



Latrobe Health
Advocate

Quarterly
Update
October 2018





Jane Anderson
Latrobe Health Advocate
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The Latrobe Health Advocate respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal people as the Original Custodians of the land we walk on today – the land of the Braiakaulung people of the Gunakurnai nation and pass on respect to their Elders past and present.



Jane Anderson, Latrobe Health Advocate

Following my appointment by the Minister of Health I commenced work in June and with the support of the Department of Health and Human Services have established an interim office in Morwell.

I provide independent advice to the Victorian Government on behalf of Latrobe Valley communities on system and policy issues affecting their health and wellbeing. I maintain 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.

Throughout my time as Latrobe Health Advocate I will publish regular updates that will outline the conversations I am having with community members, the progress that is being made in relation to my stated priority areas and the connections we are making for communities across the Latrobe Valley.

In this first report I am pleased to provide a summary of my Statement of intent which has been released this month and an insight into some of the stories that I have heard so far.

I have been working with Latrobe Valley communities for nearly 20 years, fighting for better and more services to improve health and wellbeing. My career includes working as a Victoria Police Officer, a lawyer and as Gippsland Regional Director for Anglicare Victoria for the last 12 years. I have lived and worked in the Latrobe Valley for nearly 20 years and worked in Morwell throughout the time of the Hazelwood mine fire supporting communities' recovery.

With this experience and the support of the Latrobe Valley Community I have an opportunity to be a bold and influential advocate for the improvement of the health and wellbeing of us all.

Statement of Intent

I am very pleased to release the Latrobe Health Advocate Statement of Intent which outlines my role and the priorities that have been identified for the next twelve months.

The full report is available here: [Latrobe Health Advocate: Statement of Intent](#)

Priorities

In reducing social disadvantage and supporting equality, a collaborative community driven approach will be taken that aligns with the priorities of the Latrobe City Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-21, Latrobe Health Assembly strategic vision, Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-19 and the Latrobe Health and Wellbeing Charter.

Since commencing on 1 June 2018, I have invested a significant amount of time in meeting with, and listening to, residents and other key stakeholders to identify what should be my initial priorities to ensure sustainable health and wellbeing for Latrobe Valley communities.

Through those meetings, the following priorities have been identified and will be focussed on over the coming twelve months. While these are the known priorities now, it is expected that further priority areas will emerge as the work of all key stakeholders and communities progresses across the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone.

Priority	Inclusive communities Enabling inclusiveness of marginalised communities within Latrobe Valley. There are groups of people in Latrobe Valley who experience exclusion for reasons such as age, health, economics, education or they may live in an area that is not easily accessible.	Health is everyone's business Engaging the breadth of Latrobe Valley communities to prioritise and have a say about the sustainability of their health and wellbeing. The Latrobe Health Innovation Zone is the platform for enabling everyone to have a place in making things happen differently.	Systems change Using a project/campaign approach to change conditions that hold a problem in place, the Latrobe Health Advocate will initially focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental health• Alcohol and other drugs• Palliative care
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Community Conversations:



I recently had the opportunity to drop in on the crew at the Boolarra Men's Shed where I caught up with many of the group's members as they chatted and worked away on their various hobbies.

The building of the Shed began back in 2009 and opened officially in 2013. There are over 30 members in the group and while many of those attending have an interest in woodwork and metal work often they just come for a cuppa and a chat. The group talked to me about improving mental health and service accessibility.

Late in September I was invited to visit the Churchill Neighbourhood Centre which is part of the Churchill Community Hub, a terrific venue offering a range of services to the community of Churchill.

Abigail Brown, the centre's manager, very proudly showed us around her bright and friendly venue including a thriving community garden and extensive computer lab.

Better connections with young people and children were among the things that Abigail shared with us on the day.



In early September, I joined participants and staff at Morwell Neighbourhood House for their "footy and fairies" lunch.

Activities including a handball competition and "weaving" our way through the posts kept everyone busy and laughing as we enjoyed the sun.

A great BBQ followed and I heard from staff and participants about their aspirations for their health and wellbeing now and into the future.

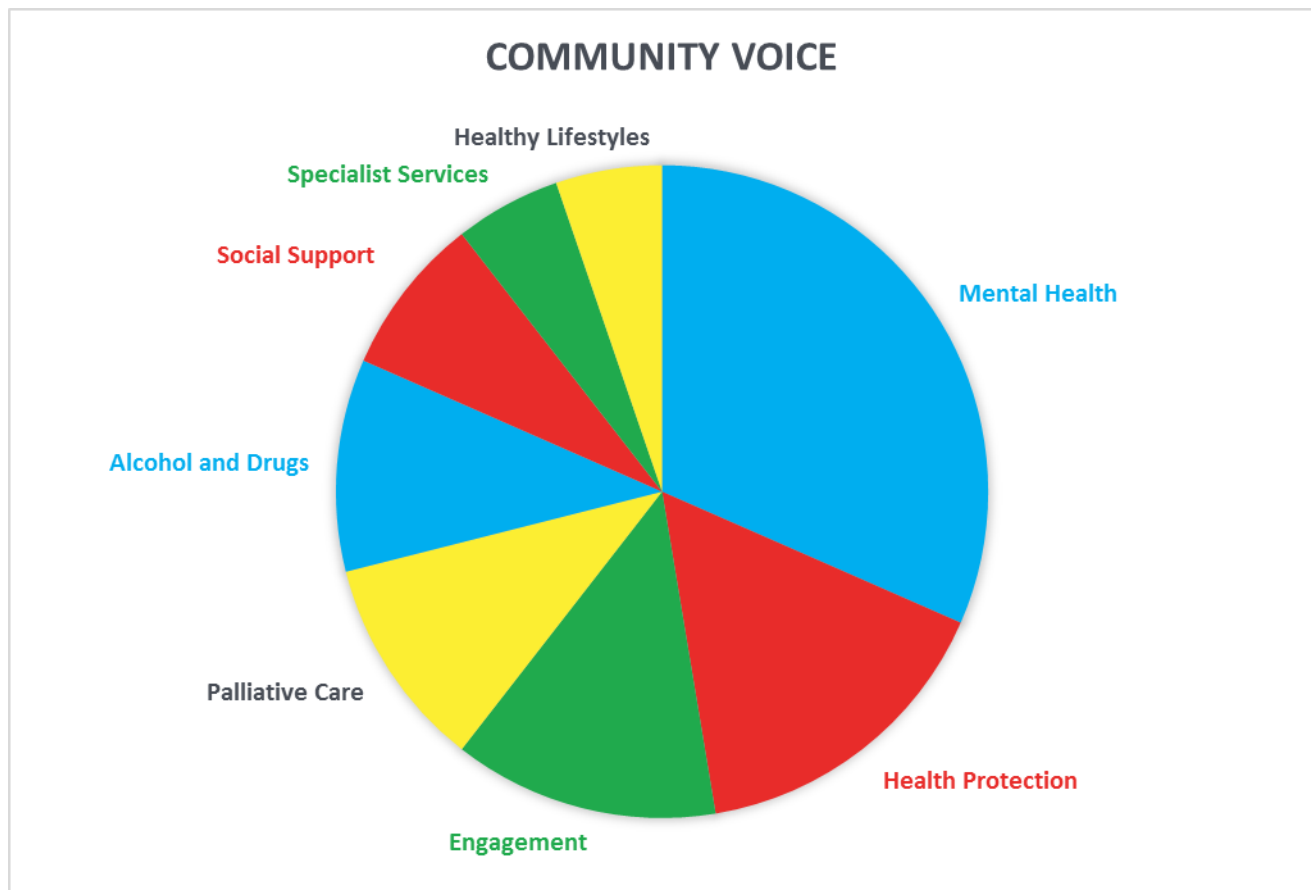


What we've heard:

During these first few months I've had the privilege of hearing from many people in our communities. It's important for me that I understand the issues that are impacting on people and provide a platform for that community voice.

Issues that affect mental health and wellbeing have been the most common topic in my conversations, and the discussion ordinarily includes matters related to social support, alcohol and other drugs, employment and education.

Community members have raised their desire to be involved in decision making and are seeking out information for themselves and others to make services more responsive.



What we're doing:

My office is providing information to community members in response to their questions, raising awareness of activities and services available in the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone and connecting communities with services wherever possible.

I am meeting with businesses, Local and State Government and industry to ensure community health and wellbeing is prioritised.

I am discussing availability of, and access to, specialist medical services with Department of Health and Human Services, Latrobe Regional Hospital and Latrobe Community Health Service.

Keep talking to us:

Would you like to share your thoughts with the Advocate?

Jane is happy to meet with community groups and individuals to listen to your concerns and your aspirations for sustainable health and wellbeing.

- If you have a community group meeting or activity coming up please think about inviting Jane to attend.
- If you have concerns or ideas about how things can be done, please share a cuppa and your own story with Jane. Jane is happy to come to a café near you or we have plenty of tea, coffee and water at our office in Morwell.

Contact us:

You can call us on 1800 319 255

You can email us: info@lhadvocate.vic.gov.au

You can call in to see us at:

Level 1, 154 Commercial Road Morwell

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Meet the rest of the team at the office of the Latrobe Health Advocate:

Alistair Edgar



Alistair comes to the Latrobe Health Advocate Office after an extensive career in Health and Community Services at both a State and Local Government level. His most recent work in the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone has given him a great base to work from as he joins Jane in his role as Senior Advisor.

Alistair believes if something is worth doing it's worth doing well and he brings this positive attitude and pragmatic approach to his work with the Latrobe Health Advocate.

Alistair says he is motivated by the opportunity for people and organisations to work together and inspired by the innovative and progressive thinking that he sees in his community.

Kylie Jones



Kylie joins us following a long career in Education and Employment Services. Most recently her roles have included the development and implementation of systems and processes that ensure the effective and transparent operation of services and it is this administrative experience that Kylie brings to her role as Office Coordinator.

Kylie looks forward to welcoming people to the Latrobe Health Advocate Office in Morwell and accepting invitations to meet with people in the community.

