

Creating healthy rural places

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People, place and wellbeing are intrinsically interwoven, with many complex relationships linking the place a person lives and that person's wellbeing. These linkages are diverse: the place you live may influence your wellbeing via your social interactions with others in the community, the physical landscape, availability of key services, and overall liveability, to name just a few. A community with poor leadership, few facilities, a lack of green space, poor housing, and high levels of social conflict is less likely to support wellbeing compared to a community with good, accessible facilities and services, attractive landscapes, and strong community cohesion. Despite a rapidly growing body of work in this area, designing wellbeing interventions that focus on the place a person lives in, rather than on the individual, is not easy. In this paper we examine both expected and unexpected connections between place and wellbeing. To do this, we use the findings of the Regional Wellbeing Survey, an annual survey of more than 10,000 rural and regional Australians that measures both the wellbeing of individuals, and how they experience the community they live in. We draw on this rich dataset to examine the nexus between people and place in rural Australia, and identify place-focused interventions with promise for supporting wellbeing.