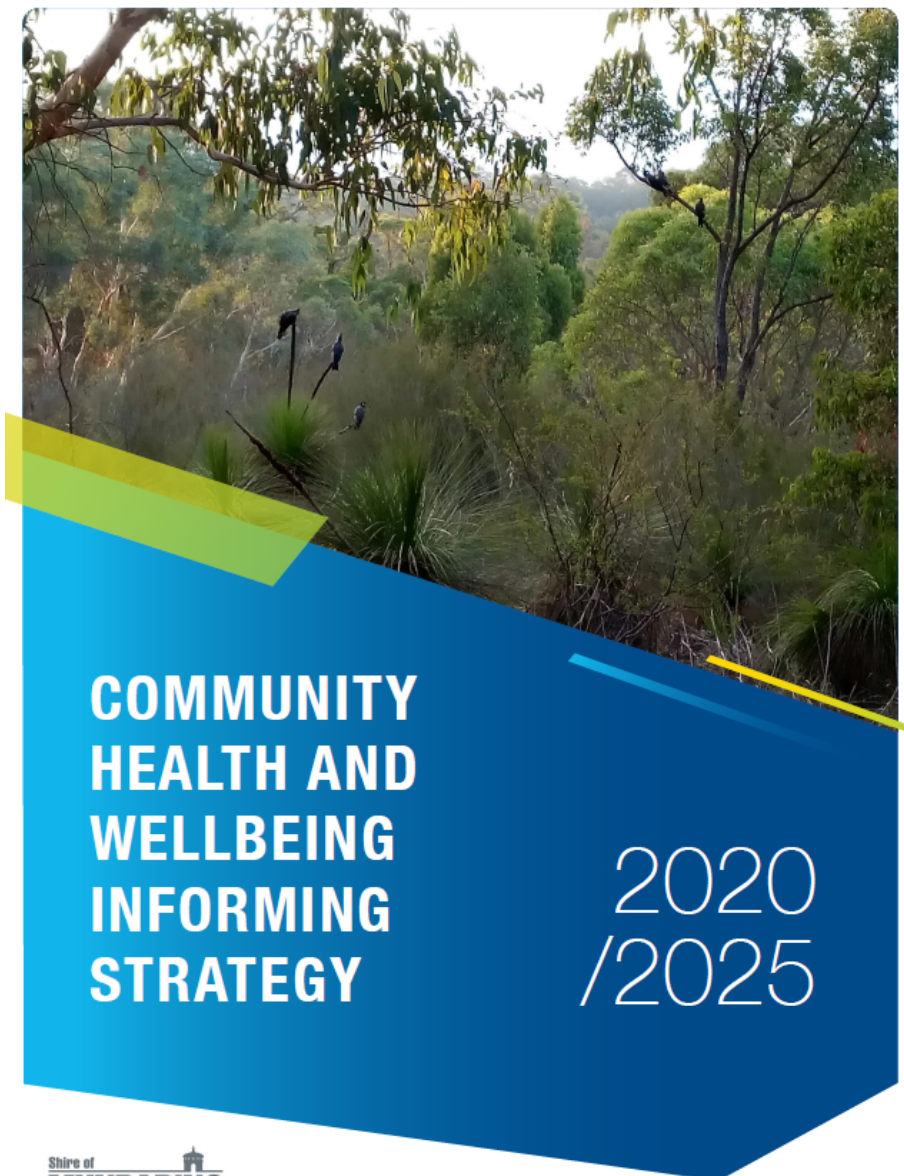


THE STORY OF OUR PUBLIC HEALTH PLAN

SHIRE OF MUNDARING



The why behind our PHP development

The Shire of Mundaring aspired to be proactive around the health and wellbeing of our community and commenced work on our Community Health and Wellbeing Informing Strategy (CHWIS) 2020-2025 prior to it being formally legislated under the Public Health Act 2016. The strategy had the support from both Elected Members and Senior Management which set the scene for it to be a 'whole of council' approach and achieve buy-in from all departments. We also had a budget allocated along with staffing resources to assist in the development.

How we developed our PHP

The Shire already had a member of staff with health promotion qualifications and they took on the coordination role of the CHWIS development rather than consulting the work out externally. We didn't reinvent the wheel and utilised the various PHP Planning Guides available to plan our project, which resulted in a defined process for everyone to follow. We formed an internal working group that consisted of staff currently involved in delivering on outcomes that impact public health in some capacity. These meetings provided the opportunity for discussion, progress updates and feedback and resulted in enhanced buy-in from across the organisation, reinforcing the CHWIS as a whole of council approach to addressing public health issues.

Our project plan was created using the Shire's internal Corporate Planning System to streamline the monitoring and reporting process across the organisation. It also provided project continuity if the project coordinator was required back at their seconded role and allowed for other staff movements throughout the course of the project. We also used a number of health promotion students throughout the process of developing our CHWIS, which generated an extensive learning experience for the students, as well as providing the Shire with contemporary knowledge of public health theories that assisted with some of our decision making and priority setting.

We partnered with EMHS, Aboriginal communities, Department of Health, Injury Matters, Main Roads WA and Profile ID to develop our CHWIS. As we had commenced the PHP process relatively early, EMHS were not in a position to provide our local health data so we used our students to develop our Shire health profile report. During our project, the State Health Plan was released, this also provided further guidance and direction to align our CHWIS outcomes, where relevant. We then completed an internal review of strategies and policies and consulted with the community and stakeholders. From this, we determined our goals and strategies for our CHWIS. We completed the plan by identifying a list of current public health commitments already implemented by the Shire that have outcomes to enhance the health and wellbeing of the local community.

Outcomes to date

Our first CHWIS outlined and captured what we already do within the current capacity of the Shire resources that positively impacts and protects the health and wellbeing of our community and residents. The CHWIS aims to provide a platform of awareness and education for both the community and other Shire departments about the role that local governments play in public health.

It is then intended to bring the community and stakeholders along the journey to monitor and evaluate this strategy and bring ideas forward to potentially develop some more innovative ideas for our second strategy with some more stretch targets identified.

Challenges and barriers faced

As we were an early adopter in developing a PHP, our main challenge when commencing was gaining access to our localised health and wellbeing profile data from our Health Service Provider. We decided to utilise the research knowledge of our students and compiled our own profile. Due to the limited knowledge and understanding within our Shire departments about public health and the role of LG in this space, gaining internal buy-in and interest was also somewhat of a challenge initially.

In resourcing the role to see the CHWIS come to life and deliver on the outcomes, we enlisted our Health Promotion students to assist our dedicated staff member once again. We did receive feedback that our plan was not innovative enough, however, the intent of the first plan is to capture what we were already doing within current plans, activities and resources. The aim is to build on this moving forwards and use the CHWIS to attract funding support for new, more innovative health initiatives. This has historically proven difficult for the Shire and we are hoping the plan will change that as we now have an overarching strategic direction to support future funding applications.

Shire of Mundaring's Role in Public Health



COVID-19 impact?

The Shire's COVID 19 pandemic responses aligned with strategies outlined in our CHWIS and highlighted the commitment and actions already identified within the strategy to respond to disaster and recovery. Internally, although the CHWIS was still adopted and released, it resulted in a pause in the awareness and promotion across the business to introduce the strategy, this recommenced in late 2020.

The Shire's perception of COVID-19 is that it has resulted in increased awareness about public health in general (both internally at the Shire and within the community) and more specifically what local governments do to address public health. It also reinforced that COVID-19 is addressed generally as a public health issue within the CHWIS.

Key lessons and words of wisdom

Bringing the students on board and embedded into the Shire was a fantastic knowledge-sharing experience. The Shire got to learn from them about up to date health theories and models, new stakeholders and data sources and research available. In return the students received experience in working within local government, drawing on the knowledge, skills and experience of staff there and how to transfer their learnings into the workplace setting and project outcomes.

We also found the various Public Health Planning Handbook and reference guides available extremely useful to develop our CHWIS.

