

6 December 2012

VICTORIA'S HEALTH PROMOTION HEROES FOR 2012 HONOURED

Eight extraordinary Victorian organisations have been formally recognised as the state's champions of promoting good health and wellbeing for Victorians.

Winners of the *Victorian Health Promotion Awards* were announced at a ceremony in Melbourne last night by His Excellency the Honourable Alex Chernov AC QC, Governor of Victoria.

The Awards were held as part of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation's 25th Anniversary at a special celebration at Government House in Melbourne.

Among the winners were a program which teaches new parents nutrition for babies, a program to reduce smoking among people experiencing mental illness, workplace health checks with construction workers to identify risk factors for chronic disease, a campaign to raise awareness about the devastating impact of emphysema and an arts project which uses fun and colour to get children physically active.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the Awards recognise inspiring health promotion work throughout Victoria.

"To mark 25 years of world-leading health promotion in Victoria, VicHealth has this year expanded its annual internal awards to accept applications from the wider community across the state," Ms Rechter said.

"These Awards recognise the value of health promotion and its potential to save thousands of lives and millions of dollars through the prevention of chronic disease, and improving people's health and wellbeing. So often, extraordinary work in health promotion slips under the radar because there tends to be a focus on treatments for illness. These Awards focus on work underway in Victoria that aims to prevent people from becoming ill in the first place."

Eminent anti-cancer campaigner, Dr Nigel Gray, one of the founders of VicHealth, was also honoured with a special award recognising leadership in health promotion over several decades.

"Dr Gray's foresight, determination and exceptional work, was critical to the early success of this world first model in responding to major health issues facing us as a society," Ms Rechter added.

"He is seen by many as a founding father of the international tobacco control movement. And a founding father of VicHealth, continuing on today as one of its Patrons. It is both a privilege and honour to acknowledge his invaluable contribution to the legacy of wide-ranging reform in health promotion in Victoria – and a very big congratulations to all of our 2012 winners."

The 2012 Victorian Health Promotion Awards winners

- **Professor David Hill Award for knowledge and understanding** -The InFANT Feeding Activity and Nutrition Trial Program, Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition Research, Deakin University

The InFANT program aims to improve the health of first-time parents and their new born infants. It aims to reduce parent and child obesity risk through supporting development of healthy dietary behaviours, increased physical activity and reduced sedentary behaviours. This program is delivered within existing and sustainable social groups, such as the Maternal and Child Health nurse initiated first-time parent groups. Two-thirds of Victorian families join these local groups, which are sustained for 18 months. The six-session program is delivered quarterly by trained health workers.

- **Tackling health inequalities** - Smokefree and Wellness Initiative, Neami

This Smoke-free and Wellness Initiative, in its third year, was established to support improved physical and emotional health outcomes of people with severe mental illness in response to high smoking rates. The project aims to create an environment conducive to supporting people with a severe mental illness who wish to reduce or quit smoking. In Victoria, Neami operates from 11 service delivery sites, offering services to 900 consumers and employs about 150 staff. In collaboration with Quit Victoria, an evaluation framework was

developed including tools and resources to ensure the program is appropriately modified to meet the varying needs of participants.

- **Building health through arts** - Tangle MOTION, Polyglot Theatre

Polyglot Theatre works collaboratively to empower children, develop their confidence in their own creativity and ignite their imaginations. Tackling the issues of positive engagement within family groups, child-parent relationships with play and health and alternatives to screen based entertainment, *Tangle MOTION* demonstrates instant physical play and ease of engagement with creative activity. In partnership with Berry Street Playgroups, Kinship Care and VicHealth, *Tangle MOTION* is being rolled out across three separate Victorian communities, aiming to reach 900 pre-school children and their families that experience significant levels of social exclusion.

- **Building health through sports** -State Sporting Association Participation Program Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Aquatics Project, Year 1, Life Saving Victoria

Learning how to swim and behave safely around water opens the door to a variety of life-long sporting and recreational pursuits. One of Life Saving Victoria's key project aims is to provide water safety knowledge and aquatic life skills to Victoria's Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)/new migrant community to increase both safety and healthy participation. Year 1 facilitated participation and skill development was available to more than 3,200 CALD/new migrant community members.

- **Building health through education** -Smiles 4 Miles, Dental Health Services Victoria

Smiles 4 Miles works to improve children's oral health by encouraging good oral hygiene practices among children and their families. Reducing risk factors for poor oral health, particularly in children, can have far reaching additional health benefits long into adulthood. Dental Health Services Victoria identified the need to build capacity within early childhood services so that skills and organisational structures developed are sustainable. Many of the risk factors for oral diseases, including diet and hygiene, are also risk factors for other chronic diseases.

- **Building health through community and local governments** - Preventing Violence Together: The Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women, Women's Health West

This is the first collaboratively-developed, regional, primary prevention action plan of its type to prevent violence against women. Its vision is communities, cultures and organisations in the western region are non-violent, non-discriminatory, gender equitable and promote respectful relationships. The plan proposes a series of 39 mutually reinforcing actions to be implemented within and between signatory organisations in the western region. These concrete actions sit within seven objectives across the areas of partnerships and structures; community leadership; capacity and tools; communications, advocacy and champions; skills, attitudes and social norms; research and evaluation; and embedding.

- **Building health through workplaces** - Incolink

The Incolink program delivers health checks on construction sites across Victoria. It aims to raise awareness of the risk factors of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease among male 'blue collar' workers. The confidential health check includes a lifestyle survey, measurement of blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and waist circumference. Results are provided immediately with health professional advice. Workers are encouraged to seek further assistance if identified at increased risk. More than 75 per cent of workers on participating building sites have taken part and over 17,000 health checks have been performed.

- **Communications in health promotion** - Meet Mick Campaign, Quit Victoria 2011-2012, Quit Victoria

In July 2011, Victoria met Michael "Mick" Roberts, a 49-year-old man from Lara, who had suffered advanced emphysema for four years caused by smoking. Mick told his story as a way of expressing the loss of quality of life and impact on his family, in an effort to help others. The aims of the campaign were to: encourage smokers to make a quit attempt, create awareness among smokers of the dual effects of smoking both physically and emotionally, and encourage smokers currently thinking about quitting to plan a quit attempt.