

## Integrating and consolidating health promotion efforts in rural Victoria

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**Background:** Primary Care Partnerships, a Victorian State funded framework, support agencies to deliver the Integrated Health Promotion program. A 2009 audit of 62 health promotion plans across Hume Region, encompassing four Primary Care Partnerships, identified 13 different health promotion priorities. Findings reported a lack of integrated planning between agencies and limited use of evidence, evaluation and strategic targeting of interventions.

**Methods:** The Regional Health Promotion Strategy was developed in 2012 to maximise health promotion outcomes in rural communities through a focused and integrated approach. The main objective of the strategy was to consolidate resources through the identification of a single priority for the Hume region. The Regional Health Promotion Strategy supports the sharing of resources and knowledge across a large rural area, reducing duplication of activities. Primary Care Partnership staff display leadership in integrated planning and implementation by working together to provide capacity building opportunities for the geographically isolated workforce.

**Results:** Introduction of Regional Health Promotion Strategy reduced the number of health promotion plans from 62 to four, reflecting a single health promotion priority across four Primary Care Partnerships (12 local government areas). Working together using a coordinated planning process has seen agencies increase the use of evidence based interventions and plan comprehensive evaluation measures. An integrated approach across the four Primary Care Partnerships strengthens ability of agencies to adopt a 'big picture' understanding of health promotion sector. Resources have been consolidated under one health promotion priority reflecting a commitment from agencies to work together in delivering integrated health promotion across a large rural region.

**Conclusion:** This strategic approach to health promotion has been a strong catalyst for regional consolidation of resources, improved planning process, and greater focus on evidence based practice. This presentation identifies the leadership capacity of Primary Care Partnerships in working together to strengthen and facilitate a consolidated approach to best practice health promotion in a rural context.