



# **Strengthening Our Communities**

Lower Hume Community Conference

22 April 2004

## **Final Report**



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# Background

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## **Tough Times, Tough People**

In 2003, Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership (Lower Hume PCP) developed the *Tough Times, Tough People* (TTTP) strategy to address the established health priority of mental health in our community.

TTTP is an innovative health promotion project supported by the Lower Hume PCP, which aims to strengthen the links between local health and community service agencies and community groups to achieve better health outcomes for the community and more effective use of health resources.

The TTTP strategy aimed to increase social capital and resilience levels of communities in Lower Hume by June 2004.

The 2000 National Mental Health Strategy describes several community and cultural factors that protect against the development of mental health problems. These include a sense of connectedness, attachment to networks within the community and participation in a community group.

Community organisations also play a significant role in developing resilient communities. Resilience is described as the ability to “bounce back from adversity” (Wolin & Wolin, 1999). In recent times residents in the Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires have experienced adversity in the form of drought, water restrictions and fire. Community groups have played a significant role in the bouncing back of our community following such challenges.

Through the TTTP strategy, Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership highlighted the importance of providing support, skills and encouragement to such groups.

## **Lower Hume Community Conference**

As part of the planning for the TTTP project it was proposed that Lower Hume PCP host a community conference that would enable community groups from across the Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires to participate in a low cost, accessible conference that would give them an opportunity to skill up and gain knowledge on issues that are important to their survival.

It was decided that a one day conference be held at Trawool Valley Resort with a focus on strengthening the capacity of local groups to take control of their own situation and to make important decisions about their future.

# Aims and Objectives of the Conference

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## **Aim:**

- To improve the capacity of community groups to operate successfully, to expand and to achieve their goals.

## **Objectives:**

- To provide resources for community groups in the Shires of Mitchell and Murrindindi that assist them to develop their organisations.
- To increase the opportunity for networking relationships to develop between community organisations and local health and community service agencies.

## **Key Health Priority:**

Community Capacity Building

## **Key Population Target:**

Whole of community – reached through community groups such as service clubs, sporting clubs, craft groups, Landcare groups, social groups and Neighbourhood Houses.

## **Ottawa Charter Principal:**

Strengthening Community Action

## **Dimensions of Health and Wellbeing:**

### ***Environmental***

- Including environmental issues in the conference agenda
- Providing information to community groups about community facility management

### ***Social***

- Providing opportunities for social interaction and networking
- Supporting community groups to prosper

### ***Economic***

- Providing skills in relation to financial management, insurance and risk management

### ***Governance***

- Providing information about legal compliance, and strategic procedures for governing bodies of community groups
- Training and education for community based leaders

## Conference Working Group

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To manage the development of the Community Conference, a working group was convened that had two components:

**Core Working Group** – The core group was made up of LHPCP project staff, a LHPCP Health Promotion Team Leader and at least five other agency representatives who were willing to meet on a regular basis to develop and plan the conference.

**Resource Group** – The resource group was made up of around ten other agency representatives who assisted the Core Working Group identify and engage speakers, brainstorming topics and assist with the planning and development of the conference when needed.

The Core Group included:

Jenny Branton	Murrindindi Shire Council (HP Team Leader)
Yvonne Padgett	Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership
Natalie Stewart	Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership
Lisa Linton	Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership
Jaime Carrol	Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership
Natalie Wischer	Murrindindi Community Health Service
Gary Fox	Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
Peter Mitchell	Landcare Co-ordinator South West Goulburn
David Hall	Berry Street

The Resource Group\* included:

Mary-ann McCue	Mitchell Shire Council
Lynn O'Donnell	Womensport and Recreation Victoria
Judi Pay	ValleySport
Peter Burke	ValleySport
Anne Jungwirth	Mitchell Community Health Services
Peter Burke	ValleySport
Jacqui Kelly	Murrindindi Shire Council
Bill Coppinger	Central Ranges LLEN
Sheree Brown	Department of Victorian Communities

\* It must be noted that several of the members of the Resource Group joined the Core Group in the later stages of preparation and contributed more significantly to the development of the conference.

## Budget

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### Conference Cost

Total cost of the conference was \$15,000. This amount was funded out of the Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership Integrated Health Promotion budget.

### Participant Contribution

Participant's registration fee was \$20.00. This was in line with the original aim of the conference which was to provide a low cost, assessable conference for community groups in Lower Hume.

## Community Conference Timetable

<b>9:15am</b>	<b>REGISTRATION</b>				
<b>9:45am</b>	<b>WELCOME AND OPENING</b>				
<b>11:15am</b>	<i>MORNING TEA</i>				
<b>Session Times</b>	<b>Stuart Room</b>	<b><i>Bittles Restaurant</i></b>	<b><i>Committee Room</i></b>	<b><i>Pool Room</i></b>	<b>Marquee</b>
<b>11:30am – 12:30pm</b>	<i>Successful Community Grants &amp; Applications</i>  <i>Cr Sue Marstaellar Mitchell Shire Council</i>	<i>Volunteering and Sustainable Community Development</i>  David Hall / Marie Hogarth Berry Street Alexandra	<i>Community Publishing – High Tech vs. High Touch</i>  Jo McInnes Graph Attack	<i>Change, Stress and Coping with Burnout</i>  <i>Kerry Bittles – Mitchell Community Health Ian Byron – Bureau of Rural Science</i>	<i>Off Their Face... In Yours</i>  Mitchell Community Health Service
<b>12:30pm</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>				
<b>1:30pm – 2:30pm</b>	<i>Risk Management &amp; Insurance</i>  Lisa Elward & Sandice McAulay, Murrindindi Shire Council	<i>Social Marketing and Facilitating Action in the Broader Community</i>  Adrienne Stephens – Municipal Association of Victoria. Andrew Straker – Department of Sustainability & Environment	<i>Turning on the Light</i>  Sandy Stafford Department of Sport and Recreation, Victoria	<i>Women &amp; Physical Activity</i>  Lynn O'Donnell - Womensport Victoria. Peter Bourke – ValleySport	<i>Governance. What the ...?</i>  Steve Bowman - Life Mastery
<b>2:30pm – 3:30pm</b>	<i>Working with the Media - Radio &amp; Newspapers</i>  Margaret McLauchlan - UGFM Radio Murrindindi & Lisa McKenzie – Impress Publicity	<i>Healthy Landscapes - Sustainable Community</i>  Mark Costello Landcare	<i>Introduction to Cash Flow and Budgets</i>  Robert Pearce	<i>Successful Community Grants &amp; Applications</i>  <i>Cr Sue Marstaellar Mitchell Shire Council</i>	<i>Risk Management &amp; Insurance</i>  Lisa Elward & Sandice McAulay, Murrindindi Shire Council
<b>3:30pm</b>	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>				
<b>3:50pm</b>	<b>DRAWING THE THREADS TOGETHER</b>				
<b>4:30pm</b>	<b>NIBBLE AND NATTER</b>				

# Speakers and Presentation Briefs

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## **Welcome and Opening Plenary Session**

**Mark Amos, Chairman, Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership**

**Andrew Fuller, Clinical Psychologist, author**

Respected author and presenter, Andrew Fuller is a Clinical Psychologist who lectures on the promotion of resilience in people, schools and organisations across Australia. Andrew has established programs around the promotion of mental health in schools, substance abuse prevention, the reduction of violence and bullying, suicide prevention programs and assisting homeless young people. His programs have received awards for national excellence in the areas of violence prevention and mental health promotion. Andrew opened the conference in an entertaining and informative session on the importance of young people's resilience for the community's health and the importance of community groups to sustain and enliven communities.

**Frock-up Promotions**

Established by two nurses with over 20 years experience in many areas of the health profession, Frock-up Promotions provide an innovative approach to education and awareness, incorporating humour and theatre skills. Frock-up Promotions set the tone of the conference and introduced the workshops that would be conducted during the conference.

## **Presenters and Workshop Synopsis**

**Successful Community Grants and Applications**

**Cr Sue Marstaeller, Mitchell Shire Council**

Presented a workshop on increasing community group's confidence in writing submissions and improving their chances of securing funding. Sue answered many questions specific to community groups difficulties in this area. Topics included were - understanding the essentials of applications, planning submissions and writing for success.

**Change Stress and Coping with Burnout**

**Kerry Bittles, Mitchell Community Health and Ian Byron, Bureau of Rural Science**

Kerry and Byron examined the causes of stress for community group members who often can feel the effects of burnout. The workshop also showed the effect it can have and how individuals can change their current situation to reduce the impact of stress.

**Off their Face... In Your!**

**Mitchell Community Health Drug & Alcohol Team**

The Drug and Alcohol team at Mitchell Community Health Services highlighted some of the ways that community group members can respond to drug and alcohol related issues in their community and groups. The workshop covered recognising the problem, taking appropriate action and following up where necessary.

### ***Risk Management and Insurance***

#### ***Sandice McAulay and Lisa Elward, Murrindindi Shire Council***

The workshop looked at the types of insurance community groups need, and how to access the right policy. Information was provided on identifying risks and hazards in community group activities, how to rate these risks and how to effectively control them. Guidelines were given as to developing management guidelines for events organisations might hold.

### ***Working with the Media – Radio and Newspapers***

#### ***Margaret McLauchlan, UGFM – Radio Murrindindi and Lisa McKenzie, Impress Publicity***

Margaret and Lisa, both experienced in working with the media, conducted an interactive workshop about getting community group's messages heard. The workshop included giving groups tips on how to make their messages attractive to local media and ultimately the people that they need to reach. Topics included recognising the value of using local media to promote community groups and activities, and how to write effective media releases and how to give interviews.

### ***Social Marketing and Facilitating Action in the Broader Community***

#### ***Adrienne Stephens, Municipal Association of Victoria and Andrew Straker, Department of Sustainability and Environment***

Most community education programs produce an overabundance of informative, written material etc, but research demonstrates that simply providing information usually has little or no effect on what people DO. This workshop introduced the concept of Community Based Social Marketing (CBSM) and explained how CBSM can be used to develop sustainable behavioural change programs within communities.

The second half of the workshop documented how the Department of Sustainability and Environment has used an innovative approach to community engagement in their Living Systems Project.

### ***Community Publishing – High Tech vs High Touch***

#### ***Jo McInnes, Graph Attack***

The workshop, using online technologies, reviewed and demonstrated some of the latest online publishing tools. The focus was on resources that improve and sustain community groups and organisations with limited budgets and a wide range of communication needs. The workshop provided very practical and NONTECHNICAL examples of what was possible.

### ***Governance. What the...?***

#### ***Steve Bowman, LifeMastery***

This was a focused, information rich session that provided Board/Committee of Management and Coordinators of Not for Profit and community based organisations with the latest legal, compliance, strategic, risk management and best-practice processes in governance relevant to their position.

### ***Health Landscapes – Sustainable Community***

#### ***Mark Costello, Landcare***

Exploring how a community development approach can be applied to address natural resource management issues as well as other key issues affecting communities was the focus of this workshop. The workshop looked at using principals of Landcare, that is working together to respond to specific problems and identifying sustainable outcomes, to assist groups to look at their capacity/resources, develop visions and set objectives and finally to plan actions.

### ***Turning On the Lights***

#### ***Sandy Stafford, Department of Sport and Recreation Victoria***

Sandy presented an informative session outlining why community groups should include people with disabilities and how, by thinking outside the square, you can open your doors to anyone. Participants learnt how being more inclusive can attract people outside their traditional recruiting markets, and reinvigorate their organisations.

### ***Women and Physical Activity***

#### ***Lynne O'Donnell, Womensport Victoria and Peter Burke, ValleySport***

Less than 60 per cent of Australian females participate in sport or physical activity (the figure is even lower in rural areas). This workshop examined the issues and looked for sustainable solutions to this area of concern in female health – both from a sporting and a health perspective.

### ***Volunteering and Sustainable Community Development***

#### ***David Hall & Marie Hogarth, Berry Street Victoria (Alexandra)***

The workshop explored the recruitment, training and strengthening of volunteers in community groups and looked at sustainable community development. Participants heard some of the lessons learnt through the Connect for Kids program. Key messages included the benefit of using local content and identifying key local people to raise community knowledge, identifying and building on local initiatives, establishing credibility and developing partnerships to ensure your program has a future further than tomorrow.

### ***Introduction to Cash Flow and Budgets***

#### ***Robert Pearce- Previous company director, lecturer in business studies***

This workshop provided community groups with an introduction to the advantages of using a combined Budget & Cash Flow Plan, and knowledge of how to prepare one for their organisation. Particular emphasis was on the use of the Plan to supervise the financial performance & health of your organisation. Topics included cash accounting, budget preparation and developing a manual or electronic planning and control document.

## The Conference Expo

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As part of the conference an expo was held. The expo was an opportunity for community groups to access resources and information that would assist them to operate more effectively. The expo was also an opportunity for health care and community services organisations to showcase their services and have an opportunity to meet the decision makers of community groups.

The main times in which people viewed the expo was during the lunch period 12.30-1.30pm and during the “Nibble and Natter” session at the end of the day 4.30-5.30pm. However participants were free to browse at the stalls at anytime during the day.

### **Expo exhibitors**

- Landcare/Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- Avenal Neighbourhood House
- Goulburn Valley Family Care
- Murrindindi Shire Council
- Murrindindi Community Health Services
- Valleysport
- Rural Housing Network Ltd
- Pathways

# Conference Statistics

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Total numbers attending: 106

Total number of presenters: 23

Community groups represented	65
Organisations	12
Landcare	9
Hall /Recreation reserve committees	8
Specific action groups	6
Sporting clubs	6
Neighbourhood Houses	5
Community action groups	5
Education based groups	4
Aged care groups	4
Churches	1
Historical societies	1
Tourism groups	1
Support groups	1
Other interest groups	1
Friendship groups	1

## Total Attendance Split:

Murrindindi Shire	Mitchell Shire	Other shires
55 %	44%	3%

## Community Group Split:

Murrindindi Shire	Mitchell Shire
58%	42%

8 Community groups sent three or more delegates

## Workshop Demand

Based on the 108 applications sent in to be processed, the highest demand sessions were:

1. Successful Community Grants and Applications
2. Risk Management and Insurance
3. Social marketing and facilitating action in the broader community
4. Working with the media
5. Healthy landscapes-sustainable communities
6. Introduction to cash flow and budgets
7. Governance. What the...?
8. Change, stress, and coping with burnout
9. Community Publishing-High tech vs high touch
10. Women and physical activity
11. Turning the lights on
12. Off their face...in yours

**Attendance Analysis:**

- A broad range of community groups were represented in the grant submission workshops
- Sporting groups did not attend workshops on volunteering, however there was an equal representation across all other group types
- Neighbourhood House groups were more likely to attend a workshop on stress and burnout
- Sporting groups did not attend the workshop on dealing with people under the influence of alcohol
- A wide range of community organisations attended the risk management workshop
- Organisations attended the workshop on facilitating change in the wider community more than any other group
- A wide range of community groups chose to participate in the disability, working with the media and cash flow workshops.

## Conference Evaluation

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The committee developed the following plan to evaluate the outcomes of the conference.

Evaluation	Activities	Resources
<p><b>Goal:</b></p> <p>To improve the capacity of community groups to operate successfully, to expand and to achieve their goals.</p>	<p>Participant questionnaire</p> <p>Phone interview with community groups in attendance six months from the completion of the conference to assess the degree to which they have used the information they gained.</p>	
<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>To provides resources for community groups in the Shires of Mitchell and Murrindindi that assist them to develop their organisations.</p> <p>To increase the opportunity for networking relationships to develop between community organisations and local health and community service agencies.</p>	<p>It was intended that Andrew Fuller would gather information about resources that were given to community groups as an evaluation for this objective.</p> <p>Participant evaluation questionnaire also addressed this question.</p> <p>Planning committee observations of interactions on the day</p> <p>Andrews observations Planning</p>	<p>Questionnaire was distributed to all participants, whose names went into a draw for a prize as an incentive to complete</p> <p>Planning committee met soon after the conference to discuss their observations</p>
<p>Actual Conference delivery</p>	<p>Registration numbers</p> <p>Quality of materials</p> <p>Quality and satisfaction with the speakers</p> <p>Quality of expo</p> <p>Quality of food and venue</p>	<p>The participant questionnaire provided the main feedback</p> <p>Observations of committee members</p>

# Working Group Evaluation

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A questionnaire was sent to all the committee members seeking their response to a number of questions around their involvement in the planning process, following are the results:

## **1. Levels of participation by the committee - – how have you been involved in the planning /preparation of the Community Conference?**

- Sharing of agency resources
- Planning of the conference
- A variety of tasks were shared between the planning committee where particular skills and knowledge were apparent. Some examples included hiring equipment, the organisation and co-ordination of speakers, information technology co-ordination and promotion of the conference.

## **2. How did the committee communicate? In what ways was it effective/not effective?**

Most planning committee members described the communication methods as effective. Regular and prompt e-mails ensured communication was effective. There was a good balance between the mediums of meetings, phone calls and e-mails. Meetings were good to discuss issues and make decisions. The use of task lists was a good method of keeping the committee on track.

## **3. What time, money, and other resources went into the planning of the conference by your agency**

The main resources that went into planning the conference by agency members were their time to attend meetings. Most respondents felt that the resource allocation was worth it for their organisation because of the great opportunity to network, share resources, and increased skill development as a result.

## **4. How have you felt about the planning process?**

The majority of the planning committee felt satisfied with the process of organising the conference. Several of the committee felt that we should allow more time to plan; however the process of having clear deadlines was of assistance. The conference could have been better advertised according to two respondents.

## **5. Was the conference as timely and effective as it could be?**

The committee identified that besides the need to begin the planning process earlier, that the conference was timely. Groups needed flyers earlier as many community groups only meet once every three months. It was noted that the time of the year was good but that the venue may need to be larger next time.

## **6. As a working group how did we perform in the following areas (shared objectives, collective expertise for task, agreed roles, communication between members)?**

The working group identified that they had good skills in sharing objectives, and collective expertise for tasks that were involved. They rated themselves highly for agreeing about their roles, and for communication between members.

## **7. What opportunities for integration between agencies have occurred as a result of the planning of the community conference?**

The main comments indicate that agencies have been able to build better relationships with each other as a result of the planning for the conference. Several agencies indicated they are now participating in a joint project as a result of the closer ties they developed through the conference working group.

**8. Would you participate in a similar working group in the future?**

Most respondents indicated they would be keen to be a part of a similar working group as long as the objectives were in line with their agency objectives.

**9. What recommendations would you make around the planning for a future conference of this sort?**

The committee made several recommendations as to improving the planning for a conference. Respondents indicated that allowing more time would be beneficial to the planning process. It was suggested that the committee make up a list of tasks, actions, and timelines around what was involved this time for future use.

**What we have done well?**

- Sharing our resources, resources and expertise
- Regular communication through e-mails and task lists
- Good communication between committee members

**What would we do differently next time?**

- Allow more time for planning and advertising
- Hire a larger venue

## Participant Evaluation

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All participants received an evaluation survey in their conference bags. Participants were encouraged to fill them in and were offered to be part of a draw to win a prize upon its completion. Following are the results:

Note: 83 Surveys were completed. Where there are percentage figures in the results summary, these are based on the TOTAL figure being 83.

In terms of meeting our target audience the conference was mostly successful. There was an overrepresentation of organisations, however, that meant that some community groups may have missed out.

1: *How did you hear about this conference?*

Sent brochure	67	80%
Community publication	3	4%
Local Newspaper advertisement	4	5%
Website	0	0%
From a friend	8	10%
Did not answer	1	1%

2: *Please specify the main reason for attending this conference*

Content of workshops	44	53%
%Networking opportunity	4	5%
Personal growth	3	4%
Community group growth	27	32%
Speakers	3	4%
Other	1	1%
Did not answer	1	1%

3: *Did the conference fulfil your reason for attending?*

Yes	77	93%
No	1	1%
Unsure	4	5%
Did not answer	1	1%

4a: *In your opinion, did the Community Conference meet its aims to provide resources for community groups to assist them in the development of their organisations?*

Yes	76	92%
No	1	1%
Unsure	5	6%
Did not answer	1	1%

4b: *In your opinion, did the Community Conference meet its aims to increase the opportunity for networking relationships to develop between community organisations and community service agencies?*

Yes	69	83%
No	4	5%
Unsure	9	11%
Did not answer	1	1%

5: *Welcome and Opening by Andrew Fuller. Do you have a greater understanding of community resilience and the role that community organisations play as a result of this session?*

Yes	69	83%
No	3	4%
Unsure	10	12%
Did not answer	1	1%

6: *Welcome and Opening – Frock-up Promotions. Was this session enjoyable and did it help to set the scene for the day?*

Yes	77	94%
No	2	2%
Unsure	2	2%
Did not answer	2	2%

7: For each workshop you attended during the day, please indicate on the scale your degree of satisfaction with the workshop components.

	To what degree was the presentation clear and concise?			The presenter was well practiced and confident.			To what degree was the material relevant to the audience?			The audience questions were thoroughly answered by the presenter.			The handouts were clear and useful.		
	Av	High	Low	Av	High	Low	Av	High	Low	Av	High	Low	Av	High	Low
<b>SESSION ONE</b>															
<i>Successful Community Grants and Applications</i>	8	10	6	9	10	6	9	10	5	8	10	5	9	10	5
<i>Volunteering and Sustainable Community Development</i>	8	10	3	8	10	4	7	10	3	7	10	2	8	10	1
<i>Community Publishing – High Tech vs High Touch</i>	8	8	8	9	10	8	9	10	8	9	10	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Change, Stress and Coping with Burnout</i>	7	10	6	8	10	5	7	10	5	8	10	5	8	10	7
<i>Off Their Face ... In Yours</i>	7	10	5	7	10	5	7	8	5	8	10	5	5	10	1
<b>SESSION TWO</b>															
<i>Risk Management and Insurance</i>	8	10	7	8	10	7	8	10	8	8	10	7	9	10	8
<i>Social Marketing and Facilitating Change in the Broader Community</i>	9	10	5	9	10	7	8	10	5	5	10	1	7	10	4
<i>Opening the Doors to all Abilities</i>	8	10	5	9	10	5	9	10	7	9	10	8	9	10	8
<i>Women &amp; Physical Activity</i>	8	10	5	8	10	6	8	10	4	8	10	3	9	10	6
<i>Governance. What The?</i>	9	10	8	9	10	9	9	10	8	9	10	9	9	10	8
<b>SESSION THREE</b>															
<i>Working with the Media – Radio and Newspapers</i>	9	10	6	9	10	6	9	10	7	7	10	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Healthy Landscapes – Sustainable Communities</i>	6	10	1	6	10	1	6	10	2	5	10	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Introduction to Cash Flow and Budgets</i>	8	10	5	9	10	5	9	10	5	8	10	6	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Successful community grants and Applications</i>	9	10	7	10	10	9	9	10	8	10	10	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Risk Management and Insurance</i>	8	10	7	8	10	7	9	10	8	9	10	7	N/A	N/A	N/A

8: *Drawing the Threads Together* – This session helped to put all the information from the day into context.

Yes	54	65%
No	0	0%
Unsure	5	6%
Did not answer	24	29%

## **Summary of Delegates Ideas from the “Drawing the Threads Together” session**

(The theme was around what further things could be done to strengthen your community)

- Recruit more volunteers
- Review the constitution
- Apply for grants
- Review insurance policies and risk assessments
- Change old behaviours
- Improve websites
- Groups to link up and work together (applying for funding and insurance)
- Identify skills in communities to draw information into them more
- Identify possible community projects/initiatives
- Documentations – identify what supports are needed and how projects can be delivered

### **MITCHELL**

- Bike and walking tracks
- New community centre (Wallan)
- Skateboard park (Broadford, Kilmore)
- Disabled parking throughout shire
- Pavement – urgent repairs
- Affordable housing
- Footpaths – High street Seymour – urgent attention
- Respite Care
- Seymour High street crossing, Kilmore/Wallan crossing
- Traffic management – all over

### **MURRINDINDI**

- Promote what we do with a view to get more volunteers
- We need a building to call a youth action centre in each town
- Active youth worker/with access to centres
- Public transport between centres at convenient hours
- Better medical facilities in small centres
- Youth – involvement. Communities+ responsibility, self esteem, all abilities
- Training (Committee) Up skill – organisation
- Training – volunteers
- Old people
- Whole of community “Anti Bullying” program
- Understanding of other committee workers
- Youth and older people linkages
- Grant applications
- Drought affected older people (other than farmers)
- Sustainability of communities
- Increased media awareness
- Mentoring to increase resilience across community.
- Promoting to government the benefits for the community beyond productivity/economic benefits.

9: Conference Organisation

Question	Yes	No	Did not answer
Trawool Valley Resort was a suitable venue for the conference.	80 (96%)	0	3 (4%)
The registration process was simple and flowed.	79 (95%)	1 (1%)	3 (4%)
The initial conference brochure was clear and well presented.	79 (95%)	1 (1%)	3 (4%)
My request for information was responded to promptly.	71 (86%)	0	12 (14%)
Planning staff were responsive and courteous during the conference.	80(96%)	0	3 (4%)
The expo was useful in providing relevant information to community groups.	78 (94%)	2 (2%)	3 (4%)
Would it be more suitable to hold the conference over two days?	34 (41%)	44 (53%)	5 (6%)

10a: Follow Up. What topics would be useful to cover should another conference be held?

- A better understanding of the Shire's commitment to community groups.
- Insurance obligations and opportunities.
- Andrew Fuller - Helping youth day. Help us help them.
- Biodiversity Planning.
- Group building and support.
- Community Health.
- Equity for all communities - how to achieve in disadvantaged areas.
- Compiling group listings.
- Other similar groups in the area - i.e. networking.
- Mutual feedback.
- Dealing with conflict / conflict resolution.
- Communication skills - ability to work with different people and keep the group cohesive.
- MORE sessions by Andrew Fuller.
- Employing staff - pitfalls and positives.
- Committee of management - training volunteers vs getting skills based people around the table.
- Marketing / promotion for NOT FOR PROFITS.
- Networking through case studies of community groups and not for profits.
- Understanding how contacts operate & establishing contacts.
- Governance.
- Revenue streams.
- Empowering groups to keep asking!
- Exercising for older people - Males and Females.
- Funding Opportunities - e.g. different organisations & procedures on obtaining funding.
- Investing Club money to gain profit.
- Governance issues - today's session was great.
- Governance.
- Healthy Lifestyles.
- Better life for aging & middle years.
- Helping our children & grandchildren & more.
- It would be interesting to know more about other participant organisations (rather than just presenters) - perhaps more room for displays (as part of the motivation for attendance is networking).
- Law & Order.
- Rural Road Safety.
- Local Club / Organisational Management.
- Incorporation.
- More networking.
- More opportunities.
- More on attracting volunteers from the community and how to do this.

- Networking.
- More marketing - Adrienne Stephens was a true motivator.
- Keeping community members inspired.
- More on Community Grants - Where to find them - eligibility.
- Networking.
- More on Governance (this is so important).
- Creating revenue streams.
- Requirements / obligations when employing staff.
- More time on media usage - including web design.
- Networking - how to better community and intercommunity links and cooperation, share ideas, innovations and strengths and problem solving.
- Establish Shire wide volunteer website.
- Networking with other groups.
- Employment opportunities.
- Policy and procedure.
- Proformas and Policies.
- Recruiting more volunteers.
- Policy Development and Proformas
- Politics in groups.
- Strategic / Business Planning.
- Resilience.
- Social change - Marketing.
- Shire-Wide Volunteer Expo.
- Ideas to engage younger volunteers in organisations.
- Social Marketing & Facilitating Change.
- Would love to do more in the area of Biodiversity.
- Volunteering - more hands on how to recruit and train.
- Marketing - design brochures etc.

10b: *I would like to be kept informed of other events that my community group could benefit from.*

Yes	63	76%
No	2	3%
Did not answer	18	21%

#### **Other comments from participants**

- A great day full of useful information.
- A valuable experience all round. Thank you.
- Afternoon Sessions were too long i.e. 1:30pm - 3:30pm. Felt that the participants were getting tired by the end.
- Andrew Fuller would inspire anyone. Great choice - never lose sight that the children of today are the adults of tomorrow. So much info - too little time but great just the same. Very well organised event.
- Excellent day!! Thoughtful, interesting & relevant.
- Excellent day. Congratulations to all the organisational work.
- Excellent presentations by all speakers.
- Frock Up were very funny.
- Governance session very well done. Fund raising very informative. Lunch was excellent. Good Day. Well Done.
- Great day - thanks to the organisers.
- Great day of learning and networking! Thanks for initiating the conference, there was an optimistic theme throughout the whole day & it was magnificent to meet so many community oriented others.
- If the conference went over two days, I could have attended all topics.

- It was a bit rushed with very limited time to look at the expo and network and chat. This would be solved if it was over 2 days, however, this would take a greater commitment from participants and some may not come.
- It was well planned and very enjoyable.
- Maybe needed more time for networking. The final birthdays / shoes / groups etc might have helped to break the ice at the beginning.
- More time was needed in the sessions.
- Older people have found today very taxing.
- Very well organised - Thankyou!
- Well Done!
- Well organised - congratulations!
- Workshops were too short.
- Would be good over two days so we could attend more sessions - they are fantastic!
- Would not have known about conference except from word of mouth. NIL advertising in local magazines - i.e. Mountain Monthly. Had to investigate how to obtain brochure & registration form.
- 1st session was postponed & whilst I was in the 2nd choice of the 1st session I was told I could return to the initial room and attend the 1st session through lunch. Realised that had I done so - No lunch and 2 sessions would have been interrupted!
- Absolutely marvellous! Short & sweet - plenty to intake but not an overload. Will be using some of today's ideas and activities as soon as I've left here. Make these a couple of times a year for people who couldn't be here today. Speakers clear.
- Andrew Fuller's introduction was good & very popular but would have benefited more by more emphasis on its relevance. Of what relevance was psychological development of children? Presumably, healthy children, well understood, leads to healthy communities.
- Conference somewhat parochial & "Alex specific" considering "Strengthening our Communities" was the name of the Expo. Much is happening in the oft-mentioned locations, which is commendable however we "fringe dwellers" in Kinglake are seemingly neglected.
- Congratulations to the organisers on a fabulous day.
- Excellent in all respects.
- Great Effort!
- I enjoyed the conference. However I felt at times some speakers could have spoken a little longer. I would have liked to hear other speakers. Well done though. If handouts are available this helps to concentrate on the speaker rather than spend time note taking. I found nothing I didn't know already.
- I was pleasantly surprised with the content and information given in all sessions and would be very willing to come to more events of this nature. Thanks for a great informative day.
- Insufficient time for the expo (lunch area was crowded). Insufficient time for questions in the first two sessions I attended. Insufficient time for reflections on how to use the information back in our groups.
- It would be good to hold a two-day conference so you can go to 6 rather than 3 sessions. The session lengths were great - they were informative and not too long, so you did not get bored or agitated.
- It would have been great to attend more workshops - or all. Well done & hope we can do this again. But some of the workshops were useless to community groups and they are definitely not workshops.
- Lots of things to do - not enough time.
- There was some lag time at the commencement of the conference. Other than that, the conference was very well administered.
- Would have been able to attend more sessions (if over two days) to round out the relevant information.
- Would have been nice to have the conference over 2 days - but potentially less logistically feasible. Time off work. Transport vs Accommodation etc.
- An excellent conference. I have been to conferences where the registration fee has been in the \$100s and have not received 10% of the information of this conference. It had an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere right from the start.
- Excellent forum. Good quality speakers. Well organised.

- I think the whole conference went well. There was good coverage of subjects for everyone. Well Done.
- Replacement and postponement process appeared disorganised. I understood I would have the opportunity to workshop here - this has not happened. Every session run, has for the most part, been full from beginning to end of speakers reading word for word from overheads. I have been talked at for over 31/2 hours & am near brain dead. I have gained little information or satisfaction from this experience except a disquieting awareness that the topics I chose were not delivered.  
Thank you! (Lots of these!)
- The resort was an excellent venue. Thank you for an excellent day.
- Thumbs up to the Community Grants session and the Introduction to Cash flow and Budgets session.
- Was happy to be thanked as a volunteer for today by Lisa Elward.
- Well done! You did a great job. It was a fantastic conference.
- Benefits for the community, beyond productivity, economic.
- I have just moved to Yea from the city and being involved in this conference has re-enforced many of the reasons why we moved here with our young family. This conference has certainly reinforced what it means to "belong" to a community.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The conference reached its target audience with the majority of participants from community groups within the two shires. The main community group types were Landcare organisations and hall and recreation reserve committees. Slightly more delegates came from the Murrindindi Shire. Future conferences need to examine whether organisations need to be excluded.

The vast majority of delegates were sent a brochure through their community group. Over half the respondents attended the conference because of the content of the workshops and for community group growth. Over 90% stated that the conference fulfilled the reason they had for attending.

The vast majority of delegates described that the conference achieved its goals and objectives. The majority of participants believed that Andrew Fuller presented information about community resilience and the role of community groups towards this end. Ninety-four percent of participants stated that Frock-up presentations set the scene for the conference.

In analysing the data around delegate's opinions on the workshops it can be concluded that most were pleased with their presenter. All delegates rated their presenters over six for being clear and concise, with the majority indicating eight. Presenters were described as rating an average of eight for being well practised and confident. The material was highly relevant to the audience according to the evaluations. An area of improvement according to the evaluations would be in allowing time for audience questions to be thoroughly answered. Most thought that the handouts were clear and useful.

The workshop most high in demand was "Successful Community Grants and Applications followed by Risk Management and Insurance. The least popular was the "Off their face...in yours workshop. Many of the workshops showed a wide variation in the spread of community groups. Sporting groups did not attend workshops on volunteerism, while Neighbourhood house were largely represented in the stress and burnout session.

Sixty-five percent of delegates believed that the concluding session with Andrew put all the information together from the day into context. The vast majority believed the venue was suitable, the registration process was simple, the brochure was clear, and requests for information were responded to promptly. A little over half stated that the conference would be best kept at one day.

Other conference topics that were popular included, networking, drawing in volunteers and sustaining them, governance issues, and policy development.

# Speakers and Presenters Evaluation

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## 1. To what degree was your presentation relevant to your audience?

The average response by speakers to this question was eight indicating they believed their workshops were highly relevant to their audiences.

## 2. To what degree was the conference a relevant forum for your topic?

The average response was nine to this question indicating that speakers felt the conference was highly relevant to their presentation.

## 3. What responses did you receive from your participants following your session?

### Themes

Calls for more information and assistance	4
Enjoyed the presentation	2
Responses were great	1
Not a good venue for presentation	1

## 4. As a presenter what suggestions can you make to improve our conference in the future?

- If more than one presentation is planned there is a need for a break between sessions
- The poolroom is inappropriate for presentations
- Longer presentation time for some topics such as cash flow/budgets

## 5. Are there any ways in which we could have assisted you further in the delivery of your sessions?

- Only the venue as above

## 6. In your opinion did the community conference meet its aims to:

### a. provide resources for community groups to assist them in the development of their organisations?

All respondents answered yes to the question

### b. increase the opportunity for networking relationships to develop between community organisations and community services agencies?

All respondents answered yes to the question

## 7. In your opinion Trawool valley resort was a suitable venue for the conference?

Four respondents said yes but one believed the poolroom was inappropriate

## 8. The contact I had with planning staff was professional and efficient?

Four respondents replied yes to the question, stating that the committee was helpful and pleasant. Two respondents commented that the draft should have been circulated prior to printing. One respondent stated that the program had not been proofed.

### **9. My request for information was responded to promptly?**

All respondents stated yes

### **10. The expo was useful in providing relevant information to community groups?**

All respondents answered yes to the question, one respondent stated that it was a great opportunity to meet with community groups and that they hope it will become an ongoing event.

### **11. Would it have been more suitable to hold the conference over two days?**

Most respondents answered no to the question one stating that:

“it would be great but I feel you wouldn’t get the same numbers, community groups can’t afford for participants to stay overnight..”

One respondent however did state that:

“the community members I talked to all appreciated the opportunity to network- more time over two days to network would be great.”

### **12. Other comments**

- Planning group to be commended
- Excellent conference
- Great opportunity for community groups to network
- Longer planning time frame and collaboration with other community council workshops being run in the region
- Different messages from different staff of what time to arrive and set up

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The speakers that were invited proved to be highly relevant to their audience. Many presenters experienced participants asking more questions and wanting to receive more information. There is a need, according to presenters to make sure rooms are not crowded, that speakers need a break between sessions and that some presentations needed to be longer.

# Planning Committee “On the Day” Evaluation

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## **1. Comment on the workshops and presenters that you saw or heard about? How could they have delivered their message better?**

- Two lots of double speakers that didn't tie in very well together
- Double speaker sessions sometimes meant that jamming up occurred and that there was no time for comments.
- Some presenters overemphasised their own programs rather than used it as an example.
- There was a need for a more articulate program of delivery for presenters involving more interaction, and guidance about what is involved in workshop delivery. Guidance could include asking presenters what the one burning question is in their presentation and build their workshop around it. Planning staff felt that presenters needed some guidance on the use of IT, arriving on time, more recognition of the seriousness of their job, and having synopsis's that reflected what their workshop was actually covering.
- Presenters needed to give a copy of photocopies next time to include in proceedings booklet.
- It was difficult for speakers who had to repeat a session, by the second session they felt flat.
- Feedback from participants was very good

## **2. Please comment on your own observations and comments from other on Andrew Fuller's session.**

- Lacked the community feel theme a little
- Focused too much on children and families
- The last session needed to bring all the threads together and summarise and reflect on the purpose of the conference.
- The session did not address the theme or provide ideas for groups to use.
- The end session would have been better at the start as an ice-breaker
- Great feedback from the participants
- We didn't seem to get the benefit of having him there all day
- There is always an expectation that if you write something down like what participants want, then you will do it for them.
- The conference was missing the important conclusion

## **3. Comment on the Frock-Up presentation from your own observations and from comments by participants.**

- Very, very funny
- Good to relax people
- Fun but too long
- The group really enjoyed it
- Extensive laughter and participation

## **4. Comment on the appropriateness of the venue.**

- Venue good
- Rooms for individual sessions could have been bigger
- Venue was adequate for size and location
- Extra room will be needed next time
- Rooms down below were not so good
- A few commented that it was too far from a lot of those in the Murrindindi Shire and seemed to be located for those in Mitchell. (i1/2 hours drive from Eildon verses a 20 minute drive from places in Mitchell.)
- The Bittles room and Poolroom were overcrowded

## 5. Please comment on any networking you observed during the conference?

### Observation of Community Groups

- A bigger room and more time for networking would have been useful
- Mixing groups rather than splitting shires at the end would have been better
- Some examples of talking
- Maybe we should think about a few smaller workshops that mix groups and allow participants to introduce and meet others
- Good networking but we should have mixed it up a bit more, and made each room introduce individual members, representative community group and why they were there.
- Didn't seem extensive but I was so busy anyway

### Opportunity for own agencies

- Expo was great for this
- I had no time and attendance by Landcare groups was poor
- Great it was good to spend time with other local services and get to know them very well.

## 6. What things do you feel worked well?

- The planning, implementation and evaluation worked well
- Good workshop topics
- Venue and meals
- Organisation of bookings, program, and facilities
- The day flowed really well
- Breaks were good
- Session lengths were good

## What would you suggest we do differently next time? How could we improve the running of the day next time?

- A different registration process, involving a couple more people on the desk, and a queries section so that those doing registrations can do that and not have 5 or 6 people waiting in line – not good for delegates.
- All organisers could wear T-shirts. (Like the Tough Times, Tough People t-shirts) This way they are easy to find, just a badge is not so easy.
- Need to allow more time to develop each workshop. The initial idea that each presenter presents a workshop and not a lecture and within the time limits. Maybe a bit of leeway with time could have helped the many questions to be answered.
- More gaps between workshops for individuals to talk to presenters
- Think about how we could cater for more first and second choices, perhaps by cancelling some speakers, and leaving space in the program for repeat presentations.
- More direct actions to help community groups strengthen themselves
- What do they want to make stronger in the community arena?
- In local nodes, decide on action to take together
- Across networks, decide on action to take together
- Invite representatives to a separate future round table forum to resolve issues.
- Rooms needed to be more clearly marked or colour coded
- Presenters should have to submit presentation 2 weeks prior so notes can be collated
- Highlighting information people through hats or t-shirts
- A panel discussion at the end would have been more useful, where there could be discussion, suggestions from the audience or even a few case studies.
- We should encourage more ownership by agencies in the process.
- Drinks should be served at the end in the big room
- Monthly newsletter about the progress of the conference leading to broader communication
- Make registrations not open until 9.00am.
- A video camera and maybe a professional photographer is needed.

## Recommendations

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- Work more with presenters on formats, and give guidance on building their workshops.
- Don't tie two speakers in together or repeat two of the same sessions one after the other.
- Ensure that all session speakers are aware of what their brief is and check
- Make sure the venue is appropriately large enough next time
- If any doubts arise from the room size on inspections take notice of them
- Give the Expo more room next time and expand it
- Plan in much the same but use the action list from this time and allow much more time especially for advertising to community groups who may only meet once every three months.
- Make a booklet with all handouts and presenter talks in it
- Think of a new format for the conclusion maybe a panel discussion
- Agencies need to be shown how important this is for them and take a larger responsibility for putting in resources next time
- Communication could begin with a newsletter
- Registration should not begin until nine. An information desk would be useful in addition to a registration desk. Helper could wear T-shirt to help delegates find them
- Place even less emphasis on the attendance of organisations

For more information on being involved in the planning of the next community conference contact Yvonne Padgett, Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership on 5797 3271 or e-mail at [lowerhumepcp@virtual.net.au](mailto:lowerhumepcp@virtual.net.au).