

Palmerston Grow Well Live Well Common Agenda

In 2014 a group of community organisations agreed to start working together in a new way to address concerns about the development and wellbeing of children and young people in Palmerston– their life choices, their opportunities and their futures. The group decided to use what is called a Collective Impact approach to focus on improving the wellbeing of Palmerston’s children and young people..

What is Collective Impact?

Collective Impact was developed in the United States in 2011 and is being implemented in the USA, Canada, New Zealand and at many sites around Australia. This approach is a way of working together that has been developed to address complex social problems. In its simplest terms the approach recognises that one organisation or government department by itself cannot fix social problems that have been happening for a long time.

But the right community members and organisations working with government and the wider community, if they have the right support, have a much better chance of changing a community at a local level as well as changing government systems that are not working for the community.

The Collective Impact approach is not just another form of collaboration. Collaboration may lead to local change but the Collective Impact approach is more ambitious. It aims for change to be sustained over time in both the community and in the way government and community organisations work with the community. At its heart Collective Impact is about the community leading and driving change.

The GWLW Leadership Group

Over a period of two and a half years GWLW developed a Leadership Group with representation from Territory and Local Governments and Community Organisations working in Palmerston.

For Collective Impact to work well organisations involved first need to build trust and understanding and agree on a common set of goals. The Leadership Group spent time developing a set of Principals and Terms of Reference.

The group also agreed to use Deep Democracy to guide our discussion and decision making.

Deep Democracy is an inclusive process that aims to hear all voices and is also open to allowing space for various and competing views, tensions, feelings, and styles of communication. Deep Democracy acknowledges that relative rank and power, can tend to marginalise various views, individuals, and groups and so actively invites all views.

Deep Democracy includes not only the views of other people and groups, but accommodates the different groups in a way that avoids situations where the strongest voice holds sway and the winner takes all.

GWLW were able to source a small amount of funding to employ a community facilitator to lead a range of consultations with groups across Palmerston. Community supplied data together with publicly available data was collated using the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) Nest Framework an evidence-based set of indicators for children's wellbeing. This resulted in the first 'Palmerston State of the Children Report' launched in November 2016.

Palmerston State of the Children Report

The report draws on the thoughts, ideas and concerns recorded through numerous consultations, questionnaires and interviews with members of the Palmerston community. Three questions were asked:

- What do you like about living in Palmerston?
- What worries you about bringing up children in Palmerston?
- What would you like to see change?

The report once completed was shared with the Palmerston Community to ensure that what we had heard was accurately reflected in the report.

The Community was then asked to identify the most important priorities for change that would improve outcomes for children and young people in Palmerston.

Through a process of questionnaires and focus groups three priorities emerged which form the basis for the Grow Well Live Well Action Plan.

These were:

- Family Violence
- Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Property Crime

Having identified the priorities Grow Well Live Well looked at how these priorities should be tackled.

Decisions on how to best address priorities took into account what is happening already in

Palmerston and how we can build on and improve what is happening; the need to hear the voice of the Palmerston Community and be led by what the community needs; and the evidence about what

has worked in other places to impact the three priorities.

GWLW Action Groups

Grow Well Live Well formed 3 Action Groups to address the priorities. They are

- Working with the Community – to ensure community voice, ideas and leadership are at the heart of all we do
- Empowering Parent and Families - to support parents to ensure their children and young people have all they need to grow into healthy young adults
- Strengthening Service Delivery – to make sure services in Palmerston are working in the best way to meet the needs of the community.

The Action groups are in the formation stage, seeking new members, inducting members and finalising and developing charters for action. This work takes time if it is to be done effectively but by the beginning of 2019 the aim is for all groups to be operating with a defined charter for action informed by both GWLW's State of the Report and Action Plan.