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| Sustainability in healthcare update |
| Update No. 32, March 2021 |

The Victorian Health Building Authority (VHBA) produces the quarterly Sustainability in Healthcare Update to inform health services on sustainability initiatives being implemented across the healthcare sector, as well as key sustainability issues of interest.

## Machinery of Government changes

On February 1, the Department of Health and Human Services separated to become two new departments - the Department of Health and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. At the same time the Victorian Health and Human Services Building Authority was renamed the Victorian Health Building Authority.

The Department of Health will be responsible for the Health, Ambulance Services, Mental Health and Ageing portfolios and, importantly, continue leading the Government’s public health response to the pandemic with the Hon. Martin Foley as the Coordinating Minister. Further information and updates on the machinery of government changes can be found on the Funded Agency Channel Website <https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/news/machinery-government-update>.

## Victoria’s New Environment Protection Laws

Victoria’s New Environmental Protection Laws and proposed final subordinate legislation comes into effect on the 1 July 2021.

The general environmental duty (GED) is a centrepiece of the new laws and applies to all Victorians. Entities that conduct activities that pose a risk to human health and the environment, must understand their risks and take reasonably practicable steps to eliminate or minimise them. In an Australian first, the GED is criminally enforceable. The focus on the new laws is on preventative actions and the action an organisation takes to prevent harm.

As long as health services continue to manage key environmental risks, such as waste management, and emissions to land and air, the changes are unlikely to have any significant impact on operations. However, if an environmental incident occurs, the health service will need to provide evidence that it took all reasonably practicable steps to eliminate or minimise the incident from occurring.

EPA has produced a number of resources including a recording of a webinar they ran in February. The link to the recording, and other resources including frequently asked questions is available on the [EPA website](https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/newlaws) <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/newlaws>.

## Waste management update

**Waste education evaluation summary**

An evaluation of the waste education in healthcare project has been completed and an evaluation report completed. A big thank you to all of you that completed the survey. A list of the resources that have been produced from the project is also available at the end of the evaluation summary which is available from the [waste section](file:///C:\Users\ayor1912\Downloads\%3chttps:\www2.health.vic.gov.au\hospitals-and-health-services\planning-infrastructure\sustainability\waste%3e) of the Sustainability in Healthcare website <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste>.

**Web resources including new resources**

New resources have been added to the Waste section of the [Sustainability in Healthcare website](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste)  <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste> including a recycling single Use Instruments (SUMI) guide and Waste Management plan template

The following materials were prepared as part of the waste education in healthcare project:

* [Waste education in healthcare summary report](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/waste-education-in-health-care-summary-report) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/waste-education-in-health-care-summary-report>
* [Waste signage including downloadable](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste/waste-and-recycling-signage) posters <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste/waste-and-recycling-signage>
* [Implementing a hospital PVC program guide](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste/pvc) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste/pvc>
* [Single Use Metal Instruments (SUMI) recycling guidelines](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste>
* [Waste management plan template](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste) <<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste>>
* [Clinical and related waste guidance – Supplement for healthcare](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/clinical-related-waste-guidance) staff <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/clinical-related-waste-guidance>
* [Waste audit guidelines](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste/audit-guidelines) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/planning-infrastructure/sustainability/waste/audit-guidelines>

**Changes to comingled recycling**

VHBA is working with HealthShare Victoria and CleanAway Daniels on updating the recycling posters to ensure they align with what can be recycled. If anyone is using them, or about to use them, they should note that changes to the posters will be made and will require communication to staff.

CleanAway Daniels has produced a video showing the inside workings of a materials recycling facility where hospital recyclables are processed. The video is available at <https://youtu.be/tX1Cld6gbzs>.

## Sustainable transport project



A big thanks to the perseverance of the project partners, Peninsula Health and Eastern Health, and consultants Active Travel in keeping the Sustainable Transport project moving amongst the challenges of COVID-19. The project includes the development of a framework and tools, and data collection via a travel survey and focus groups.

The draft framework is being reviewed by Western District Health Service, to ensure it is appliable to a rural health service. The project is due for delivery to the department by the end of the financial year. Further communication will be forthcoming on accessing the tools and how they can be applied in your health service.

## Global Green and Healthy Hospitals (GGHH) – case study and update

A case study has been developed on the regional health solar program and will be available within the [GGHH websites resources section](https://www.greenhospitals.net/case-studies-energy/) < https://www.greenhospitals.net/case-studies-energy/>.

VHBA encourages public health services to join  <<https://www.greenhospitals.net/>> 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. There are resources available which have been developed specifically for healthcare sustainability as well as opportunities for international recognition for environmental achievements.

If you have any questions or would like to become a member of the GGHH, please contact [Carol Behne](mailto:carol.behne@caha.org.au), CAHA Sustainable Healthcare Program Manager & GGHH Pacific Region Coordinator. Access the [GGHH Pacific region website](https://www.caha.org.au/globalgreen_healthyhospitals) for more information <<https://www.caha.org.au/globalgreen_healthyhospitals>>.

## Single use plastics ban

On 27 February, the Minister for Environment Lily D’Ambrosio announced a phase out and ban of specific single-use plastics by 2023, which will include single-use plastic straws, cutlery, plates, drink stirrers, polystyrene food and drink containers, and plastic cotton bud sticks. The ban is intended to reduce waste going to landfill. In many cases, these single-use plastics can be substituted with readily available, cost-effective alternatives.

The phase out and ban will not impact on medical or scientific equipment, emergency services or other activities that require these types of plastics for health and safety reasons. The government will work with the aged care and disability sectors to ensure appropriate emptions for people who require straws or other single-use plastics.

Further information can be found on the [Premiers website](https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/victoria-taking-action-single-use-plastics) < https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/victoria-taking-action-single-use-plastics>.

## Health and human services climate change adaptation action plan

The Climate Change Act 2017 requires the development of seven system adaptation and mitigation plans by November 2021. To prepare the health and human services sector, a pilot health and human services climate change adaptation action plan was prepared and released in 2019–21 which is available on the [departments website](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/201912/Pilot%20health%20and%20human%20services%20climate%20change%20adaptation%20action%20plan%202019-21-20191209.pdf) <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/201912/Pilot%20health%20and%20human%20services%20climate%20change%20adaptation%20action%20plan%202019-21-20191209.pdf>.

A draft plan, as required under the Act, is being developed by the department and will be released for public consultation in mid-2021. VHBA is working with the Commissioning and System Improvement and Public Health divisions in the department on engagement with the sector on the draft AAP Strategy. If your health service would like to participate in upcoming workshops providing an overview of the draft AAP and an opportunity to provide feedback on its direction, please contact [sarah.bending@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:sarah.bending@health.vic.gov.au). It is expected the workshops would be held online in April 2021.

## Upcoming events

The annual ANMF (Vic Branch) Health and Environmental Sustainability Conference will be held Thursday 6 May 2021 followed by a Wellness Conference on Friday 7 May 2021.  The conference will be held online and eligible for 15 CPD points. Further information is available by visiting the [ANMF registration page](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/anmf-sustainability-conference-nmhpvanmf-wellness-conference-registration-136755594665?aff=otrfb) < [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/anmf-sustainability-conference-nmhpvanmf-wellness-conference-registration-136755594665?aff=otrfb](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.eventbrite.com_e_anmf-2Dsustainability-2Dconference-2Dnmhpvanmf-2Dwellness-2Dconference-2Dregistration-2D136755594665-3Faff-3Dotrfb&d=DwMGaQ&c=JnBkUqWXzx2bz-3a05d47Q&r=63QUJ8vPITj9VxQCgC_FOjaQxYjJE-YphC7-xmQoNuw&m=HTSc_1sYRnWN-Z_ApjcKCOsPb9cbSIOpDSYOEUPqsqM&s=DabDMtnApqa8-VLD_x5aqZSsm5KRwZ9NVchKi9JCjWQ&e=)>.

## Nursing for the Environment Intensive

Nursing for the environment – Intensive is a practical and informational course designed to strengthen advocacy and leadership around climate mitigation and environmentally sustainable workplace practice. The program is part of the ANMF Continuing Professional Development program and provides information on governance requirements, opportunities to speak with a range of experts, and develop an action plan. The forum is a good opportunity for an organisation to support staff in increasing environmental credentials who may not come from environmental backgrounds.

This course is suitable for registered nurses, enrolled nurses, midwives and personal care workers.

Further information on the next sessions are available from following the links below or by emailing [eduction@anmfvic.asn.au](mailto:eduction@anmfvic.asn.au). Bookings can be made at:

* [23 June 2021](https://cpd.anmfvic.asn.au/events/viewitem/989):  <https://cpd.anmfvic.asn.au/events/viewitem/989>
* [6 October 2021](https://cpd.anmfvic.asn.au/events/viewitem/990): <https://cpd.anmfvic.asn.au/events/viewitem/990>

## Summary of resources online

The Department of Health (DH) and **Victorian Health Building Authority (VHBA) websites contain a wealth of the latest resources on sustainability in healthcare.**

* Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) - [Sustainability in Healthcare](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/sustainability)  
  <www.health.vic.gov.au/sustainability>
* [Victorian Health Building Authority](http://www.vhba.vic.gov.au) **(VHBA), a branch of Department of Health <**www.vhba.vic.gov.au>.
* quarterly Sustainability Updates (dating back to March 2014),
* videos outlining the importance of sustainability in the healthcare system,
* case studies and factsheets on sustainability initiatives to assist health services,
* guidelines and guidance notes around sustainability issues relevant to the healthcare sector, and
* templates including relating to environmental management planning
* topics: **capital works, carbon management, data management tools, dialysis services, environmental compliance, energy, procurement, transport, waste and water.**

## Does your health service have a sustainability achievement or initiative to share?

We are always keen to get updates on any initiatives you are undertaking that you may wish to share with other health services. These do not need to be full case studies, though we and GGHH are always keen to receive these as well. Please email [sarah.bending@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:sarah.bending@health.vic.gov.au) if you have something you wish to have included in a further update.

## Key contacts

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