

Foreword

I am pleased to provide the foreword to this wonderful book. The creation of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) was a significant policy change by the Victorian Government, and signalled a new vision and commitment to health promotion. The innovative proposal to apply a dedicated tax on tobacco to fund such a foundation was groundbreaking for its time, and opened the door for a program of wide-ranging reform in health promotion. Several foundations from around the world have adopted the VicHealth model and now collaborate as members of the International Network of Health Promotion Foundations.

Overwhelming political support from all parties set the foundation for VicHealth to work with government and industry to address the big issues in health with a long-term view. Initially the tobacco industry was tackled head-on by replacing tobacco sponsorships with health promotion messages. VicHealth showed how the media could be used to advocate for change in policy. This adaptability displayed early on has continued, and allowed VicHealth to address the challenges that have presented over the years in imaginative and practical ways.

In line with the need to adapt its activities to the pressing health issues of society, VicHealth has been at the forefront of research and innovation in promoting mental health and wellbeing, and increasing participation in physical activity. Issues including mental health, physical activity, poor nutrition and health inequalities require diverse and innovative ways of partnering and networking, coupled with highly skilled advocacy techniques to lobby for the promotion of good health. The ingenuity, persistence and commitment of leaders such as Nigel Gray, Gus Nossal, Rhonda Galbally, David White, Mark Birrell, John Funder, Jane Fenton, Rob Moodie and a team of hard working professionals have made this possible.

The Story of VicHealth – a world first in health promotion is a fascinating overview of VicHealth from inception to present day. This publication will provide readers with an insight into the breadth of work undertaken by VicHealth and the complexity of applying health promotion concepts and programs to the multifaceted policy environment of health.



I commend this book to all who are interested or involved in health promotion and to those who have watched the development of VicHealth.

I continue to wish VicHealth every success in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bronwyn Pike". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Hon. Bronwyn Pike MP
Minister for Health