

## NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2016

### Health care on the Bellarine

Future health care needs of Portarlington and other Bellarine communities are the focus of a current strategic service plan commissioned by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.

A limited number of community consultations are being held as part of the planning process. Forty people attended a public meeting facilitated by the study consultants Biruu Health on July 20 in Portarlington, hosted by Bellarine Community Health.

From the perspective of older residents strong views were voiced about our active community, the importance of positive ageing, and assisting people to stay living at home for as long as possible. This means that services need to be timely, responsive, affordable and accessible.

People identified a number of key service gaps (for example, inadequate local GP and allied health services) that are compounded by the lack of public and community transport services. However, it was not clear how these gaps would be addressed in the plan, or what resources would be available to improve them in the future.

In relation to the existing uneven distribution of services across the Bellarine, including between neighbouring communities such as Portarlington and Drysdale, a question was raised about the importance for the plan to obtain and analyse small area data sets, as well as broad scale population health statistics. The need to identify risk and needs levels for smaller populations was acknowledged by the Biruu Health consultant, but there was no clarification about how this would be followed up.

The meeting requested feedback on the proposed plan before its finalisation, which SiP strongly endorses. We would like to see planning WITH people, rather than decision making by agencies on our behalf. SiP believes that the policy goal of consumer directed care will not become a reality unless consumers are first encouraged to help design and shape the service system.

In the context of current and ongoing major changes to the age care system, SiP seeks consideration of its model for a one-stop shop for health and age care information, advice and advocacy to be piloted in Portarlington as part of future health directions for smaller communities on the Bellarine.

### SiP's annual outing - Thursday October 6, 9.30 am - 3.30 pm

You are invited to join us for a coach trip to the award winning **Narana Aboriginal Cultural Centre** for a presentation, guided tour and morning tea, followed by a visit to **Moorabool Valley Chocolates** for a 2-course lunch.  
Cost - all inclusive \$40.

Contact Jenny Wills (SiP Vice-president) 5259 2032 for enquiries and bookings.