



Latrobe Health
Advocate

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

ON THE BUSES

December 2018

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- Latrobe Valley Buslines Management and staff
- Local media for their interest including:
 - ABC Gippsland
 - Latrobe Valley Express
 - Channel Nine news



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Executive Summary

10 – 14 December 2018

In December 2018 the Latrobe Health Advocate travelled on local buses and spent time at bus terminals engaging with community members. This unique approach to community engagement proved to be invaluable enabling the Latrobe Health Advocate to hear from 70 people in four days. Community members shared their stories, raised concerns and talked about their health and wellbeing aspirations for Latrobe.

The Office of the Latrobe Health Advocate worked with Latrobe Valley Bus Lines to develop an itinerary that included the Latrobe towns of Churchill, Moe, Morwell and Traralgon. Local media showed interest in the approach and helped to raise public awareness of the opportunity for communities to have their voices heard.

A broad range of health and wellbeing issues were raised with the top five topics being;

- access to services,
- social inclusion,
- alcohol and drugs,
- mental health and wellbeing, and
- community safety.

Engaging with Latrobe communities at the bus stops and on the buses enabled the Latrobe Health Advocate to hear directly from a diverse mix of local people who may not usually have their voices heard. This approach was intentionally informal and relaxed with a commitment to reaching out to communities at times and locations convenient to them.

The Office of the Latrobe Health Advocate will now provide feedback to communities about what has been heard and will work together with local health services and government to identify opportunities to address community concerns and bring about change to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Latrobe.

This report provides a summary of the engagement methodology, the breadth of issues, concerns and aspirations raised by community members and the actions that the Office of the Latrobe Health Advocate will take in response.

Planning and Logistics

Objectives:

The aim of the engagement was twofold.

1. Give people an opportunity to have their say.
2. Increase the awareness of the Advocate in communities.

Process:

Latrobe Valley Buslines were supportive and provided information on the 5 top locations for engagement. These were:

- Traralgon Centre Plaza
- Churchill Terminal
- Mid Valley Shopping Centre
- Morwell Terminal
- Moe Terminal

Engagement was scheduled for Mid-December. Each day was arranged around the relevant bus timetable, ensuring enough time between stops to engage effectively with people at each terminus.

In the weeks prior to the commencement of the engagement activity, promotional flyers were distributed via Latrobe Valley Bus Lines on the buses and promoted on the Advocate's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

The Office of the Latrobe Health Advocate distributed a media release that generated strong interest from local media outlets. The Advocate had numerous interviews with media and was joined on the buses by a TV news crew on the first day. The project received Radio, TV and newspaper coverage reaching a potential audience in excess of 30,000 people

Social media channels were used to promote both the opportunity to speak with the Latrobe Health Advocate and to provide feedback about the issues raised by communities. Facebook posts were shared by a range of services and local entities including Media Facebook pages, with a potential reach of more than 60,000 Facebook users.

Media coverage	
Media	Summary of coverage (As of 22 Jan 2018)
Social Media	<p>Latrobe Health Advocate Facebook (82 Followers) 12 Posts, 95 Likes, 11 Shares</p> <p>Latrobe Health Advocate Twitter (55 Followers) 4 Tweets</p> <p>Latrobe Valley Bus Lines Facebook (1339 Followers) 1 Post, 3 Likes, 1 Share</p> <p>9 News Gippsland (11,778 Followers) 1 Video, 6 Likes, 3 Shares, 799 Views</p> <p>Latrobe Valley Express (16,131 Followers) 1 post, 78 likes, 117 comments and 100 shares</p>
Latrobe Valley Express Newspaper	<p>All aboard the health bus 6 Dec 2018 http://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/story/5798015/all-aboard-the-health-bus/</p> <p>GP turnover concern uncovered 10 January 2019 http://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/story/5846019/gp-turnover-concern-uncovered/?cs=1462</p> <p>Valley doctor 'crisis' 21 January 2019 http://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/story/5861239/valley-doctor-crisis/?cs=1462</p>
ABC Gippsland Radio Broadcast	<p>Interview with Rebecca Symons 7 Dec 2018 Approx. 8 minutes</p>
Channel 9 Gippsland Television Broadcast	<p>Interview and News Story 11 Dec 2018</p> <p>Interview and News Story 14 Jan 2019</p>

Data in the form of notes from each conversation was collated and analysed. Every conversation was categorised based on the main health issues raised or general area of focus. Themes were identified on a daily and overall basis.

In total twelve themes or categories were identified. A description of each of these categories is listed over page. The main topic of conversation was access to services. People talked about the availability, affordability and location of medication, doctors, health services and specialists. They shared their concerns about having to wait too long and about having to retell their story too often.

Most frequently raised issues (overall)

ACCESS TO SERVICES	SOCIAL INCLUSION	ALCOHOL AND DRUGS	MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	COMMUNITY SAFETY
17 MENTIONS	14 MENTIONS	10 MENTIONS	10 MENTIONS	9 MENTIONS

Top three issues (per day)

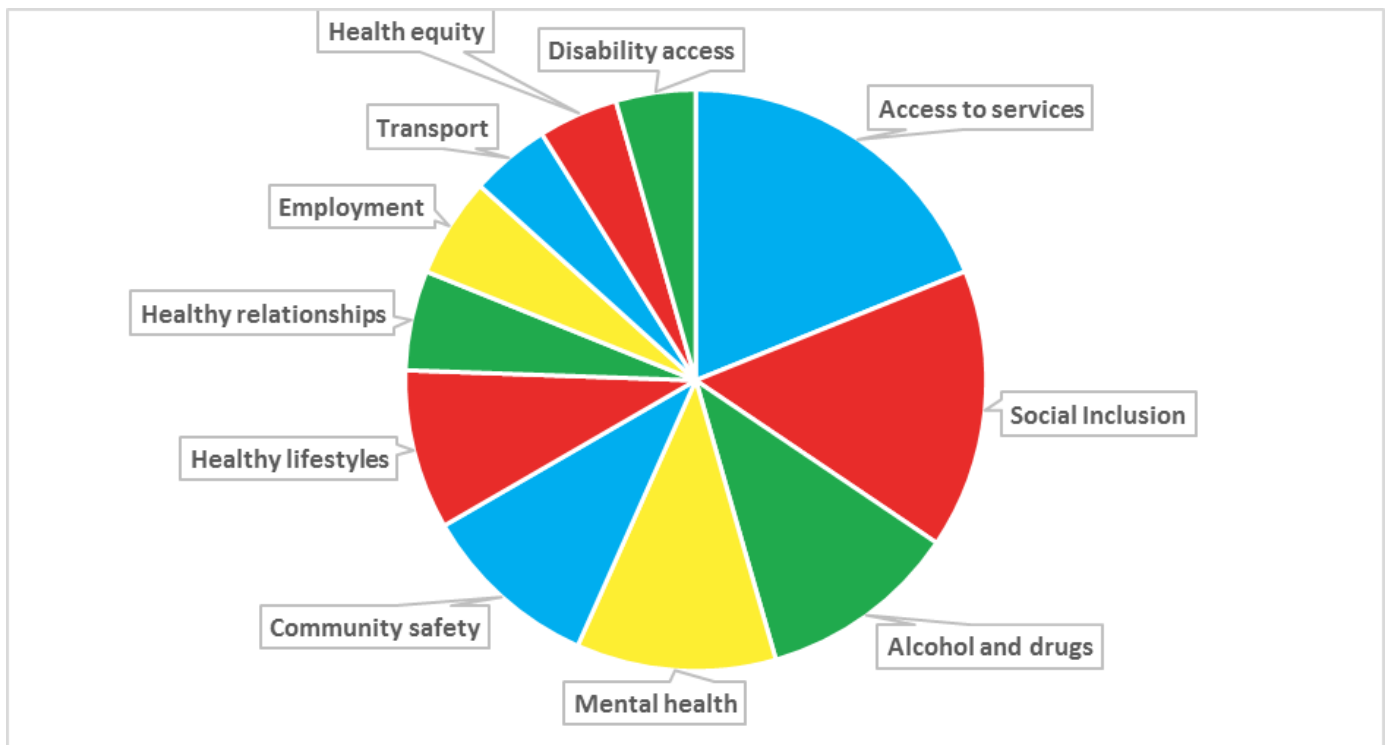
DAY 1 TRARALGON – MORWELL – MOE	DAY 2 MOE – MORWELL- TRARALGON	DAY 3 MORWELL – CHURCHILL	DAY 4 CHURCHILL – MORWELL
ALCOHOL AND DRUGS	SOCIAL INCLUSION	ACCESS TO SERVICES	SOCIAL INCLUSION
ACCESS TO SERVICES	ACCESS TO SERVICES	COMMUNITY SAFETY	ACCESS TO SERVICES
MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	ALCOHOL AND DRUGS	EMPLOYMENT	COMMUNITY SAFETY

Summary of issues raised

Health Issue	People talked about...
Access to services	The availability, affordability and location of medication, doctors, health services and specialists. Concerns about having to wait too long and about having to retell their story too often.
Social inclusion	The importance of family, friends, neighbours and communities being able to come together. Their aspirations for more community events and activities designed for specific age groups and communities.
Alcohol and drugs	The impact alcohol and drugs can have on individuals and community and the negative implications of drug addictions.
Mental health and wellbeing	The importance of having mental health support services that are approachable and sympathetic. There was a common concern for the mental health and wellbeing of younger people and a recognition of the importance of the home and school environment.
Community safety	Their concerns for the safety of younger and older people. Their desire for a greater police presence and for safer community spaces. Community safety was often associated with concerns about alcohol and drugs.
Employment	The need for more job opportunities and the importance of gaining qualifications and work-related licences.
Healthy lifestyles	The importance of exercise and eating well. People talked about involvement with local activities and shared their aspirations for more programs and offerings.
Smoking	Their experiences in trying to / supporting others to quit smoking and the influence of cultural norms, family and friends.
Healthy relationships	Their aspirations for people to be kind to each other. There was a focus on younger people and a desire to see more respect within the community.
Healthy equity	The affordability of services and medications in the context of (relative to) their own circumstance. These conversations were commonly associated with concerns about access to health services.
Disability access	What was working well and shared their ideas about what could be improved. This was mostly focused on wheelchair access and public transport.
Transport	What they liked about the local bus system and their ideas about how it could be improved.

Community voice

Health Issue	Community Voice
Access to services	<p>"We need more GP's, they change every three months and we have to keep telling our story."</p> <p>"In Latrobe there was a six month wait to see a psychiatrist, so I went to Warragul."</p> <p>"We want someone to talk to in our schools or towns, but don't call them mental health, social worker or GP."</p>
Social inclusion	<p>"There is a lack of parenting groups in my area."</p> <p>"We need to engage young people. I don't see kids out and about any more."</p>
Alcohol and drugs	<p>"Some parents have alcohol and drug issues. It comes from the way they were brought up."</p> <p>"The home environment needs to be more stable and loving."</p>
Mental health and wellbeing	<p>"Services need to listen to people who are yelling out for help."</p> <p>"We need to support people who are struggling with stress and financial pressures."</p>
Community safety	<p>"Sometimes I'm afraid to walk the streets by myself."</p> <p>"Drugs are an issue. Police need to do more raids."</p> <p>"We need more police. There are lots of drug buyers and sellers."</p>



Latrobe Health Advocate Actions

Engaging with Latrobe communities at the bus stops and on the buses enabled the Latrobe Health Advocate to hear directly from a diverse mix of local people who may not ordinarily have their voices heard.

The Office of the Latrobe Health Advocate will now provide feedback to communities about what has been heard and work together with local health services and government to identify opportunities to address community concerns and bring about change to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Latrobe.

Community engagement

- Deliver the Inclusive Communities priority project through further engagement with Latrobe communities and specifically those who experience exclusion for reasons such as age, health, economics, education or location. This will enable the Latrobe Health Advocate to better understand health and wellbeing concerns and aspirations from a community perspective and empower Latrobe communities to determine how they can have their voices heard.
- Provide feedback to communities about the issues raised with the Latrobe Health Advocate and the ongoing work associated with these.
- Work with Latrobe Valley Bus Lines to schedule future opportunities to speak with communities on the buses.
- Initiate other activities where communities can have their voices heard by the Latrobe Health Advocate in alternate settings.

Access to services

- Work with the Latrobe Health Assembly, local health services and Government to consider what can be done either immediately or in the long term to improve access to services for communities.

Social inclusion

- Work with Latrobe City Council and the Latrobe Health Assembly to learn more about activities already underway to enable inclusiveness within Latrobe communities and identify what more can be done.

Alcohol and drugs | Community safety

- Alcohol and drugs is a priority focus for 2019. Continue to hear the voice of communities and use this to inform the design of the recently announced rehabilitation service for Latrobe.
- Work with Latrobe City Council, Latrobe Health Assembly and Victoria Police to consider what people have said about community safety and identify what more can be done.

Mental health and wellbeing

- Mental health and wellbeing is a priority focus for 2019. Continue to engage with Latrobe communities, the local health system and Government regarding mental health to prepare a submission for the Mental Health Royal Commission and support communities have their voices heard.

System Change

- Provide feedback to the Minister for Health about the issues affecting Latrobe communities and make (towards the end of 2019) formal recommendations specifically in relation to; mental health, alcohol and drugs as well as other emerging and priority issues.

Conclusion

There are groups of people in Latrobe Valley who experience exclusion for reasons such as age, health, economics, education or who may live in an area that is not easily accessible.

The Latrobe Health Advocate encourages Government and local organisations to:

- Engage with purpose and with an awareness of the context in which people live their lives.
- Be committed to a deeper understanding of the conditions that hold a problem in place and work towards delivering systems change that meets the needs expressed by Latrobe Valley communities while noting:
 - It is important to be authentic and approachable, be open to take conversations where people want to take them, without being restricted by a predetermined agenda.
 - Reaching out to communities at times and locations convenient to them demonstrates a willingness to truly hear from people without requiring them to come to you.