



# Community Advocates Peer Mentoring Model in Wodonga

A case study from Gateway Health's Health Promotion Team

<b>Aim</b>	To establish a pool of local community advocates implementing advocacy campaigns that support healthy environments for childrens and families in Wodonga
<b>Rationale</b>	Lack of community advocates with skills and confidence to progress RESPOND Wodonga – Albury advocacy issues identified in Group Model Building community workshop
<b>Partnerships</b>	Lower Hume Primary Health Network (LUPHN) Public Health Advocacy Institute Australia RESPOND Wodonga-Albury Brains Trust
<b>Links to local/state policy/initiatives</b>	GH IHP Plan 2023-2025 GH Strategic Plan GH RESPOND Wodonga Albury Action plan Ottawa Charter
<b>Resources</b>	GH IHP Program funding Lower Hume Primary Health Network (LUPHN) program funding PHIA staff – Mel Stoneham, Christina Pollard (Trainers) PHIA Advocacy Framework <a href="#">Tool Kit</a>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<p><b>Short to medium term expected outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Minimum 10 participants from RESPOND community trained in public health advocacy</li> <li>ii. Community participants feel confident post training that they have the resources (documentation, tools, templates, expert contacts, research) to develop and run a lobbying and /or advocacy campaign</li> <li>iii. Community participants identify at least 1 campaign they want to develop within the next 12 months</li> <li>iv. GH HP team report that they have increased capacity to run or support local campaigns</li> <li>v. Peer advocates network established</li> </ul> <p><b>Expected longer term impacts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vi. Increased pool of community advocates who are well connected with other community advocates / campaigners</li> <li>vii. System changes and impacts that support healthier environment linked to campaign run by RESPOND community advocates /campaigners from Advocacy workshop</li> </ul>

## Overview

The Public Health Advocacy Institute of Australia defines advocacy as a ‘deliberate attempt to influence decision makers and other stakeholders to support or implement policies, practices, laws, regulations, programs, products and prices that contribute to improving community health and wellbeing equity using evidence.’

## Objectives

To recruit, train and provide ongoing support to a group of local community members involved in population health advocacy campaigns

### The story

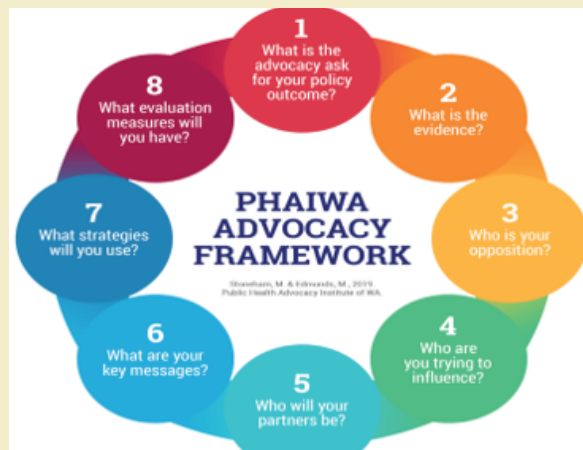
In late 2019, as part of the RESPOND Wodonga research project Gateway Health with Deakin University and other local partners ran a series of group model building workshops focusing on children’s health and wellbeing. At these workshops a number of advocacy campaign were identified.

In 2021 at further community workshop community advocacy training was identified as a high priority. It was clear that there was a lack of community members with the skills and confidence to progress RESPOND advocacy issues identified previously.

Gateway Health - Health Promotion began investigating appropriate training providers, a peer mentoring model and identifying local community advocates. In late 2022 a partnership between Gateway Health, Lower Hume Primary Health Network and Public Health Advocacy Institute of Australia agreed to delivering regional advocacy training to health promotion practitioners

In addition, a one-day advocacy training workshop was held for interested community members in Wodonga, with attendees from a range of sectors including environment, business, emergency food relief, youth, arts and body esteem/positivity participating.

The workshops were run by experienced public health advocacy experts Mel Stoneham and Christina Pollard from PHAI. They gave attendees the tools and skills to develop change campaigns by breaking down their advocacy toolkit into the simple framework detailed below.



## What did we achieve?

12

Nine community members and 3 GH HP staff attended the hands-on Wodonga community advocacy workshop

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The attendees focused on building advocacy campaigns around the following advocacy issues: ·Foodshare ; ·Project 66; ·Listening to Voices ; ·Body esteem/positivity ; ·Election of local government councillors

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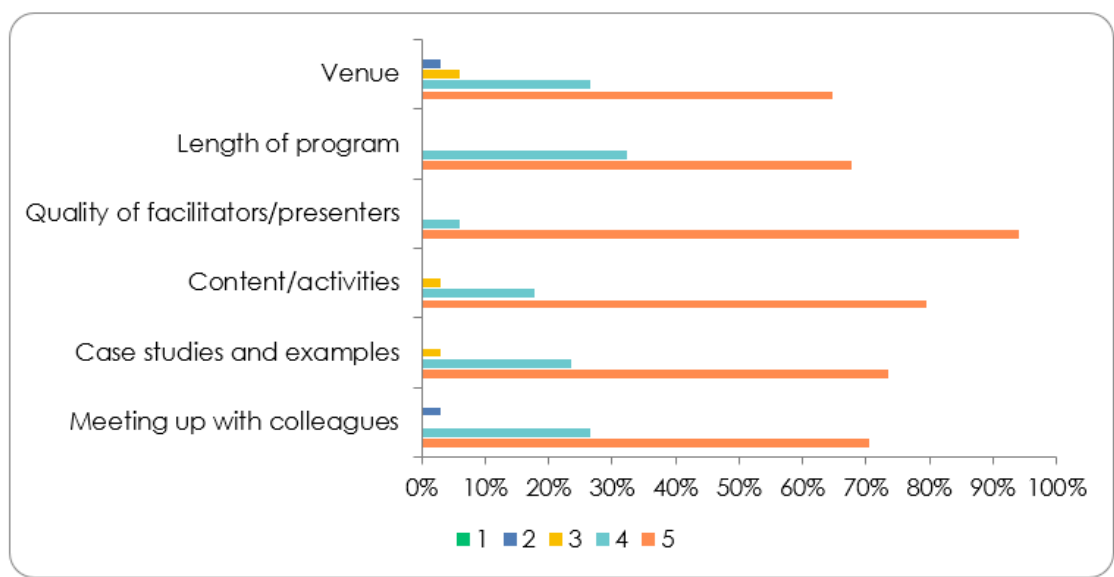
24 practitioners trained at regional advocacy workshop



# Wodonga Community Advocacy Participant feedback

## Quality of workshop

The Wodonga participants rated the overall workshop highly with 73.53% rating it excellent and a further 26.47% as very good. Components of the workshops were rated on a scale of 1-5 with one being poor and 5 being great, as shown below.



## Advocacy skills and confidence

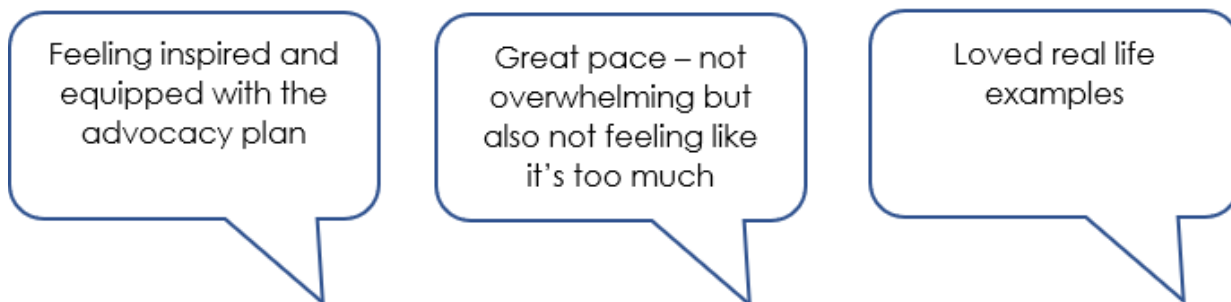
Every respondent indicated that having completed the workshop, they hold more awareness about the development of an advocacy project or campaign.

A high majority of all respondents (78%) reported that after having completed the workshop, they have the skills to develop an advocacy project or campaign as part of their role. The remaining 2 participants were unsure.

All participants advised they would recommend the training to other people and sectors. Specific sectors identified included Housing, community groups, Council Officers and Elected Members, other PHU staff, Health Promotion Officers and service groups.

A total of 5(47%) of the participants advised they would like advocacy mentoring post workshops.

## Comments



## Conclusion

The aim of these (3) workshops including Wodonga Community Advocacy workshop, was to facilitate discussion and build advocacy skills among different preventive actors in the northeast region on Victoria, with a view to develop a shared understanding of the current challenges and opportunities in this area.

The three workshops were planned to integrate active learning, group participation, fun and relevant case studies while considering the diversity of contexts, needs and approaches. The evaluation results indicate this was achieved.

Source: Dr. Mel Stoneham and Assoc. Prof Christina Pollard, Advocacy Training Evaluation Report May 2023

## Recommendations and next steps

Four trained community members have indicated they are interested in being part of an ongoing peer advocacy group for Wodonga. The HP team have developed a local mentoring model with:

- i. Local advocacy experts as guest speakers at each session
- ii. Ongoing membership of people who attended the Community Advocacy Workshop discussing their campaigns successes and issues
- iii. GH HP acting as liaison between group and PHAI for advice on local campaigns