



# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **East Gippsland Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner Project – Stakeholders Meeting**

Health services throughout East Gippsland will be involved in the development and implementation of a Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner with Gippsland Lakes Community Health (GLCH) taking the role of lead agency.

“A Nurse Practitioner is a registered nurse who has additional skills and qualifications which entitles them to practise in an advanced and extended clinical role,” explained Cheryl Bush, executive manager of Clinical and Nursing Services at GLCH.

“The nurse practitioner role includes assessment and management of clients using nursing knowledge and skills including direct referral of patients to other health care professionals, prescribing medications and ordering diagnostic investigations.”

An initial meeting of key stakeholders was held at Gippsland Lakes Community Health last Thursday with representatives from both acute and community based providers in East Gippsland invited to participate in setting up a memorandum of understanding.

A steering committee to oversee the development and implementation of the Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner model for East Gippsland was also established at the meeting.

“The health workforce is a critical concern for the Victorian Government, and advanced practice nursing roles such as nurse practitioners are an important component of building a responsive, skilled and appropriate workforce to meet the needs of the Victorian community,” said Cheryl.

“The other major challenge will be the recruitment of a suitable candidate. The concept of a Nurse Practitioner is relatively new in the field and therefore it may never have occurred to current nurses to aim for this level of endorsement,” Cheryl added.

Prospective Nurse Practitioner candidates, health professionals, or interested members of the community are invited to contact Project Worker, Debbie Smith, at Gippsland Lakes Community Health for more information regarding this exciting new initiative.



**Pictured Lto R (Back):** Gippsland Regional Palliative Care Consortium (GRPCC) manager, Anthony Hooper; Debbie Smith, Project Worker; Maggie Goss, East Gippsland Primary Health Alliance; Mary Filmer, Cann Valley Bush Nursing Centre; and Anne Curtin, GRPCC Chairperson. Front: Celia Wallace, Mallacoota District Health and Support Service; Therese Bourke, Ensay Bush Nursing Centre; Cheryl Bush, GLCH; and Vicki Farthing, Bairnsdale Regional Health Service.