



1 May 2022

Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin
Chief Executive Officer
Public Health Association Australia

Email: policy@phaa.net.au

Dear Professor Slevin,

I write in response to the questions raised by the Public Health Association Australia . Please find below the Australian Labor Party's response to the key areas you have raised.

Yours sincerely

Paul Erickson
National Secretary
Australian Labor Party

Public Health Association Australia

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

An Albanese Labor Government will train 500 additional First Nations Health Workers and invest in life-saving dialysis and rheumatic heart disease treatments to help close the gap in First Nations health outcomes.

Aboriginal community-controlled health services worked tirelessly to keep First Nations communities safe during the pandemic. Their workforce has been stretched to its limits and vital programs such as chronic disease prevention and First Nations health checks have had to be scaled back.

Labor will work in partnership with community-controlled and other health services to strengthen the sector and improve health outcomes for First Nations people by:

- Training 500 First Nations Health Workers – building the First Nations health workforce, creating jobs and revitalising community-controlled health services after the pandemic.
- Delivering up to 30 new dialysis units – so people living in the city and the bush can access lifesaving treatment for chronic kidney disease.
- Doubling federal funding to combat Rheumatic Heart Disease – so that fewer people miss out on lifesaving screening, treatment and prevention programs in high-risk communities.

These commitments will be implemented through the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), communities and health experts.

An Albanese Labor Government would implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full, and renew our national commitment to Reconciliation and work in genuine partnership with First Nations people for better outcomes. We recognise that First Nations peoples hold the solutions and must lead the way on policies, legislation and practices that affect them.

That principle underlies our commitment to the Uluru Statement, including working with First Nations people towards a referendum to constitutionally enshrine a First Nations Voice to Parliament in the Constitution in our first term. We believe Australia is ready for that conversation, that referendum, and an Albanese Labor Government would get on with it.

An Albanese Labor Government will also work with the Coalition of Peaks and all levels of government to raise ambitions and ensure sustained progress on the current National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Labor has already announced several policies that will deliver greater national leadership on the Closing the Gap. This includes our landmark commitment to [justice reinvestment](#) as a means of supporting communities and families to turn the tide on over-incarceration.

Invest in preventive health

An Albanese Labor Government would support the implementation of the National Preventative Health Strategy.

Invest in the national public health workforce

There is no question that shortages of locally trained doctors and nurses have got worse because of this Government's lack of any health workforce policy – as well as their cuts to Medicare and aged care.

Over the course of this campaign Labor will have more to say about training more doctors and nurses here in Australia. Already, Labor has announced 20,000 additional university places and 465,000 fee-free TAFE places targeted at areas of skills shortage – including health and aged care.

Establish a Centre for Disease Control and Prevention

Australia is the only OECD country without a Centre for Disease Control (CDC), and health experts have been calling for an Australian CDC for more than three decades.

An Albanese Labor Government would improve pandemic preparedness and response by establishing an Australian CDC. The CDC will:

- Ensure ongoing pandemic preparedness.
- Lead the federal response to future infectious disease outbreaks.
- Work to prevent non-communicable (chronic) as well as communicable (infectious) diseases.

All Australians will benefit from improved pandemic preparedness and response, as well as a renewed focus on preventing chronic disease.

Protect against unhealthy products

Labor has a proven track record of acting on harmful products including increasing the tax on Alcopops in 2008, in an effort to reduce binge drinking and it was Labor who introduce plain packaging for cigarettes in 2012.

If elected, an Albanese Labor Government would consider any additional regulatory protections on unhealthy products on their merit.

Climate and health

Labor will deliver the first National Climate Health Strategy and make Climate Health a National Health Priority.

Creating jobs, cutting power bills and reducing emissions by boosting renewable energy are at the centre of Labor's [Powering Australia Plan](#). This plan will bring cheaper renewable energy to Australian homes and businesses.

Labor's [Powering Australia Plan](#) will reduce emissions by 43 per cent by 2030 – keeping us on track for net zero by 2050.

For nearly a decade, the Liberal Government's mismanagement of our energy policy has been a threat to our economy - leaving Australia missing out on the jobs, growth, and opportunities that our abundant renewable resources could unlock.

Business has shown leadership. Government must play its part.

A Labor Government will close the yawning gap between our current Federal Government and our business community, the agricultural sector and state and local governments when it comes to investing in the renewables that will power our future.

Healthy democracy and public policy-making

An Albanese Labor Government will establish a powerful, transparent and independent [National Anti-Corruption Commission](#). Labor is also committed to amend the Commonwealth Electoral Act to require that political donations above \$1,000 are disclosed within 7 days.