

# **Towong Healthy Communities Plan 2013 - 2017**

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This information is available in alternative formats on request

The Appendices referred to in the Plan are available on request.

## Mayor's Message

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Our Shire is a serene and pristine place to live with easy access to National Parks, Lake Hume, beautiful valleys and the upper reaches of the Murray River. We have a large geographic area and the small population is spread throughout tiny towns and large valleys. While these aspects give our residents many positive advantages for their personal health and wellbeing, we also face a number of challenges as we work on improving local health and wellbeing outcomes.

The *Towong Healthy Communities Plan 2013 – 2017* identifies opportunities for improving the health and wellbeing of the community. The opportunities presented in the Plan are based on population health data and research, demographics, community values and needs, government policy and directions, best practice and the environment around us.

Towong Shire Council has partnered with Walwa Bush Nursing Centre, Upper Murray Health and Community Services and Tallangatta Health Service to form the Towong Alliance. The Alliance is serious about its responsibility to influence and create a range of healthy environments within the Shire to assist residents to lead productive, rewarding and healthy lives.

The *Towong Healthy Communities Plan 2013 - 2017* is a joint initiative of the Towong Alliance together with other key industry and community stakeholders. This collaborative approach has resulted in an informed plan to facilitate decision-making and initiatives that will help our residents be safe, well and capable of living a full life.

This Plan promotes a unified, central approach to help the Towong Alliance as a body and the individual partner organisations to prioritise community health and wellbeing initiatives, work together effectively on joint initiatives and achieve greater outcomes through synergy.

Towong Shire Council, together with its Alliance partners, are passionate about ensuring that Towong Shire is a great healthy place to live and look forward to assisting locals to achieve the best possible health outcomes through the implementation of the Towong Shire Healthy Communities Plan.

## Towong Alliance Endorsement

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The Towong Alliance health service partners commend Council for adopting a partnership in the development and implementation of the *Towong Healthy Communities Plan 2013 - 2017*.

The *Towong Health Communities Plan 2013-2017* enables the alignment of Towong Alliance health service plans and the Municipal Plan thereby providing a great opportunity to clearly articulate the complementary and collaborative roles each agency has in relation to improving community health and wellbeing throughout the Towong Shire.

The Health Services look forward to working with Council and the Towong Alliance in delivering the Plan.

**Tallangatta Health Service**

*CEO Robyn Gillis*

**Upper Murray Health  
and Community Services**

*CEO Maxine Brockfield*

**Walwa Bush Nursing Centre**

*CEO Sandi Grieve*

## Acknowledgements

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- City of Greater Shepparton
- Charles Sturt University (CSU)
- Council on the Ageing (COTA)
- Department of Health
- Goulburn North East Women's Health (GNWH)
- Hume Medicare Local (HML)
- Hume Region Aged Care Planning Network
- Hume Region Integrated Health Promotion Network (PCP IHP)
- Hume Region Primary Care Partnership (PCP)
- Hume Region Rural Access
- Indite Consulting
- Indigo Shire Council
- LaTrobe University
- Moira Shire Council
- Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)
- North East Transport Connections Project (NTCP)
- Ovens & King Community Health
- Tallangatta Health Service (THS)
- Towong Shire Community
- Towong Shire Council
- Upper Murray Health and Community Services (UMHCS)
- Walwa Bush Nursing Centre (WBNC)
- Youth

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## Executive Summary

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The *Towong Healthy Communities Plan 2013 – 2017* (hereafter referred to as The Plan) provides a holistic approach towards improving community health and wellbeing throughout the Towong Shire community.

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, all councils in Victoria are required to prepare a Municipal Public Health Plan (*Towong Healthy Communities Plan*) which is consistent with their Council Plan and their Municipal Strategic Statement.

The development of the Plan has been led by the Towong Shire Council with support from Tallangatta Health Service, Upper Murray Health and Community Services and Walwa Bush Nursing Centre. This collaborative approach builds on the Towong Alliance partnership initiative to deliver better health outcomes for residents of the Towong Shire. It has resulted in a well informed plan to facilitate decision-making and support initiatives that will help our residents be safe, well and capable of living a full life; and has been endorsed by all four Towong Alliance partners.

The Plan has been prepared in the context of the Victorian *Environments for Health: Municipal Public Health Planning Framework (2001)*, *Guide to municipal public health and wellbeing planning (2013)*, and *Municipal public health and wellbeing planning: Having regard to climate change (2013)*.

The population health and social determinants data, policies and local community input used to inform the Plan reflects the World Health Organisation's definition of health and evidence that improved health and well being is achieved by focusing on the social and environmental determinants of health, in tandem with biological and medical factors.

The strategic health and wellbeing priorities relevant to Towong Shire are as follows:

1. The need to improve health and wellbeing of the Towong Shire community with support for people to increase control over and improve their own health
2. The need to improve social connections and resilience to ensure sustainability of communities
3. The need to respond to opportunities and challenges of an increasingly aged population
4. The need to respond to the needs of the young people and young families, who have significant influence on future directions.

The Plan includes a Strategic Action Plan, identifying strategies, objectives, actions, lead agencies and timeframes to address the agreed strategic priorities which will be reviewed annually.

The Plan is supported by Appendices providing further data and planning details.

The *Towong Healthy Communities Plan 2013 – 2017* provides an integrated, strategic direction towards improving the health and wellbeing of Towong Shire residents and communities.

## **Section 1 – Background Information**

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# **Purpose and scope of the Healthy Communities Plan**

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## **What is the Towong Healthy Communities Plan?**

### Towong Healthy Communities Plan:

The Plan aims to provide a holistic approach towards improving community health and wellbeing throughout the Towong Shire community.

The Plan has been developed after considering relevant evidence, informed data, policies and local community input.

The development of the Plan has been led by the Towong Shire Council with support from the partners of the Towong Alliance.

### The Towong Alliance:

The Towong Alliance is a partnership between the Towong Shire Council, Upper Murray Health and Community Services (UMHCS), Tallangatta Health Service (THS) and Walwa Bush Nursing Centre (WBNC).

The Towong Alliance aims to respond to and improve the health and wellbeing of the local community through enhancing service effectiveness, efficiency and capacity as a result of a collaborative approach to planning. The Plan represents the strategic direction for the Alliance over the next four years.

This Plan will also inform individual Towong Alliance agency plans including the 2013 – 2017 Towong Shire Council Plan and service planning for the UMHCS, THS and WBNC.

## **Why do we need a Healthy Communities Plan?**

### Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

All councils in Victoria are required under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to prepare a four year Municipal Public Health Plan (*Towong Healthy Communities Plan*) with reviews aligning to the development of each new Council Plan.

*The Act recognises the important role council health planning has in supporting the strategic direction of the municipality. Health planning needs to improve and promote equality of opportunity regardless of gender, age, race, cultural background, ability or location, and address current disadvantage by affirmative action to promote equality of health outcomes.* The Municipal Public Health Plan, therefore, must outline what councils will do to promote good health and prevent ill health in their communities.

### Guidelines for development of Public Health and Wellbeing Plans:

The Plan has been prepared in the context of the Victorian *Environments for Health: Municipal Public Health Planning Framework (2001)*, *Guide to municipal public health and wellbeing planning (2013)*, and *Municipal public health and wellbeing planning: Having regard to climate change (2013)*.

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* the Department of Health together with the Municipal Association of Victoria developed these guidelines for use by Local Government Authorities in the development of Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Under these guidelines, the Plan is required to provide information about:

- What the Towong Shire community looks like;
- How healthy we are and what health issues we face;
- What Council is going to do in the next four years to address these issues and improve our health;
- How Council will have regard to climate change according to recommendations of the *Climate Change Act 2010*;
- Who Council is going to work with to achieve better health outcomes; and
- How Council is going to monitor the performance of this plan.<sup>1</sup>

### Support with local level planning:

The Plan provides an integrated, strategic direction towards improving the health and wellbeing of residents and communities. Contributions have been received from a range of agencies and services towards the development of the Plan. These community, government and industry stakeholders, each have individual roles in relation to influencing health and wellbeing. (Refer Acknowledgements section, page 3, for a list of stakeholders contributing to the Plan)

This collaborative approach aims to ensure planning at all levels (from agency planning to issues based planning) responds to community need and provides maximum benefit by identifying joint opportunities, avoiding duplication of efforts and identifying gaps. It will assist in supporting a coordinated approach across a wide range of services by linking with stakeholder policies, plans and interventions.

The Plan also links with other levels of Government and Council strategic planning documents (refer Appendix 5: Linking Policies and Plans).

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Human Services, State Government of Victoria, Environments for Health, Promoting Health and Wellbeing through Built, Social, Economic and Natural Environments, Municipal Public Health Planning Framework September 2001

## The definition of Health

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### World Health Organisation:

The World Health Organisation's definition of health is *".. a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without discrimination of race, religion, political belief or economic and social condition. The right to health includes access to timely, acceptable, and affordable health care of appropriate quality."*<sup>2</sup>

Public health is defined as "what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy. Public health focuses on prevention, promotion and protection rather than on treatment, on populations rather than individuals, and on the factors and behaviour that cause illness and injury."<sup>3</sup>

In keeping with the World Health Organisation's definition of health, the Plan is not just about responding to disease, it considers the bigger picture of physical, economic and social factors affecting our community health and wellbeing. By addressing these factors through strategic planning, partnerships and projects/interventions, the Towong Alliance aims to build a stronger, healthier community into the future.

### Social Determinants of Health:

"The social determinants of health are the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age, and the systems put in place to deal with illness. These circumstances are in turn shaped by a wider set of forces: economics, social policies, and politics."<sup>4</sup>

There has been increasing recognition over the last thirty years that the global burden of disease, and the health inequities found in all countries, arise in large part from the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age.<sup>5</sup> These conditions are referred to as the "social determinants of health" and include social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental.

This framework operates on the evidence that improved health and well being is achieved by focusing on the social and environmental determinants of health, in tandem with biological and medical factors.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> World Health Organisation, Constitution, 1994 and Fact Sheet 31

<sup>3</sup> *Guide to Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Planning January 2013*

<sup>4</sup> WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health – final report 2008 - 2009

<sup>5</sup> Department of Health, Guide to municipal public health and wellbeing planning, 2013

<sup>6</sup> Keleher H and Marshall B (2002), *A Framework for Strengthening Health Promotion in Community Health*: Deakin University, Melbourne.

The benefit of working within the social model of health is that it supports individuals and communities to identify and address important factors that influence health depending on the specific context.<sup>7</sup>

### Environments for Health:

The Environments for Health Municipal Public Health Planning Framework<sup>8</sup>, developed by the Department of Human Services and the Municipal Association of Victoria, is designed to assist Councils in achieving maximum health and wellbeing outcomes for their communities. It has recognised that Local Government Authorities have the ability to have a positive influence on an individual's health through four key dimensions known as the Environments for Health:

- the social environment
- the economic environment
- the physical environment (natural and built)

Refer Appendix 2 for further information on the Social Environments of Health and the Environments for Health.

### The link between the Towong Alliance and community health and wellbeing

The Towong Alliance recognises good health as an important resource for everyday life, a positive concept that embraces not only a healthy lifestyle but also community and personal wellbeing. We need to think about things such as access to doctors, availability of housing, being able to get around the community, opportunities to meet others socially, looking after our environment and having a job.

Therefore, development of the Plan will support the ability of the Towong Alliance, stakeholders and individuals to influence a positive change in the health and wellbeing of the Towong community by addressing issues around the Social Determinants of Health and Environments for Health.

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<sup>7</sup> Department of Human Services (2004) *Integrated Health Promotion: A Practice Guide for Service Providers, Primary and Community Health Branch*: Public Health Group, Victoria

<sup>8</sup> Department of Human Services, State Government of Victoria, Environments for Health, Promoting Health and Wellbeing through Built, Social, Economic and Natural Environments, Municipal Public Health Planning Framework September 2001, page 10

## How was the Healthy Communities Plan developed?

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The Plan has been developed using existing information including health data, demographic information, government policies, and community consultation outcomes from recent and relevant local planning projects. An analysis of this information is the basis for the development of the Plan.

A Public Exhibition Period enabled community members to provide input and ensure the plan reflects local health and wellbeing experiences.

Below is a summary of the development process undertaken:

### Step 1

- Data Collection
- Government and relevant industry body policy and literature review
- Community consultation outcomes from other topic and issues based local level planning and projects

### Step 2

- Workshop with Towong Alliance, facilitated by the Department of Health, to analyse data, policy, literature and community consultation information including needs and values of the local community
- Development of a draft set of key objectives and priorities

Refer Appendix 3 and 4 for further detail on the analysis process.

### Step 3

- Development of a draft report
- Presentation of draft plan to Towong Shire Council and health service Boards

### Step 4

- Public Exhibition Period to enable comment and suggested changes from community members.

Refer Appendix 7 for community consultation processes contributing to the Plan.

## How will the Towong Healthy Communities Plan be delivered?

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The Healthy Communities Plan will be delivered through:

- Developing and maintaining effective partnerships
- Good governance and decision making
- Linking policies and plans
- Informing the development of ongoing planning processes and projects
- Implementing agreed actions with a coordinated approach
- Using resources wisely
- Engaging with the local community

### Developing and maintaining effective partnerships:

The Towong Shire Council is legislated to develop a Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, however, the Towong Alliance recognises the value in developing collaboratively the Plan as its key strategic document for promoting good health and preventing ill health throughout the Shire. The Towong Alliance understands that good health is the responsibility of everyone; therefore, our approach to maintaining a healthier community is multi faceted and involves a range of partnerships.

### Good governance and decision making:

The Towong Alliance provides a platform for leadership in improving public health, promoting coordinated efforts through partnerships and advocacy in support of local needs and facilitation of change through integrated planning.

The Plan informs the Towong Alliance for effective decision making and efforts.

### Linking policies and plans:

It is important to recognise the importance of understanding higher level government planning and policies. It ensures we all speak the same language and share the same vision so that health initiatives can be rolled out across the shire in a coordinated and meaningful way.

Refer Appendix 6 for detail on the plans linking with and informing the Plan.

### Informing the development of ongoing planning processes and projects:

The Plan will inform the review and updates of local plans, as well as contribute to the development of any new plans, projects and programs at the local level. It will also provide an opportunity for advocacy to inform higher level government and other agency planning.

#### Implementing agreed actions with a coordinated approach:

One of the significant benefits of the Plan being developed in partnership is the opportunity for a coordinated approach towards implementation, monitoring and evaluation of goals and actions.

The advantage of this approach is anticipated to be a high level of success in delivering the Plan, compared to what agencies working alone are able to achieve.

The Plan strategic directions will be implemented by being incorporated into relevant strategic plans of the Towong Alliance member agencies.

The strategic direction will also link closely with stakeholder and community planning for a true integrated and collaborative approach towards increasing health and wellbeing within the Towong Shire.

#### Using resources wisely:

The Towong Alliance will ensure the Plan is achievable by strategically planning coordinated use of available resources.

#### Engaging with the local community:

The Plan provides opportunity for the Towong Alliance to establish, build and strengthen relationships with each other and the community.

The Towong Alliance aims to encourage individuals and the community to take responsibility for their own health. Therefore, the planning approach undertaken has ensured the information and interventions are based on sound data while meeting localised community needs, values and expectations where possible.

# Towong Shire - Who are we?

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## Towong Shire

The Towong Shire comprises an area of 6673 square kilometres.

It is bounded by the Murray River in the north and east, the East Gippsland and Alpine shires in the south, and the Indigo Shire and City of Wodonga in the west.

The Shire offers a diversity of landscapes that range from pastoral and agricultural farming areas to pristine national parks and state forest environments to alpine peaks and waterways. Around two thirds of the Shire is forested public land, national and state parks.

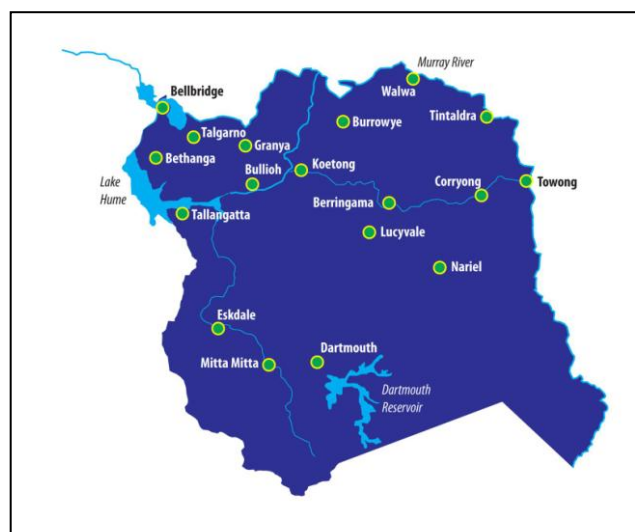
While Corryong and Tallangatta are the Shire's main urban centres with populations of approximately 1,000 people each, other significant settlements include:

- Bellbridge and Bethanga which offer town/village living opportunities close to the larger regional centres of Wodonga and Albury;
- Communities at Dartmouth, Eskdale and Mitta Mitta which are more remote and self sufficient;
- Talgarno, Granya, Walwa, Tintaldra and Towong which provide lifestyle choices on the banks of the Murray River; and
- Cudgewa, Koetong, Old Tallangatta and Tallangatta Valley which are nestled in fertile valleys and surrounded by scenic hills.

The Shire's location is significant in terms of being at the headwaters of the Murray River and contains the major water storages of Lake Hume and Dartmouth Dam. These storages supply irrigation water and town water supply for down-stream communities.

Towong has the least diverse economy in the North East region, being heavily dependent on agriculture, however it is one of the most productive agricultural areas within the region generating in the order \$80 million worth of agricultural produce annually. The Shire's tourism sector is centred on key waterways, Victoria's largest National Park, the Alpine National Park, the nearby Kosciusko National Park, a number of State and National Parks, Hume and Dartmouth Dams and the legend of the "Man from Snowy River".

Further information on the Statistical Local Areas, Settlement, Environment and Economy are available in the Towong Shire Municipal Strategic Statement Clause 21.01.





## Population

Towong Shire has an estimated population of 5,958 people (2011: 2,917 females & 3,041 males), with the highest proportion (32.3%) of people aged between 45-64 years.

The health services in Towong Shire provide services to a significant number of people from NSW. For example, 50% of medical clinic patients at WBNC are from neighbouring NSW shires and UMHCS provides outreach services to Khancoban, NSW.

People aged over the age of 65 comprise 21.5% of the population and this proportion is expected to increase to one third (29.1%) in 2021, compared to an increase across Victoria from 14% in 2011 to 16.7% in 2021. As such, a key health factor in Towong Shire is the increasingly aged population.

Young people between 0 to 24 years currently make up 27.9% of the total population.

The major contributors to employment are agriculture, forestry and fishing (611, 31.8%), health care and social assistance (256, 13.3%), education and training (190, 9.9%) and other (864, 45%).<sup>9</sup>

Refer Appendix 4 for further detail on population and demographics for the Towong Shire.

## The health and wellbeing of Towong Shire

### Significant Health and Wellbeing Themes

- i. Strong community in terms of high levels of feeling safe and belonging
- ii. High rate of volunteering
- iii. An increasingly aged population
- iv. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population rate (1.48%) twice Victorian average (0.74%)
- v. Cultural diversity one of the lowest percentages in the state
- vi. Access to transport ranked the lowest in the State
- vii. Low socio economic status (e.g. farming families and dependence on social security)
- viii. Unemployment slightly less than the State average
- ix. Alcohol consumption higher than state average
- x. Over half the population obese or overweight
- xi. Higher suicide rate of 17.7% (rate per 100,000) than Victoria 10.92 (2012)
- xii. High rate of participation in child health assessments and immunisation
- xiii. Notifications of pertussis (whooping cough) third highest in the state
- xiv. Low participation rate for breast screening
- xv. Less households have internet access via broadband connection than state average
- xvi. Low rate of household waste recycling.

Refer Appendix 4 for health and wellbeing data on Towong Shire.

### Policy Context

It is the Towong Shire Council's aim to support the community to attain of a high level of health and safety, resilience and connectedness.

The Towong Municipal Strategic Statement<sup>10</sup> (MSS) recognises that population, economy, environment and settlement factors play a significant part in influencing the wellbeing of our

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<sup>9</sup> REMPLAN Economic Modelling based on ABS data (accessed 18 February 2014)

<sup>10</sup> Municipal Strategic Statement awaiting Ministerial approval

community. The MSS and Towong Municipal Plan 2013-2017 include strategies to address community wellbeing, environmental sustainability and economic development, including:

- maintaining, protecting and enhancing key natural assets
- creating environments, including new and upgraded facilities, for improved healthy living to encourage an increase in the uptake of physical activity and social connections
- embracing and including community members with access and inclusion issues
- responding to the ageing population with strategies that encourage healthy ageing.

Local Health Services (WBNC, UMHCS and THS) planning aims to respond to population health issues with a focus on:

- Primary Health Care, wellbeing, healthy lifestyles and self-managed care
- partnership development to increase integration and response to health needs
- screening and prevention of disease strategies
- person centred care approaches
- active service models of care
- addressing issues in relation to the increasingly aged population
- working closely with the community through sound community development practices
- developing a workforce for the future
- improving aged care sustainability
- supporting young people and young families
- strengthening community transport

The Victorian State Government, including relevant associated networks and industry bodies (such as Hume Medicare Local, Upper Hume Primary Care Partnership incorporating the Integrated Health Promotion Network and Aged Care Network), are working towards engaging policy, projects and programs that support:

- capacity building of community and stakeholders to encourage resilience and reduce disparities in health outcomes
- leadership and strengthening of partnerships
- providing population health data on which to base integrated partnerships, planning and interventions
- integrating Statewide policy
- embedding self managed approaches and person centred care

Refer Appendix 6 for policy and literature review from Local, Regional and State Policy Scan.

### Conclusions - Opportunities and Challenges

Partnerships - The Towong Alliance partnership provides a great opportunity to work collaboratively to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing levels throughout the Towong Shire. The Alliance partners bring strengths in gathering and analysing baseline evidence, community engagement and consultation; and innovative service development. A continued joint planning approach, which also draws in other key stakeholders including industry bodies, other government agencies and the community, will ensure a collaborative approach towards responding effectively to population health needs in the Towong Shire.

Resources – Members of the Towong Alliance together with key stakeholders have limited resources (including human and financial) to support good health and wellbeing in a community with an increasing proportion of older people. The Towong Healthy Communities Plan provides opportunity to plan collaboratively making the most of available resources and avoiding unnecessary duplication.

Environment – One of the key opportunities and challenges for the Towong Shire community is the physical geographic nature of the landscape. Small rural communities are spread across the 6673

square kilometres with limited access to or no public transport. Outside of the main townships of Corryong (1440), Tallangatta (957) and Walwa (303) residents and health service providers regularly travel up to 80 kms to access and provide health services. The additional cost and access issues arising from these challenges requires advocacy and innovative solutions to ensure people are well connected and able to access products and services crucial to strong health.

## **What does the community say?**

### Key messages from population groups and communities throughout the Shire:

Community consultations have been undertaken in the development of a variety of related strategies and planning which have informed the development of the Towong Alliance partners health service plans and the Plan.

Key messages from these consultations and resulting planning include:

- a. Improved transport needed locally, within the shire and to Albury/Wodonga
- b. Improved access and affordability of health services such as dental care, podiatry, doctors, specialists, physiotherapy
- c. Increased availability of affordable and accessible housing
- d. Increased number of support groups/services
- e. Increased capacity of aged care facilities/services
- f. Improved focus on population groups (especially young families & young people)
- g. Improved access to healthy food options
- h. Improved footpaths and walking facilities to encourage and support walking
- i. Increased social connection opportunities and emotional wellbeing activities
- j. Increased innovative business and economic development opportunities

A Public Exhibition Period provided community members with a further opportunity to make comments and offer suggestions to improve the Plan.

For further detail on Community Consultation Strategy and Community consultations relevant to the Plan refer to Appendix 6.

## **Service Mapping**

### What do we have and where are possible gaps

The multi-purpose and small rural health service models in the Towong Alliance partnership provide a breadth of key community aged care, home and community care, primary health, acute and sub-acute care services responsive to the needs and demographics of the Towong community. The Towong Shire Council provides essential environmental, built, economic and social infrastructure central to supporting community health and wellbeing.

Whilst each health service provides counseling services, there are limited specialised programs available in the fields of mental health and alcohol and drug services.

A feature of Towong health and wellbeing programs is the number of visiting services relying upon the commitment of Albury-Wodonga based services to service outlying communities.

Refer Appendix 4 for Health and Wellbeing Program Mapping details.

## **Together what does this all mean**

### What needs to be addressed?

The key strategic health and wellbeing directions evident in the government policy, literature, population health data and local level consultations relevant to Towong Shire are as follows:

1. The need to improve health and wellbeing of the Towong Shire community with support for people to increase control over and improve their own health
2. The need to improve social connections and resilience to ensure sustainability of communities
3. The need to respond to opportunities and challenges of an increasingly aged population
4. The need to respond to the needs of the younger generation (youth and young families) who have significant influence on future directions.

### What are the options?

With careful analysis and consideration of population health data, government and industry policy, plus community feedback from various recent related consultation activities; a number of goals, objectives and actions have been identified as those which can make the most difference towards improving the health and wellbeing of the Towong Shire community.

The Plan – Strategic Action Plan captures this information and is provided in Section 2.

A detailed Implementation Plan, including activities, indicators and stakeholders is available from Towong Alliance partners.

## **Section 2 – Strategic Action Plan**

## Strategic Action Plan

### Four Key Strategic Directions:

- To improve community health and wellbeing
- To strengthen community resilience and connectedness
- To promote, improve and protect the wellbeing of older people
- To address the needs of young people and young families

## Strategy 1 – To improve community health and wellbeing

Goal 1.1 - To promote and encourage healthy lifestyles and improved community wellbeing			
Objectives (where we want to make a difference)	What we are going to do	Who (Lead Agency)	When (Timeframe)
1.1.1 "We will be a World Class small Council and Towong Shire will be the ideal place to live"	<p>Identify health and wellbeing priorities from the Towong Shire Council Plan 2013 – 2017 that can be achieved through an integrated and coordinated approach.</p> <p>Reference document:  <a href="http://www.towong.vic.gov.au/Files/CouncilPlan20132017.pdf">http://www.towong.vic.gov.au/Files/CouncilPlan20132017.pdf</a></p> <p>Feed up to date health information and data for use in the review of each Council Plan.</p> <p>Advocate to all levels of government for support.</p> <p>Ensure Towong Shire residents have had opportunities to attain a higher level of health and safety, resilience and connectedness to their communities.</p>	Towong Shire Council	2013 - 2017

1.1.2 To investigate future climate change health and wellbeing impacts and effects on the local community	<p>Develop a strategy outlining climate change effects that will impact the health and wellbeing of Towong shire residents. Recommended interventions to be included in the Strategy.</p> <p>Reference document <a href="http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/Municipal-public-health-and-wellbeing-planning-having-regard-to-climate-change">http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/Municipal-public-health-and-wellbeing-planning-having-regard-to-climate-change</a></p>	Towong Shire Council	2013 - 2017
1.1.3 To ensure a healthy environment for Towong residents to live where land-use planning, economy, environment and settlement are well coordinated and integrated	<p>Support community health and wellbeing through implementation of the Towong Shire Council Municipal Strategic Statement</p> <p>Reference document: MSS awaiting Ministerial approval</p>	Towong Shire Council	2013 - 2017
1.1.4 To support Towong Shire residents attain a higher level of health through increased physical activity rates and healthy eating choices.	<p>Align with Upper Hume Region Primary Care Partnership Integrated Health Promotion physical activity and healthy eating plans.</p> <p>Reference document: <a href="http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/E6018A4A24590D8ACA257A0200046E11/\$FILE/Hume%20Region%20-%20Integrated%20Health%20Promotion%20Strategy.pdf">http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/E6018A4A24590D8ACA257A0200046E11/\$FILE/Hume%20Region%20-%20Integrated%20Health%20Promotion%20Strategy.pdf</a></p>	Tallangatta Health Service  Upper Murray Health & Community Services	2013 – 2017
1.1.5 To support the whole community having access to immunisation services and encourage an increased uptake of the service	Revise Towong Shire Council's current immunisation contract.	Towong Shire Council	2013 - 2014
1.1.6 To improve collaborative systems between Towong Alliance partners for the benefit of integrated community health and wellbeing planning and service provision	Develop collaborative systems in relation to: annual Towong community health and wellbeing evidence profile, community engagement, organizational resource management, workforce integration and education, volunteer programs	Towong Alliance	2014 - 2016

Goal 1.2 - To ensure all people have the opportunities to achieve and maintain optimal mental health and wellbeing			
Objectives (where we want to make a difference)	What we are going to do	Who (Lead Agency)	When (Timeframe)
1.2.1 To have a positive impact on reducing the number of people affected by mental health issues	Align with <i>Because Mental Health Matters</i> (Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy 2009 – 2019) seven (7) key strategic directions: Prevention, Early Intervention, Social Inclusion, Meeting Individual Needs, Recovery, Reducing Inequalities, Workforce Capacity and Innovation.  Reference document <a href="http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/CE4F17F258CD6231CA2579CF007E309B/\$FILE/mh-matters-strategy0209.pdf">http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/CE4F17F258CD6231CA2579CF007E309B/\$FILE/mh-matters-strategy0209.pdf</a>	Upper Murray Health & Community Service  Tallangatta Health Service  Walwa Bush Nursing Centre	2017
1.2.2 To improve mental health status through increased and/or improved social connection opportunities with particular focus on people living outside main townships	Advocate on behalf of the Towong Shire community to agencies who are in a position to positively affect the mental health of residents (diversity well targeted: age, gender, rural)  Work with existing community groups to increase awareness of the importance of inclusiveness and the benefits of supporting vulnerable community members through improved social connections.	Towong Alliance  Upper Murray Health & Community Service  Tallangatta Health Service  Walwa Bush Nursing Centre	2014 - 2017



Goal 1.3 - To ensure the community have access to a broad range of passive and active recreation opportunities (facilities and programs)			
Objectives (where we want to make a difference)	What we are going to do	Who (Lead Agency)	When (Timeframe)
1.3.1 To ensure the community has equitable access to passive and active recreation opportunities that respond to identified need across the Municipality.	<p>Review the Towong Shire Recreation Strategy reflecting community need now and into the future to ensure an increase in participation in recreation across all age groups.</p> <p>Strengthen partnerships, such as, aligning with the Upper Hume Integrated Health Promotion plan for physical activity.</p> <p>Ensure planning for community facilities, open spaces and asset management consider health and wellbeing opportunities e.g. multi-purpose use, visiting services and programs</p> <p>Develop and deliver a footpath replacement and extension program for strategic community links</p>	Towong Shire Council	<p>2015</p> <p>2013 - 2017</p>

Goal 1.4 - To explore opportunities for new and innovative service models and/or funding and reporting mechanisms to support improved outcomes for people with chronic disease across the Towong Shire			
Objectives (where we want to make a difference)	What we are going to do	Who (Lead Agency)	When (Timeframe)
1.4.1 To better align with evidence based practice and improve service frameworks around chronic disease	<p>Align with the National Chronic Disease Strategy and the service improvement frameworks in all local services, to support consistent evidence based practice.</p> <p>Reference: <a href="http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pq-ncds-strat">http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pq-ncds-strat</a></p> <p>Relevant recommendations from the National Chronic Care Disease Strategy incorporated into health service plans.</p>	<p>Upper Murray Health &amp; Community Services</p> <p>Walwa Bush Nursing Centre</p> <p>Tallangatta Health Service</p>	2013- 2017

<p>1.4.2 To increase awareness and prevention across the Shire of the major risk factors affecting chronic disease and avoidable mortality</p>	<p>Align with the Hume Region Chronic Care Strategy</p> <p>Reference document  <a href="http://www.humeml.org.au/Portals/0/documents/Resources/Hume%20Region%20Chronic%20Care%20Strategy.pdf">http://www.humeml.org.au/Portals/0/documents/Resources/Hume%20Region%20Chronic%20Care%20Strategy.pdf</a></p> <p>Align with the Upper Hume Primary Care Partnership Implementation Plan 2013.</p> <p>Reference document  <a href="http://www.upperhumeppc.com.au/uploads/documents/UHPCP%20implementation%20plan%202012-13.pdf">http://www.upperhumeppc.com.au/uploads/documents/UHPCP%20implementation%20plan%202012-13.pdf</a></p> <p>Align with the Hume Region Aged Care Strategy.</p> <p>Reference document  <a href="http://www.upperhumeppc.com.au/uploads/documents/Hume%20Integrated%20Aged%20Care%20Plan%20August%202010-2015.pdf">http://www.upperhumeppc.com.au/uploads/documents/Hume%20Integrated%20Aged%20Care%20Plan%20August%202010-2015.pdf</a></p>	<p>Upper Murray Health &amp; Community Services</p> <p>Walwa Bush Nursing Centre</p> <p>Tallangatta Health Service</p>	<p>2017</p>
<p>1.4.3 To support an improvement in the health of people with chronic disease</p>	<p>Identify targeted programs for collaboration to improve outcomes for people with chronic disease in the areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Cardiovascular Disease</li> <li>• Oral Health</li> </ul>	<p>Upper Murray Health &amp; Community Services</p> <p>Walwa Bush Nursing Centre</p> <p>Tallangatta Health Service</p>	<p>2014 - 2017</p>



<p>1.5.3 To improve primary care services across the Shire</p>	<p>Health Services to develop service improvements such as early response, monitoring and ongoing primary care</p> <p>Health Service Plans:  <a href="http://www.umhcs.vic.gov.au/index.php?page=publications">http://www.umhcs.vic.gov.au/index.php?page=publications</a>  <a href="http://www.walwabushnursing.com/home/">http://www.walwabushnursing.com/home/</a>  <a href="http://www.tallangattahealthservice.com.au/corporate_information/reports.html">http://www.tallangattahealthservice.com.au/corporate_information/reports.html</a></p> <p>Develop collaborative projects to attract health services staff and new residents</p> <p>Ensure planning for community facilities, open spaces and asset management consider health and wellbeing opportunities e.g. multi-purpose use, visiting services and programs</p>	<p>Upper Murray Health &amp; Community Services</p> <p>Walwa Bush Nursing Centre</p> <p>Tallangatta Health Service</p> <p>Towong Alliance</p> <p>Towong Shire Council</p>	<p>2013 - 2017</p>
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## Strategy 2 - To strengthen community resilience and connectedness

Goals 2.1 – To promote effective community input to health and wellbeing planning and activities			
Objectives (where we want to make a difference)	What we are going to do	Who (Lead Agency)	When (Timeframe)
<p>2.1.2 To ensure opportunities for community input into the planning, delivery, annual review and evaluation of the Towong Healthy Communities Plan 2013 – 2017</p>	<p>Collaborative community planning practices established</p>	<p>Towong Alliance</p>	<p>2013 - 2017</p>

Goal 2.2 To embrace diversity (cultural, social, economic, sexual, religious, disability)			
Objectives (where we want to make a difference)	What we are going to do	Who (Lead Agency)	When (Timeframe)
2.2.1 To advocate for needs of diverse groups, including the indigenous population	Develop an action plan outlining advocacy and inclusion activities e.g. Closing the Gap, reconciliation week	Upper Murray Health & Community Services	2013 - 2017
2.2.2 To actively advocate, embrace and support new residents into the wider community	Identify two key agencies and/or existing community networks to develop a pilot plan for embracing and supporting newcomers into the Towong Shire.	Towong Shire Council to support the following:  Volunteer ILOP/HADP Ambassadors  Upper Murray Business Incorporated  Mitta Valley Advancement Forum  Our Bellbridge	2013 - 2017

Goal 2.3 To promote and encourage connectedness			
Objectives (where we want to make a difference)	What we are going to do	Who (Lead Agency)	When (Timeframe)
2.3.1 To advocate for facility improvements supporting enhanced and increased community connections.	<p>Seek broad community and stakeholder input into Towong Shire planning e.g. Recreation Plan, Recreation Reserve master plans, and community facility redevelopment proposals, to ensure opportunities for community connections are enhanced and increased.</p> <p>Reference document:  <a href="http://www.towong.vic.gov.au/Files/TowongRecreationStrategyUpdateweb.pdf">http://www.towong.vic.gov.au/Files/TowongRecreationStrategyUpdateweb.pdf</a></p>	Towong Shire Council	2013 - 2017

Goal 2.4 To increase community capacity opportunities			
Objectives (where we want to make a difference)	What we are going to do	Who (Lead Agency)	When (Timeframe)
2.4.1 To identify and build on capacities of existing local community groups and networks in regards to healthy ageing	Support the planning, consultation and implementation of initiatives in relation to the Healthy Ageing Demonstration Project and Improving Liveability for Older People.	Towong Alliance	Dec 2014
2.4.2 To support increased community capacity to respond to natural disasters	<p>Support development of a Vulnerable Persons Register as per the Department of Health Guidelines.</p> <p>Review the Towong Shire Heatwave Plan as per Department of Health recommendations and consider including into the Municipal Emergency Management Plan to ensure actions are linked with emergency guidelines.</p> <p><a href="http://www.towong.vic.gov.au">www.towong.vic.gov.au</a></p>	Towong Shire Council	February 2013

### Strategy 3 - To promote, improve and protect the wellbeing of older people in the Towong Shire

Goal 3.1 - To address identified needs of our ageing community			
Objectives (where we want to make a difference)	What we are going to do	Who (Lead Agency)	When (Timeframe)
3.1.1 To identify future issues and opportunities in relation to Towong Shire's ageing population	<p>Analyse the Department of Health's ageing community profile report (to be released 2014) in regards to data and projections for Towong Shire and its ageing population</p> <p>Assess future implications and opportunities for Towong Shire in regards to its ageing population, including housing, social connections, education, access to transport, access to technology, support to stay in own homes</p>	Towong Shire Council	2013 - 2015
3.1.2 To improve the opportunity for healthy ageing within the Towong Shire	<p>Support planning and implementation of the Healthy Ageing Demonstration Project and Improving Liveability of Older People aiming to improve the health and wellbeing of older people in the Towong Shire</p> <p>Identify opportunities from LaTrobe University research to support 50 – 70 year age group to transition into 70 plus with the best possible positive health outcomes</p>	Towong Alliance	<p>Dec 2013</p> <p>2013 - 2017</p>
3.1.3 To develop age friendly communities throughout the Towong Shire	<p>Align with the Municipal Association of Victoria and Council On The Ageing Positive Ageing in Local Communities Project (WHO age friendly communities)</p> <p>Further information on Age Friendly Communities <a href="http://www.cota.vic.gov.au">www.cota.vic.gov.au</a></p>	Towong Shire Council	Dec 2013 (and annually)

3.1.4 To increase community capacity for understanding and caring for people with dementia	Develop a strategy for improving dementia awareness across Alliance staff, volunteers and carers throughout the community	Walwa Bush Nursing Centre Tallangatta Health Service	2013 - 2014
3.1.5 To support vulnerable people to remain independent in their homes for as long as possible	Effectively deliver Home and Community Care through an Active Service Model  Support the development of a Towong Positive Ageing Strategy  Align with Upper Hume Primary Care partnership Elder Abuse Prevention planning and initiatives.	Tallangatta Health Service  Upper Murray Health & Community Services  Towong Shire Council  Upper Murray Health & Community Services  Walwa Bush Nursing Centre  Tallangatta Health Service	2013 - 2017  2014-2017  2014-2017



<b>Goal 3.2 To enhance and grow economic opportunities for older people</b>			
<b>Objectives (where we want to make a difference)</b>	<b>What we are going to do</b>	<b>Who (Lead Agency)</b>	<b>When (Timeframe)</b>
3.2.1 Expand long-term employment and economic opportunities whilst continuing to maintain and promote our natural environment and the lifestyle our municipality offers.	<p>Advocate and support implementation of Council's Municipal Strategic Statement in regards to economic growth and sustainability, including encouraging local skill develop opportunities, link with diversity planning and support implementation of the Healthy Ageing Demonstration Project and Improving Liveability of Older People.</p> <p>Support implementation of community and town planning projects such as Tallangatta Tomorrow, Our Bellbridge, Mitta Valley Advancement Project and Upper Murray 2030 to ensure social model of health issues included.</p>	Towong Shire Council	2013 - 2014

<b>Goal 3.3 To achieve integrated and person centred aged care services in the Towong Shire</b>			
<b>Objectives (where we want to make a difference)</b>	<b>What we are going to do</b>	<b>Who (Lead Agency)</b>	<b>When (Timeframe)</b>
3.3.1 Address the six priorities identified in the Hume Region Aged Care Plan as appropriate to Towong communities	Contribute to implementing the six priority actions: increase the system's financial sustainability & productivity, improve prevention early intervention and primary care response, develop regional and sub-regional plans and approaches, respond to ageing population, respond to disadvantaged populations, implement continuous improvement and innovation	Walwa Bush Nursing Centre Tallangatta Health Service Upper Murray Health and Community Services	2013 - 2017

## Strategy 4 – To address the needs of young people and young families

<b>Goal 4.1 Identify needs of youth and young families</b>			
<b>Objectives (where we want to make a difference)</b>	<b>What we are going to do</b>	<b>Who (Lead Agency)</b>	<b>When (Timeframe)</b>
4.1.1 To address the needs of young people throughout the Shire and respond to prioritised need	Develop a Youth Strategy incorporating a needs assessment and service mapping	Towong Shire Council	Dec 2014
4.1.2 To address the needs of young families throughout the Shire and respond to prioritised need	Develop an understanding of the needs of young families and develop relevant activities throughout the Shire (0-8 Network)	Towong Shire Council	2014 - 2017
4.1.3 To support regional initiatives contributing to the health and wellbeing of 0-12 age group	<p>Align with the Primary Care Partnership Integrated Health Promotion Plan for healthy eating and physical activity of 0 to 12 age group aiming to:</p> <p>Increase knowledge of Australian Dietary requirements by the target group (including parents/carers) and an increase in the number of children 0 – 12 years who meet Australian Dietary requirements.</p> <p>Policies and practices supporting healthy eating are adopted by the primary schools and early childhood centres who participate in the Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program (Healthy Eating).</p> <p>Include inter-generational focus where relevant</p>	<p>Tallangatta Health Service</p> <p>Upper Murray Health &amp; Community Service</p>	2013 - 2017

## Management

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The Towong Shire Council has legislative responsibility for the Healthy Communities Plan 2013 – 2017.

Council's Manager Community Health and Wellbeing will work with the Towong Alliance to monitor implementation against objectives and requirements of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (refer Review and Evaluation section below for further information).

## Review and Evaluation

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The *Guide to Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Planning January 2013* recommends Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans are reviewed annually with an evaluation every four years with newly elected Councils.<sup>11</sup>

The Guide identifies four evaluative questions that need to be addressed:

1. Have we done what we said we would do? (Annual Reviews)
2. Are we having the influence we expected?
3. Have we achieved the change we sought?
4. What worked well and what needs improvement?

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act s.26 (2) (c) requires *the involvement of people in the local community development, implementation and evaluation of the public health and wellbeing plan.*

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<sup>11</sup> *Guide to Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Planning January 2013 pg 22*

**Proposed Towong Healthy Communities Plan 2013 - 2017 Review and Evaluation Timelines:**

Activity	Timeframe	Process
Towong Healthy Communities Plan: Approved	June 2014	
THCP Annual Review	June 2015 June 2016	Annual Review Template to focus process and questions. (Refer to Appendix 7)
THCP Evaluation  Consider opportunities to involve local TAFE or University students and staff	2017	<p>The six steps in the evaluation framework for health promotion and disease prevention programs are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the program</li> <li>2. Evaluation preview</li> <li>3. Focus the evaluation design</li> <li>4. Data collection</li> <li>5. Data analysis and interpretation</li> <li>6. Disseminate lessons learned<sup>12</sup></li> </ol> <p>Impact Evaluation: are we having the influence we might expect? (Medium term benefits)</p> <p>Outcome Evaluation: have we achieved the change we sought? (Long term benefits)</p>

For further detail on the Refer Evaluation Strategy refer Appendix 7.

<sup>12</sup> Department of Health (2010) Evaluation Framework for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Programs