



# STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria  
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party



## MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 31 October 2019

### **PACER & PROMPT: What's next?**

Stuart Grimley MP has asked the Health Minister if the State Government plan to implement the Police, Ambulance, Clinician Emergency Response (PACER) program in Victoria after its successful trial in Melbourne between 2007 and 2011.

PACER addresses the large number of mental health callouts Victoria experiences, comprising a mental health clinician and a police member attending an incident in the community following a request by an operational police unit. However PACER can also be requested by ambulance services through the police.

Due to 'two up' laws, where ambulance and police officers must each patrol with two officers for safety reasons, there have been individual responses to incidents which involve mental health patients and this has resulted in engaging unnecessary emergency resources and ineffective care.

Considering there is a mental health callout (attended by an ambulance) 15 times on average each day in the Barwon region, Mr Grimley thinks PACER would be a great on-going solution to more effective police resourcing within the Geelong Police Service Area.

The services provided by PACER depend on the level of impact but could include onsite clinical assessments, advice on mental health referral options and the design of intervention strategies for high users of emergency services.

The PACER Trial Report which Mr Grimley referred to in his speech (available for download below) concluded that "there is widespread support for improved inter-agency collaboration in responding and managing mental health crises in the community".

Mr Grimley supports PACER due to its more timely response to mental health problems in the community, its collaborative response to better deal with mental health issues and its cost effectiveness in addressing problems "head on" rather than promoting emergency departments to deal with mental health problems.

In its trial, PACER also saw a reduction in the length of hospital stays for mental health patients referred by the PACER unit by around two hours. The trial also saw an increase in the sharing of data between ambulance and police databases and a reduction in costs from "usual service provision".

Mr Grimley acknowledged that since May this year, Geelong has experienced a similar trial - called PROMPT (Prehospital Response of Mental Health and Paramedic Team) - which also directly addresses mental health crises.

PROMPT sees specialist mental health professionals attend call-outs alongside ambulance officers in unmarked cars (rather than ambulances) where mental health may be a factor.

### **Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:**

"PACER was a success a handful of years ago and I'd really like to see it continued as standard in the broader Geelong region.

As a former police officer, I feel this program would be perfect for Geelong. Being able to attend minor mental health incidents with a mental health professional rather than two police officers has a threefold benefit; it reduces personnel needed at these incidents, it better treats the mental health patient and it keeps them out of hospital.



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PACER is a targeted program that address mental health in a modern way. Much of what police deal with is in some way related to mental health and using a different strategy that's been proven to be successful is to me, common-sense.

*In Stuart's speech in Parliament:*

I ask the Health Minister to explain why PACER has not been continued or if it has been replaced by other programs.

Further, if PROMPT is successful, to outline if there are plans to continue this program for the benefit of Victorians who need specialist mental health help.”

Download the [PACER Trial Report 2012](#) [974KB].

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