

MEDIA RELEASE

14 October 2025

Community health delivers better ROI and better health outcomes.

IPC Health welcomes the launch of **Community Health First's 2025 Impact Report** and supports its recommendations. We see the transformative impact of holistic, integrated community-based healthcare in the lives of thousands of our clients.

One example is the Huntly family. Today, Rachel and Adam Huntly are sharing their story at a launch event of the Impact Report at State Parliament event. The Hon. Mary-Ann Thomas, Minister for Health, will open the event. The Huntlys will participate in a panel discussion on the unique role of community health organisations like IPC Health in delivering accessible, affordable wrap-around support in our local communities.

'Having everything under one roof has been a game-changer. We're not running around to 50 different places anymore. It's way less stressful and so much easier for our family. Before, it felt like we were on our own. Now, we have a team that understands Trinity and supports us every step of the way.' - Rachel Huntly

'When your child has complex needs, you need a lot of support. Having it all in one place makes a huge difference. Not just for my daughter, but for the whole family. They also organized mental health support for us as parents, so helped us as a family.' - Adam Huntly

Please see below for more detail on the Huntly's experience.

IPC Health supports people in some of the fastest growing yet most disadvantaged suburbs in Victoria. Many of our clients struggle to access timely affordable healthcare. These include older Australians, refugees and other migrants, people with disabilities and lower income Australians, none of whom can afford private healthcare. Demand has grown exponentially but the capacity to take on new clients has not.

Investment in community health has remained the same for the past decade – apart from CPI indexation. Funding has not kept pace with population growth. Every year, community health services including IPC Health struggle to balance their budgets, and many run at a loss. This means many Victorians can't access the support they need. Tight budgets also stifle innovation.

Research shows that public health interventions deliver a median return on investment of about 14 to 1. This means that every dollar spent on preventive healthcare can save approximately \$14 in future costs to support people living with chronic but manageable conditions.



IPC Health CEO, Jayne Nelson, notes, *‘The return on investment is compelling. Increasing funding to community health services, including shifting investment from hospitals, will not just provide better return on investment for the state healthcare budget, it can transform lives and communities.’*

We welcome the opportunity to work with government on delivering the most effective health and wellbeing to ensure that our communities can be well for life.

Case Study: One Family’s Journey to Integrated Care

When Rachel and Adam Huntly of Melton first sought help for her 10-year-old daughter Trinity, they were already familiar with the challenges of navigating the health system. Years earlier, their eldest son’s epilepsy and autism diagnoses involved ‘so much running around’ — multiple appointments across different locations, endless paperwork, and long delays. This time, things were different.

Trinity was struggling with anxiety and handwriting difficulties, and her parents suspected autism. The family needed timely assessments, therapy, and practical support. But with both parents working full-time and another child at home, the thought of repeating the exhausting process was overwhelming.

Through the Brimbank Melton Children’s Health & Wellbeing Local, Rachel and Adam found a coordinated, multi-disciplinary team under one roof. Within a week of her first call, Trinity had an intake appointment. Soon after, she received an autism diagnosis, occupational therapy, mental health support, and occupational therapy referrals, all in the same location. The family also connected with a lived experience worker who provided guidance on independence, future employment pathways, and even overcoming housing challenges. The empathy and compassion from someone with lived experience of these challenges was invaluable.

For Rachel, Adam and their kids, the difference was life-changing; less stress, better care.

‘Everyone’s in the same place, talking to each other. I don’t have to tell our story 100 times and all the different practitioners can share info on what the best care plan would be.’ - Rachel Huntly

‘There’s no more juggling multiple contacts at different services, trying to coordinate different appointments or long travel times or not knowing where we’re going or who we’re going to talk to.’ - Rachel Huntly

‘Before I felt hopeless, now I have hope.’ – Adam Huntly



'Visiting numerous services in different locations was exhausting - mentally and physically. With my eldest son, we were constantly driving to different places, repeating the same story over and over. It felt like another full-time job on top of everything else.' - Rachel Huntly

'It took away so much from us just being a family. We'd spend hours every week just on the phone trying to organise everything, travelling to appointments, and waiting. It took time away from work, from my other kids, and from just being a family. It was stressful and overwhelming.' - Rachel Huntly

'The experience with our son [diagnosed with autism at age 4, through the public health system] was very clinical, very 'doctor-y'. With IPC Health - to have a home appointment - it was an opportunity to meet Trinity in our own environment, which made her feel more comfortable as well. It's so important when you have a child that's very introverted.' - Rachel Huntly

'I wasn't sure about the different types of help that was available or that would be useful. The team at IPC Health made sure I knew about all our options. The government funds some great services but it's hard to find out about and organise everything that's available. I feel like the team at The Local has got my back and we don't have to go through this alone.' - Rachel Huntly

'For us as a family, there's been a lot of change, but that change has really helped us, to the point where we're getting a little bit more happy as a family, instead of always being grumpy. It's much better. Trinity usually didn't really talk before but now she talks to everyone including me. She's come out of her shell much more, which is really good.' - Tyler Huntly (age 15)

'I want other parents who have kids with complex needs or neurodivergence to know that they can get a 'one stop shop' at the Brimbank Melton Children's Health & Wellbeing Local. They're not on their own.'

'My youngest daughter also has challenges with ADHD, and getting diagnosis and support through the team at The Local, with everything in one place, in a really nice facility, has made a big difference.'

'The help from the start to where we are now has just been amazing. I'm so grateful. Romy in particular [Lived Experience Practitioner], it was eye opening. We can see our kids actually have a chance in the future, with the right help and the right encouragement.' - Adam Huntly

"To have it coordinated through one team, under one roof made it less time consuming for us as parents. And it made it less repetitive. We didn't have to keep repeating our story. Every team member was on the same page. And they helped refer us to other services that could help." - Rachel Huntly

'For my sisters it was much easier, they're not seeing multiple people. They're only going to one place, not destination after destination. Organisations like this need to be more funded because they're more helpful. Going to a regular doctor isn't always going to give you the right treatment.'

But going somewhere that's personalised, they can get a better understanding and help you.' - Tyler Huntly (age 15)

"If I had one ask for the government, it would be to find funding for programs like these. They're life changing. It's programs like these that will help us as a society move forward, especially kids. It's that early intervention that we need to help them with, and without that funding, we can't help them." - Adam Huntly

Summary

At IPC Health, we believe that purpose-built community health infrastructure is key to delivering integrated, person-centred care. The Huntly's story shows how multi-disciplinary support under one roof can reduce stress, improve outcomes, and empower families. We welcome Infrastructure Victoria's call for increased investment in community health facilities—because better buildings mean better care. With timely support, coordinated care, and a compassionate team, Rachel, Adam and their children found hope and stability after years of struggle.

Results from the Australian Early Development Census demonstrate the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable has increased over the past three years, despite investment in Early Years Education.¹ This indicates other strategies are required.

The Brimbank & Melton Children's Health and Wellbeing Local offers mental health, wellbeing, and healthcare services all in one place. Families like Rachel and Adam's have found life-changing support through our integrated care model. Learn more about how we're helping children and families thrive—close to home.

The Brimbank Melton Children's Health & Wellbeing Local is here to support families and carers of children aged up to 11 years in the Brimbank and Melton areas. The Local is a partnership IPC Health, the Royal Children's Hospital and Western Health. The Local is currently taking referrals from partner agencies and Enhanced Maternal Child Health (Brimbank and Melton). IPC Health is grateful for joint funding from the Victorian Government and the Australian Government through the Head to Health Kids initiative. In FY '24-25 IPC Health our team supported over 400 clients, with 75% of these children receiving support across multiple disciplines.

These include speech therapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, physiotherapy, pediatrics, lived experience support and more. The team also provides overall case management, service navigation, and internal and external referrals.

For more information see: <https://www.ipchealth.com.au/services/bm-childrens-local/>

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References:

Australian Government Department of Education. (2024). Australian Early Development Census.

- The percentage of children assessed as developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains increased from 22.0% in 2021 to 23.5% in 2024.
- The percentage of children assessed as developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains rose from 11.4% in 2021 to 12.5% in 2024.
- Additionally, the proportion of children who were on track across all five developmental domains declined from 54.8% in 2021 to 52.9% in 2024

Masters, R., Anwar, E., Collins, B., Cookson, R., & Capewell, S. (2017). Return on investment of public health interventions: A systematic review. *BMJ Global Health*, 2(5), e000335.
<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2017-000335>

Family details:

Adam Huntly (father)
 Rachel Huntly (mother)
 Tanikwa Huntly (age 17)
 Ty Huntly (age 15)
 Trinity Huntly (age 10)
 Tamaia Huntly (age 7)

High res professional photography and video available.
 Interviews can be organised upon request.

