



# Sharing the voice of Latrobe Communities

**July to September 2019**





# Jane Anderson, Latrobe Health Advocate

## July – September 2019

I am pleased to present this update from the Office of the Latrobe Health Advocate for the period July to September 2019.

In this report I highlight the activities of my office and the conversations I have had with people across Latrobe. The work my office is undertaking is directly related to the priorities we have set for 2019/20 which are established based on these community conversations.

Our aim is to work on those issues that you have brought to our attention and alongside of this research, consider other impacts on the health and wellbeing of Latrobe communities.

As always, I look forward to having many more conversations in coming months and encourage you to contact me on 1800 319 255 or via email at [info@lhadvocate.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@lhadvocate.vic.gov.au) at any time.

Please visit and like our Facebook page where you can keep up to date with the events I'm attending and information on health and wellbeing issues that may be of interest to you. You can also follow me on Twitter and our website is where you can find copies of the reports we publish along with this quarterly update.

*J. Anderson*

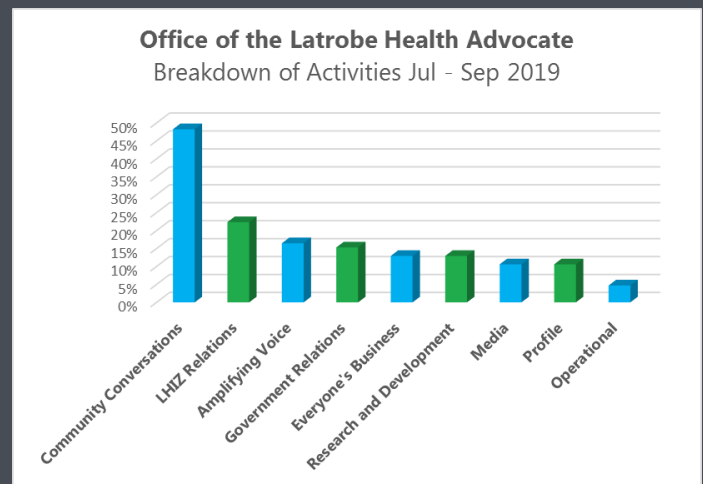


### Activities July – Sept 2019

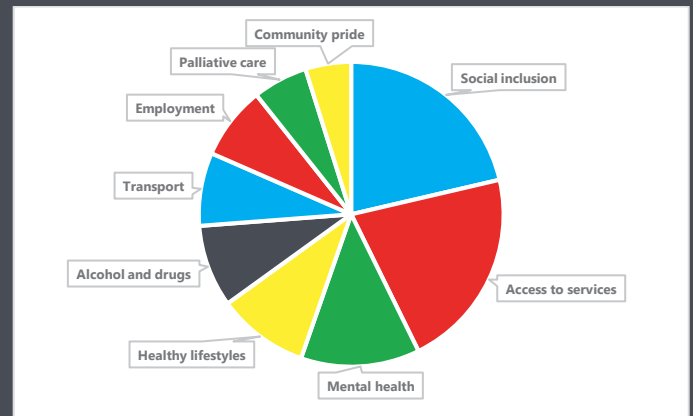
In July the Advocate hosted a co-design workshop focused on end of life palliative care, spent four days hearing from people on the buses and at bus stops across Latrobe, and gave evidence at the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

In September the office partnered with TACSI (The Australian Centre for Social Innovation) and delivered a range of co-design and engagement activities to hear from people living with disability, chronic conditions and people from a multicultural background.

During the quarter the office of the Latrobe Health Advocate developed the 2019/20 Statement of Intent and annual plan. This was informed by the last twelve months of community engagement and discussion with key stakeholders and Government decision makers.



### Community Voice July – Sept 2019



### Social Inclusion

In Latrobe, there are ways and places for people to connect, however some people and groups are missing out and others are concerned for their health.

Communities are particularly concerned about children and young people and want to see more activities on offer for them.



## Access to Services

In Latrobe, people find it hard to get an appointment with a doctor. Their experience with services does not always meet their expectations and their health is being impacted. Local doctors are in high demand and the system seems to be working against them.

Local practices have expressed their frustrations about having to turn patients away on a daily basis and have shared their aspirations for changes in the training and recruitment pathways for GPs.



## Mental Health

People in Latrobe are aware of and talk openly about the need to improve mental health and wellbeing for themselves and others in their community. There is a consistent voice for more mental health supports and services in the area.

People have also shared some of their personal stories of accessing local mental health services and what the experience has been like for them or their loved ones. They have expressed concerns about how accessing mental health services can be frightening, particularly if it's a new experience. They have shared their aspirations for services and supports to be more welcoming and inclusive of families.



## Healthy Lifestyles

People in Latrobe are aware of the physical and mental health benefits of eating well and exercising and there are lots of activities and programs on offer within the community. However, communities are looking for these to be more convenient, accessible and affordable.

Cost has been identified as a barrier for some people who want to participate in local programs and activities but may not be able to afford fees, memberships and travel expenses.



## Alcohol and Other Drugs

People in Latrobe are concerned about the prevalence and impact of drugs in their communities and want to see action being taken to address the underlying causes associated with substance abuse. There is ongoing interest in the establishment of a rehabilitation centre in Latrobe.

Young people have talked about the importance of drug education and how schools can teach them about what is legal and what is not.



## Transport

Public transport in Latrobe can have a significant impact on someone's health. The geography in Latrobe is such that not everyone has easy access to health services in their neighbourhoods or towns. To improve community health outcomes the transport and health systems need to work seamlessly.

For some, who rely solely on public transport, primarily buses and taxis, access can be difficult depending on schedules, location of services and the nature of a person's health, their disability, chronic condition or understanding of the Australian transport system.



## Employment

There are people in Latrobe looking for work, some of them have skills and qualifications but run into barriers in the employment process, others want to develop their skills. Improving health outcomes through employment requires a whole-of-system approach so that no-one slips through the gaps.

People have talked about how important it is to have a job and how this can positively impact their mental health. They also talked about how the process of looking for work or working for the dole can in some instances have the opposite effect.



## Palliative Care

People in Latrobe have shared their stories of hope, gratitude and despair around palliative care services in the area. There has been a strong call to improve the physical environment at the hospital and to consider a dedicated hospice in Latrobe.

The Latrobe Health Advocate is calling on governments and local health services to work together with the community to make immediate improvements to local palliative care services and to strive towards building a system in Latrobe that becomes the benchmark for the rest of Victoria



## Community Pride

Bus travellers in Latrobe talked about the importance of being proud of who we are and what it means to live in Latrobe. They shared their aspirations for local parks, gardens and community spaces to be well looked after so that they are safe and appealing.

A good doctor listens,  
creates a good care  
plan and gives good  
referrals.

Mental health services  
need to be more  
welcoming and family  
friendly

There need to be less  
jails and more  
rehabilitation centres  
especially for young  
people.

People shouldn't  
feel bad that they  
need help... it takes  
a village...

There may be enough  
doctors per person here  
but not enough doctors  
per problem

We need to be  
ourselves and reach  
out to others.



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