



Health & Wellbeing Outcomes

Focus: What have we learnt from extensive research and community lead health & wellbeing initiatives conducted in the 10 years since the fire regarding the health impacts and progress in our community.

Ask the panel a question, submit online or raise your hand during the Q&A section

<https://forms.gle/rQKWNQC1gKSmWBRR7>

Moderator



Dr Matthew Carroll (He/Him) — Co-principal Investigator, Hazelwood Health Study, Monash Rural Health Churchill

Bio

Dr Matthew Carroll is the Co-Principal Investigator for the Hazelwood Health Study and is responsible for the Gippsland components of the study. Dr Matthew Carroll is a Senior Research Fellow within the Monash School of Rural Health and is based at Churchill, in the Latrobe Valley. Dr Carroll has been involved in the study from its inception, and leads the Psychological Impacts stream as well as being involved in other stream activities

Stay Connected

We are currently planning to do a related session on Friday 16 Feb as part of the innovation breakfast series and are keen to connect with different community groups across 2024.

Contact details: matthew.carroll@monash.edu

<http://hazelwoodhealthstudy.org.au/>

Panellists



Dr. Lieke Scheepers — Early Life Follow-up Stream Research Fellow, Menzies Institute for Medical Research (University of Tasmania).

Bio

Dr. Lieke Scheepers, an epidemiologist and Research Fellow at the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, specialises in studying how early-life exposures shape later-life health outcomes.

Recently, she joined the Hazelwood Heath Study's Early Life Follow-up (ELF) stream to explore the effects of mine fire exposure during pregnancy and infancy on health outcomes in childhood and adolescence.

Topic Highlights Summary

- Pregnant women exposed to smoke from the fire were at greater risk of developing gestational diabetes.
- No long-term impact on lung function of babies exposed to the fire. The mild effects, shown 3 years after the fire, did not persist to the 7-year follow-up.
- Children whose mothers were exposed to the fire were more often prescribed croup and asthma medication, such as prednisone, during the first two years of life.
- Children whose mothers were exposed to the fire were more likely to visit the emergency department for respiratory condition and for allergies and skin rash, in their first year of life.

Stay Connected

Contact details: lieke.scheepers@utas.edu.au

<https://hazelwoodhealthstudy.org.au/research-areas/child-health-development>



Tim Campbell (He/Him) — Hazelwood Health Study, Monash University

Bio

Tim is an early career researcher in the field of psychology with Monash University School of Rural Health, based in Churchill. Alongside a PhD project exploring parental mental illness and family-focused mental health care, Tim is a research officer with the Psychological Impacts stream of the Hazelwood Health Study. This

includes surveying adults, children and families, and conducting analyses of administrative databases that record local health, educational, and social outcomes. As the community moves forward from the mine fire event, the stream also seeks to understand the community's recovery, resilience, and social wellbeing.

Topic Highlights Summary

Some of the key findings from our research in the HHS Psychological Impacts stream are:

- Overall, adults in Morwell experienced low to moderate levels of distress in relation to the mine fire. Those who were exposed to more smoke during the event, who were younger at the time, or have experienced other adversities have typically been most vulnerable to distress.
- Children in Morwell also experienced, on average, moderate levels of distress in relation to the event, with primary school-aged children more susceptible. NAPLAN data suggest that the event caused some delays in academic progress among students attending Morwell primary and secondary schools, which persisted for some years.
- Local health service data suggest that the mine fire period was associated with subsequent increases in demand for mental health care and prescription of psychiatric medications.

Stay Connected

Contact details: tim.campbell@monash.edu

<https://hazelwoodhealthstudy.org.au/research-areas/psychological-impacts>



Dr Susan Yell (She/Her) — Hazelwood Health Study, Community Wellbeing Stream, Federation University

Bio

Dr Susan Yell is an Adjunct Senior Research Fellow in the Institute of Education, Arts and Community at Federation University's Gippsland Campus. She leads the Community Wellbeing stream of the Hazelwood Health Study. The Community Wellbeing stream's focus is on resilience, recovery, and transition for this community since the mine fire. We are also looking at how to track changes in community wellbeing using publicly available data.

Ten years on, many of these issues are still relevant to a range of other challenges the Latrobe Valley community is facing.

Topic Highlights Summary

Some of the key findings of our research are:

- The handling of the Hazelwood mine fire eroded trust in the authorities dealing with the crisis.
- There were flaws in the way the community was communicated with during the crisis.

- Some community members formed groups to provide support to one another and to plug communication gaps.
- Social media played a role in enabling these community groups to express their views and advocate for themselves and the community.
- The Hazelwood mine fire inquiry recognised the need for improvements in communication, but there are still concerns about the apparent lack of a plan for a similar future emergency.
- The recovery phase raised the question of 'recovery to what?'
- Many community members have hopes and aspirations for the future and want to engage in these conversations.

Stay Connected

Contact details: sue.yell@federation.edu.au

<https://hazelwoodhealthstudy.org.au/research-areas/community-wellbeing>



Ellen-Jane Browne (She/Her) — Latrobe Health Assembly

Bio

Ellen-Jane is currently Executive Officer of the Latrobe Health Assembly, a place of community informed health innovation situated in Victoria's Latrobe Valley. She has been in the role for the past three and half years. Ellen-Jane brings to the role a long history of working in the university and

government sectors. These include - Principal Advisor for the establishment of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone, Director Portfolio Services at DHHS, Academic Register at RMIT, and many other senior officer roles spanning six government departments and two Universities. Ellen-Jane also tutored in the areas of Sociology, Political Science and Law. Away from work, Ellen-Jane has a love of the Strzelecki Ranges in South Gippsland, the CWA, her old school Land Rover Defender, and Antarctic History First Editions. Ellen-Jane holds a variety of graduate and post graduate qualifications in the areas of Sociology, Political Science, and Public Administration from Monash, RMIT and Melbourne Universities.

Topic Highlights Summary

- The Latrobe Health Assembly provides our community with the opportunity to shape health and wellbeing outcomes in the Latrobe Valley.
- The Latrobe Health Assembly is the only one of its kind in Australia and is a once in a generation opportunity to lift health outcomes in the Latrobe Valley.
- The Latrobe Health Assembly is the communities Assembly... it is a recognition by the Government that the Latrobe Valley community has not always been listened to, and that by creating the Assembly we are giving voice to the community.

- The work of the Latrobe Health Assembly is broad, and it seeks to influence all those things that contribute to better health. We work with our partners to develop, test, pilot and evaluate new ways of intervening in the health system. All with community voice as the focus.
- Above all, the Latrobe Health Assembly is about listening and providing hope for a better Latrobe Valley.

Stay Connected

The Latrobe Health Assembly welcomes community members and invites interested people to explore our webpage and consider joining the Assembly, becoming a friend of the Assembly or joining one of the advisory groups.

Contact Details: info@healthassembly.org.au

<https://www.healthassembly.org.au/>



Jane Anderson (She/Her) — Latrobe Health Advocate

Bio

Jane was appointed as the Latrobe Health Advocate by the Minister for Health in 2018. The first-of-its-kind in Australia, the Advocate is part of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone and provides independent advice to the Victorian Government on behalf of Latrobe Valley communities on system and policy issues affecting their health and wellbeing. Jane provides community-wide leadership by enabling, mediating, and advocating for health improvements.

In 2019, Jane was appointed Chair of the Latrobe Valley Asbestos Taskforce, which was established by the state government to review how asbestos is managed in the Latrobe Valley.

Jane is a member of Regional Partnerships Victoria, a committee member of Gormandale Community House, and a former Board Director of Lifeline Gippsland.

Previously, Jane was the Regional Director of Anglicare Victoria for 12 years and a practising lawyer for 7 years in private and community settings. Jane served with Victoria Police for 11 years in roles including prosecutor, investigator, and general police officer.

Topic Highlights Summary

Explanation of Advocate role, with an expectation to hear from people not ordinarily heard.

The Engagement model developed with the community has 3 areas to emphasise:

- **We engage:** An essential part of my job is to listen to and understand the views and needs of people in Latrobe. For me, the only way to do this is to first understand how people in Latrobe want to have their voice and what is important to them.
- **We influence:** We identify immediate actions and longer-term aspirations, and work to improve current systems and transition to new systems. We connect stakeholders into community and build community sensitivity to the genuine constraints of the system.
- **We prompt change:** We advocate on behalf of Latrobe communities for systems change to improve health and wellbeing.

Priority Campaigns that have enabled systems change to improve: Palliative care; Human connections; Access to Services; Community First Planning; Accessible Transport

Examples of systems change — community voice being louder and more valued, stronger relationships and collaboration, changes to mindsets, improved services

Stay Connected

I welcome the opportunity to meet with individuals or groups to listen to their concerns and aspirations for sustainable health and wellbeing.

Contact Info: info@lhadvocate.vic.gov.au or phone 1800 319 255

<https://www.lhadvocate.vic.gov.au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/LHAdvocate/>

<https://twitter.com/LHAdvocate>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/latrobe-health-advocate/>
