

Case Study Report



Enabling Resilience with Balmoral Bush Nursing Centre

An output of the Rural
People; Resilient
Futures Project



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Images

Courtesy of Balmoral Bush Nursing Centre. 2014

Disclaimer

The views expressed herein do not represent those of the Victorian Government. They are the views of the report authors.

This case study report is a co-developed research output of the Rural People; Resilient Futures project, funded through the Victorian Adaptation and Sustainability Partnership Grant Scheme, through the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries. This report was co-written by Balmoral Bush Nursing Centre, the Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care Partnership, as well as researchers from RMIT University. Chapter 4 of this report outlines information gathered through consultations undertaken throughout the project and the report captures the views of the project partners and the researchers involved.

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1. About us

The Balmoral Bush Nursing Centre (BBNC) is situated in the North of the Southern Grampians Shire in a rural setting 50 minutes' drive from the regional centres of Hamilton and Horsham. BBNC utilises many partnerships to provide an extensive range of community based healthcare services. Qualified nursing staff provide treatment and health advice and act as an advocate in referral to external health services. Regular visits from GP's from the Coleraine/Casterton Medical Clinic and Hamilton Medical Group along with Podiatry, Maternal and Child Health Care and Continence staff through WDHS - Hamilton, enable convenient local access to specialised care. Community services staff provide a broad range of respite services, exercise programs and other activities. Childcare services offer great support to young families.

The service is committed to "Connecting people, promoting knowledge and investing in the health of our community for the future".



FIGURE 1. LISA HUTCHINS, CENTRE MANAGER

2. The Rural People; Resilient Futures Project

Our organisation is a member agency of the Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care Partnership (PCP in the following), who have been involved in a project funded by the Victorian government through the Victorian Adaptation and Sustainability Partnership Grant Scheme. The project entitled '*Rural People; Resilient Futures*' (RPRF in the following) has been conducted to investigate the nature of vulnerability in a rural Shire, understand how this will vary under the impacts of climate change, how the capacity of these groups can be increased and who can help.

The project is a collaborative endeavour between the Southern Grampians and Glenelg Shire (the Shire in the following), the PCP and researchers from RMIT University. Eight member agencies of the PCP, and various other stakeholders were involved in all phases of the project, and facilitated engagement with community members throughout the Shire.

2.2 The process

The RPRF project involved four phases, over a 12 month period. Key member agency engagement was facilitated through one-on-one consultations with the PCP and researchers, as well as workshops throughout all phases of the project. The project phases are outlined below:

Phase 1:

Baseline Understanding
What does vulnerability look like in SGSC.

Phase 2:

How does climate change complicate this vulnerability?

Phase 3:

What can we do locally?
Focus on integration into plans and policies

Phase 4:

Information sharing to inform community and stakeholders

3. Getting started

3.1 Why we wanted to participate

BBNC is central to the Balmoral Community and plays a major role in the community. We are concerned about the impacts of climate change on our community and have already experienced significant bushfire events and heatwaves.

"Balmoral community members work together in times of crisis, partnerships enhance the wellbeing of the community"

BBNC has also understood other impacts and recently participated in an energy efficiency project with SGGPCP, using local networks to increase household energy efficiency. Access to fresh food can also be an issue in rural communities and a local food swap has recently begun at the centre.

At the time of expressing an interest in the project, work had been carried in climate change adaptation:

- We already had a heatwave and bushfire policy
- We had taken measures to prepare clients during extreme events – such as community education sessions, assessing access to and confidence with mobile phones and ensuring access to cool community spaces.
- OH&S considerations were applied to policy relating to staff response within the community and attendance at community events
- The Department of Health and Department of Human Services guidance on heatwave were guiding factors in review of policy development and our operational response plans.

4. Engagement in the Process

4.1 Initial consultations – Phase 1

We initially engaged with the PCP for this project in April 2014 through a Phase 1 Consultation Interview. During this meeting, PCP representatives engaged with us on the following questions:

- Who do you work with?
- What makes life tough for community members?
- What are community members doing to make life easier?
- What happened during the last heatwave?
- How can we make life easier?

Our key response to these questions outlined:

- We support clients from all ages and background;
- Some areas which make life tough for our clients include; limited access to transport services, unreliable internet and phone services, rising living costs (particularly petrol);
- Medical services which travel to Balmoral ease the stress of long distance travel for clients;
- Fire plans are a way of life for the community in Balmoral;
- BBNC cancelled trips during the last heatwave following centre policy, trips always include travel which can be high risk on code red days;
- BBNC staff and clients are vulnerable to heat related conditions when travelling; and
- Support from BBNC, family and friends increase client's health and wellbeing making life easier. "Neighbours checking on neighbours during extreme weather and events".

During this phase, an informal community consultation workshop was undertaken at BBNC as well as a Stakeholder Workshop where we were invited to discuss means to manage the complexity of vulnerability in rural Victoria. These workshops were purposed to understand what vulnerability really means in the Shire from the perspective of the community.

Simultaneously, the researchers from RMIT University undertook a literature review to understand what the academic and grey literature outlined about vulnerability. This was presented to our team through a workshop in Phase 2.

We worked with the PCP to complete a climate and vulnerability workbook produced by the research team, to help understand what our organisation, service delivery and clients may be vulnerable to already.

From this process, we understood that currently we are most vulnerable to the following:

- Extreme heat and code red days ;
- BBNC is located in a higher risk bushfire zone with large national parks and state forest to the North and East and smaller national parks and state forest to the East; and
- Geographical isolation increases vulnerability.

pcp

Victorian Adaptation & Sustainability Partnership

Victoria

Southern Grampians
SHIRE COUNCIL

RMIT
UNIVERSITY

What does climate change mean for your community service organisation?

Activity Book

Rural People; Resilient Futures Project
Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care Partnership
Southern Grampians Shire Council
RMIT University

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Purpose: to determine the impacts of climate change on your service delivery and clients' vulnerability, and what can be done to manage this.¹

The Adaptation Process²

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graph TD; 1[1 Getting started] --> 2[2 Current climate vulnerability]; 2 --> 3[3 Future climate vulnerability]; 3 --> 4[4 Adaptation options]; 4 --> 5[5 Monitor & review]; 5 --> 1;
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¹ Workbook adapted from:
NHS – Adaptation to Climate Change for Health and Social Care Organisation
UKCIP - Local Climate Impacts Profile: how to do an LCIP
UKCIP – Adaptation Wizard Notepad

² UKCIP Adaptation Wizard, <http://www.ukcip.org.uk/wizard/>

Figure 2. The Climate and Vulnerability workbook¹

4.2 The impact of climate change - Phase 2

During this phase, the RMIT Researchers and PCP ran a workshop to understand how climate impacts may affect our organisation, service delivery and clients. We were taken through a climate impacts table¹, which PCP representatives later met with us to complete.

The table demonstrated which impacts are likely to occur to 2070, highlighting specific events and how they might increase in intensity or frequency. The table then investigated the 'Receptor: thing being affected', the 'Consequences', the 'Threats: negative impacts' and 'Opportunities: positive impacts' that may occur as a result of each climate impact.

At the end of the workshop, we ran through two possible scenarios that could affect our organisation and the Shire; heatwave combined with bushfire, and an extreme rainfall and flood event, illustrating a critical disaster point. We then worked back through time, over six months, two years, and five years to brainstorm adaptation actions that would have helped us to avoid the disaster in the first place. These formed the basis of our adaptation action planning and highlighted things that we are already doing to increase resilience. During this workshop, we participated in the production of a film on the project.



Figure 3. Filming phase two workshop

¹ Adapted from: UKCIP – Local Climate Impacts Profile

4.3 Current adaptation actions

Through the process, we understood that we are already undertaking actions that aid in building resilience within our community.

Balmoral community members work together in times of crisis and BBNC partners with the community to enhance wellbeing. The township has been at risk of losing 2 major services, the Balmoral General Store and the Balmoral Service Station.

BBNC worked with the community to facilitate a community owned General Store which has ensures local access to food and household items. The closure of the service station impacted heavily on the community with impacts on social connection and people were reluctant to use fuel to drive to visit a friend or attend events as one example of the many and varied impacts.



FIGURE 4. RICH PICTURE EXERCISE - PHASE 2

4.4 New adaptation actions – Phase 3

In October, the project team ran a workshop to demonstrate some adaptation action case studies that were relevant to our organisation. We then participated in a facilitated brainstorming session to decide on what actions we would commit to including in our existing practices.

We committed to:

- Showcase the inherent resilience in the Balmoral community while demonstrating the significant impact that climate change can have on a rural community.

5. Outcomes of the process

5.1 What did we learn?

- The Balmoral Bush Nursing Centre underpins community connectedness and is critical to successful implementation of community sustainability projects

5.2 What was challenging?

- Coordinating effective input to the project due to resource poor and volunteer over commitment which is very common in small remote rural communities.

"It was a wonderful experience to be included in a short film and have the story of our community broadcasted out to the world! (Ben McPhee Proprietor / Owner Fuel Station)."

5.3 What has changed during this process?

- A renewed confidence in the role of BBNC in achieving good things for the community.
- Validation of the work that BBNC achieves in strategically improving the health status of our community.

5.4 What was most important for us?

- Recognition of BBNC facilitation projects as being socially significant both on a local and broader stage.
- Promotion of the multi foci benefits of implementing local solutions with local capacity to achieve sustainability for small rural remotes communities. This ensures that projects are owned by communities and increases capacity for sustainability into the future.



Figure 5. Balmoral Community Members interviewed for short film 'Uncovering a Leadership Model for Building Resilience'.

6. What next? Moving forward.

BBNC will commit to support ongoing community projects and has great plans for the future. The Balmoral and District Development Association have recently endorsed the Balmoral Community Plan which has prioritised a number of community sustainability projects that the Centre will be actively involved in facilitating implementation.

These projects include:

- Development of a Rocklands Management Plan
- Building a new Community Centre at the Balmoral Recreation Reserve
- Development of a mural square and arts precinct in the centre of town inclusive of accessible public toilets to increase foot traffic in the town area and thereby improve economic sustainability of community business



Figure 6. Our Place – Highlights from the Balmoral Community