PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
Strategic Plan

March 2017
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Introduction

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is recognised as the principal non-government organisation for public health in Australia working to promote the health and well-being of all Australians. It is the pre-eminent voice for the public’s health in Australia. This Strategic Plan identifies the way in which the PHAA plans to ensure that the public’s health is improved through sustained and determined efforts of the Board, the National Office, the Branches, the Special Interest Groups and the members.

The efforts of the PHAA are enhanced by our vision for a healthy Australia and by engaging with like-minded stakeholders in order to build coalitions of interest that influence, public opinion, the media, political parties and governments.

Health is a human right, a vital resource for everyday life, and key factor in sustainability. Health equity and inequity do not exist in isolation from the conditions that underpin people’s health. The health status of all people is impacted by the social, cultural, political, environmental and economic determinants of health. Specific focus on these determinants is necessary to reduce the unfair and unjust effects of conditions of living that cause poor health and disease. These determinants underpin the strategic direction of the Association.

All members of the Association are committed to better health outcomes based on these principles.

Vision for a healthy population

A healthy region, a healthy nation, healthy people: living in an equitable society underpinned by a well-functioning ecosystem and a healthy environment, improving and promoting health for all.

Mission for the Public Health Association of Australia

As the leading national peak body for public health representation and advocacy, to drive better health outcomes through increased knowledge, better access and equity, evidence informed policy and effective population-based practice in public health.

Strategic Direction

Global Charter for the Public’s Health

In 2015, the World Federation of Public Health Associations developed A Global Charter for the Public’s Health (The Charter) to be read in conjunction with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). This charter was developed to bring together the best of all the existing models and provide a comprehensive, clear and flexible framework that can be applied globally and within individual countries.
“Currently, there is no global agreement on what public health functions or services consist of, and the lack of a common vocabulary in public health adversely affects the efforts of public health systems, including security and workforce development and quality standards across the world. Many public health policies, especially those that look at disease specific topics, remain vertical, even if they outline some inter-sectoral components.”

The PHAA has adapted the Charter framework of building strong Governance, Capacity, Information, and Advocacy to support Protection, Prevention and Promotion of public health in Australia as the basis for the PHAA Strategic Plan as outlined below.

For the full Charter go to: http://www.wfpha.org/

PHAA Adaptation of the Global Charter for the Public’s Health

The PHAA adaptation of the Global Charter for the Public’s Health as endorsed by members at the PHAA Annual General Meeting in September 2016 is as follows:

PHAA will use the above direction to guide advocacy efforts in priority areas as identified each calendar/financial year by the PHAA Executive team, Board, Members and Stakeholders.
How we work

This part of the Strategic Plan has been developed for the work of the National Office. However, it is expected that similar strategic plans, that remain consistent with the Strategic Direction adopted at the 2016 Annual General Meeting will be developed by Branches and Special Interest Groups.

The National Office

Advocacy

Leadership and ethics; health equity; social-mobilisation and solidarity; public education; people centric engagement; communications; ecologically sustainable development.

Guided by the Kotter Plus 10 Step Plan, PHAA will continue to plan advocacy action and to evaluate efforts based on the following 10 Step Plan:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating a guiding coalition
3. Developing and maintaining influential relationships
4. Developing a change vision
5. Communicating the vision for buy-in
6. Empowering broad-based action
7. Being opportunistic
8. Generating short-term wins
9. Never letting up
10. Incorporating changes into the culture

The PHAA will continue to engage, lead and advocate for public health protection, promotion and prevention initiatives in accordance with the policy and position statements developed and endorsed by members of the association. The work will be underpinned by social, cultural and ecological determinants of health and will be based on the Change Vision (steps 4 & 5) that have been developed as the policies of the PHAA. Where policies are not clear, advocacy action will be based on the principles of the Association.

Priority areas for 2017

- Building and maintaining networks of influence with Like-minded stakeholders; Government, political parties, media and others
- Influencing the general public through media engagement including both traditional and social media

Capacity Building

Workforce development; teaching, training and networking: workshops, conferencing, resources, standards and curriculum.

The PHAA will continue to work with universities through our partnership with the Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australia (CAPHIA) and the Public Health Indigenous Leadership in Education Network (PHILE).

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The association will maintain and build upon intern programs within the national office and supported through the branches to provide training and workforce development opportunities for public health students around the country.

In addition to coordination of 3-4 national and or international conferences each year, PHAA is building capacity to facilitate local, topic specific workshops for education and resource sharing amongst the seventeen Special Interest Groups. These workshops will take place in the form of face-to-face events and online webinars.

**Priority areas for 2017:** Formalising of PHAA National Office Intern Program; building of workshop and webinar capacity; participation, facilitation and coordination in the 15th World Congress on Public Health; Communicable Diseases Control Conference 2017, and; Global Alcohol Policy Conference 2017.

**Information**

Monitoring, evaluation and surveillance; research and evidence; risk and innovation; dissemination and uptake.

Through our extensive networks, partnerships and collaboration efforts with Government, NGO and academic stakeholders, PHAA monitors emerging research and evidence on public health issues of concern to members. Relevant and topical information is disseminated regularly to members and stakeholder through a range of communication channels managed by the national office.

**Priority areas for 2017:** Gathering and disseminating relevant reports, research and evidence to PHAA members and stakeholders through electronic information sharing channels such as the ebulletin; Intouch; Twitter; Facebook and LinkedIn profiles; and traditional media including TV, radio, newspapers and journals.

**Good Governance**

Democratic principles; influencing legislation and regulation; assuring transparency and accountability; strategy; organisation.

Drawing from the 70+ policies endorsed by PHAA members, the association will continue to develop submissions to Government and Parliamentary inquiries on public health issues.

The PHAA will continue to work with Government to pursue increased transparency and accountability in Australia on legislation and regulations pertaining to improving and promoting health for all. The PHAA will continue to press for ‘good government stewardship’ and will counter “nanny state” arguments.

**Priority areas for 2017:**

- Developing submissions
- Appearing before relevant government and parliamentary inquiries

**Promotion**

Social, economic and ecological determinants of health; inequality, healthy settings, health literacy.

Underpinning PHAA work to improve social and ecological determinants of health in Australia is set out in the PHAA Constitution at Sections 3.2 and 3.3 and in PHAA policies. These policies underpin many, perhaps all of PHAA’s policies and PHAA will continue to pursue the aim that public health activities and government policies contribute to social and health equity and ecological sustainability.
Priority areas for 2017: Ensuring that PHAA advocacy efforts are underpinned by the principles outlined in the Objects of the PHAA Constitution.

Prevention

Primary: vaccination; Secondary: screening; Tertiary: evidence and community based, integrated, person centred quality health care; healthcare management and planning.

Health prevention is a key focus for the PHAA. With only 1.5% of government health expenditure directed towards preventive measures, PHAA will continue to advocate strongly for improvements in this area.

Priority areas for 2017: Strong advocacy on increased funding in the area of prevention of particular concern in the current political landscape. PHAA will focus on prevention initiatives such as an increase of government spending on prevention; taxing of unhealthy commodities, maintaining tobacco reduction efforts; progressing a National Nutrition Plan; and addressing the causes of preventable chronic disease.

Protection

Regulation and coordination; Health Impact Assessments (HIAs); communicable disease control; emergency preparedness; occupational health; environmental health; climate change and ecological sustainability.

Pursuit of regulation and coordination of public health protection methods continues to be of importance to the PHAA. Through use of tools such as Health Impact Assessments, PHAA will advocate for public health concerns to be address when evaluating the returns, effectiveness and impact new and revised government policies may have on the health of Australians and our neighbours.

Part of ensuring health protection is in building and maintaining of Australia’s capacity to respond and manage communicable disease and public health emergencies. PHAA will work with government and political stakeholders to establish appropriate services and capabilities are established to respond these areas.

Priority areas for 2017: Seek opportunities to advocate on establishment of HIAs in trade and other government policies, and; advocate for evaluation of Australian government capacity to respond and manage public health emergencies and communicable disease preparedness. The PHAA will also strive to maintain influence on protection through the Communicable Disease Conference and the National Immunisation Conference in the alternate years.

Conclusion

The National Office of the PHAA has limited capacity to manage the challenges of public health. By working closely with PHAA Branches and Special Interest Groups, stakeholders, government departments and ministers, it is possible to have considerable influence to bring about positive change and to meet our vision and our mission.