

Healthy Cities Onkaparinga: Learning From the Past, Moving Into the Future

GWYN JOLLEY^{1, 2} and HELEN MIKOLAJ¹,

¹Healthy Cities Onkaparinga, ²SA Community Health Research Unit, Flinders University



Introduction

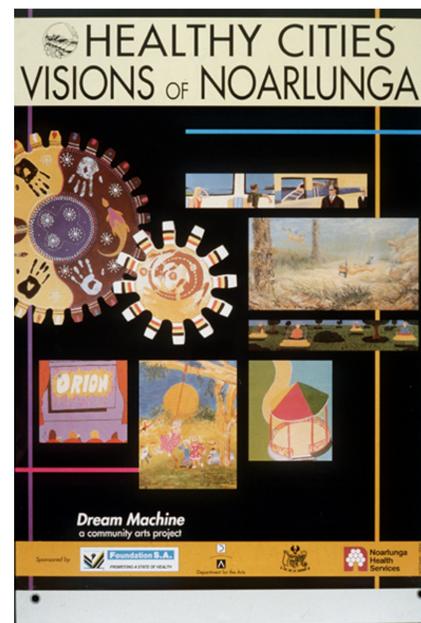
Healthy Cities Onkaparinga (HCO) celebrates its 25th birthday in 2012. This poster presents a summary of past achievements, an analysis of the factors that have sustained us over 25 years, and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing HCO today and into the future.

Background and History

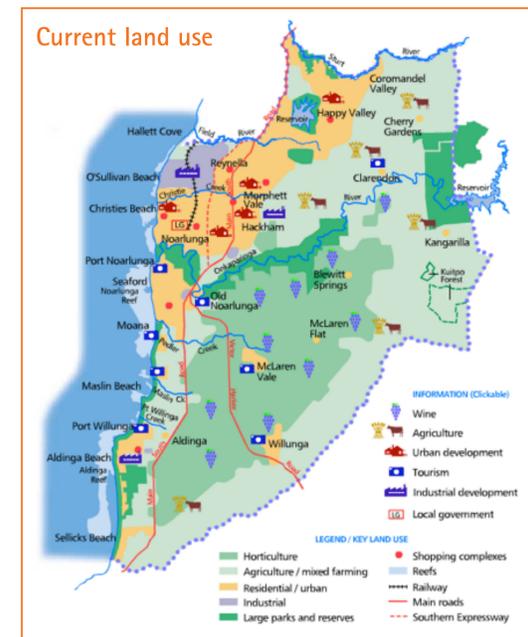
Healthy Cities Onkaparinga, formerly Healthy Cities Noarlunga, is a non-government organisation based within the City of Onkaparinga, south of Adelaide.

- Formed as part of the Federal Government pilot project in 1987
- Incorporated in 1991 with management committee of 8 community members and 7 organisational representatives
- Support from local health service and City of Onkaparinga
- In-kind support from local agencies and community
- In 2008, in line with council changes, Healthy Cities Noarlunga became Healthy Cities Onkaparinga

Onkaparinga has an area of 518 sq. km, population 160,000, (predicted to rise to 200,000 by 2028) and 31 kms of coastline.



Visions of Noarlunga



Our Goals

- To promote a social view of health within government departments, local government, private business and the general community
- To encourage cooperative processes between government and private sectors at a local level which coordinate health promoting activities and foster the community's discussion of better health
- To encourage commitment to improving the health of the local community



Safe water pumps in Bangladesh



AFHC Award for Pioneers in Healthy Cities



Communities in Partnership for a Sustainable and Healthy Future Conference

- Hosted Communities in Partnership for a Sustainable and Healthy Future Conference and 2nd meeting of the Australian Chapter of the Alliance for Healthy Cities October 2009

Sustaining Factors

1. Vision - developed understanding of social, environmental and economic determinants of health
2. Leadership - consistent leadership from Chair of Healthy Cities for the first 17 years, and bipartisan support from Mayors
3. Adapted to local conditions - incorporated status works well for HCO in a lobbying/motivating/facilitating role
4. Juggles competing demands - short term and longer term outcomes, top down social planning with bottom up community action
5. Strong supported community involvement - community involvement taken seriously from the beginning, majority of community members on management committee
6. Recognised as "game board" - draws players together from a variety of sectors
7. Value of evaluation recognised - consistent link with research and evaluation capacity from SACHRU, Flinders University
8. International links and WHO leadership - source of reinforcement and new ideas, provides legitimacy
9. Transition from project to approach - agencies expect to work together on many issues, community has on-going, not sporadic, involvement



International links

Selected Achievements

- Injury prevention work with local small businesses and in Bangladesh
- Vision 20/21- Sharing History, Sharing Destiny
- Food bank
- Multi-cultural group
- Youth theatre support
- Community participation register
- Short course program with Flinders University
- WHO Safe Community award and redesignation
- WHO Regional Director's Award for Outstanding Healthy City 2006

Strengths

Community participation
Diverse representation from community and agencies and program areas
Evolution of self-sustaining initiatives e.g. Noarlunga Community Action on Drugs, Noarlunga Towards a Safe Community
Strong relationship with academia and international Healthy Cities
History of cross-sector partnership in the region
Independent NGO

Weaknesses

NGO structure means weak link with local government
No paid staff or office infrastructure
No ongoing funding

Opportunities

Increased recognition of social determinants of health and understanding within Local Government
Partnership with City of Marion - neighbouring council area and relatively new Healthy City
Membership of Alliance for Healthy Cities and Australian Chapter

Discussion and Conclusions

HCO takes the Ottawa Charter as its foundation and has adopted the strategies of enabling, mediating and advocating for health. Community participation and intersectoral collaboration have always been key features of our approach.

As an NGO, Healthy Cities Onkaparinga has a very different governance structure from most other Healthy Cities and this has enabled us to be independent of local government and the health service. It also means that we have few resources and rely on volunteer help.

In many ways HCO has achieved what it set out to do in terms of getting health promotion onto the agenda and bringing together government, non-government, business and community members to work to improve condition to support health and wellbeing in our city. We now need to re-affirm our commitment to the Healthy Cities approach in ways that ensure we remain relevant in our rapidly changing world.

Contact details

Gwyn Jolley, Senior Research Officer, SA Community Health Research Unit, Flinders University
gwyn.jolley@flinders.edu.au
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/medicine/sites/sachru/>
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A
<http://www.healthycitiesonkaparinga.org.au/>



HCO members at the founding of the Australian Chapter



HCO members with Ilona Kickbusch, developer of the WHO Healthy Cities Project and the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion in 1986

Threats

Future funding in context of budget constraints
Budget and time constraints also having an impact on agency support