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**Please type your submission in the box below.:**

Ballarat Community Health (BCH) congratulates Golden Plains on its decision to incorporate its Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan into its broader Council Plan in recognition of the concept that 'health and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility' (Draft Council Plan p10) and looks forward to working with the Shire to support the implementation of the Shire's Health and Wellbeing Priorities. BCH would like to take this opportunity to make a few comments on specific aspects of the draft plan

**ACCESS TO LOCAL HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

BCH notes that improving access to community and health services and facilities and the provision of social infrastructure to support community health and wellbeing was a key theme arising from the community consultation and is aware that limited access to health and community services, particularly in the Northern end of the Shire, is a key issue for Golden Plains Shire.

BCH congratulates Golden Plains for its proactive approach in planning for the provision of quality infrastructure across the Shire for the delivery of health, sporting and community facilities. BCH was pleased to partner with the Shire and other relevant stakeholders in the planning for a business, health and community Hub in Smythesdale, funded through Federal and State government funding, with a significant contribution from the Shire, which commenced in 2004. Since 2009 BCH has been operating a General Practice clinic from this hub. BCH has also provided a number of other programs and initiatives to promote and support community health and wellbeing from the Smythesdale hub, known as 'The Well', since the facility opened in 2009 and is keen to continue to do so.

It should be noted though, that our ability to partner with Golden Plains Shire in the provision of health and wellbeing services from the Well and/or other Shire premises is predicated on a partnership arrangement whereby BCH provides the health service, program or activity in the Shire facility but the Shire does not expect BCH to pay market prices for the hire of this facility. BCH is unable to sustain health service delivery in the Golden Plains Shire without this support due to low population numbers in the northern end of the shire; rising costs of service delivery and dwindling government income.

**HIGHER PROPORTIONS OF PEOPLE SMOKING THAN THE STATE AVERAGE**

BCH is aware that the smoking rates in Golden Plains are higher than the state average and

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indeed higher than the rate in other local government areas in the Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership region, including the City of Ballarat. Smoking is still one of the biggest causes of premature death and preventable illness in Australia. BCH notes that the Shire makes mention of this in the draft plan under the section entitled: What the research tells us about the Shire (p 15) but does not address this at all in the draft Council plan.

There are a number of strategies that BCH encourages the Shire to take in relation to the Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan's (2015-2019) priority Tobacco-free living – particularly given the higher than average rates of smoking in Golden Plains Shire, even if the Shire determines not to include this as a specific action area in the Council plan. These include but are not limited to:

- Banning smoking not only in but also around any Council owned premises and not providing any materials that facilitate smoking outside Council owned premises (such as ashtrays)
- Ensuring 'no smoking' signage is displayed prominently in Council owned buildings
- Developing a smoke-free events policy
- Promoting and participating in awareness raising events around tobacco free living such as World No Tobacco Day.

BCH is happy to support Golden Plains Shire with any work it might choose to do to advance the priority of Tobacco free living.

**Upload documents here:**

**Do you wish to be heard by Council in relation to your submission?:** No, I do not wish to present to Council

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