



**dorset**  
C O U N C I L

21 August 2020

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The Honourable Greg Hunt MP  
Minister for Health  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet  
Commonwealth of Australia

Dear Mr Hunt

RE: Healthy Dorset – A community-wide health and wellbeing project.

Please find below a budget submission, as supported by Mrs Bridget Archer MP.

This project provides an immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic and will develop an evidenced-based, ongoing community-wide health and wellbeing project for the socially-disadvantaged local government area of Dorset in Northern Tasmania (BASS).

Council is committed to ensuring that our dispersed rural communities stay mentally and physically healthy and connected during and after this pandemic, and see this project as a key element of ensuring this occurs.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions on this funding request.

Tim Watson  
General Manager

<b>Project name</b>
Healthy Dorset
<b>Project proponent</b>
Dorset Council
<b>Timeframe</b>
3 years commencing in January 2021
<b>Location</b>
Dorset Council, Northern Tasmania (BASS)
<b>Total project cost</b>
\$481,500.00
<b>Funding request of Federal Government</b>
\$451, 500.00
<b>Project summary</b>

Healthy Dorset will be an evidence-based, community-wide, holistic, collaborative and sustainable health and wellbeing project that aims to create a connected, vibrant, healthy and resilient community.

Objectives:

- Develop strategic partnerships with key stakeholders for the improvement of healthy lifestyle behaviours and to boost local inter-agency collaboration
- Increase the opportunities for participation in healthy lifestyle activities for those with the highest needs.
- Increase the use of Council owned facilities and assets.
- Identify, develop and maintain resources that promote living a healthy lifestyle.
- Monitor and evaluate project outcomes.

#### **Real stories from similar projects**

Mark came from the 'rough end of town' and had a pretty tough upbringing. In adulthood he decided he wanted to help kids who also came from the 'rough end of town' but didn't know where to start. A community project called Active Launceston supported Mark to get the checks and process in place to start his own business and then employed him to run some sessions teaching teenager's basic self-defence. Mark said "if it wasn't for Active Launceston, he probably wouldn't be alive today". Mark has now reduced his reliance on federal government allowances, can support his family and has recently been elected as a board member of his local neighborhood house.

Joan smoked 30 cigarettes a day for the past 40 years. She also drank 30 cups of coffee a day. Joan participated in a community program called Healthy Quit in George Town Tasmania. Through this program she learnt that coffee is a trigger for her wanting to smoke a cigarette. Over a 7-week period Joan cut her cups of coffee right back to 3 a day and this meant she only had 3 smokes a day too. Joan still has a bit of work to do, but said that out of all of the smoking cessation programs she has

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tried over the years, this is the only one that was non-judgmental, made her feel welcome, and gave her the confidence that she could QUIT for good.

## Project details

Dorset Council is a local government body in Tasmania, located in the far north-east of the state in the electorate of Bass. Dorset is classified as a rural local government area and has a population of 6,652. The major towns and localities of the region include Bridport, Derby and Ringarooma with Scottsdale being the regional centre. This funding application is for a place-based project in response to the COVID19 pandemic.

Healthy Dorset will be an evidence-based, community-wide, holistic, collaborative and sustainable health and wellbeing project that aims to create a safe, connected, vibrant, healthy and resilient community. In partnership with community organisations, local providers and health professionals, Healthy Dorset will facilitate the delivery of a broad suite of activities, events, initiatives and strategy/policy developments. Healthy Dorset will mobilise the community to improve their wellbeing by; filling gaps in provision, creating pathways, reducing barriers and targeting those with the highest need.

Based on community consultation and engagement, initiatives will include but will not be limited to: physical activity, healthy eating, smoking cessation, immunisation and mental health. Healthy Dorset will add value to existing local programs/services and fill any identified gaps. Healthy Dorset will not duplicate services, rather endorse and support new and existing healthy lifestyle providers to enhance their service to identified gaps and their connection with the community. Initiatives will be designed to overcome specific barriers for people with poor health and will drive social inclusion.

Healthy Dorset is based on the evidence of the [Active Launceston](#) project which has successfully delivered programs in Launceston for over 12 years increasing levels of physical activity, creating social capital and becoming an economic multiplier [Health Promotion Journal of Australia, doi: 10.1002/hpja.241; 2019](#). This evidence base has been used to develop many other community projects in Tasmania and beyond including the recently federally funded project: [Healthy George Town](#).

Healthy Dorset aims to support and connect vulnerable community members to the services and supports that they need to improve their knowledge, build their resilience, improve their health and wellbeing and rebuild their lives to ensure that they are not left behind due to the COVID19 pandemic. It also acts as a vehicle to better connect existing and new local providers, support them to fill identified gaps and increase their visibility within the community. COVID19 provides us with a 'teachable moment'. This is a moment in time when community members are eager to engage, learn and improve their lives. That time is now.

## Why is the project needed?

**Healthy Dorset will support the Federal Government to deliver on the National Primary Health Care Framework with a specific focus on the key objectives: Improve access and equity and increase the focus on health promotion and prevention.**

As is depicted in the map below, the ABS tells us that Dorset is a disadvantaged community with all of the associated impacts of social determinants of health. Dorset has a SEIFA ranking of 918 in the bottom 13th percentile nationally, making it one of Tasmania's most disadvantaged local government areas.

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Primary Healthy Tasmania (Tasmania's only Primary Health Network) published a document entitled *Community Health Check 2020: Dorset LGA*, this data is sourced as part of Primary Health Tasmania's ongoing provider support activity. The document draws on multiple data sources to paint a picture of the current health status of the municipality, and it is not a good picture. The report suggests:

- The proportion of people in the Dorset LGA who have completed year 10 (81%) is less than the proportion for Tasmania overall (86%).
- The rate of people who are unemployed is higher in the Dorset LGA (7.6%) than in Tasmania overall (7%).
- Weekly income per household is less in the Dorset LGA (\$822) than in the rest of Tasmania (\$1,100).
- Risk factors to disease are higher in Dorset than Tasmania overall including: insufficient physical activity (19.3% v 14.9%), Obese/overweight (30.4% v 24.3%) Consume less than two serves of fruit per day (49% v 39.3%)
- Rates of childhood immunisation in Dorset (88%) are less than in Tasmania overall (93%)
- In Tasmania, 11% of people are likely to experience high or very high levels of psychological distress. Although Data are not available for the Dorset LGA with confounding impacts of the social determinants of health it is predicted that the local rates would be significantly higher.
- Cancer, circulatory disease and heart disease were the leading causes of death in the Dorset LGA in 2017–2018.

This level of disadvantage has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis and anecdotal evidence tells us this has impacted our community in job losses, increased family violence, increased prevalence of poor mental health, increase substance abuse, increased isolation and other interruptions to family life such as pressures of home schooling. A recent report by Australia's Professor Friel and CEO of VicHealth, Dr Sandro Demaio, published in the Medical Journal of Australia suggests that *"Poor people, the precariously employed, those with big existing debts, the homeless, people with disabilities, the socially marginalised are the vulnerable people who will feel the disastrous effects of this global pandemic most"* The report also suggests that *"COVID-19 will have significant impacts on health inequities in Australia... and will embedded inequities and the social determinants of health will amplify the COVID-19 response effects, exposing socially disadvantaged groups even more"*.

We already know that people living in lower socio-economic communities are at a higher risk of poor health including higher rates of illness, disability and death, and live shorter lives than those who are more advantaged (*Australia's Health 2016, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*). We also know from The State of Public Health Tasmania report (2018) that Tasmania faces greater health challenges than communities on the mainland such as:

- Life expectancy is 1-2 years less than the national average
- Oldest and most rapidly ageing population in Australia
- Highest prevalence of overweight and obese adults nationally (66%)
- 50% of Tasmanians have three or more chronic health conditions, the highest in Australia
- Over 10% of people report cost barriers to getting the health care they needed Socio-economic disadvantage is associated with marked difference in many key health indicators

**Our community needs Healthy Dorset during this pandemic more than ever. It is a single project with a multipronged approach that will improve health and wellbeing, build resilience, and drive social inclusion.** Without a project like Healthy Dorset the gap between the disadvantaged and the advantaged will only become wider and the vulnerable Tasmanians living in our communities will again be left behind feeling unsupported and disconnected.

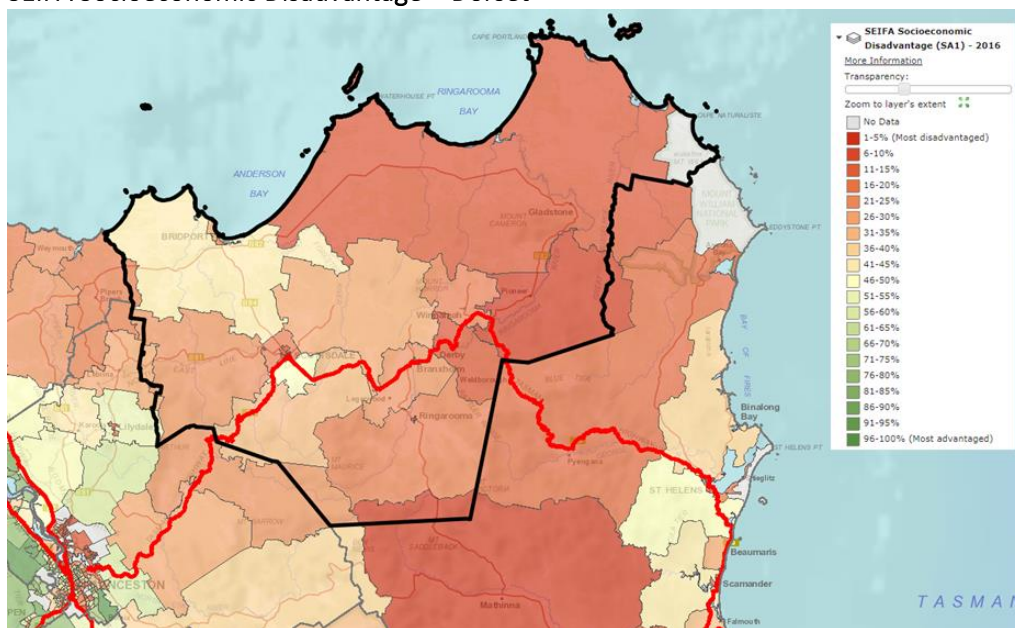
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Healthy Dorset initiatives will be designed through community consultation, to overcome specific barriers local community members have such as a lack of opportunities, low self-esteem, high costs associated with participation, social disconnection and/or a lack of knowledge of the opportunities available in our community. A wide variety of initiatives will be delivered at multiple venues and multiple times to help to cater for all.

Healthy Dorset will support community members in one of Tasmania's most disadvantaged municipalities to engage in improved healthy lifestyle behaviour, thus encouraging sustainable behavioural change. This engagement will happen through free access to programs, resources and networks to ensure the behaviour changes are sustainable into the future, thus reducing the burden of ill health on the individual and at a community/state/national level. **This is a long-term project for Council and we seek support from the Federal Government to help establish the initiative in the first three years.**

### SEIFA Socioeconomic Disadvantage – Dorset



### Target groups

All members of the Dorset community will have the opportunity to be involved in Healthy Dorset programs. However, based on consultation, and ensuring the project identifies and fills service gaps, the key target groups include:

- Older people
- Unemployed or under employed
- Disengaged young people
- Children
- Sedentary adults
- Migrants and refugees
- People who are affected by: chronic condition, disability, psychological distress, illness/injury, low socio-economic status, substance abuse, criminal behaviour.

It's expected the benefit to the community will reach far beyond these specific target groups, as the participants share their key learnings with colleagues, families and friends both in and outside the municipality.

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## Project outcomes

Healthy Dorset will have a wide range of outcomes for one of Tasmanians most disadvantaged populations. First and foremost, Healthy Dorset will support and connect community members to live well during this pandemic, a time of uncertainty and constant change and help community members to find their place in the 'new normal'. Outcomes include but are not limited to:

- Increased participation in physical activity
- Improved food choices
- Improved weight management
- Reduction in smoking
- Improved mental health
- Increased use of council owned assets and natural assets
- Increase local capacity to deliver health promotion projects
- Increased collaboration between council and health/community sector
- Well established framework that can continue into the future
- Increased employment opportunities for local business
- Increased referrals to existing services
- Increased confidence and resilience
- Reduced risk of chronic disease
- Improved pride-of-place
- Rebuilding connections and social fabric

## Why Council?

The Tasmanian Public Health Act 1997 stipulates that Local Government authorities must “*develop and implement strategies to promote and improve public health*”. In line with these statutory obligation’s, Council is committed to deliver this project and will provide significant in-kind support and a financial contribution each year (as outlined in the budget). Furthermore, Healthy Dorset perfectly aligns to the Mission of Dorset Council which is: ***An efficient Council that provides value to ratepayers, is responsive to community challenges and is proactive in implementing practical initiatives in response to these challenges, be they social or economic.***

In partnership with community organisations, local providers and health professionals Council is the best-placed to deliver this project through the use of our assets and resources, the application of sound governance and our prudent financial management.

## Project management and partnerships

Healthy Dorset will be built on partnerships and collaboration. The project will be managed by the Dorset Council and we will establish a ‘special committee’ of Council to guide, direct and co-create the project with membership across a wide variety of stakeholders and community representatives. This committee will provide an effective and efficient pathway to consult with target groups through the organisations represented on the Committee, ensuring the project is kept abreast of current community needs. This awareness of community needs will in turn support Committee members to make decision about priorities for program and service implementation.

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Furthermore, Healthy Dorset will seek support from industry stakeholders through a variety of other means. This will vary from sporting clubs, associations and small businesses through to University of Tasmania, state government departments and community houses. Volunteers and university students will also be engaged to support the project. By using these partners, a legacy will be created in connecting our community members to existing services and providers for ongoing education and support and will also boost regional economic growth.

As a quality control measure, Council have established a strategic partnership with local providers [Healthy Tasmania Pty Ltd](#) to support the management and delivery of Healthy Dorset in the first 12-months. Healthy Tasmania Pty Ltd has a strong track record of effectively and efficiently developing, delivering and evaluating community projects. They are specialists in developing successful and sustainable collaborations and supporting communities to improve quality of life by engaging with existing providers. Healthy Tasmania Pty Ltd call themselves 'community organisers'. They collaborate with a range of partners to build capacity, improve equity, inclusion, health and wellness; and promote pride of place. Importantly, Healthy Tasmania Pty Ltd's key role in the partnership will be empowering locals and committee members by equipping them with the skills, tools and industry-knowhow to effectively improve the wellbeing of their own community. This 'for purpose' company has been responsible for successfully developing community-wide initiatives in George Town, Launceston and Hobart and their work has been recognised locally, nationally and internationally.

Council will employ a Project Officer who will coordinate the implementation of the project. The Project Officer will receive mentoring, training and support from Healthy Tasmania Pty Ltd and will also receive support from Council's existing staff. Council will elect a chair person for the Healthy Dorset Committee from existing elected members to ensure the project has buy-in at the elected level. This process has been developed to ensure that the project is an ongoing concern and its fluidity will accommodate changes in needs, demand and fiscal constraints.

## Budget

Based on the budget below, the funding request of the Federal Government is: \$451, 500.

Council will contribute in-kind support and a financial contribution of: \$30, 000.

Additional funding will be sought from state government, local philanthropic organisations and granting bodies and sponsors.

Council will accept partial funding.

Income			
Funder	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Dorset Council	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Federal Government	\$ 229,500.00	\$ 113,500.00	\$ 108,500.00
<b>Total income per annum</b>	<b>\$ 239,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 123,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 118,500.00</b>
Expenses			
Budget Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Project Officer: 0.8 FTE Level: 5	\$ 78,000.00	\$ 78,000.00	\$ 78,000.00
Promotion: Logo, website, merchandise, signage, advertising etc	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00

Equipment: computer, phone, Co2 Monitor, yoga mats, stationary, crates etc	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Data collection: Phone app licence	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
Evaluation and reporting	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Project Management: Consultants; training, mentoring, resources, tools, on-on-one support	\$ 75,000.00	\$ -	\$ -
Program delivery via local SME's: mindfulness, smoking cessation, yoga, bike riding, healthy eating, mental health etc	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Catering and consumables	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Administration: Postage, printing	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
<b>Total per annum</b>	<b>\$ 239,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 123,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 118,500.00</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 363,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 481,500.00</b>