

Healthy Towns Woolgoolga 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 Woolgoolga 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
February-July 2018	Face to face consultations	30 consultations
March-April 2018	Community Surveys	421 surveys completed
5 June 2018	Community Action Planning Workshops	58 participants

Consultation Outcomes

1. Diet and Exercise / Healthy Lifestyle

Participants identified diet and exercise as an issue for the Woolgoolga community. Children and families as well as males over 50 years of age were identified as key groups in need of education around physical inactivity and nutrition. While there are a range of community strengths including the natural environment, community sporting events and no fast food chains, the community would like to see more local infrastructure to support physical activity,

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Work Shops	Consults	Stakeholders
Physical inactivity	Public exercise equipment along walkways, public spaces and beach	X	X	Parents
	Community transport to exercise clubs	X		Schools / Pre-schools

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Work Shops	Consults	Stakeholders
	Health, nutrition and exercise programs in schools e.g. GO 4 FUN, PICNIC	X	X	Mid North Coast Local Health District Paddle Coffs Coast Fluro Friday Rotary & Lions NCPHN Coffs Council Community Garden Woolgoolga Neighbourhood Centre Fitness Service Providers Private Dieticians Exercise professionals
	Educating parents and children about decreasing screen time	X		
	Family-based exercise groups targeting children / schools *	X	X	
	Education about what services / groups / programs are currently available*	X		
	Free exercise classes run by council and by local fitness facilities*	X		
	'Healthy Town Month' – education sessions all month*	X	X	
	Community walking group for kids	X	X	
	Adventure activities for teens*	X		
	Nutrition & cooking classes and workshops: healthy cooking on a budget, shopping tours and label reading*	X	X	
	Promote community gardens	X	X	
	Soup kitchen	X		
	Meditation classes	X	X	
Physical inactivity in men over 50 years (connected with mental health / social isolation)	Men's 50+ health program focused on physical activity. As part of this program include health ambassadors or champions using a buddy system.*	X	X	
Lack of knowledge about current services	Community Noticeboard (better location / more accessible than current)	X		
	A health expo / community health events	X	X	
	Funded health coaching programs*	X		

*Denotes participant votes for initiatives

2. Mental health

Participants identified that many community members do not have a good understanding of mental health issues, and that discussing mental health still has a stigma, particularly among older males and within the CALD community. There is also a lack of mental health professionals in town and poor understanding in relation to access and availability of treatment and services. Vulnerable population groups include men over 50 years of age, the general ageing population, young people and the CALD community. High unemployment rates in the area are also correlated with high rates of depression and anxiety. Woolgoolga has some great strengths including community champions who run programs and events to improve mental health and wellbeing.

Issue	Initiative/strategy	WS	Cons	Stakeholders
Lack of public awareness of mental health and social stigma	Safe bloke spaces – mentors / buddies (re: Sawtell program)***	X	X	Rural Adversity and Mental Health Program (RAMHP) GPs Mental health professionals Sikh Temples Physiotherapists Rotary NCPHN
	Discrete local support groups – social media	X		
	Promoting preventative mental health care and positive mindset – resilience (positive mental health)	X		
	Mental Health First Aid Training	X		
	Mental health peer mentors with lived experience	X	X	
Lack of awareness of available services	Woolgoolga Interagency Meeting*	X	X	Sawtell Men-tors Mid North Coast Local Health District Coffs Harbour Council Rotary Paddle Coffs Coast Headspace Youth Collaborative Group Woopi Community Gardens Coffs Health Campus Wesley Mission (Youth) CHESS Employment (Youth) Woolgoolga Neighbourhood Centre
	Mental Health month events (October) to create more awareness*	X		
	GP training: about mental health and referral pathways	X		
	Information distribution (central depot) – notice board with activities	X	X	
	Local directory of services – ease of access for CALD and ageing groups. This could extend current Woolgoolga page or Council Directory	X		
Social Isolation	Intergenerational activities or weekly catch ups at community garden *	X		
	Cooking programs to help people to engage more and socialise	X	X	
Lack of Services	Response to grief and loss in community – education and awareness*	X		

	Youth outreach Headspace (not only held at high school)	X	X	
	Increase Buttery (AOD counselling)	X		
	Campaign to attract more health professionals	X		
	More mental health services for over 50s*	X		
	Free counselling services currently at Coffs Neighbourhood Centre – can we duplicate this in Woopi?*	X		
Young people	Safe youth spaces – youth centre or youth hub with activities. Model like ‘The Hub’ in Bellingen and youth centre in Grafton*	X	X	

*Denotes participant votes for initiatives

3. Ageing

Woolgoolga has a significant ageing population being a popular place for retirees due to its beautiful natural environment. Some of the strengths of the community in terms of ageing are the community gardens which are wheelchair accessible and central location of most services. Issues identified were lack of awareness of current programs and services available, poor infrastructure including footpaths and ramps for scooters and wheelchairs. Insufficient public toilets, lack of computer literacy skills, language barriers among the CALD ageing population and health professionals were identified as issues for the community.

Issue	Initiative/strategy	WS	Cons	Stakeholders
Lack of awareness of services available	Community Newspaper via Chamber of Commerce**	X		Woolgoolga Neighbourhood Centre NCPHN Services Clubs Chamber of Commerce Coffs Council Mid North Coast Local Health District
	Community noticeboard	X	X	
	Printed list of services for Woopi & Northern beaches – including Punjabi version – can include paid advertising***	X		
	Community health expo*	X	X	
	More notices / flyers in Punjabi	X		
	Computer and mobile tablet classes for seniors *	X		
	Improve communication between community health and private practice*	X		
	Low care nursing centre (RSL)*	X		
	Increase culturally diverse staff	X		
Health Workers	Case manager to link elderly in with health services	X		

Issue	Initiative/strategy	WS	Cons	Stakeholders
Transport	Community Bus	X		
	Home delivery services for healthy meals	X		
	Lobby Council for footpaths and toilets*	X		
Infrastructure	Another retirement village and nursing home	X		
	More disabled parking*	X		
	Intergenerational programs: contact high schools for mentoring*	X		

*Denotes participant votes for initiatives

4. Access to Healthcare

Strengths in the community include Community Health, very centrally located health services, and a large number of physios, dentists and podiatrists. Some of the main concerns around access to healthcare include access to women's health and antenatal care and transport into Coffs Harbour for specialist appointment. The community identified the need for more awareness around home-care packages and what services are accessible in-home to ageing community members. High turnover of GP's in the community was also identified as a barrier to continuity of care.

Issue	Initiative/strategy	WS	Cons	Stakeholders
Women's health	Women's health at Community Health*	X		Mid North Coast Local Health District
	Antenatal care at Community Health	X		
Lack of Services	Specialist outreach e.g. geriatrician, telehealth*	X	X	Meals on Wheels Neighbourhood Centre GP's and care coordinators
	Local case managers for complex health coordination when community members need to travel for services*	X		
Transport	Community driver services	X		Partners in Recovery Mission Australia NDIS Cancer Care Council
Awareness of services	Health Expo*	X	X	
	GP education for better referral pathways*	X		
	Health specific Woopi Facebook page / Use of other social media	X		
	Central information sharing centre – noticeboard – near Backpackers to include CALD community.	X		

CALD	Translation services available at GP's for Punjabi and other CALD groups including seasonal workers	X		Chamber of Commerce
	Health information available at Woopi Backpackers	X		

*Denotes participant votes for initiatives

5. Transport

The main community concerns around public transport include timing of local buses and lack of services over the weekend. Awareness of available services including health and community transport was highlighted as an issue. Transport issues have a particular impact on young people due to having to rely on parents for transport, as well as needing access to a car to practice for drivers licence.

Issue	Initiative/strategy	WS	Cons	Stakeholders
Access to vehicles for training and learners	PCYC Safety Driving Course @ school – RTA outreach (Service NSW)	X	X	NCPHN Coffs Council
	Service NSW outreach	X		
Limited public transport – timing and weekends	Community info hub with eligibility information	X	X	Heslop Youth Collaborative Group Woopi Community Gardens
Lack of community-based driving	Intergenerational / Community volunteers for driving hours – Look at Bello Model exchange	X		
	Strengthen and support community transport – fill access gaps	X		
Limited access to community transport – gaps in those eligible	Increase community volunteer drivers for social / community transport i.e. 'Volunteer Uber' / social transport	X		Woolgoolga Neighbourhood Centre Service NSW
Medical Transport appointment times	Raise awareness about community transport and eligibility criteria	X		

*Denotes participant votes for initiatives

6. Social Isolation

Young people, older people and the CALD community were identified as groups particularly vulnerable to social isolation. Young people do not have a dedicated safe space to interact and engage. Men over 50 were also identified as a key group in need. The need for a men's health promotion group that bring men together to engage in physical and social activity was raised numerous times in community consultations.

Issue	Initiative/strategy	WS	Cons	Stakeholders
Social connection for young people	Work with schools and justice system	X		NCPHN
	Youth space / youth centre*	X	X	Mid North Coast Local Health District
	Headspace (outreach)	X	X	RAMHP
	Programs educating youth about social media / online connection versus real life human interaction	X	X	Coffs Harbour Council
	Early intervention programs – after school club – including transport*	X		Headspace
	After school club - see Clarence Valley model. Targeted interest groups for children – after school space to connect over common interests.	X		Youth Collaborative Group
Engagement / Social Connection	Shared hub multi-purpose space*	X	X	Woopi Community Gardens
	Free and accessible community events*	X		Fluro Friday Coffs
	Free outdoor movie nights	X		Health Campus
	Coffee cart / teaching life skills program*	X		Paddle Coffs Coast
	Café connections - flag if alone and wanting company*	X		Wesley Mission
	Encourage volunteering (particularly engaging males)	X	X	CHESS Employment
	Men's health promotion physical activity program. *	X	X	

*Denotes participant votes for initiatives

Healthy Towns Woolgoolga is delivered by NCPHN in partnership with Mid North Coast Local Health District and funded by the Australian Government.

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