This submission has been prepared to highlight the valuable role the community and health sector can play enhancing resilience in the face of climate change, particular due to the existing, trusted relationships with those most vulnerable in our community. Primary Care Partnerships offer a strong leadership platform to support the sector by building capacity and capability and connecting to research and policy makers.

Southern Grampians Glenelg Primary Care Partnership (SGGPCP) has identified the impacts of climate change as a prevention priority since 2008 recognising the negative health and wellbeing effects on those most vulnerable in our community. An emerging health issue in 2008, climate change is now regarded an as an urgent health issue with The Lancet reporting, as recently as January 2019 that climate change can be considered a pandemic because of it’s sweeping effects on the health of humans and the natural systems we depend on.¹ We believe that climate change exacerbates disadvantage and that those who are most disadvantaged are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It is widely recognised that disadvantaged groups have poorer health compared to communities of higher socio-economic advantage² and as early as 2007 the World Health Organisation identified that Climate Change is likely to be felt by those most disadvantaged including chronically ill, socio-economically disadvantaged, those with poor access to essential services such as good housing and adequate fresh water. Also other groups vulnerable will be those whose economic prosperity depends heavily on climate conditions and who do not have sufficient resources to adapt. In other words, under climate change the wealthier parts of the population “will become inconvenienced (…) the poor will die”.³

SGGPCP is one of twenty eight Primary Care Partnerships in Victoria funded through the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services. SGGPCP has twenty partner agencies including local government, large and small rural health services, bush nursing centres, aboriginal health services, disability services, mental health services, community houses and a water authority. We work together with our partner agencies and many other stakeholders to support our community to thrive. Our SGGPCP Strategic Plan outlines the approach of the partnership which has a focus on fostering leadership, building capacity ad confidence, mobilising community and proving the value. Over the past ten years, SGGPCP has striven to build capacity of our partner agencies and stakeholders to reduce the vulnerability of the community to the impacts of climate change beginning by facilitating projects around household energy efficiency, food security and extreme climatic events. Projects such as Pass the Parcel and Glenelg SAVES⁴ have focused on building the capacity and capability of our partners to work with their community to improve household energy efficiency using innovative community development techniques. These projects assisted partner agencies identify the links between climate change and the everyday impacts on vulnerable communities, supported the development of practitioners skills and knowledge while resulting in improved outcomes for the community. The significance of the trusted relationships existing in the community and health sector
was further understood through the Balmoral Fire Connect Project\(^v\) which investigated the connections between staff and user groups at a rural bush nursing centre using social network analysis and a community connection activity to highlight the role that the community sector can play to reduce vulnerability to climate change, particularly extreme climatic events. The findings of this report have been disseminated through a short animation entitled ALLready.

Alongside these pieces of work, we have increased our partnerships with the research and policy sector to lead strategic ventures which highlight the leadership platform existing in the Primary Care Partnership structure. Rural People; Resilient Futures\(^ii\) saw a strategic relationship forged with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and RMIT University enabling an increase in our understanding of vulnerability to climate change across the Southern Grampians Shire and strategies SGGPCP partner agencies could integrate to enhance resilience. Subsequent collaborations with Emergency Management Victoria and RMIT University investigated the networks existing within SGGPCP and the value of these networks to enhance resilience in the face of climate change. Enhancing Networks for Resilience \(^vi\) used social network analysis alongside a series of interviews to understand the inter-organizational collaboration for disaster resilience. A second phase of this project\(^vii\) highlighted the value of SGGPCP structure as a platform learning and networking to increase the capacity and capability of partners to enhance community resilience.

The community sector and umbrella organisations such as Primary Care Partnerships are well placed to enhance community resilience in the face of climate change. However, the sector faces significant challenges centred upon capacity and capability. As documented through the work of SGGPCP improving the capability of the sector could result in beneficial outcomes for those Victorians most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Submission prepared by
Jo Brown: Manager Health and Wellbeing
Southern Grampians Glenelg Primary Care Partnership
PO Box 283
Hamilton, 330

\(^iii\) Costello, A. et al 2009 Managing the Health effects of climate change. The Lancet May 2009
\(^vi\) Rance, A. Fuenfgeld, H. and Brown, J. (2015) Rural People; Resilient Future Pilot Project – Building blocks of rural community resilience. RMIT University
\(^vii\) McCann, H., Fuenfgeld, H. Brown, J. and Wylie, R. (2016) Enhancing Networks for Resilience – Inter-organisational collaboration for disaster resilience: A case study of the Southern Grampians Glenelg Primary Care Partnership, RMIT University
\(^viii\) Scott, H., Bosomworth, K., Brown, J. and Picken, B (2018) Enhancing Networks For Resilience Stage Two: Understanding applied learning to enhance resilience in a PCP. RMIT University