The Role of Local Governments in Behaviour Change for Farming Community’s Health and Wellbeing

Michelle Graymore\textsuperscript{1}

Imogen Schwarz\textsuperscript{1}, John Martin\textsuperscript{2}, Craig Hurley\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1}Horsham Campus Research Precinct, University of Ballarat, Horsham, Victoria
\textsuperscript{2}Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities, La Trobe University, Bendigo, Victoria
\textsuperscript{3}National Centre for Sustainability, University of Ballarat, Ballarat, Victoria
Local Government & Rural Health

• Local governments in rural Australia have the goal of:  
  *Improving the health and wellbeing of their community*

• Role has shifted from providing infrastructure

• Strengthen communities through:
  – social inclusion
  – community participation
  – a sense of belonging

• Aim to enhance the health & wellbeing of the community
Rural Health Issues

• Higher rates of chronic disease (i.e. heart disease and diabetes)
• Mental health issues
• Alcohol misuse
• Decreased access to fresh food and health services
• Lower life expectancies
Role of Behaviour Change in Health

• Health issues are often linked to behaviour choices
  – Level of exercise
  – Choice of food
  – Risky behaviours (i.e. alcohol, risk taking)
• A change in behaviour can improve health outcomes
• But how do we change people’s behaviour?

## Health Goals & Actions of Selected LGAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Grampians</td>
<td>Strengthening health, Inclusiveness &amp; connection, Developing capacity, Enhancing liveability</td>
<td>Drug and alcohol use, Healthy eating, Physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horsham</td>
<td>Social connectedness, Physical activity, Healthy &amp; liveable environments, Economic development, Public health &amp; safety</td>
<td>Mental health, Healthy eating, Community participation &amp; social connection, Physical exercise, Neighbour checks, Immunisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepburn</td>
<td>Community capacity &amp; wellbeing, Health protection, Health promotion, Build resilience &amp; community strength</td>
<td>Physical activity, Immunisation, Maternal &amp; child health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindmarsh</td>
<td>Access to health services, Physical activity, Food &amp; nutrition, Mental health, Ageing, Water quality</td>
<td>Learning centres, Physical activity, Mental health, Rainwater tank quality, Immunisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bendigo</td>
<td>Liveability, Linked &amp; sustainable towns, Build social capacity, Promoting social justice, Strengthening service capacity</td>
<td>Participation in community life, Physical activity, Mental health, Food safety, Life skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Behaviour Change Theories: e.g. Reasoned Action Model

**Background factors**
- *Individual* personality, mood, emotion, values, stereotypes, general attitudes, perceived risk, past behaviour
- *Social* Education, age, gender, income, religion, race, ethnicity, culture
- *Information* Knowledge, media, intervention

- **Behavioural beliefs**
- **Normative beliefs**
- **Control beliefs**
- **Perceived norm**
- **Perceived behavioural control**
- **Attitude toward the behaviour**
- **Intention**
- **Behaviour**

Barriers and drivers are the key to change

*Fishbein and Ajzen 2010*
RAM – its application

• We are not like them!
• Define the behaviour you want changed
• Elicitation is used to determine for the behaviour:
  – Behavioural beliefs (good and bad consequences)
  – Normative beliefs (people who would approve or disapprove)
  – Control beliefs (enablers and barriers)
• Develop a persuasive communication strategy
• Monitor behaviour and evaluate your strategy
Examples of successful application

- Sustainable Farm Families program (National Centre for Farmer Health)
- Children’s fruit and vegetable consumption (Gratton et al 2007)
- Sticking to the walking paths (Port Campbell National Park Victoria)
Councils & behaviour change

• Councils need to be capable of implementing effective behaviour change programs
• Council staff are not behaviour change specialists
• Limited in their capability to effectively develop and carry out behaviour change programs
• Many behaviour change programs are information or education programs
• We are proposing a method to fill this knowledge and skills gap in local governments
Local Government Change Agents
Project Aim

Build the capability of council officers in rural and regional Victoria to help their communities become sustainable and resilient

In doing so:

• Council staff will better understand:
  – How to implement effective behaviour change programs
  – The characteristics of effective behaviour change initiatives

• A framework for training & mentoring staff in behaviour change will be developed

• Councils will achieve priority actions, including increase rural health
Participating LGAs
Project Methods

- Training workshops
- Research: Case studies & Surveys
- Mentoring

Increased Capacity of Local Government Staff
Methods: Training and Mentoring

• Training and mentoring program for Council staff
• Based on:
  – Reasoned Action Model
  – Literature review
  – Council staff & community survey
• Open to all council staff involved in behaviour change
• 12 month training with 4-6 x 1 day workshops
Methods: Training and Mentoring

• Workshops will cover:
  – Behaviour change theory
  – Identification of barriers and enablers in their community
  – Development and implementation of interventions
  – Monitoring and evaluation

• Each participant will carry out a behaviour change program to address a priority action

• Mentoring along the way

• Evaluation of the project & program
Expected outcomes

• Targeted training will provide Council staff with the skills to be able to implement effective behaviour change programs
• Network of change agents in local governments across Western Victoria
• Lead to improvements in health & wellbeing of rural communities

Source: http://zagvillage.wordpress.com/category/khoa-h%E1%BB%8Dc/
Thank you!
Any questions?

Contact details:
m.graymore@ballarat.edu.au
0417109813