Rural People: Resilient Futures

Stakeholder Bulletin - Edition Three



Welcome:

Welcome to the second edition of the Rural People; Resilient Futures Stakeholder Bulletin – designed to keep stakeholders and community members updated on the progress and happenings of the project on a quarterly basis. If you have any questions or comments about the project feel free to contact our friendly team.

Overview:

Southern Grampians Shire Council (SGSC) has received funding through the State Government Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) through the Victorian Adaptation and Sustainability (VAS) Partnership to facilitate an action research pilot project entitled **Rural People: Resilient Futures**. The project aims to understand vulnerability across the Southern Grampians Shire, and how this will evolve under the impacts of climate change. A particular focus on defining **who** is vulnerable, **what** they are vulnerable to, **how** this will vary in the future and what can be done to **manage** this varying vulnerability.

Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care Partnership (SGGPCP) will lead the research project in partnership with RMIT University providing research direction and SGSC as funds recipient providing valuable community links. Rural People: Resilient Futures is funded until May 2015.

What has happened?

Policy Updates

- Victorian Centre for Climate Change Adaptation Research (VCCCAR) released a policy guidance for state government 'Adaptation planning for community service organisations and primary care partnerships' for State Government. The policy brief highlights the affects climate change is already having on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in our communities and that primary health and community welfare organisations can play a central role in facilitating improvements to community resilience. http://www.vcccar.org.au/sites/default/files/publications/Implementing%20Adaptation%20Policy%20Brief.pdf
- World Health Organisation (WHO) Climate change and health is on the global agenda with the World
 Health Organisation calling for more concentrated action worldwide to reduce the risks associated with
 climate change. WHO hosted its first conference on health and climate change, in Geneva on 27-29 August.
 The conference focused on the profound effects that climate variables have on health.

http://www.who.int/globalchange/mediacentre/events/climate-health-conference/en/

Project Updates

- Phase 1 research 'Understanding Vulnerability'
 - More than 25 consultations have been completed with member agencies as well as community members and groups
 - During the consultations we asked "what makes life tough"? Common responses included financial issues, lack / inconsistent information, lack of transport, lack of employment options, lack of services (medical, support, transport), health difficulties (mental health, disabilities, chronic illness), technology black spots, distance...











- We also asked "**Who** do you think is doing it tough"? Responses included socially isolated people (geographically, transport), single people (35-55) with no dependent children living at home, those with limited social skills, families with low income, those without a home, single mums, the elderly, farming families doing it tough, clients on low income/pension, those with limited access to services. Responses highlighted that those people who are borderline or who "fall through the gaps" and don't fit assessment criteria for support are particularly vulnerable.

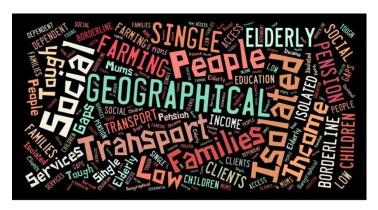


Figure 1: Who is doing it tough? - Common themes

• Literature Review – Literature review investigations indicate that there is a gap between the policy framing of 'vulnerability' at Australian State and Federal government levels, and the meaning of social vulnerability in the context of a rural Victorian Shire. Given that funding models follow such definitions at State and Federal levels, it can be inferred that this gap could result in vulnerable community members 'slipping through the cracks' as such.

The preliminary literature review has found that social, natural, physical and financial capital impact on community vulnerability. This includes lack of access to resources (including information, knowledge and technology), limited access to political power and representation, social networks and connections, beliefs and customs, quality housing and accommodation options, frail and physically limited individuals and type and density of infrastructure and lifelines.

Phase 2 – Working with agencies to understand climate change impacts on services and clients.

- The Adaptation Journey The Rural People; Resilient Futures team is working with local agencies to identify and document impacts and vulnerabilities to assist the adaptation process and identify possible actions in the workplace. Agencies are asked to look at how their organisation / service delivery has been affected by past weather events, which impacts left the organisation and clients most vulnerable and what strategies were used to address this. Ali, Jo and Mel have been busy meeting with stakeholders to further investigate actions based on the individual needs of the workplace.
- Plan, Prepare, Lead Workshop (Thursday 4th September) –SGGPCP member agencies and associated stakeholders were invited to take part in the *Plan, Prepare, Lead workshop* where participants were able to share the adaptation experience and begin to identify strategies and actions to reduce the vulnerability on their service delivery and clients. Project team member Alianne Rance (RMIT University) facilitated the day and 'opened the eyes' of some participants to the everyday impacts climate change brings to their workplaces.











 Information Dissemination - Short Film - The Rural People; Resilient Futures Project has completed production of a short film focusing on climate change and its impact on rural areas highlighting the

important role health and community service agencies play in building community resilience. Film maker Sue Roberts of Luminescence Films has been working with the project team to capture the Plan, Prepare, Lead Workshop as well as some local as well as the important role SGGPCP and health and community agencies reducing climate impacts on the community.



Copies of the film will be available on the PCP website: www.sggpcp.com

- **Film Launch** The Rural People; Resilient Futures Team will be holding a film launch at the end of October, PCP partners, stakeholders and community members will be invited along to help us celebrate and support this wonderful short film. Launch details will be circulated shortly, events will be held in Hamilton and Balmoral.
- Climate Adaptation 2014 Future Challenges Conference. Jo Brown will present the Rural People: Resilient Futures Project at the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF) Conference being held on the Gold Coast in October.

What's Next?

Phase 3 Developing Regionally Applicable Actions – develop and integrate strategic adaptation actions into current strategies and planning mechanisms of selected member agencies to enable vulnerable persons and associated services to adapt to the direct and indirect impacts of climate change and social vulnerability.

- Identifying integrated adaptation actions The project team will continue to work with agencies to support them to identify actions that can be integrated into current operational and strategic planning and guidelines that can reduce vulnerability. The team will work through a template developed by RMIT over the next 2 months.
- Phase 3 workshop Alianne Rance (RMIT University) will be returning at the end of October to facilitate final stakeholder workshops to support stakeholders through the action development phase of the process. These sessions will provide valuable opportunities for networking, upskilling and tailored support for each agency. Sessions will be held in both Hamilton and Balmoral, details will be circulated shortly.
- SGGPCP Website The Rural People; Resilient Futures Project updates and information is available on our website: www.sggpcp.com

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