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And a special thank you to the Cooma Pace Setters Walk Organiser Darrell Henderson who conducted and provided the Heart Foundation Walkability checklist submission to Cooma Monaro Shire Council and the Cooma Visitors Centre for providing the image on page 3.

July 2015
Cooma Get Healthy Report
2014-2015

Overview

Southern NSW Local Health District was successful in the bid for Cooma to be one of the five rural towns to compete in the first NSW Healthy Town Challenge.

Over an eight-month period, the project utilised personal skills development and policy initiatives to influence and support new health behaviours. There was a commitment to working in partnership with residents and agencies to improve the social and physical environments to sustain good health. Participant interaction with the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service® also offered sound support in changing the health behaviours of Cooma residents.

Cooma-Monaro Shire, with a population of 9,772, had a total of 213 community members engaged in the challenge and 171 contacted by the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service®. There were also varying numbers on the Cooma Get Healthy Facebook Group reaching peak numbers at 108.

The challenge was branded Cooma Get Healthy as a strategy to emphasise the project was locally led and to encourage individuals 18 years and older living in the Cooma-Monaro area to participate.

- This was a pilot project offered by the Office of Preventive Health.
- Pre and post data was collected by the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service® (weight and waist circumference).
- Community feedback (n = 20) was obtained at the Cooma Rotary Market Stalls on the 17th May 2015 (n=9) and online via survey monkey (n= 11).
- Facebook analytics indicated the social medium as a valuable tool for communicating information.

This report summarises partnerships developed, communication strategies utilised, activities conducted, community feedback on the challenge, Facebook analytics, sustainability outcomes, lessons learned and recommendations should the challenge be conducted again.
**Networks**

Informal exchange of information for mutual benefit. Requires minimal time, trust or sharing of resources. It is a useful approach for organisations that are in the initial stages of working relationships. Information sharing includes understanding and knowing who is doing what, improved knowledge of services, their goals and plans, how they operate and with whom they are working. No formal agreement across partner groups on visions, tasks or decision making. This strategy can be used to establish working relationships.

**Cooperating**

Exchange of information, altering activities and sharing resources for mutual benefit and a common purpose, task or project; requires significant amounts of time, high levels of trust, and a significant sharing of turf. May require complex organisational processes and agreements in order to achieve the expanded benefits of mutual action. Acknowledgement of common issues, interests and agendas.

**Coexistence**

Stakeholders have basic knowledge of what other services are operating in the local area. No direct relationship, dependency or recognised need to share or collaborate.

**Coordinating**

Exchanging information for mutual benefits and altering activities for a common purpose; requires more time and trust but does not include the sharing of turf. Coordinating can be used to create more user-friendly access to services.

**Collaborating**

Exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources, willingness to enhance the capacity of another for mutual benefit and a common purpose; requires the highest levels of trust, considerable amounts of time, and an extensive sharing of resources.

**Partnership**

Sharing risks, resources, power and decision making for mutual benefit. Requires greater levels of trust and time. Is based on an agreed purpose and vision. Focuses effort on making a difference to outcomes for specific target group. Includes a willingness to reciprocally build capacity. May involve changing organisational culture and structures. Has a degree of formality and contractual and relational obligations.

**Contracting**

A financial arrangement where a direct service is provided or goods and services are exchanged.

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**LEGEND**

- Informal Terms of Reference
- Existing relationships built upon
- Face-to-face, teleconference and email
- 14 meetings – attendance mean of 6
- Coexisting
- Coordinating
- Cooperating
- Contracting
- Collaborating
- Partnership
- Networking

Patterned from:
## Communication Strategy

### Websites:
- NSW Office of Preventive Health
- Cooma-Monaro Shire Council
- Cooma Visitors Centre

### Cooma Get Healthy branding

### Word of mouth

### Paid radio advertising

### Community networks

### Weigh-in stations at library and events.

### Paid newspaper advertising

### Poster/Brochure Household Mail Out

### Partners’ networks

### Community events
- Rotary Markets x 3
- Cooma Relay for Life

### Facebook Group
- 108 group members
- Allowed participants to engage with each other, ask questions and share ideas

## Improvements Needed

- 213 engaged in the challenge.
- Various methods for signing up to the challenge (online website, community stalls, Monaro Regional Library & Cooma Visitors Centre).
- All participant sign-up information sent through to the Get Healthy Information and Service® for collation.
- Email or mail distribution list not available - Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service® unable to disclose participant contact details.
- Challenge to capture non-Facebook members.
- 0% of participants listed radio as a method of finding out about events.

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*Note: this chart does not add up to 100%*
Events/Activities

- Variety of events aimed at all fitness and knowledge levels
- Purpose = increase health literacy levels
- Small but dedicated group of participants
- Free nutrition & physical activity events

North Ridge Bush Walk  
Krista’s Hula Hooping  
Outdoor Green Gym

Cooma Community Garden workshops  
Promotion of existing activities in addition to Cooma Get Healthy activities

- Safely & effectively use public equipment

Themed Facebook events with attached incentives increased the number of participant posts

KINGA’s Outdoor FITT Group  
Food Cents & Healthy Foundation Walking Groups run by Southern NSW Medicare Local

- Variety of Facebook motivational messages & participants spontaneously sharing their health journey with others.
Pre and Post Data

- Data was collected by the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service®.
- Total of 213 participants registered for ongoing support and 171 were contacted by the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service®.
- Weight loss average consistent with all towns average (1.1kg) and locally was 1.2 kg per person.
- Majority of participants were female.

Consumer Feedback

- Participant feedback was obtained via an 11-item questionnaire.
- Hard copy surveys were available at the Community Spirit Awards Ceremony held in May 2015 and an online version also made available via survey monkey.
- There was a response rate of 20 participants (nine hard copies and 11 online).
- A Family Fitness pack was used as an incentive to encourage participants to complete the survey.

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**Overall Rating of Challenge**

- Excellent: 70.0%
- Good: 50.0%
- Fair: 15.0%
- Poor: 5.0%
- Very Poor: 0.0%

**Participant Completion of Get Healthy Phone Calls**

- Yes: 80%
- No: 15%
- Some: 5%

**Most Useful Aspects of Challenge**

- Free Exercise: 70.0%
- Inspirational Person: 60.0%
- Get Healthy Service: 50.0%
- Facebook Group: 35.0%
- Calendar of Events: 30.0%
- Free Show: 20.0%
- Bag: 15.0%
- Friendships: 10.0%
- Free Nutrition: 5.0%
- Other: 0.0%

- "Great having others with the same journey and having the extra support"

**Least Useful Aspects of Challenge**

- Get Healthy Service: 40.0%
- Facebook Group: 35.0%
- Free Nutrition Sessions: 30.0%
- Free Show: 20.0%
- Bag: 15.0%
- Calendar of Events: 10.0%

- "I found my coach not right for me and annoying. Didn't seem to give me any inspiration"
Facebook Group Analytics

- Facebook Group created to support participants during the challenge.
- Closed private membership.
- The community collaborated on shared links, photos and documents.
- Administration staff used their personal accounts to monitor group in a more informal, personal approach. This created deeper relationships with the group members.
- Members received notification upon any new post being created, not just simply turning up in their newsfeed.
- Non-Facebook participants may have been alienated.
- Heavy staff engagement to monitor and facilitate group discussions.

Facebook Special Events

```
<table>
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<th>Incentive</th>
<th>No Incentive</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>CGH Participants</td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Number of Facebook Members

- 108 Participants
- Over 654 Likes
- Over 137 Posts
- Over 365 Comments
- 100% of posts were either liked or commented on

Importance of Facebook in Challenge

- Very Important 40%
- Not a Facebook Member 15%
- Not Important 10%
- Somewhat Important 10%
- Important 20%
- Neutral 5%

“Because I’m a dummy on Facebook”
**Sustainability**

**People**
- Improved community awareness of local services.
- Increase in health literacy levels, particularly reading food labels, the Australian Dietary Guidelines, and the importance of being physically active.
- Social structures/networks developed.
- Participants self-reported an increase in their self-efficacy and internal locus of control.

**Policy**
- Nutrition Policy Tip Sheet developed and promoted to local organisations.
- Recommendations to Council Report developed:
  - Walkability of Cooma
  - Nutrition Policy
  - Outdoor Fitness Equipment
  - Community Gardens

**Environment**
- Increased use of existing social capital and infrastructure:
  - Heart Foundation Walking Groups
  - Cooma Community Garden
  - Council Recommendations Paper for Creating Healthy Towns
  - Outdoor Green Gym Fitness stations
- Promotion of the Get Healthy @ Work service.

**Funding**
- One-off $15,000 from NSW Health
- Additional funding provided by MCCCR and SERRG
- In-kind support throughout challenge provided by SERRG; Cancer Council, Southern NSW Medicare Local, Cooma Lions Club, and Rotary Club of Cooma.

**Partnerships**
- Capacity building.
- Inter-sectorial collaborative approach to addressing the social determinants of health.
- Logo support provided branding and identity.
- Community partners were selected based on mutual objectives.
**Lessons Learned**

**Required Resources**
- Staffing costs for dedicated Full Time Equivalent and other staff for event support.
- Time exhaustive. Competing work priorities, reliance on volunteers and committee members.
- Existing capacity, networks and steering committee vital for a broad community reach.

**Community Feedback**
- Most-liked aspect of the challenge was the free exercise sessions. Feedback indicated that nutrition sessions would have also been listed as useful; however, due to the timing of sessions, most participants could not attend them and thus rated them as least useful.
- The Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service® was listed by 60% as one of the most useful aspects and 40% as one of the least useful aspects. Qualitative data indicated that time of phone calls as well as missing phone calls, and on some occasions receiving no calls was a significant contributor as to why the service was deemed least useful.
- Sessions on how to use the Green Gym Equipment were well received by participants with 85% stating they had used the equipment in the past six months; 90% also stated the equipment to be either important or very important to their ongoing increase in physical activity.

**Communication Strategy**
- Essential to implement strategies to monitor and reach non-Facebook participants. Vital to obtain a contact list including email addresses of participants for distribution of information.
- There needs to be sufficient time between notification of successful town and the recruitment phase to maximize proactive evaluation and planning processes.
- Better transition between recruitment period and challenge. Do not have recruitment period longer than one month as participant motivation can wear off and they are left wondering when they will receive further information.

**Evaluation Process**
- Improve the process of communicating the progress of towns, ie regular updates on retention rates and communicate rankings of which town is coming first, second and so forth.
- Ensure that activities are monitored and evaluated throughout challenge.
- Sustainability of activities conducted and partnership establishment should be a key criterion for determining the success of a town.
- Data collection methods require multiple mediums to cater for diverse users.
- There needs to be an ongoing feedback loop for monitoring of reach - Facebook is a fantastic feedback tool.

**Recommendations**

1. Facilitate community run events to complement the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service®. This will connect participants to each other to share the journey together and generate a sense of community spirit and team work.
2. Utilise social structures and capitalise on existing social infrastructure and established networks.
3. Seek community support and volunteers from key community groups, health services and Local Government. Outline benefits of committee membership and develop committee Terms of Reference.
4. Create an ongoing feedback loop to participants, for example a Facebook group, website and email distribution list.
5. Increase the lead-in time prior to recruitment and limit challenge duration to three months. This is particularly important with limited funding to maintain engagement and enthusiasm of participants.
References


VicHealth (2011). The partnerships analysis tool, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne

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