

3 May 2016

www.phaa.net.au

Prevention still not a priority in Federal Budget

The latest budget shows a fundamental misunderstanding of the importance of prevention for the economy and the health of the Australian population says Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) Vice President David Templeman.

The Federal Budget was released this evening with the bulk of funding focused on treatment and clinical services instead of prevention initiatives.

“After tonight’s budget release, it is clear the Government is not prioritising prevention and has missed a significant opportunity to invest in the health and wellbeing of Australians,” said Mr Templeman.

“This budget is very treatment focussed. We must shift to a model which focuses on prevention rather than waiting for someone to become sick and relying on healthcare and hospital services,” said Mr Templeman.

PHAA’s election priorities identify ways the Federal Government can save lives and help the economy, for every dollar invested in prevention, the Government can save over five dollars in health spending.

“We know prevention works. While we applaud the Government for reinvesting in initiatives such as the Health Star Rating and tobacco consumption rates but we would like to see a greater level of investment in public health prevention initiatives such as a sugar tax on soft drinks,” said Mr Templeman.

“A sugar tax on soft drinks would not only improve the health of Australians but it would inject money back into the economy. The funds can be reinvested back into prevention initiatives and research,” said Mr Templeman.

“Initiatives such as these have had flow on affects. The [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples smoking rate is now at 39% the lowest recorded rate](#) which is attributed to prevention and educational programs,” said Mr Templeman.

“People don’t want to be in hospital. A comprehensive approach is vital to keep Australians out of hospital and have the best quality of life. Over the last decade, there has been a significant increase of people living with multiple chronic diseases including type II diabetes and heart disease. This should be a wakeup call to the Government to implement strategies to prevent this from happening,” continued Mr Templeman.

“The Federal Government has missed an opportunity to consider how the pressure could be taken off the health system. There doesn’t have to be a choice – treatment and prevention can both be funded but investment in prevention can stop the problem before it starts,” stated Mr Templeman.

The PHAA will examine the Health Budget over the next few days and comment accordingly.

For further information/comment:

Sophie Brown PHAA (David Templeman comment)

0421 749 608