

OUTCOMES REFORM IN VICTORIA



VICTORIA
State
Government



Foreword

Mobilising around purpose

The Victorian public sector is driven by a strong moral purpose to improve the lives of all Victorians. The best way to ensure that we deliver public value to the people of Victoria is to clearly define the outcomes we are trying to achieve, and measure our progress along the way.

Outcomes help to communicate our priorities and determine the actions we take as public servants. They also provide a platform to work together as one Victorian Public Service, by setting a shared direction for change and motivating us to work consistently to achieve it.

Outcomes-thinking has emerged as a key capability of the public service in the current era of rapid technological change. Victorians' expectations of services are rising, as they become more accustomed to services that anticipate and respond to their needs in real-time. A critical success factor is working together to determine our priorities and deliver services that more closely align with the needs of our people and communities.

I am proud to be leading a public sector that is at the forefront of these reforms. We are making real progress toward our common vision of better outcomes for Victorians and the state as a whole. Outcomes-thinking underpins this vision by helping us to determine our priorities, know what is working and what isn't, and deliver services that more closely align with citizens' needs.

The Victorian Public Service has already begun the process of embedding outcomes in governance, performance and funding systems. As this work progresses, we will get more sophisticated at measuring the impact of everything we do.

I look forward to continuing to work with all of you to achieve our collective vision for outcomes reform.

Chris Eccles AO
Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Context

Setting an ambitious, long-term vision is the cornerstone of driving and delivering better government.

The challenge

The prosperous and cohesive Victoria we enjoy today has been shaped by the work of the Victorian Public Service (VPS) over generations. But we are experiencing far-reaching demographic, economic, security, technological and environmental shifts. These challenges are different in scale, scope and speed to those we have tackled before.

At the same time, the community is expecting higher quality, more timely and individualised services from government, and citizens are seeking a greater voice in the decisions that affect them.

The situation we find ourselves in today is not unique to Victoria. There is a growing need around the world to better align government operations with the needs of the community. Delivering sustainable change and a better quality of life for everyone cannot be achieved in isolation or in the short term.

Creating and sustaining the conditions needed for Victorians to thrive, now and into the future, depends on how we respond to these big-picture issues and take hold of the opportunities they present.

Driving a modern public sector

Victoria's Public Sector Reform statement identifies outcomes as one of the key drivers to achieving the public service of the future.

Outcomes are clear and concrete statements about the difference we want to make for Victorians. Outcomes set direction, focus our efforts where we can have the greatest impact, and allow us to measure the difference we are making.

A focus on outcomes is one of the ways we will drive a modern public sector that is fit-for-purpose and focuses on the things that matter.

Outcomes are driving significant change around the world

Jurisdictions around the world that are using outcomes to drive their public sectors are starting to see tangible improvements in some of their most complex and enduring problems.

Some jurisdictions use outcomes in very sophisticated ways, to provide a shared direction and create incentives for working together.



- New Zealand has made significant progress on ten long-standing, highly complex issues prioritised in their Key Results framework, which established shared accountability for delivering change.
- Canada is making more strategic and cohesive investments by aligning all spending with their priority outcomes, and using meaningful reporting to drive continuous improvement.
- Scotland is improving the efficiency and impact of its spending by supporting communities to set priorities for local investment, aligned with national outcomes.
- Virginia has built a sustained, shared commitment to long-term priorities, enabled by meaningful public reporting.

Victoria's approach to outcomes

Victoria's approach to outcomes is shaped by a strong understanding of the experiences of governments around the world that have mature approaches to outcomes.

A uniquely Victorian approach

The public service is driven by a desire to create a better society. Outcomes is a way of working that drives us to think and work in fundamentally different ways to create better public value for Victorians. To embed a focus on outcomes in the everyday business of the Victorian public sector, we are taking the best knowledge from around the world and customising it to meet Victoria's needs, co-designing our frameworks with users, and being adaptive and iterative as we progress.

Driving ambitious government

Victoria's outcomes approach sets high expectations for what the public sector can achieve for citizens by working together and directing our collective efforts towards common outcomes. Outcomes articulate the ambitions we hold for Victoria and ensure that achieving impact is at the forefront of our work.

A pragmatic and flexible approach

Outcomes must be fit-for-purpose. The Victorian outcomes approach was specifically designed to work for the VPS. It has been continually refined within and across Victorian government departments and agencies.

Our approach is designed to be flexible and suit a wide range of public administration needs. It can be tailored for different contexts and emerging priorities, but is underpinned by a consistent language and shared understanding of what outcomes are and how to use them.

More than measurement

Outcomes provide a way to clearly and effectively measure the impact of government activity.

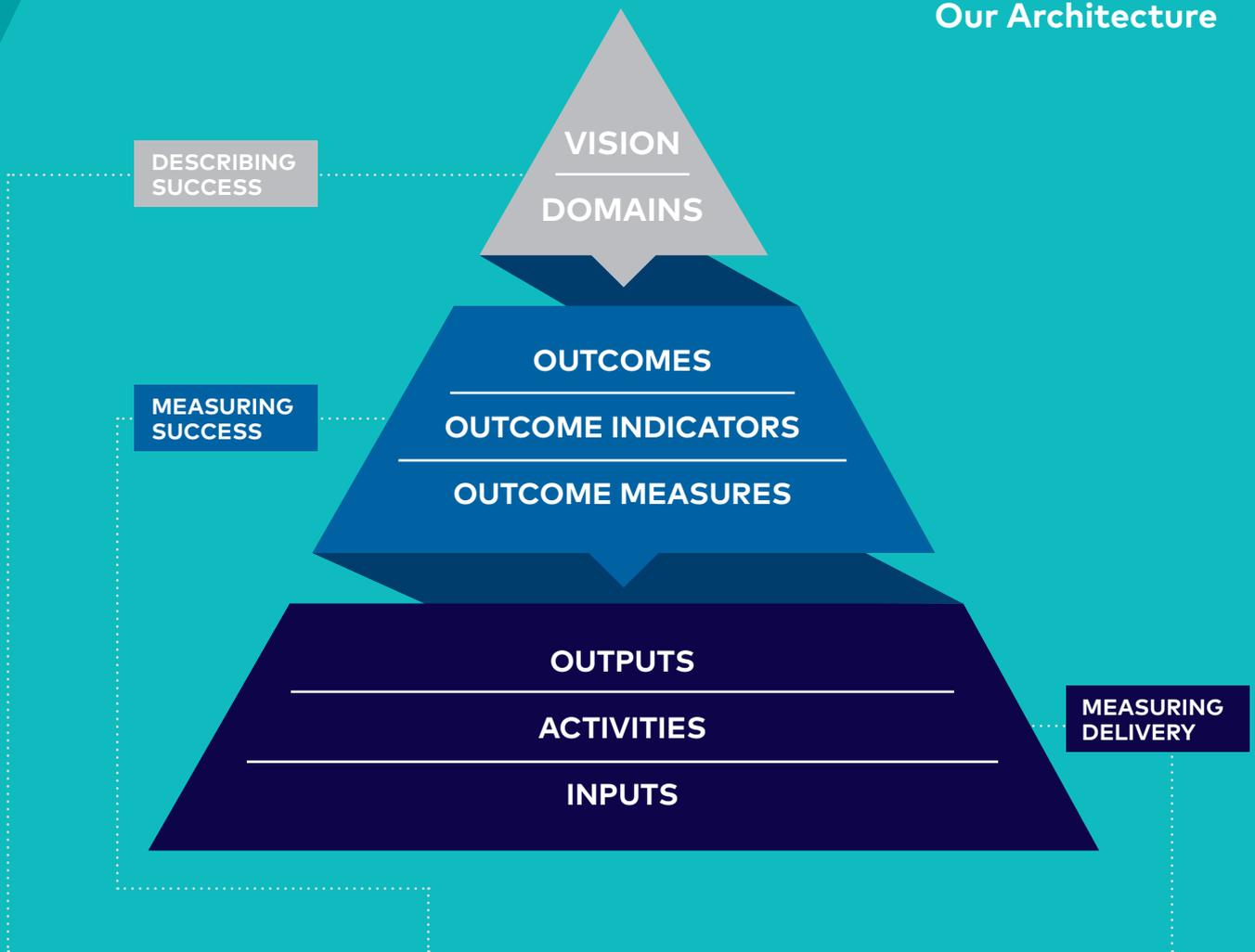
However, Victoria's outcomes approach doesn't stop at measurement. A focus on achieving outcomes also drives the public service to be bold, curious and flexible. It requires us to lead, inform, engage and collaborate meaningfully. A mature outcomes approach moves us beyond measuring activities and outputs, and towards tracking impact. This requires fundamental structural changes, and prompts us to reorient the systems that underpin our work.

Strong language discipline

Outcomes is a term used in various contexts within and beyond the public service, and the way outcomes are talked about varies greatly. This difference can create confusion.

Experience from other countries shows that shared language is critical. A simple and easily understood way to talk about outcomes shifts the focus away from a technical focus on measurement.

Victoria has adopted an outcomes architecture to provide a consistent language that is accessible and meaningful. Our use of clear and unambiguous language promotes a shared understanding of what is important. This provides the starting platform for collaborative action on shared outcomes. When we talk about outcomes, we now speak the same language.



VISION: The vision is the big picture, aspirational statement that describes what government wants to achieve for the community.

DOMAINS: Domains provide a logical structure for grouping related outcomes, and a line of sight from each outcome to the overall vision.

Organising outcomes frameworks into domains encourages people designing and using outcomes frameworks to consider the broader social, economic and environmental drivers of outcomes, and helps ensure frameworks cut across traditional policy divisions.

OUTCOMES: Outcomes articulate what success looks like and reflect our ambition for Victoria. They are clear, unambiguous and high-level statements about the things that matter for people and communities.

OUTCOME INDICATORS: Outcome indicators specify what needs to change in order to achieve a desired outcome, and set the direction of change. Outcome indicators reflect the key drivers and influences on progress towards an outcome.

OUTCOME MEASURES: Outcome measures provide the more granular, specific detail about what will change and how you will know if you are making progress. Outcome measures are the specific way we know or count the size, amount or degree of change achieved.

Measuring success requires us to be specific about what success looks like, what needs to change to get there, and how we will know if we are getting there.

OUTPUTS: Outputs are how we count what we deliver. The number of activities delivered, products produced, or clients served.

ACTIVITIES: Activities are what we deliver. The programs, services and initiatives we undertake, and the everyday work we do.

INPUTS: Inputs are the resources or investments allocated to deliver activities (funding, staffing, capital or infrastructure).

An outcomes approach does not replace the essential work of measuring inputs, activities and outputs. These allow us to show we have delivered on time and on budget, and are essential for meaningful accountability. The change an outcomes approach brings is that we don't stop at measuring what and how much we delivered. Outcomes prompt the next question – did we achieve our intended impact?

How Victoria is using outcomes

Our journey so far

The VPS has embraced an outcomes approach. Outcomes are front and centre of the government's reform agenda. They are a key part of the transformation delivering a modern, responsive and adaptable public service that strives for the best for our people and communities.

Victoria has made a strong start. The pace of change has been driven by an appetite to 'do things differently'. There is a growing culture enabling us to work towards outcomes, and this is setting us up to drive transformative change.

We know that change of this scale will not and cannot happen overnight. We also know that we need to continue to engage across the VPS and with Victorians to ensure the outcomes approach makes real and lasting change.

As we progress from building a culture that focuses on outcomes towards integrating outcomes into the systems and processes that drive government business, we will continue to learn, adapt, iterate and improve.

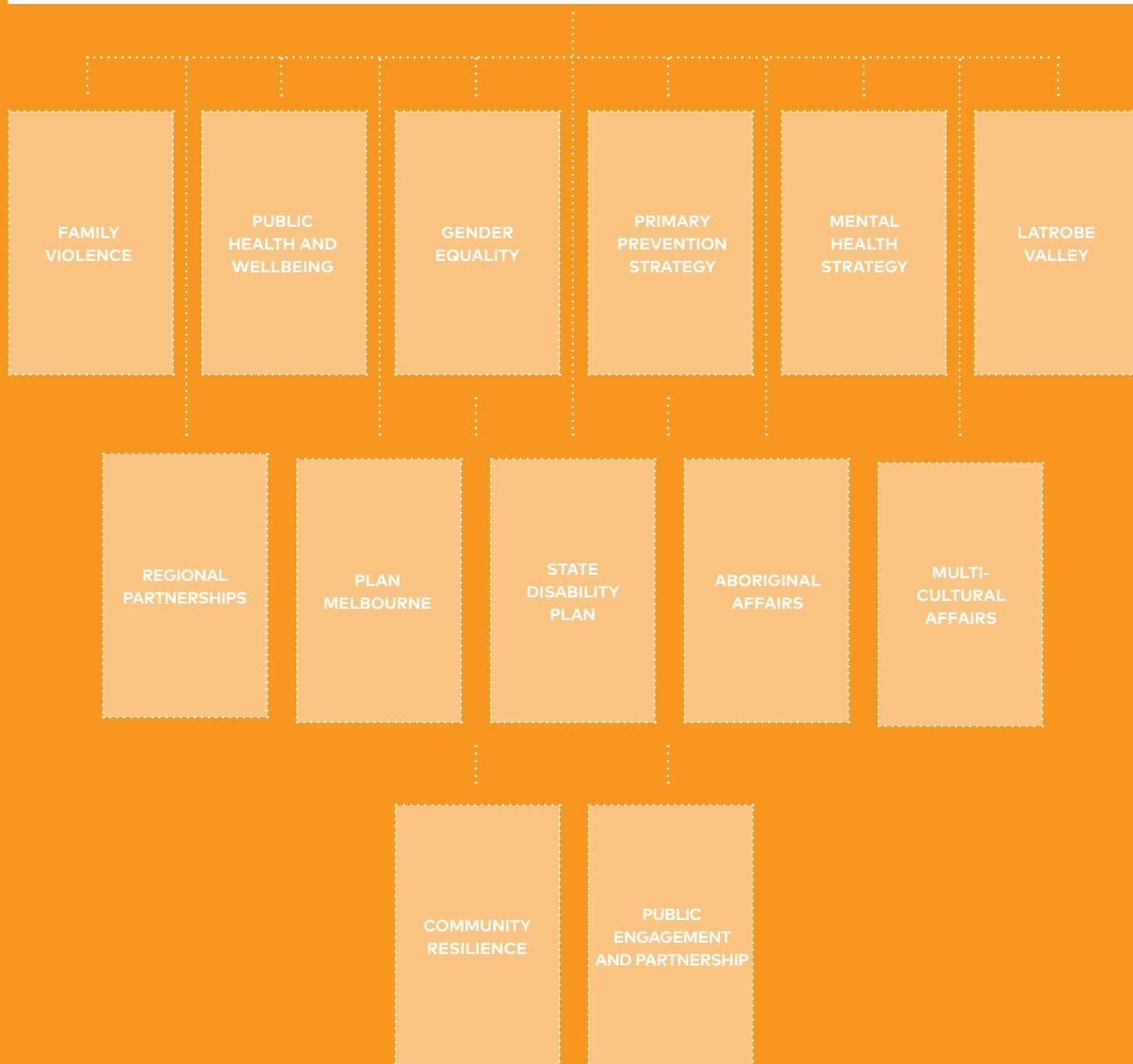
Building strong foundations

The VPS has started with the foundational work of identifying and articulating the outcomes that matter most for Victorians for every portfolio of government. Every service delivery department and major cross-government reforms now have outcomes frameworks in place.

Collective support from government's most senior and influential leaders has been critical to achieving these changes. However, strong executive leadership is only part of the story. There is a network of outcomes champions across the VPS who are leading from the front and embedding outcomes thinking in their everyday work.

There are outcomes that align with the service delivery functions in departments. State-wide strategies now have outcomes frameworks, with ambitious outcomes that are shaping the everyday work of the public service.

FRAMEWORKS FOR MAJOR REFORMS AND STRATEGIES



Outcomes compel us to work together to achieve change

Victoria's reform agenda demands that we deliver exceptional outcomes for Victorians. We need to focus on what matters most and ensure we are getting it done.

Outcomes are being used in Victoria to provide shared direction, enable us to measure change and support us to better organise our business.



Collaborating on what matters most

Ambitious long-term vision: articulating where we are going and helping us understand what needs to change to be successful.

Communicating our shared direction: communicating with citizens, communities and our partners in a way they understand, and focussing the conversation on the things they care about most.

Systems focused

Setting priorities: making the difficult decisions about where to invest and being clear about the trade-offs.

Embedding outcomes in decision-making: decisions make the best use of our resources and influence us to move towards the outcomes we want to achieve.

Working as one VPS: organising the systems and processes of government so our work is consistent and joined up, and we are equipped to solve complex problems.

Data driven action

Measuring what matters: tracking our efforts, and using data to better understand how Victorians are faring in key areas of their lives.

Responding and adapting: being nimble, with the ability to innovate and improve. Providing the information we need to change our course of action, be flexible, scale up and respond to the changing needs of our people and communities.

Using outcomes effectively will build a public service now and for the future that:

Works as one VPS

This is a VPS that is more connected and aligned, and organises itself to generate greater public value by working together as one. It is a VPS where our people are organised around key priorities that span across departmental and agency boundaries, and are working in the same way, to achieve the same things.

With a more informed understanding of what our biggest challenges are, and their impacts across multiple areas of government, the VPS will better understand the role that we all need to play — no matter how big or small — to meet our greatest challenges as a collective VPS.

Builds and uses strong evidence to achieve change

This means a VPS that can bring the power of data and evidence together to support more intelligent decision-making. It is a VPS where decisions are made based on their intended impact on clearly defined and agreed priorities, and where we use strong evidence to best determine how we get to our end result. This will give greater confidence in all decision-making processes.

Using outcomes to focus evidence on addressing our most enduring problems, and working to provide the answers we need for how best to solve these problems now and in the future.



Shared direction

Outcomes set a shared direction for the public service and its partners, placing the things that matter most front and centre.

Ambitious long-term vision

The public service plays a significant role in shaping the society, economy and environment that future generations will experience. We need to have a clear view of how the decisions we make today are contributing to the future we all aspire to.

Outcomes articulate our long-term vision for success in a way that is concrete and relevant. Knowing exactly what we need to achieve for people and communities sets the direction for designing solutions and building on the things we know are working.

When we say we want a future where no woman or child dies from family violence, we set a clear and unambiguous expectation about what the public service needs to achieve, and how hard we need to work to get there. It sets us up with a focus and commitment that needs to be sustained for at least a generation. Victoria's outcomes make our vision for the future clear, meaningful and measurable.

Developing outcomes frameworks for departments and our key strategies has involved senior leaders coming together – within and across portfolios – to be clear and precise about the most important outcomes for Victorians.

These outcomes set a vision for Victoria that cannot be fully achieved without a sustained, collective effort over the long term. But they set our compass and keep our focus on our purpose.

Communicating our shared direction

All of the outcomes we seek for Victoria require government to work in partnership – within and across departments, alongside people and communities, and with the for-purpose sector, businesses, and academia. It is only by harnessing our collective knowledge, insight and effort in the same direction that we will make meaningful progress. Working together towards shared outcomes is essential because so many of the challenges government aims to solve are multi-dimensional, with no simple solution.

Outcomes make it clear that we share responsibility for achieving change. A shared vision is a powerful enabler of collaboration. It helps everyone see how their work contributes to an outcome, who else is contributing, where the gaps are, and how everyone's collective efforts can align to achieve a solution that is more than the sum of its parts.

Our outcomes frameworks are written in ways that make sense and resonate with people. They reflect the things people care about, in language they understand. This enables everyone to be part of the conversation about what needs to change, and what we need to do to make change happen.

Every young person achieving at school is an outcome the whole community believes in. It is an outcome that is best achieved by

schools working in partnership with families and community members, kindergartens, health and community services, researchers and local businesses. Recognising the different ways all these partners contribute to young people's educational success can expand everyone's role, broaden their focus and strengthen our opportunity for impact.

Other frameworks are connecting local and state-wide priorities. We have created an outcomes dashboard with a range of indicators for the Regional and Metropolitan Partnerships to help them in the formation of their advice to government on priority outcomes.

The family violence outcomes framework is making it 'everyone's business' to end family violence

In Victoria, the Royal Commission into Family Violence highlighted the devastating impact of family violence and the need for a more effective response from government.

'Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change (the 10 Year Plan)' is Victoria's ambitious plan for ending family violence. It outlines government's vision for a future where every Victorian lives free from family violence, and where women and children are valued and respected.

The 10 Year Plan is underpinned by the Family Violence Outcomes Framework. This framework is dynamic, and will drive change in multiple areas. The framework commits to a Victoria where:

- Family violence and gender inequality are not tolerated.
- Victims survivors, vulnerable children and families, are safe and supported to recover and thrive.

- Perpetrators are held to account, engaged and connected.
- Preventing and responding to family violence is systemic and enduring.

The outcomes in the framework are compelling, ambitious and give a voice to victims survivors and their families. The framework sends a strong and profound message from government that we will no longer tolerate family violence - that family violence is not acceptable - and that ending family violence is everyone's collective responsibility.

The framework provides direction for work that needs to happen now, but also sets the roadmap for eliminating family violence in the future - creating a society where women, men and children are treated equally and respectfully.



Organising our business

We want to deliver better outcomes in a way that makes the best use of our resources. Outcomes present a significant opportunity for us to organise the everyday business of the public sector differently, to enable us to better respond to the needs of a modern Victoria.

Setting priorities

In a time when government needs to be nimble, decisive and more accountable for its actions, setting priorities and being confident that they are the right priorities has never been more important.

Setting clear, long-term priorities gives government and the public service a more grounded platform for making the hard decisions about where to invest, what the trade-offs are, and where it is necessary to work across organisational boundaries to achieve impact.

Outcomes support a strategic and whole-of-government approach to setting priorities, and can make it easier to see where we need to focus the effort and attention of the entire public service.

"Without the will to prioritise, governments across the world run the risk of trying to do everything and achieving very little."

Centre for Public Impact

Using an outcomes approach to design our priority reform strategies – like Ending Family Violence, the State Disability Plan, and the 10 Year Mental Health Plan – has involved making

decisions about priority outcomes and the most significant drivers and indicators of change. Many of these frameworks have been co-designed with the people whose lives they are intended to improve. This has often revealed differences in priorities or emphasis and has led to changes.

Starting with outcomes has driven different conversations about resource allocation, responsibility, the way we need to work and, critically, what actions and activities have the best chance of delivering the impact we seek. It has demanded greater clarity about how our proposed investments intend to achieve change, and a more strategic view of the package of actions needed for sustained progress.

Embedding outcomes in decision-making

Having outcomes at the front and centre of our decision-making process informs everything we do – from how we allocate resources, to the design of policy and programs, to how we work with clients on the ground.

Rather than going straight to an answer, an outcomes approach requires us to start with a different set of questions – 'what do we want to achieve', 'what does success look like' and 'what will get us there'. Starting with outcomes helps open up a broader conversation about

potential solutions, prompting us to consider different options, new partnerships, and alternative ways of delivering.

Building the capacity of local leaders might be a more effective strategy than delivering a new government program. Making information more accessible and relevant might have a bigger impact than increased regulation. Working with a client's priorities rather than delivering a set program might be the best pathway to the sorts of outcomes we want to see.

Outcomes also help create a continuous feedback loop of information, so that information about past performance features more strongly in decision-making. When we know where money is spent and what it was meant to achieve, we can more confidently determine what is working, what isn't working and what needs to change. This can provide us with greater confidence to redirect resources from areas that aren't achieving our intended results, allowing us to deliver greater value to people and communities.

Victoria is building a focus on outcomes into both professional practice, and the decision systems of government. These changes are intended to drive and empower everyone in the public sector to make the most of every opportunity they have to make a difference.

Setting priorities for the Education State

The Department of Education and Training employs a comprehensive suite of outcomes-focused monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks to track progress against a range of student and child outcomes and indicators. This includes school level performance monitoring, program level monitoring and system-level performance monitoring.

Central to the department's system-level performance monitoring is the department's outcomes framework, which measures what matters most to improving outcomes across the life-course of children and young people, from early childhood to school to training and TAFE.

The framework tracks progress towards achievement, engagement and wellbeing in the early, interim and long-term. Internal reporting against the framework provides a line of sight to the overall performance story for policy and program areas of the department, informing planning, decision-making and evaluation of department policies and programs. The outcomes assessment reports draw together the latest data against high-impact measures identified in the framework and provide a holistic narrative on

performance over the life course. The reports provide rich and robust evidence of outcomes and performance that all areas of the department can draw upon to drive discussions around policies and strategies to improve outcomes, and track progress across achievement, engagement and wellbeing, in line with national and international research evidence. The outcomes framework and outcome assessment reports are used by staff in the department to plan business priorities, develop budget bids, design policies and programs and establish research and evaluation priorities.

System outcomes are also tracked through the Education State school targets, developed to focus school improvement on the range of factors that allow students to achieve their best. The targets are emblematic of the ambition of the Education State, to improve outcomes for every student, in every classroom, in every school, and for all communities, building a system that provides students with the knowledge, capabilities and attributes that will see them thrive through their lives. The targets focus on delivering outcomes for the whole child, including achievement in literacy, numeracy and science, critical and creative thinking and the arts, student health

and resilience, and measuring the impact of efforts to reduce disengagement and the effect of disadvantage on student outcomes.

The department also supports schools, areas and regions through the Regional Performance Framework, a tool for understanding, measuring and monitoring outcomes of government school students. It enables the department's areas, regions and central office to use an enquiry based approach to decision-making, supporting regions with place-based data, to provide evidence leading to actionable insights for change, and improved student outcomes.

There is significant overlap in the measures in the department's outcomes framework and the performance discussion that is undertaken with regions, ensuring that education leaders at all levels of the system are supported to focus on the outcomes that matter to Victorian children and young people. At school level, reports and dashboards provide access to measures aligned to system and regional reporting, to inform the school improvement cycle.

Working as one VPS

The role that siloed institutions and practices has played in policy and service failures is well documented in Australia and internationally. In Victoria the Royal Commission into Family Violence highlighted the devastating impact of fragmented and poorly coordinated systems on women and children.

To genuinely fulfill our mandate, our services must be built around the citizens we seek to serve, rather than our own convenience. Our systems and institutions are complex. Building shared understanding and ways of working across program and organisational boundaries is critical.

An outcomes approach prompts us to think differently about how we organise our work and structure the business of the public sector.

Outcomes span traditional policy portfolios. They require departments and agencies to work more closely to identify and resolve inconsistencies or gaps.

As shared outcomes are increasingly identified and understood, officials gain greater visibility of the impact of their work on other policy areas, providing mechanisms and incentives for shared accountability.

Victoria's outcomes approach is driving cross-boundary problem solving to achieve results that have historically fallen into organisational gaps.

Using outcomes to frame the focus and priorities of Victoria's biggest departments

Departments with large and complex portfolios, like the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), are using outcomes to drive greater integration and collaboration in decision-making and day-to-day working. Each department has taken a different approach to articulating their outcomes, but outcomes cut across program and portfolio boundaries in both. This provides a unified purpose for each department's diverse but interrelated portfolios.

Department of Health and Human Services

DHHS was established to provide integrated stewardship of the systems and outcomes in health and human services. The department is responsible for delivering policies, programs and services that support and enhance the wellbeing of all Victorians. DHHS used a key results approach to develop its outcomes framework.

The key results framework does not attempt to capture the results of all the activity across the department, but instead drives action and focusses effort on a number of key priority areas. The department is using its outcomes framework as a prioritising and organising mechanism. The framework is helping to target efforts more effectively to address disparities in access and outcomes for individuals and communities across the state. In particular, it has been used to inform the development of the department's strategic plan and to identify the 27 priority actions to be delivered that represent the department's most significant reforms, initiatives and programs.

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

DELWP was established to bring together Victoria's planning, local government, environment, energy, forests, emergency management, climate change and water functions into a single department to strengthen connections between the environment, community, industry and economy.

DELWP2020 articulates a range of outcomes and actions that set the department's focus and key directions to ensure the department delivers on the government's priorities. These outcomes are specifically linked to the work the department is doing and guide how its various portfolios work together to deliver on the government's priorities. The outcomes also guide the department's annual planning processes and resource allocation for service delivery and asset investments. DELWP2020 is reviewed regularly to ensure the department's work continues to align with government priorities.



Measuring change

Achieving long term change depends on having good quality information to guide decision-making, shape and direct our everyday actions and enable us to be responsive to changing circumstances and different needs and priorities.

We know that our current data is not perfect, but an outcomes approach helps us do more with the data we have. A focus on outcomes also shines a spotlight on where there are critical data and evidence gaps. Building our data and evidence capacity is equipping us to know what works, for whom, where and in what circumstances.

Measuring what matters

Traditionally, government has measured what it does (outputs, activities and inputs) and not what it achieves (outcomes and impact). For example, our current reporting processes tell us how much funding was allocated to a service (inputs), the type of work that was undertaken with people while receiving the service (activities), and how many people received services (outputs). These are important, but they don't tell us whether people's lives were improved as a result.

We need to know if Victorians are healthier and safer, if our young people are achieving at school, if our biodiversity is improving, and if our economy is contributing to a fair and prosperous Victoria.

We need to know if our investment in family violence is making people safer. And we need to rethink our approach if things are not progressing in the way we expect.

Developing a meaningful understanding of what is working and why requires quality data and evidence. Having clearly defined outcomes highlights the most critical questions we need to be able to answer, and drives a razor-sharp focus on the data and information we need to generate those answers.

Victoria is using outcomes frameworks to prioritise investments to address the data and evidence gaps that will give us a more meaningful understanding of impact. The Victorian Centre for Data Insights is transforming the way government uses data. They are making the data we already have more accessible and meaningful, and are helping the VPS to capitalise on the latest technology to build ongoing feedback loops to track our impact.

The Data Reform Strategy is about seizing the opportunities that 21st century technologies offer to improve government policy and service design, accurately model future programs, and save significant time and money.

The reform is underpinned by five strategic priorities:

- 1. Incentives: Incentivise better use of data**
- 2. Technology: Establish data linkage and analytics environment**
- 3. People: Develop people capabilities**
- 4. Process: Strengthen and streamline analytics processes**
- 5. Innovation: Drive data analytics**

Responding and adapting

A 'one size fits all' approach will not achieve the changes we seek. Government needs to be able to tailor its policy and service delivery around the needs of people and places, and be responsive to changing needs and circumstances. We also know from experience that even with careful planning, things can go wrong during implementation and we need the capacity to adapt and innovate.

Outcomes set up the end-point we are all working towards, and help open up different pathways for how we get there. An outcomes approach prescribes the destination but not the journey. This creates flexibility in our actions and decisions at every level of service delivery and administration – from how we work with people day by day, to how we design and plan, to how we respond and iterate as we deliver services.

Driving state wellbeing through tailored local action

The Victorian public health and wellbeing plan, developed every four years, sets the priorities for improving health and wellbeing in Victoria.

The Victorian public health and wellbeing outcomes framework translates this agenda into a set of measurable outcomes that enable us to track whether our collective efforts are improving the health and wellbeing of Victorians. Importantly, the outcomes framework also allows us to monitor inequalities between different population groups (where data is available).

Reporting against the outcomes framework occurs every four years and will inform the next state level public health and wellbeing plan.

Improving population level public health and wellbeing can take many years and requires concerted and collective effort across a range of sectors. Outcomes thinking has been used to develop, in consultation with various sectors, measures of shorter-term change – or progress measures – for selected priorities of the Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2015–2019.

These measures can be used to provide feedback on whether our actions are contributing to the change we need to improve population health outcomes.

Together, the outcomes framework and progress measures will provide a shared way of understanding how the state and communities are faring, monitor the impact of local efforts, and prioritise and tailor responses.

We all have a role to play in improving health and wellbeing.

This adaptability is supported by consistent and meaningful measurement of progress towards our outcomes, which helps us to identify where additional effort or alternative approaches are needed.

Outcomes can support flexibility for people and place. At the local level, an outcomes approach helps us to tailor our policy and service

delivery to address local priorities, opportunities and challenges. Outcomes also help us to understand how the full range of government and non-government activities and investments can come together and reinforce each other at a local level.

When used in client case-management, outcomes can help us enable individuals and families

to be more active participants in the services and support they receive. A focus on outcomes can give clients ownership of the things that are important to them and this helps support a service response that is tailored to their specific needs.

Next steps



Building outcomes capability

Working to outcomes requires strong skills in identifying and solving problems, the flexibility and creativity to change and refine approaches, the capacity to extract actionable insights from data, and to build and sustain collaborations across boundaries.

In many ways, this represents a shift in expectations for the public sector. These are skills and cultures that need nurturing and development. There is a strong network of champions who can tailor outcomes thinking to the VPS environment and drive change on the ground. Outcomes thinking will become one of the core competencies of the public sector into the future.

We are:

- Building a community of practice for outcomes champions in the VPS.
- Developing resources and tools to support VPS staff to embed outcomes in their work.
- Building outcomes thinking into professional development opportunities for emerging leaders.



Data driven ways of working

Articulating and reporting on outcomes over the past three years has allowed us to get better value from the data we hold. It has also highlighted where there are gaps in what we know.

To address these gaps, we are looking into new ways to answer our critical questions. We are taking advantage of the latest technological advances and innovative ways of generating the data that ensures decision-makers have the information they need. We are also strengthening consistency in measurement across government. By measuring the things that matter we will be more strategic in our efforts and investments, and begin to produce data that generates the most value. This will substantially reduce reporting burden over time.

We are:

- Strengthening data and analytics capacity across the VPS through the Data Reform Strategy.
- Undertaking significant data development projects to address key data gaps identified through the development of outcomes frameworks.

We know that the public service of the future requires a focus on system stewardship, promoting systems thinking and embedding collective leadership.

Our outcomes approach will facilitate a more engaged and responsive public service, and will help to create the conditions for setting the trajectory for transformative change.

We have laid the groundwork for change and will continue to drive change to reap the benefits of an outcomes approach.



Evidence informed decision-making

The Victorian Government has access to a vast amount of evidence and information that can help us think about the challenges facing the community. Outcomes provide a way to better focus our consideration of evidence to ensure it addresses the issues that matter and endure.

Now that outcomes are in place, we are progressively building the logic and evidence to confirm all the factors that drive success, understand how the full scope of government investment contributes to achieving our outcomes, and where there are critical evidence gaps.

We are also looking at ways to combine our evidence to provide a systems view and unlock more effective solutions to complex problems, and pursuing new approaches to building an outcomes-focused evidence base.

We are:

- Identifying and addressing key gaps in evidence, especially around critical cross-portfolio enduring questions, through the Evidence Reform Strategy.



Reporting progress and impact

As our outcomes measurement systems are maturing, sharing knowledge about our progress and achievements becomes a critical foundation for collaboration and sharing our story with the community. Public reporting on progress towards outcomes has started for some of our most significant reforms. This is guiding their implementation, strengthening our accountability to the community, and ensuring an enduring focus on our key priorities.

From these initiatives, we are developing reporting platforms that will provide information about the progress we are making in ways that are meaningful and accessible.

We are:

- Moving to progress reporting for outcomes frameworks for departments and key reform initiatives.



Testing and trialling

We are working to embed outcomes into the systems that drive the day to day operations of the public service. These are far-reaching changes that involve great complexity, and it is important to get it right.

In tandem with broader public sector reforms, we are testing and trialling approaches to understand the conditions for successful implementation in Victoria.

We are:

- Using outcomes to frame place-based initiatives, reflecting the priorities and perspectives of local communities.
- Testing models of shared ownership and collective responsibility within some of our most significant reforms, such as family violence.
- Considering how to embed outcomes into our core systems and processes over time, so they inform and drive everything from the way we design our policies, to how we deliver our services, and hold ourselves accountable.



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For more information go to
vic.gov.au/publicsectorreform/outcomes