

# Strategic Plan

2013 - 2016



Victorian Institute  
of Forensic Medicine



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## Message from the Director and the Chief Operating Officer

Welcome to our Strategic Plan for 2013 – 2016. A lot of effort has gone into generating the three strategic goals which will guide our work for the next three years. The Management Action Group, the VIFM Executive, the Executive and Finance Committee and the Council have all had input into its genesis. I thank everyone for their participation.

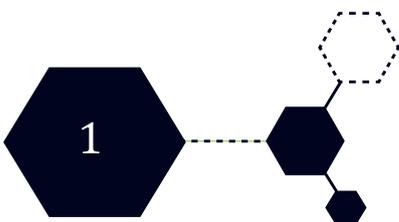
This Plan is the key organisational reference point for our development work for the next three years.

What we are determined to do is embed research and innovation as

key characteristics of the Institute, focus on stakeholders, and become more responsive and capable as an organisation.

### Our Evolution

The Victorian Institute of Forensic Pathology opened for business in 1987 to provide independent, expert forensic medical and related services to the justice system. A history of national debate surrounding compromised evidence in coronial and forensic cases and the absolute need for independence and high quality medical and forensic scientific evidence were at the forefront of its establishment. VIFP roles and functions were therefore enshrined



in legislation as a policy response to address the substandard services and facilities that existed at that time.

A key concern of our founders was that credible evidence and expert opinion would be underpinned by integrating service with teaching and research. Thus, it was important for the Institute to be established with an academic identity through Monash University. The cycle of service, teaching and research is what underpins our contributions to justice, the community and the families we serve.

In 1989 the Institute first began providing human tissue for transplantation and in 1991, the DTBV was formed. In 1995, the Institute amalgamated with the professional discipline of Clinical Forensic Medicine and reflected this growth by a name change to the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM). The relationship with Monash University also expanded at this time to provide post graduate education and qualifications in both disciplines – Clinical Forensic Medicine and Forensic Pathology.

Now midway through its third decade, the Institute exists to promote, improve and sustain forensic medicine and related disciplines through its service delivery and integrated teaching and research functions.

## The Future

The Institute is well respected, we have a solid platform to build from, and are well positioned for growth and development.

However, VIFM will only continue to be a leader in the field if we innovate (and give practical effect to that idea), and give adequate attention to research, teaching and our humanitarian work. We will need to ensure that these activities, which we know improve our services, are carefully balanced with our service work and that we monitor this balance in an ongoing way.

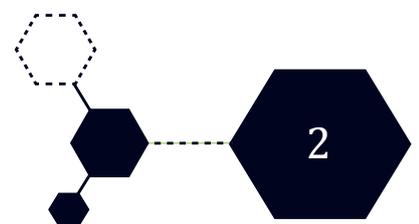
In the light of constrained resources, and with increasing demands and expectations, it is essential that we concentrate our resources to deliver the best possible services.

Our leaders and managers will therefore, need to be well trained in the science and art of leadership and management.

On a practical note, sitting beneath this plan is a three year action plan, the first year of which is VIFM's Business Plan for 2013/14.

**Stephen Cordner**  
Director

**Mari-Ann Scott**  
COO



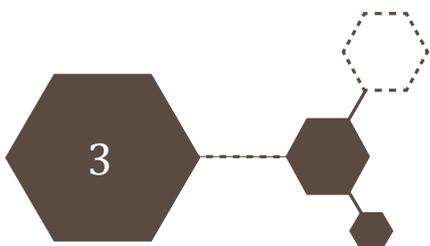
# Our Vision

To advance our role as a reliable and innovative leader in the world of forensic medicine and science.

# Our Mission

As an independent institute underpinned by ethical principles and a commitment to excellence, our purpose is to:

- Provide forensic medicine and related services to the Victorian public and justice system,
- Increase knowledge through teaching and research,
- Contribute more broadly to justice in, and the health and safety of, communities in Australia and overseas, and
- Enable the provision of high quality human tissue grafts for transplantation.



# Our Values

## Respect

- We respect all people, our history, our calling and the law.

## Openness

- We are open-minded. Open to each other and open to knowledge and learning.

## Service

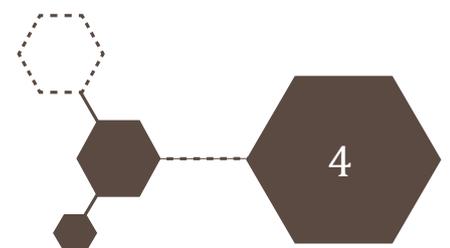
- We provide services for the community, which are responsive and client-focused.

## Integrity

- We will be beyond reproach. We commit to truth, confidentiality, impartiality, and accountability. We commit to systems which are secure, reliable, accurate, valid and safe.

## Innovation

- We are creative and curious. We are not afraid to do things differently. We will continue our search for knowledge and truth.



We aim to  
achieve the  
following goals  
over the next  
three years:



# Our Strategic Goals

1.

Embed research and innovation as core characteristics of the Institute.

VIFM wishes to maintain its position at the forefront, the cutting-edge, of forensic medicine and science. Research creates new knowledge, which together with innovative approaches, supports delivery of better services.

2.

Maintain and foster the confidence of our stakeholders.

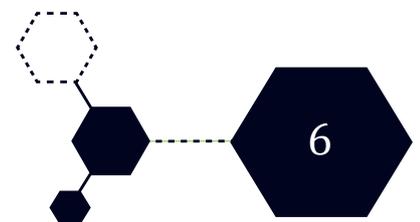
Effective stakeholder engagement and relations enable better planned and more informed policies, projects and services. Mutually beneficial partnerships can produce outcomes which extend beyond what can be achieved alone.

3.

Enhance organisational responsiveness and capability.

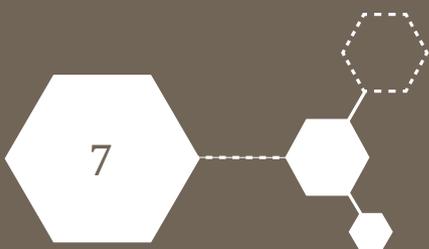
Agility and VIFM's capacity to respond to stakeholder needs underpin sustainability. Stronger capability to meet challenges, combined with better stakeholder relationships, will help us to deliver to expectations and remain the preferred provider.

Maintaining a focus on quality is a must. Quality underpins our reputation for reliability.





Embed  
research and  
innovation  
as core  
characteristics.



# Strategies to achieve this goal:

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**1. Seek out opportunities to improve service delivery through innovation.**

Rationale: To maintain VIFM's leadership in forensic medicine and related sciences.

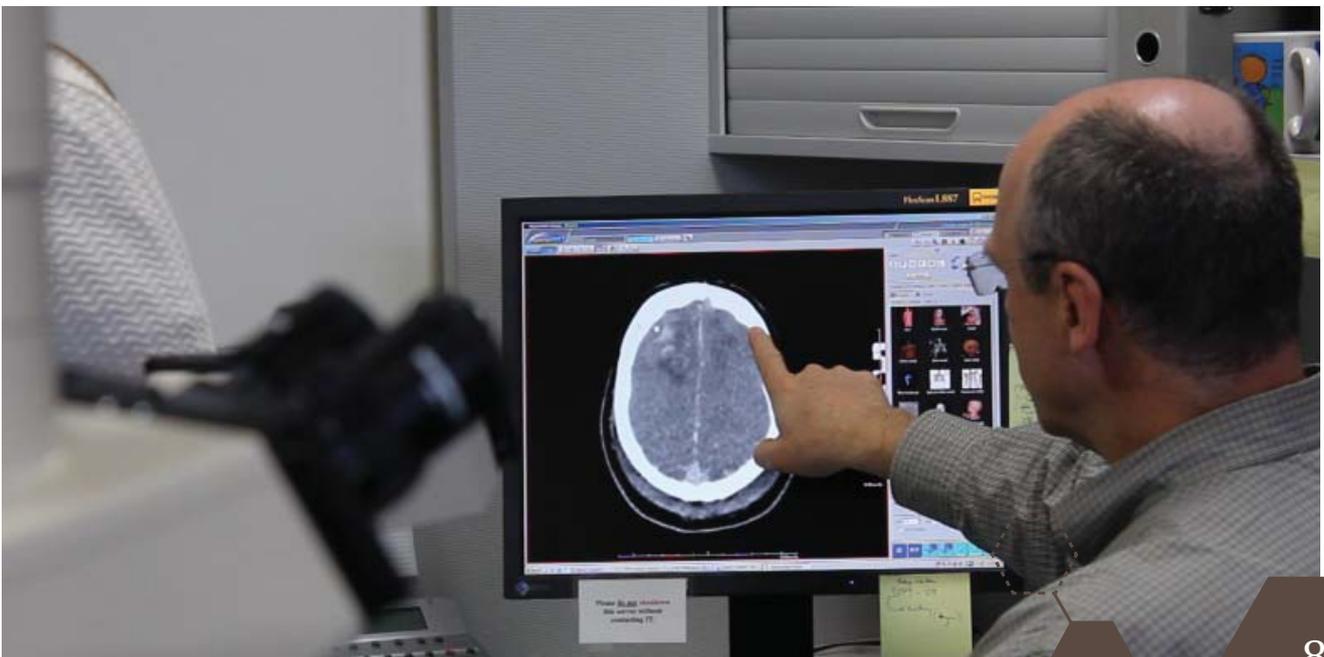
**2. Implement evidence based practices and guidelines, including medico-legal reports.**

Rationale: The introduction of evidence based guidelines is an

important innovation in forensic pathology and medicine. These guidelines will improve the quality of conclusions and opinions.

**3. Increase mentoring of staff engaged in or interested in research.**

Rationale: Mentoring future research staff is known to increase staff confidence in conducting research and this in turn increases outputs.



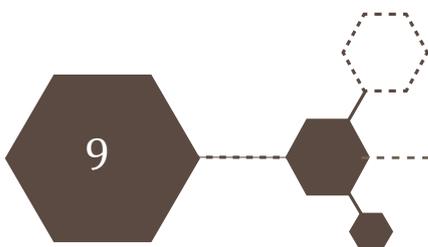


#### 4. Further develop Monash Masters in Forensic Medicine and related teaching.

Rationale: The further development of the Masters program will increase the number of forensic practitioners involved in research and will also improve their knowledge, skills, written opinions and oral evidence.

#### 5. Seek out opportunities to engage stakeholders as research partners.

Rationale: Research undertaken in partnership with stakeholders will increase the relevance of VIFM's research. It will also improve VIFM's capacity to fulfill its statutory objects and functions.



*Embed research and innovation as core characteristics of the Institute.*

## 6. Develop a significant project relevant to the needs of indigenous Australians.

Rationale: VIFM should contribute to improving forensic medical outcomes generally, paying particular attention also to indigenous Australians.

## 7. Strengthening VIFM's research base.

To enable more research there is a need to develop the number of staff members undertaking research as well as their capacity.

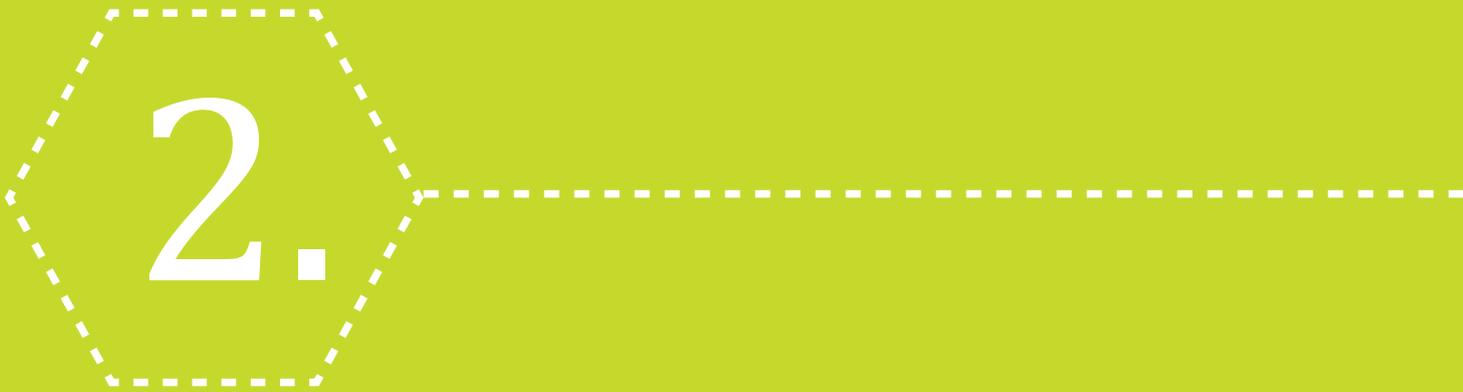
## 8. Strengthen academic outputs.

Rationale: Assists in maintaining VIFM as a leading centre for forensic medicine and related sciences.

## 9. Strengthen the teaching skills of our staff.

Rationale: Through high quality teaching more medical practitioners and scientists will be attracted to undertaking research at VIFM. Additionally high quality of teaching is an essential part of our academic platform.





2.

Maintain and  
foster the  
confidence  
of our  
stakeholders.

# Strategies to achieve this goal:

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## 1. Develop and embed a stakeholder framework into VIFM operations.

Rationale: The framework will provide a guide to staff about how VIFM works with its stakeholders to meet their needs.

## 2. Strengthen staff commitment to adopting stakeholder management principles (as per stakeholder framework).

Rationale: Stakeholder engagement is a critical attribute of a well-functioning service organisation and this needs buy-in from all staff.

## 3. Raise VIFM's profile with stakeholders.

Rationale: Greater stakeholder familiarity with, and understanding of, VIFM staff and our operational capability will improve relationships.



#### 4. Regular meaningful consultation with stakeholders.

Rationale: By recognising and understanding the needs of stakeholders, VIFM can ensure our services are properly targeted.

#### 5. Anticipate our stakeholders needs as much as possible by being up to date on stakeholder business imperatives.

Rationale: This demonstrates responsiveness and organisational agility.

#### 6. Look for opportunities to add value to our stakeholders' services.

Rationale: To demonstrate responsiveness and support stakeholders' needs.

#### 7. Ensure VIFM consults with stakeholders prior to making key decisions.

Rationale: To reinforce confidence in VIFM's approach and demonstrate a collaborative approach.

#### 8. Actively network with key stakeholders.

Rationale: To better understand stakeholder needs to build relation-





ships which improve engagement with stakeholders and improve stakeholder appreciation of VIFM.

## 9. Monitor and self assess our performance with respect to stakeholder requirements.

Rationale: To verify VIFM is delivering against our commitments and stakeholder requirements.

## 10. Ensure VIFM has a recognisable and understandable brand.

Rationale: A good reputation along with a recognisable brand will lead

to the promotion of VIFM's service delivery capability.

## 11. Effectively negotiate with stakeholders through the development of agreements.

Rationale: Secure clear understandings with stakeholders about service delivery requirements.

## 12. Actively engage with the community.

Rationale: Provides community reassurance about our services and will assist with increasing donors for DTBV.



3.

Enhance  
organisational  
responsiveness  
and capability.

# Strategies to achieve this goal:

1. Provide evidence-based advice to Government on the rationale for changes to be made to the VIFM Act.

Rationale: The niche nature of VIFM means that expertise about our legislative underpinnings lives largely at VIFM.

2. Develop a sustainable model for regional service delivery in collaboration with CCOV, Victoria Police and hospitals.

Rationale: To address the inherent difficulties in providing access to niche specialist services in regional Victoria.

3. Undertake service by service efficiency reviews in parallel with reviews of service models.

Rationale: Greater manpower flexibility will be needed in order to meet service expectations in the context of the sustainable government initiative and related responses to declining government revenues.





#### 4. Strengthen staff engagement with their Quality Framework and its responsibilities.

Rationale: An effective quality management system underpins reputation, performance and reliability by ensuring high quality, effective and efficient operational performance and service delivery. Staff engagement is essential.

#### 5. Develop and strengthen organisational and management competencies, including by building business knowledge.

Rationale: Efficient business practices are a prerequisite for the quality and efficiency of service delivery. The cycle of service, teaching and research should extend to encompass organisational and business practice.

#### 6. Develop more partnerships.

Rationale: To improve our business processes through delivery in conjunction with new and existing external and internal partners.

#### 7. Identify business opportunities relevant to Forensic Scientific Services.

Rationale: Develop business opportunities to sustain future, and

*Enhance organisational responsiveness and capability.*

further develop, services. At the same time as managing funding pressures, this better utilises the expertise of the staff, and benefits recruitment and retention. Scale improves the overall efficiency of operations.

## 8. Achieve formal recognition of CFM as a medical specialty.

Rationale: The field of clinical forensic medicine is clearly that of medical specialty, but it is not recognised as such. Recognition will be beneficial for recruitment and retention.

## 9. Articulate the next generation CFM services model, to include an emphasis on interpersonal violence services.

Rationale: Expansion of existing forensic medical services in line with community expectation and the Justice Portfolio.

## 10. Increasing the sustainability of the Donor Tissue Bank of

## Victoria is an organisational priority.

Rationale: To safeguard and strengthen the future of the DTBV for the benefit of patients in Victoria and beyond.

## 11. The governance arrangements for the Donor Tissue Bank of Victoria are strengthened.

Rationale: To meet the regulatory obligations for the DTBV and ensure risks are being effectively overseen and controlled.

## 12. Staff access to the best possible physical environment and equipment is an organisational priority.

Rationale: Workplace infrastructure impacts positively on staff productivity, morale and motivation.

### 13. Staff welfare is promoted as an organisational priority.

Rationale: Demonstrated commitment to staff welfare underpins our reputation both internally and externally and will lead to increased staff efficiency and engagement with change processes.

### 14. VIFM culture is promoted as an organisational priority.

Rationale: Staff engagement and morale will increase and VIFM will be an employer of choice.

### 15. Develop a self-sustaining international

### program that supports core delivery and further builds on VIFM's international links.

Rationale: Highly specialist nature of our work means that the majority of our professional peers (and their knowledge) are located outside Australia, thus such collaborations has local benefits. In addition, the limited ability for many jurisdictions to train their own specialists provides opportunities for VIFM to strengthen its own people while delivering benefits to others.

International collaborations benefit Victoria by saving costs and supporting capacity by drawing on other national and international agencies in times of emergency.



*Artist's rendering of the new building.*



## 16. Develop an organisation-wide focus on financial sustainability.

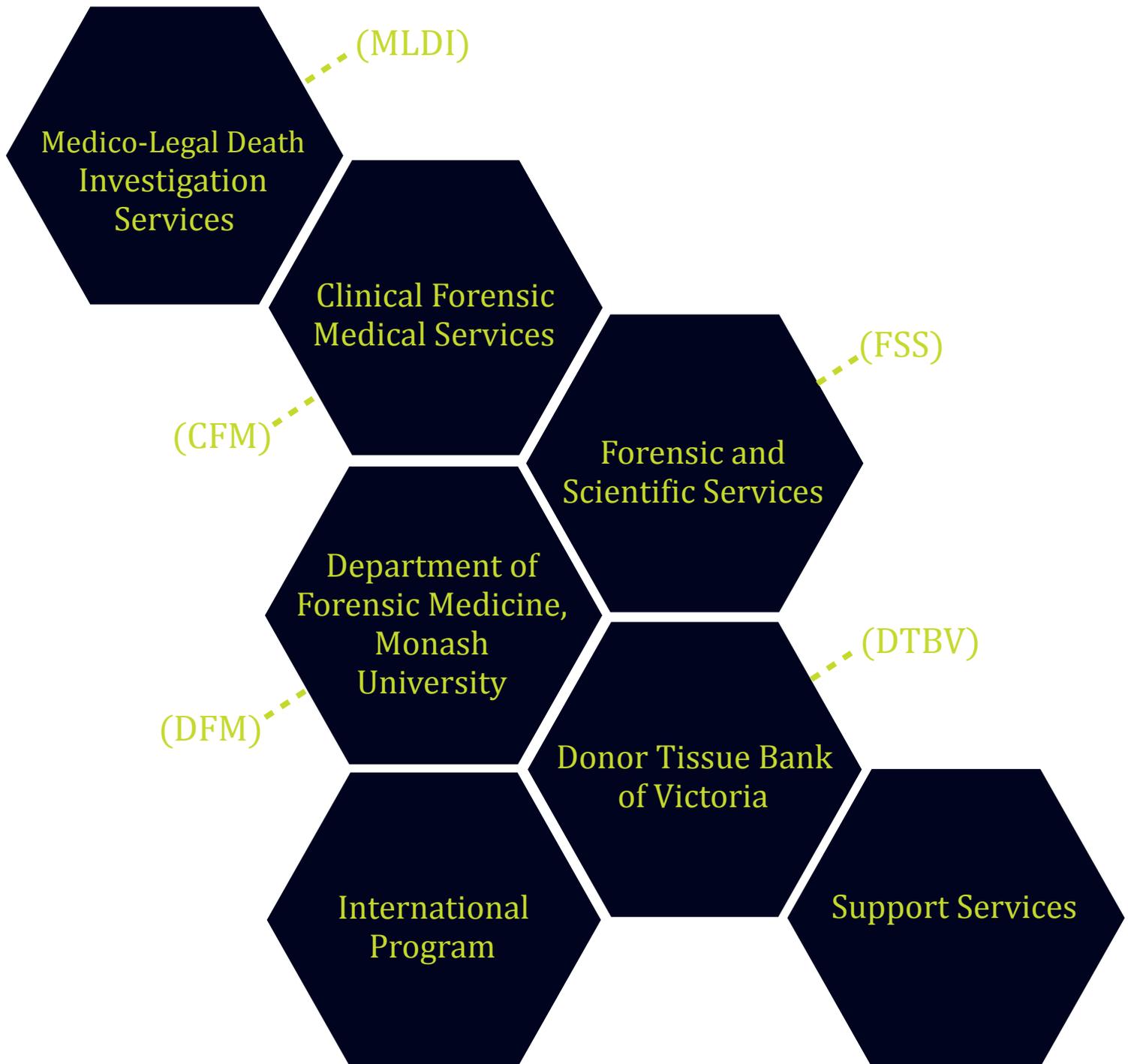
Rationale: Wide awareness of resource management ensures that VIFM will focus on meeting its financial targets.

## 17. Develop an organisation-wide focus on VIFM's statutory compliance obligations.

Rationale: VIFM is obligated to meet Government's requirements of public sector agencies.

# Our Services

Our statutory responsibility is the provision of independent, expert and credible forensic medical services to the justice system, human tissue for transplantation, teaching and research. The VIFM delivers the following mainstream services on a daily basis:





## (CFM)

### Clinical Forensic Medical Services

CFM provides independent clinical forensic medical services to Victorians when, for a range of reasons, they come into contact with police and the justice system.

## (MLDI)

### Medico-Legal Death Investigation Services

MLDI Services provides independent forensic pathology and related services, including mortuary services, to Coroners Court of Victoria (CCOV), the Justice system and to the people of Victoria.



## (FSS)

### Forensic and Scientific Services

FSS provides laboratory-based services and opinions to assist medico-legal death investigations, and investigations into assaults and traffic offenses in Victoria and beyond.



# (DFM)

## Department of Forensic Medicine, Monash University

The DFM is the means by which all parts of the Institute acquit their research and teaching obligations to underpin our service and strengthen the evidence base of our disciplines.



## International Program

VIFM's International Program aims to improve forensic medicine capacity internationally through the delivery of training, consultancies and services (including emergency response), especially in resource poor nations.



MONASH  
University

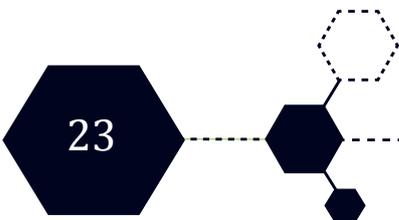
# (DTBV)

## Donor Tissue Bank of Victoria

The DTBV provides safe and high quality human tissue needed for transplantation. It facilitates tissue donation for therapeutic use and supports ethical research programs. DTBV provides a microbiology/serology service in support of the Institute's MLDI.

## Support Services

Support Services provides corporate services to VIFM in the fields of: Finance and Business Services; Legal Services; Technology Services; Quality and Improvement; Human Resources and Organisational Development; Governance, Strategic Projects and Risk Management; Building and Facilities Redevelopment.







## Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine

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