



Preventive Health and Community Wellbeing Resource Guide



Government
of South Australia

Preventive Health SA

As the tier of government closest to communities, councils play a key role in creating vibrant and healthy communities. Councils are well placed to support preventive health policy and action to deliver better wellbeing outcomes for communities through the provision of a range of services, infrastructure and facilities which support community wellbeing.

Preventive Health SA, in partnership with the Local Government Association of South Australia, has developed a set of Resource Guides to support local councils in improving community health and wellbeing outcomes for their communities.

It is acknowledged that there is diversity across South Australian councils and that capacity to support and deliver health and wellbeing initiatives varies based on location and size, resourcing, priority focus areas and the interests and concerns of the local community. This diversity across council areas will influence and shape the design, implementation, and evaluation of community wellbeing initiatives.

The Resource Guides provide evidence-informed information and pathways to resources to support the planning, implementation and evaluation of community health and wellbeing initiatives. The Resource Guides are not prescriptive, and councils can tailor the implementation of community wellbeing initiatives to suit their specific operating environment. These may be useful to councils who are just starting their wellbeing journey, right through to those who are well established in their health and wellbeing strategies.



Preventive Health SA acknowledges and respects Aboriginal peoples as South Australia's First Peoples and recognise Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners and occupiers of South Australian lands and waters. We recognise that their connection to the land and waters is integral to identity and cultures and should be honoured and celebrated. We give respect to Aboriginal Elders who have sustained culture, in days past, present and the emerging generation that will carry it into the future.

Preventive Health SA recognises and thanks the Councils and staff who have contributed to the development of these Resource Guides.

Version 1.0 | Published September 2024

For more information contact:

Preventive Health SA – Strategy and Partnerships
Email: PreventiveHealthSA.strategy@sa.gov.au

Preventive health and community wellbeing: a shared responsibility

‘When a community flourishes, its health tends to flourish too, enabling individuals to achieve their full potential’¹

Local councils are committed to understanding the needs of their communities, and provide a range of services, infrastructure and facilities which support health and wellbeing, including:

- Developing active transport networks
- Managing parks, playgrounds and open spaces
- Managing social infrastructure, such as community centres and libraries
- Considering inclusive approaches to planning, implementing and evaluating initiatives
- Building social connection through place-making, community partnerships and grants, volunteering programs, and arts and culture and events.

A preventive health approach addresses the protective and risk factors which contribute to the development of preventable health issues and is essential in building healthy and vibrant communities.

The [National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030](#) (the Strategy) calls for preventive health action to achieve a healthier Australia by 2030. The Strategy frames prevention through a systems-based approach, addressing the wider determinants of health, reducing health inequity, and decreasing the burden of disease through action on risk factors.

Local councils across South Australia are varied in size, location, resourcing, capacity, and community needs.

Working within communities is complex, and effective health and wellbeing initiatives require partnerships across various sectors, including all layers of government and the community sector.

The South Australian Government’s commitment to the prevention of ill health and promotion of positive health and wellbeing is operationalised through the work of [Preventive Health SA](#) and [SA Health](#).

These agencies work in partnership to improve the health and wellbeing of local communities in diverse ways, including supporting implementation of the [South Australian Public Health Act 2011](#)².

Preventive Health SA works across priority areas of obesity prevention, smoking and vaping, alcohol and other drugs, mental health and wellbeing, suicide prevention, and the determinants of health.

At a local council level, mandated functions under the [South Australian Public Health Act 2011](#)² and the [Local Government Act 1999](#) (SA)³ strengthen action to preserve, protect and promote health and wellbeing locally, and to provide for the welfare, wellbeing and interests of individuals and groups within their community.



Data and evidence – the case for a focus on preventive health

Data and indicators provide an understanding of community needs, which help to identify opportunities to address protective factors that will improve health and wellbeing. Local councils can access a range of data and information through a variety of sources.



More information on the use and availability of data can be found in *Planning and Evaluating Community Wellbeing Resource Guide*.

As an example, the South Australian Population Health Survey (SAPHS) collects data on a variety of indicators. The SAPHS is a large annual survey of a representative sample of 7,000 South Australian respondents, which collects data about health and wellbeing and is an ongoing source of data for the [Preventive Health SA Wellbeing Index](#).

The Wellbeing Index includes data across the following domains⁴:

- Physical wellbeing
- Mental wellbeing
- Social and community wellbeing
- Determinants of health.

The case for a focus on preventive health and community wellbeing is convincing. Global data indicates that people with lower socioeconomic status are at greater risk of poor health and have higher rates of illness, disability and death,

than those with higher socioeconomic status. This ‘social gradient of health’ depicts the devastating effects of health inequities that are both unfair and avoidable^{5 6}.

Whilst Australians are now living longer, we are living more years in ill health – largely due to preventable chronic disease. The impact of chronic disease places significant social and economic burdens on communities, as well as the impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals. Informed by data and an understanding of their communities’ needs, local councils can contribute to a preventive health approach and reduce the risk factors for chronic disease⁷.



37%

of a representative sample of South Australian adult respondents report having good overall wellbeing⁸.

55.8%

of South Australian respondents experience at least one chronic condition, with around one quarter (25.9%) having two or more chronic conditions⁹.



38% of the chronic disease burden in Australia (49% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people), could be prevented through a reduction in modifiable risk factors such as tobacco and alcohol use, dietary risks, and cholesterol⁹.



The burden of disease is inequitable among all Australians.

People living with socioeconomic disadvantage, including in rural or remote areas, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are disproportionately affected⁹.



Treatment of chronic disease now consumes more than a third of Australian federal health spend, and has economic impacts across civil society, including reduced participation in the workforce (60% less participation¹⁰), premature retirement and early mortality. Conversely, prevention only represents 0.003% of the federal health budget¹¹.



In Australia the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare have identified key risk factors which increase the risk of developing ill health, including¹²:

- Smoking (one in seven adults smoke daily).
- Being overweight or obese (one in four children and two in three adults are overweight or obese).
- Lack of physical activity (more than half of adults and two in three children do not meet the physical activity guidelines).
- Inadequate intake of healthy food (most people do not eat enough fruit and vegetables and eat too much discretionary food).



Prevention continuum – risk factors and protective factors

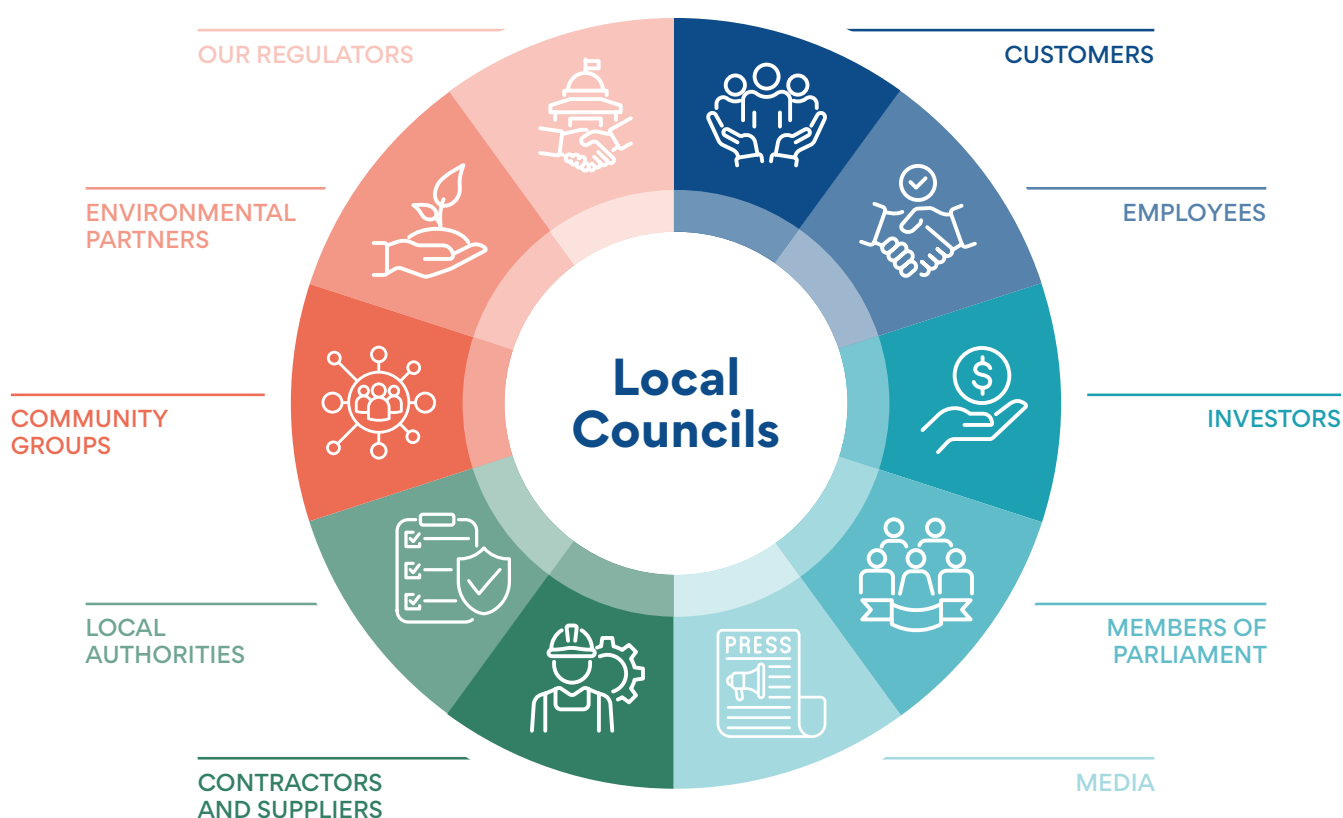
Risk factors increase, and protective factors decrease the likelihood of people experiencing poor health and wellbeing¹³.

Understanding risk and protective factors will inform opportunities for action as within their remit, local councils can promote protective factors as well as reduce risk factors. These actions may include creating environments that support healthy choices; facilitating or promoting programs and services; building social connections; increasing physical activity; and supporting cultural programs.

The [Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion](#) (WHO, 1986) is a framework for health promotion and provides five action areas^{14 15}: building healthy public policy, creating supportive environments for health, strengthening community action, developing personal skills and reorienting health services.

Within the resource guides, opportunities and areas for action will be framed within the following categories: supportive environments; programs and services; engagement and partnership; policy and planning; and communication. Working in partnership with community health agencies, non-government organisations, research institutions and government departments may strengthen the approach and broaden the reach of councils (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Relationship and partnership opportunities for local councils, working in preventive health



Improving health equity

Health is a fundamental human right and is achieved when everyone can attain their full potential for health and wellbeing¹⁶. Striving for equity in health and wellbeing outcomes should be a universal goal.

Health inequities are variations in the experience of health between population groups – aligned by social, economic, cultural, demographic, or geographic contexts. These exist through inequitable distribution or experience of factors that support good health and wellbeing, commonly referred to as the ‘determinants of health’. Importantly, health inequities are beyond the control of individuals and are defined as being avoidable and unfair, and therefore present an opportunity for change.

One approach that councils can use to improve health equity through tailored planning is a community development approach. The Local Government Professionals Australia (SA) has developed the [Local Government Working with Communities Guide](#), which provides an introduction on the nature and principles of community development work undertaken by councils¹⁷.

The LGA has also supported the development of a Valuing Social Outcomes (VSO) tool to support councils in measuring the social value of their community development initiatives¹⁸.

Considering equity and the determinants of health within the planning of Regional Public Health Plans provides an opportunity to guide work to influence the health and wellbeing of local communities.



Refer to *The Determinants of Health Resource Guide* to explore this topic further.



Practice frameworks contributing to preventive health

Creating a settings-based approach to promoting community wellbeing involves action across a range of areas within councils, depending on the activity, resourcing and capacity.

Councils may draw upon a variety of practice frameworks to shape health and wellbeing strategy and actions. Figure 2 provides an overview of common frameworks across community development, social justice and health protection and promotion, which play a role in influencing health and wellbeing.

Figure 2: A variety of practice frameworks addressing health and wellbeing



Influencing change and managing resistance

When introducing new initiatives or modifying programs informed by evaluation outcomes, there may be resistance to change.

Although the role of councils in community wellbeing is vital, it can be difficult to define and embed among other priorities. Introducing the concepts within this resource can help to align core council work and the impact on health and wellbeing of communities.

Adopting a change management approach can help staff to understand the context and navigate resistance or barriers.

As with all times of transition, considerations for managing change in your council could include:

- Understand community needs and alignment with strategic policies.
- Gain support and seek change champions/early adopters.
- Seek opportunities to support positive change.
- Ensure transparency and open consultation.
- Draw on the skills and voice of external partners and the role they can play in advocating to the council.
- Ensure that your approach is evidence-based and utilise data and evidence to tell the picture and advocate internally.



Case Study

Ngutungka West Lakes: A Hub of Community Wellbeing and Knowledge



An innovative community facility within the City of Charles Sturt has earned recognition for connecting people and improving the lives of those residing in the council area.

Unveiled in April 2022, the \$8.3 million facility has transformed the library into a state-of-the-art community hub that redefines the expectations of typical library spaces.

Speaking about the new space, Bec Lyons, Manager of Community Connections, highlighted how the role of libraries has changed over time. *“More than just a repository for books, Ngutungka West Lakes is guided by a community development framework and offers a spectrum of programs and services that enrich the lives and enhance the wellbeing of residents and the broader community”* Bec said.

“Ngutungka holistically addresses various dimensions of wellbeing by offering integrated services, inclusive spaces, cultural integration, health services collaboration, learning opportunities, social connection and diverse programs that respond to the physical, mental, cultural, educational, and social needs of the community.”

Situated on Mikawama Country, the facility seamlessly integrates into the local landscape, and incorporates allied health services and community spaces, featuring a community kitchen at its heart.

Named ‘place of knowledge’ in Kurna language, Ngutungka West Lakes is a celebration of Aboriginal culture, promoting inclusivity and cultural respect, and is a key addition to the Charles Sturt libraries’ network.

Ngutungka West Lakes recently received high commendation in the Minister for Health and Wellbeing Excellence in Public Health Awards. The success of this facility has been a catalyst for the construction of the council’s second hub, Ngutungka Henley, which in 2024 will integrate the Henley Library and the Henley & Grange Community Centre.



Image: City of Charles Sturt

Case Study

Spring into Wellbeing: Using the '5 Ways' Framework – City of Adelaide



After establishing its Community Wellbeing team in 2021, the City of Adelaide embraced the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' (5 Ways) framework and used it to plan a successful 'Spring into Wellbeing' campaign.

The Community Wellbeing team connects people from priority groups with opportunities to enhance wellbeing outcomes, focusing on volunteer participation, reablement services for those over 65, programming with community partners, and strategic partnerships through community grants.

The '5 Ways' framework – comprising Be Active, Keep Learning, Take Notice, Connect and Give – seamlessly aligns with these priorities, creating a natural synergy with other City of Adelaide initiatives in sport and recreation, community centres, libraries, and volunteering.

The annual 'Spring into Wellbeing' campaign, uses this framework to help increase community knowledge of self-care strategies, raise awareness of existing wellbeing offerings in the city, and leverage other spring campaigns.

Community Wellbeing Project Officer Rachel Telfer leads the project, and shared how the work emphasises the importance of wellbeing.

“This initiative not only reinforces the council’s commitment to the health and vitality of its residents, but also sets an example for integrating wellbeing principles into local government programs and campaigns”. A bi-monthly wellbeing newsletter supports the strategy by spotlighting upcoming opportunities and events relating to the 5 Ways to Wellbeing framework.

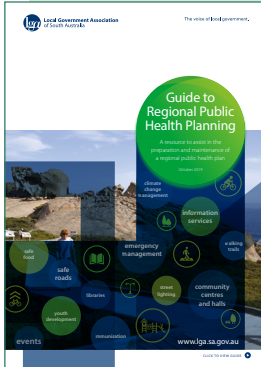
The council successfully implemented a multi-faceted approach to supporting wellbeing, despite some challenges including campaign delays, and the need to adapt to caretaker periods. Paid social media played a crucial role, driving substantial webpage traffic, with women in the 40 to 65+ age bracket showing the highest engagement.



The program received positive feedback from participants, emphasising its informative and motivating nature.



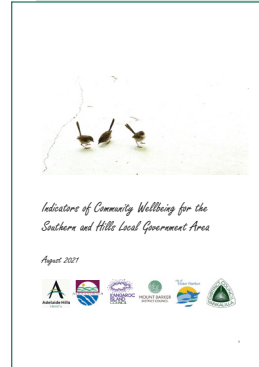
Useful Tools and Resources



Guide to Regional Public Health Planning¹⁹

A resource to assist local councils in the preparation and maintenance of Regional Public Health Plans. It outlines examples of the various roles that council business units play in public health.

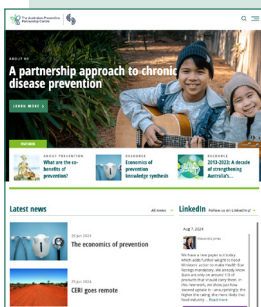
[View document](#)



Indicators of Community Wellbeing for the Southern and Hills Local Government Area August 2021²¹

Report developed to monitor the dynamic domains of community wellbeing that are within the influence of local government. It considers the levers that local councils have to improve community wellbeing through resource, land use and transport planning, and environmental, economic and community development activities.

[View document](#)



The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre²⁰

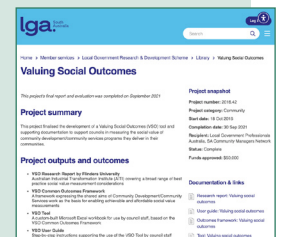
Portal of resources supporting capability building, research, evidence and networks.

[Visit website](#)

Valuing Social Outcomes Tool¹⁸

A tool to support councils in measuring the social value of their community services.

[Visit website](#)



Local Government Community Health and Wellbeing Toolkit²²

Guides local councils in creating supportive environments to “increase the effectiveness and sustainability of community health and wellbeing outcomes” by addressing smoking, improving nutrition, reducing harmful alcohol use, promoting physical activity, and supporting mental wellbeing.

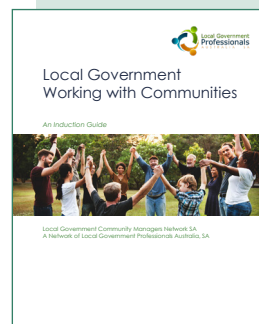
[View Toolkit](#)



Working with Communities Induction Guide¹⁷

Introduces local government and community services for new staff. Provides an overview of the nature and principles of community development and community work.

[View document](#)

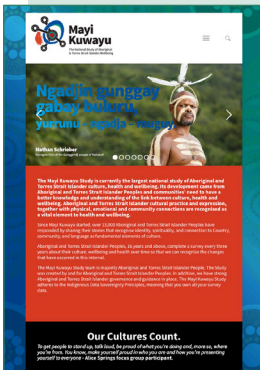


Useful Professional Development Networks

In addition to professional associations, there are various professional development networks available to council staff working in preventive health and wellbeing, including [Community Development Network](#), [Social Planners' Network](#) and [Aged Care Network](#). Meetings are often accessible on-line. Networks with broader sector representation may also be present within your community or region, including: [Suicide Prevention Networks](#) and [Health Advisory Committees](#)²³.



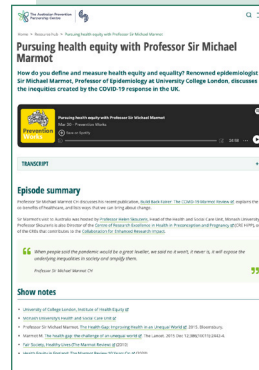
Recommended Reading and Listening



The National Study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing²⁴

This study looks at how various cultural domains contribute to the experience of social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

[Read the study](#)



Podcast Interview on pursuing health equity with Professor Sir Michael Marmot²⁵

Renowned epidemiologist Sir Michael Marmot, Professor of Epidemiology at University College London, discusses the inequities created by the COVID-19 response in the UK.

[Listen to the podcast](#)



References

- ¹ DHAC (Department of Health and Aged Care) (2021) [National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030](#), DHAC, Australian Government.
- ² [South Australian Public Health Act 2011](#).
- ³ [Local Government Act 1999](#).
- ⁴ Preventive Health SA (2022) [Wellbeing Index for South Australia](#), Government of South Australia, accessed 28th January 2024.
- ⁵ WHO (World Health Organization) (2021) [COVID-19 and the social determinants of health and health equity: evidence brief](#), WHO, Geneva.
- ⁶ AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing) (2021) [Australian Burden of Disease Study: Impact and causes of illness and death in Australia 2018](#), AIHW, Government of South Australia.
- ⁷ Morgan M (11-13 May 2022) [Local government: Game changers in chronic disease prevention?](#) [conference presentation] Annual Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) 2022, Brisbane.
- ⁸ Preventive Health SA (2022) [South Australian Population Health Survey 2022 Annual Report](#), PHSA, South Australian Government.
- ⁹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2021). [Australian Burden of Disease Study 2018 – Key findings](#). Cat. no. BOD 30. Canberra: AIHW, Government of Australia.
- ¹⁰ The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre (APPC) (n.d.) [What is the burden of chronic disease?](#) APPC website accessed 28 January 2024.
- ¹¹ Department of Health and Aged Care (DHAC) (2023) [Health protection, preventive health and sport – Budget 2023-24](#), DHAC, Australian Government.
- ¹² The Department of Health and Aged Care (DHAC) (2023) [About preventive health in Australia](#), DHAC, Australian Government.
- ¹³ University of Washington (2020) [What is risk and preventive factor focused prevention?](#) Centre for Communities That Care.
- ¹⁴ World Health Organisation (WHO) (1986) [The 1st International Conference on Health Promotion](#), Ottawa, WHO.
- ¹⁵ World Health Organisation (WHO) (1998) [Health Promotion Glossary](#), WHO.
- ¹⁶ World Health Organisation (WHO) (n.d.) [Health Equity](#), WHO.
- ¹⁷ Verity F (2016) [Local Government – Working with Communities](#). Local Government professionals SA Community managers Network.
- ¹⁸ Local Government Association South Australia (LGASA) (2016) [Valuing Social Outcomes](#), LGASA.
- ¹⁹ Local Government Association of South Australia (LGASA) (2019) [Guide to Regional Public Health Planning, 2019](#).
- ²⁰ The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre (APPC) (n.d.) [A partnership approach to chronic disease prevention](#), APPC website.
- ²¹ Pope J. (2021). [Indicators of Community Wellbeing for the Southern and Hills Local Government Area](#). For the Southern and Hills LGA.
- ²² SA Health (2020) [Local Government Community Health and Wellbeing Toolkit](#), SA Health, Government of South Australia.
- ²³ SA Health (2024) [Regional Health Advisory Councils](#), SA Health, Government of South Australia.
- ²⁴ Mayi Kuwayu (2024) [The National study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing](#), Mayi Kuwayu.
- ²⁵ The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre (APPC) (2023) [Pursuing health equity with Professor Sir Michael Marmot](#), APPC.



Government
of South Australia

Preventive Health SA