



Southern Grampians and Glenelg
Primary Care Partnership

Partnership Agreement

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Acknowledgements

The Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care Partnership extends its appreciation to the Inner South East Partnership in Community & Health (ISEPICH) for their generosity in sharing their Partnership Agreement and the background planning that was used.

The SGG PCP has found their approach invaluable and has based much of this Partnership Agreement on the ISEPICH model. More information on ISEPICH can be obtained at www.isepich.org.

1. Introduction

The Primary Care Partnership (PCP) Strategy was launched in 2000 by the Victorian Government to:

- improve the experience and outcomes for people who use primary health care services;
- enhance physical and mental health through prevention or early responses to issues.

PCPs have a wide application and require broad membership beyond the health system, since social, economic and environmental circumstances determine an individual's health.

PCPs have the ability to work across a broad range of issues that impact on community health and wellbeing. For example, these include addressing the impacts of drought; alcohol abuse; family violence; social and economic disadvantage; levels of participation in the arts; transport; poor service access and childhood health and education.

PCPs offer the following unique functions:

- they provide an accountable, virtual governance structure which supports collaboration between a broad range of sectors; and
- they facilitate the development of locally integrated solutions.

The Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care Partnership (SGG PCP) was established in 2000 with 18 member agencies. The initial membership represented the key primary care providers, including local government, health and community services.

This new Agreement was established in 2008 with the aim of broadening the membership of the SGG PCP to reflect the range of organisations that are working in partnership to address priority issues for community health and wellbeing.

2. Purpose and Principles

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to improve the health and wellbeing of communities by facilitating and building partnerships that increase capacity and integration.

Our Principles

That we strive for an inclusive society;

That any issue that significantly impacts on the health of our community is core business of the SGG PCP;

That we strive to address the underlying foundations of good health via a social model of health;

That we must focus on reducing the inequality of health by reducing disadvantage;

That we operate in an inclusive and collaborative way by involving those impacted most by our decisions;

That we must collaborate beyond the health system to make greatest gains;

That we make decisions based on evidence; we strive to find the most effective solutions; and we evaluate our effectiveness to identify ongoing improvement;

That our work supports regional communities being healthy, productive and sustainable.

3. Membership

3.1 Eligibility

Membership of the Southern Grampians and Glenelg PCP is open to any incorporated body that has a commitment to enhancing the health and wellbeing of the community in the Shires of Southern Grampians and Glenelg.

Organisations seeking membership must demonstrate they meet the following criteria. Organisations must:

- be an incorporated body;
- have a local connection to or interest in the health and wellbeing of our community in the SGG PCP catchment;
- be committed to progressing the PCP's purpose and principles, as outlined in section 2;
- have the capacity to meet the responsibilities of a PCP Member, as outlined in section 3.2.

Organisations may apply for membership by completing the SGG PCP membership application form for consideration by the Executive Committee.

3.2 Responsibilities of Members

Signatories to this Agreement make a commitment to:

- working in partnership to achieve the strategic goal of the SGG PCP; and
- contributing to the development of the SGG PCP's strategic direction.

Member organisations are expected to participate in SGG PCP initiatives and working groups that are relevant to their role. There is no expectation that member organisations must be involved in all SGG PCP activities. SGG PCP is committed to inclusion and recognises that small organisations, in particular, may have limited capacity to be involved in activities, while noting that small organisations can make, and have made, a significant contribution to the Partnership.

Where agencies are involved in SGG PCP activities, they need to make a clear commitment regarding their level of involvement and how much time they can dedicate to certain initiatives. This can occur in the process of developing project briefs or plans. Members must be willing to promote continuity of membership and regular attendance at all relevant meetings.

4. Life of the Agreement

This Agreement will be valid for the term of the State Government's Primary Care Partnership initiative or where Members agree by majority vote to end the Partnership.

The Agreement will be reviewed every three years, or at the discretion of the Executive Committee. Proposed changes to the agreement must be in writing and circulated to all signatories for approval.

Members wishing to withdraw from the Partnership must give three months notice in writing to the Executive Committee of their intention to withdraw. During the period of notice, the Member will continue as an active member in the full spirit of this Agreement.

5. Consultation, Communication and Transparency

SGG PCP is committed to actively involving, consulting with and communicating to all stakeholders in the development and implementation of initiatives. The following mechanisms facilitate this:

- Dissemination of information for the SGG PCP Executive Committee, Member Organisations, Community Representatives and Project Staff, about the policies and procedures for the management and operation of SGG PCP;
- Written communication from the Chair containing information on current issues and opportunities, that is distributed widely to individuals, including organisational staff and community members;
- Written communication from Executive Officer on behalf of the Executive Committee informing members of key developments;
- Forums held annually that provide all members with an opportunity to share information and plan strategic directions;
- Reports on progress of working groups and projects made available to members and the community. All key documents will be made available on the SGG PCP web site.
- Regular dialogue with other Primary Care Partnerships; and
- Communication of information of general interest to the community including via the media.

6. Professional and Legal Obligations

This Partnership Agreement does not create a *legal relationship* between the parties. Each Member organisation is a legal entity with its own accountability requirements, policies, practices, standards and culture.

Members of SGG PCP will *act in the public interest* and not in a manner designed to gain unfair advantage for themselves, their agencies or other individuals such as relatives, close friends or business acquaintances. This particularly applies if members are involved in areas such as the letting of contracts or purchasing of goods and services. Members must disclose in writing any pecuniary or other interests they hold which could lead to potential or actual *conflict of interest* between private activities and official duties.

Members are required to respect the *confidentiality of information* provided on an in-confidence basis.

Should the situation arise, Members will not seek or accept favours or *gifts* for services performed in connection with performing SGG PCP duties. Included in this category are gifts in kind, such as free travel or accommodation arrangements. They may accept token gifts or trivial benefits, such as chocolates or flowers from grateful service recipients or the wider community.

Use of *intellectual property* acquired as a consequence of involvement in SGG PCP will be determined in accordance with the SGG PCP's Intellectual Property Policy.

SGG PCP may support *funding submissions* by single agencies and collaborative partnerships where:

- The project is consistent with SGG PCP objectives and philosophy;
- The proposed service/project complements existing services; and
- The agency/s concerned has the capacity to effectively manage the initiative.

SGG PCP reserves the right to support more than one proposal for the same funding.

Agencies undertaking or acting as fundholders for SGG PCP *projects* are required to:

- Provide progress and financial reports to the Executive Committee. The frequency of these reports will be negotiated on an individual basis;
- Ensure compliance with the conditions of the service agreement or other requirements between SGG PCP and the funding body; and
- Ensure that an appropriate evaluation process occurs. A written report is to be provided to the Executive Committee at the conclusion of the project.

7. Dispute Resolution

SGG PCP members are encouraged and supported to express and discuss issues openly. Members are encouraged to recognise and value diversity and seek to anticipate and resolve differences. Where agreement cannot be reached, the matter should be referred to the relevant working group Chair or the Executive Committee, with a view to resolving matters as quickly as possible.

Member representatives are encouraged to discuss any concerns with an Executive Committee member. If necessary, the Chairperson will make contact with the organisations concerned, with a view to resolving the issue. If the grievance is in relation to the performance of the Chairperson, or the Chairperson's organisation, a quorum of the Executive Committee will be convened to determine an appropriate course of action.

8. The Executive Committee

8.1 Role

The Executive Committee has a leadership role and is responsible for the overall governance of SGG PCP including the implementation of SGG PCP initiatives.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Governance and membership of SGG PCP;
- Overseeing the development and implementation of the strategic plan;
- Budget approval and ongoing monitoring of finances;
- Determining SGG PCP staff requirements and involvement in recruitment processes;
- Ensuring effective decision making processes;
- Developing and implementing SGG PCP policies and procedures;
- Convening stakeholder forums and overseeing working groups;
- Facilitating communication across the primary care and related service provider networks and between sectors;
- Establishing mechanisms to ensure carer and community participation;

- Representing SGG PCP to funding bodies, such as the Department of Human Services (DHS);
- Negotiating and managing the Service Agreement with funders, including between SGG PCP and DHS, and monitoring the outcomes; and
- Matters of public relations.

8.2 Membership

The Executive Committee will reflect the range of members of the SGG PCP and will comprise the following:

- up to 2 representatives from Southern Grampians and Glenelg Shire Councils
- up to 2 representatives from regional health services
- up to 3 representatives from small health services/bush nursing centres
- up to 2 representatives from organisations providing family/community services
- up to 3 representatives from non-primary care organisations
- up to 2 representatives from community representatives

Non-voting members will be invited to join, as required and may include representatives from key government agencies and other stakeholders.

8.3 Election and Period of Appointment

Executive Committee members will be appointed for three years and will be elected at an Annual Meeting of all Members. If more than one nomination is received for an Executive Committee position, all Member organisations will be invited to cast a vote (one per member agency). A simple majority vote by show of hands will determine the successful nominee/s. The Chairperson of the meeting will have the casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

8.4 Responsibilities of Executive Committee Members

It is the responsibility of each Member organisation to select its own representative to sit on the Executive Committee. Representatives are deemed to be empowered by their organisations to contribute to the collective decision making processes of SGG PCP. A Member organisation may nominate an alternate to attend in the absence of the elected representative.

Member representatives:

- require knowledge and expertise at a strategic and senior management level;
- must be able to attend meetings regularly and participate in working groups or sub-committees, and
- are expected to encourage the implementation of decisions made by SGG PCP within their own organisations.

8.5 Meetings

Meetings of the Executive Committee:

- will be held a minimum of six times per year;
- will consist of a quorum when 50% of members are present.

Member organisations with Executive Committee responsibilities are expected to have a representative at all meetings of the Executive Committee;

SGG PCP is committed to open and transparent decision making processes and these are guided by a decision making protocol. Executive Committee decision-making will be by consensus as far as

possible. Where a decision cannot be reached the item will be placed on the agenda of the following meeting and a vote will be taken. The Chairperson will not have an additional deciding vote.

Meeting Processes:

- The agenda will be developed and circulated a minimum of five days prior to the meeting with all relevant documentation attached;
- Minutes will include clear decisions and action items;
- Minutes of Executive Committee meetings will be available to the general membership following confirmation by the Executive Committee; and
- Members have the right to abstain due to conflict of interest, which is to be documented.

A *policy* manual is maintained which documents policies made by the Executive and contains references to key documents produced by SGG PCP.

The SGG PCP Executive Committee will undertake regular strategic planning review consulting with member agencies, working groups and community representatives.

The Executive Committee will undertake an annual evaluation of SGG PCP's performance, including the functioning of the Executive Committee.

8.6 Orientation of New Executive Committee Members

An orientation program is provided to familiarise new members of the Executive Committee with SGG PCP's purpose, strategic directions and operating procedures. Individual needs differ, however the orientation will include:

- A briefing by the Executive Officer;
- Copies of key documents including a list of members and the current Strategic Plan;
- A 'buddy system' where an experienced Executive Committee member supports new Executive members (where required); and
- An opportunity for new members to meet with existing committee members to gain a thorough briefing on the role and current priorities.

8.7 Role of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

The Executive Committee elects a Chairperson to take overall responsibility for providing leadership within the Executive Committee. The Chairperson will have experience and expertise in chairing meetings, an ability to manage diverse opinions and expectations, and a capacity to work collaboratively to successfully achieve SGG PCP's strategic objectives. The term of appointment of the Chairperson will be for two years and reviewed annually.

The Chairperson's responsibilities include:

- Chairing Executive Committee meetings and coordinating the preparation of the agenda;
- Acting as spokesperson for SGG PCP;
- Coordinating initiatives, promoting SGG PCP and following through with decisions of the Executive Committee;
- Facilitating effective communication within the Executive Committee, working groups and across networks; and
- Representing the SGG PCP at a minimum of three state PCP meetings per year.

The Executive Committee elects a Deputy Chairperson to support the Chairperson in performing their responsibilities. The Chairperson and Deputy will negotiate respective roles and areas of

responsibility to ensure that overall governance and leadership functions are performed effectively. The term of appointment of the Deputy Chairperson will be for two years and reviewed annually.

9. Working Groups

The SGG PCP Executive Committee establishes working groups as needed. All working groups have Terms of Reference, which are 'signed off' by the Executive Committee. Working groups comprise representatives from relevant service providers, and other stakeholders, including community members. Each working group will have a nominated Chair who provides leadership and is responsible for ensuring effective communication with the Executive Committee.

Responsibilities of working group Chair include:

- Chairing meetings;
- Ensuring the group is guided by the vision and principles of the Partnership and works to achieve the tasks determined as priorities;
- Coordinating the development of the agenda;
- Establishing strong links between working groups and the Executive Committee;
- Encouraging equal participation of all working group members;
- Representing the views of the working group to the Executive Committee; and
- Ensuring minutes of each working group meeting are kept and distributed to working groups members and where requested to the Executive Committee.

10. Executive Officer and Staff

The SGG PCP Executive Officer and other staff are employees of the auspicing organisation. The Executive Committee delegates the implementation of human resources and other relevant policies and procedures for SGG PCP staff to the Auspice Agency.

Under the direction of the Executive Committee, the Executive Officer is responsible for facilitating the development and implementation of the strategic plan, the development and oversight of the budget and financial management and for the management of staff.

The Executive Officer and staff perform a facilitation role, which varies according to the needs of members and stakeholders and should be negotiated and clarified at the commencement of new initiatives.

The role of staff includes a broad range of tasks ranging from performing a secretarial role for working groups through to undertaking research and data collection, building capacity among member agencies and managing projects. Where required, staff will be involved in developing project proposals, discussion and briefing papers, submissions, reports and funding proposals.

Staff represent SGG PCP to funders, such as the Department of Human Services, and other networks and forums as required.

11. Annual or Extraordinary Meetings

An Annual Meeting of all members will be held each calendar year. The purpose of the Annual Meeting will be to:

- elect the Executive Committee for the next period (if it falls due);
- review the management structure, procedure/performance of the auspice agency and Executive Committee;

- review the performance against the Strategic Plan; and
- review the PCP's financial position.

An extraordinary meeting will be called if 50% of the Executive Committee or 50% of Members request such a meeting. Voting shall be by show of hands with majority vote determining if a proposal is carried.

12. Auspice Agency Responsibilities

- Enter into purchasing arrangements to purchase services from agencies that are external to the SGG PCP;
- Enter into contracts or other legal obligations;
- Employ employees or engage consultants to do the work
- Hold on trust any grants, funds or assets of the SGG PCP and to pay salaries, contractual payments or other expenses of the SGG PCP
- Report on and coordinate the finances of the SGG PCP, including the investment of monies from time to time
- Compliance with the reporting requirements of funding bodies, including an annual audit
- Act in other matters, as directed by the Executive Committee.

Western District Health Service is the current Auspice Agency of the SGG PCP.

13. Financial Management

The Executive Committee will ensure effective processes are in place to monitor the financial performance of the SGG PCP and to ensure ongoing financial viability. This will include:

- a Finance Sub-Committee to meet monthly and to report on the SGG PCP's financial position to the Executive Committee; and
- a Finance staff member from the Auspice Agency to be a member of the Finance Sub-Committee; to report quarterly to the Executive Committee and to report to the SGG PCP membership at the Annual Meeting.

14. Disbanding the Partnership

In the event that the majority of members vote to disband the SGG PCP, the Executive Committee will manage the disbursement of un-allocated monies and assets acquired by the PCP either to the designated funds-holder and/or to a recipient agreed by the majority of members.

15. Consulting Services

The PCP Office will provide additional services to Member and non-member organisations on a consulting basis. These services will be contracted directly between the PCP Office and the organisation seeking the service. PCP staff may receive a higher hourly rate for the consulting service depending on the service being provided. Income received will be regarded as general PCP income and will be used for core activities of the Partnership.

16. Contacts

SGG PCP Office

Executive Officer

SGG PCP

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Email: sggpcp@wdhs.net

website: www.sggpcp.com

Auspice Agency

Chief Executive Officer

Western District Health Service

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Hamilton VIC 3300

T: 5551 8222

Email: ceo@wdhs.net

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Information about the State Government's PCP initiative is available at: www.health.vic.gov.au/pcps

SGG PCP Partnership Agreement Signatures

Name _____

Title _____

Organisation _____

Signature _____

Witness _____

**Print Name
of Witness** _____

Dated _____