

Maroondah Certificate in Creating Wellbeing 2021–22 Impact Summary



Communities
of Wellbeing

Be Kind



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“Small changes matter – Tiny is Mighty – you can make an impact one person at a time and it will be lasting.”

Karen Daniel



Introduction

As the many impacts of COVID-19 began to emerge in the second half of 2020, Council undertook significant community consultation to identify the Maroondah community's priorities in responding to and recovering from the pandemic.

Mental Health was listed as the highest priority requiring attention in the COVID-19 community survey with 70% of respondents reporting that the COVID-19 pandemic had negatively impacted their mental health. These impacts included increased feelings of anxiety, being worried and other mental health concerns.

Building improved mental health and wellbeing emerged as a key priority arising from COVID-19. Pre-existing high levels of anxiety and depression were further exacerbated and amplified by the many impacts of the virus including social isolation, working from home and loss of work, remote learning, increased levels of stress, unemployment and high levels of uncertainty.

Combined with a strong desire to address the social isolation that had impacted so many throughout the lockdowns and restrictions, there was a clear need to put in place a capacity building initiative that would connect people across the Maroondah community to build mental health and wellbeing by building on the strengths of the people and relationships across our community.

Significant work has taken place in Maroondah over recent years to build community-level partnerships, programming and local capability in relation to wellbeing and mental health, placing Maroondah in a strong position to respond to this important need.



For this COVID-19 recovery initiative, Communities of Wellbeing Inc was identified as a key local partner to support Council to deliver this capacity building work. Communities of Wellbeing is a local not for profit organisation that has been striving to build flourishing people and communities for over five years.

The Certificate in Creating Wellbeing – offered by The Wellbeing Lab, was identified as the ideal model to build wellbeing literacy among community members and promote a collaborative partnership approach to enhancing wellbeing across Maroondah.

The certificate course empowers people to learn about and facilitate wellbeing in their own communities with a focus on how we build on strengths and abilities, rather than a focus on illness. The course involves a blended learning program that provides participants with effective, evidence-based, systems-oriented approaches for improving wellbeing across the community. Delivery of the course with a cross section of people from the one community provided Council with a unique opportunity to mobilise Maroondah community members to address our local needs.



“[I have enjoyed] seeing the leaders from many areas of our community take this learning on and knowing that the work will ripple out into so many different micro-communities”.

Cr Marijke Graham

Maroondah Certificate in Creating Wellbeing

The Maroondah Certificate in Creating Wellbeing was a community led recovery initiative designed to build upon existing local community knowledge, energy and relationships. It brought people together from multiple community settings, including sports clubs, business, faith groups, community houses, community organisations, schools, agencies and Council, to collectively tackle the significant and growing mental health challenges as a consequence of the pandemic.

Specifically, the program's aim was to build the knowledge, capability and confidence of Maroondah residents to understand, develop and manage their own wellbeing, and support and positively influence the wellbeing of those around them.

The objectives of the program were to:

- Identify key community leaders with an interest and motivation to improve the wellbeing of their constituents
- Build foundational knowledge about wellbeing and key principles, practices and skills that contribute to wellbeing.
- Develop and upskill a network of community based health and wellbeing champions across a range of population cohorts and mobilise them to undertake projects/activities that improve wellbeing in their context
- Provide a sustainable approach to strengthening wellbeing that meets current and longer term recovery needs.

As part of undertaking this program, all participants were encouraged to develop and implement a community impact project to apply the wellbeing learnings from the course and generate outcomes that enhanced the wellbeing of the broader Maroondah community.



Participants:

A total of 39 Maroondah community members completed the Certificate in Creating Wellbeing course.

[Kaye Bhan](#)
Croydon Community School

[Hilary Bird](#)
Glen Park Community Centre

[Marisa Briant](#)
Opening Doors

[Kay Bryan](#)
Tarralla Kindergarten

[Rebecca Burley](#)
Kalinda Primary School

[Fiona Burridge](#)
Be Kind Maroondah Facilitator –
Maroondah City Council

[Tara Choudari](#)
Leisure and Aquatic Facilities –
Maroondah City Council

[Siobhan Cook](#)
Tinternvale Primary School

[Amy Corcoran](#)
NEAMI National

[Sharon Cosgriff](#)
Arrabri Community Centre

[Karen Daniel](#)
Mullum Primary School

[Tracey Davis](#)
Resident

[Monique De Zoete](#)
Walk your talk therapy

[Alysha Dixon](#)
Youth and Children's Services –
Maroondah City Council

[Monique Gleeson](#)
Mullum Primary School

[Cr. Marijke Graham](#)
Councillor – Maroondah City Council

[Ricky Hall](#)
4TK Australia

[Bronwyn Harcourt](#)
Croydon Community School

[Scott Hawkins](#)
Urban Life/Winter Shelter

[Daniel Hearn](#)
Aged and Disability Services –
Maroondah City Council

[Peter Maguire](#)
Ridgeline HR

[Todd Mahoney](#)
Eastern Ranges Football Club

[Indi Mills](#)
KYM

[Jess Ness](#)
Central Ringwood
Community Centre

[Lisa Nguyen](#)
Mullum Mullum Indigenous
Gathering Place

[Sally Phillips](#)
Indigenous Basketball Victoria

[Susan Pitt](#)
Eastern Regional Libraries

[Julie Reid](#)
North Ringwood Community Centre

[Jen Schrader](#)
Yarrunga Community Centre

[Norma Siep](#)
OAM

[Natalia Sopelario](#)
Yarra Ranges Council,
Communities of Wellbeing Inc.

[Mel Spencer](#)
Different Journeys

[Jessica Sprague](#)
Tinternvale Primary School

[Ash Taylor](#)
Deco Place

[Shayne van der Heide](#)
Ringwood Trade Training Centre

[Judi Venten](#)
Different Journeys

[Cathy White](#)
South Croydon Football Club

[Natasha Wilkinson](#)
Donwood Aged Care

[Pam Yarra](#)
Community volunteer

Facilitators:

[Adam Cooper](#)
Social, Health and Wellbeing
Recovery Coordinator – Maroondah
City Council

[Zoe Ellul](#)
Community Planning Officer –
Maroondah City Council

[Beck Melville](#)
The Wellbeing Lab

[Carissa Rash](#)
Mental Wellbeing Project Officer –
Maroondah City Council

[Edwina Ricci](#)
Communities of Wellbeing Inc

Community impact projects

Acts of Kindness

Fiona Burridge and Tracey Davis

We wanted to make people aware of the kindness within Maroondah to spark jolts of joy. Between September and December 2021, we encouraged people to share short videos and kindness stories to help inspire others. We hope by sharing these stories we will inspire others to spread kindness and help improve wellbeing across Maroondah. This project covers most of the PERMAH (positive psychology) pillars through the sharing of good news stories. Stories are important as they help us connect to each other, restore order amongst chaos and share joy and happiness. This project gives people the freedom to 'playfully experiment' and pick up on elements of different stories that suit them and the people they interact with.

As these stories were shared on social media, we received consistent feedback through these platforms about the impact it had on the audience. This project remains part of the Be Kind Maroondah campaign and therefore remains available to our community on our web page.

Over 20 good news stories from Maroondah residents were shared to help lift our communities' spirit. We also developed three Acts of Kindness videos starring community members sharing their local kindness stories.

Wellbeing booklist and library display

Sue Pitt

Through experiencing the benefits of improving wellbeing literacy for myself, I decided to create a booklist of wellbeing resources held by Eastern Regional Libraries for the community to use. This list has been uploaded to the Communities of Wellbeing website for interested people to share so they can expand their own knowledge of the science of wellbeing. The booklist featured titles by many authors in the program workbooks which were in either print or electronic format in the library's collection. Selected copies of these resources were then put on display at the Croydon Library.

25 titles are on the resource list, 50% of those titles have a current waiting list of library users wanting to read the title. 60% of those titles have been borrowed more times in the last 6 months than the previous 6-months.



Gaming Room at *The Base* – youth centre in Ringwood

**Ricky Hall and
Shayne van der Heide**

When we learned more about the power of connection through the course, we decided to design a project that will create a safe space for isolated or disadvantaged young people to connect with others within *The Base*, a local not for profit youth centre for young people. The 'Play and Connect Gaming Room,' will be created for young people to connect and build relationships, where they can hang out in a youth gaming environment, challenging others to play games and foster new friendships in a safe and non-judgmental space doing things they enjoy.

Neighbourhood Social Groups and Support

Todd Mahoney

I'm passionate about the connections that occur at the street and community level and want to help to develop and grow interest and need based groups for neighbourhood members to connect and gain support. My local neighbourhood is the target audience as we have built connections in this space throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and would like to build on this with my new knowledge over coming months and years.



Christmas Day Community Lunch and Christmas Eve Hamper Night

Scott Hawkins in partnership with Jay Sawyer Urban Life Community, Holy Cheesus Cafe, with Boccas Pizza, and Eastland

At Urban Life we are passionate about supporting disadvantaged people in our community to get the support they need.

Inspired by what I'd learned in the certificate, on Christmas Day 2021 we coordinated a free three-course traditional lunch in The Park at Ringwood Town Square for anyone who found themselves alone, homeless, vulnerable, or unable to celebrate on the day. There are many in our community who have recently come from overseas, and others with interstate family or those who have been

separated by COVID-19, and this was an opportunity to celebrate and enjoy lunch together along with people of faith traditions that do not recognise the customs of the season, as well as many who were ostracized from family and community through mental illness, separation, age, homelessness, and social isolation.

In addition to the lunch, on Christmas Eve, a free "personal shopping" experience was also provided where donated Christmas presents, food, hampers and personal items were distributed to anyone in need. For many reasons, including financial, there are families who were unable to provide a Christmas experience for their children and wider family.

Others felt unwelcome at planned family gatherings because they come empty handed. This was a wonderful event for the donors, volunteers and guests who were able to choose a large hamper of goods that they could use at their own Christmas celebrations or give away and enjoy with extended friends and family.

Fifteen volunteers provided around 70 gift crates on Christmas eve with approximately 50 items in each.

On Christmas Day over 20 volunteers fed more than 85 people with additional takeaway meals also provided. Everyone who participated experienced increased feelings of wellbeing, kindness and joy.





The Sunflower Effect Gardens of Wellbeing Project

**Rebecca Burley, Kay Bryan and
Monique Gleeson**

Education settings were identified as key places in the community in which wellbeing could be improved, with most of our children attending these settings every week. The wellbeing of educators in these settings was also seen as critical as front-line workers were key to effectively supporting our children and families at such a difficult time.

We created a box of materials, tools and resources to create sunflower (hope) gardens within all schools and childcare/kindergartens across the City of Maroondah.



Ingredients in these kits included seeds and other equipment to plant a garden for students and educators in Maroondah to have a place to go to reflect, relax and support their wellbeing.

The hope was that educators in early, primary and secondary sectors in Maroondah were provided with a place to relax amidst the chaos of remote learning and provide a great space for children to go once they returned to onsite learning.

"I hope that we brought some positivity, hope and learning to schools around growing, changing and hoping. It is important for children to learn that things change, and we must grow with those changes. For staff, I think it was to find hope that although things are changing, and pressure is continuously developing, you can find hope and success in the little things." – Monique Gleeson



OurTime

Julie Reid

Many children, parents and carers found remote learning and lockdowns difficult, and parents and carers of children with learning and behavioural challenges were no exception.

After having a conversation with one parent who expressed how disconnected she felt to the wider school community based on the challenges that she faced on a daily basis, I designed a project to connect this parent with others sharing the same experience.

It was clear that there was extra pressure for these parents/carers so this project was developed to share some evidence-based practices that could help them to enhance their own wellbeing.

‘OurTime’ aimed to support these parents/carers from a local primary school community who were invited to attend four online weekly sessions in November 2021 to connect with each other and learn about what it means to care for their own wellbeing.

Initially I hoped to impart some knowledge and experience to a small group of parents/carers and to support them to connect with each other and learn some sustainable wellbeing practices. Based on the success of the 4-week program, my hope now is that it evolves into an ‘in person’ and ‘online’ platform that is facilitated by group members with support from me when required.

I hope that this group will become a haven for many parents/carers of children with learning and behavioural difficulties in our school community; that it will be a place where everyone is supported and valued just for ‘showing up’ and that in that ‘showing up’ participants can encourage one another to care for their own wellbeing acknowledging that if they don’t, caring for their children will be a lot more challenging than it already is.



New Beginnings

Bronwyn Harcourt and Kaye Bhan

Our project focused on gratitude as a way of improving the wellbeing of all staff within our organisation from August 2021 and beyond. The endless changes and challenges over the past two years and the repeated periods of remote learning due to COVID-19 regulations had resulted in morale sinking to a very low point.

Our theory was that you can't hold negative feelings if you are focusing on seeing and acknowledging everything that is good around you.

By consistently and systematically using gratitude as part of our daily routine we have helped people to focus on what has gone well, and what we have, and has helped people to overcome many of the challenges we've faced throughout the pandemic.

Our staff culture has improved including increased happiness, contentment, and a realisation that there is always a silver lining if you just look for it.

Character Strengths in the Classroom

Jessica Sprague

At the start of Term 1 2022 the grade 5/6 students at Tinternvale Primary School did the character strengths survey to understand what personal strengths they bring to our school. We will then share them with their classmates and make a display so we all know our unique abilities and differences. In Term 2 we will explicitly teach what each character strength is and what it might look like if someone was displaying that strength. We will have a jar in each classroom and for the team in our office with a stack of post-it-notes, an information sheet and a pen so that students and staff can spot the strengths being used by each student. The idea is that students will spot a strength being displayed and anonymously write that student's name with what they did and what character strength was shown. This will go in the 'gratitude jar' in the classroom and during class time a volunteer or myself will pick them out and read them out to everyone so students can feel good about being noticed for doing what they're good at.



Vets For All

Hilary Bird



Our pets have helped many of us to get through the pandemic and are critical to our wellbeing, yet many have struggled to be able to take care of their pets. My project aimed to help the community – especially the disadvantaged – with access to vet services and/or lower costs in relation to their pets.

While at Glen Park Community Centre, I heard about several people who were skimping on their own meals so that their companion animals could attend the vet for treatment. These animals are extremely important to their owners as, in many circumstances, they are their only company and are therefore regarded as precious family members.

My goal is to establish a 'travelling vet' that comes regularly to Glen Park Community Centre – similar to mobile dentists, clinics and libraries that travel to the Centre at pre-arranged intervals. The program aims to provide free or significantly discounted:

- basic health checks for animals
- medicines and inoculations if needed
- surgeries for animals in need
- Periodic animal behaviour and first aid talks
- Animal health fact sheets.

Our Local FIRM

Peter Maguire

My project will develop a social connection and wellbeing hub for small business owners and managers. Small business owners and managers are a group that has been identified as having special needs in relation to wellbeing and provides a great avenue for teaching good wellbeing practice through their own management of their people. The hope is that the project will launch in July 2022 where a growing group of small business people will connect and learn from each other creating a vibrant and sustainable local business community group dedicated to continuously learning and improving wellbeing in their communities.



The Wellbeing Connectors Guide – Every Age Counts – Intergenerational Program

Daniel Hearn, Pam Yarra, Natalia Sopelario, Norma Seip and Natasha Wilkinson

There is concern about ageism in our community so we looked at opportunities that currently exist to connect older people and expanded that to include the many intergenerational activities. Our desire was to spread that knowledge and happy news throughout our community to build as many connections as possible, reduce social isolation, foster belonging, a sense of purpose, and greater connections amongst different age groups and cultures.

Through the creation of a Wellbeing Connectors Guide prototype, the group developed valuable

partnerships that have enabled intergenerational connections to take place across our community. This has led to the Wellbeing Connectors Network and a goal to continue supporting intergenerational connections across the community.

Meaningful community connections within Maroondah are a critical resource that will support people to reconnect with each other and their community, remind people of their essential worth, strengthen the communal bonds that support us all, and most of all, to inspire hope.

We will foster deeper appreciation of the benefits of intergenerational connection to support growth, connection and wellbeing; and embed this philosophy into our personal and professional lives. Numerous projects are now underway that build on the learnings from the Certificate in Creating Wellbeing course including:

- Maroondah Preschool partnering with Donwood Community Aged Care
- GenConnect – Maroondah Occasional Care and Kerrabee intergenerational partnership
- Education Week celebrating 150 years through intergenerational conversations
- Supporting young people at risk of homelessness



Love your Local Business

Cathy White

Many businesses struggled throughout COVID and I was eager to capture and share the stories of coping, strength and success so that everyone could learn from each other and support our local businesses in Maroondah. I interviewed some local small business owners to see how they were going after the lockdowns, to hear about their business and get their tips about how to cope and bounce back. I used Facebook as the platform to share online interviews to make it easily shareable.

I undertook over a dozen interviews with local traders, obtained over 200 followers and over 5000 views.



Lockdown Wellbeing

Tara Choudari

Working as the Leisure and Aquatics Manager for Maroondah Leisure and particularly leading a team working from home, I decided to focus on teaching the team how to manage their wellbeing from home. The project aimed to replicate the learnings of the certificate in wellbeing and support the team in understanding wellbeing and the different PERMAH pillars; understanding how to manage their own wellbeing; and lastly, understanding how to support others in managing their wellbeing.

The project involved running workshops online focused on wellbeing at the 'me' level, and then at the 'we' level. With many of the team struggling, feeling isolated or having family members/partners experiencing various mental and physical health challenges, the project gave them some tools to get them through the long and challenging lockdowns.



My outcomes for the community always remained consistent both through the program, through my project and through my role for Maroondah City Council. I wish for people to prioritize their mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Specifically for this project, I had an audience of staff who live and work within the Maroondah community and who can positively impact their families, staff and friends through understanding wellbeing and how to have conversations around it. It's a ripple effect.

The more we keep the conversation going and provide our people with an understanding of all PERMAH pillars – positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishments and health – the more our community thrives.

“Being part of a like-minded group that were so supportive and caring of each other [was the best part of the certificate program]. The information and the way it was presented and explored was fantastic”.

Jen Schrader

Emotion Connect

Ashley Taylor

People want to feel well and be well, which 'Emotion Connect' will encourage and support, through developing individuals' emotional intelligence and welcoming emotional connections between people.

The goal of my impact project is to activate the PERMAH pillar of Relationships using research in the area of emotional intelligence and emotion coaching, as well as drawing on my own insights from running parenting courses and teacher professional development workshops in this area.

I hope this learning package will be easy to understand, yet highly strategic, so that 'Emotion Connect' is seen to be so helpful that practical implementation by participants flows naturally through a belief in its purpose and worth.

The project will target children, young people, fellow educators and parents. I chose these multi-generational audiences because I believe intergenerational interactions that are caring and foster genuine emotional connection between people are vital for health and wellbeing.

Through my family business, known as 'Deco Place', I hope to develop proactive educational services, such as 'Emotion Connect', that helps individuals, families and communities achieve good health through emotionally intelligent, value consistent action – and that this action impacts positively on wellbeing at the individual, family and community levels.



PLAY – Positive Living at Yarrunga

Jen Schrader

PLAY is a banner under which Yarrunga Community Centre is now running a number of 'wellbeing' activities:

- Wellbeing Hub (now being renamed Chatty Cafe). A social group that meets every Friday for an hour to connect and chat, and share wellbeing information and experiences
- Information campaign: regular quotes and generative questions posted on social media relating to wellbeing; a dedicated noticeboard at Yarrunga Community Centre that contains information about wellbeing and the PERMAH (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment and health) model; regular wellbeing and PERMAH information in our quarterly newsletter; a dedicated PLAY page on our website.

Under the PLAY banner we are bringing the language and concepts of wellbeing into the everyday life of our Centre staff and participants, as well as providing opportunities to reduce isolation and bring like-minded people together.

The desired outcome for our community is to plant the seeds of positive living and to give them the encouragement, information, and tools they need to manage their own wellbeing and be involved in the wellbeing and support of others.



Supporting our Carers

Mel Spencer

One of the many roles within Different Journeys is working with carers of autistic individuals. Our approach gives us an opportunity to focus on reframing some of the language we use through a strength-based peer support approach.

By sitting with carers individually through an informal chat over coffee, I was able to see where they are at and offer a chance to strengthen our connectedness and positively impact on carer's wellbeing. Using the PERMAH factors we were able to incorporate each PERMAH pillar using generative questions. Our aim was to practice gratitude and ensuring that selfcare was incorporated into this.

It is important to note the power of these conversations. The PERMAH pillars (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment and health) if done in the right format and intentions, can help change lives.

The other powerful tool that we came away with was that of psychological safety and giving our carers permission to acknowledge it and ask for it when needed in other ways.



Mighty Maroondah

Cr Marijke Graham

Through learning BJ Fogg's Tiny Habits method of positive behaviour change, I was moved to share this powerful knowledge with the community. My project involves the development of an Instagram account called Mighty Maroondah to inspire Maroondah community members to begin and implement their own Tiny Habits using this evidence-based method. Followers can anonymously submit their own Tiny Habits via an online form found in the bio of the Instagram page.

The content is a mixture of these shared community-created Tiny Habits, plus what I have been using in my own life; and other ideas for new habits from resources that align with the teachings in the course.

Mums who have school and pre-school aged children are a key target group because traditionally they can be a very socially isolated group (particularly those with pre-school aged children) who don't prioritise their own wellbeing but support the wellbeing of so many others. Without them the world would fall apart!

Instagram is a place mothers like to 'hang out' in when they do get a moment to themselves, so this seemed perfect. I hope that Maroondah mums get inspired to take easy, actionable, tiny steps to put wellbeing practices into place for themselves because wellbeing doesn't need to be a 10-day retreat – the most impactful practices are often the simplest.

“We all need someone to believe in us, support us with understanding and not judgement. When someone sees skills in you that you don't see in yourself and supports you to see that too – it's a beautiful revelation and the first step to looking at new horizons. Instead of 'I can't', it becomes 'well perhaps I could consider'”.

Mel Spencer

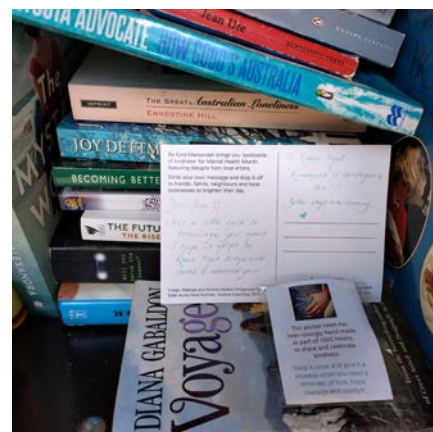
CONNECT – Creating Opportunities to Nurture, Nourish and Enable Communities Together

Monique De Zoete and Marisa Briant

As a part of our collective COVID recovery, through CONNECT we hope to reduce social isolation and help restore social connections. We will do this by introducing participants to creative initiatives that provide opportunities for nurturing and nourishing, as well as enabling their connection to self, others and their community. While open to all, our target audience was those experiencing or at risk of social isolation. On reflection, we recognised that throughout COVID all had experienced some level of social isolation.

We successfully tested and tried a model that can be replicated and built upon in the future.

We put together a short video and 50 heart starter packs for students at a local high school. This introduced the students to the 1000 Hearts Project – a kindness project offering people a symbol of compassion and care through the making and sharing of tiny pocket hearts and the Postcards of Kindness Project. The students were encouraged to make a minimum of two hearts each – one to keep for themselves as an act of self-compassion and then one to give away as a random act of kindness. The “heart starter packs” contained instructions and materials to make the hearts and Postcards of Kindness postcards were placed in each of the packs for students to write a personal message of kindness for the person they were giving the heart to.



Heart starter packs and hearts were also made for the activity staff at Kerrabee. This project will also be rolled out across most of their groups and up to 80 participants of their social inclusion and wellbeing programs for residents that are frail/aged, have a disability or are socially isolated in May. In addition to the packs, activity coordinators were also provided with further resources, ideas and were encouraged to build in opportunities to CONNECT.

Ripples of kindness were also shared throughout the community by distributing tiny hearts to street libraries, food pantries, community houses and given to community workers as a token of care, appreciation and encouragement.





We Wellbeing Conversations

Lisa Nguyen

At our organisation, there are many opportunities to share stories and knowledge and learn from each other. By learning about “we” wellbeing conversations through completing the Certificate in Creating Wellbeing, I have been able to provide a safe space for discussions, and for words of wisdom and tips for self-care to be passed on to the community.

We have shared these thoughts with the community around wellbeing, at an “us” level.

We have had many conversations about wellness and will continue to have conversations around self-care, gratitude, self-compassion, triumph, meaning, purpose, engagement, relationships and accomplishments.

We have shared the stories, knowledge and ideas at an “us” level to the wider community to support the uptake of wellbeing practices.



Living through the Pandemic

Sharon Cosgriff

A group of writers will attend writing classes at Arrabri Community House and write about their experiences over the last two years. They will be introduced to the PERMAH pillars, and their writing will draw upon their experiences relating to each pillar. The ideal outcome will be to develop community knowledge of PERMAH pillars and to encourage community members to have the ability to look for positivity in all situations.

Driving Wellbeing

Alysha Dixon

Our L2P program matches disadvantaged learner drivers with mentors to get the experience they need to become competent and capable drivers. Along the way relationships are built and there are opportunities to embed conversations about aspects of wellbeing that can be mutually beneficial. I plan to put together an in-person training session for mentors with an introduction to the PERMAH factors and a take home self-care wellbeing goody bag.

Mentors will then be invited to an online group that allows mentors to connect with each other, and access relevant resources and concepts that we can discuss together and implement in their time with the learners.

This forum will give mentors the opportunity to connect with each other, share their stories and experiences and reflect on their own wellbeing. A second mentor session focusing on assisting young people with mental health and anxiety, when coming out of a pandemic, is also being organised.

“[I enjoyed] Connecting with so many people in the Maroondah community. I felt so inspired to meet and learn with such dynamic people. Everyone was so willing to share their stories and some of the stories left me feeling so inspired and downright speechless”.

Tara Choudari

Classroom Wellbeing

Siobhan Cook

I have chosen to design a booklet of activities based on the PERMAH pillars to be used as a resource. I will be executing this project on my class with the aims to introduce it more broadly. I have used tools and ideas that we've discussed during the weekly coaching calls including an activity based on 'glimmers' (a special moment, feeling or quality). My aim is to get students using the language of wellbeing inside and outside the classroom, by teaching students to care for each of the PERMAH pillars in their own lives and the lives of those around them.

Strengths Connect

Amy Corcoran

I ran a group learning and reflection session about character strengths with my teammates at a mental health and suicide prevention service. These people give so much to others and could benefit from some increased wellbeing during this stressful time.

My colleagues and I did our own strengths assessments and I shared personal stories about how strength language and spotting have impacted my wellbeing, and my work in other workplaces and settings.

We reflected on each other's strengths and discussed how to use them at work – with each other and our clients, and just as importantly, in our personal lives. It gave our team, that had only really connected online a greater sense of cohesion, a greater understanding of their colleagues and sense of their own strengths that could help them get them through COVID-19.





Handwritten text on a piece of paper: "FR", "IF", "Lamp"

Project highlights and reflections

What were your highlights?

"The best thing about my project was hearing my interviewees recognise strengths within themselves that they hadn't taken the time to think about before."

Cathy White

"Seeing the beautiful sunflowers blooming the first day back at school and the joy they brought to the kids and families."

Rebecca Burley

"We all need someone to believe in us, support us with understanding and not judgement. When someone sees skills in you that you don't see in yourself and supports you to see that too – it's a beautiful revelation and the first step to looking at new horizons. Instead of 'I can't', it becomes 'well perhaps I could consider'."

Mel Spencer

"Small changes matter – Tiny is Mighty – you can make an impact one person at a time and it will be lasting."

Karen Daniel

"There was a beautiful (and deliberate) blurring of the lines between who was a donor, volunteer and/or guest. At many times throughout each day, it would be hard for any outsider to tell the difference. The best part of this is that it removed all stigma that might otherwise have been there for those attending."

Scott Hawkins

What have you enjoyed the most from participating in the Certificate in Creating Wellbeing?

"Working with another member of the course as we could discuss the merits of this project in line with the course content. An additional benefit was the joy we received in reading and sharing the Acts of Kindness. It was wonderful to see how creative people were during the pandemic and how keen some were to provide joy to others."

Fiona BurrIDGE

"Building and enhancing relationships with the wonderful participants and learning new techniques and tools for improving wellbeing."

Peter Maguire

"Connecting with so many people in the Maroondah community. I felt so inspired to meet and learn with such dynamic people. Everyone was so willing to share their stories and some of the stories left me feeling so inspired and downright speechless."

Tara Choudari

"I really enjoyed being part of a like-minded group that were so supportive and caring of each other. The information and the way it was presented and explored was fantastic."

Jen Schrader

"Expanding my knowledge of positive psychology but also enhancing my skills in applying interventions for my own personal benefit but also for those in my life. Also seeing the leaders from many areas of our community take this learning on and knowing that the work will ripple out into so many different micro-communities."

Cr Marijke Graham

"Meeting inspiring, inspired people and learning about all the incredible work they're doing. Connecting with people with such heart."

Natalia Sopelario

"I am really invigorated working closely with those who are keen to grow and make transformational change."

Judi Venten

"The friendly faces and contacts that I have been lucky enough to engage with during this course I think will definitely help me build wellbeing in my community. With such a mixture of community members from a range of different backgrounds, levels of knowledge and expertise who have all been so open and engaging, if I needed assistance to build wellbeing in my community I don't doubt that someone would be able to assist."

Indi Mills

What is the most significant change you've noticed in yourself and others since you participated in the certificate?

"The participants are all still really connected and can rely on each other in both personal and professional spaces. I have learnt to be more vulnerable with others (appropriately) and to have more confidence in myself. Those who participated now have a common language and shared purpose to continue to infuse wellbeing conversations into their daily lives."

Julie Reid

"Talking about the certificate, sharing what I have learned, adopting Tiny Habits and being kind to myself."

Kay Bryan

"I've noticed that I am more aware of my emotions and can recognise when I need to be alone for my own mental health – rather than focusing on others' problems to deter from my own."

Monique Gleeson

"Being more curious, patient and humble almost with how I approach things and deal with other people daily."

Jessica Sprague

"I am far more conscious of what is happening in the community. Although I have always been empathetic, I find that I am more alert to where empathy is required"

Hilary Bird

"We can all see the bright side – 'always looking on the bright side of life' seems to be the norm. I have more understanding, confidence and love for myself and am far less critical of perceived shortcomings and negative comments. The pace of the course, combined with the pandemic and life itself, taught me to pace myself and take care of myself far better than I have ever done before – and now I achieve twice as much and have the understanding to take on board that some things take that little bit longer. It gave me back hope for a fabulous future."

Norma Siep

"I have really embraced the motto of 'Tiny is Mighty' which has also filtered down to my fellow work colleagues. Especially as we enter a busier world now that restrictions ease, we can easily forget to embrace this mantra and continue to make a difference in people's lives."

Daniel Hearn

"Increased positivity and positive mindset."

Lisa Nguyen

"I am mindful of my emotions and more focussed on my own wellbeing. It has also helped with dealings in my workplace and at home in regard to the appreciative inquiry."

Sharon Cosgriff

"I feel confident in my ability to face life's challenges in a more positive manner, and it is having a positive influence on how I tackle life. I have some tools to help me implement better coping strategies when life throws me some curveballs."

Sally Phillips

In five years' time, what are your hopes for wellbeing in Maroondah?

"I do hope we are well connected, more in tune with each other and have a level of kindness and acceptance that enables individuals to flourish amongst connected groups"

Natasha Wilkinson

"I am hopeful our group of wellbeing warriors grows and that we continue to come together through a community of practice supported by the unique and powerful work of 'Communities of Wellbeing' – the organisation that inspired and made possible, with the help of Maroondah City Council, this wonderful opportunity for myself and others to participate in the Certificate in Creating Wellbeing."

Ashley Taylor

"Maroondah community members are better equipped to deal with community wellbeing."

Ricky Hall

"Shared support for one another, with less reliance on specialists such as psychologists, due to a 'village' mentality growing, even through relationships being built deeper within smaller neighbourhoods amongst wider Maroondah. Seeing dimensions of health grow, including spiritual, mental, emotional, social and physical health"

Todd Mahoney

"A happy and healthy community that sees the good in others and reaches out to help those who need it."

Bronwyn Harcourt and Kaye Bhan

"I hope that Maroondah is a better place for everyone living in it, the fact that wellbeing is a whole and important aspect to people's lives is inspiring. Prior to completing the course, I did not regard wellbeing as an important aspect to a well-functioning society, but my eyes have now been opened because of this course and I hope this course can be carried out in years to come."

Shayne van der Heide

"Students have the tools, skills and knowledge to navigate life."

Siobhan Cook

"My hope is that there are strategies in place to assist residents at the local level with resources and participation in events."

Susan Pitt

"That people of all ages and all walks of life live a life of wellbeing and are well connected to their community members."

Pam Yarra

Unexpected outcomes



One participant drew upon the new network created by the program and managed to source **accommodation** for a homeless family friend.



One of our participants decided to **nominate** for Council to continue her work improving wellbeing across the community.



Two of the organisations represented on the program successfully obtained **\$15,000** and a place on a wellbeing program to continue their work building wellbeing in local small businesses.



Two participants in the certificate now **work for 4TK** – a not-for-profit youth organisation as a result of the relationships built through the program.



One of our participants was invited to be the **guest speaker** at the March Communities of Wellbeing Meeting.



Communities of Wellbeing obtained an **Education Week grant** to have an intergenerational discussion about education using a number of participants and organisations on the program.



Council's Vacation Care school holiday program ran an excursion to the **'Friendship Ninja Zone'** at Eastland to learn about wellbeing.



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