



# VicHealth

## LETTER

ISSUE NO. 38



## Digital innovations to improve Victoria's food channels

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

VICTORIAN HEALTH PROMOTION FOUNDATION AWARDS

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ALCOHOL IN OUR CULTURE

HIGHLIGHTS OF VICHEALTH'S INVESTMENTS IN ENCOURAGING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



**Our approach at VicHealth has always been to think ahead and be innovative when it comes to addressing today's complex health challenges. The future of health promotion in the digital age and our renewed focus in this area encapsulates the essence of this VicHealth Letter edition.**

Over the past 26 years, we have seen changes in the culture, lifestyles and behaviours of Victorians, and continued to adapt our work to forecast and address the health impacts of these emerging trends.

Looking back at VicHealth's work, it shows a history of valuable and novel investments in preventing chronic disease.

For example, preventing tobacco use has been a cornerstone of VicHealth's work since the organisation's creation. The most recent data shows that in 2012, 13.3 per cent of Victorian adults regularly smoked, down from 18.3 per cent in 2005.<sup>1</sup> Along with legislative and policy reforms, VicHealth's longstanding funding for the smoking

prevention and cessation programs delivered by Quit Victoria has played a critical role to drive down these rates.

Further evidence of the significant impact made to the reduction of smoking rates can be read on [page 17](#).

Another strategic focus for VicHealth is to promote healthy eating. Food and nutrition-related ill health accounted for the largest burden of disease in Victoria in 2001, at 17.4 per cent.<sup>2</sup> National research has found that increasing fruit and vegetable levels by one serve a day would save between \$8.6 million and \$24.4 million per year in direct health care costs relating to cancer and a further \$150 million relating to direct health costs associated with cardiovascular disease.<sup>3</sup>

Addressing today's complex health issues requires embracing emerging technologies and new approaches.

These new opportunities present exciting ways to evolve and propel our progressive role in health promotion, and we're just getting started.

**Mark Birrell** | Chair of the Board

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# CEO's FOREWORD

**VicHealth has a brave and successful history of investments that have been an impetus for change. Much like our vision to extend our pioneering role, make greater gains and meet new challenges, our work and investments must continuously evolve to reflect changes in society.**

As digital and online environments continue to shape the future of health promotion, we are finding new ways to use digital technology to facilitate innovative collaboration and increase access to knowledge.

The Seed Challenge, a digitally focused initiative to improve healthy eating in Victoria, is testament to our pursuit of presenting cutting-edge ways of engaging with different audiences.

We are delighted to introduce the two Seed Challenge winners in this edition of the *VicHealth Letter*. Read about how the winning teams, **3000acres** and **Open Food Network**, are set to transform our food landscape in 'Green revolution' on **page 8**. We also feature the other competition finalists that inspired us. More inspiration comes on **page 5** in the form of 8-80 cities Executive Director Gil Peñalosa, a passionate international expert creating vibrant cities and healthy communities. Gil's recent presentation at VicHealth to our local government partners challenged contemporary thinking and showed new ways of using parks and open spaces to increase physical activity.

We also celebrate the achievements of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation Awards finalists and winners on **page 6**. These awards showcase the initiatives, projects, campaigns, health agencies, organisations and teams working together with the common goal of promoting health.

When it comes to celebrations, unfortunately in Victoria, alcohol is prevalent at most social events. In 'Exploring the role of alcohol in Victorians' lives' on **page 12**, we discuss our research into Victoria's alcohol culture. This thought-provoking piece also reveals our partnership with the Victorian Government to challenge excessive drinking.

On **page 14**, we highlight some of our valuable VicHealth investments and focus in physical activity, sport and walking, and the strong partnerships forged to support people to be active.

The achievements we share with you in every *VicHealth Letter* are only possible with the support of our partners and colleagues – from whom we learn a great deal and rely on to spread the health promotion message.

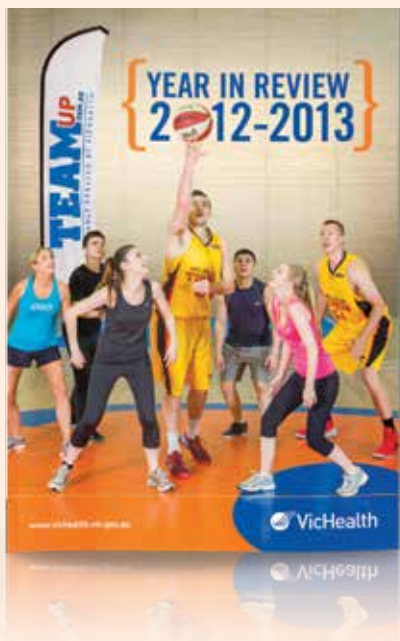
Let me close by offering my sincere thanks for everyone's support during the past year, especially their willingness and courage to tackle the big issues with us.



**Jerril Rechter**  
Chief Executive Officer



**“We are finding new ways to use digital technology to facilitate innovative collaboration.”**



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

We recently celebrated the contribution of our partners, projects and accomplishments for the year in two annual publications: VicHealth's ***Annual Report of Operations and Financial Statements 2012-2013***, and the ***Year in Review***.

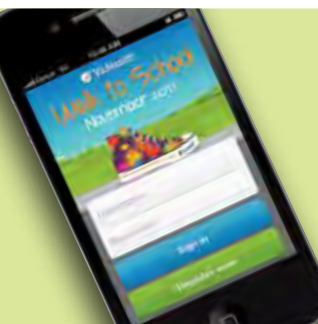
VicHealth's ***Annual Report of Operations and Financial Statements 2012-2013*** outlines our performance and achievement of objectives in the last financial year. Our ***Year in Review*** publication highlights our continued commitment to innovative and effective partnerships and projects.

It is a notable year for the organisation as we closed off our 2009-13 Strategy and Business Plan and launched our ***Action Agenda for Health Promotion*** – the new vision and action plan for the next three years and beyond to 2023.

**Annual Report of Operations and Financial Statements 2012-2013**  
[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/annualreport](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/annualreport)

**Year in Review**  
[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/year-in-review](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/year-in-review)

**Action Agenda**  
[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/actionagenda](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/actionagenda)



### ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO WALK TO SCHOOL

For the first time this year VicHealth provided grants for local councils to coordinate Walk to School (WTS) in their area during November. More than 50 local Victorian councils signed up to help promote the annual event and get more Victorian families active.

WTS raises awareness of the need for children to make walking part of their daily routine to improve fitness, friendships, the environment and their confidence. Fantastic prizes were also on offer for children, including a free WTS app and Cotton on Kids discount.

[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/walktoschool](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/walktoschool)



### VICHEALTH AND THE FESTIVAL OF IDEAS

During 1-6 October the 2013 Festival of Ideas event, supported by VicHealth and organised by The University of Melbourne, brought together more than 80 thought leaders to discuss how to create a healthier future in relation to five key topics: Food and Nutrition, Brains and Minds, Environments, Families, Democracy.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter's presentation at the event launch about using new technology to collaborate with partners and the wider community can be viewed at:

[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/festival-of-ideas](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/festival-of-ideas)



### NEW ALCOHOL CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

VicHealth, in partnership with the State Government, recently launched a \$2.6 million alcohol culture change campaign.

The campaign is a key initiative of the government's 'Reducing the alcohol and drug toll: ***Victoria's plan 2013-2017***'. Minister for Mental Health Mary Wooldridge and VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter unveiled the Name That Point campaign designed to spark a frank discussion about the role of alcohol in our lives.

Find out more about Name That Point: [www.namethatpoint.com](http://www.namethatpoint.com) and [www.facebook.com/namethatpoint](https://www.facebook.com/namethatpoint)



### STEPPING OUT - LISA GIBBS' RESEARCH

The results of a two-year study conducted by the University of Melbourne and VicHealth reveal the final years of primary school are critical for developing children's confidence and independence to travel without their parents.

A presentation by Dr Lisa Gibbs from the School of Population and Global Health of the Stepping Out study aimed to find ways to encourage children to walk independently and foster health and wellbeing.

Read the report: [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/stepping-out](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/stepping-out)

Watch the video: [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Video-Gallery/Stepping-Out](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Video-Gallery/Stepping-Out)

## Meet Gil Peñalosa

**Gil Peñalosa is an international expert on creating vibrant cities and healthy communities. He was invited to speak at a recent VicHealth 'Be Active' Network Session to share with partner councils ways to use public spaces to encourage people to be more active. Former Commissioner of Parks, Sport and Recreation for the City of Bogota, Colombia, Gil is now based in Canada. He created the non-profit organisation 8-80 Cities which aims to transform cities into places that are easily accessible, safe and enjoyable.**



**VIDEO** | VIEW THE FULL VIDEO INTERVIEW

### **How can we get more people to use parks and open spaces?**

Getting people to use open spaces such as parks involves a few different things; one is to realise that we need a 'system of parks' – different sized parks for a variety of purposes. For example, small neighbourhood parks are where we build communities and meet people, and larger parks which satisfy different needs. It's also about creating multiple uses and activities at parks. We need to be able to engage a variety of groups and get them to use the parks regularly.

### **How can we turn unused/abandoned public spaces into places for people to exercise?**

There are many abandoned parks, and they deteriorate the quality of life of a neighbourhood. The most important thing is community engagement. Ask the community and honestly listen to them. They might not know about the design – that's what the architects know – but they know what they want. So we need to reach all parts of the community, and if they don't go to the meetings then go to them. Community engagement is the key to making unused parks healthy places and fantastic environments.

### **What can governments do to support more people exercising in public spaces?**

Governments have to work out how to improve the use of parks and public places, including the streets and the sidewalks, to get people to be more physically active. For example, New York has gone through a wonderful transformation where government departments are working together with the same goal – to make citizens happy and healthy. Today, their streets are much safer from widening the sidewalks, improving the crosswalks, installing extra lights, and reducing the speed limit. These changes have promoted walking and cycling as a normal part of everyday life, as well as active transport.

### **How do you think Victoria rates in terms of offering people opportunities to exercise outdoors?**

My perception is that Victoria has some of the best places in the world but also many that are mediocre. *The Economist* said that Melbourne is the most liveable city in the world, which is very nice recognition but at the same time a very big barrier. People say, 'We are already the best, we don't want to change'. It is hard to move from good to great but Victoria has to move in that direction, learn from all the magnificent things it has done, and realise that this is a process of continuous improvement – you are never finished.

### **What value do you think VicHealth is adding in this area?**

There is no health system in the world that can survive if it's only curative. It has to be preventive. VicHealth's successes in illness prevention and health promotion are recognised internationally, and hopefully its initiatives can be adopted in other Australian states and around the world. Initiatives around nutrition, around physical activity, realising the benefits to mental and physical health, are critical. VicHealth can play a major role in creating wonderful new communities in Victoria, as well as improving existing ones.

### **How can technology help people to become more active?**

With good infrastructure, technology can help to improve levels of physical activity. Through technology, people are much better informed. They can find out where to do yoga in the park or create a new group that likes to run five kilometres every night, or some other common interest. Even more important is connecting technology with champions – in schools, neighbourhoods, businesses – people that will promote physical activity where technology might make things more fun or interesting. We also need to realise the benefits of physical activity and move from talking to doing.

**With good infrastructure, technology can help to improve levels of physical activity.**

# 2013 VICTORIAN HEALTH PROMOTION FOUNDATION AWARDS

## PROMOTING HEALTHY EATING

### FINALISTS

#### **RETAIL FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROJECT IN BASS COAST SHIRE** Bass Coast Shire Council

This project aimed to increase the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables in the Bass Coast with an emphasis on isolated communities.

#### **FACILITATING HEALTHY EATING POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS**

Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)

This project aimed to improve the healthy eating culture and behaviour within Indigenous communities in Victoria.

### WINNER

#### **PROMOTING HEALTHY EATING THROUGH PRICE REDUCTION & SKILL-BUILDING**

Deakin University

**With:** National Heart Foundation and Coles Supermarkets

Through a supermarket-based intervention research program, this project helped improve nutrition behaviours of low income Victorian women and their families.

## ENCOURAGING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### FINALISTS

#### **KOORI BEAT IT PROGRAM – THE BIGGEST MOB, MOVIN' AND LOSIN'** City of Whittlesea

**With:** Plenty Valley Community Health, Bubup Wilam for Early Learning Inc

Koori Beat It is an evidence-based physical activity and lifestyle modification program for people with, or at risk of, chronic disease.

#### **DSAMP LETS GO SURFING DAY**

Disabled Surfer Association Mornington Peninsula (DSAMP)

This project provided people with a disability to have access to the beach, and enjoy a safe surfing experience.

#### **HEALTHY ACTIVE LIVING IN MOUNT ALEXANDER**

Mount Alexander Shire Council

**With:** Tarrengower Prison, Castlemaine District Community Health, Castlemaine Community House and the Central Victorian Health Alliance

Promoting wellness among disadvantaged vulnerable residents, this project improved access to and sustainability of physical activity, healthy eating, and lifestyle modification programs.

### WINNER

#### **BOOSTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN WELLINGTON SHIRE**

Wellington Shire Council

The Wellington Shire Council *Physical Activity Strategy 2010* outlined a new integrated approach to encouraging increased levels of physical activity among residents.

## PREVENTING HARM FROM ALCOHOL

### FINALISTS

#### **COMMUNITY ALCOHOL ACTION NETWORK (CAAN)** Australian Drug Foundation

This network brings together a range of organisations to inform, enable and mobilise the community to raise their concerns and seek advice on alcohol issues.

#### **DRINKING-RELATED LIFESTYLES RESEARCH** RMIT

**With:** Deakin University

This research examined the use of alcohol by younger and older Victorians in a variety of social contexts.

### WINNER

#### **FEBFAST**

FebFast

This annual event in February challenges Australians to press pause in their alcohol consumption for the whole month.

## IMPROVING MENTAL WELLBEING

### FINALISTS

#### **ALLPLAY**

Moreland City Council

**With:** HealthMaps, North Western Mental Health

ALLPLAY is a pilot project that delivered health promotion messages through community organisations.

#### **RARE – RURAL AND REMOTE ENGAGEMENT**

Wimmera Uniting Care

RARE used a community-based, inclusive approach developed in response to extreme drought, fires, floods and remote conditions prevalent in the Wimmera and southern Mallee regions.

### WINNER

#### **L2P – LEARNER DRIVER MENTOR PROGRAM**

VicRoads

**With:** Transport Accident Commission (TAC)

This community-based program is for learner drivers to get experience with fully licensed volunteer mentors, leading to improved access to employment opportunities and increased social connection.

## PREVENTING TOBACCO USE

### WINNER

#### **PARTNERING TO SUPPORT HOMELESS SMOKERS**

Quit Victoria

**With:** The Royal District Nursing Service Homeless Persons Program

Quit Victoria and the Royal District Nursing Service Homeless Persons Program (RDNS-HPP) formed a partnership to develop and evaluate a program for clients to quit or reduce smoking and review RDNS-HPP's smoking-related policy and practice.

# FINALISTS & WINNERS

The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation Awards celebrate the wide range of innovative and successful contributions to health promotion in Victoria.

The breadth of different approaches and the level of creativity and innovation represented in this year's finalists highlights why Victoria is considered a world leader in health promotion.



## COMMUNICATIONS IN HEALTH PROMOTION

### FINALISTS

#### HEALTHY LIFESTYLE, HEALTHY COMMUNITY PROJECT

Gannawarra Shire Council

**With:** Northern District Community Health, Cohuna District Hospital, Kerang District Health, Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership

This project was a first step towards starting a conversation about health and wellbeing in a regional community.

#### 'LAST DANCE' CAMPAIGN

Quit Victoria

This campaign was developed in response to research suggesting the concept of 'regret' held potential value as an emotion that could motivate people to quit smoking.

#### THE ANTI-HATE PROJECT

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

This project was developed after research that showed people were looking for a place to share their experiences if they didn't want, or were unable, to make a formal report about racial abuse to the police or the Commission.

### WINNER

#### SWITCH OFF SOLARIUMS

Cancer Council Victoria

The aim of this campaign was to encourage a solarium ban in Victoria. A range of health promotion activities were used, including a collaboration between a number of organisations.

## BUILDING HEALTH THROUGH SPORT

### FINALISTS

#### BOYSPACE

Centre for Multicultural Youth

BoySpace used sport and recreational tools to engage young men (particularly from Afghanistan) arriving as orphans or Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors, to help them adapt and thrive in Australia.

#### FAIR GO, SPORT!

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

**With:** Hockey Victoria

Promoting sexual and gender diversity in sport. This project promoted safe and inclusive sporting environments.

#### SPIRITWEST CALD SPORTS PROGRAM

Western Bulldogs Football Club

Through sport and active recreation, this project supported newly arrived refugees and migrants from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds to settle in Australia.

### WINNER

#### RUMBALARA FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB (RFNC)

Rumbalara Football Netball Club

RFNC took an ecological approach to health promotion by creating healthy environments that promote cultural safety, healthy lifestyles, strong Aboriginal identity, and positive interaction with mainstream society.

## BUILDING HEALTH THROUGH ART

### FINALISTS

#### BODY ARMOUR

ILBIJERRI Theatre Company

**With:** Hepatitis Victoria, Victorian Department of Health, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)

This is an original performing arts story that follows the journey of three teenagers as they experiment with risky activities such as piercing, tattooing and blood sharing.

#### BEING BREND0

Victorian AIDS Council/Gay Men's Health Centre

**With:** Burnet Institute, Melbourne University, X-Machine Productions

This project explored the utility of social media for health promotion through the production of an online episodic drama.

### WINNER

#### MUSIC AS A VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Black Arm Band

Black Arm Band is a Victorian-based performing arts company that celebrates contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and culture.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

### FINALISTS

#### HEALTHY BY DESIGN – A RURAL PERSPECTIVE

La Trobe University

**With:** Inclusive Design, Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership, Swan Hill Rural City Council, Buloke Shire Council, Gannawarra Shire Council

This study identified that when compared to their urban counterparts, rural and regional communities are inadvertently 'hard-wired' by years of incremental design decisions.

#### EXAMINATION OF NUTRITION LABELLING AND CONSUMER FOOD SELECTION

Obesity Policy Coalition

**With:** Cancer Council Victoria – Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer

This project evaluated the effectiveness of kilojoule labelling, to determine if it led adults to select less energy-dense fast foods in an Australian context.

#### YOUNG AND WELL NATIONAL SURVEY

Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre

This survey used online methodologies to create a national databank of young people's experience of mental health and wellbeing, and their use of technologies.

### WINNER

#### FAMILY VIOLENCE AFTER NATURAL DISASTER RESEARCH: BREAKING NEW GROUND

Women's Health Goulburn North East

This work aimed to drive and support new approaches to family violence in the aftermath of natural disasters.

# Green

## Victoria's fruit and vegetable supply goes digital with the Seed Challenge winners

Imagine a world in which you could step out of your front door and harvest fresh zucchini or pumpkin growing on the nature strip. Imagine arranging deliveries of fresh eggs from a local producer through a website designed to connect small farmers with their communities.

These are two of the visions born when VicHealth shook the tree by throwing open a challenge to Victorians with a wide range of skills and expertise not normally associated with health promotion: "How do we improve fruit and vegetable supply and access, as well as develop and promote a culture of healthy eating in Victoria?"

**The Seed Challenge** took a radical approach to a big issue: most Victorians eat less than the recommended amount of fresh fruit and vegetables. Knowing that access to good food makes more difference than health education alone to what people eat, VicHealth aimed to foster innovation and encourage Victorians

to find new ways of working together, to develop new bright ideas and use digital technology to bring them to reality.

"By mounting a challenge, we were able to get social entrepreneurs, designers, urban architects and people with digital expertise to really think about this problem," said VicHealth CEO, Jerril Rechter.

"These were people who were really passionate in this area. We got them thinking about how they could bring their skills together and get to the heart of the problem: if we are telling people we want them to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables, they have to have it easily accessible in their own communities."

Poor nutrition is implicated in more than 56 per cent of deaths in Australia and 16 per cent of the total burden of disease.<sup>4</sup> Much of this is preventable – but despite years of health messages encouraging

### The challenge: Improving access to fruit and vegetable supply



### Key approach: Using digital tools





# Revolution

people to eat five serves of vegetables and two of fruit a day, nine out of 10 Victorians do not meet that requirement. More than 60 per cent – 2.4 million people – are overweight or obese, and at greater risk of chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer.<sup>5</sup>

Seminal work published by VicHealth in 2010 offered a partial explanation: even in a fertile state like Victoria, there remain communities in which there literally is no easy access to fresh fruit and vegetables. For others, using fresh produce is simply too expensive or difficult.

To address these problems, fresh fruit and vegetables must be an easy, cheap and desirable choice. And while backyard veggie patches might hark back to a bygone era, 21st-century innovation in design, urban planning and technology have opened possibilities to influence and inform the public in ways that have never before been possible.

In launching the Seed Challenge, VicHealth partnered with **The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI)**, which brought to the table experience in the innovation process and technical skill around venture support, process challenges and company design.

“The way we communicate with each other and live our lives, the connections that exist within the community, are really being transformed quite rapidly by digital technology and engagement,” said TACSI project manager for Victoria, Christian Stenta.

“We wanted projects that could use digital technology not only as a mechanism for collaboration, but as an inherent part of what they were trying to create.”

Entries were judged on innovation, sustainability, collaboration, social impact and their digital component. The top 10 received support to work with VicHealth

and TACSI to develop their idea into a business plan and present it to a judging panel. The two winners were announced in September.

Each of the winners receives \$100,000 plus 12 months further support to develop their concepts into sustainable business models. The remaining eight are at the point where they can take their ideas to the next level with the right funding partner. “It’s meant really strong capacity building in the sector,” said Ms Rechter.

The potential of technology for fostering social innovation and entrepreneurship in the health space is only just starting to be recognised. With the success of the Seed Challenge, Ms Rechter said VicHealth was interested in pursuing similar challenges in future to address fundamental culture change and ultimately achieve better health for Victorians.

## Collaboration: Spreading the word



## Result: Connecting people to fresh fruit and vegetables





## Winners

### Open Food Network

Kirsten Larsen and Serenity Hill worked for 10 years in food policy and research before they decided to get their hands dirty and spend time on a farm in north-eastern Victoria. Seeing food literally rotting on the ground, they had the idea of selling it on a website as a way of covering their petrol expenses.

Several years and lots of hard work later, the Open Food Network will create a whole new marketplace for small producers, allowing farmers and suppliers to connect directly with consumers who want their produce without having to go through a supermarket.

When it goes live in 2014, their website will offer transparency in farming and distribution practices, as well as various ways of delivering food to customers through different mechanisms such as farmers' markets, home delivery and co-ops.

"People who have good produce can trade it in a streamlined way. It means their food production will be viable and accessible, and it will incentivise people to increase their production and diversity of production," said Ms Larsen.

"Rather than worrying about getting our idea onto a financially sustainable basis straight away, winning the Seed Challenge enables us at this early stage to focus on channelling food across the community's needs, while at the same time putting together a solid business model."

Serenity Hill and Kirsten Larsen.

## Finalists

**Healthy Food Connects**, Mildura Rural City Council: using technology to connect local farmers with the community by developing an open food hub and Quick Response Codes (QR) – a barcode that provides access to information through a mobile phone - with healthy recipes.

**Suspended fresh food at farmers' markets**, Victorian Farmers' Markets Association: a charitable user-pays system where fresh and healthy food is offered on a sliding price scale to improve affordability for low-income earners.

**The Good Food Convoy**, Sustainable Table: a portable 'mini marketplace' that will visit areas with limited access to fresh food and provide education, particularly aimed at children, along the way.

**Pop Up Fresh Food Markets**, Inspiro: A series of pop-up mini-markets for the Yarra Ranges area to visit local 'food deserts', along with a mobile phone app and website to track the markets' locations.

## Winners

### 3000acres

As a planner and landscape architect respectively, Chris Renkin and Kate Dundas were aware that policy around healthy cities focuses heavily on promoting physical activity, but puts very little emphasis on nutrition. The 3000acres dream is to unlock land in Melbourne – from nature strips to council car parks – for people to cultivate their own food. It’s a concept encapsulated in the name itself – signifying the need to bring innovation and better design to the Victoria’s postcode.

“The way we design our cities is disconnecting us from food production – we are saying there needs to be a whole new idea about using space and linking planning and design of the built environment with nutrition,” said Ms Renkin.

“We are proposing to get rid of the barriers so people can access the land, to create a social community infrastructure so people will know how to grow food and be connected to food production again.”

Modelled on similar movements in New York and Glasgow, the 3000acres website uses social networking and an open source platform to identify plots of land available for food growing, including both public and privately-owned. It will contain information, checklists and legal agreements that people need to establish a community garden.

“One of the things that really attracted me to this project”, said Ms Rechter, “was it uses digital technology as a way to motivate and spread the word, but it has a great practical application as well. You can almost see fruit trees growing on suburban nature strips everywhere. People will see they can use their urban environment to supply fresh fruit and vegetables in ways they wouldn’t have thought of before.”

Kate Dundas and Chris Renkin.

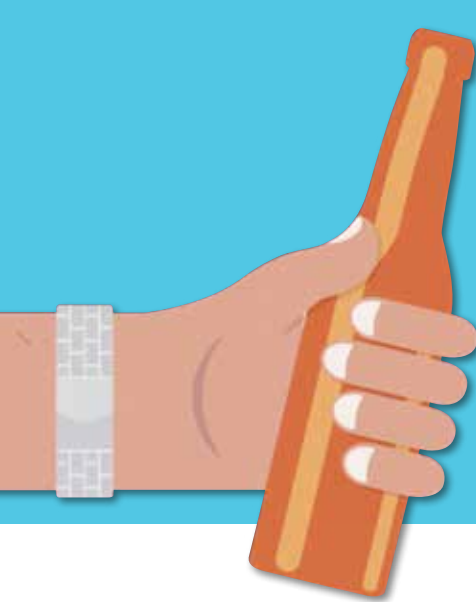


**Construction Workers Eating Phone Application Quiz and tips**, Incolink Foundation Fund: a mobile phone app to provide healthy eating information and education to construction workers through quizzes and key industry news.

**Fresh and Fruitful**, eating advice for new and expecting mums – Bridge 8: a series of short animations for pregnant women and new mothers with expert advice on nutrition for both mum and baby.

**Locavore Market**, a gamified system for changing behaviours – Monash University: applying high-tech ‘gamification’ techniques and avatars to Victoria’s food system by allowing people to choose what to grow and where and how to distribute produce.

**Squares**, Centre for Education and Research in Environment Strategies (CERES): this meal planning app asks users to enter basic details about how they eat and cook and provides YouTube clips to healthy recipes, access to food relief services, among other items.



# Exploring the role of alcohol in Victorians' lives

One of the few constants in Victorians' social lives is alcohol – that ever-present companion to celebrations, commiserations and most things in between. Just as a school of fish remain blissfully unaware of the water that surrounds them, the sheer ubiquity of our favourite social lubricant is rarely challenged in wider society. To stop mid-stroke and ask, 'what exactly is this that we're swimming in?' is to disrupt the entire ecosystem.

Yet this type of incisive, challenging question is at the heart of new research undertaken by RMIT University, with the assistance of a VicHealth Innovation Research Grant. By examining Victorians' attitudes toward excessive drinking, the nine-week study has identified four distinct 'drinking identities' through qualitative interviews with more than 180 adults across the state.

The ***Drinking-related lifestyles: exploring the role of alcohol in Victorians' lives***<sup>6</sup> research also surveyed 2,500 Victorians to find out how many of us belong to each identity, the drivers of their behaviour, and what might be done to promote a reduction in excessive drinking.

RMIT Associate Professor, Mike Reid, was surprised to find that the 'initiator' type – more commonly known as the over-indulging 'life of the party' – was

'initiators' can lose sight of that. You can have fun and celebrate, but you don't need to drink copious amounts to do that."

A 2013 national poll conducted by the **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education** found that 75 per cent of Australians believe that the country has a problem with excessive drinking.<sup>7</sup> Yet this has traditionally been a tough area in which to effect change.

"Public health marketing efforts to reduce excessive alcohol consumption in Australia have tended to focus on negative campaigns that depict harms from drinking alcohol," VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said. "But as Professor Reid's research indicates, these negative messages do not always resonate with drinkers, who either don't experience extreme harms, or consider that the benefits of drinking outweigh any negatives."

Ms Rechter believes that the wider community is ready to start changing this culture of excessive drinking. "We know that Victorians are increasingly participating in movements such as **FebFast** and Hello Sunday Morning, which promote the benefits of more moderate alcohol consumption," she said.

**Hello Sunday Morning** is an initiative to reduce risky drinking through mobilising a supportive online community. "Australia has a culture where the non-drinker is the outcast," said Jamie Moore, the organisation's general manager. "People are so afraid to be different. Research has shown that one of the key reasons people drink is to 'fit in'; a lot of people don't have that confidence to say no when they're offered a drink. We'd like to create a culture where that's not the case."

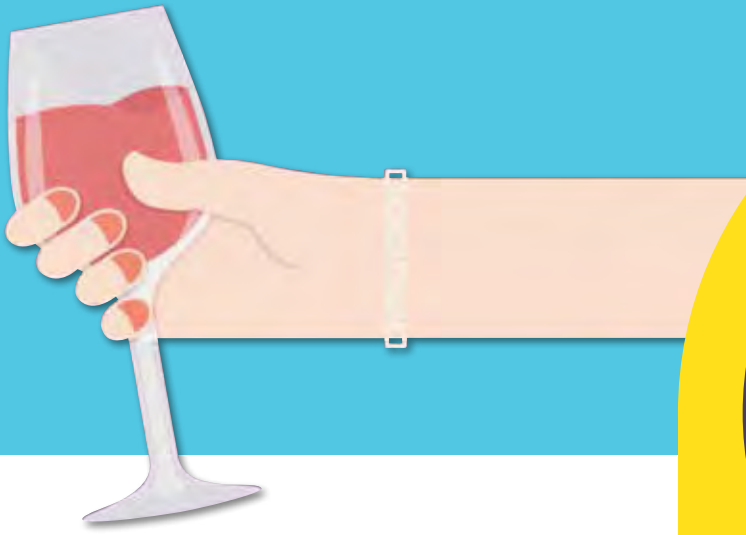
The three other 'drinking types' identified by Reid's research include 'followers', who look to others to direct their drinking and are strongly influenced by social pressures to drink; 'moderators', who tend to associate being drunk with being out of control and vulnerable; and 'protectors', who drink minimally and often speak out about the excessive drinking of others. Context plays a large part in determining where an individual fits within these four categories: some might find that they're an initiator among their circle of friends, for example, but a follower when it comes to work-related social events.

## Australia has a culture where the non-drinker is the outcast.

the largest, constituting 40 per cent of respondents. "I was also surprised that so many people were anchored having alcohol as a big part of who they were as a person," he said.

Reid points out that while alcohol consumption is positively ingrained in peoples' lives, it's all too easy to overdo it.

"More emphasis should be placed on the fact that you can have fun by reducing the amount of alcohol you have. Alcohol doesn't have to be a central pillar or an anchor of having fun with your friends. I think



Culture plays a vital role in establishing and reinforcing social norms within communities and people generally tend to consume alcohol according to the norms around them. In Victoria one strong cultural norm is to accept or even expect the use of alcohol in most social situations. These normative drivers create an environment where Victorians learn from a very early age to expect alcohol – and for some, intoxication – to be a normal part of their adolescent and adult lives.

VicHealth in partnership with the State Government and others will develop and implement a long-term approach to promoting healthier attitudes to drinking and drunk behaviour among Victorians. VicHealth's cultural change project is one component of '[Reducing the alcohol and drug toll: Victoria's plan 2013-2017](#)', which outlines a 15-point-plan for how the Victorian Government will work together with the whole community to bring down the alcohol and drug toll. Recently the Minister for Mental Health Mary Wooldridge and VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter unveiled the Name That Point campaign, which aims to reshape Victoria's alcohol culture into one that embraces moderation, rather than applauding excess and harm.

"This project offers a valuable opportunity to take a different, positive approach," Ms Rechter said. "Our initial goal is to shift our alcohol culture through questioning our attitudes and perceived social norms around alcohol, rather than dictating to people how they should drink. Young people and young adults are not just passive recipients of culture; they can actively shape culture, too."

"If we do nothing, there's a high chance today's binge drinking teens will become tomorrow's heavy drinking 30-somethings, who then have a much higher chance of suffering from disease in middle age," Ms Rechter said. "However, if we step in and influence that young people's attitude and expectations towards alcohol, then he or she might decide to scale it back, and the damage is reduced. It also has the added effect of setting the standard for generations to come. It's clear that Victoria's relationship with drinking is not healthy, and it's now time the vast majority of the community is ready to accept there is a problem and join together to work on it."



**VIDEO** | [www.yourdrinkingprofile.com.au](http://www.yourdrinkingprofile.com.au)

Find out more about Name That Point:  
[www.namethatpoint.com](http://www.namethatpoint.com) and [www.facebook.com/namethatpoint](https://www.facebook.com/namethatpoint)

## WHAT KIND OF DRINKER ARE YOU?

The results of the Drinking Related Lifestyles survey have been transformed into an interactive online quiz and website to help Victorians see where they fit in the spectrum of drinking identities.

### What kind of drinker are you?

#### INITIATOR

"I love to have a drink and let loose. I always know the best bars and parties, and like others to have fun drinking too."

#### FOLLOWER

"When I do drink, I wish I could stop at just one or two. Alcohol doesn't really affect my life too much, but it is a big part of my life."

#### MODERATOR

"I choose not to drink that much. I like to have dinner and drinks with good friends, then go home at a decent hour."

#### PROTECTOR

"It doesn't bother me not having a drink when others are having a drink."

Complete the quiz and get your results at:  
[www.yourdrinkingprofile.com.au](http://www.yourdrinkingprofile.com.au)





Highlights of VicHealth's investments in

# Encouraging physical activity

**VicHealth works in partnership with sports, active travel and recreation agencies, the arts, and workplaces to create new opportunities for Victorians to make physical activity part of their everyday lives. Here's a snapshot of some of these investments.**

## **MOTION**

MOTION is making art that moves people. VicHealth created MOTION to promote the health benefits of arts activities that increase physical activity, build social connection and enhance mental wellbeing. MOTION places a strong emphasis on strategic partnerships and creating models of arts participation that can be replicated and sustained into the future. To date, 12 arts and cultural organisations have worked on unique projects in partnership with their local communities. These have created an exciting range of arts participation opportunities to get people more physically active in a fun and unique way.

## **Active Club Grants**

Since 2005, these small grants to community sport and active recreation organisations have benefited more than 1 million club members across Victoria by helping address the barriers to regular physical activity such as cost and lack of equipment. This year, funding focused on sports injury prevention and management equipment, and essential sporting equipment. The Active Club Grants recognise the important role local clubs/organisations play in increasing physical activity and helping communities stay connected.



**WATCH THE VIDEO**



## **Parental Fear research**

Today, two-thirds of children in Victoria are driven to school even though they live less than two kilometres away.<sup>8</sup> VicHealth has monitored this trend and increased understanding of what is causing parents to restrict their children's ability to independently navigate their way to and from school. This research has shown that reasons include concerns for road safety and a perceived risk of strangers. We are working with the Parenting Research Centre to produce the first large-scale study into parental fear, to drive initiatives to help overcome these concerns.

## Victoria Walks

VicHealth provided funding to establish Victoria Walks Inc to get more people walking every day. Victoria Walks supports local community action to increase walking and the walkability of neighbourhoods. Through a partnership with VicHealth and the Department of Health, it currently supports staff in the Department's Healthy Together Communities program to increase walking across school, workplace and community settings. Victoria Walks also promotes walking through social media, online activities such as the 550 'Walking Maps', and educational resources such as the 'Smart Steps' suite for primary schools, local councils, and families.

## Walk to School

The Walk to School campaign aims to raise awareness of the need for children to make walking part of their daily routine. In 2012, Walk to School became a month-long activity (instead of a day), with over 14,000 children walking a total of 241,363 kilometres. That's equivalent to six times the circumference of the Earth. Our research has shown that in addition to its physical benefits, children who make walking their primary mode of transport benefit from better motor skills, self-esteem and social skills, and start off a great lifetime habit.

In November 2013 VicHealth continued its support of the annual Walk to School event with more than 50 local Victorian councils and 500 schools participating across the state.



## TeamUp

VicHealth launched the TeamUp digital platform in March 2013 to help Victorians find people in their local area who are looking to get out, get active and have fun. TeamUp links people of all sporting abilities with opportunities across hundreds of sports and activities so that they can choose what suits them best: from formal club membership and competition-based activity, to a completely casual kick in the park. It offers all Victorians an easy way to find sport and physical activities or create their own and join in with others, whether they want to get active one afternoon a month, or turn up to play every week.

## Reducing prolonged sitting in the workplace

Workplace sitting is time spent in sedentary behaviour, a risk factor for poor health that is known to contribute to overweight and obesity. That's why reducing prolonged sitting is one of the priorities of our Creating Healthy Workplaces program that's building an evidence base on effective workplace health actions. The pilot project 'Stand Up Victoria' targets prolonged sitting and will assess the effectiveness of reducing this through a trial of standing workstations with the key messages of 'stand up, sit less, move more'. The learnings will benefit workplaces with many office-based employees, which is at least 324,000 staff in Victoria – more, if all workplaces requiring some computer time are included. It is estimated that office-based employees in Australia spend around 80,000 hours seated in the course of their working life.<sup>9</sup>



[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



## TURNING POINT RESEARCH REVEALS ALCOHOL DIVIDE

Research by Turning Point Alcohol & Drug Centre, funded by VicHealth and the Australian Research Council, has found young people in inner-Melbourne were more likely to have casual attitudes than those in growth areas when it comes to alcohol.

A paper published in *Urban Policy and Research* identified how young adults drinking patterns and attitudes vary across Melbourne.

The **Drinking patterns and attitudes for young people** paper by Turning Point researcher Dr Sarah MacLean used data from the most recent Victorian Youth Alcohol and Drug Survey. It compared the responses of those living in growth areas such as Casey, Cardinia, Melton, Whittlesea, Wyndham and Mitchell with those in inner Melbourne, including Port Phillip, Stonnington, Yarra and the City of Melbourne.

The study of young people aged 16 to 24-years-old found:

- » 76 per cent of young people in inner Melbourne agreed that having a drink was one of the pleasures of life, compared to just 66 per cent in outer Melbourne.

» When asked "to what extent do you think it is wrong for someone your age to drink regularly?" 63 per cent of young people in inner Melbourne thought it was "not wrong at all", compared to just 50 per cent in growth areas.

» 94 per cent of 16-17 year olds in inner Melbourne had drunk alcohol in the past 12 months, compared to just 75 per cent of 16-17 year olds in growth areas.

Researcher Dr Sarah MacLean said the study indicates that different alcohol policies are required across large cities such as Melbourne. "Enforcement of provisions banning alcohol sales to minors is particularly needed in inner-Melbourne. In the growth areas, we need strategies to deal with different drinking patterns, for example interventions to ensure parties are safe and well managed, and we also need a cautious approach to liquor outlet density planning."

She said strong consideration should be given to reducing binge drinking, with high levels in both inner and growth areas. "We need to look at restricting alcohol availability in both inner Melbourne and the growth areas."

VicHealth will publish the final report in 2014.

## SOCIAL HARMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SALE & SUPPLY OF PACKAGED LIQUOR IN VICTORIA

VicHealth's report on **The social harms associated with the sale & supply of packaged liquor in Victoria** commissioned by the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing through the Victorian Law Enforcement Drug Fund, presents a statewide overview of packaged liquor supply, utilisation and associated short-term harms in Victoria.

More than three-quarters (78 per cent) of all alcohol in Australia is bought as packaged liquor for off-premises consumption. Despite the inherent contribution this supply makes to the harms of alcohol consumption, there has been little research examining packaged liquor supply and its consumption and consequences. This paucity of evidence makes it difficult for police and policy makers to develop effective, intelligence-led responses mitigating the harms of packaged liquor.

The report comprises five components documenting the contribution of packaged liquor to short-term alcohol-related harms:

- » the background to liquor licensing in Victoria and relevant research investigating packaged liquor, community environments and health outcomes
- » the burden of short-term harm attributable to the consumption of packaged liquor in Victoria
- » packaged liquor consumer beliefs, attitudes and behaviours
- » the current environmental context of packaged liquor sales
- » opportunities for further research.



VIEW THE REPORT

[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/package- quor](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/package<li>quor)





## AUSSIE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN BUBBLE-WRAPPED

A comparison study of children’s independent mobility in England and Australia found Australian parents of 10- to 12-year-olds are more hesitant to allow their kids to walk home from school alone, compared to their British counterparts.

The research, led by Dr Alison Carver and released by Deakin University and VicHealth, compared 784 primary school children and 455 secondary school children in rural and metro areas of Britain and Victoria.

The results show more than half of Australian primary school kids (51 per cent) are ferried to school by car compared with less than a third (32 per cent) of primary school children in England, despite generally walkable distances to and from school.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the research confirms that children’s walking is declining, at a time when childhood obesity has reached record levels.

“VicHealth is interested in the reasons why so many kids are still getting dropped off at school when the walk is usually manageable and obviously beneficial for their health and development,” she said.

The full paper has been published in the hard copy edition of Children’s Geographies.

**READ MORE**

[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/childrenwalkingstudy](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/childrenwalkingstudy)

## REDUCTION IN SMOKING RATES

Victoria has been a world leader in tobacco control for many years and much of this achievement has been borne out of the longstanding partnership between VicHealth and the Victorian Government to support the activities of **Quit Victoria** in tobacco control.

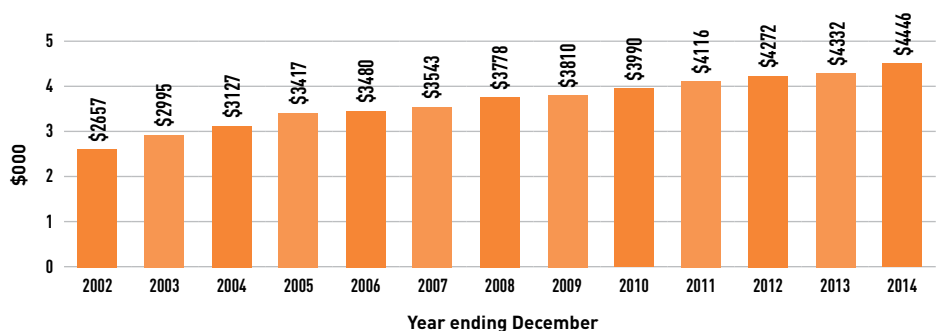
The partnership of these organisations and their tobacco control strategies, such as mass media public education campaigns, high tobacco taxes, advertising bans and smoke-free environment legislation, have helped with the steady decline in smoking rates over recent decades.<sup>10</sup> Between 1991 and 2010, the proportion of daily smokers aged 14 years and over decreased by almost 40 per cent.<sup>11</sup>

Between 2001 and 2011-12, overall rates of smoking have decreased for both

males and females. The age standardised rate of current smokers for males aged 18 years and over fell from 27 per cent in 2001 to 20 per cent in 2011-12, and declined from 21 per cent in 2001 to 16 per cent for females.<sup>12</sup>

Smoking is recognised as the largest single preventable cause of death and disease in Australia and that’s why VicHealth has invested significantly in the important work Quit does.

**VicHealth’s Quit program funding**<sup>13</sup>



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13. Internal VicHealth reports.

## Further reading

**Q&A with Gil Penalosa of 8-80 cities** (p5), a non-profit organisation to make cities into more accessible, safe and enjoyable places.

[www.8-80cities.org](http://www.8-80cities.org)

**VicHealth's Seed Challenge**

[www.seedchallenge.vic.gov.au](http://www.seedchallenge.vic.gov.au)

**The VicHealth Seed Challenge Background Document** (p8)

[www.seedchallenge.vic.gov.au/page/background](http://www.seedchallenge.vic.gov.au/page/background)

**Open Food Network** (Seed Challenge winner) (p10):

[www.openfoodnetwork.org](http://www.openfoodnetwork.org)

**3000acres** (Seed Challenge winner) (p11):

[www.3000acres.org](http://www.3000acres.org)

**Drinking-related lifestyles: exploring the role of alcohol in Victorians' lives research report** (p12)

<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Alcohol-Misuse/Drinking-related-lifestyles>

**Reducing the alcohol and drug toll: Victoria's plan 2013-2017** (p13)

[www.health.vic.gov.au/aod/strategy/index.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/aod/strategy/index.htm)

## Acknowledgements

### Writers

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