



Case Study – Corangamite

“Open communication was everything”: Corangamite INFANT’s key to successful set-up

INFANT snapshot: Corangamite

- LGA location: Regional
- Births per year: More than 150 (as of 2020)
- INFANT model: Lead organisation – Corangamite Shire Council; Session facilitators – Corangamite Shire Council (MCH nurses) and South West Healthcare (Dietitians)

With challenges for community health services in 2020-21, how did Corangamite use collaborative partnerships and seed funding to their advantage during their INFANT set-up in 2021?

The INFANT journey in Corangamite LGA, South-West

At Corangamite Shire the INFANT seed funding has been used to fund additional hours for the Enhanced Maternal and Child Health (EMCH) Project Worker. The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) service had recently developed the role to develop programs to reduce vulnerability and increase community strengthening activities for families in the LGA. The worker’s focus was to build capacity both within the existing MCH team and with the local health services. INFANT was seen as a program that could be offered to all families with a new baby and although the New Parents group was the ideal launching platform for INFANT, the aim has been to widen the program and offer it to all families with a new baby.

The MCH team recognised there was a need for local efforts to support healthy eating and physical activity as these are priority health areas at both the local and state level. The team believed their connections with families would facilitate engagement with the INFANT program and link them with local health services embracing INFANT.

Getting started

Corangamite EMCH Project Worker Chris Towers explained that the INFANT model relied on a partnership between MCH and local health services. “We found it essential to communicate early and seek support from our health service partners. We engaged with staff from health promotion, dietetics and community health nurses at South-West Healthcare, Timboon Health Service and Terang and Mortlake Health Service and identified where our roles could intersect in delivering INFANT across the LGA.

Early on the focus was engaging key staff to undertake the INFANT training and this was closely followed by mapping the availability of staff to provide sessions within the existing capacity of their role.”

INFANT would become one of several group programs being offered by MCH with each needing to be coordinated around the availability of facilitators, venues, having resources



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available and local considerations. Timing the session so parents would be able to park their cars was an important factor as sessions were often held at venues which incorporated MCH and kindergarten. “We needed to make sure sessions didn’t coincide with afternoon kinder pick-up time as this would have increased congestion around the facility”.

Capacity building processes

Documenting discussions and developing a schedule of INFANT groups and sessions was another task undertaken with the seed funding. The schedule was shared with all stakeholders so we could make changes as needed. This included factoring in staff annual leave/professional development etc. “The schedule has turned out to be an important document for planning and adjusting the INFANT sessions. Sometimes a session may not have run as planned because of the pandemic restrictions. We have also needed to add several more INFANT groups as additional New Parent Groups were added during the year”.

As Corangamite INFANT are getting closer to using all the seed funding they are directing their efforts to include the INFANT schedule into an existing position description to build sustainability for this important administration function. Other administration tasks will be to develop a database of trained facilitators, their work location/s, contact details and availability.

Sustainability and collaboration with partners

The EMCH Project Worker has also been actively involved in recommending INFANT be included in the Corangamite Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. This has included identifying key Corangamite staff and local health services and their actions to deliver INFANT. “MCH have drafted actions and attended planning meetings for the MPHWP and hope to see INFANT included. INFANT is an important contribution to our LGAs efforts to increase healthy eating and physical activity which are priority health issues”. Partners are also working on their Integrated Health Promotion Plans and are developing up actions for INFANT. “INFANT gives us an opportunity for working collaboratively which is reflected in our key plans”.

Learnings have been made along the way with one being the complex funding streams operating in MCH, Health Promotion and Community Health. Each has its own funding and its own targets and has different governance arrangements. Embedding early years programs such as INFANT into the various funding streams would further support the roll out of INFANT across Victoria.

Data and documentation

Local families are enrolled into Corangamite’s INFANT through the Child Development Information System (CDIS) and families receive text message reminders of session dates. During the first INFANT session, parents are provided with a flyer developed by Corangamite MCH detailing session dates, My Baby Now app details and key messages about INFANT. Attendance is recorded in CDIS following the group sessions.



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Currently, the Corangamite INFANT team is using the seed funding to streamline INFANT organisational procedures. This includes a yearly schedule of groups including INFANT, creating digital flyers and registration via Eventbrite and program evaluation.

Key takeaways

- The Corangamite Shire Council Maternal and Child Health (MCH) team recognised INFANT would build on their relationships with families and was an opportunity to be further involved in collaborative partnership work with dietitians and community health nurses from their local health services.
- Corangamite’s first INFANT session is dove-tailed into every New Parent Group across the region.
- Corangamite took advantage of \$5000 seed funding to streamline INFANT processes, such as creating digital flyers, setting-up Eventbrite digital registration and program evaluation.

Want to implement INFANT in your LGA? Start [here](#).

Get in touch with Corangamite

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