



Public Health Association
AUSTRALIA

Intern Handbook **2024**

Version: December 2023

The Public Health Association of Australia

The Public Health Association of Australia Incorporated (PHAA) is recognised as the principal non-government organisation for public health in Australia and works to promote the health and well-being of all Australians. The Association seeks better population health outcomes based on prevention, the social determinants of health and equity principles. PHAA is a national organisation comprising more than 2,000 individual members and representing over 40 professional groups.

The PHAA has Branches in every State and Territory and a wide range of Special Interest Groups. The Branches work with the National Office in providing policy advice, in organising seminars and public events and in mentoring public health professionals. This work is based on the agreed policies of the PHAA. Our Special Interest Groups provide specific expertise, peer review and professionalism in assisting the National Organisation to respond to issues and challenges as well as a close involvement in the development of policies. In addition to these groups, the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* (ANZJPH) draws on individuals from within PHAA who provide editorial advice, and review and edit the Journal.

In recent years PHAA has further developed its role in advocacy to achieve the best possible health outcomes for the community, both through working with all levels of Government and agencies, and promoting key policies and advocacy goals through the media, public events and other means.

Vision for a healthy population

The PHAA has a vision for a healthy region, a healthy nation, healthy people: Living in a healthy society and a sustaining environment, improving and promoting health for all.

PHAA's Mission

PHAA members will work to promote better health outcomes through increased knowledge, better access and equity, evidence informed policy and effective population-based practice in public health.

Strategic Plan 2021 – 25

The full Strategic Plan can be located [here](#).

A brief summary of the goals for the duration of the plan is:

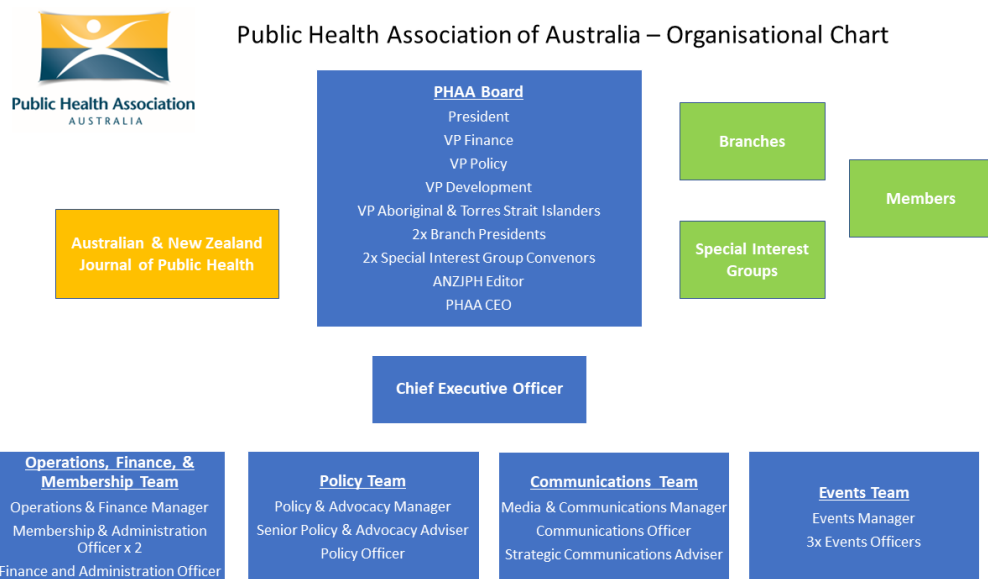
During the life of this Strategy, we have the following goals for our community:

Public health ideas	Effective promotion of public health thinking, health equity values and ecosystem and health values, driven by evidence-based research and policy.
Public health action	Growth in investment in public and preventive health programs, public health research, the public health workforce, and our national public health capacity.
Equity and equality	Continual reduction of social and economic health inequities and inequality.
Climate and health	An effective response to climate change and its impact on planetary and human health.
Reconciliation and health	A successful Reconciliation process among all Australians, and improved health to close the gaps for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

PHAA also supports the globally relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our work links most directly to SDG 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing, and other SDGs closely relevant to public health include SDG 2 – Zero Hunger, SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities, and SDG 13 – Climate Action. However, we also recognise that all of the 17 sustainable development goals are interconnected and mutually supporting.

Closer to home, we also have the vital goal of sustaining PHAA as a vibrant civil society organisation, founded in its engaged and enthusiastic members, and continuously active through our advocacy, our professional development and educational events (member-based and public), our assistance to the public health professions, and our general communications (including our journal, our social media presence and our media interactions).

PHAA Staff and Board Structure



President: Tarun Weeramanthri

Vice-President (Policy): Caroline Miller

Vice-President (Development): Kathryn Backholer

Vice-President (Finance): Vincent So

Vice-President (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander): Alana Gall

Branch Presidents' Representatives: Jacqui Bowden and Kate McBride

SIG convener's Representatives: Deb Gleeson and Aziz Rahman

National Office Policy Team

Policy & Advocacy Manager: Leanne Coombe (Full-Time)

Senior Policy & Advocacy Adviser: Malcolm Baalman (Full-Time)

Policy & Advocacy Officer: Lily Pratt (Full-Time)

Special Interest Groups (SIG)

The PHAA advocacy is based around 18 special interest groups which are funded and managed by PHAA member convenors.

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health

SIG: The Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Special Interest Group mission is to coordinate PHAA members interested in Aboriginal health issues, and utilise their knowledge and skills to respond to relevant policies and events to advocate for effective changes in policy that impact

on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Alcohol / Tobacco / Drug SIG: The objectives of the Alcohol Special Interest Group are to: Provide a focal point for discussion of and action on alcohol issues; Support advocacy, networking and

collaboration on alcohol issues; ensure that action on alcohol is represented in the activities of the Public Health Association of Australia

Child & Youth Health SIG:

The objectives of the Child Health Special Interest Group are to: Provide a focal point for discussion of and action on child health issues; Provide a formal vehicle for networking, advocacy and collaboration in public health nutrition; Promote development of a framework for education and professional development of public health workers interested in child health, and; Ensure that child health is represented in PHAA's affairs.

Complementary Medicine - Evidence, Research & Policy SIG:

The Complementary Medicine - Evidence, Research & Policy SIG aims to provide leadership for the emerging subfield of public health scholarship in complementary medicine use, practice and policy. The SIGs objective is to encourage and conduct rigorous critical public health scholarship and debate focused upon complementary medicine use, practice and policy. The SIG continues to develop research capacity in the public health field of complementary medicine.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion SIG

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion SIG was formed to address diversity-related public health matters in Australia and internationally by pooling the diversity-related expertise among PHAA members, particularly (but not limited to) those which thus far have not been specifically accommodated in existing SIGs, such as: sexuality and gender diversity; men's health; ageing and aged care; disability; and religion and spirituality.

Ecology & Environment SIG:

The aim of the Ecology and Environment SIG is to help create a fair, ecologically sustainable, health promoting humane society in Australia and around the world through strong advocacy and collaborative partnerships.

Food & Nutrition SIG:

The objectives of the Food and Nutrition Special Interest Group are to: Provide a focal point for discussion of and action on public health food and nutrition issues; Provide a formal vehicle for networking, advocacy and collaboration in public health nutrition; Promote development of a framework for education and professional development of public health workers interested in public health nutrition, and; Ensure that public health nutrition is represented in PHAA's affairs.

Health Promotion SIG:

The Health Promotion SIG focuses on issues related to education, prevention, and health promotion across a broad range of areas impacting on public health.

Immunisation SIG:

The Immunisation SIG aims to advocate for appropriate policy change which will strengthen Australia's vaccination programme; provide expert input into areas which require further exploration, research and focus; and to ensure that the most vulnerable groups suffering high communicable disease burden continue to receive attention.

Injury Prevention SIG:

The Injury Prevention SIG brings together researchers, practitioners and policy makers. Injury prevention is a significant issue in Australia. Injuries are preventable through: access to good information about the circumstances of the injury; provision of evidence-based programs; targeting those who have responsibility for safety; and effective policy.

International Health SIG:

The International Health SIG was formed to focus on global health issues and health issues that impact developing countries especially in the Asia Pacific Region. The SIG's objectives are to promote understanding, dialogue and advocacy around global health issues

especially those that impact developing countries and vulnerable populations.

Justice Health SIG:

The Justice Health SIG's aim is working within a human rights framework, to improve the health of those who come into contact with the criminal justice system through the promotion of high quality, ethical research; effective advocacy and meaningful translation of evidence into policy and practise.

Mental Health SIG:

The Mental Health SIG aims to take a population, rather than individual approach to advocating for mental health promotion and the prevention, treatment and management of mental disorders. At the same time, we recognise that certain populations are at greater risk of poor mental health and require more targeted support and advocacy. Our committee, along with our members, responds to emerging and ongoing issues relevant to mental health primarily through generating evidence-based position and policy statements, submissions and supporting other organisations.

One Health SIG:

The One Health SIG aims to support policy and strategy development and implementation leading to an increased use of one health approach wherever possible by those providing services and support to the environment, animal and human health sectors.

Oral Health SIG:

The Oral health SIG assists the PHAA to periodically update its Oral Health Policy and advocate for the policy's key messages; network with representatives of other NGOs and professional bodies to promote greater public awareness of oral health issues and opportunities for reform; links with other organisations to form coalitions of interested parties for advocating for inter alia, fluoridation and greater equity in oral health care.

Political Economy of Health SIG:

The political economy of health deals with the political and economic determinants of population health including both the promotive influences and the risks. It deals also with the public health strategies required to engage with those determinants, to cultivate the promotive relations and to manage the risks. This SIG provides a space for sharing, support and learning for PHAA members with an interest in the political economy of health. The PEH SIH contributes to PHAA's policy development and advocacy in relation to public health issues where a political economy perspective can assist.

Primary Health SIG:

The Primary Health Care SIGs objectives are to: Facilitate the preparation and delivery of periodic seminars and workshops, discussion/issues papers and conference papers for members and other stakeholders; Participate in the development of primary health care policy in Australia and overseas; Contribute to the gathering of an evidence base to inform and improve primary health care in Australia to inform and aid best practice nationally; Develop PHAA policies to support primary health care in Australia; Collaborate with other stakeholders to advance our aims.

Women's Health SIG:

The Women's Health SIG aims to influence policy development to advance women's health and the public health research that informs policy and programs. We promote understanding of the social model of health and how gender determines health. Using human rights and feminist approaches, we advocate for improving women's health in Australia, as well as working to promote women's health globally, often with other PHAA SIGs. A feminist and human rights approach recognises that women may experience injustice based on their sex/gender, and that these injustices may also occur on a systemic level through public policy processes.