



Family Planning Victoria (FPV) congratulates the Minister and the Department of Health on the development of the Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012 – 2022: Metropolitan Health Plan and welcomes the opportunity to comment.

### **FPV's role in health service delivery**

FPV is a statewide, independent, not-for-profit, pro-choice organisation which has been advocating for the sexual and reproductive health rights and needs of the Victorian community for over 40 years.

Our vision is sexual and reproductive health for all Victorians and our mission is to provide leadership in public policy, advocacy, education and clinical care in sexual and reproductive health.

We provide:

- specialist training programs for education and healthcare providers
- school and community education sessions
- clinical services
- research and advocacy.

We have particular expertise in education, training and clinical services for people aged under 25 years. We also work with:

- education and healthcare providers
- parents and carers
- people in their reproductive years
- agencies working with vulnerable populations.

FPV is an active member of the national body, Sexual Health and Family Planning Australia (SH&FPA). Through SH&FPA, we are associated with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

For more information about FPV, go to [www.fpv.org.au](http://www.fpv.org.au).



## Our response

### Ensuring sexual and reproductive health is included in the plan

The Metropolitan Health Plan makes no reference to sexual and reproductive health services such as maternity, sexually transmissible infection treatment, assisted reproductive technology or termination of pregnancy services. Such services are critical components of a health system and should be included in a transparent manner.

**Health service planning should include the availability of the full suite of sexual and reproductive health services.**

### Focusing on the health needs of young people

- The World Health Organization (WHO) recognises young people are particularly vulnerable to factors affecting their sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
- Early sexually transmissible infections (STIs) can have significant effects on future sexual and reproductive health, including cervical cancer (human papilloma virus), infertility (Chlamydia infection) and recurrent pain (e.g. herpes simplex virus).
- The Second National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2010-2013 identified young people as a priority group.

#### Current Victorian data

- Between 2005 and 2009, notifications for Chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis increased significantly across all Victorian rural and metropolitan regions.
- The youth demographic now represents over half of all STI notifications in Victoria, the majority of which are for Chlamydia.
- The proportion of gonorrhoea notifications in Victorian women nearly doubled between 2006 (10 per cent) and 2009 (19 per cent). Thirty four per cent of these notifications were in young people aged between 15 and 24 years.
- The North and West metropolitan regions have recorded the highest rates of Chlamydia notifications.
- Chlamydia notifications have increased considerably in four of the five rural and regional areas, including the Grampians, Loddon Mallee, Hume and Gippsland.
- Teenage births in rural areas are above the state average of 10.6 births per 1000 young women aged 15-19 years.
- Same-sex attracted young people (SSAYP) are sexually active earlier than their heterosexual peers. These young people often have sexual partners of both genders and lower protection levels than opposite-sex attracted youth.



#### Current service gaps for young people

- Limited access to affordable contraception advice and services
- Lack of consistent and comprehensive relationships and sexual wellbeing education in school and community settings
- Limited availability of youth friendly health services which address sexual and reproductive health issues
- Lack of user friendly health information to balance the often misleading information promoted through a range of media
- Lack of bulk billing GP services
- Lack of health professionals who are aware of the issues faced by young people and are trained in the delivery of youth health services

**Young Victorians should be recognised as a population group in the Metropolitan Health Plan, especially regarding their sexual and reproductive health.**

#### Improving health literacy in the workforce

FPV welcomes the allocation of additional investment in workforce education, training, placements and role development. We have been providing accredited clinical education and training for over 40 years and are the only provider in Victoria of the Sexual Health & Family Planning Australia certificate in Sexual and Reproductive Health for doctors.

In 2009-10, we trained **1969 doctors**, reaching **28 per cent** of the estimated population in Victoria. FPV also trained **842 nurses** during this period, with **54 per cent** practicing in rural and regional Victoria.

**Further financial investment in workforce development is needed to ensure sexual and reproductive health services are accessible across Victoria.**

#### Linking Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012 – 2022 and Victoria Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011 – 2015

FPV acknowledges the valuable content of both the Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012 – 2022 and Victoria Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011 – 2015. It is imperative that these two plans are linked and that their relationship is well articulated.

We cannot underestimate the importance of linking prevention, as described in the health and wellbeing plan, to the elements of the health system described in the Metropolitan Health Plan including health promotion, community-based health services and hospitals. To the individual accessing the range of health services, this is most important.



**FPV suggests linking the documents in the final publication through the Minister's foreword and through the aspects of the documents that are interconnected.**

### **Incorporating the not-for-profits**

FPV acknowledges the statement that effective planning must occur across public, private and commonwealth funded sectors and agrees that local planning is fundamental. We believe that the value added by the not-for-profit sector in reducing the economic impact of ill health is not adequately acknowledged in the Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012 – 2022.

**Not-for-profit organisations have a long history in the Victorian health and human service sector and their contribution to evidence based practice and engagement with communities could further support and strengthen the implementation of the Metropolitan Health Plan.**

### **Statewide planning that bridges the metro/rural/regional divide**

The need and benefits of using consistent planning catchment areas requires further consideration. Currently, there are a number of catchment areas including local government areas, Department of Health regions, primary care partnership catchments and the most recent Medicare locals.

FPV recommends making a decision regarding the consistent use of one catchment planning area framework and embedding this framework in service agreements and contracts.

As a statewide service provider, FPV is interested in finding innovative ways of working with government and regional communities to assist with policy development and service planning in the area of sexual and reproductive health.

Currently, there are a range of organisations at the statewide and regional level that include sexual and reproductive health in their service delivery. These include women's health services, community health centres, hospitals and healthcare groups and statewide services focused on HIV prevention, sexual assault and support for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities.

**FPV believes that planning for clearer sexual and reproductive health service coordination and strategic planning should be included in the Metropolitan Health Plan.**

### **Further information**

For further information, please contact CEO Lynne Jordan at E/ [ljordan@fpv.org.au](mailto:ljordan@fpv.org.au) or on T/ 03 9257 0128.