





## Emerging Concerns:

### Community Participation and Empowerment

- At the top of the map new yellow factors were added by the group. The group felt that they are seeing an increase in top down leadership which is causing a decrease in community empowerment and vision resulting in a decrease in capacity to recommence or plan for a viable future.
- There was concern from the group that the community have become used to the top down approach and relied heavily on strong leadership for decision making, this approach was also evident in sporting and recreation clubs. Due to the amount of preparation and compliance to recommence activity, leaders were tending to make decisions and membership were not often involved in this process. This is seen as not only decreasing the power of club membership but also creating an increased burden on leadership possibly impacting their long term sustainability in these positions. This could have implications for volunteering in the future.
- Limited involvement of membership and community to input into decisions could limit effort to mobilise community action in the future. Community Sector agencies may need further support to redevelop skills to enhance capacity for community mobilisation.
- The group also felt there was less connection between community groups thus less opportunity to share capacity and less vision for the future with focus on immediate needs.
- There were also concerns about limited opportunities for volunteers to participate in activity due to limited face to face contact and capacity of clubs and services to adapt to digital platforms. This potentially is a risk to volunteer participation.

### Mental health and wellbeing

- The uncertainty of the pandemic with conditions rapidly changing and the longevity of the ongoing impacts are presenting a number of challenges within the community.
- This is placing pressure on the workforce causing workforce vulnerability through fear of losing employment and an increased risk of being exploited through to frontline pressure of workers in sales and hospitality.
- The group told stories of workers who were policing physical distancing rules in cafes and shops feeling pressure from both the community and colleagues.
- The ongoing nature of the pandemic is also unsettling for those working from home faced with ongoing isolated working conditions.
- Stories reflected the perception that many were starting to see the 'light at end of tunnel' with easing of restrictions, then an increase in cases and halt to further easing of restrictions. This was all resulting in increase in anxiety and stress.
- Loneliness was continuing to be an issue and it was noted that many grandparents who were providing care for school aged children were now feeling lonely with children returning to school.
- Mental health was also being impacted by fear and the group identified the challenges faced with school holiday tourists balancing fear of bringing the virus into the local community and economic gain.



This network is being facilitated by  
Southern Grampians Glenelg Primary Care Partnership. For  
further information contact  
Jo Brown [joanne.brown@wdhs.net](mailto:joanne.brown@wdhs.net)