

Appendix A:

Submissions and comments

We have consulted with the Department of Health, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and 4 service providers – Bendigo Community Health Services, Gippsland Lakes Complete Health, Monash Health and Women's Health Victoria and we considered their views when reaching our audit conclusions. As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, we gave a draft copy of this report, or relevant extracts, to those agencies and asked for their submissions and comments.

Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the agency head.

Responses received

| Agency | Page |
|--|------|
| Department of Health | A-2 |
| Bendigo Community Health Services | A-6 |
| Gippsland Lakes Complete Health | A-7 |
| Monash Health | A-8 |
| Women's Health Victoria | A-9 |
| Department of Families, Fairness and Housing | A-11 |

Response provided by the Secretary, Department of Health



Secretary

Department of Health

50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone: 1300 650 172
GPO Box 4057
Melbourne Victoria 3001
www.health.vic.gov.au
DX 210081

BAC-CO-35642

Dave Barry
Acting Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Via e-mail c/:

Dear Dave

Thank you for your correspondence of 18 April 2023 and the proposed report on *Supporting sexual and reproductive health*. In accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* (the Act), I have considered your report and wish to provide a submission in response to your recommendations.

I accept the recommendations provided by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office and attached to this letter you will find the department's action plan to address these recommendations.

I note that the proposed report will be tabled in Parliament and that under the Act, I am responsible for protecting the confidentiality and security of this information.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to these recommendations. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Adele Mollo, Executive Director, Policy and Programs at the Department of Health at

Yours sincerely

Professor Euan M Wallace AM
Secretary

01/05/2023

Enc



Department of Health action plan to address recommendations from the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) on supporting sexual and reproductive health

| No. | VAGO recommendation | Action | Completion date |
|-----|---|---|--|
| 1 | Undertake a comprehensive and up to date sexual and reproductive health service demand and gap analysis for the whole of Victoria, including: •documenting a complete list of providers •identifying and analysing the demand for the various categories of services across the state (refer to Section 3). | Accept. The department will: Conduct a statewide sexual and reproductive health demand and gap analysis based on the data available to identify and analyse demand issues and inform service planning | 30 June 2024 |
| | | Support sexual and reproductive health needs assessments and service mapping in Local Public Health Unit catchments, to better understand current community needs, government-funded service demand and gaps | Commenced 1 December 2022, to be completed by 30 June 2025 |
| | | Explore expansion of the Women's Health Atlas data, in partnership with Women's Health Victoria, to enable a deeper understanding of the complexities of Victorian sexual and reproductive health demand and access gap issues | 31 December 2023 |
| | | Ensure a needs and equity-led approach for the selection and prioritisation of potential locations of new sexual and reproductive health services, including hubs, while concurrently taking into account the feasibility, for example based on availability of general practitioners | From June 2023, ongoing |
| | | Ensure that all government-funded sexual and reproductive service providers are listed on 1800 My Options, noting that primary care provider data is not available to enable a complete list of providers to be developed | 30 September 2023 |

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Response provided by the Secretary, Department of Health—continued

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| | | Oversee the implementation and monitoring of the <i>Victorian women's sexual and reproductive health plan 2022-30</i> , including developing an indicators and monitoring framework, annual progress reporting and a mid-cycle review to refresh plan priorities and activities as required | <p>By 30 September 2023 (indicators and monitoring framework)</p> <p>By 31 December 2023 (data dashboards developed)</p> <p>By 31 December 2023 (annual progress reporting established)</p> <p>To be completed 1 June 2025 to 30 June 2026 (mid-point review conducted)</p> |
| 2 | Develop relevant outcome performance measures for 1800 My Options and the hubs to monitor and report on the programs' achievement of its objective to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •increase Victorian women's access to sexual and reproductive health services. (refer to Sections 3 and 4) •focus on the needs of priority groups in accessing sexual and reproductive health information and services (see Sections 3 and 4). | <p>Accept.</p> <p>The department will:</p> <p>Develop an evaluation framework in collaboration with an expert contractor, to support program outcomes for 1800 My Options and the hubs</p> <p>Improve demographic data collection for 1800 My Options and the hubs to better understand the priority populations accessing information and services and their health needs</p> <p>Collect patient outcomes data which will be disaggregated by demographic information to determine any differential outcomes for priority population groups</p> | <p>31 December 2023</p> <p>31 March 2024</p> <p>31 March 2024</p> |

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Response provided by the Secretary, Department of Health—continued

| | | | |
|---|---|--|------------------|
| | | Develop a process to collect qualitative patient experience data to inform the service delivery and ensure it meets the needs of priority population patients | 31 March 2024 |
| | | Develop additional outcome performance measures for 1800 My Options and the hubs, aligned to the strategic priorities and actions of the <i>Victorian sexual and reproductive health and viral hepatitis strategy 2022-30</i> | 31 July 2024 |
| | | Improve half-yearly performance monitoring and reporting of activity and performance of 1800 My Options and hubs in accordance with the department's agency monitoring framework. | 31 December 2024 |
| 3 | Work with department funded sexual and reproductive health service providers to: •establish a method for collecting relevant performance data on hub attendees' referral source (see Section 4) •establish consistent performance reporting requirements (see Section 3). | Accept. The department will: | |
| | | Develop an improved process for demographic data collection (with a minimum dataset) to better understand the priority populations accessing services | 31 July 2024 |
| | | Explore expansion of data collection to include information on patient referral sources, to further inform service delivery | 31 July 2024 |
| | | Improve agency performance monitoring and reporting, aligned to the strategic priorities and actions of the <i>Victorian sexual and reproductive health and viral hepatitis strategy 2022-30</i> and in accordance with the department's agency monitoring framework | 31 December 2024 |
| | | Work with Primary Health Networks and Local Public Health Units to strengthen uptake of, and report on outcomes of, localised referral pathways for sexual and reproductive health care through Health Pathways | 31 July 2025 |

OFFICIAL: Sensitive



18 April 2023

Ms Elsie Alcordo
Audit Director
Victorian Auditor – General Office
Level 31/35 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Ms Alcordo,

Proposed Performance Audit Report: Supporting Sexual and Reproductive Health

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Performance Audit Report: Supporting Sexual and Reproductive Health.

Firstly, let me take the opportunity to congratulate your staff on their professionalism and support for the Team at Bendigo Community Health Services in assisting in this report. Feedback from Mr Graem Kelly - Executive Leader Better Health, and his team has recognised your staff as always being fair, transparent and professional throughout the audit process.

The report highlights opportunities for improvement, but we feel important to also recognise the support by the Victorian Department of Health has led to BCHS making many improvement in the sensitive areas of sexual health, most importantly unwanted pregnancy management and termination, sexually transmitted diseases and women sexual health more generally. The report has we believe represented the context fairly and honestly, but this should not dampen the positive inroads supported from the initiative. We hope this report will build opportunities for greater improvement to be made across all Victoria from lessons learnt from Hub services thus far.

Again, thank you and your team for the great work you all do. We look forward to building a better health system addressing the health needs of all Victorians.

Should you require any further information please contact the Executive Leader, Better Health: Graem Kelly PSM as responsible Executive for Sexual and Reproductive Health services at BCHS via [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box representing a redacted signature.

Ms Vicki Pearce
Ex-Board Chair / Current Board Director
Bendigo Community Health Services

Eaglehawk
3 Seymoure St

Kangaroo Flat
19 Helm St

Central
165–171 Hargreaves St

Elmore
46 Jeffrey St
Ph: (03) 5432 6001
Fax: (03) 5432 6101

Reg. No. A002400N
ACN 136 467 715
ABN 76 026 154 968
PO Box 1121
Bendigo Central VIC 3552

Phone for all sites: (03) 5406 1200
Fax for all sites: (03) 5441 4200
Email for all sites: bchs@bchs.com.au



3 May 2023

Dr Elsie Alcorido
Acting Director, Performance Audit – Health and Human Services
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
Level 31, 35 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
[Redacted]

Dear Dr Alcorido,

VAGO Supporting Sexual and Reproductive Health Audit

Gippsland Lakes Complete Health (GLCH) appreciated the opportunity to contribute a rural service provider perspective in the Victorian Auditor General Office (VAGO), Supporting Sexual and Reproductive Health Audit.

GLCH highly values introducing the Sexual and Reproductive Hub program in Victoria and considers it crucial that people living in the East of the state, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, have access to local and affordable services.

For GLCH, the program's establishment was hindered by the impact of bushfires, COVID-19 and associated workforce issues. We would like to acknowledge the Department of Health's support and understanding of the effects of these extraordinary circumstances.

GLCH look forward to working with the Department of Health to consolidate the service further and provide more robust and transparent data that will more readily capture the significant outcomes being achieved for individuals in our community catchment.

Yours sincerely,



Anne-Maree Kaser
Chief Executive Officer



Executive Office:
Monash Medical Centre
246 Clayton Road
Clayton Victoria 3168
Australia

Postal address:
Locked Bag 29
Clayton South Vic 3169
Australia

Tel (03) 9594 2738
Fax (03) 9594 6590

4 May 2023

Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor – General's Office
[Redacted]

Dear Mr Greaves

Proposed Performance Audit Report: Supporting sexual and reproductive health

Thank you for your letter dated 18 April 2023 and for inviting a response from Monash Health into the proposed performance audit report into *supporting sexual and reproductive health*.

We would like to acknowledge the professional approach and regular engagement with the audit team throughout this review in understanding the services provided by Monash Health.

Thank you for considering the matters raised through the provisional draft process and including details to represent the context of the environment fairly. The audit report has provided Monash Health with useful insights.

Although the proposed report does not include any recommendations specific to Monash Health, we are supportive of the recommendations made and we will continue to work closely with the Department of Health to support the implementation.

Monash Health continues to see the value in the provision of these services to our priority populations and since the dates of the audit review have expanded the services to include a second site at Cranbourne and the employment of a second doctor to provide these important and necessary services to our community.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]
Professor Andrew Stripp
Chief Executive

Monash Medical
Centre Clayton
246 Clayton Road
Clayton
Tel: 9594 6666

Moorabbin Hospital
Centre Road
East Bentleigh
Tel: 9928 8111

Kingston Centre
Warrigal Road
Cheltenham
Tel: 9265 1000

Dandenong Hospital
David Street
Dandenong
Tel: 9554 1000

Casey Hospital
Kangan Drive
Berwick
Tel: 8768 1200

Community-based
services across
the South East

ABN 82 142 080 338



healthy • empowered • equal

Andrew Greaves
Auditor General
Victorian Auditor General's Office
Level 31, 35 Collins St
Melbourne, VIC, 3000

3 April 2023

Dear Mr Greaves

RE: Proposed report: Supporting Sexual and Reproductive Health

Thank you for the opportunity for Women's Health Victoria to comment on the proposed report: Supporting Sexual and Reproductive Health.

The Victorian Auditor General's report provides valuable insights on service gaps, performance, and outcomes for women. Women's Health Victoria supports all three recommendations.

The three recommendations will assist to strengthen the service system and develop a more robust framework for measuring performance and outcomes. This is particularly timely for informing implementation of the Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan 2022-2030.

Women's Health Victoria is committed to improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes for women in Victoria. We are working with the Department of Health and service providers to create an integrated sexual and reproductive health service system, where women can get the services they need, when and where they need them, in a safe and culturally appropriate environment.

Our 1800 My Options service, Victoria's first sexual and reproductive phone line and website, was established to assist women to get information and pathways to services for sexual and reproductive health care including abortion.

The report acknowledges that 1800 My Options has supported women to access information about sexual and reproductive health issues and services, but there was no data available in the scope of the investigation to assess whether the information resulted in women receiving a specific service.

With regards to:

- Recommendation 1. Women's Health Victoria is working with the Department of Health by providing data about service gaps using the 1800 My Options data base and publishing data about medical termination of pregnancy and access to long-acting reversible contraception on the Women's Health Atlas; a gendered, interactive geo mapped data base.
- Recommendation 2. We fully support the development of outcome performance measures for 1800 My Options, linked to other service providers, so that we can ensure we have the best operating model to support women to get sexual and reproductive health care and measure which women or other priority population groups are missing out on services.
- Recommendation 3. We have a collaborative working relationship with the Department of Health and see outcome performance measures and reporting as critical for accountability and in supporting the integrity of our service, the women and gender diverse people we support and the service providers we work with.

Women's Health Victoria values the opportunity to participate in such a thorough and robust process to improve outcomes for Victorian women. We thank the Auditor General for their interest in women's sexual and reproductive health, for giving visibility to this very important aspect of healthcare and the sensitivity and understanding shown by the investigators in an area of healthcare that is gendered and stigmatised.



healthy • empowered • equal

If you require more information or would like to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Dianne Hill
Chief Executive Officer



Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone: 1300 475 170
GPO Box 1774
Melbourne Victoria 3001
www.dffh.vic.gov.au
DX 210319

BAC-EOB-82

Dave Barry
Acting Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
Level 31/35 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Barry

Thank you for providing the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the department) with the proposed performance audit report for *Supporting sexual and reproductive health* audit.

I reaffirm that the department has a limited role with these services, with department staff receiving information relating to key strategic program directions and funded organisation performance from the Department of Health (DH).

The department offers the following comments for inclusion in the report.

Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH) welcomes information from DH about the key strategic directions, performance measures and reporting requirements relating to funded organisations providing sexual and reproductive health services. Advice on these program areas will provide DFFH staff who liaise with organisations funded by both DFFH and DH with key information about the sexual and reproductive health services.

Should the audit team require further information from the department please do not hesitate to contact Ms Brown on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Peta McCammon
Secretary

27/04/2023

Cc: [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

