



Healthy Towns South West Rocks Consultation Summary

Introduction

Healthy Towns aims to improve health and wellbeing in selected North Coast communities using a partnership approach. The objectives are to:

1. Build community engagement and sense of connection
2. Strengthen integration and coordination of health and community services
3. Identify and address service gaps

The program in South West Rocks is coordinated by North Coast Primary Health Network in partnership with Mid North Coast Local Health District. Healthy Towns works with communities, service providers and health professionals to identify local needs and design health and wellbeing initiatives.

Consultation Overview

Dates	Engagement Method	Total
March – June 2018	Face to face consultations	32 consultations
April – May 2018	Community Surveys	409 surveys completed
June 2018	Community Action Planning Workshops	81 participants

Consultation Outcomes

1. Ageing Issues

South West Rocks has a significant ageing population with 36% aged 65 and over. There are two main segments within this group; younger retirees who are still self-sufficient and active, and those who are older and experiencing increasing health and mobility issues. The most common issues raised for older residents included difficulty with transport to specialist appointments due to license restrictions or lack of a personal vehicle, difficulty understanding the health system and low awareness of the services on offer. One of the most requested initiatives was the return of x-ray and radiology facilities to South West Rocks.

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Workshops	Consults	Working Group members
Difficulty navigating health system	Independent advocate or support for My Aged Care	•		NCPHN MNCLHD Council Community Transport Japara Senior Citizens Association Kempsey Neighbourhood Centre
	Community education & information sessions*	•		
	Health & wellbeing expo	•		
	Education days at a drop in centre		•	
Transport & travel to access services	Specialists to outreach to South West Rocks	•	•	
	Video conferencing with specialists and medical support.	•		
	Community bus for appointments, shopping and outings.*	•		
	Radiology & x-ray facilities*	•	•	
Lack of dementia services	Dementia support group and residential care			
Lack of community hub/space for senior citizens to meet	Community hall with ample parking*	•	•	
Future planning	Financial advisor services for self-funded retirees	•		
	Legal aid – power of attorney, guardianship, probate etc*	•		
	Seniors expo/information day*	•		
Intergenerational activities	Community garden	•	•	
	Japara bus to bring preschool kids to visit nursing centre	•	•	
Lack of gentle exercise options	Tai chi, stretching & yoga	•		
	Toilets at back creek	•	•	
	Heated pool	•	•	
	Improved footpaths, bench seats along walking paths	•	•	

* Denotes workshop participants' selected priorities

2. Transport

The transport services in South West Rocks are limited to school bus services, 3 return trips to Kempsey each day between 8am and 5pm, and community transport services available to 65+, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander 50+ or those on NDIS. The Senior Citizens Association were providing a transport service for members, however liability insurance was expensive and hard for the association to maintain. There is more capacity for increasing community transport in South West Rocks, however cost of community transport and awareness of services is still a barrier for many.

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Workshops	Consults	Working Group members
Lack of Public Transport	Buses coordinate with trains to get to Sydney*	•		NCPHN MNCLHD Kim Anderson – Hastings Macleay Community Transport Country Club Ken – Senior Citizens Association Council
Discharged from hospital without transport	Ask if patient has transport home and offer options.	•		
Cost of Community Transport	Carpooling to specialist appointments in Port Macquarie & Coffs Harbour		•	
	Transport vouchers	•		
	Bring more services to SWR to reduce need for transport*	•	•	
	Co-ordination of appointments so that patients attending same specialist can car-pool/travel together to reduce costs.		•	
Cannot access community transport due to age, income or other barriers.	Bring community transport organisations together to work out those falling through gaps.	•		
	Mini bus to Kempsey 1 day per week	•		
	Community mini bus using Country Club or Tavern courtesy bus to get people around SWR e.g. shopping day	•		
Awareness of transport options	Better utilisation of community health centre. Promote services, improve accessibility and visibility.	•		
	Information co-ordinator based in community centre	•		
	GP/practice manager education about transport options available	•		

* Denotes workshop participants' selected priorities

3. Poor Access to Healthcare

Access to health services was highlighted as an issue from the South West Rocks community survey, where majority of respondents found it difficult or very difficult to access services, particularly specialist doctors, allied health and mental health services. GP access can also be difficult if you are new to town or visiting, as the GPs in town have closed their books. Making it easier for community members to access the health services they need by improving transport options, providing more telehealth options or making more services available in South West Rocks, were indicated as strategies by the community.

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Workshops	Consults	Working Group members
Previously had access to radiology facilities in SWR but now have to go to Kempsey.	Local radiology facility offering x-ray & ultrasound*	•	•	NCPHN MNCLHD Rural Doctors Network Local GPs/Practices & AHPs
Access to GPs is hard for some, particularly after hours, if new to town as books are closed, or long wait list for appointments (2-5 week wait). Demand for GPs increases during holiday periods with lots of visitors inflating population.	Triage training to lighten GPs load*	•		
	My Emergency Dr app	•	•	
	Promote town to holidaying GPs as a working holiday.	•		
	GPs co-ordinate and share on-call for holidays and weekends.	•	•	
	GPs keep some appointments open for patients not on their books.		•	
Hard to access specialist services particularly psychologist and paediatricians.	Visiting specialists in South West Rocks	•	•	
	Access to IPTAAS Support Officer*			
	Video conference run by community health centre with training/help for those not computer savvy	•	•	
	Services (speech pathologist, occupational therapist, child psychologist) providing outreach to preschools and school.		•	
Lack of awareness of services	Improved signage for services including GPs	•		
	Electronic information hub/service directory in shopping centre*	•		

* Denotes workshop participants' selected priorities

4. Diet, Exercise & Recreation

Preventative health in the form of diet, exercise and recreation was highlighted as important in consultations, community surveys and the action planning workshops. South West Rocks has a strong outdoor recreation and sporting culture, underpinned by the town's natural environment of beaches, waterways, and national parks. There are currently numerous team sporting options available (golf, bowls, netball, football, nippers), however cost of sports is unaffordable for some. South West Rocks currently has two Heart Foundation Walking Groups and the Stepping On program run through the Gym @ SWR. Feedback from the community focussed on low cost and easily accessible recreation options that cater to a wide range of community members.

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Workshops	Consults	Working Group members
No heated pool or public pool in winter	Heat pool so that it can remain open through winter*	•	•	NCPHN LHD Health Promotion Kempsey Council Community Health Centre Pool licensee Gym @ SWR
Inclusive sport & recreation	All-abilities sports	•		
	Disabled fishing access	•		
	Easier access in and out of pool	•		
	Walking netball/walking soccer	•		
	Mentoring program with youth e.g. Golf	•		
Cost of exercise services unaffordable for many	Parkrun*	•	•	
	Stepping On Program*	•		
	Free community yoga classes	•	•	
	Heart foundation walking groups	•	•	
Pathways	Better connectivity throughout SWR by paths that link the whole way through town	•	•	
	Cycleways & bike racks*	•	•	
	Dog owner etiquette signage	•		
Sporting facilities are overused and need improvement	Indoor sports centre*	•	•	
	Sports stadium	•	•	
Lack of awareness or information about services	Community directory & co-ordinator*	•	•	
	Community newsletter	•	•	
Lack of community hub or venue	Community garden*	•	•	
	Men's/Women's Shed	•	•	

Education & dietitian services	Cooking & nutrition classes	•	•	
	Mobile kitchen (Koori cooking kart)	•	•	

* Denotes workshop participants' selected priorities

5. Mental Health

Mental health was identified as an issue in face-to-face consultations and action planning workshops, with many community members finding it difficult to access mental health specialists. Many community members feel they slip through the cracks because they are not “bad enough” to access bulk-billed services and can’t get in to see a psychologist locally. More services are needed locally, rather than outreach and must be affordable. Stigma around mental health was also highlighted with community education needed to increase community support and reduce fear or stigma. Mental health is a particular concern for young people in the town, who also experience trouble accessing appropriate support and face complexities from social media and cyber-bullying.

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Workshops	Consults	Working Group members
Young people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kids 0-12 accessing mental health assessment - Youth & social media 	PCYC or youth group venue*	•	•	NCPHN MNCLHD RAHMP Omnicare
Waitlist for mental health specialists	Incentives for psychiatrists & psychologists to come to rural areas.	•		
	Incentives for graduates to come and work in rural areas.	•		
	Promotion of existing services	•		
	Access to ambulance or appropriate transport for acute care	•	•	
Need services based in Macleay Valley, not outreach.	Headspace centre in Macleay*	•		
Lack of community hub in SWR	Venue that whole town can utilise*	•	•	
	Peer support groups for carers, parents etc.	•	•	
Eating Disorders		•		

Fear or stigma surrounding mental health	Training in mental health for communities*	•	•	
	Liaison/co-ordinator at Community Health Centre*	•		
	Awareness campaign	•		

* Denotes workshop participants' selected priorities

Healthy Towns South West Rocks is delivered by NCPHN in partnership with Mid North Coast Local Health District. The program is funded by the Australian Government.

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