

# Media Release

Wednesday 18 March 2020

Primary Care Partnerships across Victoria today celebrated their 20 year history of providing on the ground support in local Victorian communities to improve health and wellbeing outcomes. Primary Care Partnerships were established in Victoria in 2000 to strengthen relationships across local primary care, health and community sectors and support prevention, early intervention and equitable access to services.

The State-wide Chair of Victorian Primary Care Partnerships, Margaret McDonald, acknowledged the work of partner organisations and the desire to celebrate collectively.

'As catchment-based voluntary alliances of health and community service organisations, we have worked together for 20 years to maximise health and wellbeing outcomes, promote health equity and avoid unnecessary hospital presentations and admissions', Ms McDonald said.

Primary Care Partnerships connect more than 850 organisations across health, education, community service and local government with local communities to support them through work such as sharing data, undertaking integrated planning, providing workforce and resource development and assisting community participation. The assistance supports delivery of over twenty state government priority strategies, actively embedding government policy and reform in local communities through more than 150 distinct initiatives.

'We understand our communities because we are members of them. That means we can respond directly to their needs', she said.

'Whether we are facing crisis as we are now, or longer term issues such as chronic disease, higher rates of soft drink consumption, or lack of awareness of the harm caused by alcohol or gambling, each community is different and needs different things from our health system', she said.

'Navigating that system, particularly as it changes or where issues cross service boundaries, can be challenging and our partnerships enable more effective working relationships that support collaborative health promotion, service coordination, integrated planning and shared knowledge, data and learnings', Ms McDonald said.

'We are proud to have remained leaders throughout our 20 year history and to continue to provide the platform for our partners to work together quickly and efficiently, responding to community need and supporting successful community outcomes that the government relies on particularly in rural and regional areas where services are less accessible and where often care is needed most', Ms McDonald said.

'In a changing health landscape, our work is sometimes misunderstood or assumed to be undertaken by metropolitan and regional partnerships, the Orange Door services and Primary Health Networks, but it is very different', she said.

'We acknowledge the government's commitment to further funding and are excited to work with the Department, Minister, our partners and our stakeholders to continue to remain fit for purpose, continue to improve community health outcomes and to secure the partnership's future', Ms McDonald concluded.

*"Bringing together more than 850 organisations  
in partnerships across Victoria"*

The Partnerships were due to celebrate their anniversary with Members of Parliament, Stakeholders and Staff at an event in Parliament today, but have made the decision to celebrate 'offline' following the recommendations from the Federal Government to postpone all non-essential gatherings of 100 people or more and recognising the limits for healthcare professionals and other critical workforce in attending events.

For more information please contact Margaret McDonald, Victorian Primary Care Partnerships Chair on 03 5421 1666 or email [Margaret.McDonald@cobaw.org.au](mailto:Margaret.McDonald@cobaw.org.au)

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## Further Information

### **Victorian Primary Care Partnerships**

Vic PCP is a voluntary alliance of the 28 primary care partnerships in Victoria. Vic PCP exists to support and promote the primary care partnership platform and the broader use of partnerships to achieve improvements in population health and well-being.

More information about the #SecurePCPsFuture and other resources is available [here](#).

## Case Studies

### **Gippsland Healthcare that Counts Framework**

The aim of the Gippsland Healthcare that Counts Framework Implementation Project is to improve the care of children vulnerable to abuse and neglect in health and community services. The Gippsland PCPs have developed resources, and facilitated training and capacity building opportunities and peer learning networks to support agencies across the Gippsland region to implement and embed the Framework in health services. This has led to earlier identification and improved responses to vulnerable children by Gippsland health and community services which, in turn has promoted better health and well-being outcomes for those children and their families.

### **Mental Health, Aboriginal Health and Family Violence**

Campaspe PCP has been responding to a number of current challenges facing local communities related to Mental health, Aboriginal Health and Family Violence. In particular:

- 30% of the Campaspe population are diagnosed with anxiety or depression – 176 community members have been trained in the Mental Health First Aid program to provide support to friends, family and colleagues
- Smoking rates of Njernda Aboriginal Corporation's staff have reduced by over 20% through the support and actions of the local Aboriginal Health Partnership Group
- Family violence incidents have increased by 21% in the last year in Campaspe - through the local Campaspe Family Violence Action Group we have created opportunities for women to break gender stereotypes with scholarships supporting them in non-traditional industries.

### **Improving Cultural Security**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people report that mainstream employment is highly stressful and workplaces are culturally unsafe, disempowering, and socially isolating. Inner North West PCP co-designed the From Symbols to Systems Framework with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to support organisations to become more culturally safe. The framework steps out whole of organisational processes, templates and checklists to improve cultural security, ensuring the organisation is safer to work in and access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.