

## Medical–legal partnerships: connecting services for people living with mental health concerns

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Our paper will discuss an action research project currently underway in regional and rural Victoria which seeks to build a dual site Medical-Legal partnership (MLP). MLPs bring together medical practitioners and legal practitioners to provide an integrated service aimed at supporting the health and wellbeing of individuals. MLPs, conceptually, are in their infancy in the Australian context having been successfully operating in the United States since the early 1990s. Our research project focuses upon an MLP model which diverts from the norm focusing upon holistic health rather, is specifically directed towards supporting individuals living with mental health concerns in rural and regional Victoria. Empirical evidence will be drawn upon to demonstrate how a project such as ours can be commenced and it will deliver early findings into the success of integrated services and notions of co-locating services in the rural context. We aim to demonstrate the benefits of the MLP model in supporting the mental health needs of individuals living the rural Australian context.