



# Valuable program lauded

Delatite Community Health Service nurse Deb Smith joined with NorthEast Health nurses Russell Maher and Gill Malone and spoke of their local experiences in delivering the Sustainable Farm Families program at a statewide summit on farmer health recently.

The nurses said the summit brought together health professionals to develop their skills in mental ill-health, respiratory assessments and prepare for the delivery of the second year of Sustainable Farm Families

workshops to 1000 farmers across the state.

Agriculture Minister Joe Helper officially opened the summit in Dunkeld and said the Victorian Government would invest \$2.18 million during the next four years to enable an additional 500 Victorian farmers to access the successful Sustainable Farm Families program.

Mr Helper said funding would be used to run workshops with a focus on practical steps to improve the lives of farm families, targeting families in areas

undergoing significant change.

He said prevention the program focused on participants being able to walk away from the program with a greater understanding of how to prevent disease and injury, and the motivation to take action.

"There were some cases where participants had malignant skin cancers identified at the workshops, which could have otherwise gone unchecked," Mr Helper said.

Sustainable Farm Families' workshops cover a range of health topics including cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, stress, depression, anxiety, nutrition and exercise.

The program is an award-winning initiative of Western District Health Service delivered in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and in collaboration with Delatite Community Health Service and NorthEast Health.



**Kicker:** Deb Smith, Agriculture Minister Joe Helper, Russell Maher and Gill Malone