



# years of VicHealth 2013-2023

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# Foreword



On behalf of the VicHealth team, past and present, I am proud to present this report that showcases VicHealth's work under the VicHealth Action Agenda for Health Promotion 2013–2023.

VicHealth has always been a pioneer – both locally and globally. This report celebrates the work of VicHealth to improve the health and wellbeing of Victorians, and influence health promotion across the world.

VicHealth kicked off the Action Agenda in 2013 with a focus on five strategic imperatives:

1. Promote healthy eating
2. Encourage regular physical activity
3. Prevent tobacco use
4. Prevent harm from alcohol
5. Improve mental wellbeing.

The strategic imperatives supported our ambition for one million more Victorians to have better health and wellbeing by 2023. They helped focus our work on areas of need and where we could achieve the greatest impact. We are confident that we have not only met but exceeded our 10-year targets, and indeed we have achieved so much more. Under these strategic imperatives, we created and funded world-class interventions, conducted vital research to advance Victoria's population health, produced and supported public campaigns to promote a healthier Victoria, and provided transformational expertise and insights to government. This work continues today.

The VicHealth Action Agenda for Health Promotion 2013–2023 identified a number of key themes and our work over the past decade and across the five strategic imperatives included a strong focus on improving gender equality, supporting young people's health and wellbeing, working in partnership with local communities, and addressing health equity in everything we do.

Our local investments to serve the people of Victoria have been complemented by our international work, including receiving official designation as a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Leadership in Health Promotion in 2014.

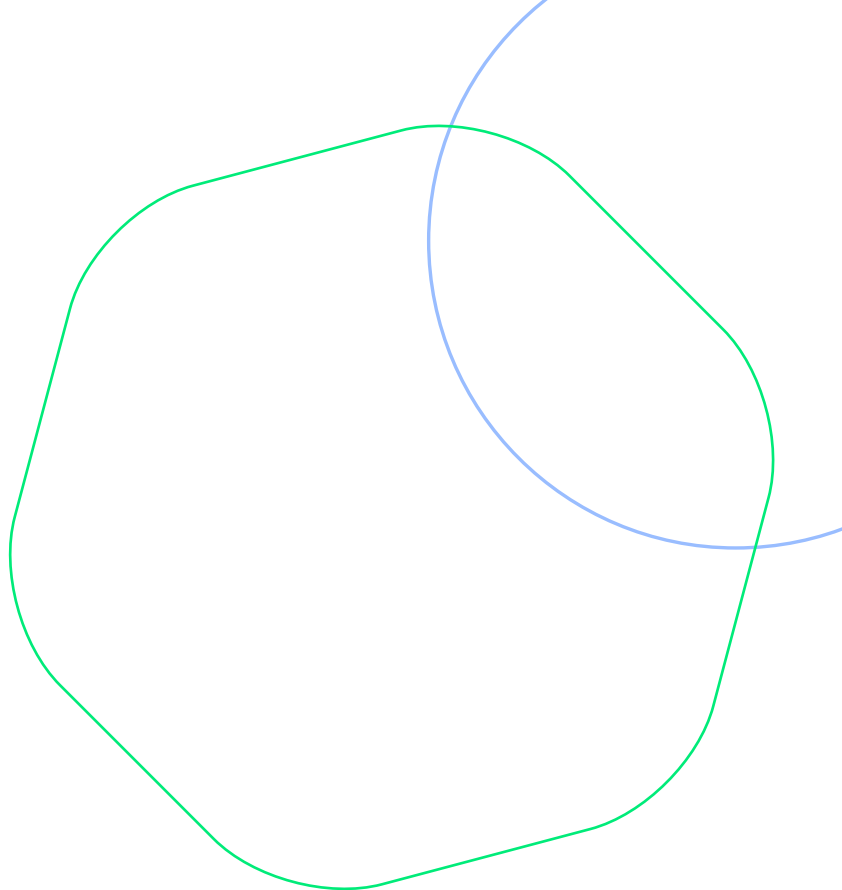
Today's public health problems are complex and require us to think and work in new ways. VicHealth has continued to evolve throughout the Action Agenda, striving to be bold, ambitious and to strategically influence change. Over the decade, VicHealth has transformed from a funding body to a strategic investor. We listen deeply to our community and are enabling lived experience leadership, insights and knowledge to inform our work and broader system reform and improvements. We use multiple strategies to influence change and act on the factors, environments and systems that shape health. We continue our work with longstanding allies, and welcome many new strategic partners. We pivoted in response to the coronavirus pandemic and to support communities affected by bushfires. Our systems have been modernised to allow us to have greater impact. VicHealth is innovating and influencing health promotion at scale.

Please join us in celebrating the incredible achievements of VicHealth over the course of the VicHealth Action Agenda for Health Promotion 2013–2023. All Victorians can be justifiably proud of VicHealth's work in partnership with communities across the state to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Victoria.

As we look to the future, we commit to building on VicHealth's 36-year legacy to reshape systems together for a healthier, fairer Victoria.

**Dr Sandro Demaio**  
Chief Executive Officer  
VicHealth

# About VicHealth



## Our origin

VicHealth is the world's first health promotion foundation. We were established with cross-party support by the Victorian Parliament as part of the *Tobacco Act 1987*.

This Act set the standard for international best practice by banning outdoor tobacco advertising and using cigarette taxes to fund anti-smoking campaigns and buy out the tobacco sponsorship of sport and the arts. Importantly, it also established the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (now VicHealth), a standalone independent body with a mandate to promote good health.

**“The multi-partisan support for our organisation is a hallmark of our origins and evolution: a core reason why Victoria has been able to achieve so much.”**

Professor Emeritus John Catford

**“VicHealth was the first health promotion body in the world to be funded by a tax on tobacco. It was the result of an unparalleled public health advocacy effort.”**

Professor Emeritus Sir Gustav Nossal AC  
VicHealth Patron and inaugural Chair

## How VicHealth is funded

For its first 10 years (until 1997), VicHealth was funded by a dedicated (or 'hypothecated') tax. VicHealth now receives core funding from the Department of Health to deliver its objectives as outlined in the *Tobacco Act 1987*. Additionally, VicHealth periodically receives special funding from various government agencies to deliver specific programs.



Interest in establishing health promotion foundations and recognition of the benefits of having long-term sustainable funding for health promotion has continued to increase over the past 35 years since VicHealth was established. Today, many health promotion foundations exist around the world, supported by the International Network of Health Promotion Foundations.

## Our work

The objectives of VicHealth as set out in the *Tobacco Act* are to:

- fund activity related to the promotion of good health, safety or the prevention and early detection of disease
- increase awareness of programs for promoting good health in the community through the sponsorship of sports, the arts and popular culture
- encourage healthy lifestyles in the community and support activities involving participation in healthy pursuits
- fund research and development activities in support of these activities.



## Our overarching priorities

Over the previous decade, 4 unique approaches have underpinned our mandate to prevent chronic disease.

### Our role as an independent statutory authority with bipartisan support

We advise governments and complement and contribute to the efforts of various government portfolios.

### A comprehensive, inclusive approach to health

We focus on creating the conditions in which good health can flourish – from better public policy and healthy urban environments to more inclusive and respectful communities.

### Our innovation

We are able to take and absorb risks in ways that governments cannot. Our work is underpinned by robust evidence, and is integrated with evaluation, practice and dissemination.

### Our partnerships

We work in partnership with governments, organisations, communities and individuals in a broad range of sectors, including sport, recreation, community, urban planning, research, transport, local government, education, arts and business. We have a legislative mandate to allocate at least 30% of our appropriation to sports organisations.

## World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Leadership in Health Promotion

VicHealth received official designation as a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Leadership in Health Promotion in September 2014. This role gives us the opportunity to build the capacity of existing and new health promotion organisations in the Western Pacific Region through technical support and mentoring, as well as hosting international delegations, forging new partnerships in health and sharing information and resources.



# The VicHealth Action Agenda for Health Promotion 2013–2023

VicHealth's Action Agenda for Health Promotion focused on 5 strategic imperatives:

- promoting healthy eating
- encouraging regular physical activity
- preventing tobacco use
- preventing harm from alcohol
- improving mental wellbeing.

These priorities are consistent with VicHealth's obligations under the *Tobacco Act 1987*. They also align with Victorian Government policy and program directions, and national and international health promotion priorities and policies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) charters and declarations for health promotion.

The Action Agenda was launched in 2013. The 2016 and 2019 updates introduced themes for action and reaffirmed VicHealth's commitment to the strategic imperatives and 10-year targets.



## Strategic imperatives



### PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

All Victorians should have physical and economic access to adequate amounts of nutritious, safe and culturally appropriate foods, at all times and in a dignified manner.

The opportunity to eat a healthy, balanced diet is often undermined by a combination of system-level factors. A web of actors and activities make up our food system and shape our diets by influencing the access, availability, and affordability of healthy, sustainable, culturally appropriate food. Forces that influence and shape what we eat include the marketing and promotion of unhealthy foods, time pressures that make convenience foods appealing, the relatively high cost of healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables, and disconnection to food and how it is produced.



#### A decade in review

Our healthy eating work has responded to the challenge of preventing diet-related conditions, including obesity. Our early work under the Action Agenda focused on supporting achievement of the [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#) by promoting water as the drink of choice instead of sugar-sweetened beverages and reducing salt consumption.

To create healthier food and drink environments, we explored ways for sporting bodies and facilities to promote healthier food and drink options. We continued to work with our partners to support policy and legislative changes to improve the food supply chain and the way the food industry markets and sells its products.

This included convening Victoria's Citizens' Jury on Obesity to ask Victorians for their solutions to obesity, convening a roundtable on obesity prevention that developed recommendations for Victoria, and ongoing work with the Salt Reduction Partnership to identify changes at the national level to reduce the amount of salt hidden in processed foods.

More recently, VicHealth's work to promote healthy eating has moved away from an individual behaviour focus that perpetuates the myth that improving the public's health is a personal responsibility and ignores the impact that the environments and broader systems have on our health and wellbeing.



Today, our healthy eating work sits within a broader program of integrated work focused on the commercial determinants of health and harmful industries, healthy and sustainable food systems, building back better from the coronavirus pandemic, and investing in the health and wellbeing of young people.

We are committed to creating a healthy, equitable, sustainable and resilient food system in Victoria that supports connected communities and good food for all. Together with our partners, we are working to drive food systems change in Victoria for better health, social and environmental outcomes.

## Our highlights and impact

In the past decade, we:

- supported partners to create healthy food environments by increasing the availability of free drinking water as a genuine alternative to sugary drinks, including work with local councils, the arts and music industry, and major sport and recreation facilities including Melbourne Cricket Ground, Melbourne & Olympic Parks, Kardinia Park and Etihad Stadium (currently Marvel Stadium)
- delivered statewide social marketing campaigns to increase water consumption and reduce salt consumption
- joined forces with local councils in a bid to phase out unhealthy food vouchers in kids' sport and replace them with healthy activities
- brought the sector and industry together through roundtables and events to share evidence, showcase best practice and collect insights to inform our work
- established the Salt Reduction Partnership Group to advance action on salt reduction in Victoria
- worked in partnership to develop a consensus statement on obesity prevention for Victoria, A Healthier Start for Victorians
- continued to contribute efforts to enhance regulation and reduce unhealthy marketing and food labelling in Australia, including public opinion polling, with strong leadership from the Food for Health Alliance
- developed and evaluated new approaches to improving local fruit and vegetable supply, access and culture, such as 3000 Acres and the Open Food Network
- convened Victoria's Citizens' Jury on Obesity to seek community solutions to address obesity and explore innovative approaches to developing public policy with greater democratic participation
- undertook practical and outcomes-focused research including behavioural insight trials on water supply, accessibility and promotion to inform the development of evidence-based approaches and best practice guidelines for the provision of water in specific settings, research to inform the development of a regulatory definition of added sugars for Australia and New Zealand, and to explore policy interventions to protect Australia's food security in the face of increasing environmental sustainability challenges
- contributed to greater food security for those facing disadvantage, many for the first time due to pandemic-related financial distress, through a new partnership with The Community Grocer
- funded local Victorian organisations to support more Victorians to access healthy and affordable food following the challenging and ongoing impacts of the pandemic
- launched Future Healthy and JumpStart!, major new initiatives to deliver place-based and youth-led programs across Victoria that support young people to access and enjoy good food.

## VicHealth strategies

- [Healthy eating strategy 2019-2023](#)

## Resources

- [Mapping Melbourne for land capability: assessing the agricultural capability of Melbourne's peri-urban area](#) (2013)
- [State of salt: the case for salt reduction in Victoria](#) (2015)
- [Provision of drinking water guidelines in public areas: a local government action guide](#) (2016)
- [Encouraging healthy food and drink choices: an overview for local governments](#) (2016)
- [Reformulation readiness: a best practice guide to salt reduction](#) (2019)
- [A Healthier Start for Victorians: a consensus statement on obesity prevention](#) (2020)

## Research reports

- [Negative growth: the future of obesity in Australia](#) (2014)
- [Promoting equity in healthy eating](#) (2015)
- [Too little and too much: exploring the paradox of food insecurity and obesity in disadvantaged populations](#) (2016)
- [Obesity and healthy eating in Australia](#) (2016)
- [Australian food supply scenarios: implications for policy and practice](#) (2017)
- [Encouraging water consumption in licensed premises](#) (2017)
- [Under the radar: harmful industries' digital marketing to Australian children](#) (2020)
- [Dark marketing tactics of harmful industries exposed by young citizen scientists](#) (2021)
- [Supporting evidence-informed policy work on added sugar](#) (2021)

## CASE STUDY

### Victoria's Citizens' Jury on Obesity

In 2015 we convened Australia's largest citizens' jury, [Victoria's Citizens' Jury on Obesity](#) with the support of [newDemocracy Foundation](#). Our aim was to meaningfully engage communities and establish community consensus for government, industry and community action on obesity.

The Citizens' Jury on Obesity brought together over 100 everyday Victorians to deliberate and then offer a range of suggestions in response to the question: 'We have an obesity problem. How can we make it easier to eat better?'

The juror's suggestions were the basis for 20 'asks' to promote healthier eating and tackle rising rates of obesity, which were submitted to a steering committee of government leaders and health and industry experts. These 'asks' included a government-mandated health star labelling program, a ban on junk food and beverage marketing to children under 16 years, a 20% tax on sugar-sweetened drinks, and fast-food exclusion zones around schools, sporting clubs, youth and community centres.

In 2016 the Citizens' Jury was recognised with an [award from IAP2](#) – the International Association for Public Participation, a leading international organisation advancing the practice of public participation.





## ENCOURAGE REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular physical activity has major benefits for health and wellbeing. It reduces people's risk of conditions like heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer. It also helps reduce social isolation, strengthens social connection and improves mental wellbeing.

As the way that Victorians are being active changes, our focus on encouraging physical activity through participation in sport has broadened to include social and recreational activities that are fun and flexible, such as walking, active travel, social sports and play. A priority for VicHealth has been engaging people who are less active and who experience the greatest barriers to participation, with a focus on women and girls and young people.



### A decade in review

Throughout the Action Agenda we worked with local governments, schools, community organisations and all levels of sport to promote physical activity so that more Victorians can be active, no matter where they're from or how much cash they've got in their bank account.

We funded research that revealed Victorians' changing needs for, and expectations of, physical activity and identified that social and recreational activities are increasing while participation in traditional club-based sport is decreasing. We know that people want to take part in social and unstructured sport and physical activity that is flexible and fun and fits into their busy lives. This is particularly true for people who are less physically active.

Our landmark campaign, [This Girl Can – Victoria](#), was launched to celebrate real women giving it a go and getting active, and to influence policies and the places where women go to exercise so they feel welcome, included and supported.

Our approach targeted the key life stages where physical activity typically drops off. We worked with partners to deliver world-class interventions and build sector capacity to encourage physical activity in key health promotion settings (for example, sport, education, workplaces, digital and online), including an urban design project – a first for Australia in terms of embedding health promotion planning and solutions from conception to construction.

Our grants program and approach evolved to continue to deliver outcomes in a changing landscape.

## Our highlights and impact

In the past decade, we:

- launched [This Girl Can – Victoria](#), which over 4 years has inspired more than 1 million Victorian women to get active and stay active
- encouraged an average of over 100,000 Victorian primary school kids each year to [walk to school \(or ride/scoot/skate\)](#), by working with councils and schools
- invested in a range of sport and physical activity initiatives
- supported sporting organisations across Victoria to [do sport differently](#) and encourage Victorians who are less active to be more active through more social and flexible versions of sport, including in [rural and regional areas](#), and to [develop sustainable policies](#)
- supported the Victorian Government's [Change Our Game](#) initiative
- tested the design and development of modified [social sport programs](#) to inspire women and girls to be more active through sport, work towards better gender equality and take on greater leadership roles in sport
- piloted interventions to [reduce prolonged sitting in the workplace](#)
- encouraged innovation in the sporting sector via the [Innovation Challenge: Physical Activity](#) and built capacity to be innovative via our incubator program [Sport Jam](#)
- developed a [free app](#) to help people join a range of nearby sports and physical activities
- extended the body of knowledge on barriers to active travel and how to positively influence individuals' behaviour, and tested programs to get women walking more by funding the [Change to Walking](#) program and [Let's Walk](#) programs conducted by Victoria Walks
- generated evidence and built knowledge around physical activity, including [parental fear](#) in shaping children's independence and physical activity, the barriers and motivators of physical activity at various [life stages](#), and [healthy urban design](#)
- supported [Victoria Walks](#) to encourage more Victorians to walk for recreation and transport
- funded local Victorian organisations to support more Victorians to [get active](#) following the challenging and ongoing impacts of the pandemic
- invested in initiatives to increase female participation and representation in sport – both on and off the field – including [Advancing gender equality in sport for women and girls: female participation in sport](#) and [Active Women and Girls Program](#)
- launched a major new initiative [Future Healthy](#), including [JumpStart!](#), to deliver place-based and youth-led programs across Victoria that support young people to get active.





## VicHealth strategies

- [Physical activity strategy 2018-2023](#)
- [Physical activity strategy 2019-2023](#)

## Resources

- [Active for Life: challenging the status quo to get our children moving more and living active, healthy lives](#) (2014)
- [This Girl Can: helping women and girls get active guide](#) (2017)
- [Doing sport differently: a guide for sports clubs](#) (2019)
- [Doing sport differently: designing and delivering sport to engage people who are less active](#) (2019)
- [Tips for clubs and community programs seeking to increase migrant and refugee community participation in sport](#) (2020)
- [Framing walking and bike riding: message guide](#) (2021)

## Research reports

- [Beyond the bubble wrap: understanding parents' fears in allowing their children to play and travel independently](#) (2014)
- [Promoting equity in physical activity](#) (2015)
- [Planning and designing healthy new communities: Selandra Rise](#) (2016)
- [Victorians' physical activity across life stages: insights to engage Victorians in physical activity at different life stages](#) (2017)
- [Females and physical activity](#) (2019)
- [Count Me In](#) (2020)
- [Sport participation in Victoria 2015-2020 and the impact of COVID-19 on participation: research summary](#) (2022)

## CASE STUDY

### Walk to School

VicHealth's [Walk to School campaign](#) started out as an annual activity that schools could get their students involved in each year. You could even win prizes (like meeting an AFL hero). All you had to do was walk (or ride/scoot/skate) to school throughout the month of October.

The annual campaign worked with councils and schools to encourage an average of over 100,000 Victorian primary school kids each year to walk to school. 2019 had the [biggest turnout in the history of the campaign](#) – approximately 1 in 3 Victorian primary school kids from all over the state.

After 14 fun-filled years of the annual Walk to School campaign, coronavirus hit. So Walk to School adapted. Now schools can get involved at any time of the year through the [VicHealth Local Government Partnership](#).







## PREVENT TOBACCO USE

World-leading innovation – led by VicHealth in partnership with **Quit Victoria**, the Department of Health and others – has halved the rate of Victorians who smoke regularly to an all-time low.

VicHealth is a major partner of Quit Victoria and through this investment and long-standing partnership we have continued to deliver significant improvements in the prevention of tobacco-related harms. The prevalence of smoking in Victoria has steadily declined since VicHealth was established in 1987 and is now sitting at under 11%.

### A decade in review

Victoria has been a leader in tobacco control for many years and much of this achievement has been born out of the longstanding partnership between VicHealth and the Victorian Government to support the activities of the **Quit** program (led by **Cancer Council Victoria**) in tobacco control.

Despite reductions in tobacco smoking over the past few decades, tobacco remains one of the leading preventable causes of disease and premature death for Victorians. The tobacco industry is continually evolving its products to make them more appealing, and in some instances more affordable, thereby threatening to stall the progress made over the past 30 years.

VicHealth continued its longstanding investment in Quit Victoria throughout the Action Agenda, providing funding to reduce the uptake of smoking among Victorians, increase successful quit attempts among people who smoke and reduce exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke.

A key focus of our investment with Quit Victoria is to increase the reach and impact of smoking cessation with high smoking rate populations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Reducing the disparity in smoking rates and disease is a priority for VicHealth.



VicHealth’s investment supports Quit’s work in:

- public advocacy, community engagement, communications and public education
- policy and advocacy
- technology and service innovation
- data collection and analysis.


The most recent data (2018) shows that 10.7% of Victorian adults regularly smoke, down from 13.5% in 2015.

In the past 18 months, VicHealth’s work in this space has pivoted to include the urgent and emerging threat of e-cigarette usage, which has been increasing significantly, particularly among young people. VicHealth has been a leading advocate in policy change and regulation and has also expanded its work with Quit to include campaigns and research in this area.

## Our highlights and impact

In the past decade, we supported [Quit Victoria](#) to deliver whole-of-population programs and campaigns to reduce smoking, with a focus on:

- public education campaigns using mass and digital media and other communication tools including Quit's first digital-led campaign [Breaking Habits](#), the [You Quit, You Win](#) television campaign, and campaigns [Sticky Blood](#) and [The Con That Kills](#)
- providing accessible cessation support delivered by the Quitline and online, including the integration of AI technology that makes calls to Quitline users as a way of providing ongoing contact and encouragement to support people to quit smoking
- tobacco control policy and regulatory change, including input into the development and delivery of the [National Tobacco Strategy](#), and calling for strengthened regulations to reduce the supply, availability and accessibility of tobacco products, and urgent action to address the e-cigarette epidemic
- documenting community attitudes and support for tobacco-control measures, such as [parental support for smoke-free dining](#), and reshaping social norms about the tobacco industry and tobacco use
- partnering with the [Royal Australian College of General Practitioners](#) to support health professionals to provide effective, evidence-based cessation support to people who smoke
- promoting cessation and testing new tobacco-control approaches in health, community and social settings, such as [mental health services](#)
- building the evidence base for [tobacco-related health inequities](#) and how to [address the social determinants of inequities in tobacco use](#)
- funding innovative research with a focus on priority evidence gaps, such as smoking cessation support for communities with high and persistent smoking rates, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people experiencing homelessness and those in prison
- bringing the sector together through local, national and international forums to share knowledge and strengthen collective action towards a tobacco-free society
- working closely with government and other stakeholders to support people to quit, reduce the appeal of tobacco products, and discourage uptake of tobacco use, particularly among young people
- supporting and showcasing voluntary tobacco control initiatives, including the [Victorian Universities Tobacco-Free Initiative](#), which in 2014 marked the first time an entire state's university institutions have come together to voluntarily ban smoking, and the global [Tobacco-Free Portfolios](#) initiative to support leading financial institutions to implement tobacco-free finance policies spanning lending, investment and insurance
- incorporating the learnings of the longstanding partnership with Quit Victoria into our new Harmful Industries program, a research-policy program that is building the capacity of the health promotion sector to understand and counter harmful industry activity and drive reform on digital marketing of harmful products to children, with a particular emphasis on marginalised populations.



# The con that kills

## VicHealth strategies

- [VicHealth tobacco strategy 2019-2023](#)

## Resources

Quit published numerous [resources](#) for the health promotion sector, featuring information and statistics on smoking, guidance on developing community-level initiatives, vaping resources and settings-based resources. This included an evidence-informed [Health promotion framework for action](#) to guide planning, implementation and evaluation of community-level initiatives aimed at reducing tobacco-related harm.

## Research reports

Quit produces leading tobacco control research and evaluation, which can be accessed [here](#).

## CASE STUDY

### Smoke-free legislation changes in Victoria 2013-present

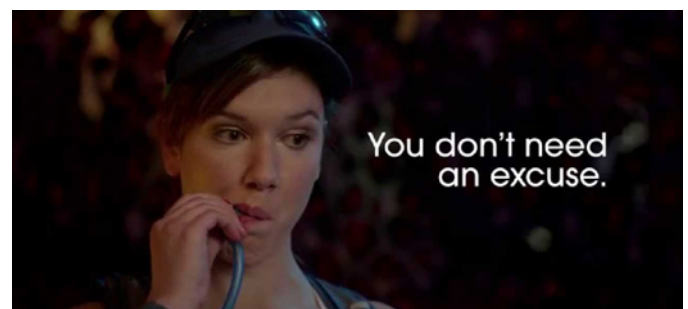
- Outdoor public playgrounds (2014)
- Public swimming pools, sea baths, skate parks and children's sporting events (2014)
- All areas of railway stations and raised platform tram stops (2014)
- Childcare centres, kindergartens (or preschools) and primary and secondary schools (2015)
- Within 4 metres of an entrance to children's indoor play centres, public hospitals and registered community health centres, and certain Victorian Government buildings (2015)
- State prisons (2015)
- Outdoor dining areas (2017)



## PREVENT HARM FROM ALCOHOL

When people drink in risky ways, it can lead to negative health impacts as well as harmful side effects, such as injuries, social problems and poor mental health. This can cause problems for both the person drinking and the people around them.

Our world-first Alcohol cultures framework helped to shift the focus of public health action from the behaviour of individuals to the shared drinking norms, practices and expectations of groups and 'social worlds'. Over time, VicHealth have zoomed out further – we now embrace a broader focus on harmful industries and the commercial determinants of health and wellbeing.



### A decade in review

Since 2013, we have worked with our partners in state and local government, universities, and community and sporting groups to highlight the harms of alcohol, the benefits of drinking less and the evidence for why and how to do so.

Our work, and in particular our world-first [Alcohol cultures framework](#), has been instrumental in shifting the focus of public health action from the behaviour of individuals to the shared drinking norms, practices and expectations of groups.

Building on this innovative work, we've undertaken research and tested and trialled programs to change risky drinking cultures and enable environments to support low-risk drinking.

We are committed to reducing alcohol-related health inequity. Our work to reduce harm from alcohol products has taken account of how social position can affect alcohol-related harm, and has focused on reducing harm from alcohol products across groups who drink at high-risk levels, focusing on disadvantaged populations.

We continue to advocate for evidence-based alcohol harm prevention policies, and to seek ways to increase public support for the regulation of alcohol marketing and sales. More recently, our alcohol harm prevention work has sat within a broader program of work focused on harmful industries, defined as industries that produce, sell and promote products that are harmful to health and wellbeing, such as alcohol, unhealthy food and gambling.



## Our highlights and impact

In the past decade, we:

- developed a world-first [Alcohol cultures framework](#) to guide public health action on risky drinking cultures
- invested in [Alcohol Culture Change projects](#) to trial targeted and tailored efforts that reach those most in need, where risky drinking and risk of alcohol-related harm is greatest, and to change cultures of risky drinking, including [men's risky drinking](#)



- delivered and [evaluated](#) statewide social marketing campaigns including [Name That Point](#) and [No Excuse Needed](#) to challenge social norms around younger people's drinking, including the pressure some young people feel to drink
- delivered a statewide competition created by young Victorians (18 to 29 years), the [Top Spin](#) initiative, asking young people to expose the tactics used by the alcohol industry to influence them to drink

- assisted local councils in municipal health planning and liquor licensing matters, and strengthened the capacity of local councils to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm and to create safer and healthier communities in their municipalities, including the provision of evidence-based [guides](#) and [modules](#)
- supported partners to deliver programs to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm, including [Good Sports](#) and [Hello Sunday Morning](#)
- worked with [Common Cause Australia](#) to support health promotion practitioners' alcohol communication and messaging
- conducted research to monitor the burden of alcohol and related attitudes, behaviours and cultures and the role of the alcohol industry, including an [Australian-first population-wide survey to measure Victoria's alcohol culture](#) and research into the [changing face of retail, food and beverage sectors](#)
- supported the [National alcohol strategy 2019-2028](#), Australia's national framework to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harms among individuals, families and communities
- advocated for evidence-informed policy and legislation that will strengthen controls on access, availability and marketing, and pricing and taxation reforms to reduce risky alcohol consumption, including [pregnancy warning labels on alcohol products](#), which will help protect generations of children from the lifelong impact of alcohol harm
- provided legal policy capacity to the alcohol-prevention sector.



## VicHealth strategies

- [VicHealth Alcohol Strategy 2019–2023](#)

## Resources

- [Young adults and alcohol: developing local government policy responses in inner- and outer-urban settings](#) (2014)
- [Alcohol cultures framework](#) (revised 2019)
- [Alcohol cultures guide: taking action on risky drinking cultures – To support use of the VicHealth Alcohol cultures framework](#) (2020)
- [The art of community alcohol management: what local government can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm](#) (2020)

## Research reports

- [The social harms associated with the sale and supply of packaged liquor in Victoria](#) (2013)
- [Drinking-related lifestyles: exploring the role of alcohol in Victorians' lives](#) (2013)
- [A snapshot of Victoria's alcohol culture](#) (2014)
- [Alcohol's burden of disease in Australia](#) (2014)
- [Inequities in alcohol-related chronic disease in Victoria](#) (2014)
- [Attitudes of Australian cider drinkers](#) (2014)
- [Alcohol and junk food advertising and promotion through sport](#) (2014)
- [Reducing alcohol-related health inequities](#) (2015)
- [Australians' attitudes towards their health, alcohol consumption and taking a break from alcohol](#) (2015)
- [Alcohol mixed with energy drinks: exploring patterns of consumption and associated harms](#) (2016)
- [Exploring the drinking cultures of middle aged and older Victorians](#) (2017)
- [Encouraging water consumption in licensed premises](#) (2017)
- [Exploring men's risky drinking cultures](#) (2019)
- [On-demand alcohol delivery services and risky drinking](#) (2020)
- [Under the radar: harmful industries' digital marketing to Australian children](#) (2020)
- [Dark marketing tactics of harmful industries exposed by young citizen scientists](#) (2021)

## CASE STUDY

### Alcohol cultures framework

Our world-first [Alcohol cultures framework](#) guides public health action on risky drinking cultures, shifting the focus from individual behaviour to the way a group of people drink and their shared drinking norms, practices and expectations. We know that the shared practices of social groups, rather than individuals, have greater scope to bring about cultural change.

The framework defines alcohol culture, and outlines the critical questions to ask to understand the alcohol culture within a risky drinking social group and the critical components of a culture change project. It is a practical and evidence-based planning tool for practitioners to use to reduce harm from alcohol-related products.





## IMPROVE MENTAL WELLBEING

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

We strive to establish the foundations for good health early on, so that every young person is able to reach their full potential for mental and physical health and wellbeing. We listen deeply and centre the lived experience of young people to ensure they are at the heart of co-designing solutions that will build a strong, healthy and resilient Victoria today and into the future.



### A decade in review

VicHealth has a long and proud history of working to promote the mental health and wellbeing of Victorians. Since our first mental health promotion plan in 1999, we have prioritised action on the key factors affecting mental health – violence against women, race-based discrimination, barriers to education and employment, and social isolation.

Over the last decade, we prioritised working with partners to build knowledge and evidence to inform a new way of working, with a focus on resilience, social connection, young people and gender equality. Our work has drawn on the ecological model of resilience assets and built our understanding of a diverse range of factors that strengthen and nurture resilience at the individual, family/friends and community/organisations levels.

We worked with partners to deliver world-class interventions and build sector capacity to deliver change in key settings and environments for health promotion action (for example, sport, education, workplaces, digital and online), including a world-first, site-based saturation approach to primary prevention. Our work targeted different stages of the life course, with a focus on key life stage transitions (for example, the move from education to employment).

Our groundbreaking work on preventing violence against women was embedded in the sector and our work over the previous decade has advanced gender equality knowledge and practice.

## Our highlights and impact

In the past decade, we:

- established an evidence base on the nature of resilience and what works for young people and their communities
- led research to assess levels of resilience and wellbeing among Victorians aged 12 to 25
- identified the megatrends likely to affect young people's mental wellbeing over the next 20 years, in partnership with the CSIRO
- tested programs to strengthen resilience and social connection, in partnership with local councils and workplaces
- hosted forums and brought the sector together through local, national and international forums to share knowledge and strengthen collective action towards a tobacco-free society
- collaborated with workplace mental wellbeing leading organisations to help workplaces create positive and supportive cultures and environments
- worked collaboratively to support the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System
- supported state and national action to scale up the prevention of violence against women
- embedded our work on the prevention of violence against women and gender equality through partnerships with other organisations, including the national community attitudes surveys with ANROWS (Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety), development of the first national prevention framework with Our Watch and ANROWS, and working with the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector
- trialled and embedded effective approaches to promote the mental wellbeing of young people in Victoria
- generated new knowledge about the prevalence and nature of loneliness among young Victorians to empower local government and community organisations to foster positive social connections among young people
- explored the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on young people and launched a major new initiative – Future Healthy, including The Big Connect and JumpStart! – to support young people to reconnect socially and safely following the challenging and ongoing impacts of the pandemic
- led a new program of work to integrate wellbeing into the business of government.



## VicHealth strategies

- [VicHealth mental wellbeing strategy 2015-19](#)
- [Mental wellbeing strategy 2019-2023](#)

## Resources

- [Integrating wellbeing into the business of government: the feasibility of innovative legal and policy measures to achieve sustainable development in Australia \(2021\)](#)

## Research reports

- [Bright Futures: megatrends impacting the mental wellbeing of young Victorians over the coming 20 years \(2015\)](#)
- [Young Victorian's resilience and mental wellbeing survey \(2015\)](#)
- [Current theories relating to resilience and young people: a literature review \(2015\)](#)
- [Epidemiological evidence relating to resilience and young people: a literature review \(2015\)](#)
- [Evidence review: addressing the social determinants of inequities in mental wellbeing of children and adolescents \(2015\)](#)
- [Interventions to build resilience among young people: a literature review \(2015\)](#)
- [National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey \(2013; 2017\) including Young Australians' attitudes to violence against women \(2013\)](#)
- [A high price to pay: the economic case for preventing violence against women \(2015\)](#)
- [Violence against women in Australia: an overview of research and approaches to primary prevention \(2017\)](#)
- [Young people, transition into work and mental wellbeing \(2019\)](#)
- [The Young Australian Loneliness Survey: understanding loneliness in adolescence and young adulthood \(2019\).](#)

## CASE STUDY

### Bright Futures

In 2015 we identified the megatrends likely to affect young people's mental wellbeing over the next 20 years, in partnership with the CSIRO.

The report combined stakeholder and expert consultation, horizon scanning and trends analysis to identify 5 megatrends related to youth mental health and wellbeing. It identified emerging health challenges and raised questions about how Victoria can educate and prepare young people to be resilient and adaptable in a world characterised by decreasing job security, the fluidity of globalisation and technology, increasingly diverse societies and overexposure to the internet.

We used the findings from this strategic foresight report to innovate, invest and find solutions that will support young people in Victoria to get 'future healthy'.

The 5 identified megatrends impacting the mental wellbeing of young Victorians over the coming 20 years are:



**The rising bar:** a rise in skill and education levels in emerging economies and increased automation leading to a more competitive global job market.



**Global reach:** globalisation and digital technology are creating a breakdown of traditional barriers, changing the way workplaces, organisations, societies, governance structures and individuals operate.



**Life's richer tapestry:** a more diverse culture, society and consumer market where identification of the mainstream is increasingly difficult.



**Overexposure online:** increasing exposure to wide-ranging online content, privacy breaches and virtual relationships.



**Out of the shadows:** improved understanding of mental health and wellbeing coupled with a change in service delivery models.

[Bright Futures: megatrends impacting the mental wellbeing of young Victorians over the coming 20 years](#)

# Cross-imperative themes

## GENDER

VicHealth has a deep and longstanding commitment to gender equality and preventing violence against women and minority groups in our community.

VicHealth's work to improve gender equality contributes to improved health and wellbeing for Victorian women and girls, resulting in health, social and economic benefits for the Victorian community as a whole.

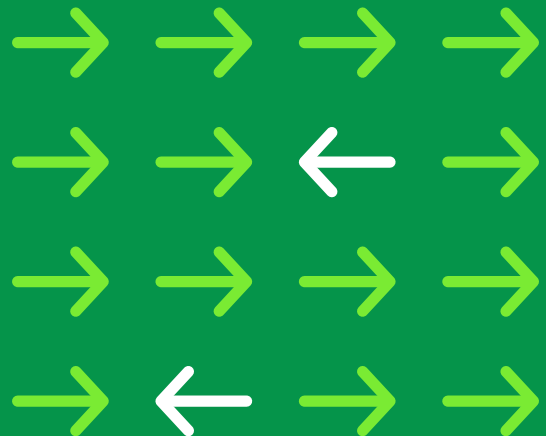
### A decade in review

For close to 2 decades, we have delivered initiatives to support the more equal treatment and valuing of women and girls in sport, workplaces, education and other spheres of public and private life. In recent years we have also supported new work that seeks to challenge outdated masculine stereotypes.

VicHealth's focus on improving gender equality has spanned all 5 of the Action Agenda's strategic imperatives over the past decade. We created a large body of work to promote women's and girls' participation in sports and physical activity, alongside work in other settings including education, workplace and place-based approaches in the community. We trialled behavioural insights approaches to gender equality and developed resources to strengthen the capacity of the sector to improve the health and wellbeing of all Victorian women and girls.

### (En)countering resistance

Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives



[vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://vichealth.vic.gov.au)



Our seminal work on preventing violence against women was embedded in the sector, and we contributed to government action to promote gender equality, focusing on the systemic reforms outlined in [Safe and Strong: A Victorian gender equality strategy](#), Victoria's first gender equality strategy, and [Free from violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women](#).

Our pioneering work has generated new knowledge and approaches to advance gender equality knowledge and practice.



## Our highlights and impact

In the past decade, we:

- launched This Girl Can – Victoria, a campaign designed to encourage, motivate and inspire women to become more active while challenging traditional stereotypes
- delivered the world-first Generating Equality and Respect Program in Melbourne's south-east to prevent violence against women
- invested in initiatives to increase female participation and representation in sport – both on and off the field – including Advancing gender equality in sport for women and girls: female participation in sport and Active Women and Girls Program
- designed 10 behavioural trials addressing underlying drivers of gender equality, including the Gendered Language in Job Advertisements trial that was included in the Victorian Government's Recruit Smarter pilot
- generated knowledge and resources to support bystander action, including testing interventions to identify best practice and working with partners to develop tools and strategies to help bystanders who witness sexism or sexual harassment take effective action
- brought the sector and industry together through events and deliberative forums to share evidence, showcase best practice and collect insights to inform our work
- worked with Common Cause Australia to undertake research and develop values-based message guides to support communication on the topics of gender equality and masculinity
- created opportunities for Victorian organisations to access our Leading Thinkers initiative, which had a focus on behavioural insights and gender equality
- supported new work to engage young men and boys in gender equality and to challenge outdated masculine stereotypes through the development of a public health framework and messaging, and working with partners to test interventions and build capacity
- led research and developed guidance on gender equality for the health promotion sector, including resistance and backlash and the role of the arts and creative industries.



## VicHealth strategies

- [Gender equality, health and wellbeing strategy 2017-19](#)

## Resources

- [\(En\)countering resistance strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives](#) (2018)
- [Take Action: empowering bystanders to act on sexist and sexually harassing behaviours](#) (2019)
- [Guide to implementing a university-wide bystander email campaign](#) (2019) and [Empowering bystanders to act on sexist and sexually harassing behaviours while working remotely: guide to implementing a social norms email campaign encouraging bystander action](#) (2021)
- [Bystander behavioural survey tool for universities](#) (2019) and [Understanding experiences of sexism and sexual harassment while remote working: behavioural survey tool](#) (2021)
- [Masculinities and health: a framework for challenging masculine gender stereotypes in health promotion](#) (2020)
- [Framing masculinities: message guide](#) (2020)
- [Framing gender equality: message guide](#) (2021)

## Research reports

- [Resistance and backlash to gender equality](#) (2018)
- [Take action: empowering bystanders to act on sexist and sexually harassing behaviours in universities – Summary Report from the bystander trials](#) (2019)
- [Masculinities and health scoping review](#) (2020).

## CASE STUDY

### This Girl Can

In 2016, VicHealth's research revealed the hidden impact of the fear of judgement on women's physical activity across life stages. A fear so powerful that for 41% of women in Victoria, the embarrassment was so bad it stopped them from getting active altogether.

VicHealth licensed Sport England's highly successful This Girl Can campaign and adapted it to a local Victorian context, going live in 2018.

Informed by world-leading research, This Girl Can – Victoria is more than a physical activity campaign. It's about empowering women to get active by focusing on how the movement feels instead of worrying about being judged. It also supports gender equality by challenging traditional gender roles and by celebrating women in this space.

The long-term, holistic social marketing campaign has included an above-the-line media spend, elite sporting partners, media and social media activity, local council marketing, free events and was later integrated into the Victorian Local Government Partnership.

From 2018-2021:

- Over 1 million women across Victoria were inspired to get active and stay active as a result of the This Girl Can – Victoria
- 1 in 6 Victorian women aged 18 to 65 got active after seeing the This Girl Can – Victoria campaign.
- 8 in 10 of the women who got active after seeing the campaign were still keeping active 4 months later.

After 5 years of campaign activity, research is indicating that a fear of judgement is no longer the most challenging barrier women are facing when getting active.

Further research in 2024 will examine the longitudinal effects of This Girl Can – Victoria.

## YOUTH

We have a vision for a Victoria where no young person is denied a future that is healthy. We see a future with vibrant communities, where young people are connected, active, enjoy wholesome food and feel great. A future inspired by, shaped by and shared by the people of Victoria.

Young people have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic through joblessness, disrupted education, reduced social connectedness and increased anxiety about their futures – and these disruptions have occurred at a critical life stage for young people, when they are already coping with major transitions and the establishment of lifelong health attitudes and behaviours.

Young people's health is the foundation for lifelong health – supporting young people's health and wellbeing now sets them up for a healthy future



### A decade in review

VicHealth's focus on creating a healthier future for Victoria's young people has spanned all 5 of the Action Agenda's strategic imperatives over the past decade. A large body of work to promote young people's resilience, social connection and mental wellbeing was created, with a focus on key life stage transitions for young people, such as the move from education to employment.

We defined best practice for meaningfully engaging young people to co-design solutions, and are proudly modelling this approach across the organisation and developing resources to empower our partners to centre the lived experiences and amplify the voices of young people in their work.

In recent years we have invested more heavily in programs for young people who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic to support them to reconnect socially. By working with young people to build back better and fairer, we know this is where we can have the greatest impact.

## Our highlights and impact

In the past decade, we:

- [amplified young people's voices](#) and centred their lived experience across our work
- identified and implemented best practice approaches to youth engagement and [co-design](#) that enable young people to have a meaningful role in decision-making, development and implementation of health promotion initiatives
- in partnership with young people, developed a [co-design toolkit](#) to guide the design of VicHealth's youth-focused initiatives and disseminated the toolkit to our partners to help build their capacity in working meaningfully with young people
- engaged in conversations with young Victorians about how they could be supported as they [transition from education to employment](#)
- used online platforms to directly engage with young people
- developed a [framework](#) to support the effective design and implementation of youth engagement activities
- explored the [impact of the coronavirus pandemic on young people](#) and launched a major new initiative – [Future Healthy](#), including [The Big Connect](#) and [JumpStart!](#) – to support young people to build back better: to reconnect socially and safely, get active, and access and enjoy good food.

## VicHealth strategies

- [Young people, health and wellbeing strategy 2017–19](#)

## Resources

- [How to co-design with young people](#)
- [Youth communication and engagement playbook](#) (2021)
- [Youth engagement evaluation framework](#) (2022)

## Research reports

- [Promoting equity in child and adolescent mental wellbeing](#) (2015)
- [Promoting equity in early childhood development for health equity through the life course](#) (2015)
- [Young people coping with coronavirus: interim report](#) (2020)

## CASE STUDY

### The Big Connect

VicHealth invested \$5m in 27 Big Connect programs to create 100,000+ new social connection opportunities for Victoria's young people.

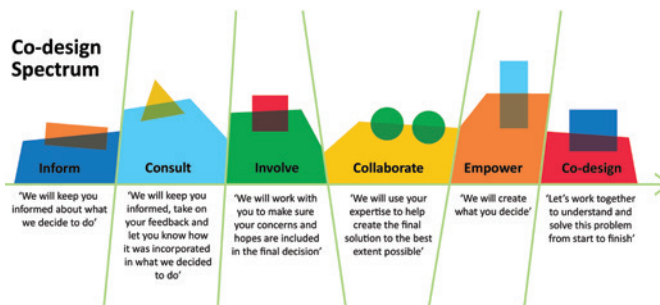
The Big Connect is an integrated health promotion package, including funded partnerships, sector capability building, educational support for families and a public-facing health promotion campaign.

We're working with a range of organisations to deliver place-based and youth-led programs across Victoria's sports, active recreation, arts, cultural, youth, health promotion and community food sectors.

# COMMUNITY

Where we live and how we connect with others influences our health and wellbeing, both positively and negatively. The communities that we are a part of form the backdrop to our individual lived experience of health, wellbeing and illness.

We work with communities to set priorities, make decisions and create solutions. Victorian communities, whether defined by geography or social identity, are central to our work – they are our partners, the places where we live, the people we relate to and connect with, and ultimately, the people that we serve.



Taken from the International Association of Public Participation IAP2 spectrum. The inclusion of co-design takes participation to the next level of self-determination.



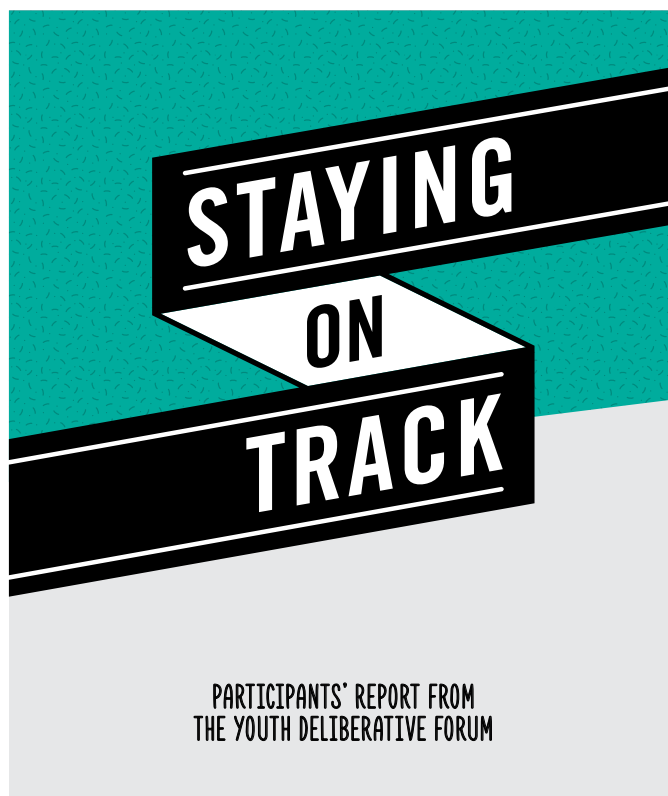
## A decade in review

Working with Victorian communities is central to VicHealth's way of working.

We recognise that community can be defined in different ways, including places, spaces and neighbourhoods, and also by social groups with a shared identity, interest or lived experience.

Over the past decade we've worked with communities across Victoria to:

- strengthen community action for social and environmental change
- change community awareness, attitudes and behaviour
- create environments that support health where people live, work and play
- work together on community-generated solutions.





## Our highlights and impact

In the past decade, we:

- centred the lived experience of community members and supported our partners to engage in meaningful co-design
- gave a voice to Victorians using innovative strategies such as deliberative forums, and engaging young people and parents as community champions
- continued to lead and mobilise community action in collaboration with our government and non-government partners, to help citizens advocate for environments that support their health and wellbeing and enable Victorians to exercise greater control over their community's health
- built community capacity via training, workshops and communities of practice
- supported partnership work across multiple sectors and supported organisations to maximise the effectiveness of partnerships using the Partnerships Analysis Tool
- delivered interventions and used social marketing to change community awareness, attitudes and, ultimately, behaviour
- funded community organisations to build vibrant communities, including by transforming a public space or place and through food, art and play
- strengthened existing relationships and developed new connections with communities, including community leaders and members
- integrated regional and community visits across the state into our everyday business to give us deeper insights into the opportunities and challenges that each community is experiencing and to help us better support the communities and partners that we serve
- undertook research and listened deeply to our community to ensure our programs are informed by and shaped by the insights, lived experience and stories of Victorians
- transformed our workforce to ensure it reflects the diversity of the Victorian community.

## Resources

- Partnerships Analysis Tool (updated 2016)
- How to co-design with young Victorians

## Research reports

- Future Healthy community listening report



# HEALTH EQUITY

We promote fairness and opportunity for better health for all Victorians by making health equity an aim of all our work. We use a combination of strategies including universal, targeted, life course, settings and systems approaches to work towards the highest level of health for everyone.

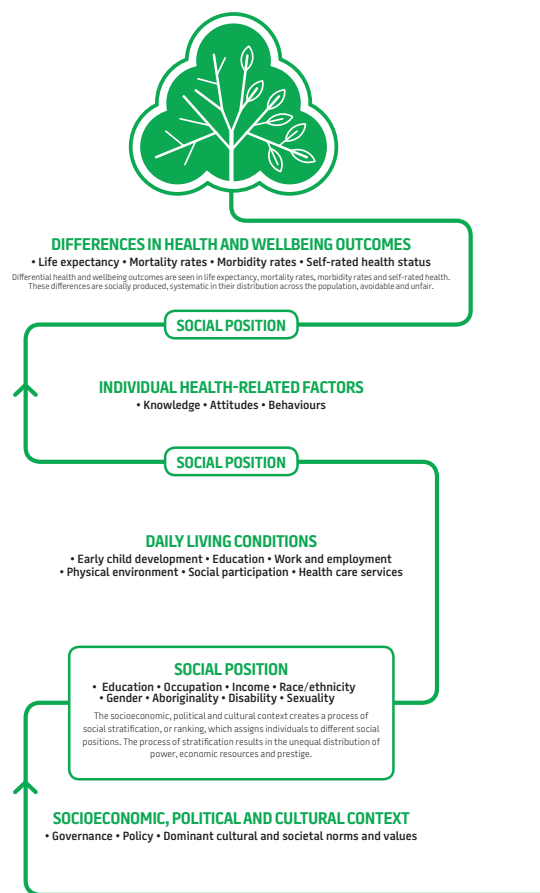
VicHealth’s world-leading Fair Foundations framework has revolutionised health equity work in Australia and internationally. The framework equipped the sector with a robust planning tool to guide health promotion policy and practice – now, for many, health equity is no longer simply a value or abstract aspiration, but a tangible outcome that is being actively pursued using evidence-based strategies.

## A decade in review

VicHealth has remained firmly committed to health equity and ensuring that everyone has a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential. We know that some people face greater barriers than others to enjoying a healthy life – we want to level the playing field and achieve the highest level of health for everyone.

Over the past decade we have worked closely with communities to address need and reduce the avoidable and unfair differences in health outcomes through research, programs and partnerships. We have also embedded health equity throughout our own work – from operations through to governance.

A significant milestone was the release of VicHealth’s health equity framework, Fair Foundations. The framework is a planning tool for health promotion policy and practice based on a conceptual framework developed by the



**Fair Foundations: the VicHealth framework for health equity**  
The social determinants of health inequities: The layers of influence and entry points for action

World Health Organization Commission on the Social Determinants of Health. It recognises the underlying factors that support or hinder good health, and identifies key drivers of health inequity that must be addressed so that all Victorians can experience good health and wellbeing. The framework suggests entry points for action, for the development of policies and programs that promote health equity and can be used for any public health issue.

We remained focused on reducing health inequities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians.

## Our highlights and impact

In the past decade, we:

- developed [Fair Foundations: the VicHealth framework for health equity](#), a planning tool for health promotion policy and practice that guides action on the social determinants of health inequity
- funded research to better understand health inequities in Victoria and how to address them, including [evidence reviews](#) about what can be done to reduce inequities in relation to mental wellbeing, alcohol consumption and harm, tobacco smoking, physical activity and healthy eating, as well as in different settings, in early childhood, and through social innovation
- funded programs to target different population groups experiencing health inequity, including physical activity and arts programs that support social connection, enhance mental health and wellbeing, and increase skills and confidence to improve employment prospects
- continued to focus on reducing health inequities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians, with sport as a critical setting, including continued support of Surfing Victoria's [Indigenous Surfing Program](#), one of the longest running Indigenous engagement programs in the country
- worked with Victorian communities to explore ways to improve health equity, including [Elevate](#)
- worked with a range of partners in and beyond the health promotion sector to influence the determinants of health inequity
- played a leading role in the response to the [Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry](#), supporting action by local people and service providers to tackle the social determinants of health in one of Victoria's most disadvantaged, yet resilient, communities
- put equity at the heart of our work by embedding it within the day-to-day work across our organisation.

## VicHealth strategies

- [VicHealth health equity strategy 2019-2023](#)

## Resources

- [Enabling health: taking action to improve the health of people with a disability \(2014\)](#)
- [Fair Foundations: the VicHealth framework for health equity \(2015\)](#)
- [About Fair Foundations and promoting health equity – A resource to support Fair Foundations: the VicHealth framework for health equity \(2015\)](#)

## Research reports

- [Fair Foundations health equity series: evidence reviews \(2015\)](#):
  - [Promoting equity in child and adolescent mental wellbeing](#)
  - [Promoting equity in physical activity](#)
  - [Reducing tobacco-related health inequities](#)
  - [Reducing alcohol-related health inequities](#)
  - [Promoting equity in healthy eating](#)
  - [Promoting health equity through social innovation](#)
  - [Promoting equity in early childhood development for health equity through the life course](#)
  - [Promoting health equity through addressing social determinants in healthy settings approaches](#)

## RESEARCH

We create and use evidence to identify the issues that need action and to guide policy and practice by VicHealth and our partners.

Research is at the heart of what we do. We build knowledge and evidence to support health and wellbeing, but we don't stop there – we bring research into the real world by applying our findings and sharing evidence widely so that others can also use it to support health and wellbeing right across Victoria.

### A decade in review

Our research investments are critical in boosting knowledge of what drives preventable disease and the interventions needed to make change. The landscape is constantly changing and our research gives us the evidence to respond.

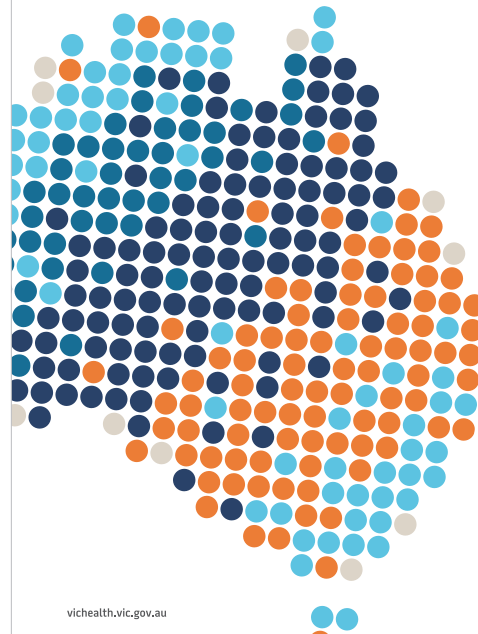
Since 2013, VicHealth has contributed more than \$31m to a wide range of research projects to improve the health of all Victorians. Our research has spanned all 5 of our strategic imperatives.

Over the past decade we've funded research activities through a range of mechanisms including:

- investigator-driven research grant programs, including partnering on [National Health and Medical Research Council \(NHMRC\) partnership grants](#) and [Australian Research Council \(ARC\) Linkage Projects](#), and VicHealth's own [Impact Research Grants](#)
- commissioned research to inform our work, explore emerging research priorities, or to fill an identified evidence gap
- knowledge translation activities, including communicating our research and findings with policy-makers and practitioners to support its dissemination and use
- investment in leading [researchers](#), [centres of excellence](#), [experts and thinkers](#) to help shape a healthier future.

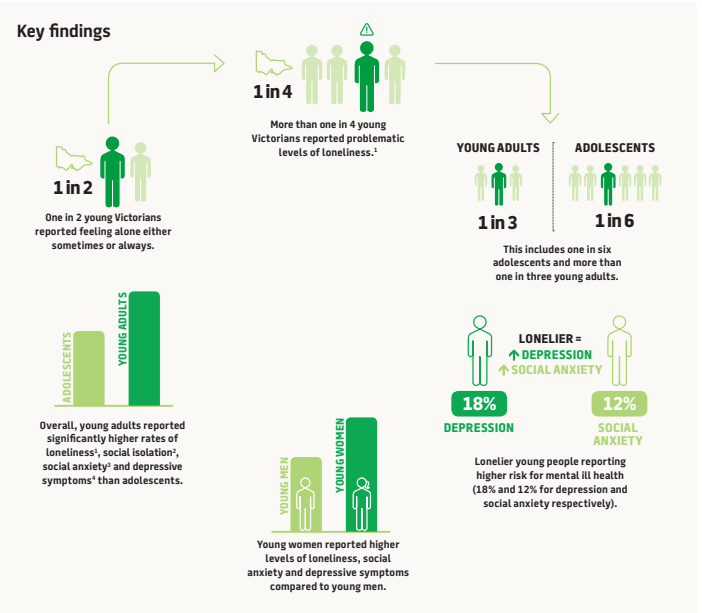
## Australians' attitudes to violence against women

Findings from the 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS)



Central to VicHealth's investment approach to research is:

- a strong focus on outcomes with practical application – we fund research that directly informs changes to policy and practice and ultimately improves the health and wellbeing outcomes of the Victorian community
- a commitment to VicHealth's broader principles of health equity and innovation
- the development of research partnerships that accelerate the translation of research findings into action
- dissemination of research findings to increase the health promotion sector's capacity to deliver successful programs and policies and advance health promotion practice
- investing in talented researchers to ensure leading research into critical public health issues provides decades of return for all Victorians.



## Our highlights and impact

In the past decade, we:

- built a strong evidence base around the key factors affecting health and wellbeing and what works to promote health and wellbeing and prevent chronic disease
- generated high-quality evidence to describe the burden of disease and pioneering research to identify future trends that will impact health and wellbeing
- undertook population health monitoring in a number of areas including community wellbeing, resilience and loneliness to inform public health planning and complement other population health surveys such as the Victorian Government's Victorian Population Health Survey
- uncovered attitudes to help hone and direct our work, including attitudes towards violence against women and gender equality, alcohol and masculinity
- conducted behavioural insights trials to generate new knowledge about what works in supporting people to change their health behaviour
- monitored the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, including how the health and wellbeing of Victorians and participation in sport were affected by the pandemic
- continued to invest in leading researchers, scientists, experts and thinkers to help shape a healthier future through our postdoctoral fellowships
- showcased health promotion research and evidence both in Australia and internationally
- evaluated our investments and activity to build a strong understanding of effective health promotion and prevention approaches.

## VicHealth strategies

- VicHealth's research strategy 2019-2023



## ARTS

Participating in the arts has multiple benefits for health and wellbeing: it reduces social isolation, strengthens community connection and builds self-esteem, as people pursue creative activity alone or in groups.

Through our longstanding commitment to the arts, we have increased participation and diversity in the arts, strengthened sector capacity, and built a strong understanding of how the arts can contribute to health and wellbeing, including the development of new approaches to optimise the role of the arts in addressing complex social issues.



### A decade in review

Over the past decade, VicHealth has supported arts and cultural initiatives that promote mental wellbeing and health equity, encourage physical activity and healthy eating, and prevent harm from alcohol and tobacco. During the 2013-23 Action Agenda and in line with state government directions, we used an expansive definition of 'the arts' that included cultural and creative industries. This included visual and performing arts, culture, screen and digital games, literature and publishing, fashion and design, and encompassing both community-based and commercially-driven activity.

We have led a research agenda to build the evidence for arts-based health promotion, reflecting the need to know what works, how to measure it and the importance of communicating the benefits of arts for health and wellbeing. This has led to a strong understanding of arts for health benefit and its value and outcomes, and the role that arts can play in addressing complex social issues such as social isolation, youth mental wellbeing, gender equality and local identity.

Our efforts helped to create communities and environments that are inspiring, socially connected, and support healthy living and mental wellbeing. Our work aligns with the [National arts and health framework](#) and contributes to the achievement of government priorities through delivery of arts and health programs and initiatives that contribute to key Victorian Government priorities, including health and wellbeing, mental wellbeing, building capacity, Closing the Gap and reducing health inequalities.

Our arts work is underpinned by VicHealth's broader principles of health equity, inclusiveness and innovation in health promotion. We work in partnership with the arts and creative industries, and embed the arts and creative industries across our work.

In recent years and in consultation with peak bodies, the level and flexibility of funding for arts organisations has increased in response to the impact that the coronavirus pandemic has had on the arts, cultural and creative sectors.



## Our highlights and impact

In the past decade, we:

- undertook research, evaluation and documentation of arts and health practices to build the evidence for arts-based health promotion
- stimulated public debate and led policy development for arts-based health promotion
- worked with leaders from the arts and other sectors, including arts and cultural ambassadors, to engage communities in conversations about how the arts can address challenging social issues and improve wellbeing
- established partnerships between premier arts organisations and councils to activate selected spaces in local communities, with some becoming permanent sites for physical activity through the Community Activations Program. This work was complemented by investments in mass community-participation events such as White Night, Fun Run, Big Dance 2018 and The Gallery Workout
- delivered programs in partnership with Creative Victoria and other Victorian Government departments and creative agencies that explored the social impact of the creative industries
- supported local councils to increase social connection and physical activity, build access, diversity and inclusion, and promote gender equality through the arts, and generate new ideas that promote health and wellbeing at the local level
- invested in innovative ideas to get more Victorians physically active and socially connected, including games to help boost young workers' resilience and the use of design innovations
- invested in the development of models and approaches for a more equitable sector where more people can experience more art more often
- increased investment into arts and community programs benefiting First Nations people to expand support for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and to increase access to the creative industries
- created opportunities for young people to build meaningful social connections and improve mental wellbeing through the arts and worked with a range of organisations to deliver place-based and youth-led programs across the state that help us build back from the coronavirus pandemic healthier and fairer.

## VicHealth strategies

- Building health through arts and new media strategy 2013
- VicHealth active arts strategy 2014-2017
- VicHealth arts strategy 2017-2019
- VicHealth arts strategy 2019-2023

## Research reports

- Promoting gender equality through the arts and creative industries: a review of case studies and evidence (2018)
- The arts and creative industries in health promotion: evidence review (2020)

# A decade in review 2013-2023

2013

## VicHealth highlights

VicHealth releases new strategy – the [VicHealth Action Agenda for Health Promotion 2013 –2023](#).

- The Seed Challenge program launches in collaboration with the Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI), to improve fruit and vegetable supply and access, as well as develop and promote a culture of healthy eating in Victoria.
- VicHealth’s Name That Point campaign encourages young people to take ownership of their drinking and decide at what stage of a night out ‘clear thinking turns into more drinking’.
- The TeamUp campaign provides accessible, fun and social opportunities for Victorians to get active.
- VicHealth releases research funding [Choosing to act: bystander action preventing race-based discrimination](#).
- VicHealth formalises its commitment to reconciliation and meeting locally identified needs in culturally appropriate ways in its first [Reconciliation Action Plan 2013-15](#).

## The policy and practice context

Victoria:

- Implementation of [Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2011-2015](#).
- [Healthy food charter: creating a vibrant healthy eating culture](#) released.
- Implementation of [Healthy Together Victoria \(2011-2016\)](#), a major state government-led initiative and systems approach to obesity prevention.

Australia:

- [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health plan 2013-2023](#) released.
- Establishment of the Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children (now known as [Our Watch](#)).

# 2014

## VicHealth highlights

- VicHealth receives official designation as a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Leadership in Health Promotion.
- H30 Challenge encourages Victorians to replace sugary drinks with water for 30 days.
- Launch of VicHealth's Leading Thinkers initiative and VicHealth's inaugural Leading Thinker Dr David Halpern, focused on obesity.
- VicHealth's No Excuse Needed campaign identifies the pressure young people feel to drink alcohol.
- VicHealth's active arts strategy encourages physical activity and improves mental wellbeing.
- VicHealth releases findings from the third National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey.
- The Alcohol Innovation Challenge calls for new ideas to help change Victoria's drinking culture.
- VicHealth's resource Enabling Health provides information and guidance on action to improve the health of Australians with a disability.

## The policy and practice context

Victoria:

- Implementation of Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2011-2015.
- New Victorian Government: Australian Labor Party.
- Implementation of Healthy Together Victoria (2011-2016).

Australia:

- The Australian National Preventive Health Agency ceases operations.
- National arts and health framework released.

# 2015

## VicHealth highlights

- The Victoria's Citizens' Jury on Obesity engages 100 everyday Victorians in a discussion around solutions to address obesity, resulting in 20 'asks'.
- VicHealth's [Bright Futures Megatrends report](#) reveals the trends and influences on young people's mental wellbeing and identifies resilience as a key asset.
- Changing the Game launches, to increase female participation in sport.
- VicHealth launches [Fair Foundations: the VicHealth framework for health equity](#) – a planning tool for health promotion policy and practice that guides action on the social determinants of health inequity.
- Our Watch, VicHealth and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety launch [Change the story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia](#).
- VicHealth leads the Salt Reduction Strategic Partnership with The George Institute for Global Health, Heart Foundation Victoria, Deakin University's Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition Research, National Stroke Foundation, Kidney Health Australia, the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute and the High Blood Pressure Research Council.
- VicHealth releases [VicHealth mental wellbeing strategy 2015-19](#).

## The policy and practice context

Victoria:

- Release of [Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2015-2019](#).
- [Victoria's 10-year mental health plan](#) released.
- [Royal Commission into Family Violence](#) established.
- Implementation of Healthy Together Victoria (2011-2016).

Australia:

- [Healthy, safe and thriving: national strategic framework for child and youth health](#) released.

# 2016

## VicHealth highlights

VicHealth releases the [VicHealth Action Agenda for Health Promotion – 2016 Update](#).

- [Alcohol cultures framework](#) is launched.
- VicHealth commences the second Leading Thinkers residency focusing on gender equality.
- Healthy Living app launches.
- Elevate begins – a VicHealth initiative exploring ways to improve health equity through the VicHealth Community Challenge (Latrobe Valley project).
- VicHealth releases results of the 2015 VicHealth Indicators Survey.
- VicHealth, SuperFriend and WorkSafe Victoria form the [Victorian Workplace Mental Wellbeing Collaboration](#) to help workplaces create positive and supportive cultures.

## The policy and practice context

Victoria:

- [Safe and strong: a Victorian gender equality strategy](#), Victoria's first gender equality strategy released.
- [Youth policy: building stronger youth engagement in Victoria](#) released.
- [Creative state 2016–2020](#), Victoria's first creative industries strategy released.
- [Health 2040: advancing health, access and care](#) released.
- Implementation of Healthy Together Victoria (2011–2016).



# 2017

## VicHealth highlights

- VicHealth partners with Sport England to deliver the Australian version of the highly successful This Girl Can campaign.
- VicHealth and the Heart Foundation launch Unpack the Salt campaign.
- The Alcohol Culture Change Initiative launches to change cultures of risky drinking in Victoria.
- VicHealth releases findings on the impact of implementing healthy food and drink choices for a retailer's perspective with Building the business case – Healthier food and drink policies.
- Launch of VicHealth's second Leading Thinkers residency, Behavioural Insights and Gender Equality, shared by Professor Iris Bohnet and Dr Jeni Klugman.
- VicHealth supports Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (MSAC) to become the first state-level sporting facility in Victoria to eliminate the supply of unhealthy, sugary drinks and introduce a healthy food range.
- Alcohol Culture Change projects trial targeted and tailored efforts to reach those most in need, and to change cultures of risky drinking.
- VicHealth releases 30 years of VicHealth.

## The policy and practice context

Victoria:

- Free from violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women released.

Australia:

- National strategic framework for chronic conditions released, a framework to guide decision-makers and policy-makers to reduce the impact of chronic conditions in Australia.
- National drugs strategy 2017-2026 released, a 10-year framework that aims to reduce and prevent the harmful effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

# 2018

## VicHealth highlights

- This Girl Can – Victoria campaign launches to inspire women to become more active and to challenge traditional stereotypes.
- VicHealth supports the Rumbalara Football Netball Club to host the Murray Football Netball Grand Final – the first time in the league’s history that a grand final was hosted by an Indigenous club.
- Undertake 2 active bystander intervention trials in 2 Victorian universities.
- Staying on Track deliberative forum gives young Victorians a voice in how they could be supported during their transition from education to employment.
- Implementation of the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry recommendations relating to health equity and health improvements through the LaTrobe Health Innovation Zone and LaTrobe Health Assembly initiatives.
- Quit Victoria deliver Tackling Tobacco in Mental Health Services pilot project.
- Launch of the Top Spin initiative, a statewide competition asking young people to expose the tactics used by the alcohol industry to influence them to drink.

## The policy and practice context

Victoria:

- Victorian Government introduces a kilojoule labelling scheme that applies to large chain food businesses and supermarkets.

Australia:

- Sport 2030 released, a national sport plan that aims to help make Australia the world’s most active and healthy sporting nation, known for its integrity and sporting success.
- National digital health strategy 2018-2022 released.

# 2019

## VicHealth highlights

- VicHealth releases the [VicHealth Action Agenda for Health Promotion – 2019 Update](#).
- [You Quit, You Win](#) television campaign launches.
- Releases of a world-first report on loneliness, highlighting problematic social isolation in young people.
- Hosts [Behavioural Insights & Gender Equality Deliberative Forum](#): How can we make it easier to move from intention to action?
- VicHealth hosts Leading Thinkers Symposium, to share practical ways in which organisations can bring gender equality strategies to life in workplaces, leadership, government and sport.
- Works with food manufacturers on salt reformulation projects and released a new industry guide, [Reformulation readiness: a best practice guide to salt reduction](#).
- Commences 2 strategic projects to drive organisational capability: the Core Systems Replacement Project and the People Strategy Project.

VicHealth releases a number of strategies to support delivery of the Action Agenda:

- [VicHealth health equity strategy 2019-2023](#)
- [Healthy eating strategy 2019-2023](#)
- [Physical activity strategy 2018-23](#)
- [Physical activity strategy 2019-2023](#)
- [Mental wellbeing strategy 2019-2023](#)
- [VicHealth tobacco strategy 2019-2023](#)
- [VicHealth alcohol strategy 2019-2023](#)
- [VicHealth arts strategy 2019-2023](#)
- [VicHealth research strategy 2019-2023](#)

## The policy and practice context

Victoria:

- Release of [Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2019-2023](#).
- [Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System](#) established.

Australia:

- [Australia's Long Term National Health Plan](#) released, outlining a plan for a better health system.
- [National action plan for the health of children and young people 2020-2030](#) released, outlining Australia's national approach to improving health outcomes for all children and young people, particularly those at greatest risk of poor health.
- [National alcohol strategy 2019-2028](#) released, outlining Australia's agreed approach to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm.
- [National women's health strategy 2020-2030](#) released, outlining Australia's national approach to improving the health of women and girls – particularly those at greatest risk of poor health – and to reducing inequities between different groups.
- [National men's health strategy 2020-2030](#) released, outlining Australia's national approach to improving the health of men and boys – particularly those at greatest risk of poor health – and to reducing inequities between different groups.

# 2020

## VicHealth highlights

- Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Anthony Carbines MP, launches the report [A Healthier Start for Victorians: a consensus Statement on Obesity Prevention](#) led by VicHealth on behalf of the Healthy Eating and Active Living Roundtable.
- [Phases out sugary drinks at all Museums Victoria venues.](#)
- Releases values-based messaging, cutting-edge research and [Healthy Persuasions message guide.](#)
- Conducts bystander action on sexism and sexual harassment intervention [trials.](#)
- Releases Masculinities and health framework.
- Supports [Tobacco-Free Portfolios.](#)
- [Develops and finalises the VicHealth Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2020-2022.](#)
- [Research to explore the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the health and wellbeing of Victorians.](#)
- Shift in strategic imperatives as VicHealth focuses on responding to the impacts of the bushfires and coronavirus pandemic, including the creation of an online [Health Promotion Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resource Hub](#) to inform all Victorians in order to keep the community safe and healthy.
- Facilitates in-depth discussions about [Life and Health Re-imagined.](#)

- [This Girl Can – Victoria pivots](#) to focus on building new home exercise video content, supporting women to be active at home.
- Leads work to explore the potential for a [wellbeing economy](#) in Victoria and to support and inspire ambitious policy development.

## The policy and practice context

Victoria:

- [Gender Equality Bill 2019](#) passed.
- [The Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector](#) was established.
- [Dr Niki Vincent was appointed Victoria's first Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner.](#)

On the global stage:

- [WHO declared the COVID-19 pandemic a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.](#)

# 2021

## VicHealth highlights

- [Reimagining Health Grants](#) support Victorians hardest hit by the impacts of coronavirus and the Victorian bushfires.
- [Invests in new health promotion strategy grants and programs funding, including Future Healthy](#) to create vibrant communities, where young people are connected, active, enjoy wholesome food and feel great.
- [VicHealth Local Government Partnership](#) launches to build health promotion capacity and leadership in Victorian councils and to centre young peoples' voices as they create communities that prioritise health and wellbeing.
- Lead conversations about building back better and fairer including [integrating wellbeing into the business of government](#) and created a road map for the public health sector [Australia in 2030: what is our path to health for all](#) and discussions.
- [Youth Peak Partnerships](#) launches with key youth organisations to put young people at the centre of health solutions.
- New policy-research Harmful Industries program builds capacity of the health promotion sector to understand and counter harmful industry activity and drive.
- Victorian-first [Healthy Sports Reward initiative](#) sees junior sports clubs replace vouchers for fast food and takeaway with healthy activities.

- VicHealth diversifies and evolves investment model, repositions as a 'digital first' agency, and moves from home of 20 years in Carlton to a new, state-of-the-art collaboration hub in Spencer Street, West Melbourne.
- Restarted the VicHealth Research Fellowship program after a hiatus, focused on supporting early career researchers. The policy and practice context.

## The policy and practice context

Victoria:

- [Healthy kids, healthy futures](#) released, a 5-year action plan to support children and young people to be healthy, active and well.
- [Creative state strategy 2025](#) released.

Australia:

- [National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030](#) released, outlining the overarching, long-term approach to prevention in Australia.
- [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health plan 2021-2031](#) released, a national policy to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- [Gender Equality Act 2020](#) commenced.
- [Change the story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia \(2nd ed.\)](#) was released by Our Watch.



# 2022

## VicHealth highlights

- Invests in locally led solutions co-designed by young people right across the state through Future Healthy, including [The Big Connect](#), [JumpStart!](#), [Future Reset: Young People](#), [Arts and Mental Wellbeing](#), [Future Healthy Food Hubs](#), and Future Active: Activating Underutilised Spaces.
- [Future Healthy Community Champions](#) help to shape health and wellbeing solutions for the future.
- [VicHealth Local Government Partnership](#) health promotion modules help to embed the voices, ideas and experiences of young people in council strategy.
- Convened new conversations about health and wellbeing including the [Future Reset Summit](#) and Space Invaders Conference: how business can harm health and what can be done about it.
- ACB Takeover amplifies the voices and lived experiences of young people across Victoria and was [held in a regional area for the first time](#).
- Minister for Health [Martin Foley MP opens the Victorian Health Promotion Hub](#).
- In-depth [community listening](#) and regional and community visits inform the development of the next VicHealth Strategic Action Agenda.

## The policy and practice context

Victoria:

- [Our promise, your future: Victoria's youth strategy 2022–2027](#) released.
- [Gender equality action plan 2022–2025](#) released.
- [Active Victoria 2022–2026 – A strategic framework for sport and active recreation in Victoria](#) released.

Australia:

- [National obesity strategy 2022–2032](#) released, a 10-year framework for action to prevent, reduce, and treat, overweight and obesity in Australia.
- [The national plan to end violence against women and children 2022–2032](#) released.

# VicHealth Action Agenda for Health Promotion 2013–2023

Strategic imperatives 2013–2023	2013–2016 3-year priority	2016–2019 3-year priority Action Agenda 2016 Update	2019–2023 4-year goal Action Agenda 2019 Update	10-year target	Ambition
<b>Promote healthy eating</b>	More people choosing water and healthy food options	80,000 more people choosing water and healthy food options	To further increase access to healthy foods and drinks in Victoria, with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sports settings</li> <li>• fruit and vegetable consumption</li> <li>• food cultures.</li> </ul>	200,000 more Victorians adopt a healthier diet	One million more Victorians to have better health and wellbeing by 2023.
<b>Encourage regular physical activity</b>	More people physically active, participating in sport and walking	180,000 more people physically active, playing sport and walking, with a focus on women and girls	To increase the physical activity levels of people who are less active, with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fear of judgement experienced by women</li> <li>• social sport, active recreation and play</li> <li>• walking and active travel.</li> </ul>	300,000 more Victorians engage in physical activity	
<b>Prevent tobacco use</b>	More people smoke-free and less harm among resistant smokers	280,000 more people smoke-free and quitting	To further reduce tobacco use, with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preventing uptake among young people</li> <li>• supporting people to quit, particularly those from disadvantaged groups</li> <li>• reducing the appeal of tobacco products.</li> </ul>	400,000 more Victorians tobacco-free	
<b>Prevent harm from alcohol</b>	More people actively seeking the best ways to reduce alcohol-related harm	80,000 more people and environments that support effective reduction in harmful alcohol use	To prevent harm from alcohol products, with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changing risky drinking cultures</li> <li>• enabling environments to support low-risk drinking.</li> </ul>	200,000 more Victorians drink less alcohol	
<b>Improve mental wellbeing</b>	Build stronger approaches to resilience, focusing on young people	80,000 more opportunities to build community resilience and positive social connections, with a focus on young people and women	To increase mental wellbeing, with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• positive social connections among young people</li> <li>• gender equality.</li> </ul>	200,000 more Victorians resilient and connected	
<b>Themes for action</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health equity</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Arts</li> </ul>		



VicHealth acknowledges and thanks all the individuals, organisations and stakeholders who have worked for and with us over the past 10 years.

Your dedication, expertise and insights delivered significant positive health impacts for people and communities in Victoria.

#### **Board Chairs 2013–2023**

Mark Birrell AM  
Emeritus Professor John Catford  
Fiona McCormack AM  
Nick Green OAM  
The Hon Nicola Roxon

#### **Chief Executive Officers 2013–2023**

Jerril Rechter AM  
Dr Lyn Roberts AO (Acting)  
Dr Sandro Demaio

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#### **Victorian Health Promotion Foundation**

Level 2/355 Spencer Street  
West Melbourne VIC 3003  
T +61 3 9667 1333  
F +61 3 9667 1375  
vichealth@vichealth.vic.gov.au  
vichealth.vic.gov.au

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VicHealth acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land. We pay our respects to all Elders past and present.

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