the gym
- Play sport
- Socialise
- Nothing really – stay away from drugs, sex and alcohol
- Gymnastics
- Stay well/healthy by walking home from school every day
- I stay happy by spending time with friends
- Balance work and sleep and school
- Go to parties

**Can you think of ways to improve your health, wellness and happiness?**

- Stay healthy
- Eat healthier, not eat as much junk food
- Don't take things to heart
- Meeting friends
- Work out harder
- Probably go out and do more stuff – like walk
- Umm – no I'm fairly all right
- Exercise much more
- Relaxation time

**What is good about where you live – what do you like about it?**

- I don't like where I live but I like the people I live with
- Nothing I hate it
- The only good thing is that it doesn't take too long to get places
- Its secluded
- Good mountain views (Mt Arapiles)
- Very few people
- Fresh air

- Friendly people
- Healthy environment
- Its small and everyone knows everyone
- Its safe – can walk home at night and feel safe (except Horsham North) – would rather walk then catch a bus
- Its quiet
- Nice people
- No pollution
- Its quick and easy to get around
- The Aquatic Centre is good
- Thumb snappers is good

**What do you see as issues about where you live?**

- Boredom/extreme boredom/lack of interesting things to do/young people getting bored
- Binge drinking and bullying
- EMO's in May Park
- Ruralness – gossip central
- Drought – the river in Horsham is very low. The city looks better when its green and when the river is full
- Water – lack of/restrictions and people breaking restrictions
- Hoons
- Need more entertainment
- Kids hang out at McDonalds because there is nowhere else to go

**What are some possible solutions that could happen in your community?**

- More entertainment and more activities
- Police night patrols
- Enforced water restrictions – more awareness
- Not sure – finding ways to get people activated
- Kids clubs
- Parks

- More places for kids to hang out – on the weekends and in the evening. A casual place where you can go and you know other kids are going to be
- More shopping
- Diversity of movies
- There are some activities for kids to do, but sometimes kids aren't motivated to do them or to go out

### **Laharum Men's Health Night**

**24 June 2008**

A men's health night was held at the Laharum Football Club with Bernard Denner and Dr Rob Taylor as speakers. The night was run through the Laharum Community Links project and the Community Building Initiative (CBI). Surveys were distributed on the night and 21 were returned. This information is from those surveys.

#### **What is good about where you live?**

- Fresh air
- Aesthetically pleasing
- No traffic
- Social networks
- Clubs and societies – service, agricultural and sports
- Opportunities to participate
- Rural lifestyle
- Peacefulness
- Can do things at your own pace
- Views and scenery
- Community
- Have a good job with plenty of variety
- Increased use of chemical farming is a concern
- Great environment
- Sense of a future
- Close community
- Plenty of activities to be involved in

- Peace, quiet and tranquillity
- Building a family business
- Seeing the results of hard work
- Get to plan most days for myself
- Have retired in Wartook after living in Melbourne. It's a great environment and a good community
- Relaxed
- Beautiful place

**What has a positive affect on your health and wellbeing?**

- Family and friends
- Rain
- Sunshine
- Exercise
- Stress and anxiety
- Workplace
- Lifestyle
- Living in this area
- Hobbies
- Sport
- Financial security
- Breaks away/holidays
- Eating healthy nutritious food and wine
- Information eg Men's Health Night
- Participation
- Helping others
- Playing sport
- Keeping physically active
- A stress free environment
- Knowing my kids have the opportunity to comeback to business
- Mates
- Stable home life
- Working outside at my own pace

- Healthy food

**Can you think of any ways to improve your health and wellbeing?**

- Give up smoking
- Enjoy free time
- Spend more time with the family
- Regular check-ups/visits to the doctor
- Reduce drinking
- Lose weight
- Lower fuel prices
- More nutritious food
- More knowledge
- Looking after self a bit more
- Looking after relationships a bit more
- More relaxation
- Having a plan for the future
- Becoming more involved in the kids future
- Improve communication with the family
- Work less
- Watch food intake

## **Horsham Men's Shed**

**26 June 2008**

Seven men were present at the consultation which took place over morning tea at the Men's Shed.

### **What's good about the Men's Shed and how does it contribute to a sense of wellbeing?**

- It's my second home
- Get to mix with other blokes
- Can talk with others about personal issues
- A chance to do things
- A place to learn new skills
- When you are retired going to the Men's Shed gives you something to do
- The Men's Shed is hands on – that is the difference compared with other community groups or activities
- Some men come here and recover from health issues
- Undertake personal and community projects – eg building some chairs and tables that will be used at the Taylors Lake Football grounds, chairs at Natimuk. Like to do community projects but don't want to compete with businesses.
- Has been going since 30 January 2007 and is open three days a week with an average of nine people attending each of these days
- Many have been coming since it opened
- Also have a pool table and quoits
- Some stay for dinner
- See people grow
- Connect Ed kids come on a Tuesday afternoon and work on projects – feel this is positive for them as well
- Can talk about problems/what's bugging you
- A place to share things – eg one of the members if going through a marriage break-up and members of the men's shed are someone to talk to/help out

### What's good about living in Horsham?

- Aquatic centre is good
- Walking is a popular form of exercise
- Community, friends, family and belonging all contribute to wellbeing
- U3A gardening club is popular
- Community groups and activities are a good thing
- Volunteering and helping out groups – gives something to do
- Wool Factory and Karkana are good facilities for people especially with a disability

### What could be done to improve wellbeing?

- More of an outlet for men to get into exercise programs – eg Tai Chi. The U3A exercise classes are 98% women and some men feel uncomfortable going to these sessions. A Men's exercise program for over 60's – maybe a certain time at the gym?
- Ongoing funding for the Men's Shed – eg to cover the running costs and some materials then could do more
- Haven Hall – should be more activities there that could be a place for the local community to do things. Sue Exell does a good job
- Activities should be held in local halls so local people can get easy access and develop a sense of community
- Affordable daytime activities
- Community bus/transport are issues. One of the men at the shed is a volunteer driver but there are restrictions associated with this – i.e. cannot pick up people from retirement home/hostel can only pick up people from their own homes. Is not aware of who is out there that has difficulties with transport
- Assistance/respice for people with carer needs



- Emergency housing is an issue in Horsham – the Wheatfields Motel on Stawell Road isn't being used – could this be used for emergency housing
- Respite for parents with children with disabilities eg autistic children
- Better education for people in community and health areas on how to deal with people with autism – an example was given of an autistic child getting blood taken at Wimmera Base Hospital and being held down by five people
- Bus trips

## **St Brigid's College**

**24 June 2008**

13 Year 11 and 12 students were involved in the consultation, which took place in conjunction with the Wimmera RYAN's Youth in Action program. Christine Piccone from the Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN and Jodie Matthews from Nexus were at the consultation.

### **What do you do to stay well, healthy and happy?**

Footy training, staying fit, keep a positive mind set all the time, playing a variety of sport is social and keeps you fit, be sociable, go out to party, participate in physical activity, eat healthy, hang out with friends and family, exercise, make sure I don't over work, dancing, boyfriend, school, relaxation, weekends, food, listen to music, get enough sleep, try new things, do well in school, I play for a sociable footy team and train twice a week, watch a movie, go shopping, eat a balanced diet, do a culmination of 30 minutes exercise a day, have a positive state of mind and surround yourself with positive people, watch comedy, umpire footy, help with Auskick, walk.

### **Can you think of ways to improve your health, wellness and happiness?**

Eat better, eat more healthier food, be an active person, socialise with the right groups, put aside more time for physical activity, stress less about school work, drink lots of water, don't stay up so late, talk about problems with people, being educated about sensitive stuff, be more organised, join a health club, be active, hang out with the right crowd, interact more with people of all ages, not only our peers, but get involved with older and younger people, actually do that 30 minutes of exercise a day, do what makes

me happy and what benefits me, be selfish once in a while instead of trying to please everyone, participate in more physical activities, state of mind.

**What is good about where you live? – What do you like about it?**

Quiet, there's no party's or wild people that live near me, I live in town its good because everything is within walking distance, small community, know most people, look out for each other, it's a small tight knit group, very supportive, big space, lots of freedom, friends close by, good childhood memories, everything's close, quiet, community spirit, I have family here which is good, I live in a nice neighbourhood, majority of people are nice, people say hello, the people here are so welcoming and accepting, I moved here a year ago and the people accepted me immediately, they were friendly instantly, everyone knows each other and are friendly except EMO's, the fact that there is a guarantee that you will run into at least one person you know when you're going down the street, half way between Adelaide and Melbourne,

**What do you see as issues about where you live?**

Nothing, binge drinking lots of kids buy \$8 casks of goon, EMO's, illegal drugs, bashings (May Park), the danger of drugs on youths, not enough stuff to do, drunk EMO's May Park at night, rape, fear of being alone at night, my family being really annoying, drugs, safety issues walking home, not enough to do, bitch, drunkenness, May Park, drug and alcohol consumption, drought, sexual abuse, bullying, teenage pregnancy, nothing else to do but pursue relationships, when drinking make really bad choices and safe sex is forgotten, group clicks – which can sometimes mean that you don't go to events if you are not part of the group or you don't want to go because another group will be there, Nexus, new P-plate issues for transport for young people travelling to sport at weekends, will have to take more cars which will mean more money for petrol and more carbon emissions.

### **What are some possible solutions that could happen in your community?**

More security, more youth based projects, police getting their priorities right, less about hooning more about EMO's bashing people for fun and disturbing people e.g. walking through May Park and being yelled at, teen drinking, bitchiness, cliques, more events that people want to go to, bands, better shops, more school based information sessions on stuff that's too embarrassing to ask at school or home, more adults to help for any health problems you may have, education, provide more activities on weekends for 15-18 year olds so they won't turn to drinking or drugs, work together to help encourage a safe environment, safety awareness, more social events that provide opportunities for young people that is appealing, not boring options, break down barriers with individual groups, live footy broadcasts on big screen for young people with popcorn, more music options that are affordable for young people like the Spirit of the Bush concert, free buses to events.



### **Laharum**

**10 July 2008**

A survey asking the following questions was distributed at a lunchtime session on Men's Health. 26 women attended the session that was a follow up for partners of men that attended a Men's Health night held in Laharum. 13 responses to the survey were received.

### **What's good about where you live?**

- Peace and quiet
- Waking up with the birds

- Looking out the window and seeing the mountains
- Driving to work and only passing two vehicles and 20 kangaroos
- Good friends
- The view
- Freedom
- Scenery
- Walking
- Tennis
- Outdoors
- Casual social life
- Close to family/grandson
- Space
- Privacy
- Growing own vegetables/food
- Fresh air
- Beautiful natural environment
- A busy active community
- The open air – lots of space to walk and work
- Nature – birds and animal

**What has a positive effect on your health and wellbeing?**

- Exercise
- Family time
- Fresh air
- Good company
- Good laughs
- Good times
- Cold weather
- Walking/bushwalking
- Being retired (largely)
- Good relationships
- Eating well
- Regular visits to the doctor

- Keeping busy
- Family and friends
- Being involved in the community

**Can you think of ways to improve health and wellbeing?**

- Get motivated and do something
- Check ups more often
- Getting to know your body
- Healthy eating
- More exercise
- Preventative measures – eg check ups
- Drink less
- Actually deal with your own health problems
- Weight bearing exercise

**Goolum Goolum Health Centre, Horsham**

**15 July 2008**

A number of one-on-one discussions took place with people visiting and working at Goolum Goolum Health Centre on the afternoon of the 15 July – seven people were consulted.

**What's good about where you live?**

**Horsham**

- Opportunity for work
- Lifestyle
- Good programs here at Goolum for Koori's
- Goolum provides more services than are provided in many other regional areas eg Swan Hill
- People are helpful
- Good medical support and assistance including webster packs at pharmacies
- Diabetes educators

- Good doctors at Goolum
- Better than other places
- People take the time to help you and make sure you get what you need
- Everything is close – don't have to travel miles to get there
- Goolum provides a driver to take people to medical appointments in Ballarat and Melbourne
- Horsham is a clean town
- Everything is in walking distance
- Goolum is good
- Shops like Peaches and Karkana are good for fruit and vegetables. Supermarkets are expensive and the quality is not so good.
- There is good public transport
- Easy to get around
- Its not too big - no hustle and bustle
- Has become more multicultural – eg recently more people from Africa have moved here – this is good. It also means its not as white
- There are lots of activities in Horsham – eg Art is, Kanamaroo
- Plenty of services
- Good sporting opportunities
- Very welcoming community
- Laid back, not fast pace
- Good place to bring up kids, stuff for kids to do
- No smog
- Fresh air
- Beautiful environment
- Schools are good

### **Negative**

- River isn't in good condition
- Horsham never changes – it's like its at a standstill. Could go away for years and come back and everything would still be the same
- Childcare is expensive
- Bit noisy living near the train line

## **What has a positive effect on your health and wellbeing?**

- Support that you get from Goolum:
  - Home visits
  - Activities (eg mosaics, cards, make dolls etc) and people to talk to
  - Friendly service – you are a person not a number
  - More personalised service
  - Travel assistance and home help (HACC program)
  - Can get most tests done here
- Some Koori people will only go to Goolum for medical assistance
- Exercise
- Eating properly
- Motivation
- Work influences health and wellbeing in a number of ways – financial, personal fulfilment but can also create stress
- Seeing your children grow up and get work
- Balancing work and childcare on a low income is difficult
- The workplace – the overall vibe of the workplace and how happy people are affects your wellbeing
- Managing work and stress levels – getting the right balance between work, rest and play
- Good medical advice – eg dietician
- Keeping active and getting involved in things
- Fitness
- Doing exercise – clears your mind mentally
- Good family life

## **Negative**

- air quality and impact of wood heaters in Horsham West

## **What could be done to improve health and wellbeing?**

- An exercise program for bigger people and older people. Embarrassed to go to the gym (Aquatic Centre)/think programs there would be too hard. Need someone to go to the gym with/motivation to go there and do stuff
- Cooking classes focussing on healthy eating and healthy cooking
- Need help understanding and reading labels on food
- Advice on healthy eating/diets
- Eat more fruit and vegetables
- Nutrition information for elders
- Information on food storage and safety
- Need more things for teenagers and young people
- At Goolum older men don't get involved in activities – need some more stuff for older men eg fishing, cooking, things for their self esteem
- Older men have lost their role in this culture
- Reduce drinking in men
- Music festivals – eg country music
- More social activities and things to do
- A fresh produce market
- Improved dialysis capacity in Horsham
- Environmental flows – more water for the river and lakes
- Public transport to Melbourne and Ballarat could be better
- Better co-ordination of health services at Goolum. Have many visiting specialists if you have to travel into Horsham to come to Goolum then you have to come in on multiple days
- **Seems to be a gap in terms of programs at Goolum for people that aren't elders or have kids.**

The following two consultations were conducted by Christine Piccone (Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN) as part of the Wimmera RYAN's Youth in Action program.

### **Horsham VCAL Students**

#### **What do you do to stay well, healthy and happy?**

Football, jogging, sit ups, hangout with friends, yake random drives, visit my family, go fishing, work with stock dogs, be on the farm, go shooting, work with horses, do volunteer work, go to the gym (YMCA).

**Can you think of ways to improve your health, wellness and happiness?**

Move closer to home, get my licence, learn to cook, spend more time with friends, lose some weight, get a dog, get myself a decent boyfriend, eat better, be organised

**What is good about where you live? What do you like about it?**

Family, position-close to everything I need, nothing much really, not as crowded as city, can visit people (close to each other), public transport, plenty of volunteer work

**What do you see as issues about where you live?**

Regular binge drinking amongst teenagers, school non-attendance, hoons, drought, substance abuse, drink driving, eating disorders, bullying, discrimination, fuel prices, violence, speeding, obesity, depression

**What are some possible solutions that could happen in your community?**

Rugby clubs, more youth services, better law enforcement, groups to focus on talks and activities to help, support and educate people on specific topics, better peer groups

**Connect Ed Students**

**What do you do to stay well, healthy and happy?**

Go to doctors - but usually can't get appointments, try to eat healthy food, hang with friends, have a couple of drinks, play music, laugh at people, play with pets, shopping

**Can you think of ways to improve your health, wellness and happiness?**

Manage family conflict, improve relationships within family, more money, need an under 18 place to hang out, a health centre open 4pm to 4am with a doctor, nurse, health worker, CASA worker

**What is good about where you live? What do you like about it?**

We have Connect Ed, not a lot

**What do you see as issues about where you live?**

Nothing to do, no entertainment for under 18's, more shops needed, not many jobs that are exciting

**What are some possible solutions that could happen in your community?**

Want more action from the police e.g. come more quickly when called, skate park, more access for disabled and older people, open Nexus from 12 to 12 Mon to Sat with more staff who are prepared to help youth, need more emergency housing that is easier and quicker to get, more things like Friday Night Live at Nexus

**The following notes are the results of feedback provided in one-on-one conversations with people from Horsham, Natimuk and Nhill.**

**What do you do to stay well, healthy and happy?**

- Eat fairly healthy – with comfort food thrown in
- Bush walking – looking at wildflowers and bird watching
- Visit friends
- Eat a minimum of junk food
- Work
- Swimming at Horsham Aquatic Centre
- Mountain bike
- Canoeing
- Mountain climbing / rock climbing at Arapiles
- Play music – guitar, drums
- Regular exercise – eg swim, walk the dog
- Try and get enough sleep
- Chill out time
- Have a bath – listen to music
- Exercise is very important – eg go to the gym and do classes, bike riding, bush walking. If I don't exercise then I get grumpy

- Maintain a good work/life balance – when this achieved feel better physically and mentally
- Go out with friends and do stuff – create own activities and fun

**Can you think of ways to improve your health, wellness and happiness?**

- Walk more
- Join a club
- Visit friends more
- Better diet
- Better personal discipline
- Go to bed earlier – get out of bed earlier
- Work life balance is really important, although hard to maintain when work involves lots of travel
- Critical to maintain work/life balance
- Daily exercise – this doesn't always happen
- Many businesses in Horsham are just hanging on. Difficult for business people to take time out

**What is good about where you live? What do you like about it?**

- Country air
- Can have horses and a dog
- Can get away from people
- Clean air
- Not too many people
- Wide open spaces
- Friendly people
- Safe
- Great facilities (Horsham)
- Good shopping
- The Grampians
- Quiet lifestyle
- Relaxed and easy living

- Low pressure
- Can do your own things and people will support them

**What do you see as issues about where you live?**

- Lots of people who are poor
- Lack of transport
- Price of petrol
- Lack of opportunity
- Need for young people to move to find work
- Dial up broadband
- A lot of people drink – do drugs etc
- Boredom – people are not interested in activities
- Drought
- Lack of water
- Not enough social life options (Nhill)
- Can be too quiet at times
- Not enough critical mass so when something is on there often isn't enough people to support it
- If you aren't into sport, sometime there isn't much to do
- Water for Natimuk Lake
- Fuel station in Natimuk
- More help with education – extra resources for kids with learning needs at Nati School
- Mt Arapiles, Lake with water (too shallow), rabbits about the Lake salinity management

**What are some possible solutions that could happen in your community?**

- More opportunities for social life such as games nights for various ages of people
- Recognition by government of the needs of regional areas
- Development of partnerships between government and country businesses
- More places for younger people to hang out

- For small towns work better in partnership to bring more options to the bush – so everyone doesn't have to go elsewhere for social life
- Important to have facilities and activities happening in the various communities – eg exercise programs in Natimuk.
- Off road bike trail around Natimuk – out to the Lake, somewhere for kids to ride bikes
- Mt Arapiles Bike Trail
- Childcare facilities in Natimuk
- Play equipment for children – eg swings (there are no swings in Natimuk) and more challenging play equipment for older children.

# **Municipal Public Health Plan Consultations**

## **WEST WIMMERA SHIRE**

### **Edenhope Play Group**

**16 May 2008**

Six mums and their toddlers attended the consultation that was held during a session of the playgroup at the Edenhope Kindergarten. The consultation was very informal with the group as whole going through the questions together.

#### **What does wellbeing mean to you?**

- Getting out and talking with others
- Friends
- The new coffee shop in Edenhope is good its kid friendly and a good place to go and meet people
- Good to talk with others about non-kid issues
- Having input into things
- Activities – eg choir
- Important to avoid isolation – need to get together with others
- Important for mums, especially new mums to come to groups – needs to attract others to the playgroup (let people know about it when they come to antenatal classes)

#### **What is good about living in Edenhope?**

- People are friendly
- When I moved to Edenhope people lent me a bike to get around, took me out to tea, made me welcome (a bit more difficult for the non-work partner)
- Safeness of the town – it feels safe
- You only need a few people to make you feel welcome
- Getting to know people through groups and the school
- It's a good place for kids – safe to walk and ride to school
- There are good schools in Edenhope – high school has a good reputation

- Lake Wallace and surrounding lakes
- Yabbies
- Going camping
- Bird-life and bushland
- Close to natural features – eg Glenelg River, coast, Grampians, Little Desert, beaches
- You don't have to spend money – there's always something to do
- Halfway between Adelaide and Melbourne
- Being able to walk everywhere
- Car parking is good – always get a park out the front of the supermarket, which is great when you have kids
- The smell of the air
- Can go to Melbourne for a fix of shopping and then come back
- There are a variety of medical facilities available in Edenhope – some are good.

#### **What could be done to improve your wellbeing?**

- A number of people at the consultation had recently moved to Edenhope – they initially found it hard to get information. Information and contact details on the Council website are sometimes out of date, and the information pack they received also had out of date information (sometimes up to two to three years out of date). Important for everyone – but very important for new people who have moved to the town.
- Consider that it is important that people know about children's/family services and support when they are pregnant – not have to find out after they have had their baby. Suggested coming along and getting introduced to the playgroup (or other programs/systems) when you are pregnant.
- Suggest having a bulletin board with information and also information in the Naracoorte and Horsham doctor's surgeries as women have to go to these towns when pregnant
- Maternal and Child Health service is a good service but if you move here with kids you don't necessarily tap into the information/connections that the staff there have
- Suggest using the Council bulletin in the paper to have more information on family and children's services (seems to be very sport dominated)

- Should be more emphasis on promotion of services for families
- Even though Edenhope is a small town, not everyone knows everyone – so shouldn't assume that information gets around by word of mouth
- Need more activities/programs for kids who are not into sport
- Not much childcare available. Need for more childcare/family day care and occasional care. The only care that is available is two days a week (maximum of four children per week) – that's not enough, so people don't bother to put their names down. Casual care – eg if have to go to appointment in nearby town, need somewhere to be able to leave kids.
- Would like to be able to do more exercise – eg yoga activities. Needs to be during the day (or when you can get care for kids)
- Some uses golly gym at the Elsie Bennet Centre
- Suggest exercise programs/kinder gym for kids
- Would be good to have some “well women” sessions or clinics. Many went to the Harrow session but want more information
- Could have a baby-sitting club – must be with a group of people you trust – start with “credits” and then they eventually get used up
- Men's health – concerned that there is not enough support for men. If you are not into football, the pub or a service club/specialist hobby then there are not many chances for men to get together. Some gave an example of BBQ's that happen at various fire sheds – these were considered to be good activities for men.
- Maybe have a late night men's shed for younger blokes
- Its hard for men to make friends if they have moved here
- Consider that there is a gap for men who are above 40 years and are too old for Apex – Lions is considered to be full of people that are too old.

### **Other**

- Drought means that farmers have more to do – eg feeding sheep and this has an impact on stress levels, the time when farmers stop work, and therefore the ability for the family to relax together and also time for the wives/partners to go out to other activities.

## **Goroke CBI Committee**

**20 May 2008**

The consultation took place as part of the Goroke Community Building Initiative Steering Committee meeting – there were five people in attendance.

### **What affects your health and wellbeing?**

- Community involvement
- Fitness – walking
- Social networks
- Family
- Access to education
- Availability of doctors and other health professionals
- Information availability and access to it
- Financial considerations including fuel costs
- Transport availability
- Childcare availability – two days a week in Goroke
- Community input – having a say and having an influence
- Communications
- Tai chi/aerobics sessions are held during the day at the Goroke Health Centre
- Services for families - education, childcare and sports
- Distance (negative)
- Demographic and economic changes – most families now need two incomes

### **What's good about Goroke?**

- Relaxed
- Quiet town
- No pollution
- Social interaction
- Not left out
- Not having to ask – people able to help
- Community partnerships - there is a good connection between groups in Goroke

- You know your kids are safe in Goroke – living here gives kids a chance to be kids – kids are able to have a degree of independence – eg go to the shops and buy things (learning)
- Despite being in a small town there is an opportunity to do things – people often think that you are disadvantaged by living in a small town – that's not the case
- School is good – P-12 level
- More community responsibility in the kids that live in the small towns
- Three generations of families in the one town

### **What could be done to improve your health and wellbeing?**

- More activities for middle aged people out of work hours – occasional activities/programs
- A community shed – not just for men but a place for all including teenagers
- Apex – provides an outlet for younger blokes
- Mental health issues for teenagers is becoming an emerging issue – there is a gap in the provision of care. Some kids don't have social networks. Services need to have on-line components as well as confidential counselling. Should be activities.
- There is a gap in terms of activities for kids who aren't into sport
- Provide information on stress management and techniques – would be of interest to people throughout the community
- Community garden

### **Kaniva Rotary**

**26 May 2008**

The consultation took place as part of Kaniva Rotary Club's regular meeting. Four small groups discussed the consultation questions and reported back with a general discussion. 15 people were at the meeting.

### **What's good about living in Kaniva?**

- Its appealing, open, less stress, slow pace
- Services are available

- Fresh air, no smoke, pollution free
- Friendly
- Safe
- Familiarity
- Caring community
- Good weather
- Peaceful
- Cost of housing and living
- Close for work
- Less travel – less stress
- There is work available in Kaniva
- Many volunteers groups
- Rotary, Lions, Football, SES, Ambulance, RSL, Scouts/Guides, Progress Association, Senior Citizens, Probus, netball, hockey, squash, tennis, bowls, exercise groups, Golf, croquet, shooting – pistol and rifle range, badminton, fitness centre, skateboarding, Community Sports Centre, Show Society
- 75 organisations use volunteers
- People assist each other
- Availability of water, minimal water restrictions. It's a reliable water supply that's very reassuring.
- Plenty of gossip from the street observers
- Reliable seasons compared to many rural areas around
- Good support networks
- Nature walks
- Open space
- Friendly environment
- Kaniva is green and neat
- Pretty well has all services
- People talk to you
- Quiet rural environment
- Local hospital and aged care facility and school
- Visiting surgeon at Nhill hospital

- Wetlands/fauna park

### **Downsides**

- Lack of industry to keep population
- Geographical distance to buy some essentials and personal shopping
- Fuel – freight charges
- No dentist
- Currently no doctor – it's critical to have a doctor here
- Lack of continuity of care with doctors, physiotherapist
- Transport to get to appointments
- With the public transport timetable (and the fact that it doesn't come to Kaniva), can't get to the footy in Melbourne on the weekend
- Public transport from Nhill but not from Kaniva
- Buses have inconvenient times and don't necessarily stop in Kaniva

### **What has a positive effect on your wellbeing?**

- Climate
- Going for regular health check ups
- Eating healthy
- Trying to keep a level of fitness
- Good socialising with people
- Good family networks
- Availability of services
- Knowing people care about you and are concerned about you
- Interest groups in the area – eg sport, churches, CWA, service clubs etc
- Good medical services – eg family doctor
- Town has a good school, hospital and sporting facilities

### **Can you think of ways to improve your wellbeing?**

- Have the odd glass of alcohol
- Keep a balanced life and a level of fitness
- Put a bicycle track/walking track at racecourse
- An influx of good living families
- Stop smoking
- Eat less junk food
- Drink less alcohol
- More activities in town/get together
- Try to be more physically active
- Family doctor service – personal service – having a doctor who is always present for consistent care and emergencies (mentioned by all groups)
- Walking track about town (mentioned by all groups)
- Encourage people to participate in the groups that are available
- Off road tracks
- Transport assistance to get to specialist services that are available in Horsham or other areas
- No visiting physiotherapist
- Can Shire provide a car to go to Nhill, Horsham or Ararat?
- Supplying community transport
- Cheaper petrol because travel is so important for us
- Encourage businesses to come to lift employment – maybe more tree changers
- Caring for elderly - flats

## **Elsie Bennet Centre, Edenhope**

**12 June 2008**

The consultation took place during an activities session at the Elsie Bennet Centre. The session was held in conjunction with the Wimmera Aged Care Strategy and was co-facilitated with Vivien Clark. 22 people were involved in the consultation.

### **What's good about living in Edenhope?**

- Feel safe
- Sporting facilities
- Friendly service at the supermarket
- Well looked after
- The Elsie Bennet Centre is wonderful
- People look out for each other
- Community gets together – eg Henley on Lake Wallace
- Its safe for kids
- Police presence is high – this is good
- Men's Shed
- Lions Club
- Bowls Club etc
- Have very strong sporting clubs
- Volunteering is a way of meeting people
- Good schools
- Mechanics Hall has been done up
- Have a number of visiting health practitioners – eg dentist, optician, podiatrist, dietician, speech therapist
- Meals on Wheels

### **What has a positive effect on your health and wellbeing?**

- Security in your own home
- Financial security
- Exercise

- Walking
- Water – drinking lots of it
- Cost
- Immunization programs
- Going to the gym
- Fitness
- Losing weight
- Gopher trails – being able to ride around safely and comfortably
- Social wellbeing
- Sense of belonging
- Friendly people
- Getting together
- Bus trips
- Fitness programs
- Men's Shed – 10 people attend
- Planned Activity Groups
- Respite in the home
- Home help – need help with heavier/handyman work. Need a home handyman
- Community Car – two people in town are drivers (need more), able to take people to appointments
- Personal security alarms – many people have them but there seems to be some confusion on the extent or area in which they will work
- Transport – difficult to access services in Ballarat, Hamilton, Mt Gambier, and Naracoorte



### **What could be done to improve health and wellbeing?**

- District Nurse – very busy, visits to the home, not enough
- Lots of elderly live on their own – have larger properties and large homes, concerned with the condition of yards and the risk of falls. Difficult to maintain outside of houses/yards
- Water in the lake
- Concerned about the future workforce
- Bus to Horsham – time in Horsham is not enough, have to rush around
- Need a morning service to Horsham – maybe once a week could go in earlier?
- No footpaths at the western end of town only in the centre
- Difference in satisfaction between planned and un-planned appointments
- Don't have a neighbourhood house. Need one to run activities and have a place for people to meet/maybe a wellness house.
- Doctor's surgery – waiting room is very crowded
- Need more physiotherapy services
- Important to have good emergency services they are often out of town- people have to wait
- Men's health is harder to target
- Younger disabled need to have a venue of their own and a place to do things that are of interest to them
- Young disabled people often don't get looked after well in rural towns
- Counselling service – the in home service is stopping. This is critical.
- Concerned with mental health problems in the future
- Concerned with privacy at counselling rooms at the shire office, can see though them
- Family-oriented community events
- Keep Elsie Bennet Centre
- Music – sing-alongs, concerts and shows
- More footpaths
- Gopher parking
- Mental health services

## **Apsley Senior Citizens**

**12 June 2008**

The consultation took part as part of the weekly Senior Citizens session with 26 people at the session. The session was in conjunction with the Wimmera Aged Care Strategy consultations being conducted by Vivien Clark.

### **What's good about living in Apsley?**

- Apsley senior citizens group offers companionship; activities (cards, bowls, monthly trips), socialising, and they look out for each other.
- There are four or five voluntary community carers in Apsley
- Home care is available
- Public phone box is very important – especially as mobile phone coverage is poor
- Do aerobics in the RSL Hall
- People in Apsley are only too happy to help
- Peace and tranquillity
- Wildlife
- People are friendly and accepting
- Wouldn't change it for the world
- People are great
- Apsley has a good name
- No pollution
- No parking problems
- Get goods and deliveries at the local shop. Pharmacy delivers to the local shop
- Meals on wheels
- Have an excellent police officer
- Community health nurse comes from Edenhope
- Some have a safety alarm and a system with neighbours
- Seven units managed by Grampians Housing – has one vacancy
- Community groups – progress association, Lions Club (three members), RSL (20 members mainly affiliate members (widows))
- Can get petrol
- Small walking track at Apsley – to the nearby lake

- A number of events are held in Apsley – Carols by Candlelight, ANZAC Day service, Australia Day BBQ,
- Apsley Primary School – 27 kids
- There have been a number of new houses built in Apsley – five recently, mainly people moving to Apsley

### **What has a positive effect on your wellbeing?**

- Humour
- A happy disposition
- Walking
- Being honest
- Keeping in contact and being active
- Good food and exercise
- Gardening
- Activities – eg bowls, cards
- Elsie Bennet Centre in Edenhope is very good

### **Issues: What could be done to improve wellbeing?**

- Travel – bus from Naracoorte leaves Apsley at 8.40am. Doctors in Edenhope don't open till 11am. Council cars aren't always available for the return journey. Issue of timing of medical services with the cars – i.e. doctors often running late and Council car returns to Apsley at 12.
- Possibility of roster of volunteer drivers
- Co-ordination within the community for regular doctors appointments/visits – opportunity to car pool
- People would leave Apsley if they couldn't drive – would move to Edenhope or Naracoorte
- Need for more doctors in Edenhope
- Can blood tests be done in Apsley? Doctor comes to Apsley twice a month
- Local shop is very important – does the meals on wheels for Apsley, does senior citizens meals
- Rising fuel costs are an issue – impact on pensions and affordability
- No mobile phone coverage

- Department of Veterans Affairs only visits the area once every six months
- Home adjustments
- No handyman in Apsley
- Edenhope College send up kids to help mow lawns
- Don't have the facilities in Apsley to keep people with medical conditions
- No employment in Apsley
- Broadband is expensive for some people
- Information on services, assistance etc is necessary
- Visits from the mobile library would be good
- Digital TV is not good at Apsley and in the area around it

### **Harrow Bush Nursing Centre**

**12 June 2008**

The consultation session was held at the Harrow Bush Nursing Centre and attended by six people. The session was promoted locally and information mailed out to people that regularly attend the centre. Melissa Morris and Vivien Clark facilitated the session.

### **What's good about Harrow?**

- Café – a place to meet and catch up – it's a casual meeting space
- Library
- Art and Craft Shop – people use these spaces.
- Three churches. Churches also provide a social aspect
- Fire brigade – brings people together/people rely on each other
- Despite having a small population – there are different communities/circles within – i.e. different people use the hotel, café, library and men's shed. Each one of these you can go to and see people that don't go to the other facilities. This diversity of activity spaces is important to meet people's different needs and interests.
- The Men's Shed fulfils a niche for men and they are able to do things for the community – creates a sense of belonging and doing
- The Sound and Light Show – need 35 people to run the show but more than 50 in the community are involved – this show helps bind the town
- There is a sewing and craft group, quilting

- Sporting clubs and facilities – netball, football, tennis, golf
- Senior citizens
- Opportunities for people to connect is important
- In Harrow people feel that they can make a difference
- There are many programs run through the Harrow Bush Nursing Centre (HBNC) and many people use them
- Walking group, kinder moves, singing group
- The Harrow community is good in supporting things and new initiatives
- Harrow is not a clique community
- There is a bus that goes once a month to the Horsham swimming pool
- People tend to do their shopping in Horsham, Hamilton or Naracoorte
- Medical – doctors come here from Edenhope and one from Horsham once a month
- Follow up done by HBNC has had a big success
- HBNC is very proactive
- Pauline has been doing things for many years to develop the well being of the community
- Have good staff/people who can do things and bind the community
- Connectedness to the community
- Beaut Blokes
- Kids go to school in Balmoral (21 out of 96 people in Harrow would be young kids)
- Most young farmers are now tertiary educated and run a farm more like a business

**What has a positive effect on your health and wellbeing?**

- Keeping busy
- Participate in things
- Communicate with people
- Employment
- Voluntary work
- Keeping active and social
- People need to make decisions for themselves
- Attitude

### **What could be done to improve health and wellbeing?**

- Funding to continue to support the community
- Drought funding for streetscape works – improved the amenity of the main street this has had a very good effect
- Keep businesses going – don't want to see empty shops in the main street
- New fence near the river looks good
- Appearance of the town – important to keep it to a high standard, keeps people feeling positive
- Promote shop locally
- Keep as many services as we can here in Harrow – avoid out of town expenditure
- In-home respite is an issue – especially providing for occasional/emergency respite when carers need a break
- Having a facility like HBNC is critical
- Counselling service (Lowan Health and one other) is finishing up – this service is critical
- Mental health facilities and services
- Adult education – the new Neighbourhood House will be running courses
- Library is very important, has a high level of usage, want a larger library space – current 14 square metres
- Transport – there is no public transport in Harrow, and no direct transport/delivery services from Hamilton or Horsham. The change of mail run from Horsham affected this
- Jobs for women to do – professional jobs. Many couples put off by a lack of or perceived lack of employment for professional women
- Mobile coverage
- Sewerage set up in town isn't very good – people still have septic, concern with leaching into the Glenelg River
- No potable water
- Someone to facilitate information on programs and assistance re ageing
- Needs to be capacity for care in the community – while some may move to larger centres and retirement facilities, others will want to age in their homes in Harrow
- Town doesn't farewell people when they move out and go and live elsewhere
- Looking for smaller houses

- Need information about products and programs that are available – e.g. products offered through Vision Australia

## **Kaniva Playgroup**

**13 June 2008**

The consultation took place during the weekly session of the Kaniva Playgroup. Eight people were at the session.

### **What's good about living in Kaniva?**

- People here are welcoming
- Being on the highway helps keep the town fresh with passing trade and more activity
- People are friendly
- It's a close knit community
- There were different views expressed about cliqueness – some thought Kaniva wasn't cliquey others thought it was
- "Don't consider myself a local" – you have to be born here to be a local
- There is a strong feeling of safety
- Kids can ride to school/walk to school safely – the only road of concern is the highway
- Being involved in groups is very important – if you are new to town it is important to get involved
- Football and netball clubs are very strong clubs in town
- Can trust my neighbours
- There is a social context to everything
- People genuinely want to know how people are going
- Everything takes time – because people stop and talk to you
- For the size of the town, facilities are excellent (compared with other towns)
- School, hospital and shire are the main employers in town
- A doctor 2.5 days per week
- Need to go to Bordertown or Horsham for real emergency
- M&CH nurse half a day per week

- Grampians 24 hour community nurse phone service is used
- Some go to Horsham for doctors – service is more regular/easier than going to Nhill or Bordertown and waiting for just as long. Tend to also do shopping in Horsham when go there to the doctors
- School, childcare sporting complex – all good facilities

### **What affects your health and wellbeing?**

- Friends
- Socialising (very important) – do something four days a week. Also helps you get through postnatal depression
- Friendships and support – having an outlet
- Having time out
- Football and netball
- Walking and running
- Town is small enough to be able to walk or ride around
- Kids ride bikes and scooters everywhere
- Fresh air, no smog; seeing the stars and the sky and sunsets
- Seeing farm animals – good for kids
- Eating healthy – not many temptations in Kaniva
- Fruit and vegetables available locally are OK – while they may be more expensive than in other areas – that is balanced out by not having to spend money on fuel

### **What could be done to improve your wellbeing?**

- A doctor based in town is the one service we should realistically have and need but don't have
- Need to provide information to the whole community
- There is a town newsletter but the person who puts it together has difficulty getting information from some clubs and some clubs have their own newsletter for their members
- Hockey – would be a good to be able to link this more with football and netball (but play in different leagues)
- Speech pathologist doesn't visit here any more – also losing this service at the school. Now have to go to Nhill.

- Shops aren't open after 5pm – would be good to have some late night access
- Have had family day care in the past but don't have this at the moment, would be good to have again
- Numbers at the school are going down
- Would like an after hours school program – would mean more mums could work. Difficult to finish work and to pick up kids.
- Childcare is important – there are limits to how much and when you can use your friends for babysitting
- Tricky to juggle work, childcare and the need for flexibility
- Difficult getting a new mums group off the ground in terms of numbers at any one time of people having first kids. While people with younger kids are welcome at the playgroup, people don't feel comfortable or feel that they fit in (this had been the experience of parents there).

#### **Other**

- There are a number of houses where people who have recently left jail are placed – this is of concern – these people are very different from others in Kaniva
- Farms are getting bigger

#### **West Wimmera Youth Consultative Council**

**17 June 2008**

The consultation took place during a meeting of the West Wimmera Youth Consultative Council – 10 young people were in attendance who lived in and around Edenhope.

#### **What has a positive effect on people's health and wellbeing?**

- Taking the dog for a walk
- Energy
- Drugs and alcohol
- Sleeping – getting enough sleep
- Eating well – eating fruit and vegetables
- Going for a run
- Going to the doctor

- Walking
- Mixing with others
- Drinking water
- Socialising
- Climate change
- Avoiding isolation
- Pollution
- Cleaning up your room
- Gardening
- Rain
- Exercise – football, netball, soccer, hockey, skateboarding, riding BMX bikes, softball, going to the skate park
- Safety

#### **What's good about living in Edenhope?**

- Good people
- No drugs
- Get along with most people
- Good school facilities – especially multimedia and IT
- My friends
- Can find work easily
- Everyone knows everyone (this is good and bad)
- Police
- It's safe
- Can walk around town easily and safely
- Friendly people
- Community helps each other / community feeling

#### **Most common feedback - It's boring**

#### **What could be done to improve your wellbeing?**

- Need more things for kids under age to do

- Have something for kids to do on the weekends – a place for kids to chill/ hang out – eg could have a jukebox, pool tables, maybe movies
- Water in Lake Wallace
- More shops / bigger town
- FREEZA gigs
- Walking tracks
- Transport – there is no way to get to Horsham on a Friday night, this would be good, could go to the movies, go late night shopping
- A cinema
- Something for girls – boys have skateboarding

### **Goroke Apex**

**18 June 2008**

The consultation took place at a meeting of the Goroke Apex Club at the Goroke Hotel – 17 men were at the meeting.

#### **What's good about living in Goroke and district?**

- Fresh air
- No pollution/clean air
- Relaxed environment/relaxed lifestyle
- Good atmosphere
- Safety
- Good for raising kids
- Community spirit
- Apex Club – have many life members and third generation members
- Sense of belonging in town
- Has a good level of basic services – school, supermarket, pub, post office, bank (could be open more), fuel, pharmacy

#### **What has a positive effect on your health and wellbeing?**

- Sport – football

- Social activities
- Rain
- Sex
- Apex – being involved in a group and providing a community service
- Sense of belonging in a community
- Pub
- Young blokes in their 20s and 30s tend not to think about their health – think they are invincible. Only think of their health if they have a problem.

**Can you think of any ways to improve your wellbeing?**

- A greater balance of gender
- Better mobile phone reception
- Better services for elderly people – no accommodation for elderly people in Goroke (there has been a donation towards this) – next likely place for people to go into care is Natimuk Nursing Home. Gave an example of a resident in Mitre who had to go to Rainbow while waiting for a vacancy to come up in Natimuk – this was a long distance away from community and family
- Better health care – not enough doctors and allied health providers (regular). Tend to go to Horsham and Naracoorte
- Female doctors considered to be better listeners and better for personal issues than male doctors
- Drink more water
- Edenhope was considered to have good medical facilities, Goroke not so good – people tend to go to Horsham
- Important to improve and maintain the facilities that are in town
- Drink less alcohol

## **Harrow Bush Nursing Centre**

**19 June 2008**

The consultation took place throughout the day at Harrow Bush Nursing Centre (HBNC). Discussions occurred with people from the mini movers program (4), exercise group (5), Harrow and District Progress Association (1), Mens' Shed (5) and the singing group (7).

### **What's good about living in Harrow?**

- Footpaths have recently been done – in OK condition
- HBNC – can come to the doctor here
- NAB – open 1.5hrs per week on a Friday
- Edenhope has an accountant and bank facilities
- 5th generation of family here
- Many community groups – Harrow and District Progress Association, Hall Committee, Calico and Candles, HBNC, 3 church groups, Men's Shed, RSL, Historical Society, Cemetery
- New fences in town
- Horsham is the main shopping centre
- Quaint old town
- People are very friendly
- Edenhope very cliquy, Harrow isn't
- Historical society owns a number of buildings and has done them up
- Feel part of Harrow
- Sound and Light show
- Prescriptions get delivered to the Café
- Friendly people
- Lots of activities
- It's a young community
- An active community
- Quiet
- Farm life – good for kids

- There are always things being organised and done in Harrow – eg things at the pub, activities for kids at HBNC, many groups to get involved in and general activities at HBNC
- Its quiet and beautiful
- Good for kids
- Young guys are coming back for farming and business
- HBNC programs are good and cater for all age groups
- Getting people out and about
- After school programs at schools in Balmoral and Edenhope
- Its safe for kids
- There are movie nights at HBNC for kids during holidays – aimed at younger kids and teenagers
- Preschool kids can go to preschool on the school bus
- Space and freedom
- Nice and peaceful
- Community is very caring
- Always someone to help you
- Know our neighbours
- Good neighbours
- People look out for each other
- Arts is a great outlet
- Initially when moving to the country from Melbourne thought I was making a sacrifice but that's not the case at all – there is a lot to do up here, are able to do things that I am interested in and can also create new things as well
- HBNC has become the heart of Harrow – not too many people wouldn't use it
- HBNC is a godsend – excellent people run it
- Feel that there is good health care here and personalised service – better than what you would get in the city in many ways
- Don't think there is a single person who isn't made to feel welcome or needed in Harrow
- Can find something you like in Harrow or can start something you like
- Country life has the friendship which is not often found in the city

- Elsie Bennet Centre is a good centre – main issue in Edenhope is the doctor situation
- Clean country air
- Pub is a place where many blokes catch up
- People get on and do things in Harrow – otherwise the place will die
- Some think it's the best place ever
- It's not stressful going to work – no traffic

**Other comments:**

- Toilets at the hotel smell
- Primary School closed in 2002
- No public transport in Harrow
- Absentee landowners – larger farms – not supporting local groups. Impact of absentee landowners is on a par with impacts of blue gums
- Harrow is a little bit isolated

**What affects your health and wellbeing?**

- Don't smoke and drink
- Eat healthy foods
- Look after myself – consider myself to be healthy
- Walking
- Volunteering (sometimes time available for volunteering is difficult)
- Being able to say no
- HBNC – visit people in their own homes
- Take people to Horsham once/month for shopping, doctor's visits, hairdressers etc
- Socialising
- Access to services at HBNC
- Netball/football
- Kid's activities
- Kids are able to wander around safely
- Pub is an outlet for men to debrief
- Mini movers is good

- Attending the weekly exercise program at the HBNC has been very good, feel better – has improved one persons fitness so much that she was able to dance all-night at a family party (wouldn't have been able to do that before)
- Exercise
- Activities like golf
- Listening to music/teaching music
- Helping other people
- Depression is a big issue – has lead to an increase in workload for the local policeman – because he is a nice bloke people go and talk to him. Depression caused by drought is an issue.
- Fuel prices are having a big impact. There is no public transport in Harrow and it is a long trip to Melbourne. Travel assistance is too difficult to get.
- Insurance costs are prohibitive for community groups
- Contentment
- The singing group
- A feeling of belonging which exists here in Harrow
- Important to live life to the full
- Its all about having a positive attitude – how you feel and how you think are very important
- Surround yourself with positive thinkers
- Volunteering – camaraderie
- HBNC can take people to the doctors if necessary

### **What could be done to improve wellbeing?**

- The contract for the seniors meal in Harrow ran out and hasn't been resolved yet, the committee had to cook last time
- Water supply
- Mobile phone service – none in Harrow and very patchy around here. Concerned for emergency purposes, business purposes and if break down on road – not much traffic
- Toilets and sewerage system in town, concerned about effluent run-off into the river
- More assistance fore elderly re transport

- Childcare – no formal childcare in Harrow nearest would be Balmoral or Edenhope – not sure what would work here
- HBNC services are continually improving and staff are very receptive to feedback and schedule new programs
- More equipment for the exercise program at HBNC – eg more mats, bench press, rails along wall so people can use them for stability (would give people something to hang on to if they need extra stability or if they are recuperating from injury)
- Adult learning classes – eg computer basics. Too far to travel into Horsham for classes especially at night
- Some people on farms living on their own and getting older - isolation is an issue for them – connecting people in (if they want to) is important
- Not an excess of housing available in Harrow – possibly issue of housing diversity and suitability of housing for elderly
- Transport is an issue
- Access to information
- Suggest a local bus that goes from Casterton to Edenhope via Harrow connecting many of the small communities
- Many people who are in their late 60/70's and live in small communities are afraid to drive, especially at night because of kangaroos etc
- Feel they have most services they need
- Feel that the Shire does a good job with the resources they have

#### **Other comments**

- Concerned about drought and if farmers stop spending then that will have a big effect on the town
- People are car pooling more and more for work and activities due to rising fuel costs

#### **Harrow Men's Shed**

- A place to learn new skills – eg welding/woodwork and a place to pass on new skills
- A place to have a cup of tea and a chat and time out
- A meeting of blokes – place to meet and talk
- Coming here means that it saves me sitting at home alone

- It's a home away from home
- Have only been going for about a year and new people are still joining. Currently have 14 members
- Do some community projects – eg currently making a redgum burl clock for the HBNC and have been asked to maintain props for the Sound and Light Show, also do private projects

### **Kaniva Netball Team**

**19 June 2008**

The consultation session took place at a training session of the Kaniva netball team – one-on-one discussions occurred during and after training with 11 people.

### **What's good about living in Kaniva and District?**

- Casual
- Easy going
- Keep busy
- Good socially
- Close knit community
- Rural town
- Friendliness
- Peaceful quiet surroundings
- Close social network
- Small united community
- Not being alone
- Knowing your neighbours
- Close bonds with people in a rural town
- Relaxed but busy lifestyle – not high pressure
- Its home
- Welcoming
- The town is vibrant – two supermarkets sustained because of highway traffic
- People are willing to do a good turn for you
- Shire, hospital and school are the main employees in the town

- Many community groups
- Have an indoor gym, squash and basketball, netball tennis, swimming pool, football, hockey, bowls. Have water aerobics in summer
- Fresh air
- Have a volunteer ambulance
- Children services – Maternal and child health, playgroup, childcare (two days per week – full days), kinder
- Hospital has six acute beds and 11 geriatric beds – not set up for emergency

**What has a positive effect on your wellbeing?**

- Community minded people
- Clean air
- Socialising
- Good health
- Community sporting events
- Being active and involved
- Spiritual and physical wellness
- Open space
- Freedom
- Sport and sports options
- Community group and events
- Outdoor activities
- Sense of belonging
- Exercise
- Friends
- Happy and healthy kids
- Financial circumstances can have a positive or negative effect
- Rain and drought can have either a positive effect or negative effect

### **Can you think of ways to improve wellbeing?**

- Joining in physical activities
- Wider range of medical facilities available
- Drink more water
- Play more sport
- Health facilities that are closer to access
- Fitness classes – aerobics, dancing
- Update shopping facilities
- Have more fun rural activities like dog jumping and horse racing at the show
- Information – seems to be varying levels of awareness of the state of medical facilities and what is available – changing services seem to have compounded this
- Getting rid of red tape associated with volunteer and community activities
- Local drivers test
- A regular (full time) doctor and dentist service in Kaniva. Doctors comes two days per week from Nhill
- Visiting allied health services
- Need to have time out and relax
- More exercise
- No dentist, have to go to Nhill. View that people will use services if they are available/provided
- With limited childcare have to either work part time, get family to look after children or wait until kids go to school before working full time.
- Farmers don't look after their health – tend to work very long hours and are totally focused on the farm
- Transport – no community car in Kaniva, yet there is one in Edenhope
- No mental health services
- Need things for farmers to do after they retire – so they are not at a loose end e.g. volunteering
- Someone at the Shire to help co-ordinate volunteer drivers – they have this in Edenhope but not in Kaniva
- With drought more women working
- A Men's Shed

There are a couple of homes in Kaniva that are used to house people that have recently been released from jail. A number of people commented that this has created problems in Kaniva to do with begging on the streets, concerns for safety, unstable kids causing problems at school. The fact that there is limited employment in Kaniva means that people that move here are unlikely to find work and this is compounded by limited transport. Often people move on quickly after re-offending.

**The following consultations were conducted by Christine Piccone (Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN) as part of the Wimmera RYAN's Youth in Action program.**

### **Goroke College**

#### **What do you do to stay well, healthy and happy?**

Play sport, socialise, chill out, play games, hang out with friends, motor bike ride, watch TV, eat fruit and vegies, do fun things (sport), relax, play on the internet, talk on MSN, read, write, draw, talk with family and friends, watch anime, read magazines, exercise, work on farm – shearing, droving, go for a drive, go shooting, party, socialise at Freeza's, play after school and weekend sport, drive, play netball, shower, have fun, go horse riding, read a book, not smoking or doing drugs.

#### **Can you think of ways to improve your health, wellness and happiness?**

More exercise and catch up with friends, go out and meet more people, rec area to hang, BMX Park, Bike track, eat less junk food, do more fun stuff, get out more, there probably are some such as getting more sleep but I'm fairly content living on a farm where there's plenty to do, have somewhere in Goroke to hang out and to chill with friends, fitness, sport, more places to hang out, party, eat healthier, do more sport, relax and enjoy life, don't stress.

#### **What is good about where you live? What do you like about it?**

You know most people here, friends, freedom, privacy, good clean air, good quality of life, people, not too many people, quiet, no pollution, safe more or less, can see the stars, being half an hour away from civilisation, open spaces, as far as I can see is my

playground, my friends live around the area so I can hang out with them, good places to do sport, good places to run, you can do almost anything, we have three netball games at Goroke, nothing to do its just crap, nothing, limited shops, its quiet, I can do hobbies I enjoy.

**What do you see as issues about where you live?**

Recreation, sports clubs, climate, prices, can have a poor social life, nowhere to hang, isolated, transport, time it takes to get to a medical facility, needing an adult to go shooting, kids don't have anything to do, nowhere to hang out, fat people, not a lot to do, is small as, it's a hole, small, more shops needed, no quick shopping, not many young people, population is mostly elderly people and no new people are coming.

**What are some possible solutions that could happen in your community?**

More public events, more sporting options, gym, BMX track, flying fox, more public transport, ease restrictions of shooting regulations, reduce amount of paperwork needed, proper sustained amounts of funding for farmers in need, I think we could have something like a drop in centre for kids to hang out at, milk bar as we don't have anything like it, rugby, local footy club, car races, more people at school, shops, foam party, karaoke, Goroke is scum, make it better with shops, more job opportunities would attract more people to the town.

**Kaniva College**

**What do you do to stay well, healthy and happy?**

Eat healthy, exercise, go shopping, play netball, hang with friends, sport, socialise, eat well, I play sport, talk to people, take time out, school, riding the motor bike, food, water, bush walking in the scrub, go to the movies.

**Can you think of ways to improve your health, wellness and happiness?**

Get out of the house more when I'm bored and do things, exercise, peace and quiet, a bit more freedom, eat well, eat healthier, healthy, doctor, find new sports interests, increase social events.

**What is good about where you live? What do you like about it?**

It's quiet and there is little traffic, it's fairly safe, friendly town, being on a farm there is more freedom than the city, privacy, the open space, eat well, know most of the people in town, you are close to the community, no rush, you have good support, lots of space, hockey field, complex, fresh air.

**What do you see as issues about where you live?**

There's little to do and there's no shopping centre, drinking, very small, feral people, ex-prisoners, nothing ever happens, nothing to do, isolation, the biggest shops are supermarkets, the only place us kids go is wimpy Kaniva Community Roadhouse and Freeza's, boredom, not enough facilities, not many shops, there is no movies, hard to meet new people, have to travel to everything, cost of petrol, p-plate new rules means less people able to go places, hard to think about employment options as not a lot even for work experience around here.

**What are some possible solutions that could happen in your community?**

Ten pin bowling, have movies playing Friday and Saturday nights like a cinema at the Shire Hall or have a bus going to Horsham every month, have a waterslide at the pool, get to the gym, get rid of the horses at the show and have more rides, hang out place, fix the football oval, community bus, have a youth centre for kids to go, more events/trips for youth, have some facilities and entertainment places built, mini golf, motorbike track, need a community bus that could take us to Nhill every now and then to go to the movies, hang out place for kids that has sing star, X-box, pool tables, guitar hero, work with employers to try to establish employment options for young people, increase more options for work experience and structured workplace learning placements, more Freeza's, more rides and fun stuff at the show or organise a bus to take us to Nhill show so that we aren't missing out, build a cricket shed, bike track, mini golf course or at least a couple of holes of golf that could be made at the showgrounds and used by people at the weekends instead of driving out to the golf club – too young to have a licence to be able to get out there.

# **Municipal Public Health Plan Consultations**

## **YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE**

### **Warracknabeal Mothers Group**

**6 May 2008**

Four mums and their little babies and Carolyn Russell from Wimmera Primary Care Partnership attended the consultation that was held at the Yarriambiack Shire offices. The consultation was very informal with the group as whole going through the questions together.

#### **What does wellbeing mean to you?**

- Friendship and family
- Social networks
- Money
- Time to do what you need to and what you want to
- Safety when walking in the streets – eg footpaths
- Exercise
- Access to doctors and medical facilities
- Physical health and the absence of illness
- Environment – drought, lack of rain/water (and hence a garden)

#### **What is good about living in Warracknabeal?**

- The community – there are lots of people to help you, and people are legitimately concerned/want to help
- Distance between work and home is not great
- No peak hour commuting
- As a kid felt safe walking to school or home at night (not so sure about that now)
- Clean air
- Stars
- Wildlife
- It's a safe environment – you can go to the park and feel safe with your kids

- Horsham, which is relatively close by, has good medical facilities
- Good parks – eg the Lions Park
- Good sporting facilities in Warracknabeal and the region
- Can sustain relationships easier – eg people drop in casually and visit for a cuppa whereas this wouldn't happen in the city.
- It's easier to catch up with people



- Shops – good shops and services in Warracknabeal
- A good Target store (better than Horsham)
- Good early child support – good kinder, good M&CH nurses, good playgroups, take a break program, rhyme time at the library, music for little kids

**What could be done to improve your wellbeing?**

- Remove bindiis from near walking paths near the creek and also in some parks. Bindiis can puncture pram tyres and aren't good in areas where kids play.
- Improve the condition and provision of footpaths in areas – especially Scott Street and surrounding street or on heavily trafficked streets
- Put a ramp into the Post Office and alter the doors (currently open out) – it's difficult to access the Post office with a pram. Have to leave their prams outside the post office and take valuables and babies inside.
- Rest rooms in Warracknabeal are great – a good venue for changing babies and breastfeeding – would be better if they were open on the weekend, especially a Saturday morning, as sometimes it's hard to find a spot to sit down and breastfeed – the cafes are often full.
- Rain
- Six more arms!

- Doctors – need a doctor’s service that is available on the weekend. There are four doctors in town and only one that does after hours work. This is considered not to be adequate and most of the people at the session have had to go to Horsham to access basic medical facilities on the weekend.
- Hospital should have a contact person. The hospital was not considered to provide a useful service.
- A town the size of Warracknabeal should have basic medical facilities here – that includes doctors on a weekend, physiotherapists and speech therapists. Otherwise it’s a 160km round trip to Horsham. One mother had to do that three times a week which is time consuming and expensive.
- Dam water is currently very salty so unable to water the garden with it – the pipeline will hopefully fix that
- If you are new to town it can be difficult to get to know people – suggest the return of Welcome Stranger nights or Welcome Bags
- Have now got better fruit and vegetables in town with the opening of a new fruit store – its brought prices down, but its hard to get into and around with a pram
- Would be good to be able to do more exercise. Difficult to go to current gym in terms of both hours and there is no childcare at the gym. Suggested the need for classes and activities that may be able to happen with informal childcare – some suggested activities include:
  - Pilates that can be done with babies (like on the Morning Show),
  - Swimming with babies;
  - Happy strollers (for younger mums);
  - Netball/tennis;
  - Need to be able to have kids there, need someone to look after them and has to be affordable, daytime would be best.
- Difficult to get involved with netball club when you have a young baby as need to go to training two nights per week and also then the competition day
- Some elderly people are not comfortable driving in Horsham so need for services here

### **Other issues**

- Price of food has increased since the drought
- Hard to fit in exercise with little ones
- Gym doesn't have crèche or childcare facilities
- Drought has had a big impact
- Don't have a garden – so no grass for the kids to play on.

### **Yarriambiack Shire Community Services Staff**

**6 May 2008**

A short exercise was conducted at a Community Services staff meeting with seven staff that lived in a number of different areas including Warracknabeal, Horsham, Hopetoun, Dimboola, Murrawarra, Lah and Cavendish.

### **What does wellbeing mean to you?**

- Good weather
- Community services
- Food/diet (cost of food is increasing which is impacting on the elderly)
- Laughter
- Sense of belonging to the community – being useful
- Social connections
- Employment
- Having people around you of like mind
- Access to resources and information
- Finances
- Positive thinking
- Family
- Friendships
- Exercise
- Access to services – library etc
- Being able to get around – avoid social isolation

### **What has a positive affect on your wellbeing?**

- Financial security
- Employment
- Sense of belonging and contribution
- Living in a small community provides more opportunity to contribute
- Staying active – not getting lonely
- Learning new skills and using these skills
- Affordable housing
- Like the open space and freedom of living here
- Family ties
- Horsham/Wimmera is home – the people of the area are a major attractor – choose to live here rather than elsewhere
- There are a lot of benefits of living in a smaller community - sometimes moving away makes you aware of this
- Recreation opportunities
- Social support – support bases in a small town are a lot better for the young and elderly

### **What could be done to improve wellbeing?**

- Rain/water
- Hopetoun would be booming if there was water in the lake
- Medical services - have visiting professional specialists but they are available only for short snippets of time rather than a full service
- Lack of medical staff at the weekend – have to go to Horsham
- Centralisation of services (post amalgamation) – makes it difficult for people to access services – leads to transport and leakage of money from local economies
- “Tyranny of Distance” – time of appointments sometimes are awkward when travelling long distances – eg may have to stay overnight in Melbourne and this is expensive. DHS travel assistance is difficult/complicated to access.
- Community groups need training in running meetings and in running an organisation.

### **Other issues**

- Price of fuel is affecting people's ability to get around
- Heating and cooling costs are increasing
- Increasing costs

### **Warracknabeal Action Group**

**6 May 2008**

This consultation took place during a monthly meeting of the Warracknabeal Action Group and was attended by six members of the group. Due to time constraints the full exercise did not occur.

### **Factors affecting wellbeing**

- Current economic setting is affecting stress in the community
- Economic and environmental factors closely linked
- A more secure economic environment would mean people would stay in the area
- Lack of employment/industry and security
- The region's economy has a major effect on people's wellbeing
- Rain
- Everyone smiles and talks about it when it rains – has a positive effect on wellbeing
- Need to drought proof the area and make the economy not weather reliant
- Need other attractors
- People are leaving the area – this is having a very negative effect on the community – means less friends, less volunteers and less business
- Demographics of Yarriambiack Shire are changing – 50% of the population are single parents
- People that move here from the city don't get involved in volunteering
- Symptom of cheap real estate and the absence of employment etc that keeps people here
- Distance – cost of fuel has a negative impact on isolation – for some people on farms – eg farming wives they have remarked that people no longer drop in and visit them, or going to town for meetings etc is becoming more difficult

- Long term stable community relationships have an amazing effect on peoples wellbeing

### **What is good about living in Warracknabeal?**

- Good schooling – primary to secondary
- Sense of involvement for kids through sporting activities
- Good activities for kids means that families are able to be happy
- The community offers a lot for kids to do
- It's a safe and friendly place
- People/family members come home for Christmas and Easter and there is always a good feeling/vibe around the town
- There is no crime, traffic or pollution
- Lifestyle – people would choose/prefer to stay here if they could get jobs.
- Career path is sometimes limited in towns like this
- Lifestyle/employment balance – many people choose to live in the area for lifestyle reasons and this sometimes outweighs the employment/career opportunities. Flow on effect from the pipeline will be positive for the region
- State governments focus on economic development hasn't really gone past Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong. Yet to feel any positive effects of the Provincial Victoria campaign.
- Able to live in Warracknabeal and work in Horsham and vice versa – not too far to commute
- New industrial estate in Warracknabeal getting closer – rezoning has just gone through, will have three large lots

The Warracknabeal Action Group sent the survey questions out to their members in a newsletter and asked for a response. Eleven surveys were returned and the results are listed below.

### **What has a positive effect on your health and wellbeing?**

- That I live in a good environment
- Having fun
- Good times with friends and family

- Sport
- Having good medical assistance available
- Professional help and advice on health problems
- Good chemist for general enquiries
- Visiting professionals eg women's doctor
- My mental state - if I am being positive life in general runs smoother. If I'm negative everything goes wrong and snowballs
- Provision of services and care available for older folk
- Living in a friendly community
- Good access to health services (mental and physical)
- Having something to do in my free time
- Being able to live comfortably i.e. no money problems/financial security
- Employment in a job worth doing
- Support from colleagues and friends
- Good health
- Health care services – aged care and doctors
- Law and order
- Education
- Well balanced diet
- Keeping fit and healthy with an active mind and body
- Being active
- More reliable climatic conditions
- Assistance for everyone not just farmers

#### **What is good about where you live?**

- It's friendly
- People help each other
- Supportive community
- A good place to bring up children
- Laid back lifestyle
- Quiet
- Good community, strong community values
- Community activities

- We love living here, we love to go down the street and people know who you are
- Safe/feel our children are safer here the perhaps they would be in the city
- Provides all our needs
- Various denominations cared for
- Don't need to travel out of town for shopping and services
- Weather (except for drought)
- Sporting facilities
- Great range of facilities and activities for families
- Clean atmosphere

### **What could be done to improve health and wellbeing?**

#### **Health care**

- Our wellbeing would be greatly enhanced if we could rely on doctors being available locally every weekend
- We need much better regional mental health facilities for the community
- Having doctors available at the hospital after hours for emergencies
- Better counselling services
- Better more comprehensive health services – finishing the new hospital
- Health information breakfasts/dinners
- Networking with Rural North West Health on delivery of community health services

#### **Other**

- We badly need an employer/business in town to provide work for a lot of workers – instead of them having to leave town
- Better transport systems to and from Warracknabeal
- Stop bureaucrats making ever increasing stupid laws – I'm responsible for my life not someone else
- We need the creek full – it brings life – it is a living thing providing recreation and leisure
- Being organised
- As a family unit there is a need for young people to have more to do, so that they don't spend their weekends at the pub

- A Bunnings store
- Being able to get away, have a break and switch off

### **Minyip Progress Association**

**7 May 2008**

A short session was held at the start of the Minyip Progress Association meeting. 10 community members were in attendance.

#### **What does wellbeing mean to you?**

- Community
- Weather has an affect on wellbeing
- Having services to meet your heath needs
- Community nurses in Minyip are able to do things, and this contributes to sense of wellbeing by having additional resources on hand
- Feeling safe
- Retired people need to keep doing things and keeping active
- Healthy diet
- Activities for kids to do
- Volunteering
- Relaxing with a couple of drinks
- Keeping active and fit makes you feel better
- Positive thinking and a sense of ownership and responsibility for your own actions and life
- A police presence
- Healthy and happy relationships
- People looking out for each other
- Its not only about money
- A place where people care about you
- Feeling welcomed
- Need to get involved in activities

### **What is good about living in Minyip?**

- People are aware of you and care about you.
- People in Minyip care for you and will look after you when you are sick
- Example of someone who was in hospital, when he came home his animals had been fed, his fridge was stocked and house was cleaned – cannot over emphasise the importance this had on how he felt
- People are friendly and welcome new people – say hello
- People are genuinely concerned about others – go to the nursing home and visit people that they are not related to
- People keep an eye on others kids
- When you live in a small town you need to volunteer and get involved in things to be a part of the community

### **What could be done to improve wellbeing?**

- Getting a policeman, this position is currently vacant. While people said they felt safe in Minyip a police presence reinforces this and the police are also proactive in the community – some of the initiatives they instigate don't happen when they aren't there. The police are also part of the community and work with volunteers.
- Doctors – only have access to doctors 1.5 days per week, want better access to doctors in town
- There is a lack of services in the area that address and support people with a mental illness
- Rain
- There are lots of activities for people to do in town – eg walking, tai chi etc. But need more for kids to do, especially if kids are not interested in sport – other activities.
- Should be more of a focus on preventative health activities rather than doctor's services etc. Feel that Dunmunkle Health Service is very good at this.
- Water quality – doesn't meet WHO standards (it's not treated). Has varied over the years.
- Gophers – need to allow for this (and also for people with prams), some of the streets are difficult partly because of their formation and also lighting is not so good. (Shire is aware of this)

- Stray cats are a problem
- Minyip is in a safe conservative seat – with Labor state and federal governments this may not be a good thing

### **Hopetoun Progress Association**

**14 May 2008**

The consultation took place at a monthly meeting of the Progress Association at the Uniting Church Hall. Nine community members were in attendance (five women, four men)

#### **What is good about living in Hopetoun?**

- It's a caring community
- There is support with the district nurse and home help
- If something were to happen to a resident who lives at home, others in the community and neighbours would visit and help – those at the session have had that experience
- If you are not well people cook meals for you and visit you
- You feel cared for in Hopetoun
- If a farmer has a mishap other farmers will step in and help, eg put the crop in, help out where they can
- News gets around quickly
- The sky is so clear and beautiful, the clouds are beautiful
- Sunsets – Mallee sunsets
- Two to three days after it rains everything is transformed
- There are lots of good local businesses – eg Kayes Collection – the “Mini Myers”
- Hopetoun still has a vibrant business community and it is far enough away from Horsham to hold its own
- The Hopetoun community does things and has a track record of doing things
- Hopetoun has a fantastic level of volunteer involvement and volunteer effort over the years – eg the airport, community hotel, Coorong co-operative. Example of how farmers each donated a load of wheat and the community raised \$23,000 which became the community's in-kind contribution.

- There is a high level of community involvement in the upkeep of the town
- Sporting facilities are in good condition due to stormwater harvesting project the town did. Other towns come and use Hopetoun's facilities.
- Small schools
- Kids care for each other
- It's a close knit community

**What does wellbeing mean to you? What has a positive affect on your wellbeing?**

- Being part of the community
- Good health
- Good company
- A glass of good red
- Involvement in the church community
- The feeling that I may be of help somewhere/somehow in my community
- Belonging and being loved
- Our community environment
- Good seasonal conditions
- Rain for water supply
- Feeling of helping
- Being loved and accepted
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- Self esteem
- Our community is our family
- Knowing that facilities are there in case you need them, eg ambulance, doctors
- Quite town
- Country life
- Peace and quiet
- Sunsets and sunrises
- Being able to see the stars and smell the rain
- Seeing my kids grow up and mature. My children are happy here, they go to an excellent school. If kids aren't happy families aren't happy.

### **What could be done to improve wellbeing?**

- Meals on wheels – the cook/chill facility and approach to delivering meals is not popular and has led to a reduction in the number of people using the service. The food doesn't taste good. They would prefer to see meals cooked locally (eg at the local café) in Hopetoun rather than at Warracknabeal (Rural North West Health). Many people have stopped getting meals on wheels and go to the community meals session, which is not good if you aren't mobile
- Business houses should work together more and have more input into the Progress Association. There is a traders association but it only holds a Christmas function.
- Housing is an issue. The community has recently been successful in getting a grant for a consultant to look at the viability of developing a number of independent living units in Hopetoun.
- There has been an issue of having suitable quality housing for nurses who work at the hospital. There have been some improvements to the house at the hospital.
- Rain for seasonal conditions gives confidence into the future
- Water supply for gardeners
- Being part of the community
- Social gatherings
- Good grounds for sports clubs
- Need help to have hope and to continue to be positive
- Important to maintain the current community feeling and services and facilities in Hopetoun
- Roads in the area are some of the worst in the state. Will be made worse with trucks from the Ouyen mineral sands. When roads are in bad condition there are more accidents and trauma and it's bumpy when going in buses, ambulances etc.
- Should be more use of the rail network to get freight/trucks off the roads
- Need money for small projects in towns other than Warracknabeal
- Men's Shed at Hopetoun

### **Other:**

- Home Help & OHS regulations are problematic

- Concerned that corporate farmers will have a negative effect on the community. Although this hasn't really happened around Hopetoun yet, people are moving off the farm and out of other areas.

### **Patchewollock Play Group**

**19 May 2008**

Four mums and their toddlers, and Judy Drage from Yarriambiack Shire attended the consultation that was held at the Patchewollock Community Centre. The consultation was very informal with the group as whole going through the questions together. All of the women present live on farms in the area surrounding Patchewollock.

#### **What factors affect your wellbeing?**

- Economic conditions – drought has a major affect on wellbeing
- Isolation from people and facilities
- Price of fuel affects the ability to do things
- Groceries – price and availability of fruit and vegetables. Compounded by not being able to have a vegetable garden due to water restrictions
- As a parent and living where they do not enough time to look after yourself
- Sport has a positive effect on well being and makes you feel good
- Travel and the length of time it takes to get to places eg children's sports is a deterrent
- The length of time travelling also has an affect on kids as they get tired and hungry
- Takes 1.5 hours to get to Mildura where many services are located
- When you are living on a farm other people don't just drop in and visit
- The availability of childcare and the cost of fuel – sometimes it doesn't make sense economically to work
- Being a parent has a major effect on your well being from the time you are pregnant – its ongoing
- Distance and the cost of fuel means that you have to plan your activities when you are going into town
- With farmers as husbands it is difficult to get involved in groups

- Get very annoyed when you travel a distance to go to a meeting and it's either cancelled or not productive
- Very difficult to go to courses at night – childcare, time to get there etc
- Childcare available in Ouyen five days per week, Hopetoun two days per week
- Need to be very organised

### **What's good about living where you live?**

- Not having neighbours
- Safety – its very safe
- Don't have negative influences from other kids
- Able to protect kids, get to choose who they see
- Freedom for the kids on a farm
- Big space
- Kids can develop imagination on a farm – they have to learn to entertain themselves
- Living on a farm is great
- No takeaways – that's good and bad
- No noise, no pollution, no traffic
- Everyone looks out for your kids
- Sense of community
- There's gossip – but don't take it too seriously
- Playgroup – felt they had made it what it is – are proud of that. The Shire has helped the playgroup. Group raised over \$10,000 in a year for shade sails and fencing, had a Gala Day.

### **What could be done to improve wellbeing?**

- More time in the day
- More days at childcare/childcare capacity
- Need to have family day care at Hopetoun
- There is limited choice of service providers – if you don't like the service you don't have any other alternative
- People car pool when they can, but its not always practical given the geographic spread, realise there is not enough capacity/volume for a mini-bus
- Having activities in Patchewollock is good – not much travel

- Ouyen has a good after school program – with a variety of activities which gives kids an opportunity to do things they may not otherwise do, eg lawn bowls, gymnastics. Ouyen also has vacation care.
- Hopetoun does not have an after hours program. When people are able to access these programs they are good, but they do not suit everyone especially if children come home on the school bus.
- Ouyen is pretty good in terms of medical facilities – eg dentist, chiropractor, podiatrist, physiotherapist, there is a doctor (but they will be leaving soon – gave two years notice). Has a good hospital.
- Mildura –the quality of the hospital service has decreased (there used to be a private hospital but that closed). After having a baby the Mildura hospital makes you leave quickly – most mothers like to stay until their milk comes in but they make you leave. The services at the Mildura hospital are a deterrent to having another child.
- Its difficult when going into labour when to go to the hospital – especially if you go there and contractions stop as it's a long distance to travel back and forth. One woman at the session was able to stay with family in Mildura but others had to return back home which was not an ideal situation.
- Location is difficult if you have quick labour - difficult to get to either Mildura or Horsham quickly
- Hopetoun has a good after hours doctor service, the doctor makes you feel as if your issue is important no matter what time of the day you call.
- M&CH nurse visits once a month
- Sometimes the wait for services means that you go without or don't follow up on medical issues and concerns

### **Hopetoun Play Group**

**19 May 2008**

Four mums and their little babies, and Judy Drage from Yarriambiack Shire attended the consultation that was held at the Hopetoun preschool/childcare centre. The consultation was very informal with the group as whole going through the questions together. Three of the women live on farms, one lives in Hopetoun.

### **What factors affect your wellbeing?**

- Rain – drought – farmers. The weather affects the whole community
- Playgroup is good for well being – keeps us sane
- Sports – play netball
- Walking
- Activities
- Illness affects wellbeing
- Neighbourhood house offers programs
- Availability of childcare – childcare available two days per week. If you have a full time job, need to get childcare in Warracknabeal as well (some mothers do this) – hours of opening of the service in Hopetoun makes it difficult to go to Warracknabeal and get to work on time.
- When it rains, like it just has, it makes an enormous difference to the outlook of individuals and the community as a whole.

### **What is good about living in Hopetoun?**

- People are friendly/accepting/welcoming
- Being a small town you know the other kids, and when you go to events you know that there will be people there with other kids
- Know everybody and what's going on
- Can get into the doctors quickly. Better one-on-one service.
- There are visiting chiropractors, podiatrists, optometrist
- Someone comes quarterly to do pap smears
- There is an ambulance but no paramedic in the area (this was of some concern)
- Hopetoun hospital doesn't do emergency (have to travel for extra services)
- Services – pharmacist, supermarket, butcher etc, two primary schools, high school, kinder, preschool –good for kids
- There are social activities that happen in Hopetoun – eg footy, quiz nights
- Schools – because they are smaller, can have good one-on-one with the teachers. Teachers should know the kids. However are concerned to ensure that their children have enough stimulus/ resources available and a high quality of education. Concerned that the level of competition in sports may not be as high as in larger centres.

### **Can you think of any ways to improve your wellbeing?**

- Generally consider that they personally are travelling well with their health and wellbeing
- More rain
- Out of the last senior year there are only three or four girls still in Hopetoun. Needs to be more opportunity for employment for women.
- Price of fuel means that you have to co-ordinate and plan activities
- If their husbands aren't happy or work/the farm isn't going well that has an affect on well being of the family
- The Hopetoun community is very weather dependent
- A paramedic in the area
- More childcare days

### **Other:**

- Quality of water is better with the pipeline

### **Warracknabeal Rotary meeting**

**28 May 2008**

This session was co-facilitated by Vivien Clark and was held in conjunction with the Wimmera Aged Care Strategy consultations. 25 people were in attendance.

### **What's good about living in Warracknabeal?**

- Services and carers
- Support groups
- Town - being small people are able to help each other out
- Good climate
- At present there is a taxi in Warracknabeal
- Meals on wheels
- Peace and quiet
- Close proximity to everything in Warracknabeal

- Friendliness
- Safe environment
- District nurses care for many people
- People know you and care for you
- Friendly
- Country living
- Knowing your neighbours
- Well placed geographically
- Well serviced for health and education, sports and cultural activities
- Relaxed friendly environment
- Comfortable living
- Strong community
- Positive people
- Wide variety of services
- Safety factor is significant
- Good range of sporting and leisure activities
- Strong sense of unified community
- Service clubs and personal interests groups are alive and varied
- Good cross section of shopping facilities
- Good hospital and good doctors

**What has a positive effect on wellbeing?**

- Support groups
- Friends
- Family
- Doctors in town
- Hospital
- Churches
- Friends/caring friends
- Rain
- Helping others
- Ambulance facilities

- Community support
- Feeling of self worth
- Sense of community
- Friendly community
- Health services
- Sense of connectedness to community
- Sporting, personal interest and service clubs
- Sense of identity
- Sense of community support in difficult situations
- Sense of belonging
- Being able to walk down to the shops
- Main street is attractive and accessible
- Rotary
- Very happy with the environment
- Cheaper housing
- No parking meters
- Volunteering and being involved

### **Suggested improvements**

- Distance for some support is bad
- Affordability of transport
- Day centre is good but located in a bad spot
- Help to get apprenticeships happening in small towns – help with costs as expensive and OHS issues cause big problems for one person operation
- To have a doctor on call every weekend, this will avoid having to travel for 40 minutes plus to Horsham
- To have the service of an air ambulance and have a helicopter landing pad at the Warracknabeal hospital
- Keep the acute ward at the hospital
- Have a good working hospital – doctors on call all the time, 24/7 emergency care
- Current adequate health services, need ongoing development to meet the needs of an ageing population

- Access to emergency specialist treatment
- Lack of doctors on the weekend is a concern for some and has made them leave town
- Retain a greater percentage of youth in our community and encourage more community interaction by new and younger residents
- Greater emphasis on local/regional enterprises
- Greater emphasis on local and regional solutions and self reliance
- Win tattslotto
- More job opportunities for youth, eg trades
- Sporting facilities
- Maintain our retail outlets
- Rail systems
- Ongoing advocacy for our evolving circumstances
- Forward looking perspective is critical
- Rain
- Health
- Roads kept in good condition
- Public transport
- Shift Horsham further south
- Encourage the younger community to be involved
- Forward planning and asset management are linked
- Involve and encourage youth
- Need for thorough planning and infrastructure planning
- How can you have a healthy community without basic planning and facilities – transport, health etc
- Structured and non structured social networks
- With increasing transport costs need to become more self sufficient in the future

## **Hopetoun Senior Citizens**

**28 May 2008**

This session was co-facilitated by Vivien Clark and was held in conjunction with the Wimmera Aged Care Strategy consultations. 11 people were at the meeting from different community groups in Hopetoun.

### **Groups**

- Senior citizens group
  - Has 63 members, mainly from Hopetoun
  - Conduct many activities/entertainment program, this has led to an increase in people being involved and that have been well received
  - Most of the older people already live in Hopetoun
  - One meal per week at senior citizens
  - Have carpet bowls tournament with surrounding areas
  - Must be over 55 to join senior citizens
  
- Bowls Club:
  - 30 men, 15 women (have had more members in the past)
  - Have three greens, water restrictions have been difficult
  - Use private transport to go to pennant games
  
- Neighborhood House
  - Carers support group and annual carers expo
  - Patchwork group
  - Scrapbooking, crafts, knitting
  - After school and school holiday activities
  - Men's Shed
  - Health and Wellbeing activities – walking, cycling, tai chi, strength training, weight loss support group
  - Arts projects – in collaboration with Regional Arts, A & P Show
  - Bus driving
  - Excursions – locally and regionally

- Referrals
  - Engage children, youth, adults
  - Part of larger regional networks
  - Groups that operate out of the venue include CWA, Lioness and Historical Society
- CWA – occasionally do activities where they need a bus
- Men's Shed
    - In its infancy
    - Have just received a \$50,000 grant
    - Looking at buying the old grocery store. Are keen for more members. Have 10 members that turn up on a regular basis
    - Perhaps some of the men may be able to do some odd jobs at people's homes
    - Potential to link in with other groups in Hopetoun – eg bowls
- Many other groups in town – eg Patchwork Group, Fisherman's group, Historical Society (although don't have toilets), Probus is a large club (100 members from broader area). Have a number of sporting clubs – football, netball, cricket, tennis, basketball.
  - Service clubs in Hopetoun have closed down
  - Have Tai Chi at the senior citizens. Have many courses/activities at the Neighbourhood House
  - Would like to see groups co-operating together more. Also like to see community activities that involve everyone. Seniors citizens have a billiard table – other groups in the community would be interested in using this
  - There isn't a community calendar or activities calendar
  - Local progress association has a website
  - CBI has made a difference in terms of bringing groups together
  - There is a notice board at Gateway Beet but not everyone goes there
  - Shopfronts well used in terms of putting up notices
  - Possibility of better pooling/sharing local resources

## **Housing**

- Only two units in Hopetoun – isn't really the option of moving to a small dwelling
- Hopetoun Progress Association are currently running a consultancy to investigate establishing some additional units in town
- Lots of single person households (often elderly ladies living alone) in larger homes
- There are homes for sale – maybe 14-16 at the moment so there is generally housing stock available for people that want to move to Hopetoun
- Most people that move to Hopetoun tend to be elderly
- Sometimes hard to link in with those that have just moved into Hopetoun
- Need young people/industry
- A few have already had to do adjustments to their houses, others haven't addressed this

## **Falls**

- Two people at the meeting had safety link, others didn't really comment

## **Transport**

- There is a need for a community bus – there are a number of privately owned mini buses in town (but not big). Wimmera volunteers have a seven seater bus but Yarriambiack Shire is only able to access this one week per month.
- Need for a bigger bus – capacity for more than 36 people
- Rainbow has a permanent bus that takes people around
- Don't want escape expenditure from shopping trips
- Public transport options – VLine – Ouyen to Ararat bus and the Horsham bus. Private bus that goes along the Henty Highway – Mildura to Hamilton.
- Wimmera Volunteers
- Shire car

## **Businesses and services**

- Grocery store, butcher, baker, still have fuel in town (although the other functions of the service stations have stopped), only one mechanic in town who is very busy also

does farm equipment, newsagent, post office. Have access to fresh vegetables at the grocery store.

- Local supermarket is able to deliver to the house
- CFA still strong, volunteer ambulance service, three police officers
- People support their local businesses
- Seven businesses have closed over the last three years
- Bon Bon Café do private deliveries and cater for larger events as well

### **Medical and support services**

- Home help from the Shire works well. At the moment there are enough people available for this. New regulations with home handymen mean that can't go up on ladders.
- Need more mechanics and allied health services
- Schools have a good reputation, cluster of southern mallee schools. Primary school has 50 students, St Joseph's – 25 students and the High School about 100 students.
- Meals on Wheels – chilled service is no good
- Don't have a physiotherapist based in Hopetoun however a visiting physiotherapist comes once per week
- Dentist in Ouyen
- Have a visiting optometrist
- Have to go to Horsham, Mildura or Swan Hill for hearing aids
- Have a pharmacy

### **Other improvements**

- People use electric scooters. Want a cover/awning near the senior citizens so people can park their scooters undercover.
- Water in the lake
- More bowlers
- People are generally pretty happy/lucky living in Hopetoun
- Hopetoun is a strong community, people are proud of the town

### **Summary of improvements**

- Transport – larger community bus
- Housing
- Groups working together more and sharing resources
- Information/community calendar

## **Murtoa Senior Citizens**

**29 May 2008**

The session was held at the Murtoa Senior Citizens rooms and was attended by 18 community members. The session was facilitated by Melissa Morris and Vivien Clark.

### **Factors affecting wellbeing**

- Murtoa is a lovely place to live
- Other people in the town are very caring
- People are friendly but respect your privacy
- People do things for each other
- Weather
- There are many activities to do
- Financial conditions affect your wellbeing
- Increasing fuel costs are having a negative affect on wellbeing
- Footpaths (need improving)
- Services – good health services, shops (everything but clothes), mobile library (has talking books), tai chi and activities at senior citizens
- Good facilities - new health centre being built, swimming pool, skate rink, bowling club, sporting facilities, school
- Local hotel caters for meals on wheels
- Have a pharmacy depot
- Good school in Murtoa – many come from Horsham to go to it, very proud of their school
- Mechanics
- One petrol station and one fuel outlet (need a card)
- Weekends are quieter – most activities tend to be during the week
- Feel very safe at home



- A number of semi-retired farmers have moved in from the land and still go out and work at the farm/stay there some nights
- Two doctors in Murtoa
- District nurses are wonderful
- Home help is available
- Shire handyman - \$5 per visit (limited activities), local handyman - \$20 per visit
- Community noticeboard at IGA, Neighbourhood House
- Local newspaper

### **Activities**

- Some go walking
- Two days per week at senior citizens
- Some go to the pub once a week
- Neighbourhood house has a meal once a month
- Day centre at Dunmunkle Health Services does a trip once a week
- Internet at senior citizens
- Neighbourhood House runs many programs and has 11 computers
- Bus to Horsham once a week takes people to the Horsham pool
- Probus has 50 members
- Murtoa Big Weekend
- Bingo on a Tuesday night at the RSL (Lions run it)

### **Housing**

- There are some private flats, some public housing flats and some that the Shire runs. One of the public housing units has been vacant for a year as its very expensive \$140/week to rent
- A lot of people move to Horsham
- Some have carried out adjustments to their houses so they can remain there
- Many old homes in Murtoa with big yards – difficult to maintain
- Bottled gas is expensive, a number of people at the session have wood heaters (get one free load from Apex)
- Lots of people use greywater on their gardens

### **Access within town**

- Access to the Post Office is difficult, has heavy doors
- Have to go the side door
- Access to newsagent is also difficult
- Some footpaths are difficult to get around, also difficult in gophers

### **Transport**

- Wimmera volunteer drivers – mainly for doctors visits
- Wimmera volunteers bus – one week per month
- Horsham – Donald bus service goes through town
- Public buses – steps are often too high

### **Shopping**

- Local shopping is quiet expensive
- Many shop in Horsham, tend to just buy a few things in Murtoa
- Some get deliveries from Karkana
- IGA does home deliveries
- Local butcher is good

### **Improvements to wellbeing**

- Water in the lake
- More public toilets
- Affordable housing – need more units
- Films
- More activities like mini golf/indoor bowls
- Access into the pool in Murtoa (difficult to get into and out of the pool)
- Get Vision Australia to come to Murtoa
- Get houses checked for trip hazards, safety etc by Dunmunkle Health Services

## **Meeting of VFF - Warracknabeal**

**29 May 2008**

This session was co-facilitated by Vivien Clark and was held in conjunction with the Wimmera Aged Care Strategy consultations. 16 people were in attendance.

### **General comments**

- 10 empty houses in a 20 mile radius of one farm
- Will have no younger ones left in town to look after us
- Moving big machinery around roads/fragmentation of farms is a problem – more difficult to manage (however has some benefits)
- Farms are big and capital intensive
- One farmer had a 23 year old son who wants to move back to Warracknabeal and start farming but doesn't have the capital to get started
- One person can't manage a property on their own
- Fathers who are 65-70 years of age are running farms on their own
- Agriculture doesn't give an income compared to what other trades offer – eg \$80,000 to drive a truck for Ouyen mineral sands – farming can't compete with that
- Hours that you have to work as a farmer are not attractive for younger people
- Farms are getting bigger – size has doubled in the last 10 years
- People moving from the area take wealth out of the area and leave debt
- Many people have moved closer to family or closer to medical services especially Ballarat and Bendigo
- Quality of Warracknabeal Hospital is a concern
- Many people move to Horsham for units
- Housing stock and diversity is an issue
- People won't go and visit others on farms
- People have contributed \$\$ to the nursing home in Warracknabeal and now it is not going to be used
- Feel stuck in Warracknabeal – if you have a home need 2.5 times more money to buy a home in Horsham
- No opportunities to downsize in terms of housing stock
- Zoning/business support – blockages in Council

- Many farmhands are 70 year olds
- Costs of recreation water is very expensive – capacity of paying for community groups is difficult
- Can't go to Melbourne and back in a day on public transport
- Home Help is available to people on farms (many at the meeting weren't aware of this)
- Weekly frozen meals delivered through meals on wheels

### **Positive influences on wellbeing**

- People know you in Warracknabeal
- Sense of belonging
- Information and knowledge of services
- Financial security
- Quality of life
- Warracknabeal has all the services you want
- Well serviced with shops
- Arts Council activities – seniors concerts etc
- Warracknabeal is a safe place
- Local police do a good job
- Transport is important
- Having family around is important – affects wellbeing
- Community groups
- Cohesive nature of the community
- Better social fabric in country towns
- Networks
- You have to do it otherwise it doesn't happen
- Spirit of participation
- You make the community by your involvement

### **Suggested improvements**

- Diversification of industry
- Yarriambiack Shire Council do not support or facilitate business development in Warracknabeal – various examples cited

- Planning is a concern
- Cost of development in Warracknabeal in the area affected by flooding is very expensive/prohibitive
- Need an effective body to represent the community - Warracknabeal Action Group not considered effective
- Should have a co-ordinator for the action/business group in the Shire
- Should have parking for staff at the rear of the shops in Scott Street instead of staff parking in front of the shops (some say parking is very easy/others say there is some difficulty accessing parking)
- Housing diversity – need more units, people want to downsize
- Need for better information on resources and support that is available
- Water in Yarriambiack Creek
- Taxi – should have a larger radius – often goes for longer trips and not available locally
- Activities – people need company, men's shed, concerts etc
- Need more/better access to Wimmera Volunteer vehicle
- There is a car available in Murtoa through Dunmunkle Health – not one in Warracknabeal
- Shelter at post office for people wanting to go on long distance buses
- Help for bags at the bus station in Ararat/Ballarat – difficult for older people
- Need good transport – people are comfortable driving in country but not in the city
- Shortage of trades
- Small business assistance
- Places in Melbourne for country people to stay like rotary house are valued

## **Warracknabeal Men's Shed**

**30 May 2008**

This session was co-facilitated by Vivien Clark and was held in conjunction with the Wimmera Aged Care Strategy consultations. Three members of the Men's Shed were at the meeting.

- Overall the Men's Shed has 45 members but 16 regulars usually with 10-12 members at a session
- They have a common interest
- Through the Men's Shed meet people that you otherwise wouldn't have met or dealt with, maybe just know their face from around town – now they are mates
- The Men's Shed is something to look forward to
- It fills a gap after a busy working life
- Chance to learn new skills
- Through the Men's Shed feel that they are able to do something productive
- Have made hurdles for the local school, do the post box for Santa, have done up and sent bicycles to the Ukraine, have done up a dolls house for a lady, restore equipment for the historical society/museum
- Have set up in the old Apex Shed and originally got a donation of much equipment from Ralph Christian
- Have to have two people at the shed at any one time
- It's casual
- Gave an example of one younger man who kept walking past the shed for weeks and was very quiet and didn't say much, gradually he became involved and is now a lot more open and involved

## **Rupanyup Kindergarten Committee**

**11 June 2008**

The session was held with three women at the Rupanyup preschool – two lived out of town on farms and one lived in Rupanyup.

### **What's good about living in Rupanyup?**

- Rupanyup is an accepting community
- Rupanyup is a progressive town – gets off its butt and does things
- Good parks and walking tracks in town, BBQ facilities are good
- Knowing each other
- Community support for kinder/preschool – gets lots of attention in town
- New playground at Lubeck is good
- There are sports facilities and clubs and the community is still positive despite the drought
- Elderly exercise groups at senior citizens
- Dunmunkle Health Services is very good
- Speech therapy is available in Murtoa and Minyip
- Take a break program is available for three hours per fortnight which is used by people who need to go to appointments, do some work, get things done
- Take a break program in Murtoa is booked out
- Access to services in Minyip/Murtoa/Rupanyup is good – 10 minute drive between them, means that you are able to access facilities easily in these towns
- Maternal and Child Health service is good – personalised service (however this service has been reduced to one visit per month and while people are able to call the M&CH nurse they often seem reluctant to do so)
- Lubeck holds community gatherings – this is a good way of keeping in touch with people and seeing how they are going
- People make their own fun/organise activities – eg people have started a book club
- There is a monthly newsletter
- The pub has a monthly birthday celebration
- There is strong community support for football and netball
- Farm lifestyle is great for kids – kids are able to spend time with both parents

- Rpanyup is like an extended family
- A network of friends and support
- Support through adversity
- People help one another
- Can sometimes take a while to walk down the street and get things done because people always stop and say hello
- There are activities for kids – Guides/Joeys/Cubs, musical program, primary school has an after hours program
- You meet more people in a small community than you would meet in a larger town

### **What affects your health and wellbeing?**

- Access to good food – especially fruit and vegetables
- Rain – income for farmers – can also affect mental health
- Everything is connected
- Environment
- Social networks – eg book club
- Friends – this is very important when family is not close by
- Time for yourself is important – “respite”
- Juggling work, farming and kids
- Happy kids
- Physical health
- Exercise
- Groups and sport provides an outlet for people
- Cropping and harvesting times are very busy and put pressure on families – eg sometimes out driving at night to deliver hot meals to people still working sowing/harvesting etc

### **Can you think of ways to improve your health and wellbeing?**

- Transport – being able to catch the school bus to preschool (four year olds). Has happened in this area before. There are issues with this, eg having someone to meet them at the other end, but it would be a good thing (financial and environmental benefits). Where the school bus goes affects where people send their

kids to school, eg would prefer to send child to Rupanyup but the bus goes to Murtoa

- More childcare – only one provider at the moment, more would be good
- The Take a Break program is very good – would be good to have it every week
- New function rooms at football club will be good
- Would be good to have more choice in terms of food, cafes and restaurants
- Flexibility in postnatal depression courses – there were different experiences with postnatal depression programs within the group. One person attended sessions at Horsham and these were considered to be very good, held during the day. One person attended a course at Murtoa which was held at night time, it was difficult to get care and it would have been better during the day.
- Open activities - things that are open to the whole community as a way of getting to know others – good for people who are new to the town
- The sustainable farming families program has been good and made the person that attended it aware of the importance of relationships and looking after your health and your family etc

## **Warracknabeal Secondary College**

**11 June 2008**

The session was held with eight Year 9 students who are part of the Life Schools Program. Melissa Morris and Chris Solley (Yarriambiack Shire youth worker) facilitated the session.

### **What do you do to stay well, healthy and happy?**

- Sing
- Listen to music/play music
- Hang with friends
- Play sport – basketball, netball, soccer
- Ride my bike
- Skateboarding
- My family
- Eat good food, try not to eat junk food

- Help the family

**Can you think of ways to improve your health, wellness and happiness?**

- More shops
- Get more young people involved in the Arts Council – encourage the Arts Council to get young people involved
- A bigger skate park
- Be with friends
- Talk to someone about your problems
- Go for a walk
- Run
- Eat more healthy food
- Go to the gym

**What is good about where you live?**

- That we all know each other
- The skate park
- Friends and family
- Its safer then a big city
- It's quiet and fun
- It's a small town
- Things are close together and easy to get around

**What do you see as issues about where you live?**

- The town's too small
- There's no shops
- There are people I don't know/there are criminals
- Boredom
- Not many young kids/friends
- Its hard to make new friends when you move here

**What are some solutions that could happen in your community?**

- More shops
- A bigger skate park with lights
- Entertainment like a cinema or film
- Stop the pub in my town (Watchem) from closing down
- Skate competitions

## **Abbreviations**

HBNC	Harrow Bush Nursing Centre
HRCC	Horsham Rural City Council
HSC	Hindmarsh Shire Council
M&CH	Maternal & Child Health
RYAN	Wimmera Regional Youth Affairs Network
WHO	World Health Organisation
Wimmera PCP	Wimmera Primary Care Partnership
Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN	Wimmera Southern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network
WWSC	West Wimmera Shire Council
YSC	Yarriambiack Shire Council