

Harm Reduction Victoria

Strategic Plan

2011 - 2015



Health Rights • Human Rights • Harm Reduction

Our Vision

A world where all people are treated the same and have the same opportunities regardless of their drug of choice.

Our Mission

Harm Reduction Victoria works to advance the health, dignity and social justice of people who use drugs in Victoria.

Our Role

Harm Reduction Victoria is the drug user organisation for the state of Victoria and part of the national network of drug user organisations, facilitated by AIVL, the national peak body representing state and territory drug user organizations across Australia.

About Harm Reduction Victoria

Harm Reduction Victoria is a peer based, not for profit, community-based organisation that represents the needs and concerns of people who use drugs, past and present, in Victoria. Harm Reduction Victoria is the authentic voice of and for people who use/have used drugs and we bring drug users' perspectives and the reality of what people who use drugs actually experience into all our harm reduction initiatives as well as our partnerships with other organisations and our advice and advocacy to governments.

As a 'peer based' organisation, Harm Reduction Victoria is run by and for people who use or have used drugs and we encourage our constituents to participate at all levels of the organisation. We work to ensure people can use drugs as safely as possible and with minimal harm to themselves and others. We also strive to improve access to quality health information and services and to reduce the stigma and discrimination regularly encountered by people who use drugs. Harm Reduction Victoria provides a range of health promotion programs and peer driven interventions, including information, support and advocacy for people who use or have used drugs across the state of Victoria. The organisation is governed by an elected board and day to day operations are overseen by the Chief Executive Officer. Harm Reduction Victoria is funded by the Victorian Department of Health.

Our priority communities

People who use drugs are vulnerable to a wide range of harms – to their health, to their rights, to their dignity, and to their ability to realise their potential and enjoy a full and productive life. All people who use drugs are included in Harm Reduction Victoria's primary constituency. However Harm Reduction Victoria maintains a priority focus on the most marginalised and disadvantaged sections of the drug using community and in particular on people who inject drugs, due to the increased risks associated with injecting drug use, including transmission of blood borne viruses including HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C and B.

HRVic's programs are designed to reach a range of priority groups at greatest risk of drug related harm, including:

- young people who inject, especially young women and those living in rural and regional areas
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who inject
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) who inject
- people in custodial and/or post release settings who inject
- people who are new to injecting or are likely to transition to injecting
- people who have viral hepatitis, and/or HIV who inject
- GLBTI people who inject

Our guiding principles :

- **Community ownership and accountability:** Harm Reduction Victoria exists for our communities, to identify and serve their needs. We strive to build ways to make sure their ownership is actualized and enhanced.
- **Inclusion:** Harm Reduction Victoria seeks to represent and respect all people who use drugs in Victoria, regardless of gender, sexuality, age, disability, or ethnic group.
- **Participation and "Nothing about us without us":** Harm Reduction Victoria asserts our right as people who use drugs to be directly involved in the response to drug use and associated harms in Victoria, as declared in the Goa Declaration 2008.
- **Human rights:** Harm Reduction Victoria rejects all forms of arbitrary discrimination against people who use drugs, and works towards the elimination of stigma associated with the use of drugs.
- **Health promotion:** Harm Reduction Victoria is a health promotion organisation. We seek to advance the health and well being of people who use drugs by creating an enabling environment in which individuals are empowered to realise their aspirations, meet their needs, and participate fully in society.
- **Partnerships and collaboration:** Harm Reduction Victoria is committed to forming partnerships built on shared goals and trust, in order to respond more effectively to the needs of our affected communities of people who use drugs, past and present.
- **Excellence:** Harm Reduction Victoria strives to be a model employer, to be accountable to our constituency for all our actions and to achieve optimal outcomes.

About this Strategic Plan:

The national strategies relating to HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs and ATSI 2010-13 guided the development of Harm Reduction Victoria's Strategic Plan 2011-15, in conjunction with state and national Drug Strategies. More detailed performance measures and actions will be documented in the Operational Plan which will be overseen by the CEO and actioned by staff of Harm Reduction Victoria. The implementation of the Strategic Plan will be monitored by the Board of Harm Reduction Victoria.

This Strategic Plan 2011-15 will guide the direction of Harm Reduction Victoria's work over the next 4 years. The 4 key action areas are:

1. Prevention and harm reduction

The drug using community will have increased knowledge and skills to prevent BBV transmission and other harms associated with drug use and in particular injecting drug use

2. Promotion of health

People who use drugs will have increased access to quality information, care, and treatment, and will be able to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing

3. Leadership, coordination and advocacy

Harm Reduction Victoria will provide a strong voice which represents the needs and priorities of people who use drugs and will be a respected partner and advocate for our constituency

4. Organisational governance and management

Harm Reduction Victoria will be a strong and responsive organisation, accountable to our constituency and able to achieve optimal outcomes



Action Area 1: Prevention and harm reduction

The drug using community will have increased knowledge and skills to reduce the risk of BBV transmission and other harms associated with drug use and in particular injecting drug use

Strategies

- Provide high quality peer based education programs to prevent HIV, viral hepatitis infections among people who inject
- Develop and deliver best practice health promotion interventions, programs and resources which utilise harm reduction and peer driven strategies and target priority groups within the drug using community
- Seek innovative opportunities to increase access to sterile injecting equipment by piloting a peer network model which supports secondary distribution of needles/syringes and by operating a peer based NSP service
- Maintain strong relationships with researchers who identify the needs and concerns of people who use drugs and contribute to the evidence base, which informs all our work
- Provide professional development training from a drug user perspective to health and community workers who work with people who use drugs

Action Area 2: Promotion of health

People who use drugs will have increased access to quality information, care, and treatment, and will be able to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing

Strategies

- Develop strategies and facilitate pathways that will enhance medical care and support, including increased access to testing, treatment and vaccination for people who use and inject drugs, and those with viral hepatitis and/or HIV or at risk of viral hepatitis and/or HIV infection
- Provide information, support and referral to people who use/inject drugs, who are living with viral hepatitis and/or HIV or at risk of viral hepatitis and/or HIV infection
- Integrate information about hepatitis B prevention and encourage uptake of hepatitis B vaccination across all relevant projects and peer education programs
- Build capacity within the drug using community to enable people who use drugs to self-advocate and build the capacity of organisations to respect the rights of people who use drugs and those who are living with viral hepatitis and/or HIV or at risk of BBV infection.
- Develop campaigns and strategies that address the stigma and discrimination routinely experienced by people who use/inject drugs, past and present

Action Area 3: Leadership, Coordination and Advocacy

Harm Reduction Victoria will provide a strong voice which represents the needs and priorities of people who use/inject drugs, past and present and will be a respected partner

Strategies

- Provide a strong and authentic voice which represents the needs and priorities of people who use/have used drugs when working with advisory groups, policy makers and other decision makers, including local and state governments
- Establish Harm Reduction Victoria as a respected partner and adopt a collaborative approach across all programs and areas of work
- Take a leadership role and continue to advocate for better resourcing of peer based and harm reduction initiatives
- Develop and implement a communication plan for the whole of organisation to promote Harm Reduction Victoria and its work to our primary constituency i.e. people who use/inject drugs past and present, as well as to health and community organisations, and the general public
- Advance strategic relationships within correctional and justice settings
- Facilitate ways for people who use drugs, past and present to be directly involved at all levels of Harm Reduction Victoria and to have increased opportunities to participate in the development of health promotion and peer education programs
- Strengthen Harm Reduction Victoria's membership base and ensure that members have a voice and are able to assist HRVic to respond to key issues in a meaningful way

Action Area 4: Organisational Governance and Management

Harm Reduction Victoria will be a strong and responsive organisation

Strategies

- Ensure that Harm Reduction Victoria is a capable and accountable organisation which can effectively implement the new strategic plan
- Integrate rigorous evaluation across all programs and areas of work to monitor and improve outcomes
- Integrate a continuous improvement approach to our work to increase our ability to track and monitor achievements and identify opportunities for improvement
- Build the capacity of organisation to be culturally responsive across all systems and programs
- Nurture and build the capacity of staff and the organisation, particularly in the areas of organisational governance, management and leadership
- Support the team to function at the highest level and to be valued for their contribution to the organisation and the sector
- Identify opportunities for professional development and further training for staff

**For further information about Harm Reduction Victoria and how to become a member,
you can contact us:**

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