

Friday 2 December 2011

## VICHEALTH RECOGNISES HEALTH PROMOTION HEROES OF 2011

Victoria's champions in promoting good health were announced at the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) annual Awards ceremony last night.

The Awards, which coincide with VicHealth's Annual General Meeting each year, pay homage to the most outstanding research projects, community programs and initiatives designed to improve the health of Victorians.

The 2011 winners ranged from an Australia-first project which determined the public holidays related to a peak in alcohol-related accidents and assaults, to organisations that lobbied for changes to food labelling and nicotine replacement therapy subsidies.

As well as the conventional areas of tackling alcohol, smoking and poor diet, a range of arts and multicultural projects were honoured, as well as a program that works with new parents to encourage gender equality to prevent violence against women.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the Awards recognise that health promotion deserved more prominence in the health field, given health promotion had the potential to save thousands of lives and millions of dollars.

"So often, extraordinary work in health promotion slips under the radar because there tends to be a focus on treatments for illnesses instead of prevention," Ms Rechter said.

"VicHealth believes illness prevention projects must be acknowledged for the outstanding and often trail-blazing work they achieve – and that's what the VicHealth Awards are about. Congratulations to all of our winners for 2011, whose work continues to make a huge difference to the future health of all Victorians."

Premier Ted Baillieu praised the winners and their achievements.

"The VicHealth Awards showcase the outstanding work happening across Victoria to promote good health and prevent illness," Mr Baillieu said.

"These awards celebrate achievements in some of the important projects that VicHealth has funded in the areas of advocacy, environments for health, community development, research and communication.

"Health promotion is crucial because it improves everyday wellbeing and helps prevent chronic disease. As a long-time supporter of VicHealth, I congratulate the 2011 award winners for their dedication to improving the lives of all Victorians."

Minister for Health David Davis said as highlighted in the Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012 – 2022, VicHealth plays a critical role in promoting healthy individuals and communities.

"This role is demonstrated in the range of activities and partnerships VicHealth has engaged in to improve nutrition, increase physical activity, reduce smoking rates and reduce harm from UV exposure," Mr Davis said.

"The Coalition Government has released Victoria's first ever Public Health and Wellbeing Plan to fight rising rates of chronic and preventable diseases."

***Winners on the following page...***

And the winners of the 2011 VicHealth Awards are....

**David Hill Award for Knowledge and Translation**

*Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre – Drinking Cultures and Social Occasions: Alcohol harms in the context of major public holidays, sporting and cultural events.*

This study maps the incidence of illness, accidents and assaults associated with alcohol at major sporting events, during public holidays and other social occasions in Victoria.

**Award for Environments for Health**

*Stockland, Planning Institute of Australia, City of Casey, Growth Areas Authority, RMIT Selandra Rise Demonstration Project*

This housing development in the City of Casey is real-world model of how health can be incorporated into a master planned community to encourage physical activity, social inclusion and safety.

**Award for Communications**

*Museum Victoria – Immigration Museum Identity: Yours, Mine, Ours/Talking Difference*

Identity: Yours, Mine, Ours brought together people and communities to discuss issues around intolerance and racism to promote understanding and respect for diversity and difference.

**Award for Advocacy (joint winners)**

*Cancer Council Victoria, Diabetes Australia–Victoria, WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention at Deakin University – The Obesity Policy Coalition*

In 2011, the Obesity Policy Coalition focused on reducing childrens' exposure to unhealthy food marketing and more informative labelling on packaged foods, as well as price and taxing policies for junk food that encouraged people eat more nutritious foods.

*Quit Victoria - 'For the first time it is cheaper to quit than smoke' campaign*

Quit Victoria campaigned to offer smokers, who couldn't otherwise afford it, vital support to quit and encouraged even more smokers to give quitting a go.

**Award for Community Development**

*Cricket Victoria – Cricket4Me*

In 2011 Cricket Victoria influenced cultural and behavioural change within all levels of cricket – from grassroots clubs to Cricket Australia - and created more opportunities for people from culturally diverse and Indigenous backgrounds to play the sport, or become volunteers, administrators or officials.

**Award for Organisational Development**

*Victorian Local Governance Association – Food for All Dissemination Project*

Following the successful five-year Food For All program with nine local councils around Victoria, a suite of fact sheets and videos were widely disseminated to local governments around the state to share wisdom and inspire others to develop their own local food security projects.

**Award for Participation and Skill Development**

*Whitehorse Community Health Service – Baby Makes 3*

Baby Makes 3 is a program that seeks to prevent violence before it occurs, by promoting equal and respectful relationships between men and women during the transition to parenthood.

**Award for Outstanding Journalism in Health Promotion**

*Whittlesea Leader – Cheryl Balfour - See Beyond Race campaign*

Ms Balfour wrote a series of feature length profiles on the participants in the See Beyond Race campaign, which tackled difficult issues of racism and lack of understanding. The quality, depth and fairness of these reports was extremely impressive and a terrific asset for Whittlesea community at large.

**Media enquiries:** Jane Gardner, Senior Media Officer, 03 9667 1319/ 0435 761 732