5 October 2018

Lisa Atwell
Prevention and Population Health, SA Health
PublicHealthAct@sa.gov.au

Dear Lisa,

Re: Public Health Association of Australia SA Branch - Submission on the Review of South Australia’s State Public Health Plan

Thank you once again for the opportunity for the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) SA Branch to provide further comment on the State Population Health Plan. We acknowledge the time that has been invested in developing this important document as a means to guide coordinated action over the next five years to improve the health and wellbeing of South Australians.

The 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.

We were pleased to note the inclusion of several key concepts that we outlined in previous submissions. Overall the plan covers a good variety of strategies that support both behavioural and supportive environments to make the healthy choice the easy choice. We were pleased to see reference to priority groups including mental health, low incomes and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Clear reference to the Public Health Indicator Framework 2018 indicates how the outcomes in the plan will be measured.

Key local public health initiatives such as Public Health Partner Authorities are discussed, however no reference is given to newly announced initiatives such as Wellbeing SA. The PHAA would like to know what this will look like in practice and what role the new agency will play in relation to the State Public Health Plan.

While it was pleasing to see community capacity and engagement mentioned in the plan, we remain sceptical for how this will be successful after the de-funding of Health Consumers Alliance, who would usually be the key body driving consumer engagement in health systems planning and would hope to see some of that funding reinvested in this space.

We recommend the additional inclusion of the following:

1. Clear articulation of the role of the new Wellbeing SA and how it will link to key initiatives discussed in the Public Health plan. PHAA and our SA Consortium partners have requested involvement in preliminary planning in our conversations and letter correspondence with the Minister, including suggestion of an external advisory group.

2. Wider consideration of priority groups including; substance abuse, people with disabilities, the LGBTIQ community, people with Dementia, and those without or in poor housing conditions.

3. A greater focus on the role of primary health care in supporting public and population health

4. Increased support and capacity building for the non-government community services sector to engage in and partner in sustainable health planning and community development. While this is acknowledged on page 24, it does not provide tangible strategies for how this will be achieved, nor how such a strategy would be resourced.
5. A Children’s Nutrition Strategy, including auditing and enforcing of existing nutritional guidelines in food outlets in public institutions (particularly soft drink bans and healthy vending machines), ban unhealthy food advertising on public property (including bus shelters), consideration for health under the new planning act for zoning regulations to prevent new unhealthy food outlets close to schools and support for councils to implement their public health plans around healthy food access. This could be offset by a levy on soft drinks.

6. A clearly articulated public health workforce strategy with particular focus on building the NGO and Local Government capacity to participate in public health planning.

With regards to the layout and format of the plan, the feedback from our members has been that it has a logical flow and is easy to read.

We look forward to seeing the next version of the plan and are happy to provide further comment and consultation as needed.

Yours sincerely,

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