



# Population Health Catchment Plan

2023–2028

## Who We Are

Monash Health's South East Public Health Unit (SEPHU) is one of nine Local Public Health Units working with the Department of Health to keep our community healthy, safe and well. We use local knowledge, community-based relationships, and direct engagement to effectively tailor and deliver public health initiatives and respond to incidents and issues within our local area.

Local Public Health Units were established in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic to manage local cases and outbreaks of COVID-19. SEPHU has expanded its role to undertake additional public health responsibilities, including health promotion, disease prevention and responsibility for communicable diseases and notifiable medical conditions other than COVID-19.

SEPHU is focused on leading health initiatives that improve the lives of people in the south-east. Our catchment area covers about 1.8 million residents across 11 local government areas: Bayside, Cardinia Shire, Casey, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Monash, Port Phillip, Stonnington and Mornington Peninsula Shire.

SEPHU partners with local councils, healthcare providers, peak bodies and community groups to co-design and lead public health initiatives across the south-east suburbs of Melbourne and along the Mornington Peninsula.

We are a multidisciplinary team with expertise in public health, infection prevention, epidemiology, disease prevention, health promotion, partnerships and community engagement. Each member of the SEPHU team plays an important role in the overall program.

SEPHU is currently finalising its Public Health Strategy 2024-2029. Our public health priorities have been established through our *Population Health Catchment Plan 2023-2028*. Our role includes:

- › Health Protection – operating across the SEPHU catchment, we are responsible for the management of notifiable medical conditions, including working with communities to ensure a quick response to outbreaks. By December 2023 this will encompass 81 notifiable conditions.
- › Health Promotion – this enables individuals and groups to improve their health via education and empowerment.
- › Disease Prevention, which reduces the risk of disease or injury before it occurs.
- › Community engagement, which builds relationships based on trust as we work collaboratively with the community and stakeholders to improve health and well-being outcomes. Focus areas include targeted engagement with priority population groups, capacity building, strategy development, health equity-related projects, and developing relationships and strategic partnerships.
- › Research is a key element at SEPHU and an important component of our 6-year strategy currently being developed.

### Acknowledgement of Country

Monash Health respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples, the Traditional Custodians and owners of the lands where our facilities are located and programs operate. We recognise the ongoing spiritual link Aboriginal people have to their lands, culture and lore; and acknowledge that their connections build healthier families and communities. Monash Health pays respect to the Elders of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong peoples; past, present and future. We extend our respect to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, consumers and stakeholders.



Ngarra-jarra-noun artwork  
by Dixon Patten

# Population Health Catchment Plan 2023–2028

SEPHU took an evidence-based approach to establish the public health priorities that will improve the health and wellbeing of our catchment, through the SEPHU Population Health Catchment Plan 2023–2028.

Our method included a comprehensive needs assessment and analysis of population health data, looking at demographics, modifiable risk factors associated with preventable chronic diseases and current burden of disease.

Following a review of our needs analysis along with our understanding of local health priorities and current activity, plus stakeholder consultation and community engagement through the first half of 2023, we identified four areas of shared priority and opportunity for collaboration. These four public health areas are:

- › Reducing vaping (e-cigarette) and tobacco use and related harms
- › Preventing hospital admission due to falls
- › Promoting active lifestyles
- › Enhancing cervical cancer screening and human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination rates.

These priorities align with strategic government priorities as outlined in the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023* and *Victorian Cancer Plan 2020-2024*. They also offer the potential for effective interventions that both address health inequities and promote health equity among the diverse socio-demographic and priority population groups in our catchment.

The Catchment Plan incorporated an equity/gender impact assessment on all our priorities. This process looked at gender but also included consideration of an intersectional lens including Aboriginal culture, disability, socioeconomic status, age and cultural diversity. Our engagement with the community in the first half of 2023 shaped and informed the Population Health Catchment Plan. This engagement will continue as the plan is rolled out.

The plan will be reviewed after 3 years.



Public health priority

# Reducing vaping (e-cigarette) and tobacco use and related harms



Tobacco and e-cigarette use remain a major public health issue, with significant impacts on morbidity and mortality in our catchment area.

Reducing vaping and tobacco use and their associated harms is vital because vaping and tobacco use are associated with numerous health risks, including lung disease, heart disease and cancer, and contribute to health disparities in our community.

There was a significant increase in the use of e-cigarettes in Victorian Adults in 2022 compared with 2018-19, with current users doubling from 3% to 6%. More than half of these current users are less than 30 years old, and 25% of current users have never smoked tobacco before. Additionally, 33% of 14-17 year olds reported to have vaped at least once. Triangulation of evidence with health data from the SEPHU catchment, including rates of current smoking, heart disease, stroke and chronic disease

provides supports the selection of this priority area.

The overarching goal is to significantly decrease the prevalence of vaping and tobacco use in our catchment and to mitigate the health impacts associated with these behaviours. This will contribute to improved public health outcomes, reduced health disparities and a healthier, more vibrant community.

The objectives include increasing awareness about the risks of vaping and tobacco use, advocating for stricter tobacco and vaping regulations, reducing access to these products, especially among youth, promoting cessation services and support, and fostering healthier norms and behaviours around smoking and vaping. Advocacy and education campaigns will be launched to highlight the environmental impact of e-cigarettes and promote responsible disposal methods.

**Our work on this priority begins in 2023. Progress will be monitored, evaluated and assessed, with adjustments made as required.**

Public health priority

# Preventing hospital admissions due to falls

Preventing and reducing hospital admissions due to falls, particularly among older adults, is a key focus area.

Falls can lead to severe injuries, loss of independence and death. Furthermore, they can put significant strain on health services and caregivers.

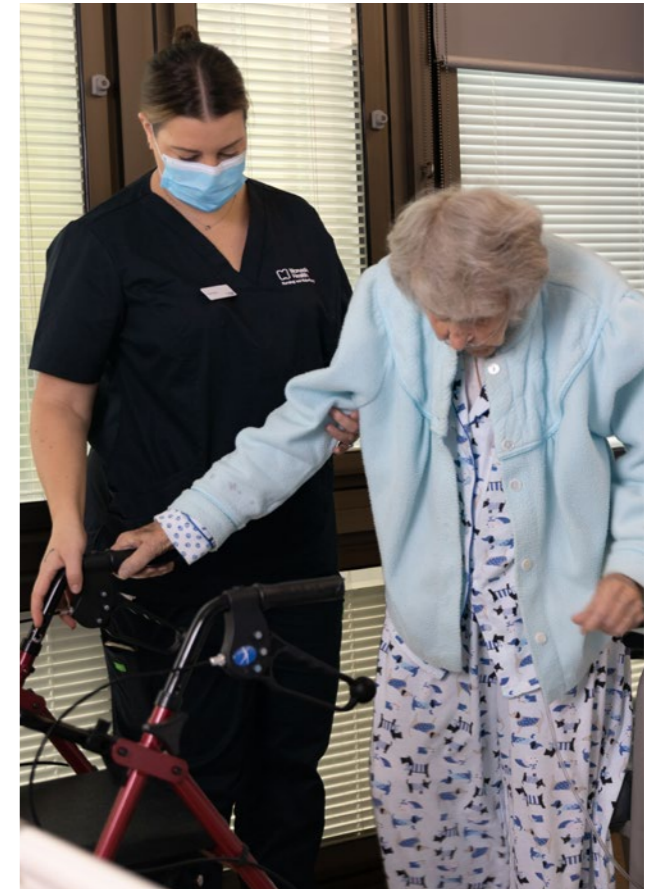
SEPHU has observed high rates of hospitalisation due to falls in those aged 65 and older across multiple LGAs.

Preventing falls is a key component of healthy ageing. Some risk factors for falls are relatively easy to change and, where falls occur, injury severity can be reduced.

The overarching goal is to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of older adults by reducing the incidence and impact of falls. This involves not only preventing falls but also minimising the harm when they do occur and enhancing older adults' resilience and recovery.

Key objectives that support the goal include reducing the hospitalisation and bed impact of falls; reducing the rate of falls and fall-related injuries among older adults; increasing the number of older adults participating in fall prevention programs; increasing public awareness about the risks of falls and how to prevent them; and reducing disparities in fall rates or access to fall prevention programs across different demographic or socioeconomic groups.

The initial focus will be on developing and interpreting available data with a view to understanding hospital admission data on falls, reducing immediate falls risk, followed by strategies aimed at reducing long-term falls risk.



**Our work on this priority begins in 2023. Progress will be monitored, evaluated and assessed, with adjustments made as required.**

Public health priority

# Improving cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination

Improving cervical cancer screening and human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination rates is essential to reduce the burden of this preventable cancer.

Cervical cancer accounted for 0.4% of all cancer related deaths in Victoria in 2020. Screening and vaccination help reduce disease burden, but there is a need to improve screening rates across all LGAs, which could also then provide access to care to improve sexual and reproductive health.

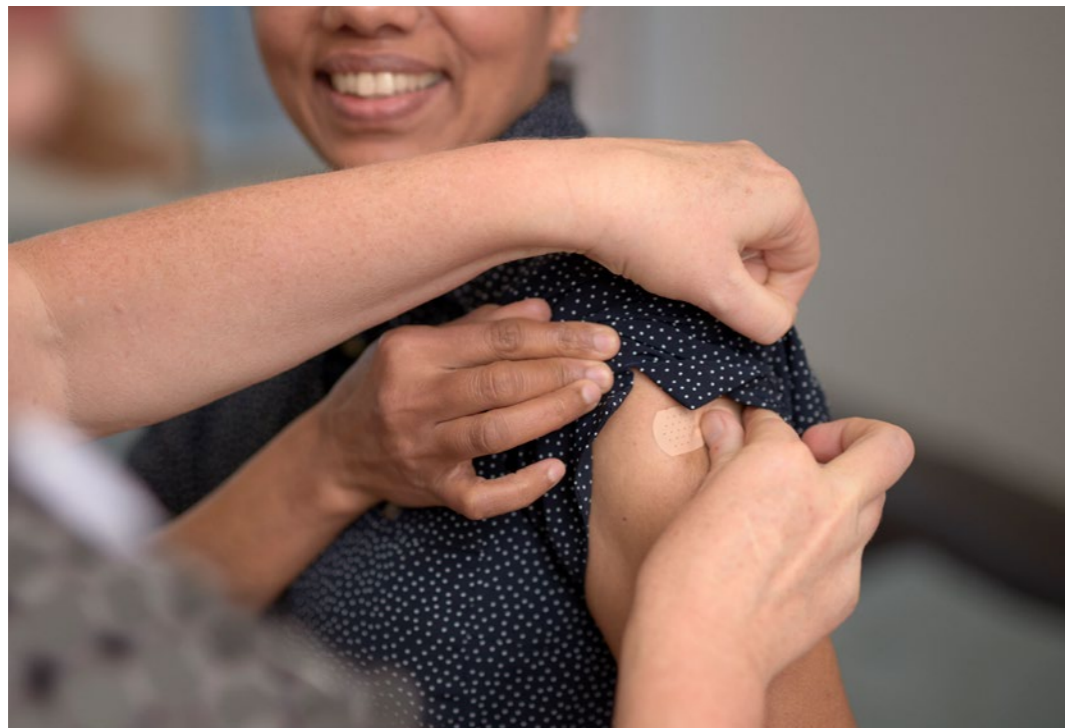
Another priority focus area is the enhancement of cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination rates. This focus stems from the imperative to reduce the incidence

and mortality of cervical cancer and other HPV-related diseases in the community.

Our overarching goal is to increase cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination rates in the community, which will contribute to a reduction in the prevalence of cervical cancer and other HPV-associated conditions. We aim to do this by focusing on accessibility, education, and targeted interventions for at-risk groups.

Our strategies will be implemented through collaboration with our stakeholders, with a focus on creating tailored, community-based interventions. Their effectiveness will be evaluated through regular monitoring of our key objectives, along with feedback from community members and stakeholders.

**Our work on this priority begins in 2024. Progress will be monitored, evaluated and assessed, with adjustments made as required.**



Public health priority

# Improving active living



Promoting active living is crucial to prevent chronic disease and improve overall health and wellbeing.

More than half of all Victorians do not meet Australian physical activity guidelines and are at increased risk of developing chronic conditions. Regular physical activity helps improve overall health, fitness and quality of life. It also reduces the risk of chronic conditions like type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, many types of cancer, depression and anxiety, and dementia.

The overarching goal for this priority is to create a culture of physical activity and health that is integrated into the daily lives of all community members, with the aim of improving both individual and communal health and wellbeing.

Several specific, measurable objectives support this goal and align with the overall direction of the priority. These include increasing the proportion of individuals who meet the recommended guidelines for physical activity, reducing rates of preventable chronic diseases, enhancing the community environment to support active living, and fostering sustainable active lifestyles.

**Our work on this priority begins in 2024. Progress will be monitored, evaluated and assessed, with adjustments made as required.**



For more information please visit:  
[www.sephu.org](http://www.sephu.org)

SEPHU fosters a strong culture of partnership and a collaboration between Monash Health, Alfred Health and Peninsula Health to facilitate seamless access to support independence and deliver the best health outcomes for the diverse communities we serve.