

EVIDENCE REFORM

Victoria's approach





Message from the Minister

I am delighted to present this Evidence Reform Statement to you.

The Victorian Government has a clear vision to deliver a better future for Victoria.

Together with the Victorian Public Service (VPS), we are tackling the important challenges we face as a society, from delivering world class public transport, to building a vision for a future health system, to ending family violence.

A modern and capable public service has been crucial to delivering the government's commitment to support the wellbeing, security and prosperity of our community. To continue to be relevant and have impact, the public service must find innovative ways to maximise its impact and the value it provides to the people of Victoria.

To achieve its biggest impact, the VPS must use evidence in more sophisticated ways. This will allow us to better anticipate and respond to the changing needs of our people and communities.

An effective and capable public service is one that responds well, and in a timely way, to the challenges facing Victoria today and into the future. This Statement provides the roadmap to get there.

This Statement is the first step in supporting and building on the great work already underway across the public service. It will place Victoria at the forefront of public sector reform globally, and build the confidence and capability of the public sector. Substantive cultural and organisational change takes time. It is important that we start now.

Gavin Jennings MLC
Special Minister of State



Message from the Secretary

This Evidence Reform Statement sets out a clear direction and commitment to embedding robust and fit for purpose evidence use within the VPS.

The VPS is driven by a moral purpose to improve the lives of all Victorians. We work hard to deliver the outcomes that Victorians want and need, to improve our society.

The ability of the VPS to generate the evidence needed to support our decisions is a critical part of our work. The VPS is leading the way in improving approaches to evidence. We have made strides in recent years across the public sector in cultivating our evidence generation capacities. Departments have developed evaluation units, adopted behavioural insights and improved how data is collected and used, to support the decisions we make and the policies we pursue.

Simply adding to the evidence pile is not enough. We need to better shape, coordinate and share the evidence we have. We need to focus our collection activities on the issues that matter. This Statement provides a way forward for ensuring that our evidence answers the questions that we must address to improve the lives of Victorians.

We also need to make sure that evidence collected in one area of government is available to other areas where appropriate. This can reduce duplication of evidence activities and deliver greater value for money to the Victorian people.

We must embed the evidence we generate in every decision we make. This Statement begins the process of identifying the key points in the decision making process in which we must embed the best evidence.

The Evidence Reform Statement provides a pathway to a world leading evidence system that will support our public service to deliver policies and programs for the future. It brings together the good work already happening across the VPS and provides an ambitious agenda and a common purpose to which our public service should aspire.

Chris Eccles AO
Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet

VISION

A Victorian Public Service that values, shares and uses a range of evidence productively to inform government operations.

The Evidence Reform Statement is about harnessing evidence to support better decision making. It will bring together all the good work currently underway across the VPS, and optimise the way we request, generate, share and use evidence now and into the future.

PART 1

Evidence reform in context



Context

In recent years, Victoria has been making great strides in using evidence to inform policy and program design.

Scope of the evidence reform

Evidence is at the core of every decision government makes. Finding ways to better supply, demand and use evidence is a crucial part of improving those decisions and delivering better services, policies and outcomes for Victorians.

This reform provides strategic direction for the VPS to change and improve how it makes evidence part of policy and service design, the core business of the public service. It provides a clear roadmap to align all public service evidence activities towards addressing the key challenges facing government.

It is aimed at all VPS staff because we will all play a key role in driving and incentivising the use of evidence in government operations.

A range of evidence reform activities are already in progress across the VPS. This Statement complements the work in these important areas and fills critical gaps in our whole of government approach to evidence.

Departments have been:

- expanding evidence capabilities by creating dedicated evaluation and data analytics teams to build internal capability and increase the supply of evidence
- establishing innovative systems, tools and processes to enable better sharing and use of evidence
- embedding a culture of using evidence to support ongoing improvement or adaptive learning
- raising awareness of the value of evidence across all levels and functions in their organisations, from policy to senior executive officers
- delivering strategic research and evaluation projects to address issues shared across policy areas, reflecting a greater interest in how government interventions are working together to improve outcomes.

At a whole of government level there has been a range of innovations through a suite of public sector reform initiatives.

For instance, the government has supported the establishment of the Behavioural Insights Unit, the Victorian Centre for Data Insights and the Business Insights Unit, and has supported other emerging evidence capabilities such as user-centred design and a focus on outcomes to better embed evidence into our culture of decision making.

Benefits

This Statement is about maximising the productivity of the evidence that is available to the VPS, now and into the future, through better coordination and sharing.

By better coordinating our evidence activities, answering the right questions and developing a shared understanding of evidence based on the needs of the VPS, we can maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of our evidence.

This Statement will provide a strategic and unifying direction for the VPS's current and future evidence activities. It leverages existing efforts and progress in evidence informed decision making across the VPS and creates a shared direction for collaborative improvement into the future.

1. Better coordinate and share evidence

This reform is not simply about increasing the supply of evidence, such as the amount and types of evidence available. It instead outlines a holistic approach that improves how we supply evidence and addresses the demand and use of evidence as well.

The VPS routinely collects a vast array of evidence and the sheer volume can overwhelm time pressured policy makers. Moreover, a lack of coordination of the available evidence leaves us unaware of what evidence exists and increases the duplication of evidence production.

While the VPS continues to adapt and find ways to produce

evidence, there is an immediate need to share the evidence we develop and embrace a more coordinated approach to evidence generation and use.

We need to overcome structural and cultural barriers that do not sufficiently support the routine sharing of evidence across the VPS. This will allow us to improve our understanding of what we have previously done and the impact of government investments.

2. Answer questions of ongoing significance to Victoria

Our evidence activities have often focused on solving issues within the confines of departmental and portfolio responsibilities. While this has led to important interventions it has not been sufficient to solve complex public policy problems such as family violence, sustainable economic growth, locational disadvantage and homelessness. There are further gaps and silos in our understanding of public policy problems, what interventions work, and how solutions can be implemented.

We need to continue to build an evidence base that will position government and the public service to best address the problems our state faces,

now and in the coming decades. Coordinating our evidence activities around strategic questions that will position Victoria to better implement shared solutions.

3. Consider all the evidence available to us

A better approach must emphasise utilising the full spectrum of evidence available. As a more sophisticated understanding of evidence is developed, we need to build an approach across government that supports our ability to produce and share the range of evidence that we need.

4. Prioritise our efforts and resources on the evidence we need and strengthen it over time

The focus across the public service on building an evidence base relevant to the work we do has led to variation in how we use evidence to inform decision making. Evidence generation, sharing and use should be prioritised around developing an evidence base that supports the strategic needs of decision makers into the future. It should help embed evidence into our culture of decision making at all levels.

Evidence is data, facts and information that have been appropriately analysed and appraised to inform government decisions and priorities. This can include robust findings from research, evaluation, practice experience, community sentiment and user insights.

Opportunity

There is growing momentum for building an enduring evidence base to support better decision making.

Governments around the world are wrestling with the challenge of finding the most relevant, useful and timely evidence to support their decision making processes¹. Policy problems are complex, and coordinating evidence generation and use will need to become a prominent part of government activities to address this complexity.

Governments are beginning to invest heavily in improving their evidence generation and sharing capabilities². Innovations in data and access to real time information and insights are intensifying the power of evidence, helping to transform decision making processes, including budget processes. Senior decision makers are increasingly using more rigorous evidence that is being made available to them in new and dynamic ways to influence key decisions.

The focus of reforms in other jurisdictions, including within Australia, has been on improving the supply of evidence by prescribing methodologies or frameworks such as hierarchies of evidence and impact evaluations. Moreover, there has been a narrow focus on what relevant evidence could help us achieve. Evidence is more often used to track performance or demonstrate achievements instead of also promoting continuous improvement.

Better generation and use of evidence is driving significant change

The United Kingdom and New Zealand governments are becoming more sophisticated in evidence generation and use, resulting in provision of more information rich policy advice, ultimately leading to better outcomes for people and communities. These jurisdictions are now realising the power of using evidence and the benefits of investing in evidence capabilities and infrastructure.

The VPS can better coordinate evidence generation and use

In Victoria, successive inquiries have found that the VPS can improve its use of evidence to inform better decision making, policy design and demonstrate the achievement of outcomes³. These findings provide a strong incentive for departments and agencies to further strengthen their partnerships and networks so the evidence that we collectively generate can be shared, used and cumulatively strengthened over time. Coupled with the advent of increasingly powerful and

sophisticated analytics tools, it provides a timely opportunity for the VPS to leverage its systems and tools to further improve how it generates, shares and uses evidence.

Gaps in our knowledge of what evidence is available across the VPS for any given shared policy problem will limit the effectiveness of our future policies. The VPS has the opportunity to do things differently to better coordinate evidence generation and use and navigate the complex evidence environment. Better coordination can minimise the loss of institutional knowledge and evidence that often occurs due to staff movements and machinery of government changes.

Acting now to build on existing progress will ensure that the evidence we generate across the VPS delivers maximum value and supports better and more timely decisions. It will also position Victoria as a leader in the way the public service generates, uses, and shares evidence.

¹ McKinsey Center for Government (2017), Government Productivity: Unlocking the \$3.5 Trillion Opportunity.

² McKinsey Center for Government (2017).

³ Victorian Auditor General's Office (2015). Annual Report 2014-15 Volume 2 Key Audit Themes.

PART 2

Victoria's approach



A different way forward

Victoria is taking a systemic and incremental approach to transforming how the VPS generates, uses, and shares evidence to enhance public policy and inform decision making.

This involves a more holistic focus by targeting and improving three core areas and strengthening the relationship between them:



supply



demand



productive use

Victoria has made significant enhancements to the supply of evidence in recent years through a growing emphasis on data analytics, program evaluation and longitudinal research. This puts us in line with improvements and approaches adopted in other jurisdictions. Despite these efforts, the evidence we produce is not always used beyond the business area and primary purpose for which it was generated. Moreover, the evidence is often not incorporated into our strategic and whole of government decision making processes.

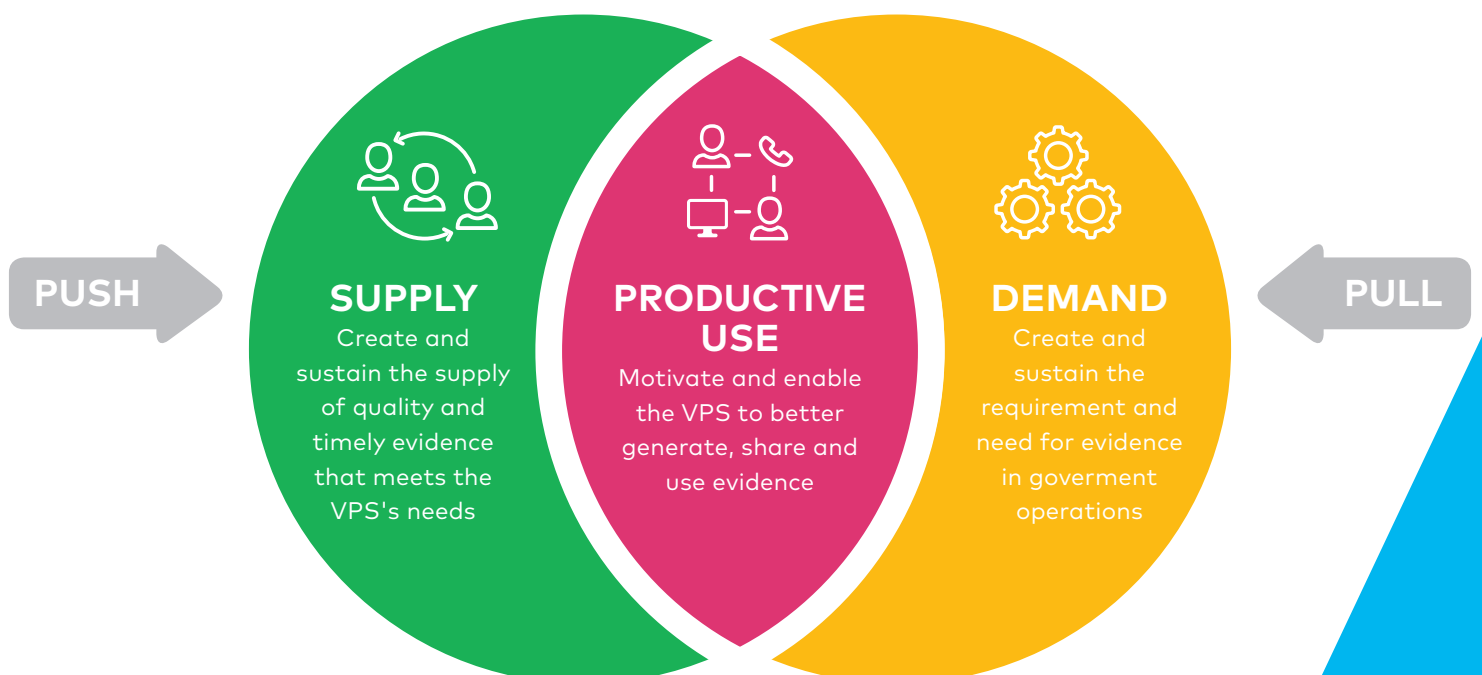
Our approach seeks to further embed evidence in the culture of decision making in the VPS. To this end it will place evidence at the heart of the key decision making processes. This will focus on how

all departments and agencies can work together to ensure that our rich supply of evidence is shared and used across the VPS to inform delivery on our priorities.

It will place the end users of evidence, particularly senior decision makers, at the heart of how we communicate the evidence that we have. We will improve how we translate and communicate evidence so that we meet the wider evidence needs of the VPS.

Over time, this approach will help us to build, strengthen and expand the evidence base. This will enable the VPS to collectively and more strategically respond to current and future multi-faceted public policy problems that require a coordinated whole of government response.

THE FOCUS AREAS OF VICTORIA'S EVIDENCE REFORM



Key features of Victoria's approach

Put evidence users at the centre of the reform

This goes beyond the traditional focus on improving methodology to instead focus on synthesising and translating evidence to make it relevant and applicable for decision makers. By understanding and responding to the needs of evidence users, we can build, refine and strengthen the VPS's evidence base.

Focus on answering the questions that decision makers ask

The evidence we develop must be aimed at answering the questions that decision makers face. Decision makers need to be confident that the evidence the VPS generates will help them understand a problem and its contextual factors, critical enablers and potential solutions.

Broaden our understanding of evidence

There are many sources and forms of qualitative and quantitative evidence that can be used to inform decision making. These might include the lived experiences of individuals, social media sentiment and other emerging forms of evidence that can be gained through enhanced data analytics. By broadening our understanding of what constitutes evidence, we can draw on richer insights from the administrative data and information we currently have.

The three focus areas for reform



Supply

The supply of evidence is about generating and collecting evidence that helps the VPS better respond to policy issues and deliver better outcomes for Victorians.

Features of better supply of evidence

Better supply of evidence exists when the information generated meets the needs of decision makers. It is fit for purpose, timely, high quality and drawn from an appropriate range of sources and research methods. It requires users to be aware of the evidence they need and understand when they need it.

Better supply is organised around key government priorities (for example, family violence) rather than in programmatic and departmental silos. This allows the supply of evidence to be better coordinated and cumulatively built over time.

We know that the VPS already has a vast amount of evidence. This reform is not about increasing the quantity of supply but improving how we supply evidence and doing more with what we already have. It is also about being strategic and purposeful in the evidence we generate and use to help us improve outcomes for Victorians.



Demand

Demand for evidence is about strengthening how decision makers use evidence in government operations. This includes the need to incentivise the use of evidence so that it becomes normalised in day to day business and forms an inherent part of our organisational culture. Decision makers also need to be confident that the evidence they receive will support them to deliver government operations more effectively and efficiently.

Features of stronger demand

Stronger demand is characterised by the systems and processes of government incentivising and making evidence use part of normal everyday behaviour in decision making. This includes embedding evidence in business planning, Cabinet processes and budget and financial management systems.

Stronger demand is also characterised by decision makers being presented evidence in a way that is tailored to their needs, easy to understand and persuasive. This will require policy makers to be open and clear about:

- what policy questions they are seeking to answer
- what evidence they need
- why evidence is needed and for what purpose
- who they or their staff will engage with to ensure the right questions are being asked.

When there is strong alignment between a government's policy priorities and the evidence base, it gives decision makers confidence that the evidence they request will better support government operations.

Over time, embedding stronger demand in government systems and processes will be an important step towards driving a stronger culture of evidence generation and use.



Productive use

Productive use of evidence is about knowing what evidence we have and making the most of the evidence in a way that meets the needs of our decision makers. It will involve the VPS working together to improve how we appraise, synthesise, present and share evidence while minimising unnecessary duplication.

Features of better productive use of evidence

Better productive use of evidence is characterised by:

- maximising the application of the available evidence by drawing on relevant existing data or information, where possible, instead of generating new evidence
- broadening the scope of evidence sources and types to better inform decisions
- maximising the use and value of existing evidence in a way that generates new insights.

This means the VPS builds on the existing evidence base to reduce unnecessary duplication, and policy makers draw on evidence from a range of sources and translate it so that it meets decision makers' needs.

Better productive use of evidence will require public servants to know:

- what evidence is currently available
- how to find the evidence they need
- how to contextualise, translate and synthesise the evidence to make it fit for purpose.

Victoria's evidence reform architecture

To achieve whole of government evidence reform, we need to be strategic and coordinated in the way we generate, use and share evidence. We have developed an evidence reform architecture that provides the roadmap for how we will achieve our desired vision. The architecture also supports each part of the VPS to understand their role in this evidence reform.

Victoria's evidence reform architecture comprises three key elements that place evidence users at the centre of how we will improve the supply, demand and productive use of evidence:

- **Enduring questions:**

Questions the VPS needs to ask to address policy problems that exist today and into the future and inform decisions that will deliver outcomes.

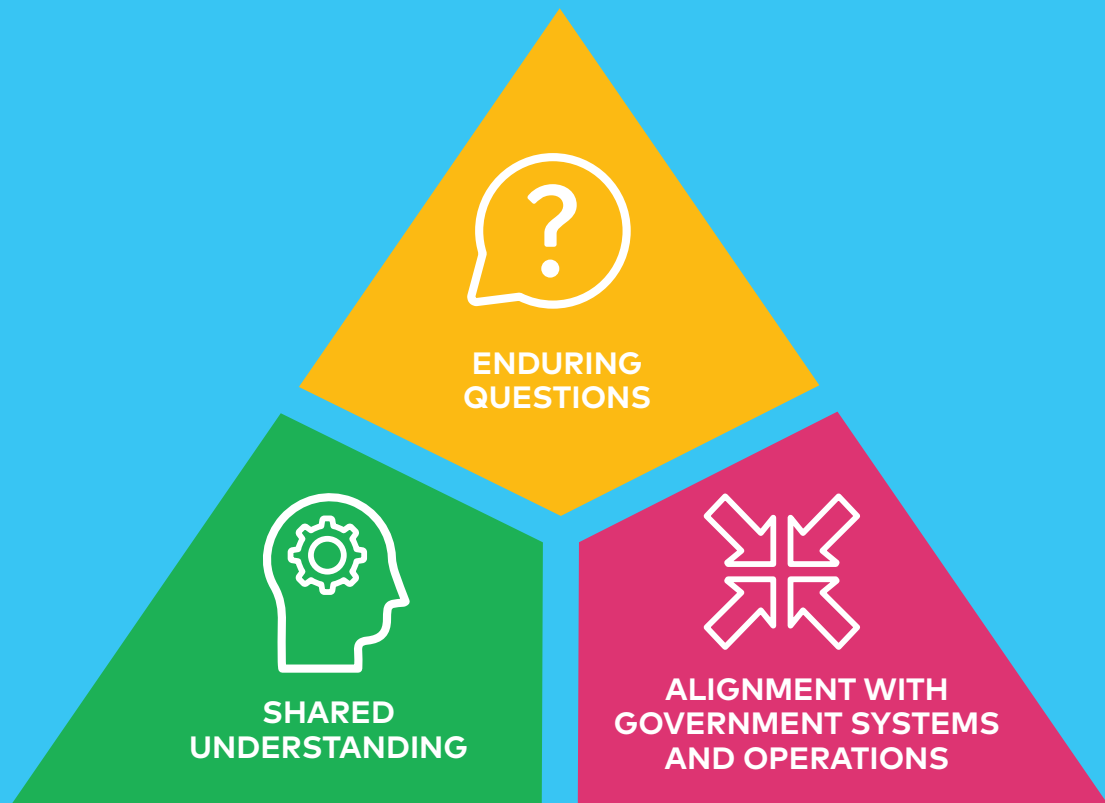
- **Shared understanding:**

A language about evidence, the context in which it was generated and any associated limitations, which we build together across the VPS. This will drive how the VPS better defines, appraises, interprets and shares evidence to address policy problems.

- **Alignment with government systems and operations:**

A process for applying evidence to the day to day operations of the VPS, such as providing advice to Cabinet and informing budget processes.

EVIDENCE REFORM ARCHITECTURE



Enduring questions

The questions we ask to help us address a policy problem and deliver outcomes

Shared understanding

How we translate the answers into useful evidence for us to address the problem

Alignment with government systems and operations

How we apply the evidence to our day to day operations



Enduring questions

What it means

Enduring questions are big picture questions about the endemic and systemic issues facing Victoria. They bring into focus the issues and problems facing Victorian communities that are entrenched and require sharp and long term focus from government and the VPS. These questions cut across portfolios and departments and define the purpose of the public service. They require coordination across multiple sources of evidence over time to develop an appropriate and effective response.

Framing evidence generation and use around enduring questions and embedding these in the systems and processes of government will provide a more complete picture of the problem and potential solutions. It will help address some of the challenges associated with evidence informed decision making, including the loss of institutional knowledge and evidence often brought about by staff movements and machinery of government changes.

The concept of enduring questions has been used in other jurisdictions and government operations including Infrastructure Australia and Statistics New Zealand in association with the New Zealand Ministry of Transport and Disability Support Network. The Department of Transport (DOT) in Victoria has also developed enduring questions as part of their Information Plan project to identify transport information needs.

Most of these examples of the use of enduring questions are at an operational level. We will instead use enduring questions strategically to drive change at the whole of government level by framing evidence generation and use around the key issues facing our society.

Why enduring questions matter

Enduring questions can promote a shared understanding across the VPS of high level systemic issues such as locational and intergenerational disadvantage, and economic restructuring and underemployment. By their very nature, enduring questions will support us to:

- identify, generate, organise and share evidence to respond to the key priorities facing government now and into the future
- broaden our focus on key policy issues beyond localised, siloed understandings of issues
- consider the full scope of complex policy problems and the broader interactions at play.

Examples of enduring questions

- How can the VPS ensure sufficient infrastructure, services, and resources to support a sustainable and productive population?
- How can the VPS better address long-term unemployment to make Victoria more prosperous and inclusive?
- How can the VPS help ensure Victorians are safe and secure in their families and communities to build a more inclusive and cohesive society?

Examples of what enduring questions mean for the VPS

Enduring questions will help the VPS better articulate the information it needs to advise ministers on policy and investment options.

They will provide our **policy officers** with a better knowledge of what evidence is available on systemic issues.

They will help our internal **research and evaluation officers** frame their key research and evaluation questions so the findings they generate also contribute to a broader evidence base on systemic issues facing Victoria.

SUPPLY	DEMAND	PRODUCTIVE USE
Fostering clarity and purpose for evidence generation.	Framing of evidence requests and focus decision making.	Guiding coherent synthesis, sharing and use of evidence.
<p>Enduring questions will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prioritise evidence investments to answer Victoria's most pressing questions • help the VPS to have a holistic view of key policy issues, including options for implementation. 	<p>Enduring questions will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help decision makers to better articulate the information they need • create a stronger alignment between key challenges and the evidence being generated. 	<p>Enduring questions will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • synthesise and present evidence in a way that is meaningful and links directly to Victoria's priorities • help the VPS to enhance the insights we draw from our evidence base.



Shared understanding

What it means

A shared understanding is about building consistency in how we define, interpret and apply evidence. Evidence terminologies and approaches vary significantly across disciplines and jurisdictions. Developing a shared understanding about evidence will help the VPS to better coordinate our evidence activities. It will also enable the VPS to compare and share evidence and maximise its use.

A shared understanding is not about prescribing evidence hierarchies or privileging certain methodologies. It is about ensuring that we generate and use evidence that is fit for purpose. It is about logically prioritising our evidence needs to determine what will be generated and how.

Why a shared understanding matters

A shared understanding will enable the evidence we generate to be translated and utilised across government in a more appropriate and productive manner. In particular, it will facilitate better coordination and linkage of evidence across the public service to address complex and multi-faceted problems. A more coordinated approach to evidence will facilitate better partnerships between the public service, academics and external providers to develop an enduring evidence base.

This will also include identifying where the opportunities exist to use evidence to influence decision making. This in turn will better support key priorities and cross departmental goals.

Examples of what a shared understanding about evidence means for the VPS

A shared understanding will help the VPS have a more consistent understanding of complex policy issues from multiple evidence sources and different portfolio perspectives.

It will allow our **policy and program officers** to more easily compare

the quality and usefulness of the evidence available so they know what to use.

It will help our **data analysts and custodians** to better share and strengthen the evidence they generate across departments and portfolios.

SUPPLY	DEMAND	PRODUCTIVE USE
Providing clarity about the information available to the VPS.	Coordinating how we demand evidence.	Broadening our understanding and application of evidence.
<p>A shared understanding will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhance the insights we draw from our evidence base ensure the evidence we generate better meets decision makers' needs. 	<p>A shared understanding will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote a consistent understanding of complex policy issues strengthen decision makers' awareness of the value and usefulness of evidence strengthen policy makers' capability to decide which evidence is useful, when, and for what purpose. 	<p>A shared understanding will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> allow comparison of the strength of evidence received promote greater sharing of evidence across departments and portfolios drive holistic use of evidence by reducing bias and the privileging of certain types of evidence and research methods.



Alignment to government systems and operations

What it means

To futureproof our evidence approach we need to build a system that forms part of the everyday activities of Victoria's public service.

The evidence we generate and use should be strategic and aligned to key government systems and operations, such as providing advice to government, developing and delivering policy and programs and ensuring that public money is spent responsibly. This alignment will ensure that the evidence we generate and collect is fit for purpose and best positioned to be used to inform decisions that improve outcomes for Victorians. This will strengthen the use of evidence as part of the day to day operations of the public service.

If the evidence we generate and use is not aligned to key government systems and operations, there is a significant risk that any improvements to policy and service delivery will be disjointed and of limited value.

Why alignment to government systems and operations matters

Decision makers need to value the use of evidence in delivering better outcomes and be confident that the evidence they receive is relevant, valuable and capable of supporting better delivery of

public service operations and investment decisions. Aligning evidence generation and use to key processes can improve and sustain demand for evidence that is timely and appropriate. It can also normalise evidence use and become part of organisational cultures and behaviours.

Alignment of the evidence we supply and use with critical government operations will generate a better fit of evidence for a range of evidence users. Put simply, this means designing the systems and processes for evidence generation and use that are the right fit for the:

- **problem** – evidence users know where to find the evidence they need in relation to common policy problems
- **user** – evidence is translated, contextualised and synthesised to meet decision makers' requirements
- **evidence provider** – evidence that is generated has a better fit to the problem and evidence end users' requirements.

Examples of what an alignment of evidence activities to government systems and operations means for the VPS

Alignment of evidence activities to public service operations will help the VPS build an evidence base that supports them to make decisions that will better deliver government operations.

It will provide our **policy and program officers** with the evidence they need to design, deliver

and report the performance of government interventions.

It will help our **evaluation officers, data analysts and custodians** focus on generating, synthesising and sharing evidence that is most needed to deliver government priorities.

SUPPLY	DEMAND	PRODUCTIVE USE
Generating evidence relevant to the VPS's changing needs.	Supporting evidence to become part of business as usual activities.	Encouraging greater accessibility of available evidence.
<p>Aligning to government systems and operations will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus evidence generation on big picture policy issues, ensuring evidence is not siloed along programmatic goals. 	<p>Aligning to government systems and operations will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give decision makers greater confidence that the evidence requested and received will help them make decisions to better deliver our operations • strengthen requirements for, and incentivise the VPS to, better generate and use evidence in our processes. 	<p>Aligning to government systems and operations will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage evidence to be shared across the public service and used for multiple purposes where relevant and appropriate • ensure evidence is translated, contextualised and synthesised to improve our operations.

The way forward

The vision of this reform is to embed the use of better evidence in the culture, policies and operations of the VPS. This policy statement enhances the collective efforts and insights of all Victorian departments and agencies, and further strengthens their commitment to improve the supply, demand and productive use of evidence over time.

Our approach to reform is incremental but enduring

The VPS will take incremental steps towards achieving our vision. We will start with identifying and raising the profile of existing innovative practices across the VPS that are aligned with this reform, so that we can learn from and replicate successful initiatives (see Appendix 1 for examples of work currently underway).

We know that many departments and agencies are trying different ways of improving how they generate, request, synthesise and use evidence, and having some success. We intend to maximise the potential of existing successes before introducing more changes. We will raise the profile of these initiatives so that there is a more coordinated understanding of what these success stories are, and how they can be replicated or scaled up. We will also share learnings from past failures so we know what to avoid, and why.

We will take a co-design and continuous improvement approach to implementing this reform. We will work to better articulate the needs of government and ensure this reform continues to drive improvements in the delivery of services and policies.

We will be targeted and outcomes focussed

We have begun evidence reform in areas of greatest need and impact. We will focus on pragmatic and tangible improvements in areas where critical ongoing gaps exist. Departments and agencies across the VPS are already working together to deliver results in our three focus areas (see Appendix 2 for examples of work already begun): supply, demand and productive use.



Supply

Create and sustain the supply of quality and timely evidence that meets the VPS's needs

The VPS will improve the supply of evidence and create an enduring evidence base by:

- driving a consistent understanding and appreciation of the evidence we need to deliver on core government operations
- promoting and enabling information sharing to build a shared and coherent evidence base
- using enduring questions to identify and meet critical evidence gaps
- targeting strategic partnerships with academic institutions and experts to fill these gaps.



Demand

Create and sustain the requirement and need for evidence in government operations

We will achieve long term and sustained change by normalising evidence generation and use in our day to day operations. This will inform and drive the way we design our policies and deliver our services. We will:

- embed a stronger expectation for using quality evidence from a range of sources to inform the work we do and the advice we provide
- build evidence checks into key advice mechanisms and departmental planning processes
- work to embed a more integrated use of evidence across budget and financial management systems.



Productive use

Motivate and enable the VPS to better generate, share and use evidence

We are looking at ways to draw on the available evidence to provide decision makers with a holistic view of complex policy problems. This includes:

- consulting with key decision makers to understand their evidence needs and satisfaction with current public sector advice
- consulting with evidence practitioners to identify barriers or enablers to providing the evidence that is needed, when it is needed
- identifying leading practice and platforms for communicating actionable insights
- identifying options for improving the timeliness and translation of evidence.

APPENDICES





ISSUS

Eliana Lulu

UNIVERSAL
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BOOKS, GOLF, JEWELLERY
& OTHER COLLECTABLES
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PH: 9654 2997

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RICOTTA HOT CAKE
SERVED WITH CARAMELIZE
BANANA, CRUSHED
WALNUTS & GREEK
STYLE YOGHURT

FRANKIES
W/ STEAK SAUCES &
MAPLE SYRUP
+ HOT ICE CREAM
+ GOOD NUTELLA

MIDDLE EASTERN
MEATBALLS IN P
MILK SAUCE
BAKED BEANS &
CRISPY BREAD!

Examples of good practice in the VPS

The case studies showcased below are only a few examples of best practice across the public sector, highlighted for illustrative purposes. This is not an exhaustive list and more examples will be identified as the reform progresses.

1. Department of Transport – Supply, demand, and productive use

Transport services are fundamental to Victoria's liveability and economic prosperity, connecting Victorians to their work, family and recreational activities. Victoria's population is projected to almost double to 10.1 million in 2051, which will double the demand for public transport and triple freight movements. In addition to the \$100 billion of assets in the transport system, there are another \$35 billion coming online in the next five years.

Victoria needs a new and integrated approach to managing these assets to ensure the transport system meets the needs of a growing population. This requires collaboration across transport sector agencies and innovative ways to address the problems facing us today and into the future. To do this, DOT needs the most up to date and reliable evidence.

DOT has recently completed an investment modelling pilot project to test the principles of an integrated approach to asset

investment planning and service improvement along a four-kilometre section of the northern Sydney Road transport corridor. This work was underpinned by consolidated asset information from a number of agencies and sophisticated data analytics to inform decision making. The pilot demonstrated the value of an integrated investment framework to multi level stakeholders by presenting different levels of investment and their associated service level outcomes. The project highlighted the importance of credible and accurate asset information to the success of more complex and detailed modelling of the transport network.

The proposed next stage of the project is to model an entire transport corridor and to develop multi modal value propositions that enable prioritisation and optimisation across the transport portfolio. This next stage will also inform a whole of transport network rollout of this integrated planning approach.

2. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) – Child Protection Decision Support Tool

Child protection practitioners must make difficult decisions in real life circumstances about children who may be at risk of significant harm. Often, decisions are made in a resource constrained environment with limited access to relevant information and under time pressure.

DHHS has developed a child protection decision support tool to help child protection practitioners who are making an initial risk assessment to access the information they need to make better decisions. The decision support tool is underpinned by linked administrative data of more than 130,000 historical cases to identify those children reported to child protection who are at greater risk of being substantiated within one year, or ending up in out of home care within three years.

The decision support tool allows efficient access to information about families' service use that is already collected by the Victorian Government, as well as an indication of the child's likely outcomes. Practitioners can use the information provided by the tool as an input to help them make better decisions about which cases to progress for investigation, which to close and which to refer to other services. This will have an immediate benefit to child protection practitioners who would otherwise have to compile relevant information from various sources to determine this in an already time pressured environment.

3. Department of Health and Human Services – Menu of evidence informed practices and programs

DHHS is using evidence to reform the child and family service system to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families.

A menu of evidence informed practices and programs is being designed in order to provide the department and the wider public service access to the best available evidence on what works.

To develop the menu, the department commissioned a framework to provide:

- a standard definition of evidence informed practice to underpin the menu
- an inclusive approach to different forms of evidence (from evidence informed practice elements to evidence based programs)
- guidance on how practices and programs could be identified, through published literature or submitted for review, and rated.

The menu will include information and rate each practice or program based on the:

- strength of evidence on impact
- requirements and supports for implementation
- costs associated with delivery.

The development of the framework involved a review of other menus and repositories in child welfare and consultation with the

child and family service sector to build on existing knowledge and expertise. The framework provides principles and recommendations that could be adapted for other community service sectors.

The next step, currently underway, is to develop the specifications for searching and assessing published studies to be included in the menu. While the menu is being developed, DHHS continues to test, trial and evaluate a range of evidence informed approaches to delivering child and family services.

The menu is just one of a suite of projects that DHHS is leading to build the evidence base, improve access to high-quality evidence and embed the use of outcomes and evidence in the delivery of services.

More information about the Menu Framework can be found here: https://www.strongfamiliesafechildren.vic.gov.au/news-feed/news_feed/new-sector-framework-for-the-menu-of-evidence-informed-practices-and-programs

Examples of evidence reform already underway

The foundation projects highlighted below are some of the first major projects to begin implementing evidence reform. This is not an exhaustive list of either the work that is currently underway or what will be needed for evidence reform.

Foundation project: Designing specifications and guidance for enduring questions

Enduring questions are the big picture, strategic level questions that any government will need to answer in order to make good policy decisions now and into the future. Victoria Police, the Department of Education and Training (DET), the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF), DHHS and the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) are partnering to design:

- the specifications and guidance for developing enduring questions
- how they can be applied at different levels of the VPS
- a model for operationalising enduring questions
- a process for establishing the pitch of enduring questions to meet the strategic and operational needs of the VPS for evidence.

Over time, departments will be able to use the enduring questions to drive the supply of evidence to better respond to ongoing policy problems, and more clearly assess and communicate what they know and where they need to know more. Departments will also be able to use enduring questions to identify, prioritise and address evidence gaps.

Foundation project: Designing a whole of government knowledge bank

The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS), DET, DOT, DHHS and DPC are working together to develop a process to:

- support the VPS to better generate and collect evidence on a given policy topic
- enable relevant evidence and evidence related expertise to be shared so that decision makers can access the evidence they need in a timely fashion.

Over time, this will create a shared and ongoing understanding of existing evidence across the VPS and of who the experts are on a given policy topic.

Foundation project: Designing a whole of government resource bank for evidence

Victoria Police, DHHS and DPC are working together to design:

- options for storing and collecting good practice advice and tools that will strengthen the VPS's evidence expertise and knowledge
- evidence tools that can be used consistently across government, including a standard template for making a successful data request.

Over time, the VPS will have the tools and support network to better access and productively use available evidence expertise and advice.

Foundation project: Embedding evidence in departmental planning processes

Victoria Police, DJCS, DJPR, DOT, DHHS and DPC are working together to:

- identify leverage points and opportunities for embedding evidence in departmental planning processes (e.g. corporate, strategic, divisional and business planning)
- progressively build stronger demand for evidence in corporate and divisional plans, and incorporating stronger evidence checks into decision making processes.

This will lay the foundation for supporting future work to create a stronger line of sight between the VPS's evidence base and government's strategic priorities.

