

2018 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.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 (refer to the [Global Network Strategic Plan \(2015-2018\)](#), 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 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

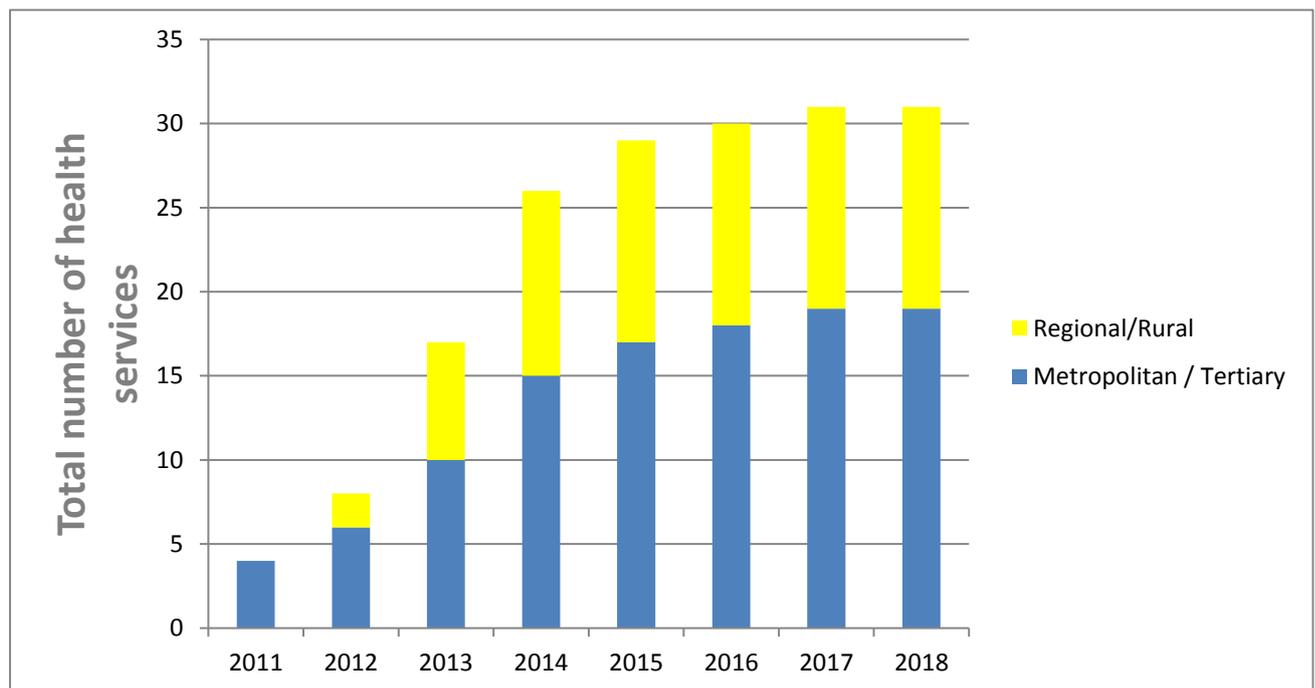
Membership

VNSHS now 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.

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 – 2018)



VNSHS membership as at September 2018

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 audits and recognition status

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.

The requirement for two yearly reaudit introduced in January 2017 encourages members to engage in the continuous improvement cycle within a realistic timeframe.



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

In the last 18 months, 9 [member health services](#) have achieved either Bronze or Silver membership level based on their self-audit results against the new [Global Standards](#).

Furthermore, two of our GOLD Forum member health services (Alfred Hospital and Colac Area Health) have reaudited to maintain their international GOLD recognition status.

Members now have a 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 promote this achievement through the use of the logo, which also appears against their service on the [VNSHS website](#).



New network meeting format

A new quarterly 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](#).

Face-face meetings were held at the following member sites and included a special focus for each meeting:

Eastern Health – Occupational Violence and aggression response

Violence and aggression associated with smokefree environments has been an ongoing issue for our members, and in light of the incident at Eastern Health (who is also a VNSHS member). Specifically, one member was undertaking a project looking at correlating clinical violence and aggression with poor management of smoking dependence in their service. Others have developed communication tools such as brochures and cards for staff to hand to smokers who are not complying with smoking bans. Others have also provided specific education to staff about how to have positive conversations of this nature.

Barwon Health – Smoking and pregnancy

Smoking and pregnancy is a common focus for health services as women can be motivated to quit smoking, while at the same time, quitting can be more difficult during pregnancy. This topic was also inspired by presentations at the [OCEANIA Tobacco Control Conference](#). The [Maternity Services at Barwon Health](#) provided an update on their achievements and challenges in this area.

Northeast Health Wangaratta - Pre-admission and inpatient assessment and management of nicotine dependence

Health Promotion Officer Laura Tonkin delivered an excellent presentation outlining the health service's smokefree journey, particularly their experience in preadmission and inpatient management. Areas for ongoing improvement include staff education and achieving engagement across the service. There was particular interest in exploring how regional services could more readily access specialist smoking cessation training.

Peninsula Health - Smoking and surgery update

Anaesthetist Dr Ashley Webb gave a compelling presentation on smoking and surgery, highlighting the many opportunities that still remain to address smoking in the lead up to surgery. Ashley has pioneered the "Stop Before the Op" intervention approach at Peninsula Health, helping smokers to achieve improved surgical outcomes and cessation.



NORTH EAST HEALTH WANGARATTA - Pictured from left-right: Felicity Kennedy (Gateway Health), Fiona Landgren (Barwon Health, VNSHS Coordinating Centre), Laura Tonkin (Northeast Health Wangaratta), Margaret Bennett (CEO Northeast Health Wangaratta), Rudi Gasser (Barwon Health, VNSHS Regional Coordinator), Lydia Thomsen (Barwon Health, VNSHS Coordinating Centre), Stacey Manfield (NHW), Maureen Ryland (Alpine Health)



PENINSULA HEALTH - Pictured: Belinda Tascone and Dr Ashley Webb from Peninsula Health.

2017 Oceania Tobacco Control Conference

In October 2017, two members of the network presented at the OCEANIA Tobacco Conference in Hobart, Tasmania 17-19 October. Emma Dean (Alfred Health) presented on 'Smoking and clinical aggression in health services – can we do better?' and 'Health professional and consumer perceptions of NRT for smoking cessation'; while Lorrae Mynard (Thomas Embling Hospital) presented on Using an occupational health approach when transitioning to smokefree in a high secure hospital.

Network governance

In February 2017, VNSHS established a Network Steering Committee to support governance of the organisation. Specifically, the Steering Committee was formed to provide advice regarding the management and activities of VNSHS, so as to achieve the growth and influence that will help the organisation achieve its goals and to optimise the benefits for members and stakeholders.

Supporting stakeholder 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, 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.

In July of this year, Quit Victoria and the Cancer Council Victoria launched their new campaign - [Target 2025](#) which aims to reduce the daily smoking prevalence to 5% by 2025. In an effort 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!



Looking ahead

Target 2025 – joint activity

To explore the role of the Network and Victorian health services in relation to the important Target25 initiative, the next VNSHS event will run in collaboration with Quit Victoria in November.

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). Experience of the validation process in 2016 has confirmed the value for participating services, with Barwon Health, together with Peninsula Health and Bendigo Health aiming to apply in 2019.

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.

