

COMMUNIQUE

NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH STRATEGY RESEARCH WORKSHOP: 7 NOVEMBER 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 consultations are being held in October and early November. A research consultation was held on the 7 November 2019 in Melbourne. Participants included representatives from research organisations, consumer groups, government departments, not-for-profit organisations, Primary Health Networks, and other experts in prevention.

CONSULTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Consultation participants considered the vision and scope for the Strategy, as well as data, research and evidence for prevention.

Some of the themes emerging from the discussion were:

- The Strategy needs an upstream, whole of society response and a focus on equity.
- Evaluation and performance monitoring are critical; but current data systems are not adequate.
- There is an opportunity to develop capacity, tools, networks and coordinated approaches to support prevention research.
- Research and policy pathways can be strengthened.
- The importance of the community and consumers in engaging with prevention research.
- There is opportunity to scale up what we know works.
- There is a need for more intervention research in prevention and a recognition that this will require different approaches to research funding
- Precision medicine, AI and data mining present opportunities and threats
- The need to establish a mechanism to embed prevention funding and a strong focus on effective, sustained implementation and accountability.

NEXT STEPS

The following next steps will be undertaken:

- The Expert Steering Committee will meet again late November to consider the outcomes of the consultations.
- There will be a public consultation on the draft Strategy in the first half of 2020.