

Primary Care Partnerships for Community Resilience

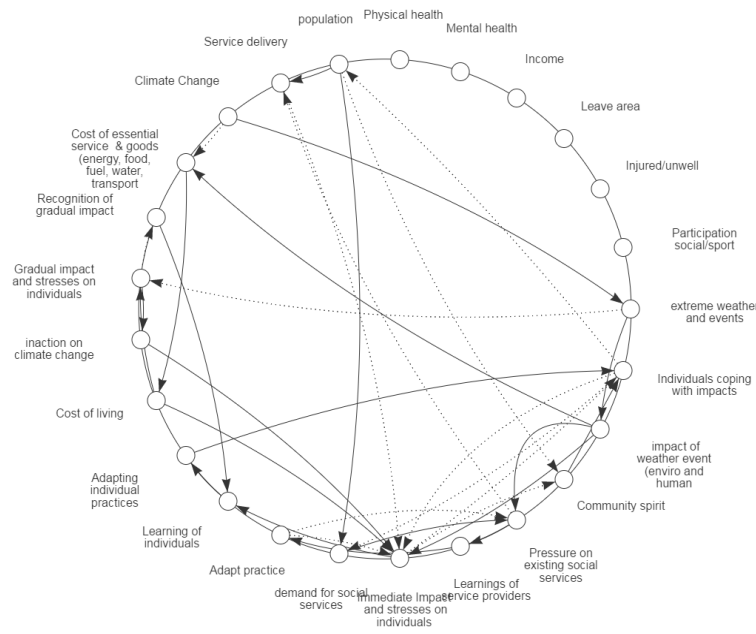
Climate change is emerging as one of the biggest health issues of this century. It is widely reported that climate change will exacerbate disadvantage and the impacts will be felt by those who are the most vulnerable. Primary Care Partnerships (PCPs) are recognised as strong networks that bring health and community sectors together. PCPs can play a major role to enhance resilience in the face of climate change. Southern Grampians Glenelg PCP (SGGPCP) has been recognised as a leader in building the capacity of their partnership to enhance community resilience in the face of climate change and has been funded through the Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation to elevate the approach to a state-wide level, beginning with a trial with SGGPCP Partner agencies and stakeholders.

SGGPCP Trial: The process

Workshop 1

In May 2019 an enthusiastic group of SGGPCP Partners and Stakeholders came together to share their diverse knowledge and experience in a workshop to understand the impacts of climate change on the health and wellbeing of our community. Using Group Model Building (techniques introduced to SGGPCP by the Global Obesity Centre at Deakin University (GLOBE)), the group created a map that represented the connections between the factors they identified resulting from climate change that impact health and wellbeing.

Connection Circle



The Impacts:

Beginning by describing the impacts and how these have changed over time, participants told stories of how they have seen climate change impacts affecting the health and wellbeing of their communities. Participants shared their stories relating to the impacts of climate change on physical health, community capacity, service provision and access, cost of living, mental health, social cohesion and many more.

The Connections

The impacts were documented around a circle using STICKE software (Systems Thinking in Community Knowledge Exchange). Participants then discussed the connections between the impacts and identified the linkages. For example, there was a connection identified between cost of essential services and cost of living, adapting individual practices and individuals coping with impacts, population and demand for services, impact of weather events and demand for services which were all plotted on the connection circle (above). The connection circle was then converted to a map to enable a clearer representation of the connections. The group continued to identify linkages and connections.

“Recreation reserves are dry which has consequences for physical activity, mental health and social connection”

“Lack of financial security for our farming community means that people are moving off the land and away from small towns – as a result shops and schools and eventually health services are closing in those towns also”

“Cost of living is rising (like energy costs) so people have to decide whether to spend money on medicines and food or power bills”

“Due to lack of rainfall, people are not growing their own food, so access to fresh fruit and vegies is decreasing”

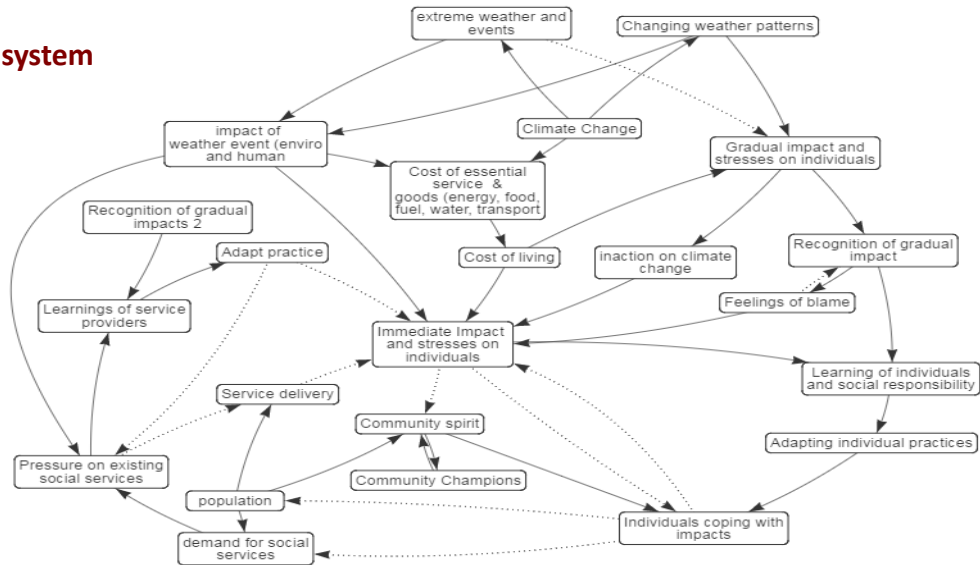
“We are having more heatwaves or periods of prolonged heat. The impacts can creep up slowly so often our elderly are not prepared or don’t think they will be impacted”

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Moving to Action:

A second workshop was held in June, with participants coming back together to review the systems map created in workshop one. The map had been revised to align the stories told during workshop one under broader headings to describe multiple impacts enabling a simpler visual representation. For example *Immediate impacts and stressors on individuals* is a broad term to include physical and mental health impacts and stressors. Participants then discussed opportunities for action, particularly at a partnership level.

The Map of the local system



Identified Actions:

The group focussed on identifying collaborative action that could be led by the PCP.

Community Cohesion:

The group identified that a strong and connected community would have the potential to reduce the vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. The group saw that driving action around community cohesion and connection would link into many of the factors on the map including increasing community spirit, increasing community champions which would result in an increase in individuals coping and therefore less immediate impacts. Community connection was also identified as a protective factor for a range of health and wellbeing issues. A number of assets and projects already in existence or in planning were identified as potential opportunities and leverage points.

Learning:

The group identified that the PCP is well placed to facilitate action based on learning and adapting (both individual learning and organisational learning) which would reduce the impact on individuals and services and reduce vulnerability. This group discussed the value of creating a *Discovery Plan* (based on the Emergency Management Recovery Plan language) to understand and share stories of impacts and learning opportunities. Challenges around the gradual impact of climate change and the capacity of the community sector were highlighted.

SGGPCP will work in collaboration with our partners on these actions over the next 12 months to enhance the resilience of our community in the face of climate change.



This work is funded by the Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation through Community Resilience in the face of climate change.

SGGPCP will use the learnings from the trial with two other PCPs to begin to elevate this work to a state-wide level.

Further information
joanne.brown@wdhs.net

