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Upper Murray Health and Community Services

## Evidence Based Needs Assessment And Health Outcome Improvements In The Upper Murray.

### Abstract

In 1997 Upper Murray Health and Community Services (UMHCS) conducted a comprehensive needs assessment that combined a socio-demographic/epidemiological, evidence-based and community consultative approach. In 2002 UMHCS used a similar methodology with regard to the socio-demographic/epidemiological and evidence-based approach; where it differed markedly is with regard to community participation strategies. A community led consultation process was used in this second evidence based approach.

Evidence-based needs assessment involves three converging strategies. Strategy one involves the development of a demographic and epidemiological profile for the catchment population. Strategy two involves the development of evidence-based case studies relating to the priority areas identified through the demographic and epidemiological profiles, community led consultation and the national priority areas. Strategy three involves the development and implementation of a community led consultation process. A further stage, that is ongoing, involves the continued development of community participation strategies that will facilitate community decision making when finite resources require that one service or program be funded ahead of another or others.

A local epidemiological profile helped to identify local areas of concern, facilitate health outcome measurement and assist decision-making relating to funding priorities. UMHCS has been able to demonstrate statistically significant improvements in health outcomes in a number of areas and in particular the national health priority areas of cardio-vascular disease, injury and cancer.

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