

## **VICTORIAN HEALTH LIBRARIES CONSORTIUM – THE EVOLUTION CONTINUES**

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The Victorian Health Libraries Consortium (VHLC) was formed in 2004 by Stephen Due (former Chief Librarian, Barwon Health Library Service, now retired) and others, after continuation of the Clinicians Health Channel (CHC) – an online health information portal provided to public sector health professionals by the Victorian Department of Health – was threatened. The Clinicians Health Channel survived, and the VHLC thrived, offering package deals to Victorian health libraries for online journals and databases not covered by the CHC.

The Consortium Management Group (CMG), made up of volunteering librarians, put in place a range of deals that offered cheaper prices to health libraries. From the beginning, there were many options for content and terms and conditions for deals – these continue to evolve, keeping the CMG on its toes.

VHLC works with an agent for some of the deals, and for others, the consortium negotiates directly with the publisher. Some of these deals are packages already on offer from a publisher, where a discount is applied for multiple-library purchase. Some have content customised to the needs of the participating libraries. VHLC deals for database access often involve sharing simultaneous user allocations across the group. Some deals have had up to 21 participating libraries; some as few as two in the 'consortium'.

In the early years of the VHLC, multi-year deals were common as this provided certainty for libraries and publishers. In recent years, the CMG has found that the uncertainty of library budgets often doesn't allow libraries to commit beyond one year.

In 2011, the VHLC offered its first e-book deal with Oxford handbooks, and the number of e-books in the packages offered has grown substantially with packages from Springer and Elsevier now available.

For 2015, the VHLC has 14 deals on offer for health libraries to choose from and 29 libraries already participate in one or more of these deals. No doubt by 2016 some changes will be made to the lists – and also as we continue to evolve. For more details on deals available, visit the [HLI website](#).

The CMG is keen to work with publishers and health libraries around Victoria to develop new offers that libraries will find attractive and affordable. Please contact a CMG member with your suggestions.