Healthy Cities Australia

Annual Report

2026



Healthy People. Healthy Cities.

Our Impact

3,985
participants across 53 regular programs

5,350
volunteer hours dedicated to community programs

30,000+
year 11 and 12 students (tomorrow's voters and leaders)

Pre and post evaluation data consistently show improvements in health literacy, physical activity levels, healthier food choices and feelings of belonging.

That's an estimated community value of over $187,250 as well as building skills, purpose and connection.

Studied Healthy Cities initiatives as part of the revised NSW Health & Movement Science curriculum.

For every $1 invested in preventative health

$1

$14 are saved in healthcare and other costs.

$14

"True prevention happens much further upstream.

It happens in housing policy, urban planning, transport systems, education, employment, economic development, food systems and environmental protection. It is found in whether children can walk safely to school, whether communities have access to affordable healthy food, whether people can afford secure housing, and whether public spaces encourage connection, activity and belonging."

Kelly Andrews, Healthy Cities Australia CEO

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Healthy Cities Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Healthy Cities Australia warmly welcomes everyone, irrespective of their ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation or gender identity. We are committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination.



healthycities.org.au

From Our Board Chair



Dr Lina Engelen
Chair at HCA

Lina Engelen

What a year it has been. Twelve months ago, we had just become Healthy Cities Australia, with a new name and an ambition to lead the Healthy Cities movement locally, nationally and across the Asia-Pacific. This year, that ambition has started to take shape.

Prevention rarely makes headlines. When it works, nothing dramatic happens: a child doesn't develop asthma, an older person stays independent, a worker stays healthy and on the job. Yet prevention is how we build healthier, more productive people and more resilient communities. Our three-year Strategic Plan is designed to make that value impossible to ignore. By 2027, we aim to be recognised as a national leader in preventative health, with stronger evidence, stronger partnerships and stronger communities. We are already measuring the return: every dollar invested in our Active In-Betweens program returns six dollars in social and economic value. We will continue to build that evidence across all our work, so that prevention is seen for what it is: one of the smartest investments Australia can make.

This year we are proud of several key achievements:

- **Strengthening our international leadership:** We hosted the Steering Committee of the Alliance for Healthy Cities, welcoming delegates from nine countries across the Western Pacific. With Cr Melinda Lawton chairing the Steering Committee and our CEO Kelly Andrews as its not-for-profit delegate, Australia's voice in the movement has never been stronger.

- **Renewing a national network:** With UNSW Cities Institute, we convened a World Café workshop in Sydney. It brought together leaders from local government, health, academia and advocacy from across Australia, and revealed a strong appetite for a renewed national Healthy Cities network.

- **Bringing the world to Sydney:** After a year of preparation, led by co-chairs Kelly Andrews and Dr Jinhee Kim, we co-hosted the 11th Global Conference of the Alliance for Healthy Cities with UNSW Cities Institute in September 2026. Under the theme Healthy Cities for All, it welcomed more than 400 delegates from 30 countries and it was a success.

- **Reaching new communities:** Our Healthy Ageing programs, delivered with Charles Sturt University, are expanding our reach to Nowra, Goulburn and Queanbeyan. Our School Lunch Project pilot is exploring how a cooked school lunch can improve children's health and learning.

- **Tackling food insecurity:** We continued to rescue good food and get it to people who need it, and we are working towards a regional food hub to do this at scale.

I am proud of how far we have come, and I also want to be candid. Some milestones have been reached and others are still ahead of us. Too much of our work depends on short-term, program-specific grants. That funding makes it hard to plan, retain skilled staff and invest in the evidence and advocacy that drive lasting change.

As we approach our 40th anniversary in 2027, I invite you to invest in healthier communities. We welcome tax-deductible donations of any size. We are also seeking long-term grants and partnerships that support the organisation as a whole, not only individual programs. Supporters can also direct their Return and Earn refunds to us or join us as members. Every contribution helps turn prevention from an aspiration into a reality.

On behalf of the Board, I thank my fellow directors for their wisdom and generosity. I thank Kelly and our staff and volunteers for their tireless commitment, and our funders, partners and members for their trust. Together, we are helping to ensure the Healthy Cities movement remains a force for health and wellbeing for generations to come.

Reflections From Our CEO



Kelly Andrews
CEO at HCA

Kelly Andrews

Forty Years After Ottawa: Why Are We Still Funding Illness Instead of Health?

In 1986, the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion fundamentally changed how the world thinks about health. Rather than viewing health simply as the absence of disease, the Charter recognised that health is created in the places where people live, work, learn and play. Forty years later, its vision remains as relevant as ever as communities grapple with rising chronic disease, food insecurity, housing stress, mental ill-health and widening inequities.

The Charter outlined five interconnected action areas for improving population health:

1. Build Healthy Public Policy

Health is shaped by decisions across all sectors, not just healthcare. Policies relating to housing, transport, education, food systems and employment all influence health outcomes and equity.

2. Create Supportive Environments

Healthy choices should be the easy choices. Safe neighbourhoods, affordable housing, active transport infrastructure and access to healthy food all contribute to better health and wellbeing.

3. Strengthen Community Action

Communities are best placed to identify local priorities and lead solutions. Empowering local people builds ownership, resilience and long-term change.

4. Develop Personal Skills

People need access to information, education and resources that support healthy living throughout the life course.

5. Reorient Health Services

Healthcare systems must move beyond treating illness and invest more strongly in prevention, health promotion and addressing the social determinants of health.

Chronic diseases account for 9 out of 10 preventable deaths in Australia each year and costs over a third of all health spending (more than $24 billion) to treat. We have known better for a long time. A decade ago, The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre published modelling suggesting:

- Each additional kilometre walked has been estimated to result in health-related benefits that range in value from $1.04 to $2.08.
- Each additional kilometre cycled results in health-related benefits that range in value up to $1.12
- Increasing walking within a neighbourhood is associated with health-related benefits worth an average $14.65 per adult annually, depending on the destination and context.
- The economic value of increasing neighbourhood walkability is worth an average $1.62 per adult annually.

The economic argument for investment in prevention is strong, but political will is weak. Chronic disease imposes enormous costs on individuals, governments and the economy through hospitalisations, reduced workforce participation, absenteeism and premature death. Preventive action not only improves health outcomes but also strengthens economic productivity and reduces pressure on health services. The Productivity Commission estimated that improving the health of Australians could add approximately $4 billion annually to national GDP. Prevention is not a cost; it is an investment in a healthier and more prosperous future.

Recent findings from the HILDA-Statistical-Report-2026 reinforce this reality. Rising housing stress, increasing food insecurity and persistent disadvantage among single-parent families demonstrate that health outcomes are deeply connected to social and economic conditions. Addressing these challenges requires action far upstream of the healthcare system.

This is where the Healthy Cities approach offers a powerful pathway forward. By bringing together local government, community organisations, health services, businesses and residents, Healthy Cities turns the principles of the Ottawa Charter into practical action. As we mark forty years since Ottawa, we absolutely know that health and equity lie in creating vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities.

Despite this, our organisation, and prevention more broadly, remains chronically underfunded and undervalued. While Australia spends the vast majority of its health budget treating illness, only a small proportion is directed toward preventing disease and creating the conditions that enable people to live healthy lives. If we are serious about improving wellbeing and reducing inequities, governments at all levels must move beyond recognising the value of prevention and commit to funding it accordingly.

My Thanks

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary team at Healthy Cities Australia. Behind every program, partnership, workshop, advocacy effort and community initiative featured throughout this report is a group of dedicated professionals who are deeply committed to improving health and equity in the communities they serve.

Our staff and volunteers bring expertise, passion and determination to some of the most complex challenges facing society today. They do it with very limited resources and make every dollar count. Their commitment extends well beyond their professional obligations and reflects a genuine belief that every person deserves the opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilling life. Please read, enjoy and share the stories and achievements throughout this Annual Report. I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved this year.

Thank you, Margareta Saveska, Clare Hastings, Sean Wilson, Michelle Barry, Ingrid Ferguson-Pillay, Loreto Medina, Alexander Brown, Grace Potter, Melinda Lawton, Samantha Karmel, Linda Milling, Manami Henderson, Vicky Wallace, Stephanie Cowan, Roxane Lancaster, Isabella Russell, Jarrah Manning, Linda Sabato, Keegan Whitten, Riahnna Ricardo, Sienna Lokker, Jannine Devery, Jaye Cartwright, Kate Gant, Shannon O'Grady, Trude Salat, Bing Liu, Natasha Atelj-Smith, Jacinta Rice.



Kelly Andrews and Dr Shelley Bowen, CEO of Health Futures Australia at the Healthy Cities World Café workshop in Sydney.

About Us

At Healthy Cities Australia, we focus on promoting health – reducing disease and creating inclusive, thriving communities across Australia. Our vision is simple yet ambitious: a healthier, brighter future for everyone.

Founded in 1987 as Healthy Cities Illawarra, we have grown from our local roots into a national organisation, rebranding in March 2025 to reflect our expanded role. Now 39 years young, we continue to build on our legacy of leadership, collaboration, and prevention.

Since 2007, we have proudly served as the Secretariat of the Australian Chapter of the Alliance for Healthy Cities. We also sit on the Steering Committee of the Alliance, guided by the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities framework, which recognises that the social, economic, and physical environments are key to community health and wellbeing.

Healthy Cities Australia is an independent, not-for-profit organisation and a registered health promotion charity with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (ACNC). We bring people, partners, and communities together to create long-lasting change. We champion prevention over cure, working at the intersection of health, environment, and social wellbeing to deliver real impact where it's needed most.

Our current issue and impact statements:

Issue

There is a decline in health and wellbeing in Australian cities

Impact

Healthy Cities Australia leads a bold transformational social policy movement that drives improvements in health, equity and community wellbeing.

Our Impact in 2026

- 26 staff driving programs and advocacy
- 5,350 volunteer hours delivered
- 53 regular community programs
- 3,985 participants actively engaged; a 527% increase from FY25

Together, we are shaping healthier places to live, work, and play, connecting people and communities to the opportunities they need to thrive.



What We Do

At Healthy Cities Australia, we turn preventative health into practical action. We design and deliver programs, campaigns, and partnerships that make it easier for people to eat well, move more, breathe cleaner air, and feel connected to their community.

We focus our efforts where they matter most:

Healthy Eating & Food Security – improving access to nutritious, affordable food and supporting healthier choices.

Physical Activity & Active Transport – encouraging walking, cycling, and other active ways to get around safely.

Community Wellbeing – creating inclusive spaces and opportunities for people to connect, belong, and thrive.

Our approach is grounded in collaboration. We work alongside councils, schools, community organisations, researchers, and universities to co-design solutions that reflect the needs of each community.



Our Values

Integrity

We develop evidence-based programs, which work to prevent and control chronic ill-health and disease in humans. We adhere to the principles of the WHO Healthy Cities Movement.

Equity

We participate in the development of public policy to effect change for population health outcomes. We aim to reduce inequity by building capacity. We recognise the diverse needs of our communities.

Collaboration

We are active members of the WHO Alliance for Healthy Cities. We partner with government and private organisations as well as grass roots community groups to prevent and control ill-health and disease in humans and protect our environment.

Inclusivity

We aim to foster social connection and inclusion of all those who are marginalised in our communities.

Looking Ahead

Help Us Celebrate 40 Years of Healthy Cities!

Help Us Celebrate 40 Years of Healthy Cities! In 2027, Healthy Cities Australia will proudly celebrate 40 years of building healthier, more connected communities. To mark this incredible milestone, we will be hosting a public exhibition at Wollongong Library in March - May, showcasing the people, projects and partnerships that have shaped our journey since 1987.

We would love to reconnect with former staff, volunteers, board members, program participants, Award winners, partners and supporters who have been part of our story over the past four decades. Whether you were involved for a few months or many years, your contribution has helped create a lasting impact.

If you have photos, memories, stories or memorabilia to share, or would simply like to hear about upcoming celebrations, we encourage you to get in touch. Please share your details so that we can create a renewed list of legends who have made this organisation what it is and keep you in the loop. Get in touch here.

We can't wait to celebrate with you later in 2027!

Looking Forward: The Cost of Absence

Despite the optimism of approaching our 40th anniversary, this Annual Report is written at a time when health promotion, prevention and the broader community sector remain chronically underfunded. Like many small not-for-profit organisations, our financial sustainability is under pressure, and our future cannot be taken for granted.

> **A question every community organisation should ask is: if we ceased to exist tomorrow, what would be lost?**

Without organisations like ours, communities risk becoming less connected, less inclusive and less willing to address the root causes of poor health rather than simply responding to its consequences. Who would advocate for prevention in a system largely focused on treatment? Who would bring together government, researchers, community leaders and residents to tackle complex challenges? Who would ensure that the voices of those experiencing disadvantage are heard? The true value of community organisations is often only recognised when they are no longer there.

As we look ahead, our task is not simply to remain financially viable, but to continue delivering value through strong partnerships, leadership and a commitment to healthier, fairer communities. For four decades, we have worked quietly behind the scenes to strengthen community capacity, foster collaboration and influence the conditions that allow people to thrive.

In an increasingly inequitable world, Healthy Cities Australia is more than an organisation; it is a community asset. When community assets are under-funded or even disappear, the impact extends far beyond a balance sheet. It is felt in weaker networks, fewer opportunities for participation, diminished advocacy and a reduced capacity to create places where everyone can live well. That is a loss our communities can ill afford.

Become a Member here

Donate here

Our Vision

> "By 2027, Healthy Cities Australia will be recognised as a national leader in preventative health, with stronger evidence, stronger partnerships, and stronger communities"

Healthy Cities in NSW Classrooms

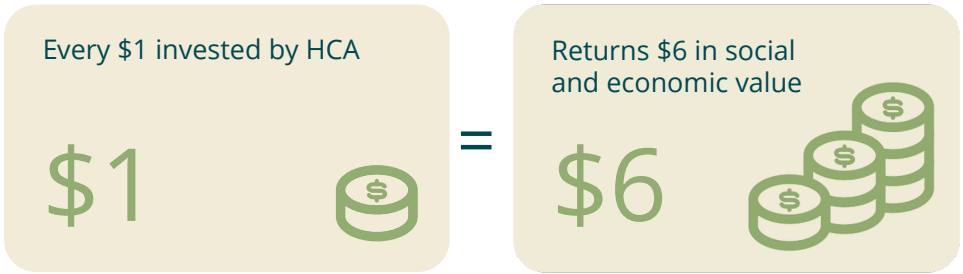
It is a tremendous honour for Healthy Cities to be recognised by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) as a leading example of the practical implementation and localisation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through its recent inclusion in the NSW Higher School Certificate subject Health and Movement Science, HCA is now being studied by Year 11 and 12 students across the state as a real-world model of how communities can address the social, environmental and economic determinants of health through place-based action.

The curriculum highlights Healthy Cities Australia's work in creating healthier, more inclusive and sustainable communities, demonstrating how global goals can be translated into meaningful local initiatives. Students explore programs that promote physical activity, social inclusion, healthy ageing, community safety and equitable access to opportunities, while examining their links to multiple SDGs.

Being embedded within senior secondary education provides a unique opportunity to engage future voters, leaders, professionals and changemakers. It ensures that thousands of young Australians are exposed to the principles of community wellbeing, sustainability and collective action. We are proud that our work continues to inspire not only healthier communities today, but also the next generation of citizens who will help shape Australia's future.



Example of the Social Impact of Active In-Betweens:



Our Programs

Driving prevention, influence, and change for healthier futures.





Volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of Healthy Cities Australia, transforming ideas into action and strengthening connections across our communities. During 2025-2026, we welcomed 56 new volunteers who contributed more than 5,350 hours across programs, events, health promotion initiatives, and organisational projects, representing an estimated community value of over $187,250.

Beyond the numbers, volunteers helped create opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect, participate, and thrive. Their contribution strengthened community wellbeing, fostered inclusion, and supported HCA to respond to local community needs.

A particular highlight was our Youth Volunteer Team. Recognised during National Youth Volunteer Week, these dedicated young people served as positive role models, bringing energy, creativity, and fun to every program they supported. Their insight into emerging youth trends and experiences helped keep our programs relevant, engaging, and impactful.

HCA also supported future leaders through nine university undergraduate placements and four six-month internships. Additionally, we worked with 8 groups of MBA researchers from UOW on topics from food insecurity, financial sustainability and commercialisation to digital systems and technological advancement. We thank our students, volunteers and their families for the lasting difference they make in our communities.

> "I really appreciated the strong sense of community and genuine passion everyone seemed to have for the wellbeing and happiness of the kids. I loved having the opportunity to engage with kids and join in activities rather than just observing. It was a very positive environment and I always felt well supported."
>
> Eliza
> **Active In-Betweens Volunteer**





Acknowledging our Board of Directors

We gratefully acknowledge the outstanding contribution of our volunteer Board of Directors, whose commitment and expertise guide the strategic direction, governance, and sustainability of our organisation. Their dedication – offered freely alongside their own professional and personal responsibilities–ensures that we uphold the highest standards of accountability, transparency, and impact. By lending their time, skills, and passion, our board members play a vital role in shaping our vision, strengthening our community partnerships, and stewarding Healthy Cities into a strong and sustainable future.



Dr Lina Engelen
Chair



Dr Lance Barrie
Deputy Chair



Kelly Andrews
Secretary & Public Officer, CEO



Andrew Mastroianni



Franca Facci



Dr Mary-Anne Land



Katie Singh

56

new volunteers have been onboarded since July 2025.

5,350

volunteer hours contributed over the past financial year.

$187k+

volunteer support in community value.

Food Fairness Illawarra

foodfairnessillawarra.org.au

The Global Goals For Sustainable Development



2 ZERO HUNGER | 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | 4 QUALITY EDUCATION | 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | 13 CLIMATE ACTION | 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS | 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Food Fairness Illawarra (FFI) was established in 2005 to work towards food security for all in the Illawarra region. Our collaborative efforts involve working closely with local councils, the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, the University of Wollongong, community groups, charities, businesses, and passionate individuals.

Illawarra Food Rescue and Relief Program

This year, FFI renovated our website, making it easier to navigate and sharpening its focus on food security, food rescue and food relief. The refreshed platform improves access to food support information, the Fair Food Directory and resources for businesses wanting to donate surplus food.

We were proud to support the 3rd Annual Illawarra Edible Garden Trail with 36 gardens opening between Otford and Shell Cove to over 600 enthusiasts! This year, the trail became the first of its kind to expand to include Native Habitat Gardens celebrating not only growing food for humans but food & shelter for Illawarra's native wildlife. Congratulations to Emily Fowler, Claudia Walters, Alicia Coleman and your amazing volunteer team of organisers for such a successful and inspiring event.

We also worked as a founding member of the new Illawarra Shoalhaven Food Futures Taskforce Chaired by Regional Development Australia Illawarra Shoalhaven. Through this coalition, we continue to contribute to a more resilient, equitable and sustainable local food system.

Our major project, funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority, is the Illawarra Food Rescue and Relief Program designed to strengthen the region's ability to rescue surplus food and redirect it to people experiencing food insecurity. Six new partner organisations joined the network, expanding collaboration across the food relief sector and creating new pathways for community support.

A highlight was the growth of the Food Donations WhatsApp network, which now connects around 60 members and has facilitated more than 300kg of surplus food donations. Through business engagement, social media campaigns, direct outreach and community partnerships, more local food businesses began donating surplus food, helping reduce waste while supporting vulnerable community members.

The project delivered practical resources for the sector, including a Regional Food Donations Action Plan and a Guide to Reducing Food Waste for hospitality and food retail businesses. Partner organisations also received infrastructure support such as fridges, freezers and shelving, increasing their capacity to safely store and distribute rescued food.

Illawarra Food Rescue and Relief Program is proudly funded by: nsw epa | NSW GOVERNMENT

The Illawarra Regional Food Hub: Pilot Project



Over the past 12 months, the Illawarra Regional Food Hub project has progressed from concept to an investment-ready regional initiative. The project has focused on establishing the strategic foundations, partnerships and evidence base required to create a coordinated food hub that addresses food insecurity, reduces food waste and strengthens food system resilience across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven.

Key achievements included completion of a comprehensive feasibility study and business case, investigation of best-practice food hub models, assessment of regional infrastructure needs, and development of proposed governance and operational frameworks. Extensive research and sector mapping identified service gaps, food recovery opportunities and the infrastructure required to increase the scale and efficiency of food rescue and relief across the region.

Stakeholder engagement was a major focus throughout the year, with consultations undertaken across the food relief, food rescue, community services, local government and food donor sectors. This engagement informed project design and strengthened regional collaboration around food security challenges and solutions.

Strong governance structures were established through the creation of the Illawarra Regional Food Hub Steering Committee, bringing together key sector representatives to provide strategic oversight and guide project development. Partnerships were also expanded across community organisations, food relief providers, food rescue organisations and potential industry partners.

Significant effort was directed toward securing future investment, including the preparation of grant applications, funding proposals, prospectuses and investment materials. Engagement with government, philanthropic and corporate stakeholders increased awareness of the project and strengthened opportunities for future funding and support.

Communication and advocacy activities helped build momentum for the initiative through presentations, stakeholder briefings, social media, educational resources and the development of the ‘Missing Link’ video, which highlights the need for regional food recovery infrastructure. Advocacy with local, state and federal stakeholders further positioned the project as a strategic regional response to food insecurity, food waste and circular economy objectives.

As a result of this work, the project has developed a strong regional evidence base, increased stakeholder support, strengthened partnerships and advanced the Illawarra Regional Food Hub to an implementation-ready stage. Priorities for the next 12 months include securing investment, confirming infrastructure requirements, expanding partnerships and progressing detailed implementation planning to establish the region's first coordinated food security and circular economy hub.

> **“The food is already there. The need is clearly there. What's missing is the infrastructure to connect the two. The missing link."**
>
> Kelly Andrews
> **CEO, Healthy Cities Australia**

Go to our GoFundMe campaign page

Connect with Food Fairness Illawarra:

Cook Chill Chat



The Global Goals For Sustainable Development



Cook Chill Chat (CCC) is a novel, place-based, trauma-informed cooking program that fosters social cohesion, strengthens community links, and promotes physical and mental wellbeing.

Cook Chill Chat continued to provide community members with practical food literacy skills, opportunities for social connection, and increased confidence in preparing healthy, affordable meals. Delivered in partnership with community organisations and social service providers, the program reached diverse groups across the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Southern NSW, including families with young children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, women experiencing domestic violence, older adults, and people experiencing social isolation.

Across the year, Cook Chill Chat engaged more than 213 participants through 17 programs, demonstrating the value of community-based food literacy initiatives in promoting healthy eating, social connection and wellbeing across diverse communities.

One of these programs was funded by the Illawarra International Women's Day Major Prize and we partnered with SASSI in providing this program with their clients. All other programs were funded by COORDINARE in partnership with Koonawarra PS, Gawura, Pt Kembla Senior Citizens, Vinnies, Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services, BCR Communities Sanctuary Point, Goulburn CWA, Queanbeyan Senior Citizens, Sustaining NSW Families, Benevolent Society and Mission Australia.

The program's expansion within Gawura Aboriginal Corporation, including dedicated men's and women's groups, strengthened relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and established a foundation for ongoing collaboration. This partnership has since created opportunities for future program delivery with young people through Gawura's KYAKK program.

From January to June 2026, Cook Chill Chat was delivered to a further 155 participants across eleven community-based programs. Activities were delivered in partnership with organisations including Vinnies, Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services, BCR Communities, Mission Australia, the Benevolent Society and Sustaining NSW Families, with additional programs commencing in Crookwell and Bungendore at the end of the reporting period.

Impact at a glance (FY 2025-26):

- 17 Cook Chill Chat groups delivered.
- 213 women and families reached; a 57% increase over FY26.
- 12 community partnerships, strengthening each year.
- Participants consistently reported increased confidence, stronger social connections, and healthier eating habits.

Cook Chill Chat continued to deliver strong outcomes, with participants reporting increased confidence in preparing healthy meals, improved understanding of budgeting and nutrition, and greater social connection within their communities. The program's partnership with Sustaining NSW Families strengthened in its second year, contributing to significantly increased attendance and positive outcomes in food literacy, healthy eating behaviours, parental confidence and family wellbeing. By bringing together participants of all ages, from young adults to people in their 80s, the program fostered new friendships, reduced social isolation and encouraged greater community participation.

Participant satisfaction remained exceptionally high, highlighting the value of combining food, learning and connection to build healthier, more connected communities.



> “I don't eat chickpeas like this (in the curry), but this is actually good. I'll be happy to cook this at home.”
>
> Cook Chill Chat participant



Dinner Table Project



The Global Goals For Sustainable Development



The Dinner Table Project is a 6-week family cooking program where adults and kids cook healthy home-cooked meals and share dinner together. The program is open to families from the Shellharbour area who have at least one child aged 8+ years old (including younger siblings) and is designed to build capacity that will empower families, that need it most, to spend more time together and have conversations as well as prepare, cook and eat healthy home-cooked meals.

Across the year, the program engaged 79 participants from 43 families, providing opportunities for families to build practical food skills while strengthening social connections and community belonging.

A key outcome was the program's ability to support ongoing engagement and relationship-building beyond individual sessions. Families were able to participate in both the Shell Cove Community Centre and Illawarra Women's Health Centre programs, benefiting from continued connections with program staff and fellow participants. Through this extended involvement, families developed stronger community networks and has since become a regular participant in Healthy Cities Australia's Active In-Betweens program.

The Dinner Table Project continues to demonstrate the value of family-centred food programs in creating supportive community connections, reducing social isolation and fostering healthier, more resilient families.

Programs delivered:

- Gawura Women's Group (Term 3 2025): 14 participants across 14 families
- Berkeley Public School (Term 4 2025): 23 participants across 7 families (follow-on from What's for Lunch? Pilot)
- Shell Cove Community Centre (Term 1 2026): 13 participants across 4 families
- EduPlay Collaboration (Term 1 2026): 14 participants across 5 families
- Illawarra Women's Health Centre (Term 2 2026): 15 participants across 5 families

> **"My kids really look forward to coming every week."**
>
> Active In-Betweens family at Dinner Table Project



What's for Lunch?



The Global Goals For Sustainable Development



A pilot lunch program supporting equity in a NSW primary school

Setting

This partnership project was delivered at Berkeley Public School, a government primary school in the Illawarra region of New South Wales, with a focus on creating healthier, more equitable food environments for children. The school is in an area of high socioeconomic disadvantage and serves a culturally diverse community, including a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Project partners included Berkeley PS, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Health Promotion Unit, Early Start University of Wollongong and Healthy Cities Australia.

Challenge / Opportunity

Food insecurity remains a significant and growing issue for families with children, affecting nutrition, wellbeing and learning. While policies support healthy eating in schools, access to nutritious food during the school day is not guaranteed. This project sought to address an opportunity to intervene early in the life course by improving food access and the social experience of eating at school.

Approach / Intervention

"What's for Lunch?" was a pilot school lunch provision program delivered to a Year 1 cohort across two school terms. The program was co-designed with school staff, families and community partners. Nutritious cooked lunches were prepared onsite and provided three days per week.

Menus were informed by evidence-based school lunch models. The program supported social interaction and mealtime conversation through shared eating at tables with peers and teachers. Data were collected through parent and staff surveys, observations, and child feedback to assess feasibility, acceptability, and impacts.

Outcomes and Learnings

The pilot demonstrated that school-based lunch provision is feasible and acceptable within a NSW primary school and can support equitable access to nutritious food. Staff and parents reported improvements in children's willingness to try new foods supported through responsive mealtime practices, social connectedness and reduced stigma associated with food access.

Across 52 service days, 2,600 meals were provided. Nutritional analysis showed meals contained an average of 2.81 serves of vegetables per meal, substantially exceeding the 0.21 serves typically reported in children's school lunchboxes. Parents looked forward to their child trying new foods (100%), having a healthy filling lunch (69%) and accessing free meals (44%).

Partnerships, sustainable resourcing, and integration with existing school systems are critical for scaleup. This case study highlights schools as key settings for equity-focused interventions and provides practical insights for initiatives seeking to address food insecurity and supporting healthier life course trajectories.

Watch: kids share what they liked about the project!

Play Illawarra

playillawarra.com.au

The Global Goals For Sustainable Development



PlayIllawarra.com.au is a free online playground and event directory for Wollongong and Shellharbour, and an event directory for Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, and Shoalhaven. It promotes outdoor, active play and community connection through a 'What's On' calendar featuring free, family-friendly events.

Throughout 2025-26, Play Illawarra delivered a range of free community events engaging more than 2,000 parents, carers and children. Highlights included Culture Mix, Nature Shake, Let's Play Kanahooka, a Fishing and Beach Play Day, and Let's Play Kiama, which attracted 407 registered participants and received overwhelmingly positive community feedback, with families praising the event's accessibility, inclusiveness and focus on active outdoor play.

The program also expanded opportunities for young people through school holiday activities and two youth activation events delivered in partnership with Stockland, local police, youth services and community organisations, reaching approximately 400 young people and promoting positive youth engagement.

A strong focus remained on community education around children's health and wellbeing. In partnership with the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District and Life Education, Play Illawarra delivered the Screen Time Tips for Families webinar in response to growing community concerns about children's screen use.

The webinar was informed by local survey data, attracted 110 registrations and provided practical strategies to support healthy digital habits, sleep, physical activity and family wellbeing. Survey findings showed parents' primary concerns related to screen time, online safety, behavioural impacts and signs of screen dependency.

Impact at a glance (FY 2025-26):

- 2,000+ parents, carers and children engaged through free community events
- 2nd annual Connecting Communities Through Play attracted 150 play enthusiasts.
- Active website users 15,000 up 84% from FY25; new users 15,000 up 82% from FY25.
- Over 2,200 individuals receive the bi-weekly newsletter; 330% audience growth from FY25.

> **It was free! As a family of 5, financially it's nearly impossible lately to go to fun events! Thank you."**
>
> Let's Play Kiama attendee

Advocating for Play

Play Illawarra continued to be a leading voice for children's right to play through local, state and national advocacy contributing submissions to local and state government, advocating for inclusive, accessible and challenging play spaces that support children of all abilities, as well as greater consideration of risky play and the needs of older children and young people.



The annual Connecting Communities Through Play forum brought together more than 150 educators, health professionals, community leaders and government representatives to explore the role of play in creating healthy, connected communities.

Play Illawarra also presented at the Australian Public Health Conference and the National Sport and Physical Activity Convention, strengthening its position as a national leader in play advocacy and child-friendly communities.

Through community events, partnerships, research and advocacy, Play Illawarra continues to create opportunities for children and families to connect, be active, and experience the many health and wellbeing benefits of play, while championing the importance of play in community planning and public health.



Active In-Betweens



The Global Goals For Sustainable Development



Active In-Betweens provides a place-based, trauma-informed after-school program for children aged 8 to 12 years. The program recognises the pre-teen years as a pivotal stage of development, supporting children as they build healthy habits, strengthen social and emotional skills, and navigate the transition to adolescence and secondary school.

This year, Active In-Betweens continued its programs across five health priority population areas; Albion Park Rail, Bellambi, Bundaleer, Warrawong Koonawarra and Warilla. Each term has a specific health focus including food and nutrition, fundamental movement skills, safety and substance education - all supported by a team of trauma informed Health Promotion Officers and volunteers.

In 2025, Wollongong and Illawarra CALD Local Drug Action Team completed community consultation in Bellambi and Bundaleer with 181 children and young people, 47 adult community members, 26 professionals and 14 LDAT members. There was strong community support for safe spaces for children, early education on alcohol and drug harms, healthy food options, community activities and positive relationship role modeling as provided by Active In-Betweens.

The contribution of Active In-Betweens youth volunteers continued to grow throughout the year. Drawing on their experiences as former program participants, these young leaders provided peer support and contributed to organisational initiatives, including the development of the Child Friendly Statement and its supporting visual design.

This ensured the final resources were engaging, accessible, and informed by the perspectives of young people.

With ongoing thanks to our partners Communities for Children Shellharbour via Barnardos, Community Drug Action Team, Alcohol and Drug Foundation and Dapto Leagues Club.

Impact at a glance (FY 2025-26):

- 3,543 enrolments across the AIB program; 16% increase from FY25
- Over 350 hours of free after school activity across 5 sites.

> **"This program has been so important for my child's development, they often refuse to go to the shops or other programs/activities but she is genuinely and openly excited and happy to come on program day. I'm grateful for the connections my child had developed with the facilitators... she only talks to them about what is happening in her life."**
>
> Active In-Betweens parent

Breath Better Illawarra



The Global Goals For Sustainable Development



Asthma is one of the most common chronic diseases affecting Australians, leading to 13,600 hospitalistions each year. Breathe Better Illawarra (BBI) is an HCA initiative funded by Asthma Australia through the Pearl Sheppard Trust. It incorporates community asthma awareness, advocacy, and healthcare practitioner education to improve outcomes for children with asthma in the Wollongong area.

BBI continued to deliver our popular 'Give Me Space!' self-management workshops for families living with asthma, in partnership with the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District's Community Asthma Service.

One parent told us: "it was very informative and the kids had so much fun". We asked participants about their knowledge and skills to help look after their child's asthma before and after the workshop, with most parents reporting they felt more confident after the workshop than they had at the beginning.

This year BBI supported healthcare practitioners by providing funding for a University of Wollongong initiative to improve asthma management in primary care and holding the 2026 Asthma Update for healthcare professionals on World Asthma Day in May in partnership with Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, COORDINARE, and the National Asthma Council. 57 attended, including nurses, doctors and pharmacists.

We also continued our advocacy for asthma-safe environments. Wollongong City Council has responded to our campaign to make new residential and commercial developments all-electric in their latest changes to the Development Control Plan. We also appeared at the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Clean indoor air in partnership with the NSW Branch of the Public Health Association of Australia.

Impact at a glance (FY 2025-26):

- 102 participants attended a self-managed workshop.
- 57 healthcare professionals trained.
- Active advocacy:
  - 2 joint submissions
  - 2 HCA submissions
  - 8 community action group meetings
  - 3 policymaker engagements
  - 7 stakeholder engagements
  - 4 public appearances



Community Walking



The Global Goals For Sustainable Development



Walking is one of the simplest, most accessible, and most effective forms of physical activity. According to the Australian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines, adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week. Regular walking not only helps people reach these targets, but also improves cardiovascular health, supports mental wellbeing, reduces the risk of chronic disease, and strengthens social connections.

Community-based walking programs are widely recognised in the evidence base as effective, low-cost interventions that improve health outcomes and reduce isolation. Research shows that walking in groups increases adherence to physical activity programs, builds social support, and improves mood and resilience compared to walking alone.

This year Healthy Cities has been able to expand its successful 5x5, 3x3 community walking programs from being offered only in the Illawarra to now being offered in Nowra, Queanbeyan and Goulburn. With funding from COORDINARE: Southeastern NSW Primary Health Network, in the past year HCA has delivered a total of 11 walking programs in eight different locations across four regions with a total of 60 group weeks of walking. More than 150 participants have enjoyed these community walks, experiencing the joys of being active outdoors and being able to socially connect with others.

Impact at a glance (FY 2025-26):

- 150 participants across 11 walking programs in 8 different locations across 4 regions.

Our walking program attracts mainly older adults with an average age of about 66 years of age. HCA has led walks along the beautiful Wollongong coastline, along the Queanbeyan River, with walkers sometimes spotting the local platypus that lives there; along the Wollondilly River in Goulburn and along the Shoalhaven River in Nowra. HCA has been out walking in all seasons, with those in Goulburn having to start at 8.00am due to the extreme temperature in January yet rug up in July with the 4 degree mornings. We have enjoyed the lovely spring and autumn colours that you see when walking in inland towns.

Social impact and wellbeing outcomes

The walking program has delivered significant social and community benefits by fostering connections, peer support, and leadership among participants. Walkers regularly support one another through companionship, mobility assistance, and inclusive welcoming practices. The program has connected neighbours who had never met and reunited former classmates after decades apart.

These relationships have grown into genuine friendships, reducing social isolation and strengthening community cohesion. A group of participants in their 80s, once strangers, now carpool together and meet weekly at a new walking site. The program has also built community leadership, with peer-led walking groups continuing independently between scheduled activities. These outcomes demonstrate stronger social networks, increased community connectedness, and participants' capacity to support one another.

Local Partnerships



Healthy Urban Environments
Community of Practice

2025-26 has been an exciting year for the local built environment and public health professionals who make up the Healthy Urban Environments Community of Practice (HUE CoP). We held four well-attended quarterly meetings on healthy urban environments topics including:

- 'Safe Streets to School': July 2025 (18 participants)
- 'Climate Change, Mental Health, and the Built Environment': October 2025 (18 participants)
- 'Healthy and Accessible Transport': March 2026 (22 participants)
- Climate Resilience and Urban Greening': June 2026 (20 participants)

The group also came together to celebrate its achievements in December 2025 with 29 members and friends attending an in-person end-of-year gathering in Mt Kembla with urban design expert Andy Sharp. Andy shared insights from his decades of experience leading urban renewal and healthy urban environments initiatives in Canberra and Sydney. The group also met with Healthy Streets founder Lucy Saunders to learn more about how this framework can support urban design professionals in Australia to make streets more human-centric.



Following on from these workshops, HCA worked with presenters to produce a new series of factsheets hosted on the HCA website including case studies and links to key resources.

- Safe Streets to School: Healthy Urban Planning Approaches
- Climate Change, Mental Health, and the Built Environment
- Healthy and Accessible Transport

We leveraged these factsheets to obtain media coverage of these important issues, with two stories featuring HUE CoP on ABC Illawarra radio and one on ABC Gold Coast.

Thank you to Co-Chairs Jennie Pry and Michael Alvisse for your stewardship and Alexander Brown for ongoing coordination.


Healthy Urban Environments
Community of Practice
Fact Sheet:
Climate Change, Mental Health, and the Built Environment
Proudly supported by
Healthy Cities Australia
Problem
www.healthycities.org.au
Climate change is a major public mental health concern, especially where poverty and insecure housing intersect. It affects social and environmental health determinants, as more frequent heatwaves, bushfires, droughts, and storms threaten homes and essential infrastructure. These events elevate stress and displacement, particularly in disadvantaged communities, while straining already stretched healthcare and emergency services.
The mental health burden is amplified by overlapping disasters and livelihood stress, with children and young people especially impacted. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face disproportionate impacts, including loss of connection and homelessness. The built environment can both amplify or ameliorate risk. Poor housing increases vulnerability, while inclusive, well-designed spaces foster resilience and social connection. Adaptation is vital, with local climate plans and features like tree canopy, shading, and cooling infrastructure helping communities cope and recover.
76%
of Australians aged 12-25 concerned about climate change
400%
expected rise in heat-related deaths in Sydney if global temperatures climb by 2-3 degrees
Subject Matter Experts
Lyrian Daniel
Email: Lyrian.Daniel@unisa.edu.au
Phone: +61 8 8302 9740
people.unisa.edu.au/Lyrian.Daniel
Jo McClellan
Email: jo@twothings.au
Phone: +61 407 932 573
twothings.au
Jacky Dawkins
Email: jacqueline.dawkins@sydney.edu.au
sydney.edu.au/matilda-centre
Contact and Membership
Interested in learning more or in joining the HUE CoP?
Contact: Alexander at alexander@healthycities.org.au or call 4283 8111

Community Drug Action Teams

Since 1999, Community Drug Action Teams (CDATs) across NSW have been building safe, healthy and resilient communities through preventing, responding and reducing health, social and economic harms related to drug and alcohol use.

Overdose Awareness Day Community Vigil

On 31 August, over 70 community members attended a vigil at Flagstaff Point Lighthouse, Wollongong, to mark International Overdose Awareness Day. The lighthouse was illuminated purple in recognition of those lost to overdose and the families, friends and communities impacted by overdose.

PreVenture Program

PreVenture is an evidence-based prevention program that uses brief, personality-focused workshops to promote mental health and delay substance use amongst young people. The PreVenture program supports young people to build resilience and develop healthy coping strategies. Sixteen PreVenture workshops were delivered across two schools, with 80% of participants reporting an increased awareness of effective coping strategies to manage challenges and reduce the risk of future alcohol and other drug-related harms.

CDAT
We're stronger together

The Price of a Drink Photography Competition

70 young people participated in 7 workshops across Wollongong and Shellharbour part of the Price of a Drink photography competition. The workshops encouraged participants to explore alcogenic environments, that is, how alcohol consumption is normalised in our society. For example, through advertising and marketing of alcoholic beverages and high alcohol outlet density.



Illawarra Women's Day of Dance and Culture

The Illawarra Women's Day of Dance & Culture once again brought women from across our region together for a vibrant day of connection, celebration and wellbeing. With around 200 people filling the room, the atmosphere was alive with energy, colour and community spirit.

This year's theme, "Take Me to the Island," celebrated the bold rhythms and vibrant traditions of the Pasifika community. The day featured joyful dance performances, shared cultural experiences, and plenty of moments that reminded us of the strength that comes from coming together.

Alongside the dancing, women had the chance to access free health checks and explore a wide range of information and support services.

Stallholders included:

- Multicultural Communities of the Illawarra (MMCI)
- Women Illawarra
- Wollongong City Council
- Multicultural Health (ISLHD)
- Supported Accommodation & Homelessness Services Shoalhaven (SAHSSI)
- Illawarra Multicultural Services
- Illawarra Women's Health Centre
- BreastScreen NSW
- NSW Police
- WEA Illawarra

ILLAWARRA WOMEN'S DAY OF DANCE+CULTURE

The mix of culture, health and community support made the day both meaningful and practical, a space where women could dance, connect, and also learn more about services available to them. This event is unfortunately the last one HCA will be hosting due to funding and resourcing constraints. The organising committee, however, will continue to seek support and a host venue for future events.

We'd like to thank everyone who was involved in making the day possible over the last four years, from performers and stallholders to the women who filled the room with energy and spirit. Your contribution helped create an unforgettable event that brought women together in friendship and community. Special thanks to Margaret Biggs, Kerrie Guillaume, Ingrid Ferguson-Pillay, Sue Meehan, Diana Lyon, Debbie Gates and Judith Hurley.

Watch: The Illawarra Women's Day of Dance & Culture event recap



Advocacy & Awareness





Communications & Reach

Through digital campaigns, social media, and our monthly newsletter, we share stories that inspire change and highlight the importance of preventative health. These platforms give our community a voice, amplifying local stories, sharing knowledge, and building momentum for healthier cities across Australia.

The FY26 marketing and communications strategy:

- **Had a national focus**, expanding from the Illawarra and Shoalhaven to inspire and support healthier, thriving communities across Australia.
- **Was integrated,** recognising the interaction between social, economic, and physical environments in shaping health outcomes.
- **Addressed the social determinants of health**, acknowledging that health is shaped by the conditions under which people are born, live, work, play, and age, including both natural and built environments
- **Aliged with the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030**, contributing to global targets through local and national action.
- **Buillt cooperation and partnerships**, fostering collaboration between public, private, and not-for-profit sectors to amplify impact.
- **Promoted health equity**, recognising and responding to the needs of vulnerable groups, while strengthening social connection and inclusion.
- **Empowered individuals**, organisations, and communities, by encouraging participation in decision-making, developing skills and capacity, and supporting self-sufficiency and resilience.

By the Numbers

Strategic communications play a vital role in strengthening our impact. By leveraging social media, our website and traditional media, we promote our programs and advocacy, engage communities and contribute to conversations on the public health issues that matter most. Key results this year include:

Social Media

- Social media channels had a combined 7,958 followers across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Newsletters

- Email subscriber base grew 21% (FY25) to 8,064.

HCA Website

- Our team wrote 58 blogs.
- Website traffic grew by 320%, viewed 130,252 times by 27,000 active and 27,000 new website users.

Traditional Media

- We made headlines 53 times (152% growth from FY25).



Community Events

Attending and supporting community events is an important part of how we connect with local families, build relationships, and strengthen community wellbeing. As we continue to grow our impact, we are also developing a fee-for-service Pop-Up and Play model, creating new opportunities to engage communities while generating sustainable income to support our programs and services.

July

- 7th: HCA pop-up at Shellharbour NAIDOC Day
- 8th: HCA pop-up at Warrawong NAIDOC Family Day

September

- 5th: HCA hosts the Illawarra Women's Day of Dance and Culture
- 20th: HCA pop-up at Culture Mix by Wollongong City Council



November

- 2nd: HCA pop-up at Nan Tein Temple Wellness Day
- 22-23rd: Illawarra Edible Garden Trail
- 25: HCA pop-up at Nature Shake

March

- 3rd: HCA pops up at the Seniors Festival

February

- 23rd: HCA presents at the Hospitality and Food Business Forum

January

- 21st: Play Illawarra Pop-up and Play at Let's Play Kiama



April

- 15th: HCA pops up at Saltwater Festival



May

- 5th: HCA hosted 2026 Asthma Update for World Asthma Day
- 28th: HCA pops up at KidsFest Shellharbour
- 23rd: HCA celebrates National Volunteer Week at the Shellharbour Volunteer Expo

June

- 10th: Play Illawarra & Healthy Cities host Connecting Communities Through Play

Advocacy In Action

One of our greatest advocacy successes this year was our campaign to make new developments in Wollongong all-electric. All-electric planning controls are now being adopted through revisions to Wollongong's Development Control Plan. We also supported healthier transport, working with Community Industry Group to make submissions on the Illawarra Shoalhaven Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan. Unfortunately, this major state government strategy is not backed up with the funding needed to realise its stated objective of achieving mode shift to active and public transport.

Formal Submissions

- Illawarra Shoalhaven Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan
- Liquor License Objection BWS Warrawong
- Nowra Precinct Renewal
- NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy and Water 'Investigation into minimum energy efficient rental standards' Consultation Paper
- NSW Net Zero Commission 2025 Consultation
- NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Clean Indoor Air
- Warrawong Parklands Masterplan
- Wollongong City Council 'Let's talk about play!' Playspace Strategy consultation
- Wollongong City Council 'A City for People' City Centre Planning Review

Meetings with Decision Makers

- Paul Scully, Member for Wollongong and Planning Minister
- Ryan Park, Member for Keira and Health Minister
- Ron Hoenig, NSW Minister for Local Government
- Anna Watson, State Member for Shellharbour
- Katelin McInerney, Member for Kiama
- Rose Jackson, NSW Housing Minister
- John Graham, NSW Transport and Nighttime Economy Minister
- Alison Byrnes, Federal Member for Cunningham
- Carol Berry, Federal Member for Whitlam

Our advocacy is amplified by working with partners. For example, we provided input on healthy planning issues to the NSW Council of Social Services' Health Equity Alliance submission on the Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing in NSW. Similarly, we engaged in clean air advocacy with the Public Health Association of Australia NSW Branch, co-authoring a submission on clean indoor air and appearing together at the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Clean Indoor Air.

Partnerships and Endorsements

- #RaisetheAge NSW
- 350 Australia
- Barnardos
- Healthy Futures
- NSW Council of Social Service
- NSW Council of Social Service - Health Equity Alliance
- Public Health Association of Australia NSW Branch
- Safer Air Project
- Sweltering Cities
- Unharm

More Advocacy

- Climate and Health Alliance - Climate and Health Summit 2025
- Collected 352 signatures on a petition to Wollongong City Council on clean indoor air
- Energy Access and Poverty Plan Workshop, Wollongong City
- Extreme Heat Awareness Day
- Feeding Australia
- Illawarra Food Hub
- HCA Federal Election Platform 2025
- Ride2Work Day
- Shellharbour Disability and Inclusion Letter
- Support for Cr Petreski's ALGA Notice of Motion
- Support for Cr Anne Martin NSWLGA Notice of Motion on Electrification
- Witness at the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry Clean Indoor Air
- Wollongong City Council Alcohol Free Zones CDAT response
- Wollongong City Council Cycling Network Plan workshop
- Wollongong City Council Disability Inclusion Letter
- Wollongong City Council EV Charging Pilot
- Wollongong City Council Robinson Park Toilet Block Letter

More Than A Cyclist

Healthy Cities Australia is proud to announce that More Than A Cyclist has been awarded the Community Programs Award at the 2026 Australian Road Safety Awards, recognising the campaign's success in building empathy between road users and creating safer, more respectful roads.

Presented by the Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) at Parliament House in Canberra, the Australian Road Safety Awards celebrate programs that are delivering meaningful, measurable change in road safety across the country. In 2026, the Awards attracted a record 128 entries, highlighting the growing commitment of organisations, governments and communities to reducing road trauma and improving safety outcomes for all Australians.

For Healthy Cities Australia, this recognition reflects years of work to challenge perceptions, shift behaviours and remind drivers that the person on a bike is, above all else, a person.

Learn more about the campaign and how to run it in your community:
https://www.morethanacyclist.org.au







Financials & Funders



Financial Report Summary 2026

Financial Report Summary 2026 - Healthy Cities Illawarra Incorporated

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2026

CURRENT ASSETS	2026	2025
Bank Cheque Accounts & Term Deposits	$ 794,756.00	$ 835,693.00
Receivables	$ 193,117.00	$ 5,140.00
Other Current Assets	$ 15,586.00	$ 6,368.00
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	**$ 1,003,459.00**	**$ 847,201.00**

NON CURRENT ASSETS	2026	2025
Fixed Assets	$ 31,051.00	$ 7,100.00
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	**$ 31,051.00**	**$ 7,100.00**
TOTAL ASSETS	**$ 1,034,510.00**	**$ 854,301.00**

CURRENT LIABILITIES	2026	2025
Creditors	$ 43,245.00	$ 37,787.00
Unexpended Grants & Grants in Advance	$ 404,331.00	$ 293,621.00
Funds Held in Trust	$ 7,886.00	$ 12,578.00
Net GST	$ 54,900.00	$ 9,336.00
Provisions	$ 114,089.00	$ 70,071.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	**$ 624,451.00**	**$ 423,393.00**
NET ASSETS	**$ 410,059.00**	**$ 430,908.00**

Statement of Income & Expenditure for the Year ended 30 June 2026

INCOME	2026	2025
Grants Received	$ 1,637,278.00	$ 673,180.36
Program Delivery	$ 6,202.00	$ 277,136.00
Grants Unexpended Carried Forward	$ 293,621.00	$ 508,475.00
Membership Fees, Training Income	$ 5,493.00	$ 406.38
Interest & Miscellaneous	$ 263,934.00	$ 370,800.51
TOTAL INCOME	**$ 2,206,528.00**	**$ 1,829,998.25**

EXPENDITURE	2026	2025
Employee Costs	$ 1,107,610.00	$ 767,484.00
Program Costs	$ 113,784.00	$ 131,604.00
Administration & Sundries	$ 606,344.00	$ 522,140.96
TOTAL EXPENDTURE	**$ 1,827,738.00**	**$ 1,421,228.96**
Surplus/(Deficiency) of Income for the Year	**$ 378,790.00**	**$ 408,769.29**
Amounts Transferred to Unexpended Grants/Held in Trust	$ 399,640.00	$ 306,199.04
Net Surplus/(Deficiency) of Income for the Year	**-$ 20,850.00**	**$ 102,570.25**

Our Funders

As a not-for-profit organisation that relies on external funding through grants, we extend our sincere gratitude to our funders whose support makes our work possible and helps us continue creating positive outcomes for our community.

A special thank you to our local Rotary Clubs for cash donations plus support running much loved BBQ's at our community events.

Andersen Family Bequest

- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- NSW Health & Medical Research Program
- NSW Ministry of Health
- NSW Office for Youth

Our Membership

Membership is a way for people to stand with us in championing prevention and creating healthier, more liveable cities.

Becoming a Healthy Cities Australia member means more than supporting an organisation. It means joining a global movement grounded in local action, equity, and evidence-based practice.

We are especially proud to thank our 66 members, who joined us or renewed this year and have set the foundation for a growing national community committed to healthier futures.

Alexander Brown
Amy Bestman
Anthony Lever
Bart Willems
Ben Beck
Brittany Swelam
Cal Spencer-Rosenberg
Corina Rowe
Danielle Smith
Deidre Stuart
Emily Henderson
Emma Rooksby
Emma Davies
Felix Bronneberg
Fiona Haigh
Franca Facci
Geoff O'Donnell
Georgina Blix
Graham McCabe
Helen Piper
Jane Warren
Jenny Norman
Jess Whittaker
Jinhee Kim
Jodie Cooper
Joe Woodward
John Armstrong
Jonathan Hallett
Judith Hurley
Katherine Kent
Katie Singh
Kellie Martin
Kristy Law
Kylie Riley
Lance Carr
Lance Barrie
Lina Engelen
Linda Bunclark
Loreto Medina
Manami Henderson
Marg Saveska
Martin Andrews
Mary-Anne Land
Maxyne Graham
Megan Hammersley
Melinda Lawton
Melinda Covey-Hansen
Michelle Barry
Natasha Debsieh
Nicolas Walker
Paula McPherson
Philip Laird
Pippa Rendel
Reece Conley
Robert Servine
Robyn Tindall
Rosi Johnston
Roxanne Journet
Simone Potter
Sue Downie
Susan Wallis
Tara Jamalishahni
Thomas Gray
Vicky Wallace
William Land
Zara Male

Renewing the Healthy Cities Network

In 2026, Healthy Cities Australia took an important step toward renewing the Australian Healthy Cities Network. In partnership with Dr Jinhee Kim, from UNSW Cities Institute, we embarked on a national engagement process designed to explore the future of the Healthy Cities movement in Australia. This work extends beyond a single workshop, with ethics approval for further interviews, surveys and collaborative discussions to capture diverse perspectives from across local government, health, academia, community organisations and advocacy sectors.

A key milestone was the World Café-style workshop held in Sydney, where participants explored what a renewed network could look like and the value it could offer members. The consultation process revealed a strong appetite for greater collaboration, shared learning and coordinated action, while recognising that many existing healthy place initiatives remain fragmented and difficult to scale. Participants expressed an interest in the need for a member-driven Community of Practice that is practical, inclusive and sustainable.

The broader consultation also highlighted important questions about the future identity, purpose and impact of the network. Stakeholders called for stronger alignment between local, state and federal efforts, clearer articulation of outcomes, and deeper engagement with communities and voices that are often underrepresented in planning and decision-making.

As Healthy Cities Australia approaches its 40th anniversary in 2027, these consultations are helping shape a renewed national network that reflects contemporary challenges and opportunities. By combining evidence, stakeholder insights and collective leadership, the organisation is laying the foundations for a stronger, more connected Healthy Cities movement capable of advancing health, equity and sustainability for communities across Australia.





Become a Member, please.

Support Healthy Cities Australia's work to build healthier, more liveable communities.

By becoming a member, you'll join a growing movement of individuals championing health and wellbeing across Australia. Our membership fee is intentionally modest and every membership sends a powerful message of support. It helps sustain our advocacy, strengthen our network, and keeps our spirits up knowing that others share our vision for healthier communities.

https://healthycities.org.au/membership