

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title:	Environmental Health Officer
Business Unit/Department:	Western Public Health Unit (WPHU)
Division:	Western Public Health Unit (WPHU)
Award/Agreement:	Victorian Public Sector Health and Allied Services Managers and Administrative Workers Enterprise Agreement 2021-2025
Reports To:	Health Protection Team Leader/Senior Public Health Officer
Direct reports:	Contact Tracing Officer / Support Officer (as required)
Date Prepared/Updated:	30 October 2024

Position Purpose

The Environmental Health Officer (EHO) is responsible for protecting public health by aiding the prevention, investigation, response and management of cases or outbreaks of communicable diseases and their associated settings within the WPHU catchment.

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.
- Undertaking environmental health risk assessments including inspections or remote assessment of settings to identify and assess environmental hazards and advise on required control measures.
- Advising on and if required undertaking environmental sampling such as food or water sampling.
- Collaborating with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders and agencies.
- Contributing to improvement and quality service provision.

Environmental 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 1.3M 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

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and outbreak management) in collaboration with the Victorian Department of Health (DH). However, now 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 Environmental 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. 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.
- Demonstrate a high level of emotional intelligence and strategic thinking to work collaboratively with Operations Manager(s), Team Leader colleagues and PHOs 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.
- Undertake other reasonable duties and responsibilities as directed/ as necessary by WPHU.
- Complete Authorised Officer training as directed/as necessary by WPHU.

Undertake environmental public health practice

- Actively contribute to the development and evolution of the EHO role in WPHU and LPHUs more broadly.
- Undertaking environmental health risk assessments including inspections or remote assessment of settings to identify and assess environmental hazards
- Advise on and if required undertaking environmental sampling such as food or water sampling.
- Advise WPHU and other stakeholders on required environmental control measures.

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- Provide advice and guidance to local government environmental health departments on the investigation and management of food safety issues and other environmental hazards that affect human health.
- Perform the duties of an authorised officer under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008. This may include conducting compliance assessments, inspections, investigating consumer complaints, undertaking sampling. If involved in food safety or water quality investigation, this may involve advising on or conducting food and water sampling and assessment of food safety programs and their compliance.
- Provide advice and expertise on a range of environmental health matters to the wider WPHU team.
- Conduct offsite assessments and community engagement activities.

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.
- Provide supervision, advice and education to reporting roles, surge workforce 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.

Key Working Relationships

Internal:

- WPHU Team Leaders
- WPHU Public Health Officers
- WPHU Operations Managers
- WPHU Data, Epidemiology and surveillance team
- WPHU Medical Team
- Other WPHU Staff
- Director WPHU
- Divisional Director WPHU

External:

- Cases, contacts and outbreak settings as required
- Managers/representatives of exposure/outbreak sites organisations or agencies
- Victorian Department of Health, Community and Public Health Division
- Other Local Public Health Units
- Local Government Environmental Health departments, food safety teams and equivalent teams
- Community partners including Community Health, Metropolitan and Regional Health Services,
- General Practitioners and Primary Health Network(s)

Selection Criteria

Essential:

- Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Health) or equivalent
- Demonstrated experience as an environmental health officer in local government, including demonstrated knowledge and experience in public health theory and practice
- High levels of technology literacy with ability to learn and master online data reporting tool(s)
- Licenced to drive a motor vehicle in Victoria

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- More than five years' experience in environmental health

Desirable:

- Experience with health education, community outreach, linkage to care, social services
- Familiarity with Department of Health clinical reporting platforms and information systems
- Previous experience in Communicable Disease Control
- Experience working as part of a multidisciplinary team
- Masters of Public Health or Masters of Epidemiology

Skills and attributes:

The candidate will be able to demonstrate:

- Ability to interact in an empathetic and non-judgmental manner with culturally diverse populations and persons experiencing a wide range of social conditions
- Strong stakeholder management and interpersonal skills
- Strong problem-solving skills, with attention to detail and the ability to use sound judgment in responding to client issues and concerns
- Flexibility and adaptability to changing priorities at short notice and able to work effectively in a fast paced and dynamic environment.
- Ability to use discretion, maintain confidentiality, and practice ethical conduct
- Ability to work effectively with all levels of staff, establishing and maintaining collaborative professional relationships
- Strong time management – organisation, prioritisation and multi-tasking
- Ability to work autonomously and as part of a multidisciplinary team
- Proficiency with use of computers and mobile devices (smartphones, desktop, laptop, tablet)
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including active listening, emotional intelligence

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
- Be aware of and comply with the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees and other Western Health employment guidelines

General Information

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- Redeployment to other services and 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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