

31 March 2021

## Member briefing – National Preventive Health Strategy 2030

On 5 March 2021, the Commonwealth Government announced the launch of a [consultation](#) on its draft [National Preventive Health Strategy](#) which seeks to guide and improve Australia's preventative health system and its resources and capabilities over the next 10 years.

### Background

In June 2019, the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, announced that the Commonwealth Government would develop a 10-year National Preventive Health Strategy, with the consultation process extended to 2021 in April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The development of the strategy has been informed by an Expert Steering Committee and responses to an August 2020 consultation paper.

Along with mental health, preventive health is the third pillar of *Australia's Long Term National Health Plan*, which was released in August 2019 and referenced the creation of National Preventive Health Strategy.

### Proposed strategy

The consultation requests feedback on whether the vision, policy aims, enablers and the focus areas, with the associated targets and aims, of the strategy are will achieve their aims.

The strategy aims to create a stronger and more effective prevention system and recognises that a whole-of-government response is required, involving all sectors and industries which impact on health and wellbeing and the full spectrum of prevention. The strategy also recognises the impact of social, environmental and economic determinants of health, that health inequities are experienced by certain groups in society, and that structural barriers exist that inhibit access to health care and support. The strategy aims to improve the start, length and quality of a person's life, with health equity and increased investment in prevention.

The strategy includes a responsive framework designed to be adapted over the 10 years, with three interlinked elements:

*Mobilising a prevention system* - The strategy identifies seven enablers to mobilise a prevention system and highlights their key proposals and 2030 policy aims. These are:

- Leadership, governance and funding
  - The strategy aims to establish an independent governance mechanism, increase and ring-fence prevention funding, and ensure a health lens is applied to all policy.
- Prevention in the health system
  - This is a major focus of the strategy, including increased investment in system infrastructure, better utilisation and 'future-proofing' of the health workforce, embedding social prescribing and establishing regional prevention networks.
- Partnerships and community engagement
  - This includes ensuring that innovative partnerships are established between and within sectors that influence health, creating a national consumer engagement strategy and supporting local community approaches to prevention.
- Information and health literacy
  - There is a focus on increasing health literacy, as well as using the health workforce to support this. Another key aim is a national platform that provides or identifies credible, evidence-based health information.

- Research and evaluation
  - The strategy aims to encourage research partnerships and collaboration with all stakeholders. A key policy aim is creating national guidelines for including evaluation as part of preventive health policy and program development and implementation.
- Monitoring and surveillance
  - The strategy aims to improve data collection, monitoring and use, including developing a set of nationally agreed prevention monitoring indicators and a national prevention monitoring and reporting framework.
- Preparedness
  - This includes a focus on preparing for threats including climate change and future pandemics, to create a prepared and responsive system and workforce.

Of the policy aims in the strategy, 8 are immediate priorities, including: increased prevention investment; a national health information platform; embedding prevention in primary healthcare; a national consumer engagement strategy; and enhanced public health workforce planning.

*Boosting action in focus areas* - The strategy identifies 7 focus areas that will be the priority for prevention action in the first years of the strategy, with their own 2030 policy aims and targets. These focus areas are:

- Reducing tobacco use
- Improving access to and the consumption of a healthy diet
- Increasing physical activity
- Increasing cancer screening and prevention
- Improving immunisation coverage
- Reducing alcohol and other drug harm
- Protecting mental health

*Continuing Strong Foundations* - The strategy recognises the many existing, effective and well-designed prevention-based programs and strategies developed by government, non-government organisations and communities, that require ongoing support and will provide learnings. However, it is acknowledged that these ongoing prevention programs will need to be adjusted in the future as learnings are identified during the rollout of the National Preventive Health Strategy. The Strategy is also meant to be responsive and makes allowances for adjustments over its duration, with additional focus areas able to be created to respond to emerging health issues.

### Next steps

The consultation closes on 19 April 2021. The VHA is in the process of developing a submission for the consultation and invites members to contribute and share any insights they have. It is anticipated that the final Strategy will be launched in mid-2021 and the VHA will continue to monitor its development and implementation.



#### For further information contact

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