

Public Health Service

Board Director Position Description

Public health services deliver a range of health, mental health, community health and aged care services across Melbourne and the major regional areas of Geelong, Bendigo, Grampians, Albury and Wodonga, the Latrobe Valley, and the Goulburn Valley.

Public health services are entities operating under the *Health Services Act (Vic) 1988* and are integral to the Victorian health system. The board, and 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

At the Department of Health, we are committed to creating a health system that embraces individual differences to build a culture where everyone feels safe and valued. Having people with a diverse range of knowledge, skills, life experiences, cultural perspectives and personal qualities helps us to better reflect the Victorian communities we serve.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that government boards and committees reflect the rich diversity of the Victorian community. To build an empowered and engaged leadership across the health system, the priority areas are First Nations people, people who live with a disability, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and gender diverse, Intersex, Queer and Asexual (LGBTIQA+), gender equality and upholding human rights.

Legislative framework

The board is responsible for ensuring the health service is compliant with all relevant legislation. For health service boards, 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 department 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 public officials 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 racism, discrimination, harassment, and bullying

- having ultimate accountability of the organisational culture, including a workforce that feels safe
- oversight of the performance and delivery of key policy priorities
- ensuring the financial viability and sustainability of the organisation
- recruitment, support and monitoring of the Chief Executive Officer.

Collectively, the board is responsible for creating a governance environment that acts in the best interests of the organisation, of Victorian communities and enables an integrated health system.

Role of the directors

Board directors are an integral part of Victoria's health system. Board directors are selected for their capabilities, encompassing personal and professional attributes, skills, knowledge, and experience, which are expected to continue to be developed while on the health service 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 and contribution to the health 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 without bias or favours.
- 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 to enable good decisions.
- Adhere to the relevant obligations and duties set out in the Victorian Public Sector Commission's (VPSC) website, including the Directors' Code of Conduct¹ and Government board duties and responsibilities².
- Be aware of the *Health Services Act 1988 (Vic)* and other applicable legislation and regulations.
- Develop a full understanding of the organisation'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.
- Have a lens on how the organisation partners with other health providers to enable seamless health care for Victorians at the right place and time.
- Commit the time required to fully exercise the duties required of the position (minimum of -2-3 days per month). Time is needed to:
 - Attend, as a minimum, 75 percent of the approximately 11 board meetings per year which are usually held monthly and during business hours. 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 four committees per board, dedicated to Finance, Audit and Risk, Quality and Safety, and Community Advisory). These meetings are usually held quarterly.
 - Review agenda items, papers and minutes of board and subcommittee meetings.

¹ Available from: <https://vpvc.vic.gov.au/resources/code-of-conduct-for-directors/>

² Available from [Duties and responsibilities of boards and board directors | boards.vic.gov.au](https://boards.vic.gov.au/Duties-and-responsibilities-of-boards-and-board-directors)

- Attend events where the health service requires representation. These are usually in person events such as the Annual General Meeting, strategy or planning days, and visits to facilities overseen by the board.
- Undertake both local and statewide board induction, Clinical Governance training and any other professional development required to fully discharge their responsibilities.

Indemnification and remuneration

The health service indemnifies board directors 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 are also entitled to remuneration for their services as a director of a public board. Public health services have been classified as Class A boards and fall within band 2 to 4. The current remuneration rates for those classifications are:

- Class A Band 2 - \$49,816.68 per annum
- Class A Band 3 - \$34,250.82 per annum
- Class A Band 4 - \$19,614.79 per annum

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

Key Selection Criteria

While Victorian public health boards are based on capabilities, boards are more effective when these capabilities also represent the breadth and richness of the diverse voices of Victorian communities. A diverse leadership of the health system that represents the variety of backgrounds and cultures of Victorian communities enables the vision of achieving the best health, wellbeing and safety for everyone.

Board Director Capability Framework

The Board Director Capability Framework (the Framework) has been developed by the department to enable board directors 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 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.

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

Board capabilities

Board directors are expected to, collectively as a board, cover 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 – 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 [board applications](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/board-applications) <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/board-applications>>.

The department welcomes the opportunity to discuss reasonable adjustments or supports that can be provided throughout the recruitment process and/or post appointment. A discussion can be arranged by contacting healthservicegovernance@health.vic.gov.au.

If you would like help understanding this document or would like to receive it in another format please phone 03 9456 3724, using the National Relay Service 133 677 if required, or email healthservicegovernance@health.vic.gov.au

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Available at [Applying for board positions](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/board-applications) <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/board-applications>>