



The Coalition's Mental Health Plan

VICSERV, the peak body representing community managed mental health services in Victoria welcomed the launch yesterday of the Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition's mental health policy going into the State election.

The Coalition's policy with its focus on community-based support and long-term recovery is welcomed and supported by VICSERV. Significant investments in community-based services and housing initiatives will go some way towards achieving balance in the service system.

Ms Kim Koop, Chief Executive Officer of VICSERV expressed delight in relation to Coalition's recognition of the importance of community-based support.

"People living with mental illness fare much better when they have access to support services in their community. Investments in recovery orientated services and housing support is vindication of what we have been advocating for all along," says Ms Koop.

"Dedicated housing, education, and employment officers will assist people recovering from mental illness in planning a brighter future post-hospital discharge. Expanding the PARC model will provide more appropriate treatment settings. Teamed with community support and treatment, this is a welcome alternative to hospital-based treatment."

Ms Koop believes that greater coordination and partnerships are crucial to the longevity of the service system. "There needs to be greater coordination of services across the spectrum to ensure that services are appropriate and available when required. People are falling through the gaps because they do not know what services are out there."

The Coalition's plan for gender specific spaces within wards are desperately needed says Ms Koop. "Hospitalisation is often a traumatic experience for people with a mental illness. This will go some way towards improving the situation."

For media enquiries please contact Ms Wendy Smith, Policy and Research Manager or Ms Kim Koop, Chief Executive Officer on (03) 9519 7000.

For further information VICSERV members can contact Ms Anthea Tsismetsi, Policy and Research Officer on (03) 9519 7000.