28 April 2011

Mrs Jan Kronberg MLC  
Chair, Outer Suburban Interface Services & Development Committee  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Jan  

Re: Inquiry into Liveability Options in Outer Suburban Melbourne –  
RACGP Victoria Faculty Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the above inquiry and to express the views of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Victoria Faculty on the Terms of Reference.

Where it is applicable to the RACGP, point (d) in the ToR specifies:

(d) Identify the provision of medical/health and support services in outer suburban areas.

It is important when planning for the provision of healthcare in burgeoning areas, that due consideration be given to establishing infrastructure so that service delivery is maximised. Wherever medical/health clinics are planned, it is essential that they be accessible, either by road or public transport, and easily identified. Consideration should also be given to an adequate number of car parking spaces, keeping in mind patients who are elderly or who have disabilities will require easy access to clinics, by wheelchair or other personal motorised transport.

In terms of health and support services, general practice is in many cases the first point of contact for patient care in preventative health services; mental health services and allied health services. The general practice clinic is often a hub to the delivery of these other services, or contributes to building the awareness of them with patients’ support. For this reason, planning for general practice services within a community needs to take on a collaborative approach with the general practices and integrated into local government health services planning (including state hospital and community health services) as much of the delivery of services and communication with patients is through general practice. Linkages between general practice and local law enforcement and ambulance services are also important considerations.
In planning to maintain and maximise the wellbeing of a new community, establishing localised health services networks, including e-health networks, making information easily accessible via online communications channels and via GP clinics is important for the immediate and long-term sustainability of the health and well being of the community.

Finally, the comments above can also be applied to the second inquiry you mentioned in your letter, Inquiry on Growing the Suburbs: Infrastructure and Business Development in Outer Suburban Melbourne. Something to note is that while there are general considerations that can be applied to different suburban areas in terms of infrastructure, communications and support, what must also be considered are the unique challenges that confront individual communities. For example, where there are high numbers of the elderly, or Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or migrant members in the population, then these influences should determine what services are provided, how they communicated and how they are provided.

Once again, I thank you for this opportunity to provide this input to the inquiry. If you require any further assistance from the RACGP Victoria Faculty, please contact Emma Stonham, Acting State Manger, on 03 8699 0468 or email emma.stonham@racgp.org.au.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

**Associate Professor Morton Rawlin**

Chair, RACGP Victoria Faculty