

CAPHIA

*Council of Academic Public
Health Institutes of Australia*



Prime Minister: Hon Julia Gillard MP
Treasurer: Hon Wayne Swan MP
Minister for Education: Senator, Hon Chris Evans
Minister for Health: Hon Nicola Roxon MP

6 April 2010

Over 100 professors express concern over possible cuts to the NHMRC

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers,

We write to you to express concern about the possibility of financial cuts to the research funding through the NHMRC – particularly at a time of unprecedented reform including in the primary health care and preventive sector.

A previous Federal budget saw the abolishment of the Public Health Research Program (PHERP) with a major impact on a range of public health programs and of particular concern, the loss of the Applied Masters of Epidemiology Course conducted by the Australian National University. However, every University with a Master of Public Health program has been impacted by the loss of PHERP funding which in turn affects capacity building in the public health workforce.

Now, proposed cuts to the NHMRC research funds will have further impact on public health research. Public health research has struggled to gain funding within NHMRC to a level anywhere near commensurate with its potential policy relevance and population impact and remains especially vulnerable to disproportionate reductions if budget cuts are instituted. Additionally, public health research tends to produce long term rather than short term outcomes and is therefore more vulnerable to cutbacks than other forms of research. However, it is also true that many of the great advances in improved health outcomes have come through public health. If we are to improve population health and address health inequities, we must invest in public health research to inform programs and policy.

Public health successes in environmental health (eg sanitation, clean water, and food safety), communicable diseases control (eg vaccinations, surveillance systems), injury prevention (eg road toll, workplace safety) and health advancement (eg tobacco control and fluoridation) account for much of the improvements in health and life expectancy over the last 50 years. While more research is still being conducted on these issues public health is also involved in improving nutrition and physical fitness to deal with the obesity epidemic, alcohol, illicit drugs and gambling policy to

reduce harm associated with these activities. These are complex issues in which evidence gaps exist and further research is required to effectively support programs.

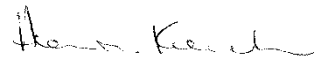
Pleasingly, the government has provided a commitment to support recommendations of the *National Preventive Health Strategy*, with an \$800 million package. It would be counter-productive to reduce the funding of research which will support the implementation of the most effective strategies to improve the health of the nation. To make the most of this funding, it is crucial that we implement robust, well researched public health programs.

Public health research informs the development of programs and policies and evaluates their effectiveness in specific settings such as work place, schools, homes and communities and in the population as a whole. It investigates the social and environmental determinants of health to establish optimal targeting of programs ensuring the best outcomes for the most efficient expenditure. We know that prevention is better than cure, prevention reduces the burden of illness and disability in our society and undertaking research into prevention of ill health and promoting good health is a cost effective intervention which saves lives. Other examples of public health research include research to support vulnerable sub-populations, oral and mental health, the health of children and our international health obligations.

We urge you to reconsider any possible cuts to the NHMRC budget that will surely impact heavily on public health research.



Professor Catherine Bennett
Chair
CAPHIA



Professor Helen Keleher
President
PHAA

This letter is supported by the professors of public health listed below

PHAA/CAPHIA - Professors of Public Health to support NHMRC Research Funding

	Title	Name	Academic Institution
1	Professor	Catherine Bennett	Deakin, Victoria
2	Professor	Helen Keleher	Monash, Victoria
3	Professor	Gregory Kolt	Uni of Western Sydney
4	Professor	John MacDonald	Uni of Western Sydney
5	Professor	Boyd Swinburn	Deakin, Victoria
6	Professor	Kylie Ball	Deakin, Victoria
7	Professor	Mike Daube	Curtin, WA
8	A/Professor	Marjorie Moodie	Deakin, Victoria
9	Professor	Jo Salmon	Deakin, Victoria
10	Professor	Richard Osborne	Deakin, Victoria
11	Professor	David Crawford	Deakin, Victoria

12	Professor	John Catford	Deakin, Victoria
13	Professor	Rob Carter	Deakin, Victoria
14	Professor	Rachel Davey	Uni of Canberra ACT
15	Adj Professor	Michael Moore	Uni of Canberra ACT
16	A/Professor	Vicki Flood	Uni of Wollongong NSW
17	Professor	Sue Fyfe	Curtin WA
18	Professor	Donald Stewart	Griffith, Qld
19	Professor	Roger Hughes	Griffith, Qld
20	Professor	Jeff Dunn	Griffith, Qld
21	Professor	Nicholas Buys	Griffith, Qld
22	Professor	Allen Ross	Griffith, Qld
23	Professor	Suzanne Chambers	Griffith, Qld
24	Professor	Paul Scuffham	Griffith, Qld
25	Professor	Cordia Chu	Griffith, Qld
26	Professor	Andrew Tonkin	Monash, Victoria
27	Professor	Grant Russell	Monash, Victoria
28	A/Professor	Alex Collie	Monash, Victoria
29	Professor	John Lowe	Uni of Sunshine Coast
30	Professor	Danielle Mazza	Monash, Victoria
31	Professor	Sandra Leggat	La Trobe, Victoria
32	Professor	Vivian Lin	La Trobe, Victoria
33	Professor	Rhonda Nay	La Trobe, Victoria
34	Professor	Annette Street	La Trobe, Victoria
35	Professor	Yvonne Wells	La Trobe, Victoria
36	Professor	Janet Hiller	Australian Catholic Uni
37	Professor	John Lynch	University of Adelaide
38	Professor	John Karnon	University of Adelaide
39	Professor	John Moss	University of Adelaide
40	A/Professor	Peng Bi	University of Adelaide
41	Professor	Annette Braunack-Meyer	University of Adelaide
42	A/Professor	Dino Pisaniello	University of Adelaide
43	A/Professor	Scott Cameron	University of Adelaide
44	Professor	Linda Worrall-Carter	Australian Catholic Uni
45	Professor	Sally Borbasi	Australian Catholic Uni
46	Professor	Paul Ward	Flinders University
47	Professor	Fran Baum	Flinders University
48	Professor	Judith Dwyer	Flinders University
49	Professor	Peter Sainsbury	University of Sydney
50	Professor	Ann Roche	Flinders University
51	Professor	Jane Farmer	La Trobe University
52	Professor	Pranee Liamputtong	La Trobe University
53	Professor	Rhonda Small	La Trobe University
54	A/Professor	Bob Boughton	University of New England
55	A/Professor	Rafat Hussain	University of New England
56	Professor	Anthony Zwi	University of NSW
57	Professor	Raina MacIntyre	University of NSW
58	Professor	Mary Louise Mclaws	University of NSW

59	Professor	Robyn Richmond	University of NSW
60	Professor	Alexandra Barratt	University of Sydney
61	Professor	Peter Leggat	James Cook University
62	A/Professor	Ann Koehler	University of Adelaide
63	Professor	John Mackenzie	Curtin University WA
64	Distinguished Prof	Michael Alpen	Curtin University WA
65	Clinical Professor	David Smith	University of WA
66	Professor	Robert Booy	University of Sydney
67	Professor	Peter McIntyre	University of Sydney
68	A/Professor	Stephen Lambert	University of Queensland
69	A/Professor	Deborah Lehmann	University of WA
70	A/Professor	Glenda Lawrence	University of NSW
71	Adj Professor	Philip Baker	Qld Uni of Technology
72	Professor	Adrian Miller	Southern Cross University
73	Professor	Sherry Siggers	Curtin University WA
74	Professor	Bart Currie	Charles Darwin Uni NT
75	Professor	John McBride	James Cook University Qld
76	A/Professor	Michael Baker	University of Otago NZ
77	Professor	Patrick Crookes	University of Wollongong
78	A/Professor	Heather Yeatman	University of Wollongong
79	A/Professor	Karen Charlton	University of Wollongong
80	Professor	Tony Worsley	Deakin University Vic
81	Professor	Colin Binns	Curtin University WA
82	A/Professor	Deborah Kerr	Curtin University WA
83	A/Professor	Bernie Marshall	Deakin University Vic
84	A/Professor	Richard Franklin	James Cook Uni, Qld
85	Professor	Lisa Jackson Pulver	University of NSW
86	Professor	Steve Allsop	Curtin University WA
87	A/Professor	Tanya Chikritzhs	Curtin University WA
89	Professor	Ann Taket	Deakin University
90	Professor	Mardie Townsend	Deakin University
91	Professor	Sandy Middleton	Australian Catholic Uni
92	Professor	Geraldine Naughton	Australian Catholic Uni
93	Professor	David Thompson	Australian Catholic Uni
94	Professor	Peter Howat	Curtin University WA
95	Professor	Bruce Maycock	Curtin Uni of Technology
96	Professor	Simon Lenton	Curtin University WA
97	Professor	Jane Freemantle	Uni of Melbourne
98	Professor	Nick Crofts	Uni of Melbourne
99	Professor	David Dunt	Uni of Melbourne
100	Professor	Dallas English	Uni of Melbourne
101	Professor	Christopher Fairley	Uni of Melbourne
102	Professor	Anne Kavanagh	Uni of Melbourne
103	Professor	Janet McCalman	Uni of Melbourne
104	Professor	Jane Pirkis	Uni of Melbourne
105	Professor	Robin Room	Uni of Melbourne
106	Professor	Elizabeth Waters	Uni of Melbourne

107	Professor	Hugh Taylor	Uni of Melbourne
108	Professor	David Studdert	Uni of Melbourne
109	Professor	John Carlin	Uni of Melbourne
110	Professor	Tony Scott	Uni of Melbourne
111	Professor	Doreen Rosenthal	Uni of Melbourne
112	Professor	Jane Fisher	Uni of Melbourne
113	Professor	Ron Borland	Uni of Melbourne
114	Professor	Margaret Hamilton	Uni of Melbourne
115	Professor	David Hill	Uni of Melbourne
116	Professor	John Wiseman	Uni of Melbourne
117	Professor	Terry Nolan	Uni of Melbourne
118	Professor	Robin Daly	Deakin University Vic
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124	Professor	Jeff Sprickett	Curtin University WA
125	Professor	Vijay Jayasena	Curtin University WA
126	Professor	John Mamo	Curtin University WA
127	Professor	Andy Lee	Curtin University WA
128	A/Professor	Jill Sherriff	Curtin University WA
129	A/Professor	Vicky Solah	Curtin University WA
130	A/Professor	Hannah Williams	Curtin University WA
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132	A/Professor	Satvinder Dhaliwal	Curtin University WA
133	A/Professor	Rosemary Coates	Curtin University WA
134	Professor	Lisa Maher	University of NSW
135	Professor	Dennis Gray	Curtin University WA
136	Professor	C D'Arcy J Holman	Curtin University WA
137	Professor	Matthew Knuiman	Curtin University WA
138	Professor	Leanne Monterosso	Notre Dame WA
139	Professor	Helen Parker	Notre Dame WA
140	A/Professor	Amanda Devine	Edith Cowan WA
141	A/Professor	Vicky Solan	Curtin University WA
142	Professor	John Coveney	Flinders University SA
143	A/Professor	David Preen	Curtin University WA
144	A/Professor	Tom Briffa	University of WA
145	Professor	Jon Adams	University of Technology NSW
145	A/Professor	David Sibbritt	University of Technology NSW
146	A/Professor	Jane Heyworth	University of WA
147	Professor	Elizabeth Geelhoed	University of WA
148	A/Professor	John Hall	University of Newcastle
149	Professor	Julie Byles	University of Newcastle
150	Professor	John Attia	University of Newcastle
151	A/Professor	Colin MacDougall	Flinders University SA