Case Study
Rochester and Elmore Ice Action Committee.

Activity aim:
To empower the Rochester and Elmore community to manage the issues surrounding the use of crystal methamphetamine (ice) through a community-driven, sustainable approach.

Issue being targeted
Local youth and their families and carers required support with the issues surrounding ice use in the community. It was also identified that youth had limited awareness of, and access to, local support services.

Drivers for the activity
The community of Campaspe and northern Greater Bendigo (Elmore) are faced with a number of significant social disadvantages such as youth unemployment and alcohol and illicit drug use.

Significant documents provided the group with an evidenced-based template for action:
- National Ice Action Strategy 2015
- Shire of Campaspe Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013–17
- Shire of Campaspe Youth Research Project 2015
- Healthier Campaspe Needs Analysis 2016–20

Dates of the project:
August 2017 – November 2018

Target audience:
Rochester and Elmore general community
Young people in the local area
Key processes used

The following steps were undertaken as part of the 2017 Community Action Plan:

**Step 1:** Delivered a total of four Community Workshops in Rochester, Elmore, Lockington and Nanneella to develop a community-driven response to ice in the community.

**Step 2:** Developed and made available a printed information resource that supports the four target locations, based on outcomes and responses generated from the Community Workshops.

**Step 3:** Engaged Rochester Secondary College students to manage a social media profile, in partnership with members of the group.

**Step 4:** Facilitated an evaluation strategy (linked to processes implemented in 2016) to gather information on the impact and change being created. The focus was to review the effectiveness of all interventions and determine the next course of action for 2018 onwards.

**Please note:** The Local Drug Action Team program has developed a set of Toolkits and Resources since this Community Action Plan was completed. If any organisation was considering implementing a similar program, the Strong and Connected Communities Toolkit and the Education in Schools Toolkit will be valuable references.

Description of activity

1. Support the local community to develop a sustainable community driven response to the following ice-related issues:
   - Community safety
   - Prevention and harm minimisation
   - Rehabilitation support opportunities
   - Family, friend and carer support networks
   - Referral processes.

2. Work with local communities to build sustainable processes to address identified gaps in service and/or support.

3. Maintain a strong focus on partnership-driven interventions that support an integrated approach to the issue surrounding ice use in the community.

**Please note:** The Local Drug Action Team program has evolved to include the SMART approach to objective setting since the completion of this Community Action Plan.

Strengths in the approach

In reference to the community meetings:

- Engaging an experienced Workshop Facilitator to lead community consultations and to theme data helped to build motivation and fine-tune actions
- Engaging a representative from each target town to ‘host’ each local workshop resulted in greater support and engagement from each community and support for the community-led approach.
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Impacts

The LDAT completed the following activities in order to meet the objectives:

- Four community consultation meetings were delivered in World Café style with 120 members attending across towns to provide insights on how to prevent harms associated with AOD use. For example:
  - Focus on building resilience in youth and education in schools
  - Increase awareness of alcohol and drugs and how/where to access support
  - Greater community connection and collaboration to support preventative activity.

- Pre- and post-meeting surveys clearly demonstrated an increase in knowledge/awareness of issues, and a motivation for the community to create positive change.

- Provided a range of information and resources on AOD and how to access help and support through ‘Static Resource Displays’. In total, there were 1,980 resources displayed across the four target communities; equalling up to 495 resources per town. Upon analysis, approximately 179 (9%) resources were taken from across the four locations over a 2-week period.

- Two students from Rochester Secondary College established and managed the Facebook page (44 posts in total). The page received an increase in likes by 22%, exceeding the target of 20%. Approximately 38% of people who liked the page were between 18–24, and the majority resided in the Shire of Campaspe/Loddon Mallee region, showing that the target audience was reached.

Were there any unintended consequences?

Unexpected positive consequences:

- The level of involvement from various partners was significant and continues to drive the community to keep working towards reducing harms associated with crystal methamphetamine

- Involvement of the community via the Community Consultation Workshops – feedback was positive and contributed significantly towards a cohesive community approach.

Unexpected negative consequences:

- See Lessons Learned.

Lessons learned

In reference to the community meetings:

- It would be better to deliver these mid-year as it was hard to engage the community at end of year (busy time and less capacity)

- If seeking input from youth, delivery in a school-based setting helps to support attendance and provides an opportunity for greater input

- A lot of community ideas and input across four towns meant that the plan had to be cut back to ensure activity was achievable with the available resources

- Communities tended to want action on ‘quick fix’ approaches to harms associated with alcohol and drug use (e.g. more rehabilitation services/counselling for families). This reinforced the LDAT’s focus on prevention

- Community engagement across four towns assisted in building stronger community connections to support future partnerships and work.
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Reflections from community

• The workshop increased awareness of ice issues in the community and developed strategies to help affected people and their families.

• [We have a] lack of early education on physical and mental long-term effects of drugs.

• We can work closely with our schools to support them with mentoring, building self-worth and self-confidence in young people.

• Need to teach children at a young age, it’s a community effort.

• Great enthusiasm. Great to be part of such a proactive community.

With thanks to:

Lead organisation
- Rochester and Elmore District Health Service

Partners
- Elmore Primary Health Service
  Created links to, and supported work within, the Elmore community.
- Rochester Community House
  Oversaw project work and supported communication of the team’s activity across its communication channels, such as social media.
- Rochester Lions Club
  Supported where required (e.g. team events, links to funding and scholarship opportunities).
- Rochester Business Network
  Worked in collaboration to develop an approach to trainee and employment opportunities for ‘at risk’ groups.
- La Trobe University
  Provided leadership on qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods for each aspect of the project.
- Victoria Police [Rochester]
  Oversaw and supported project activity, attended events, educated and informed community and young people about the role of positive policing.
- Campaspe News
  Oversaw and contributed to project activity, leading promotion and marketing of team activity to boost community engagement (e.g. advertisements in local papers).