Map My

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WELCOME TO MAP MY

Welcome to the inaugural **Map My** newsletter!
The newsletter that will keep you updated on all things happening in **Map My**. It's been a busy 6 months since we started the project - originally named The 3S (Spatial, Systems and Solutions) Approach to Rural Food Environments. This project is supported by a Medical Research Futures Fund Early-Middle Career Research Grant - Incubator stream (ID:2030589).
A large amount of work has been happening both on the ground and in the background, including staff recruitment, community visits and co-design consultations.

Dr Cindy Needham, PhD, Project Manager "The 3S Approach to Rural Food Environments"

COMMUNITY > COMMUNITY NEWS

The Northern Daily LEADER

Members of the Global Centre for Preventative health (GLOBE) and Nutrition Researchers and community stakeholders from Deakin University's Institute for Health Transformation (IHT), UON Department of Rural Health, Tamworth Regional Council, and Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network meet to begin two-year research project. Picture by Gareth Gardner

DEAKIN STAFF

Dr. Cindy Needham

Through strong collaborations with a great team of researchers, Cindy led this successful *Medical Research Futures Fund Early-Middle Career Research Grant - Incubator stream* application. She is unapologetically passionate about improving the health of rural communities and is excited about Tamworth Regional Council and Colac Otway Shire communities developing the digital tool and engaging with the community. The project will start with these 2 communities with the hope that it can be adapted and scaled into a **Map My** that can be used widely, assisting with data capture in any areas, on any area of interest.

*"The idea of being able to construct causal loop diagrams, outside of the workshop environment, around the topic of access to healthy food in rural communities, is something worthwhile examining. I look forward to seeing what **Map My** can deliver."*

Penny Fraser

Penny has worked in community-facing research for several years now and comes to this project excited about being able to include rural people in worthwhile research without having to make them drive for hours and or sit in workshops. Previously working on projects related to young people, Penny is broadening her horizons to access and explore healthy food in rural areas and will support the development, delivery and the scalability of the project.

*"**Map My** is such an exciting project, that I can't wait to co-design with and test in the communities of Tamworth Regional Council and Colac Otway Shire."*

Lesley Hendy

Lesley Hendy recently finished her role as the Health Kids Advisor for Colac Otway Shire as delivered by the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Project, between July 2021 and June 2024. This initiative has helped young Victorians access and enjoy the nourishing foods and drinks they deserve in the places they learn and play. Lesley joins **Map My** as an associate research fellow, for the Colac Otway community and is looking forward to continuing her work in the healthy food space for rural and remote communities.

*"The opportunity to continue my work focussing on access to healthy food, particularly for rural and remote communities is great. I am really looking forward to connecting with the broader Colac Otway community and seeing how the **Map My** project can provide real, ongoing benefits."*

PROJECT SUMMARY

Map My involves collaboration between researchers in rural health, key public health stakeholders, and the rural Victoria and New South Wales communities of Colac Otway Shire and Tamworth Rural Council. The project will co-design a web based platform (WBP) using participatory mapping and group model building approaches.

• ***Participatory mapping*** involves the creation of maps by local communities to provide a visual interpretation of the local geography and key features related to healthy food access.

• **Group model building** is a participatory workshop method that results in participants building a visual representation of the things that influence access to healthy food in rural communities and generating potential solutions.

The resulting WBP, called **Map My,** will allow community members to use the software in their own home or in a convenient location. It is hoped this will remove barriers and increase participation for community members.

Photo credit: Eloise Murnane.
The Otway's rolling hills meet the rhythm of farm life.

CO-DESIGN

"Co-design" seems to be the new buzz word, but what does it really mean in terms of **Map My**?

• We will work closely with both the Colac Otway and Tamworth regional communities to help us design Map My and inform how to best engage and work with the community. Through a series of co-deisgn workshops, we hope to hear and understand what hte community wants and needs - throughout the delivery - on the project requirements.

• We have project staff designated to both Colac Otway and Tamworth local government regions, ensuring that local relationships are built and maintained respectfully.

What have we done to date?

July 2024

We met with a group of Tamworth community members to begin the process of understanding what the community needs in terms of a usable WBP.

- We met stakeholders in Tamworth over 2 days, showing them our research techniques and learning from them about the greater Tamworth region - things that were important to them for the WBP and things that would and would not work for their community.

- We met with local media to help with the journey of engaging and explaining Map My to the wider Tamworth community and we can't wait to meet with them again in February 2025.

- We travelled to Manilla, one of the focus areas of the project in the Tamworth region, and loved chatting with locals and seeing the facilities the town had to offer - in particular morning tea at the local cafe, and gathering some seeds from the seed bank at the library.

August 2024

We travelled to Colac to meet with stakeholders to further understand the needs of community members in terms of usability of a WBP. Chatting with local stakeholders allowed us to gain a stronger understanding of some of the challenges people face accessing healthy food across the Colac region.

Following on from these community co-design sessions, we have been working hard with the software developers from Deakin University's IISRI to build a WBP. Our aim is that it is accessible and user friendly for the communities of Colac and Tamworth and meets the needs of **Map My** more broadly.

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

Colac Otway: Lesley Hendy has been working with the stakeholders across the region to update them on **My Map** and organise visits in February 2025.

Tamworth: We have been working with Tracy Schumacher at University of Newcastle (Tamworth) to ensure the community is ready for testing in February 2025. Cindy Needham spoke with the Manilla Times media in October 2024 with a project update.

We are also preparing to collect some baseline data of availability of healthy food across both regions. We expect this to occur early in 2025.

TESTING FEBRUARY 2025

Photo credit: Eloise Murnane.
Stormy skies clear revealing a cloudscape of calm and wonder.

In February 2025, **Map My** will move into the WBP testing phase, where we will return to both communities to test what we have developed so far.

We can't wait to see what you think!

When?

Tamworth: Week starting Monday 10 February 2025.

If you'd like to know more, please get in touch with penny.fraser@deakin.edu.au.

Colac: Week starting Monday 17 February 2025

If you'd like to know more, please get in touch with l.hendy@deakin.edu.au.

CONTACT US

Feel free to contact us if you have any queries at all or are interested in being involved in the project.

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Visit us on the web at COMING SOON!

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