



LIVE WELL

project

Northern Districts

## Dear Friends of the Live Well Project Northern Districts

The Live Well conversation and afternoon tea held on Tuesday 14 November at the Mount Elephant Visitor Centre was a great success.

Thirty-two people attended the event which was wonderful.

THANKS to all who came along and joined the conversation. Special thanks to Val Lang, Loris Shannon, Councillor Lesley Brown, Jo Pocklington, Gordon Fisher, Janine Davis, Trish Wynd, Karin Blomquist, Lilla Orton and Kathy Sproules for helping to promote the event.

It takes community involvement to address community issues such as social connection. Lack of social connection leads to loneliness and social isolation and as more of our population live longer, working together for prevention is best. Live Well project actions can be great fun and benefit all ages in the community when they are planned with care.

### What did we talk about?

- What is an age-friendly community: Age-friendly communities are places where people stay involved in community life, enjoy good health and feel safe. They are also communities where older people are treated with respect and feel they can contribute and belong.
- Live Well Project – what’s happened so far? The Live Well Project Officer has had many conversations with residents and representatives of community organisations about what it means to be age-friendly and to live well as we get older. Check the website for details. [www.corangamite.vic.gov.au/Community/Public-Health-and-Wellbeing/Live-Well-Project](http://www.corangamite.vic.gov.au/Community/Public-Health-and-Wellbeing/Live-Well-Project) Residents without online access can call Clare Vaughan on 0400369525 for an update.
- What do we love about living in Skipton, Lismore, Derrinallum, Darlington and Districts? ‘The People’ in the communities was the first response ; including those who step up and lead the Progress Associations, contribute to the newsletters, serve in the opp shops, volunteer for CFA and the men’s shed as well as the many other voluntary organisations in the towns Other assets mentioned included: the beautiful natural environment including Mount Elephant, Mount Emu Creek and the presence of platypus! The Library, the Health Service in Skipton, the Schools and local businesses are all valued! In the district, the farming communities, the landcare initiatives were mentioned as being well loved. These are all assets on which to build the Live Well Project.
- What does it mean to Live Well and what advice would you give to your younger self about how to live well. We talked a bit about physical health and the fact that *‘if you don’t make time for exercise then sooner or later you will need to make time for illness.’* Taking care of the brain was also mentioned as important and concern was expressed about the increasing prevalence of cognition issues including dementia and how we deal with this as a community. There was broad agreement that maintaining independence, interests and involvement beyond the home are key components of living well as we get older.

- The following list includes Live Well Project suggestions for consideration:
  - The strongest message from the community conversation was that there are many social activities on offer in the towns in the Northern Districts of the Shire and the newsletters do an excellent job keeping residents informed, however, boosting awareness of existing activities in each others towns and making it easier to join in by car pooling has some support. Transport between towns is a major barrier. Improving the taxis and bus services would help.
  - Could we have a Corangamite website to add events to so that we can see what is on in other towns? Good to check what is on to avoid clashes and also good for those who do not use facebook. It's a bit more nimble than the newsletters and useful for planning.
  - Strengthen opportunities for people to use online and digital technologies. Derrinallum Library and several volunteers have expressed interested in developing this action and contact details were provided and therefore this will be one of the early project actions to be developed.
  - There was interest expressed in holding training sessions on using smartphones/tablets to make recordings of community activities. Who would like to learn?
  - Group sessions related to 'prevention being better than cure'. EG: Singing bowl therapy, Qigong, reflexology on yourself, facial exercises.
  - There was concern expressed about the health of our farmers, with offers of massage, reflexology, relaxation and men's shed activities so that farmers/retired farmers can do a bit more self-care. Would there be people who would like to come together to develop this idea – especially farmers themselves?
  - Several suggestions involved singing. An offer to lead a 'tone deaf' choir in Lismore that is suitable for anyone who wants to sing, get together and have fun. There was a question about whether there is a choir in Skipton? Is there?
  - A request for activities to help people who live alone to use tools to do simple handy-person jobs. Also a suggestion we could develop opportunities for people to get together and cook for 1-2 people, share a meal and then and take serves home.
  - Two people were interested in dancing. One suggestion was to have dancing lessons for 4-6 weeks in winter and then have a dance, dress up and have supper together.
  - Another suggestion to have a local talent concert for budding talent. Be great to test this idea in 2018!
  - Two german speakers in the district if anyone wants to learn German
  - We need information about how to deal with dementia in our community. How, what, where to go to help people deal with dementia early.
  - Happy to be involved in home visits if any older people want this. Best to visit in 2's – initially at least.
  - Have community days once a month or once a season; repairing things, talking, sharing, beautifying our town.
  - Need volunteers training for things like getting food handling accreditation and working with children checks. Better to do this for multiple groups and towns.
  - There are people with knowledge and skills they'd be happy to share in relation to the original vegetation of the plains, how to work with networks and groups, and managing group processes.
  - Be good to have a 'go-to person' for community finance questions if we could find a retired accountant or book keeper.

- Promotion of the well-being benefits of volunteering and participation at every age. The volunteering opportunities in Derrinallum, Lismore and Skipton for people who are not in the full time workforce are excellent. Let's promote them to attract even more people. EG: Opp Shops, Men's Shed, CFA, Hospital Auxillary. The Live Well Project could showcase these opportunities via local newspaper media and social media if there was community interest.
- Everyone loves a bus trip to a neighbouring town to explore the natural environment and share lunch, morning or afternoon tea. Who already does this?
- We have a teacher with specialist skills in dyslexia living in Lismore if there are people wanting support?
- Be great to have exercise classes / pilates at the Darlington Hall.
- A walking track along the Emu Creek/ Nuggests Flat in Darlington would be a wonderful asset for locals and tourists (platypus).
- Could we have somewhere to ride a bike that is off the highway, safe and interesting?

## Where to from here?

The suggestions listed above will be reviewed and a timeline for actions negotiated with those who have provided contact details. If you would like to express interest in any of the ideas listed, just let Clare know. Follow up actions will be promoted to all via email, the community newsletters, and the project website: [www.corangamite.vic.gov.au/Community/Public-Health-and-Wellbeing/Live-Well-Project](http://www.corangamite.vic.gov.au/Community/Public-Health-and-Wellbeing/Live-Well-Project)

The ***Friends of the Live Well Project*** email list has a total of 202 people listed as of the 20 November 2017, with 12 friends from Derrinallum, 16 from Lismore, 7 from Skipton, 3 from Darlington and 2 from Vite Vite North!

To all project 'Friends', thanks for your involvement in the Live Well / Age-friendly Communities conversations to date and for your willingness to be informed about project progress. Anyone wanting to join the friends list can email [clare.vaughan@corangamite.vic.gov.au](mailto:clare.vaughan@corangamite.vic.gov.au) with a request.

For residents who are interested in reading Live Well Project Updates, but do not access the internet, copies of updates will be available from noticeboards at Derrinallum Opportunity Shop, Derrinallum Information Service Centre (DISC) and the Library, Lismore Post Office, Skipton Opportunity Shop or call Clare Vaughan on 0400369525 for a quick update chat.

*Clare Vaughan*

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