

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title:	Health Protection - Public Health Officer
Business Unit/Department:	Western Public Health Unit
Division:	Western Public Health Unit
Award/Agreement:	Victorian Public Sector Health and Allied Services Managers and Administrative Workers Enterprise Agreement 2021-2025
Classification:	HS3 (with above award allowance)
Reports To:	Health Protection Team Leader
Direct Reports:	Contact Tracing Officer / Support Officer (as required)
Date Prepared/Updated:	30 April 2024

Position Purpose

The Public Health Officer (PHO) is responsible for protecting public health by assisting and leading the investigation, response and management of individual cases or outbreaks of communicable diseases within the community within the WPHU catchment or more widely if required.

This is achieved by providing evidence based and timely implementation of a range of responsibilities under the direction of the Health Protection - Team Leader including:

- Undertaking case management, contact tracing and outbreak management for notifiable conditions.
- Conducting effective risk assessment, risk management and risk communication health protection practice activities, being responsible for maximising public health outcomes for notifiable conditions.
- Leading some outbreak management investigations and assisting with public health incidents.
- Conducting health monitoring and support to individuals throughout their infectious period to provide advice and referral coordination to link individuals with other service providers as required.
- Collaborating with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders and agencies.
- Contributing to improvement and quality service provision.

Public health officers may also be required to support other public health priorities related to health protection, population health promotion and community engagement.

Business Unit Overview

The Western Public Health Unit (WPHU) has been established to strengthen the public health response to communicable diseases and other health issues. The Unit is part of a system of three metropolitan Public Health Units, including Western (WPHU), North Eastern (NEPHU), South Eastern (SEPHU) and six regional Public Health Units to provide a state-wide system of public health delivery and oversight.

WPHU is led and coordinated by Western Health and responsible for approximately 1.3 million people in the LGA's of Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley, Hobson's Bay, Merri-bek, Melbourne, Brimbank, Melton and Wyndham. Initially, WPHU was responsible for COVID-related activities (case investigation, contact tracing and outbreak management) in collaboration with the Victorian Department of Health (DH). However, now

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local public health units are taking increasing responsibility for many notifiable conditions under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 alongside the Victorian Department of Health (DH), and also non-communicable disease and health promotion activities in their assigned catchments, as part of the state's overall public health response.

The WPHU team works very closely with a range of key stakeholder groups, in particular the Public Health Division at DH, local government, local community health networks and primary health providers.

WPHU promotes a healthy workplace culture, with our culture statement being "We are a diverse and welcoming team passionate about public health. We value open and honest communication. We work together to create a flexible environment of mutual respect, inclusivity and connection."

Key Responsibilities

The Public Health Officer in the Western Public Health Unit has the following key responsibilities:

Undertake communicable disease control (CDC) practice

- Undertake case management, contact tracing and outbreak management for notifiable conditions according to agreed public health guidelines, across all conditions.
- Conduct risk assessment activities, including case and contact interviews and outbreak risk assessments, site visits and inspections, through collaboration with clinicians, setting managers and members of the community, in order to make judgments on public health risk.
- Conduct risk management activities, including identifying and directing public health control measures directly and through partners, demonstrating an understanding of the epidemiology and management of the disease or disease portfolio, including urgently notifiable conditions.
- Communicate public health information, risk and recommended actions effectively to diverse audience and stakeholders, including cases, contacts, settings and through a range of communication techniques using methods including calls, emails and written advice.
- Apply knowledge of the principles of disease transmission and infection periods, principles of infection control, clinical processes and healthcare systems to CDC practice, demonstrating accountability for initiating and coordinating important public health actions arising.
- Prioritise and manage a health protection caseload, seek support and assistance when unsure or when agreed triggers for escalation are met or professional judgment indicates, and escalate situations of public health risk within WPHU.
- Apply knowledge and skill in the use of data and operating systems (e.g. TREVi, PHESS, Genesys, Microsoft Office 365) for information gathering and reporting in caseload management, governance, communication and quality improvement.
- Be proficient in the collection, management, monitoring, recording and collation of data for the purpose of effective surveillance, analysis and reporting in collaboration with the Data, Epidemiology and Surveillance Team, in accordance with legislative requirements, information security and privacy policies and requirements.
- Demonstrates a high level of emotional intelligence and strategic thinking to work collaboratively with Operations Manager(s), Team Leader colleagues and PHOs/EHOs for the purpose of evidence based, effective and efficient service delivery.
- Work autonomously, balanced with seeking support when required.
- Participate in the after-hours WPHU on-call roster and attend to urgent or emergency work requirements.

Demonstrate professional leadership within the Western Public Health Unit

- Generate reports on public health information, actions and activities.
- Understand and contribute to meeting WPHU, Western Health and DH performance targets.
- Maintain compliance with mandatory and foundational training requirements and individual performance development outcomes.
- Actively participate in program meetings, quality improvement activities, service development and change management processes.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of the WPHU strategic, procedural, guideline documents and the WPHU Catchment Plan.

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- Provide supervision, advice and education to reporting roles or students (if required).

In addition to the key responsibilities specific to your role, you are required to deliver on the [Key Organisational Accountabilities](#) which are aligned with the Western Health strategic aims and Western Public Health Unit strategy and workplace culture statement.

Key Working Relationships

Internal:

- WPHU Team Leaders
- WPHU Operations Managers
- WPHU Medical team
- WPHU Infection Prevention and Control
- WPHU Environmental Health Officers
- WPHU Data, Epidemiology and Surveillance team
- Other WPHU staff
- Divisional Director WPHU
- Director WPHU

External:

- Cases and associated contacts as required
- Managers/representatives of exposure/outbreak sites organisations or agencies
- Victorian Department of Health, Community and Public Health Division
- Representatives from other Victorian Government Departments and agencies
- Other Local Public Health Units
- Community partners including Community Health, Local Government, Metropolitan and Regional Health Services
- General Practitioners and the Primary Healthcare Networks

Selection Criteria

Essential

- Current APHRA registered health professional with no practicing restrictions and eligibility for membership with relevant professional association; OR relevant tertiary public health qualification.
- Minimum 2 years industry experience working in public health, community health or primary care.
- High level technology literacy with experience in MS Office platforms and ability to learn and master online data reporting tool(s).
- Proficient and adaptive communication style and interpersonal skills employing rapport building, empathetic interviewing and information gathering demonstrating awareness of cultural sensitivity, inclusion and safety, clear messaging that can be tailored to a diverse population.
- Ability to work collaboratively, proactively and flexibly in dynamic environment, taking on responsibility and accountability for public health outcomes in case and outbreak management.
- Strong coordination skills, problem-solving skills, attention to detail, time-management and sound judgement to respond to issues arising in an accurate and timely manner.
- Ability to work a 7-day week rotating roster and contribute to the on-call service run outside business hours, weekends and public holidays.
- Willingness to complete Authorised Officer training as directed by WPHU

Desirable

- Relevant post-graduate tertiary public health qualifications completed or in progress.
- Knowledge of Victorian Department of Health clinical reporting platforms and information systems.
- Previous experience in communicable disease control.
- More than 5 years industry experience working in public health, community health or primary care.
- Valid driver's licence

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Additional Requirements

All employees are required to:

- Obtain a police / criminal history check prior to employment
- Obtain a working with children check prior to employment (if requested)
- Obtain an Immunisation Health Clearance prior to employment
- Report to management any criminal charges or convictions you receive during the course of your employment
- Comply with relevant Western Health clinical and administrative policies and guidelines.
- Comply with and accept responsibility for ensuring the implementation of health and safety policies and procedures
- Fully co-operate with Western Health in any action it considers necessary to maintain a working environment, which is safe, and without risk to health
- Protect confidential information from unauthorised disclosure and not use, disclose or copy confidential information except for the purpose of and to the extent necessary to perform your employment duties at Western Health
- Safeguard children and young people in our care, by ensuring that your interactions are positive and safe, and report any suspicions or concerns of abuse by any person internal or external to Western Health
- Be aware of and comply with relevant legislation: Public Administration Act 2004, Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (OHS Regulations 2017), Fair Work Act 2009 (as amended), the Privacy Act 1988 and responsibilities under s141 Health Services Act with regard to the sharing of health information, the Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes, Part 5A and 6A Family Violence Protection Act 2008
- Be aware of and comply with the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees and other Western Health employment guidelines

General Information

- Redeployment to other services or sites within Western Health may be required
- Employment terms and conditions are provided according to relevant award/agreement
- Western Health is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to providing for its employees a work environment which is free of harassment or discrimination. The organisation promotes diversity and awareness in the workplace
- Western Health is committed to Gender Equity
- Western Health provides support to all personnel experiencing family and domestic violence
- This position description is intended to describe the general nature and level of work that is to be performed by the person appointed to the role. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required. Western Health reserves the right to modify position descriptions as required. Employees will be consulted when this occurs
- Western Health is a smoke free environment

I confirm I have read the Position Description, understand its content and agree to work in accordance with the requirements of the position.

Employee's Name:	Click here to enter the Employee's name.		
Employee's Signature:		Date:	Click here to enter a date.

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