

Media Release

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VICHEALTH AND CITY OF MELBOURNE REVEAL NEW WATER BOTTLE REFILL STATIONS

New water fountains have been sprouting up around Melbourne as part of a VicHealth initiative to increase Victorians' access to free drinking water.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the fountains, which have a tap for refilling reusable water bottles, would make it easier for people to make a healthy choice.

"In partnership with the City of Melbourne, we have installed 60 fountains with refill taps around the city in areas where people are taking part in physical activity and recreation or where there is a high volume of pedestrians.

"Key sites include Carlton Gardens, The Tan track and Fitzroy Gardens.

"Making water more accessible by adding refill taps to fountains is one way to help people choose water when out and about in Melbourne," Ms Rechter said.

Lord Mayor Robert Doyle said he feels passionately about Melburnians and visitors having access to free drinking water.

"The City of Melbourne encourages people to stay hydrated and drink water, this is particularly important in the summer months and during heatwaves," the Lord Mayor said.

"Therefore we were keen to partner with VicHealth on this simple, yet important project which has prepared us for the summer of 2015-2016.

"Our [website](#) features a drinking fountain [map](#) and you can also download the free smartphone app Choose Tap to find the water fountain closest to you."

The Lord Mayor said Melbourne has one of the best water supplies in the world and this initiative will help us to take advantage of that.

"It's good for the environment, good for the pocket and good for the body," he said.

Ms Rechter said providing public drinking fountains that were well designed and appointed would make water a more accessible choice for Melbournians and tourists alike.

"When identifying further sites for new water fountains, we specifically scoped areas near public transport hubs and within shopping precincts. These new fountains make it easy for everyone to access free water when they're out exercising, shopping, or enjoying lunch in one of our city's beautiful parks," Ms Rechter added.

She said a key driver for the new water fountains was to test if adding a tap to encourage people to refill water bottles was an effective way to promote water.

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An evaluation will determine the fountains' impact in making water the healthier and easier choice for Victorians.

Minister for Health The Hon. Jill Hennessy said having public spaces set up in such a way that encourages the community to drink water instead of sugary drinks was a great initiative.

"With nearly two thirds of Victorians overweight or obese, it's so important that we encourage people to choose healthier options and reduce their risk of developing type-2 diabetes, heart disease and other illnesses," Minister Hennessy said.

ENDS

VicHealth is committed to tackling the tough issues to address the physical and mental wellbeing of Victorians, including rising obesity levels. The [H30 Challenge](#) is essential to reducing Victorians' intake of excess kilojoules through sugary drinks, while the [Walk to School](#) campaign is a great initiative to get children moving, and the [TeamUp](#) app is a social community which connects people to a wide range of physical activities within their local community.

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