

2023 Pre-Budget Submission

Supporting
Chronic disease prevention
in Australia

The
George
Institute
for Global Health



*Better treatments
Better care
Healthier societies*



About us

The George Institute is a leading independent global medical research institute with major centres in Australia, China, India and the UK, and an international network of experts and collaborators. Our mission is to improve the health of millions of people worldwide, particularly those living in disadvantaged circumstances, by challenging the status quo and using innovative approaches to prevent and treat non-communicable diseases and injury. The George Institute is focused on the global health challenges that cause the greatest loss of life, the greatest impairment of life quality and the most substantial economic burden, particularly in resource-poor settings. Through a program of research, advocacy/thought leadership, and disruptive social entrepreneurship, we are driving global impact.

Acknowledgement of Country



The George Institute acknowledges the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our Australia office is built and this submission was written. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and future.

Recommendations

Implement the National Preventive Health Strategy



Develop the Measuring What Matters Framework

Establish the Australia Centre for Disease Control





1

Implement the National Preventive Health Strategy

Australia's healthcare system enables citizens to enjoy world-class treatments and programs, underpinned by a robust research sector. But effective governments don't just invest in treating health problems – they invest in preventing them, especially for the most at-risk communities.

Every dollar spent on prevention leads to better outcomes and significant health-system savings.

The development of the National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030 (the Strategy) was an important milestone for the prevention of chronic disease in Australia. The George Institute for Global Health joined its public health and consumer colleagues in welcoming the launch of the Strategy in December 2021.

Ahead of the 2022 Federal election, The George Institute called on all political parties to commit to developing a clear and explicit implementation plan for the National Preventive Health Strategy's 'Blueprint for Action' in the first 100 days of government. To date – this has not been achieved.

The Strategy is a credible and evidence-based strategy that will, if properly funded and implemented, deliver a healthier, more equitable Australia. Australian governments, the health sector and community members have worked together to develop the strategy and continue to call for its roll out.

Commitment to the goals of the NPHS, coupled with appropriate investment, is urgently needed to reverse the spiralling growth in disease burden and to help protect the health of all Australians. Nearly half of all Australians have one or more chronic condition, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer or type 2 diabetes. Yet, Australia's per capita expenditure on preventive health ranks in the bottom half of OECD countries.

The George Institute call on the Albanese Government to...

fund and implement the National Preventive Health Strategy in the May 2023 Commonwealth Budget

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Develop the Measuring What Matters Framework

The increasing impacts of global environmental change, inflation and the cost-of-living crisis, and the ongoing ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic, present significant challenges to all governments around Australia. While these are deep-rooted challenges, there is ample opportunity to redress them through a reimagining of the role and function of government in the wellbeing of current and future generations.

When applied to policy, The George Institute recognises wellbeing as a holistic concept that unites the health, economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions of the sustainable development agenda. This approach to measuring the success of our nation recognises that wellbeing goes far beyond economic development to include the day-to-day lived experiences of all Australians. By incorporating a wellbeing approach into the way that policy is developed and the 'success' of our economy is measured, The George Institute believes governments will be better able to focus on addressing the root causes of inequity in Australia and achieve greater intergenerational wellbeing for all.

The George Institute joins our public health and consumer colleagues in supporting the announcement in October 2022 that the development of the 'Measuring What Matters' Framework (the Framework) as a mechanism to improve health and equity outcomes was underway.

The development of the Framework, under the leadership of the Commonwealth Government, creates an opportunity to look for new ways of working together to better support the health and wellbeing of the community across our federated system in the face of these challenges.

To achieve such change, it is crucial that proposed indicators within the Framework are contextually relevant to communities, holistic in nature and equity focused, particularly targeting people experiencing vulnerabilities. As such, it will be crucial to the Framework's success that extensive community consultation with community members and groups is conducted to ensure the indicators are fit for purpose.

The George Institute call on the Albanese Government to...

fund extensive consultation with community members, expert groups and State and Territory Governments to develop wellbeing indicators in the May 2023 Commonwealth budget





3

Establish the Australian Centre for Disease Control

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the need for an agile and coordinated mechanism within Australia's federated health system to deal with new and emerging health threats of national and international significance.

The George Institute joins our public health and consumer colleagues in welcoming the announcement in April 2022 of the establishment of an Australian Centre for Disease Control (ACDC). With adequate funding and support, the ACDC has the potential to provide the Australian public with clear and transparent health advice and equip policy makers with up-to-date, evidence-based guidance on new and emerging local and global health threats.

For the ACDC to be successful, retain public confidence and play a leading role in the prevention of chronic disease in Australia, The George Institute supports:

- **Inclusion of prevention within the ACDC:** Chronic diseases cause 9 out of every 10 preventable deaths in Australia and account for 85% of years lost due to ill health or early death. Further, injury is the leading cause of death for Australians aged 1-44 years. As such, The George calls for the explicit inclusion of chronic disease and injury prevention within the ACDC remit.
- **Recognition of social, cultural and environmental determinants of health:** The George Institute supports the inclusion of the social, cultural and environmental determinants of health within the remit of the ACDC. This includes providing health advice based on the holistic conception of health across the life-course that takes into consideration the diversity of the Australian public.
- **Transparency and independence:** The George Institute supports the ACDC being a fully transparent and independent agency. The ACDC should include rigorous safeguards against real and perceived conflicts of interest from the private sector, other government agencies and political agendas in order to be effective and maintain public trust.
- **Building workforce capacity:** Key to the success of the ACDC will be the diversity of talent, areas of expertise and experience of its workforce. The George Institute supports the CDC investing in the development of a robust health workforce, including providing training and developing leadership capability both in Australia and abroad.
- **Conducting research:** The George Institute supports the ACDC being equipped to commission and conduct relevant research into new and emerging health threats, as well as evaluation of the effectiveness of the ACDC.

The George Institute call on the Albanese Government to...

fund the further development of the ACDC and implementation of Stage One of the ACDC in the May 2023 Commonwealth budget.

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