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Not too late for all major parties to put public health first

All political parties have a chance to commit to public health and invest in prevention, promotion and protection before the federal election on Saturday says Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) CEO Michael Moore.

“Some parties have shown commitment but bipartisan support from all major parties is needed to improve public health for all Australians. [The Global Charter for the Public’s Health](#) outlines how each component works together to deliver good public health for all. The [PHAA Election Priorities](#) provide a framework for a healthier Australia using prevention, promotion and protection,” said Mr Moore also President of the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA).

An article in [Croakey](#) released yesterday details PHAA’s election priorities. The top three asks from the PHAA to all political parties are:

1. To increase the level of Federal funding for prevention [from 1.7% \(AIHW\)](#) to 5% of the health budget. Investing in prevention, along with promotion and protection of the public’s health keeps people well and out of hospital, significantly decreasing long term pressure on the health system.
2. Address the harms associated with alcohol and sugar through appropriate consumption tax arrangements – and apply a hypothecation to ensure savings are reinvested into health promotion and protection initiatives not only with regard to unhealthy consumption but across health.
3. Focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People’s health needs, including chronic diseases; tobacco; diabetes; mental health; youth suicide and closing the gap on life expectancy.

In the weeks approaching the election, Labor and the Greens have released policies targeting prevention initiatives including sugar tax for soft drinks, minimisation of alcohol advertising and reinvestment into the health star rating to improve nutrition.

“What we haven’t seen from the parties is a rounded approach on how prevention with promotion and protection can make a real change to move towards a healthier Australia. Promotion and protection are two of the three pillars and need to work in conjunction with prevention initiatives,” said Mr Moore.

“The parties have a small window of opportunity before the federal election to look at the approach which will improve Australia’s health and save lives. Before voting, consider the impact that a Government with a real commitment to health will have on yourself and your family,” concluded Mr Moore.

The PHAA’s *Election Priorities 2016* available here: <http://www.phaa.net.au/documents/item/1497>

For further information/comment:

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