



Minister for Health

02 FEB 2009

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Mr Chris Reid
Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Men's Health
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Reid

I am writing in response to your email of 12 December 2008, inviting a formal submission to the Senate Select Committee on Men's Health.

The Victorian Government is currently developing a comprehensive Men's Health and Wellbeing Strategy through the Department of Human Services (DHS). This strategy will aim to increase awareness of men's health and wellbeing issues within the community while improving service response for men. The Department will also be working closely with the Commonwealth Government to inform the new National Men's Health Policy being led through the Department of Health and Ageing.

In 2008 the framework of *A Fairer Victoria* was updated in recognition of the clear link between good health and participation in employment and community life. The overall goal within *A Fairer Victoria* related to health and wellbeing is to reduce health inequalities by minimizing and ameliorating the prevalence of key risk factors that contribute to chronic conditions. Improving men's life expectancy and health status and reducing inequalities between groups of men is an integral part of this agenda.

Victoria's primary and community health services are continually working to ensure that the programs and services they deliver are responsive to the needs of our entire community, including men. In recent years, the Department of Human Services has funded a number of activities related to men's health and wellbeing, including:

- Data surveillance
- Funding for conferences, such as the 2005 National Men's Health Conference
- Men's health promotion initiatives, often run at a local level
- Drought counseling
- Men's sheds
- Support for community health centres to run men's health clinics
- Programs for young fathers

- Men's carer groups, and
- Population-based initiatives for Indigenous men, gay men, rural men and older and younger men.

Victoria is committed to improving men's health and wellbeing, particularly in relation to those issues and population groups where outcomes are currently poor, such as indigenous men and men from lower socio-economic groups. We look forward to constructive collaboration with the Commonwealth Government in this important endeavor.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Andrews', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**HON DANIEL ANDREWS MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH**