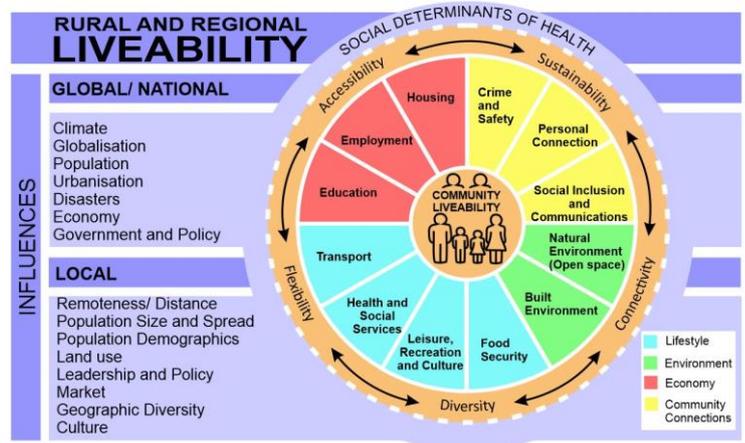


What is rural liveability?

We all want liveable communities, but do we really know what they look like? Primary Care Partnerships across the Wimmera South West in Victoria have joined forces to define and measure liveability across our 10 shires. This can help us all to celebrate the great things about where we live and find and fix the challenges. The end goal is so our local communities move forward and thrive together in their lifestyles, economies, and environments - both now and into the future.

Why Liveability?

We know that our quality of life and wellbeing are closely linked to local societal matters such as jobs, housing, food, transport, connections, and safety. It is also affected by global factors such as climate, the economy, government policy, and the current pandemic. Out here in the Wimmera South West we also have set clear goals for health and wellbeing including access to, and eating healthy foods, being active and staying connected with others. All these social, global, and local factors line up perfectly with the liveability measures we've created for rural/remote communities of the Wimmera South West. Creating a structure to measure liveability across our region will help us all better understand how we live, what works well and what can be improved. Rural people know what makes their communities a great place to be. We celebrate the assets such as fresh air, walkable towns, community connections, natural environment, affordable housing and plenty of opportunities to grow. This information can also help as we tackle many issues such as socio-economic disadvantage, higher numbers of older residents, loss of school leavers, lower wages, remoteness, difficulty in filling jobs and keeping workers, population decline and climate change impacts.



What are we doing?

We are constantly collecting and crunching the numbers on our community's health and wellbeing. With new health and wellbeing plans being developed over the next year, these figures help us to make smart decisions through this process of planning and prioritising. Shires, PCPs, health services and other users will be able to measure liveability at a shire level, sub-region, or for the whole of the Wimmera South West. Community consultations will help us informally and qualitatively measure liveability in specific communities. The more people can tell us about the places where they live, work, learn and recreate, the easier it will be to get down to what is really needed for each community to thrive. Our agreed definition of rural liveability in WSW will allow us to identify challenges, opportunities, or issues more easily for further investigation or action.

What will we measure?

Using data available at LGA level, we can measure:

- Community happiness
- Access to healthy food
- Physical activity and lifestyle
- Community connection spirit and events
- Community safety and security
- Climate
- Population size and density, open spaces, house/rent prices, jobs and transport

Overlaying this information with specific community details will help drive actions towards ensuring everyone can equally enjoy our unique rural communities.

What's in it for you?

We all strive for liveability. Our liveability measures provide simple information that can be used by a lot of different people and in many different ways as we survive and thrive into a better future.

- **Smarter planning.** This process will define, measure and clarify what makes our region liveable and present it in a way that can be translated into planning where the work is most needed, and the biggest differences can be made. Linked to existing health and wellbeing priorities, *Liveability WSWA* will provide rich information for required health and wellbeing planning Processes. We'll speak in universal language and measurements that can be applied in many ways and settings by all those who have a vested interest in improving the region.
- **Making WSWA a better place to live – together.** We get more done when we work together. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses across the region can help us channel our resources and attract funding where it is most needed.
- **Selling our story.** Positive liveability measures can be used to sell our unique area to new residents, tourists and investors. They will help residents celebrate the great things about where and how they live.
- **Embedding “Liveability” into our daily thinking.** A clear and simple explanation of what “liveability” means in WSW allows everyone - residents and decisions makers – to easily consider its impact on the many activities and decisions they make each day. Living the “Liveability” every day, of every year.

How can we help you be involved?

We know you are busy, and this is not about extra work for you. Data specialists are now crunching the numbers but there will be other questions to ask communities and we'd love your input into what these might be. ***Please let us know how we can support your involvement in this exciting process.***

Timelines

- **August – October** – Data compiled for planning and liveability focus
- **November** – Data sets and liveability assessments will be completed
- **Early December** – Liveability WSW – online meeting with LGAs and health services to discuss results
- **December to June** – IHP and MHWB planning with liveability data to support process
- **December – June** – Shires need to prepare Community Visioning Plans
- **July 2021** – Liveability WSW update on where and how this information is being used

For further information: South West - Tracey Burgess 0427 527 937 **or Wimmera** - Simone Dalton 0408 349 532 or your local **Primary Care Partnership**.

Figure 1: The Rural and Regional Community Liveability Concept

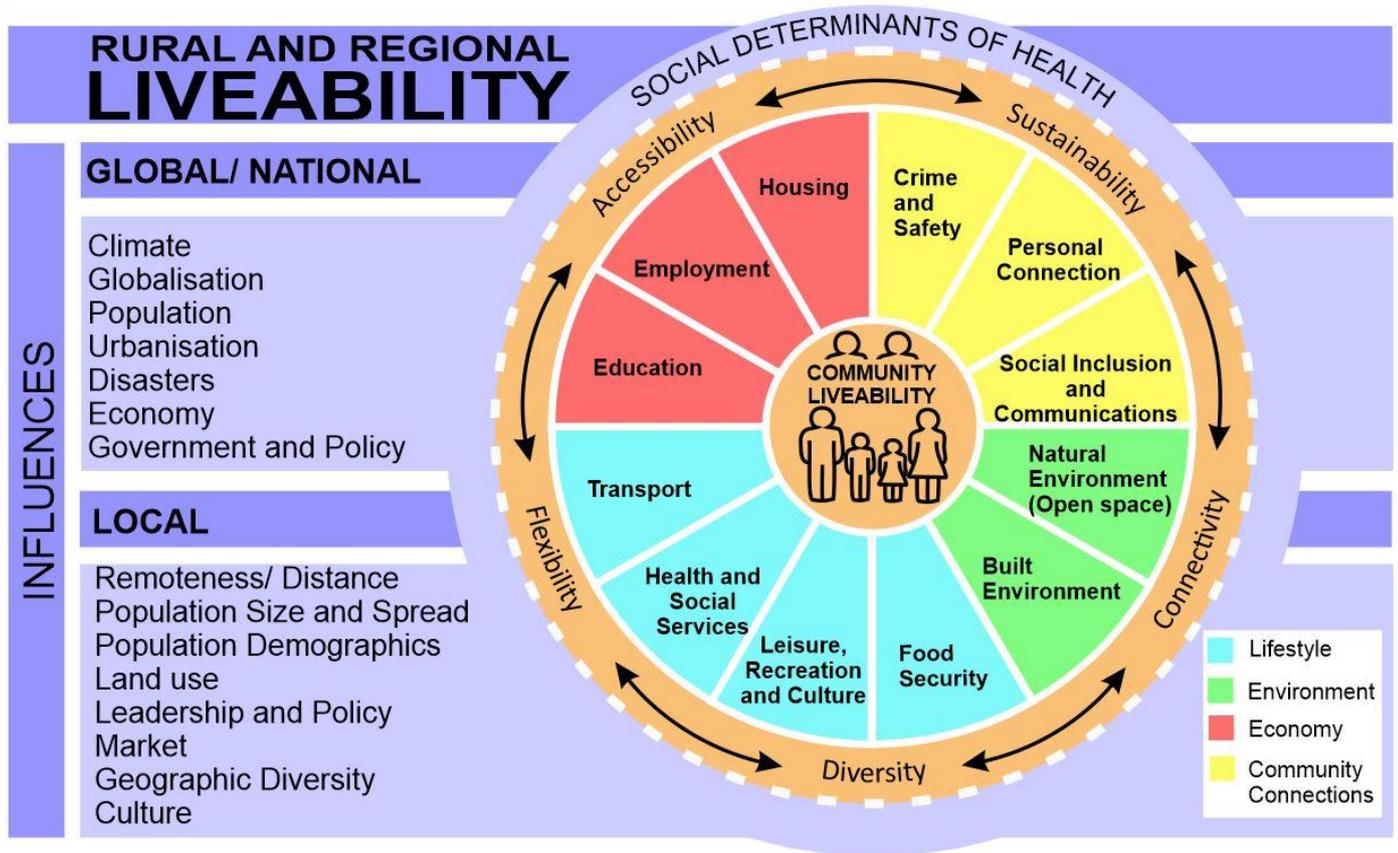


Figure 2: Public Health and Wellbeing Planning in Victoria, Liveability, Health Behaviour and Outcomes

