

THE STORY OF OUR PUBLIC HEALTH PLAN


CITY OF VINCENT



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Public Health Plan

2020 – 2025



A strategy for a healthy,
happy and connected
community for all



The why behind our PHP development

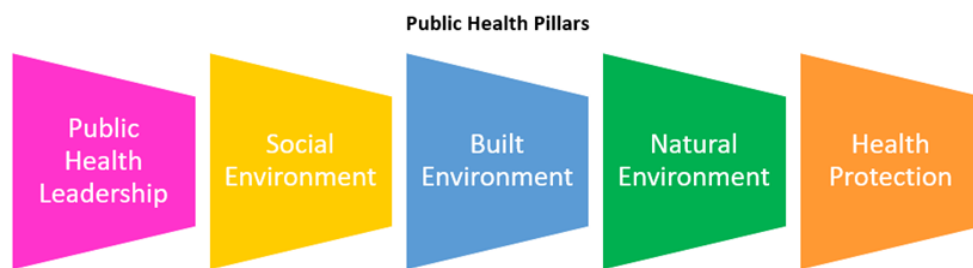
The City of Vincent has always had a strong focus on creating and maintaining a healthy, happy and connected community, giving everyone the opportunity to thrive. We were an early adopter in public health planning, developing our first one back in 2014-2017. The City then embarked on an extensive community engagement initiative for the 2018/2028 Strategic Community Plan (SCP). The priorities within the SCP contribute to a healthy and connected community and we highlighted the strong link between the Public Health Plan and the SCP to community members, Council members, Executive and internal staff members. This led to the PHP being embedded into the Corporate Business Plan and assigned an associated budget to ensure there was the commitment to completing the project as a priority throughout 2019, aligning it with the Public Health Act 2016 and State Public Health Plan release.

How we developed our PHP

It was decided to fast-track the process at the City to ensure the project was completed within the 2019/2020 year. Two dedicated project officers were employed over six months in the Health Services team to drive the project. We started our process with a thorough research and mapping activity of all City Plans, Strategies and Policies to identify actions and objectives that already impacted positively on public health. We recognised that many parts of our business were already contributing to positive public health outcomes, so to capitalise on their expertise we set up a working group with representatives from across many business units (eg - Health Services, Policy and Place, Library Services, Rangers and Marketing and Communications). It was determined that the City has nine policies in place related to health already and the opportunity to package the delivery of these policies within the PHP will ensure we can deliver our public health assurances to our community in a consistent way. As PHP's need to be evidence-based we then set about collecting the required health data and demographics specific to our community, North Metro Health Service provided a Vincent health profile which contained data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Department of Health.

The next step was our engagement with the community and stakeholders which occurred throughout March 2020 to identify local health and wellbeing priorities and actions. Consultation occurred via online surveys, face to face surveys and discussions, telephone meetings, targeted presentations and a community workshop was also planned, however this was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic announcement. From this consultation, we identified deliverables and actions for our PHP and this was done closely with Elected Members and other Council Officers and business units. These included existing projects, programs and services along with identifying future opportunities. A draft was agreed to by managers and coordinators for consensus prior to it being presented at Ordinary Council Meeting, this was important to instil a whole of council approach and responsibility to the PHP

Outcomes to date



The City has created five public health pillars for the PHP capturing where we can have the greatest influence and impact on community health and wellbeing. We believe the inclusion of the 'Public Health Leadership' pillar to be important, as it ensures we embed public health into everything we do. Our leaders will ensure health and wellbeing is ultimately incorporated into 'business as usual' operations of the City by committing to lead, influence and advocate for optimal public health outcomes. We have included some aspirational targets in our plan such as the Smoke-free Town Centres by 2025, which will require our City to go above and beyond with our policies and strategies and pioneer the way forward with local government policy and action protecting community health.

The delivery and implementation of the PHP has been incorporated into our Corporate Business Plan 2021-2024 for action, which ensures the budget allocation and key deliverables reporting. Another outcome has been increased cross-collaboration between our City business units, with an internal workplan developed and agreed to that will drive the actions over the next five years.

Challenges and barriers faced

The City set an ambitious six month time frame for the development and adoption of our PHP and allocated resources and employees accordingly. The only delays being the lead in time for reports to get up to Ordinary Council Meetings and the required 21-day consultation and comment period and a few minor COVID-19 delays.

Due to COVID-19 the City, like most other organisations, moved to a work from home structure, which was overcome with the use of Zoom meetings and emails to ensure momentum continued on the internal collaboration. The planned community consultation and engagement methods were not as robust as initially scheduled, however we have built-in continual opportunities for involvement and consultation on new projects and initiatives that arise throughout the implementation of the PHP.

Evaluating Health and Wellbeing outcomes for the community can be a challenge. The City recognises that improving the health and wellbeing of our community extends well beyond the scope of the PHP and local government activities. Also, there is often a considerable delay between the health promotion initiatives, the desired health behaviour changes and ultimately the measured

improvements in health outcomes. Therefore the City will monitor and track the success of the PHP through set key performance indicators for services, policies and programs and it will be evaluated on an ongoing basis by;

- annually reviewing deliverables and actions in line with new trends and evidence;
 - updating the local health profile as new data becomes available;
 - and using formative, process, impact and outcome evaluation methods.
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COVID-19 impact?

The impact of COVID-19 on developing our PHP has been somewhat beneficial, as it has highlighted public health as a priority, the role of local government in public health and kept it on the agenda for discussion within the City and Council. The City's role in the pandemic included quick response actions to support community members and our business community, state government directives and we have now adopted a comprehensive Rebound Plan (Addendum to COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Strategy).

Key lessons and words of wisdom

Public health is part of everything we do as a local government, it is important to do the leg work in the beginning to map out all programs, projects and services which impact health and wellbeing. While it is a big undertaking, you will reap the benefits further down in the development process. The importance of continued advocacy for public health especially with Managers, Executive and Elected Members to keep them informed and up to date. There is an opportunity to embed Public Health into the Strategic Community Plan in future reviews, and linking long term health outcomes to the State Health Plan objectives helps to easily identify which PHP deliverables contribute to overall policy priorities. Our words of wisdom are;

- get the right people around the table early on and use their wealth of information;
- create positive relationships with internal and external partners to ensure you build a 'whole of council' responsibility;
- don't underestimate the value of informal 'coffee room' conversations and what can develop from them;
- change won't come all at once, but it is possible with continued advocacy for the PHP;
- embedding the PHP into the Corporate Business Plan is essential if it is to become business as usual for the City; and
- ensure the final product is easy for the community to understand.

