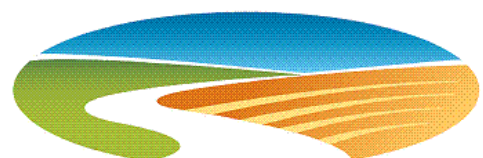


Loddon Healthy Minds Network

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 – 2022



LODDON
SHIRE

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This document is available in alternative formats (e.g. larger font) if requested.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the course of our life time mental illness will touch almost every Australian in some way, current estimates tell us that close to half of us will experience it personally while families, friends and colleagues will all be impacted by its shadow. Mental illness is responsible for the majority of health problems among young Australians and is closely linked to premature death, suffering and disability.

Our mental health is influenced by myriad entwined complex elements ranging from our genetics, family structures and thought patterns to where we live, the friendships and social networks we have, our employment status, financial stability and our physical health.

Although the exact cause of most mental illnesses is not known, it is becoming clear through research that many of these conditions are caused by a combination of physical, social, environmental and psychological factors.

The rate of people living with mental health issues is growing at an alarming rate. The need for action is critical when considering almost four million people in Australia will experience a mental illness in any one year. Mental illness is the third largest cause of disease burden in Australia after cancer and cardiovascular disease and the largest single cause of non-fatal burden, and results in significant health, social and economic and productivity consequences.¹

This Strategic Plan, developed by the Loddon Healthy Minds Network, identifies and sets the direction for the Network over the next five years.

Specifically this plan:

- identifies the values and mission of the Network
- identifies directions and priorities
- identifies the key actions needed to achieve priorities
- sets out the Network's six strategic focus areas
 - awareness
 - education
 - partnerships
 - advocacy
 - promotion
 - influence
- encompasses the following key focus areas in Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan:
 - increase mental wellbeing
 - prevent / decrease suicide.

The Loddon Healthy Minds Network would like to thank the many people who have contributed to the development of this plan. We would like to acknowledge Council's contributing departments for their input and our partners for their involvement in the identification of strategic directions and priorities for the Network in going forward.

1 WHAT IS THE LODDON HEALTHY MINDS NETWORK

The Loddon Healthy Minds Network is a special committee of Loddon Shire Council.

The group was initiated by representatives from the Wedderburn community in 2007 with the purpose of reducing the stigma of mental health whilst also advocating for appropriate mental health support in the Loddon Shire with a key focus on suicide prevention.

The Network received seed funding from Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership and was endorsed by Loddon Shire Council in the same year.

Key responsibilities:

- governance of the Loddon Healthy Minds Network
- setting strategic directions of the Network
- developing partnerships with key agencies and community groups to progress the objectives of the network
- promoting the Network and its strategies
- educating the community on mental health issues
- advocating for appropriate services and supports for people with mental health issues

Membership

The Network consists of representatives from:

- Anglicare Victoria
- Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership
- Bendigo Health
- Boort District Health
- HALT
- Headspace
- Inglewood & District Health Services
- Lifeline
- Loddon Healthy Minds Community Representatives
- Loddon Shire Council
- Murray Primary Health Network
- Northern District Community Health
- Standby

The current members bring a wealth of skills and knowledge to the Network including:

- knowledge of mental health disorders
- public health skills
- ability to promote mental health
- carer's perspective
- broad networks
- listening skills
- empathy and respect
- organisational skills
- advocacy skills – local and regional
- research skills
- financial management skills
- public speaking skills
- desire to get something done now
- community development skills
- people skills
- web development skills

2 OUR STRATEGY

Our strategic direction is informed by our Vision and Mission, and guided by our values.



This Plan will encompass our goals and objectives which will convert into our action plans.

3 OUR VALUES

The Loddon Healthy Minds Network is guided by the following values:

- acceptance
- empathy
- respect
- understanding
- equality
- trust
- collaboration
- empowerment
- good mental health and wellbeing
- willingness to drive change
- willingness to challenge the status quo
- willingness to advocate for better mental health services in Loddon
- desire to balance professional and personal opinions

This is a shared understanding of what is most important to us and what defines us.

4 OUR VISION

An inclusive, resilient and stigma free Loddon community with access to appropriate mental health services.

5 OUR MISSION

To promote and advocate for improved wellbeing and access to appropriate services for people in Loddon Shire affected by mental health issues.

To promote optimal mental health and reduce stigma through awareness, advocacy and education.

We will do this by:

- building an awareness about mental health issues with the general public
- educating people experiencing mental health issues and their carers about services available
- educating the community about mental health
- increasing community awareness about suicide prevention
- advocating on behalf of the whole community to improve mental health support
- promoting the network and its services in the Loddon Shire
- promoting the network and its model to other communities and organisations
- developing and nurturing partnerships with other relevant agencies and community groups
- demonstrating efficient and effective governance practices
- reducing stigma associated with mental health.

6 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

The Network undertook the following SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) as part of the process of developing this Plan. The analysis identified the internal strengths and weaknesses of the Network as well as the external opportunities and threats which were considered in the development of this Plan.

6.1 Strengths

- partnerships between agencies
- collaboration between groups working towards achievement of common goals
- support from Loddon Shire Council – financial contribution and staff support
- community representation keeps the network relevant
- absolute commitment from agencies and willingness to commit to the Loddon region
- inclusiveness and flexibility of group
- diversity amongst membership skill base allowing group to maximise results
- art competition – provides the setting to start the conversation with students, and ultimately their families and friends
- broader agency impact in the community – providing the agencies with a Loddon perspective (Loddonising)
- agents of change – drivers of change around mental health
- raising the profile of the network across all age groups and community cohorts
- reducing stigma, normalising mental health issues

6.2 Weaknesses

- lack of promotion
- failure to take advantage of local town newsletters to include monthly updates and advertising to raise the profile of the network
- current community events are not generating enough community interest and raising the profile of the network
- current community events and activities are reaching only a small number of people
- limited resources – Loddon Shire Council staff have limited capacity to increase level of support
- sole website administrator – additional administrators required to minimise risk and share the workload
- reliance on Council funding to continue

6.3 Opportunities

- expanding focus on carers – become the voice for carers
- develop the network as a model to be expanded – funding to create a transferable piece of work
- Loddon Healthy Minds Network within the municipal public health and wellbeing framework – feed off other plans, reduce duplication and encourage collaborative work
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) – advocate for funding of MHFA – especially adolescent and youth programs
- influence take up of available mental health opportunities, such as Mental Health First Aid, through organisational policy, e.g. a higher weighting in grant applications if the group/club executive has completed mental health first aid, or group has signed the stop stigma charter
- stop stigma charter to be adopted widely throughout the community – organisations, clubs and groups
- maintain a strong relationship with Murray Primary Health Network
- create strategic partnerships with new and existing partners
- promotion of positive messaging 'Mindframe' guidelines to local media
- investigate new opportunities to create interest at local events, e.g. the bike smoothie units
- create stronger promotional opportunities, including stronger online presence, regular local newsletter articles (or routine inclusion of the Loddon Healthy Minds Network website details), increased media releases through Council's media team
- increased inclusion of the principles of Five Ways to Wellbeing, e.g. healthy eating embedded into community events (Sunshine Breakfasts)
- review the current community events to identify opportunities to increase visibility and interaction with the community
- retain/continue to have representation for carers, particularly as funding and service systems change

6.4 Threats

- levels of community ignorance, discrimination and stigma still exist (including a belief that mental health issues are inherent with drugs and alcohol)
- changing environment – service systems, funding and policy
- creating understanding but losing support systems, need to understand the current gaps in provision and the impact of changes to funding structure
- co-dependency on agencies and the partnerships
- culture of community can create a challenge – resistant to change and mental health messaging
- lack of community champions
- media messages – sensationalising mental health and suicide
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and potential gaps for people with mental illness

7 MENTAL HEALTH – A SNAPSHOT

Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which an individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (World Health Organisation 2014).

Mental illness is a growing challenge for modern society and will touch nearly every Australian in some way throughout their lifetime. Almost half of us will experience it while families, friends and colleagues all share the burden. For young Australians it is responsible for the majority of health problems and for many Australians mental illness is linked to premature death, suffering and disability.²

Mental health problems are the third biggest health problem in Australia, after heart disease and cancer, and the leading cause of non-fatal disability, accounting for an estimated 27% of the total years lost due to disability.³

According to the 2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing around 7.3 million or 45% of Australians aged 16 - 85 will experience a common mental health-related condition such as depression, anxiety or a substance use disorder in their lifetime. Estimates from the second National Survey of Psychosis conducted in March 2010 suggest almost 64,000 people have a psychotic illness and are in contact with public specialised mental health services each year.⁴

In Victoria it is estimated that every year 1.2 million (one in five) Victorians will experience mental illness, and nearly half (45%) will experience mental illness in their lifetime. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

The prevalence of suicide in Australia is on the rise with statistics showing that suicide is the highest it has been for at least ten years. In 2015, 3,027 people ended their own lives in Australia. That's 12.6 people in every 100,000. That's more than eight people every single day. ⁵

In every state in Australia, the rate of suicide among those who live outside of the greater capital cities is higher than for residents that live within them and the rate has risen much higher in rural areas over the period 2011 – 2015. ⁶

Timely diagnosis, treatment and ongoing management of a mental health condition in rural and remote areas is likely to occur later or not at all, resulting in increased likelihood of hospitalisation and sometimes leading to self-harm and suicide. ⁷

7.1 The rural context

People in remote and rural Australia are disproportionately impacted by suicide, especially Indigenous Australians, farmers, older people and younger men.⁶

Compared with major cities, the rate of suicide in rural and regional areas is about 40% higher while the rate in remote areas is almost twice the major cities rate.⁷

The ability to participate in equal and respectful relationships is an important contributing factor to mental health and wellbeing.⁸
Young people in rural and remote areas often face pressure to conform to locally acceptable patterns of behaviour.⁷

The most recent Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Mortality Report shows that 15-24 year old males in regional areas are 1.5 - 1.8 times more likely to end their life by suicide than their urban counterparts. The incidence is up to six times higher in very remote areas.⁹

Factors contributing to the high levels of suicide and poor mental health in rural areas include occupational issues related to the farming industry, economic and financial problems, relationship breakdowns, and stressors related to changing climatic conditions and the impact it has on farm-based incomes as well as the lack of available services in rural areas.

People living in rural and remote areas with mental health issues face a range of challenges in their ability to cope with these stressors, including:

- poorer access to specialised care (for example, almost 9 out of 10 psychiatrists are employed in major cities)
- apprehension around help-seeking and fear of stigma (particularly in smaller communities where individuals are more visible and confidentiality is less assured)
- 'rural stoicism' and resilient attitudes
- lower educational attainment – affecting one's ability to obtain information on prevention, and mental health services and programs
- lower incomes – making it more difficult to afford mental health care
- limited or non-existent public transport – limiting access to mental health care
- increasing the risk of social isolation (particularly a problem for the less mobile, such as those who are frail or living with a disability).¹⁰

The gradual de-population of rural and remote communities has been compounded by social fragmentation and an ageing population. The closure, restructuring and withdrawal of essential services such as banking, schools, hospitals, government offices, train services and publicly funded employment services has significantly contributed to a declining quality of life in many rural communities.

This gradual de-population has resulted in the loss of primary relationships and increased loneliness for many rural residents.¹⁰

8 POLICY FRAMEWORK

Mental health has been identified as a priority in a number of Council's strategic planning documents as well as those at regional, state and national level.

Local

Loddon Shire Council Plan 2017 - 2021

The Council Plan 2017 - 2021 identifies Council's priorities for the next four years.
<http://www.loddon.vic.gov.au/Our-documents/Plans-and-strategies>

Living Well in Loddon – Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017 - 2021

Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan outlines Council's key direction for the next four years to address identified local health and wellbeing priorities.
<http://www.loddon.vic.gov.au/Our-documents/Plans-and-strategies>

Regional

Loddon Gannawarra Health Needs Analysis Report 2017

The Loddon Gannawarra Health Needs Analysis identifies four health priorities across Loddon and Gannawarra and how they impact on each region.
http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c0043a_1bde1bf64da479e82053b17b0855762.pdf

Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2013 - 2017

The Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership Strategic Plan was developed in partnership with key stakeholders and sets out key focus areas and actions for 2013 - 2017.
http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c0043a_47a579c482f64a00a68b2b0e01406e86.pdf

State

Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015 - 2019

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015 - 2019 outlines the government's key priorities to improve the health and wellbeing of Victorians.
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/health-strategies/public-health-wellbeing-plan>

Victorian Suicide Prevention Framework 2016 - 2025

The Victorian Suicide Prevention Framework 2016 - 2025 commits to halving the suicide rate over the next ten years.
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/prevention-and-promotion/suicide-prevention-in-victoria>

The Victorian 10 Year Mental Health Plan

The Victorian 10 Year Mental Health Plan focuses on greater efforts in prevention, and providing better integrated services and support for the most vulnerable people in the community. This is a long term plan that sets the mental health agenda for the next decade.
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/priorities-and-transformation/mental-health-plan>

The Victorian Aboriginal Suicide Prevention and Response Action Plan 2010 - 2015

The Victorian Aboriginal Suicide Prevention and Response Action Plan 2010 - 2015 detailed the approach of the Victorian Government to prevent and reduce the incidence, and associated impact, of suicide and self-harm in the Victorian Aboriginal population.
<http://www.healthinfony.net.au/key-resources/bibliography/?lid=19798>

Ice Action Plan

The Ice Action Plan builds on the Victorian Parliament's landmark 2014 inquiry into the supply and use of ice, which identified a significant increase in the number of people in their twenties using ice.

<http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/ice-action-plan/>

Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children

The Roadmap sets out once-in-a-generation changes designed to improve the lives of vulnerable Victorian children, young people and families.

<http://www.strongfamiliesafechildren.vic.gov.au/roadmap-for-reform-strong-families-safe-children>

National**Australian Government – National Suicide Prevention Strategy**

The National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS) provides the platform for Australia's national policy on suicide prevention with an emphasis on promotion, prevention and early intervention.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-nsp>

Australian Government Response to Contributing Lives, Thriving Communities – Review of Mental Health Programs and Services

This response presents a system-level change in the Australian Government's role in mental health funding and reform. It outlines nine, interconnected, concrete areas of reform.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/mental-review-response>

9 ABOUT LODDON

Loddon Shire is located in north central Victoria approximately 200 km north of Melbourne and 40 km northwest of Bendigo.

Characterised by small isolated towns and farming communities, Loddon Shire Council is a large rural municipality of 6,694 square km, hosting a population of 7,555. This is made up of an estimated residential population of more than 2,740 in the north of the Shire compared with over 4,815 in the south.¹¹



Loddon Shire has a rich agriculture and goldfields heritage and diverse natural assets ranging from forests, rolling hills and floodplains to rocky outcrops, rivers and lakes.

Land is used mainly for agriculture and horticulture, particularly grain, sheep, wool, beef cattle, dairy, pigs and poultry. In recent years there has also been viticulture, olives and fodder crops.

The northern part of the Shire holds valuable irrigation infrastructure, supporting intensive agriculture including dairy and horticulture.

The towns in the south of the Shire are steeped in 150 years of gold rush and farming history and have strong cultural and heritage links, with the goldfields influencing past wealth and prosperity along with hardship and pioneering traditions.

Although the last decade has been typified by severe drought and flood the Shire has an average rainfall of approximately 500 mm.

Characterised by a number of towns dispersed throughout the Shire it is known as a 'community of communities', and includes the towns of Bridgewater, Inglewood, Wedderburn, Dingee, Mitiamo, Serpentine, Newbridge, Tarnagulla, Boort, Pyramid Hill and other surrounding towns and communities.

The southern parts of the Shire benefit from their close proximity to Bendigo and are well connected to Melbourne with easy access to the freeway connecting Bendigo with Melbourne, and a reliable and frequent passenger rail service from Bendigo.

Within the Loddon Shire there is a rich and diverse Aboriginal cultural heritage which includes 925 registered Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and 14 registered Aboriginal historic places (data from AAV Aboriginal Heritage Register). These heritage values consist mainly of scarred trees, stone artefact scatters, earthen mounds, stone features, associations with honorary correspondent depots or stations and a small number of burial sites, quarries, collections and an art site. These Aboriginal cultural heritage values are mainly found in association with past and present natural drainage lines and water features such as rivers and lakes, lunettes, high ground, sandy deposits and remnant native vegetation. Documentation of the sites is currently limited, but significant sites are known to be in the vicinity of Lake Boort, Mount Korong, Kooyoora, Pyramid Hill and Kow Swamp. There are also numerous sites along the Loddon River.

Loddon Planning Scheme S21: Municipal Strategic Statement

10 OUR DATA

A comprehensive community profile can be found at the following sources:

Census data

Loddon Shire Community Profile

<http://profile.id.com.au/loddon>

Loddon Shire Population Highlights 2016

<http://profile.id.com.au/loddon/highlights-2016>

Loddon Shire Council strategic documents

Living Well in Loddon Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017 - 2021

<http://www.loddon.vic.gov.au/Our-documents/Plans-and-strategies>

Loddon Shire Council Plan 2017 - 2021

<http://www.loddon.vic.gov.au/Our-documents/Plans-and-strategies>

Loddon mental health data

Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership Community Health and Wellbeing Profile

<http://www.blpcp.com.au/our-publications>

2012 Regional Health Status Profile Loddon Mallee Region

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/loddonmallee/about.htm>

Indicators Survey 2015 LGA Profiles, Loddon

<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/vichealth-indicators-survey-lga-profiles>

11 OUR LAST STRATEGIC PLAN

A review of our last Strategic Plan 2011 - 2016 was undertaken as part of preparing this Plan.

Achievements from our last Plan include:

- increasing agency membership from 3 to 10
- increasing community representative numbers from 4 to 7
- setting up the network's governance structures
- establishing Terms of Reference
- developing logo and letterhead
- developing Loddon Healthy Minds Network website
- available services included on Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership website to help increase awareness of what is available in Loddon
- sponsoring community representatives to attend the national suicide conference
- conducting Mental Health First Aid training courses in the community
- two distributions of magnets with information on who to contact for help relating to mental health across the Shire
- providing advocacy on behalf of the community to federal and state Members of Parliament about important issues impacting the community such as the dairy crisis
- promotion of Mental Health Week
- planned and conducted community events including:
 - activities during Black Dog Ride
 - Sunshine Breakfasts
 - annual art competition
- guest speaking
- provision of sponsorship for Mental Health First Aid Course facilitator training.

12 DEVELOPING THIS PLAN

The development of this Plan was informed by:

- a review of Council's 2017 - 2021 Council Plan
- a review of Council's 2017 - 2021 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- a review of the broader policy context
- an examination of data relating to the demographic profile, health status and health determinants in the municipality
- strategic planning session with member agencies.

Consultation with the community included:

- 130 surveys mailed at random throughout the municipality
- 145 people surveyed using listening posts across the municipality
- provision of online community survey – advertised through Council's mayoral column and Facebook page
- provision of online survey to member agencies.

12.1 Survey snapshots

12.1.1 Listening post surveys

The listening posts comprised four quick questions to gain a snapshot of people's thoughts on mental health and suicide and their knowledge of the Network.

- Do you think mental health and suicide prevention is an issue for people living in Loddon Shire?
- Have you heard about the Loddon Healthy Minds Network?
- Do you know where you could go to for support or information about mental health?
- Have you heard of or attended any of the Loddon Healthy Mind Network events?
- If yes please indicate which ones:
 - Sunshine Breakfast
 - Art Show as a entrant
 - Art Show as a viewer
 - Other

In total, 145 people from across all areas of the Shire were surveyed using listening posts:

- 90% of respondents said that they felt that mental health and suicide prevention was an issue in Loddon.
- 39% had heard of the Network.
- 75% of respondents knew where they could go for support and information about mental health issues.
- 21% of respondents had heard of or attended one or more of the Network's community events:
 - 11% attended a Sunshine Breakfast
 - 5% viewed the Art Show
 - 3% had entered the Art Show
 - 3% had attended a Network meeting.

12.1.2 Share Your Thoughts community survey

A total of 38 surveys were completed and returned as part of the 'Share Your Thoughts' community survey:

- 58% of respondents said that they had heard of the Network.
- 13% of respondents indicated they had visited the Network's website and of those, 80% rated the quality of information as good or very good.
- 92% of respondents indicated that mental health and suicide prevention were issues for people living in the Shire.
- 24% of respondents indicated that they had heard of or attended one or more of the Network's community events:
 - 32% attended a Sunshine Breakfast
 - 13% viewed the Art Show
 - 26% of respondents had seen the Network at a community event or function.
- 71% of respondents knew where they could go for support or information about mental health
- 53% of those surveyed expressed a need for a mental health support group, and thought that if a group was established they might attend. The preferred format for such a group was face to face followed by online forums.
- 97% of respondents would recommend a support group as an option for help.

The top three issues identified by respondents that the Network should focus on were, in order of preference:

- promotion and raising awareness of mental health issues and suicide prevention 22%
- education 18%
- suicide prevention 12%
- advocating for the establishment of support groups 12%
- advocating for youth mental health programs and support 11%
- building resilience 11%
- advocating for more drug and alcohol programs 10%
- advocacy 4%.

12.1.3 Agency surveys

Member agencies were surveyed on the structure and priorities of the Network, with nine responses received:

- 100% of respondents were aware of the Network's website and rated the quality of the information at 7 out of 10 or above, with the majority rating the quality of information at 9 out of 10.
- Whilst all respondents had accessed the website, 71% had visited a few times, and 29% visited regularly.
- All respondents indicated that the preferred approach to raising awareness through community activities was a combination of small localised activities and larger, wider reaching shire wide activities.

"The meetings and networking across agencies and services is very valuable in reaching more potential users and in assisting the public in accessing support where necessary; working together for best outcomes for people living in the Loddon Mallee region".

Survey comment

"I really like the website. It is set out well and easy to navigate the various pages."

Survey comment

"The website is relevant, well-linked and well maintained."

Survey comment

"It's good to see more community reps than ever before."

Survey comment

When asked to rate priority areas members identified the following in order of importance:

- advocacy
- promotion and raising awareness of mental health issues and suicide prevention
- suicide prevention and advocating for establishment of support groups
- building resilience
- advocating for youth mental health programs and support
- promotion of community wellbeing
- advocating for establishment of support groups
- advocating for more drug and alcohol programs
- education

Respondents were unanimous that the development of a rural suicide prevention conference is a priority for the Loddon Healthy Minds Network.

"A rural suicide prevention conference will bring awareness to more isolated areas where suicide is so high and supports are fewer than in metropolitan areas".

Survey comment

13 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

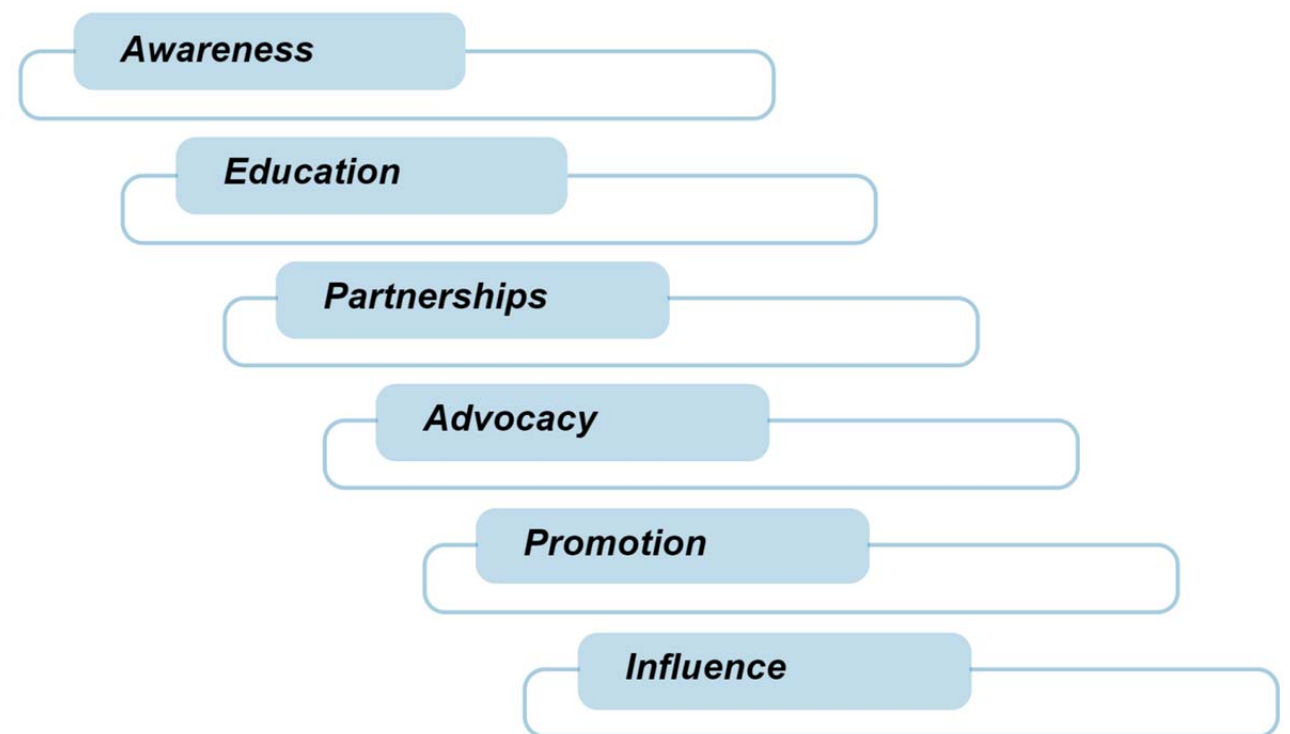
For the purpose of this Plan, the following definitions will be used:

Strategic focus areas	Describes the main focus areas to be implemented. All activities ultimately fit into one of the areas.
Goals	Describes the Network's direction. Goals convert strategic direction into specific performance targets and guide everyday decisions and actions.
Objectives (Outcomes)	Describes the measurable activities to be undertaken in order to achieve goals. Objectives are time relevant and can be measured.
Actions	Describes the main activities which will be done to achieve goals and objectives.
Performance measures	Provides a quantifiable measure against which activities can be assessed.

Network members participated in a half day planning workshop to determine the strategic focus areas and identify the goals and objectives to be achieved.

These agreed goals and objectives will inform the operational plans that will be developed annually to guide the activities undertaken by the Network.

13.1 Strategic focus areas



Awareness	
Raise awareness of the work undertaken by the Loddon Healthy Minds Network and its member agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current community events to identify opportunities to increase visibility and interaction with the community. • Work with art students to co-design a re-energised art competition. • Apply for a VicHealth award to showcase resources as they are developed. • Develop a method to collect regular information/data relating to the Network.
Reduce stigma associated with mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Stop Stigma Charter adoption throughout the community – organisations, clubs and groups. • Research resources that can be used or adapted to increase the 'normalising' of mental health conversations in the community.

Education	
Our communities have a higher understanding of mental health issues and the supports available in the Loddon region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for funding of Mental Health First Aid Training (MHFA) – especially Adolescent and Youth MHFA. • Influence an increase in mental health program participation in clubs and groups through organisational policy. • Promote positive mental health messaging guidelines to local media. • Identify and mentor community champions. • Develop resources to support guest speaking engagement by Network members. • Promote/target MHFA courses with a sports club focus – five clubs to have completed MHFA in the life of the plan. • Conduct a Suicide Prevention Conference bi-annually. • Invite representatives from relevant agencies and/or programs to make a presentation to Loddon Healthy Minds Network meetings.

Partnerships

Enhance our existing consolidated partnership to create a collaborative environment within and without the network members.

- Support continued involvement of community representatives in the Network.
- Engage with and encourage new agency involvement as the National Disability Insurance Scheme develops in Loddon.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen the voice of mental health carers.
- Undertake a review of the partnership to determine any improvements, e.g. VicHealth partnerships analysis tool.
- Make an annual presentation to Loddon Shire Councillors.
- Strengthen the partnership and collaborative opportunities with other health and wellbeing agencies by participating in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Framework Model.
- Maintain a strong relationship and involvement with Murray Primary Health Network.
- Identify and capitalise on strategic partnership opportunities across the region and state.

Advocacy

Advocate for the best possible mental health outcomes for Loddon residents

- Act as a driver of change or in response to change on mental health issues, services and supports.
- Expand the focus on carers, creating an understanding of the role of carers and the supports needed.
- Increase attendance of local politicians at Loddon Healthy Minds Network events.
- Increase access to local services, e.g. expansion of the Doctors in Schools program.
- Identify service gaps and develop an advocacy framework.
- Campaign for retention or introduction of local place-based services to improve community access.
- Attract attention to the impacts that the lack of a quality, reliable, cost effective internet service has on people's health and wellbeing – particularly mental health.

Promotion	
Create a highly visible Loddon Healthy Minds Network locally and across the state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the Network's online social media presence. • Maintain a strong website and improve ongoing sustainability. • Have a routine presence in all local community newsletters. • Engage with Council's Media Officer to increase media profile. • Find new and interesting opportunities for the Network to be represented at major Loddon events. • Include the principles of the Five Ways to Wellbeing in Network promotional resources.

Influence	
Increase the profile of the Healthy Minds Network model locally, regionally and across the state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the Network as a model to be expanded. • Investigate funding (or other opportunities) to document the Healthy Minds Network model.
Increase the resources available to support other rural communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the establishment of three new Networks elsewhere in the State over the life of the plan. • Develop ten new transferable resources over the life of the Plan, e.g. Carers video, LGBTIQ poster.

14 IMPLEMENTATION

The Loddon Healthy Minds Network is one of four coordinating and facilitating pillars within the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP). The work undertaken by the Network will, in part, be guided by and fed back into the MPHWP.



The Loddon Healthy Minds Network Strategic Plan provides the framework to achieve the strategic focus area outcomes.

An annual implementation plan will be developed by Network members who will identify the activities and initiatives for the following year, the lead agency, key partners and timelines.

The implementation plan will be separate to the Loddon Healthy Minds Strategic Plan and will be informed by the goals and objectives identified in the Plan.

15 MONITORING, REVIEWING AND REPORTING

An annual review and evaluation of the Loddon Healthy Minds Network Strategic Plan and the associated annual implementation plan will be undertaken.

This provides the platform for understanding:

- what has been successful
- what still needs to be achieved
- what can be done better.

A report outlining the achievements for the year will be prepared by the Network members and will be used to inform an annual presentation to Council.

Following this, the implementation plan for the forthcoming year will be developed.

16 REFERENCES

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