

**PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**13 February 2008**

***“Public health scorecard needed more than ever”  
AIHW report an embarrassment***

“The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report on public health expenditure by all Australian jurisdictions should make the community stop and think,” according to Chief Executive Officer of the Public Health Association, Michael Moore. “There has been so much emphasis on hospitals and waiting lists that many governments have lost sight of the economic and social benefits of prevention,” he added.

“It is an embarrassment to governments across Australia that for the last seven years the expenditure on public health has stagnated at below 2% of all health spending. Through such things as sanitation, clean water, nutrition, cessation of smoking and immunization the public health approach has been responsible for more lives saved than all the operations completed in hospitals. Effective investment in public health just makes good sense”.

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHA) announced last month its intention to scrutinize governments across Australia for their performance in public health. In his first announcement as Chief Executive Officer of the PHA, Michael Moore said that the time had come for governments to take a long term approach to health and move beyond the debate on public hospital waiting lists. With an ageing population the information contained in this report makes the scorecard even more important than ever before.

Michael Moore, a former ACT Health Minister and Adjunct Professor of Health Policy and Governance at the University of Canberra says that the PHA is determined to hold governments accountable on public health. “The PHA has announced that it will establish a set of criteria that identifies best practice public health policy development and implementation. We will then make an assessment against governments’ own reporting in Health Departments’ Annual Reports to identify how they rate in Public Health,” he said.

“Of particular interest to the PHA is how governments are performing in such areas as reducing inequality in health, achievements in health promotion and disease control, Indigenous health, environmental health, child health, obesity, mental health and misuse of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, injury prevention, oral health and prisoner health. There is so much that can be done if our communities are to become healthier – the question is to what extent are governments prepared to invest in prevention and healthier communities rather than relying on band-aids and operations once the damage has been done!!”

“The stagnation of expenditure that is reflected in this report is a challenge for all governments but particularly for the incoming Federal Government. Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon now has the opportunity to demonstrate her credentials as a minister with vision and foresight by recognising and funding public health through key prevention measures.”

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*The Public Health Association of Australia is a non-party-political organisation with a membership drawn from more than 40 health-related professions. The Association makes a major contribution to health policy in Australia and has branches in every State and Territory.* [www.phaa.net.au](http://www.phaa.net.au)

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