



a fairer victoria achievements so far

Strategy Thirteen Changing the way we work with communities

strategy thirteen

Changing the way we work with communities

Aim

A Fairer Victoria is based on an understanding that finding new ways of working with business, local government and communities is part of the key to addressing disadvantage. We are working in partnership on local and regional priorities, improving the capacity of communities and community organisations and continuing to build a strong relationship with local government.

New partnerships

Caroline Springs is one of Melbourne's newest suburbs, and the site of a partnership which brings together state and local government, the developer, community groups, local businesses and residents – all committed to making Caroline Springs a great place to live.

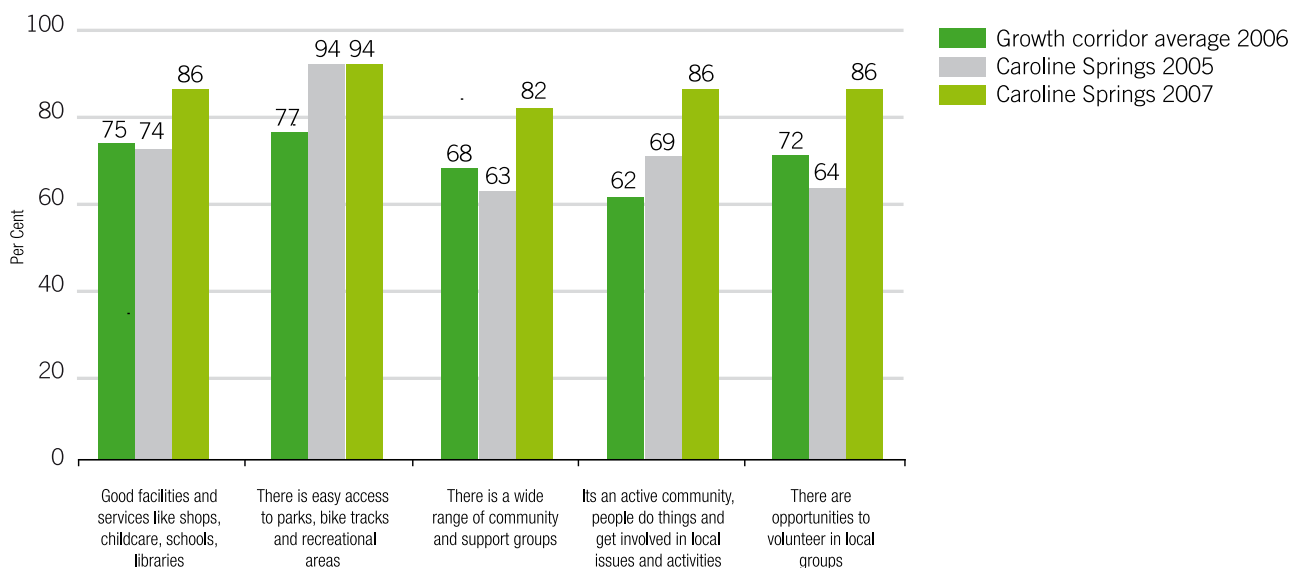
In Caroline Springs, the partnership was focused on better planning and delivery of services and infrastructure as the suburb grows. It has helped to:

- coordinate the construction and sharing of important community infrastructure, such as schools, libraries, and sports grounds
- strengthen the community by providing more opportunities for people to get involved in local activities, and
- demonstrate the efficiencies that can come from working together in this new way.

The evaluation of the Caroline Springs partnership revealed residents of Caroline Springs report high levels of satisfaction with their local area and the facilities and opportunities it offers.

In August 2007, the Department of Planning and Community Development was established to deliver creative and positive models that link planning and community development, with a particular focus on the liveability of outer suburbs such as Caroline Springs.

Perceived opportunities to participate in Caroline Springs 2005 and 2007, compared to the growth corridor average 2006



Community enterprise and volunteering

Over 13,000 volunteers have been attracted to positions in community organisations over a period of two years, through 881 *Victorian Volunteer Small Grants* approved to December 2007. These grants are provided to community organisations to help them attract and retain a larger and more diverse range of volunteers.

We directly contacted over 5,000 Commonwealth Games volunteers encouraging them to continue being active in community activities.

And we have created 286 new jobs and provided skills training for over 400 people through 76 new enterprises as part of the *Community Enterprise Development Program*, to January 2008.

“We always thought that we needed trained volunteers . . . Being able to have the resources to be able to get people trained specifically has been difficult for us... The results (for people with disabilities) we’ve got in the past nine months have been greater than in the last three years.”

Volunteer Small Grant Recipient, Regional Victoria.

Support for the community sector

Community organisations are major contributors to the economy and social fabric of Victoria. They contribute to civil society, provide opportunities for participation, deliver critical services, and are a significant employer. A strong community sector is very important to Victoria. We established and funded the *Stronger Community Organisations Project*, headed by Professor Allan Fels. The final report was handed to Government in November 2007, along with a report from the State Services Authority about how to reduce red tape for the sector. We will respond to these reports in the first half of 2008.

We have provided six scholarships so far under the *Community Sector Leaders Scholarship Program*. This supports community sector professionals to gain post-graduate qualifications at the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

We have made it much easier for community groups to find, apply for and manage Government grants by creating an electronic grants portal and consistent application and reporting processes for grants run by the Department of Planning and Community Development – this Department accounts for a large portion of Government grants.

Community engagement and involvement

We have started a program called *Enhancing Community Engagement in the Planning and Delivery of Health Services*, which entails:

- a biennial *Participate in Health Conference* to identify new strategies and benefits of community engagement in planning and delivery of health services, and
- Health Service Cultural Diversity Plans, which provide members of CALD communities with the opportunity to advise health services on how to provide local culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

We have also:

- established local teams (under the Department of Planning and Community Development) in each of the eight regions of Victoria to help local communities navigate government programs, services, and grants processes, and
- provided 46 community buses to help expand options for community based transport across Victoria.

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