

# Response ID ANON-WK6N-8HEJ-N

Submitted to **Consultation Paper for the National Preventive Health Strategy**  
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## Development of the National Preventive Health Strategy

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**Organisation:**  
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## Vision and Aims of the Strategy

### 4 Are the vision and aims appropriate for the next 10 years? Why or why not?

#### Vision and aims :

The Australian Public Health Consultants Network supports the Vision and Aims of this strategy, but recommends a stronger focus on workforce. Currently, there is an inadequate focus on workforce, despite acknowledgment in the consultation paper that the workforce underpins all of the seven enablers in mobilising a prevention system.

Note: This response from the Australian Public Health Consultants Network is focused on workforce, and more specifically self-employed workers as an important and growing segment of the public health workforce. The network supports the submissions of the Public Health Association Australia (PHAA) and the Australian Health Promotion Association (AHPA), which both have a broader scope and include a number of evidence-based recommendations for improving population health and wellbeing in Australia; of note is the critical need for the strategy to focus on the social determinants of health, climate change, and mental health and wellbeing.

## Goals of the Strategy

### 5 Are these the right goals to achieve the vision and aims of the Strategy. Why or why not? Is anything missing?

**Goals :**  
The Australian Public Health Consultants Network supports the goals of this strategy, noting that development of the prevention workforce is critical.

## Mobilising a Prevention System

### 6 Are these the right actions to mobilise a prevention system?

#### Enablers :

We welcome the statement that "building the capacity and capability of the workforce, both current and emerging, will be integral to achieving success" and subsequently believe that development of the workforce needs to be a key action to mobilise and strengthen the prevention system.

The prevention system and the prevention workforce has been subject to changing workforce trends including the rise of the freelance and consultant workforce. The Australian Public Health Consultants Network has formed in part due to the changes in funding and job security in public health. The network hopes to see an increased focus on supporting self-employed workers as an important and growing segment of the public health workforce, and one of many parts of a mobilised prevention system.

The Australian Public Health Consultants Network supports the seven enablers outlined in the consultation paper but is concerned that the workforce is not explicitly identified. We welcome the statement "Workforce underpins all seven enablers in mobilising a prevention system", however we are concerned that the workforce is not explicitly identified in the core components of the National Preventive Health Strategy. We believe that workforce needs to be more visible to reflect its central role in mobilising a prevention system and improving population health and wellbeing outcomes.

To ensure the workforce receives appropriate resourcing and support over the 10-year period of the strategy, we recommend that "health workforce" is included as an enabler or identified explicitly elsewhere in the strategy. This is in line with a number of other national strategies and action plans that identify "health workforce" as an enabler and/or priority for action, including the National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions (1), the National Men's Health Strategy 2020-2030 (2), and the National Asthma Strategy 2018 (3).

## Boosting Action in Focus Areas

## 7 Where should efforts be prioritised for the focus areas?

### Boosting Actions:

The development of the workforce needs to be a key focus. We are living in an era of entrepreneurship, small business and start-ups, and the public health workforce is changing. Self-employed workers— consultants, contractors, business owners, freelancers – are an important segment of the public health workforce. In Australia:

- 3.7 million people are freelancing – 30% of the total workforce.
- Freelancers contribute an estimated \$51 billion annually in freelance earnings to the economy.
- Lots of people aspire to freelance. Of those who don't own their own business, one in six (17%) consider it a goal they would like to accomplish (4).

With the trend towards freelancing set for continued growth, a focus on self-employed workers is imperative and will translate into benefits for the workforce and health outcomes overall. In addition to including workforce as a core component of the strategy, the Australian Public Health Consultants Network recommend:

- Adoption of a broad and inclusive definition of workforce that includes self-employed workers.
- A strategic review to build knowledge of Australia's public health workforce including size and composition and to identify the number of current and aspiring consultants. This will enable workforce planning to address gaps and meet workforce needs.
- Establishment of an oversight/reporting mechanism for monitoring workforce trends and gaps.
- Workforce development to build entrepreneurial capacity, and to support self-employed workers.

## Continuing Strong Foundations

### 8 How do we enhance current prevention action?

#### Continuing Strong Foundations:

The Australian Public Health Consultants Network supports the goals of this strategy, noting that development of the prevention workforce is critical. The Australian Public Health Consultants joins the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) and the Australian Health Promotion Association (AHPA) in calling for Five Percent for Prevention: that one in every twenty public dollars spent on our health is invested in illness prevention. The Network recommends sustained investment in preventive health in order to realise gains. Targeted investments in evidence-based prevention 'best buys' are critical, as is the monitoring of outcomes.

## Additional feedback/comments

### 9 Any additional feedback/comments?

#### Additional feedback:

About the Australian Public Health Consultants Network

The Australian Public Health Consultants Network is a national network of independent, self-employed consultants. The network connects and supports consultants working in public health and fosters a positive workforce culture based on collaboration rather than competition. Founded in 2016 by two self-employed consultants Rebecca Zosel and Kristy Schirmer, the Network currently has 69 members from across Australia, and almost 200 newsletter subscribers. The vast majority of network members are also members of Public Health Association Australia (PHAA) and the Australian Health Promotion Association (AHPA), reflecting the active participation of self-employed consultants in the public health workforce.

The Australian Public Health Consultants Network supports the submissions of the Public Health Association Australia (PHAA) and the Australian Health Promotion Association (AHPA).

We welcome the National Preventive Health Strategy and appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Consultation Paper. We look forward to commenting on the draft strategy later this year.

Rebecca Zosel and Kristy Schirmer  
Co-Founders, Australian Public Health Consultants Network

(1) AUSTRALIAN HEALTH MINISTERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL 2017. National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions. Canberra: Australian Government.

(2) COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA 2019. National Men's Health Strategy 2020-2030. Canberra: Department of Health.

(3) COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA 2017. National Asthma Strategy 2018. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Health.

(4) NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK, 2017. Rethink Success: Australians' views of success today – Chapter 3 Working for success in the digital age, <https://business.nab.com.au/rethink-success-australias-view-success-today-22468/>