



Partnership in Practice

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

## 2009 TO 2012

Between the independent health, housing and community sector  
and the Department of Human Services

## **PREAMBLE**

This is a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Department of Human Services and the health, housing and community sector in Victoria. It covers sector organisations funded by the department. The term of this agreement is three years, July 2009 to June 2012.

This MoU builds on the success of previous partnership agreements. Since 2002 there have been two three-year partnership agreements between the department and the health, housing and community sector. This MoU represents the ongoing commitment to further enhance and strengthen the relationship between the department and the sector. It will build on the significant achievements that the department, peak bodies and funded organisations have worked on collaboratively since the signing of the first partnership agreement in 2002.

This MoU acknowledges that the best service outcomes are the product of effective public policy, inclusive planning, clear service and funding agreements and improved delivery of services. The department is continuing to enhance the way it does its business, acknowledging the importance of the independent service delivery organisations it funds.

All parties to this MoU are committed to working in partnership, based on mutual respect, acknowledging the different and complementary roles and responsibilities that are aimed at achieving the best for the Victorian community.

This MoU outlines the framework of a working relationship between the parties. It is not intended to constitute a contract; it is built on goodwill and binding in honour only. The activities outlined in this MoU are illustrative only, and any working arrangement in respect of these or other activities or projects may, if deemed necessary, be defined in separate agreements or in separate governance structures.

This MoU creates no legal partnership or joint venture, and none of the parties can commit the other financially, or otherwise, to third parties.

This MoU does not permit the use of copyright materials (including logos), dissemination of confidential information, or allow staff of the organisations to represent each other without prior written agreement.

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The MoU recognises that the department and the health, housing and community sector share an overriding common objective, which is to achieve the best possible outcomes from the provision of health, housing and community services to the people of Victoria.

The parties to this MoU enter into this arrangement with the intention of working cooperatively to sustain, strengthen and build on the working relationship between the independent health, housing and community sector and the Department of Human Services.

This MoU reflects the evolution of the relationship through the original partnership agreement in 2002–2005 and the second partnership agreement 2005–2008. It confirms our strong and positive relationship that is based on trust, respect and collaboration.

It also recognises that the department and sector organisations have legitimate differences in governance, roles and responsibilities.

It presents an agreement of the vision, values and goals that the Department of Human Services and funded organisations hold in common. It supports a shared approach to developing more effective working arrangements and relationships between the department and the sector it funds.

## SHARED VISION

A vision for the future of human service delivery in Victoria assumes the sustainable existence of a robust and resilient health, housing and community sector working in a dynamic partnership with responsive and effective government agencies. This MoU supports this vision and recognises that the partnership between the sector and the department has been mutually beneficial. The parties to this MoU share a common view of the value of partnering as a means of achieving positive change in the community.

The partnership approach incorporates agreed values, and a mutual respect for the roles and responsibilities of the department and the health, housing and community sector. As with the previous two agreements, this MoU signifies an ongoing commitment to participate in and adhere to agreed processes for policy development, planning, resource allocation, service monitoring and review, and accountability. It recognises the importance of taking the long-term view as well as responding to immediate and urgent need. It recognises that social and environmental outcomes are as important as financial outcomes.

The ultimate vision continues to be for service provision that supports a democratic, fair, accountable body of services that accommodate and value diversity, address the particular needs of vulnerable and marginalised people, recognise regional and rural differences and contribute demonstrable high-quality outcomes in accordance with agreed standards. Service provision will contribute to maintaining an inclusive Victoria, where all people are enabled to participate in their community and lead purposeful lives.

The partners to this MoU are committed to the delivery of high-quality health, housing and community services as needed by Victorians. In this delivery of quality services we are committed to act ethically and in accordance with a shared set of values that translate into behaviour.

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## **ACTIVITIES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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The parties to this MoU recognise the benefits and value that each can contribute to the partnership by working together. They agree to commit time and effort to the following partnership activities, roles and responsibilities:

### **Sustaining the relationship**

Parties to this MoU will:

- commit to ensuring that constructive and principled engagement is reflected in all behaviour, with each other and with service recipients and the wider community
- participate collaboratively in a range of partnership forums to raise and address partnership-related issues as well as service planning and coordination issues including high-level forums to be convened by the Secretary of the department
- promote and evaluate the collaboration and consultation protocol with sector organisations and the department
- promote the value of partnering and the sector-DHS partnering relationship
- bring to the attention of partners emerging issues that may promote or hinder the vision or purpose of this MoU
- exchange information for mutual benefit
- identify key issues and developments of interest to the sector
- facilitate peak body and sector representation and input to Department of Human Services committees or projects where appropriate.

### **Areas of mutual interest**

Parties to this MoU will:

- work together to develop sustainable strategies for health, housing and community services for Victoria
- participate in research, innovation and ongoing development of organisational policy and practice that supports evidence-based practice in health, housing and community services
- work together to achieve improved business processes, tools and practices, and their consistent application to ensure quality, responsiveness and sustainability of services for clients
- develop and maintain relevant links with Victorian government departments, Commonwealth government and Council of Australian Government initiatives
- identify and agree on processes for the evaluation and assessment of services, programs and partnership activities.

## **The Human Services Partnership Implementation Committee (HSPIC)**

The Human Services Partnership Implementation Committee (HSPIC) is the governance structure to support and sustain implementation of this MoU. The parties to this MoU will continue to maintain and support HSPIC to facilitate, represent and service joint partnership activities.


HSPIC's role is to:

- strengthen the partnership between the Department of Human Services and the sector to promote mutually effective and respectful relationships
- provide a forum for exchange of information about issues affecting the sector as a whole
- support projects and events to further the vision and purpose of this MoU.


A HSPIC work plan will be developed, agreed and reviewed annually. The review will focus on the achievement of work plan tasks and the vision and purpose of this MoU.

## **SIGNATURES**

On behalf of the Department of Human Services

<b>Signed</b>		<b>Name</b>	Fran Thorn
<b>Date</b>	29.07.09	<b>Title</b>	Secretary, Department of Human Services

On behalf of the independent health, housing and community sector

<b>Signed</b>		<b>Name</b>	Cath Smith
<b>Date</b>	29.07.09	<b>Title</b>	CEO, Victorian Council of Social Service on behalf of the independent health, housing and community sector

Published by the Victorian Government Department of Human Services,  
Melbourne Victoria Australia

July 2009

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Printed by PMI

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