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# Annual Report

2022-23



**Latrobe Health  
Assembly**

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## Acknowledgement of Country

The Latrobe Health Assembly proudly acknowledges the traditional land of the Braiakaulung people of the Gunaikurnai nation and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.

## About Us

In response to the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiries, the Victorian Government designated the Latrobe Valley as a Health Innovation Zone, the first of its kind in Australia. The formation of the Latrobe Health Assembly is a key component of the Health Innovation Zone and is a mechanism for increased community engagement leading to health improvement and integration of services.

The Latrobe Health Assembly is a community-led organisation that seeks to positively shape and facilitate new ways of working to improve health and wellness in the Latrobe Valley. This is achieved by facilitating and enabling collaboration among the local communities, local organisations and state-wide agencies and government.

The Latrobe Health Assembly provides the opportunity for a much stronger community voice in identifying health and wellbeing issues and gaps and also identifying solutions that best meet the needs of Latrobe Valley residents.

The majority of members are from the community, with a diverse representation from various locations, professions, demographics and connections to communities and groups.

Other members of the Assembly include:

- An independent Chair.
- A standing representative from the Victorian Department of Health, Latrobe Community Health Service, Latrobe Regional Hospital, Latrobe City Council and Gippsland Primary Health Network. These representatives are the CEO or the Board Chair.
- Representatives from relevant government departments and organisations

# Our Priority Areas

The Latrobe Health Assembly has four key priority areas which underpin all initiatives and activities. As voted by the full Assembly, the priority areas are:



## ACTIVE LIVING

We are committed to encouraging and enabling healthy, active lifestyles in the Latrobe Valley. This includes projects relating to physical activity, food security, nutrition and related service provision.



## COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS AND VULNERABILITY

We are committed to creating opportunities for everyone in the Latrobe Valley to connect and participate. This includes, but is not limited to, activities focussed on social connection, pride of place, marginalised communities, accessibility, inclusion and safety.



## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

We are committed to providing all children in the Latrobe Valley with a strong start to life. This includes, but is not limited to, projects related to early childhood development, equity, education and overall wellbeing.

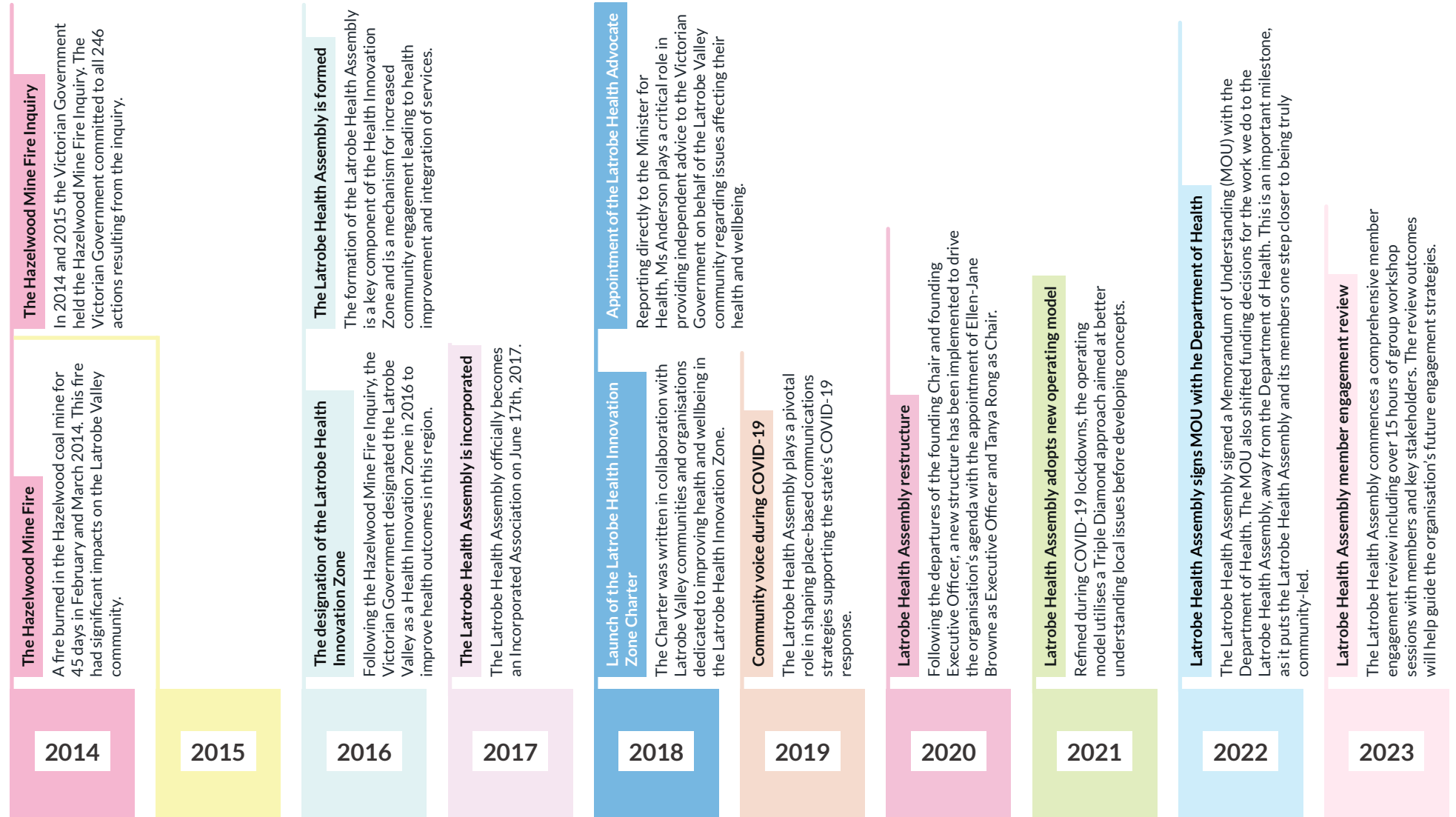


## MENTAL HEALTH

We are committed to fostering and maintaining good mental health in the Latrobe Valley. This includes, but is not limited to, projects helping people to receive better care, support and community understanding for their mental health issues.

# Our History

In 2014, the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry identified a strong need to improve health and wellbeing in the Latrobe Valley. In responding to the recommendations and affirmations, the Victorian Government committed to 246 deliverables, of which deliverables 46 -113 pertained to health and wellbeing in the Latrobe Valley.



# How we work

As part of the evolution process, the Latrobe Health Assembly has undergone a number of restructures and changes in operation since establishment in 2016. This has reflected a commitment to growth and adaptability, and has been responsive to Assembly feedback and the Deloitte evaluation of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone.

## Principles

Drawing on the principles in the Latrobe Health and Wellbeing Charter, the Latrobe Health Assembly will:

1. Enable and support the community-led approach to ensure all people, including those who are marginalised and underrepresented, have choice, control and a voice in developing the supports and services they need in their lives.
2. Work with First Nations communities and health service providers to improve health and wellbeing.
3. Do something different, try new approaches and learn from mistakes to create new and innovative health and wellbeing models and programs.
4. Be fair and transparent and follow through on commitments to Latrobe Valley communities.
5. Communicate in plain language to build trust and respect among individuals, families, communities and service providers.
6. Work to improve the lives of everyone, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the Latrobe Valley community.
7. Develop equitable access to the most appropriate supports and services for all people in the Latrobe Valley.
8. Grow and nurture collaboration and coordination between agencies to develop new ways of delivering services that cut across boundaries to best meet the needs of each person.
9. Use a codesign model to reshape and reimagine health services in the Latrobe Valley, and create innovative approaches to their design and delivery.

## Values

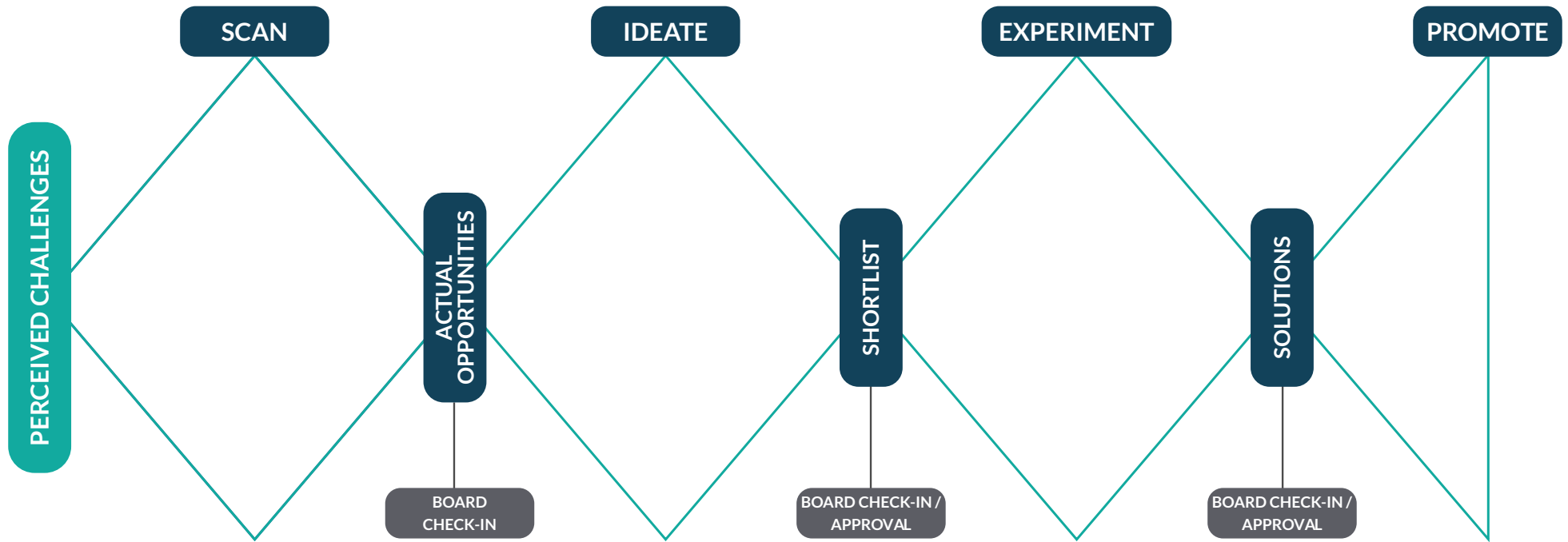
The Latrobe Health Assembly adheres to the core values identified by the Latrobe Valley community in the Latrobe Health and Wellbeing Charter. These values are:

- Collaborative enablement of engagement,
- Integrity,
- Innovation,
- Access, and
- Inclusion, and Equity.

## Ways of working together

In addition to these values, a number of defining principles were identified by stakeholders. The Assembly works in ways that are:

- Responsive, dynamic and agile; as well as sustainable.
- Sustainability needs to be considered in two ways: the first being that programs that the Assembly implements need to be sustainable in the future after the initial funding has finished; the second being that the Assembly also needs to consider environmental sustainability and impact in program design and adaptation.



## Our operating model

In April 2021, the Latrobe Health Assembly launched its Triple Diamond Operating Model (shown above). Designed to encourage collaboration on defined areas of opportunity, the Triple Diamond Operating Model has provided the organisation with a sophisticated approach to managing perceived problems within Latrobe Valley, identifying the actual opportunities and bringing together subject-matter experts along with community.

## How does it work?

We begin with our 'Perceived Problem', entering the SCAN diamond (first diamond) we explore the current situation within the community.

Before progressing to the IDEATE (second diamond), we refine the 'Perceived Problem' to identify the 'Actual Opportunities'. Using our 'Actual Opportunities' as a framework, the 'IDEATE' diamond investigates possible expansions of concepts or development of new concepts.

We then progress to EXPERIMENT (third diamond) where we trial our initiatives while exploring opportunities for expansion.

Finally, we enter PROMOTE (half diamond). Here we tell the story, including promoting the initiative with community and sharing our learnings with other organisations.

## Hello.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present you with the Latrobe Health Assembly's annual report for the 2022-2023 financial year, highlighting our commitment to collaboration, partnership and extensive community engagement. These principles continue to drive our efforts in making a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the Latrobe community.

After a challenging few years navigating lockdowns and virtual workspaces, these past 12 months have enabled the Assembly to operate with minimal disruptions, resulting in a maturity of processes and consolidation of the ways of working. The Triple Diamond Operating Model has enabled the Assembly to address the complex health needs in our region in alignment with the four priority areas and engage the broader community with lived experience as well as our Assembly membership.

Collaboration has again been at the heart of our work. Over the past year we have strengthened our partnerships with healthcare providers, government agencies and community organisations. Through these partnerships we have leveraged collective expertise to develop innovative solutions for our region's health challenges. The Assembly has become a hub for collaborative efforts, fostering a sense of collective impact and shared purpose among our stakeholders.

This year has seen the launch of milestone projects that have been years in the making. The Healthy Supermarkets campaign 'Reach for the Stars' launched in August 2022 in partnership with Latrobe Community Health Service and aims to make the healthy choice the easy choice in supermarkets. This project compliments a suite of healthy eating initiatives that are in the development phase or have already been implemented in the community, providing a multi-faceted approach to addressing health needs in Latrobe Valley.

The WES mental health café was officially launched in May 2023 and is a partnership with Lifeline Gippsland. The WES was codesigned with people with lived experience in the community and offers a safe and supportive space for people needing mental health support. This innovative project gained international recognition





in a report published by The Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development, stating that the WES was a 'global front-runner in embracing innovation'. The case study also praised the strong governance of the model and the community-based approach that capitalises on local strengths.

Additionally, we have been able to highlight the Assembly's work through other international and national platforms. Ellen-Jane and I, along with Jane Anderson (Latrobe Health Advocate) virtually participated in the 'Earning Trust to Build Healthy and Equitable Societies' program (ET4HS) held in the United States. We were invited to present our work as subject matter-experts and offered our insights, experience and learnings in community engagement, community-led design and innovation to address health inequality. Closer to home, we have had the opportunity to present our work at the Australian Public Health Conference, at the Festival of Big Ideas (FOBI), and other various forums and community groups. Storytelling and visibility play vital roles for the Latrobe Health Assembly in building connections, inspiring community and creating impact and sustainability for the work.

Engaging with our community remains a top priority. Over the past year, we initiated a partnership with Mosaic Lab, a renowned organisation specialising in community engagement. This collaboration aims to ensure that our initiatives reflect the voices and values of the people in Latrobe Valley. The findings and recommendations from this engagement review will guide the Assembly engagement strategy going forward and enables us to strengthen our communication internally as well as to the broader community, and continuously improve by evaluating and adjusting our processes to meet the evolving needs of the Latrobe Valley community.

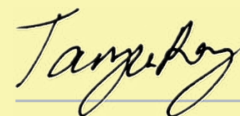
The Board welcomed Kenton Winsley as the Victorian Department of Health representative who replaced Maria Bubnic. We thank Maria for her time and contribution on the Board. I also extend my thanks to any members who have moved on from the Assembly and extend a warm welcome to new Assembly members. I look forward to working with you.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the Assembly members for their dedication and commitment to the success of the organisation. This year has seen a renewed energy for in-

person gatherings and social connection, and it has been wonderful to experience the buzz at Assembly meetings.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the dedicated Assembly staff for their unwavering commitment and work in contributing to the success of the organisation over the past year. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Executive Officer Ellen-Jane on her outstanding leadership and dedication to the Latrobe Health Assembly. Your guidance has been instrumental in driving the Assembly forward, along with your ability to navigate the complexity of working in place-based models for health improvement. We are fortunate to have you at the helm, and I appreciate the support you have given me over the past year.

The next 12 months will see a continued focus on supporting the Transition Plan implementation with the Latrobe Valley Authority as well as a continued effort on the sustainability of our work. Influencing systems change is one of the challenges of place-based work and will be a concentrated area of focus for the Assembly with the formation of a Sustainability Committee to help drive this work forward. As the 10-year anniversary of the Hazelwood Mine Fire approaches in 2024, it is a time to reflect on the incredible work of the Assembly and Health Innovation Zone as well as the strength and resilience of the Latrobe Valley community.




**TANYA RONG**

Latrobe Health Assembly Chair



# Executive Officer report Ms Ellen-Jane Browne

A portrait of Ms Ellen-Jane Browne, the Executive Officer, smiling. She is wearing a white button-down shirt with a pink floral pattern and a pearl necklace. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green trees and a blue sky. The portrait is framed by a dark blue geometric shape on the right side of the page.

It is just over three years since I accepted the role of Executive Officer with the Latrobe Health Assembly. I stepped into the role thinking that at the end of the three years I would step away from full time-work and ease into retirement. As many of you know that did not happen and so I find myself signed up for another term. It was not a decision taken lightly, but it is one I am proud to have made. The Chair and I are fully committed to the Latrobe Health Assembly, its ideals, and the work we are undertaking. But we share the view that we have much more to do if we are to succeed in having the Latrobe Health Assembly seen as the voice of community in shaping health and wellbeing outcomes in the Latrobe Valley.

We have travelled far on this journey and as you read through this report you will see that, as an organisation that is based on the ideal of community voice, we have made amazing progress. It is not perfect, but collectively we have ensured that the suite of work being undertaken by the Latrobe Health Assembly is informed, shaped, implemented and evaluated by community for community. We have debated many times over the past three years what community is, and I suspect we will continue to debate the who, what and how of community. However, it is clear from the project descriptions embedded within this year's report that Assembly members, the Board, those with lived experience, those subject-matter experts working within agencies, government, and universities, and the broader Latrobe Valley community have all been active partners in the development of our work.

The development and recent opening of The WES mental health café is but one example of our work that best demonstrates this. Here we see a project many years in the making, informed and shaped by those with the lived experience of mental health, supported by a passionate and committed Assembly and Board of Directors, and enabled by experts across the Latrobe Valley, come to life to better serve the needs of our community. In partnership with Lifeline Gippsland, it provides a safe space for community members to seek support outside of the more formal settings on offer and demonstrates firsthand how placed-based approaches to complex health issues can lead to amazing outcomes.

Of course, this is but one example of our collective efforts. We only have to look to the Board's approval of the Chronic Disease Plan for the Latrobe Valley, the endorsement of the five research pillars for the Early Childhood Development Plan, and the suite of food security projects to see the commitment of community to improving health and wellbeing outcomes, whilst also exploring new ways of working within the health system. There are complex issues embedded in these areas of our work. And yet the Assembly, working in partnership with all levels of our community, has shown that together we can intervene in the system to test, pilot and evaluate new initiatives. Again, I encourage you to read the detail of this report and if excited by our work, explore further the detail on our website or by making contact with your local Health Assembly member, the Board or the Assembly staff.



We have also been encouraged that our work has been picked up internationally, nationally and across Gippsland. This is important, as whilst our core work is to improve health and wellbeing outcomes in the Latrobe Valley, it is equally important that our learnings inform the policy debate, particularly in the areas of health prevention, early intervention and placed-based approaches to health. It has taken time for this to happen, but as the Assembly matures it has been pleasing to see our work picked up by UNESCO's Observatory of Public Sector Innovation and Boston Consulting's New York Centre for Public Impact, among others.

Similarly, it has been pleasing to see the array of publications produced by Federation University's Collaborative Evaluation Research Centre based on evaluations of our projects. Such work informs the policy debate and demonstrates the importance of our work beyond the Latrobe Valley. Likewise, positive cost benefit analyses of projects like the Community Health Nurses in Primary Schools and the Adolescent Behaviour Change Program continue to demonstrate that we are investing for the future. These projects have both received positive reviews and have demonstrated that in quantitative terms for every dollar invested by the Assembly we can show a return of one-and-a-half to four times the value. If we were to measure the qualitative return, international research suggests that the return would be even higher.

These examples only touch the surface of our work, but none of this would have been possible without the energy, passion and commitment of our community. To the Assembly members, please accept my thanks for your contribution to the work we have done together. Without you there would be no Assembly and the voice of community would be significantly lessened. To the Board thank you for the support, the encouragement and the guidance you have offered. Your wise counsel, robust discussion and informed debate has only strengthened our work and has helped the Assembly mature in a way we could not have imagined. To our partners, thank you. Without partnerships our testing, piloting and development of ideas just would not happen. To be active in community is at the heart of our work and this is amplified when we work together to bring the ideas of community to life.

Naturally none of this would be possible without a strong and enthusiastic back of house team. To our management team of Chloe, Richard, Kate and Catherine, thank you for your patience,

understanding and support. We have challenged you to take rough concepts and to work with community to shape them into new models, ideas and initiatives. You have grown with the Assembly and have supported the team of of Kate, Alex, Ashleigh, Olivia, Ashley, Josephine, Carey, Hope and Robyn to create outcomes far beyond that expected of such a small team. Thank you all for everything you have done these past twelve months.

And finally, as alluded to at the beginning, my role is only part of the story, as it has, and continues to be a shared endeavour with our Chair, Tanya Rong. Tanya has brought to the role the enthusiasm and excitement of her relative youth, her never-ending quest for knowledge, and her deep commitment to the people of the Latrobe Valley. Her willingness to listen, to learn from community and to give freely of her time (and her family) seems to be never ending. For me, as Executive Officer, Tanya has proven to be, and continues to be, one of those rare experiences that makes this role valued, exciting and rewarding. For this she has my deepest thanks.

**ELLEN-JANE BROWNE**

Latrobe Health Assembly  
Executive Officer

# Our people

## Board of Directors



**TANYA RONG**  
LATROBE HEALTH ASSEMBLY  
CHAIR



**BEN LEIGH**  
LATROBE COMMUNITY  
HEALTH SERVICE



**STEVE PIASENTE**  
LATROBE CITY COUNCIL



**DON MCRAE**  
LATROBE REGIONAL  
HOSPITAL



**AMANDA PROPOSCH**  
GIPPSLAND PRIMARY HEALTH  
NETWORK



**MARIA BUBNIC**  
VICTORIAN DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH - RESIGNED



**ANGE GORDON**  
COMMUNITY BOARD  
MEMBER



**LINDA REID**  
COMMUNITY BOARD  
MEMBER



**LEN CAIRNS**  
COMMUNITY BOARD  
MEMBER



**JEANETTE  
VANNAPRASEDLUTH**  
COMMUNITY BOARD  
MEMBER



**KENTON WINSLEY**  
VICTORIAN DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH

## Board meeting attendance

2022						2023					
JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
	9	9	10	9	8		9	9	8	8	8

# Our people

## Assembly Members

Members of the Latrobe Health Assembly include community members, directly invited representatives from key service providers within the Latrobe Valley and a Board of Directors which comprises of CEOs/Directors of the five Foundation Agencies, four elected Community Board members and an independent Chairperson.

Allan Crosthwaite	Den Lim Keighran	Marilou Ortega
Amina Khatun	Denise Stranger	Mark Munnich
Andi Walters	Diane Wilkinson	Melissa Ferguson
Ange Gordon	Emily Fenech	Michelle Tolman
Ant Costin	Jane Barr	Shaun Mallia
Arfa Khan	Jeanette Vannaprasedh	Tanya Rong
Carolyne Boothman	Kathryn Bartlett	Tony Bailey
Claire Ronaldson	Kristine Travers	Tracie Lund
Danielle Kileen	Len Cairns	Wendy Farmer
Dawn Doherty	Linda Reid	

The current Latrobe Health Assembly membership sits at 39 out of a possible 50 members.

Our members community connections include:

- Multicultural communities
- Health
- Local primary/secondary schools
- Regional service providers
- Industry

**Join the Latrobe Health Assembly**

If you would like to be a part of a team of community-minded individuals, in an Australian-first initiative developing innovative approaches to challenges, apply to become a Latrobe Health Assembly member at [www.healthassembly.org.au/join](http://www.healthassembly.org.au/join)

# Our people

## Direct invite members



Barbara Hill  
Worksafe Victoria



Julie Philip  
Victorian Department Of Health



Kristine Cooney  
Vic Health



Chris Buckingham  
Latrobe Valley Authority



Dan Poynton  
GippSport



Roni Beauchamp  
Heart Foundation



Vacant  
Department Of Education & Training



Catherine Vassoiliou  
Quantum Support Services



Stacey Clark  
Environment Protection Authority  
Victoria



Lee Garwood  
Maryvale Private Hospital



Andrew Martin  
Victoria Police



Michelle Possingham  
Lifeline Gippsland



Leigh Kennedy  
Federation University



Garry Sattell  
Ramahyuck



Tammy-Lee Chatwin  
Gippsland & East Gippsland  
Aboriginal Co-Operative



Greg Blakeley  
Victorian Department of Families,  
Fairness and Housing

# Our projects

## Active Living

- Chronic Disease Action Plan
- Food For All Latrobe Valley
- Healthy Supermarkets
- My FoodSwaps
- Permanent Outdoor Table Tennis Structures
- Physical Literacy

## Community Connectedness & Vulnerability

- Creative Latrobe
- Family United
- Hello.
- Inclusive Latrobe
- Ladder - Step Up Family Support
- Men's Shed Field Officer
- Morwell Neighbourhood House - People's Kitchen
- Social Prescribing

## Early Childhood Development (ECD)

- Allied Health Services (0-8) Scan
- Community Health Nurses in Primary School
- Latrobe Valley Imagination Library
- Literacy and Parental Value of Education
- The Little Village Project
- Parents and Guardians Information Portal

## Mental Health

- HeRO (Healthy Relationships Online)
- Impact of COVID-19 on Youth
- The WES Mental Health Cafe





## Chronic Disease Action Plan

**PRIORITY AREAS:** ACTIVE LIVING / MENTAL HEALTH

**PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

The Latrobe Chronic Disease Action Plan 2022-2027 (the Plan) was developed together with local partners, key stakeholders representing consumers and carers, and health and community services within the Latrobe Valley, as well as input from the Latrobe Health Advocate and Latrobe City Council. It aims to act on a range of areas over the next five years, that will improve the experience of people living with chronic disease, building on current success and considering new ways of working.

Governance structures have been established to support ownership and ongoing implementation of the Plan via a Steering Committee and Working group, as well as a shared reporting mechanism. Latrobe Health Assembly will be engaging the services of a consultant to undertake an evaluation of the Plan, considering the impacts on the community, the effectiveness of the partnership, and opportunities for improvement along the way.

Some actions are already underway, including the establishment of a regular forum for Latrobe Regional Hospital and Latrobe Community Health Service clinical staff to discuss their service offerings and identify opportunities for collaboration. This forum will look to expand in the future to bring in other local service providers.

The Latrobe Health Assembly have connected with Carers Victoria to discuss opportunities to pilot Carer Inclusion training in health services for public-facing staff. Conversations have commenced with Federation University and local pharmacy owners to discuss opportunities to provide community access to preventive health checks.

Work is ongoing to promote the Plan, identify opportunities for collaboration and reduce duplication, and linking into existing opportunities which can be built upon.

## Food For All Latrobe Valley

**PRIORITY AREAS:** ACTIVE LIVING / COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS

**PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

Food security can be defined as “when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. The Victorian Population Health Survey found that 11.3% of people in the Latrobe Valley, formerly 6.6%, experience food insecurity with hunger, this is significantly higher than the Victorian state average of 5.9%, formerly 3.6%.

In response to this growing issue, delivered by Latrobe Community Health Service, Food For All Latrobe Valley (FFALV) was established to increase access to fresh nutritious food across the Latrobe Valley. FFALV aims to assist the Latrobe Valley to successfully bring together health services, emergency relief agencies, community groups, food retailers and producers, Neighbourhood Houses and the wider community to work collaboratively to build capacity and work towards a more food secure Latrobe Valley community. To date FFALV has 85 membership organisations and has delivered 357 interventions.

The coalition aims to increase access, availability and consumption of fresh, nutritious food for those who live, work, play and belong in the Latrobe Valley, through collective community actions.

The key objectives include:

1. Improve access to and efficiency of food relief services across the Latrobe Valley.
2. Increase healthy food preferences and food literacy skills within the Latrobe Valley.
3. Support local food production and a sustainable food economy.
4. Improve community engagement and support capacity building initiatives.





# Healthy Supermarkets

**PRIORITY AREAS:** ACTIVE LIVING

**PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

The food environment plays a critical role in determining our dietary behaviours and the food choices we make. Research shows that supermarkets can influence consumer food purchasing behaviour by using the four marketing Ps: product, placement, promotion, and pricing. Supermarket interventions that change aspects of the four Ps to favour healthier food purchasing (“healthy supermarket initiatives”) show immense potential for improving healthy food purchasing behaviours, and therefore improving overall diet quality and health outcomes at a population level.

The Healthy Supermarkets initiative aims to work in partnership with local supermarkets to codesign and implement healthy food retail strategies and interventions that support healthy food-purchasing behaviours.

An initial scoping project was completed in 2020 to help determine whether there was sufficient supermarket interest in rolling out the program. The scoping study highlighted that there was evidence to support the concept as well as interest demonstrated by community and local retailers.

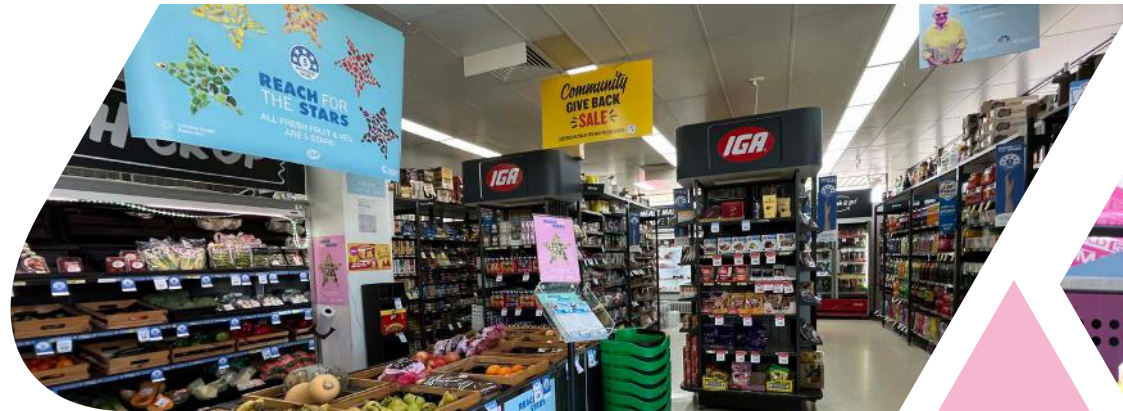
Following the positive outcomes of the project’s scoping study, the program was launched across three pilot sites under the campaign name Reach for the Stars, with an eight-week trial starting from

August 2022. Moe IGA launched 8th of August, while Morwell and Glengarry IGA both launched 22nd of August. The pilot sites concluded in October 2022. From these trials, it was determined that completing a second phase of this project would be beneficial.

This second phase of the program will build on the pilot program with a minimum of two additional supermarkets and a series of codesign workshops with store owners and managers. The second phase will also have an increased focus on a broader campaign with an increased exploration of alternate methods to help improve healthy eating behaviour within the supermarket environment.

*“I think it was really successful that we had such community involvement in the planning and design of the project. So you could say it was for Latrobe residents, by Latrobe residents.”*

Participating supermarket manager





## My FoodSwaps

**PRIORITY AREAS:** ACTIVE LIVING

**PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

Research by Monash University has shown more than half of men and women in the Hazelwood Health study did not meet recommended intakes of fibre, while 60% of men and 42% of women exceeded recommended dietary sodium intakes. It is clear that what we are doing now, at a population level, is not working well enough. Led by academics from Monash University, this project seeks to disrupt the current state of public health communication by widening access to online personalised dietary recommendations.

Throughout 2022–2023, work continued a comprehensive codesign process to develop a personalised dietary feedback system by adapting on an existing tool, Intake24. Codesign workshops have been undertaken with nutrition service providers and their consumers to build a fit-for-purpose tool that considers the local food environment in the Latrobe Valley. The tool will be accessible to the Latrobe Valley community when and where they need it and will support the actions of the Latrobe Health Assembly to make healthy options the desirable and easy option by improving dietary literacy.



## Permanent Outdoor Table Tennis Tables

**PRIORITY AREAS:** ACTIVE LIVING

**PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

In August 2020 the Assembly installed the first outdoor table tennis table in Newman Park, Traralgon. This pilot site was selected in consultation with community and Latrobe City Council. A QR code was situated at the site and gathered positive community feedback.

Following the success of the first table tennis table and ensuring each town within the Latrobe Valley has a table installed in appropriate locations, eight additional tables were approved and are being rolled-out in 2023 in the following locations:

- Morwell: Town Common Playground
- Churchill: Mathison Park
- Moe: Moe Botanic Gardens
- Glengarry: Next to the basketball half court
- Yinnar: Near the skate park
- Boolarra: Railway Park
- Yallourn North: McGregor Reserve
- Toongabbie: At the recreation reserve, near the skate park

Plans are underway to invite community members to participate in the process of decorating the tables.



# Physical Literacy

**PRIORITY AREAS:** ACTIVE LIVING / COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS / MENTAL HEALTH  
**PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

Physical Literacy includes physical, psychological, social and cognitive development and works to maintain positive physical activity behaviours for life. Broadly, statistics are showing that children are increasingly vulnerable in all four domains of physical literacy, and this has been linked with parents and caregivers placing low priority on movement due to their own low confidence and motivation in movement.

In the Latrobe Valley, we have low physical literacy levels amongst children and adults. As a consequence, a range of poorer health outcomes are experienced that could be avoided were physical literacy levels increased.

A working group comprised of Latrobe Health Assembly members/staff and representatives from Gippsport, Latrobe Community Health Service and the Gippsland Regional Public Health Unit, have taken the issue of low physical literacy through the Triple Diamond Operating Model process, with support from Federation University. The working group have since developed a Charter which outlines a shared commitment for how the group will operate and move forward, with a series of actions under the headings 'Prepare', 'Engage', and 'Participate'.

There has been a significant amount of work engaging with subject matter experts both locally, nationally, and internationally who are keen to share their experiences and expertise with the working group. These experts will support our working group to bring the community, and stakeholders along the journey as we learn, innovate and explore the possibilities that this work could bring.

**For our workgroup, success is:**

*“an informed, empowered, and confident community that participates in regular physical activity.”*





## Creative Latrobe

 **PRIORITY AREAS:** COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS / MENTAL HEALTH

 **PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

Creative Latrobe is a public art project partnership between Latrobe Health Assembly, Latrobe City Council and the Latrobe Valley community.

The project aims to address a range of key insights gained during community consultation, including the impact that perceptions have on people's use of, and/or avoidance of certain areas across the Latrobe Valley; the enthusiasm people have for increasing vibrancy and public art in our communities; and the potential people feel that art has to help showcase the Latrobe Valley's stories, strengths and identity in a cohesive way that could help to unite all the towns. It reflects the Creative & Curious, Vibrant & Connected, Physically & Mentally Active, and Equal & Inclusive wellbeing principles developed following the 2021 Looking Forward Latrobe consultations.

The Creative Latrobe project aims to implement exciting and bold art activations and installations in Traralgon, Morwell, Moe, Churchill and one small town yet to be selected. The second stage will include a larger 'flagship' place-making project in Traralgon incorporating the Whittakers Road and Bert Thompson Reserve underpasses.

More than 150 Latrobe Valley residents have provided feedback on potential sites, types of artwork and themes via community workshops, a survey and pop-up events.

Workshops are currently underway to engage Aboriginal and multicultural young people, and Federation University students in the artmaking process, with smaller art activations that aim to engage young people in the project.

## Family United

 **PRIORITY AREAS:** COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS / MENTAL HEALTH

 **PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

The Family United campaign aims to provide new and expecting parents in the Latrobe Valley with adequate tools and resources to help build and maintain healthy relationships following the birth of a child.

The campaign was developed with the help of Central West Gippsland Primary Care Partnership (CWGPCP), healthAbility (Baby Makes 3), Monash University (What Were We Thinking?), Latrobe City Council and Gippsland Women's Health and is aligned with the work of the Latrobe Prevention of Men's Violence Against Women Network (Latrobe PMVAW).

The campaign has 3 major components:

- A webpage on the Latrobe Health Assembly website to host these resources,
- Merchandise packs distributed to Latrobe Valley families via three channels, Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) antenatal classes, Latrobe City Maternal and Child Health (MCH) appointments (0-6 month) and various community events, and
- A social media campaign ran alongside to achieve a wide reach in the community.

The project has been able to achieve the following:

- Consulted over 400 Latrobe Valley parents who helped provide input and advice for the website and gave a local perspective for new parents.
- Provided nearly 400 families with Family United merchandise packs with another 300 packs ready to reach families.
- Family United website has received over 3000 page views and continues to grow.



# Hello.

 **PRIORITY AREAS:** COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS / MENTAL HEALTH

 **PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

Social connection is important for our mental health and wellbeing, preventing mental illness and helping us to live well. Our social connections include people we know; the friends we confide in, the family we belong to and the community we live in.

The Hello. campaign encourages people to say hello to each other to help foster kindness and highlight the importance of social connections in the Latrobe Valley.

Hello. has been a successful initiative bringing the community together since 2019. Hello. Day was established in 2021 as an annual event to help secure a scalable, community-led future for the campaign that is owned and celebrated by the diverse people of the Latrobe Valley.

To reach all corners of the Latrobe Valley, Hello. has seen many different forms; you might have seen Hello. on local busses, people donning the classic Hello. t-shirt, or even scored a free cuppa from a pop-up cafe!

2022 saw 6-months of ongoing Hello. celebrations, including a Winter Festival, a pen pal program promoting intergenerational connections between primary schools and retirement homes, a board games event with young people, a local pets event and Social Inclusion Week.



# Inclusive Latrobe

 **PRIORITY AREAS:** COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS / MENTAL HEALTH

 **PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

Latrobe Health Assembly is aiming to create a more equal and inclusive community in the Latrobe Valley to improve health and wellbeing. The populations that have been determined to work with in developing targeted actions include, but is not limited to, people from migrant backgrounds, people living with disability, LGBTQIA+ people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people experiencing ageism, primarily experienced by older and younger people.

The goal of phase one of Inclusive Latrobe is to improve inclusivity within the Latrobe Health Assembly operations and practices and to build relationships with target populations. The key activities undertaken during phase one include:

1. Review the Assembly's current practice to improve inclusivity of internal and external operations and processes.
2. Consult with target populations to better understand the diverse needs of the community to inform Assembly strategic planning and future planning for Inclusive Latrobe.
3. Provide training and other opportunities to improve knowledge, understanding and confidence of Assembly staff, board, and assembly members on inclusive practices.
4. Celebrate diversity and promote safety and inclusion for all by participating in and supporting local events and awareness campaigns.
5. Build and strengthen relationships with local stakeholders and target populations within the Latrobe Valley community.

Nous Group are completing the internal review of the Assembly's current operations and practices. This involves a four-stage process, with stages one-three of the internal review taking place during August-November 2023 and stage four to be completed in early 2024. Throughout this process, Nous will support the Assembly to deliver a:

- Review framework that respects the complexity of the Assembly's unique operating environment.
- Nuanced stakeholder engagement approach that facilitates genuine listening and strengthens trust.
- Practical approach that builds internal capacity and sets the scene for monitoring and evaluation.



## Ladder - Step Up Family Support

**PRIORITY AREAS:** COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS / EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

The Ladder Step Up Latrobe Valley program helps young people aged 16-25 to improve across four key domains: education, employment and training, health and wellbeing, independent living skills and community connection. The program is based in Morwell and over the last two years in particular, Ladder has seen an increase in engagement with parents, carers and guardians of Ladder Step Up Latrobe Valley program participants seeking support to address issues their young person is having outside of the program, in their daily lives, in the following areas;

- Mental health advice and support,
- Alcohol and other drug issues,
- Conflict resolution, and
- Managing COVID-19 and the effects of restrictions / isolation.

A feasibility study conducted an environmental scan that identified local services available to parents, carers and guardians and any identified service delivery gaps that exist. The study also supported interviews with parents, carers and guardians to understand their needs, how they would like to engage in a service, what is currently stopping them from using the existing service system, and what successful engagement would look like to them.

The feasibility study also explored current research and evidence of best-practice family support service models, particularly in the context of a primary youth service. Research was also completed on potential referral pathways, improvement of communication materials and how a possible pilot program may be implemented.

## Men's Shed Field Officer

**PRIORITY AREAS:** COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS / MENTAL HEALTH

**PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

Community organisations and Men's Sheds have become an integral part of the Latrobe Valley communities and are continuing to work with men, and at times women, assisting them to re-engage with the community and feel valued.

The Men's Shed Field Officer works closely with Men's Sheds in Toongabbie, Traralgon, Traralgon South, Boolarra, Churchill, Moe, Newborough, Yallourn and Morwell. The Men's Shed Field Officer project's primary aim is to work with local men, Men's Sheds and other men's groups across the Latrobe Valley to achieve healthier outcomes, both mentally and physically.

For the first stage of this project, a detailed analysis of each of the sheds within the the Latrobe Valley catchment was completed to gain their input on their needs and wants, the Men's Shed Field Officer identified a variety of focus areas. The areas identified were:

- Increasing Shed Visibility
- Building Better Pathways
- Improving Digital Literacy
- Encouraging Healthier Communities

Working towards these priority areas, the Men's Shed Field Officer has implemented several key initiatives including:

- Improving Digital Literacy sessions;
- Latrobe Valley Men's Shed marketing campaign;
- Creation of the Men's Shed Moonlight Market and Winter Festival; and
- A series of Shed-based drop-in health-related education sessions, custom selected based on individual Shed's needs.



# Morwell Neighbourhood House - Peoples Kitchen

 **PRIORITY AREAS:** COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS / MENTAL HEALTH / ACTIVE LIVING

 **PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

In 2021, the Latrobe Health Assembly undertook research with the Morwell Neighbourhood House to identify ways of expanding the People's Kitchen, its reach and, importantly, looking at ways of tackling food insecurity before the need even arises to seek the support of the People's Kitchen.

Following this research, the Morwell Neighbourhood House partnered with the Latrobe Health Assembly to enable Morwell Neighbourhood House to utilise their People's Kitchen and related programs to implement an inclusive whole-person approach to addressing issues of food security, health and wellbeing based on the following five potential solutions:

- Enabling relevant community agencies to participate in Peoples Kitchen, Food Bank, and community garden activities;
- Reaching out to communities in the Latrobe Valley who are marginalised in relation to access to resources and services;
- Framing the Food Bank and Peoples Kitchen as a key point of access for clients and volunteers to government, health, and community services;
- Offering access for Peoples Kitchen participants to formal training, skills recognition, and vocational qualifications; and
- Investigating ways to engage secondary schools in addressing the question of food security and the feasibility for senior secondary students to participate in aspects of the People's Kitchen concept.



# Social Prescribing

 **PRIORITY AREAS:** COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS / MENTAL HEALTH / ACTIVE LIVING

 **PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

Social prescribing, sometimes referred to as community referral, enables clinical professionals such as general practitioners, nurses, nurse practitioners and other primary care professionals to refer a client to a Community Connector. The Community Connector works with the client to determine their individual needs and they can refer them on to a range of local, nonclinical services.

This helps clients to have their needs met through a variety of different activities and services available in the community. This can take form in a variety of ways such as connecting a client with a local sporting or fitness group or finding a recreational group to improve social connection. This project is aimed to reach all members of the community that would benefit from increased connection within community.

A social prescribing model developed specifically for the Latrobe Valley is currently being implemented through Latrobe Community Health Service in the towns of Traralgon, Morwell, Warragul and Churchill and is currently in its second phase.

The second phase of the project aims to:

- Continue piloting the codesigned social prescribing model in Churchill that was developed in phase one, which has been approved to run until 2024;
- Establish a delivery model with Latrobe Community Health Service that will allow a community connector to refer out to a range of services that will run until 2024; and
- Gather all the necessary data required to thoroughly monitor and evaluate the pilot and, following the pilot's completion, inform a potential scale up of the initiative.



## Allied Health Services (0-8) Scan

**PRIORITY AREAS:** EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

During 2021 and 2022, the Latrobe Health Assembly engaged Ninety Mile Consulting to explore and identify challenges, opportunities and potential initiatives relating to early childhood learning and development across the Latrobe Valley.

Complex and priority issues were identified in the final consultant report and endorsed for further investigation. One of the action areas noted in the report was the opportunity for improving access to existing 0-8 early childhood allied health screening services by families.

Our ongoing work tells us that children living in the Latrobe Valley struggle to get support for their health issues because their parents and carers cannot access existing early childhood development service providers, including speech pathologists, occupational therapists, dietitians, and counsellors, in a way that meets their needs.

In early 2022 we had found that successful childhood screening in the Latrobe Valley was impacted by a shortage of allied health professionals in the region, together with related support services.

This project presents us with opportunities for improving the coordination of services, access to transport, targeted programs, and promotional wellbeing messaging, and how they could be piloted to help address the issue.

Federation University (Churchill) led by Professor Andrew Lewis was awarded funding to identify and further evaluate key early childhood allied health services in the Latrobe Valley, working closely in partnership with us, to determine what differences exist between services and document observed gaps occurring between the services.

To help us gather information on the specific service-based challenges impacting local families, the Collaborative Evaluation and Research Centre (CERC), was also commissioned to this project. The CERC team will work in partnership with us and the project team to develop a list of key stakeholders who will be invited to participate in a series of workshops and listening posts. The workshops will be held in public meeting spaces across Latrobe.

Using a codesign and mixed methods approach including workshops and interviews with professional staff who work in early childhood allied health services and programs, a series of listening posts in public areas with community members who are parents of young children, and a desktop audit of allied health services across Latrobe, services will be delivered with the view to improve access for all families with children between 0-8 years of age, living in the Valley.

This project is part of our commitment to improving health and wellbeing in the Latrobe Valley and looks at the challenges surrounding the effective delivery of early childhood health screening outcomes for our community.

A final report detailing recommendations for the Assembly board will be available in late October 2023.





# Community Health Nurses in Primary Schools

 **PRIORITY AREAS:** EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

 **PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

The Community Health Nurses in Primary Schools program commenced in 2017 due to an identified need in a local primary school. In 2018 the Latrobe Health Assembly supported the expansion of the program, which has grown and developed to now provide services to seven high-need schools across the Latrobe Valley. The expansion was based on the level of disadvantage in the schools.

The program provides a range of health supports, including, but not limited to, assistance with behaviour, vision, hearing, asthma, first aid, continence and head lice.

Each of these schools contribute to the nurses' salary, which demonstrates the value of the program from their perspective.

Recognising the strength of the program, Stockdale Road Primary School in Traralgon and Churchill North Primary School are now participating in the program and fully funding a nurse in their schools.

The Community Health Nurses in School Program, uses a health and wellbeing outreach model. It utilises a community health nurse within the school setting with an emphasis on supporting vulnerable children who are at an increased risk of poor health and wellbeing outcomes.

*“These schools have got a high percentage of vulnerable families; they’re not a normal patient that you would otherwise see. You have to work at least 12 months to get anywhere. These families need extra time to develop that relationship; these are chronic health issues that have to be worked out, and they’re not a one-appointment fix. It takes a long time. It often takes as long as they’ve had [a chronic condition] to recuperate from it.”*

**Community Health Nurses in School nurse**





## Latrobe Valley Imagination Library

 **PRIORITY AREAS:** EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

 **PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

The Latrobe Imagination Library was established to combat low literacy levels in the Latrobe Valley. The aim of this project is to improve literacy levels in children by providing access to books and providing tips on how to best encourage children to read. By targetting children before they reach school age, parents and caretakers are better able to prepare the children they care for to be ready for school.

In 2023 Latrobe Health Assembly approached United Way Australia to help establish Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in the Latrobe Valley. The establishment of the Latrobe Valley Imagination Library required partnering with the Latrobe City Council's Maternal and Child Health to help reach new families and ensure that the community is made aware of this project.

This project will see the delivery of a book each month along with a tip sheet detailing suggested ways to engage the child you care for in reading and is open to all children born from 1st of January 2023 to 31st of July 2024.

The Latrobe Valley Imagination Library is expected to run from August 2023 until July 2027. This will allow for all children born from January 2023 to July 2024 to partake in the program until they reach three years of age. It is hoped that as a child reaches this age they would be able to access other avenues such as three year old kinder to continue to develop their literacy skills.

## Literacy and Parental Value of Education

 **PRIORITY AREAS:** EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

 **PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

In 2022, Ninety Mile Consulting conducted a series of workshops in the Latrobe Valley. These workshops identified a need to focus future work relating to early childhood development in a variety of areas. One area identified was childhood literacy and the parental value of education. To better understand what aspects of literacy needed further work in the Latrobe Valley, the Latrobe Health Assembly engaged the University of Melbourne to further research this.

This research involved multiple community workshops targeting parents as well as service providers with a focus on childhood wellbeing. Desktop research as well as community workshops and focused interviews with local subject matter experts also took place.

The findings of this report will assist in shaping future work that the Latrobe Health Assembly undertakes in the early childhood development priority area.



# The Little Village Project

**PRIORITY AREAS:** EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

Latrobe Health Assembly, in collaboration with Kindred Spirits Enterprises, are delivering a community-led initiative that supports the Latrobe Valley's most vulnerable children to engage in education.

It was observed at Stockdale Road Primary School that school staff are adept at discovering the needs of their students, based on their relationships with children and their families, and their knowledge of early childhood development.

It was recognised that many interventions that were required to meet the needs of students, such as therapeutic/clinical or allied health support, were prohibitively expensive for families. Long waiting lists and complex healthcare systems were also contributing to children not receiving timely support, as well as programs that had strict and inflexible guidelines that failed to leave room for innovation or tailored and targeted interventions.



The Little Village Project is currently delivered at Stockdale Road Primary School and Grey St Primary School. It is hoped that the project will continue to expand to other public primary schools in the Latrobe Valley.

Students are identified for support when their functioning is impacted at school, which shows up in behavioural, attendance and academic data. Students might also be identified as needing assistance through engagement with parents/carers, via the School Nurse, the Department of Education Student Support Services team, Community-Based Service Providers or observations from their Teacher and Education Support staff.

Interventions are sourced and discussed with the student, their family and other stakeholders that might help the student and their family overcome the challenges that are impacting on their ability to engage at school. The Little Village Project is purposefully broad so that it can cover the very specific needs of the children it supports. Low and no-cost alternatives are always investigated and The Little Village Project is usually only ever accessed when no other options are available, or if these alternative options cannot be delivered in a timely manner. The Little Village Project leverages from the close relationships that the school and school staff have with their families and builds upon one of the greatest strengths that this community has, which is getting their children to primary school.

Interventions include Neuro-Psychological Assessments, Cognitive Assessments, clothing and glasses, and ongoing therapies such as counselling for children impacted by early childhood trauma, emerging mental health issues and adverse events, and interventions such as speech therapy to address developmental issues.



# Parents and Guardians Information Portal

**PRIORITY AREAS:** EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

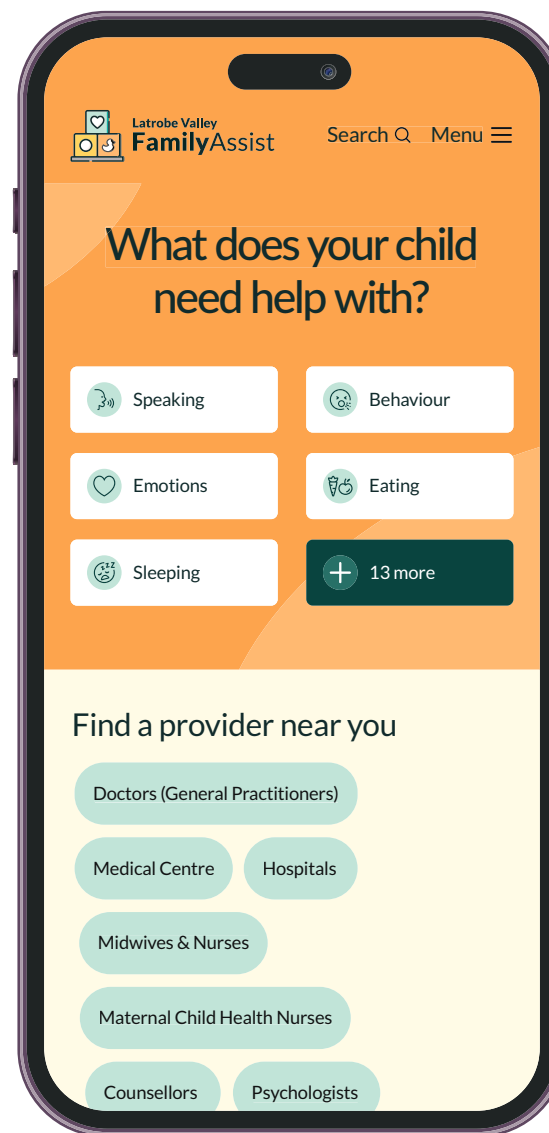
Latrobe Health Assembly has collaborated with Today Design to develop the Parents and Guardians Information Portal to help improve community awareness and promotion of available early childhood services for children, parents and caregivers in the Latrobe Valley. The website is currently in development and has undergone testing by community members to ensure it is fit for purpose.

The facilitation of a community codesign process allowed for the portal to appropriately address community concerns and better assist parents and caregivers to access early childhood services. Once the portal has launched it will provide quick and easy access to view available services and key information about them, as well as find potential services that may be of benefit to them or the child they care for. The portal is planned to contain multiple sections to provide helpful information for families.

There will be three distinct sections to the website. The first section will be an interactive children's services directory for Latrobe Valley parents and caregivers to easily access early childhood services available locally.

The second section of the website will be a subject-matter expert information library containing information on a range of early childhood development concerns, conditions or best-practice tools produced in accessible language and audio/video. This will allow families to access educational resources in an easily navigable format.

The third section of the website will be an event calendar platform that will provide parents and caregivers with details on information sessions, children's educational events, open days, and festivals within the region. This platform will help to increase community awareness of local events by increasing visibility of a variety of activities that are available locally.





# HeRO Project

 **PRIORITY AREAS:** MENTAL HEALTH

 **PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

The HeRO project is a psychosocial research program that aims to develop an educational program to support adolescents and young adults to form healthy online relationships and identify unhealthy online behaviours.

The HeRO project will involve a three-phase concept:

- Exploration: Mixed-methods approach to understand how young people use online platforms to form, manage and terminate intimate relationships.
- Implementation: Quantitative analysis using educational app to provide tips on maintaining healthy online relationships.
- Evaluation: Effectiveness of resources in improving mental health and wellbeing of young people using the Perceived Stress Scale.

Latrobe Health Assembly is funding the first phase of the HeRO project. This initial phase aims to develop an understanding of the gaps in young people's knowledge of healthy online relationship behaviours, with a focus on vulnerable groups that may lack access to educational resources and/or digital literacy that would otherwise allow them to develop healthy norms.

Throughout phase one, the aim is to collect qualitative data via one-on-one interviews with 18-25 year olds and focus-groups with 15-17 year olds, as well as collecting quantitative data via psychometrically validated measures completed by participants. In Phase 1, participants will be recruited to participate in a semi-structured group interviews and complete a battery of psychometrically validated measures assessing psycho-social variables such as attachment styles and mental health.

The HeRO project adopts a positive approach to change, emphasising empowerment, individual responsibility, and cultural change. The anticipated outcomes of the HeRO project include an educational seminar package, a website, and the HeRO app, which will all be informed by empirical research.



# Impact of COVID-19 on Youth

 **PRIORITY AREAS:** MENTAL HEALTH

 **PROJECT STATUS:** COMPLETED

The Impact of COVID-19 on Youth project initially began with the 2020 Federation University report which evaluated the impact of COVID-19 on youth engagement in Latrobe Valley, as identified by employees in community services and education sectors.

One of the recommendations in the Federation University report outlined the need to provide an opportunity for young people to reflect on their experiences of COVID-19.

This recommendation led to the collaboration between Latrobe Health Assembly, Baw Baw LLEN, Latrobe Youth Space, and Square the Circle. A youth research team was formed in March 2023 and Square the Circle supported the youth throughout a peer-led research project to investigate the impacts of COVID-19 on young people in Latrobe Valley.

This research involved a design thinking process which was used to frame the three phases, including the design sprint, scan phase and ideate phase.

The youth analysed the findings of the Federation University 2020 Impacts of COVID-19 on Youth Report and planned their own course of research by creating a survey to be completed by young people in Latrobe Valley. They were then supported to make recommendations regarding how the impacts of COVID-19 on Latrobe Valley young people could be addressed. Square the Circle developed a report outlining the findings as identified by the youth.

The list of identified lasting impacts of COVID-19 on Youth included two stand out areas of:

- Mental health challenges (including keeping motivated); and
- Distrust in the medical system/Lack of access to medical care



### Impacts of COVID-19 on Youth Project (continued)

The recommendations outlined in the final report include:

1. Create more accessible and safe opportunities (that people know about) for young people to connect with each other in the community by:
  - a. Developing an ongoing series of events to create a sense of consistency, stability, and something to look forward to.
  - b. Encouraging young people to make connections with other young people in the community to support the impacts that feeling disconnected has on mental health.
2. Take action to make sure that the health system (mental and physical health) is available to young people in ways they feel comfortable, when they need it and in ways that respect them as people by:
  - a. Raising awareness among medical professionals of what it feels like to access medical care as a young person.
  - b. Creating a resource for medical professionals showing how to work better with young people.
  - c. Creating a resource for young people to empower them when accessing medical care.
  - d. Young people and medical professionals codesigning ways for medical care to better meet the needs of young people.



## The WES Mental Health Cafe

**PRIORITY AREAS:** MENTAL HEALTH

**PROJECT STATUS:** CONTINUING

The WES Mental Health Café concept emerged from a Mental Health Forum in May 2020, where people with lived experience of mental health, their carers and supporters identified a critical lack of service options for people outside of traditional hours.

A task group was established to explore the establishment of a safe haven model that would be localised to the needs of people living in the Latrobe Valley, providing a safe and inclusive space for that would fill the service gap identified by the community and reduce emergency department presentations for non-emergency mental health issues in the Latrobe Valley.

The WES aligns with the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System's vision of integrated care for people with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues through a partnership with Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO), who deliver services to people experiencing substance misuse and their families.

Codesign has been embedded from inception, and the peer-led model ensures lived experience is elevated and valued. This is further supported through the Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG), who hold a governance role that oversees the delivery of the service.

The WES officially launched in May 2023, and is delivered by Lifeline Gippsland, providing a welcoming and safe space for anybody 16 years and over who may be experiencing distress, are in crisis or feeling

*“Made me take a step back and reflect on the actual impacts of my own experience and the ways that may have changed the way that I perceive the world around me, especially when it comes to medical professionals. I realised that my view on [medical professionals] was quite negatively warped just because of the sheer level of stress and panic that was involved with doing anything for years and years. I am really interested in working towards resolving that for a lot of young people.”*

**Youth Research Team Member, Harley**



socially isolated.

The WES staff are mental health professionals and peer support workers who have experienced mental health concerns or have cared for someone who has, so visitors can connect with someone who genuinely understands.

The service provides an alternative to Emergency Department attendance for people experiencing mental health challenges, but do not require acute inpatient care where clinical intervention and monitoring are required. This reduces the pressure on emergency departments and provides a genuine alternative to traditional clinical services.

The WES is currently operating over four days across weekday evenings and weekend hours.

Over 200 visitors have accessed The WES, improving their mental health and wellbeing, decreasing social isolation, and increasing connection to mental health services.

The WES pilot is funded until June 2024 and operates with formal and informal partnerships. Latrobe Regional Hospital, ACSO, Wellways and Mind Australia were foundational members and contributed to the consultation and codesign of the service and remain heavily invested in the pilot.

In addition to mental health and alcohol and other drugs providers, partnerships with community-based services has enabled warm inbound and outbound referrals to connect visitors to social activities.

Latrobe Health Assembly have engaged an external consultant to undertake the evaluation of The WES. The established codesign approach was embedded within the program logic, evaluation framework and data collection tools assessment.



*“I haven’t talked to anyone else about this. It is so nice to feel heard. On arrival I was feeling pretty low but on departure I feel like there is hope”*

**Quote from a visitor to The WES**

*“You have no idea how much (Peer Support Worker Name omitted for privacy reasons) helped me tonight. I really needed it”*

**Quote from a visitor to The WES**

# Sponsorship



Blake Bourne  
Blake's Big Red Run

**The Latrobe Health Assembly regularly sponsors local community groups and individuals who are seeking to deliver outcomes for the Latrobe Valley that align with the Latrobe Health Assembly's strategic objectives.**

In the 2022/23 Financial Year, the Latrobe Health Assembly sponsored the following initiatives:

- Lifeline Gippsland Golf sponsorship
- Stroke Association donation - Gamification equipment
- Baw Baw LLEN Inspiring Careers sponsorship
- Gippsland Allied Health Symposium
- Morwell Neighbourhood House Healthy You series
- Yes I Can Choir sponsorship
- Blakes Big Red Run
- Old Gippsdown Winter Festival



# Financial statement

All monies directly associated with the operation of the Latrobe Health Assembly are managed by Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) under an agreement established between LRH and the Latrobe Health Assembly.

The Assembly does not hold any monies in its own right. LRH treats any surplus Assembly funds as restricted within its Balance Sheet, meaning these funds are not available to fund LRH operations and purposefully set aside to exclusively fund Assembly operations and activities.

For the purpose of this report, information on the costs associated with the Assembly are consolidated into an Operating Statement and a Statement of Changes in Equity for the Financial Year Ended 30 June 2023.

OPERATING STATEMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023		TOTAL	TOTAL
REVENUE		2023	2022
Operating Revenue			
Grant Revenue		4,516,146	4,835,438
Other Revenue			
Total Operating Revenue		4,516,146	4,835,438
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		<b>4,516,146</b>	<b>4,835,438</b>
EXPENDITURE			
Employee Costs			
Human Resources		33,458	28,114
Long Service Leave		41,671	18,992
Payroll Costs		1,307,807	1,100,170
Superannuation		134,987	107,415
Workcover		16,893	17,729
<b>Total Employee Costs</b>		<b>1,534,816</b>	<b>1,272,420</b>
NON-SALARY COSTS			
Administration <i>(increase due to reclassification of project scoping costs)</i>		250,219	51,459
Program Grants/Projects		2,449,433	2,139,244
Computer Expenses		58,946	20,101
Domestic Charges		7,267	2,746
Food		4,328	3,946
Rental - Buildings		87,824	85,084
Repairs & Maintenance		53,185	44,471
Utilities		8,306	9,777
<b>Total Non-Salary Costs</b>		<b>2,919,508</b>	<b>2,356,828</b>
Capital Purchases		0	0
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>4,454,324</b>	<b>3,629,248</b>
<b>SURPLUS / DEFICIT</b>		<b>61,822</b>	<b>1,206,190</b>

Statement of Changes in Equity for the Financial Year Ended 30 June 2023	
Accumulated Funds as at 30 June 2022	4,111,396
Net result for 2022-2023	61,822
Accumulated Funds as at 30 June 2023	4,173,218

www.healthassembly.org.au



**Latrobe Health  
Assembly**

An initiative of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone.  
Funded by the Victorian Government

