



SWAN HILL DISTRICT HEALTH  
HEALTH PROMOTION

**2017-2019**

A snapshot of outcomes from the first two years

**SWAN HILL PUBLIC HEALTH &  
WELLBEING PLAN**

[WWW.SHDH.ORG.AU](http://WWW.SHDH.ORG.AU)



# About the plan

This report will showcase activities targeted through the lifespan from pregnancy to adulthood, focusing on our priority areas of healthier eating and active living, improving mental health and preventing family violence.

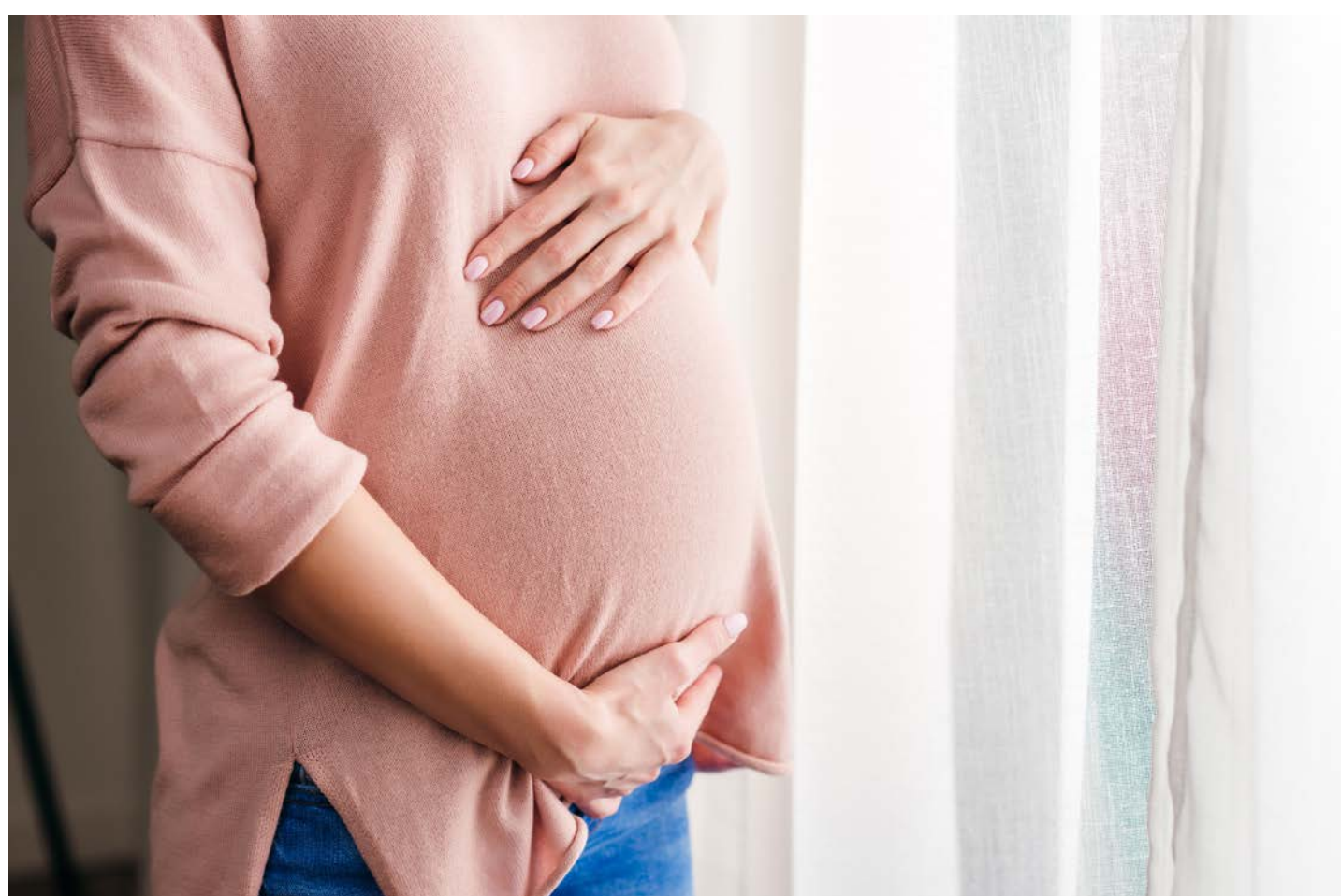
The Swan Hill Public Health & Wellbeing Plan was developed in partnership with local agencies and is a shared plan with agencies working collaboratively to deliver actions, including early childhood services, schools, employment and welfare agencies, local government, health services, sporting and arts facilities and agencies and community members.

## PRIORITY: HEALTHIER EATING & ACTIVE LIVING

Early years is widely recognised as the most effective life stage for long term health and wellbeing outcomes. Investment in promotion and support of health and wellbeing, including oral health and breastfeeding, is therefore vital during this life stage. A settings approach enables establishment of healthy habits early, setting children up for a lifetime of good health.

Community wide initiatives aim to promote healthy lifestyles, reduce illness and chronic conditions and enable support to access to basic needs for health such as food, shelter and social connections.

## Focus area: Pregnancy



### WHY?

Health and wellbeing during pregnancy can have significant outcomes for both the mother and infant. In rural communities access to specialist obstetric care is more difficult and may require referral to regional services. To enhance pregnancy outcomes, early access to services and support is important.

### WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

In consultation with our Midwifery and Allied Health Departments and based on feedback from mothers we undertook a review of our services and how we could better help women navigate the system.

This led to:

- Improved information to pregnant women via Radiology and more broadly- Positive Pregnancy Program Booklet
- Earlier booking in to Midwifery
- New services for pregnant women - dental, dietetics, physiotherapy
- Navigating Pregnancy Program (previously known as Healthy Beginnings) - providing advice on nutrition and activity (10 sessions held, 27 attendees)
- Updated 'Having a baby in Swan Hill' booklet for midwifery (given out at Booking In)



# Focus area: Breastfeeding

## WHY?

Breastfeeding is the optimal way to feed a child, exclusive breastfeeding until around 6 months of age at which time solids are introduced and continuing complimentary breastfeeding is recommended. Breastfeeding protects an infant from illness in infancy and throughout life and also has benefits for the breastfeeding mother.

Our breastfeeding rates in the Swan Hill Rural City Council area are well below the state average. Perhaps most alarming is the dramatic drop in rates at discharge (55.9% in 2015/16 compared to 85.1% in 2008/09).

## WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

168 mothers completed an online survey letting us know what is working and ways to improve outcomes. This led to:

- New Breastfeeding Support Service - commenced Jan 2018, 380 consultations provided in 2018-2019
- Breastfeeding exhibition by Suzie Blake at Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery 2 Feb to 18 Mar 2018 including launch session, 953 visits to exhibition
- Social media posts regarding breastfeeding survey including images, reach 1,100
- 'Breastfeeding Support Team' including health professionals, community and family members, displayed in service areas and the Swan Hill central business district, with excellent feedback received.
- 'Wherever, Whenever' Breastfeeding photograph series of local mothers breastfeeding in public places, these have been displayed throughout the Swan Hill central business district. 17 photos, 30+ attendees at launch
- 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' promotion at family friendly spaces and local businesses



'Whenever, Wherever' photo - Mia and children



'Whenever, Wherever' photo launch with Kristen Parker (photographer and ABA counsellor), Sonya Plant (Breastfeeding Support Nurse) Parent with infant, Nicole McKay (Breastfeeding Support Nurse)



# Focus area: Early Years

## WHY?

The early childhood period is considered to be the most important developmental phase throughout the lifespan. Healthy early child development—which includes the physical, social/emotional, and language/cognitive domains of development, are each equally important. Healthy habits formed in early childhood are vital to good long term outcomes.

The Rural City of Swan Hill has approximately 20% of children aged 0-5 with 4 or more teeth affected by dental caries, and rates of preventable hospitalisations due to dental conditions for children aged 0-4 years are much higher than the state average.

## WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

- The **INFANT program** provides interactive sessions on healthy eating and active play at key stages of 3, 6, 9 & 12 months; 34 sessions to 134 parents were provided
- 11-13 early childhood services (ECS) were supported through the Dental Health Services Victoria **Smiles 4 Miles** program, and the Victorian Government **Achievement Program**, including provision of
  - Dental visits (piloted in 2017-18 at one site with 22 oral screens conducted, 7 referrals to dental services; 2018-19: 270 oral screens, 48 referrals)
  - Eat a rainbow visits (2017-18: 10 ECS, 273 children; 2018-19: 19 visits, 345 children)
  - educator training provided (up to 11 centres)
  - 2 kindergartens engaged in Achievement Program in 2017-18, 1 kindergarten had met 4 benchmarks and another had met one, by end of 2018-19, support offered to all kindergartens
- **Pregnancy & early years collaborative** was established in early 2019 and is a partnership to improve outcomes for our community. The initial focus is on consultation with parents, service access and awareness
- 51 visits provided to mothers groups, playgroups, Baby Rhyme Time, council immunisation clinics, reaching 360+ parents and children
- Nutrition training with Sunraysia TAFE childcare & welfare students (6 sessions, approx 8 students/session).



## Focus area: Primary School Years

### WHY?

The Victorian Government's vision is for every child to be healthy, well and participate in school, and this is supported by the Healthy Schools Achievement Program. Schools are supported to determine key health priority areas and actions to enable the achievement of benchmarks for their school community. Swan Hill District Health provides support to local schools within this approach.

### WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

- 12 presentations on key messages; eat fruit & vegetables; move more often; smile together (240 students)
- Support to Swan Hill Primary, Swan Hill North Primary & Woorinen District Primary with health & wellbeing including Munching through May (2 schools, 235 students)
- Oral health education (1 school, 85 students) and dental screening (3 schools, 196 screens, 60 referrals)
- Support with edible gardens in Woorinen District Primary School and Lake Boga Primary School Kitchen Garden Program
- Healthy lunchbox challenge at Swan Hill North Primary 2017
- Walk to School program implemented in 7 schools in Oct 2017, 742 students walking; 9 schools in Oct 2018 with over 1000 students completing 16,500 walks.



Woorinen District Primary School  
Munching through May activity

## Focus area: Community wide

### WHY?

More than half (52.8 per cent) of the Swan Hill Rural City population does not meet both fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines. This is higher than the Victorian average of 48.6 per cent. More than half (61.3 per cent) of male Swan Hill Rural City residents do not meet physical activity guidelines.

### WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

Our key messages of eat fruit & vegetables, move more often and smile together are used to convey easy to recall lifestyle tips to assist in improving health and wellbeing outcomes for our community. These have been delivered through:

- Community newsletters- six per year, 850 distributed per edition
- weekly social media posts - Facebook (682 followers) and Instagram (312 followers)
- Weekly blog posts including recipes (300+ subscribers)
- Local newspaper features (The Guardian Healthy Living page)
- promotion in Active April, nutrition week, men's and women's health weeks.



# Focus area: Food for All - Swan Hill Region

## WHY?

Food insecurity occurs when an individual does not have enough food and cannot afford to buy more. Food insecurity has a significant effect on both physical and mental health. Food insecurity in children is likely to have an adverse impact on the health and wellbeing through the child's life trajectory. Data for Swan Hill indicates that 14% of the population live in poverty.

## WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

Facilitated a partnership of local agencies and volunteers working together to increase access to fresh food, promote edible gardening and local fresh produce and build fresh food knowledge and skills.

- Community forum held Oct 2017, 25 attendees
- Established image, website & social media presence
  - [www.foodforall.community](http://www.foodforall.community)
  - [www.facebook.com/foodforall.swanhillregion](https://www.facebook.com/foodforall.swanhillregion)
  - [www.instagram.com/foodforall.community](https://www.instagram.com/foodforall.community)
- New local access to food and services booklet
- Investigating better ways to access emergency food relief in Swan Hill
- Edible gardening events (3 events, 130+ attendees).



Bunnings's Mother's Day event featuring edible gardens

## Other activities promoting health within the community

- A Nyah West Men's Health 'Game On' event held July 18, 2018, 25 attendees; focus on physical and mental health.
- Swan Hill Men's Health 'Game On' event held April 11, 2018 (184 attendees) and June 11, 2019, (63 attendees), focus on physical and mental health, including heart health and cancer, providing strategies for healthy lifestyles.
- Women's Health Week event at Lake Boga, 50 attendees, included a 30 minute walk, morning tea and health and wellbeing presentations focused on nutrition, cancer screening & general health.
- 'Move like a Girl' video developed and posted on social media using local people, reach 5,600.
- 'This Girl Can' event at Swan Hill Primary School Fete, 1500-2000 attendees.
- Promotion of Heart Foundation Walking groups, Boga Babes (11 members), Swan Hill Treasures (12 members)



Men's health event logo



Women's health week event at Lake Boga

## PRIORITY: IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH

### *Focus area: awareness and inclusion*

#### WHY?

Our social connections, including the people we know, the friends we confide in, the family we belong to and the community we live in are central to mental health and wellbeing. Swan Hill Rural City can influence this priority by building a resilient community that celebrates diversity, is socially inclusive and demonstrates strong support for community advocacy, volunteering, access to education and access to support services.

#### WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

With a focus on mental health awareness and social inclusion, activities have included:

- Provider of the Engage! program, working with local young people to build community engagement, leadership and life skills, including Youth Arts Festival, Life Skills Program and physical activity leadership opportunities
- Green bails headspace cricket round, Nov 2017 & 2018 (515+ people engaged, 19 games, 2 leagues)
- headspace Swan Hill Football/Netball round in Central Murray and Golden Rivers Leagues, in May & June 2019 (over 1500 people reached)
- Central Murray Academy presentation focusing on mental health nutrition and safe sporting environment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Intersex, plus (LGBTI+) for young players, parents and coaches (150+ attendees) Feb 2019
- LGBTI+ events on World AIDs day, Wear it Purple day & International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, Interphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT) day.
- Support with youth led LGBTI groups
- Central Murray Football/Netball League first Pride Cup hosted by Nyah Nyah West United Club against Kerang Club on June 28, 2019 (400+ participants)
- To raise awareness of diversity a large scale portrait wall was installed on the wall of a local café in Swan Hill in early 2018. The wall features 92 different community members alongside the statement 'I've got your back; no matter your identity'.
- Provision of Mental Health First Aid training to agency and community members (7 courses, 78 attendees)

Pride Cup at Nyah Football ground



Diversity wall at Cafe Allure Swan Hill, IDAHOBIT day 2018 event, 60-70 attendees



## PRIORITY: PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE

### Focus Area: Gender Equity

#### WHY?

Swan Hill Rural City has the third highest rate of family violence incidents in the state ( 28.9 per 1,000 population compared to the Victorian average of 12.4 per 1,000). Implementing a whole community approach will allow for more efficient use of resources to address the issue, and will allow the community to adopt mutually respectful attitudes, behaviours and beliefs. Promotion of gender equity is a primary prevention of family violence focus, aiming to achieve cultural change in the community.

#### WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

Prevention of family violence starts with awareness and improvements in gender equity. This year several activities have been undertaken to raise awareness and address issues.

- Establishment of the Swan Hill District Gender Equity Network
- 16 Days of Activism to end Gender Based Violence 25 Nov - 10 Dec, 2018, over 50 staff and young people contributed to messages, Riverside Park walk and morning tea. A Youth Council activity resulted in a school presentation by young people and encouragement to wear orange for the day at MacKillop College focused on rural women.
- International Women's Day video of Swan Hill District Health staff supporting gender equity in our organisation, including a staff morning tea and presentation by the CEO, Mar 2019.

International Women's Day Video- <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2151974054857458>  
(5000 views of the video via Facebook)



16 days of Activism Morning Tea

#### CONTACT DETAILS

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