

Statement of Priorities

2024-25 Agreement between the Minister for Health and Dental Health
Services Victoria

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Department
of Health

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The department proudly acknowledges Victoria's Aboriginal communities and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life and how this enriches us.

We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards the equality of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice.

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Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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2206-7531 (online/PDF/Word)

Available at [The Department of Health Statements of Priorities](#)

<<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/funding-performance-accountability/statements-of-priorities>>

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Background

Statement of Priorities are key accountability agreements between the Victorian State Government and Victorian publicly funded health, mental health, and ambulance services. The content and process for preparing and agreeing on the annual Statement of Priorities are consistent with sections 40G, 65ZFA, 65ZFB, and section 26 of the *Health Services Act 1988*.

Statement of Priorities are consistent with the health services' strategic plans and aligned to government policy directions and priorities. For 2024-25, the Statement of Priorities continues to refer to the *Department of Health Strategic Plan 2023-27* (Strategic Plan), which is refreshed on an annual basis. The annual agreements support the delivery of, or substantial progress towards, the key shared objectives of quality and safety, good governance and leadership, access and timeliness, and financial sustainability.

Statement of Priorities consists of four main parts:

- Part A provides the strategic priorities for the health service to contribute to in the year ahead.
- Part B lists the performance priorities and agreed targets.
- Part C lists funding and associated activity.
- Part D forms the service agreement between each health service and the state of Victoria for the purposes of the National Health Reform Agreement.

Performance expectations and mechanisms used by the Department of Health (the department) to monitor and manage performance are described in the *Victorian Health Service Performance Monitoring Framework 2024-25* (The Framework).

High standards of governance, transparency and accountability are essential. In this context, the Victorian Government commits to publishing the Statements of Priorities each year and presenting data on the performance of our health system in the public domain.

Ministerial Priorities

As noted above, Statements of Priorities are aligned to government policy directions and priorities. In 2024-25, these include the following Ministerial priorities:

For the **overall health system**:

1. A reformed health system, shifting from competition to collaboration between health services, and with strengthened, formalised partnerships between health services and community and primary care services to ensure patients receive the right care closer to home.
2. A growing, skilled, and engaged workforce that is supported to develop professionally. This is achieved through an increased supply of critical roles, world leading employee experience, diverse workforce skills and experience, and a strategic focus on future roles, capabilities, professional development, and improving and promoting workplace gender equality, including meeting Health Service obligations under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.
3. A health system that is grounded in respect and safety, particularly cultural safety, and awareness, achieved through mandatory cultural safety training, anti-racism plans and actions, and employment plans that drive greater representation of First Nations people across all levels of a health service.
4. Improved health equity through a focus on:
 - a. Aboriginal health and wellbeing, achieved through identifying and closing gaps in access to care, and improved discharge planning for Aboriginal patients
 - b. family-centred health models for priority populations
5. A focus on women's health, including improved access to abortion care and public fertility services, and reduced gender health disparities supported through the rollout of comprehensive women's health clinics.
6. A continued focus on innovating and improving the quality and safety of care, including through strengthening clinical governance systems under the Victorian Clinical Governance Framework, and improving access to timely care by implementing strategies that improve whole of system patient flow.
7. A financially sustainable health system reflected in balanced health service budgets.

For the **mental health system**:

8. An improved mental health system, through:
 - a. supporting people to stay well in their communities through prevention and promotion
 - b. growing strong, safe, and supported mental health workforces through the implementation of the mental health workforce strategy
 - c. supporting a system that embeds lived experience at every level
 - d. delivering connected, new, and better community and bed-based services
 - e. supporting better consumer outcomes through performance improvement

- f. elevating consumer rights and supporting cultural change in line with the principles of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022
- g. providing culturally safe services that deliver social and emotional wellbeing models for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Supporting services for older Victorians:

- 9. A reformed health system that responds to the needs of older people to receive the right care in the right place through:
 - a. initiatives that reduce avoidable hospital presentations and length of stay for older people in hospital
 - b. availability of public sector residential aged care.
- 10. A strengthened approach to the delivery of high quality and safe aged care services through:
 - a. continued implementation of national aged care reforms arising from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety
 - b. system stewardship and oversight of public aged care service delivery.

These Ministerial priorities are reflected in 2024-25 Statements of Priorities and the Department of Health Strategic Plan 2023-27 (Strategic Plan).

Part A: Department of Health Strategic Plan

The Statement of Priorities are aligned with the Strategic Plan¹.

Dental Health Services Victoria will contribute to the Strategic Plan 2023-27 by agreeing to the following priorities:

System Priorities

Excellence in clinical governance

We aim for the best patient experience and care outcomes by assuring safe practice, leadership of safety, an engaged and capable workforce, and continuing to improve and innovate care.

Goals

- Develop strong and effective relationships with consumer and clinical partners to drive service improvements.
- Reduce low value care and duplication to achieve better outcomes for people and improved safety and quality.

DHSV deliverables:

- Work with Community Dental Agencies to improve service delivery models utilising the principles of value-based health care.
- In collaboration with the department, continue to reduce low value care through the ongoing review of item codes to incentivise prevention and early intervention, and decrease funding for low value care.
- Continue the roll out of the statewide Electronic Oral Health Record.

Operate within budget

Ensure prudent and responsible use of available resources to achieve optimum outcomes.

Goal

- Development and implementation of a health service Budget Action plan (BAP) in partnership with the Department with a goal to manage cost growth effectively to ensure the efficient operation of the health service.
- Co-operate with, and support department-led reforms, that look towards reducing waste and improving efficiency to address financial sustainability, operational and safety performance, and system management.

DHSV deliverables:

- Continue the implementation of the Beacon on the Hill Strategy to improve efficiency, performance and financial sustainability of the RDHM.

¹ Link to [Strategic Plan 2023-27](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/our-strategic-plan-2023-27). <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/our-strategic-plan-2023-27>

- In collaboration with the department, contribute to National Dental Reform, including input to the development of funding frameworks, outcomes measures and funding models that support a shift to value-based healthcare to achieve system wide funding reform.
- Ongoing development and implementation of the strategy to increase the utilisation of the Child Dental Benefits Schedule to optimise all available funding sources and increase service capacity across the sector.
- Co-operate with, and support department-led reforms, and Health Service Partnership collaborations that look towards reducing waste and improving efficiency to address financial sustainability, operational and safety performance, and system management.

Improving equitable access to healthcare and wellbeing

Ensure that Aboriginal people have access to a health, wellbeing and care system that is holistic, culturally safe, accessible, and empowering.

Ensure that communities in rural and regional areas have equitable health outcomes irrespective of locality.

Goals

- Strengthen programs that support Aboriginal people to access early intervention and prevention services.
- Enhance the provision of appropriate and culturally safe services, programs and clinical trials for and as determined by Aboriginal people, embedding the principles of self-determination.
- Address service access issues and equity of health outcomes for rural and regional people including more support for primary, community, home-based and virtual care services.
- Expand the delivery of high-quality cultural safety training for all staff to align with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework. This training should be delivered by independent, expert, community-controlled organisations or a Kinaway or Supply Nation certified Aboriginal business.

DHSV deliverables:

- Continue the rollout of Smile Squad and specialised services to support rural and regional Victoria to access oral health care. This includes implementing the change to delivery of Smile Squad to government secondary schools from annual to biennial, commencing from term 1 2024.
- Finalise and implement a second Reconciliation Action Plan.
- In partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), complete the development of the statewide model of care for Aboriginal people to improve oral health outcomes through a focus on prevention, early intervention and system enhancement.
- Continue roll out of Aboriginal Health Practitioner-led Fluoride Varnish program in participating Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs).
- Implement mandatory cultural safety training and assessment for all staff in alignment with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework, and developed and/or

delivered by independent, expert, and community-controlled organisations, Kinaway or Supply Nation certified Aboriginal businesses.

A stronger workforce

There is an increased supply of critical roles that support safe, high-quality care. Victoria is a world leader in employee experience, with a focus on future roles, capabilities and professional development. The workforce is regenerative and sustainable, bringing a diversity of skills and experiences that reflect the people and communities it serves. As a result of a stronger workforce, Victorians receive the right care at the right time, closer to home.

Goals

- Improve employee experience across four initial focus areas to assure safe, high-quality care: leadership, health and safety, flexibility, and career development and agility.
- Explore new and contemporary models of care and practice, including future roles and capabilities.

DHSV deliverables:

- Continue with the implementation of the Workforce Culture and Engagement Strategy 2024 – 2027. With a focus on the novice workforce pipeline as outlined in the Smile Squad Accelerated Delivery Action Plan (ADAP)
- Develop and commence implementation of a new service model for the delivery of clinical placements across the sector.

Moving from competition to collaboration

Share knowledge, information and resources with partner health and wellbeing services and care providers. This will allow patients to experience one health, wellbeing and care system through connected digital health information, evidence, and data flows, enabled by advanced interoperable platforms.

Goals

- Partner with other organisations (for example community health, ACCHOs, PHNs, General Practice, private health) to drive further collaboration and build a more integrated system.
- Engage in integrated planning and service design approaches, whilst assuring consistent and strong clinical governance, with partners to join up the system to deliver seamless and sustainable care pathways and build sector collaboration.

DHSV deliverables:

- Maintain active collaboration with VACCHO in line with the Memorandum of Understanding.
- Partner with Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisations with community dental services to achieve and sustain better oral health outcomes and deliver culturally appropriate oral health promotion resources.
- Continue implementation of the Oral Cancer Screening and Prevention Program, including the roll-out of oral cancer education and training for non-oral health professionals, such as general practitioners.

- Partner with the Australian Dental Association Victoria Branch and private providers to increase oral health capacity to support the care of our eligible clients.
- Partner with Victorian universities on oral health research that can contribute to improved oral health outcomes for Victorians.

Part B: Performance Priorities

The *Victorian Health Services Performance Monitoring Framework* (PMF) outlines the Government's approach to overseeing the performance of Victorian health services. Further information is available at the [Funding, Performance and Accountability webpage](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/funding-performance-accountability/performance-monitoring-framework) <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/funding-performance-accountability/performance-monitoring-framework>>.

As the PMF states, while the Statement of Priorities sets out the annual high level strategic performance priorities, health services remain comprehensively accountable for quality and safety, good governance and leadership, access and timeliness, and financial sustainability, as defined in relevant legislation. This means that performance against these broader accountabilities will continue to be monitored based on a comprehensive set of quantitative metrics and qualitative intelligence and managed and raised with health services as needed.

High quality and safe care:

Key Performance Measure	Target
Infection prevention and control	
Percentage of healthcare workers immunised for influenza	94%
Patient experience	
Patient satisfaction at the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne, as measured by the Patient Reported Experience Measure Survey (PREMS)	85%

Strong governance, leadership, and culture

Key Performance Measure	Target
Organisational culture	
People matter survey – Percentage of staff with an overall positive response to safety culture survey questions.	80%

Timely access to care

Key Performance Measure	Target
Emergency Care	
Percentage of Dental Emergency Triage Category 1 clients treated within 24 hours	90%
Percentage of Dental Emergency Triage Category 2 clients treated within 7 days	80%
Percentage of Dental Emergency Triage Category 3 clients treated within 14 days	75%
General and Denture Care	
Number of hospital initiated postponements per 100 scheduled appointments.	3
Waiting time for prosthodontics, endodontic, and orthodontics specialist services patients (months)	15

Key Performance Measure	Target
Waiting time for other dental specialist services patients (months)	9
Waiting time for general care (months)	23
Waiting time for denture care (months)	22
Waiting time for priority denture care (months)	3
Activity	
Total number of individuals treated ^{2,3}	365,000
Priority and emergency clients treated ^{4,5}	273,800
Dental Weighted Activity Units (DWAUs) ^{4,5}	351,488

Oral health promotion

Key Performance Measure	Target
Children participating in Smiles 4 Miles	60,000

School dental program

Key Performance Measure	Target
Schools visited by Smile Squad (annual by December) ⁴	575
Students examined by Smile Squad (annual by December) ⁵	58,000
Students receiving treatment by Smile Squad (annual by December) ⁵	15,500

Effective financial management

Key Performance Measure	Target
Operating result (\$M)	0.00
Adjusted current asset ratio	0.7 or 3% improvement from health service base target
Variance between forecast and actual Net result from transactions (NRFT) for the current financial year ending 30 June.	5% movement in forecast revenue and expenditure forecasts

² Targets reflect additional activity to be delivered under the *Federation Funding Agreement – Schedule on Public Dental Services for Adults*.

³ Targets exclude services provided via the *Child Dental Benefits Schedule*.

⁴ School Dental Program targets align with Budget Paper No. 3 *Service Delivery*. Additional negotiated deliverables are in accordance with agreed arrangements.

⁵ School Dental Program targets align with the Budget Paper No.3 *Service Delivery*. Additional negotiated deliverables are in accordance with agreed arrangements.

Part C: Activity and Funding

The performance and financial framework within which state government-funded organisations operate is described in *The Policy and Funding Guidelines – Funding Rules*. The Funding Rules detail funding and pricing arrangements and provide modelled budgets and targets for a range of programs. The [Policy and Funding Guidelines](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/policy-and-funding-guidelines-for-health-services) webpage <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/policy-and-funding-guidelines-for-health-services>>.

Period 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Table 1 Dental Health Services Victoria funding summary for 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Funding Type	Activity	Budget (\$'000)	Measure and Target 2023-24
Oral Cancer Screening & Preventions Program	16454	304,041	Implement negotiated deliverables
Service System Resourcing and Development ⁶	27010	15,809,507	Reported in Annual Report
Annual Provisions/Minor Works	27011	1,122,824	Reported in Annual Report
Oral Health Promotion	27017	3,034,354	Implement negotiated deliverables
RDHM Dental Care	27019	32,162,528	Individuals treated/DWAU
Workforce, Resourcing and Development	27020	2,412,574	Report on implementation of DHSV Workforce Strategy
Community Dental Care ⁷	27023	127,241,737	Individuals treated/DWAU
TOTAL		\$182,087,567*	

*Note that the modelled budget provided separately includes an additional \$24.8 million which was allocated in August 2024. This amount represents the funding allocation for 2024-25 under the Federation Funding Agreement of Public Dental Services for Adults.

*Note that the budgeted amount for the School Dental program is contingent upon the outcome of the funding allocation.

Please note:

- Base level funding, related services and activity levels outlined within the Policy and Funding Guidelines are subject to change throughout the year. Further information about the department's approach to funding and price setting for specific clinical activities and funding policy changes is also available from [Health Services](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/policy-and-funding-guidelines-for-health-services) <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/policy-and-funding-guidelines-for-health-services>>
- Each funding type row (e.g., “emergency services”) comprises a mix of activity-based funding and block grants. Funding depends on the service profile. For further details, refer to the Policy and funding guidelines for health services (see the above point for the link).
- In situations where a change is required to Part C, changes to the agreement will be actioned through an exchange of letters between the department and the health service's Chief Executive Officer.

⁶ Includes funding under the following activities and activity numbers: Acute activity – Admitted Patients (11008); HealthSMART Services (11027); Dental Services Purchasing (27024); Clinical Leadership and Governance (27025); Capital Planning and Development (27026); Regional Service System Support (27028); Data Management and IT (27029).

⁷ excludes FFA funding (\$24,800,000)

Accountability and funding requirements

The health service must comply with:

- All laws applicable to it.
- The *National Health Reform Agreement*.
- All applicable requirements, policies, terms, or conditions of funding specified or referred to in the Department of Health *Policy and Funding Guidelines 2024-25*.
- Policies, procedures, and appropriate internal controls to ensure the accurate and timely submission of data to the Department of Health.
- All applicable policies and guidelines issued by the Department of Health from time to time and notified to the health service.
- Where applicable, all terms and conditions specified in an agreement between the health service and the Department of Health relating to the provision of health services are in force at any time during the 2024-25 financial year.
- Relevant standards for programs that have been adopted, e.g., the International Organisation for Standardisation standards and AS/NZS 4801:2001, Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems, or an equivalent standard.
- Where applicable, this includes the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards ('NSQHS standards') as accredited through the Australian Health Service Safety and Quality Accreditation Scheme.
- Specific to DHSV: in relation to the School Dental Project Plan, as agreed and specified by both parties, including meeting the requirements outlined in the School Licence Agreement.
- Any other relevant, applicable statutory, regulatory or accountability rules, policies, plans, procedures, or publications.

Signing Page

The Minister for Health and the health service board chairperson agree that funding will be provided to enable the health service to meet its service obligations and performance requirements as outlined in this Statement of Priorities.



Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Minister for Health

Date: 11/07/2025



David Stevenson

Chairperson

Dental Health Services Victoria

Date: 11/7/2025