



# Flood affected to get mental health support

VICTORIA'S flood affected communities entering the recovery and re-building phase will be assisted by community support workers through the Commonwealth funded Mental Health Support for Drought Affected Communities Initiative.

Australian General Practice Network chair Dr Emil Djakic says the long term impact of trauma on the mental health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, particularly when faced with a disaster on the level of the Queensland floods, requires all the resources available within the health services sector and this initiative is one of

them.

"Despite one of the network's key mental health initiatives being branded for drought-affected communities, the initiative is still under way for rural communities affected by the floods," he said.

"Even though community support workers were originally employed to provide assistance for drought, the skills and networks of these workers enables them to respond to a range of environmentally adverse situations.

"This Commonwealth-funded program

is critical for rural and regional communities that require coordinated responses to mental health services in their local communities.

"Community Support Workers become a strong link between individuals, GPs and/or practice nurses, raise community awareness of mental health, including where and when to seek help, and provide education and training to enable health workers and community leaders to recognise and respond to the early warning signs of emotional stress."