



**Public Health Association**  
AUSTRALIA

27 February 2009

National Primary Health Care Strategy Secretariat  
MDP 94  
GPO Box 9848  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Secretariat Officer

### **Submission on National Primary Health Care Strategy**

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is a national organisation comprising around 1500 individual members and representing over 40 professional groups concerned to promote health at a population level. This includes, but goes beyond the treatment of individuals to encompass health promotion, prevention of disease and disability, recovery and rehabilitation, and disability support. This framework, together with attention to the social, economic and environmental determinants of health, provides particular relevance to, and expertly informs the Association's role.

PHAA welcomes the opportunity to provide input on the development of the National Primary Health Care Strategy.

Accompanying this letter is PHAA's Primary Health Care Policy that has been developed by PHAA's Primary Health Care Special Interest Group, convened by Professor Helen Keleher from the Department of Health Sciences at Monash University. The policy outlines the fundamental principles and beliefs of PHAA in relation to primary health care in Australia as a foundation for a series of recommendations and resolutions.

Specifically, PHAA recommends that:

- Δ The federal government develops a National Primary Health Care Strategy in conjunction with the States and Territories and based on a wide consultative process.
- Δ Funds be available to the primary health care sector to:
  - support local and regional level arrangements for primary health care coordination including support for citizen and community involvement, both at the local, agency and regional levels;
  - increase centrally based funding for organisations that support self-management and community participation, without limitation being placed on their exercise of advocacy;
  - strengthen local government's involvement in public health to achieve intersectoral collaboration;

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- support education and training initiatives that lead to wider implementation of primary health care principles;
- provide increased funding for research and evaluation of comprehensive primary health care in every state and territory, open to community health services, local government and a range of primary health care practitioner groups;
- plan extension of community health services as a key component of the primary health care sector, with provision for long-term funding for primary health care to avoid the costs and discontinuities associated with dependence on short term project funding; and
- flexible funding arrangements to support enhancement of the primary health care sector, in accordance with local strengths and needs and covering all relevant community-based agencies and practitioners.

Advocating for the development of a National Primary Health Care Strategy has been a priority for PHAA for some time and we are pleased to be able to provide input to the current process.

A number of policies on related public health issues can be found on the PHAA website at: <http://www.phaa.net.au/policyStatementsInterim.php#p> .

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries with regard to this submission.

Yours sincerely



Melanie Walker  
Acting Chief Executive Officer  
Public Health Association of Australia