

SCV Strategic Plan 2026-29

OFFICIAL

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Acknowledgement of country

Safer Care Victoria acknowledges the strength, power and resilience of Aboriginal people as members of the world's oldest living culture. We recognise Aboriginal people as Australia's First Peoples and honour the richness and diversity of all Traditional Owners across Victoria.

We respect the lore, customs and languages practised by Aboriginal people in Victoria and their deep spiritual and cultural connections to land and water. We are committed to a future based on equality, truth and justice and recognise the ongoing systemic injustices faced by Aboriginal people. Victoria's treaty and truth-telling processes offer a chance to address these wrongs, empowering Aboriginal people to make decisions for their communities.

We pay our deepest respects to ancestors, Elders and leaders, past and present, whose strength and fortitude have paved the way for future generations.

Acknowledgement of lived experience

Safer Care Victoria acknowledges the consumers, families, carers, friends and loved ones who have experienced, or have been affected by, sentinel events. We are deeply sorry for their distress and grief. We bear witness to their stories in the sincere hope of improving care for others.



Introduction

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Message from the CEO

I am proud to present Safer Care Victoria's Strategic Plan for the next three years, 2026–2029.

This plan builds on the momentum of our recent efforts to maximise the impact of the past decade's work and deliver critical improvements that meet the needs of a changing health system. A key update is our renewed vision: a better, safer healthcare system for all Victorians.

In developing this plan, we drew on insights from consultations with a range of our partners, including health service CEOs, clinicians, consumers and experts, as well as our leaders and staff. We heard that Safer Care Victoria (SCV) has continued to be seen as a trusted partner enabling delivery of continuous safety improvements by health services and partners. We have also heard that we still have more to do, specifically driving “better” care, which means care beyond reducing avoidable harm. This is a critical focus for SCV and the sector. Better care means that we are driven to continually improve care, making it higher quality and effective, more sustainable and that health services deliver the right care, at the right time, in the right place for all Victorians.

This plan covers a major milestone: 10 years since the Targeting Zero report that led to SCV's establishment.

We remain focused on ensuring tomorrow's system is better than today.

Over the past decade, SCV has solidified its role in a constantly changing sector: connecting partners and aligning the efforts of the sector to drive quality and safety improvements, through programs such as Safer Together, which are delivered by health services and other partners. We have also expanded our remit in recent years to include supporting translational research and clinical trials. Through consultations, our team and our stakeholders have said they see SCV as a major support for health services in driving of patient safety culture, strengthening clinical governance and improvement. My role as Chief Quality and Safety Officer, is a critical tool of accountability to the community and to ensure change.

This milestone is also significant for me, as I was one of the eight inaugural directors of SCV when it was established. Now as Chief Executive Officer and Chief Quality and Safety Officer, I look forward to continuing the momentum we have built to the years ahead. My role as a registered nurse with over twenty-five years of experience working across the health sector in both the UK and

Australia, ensures I maintain that deep understanding of the health system at the heart of our efforts.

The next three years bring both challenges and opportunities. The health system is complex and rapidly changing, shaped by new technologies, workforce pressures, and reforms such as the establishment of Local Health Service Networks. This plan positions SCV to respond to emerging needs and opportunities while anchoring of our efforts to what matters most: safer care, better outcomes, and equity for all Victorians.

We know that improving quality and safety is a shared responsibility. Our success depends on strong partnerships and alignment across the sector. In this plan, we have articulated SCV's role in leading quality and safety improvement, providing support, fostering accountability, and working collaboratively to reduce duplication and focus on what delivers the greatest impact.

Together, over the next three years, we will continue to listen and learn from you and with you, to build a better, safer healthcare system for all Victorians.



Thank you for your commitment to this vision, I look forward to working with you to make it a reality.

A stylized blue ink signature of Louise McKinlay.

Louise McKinlay

Chief Executive Officer, Safer Care Victoria
Chief Quality and Safety Officer Victoria

About us

SCV is the lead quality and safety improvement agency for healthcare across the state.

We were established as an Administrative Office of the Victorian Department of Health (the department) in 2016 following recommendations made to the Victorian Government in the [Targeting Zero Report](#) in response to patient safety concerns.

Our role

SCV's primary focus is quality and safety improvements within state publicly funded health services. We also provide support across the sector, including private providers that are regulated by the department. We work with health services, the department, clinicians, consumers, carers, safety bodies, research bodies and other key stakeholders.

We focus on quality and safety so that we can work with health services to deliver care that is safe, timely, effective, efficient and person-centred. We do this by:

- driving large scale improvements across the sector
- identifying opportunities for reducing avoidable harm and unwarranted variation in care
- strengthening capability in clinical governance, improvement science and safe and just culture
- providing insights, resources and support to health services
- supporting translational research and clinical trials in health services and universities to drive evidence-based improvements into practice.

SCV's full responsibilities are outlined by the Victorian Minister for Health in a triennial [Statement of Expectations](#).



**Partners in better,
safer care**

Partners in better, safer care

Collaboration across the sector is essential to improving quality and safety, so that all Victorians experience a better, safer healthcare system.

By aligning the efforts of the sector, we strengthen care and improve outcomes for patients and communities. We collaborate with a range of partners to deliver better, safer care, such as governments, safety and improvement bodies, research organisations, regulatory agencies, and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare. Some of our key partners include:

The Victorian Department of Health: as system stewards

We work closely with the department in their capacity as health system stewards, providing leadership, trusted advice and support to ensure the system delivers safe and high-quality care for all Victorians.

Our separation from the department allows us to lead with a dedicated focus on quality and safety improvement, and whilst we operate independently, we report directly to the departmental

secretary. Our shared priorities include system-wide improvements, building capability and strengthening clinical governance. We advise the department on performance monitoring and monitor the sector for signals of harm, based on the [Victorian Health Services Performance Monitoring Framework](#).

Health services: delivering quality and safety improvements on the ground

Victoria's health services include public, private, rural, regional and specialist services that provide patient-centred care that is timely, appropriate and effective. Health services deliver quality and safety improvements on the ground and SCV works with health services, including clinical and non-clinical staff to enable the delivery of this work.

We work with health services by fostering accountability for reviewing adverse events, responding to safety risks, and working together to reduce avoidable harm and reduce unwarranted variation. We collaborate on targeted initiatives such as improvement programs, clinical

trials, translational research, and workforce wellbeing programs. Our work also spans best practice clinical guidance and training.

Clinicians: their expertise informs quality and safety improvements

Clinicians (all healthcare professionals) play a critical role in improving healthcare quality and safety, by their direct impact on patients, and bringing their breadth of expertise and the reality of delivering care to SCV.

Clinical expertise guides our work, connecting frontline insights into system improvements. We work with clinicians through strategic partnerships, working groups, consultations, training, development of resources and time-limited projects that need specialist advice.

While one of SCV's key roles in supporting clinicians and health services is sharing and promoting evidence-based information and clinical best practice, SCV only develops statewide clinical guidance in rare instances when there is an issue that warrants our intervention.

Consumers and carers: their voices and experiences are essential to quality and safety improvements

Our work is most effective when we partner with consumers, carers, and people with lived and living experience, embracing a diversity of experiences, background and perspectives, including rural Victorians. SCV actively works with consumers, carers and lived and living experience to identify, develop, deliver, and evaluate the impact of work.

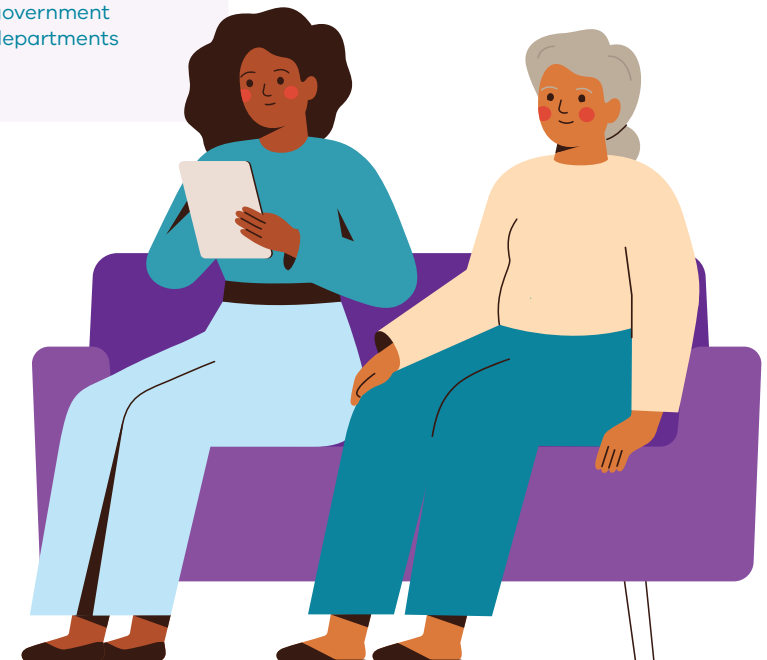
We promote engagement with consumers and representation of consumers in health service governance structures to improve experience and outcomes for all Victorians. We do this by providing practical strategies provided in the [Partnering in Healthcare Framework](#) and the [Victorian Clinical Governance Framework](#).

The Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity (CCOPMM) and the Victorian Perioperative Consultative Council (VPCC)

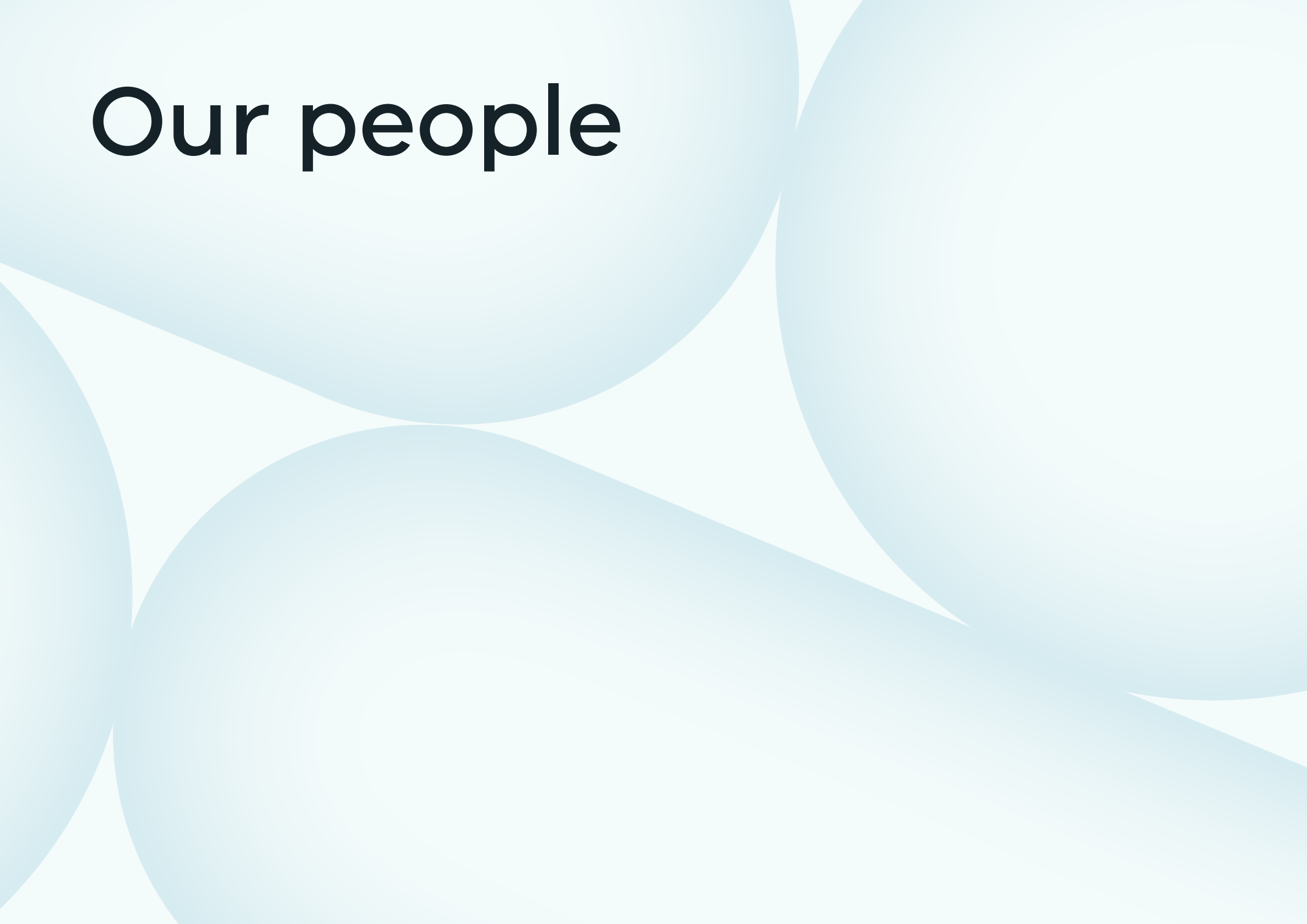
SCV supports the consultative councils in their role of providing expert recommendations and clinical practice guidelines following case review of patient harm and death in their respective fields. They operate independently under legislated powers however work closely with SCV.

We provide staffing, proactive data monitoring, and drive improvement initiatives to support their work. To learn more about the Consultative Councils, visit [Councils | Safer Care Victoria](#).

Figure 1: SCV's relationships with key stakeholders



Our people

The background of the slide features several large, overlapping circles and organic shapes in a light blue color. These shapes are positioned in the top-left, bottom-left, and bottom-right areas, leaving a large white space in the center and top-right where the text is located.

Our people

Our people are at the heart of our organisation, and their perspectives and SCV's organisational culture enables our effort to make real impact. The people of SCV share critical interests and capabilities to drive our efforts:

SCV as an organisation has a unique combination of skills and perspectives which are critical to SCV's success in driving quality and safety improvements within health services. Our people drive SCV's mission by:

We share a passion and commitment to improving care for all: We deeply care about the voiceless in the system and are highly motivated to make improvements for consumers.



We actively seek and benefit from diverse perspectives: Our diversity of experience, culture, and skills is our strength, which has enabled SCV to be greater than the sum of its parts.



We strive for excellence through continuous learning: We are highly competent and skilled yet are always seeking to learn and improve within a workplace culture of continuous learning, openness, and curiosity.



"We are passionate staff committed to working with clinicians, consumers and health services to improve care delivery for all."



SCV Staff member

Seeing and making connections across the system: Our state-wide perspective enables us to identify opportunities and trends and connect health services, large and small, to share improvements.



Combining diverse expertise across the health system and public sector: This includes clinicians with hands on experience across the breadth of health care, and professionals in policy, research, data analytics, improvement science and consumer engagement. Together, this breadth of knowledge enables us to deliver meaningful change by bridging clinical, operational and strategic perspectives.



Championing the perspectives of people with lived experience: Both through ensuring consumers and carers make up a key part of our workforce and demonstrating how our partners can best partner with people with lived experience.



"SCV acts as a connection point for health services, large and small, and connection across policy and clinical practice."



SCV Staff member

Our strategy at-a-glance

The background of the slide features several large, overlapping, curved shapes in a light blue color against a white background. These shapes create a sense of movement and depth, framing the text on the left side.

Our strategy at-a-glance

Safer Care Victoria is the state lead for quality and safety in publicly funded health services and across the sector

We drive improvements in partnership with health services, the department, clinicians, consumers and carers, safety bodies, research bodies and other key stakeholders.

Vision:

what we
aspire to

A better, safer healthcare system for all Victorians

Aim:

the specific goal
we intend to
accomplish to
fulfil our vision

Over the next three years, we will continue to work with our partners to drive quality and safety healthcare improvements across Victoria

Strategic priorities:

the key areas we
should focus on
to help us realise
our aim

Leadership

Strengthen clinical governance, national reform opportunities, state-wide initiatives, and partnerships with health services and consumers.

Insights

Harness system data, lived experience, research and frontline insights to identify and share quality and safety opportunities.

Improvement

Enable a learning health system that continuously evolves, drives whole system quality, a strong safety culture and improves system sustainability.

Under each strategic priority, we articulate:

Objectives

where we invest our effort and time

Measuring impact

what success looks like

Enabling principles:

how we approach
all that we do

We partner

by collaborating with diverse stakeholders to align our efforts, develop priorities, influence change, share insights, listen to individual and collective experiences.

We learn

by building, deepening, and sharing skills and knowledge, and embracing diverse perspectives to support a continuous learning health system.

We improve

by acting on what we know, building capability, and embedding a culture of continuous improvement: supported by strong governance, responsible stewardship, and openness.

Our strategic plan

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Our strategic plan

Over the next three years, we will continue to work with our partners to improve quality and safety in healthcare across Victoria. This strategic plan outlines our aspirations, how our team will work to achieve them, and how we will measure our impact in achieving our aim.

Our plan aligns our efforts and resources, guides our focus and provides a framework for accountability.

Equity and accessibility are central to this plan. We are committed to ensuring that all Victorians, regardless of background and circumstance, can access high-quality, person-centred, culturally safe healthcare every time, no matter where they are in the state.

Our strategic priorities

Our strategic priorities articulate our key areas of focus as an organisation, underpinned by a series of objective areas. These objective areas outline where we invest our effort and time, both through targeted initiatives as well as our response to emerging issues and opportunities on behalf of all Victorians.

Measuring our impact

To track the success of our efforts, we are committed to identifying and measuring our impact. Measuring how our work impacts patient outcomes can be complex, but we will continue to monitor and measure this through a range of evaluation approaches. We will gather insights from a range of sources, including the experiences of consumers, carers and people with lived experience. We seek to map our year-on-year impact to maximise and sustain momentum and strive to distribute our work equitably across health services and communities. Our impact will be measured and demonstrated in our annual plans and reports.

Annual plans and reports

Our program of work under the strategic priorities and impact of key initiatives will be laid out in our annual plans and reports. They will highlight our achievements and how we have responded to support the community and the sector over individual years. These can be found on our website publications page at [Corporate plans and reports | Safer Care Victoria](#).

Key frameworks for best practice and improvement

Our strategic priorities are underpinned by two key frameworks that guide health services in enabling better, safer care.

The Partnering in Healthcare Framework provides practical strategies that health services can undertake by better involving consumers, lived experience, carers and their families, to deliver outstanding healthcare for Victorians.

The Victorian Clinical Governance Framework helps health services to understand clinical governance roles and responsibilities, evaluate their clinical governance and ensure accountability for high quality, equitable and safe care. To access these frameworks and supporting materials, visit [Best Practice and Improvement | Safer Care Victoria](#).



Strategic priority 1:

Leadership

As Victoria's lead for quality and safety, we work to improve care across the state by providing and enabling leadership, and influencing reforms nationally.

We advance national reform opportunities, deliver statewide initiatives, strengthen clinical governance and promote equitable representation for consumers, carers and people with lived and living experience of all backgrounds and experiences. We share evidence-based insights and work with our partners to break down silos and combine our efforts to improve healthcare for all.

Our objective is to:

Advocate for and provide expertise on quality and safety reform opportunities, driving alignment across national, state-wide and health service partners.



Lead transformational system-wide initiatives to optimise outcomes that are consistent, reliable and equitable for all Victorians.



Promote guidance to the sector, consumers and carers through sharing and promoting evidence-based information and clinical best practice.



Advocate for consumer and carer representation across the health system in alignment with the [National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards](#) and the [Victorian Clinical Governance Framework](#).



We'll know our impact by:

Satisfaction indicators from those involved in quality and safety programs and training.



Positive outcomes of quality and safety capability development.



Delivery of government election commitments that SCV is accountable for.



"We bring the sector together to empower them to change the system to deliver better care for all."

SCV staff member

"We have subject matter experts across the breadth of healthcare."

SCV staff member

"I think that SCV does more than partnering with consumers, it creates co-design opportunities, and this is transforming our health system for best care, and I love it. SCV and Consumers developed a Codesign training program, and now health services are implementing codesign, and are partnering with consumers more than ever before. This is progress and I think we are leading the way forward not only for Victoria but Australia."

Consumer



Strategic priority 2:

Insights

We work with our partners by harnessing a range of insights to reduce avoidable harm across the Victorian healthcare system.

This includes working across the sector to source clinical intelligence and provide local, regional and statewide monitoring of trends and risks. We use health service data, research, lived experience perspectives and insights from frontline workers to identify and share quality and safety opportunities.

When partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we will honour their requirements for data sovereignty.

We translate insights into recommendations and work in collaboration to deliver service and system-wide improvements that benefit all Victorians.

Our objective is to:

Monitor system quality and safety performance using a range of data types to identify, respond to and intervene in service and system risks and trends.



Harness lived experience, frontline and system-wide insights through strong partnerships with stakeholders to strengthen healthcare for those who use and work in it.



Translate insights into system-wide learning and improvement, enabling findings and recommendations to be shared across Victoria.



Support the conduct of research, collaborate with registries and provide high-quality decision support tools accessed by clinicians at the point of care.



We'll know our impact by:

Improvements in patient experience.



Improved capability in health services to enable quality and safety.



Delivery of resources and tools informed by user and sector feedback to support national reforms in clinical research.



Engagement with key stakeholders, including people with lived experience, to harness insights.



We have an umbrella system view across the sector, and an ability to draw on intelligence within SCV and from external stakeholders."

SCV staff member

"Part of the role of SCV is to pick up noise and spikes and ask why it is happening, then work on it."

Health service CEO

"It's about sharing information and increasing the potential to build a quality and safety dataset for the state, which gives us insights about how it's all working."

Health service quality and safety director



Strategic priority 3:

Improvement

We work with our partners to drive continuous improvement in the quality and safety of health care by enabling effective accountability, acting on insights and focusing on what matters most.

Together, we aim to strengthen safety culture and build a learning health system that evolves, reduces avoidable harm, and supports sustainability. Guided by strong governance, shared accountability, and statewide engagement we turn learning into proactive safety management, targeted improvement initiatives, and better outcomes for consumers, carers and their families.

Our objective is to:

Respond to emerging quality, safety and improvement opportunities, and foster a continuous learning health system.



Enable a strong safety culture in health services through embedding robust clinical governance that prioritises quality and safety improvement.



Take a whole-of-system approach to improvement, translating research and insights into planning, processes and practice that enables change in health services.



Drive operational excellence by aligning efforts across SCV to improve performance and deliver strategic priorities.



We'll know our impact by:

High levels of health service participation in, and outcomes of our improvement initiatives.



Demonstrable reductions in avoidable harm in priority areas.



High sector uptake and engagement with SCV work.



"We want to support health services to do well."

SCV Staff member

"We are a frank a fearless friend: not punitive, but holding their hand through the storm."

SCV Staff member

"The role of SCV is about using the information and the intelligence we have to influence system level change. Recognising that we're dealing with human beings in a not perfect system but continually working to make it better."

Partner organisation CEO



Enabling principles

Enabling principles

Our enabling principles describe how we undertake our work at SCV. We believe these principles are the most critical way to drive quality and safety improvement in the Victorian healthcare system.

They are interdependent, we can't do one well without also ensuring the others. All three are fundamentally reliant on listening to our partners and a culture within SCV of curiosity, openness and collaboration.

We partner

Partnership is central to improving Victoria's healthcare system. We enable system-wide changes that our partners deliver on the ground. We cannot enable better, safer care without our partners.

We partner by consulting and collaborating with diverse stakeholders. We also work to build connections between stakeholders to share their experiences and expertise.

Our partnerships are built on trust and accountability; we deliver on our commitments. We support consumers and health services to lead and influence meaningful change, reflecting our culture of inclusion and adaptability.

At SCV, we work alongside people with lived experience including consumers and carers. We listen to and amplify their voices to improve care. We recognise that health outcomes are not always equitable, with some groups facing barriers to quality care. We partner with those who experience these barriers, with the aim of improving outcomes. We partner with all people, with women and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people who experience mental ill-health, older people, people with a disability and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

We learn

Learning is essential to continuous improvement, which drives better, safer care. At SCV, we are a learning organisation. We learn principally from the experiences and perspectives of consumers, carers, the sector and our partners, and by understanding evidence in research and data.

We learn continuously and iteratively through testing, refining and evaluating our work.

At SCV, we enable learning by fostering a just culture of continuous improvement, curiosity, openness, and feedback. We share what we learn and act on those insights to drive meaningful change.

We seek to grow and support a continuous learning health system that focuses on improvement. We build on proven insights and collaborate to create system-level change that benefits everyone.

We improve

Delivering better, safer care means continuously and proactively identifying opportunities for and making improvements to ensure the best outcomes and experience for Victorians.

At SCV, we work with the health sector to create a culture of continuous learning that drives improvement. This shared vision is supported by strong governance, responsible stewardship, and a commitment to openness.

We improve by testing innovative ideas and applying system-wide changes grounded in improvement

science – through rigorous evaluation, data, evidence, and the voices of lived experience. We partner across sectors to scale proven, evidence-based interventions and translate knowledge into practice, ensuring sustainable and impactful change throughout the health system.

We are focused on not only improving safety and quality today, but on embedding it across the system to ensure a better, safer future health system. Quite simply, we aim to ensure tomorrow is better than today.

Summary

In this section

Strategic Plan Summary

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Strategic Plan Summary

Vision: (what we aspire to)					
A better, safer healthcare system for all Victorians					
Aim: (the specific goal we intend to accomplish to fulfil our vision)					
Over the next three years, we will continue to work with our partners to drive quality and safety healthcare improvements across Victoria					
Strategic priorities (the key areas we should focus on to help us realise our aim)					
Leadership Strengthen clinical governance, national reform opportunities, state-wide initiatives, and partnerships with health services and consumers.		Insights Harness system data, lived experience, research and frontline insights to identify and share quality and safety opportunities.		Improvement Enable continuous improvement through driving a strong safety culture and a learning health system: sharing best practices across the health system.	
Objectives (where we invest our effort and time)					
Advocate for and provide expertise on quality and safety reform opportunities, driving alignment across national, state-wide and health service partners.		Monitor system quality and safety performance using a range of data types to identify, respond to and intervene in service and system risks and trends.		Respond to emerging quality, safety and improvement opportunities, and foster a continuous learning health system.	
Lead transformational system-wide initiatives to optimise outcomes that are consistent, reliable and equitable for all Victorians.		Harness lived experience, frontline and system-wide insights through strong partnerships with stakeholders to strengthen healthcare for those who use and work in it.		Enable a strong safety culture in health services through embedding robust clinical governance that prioritises quality and safety.	
Promote guidance to the sector, consumers and carers through sharing and promoting evidence-based information and clinical best practice.		Translate insights into system-wide learning and improvement, enabling findings and recommendations to be shared across Victoria.		Take a whole-of-system approach to improvement, translating research and insights into planning, processes and practice that enables change in health services.	
Advocate for strong consumer and carer representation across the health system in alignment with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.		Support the conduct of research; collaborate with registries and provide high-quality clinical decision support tools for access by clinicians at the point of care.		Drive operational excellence by aligning efforts across SCV to improve performance and deliver strategic priorities.	
Measuring impact (what success looks like)					
Participants in quality and safety leadership programs report high levels of satisfaction and capability uplift.		Patient experience shows measurable improvement.		Health services demonstrate strong participation in, and clear benefits from, SCV led improvement initiatives.	
SCV's quality and safety capability programs achieve strong satisfaction and positive outcome indicators.		Resources and tools are routinely developed or refined using user, sector and evidence based feedback, supporting national health and clinical research reforms.		Demonstrable reductions in avoidable harm in priority areas.	
The delivery of government election commitments that SCV is accountable for.		Mechanisms within health services to strengthen quality and safety capability show measurable improvement.		Sector engagement with SCV programs, guidance and initiatives is consistently high.	
		Key stakeholders, including people with lived experience, are consistently engaged and their insights meaningfully inform improvement priorities.			
Enabling principles (how we approach all that we do)					
We partner by collaborating with diverse stakeholders to align our efforts, develop priorities, influence change, share insights, listen to individual and collective experiences.		We learn by building, deepening, and sharing skills and knowledge, and embracing diverse perspectives to support a continuous learning health system.		We improve by acting on what we know, building capability, and embedding a culture of continuous improvement: supported by strong governance, responsible stewardship, and openness.	

Appendix

In this section

Appendix 1: Definitions

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Appendix 1:

Definitions

Term	Definition
Consumer	Consumers include people, families, carers and communities who are current or potential users of health services. This includes children, women and men, people living with a disability, patients, carers, clients, people of diverse cultural, linguistic and religious experiences, socioeconomic status and social circumstances, sexual orientations, sexes, genders and gender identities, health and illness conditions. The term also includes people who choose to get involved in decision-making; health consumer representatives who provide advice on behalf of consumers, with the overall aim of improving healthcare; and carers who often have an important role in health care decision making and care giving. Different health settings use terms such as patients, people/persons, families, carers, clients and residents.
Carer	This is a person, including a person under the age of 18 years, who provides care to another person with whom they are in a relationship of care.
Lived and living experience (LLE)	Lived and Living Experience refers to personal experiences of mental health and wellbeing challenges, recovery, caring, and navigating mental health systems and services. Through these experiences, people develop valuable insight into how care, support, and systems are experienced by the people they impact.
Data sovereignty	Data sovereignty refers to the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to exercise ownership over Indigenous data. Indigenous data refers to information or knowledge, in any format or medium, which is about and may affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people both collectively and individually.

