

27 October 2017

Sustainable Health Review Secretariat
189 Royal Street
EAST PERTH WA 6004

To whom it may concern,

Re: Australian Health Promotion Association (WA Branch) Submission on Western Australia's Sustainable Health Review

The Australian Health Promotion Association (AHPA®) is the peak body for health promotion in Australia. It is the only dedicated professional association in Australia for people interested or involved in the practice, research and study of health promotion.

AHPA supports members and subscribers from government departments and agencies, universities, non-government organisations, community-based organisations and groups, private companies and industries. Membership of AHPA is diverse, and includes designated health promotion practitioners, researchers and students, as well as others involved in promoting physical, mental, social, cultural and environmental health, whose primary profession or area of study may be something different, but whose responsibilities include health promotion and promoting health more broadly. The Association is governed by a Board of Directors at a national level with operational branches in most states and territories across Australia.

AHPA provides a forum for the exchange of ideas, knowledge, information and advocacy for population health and health promotion. One of AHPA's main priorities is to contribute to discussion, debate and decision-making on health promotion policy, practice and research and advocate for evidence-informed approaches. The vision of the AHPA (WA Branch) is to improve the health status of Western Australians by building the leadership capacity of our members and making health promotion a priority.

The AHPA (WA Branch) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the Sustainable Health Review to help the government determine what is needed to develop a more sustainable, patient centred health system in Western Australia.

Please see below the AHPA (WA Branch)'s response to the Sustainable Health Review. We look forward to working with the government to improve the health of all Western Australians. If there is any way the AHPA (WA Branch) can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact us on adminwa@healthpromotion.org.au.

Yours faithfully,



Courtney Mickan
Co-President
AHPA (WA Branch)



Lorena Chapman
Co-President
AHPA (WA Branch)

Recommendation 1: Sustained and increased investment in health promotion and preventive health initiatives

Health promotion is about giving people power over conditions which can influence health. It goes beyond a focus on just the individual but also recognises the impact which physical, socio-economic and cultural aspects of the environment can have on population and individual health¹.

The AHPA (WA Branch) supports continued investment in long term funding of health promotion and prevention initiatives to create positive health outcomes for all Western Australians. Strong investment in health promotion and preventive health initiatives not only saves lives but also dollars. Every \$1 invested in prevention can save over \$5 in health spending (see Appendix A).

A recent report prepared by La Trobe University found that Australia currently spends about \$2 billion on prevention each year or \$89 per person. This equates to 1.34% of all health spending which is considerably less than countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom and New Zealand².

While some strides are being made in health promotion and preventive health in Western Australia the AHPA (WA Branch) is disappointed that this year's budget estimate saw the public and community health budget allocation dropped 11%, from \$1,167,524 in 2015-16 to \$1,038,497 in 2017-18. We are concerned that health promotion and preventive health has been put on the back burner and that there is a lack of foresight in recognising that these initiatives are vital to stabilise increasing health costs in Western Australia.

Investment in health and prevention initiatives not only reduces costs overall because of the reduced need to treat expensive diseases, it also allows Western Australians to live longer and better quality lives at a reasonable cost to the health system.

With strong evidence showing the cost-effectiveness of health promotion and preventive health initiatives it is vital that the Western Australian government consider ways to sustain and increase investment in health promotion and prevention as part of the Sustainable Health Review.

There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Leveraging existing investment and directing funding into the prevention programs already occurring is recommended. More funding toward evaluating these programs is vital and a range of evaluation methods must be considered. Research and evaluation must be a priority for that is how we are able to better inform practice.

¹ World Health Organization, 1986, The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, <http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/>

² Jackson H SA, Preventive health- How much does Australia spend and is it enough, Canberra: Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, 2017, http://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Preventive-health-How-much-does-Australia-spend-and-is-it-enough_FINAL.pdf

Recommendation 2: Incorporate approaches to address the social determinants of health

The social determinants of health, which are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, can have a positive or negative impact on a person's health. The social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities - the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries³. Research suggests that when societies are more equal they are also healthier⁴.

The AHPA (WA Branch) believes there are many limitations to focusing only on behavioural approaches to health promotion. It is not enough to just encourage individuals to change their attitudes and lifestyles, when, in fact, the environment in which they live and work gives them little choice or support to make such changes. We must address those aspects of the environment which promote ill health, rather than simply deal with illness after it appears.

There is scope to improve social determinants within government initiatives, as outlined below:

- Ensuring equitable access to health services, population health and community programs in tandem with improving communication between government and non-government organisations has the potential to improve the awareness of the social determinants of health and improve delivery of health services.
- Acknowledging the differing social complexities within communities and allowing flexibility of funding and resource distribution within government programs will also allow appropriate responses to community needs and the implementation of an approach that supports local level ownership of these programs.
- A number of policies and strategies to promote health and prevent illness are the responsibility of sectors other than health. Working in partnership with these sectors using a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach can have win-win outcomes for health and other sectors. See Recommendation 4 for more information.

Recommendation 3: Sustainability of a skilled health promotion workforce

To effectively address the social determinants of health it is imperative to have a knowledgeable and skilled workforce. At the Labor Party's National Health Policy Summit in 2017, workforce was identified as a critical enabler of an effective health system⁵, and as stated by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) "*a fundamental aim of any health system is to prevent disease so that people remain as healthy as possible for as long as possible*"⁶. This reinforces the critical role that the health promotion workforce of Western Australia has in being part of the solution to improve the health outcomes of all Western Australians. The recent Virtual Issue of the Health Promotion Journal of Australia, 'Health Promotion Workforce' provides further evidence to

³ World Health Organization, 2013, Social determinants of health, http://www.who.int/social_determinants/sdh_definition/en/index.html.

⁴ Wilkinson, R and Pickett K, 2010, The spirit level: why more equal societies almost always do better. London: Penguin Books, cited in Baum, F, 2013, Comprehensive primary health care and social determinants as top priorities, *Medical Journal of Australia*, 199 (4) 233.

⁵ Smith, JA and Herriot M, 2017, Positioning health promotion as a policy priority in Australia, *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, 28 (5-7).

⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2016. Australia's health 2016. Australia's health series no. 15. Cat. no. AUS 199. Canberra: AIHW.

support this statement⁷. Health promotion practitioners possess transferable skills that are well suited to addressing a number of the determinants of health, tackling health inequalities and whole-of-government challenges in providing an equitable, sustainable and economically efficient system makes an investment in the health promotion workforce a smart investment⁵.

Recommendation 4: Strong focus on collaborations and partnerships that includes a Health in All Policies approach

To create a sustainable, patient centred health system in Western Australia that is focused on improving health outcomes for all Western Australians there needs to be strong partnerships across, not just the health sector, but all government sectors at a state and local government level, as well as non-government organisations across health and community services, Aboriginal controlled organisations, community-based groups, and more.

Health in All Policies (HiAP) provides a strategic mechanism to achieve health and wellbeing outcomes as well as the outcomes of other sectors such as housing, transport and economic development. It is based on the understanding that health outcomes are influenced by a wide range of social, cultural, political, educational, economic and environmental determinants (collectively the social determinants of health) and improving health outcomes requires these determinants to be addressed. The health sector cannot carry this responsibility alone. By using the HiAP approach to work collaboratively across the whole-of government with sectors that have the policy levers and programs to address these determinants, there is an opportunity to both achieve population health and wellbeing outcomes and also achieve targets of importance to other sectors.

HiAP should be a key outcome for the Western Australian government, with inter-sectoral action needed to address the social determinants of health and reduce health inequities.

South Australia provides an example of HiAP in practice. Their approach involves two key elements:

1. Governance with a central government mandate to work across the whole-of-government on identified policy priorities, with joint leadership from the Departments of Health and Premier and Cabinet.
2. Implementation of Health Lens analysis, which is a methodology that uses robust assessment methods and analysis to clarify the links between the policy area and the health and wellbeing of the population.

A small HiAP unit provides content and process expertise, technical support and active facilitation of the process. More information is available at:

<http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+reform/health+in+all+policies>

⁷ Health Promotion Journal of Australia, 2017, Virtual Issue – Health Promotion Workforce, <http://www.publish.csiro.au/he/content/virtualissues?id=2042>

Conclusion

The AHPA (WA Branch) has a diverse range of members and is able to play a vital role in helping the Western Australian government work towards creating a sustainable, patient centred health system through:

- Sustained and increased investment in health promotion and preventive health initiatives.
- Incorporate approaches to address the social determinants of health.
- Sustainability of a skilled health promotion workforce.
- Strong focus on collaborations and partnerships that includes a Health in All Policies approach.

A greater focus on achieving better health promotion and prevention outcomes will not only benefit Western Australia economically but will enable higher levels of community engagement, multi-level interventions and strong partnerships. Importantly, this will benefit populations susceptible to poor health outcomes in Western Australia.



Our Government must increase investment in Health Promotion

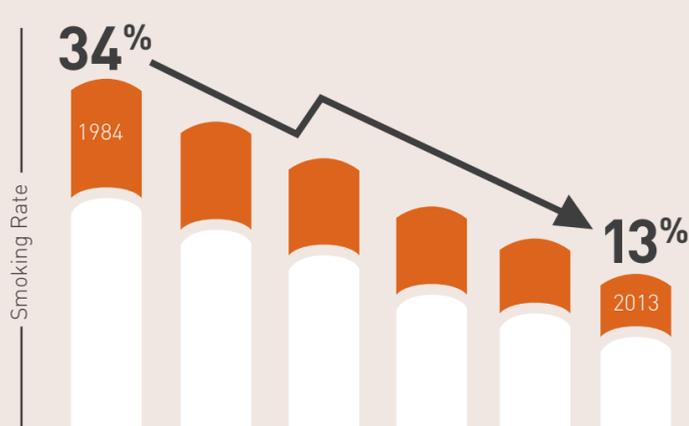
because

TREATMENT COSTS | HEALTH PROMOTION SAVES

The evidence is compelling:

Health Promotion works before people get sick and need medical care.

SMOKING



This downward trend will continue with health promotion strategies like Quitline, plain cigarette packaging and smoke-free public places.

Every 4% reduction in tobacco smoking

SAVES 3000 LIVES

in Australia per year.

OBESITY



SCHOOLS

Every dollar invested in pre-schools saves as much as \$13 in future costs.



\$13 SAVING

WORKPLACES

Our economy benefits by more than \$14 every time a person cycles to work.



\$14 BENEFIT

COMMUNITIES

People living in walkable neighbourhoods are on average 3kg lighter than those in non-walkable neighbourhoods.



3KG LIGHTER

Health Promotion increases physical activity & healthy eating within schools, workplaces & communities.

ALCOHOL MISUSE

ALCOHOL MISUSE COSTS \$36 BILLION every year in Australia.

Health Promotion can help **prevent**

157,000 HOSPITALISATIONS every year due to alcohol misuse.



Health Promotion works to reduce the supply of alcohol to minors, restricts alcohol advertising and reduces binge drinking.

Health Promotion benefits those most in need.

HEALTH EQUALITY

Reducing disadvantage & promoting mental health can:

Create **170000 JOBS** and generate **\$8 BILLION** in earnings.



Health Promotion can keep **HALF A MILLION** Australians out of hospital every year by **PREVENTING CHRONIC DISEASES** like diabetes, cancers, stroke and depression.

Health Promotion is our 'front-line' in health services.

HEALTH PROMOTION



Every \$1 invested in Health Promotion can save over \$5 in health spending.

Yet, for every **\$100** HEALTH SPENDING HEALTH PROMOTION RECEIVES **JUST 40c**

We call on political parties to commit at least 6%* of health budget to Health Promotion.

Find out where our parties stand: votecompass.abc.net.au



*In-line with other OECD countries such as New Zealand, Canada and Finland.

SOURCES

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