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Municipal Public Health Planning Framework Consultation

In partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria, Victorian Local Governance Association and local governments, the Public Health Division of the Department of Human Services is developing a new framework for Municipal Public Health Plans.

In April we released *Municipal Public Health Planning Framework: Draft Document for Consultation*. Five Consultation forums were held across Victoria in April and May 2001, allowing over 200 participants from all regions to attend. Representatives from 62 of the 78 local governments in Victoria attended the forums.

Feedback was also gained from the MAV Human Services Directors' Forum, internal Public Health Division and other DHS forums, and other government agencies.

In addition to the data gathered during the consultations forums, a variety of feedback was received from the written responses. Thirty-two written submissions were received in a variety of forms, representing the input of over 70 people from a wide range of organisations. Some of the respondents had also attended the forums.

There was a positive response to the document and its potential to improve municipal public health planning. The forums and written feedback were successful in collecting information and providing an opportunity to promote a new direction in municipal public health planning.

Information from the analysis of forum focus groups and written submissions is currently being incorporated into the final MPHP Framework document.

Next Steps

It is anticipated that the final MPHP framework will be available by the end of August 2001, to be followed by a public release and discussion of current best practice. In the meantime, we encourage you to use the current draft MPHP Framework to guide municipal public health planning.

Two consistently recurring issues were identified during the consultation that are best addressed during the implementation phase for the new Framework:

- The need for Best Practice/Good Practice examples and stories to illustrate components of Framework.
- Workforce development/skills development for practitioners and other officers in local government about Framework. The different requirements in metropolitan and rural councils need to be considered.

The overall assessment was that the MPHP Framework document provides a positive starting point to promoting integrated planning; the challenge is to start working this way.

VicHealth / MAV Project on the Social Determinants of Health and Role of Local Government

The VicHealth Strategic Directions document sets out a focus on inequalities in health and the underlying social determinants of these inequalities. It also emphasises the importance of partnership with other sectors to promote the health of Victorians.

The important role of local government in addressing the social determinants of health is well recognised. The aim of the project is to develop and trial a resource package directed to councillors and senior managers that will demonstrate the opportunities for integrating responses designed to address the social determinants of health across Council.

Particular focus is to be placed on strengthening the relationship between the social determinants of health, Municipal Public Health Plans and other core planning processes of council.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Contribute to councillors' and senior managers' understanding of how the social determinants of health can be translated into council's core business.
- Provide support for developing integrated population health planning approaches across council.
- Identify and provide examples of good practice relating to integrated planning.
- Assist councils in the local translation of key concepts around the social determinants of health and how these can be applied according to the needs of their municipality.

Comments made during the consultations indicated that participants welcome this project as providing valuable support in the development of best practice in integrated public health planning at a municipal level.

The project involves two phases:

- Phase 1 - Development and trialling of the package. This will occur from July-Dec 2001
- Phase 2 - Production and dissemination of the presentation package to all councils across Victoria from Jan - Dec 2002.

Ged Dibley, Lori Rubenstein and Michael Gordon of PDF Management Services Pty Ltd will be undertaking Phase 1 of the project, which is expected to commence on 2 July 2001.

For further information on this project, contact Kelly-Ann Jolly at VicHealth on telephone: 03 9345 3208 or email: kjolly@vichealth.vic.gov.au.

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