

## COUNCIL POLICY

<b>Council Policy Title:</b>	<b>Maternal and Child Health Services</b>
<b>Council Policy ref. no:</b>	10.1
<b>Responsible Department:</b>	Corporate and Community Services
<b>Date of adoption/review:</b>	24 July 2013

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### Policy Statement

The Colac Otway Maternal & Child Health Service is a universal service available for all families with children from birth to school age through a schedule of consultations at key ages and stages, and other activities including parent groups. Additional support is also available through the Enhanced MCH Service, which responds to vulnerable children and families. Both the Universal MCH Service and the Enhanced MCH Service are supported by the 24-hour MCH Line.

### 2. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The principles of the Maternal and Child Health Service are:

- Provide a free, equitable, flexible and accessible service to users.
- Be based on the principles of the Business Excellence Framework.
- Employ registered maternal and child health nurses.
- Be accessible through a number of strategically located service provision Centres.
- Network with allied support services.
- Respect the rights of service users including their rights to confidentiality.
- Recognise and respond to the diversity of communities.
- Be receptive and responsive to changing community and individual needs.
- Promote safe and friendly approaches to service provision.
- Provide for the special needs of clients.
- Research, monitor and evaluate our local early years developmental issues/data to better understand and provide for local needs.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

- Provide a schedule of contacts and activities for all families, with an emphasis on health promotion, early detection, and intervention where necessary.
- Help to identify children and families who require further assessment, intervention, referral and/or support.
- Bring families together, foster social networks, support playgroups and strengthen local community connections.

- Link in other services and supports, such as family support services, First Time Parents Groups and immunisation programs.
- Work in partnership with childhood development and learning educators; family support service providers, referral agencies and allied early years health professionals.

#### 4. SERVICE DELIVERY

The majority of sessions are by **appointment**. These are arranged for critical stages of the infant or child's development. They provide the opportunity for longer consultations and privacy for mothers/families.

There are also a limited number of **open sessions** which allow for contact with families with specific needs between Key Ages and Stages visits and for others that may have difficulty in attending scheduled consultations

A new baby is considered **enrolled** in the MCH service once the MCH nurse has made contact with the family. **Home visits** are provided for parents of newborn babies. The initial home visit is to be completed before the child is 2 weeks of age.

**Home visits** will be conducted at other times when there is a special need for the mother or infant.

An **Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Service** is provided which assertively responds to children and families at risk of poor outcomes, particularly children for whom there are multiple risk factors or indications of a significant level of risk. This Service is provided in addition to the suite of services offered through the universal Maternal and Child Health Service, by providing a more intensive level of support, including short-term case management in some circumstances. This may be provided in a variety of settings such as the family's home, the maternal and child health centre or other location within in the community.

For Occupational Health and Safety requirements **home visits** will not be conducted outside standard home visiting arrangements without approved procedures from Council's Occupational Health & Safety Committee.

In the instance of an Extreme and Code Red (catastrophic) fire day, Maternal and Child Health Services will operate from Colac. The service will not visit clients in high risk areas unless there is an emergency.

A Maternal and Child Health telephone line is available 24 hours a day to provide support when the local Maternal and Child Health nurse is unavailable. The telephone number is 132229. Critical **after hour's** support can be obtained from the local hospital and doctor service.

#### 5. SERVICE LOCATION

There are 9 service centres provided strategically throughout the shire. These are provided in both purpose built facilities as well as in partnership with other allied health service providers.

The Centres are located in the following townships.

**Apollo Bay**  
**Beeac**  
**Birregurra**  
**Carlisle River**  
**Colac**  
**Cororooke**  
**Forrest**  
**Lavers Hill**  
**Swan Marsh**

## 6. NETWORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The Maternal and Child Health Service will work in a collaborative manner with other agencies to ensure that the best and most appropriate support services and structures available are provided when needed. The Maternal and Child Health Nurses are core service providers. Their role is pivotal for ensuring and monitoring all referrals.

There are a number of services and groups that Council's Maternal and Child Health Service networks with. These include:

- **Child First Program** (Colac Area Health) - to reduce the number of children that are notified or re-notified to Child Protection.
- **Colac KEYS<sup>1</sup> and Southern Otways KEYS Networks** - meets to provide increased interaction between local services, shared learning, support, professional development and to develop and implement agreed actions for the group and Early Years community.
- **Post Natal Depression** (Raphael Centre, and Perinatal Emotional Health Nurses) – to work with professionals and community members to support the needs of women through group courses and by other support mechanisms.
- **Perinatal Support** - to provide/facilitate with Colac Area Health an Ante Natal Program for young, pregnant, vulnerable women which to assist with their transition to Parenthood, by enhancing parenting skills and encouraging access to community services.
- **Colac Area Health & Otway Health** – to facilitate an early transition to Maternal & Child Health Services.

## 8. SERVICE STANDARDS

Principles and objectives of the Maternal and Child Health Service will be achieved and maintained through Business Excellence, our Health & Community Services Business Plan, Service Improvements Plans (as required by the Department Education and Early Childhood Development); the Victorian Maternal and Child Health Guidelines; our Maternal & Child Health Policies/Procedures and Processes and individual Performance Management processes.

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<sup>1</sup> KEYS – Kids Early Years Services

## 9. FUNDING

The Universal Maternal and Child Health Program and Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Service are funded by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. And is supported by a Council contribution to these state-wide initiatives and other early years opportunities such as networking, partnerships and strengthening local community connections of parents.

## 10. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be implemented by all Maternal and Child Health Services staff and will be subject to a review every three years or earlier, if required.

### ADOPTED/AMENDMENT OF POLICY

<b>Policy Review Date</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>
24 May 2006	Adopted by Council
25 November 2009	Review
24 July 2013	Review