

# Obesity Collective Response to the Draft National Preventive Health Strategy

April 2021

We support the need for a National Preventive Health Strategy and the concept of building a sustainable preventive system for the future. We are particularly supportive of the following concepts included in the Draft Strategy:

- Recognition that a systems-based, collective, whole of society, whole of government approach is necessary and the need for long-term, sustained action and funding.
- The stated Aims and how it will be important to see the increase in funding for prevention.
- The framing of 'looking beyond the individual' for action.
- The Framework for Action outlining tangible action and policy achievements by 2030.
- The need for a preventive health governance structure to support monitoring and surveillance of the strategy.
- The prioritisation of tasks is a great inclusion in the strategy document as it is a comprehensive plan with a large scope.
- It is time to be bold.

**We would like to share the following constructive points for consideration:**

- Language: Please use person first language. Please try to avoid the word 'obese' and instead use 'living with obesity'.
- Investing in and planning for immediate implementation will be absolutely critical. Our fear is that we will have a bold strategy that doesn't translate to bold action and actual impact for Australians. Annual performance and process targets will help with transparency and accountability around progress.
- The Strategy document includes considerable detail on the social determinants of health but there does not seem to be a reference to how these would be addressed more broadly with the focus areas. Building on our learnings from successfully reducing smoking in Australia, it is important that policies to balance and manage commercial determinants are embedded in the seven identified enablers to mobilise a prevention system.
- Recommend updating the Physical Activity focus area title to including increasing opportunities for physical activity, similar to what was done with the healthy diet focus area.
- Many of the Policy statements for healthy diet and physical activity are great steps forward but lack detail on how it will be done and who is accountable. They will require bold action and accountability. Hopefully details will be included in the 'Blueprint' next steps.
- The Focus area targets don't include any measures on improving environments with access to healthy food and green spaces/active transport. It would be good to understand how we are improving environments by 'looking beyond the individual' and so these would be important measures to include to balance the personal responsibility metrics. We also recommend putting back in the principle: 'environments will support health and healthy living.'

- Children should be protected from unhealthy food marketing in all areas, not just digital.
- Strategies for prevention of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes might be prioritised separately from overweight and obesity, given the high burden of disease attributed to them.
- Place-based and community led/designed health and wellbeing initiatives can help support community leadership and sustainable change.
- The planned increase in government funding for prevention is critical. This could be further leveraged for impact with innovative funding approaches. There is an opportunity to invest in health economic evaluations to understand and articulate the community benefits better.
- It is not clear what the obesity success measure is with the current statement, 'Halt the rise and reverse the trend in prevalence of obesity in adults by 2030'.
- Listening to community section (page 28) provides interesting and valuable insight on what people value. Please provide further detail and references on where this information comes from.
- Overall, the document is large and dense with complex language. It would be difficult for some people to navigate the document and understand the key messages. Could an accessible summary document be created for the broader population?

Thank you in advance for considering our feedback.