Healthy & Connected Communities

REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN

For the Northern Group of Councils (NGC)

CLARE & GILBERT VALLEYS COUNCIL

GOYDER South Australia's Heartland

NORTHERN AREAS COUNCIL

2021 - 2026

Red Banks Conservation Park

Acknowledgement of Country

The Northern Group of Councils acknowledge the Ngadjuri People, the traditional owners of the land on which our Councils are located upon, and pay their respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN FOR THE NORTHERN GROUP OF COUNCILS (NGC)

Regional Public Health & Wellbeing Plan for the Northern Group of Councils (NGC)

Contents

1.   INTRODUCTION

"Healthy and Connected communities" is at the core of the Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (RPHWP) for the Northern Group of Councils (NGC) comprising Clare & Gilbert Valleys, Regional Council of Goyder and Northern Areas Councils.

The NGC have partnered together to prepare a Regional Public Health Plan for the three combined regions.

The NGC have worked collectively to identify public health priorities for the region and to establish a coordinated approach towards promoting community wellbeing through the development of an RPHWP.

This RPHWP recognises and builds upon the current activities of the Council which influence public health and wellbeing.

This is the second RPHWP developed by the Northern Group of Councils. The first Regional Public Health Plan 2014-2018 has been reviewed and has supported the establishment of further regional health priorities, projects and collaborations within the new plan.

The Plan can be reviewed at any time in accord with legislative requirements. The timeframe for evaluation and review of the Plan is otherwise every five years. The next five-year review is scheduled for 2025.

2.   BACKGROUND

The *South Australian Public Health Act 2011* (SAPH Act) provides a statutory framework for State and Local Governments to protect the public health of the community, prevent illness, disease and injury, and promote conditions to support community wellbeing.

The Act provides a framework for State and Local Government to plan for new and emerging public health issues and for all of us to work together.

The SAPH Act requires Councils to develop Regional Public Health Plans (RPHPs) (section 51), which have regard to issues identified in the State Public Health Plan 2019-2024 (SPHP) and which respond to local needs and priorities.

The current priorities of the State Public Health Plan 2021-2024 which informed the development of the Regional Public Health Plan are: **PROMOTE, PROTECT, PREVENT AND PROGRESS**.

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[1] Department for Health and Wellbeing, State Public Health Plan 2019-2024, Government of South Australia, 2019.
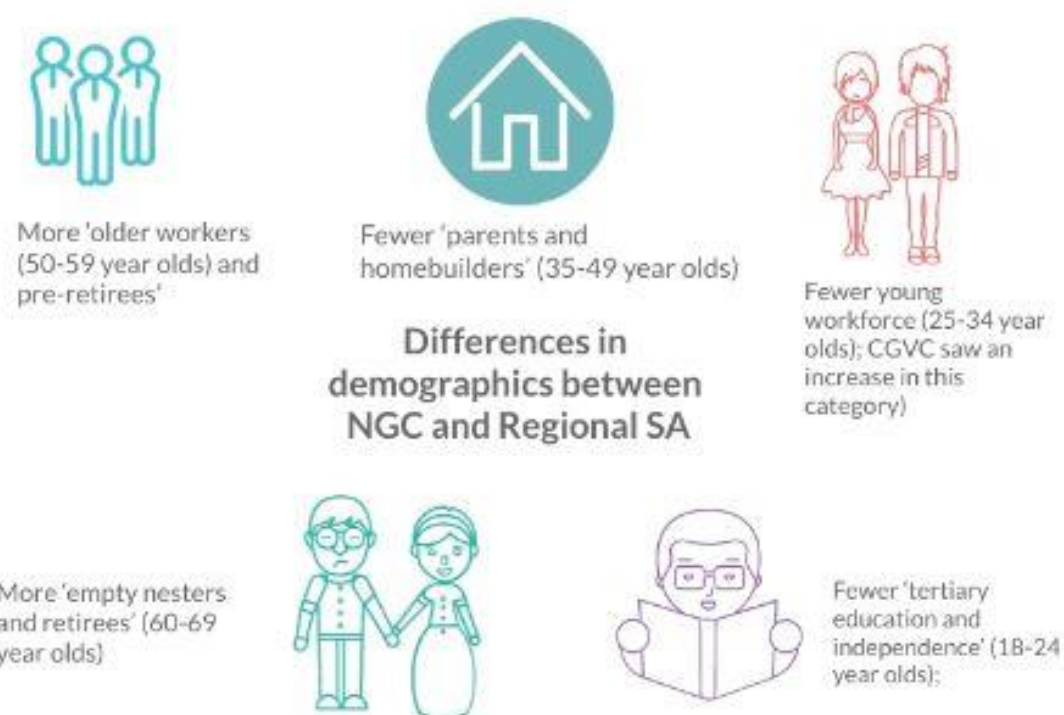
3. POPULATION PROFILE OF THE NORTHERN GROUP OF COUNCILS

The collective Estimated Resident Population of the Northern Group of Councils' region is 18,188[2]. The population estimates appear relatively stable, have experienced no substantial decline or increases when compared with the previous year, and with no substantial changes anticipated in at least the following 12months.

The population within the NGC region is ageing since the previous Census, with a median age of 47.6 years, compared to a median age of 45 years for regional SA, and 40 years in South Australia. Age medians between each of the three council areas did not have a high variation.

The majority of the groups were similar in comparison to that of Regional SA, with some diversity in differences and emerging groups between council areas.

However, the following major differences between the NGC region and Regional SA which are relevant to planning for health and wellbeing outcomes across the NGC region include -

More 'older workers (50-59 year olds) and pre-retirees'

Fewer 'parents and homebuilders' (35-49 year olds)

Fewer young workforce (25-34 year olds); CGVC saw an increase in this category)

Differences in demographics between NGC and Regional SA

More 'empty nesters and retirees' (60-69 year olds)

Fewer 'tertiary education and independence' (18-24 year olds);

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[2] 2018-19 Regional Council of Goyder, Northern Areas Council and Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council economic profile reports; Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North.

Within the three Council regions, the 2016 Census identified that there continues to be an increase in the number of older people residing in, or moving into, the region. The larger increases have been the proportion of empty-nesters and seniors since 2011.

More empty nesters and retirees (60-69 years)

More seniors (70-84 years)

Changes in Demographics from 2011 to 2016

Fewer parents and homebuilders (35-49 years)

Fewer primary schoolers (5-11 years)

Fewer secondary schoolers (12-17 years)

An ageing population indicates a future shift in required associated ageing services, extending to include recreation and community services. An example of this is the Mid North Passenger Transport Network which was identified by the NGC, and NGC health and wellbeing survey respondents, as being critically important for facilitating access to health and wellbeing services (including non-local services) for many users.

The ageing population may result in potential employment opportunities in related sectors. It may also provide opportunities to create places where people can age well; rather than that of disadvantage, which is often the focus of views relating to ageing populations.

With the reduction of parents and homebuilders in the past five years there are further risks to health and wellbeing including early years and school enrolments may become impacted putting local education sites in smaller towns at risk.

With a younger workforce also comes further business development in the region however fewer parents and homebuilders will see a shrinking of workforces (particularly in Goyder and Northern Areas Council) or shortage of staffing available in more lucrative industries such as the wine sector in the Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council.

Evident across the NGC region in response to this ageing profile is the reduction of younger volunteers available to build sustainability within community groups and local services.

4.   DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Health and wellbeing mean different things to different people as they transition through life stages and circumstances. Outside of the usually considered impacts on health, such as access and use of health care services, there are many other factors which impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities including where we live, our income, education level and our relationships.[3]

There are many ways that people in the NGC region remain physically and mentally healthy as well as enjoy a feeling of wellbeing. The NGC's consultation with community members also acknowledged this, as residents highlighted the importance of utilising local infrastructure such as local walking and cycling paths as well as sporting grounds, accessing nature through parks, open spaces and playgrounds as well as community events, as ways to stay physically and mentally well.

The NGC has an important role in shaping the conditions which help to promote healthier lifestyles. These conditions include social, economic and environmental factors and collectively are known as the social determinants of health.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH [4]

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[3] *World Health Organisation; Determinants of Health Available from https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/determinants-of-health*

[4] Department for Health and Wellbeing, State Public Health Plan 2019-2024, Government of South Australia, 2019

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5. OUR COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Data was collected, from a variety of sources, to create the Northern Group of Councils' Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan: Supplementary Data Analysis which provides a high level summary of relevant data broadly describing key characteristics of the Northern Group of Councils' (NGC) region. This data collection, along with community consultation and the review of the previous NGC Regional Public Health Plan, provided information relating to our population, community and culture, and assisted to inform the development of the Northern Group of Councils' Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

A Systems Approach to Public Health Planning [5]

The following summaries provide a further snapshot of other social determinants of health themes which have informed the health and wellbeing priorities for the Northern Group of Council's Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

These social determinents include:
- **Socio-Economic Status - Industry, Employment**
- **Socio-Economic Disadvantage**
- **Health and Wellbeing**
- **Community Resilience**

For more detailed statistical data please refer to Appendix 1- Northern Group of Councils' Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan: Supplementary Data Analysis 2020.

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[5] LGASA Guide to Regional Public Health Planning; A resource to assist in the preparation and maintenance of a regional public health plan October 2019

6.   ECONOMIC WELLBEING

INDUSTRY

The largest three dominant workgroups by sector in the NGC region are:

1. Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries

2. Heallthcare & Social Assistance

3. Manufacturing

A range of high quality agricultural industries are in the region, including mixed broadacre crops, livestock production; viticulture and winemaking.

EMPLOYMENT

The relationship between unemployment and health is complex and varies for different population groups but there is a consistent evidence base that unemployment is associated with adverse health outcomes.

The total labour force participation rate averaged 55.7% across the NGC region which is lower than the South Australian average of 58.3% at the same time. [6]


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[6] Economic profile reports (2018/19) Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North.

7.   SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

Research has shown that the lower a person's social and economic capabilities, the higher the risk of poor health and wellbeing, and that the health gap between the most and least disadvantaged is large and continuing to grow.

Based on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (ISIRD) there is significant variation of socio economic disadvantage identified between the three council areas with Regional Council of Goyder at 20 percentile, Northern Areas Council at a 34 percentile and Clare & Gilbert Valleys at higher percentage at 45. (The higher the percentile, the lower the disadvantage.)
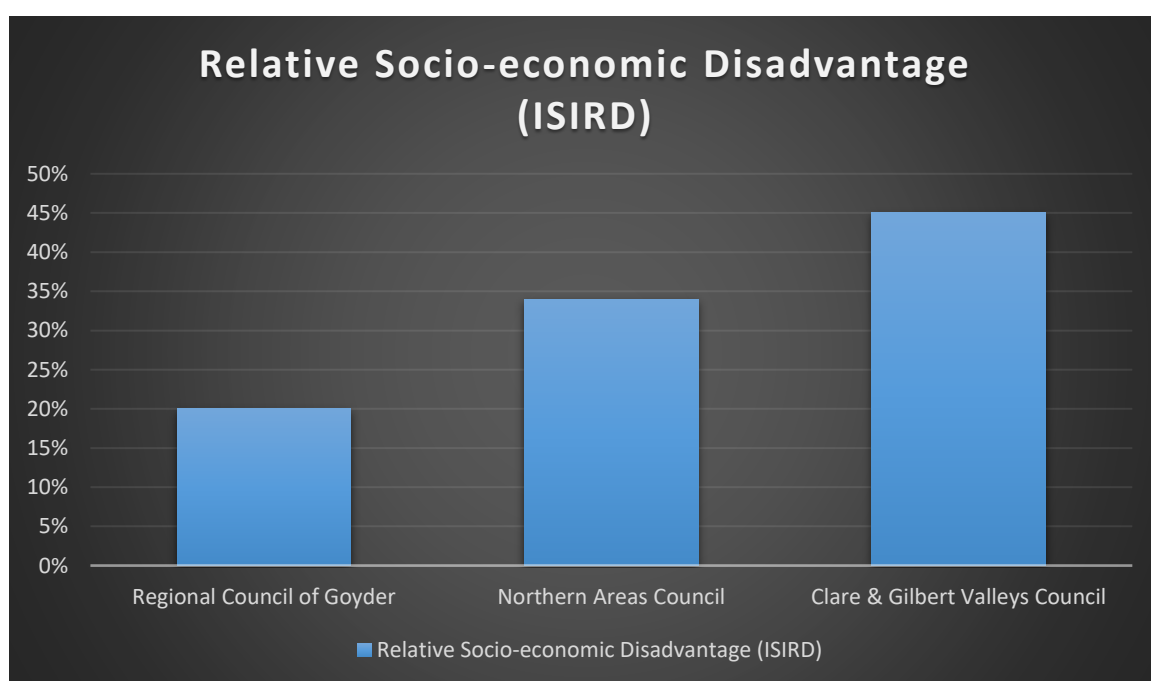
This data identifes the most significant variance between the three Council regions in relation to the social determinants of health and will further influence each council's local priorities relating to unemployment, housing and education within their individual broader strategic plans.

8.   HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO, 1948). Our physical, mental and social wellbeing can help us face life's challenges and lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.

Through data anlaysis and community consultation the NGC have idenitifed that the development of the new Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan must consider, much more than previously, the social impacts within our local communities which impact on physical and mental health.

VOLUNTEERING

Across the three Council regions there is a high level of volunteerism which is a real positive in terms of reduced social isolation and greater community support. However, with that comes volunteer fatigue which is becoming an increasing community issue with the region relying so heavily on community engagement in voluntering for events and community activities.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

Sports and Recreation play an essential part in sustaining population and community wellbeing in small towns through strong community networks. Programs such as STARCLUB (funded through Councils and the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing) provide much needed support to sport and recreation clubs to ensure their sustaniability in the region.

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DISABILITY ACCESS & INCLUSION

Disability access and inclusion issues have been identiifed as a priority for all three Councils through the development of their Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIP).
The DAIPS will assist people within the community who are living with a disability to contribute and feel welcome, have access to services, and to participate in everyday activities.

YOUTH DISENGAGEMENT

Youth disengagement is a problem not only for the individuals concerned and their families, but for the community as a whole. For young people who are disengaged, or at risk of becoming so, their situation is likely to involve financial hardship, physical and mental health problems, long-term welfare issues, and an increased likelihood of involvement in the criminal justice system. (Youth Connections National Network, 2013)

Youth disengagement continues to be an issue within the NGC region with the average percentage of disengaged youth (12-25) idenitifed at 10.4%. Positively this is slightly below the Regional SA average of 13% .

Youth Disengagement

| | 10.40% | 13% |
| NGC | | REGIONAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA |

■ Youth Disengagement

LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES

Retaining local health services has been an ongoing concern and issue in the NRC region.

There is evidence of reductions of locally based health services across the region which can lead to negative health outcomes through to reduced access and longer waiting times.

There are increasing levels of cardiovascular disease, mental health conditions and cancer diagnoses, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, which may put further strain on local health providers and residents' willingness to seek preventative services and support.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

"Community resilience is the sustained ability of communities to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity.
A resilient community is socially connected and has infrastructure that can withstand disaster and foster community recovery.
Resilient communities promote individual and community wellbeing and cohesiveness to strengthen their communities for every day, as well as extreme challenges." (7)

It is impossible to ignore the recent cumulative impacts from experiencing consecutive drought years for many communities within the NGC region, and the impacts of COVID-19 in 2020 and beyond. These impacts include social, economic, and environmental health and wellbeing, and are still occurring. These impacts have had signficant influence in the development of priorties and actions for the new RPHWP. The NGC aims to work with our partners and the community to better prepare, plan and respond to an emergency event and to become a more resilient region which enables individuals, families and communities to recover more quickly and with greater strength when faced with adversity.

7. Local Government Association website -https://alga.asn.au/policy-centre/community-resilience/

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9.   WHAT OUR COMMUNITIES ARE TELLING US
Community Survey results

NGC developed an online community health and wellbeing survey in September 2020, to enable community members to identify their key priorities for a healthy and well NGC community.

50% of respondents lived in the CGVC area; and the remaining 50% of respondents were almost equally distributed between the RCG and NAC areas. This is approximately proportional to the population distribution across the NGC region.
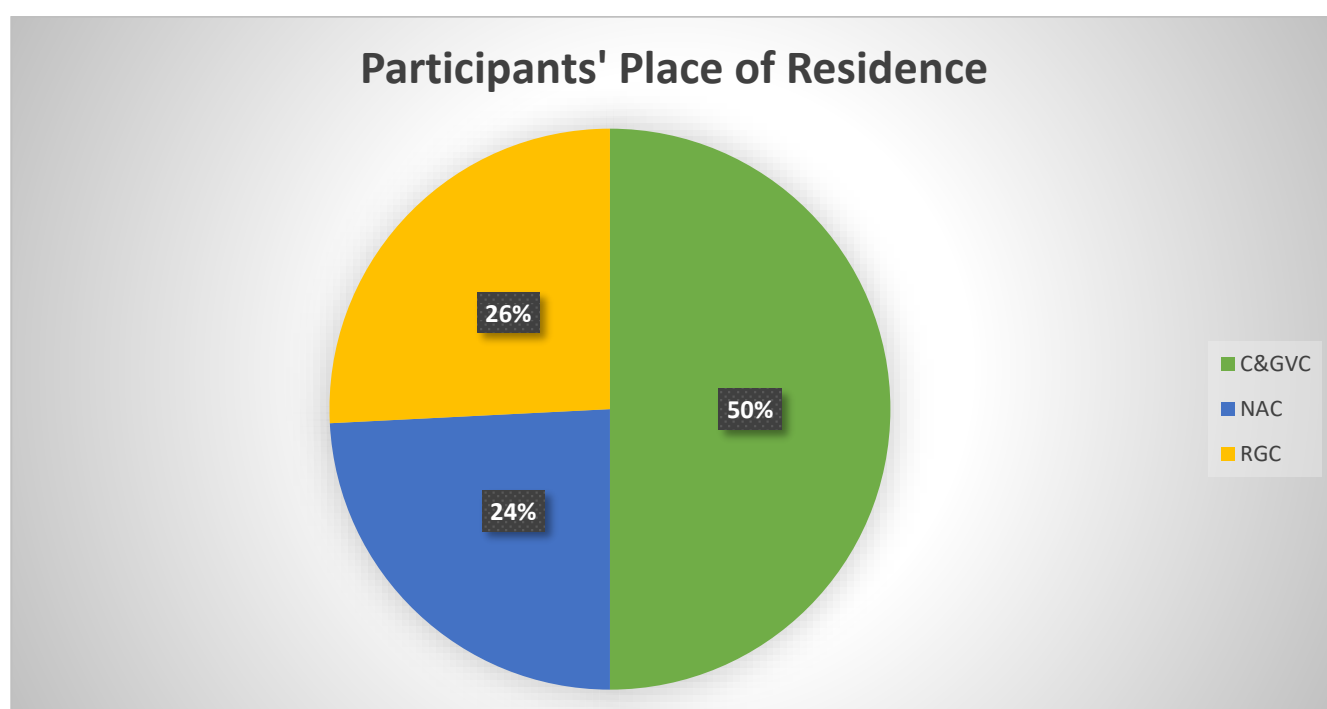
78.8% of respondents identified as female, compared with 21.2% male respondents.

More than 80% of respondents reported being between 35-64 years of age, with the remaining 20% between the ages of 18-35. No responses were received from the over 75 age group.

Community Wellbeing Priorities for the NGC
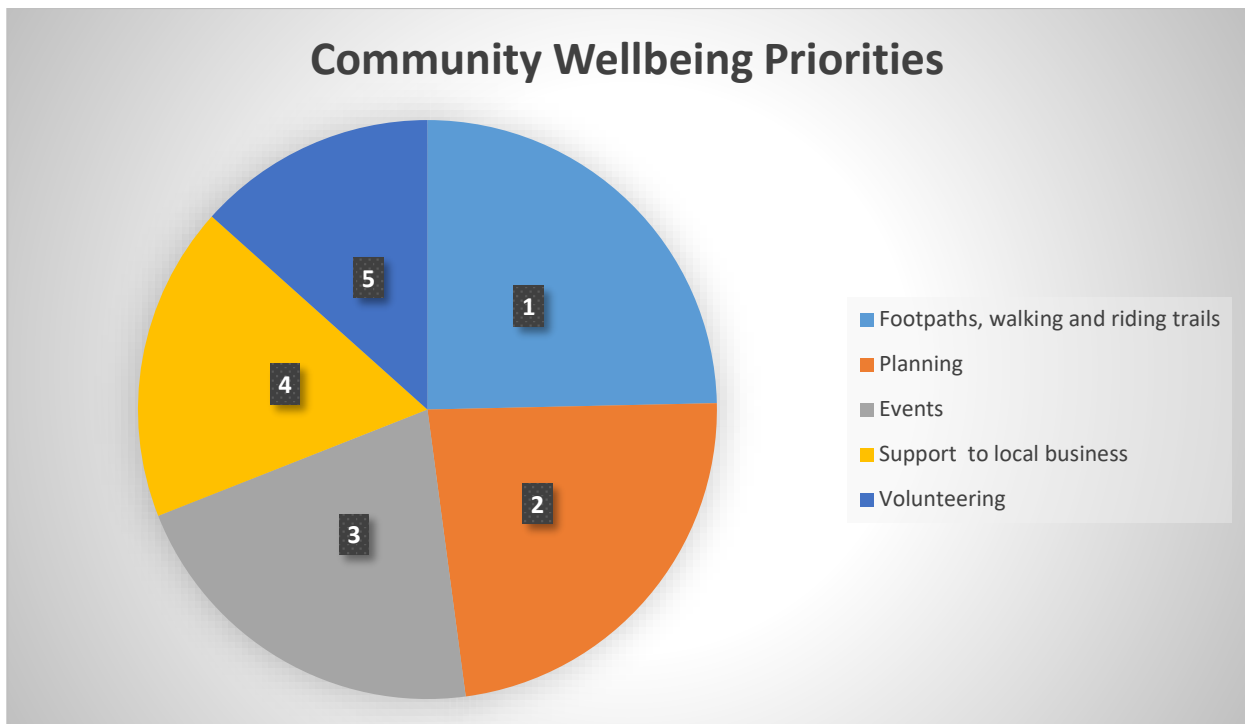
The top three areas that participants identified as most important for Council in supporting community wellbeing over the next 5 years were identified as:

1. **Footpaths, walking and riding trails.**
   Footpaths were identified as a priority in the survey in response to our aging population and to improve access for people with disabilities or families with young children.

2. **Planning our towns and villages for the future.**
   Community provided comment on the importance of future planning to ensure the sustainability of smaller towns, to encourage population growth and to support engagement by youth

3. **Promoting and supporting events that bring people together.**
   In response to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, community events and opportunities for people to come together were identified as a high priority to support the social and mental health of the community.

Support to local businesses, and supporting and acknowledging local volunteering and community involvement, were identified as the fourth and fifth most important items.

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Emerging Community Health and Wellbeing Issues

Participants identified that the top three emerging community health and wellbeing issues facing their communities were:

TOP THREE EMERGING COMMUNITY HEATH AND WELLBEING ISSUES

1. Mental Health

2. Connectivity and Inclusion

3. Timely Primary Healthcare Access
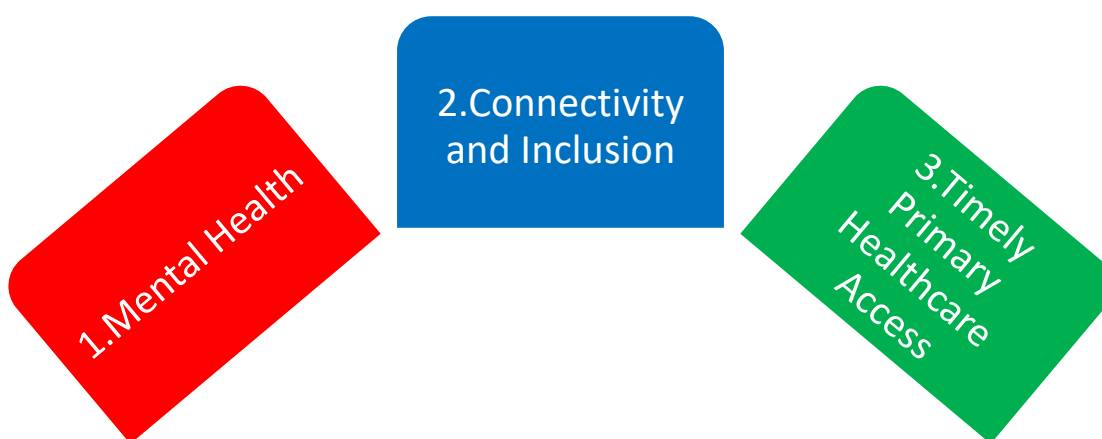
There were a number of suggestions and ideas provided by participants to advise the NGC as to what they could do to support the community with identified emerging health and wellbeing issues.

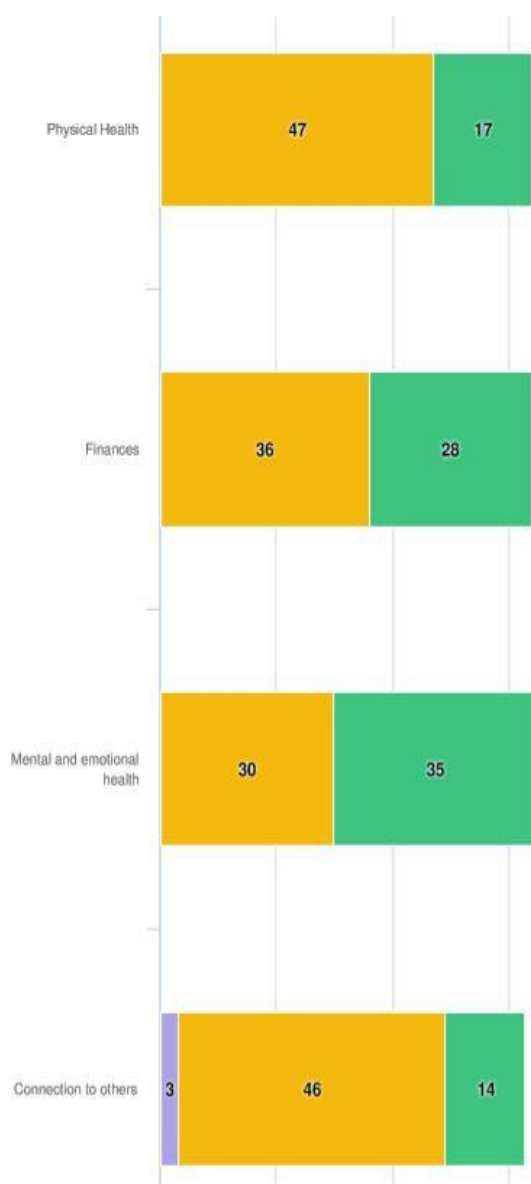The top three actions respondents identified that the NGC could implement over the next five years were:

1. Improving Public infrastructure, e.g. footpath and cycle trail access, playgrounds/parks, community transport;

2. Advocating for local country doctors and allied health professionals; and

3. Supporting closer interaction with local medical/healthcare providers and support where possible.

Participants also identified the need for more effective communication and engagement with residents; and support and funding for existing community groups already working towards improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

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10. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

In response to recent adverse events which have impacted our region, such as long-term drought and the COVID-19 pandemic, the community was also asked what they thought had been the impact on their wellbeing and health - physical, finances, mental and emotional, and connection to others.

10.1 **IMPACT OF DROUGHT**   10.2 **IMPACT OF COVID-19**
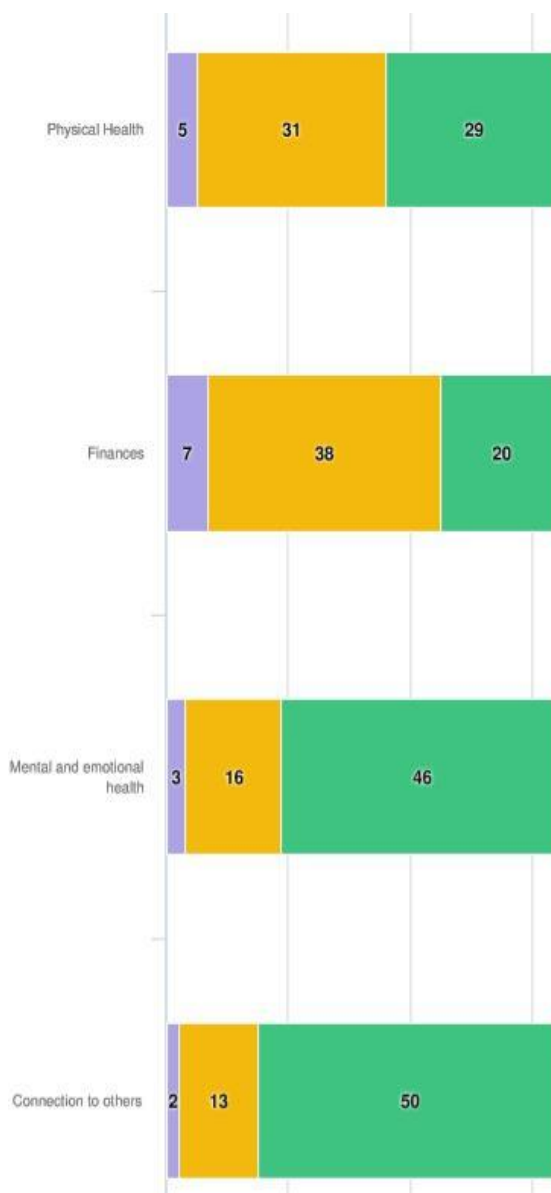
Question options
- Positive impact
- No impact
- Negative impact

The results determined that while the drought appeared to have a larger negative impact on the physical and financial health of our residents, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on people's mental and emotional health and connection to others. This could be a result of all three Councils and local community groups and services in the region focussing heavily on community events to bring people together in response to the long-term drought whilst COIVID-19 restrictions have prevented community events from taking place and reduced opportunities for social interaction, which is such an important part of regional community life and people's wellbeing. The importance of community events was also reported by respondents.

11. OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING PRIORITIES

The health and wellbeing priorities for the Northern Group of Councils were informed by themes arising from recent consultations, staff feedback, data collection and policy contexts at local, State and Commonwealth levels.

1. A community that feels connected and supported

2. Creating towns and villages which promote and encourage healthy and active lifestyles

3. Building community resilience to adverse events which impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities

4. Protecting Community Health through ongoing management of Public & Environmental Health

The following implementation plan recognises existing Council activities and ongoing services and includes priority actions which address regional public health priorities.

These actions have been determined in consultation with the community and through assessment of priority populations, public health determinants, and the current state, challenges and opportunities for public health and wellbeing in the region.

Healthy & Connected Communities

HEALTH & WELLBEING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

CGVC — CLARE & GILBERT VALLEYS COUNCIL

GOYDER — South Australia's Heartland

NORTHERN AREAS COUNCIL

2020 - 2025

NORTHERN GROUP OF COUNCIL'S REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN- 2020-2025

GOAL 1: **A COMMUNITY THAT FEELS CONNECTED AND SUPPORTED**				
Our Priorities	**Our Actions**		**State Priorities**	**Potential Partners**
Advocating for and promoting mental health services and awareness campaigns	1.1	Supporting established, or assisting with the establishment of local suicide prevention networks in each Council Region	Prevent	Our community volunteers and community groups Local Businesses Funding bodies Local Suicide Prevention Networks Mid North Suicide Prevention Network Office of the Premier's Advocate for Suicide Prevention PHN Local GPs and Hospitals SA Health Regional Development Australia Local Visitor Information services Volunteering SA Wellbeing SA Local Schools Mental Health Services
	1.2	Create a regional Mental Health Round Table group which meets to identify community priorities and projects, strengthen networks and to advocate on behalf of community to state and federal government for more services.	Protect	
	1.3	Collaborative regional support and promotion of local mental health activities in the region.	Promote	
Supporting and promoting events that bring community together	1.4	Support and build the capacity and confidence of community groups to develop and plan for local events post COVID-19.	Progress	
	1.5	Sharing and cross promotion of Regional Events and Festival Calendars	Promote	
	1.6	Promotion of events and activities through Council websites, social media, and newsletters to build community awareness.	Promote	
	1.7	Engaging and promoting local businesses in event planning wherever possible.	Promote	

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	1.8	Encourage the growth of existing events and attract new and diverse events to the region.	Prevent
Supporting and acknowledging local volunteering and community involvement	1.9	Promoting local community volunteer activities and events through Council communication.	Promote
	1.10	Acknowledging volunteer contributions on an ongoing basis through Council promotions and volunteer appreciation activities.	Promote
	1.11	Continuing to acknowledge community peak bodies, progress associations, development boards and community management committees and the work that they do. Further support them with their engagement with community, particularly with youth.	Progress
Promoting local health information, services and education programs	1.12	Extending the promotion of the Community Passenger Network and to build the volunteer base for this service.	Protect
	1.13	Encouraging community and government health services to better promote their services to residents in smaller towns/villages.	Promote
	1.14	Assist health providers with the delivery of public health and wellbeing campaigns when requested.	Promote
	1.15	Utilise the STARCLUB Field Officer to assist clubs and organisations to apply for grant funds to deliver active recreation programs in the community.	Prevent

Goal 2:
Creating towns and villages that promote and encourage healthy and active lifestyles

Our Priorities	Our Actions		State priorities	Our Potential Partners
Footpaths and Walking Trails	2.1	Identify priority areas to improve the provision of footpaths in the region.	Prevention	Our Community Our Businesses Our schools and early learning centres NRM PIRSA Regional Development Australia Red Cross Primary Health Network NDIS- Baptcare Heart Foundation Walking SA Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing StarClub Sports Development officer Service clubs, e.g. Rotary and Lions
	2.2	Further enhance current walking trails and strategically consider the development of new trails that provide further linkages within the region.	Prevention	
	2.3	Work collaboratively together to better promote walking trails across the region	Promote	
Planning for our towns and villages for the future	2.4	Consider and activate Community Led Resilience projects across the region.	Protect	
	2.5	Implement actions within each Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plans and other relevant strategic documents such as Open Space and Recreation Strategies, Master Plans and Strategic Plans.	Protect	
	2.6	Implement town amenity and streetscape improvements to build community pride.	Protect	
	2.7	Engage our youth in the planning processes, where possible, through a variety of consultation processes.	Protect	
Our sporting, recreational and outdoor spaces, parks and gardens	2.8	Support sport and recreation club development through the region's STARCLUB officer and programs to enable their continuous improvement and sustainability.	Progress	
	2.9	Enhance and develop local playgrounds and recreational spaces with the inclusion of nature play, youth and disability friendly spaces.	Promote	

Goal 3:
Building community resilience to adverse events that impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities

Our Priorities	Our Actions		State priorities	Our Potential Partners
Natural disasters	3.1	Development of local adverse event plans with a focus on strengthening our various communities' ability to cope and adapt to drought.	Protect	Our Community Our Businesses Our schools and early learning centres NRM PIRSA Regional Development Australia Red Cross Drought Resilience Officers PHN NDIS- Baptcare SA Health Local GPs Local Hospitals Local and visiting Health Services
	3.2	Delivery of the Federal Drought Communities Programme-Extension funding to deliver projects that support community resilience and wellbeing.	Progress	
	3.3	Delivery of resilient leader and emergency resilience training across the region to build the communities capacity to deal with natural disasters.	Progress	
COVID-19 pandemic	3.4	Support community recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic through community engagement, information provision, events and ongoing clear communication.	Protect	
	3.5	Reviewing Councils' responses, approaches and resource allocation to the pandemic to ensure best practice and continuous improvement to health crises that impact the community.	Progress	
	3.6	Promote buy local campaigns to support local businesses in recovery from the economic impacts of drought and the pandemic.	Progress	

Goal 4: Protecting Community Health through the ongoing management of Public and Environmental Health			
Our Priorities	Our Actions	State priorities	Our Potential Partners
Protecting community health	4.1 Support the Environmental Health Officers with the ongoing administration of the relevant Public Health Regulations (e.g. food safety inspections and training, cooling tower and warm water system monitoring of specific businesses, waste control approval and inspections)	Protect	Our Community Our Businesses Our schools and early learning centres SA Health Local GPs
	4.2 Embed health messages/resources and education across Council services and in the Community which promotes awareness of areas such as Food safety, Environmental health protection, Immunisation, Climate Adaptation and Animal management	Promote	Local Hospitals Local and visiting Health Services Federal, State and Local Governments, EPA DPTI

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