

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

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***New CEO announces
'PHA will rate governments on public health performance'***

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHA) announced today that it will 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.

Michael Moore, a former ACT Health Minister and Adjunct Professor of Health Policy and Governance at the University of Canberra, who took up his new appointment this week, revealed how the PHA would hold governments accountable on public health.

"The PHA will establish a set of criteria that identifies best practice public health policy development and implementation. We will then make an assessment against their own reporting in Health Departments' Annual Reports to identify how they rate in Public Health," he said.

"Once the criteria have been established it will be possible to make an appraisal against these measures, with input from key local informants. Our assessments will then rate the performance of governments across the country and help them to establish a public health quality baseline."

"We know that there are is much excellent and innovative work being done, but it is vital that this be scrutinized and that communities are informed about their governments' performance in the vital area of prevention.

"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!!"

He concluded, "Through such things as sanitation, clean water 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".

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Photo attached

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

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