

Media Release

EMBARGO: 00.01am 14 April 2016

FINDING NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LATROBE VALLEY

VicHealth is inviting Latrobe Valley residents to lead the way and identify new ways to drive future employment opportunities to increase the health and wellbeing of people in the region.

Through the VicHealth Community Challenge, opening today (14 April), Latrobe Valley residents can register their community driven employment ideas to help boost local employment.

Community-led businesses such as the Yackandandah Petrol Station, which was bought by group of local residents after the former owner announced it would be closing down, the community-owned Hepburn Wind Farm, and the Hastings Co-Op in NSW which comprises almost 9000 local shareholders who own several nearby stores, are just some of the business models that could be used in the Latrobe Valley.

Residents have until 18 May to submit their ideas with the most promising ones, to be chosen by the Latrobe Valley community, to get access to intensive, expert support and share in \$50,000 to progress an idea that will make a difference.

Ideas will be assessed according to their feasibility and sustainability, potential for community benefit, scope of employment and economic advancement, and their ability to engage the community.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter encouraged residents to share their ideas via the VicHealth Community Challenge Facebook [Page](#) or face-to-face at a range of sessions to be held throughout the region during May.

“Through VicHealth’s involvement with the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry’s health improvement forums we heard loud and clear that the community wants things to be done differently and we want to help complement the great initiatives already underway in the Latrobe Valley,” Ms Rechter said.

“Having a secure job makes a big difference to a person’s overall health and wellbeing and we’re particularly keen to work with the Latrobe Valley community to help generate community-led employment ideas and opportunities.

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“The recent mine fire inquiry Health Improvement report also identified increasing employment opportunities as a key to improving health within the region.

“We know there are a range of ideas already being discussed across a number of communities to generate employment in the region and VicHealth wants to support this process by unlocking those ideas and helping nurture the best ones to help them come to fruition.”

Sessions will be held in Morwell, Traralgon, Moe, Yallourn North and Churchill next month to allow residents to share their ideas.

For more information on the VicHealth Community Challenge visit the VicHealth Community Challenge Facebook page www.facebook.com/latrobevalleychallenge/ or visit <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/latrobe-valley-challenge>

Media Contacts