

26 June 2023

The Hon. Roger Cook MLA
Premier of Western Australia
13th Floor Dumas House,
2 Havelock Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

By email: wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au

Dear Premier,

Investment in Preventive Health

We, the undersigned coalition of leading public health organisations, write to you regarding your government's commitment to investing in preventive health.

We congratulate you on your recent appointment as Premier of Western Australia. As a recent Minister for Health and Mental Health in the McGowan Government, we know you have a strong commitment to preventive health and keeping people well, and we look forward to the continued focus on prevention throughout your term as Premier.

We commend the McGowan Government's strong approach to the COVID-19 pandemic, including your key role, which focused on preventive measures to save lives. As the COVID-19 response has now transitioned to a 'living with COVID-19' strategy, it is necessary to shift focus to the implementation of recommendations from the Sustainable Health Review Final Report (**SHR Final Report**).ⁱ

As you know, a key focus of the SHR Final Report is the promotion of initiatives that prevent chronic disease and illness in our community. The SHR Final Report sets out 30 recommendations as a platform for future health reform. We note these recommendations were endorsed by the McGowan Government. One of these recommendations was to:

"Increase and sustain focus and investment in public health, with prevention rising to at least five per cent of total health expenditure by July 2029." (SHR Final Report, page 10)

The priorities in implementation of this recommendation include:

- *"Transparent annual public reporting and benchmarking of investment in public health and prevention from December 2019.*
- *Investment based on clear evidence and evaluation of costs, benefits and impacts regularly published from December 2019."* (SHR Final Report, page 10)

The Public Health Association of Australia (WA Branch) received the attached letter from the former Premier, dated 3 March 2021, confirming support for the "SHR recommendation for five per cent of total health expenditure to be spent on prevention by 2029".

The Western Australian Health Promotion Strategic Framework 2022-2026 (**Framework**) includes the SHR recommendation that prevention comprise at least five percent of total health

expenditure by July 2029. In reference to this recommendation, the Framework states (at page 71):

“Progress against these indicators is reported in the Public Health Indicator Set, which has been developed by the Department’s Epidemiology Directorate.”ⁱⁱ

However, we understand that this Public Health Indicator Set is not yet publicly available.

Metrics and transparency are important tools to drive change. Accordingly, we respectfully request that the Western Australian Department of Health produce an annual public report on the progress made towards the implementation of the five percent commitment, and that this report include a breakdown of preventive expenditure allocations. Doing so would show the progress made thus far towards this SHR recommendation.

We thank your government for its commitment to investing in preventive health and thank you for your consideration of the matters raised. Please feel free to contact the Public Health Association of Australia Western Australia Branch at phaawabbranch@gmail.com should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,



Adjunct Prof. Terry Slevin
Chief Executive Officer



Laura Hunter &
Geraldine Mellet
Co-Chief Executive Officers



Dr Gemma Crawford
President



Dr Erin Lalor
Chief Executive Officer



Ashley Reid
Chief Executive Officer



Rachel Meade
A/Chief Executive



A/Prof. Christina Pollard
Director

Neil Guard
Chairperson

Megan Sauzier
Chief Executive Officer



CC:

The Hon. Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA
Minister for Health; Mental Health
Dumas House, 2 Havelock St
West Perth WA 6005
By email: Minister.Sanderson@dpc.wa.gov.au

ⁱ Sustainable Health Review. Sustainable Health Review: Final Report to the Western Australian Government. Department of Health, Western Australia, 2019. Available from: <https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Improving-WA-Health/Sustainable-health-review-delivery/Final-report>.

ⁱⁱ Department of Health. Western Australian Health Promotion Strategic Framework 2022-2026. Perth: Department of Health, Western Australia; 2022. Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~/_media/Corp/Documents/Reports-and-publications/HPSF/Health-Promotion-Strategic-Framework-2022-2026.pdf.