

COMMUNIQUE

NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH STRATEGY: EXPERT STEERING COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE 26 SEPT 2019

The Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, has committed to the development of a National Preventive Health Strategy (the Strategy). Individuals with relevant expertise have been appointed to an Expert Steering Committee (the Committee) which will provide advice on the development of the Strategy.

The Committee is chaired by Dr Lisa Studdert, Deputy Secretary, Department of Health, and includes experts across the public health, research, health promotion, medical, allied health and nursing fields.

The first meeting of the Committee was held at the Roundtable on the 26 September 2019 in Melbourne, attended by the Minister for Health. The Minister's objective is that the Strategy contributes to people living well for longer. He thanked members of the Committee, called for frank and fearless advice and stressed the key role that consultations will play in the development of the Strategy.

ROUNDTABLE CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee considered the vision for the Strategy, the priorities and the linkages to other strategies under development, including in primary care, mental health and suicide prevention and health workforce. The Strategy will include, but not be limited to, components on: immunisation; cancer screening; obesity; smoking; public education (health literacy) and research.

It is intended that the Strategy provide a long-term vision for improving the health of all Australians and that it stimulates a systemic shift to achieve a better balance between treatment and prevention. It will be a national strategy that includes primary and secondary prevention and it will not have a disease-specific approach. The Strategy will be underpinned by the strongest research available.

The Strategy is envisaged as a 'capstone' strategy, building on the related plans and strategies that have either recently been or are being developed, including the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023. The Strategy will complement existing and ongoing work to maximise the potential for a coordinated and sustained effort in prevention.

Some of the themes emerging from the discussion were:

- the approach to consultation on the strategy, noting the widespread interest;
- the role of emerging issues and major change (e.g. digitalisation) on individual health and the health system;
- the shared risk factors which contribute to the burden of disease;
- the upstream determinants of health, including social determinants;
- the mechanisms to support an increased and enduring effort in prevention; and
- the range of possible approaches to framing a prevention strategy including life course and place-based perspectives.

NEXT STEPS

The following next steps were agreed:

- Topic-specific consultations will be held during October and early November; at least one member of the Committee will participate in each workshop. The workshops will provide an opportunity to share ideas and to update participants on the work that is currently underway.
- The Committee will meet again in mid-November to consider the outcomes of the consultations.
- There will be a public consultation on the draft Strategy in the first half of 2020.