



Wellbeing Action Plan 2025/26 – 2026/27

TO SUPPORT
IMPLEMENTATION OF

**Wellbeing in
Victoria: a strategy
to promote good
mental health
2025 – 2035**





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Acknowledgement

We proudly acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands and waters on which we live, learn, work and play. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and leaders, past and present. We recognise the ongoing enrichment Aboriginal peoples, culture and communities bring to the cultural landscape of this state. We acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded.

Since time immemorial, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have practised their lores, customs and languages and nurtured Country through spiritual, material and economic connections to land, water and resources. These connections are central to Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing.

The Wellbeing Strategy and various aspects of the first Wellbeing Action Plan action plan were developed in partnership with the Balit Durn Durn Centre of Excellence. We hope that these will facilitate action to better understand and address the experiences and priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in relation to mental health and wellbeing. More broadly, we hope that it will promote healing and encourage all Victorians to learn more about the deep wisdom of social and emotional wellbeing that is held in the world's oldest continuing culture.

We know we get better outcomes when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are making the decisions that affect their own communities. Victoria's Treaty process gives us a pathway to give First Peoples a say on the policies that impact First Peoples' lives. We commit to working proactively to support this work in line with the aspirations of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Victoria. We will continue to work with the Balit Durn Durn Centre, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria as we implement the Wellbeing Strategy and supporting wellbeing action plans.

We look forward to a time where, through the Treaty process and self-determination, we have recognised the wrongs of the past, made peace, and can walk together with greater respect, understanding and connection, and fully celebrate the strength, resilience and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Victoria.

Recognition of lived and living experience

We proudly recognise the lived and living experience of Victorians. We value and embrace the rich tapestry of stories, insights and expertise drawn from different walks of life, including experiences of mental illness, suicide, substance use and addiction.

In developing the Wellbeing Strategy and the first Wellbeing Action Plan, we spoke to people about their needs and ideas to improve wellbeing. We heard from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and leaders, people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, faiths, ages, abilities, genders, sexualities and places, as well as from practitioners and researchers. We spoke to people with lived and living experience of mental illness, substance use

and addiction who have valuable insights from their approaches to recovery. While we took great care to address potential barriers to engagement, we acknowledge our efforts can always be strengthened.

We honour those who contributed to this important work. We heard stories of discrimination and struggle, and stories of persistence, strength and hope. Every anecdote has contributed to this plan. We thank everyone for sharing their deeply held desire for positive change. Your insights and dedication are our driving force for change. Your continued interest and support will be instrumental in bringing this work to life. Thank you for leading the way.

Background

All people and communities in Victoria have what they need to thrive, for now and for future generations.



Wellbeing in Victoria: A Strategy to Promote Good Mental Health is a 10-year strategy that lays the foundation to promote wellbeing, reduce the prevalence of mental illness, suicidality and alcohol and drug-related harms. It outlines priorities to be undertaken across the whole of the Victorian government, in multiple sectors, and in the places where we live, learn, work and play.



Consistent with Recommendation 2 of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (Royal Commission), the Wellbeing Strategy has been developed by the Wellbeing Promotion Office (in the Department of Health) to provide a coordinated approach that brings communities, service providers and government together to strengthen our focus on prevention, promotion and healing.

The Wellbeing Promotion Office (WPO) was established in 2022 to help shift the focus of the mental health and wellbeing system towards the prevention of mental distress and the promotion of wellbeing. It works to improve accountability, coordination and planning of activities by working across government, sectors and communities.

At the same time, the first State Wellbeing Promotion Adviser was appointed to enable government to lead further development of prevention and promotion activity across Victoria.

The work of the Wellbeing Promotion Adviser and Office has focused on the provision of leadership and coordination across sectors and government to foster a statewide approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing and preventing mental distress. Key priorities have included:

- development of Wellbeing in Victoria: A Strategy to Promote Good Mental Health 2025-2035
- establishment of Social Inclusion Action Groups, a flagship prevention initiative to drive social connection and inclusion in local communities.

- design and delivery of Local Connections – a social prescribing trial to support people to participate in community-based activities, such as art, nature or other groups and activities to reduce loneliness and social isolation.
- broadening partnerships for wellbeing promotion by bringing stakeholders together through forums such as the 2023 and 2024 Wellbeing Promotion Symposiums
- supporting capacity building for mental health and wellbeing promotion.

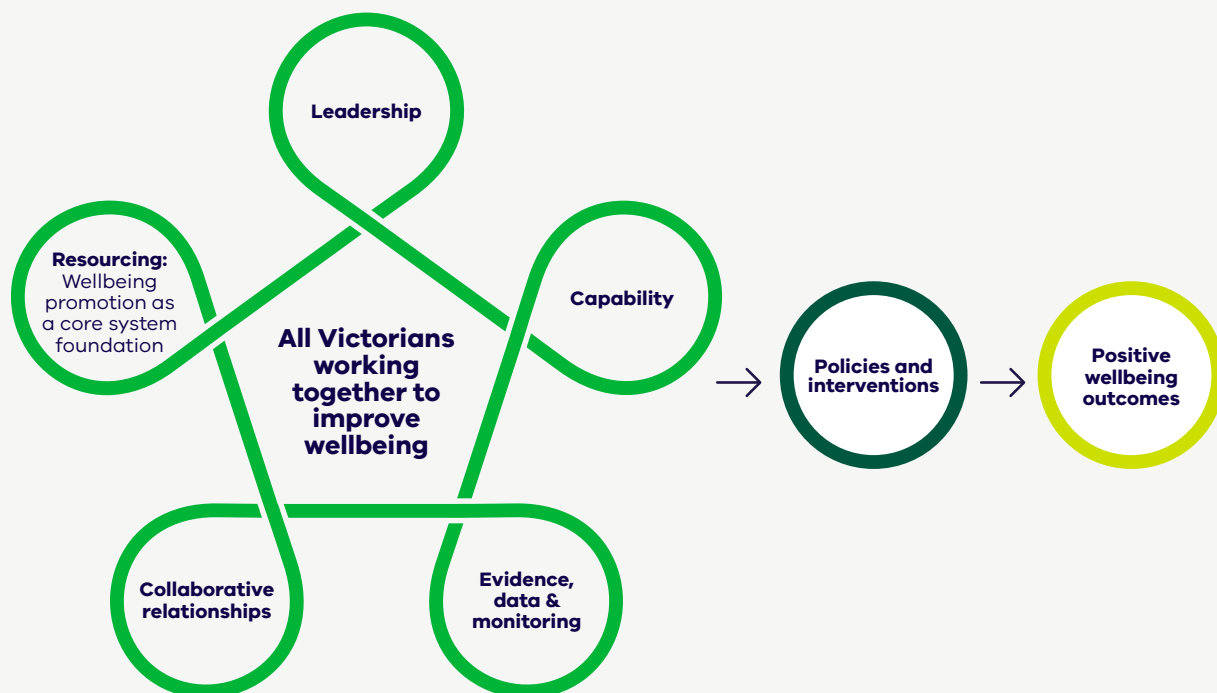


The initial focus for implementation is building the foundations of a wellbeing promotion system to deliver on the vision of the strategy. A wellbeing promotion system includes visible leadership, strong partnerships and coordinated approaches, strengthened capabilities, and supports the use of evidence and data to inform sustainable and long-term approaches to improving wellbeing.

Future action plans will drive a coordinated approach to wellbeing and investment guided by evidence and need. This work will require every part of government to take wellbeing into account in the decisions it makes. But this work also goes beyond government and aims to integrate stronger consideration of wellbeing into the places where people live, work, learn and play.

The Wellbeing Strategy is underpinned by strong and collaborative partnerships across government, businesses, organisations and communities. This first in a series of rolling wellbeing action plans has been developed in consultation with partners to set the foundations for wellbeing promotion. Ongoing engagement and partnership across government, sectors and communities will be key to successful implementation of the strategy and strengthening of our wellbeing promotion system.

Figure 1: Wellbeing Promotion System, based on Littlejohns & Wilson (2019)



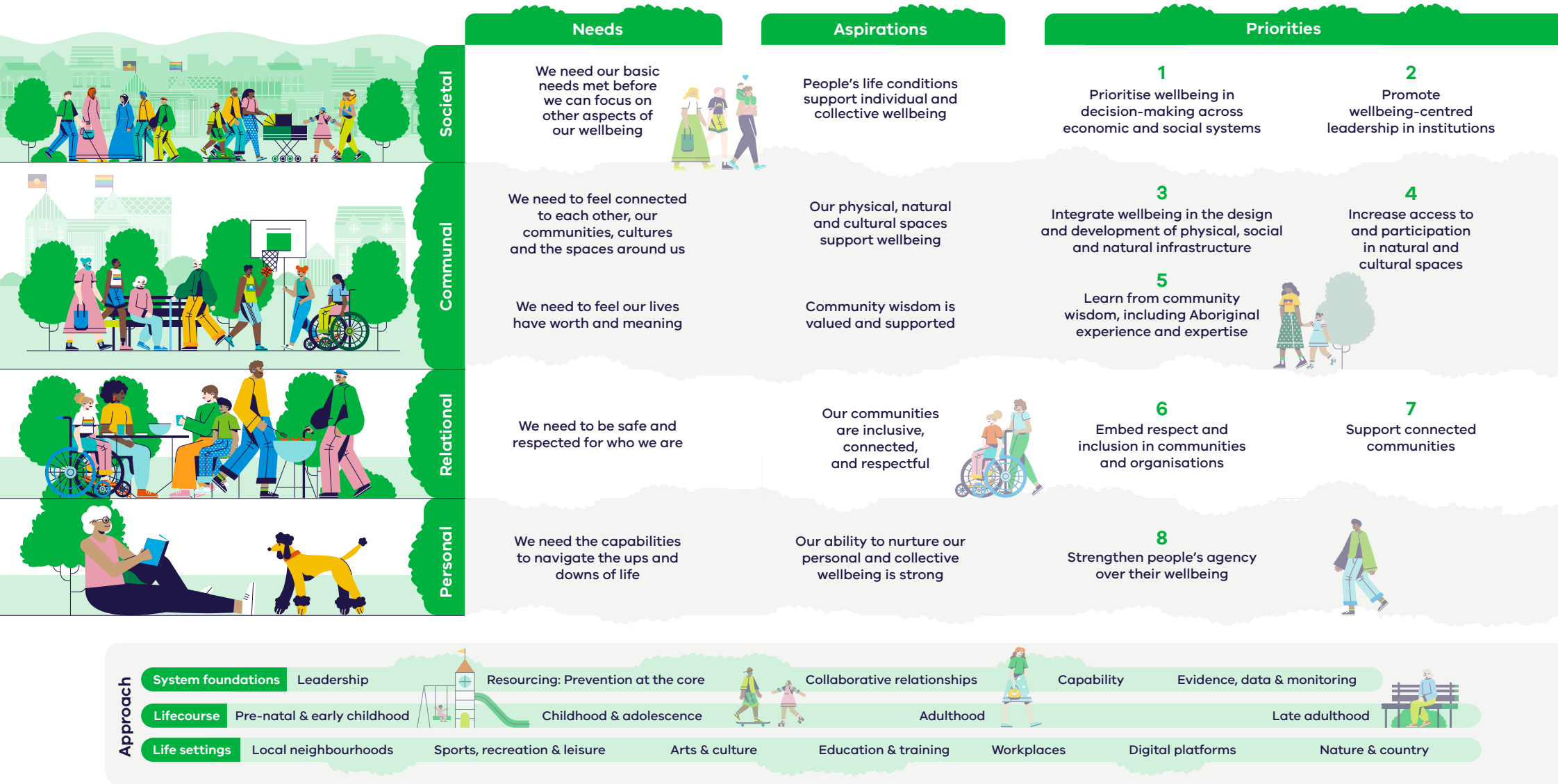
The first action plan focuses on actions to *strengthen the foundations of the wellbeing promotion system*. This will support government, sector partners and communities to deliver more effective and equitable wellbeing promotion efforts for the benefit of all Victorians.



Figure 2: An overview of the Wellbeing Strategy

An outline of Wellbeing in Victoria: A strategy to promote good mental health

Vision: All people and communities have what they need to thrive, both now and for future generations



Wellbeing Strategy priorities

Priority 1.

Prioritise wellbeing in decision-making across economic and social systems

Priority 1 is central to the success of the strategy. To achieve this, the first Wellbeing Action Plan will explore mechanisms to embed wellbeing in decision making. This will include exploration of wellbeing economy approaches.

Actions	Lead	Other relevant stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish a working group with key partners to explore mechanisms to embed wellbeing in decision making and make recommendations to the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Health and other relevant Ministers.Undertake policy work aligned with preferred approach and design implementation plan for change.	DH	DTF, DPC, DH All relevant government departments include DFFH and DEECA VCSS VicHealth Commissioner for Gender Equality in the Public Sector

Priority 2.

Promote wellbeing-centred leadership in institutions

Actions	Lead	Other relevant stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explore opportunities to embed wellbeing-led decision making as a recognised component in formal leadership training in a range of contexts.	DH	Prevention United Victorian Public Sector Commission Leadership Victoria VicHealth

Priorities 5, 6, and 7

Social Inclusion Action Groups

Actions	Lead	Other relevant stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver and evaluate the first 10 Social Inclusion Action Groups while enhancing place-based and community-led approaches to social inclusion and connection. 	Councils and SIAG community members, DH	Municipal Association of Victoria

Other priorities

Future action plans will focus on driving coordinated approaches to address priorities with the support of strengthened system foundations.

Self-determination and treaty

Continuing to embed self-determination in Victoria, including working towards Treaty, is critical to wellbeing for all Victorians.

Actions	Lead	Other relevant stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen understanding of Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing, and wellbeing promotion in this context. Champion and support self-determination, including the path to Treaty. Use the Cultural Safety Framework to develop culturally safe wellbeing promotion initiatives for funding consideration under the Early Intervention Investment Framework. 	DH	Balit Durn Durn Centre VACCHO ACCHOs DPC DTF

Wellbeing Promotion System Foundations

System Foundation 1

Leadership

Building cross-sectoral leadership for wellbeing promotion will help ensure that promotion and prevention are priorities for governments, organisations and communities as we work together towards long term change.

Actions	Lead	Other relevant stakeholders
1. Establish a Victorian Wellbeing Promotion Council to provide leadership for the implementation of the Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plans.	DH	DPC
2. Leverage the unique role of the State Wellbeing Promotion Adviser to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide expert, evidence-informed advice to the Minister for Mental Health and all relevant Ministerial portfolios and government departments to support consideration of wellbeing promotion impacts across relevant portfolios. develop and strengthen relationships with sector, industry and community leaders to increase their commitment to wellbeing promotion and drive cross-sectoral action. consider the process and mechanisms required to strengthen wellbeing and wellbeing supports in service systems for mental health, alcohol and other drugs and gambling harm treatment and response. 	DH	<p>Whole of Victorian Government</p> <p>Mental health and wellbeing sector</p> <p>Alcohol and other drugs sector</p> <p>Gambling harm treatment and response sector</p>
3. Support the continued development of local government leadership to maximise the wellbeing impacts of council policies and services including Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.	DH Municipal Association of Victoria	VicHealth Local Councils

System Foundation 1

Leadership

Building cross-sectoral leadership for wellbeing promotion will help ensure that promotion and prevention are priorities for governments, organisations and communities as we work together towards long term change.

Actions	Lead	Other relevant stakeholders
4. Explore mechanisms to support and strengthen existing community and organisational leadership for wellbeing promotion.	DH	Local Councils Regional Leadership Collective
5. Identify opportunities to support and strengthen the work of philanthropic leaders in wellbeing promotion.	DH	

System Foundation 2

Collaborative relationships

Collaborative partnerships will drive collective action, harness existing efforts and create opportunity for further shared effort to deliver on better outcomes for all Victorians.

Actions	Lead	Other relevant stakeholders
1. Host a bi-annual Victorian Wellbeing Promotion Symposium to build momentum around promotion and prevention, facilitate collaboration, and increase people's understanding of best practice in this area.	DH	Prevention United
2. Develop communications and a digital presence for the Wellbeing Promotion Office that is engaging, informative and enables collaboration across sectors and settings.	DH	
3. Identify Victorian government department organisation leads and co-leads for delivery of the eight priorities outlined in the Wellbeing Strategy and determine ways to work together to develop future action plans.	DH	Whole of Victorian Government

System Foundation 2

Collaborative relationships

Collaborative partnerships will drive collective action, harness existing efforts and create opportunity for further shared effort to deliver on better outcomes for all Victorians.

Actions	Lead	Other relevant stakeholders
<p>4. Support cross-government collaboration by</p> <p>a. Establishing a <i>Victorian interdepartmental network</i> for mental health and wellbeing promotion to better coordinate prevention activity across portfolios delivering improvements in mental health and wellbeing and preventing mental ill health.</p> <p>b. Hosting an <i>interjurisdictional</i> discussion group to promote partnership and collaboration on prevention and wellbeing promotion initiatives across Australia, through regular conversations about policy and implementation learnings, challenges and opportunities.</p>	DH	<p>Whole of Victorian Government</p> <p>Other state and Commonwealth government departments</p>
<p>5. Support the establishment of a new community of practice for mental health and wellbeing promotion in local government.</p>	DH with Prevention United	<p>Prevention United</p> <p>Local Councils</p> <p>Municipal Association of Victoria</p> <p>Local Public Health Units</p> <p>VicHealth</p> <p>Balit Durn Durn Centre</p> <p>VACCHO</p> <p>ACCHOs</p>
<p>6. Partner to support and expand existing cross sector collaborations working to deliver improved wellbeing at a regional level</p>	DH	<p>VicHealth</p> <p>Regional Partnerships</p> <p>Local Public Health Units</p> <p>Local Councils</p> <p>Women's Health Services</p> <p>Community Health Services</p> <p>Balit Durn Durn Centre</p> <p>VACCHO</p> <p>ACCHOs</p> <p>Services</p>

System Foundation 3

Capability

Building the capability of multiple workforces and communities to undertake wellbeing promotion will support evidence-based and community-led initiatives to deliver the priorities of the Wellbeing Strategy.

Actions	Lead	Other relevant stakeholders
<p>1. Grow the wellbeing promotion workforce by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Developing a wellbeing promotion workforce development plan that builds on wider health promotion workforce development activities. b. Contribute to the growth of a specialist wellbeing promotion workforce across a range of sectors and settings with the knowledge, skills and attributes required to design, deliver and support effective mental health and wellbeing promotion initiatives. c. Build the capability of the broader health promotion workforce to deliver effective wellbeing promotion policy and practice initiatives. 	DH	<p>Prevention United VicHealth Local Public Health Units Australian Health Promotion Association, Public Health Association of Victoria, TAFE, Universities, Schools, early learning childcare centres and Other education providers Department of Education DJSIR</p>
<p>2. Better understand how workforces in multiple sectors can promote wellbeing co-benefits and build their capacity and confidence to do this work.</p>	DH	<p>VicHealth Community Health Services DFFH Community sector (including Neighbourhood Houses, Men's Sheds etc.) Municipal Association of Victoria</p>
<p>3. Build the capacity of health and wellbeing promotion workforce and service providers to understand intersectional approaches and more meaningfully engage people from a diverse range of knowledges and experiences.</p>	DH	<p>DFFH DJSIR</p>

System Foundation 4

Evidence, data and monitoring

Strengthened evidence, data and monitoring will improve the system's accountability and transparency, identify wellbeing promotion priorities for collective action, and support evidence-informed policies and programs, leading to stronger social and wellbeing outcomes.

Actions	Lead	Other relevant stakeholders
1. Explore the development of a wellbeing monitoring, evaluation and learning system for Victoria that supports continuous learning, enables better measurement of impact and guides decision making at various levels.	DH	Whole of Victorian Government VicHealth
2. Grow and share the evidence base for wellbeing promotion and prevention by partnering on relevant research initiatives and identifying shared wellbeing promotion and prevention research priorities.	DH	Whole of Victorian Government VicHealth Prevention United Universities
3. Develop tailored tools that translate research to practice for local and regional planning and implementation of evidence-informed initiatives.	DH	VicHealth Prevention United Universities Wellbeing promotion workforce

System Foundation 5

Resourcing: wellbeing promotion at the core

The RCVMHS recognised the opportunity for wellbeing promotion and prevention efforts to be better connected and coordinated. Before looking to secure additional investment, the WPO seeks to better understand and connect existing investment and efforts and to identify options to improve reach and sustainability of outcomes, as well as scale and plan for future needs.

Actions	Lead	Other relevant stakeholders
1. Identify opportunities to streamline and coordinate Victorian Government's investments in prevention and wellbeing promotion.	DH	Whole of Victorian Government VicHealth
2. Developing wellbeing promotion and prevention initiative proposals for funding under the Early Intervention Investment Framework , which will allow for annual reporting and growth in the evidence base.	DH	DTF DPC

System Foundation 5

Resourcing: wellbeing promotion at the core

The RCVMHS recognised the opportunity for wellbeing promotion and prevention efforts to be better connected and coordinated. Before looking to secure additional investment, the WPO seeks to better understand and connect existing investment and efforts and to identify options to improve reach and sustainability of outcomes, as well as scale and plan for future needs.

Actions	Lead	Other relevant stakeholders
3. Support local networks and partnerships to better understand and connect wellbeing promotion initiatives in their region that are funded through various sources (government, philanthropy and other sources) to achieve greater impact.	DH	Local Public Health Units Community Health Services Local councils
4. Develop a Wellbeing Investment Agenda that considers more coordinated investment in wellbeing across portfolios, including options for shared and matched investment.	DH	DTF



Reporting our progress

This strategy represents a significant step forward in developing a coordinated statewide approach to the promotion of good mental health and wellbeing and the prevention of mental illness.

Implementation of this first action plan will strengthen the foundations of our wellbeing promotion system and support the delivery of the economic and social benefits of good mental health and wellbeing across the population over the years ahead.

The strategy will be evaluated and updated periodically, and rolling action plans released at appropriate times over the ten-year life of the strategy.

