

MEDIA RELEASE

Latrobe Health Advocate, Jane Anderson has partnered with the Gippsland Primary Health Network to produce a report which details the impact of COVID-19 in the Latrobe Valley.

The report, *COVID-19 Impact and Recovery in Latrobe*, is designed to identify system gaps, consider broader opportunities for health system reform, and provide advice to the Victorian Government and local service organisations about the key commitments required to steer recovery in the Valley.

Among them, more support for people to access technology and data, greater collaboration between health services, a whole of government approach for bolstering digital infrastructure, patient-centred care, and community-led recovery.

To achieve these and other recommended commitments and inform a healthy and equitable COVID-19 recovery for Latrobe, the report suggests a collective approach between organisations and services needs to be established.

The report will be provided to the Victorian Government, local services and organisations within the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone. It draws on engagement data and events that occurred during 2020, in which Melbourne and regional Victoria were significantly impacted by measures put in place to protect communities and limit the spread of the virus.

The most recent COVID-19 outbreak in Victoria has shown us that the future remains uncertain and reminds us that the pandemic will continue to have health and economic impacts in Latrobe communities, reinforcing the importance of actions to address the report's findings.

Quotes attributable to Latrobe Health Advocate Jane Anderson:

"Throughout 2020 I heard from communities, businesses and governments about issues and gaps in the system. I heard about digital inclusion and exclusion, mental health and wellbeing, access to services, social connections, increases in food insecurity and financial stress," Latrobe Health Advocate Jane Anderson said.

"Working in partnership with Gippsland Primary Health Network has enabled us to test our analysis of what we have heard from people in the community. Combining the analysis of community experience with GPHN's analysis of mega trends, opportunities and risks, provides an informed picture of the experience in Latrobe to ensure COVID-19 response and recovery efforts are tailored to the local experience."

"The COVID-19 response in 2020 showed us what can be achieved when everyone is pulling in the same direction."

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"I will be working with governments and service providers to make the connection between recovery and all the social determinants of health. I'm here to listen and to help our health system understand and respond to the needs of communities in Latrobe, and I am now preparing to support and inform recovery for our region"

Quotes attributable to Gippsland PHN CEO Amanda Proposch:

Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch, said the data and information collected and analysed by Gippsland PHN during the COVID-19 pandemic echoed the issues highlighted by the Latrobe Health Advocate's work.

"The themes captured in the Gippsland PHN data and other information analysed include primary care responsiveness, impact on mental health and suicide, impact on use of alcohol and other drugs, impact on people experiencing vulnerabilities, and the importance of integrated care and digital health maturity," Ms Proposch said.

"The response to COVID-19 is challenging. It has provided us with a view into the future in how we can all work together to help keep communities safe, to care and look out for one another and improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for all, especially the most vulnerable in our communities."

For more information or media enquiries, phone Kylie Jones at the Office of the Latrobe Health Advocate on 1800 319 255.

If you or someone you know needs help contact:

- ***Lifeline – 13 11 14***
- ***beyondblue Support Service – 1300 224 365***
- ***Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467***
- ***MensLine – 1300 789 987***
- ***Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800***
- ***Qlife – 1800 184 527***

To access professional mental health support in Gippsland, speak to your local doctor.