

HUMAN

CONNECTIONS
IN LATROBE

A local approach for local
communities





The Human Connections Project Partners respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal people as the Original Custodians of the land we walk on today – the land of the Braiakaulung people of the Gunaikurnai nation and pass on respect to their Elders past and present, future and emerging.



HUMAN CONNECTION

"We need more human connection in Latrobe".

Those were the words of a local community member in a conversation with Jane at a bus stop in 2019.

We have since undertaken research and engagement to understand more about what this term might mean. Our research found that there are various terms that can be used interchangeably and that impact our understanding of connections within the community.

We have come to define human connection as something that incorporates the connections we can have with each other, which are often described as social connections, as well as the connections and sense of belonging we can have with places, cultures, animals, technology, music and art.

Everyone has their own needs when it comes to human connection. When these needs are met there are health and social benefits that can be experienced at an individual and whole- of-community level.

FOREWORD FROM THE LATROBE HEALTH ADVOCATE

The Human Connections in Latrobe project is a collaborative campaign between agencies operating within the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone and takes a place-based approach in order to identify opportunities to increase social connections and community participation across Latrobe.

To deliver this work, my office has partnered with the Latrobe Health Assembly, Latrobe City Council, Latrobe Valley Authority and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. We have worked together and independently on various initiatives with the shared aim of improving community connections, social participation and mental wellbeing outcomes.

There is no doubt that COVID-19 has changed the way people in Latrobe connect with and support each other. For some, feelings of loneliness and isolation are not unfamiliar, and the ongoing health effects of COVID-19 physical distancing measures may not yet be realised. For others, being separated from friends, family and community settings are a new experience and it has been hard to adjust. Technology is a necessary part of the solution and the gaps in who can both access and confidently use technology are now visible. Through extensive engagement, desktop research and analysis of public health data, the Human Connections Project has highlighted in this report recurring themes regarding connection and belonging in Latrobe. It provides insights, shared community aspirations and opportunities for policy and systems reform to address the issues identified.

Some of the key themes to emerge include:

- The opportunity to raise awareness and help people recognise connections they do have, and the important physical and mental health benefits of human connection. How might we build on existing public health initiatives and social marketing campaigns to amplify the value and health benefits of social connection in Latrobe?
- Connection and a sense of belonging is evident for some people in their town or neighbourhood in Latrobe. How can we work together across all Latrobe towns to build on this sense of pride that exists within communities and to drive actions that result in a greater sense of belonging or connection to the whole of Latrobe?
- The opportunity to enhance and further promote the various multicultural events and activities that occur in the region with a view to boost awareness and participation. How might we measure the social impact of events in Latrobe and build this into existing event reporting systems?
- Latrobe boasts high rates of volunteerism and a broad range of community groups and clubs where volunteers are highly valued. What if we were able to provide professional guidance, management frameworks and operational supports to truly empower volunteers and enable them to better themselves and their groups?
- Digital connectivity, access to data, and technical skills are both enablers and barriers of connection. What if all levels of government came together to develop and deliver a strategy that addresses the gap between those who can connect through the online world and those who cannot?

I would like to thank each of the Human Connections project partners who have demonstrated their commitment to working together to achieve a greater understanding of the ways people in Latrobe seek out and achieve social connections. We are now well placed to respond to what we have heard from local communities and to advocate for policy and systems changes to address issues of social isolation and connection in Latrobe.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Anderson".

Jane Anderson

Latrobe Health Advocate

BACKGROUND

About the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone

In response to the 2014-15 Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry, the Victorian Government designated the Latrobe City local government area as a health innovation zone. This included the establishment of the Latrobe Health Assembly and appointment of the Latrobe Health Advocate.

The Latrobe Health Innovation Zone is intended to give voice to community aspirations in the planning, design and delivery of better health and wellbeing outcomes, and where a process of co-design with individuals and organisations is actively encouraged.

About Latrobe City

The local government area of Latrobe City is located approximately 150 kilometres east of Melbourne. It is recognised as one of Victoria's major regional centres and is one of six local government areas that make up the broader Gippsland region.

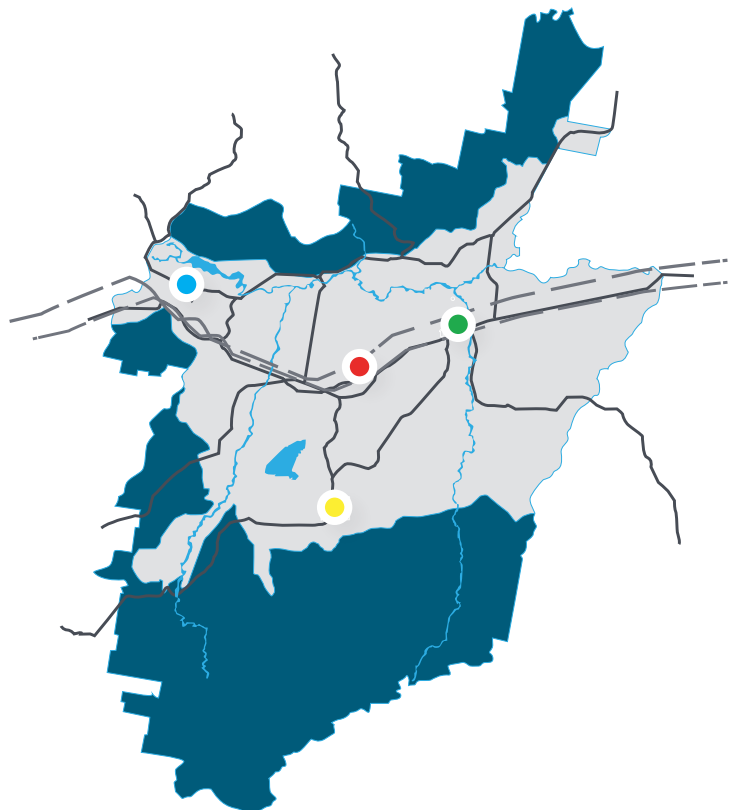
Latrobe is home to more than 75,000 residents and is made up of four central towns; Churchill, Moe, Morwell and Traralgon, and several rural townships; Boolarra, Glengarry, Toongabbie, Tyers, Traralgon South, Yallourn North and Yinnar.

About the Latrobe Health Advocate

As the Latrobe Health Advocate, Jane Anderson reports directly to the Victorian Minister for Health. Jane's role is to provide independent advice to the Victorian Government on behalf of Latrobe Valley communities on system and policy issues affecting their health and wellbeing.

Jane maintains a focus on strategic outcomes and systemic change, ensuring advice and activities within the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone are informed and underpinned by a strong collaborative approach.

Jane purposefully seeks out the views of people who may not recognise their voice or may not usually have their voices heard. Jane listens to and analyses community voice and identifies health and wellbeing priorities that impact people in Latrobe. Jane collaborates with others including the Latrobe Health Assembly and local health services with a view to bring about change and improve health and wellbeing outcomes.



Map of Latrobe

- Moe
- Morwell
- Churchill
- Traralgon

BACKGROUND

The Human Connections Project

In her 2019-20 Statement of Intent the Latrobe Health Advocate identified social isolation and loneliness as priority health issues impacting Latrobe communities. These priorities were identified through direct engagement with people in Latrobe and based on population health data, findings of the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiries and an understanding of emerging evidence and government policy directions within Australia and internationally.

The need to address the issues of mental health and wellbeing, social and community connectedness is reflected in the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023, Living Well Latrobe - Latrobe City Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and the strategic priorities of the Latrobe Health Assembly.

In 2018-19 the Advocate undertook desktop research and community engagement activities to better understand the mental health and wellbeing needs and aspirations of Latrobe communities. This work informed subsequent advocacy campaigns that resulted in submissions to the Productivity Commission's Mental Health Inquiry and the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

In recent years, the Latrobe Health Assembly (LHA), Latrobe City Council (LCC), Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA) and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) have worked together and independently on various initiatives that aim to improve community connections, participation and mental wellbeing outcomes.

In a recent evaluation of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone, Latrobe Health Assembly and Latrobe Health Advocate, Deloitte found that "there are signs of positive change in community attitudes to health and wellbeing. There is a strong sense of community pride and a desire to build on existing community strengths in ensuring a positive future for Latrobe."²

The global Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has significantly impacted communities across the world including Latrobe. It has disrupted every aspect of society and led to significant transformations in the ways people connect with each other, access services and supports within their community.

There is now a common awareness of the effects of loneliness and social isolation and an even greater number of people within the community either experiencing or affected by these issues.

COVID-19 has exacerbated the issues of loneliness and social isolation in Latrobe. Addressing these issues must be a critical component of COVID-19 recovery efforts. The following insight statement based on analysis of community engagement in 2020 was one of many starting points for this project:

There is no doubt that COVID-19 has changed the way people in Latrobe connect with and support each other. For some, feelings of loneliness and isolation are not unfamiliar, and the ongoing health effects of COVID-19 physical distancing measures may not yet be realised. For others, being separated from friends, family and community settings is a new experience and it has been hard to adjust. Technology is a necessary part of the solution and the gaps in who can access and confidently use technology are now visible.³

The Advocate included Human Connections in Latrobe as a priority project in her 2020-21 Statement of Intent and invited key agencies operating within the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone to partner with her office to design and implement the project.



²Evaluation of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone, Latrobe Health Assembly and Latrobe Health Advocate Final report, June 2020

³Latrobe Health Advocate Quarterly Voice Jul – Sep 2020

BACKGROUND

Project Purpose

The overall purpose of the project is to better understand the context and opportunities for human connection in Latrobe and the population health impacts of loneliness and isolation. Project partners worked together to engage with communities and learn from subject matter experts to identify any necessary systems changes and consider potential innovations that could be designed and tested into the future.

Project Overview and Objectives

The project took a placed-based approach to identifying systemic and policy level change to increase social connections and community participation across Latrobe.

Through the establishment of collaborative partnerships and a coordinated approach to research and community engagement, the project was informed by work occurring on the ground, including the views, experiences and aspirations of Latrobe communities.

From the outset project partners identified the following areas of focus:

- Achieving a greater understanding of the various 'touch points' within Latrobe communities, including the ways people interact with businesses, sporting clubs, education settings, community groups and services, with a view to reorienting the system towards prevention
- Creating positive learning environments and nurturing a culture of optimism to enable people in Latrobe to build their skills, confidence, community connections and employment prospects
- Addressing gaps in technology and communications infrastructure within Latrobe, improving universal access to data and building the skills of individuals, groups and organisations, to create more equitable opportunities to connect and socialise online into the future
- Informing future government policy directions with a view to giving life and light to community voice, enabling greater coordination, flexibility and localisation of policy implementation across government, broadening the definition of health to emphasise the social determinants and reorienting mental health policy directions towards prevention

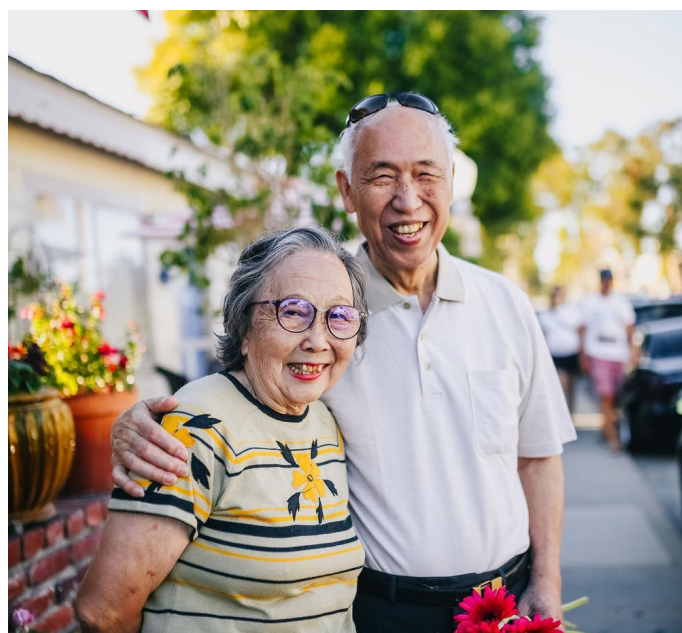
The project was designed to build on existing relationships, social networks and work occurring with local community groups and through funded services operating within the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone

Project partners aimed to identify the breadth of policies and programs that have an impact on preventing and/or limiting loneliness and social isolation within Latrobe communities.

Consideration has been given to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 via collation and analysis of community voice and engagement data and relevant emerging research. The outcomes of this project may be used to inform the design and implementation of COVID-19 recovery efforts in Latrobe.

Consideration has been given to the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System and how these recommendations can be implemented appropriately within Latrobe.

In her 2019-20 Statement of Intent the Latrobe Health Advocate identified social isolation and loneliness as priority health issues impacting Latrobe communities. These priorities were identified through direct engagement with people in Latrobe and based on population health data, findings of the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiries and an understanding of emerging evidence and government policy directions within Australia and internationally.



BACKGROUND

Project Partners

The following organisations that operate within the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone have been involved in the design and delivery of the project which has been led by the Latrobe Health Advocate.

- Latrobe Health Assembly (LHA)
- Latrobe City Council (LCC)
- Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA)
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)

The **Latrobe Health Assembly (LHA)** is a community-led organisation that seeks to positively shape and facilitate new ways of working to improve health and wellness in Latrobe. This is achieved by facilitating and enabling collaboration among the local communities, local organisations and state-wide agencies and government. Strategic focus areas are mental health, community connectedness and vulnerability, early childhood development and active living.

Latrobe City Council (LCC) has a central role in protecting, improving and promoting the conditions that prevent disease and which support and encourage healthier lives. Latrobe City Council aims to work in partnership to create healthy built, social, economic and natural environments. Council works to make Latrobe City a healthy place to live, one that is clean and safe, has adequate housing and services as well as opportunities for social engagement and employment.

Council delivers a range of programs and support services designed to protect and improve public health and wellbeing of the local community through education, prevention, monitoring and enforcement and promotion of health awareness. Every four years Council consults the community and reviews the best available evidence to develop a municipal public health and wellbeing plan to ensure this work is headed in the right direction. Planning for the Latrobe City Council Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 is underway and is informed by community and partner engagement.

The **Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA)** was established in November 2016 as a different approach to how government works in place to support a region through sustainable economic transition. The catalyst for the formation of the Authority was the closure of the Hazelwood Power Station and Mine in the context of multiple government responses over the

longer term to improve social and economic indicators for the region. The framing of the place-based response was founded on an emerging body of economic development research and practice into effective regional development. From this research a principle-based approach (the LVA Principles) was implemented to guide the way of working. This included listening to what matters to people, building on the strengths of the region, and drawing on national and international research on contemporary regional development for long-term sustainable prosperity.

The decision to adopt a place-based approach emerged from a body of economic development research and practice that indicates that regional development is most effectively achieved through integrated, place-based approaches by government. The five key principles are exercised to respond to the needs of the Latrobe Valley, both now and into the future, and include:

- locally-owned ideas
- genuine partnerships
- action orientated
- coordinated effort
- outcome focussed.

Collaborating to deliver the Human Connections project aligns to all of the LVA principles but especially to 'locally-owned ideas' where we work on what matters to the community. This principle is grounded in place but open to new approaches, ensuring community ownership of ideas and processes, and understanding the things that matter to them. We use safe and inclusive opportunities to engage with and listen to voices from the private sector, public sector and civil society. This enables collective wisdom to emerge, supporting distributed leadership to guide partnerships to lead work.

The **Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)** works hard to create equal opportunities for all Victorians to live a safe, respected and valued life. Our areas of focus are child protection, housing, disability, the prevention of family violence, multicultural affairs, LGBTIQ+ equality, veterans, women and youth.



BACKGROUND

Community Engagement

Project partners worked together to plan and coordinate community engagement efforts. The Advocate's engagement model was used to facilitate engagement planning sessions in which project partners agreed on the overall purpose and approach to engagement activities.

Engagement took place over several months and each of the project partners sought feedback and views from communities about human connections in Latrobe. Existing and project specific engagement tactics were used.

Through working in partnership and leveraging the networks and communication channels of each partner organisation, a greater breadth of people who live, learn and work in Latrobe were able to share their views and participate in this work.

Engagement activities were designed to enable the project partners to hear from people who may not usually have their voices heard. This included people travelling on local buses being invited to chat with the Advocate, people who receive home care services from Latrobe City Council participating in telephone interviews with staff and members of the Latrobe Health Assembly reaching out through their community networks to initiate casual conversations and informal interviews.

Project partners shared outcomes and reflected on what this might mean for Latrobe. Engagement insights were drafted and shared back with communities in a joint community and stakeholder workshop.

PROJECT ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

Community conversations with the Advocate travelling on buses across different towns in Latrobe

Human Connection identified as a key priority for Latrobe communities in Advocate 2020-21 Statement of Intent

Telephone interviews facilitated by Latrobe City Council with community members who receive home care services

Project partners work together to establish partnership, determine project objectives, and research questions

Drop-in community conversations with the Advocate at the Moe Library and Traralgon Farmer's Market

Project partners used the Advocate engagement model to plan and design engagement methodology

Informal community interviews facilitated by members of the Latrobe Health Assembly

Desktop research to consider relevant definitions, case studies and frameworks

Virtual engagement with small groups of community members and the Advocate

Digital engagement with communities through use of the Engage Victoria online platform



PROJECT ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY CONTINUED





HUMAN CONNECTIONS THEME OVERVIEW

THEME 1

The impact of human connections on overall health and wellbeing

INSIGHTS

Understanding the value of community connection in Latrobe

Understanding the value of community connection in Latrobe

THEME 2

Human Connection with place, people and other

INSIGHTS

Connection with place

Connection with people

Connection with other

THEME 3

Events and activities and experiences

INSIGHTS

Events, activities, experiences

THEME 4

Connecting through community groups, clubs and volunteering

INSIGHTS

Community groups, clubs and volunteering

THEME 5

Enablers of human connection

INSIGHTS

Connecting Latrobe to the online world

Being connected to 'what's on' in Latrobe

Transport enables connection



THEME 1

The impact of human connections on overall health and wellbeing

This theme focuses on the importance of understanding the value of human connection and the influence it has on overall health and wellbeing. “Social connections can be any meaningful contact with another”⁴, however it’s important to note that the ability of individuals to initiate and maintain these connections is not equal, with some having greater assets, tools and services at their disposal to do this than others⁵. Without these connections, and sometimes even with what others might see as abundant social connections, individuals can feel a sense of loneliness. It’s important to note that loneliness is a personal experience and “can mean different things to different people”.⁶

⁴ NESTA, 2021. Reimagining Help, London: Nesta.

⁵ Keyes, C.-L. M., 1998. Social Well-being. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 61(2), pp. 121-140.

⁶ HM Government: Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 2018. *A connected society A strategy for tackling loneliness – laying the foundations for change*. London: Crown.

THEME 1

Engagement Insights

Understanding the value of community connection in Latrobe

Having conversations about community connectedness can lead to a greater understanding of the connections we do have and a realisation that everyone has their own personal needs and preferences when it comes to connecting with others and participating in community. People can feel connected to others, or have a connection to place, animals or music.

Health impacts of connection in Latrobe

Connection to people, place and services is good for physical and mental wellbeing. Interacting with others can have a ripple effect and help people to feel good within themselves. Every part of society and all levels of government can impact a person's ability to connect with others and ultimately contribute to their physical and mental wellbeing. Positive social experiences can give someone confidence and motivation to take the first step to improving their health. Equally, negative social experiences or lack of connection can lead to demotivation and poor health outcomes.

Community Voice

“Having the choices available to be as involved as I want and my lifestyle allows.”

“Communities need to feel valued.”

“Social connection cannot be forced.”

“Good social connection means the world to me.”

“Without social connection it would be very lonely and depressing.”

THEME 1

Suggestions from Latrobe Communities

- Open air concerts, busking opportunities
- Christmas concerts and festivities
- Casual attendance events and pop-up activities
- Street festivals
- Adventure activities
- Music events for all ages
- Greater variety of sporting and non-sporting events
- Social activities and multicultural festivals
- Events that target and bring together different age groups
- Increased sponsorship and funding for events
- Farmers markets across multiple Latrobe locations
- Event seating and quiet spaces for conversations, planned and unplanned
- Event specific transport schedules and options, free commutes to local events
- Crossover of ages, demographics, generations
- Facilities for younger children
- Options, support and ease of access to permits to host events
- Changes to the environment to encourage participation and provoke more conversation

Existing Work to Build On

Latrobe Health Assembly	Latrobe City Council	Latrobe Valley Authority	Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
<p>Hello Campaign</p> <p>The Latrobe Health Assembly's Hello campaign is encouraging people to say hello to each other to help create a better sense of friendliness and highlight the importance of social connections in the Valley.</p> <p>Social Prescribing</p> <p>The Latrobe Health Assembly is currently trialling a Social Prescribing model in Churchill. Sometimes referred to as community referral, Social Prescribing is a way that enables clinical professionals such as GPs, nurses, nurse practitioners and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services such as support groups and community activity groups.</p>	<p>Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP)</p> <p>Latrobe City Council's MPHWP supports opportunities for community connection through Council programs and services (e.g. youth activities, library services and planned activity groups)</p>	<p>Community and Facility Fund</p> <p>The \$224 million Community and Facility Fund has supported 232 community-led projects focussed on improving accessibility, sustainability, participation and social connection. Clubs that have benefitted from the funding have reported increased membership and participation. Improved facilities have led to more activity and increased use by the community, which in turn has helped to improve the income of community groups.</p> <p>Funding for water and energy saving measures have led to significant cost savings – allowing clubs to invest savings into facility improvements. The investment has also generated a significant amount of work through the use of local contractors.</p>	<p>The Commissioner for Senior Victorians</p> <p>The Commissioner for Senior Victorians 2016 report Ageing is everyone's business explored social isolation and loneliness for older people and provided a list of priorities that could address disconnection. The 2020 follow up report Ageing well in a changing world continues the focus on social connection and how a whole of government approach can address the barriers older people face when working towards full participation in community.⁷</p>

⁷ <https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/services-information/commissioner-for-senior-victorians/ageing-well>

THEME 1

Existing Work to Build On (continued)

Latrobe Health Assembly	Latrobe City Council	Latrobe Valley Authority	Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
<p>Open Book Campaign</p> <p>The Latrobe Health Assembly's Open Book Approach project, led by Lifeline Gippsland, works with Latrobe Valley businesses to identify what the current level of mental health awareness and training is in workplaces across the region.</p> <p>COVID-19 Kindness Lives Here campaign</p> <p>In 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Latrobe Health Assembly released a series of posters at public locations throughout the Latrobe Valley promoting how little acts of kindness to one another can make a big difference in trying times. These posters have remained in place throughout 2021.</p>	<p>Community Activation and Social Isolation Initiative (CASI)</p> <p>Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic Latrobe City Council has participated in the CASI initiative and engaged with community groups supporting them to deal with change. Panel discussions with community groups and sporting clubs, capacity building workshops have offered online.</p>	<p>Health and Community Services Pathways with Federation University</p> <p>A series of promotional videos and supporting collateral to promote Health and Community Service Pathways in Gippsland. Recommendations from Gippsland's Future Health and Community Services Workforce report stated that in order to support and increase the sector's workforce, a greater awareness of opportunities and pathways needed to be supported. Priority careers have been taken from the Health and Community Services workforce working groups. Look out for the video series later in the year.</p> <p>Health Innovation and Discovery Workshops</p> <p>A series of discovery workshops as part of Gippsland's Smart Specialisation strategy. This workshop will help Federation University and the Latrobe Valley Authority identify the priorities for education and research in Gippsland and areas of opportunities for health innovation.⁷</p>	

THEME 1

Opportunities to Consider

There is an opportunity to raise awareness and help people recognise connections they do have, and the important physical and mental health benefits of human connection.

Governments and services have a general awareness of the value of social connection, however there are missed opportunities to utilise the existing system to the fullest extent possible to achieve greater social connections in Latrobe. Further work may be required to first acknowledge what is already known about the experiences of people experiencing loneliness and isolation.

Recommendation 15⁸ of the Royal Commission in Victoria's Mental Health System: Supporting good mental health and wellbeing in local communities. The Royal Commission recommends that the Victorian Government:

- Establish and recurrently resource 'community collectives' for mental health and wellbeing in each local government area.
- Support each community collective to bring together a diversity of local leaders and community members to guide and lead efforts to promote social connection and inclusion in Victorian communities.
- Test and develop a range of initiatives that support community participation, inclusion and connection.
- By the end of 2022, establish one social prescribing trial per region (refer to recommendation 3(3)) in Local Mental Health and Wellbeing Services to support healthcare professionals to refer people, particularly older Victorians, living with mental illness, into community initiatives.

Advice from the Advocate

As the Victorian Government implements the recommendations of the Mental Health Royal Commission it is important to have regard for:

- The Advocate's advice about COVID-19 impacts and recovery efforts in Latrobe⁹;
- The work undertaken by the project partners in relation to Human Connections in Latrobe;
- The extensive work that is already occurring within Latrobe, as part of the long-term delivery of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone.

There is an opportunity to build on existing public health initiatives and social marketing campaigns to amplify the value and health benefits of social connection in Latrobe in a way that:

- Continues to involve Latrobe communities and in particular those who may not usually be engaged;
- Directly engages and activates the health, social services and public sector workforces;
- Helps community members to recognise their existing connections; and
- Acknowledges and brings out into the open the barriers that some people experience to enable these to be constructively addressed

⁸ <https://finalreport.rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/recommendations>

⁹ COVID-19 Impact and Recovery in Latrobe, Latrobe Health Advocate and Gippsland Primary Health Network 2021



THEME 2

Human connection with place, people and other

This theme focuses on the connections individuals have with other people, places and non-human entities. While the importance of connection to other people and the benefits this offers is widely acknowledged, connections that individuals may have to specific places, nature, their community at large or even non-human entities such as pets can deliver important health and wellbeing benefits^{10/11}. With a diverse population in Latrobe, opportunities exist to celebrate and recognise¹² this diversity and build important new connections within the community.

¹⁰ <https://lookingforwardlatrobe.com/>

¹¹ Swinburne University of Technology: Swinburne Social Innovation Research Institute, 2018. Healthy Social Connections, Hawthorn: Swinburne Social Innovation Research Institute

¹² <https://lookingforwardlatrobe.com/>

THEME 2

Engagement Insights

Connection with place

People in Latrobe recognise their connection to homes, cafes, libraries, parks and shopping centres. They have talked about their sense of belonging and pride in their neighbourhoods or town. They have expressed a desire to feel more connected to the broader region which can at times feel limited by geography, transport and cultural norms.

Connection with people

Everyone has different people who they connect with. This could be their family, friends, a taxi driver, a fellow passenger on the bus, a teacher, hairdresser, or social worker. People in Latrobe recognise that being connected to others improves quality of life. Some people have said that they do not need a lot of connection and are happy to meet with a small number of people occasionally.

Connection with other

Research shows that humans can find value in connecting with non-human entities such as artificial intelligence, pets or music.

Everyone has their own individual needs and preferences. Through our engagement, some people mentioned the value they gain from animals and music.

Some people living with chronic conditions in Latrobe talked to us about the healing power of pets. They showed us that being around their pets helped them with their sense of emotional connectedness and overall wellbeing.

Community Voice

“People tend to be loyal to their own town but are interested in other towns.”

“Policy makers need to recognise that distance is an issue in regional Victoria.”

“Having contact with friends keeps me settled.”

“People need other people to share their joys and problems.”

“Pets play a vital role in our overall well-being. We cannot replicate the unconditional love they give us.”

What does a connected community look like? “A community with service clubs, publicly available wifi, local newspaper, vibrant local shopping area including cafes”.

“Music puts people at ease in public places.”

THEME 2

Suggestions from Latrobe Communities

- Dog parks throughout all of Latrobe that are inclusive and accessible
- Music, arts and culture in public spaces
- Concerts, bands, busking, brass bands,
- Opportunities for musicians to showcase their talents
- Involvement from all towns and activities that are available across Latrobe
- Facilitation of local musical collaborations
- Spaces for people to engage in hobbies and recreation
- Pet friendly locations and cafes
- Guidance on where to find places to connect
- Safe, secure places, libraries and meeting places
- Consideration of accessibility requirements for all community
- Ways to bridge gaps and build mutual respect across generations, towns and cultures
- Welcome packs distributed in different ways such as through real estate agents
- Promotion of the places in Latrobe through mediums other than social media

Existing Work to Build On

Latrobe Health Assembly	Latrobe City Council	Latrobe Valley Authority
<p>Urban Scale Interventions</p> <p>Throughout May-June 2021, the Latrobe Health Assembly partnered with Urban Scale Interventions to draw on its expertise in creative engagement and innovative cultural and health interventions. The aim of this project was to explore the context, challenges and opportunities around community safety and wellbeing in Latrobe Valley, with a particular focus on public spaces and design.</p> <p>Social Prescribing</p> <p>The Latrobe Health Assembly is currently trialling a social prescribing model in Churchill. Sometimes referred to as community referral, Social Prescribing is a way that enables clinical professionals such as GPs, nurses, nurse practitioners and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services such as support groups and community activity groups.</p>	<p>LCC is supporting community groups as well as business and township associations to undertake pride of place activities as well as positioning Latrobe City as Gippsland's only regional city to highlight our connectedness and shared identity. LCC also utilises its social media reach to promote local businesses, locations and activities</p>	<p>The Latrobe Valley Authority is delivering projects under the themes of Health and Wellbeing and People, Places and Spaces. The objective of our Health and Wellbeing work is to build a strong regional health and wellbeing system for Gippsland to future proof the workforce, provide innovative products and services, and support a healthy, connected and prosperous community.</p> <p>Peoples Place and Spaces</p> <p>A thriving community is one which draws on the collaborative design, development and delivery of opportunities that build social engagement and community connection, enhance liveability, support positive health and wellbeing and encourage active participation. Spaces and places are part of our natural and built environment. Some have a clearly intended purpose and location.</p>

THEME 2

Existing Work to Build On (continued)

Latrobe Health Assembly	Latrobe City Council	Latrobe Valley Authority
<p>Explore Latrobe</p> <p>Explore Latrobe is a Latrobe Health Assembly initiative which will commence in late 2021 and aims to provide virtual reality installations on strategically positioned tracks and trails to provide an innovative incentive for community members to utilise the region's many walking tracks.</p> <p>Latrobe Streetgames</p> <p>GippSport, in collaboration with the Latrobe Health Assembly implemented a schedule of activities and marketing strategies with the aim of increasing the physical activity levels and social connectedness of young people in Latrobe City via non-organised sports initiatives.</p> <p>Community Table Tennis Tables</p> <p>The Latrobe Health Assembly, in partnership with Latrobe City Council and Traralgon Apex, have recently completed the installation of a permanent table tennis table located in Newman Park, Traralgon. This is the first stage of a widespread rollout currently underway throughout all towns within the Latrobe Valley.</p> <p>My Valley My Home</p> <p>Developed in partnership between the Latrobe Health Assembly, Latrobe Valley Community Choir, and Play It Forward, the My Valley, My Home video project is a celebration of Latrobe and the importance of social inclusion.</p> <p>We Are Latrobe</p> <p>We Are Latrobe is a community focused initiative developed by the Latrobe Health Assembly to place a spotlight on the extraordinary people who live, work and study in the Latrobe Valley.</p>		<p>Peoples Place and Spaces (continued)</p> <p>Others are less defined and allow us to engage and interact with them in a range of flexible ways. They include buildings such as community, cultural and sporting facilities, outdoor infrastructure such as sports fields and courts, as well as untouched and augmented parks, bushland, waterways, tracks and trails.</p> <p>Facilitate development through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encouraging the creation and maintenance of accessible, safe and welcoming facilities building human and social capital, as well as organisational and financial capacity, capability and sustainability enabling the engagement, participation and interaction of all members of the community. <p>Facilitate activation through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote and sustainably utilise our natural and built environment strengths events and programs that encourage participation, build pride and community cohesion, enhance liveability, promote the region and increase visitation support, promote and encourage the establishment and growth of a range of safe, accessible and high-quality physical activity opportunities ensuring all people have an opportunity to participate and personally develop.

THEME 2

Opportunities to Consider

Connection and a sense of belonging is evident for some people in their town or neighbourhood in Latrobe. There is an opportunity to build on this sense of pride that exists within communities and to work towards a greater sense of belonging or connection to the whole of Latrobe.

Some people in Latrobe have described the value of connecting to others through music and animals and have expressed a clear desire for more opportunities to do this.

Advice from the Advocate

That Latrobe City Council and other relevant stakeholders continue to learn about and promote the variety of ways that people in Latrobe like to connect, and to reflect this diversity of preferences and needs across the small business sector, public spaces, transport systems, events, health and social services.

Consider opportunities to embed music, arts and culture into future events and economic strategies for the region. Explore opportunities to work at both a local and broader level to build up/promote local artists/musicians and at the same time attract other talent to the region.

Bring together local township and community development associations that represent individual Latrobe towns to discuss the importance of human connection in Latrobe and to drive whole-of-Latrobe action as a result.



THEME 3

Events, activities and experiences

This theme focuses on how events, activities and other experiences within Latrobe can be used to build and foster social connection. Each year, Latrobe City Council issues more than 500 community event permits¹³ and prior to COVID-19, events in Latrobe attracted more than 870,000 visitors¹⁴. These events provide an important opportunity to build and foster social connection within Latrobe.

¹³ Data provided by Latrobe City Council

¹⁴ Data provided by Latrobe City Council

THEME 3

Engagement Insights

Events, activities, experiences

An event may be for 2 people or for 2000, it can occur in one location or across many. It may be in person, online or both. Events by their nature bring people together. Events and activities can be an experience that people share with others, and at the same time each person walks away with their own individual understanding and experience of the event and what it means for them.

Community Voice

“You need a place that is as welcome as a home. A safe place where there is trust and you feel comfortable, not where you feel you want to go back outside.”

“It is important to do things and have a sense of satisfaction.”

THEME 3

Suggestions from Latrobe Communities

- Open air concerts, busking opportunities
- Christmas concerts and festivities
- Casual attendance events and pop-up activities
- Street festivals
- Adventure activities
- Music events for all ages
- Greater variety of sporting and non-sporting events
- Social activities and multicultural festivals
- Events that target and bring together different age groups
- Increased sponsorship and funding for events
- Farmers markets across multiple Latrobe locations
- Event seating and quiet spaces for conversations, planned and unplanned
- Event specific transport schedules and options, free commutes to local events
- Crossover of ages, demographics, generations
- Facilities for younger children
- Options, support and ease of access to permits to host events
- Changes to the environment to encourage participation and provoke more conversation

Existing Work to Build On

Latrobe Health Assembly	Latrobe City Council	Latrobe Valley Authority
<p>Hello. Day</p> <p>Hello Day is the Hello. Campaign's annual celebration and promotion of kindness and social connection in the Latrobe Valley. Its aim is to activate, empower and encourage members of the community to take simple steps to say 'hello' to one another in the interests of wellbeing.</p>	<p>LCC continues to support community events, both large and small through Council's events team. This includes providing community events grants to financially support local events</p>	<p>Events Gippsland</p> <p>LVA is working with Destination Gippsland and the 6 Councils across Gippsland to work collaboratively to attract and grow events in Gippsland with the aim of increasing the Economic and Social benefits for our communities, including Pride of Place, Health and Participation outcomes. Events will also activate infrastructure with the aim of creating sustainable places and spaces for the community. The Human Connections project will help inform this work, ensuring that the social benefits are maximised through these key learnings.</p>

THEME 3

Existing Work to Build On (continued)

Latrobe Health Assembly	Latrobe City Council	Latrobe Valley Authority
<p>Urban Scale Interventions</p> <p>Throughout May-June 2021, the Latrobe Health Assembly partnered with Urban Scale Interventions to draw on its expertise in creative engagement and innovative cultural and health interventions. The aim of this project was to explore the context, challenges and opportunities around community safety and wellbeing in the Latrobe Valley, with a particular focus on public spaces and design. From this research, seven opportunities have been created to improve perception of Latrobe Valley. Key opportunities linked to this theme include “Connecting Up”, “Viewpoint Latrobe”, “Creative Latrobe” and “Brining everyone together”.¹⁵</p> <p>Latrobe Streetgames</p> <p>GippSport, in collaboration with the Latrobe Health Assembly implemented a schedule of “door step” sporting events and marketing strategies with the aim of increasing the physical activity levels and social connectedness of young people in Latrobe City via non-organised sports initiatives. The popup events were held in easily accessible locations and hosted throughout Latrobe Valley.</p>		<p>Community and Facility Fund - Event Stream</p> <p>50 community events were supported across the region through the event stream of the Community and Facility Fund. Multicultural sporting events, women’s sporting events, music, culture and community celebrations featured strongly in the mix of LVA funded event activity. Other events focused on motor sports, aircraft exhibitions, food, the contribution of our communities to world wars as well as social forums and community celebrations.</p>

THEME 3

Opportunities to Consider

Latrobe is characterised by a broad diversity of people and communities who in their own ways attract other people to live in and visit the region. Increasing awareness and promotion of events that generally attract a niche community or specific multicultural group may create greater opportunities for human connection in the region.

With greater understanding of the barriers that some people may experience (particularly those who may suffer from anxiety, loneliness or isolation) event organisers could enhance the way events and activities are designed, creating additional value through improving social connection for more people.

Advice from the Advocate

That the Victorian Government, Latrobe City Council and other relevant stakeholders work together to enhance and further promote the various multicultural events and activities that occur in the region with a view to boost awareness and participation.

Consider ways to deliver a series of events across Latrobe in a way that is accessible to more people in more places, with the aim of creating a greater sense of belonging to the region as a whole.

Design (a new) or build into (an existing) events strategy a human connection design principle to ensure that event organisers in the region consider ways to create inclusive environments and enable connection, particularly for those who may struggle to achieve this on their own.

Determine a way to measure the human connection impact of events in Latrobe and build this into existing event reporting systems that currently report on the economic benefits of events.

The human connections design principle and impact measure should also aim to minimise the harmful effects of risky alcohol consumption, smoking and gambling at public and community events.



THEME 4

Connecting through community groups, clubs and volunteering

With 2.3 million (or 42.1% of) Victorians aged over 15 years involved in some form of volunteering¹⁶, this theme explores the health benefits this offers. In a recent Victorian Government study, social connection was listed as the third highest motivator for volunteering, with 35% of volunteers reporting that they wanted to meet new people, be involved, develop friends and social networks. The report also found that actively encouraging personal connections and relationship building is both a way for organisations to engage volunteers and also the natural outcome of people coming together with others for the 'common good'¹⁷. In addition to volunteering, the theme also explores the connections offered by being a member of a community group and/or club, such as a sporting club.

¹⁶ State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020 (Link)

¹⁷ State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020 (Link)

THEME 4

Engagement Insights

Community groups, clubs and volunteering

In Latrobe there are many community groups, clubs, or volunteering opportunities and for those that are involved, the benefits are clear. For others there may be barriers to participation that need to be identified and understood. Volunteering is important to people in Latrobe. It gives them an opportunity to utilise their skills and connect with others, while also benefiting their overall health and wellbeing.

Community Voice

“This group is more like a family to me.”

“As an individual I am not driven to be part of clubs and community groups. My connections are mainly related to friends or family activities.”

“We all seem to get along. We all have fun.”

“How can we reach people who have lost their connection to the community?”

“What can we do about the stigma which ties volunteering to unemployment?”

THEME 4

Suggestions from Latrobe Communities

- Flexible and casual volunteering opportunities
- Support for new groups to start up
- Promotion of the great work that volunteers do
- Easy to understand resources
- Professional support to help groups attract new volunteers and reduce dependency on existing volunteers
- Encouragement for primary and secondary school students to volunteer
- Tools and resources to help people in their volunteering jobs
- Communication of expectations and requirements for volunteers
- Assistance to clubs or groups wanting to reach people who may benefit from volunteering but don't have an existing connection to the club or activity
- Paid volunteer coordination positions
- In-kind reward programs and sponsorships such as covering cost of fees and memberships
- Succession planning to attract younger volunteers
- Coordination and sharing of volunteers
- Recognition of the links between volunteerism and employment pathways
- Focus on proactive volunteer recruitment and less reliance on same old crowd
- Information about what different organisations and groups do
- Promotion and facilitation of opportunities to volunteer

Existing Work to Build On

Latrobe Health Assembly	Latrobe City Council	Latrobe Valley Authority
<p>Hands Up Latrobe</p> <p>Hands Up Latrobe Valley, an initiative developed by the Latrobe Health Assembly, aims to build capacity for volunteer-involving organisations to develop appropriate volunteering opportunities and resources to adapt their volunteer engagement to the changing needs and expectations of volunteers in Latrobe City.</p>	<p>Welcoming and age friendly community groups</p> <p>Latrobe City Council has developed an initiative that aims to reduce isolation and loneliness of older members of the community. This involves a network of 'welcoming and age friendly' community groups with a recognisable brand, and through individual referral pathways.¹⁸</p>	<p>Latrobe Valley Sport and Community Initiative</p> <p>The Latrobe Valley Sports and Community Initiative (LVSCI) was established by the Victorian State Government in partnership with the Collingwood Football Club (CFC) in 2017, with the purpose of creating an 'Active and Healthy region'.</p> <p>The initiative has delivered an unprecedented \$85 million of Victorian State Government investment in sporting infrastructure including the following facilities in Latrobe:</p>

¹⁸ <https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/get-involved/for-organisations/grants/ssip/city-of-latrobe>

THEME 4

Existing Work to Build On (continued)

Latrobe Health Assembly	Latrobe City Council	Latrobe Valley Authority
<p>Social Prescribing</p> <p>The Latrobe Health Assembly is currently trialling a Social Prescribing model in Churchill. Sometimes referred to as community referral, Social Prescribing is a way that enables clinical professionals such as GPs, nurses, nurse practitioners and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services such as support groups and community activity groups. Referrals can include joining a local support group, sports club or hobby club.</p> <p>Increasing Access to Sports</p> <p>The Latrobe Health Assembly in partnership with GippSport Community Solutions undertook extensive research, data analysis and consultation in identifying a range of barriers to increasing sport recruitment within Latrobe Valley. Identified barriers include; time constraints, travel requirements, social and performance-related pressures and participation costs.</p>		<p>Latrobe Valley Sport and Community Initiative (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre, Traralgon • Gippsland Regional Indoor Sports Stadium, Traralgon • Gippsland Regional AFL Centre of Excellence, Morwell Recreation Reserve • Gippsland Regional Cricket Centre of Excellence, Ted Summerton Reserve Moe • Latrobe Valley Sports and Entertainment Stadium (synthetic Pitches), Morwell • Traralgon Tennis Centres • Upgrades to 9 Community Reserves <p>These facilities were constructed with Universal Design Principals to ensure equitable and flexible use for all of the community. LVSI also delivered a range of major sporting events to activate these facilities such as Collingwood Football and Netball Games, Melbourne Victory Matches, Melbourne Stars and Melbourne Boomers, as well as a suit of community engagement activities such as clinics, workshops and community visits. Events were low cost with community ticketing available to appropriate groups.</p> <p>LVSCI funded a range of community participation programs such as Walking Hockey, Roller Derby and walking groups to assist grow participation in sport and active recreation.</p> <p>Community and Facility Fund - Capacity Building Stream</p> <p>The Sport and Active Recreation Strategic Planning Grants Program was designed to strengthen and build robust, resilient, sustainable and inclusive sport and recreation organisations in the Latrobe Valley region. Grants of up to \$6000 were available to undertake strategic planning with a focus on improving capacity, improving operational effectiveness and efficiency and increasing the opportunities for our community to participate in sport and active recreation activities. 14 organisations were funded in Latrobe.</p>

THEME 4

Opportunities to Consider

Latrobe has high rates of volunteerism and a broad range of community groups and clubs. At times there can be a dependency on an individual or core group of people. Learning from these people and helping them with succession planning may create opportunities to build on the good work these volunteers have done and create more opportunities for others to volunteer.

Professional guidance, management frameworks and operational supports that can be adjusted to suit different groups and settings can help to improve the volunteer experience and increase retention rates.

The Victorian Government and Volunteering Victoria are currently developing a volunteering strategy that will be underpinned by the report State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020, which will guide future investment to support volunteering activities across the state.

Volunteering Victoria has developed an initiative called weVolunteer that is designed to bring together volunteers and local community organisations to help communities recover in times of need. This initiative utilises four key tools; a pool of Community Recovery Volunteers, a digital Volunteer Passport, training and resources and a place-based volunteering model.¹⁹

Advice from the Advocate

That the Victorian Government and Volunteering Victoria work directly with organisations in Latrobe to ensure that the new Volunteering Strategy and weVolunteer reaches and is of direct benefit to communities in Latrobe. A social return on investment tool could be developed to measure the positive impact that this strategy has in Latrobe.

That the Victorian Government complements investments into sporting infrastructure with future investments and policies that emphasise the importance of building the capacity of both professionals and volunteers to enable increased participation in recreation and volunteerism. In doing so, consider ways to measure the health and social impacts of community participation and volunteerism, particularly for those people who may experience isolation or exclusion.

That Latrobe City Council continues to maintain and promote the newly established volunteer notice boards located in local libraries with the aim of encouraging people who may not have access to technology to be informed about opportunities to be involved with local clubs and groups.

That Latrobe City Council and Gippsport explore opportunities to partner to take a multisectoral approach to supporting local clubs and community groups with their governance practices. Focus on achieving a more sustainable and proactive approach to diversity and inclusion with the aim of creating the conditions that will enable more people to participate in club activities and to volunteer.

¹⁹ <https://www.wevolunteer.org.au/about-wevolunteer/>



THEME 5

Enablers of human connection

This theme focuses on the enablers of human connection including access to the internet knowledge and awareness of opportunities to participate in local events and activities and access to appropriate transport. The gaps between digitally included and excluded Australians are substantial and widening for some groups²⁰ and building digital confidence to safely and securely use the internet is critical for enhancing digital inclusion²¹. According to the last census, 8,674 households in Latrobe do not have internet access²². In addition, areas that depend solely on cars for access can isolate people without them – particularly the young and old leading to social isolation, lack of community interaction and overall poorer health²³. There are however opportunities for those without cars to build social connection. Walking increases opportunities for face-to-face social contact and helps people to map their neighbourhood in social terms. Trust, sympathy, respect, understanding, loyalty and co- operation - qualities core to social connection - come more easily through direct contact²⁴ that activities like walking provide.

²⁰ Measuring Australia's Digital Divide – The Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2020

²¹ Measuring Australia's Digital Divide – The Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2020

²² https://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/City/The_Region/Population_and_Economic_Profile

²³ Barrett and Stanley ,2008, Moving People: Solutions for a Growing Australia (Link)

²⁴ https://www.victoriawalks.org.au/social_benefits/

THEME 5

Engagement Insights

Connecting Latrobe to the online world

Technology can connect people to each other and to services. It is a necessary part of the way people will connect into the future and can contribute to positive health outcomes. The gaps in who can access and confidently use technology are now visible. For some, not being able to access the online world means missing out on connecting with people, places and opportunities that they once had. For others, technology can provide a safe and convenient way to participate in society.

Being connected to 'what's on' in Latrobe

Everyone has different people that they connect with. This could be their family, friends, a taxi driver, a fellow passenger on the bus, a teacher, hairdresser, or social worker. People in Latrobe recognise that being connected to others improves quality of life. Some people have said that they do not need a lot of connection and are happy to meet with a small number of people occasionally.

Transport enables connection

Public transport can enable people in the community to connect, particularly when it is affordable, staffed and managed adequately with good Protective Service Officers and friendly drivers. Bus, taxi and train terminals, timetables and interchanges need to be designed in ways that encourage people to access public transport. People want to use public transport to access events or services, to volunteer, to meet up with friends and go shopping.

Community Voice

"We are doing things in a different way and everyone is adjusting."

"Lack of digital connection fortifies isolation. We don't know about people who are not connected."

"Don't expect to have everything come to you – be willing to step out yourself."

"It's hard to get people on their own to be motivated."

"I enjoy chatting with people in the taxi, I know them, and I have lived here for years."

"Lack of transport can have a significant impact on community involvement."

"It needs to change so everyone can rely on public transport if they need to."

THEME 5

Suggestions from Latrobe Communities

- Education on technology so that people are not left behind
- Technology experts and volunteers to assist those less tech savvy
- Training and guidance for community members who need to use online health systems, attend telehealth appointments and know how best to search the internet
- Inclusion and training on online activities
- Communication with people who are offline
- Promotional campaigns and communications to occur in all forms (physical and digital)
- Public and event transport for volunteers
- Public transport to and from community events
- Affordable and accessible public transport
- Centralised access to 'what's on' and a calendar of events that is easier to read, with reliable access to further information
- Variety of methods and platforms used to promote upcoming events
- Ongoing event reminders and prompts that can help people to feel welcome ahead of time
- General information about events, based on the view that people may not actually know about it
- Information about how to access public spaces to run events that is easy to access

Existing Work to Build On

Latrobe Health Assembly	Latrobe City Council	Latrobe Valley Authority	Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
<p>Urban Scale Interventions</p> <p>Throughout May-June 2021, the Latrobe Health Assembly partnered with Urban Scale Interventions to draw on its expertise in creative engagement and innovative cultural and health interventions. The aim of this project was to explore the context, challenges and opportunities around community safety and wellbeing in Latrobe Valley, with a particular focus on public spaces and design. From this research, seven opportunities have been created to improve perception of Latrobe Valley. Key opportunities linked to this theme include "Industry Latrobe" and "Looking to the future".²⁵</p>	<p>LLCC continues to provide internet access at LCC Libraries and free wifi at Council facilities. LCC is also rolling out free public wifi in the CBDs of Moe, Morwell and Traralgon.</p> <p>LCC also manages and maintains a community events calendar on Council's website</p>	<p>The LVA's is investigating the inclusion of digital literacy as part of the Gippsland Micro-credentialing of Enterprise Skills Project with the University of Melbourne.</p>	<p>Social Seniors Digital Training</p> <p>Social Seniors Partnership program between DFFH, Telstra and the Public Libraries Network with local libraries and U3A clubs as delivery partners.²⁶</p>

²⁵ Looking Forward Latrobe <https://lookingforwardlatrobe.com>

²⁶ <https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/eMag/articles/Social-Seniors-Digital-training-enters-a-more-seniors-friendly-era>

THEME 5

Opportunities to Consider

Digital connectivity, being informed and connected to what's on in Latrobe, and reliable access to public transport are all enablers of social connection. However, there are people in Latrobe that continue to experience isolation or loneliness because of lack of infrastructure, availability, information or confidence.

There are people in Latrobe who depend on, and want to use public transport more often. Reliable, affordable and accessible public transport is good for community health and for the environment. Addressing existing gaps in the transport system in relation to the timing, frequency and interconnection of some services can lead to increased utilisation and bring public health benefits.

Advice from the Advocate

That the Victorian Government establishes a policy position to address known gaps in digital connectivity and online participation, moving beyond infrastructure and investing appropriate resources into the education, upskilling and capacity building of communities, businesses and services.

That the Victorian Government provides support and coordination to implement a cross-governmental approach that results in a Latrobe Transport Strategy. This local strategy should aim to address known and future challenges associated with access to transport in Latrobe. As part of this strategy consider current and futures modes of transport including active transport, the overall geography and demographics of Latrobe, access to health and other essential services, ability to scale up or adjust the system for community events and the underlying issues that prevent some people from utilising transport such as costs, physical access, scheduling and interchanges.

NOTES





“Thank you for the inclusion.”



“Can we have more of these types of workshops?”



“Great engagement of the community at many levels.”



“Thank you for organising today’s workshop is great to see all organisations involved.”



“Thanks for the opportunity to contribute.”



“I feel I have a much better grasp of connectedness in Latrobe Valley after today.”