



CENTRAL VICTORIAN
Primary Care Partnership

Mount Alexander Community Lunch

Review

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Acronyms

CH	Community House
CDCH	Castlemaine District Community Health
CVPCP	Central Victorian Primary Care Partnership
MAS	Mount Alexander Shire
MH	Maldon Hospital
MNH	Maldon Neighbourhood House

Executive Summary

In partnership with Maldon Neighbourhood Centre, Central Victorian Primary Care Partnership, Castlemaine District Community Health and Maldon Hospital, a review of both the Castlemaine and Maldon Community Lunches was conducted using the Rural Social Inclusion Framework. The aim of this review was to identify barriers for attendance at the lunches, particularly for people experiencing social isolation, social exclusion, vulnerability or disadvantage.

Two stages of data collection were involved;

1. The first stage was a survey at the lunch venue.
2. Interviews with stakeholders.

Results showed;

- There is a lack of awareness of the community lunch. “Especially if you live out of town, you don’t really know about it”. It needs to be promoted more and service providers are quite happy to partner up with CCH to organise events to help raise awareness.
- Service providers are happy to purchase vouchers from the CCH that they can give to their clients who find the cost of the lunch a barrier. This initiative will raise funds for the lunch, promote it more and engage the vulnerable groups.
- Transport is a concern for people that have mobility problems and/or mental health illnesses. This can be addressed through volunteer drivers and council buses. It is also being looked into by The Age-friendly Community Program.
- People who are feeling socially isolated or have a disability such as vision or hearing impairment find it very difficult to move around the large room. Having volunteers greeting at the door and assisting people to the tables will significantly address this issue.

It is recognised that since this report was commissioned, the CCH has made progress to implement some of the recommendations to address the groups being socially excluded. Mount Alexander Healthy Communities Network will review the evaluation in 6-12 months’ time to see if the main aims and objectives of the review have been met, and how effective the recommendations have been implemented.

Introduction

The Castlemaine Community House in partnership with Mount Alexander Council hosts a weekly community lunch which welcomes everyone in the community to enjoy a hot nutritious meal. The community lunch is a great opportunity to meet other people in the local area and connect with a supportive network, it is held every Tuesday at 12.30pm at the Castlemaine Town Hall.

The menu emphasizes seasonal fresh vegetables and fruit, much of it donated by local suppliers from local businesses such as:

- Harvest Fruit and Veg (Fridays at Barker Street, Saturdays at Wesley Hill Market)
- Sprout Bakery
- Castlemaine Fruit Supplies
- Green Goes the Grocer

The aim of the community lunches is to bring all sections of society together, fostering social inclusion. Recently there has been anecdotal evidence that the most vulnerable members of our society were not attending these events.

Castlemaine District Community Health (CDCH) and Maldon Hospital (MH) agreed to partner with The Central Victorian Primary Care Partnership (CVPCP), Maldon Neighbourhood House (MNH) and Castlemaine Community House (CCH) to support a review of the community lunches in Castlemaine and Maldon, with the aim of determining what were the barriers preventing people from attending the community lunches and to work towards increasing the participation of vulnerable populations in both the Maldon and Castlemaine community lunches.

The Central Victorian Primary Care Partnership (CVPCP) works with health and community services within the Mount Alexander Shire with a particular focus on social inclusion. CVPCP has collaborated with the regional PCPs to develop and publish *Building Socially Inclusive Communities* which is an evidence-informed resource that aims to build socially inclusive communities across the region and beyond. This resource contains auditing and planning tools that can be used to analyse the social inclusiveness of projects.

The review of the community lunch sought collect information through Qualitative methods of assessment, such as interviews and anonymous questions using the Rural Social Inclusion Framework. This was the preferred method of gathering information as it yields results that can't easily be measured by or translated into numbers.

Using qualitative assessment methods rather than purely data-based information is crucial to understanding many community issues and needs. Numbers work well to show comparisons, progress, and statistics of community efforts, but they cannot express motives, opinions, feelings, or relationships.

Qualitative methods can get at the things that numbers don't usually represent clearly, such as the reasons for people's actions, or community history. They can help to identify community issues and needs, and provide a basis for planning and implementing action plans through community efforts and support that lead to long-term change/s.

This report will present the findings from the Castlemaine Community Lunch. It will draw upon the contributions from community members, service providers who were interviewed, it will highlight the issues raised by the serviced providers and the recommendations it will make, as we work together as a community in improving social inclusion in MAS.



The Mount Alexander Shire Community

Mount Alexander Shire is a diverse area with urban and rural communities, some having national historic and environmental significance. Like many regional communities, our community is ageing. According to our 2013 community profile the median age of Mount Alexander residents is 47. Our Shire has a greater proportion of older residents than other parts of regional Victoria. Children up to 14 years comprise only 16% of the population, while people 65 years and over make up nearly 21% of the population. Our population of almost 17,600 people is expected to increase by 25% by 2031.

The people of Mount Alexander value their ability to interact with each other through a range of community groups and settings. There is a high level of formal and informal interaction between residents and Council. Issues of concern to the broader Mount Alexander Shire community include public transport, housing options and aged care facilities. Council has an important role in advocating and partnering with others to deliver on these needs.

The Mount Alexander Shire Council Plan 2013-2017 states the following priority and strategy relevant to the civic participation of people in the community:

Priority: Provide an environment for a healthy, active, prepared and resilient community.

Strategy: Advocate for improved health and community services in partnership with others.

Council aims to create an environment where people of all ages and backgrounds can live a healthy lifestyle, and are able to thrive in our diverse and vibrant community. One of the ways that communities connect within Mount Alexander Shire is through community lunches. Maldon Neighbourhood Centre (MNC) and Castlemaine Community House (CCH) host community lunches in their local towns. Community lunches aim to bring all sections of society together, fostering social inclusion.

Commencing this year, the Castlemaine community lunch has been funded by The Mount Alexander Council with the aim of improving the community's physical and mental wellbeing through promoting healthy eating and social inclusion, and which would build community strength.

Rationale: Social Inclusion

There are a number of concepts used to describe the social condition of an individual such as poverty, social inclusion/exclusion, well-being, life satisfaction, happiness, economic utility, capability, community strength and social capital. Social exclusion addresses issues of the denial of rights and lack of participation. It also emphasises not only what social exclusion is, but what it gives rise to, its consequences, not only for individuals but for society, in both the short-run and over the longer-term.

'Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in society, whether in economic, social, cultural, or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole' (Levitas et al., 2007, p. 9).

Social exclusion does not have a fixed starting and end points, but is often a life-long process of experiencing alienation and frustration, so it needs to be addressed in the early stages. If not addressed, it can produce long-term damage to the living conditions, social and economic participation, emotional life, and health status of people. It also contributes to the intergenerational transmission of poverty. In turn, insecurity in living standards, political and social isolation, feelings of estrangement and unhealthy lifestyles aggravate pre-existing conditions of social exclusion. This results in a vicious circle where socially excluded people are in even more danger of suffering from additional material deprivation, social and emotional marginalisation, and health issues, which in turn expose them to more serious risks of exclusion.

Every person has the right to participate fully in the society in which they live. However, there are many disadvantaged people who do not get this opportunity and are socially excluded and live on the fringes of society. There are many factors that cause social exclusion in people, such as physical and mental health problems, single parenthood, poor academic achievements, low self-esteem, drug and/or alcohol abuse and lack of work experience. Furthermore, the majority of these people come from groups, who are already disadvantaged in:

- The work force
- Welfare dependency
- Dysfunctional families (abuse, neglect)
- Cultural displacement

These issues can significantly affect a person's ability to engage with the community, learning and work and can lead to social and economic problems. Many people living in rural areas have a higher risk of becoming socially excluded and not have access to a wide range of opportunities due to a lack of access to alternative learning, shortages in skills, resources and training needed.

Social inclusion plays a key role as a determinant of mental health (Davies, 2012) and people that are more likely to experience social exclusion are those lacking social connectivity, a supportive environment and access to resources (Scharlach, Lehning, Warburton, Ng & Shardlow, 2013). Socially inclusive activities, such as community lunches and social events have shown to produce positive outcomes in regards to social networking and employment opportunities.

Social inclusion encourages community integration, through community involvement and encourages community unity, this can lead to access to both physical and mental health services. Community lunches offer both social inclusion benefits and nutrition benefits. Community meals also have the opportunity to positively benefit physical health and social wellbeing (Bourke et al, 2011).

Methodology

The Castlemaine community lunch review was held on 16th August 2016. The purpose of this review was to be able to collect qualitative data that could then be analysed in order to determine barriers that prevented people from attending the lunch.

The aim of the review was to identify the main themes as to why certain groups were not attending the lunch and from the findings, make recommendations that CCH could use to not only make the lunch more inclusive but sustainable as well.

The main aims and objectives of the review were:

1. To identify barriers to participation in community lunches by vulnerable population.
2. To increase the participation of vulnerable populations in the community lunches.

With the purpose of achieving the following outcome:

Increase the social inclusiveness of the Castlemaine community lunch.

The Process

Anonymous Questions

The approach used on the day of the review, was to ask people as they were coming in to the lunch if they could spare some time to help with the review. Participants were asked three questions that were answered anonymously. Pockets and beads were used, the three questions had three potential answers underneath, participants needed to choose the option that they believe was the most relevant to them. Using the bead, they placed the bead in the pocket that corresponded with the answer of their choice. These questions aimed to quickly and easily identify why people attended the lunch, the main role of the lunch in the community and the reason why people did not attend the lunch.

Interviews

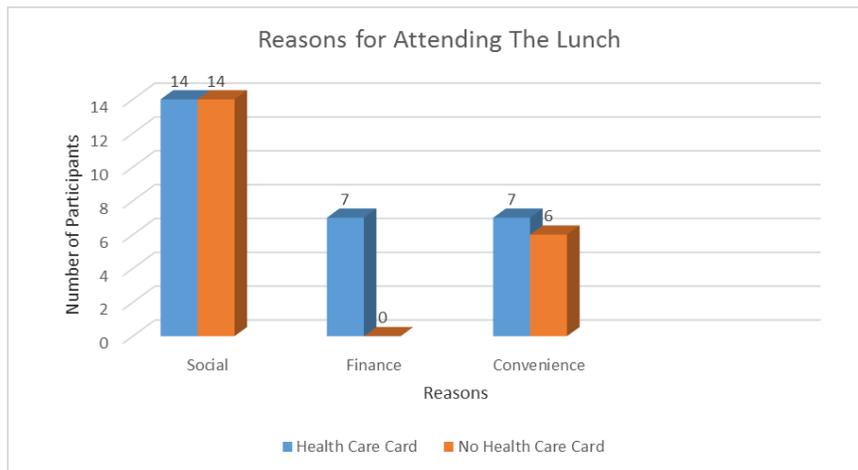
During the lunch, people were encouraged to stay back and take part in a brief interview to get some feedback regarding the lunch. A set of five questions were developed that were used to question the attendees of the community lunch. Attendees were asked questions such as, how they discovered the lunch, how inclusive they believed the lunch to be and the changes that they would like to see made.

A different set of questions were developed to interview stakeholders and people involved with the running of the community lunch. These questions were developed using the rural social inclusion framework, and were designed to provide evidence of the knowledge of the community lunch attendees. This included who was attending, the potential barriers to inclusion and how the lunch was to be improved. The questions used elements from the framework, such as the key contributing factors, vulnerable populations and partners for action, which aided the participants answering the interview questions. These interview questions were more in depth than the attendee interview questions and aimed to discover the barriers to social inclusiveness at the community lunch.

The Evaluation

Community members answered three questions as they were entering the hall for the community lunch. Results of this feedback are shown in Appendix 1.

Q1. Reasons for Attending the Lunch

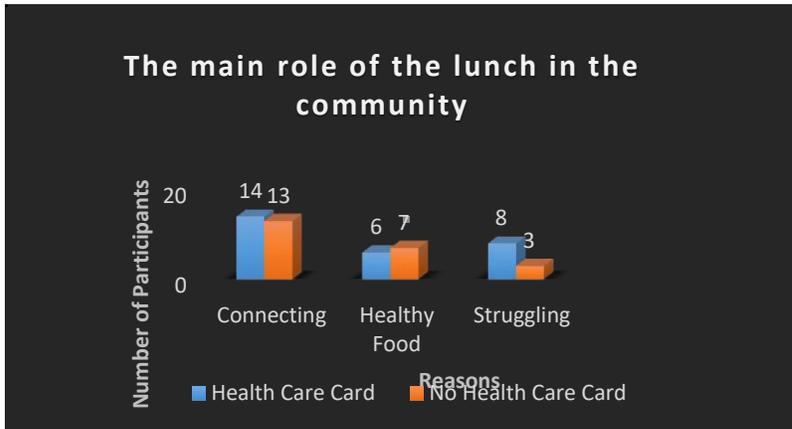


The results from the first question clearly demonstrate that the main reason for people attending the community lunch is for social reasons, regardless if they are concession holders or not, with convenience being the second choice.

This supports the view of council supporting the community lunch to promote inclusiveness.

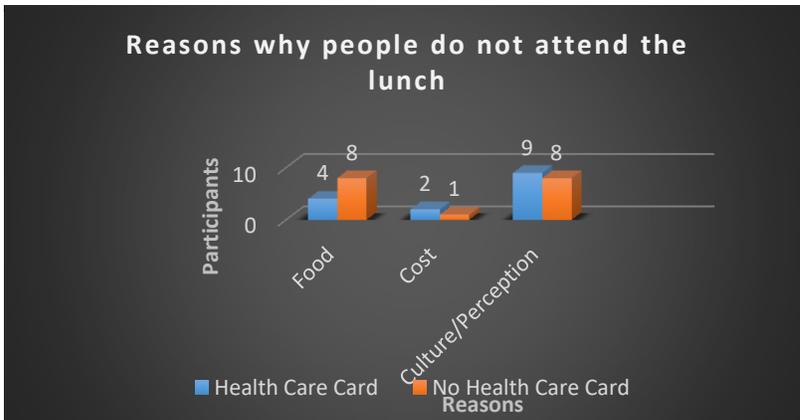
Q2. The main role of the lunch in the community

The second question produced similar responses to the first question that the main reason for attending is for connectedness, socio-economic position played a significant part as well, with many attending due to financial struggles. Healthy option also attracted a number of people, as it is an affordable way of getting a healthy lunch.



Q3. Reasons why people do not attend the lunch

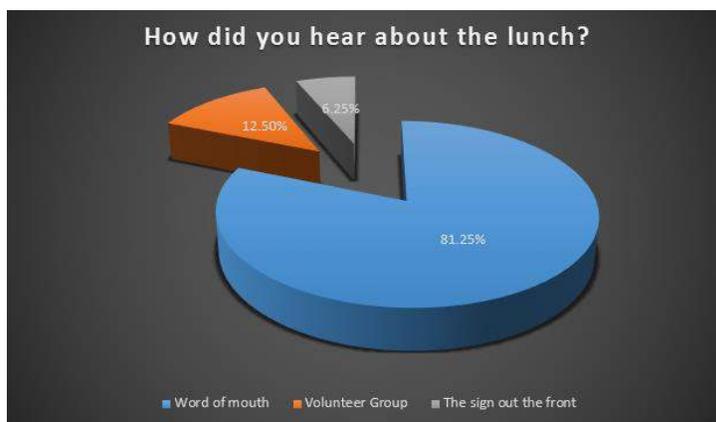
There is a misconception surrounding the intention of the lunch and who it is aimed at. The lunch is seen by many as a welfare lunch, hence numbers being high for culture/perception, regardless if you are a concession holder or not. The food being vegetarian was a bit of a concern, with the cost not being much. Raising awareness is important if we are to increase the numbers attending. By promoting that it is a COMMUNITY lunch and not a WELFARE/Soup kitchen lunch will go a long way from removing the stigma of attending.



The responses of the people that were interviewed after the lunch were collated and shown in the graphs below, the raw data can be viewed in Appendix 2:

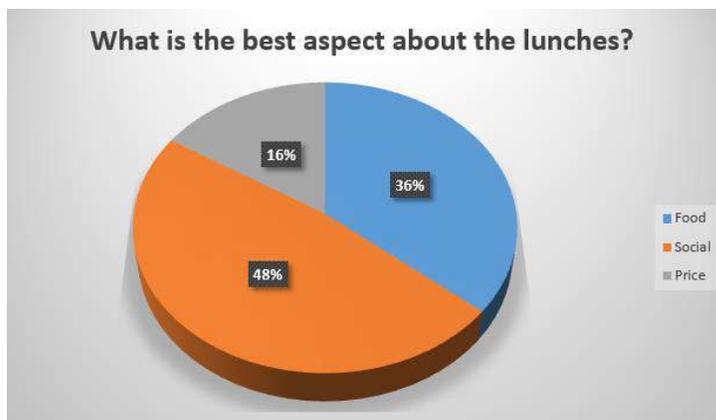
Q1. How did you hear about the lunch?

The majority of attendees knew about the lunch through word of mouth. The lunch being recommended by someone they knew and had attended was more of an incentive than hearing about it by any other means. The connectedness they feel attending a lunch that friends/family had been too, reduced the awkwardness of them attending



Q2. What is the best aspect about the lunches?

The social aspect of the lunch is what attracts people to attend. Thus is in line with Cheung (2013) view that social inclusion involves members of a community achieving access to favourable activities or opportunities in society.



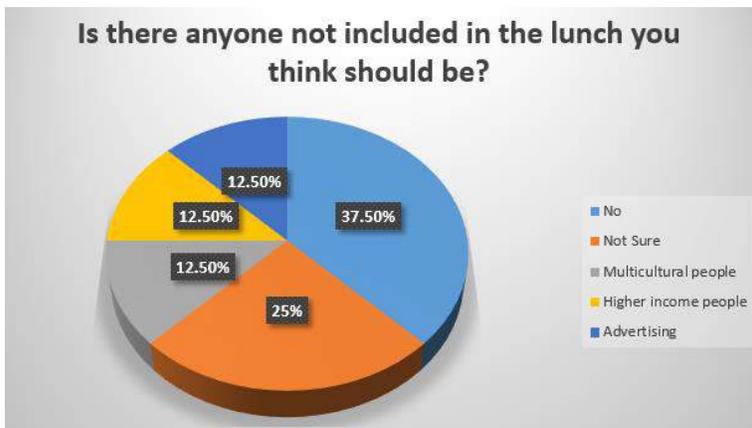
Q3. Do you think the lunch is welcoming to everyone?

The high response of the question, indicates that it is a very welcoming event and that even though the menu is restricted to vegetarian, it does not deter people from attending.



Q4. Is there anyone not included in the lunch you think should be?

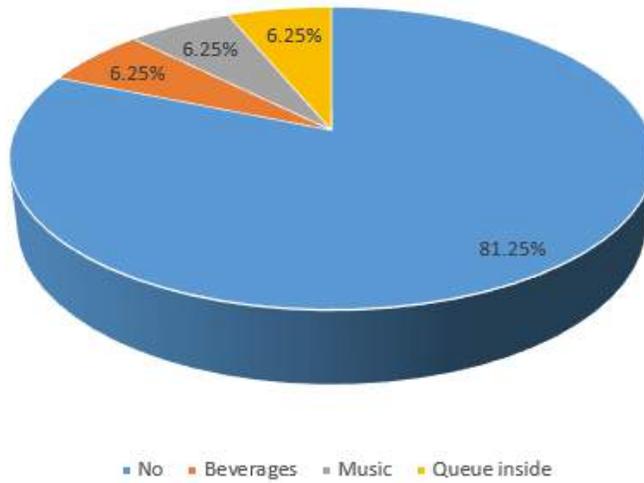
The response to this question was more spread out than the other questions. It is clear from the results that there are still gaps that need to be filled in regards to different groups attending the community lunch and that they need to be addressed, advertisement came up as high on the list, that will be a good way of reaching out to the groups that have been excluded and do not attend for lack of knowledge.



Q5. Are there any changes you would like to make?

The response to this question indicates that the majority of the people attending are satisfied with how the lunch is ran, with minor suggestion as to how to make it a little bit friendlier.

Are there any changes you would like to make?



Analysis of stakeholder Questions

Stakeholders were interviewed in order to identify possible barriers that are preventing their clients from attending the community lunches. As part of the interviewing processes, participants were asked to identify possible options/strategies that can be put into place in order to reach out and increase the participation of the vulnerable populations in the community lunches. Further recommendations on how to make the lunch sustainable were also given.

The following stakeholders were interviewed:

U3A

Centrelink

Castlemaine Copy Centre

Salvation Army

ACCESS

AXIS

Community Health

Senior Citizens

Mount Alexander Shire

Castlemaine Housing Service

Windarring (disability and support services)

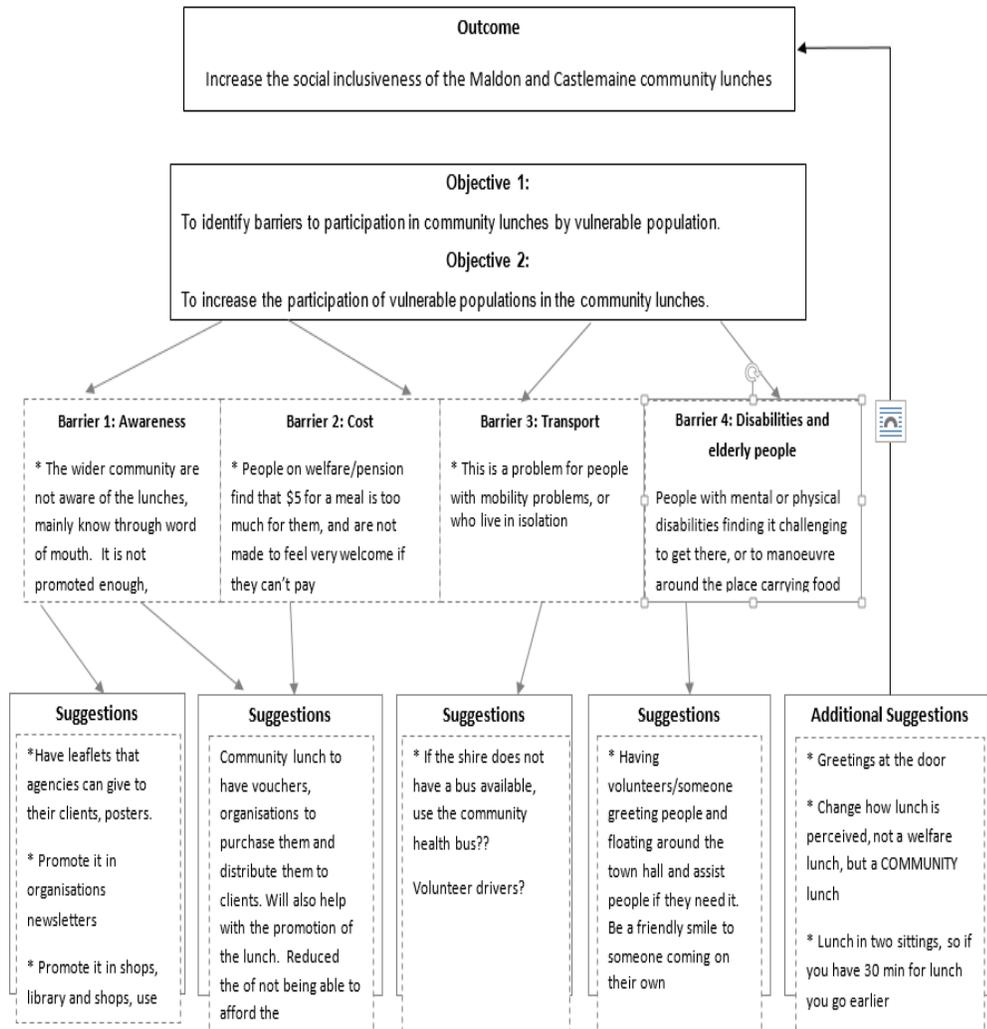
The key themes that were identified were: Awareness, Cost, Transport/time constraint and disabilities (mental and/or physical) and elderly people. Appendix three shows the responses from the stakeholders.

Recommendations & Next Steps

The table below summarizes the key themes obtained from analyzing stakeholders' response, as well as recommendations that can be implemented and suggested timeframes. For a more in-depth view of the stakeholders suggestions, please refer to Appendix four.

CASTLEMAINE COMMUNITY LUNCH REVIEW 2016			
Key Issues	Recommendations	Implementation	
		3 Months	12 Months
Barrier 1: Awareness	A.1 Have leaflets at agencies, churches, where they can be given to clients.	X	X
	A.2 Posters in shops, libraries, health service providers (eg. medical centres), markets, sporting venues	X	
	A.3 School Newsletters, U3A has 540 members that receive the newsletter, Shire website, newspaper, email to the shire workers and other agencies	X	
	A.4 Partnering up with agencies to organise events, such as carer's day, Bendigo TAFE wants to partner to fundraise	X	X
Barrier 2: Cost	B.1 Community lunch to have tokens/vouchers, that organisation can purchase from them and they can use for their clients	X	X
	B.2 Community lunch to have an inventory, groups/people can hire the equipment. It would be a good way for them to get some revenue	X	

Barrier 3: Transport/ Time Constraint	C.1 People who have limited time for lunch, can bring their own take away containers and take their lunch (this needs to be promoted)	X	
	C.2 Transport being addressed through other groups as well council, have volunteers to drive		X
Barrier 4: Disabilities and elderly people	D.1 Have volunteers at the lunch venue that can offer assistance to elderly and disabled people		X
	D.2 Have friendly volunteers greeting the people and will be ready to offer assistance if needed	X	X
	D.3 Volunteers to pick up/seat or assist people with mental and/or physical disabilities, as well as elderly people		X



Conclusion

Social inclusion is about participation, equal opportunity, and empowerment. Social participation is a key indicator of the overall 'health' and vibrancy of a community. The findings from this review show that the people attending the lunch find it inclusive, the focus needs to shift into targeting the groups that are not attending, and one of the main reasons for these groups not being reached is lack of awareness. The medium of communication and promotions needs to broaden to be able to reach as many different groups in the community.

The Castlemaine Community Lunch is ready to move to its next phase, where it start to develop into a sustainable model. This can be achieved through developing a stronger sense of ownership by the CCH and through building strong partnerships. Sustainability can be possible by working closely with the other organisations in the promotion of the community lunch and organizing events together.

Council can assist with the provision of the town hall, the kitchen facilities and CCH can co-ordinate with other agencies to organise special lunches like care's day, mother's day, mental health week to name just a few.

Engagement with one of the community groups has started, VCAL students from the Bendigo TAFE are very keen to work with the community lunch to organise fund raising activities, to raise money for the lunch and at the same time, contribute to the students VCAL component on Literacy and Numeracy certificate. This process needs to be followed through with other community groups such as disability and elderly groups, only then can we say that changes to the lunch have been made as a result of consumer participation.

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Appendix 1

The image shows a handwritten table on a piece of paper, divided into three sections labeled Q1, Q2, and Q3. Each section contains a table with three columns and two rows. The columns represent different categories, and the rows represent 'ACC' and 'No' counts.

	Social	Finance	Convergence
ACC	14	7	7
No	14	0	6

	Connecting	Healthy Food	Struggling
ACC	14	6	8
No	13	7	3

	Food	Cost	Culture Perceptions
ACC	4	2	9
No	8	1	8

Appendix 2

Answers	Response Rate
How did you hear about the lunch	
Word of mouth	13 (81.25%)
Volunteer Groups	2 (12.5%)
The sign out the front	1 (6.25%)
What is the best aspect about the lunches	
Food	9 36%
Social	12 48%
Price	4 16%
Do you think the lunch is welcoming to everyone	
Yes	12 (75%)
Unsure	3 (18.75%)
Vegetarian Option	1 (6.25%)

Is there anyone not included in the lunch you think should be

No	6 (37.5%)
Not Sure	4 (25%)
Multicultural People	2 (12.5%)
Higher income people	2 (12.5%)
Advertising	2 (12.5%)

Are there any changes you would make to the lunch

No	13 (81.25%)
Beverages	1 (6.25%)
Music	1 (6.25%)
Queue inside	1 (6.25%)

Appendix 3

STAKEHOLDER BASE QUESTIONS

1. What do you know about the lunch?

I know that is on every Tuesday, \$5 dollars, I go there when I can, but I only get 30 min lunch, so sometimes, is not long enough.

The lunch is a good nutritious and affordable lunch run through donations of food. It is trying to capture those who are vulnerable as well as increase social connectedness.

I only heard about the lunch since about one month ago when I attended the health community groups for a meeting. I'll try and answer as many questions, not sure how useful I'm going to be.

I know that it's on every Tuesday at 12:30 and that there is a \$5 donation.

I know about it and went once, a while back.

MAS works in partnership with Maldon Neighbourhood Centre and Castlemaine Community House to build an age friendly community throughout the shire. The Age Friendly Communities project aims to tackle issues of social exclusion and social isolation, and improve the health and wellbeing of older people living in Mount Alexander Shire

So we coordinate/support community lunches in Maldon, Catlemaine, Campbells creek (at the Senior Citizens Club, which is very successful, but they prefer hospital meals, rather than having them cooked on the premises). There is another community lunch at Newstead, but that is community driven, may not be going so well at the moment, sadly, council can't afford to fund it. In the process of arranging for the Maldon Neighbourhood centre to take over the managing of the Maldon lunch.

It's in the town hall and I have attended several times, even when it was move to the old Gaol, I use to catch the mini-bus.

I know about it because I work locally.

It is a vegetarian, \$5 lunch run by the community house for all members of the community.

Yes, I go there often, it's close, in the town hall.

I didn't know about the Castlemaine, only Maldon, because I go there to play Bowls on Tuesdays. Donald may know a bit more about it, he would be the person to talk to.

Yes, I did know about the lunches.

I know about the lunch because I have been there several times.

2. Would you recommend the lunch to your client? Have you previously?

I don't do it as part of their planning, I have met with clients there, have gone with some of the workers in here.

Yes. It's a great initiative.

I haven't yet, since I didn't know about it, but I will certainly do that, it would be something they will definitely benefit from.

Yes, I do recommend it, is listed under our emergency relief list.

Yes I have. In my previous role I use to recommend as well as take clients to the lunches.

No, I haven't. I'm currently in the process of moving to another job, so I'm doing a handover of all my cases to the new person. I'm in Castlemaine one day a week, and if there are no clients booked, I don't come to Castlemaine. Most of my clients are employed at the moment, so they are probably unable to go as well.

I'm not actually departmental staff, so I cannot make any payments or decisions about payments, review, assess or vary payments, so I don't get into all that in-depth information with a client, so I don't know much about them or their circumstances.

Yes, we regularly recommends the community lunch to our clients.

Yes I do, some of the volunteers go already, sometimes I go with some of them.

I don't work with clients directly, I'm in charge of the booking of venues, but I do tell people I work with, I go with some of them as well.

No I haven't recommended any of the clients, I didn't think about it, since we have our own every Friday. Perhaps if you left some leaflets behind, I could give them [to the clients] when they come in.

I have recommended the lunch to other members of the U3A. That's how we know about things, word of mouth, someone's been, they like it, recommend it.

3. Have you heard any feedback about the lunches?

Have heard some people comment that they should have meat like Maldon, others don't mind vegetarian, but not all the time. It is nice food, very good quality.

Nothing recent, only 3 years ago the feedback was that the food was quite bland and vegetarian and that it turned people off from going back.

No, not yet.

No, I haven't, have gone to the lunches myself, but haven't heard anything from anyone.

Only that it's on Tuesdays.

Yes, in my previous role, some of the clients that I used to work with were: Elderly, or with a physical disability or had mental health issues. So getting feedback was important. Clients who were feeling socially isolated or had a disability like vision or hearing impairment found it very difficult. The Castlemaine Town hall venue, because of its size can be a very noisy place for a hearing impaired person, who would find it extremely difficult to have a conversation, they would have to concentrate very hard. People with vision impairment (like tunnel vision, or degenerative macular disease) find it difficult to navigate, wait in line, carry a plate of food or find a spot.

Yes, they like it, good value, but some think it's a bit discriminating for people who would like to eat meat.

Feedback only from colleagues, they love it.

No, I haven't asked any of the clients, we have the doorways program, so through case management and mentoring we try so connect the person to other services providers, a holistic approach to help and support families and individuals. So, maybe we need to perhaps start referring to the Tuesday lunch.

Nice food, price is not too bad. However not many people know about it, even our members, not many know about it. Not publicised enough. We have 540 members, we are one of the oldest U3A, one of the first to be established. We are very innovative, with an average of 100 courses running. Someone should send an email to the U3A and ask for it to be published in the monthly newsletter. There is nothing at the moment.

4. What are the barriers that are preventing people from going in the first place?

The perception that is a "charity lunch", "welfare lunch", message people get is "it's for people who can afford things". It is a hippie place, that it is for a select "click" of people

For some people on welfare, \$5 can be a difficult thing to afford.

If a person needs support or assistance e.g. mobility aid and holding a meal. Having a vegetarian menu may be a barrier.

Unsure, possibly the menu.

Maybe transport, or if they didn't feel comfortable. I work with people with disabilities, and people with social anxieties will not go alone. I would highly recommend it for my clients.

I think one main reason is that many members of the community are not aware of it. It is on a side street, and if you haven't been to the town hall, then you wouldn't know how to get there, could easily be missed. People living in other towns wouldn't know about it.

Maybe people not knowing about it.

For some is transport, others suffering from dementia is difficult, people living alone will find it very confronting attending such an open spaces. For example, one referred a vision impaired client, had problems feeding herself, where food ended up on the table, she was very self-conscious of this, also it took her a long time to eat, by the time she was finished the placed was packed up and she did not want to go back. Another client with schizophrenia, went, but people were weary of him, he didn't feel welcome and did not want to come back.

Not knowing anyone, the cost, the change in location.

It's hard when you only get 30 min for lunch, and if the queue is too long, then you don't get much time. Maybe have two lines? An express one? Or do the lunch in two sittings, so that the waiting time can be reduced.

I'm ok in a big space, noise doesn't affect me, some people may find that a bit difficult to come with.

Not sure, haven't heard any feedback from anyone that goes, but perhaps the suggested donation?? At these Fridays lunch, we welcome a donation, but don't specify an amount. It is whatever they can afford, it is only 10 cents, then that's ok, if they can't pay, that's fine.

Not knowing about it. Otherwise we are very good at organising car-pooling, but people need to know about it.

5. What do you think would be the barriers to people returning?

Not having anyone to go with. If you are a stranger, you can feel like an outsider. Getting there, could be a problem for some people.

It would depend on the individual. But maybe not being able to afford the \$5. To some of the clients, who are on Centrelink benefits, 5 dollars can be a lot of money. Would feel self-conscious/embarrassed to not be able to give the money at the entrance.

I don't know, can't think of one, I find it very friendly.

Not feeling comfortable.

People living on their own, find the place to be too big, big tables, don't have the confidence/skills to approach a table if they don't know anyone, and will keep to themselves. Transport, none of the council mini-buses are wheel-chair friendly, and not usually available. In Maldon, there is a service that picks people up.

Not knowing anyone, the cost, the food (they might not be impressed by it).

Some people find it very difficult to sit by themselves, some of the volunteers here, who have a disability, find it difficult to go by themselves, they would go if someone went with them, but since lunches are only 30 minutes and everyone's break is at different times, makes it harder. This is where having 2 sittings would help.

No sure, maybe people wouldn't like the boundaries, there is a lot of echo, if there could be a bus to pick up people.

People who are feeling socially isolated, or struggle with a mental illness, may find it difficult to go to such a large building, transport? That's some of the possible reasons I could think about.

The only thing, I can think of, might be the noise level. It can get very noisy, but I don't think you can do much about it.

6. What could make the lunch more inclusive?

Community house should have tokens/vouchers, that organisation can purchase from them, for example, with us, we would buy them and then give them to our clients (carers) and other organisations could do the same, this will increase awareness of the lunch, for a carer, it would be respite, it will contribute to the funding of the lunch. We could give to our clients who can't afford it.

We will be able to have meetings with our clients there and we would use the vouchers to pay for their lunch.

Raise awareness. Is there a brochure? I would happily give to my clients, I could tell them about it, but they would not necessarily be able to take or remember everything, it's better to give something they can take and refer to.

I think it already is, when I have been, I have seen people from all walks of life. Access to the place for people with disabilities (from the side street) is fine.

Not sure, have only been there once.

Perhaps a different venue?? When the town hall was being repaired, for a while lunch moved to Old Jail and then to the Anglican Church. Would be nice for the community bus to be made available and for a volunteer to pick and drop the people.

People that struggle being in queues, especially if they don't know anyone.

The 2 sittings, 2 lines, advertise it more so it reaches more people. Put advertisements in markets, IGA, Video store, shops, probably not coffee shops/restaurants as they would probably not like the competition, but places like library, pool, sporting ovals, media, council, newspapers.

Maybe someone greeting at the front door, telling them what to do/go.

Being made to feel welcome, being greeted at the door, for the people [client] to feel a connection, a friendly face/smile.
I think it is already, it is an amazing idea.

7. Have you ever been to the lunch? And if so which one?

Yes, the one in the town hall.

Yes, the Castlemaine lunch 3 years ago.

No I haven't, I would like to go, but I'm only in Castlemaine on Wednesday. I'll like to go so I know what to tell my clients when I refer them.

I have been to the one in Castlemaine several times, nice food for a good value.

Yes, Castlemaine, once.

To the Maldon one, Castlemaine (on my own or with clients) and to the Salvation Army one as well on Fridays.

Yes. Has been to both lunches.

I have gone to the one in Castlemaine, only because it's close to work, and with 30 minutes, you can't go to other ones, if they are too far away.

Yes, to the one in the Town hall.

No, not any of them, because we have our own, will start to think about sending people.

I have been to the one in the Town Hall (Castlemaine).

EXTRA QUESTIONS IF YOU HAVE ATTENDED THE LUNCH

8. Is it attended by diverse groups? (Culture, age, financial).

Yes, you either go on your own or with people you know. I have not seen many elderly people.

Yes it is quite accessible and affordable.

Yes, I have seen business people, pensioners, young parents and people with disabilities.

It looked like it, hard to know when you have been there once.

Maldon: Mostly the senior citizens and a couple that get picked up by the community bus, if the numbers (which roughly are 45 at the moment) increase, they will have to move to a bigger space, and this will raise issues/concerns.

Castlemaine: Can vary which group attends, but age is a barrier why they wouldn't attend and disability. This lunch can be great for families, especially with young children, but not a welcoming place for people already feeling marginalised.

Not really, it is widely accessible for all, however it does seem to be more middle class, it also has been reported that the lunch is quite "cliquey".

Age – yes, culture seems to be more people who are "holistic organic" seeking people.

It's hard to say, I go, but there are lots of people who think that you can only go if you don't have a salary, maybe that needs to be communicated better, that is open to everyone, and that people that can pay more, maybe should be able to, so they don't feel bad.

Yes to some, it was good when the mini-bus was running, maybe it could run again, pick up other people, but for people with a disability, it can be hard.

Yes, there are people who are struggling as well as professionals, stay at home parents. There is also corporate support from members of the shire attending, could be advertised through the shire's intranet.

I think so, I see young mums, members from the U3A, I think everyone is welcome.

9. How could it be made less overwhelming for your client group?

Having events linked with the community lunch, so that the message that it send is that it is for everyone. For example, we would like to have a carer event at the community lunch, and then maybe followed up with something like line dancing.

Or for people with disabilities, invite people from Windarring, mix it up with different groups, mix it up.

Clients need support to attend, there's not enough resources to support them, as well as it is quite overwhelming in size and noise.

It would be hard for a person with a sensory issue, would find it too noisy, very overwhelming, for others it is ok, don't know how to change that, some people don't mind.

I haven't referred anyone.

Queuing up for a meal can be overwhelming, especially if you don't know anyone. Maybe have someone greeting (volunteer?), checking on progress.

Has had no feedback or reports that it is overwhelming, it seems to be quite inclusive.

They could go with someone, maybe a volunteer. I have had people on their own, ask if they could sit next to me, so I can see how it would be hard to have the courage to ask. So if a couple could go together, it would be easier.

Greeting at the door, so people don't feel overwhelmed.

This questions is not really relevant, as I don't have clients, but I do mention it to people to go to the lunch. I know noise levels can be a problem to some, but you can't change that.

10. Do you think it's accessible for people who are socially isolated?

It can be nerve wracking, walking into a hall full of people they don't know, it would be difficult for them.

It's open, but how can we get them to it? It's not well known only through community supports.

Yes, good price, central. People are friendly. There are times when I have gone, people come up to me and chat, sit next to me. It is a friendly place.

It is in the town hall, so yes, it is accessible.

Lunch is a difficult place to meet people in the community, people find it hard to engage....people sit with their demographics groups. So no, not really welcoming/supportive for people feeling isolated.

No, because they are already socially isolated so taking that "leap" from isolation to a large group of people could be quite overwhelming.

No, it would be hard (to get there), 30 minutes not long enough. Who would go with them?

To most, but if they can't get here it's hard, any chance of buses??

U3A members are good at car-pooling, but maybe other people have difficulties getting there, not sure, but perhaps transport is a problem.

11. Do any of your clients go to the other lunches? E.g. Salvation Army.

No, but I have heard that there is another lunch, on Tuesdays as well at Main Connection.

No one currently attends.

Yes, because it is on our emergency relief list, we tell them about it. The clients I get from Maldon, I refer to the Maldon lunch.

Yes, the one in Campbells creek (Senior citizens) and the one in the Salvation Army, some used to go to Newstead, but I think that has finished. But even the one in the Salvation Army can be difficult. A vision impaired client when to the Salvo's, took out his wallet to pay, and noticed a man, eyeing the rest of the money he had in his wallet. This made him feel unsafe, he worried he might become a target just to get to his money, he didn't go back.

Not that I'm aware of.

Doesn't apply to me, I go with colleagues.

Not that I'm aware of.

12. What changes do you think the lunch needs? Or is it good as it is?

Posters, promoting it more, newspapers. We would like to partner up, so a Christmas lunch. We would like to do more events if they want to partner up. It will be respite for some.

The menu could be a possible change, as well as noise level – Is there a possibility for that to be reduced?

Is there a possibility to have an outdoor lunch one day? Sit in the sun?

The only thing I can think of is to advertise it more, reach to the other towns, only part of the community know about it. Other than that, it is extremely well done, it is nice to use the local produce.

It seems ok.

What happens to the left-over food? It can be donated.

Transport, more disabled friendly, attract the younger groups, change the misconception that it is only if you are unemployed. Publicized it more.

There seems to be lots of unspoken rules, how should they behave, and the perception from some who attend who believe that you should go only if you have a health care card, otherwise, it's unfair. Makes me think that maybe I shouldn't go, if I can afford to eat somewhere else.

Issue: Should people earning an income pay more? Would that turn people away?
Expectations: People who don't have the health care card a robbing the system

Can't think of anything, only thing is the lunch, whether there is enough food to go around.

What about tea? or coffee?, that would be nice. Menu wise, it nice and healthy.

I'm in-charge of booking council's buildings, the community lunch keeps lots of equipment. I have had groups booking the town hall asked for the possibility of using the equipment, maybe they could hire it out, get them to have an inventory, and when groups/people ask about hiring the equipment, I would refer them to the community house. It would be a good way for them to get some revenue.

You don't want it to get too big, you want to make sure that the people that go are well looked after.

As I said promotion, people need to be aware of it. Also, portion sizes, if you are there early, you only get a small amount, some people don't feel comfortable going for seconds. People coming in later get larger portions.

We estimate about 25 U3A members are community lunch regulars, but of course not all are there every week. The number has grown slightly since the return to the town hall.

U3A has 14 courses/activities on a Tuesday.

Some members find the hall noisy, or that there are too many children.

Many of the attending members say from time to time, 'I forget it's on' or 'I forgot it was Tuesday'.

We could put a reminder in our newsletter about the lunch, and ensure we dispel any suggestions it's a 'charity' lunch, which I think has discouraged a few.

Would CH, in partnership, promote U3A activities, especially the Prospectus of courses, in their publications/website?

13. Do you believe anyone is excluded from the lunch? If so who and why?

It can be difficult for people with mental health issues, to be in such a large and loud place. If you only have a 30 min lunch can also be challenging, especially if you have to line up.

Not to my knowledge.

Maybe transport, bus people in, for those people who have no way of getting there.

Some people with disabilities, living on their own and have problems socialising, people with mental health issues.

No, it is quite inclusive.

No, I just think more people need to know about it, maybe work on changing perception that lunch is for people who are lower paid, hippies, but focus instead that is for everyone... encourage people to bring a friend, maybe more support for people with disabilities (physical and mental).

No, I think it's open to everyone, the menu is inclusive.

Only if you don't know about it, otherwise, it is easily accessible from the street, it is a friendly place.

Appendix 4

Barrier 1: Awareness

Twelve stakeholders were interviewed, the response from the majority of them is that not many people are aware of the community lunches. Only a small proportion know of it and mainly if you live in Castlemaine, if you live out of town, you don't know about it.

It needs to be promoted more:

- Have leaflets at agencies, where they can be given to clients.
- Posters in shops, libraries, health service providers (eg. medical centres), markets,
- School Newsletters, U3A has 540 members, they receive the newsletter, Shire website, newspaper, email to the shire workers

Barrier 2: Cost

Some people find \$5 an be a bit too much for them, Bec Patterson from Mental Health has suggested that community lunch should have should have tokens/vouchers, that organisation can purchase from them, for example, mental health, they will be happy to buy them and then give them to their clients (carers) and other organisations could do the same, this will increase awareness of the lunch, for a cares, it would be respite, it will contribute to the funding of the lunch. It could be given to clients who can't afford it. They would love to partner up with the community lunch for events, like care's day, Christmas, promote it, other agencies would like to participate. Have theme days.

To help with the cost of the lunch, Natalie Parsons from the shire has mentioned that because she is in-charge of booking council's buildings, the community lunch keeps lots of equipment. She's had groups booking the town hall asked for the possibility of using the equipment, maybe they could hire it out. Have an inventory, and when groups/people ask about hiring the equipment, she would refer them to the community house. It would be a good way for them to get some revenue.

Barrier 3: Transport.

Are there community buses available? Can they be used for the community lunch?

Additional suggestions:

- It's hard when you only get 30 min for lunch, and if the queue is too long, then you don't get much time. Maybe have two lines? An express one? Or do the lunch in two sittings, so that the waiting time can be reduced.

Barrier 4: People who are elderly, or have a disability.

- Some people find it very difficult to sit by themselves, some of the volunteers here, who have a disability, find it difficult to go by themselves, they would go if someone went with them, but since lunches are only 30 minutes and everyone's break is at different times, makes it harder. This is where having 2 sittings would help.
- People with disabilities could go with someone, maybe a volunteer. I have had people on their own, ask if they could sit next to me [Mandy, copy centre], so I can see how it would be hard to have the courage to ask. So if a couple could go together, it would be easier.
- Clients who were feeling socially isolated or had a disability like vision or hearing impairment found it very difficult. The Castlemaine Town hall venue, because of its size can be a very noisy place for a hearing impaired person, who would find it extremely difficult to have a conversation, they would have to concentrate very hard. People with vision impairment (like tunnel vision, or degenerative macular disease) find it difficult to navigate, wait in line, carry a plate of food or find a spot
- For some is transport, others suffering from dementia is difficult, people living alone will find it very confronting attending such an open spaces. For example, one referred a vision impaired client, had problems feeding herself, where food ended up on the table, she was very self-conscious of this, also it took her a long time to eat, by the time she was finished the placed was packed up and she did not want to go back. Another client with schizophrenia, went, but people were weary of him, he didn't feel welcome and did not want to come back.

- People living on their own, find the place to be too big, big tables, don't have the confidence/skills to approach a table if they don't know anyone, and will keep to themselves.
- Queuing up for a meal can be overwhelming, especially if you don't know anyone. Maybe have someone greeting (volunteer?), checking on progress.

Additional Comments

Does it always have to be meat, mix it up a bit

Some find the hall noisy, or that there are too many children.

Change the perception that is not just for people that are struggling, that is a lunch that welcomes everyone, that it is inclusive

Positive views:

Overall, many people like it, it is healthy, good value.

Small number did not like that it was vegetarian, but it is not one of the major reasons for people not attending