



Strengthening Our Communities

Thriving! Not just surviving

Lower Hume Community Conference

21 April 2005

Final Report



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Background

Community Capacity Building – The way forward

Strategic planning at both the local government and cross catchment level highlighted the need to build the community's capacity to become an active participant in their health and wellbeing.

It was established that the best way to achieve this aim was to enhance the ability of community groups within the Shires of Mitchell and Murrindindi to become participants in the development of strategies and activities that improved their health and wellbeing.

The **2004 -2006 Lower Hume Community Health Plan** outlines the following objective for the engagement of community in the area of health and wellbeing:

Improve the capacity of community groups to operate successfully, expand and achieve their goals.

The **Murrindindi Shire Council Municipal Public Health Plan 2004 – 2007** outlines the following objective for the engagement of community in the area of health and wellbeing:

Increase the opportunity for community to participate in decision making, strategic planning and policy development.

The conference was also born out of a desire to strengthen the links between local health and community service agencies and the community, to achieve better health outcomes for the region and more effective use of health resources.

Community groups are often the glue that holds our towns together, but changing rules and regulations, lack of resources and member burn-out is taking a toll on the support they can provide. The focus of the conference is to build the capacity of local groups to take control of their own situation and have the knowledge to make important decisions about their future - so they don't just survive, they thrive!

Aims and Objectives of the Conference

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

To manage the development of the Community Conference, a working group was convened. Participants included

Katie Brown	Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
Peter Mitchell	Landcare Co-ordinator South West Goulburn
Yvonne Padgett	Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership
Natalie Stewart	Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership
Bernadine Kenyon	Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership
Veronica Salter	Mitchell Community Health Services
Jaime Carroll	Mitchell Shire Council
Jenny Branton	Murrindindi Shire Council
Natalie Wischer	Yea and District Memorial Hospital

Administrative assistance and conference day support was also provided by:

Jacqui Kelly	Murrindindi Shire Council
Chris Wasley	Yea and District Memorial Hospital

Financial Contributions

Vic Health Grant

The conference was part funded by a grant from VicHealth under their Conference Support Scheme. The Lower Hume Community Conference was successful in attracting **\$3000**.

Agency Contribution

The following organisations supported the conference with a financial contribution:

Significant Contribution:

- Murrindindi Shire
- Mitchell Shire
- Central Ranges LLEN

Other agency contribution:

- Goulburn Valley Health
- Mitchell Community Health Services
- Seymour District Memorial Hospital
- The Kilmore and District Hospital
- Yea and District Memorial Hospital

2005 Community Conference Timetable

9:15am	REGISTRATION				
9:45 – 9.55am	WELCOME AND OFFICIAL OPENING				
9.55 – 10.55am	MORNING PLENARY SESSION				
10:55am	MORNING TEA				
Session Times	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3	Workshop 4	Workshop 5
11:10am – 12:10pm	Taking Your Community Group Online	What Makes a Successful Community Group?	Engaging Young People	Risk Assessment	Hop...Skip...Jump
12:10 - 1.00pm	LUNCH / LUNCHTIME ACTIVITY BRACKET				
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Being Investor Ready	How to Manage Your Community Group Effectively	Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers	Risk Management	Making The Most of the Media
2.00 – 2.30pm	AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSION				
2:30pm – 3:30pm	Magnetism, Motivation and Movement	Funding for Community Groups	Building Active, Confident and Resilient Communities	For Safety's Sake	You Can Play in the Sandpit Too!
3:30pm	AFTERNOON TEA				
3:50 – 4.15pm	FINAL PLENARY SESSION				
4:15pm	NIBBLE AND NATTER				

Speakers and Presentation Briefs

Welcome and Opening Plenary Session

Mark Amos, Chairman, Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership

Glen Manton

Glenn is far from your average athlete. Having played senior AFL football for both Carlton and Essendon for 12 years, Glenn is now embarking on a new sporting quest involving both snow and speed. The Winter Olympics in Torino Italy are set firmly in his sights.

Known for his charity-based work (*Whitelion* est. 1999) Glenn strikes a rapport with a large demographic. His ability to speak publicly to corporate groups or school aged youth is renowned. With a degree in Education and a top selling semi-autobiography to his credit, Glenn continually shows that he is more than just an athlete.

Presenters and Workshop Synopsis

Taking Your Community Group Online

Owen Polanski, Vicnet

Having an online home for your community group can be a valuable communication and marketing tool. In this workshop you can learn how an online group can support the day to day operation of your 'real world' community organisation and how to make yours motivating and important enough so people will overcome time and technical barriers to participate in it. The workshop will also demonstrate the benefits of online communities and how to make these benefits measurable and visible to your members.

What Makes a Successful Community Group?

Terry Chubb, Chubb Business & Training Solutions

Planning can help identify the sort of future a community group wants, and work out the steps needed to make it happen. This workshop will discuss how the planning process will be the 'blueprint' for future success. It will also cover financial management for community groups, including pointers on keeping the books, recording your income and expenditure and having information easily accessible.

Engaging Young People

Adam Cockerell & Paul Teusner, Cutting Edge UnitingCare

This workshop will explore the intricate art of engaging young people in community participation and providing relevant skills for workers and volunteers attempting to break down the barriers to engagement. Whether it's understanding the language of young people or providing the right forum for their voice to be heard, this session offers relevant examples and uses the collective experiences of the group to help participants gain insight into the engagement of young people.

Risk Assessment

Pauline East, Victoria Police

We will identify what areas of business could be adversely affected by risk, including the identification of existing elements that may contribute to risk. We will identify what constitutes a risk, including the separation of perceived and actual threats. We will analyse these risks as to the causal factors that have led to exposure. We will prioritise these risks for treatment. We will identify solutions for the treatments of these risks while adhering to the principles of the priorities we have set. In doing this, we will attempt to create a practical model, which participants will feel confident to implement.

Hop... Skip... Jump

Janine Cochrane, Musical Movement Performing Arts (MMPA)

With obesity amongst our young children on the rise, the MMPA program is a fun way for children to work on their fine and gross motor skills. In this workshop you'll learn how to start an MMPA program, work through a typical class, workshop how to utilise local businesses for support and look at the wider social benefits of involving the mums and dads too.

Being Investor Ready

Presenter: Heather Holder, Regional Landcare Facilitator (Goulburn Broken)

Does your community group depend solely on government-based grants to fund your projects? *Being Investor Ready* will discuss the alternative project support option of investment from local businesses and private organisations. Workshop participants will learn what's involved, assess their group's readiness for investment, and brainstorm ideas to make it all happen.

How to Manage Your Community Group Effectively

Mary-ann McCue, Mitchell Shire Council

Managing a community group can be an extremely rewarding but stressful experience. Many feel they are 'doing it alone' due to lack of support or advice. This workshop will address some common issues facing community groups and provide useful advice and resources to help overcome them.

Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

Dianna Conelley, Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau

This workshop will look at ways in which to recruit and retain your organisation's most vital asset: your volunteer staff. A brief overview will also be provided on the Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not for Profit Organisations and ideas on how to establish a volunteer management program for your organisation.

Risk Management and Insurance

Sandice McAuley and Lisa Ellwood, Murrindindi Shire Council

A look at the types of insurance your community group needs, and how to access the right policy. Information on how to identify risks and hazards in your community group activities, how to rate these risks and how to effectively control them. You will learn how to develop event management guidelines for any event your organisation might hold.

Making the Most of the Media

Jeni Emmins, journalist

Letting the public know what you and your group are doing is easy and has great benefits for you, the wider community and the media itself. Discussion-based workshop on how to communicate with the media — local and beyond — and build an on-going relationship that benefits all. A guide to writing press releases that attract editors' attention, photos that stand out, keeping people regularly informed of your activities and advertising versus editorial.

Magnetism, Motivation and Movement

Mitchell Community Health Services

Using their combined knowledge of community groups and techniques for including physical activity in everyday life, the presenters from Mitchell Community Health Services will workshop with participants to develop a tool that community groups can use to encourage safe, fun and practical ways to introduce more activity into their group.

Funding for Community Groups

Peter Bourke, ValleySport

Grants — how to access them and give yourself the best chance to win them. This workshop will assist you to understand the grants process. It will include identifying sources of grant availability, developing and applying grant templates, the submission process and what to do if you are successful or not successful in an application.

Building Active, Confident and Resilient Communities

Department for Victorian Communities

Would your community organisation like to be able to shape its own future? Would you like a Government department that is easier to work with? If you would like to know more, then come along to the DVC workshop which will outline the opportunities for community groups to access local advice about programs and funding.

For Safety's Sake – an interactive session in Duty of Care

Yvonne Lindner, Baptist Union of Victoria

Duty of Care is not simply red tape dreamed up by some killjoy people sitting in offices far away from the real action; it is an opportunity for organisations to maximize their potential by ensuring their people are safe. If it is safe and healthy, open and honest, caring and careful then people will want to be involved.

You Can Play in the Sandpit Too!

René Laan, Mitchell Shire Council/The Seymour We Want

All groups need to evaluate their worth as a group. Most of them do not like evaluation. This workshop will show you why you must evaluate, how everyone in the group should be involved in it and how to take the sting out of making recommendations and implementing change

Conference Statistics

Total numbers attending: 106

Total number of presenters: 23

Group Types	No. of groups	No. of delegates
Number of groups attending	36	67
Number of community groups	27	53
Number of organisations	9	14
Landcare	6	7
Hall / recreation reserve committees	1	1
Specific action groups	5	16
Sporting clubs	1	1
Neighbourhood houses	3	6
Education based groups	1	1
Aged / disabled care groups	2	7
Youth services	2	2
Religious	1	3
Support groups	3	5
Emergency Services	2	4
Other	9	14

Community Group Split:

Murrindindi Shire	Mitchell Shire	Other Shires
40%	58%	2%

6 Community groups sent three or more delegates

Workshop Demand

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

Rank	Session	No. of applications as first choice
1.	What Makes A Successful Community Group?	28
2.	Funding For Community Groups	26
3.	How To Manage Your Community Group Effectively	20
4.	Building Active, Confident And Resilient Community Groups	18
5.	Making The Most Of The Media	16
6.	Recruiting And Retaining Volunteers	15
7.	Engaging Young People	13
8.	Taking Your Community Group Online	11
9.	Risk Assessment	10
10.	You Can Play In The Sandpit Too!	8
11.	Risk Management And Insurance	7
12.	Magnetism, Motivation And Movement	7
13.	Being Investor Ready	6
14.	For Safety's Sake	6
15.	Hop... Skip... Jump.	4

Conference Evaluation

Participant Evaluation

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: 49 Surveys were completed. Where there are percentage figures in the results summary, these are based on the TOTAL figure being 49. In some questions participants provided more than one answer.

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

Sent brochure	29	52%
Community publication	2	3%
Local Newspaper advertisement	3	5%
Website	1	1%
Other	21	39%

Other reasons:

- Came last year / ears open for this year
- Member of organisation arranged attendance / Informed by management / Meeting / asked by workplace if interested
- Broadcare
- Word of mouth
- Phone call to DPPI
- email
- Community organisation meeting
- Brochure at Murrindindi Shire Office, Alex

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

Content of workshops	29	40%
Networking opportunity	8	11%
Personal growth	6	8%
Community group growth	22	30%
Speakers	6	8%
Other	2	3%

Other reasons:

- Last years was so good
- Event Management

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

Yes	43	88%
No	0	0%
Unsure	6	12%

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	45	92%
No	1	2%
Unsure	3	6%

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	41	84%
No	5	10%
Unsure	3	6%

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

Yes	29	59%
No	2	4%
Unsure	18	37%

6: Welcome and Opening – Glen Manton. Was this session enjoyable and did it help to set the scene for the day?

Yes	44	90%
No	3	6%
Unsure	2	4%

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
SESSION ONE															
<i>Taking your community group online.</i>	9.5	10	8	9.6	10	9	9.1	10	6	9.5	10	8	9.3	10	9
<i>What makes a successful community group?</i>	8.2	10	6	8.2	10	5	7.7	10	4	8.4	10	5	8.7	10	5
<i>Engaging young people.</i>	6.5	10	4	7.3	10	5	7.9	10	4	7.6	10	4	5.2	10	1
<i>Risk assessment.</i>	9.1	10	7	9.3	10	8	8.8	10	5	8.6	10	5	9.5	10	9
<i>Hop...Skip...Jump</i>	9.6	10	8	9.6	10	9	10	10	10	8.3	10	7	1	1	1
SESSION TWO															
<i>Being investor ready.</i>	9.5	10	8	8.7	10	7	8.7	10	7	8.5	10	6	9.2	10	8
<i>How to manage your community group effectively.</i>	8	10	6	8	9	4	8	10	3	8.4	10	6	8.3	10	7
<i>Recruiting and retaining volunteers.</i>	8.5	10	5	8.5	10	6	8	10	4	8.5	10	5	7	10	1
<i>Risk management and insurance.</i>	9	10	8	9	10	8	9.5	10	9	8.5	10	6	9.7	10	9
<i>Making the most of the media.</i>	9	10	7	9	10	7	9	10	7	9.5	10	9	9.2	10	7
SESSION THREE															
<i>Magnetism, motivation and movement.</i>	8.3	9	8	7.3	9	8	7.6	9	6	8	9	7	7.3	9	5
<i>Funding for community groups.</i>	8.8	10	7	9	10	7	9	10	6	8.8	10	6	7.9	10	2
<i>Building active, confident and resilient communities.</i>	8.3	10	6	8.4	10	6	8.2	10	6	7.8	10	5	8.6	10	6
<i>For safety's sake.</i>	9.6	10	9	9.8	10	9	9.2	10	8	9.6	10	9	8	10	2
<i>You can play in the sandpit too!</i>	8.4	10	6	9.4	10	8	9.4	10	7	8.6	10	8	8.6	10	8

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

Yes	29	63%
No	0	0%
Unsure	17	37%

9: Conference Organisation

Question	Yes	No
<i>Trawool Valley Resort was a suitable venue for the conference.</i>	46 94%	3 6%
<i>The registration process was simple and flowed.</i>	44 90%	5 10%
<i>The initial conference brochure was clear and well presented.</i>	44 90%	5 10%
<i>My request for information was responded to promptly.</i>	40 82%	9 18%
<i>Planning staff were responsive and courteous during the conference.</i>	46 94%	3 6%
<i>Would it be more suitable to hold the conference over two days?</i>	19 39%	30 61%

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

- More innovative community stories rather than agencies.
- Much more strategic information.
- What is the future - some research outcomes.
- Funding update.
- Conducting meetings."
- Anonymous evaluation would be more appropriate.
- More information on recruiting and retaining volunteers.
- How to deal with/address isolated/fringe communities & their peculiar issues.
- Where and what are other community groups in region - group database / contact list needed please.
- The topics offered were very appropriate.
- How to fundraise / budget / care.
- Unsure at this stage but perhaps delve deeper into selections.
- I would be very interested in the opportunity to network with people from other small communities without services (no doctors, high schools, only 1 health professional for 4,000 people etc etc).
- Would need more time to think about it.
- Can't think of any at the moment although disabilities would be great.
- Something specifically for Neighbourhood / Community Houses.
- How to encourage new members.
- Mitchell Shire could develop the Creating Community Connections Expo idea - I think there was one in Seymour in 2002 for local volunteer groups.
- Restoration of Heritage buildings.
- The joys of networking.
- Putting on events - pitfalls, advertising, entertainment.
- Preventing volunteer burnout.
- Housekeeping issues are a headache for small groups - governance, insurance, risk assessment and management etc.
- Motivational stuff, handling, staving off burnout.
- Topics were good but would have liked to get around to more talks.
- How to write a media release - practice and examples of quality work.
- Disability specific if possible.
- Volunteers
- Organising paperwork / emails / records etc.
- Planning - know your goals.
- Advertising.
- Clear in expression of needs - report funding.
- Confidence.
- Lateral thinking.
- Let volunteers know that they are appreciated by giving out worthwhile tasks.
- Partnerships.
- The egg metaphor.
- What groups have achieved and how.

- Legal responsibilities re community groups.
- Conflict resolution within community groups.
- Burn out and stress - how to prevent them within community based groups - stress management and techniques.
- Techniques and procedures for bringing community groups / organisations together - to work as a team and keeping them together."
- Recognition of more community groups & help organisations.

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

Yes	33	67%
No	16	33%

COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC WORKSHOPS

Taking your Community Group online

- Not enough time for anything to be dealt with.

What makes a successful Community Group?

- Thought this would be a bit more groupy and a bit less taxy.
- Extremely structured.
- The handout I viewed was great but quite a few of us didn't get them because there wasn't enough.
- Thought content of this session would be more than financial and business planning. Others in group felt the same.
- Missed out on a handout as there were not enough.

Engaging Young People

- Material relevant as presenter allowed material to come from participants. This session was flexible in that group input became focus. Many thanks
- Not long enough, ran out of time, going to be sent info by email
- Not enough time and no handouts
- Not enough time for questions

Risk Assessment

- Gave us a message to challenge our organisation
- Presenter answered my questions later

Hop...Skip...Jump

- Not enough handouts
- No handouts yet

Being Investor Ready

- Not enough time for anything to be dealt with.

How to Manage Your Community Group Effectively

- Great to find a contact at the Shire
- My only concern on info was info on Murrindindi was too limited

- Too superficial, not enough information, too basic
- Not what I expected - it was more about recruiting and keeping volunteers, meeting procedures etc

Recruiting and retaining volunteers.

- Well structured & concise, got the message out
- No handouts though they would have been appreciated

Making the Most of the Media

- Need contacts for local papers.
- Speakers excellent.
- No handouts.

Funding for Community Groups

- Extremely enlightening. I'm applying for funding
- Another handout needs to be sent out

Building Active, Confident and Resilient Communities

- Great to find a contact at the Shire

You Can Play in the Sandpit Too!

- Accent sometimes makes words hard to interpret - needs to slow down a little bit.
- I found this session rather incomprehensible - probably because it was the last in a very full day.

OTHER SPECIFIC COMMENTS

GLENN MANTON

- Glenn Manton was outstanding - an inspiration and the highlight of the day with his energy and originality and enormous sense of purpose. A great and original motivator.
- Glenn Manton - fantastic presentation.
- Glenn Manton was terrific & motivating.
- Loved listening to Glenn Manton especially in relation to people's affairs & ideas/strategies which can be implemented. Purchased his book for our community group to use/read & for our new library/resource facility.
- Glenn Manton - absolutely fantastic!
- Glenn Manton was excellent and worthwhile.
- Glenn Manton also very impressive and thought provoking. Thank you for attracting people of this calibre to the conference.
- Could have listened to Glenn Manton talk for hours.

ROD QUANTOCK

- Rod Quantock was the highlight of the day but I know some people found him a little offensive.
- I enjoyed the speakers and Rod Quantock - always good for a laugh.
- Rod Quantock was a breath of fresh air and a great reminder of how good it is to have a belly laugh every once in a while.

FRUIT BATS

- You could have done without the fruitflies [fruit bats]
- I'm not so into the Fruit Bats, I'd rather something else. They interrupted most people's lunch times - especially those whose session had run late.
- What valuable time for networking and sharing was lost with the lunchtime entertainment. Totally unnecessary.
- Not so sure about the lunchtime entertainment. This would have been a great time to chat & relax. If they were paid for I think this \$ would have been better spent elsewhere.
- Lunchtime activity interesting but the time could have been better spent networking.

2 DAY CONFERENCE

- Only have 2 day conference if sessions were more exciting.
- Two day conference if able to attend a greater variety of workshops.
- A 2 day conference would be great as the timetable was quite tight but then cost to participants would increase and availability of delegates may decrease as many people may be taking time off from paid employment.
- A 2 day conference would allow more networking time, group discussion, support and information sharing.
- 2 days good so not so rushed.
- The workshops often had to be cut short due to time limitations - holding a two day conference would allow for additional time in workshops.
- Maybe have over 2 days - it was a very full day.
- Maybe a 2 day conference as it proved difficult to manage timelines.

OVERALL PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

- Day was too long. I had too high expectations. The entertainment, venue and brochure were all well ahead of the presenters. The take home information was linked to planning and partnerships. The three I chose were rather repetitive in style. There needs to be of a break for groups to work through issues of common concern and share information.
- Great location.
- Great day.
- Very informative.
- Better pens for the next conference.
- Well done to the organisers - great day again! Extremely interesting and EXCELLENT NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY!
- Handouts were very few but available on the net or mail out.
- The day was very well planned, intense & therefore, fast. Well done.
- Timing should be adhered to as other workshops were shortened.
- The bags were a lovely idea but very noisy - maybe a small plastic pocket or a cheap cloth bag.
- Some topics had names that did not really represent the topic discussed.
- More in depth needed - most were too brief with insufficient information in the fields. I was interested especially in "engaging youth".
- Not enough time for drawing threads together. The venue was wonderful, also the food. The program was good too. Need longer to address issues and look at information. Most of the staff were lovely.
- Newspaper ad was only eventually - very late. Didn't really have any time to ask any questions.
- Poor pens.
- Some of the topics weren't quite what I thought they would be - not particularly useful for my organisation. The venue is fantastic and I look forward to attending again next year. Thank you for a lovely informative day.
- Thanks a lot for the opportunity to attend.
- The day felt very rushed. Would have liked more informal / break time to network etc and maybe finish a little later.
- Extremely interesting.
- The day was excellent. Thank you very much to the organisers. I think two speakers and workshops and the Fruit Bats (I keep thinking of them as the Dingbats) plus a final session would have been ample. This would have allowed for some networking time which was missed on the day due to the fullness of the program. No signage outside venue.
- Registration flowed but would have liked confirmation of registration please. Again, I enjoyed this conference (Attended last year) but felt that it was a bit rushed as not enough time to attend as many workshops as I would have liked. Also felt that more networking opportunities with other groups would have been very informative. Thank you and look forward to more.
- Handouts - would like to be able to access handouts I was unable to attend. Sometimes there was 2 sessions running at same time that I would have liked to attend. Also, handouts need to be double sided to save paper and environment. In bag, given Murrindindi docs that were irrelevant to Mitchell and vice versa. Waste of paper.
- The guest speakers were outstanding. Good atmosphere.
- Starting time should be adhered to.
- Some information overload.
- The day, from beginning to end, has been great. Speakers terrific - catering wonderful.
- An excellent and useful conference. Very well organised - congratulations. In general, the handouts were great - some were handed out at the end of the session. Perhaps needed to be at the beginning so we can work through the presentation with the presenter - allows you to stay focused on the message. The workshops were excellent - appropriate and well planned.

Community Conference Working Group Evaluation

Event Setup

What worked?

- Setting up the night before helped ease the stress in the morning
- Colour coded tape for organisations.
- Room understanding better due to last year
- Designating jobs
- Meeting at Trawool
- Memory stick

What didn't?

- Clearer delegation per person
- Some assumed that other knew the layout
- Check equipment before bringing to the event
- Not all committee members contributed to set up
- Clearer time for arrival
- Delay due to Mem Fox thing but was handled well

What could we do better next time?

- Suggest start time to set up the night before - 5pm
- Computer and printer available for last minute work
- Have a list of jobs for each person
- Establish the set up regimen well before the event

Registration

What worked?

- Two people rather than three (last year) was really good.
- Table positions – ok

What didn't?

- Location - having people registering, right next to coffee area. The area tended to be very crowded as people tended to float there - inc presenters and working committee - caused a little confusion of what was going on.
- Late registrations time consuming
- Moving people away from the registration desk

What could we do better next time?

- Have registration desk somewhere else and maybe get a third person to move people through so they don't mill around
- Extra person to move people on

Plenary Sessions

What worked?

- REALLY good presenters - seemed to really fit with mood.
- Glen Manton very good

What didn't?

- A little too long - maybe need to really ensure time is stuck to.
- Talk too long
- Change of room set up

- Hard to get back in room for final plenary
- Glen Manton went overtime and stuffed up other timings
- Chairs facing the door were a problem
- Distracting to the audience to have people looking over the shoulder of presenter.

What could we do better next time?

- Have someone there to prompt speakers when to finish
- Only have two plenary sessions not three
Set chairs up facing the stage / window

Workshops

What worked?

- Room direction lollypops this year helped
- Copies of evaluation
- IT equipment
- Workshops

What didn't?

- Needed colour coded signs on room doors to match directional lollypops
- Workshops were rushed
- Time disjointed
- To many cooks
- People took handful of handouts for their organisations, meaning some people missed out
- When people provided their PowerPoint presentations on the day

What could we do better next time?

- Room facilitators to hand out presenter information / handouts
- Limit of one handout per person – no taking multiples for group at home
- Presentations to be saved onto CD per room colour then to be saved on room laptop desktop and checked to run
- Larger coloured coded signs to match lollypops and more room identification

Presenters/Presentations

What worked?

- Presenters bringing spares of their presentation on disc, laptop and memory stick in case there was a problem
- Having two room facilitators

What didn't?

- Presenters felt they didn't have enough time
- Some room facilitators didn't perform their duties

What could we do better next time?

- Keep number of participant to each workshop limited to 8-12
- Watch who goes in – only participants registered for workshop
- Don't use large room for workshop – difficult to workshop
- Ensure presenters know what to do prior to the event
- Clearer instructions about keeping to time

Room Facilitators/Facilitation

What worked?

- Trawool staff support per room was good
- Two facilitators better than one

What didn't?

- Room direction lollipops needed to be bigger and clearer
- Training for facilitators was too late and rushed
- Some facilitators didn't introduce presenters or thank presenter at the end
- Some facilitators didn't turn up

What could we do better next time?

- Bigger signs
- Identify colour of rooms
- Provide sheet with presenter bio before hand to room facilitators
- List for each room equipment and speaker
- More info to all facilitators

Breaks / Meals / Food

What worked?

- Allocated room – ok
- Food was great

What didn't?

- Very rushed. A few comments that the presentation during lunch interrupted good networking / reflection time.
- Nibble and natter in the little alcove - again very crowded - people trying to get evaluation forms in, get plants (many didn't see the plants or get them)
- Rushed because of fruit bats
- Nibble food session not good value for money
- Lunch rushed for committee
- Committee seating
- Lunch too early
- Arvo tea at strange time
- Rather slow eating 20 minutes
- Trying to yell to everyone because the portable microphone wasn't working
- Not enough time for networking

What could we do better next time?

- Just have breaks with nothing on - maybe a little longer for networking etc.
- Longer breaks
- Reduce workshop
- Less formal food, more finger food

Venue

What worked?

- Trawool staff providing parking assistance
- Trawool staff support good

What didn't?

- Tables not being used in Banson Room were stacked up in the passageway – looked bad

- Confusing layout of the venue
- Finger food for 50 people
- Set up for main room presentation at front

What could we do better next time?

- Signs out to Marquee
- Look at using another venue

Technology/Furniture/Resources/Handouts

What worked?

- Allocated rooms

What didn't?

- Layout of main room

What could we do better next time?

- Fix up layout of the Banson Room and plan it

Participant Evaluation Process

What worked?

- We got lots back (about 80-85%) so maybe the evaluation prize is a good incentive?
- Good return rate

What didn't?

- Very rushed - some didn't get in before prize was drawn but had to be drawn as many people were leaving.
- Collection of evaluation forms

What could we do better next time?

- Maybe remind people before 3rd session about their evaluations.
- Have a designated 10 mins after drawing threads together and before nibble and natter where people can do these.

Other (eg Entertainment)

What worked?

- Having a "light" plenary speaker in the middle of the day (Rod Quantock) allowed people to relax a little and switch off their brains for a little while.

What didn't?

- Fruit Bats were fantastic - but maybe next time, have no entertainment during lunch.
- Macarena
- People asking for direction

What could we do better next time?

- Essential that all working group members attend the final meeting before the conference as it is essential for setting times and dates for setting up etc
- Agreed expectations of what the working group should do and clear terms of reference for group members/ organisations right from the start
- Room set-up for overnight stay needs to ensure it does not interrupt other guests
- Ensure working group members know their roles
- Have a clear understanding of what working group members will contribute

Presenters Evaluation

All workshop presenters were asked to complete an evaluation of their own workshop. Of the possible 15 evaluations, 11 were returned.

Responses were as follows

1. Did you find the original brief for the conference helpful in developing your original idea for your workshop?

Yes	8
No	1
Unanswered	2

Why / why not?

- Gave a foundation of type of information which would be sought by those attending.
- Clear outline of purpose of conference and appropriate information including workshop details and times.
- Explained aim of conference and who was targeted for participation.
- It was very clear about what was needed and the types of agencies who would be present.
- I was not involved at this stage of conference planning
- It gave us a framework to put the information we thought would be helpful in

2. Did Lower Hume PCP / Conference Working Group clearly outline what was expected from you as a presenter at the conference?

Yes	11
No	0

Please elaborate:

- Requirement to supply an outline of the content of the presentation and rationale to identify how it would benefit. Also offered assistance in ensuring presentation aids were available to conduct an effective presentation.
- Yes, however information was not always passed on effectively
- I found the seminar was clearly explained and I understood what I was expected to do and found on my arrival it was very easy to find my position for my part in the seminar and it all went very smoothly for me and the guests.

3. Did you receive sufficient support and information from Lower Hume PCP / Conference Working Group when developing your presentation?

Yes	10
No	1

Please elaborate:

- Offer of assistance in ensuring presentation aids were available and the supply of a facilitator should one be needed to ensure the points of the presentation were received and understood by the audience.

- Yes, helpful staff who were able to assist in every aspect – answer queries, accommodate specific requests and support workshop presenters on the day.
- All emails were responded to promptly and any issues clarified.
- Did not need support
- Requests made were often too difficult and constrained by the limitations of the working group or limitations they placed on things which made it difficult at times
- Yes I was in contact quite a bit prior to the seminar to make sure I had everything ready that was needed.

4. Were you given sufficient information about the conference, such as audience / purpose to plan your presentation to suit the people who ultimately came to your workshop?

Yes	8
No	3

Please elaborate:

- Unfortunately I did not receive information relating to my audience and the organisations they represented prior to the presentation however I had been out of my office for some days prior to and had in fact been sent these details prior I just didn't come across them which is my error not the committee's.
- Clear and concise info circulated
- I was told we would be informed prior about the numbers of attendees – this didn't happen (or didn't get to me)
- Yes, however not until the day before the conference
- I was not given an audience plan and I do feel if I had had my talk / exercise class in a larger area inside perhaps more people would have joined. Although those who did come along appeared to get a lot out of it and the feedback I had on the day was certainly uplifting and pleasing.

5. Were you happy with the room where you gave your presentation? Were there any positives / negatives?

Yes	10
No	1

- My room was a very pretty room with glass walls and leadlight ceiling the only detriment to that being, my presentation was a morning one and I was looking into the sun and somewhat squinting at my audience which at the end of the day is infinitely more appealing than my audience squinting and being unable to see my presentation.
- Very happy
- I was located in the main conference meeting room, which was very large. I would have preferred a small room, which would have been less formal and easier to initiate discussions and interaction with the audience.
- Happy with the room for the size of the group that we presented to.
- The room was very functional; everything that may have been needed was supplied.
- The room was very good
- Yes, happy in the tent outside

- Room was great – appropriate for our presentation content and style
- The room I was allocated was an outside marquee, which was OK. But as my program included a lot of hands-on activity from all in attendance and presenting the program verbally, it was not my preferred choice of rooms. But of course we were able to adjust and get the most out of the position.

6. Were you happy with the equipment and set-up of your presentation?

Yes	10
No	1

Please elaborate:

- Yes it was all very professional down to the water jug supplied and of which I did partake.
- There was a problem with my disk but I was able to utilise my laptop with the provided projector with not problem at all.
- Equipment was great, no complaints.
- No difficulties were encountered on the day and everything went according to plan.
- Yes, but would have been preferable to have had the presentations loaded prior to the delivery
- It was uncertain as to whether we would have a projector and laptop at the beginning of our presentation
- Yes, I was able to adjust the marquee inside to arrange enough room for everyone. The assistants who were ay the marquee on my arrival were very helpful and assisted me to arrange things inside.

7. How did you find your designated room facilitators (two were allocated to each room)? Were they helpful? Comments could include how they introduced you, assisted with question time and directed delegates to what was happening next after the workshop.

- I believe I had only one facilitator for my presentation but that was fine. With regard to my presentation only one was needed – unless the facilitator themselves felt otherwise. I know that there was staff missing and I filled in as a facilitator myself for some of the presentations later in the day and was more than happy to help.
- Room facilitators were helpful but were not proactive with directing questions or very clear about what was happening after the workshop
- I was welcomed very warmly but the person introducing me didn't know anything about me. Perhaps they could have ready my Bio and used that, instead I was happy to introduce myself. I was very warmly thanked.
- I only had one facilitator that I was aware of, but Peter was excellent, very welcoming, introduced me, kept a watch on my time – let me know when I was coming close to the end of my time allocation. He also helped distribute my handouts.
- All good, very relaxed & low key
- The room facilitators were extremely helpful and ensured that everyone was well catered for. Introductions were concise and correct. The facilitators assisted by ensuring that the group became engaged in question time by asking appropriate questions to assist the group in responding and engaging in discussion. Clear information was presented to delegates about what was happening next.
- Definitely was as an introduction to set the tone

- No they were awful (Just joking – Jaime was great)
- My co-presenter introduced me – not the room facilitator. There was some confusion due to room changes
- Yes they were fine
- Yes the room facilitators were very helpful and interacted with all concerned to assist in a smooth transition for all before, during and after my program took place

8. Did you hand any information out in your session?

Yes	9
No	2

Any comments on how well that worked – could it be handled better in the future?

- [Could it have been handled better in the future?] Not necessarily, although I had the impression that all the presentations were being placed onto CD which would be supplied as part of the showbag given to all participants so they had all the presentations available not just the ones they personally attended.
- Workshop participants were very keen to take hand outs. However, when I arrived at the workshop participants had already helped themselves to the entire range of handouts without hearing the presentation. Next time, I would prefer that the handouts not be accessed (or allowed to be taken – *room facilitators role*- until after the workshop session)
- I thought that my notes were being collated in a handout for people so I didn't bring handouts of my own. I did collect email addresses of those who wanted copies and sent them off the following day.
- As I was in the main conference room where a performance was held just prior to my presentation (during lunch break), I could not therefore go into the room and distribute the handouts before the performance had finished, all equipment etc removed and the presentation equipment set up again. That made it a little hectic.
- Tried to tailor the session towards real life examples from the group
- I was under-prepared and did not have enough copies with the to hand out to people on the day.
- Worked OK as relatively small numbers in workshop, would use room facilitator if any bigger
- It was way more elaborate than my talk
- I was under the impression that our handouts were to be included in a conference booklet for all attendees – we emailed these when requested. This wasn't available, so then has to photocopy my handouts at the venue.
- Not a great deal, but I did leave my email address with those who asked for further information. Perhaps a list of each person and the businesses they are representing could be put on an email address and given out for ease of further contact, including the presenters.

9. Were you happy with the way you presented your workshop?

Yes	11
No	0

Please elaborate:

- The only gauge I had was the blank slightly sceptical looks I had at the start and the number of questions I had at the end. To that litmus test I believe the participants got something out of the presentation.
- Overall yes, but perhaps I needed to incorporate more time for more questions.
- Time constraints are always a problem to me, but the material I presented fitted in well with material in other similar sessions. Giving the other more theoretical sessions a practical spin.
- Considering I have not done a presentation before, I think it offered a combination of information and ideas/interaction with other community groups.
- The small group worked better, able to be very specific and answer lots of questions, became an information sharing session.
- Yes, however I was unable to comprehensively present all information prepared so some of it was just “glossed over”.
- Majority of group appeared satisfied with information received. Felt it was pitched at the level of most in the room
- Yes and no - I spoke too fast in some bits, they were older and did not get everything I said
- I feel my workshop went very well. All there seemed very keen to be involved in the physical activity and interested the learn more about my program.

10. Were the audience receptive to the presentation?

Yes	11
No	0

Please elaborate:

- From the amount of questions in question time I would believe so.
- Yes, I think, I did not receive any negative feedback.
- Yes they were very interactive, and had good discussions after the session.
- Many asked questions and provided feedback and comments throughout the presentation, which made me feel that I was saying something relevant to them.
- There were plenty of questions so I am assuming YES?
- Yes. However, it is always very difficult presenting after lunch and the topic is not light-hearted. It is also more difficult to encourage volunteer organisations (where volunteers are the only human resources) to embrace the concepts of volunteer recruitment and retention.
- Asked good questions
- Overall yes, but some were more engaged than others
- Yes, I had some great feedback

11. Did you receive any informal feedback from the audience about your presentation?

- I had a couple of audience members whom asked for additional information at the conclusion of my presentation which I followed up and provided them with but no general feedback.

- A small amount of feedback after the session. It was good to chat at afternoon tea time with workshop participants, although being the last session I noticed people were a little weary.
- Yes, a number of people who had been to other risk management sessions during the day mentioned that my session complemented their material in a very practical way.
- Yes, including a couple of questions afterwards.
- Yes – very positive.
- Indicated enjoyed presentation
- Formal – gave them some evaluation sheets – collected it afterwards
- Yes just that they got something out of it
- All the feedback I got was fairly informal, but all motivated and keen

12. Have you provided any information to conference attendees after the conference?

- See first comment in above question
- I have emailed a number of people my notes.
- Information packages that could not be provided on the day were posted to people who had indicated that they would like a copy.
- The monthly ValleySport information newsletter/grant info
- I have had some requests and am in the process of putting this together as it does have some legalities that must be covered

13. Do you have any other comments, suggestions, constructive criticism about the conference as a whole?

- Lovely, professional polished performance yet again, my kudos to the event organisers “Top Job”
- It was a fantastic, informal, very friendly conference. I congratulate the organising committee on a very useful, energising and informative day.
- Whole day session was a little rushed, tried to fit too much into one day.
- The conference venue was fantastic, the organisation was very professional and the ability to keep the conference affordable is to be commended. I think all involved should be congratulated on the fantastic job that was done. It has certainly given me ideas regarding encouraging a similar conference to be held locally.
- Maybe every 2nd year? We must be careful of saturating the market.
- Run every two years, as numbers were down.
- Yearly is too frequent.
- Some people commented around the merit of spending so much money on big name speakers when so many groups are struggling
- I thoroughly enjoyed my time and found everyone to be extremely pleasant and helpful with a terrific amount of enthusiasm for my programs.

Drawing the Threads Together

In the final session of the day conference delegates were asked to identify what they thought was the best thing they got out of the conference. Following are the answers:

- Fun
- Genuine appreciation of volunteers
- Diversity of what can be done
- Information for volunteers
- Comfort zone – in and out of it
- Communication – feedback between groups
- Engaging youth
- Money - information about funding
- Motivation
- Positivity
- Evaluation
- Safety
- Recruiting and retaining volunteers
- Sharing ideas
- Information
- The Egg
- Partnerships
- Importance of having clear goals and expression of needs
- Need contact list

Recommendations

The major recommendation to come out of the 2005 Lower Hume Community Conference is that the conference should be held every two years. This will:

- Give working group enough time to plan the event and recruit relevant presenter
- Give enough lead time to successfully promote the conference through several different channels – reliance on Council community group listings as primary distribution method may impact on the numbers and types of groups reached
- Keep the conference fresh and encourage more people to attend as they see it as significantly different from previous conferences
- Give the working group more time to produce and distribute the program

Conclusion

In all the conference was a great success!

- More than 85 per cent indicated the conference fulfilled their reason for attending
- 92 per cent agreed the Community Conference meet its aims to provide resources for community groups to assist them in the development of their organisations
- 84 per cent agreed the Community Conference meet its aims to increase the opportunity for networking relationships to develop between community organisations and community service agencies