

# Funding cuts not healthy

**By SHANE DOUTHIE**

TIM McCurdy (MLA, Owens Valley) says a vital part of health care in Wangaratta and the North East is under threat from funding cuts.

Wangaratta's state MP said Victorian Health Minister Jenny Mikakos confirmed in Parliament last week that funding for all 28 Primary Care Partnerships (PCPs) in Victoria had been abolished. The cuts will affect the Central Hume Primary Care

## MP calls on state to back Primary Care Partnerships

Partnership, which includes the council areas of Wangaratta, Alpine, Mansfield and Benalla, as well as the Upper Hume Primary Care Partnership, which covers the Wodonga, Indigo and Towong council areas.

Mr McCurdy said funding for PCPs was a vital part of health care in North East Victoria.

"PCPs bring together local health and human service

providers to improve access to services and provide continuity of care for people in their community, focusing on better coordination among services," he said.

"Our local PCPs continue to deliver a range of programs with recent focuses including rural mental health, promoting healthy living, family violence and Telehealth programs for cancer care.

"We have fought hard for Mental Health First Aid training in the region to fill gaps in the public mental health system.

"Without PCPs these programs just wouldn't exist, which would be devastating for mental health support in our region."

According to the State Government's health website, Victoria's 28 PCPs involve

approximately 600 organisations, including hospitals, community health services, Primary Health Networks, local governments, mental health services, drug treatment services and disability services.

"In addition to concerns about these community programs being axed, what will happen to the local jobs for those who provide these vital services?" Mr McCurdy said.

The chair of Victorian PCP Kevin Feeney also called upon the minister to categorically rule out the PCP defunding

"The current threat to our funding is more direct than we have experienced in the past," he said.

"We call on Minister Mikakos to commit to continuing PCP's modest funding for the benefit of all Victorians."

Mr McCurdy is encouraging people to make their opinions known to his office over funding cuts to PCP.