



SHARING THE LOAD TO SHED THE LOAD



Orana Regional Organisation of Councils

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SHARING THE LOAD TO SHED THE LOAD

Sharing the Load to Shed the Load is an initiative developed by Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) to educate and inform communities in the region about physical activity projects that help overweight people effectively address their issues in supportive environments in ways that are cost effective, simple and adaptable. Healthy eating is vital in terms of health, well-being and weight loss but it is not within the scope of this initiative.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide councils and communities with the information and encouragement needed to take a stance in addressing healthy weight and physical activity issues at both local and regional level.

This booklet features six physical activity projects that have worked well within the Orana Region's rural communities to address overweight and obesity, improve self-esteem, strengthen social connectedness and promote community action.

It also offers a section of information for Local Government and further helpful resources and contact details.

**So what are you waiting for...??
Get moving. Let's increase the opportunities for physical activity**

in our communities and find ways to encourage as many people as possible to join in.

Sharing the Load to Shed the Load initiative is funded by NSW Health in partnership with Local Government & Shires Associations of NSW (LGSA).

BENEFITS FOR COUNCILS AND THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE AS A RESULT OF INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY....

- Improved physical, mental and social health of individual members of the community
- Stronger families and healthier communities
- Economic benefits such as reduced number of sick days and improved staff retention
- Environmental benefits such as increased volunteering, concern for the natural and built environment
- Reduction in crime and anti social behaviour
- Improved injury/falls prevention
- Enhanced profile for the council in the local community

WE'VE JUST GOT TO GET MOVING

According to the report *The health of the people of NSW, report of the Chief Health Officer 2010*, people living in rural and remote areas have worse health generally than those living in metropolitan areas. Many factors contribute to this inequity, including geographic isolation, socioeconomic disadvantage, shortage of health care/health promotion, access to appropriate health services, greater exposure to injury risks, and poorer health among Aboriginal people who comprise a significant proportion of communities in rural and remote areas.

Alarming health facts

- It is believed that the growing prevalence of diabetes within the Orana region is linked to low levels of physical activity and exercise and the rising levels of obesity.
- The National Rural Health Alliance has found that overweight and obese people face higher risks of suffering from diabetes, cardiovascular disease, osteoarthritis and some cancers. Mental health problems, poor self esteem and lack of confidence also spring from being overweight.

- 90% of Type 2 Diabetes, more than 50% of cardiovascular disease and 50% of cancers are preventable through healthy lifestyle choices (diet and exercise).
- The total annual direct cost of overweight and obesity in Australia is in excess of \$21 billion per year.
- The total annual direct cost of Type 2 Diabetes in Australia is \$3 billion per year.
- It is projected that by 2025 the number of obese Australians will rise to over 7 million people compared to 3 million people in 2010.

BARRIERS TO IMPROVED HEALTH ARE MANY AND VARIED

- *Time*
- *Cost*
- *Unemployment/low income*
- *Distance and lack of access*
- *Lack of facilities*
- *Disabilities*
- *Lack of information, awareness raising and education*
- *Lack of motivation and support*
- *Poor Self esteem*

Information sourced and supplied by Epidemiology Population Health, Western Local Health Network 2010

ABOUT OROC

The OROC Region comprises the Shires of Bogan, Bourke, Brewarrina, Cobar, Coonamble, Gilgandra, Narromine, Walgett, Warren, Warrumbungle and Dubbo City Council – see map on back cover.

These councils are located in the Central West, NorthWest and Far West sectors of New South Wales. The OROC region covers approximately 20% of the geographical area of New South Wales and comprises a diverse environmental landscape with an extensive and complex range of natural resources that covers approximately 190,000 square kilometres. ABS Population statistics show that there are just over 85,000 people residing in the OROC region.

The Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) is a partnership between local government entities that agree to collaborate on matters of common interest.

Each OROC member council is represented by two delegates entitled to vote from the 11 member councils.

Delegates to the Board of OROC include the Mayor and General Manager of each member council.

Vision

To be a leading regional organisation of Councils known for a high level of achievement, collaborative excellence and strong commitment to the region’s communities.

Mission

To ensure the long term viability, well being and sustainably of local government and communities in the OROC region by supporting the delivery of infrastructure and services.

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Six Physical Activity Case Studies In The Orana Region

1. REGIONAL RECREATIONAL PRECINCT (FITNESS CENTRE)

Strategy

Because of the cost involved in undertaking the scope of work, Dubbo City Council would not have been able to complete the works without the financial assistance from the Federal and State Governments. However once these funds were secured, a priority scope of works was identified and costed out. As these funds were attracted over a number of years it was necessary to stagger the development of the Regional Recreational Precinct to match the available funding.

Location: Victoria Park, Darling Street Dubbo

Objective

The objective of this project was to provide opportunities for families to reconnect and interact through the fitness centre, the all-access playground and sport. As all these elements are provided free of charge to the community, it enables people of lower socio-economic means the opportunity to access quality fitness and interactive equipment to encourage and improve health and well being.

The all-access playground encourages children to become physically active and also encourages children to overlook the differences that may exist between them and allows them to concentrate on being children and having fun.

Targeted participants and/or users

As there are numerous elements included in the Regional Recreational Precinct it is used by an entire cross section of the community.

The fitness centre is used by sporting clubs as an alternate training venue from regular drill training; by mothers who use the facility whilst their children use the All Access Playground; by the youth and also the elderly.

Noticeably the playground is used as a meeting place for parents with children, children of all age groups and disabilities. The skate park and skate bowl is heavily used by the young people in the community.

Local Government Involvement

Dubbo City Council was the chief proponent of this project and was responsible for the original development, identification and submission of grant applications, project and contract management. Over three years Dubbo City Council contributed \$588,300 to the project.

Funding and contributing partners

In total the development and construction of the project equated to \$1,660,000 this included the skate bowl, skate park, rage cage, all access playground and fitness centre).

\$971,700 of the project was funded from external grants. These include the Federal Government’s Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Grants, Building Community Partnerships (State) and the Touched by Olivia Foundation.

Approach

The program was developed originally through the identification of a need to provide a community facility that could cater for a broad cross section of the community. This need was identified through a range of consultative measures including the Dubbo City Council Community Needs survey that is undertaken every 4 years by council.

Once the community need was identified it was handed over to the Parks and Landcare Division to further develop the project. Concept plans were commissioned and formally adopted by Council that identified this project as a funding priority if “additional funding” was identified or made available.

As this project was already identified as a funding priority a large proportion of Dubbo City Councils first funding round from the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program was dedicated to this project. Further funding sources provided additional funding that enabled the Outdoor Fitness Centre to be constructed.

Some key lessons learned:

1. Be prepared. Have plans, costing and approvals ready so that you can submit grant applications or claim for funds early.
2. Use local contractors wherever you can. Not only is this good for the local economy but if there are warranty issues or other problems they are more readily available than remote contractors.
3. Don't overstretch yourself. Projects of this size and complexity can involve many contractors and cost a lot of money. Break the project up into manageable parts and costs. If this is done at the very beginning of the project and communicated to the public, Councillors etc. they are generally happy to accept it better than to have project deadlines pushed back.

Results

The project has succeeded in what it had set out to achieve. The project offers opportunities for individuals and families to participate in recreational pursuits and promote health and well being throughout the Dubbo community.

The Park is now much more heavily frequented and the project has strengthened the community interaction through the provision of a place to meet, a place to recreate and a place to enjoy the park.

Future Plans

The Regional Recreation Precinct project has now been completed and other projects are being investigated such as the development and construction of a Sensory Garden. There is even the establishment of a “Friends of Victoria Park” group to help foster ownership and self help in the ongoing maintenance of the facility. Over time this group may also identify other elements that could be included to further meet the community needs.

Future partnerships

Opportunities always exist and it is a matter of identifying and assessing them. If Dubbo City Council is successful in establishing a “Friends of Victoria Park” it could provide an opportunity to establish a community garden within the park.



2. iKiFit

Western NSW

Location

The program is currently delivered in many schools throughout Western NSW through face to face delivery and online via internal web browser. Additionally a number of community and health groups in Western NSW use iKi Content.

Objective

iKiFit was developed over 23 years as a fitness, resilience and well-being program to engage the mind, the body, the heart and the imagination. iKiFit uses a combination of modern and ancient martial arts, dance, aerobics and well being movements, combined with contemporary technology – that all come together in a modern and accessible way for 6 year olds to 60 year olds.

Initially iKiFit was designed to create an exercise system that would be both engaging and empowering. However as iKiFit has evolved, it has become a useful behaviour management and capacity building tool for children; and has helped position the iKiFit program into schools across western NSW.

Strategy

iKiFit was developed by company director Kim Macrae, who with over 30 years experience as a martial arts instructor and fitness industry professional and 20 years working as a high school teacher; saw a gap in children’s fitness. As a result, Kim developed a system that incorporates fitness, education and social growth. iKiFit has worked in conjunction with long serving educators in both the public and independent school systems, to create this world class system. With an established online presence iKiFit can be conducted in any location at anytime in any part of the world.

Targeted Participants and/or users

- Schools
- Community Groups/Leaders
- Health care professionals

Local Government Involvement

This project has had minimal interaction with local government.



Funding and contributing partners

- NSW Department of Industry and Investment
- NSW Department of Education and Training
- NSW Institute of Teachers
- Fitness Australia
- Department of Families, Housing, Community Service and Indigenous Affairs (FaHSCIA)
- Western Local Health Network
- Housing NSW

Approach

After identifying a gap in children’s fitness and development the iKiFit Program was developed over 23 years involving a considerable amount of time, research and travel.

Some key lessons learned:

- Focus on using local and regional providers.
- Keep Growing – since the initial development of the iKiFit program, it has evolved and is now heavily

focussed on providing a dynamic capacity building program for school communities.

- Think outside the square – delivering a health and wellbeing program online, has ensured iKiFit to have a presence in remote areas of NSW.

Results

Since 2009 iKiFit has been to over 2500 participants in more than 30 locations.

iKiFit is delivered into St John’s Primary School, Dubbo; Wellington Public School; St Josephs Primary, Walgett; Lightning Ridge and Baradine Central Schools, Coonabarabran Public School and 13 additional schools across western NSW.

Wellington Public School has recorded a decrease in poor student behaviour by more than 50%.

Student participation in the iKiFit program is recorded to be up to 98% in all schools.

Identified high risk students in remote locations have gone on to further education as a result of participating in the iKiFit program.

Schools participating in the program have recorded fewer incidences of bullying amongst students.

iKiFit has offered training, capacity building and mentoring opportunities to the communities of Western NSW.

iKiFit has engaged 2 Indigenous trainees to become iKiFit trainers (Industry Accredited).

Future Plans

To enhance the profile of iKiFit and have the program delivered throughout NSW schools and remote communities.

SNAPSHOT OF WEIGHT RELATED STATISTICS IN THE WESTERN LOCAL HEALTH NETWORK REGION

- 75.3% of Males and 54.3% of Females living in the region are either overweight or obese.
- 75% of children aged 9 to 15 years do not participate in adequate physical exercise.
- 60% of people aged 16 years and over in the region, are either overweight or obese compared to the state average of 50%.
- Compared to the NSW state average people living within the OROC region are:
- More likely to be overweight or obese;
- More likely to be admitted for hospitalisation attributed to high body mass;
- Less likely to participate in adequate physical activity.
- Western NSW has the highest rate of hospitalisations that are attributed to the detrimental effect of being overweight.

Information sourced and supplied by Linda Mason Acting Epidemiologist, Western Local Health Network 2010

3. GO4FUN®

Western NSW

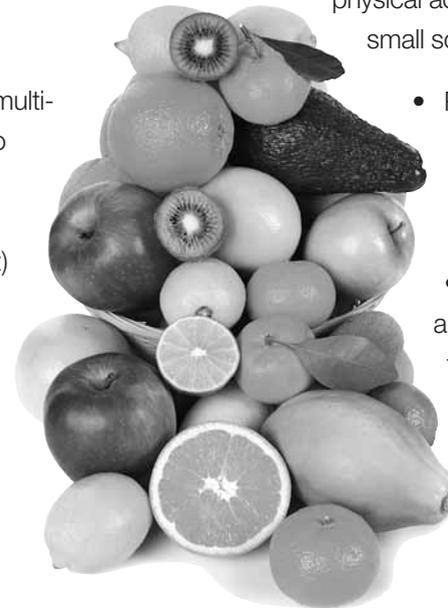
Go4Fun® Program is a multi-component approach to child obesity. Previously known as MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do It)

Location

Go4Fun® is currently located in sites across the Western Local Health Network – Dubbo, Orange, Bathurst, Broken Hill, Mudgee, Coonamble, Parkes, Condobolin, Forbes, Narromine and Walgett. This program can be conducted in any location where there is interest and participants available.

Objective

The Go4Fun® Program’s objective is to address childhood overweight and obesity by assisting parents and children to develop a long lasting and healthy approach to living. This is achieved through the following strategies that:



- Modify family lifestyles and improve parenting skills around healthy eating, physical activity and sedentary small screen behaviours
- Promote healthy weight and weight management through sustainable behaviour change
- Encourage, inform and improve children’s food choices and eating behaviours
- Encourage, inform and improve children’s physical activity skills and behaviours
- Increase children’s sense of well being, confidence and self esteem.

The primary target group for the Program are children and parents living in NSW, specifically with

- Children aged 7-13 years of age who are overweight or obese
- Parents of children from 7-13 years of age who are overweight or obese

This program is an initiative of NSW Health in association with MEND Pty Ltd. The NSW Parenting program has been re-branded as Go4Fun®.

Strategy

The Go4Fun® Program within Western Local Health Network is a fully funded, fun, evidence based program run specifically for families with children 7-13 years whose weight is above the healthy range for their age and height.

Recruitment to the program is via various platforms this includes self referral, General Practitioner and other health professionals, health providers and through schools. Referrals are made directly to the local program coordinator.

The program is run over 10 weeks in 2 x 2 hour sessions per week during school terms.

Each group comprises 10-15 children with at least one parent.

Health, fitness and self-esteem are key areas of the program.

Parent or carer support and interaction during the course of the program is essential to the success. Measurements are taken before and after the program and there is follow up contact including newsletters and reunions.

The program is delivered by one trained Mind & Nutrition Leader, and one trained Exercise Leader. Each 2 hour session is broken into an hour's nutrition based

interactive session and an hour of fun exercise for children while the parents have healthy lifestyle discussions. The program's data collection is undertaken before and after the program and involves a range of measurements. Staff involved in the program will undertake 3 days of training.

Within the Western Local Health Network, delivery to communities ranging from large rural centres to small remote communities has been a challenge. It has been decided that the program will commence contracting Non Government Organisations to assist in the delivery of the service.

Targeted participants and/or users

Children aged 7-13 that don't fit within the norms for weight range according to the BMI appropriate for their age. Their families are also the target as it is compulsory for parents and/or carers to attend all sessions with the children.

Local Government Involvement

To date there has been no Local Government engagement to assist to deliver the program.

Funding and contributing partners

NSW Health has supplied Population Health with \$250,000 for the second year to run the program. The target is to attract 200 children in the year.

Approach

This project is a recognised international program and is being rolled out across NSW, and other states across Australia due to the evidence that supports the intervention. Although this program was not developed by local staff, it is being adapted for regional and remote communities to make the content culturally appropriate.

Some key lessons learned:

- Find a local champion that will run with the program and assist local recruitment, it helps greatly to have that local knowledge and contact.
- Encourage referral from local GPs and community health staff . However, over time the best source of referral has proved to come from schools.

Results

So far results have been excellent across Western Local Health Network, there have been good changes seen with:

- Reductions in BMI
- Reduction in waist circumference
- Increase in amount of time children spend per week in physical activity
- A decrease in heart rate after a 3 minute step test
- Increase in Fruit and Vegetable consumption
- Decrease in amount of time spent in sedentary behaviours eg computer games, video games etc
- Improvements in self esteem

Future Plans

The Go4Fun® Program is planning to roll out across all of NSW. This program is supported by NSW Health.

Future Partnerships

To date partnerships have been developed with the Central West Division of General Practice, Dubbo Plains Division of General Practice and YMCA at Broken Hill to assist in the rollout. There are further partnerships that are currently in negotiation.

4. CASTLEREAGH RIVERWALK (STAGE 1)

Coonamble NSW

Location

Smith Park, Castlereagh Highway, Coonamble

Objective

The Objective of the Riverwalk project was to address a range of issues for the Coonamble community including:

1. Prevention of obesity, diabetes and other lifestyle-related diseases.
2. Pedestrian safety and access to community and sporting facilities.
3. Building the local economy by increasing visitor stays.
4. Building local pride to reduce crime and increase community connectedness.
5. Preserving and promoting the unique natural environment of the Castlereagh River.

Strategy

- (i) Construct a concrete walkway almost 600m long and 1.5m wide along the upper banks of the Castlereagh River, and connecting with a new Council footpath alongside the Castlereagh Highway,
- (ii) Install 5 exercise stations, approximately 100m apart along walkway adjacent to the Smith Park playing fields. Stations were selected by Coonamble Health Council in consultation with a range of sporting groups and health bodies.
- (iii) Remove invasive exotic plants and planting of native plants, and planting of indigenous trees, shrubs and groundcovers along the riverbank, overseen by Coonamble Environment Group. Signage relating to the river environment/history and local flora and fauna was also installed.

The River walk compliments the playing fields and other public facilities in Smith Park and marked the beginning of a series of further Council improvements and community projects in the precinct, including:

- completion of the footpath from the hospital to the town centre.

- a Tourist Information Bay
- upgraded public toilets
- new picnic tables and seating
- a skate park instigated by local high school students and completed with the assistance of Streets Ahead and Council
- bench seating and picnic tables
- Kiosk and store room

Targeted participants and/or users

The project targeted all Coonamble Shire residents plus visitors; however anecdotal evidence shows that immediate and continued users of the walkway include:

- residents of Koonambil aged hostel participants in Coonamble Community Health wellness programs
- children whose siblings participate in Saturday morning sports competitions at Smith Park
- travellers along Castlereagh Highway who stop for a break at Smith Park.
- caravan park and motel occupants.
- a wide cross section of residents – casual use

Local Government Involvement

Coonamble Shire Council led the initiative and contributed significant staff time and in kind contributions to see the completion of all phases of Stage 1.

Funding and contributing partners

Total project cost was approximately \$120,000. Contributions were as follows:

- NSW Department of Sport & Recreation – Active Councils Grant 2003/04 – \$30,000
- Community donations/paver sponsorship – approx \$5,000
- NSW Envirofund – \$13,364
- Volunteer labour – \$2,000
- Coonamble Shire Council – approx. \$68,000 plus staff time in managing project
- Western Local Health Network – \$1000

Approach

The Castlereagh River walk project was instigated in June 2003 when a Project Team was formed involving representatives from Coonamble Streets Ahead Committee, Coonamble Health Council, Little Athletics, Community Health, Tourism, Garden Club, and Coonamble Environment Group. The Project Team was supported by a team from Coonamble Shire. The Riverwalk was officially opened in October 2006.

Some key lessons learned:

1. Community-driven projects can be the most effective in meeting a range of local needs by harnessing the ideas and motivation of a range of groups and professionals rather than relying on a single agency and their in-house skills.
2. Staging the project is important if key funding sources are not available at the same time.
3. Council's role is critical – either as leader or in responding to community requests. Every effort needs to be made to ensure Council is involved from project inception.

Results

The Riverwalk has been very successful and has achieved more than it initially set out to achieve, with community groups working collaboratively. Coonamble Shire Council's involvement in the project drew on a range of funding sources and delivered outcomes for health, economic, tourism and the local environment. This project offers much more than a simple walk way.

Future Plans

Future plans include:

- further landscaping, and locally-produced artworks interpreting the natural environment of the unique Castlereagh River.
- additional shade structures and playground facilities have also been discussed.
- an Eco-Spa is also planned for the southern end of Smith Park as part of a re-developed and expanded Caravan Park.

Future Partnerships

In 2010 Coonamble Arts Alive and Coonamble Streets Ahead embarked on a partnership to commission local artists and school students to create a series of sculptures to be installed along the Riverwalk.

Coonamble Shire Council is now working with Coonamble Multi Purpose Health Service, Coonamble Aboriginal Health Service and Ochre Health to plan further healthy community programs for the town and district.

FACTS ABOUT THE HEALTH RISKS OF BEING OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE

- *It is believed that the growing prevalence of diabetes in this region is linked to low levels of activity and exercise and the rising levels of obesity.*
- *The National Rural Health Alliance has found that overweight and obese people face higher risks of suffering from diabetes, cardiovascular disease, osteoarthritis and some cancers. Mental health problems, poor self esteem and lack of confidence also spring from being overweight.*
- *90% of Type 2 Diabetes, more than 50% of cardiovascular disease and 50% of cancers are preventable through a healthy diet and exercise.*
- *The total annual direct cost of overweight and obesity in Australia is in excess of \$21 billion per year.*

Information sourced and supplied by OROC 2010

5. NARROMINE BODY BLITZ/ BOOT CAMP

Location

Cale Oval, Narromine

Objective

To encourage the residents of Narromine to incorporate outdoor exercise into their life and realise that exercise can be enjoyable, and also to assist with weight loss, fitness and increasing strength for those requiring it.

Strategy

To engage the Narromine community to be more aware of fitness and physical activity by offering boot camp style outdoor exercise in a friendly, fun and non threatening manner.

Narromine Body Blitz/Boot Camp provided an educational approach to exercise. By taking this one step further a men’s boot camp was incorporated and active kid’s classes were introduced. With the aim to assist with development and core stability for children aged 7-12.

Target participants

Women over 16 years of any fitness level.
Men over 16 years of any fitness level,
children 7-12 years.

Local Government Involvement

Narromine Body Blitz/Boot Camp uses ovals owned and maintained by Narromine Shire Council. A small usage fee is paid to Council in order for these activities to be conducted.

Funding

As this was a commercial initiative of the Narromine Physiotherapy Practice there were no external funds used. All participants pay a fee at the beginning of each 6 week block which covers the hire of ovals and instructors’ fees.

Approach

The program is based on many years of personal training of women for weight loss and elite athletes for fitness and strength. An advertisement was placed in the local paper and 20 participants were accepted initially.

A pre and post fitness and measurement test is undertaken which offers a baseline objective and can then provide each individual participant with feedback on individual progress.

The classes are divided into two groups based on fitness test results which ensure each participant works and trains at an intensity that is appropriate for the individual.

Two trainers run classes which run 45 minutes with a 5 minute warm up and 5 minute warm down. Interactive educational sessions are run within each class and questions are answered. The Body Blitz/ Boot Camp classes consist of interval and cross training, three times a week. Participants are also encouraged to undertake independent exercise on days off from Body Blitz/Boot Camp.

Some key lessons learned:

- As with any commercial entity it is essential that participants pre pay.
- Placing participants into fitness specific groups is imperative.
- The delivery of classes three times a week is ideal in theory, yet in practice does not always suit the participant.

Offering double sessions consecutively is quite exhausting, access to more than 2 trainers would be ideal to run double sessions.

Due to the extremities of climate it is difficult to run outdoor Body Blitz/Boot Camp at 6.00am in the morning in the midst of winter and summer temperatures are sometimes unbearable in the middle of summer. The extremities of weather do pose some problems and it is ideal to have an alternate indoor venue available.

Results

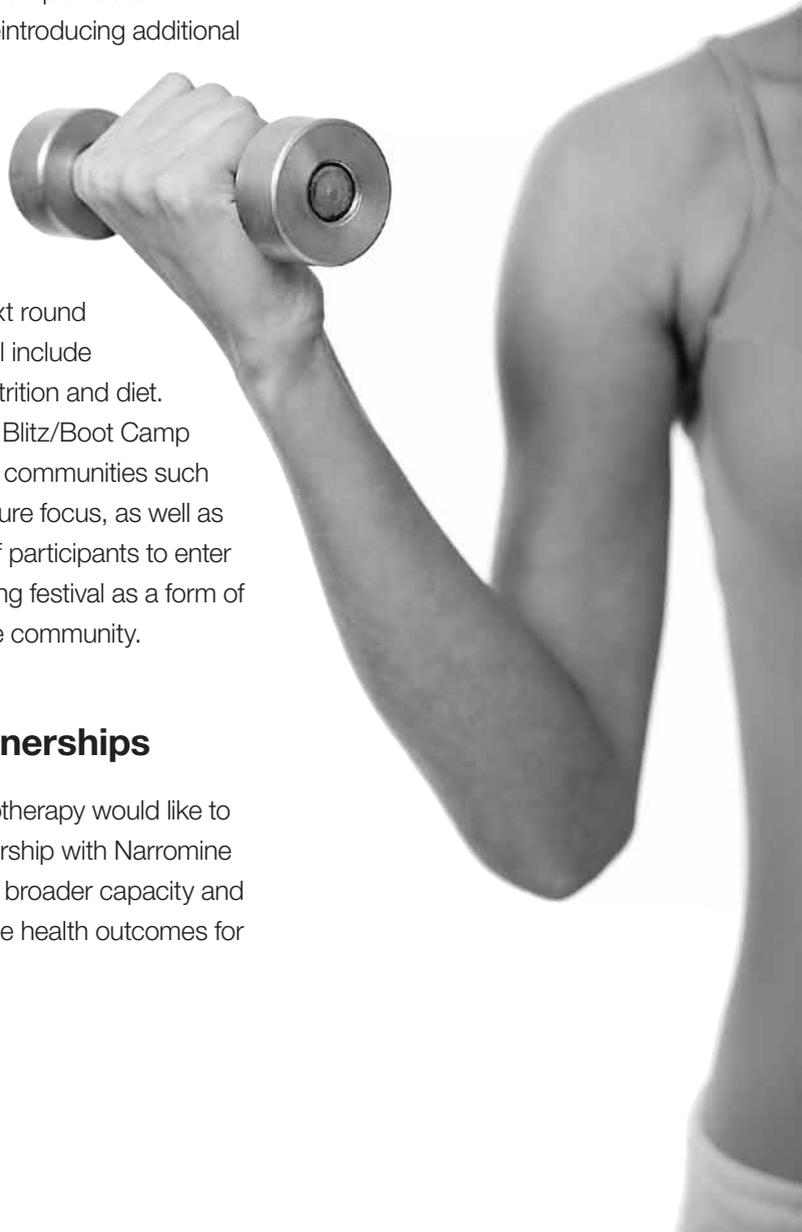
This Boot Camp has more than met the initial objective as it has encouraged the use of the Narromine Physiotherapy onsite gym and Council owned and managed gymnasium.

The exercise program has offered some real changes in attitude towards exercise and physical activity in Narromine as small independent exercise groups have established including walking and running groups. There is also a noticeable increase in home exercise as many clients have requested input into purchasing exercise equipment.

Overall the popularity of Boot Camp has continued and therefore the program is running continually in the community.

Future plans

To continue with the current women's Body Blitz/Boot Camp classes with the objective of reintroducing additional exercise classes for men and children. Incorporating a 15 to 20 minute educational session at the next round of classes that will include information on nutrition and diet. Introducing Body Blitz/Boot Camp into neighbouring communities such as Trangie is a future focus, as well as getting a group of participants to enter a fun run or running festival as a form of fundraising for the community.



Future Partnerships

Narromine Physiotherapy would like to continue a partnership with Narromine Shire Council in a broader capacity and deliver measurable health outcomes for the community.

6. GILGANDRA FITNESS CENTRE AND SPORTING HALL OF FAME

for these sporting activities are of excellent quality. However, the Gilgandra community has lacked a facility like a gymnasium that provided all weather access to aerobic, resistance and gentle exercise equipment and activities where residents can attend at a time which is convenient to them and where costs are not prohibitive.

Location

8 Hall Street Gilgandra

Objective

The objective of this project was to provide an alternative health and fitness venue (gymnasium) in Gilgandra that encouraged residents to take responsibility for their personal health choices; that is accessible and affordable and; where a range of activities can be utilised at all times of the year, regardless of the weather.

In conjunction with this, the Gilgandra Sporting Hall of Fame was also established at the site to celebrate those people that have been involved in sport in Gilgandra and to support the focus of healthy and active living.

A large cross section of the Gilgandra community participates in organised sports and the outdoor facilities that cater

Strategy

Whilst undertaking Council's Community and Social Plan, it was identified that the Gilgandra community was lacking an indoor facility for personal health and fitness activities.

A third squash Court was not being used, so a decision was made following consultation with the community and with the financial support of State and Federal Governments to transition the use of a squash court to a fitness centre and gymnasium.

The Gilgandra Fitness Centre and Sporting Hall of Fame now compliments the squash courts, basketball stadium and youth centre as these facilities are all located at the one site.

The project was planned well ahead, with continuous consultation with building staff, gym set up contractors, youth and facilities staff.

Targeted participants and/or users

The project targeted all Gilgandra Shire residents and visitors.

Essentially, this facility has opened up a new option and equity for people. A community the size of Gilgandra needs a gym. The closest gym is too far away to travel to and for many people they will only be inclined to exercise if they have an indoor exercising alternative.

Local Government Involvement

Gilgandra Shire Council led the initiative and contributed significant resources to see the completion of the project, this included:

- Facilitating the discussions that led to the development of the concept.
- Developing the concept.
- Attracting funds from other levels of government.
- Providing 50% funding to the project.
- And managing the fitness centre/ service.

Funding and contributing partners

There are a number of partners that assisted with this initiative. The Indigenous Co-ordination Centre (through FaHCSIA) provided \$25,000 towards establishing the gymnasium. The Department of Health and Ageing also provided \$90,000 over three (3) years for employment and training of key staff.

NSW Department of Sport and Recreation provided support to allow two of the three co-ordinators of the centre to be trained to Certificate Level Three in Fitness.

The ongoing support of the local community has been crucial to the success of the initiative, but in particular the local schools, aged care and disability groups, local clubs and the Council.

Approach

Throughout the community consultation process, it was widely reinforced that good health is the most pressing and important issue that confronts people in the community. This assertion is reflected in Gilgandra Shire Council's Community and Social Plan:

"Having good health is fundamental to having a good life. There are many factors

that influence good health and one of the key determinants is having access to appropriate health services. At present, there are a broad range of quality health services in Gilgandra, and these need to be maintained. There are, however, a number of key health services that are not as accessible to the community; accordingly every effort should be made to improve access to these services.

In addition, many people in our community suffer poor health from illnesses that can be prevented by adopting healthier lifestyle changes; therefore it will be necessary to provide services, facilities and activities that encourage residents to make healthier lifestyle choices".

In addition to the information gathered as part of the Community and Social planning process, Council has also highlighted strategies as a part of the 2020 Gilgandra Community Strategic Plan.

Four Principal activities were identified being: Inclusive Community, Thriving Environment, Growing Economy and Strengthened Infrastructure.

There are eight (8) strategies within Inclusive Community. Two (2) of these strategies include:

1. To improve community wellbeing (physical and mental).

2. Establish a sport and recreation plan.

Council's Management Plan also identifies more specific goals pertaining to the Principal Activity of Inclusive Community. These include:

1. Initiate a whole of Community exercise package.
2. Review resources at Gilgandra Youth Services to be able to offer a quality integrated experience including fitness opportunities.
3. Links formed with NSW Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation.
4. Funding opportunities identified.

Some key lessons learned:

- Ensure the community is supportive of the project.
- Ensure there are good reasons for developing the concept.
- Ensure staff are appropriately trained.
- Survey clients as to the most suitable times for fitness classes.
- Approach corporate sponsors for the gymnasium during the set up/planning phase.

Results

The most important achievement of the project is that Aboriginal people and people older than twenty five (25) are exercising again.

Whilst it is fantastic that all demographics are utilising the gym, a large proportion of the people using the facility (reflected in membership data) are groups that are at risk of different heart related problems. These people seem to feel comfortable in the gym and it is an ideal way for them to be able to exercise. These people are inspired by this new facility and it really is showing in the ways they are exercising, making the most of the facility and improving their health.

The Gilgandra Fitness Centre has proved to be very popular among locals/tourists/travelling workers.

Levels of success are by tracked utilising the following data:

- Number of members/users
- Revenue per year
- Number of people attending circuit classes
- Number of incidents
- Census data

Future Plans

Expand exercise classes to incorporate Yoga and Pilates.

Introduce the mobile Gilgandra Fitness Centre: visits to aged care facilities, schools and disability facilities. It is also hoped that future planning will allow child minding arrangements can be offered at the gym.

Future Partnerships

Future partnerships have been identified with Gilgandra Youth Services, aged care providers and disability services.

Offering a mobile service in the villages of Gilgandra Shire, targeting specific groups:

- Pregnant women
- Youth
- Disability clients
- Work cover clients

Gilgandra Shire Council is working towards gaining corporate sponsors, group memberships and developing closer links with the Gilgandra Shire Swimming Pool with the potential of joint memberships being offered.

Section 2

A RESOURCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Promoting health

The Ottawa Charter (World Health Organisation, 1986) states that

“Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment... Health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but goes beyond healthy life-styles to well-being”

Local Government has a major part to play to ensure its communities are healthy. As Local Government transits to the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework, each council must identify priorities and aspirations for the future – a 10 year Community Strategic Plan.

This section covers the process of community engagement and community strategic planning.

Community Engagement

The term community engagement broadly captures public processes in which the general public and other interested parties are invited to contribute to particular proposals or policy changes. Community engagement has the potential to go beyond merely making information available or gathering opinions or attitudes. It entails a more active exchange of information and viewpoints between the sponsoring organisation (or community group) and the public, however the public is defined.

Local Government Act

The Local Government Act says each council must develop and endorse a Community Strategic Plan, on behalf of its local government area. The plan must identify the community’s main priorities and aspirations for the future. The minimum timeframe for a Community Strategic Plan is 10 years.

Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan should be developed and delivered as a partnership between Council, state agencies, community groups and individuals, it should address a broad range of issues that are relevant to the whole community.

Council's role is to guide the community through these important discussions and to document the response in a meaningful plan. However, it should be clearly understood that it is not the council's responsibility to deliver every aspect of the Community Strategic Plan.

It is important to explain this during the engagement process, or the community will not take ownership of the document and may develop unreasonable expectations about Council's role in the delivery process.

The Community Strategic Plan should aim for a partnership – what can individuals, community groups, state agencies and Council do to deliver the desired outcomes? It should also aim to establish partnerships or other arrangements to minimise the chance of the plan becoming a 'shelf document'.

The Community Strategic Plan should address the entire local government area,

although councils may choose to include place specific sections if this is relevant to the community.

A Checklist For Community Engagement Strategies

Community engagement involves interactions between identified groups of people. It can cover a wide range of activities including the provision of information, consultation, education, communication and relationship building.

An engagement plan is a fluid process, and varies depending on the purpose for which the engagement is to be undertaken. The following five points demonstrate an engagement model for the development of a Local Government Area's Community Strategic Plan.

1. INFORM

One way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has happened

2. CONSULT

Two way communications designed to obtain public feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.

3. INVOLVE

Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making.

4. COLLABORATE

Working together to develop understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.

5. EMPOWER

Providing opportunities and resources for communities to contribute to solutions by valuing local talents and skills and acknowledging their capacity to be decision makers in their own lives.

Councils are involved in providing a wide range of facilities and services which are relevant to encouraging increased participation in physical activity. In particular, councils in NSW are generally responsible for:

- The development of their areas through strategic planning, policy development, planning controls such as the Local Environmental Plan.

- Managing public land, including providing open space and providing or facilitating the provision of sport and recreational facilities and services. This also includes providing infrastructure to support incidental physical activity, such as walkways and cycle ways.
- Providing other community services and facilities such as childcare, preschools, libraries, youth centres, senior citizens centres and community events
- Providing information about facilities and services and promoting events to the community.

The Community Strategic Planning process is a great platform for council and the community to develop strategies to maintain, improve and plan for open spaces, sporting and recreational facilities used for physical activity and ultimately offer a positive impact to the health and wellbeing of the community.

Ways for councils to address and integrate Healthy Weight objectives and strategies within the Community Strategic Plan

NSW councils have an extensive role in undertaking public health activities under regulation, primarily in health protection areas such as food safety, microbial control and blood borne disease control. They also have a historic role in immunization.

However, councils also undertake a range of other activities intended to promote the health of communities, such as the provision of food services, sporting and recreational facilities and open space, sun protection through shade provision, cultural development and the promotion of heritage, water fluoridation, promoting mental health, physical activity, addressing overweight and obesity, promoting safety and preventing injury and preventing harm associated with alcohol and other drugs.

In rural and regional NSW, councils frequently offer the provision of health infrastructure to attract, retain and house health professionals in their communities.

Councils also have a role in considering how planning the built environment can be undertaken in a way that promotes health.

Urban planning and public health

The Designing Places for Active Living web product, www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/guidelines/index.html, which provides information on how to design environments that are conducive to active living, is available on the Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL) website.

This website can assist those responsible for planning and designing the physical environment (natural and built environment) to create communities that have a positive impact on health and wellbeing. This resource is to assist practitioners to create environments that help to prevent diseases that are a consequence of a sedentary lifestyle, such as obesity, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

This resource is targeted at practitioners in both local and state government, private consultancy and the development industry. Users may include town planners, traffic and civil engineers, road safety officers, community safety officers, architects and urban designers.

SOME FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY:

Foundation for Rural and Regional Australia (FRRR)

The foundation supports the development of regional community foundations, and uses seed funding and challenge grants to move regional development project funding into a more dynamic context.

Contact: FRRR
P: 1800 170 020
E: info@frrr.org.au
Web: www.frrr.org.au

NSW Department of Sport and Recreation

Financial assistance and grants are available to sport and recreation groups and individuals through a number of sources, including the Sport and Recreation Grant Program.

Web: www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/grants/

Department of Health & Ageing

Better health and active ageing for all Australians.

Web: www.health.gov.au

NSW Cancer Council
Web: www.cancercouncil.com.au

Good Sports Programme
Web: www.goodsports.com.au

Department of Families, Housing, Community Service and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)
Web: www.fahcsia.gov.au

Regional Development Australia

RDA is an Australian Government initiative that brings together all levels of government to enhance the growth and development of Australia's regions.

Web: www.rda.gov.au

Our Community

Our community delivers a monthly Easy Grants Newsletter.

Our Community is a world-leading social enterprise that provides advice, tools and training for community groups and schools, and practical linkages between the community sector and the general public, business and government.

Web: www.ourcommunity.com.au

HELPFUL CONTACTS

Health Promotion Services

NSW Health, Health Promotion Service Staff can assist councils to refine ideas for a grant proposal, review applications and identify key sources of information and key contact people within the Local Hospital Network.

Please contact the relevant Health Promotion Services for your local government region by visiting

www.health.nsw.gov.au/lhn

Multicultural Health Communication Service

Provides information and services to assist councils to communicate with Culturally and Linguistically diverse communities throughout NSW.

Contact: Peter Todaro
P: 02 9817 0347
E: Peter.Todaro@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au

Centre for Health Advancement

Provides information to assist councils connect and create partnerships with Aboriginal Health Services and Local Hospital Network Services in the field of health promotion.

Contact: Claudine Lyons
P: 02 9391 9164
E: Claudine.lyons@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Cancer Council NSW

Is committed to working closely with councils through its ten offices across NSW and has developed a range of online resources to support councils with implementing healthy initiatives.

Contact: Local Government Strategy Officer
P: 02 9334 1891
E: localgovernment@nswcc.org.au

Good Sports Programme

Provides a program that supports community sporting clubs to be safe, healthy and family friendly environments.

Contact: John Reid
State Manager
P: 02 9972 3160
E: johnreid@adf.org.au

Healthy Kids Association

Promotes and influences health food choices for children

Contact: Sue Bell
P: 1300 724 850
E: info@healthy-kids.com.au

The Heart Foundation

Has a range of tobacco control, physical activity, and nutrition programs, resources and guidelines to assist and support Local Governments to create Healthy Communities.

Contact: Audrey Tolua
P: 02 9219 2475
E: Audrey.tolua@heartfoundation.org.au

Local Government and Shires Association of NSW

Is the peak industry body for Local Government in NSW

Contact:
Senior Policy Officer – Public Health
P: 02 9242 4028

NSW Aboriginal Lands Council

Aims to protect the interests and further the aspirations of its members and the broader Aboriginal community.

Contact: Senior Policy Officer
P: 02 6124 3559
E: Stephen.Hynd@alc.org.au

Premiers Council for Active Living NSW

Aims to build and strengthen the physical and social environments in which communities engage in active living.

Contact: Lauren Templeman
P: 02 8922 2322
E: lauren.templeman@heartfoundation.org.au

Arts and Health Australia

Is a national advocacy organisation and consulting agency, providing local government with best practice policy, programming and research in the field of creativity, health and wellbeing in regional and metropolitan communities.

Contact: Executive Director
P: 02 6583 5040
E: margaret@artsandhealth.org

