



Final Report: Executive Summary

Gleneelg SAVES Consortium

Prepared by:

David Lynch¹, Jackie Tuck¹, Craig Hurley¹, Penny Fraser² and Joanne Brown²

¹ Federation Business School ² Southern Grampians Gleneelg Primary Care Partnership



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Project team

Southern Grampians Glenelg Primary Care Partnership

- Penny Fraser, Project Officer
- Joanne Brown, Manager Health and Wellbeing

Glenelg Shire Council

- Anne Deam, Aged and Disability Services Manager
- Maureen Crisp, Project Officer

Federation University Australia

- David Lynch, Research Fellow
- Sasha Ivkovic, Database Manager
- Dr. Jackie Tuck, Research Fellow
- Craig Hurley, Manager, National Centre for Sustainability (FedUni)
- Assoc. Prof Jerry Courvisanos, Associate Professor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Sue Veitch, Research Assistant

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Executive Summary

The groups most vulnerable in Australia to rising energy costs include the elderly, the chronically ill and the socio-economically disadvantaged. The Australian Government's Low Income Energy Efficiency Program (LIEEP), funded through the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, aimed to assist these disadvantaged groups. The Glenelg SAVES project, funded under Round Two of LIEEP, aimed to address information failure as a barrier preventing low-income residents from improving their energy efficiency. The Glenelg SAVES consortium: Western District Health Service - Southern Grampians Glenelg Primary Care Partnership (SGGPCP), the Glenelg Shire Council (Glenelg Shire) and Federation University Australia (FedUni), managed this project.

This partnership between SGGPCP as the lead agency, Glenelg Shire, FedUni and energy efficiency experts was set up as an advisory group to lead the project. This collaborative approach involved staff from each organisation sharing knowledge, skills, lessons from previous projects and other resources.

The Glenelg SAVES project targeted low-income households who receive Home and Community Care (HACC) services in the Glenelg Shire in South-West Victoria, including elderly residents and people with a disability. The project focused on increasing the capacity and knowledge of the Glenelg HACC staff through an innovative participatory approach, which sought to engage staff in the project by providing home energy efficiency training. This training was tailored to the existing skills and knowledge of HACC staff and enabled them to undertake home energy assessments in both their own homes and that of the region's HACC service recipients. In particular, the objectives of the Glenelg SAVES project were to:

1. Increase the household energy efficiency skills, specifically in home auditing and advice, and improve household energy efficiency for Glenelg Shire HACC staff.
2. Improve energy efficiency in the homes of HACC clients in the Glenelg Shire.
3. Deliver a high quality trial project that provides data and analysis to inform policy and future energy efficiency programs and support for low income households.

This project trialed a participatory development method designed to engage HACC staff and clients in becoming more energy efficient. This approach aimed to increase the knowledge, interest and motivation of HACC staff, who undertook home energy assessments and provided energy efficiency advice to HACC clients through their existing relationship. A range of data including survey, energy use and climate data has been collected and analysed to evaluate the effectiveness of Glenelg SAVES and inform future policy and program approaches.

Methodology

Project Approach

The first stage of the project involved recruiting Glenelg Shire HACC staff to take part in the project. All Glenelg Shire HACC staff (support, maintenance, assessment and management) were invited to take part in an initial information session to outline the project, including processes, support structures and benefits. The project also employed an existing HACC staff member, for 0.2EFT, to be the primary point of contact for the HACC staff, and act as the Glenelg SAVES champion.

HACC staff participants received training in home energy assessments from the Moreland Energy Foundation (MEFL). This training was designed to enable participants to identify and prioritise recommendations, and help arrange their implementation. Once trained, the staff collected baseline data using a paper-based survey and conducted home energy assessments for HACC client participants. The energy efficiency implementation was then carried out, and post-implementation data collected. The project had a budget of up to \$200 per household to support energy efficiency purchases.

As part of the project's community engagement activities, family and others having a relationship with HACC Clients were also encouraged to become more energy efficient. This phase included six community workshops with Planned Activity Groups (PAG) and the local Men's Shed Association.

The longitudinal design employed, used measurements at baseline and at intervals throughout the project. The three major data sources for this study included: energy data, participant surveys and climate data. Qualitative data was also collected through discussions with HACC workers, consortium members and contractors involved in the project.

Evaluation

The methodology applied to the Glenelg SAVES evaluation allows for evidence-based policy making by studying questions such as:

- What influence did the Glenelg SAVES project have on energy use behaviour of HACC staff and clients?
- What influence did the Glenelg SAVES project have on HACC staffs' knowledge and ability to provide advice on household energy efficiency opportunities?
- Which types of participants benefited most from the Glenelg SAVES project?
- What types of low-income consumers are attracted to energy efficiency programs and technologies?

- What factors influence adoption of energy efficiency technologies and curtailment behaviour?
- How does project participation influence the drivers of energy use behaviour?

The evaluation design developed by FedUni researchers is a well-grounded theory-based approach that ensures policy relevance: it not only answers what works but also why (or why not). The framework maps out the sequence from inputs to impact and allows for the identification of barriers that may influence the project's outcomes. Importantly the framework evaluates the Glenelg SAVES trial not simply in terms of observed changes in energy use (and other related measures) but rather in terms of what happened because of the project compared with estimates of what would have happened without the trial (i.e. counterfactuals).

FedUni maintained records of all project activities, all participants (HACC staff and clients) recruited into the project, and all energy efficiency recommendations adopted. The content of the database included:

- Household energy consumption data (from meter and/or billing data)
- Household and demographic data relating to LIEEP Data items
- Weather data (from Bureau of Meteorology data files)
- Household attitudinal and other data

Glenelg SAVES was conducted from 2013/14 to 2015/16 and included 22 HACC Staff and 306 HACC Client participants.

Findings

In summary:

- The project was successful in increasing beliefs around the energy efficiency levels of participant households and their perceived control over energy consumption.
- Glenelg SAVES was successful in increasing: perceived household energy efficiency levels and control over energy use and heating curtailment behaviour among HACC Client participants.
- The project was successful in achieving its aim of increasing the energy knowledge of HACC Staff.
- Most workers and clients had carried out some of the recommendations arising from their energy efficiency assessments.
- Satisfaction with participation in the project for both workers and clients was high.
- The project was not successful in reducing household electricity use. Although electricity use did decline from the project's pre- to post-assessment phase, this was consistent with

historical trends. The actual levels of energy use were 5% higher than forecasts from statistical modelling. These results were consistent for both HACC Staff and Clients.

- The analysis found that energy efficiency knowledge had a significant influence on attitudes towards reducing energy and participant's perceived ability to achieve this goal.
- HACC staff identified economic factors as the major reason for joining the project, whereas for HACC clients the influence of HACC staff and financial support for energy efficiency purchases were greater.
- A high level of energy curtailment for HACC clients was identified, suggesting little potential to increase such behaviour, although opportunities for increased energy efficiency may exist.
- Most common actions, for staff and clients, generally related to appliances and heating.

Recommendations

1. Extend the HACC Program to incorporate energy efficiency training for all staff and targeted advice and support for clients.
2. Promote energy efficiency as a wellbeing issue that falls within the provision of public health services.
3. Alleviate imperfect information market failure by using social networks to support disadvantaged groups in accessing energy efficiency information, advice and support.
4. Establish standard guidelines for undertaking energy efficiency program evaluations in an Australian context.
5. Investigate opportunities for encouraging financial support for energy efficiency investment by low-income households.

Further Information

For more information, or to comment on this project, please contact:

Southern Grampians & Glenelg PCP:

Postal Address: PO Box 283, Hamilton, 3300 VIC

Telephone: (03) 5551 8471

Fax: (03) 5572 3692

Email: sgg.pcp@wdhs.net

Web: www.sggpcp.com