

Integrated theme: New ways to promote health



Senior Advisor Alex Gyani (left) and Director Dr David Halpern of the UK's Behavioural Insights Team.

VicHealth's role has always been to push the boundaries and trial new ways to promote health – now we are pushing our own limits to how we do business.

Our job as innovators is to think about the *how*. How can we use the wealth of academic knowledge built up over 27 years in ways that are promising but unproven to make the right gains in our *Action Agenda*?

Our Innovation Office is helping us read the shifting social trends, tap in to changed business models and use rapid advances in technology to progress health promotion at the population level.

After 1 year, there are positive signs that innovative approaches are helping us transform health promotion into a social movement.

INNOVATION CHALLENGES

Connecting knowledge, networks and resources with big thinkers and bold doers

Through our Innovation Challenges we are collaborating in fresh ways – finding new opportunities to work with social innovators, digital disruptors, entrepreneurs and change-makers.

Working with The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI), we launched our healthy eating Seed Challenge (see p. 20) in April 2013. It took a radical approach to a big issue: most Victorians eat less than the recommended amount of fresh fruit and vegetables.

The Seed Challenge has led to a crowd-funding campaign for a national local food marketplace connecting buyers to local fruit and vegetable suppliers, and projects to unlock vacant land across Melbourne to grow food.

<http://challenge.vichealth.vic.gov.au/challenges/>

Hackathons are helping young people get engaged in the design of new digital technologies to build resilience, and social campaigns are starting conversations around the same theme to improve mental and physical wellbeing.

We've been extremely encouraged by the response to our social media campaigns that have opened up debate on the place alcohol has in our lives through the NameThatPoint and No Excuse Needed campaigns (see p. 42).

LEADING THINKERS INITIATIVE

Through our international Leading Thinkers initiative we are challenging ourselves to look differently at tackling obesity.

Dr David Halpern, Director of the United Kingdom's Behavioural Insights Team, is our inaugural Leading Thinker who is working with us and other agencies tackling rising obesity levels by bringing a behavioural insights approach to Victoria.

In the year ahead, we will be going directly to the public with a deliberative forum to see how far we can push community consensus for action on obesity. We're also working closely with the sports sector to build new ways to fit physical activity into people's lives that works for individuals and communities.

Extending on our pioneering work, our goal is to test more promising ideas, scale up what works, and take innovation to the market place.

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/About-VicHealth/Leading-Thinkers-initiative



“From preventing violence to enhancing sports clubs and tackling broader socioeconomic inequalities, the strength of VicHealth is its focus on understanding the problem and finding solutions, using innovative approaches.”

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ANNA PEETERS

Head of Obesity & Population Health, Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute



“New and emerging technologies have fundamentally changed the way in which we think about the science of wellbeing. Together with VicHealth and Australia's young people and thought leaders, we are driving mental health reform and leading the world in rethinking the way in which we use technologies to build resilient communities both on and offline.”

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JANE BURNS

CEO, Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre