



Sharing the voice of Latrobe Communities

October to December 2019





Jane Anderson, Latrobe Health Advocate

Activities Oct – Dec 2019

The Advocate attended the Vic Health Awards Night and was pleased to see three finalists from the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone featured on the night. Latrobe Street Games, a collaboration between GippSport and the Latrobe Health Assembly was recognised as a winner for improving the health and wellbeing of young Victorians.

In early December the Advocate was pleased to work alongside Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Carers and Volunteers, Mr. Anthony Carbines at a community engagement workshop which focused on the development of a Victorian Volunteering Strategy. This event was well attended by a diverse range of people who shared valuable insights and feedback about the health and social benefits of volunteerism. It was a great opportunity for the Advocate and Parliamentary Secretary to bring together state and local perspectives to inform future strategic directions.

The Advocate released her first annual report, which includes a summary of community aspirations and concerns with the top aspirations for the twelve-month period being; mental health, access to services, social inclusion, healthy lifestyles, alcohol and other drugs. A highlight of the report is the montage of photos, showing the many people the Advocate has had the pleasure of hearing from in 2018/19.

On 20th December the Advocate released a new report **Engagement inspiration** that includes key insights and suggestions for governments and services about how people in Latrobe want to engage. The report offers some innovative ways to hear directly from people who may not usually have their voices heard. We again learned that people in Latrobe do want to engage. They have something to say and they want to be heard. People in Latrobe care about their health and wellbeing and they care about each other.

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

This quarter saw a lot of activity for the office. We officially opened our premises at 2 Tarwin Street, Morwell. Ms. Harriet Shing Member for Eastern Victoria helped us cut the ribbon and delivered a message of congratulations from the Minister for Health. The event was attended by key stakeholders, that included community groups and individuals, local health services, government representatives and the Latrobe Health Assembly.

The official opening was followed by an open day that saw residents, neighbouring retailers, businesses and service organisations, all coming to say hello and connect with us. Speeches and discussions on the day were overwhelmingly positive about the value of engaging with communities and the work of the Latrobe Health Advocate.

Following my submission and evidence at the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, I was invited to attend the release of their Interim report. The findings and priority areas for action highlighted in the interim report are reflective of what I have been hearing from communities in Latrobe.

I look forward to continuing to engage with the Royal Commission with a view to further supporting key stakeholders including Latrobe Regional Hospital, the Department of Health and Human Services and local communities to prepare for the major reforms ahead.

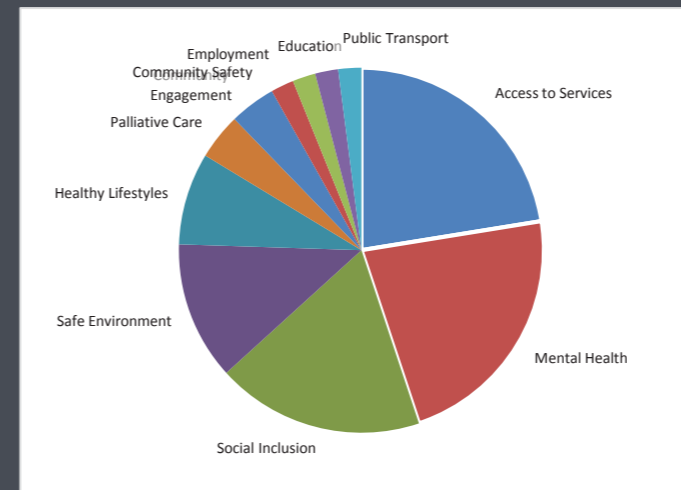
I have had many conversations this quarter, and we have highlighted some of them in this report. As always, I look forward to hearing from more of you in coming months and encourage you to contact me on 1800 319 255 or via email at info@lhadvocate.vic.gov.au at any time.

Remember you can follow my work on Facebook and Twitter and our website is where you can find copies of the reports we publish along with this quarterly update.

Jane Anderson



Community Voice Oct – Dec 2019



Access to Services

Latrobe communities have a diverse range of access and health needs. Their ability to get the help they need can be impacted by their knowledge of the health system, how well services work together, and the experience people have with health professionals. For some people, there are barriers within the system, that can have a negative impact on their health.

People in Latrobe have shared their aspiration for local services to understand and accommodate their diverse needs.



Mental Health

People in Latrobe want to enjoy good mental health and wellbeing. They want to live in a community where it is socially acceptable to access help for themselves and others. They are concerned about the stigma often associated with accessing mental health services.

People have shared their aspirations for a community-wide approach to prevent suicide and for services to be more inclusive of families and friends. They have talked about services providing a hopeful environment where there is access to gardens and healthy foods.



Social Inclusion

Latrobe communities recognise the health benefits of connecting with each other. They have shared their aspirations for local activities and events to be welcoming and inclusive in ways that cater for a diverse range of needs.

People have said that a positive social experience can give someone the confidence to take the first step to improving their health.

Safe Environment



The designation of Latrobe as a Health Innovation Zone places emphasis on the importance of protecting the health and wellbeing of local communities.

People in Latrobe have strong expectations that commercial and economic development activities do not adversely impact people's health. They are asking questions about carbon emissions, dust, air quality and pollution. They want to be informed and engaged throughout decision-making processes and they want the outcomes to have a positive impact on communities.



Healthy Lifestyles

People in Latrobe are aware of the physical and mental health benefits of eating well and exercising. They want services to work together to create more inclusive environments for people to be active and offer a range of opportunities that reflect the diverse nature of our Latrobe communities.

There are volunteers in communities who want to improve access to fruit and vegetables and have shared their aspiration for a Latrobe community food strategy.



Palliative Care

People in Latrobe continue to share their suggestions about end of life palliative care services. There is increasing interest in a dedicated hospice or palliative care facility in Latrobe.

People are looking for improvements to the system that result in better access to medications, stronger partnerships between palliative care nurses and GPs and direct admissions to hospital for palliative care patients that need assistance with pain management.



Community Engagement

People in Latrobe want to engage. They have something to say and want to be heard. They care about their health and wellbeing and they care about each other.

People living with disabilities want governments and services to think ahead and plan engagement activities that are physically and emotionally safe.

People living with chronic conditions have suggested keeping engagement simple, keeping it real. They have also talked about the value of social time with people and pets and recognise that this is good for health and wellbeing. Face to face engagement is also important for people from multi-cultural backgrounds.

Elderly people are quite interesting – they have a great story to tell.

Getting out and about keeps me sane.

He's a life saver. I get home and he (my dog) is there to greet me.

She listened, she let me cry, she let me laugh

You get used to a doctor and then they leave. What am I going to do about a doctor now?

We all need love in our life. Love means a lot. We should not be racist, we should love everyone equally.



Latrobe Health
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