



Healthy Towns Casino Consultation Summary

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 Casino is coordinated by North Coast Primary Health Network in partnership with Northern New South Wales Local Health District and Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation. 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
Nov 2017-May2018	Face to face consultations	50+ consultations
May 2018	Community Surveys	598 surveys completed
7 June 2018	Community Action Planning Workshops	34 participants

Community consultations were undertaken in Casino between November 2017 and May 2018. Approximately 600 community surveys were completed by residents. Additionally, face to face consultations were held with around 50 service providers, community members, local groups and associations and health practitioners.

Community Action Planning Workshops were held in Casino on 7 June 2018 with a total of 34 participants attending across two sessions. The workshops presented the outcomes of the community consultations and the top ten health and wellbeing concerns expressed by the community in surveys. The group voted on which issue areas to further discuss. Small groups worked together to define the issues and brainstorm potential solutions.

A summary of workshop and consultation outcomes is presented below. Please note that some listed working group members nominated themselves while others were suggested by the discussion group and may not be available to participate.

1. Alcohol and other drugs

Concerns around alcohol and other drugs come up consistently in conversations with community members in Casino. Drugs and alcohol are readily available, and people are very worried about the impact right throughout the community, but particularly the impact on family and friends of people who use. People feel that AOD use is linked to increased crime and violence, and have raised valid concerns about the trauma young people experience from being around alcohol and drug abuse. There is a lack of local rehab services, meaning people have to leave family and friends in order to seek treatment, and if people have coexisting mental health issues, they are often unable to access detox support. On the positive side, Bulgarr Ngaru have AOD workers and there is a 24hr police station to somewhat alleviate concerns around safety and violence.

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Workshops	Consults	Working Group members
Lack of local rehab services, closest are Lismore, Alstonville and Binna Burra	Rehab services based in Casino	•	•	Politicians LHD
The impact of AOD abuse is felt right across the community – parents, children, family, friends, other community members	Support for family members	•		AMS CNC
	Well publicised emergency phone number (similar to 000) for families, friends, people using to call during crisis situations	•		Casino sports stadium RVC
Drugs and alcohol are readily available in the community and many people start using while still at school	Clubhouse, including computers, to be developed at the sports stadium *	•	•	
	Lived experience workers “floating” through different services in town, ie schools, sports stadium, Casino Youth Service *	•		
People falling through gaps because they can’t access detox support due to mental health issues	Joint AOD/mental health treatment service	•	•	
Knowing what services are available and how to access them	More promotion of current groups	•	•	
Lack of education on health impacts of drug use	Campaign similar to those used for smoking cessation targeting drug use	•		
Lack of early intervention/early access to support	Early intervention/access to support	•		
	AA/support group	•		
	Free counselling for AOD	•		

2. Mental health

Mental health issues regularly come up as one of the main health and wellbeing concerns in the Casino community. There are complex factors involved, including high unemployment, homelessness, poverty, social isolation, AOD issues, difficulty accessing mental health services, and lack of transport to attend appointments. There are some existing services, such as the LINKS program and youth counsellor at Casino Neighbourhood Centre, Headspace outreach (intake only), and some support through Community Health services, but there is a general feeling that services need development in this sector.

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Workshops	Consults	Working Group members
Lack of specialist and support services in Casino	Increase in local mental health services and outreach services – Headspace, community mental health, psychologists	•	•	LHD PHN CNC
	Support in safe places *	•		
	Integrated service provision at one location	•	•	
	Mental health advocacy team to help get people to appointments, find appropriate housing, etc.		•	
	Grief and loss support group	•		
	Accessible and affordable childcare to enable people to attend appointments	•		
	Dementia support group	•		
AOD link to mental health issues	AOD worker to support people with both mental health and AOD issues	•	•	
Lack of community awareness and understanding of mental health issues	Mental Health First Aid Training *	•		
	Prevention program in schools *	•	•	
	Dementia/alzheimer's specific education re mental health *	•		

3. Diet and exercise

Casino has a strong sporting culture and there are a range of exercise classes available for different sectors of the community. The sports stadium in Casino is a hub for many activities and is well utilised across different age groups. One issue that is often raised is that people are unaware of how to find out what exercise and fitness activities there are in town. There are major concerns re obesity levels in Casino, particularly childhood obesity. The connection between diet and exercise and the impact on mental health and chronic illness is gaining greater understanding in the community and people are keen to participate in working groups on this topic.

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Workshops	Consults	Working Group members
Need for health promotion or education programs around nutrition and healthy eating	Education re nutritional choices, diet, etc, for parents and children via schools	•	•	RVC grants officer Community Health Service clubs - Lions / Rotary / Quota RSM club GPs Casino sports stadium CNC Schools and preschools AMS Social Futures early linkers Northcott RVC – build a hydrotherapy pool Casino Sport and Rec Assn LHD Healthy Environments Project officer 7 x community members
	Looking at school canteens and encouraging the “Green Canteen” idea	•		
	Promotion of early education programs, eg Crunch and Move *	•		
	“My Kitchen Rules Casino” competition	•		
Lack of or poorly maintained footpaths, cycle paths and outdoor exercise equipment	Develop exercise areas along walking tracks as in other towns, eg Kyogle *	•		
	Walking track along the river	•	•	
	Nature based exercise equipment / more outdoor gym equipment	•	•	
	More seating on walking paths for people who need to take a break, ie elderly or people with disabilities	•		
	Council to apply for “Cycling Towns” grants	•		
	Town planning to consider healthy urban design *	•	•	
Lack of information about exercise classes, sport, activities, etc, available in Casino	Promotional info re paths and walkways	•		
	Promotional launches of the Tenterfield Track and the Crawford Square gym equipment	•		
	Casino “app” with info about fitness groups, exercise classes, etc *	•		

Access to healthy food options	More encouragement for people to grow their own food		•	
	Community food centres/hubs *	•		
	Farmers market	•	•	
Access to local sport and exercise activities	Parkrun – reinvigorating the idea	•		
	Hydrotherapy pool *	•	•	
	Walking groups for all community members, people with prams, older people, etc	•	•	
	Rock climbing wall at the sports stadium	•	•	
	Gov rebate for all people to participate in sport and fitness activities, not just children	•		

4. Family violence and child protection

Awareness around family violence issues has increased and stigma reduced in recent years, bolstered by positive education programs in schools and broader community campaigns. Casino has some established family support services, such as Casino Family Support Service, Brighter Futures, and the Family Referral Service, as well as access to designated family violence workers in town. Despite this, family violence and child protection issues still rate highly as concerns for the community. There is no refuge or emergency accommodation in Casino, and a lack of AOD and mental health services have a major impact on family violence issues. Casino’s more affordable housing often attracts vulnerable families but there are limited services in town to support them. There are major concerns around the intergenerational impact of family violence on the community, but particularly on children, whose education, development, self-esteem and long-term growth is often effected.

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Workshops	Consults	Working Group members
Need to build the level of community awareness and understanding of issues involved	Bystander program through schools, “MATES”	•		Casino Family Support Service Casino sports stadium LHD Family Referral Service Schools
	Media promotion for events with community involvement	•		
	Positive relationship education program in schools, “Expect Respect” *	•		
Lack of local services and support	Dedicated DV counsellor	•		
	Child-specific counsellor/psychologist (trauma)	•		
	More services that sit in Casino, not outreach *	•		
	“No gap” counselling for families – wholistic/generalist (social worker or psychologist) *	•		
	Refuge/emergency accommodation in Casino *	•	•	
	Richmond Valley DV committee with community members *	•		

5. Youth

The Casino community is generally supportive and generous and a lot of people would like to see more opportunities for young people in town. There is a growing peer support group in Casino, and this is fostered through activities at the sports stadium and Casino Neighbourhood Centre's youth programs. In general, however, there are a lack of activities and things for young people to do in Casino, and poor public transport to access to work/study opportunities or activities in other towns. Young people are faced with a complex series of issues, including AOD, bullying and harassment, mental health, family breakdown, financial stress, and lack of employment and educational opportunities.

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Workshops	Consults	Working Group members
Not enough things for young people to do	Youth focussed programs, drug and alcohol free *	•	•	Schools
	Free and safe public youth friendly spaces *	•	•	Casino Youth Service - CNC
	Make youth sports more affordable *	•	•	Other service providers
	PCYC Casino / clubhouse at the sports stadium *	•	•	Parents/families
	More funding for the sports stadium *	•	•	Young people
	Intergenerational programs – youth to teach seniors IT, etc *	•	•	Police
	Make information about what services are available (Casino app – “what’s on”) *	•	•	TAFE
	Need to attract businesses to town, eg cinema *	•	•	Casino sports stadium
	Wifi at stadium *	•		Casino Family Support Service
	Cooking classes – learning nutrition	•	•	RVC
	Buy headphones for sports stadium for silent discos, movies, etc	•		Sports clubs
Lack of targeted education, cultural and support programs for young people	Support/education to counter bullying *	•	•	Sports mentors and local success stories
	Education programs on conflict resolution *	•		PHN
	Youth programs – connection to country, community, culture outside of school environment *	•		Community health
	Early education programs around health issues like teenage pregnancy		•	
	Mental health promotion directed at youth	•		
	Mentoring program (about to be defunded) *	•		

	Sports clubs to share/identify role models	•		
Poor transport options for young people to travel to other towns for education, employment, recreational activities	Youth focussed transport *	•	•	
Lack of youth health and allied health services	Lobby counselling service to be based here, eg Headspace, youth social work *	•	•	
Poor relationship between police and young people	Police youth liaison *	•	•	
Young people feel like they don't have a voice in Casino	Youth advisory council on RVC *	•		

6. Racism and discrimination

This is a major issue in the Casino community with our survey identifying that over 50% of people in Casino have experienced racism or discrimination and over 67% of people think it's a problem. Young people are often particularly discriminated against, and many people have identified that racism goes both ways between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. There are high levels of street harassment and bullying in Casino which impacts on feelings of safety in town. On a more positive note, Bulgarr Ngaru has a strong presence and is well trusted and respected. A strong sense of community and good levels of community participation were shown in the survey, and people identified some great examples of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members supporting each other, such as through participation in NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week events.

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Workshops	Consults	Working Group members
Lack of understanding and mutual respect among different groups in the community	Increasing non-Aboriginal participation in NAIDOC and Reconciliation events *	•		Cooperative Legal Services Delivery (CLSD – legal justice partnership) Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre AMS Aboriginal Consultative Education Group Police Aboriginal Community Liaison – PACS Schools Early childhood services
	Getting non-Aboriginal people hearing the stories of Aboriginal people, eg film festivals *	•	•	
	Incorporate Reconciliation week activity with Beef Week (has previously happened) *	•		
	Bring “celebrity” Aboriginal people back into the community *	•		
	Recruit Elders to share local history and stories *	•		
	Positive relationship stories	•	•	
	Reconciliation Ball – shared social event, “walking the talk” *	•		
Poor relationship between police, young people and Aboriginal people	Justice Reinvestment Program	•		
	Build on PACS	•		

7. Transport

The lack of public transport is a major issue in Casino. It's very difficult to use public transport to access work or study in other towns, for medical appointments, or for recreational activities. The groups most impacted are young people, elderly people, and those from lower socioeconomic groups. There is limited community transport, with a long established community transport service recently announcing it is closing, so there is community concern as to whether the other existing community transport service will be able to pick up the shortfall. Other issues around transport include deteriorating bus stop infrastructure, and mobility concerns around footpaths and pedestrian crossings for elderly people, wheelchair users and people with prams.

Issues	Initiatives and Strategies	Workshops	Consults	Working Group members
Poor transport links between Casino and other towns	More regular transport between Casino and Lismore, Evans Head and Kyogle	•	•	Bus companies Social Futures
Safety for cyclists	Separated cycle ways	•		Federal/State gov funding
Loss of medical and community transport service	Increased funding for community transport	•	•	RVC
Inflexible bus timetables for town services	Mini bus shuttle that runs around town on a flexible timetable (ie get on/off where you like, driver takes route based on where people want to go) *	•		LHD Healthy Environments Project officer

*Denotes workshop participants' selected priorities