

MEDIA RELEASE

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PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION WELCOMES LANDMARK PREVENTIVE PLATFORM

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) today welcomed the Australian Labor's new platform on "Preventive health care for our families and the economy" as an important step to putting prevention on the health agenda.

"Labor's recognition of the importance of prevention is a landmark policy change. If we are to help all Australians to a healthier future this approach will need bipartisan support at all levels of government," said Dr Jane Freemantle, Vice President (Policy) PHAA.

Professor Mike Daube, Vice President (Development) said, "At last we have a major party making a commitment to treat prevention as a priority, not as a poor relation. We know so much about how to prevent so many of our major health problems, yet only 1.7% of national health expenditure goes to prevention. Mr Rudd's commitment "to place prevention at the centre, and not at the margins of our health policies " is especially welcome.

"The paper rightly focuses on the responsibilities of both Commonwealth and State governments. The proposal for a separate Prevention Agreement between the Commonwealth and States is a great idea that all sides of politics should adopt, as the current Health care Agreements are all about hospitals and allow no serious focus on prevention"

"We will look forward to seeing the specifics as they are released. Prevention and primary care could be one of the key battlegrounds in the election. Crucially we seek from both sides an increase in the prevention share of government health expenditure from 2.5% to 4%," said Professor Daube.

Dr. Freemantle said, "The great gains in health – and ultimately savings to our healthcare system – will come from prevention. The Public Health Association will be keen to see both sides of politics put a much greater emphasis on prevention in the coming election."

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