

**UNDER EMBARGO until 2am on Tuesday 3 August 2010**

## **ELECTION 2010: FOCUS ON PREVENTION**

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is today releasing key priorities in public health ahead of the federal election. The paper highlights a series of priority areas for action and provides a detailed list of recommendations. A call to increase the proportion of funding for prevention to 4% of health expenditure to address issues such as obesity, alcohol, tobacco, Indigenous health, mental health and oral health are a key imperative.

“Governmental commitment to prevention across Australia is currently 2.2% of annual health budgets, much of which is dedicated to screening and immunisation. Any plans to improve the health of Australians must include increasing the proportion of funding allocated to health protection and promotion and remedying health disadvantage. Just over 2% of health spending for prevention fails to recognise the enormous potential for preventive programs to improve the health and well-being of the community,” said Professor Mike Daube, PHAA President. “This is funding that can literally save lives”.

“The PHAA urges all parties to recognise the importance of prevention by presenting to the community a Public Health Policy document that commits to a significantly increased focus on all aspects of public health - from intervention to research and including public health training, development and capacity building,” said Professor Daube.

“Raising the expenditure on prevention from 2.2% to 4% federally would cost an additional \$1.1 billion pa. This could be found from taxes on alcohol and tobacco, where anticipated revenue for 2010 is close to \$14 billion (alcohol - \$7.94b, tobacco - \$5.8b), and there is strong public support for tax increases if the funding is allocated to health services. We recognise the increasing focus on prevention in recent years and believe that now is the time for additional policy commitments and funding to match the potential health gains prevention can deliver.

“The PHAA specifically calls on all parties to commit to a program that entails acting on a number of overarching recommendations and actions outlined in fifteen key public health policy areas. While these are not the only issues on which the PHAA seeks governmental action, they have been identified as key issues requiring urgent action and commitments at the 2010 Federal Election,” said Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer of PHAA.

The priority areas outlined in the paper are: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health; Alcohol; Climate Change and Sustainable Population; Health Impact Assessment; Injury Prevention; International Health; Mental Health and Wellbeing; Nuclear Industry; Overweight and Obesity; Oral Health; Primary Health Care; Prisoner Health; Social Determinants of Health; Tobacco and Women’s Health.

**For further details/comment:**

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**Copies of PHAA’s 2010 Federal Election Policy Priorities paper are available on request. The paper will also be available on PHAA’s website at [www.phaa.net.au](http://www.phaa.net.au) from 9am on Tuesday 3 August 2010.**