

Media Release

10 August 2016

TRANSITIONING THE VALLEY INITIATIVE TO BOOST LATROBE VALLEY JOBS AND HEALTH

The poll is closed, the people of Latrobe Valley have spoken and Transitioning the Valley has been named the winner of the VicHealth Community Challenge, seeing off strong competition from ALT_ART and 'Get Stuffed'.

Transitioning the Valley received significant community support, and was considered the initiative most ready to launch by VicHealth. The initiative will now benefit from a \$20,000 boost from VicHealth.

Transitioning the Valley is a jobs and collective impact, future industry initiative that blends existing hard and soft infrastructure, new energy technologies and a blend of business models. Initiated by the community, it will work together with government, business and educational facilities to provide a pathway for transition to the future industries. The project will initially focus on the brokering and founding of a Transition Centre and industry incubator, to retool the industrial and educational base of the Latrobe Valley for the requirements of a 2050 Hybrid Energy future. Find out more [here](#).

ALT_ART aims to provide career opportunities creative connections and skills development for emerging artists as an artist run, community owned gallery. This involves a physical gallery space at the VRI Hall in Traralgon, cultural events and an online database and store, with artists supported by professional mentors and networks. ALT_ART is a launching pad for aspiring creatives, an artistic and cultural attraction to Latrobe Valley, sharing local art with a broad range of buyers, collectors and appreciators of art and connecting people in our communities through the benefits of art. Find out more [here](#).

'Get Stuffed' is a new initiative to boost the local food economy of the Latrobe Valley, creating sustainable jobs through fresh local produce. The 'Get Stuffed' Food Network wants to work with new and existing food suppliers to improve their access to customers, and help to get local entrepreneurs into the market with an intelligently designed portable growing module. This evolving local food culture will be amplified by an online platform connecting the community to all sorts of local food related information and activities. By promoting good food, good health and local jobs growing in the Valley, let's all Get Stuffed together! Find out more [here](#).

A fourth initiative, Hospitality Hire participated in the business planning support element of the challenge, but was not eligible for the boost funds.

Hospitality Hire* is an employment initiative that connects young people with restaurants and cafés in the Latrobe Valley. It provides training and job placements, and strives to build a local hospitality community. It will provide young people with engaging, hands-on training to meet the needs of today's hospitality industry while supporting the health and wellbeing of young workers. Find out more [here](#).

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Voices of the Valley are the local group behind the Transitioning the Valley initiative, and plan to continue on the path they established through the business planning support process of the VicHealth Community Challenge. Next steps for Transitioning the Valley will include a series of community workshops and further development of a business plan.

Wendy Farmer, President of Voices of the Valley reflected on the value of the business planning support process, saying, “This has been an amazing experience, it has pushed us to extremes in our thinking and confirmed we are on the right track. We hope that these opportunities will be given to other groups.”

VicHealth’s Policy Director Kellie Horton declared the first ever VicHealth Community Challenge a success.

“It was great to see such a high level of community engagement through the Challenge, as well as the real commitment of Latrobe Valley residents in developing four very different initiatives to create local jobs and boost health and wellbeing in the region. It’s a strong indication that there are good things ahead for the Latrobe Health Zone.

“We look forward to seeing all four initiatives developed through the Challenge take off over the coming months, and will be proudly supporting them through regular follow up, provision of advice and identification of opportunities for further development and support.

“VicHealth is committed to supporting more locally-driven action to improve health and wellbeing in the Latrobe Valley as the Latrobe Health Zone takes shape. The local community can expect to see more of us in the coming period as we prioritise action in the Latrobe Valley which recognises and amplifies the assets of a community that is ready, willing and able to do things a little differently for the benefit of their health and wellbeing,” said Ms Horton.

For more information, go to: www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/latrobe-valley-challenge

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