

# MEDIA RELEASE – Latrobe Health Advocate releases latest Quarterly Update

February 15, 2022



Latrobe Health Advocate Jane Anderson has delivered the latest quarterly update from her 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.

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

The Advocate continued to hear from people about the importance of **Community Engagement**. 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.

**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 demographics. 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.

The Advocate spoke to her submission at the panel hearing regarding the proposed Delburn Windfarm where she noted that she had consistently put forward the view that governments and industry need to actively involve communities in the design and decision-making process. She 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.

She 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 the Advocate saw several systems changes that can provide opportunities for better health and wellbeing across Latrobe, some of which are highlighted in her update.

The full quarterly update can be found at: <https://www.lhadvocate.vic.gov.au/publication/quarterly-update-october-to-december-2021/>

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**Quotes attributable to Jane Anderson, Latrobe Health Advocate:**

“A key element of my role is to elevate the voice of communities and enable systems change that leads to improved health and wellbeing of Latrobe communities.

“I reach out to people who often don’t have their voices heard, provide a pathway to government for the aspirations and concerns expressed by communities and call for governments to consider community voice at all stages of service design and delivery.

“In this report I am sharing people’s experiences which provide great insights into what is concerning them and what solutions they can see that will support people in Latrobe to experience better health and wellbeing.

**For more information or to arrange an interview with the Advocate, contact Office Coordinator, Kylie Jones on 0408 216 053 or email [Kylie.E.Jones@lhadvocate.vic.gov.au](mailto:Kylie.E.Jones@lhadvocate.vic.gov.au)**