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| Sustainability in Healthcare update |
| #37 December 2022  |

The department produces quarterly sustainability updates to inform health services on sustainability initiatives being implemented across the health care sector, as well as key sustainability issues of interest. We welcome items of interest from health services.

# Health service CEO interactive workshop

The Department of Health hosted an interactive workshop for Health Service CEOs with Dr Nick Watts, Chief Sustainability Officer of the United Kingdom's National Health Service on 12 September.

Nick was in Melbourne in for CODA 22 and the department was thrilled to secure an opportunity for him to share his expertise with attendees. Nick reflected on his experiences from the UK on how to deliver a more sustainable and resilient healthcare system and joined a thought-provoking panel discussion on actions we can take to create a more sustainable and resilient health system in Victoria. Joining Nick on the panel were: Dr Forbes McGain, Anaesthetist and Intensive Care Physician, Western Health; Professor John Thwaites, Chair, Monash Sustainable Development Institute and Chair, Climateworks Centre; and Professor Zoe Wainer, Deputy Secretary, Public Health.

# Climate change and risk

## Directors’ duties with respect to climate risk

The directors’ duty of care diligence and skill under the [*Public Administration Act 2004*](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/public-administration-act-2004/081) requires consideration of risk, including climate change-related risks

With over [3000 public sector boards in Victoria](https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/data-and-research/data-facts-visuals-state-of-the-sector/board-numbers-and-demographics-2021/), board members play a critical role in overseeing management of climate-related risks to the delivery of services relied on by the Victorian community.

The Victorian Public Sector Commission has produced a guide to help the boards of public sector entities oversee the management of climate-related risks. These resources are now available on the [Victorian Public Sector Commission website](https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/directors-duties-respect-climate-risk) <https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/directors-duties-respect-climate-risk>.

## Victorian Government climate risk disclosure statement

The Victorian Government recently released its first climate risk disclosure statement.

The Climate-related Risk Disclosure Statement provides information about the Victorian Government’s approach to climate-related risks and opportunities in Victoria, and marks the first time in Australia that a government has made a climate-related disclosure in line with recommendations of a G20 tasforce.

The purpose of the Disclosure is to build understanding about the climate-related risks and opportunities that are relevant to Victoria and the actions the Victorian Government is taking to manage the risks and capitalise on the opportunities.

Further information is available from the [DTF website](https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/funds-programs-and-policies/victorian-government-climate-related-risk-disclosure-statement) <https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/funds-programs-and-policies/victorian-government-climate-related-risk-disclosure-statement>.

# Public Consultation on Sustainable Healthcare Module

Environmental changes are impacting health and health care services globally. Providing sustainable health care is becoming a central feature in designing new facilities or upgrades, in supply chain management and in waste management.

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care recognises the importance of health care services being sustainable, adaptable and resilient. To reduce the impact and build climate resilience, the Commission has developed a Sustainable Healthcare Module.

The Module was developed in collaboration with experts from both health care and environmental health. The Module contains five actions which will support health care services to include sustainability measures and targets when setting priorities and strategies. It is designed to support improvements in the safety and quality of health care, reduce waste and drive reductions in low value care and unwarranted variation across the health care system.

The Module focuses on resilience, mitigation and adaption of health care services and is currently open for public consultation.

**How can you have your say?**
**You can access the Module for consultation on the** [Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care](https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/standards/nsqhs-standards/sustainable-healthcare-module)[website](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/safetyandquality.cmail19.com/t/j-l-vhrkie-dtbydklkl-y/__;!!C5rN6bSF!GvaVzP8EYAEYDsK2T6qrrzqGm5JLHxkdvxiiKZt4FRMvy3jLldI2MvuWZymmp6VIinPdfcsB2TyAeRUn01lgoJrgJEdq38DN6RDaAuRJiDaLrTaTPJQy$) <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/standards/nsqhs-standards/sustainable-healthcare-module> and provide feedback. Options include, an online survey, registering to attend a virtual forum or providing a written submission.

* Following on links to the survey
* Participating in a virtual forum
* Providing a written submission via email to NSQHSStandards@safetyandquality.gov.au

**Consultation will close on 31 January 2023.**

To stay updated on the progress of the Sustainable Healthcare Module, please visit the ACSQHC website above.

# Health service portfolio environmental performance data

The department’s annual report was published in September. We thank all health services for submitting data into the EDMS which forms the basis of the portfolio consumption assessment.

While energy consumption has increased between 2019-20 to 2021-22, the associated greenhouse gas emissions have declined by approximately five per cent. This is most likely attributed to a less intensive electricity grid reflected in the latest greenhouse gas emission factors.

There has been a modest increase in waste to landfill between 2019-20 and 2021-22 but the recycling rate has stayed relatively stable currently being at 26 per cent and water consumption has declined over the same period.

Further information including highlights can be found on the [Department’s website](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/department-of-health-annual-report) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/department-of-health-annual-report>.

# Single Use plastics ban commencing February 2023

From 1 February 2023, problematic single-use plastics – including drinking straws, cutlery, plates, drink stirrers, cotton bud sticks, and expanded polystyrene food service items and drink containers – will be banned from supply or sale in Victoria.

It is the responsibility of all Victorian businesses and organisations to comply with the regulations and not sell, supply, distribute or provide banned single-use plastic items, including to patrons or customers.

#### Exemptions

However, there are exemptions for health and safety reasons or where suitable alternatives are not currently available, and include:

1. Single-use plastic drinking straws for people who need them due to a disability or for medical reasons.
2. Single-use plastic cutlery used in correctional and mental health facilities to prevent physical harm or injury.
3. Single-use plastic cotton bud sticks for scientific, medical, forensic or law enforcement testing.
4. Until 1 November 2024, single-use paper or cardboard plates lined with plastic.
5. Until 1 January 2026, any single-use plastic item that is integrated into food or drink packaging (e.g. a plastic straw attached to a juice box).

Although the exemptions allow the continued use of these items, to reduce litter and waste, businesses and organisations should consider avoidance and reusable items ahead of single-use items made from alternative materials. Businesses and organisations do not need to apply for an exemption, however single-use plastic items can only be used for the specific circumstances listed in the exemptions.

Factsheets developed by the Department, Environment Land use, Water and Planning are available on the [HealthShare Victoria website](https://healthsharevic.org.au/hpv-resources/single-use-plastics-ban/) <https://healthsharevic.org.au/hpv-resources/single-use-plastics-ban/>.

#### Further information

There are a range of resources available online to help you prepare for the single-use plastics ban, including guides, factsheets and posters. These are available [from](https://dhhsvicgovau.sharepoint.com/sites/VHHSBAAssetStrategy/Shared%20Documents/Environmental%20Sustainability/Communications/Sustainability%20updates/from) the [Victorian Government website](https://www.vic.gov.au/single-use-plastics-ban-resources) <https://www.vic.gov.au/single-use-plastics-ban-resources>.

Free information sessions are being held online every Friday at 11am until February 2023 for Victorian businesses. These sessions are designed for all businesses (of any size or type) to ‘pop in’, ask questions, receive practical advice, and see what other businesses are doing. To register for a session, click the *“Register for a session”* tile tab on the [Victorian Government website page](https://www.vic.gov.au/single-use-plastics) <https://www.vic.gov.au/single-use-plastics> which will open the registration link.

# Introduction of FRD24 expansion

As communicated in the August edition of the Sustainability in Healthcare update, the Victorian Government has introduced a significant enhancement to environmental reporting requirements to improve transparency, support management of climate-related risks, and assist implementation of the [Whole of Victorian Government emissions reduction pledge](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0034/522799/WoG-sector-pledge-full-colour.pdf) available on the [Victorian Government website](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0034/522799/WoG-sector-pledge-full-colour.pdf%3E.) <<https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0034/522799/WoG-sector-pledge-full-colour.pdf>>. This includes expanding the scope and application of Financial Reporting Direction (FRD) 24: Reporting of environmental data by government entities, which came into effect 1 July 2022 for the 2022-2023 reporting year.

The department is working with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) on arrangements to support health services and other portfolio entities with implementation of the new requirements. An updated environmental data management system (EDMS) is expected to be available to health services from 1 July 2023. Guidance will be provided on how to use the information from the current EDMS to comply with the FRD24 requirements. The department and DELWP will arrange training sessions for health services which are anticipated to be held around late March to early April. The sessions will build on the two consultation sessions held earlier in the year which looked at the proposed FRD24 requirements and gaps between the current EDMS and the new FRD24.

The training sessions will provide sector specific guidance on the reporting obligations. The sessions will include guidance on how health services can produce compliant reporting, including where health services have relevant activity data that is readily available, and in circumstances where reporting relevant activity data is not practicable. It is important to note that there will be some data that needs to be reported under FRD-24 that is not currently collected through the EDMS. This data will need to be collected and managed separately by health services.

Further information is available on the DELWP’s [Climate Change website](https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-action-on-climate-change/government-environmental-reporting)  <<https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-action-on-climate-change/government-environmental-reporting>>.

For further information please contact sarah.bending@health.vic.gov.au or if it relates to EDMS email edms@health.vic.gov.au.

# National Australian Built Environment Rating Scheme (NABERS)

The Victorian Health Building Authority rates approximately 140 public hospitals every year against the NABERS Public Hospitals tool for energy and water.

The NSW Government, who administers the NABERS tools, has completed a benchmarking review of the public hospitals tool, to ensure ratings accurately reflect the performance of public hospitals across Australia. VHBA will be using the updated tool to rate Victorian public hospitals for 2021-22, which may result in some changes to existing NABERS ratings.

This benchmarking process has delayed the rating process, and VHBA is aiming to send 2021-22 certificates to public hospitals in early 2023.

The 2022-23 NABERS energy ratings are expected to include a Renewable Energy Indicator (REI) which will disclose the proportion of renewable energy used in a building on its NABERS rating certificate. For the REI to be accurate, health services will need to ensure solar data for all arrays on their hospitals are in the environmental data management system (see below).

Victoria's leadership on NABERS for public hospitals is encouraging other countries to rate the performance of their hospitals, with New Zealand due to finish an Energy and Water for Hospitals rating tool in 2023.

# Uploading solar data

The department has approximately 15,700 kilowatt-peak (kWp) of solar PV capacity installed across the Victorian public health portfolio. For the department to report on its commitment of meeting five per cent of its electricity demand from behind the meter solar by 30 June 2023, it needs generation data from solar PV installed across the health system. The primary sustainability contact at each health service should have received an email if one or more of your facilities has a solar PV array installed that is not currently reporting to the department’s Environmental Data Management System (EDMS). This email includes detail on:

* Section 29.11 of the department’s [Policy and Funding Guidelines 2022-23](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>, which states that “*public hospitals and health services are to configure any behind-the-meter solar arrays to automatically feed net generation data into the EDMS*.”;
* The NABERS Renewable Energy Indicator (REI) that has been developed and will feature on all NABERS energy ratings from early 2023. The REI will provide an indication of how much of the energy used in a building comes from renewable sources and will recognise a broad range of renewable energy sources such as GreenPower and onsite renewable energy (such as from solar PV arrays);
* The new Financial Reporting Directive 24 on [“Reporting environmental data by government entities”](https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/financial-reporting-policy/financial-reporting-directions-and-guidance) < https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/financial-reporting-policy/financial-reporting-directions-and-guidance> came into effect from 1 July 2022. FRD24 encourages the reporting of generation data from solar PV arrays, which will highlight the leadership position of the health system in solar PV.

The department has been working with hospitals and health services to assist in getting solar data into the EDMS. Where there are challenges with inverter connectivity or the ability to generate a report in the required format, the department has been creating Microsoft Excel macros to convert exported data from solar dashboards into the required format. If you need assistance in getting solar data into the EDMS, please contact Aaron Hoare at aaron.hoare@health.vic.gov.au

# Energy and solar program for public hospitals

The Victorian Health Building Authority (VHBA) has secured $40 million grant funding to support energy efficiency and solar in public health facilities. The program will:

* install additional solar, primarily in metropolitan hospitals
* support site-wide energy efficiency retrofits in local, small rural, multi-purpose and state-wide health services,
* support site-wide energy efficiency retrofits and solar in bush nursing centres, registered community health services and Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Centres, and
* support the electrification of public hospitals.

VHBA is in the process of preparing the program guidelines. It is expected that the program will target investment at specific initiatives identified through an energy audit process managed centrally by VHBA. Further details of the program and how to get involved will be provided to eligible health services in 2023.

Global Green and Healthy Hospitals (GGHH) Network

The department encourages public health services to join GGHH and access the many benefits provided through the network which include networking and support from a community of sustainable healthcare colleagues across Australia, New Zealand and globally.

In the last six months, Central Highlands Rural Health, Rural Northwest Health and Western District Health Service have become GGHH members.

There are resources available which have been developed specifically for healthcare sustainability and opportunities for international recognition for environmental achievements.

If you have any questions or would like support becoming a member please contact Stephanie Caruso, CAHA Sustainable Healthcare Program Manager & GGHH Pacific Region Coordinator. For more information visit the [GGHH website](https://www.caha.org.au/globalgreen_healthyhospitals1) <https://www.caha.org.au/globalgreen\_healthyhospitals1>.

Key contacts

Enquiries can be emailed to sustainability <sustainability@health.vic.gov.au>, or alternatively please see the contacts below.

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**VHBA – Sustainability in capital projects, environmental data and energy programs**

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