

COMMUNIQUE

NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH STRATEGY TOBACCO WORKSHOP: 8 NOVEMBER 2019

The Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, has committed to the development of a National Preventive Health Strategy (the Strategy). 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.

An Expert Steering Committee has been appointed to provide advice on the development of the Strategy, with the first meeting held on 26 September 2019. Broad consultation is integral to the development of the Strategy and the views of public health groups, key stakeholders and consumers will be represented in the Strategy.

A series of consultations are being held in October and early November. A tobacco control consultation was held on the 8 November 2019 in Melbourne. Participants included representatives from research organisations, consumer groups, government departments, not-for-profit organisations, Primary Health Networks, and other experts in prevention.

CONSULTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Consultation participants considered the vision and scope for the Strategy, as well as topics specific to tobacco control.

Some of the themes emerging from the discussion were:

- The Strategy needs to be people centred, bold and implementation focussed.
- There must be a sustained investment to realise gains
- Recognising and addressing inequity requires explicit commitments
- The need to harness the “multiplier effect” of government working with NGOs and community groups (civic society)
- While there have been great gains in tobacco control; this work is not complete.
- Critical to success is political commitment and cross-government action including fiscal measures and environmental/product regulation, alongside public education and social influencing
- Potential next steps in tobacco control include continued public education, regulation of product and retail sales, responsiveness to the evolution of the market (specifically the use of e-cigarettes), and continued attention to product constituents.
- There must be vigilance in interactions with industry; and the need for continuing vigilance even after good progress has been made.

NEXT STEPS

The following next steps will be undertaken:

- The Expert Steering Committee will meet again in late November to consider the outcomes of the consultations.
- There will be a public consultation on the draft Strategy in the first half of 2020.