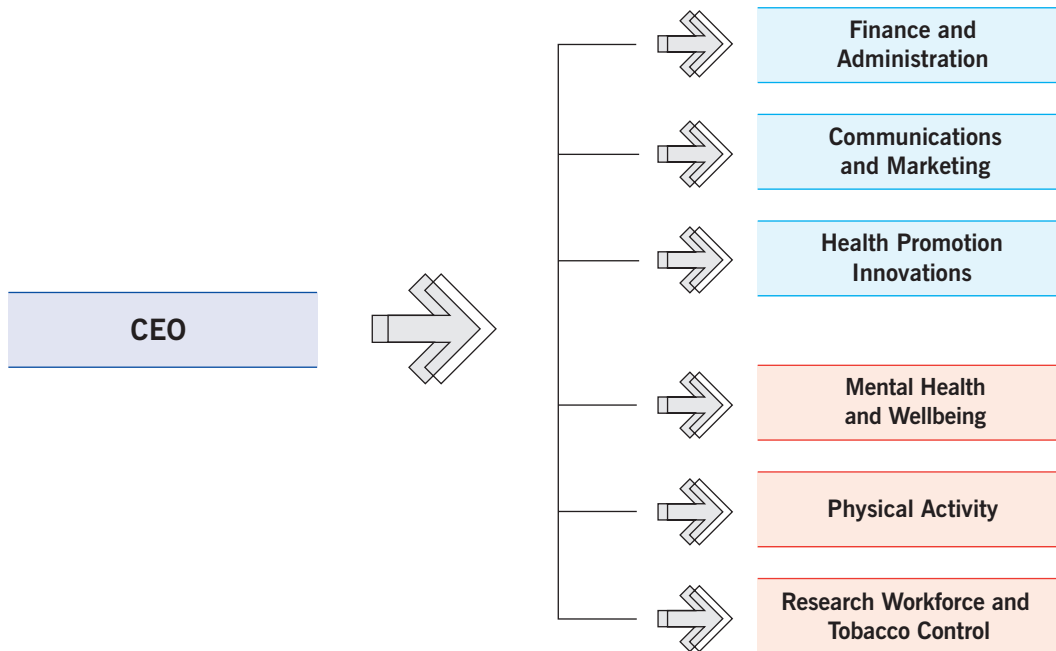


# Strategic Directions 2003–2006

## Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

# VicHealth Structure



## Core Work Units

### Mental Health and Wellbeing

Responsible and accountable for managing VicHealth's investment in mental health promotion and health inequalities.

### Physical Activity

Responsible and accountable for managing VicHealth's investment in physical activity and healthy eating.

### Research Workforce and Tobacco Control

Responsible and accountable for managing VicHealth's investment in research that builds public health research capacity in Victoria and the health action areas of tobacco control, sun protection, alcohol, illicit drugs, sexual health and injury surveillance.

## Service and Support Units

### Finance and Administration

The unit is responsible and accountable for financial integrity, management and internal controls as well as ensuring appropriate governance processes are upheld, the implementation of best practice HR strategies and quality office management and administrative support.

### Communications and Marketing

The unit is responsible and accountable for raising and maintaining the profile of VicHealth as a leader in health promotion and facilitating the effective dissemination of corporate initiatives.

### Health Promotion Innovations

The unit is responsible and accountable for ensuring VicHealth maintains its leading-edge in health promotion excellence and its credibility as an advocate for change.

# Introduction

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The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation works with a range of partner organisations to deliver innovative responses to the complex social, economic and environmental forces that influence the health of all Victorians.

Sitting within a state and federal system of health promotion and disease prevention, the Foundation's particular focus is on a flexible, responsive, and evidence-informed approach to working with its partners from across different sectors in the community. VicHealth is continually scanning the environment for, and investing in, new knowledge and approaches to help lead the discipline of health promotion. Systematic evaluation of programs feeds into the body of knowledge and, with a commitment to wide dissemination of new evidence, VicHealth seeks to contribute value to the wider public health system.

In 1999 the Foundation developed a strategic plan that focused the organisation on developing a more knowledge-based and capacity-building approach to health promotion. It involved a change to its research priorities with a strategic investment in the public health research system. It also involved establishing new and improved relationships with partners from across many sectors of the community and government, setting clear program goals in high-priority health action areas, developing better internal and external evaluation systems, and creating a vibrant and challenging work environment.

The update of this triennial plan involved the review of progress towards the goals we established in 1999. The extensive program of review, conducted over eight months, involved the board, advisory panels, and all staff. The process was outward looking and involved consultation with opinion-leaders and decision-makers in the Victorian public health community, as well as a revised and expanded Stakeholder Survey, which canvassed the views of 289 stakeholders through face-to-face interviews and questionnaires.

The Foundation's work still reflects the mandate articulated in the Tobacco Act 1987, in many ways one of the most visionary pieces of public health legislation in the past 50 years. While national tobacco control measures reduced the need for the Foundation to continue the buy-out of tobacco sports and arts sponsorships, working with a range of partners outside the traditional health sector to deliver health benefits to the Victorian population remains at the core of VicHealth's success and future strategy.

The activities supported by the Foundation over the past 16 years have contributed significantly to public health improvements in Victoria. The reduction of smoking prevalence among adults is a success story in the effectiveness of comprehensive, well-funded and sustained programs for improving health and this guides our thinking in facing the challenges of smoking prevalence among young people. The establishment of research centres in health promotion and public health has provided the necessary infrastructure for a flourishing of public health scholarship in Victoria. VicHealth has worked hard at involving a large number of organisations across the community in this period and remains committed to maintaining a culture in Victoria that promotes health.

This strategic plan reflects a sharpening of our focus and consolidation of the major changes VicHealth has made over the past four years. The major health challenges identified in 1999 continue to require long-term commitment, innovative thinking, the involvement of many sectors and rigorous evaluation to ensure significant health improvements for Victorians now and for future generations.



John Funder  
Chair Board of Governance



Rob Moodie  
Chief Executive Officer

# Promoting health is value for money

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With the understanding that the population's health is dependent on much more than the health sector alone, the Foundation works towards building strong partnerships and facilitating linkages across sectors.

With research and evidence guiding programs, VicHealth invests in a range of activities in sectors as diverse as sport and active recreation, the arts, education, planning and built environment, community, and local government. These programs promote change in policy and practice that can influence people's ability to support healthy lifestyles.

When the Foundation was established 16 years ago, health promotion was in its early development as a newly conceived approach, emerging from the activities of health education and preventive medicine. Health promotion and disease prevention are now acknowledged as a core element in all comprehensive health policies worldwide.

Australia has been at the forefront of a number of acclaimed successful public health programs, including tobacco control, road safety, and the prevention of HIV/AIDS. The Foundation, through its support of the QUIT Program in Victoria, has contributed substantially to the reduction in smoking prevalence among adults from 34.2% in 1983 to 20% in 2001<sup>1</sup>. In Australia, smoking consumption has dropped over 30 % in the last 20 years. The estimated total benefit of health improvements due to lower cigarette smoking from 1970 to 1998 is \$12.3 billion<sup>2</sup>. This kind of investment in prevention is between 500 and 1000 times more cost effective than treating end-stage lung cancer.

High levels of overweight and obesity (60.7% of Victorians)<sup>3</sup> and high levels of depression in our community (depression is the fourth leading medical cause of disability in the Australian community)<sup>4</sup> require landmark programs and responses such as those tobacco control managed 20 years ago. Supporting a creative mix of state-level and community-based activities, VicHealth seeks to contribute to creating social, cultural and physical environments that will enable individuals to choose and sustain healthy lifestyles. Success in promoting a healthier Victoria is predicated on long-term and stable funding for well-designed health-promoting activities.

# Guiding principles

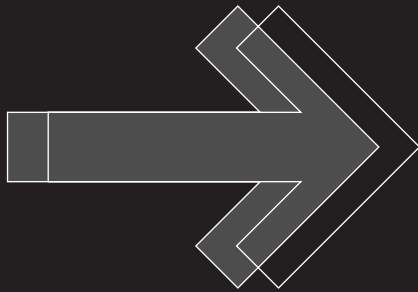
The principles guiding the Foundation's strategic directions for 2003–2006 are:

- Strategies that are consistent with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) directions for health promotion set out in The Jakarta Declaration on Health Promotion, *Leading Health Promotion into the 21st Century 1997*<sup>5</sup>, and the *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion 1986*<sup>6</sup>. In particular our strategies reflect the areas of:
  - > building healthy public policy;
  - > funding appropriate structures for health promotion delivery and development;
  - > promoting shared community responsibility for improving health;
  - > creating environments that support healthy choices;
  - > developing and supporting partnerships for health;
  - > increasing the community's skills and resources to promote healthy behaviours and empowering individuals to make informed decisions; and
  - > developing personal (knowledge and) skills.
- VicHealth's activities will continue to reflect national and state public health priorities, with a focus on improving the health status of all population groups, while reducing health inequalities. Not all public health priorities can be addressed comprehensively and simultaneously; hence, VicHealth has identified priority areas for research, development and advocacy within existing and new program areas (see key activities and targets for 2003–2006 starting page 9).
- VicHealth is committed to working in collaborative ways with a range of individuals, groups and organisations from many sectors, including sport, health, planning, transport, local government, education, community and the arts to improve health.
- VicHealth will continue to build on our internal culture of innovation and knowledge exchange to support the development of public health leadership and skills within individuals, groups, and organisations.
- VicHealth will maintain strategic alliances with national and global public health interests that aim to strengthen health promotion action and advocacy.

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- VicHealth will act as a catalyst and advocate for the development of appropriate health-promoting policies and programs.
  - VicHealth's core strategy will continue to be funding activities designed to increase the capabilities of others to improve health. However, there may be exceptions due to gaps in research, development and/or delivery, where VicHealth undertakes the start-up work.
  - VicHealth will continue to encourage practitioners, policy-makers and researchers to work together to increase the relevance of research to policy and to promote the use of new evidence amongst practitioners and policy-makers.
  - VicHealth will seek excellence in meeting all legislative, fiscal and service commitments to ensure a high level of partner, stakeholder and community satisfaction.
  - VicHealth will strive for excellence within our internal processes, ensuring a culture of collegiality, creativity and continuous improvement.

# Vision and Mission

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## **The Foundation envisages a community where:**

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- > health is a fundamental human right;
  - > everyone shares in the responsibility for promoting health; and
  - > everyone benefits from improved health outcomes.
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## **The Foundation's mission is to build the capabilities of organisations, communities and individuals in ways that:**

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- > change social, economic, cultural and physical environments to improve health for all Victorians; and
  - > strengthen the understanding and the skills of individuals in ways that support their efforts to achieve and maintain health.
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# Our Approach

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VicHealth's continued innovation and responsiveness to current and emerging health promotion challenges has been the cornerstone of our success. We continue to attract support across the political spectrum. Our strategic intent for the next three years is innovation, building and sharing health promotion knowledge, and working across many sectors to broaden the benefit of health promotion strategies.

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## **Innovation for excellence in promoting health**

Creative culture

Ideas exploration

Risk taking

Agenda setting

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## **Building on and sharing health promotion knowledge and skills**

Research and evaluation

Analysis and assessment

Learning and exchange

Advocacy

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## **Working across sectors to broaden the benefit**

Multiple health promotion strategies

Multiple levels of influence: individual, organisation and community

Different groups and life stages

Collaborations and alliances

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VicHealth is overseen by a Board of Governance comprising 11 ministerial appointments and three members elected by Parliament. The Board is supported by advisory panels, and a committed, professional team. The involvement of stakeholders in VicHealth's governance provides multiple perspectives and expertise that adds to organisational performance.

# Setting our agenda

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VicHealth has identified health priority areas for the next three years, in which we will focus our funding, developmental work, research, evaluation, and advocacy. They are not inclusive of all national and state priorities and balance known benefit with potential benefit, whole population and specific target population approaches, and immediate reward with long-term change.

The selection of priorities for VicHealth is guided primarily by their **relevance** to the vision, mission, aims and objectives of VicHealth, which reflect the *Tobacco Act 1987* and are founded on principles of equity. In addition the following criteria are used, though not all are necessarily met on every investment:

## **Our collaborative advantage**

The action areas must complement and amplify other funded activity by adding value rather than merely replicating the work of State, Commonwealth and non-government organisations.

## **Feasibility for achieving stated outcomes and potential**

program activities and innovations must have a significant prospect of achieving their stated outcomes.

## **Impact and scale of the health issue**

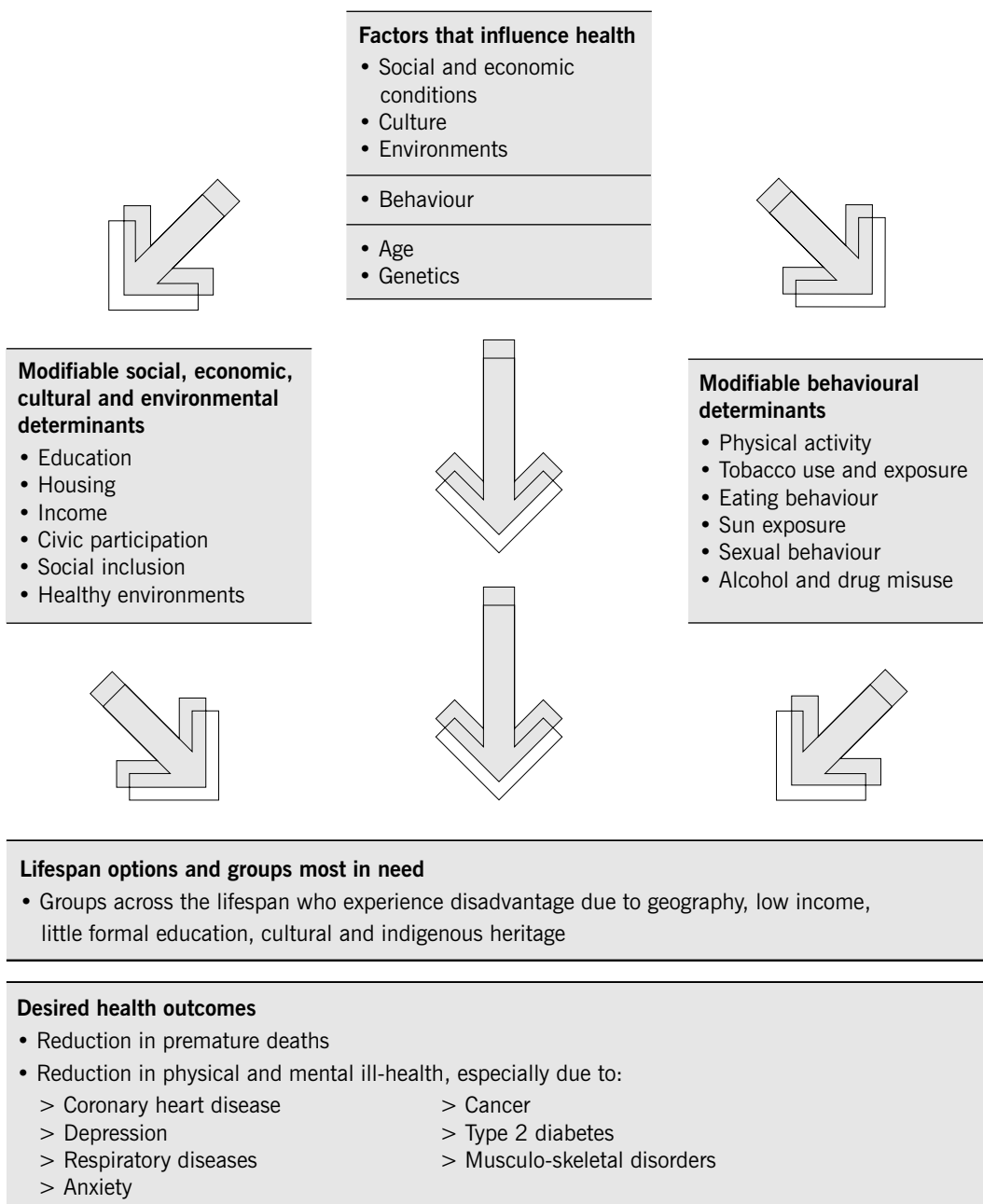
Programs must target actions to areas where there is the greatest burden of disease and disability and scope for significant health gains.

## **Timeliness**

There is a strategic opportunity present now and over the next three years.

# Promoting health

VicHealth focuses on the social, economic, cultural and environmental factors that influence the health of Victorians. In particular, VicHealth seeks to influence those things that determine individual health outcomes that are modifiable, relate to non-communicable diseases, and that are aligned with national and state health priorities. The advantage of this approach is that many diseases have common modifiable risk factors that underlie their development.



# Key activities and targets for 2003–2006

## Major programs

### Tobacco control

- Reduce the prevalence of smoking.
- Reduce exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

### Mental health and wellbeing

- Increase the evidence base for promoting mental health.
- Develop the skill base and resources of communities, organisations and individuals to sustain mental health promotion activity.
- Consolidate mental health promotion within policies across a range of sectors.
- Increase the broader community understanding of the importance of obtaining and maintaining mental health.

### Physical activity\*

- Contribute to increasing the proportion of Victorians participating in sufficient physical activity for physical and mental health improvements.
- Increase the community capacity across different sectors at state, regional and local levels to increase opportunities for participation in physical activity.
- Strengthen the evidence base for, and contribute to the creation of, organisational policies and social and physical environments that facilitate physical activity.

## Strategic development and advocacy work

### Healthy eating\*

- Increase the understanding of social, environmental and cultural factors that influence eating patterns.
- Contribute to reversing the trends in obesity in the population over the next 10 years.

### Health inequalities

- Increase the knowledge base about social and economic factors that cause poor health and identify effective ways for reducing inequalities.
- Establish partnerships with others working with and representing disadvantaged groups, to reduce health and social inequalities.

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\* Activity to reduce obesity

## **Strengthening collaborations**

Maintain effective partnerships with sport, the arts and community organisations and extend our links with:

- local government; and
- planning.

## **Strengthening research and evaluation capacity**

- Support outstanding health promotion and public health researchers.
- Contribute to the development of the skills of health promotion and public health researchers.
- Develop the skill base and capacity in health promotion evaluation.

## **Supporting innovation**

- Maintain flexibility to respond to new concerns.
- Be a focal point for capturing and testing new ideas that will potentially contribute to the knowledge and evidence base for effective health promotion activities.
- Encourage and support individuals and organisations to innovate in ways that will improve health.

**VicHealth will also maintain a range of strategic investments in areas outside those priorities outlined above, where we are able to make gains from established investments and partnerships.**

## 2003 – 2006 Outcomes

The major organisational goals and objectives for the next three years are outlined below. VicHealth's business plan and single investment plans for major health areas, such as promoting physical activity, provide program aims and objectives and their respective targets.

Outcome	Objectives	Indicators
A culture of innovation in health promotion/public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish VicHealth as a focal point for health promotion innovation</li> <li>• Maintain flexibility in responding to new or emerging issues in health promotion/public health</li> <li>• Continue to improve our synthesis, reflection, dissemination and exchange of new knowledge and good practice</li> <li>• Encourage and provide incentives for funded organisations to innovate</li> <li>• Continue to support investigator-led research initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner organisations and stakeholders acknowledge and value VicHealth's contribution to new ideas and practice</li> <li>• VicHealth delivers and/or facilitates timely responses to issues</li> <li>• Health-promoting policies and practice changes are evident in selected sectors</li> <li>• VicHealth is recognised as a funder of innovative projects</li> </ul>
An evidence-informed policy and practice approach in health promotion/public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and improve quality of health promotion/public health research and evaluation of projects</li> <li>• Support the development of a critical mass of health promotion/public health researchers</li> <li>• Increase and improve exchange between research, policy and practitioner communities</li> <li>• Increase health promotion knowledge, research and evaluation skills in field practice and management across selected sectors</li> <li>• Increase information exchange between VicHealth and organisations in select sectors to encourage a shared responsibility for health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated investment in knowledge building</li> <li>• Quantity and quality of education and information exchange</li> <li>• Quantity and quality of publications and website content updates to support knowledge transfer</li> <li>• Quantity and quality of technical assistance in evaluation</li> </ul>

Outcome	Objectives	Indicators
<p>Focus on identified health areas of high priority: tobacco control mental health promotion physical activity healthy eating</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the next triennium an estimated 60 per cent of grant monies will be targeted towards these areas</li> <li>• Utilise multi-strategy approaches to promote health of Victorians across lifespan at individual, organisational and community levels</li> <li>• Undertake activities in collaboration and maintain and extend alliances within a range of sectors that have the potential to contribute to health gains</li> <li>• Continue to leverage contributions from different government departments, community, business and other organisations to increase effectiveness of VicHealth-funded initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sixty per cent of grants budget allocated to priority areas</li> <li>• Positive behavioural changes in smoking prevalence and physical activity rates</li> <li>• Increased awareness and attitudinal changes about mental health issues</li> <li>• Health-promoting policies are created in selected sectors where tobacco control, mental health and wellbeing, physical activity and healthy eating projects are implemented.</li> <li>• High-quality collaborations in selected sectors</li> <li>• Sustained support for effective projects by other grant-makers</li> </ul>
<p>Action which tackles health inequalities that arise due to variations in geography, income, education, and heritage (indigenous and cultural and linguistic)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a strategic balance between whole of population and a specific population focus</li> <li>• Ensure participation strategies in funded initiatives address the needs of groups experiencing disadvantage</li> <li>• Undertake research and advocacy to encourage macroeconomic and social policy changes that are likely to lower health differentials</li> <li>• Where appropriate, maintain and extend the implementation of health-promoting policies that respond to the needs of the most disadvantaged within selected sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain 30-40% of grants for specific population group activities</li> <li>• Research investment into understanding health inequalities and how to reduce them</li> <li>• Advocacy and public awareness activity addresses (in part) the reduction of health inequalities within the context of priority health action areas</li> </ul>
<p>A culture of creativity and excellence in our organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster a culture of creativity and ideas development within VicHealth</li> <li>• Foster external relationships based on mutual respect and understanding</li> <li>• Maintain financial integrity and management and internal controls</li> <li>• Continue to improve strategic management of human resources</li> <li>• Effectively manage information technology resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational culture based on trust and mutual respect</li> <li>• Continuous improvement of information exchange between core, support and service functions</li> <li>• Excellence in financial management</li> <li>• High professional standards</li> </ul>

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