



**SOUTHERN MALLEE  
PRIMARY CARE PARTNERSHIP**

***Southern Mallee Primary  
Care Partnership***

***Community Development  
Workshop, March 2012***

**Evaluation Report**



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# *Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership Community Development Workshop*

## **Evaluation Report**

### **Overview**

#### **Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership – Capacity Building Overview**

The Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership (SMPCP) is a partnership of organisations (health, welfare, disability, local government, community based), across the areas of Buloke, Gannawarra and Swan Hill, who are working together to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities. As a partnership, SMPCP works in the areas of health promotion, service coordination, chronic disease management, capacity building and partnership development. Further information can be found at [www.smpcp.com.au](http://www.smpcp.com.au)

As part of the SMPCP 2009 – 2012 Strategic & Operational Plan, members identified and agreed to work more collaboratively together over the next three years to address the following three strategic priorities;

- Mental well-being and social connectedness – with a focus on mental health and family violence.
- Promoting healthy lifestyles – with a focus on preventing chronic diseases through physical activity and nutrition.
- Management of chronic diseases – with a focus on Diabetes and Cardiovascular diseases.

A fourth priority area of work for SMPCP which underpins the above three Strategic Priorities is 'Partnership & Governance'. This area of work is critical in achieving better health and wellbeing outcomes for the southern mallee communities, by establishing a structure that is more conducive for agencies to work collaboratively in partnership together. All four priorities are interlinked and strategies for each priority area impact on one another. Prevention and early intervention is an important part of the three year Strategic Plan.

The Partnerships & Governance priority's work is undertaken by the SMPCP Integrated Partnership Committee relating to building capacity of agencies.

***“Priority: Partnership & Governance***

***Goal: Strengthen planning to achieve improved health and wellbeing outcomes for the southern mallee***

***Objective: Build Capacity of members and other agencies to plan, implement and evaluate projects & initiatives across the catchment”***

#### **Workshop Background**

The Loddon Mallee Regional Health Promotion Survey, conducted in 2009, provided further evidence of the need to build capacity of member agencies within Southern Mallee. The results and report particular to the Southern Mallee identified that over 80% of health workers within the Loddon Mallee do not have health promotion qualifications; less than half work full time; and around a quarter have been working in their position for less than twelve months.

In order to support and progress this initiative the SMPCP Integrated Partnerships: Capacity Building Training Plan was developed. The training plan consisted of four proposed training options;

- 1) Community Development – Practitioner Training
- 2) Integrated Health Promotion Workshop
- 3) Needs Assessment and Planning, Report Writing and Evaluation Workshop
- 4) Health Promotion Workforce Development.

The training plan aims to achieve the goals and objectives identified through the SMPCP strategic planning process (as set out above) to improve competency levels for health promotion and community development across the southern mallee agencies.

The SMPCP Integrated Partnerships Committee proposed that the focus would initially be on planning a first Workshop, evaluating this well and undertaking further conversations with agencies regarding future training. The first Workshop identified by the SMPCP Integrated Partnership Committee was the Community Development – Practitioner Training. Results derived from the evaluation of the Community Development – Practitioner Training are to be considered in relation to future sessions to be held, capacity building plans and also to inform the development of the next SMPCP Strategic Plan.

### Community Development Workshop

Athena Williams and Julie Cairns, More than One, facilitated the Community Development Workshop held 7 March, 2012, Northern District Community Health Service, Kerang. The program aimed to provide a range of community development training opportunities by developing participants knowledge and skills in supporting community change. The workshop drew upon a strengths perspective – an approach that Athena and Julie had found effective in work with communities in rural, regional and urban environments.

The workshop aimed to encourage participants to recognise the broad range of assets in every community as an important starting point. Athena and Julie had designed the workshop to be interactive, fun and for participants to leave with new knowledge, skills and tools they would be able use in their work.

### Objectives

The objectives of the workshop included;

- Increasing knowledge of community development approaches to utilise
- Increasing skills to utilise and implement community development approaches
- Providing access to tools / resources to utilise and implement community development approaches
- Providing practical strategies to assist local workers to utilise community development approaches with their communities
- Delivering a local context and application of utilising community development approach

## Workshop Structure and Participation

The Community Development Workshop was held on 7 March 2012, Activity Room 1 of Northern District Community Health Service, Kerang and was attended by 31 people (including two Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership staff).

The workshop structure included a mix of presentations and group activities facilitated by Athena Williams and Julie Cairns over the day. The workshop provided opportunity for sharing of information between participants and networking.

Participants were requested when registering for the Workshop to indicate what they hoped to achieve from attending the Workshop. The majority of the responses related to;

- Increasing knowledge of Community Development model/strategies
- How to use Community Development approaches
- How to engage better with community members
- Increase skills in Community Development approaches
- Gaining a better understanding of 'local' context
- Gaining a better understanding of how to support community

## Evaluation Method

Evaluation forms were provided to participants who were then encouraged to complete the form prior to departing. A copy of the feedback form is at Appendix 3.

## Evaluation Response

A total of 27 completed feedback forms were received by SMPCP from the 29 participants of the forum (excluding SMPCP staff). This equated to 93% of the participants completing a feedback form.

## Evaluation Results

### Your job/role

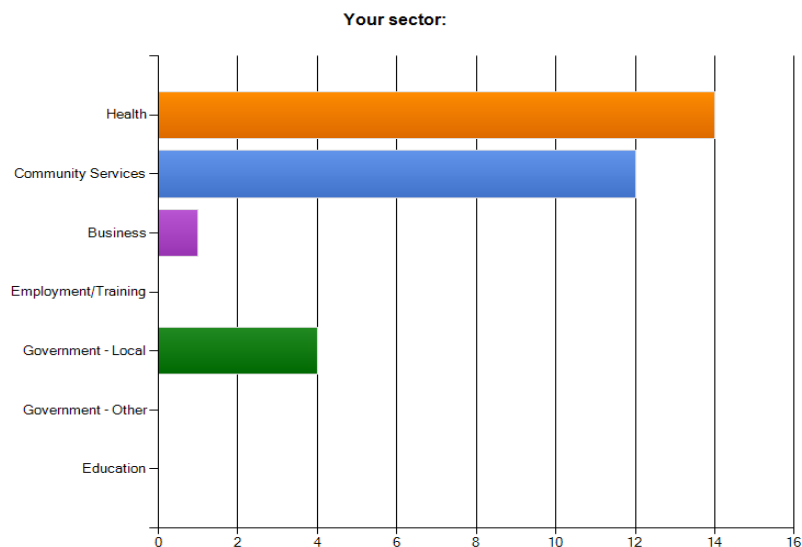
A range of different jobs/roles were represented. The job/roles most represented at the workshop were the following:

Health Promotion		16%	4
Coordinator		12%	3
Nurse		12%	3
Project Worker		8%	2
Carer Support Worker		8%	2
Community Development Worker		8%	2
Management		8%	2

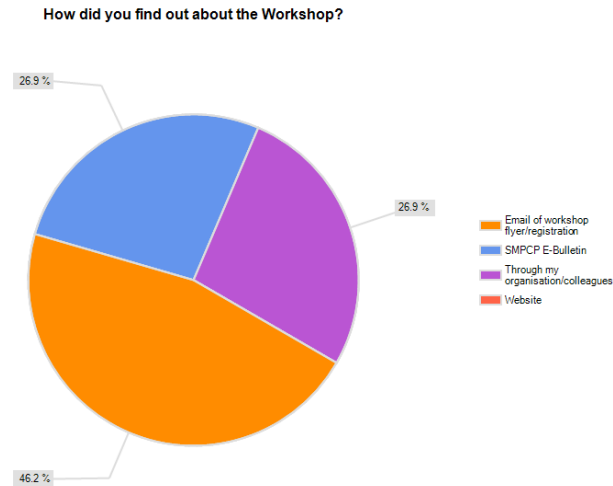
The highest represented job/role was Health Promotion at 17%, with equal representation of Nurses and Coordinator at 13% each. Project Workers, Carer Support Workers, Community Development Worker and Management all made up 8% of the attendance with a smaller range of other job/roles also present at the workshop.

### Your Sector

The “Health” (14 participants) and “Community Services” (12 participants) sectors were most represented at the workshop. Other sectors represented included “Government—Local” (4 participants), and “Business” (1 participant).

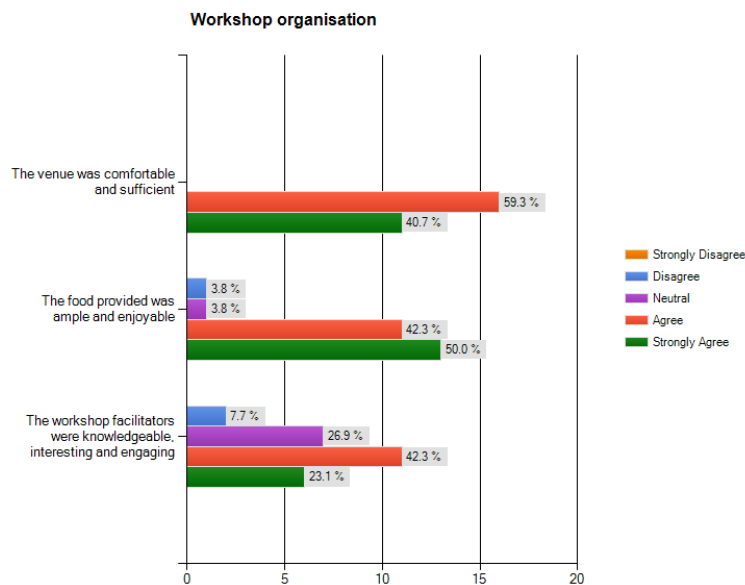


## 1. How did you find out about the workshop?



The majority of the workshop participants found out about the workshop through an email of the workshop flyer/registration (41.7%) or equally through their organisation/colleagues or SMPCP E-Bulletin (29.2%). The website was cited as the least likely place that participants found out about the workshop with no respondents choosing this answer.

## 2. Workshop organisation

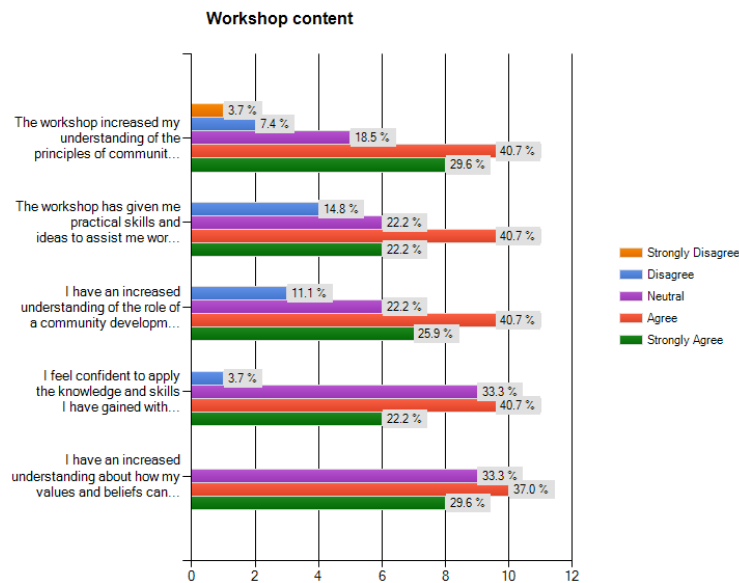


Overall the response to the workshop organisation was very positive, with most respondents scoring the venue and food at 4 or above, and facilitators at 3 (neutral) or above (positive gradient).

12 respondents also provided feedback about the forum organisation. The comments generally related to the following:

- Workshop structure (6)
  - Was well structured
  - Afternoon needed to be more stimulating
- Morning, afternoon tea and lunch (3) -
  - Would have liked fruit in morning and afternoon tea

### Question 3. Workshop Content



The response regarding the workshop content was generally positive, with most questions scoring at 3 (neutral) or above (positive gradient). Respondents scored 'increased understanding of my values and beliefs can influence my work' in the high range compared to 'increased understanding of the principles of community development' which was scored more in the average range.

10 respondents commented on the workshop structure and content. The comments generally included the following:

- Afternoon session content (2)
  - Difficult to understand relevance
- Workshop content (5)
  - Timing
  - More practical examples needed
  - Good, beneficial

### Question 4. Is there anything different you will be trying in your work as a result of participating in the workshop?

19 participants provided feedback to this question, with respondents generally believing they will try something different in their work environments as a result of attending the Community Development Workshop.

The comments provided included such comments as:

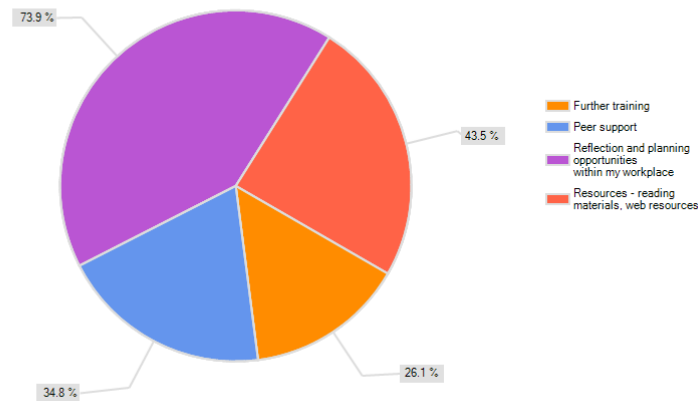
- Change in approaches to community groups (6)
- Change in approaches to meeting (2)
- 'Loiter' with purpose (2)

A small number of respondents believed that they would not try anything different within their work environments, with most believing that they already use community development practices within their workplace.



## Question 5. What else do you feel may help you to implement community development principles within your work?

What else do you feel may help you to implement community development principles within your work?



Feedback on what may help implementation of community development principles into practice indicated most participants would like reflection and planning opportunities within their workplace in the future (72.7%), with the next highest implementation tool being resources—reading/web resources (45.5%), followed closely by peer support (36.4%) and further training (27.3%).

2 responses were provided to this question, citing;

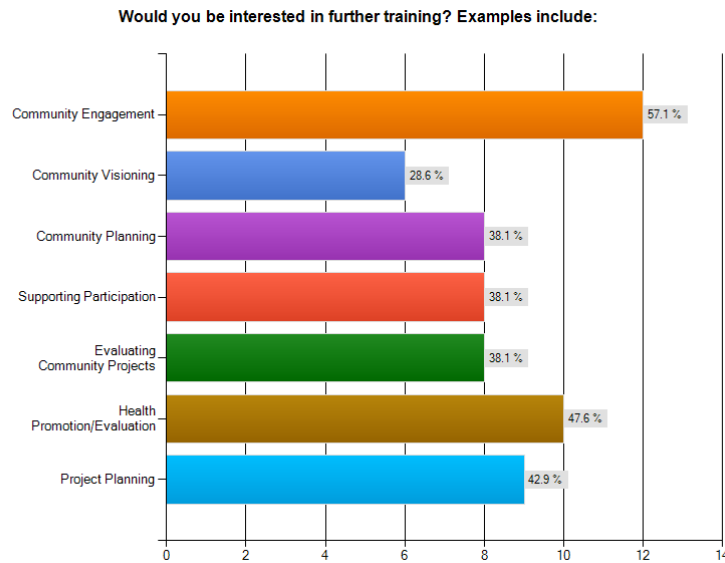
- 'Web'
- 'Hearing some examples of some projects—how they engaged the community, what worked/what didn't work. Examples of some awesome 'out there' success in CD [Community Development]'

## Question 6. How would you like this to occur?

14 participants responded to this question, with 11 indicating that further training would be beneficial. The comments generally indicated:

- Training within workplaces (5)
- Future training opportunities were wanted (4)
- Internet based (2)

### Question 7. Would you be interested in further training? Examples include:



20 participants responded to this question, with responses indicating that the most requested form of training topic is 'Community Engagement' (52.6%), followed by 'Health Promotion/Evaluation' (47.4%), and 'Project Planning' (42.1%).

However all choices received high scores, with 'Community Planning', 'Supporting Participation' and 'Evaluating Community Projects' receiving 36.8% of responses, and just over a quarter of respondents wishing to participate in 'Community Visioning' training (26.3%).

2 respondents commented on this question, citing;

- 'All of the above!'
- 'I thought this day would have covered all of these areas?'

### Question 8. Any further comments on the Community Development Workshop?

20 participants responded to this question, with comments being generally positive in nature. Many respondents had constructive suggestions and thoughts for future training. Comments included;

- 'Great workshop/facilitators' (5)
- Time (5)
  - Could be shortened as ideas overlapped
  - Didn't leave enough time for activities
- Slides (5)
  - Slides overlapped and were too complicated
  - Afternoon session read from slides
- Facilitators knowledge (4)
  - Facilitators very knowledgeable
- Networking (3)
  - Not enough time for networking

## **Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership Staff Reflections**

SMPCP staff shared reflections following the Community Development Workshop, focusing on the group setting, knowledge sharing, PowerPoint slides and venue/catering. SMPCP staff agreed that the knowledge and information that was shared was highly beneficial to participants, with the sharing of different methods allowing for practical inclusion of the approaches to practice.

Access to the tools, as well as further information on the Community Development approaches including SPEECS, were also discussed by SMPCP staff with suggestions involving participants receiving a refresher on the knowledge of the day. It is hoped that by bringing the Community Development Workshop to the forefront of participants minds again that it will serve as a reminder to integrate these learnt tools/approaches into practice.

## Facilitators Reflections (Athena Williams and Julie Cairns, More than One)

Regular and collegial contact with Bronwyn throughout the planning stage was imperative, well received and helpful. When running an open enrolment introductory workshop there is a significant challenge in managing expectation. As the facilitators we felt we were able to clarify aspects of the workshop and have discussion about what we felt could and could not be included in one day. All aspects of pre planning and organizing equipment, logistics and evaluation methods was done with ease and in a collaborative environment between ourselves and SMPCP.

The workshop was planned to introduce the concepts, principles and processors of community development, using a model to articulate the process. Each stage of the model had a dedicated session within the one day workshop. The workshop participants came from a range of organisations and brought a diverse set of skills and experiences to the discussions. It became clear throughout the day that some participants had a high level of skill and knowledge in the area of community development, while others were experiencing some of the concepts for the first time. For those experienced participants it became increasingly evident that the workshop content may have been familiar to them and part of their every day practice, prompting us to consider the relevance of the workshop to those who were experienced participants. In reflection, given these circumstances, the opportunity we missed was to utilise the wisdom in the room to a greater degree by enabling larger blocks of time dedicated to smaller group discussions.

Whilst from a facilitation perspective building more opportunities in future workshops for discussion between participants to best access and share the skills and knowledge in the group, we also wonder whether there may be an opportunity to consider workshop registration processes that support participants for whom the workshop content is most relevant to come along.

The purpose of the day was to equip participants with an introduction to the concepts, principles and processors of community development and this seemed to have been achieved. Networking opportunities rated highly for people, both in their expressed hopes for the workshop, and also reflected in the future learning and support opportunities identified in the evaluation forms. A valuable step forward for the SMPCP may include consideration of the possibilities for networking amongst professionals working with communities, both to share service related information and to access peer support and ongoing professional development around community building work.

### Recommendations and Next Steps

1. To continue with the collegial and collaborative nature of engaging facilitators and/or consults as demonstrated in the pre workshop preparations by SMPCP.
2. Consideration for workshop registration to support relevant participation, one option may be to include a small fee for participation in the hope that the workshop would attract the intended audience.
3. Acknowledge the expressed desire to Network by participants by bringing participants together to discuss
  - What do we currently do in community development/building as a workforce?
  - What is it that we do well
  - What can we do collectively to do better

As a way to bring and share varying experience and knowledge's together and to develop a self determining action plan for future support.

## Results Summary & Next Steps

### Summary

The Community Development Workshop participants responses were generally positive, with scores and comments indicating that the workshop generally met participants expectations and needs. The most positively scoring answers included 'The workshop increased my understanding of the principles of community development', 'I have an increased understanding about how my values and beliefs can impact my work', along with high scores for the venue and food.

Participants provided written responses to most questions where requested, with time management, over use of PowerPoint slides and engagement in the afternoon session most discussed in 'Any further comments on the Community Development Workshop' and 'Your comments on the Workshop Content'.

Overall, participants scored the Community Development Workshop at 3 (neutral) or higher (positive gradient) and commented that they felt the workshop was generally 'beneficial'. Networking was mentioned frequently in responses, with participants eager to network with one another where possible. Participants suggested that further training would be welcomed in specific areas of community development in the future and sharing experiences as useful next steps.

### Next Steps

Participants indicated in Question 5 'What else do you feel may be able to help you to implement community development principles within your work' and 6 'How would you like this to occur' that future work needs to be done in this area to ensure community development principles are integrated into workplaces successfully.

Participants indicated that their preferred methods were reflection and discussion within their workplaces, access to resources (both written and web), peer support and further training opportunities. It was also indicated that participants would be interested in further training in other community development areas, including 'community engagement', 'health promotion/evaluation' and 'project planning'.

Suggestions from the facilitators to consider further work prior to the event / training with potential participants making sure both facilitators and participants are prepared and aware of what to expect at the workshop, forum or other event to be considered with future SMPCP activities.

As highlighted in Athena and Julies recommendations, acknowledge the participants expressed desire to network by providing further opportunities for agencies to network and share information on how they are currently using community development principles, what they are doing well, what can be improved and sharing of examples.

These responses will be investigated further by Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership via the SMPCP Integrated Partnerships Committee in the hope of providing further support and training to member agencies wishing to further increase their skills and knowledge in community development principles. Consideration will be given to participant responses, facilitators feedback and recommendations and timing of additional support/training and capacity of all involved to determine the next steps to be taken.

## Suggested Readings

### Athena & Julie's Recommendations

- Building Communities from the Inside Out  
*Jody Kretzman*
- Community of Hope  
*Wayne McCashen*
- B.A.N.K. of IDEAS website  
<http://www.bankofideas.com.au>

### Further Recommendations

- The Sustainability of Australia's Country Towns: Renewal, Renaissance, Resilience.  
*J. Martin & T. Budge*
- Toward a Healthy City; People, Places and the Politics of Urban Planning.  
*Jason Coburn*
- The Community Planning Handbook.  
*Nick Wates*
- Participatory Practice  
*Margaret Ledwith & Jane Springett*
- Community Planning (2nd edition).  
*Eric Damien Kelly*



For more information you can visit our website

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