



COVID-19 shows why centre for disease control an urgent priority

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'The pandemic experience this year is a clear reason for the establishment of an Australian Centre for Disease Control,' says Alison Verhoeven, Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) Chief Executive.

'We welcome Labor's announcement today that it will commit to establishing a Centre for Disease Control, and we hope that the Government will make funds available in tonight's Budget to progress this as soon as possible.'

'The call for this has been long-standing, with a 2013 recommendation to the Government by the Standing Committee on Health and Ageing overlooked in favour of the development of a National Communicable Disease Framework.

'The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed weaknesses in Australia's planning and response processes.

'Inconsistent messaging and conflicting expert advice across jurisdictions was partly addressed "on the run" by the establishment of the National Cabinet, with the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee reporting directly to it.

'However, this has resulted in a reduction in public transparency about disease control decision-making processes.

'A Centre for Disease Control requires a level of independence from political decision-making, with accountability and transparency identified in the enabling legislation.

'Such a Centre would position Australia well to demonstrate global leadership in communicable disease planning and response capabilities.

'It would also support existing state and territory disease control measures through a cohesive approach to research, diagnosis, screening, reporting, case management, contact tracing, forecasting and trend monitoring.

'Clear lines of authority and responsibility, as well as response activation protocols, would be required, to ensure rapid, integrated outbreak responses.

'Let's learn from the COVID-19 experience, and make today's call for a Centre for Disease Control a funded initiative in tonight's Budget, with bipartisan support, to make Australia a safer, healthier country for all,' says Ms Verhoeven.

This media release is available [online](#).

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association is the national peak body for public and not-for-profit hospitals, Primary Health Networks, and community and primary healthcare services.