



Working together towards healthier communities

Joint statement of
commitment to prevention

Foreword

In December 2011, the Victorian Department of Health, the Australian Government and participating local government authorities committed to working together to create healthier communities.

The commitment and leadership of all these organisations, together with community health and non-government organisation partners at the state and local levels, has delivered significant results in a relatively short period of time.

These results and future efforts, previously delivered under the Prevention Community Model banner, will now be recognised as part of Healthy Together Victoria, with the 12 prevention areas collectively known as Healthy Together Communities.

Healthy Together Victoria will represent the collective responsibility of individuals, who form part of the prevention sector and their local community, to create better health outcomes for themselves and others.

Some of the key achievements delivered across Victoria's preventive health system over the past 12 months include:

- recruitment of a prevention workforce of over 100 staff across 43 communities
- growing action and engagement in Healthy Together Communities across the state
- development of the Victorian Healthy Eating Enterprise with key partners
- commencement of the Victorian Healthy Eating Advisory Service
- release of the Healthy Whittlesea pilot website
- increasing numbers of primary schools and early childhood services signing up for the Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program
- Jamie's Ministry of Food kitchen opening in Geelong
- launches in ten Healthy Together Communities leading to significant interest and involvement from a range of local organisations
- recognition at Australian and international prevention forums.

The Victorian approach is the largest and most rigorously planned population health intervention at a community level experienced in Australia. These developments, and the many more achieved to date, are positioning Victoria as a world leader in prevention.

Prevention is a complex and highly challenging business, which requires comprehensive and innovative approaches. By working together we are demonstrating what can be achieved through partnerships.

The Victorian Government is committed to improving the health of Victorian communities. Over the coming years there will be challenges, but with the combined strength of all levels of government, and close partnerships with many more organisations, we will also see new opportunities for celebration as the health of Victorian communities improves.

It is with passion and energy that I look forward to continuing the journey with new and re-elected mayors, and the Federal Minister for Health, as we continue our commitment to creating better health where Victorians live, learn, work and play.



The Hon. David Davis MP
Minister for Health

Purpose

This statement articulates a commitment to creating healthier communities together. It is a joint agreement between all levels of government, the Victorian Department of Health, the Australian Government and local government authorities participating in the implementation of Healthy Together Communities.

Vision

To improve the health and wellbeing of Victorians by engaging communities in prevention.

Evaluation

The Centre of Excellence in Intervention and Prevention Science has been established to support the Victorian Department of Health and Healthy Together Communities in assessing the success of prevention efforts.

Ongoing evaluation will ensure that prevention efforts are meeting community needs and creating opportunities that make it easy for people to be healthy.



Setting the scene

Australia has one of the best health systems in the world, but it is under pressure from a rapidly growing and ageing population, and increasing prevalence of preventable chronic diseases. In particular, an increase in people being overweight or obese is linked to worrying health trends in cardiovascular disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis and some cancers.

We can significantly reduce chronic disease by working together to promote healthy lifestyles and improving the environments in which people live, learn, work and play. Programs for individuals are useful, but their benefits are often only short-term. To permanently slow the growth of chronic disease, and to create lasting improvements in the health and wellbeing of people and communities, we need to develop a prevention system that is coordinated, responsive, sustainable, and that complements our healthcare system. Victoria is developing such a system.

The Commonwealth Government has provided \$119 million over nine years (2009–10 to 2017–18) through the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health (NPAPH) to slow the growth of lifestyle-related chronic disease in Victoria. As part of Victoria's implementation of the NPAPH, and integrated with the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011–2015*, the Victorian prevention system will bring together statewide policy and local action to develop and deliver tailored evidence-based interventions. These interventions will specifically target the underlying causes of chronic disease, including smoking, poor nutrition, alcohol misuse and physical inactivity. This will involve working with local communities, schools and workplaces to take action on health.

Community-level action enables an intensive and targeted prevention effort that responds to local needs and reflects local infrastructure, networks, programs and planning processes. This approach is designed to create better and longer lasting improvements in the health and wellbeing of local people and their communities.

Healthy Together Communities

Victoria's Healthy Together Communities strategy has funded 12 local community areas for intensive action against preventable diseases. These areas include 14 local government authorities in partnership with community health agencies. Intense work across over 40 communities, reaching approximately 1.3 million Victorians, will aim to improve health and reduce health disparities.

In these communities, existing health promotion efforts will be strengthened through alignment with the new prevention system. The new prevention workforce will:

- tailor interventions at the community level through significant funding to implement healthy living programs that encourage participation, and implement initiatives that create environments that support and encourage healthy living
- support robust and sustainable health-promoting early childhood services, schools, workplaces and communities
- participate in local and statewide health promotion networks and leadership programs to make health a priority for all
- establish local partnerships to harness the passion and experience of community leaders to drive change
- deliver innovation in statewide and localised community engagement and social marketing activities
- provide research and evaluation support in partnership with the Centre of Excellence in Intervention and Prevention Science.

Core principles

The principles that guide the strategy include:

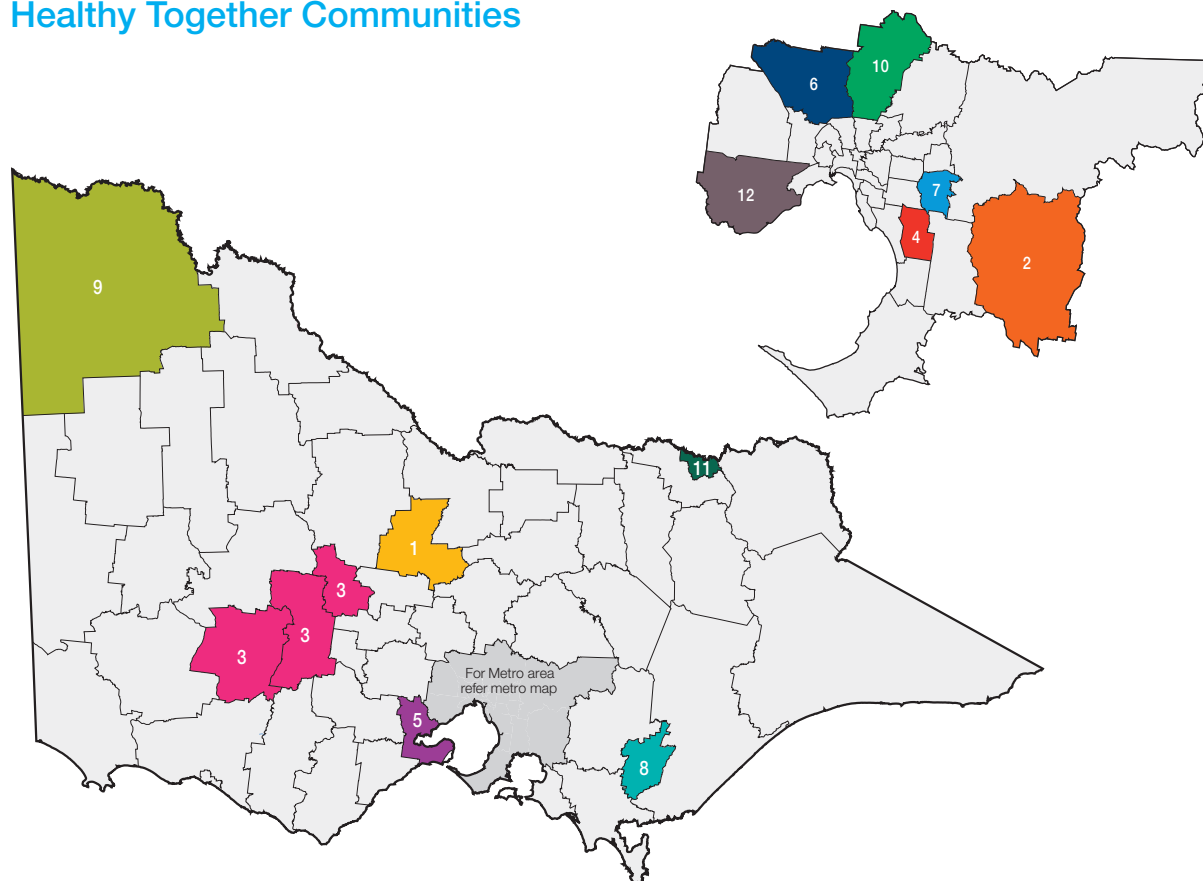
- a dynamic and interactive approach to prevention that is responsive to the varying needs and concerns of local communities
 - prevention delivered through community partnerships led by local government and supported by community health and other community groups and health agencies
 - a comprehensive approach with integration between local community efforts and statewide policy
 - a local partnership focus on prevention
 - resourcing based on community needs and objectives – ensuring the targeting of the right kinds of programs in the right places
 - alignment with legislatively driven strategic planning processes: *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*; *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011–2015*; and municipal public health and wellbeing plans
 - an approach that aims to improve health and reduce health disparities
 - recognising and strengthening the role of local community leadership in preventive health activities
- partnering with non-government organisations and industry to create environments that support healthy choices for communities, workers, families and children
 - a model structured around a research–policy–practice partnership approach, which integrates research and evaluation into routine design and implementation of preventive health efforts, to strengthen future projects.



Working together

This statement acknowledges the partnership with community health services in working together to deliver prevention in their communities.

Healthy Together Communities



1. Bendigo

City of Greater Bendigo
Bendigo Community Health Services

2. Cardinia

Cardinia Shire Council
Southern Health

3. Grampians Goldfields

Central Goldfields Shire Council
Pyrenees Shire Council
Ararat Rural City Council
Maryborough District Health Service
Beaufort and Skipton Health Service
Grampians Community Health
East Grampians Health Service

4. Dandenong

City of Greater Dandenong
Southern Health

5. Greater Geelong

City of Greater Geelong
Barwon Health
Bellarine Community Health

6. Hume

Hume City Council
Dianella Community Health
Sunbury Community Health Centre

7. Knox

Knox City Council
Knox Community Health Service

8. Latrobe

Latrobe City Council
Latrobe Community Health Service

9. Mildura

Mildura Rural City Council
Sunraysia Community Health Services

10. Whittlesea

City of Whittlesea
Plenty Valley Community Health

11. Wodonga

City of Wodonga
Gateway Community Health
Albury Wodonga Health

12. Wyndham

Wyndham City Council
ISIS Primary Care

Our commitment

The Victorian Department of Health, the Australian Government and the Healthy Together local government authorities have jointly developed this statement and support its objectives.

Under the Healthy Together Communities strategy, we are committed to monitoring, reviewing and evaluating this statement and its contribution to Victoria's prevention system. We will also assess its potential to be sustained beyond the life of this initiative.

The Victorian Department of Health and the Australian Government committed to this statement in December 2011.



Hon David Davis MP
Minister for Health
Victorian Government



Hon Tanya Plibersek MP
Minister for Health
Australian Government

Recently elected local government mayors committed to this statement in December 2012.



Cr Ian Wilson
Mayor
Ararat Rural City Council



Cr Brett Owen
Mayor
Cardinia Shire Council



Cr Barry Rinaldi
Mayor
Central Goldfields Shire Council



Cr Lisa Ruffell
Mayor
City of Greater Bendigo



Cr Angela Long
Mayor
City of Greater Dandenong



Cr Keith Fagg
Mayor
City of Greater Geelong



Cr Geoff Porter
Mayor
Hume City Council



Cr Karin Orpen
Mayor
Knox City Council



Cr Sandy Kam
Mayor
Latrobe City Council



Cr Glenn Milne
Mayor
Mildura Rural City Council



Cr Michael O'Connor
Mayor
Pyrenees Shire Council



Cr Rex Griffin
Mayor
City of Whittlesea



Cr Mark Byatt
Mayor
City of Wodonga



Cr Heather Marcus
Mayor
Wyndham City Council

www.health.vic.gov.au/prevention/healthytogether

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