



## Mallee Track Health & Community Service

28 Britt Street (PO Box 130) OUYEN VIC 3490  
Phone: 03 5092 1111 Fax: 03 5092 1177  
ABN 43 518 931 864 Email: [mthcs@mthcs.vic.gov.au](mailto:mthcs@mthcs.vic.gov.au)

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## MALLEE TRACK PLEASSED WITH COMMUNITY PARAMEDIC TRIAL

**A TRIAL program providing Ouyen residents with healthcare options in their own community has been hailed a “huge success” by patients, participants and healthcare providers, with high hopes that funding will be provided for it to continue.**

The Advancing Paramedic Roles Implementation Program (APRIP) has been running in collaboration with Mallee Track Health & Community Services (MTHCS) and Ambulance Victoria since March 2021. Under the trial, Community Paramedics work alongside local healthcare workers, providing emergency skills training and assisting with patient care, vaccinations, chronic health management, falls patients and palliative care.

Now in its evaluation phase, MTHCS Chief Executive Officer Lois O’Callaghan said the APRIP program has been “incredibly beneficial” in decreasing the number of preventable hospital transfers from both the urgent care centre and aged care facilities, therefore providing Ouyen residents with the chance to stay closer to home to receive treatment.

“The APRIP program is one of many strategies of alternative workforce that MTHCS is using that show results,” Ms O’Callaghan said.

“We use nurse practitioners in our medical clinics, we have nurses who work in our urgent care centres, and upskilling paramedics to help fill the gap around primary care in our community is another form of this approach,” she said.

“Recruiting primary health care professionals has always proved to be difficult - using paramedicine to fill the gap where we might otherwise need a doctor or a nurse makes sense, and now that the program is in its evaluation phase, we know it works and provides better client outcomes closer to home.

“We’re just hoping that the Department of Health see what a positive difference this program has made in the lives of the Ouyen community and provide the necessary funding for us to continue that work.”

Community paramedic Joe Columbo said the program allows paramedics to implement preventative measures and take corrective action to reduce the deterioration of vulnerable community members.

“When undertaking a community visit to someone who has previously fallen, it’s not just the fall we focus on. That’s one aspect, but we often encounter other health issues that need attention,” Mr Colombo said.

“As a community paramedic, we can assist the patient with referrals, checking their medication is up to date and ongoing health monitoring to ensure they are happier and at home for longer.”

**Ends.**

*Pictured: Caption*

For interviews or further information contact MTHCS CEO Lois O’Callaghan (03) 5092 1111