

**PROPOSED MERGER EXPLORATION- MERRI HEALTH AND BANYULE COMMUNITY HEALTH
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – Updated 06.05.2024**

Question	Response
Who are Banyule Community Health / Merri Health?	<p>Banyule Community Health was established in 1975 as West Heidelberg Community Health and Welfare Centre and merged with Diamond Valley Community Health Service in 1996. In recent years West Heidelberg Community Legal Service merged, and in 2020 Himilo Community Connect have become key programs of Banyule Community Health.</p> <p>Merri Health was established in 1975 as Brunswick Community Health Service and merged with Coburg Community Health in 1996. Over the years, other services joined Merri Health including Carer Links and Speech Inc. Since 2020 Merri Health has led the Carer Gateway consortium in Victoria.</p> <p>We are similar organisations, with great people, shared values, complementary services and a genuine commitment to our communities. A merger of equals, we think together we are a great match to improve services to our communities and grow into the future.</p>
What does a merger mean?	Together, joining our collective skills and resources we will provide better service offerings for clients and our communities, be better prepared for our evolving care sector and increase opportunities for staff.
What is the catalyst for the merger exploration? Why now?	<p>The Community Health Service environment continues to evolve and change. The Boards’ and leaders of both organisations have recognised the success of a number of recent community health amalgamations, largely based on their increased footprint and therefore greater voice and strength.</p> <p>We want to bring this to our communities and recognise we need to push forward rather than wait for the world to catch up to us.</p> <p>Together we can be more capable and responsive to the current and future needs of our clients, staff, funders and most importantly our communities.</p>

Question	Response
How might Banyule Community Health / Merri Health change with the potential merger?	<p>The Banyule Community Health and Merri Health service profile is very closely aligned, and this a key strength of this merger exploration. Our intention is to maintain and/or grow our current programs and services; and for staff to continue to work from their current locations and community to visit their usual site.</p> <p>It is the same services, delivered by the same people, with greater strength and capacity to grow into the future. Together, we will have a stronger voice for our communities.</p> <p>We are excited for greater opportunities for staff collaboration, better professional opportunities and diverse work experiences.</p>
Where would services be delivered from in the future?	Banyule Community Health and Merri Health will continue to provide services from their current locations and are deeply committed to servicing communities locally.
Is this as a result of reduced funding streams or government policy?	No. Whilst the Community Health sector has faced a number of challenges, the potential merger would be next stage of both organisation's evolutions and will help to ensure that we remain strong and sustainable in the future.
Are we in financial trouble?	No. Both Banyule Community Health and Merri Health are in strong financial positions.
When are you merging?	<p>Due diligence has recently been completed and approved by both Boards following a thorough review by independent auditors and lawyers. This confirmed the robust operational compatibility of our two organisations. We have moved to the next step of developing a new governance model that incorporates the strong values and operating principles of both organisations.</p> <p>Subject to a number of approval processes, a formal merger could come into effect in the next Financial Year.</p>
Who will be CEO?	The CEO's of Banyule Community Health and Merri Health are committed to seeing the merger through and focussed on its success. They will continue to lead the process before, during and after

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	the proposed transition. A Transition Committee will confirm a process for the appointment of the permanent CEO of the merged entity.
Have other Community Health Services merged? Were they successful?	Yes. There are several examples of successful Community Health Services that have merged. This includes Sunbury Cobaw Community Health in 2021, DPV Health (from Dianella & Plenty Valley) in 2018 and Cohealth (from North Yarra, Doutta Galla & Western Region) in 2014.
Is this just a step towards privatisation?	No. The proposed new entity will remain a non-profit organisation closely aligned with our government partners and community.
With high inflation, cost of living pressures and pressures on state government funding, isn't this the worst time to do this? Can we defer this decision?	The current situation highlights the essential need for adaptable, flexible and resilient community organisations. Now is a critical period of challenge and change for the sector and highlights the importance of undertaking this merger process. The merger exploration journey we are on is common in our sector.
What will happen to Banyule Community Health / Merri Health programs that the other service doesn't have?	Our intention is to maintain and / or grow our current programs. We see this as an opportunity to grow service delivery in the future.
Why isn't another Community Health Service a part of this proposed merger?	<p>Banyule Community Health and Merri Health have a strong history of close alignment and partnership, and through this process aim to strengthen their capacity and capability to ensure improved service provision to our communities.</p> <p>Both organisations are continually exploring strategic and operational partnerships that transpire in positive outcomes, and as such welcome any exploration that would support and align with our key objectives and delivering on our vision for the future.</p>
What will happen now?	Both organisations will continue to work closely, methodically moving through the requirements to fully explore the benefits of a combined organisation.

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	<p>Due diligence has been completed and approved by both Boards, following a thorough review by independent auditors and lawyers. We have now moved to the next step of developing a new governance model that incorporates the strong values and operating principles of both organisations.</p> <p>Each Board will engage key stakeholders, before a vote at a Special General Meeting of members from each organisation. Further information on that meeting and the associated information will be provided well in advance.</p>
<p>Does Banyule have Rainbow Tick accreditation?</p>	<p>Banyule Community Health is currently working towards Rainbow Tick accreditation and will be assessed against the Rainbow Tick quality standards in April 2024. Banyule Community Health is dedicated to creating safe and respectful environments for people accessing its services and for staff.</p> <p>All staff, volunteers and Board members are trained in LGBTIQ+ inclusion to ensure they are aware of the issues faced by LGBTIQ+ people when accessing health services, and to enable the development of awareness and skills to create safe and affirming experiences for LGBTIQ+ people. Banyule Community Health also works to ensure its physical environments are visually welcoming, and regularly audits spaces to review accessibility, safety and inclusion.</p>
<p>Does Banyule have a formal strategy or plan on environmental sustainability or climate action?</p>	<p>Banyule Community Health has a deep commitment to environmental sustainability. For many years a Green Team has driven efficiency and sustainable practices in the workplace. This work is complimented and supported by a number of community-based projects driven by sustainability principles.</p> <p>Banyule Community Health is currently finalising an Environmental Sustainability Action Plan to ensure ongoing commitments.</p>