

# Healthy best practice - communities

## Healthy Queensland AWARDS

Communities play an important role in fostering the physical, mental and social wellbeing of individuals and families. By identifying the needs of your community and working together towards tangible goals, you can make a positive difference in the lives of many in your community.

### What can I do to help make my community healthier?

The following checklist provides some overarching ideas to keep in mind when planning your activities. Make sure your initiatives, programs and activities are:

- based on community need:** involve the community (e.g. families, schools, workplaces, community organisations, local government) in the planning, implementation and evaluation of community activities to promote health and wellbeing
- sustainable:** ensure strategies are in place to keep the activity going e.g. even if a key community figure or staff member leaves or when initial funding runs out
- inclusive:** implement strategies that target all people in the population, especially those who are most at risk of chronic disease such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, older people, people with depression and mental illness, people living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage, people with transport or access issues and people with disabilities.

### Healthy communities examples

The Queensland's Healthiest Community Award is about streets, suburbs, schools, workplaces and towns working together to promote healthy lifestyles. Activities could be aimed at increasing physical activity, making healthier food choices, achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, being smoke free, encouraging responsible drinking and being sun smart. Below are some *examples* of activities that may be suitable to use or adapt for your community:

### Programs and promotion

- generate local promotion and broad, varied media coverage of health and well-being opportunities, programs, services and information in your community
- create partnerships in the town that encourage groups working together to improve the health of their community e.g. between community groups, multicultural sporting clubs, health, not-for profit groups, youth, local government, transport etc.
- promote alternatives to the private car, especially for short trips e.g. walking, cycling and using public transport
- provide a range of low cost or free physical activity groups and programs that encourages physical activity for all e.g. walking groups, programs in parks, traditional dance and traditional Indigenous games
- promote reputable healthy weight programs e.g. those that include physical activity and healthy eating messages and skills to maintain a healthy weight (rather than unhealthy weight loss competitions which promote speedy weight loss). Your local general practitioner or community health professionals can help here

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- improve access to healthy food in the local community e.g. community gardens, market gardens, farmers' markets, food co-ops, promoting home kitchen gardens, working with local retailers to promote and improve access to healthy foods e.g. cooking demonstrations; fruit and vegetable promotions
- support a breastfeeding friendly community
- decrease advertising/promotion of unhealthy foods and drinks e.g. restricting advertising of "fast foods" near schools
- limit access to unhealthy food and drinks e.g. limit unhealthy options in vending machines
- run activities, venues and events for young people that promote alternatives to alcohol consumption and smoking as recreation and promote responsible drinking – ie. smokefree and alcohol free events
- promote information and education about tobacco and alcohol and support services for people who want to quit smoking or manage their drinking
- promote and ensure public safety around alcohol (ie. address issues such as public intoxication, violence, transport, drink driving, lighting, appropriate venue promotions and opening hours)
- encourage activities and events that promote the positive aspects of cultural diversity e.g. promote broad participation in cultural events and festivals
- organise events that involve broad community participation e.g. Walk to Work Day, Walk Safely to School Day and Bicycle Week.

## Policies and planning

- consider time/s of day that activities are planned; provide shade for participants and spectators; and provide or promote protective clothing, hats, sunglasses and sunscreen
- involve health professionals in planning for town/community services, events
- provide healthy food and drink catering for community meetings/events
- implement policies that promote responsible drinking, smokefree environments and help people to quit smoking
- promote and comply with Queensland's tobacco laws (see [www.health.qld.gov.au/atods/tobaccolaws](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/atods/tobaccolaws))
- consider a local government corporate plan in which health is identified in the vision and is incorporated into the relevant themes
- develop and implement a local government physical activity plan in partnership with other organisations
- foster partnerships in the town that aim to encourage smokefree environments and responsible drinking (ie. between community, police, health, youth, liquor licensed venues and transport etc)
- consider actions that make it easier for community members to purchase, grow or access healthy foods e.g. bus routes to shopping centres, land use for community garden spaces, zoning/location of fruit and vegetables shops and fast food outlets and provision of water bubblers in public spaces

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## Facilities

- well-maintained places for physical activity including parks, sporting grounds, community halls and streetscapes
- provide infrastructure that encourages, facilitates and supports being physically active for transport (as an alternative to the private car) e.g. well-maintained, connected, accessible, well-lit, safe open spaces, footpaths and bikeways; destination signage for cyclists and pedestrians, pathway beautification projects, provision of shade cover, seating, drinking fountains and end-of-trip facilities
- provide shade in local council parks and gardens, recreation areas and locally run early childhood services

## Monitoring

- monitor the implementation of health programs and initiatives for their level of participation, reach and effectiveness
- monitor policies and their implementation and modify them as the needs of the community change

## What sort of things will be considered for funding from the Awards prize money for communities?

Documented plans, drawn from a wide consultation process, will need to be provided demonstrating the community's future activities and infrastructure planning. These plans need to include details on how any infrastructure will be maintained. The following types of 'healthy infrastructure' may be funded:

- sporting or recreational facilities, such as a basketball court, playground, sporting, exercise or outdoor recreation equipment (with inclusion of plans for how these facilities will be manned and maintained)
- infrastructure that encourages, facilitates and supports being physically active for transport (as an alternative to the private car)
- integrated community level planning and activities that increase availability and access to healthy foods
- community-level policies and plans which support health and the prevention of chronic disease
- affordable community-based lifestyle and behavioural modification programs
- promotional and motivational activities to encourage good health (you will need to demonstrate how these contribute to long-term strategies)
- initiatives to improve access to health promotion programs and services to those most at risk of chronic disease

## Want to know more?

There are a large number of resources and tools which can help you. Find out more from the 'helpful links and resources' on the Awards website at [www.keepaustraliabeautiful.org.au/qld](http://www.keepaustraliabeautiful.org.au/qld)