

## **Submission to the Inquiry on Australian National Preventive Health Agency (Abolition) Bill 2014**

From Dr Jackie Street, Australian National Preventive Health Agency Fellow, School of Population Health, The University of Adelaide

I would like to bring to the attention of the Inquiry the following points:

Preventive health is an essential plank in Government and community efforts to maintain the health of the Australian population.

It is well recognised that without a focus on preventive health, as a nation we will struggle to meet the tide of chronic disease in an ageing and increasingly overweight population.

Recent successes in reducing the levels of smoking in Australia demonstrate the importance of preventive health measures.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), although an admirable organisation supporting excellent research in Australia, has a broad research view much of which is focused on medical intervention and disease-focused research rather than the improvement of the wellbeing and health of the population.

Researchers with a focus on preventive health have struggled in the past to obtain funding for their research.

Researchers in this area often come to preventive health from another background and a previous career in another area.

The unusual career paths of these researchers means that they are often ineligible for the early and mid-career fellowship schemes provided by the NHMRC and non-competitive for the senior Fellowship schemes.

The Australian National Preventive Health Agency (hereafter called The Agency) has provided support for targeted research in the area of preventive health and has recognised the non-traditional career path of researchers in this area.

As an Australian National Preventive Health Agency Fellow, the Agency has provided me and two other Fellows as well as many researchers the opportunity to pursue research in areas of importance in advancing preventive health agenda in Australia.

In addition, The Agency provided an important role in translating the research findings into policy and practice. This role will be lost if The Agency is abolished.

I appeal to the House of Representatives to maintain The Australian National Preventive Health Agency