

Health and Wellbeing Plan Advisory Committee review findings – November 2017

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1. Introduction

A review of the purpose and function of the Health and Wellbeing Plan Advisory Committee (the Committee) was conducted during October and November 2017. This was prompted by concerns raised by some Committee members that the group was not acting in accordance with their expectations of the Committee's purpose. The review sought to understand:

- a) whether the Committee's activities are aligned with the Committee's purposes outlined in the Committee's Terms of Reference (TOR)
- b) members perspectives about the role and purpose of the Committee.

No recommendations were made as part of this review. This was in part due to an anticipated broader review of Council Committees, likely to be conducting during 2018.

2. Approach

The evaluation comprised a member survey and a review of the Committee's minutes for the previous two years. The review focussed on aspects relating to the purpose and frequency of the Committee. As such, other pertinent areas, such as Council Officer resourcing requirements, member recruitment processes and terms of reference, were outside the scope of this review.

3. Main findings

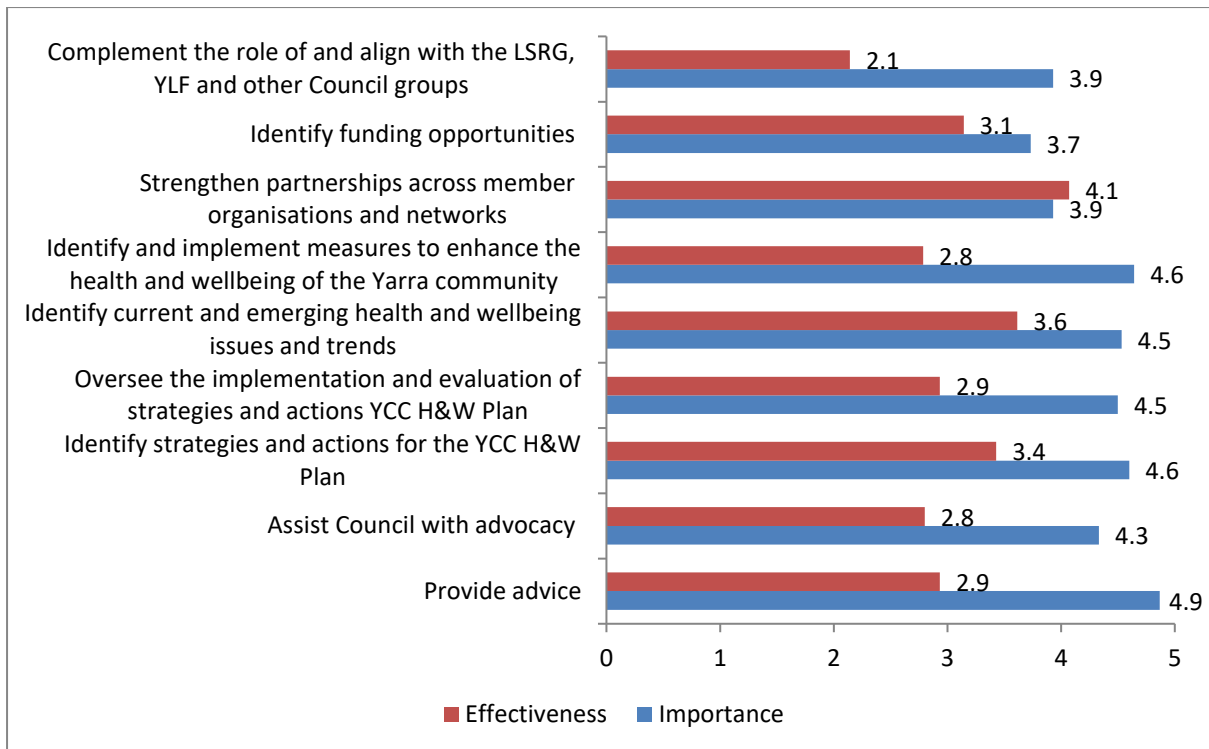
3.1 Member survey

A survey was conducted to understand members' perspectives about the frequency, purpose and other features of the Committee. A total of 25 survey invites were emailed to Committee members. Thirteen completed and two partially completed responses were received; this represents a 60% response rate and 87% completion rate.

Key findings:

- The majority of respondents (10 out of 14 respondents) preferred to continue meeting at about the same frequency.
- Generally, most respondents rated the "importance" of each purpose set out in the TOR considerably higher than the "effectiveness".

Figure 1: Mean scores importance and effectiveness of Committee functions



- Most respondents considered that the Committee was an appropriate composition to achieve the purpose of the Committee.
- The most commonly identified benefit of the Committee was with regards to networking, information sharing, and providing an opportunity to work collaboratively with other member organisations.
- Several suggested improvements to the Committee related to shifting the focus of the group to an advocacy (3 respondents) or advisory (2 respondents) role. It was suggested that by having clear objectives and a specific set of issues that the Committee could advise on, or advocate for, that this would better utilise the skills and expertise of the Committee members.

3.2 Further results

A survey was conducted to understand members' perspectives about the frequency, purpose and other aspects of the Committee. A total of 25 invites were sent to Committee members. Thirteen completed and two partially completed responses were received, representing a 60% response rate and 87% completion rate.

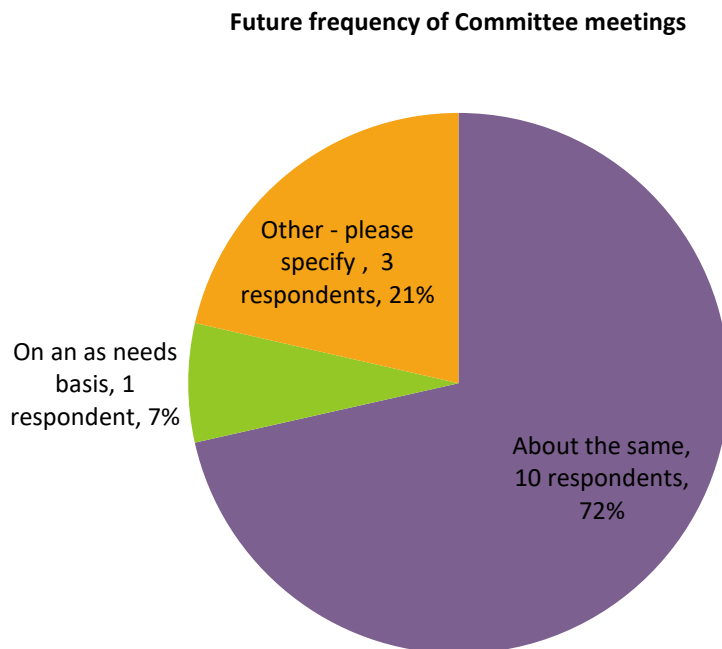
The following section details the responses for each question.

1. Meeting frequency

Respondents were asked about their preferences regarding the frequency of meetings. The majority of respondents (72%) preferred to continue meeting at about the same frequency, quarterly. One respondent preferred to meet on an as needs basis and a further three respondents stated their preferences for meeting frequency would depend on any changes to the purpose of the committee.

Question 1: “Currently, the Committee meets quarterly. If the Committee continues in its current form, would you prefer that the Committee meet: About the same; on an as needs basis; or, other – please specify?”

Responses:



2. Committee’s purpose – effectiveness and importance

Next, respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness and importance of each purpose outlined in the Committee’s terms of reference. Respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1, being very low, and 5, being very high. The graph below outlines the mean scores from this question. Respondents were also provided the option of “don’t know / can’t say”, which is excluded from the results outlined in the graph below.

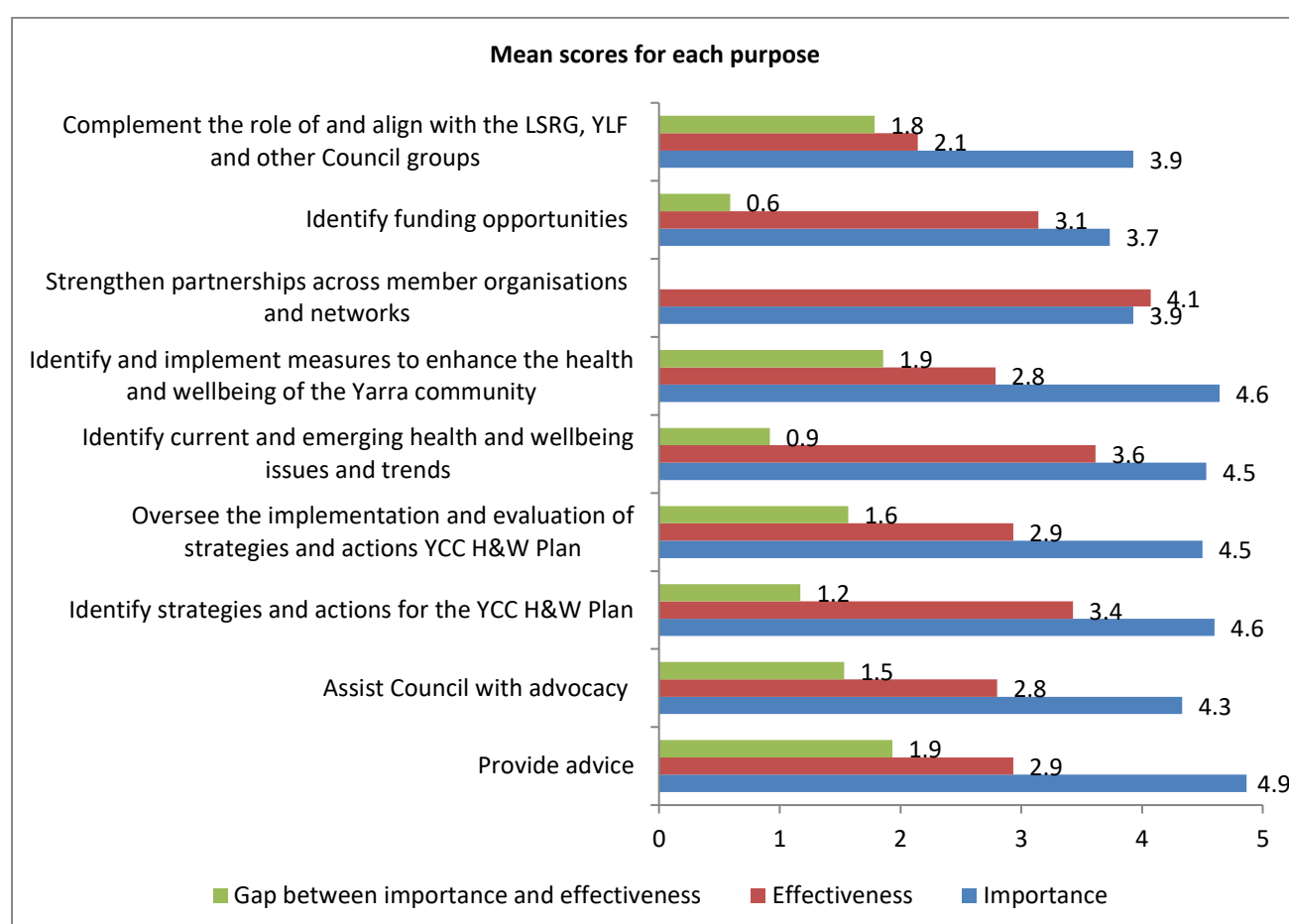
Generally, most respondents rated the “importance” of each purpose considerably higher than the “effectiveness”. An exception to this is the purpose regarding strengthening partnerships across member network organisations. Overall, most purposes were ranked very highly in terms of importance by respondents with mean scores ranging from 3.7 (identifying funding opportunities) through to 4.9 (providing advice). In contrast, there was greater variation in the overall score for effectiveness. The purpose with the lowest rated effectiveness score was “Complement the role of and align with the Local Safety Reference Group (LSRG), YLF (Yarra Liquor Forum) and other Council groups” (mean score 2.1) and the purpose with the highest rated effectiveness score was “Strengthen partnerships across member organisations and networks” (mean score = 4.1).

Clearly, members consider the purposes of the Committee to be highly important. However, the low effectiveness scores, for several purposes, suggest that the members perceive that the group is not successfully fully achieving the outcomes they would like from the Committee.

The variation in the effectiveness scores also reflect responses to questions regarding what is working well and what aspects of the Committee, members would like to see changed or improved. For example, all respondents noted that the information sharing and networks developed was an important benefit of the Committee, and this is reflected in the high effectiveness score (mean score = 4.1).

Question 2: “The following is a list of the Committee’s purposes, from the terms of reference. For each purpose please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, how important it is for the Committee to carry out the purpose and also how effective you consider the Committee is in carrying out the purpose.”

Responses:



3. Additional functions

Respondents were asked about additional Committee functions, not currently included in the TOR, which should form part of the Committee’s role. Only one respondent commented regarding the Committee’s involvement in the reporting functions of the MHP.

Question 3: “Are there any other functions, not described above, that you consider should form part of the Committee’s role? Please describe what these functions are, and why they should form part of the Committee’s role.”

Responses [Verbatim]:

- Planning and reporting for Municipal Health Plan - partnership engaged in the reporting - focusing on issues of importance for instance to include issues such as Female Genital Cutting

4. Committee membership

Respondents were asked about the appropriateness of the current membership of the Committee. Generally, most respondents considered that the Committee was an appropriate composition to achieve the purpose of the Committee. However, some respondents suggested that representation from the LGBTIQ and CALD communities; PCPs; Primary Health Networks and housing organisations would be useful. In addition, one respondent suggested there should be clarification about the role of community members who may also work for an employer within the sector. A further respondent noted it depends on the purpose of the Committee.

Question 4: “Currently, the membership of the Yarra Health and Wellbeing Plan Advisory Committee is made up of professionals who work in health and wellbeing, three community representatives and two Yarra City Council Councillors. Do you consider this is an appropriate composition to achieve the purpose of the Committee? If not, please explain your answer.”

Responses [Verbatim]:

- Yes
- Yes, I feel that there is appropriate composition to achieve the purpose of the Committee.
- Yes
- Representatives from LGBTIQ, CALD and housing organisations would be useful
- Yes - Council can make up the decision
- could there be reps from the PCPs and also from the PHNs?
- Yes, this is appropriate. My sense is that community reps need to be there to represent their community, not their employer
- I think it depends on the main purpose of the committee. Three community representatives? Are these interested local residents or service providers? I believe there needs to be room for both. Currently there seem to be more members than listed here. I note that there are 8 health service representatives listed at the meeting in August, 4 Yarra officers and Councillors, 2 community reps and one other (ACU). In May it was 4 Yarra, 6 health, 4 community and one other (ACU). NB I was a community rep and have been unable to attend due to scheduled meeting time.

5. Benefits of attending

Respondents were asked what the benefit of attending the Committee was, both for themselves and the organisation that they represent. The most commonly identified benefits were in regards to networking, information sharing, and providing an opportunity to work collaboratively with other member organisations. Other benefits mentioned include the opportunity to gain familiarity and understand Council policy and planning processes; providing a voice for local residents; and an opportunity to hear about relevant Council activities.

Question 5: "What are the benefits of attending the committee for you and your organisation?"

Responses [Verbatim]:

- Providing a voice for local residents
- Being part of the health and wellbeing process for Yarra.
Getting an in depth understanding of Council processes in relation to the Council plan and its development/review.
Working collaboratively with partners on the committee to get a better understanding of what they are doing and alignment of activity.
Working towards greater collective work as a group.
- To network with other services.
To understand the policy, procedures and planning in Yarra around health and wellbeing.
To develop a better understanding of other health and wellbeing issues in the broader community.
- Networking, Collaboration and Innovation
- Ability to influence the work/direction of other organisations
Ability to more closely align and if possible gain greater leverage for work that we are doing by working with others
Access to other elements that are important to health -such as physical space, parks and housing which local government play a role in
- The opportunity to hear what council and others in the room might be doing and opening up partnership opportunities
- Networking - member of municipal health plan for share actions and strategies - to implement funders requirements - more activities and actions to share
- Information dissemination and awareness of others perspectives
- Connections to other organisations
Opportunities to contribute to shared work
Opportunity to influence elected representatives
- Networking and information sharing
Formation of partnerships
Achieving common goals and priorities for the community
- More informed about initiatives and trends in the municipality which then is shared within my organisation and networks.
Impacts on our organisation's program design and planning,
Opportunities to identify key contacts in organisations to follow up regarding program development ideas (at a time outside the meeting!)
Ability to alert meeting to emerging issues or initiatives

6. Changes or improvements

Respondents were asked about aspects of the Committee they would like to see changed or improved. Respondents provided a range of suggestions. Several suggestions related to shifting the focus of the group to an advocacy (3 respondents) or advisory (2 respondents) role. It was suggested that by having clear objectives and a specific set of issues that the Committee could

advise on, or advocate for, that this would better utilise the skills and expertise of the Committee members.

Question 6: "Are there any aspects of the committee that you would like to see changed or improved?"

Responses [Verbatim]:

- Advocacy and a greater involvement with planning and prevention staff
- Colleagues have expressed concern that current Health and Wellbeing Plan process tends to be about of us telling Council what we are already doing and council including it in the plan. What we would like to see more of is identifying potential shared priorities and Council opening up opportunities for shared work (projects, advocacy, events etc).
- I do think it would be better if we were able to make our meetings more strategic in terms of when we are meeting and alignment to Council process. I think the Committee could be performing better in an Advisory role, if it was clearer as to what they are advising on.
- I don't feel like the committee actually provides advice - its more about the committee informing partners. I'd like to see council come to the committee with options papers and seek advice on how to proceed. This might mean that the committee needs to meet on an as needs basis?
- I think that we need to try and maximise the value of having all of the committee members together face to face - to me the value is in being able to have discussions and talk about issues/think about possible solutions using multiple brains and perspectives. I think that we also need to maximise the value of having local government in a health space (of which they do some health things but also much more that impacts on health) and consider in a meaningful way the other aspects that local government has responsibility for that impact on health.
- Less information sharing based and more workshop based to find solutions to issues surrounding the municipality
- More frequent meetings but with specific issues of discussion and interest
- More influence on council priorities
- Opportunity to work on joint projects and/or advocacy
- Unfortunately I have not been able to attend in the last year - and...I seem to always give my apologies too late so they don't show up on the minutes!! My observation is that it varies a lot depending on the chairperson. I have observed that some councillors have been more adept than others at engaging people in dialogue, steering the group and keeping it both focused, relevant and inclusive. No surprises there really. I imagine that the chairpersons effectiveness is also about prior briefing and understanding of council officers work.
- I thought coming onto the committee that the community members would have more of a role in voicing concerns about things we see in the community and asked our perspective of how things would work for us as members of the community - kind of like representatives of the community - but I don't feel I've really contributed in this way. At the one meeting I've attended so far I kind of found myself wondering what to say as I found the bulk of it was spent on members updating the group in what their organisation was doing recently - including the other two community members as they work for smaller social/health organisations. I wasn't able to contribute anything in this way because I work for a large hospital not located in the city of

Yarra. I still think the committee is a good idea and am really honoured to have been chosen as a community member but hope for a more clearly defined role in the future!

7. Other comments about the Committee or Council

The final survey question asked respondents about any further comments about Council or the Committee. Feedback was very positive about the meeting organisation, and specifically the Council Support Officer responsible for the Committee. One respondent commented that greater clarity was required about the role of the Committee.

Question 7: “Do you have any other comments about the Committee or Council generally?”

Responses [Verbatim]:

- Have found committee to be an important communication forum for representing the community within our catchment
- I feel like it would be a good idea to do some activities with the group around our collective work and how we can work in a more meaningful way. It would be good to clarify the role of the group and start to think about the steps we can take towards our collective activity. Perhaps some principles for our collective work. Are we just an advisory group or are we charged with working together as a collective? I think this role has sometime been not well understood.
- I've been really impressed by how Erika and the councillors have listened to the feedback that has been provided so far about the Committee and are open to and willing to seriously consider improvements.
- It is good running at this stage - we appreciate the meetings and committees activities to date
- Well organised and informative

4. Review of the meeting minutes

The agendas and minutes for meetings held during 2016 and 2017 were reviewed to understand the extent to which they aligned with the Committee's purpose, as set out in the Committee's TOR. A two year period was selected as it was deemed that this would provide a sufficient range of meeting topics and discussions. Meeting minutes for the following meetings were reviewed:

- Wednesday 17 February 2016
- Wednesday 24 August 2016
- Wednesday 15 February 2017¹
- Wednesday 3 May 2017
- Wednesday 2 August 2017.

Discussion topics, excluding those of an administrative nature, tended to focus on updates from Council, members, or, occasionally, from sector organisations. The updates tended to dominate the majority of the agenda, and were generally presented as an update rather than seeking input. Only

¹ The February 2017 meeting was conducted as a facilitated session in order to specifically seek input from members regarding the proposed Council plan.

a minority of agenda items specifically sought advice from the Committee. However, this included a significant agenda item of the February 2017 meeting, seeking input from the Committee on the draft Council Plan.

4.1. Summary

The member survey showed respondents generally rated the effectiveness of achieving the majority of purposes set out in the Committee's TOR low but the importance of each purpose considerably higher. This suggests that the members consider the purpose of the Committee to be important, yet perceive that the Committee is not currently achieving their full purpose, as set out in the terms of reference.

Moreover, the results of the survey and review of the meeting minutes suggest that the Committee is primarily functioning as information sharing network rather than as an advisory group. This finding was echoed in both the results of the member survey and review of meeting minutes. The only purpose to score highly on effectiveness related to network development ("Strengthen partnerships across member organisations and networks"). Similarly, a review of the meeting minutes highlighted that the majority of the discussions focussed on updates from Council, members and sector representatives. Only a minority of agenda items, over a two-year period, specifically sought advice from Committee members.

Despite this, respondents expressed that they saw considerable value in the Committee operating in an information sharing capacity. This is reinforced through the membership survey where the vast majority of respondents commented about the benefits of information sharing and networking.

Overall, this suggests that the information sharing and networking aspect of the Committee is both highly valued and well-functioning. However, further investigation is needed to understand how to ensure the Committee is appropriately positioned in order that the breadth of the Committee's purposes can be acted upon.

4.2. Review of 2016 and 2017 meeting minutes

In order to understand the extent to which the Committee's actions were aligned with the Committee's purposes outlined in the Committee's Terms of Reference (TOR), minutes from meetings held during the the previous two-years were reviewed.

The meeting minutes from the following meetings held during 2016 and 2017 Seven meetings were scheduled during this period, however only five were conducted. The February 2017 meeting was conducted as a facilitated session, specifically focussing on the 2017-2021 Council Plan. Meeting minutes for the following meetings were reviewed:

- Wednesday 17 February 2016
- Wednesday 24 August 2016
- Wednesday 15 February 2017
- Wednesday 3 May 2017
- Wednesday 2 August 2017.

Meeting administration

The four meetings (excluding the facilitated session) were chaired by three different Councillors. As Councillor portfolios are generally reshuffled on an annual basis, this variation in chairing is unsurprising. All four meetings were scheduled for two hours each, and with the exception of one meeting which closed early due to a Health & Safety matter, sufficient time was allocated to discuss all agenda items.

Meeting topics

Discussion topics, excluding those of an administrative nature, tended to focus on updates from Council, members, or occasionally from sector organisations. The updates tended to dominate the majority of the agenda, and tended to be presented as an update rather than seeking input. Only a minority of discussion topics specifically sought advice from the Committee members: “CCTV - Victoria Street, Richmond/Abbotsford” (February 2016), “Priorities and strategic objectives for 2016” (May 2016), “Input on draft Council Plan” (February 2017), and “Feedback on Draft Council Plan - Strategic Objective one” (May 2017). The minutes suggest that members provided a range of specific and valuable comments regarding these two topics.

Table 1: Discussion topics

Meeting date	Discussion topics (excluding administrative discussion)
February 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency updates - all • Local Safety Reference Group - safety indicators and group update - Malcolm McCall / Erika Russell, Yarra City Council • CCTV - Victoria Street, Richmond/Abbotsford - all • Priorities and strategic objectives for 2016 - all
August 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Health Network - Jeff Cheverton, Executive Director Commissioning, North West Melbourne Primary Health Network • Project Respect - Rachel Reilly, Acting Executive Director, Project Respect • Agency updates - all • Council update
February 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input on draft Council Plan - all
May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food choices traffic light system in Yarra leisure centres - Sam Carroll, Customer Service & Sales Coordinator, Yarra City Council • Update from the State Government on their restructure and priorities - Patricia Deering, Senior Program Adviser / Health Integration and Partnerships, Department of Health and Human Services • Member updates - all • Feedback on Draft Council Plan - Strategic Objective one - all • Victoria Street precinct update - Erika Russell, Yarra City Council
August 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOD priorities for the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network - Brad Pearce, Alcohol & Other Drug Service Coordinator, North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network • Perceptions of safety - Erika Russell, Yarra City Council • Census data - key differences between 2011 and 2016, Malcolm McCall, Yarra City Council • Member updates (scheduled, but not discussed as meeting was closed early due to an OH&S matter) - all