

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01 — Message From the Advocate
- 02 — Quarterly Activity Breakdown
- 03 — Quarterly Activity Breakdown cont.
- 03 — Community Aspirations
- 04 — Community Aspirations cont.
- 05 — Community Aspirations cont.
- 06 — Priority Campaigns
- 07 — Systems Change
- 08 — Observations of Systems Change



Latrobe Health Advocate
2 Tarwin Street, Morwell
Phone: 1800 319 355
Email: info@lhadvocate.vic.gov.au

A MESSAGE FROM

Latrobe Health Advocate



I am pleased to provide this update from my office for the period October to December 2021.

Health Equity and **Access to Services** were the top aspirations identified by Latrobe communities this quarter. People have said that not everyone can access vaccinations within the government timelines and delivery settings, particularly people who have experienced trauma or who may be living with mental illness. This is the first time **Health Equity** has been in the top 5 aspirations.

I heard about the struggles of some older residents who required direct support to access technology and government apps to demonstrate their vaccination status. Without this support from family or friends they were unable to participate in their community.

Healthy Lifestyles was also among the top aspirations identified by Latrobe communities this quarter.

I continued to hear from people about the importance of **Community Engagement**. A local community group continued to provide feedback and raise concerns with me about the development of a Used Lead Acid Battery plant in Latrobe. I heard about the group's desire to see health and wellbeing protected and to transition to a clean and green energy future.

Social Inclusion was an aspiration for people in the **LGBTIQ** community. I heard about a new program for **LGBTIQ** people in Latrobe that is tailored mainly for adolescents but open to all ages. Staff involved with the service are there to make transition easier for people, to support individuals and to influence the service system. They want to ensure that everyone has someone who they can speak to.

During this quarter the Latrobe LGA experienced the highest number of **COVID-19** cases since the beginning of the pandemic. At the same time, the Commonwealth and State vaccination programs were being implemented and 95% of eligible people in Latrobe were recorded as receiving two doses of vaccine. Over the three months, there was a notable shift in government policy, moving from hard lockdowns towards what was described as a vaccinated economy.

I spoke to my submission at the panel hearing regarding the proposed Delburn Windfarm and noted that I had consistently put forward the view that governments and industry need to actively involve communities in the design and decision-making process. I suggested that the Victorian Government considers the psychological impacts of the approval process on those people who have raised concerns and works to mitigate the effects raised, by maintaining a transparent process, and ensuring evidence-informed communication strategies are employed to prevent unintended harm.

I also shared this concern when meeting with the new Chief Environmental Scientist, Mark Taylor and staff at the EPA midway through the quarter.

During this quarter I have seen several **systems changes** that can provide opportunities for better health and wellbeing across Latrobe, and some of them are highlighted in this update.

I continue to hear from communities who share their goals, barriers, and suggestions and how they want to be engaged by governments and services across Latrobe.

If you have any questions about the report or the information provided, please contact my office for further details or go to our website www.lhadvocate.vic.gov.au

Jane

@LHAdvocate

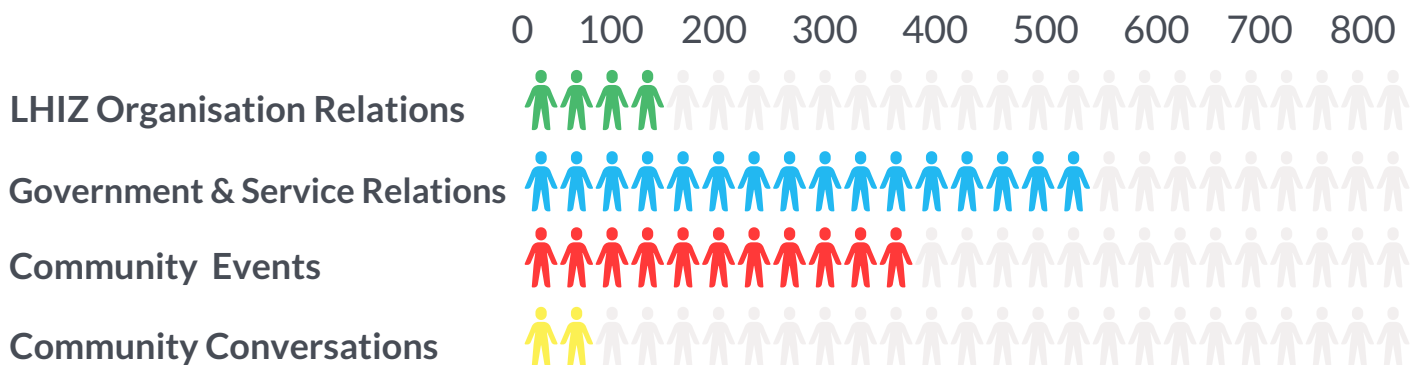


QUARTERLY BREAKDOWN

OFFICE ACTIVITIES

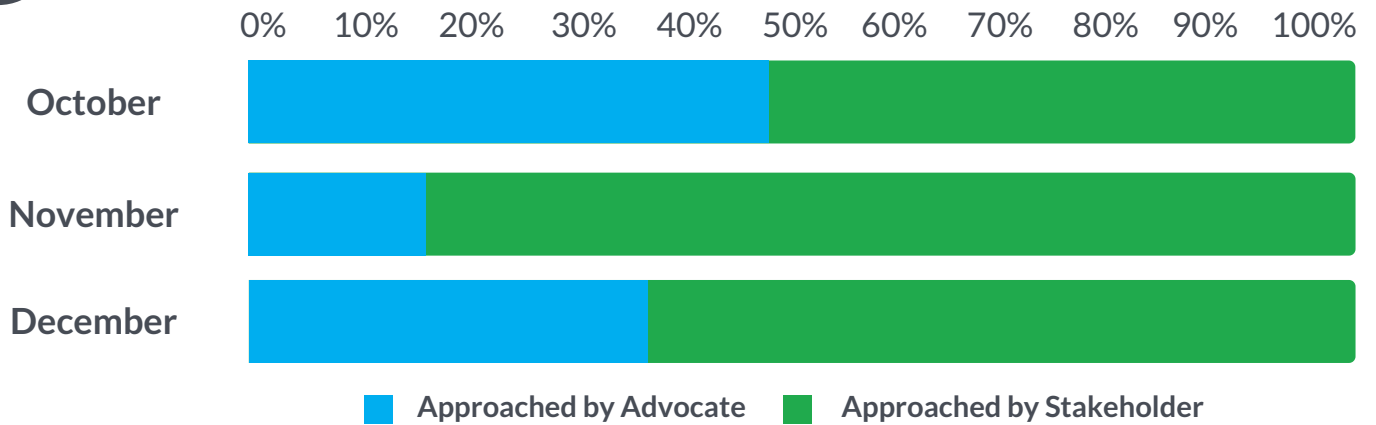


NUMBER OF PEOPLE

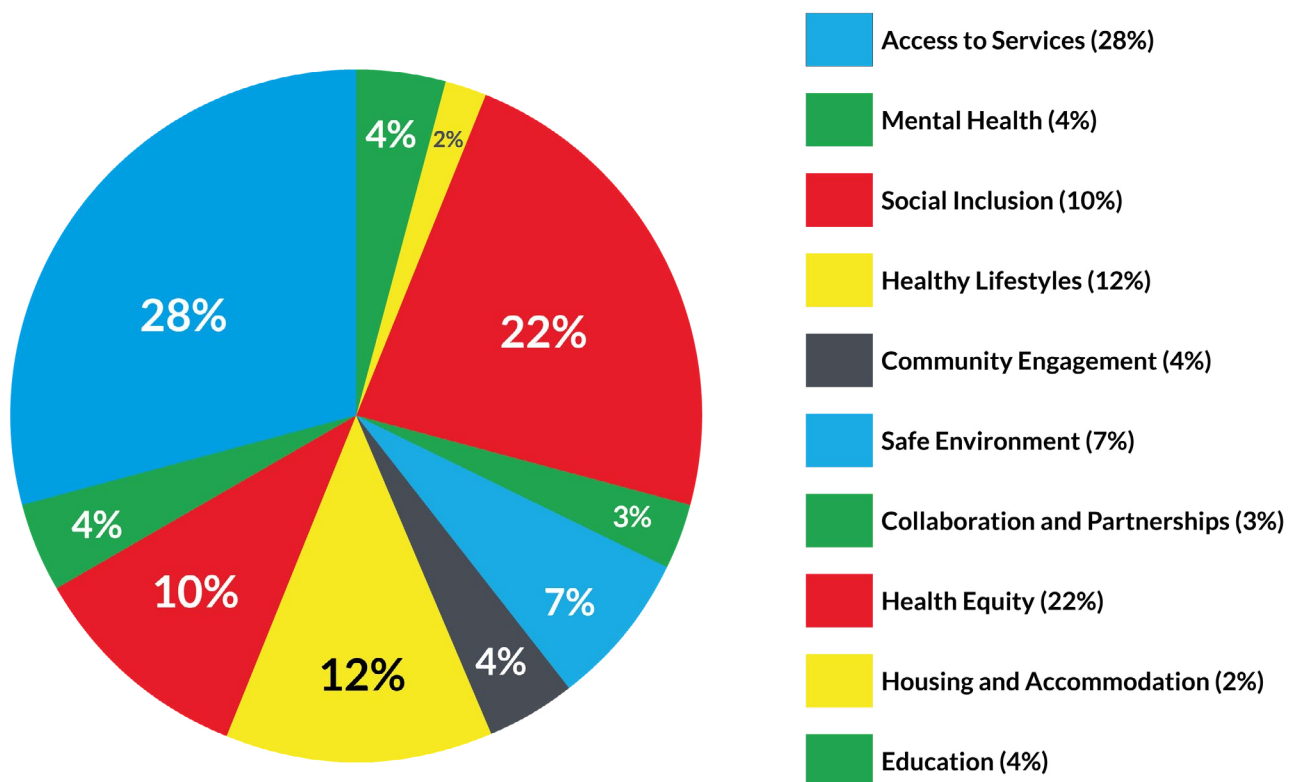




ENGAGEMENT REACH



COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS



COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

Health Equity and Access to Services

Health Equity and Access to Services were the top aspirations identified by Latrobe communities this quarter. People have said that not everyone can access vaccinations within the government timelines and delivery settings, particularly people who have experienced trauma or who may be living with mental illness. They have said this is not an equitable way of protecting communities. This is the first time Health Equity has been in the top 5 aspirations.

Access to services was the focus of 28% of community conversations, and health equity was the focus of 22% of community conversations with the Advocate



The Advocate also heard about the struggles of some older residents who required direct support to access technology and government apps to demonstrate their vaccination status. As a result, without this support from family or friends they were unable to participate in their community.

“Many people with a disability are unable to stand for lengthy periods of time and this has forced people to leave without getting a test.”

Healthy Lifestyle and Education

Healthy Lifestyles and Education were also among the top aspirations identified by Latrobe communities this quarter. A local teacher shared their enthusiasm for using education as a mechanism to improve healthy lifestyle skills and knowledge and to break the cycle of poor health and education outcomes.

Healthy lifestyle was the focus of 12% of community conversations with the Advocate and education was the focus of 4% of conversations.



The Advocate has heard how trauma from the past can impact on people's sleep patterns, which in turn impacts their overall health.

“There is so much potential around.”

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

Social Inclusion and Community Safety



Social Inclusion was an aspiration for people in the LGBTIQ community. The Advocate heard about a new program for LGBTIQ people in Latrobe that is tailored mainly for adolescents but open to all ages. Staff involved with the service are there to make transition easier for people, to support individuals and to influence the service system. They want to ensure that everyone has someone who they can speak to.

The Advocate heard from people who were concerned as COVID-19 restrictions eased, knowing that there are some people within the community who are immunocompromised and may still need additional protections from the virus.

During this quarter the Latrobe LGA experienced the highest number of COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic. At the same time, the Commonwealth and State vaccination programs were being implemented and 95% of eligible people in Latrobe were recorded as receiving two doses of vaccine. Over the three months, there was a notable shift in government policy, moving from hard lockdowns towards what was described as a vaccinated economy.

The Advocate heard from people who wanted to know about and comply with COVID-19 rules, however they were struggling with what appeared to be inconsistency and the unreliable frequency of information that relates to them. Some have expressed concerns about the reliance on social media as the channel to share information, when not everyone can access this.

Social inclusion was the focus of 6% of community conversations with the Advocate and community safety was the focus of 4% of conversations.

"I hope we can educate the community about the need for immunocompromised folk to continue to wear masks in most settings."

"For so long, we worked towards no segregation and preventing discrimination, mandatory appears to be a way of discriminating between vaccinated and not vaccinated. Fear overrides responses and actions."

Community Engagement and Safe Environments



The Advocate continued to hear from people about the importance of Community Engagement, which was among the top aspirations this quarter. A local community group continued to provide feedback and raise concerns with the Advocate about the development of a Used Lead Acid Battery plant in Latrobe. The Advocate heard about the group's desire to see health and wellbeing protected and to transition to a clean and green energy future.

Questions were asked about the legislative status of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone and ways to embed health protection into planning processes.

Community engagement was the focus on 4% of community conversations with the Advocate and community safety was the focus of 7%.

"My parents do not have a myGOV account, they don't own a computer, don't have an email address and don't know how to access anything online."

PRIORITY CAMPAIGNS



HUMAN CONNECTIONS

The Advocate heard about a new program for LGBTIQ people in Latrobe that is tailored mainly for adolescents but open to all ages. Staff involved with the service are there to make transition easier for people, to support individuals and to influence the service system. They want to ensure that everyone has someone who they can speak to.

Some of the suggestions put forward by the community in this area include:

- Inclusive and queer friendly places
- A sounding board for services and organisations
- Services that address gaps in the system such as older LGBTIQ people
- Ongoing education about the risks of COVID-19 and encouragement of mask wearing to protect people who may be more vulnerable



ACCESS TO SERVICES

People with disabilities and limited mobility have expressed concerns about having to stand for long periods of time to access a COVID-19 test. With few testing centre locations, transport and travel can also be problematic.

The Advocate has heard about long wait times to access public dental services, including emergency dental appointments. Some people cannot afford private dental services and depend on the public system for the care they need.

The Advocate also heard that Family violence services need to support victim survivors to access local General Practitioners, however, they are not aware of which General Practitioners have the appropriate knowledge and training to care for victim survivors in a safe and inclusive way.

The Advocate has heard that due to COVID-19 restrictions, people trying to access accommodation support are being asked to stand on the street and use an intercom before entering the building, which can be distressing and may create additional risk.

Some of the suggestions put forward by the community in this area include:

- Drive through COVID-19 testing sites for people who are unable to stand for long periods
- Consistency of communications and information about COVID-19
- Communication and follow up from local services for people wanting to be informed about and compliant with COVID-19 rules
- Frontline staff who are informed about COVID-19 rules and trained in communication
- A deliberate plan to support the minority of people who may not be able to access COVID-19 vaccination on their own
- Sufficient time for people to access vaccination before mandating it
- Use of trusted sources, safe and familiar community settings for COVID-19 vaccination
- Accessible dental care
- A register of GPs who have undertaken trauma-informed training and who are suitable for victim-survivors of family violence
- Improved access to specialists through visiting rotating rosters
- Enhanced attraction and retention of GPs
- Safe and accessible access to housing and accommodation support services

SYSTEMS CHANGE

The Advocate sees better systems of health and wellbeing driven by six elements:

BETTER MENTAL MODELS

Habits of thought - deeply held beliefs and assumptions and taken-for-granted ways of operating that influence how we think, what we do and how we talk.

INTEGRATION OF COMMUNITY VOICE

The distribution of decision-making power, authority and both formal and informal influence among individuals and organisations.

BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

Quality connections and communication occurring among actors in the system, especially among those with differing histories and viewpoints.

BETTER SUPPORTS

How money, people, knowledge, information and other assets such as infrastructure are allocated and distributed.

BETTER SERVICES

Espoused activities of institutions, coalitions, networks, and other entities targeted to improving social and environmental progress. Also, within the entity, the procedures, guidelines or informal shared habits that comprise their work.

BETTER POLICY

Government, institutional and organisational rules, regulations, and priorities that guide the entity's own and others' actions.

OBSERVATIONS OF SYSTEM CHANGE

BETTER MENTAL MODELS

- Latrobe City Council has established a taskforce to plan for community and economic transition in advance of the closure of Yallourn Power Station.

BETTER SUPPORTS

- The Department of Health is providing greater support to hospitals to enhance implementation of staff health and wellbeing strategies.

INTEGRATION OF COMMUNITY VOICE

- Latrobe Regional Hospital is designing and implementing ways to integrate community voice and respond to community experiences.

BETTER SERVICES

- Latrobe Community Health Service, Latrobe City Council, Gippsland PHN, the Gippsland Public Health Unit and the Royal Flying Doctors Service are working together to support people to access vaccinations.

BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

- Latrobe Regional Hospital is working with Latrobe Community Health Service to plan transition points so that palliative care patients do not need to access care via the emergency department.

BETTER POLICY

- Gippsland Multicultural Services has convened a group of stakeholders who can come together whenever an issue arises in order to elevate the voice of the ethnic sector.