

Thriving Communities

A way of working together



Government
of South Australia

Department for Communities
and Social Inclusion

No community left behind



Where we live affects our wellbeing. A thriving community offers the advantages of good schooling, a healthy environment, housing, work and other forms of social and economic participation, enhancing the wellbeing of individuals and the community as a whole.

Equally, communities are disadvantaged by lack of equitable access to opportunities and resources, creating a complex web of challenges that can become entrenched over generations.

Disadvantage is costly to our wellbeing and to our economy. We need to challenge our taken-for-granted ways of working so that all South Australian communities can participate and flourish.

In the top 3% of disadvantaged South Australian communities, people are:

10x

as likely to have spent time in prison

**5x
more
than**

as likely to have low level of education and be disengaged from education or employment as young adults

2x

more likely to have a disability

3.5x

more likely to be dealing with mental health issues



In South Australia disadvantage is:

concentrated

in a small number
of communities

entrenched

– with measures showing
the same communities
are disadvantaged in
2007 and **2015**

prominent

in remote communities

complex

and most frequently
characterised by
unemployment, poor
education levels,
criminal convictions and
disengaged young people

What will make

Community at the heart

Nobody knows a community better than the people who live and work there. The fabric of a community is a complex weave of issues, needs and strengths and there is no better way to map the intricacies than to listen to the insights and ideas of those who are part of it, and devise solutions with them.

The active contribution of local communities, including residents, local government, business and any others who might have a part to play, is critical to the Thriving Communities approach, both in understanding the issues and in shaping solutions.

Many solutions to achieve a common vision

The issues created by long-term disadvantage are complex, interwoven and persistent. To overcome generations of disadvantage, people must come together through a common vision, a sense of urgency and commitment, and a belief in the possibility of change based on the concrete evidence of what has worked elsewhere.

Just as the issues affect people across the broad spectrum of community, so should the solutions. The Thriving Communities approach recognises that scale of change must be in keeping with the scale of issues and must involve not only services and programs supporting individuals and groups, but also changes to systems, policy and infrastructure that support the community as a whole.

a difference?

Local assets are resources for change

Building a thriving community is about improving services, choices and opportunities. But it is also about nurturing what already supports the wellbeing of those who live there. A community's assets lie in its people and its physical, social and economic environment. Working with these assets helps generate further opportunities and also strengthens the resilience of a community to face challenges and barriers.

A thriving community actively engages in its own growth but also uses the support of government, business and services to tackle social and economic inequities.

Why measurement is crucial

The Thriving Communities approach doesn't measure activity, it measures the impact activity is making. Activity includes the range of services, programs and policies that contribute to the results everyone agrees will make the most impact on community and individual wellbeing.

The impact of activity is measured by choosing a number of indicators that tell us we are moving toward those results. These indicators are things that can be reliably measured and easily shared. Indicators tell a persuasive story about what is making a difference that can influence decisions about services and funding and drive further action.



What does a thriving community look like?

People have access to life opportunities

- Education
- Employment
- Adequate income and material resources
- Access to services and support
- Meaningful activity

People are socially, emotionally and physically thriving

- Good mental and physical health
- Social connection
- Strong relationships
- A sense of accomplishment
- Positive emotion
- Resilience during times of challenge and change

A supportive physical environment

- A safe, healthy environment with abundant public space, designed in ways that bring people together
- Affordable, adequate housing
- Infrastructure such as good public transport and community and recreational facilities

Community cohesion

- A vibrant and creative local culture that embraces diversity and encourages community pride and connection
- Local people, groups, businesses and institutions are engaged and actively participate in decisions that affect them
- Resilience in the face of social and economic challenge
- People feel confident to live, work, play and invest in the community
- People feel valued and safe in the community

Feedback

DCSI Client Feedback

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