

Victorian Network of Smokefree Healthcare Services

2017 Report of Activities

The Victorian Network of Smokefree Healthcare Services (VNSHS) is part of The Global Network for Tobacco Free Healthcare Services – an independent, not for profit association devoted to tobacco control (www.ensh.org).

The Global Network promotes a systematic and proven approach, enabling the use of eight comprehensive quality standards to guide sustainable and effective implementation of tobacco management and cessation policies in healthcare settings in accordance with the [WHO Framework Convention for Tobacco Control](#) to which Australia is a signatory (one of 180 countries).

As a regional network, VNSHS aims to:

- Promote the ideals and resources of the Global Network (refer to the [Global Network Strategic Plan \(2015-2018\)](#), including the Global Network Standards for healthcare services
- Provide opportunities for networking and information sharing amongst Victorian healthcare services
- Work with local stakeholders to enhance the support available to healthcare services.

One of our obligations as a regional network is to report to the global organisation about our activities. This report serves this purpose, as well as providing our members and associates with a summary of our activities in the last 12 to 18 months and an idea of what lies ahead for the network. Please feel free to distribute it within your organisation and refer your colleagues to the VNSHS website. www.smokefreevictoria.com.au

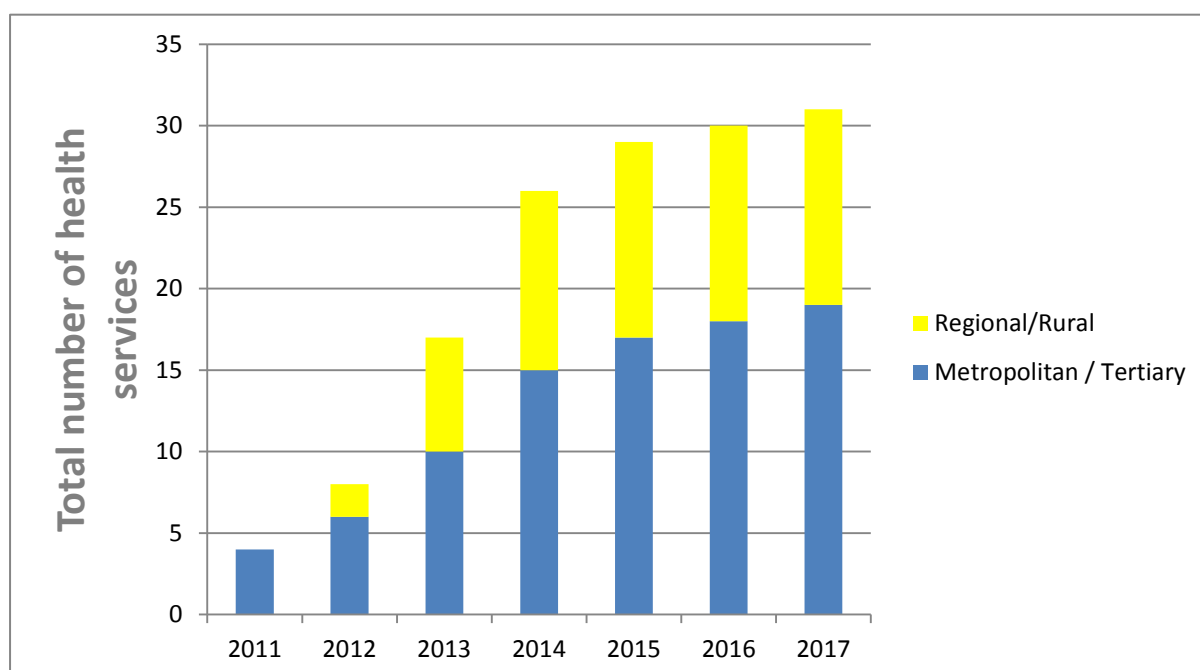
Membership

Members of VNSHS include metropolitan and regional / rural based services, as well as general and specialised services within acute and community settings. Both public and private services are also represented.

In the last 12 months, two health services (Ringwood Private Hospital and Merri Health) have joined the Network, bringing our membership to thirty one. See overleaf for details of current VNSHS members.

Associate members include key local stakeholders such as [Quit Victoria](#) , and the [Tobacco Control Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services](#).

Membership of VNSHS (2011 – 2017)



VNSHS membership as at September 2017

Metropolitan / Tertiary (Year joined)	Regional/Rural (Year joined)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alfred Health (2011) Austin Health (2011) Bellbird Private Hospital (2014) Barwon Health (2011) Calvary Health Care Bethlehem (2014) EACH Social & Community Health (2014) Eastern Health (2013) Knox Private Hospital (2014) Merri Health (2017) Neami National (2013) Northern Health (2015) Peninsula Health (2011) Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (2012) Ringwood Private Hospital (2016) St Vincent's Hospital - Mental Health Unit (2015) The Bays HealthCare Group Inc. (2015) The Melbourne Clinic (2013) Thomas Embling Hospital (2013) Western Health (2012) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albury Wodonga Health (2014) Ballarat Community Health (2013) Beaufort and Skipton Health (2013) Beechworth Health (2013) Bendigo Health (2012) Colac Area Health (2012) Heathcote Health (2013) Hepburn Health Service (2014) Mildura Base Hospital (2014) Northeast Health Wangaratta (2013) Northern District Community Health Service (2014) South West HealthCare Warrnambool (2015)

New Global Standards

Our work and that of the Global Network is underpinned by Global Standards that outline a systematic approach for health services in addressing smoking. The Global Standards address key elements known to be important in achieving outcomes for tobacco control and smoking cessation. Each standard is supported by implementation criteria (specific structures and processes) to help guide health services in achieving implementation and monitoring progress.

The standards underwent a comprehensive review in 2015/16 to ensure alignment with best practice and to address developments such as the availability of e-cigarettes. The revised standards are clearer in their intent, with specific criteria to illustrate how each standard can be achieved in practice. Members of VNSHS have been directly involved in the revision process.

Implementation of the new standards has been a key activity for VNSHS in 2016/2017, with the Coordinating Centre providing guidance to members regarding the transition, including revised audit templates. This has led to greater clarity around the requirements of the standards and therefore a greater understanding of the key elements known to be important in achieving outcomes for tobacco control and smoking cessation.

<p>Standard 1: Governance and Commitment The healthcare organisation has clear and strong leadership to systematically implement a tobacco-free policy.</p>	<p>Standard 2: Communication The healthcare organisation has a comprehensive communication strategy to support awareness and implementation of the tobacco-free policy and tobacco cessation services.</p>
<p>Standard 3: Education and Training The healthcare organisation ensures appropriate education and training for clinical and non-clinical staff.</p>	<p>Standard 4: Identification, Diagnosis and Tobacco Cessation Support The healthcare organisation identifies all tobacco users and provides appropriate care in line with international best practice and national standards.</p>
<p>Standard 5: Tobacco Free Environment The healthcare organisation has strategies in place to achieve a tobacco-free campus.</p>	<p>Standard 6: Healthy Workplace The healthcare organisation has human resource management policies and support systems that protect and promote the health of all who work in the organisation.</p>
<p>Standard 7: Community Engagement The healthcare organisation contributes to and promotes tobacco control/prevention in the local community according to the WHO FCTC and and/or national public health strategy.</p>	<p>Standard 8: Monitoring and Evaluation The healthcare organisation monitors and evaluates the implementation of all the Global Network standards at regular intervals</p>

Member audits and peer review

Audit against the Global Standards is an important driver for improved performance.

All members are required to commit to regular self-audit, submitting their audit results and corresponding action plans to the VNSHS Coordinating Centre at least 2 yearly.

For new members, this is invaluable in establishing an understanding of their smokefree status and guiding their initial planning processes. Ongoing audit identifies improvement and refocuses efforts in a continuous cycle.

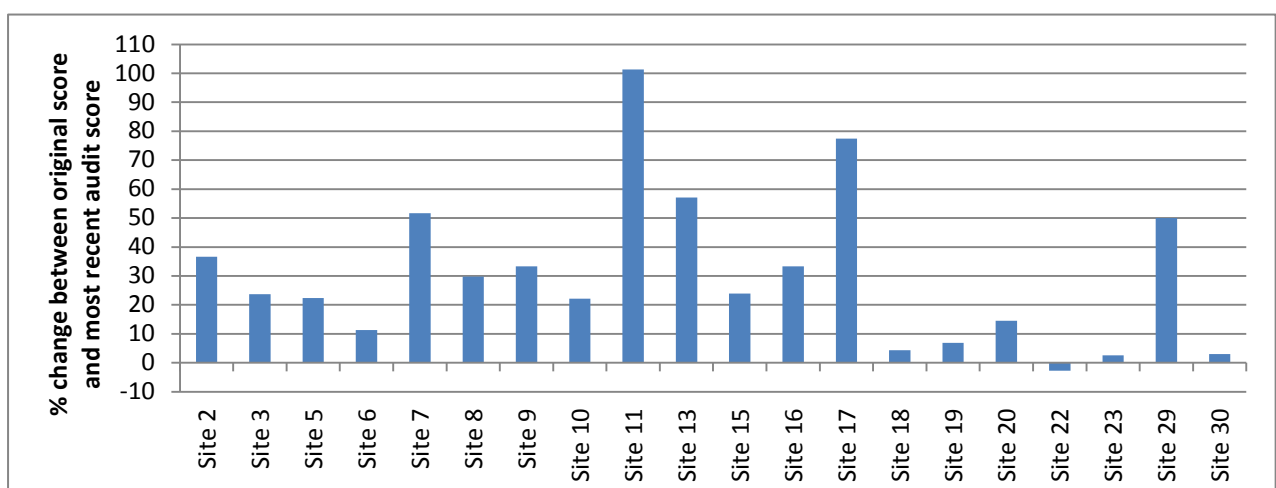


All new members are provided with feedback about their initial audit.

In the last 12 months, seven member health services have conducted audits against the new Global Standards; Barwon Health, Colac Area Health, Alfred Health, Austin Health, Calvary HealthCare Bethlehem, Western Health and Northeast Health Wangaratta. In 2015, the network commenced a peer review process in which members were invited to discuss their audit results at the member teleconference. Presenting members are asked to reflect on their key achievements and challenges in relation to smokefree in the last 12 months, as well as the key strategies they plan to put in place. The exercise is helpful in identifying practical strategies for achieving incremental improvement, and has demonstrated how annual audit against the standards can help drive this improvement.

Five members have undertaken peer review via this process to date including Hepburn Health, Bendigo Health, Calvary Health Care Bethlehem, Peninsula Health, and the Mental Health Unit at St Vincent's Hospital. The benefits of the process are highlighted in the figure below which shows the percentage improvement in audit score for various VNSHS members.

Performance improvement for VNSHS members 2015 (% improvement in audit score compared to previous audit)



Regional validation program and GOLD FORUM

VNSHS established a Regional Validation Program in 2013, involving independent validation of members' self-audit assessment by experienced health surveyors. The process supports participating members in identifying areas for improvement. Other members participating in the process as observers also gain much in terms of understanding the requirements of the standards and observing the activities of the service being validated.

Baron Health was the first health service to participate in the process in 2013 and more recently, two further members have undertaken the validation process – Colac Area Health (July 2016) and Alfred Health (November 2016). This has supported these services in qualifying for the GOLD Forum process and receiving international 'GOLD' recognition.

VNSHS congratulates our GOLD Forum winners for 2017

Colac Area Health's integrated health service includes an aged care facility, acute care and community health services to meet the needs of more than 30,000 people in the Corangamite, Colac Otway, and Surf Coast Shires. In 2012, 21.5% of adults in the Colac Otway Shire were identified as current smokers. This is the highest percentage in the Barwon South West region and higher than the Victorian average of 13.3%. Controlling Tobacco Use was then identified in the Colac Area Health Integrated Health Promotion plan as a key priority for 2013-2017. To confirm this commitment, Colac Area Health joined the Victorian Network of Smoke Free Healthcare Services (VNSHS), and was the first rural hospital in Victoria to do so.

Alfred Health is one of the main metropolitan services in Melbourne, Victoria and has shown considerable leadership in the area of smokefree for a number of years. This is evident in their well-integrated support for patients, their ongoing efforts to maintain a smokefree environment, and their involvement in a wide range of activities that support smokefree efforts in the broader community, including among other health services. They have demonstrated innovative approaches in a number of areas, including in education and communication, and in their efforts to engage consumers. Their smokefree initiative complements a comprehensive health promoting health services approach.



What is the GOLD Forum?

The GOLD Forum is a global platform that gives recognition to members implementing the Global Quality Tobacco Standards at a high level. It provides a learning and sharing forum to exchange best practice and access expertise knowledge on key aspects of tobacco free policy implementation. The experiences provided by Forum members serve to inspire healthcare services interested in implementing the Global Network of Tobacco Free Healthcare services concept, provide practical assistance to networks where tobacco legislation is weak and be a rich source of good practice models in a variety of settings.

Who can participate?

All member health care services that have reached a high level of implementation of the Global Standards on tobacco control and have had their audit results validated in a national or regional process. For more information go to: <http://www.ensh.org/gold.php>

Other network activities in 2016 & 2017

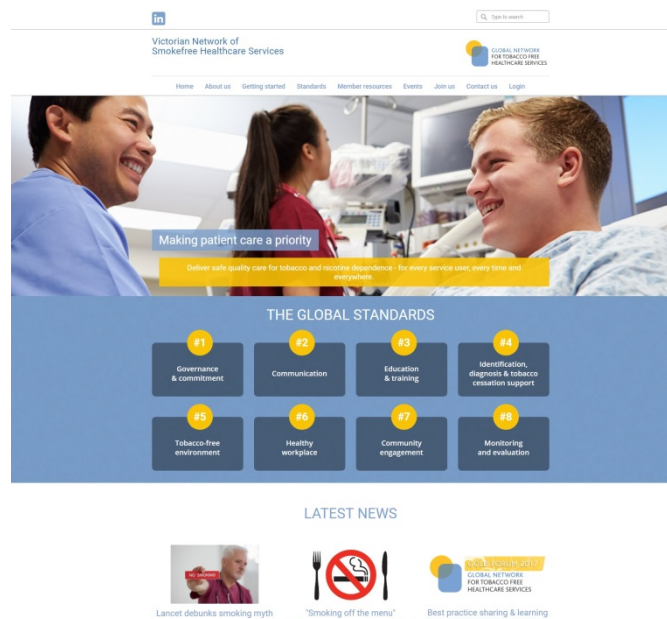
New VNSHS website

A major activity during 2016 has been the redevelopment of the VNSHS website (www.smokefreevictoria.com.au) which aims to improve information exchange between members and to create awareness and understanding of the Global Network and Global Standards more widely.

The website features an extensive “members’ only” resource section, which facilitates sharing of resources to support implementation of the Standards. The resources are catalogued according to their relevance to each of the Standards.

The website also supports non-members in understanding the benefits of the Network and the Standards.

The launch of the new website has enabled improved communication with members and other stakeholders through an e-marketing function to promote the Network and its activities, as well as updating interested parties on various smokefree initiatives, news, resources and training opportunities. The newsletter is distributed to network members and a wide variety of other stakeholders such as metropolitan and rural health services, GP networks, government bodies and other health related associations.



Regular member meetings

Members participate in regular meetings to gain advice and share experiences on current smokefree issues including supporting special population groups. Most meetings are held via teleconference / web-conference. At least two meetings per year are held at a member site to enable face-to-face interaction. In 2016, Bendigo Health hosted the annual planning day (February 2016) and a further meeting coincided with the regional validation site visit to Colac Area Health and the Alfred.

These meetings are also an opportunity to engage directly with key stakeholders [Quit](#) and the [Department of Health and Human Services](#) who have a standing invitation to attend.

Supporting stakeholders events and activities

The Network participates in a number of collaborative activities to support wider efforts in relation to tobacco control. This year the Department of Health and Human Services hosted the first state-wide **Smoking Cessation Forum – High Priority Populations** for primary and community care workers in areas of mental health, aboriginal health, General Practice and Alcohol and other drugs (AOD). The Network's Regional Coordinator, Dr Rudi Gasser presented on 'Systems to support effective smoking interventions presentation' which can be viewed on the DHHS website: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/systems-to-support-effective-smoking-interventions>.

This was preceded by the Department of Health and Human Services **Supporting Patients to be Smokefree** workshop, which VNSHS co-hosted with the Alfred. This half day event aimed to facilitate clinical practice improvement of nicotine dependency across Victorian health services. Network members have also provided input into other state-wide activities including resources produced for the [Start the Conversation initiative](#) led by Alfred Health and supported by the Department of Health and Human Services.

VNSHS "GOLD" Forum

Bringing the "GOLD" Forum experience to Victoria, Alfred Health and Colac Area Health shared their experience of validation and the Gold Forum process with network members, interested health services and stakeholders at Quit Victoria (Cancer Council) on the Tuesday 30th May 2017.

This interactive forum was well received, supporting members' and stakeholder awareness and understanding of the process and its value for continuous improvement.

Establishment of a Network Steering Committee

With the growth of the organisation, moves to establish a formal governance structure for VNSHS commenced in 2016. Terms of Reference for a Steering Committee have been agreed, which focus on the provision of high level guidance regarding the organisation's direction, management and ongoing development.

Membership of the Committee was finalised in early 2017, with representation sought from metropolitan and regional areas; as well as associate representation:

- Dr Rudi Gasser (Barwon Health)
- Mark Heenan (Calvary HealthCare Bethlehem)
- Erin McClusky (Colac Area Health)
- Kirstan Corben (VicHealth)
- Nga Tran (St Vincent's Hospital, Mental Health Unit)
- Sally Thomas (Eastern Health)
- Dr Sarah White (Quit Victoria)



Specifically, the committee responsibilities include:

- Advice regarding the strategic direction of the organisation
- Advice regarding the operational activities of the organisation

The Committee will be charged, in the first instance, with determining the priorities of the Network and how it can best integrate with and support the wider initiatives within Victoria.

Looking ahead

Information exchange

Information exchange will continue to be a major activity for the Network, and will be guided by the priorities identified through the new governance structure. This is likely to include a combination of online and face-to-face networking opportunities, as well as engagement through the website and e-marketing.

Regional validation for members

It is the Global Standards that differentiate the work of the Network and that provide a focus for member services to achieve their smokefree goals. Experience of the validation process in 2016 has confirmed the value of this process for participating services and participation will be promoted in 2017. A further goal will be to encourage and equip member services to aim for Gold Forum status at an international level.

Joint activities

The Network will look for ongoing opportunities to build strategic partnerships and conduct of joint activities to improve health system capacity to reduce the impact of smoking.