

From planning to action

What can local government
do to support chronic
disease prevention?



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From planning to action – what can local government do in chronic disease prevention?

Local government makes a significant contribution to building healthy communities.

Chronic disease prevention is such a huge challenge across our communities, not one agency or organisation can tackle this problem alone. However, by each taking a 'piece of the puzzle' together, we may be able to make a difference, with locally driven, locally appropriate approaches for our Queensland communities.

Preventable risk factors for chronic diseases cause a huge burden on our Queensland communities. These risk factors include:

- ♦ physical inactivity
- ♦ unhealthy eating
- ♦ overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation
- ♦ tobacco smoking.

Other risks include poor access to health information, poor health literacy and poor access to health services.

Tobacco smoking, obesity and excessive alcohol consumption increase the risk of developing many chronic diseases (AIHW, 2016). In addition 9 in 10 preventable cancers are caused by six risk factors: smoking, UV radiation, poor diet, overweight, physical inactivity and alcohol (Whiteman et al 2015).

Suggested citation: Baldwin, L (2019) From planning to action - *What can local government do to support chronic disease prevention?* Brisbane: QUT.

Overcoming these burdens requires the work of many sectors, to work together piece by piece and collectively make a difference.

Here are some suggested steps to guide local action:

Case studies

Case studies can be a useful tool to demonstrate chronic disease prevention action ... in action!

Check them out here: www.research.qut.edu.au/coolandcovered/projects/

We also refer to Heart Foundation's local Queensland case studies:

www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au/case-studies?categories%5B%5D=35&states%5B%5D=13&categories%5B%5D=20

Step 1 – know your community

In recent years there has been a huge number of local needs assessments conducted with Queensland communities. These provide local data on a range of issues.

Here you can access local health needs assessment data for your community.

These can be accessed here and then click on 'Health Snapshot Flyers'

www.nqphn.com.au/health-provider-resources/



Step 2 – identify and celebrate what you’re already doing.

There is much to promote and celebrate. There simply may also be some additional actions that could be implemented, or some opportunities to measure and document local action and help build an understanding of local action happening across Queensland.

The local action table may help document current action.

| Physical activity | What are we doing? | What policies and programs support this? | What measures do we have in place? Eg usability, participation, community feedback. |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Infrastructure and built environment | | | |
| Participation programs | | | |
| Community awareness | | | |
| Strategies to improve access | | | |

| Healthy eating | What are we doing? | What policies and programs support this? | What measures do we have in place? Eg usability, participation, community feedback. |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Infrastructure and built environment | | | |
| Participation programs | | | |
| Community awareness | | | |
| Strategies to improve access | | | |



| Smoke-free spaces | What are we doing? | What policies and programs support this? | What measures do we have in place? Eg usability, participation, community feedback. |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Infrastructure and built environment | | | |
| Participation programs | | | |
| Community awareness | | | |
| Strategies to improve access | | | |

| Shade and sun protection | What are we doing? | What policies and programs support this? | What measures do we have in place? Eg usability, participation, community feedback. |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Infrastructure and built environment | | | |
| Participation programs | | | |
| Community awareness | | | |
| Strategies to improve access | | | |

Celebration steps: Tell everyone what you're already doing!

- ♦ Opportunities to promote community awareness of local action, opportunities and facilities include:
 - ♦ awareness in usual local channels such as social media, community newsletters and events
 - ♦ promotion through local community and service group channels such as articles in newsletters for local sports clubs, service groups, workplaces and community action groups
 - ♦ public events at local facilities.
- ♦ Such celebration and awareness steps provide a great opportunity for community engagement and feedback. This can be in relation to other community needs, barriers experienced to participate in programs or use facilities.

Step 3 – prioritise the gaps and identify opportunities

From the information in the table on the previous pages, and the needs assessment for your region, you can collectively identify some of the gaps and needs. Depending on the size and structure of your Council, encouraging community ownership and engaging with the community on prioritising such issues is important. Some councils have community committees established, some have links with key community based organisations – or it may be ideal to open up consultation through channels such as social media or an online survey. Other options can include community meetings , stalls at community events or engagement through main streets and local shopping areas.

Prioritisation is likely to be also dependent on resources, timeline and likely community benefits

Step 4 – plan – including accessing evidence

Planning tools vary and there may be specific tools you have available as part of your council. These usually include planning with a goal, objectives, strategies, timeline and some evaluation.

Access the evidence – what has worked elsewhere and can this inform our work locally?

Research and statistics to support the need for chronic disease prevention action:

Queensland Health 2018 Chief Health Officer Report: Comprehensive overview of population data on health issues by region in Queensland: www.health.qld.gov.au/research-reports/reports/public-health/cho-report/current

With selected topic fact sheets here: www.health.qld.gov.au/research-reports/reports/public-health/cho-report/current/selected-topics

World Health Organisation “Best buys” for tackling non-communicable diseases including actions for local government such as public open space, sports facilities, digital technology to reduce barriers to accessing health services: www.apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/259232

Improving health and wellbeing in regional Queensland : assessing health needs and identifying evidence based responses ; a population health approach. Includes a review of evidence under topics of mental health, access to health services, physical activity and healthy eating and managing alcohol and drug use: www.eprints.qut.edu.au/107845/



Physical activity and healthy eating:

Australian government: www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-active-evidence.htm

Closing the Gap Clearing House: Healthy lifestyle programs and physical activity and nutrition (January 2012): www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/b849c9fb-d4a0-4b1d-83dd-ffaf6de0386/ctgc-rs09.pdf.aspx?inline=true

Policies for tackling obesity and creating healthier food environment: Scorecard and priority recommendations for the Queensland government: www.opc.org.au/downloads/food-policy-index/QLD-food-epi-report.pdf

Shade and skin cancer prevention:

Queensland Health's Skin Cancer Prevention Strategy 2017-2020: www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/663032/health-wellbeing-strategic-framework-skin-cancer.pdf

Cancer Council Australia: Statistics on skin cancer in Australia: www.cancer.org.au/about-cancer/types-of-cancer/skin-cancer.html

Office of Climate Change ; Adaptation for Queensland Issues paper: <https://cabinet.qld.gov.au/documents/2011/Aug/Climate%20Change%20Adaptation%20for%20Qld/Attachments/issues-paper%5B1%5D.pdf>

Tobacco control and smoke-free spaces:

Queensland Health Smoking Prevention Strategy 2017-2020: www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/651802/health-wellbeing-strategic-framework-smoking.pdf

Australian Government Department of Health: www.health.gov.au/tobacco

Australian institute of Health and Welfare Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia: www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/drug-types/tobacco

Accessing tools made to help and guide local government work

There has been a lot of work in Australia over the past years to collate toolkits and resources to guide local government work in building healthy communities. A selection is provided here which may be useful in your planning.

Building Healthy Communities

This has been the focus of work from the Local Government Association of Queensland. This site provides access to case studies and resources; the LGAQ Healthy leader awards and Healthy community demonstration projects: www.lgaq.asn.au/more-good-stuff/-/asset_publisher/U3wmn7ZNDI23/content/healthy-communities

Whilst this resource specifically address South East Queensland, it is a comprehensive overview of social planning: www.dlgrma.qld.gov.au/resources/guideline/ImplementationGuideline5.pdf

Physical activity and Healthy eating:

Healthy Active by Design is a flagship program by the Heart Foundation. This resource outline public open spaces, community facilities, buildings, destinations, movement networks, housing diversity, sense of place and healthy food: www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au/



Active Healthy Communities: a resource package for local government to create supportive environments for physical activity and healthy eating, developed by the Queensland Government, Heart Foundation and Local Government Association of Queensland: www.heartfoundation.org.au/images/uploads/publications/Active-healthy-communities-Queensland.pdf

An overview of Queensland Government initiatives to support physical activity and healthy eating including stools and resources is provided here: www.healthyweight.health.gov.au/wps/portal/Home/helping-hand/links/state-gov/queensland

The Queensland Cycling Strategy (2017-2027) provides an overarching direction for increasing cycling across Queensland including case studies: www.cabinet.qld.gov.au/documents/2017/Jul/Cycling/Attachments/Strategy.pdf

The Active living New South Wales program provides tools and resources for local government's role in healthy eating: www.nswpcalipr.com.au/local-councils-role-in-supporting-active-living-and-healthy-eating/healthy-eating/

Healthy Auckland, New Zealand guide for promoting physical activity at the local government level: www.healthyaucklandtogether.org.nz/assets/Uploads/ana-evidencesnapshot.pdf

Shade and protection:

A series of checklists and resources from Queensland Health on shade and sun safety in public facilities: www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/shade-and-sun-safety-in-public-facilities
www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/industry-environment/environment-land-water/shade/community

Creating Shade at Public Facilities: Policy and Guidelines for Local Government provides policy information and site specific shade guidelines for common public facilities such as parks and recreation, outdoor dining, showgrounds and sporting fields: www.eprints.qut.edu.au/101278/

Child-friendly spaces:

The Planning Institute of Australia has a policy on child-friendly spaces and a comprehensive website also outlining links to resources: www.planning.org.au/policy/child-friendly-communities

Age friendly spaces:

The Queensland Government Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors has a range of tools and resources to help plan age friendly services including outdoor spaces and building, transport, housing, social participation ; respect and social inclusion; civic participation and employment; communication and information and community support and health services: www.communities.qld.gov.au/seniors/queensland-age-friendly-community/age-friendly-toolkit/what-age-friendly

Shade and age-friendly design:

www.research.qut.edu.au/coolandcovered/age-friendly-shade-and-design

Smoke-free spaces

Cancer Council Queensland provides a comprehensive overview of smoke-free information for Queensland local councils: www.cancerqld.org.au/cancer-prevention/understanding-risk/tobacco-smoking/smoke-free-public-places-information-for-local-councils/

Other health organisations

Many other health organisations may be running programs in relation to a particular health issue such as heart disease or diabetes. By contacting the local or central coordinator, there may be an opportunity to work together and conduct programs or build services. Advocating towards policy may also be an option.



The following template may also be useful in your planning:

[illegible]

Implement

Planning an initiative, project or long-term program is one thing, yet actioning and implementing it is another.

The following tips and tricks may assist with guiding implementation:

- ♦ Ensure the strategies and the planning is realistic.
- ♦ Identify the resources – who is 'doing' the work and where does it fit in weekly capacity?
- ♦ How is the work being monitored and reported on? For example, can it be a regular agenda item in team meetings?
- ♦ Is there a separate working group needed to oversee the project – or to divide up the action plan, take on strategies and report back to the group?
- ♦ Is there public feedback on progress? For example, is the project or initiative launched with regular progress updates communicated to the community?
- ♦ How are milestones celebrated?

Sustainability

Sometimes, one-off programs and projects meet the needs of council and may build on some momentum or local opportunity. However to contribute towards longer term improvements in local community health outcomes it is important to think about how chronic disease prevention approaches can be longer term and become part of the way the community functions. For example, strategies around events such as shade and healthy food, could become part of council's relevant events policies. Similarly, improving access to health and other services could be relevant to transport planning. Throughout the evaluation you can think about how the approaches could be sustained and integrated into the way council works.



Evaluate

Evaluation is an essential part of programs and can help identify opportunities to improve practice, analyse use of resources, local at the effectiveness of approaches or actions and investigate how the actions are meeting community needs.

A series of evaluation questions can guide the process (adapted from O'Connor-Fleming et al , 2006).

Process evaluation:

- ♦ Is the program reaching the priority populations and communities?
- ♦ Are the materials and resources well received?
- ♦ Are activities being implemented as planned or if not, what can be changed?
- ♦ Are intend communities/participants satisfied?

Impact evaluation:

- ♦ Are the objectives being met?
- ♦ What strategies need to change to be 'nimble' with community needs and local context?
- ♦ What behaviour/environmental factors have changed as a result?

Outcome evaluation:

- ♦ Longer-term outcomes depending on the program – this can measure long term participation, presence of facilities or programs, changes in attitudes, behaviours, improvements in local environments, etc.

Tools for measurement (for both community and local government/other stakeholders) include such as questionnaires, focus groups, polls, checklists or observation.

References:

AIHW (2016) *Evidence for chronic disease risk factors* www.aihw.gov.au/reports/chronic-disease/evidence-for-chronic-disease-risk-factors/contents/behavioural-and-biomedical-risk-factors.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010) *Community Health Assessment and Group Change Evaluation (CHANGE) Action Guide: Building Foundation of Knowledge to Prioritize Community Needs*. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services.

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Pettman T, Armstrong R, Pollard B, Evans R, Stirrat A, Scott I, Davies-Jackson G, Waters E. (2013) Using evidence in health promotion in local government: contextual realities and opportunities *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* 24, 72-75.

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Whiteman D, Webb P, Green A et al (2015) cancer in Australia in 2010 attributable to modifiable factors: summary and conclusions *Australian New Zealand Journal of Public Health* 39(5) 477-484.



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