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## **PREVENTION FOCUS FOR INDIGENOUS & NON-INDIGENOUS VICTORIANS IN STATE BUDGET**

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) has praised the Victorian Government for its strong commitment to dental and preventive health initiatives in today's budget. New preventive health measures targeting both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Victorians represent a forward-thinking investment in the health of the community over the longer term.

"Traditionally measures to improve public health and prevent illness over the longer term don't receive much attention in Australia, usually receiving under 2% of recurrent expenditure for health as a whole. It is heartening to see that new initiatives designed to prevent the health problems that see many people seeking treatment for a range of illnesses over the longer term feature prominently in this year's budget," said Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the PHAA.

"\$52.8 million is allocated in this year's budget to boost dental services, roll-out improved breast cancer screening technology and fund new programs to manage chronic diseases and prevent communicable diseases. The additional investment of \$21.1 million in the provision of dental services is particularly welcome. Oral health services are a key preventive health measure as dental health is linked to other health outcomes and overall wellbeing.

"A \$23.9 million boost to the Hospital Admission Risk Program will improve the management and treatment of chronic illnesses in the community to prevent people from having to go to hospital. \$7.8 million over 4 years has been allocated for the Victorian Immunisation Strategy, particularly targeting the prevention of new strains of tuberculosis.

"\$47.4 million over 4 years has been allocated specifically to initiatives designed to focus on high rates of smoking and obesity among Aboriginal Victorians and promote physical fitness. The funding will train an extra 35 Aboriginal health workers each year, who will provide practical support to patients.

"The funding will also be used to build on health promotion activities targeting Aboriginal elders. A further \$1 million will expand maternity services catering to Aboriginal communities.

"The strong focus on preventive health activities for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in this year's budget will provide a strong foundation for the improvement of health outcomes for years to come. These measures are an investment in keeping people out of hospitals into the future," said Mr Moore.

**For further information/comment:**

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