



Preventive Health – National Preventive Health Strategy

The Australian Government is investing \$30.1 million in preventive health measures to make Australia healthier and reverse the rising incidence of preventable chronic conditions by implementing the *National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2030* and continuing to strengthen our response to infectious diseases.

The Government also invests significantly in preventive measures tailored to address the particular health issues of men and women.

Additionally, in the 2022–23 Budget, our Government is providing \$236.4 million over four years for preventive health measures.

Since 2012–13, the Australian Government has driven significant developments in preventing poor health outcomes including:

- In the first two years since pre-exposure prophylaxis (PReP) was listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in 2018, the number of HIV notifications in Australia have decreased by 25% (from 841 in 2018 to 633 in 2020).
- Through increased alcohol and drug prevention efforts, the proportion of Australians aged 14 and over who drank alcohol in ways that increased their risk of alcohol-related disease or injury declined from 38.1% in 2001 to 32% in 2019.
- Over the last decade, the National HPV Vaccination Program has dramatically reduced the incidence of HPV infection and disease in Australian women and heterosexual men aged 21 years or younger.

The National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2030

The National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2030 (the Strategy), released in December 2021, will be key to achieving a healthier Australia by 2030 through more physical activity, better nutrition and reducing the use of alcohol and other harmful drugs.

Following a period of planning, the Government is now investing \$30.1 million in implementation activities for the Strategy which will assist in creating long-term improvements to the health and wellbeing of all Australians.

The activities include:

- \$9.7 million over three years for the Heart Foundation to build on their successful walking initiatives to improve awareness of the benefits of physical activity and increase participation of at-risk groups, with the aim to more than double participation rates by 2025
- \$8.4 million over four years to support the continuation of the Asthma Management Program, which aims to improve the management of asthma in the community and to promote appropriate access to medical support
- \$8.6 million over one year to allow key organisations to continue programs that aim to eliminate HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as public health threats by 2030, through the implementation of five National Blood Borne Viruses (BBV) and STI Strategies 2018-2022
- \$1 million over one year to continue the implementation of the Healthy Habits program of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)

This program helps GPs to make positive lifestyle changes easier and more effective for patients, using behavioural interventions designed in consultation with GPs, Primary Care Nurses and behaviour change experts

- \$700,000 over four years will go towards developing a National Nutrition Policy Framework that will take a multi-sector, 'whole-of government' approach to identify, prioritise, drive and monitor healthy eating in Australia
- \$600,000 over two years to establish the evidence for a systems-based approach to prevention in Australia that will address the risk factors and influences of poor health and wellbeing
This approach will enable health professionals to refer people to a range of non-clinical, community-based services to improve health and wellbeing
- \$500,000 over two years to support a feasibility study that will explore the current landscape of marketing and advertising to children, and also consider the practicality of implementing restrictions similar to new measures being introduced in the United Kingdom, and
- \$200,000 over two years to update the adult and the older Australian Physical Activity Guidelines with the latest evidence and integrate 24-hour movement behaviours including physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep.

Strengthening Australia's Response to Infectious Diseases

The Australian Government is investing \$5 million in 2022–23 to strengthen Australia's response to emerging infectious diseases. This funding will support the expansion and reinvigoration of the successful Australian Partnership for Preparedness Research on Infectious Disease Emergencies Network.

Women's Health

The Australian Government's investment in preventive health for women and girls includes:

- \$58 million over four years to support women experiencing endometriosis, a painful and debilitating yet frequently under diagnosed condition which affects around one in nine Australian women with a potentially major impact on health, education and employment

- \$4.2 million over four years for a health promotion grant opportunity, which aims to improve health outcomes for priority and hard to reach populations of women including migrant and refugee women, ageing women and women with disabilities
- \$137.6 million over four years to address the poorer health and mental health outcomes for women who have experienced intimate partner violence and/or sexual violence, through the expansion of primary care models, support for the Trauma-informed Recovery Care - pilot program and the Illawarra Women's Centre, and addressing the impacts of female genital mutilation/cutting, and
- \$500,000 over three years towards the Her Heart Hub and cardiovascular health to address rising rates of cardio-vascular disease risk among women.

Men's Health

The Australian Government's investment in preventive health for men includes:

- \$700,000 over four years for clinical guidelines to promote early detection and treatment of prostate cancer – updating expired clinical guidelines to support optimised treatment and management of prostate cancer patients, and
- \$300,000 over four years for a gap analysis to strengthen the men's health evidence base, to better inform future investment needs and priorities for male health.

Why is this important?

Chronic conditions are the leading cause of ill health and death in Australia and account for 87% of deaths. Around 38% of the chronic disease burden could be prevented through a reduction in modifiable risk factors such as obesity, physical inactivity and the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. This figure rises to be 49% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The National Preventive Health Strategy responds to these health issues. It is a 10 year plan that aims to improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians, at all stages of life. The Strategy seeks to improve Australia's health system, currently focused on the treatment of illness and disease, by shifting the focus to prevention – from illness to wellness, and from healthcare to health.

The National Incident Centre (NIC) is the Australian Government's key coordination body of the national response to health emergencies. It is central to advising Government and National Cabinet on the public health advice as it evolves in Australia and around the world, and has coordinated effective responses to COVID-19.

Women and girls make up more than half of the Australian population and their health is of critical importance to their overall wellbeing and ability to participate in society. Women, in particular, have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This investment will ensure women and girls in Australia can thrive – physically, mentally, socially and economically.

The Government's *National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030* (Women's Strategy) outlines Australia's national approach to improving health outcomes for all women and girls, particularly those at greatest risk of poor health.

Maternal, sexual and reproductive health is a key priority for of the Women's Strategy and focus for the Australian Government. Pregnant women and their children are an identified priority population in the Women's Strategy.

Many Australian men experience poor health outcomes and have a greater share of fatal and non-fatal burden of disease, dying at younger ages than females, and more frequently from preventable causes.

Every year almost 20,000 Australian men are diagnosed and 3,300 men die with prostate cancer, making prostate cancer the fourth most common cause of male deaths. The *Clinical practice guidelines for Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) Testing and Early Management of Test-Detected Prostate Cancer* was originally published in 2016 and needs to be updated to ensure best practice evidence-based treatment for men.

Who will benefit?

Australians in good health and wellbeing are better able to lead fulfilling and productive lives, and can participate fully in their community, their jobs, and their education. COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of our health and the economic benefits health can bring.

Strong action in preventive health will also reduce the burden of avoidable diseases and conditions on the health system, making it more robust and agile in responding to challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Partnering with other academic institutes to respond to emerging health threats will enhance the operation of the NIC and ensure Australia is well prepared so that Australians, especially those who are more vulnerable, remain safe. Providing the capability for cutting edge research across the vaccine and infectious disease networks on Australian soil will enhance our ability to rapidly and more effectively respond to unexpected infectious disease outbreaks.

The approximately 12.8 million women and girls in Australia will benefit from the additional investment in measures to improve their health and wellbeing.

The Australian Government's national approach to support the goals and outcomes of the *National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030* maintains a sustained, strong focus on addressing the health issues that affect women and girls throughout their lives

Australian men and boys will benefit from enhanced prevention and early detection of key conditions affecting men. They will also benefit from strengthened research, evidence and clinical practices relevant to men's health, and activities promoting better health and wellbeing.

How much will this cost?

The Australian Government will invest \$236.4 million in these preventive health measures over four years from 2022–23 to 2025–26.