



**EMBARGOED UNTIL MIDNIGHT 1 SEPTEMBER 2013**

**NAPCAN Play Your Part Awards Victoria**

**To: Monique Rosenbauer and Kerryn McGlone - Bendigo Health  
For: Complex Pregnancy Care (CPC)**

**Name of project:** Complex Pregnancy Care (CPC)  
**Organisation:** Bendigo Health  
**State:** Victoria

The Complex Pregnancy Care (CPC) Program at Bendigo Health commenced in October 2007 to offer more support to mothers and babies with complex needs. The program was developed when it was identified that opportunities existed throughout the pregnancy to develop strategies for these higher risk clients to be the recipients of a more structured identification and planning process to ensure complex social issues associated with pregnancy, childbirth and the care of newborn infants were recognised and effectively managed.

The identification and referral of CPC clients by midwifery and medical staff occurs at 'booking in' clinic or during ante-natal visits at the Women's Health Centre. Referral is then made to the Complex Pregnancy Care Program staffed by a social worker and a midwife. This process of identification and referral allows for complex discharge planning occurring *prior* to the birth of vulnerable infants. Bendigo Health has approximately 1200 births per year and of these births about 10%, hence 120 per year are in the CPC program.

The initiative has adopted a preventative approach, using early detection to refer pregnant women to the program so that they can develop a plan with information as to the best way to support clients exposed to certain risks. The CPC program engages community members in educational sessions to demonstrate that the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children is everyone's business.

As a result the reporting of unborn babies to the Child Protection Agency has decreased. The program includes consulting with Child Protection Agency and other community support services during case conferencing to develop a discharge plan with the cooperation of families. Pregnancy and childbirth can be a very motivating time to make significant changes to lifestyle and hence reduce risk and ensure safety. By consulting Child Protection and families prior to reports being made, the program has been able improve the image of Child Protection services and decrease the belief by clients that all they do is remove children. Families have been able to experience Child Protection and other family support services as preventative rather than crisis driven services, meeting the needs of the family and community. This not



only ensures the safety and wellbeing of the newborn and other siblings but empowers the family to be proactive in making their own changes and links with support services.

**NAPCAN is awarding 2013 Play Your Part Awards Vic to Bendigo Health for: implementing and sustaining a prevention program where the focus is keeping children safe within their families.**

**For further details:** contact Madelene McGrath, NAPCAN on 02 9269 9200