



Having a Field Day: Growing Collaborative Partnerships in Health Promotion

Introduction:

Reaching rural and remote populations, especially men, for social marketing and health information has its challenges for health promotion workers. The Wimmera Machinery Field Days event, the largest agricultural event in Western Victoria, covering 20ha, with 600 exhibitors occupying 1000 sites and attracting over 20,000 people, provides a unique opportunity to engage.

For 11 years now, Wimmera PCP 'Field Day's collaborative has brought together 23 different agencies who showcase a range of services, activities and giveaways aimed to help you stay healthy, active and connected to your community.

Participating agencies are located in and around a health and wellbeing hub of the Moore Exhibition Centre. At its centre, a communal space features a variety of activities based on the theme of *healthy living* with opportunities for Wimmera residents to keep fit, learn new skills and explore new social networks. Other hub highlights include the Men's Shed toy making workshops and displays.

Method:

Collaborating agencies plan and develop the Field Days event together every year. Each agency has their own site and each year (or every few years) a different health focus is themed to link the sites together.

Visitors can easily identify the health sites through common branding, and large colourful shop signs. A competition requires you to visit a minimum of three sites to complete an entry with prizes including family tickets to Halls Gap Zoo and Grampians Adventure Golf, cinema tickets and items donated by participating agencies, including swim passes, books etc. The competition was devised to increase the number of visitors to each agencies sites.

Results:

Ongoing evaluation shows that agencies have identified that working together increased their profile and numbers of visitors seeking health information.

Visits from hard to reach populations are increasing each year. Pathways and referral to health and community services are provided for these clients.

The collaborative approach shares the load of promoting the health hub and creates a great deal of media interest. Agencies reap the rewards of collaboration.



Conclusions:

Agencies are collaborating and improving the cues for health and health service utilization in a socially and culturally appropriate setting.

Partnership and collaboration towards a shared goal can provide benefits of a shared workload, creative ideas, pooling of resources and support.

Agencies feel strongly that working together has increased their profile as providers of health and wellbeing services and allows for broader community engagement.

Consumers are more aware of the range of services available to keep them healthy in the Wimmera and also how they can access those services.

Visits and referrals from new clients participating services has increased.

Collaborating agencies over the years:

BreastScreen Victoria
Child and Family Services Ballarat
Horsham Aquatic Centre
West Wimmera Health Services
Wimmera Regional Library Corporation

Wimmera Men's Shed Network
Wimmera Partnership Network
Volunteering Western Victoria

Wimmera UnitingCare
Royal Flying Doctors Service
Deaf Access & Rural Access
Direct to Care

Centre for Participation
Grampians Community Health
Rural Northwest Health
Wimmera Health Care Group
Wimmera West Grampians
Neighbourhood House Network
Horsham Rural City Council
Dunmunkle Health Services
Wimmera Regional Sports
Assembly
Wimmera Hearing Society
Wimmera Community Options
Women's Health Grampians



Theme's for the Health Hub over the years:



Field Days
Collaboration
Since 2007

