

The Role of Local Governments in Behaviour Change for Farming Community's Health and Wellbeing



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**Horsham Rural City
Council**
urban rural balance



Local Government & Rural Health

- Local governments in rural Australia have the goal of:
Improving the health and wellbeing of their community
- Role has shifted from providing infrastructure
- Strengthen communities through:
 - social inclusion
 - community participation
 - a sense of belonging
- Aim to enhance the health & wellbeing of the community



Rural Health Issues

- Higher rates of chronic disease (i.e. heart disease and diabetes)
- Mental health issues
- Alcohol misuse
- Decreased access to fresh food and health services
- Lower life expectancies



Role of Behaviour Change in Health

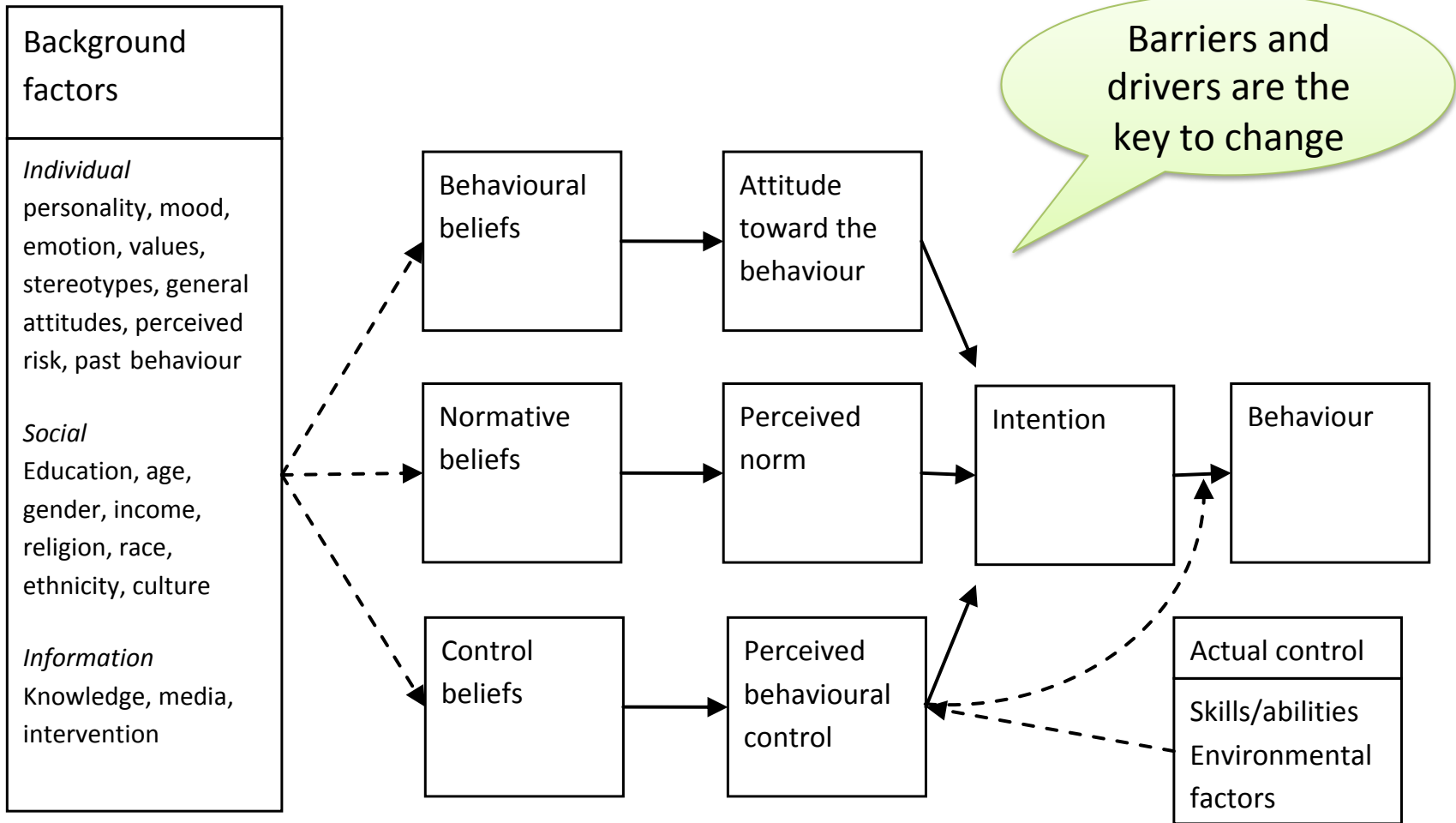
- Health issues are often linked to behaviour choices
 - Level of exercise
 - Choice of food
 - Risky behaviours (i.e. alcohol, risk taking)
- A change in behaviour can improve health outcomes
- But how do we change people's behaviour?



Health Goals & Actions of Selected LGAs

Council	Goals	Actions
Southern Grampians	Strengthening health Inclusiveness & connection Developing capacity Enhancing liveability	Drug and alcohol use Healthy eating Physical activity
Horsham	Social connectedness Physical activity Healthy & liveable environments Economic development Public health & safety	Mental health Healthy eating Community participation & social connection Physical exercise Neighbour checks Immunisation
Hepburn	Community capacity & wellbeing Health protection Health promotion Build resilience & community strength	Physical activity Immunisation Maternal & child health
Hindmarsh	Access to health services Physical activity Food & nutrition Mental health Ageing Water quality	Learning centres Physical activity Mental health Rainwater tank quality Immunisation
Bendigo	Liveability Linked & sustainable towns Build social capacity Promoting social justice Strengthening service capacity	Participation in community life Physical activity Mental health Food safety Life skills

Behaviour Change Theories: e.g. Reasoned Action Model



RAM – its application

- We are not like them!
- Define the behaviour you want changed
- Elicitation is used to determine for the behaviour:
 - Behavioural beliefs (good and bad consequences)
 - Normative beliefs (people who would approve or disapprove)
 - Control beliefs (enablers and barriers)
- Develop a persuasive communication strategy
- Monitor behaviour and evaluate your strategy



Examples of successful application

- Sustainable Farm Families program (National Centre for Farmer Health)
- Children's fruit and vegetable consumption (Gratton et al 2007)
- Sticking to the walking paths (Port Campbell National Park Victoria)



Councils & behaviour change

- Councils need to be capable of implementing effective behaviour change programs
- Council staff are not behaviour change specialists
- Limited in their capability to effectively develop and carry out behaviour change programs
- Many behaviour change programs are information or education programs
- We are proposing a method to fill this knowledge and skills gap in local governments



Local Government Change Agents

Project Aim

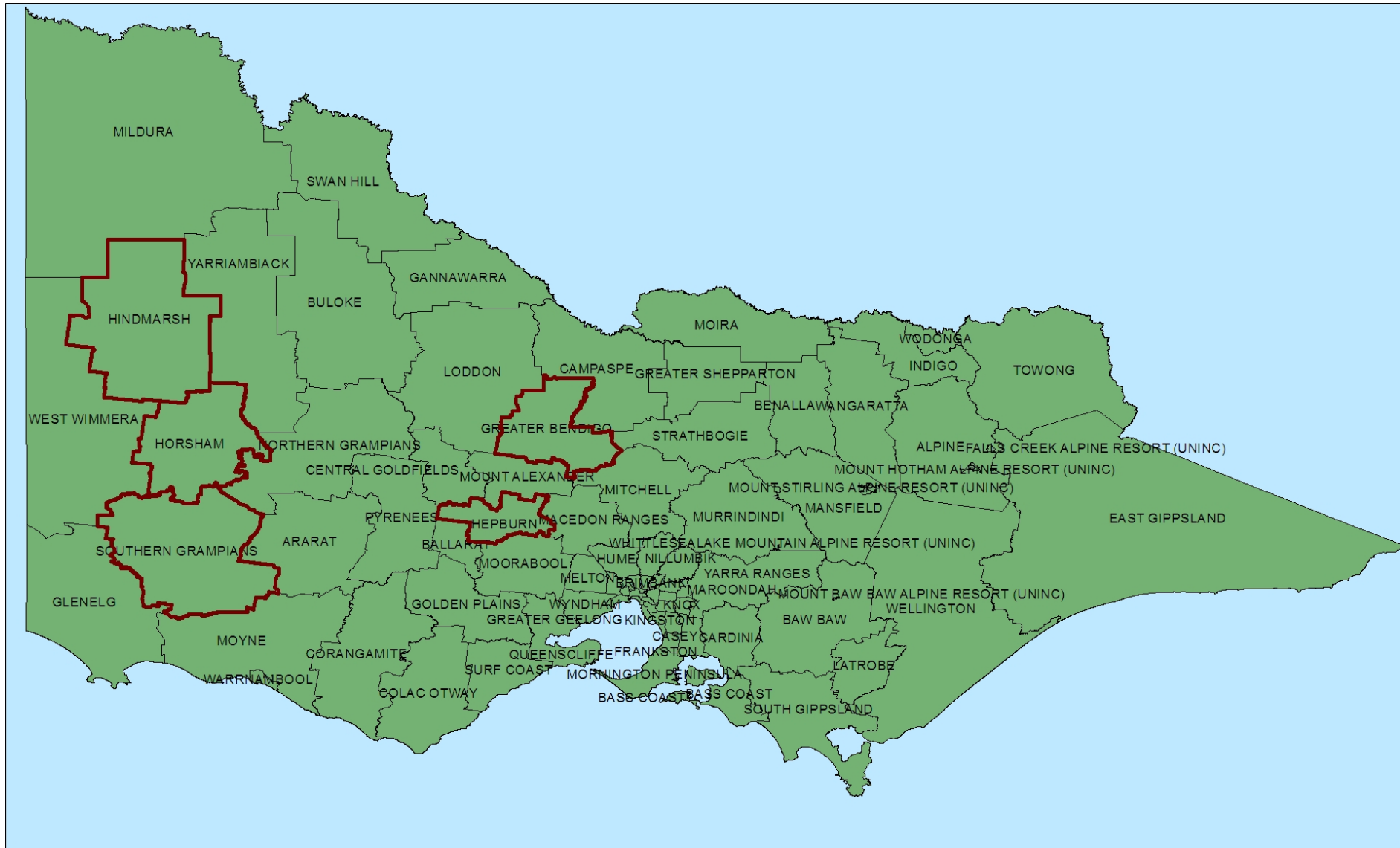
Build the capability of council officers in rural and regional Victoria to help their communities become sustainable and resilient

In doing so:

- Council staff will better understand:
 - How to implement effective behaviour change programs
 - The characteristics of effective behaviour change initiatives
- A framework for training & mentoring staff in behaviour change will be developed
- Councils will achieve priority actions, including increase rural health



Participating LGAs



Project Methods



Increased Capacity of Local
Government Staff

Methods: Training and Mentoring

- Training and mentoring program for Council staff
- Based on:
 - Reasoned Action Model
 - Literature review
 - Council staff & community survey
- Open to all council staff involved in behaviour change
- 12 month training with 4-6 x 1 day workshops



Methods: Training and Mentoring

- Workshops will cover:
 - Behaviour change theory
 - Identification of barriers and enablers in their community
 - Development and implementation of interventions
 - Monitoring and evaluation
- Each participant will carry out a behaviour change program to address a priority action
- Mentoring along the way
- Evaluation of the project & program



Expected outcomes

- Targeted training will provide Council staff with the skills to be able to implement effective behaviour change programs
- Network of change agents in local governments across Western Victoria
- Lead to improvements in health & wellbeing of rural communities



Eat well Move more Live longer

Thank you!
Any questions?

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