BACKGROUND
As the community foundation for Greater Melbourne, Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation recognises that climate change is increasing the incidence of extreme heat events in our city and disproportionately affecting the health of people who are disadvantaged or socially marginalised. It is our city’s community-based and social service organisations that work closely with those most vulnerable to the health impacts of heatwaves, however they are not specifically resourced to plan for and respond to extreme weather events.

Following consultation with Emergency Management Victoria, Victorian Council specifically resourced to plan for and respond to extreme weather events.

As the community foundation for Greater Melbourne, Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation and the Department of Health and Human Services, in October 2018, the Foundation launched the Hot Spots initiative.

The initiative supports place-based collaborations between health, social service and environmental organisations with local government and emergency services in areas of Melbourne with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, and higher temperatures during heatwaves (based on the Monash Heat Vulnerability Index).

There are two projects underway led by community health organisation IPC Health in Brimbank and Primary Care Partnership enliven in Dandenong. The experience of time has been that the community organisations have been involved in this work and a clear need has been identified to develop knowledge of climate change and health across all project partners.

HOTSPOTS
An initiative of Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation

BRIMBANK
2 COMMUNITY EVENTS
– PCP Health
– Brimbank City Council
– Health West Primary Care Partnership
– ccohealth

LIST OF ALL BRIMBANK PARTNERS
• IP Health
• Brimbank City Council
• Health West Primary Care Partnership
• ccohealth

LIST OF BRIMBANK PROJECT PARTICIPANTS
• Brimbank Council’s planned activity groups; seniors forums; parenting groups and playgroups
• Brimbank Libraries
• Brimbank Youth Services
• Good Shepherd Community House
• Centre for Multicultural Affairs
• Youth Links
• Uniting Care – Sunshine Mission
• The Salvation Army

OVERALL OUTCOMES
Almost all (23 out of 25) of the service providers consulted did not receive DHHS health alerts; and all service providers were interested in receiving further training on the health impacts of heatwaves.

None of the community groups consulted had plans for next summer regarding a heatwave.

Elderly people and parents of young children had similar strategies for keeping cool which included staying indoors, drinking lots of water, wearing light clothes and wearing less cloth. However, these strategies were creating challenges by disrupting normal routines, contributing to changes in mood in children and exacerbating the social isolation of older people.

Many primary school children demonstrated they had good knowledge of how to keep cool during a heatwave.

The Brimbank project has identified the following opportunities in the lead up to next Summer:

- Awareness raising and dissemination of the Department of Health and Human Services heat health alerts and information available to community-based and social service organisations.
- Review free community groups, individuals and services can plan for heatwaves and respond to community need.
- Further promote the health impacts of heatwaves to people who are most vulnerable so they take action to reduce risk.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL
The Keep Cool in Summer health promotion material was produced in various formats including: postcards, A4 posters, A3 posters, drink bottle, material. This material was adapted with permission from the Yarra City Council’s Keep Cool in Yarra campaign.

DANDENONG
22 INFORMATION SESSIONS
– Bolton Clarke,
– Supported by South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA)

LIST OF ALL DANDENONG PARTNERS
• enliven
• Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre, City of Greater Dandenong
• AMES
• Dandenong West Primary School Flaygrup
• Seniors Club Leaders Network
• Cultural Diversity Network
• City of Greater Dandenong: Family and Children’s Services, Community

OVERALL OUTCOMES
enliven as a Primary Care Partnership has already established relationships with relevant agencies so could commence work quickly in time for the heatwave period.

The collaborative approach between partners opened-up new networks for health promotion information distribution, providing many new contacts for enliven and the City of Greater Dandenong’s Environment and Sustainability team. The project provided an opportunity for health and environment teams to work together and disseminate the same messages.

Hot Spots Dandenong strengthened collaboration between the City of Greater Dandenong departments, bringing together the Environment and Sustainability, Community Care and Emergency Management teams. The project aligned with the Council’s development of a Climate Change Strategy as well as the availability of free and subsidised Energy Home Assessments, Residential Efficiency Scorecards and Energy Savvy Upgrades.

Using an action research approach, Hot Spots Dandenong project partners seized opportunities as they arose including:

- spending time discussing the health impacts of heatwaves with parent/child groups meeting on maternal and child health immunisation sessions;
- working with CALD groups in general rather than targeted approach when data was not available to prioritise communities as intended;
- information sessions were continually modified based on participant feedback.
- identification of further funding opportunities for funding and access to new data, resources and contacts.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL
Over 600 Emergency Prepare booklets, 340 Emergency Checklist red bags and 480 bamboo hand-held fans distributed.

LIST OF DANDENONG PROJECT PARTICIPANTS
- Wellspring for Women
- AMES
- Dandenong West Primary School Flaygrup
- Seniors Club Leaders Network
- South East Melbourne Primary Health Network: Practice Managers and Practice Nurses Network
- Cool Islander, Arabic Seniors Club

“Now I know what a heatwave is!”
“Did I do not know about Heat on Cell and how could they help us”

“People asked to share the information with people”

EVALUATION
The Hot Spots initiative is being independently evaluated to ascertain what are the components of an effective response to reduce heat vulnerability in low income communities using a cross-sector collaborative approach?

While the overall outcomes of these projects are focused on the health and wellbeing of those experiencing disadvantage, a co-benefit of this work is the capacity building of health and social service organisations in relation to responding to the health inequities exacerbated by climate change.

“People ask me how cool we are!”
“I did not realise so many people died during heatwaves”

“Now I know what a heatwave is!”
“Did I do not know about Heat on Cell and how could they help us”

“We have to talk about heat health with service users”

“I did not realise so many people died during heatwaves”

MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED
- Keep Cool in Summer Health Promotion Material
- Promotional Posters
- Promotional Materials

“People asked to share the information with people”

QUOTES FROM CONVERSATIONS
- “I have trouble sleeping in hot weather, my breathing gets more difficult and he hard keeping the house cool when you still have to cook”
  - Karen (7), Burmese (6), Spanish (6), traditional (10), Chinese simplified (9), Vietnamese (16), Khmer (14), Chinese English (50), Arabic (40), Dari (40), Farsi (33), Khmer (20), Chinese simplified (15), Vietnamese (15), Arabic (15), English (15), Chinese (14)

- “I place lots of water bottles in the fridge and sleep with these by my side to keep cool during the hot nights”
  - Karen (7), Burmese (6), Spanish (6), traditional (10), Chinese simplified (9), Vietnamese (16), Khmer (14), Chinese English (50), Arabic (40), Dari (40), Farsi (33), Khmer (20), Chinese simplified (15), Vietnamese (15), Arabic (15), English (15), Chinese (14)

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