25 January 2021

Jeremi Moule
Secretary
Department of Premier and Cabinet

By email to: equality@dpc.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr Moule

Re: Victorian LGBTIQ+ Strategy Directions Paper

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Victorian Branch (RANZCP Victorian Branch) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Victorian LGBTIQ+ Strategy Directions Paper.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists is the principal organisation representing the medical specialty of psychiatry in Australia and New Zealand and is responsible for training, educating and representing psychiatrists on policy issues. The RANZCP Victorian Branch has almost 1700 members, including around 1200 qualified psychiatrists and more than 300 members who are training to qualify as psychiatrists. The RANZCP partners with people with lived experience, through the Community Collaboration Committee and our community member on the RANZCP Victorian Branch Committee. Carer and consumer representation is woven into the fabric of the RANZCP and helps to ensure the RANZCP considers the needs, values and views of the community throughout its work.

The RANZCP Victorian Branch would like to emphasise the importance of considering the mental health challenges that may be faced by LGBTIQ Victorians and ensuring there is appropriate support for these individuals and their families. While the Directions Paper clearly communicates the Victorian government commitment improve the lives of all LGBTIQ+ people and communities, there is limited mention of mental health. This is concerning given mental health outcomes for the LGBTIQ+ populations of Australia are amongst the lowest of any demographic. Mental health should be a central focus of the Victorian government LGBTIQ+ Strategy.

The RANZCP Victorian Branch supports the Future Directions for Development within the Directions Paper, particularly the focus on equitable and accessible service systems. Mental health and related services must be safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ people. Health, aged care, child and adolescent, family violence and other services should take steps to promote inclusiveness and cultural safety for LGBTIQ+ people. This includes ensuring assessment forms, databases and other mechanisms for collecting information avoid assumptions and discriminatory language. Services should also consider registering with relevant LGBTIQ+ health directories and displaying inclusive signage. Services should make reasonable steps to accommodate the needs of LGBTIQ+ consumers, including recognising partners, addressing personal care issues and ensuring privacy.
The RANZCP Victorian Branch provided an earlier submission to the consultation on the Victorian LGBTIQ+ Strategy, which is re-attached for your information. Further information on the RANZCP position on supporting mental health in the LGBTIQ+ community is available in RANZCP Position Statement 83.

To discuss any of the issues raised in this letter, please contact Lily Edwards, Policy and Advocacy Advisor, via Lily.Edwards@ranzcp.org or by phone on (03) 9236 9105.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kerryn Rubin
Chair, RANZCP Victorian Branch Committee