



Consumer Health Network Information Kit



July 2004

1. Contents

Information Kit.....	1
1. Contents.....	2
2. Introduction	3
3. What are Divisions of General Practice.....	4
4. West Vic Division of General Practice.....	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Mission Statement.....	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Current Projects.....	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Core Funded Initiatives.....	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Past Activities	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Summary	9
<input type="checkbox"/> The Staff Team.....	10
<input type="checkbox"/> What are Primary Care Partnerships.....	11
5. Consumers and Community Involvement	11
<input type="checkbox"/> Who are Consumers?.....	11
<input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Health Network Role	12
<input type="checkbox"/> Why Consult with Consumers.....	12
6. Funding.....	12
7. Other Useful Information	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Websites.....	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact Details	13

2. Introduction

West Vic Division of General Practice has pleasure in presenting you with a Consumer Health Network Information Kit.

The information in this kit seeks to inform consumer representatives of the history and purpose of Divisions of General Practice and provide insight into the priorities and programs of your own local Division, the West Vic Division of General Practice.

The formation of the 120 Divisions of General Practice throughout Australia have made it possible for General Practitioners (GPs), consumers and communities to work together on issues of common interest and local relevance.

There are many benefits for Divisions of General Practice to involve consumers in their activities. Equally, there are many advantages for consumers in being able to work alongside doctors in a collaborative and consultative relationship outside that of a doctor/patient, to ensure a quality health care environment for the local community.

The community is an integral part of General Practice at both the national and local levels. This Information Kit aims to ensure that the path to community involvement in the Division at the local level is made easier.

We hope that you will find the information provided will assist you in achieving effective and efficient primary care services and more responsive secondary care services in West Vic Division.



Dr Jeffery Jenkinson
Chair
West Vic Division of General Practice

3. What are Divisions of General Practice

As geographically based networks of GPs, the Divisions of General Practice are:

A base where:

- GPs provide peer support to other GPs at personal and professional levels
- GPs can work with their community and other health professionals to improve local health outcomes
- The health care system and the community can contact and work with General Practice.

A mechanism for:

- Fostering communication between GPs and with the community, other health care providers, government, and other interested parties
- Monitoring the general practice workforce and local health service trends
- Helping GPs use local networks – for example, making referral services work better
- Purchasing services from and for GPs
- Broadening the scope of GPs work
- Encouraging innovation in the health system.

A resource that:

- Helps GPs, communities, other health care providers and government gain access to local primary health care information
- Offers clinical and management support to GPs and their practices
- Provides an opportunity for professional development, which might include continuing medical education, mentoring and teaching placements
- Helps GPs do research in primary health care
- Links with systems for monitoring and evaluating public health
- Helps GPs gain access to various funding programs

A vehicle for:

- Contributing to a unified voice for general practice
- Enabling GPs to participate in health policy development
- Helping GPs influence decision making for local, State and Territory, and national health service delivery
- Helping GPs improve the quality of general practice.

4. West Vic Division of General Practice

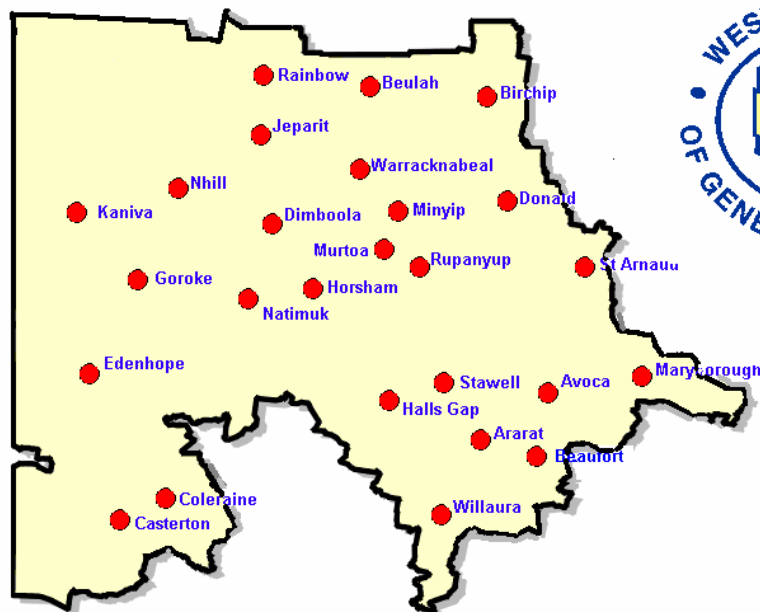
- **Mission Statement**

“A general practice organisation that improves the health of the community through recruitment and retention of GPs, promotion of best practice systems, integration of general practice with other health services and the promotion of health in the wider community.”

The West Vic Division of General Practice was incorporated and established an office in Ararat, Victoria in July 1993.

The West Vic Division covers 62,500 square kilometres and is characterised by many small farming communities supported by strategically developed small cities/towns. The Division has a population of 77,814. 75 General Practitioners (GPs) work from 25 practices consisting of 31 campuses or sites. 12 practices are run by solo GPs over 16 sites and 13 are group practices covering 15 sites. 6 practices are training practices.

Seven GPs sit on the Board of West Vic Division of General Practice. GPs themselves feel a strong connection with the people they see in their practice and form a rich knowledge base over time about the common and complex health problems being experienced in our community. GPs bring this knowledge with them to their work with the Division to improve the health of the community.



WVDGP has developed, implemented and completed projects that have had operational budgets between \$6,000 and \$250,000. In addition, the Division manages a recurrent 'core' budget of \$425,000 per annum from the Department of Health and Ageing.

WVDGP strives to be well informed about the health needs of the population groups that make up our local communities. The Division has an established history of managing innovative health focused projects on time and within budget. The Division's management structure ensures projects remain focused and effective with strong input from General Practitioners.

- **Current Projects**

Anticoagulation: West Vic Division in partnership with Wimmera Health Care Group has been funded by the Department of Human Services to improve the management of Anticoagulation in a rural area. The project provides a service to GP's in the Wimmera under a similar model to diabetes education. The service comprises of a specialist nurse with support from a pharmacist and dietician.

Central Grampians After Hours Primary Medical Care Triage: one of five original National After Hours trials commenced in 1999. The West Vic trial has tested the effectiveness of regional nurse triage service in a rural area. After hours calls to GPs have been reduced by over 50%.

Clinical Risk Management: has been conducted since 1994 and aims at improving the quality of patient care by providing rural GPs in small rural hospitals with a peer review program that monitors adverse patient events. This is a quality assurance program that offers non-punitive peer review for rural GPs. During 2002 and 2003, the Division worked with the Victorian Department of Human Services to support a roll-out of this project across rural Victoria in conjunction with five other Divisions of General Practice.

Diagnostic Imaging: A two-year project that developed electronic referral and decision support at the GP's desk top computer. This project was funded by the Commonwealth and in partnership with Ararat Medical Centre, East Grampians Health Service and the Collaborative Centre of E-Health (Ballarat University).

Foothold on Safety: Conducted in conjunction with the Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership (PCP), this state funded initiative is designed to ensure falls prevention is recognised and adopted as a "whole of community" responsibility. It aims to increase the proportion of older people who take action to reduce their personal risk of having a fall.

Home Medication Review: This program is funded by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and facilitates the awareness and uptake of home medication review, a joint GP/Pharmacist review of a patients' medication. Due the shortage of accredited pharmacists, West Vic Division's focus is on small group learning between GP's and

pharmacists and supporting training for pharmacists to achieve medication review status.

Active Script: In partnership with Wimmera PCP and Grampians Pyrenees PCP, West Vic is conducting an Active Script program. Participating GP's are able to prescribe exercise on a locally developed Active Script and a copy is mailed to a local "enabler". The enabler (a trained health professional) contacts the patient and mentors them into sustained physical activity. Work to date has shown that GPs are referring patients for depression, weight loss, high blood pressure, diabetes and arthritis.

Lift for Life – Mobile Gym: West Vic Division with the two PCPs is conducting initiatives that address the risk factor of physical inactivity in our rural population. With the International Diabetes Institute the Division is conducting strength training in small rural communities through the provision of a mobile weight van. The Weight on Wheels program complements the Active Script program.

More Allied Health Services (MAHS): Provides a referral point for Wimmera and Maryborough GPs dealing with non-seriously mentally ill patients. MAHS funding has also been used to employ appropriate staff to establish and trial diabetes and asthma clinics in the General Practice setting.

Rural Palliative Care: Funded for three years, this project aims to enhance health professionals' knowledge and expertise in the area of palliative care as well as addressing service development issues such as care planning, after hours, access to medications and multidisciplinary team meetings.

NPS Quality Use of Medicines Program: The Division employs a part time pharmacist to provide GPs with best practice and unbiased information regarding prescribed drugs. This is part of a national program funded by the Commonwealth.

Locums: Provision of a booking service for GP locums, to provide recreation, family and study leave for Division members. Funding from the Rural Workforce Agency provides a direct financial subsidy to practices to cover the travel costs and time associated with locum travel. The Division also provides a resource list of pharmacist locums for the region.

Primary Care Partnerships: The Division actively participates in the Grampians Pyrenees and Wimmera PCPs.

Regional Immunisation Project: The Australian Childhood Immunisation Register is a national database that records immunizations. The state government funds Regional Data Quality Officers to assist local government and general practice staff to follow up on children over-due for immunizations. A Regional Data Quality Officer is employed by the Division and assists in maintaining the region's immunization rankings in the top ten in Australia.

Grampians Rural Health Workforce Strategy: An eighteen month project in partnership with the Wimmera and Grampians Pyrenees PCPs and funded by the Department of Human Services. This project intends to replicate the lessons learned in recruiting General Practitioners to attract and retain allied health staff to the area. The Division recognizes that sustainable rural general practice is reliant on a sustainable health team.

- ***Core Funded Initiatives***

Utilising core funding, the Division currently has a strategic focus in the following programs:

Workforce: The Division has reversed rural GP workforce trends with a case management approach for the recruitment and retention of GPs and Other Medical Practitioners to the region. The Division has increased the GP workforce from 58 in 1997, to 75 in June 2004. The Division has also allocated additional resources to support overseas trained doctors to obtain Specialist General Practice Registration, a GP peer support program is also being developed to provide support for new doctors in the Division.

Management: Allocation of resources to ensure the Division is managed efficiently and effectively by a Board representing GP members and setting the strategic direction of the Division. The Division has developed two needs analysis (1996 and 2003) that extensively document the demography, members needs, health and welfare providers' needs, community issues and health status. The findings of the 2003 needs analysis and consultation with members and health services has provided a strong basis for identifying the Division's priorities, goals and strategies for the next three years.

West Vic Division also aims to consolidate its reputation as a member oriented Division, responding primarily to members' needs. The Division continues to commit to the development of tenders and innovative project delivery where these opportunities meet the aims and objectives of the Division, are relevant to rural general practice and result in positive population health outcomes or quality patient care.

Quality: A quality framework is used to promote best practice and support quality general practice. Services to members include practice staff training; practice visits and audits; support for information management; accredited continued professional development for GPs, with a multi-disciplinary approach where appropriate; and continued support for a GP peer review program. The Division will also provide ongoing support to improve collaboration between pharmacy and general practice, working with initiatives such as Home Medication Management Review.

West Vic Division is an accredited provider of general practice education. The Division facilitates local education and specialist education groups in anaesthetics and obstetrics.

Population Health: The issue of access and equity for rural people continues to impact upon the level of health in our community. The Division will explore new opportunities to improve access and equity through the consumer network, while continuing to work towards a sustainable GP clinic in Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative, establishing more multi-disciplinary general practice teams and promoting the role of the practice nurse.

Community involvement is essential to the success of Division projects. West Vic Division has a Consumer Health Network, a group of interested health consumers called upon for input into projects. Focus groups to gain the community perspective are held as needed and bi-monthly bulletins inform the consumer network of projects.

- ***Past Activities***

The Division has successfully completed a number of projects:

- GP/Pharmacy Liaison
- Best Practice in Infection Control
- Grampians Outreach Immunisation Service
- Heart Monitor – Cardiovascular Disease Project
- West Vic Division Health Needs Analysis
- Recruitment and Retention of General Practitioners
- Clinical Risk Management, Aged Care.
- Pharmacy Locum Project.

- ***Summary***

West Vic Division focuses on delivering services to assist in retention of its GP workforce. Thus many services are designed to enhance rural general practice whilst minimising the impact on GPs in their daily practice.

The West Vic Division is one of the largest Victorian Divisions in terms of the projects, programs and services it provides. West Vic has been able to build its capacity by successfully tendering for funded projects in addition to core funding from the Commonwealth. This capacity has increased health service provision to the West Vic region while ensuring the local delivery of services remains relevant to members and their communities.

- **The Staff Team**

Ararat Office
64 HIGH STREET
PO BOX 127 ARARAT 3377
Ph: 03-5352 4804 Fax: 03-5352 5495
Email: ararat@westvicdiv.asn.au

Executive Officer
Senior Project Manager
Project Officer (Workforce)
Project Officer (Palliative Care)
Project Officer (Clinical Risk)
Project Officer (Diabetes)
Project Officer (CPD/Consumers)
Project Officer (Weights on Wheels)
Finance Officer
Executive Assistant
Administrative Officer

Sally Philip
Jane Measday
Tina Wilde
Catherine Mackay
Liz de Fegely
Judith Hatcher
Annette Metcalfe
Debbie Boyd
Liz Laidlaw
Cheryle Stapleton
Jess Cole

Horsham Office
KORO COURT
148 BAILLIE STREET
PO BOX 1158 HORSHAM 3402
Ph: 03-5381 1756 Fax: 03-5381 0313
Email: horsham@westvicdiv.asn.au

GP Consultant
Senior Program Manager
Project Officer (Afterhours)
IM/IT Officer
Project Officer (Mental Health)
Project Officer (Mental Health)
(Maryborough)
Project Officer (Pharmacy)
Project Officer (Practice Support)
Project Officer (Active Script)
Health Promotion Officer
Workforce Support Officer
Immunisation Data Cleaning
Administrative Officer

Dr Rob Grenfell
Wendy Brand
Alicia McGrath
Russell Venn
Jenny Keir
Karen Ryles

Debbie Norton
Leisl Jackson
Lisa Cosson
Joanne Martin
Helen Panozzo
Julie Eltringham
Ann Ross

Board of Management

Chair	Dr Jeff Jenkinson (Horsham)
Treasurer	Dr David Lia (Stawell)
Board Member	Dr Rob Grenfell (Horsham)
Board Member	Dr Danie deVilliers (Maryborough)
Board Member	Dr Khaled El-Sheikh (Warracknabeal)
Board Member	Dr Chris Wimbury (Edenhope)
Board Member	Dr Malcolm Anderson (Nhill)

- ***What are Primary Care Partnerships***

Primary Care Partnerships aim to improve the health and well being of their catchment's population by better coordination of planning and service delivery in response to identified needs. The Primary Care Partnerships encourage consumer participation and community involvement. West Vic Division of General Practice is associated with two PCPs that cover the greater part of the Division's region.

- ***Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership*** is a voluntary alliance of approximately 20 primary care service providers in the Central Grampians region, encompassing the Shires of Pyrenees and Northern Grampians, and the Rural City of Ararat
- ***Wimmera Primary Care Partnership*** is a voluntary alliance of care service providers in the Wimmera Region, encompassing the Shires of Yarriambiack, Hindmarsh, Horsham and West Wimmera.

5. Consumers and Community Involvement

- ***How do Divisions learn about Community Issues?***

WVDGP strives to be very well informed about community health needs and issues in both our local communities and more broadly. Previously we have relied upon regional health needs surveys and studies conducted by local government, hospital networks, state government and research and health promotion organisations. Recently we have surveyed our own health and welfare workers and GPs for their views on health needs in our region. The Division provides representatives to many health organisations and committees. In this way Division members and staff are exposed to a wealth of information and views about community health issues and how they should be addressed. ***To complement this knowledge, WVDGP now seeks consumer input directly from community members.***

- ***Who are Consumers?***

Consumer Representative – a person who voices the consumer perspective and takes part in decision making processes on behalf of consumers. This person is usually nominated by, and accountable to, an organisation of consumers.

Community Representative – a person who represents the general views of “lay” people within a community (not necessarily those of particular health consumers).

- **Consumer Health Network Role**

Membership of the Consumer Health Network is open to organisations who represent the interests and concerns of health consumers and individual community members who are interested in local health issues.

Members of the Consumer Health Network will:

1. be kept up-to-date on the Division’s work with GPs via regular updates from the Division
2. be encouraged to raise issues and comment on aspects of general practice that are important to consumers
3. Be invited to join with other Network members in focus groups from time to time, which will provide opportunity for more focused discussion on consumer health issues of strategic importance to the Division.

- **The role of Focus Groups.**

Focus Groups bring together people to talk about an issue. Focus Groups are not problem-solving sessions or decision-making groups. Focus Groups allow people to discuss things among themselves, with the researcher monitoring and guiding the discussion. A key advantage of focus groups is they are a very efficient way of collecting qualitative data.

- **Why Consult with Consumers?**

West Vic Division of General Practice values the input of consumers, and believes it is important to involve them in the Division’s activities because:

1. Consumers are able to provide valuable insight into issues relating to general practice, based on their experience of the health care system
2. It is important to find out what the community needs and wants in a health care system, in order to plan successful and appropriate services
3. Better health outcomes are achieved when health care professionals work in partnership with consumers.

6. Funding

The Commonwealth Government is committed to encouraging a stronger, more active role for consumers at all levels of the health system.

To achieve this, the Commonwealth Government has provided funding to develop and implement initiatives designed to strengthen the involvement of consumers in the health system. These initiatives are intended to promote, integrate, and disseminate information and increase consumer involvement in health service planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

WVDGP will reimburse consumers participating in focus groups or training sessions \$25 per hour for their involvement.

7. Other Useful Information

- **Websites**

West Vic Division of General Practice	www.westvicdiv.asn.au
General Practice Divisions Victoria	www.gpdv.com.au
Australian Divisions of General Practice	www.gp.org.au
Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership	www.grampianspyreneespcp.org.au
Consumer Health Forum	www.chf.org.au
National Resource Centre	www.participateinhealth.org.au
National Centre for Consumer Participation in Health based in Victoria.	www.nrccph.latrobe.edu.au

- **Contact Details**

West Vic Division of General Practice

62 High Street
(PO Box 127)
Ararat Vic 3377
53524804 (phone)
53525495 (fax)
a.metcalfe@westvicdiv.asn.au
www.westvicdiv.asn.au

**Grampians Pyrenees
Primary Care Partnership**

60 High Street
Ararat Vic 3377
53522555 (phone)
53522533 (fax)
info@grampianspyreneespcp.org.au
www.grampianspyreneespcp.org.au

Consumer's Health Forum of Australia Inc.

Suite 3, 3-5 Phipps Close
Deakin. ACT. 2600
PO Box 170, Curtin ACT 2605
03-62180811 (phone)
info@chf.org.au (email)
www.chf.org.au (web)

Wimmera Primary Care Partnership

PO Box 442
Horsham 3402
53827660 (phone)
kathym@wimmera.unitingcare.org.au