

HOT SPOTS



An initiative of Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation

BACKGROUND

As the community foundation for Greater Melbourne, **Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation** recognises that climate change is increasing the incidence of extreme heat events in our city and disproportionately affecting the health of people who are disadvantaged or socially marginalised. It is our city's community-based and social service organisations that work closely those most vulnerable to the health impacts of heatwaves, however they are not specifically resourced to plan for and respond to extreme weather events.

Following consultation with Emergency Management Victoria, Victorian Council of Social Services, and the Department of Health and Human Services, in October 2018, the Foundation launched the **Hot Spots initiative**.

The initiative supports place-based collaborations between health, social service and environmental organisations with local government and emergency services in areas of Melbourne with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, and higher temperatures during heatwaves (based on the **Monash Heat Vulnerability Index**).

There are two projects underway led by community health organisation **IPC Health** in **Brimbank** and primary care partner **enliven** in **Dandenong**. The experience to date has been that the community wants to remain involved in this work and a clear need has been identified to develop knowledge of climate change and health across all project partners

BRIMBANK

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COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Sustainable Living Expo and Emergency Services Expo; each with over 100 people in attendance estimated 60 conversations; 100+ people in attendance at each event.

283

CONVERSATIONS

with primary school aged children, senior citizens and service providers about heat health.

Overall, 111 organisations/community groups and 411 individuals were engaged through conversations, information sessions, community events and distributions of **Keep Cool in Summer** health promotion materials

DANDENONG

22

INFORMATION SESSIONS

503

PEOPLE ASKED TO SHARE THE INFORMATION WITH 5 PEOPLE

Included in the 503 attendees were 221 from community groups, 147 staff and 135 individuals at immunisation sessions.

LIST OF ALL BRIMBANK PARTNERS

- IPC Health Stakeholder participation from Ambulance Victoria; Victoria Police, Australian Red Cross.
- Brimbank City Council
- Health West Primary Care Partnership
- cohealth

LIST OF ALL BRIMBANK PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

- Brimbank Council's planned activity groups; seniors forums; parenting groups and playgroups
- Brimbank Libraries
- Brimbank Youth Services
- Good Shepherd Community House
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Youth Links
- Uniting Care – Sunshine Mission
- The Salvation Army
- Western Health - Sunshine Hospital
- HeadSpace
- VICSEF – Playgroups and Children's Group
- Drummond Street Services
- Ambulance Victoria
- Health promotion distribution Lists: Brimbank Early Years Network; Family Day Care; Neighbourhood Houses; Customer Services; Community Vulnerability Register; Disability Network.

QUOTES FROM CONVERSATIONS



"I place lots of water bottles in the fridge and sleep with these by my side to keep cool during the hot nights" – Primary school aged child



"I have trouble sleeping in hot weather, my breathing gets more difficult and its hard keeping the house cool when you still have to cook" – Senior Citizen Brimbank



"The community services that I have spoken to do not have a strong feeling of responsibility to provide such a service that responds to heat waves, this could be a focus of the campaign" – Brimbank worker who telephone interviewed services.

OVERALL OUTCOMES

- Almost all (23 out of 25) of the service providers consulted did not receive DHHS heat health alerts; and all service providers were interested in receiving further training on the health impacts of heatwaves.
 - None of the community groups consulted had plans for next summer regarding a heatwave.
 - Elderly people and parents of young children had similar strategies for keeping cool which included staying indoors, drinking lots of water, lowering blinds and wearing loose clothing. However, these strategies were creating challenges by disrupting normal routines, contributing to changes in mood in children and exacerbating the social isolation of older people.
 - Many primary school children demonstrated they had good knowledge of how to keep cool during a heatwave.
- The Brimbank project has identified the following opportunities in the lead up to next Summer:
- Awareness raising and dissemination of the Department of Health and Human Services heat health alerts and information available to community-based and social service organisations.
 - Review how community groups, individuals and services can plan for heatwaves and respond to community need.
 - Further promote the health impacts of heatwaves to people who are most vulnerable so they take action to reduce risk.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

The **Keep Cool in Summer** health promotion material was produced in various formats including: postcards, A4 posters, A3 posters, drink bottles. This material was adapted with permission from the Yarra City Council's **Keep Cool in Yarra** campaign.



LIST OF ALL DANDENONG PARTNERS

- enliven
- Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre,
- City of Greater Dandenong,
- Bolton Clarke,
- Supported by South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA)

LIST OF ALL DANDENONG PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

- Wellsprings for Women
- AMES
- Dandenong West Primary School Playgroup
- Seniors Club Leaders Network
- Cultural Diversity Network
- City of Greater Dandenong: Family and Children's Services, Community Care, Volunteers, Social Support, Immunisation, Regional Assessment Service
- South East Melbourne Primary Health Network: Practice Managers and Practice Nurses Network
- Cook Islander, Arabic Seniors Clubs

QUOTES FROM CONVERSATIONS



"Now I know what a heatwave is!"



"I did not know about Nurse on Call and how they could help us"



"It's great to have all these resources in community languages so we can use them when talking about heat health with service users"



"I didn't realise so many people died during heatwaves"



OVERALL OUTCOMES

enliven as a Primary Care Partnership has already established relationships with relevant agencies so could commence work quickly in time for the heatwave period.

The collaborative approach between partners opened-up new networks for health promotion information distribution, providing many new contacts for enliven and the City of Greater Dandenong's Environment and Sustainability team. The project provided an opportunity for health and environment teams to work together and disseminate the same messages.

Hot Spots Dandenong strengthened collaboration between the City of Greater Dandenong departments, bringing together the Environment and Sustainability, Community Care and Emergency Management teams. The project aligned with the Council's development of a Climate Change Strategy as well as the availability of free and subsidised Energy Home Assessments, Residential Efficiency Scorecards and Energy Savvy Upgrades.

Using an action research approach, Hot Spots Dandenong project partners seized opportunities as they arose including:

- spending time discussing the health impacts of heatwaves with parents/caregivers waiting at maternal and child health immunisation sessions;
- working with CALD groups in general rather than targeted approach when data was not available to prioritise communities as intended.
- information sessions were continually modified based on participant feedback.
- identification of further funding opportunities for funding and access to new data, resources and contacts.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

Over 600 Emergency Prepare booklets, 340 Emergency Checklist red bags and 480 bamboo hand-held fans distributed

Brochures 288 distributed: Dari (70), Arabic (60), English (40), Vietnamese (33), Khmer (20), Chinese simplified (14), Italian (10), Spanish (8), Chinese traditional (8), Polish (7), Serbian (7), Croatian (6), Greek (5).

Better Health Channel Videos available in many community languages:

- Heat health advice for children,
- Heat health advice for elderly people,
- Heat health for those with pre-existing conditions and
- Extreme heat

Posters 307 distributed: Survive the Heat English (50), Arabic (40), Dari (40), Vietnamese (16), Khmer (14), Chinese traditional (10), Chinese simplified (9), Karen (7), Burmese (6), Spanish (6), Italian (6), Serbian (5), Croatian (5), Polish (4), Greek (4)

Our Valuables should never be left in the car (70) Extreme Heat Infographic (15).



EVALUATION

The Hot Spots initiative is being independently evaluated to ascertain what are the components of an effective response to reducing heat vulnerability in low income communities using a cross-sector collaborative approach?

While the overall outcomes of these projects are focused on the health and wellbeing of those experiencing disadvantage, a co-benefit of this work is the capacity building of health and social service organisations in relation to responding to the health inequities exacerbated by climate change.