Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

8 October 2012

Dear Committee Chair

The MAV is pleased to submit the following key issues from a Victorian local government perspective to the Inquiry into Australia's Response to Social Determinants of Health

In Victoria, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans (MPHPs) are developed by councils every four years under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008. This legislated requirement has supported the development of strong and coordinated Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans based on social determinants of health. Local councils across regions and at a state level share learning and coordinate advocacy, research & other initiatives. The legislation also requires MPHPs to be linked directly to Council City Plans and Municipal Strategic Statements.

The "Environments for Health" planning framework which underpins the MPHPs developed for local government has been an invaluable integrated planning tool as it addresses social, economic, built and natural environments.

In recent years the social determinants approach has been extended to understanding and responding to emerging issues for local government. An example of this is preventing violence against women.

- In Victorian local councils, the focus to prevent violence against women is occurring through efforts to increase gender equity across many levels and range of settings, to address the social determinant of unequal power relationships and distribution of resources between men and women. This is evidenced through the MAV Gender Equity Preventing Violence Against Women Leadership Statement, which states much of the work of Victorian councils is guided by current research that shows a key determinant of violence against women is the persisting inequities between men and women. The MAV Leadership Statement further shares the vision of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, for a society where women and children live free from violence in safe communities, acknowledging this will require the commitment and contribution from all levels of government, businesses, the media, schools, sporting groups and other community organisations and community members.

The recently released Victorian Health Monitor was conducted as a Victorian state-wide cross-sectional, population-health measurement survey. It shows data collected between May 2009 and April 2010 included this summation in the section headed social determinants;

'Despite the fact that the majority of findings in this report demonstrate an improvement in the prevalence of chronic disease and the risk factors for chronic disease, it also shows distinct patterns of social and health inequalities in Victoria. Individual-based and area-based measures of the social determinants of health were

related to higher prevalence of disease risk factors and to chronic disease in Victorians. Such health inequalities limit the life opportunities of many people and create an economic burden for society. To tackle health inequalities, it must be accepted that they exist, that they have significant social and economic consequences, and that they can be prevented. This report provides updated evidence that these inequities are real, and if not addressed, may lead to a greater burden of chronic disease in future years.'

The data and conclusions within the Victorian Health monitor, along with other data sources and plans (such as the Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan and Population Health surveys, ABS census and local services information) will be utilized by local councils across Victoria. This will be in preparing to determine priorities for action in the 2013-2017 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

The MAV trusts that this information will be of some assistance to the Committee, and we would be happy to expand on these key points if requested.

Yours Sincerely

ROB SPENCE

Chief Executive Officer

Senate inquiry -

Australia's domestic response to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Commission on Social Determinants of Health report "Closing the gap within a generation"

On 22 August 2012 the Senate referred the following matter to the Senate Community Affairs Committees for inquiry and report.

Submissions should be received by **04 October 2012**. The reporting date is **27 March 2013**.
The Committee is seeking written submissions from interested individuals and organisations **preferably in electronic form submitted online** or sent by email to community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au as an attached Adobe PDF or MS Word format document. The email must include full postal address and contact details.

Terms of Reference

Australia's domestic response to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Commission on Social Determinants of Health report "Closing the gap within a generation", including the:

(a) Government's response to other relevant WHO reports and declarations;
(b) impacts of the Government's response;
(c) extent to which the Commonwealth is adopting a social determinants of health approach through:
    (i) relevant Commonwealth programs and services,
    (ii) the structures and activities of national health agencies, and
    (iii) appropriate Commonwealth data gathering and analysis; and
(d) scope for improving awareness of social determinants of health:
    (i) in the community,
    (ii) within government programs, and
    (iii) amongst health and community service providers.

Please note: **This is not an inquiry into the social determinants of health themselves.** Submitters should address the terms of reference, which focus on the government's response, adoption of a social determinants of health approach, and scope for improving awareness of the social determinants of health.

Please note: The World Health Organization's report "Closing the gap in a generation" is available

at:www.who.int/social_determinants/thecommission/finalreport/en/index.html

Notes to help you prepare your submission are available from the website athttp://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/wit_sub/index.htm.
Once the Committee accepts your submission, it becomes a confidential Committee document and is protected by Parliamentary Privilege. You must **not** release your submission without the Committee's permission. If you do, it will not be protected by Parliamentary Privilege. At some stage during the inquiry, the Committee normally makes submissions public and places them on its website. **Please indicate if you want your submission to be kept confidential.**