



Local Government & Positive Psychology: The Odd Couple?

...A snapshot of a collection of Council activities, where and how they connect to PERMA

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Social Media and Online Collaboration

- To connect via Twitter use #PosMtBarker
- To comment on points of interest or ideas visit the Padlet address:
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The District Council of
Mount Barker



Key Questions

Is Positive Psychology relevant to Local Government?

How can DCMB support flourishing communities and improve wellbeing in its region?

How can our organisation become a learning community and foster wellness and resilience in our workforce?



**What does
DCMB's Strategic
Plan say about
wellbeing and
PERMA?**



Character Strengths

Justice

Citizenship
Loyalty
Teamwork
Fairness/Equity
Leadership

Courage

Valour/Bravery
Perseverance/Diligence,
Industry
Integrity/Honesty

Temperance

Self-Control
Discretion
Caution
Prudence
Modesty/Humility

Wisdom & Knowledge

Curiosity/Interest in the world
Love of Learning
Judgement/Critical Thinking
Ingenuity/Originality
Social & Emotional Intelligence
Perspective

Humanity & Love

Kindness/Generosity
Love/Being loved

Transcendence

Appreciation of beauty & excellence
Gratitude
Hope /Optimism
Spirituality/Faith/Sense of purpose
Forgiveness/Mercy
Playfulness/Humour
Passion/Enthusiasm



POSITIVE EMOTION

Good times, gratitude, pride, inspiration

What Do We Do Well?

Own & manage **settings for 'good times'** ie public assets: parks, sporting facilities, skate park, halls and community spaces, library, cycle trail etc

Support community/cultural events & **celebrations** eg HOOT, the International Sculpture Symposium, Christmas pageant

We protect the **beauty** and value of our natural assets – (open space and vegetation management, urban planning regulation)

Completed a Youth Research Project that gives us a good picture of **what young people want/need**

Negotiating with developers and state agencies to ensure that **community and recreation facilities** are improved as the population grows

What Can We Improve?

Aesthetics: more colour, humour and beauty in the public realm –eg public art, urban design, material selection

Pursue continuous improvement in processes to incorporate community input regarding needs and desires

More fun places and activities for young people

Increase diversity of leisure opportunities

Foster more good feelings in the workplace, culture - improve our Losada Ratio



ENGAGEMENT

Focus, flow, fully absorbed in the activity

What Do We Do Well?

Provide opportunities for flow & engagement via delivery of programs, supporting sport & recreation activity, creative endeavours, **skills development** in the arts, sport, library, youth development

Support volunteering through grants and staff time – environmental volunteering, community projects, graffiti clean up

Lots of **challenging and potentially rewarding and satisfying** work to do!

What Can We Improve?

Increase resourcing for community programming in line with population growth and community interests/needs

Organisational priorities and resourcing can impede staff 'flow/ engagement' in work

Work place culture, structure and systems can be an inhibitor of flow



RELATIONSHIPS

Other people matter

What Do We Do Well?

We provides facilities and programs that foster **social connections** – Community Development, HACC social options

We provide **Community Grants** that enhance initiatives of various clubs and groups

We have strong foundations and a track record in **regional collaboration** eg Positive Ageing Strategy and Youth Strategy

Improving **community engagement** – building better communication with stakeholders into our projects

External **relationships and partnerships are foundation** for achievement of effective outcomes (funders, regional orgs, peak bodies, residents grps)

***Cross disciplinary collaboration** is developing/evolving – necessitated by the urban growth challenges*

What Can We Improve?

Improve **public spaces** in the towns that people use to socialise

More initiatives that are designed to **strengthen social capital**

Pursue continuous improvement in key **stakeholder relationships.**

Continue to strive for innovation in community input and equitable access to decision-making

Strengthen cross disciplinary consultation, collaboration in work place practice



MEANING

Serving something bigger than ourselves

What Do We Do Well?

Good synergy between resident's and DCMB commitment to **quality of life** - eg protecting amenity of rural townships, protecting natural environment, building local opportunities

Strive to ensure our work does **make a difference** to residents

Support and resource volunteers and volunteering opportunities

Employ & resource a Youth Development Officer to work strategically to **improve opportunities for young people**

Support the work of other organisations/specialists skilled in addressing specific issues to ensure meaningful responses
Eg Operation Flinders, community/service groups

Majority of staff committed, passionate & hardworking for the 'higher good' of their work – seeking positive outcomes for the District and residents

What Can We Improve?

Always room to improve our customer service

Gap between the high demand, rate of change of the work and resourcing levels needs to find equilibrium

Clearer in communicating meaning/purpose to build momentum towards common goals

Continue to strive for intent and delivery to be consistent and balanced



ACCOMPLISHMENT

Success, winning, achievement, mastery

What Do We Do Well?

Recognise and promote community achievement via award programs , council publications and media opportunities

Council staff & projects have been recognised for best practice in their field or discipline eg Town Centre Strategy, Laratinga Wetlands

What Can We Improve?

More sharing of good news stories, achievements and success for Council and the community and reduce the dominance of negative stories

Council could contribute more to recognising non traditional youth achievements

Pursue recognition opportunities for staff and projects

Future Initiatives to Enhance Wellbeing



- Further investment in better relationships with internal and external stakeholders
- Consult and engage more consistently
- Measure wellbeing: "Community Strengths Survey" in 2013 to establish baseline data
- Regional Public Health Plan can incorporate Positive Psychology concepts
- Develop a Business Excellence Program
- Build PERMA into organisational culture
- Your ideas?

Key Questions Reviewed



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