

VITAL RURAL AGED SERVICES UNITE OVER THREAT TO VIABILITY

Friday 21 August 2009

Media Release

Nearly 100 aged and community care providers from across Victoria have today assembled at Aged and Community Care Victoria's (ACCV) Rural Mini Conference in Echuca, to discuss the critical viability issues for rural and remote services.

"Every stress and pressure in the industry such as funding and workforce is always more challenging for our rural communities", said Gerard Mansour, CEO of ACCV.

"There is much to be done to ensure that our already struggling industry can be supported to continue to provide vital aged and community care services to Victorians in rural and remote communities." Mr. Mansour said.

ACCV has voiced the needs and concerns of the Victorian aged and community care industry through submissions to the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission and Senate Inquiry into Aged and Community Care.

"Through these processes, we have strongly represented the needs of our rural services to receive much greater support", Mr. Mansour said.

"ACCV calls upon State and Commonwealth Governments to undertake an urgent review of the real costs of doing business for aged and community care providers."

"This must include recognition of the pressures, lack of resources and costs of providing aged and community care services in rural, regional and remote areas. There is a critical need to overhaul and update funding, including expanding eligibility of the Rural Viability Supplement", Mr. Mansour said.

ACCV calls for an urgent overhaul of eligibility criteria so that many of the needy small rural communities no longer miss out on much needed additional support.

"Urgent attention is also needed so a range of initiatives and incentives are put in place to respond to chronic workforce shortages in rural areas", Mr. Mansour said.

"Many of Victoria's rural and remote aged and community care services will be unsustainable without this much needed additional support."

"The Commonwealth Government now has the opportunity, in its response to the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission Report, to make sure our rural communities will have robust and sustainable aged care services in the long term. I urge them not to miss this crucial opportunity," said Mr. Mansour.

ACCV is the single and united voice within Victoria for providers and other organisations associated with aged and community care which includes residential care, community care and retirement or independent living.