



**AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
(SOUTH AUSTRALIA) INC**

25 June 2018

Prof Paddy Phillips  
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Dear Prof Phillips

**Summary Framework for Consultation – Draft State Public Health Plan 2019-2024**

Thank you for your invitation to provide feedback on the summary framework for the State Public Health Plan 2019-2024. We note your reply of 4 April to our initial feedback, including the absence of information on formal evaluations. Below is some supplementary feedback to our 'stage one' comments, as well as feedback in response to the summary framework provided in your letter of 16 April.

**Stage one consultation – additional feedback**

As you know, it is widely accepted that healthy, sociable communities are happier communities. The AMA(SA) is particularly interested in how the healthy options can be made the easiest to choose/incorporate into everyday life, for example:

- Design (redesign) the city for bikes, not cars – Amsterdam and Copenhagen being obvious examples.
- More public swimming pools – heated in winter, accessible to those with disabilities.
- Protect our parks and gardens, the parklands in particular, but don't be afraid to reclaim land to build facilities which would attract people out of their homes, especially in the winter months – eg outdoor skating rinks.
- Affordable healthy lunches and snacks in schools, kindergyms, community centres etc.
- Offer easily-accessible quit-smoking programs.
- Sporting facilities which are affordable/cheap/free and accessible to all – at the same density across socioeconomic regions, not concentrated in communities which are already well resourced.

Also, the AMA(SA) stresses the importance of creating opportunities to connect with others which are attractive, based on the evidence and consumer feedback:

- Sporting facilities (as above) – especially to draw young people out and away from screens, to connect with peers and other age groups. Outdoor skating rinks is one example.
- Dementia-friendly cinema sessions.
- 'Men's Sheds'.
- Purpose-built community hubs and 'additional purposing' of existing meeting places, eg schools, church halls.
- Joint activities (eg exercise classes) for pre-schoolers and older people.

In relation to the strategic priority on 'Stronger and Healthier Communities and Neighbourhoods' in the current plan, the needs of children and adults with physical disabilities must be recognised and met when planning or upgrading aspects of the physical environment. Not just wheelchair access to parks, walking trails etc, but user-friendly toilet facilities, playground equipment for older children and adults, to mention a few.

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Young people could be encouraged to connect with others their age, and the wider community, by asking them what would draw them out, and providing it. Community hubs, like the Glenunga Hub, could be a major drawcard, if done in the right way, encouraging young people to engage around social basketball and other sports, learning new skills etc.

Aboriginal communities must be consulted on their specific needs. The opportunity must be taken to carefully consider ways in which healthier living might be bolstered by changes to physical infrastructure.

In relation to the 'Increasing Opportunities for Healthy Living' strategic priority in the current plan, the AMA(SA) advocates for SA Health to work with the education sector to incorporate evidence-based programs into schools, including healthy choices generally, drugs and alcohol, mental and emotional wellbeing, perfectionism, resilience etc. Again, Aboriginal communities must be consulted on their specific needs and likely solutions, if we are determined to 'Close the Gap'.

The AMA(SA) strongly endorses the need for a significant commitment to improve the health literacy and nutritional literacy for South Australians. This would enable patients to better partner in their healthcare. We hear from members who are shocked at the poor nutritional intake of their patients when they take a diet history – and we know that diet is fundamental to health and wellbeing.

### **Feedback on the Summary Framework for the new Public Health Plan**

In response to the Summary Framework for consultation for the draft State Public Health Plan 2019-2024, the AMA(SA) has the following comments and queries:

- p.8 – How does the plan align with the newly-elected government's objectives? – For example, in relation to pre-election policies such as 'Targeted Preventive Health', 'Better Prevention for a Healthy South Australia' and Wellbeing SA.
- p.9 – The Vision is commendable, including the statement that it is for the whole state and residents of all ages. It is acknowledged that "health status varies considerably across different population groups and that socio-economic disadvantage is associated with poorer health outcomes." (p.7).

How does the state government intend to address the vast variation in 'starting points' for different communities? Specifically, is it the government's intention to distribute resources to the areas/localities of greatest need, based on robust measures of relative economic and social advantage and disadvantage? In other words, is the government serious about redressing the balance, across the state, in order to *invest* in the long term health and wellbeing of the South Australian community?

- With regards to the priorities: (pp. 8-16):
  - Promote – articulate the health promotion role at a population level. The existing 'promote' focus is mainly on the built and surrounding environment – this is important, but a population health promotion component is also required.
  - The AMA(SA) suggests the inclusion of a mental health and wellbeing priority – the Minister has asked for a renewed Mental Health Plan/Strategy and the two should align.
  - Protect – This should include a focus on sustainable development goals – these are internationally endorsed by member states of World Health Assembly, and given the principles outlined in SA Public Health Act, this agenda should be included at the high level plan. We need to have a sustainable health system and a conversation about sustainability under 'protect' is necessary. A/Prof David Pencheon's work in UK is a good example of what is possible.

- Prevent – We note the reference to chronic disease and risk factors. It should be noted that governments should not let up on smoking, alcohol, diet/nutrition and physical activity, substance misuse, etc.
- Under progress – importantly, where is the leadership role and function, partnership opportunities, governance, and evidence-informed data systems, as critical enablers to "further developing the state-wide public health system"? On this note, the AMA(SA) is calling for an independent clinical analytics entity for SA to better inform practice and policy and support better health outcomes. Another important element is to include a comprehensive workforce planning strategy – something the AMA(SA) has been advocating for some years.
- p. 17 – Implementation and Governance – this area needs an emphasis on priority setting, actions, goals, strategies and steps. Who sets the priorities? What are the priority actions under each goal? What is the governance structure? – noting the current state transition/disruption of governance. What are the accountability mechanisms? – noting there are provisions in the Public Health Act.
- p.18 – The plan should articulate indicators, and have an in-built evaluation and monitoring function. We raised this in our earlier correspondence and were referred to a number of separate reports; however, there did not seem to be a focus on, or clear reference point for, how the overall progress of the State Public Health Plan is tracking.

On this note, members have asked whether there are robust validated tools (eg questionnaires) for measuring important indicators of public health and wellbeing such as 'social connectedness'. Rigorous monitoring of progress, or otherwise, is vital.

- Older people – We note the recent Office for the Ageing (Adult Safeguarding) Amendment Bill and advocate that the objectives of this Bill should also be considered in the context of the State Public Health Plan, in terms of supporting and promoting health and safety for older and vulnerable people. Examples include providing infrastructure that enables the ageing population to exercise and remain connected, and enabling older people to contribute to community life in meaningful ways, and adopt appropriate leadership roles.

As indicated in our previous feedback, the AMA has a wide range of national position statements on public health and we are glad to direct your team to these documents (links enclosed), as a resource for SA Health's planning process.

We look forward to hearing about the next steps for this important planning process, and thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Yours sincerely



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Chief Executive

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## **AMA NATIONAL POSITION STATEMENTS – PUBLIC HEALTH (links)**

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- [Mental Health - 2018](#)
- [Nutrition - 2018](#)
- [Road Safety - 2018](#)
- [Harmful substance use, dependence and behavioural addiction \(Addiction\) - 2017](#)
- [Infant Feeding and Parental Health - 2017](#)
- [Marriage Equality - 2017](#)
- [Female Genital Mutilation - 2017](#)
- [Blood Borne Viruses \(BBVs\) - 2017](#)
- [Australian National Centre for Disease Control \(CDC\) - 2017](#)
- [Firearms - 2017](#)
- [Autism Spectrum Disorder - 2016](#)
- [Obesity - 2016](#)
- [Family and Domestic Violence - 2016](#)
- [Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder \(FASD\) - 2016](#)
- [Concussion in Sport - 2016](#)
- [Health Care of Asylum Seekers and Refugees - 2011. Revised 2015.](#)
- [Tobacco Smoking and E-cigarettes - 2015](#)
- [Combat Sport - 2015](#)
- [Methamphetamine - 2015](#)
- [Climate Change and Human Health - 2004. Revised 2008. Revised 2015](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health - revised 2015](#)
- [Health in the Context of Education - 2014](#)
- [Sexual and Reproductive Health - 2014](#)
- [Physical Activity - 2014](#)
- [Cannabis Use and Health - 2014](#)
- [Wind Farms and Health - 2014](#)
- [Women's Health - 2014](#)
- [Health of Young People - 1998. Revised 2013.](#)
- [Health Effects of Problem Gambling - 2013](#)
- [Health and the Criminal Justice System - 2012](#)
- [Sexual Boundaries Between Doctors and their Patients - 1994. Revised 2012](#)
- [Alcohol Consumption and Alcohol-related Harms - 2012](#)
- [The role of financial incentives in Preventive Health - 2011](#)
- [Mental Health - 2011](#)
- [Doctors and Preventative Care - 2010](#)
- [Developmental Health and Wellbeing of Australia's Children and Young People - revised 2010](#)
- [Body Image and Health - 2002. Revised 2009](#)
- [Ethical Considerations for Medical Practitioners in Disaster Response in Australia - 2008. Revised 2014](#)
- [The Role of the Medical Practitioner in Determining Fitness to Drive Motor Vehicles - 2008](#)
- [Social Determinants of Health and the Prevention of Health Inequities - 2007](#)
- [Public Health - 2006](#)
- [Child Abuse and Neglect - 1996. Revised 2005](#)
- [Men's Health - 2005](#)

*Available at [ama.com.au](http://ama.com.au) > Advocacy > Position Statements*

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