

**SUBMISSION OF THE HEART FOUNDATION
TO THE HEALTH ACT REVIEW DRAFT POLICY PAPER**

Recommendations

	Issue	Section reference
1	That the new Act be named the <i>Public Health Act</i> .	1.1
	Comment: We support this recommendation.	
3	That the public health Act recognise the importance of promoting public health.	1.2
	Comment: We support this recommendation.	
4	That the public health Act recognise the need to address inequalities in the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged communities.	1.2
	Comment: We support this recommendation.	
6	That the term "health and wellbeing" be defined in the public health Act to include health as a positive condition, not merely the absence of disease, and be inclusive of physical, social and mental wellbeing (both individual and collective) and apply to the provisions in the public health act relating to the following: (a) objects (see 1.6) (b) guiding principles (see 1.7) (c) functions of Secretary, Chief Health Officer and municipal councils (see 1.8 to 1.10) (d) public health inquiries (see 2.1)(e) (e) municipal public health plans (see 3.1)(f) (f) health information management (see 3.6).	1.4
	Comment: We support this recommendation.	
11	That the public health Act include the following statement of objects: <i>Whereas</i> The State of Victoria has a significant role in promoting and protecting the health of all Victorians; and	1.6

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	<p>It is accepted that health is a state of individual and collective wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease; and</p> <p>One of the ways it is possible to improve the population's health status and reduce health inequalities is through public health interventions —</p> <p>The objects of the Act are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) to protect public health and prevent disease, illness, injury, disability and premature death; (b) to promote conditions in which the people of Victoria can be healthy; and (c) to reduce social and health inequalities and enable all Victorians to achieve the best possible state of health and wellbeing. 	
	<p>Comment: We support this recommendation.</p>	
16	<p>That, if a statutory position of Chief Health Officer is established, the public health Act require the Chief Health Officer to ensure that a comprehensive report on the health and wellbeing of Victorians is made available to the public on a biennial basis.</p>	1.8
	<p>Comment: We support this recommendation.</p>	
19	<p>That the public health Act include the following statement of the function of the municipal councils: The function of every council under this Act is to seek to protect and improve public health, and promote community wellbeing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) creating environments which support the health of the local community and strengthen the capacity of communities and individuals to achieve better health (b) initiating, supporting and managing public health planning processes at the municipal level (c) developing and enforcing up-to-date public health standards and intervening if the health of people within the municipal district is, or may be, affected (d) facilitating and supporting the efforts of other local agencies whose work has an impact on 	1.10

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	<p>public health to improve public health status of the local community</p> <p>(e) coordinating and providing immunisation services to children living or being educated within the municipal district.</p>	
	<p>Comment: We support this recommendation.</p>	
23	That the public health Act not include the legislative requirement that every municipal council appoint a medical officer of health.	1.12
	<p>Comment: We support this recommendation.</p>	
25	That the public health Act re-enact the requirement for every municipal council to appoint one or more environmental health officers, and allow environmental health officers to be shared between councils.	1.12
	<p>Comment: We support this recommendation.</p>	
27	That the public health Act require that a council only appoint as an environmental health officer a person who has qualifications and/or experience nominated by the Secretary, or by a person approved by the Secretary.	1.12
	<p>Comment: We support this recommendation.</p>	
54	That the public health Act provide that a prescribed consultative council established by the Minister may request a health service provider to provide information to the council and the health service provider is authorised to provide that information to the council. This could be a general request or made in a particular case.	2.2
	<p>Comment:</p>	
55	That in order to protect and promote public health within their municipal district, municipal councils be required to prepare a municipal public health plan (in consultation with the Department of Human Services) within 12 months after each general	3.1

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	election.	
	Comment: We support this recommendation.	
56	The public health Act list matters to be addressed in municipal public health plans as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) examine data about health status and health determinants in the municipal district (b) identify goals and strategies based on available evidence for creating healthy communities, to enable people living in the municipal district to achieve maximum health and wellbeing (c) describe how the local community is engaged in developing, implementing and evaluating the plan (d) address how municipal councils work in partnership with the Department of Human Services and others undertaking public health initiatives, projects and programs within the municipal district to accomplish goals and priorities identified in the municipal public health plan. 	3.1
	Comment: We support this recommendation.	
57	That the public health Act provide that each municipal council be required to review its municipal public health plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan.	3.1
	Comment: We support this recommendation.	
58	That the public health Act provide that each municipal council must submit its municipal public health plan ("MPHP") to the Department of Human Services within 12 months after each general election. Where the plan is amended, it must be submitted annually. The MPHPs would be made available on a central database as a resource for council health planners. Further, MPHPs would inform the development of state public health planning and policies.	3.1
	Comment: We support this recommendation.	

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61	That the Department of Human Services develop a non-legislative public health plan that assesses and sets priorities for the public health system. However, at this stage, the Act should not require the Secretary to develop such a plan.	3.2
Comment: We support this recommendation.		
63	That Victoria continue to rely on a legislative requirement for health impact assessment in the <i>Environment Effects Act 1978</i> (Vic) and the <i>Environment Protection Act 1970</i> (Vic).	3.4
Comment: We support this recommendation.		