

Media Release

Public Health Association of Australia

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Budget 2018 – prevention focus goes missing

Tonight's national Budget continues to fund the health care systems, but is woefully short on preventative health measures to keep Australians from becoming sick in the first place, according to Public Health Association Australia (PHAA) Chief Executive Michael Moore AM.

"Despite repeated advice – and repeated commitments in principle – the Government is still not developing a preventative health focus for our health system," said Mr Moore.

"It's true there are a few modest measures tonight – including additional vaccinations funded, very welcome measures to promote mental wellbeing, and the Good Sports Program to reduce alcohol consumption in sporting contexts."

"But Australia's people will continue to experience avoidable chronic disease in the years ahead. People who should be destined to live healthy lives will not because of the preventable diseases they will suffer. While we need to look after the aged populations and those requiring medical treatment, we need to focus even more heavily on the younger generation we are failing," Mr Moore said.

"The inevitable cost to Budgets far into the future will be greater than the investments that might have been funded."

"What is also noticeable is that there are no preventive measures in this budget which impact negatively on industry."

"Just last week we saw Australia's first ever dedicated conference of preventative health professionals, with 300 expert Australians gathering in Sydney to debate the way forward to a more preventive approach to health and wellbeing.

"Yet tonight, preventive health has again been relegated to a low priority."

"Future Health Ministers and Treasurers will rue the mistakes of this generation, including tonight's Budget, in failing to invest in preventive health."

Mr Moore also acknowledged Minister for Aged Care and Indigenous Health Ken Wyatt for securing a number of important initiatives in Indigenous health, Australia's most agonizing continuing health crisis.

The Public Health Association welcomed a number of specific initiatives in tonight's Budget:

- Improving physical activity with a \$50.4m investment to get people moving and expanding other physical activity.
- Funding to expanding four forms of vaccinations, including Pertussis, and a targeted program to address low vaccination rate areas.
- A National Injury Prevention Strategy for children and older people, including a program to prevent water and snow sport injuries
- Additional funding for suicide prevention

Mr Moore also welcomed the government's focus on quality in aged care.

For further information/comment: Michael Moore 0417 249 731 mmoore@phaa.net.au

20 Napier Close Deakin ACT Australia 2600 – PO Box 319 Curtin ACT Australia 2605
T (02) 6285 2373 E phaa@phaa.net.au W www.phaa.net.au