

COMMUNIQUE

NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH STRATEGY CANCER SCREENING WORKSHOP: 14 OCTOBER 2019

The Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, has committed to the development of a National Preventive Health Strategy (the Strategy). It is intended that the Strategy provide a long-term vision for improving the health of all Australians and that it stimulates a systemic shift to achieve a better balance between treatment and prevention. It will be a national strategy that includes primary and secondary prevention, and it will not have a disease-specific approach. The Strategy will be underpinned by the strongest research available.

An Expert Steering Committee has been appointed to provide advice on the development of the Strategy, with the first meeting held on 26 September 2019. Broad consultation is integral to the development of the Strategy and the views of public health groups, key stakeholders and consumers will be represented in the Strategy.

A series of topic-specific consultations are being held in October and early November. The first topic-specific consultation was on cancer screening, held on the 14 October 2019 in Sydney. Participants included representatives from consumer groups, government departments, not-for-profit organisations, Primary Health Networks, research organisations and cancer experts.

CONSULTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Consultation participants considered the vision and scope for the Strategy, as well as issues specific to cancer screening.

Some of the themes emerging from the discussion were:

- The importance of equity of access to prevention services and reducing health differences.
- The ways to increase participation in current cancer screening programs.
- The ways to enhance data and pathways to treatment in current cancer screening programs.
- The priorities for future cancer screening programs – consideration of targeted or risk-based screening programs.
- The agility of the prevention system to respond to new evidence and technologies.
- The role of workforce in prevention, particularly primary care.
- The use of data, research and evidence to support primary and secondary prevention.
- The importance of person-centred communication and engagement.

NEXT STEPS

The following next steps will be undertaken:

- Further topic-specific consultations will be held during late October and early November.
- The Expert Steering Committee will meet again in mid-November to consider the outcomes of the consultations.
- There will be a public consultation on the draft Strategy in the first half of 2020.