



Australian Government

Department of Health

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**SUBMISSION TO THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
INQUIRY ON THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH AGENCY
(ABOLITION) BILL 2014**

I am writing to provide the below submission from the Australian Government Department of Health to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee Inquiry on the Australian National Preventive Health Agency (Abolition) Bill 2014.

The Department of Health is the lead agency for the government's work on preventive health policy. In this role it ensures that prevention policy is developed to take account of important linkages across the health system, for example connections to primary care and chronic disease policy. The Department has maintained this role following the establishment of the Australian National Preventive Health Agency (ANPHA).

ANPHA has managed some elements of alcohol, tobacco and obesity policy and programmes. However, the Department has maintained an ongoing policy role in these and other critical areas of preventive health, including for example immunisation, screening, mental health and Indigenous health.

The Department's role in leading and supporting national preventive health efforts has been reinforced in the 2014-15 Commonwealth Budget, including through:

- Rolling out the full implementation of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme, building on the successes it has achieved to date, thereby providing access for all Australians aged 50 to 74 years to biennial screening by 2019-20;
- Continuing its efforts on addressing harmful use of alcohol through new funding for the *Good Sports Programme*, which will support local sporting clubs to build a culture of responsible drinking at the grassroots level;
- Continuing to enhance its broader preventive health efforts, by supporting the establishment of ten new *headspace* sites, which will provide community-based services for young people aged 12 to 25 years who have, or are at risk of, mental illness; and
- Encouraging school children to take part in sport-based physical activity through the provision of \$100m for the *Sporting Schools Initiative*.

The Department worked productively with ANPHA and supported its efforts where appropriate. However, there are significant administrative efficiencies that can be made by reintegrating essential ANPHA functions with the Department's work on prevention. For example, human resources and other corporate functions have been duplicated across ANPHA and the Department in order to support the separate agency. Addressing this is particularly critical in time of tight fiscal management across the public service. The Department is working with ANPHA to transfer functions and current work. The transfer process has included managing the transfer of corporate knowledge and related records and files; and providing for the ongoing management of continuing grants and expenditure commitments.

As part of the transition, the Department has managed the transfer of ANPHA staff to the Department as appropriate, to ensure that skilled and experienced staff are available for prevention projects across priority areas.

To summarise:

- The Department is the lead agency for preventive health and this role did not change with the establishment of ANPHA.
- The Department's role in preventive health has been further reinforced and expanded in the 2014-15 Budget.
- The Department remains committed to ensuring national preventive health efforts are well managed, and is working with ANPHA to ensure resources and essential ongoing work smoothly transition from ANPHA and are reintegrated into the Department's work in priority areas.

Yours sincerely

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