

**World Conference on Health Promotion & Health Education,
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Abstracts on Victorian's municipal public health planning programs**

Title: Environments For Health: Integrating Health In Local Government

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Aim of presentation/abstract:

To demonstrate an innovative policy approach for municipal public health planning in Victoria, Australia, that supports local governments in creating healthy environments for their communities.

Background and Methods:

There are many influences on the health and wellbeing of a community—safe and healthy places to live and work, social networks and support services, opportunities to participate in decisions affecting the community, and good infrastructure such as transport and land use schemes. Local government is one of a number of stakeholders whose actions impact on these areas. Operating at a level so close to the community it serves enables local government to have a unique capacity to make a difference.

“Environments for Health” is a framework that has been developed for local governments to assist them in undertaking municipal public health planning, which is required in Victorian legislation. The framework is designed to help local governments in acting, wherever possible, in the interests of creating a healthier community. The framework focuses on the social, economic, natural and built environments as avenues for local government to improve health.

“Environments for Health” builds on the longstanding role and achievements of Victorian local governments in promoting and protecting the health and wellbeing of their citizens. The framework was developed through a partnership between the Public Health Group of the Department of Human Services, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), the Victorian Local Governance Association, local governments and other stakeholders.

Implementation:

The Department of Human Services and its partners, MAV and VicHealth, are conducting a comprehensive implementation program that includes the following:

- Good Practice funding to assist councils to incorporate the framework into their planning.
- An evaluation initiative to support the Good Practice projects.

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- Planning and Health forums throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria.
- “Leading the Way” package for councillors and senior management in local government regarding social determinants of health, coordinated by VicHealth.
- Workforce development resources available on the Internet.
- Strengthened partnerships between planners at local, regional, state and national levels. These include the Departments for Victorian Communities, Infrastructure, and Sustainability and the Environment, and the Planning Institute of Australia.
- Collaborative relationships with partners such as the Primary Care Partnership Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal.

The presentation will use case studies to illustrate how local councils are using the framework to create healthier communities.

Conclusions:

The “Environments for Health” Framework provides an innovative model to support local governments in promoting health across the built, social, economic and natural environments.

Title: Whole of Council (Local Government) approach to public health planning

Author: Dennis Wapling, City Of Greater Shepparton

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The City Of Greater Shepparton is committed to improving the mental and physical health, social wellbeing, and sense of community connectedness of all residents. A Public Health Plan, which embraces the WHO social model of Health, has been created through wide community based input to be the vehicle for personal, social and cultural advancement for residents within Greater Shepparton. The Greater Shepparton Public Health Plan is the “umbrella” for a range of Council supported public health promotion and community capacity building strategies and programs. The Plan is a “living” document, which will be updated at least on an annual basis from community and key stakeholder feedback, organisational considerations and changing environmental circumstances. The Council undertook creation of the Plan as a vehicle to cultivate an internal organisational culture of integrated planning, health promotion and community capacity building.

As a consequence, the Greater Shepparton community is now benefiting from major new initiatives, as well as direct outcomes from Year 1 actions of the Health Plan. These major new initiatives include:

- a 3 year \$680,000 Best Start Program Demonstration Project aimed at improving service access and support for children 0-8 years and their families, particularly mothers
- a 3 year \$500,000 Community Building Project which will focus on assisting young people aged 12-25 to become better equipped for life and more involved in their community
- a 2 year \$55,000 Walking School Bus Program that aims to increase the physical activity and social connectedness of children, families and schools

- funding for a Community Celebration titled “Beyond the Drought”, a celebration that recognises the diversity and strength of the Greater Shepparton community.

In turn, these Projects have linked with other community capacity building projects and programs, including the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy of the Office of Housing, to create unprecedented momentum with regard to community members being able to join together to improve the quality of their lives and the community in which they live.

These strategic partnerships and alliances have been a key success factor in all major public health capacity building projects in Greater Shepparton. This involves community based, public sector, private sector and philanthropic arrangements of cooperation and assistance, around a culture of community engagement, empowerment and involvement.

Council has received a Victorian Public Health Award for Excellence and Innovation in recognition of achievement in Public Health capacity building and fostering strategic partnerships to improve the health, wellbeing and social connectedness of residents.

This paper will report the processes and impact by which health promotion approaches have been incorporated in the development of the City’s Public Health plan as an integral function of local governance.

Title: Municipal Public Health Planning – A Regional Workforce Development Initiative.

Authors: **Andrea Hay**, Manager Public Health Development
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Theonie Tacticos, Research Fellow
 Program Evaluation Unit – The University of Melbourne
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Aim of the presentation:

To share the experience and achievements from this initiative with others from across the international public health field; and showcase some of the work undertaken by local government.

This presentation will demonstrate the benefit of supporting policy implementation through targeted workforce development and a partnership approach.

Background:

This initiative is a collaborative effort between the Department of Human Services Southern Metropolitan Region and the Program Evaluation Unit at the University of Melbourne. It supports the implementation of the “Environments for Health” policy

framework that has been developed for local governments in Victoria to assist them in undertaking Municipal Public Health Planning, which is required in Legislation.

Evaluation was chosen as the focus for the workforce initiative as this was an identified priority for local governments within their role in municipal public health planning. Although Municipal Public Health Plans (MPHPs) have been undertaken by Victorian local governments since the early 1990s, their focus has often been on the development of the plan rather than on implementing, and even to a lesser extent, on evaluation.

This initiative provided an opportunity for training and support in MPHP evaluation. As well as focusing on outputs, evaluation also allows for reflection upon the nature, quality and extent of implementation, the achievement of outcomes, success factors and barriers encountered along the way.

Objectives of the initiative:

- To enable local government health promotion and health planning practitioners to participate in a program that improves their skills in health promotion and health planning.
- To support improved evaluation practice among local government health planners in the Region.

Title: Incorporating Environmental Dimensions of Health in Local Government Planning (A case study – City of Melbourne)

Authors: Nancy Di Santo, Senior Project Officer City Safety, City of Melbourne
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There are many influences on the health and wellbeing of a community – safe and healthy places to live and work, social networks and support services, opportunities to participate in decisions affecting the community, and valuable infrastructure such as transport and land use planning.

Local Government is one of a number of players whose actions impact on these areas. As local government operates at a level so close to the community it services, it means that it has a unique capacity to make a difference.

The City of Melbourne is embarking on the development of a public health planning framework that aligns with the Department of Human Services' Municipal Public Health Planning Framework - Environments for Health, and uses the Triple Bottom Line approach to reporting.

This new framework aims to integrate a number of strategic directions that respond to health and welfare issues including food safety, city safety, crime prevention, injury prevention, syringe management, and drugs use.

Initiatives within these strategies are being developed with an understanding of the four environmental dimensions for health including the built /physical, social, economic and natural environments.

The City of Melbourne has been recognised for its best practise strategic and services planning in the area of health promotion and community safety through its accreditation by the World Health Organisation in 2000 as a ‘Safe Community’ and has also recently been awarded by the Economist Intelligence Unit, for the second year in a row, as one of the ‘most liveable cities in the world’.

This paper presents information on the City of Melbourne’s public health planning framework that aligns with the Department of Human Services Municipal Public Health Planning Framework - Environments for Health, and uses the Triple Bottom Line approach to reporting.

The new public health planning framework provides a number of strategic directions that respond to health and welfare issues including food safety, city safety, crime prevention, injury prevention, syringe management, and drugs use.

Initiatives within these strategies are being developed with an understanding of the four environmental dimensions for health including the built /physical, social, economic and natural environments.

Title: Evaluation Support and Partnership: case-study in Municipal Public Health Planning Evaluation

Author: Helen Jordon, Program Evaluation Unit, University Of Melbourne

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Quite rightly, recognition of the importance of evaluation of public health initiatives has risen in recent years. Evaluation is the central focus of the Program Evaluation Unit (PEU) at the University of Melbourne. Rather than relying solely on the model of ‘external evaluator’ PEU has been developing the notion of evaluation support and partnership through a range of initiatives over the last five years. This support in partnership model involves evaluating in partnership with the project initiative, the funder and the evaluator. Through their active involvement in the planning, implementation and reporting of the evaluation, the funders and project initiative are more likely to find the evaluation findings relevant to their information needs and subsequently utilise the findings.

This presentation will draw upon the learnings from the evaluation of the Victorian (Australian) local government ‘Good Practice Program’ which funded 26 pilot projects implementing the new Municipal Public Health Planning framework, ‘Environments for Health’ which focuses on the social, economic, natural and built environments as avenues for local government to improve health. An important

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process of the evaluation was regular and timely reporting back of findings across a range of mediums, to allow funders, and project staff to provide needed support, share newly acquired or developed resources and improve their projects.