

# Media Release

## LEADING THE WAY TO CREATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Monday, May 06, 2002

Local councils across Victoria will be leading the way to creating healthier and happier communities with the help of a new resource to be launched today by VicHealth, in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Department of Human Services. Leading community advocate and a Councillor to the Melbourne City Council, Kate Redwood was also on hand to help launch the publication.

Leading the Way: Councils creating healthier communities was developed to explain the things that influence the health and wellbeing of communities and to provide concrete ways for councils to respond to their own local circumstances with practical solutions.

“Local councils certainly have a leadership role to play within their communities,” said Dr Rob Moodie, CEO of VicHealth. “This resource recognises the leading role played by councils in creating environments in which their communities and the people within those communities can prosper and enjoy maximum health and wellbeing.”

Councils have a vital role in creating healthier communities. Good health and wellbeing isn't just for doctors and health professionals. In fact good health and wellbeing should be a strong part of every council's core business.

“Leading the Way will provide an invaluable resource to support councils in their endeavours to achieve better outcomes for their communities,” said Cr Brad Matheson, President of Municipal Association of Victoria. “It is pleasing to see that the critical role played by local government in creating healthier communities has been clearly recognised.”

According to Dr Moodie, this new resource emphasises the importance of building strong partnerships with sectors other than just health.

“At a local level, councils can directly influence things like municipal planning, employment, social supports, transport, community participation and access. All these things are key ingredients for a healthy vibrant community.”

In building healthy communities, it is crucial that councils have a strong understanding of how they can influence the health and wellbeing of the community.

“It's about looking for ways to create healthy environments – and conditions in which people can live, work and perhaps more importantly, can thrive.”

“And an integrated approach to planning is important. This sort of resource will hopefully enable local leaders to develop policy and strategic priorities to address the social and economic issues of health and wellbeing in an integrated way across all the planning processes of the council.”

Leading the Way: Councils Creating Healthier Communities project was designed to provide councillors and senior leaders with the information and tools they need to develop policy and directions to create healthy communities. The resource was tested with Councillors, CEOs and Senior managers from a range of councils who participated in a pilot, including the Shires of Corangamite, South Gippsland, Towong and Yarra Ranges and the Cities of Banyule, Brimbank, and Greater Dandenong.

### For more information, please contact:

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