

## Amalgamation Survey

The purpose of the survey was not for members to 'vote' on the options, but to indicate their feelings. The survey was distributed to members with little or no information about the potential advantages or disadvantages of the three options. Hence, responses are preliminary impressions only and do highlight issues. Any form of vote is not appropriate until a specific model is proposed, and there has been a systematic information process leading up to the vote.

Three broad options for future arrangements between the Divisions were identified in the early stages of this study, and were the subject of a survey of members

They were, the Divisions:

- **Continuing to operate as they are and not amalgamating**
- **Working more closely together and not amalgamating**
- **Amalgamating.**

As at May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006, there were 91 returns (40%) from members of the NEV Division.

Of the 91 NEV Division members that returned the survey:

- **31.9% indicated they are in favour of operations continuing as they are**
- **51.7% indicated they are in favour of closer working arrangements**
- **26.4% of respondents indicated they are in agreement with amalgamation and 20.9% are opposed**
- **40.7% indicated they are unsure as to whether they support amalgamation.**

NEV Division respondents rated it very highly in regard to responsiveness and GP practice focussed areas.

The Division's 'personal touch' and knowledge of local practices received favourable comment by many respondents.

Ratings of over 75% for undertaking tasks 'well' or 'extremely well' were given for communication to members [93.3%], quality education and training provision for Practice Staff [91.8%], quality education and training provision for GPs [91.0%], and responding to requests for assistance [90.9%], followed by supporting practices with quality of care [82.6%], being driven by member needs [80.0%], and supporting practices with business operations [77.1%].

Respondents rated the Division's effectiveness in 'outward focussed' or system interface areas less highly. Ratings of 65% or less were given for supporting recruitment of GPs 'well' or 'extremely well' [32.9%], improving population health 'well' or 'extremely well' [64.0%], and representing the interests of local GPs with other organisations 'well' or 'extremely well' [63.9%].

NEV Division respondents rated the Northern Division's effort in communication to members the most highly [88.9%], followed by education and training provision for GPs [with 87.8% rating it being undertaken 'well' or 'extremely well'], and responding to requests for assistance [80.5%]. Respondents rated the Division at below 65% for doing 'well' or 'extremely well' in all of the other areas listed except for being driven by member needs [68.3%]. The areas where the Division received the lowest ratings for doing 'well' or 'extremely well' were supporting recruitment of GPs [35.3%], helping GPs access a greater range of services for patients [44.1%], supporting practices with business operations [44.5. %], representing the interests of local GPs with other organisations [50%], improving population health [52.9%], and improving coordination between GPs and hospitals [55.0%] [Table 42 and Figure 12].

To reiterate, the purpose of the survey was not for members to 'vote' on the options, but to indicate their feelings. Any form of vote is not appropriate until a specific model is proposed, and there has been a systematic information process leading up to the vote.

They are preliminary impressions and highlight issues. As one would expect, results from the NEV Division confirm that GPs in outlying areas may be more affected by amalgamation and therefore more adverse to centralisation. Options to ensure accessibility to programs and events, and means of maintaining personal knowledge of individual practices are required in the development of a detailed proposal for future operations.

The survey results indicate that there is enough support for increasing collaboration and the 'concept of amalgamation' for the Divisions to proceed with:

- Increasing collaboration
- Considering a specific model for an amalgamated Division
- Undertaking a process of information provision.

A full electronic copy of the Consultants report will be available from the Division by the end of June to any member who requests it.