

Project Brief

**Development of the Victorian Food and Nutrition
Monitoring and Surveillance Program**

1) Introduction

The establishment of a public health nutrition monitoring and surveillance program has been identified as a priority action for the Department of Human Services. The aim is to provide accurate and timely public health nutrition and related data to inform the public health nutrition policy development, planning, resource allocation, research and program evaluation activities in Victoria. The program will be developed to complement and support other related national, state and local initiatives.

The Victorian Food and Nutrition Monitoring and Surveillance Program (FNMSP) will be an ongoing initiative forming a key part of the Department of Human Services Public Health Nutrition Program.

This briefing describes the work to be completed for the development of the FNMSP. It is a time-limited project to identify the data, analysis and dissemination requirements for the FNMSP as well as making recommendations regarding the most appropriate model for its delivery.

2) Purpose of the Victorian Food and Nutrition Monitoring and Surveillance Program

The purpose of the Victorian Food and Nutrition Monitoring And Surveillance Program is to provide accurate and timely information for:

- policy development;
- coordination and review;
- program planning and evaluation; and
- reporting against goals and targets.

This project is to identify the information and intelligence on sources of data and data analysis needed to establish the FNMSP and to provide initial data to report on public health nutrition in Victoria.

3) Rationale

There is a strong rationale for the establishment of the FNMSP. There is solid evidence regarding the benefits that good nutrition and healthy eating but at the same time there is

recognition of the complexity and range of strategies that need to be employed if behaviour change is to be achieved.

An effective monitoring and surveillance program is a necessity to know if progress is being made against the goals and objectives. Progress or the lack of progress on certain issues or with particular population groups will help to inform program planning and prioritisation.

An effective monitoring and surveillance program can also provide information on the social, environmental, cultural, and economic conditions that impact on eating behaviour and nutritional health. There is a range of demographic and other data already available that make an important contribution to this. However, there is also new information, especially that relating to behavioural issues being identified and is setting new challenges in public health nutrition monitoring and surveillance.

The development of the Victorian Public Health Nutrition Monitoring and Surveillance Program will make a significant contribution to the efforts to improve nutritional health in Victoria. It will be designed and implemented to be responsive, and of value, to as much of the public health nutrition sector as is possible.

4) Project tasks

The development phase for the FNMSP will occur over a 6 to 9 month period. The exact process and detail for the development phase will be finalised in consultation with the Project Steering Committee (to be formed by DHS) and an Expert Advisory Panel (see 7b for details). This process will give due consideration to the following tasks and considerations:

a) Identify users of the FNMSP

The identification of data users is important to the development of the monitoring and surveillance program helping to define the range of type and scope of information that it should collate and disseminate.

It is acknowledged that there is potentially a broad range of individuals, organisations and groups of organisations who will be interested in, and make use of, data from the program. Consideration will need to be given to prioritising potential users in respect of their need for data and how its use will contribute to the goals and objectives of the Food and Nutrition Policy.

Data users may be identified through the Expert Advisory Panel, through a review of the literature and through consultation with key stakeholders. The range of potential users include DHS and other government departments, state-wide agencies, local government, primary health care services, universities, and other members of the public health nutrition sector.

A prioritised list of users of the FNMSP, including a rationale regarding the contribution of these organisations to public health nutrition and their monitoring and surveillance data needs, will be developed. The final prioritisation will be carried out in consultation with the Expert Advisory Panel and the Project Steering Committee.

Deliverable 1: A prioritised list of users of the FNMSP including a rationale regarding the contribution of these organisations to the achievement of the public health nutrition goals and

their monitoring and surveillance needs. The final prioritisation will be carried out in consultation with the Expert Advisory Panel and the Project Steering Committee.

b) Identifying information needs

Define and document the information sought from the FNMSP based on the needs identified by priority users (and where possible other users). It is expected that this process will include the examination of information needs covering the following broad areas:

- Food supply (including cost if appropriate and possible)
- Consumption
- Social, environmental, behavioural determinants of healthy eating
- The nutritional and health status of the population.

Cross-sectional information describing priority and at-risk groups will also need to be considered including (but not limited to):

- Vulnerable population groups (food insecurity)
- Mothers and children

The identification of information needs will also include reference to the level/locality that needs to be described. For example, documenting where information is needed describing community/local conditions to meet identified information needs.

Deliverable 2: A report documenting the core information that is needed to inform work to progress the ongoing development and implementation of public health nutrition activities.

c) Identification and compilation of data sources and expertise

The data required to meet the information needs listed above will be documented. This will include identification of:

- Existing data
- Gaps in existing data
- New data that should be collected including recommendations about collection (where it is considered there is capacity to collect this data)
- Unavailable data (data identified as needed but is unavailable and can't be collected).

Capacity to report at different levels will need to be considered, including:

- State-wide data
- Department of Human Services Regions
- Local government/community

The identification of data sources and indicators for inclusion in the FNMSP will include detailed examination of data sources and indicators identified and in use nationally and elsewhere. The goal is to ensure the best quality data and indicators are selected and to maximise compatibility with other data collections.

Direct contact will be made with the National Food and Nutrition Monitoring and Surveillance Program regarding the work already completed in the development of the national program. As appropriate to identified needs, the development of the Victorian program should make use of the learnings and expertise from National program. Continuity

and coordination between the two programs should be maximised to enable comparison and cross use of data.

Past and future national and state surveys relevant to public health nutrition will be considered and the Victorian program structured to make maximum use of these processes (where appropriate to information needs).

Opportunities for links and data sharing with the Physical Activity Monitoring and Surveillance Program (currently being developed) will be examined. A variety of demographic, risk factor and other descriptive data could be considered for use across the two programs.

Deliverable 3: A detailed report documenting data sources and expertise as described above.

d) Document the content and structure of the FNMSP

Detailed documentation of the content and structure of the monitoring and surveillance program will be provided to include the full range of information needed to inform use, maintenance, and development. It is recognised that initial data availability and capacity may mean that not all information/data needs will be able to be met. The range and scope of data to be included in the initial data set will be defined in consultation with the expert working group and the Department.

The documentation should include:

- full details of the initial data set and indicators including sources, format and analysis details;
- the expertise, resources and capacity needed for the program;
- identification of key linkages with other organisations and expertise needed to be developed and maintained to provide necessary input, assistance and support for the program;
- additional data requirements;
- ongoing developmental work needed to expand the FNMSP to meet identified needs; and
- details of how the data should be analysed and reported on to meet identified information needs.

Deliverable 4: Detailed documentation on the content, structure, analysis and reporting of the FNMSP (as described above) to guide its ongoing implementation, maintenance and development.

e) Establish initial data sets

Initial data sets for the FNMSP will be collected and collated. These initial data sets will represent the beginning of the program, which can be built on with additional and new data as it becomes available. It is acknowledged that the number and range of data that can be included will be dependant on what is available and what is possible within project resources. The content of the initial data sets will be defined in consultation with the Steering Committee and the Expert Advisory Panel.

Deliverable 5: The establishment of the initial data sets for the FNMSP as described above.

f) Dissemination

Provide discussion on a dissemination model to ensure that the data from the program is made available to key decision makers and other users in a timely and appropriate manner.

Deliverable 6: A report providing information on the dissemination of the FNMSP findings as described above.

g) Operational model for the FNMSP

There are different options regarding the ongoing implementation of the FNMSP including it being contracted to consultant, implemented from within the Department of Human Services or a combination of both. Advice and recommendations on an operational model for the program will be developed taking into account the expertise, resource needs, linkages and needs for sustainability.

Deliverable 7: A report providing recommendations on an operational model for the FNMSP.

5) Selection criteria

- Demonstrated expertise in the field of epidemiology, including advanced data collection and analysis skills.
- Detailed understanding and experience in the field of monitoring and surveillance as it relates to public health nutrition.
- Demonstrated understanding of issues relating to public health nutrition and health promotion strategies.
- Demonstrated ability to identify and critically analyse relevant information and present it in a clear and concise form.
- Demonstrated ability to document an ongoing dissemination program to ensure the monitoring and surveillance is made available to key decision makers and other practitioners in the field of public health nutrition.
- Strong communication skills.
- Demonstrated understanding of the brief and required outcomes.

6) Roles and responsibilities

Management

The Department of Human Services will be the contract manager of the project. A project manager (Department of Human Services) will be identified for day-to-day management issues.

The DHS will also form a Project Steering Committee to oversee the project and advise on various project issues, including communication with stakeholders and key partners, budget issues and accountability.

Consultant

The Consultant will be required to develop an Expert Advisory Panel to oversee the project and advise on various project issues, including communication with stakeholders and key

partners, budget issues and accountability. This may include representation from the project working group, state-wide organisations, universities, non-government organisations, etc.

The Consultant will provide project status reports to the Expert Advisory Group at regular intervals (the meeting schedule of the Expert Advisory Group will be provided by the Consultant).

The Consultant will be responsible for providing a final report of the project and this will include documentation of an ongoing dissemination program to ensure the monitoring and surveillance is made available to key decision makers and other practitioners in the field of public health nutrition.

7) Budget

The total budget available for the development phase for the Public Health Nutrition Monitoring and Surveillance Program is \$65,000 (this amount is GST exclusive).

8) Timeline

The development phase for the Public Health Nutrition Monitoring and Surveillance Program will be implemented over a 6 to 9 month period.

9) Submissions

- Written submissions are invited and should include:
 - *Proposed model for development phase,*
 - *Discussion on information needs for public health nutrition ,*
 - *Identification of issues regarding data identification, collection and analysis,*
 - *Links with other public health nutrition monitoring and surveillance activities,*
 - *Comment on the developed public health nutrition monitoring and surveillance program and what it could be expected to provide,*
 - *Budget,*
 - *Expertise of the Team (Curriculum vitae of person/persons to be directly involved in the project are required (including three relevant referees).*
- Please supply three copies of written submissions.
- Closing date for submissions is 5:00pm, Monday 26 March 2001.

Submissions to be forwarded to:

Rowland Watson
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Public Health Division
Department of Human Services
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