

COLLABORATION FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE (COVID 19)

Understanding the complexity of community impacts and adaptations to build community resilience in the face of COVID 19 as at June, 2020.

BACKGROUND

The Southern Grampians Glenelg Primary Care Partnership (SGGPCP) is committed to working together to mobilise community-led action to build healthy, resilient and thriving communities. The resilience of the Southern Grampians and Glenelg communities in the face of COVID 19 can be strengthened by organisations having collective knowledge and advocacy of the needs of the community. The leadership platform of the PCP alongside the established network of trusted relationships, local knowledge, agility and adaptability are key assets that enabled SGGPCP to lead a local collaboration.

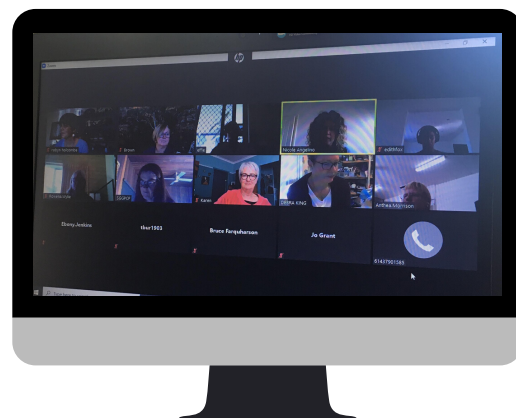
An existing network, RASnet (Rural Adjustment and Support Network) was established by SGGPCP in 2006 for cross sector organisations to be networked and align their support efforts for the community in response and recovery to drought. This group has continued post drought to maintain relationships to monitor and support our rural communities through any key changes it was facing. RASnet was broadened and accelerated in recognition of the value of the existing relationships and structures to collaborate local efforts to enhance community resilience in response to COVID 19. The network was renamed to represent the current situation to Collaboration for Community Resilience (COVID 19) - C4CR.

METHOD



The first two weeks of the onset of the Coronavirus Pandemic in Australia saw a rapidly changing environment with SGGPCP partners required to implement unprecedented actions and navigate a web of complex information, generally resulting in a focus on internal organisational response. SGGPCP staff quickly reacted to the immediate needs of partners by facilitating opportunities to work together to develop collaborative approaches to communication and support for working in the new environment.

After attaining support and commitment from Local Government who recognised the value of this network and its potential alignment and ability to inform local emergency management structures, the SGGPCP Collaboration for Community Resilience (COVID 19) (C4CR) network began to meet in early April 2020.

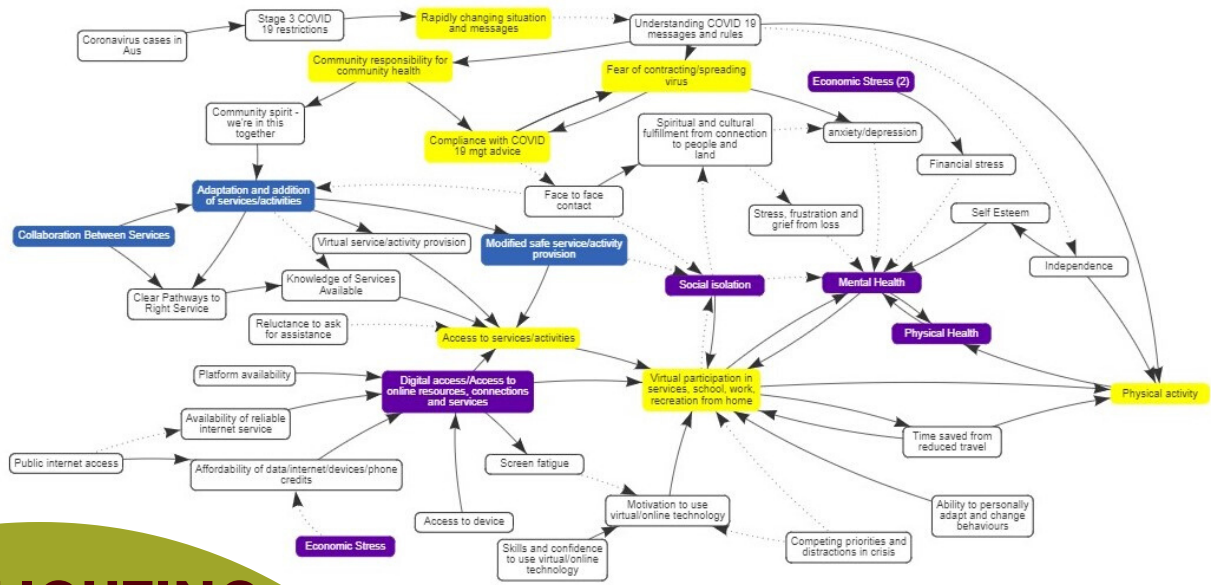


With the aim to develop a shared understanding of the impacts of COVID 19, the actions being implemented and begin to identify the gaps, the network used zoom and visual participatory processes (Miro for example) to facilitate collaborative conversations.

The complexity and connections between the impacts identified by the group necessitated the need for a more sophisticated approach. In the past, SGGPCP had worked closely with the Global Obesity Centre (GLOBE) at Deakin University to understand and act on the complexity around childhood obesity. As part of this approach SGGPCP had built their capacity to map the system by creating Causal Loop Diagrams (CLD) that visually represent the influences and connections of complex systems.

The process to develop a CLD with a community generally requires an identified complex issue in the community, a diverse group of participants with understanding of the problem, and a series of workshops to create and review the map to identify and develop actions. SGGPCP adapted the standardised process with the C4CR network to visually represent the system using CLDs. Taking each of the impacts of COVID 19 as identified in previous meetings, C4CR participants used STICKE software to create diagrams and document them in a suite of local impacts documents.

As a result four sub-CLDs and narratives were produced as well as an overall visual representation of the whole system (pictured below) showing how these impacts interact. These valuable diagrams are being used by the Network to continue to understand and track changes to the system as restrictions ease, as well as using our shared understanding of the system, to build a better and more resilient community into the future as part of recovery.



HIGHLIGHTING THE VALUE OF PCP

The establishment and implementation of the C4CR network highlights the valuable role of the PCP platform. With established, trusted relationships, SGGPCP has a history of innovation to initiate new ways of working with the partners and stakeholders. As a result, participants trusted SGGPCP to guide the discussion and expose the group to new approaches. SGGPCP has strong external partnerships which have increased the capability of the partnership to respond proven by implementation of CLDs with his network which result from a strong relationship with GLOBE at Deakin University. SGGPCP is agile and has the ability to adapt to new challenges unlocking the capability to pivot existing work to respond to urgent needs, particularly at a local level.

OUTCOMES

Shared Understanding: The C4CR network created a forum for sectors to come together and discuss impacts of COVID 19 on community and develop a greater understanding of the system at a time when organisations were facing enormous challenges. Participation was not limited to traditional health and wellbeing organisations but promoted cross sector participation. As a result, the Network was also well attended by Rural Financial Counselling Services, Local Government Business Support and Emergency Relief organisations, such as Red Cross. This broad participation provided a deeper and richer understanding of the local impacts (social isolation, digital access, service access, economic impacts and impacts on mental and physical health) of COVID 19 on our local community.

Service Access: Participants shared knowledge of existing services, operations, changes and gaps to increase service provision to the local community. Networking across a broad sector provided the development of new relationships, increasing knowledge and connections.

Facilitating action: Coming together for the C4CR Network increased local understanding of actions and sharing knowledge through networking in turn influenced future actions and adaptations. Sharing knowledge of the barriers and enablers to action drove further actions. New champions in our local community were uncovered.

Documenting the process: All participants in the C4CR network were able to link learnings back into their organisations and other key stakeholders discussions. The documents created, systems maps and narrative were valuable tools to inform local and regional planning, relief and recovery conversations.



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<https://sggpcp.com/collaboration-for-community-resilience/>