**Learning Together: Personal and Community Wellbeing**

**Part Two (of two): Community Wellbeing**

Community Wellbeing and Personal Wellbeing are obviously related (that’s one of the reasons we decided to group them together in *Learning Together!).* Our Judeo-Christian heritage believes that the wellbeing of an individual is derived from his or her community; the Greek/Enlightenment view believes that a community’s wellbeing is comprised of the sum of the wellbeing of individuals of which it is comprised. Wherever you would place yourself on the kind of continuum implied by those positions, Luke suggests that the following diagram sums up the need to balance care for the wellbeing of others and care for one’s own wellbeing in a helpful way. (T. M. Skovholt and M. Trotter-Mathison: *The Resilient Practitioner*)



The diagram can also be applied to the need to balance a community’s focus on its own needs and the needs of those surrounding the community, if, as some believe, such a balance is necessary for the health and wellbeing of a community. For example, Viktor Frankl’s research, tested in the extermination camps of WWII, concluded that those who had a goal or a relationship outside of themselves, and who gave themselves to that goal or relationship, were those most likely to survive and prosper. Many

writers and community practitioners (e.g. Jean Vanier, Henri Nouwen, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Erich Fromm) conclude that the same is true for communities.

But the wellbeing of a community needs more than an appropriate balance between an outward focus and attention to internal needs and processes. The Hebrew notion of shalom, which gives rise to specific instructions about healthy attitudes, social and interpersonal processes (Torah), is one attempt to promote a community’s wellbeing. The Australian first nations’ notion of The Dreaming (Tjukurpa in Anangu) which describes the way in which individuals relate with and care for one another and the environment around them, is another.

In more modern times (1972!), the former king of Bhutan initiated a measure of national wellbeing Gross National Happiness (GNH). GNH has 4 ‘pillars’: (i) [sustainable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_development) and [equitable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_development_theory) socio-economic development; (ii) [environmental conservation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_protection); (iii) preservation and promotion of culture; and (iv) good governance. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross_National_Happiness>)

Here in Australia, Community Indicators Victoria (in a research project funded by the state government from 2005-2007)suggested 5 indicators of community wellbeing, which described what constituted:

(i) Healthy, safe and inclusive communities; (ii) Dynamic, resilient local economies; (iii) Sustainable built and natural environments; (iv) Culturally rich and vibrant communities; and (v) Democratic and engaged communities. (<https://naaee.org/sites/default/files/civresourceguide.pdf>)

We in Poatina might describe our wellbeing as the degree to which we are practicing the 21 guiding principles we identified at the first Poatina Weekend (see appendix).

The process of measurement and evaluation of those principles might lead to us to thinking about how we could improve our practice of those principles. And here Luke suggests that the following principles that emerged from a community development forum in Fiji some years ago might be worthy of our consideration. For, as important as our community’s guiding principles are, the principles which guide their implementation (which also reflect Asset Based Community Development practices) are probably just as important. The 12 principles are:

1. People are more important than things; people are more important than programs.
2. Growth comes from within people; all people have talents waiting to be developed.
3. People grow in responsibility as they are helped to accept greater responsibilities.
4. The most effective venue for training the community is in the community itself.
5. People learn most effectively when what they are learning is relevant and built on the basis of their experiences.
6. As communities are integrated, they are best served by integrated development rather than by departmentalized units working in isolation from one another.
7. The most effective helper is a person who strongly identifies with the community and who develops a relationship with that community based on trust.
8. Communities know their own problems and the solutions that will work better than others from outside the community do.
9. The energy any community will put into any activity will be in proportion to their involvement in the planning of that activity.
10. The pace of development will be determined by the community; a particular change will only become permanent if the community is ready for it.
11. People should be helped only in so far as this assistance enables them to become more self-reliant.
12. There are resources in each community that are under-utilized and waiting to be released.

(Dave Andrews: *Compassionate Community Work*)

Bruce Dutton with Luke Morgan, October 2019

**Some suggested questions for discussion ‘over the back fence’, in your workplaces or in a group:**

1. What did you find helpful in this discussion paper?
2. What did you find unhelpful about this paper?
3. What would you like to add to the discussion?
4. What do you think contributes to the wellbeing of the Poatina Community?
5. How might we achieve those things?
6. How do you maintain a healthy balance between personal and community wellbeing?
7. Which measures described in the appendices do you think we need to give attention to?

**Appendix:**

# **Poatina Community Guiding Principles, 2017**

1. Spirituality 28
2. Hospitality 27
3. People matter 20
4. Sustainability 20
5. Creativity 19
6. Respect 18
7. Generosity 16
8. Reaching out / outward focus 16
9. Community Ownership 12
10. Social Justice 12
11. Adventurous spirit 11
12. Personal responsibility 10
13. Accepting / non-judgmental 10
14. Trust 10
15. Personal and community wellbeing 10
16. Engagement / Involvement 9
17. Collaboration 9
18. Truth 8
19. Transparency / accountability 7
20. Excellence 5
21. Opportunity 1
22. **City of Whittlesea Community Wellbeing Indicators Report 2017**

*Inclusive and engaged community*

Participation in community groups; Community acceptance of diverse cultures

Sense of community

Volunteering

Participation in decision making

*Accessibility in, out and around our city*

Broadband access

Access to public transport; Commuter travel time

Cycling facilities; Walking facilities

*Growing our economy*

Income

Unemployment; Underemployment; Youth disengagement

Highly skilled workforce; Qualifications

Local employment; Local jobs

*Places and spaces to connect people*

Use of open space; Community meeting spaces

Recreation facilities

Participation in sports and recreation

Distinct community character

*Health and wellbeing*

General health

Psychological distress; Risk factors

Food insecurity

Gambling loss; Family violence

Affordable housing; Access to health services; Access to human services

Safety in public areas

Developmental vulnerability

Connectedness to school; Access to educational services

*Living sustainably*

Household energy usage, waste generation, recycling contamination, water usage

Stewardship of the environment

*Good governance*

Community consultation and engagement

Decisions in community’s interest

Lobbying for community

Council’s overall performance

<https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/2523/community-wellbeing-indicators-report_accessible-version-accessible.pdf>

**The ‘Six by Six’ Model for Measuring Community Wellbeing (Central Qld LGAs)**

*1. Wealth & Affordability*

1.1 Average Cost of Renting; 1.2 Housing availability; 1.3 Housing Activity (Prices Trend);

1.4 Personal Income; 1.5 Economic Stress; 1.6 Income support

*2. Safety & Public Health*

2.1 Public Health Services; 2.2 Crimes against Persons; 2.3 Other Offences;

2.4 Crimes against Property; 2.5 Perceptions of Safety & Crime; 2.6 Victim of crimes

*3. Personal Health & Fitness*

3.1 Adults Overweight; 3.2 Adult Physical Activity; 3.3 Alcohol Consumption;

3.4 General Health Status; 3.5 Satisfaction with life; 3.6 Work-life Balance

*4. Diversity & Learning*

4.1 Age Distribution; 4.2 Education Level; 4.3 Population Density;

4.4 Population Growth; 4.5 Local Arts and Cultural Activities; 4.6 Diversity

*5. Community & Governance*

5.1 Citizen engagement; 5.2 Community Governance; 5.3 Community Connectedness

5.4 Personal Connectedness; 5.5 Community Trust; 5.6 Community Participation

*6. Environment & Infrastructure*

6.1 Parks and Gardens; 6.2 Community and Recreation; 6.3 Roads and Infrastructure;

6.4 Local Development; 6.5 Environmental Issues; 6.6 Transport

<https://www.anzrsai.org/assets/Uploads/PublicationChapter/246-Milesetal.pdf>