

Media Release

Monday 3 April 2017

Collaboration key to tackling public health issues

Health promotion foundation VicHealth has today announced up to \$500,000 in funding to foster new international research partnerships addressing the impact of emerging challenges on public health.

VicHealth's [Sustainable Development Goals Partnership grants](#) aim to foster collaboration between Victorian and international partners to explore how social and environmental issues such as climate change, ageing populations and the exponential growth of technology will affect our health over the next two decades.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter announced the funding during the first plenary session of the [15th World Congress on Public Health 3–7 April](#). The Congress brings together leading international public health experts in Melbourne to share learnings from around the world.

Ms Rechter said VicHealth welcomed the opportunity to facilitate partnerships between leading global experts to tackle critical public health issues such as obesity, gender equality and mental wellbeing.

“Since we were established 30 years ago as the world’s first health promotion foundation, VicHealth has been seen by many in the global health community as a pioneer in health promotion. It’s crucial we continue to look ahead to ensure we’re well prepared for the health and wellbeing challenges of the future,” she said.

“This week’s Congress is an opportunity for public health leaders and innovators from all around the world to come together to share knowledge about how we can continue to improve global health outcomes now and into the future.

“Our Sustainable Development Goals Partnership Grants scheme is aimed at building collaborative research partnerships to address the impact of global megatrends on our health. VicHealth has recently investigated the impact of [global megatrends on young Australians’ future wellbeing](#) and is seeking new ideas to help the Victorian health sector tackle key issues such as physical inactivity, alcohol harm and improving mental wellbeing.

“We’re thrilled to work with an incredible international network of health promotion organisations at this Congress to build on our work with the World Health Organization to strengthen action on non-communicable disease across the Western Pacific region.”

VicHealth is the Public Health Champion of the Congress, and will lead special sessions including a breakfast forum on leadership for population salt reduction with the George Institute for Global Health; an arts for health lunchtime program; a panel on improving mental wellbeing and gender equality in workplaces; sports and digital environments; and a meeting of Australian WHO Collaborating Centres.

[VicHealth experts](#) will present and chair a range of sessions at the 15th World Congress on Public Health including:

- Voices and Visions opening plenary

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- Nature is Good Medicine world leadership dialogue
- VicHealth's insights into using citizens' juries to influence policy and practice
- The impact of increasing the supply, access and promotion of free drinking water
- [VicHealth's Healthy Living Apps Guide](#) – an evidence-based review system and website of lifestyle health apps
- Taking action on drinking cultures: development and implementation of the VicHealth Alcohol Cultures Framework
- Innovative approaches to advancing gender equality in sport participation

To coincide with the Congress VicHealth has also released a free [Health History Walks app](#) featuring walking tours exploring Melbourne's unique heritage and showcasing important health promotion and public health initiatives.

The World Congress on Public Health is held every 2–4 years by the World Federation of Public Health Associations. The Congress serves as an international forum for the exchange of knowledge and experiences on key public health issues, contributing towards protecting and promoting public health at a national and global level.

More on [VicHealth's Sustainable Development Goals Partnership grants](#)

More on the [15th World Congress on Public Health](#)

A full list of VicHealth presenters is available on the [VicHealth website](#)

To download the [Health History Walks app](#) visit the app store.

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