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| Public Health Service |
| Board Chair Position Description |
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Public health services deliver a range of health, mental health, community health and aged care services in metropolitan Melbourne and across the major regional areas of Geelong, Bendigo, Grampians, Albury and Wodonga, the Latrobe Valley and the Goulburn Valley.

Public health services are independent entities operating under the *Health Services Act (Vic) 1988* and are integral to the Victorian health system. The board, the chair and the individual directors of a public health service have formal duties and responsibilities to the Minister for Health (the Minister), the Secretary of the Department of Health (the department) and Victorian communities.

## Equal Opportunity and Diversity

The department is committed to ensuring that health boards and committees reflect the breadth and richness the diverse voices of Victorian communities.

The department encourages applications from women, people of all ages, Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander people, people of all abilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and from lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) communities.

## Legislative framework

The board is responsible for ensuring the health service is compliant with all relevant legislative law. For health services, the board’s responsibilities are primarily derived from the *Health Services Act (Vic) 1988.*

The *Health Services Act (Vic) 1988* establishes the boards of Victoria’s health services, and defines their duties, rights, and responsibilities. The board ensures the Minister, and the Secretary are advised about significant board decisions and are informed in a timely manner of any issues of public concern or risk that affect or may affect the health service.

Directors on the board of a public health service are considered a public official under section 4 of the *Public Administration Act (Vic) 2004.* As such directors are bound by the legislated requirements of the Victorian public sector values and the Directors’ Code of Conduct.

The *Financial Management Act (Vic) 1994* also applies to the financial administration of public health services relating to the accounting and reporting of public money and public property.

## Role of the Board

The role of a public health service board is to oversee the performance of its organisation and ensure that it is meeting the policy and strategic objectives of the Minister and government of the day. The board is held to be ultimately responsible for all aspects of the organisation’s activities. This includes, among other things:

* setting the vision, strategy, and direction of the organisation, in line with government priorities
* having ultimate accountability for the delivery of safe and quality care, including cultural safety and freedom from discrimination, harassment, and bullying
* oversight of the performance and delivery of key policy priorities
* ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the organisation
* recruitment, support and monitoring of the Chief Executive Officer.

The functions of the board are varied and cover accountability to stakeholders and leadership both internally and externally, now and into the longer term. Collectively, the board is responsible for creating a governance environment that acts in the best interests of the entity, the broader health system and Victorian communities.

## Role of the chair

The chair of a public health service is appointed as both a director under section 65T(1) of the *Health Services Act (Vic) 1988* and the chair under section 65T(2). In addition to the duties and responsibilities appointed as a director, a board chair has additional duties in leading the board.

Board chairs are expected to:

* Develop a comprehensive understanding of the health service’s finances, scope of services, strategic context, and legal framework.
* Ensure the organisation carries out its functions in a manner that is safe, effective, efficient and consistent with prudent financial management practices.
* Inform the Minister and the department of major issues of public concern or risks that affect or may affect the organisation. This includes bringing any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest or conflicts of duty to the attention of the department.
* Ensure that all appropriate items are included on the board’s agenda with meetings run effectively so that all members participate actively in decision-making.
* Lead the recruitment, support and performance monitoring of the Chief Executive Officer.
* Take a leadership role in managing relationships with external and internal stakeholders of the service.
* Facilitate regular performance assessments of the board as a whole and of individual members to ensure good governance and to assist in the identification of capability gaps and opportunities for further development.
* Promote and develop board policies and procedures to improve performance, ensure legislative compliance, and ensure appropriate risk management strategies are in place.
* In accordance with Section 80 of the Public Administration Act 2004 ensure that all relevant policies are readily accessible to all board members.
* Participate in meetings of the Council of Board Chairs, of which all Public Health Service Board chairs are members.

## Role of directors

Board directors are an integral part of Victoria’s health system, and our health services cannot operate without them. Directors are selected for their capabilities, encompassing personal and professional attributes, skills, knowledge and experience, which they are expected to continue to develop while on the board.

Board directors are expected to:

* Commit to the delivery of safe, high quality, culturally safe, person-centred care – a genuine interest in the fundamental purpose of the organisation and its role in the health care service system.
* Have integrity and be accountable – dedication to fulfilling a director’s duties and responsibilities, putting the organisation’s interests before personal interests, and acting ethically.
* Provide constructive challenge and oversight - the curiosity to ask questions and the courage to challenge, where necessary in a respectful manner.
* Use and interpret complex information – understanding the need for information on which to base decisions.
* Adhere to the relevant obligations and duties set out in the Victorian Public Sector Commission’s (VPSC) website, including the Directors’ Code of Conduct[[1]](#footnote-2) and Government board duties and responsibilities[[2]](#footnote-3).
* Be aware of the *Health Services Act 1988 (Vic)* and other applicable legislation and regulations.
* Commit the time required to fully exercise the duties required of the position (about 1-2 days). Time is needed to:
  + Attend, as a minimum, 75 percent of the approximately 11 board meetings per year which are usually held during the day. While meetings may be attended in person or on-line, it is important that all board directors attend some meetings in person and onsite of the health service.
  + participate on two or more standing and/or ad hoc committees of the board (there are a minimum of three committees per board, dedicated to Finance, Audit and Risk, and Quality and Safety)
  + review agenda items, papers and minutes of board and sub committee meetings; and
  + attend events where the health service requires representation. These are usually in person events such as the Annual General Meeting, strategy or planning days.
* Develop a full understanding of the organisation’s finances, scope of service, strategic context, and legal framework.
* Undertake Board Induction and Clinical Governance training and any other professional development required to fully discharge their responsibilities.

## Indemnification and remuneration

The health service indemnifies board directors and chairs so that they are not personally liable for anything done, or omitted to be done, **in good faith** when carrying out their duties. Any liability resulting from an act or omission attaches instead to the health service rather than individuals.

Directors and chairs are entitled to remuneration for their services on a public board. Public health services have been classified as Class A boards and fall within band 2 to 4. The renumeration rates for chairs are based on the board classifications:

* Class A Band 2 - $95,088.83 per annum
* Class A Band 3 - $72,532.09 per annum
* Class A Band 4 - $49,990.10 per annum

A list of the classification of the public health services is available at [www.health.vic.gov.au/board-applications](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/board-applications).

## Key Selection Criteria

### While Victorian public health boards are based on capabilities, the boards are more effective when these capabilities also represent the breadth and richness of the diverse voices of Victorian communities. The department encourages boards to consider how to strengthen their boardroom safety and competence to respond to people’s diverse identities, needs and preferences in terms of Aboriginality, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds, age, sex and gender identity, sexuality, ability and other factors to ensure every person has the best possible experience in accessing healthcare.

### Board Director Capability Framework

The Board Director Capability Framework (the Framework) has been developed by the department to enable board directors and chairs to have a clear expectation of what’s important to building an effective board to oversee the Victorian public health services.

To support and strengthen public health service boards, the department has outlined key attributes and capabilities. While some capabilities are necessary, all the attributes are necessary for the effective governance of a public health service. Some capabilities will depend upon the strategic outlook of the organisation and may be prioritised by a board based on its strategic focus.

Directors and Chairs appointed to a board are preferred to be proficient in their nominated primary capabilities and are expected to attain the foundation level on the remaining capabilities within their first year after appointment.

Chairs appointed to a board are also expected to have the following capabilities:

* develop and execute strategy and create a culture of inclusiveness, collaborative discussions, and collegiality while avoiding groupthink.
* pursue and manage difficult conversations and sensitive to the Chief Executive Officer and fellow board directors in communicating with them.
* Build and maintain effective working relationships with the department, the board, management of the organisation, and other stakeholders.

For further information about the framework refer to [www.health.vic.gov.au/board-applications](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/board-applications).

### Board capabilities

Board directors and chairs are expected to, collectively as a board, cover at least the range of necessary capabilities to ensure good governance and a culture of inclusiveness, integrity, and safety.

The department has outlined 13 capabilities which are grouped into two tiers:

* Tier 1 – the necessary capabilities that support effective governance; and
* Tier 2 – important capabilities that will depend upon the strategic outlook of the organisation and may be prioritised by a board based on its strategic focus.

In ensuring these capabilities are present on the board, applicants are asked to nominate and provide supporting information on their three primary capabilities. Applicants will also be able to nominate and provide supporting information on up to three secondary capabilities.

#### Tier 1 – Capabilities necessary for a board

Audit and risk management

Clinical governance

Corporate governance

Financial management and accounting

Law

Patient (user) experience and consumer engagement

Registered clinician

Strategic leadership

#### Tier 2 – Capabilities important for a board

Asset management

Communications and stakeholder engagement

Community Services

Human resources management

ICT strategy and governance

## Data and Privacy

When collecting and using personal information, the Department of Health acts in accordance with the Victorian Government Privacy Statement, and the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* which contains the Information Privacy Principles (IPPs).

Individuals do not have to disclose any personal information if they do not want to, but it can help the board and the department to understand how people can be supported through the recruitment process and beyond.

Applicants should read the Privacy and Consent Statement available at [www.health.vic.gov.au/board-applications](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/board-applications).

The department welcomes the opportunity to discuss reasonable adjustment or support that can be provided throughout the recruitment process and/or post appointment. A discussion can be arranged by contacting [healthservicegovernance@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:healthservicegovernance@health.vic.gov.au).

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1. Available from: <https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/resources/code-of-conduct-for-directors/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Available from [Duties and responsibilities of boards and board directors | boards.vic.gov.au](https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/duties-and-responsibilities-boards-and-board-directors) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)