Healthy Tasmania Community Forum Report

Overview

- The *Healthy Tasmania Five Year Strategic Plan* outlines a commitment to working in partnership with the community and key stakeholders and to seek input on the Plan’s progress and future directions.
- On 13 August 2019, representatives from a wide range of community organisations and government agencies attended the Healthy Tasmania Community Forum to celebrate the work being undertaken as part of the Healthy Tasmania Strategy and share ideas about health and wellbeing. These ideas were shared the following day at events hosted by the Premier’s Health and Wellbeing Advisory Council.
- The key ideas and discussions from the day will inform future directions for Healthy Tasmania and will be included as part of the Healthy Tasmania interim evaluation.

Background

- The Tasmanian Government committed $6.4 million over four years from 2016-2020 to support the implementation of the Healthy Tasmania Five Year Strategic Plan and achieve its vision for Tasmania to be the healthiest state by 2025.
- The Plan aims to improve the health of Tasmanians through targeting the key priorities of smoking, healthy eating, physical activity, community connections, and chronic conditions screening and management.
- The Plan identified a need for taking a Health in All Policies approach and working across all areas of government to develop long term solutions that address social and economic factors that influence health outcomes.
• Both commitments complement each other and involved the joint planning of the Healthy Tasmania Community Forum and Premier’s Health and Wellbeing Advisory Council’s Health in All Policies Forum to target and engage key stakeholders across Tasmania.

What did we do?

The Healthy Tasmania Community Forum brought together 176 people from community organisations, universities, state and local government agencies from across Tasmania, to discuss health and wellbeing.

The purpose of the Forum was to:

• celebrate and showcase some of the achievements of Healthy Tasmania to date and the wide range of health and wellbeing programs and activities taking place in communities across Tasmania
• share knowledge and ideas, through presentations from Tasmanian and interstate speakers
• provide an opportunity for participants to connect with each other and the work being undertaken by Healthy Tasmania
• provide a forum to discuss the enablers and barriers to health and wellbeing in Tasmanian communities.

Celebrate

Healthy Tasmania supports a number of community-based health and wellbeing initiatives through partnerships and funding. Representatives from a range of organisations were invited to share stories and achievements from their communities’ health and wellbeing projects.

These included:

• The Bothwell Wellness Group and Break O’ Day – Active4Life (view the video1)
• Drug Education Network – Tobacco Free Communities (Rachel Breen)
• Health Action Team Central Highlands – Highlands Food Connect Project (Tracey Turale)
• Starting Point Neighbourhood House – Healthy Men’s Shed (Nettie Burr)
• Hobart City Farm – Fresh Connections (Louise Sales)
• Waratah Wynyard Council – Increasing Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Wynyard (Richard Muir-Wilson)
• Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service – Healthy Parks Healthy People (Sam Cuff)
• Clarence City Council – Help to Health Project (Kate Franke)
• Department of Education and Department of Health Student Health Initiative – Clarendon Vale, Springfield Gardens, Haven View, St Leonards and Waverley Primary Schools.

Stories from community projects were celebrated and shared through film and posters and will be available on the Department of Health website2.

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1 https://youtu.be/pQHsiILARA1E
2 http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/about_the_department/our_plans_and_strategies/a_healthy_tasmania
Project themes

Some of the themes from the projects showcased at the Forum included:

- Projects are inclusive and positive where participants feel loved, safe and respected; participants have opportunities to connect with people they wouldn’t normally talk to and this has benefits for their communities.
- Participation provides educational opportunities that can lead to generational and sustainable change.
- Through educational experiences, children are empowered to make healthy choices by growing and preparing healthy food and sharing what they learn with their families.
- Physical activity projects involved a social element that helped connect people and improve physical and mental health.
- Being outside in nature makes us feel good and improves wellbeing.
- Collaboration and partnerships are important to connect people with opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing.

Share

A range of speakers shared information about the factors that influence health and wellbeing including current Tasmanian, Australian and international data and research. These presenters were chosen to highlight the current state of Tasmania’s health and the need to work collaboratively across government sectors and in partnership with communities to support strategic and appropriate responses to health and wellbeing.

Visualising the discussions

Artist Josh Santospritio captured and mapped connections between stories, questions and discussions throughout the day with a series of visual artworks (see Appendix1).
Keynote speakers

Dr Mark Veitch
Director of Public Health
Presentation: The State of Tasmania’s Public Health
- Highlighted findings from the State of Public Health Report 2018³
- Discussed the complex social, economic and environmental influences on health, and the need for long-term approaches to improve health outcomes for all Tasmanians.
- Indicated potential future focuses and the benefits of a new Public Health Act.

Professor Billie Giles-Corti
RMIT University
Presentation: What are the ingredients of a community that promotes health and wellbeing?
- Highlighted the liveability of communities and design considerations for communities that are inclusive, encourage walking, provide access to facilities and allow for sustainable transport.
- Discussed the need for ‘delightful density’ rather than urban sprawl.
- Emphasised things local communities can do to improve their liveability, such as improving walkability, encouraging cycling, carpooling and community gardens.

Ms Kym Goodes
CEO of the Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS)
Presentation: What Makes a Good Life?
- Highlighted TasCOSS’s findings on what people need to have a good life in Tasmania and the current disadvantage that exists in Tasmanian communities.
- Challenged the audience to consider what kind of ‘selfie’ we will be showing to future generations and what actions we could take to change this image and improve the lives of Tasmanians.

Professor Alan Shiell
LaTrobe University
Presentation: Community Driven Health Innovations
- Described international research examples of health innovations initiated by communities.
- Discussed the need to find better systems, approaches and funding models that acknowledge, listen to and use the community voice in the design of health and wellbeing initiatives.

Making connections

Participants were able to connect with each other throughout the day during group discussions and networking time. Films and photographs of events and funded projects were presented during breaks, posters of community health and wellbeing initiatives were on display and a Healthy Tasmania stand was staffed to provide health promotion and grant information to participants.

Before the Forum attendees and members of the community, through Neighbourhood Houses across Tasmania, were asked the following question via an online survey: Where you live, what is the most important thing you need to help improve your health and wellbeing?

The responses were used to create the following word cloud as a stimulus for the first discussion question of the day:
Attendees had the opportunity to inform the work and directions of Healthy Tasmania through the following four discussion sessions:

**Discussion 1: What are the top three things that get in the way of having a healthy community?**

View a [video of community responses](https://youtu.be/DlsM45YEPRU) to the question, collated before the Forum.

Key barriers identified included:

- Lack of access to local facilities and services that are affordable, including education and medical services, and lack of access to money, food and housing.
- Community attitudes including lack of confidence, awareness, motivation, trust and behaviour.
- Lack of connection between people and groups.
- Time management of competing priorities.

**Discussion 2: You are a visitor to a thriving community in 2040. What is it like here?**

Participants were asked to write a postcard to a friend in the future to answer this question.

The responses included:

- Nearly three quarters of people described the environment as clean, safe and friendly, and with lots of access to green spaces for community activities with good infrastructure, such as playgrounds and community gardens.
- Themes of having a diverse, accepting and supportive community were strong, with lots of community social activities, access to low-cost group activities and access to support described.
- Access was frequently mentioned, such as:
  - safe walking and bike tracks, less reliance on cars and good sustainable transport options
  - access to local services (such as shops, cafes, bakeries, libraries, services and employment)
  - food and housing access.

Some comments from the postcards include:

“Hi there, I went for a walk to the shops today, took the dog. There were kids having fun at the park, a walking group struggling up the hill, and lots of people working at the community garden. At the shops there was an information booth about healthy eating and people taking recipes. I’m making salad for dinner.”

“Our community is SAFE - you can work outdoors on our all-access, visibly aesthetic, natural pathways any time of the day or night. Our community is INCLUSIVE - we talk over the fence, across the road at school drop offs. People are more than friendly, they include you in what’s happening. Our community is healthy. There are book depositories, lemon stands and community gardens to boot!”
Discussion 3: What strengths and assets exist today in Tasmania’s communities that help improve health and wellbeing?

Responses highlighted:

- Community traits such as community connection, being passionate, creative, resilient and humble.
- People - their stories and innovation.
- Tasmania’s natural environment and access to open spaces was viewed an asset and safe, secure, clean, friendly community environments.
- Community-driven facilities and social planning for connection.

Discussion 4: How can we work better to improve the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians? How can we hold the voice of the consumer at the centre of decision making?

Many groups discussed:

- The need for government to have authentic consumer voice when making decisions, such as using the co-design process and being human-focused.
- Informal and formal cross-sector partnerships and opportunities for collaboration are an important way to work more effectively for better health outcomes.
- Funding is a significant factor in improving the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians. Participants discussed the need for more funding that is adaptable and timely, with better funding processes and longer funding periods.
Some suggested methods to work better together included:
- More sharing platforms, such as forums.
- Better needs assessments and community consultation.
- Improved community engagement and networks.

Feedback

Participants provided feedback after the event through an online survey. Twenty-four per cent of participants completed the survey.

Most respondents appreciated the opportunity to network and learn about other community projects and from keynote presenters. Many people commented on their positive experience of the forum and found it relevant and inspiring. Some suggestions for future content included mental health, Aboriginal health and workforce education.

“I really appreciate the opportunity to be inspired and revitalised about the work we do. Really liked the emphasis on community connection, the power of that to impact people’s health.”

“It was an excellent forum, people seemed to really be enjoying the opportunity to come together and celebrate/discuss the work that is happening as part of Healthy Tas. People seemed really keen to learn from each other and find ways to support the work they are doing in communities.

Where to from here

The Premier’s Health and Wellbeing Advisory Council hosted two events the following day starting with a Leaders’ Breakfast. The Leaders’ Breakfast was attended by over 60 members from all political parties, senior policy staff across the state, local government, the University of Tasmania and non-government and community health organisations.

At the event the Premier and Deputy Premier, along with Chair of the Premier’s Health and Wellbeing Advisory Council, Graeme Lynch AM, signed the Tasmania Statement – Working Together for the Health and Wellbeing of Tasmanians. The Statement describes the principles considered to be important for collaboration on long term solutions to address the social and economic factors that influence health.

The key outcomes, highlights and themes from the Healthy Tasmania Community Forum were presented at the Health in All Policies Forum following the Leaders’ Breakfast through a presentation by Siobhan Harpur, CEO of Public Health Services, shared keynote speakers and graphic art. These were used to inform discussions and decisions by policy makers.

At the Health in All Policies Forum over 90 delegates discussed what the Tasmania Statement means for them and their organisation, and ideas for bringing the Statement to life.

More information can be found on the [Premier’s Health and Wellbeing Advisory Council web page](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/policy/premiers_health_and_wellbeing_advisory_council). Information gathered at the Community Forum will be used to inform the future work of Healthy Tasmania.

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Appendix 1 Graphic Art Summaries from the Healthy Tasmania Community Forum
Liveable Communities

If you were a developer, who would you include on the agenda physically? Initially, we would include:
- Lively communities
- What would you do if you were a developer?
- Diversity and sustainability
- Liveable communities need to be sustainable
- What if you were a developer?
- Lively communities need to be sustainable
- Liveable communities need to be sustainable
- Environmental sustainability

Professor Billie Giles-Corti

Lively communities need to be sustainable

Diversity and sustainability

Lively communities need to be sustainable

Recognising the contribution of older people in our community

What about the disabled?

What is it like in your disability community?

Rethinking the role of the elderly in society

What about the disabled?

Rethinking the role of the elderly in society

What about the disabled?

What is it like in your disability community?

Questions:

- What about the disabled?
- Rethinking the role of the elderly in society
- What is it like in your disability community?

Community Strengths

What are the characteristics of community?

Community strengths can help improve our quality of life

What are the characteristics of community?

What are the characteristics of community?

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What are the characteristics of community?
We need innovative ways to circumvent the system.

Another clue: Evaluate financially and regularly.

Community-driven Health Innovations

Professor Alan Shell

Policy is simple. BUT... Community work is not necessarily simple.

Strategic

Engagement

Local experience

Promoters

Support

Research

Systems

Funding a well?

Sharing among problems, the larger, the bigger.

In the global health environment, there is a need for support.

Can we change the local culture?

Can we change the health culture?
Appendix 2 Organisations represented at the Healthy Tasmania Community Forum

Non-Government Organisations

- 24 Carrot Garden Program
- Alcohol and Drug Foundation
- Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania
- Beacon Foundation
- Bicycle Network Tasmania
- Brave Foundation
- Cancer Council Tasmania
- Child Health Association Tasmania
- Commissioner for Children and Young People
- Community Based Support
- Conservation Volunteers Australia
- Consumers Health Forum of Australia
- COTA Tasmania
- Cygnet Community Hub
- Delta Dog Safe
- Dementia Australia
- Drug Education Network
- Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House
- Eat Well Tasmania
- Epilepsy Tasmania
- Family Food Patch
- Friendly Care Chemmart Pharmacy
- Glenview Community Services
- Gowrie Training and Consultancy
- Grassroots Community Development
- Hansen Orchards
- Headspace Hobart
- Healthy Happy Staff
- Healthy Tasmania Pty Ltd
- Hearing Australia
- Heart Foundation
- Hobart City Farm
- Hub 4 Health
- Huon Health Connect
- Impact Communities
- IN-TERIA
- Jordan River Service
- Kidsafe Tasmania
- King Island Pharmacy
- Launceston PCYC
- Nayri Niara
- PFLAG Tasmania
- Red Cross
- Relationships Australia Tasmania
- Richmond Fellowship Tasmania
- Salvation Army
- South Eastern Community Care
- St John Ambulance
- Stroke Foundation
- TasCOSS
- Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre
- Tasmanian School Canteen Association
- Volunteering Tasmania
- West Moonah Community House
- Womensport and Recreation Tasmania
- YMCA Hobart
- Youth Network of Tasmania
Local Government
- Central Highlands Council
- Circular Head Council
- Clarence City Council
- Huon Valley Council
- Hobart City Council
- Kingborough Council
- Tasman Council
- Waratah-Wynyard Council
- Local Government Association of Tasmania

Government
- Department of Communities Tasmania
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of State Growth
- Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
- Department of Premier and Cabinet

Universities
- University of Tasmania
- La Trobe University
- Menzies Research Institute
- Monash University
- RMIT University

Sectors Represented At The Healthy Tasmania Community Forum