

Network Activity Update 2020

The Victorian Network of Smokefree Healthcare Services (VNSHS) is part of The Global Network for Tobacco Free Healthcare Services (GNTH) – an independent, not for profit association devoted to tobacco control (www.tobaccofreehealthcare.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 including the Global Network Standards for Tobacco Free 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 months and an idea of what lies ahead.

We particularly draw your attention to the recently released [Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan for 2019-2023](#), which includes reducing tobacco related harm as one of four focus areas for Victoria. The plan sets out several strategic actions to reduce Victoria's smoking rates, a key one being to **embed smoking identification and cessation pathways into routine care**. The plan specifically recommends that health services ***“participate in the Victorian Network of Smokefree Healthcare Services and work collaboratively with other health and human services to form networks, share knowledge, resources and measurement systems”***. This is a strong endorsement of the value of the Network. Other actions reinforce the systematic approach reflected in the Global Network Standards.

I also commend to you the recently released [online audit tool](#) developed by the Global Network. This enables reporting and benchmarking to support your ongoing efforts for improvement.

Please feel free distribute this report it within your organisation and refer your colleagues to the VNSHS website (www.smokefreevictoria.com.au).



Regional Coordinator, VNSHS

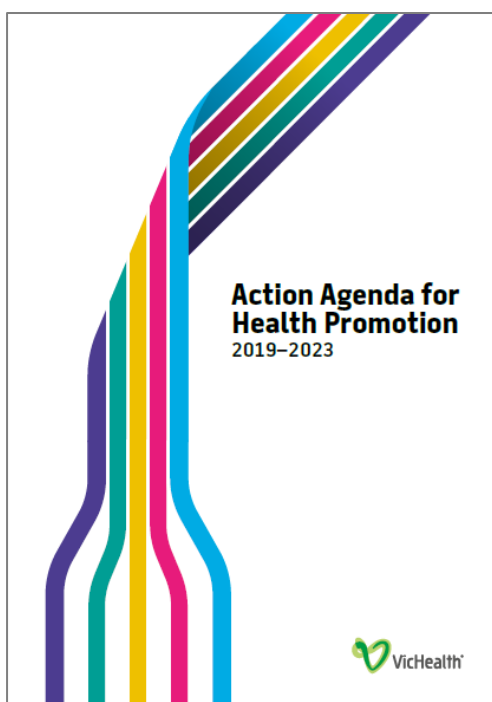
Part of an integrated approach to tobacco control in Victoria

The Network seeks opportunities to integrate with the wider efforts in relation to tobacco control. In 2018 the Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria hosted the first **Think Tank** to develop a shared vision to embed a sustainable model of smoking cessation care in Victorian health services, and a plan for achieving that vision over the short, medium and long term.

This work is now reflected in the latest [Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan for 2019-2023](#), which includes reducing tobacco related harm as one of four focus areas for Victoria. The plan sets out several strategic actions to reduce Victoria’s smoking rates, a key one being to embed smoking identification and cessation pathways into routine care.

Among the evidence-based actions proposed for health services is that they **“participate in the Victorian Network of Smokefree Healthcare Services and work collaboratively with other health and human services to form networks, share knowledge, resources and measurement systems”**. This is a strong endorsement of the value of the Network. Other actions reinforce the systematic approach reflected in the Global Network Standards.

This focus on integrating smoking cessation support into health service settings is also reflected in the [VicHealth Action Agenda for 2019-2023](#). The Action Agenda identifies that VicHealth, which is the funder of Quit Victoria, will participate in coordinated effort and action to integrate evidence-based smoking cessation support in health service settings. These actions are set out in further detail in the [VicHealth Tobacco Strategy 2019-2023](#).



Prevent tobacco use

While the proportion of Victorians who smoke is declining, the tobacco industry is continually evolving its products to make them more appealing – and in some instances more affordable – thereby threatening to stall the progress made over the past 30 years. Preventing uptake, promoting and supporting cessation and reducing exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke are the key pillars to reducing harm from tobacco.

Our 10-year goal
Preventing tobacco use has been foundational work for VicHealth, and in 2013 we committed to a 10-year goal: to make 400,000 more Victorians smoke or tobacco-free by 2023.

Over the past six years, we have supported Quit Victoria to deliver programs and campaigns across the Victorian population to reduce smoking with a focus on:

- public education campaigns using mass and digital media
- cessation support co-delivered by the Qutline and online
- policy and regulatory change
- cessation promotion in homes, community and social settings.

We have also funded research to explore the effectiveness of cessation support for disadvantaged groups and, in partnership with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, supported health professionals to offer evidence-based support to people who smoke.

2019-2023
Four-year goal: To further reduce tobacco use, with a focus on:

Preventing uptake among young people

- Continue to monitor tobacco and nicotine products to ensure they are not designed to appeal to young people.
- Support, through Quit Victoria, the delivery of public education campaigns about the negative health impacts of smoking, to increase quitting rates and to discourage uptake of smoking among young people.

Supporting people to quit, particularly those from disadvantaged groups

- Continue to provide substantial funding for the Quit Victoria program, and secure opportunities for greater education and awareness of organizations and communities to contribute to smoking cessation.
- Participate in collaborative efforts and action to integrate evidence-based smoking cessation support in health service settings.

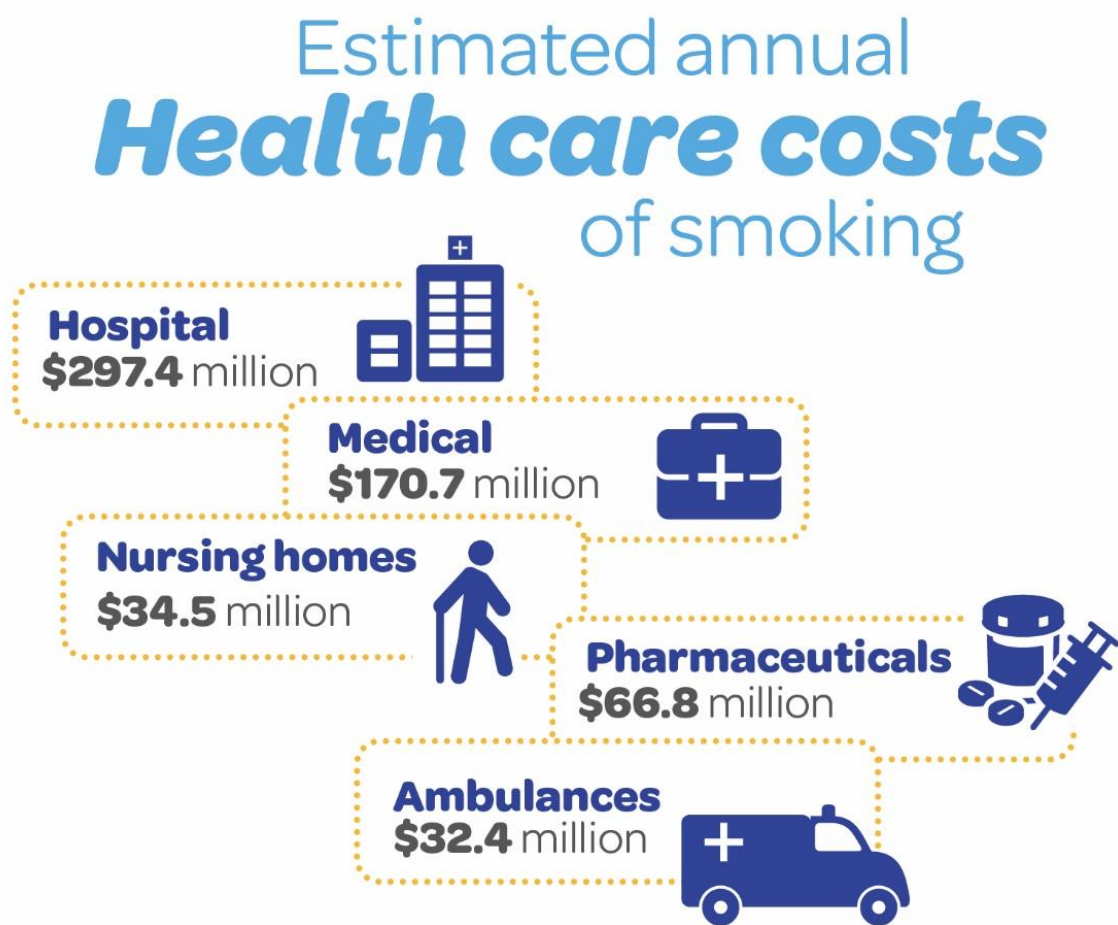
Reducing the appeal of tobacco products

- Continue to advocate for national reform on tobacco products, including pricing and further regulation of product packaging and contents.
- Work with government and other stakeholders, including Quit Victoria, to identify and secure progress in tobacco law and regulation.

Find out more about VicHealth's [Tobacco Strategy](#).

In July 2018, Quit Victoria and the Cancer Council Victoria launched a campaign - [Target 2025](#) which aims to reduce the daily smoking prevalence to 5% by 2025. To 'virtually eliminate' smoking, 24 organisations (including VNSHS) signed on to this countdown to a tobacco-free Victoria. This would mean halving the number of Victorians who currently smoke (prevalence of adults smoking daily was 13.7% in 2014-15) and a total saving of \$4.0 billion in tangible costs - including over \$602 million in healthcare costs!

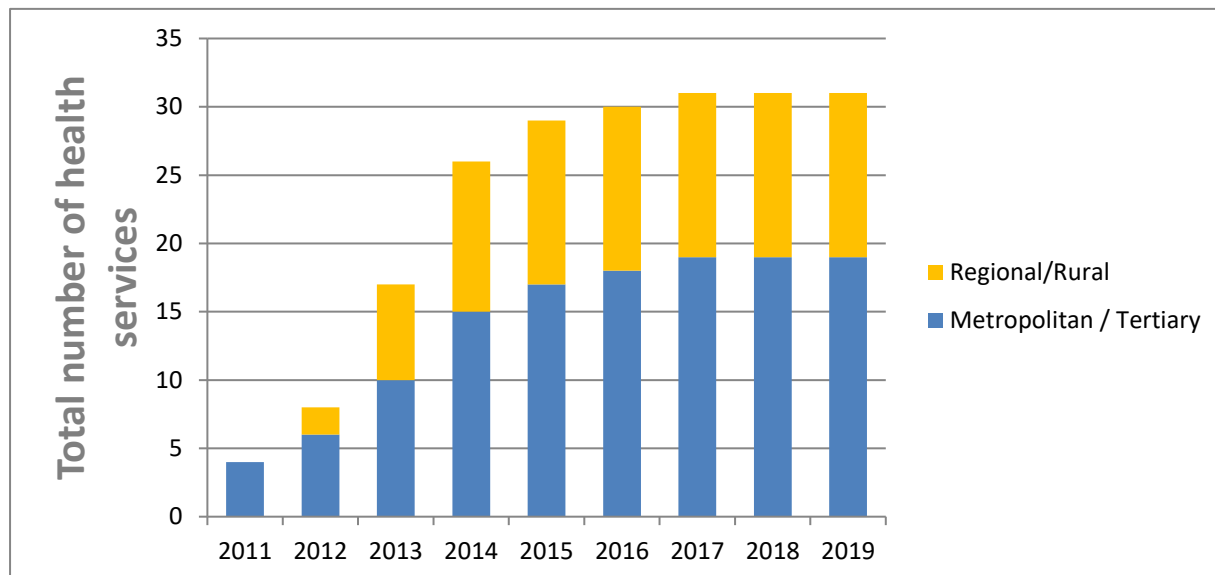
In November 2018, VNSHS and Quit hosted a forum to facilitate discussion about how the Network could support the 2025 target. The forum explored the barriers and opportunities for embedding smoking interventions in clinical care, this being a key strategy for Quit towards the 2025 target. During 2019, VNSHS continued to promote the campaign through the Network website and at meetings.



VNSHS Membership

VNSHS has 31 members, made up of 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. 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 – 2019)

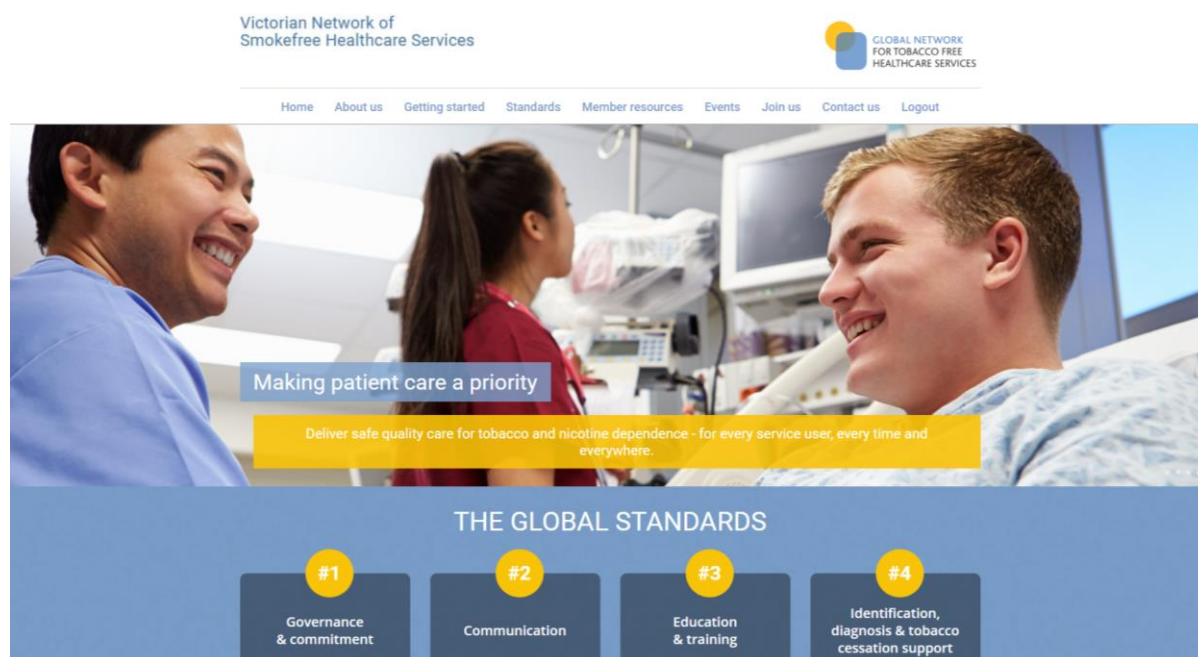


VNSHS membership as at December 2019

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)

Member resources

The [VNSHS website](#) is an interactive communication platform, providing health services with information and tools to support awareness and implementation of the 8 Global Standards for tobacco management in health services. The website also serves as a tool for information exchange and resource sharing for member organisations.



The [Member Resource Centre](#) connects members to the Global Standards and tools that enable them to address tobacco and smoking systematically throughout their service.

The Resource Centre also connects members locally to specific resources from other member organisations, building a shared capacity for effectively reducing the health impact of tobacco and smoking. The resources are conveniently arranged according to their relevance to the 8 Global Standards.

Announcing the Global Network online audit tool

The Global Network is pleased to introduce the NEW [online audit tool](#), which enables health services to:

- Enter and view audit data
- Monitor your healthcare service's progress over time using reporting functionality
- Meet your membership requirements by submitting annual audit results
- Benchmark against healthcare services in your own country.

The tool is available to all members.

Member audits and recognition

Audit against the [Global Standards](#) is an important driver for improved performance.

Members commit to regular self-audit, submitting their audit results and corresponding action plans to the VNSHS Coordinating Centre.

For new members, this is valuable for establishing an understanding of their smokefree status and guiding their initial planning processes.

The requirement for two yearly reaudit introduced in January 2017 encourages members to engage in the continuous improvement cycle within a realistic timeframe. Members who are unable to commit to two yearly audits are offered the status of “corresponding member”, which enables them to remain connected and informed about VNSHS activities and opportunities for engagement.



The new Global Network online audit tool further supports health services in monitoring and benchmarking their performance over time. To register, go to <https://www.tobaccofreehealthcare.org/self-audit/online-audit>

Members receive feedback about their audit submissions and are recognised for their level of achievement

In the last 12 months, 4 [member health services](#) have achieved either Bronze or Silver membership level based on their self-audit results against the [Global Standards](#).

Members are offered visual recognition of their level of achievement. Based on self-audit results, members receive a logo in either the bronze, silver or GOLD Forum member categories (see examples right). Members are encouraged to promote this achievement through the use of the logo, which also appears against their service on the [VNSHS website](#).



Most recently, Barwon Health has achieved [Gold Forum membership status](#) – a process that involves assessment by an international jury through the Global Network.

Regional validation for members

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. Barwon Health was the first health service to participate in the process in 2013, followed by Colac Area Health (July 2016) and Alfred Health (November 2016). Barwon Health participated in the validation process again in April 2019, and secured eligibility to participate in the Gold Forum process.

More information about the validation VNSHS Regional Validation Program is available on the [website](#).

Overview	<h2>VNSHS Regional Validation Program</h2> <p>VNSHS members have the opportunity to have their performance against the standards independently validated through the VNSHS Regional Validation Program. This means that the service can be recognised for its contribution to reducing the health impacts of smoking and for aligning with best practice approaches in managing nicotine dependence. It also means that the health service can gain valuable input towards continuous improvement.</p> <p>The process involves a formal and structured review, conducted by experienced health service surveyors and resulting in a detailed report that provides a basis for further planning and improvement. The process also results in recognition of the level of performance achieved according to the global performance framework and the global standards.</p> <p>Importantly, validation through the Regional Validation Program is now a pre-requisite for health services wishing to apply for Gold Status at the The Global Network Gold Forum.</p> <p>Levels of achievement against the Global Standards (Maximum score 144):</p> <table border="1"><tr><td>BRONZE</td><td>SILVER</td><td>GOLD</td></tr><tr><td>≥ 27 points</td><td>≥ 108 points</td><td>≥ 126 points*</td></tr></table> <p>*Healthcare Services with a self-audit score of 126 or more are eligible to request external recognition (GOLD FORUM).</p> <h3>What is involved?</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 The participating health service conducts their self-audit against the Global Standards. An audit conducted within the last month is required.2 The results are externally validated by experienced surveyors who visit the service to review the evidence provided by the health service and provide a detailed report, including feedback to support ongoing improvement.	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD	≥ 27 points	≥ 108 points	≥ 126 points*
BRONZE		SILVER	GOLD				
≥ 27 points		≥ 108 points	≥ 126 points*				
Standard 1							
Standard 2							
Standard 3							
Standard 4							
Standard 5							
Standard 6							
Standard 7							
Standard 8							
Self audits & action plan							
Regional validation program							

Gold Forum

[Gold Forum](#) is the recognition provided to health services who can demonstrate implementation of the Global Network standards to a high level and share their practice with the wider Network. Gold Forum applications are assessed through an international process involving an independent jury. Only health services who have been validated at a local level can go on to participate in the Gold Forum process. Colac Area Health and Alfred Health achieved Gold Forum status in 2017 and are due to renew this process. Barwon Health has been successful in the latest Gold Forum process, and a number of other services have expressed an interest in participating in the 2020/21 process. The Coordinating Centre supports our network members towards achieving this recognition.

Network meetings for VNSHS members

A new onsite meeting format replaced monthly teleconferences from the end of 2017. Based at members' facilities, these have proven very successful, providing an opportunity for members to showcase their smokefree efforts and benefit from a direct engagement with the Coordinating Centre.

Hosting services provide a formal presentation on a topic of their choice, providing an opportunity for in-depth discussion and information sharing. This new format has also been seen as an opportunity for non-member sites close to the host venue to participate in discussions and to learn more about [network membership](#).

In 2019, Barwon Health invited VNSHS members to participate in their validation process, which took the form of a full day of presentations from the Barwon Health clinical directorates and other representatives. It also included a site walk-around. The event was videoed and presentations are now available to members via the [website](#) (login required).

