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Dear Lisa

**RE: SA Public Health Plan consultation 2018**

As a consortium of leading public health expert organisations in South Australia, we welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the *State Public Health Plan*. All partners of the consortium have a vested interest in promoting health in the community through disease prevention. We share a vision for a healthy, flourishing South Australian community, where all members have the opportunity to live well and engage in community life.

In recent years, we have been gravely concerned by the reduction in the public health workforce capacity in SA, both centrally and in health and community services. This has led to a lack of focus on and capacity to address the non-communicable disease-related preventable causes of death and disability at the population level, as outlined in the recently released AIHW report <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129556205>. Chronic disease continues to affect one in every two Australians. This report reminds us that much of the burden is both preventable and experienced disproportionately by those who are living in disadvantaged circumstances. We have come together to emphasise the importance of investing in health promotion and ensuring that services and programs are accessible to those who need them most at very early stages, rather than simply treating people after they get sick.

The *State Public Health Plan* is an important document to provide a framework for state-led public health policy, actions, and programs. It should provide clear and specific action areas, targeted to improving health outcomes across the community, with a particular emphasis on groups more vulnerable to ill health. Any plan of this kind should take account of the *Global Charter for the Public's Health* which identifies the three fundamental services as protection, prevention and health

promotion and four specific enablers as good governance, accurate information, capacity building and advocacy. The Charter was developed by the World Federation of Public Health Associations in conjunction with the World Health Organization at the request of WHO DG Dr Margaret Chan. For more detailed understanding a copy of the four page Charter may be found at:

<https://www.phaa.net.au/documents/item/1876>

Whilst well-intentioned, we believe that the vision put forward by the *State Public Health Plan* is quite broad in scope. The current plan lacks detail in regards to specific actions and expected outcomes. Accordingly, we call for the establishment of more targeted objectives, including greater emphasis on improving the health of the most disadvantaged and marginalised South Australians, in light of growing inequities in health and social outcomes.

As a consortium we are concerned by the lack of public health, health promotion and disease prevention resources at the state-level. There is substantial emphasis on local government undertaking the majority of the work in this space. We acknowledge that local neighbourhoods and communities are key settings in which people live, work and play. Indeed, over the last twenty years the settings approach to health promotion has gained much traction, based on the recognition that health is highly influenced by social and physical environments. We have welcomed the adoption of the *Public Health Act* which mandates local government produce public health plans for their regions, however we wish to see greater support for local government in the planning and implementation stages, with a clearer focus on disease prevention and strategies to increase equitable access to services and initiatives. There is a clear, well-established evidence-base for disease prevention approaches that reduce future healthcare costs, which the state can draw on.

As a consortium we recently released an election priorities document available here <https://www.phaa.net.au/documents/item/2590>. We discussed this report with Minister Malianaskas in December 2017 prior to its public release. The document calls on the state Government to build public health capacity and commit to the health and wellbeing of all South Australian's through three key initiatives:

1. Establish a discrete, full-time position of Chief Public Health Officer to enable state-level leadership with a mandate for disease prevention, health promotion and wellbeing (currently this position sits alongside that of Chief Medical Officer).
2. Establish a state-wide community health promotion and disease prevention *Connected Health for All* Strategy to support coordinated public health programs and partnerships between NGOs, local and state government
3. Establish and evaluate two non-government primary health care centres to build community capacity through health promotion, partnerships and community development.

We note that the Public Health Association of Australia SA Branch has provided a more detailed submission and as a consortium we endorse this submission. In particular, we endorse the additional priorities recommended:

1. Specifically identify how the state will work with Aboriginal communities to support better health outcomes
2. Increase action on the social determinants of health to improve health equity
3. Review governance structures in SA Health to include a discrete position for an expert Chief Public Health Officer that operates separately from the role of Chief Medical Officer
4. Build the capacity of the NGO community services sector through key sector support roles

5. Establish a more clearly defined focus on mental health in the South Australian community. Any Public Health Plan should recognise the equal importance of protecting and supporting the physical AND mental health of South Australians
6. Recognise the importance of the *Global charter for Public Health* which provides a strong framework for explaining public health.

Sincerely,

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