Pass mark for Shepp providers

BUT HEALTH SERVICES MUST DO MORE: STUDY

By Charmayne Allison

The study was authored by Zubaidah Mohamed Shaburdin, Mujibul Anam, Dr Olivia Mitchell and Prof Bourke.

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Data was collected over 18 months, with 119 participants sharing their experiences through individual and small group interviews and focus groups.

The feedback from participants was generally positive, with many describing Shepparton health services as generally "good", both in terms of quality and inclusion.

However, some people shared "points of exclusion", where assumptions were made about them based on their obvious identities, how they looked or their social or physical attributes.

"Let's not assume that every patient in the waiting room has the ability to hear when a doctor calls their name."

"It's these little assumptions we all make — particularly when health services are under pressure, they're in a rush."

"But I would encourage health professionals to think about the language they use."

"In fact I'd say community-wide, that's a good message."

Prof Bourke wasn't surprised feedback from participants had generally been positive when it came to healthcare in Shepparton.

"I think our health services are under pressure, but it's also about checking that language — because language can be the difference between someone feeling included and comfortable in a health service, or somebody saying, 'I didn't like it then and I'm not going back'."

"And when it's your health, it matters."

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