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Jerril Rechter
Chief Executive Officer



Our society is more connected to each other, and to information, than ever before. That is clear.

It's inspirational to see technology catalyse social connection, communication and co-creation, distribute tools and information at full throttle, or enable instant feedback.

The hallmark of our time is digitisation. It's no different in promoting health and preventing illness, as we see social marketing evolve, and new ways to communicate such as online platforms and apps become part of daily lives. More than 70% of Victorians now access the internet via their mobiles, and more than 90% are connected to others via social networking sites. Two in five Victorians tell us they trust health information from an app.

VicHealth has achieved much with social marketing to influence attitudes and behaviours that benefit the health of individuals and communities.

In 2015, our investment in this space continued leveraging new technologies, and pursuing ambitious goals backed by our long-held tradition of using high calibre evidence to create and evaluate our programs. These include the challenge of changing attitudes towards risky alcohol consumption, encouraging Victorians to drink less, nudging people to prefer water over unhealthy drinks, supporting communities to be active from walking to school to opening opportunities for more females to participate in casual and organised sport.

Establishing new ways to engage and communicate is particularly important among Victorians who may not have the same opportunities as others to lead healthy lives. Achieving health equity is an important focus across all VicHealth's funded programs, campaigns and partnerships.

In the coming years as we work through our strategic plan, the VicHealth Action Agenda for Health Promotion, we will continue to develop and pursue comprehensive and multi-faceted approaches to our programs and partnerships. We will innovate, test, partner, leverage and communicate; always refining our approach.

This edition of the VicHealth Letter will hopefully make you feel, as it does for me, that although Victoria's health challenges are defined by their complexity, our solutions are defined by their insight, innovation and inclusivity. Being at the forefront of health promotion, we will continue to support the means to find the evidence to plug gaps in knowledge that inform policy and practice as well as enable all Victorians to make decisions for their health. ■