ELECTION MANIFESTO LAUNCH:
DISEASE PREVENTION MUST BE KEY DRIVER IN FUTURE HEALTH INVESTMENT

The health of Australians is far more likely to be advanced by spending money on preventing disease than it is curing or treating illnesses.

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) will today launch its election manifesto at its Justice Health conference in Sydney in an attempt to pivot the health conversation towards prevention.

“With an aging population and chronic disease snowballing, the current focus on health through the prism of hospitals and drugs is unsustainable,” PHAA CEO, Terry Slevin said.

“Many Australians would be shocked to learn that less than 2% of the health budget is spent on prevention. We are calling for that to change.”

“Most OECD countries commit around 5% of health spending to prevention. On this Australia is lagging behind.”

“We have shown what can be done by driving down smoking rates. While more needs to be done on tobacco, there is an urgent and growing need to apply that lesson to obesity, physical activity and alcohol consumption.

The launch of the PHAA Immediate Priorities 5-point plan today calls for:

- Setting the target of 5% of Australia’s health budget to focus on prevention
- Protecting kids from marketing of tobacco, alcohol, junk food
- Investing in sustained and effective community education programs on tobacco, healthy eating, alcohol and being physically active
- Focusing on improved health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adolescents, and
- Curbing climate change with clear and effective action to ensure a healthy planet.

This plan is being launched at our Justice Health conference to emphasise the importance of focusing on the people of greatest need.

“Those who come in contact with the justice system are often the most vulnerable. People with mental health issues, drug and alcohol problems, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are all over-represented in our jails. If we aim for a fair go for all Australians, that requires us to focus our attentions on those with the greatest need.”

“If we get this right, we can add at least five more good years to people’s lives so they can enjoy the fruits of their labour, the celebrations and successes of our families and the people we love for longer. Surely this is a goal we all must share and pursue.”
“Health experts have the solutions; parliamentarians simply need to act. That includes engaging business to ensure the unhealthy commodities industry does its part,” Mr Slevin said.

ENDS

For the full conference program and keynote speakers: https://www.phaa.net.au/events/event/justice-health-conference-2019

For PHAA’s National Policy Priorities document: https://www.phaa.net.au/documents/item/3373

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