



ACT
Government

ACT Health

Preventive Health Action Plan 2023-2025

Consultation Draft

March 2023



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Introduction

The Healthy Canberra: ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020 – 2025 (the plan) is a whole of government plan that aims to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease in the ACT and support good health at all stages of life.

The plan's guiding principles are equity, life course, evidence-based and innovation. The plan includes 5 priority areas to guide government's preventive health action:

1. supporting children and families
2. enabling active living
3. increasing healthy eating
4. reducing risky behaviours
5. promoting healthy ageing.

This is the second of 2 action plans and will be implemented between 2023 and 2025.

Nearly half of all Canberrans live with one or more chronic diseases including mental health conditions, back problems, arthritis, asthma, osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cancer or kidney disease. A preventive health approach will help Canberrans live well by reducing chronic disease across our community

Building on the first action plan

Progress has been made in all 5 priority areas since the plan was launched in 2020, despite the impacts of the COVID-19 response on the government and community in delivering preventive health initiatives. Key achievements include:

- supporting children and families in the first 1000 days through delivery of the Best Start for Canberra's Children: The First 1000 Days Strategy (Best Start)
- continuing to improve connections between public transport and the active travel network including school safety programs and infrastructure improvements

- creating healthy food and drink environments through healthy food and drink choice policies and programs like Healthier Choices Canberra and Fresh Tastes
- actions which aim to prevent risky use of tobacco and e-cigarettes through action such as legislation which prohibits the sale of nicotine-containing products without a prescription and delivering programs such as the Safer Baby Bundle initiative
- contributing to the prevention of sexually transmitted infections and blood borne viruses through investing in initiatives such as needle and syringe programs
- promoting healthier ageing through the Healthier Work program and the Seniors Grants program.

The draft second action plan has been informed by:

- the ACT Childhood Healthy Eating and Active Living Audit
- recommendations from the Preventive Health Plan Mid-Term Review (2022)
- latest ACT population health data and evidence, including data which informs the Chief Health Officer Report
- prioritisation of the early years and mental health by the ACT Government through the [ACT Wellbeing Framework](#) and the ACT Budget
- the [Healthy Food Environment Policy Index \(Food-EPI\) report findings](#) and recommendations
- the [National Preventive Health Strategy](#) and [National Obesity Strategy](#) priorities
- feedback from a prevention-focused community survey of approximately 700 Canberrans in 2022.

Preventive action requires persistent and sustained collaborative efforts to succeed. Many actions from 2020-2022 will continue to be progressed in the new action plan to achieve longer term objectives. New actions have been included relating to e-cigarettes, healthy homes, online and home delivery of alcohol orders, sexually transmitted infections (STI), blood borne virus (BBV) prevention and the first 1000 days.

These actions are responsive to emerging evidence showing increasing prevalence of e-cigarette use among young people, rising cost of living pressures, harmful impacts of alcohol use in private/home settings and the need to invest in better supporting children and families to save future costs to the healthcare system.

Delivery of the plan continues to be supported by key initiatives such as the [ACT Health Promotion Grants Program](#). This program supports the aims of the plan by providing grants to community-based organisations to improve the health of Canberrans and minimise the risk of them developing chronic disease.

Wellbeing approach

Actions will align with the [ACT Wellbeing Framework](#), particularly with indicators in the Health, Access and connectivity, Environment and climate, Economy, Housing and Home and Living Standards Domains.

Directions in national preventive health

The [National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2031](#) and [National Obesity Strategy 2022-2032](#) were launched during 2021/22 signalling a renewed and longer-term national commitment to prevention. These strategies emphasise a systems-based approach as critical to success, calling for current prevention efforts to be strengthened and to embed prevention across the life course. These national plans also recognise that a whole of government approach, across all levels, plays a critical role in creating a society that is supportive of positive population health outcomes.



Emerging challenges in prevention

Since the plan and its first action plan were released in December 2019, we have seen major shifts in public health. Global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change are disruptors to public health practice and delivery of health services. This disruption provides an opportunity to act and respond differently to multiple complex problems, such as the interaction between human and environmental health.

Data from around the world and Australia has shown that individuals with preventable chronic conditions and vulnerabilities such as cardiovascular disease, smoking and obesity were at greater risk of adverse outcomes associated with COVID-19. Health systems worldwide acknowledged that significantly more needs to be done outside of a pandemic to keep people healthy and well.

The adverse health impacts of climate change are expected to be felt disproportionately across the population, affecting some groups more than others. These priority population groups for prevention include:

- people with pre-existing medical conditions;
- older and younger people;
- people with disability; and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Our communities are at risk of more frequent and severe heatwaves, bushfires, floods and severe storms. We are already beginning to see the impacts of climate change on health including worsening symptoms of existing health conditions and increasing pressure on health services. It is expected health services will experience increased demand for both acute and chronic disease care as a direct (and indirect) consequence of climate change. This will impact on quality of life of people who may not be able to access services and supports when they need it. These challenges require policy responses surrounding preparedness of systems, mitigation and the capacity and capability to effectively adapt to climate change.

Equitable approaches to prevention

There are many important opportunities for prevention throughout a person's life. To reduce health inequities, the plan contains actions that are universal and adaptable to best work for different communities and people. Implementation of actions should be scalable according to need.

Universal design seeks to create an environment where all people are able to fully participate in an inclusive way by reducing barriers to participation. For the purposes of this plan, universal design strategies include policy and process reform as well as changes to the physical, social and economic environments. Universal design is the most effective strategy in reducing barriers to participation and does not rely on individual behaviour change.

As we mature to an embedded model of universal design, targeted strategies will support people at greater risk, or those for whom specific actions may be required. These include opportunities to support behaviour change or community-led preventive activities.

Universal and targeted approaches complement each other to:

- keep people well by creating environments that empower all people to adopt and choose healthy behaviours;
- identify chronic conditions early and act to prevent further progression; and
- enable people to access early and appropriate support and treatment to improve health and prevent chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The plan has an evaluation framework in place that aims to measure success and where needed, identify opportunities to recalibrate efforts. There are 2 levels to the evaluation framework:

- Level 1: Whole of Government. A systems level evaluation which seeks to answer questions related to the government as an enabler to deliver actions in the preventive health plan. This includes an understanding of governance, leadership, and partnerships in accordance with the fundamental principles of collaboration and collective impact.
- Level 2: Priority Areas. This relates to implementation and impact across each Priority Area including questions about how effectively each of the strategic actions were implemented, what the impact was and how the activities are contributing to improved health for vulnerable groups.

The Mid-Term Review of the plan was undertaken in 2022. This systems level evaluation reviewed the role of government as an enabler of change. The review included a community survey of over 700 Canberrans that has informed this draft action plan. It included advice relating to governance, leadership and collaboration. A shared vision and collective governance were identified as a key goal for the plan going forward.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation of programs will be an essential component of delivering the second action plan in the lead up to an impact evaluation at the end of the plan's 6 years.

Community feedback

The draft actions in the following pages have been developed with input from all ACT Government Directorates and build on feedback received by the community to date.

The ACT Government is seeking community feedback on the draft action plan to ensure actions are relevant to the needs of our community, in particular to those in our community who experience a greater likelihood of chronic disease. This includes people:

- who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- from LGBTIQ+ communities
- with lower socioeconomic status
- with disability
- living with obesity
- living with mental illness.

Draft Preventive Health Action Plan 2023-2025

Supporting children and families

Objective	Actions to achieve this	Intermediate/short term outcomes	Wellbeing Domain/ Indicator
Families are supported to optimise the healthy development of their children in the first 1000 days	<p>Deliver earlier and better supports for children and families during the first 1000 day period and increase awareness about the importance of the first 1000 days for child development</p> <p>Lead agency—CSD Support – CHS, ACTHD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents, carers and service providers have greater health literacy, awareness, knowledge and skills re. first 1000 days • Parents and carers increase use of services that support healthy child development 	HEALTH: Best Start to Life
More children are physically, socially and emotionally ready to start school	<p>Ensure all children have affordable access to quality early childhood education and care so they can successfully transition to school and experience improved lifelong education and wellbeing outcomes</p> <p>Lead agency—EDU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted access to preschool for 3-year-old children, prioritising children and families most in need • Children experience positive transitions with strong collaborative relationships across early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings and schools • Families are active partners in their children's learning prior to preschool 	HEALTH: Best Start to Life

Enabling active living

Objective	Actions to achieve this	Intermediate/short term outcomes	Wellbeing Domain/Indicator
More adults and children using active modes of transport	<p>Promote active travel through safer walking and cycling infrastructure, a better connected and maintained network, making active travel and bicycle parking easy and working with communities to support behaviour change*</p> <p>Lead agency – TCCS Supporting agency: CRA (City Renewal Precinct)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater awareness of, and interest in, active travel • Greater participation in active modes of travel • Increased availability and quality of active travel infrastructure e.g. footpaths, pedestrian crossings near schools 	ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY: Transport use and Access
More people participating in sport and active recreation across all stages of life	<p>Increase and promote active recreation opportunities for all Canberrans, including identifying barriers to utilising open spaces, nature and amenities*</p> <p>Lead agency – EPSDD Supporting agency: CRA (public recreation spaces city renewal precinct) CMTEDD Sport and Recreation, TCCS (public spaces and facilities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of green spaces, open urban spaces, recreational facilities and sports facilities • Increased use of walking paths and bikeways • Greater awareness of, and interest in, active recreation opportunities 	<p>ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY: Liveable City</p> <p>ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE: Connection to nature</p>
	<p>Increase the quality and quantity of living infrastructure, including tree canopy cover and surface permeability, to reduce urban</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-wide health and wellbeing is promoted through greater use of open spaces and active travel • Health risks from rising temperatures and heatwaves due to climate change and urban densification are reduced 	ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE: Climate

Objective	Actions to achieve this	Intermediate/short term outcomes	Wellbeing Domain/Indicator
	<p>heat and support the use of public spaces, including along active travel routes</p> <p>Lead agency—EPSDD Support – CRA</p>		resilient environment and community
	<p>Implement policies and professional development activities in schools that create and maintain supportive physical activity environments</p> <p>Lead agency – EDU Support - ACTHD, TCCS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical activity policies • Professional development activities/skills/knowledge • Communication activities and resources 	HEALTH: Healthy lifestyle

Increasing healthy eating

Objective	Actions to achieve this	Intermediate/short term outcomes	Wellbeing Domain/Indicator
Lower intakes of energy-dense, nutrient-poor (discretionary) foods and drinks - Increased consumption of vegetables	Implement evidence-based strategies to support healthier food and drink environments in the wider community Lead agency - ACTHD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthier food and drink environments in businesses, and junior sport (Healthier Choices Canberra [HCC] initiatives) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building and advocacy activities Policies, contractual arrangements that prioritise healthy food and drink environments Communications with community and partnerships formed 	HEALTH: Healthy lifestyle
	Implement evidence-based strategies that support a whole-school approach to creating and maintaining healthy food and drink environments in and around schools* Lead agency – EDU Support - ACTHD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthier food and drink environments in school settings 	HEALTH: Healthy lifestyle
	Improve the availability and promotion of free drinking water in public places, sports facilities and food outlets* Lead agency - TCCS Support – ACTHD, EPSDD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased availability and promotion of free drinking water All new drinking fountains fit for purpose (accessibility, dog requirements) and meet standards Consideration of need for drinking fountains included in public consultation for new public amenity upgrades 	HEALTH: Healthy lifestyle

Objective	Actions to achieve this	Intermediate/short term outcomes	Wellbeing Domain/Indicator
	<p>Continue to implement and monitor ACT healthy food and drink marketing policies on public buses and light rail; and explore opportunities to limit unhealthy food and drink marketing and sponsorship in ACT Government facilities and community settings including junior sports*</p> <p>Lead agency – TCCS (buses and light rail), ACTHD</p> <p>Support - CMTEDD Sport and Recreation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are less exposed to the promotion of unhealthy food and drink options when participating in junior sport Relevant ACT Government policies and contracts limit exposure to unhealthy food and drink marketing 	HEALTH: Healthy lifestyle
	<p>Strengthen urban design to enable easier access to community gardens, fruit and vegetable outlets, and healthy food and drinks in Canberra residential areas and limit the number of fast-food outlets around children's settings*</p> <p>Lead agency – EPSDD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACT Government urban design and planning principles and processes facilitate access to healthier food and drinks in community settings 	HEALTH: Healthy lifestyle
	<p>Undertake collaborative research to establish the prevalence and profile of households at risk of food insecurity in the ACT*</p> <p>Lead agency – ACTHD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and scoping of data linkage project with ANU Population Health exchange Identify potential actions 	<p>LIVING STANDARDS: Cost of Living</p> <p>HEALTH: Healthy lifestyle</p>

Reducing risky behaviours—smoking, alcohol, sexually transmitted infections (STI) and bloodborne viruses (BBV)

Objective	Actions to achieve this	Intermediate/short term outcomes	Wellbeing Domain/Indicator
Fewer people drinking at risky levels	<p>Increase promotion of the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines to prevent and reduce health risks associated with drinking alcohol</p> <p>Lead agency—ACTHD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of risky drinking guidelines 	HEALTH: Overall Health
	<p>Build a better picture of where alcohol-related harms occur in the ACT through geospatial mapping of emergency department data from the Driving Change study</p> <p>Lead agency—ACTHD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geospatial map Exploratory data analysis of space and time for presentations of alcohol-related harm in Emergency Departments 	HEALTH: Overall Health
	<p>Investigate options to address impacts of online alcohol orders and home delivery on health and wellbeing of Canberrans</p> <p>Lead agency—JACSD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts and potential future actions identified 	HEALTH: Overall Health
	<p>Support community and sports organisations to deliver health promotion programs and initiatives that prevent and reduce harms from alcohol*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness of risks associated with alcohol use Develop, implement and evaluate effective community-based programs 	HEALTH: Overall Health

Objective	Actions to achieve this	Intermediate/short term outcomes	Wellbeing Domain/Indicator
	Lead agencies—ACTHD, CMTEDD Sport & Recreation		
Minimise e-cigarette use in non-smokers, particularly adolescents and young adults	Develop and implement approaches that educate and inform Canberrans, in particular young people and school communities, to prevent and reduce e-cigarette use Lead agency—ACTHD, EDU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of E-cigarette harm Reduced appeal and availability of smoking products and opportunities. 	HEALTH: Overall Health
	Advocate for stronger national regulation of e-cigarette products and review ACT legislation to ensure current arrangements are contributing to minimising the harm caused by e-cigarettes Lead agency—ACTHD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant ACT legislation reviewed Appeal and availability of smoking products and opportunities is reduced Strengthened national regulations 	HEALTH: Overall Health
Lower rates of smoking among population groups at higher risk, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Increase support for women and their family to quit smoking during pregnancy, especially cohorts with high pregnancy smoking rates Lead agency—CHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved support mechanisms for women and families to quit smoking during pregnancy 	HEALTH: Overall Health
	Transition to a smoke-free Alexander Maconochie Centre Lead agency—JACSD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced appeal and availability of smoking products and opportunities. 	HEALTH: Overall Health

Objective	Actions to achieve this	Intermediate/short term outcomes	Wellbeing Domain/Indicator
	Investigate approaches to support people with mental illness to quit smoking Lead agencies—ACTHD and CSD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence-based approaches are identified, implemented and evaluated 	HEALTH: Overall Health
Achieve a daily smoking prevalence of 5% or less by 2030	Review ACT legislation to ensure current arrangements are contributing to minimising the harm caused by tobacco and smoking across our community Lead agency—ACTHD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant legislation is reviewed and enacted 	HEALTH: Overall Health
Fewer young people engaging in unsafe sex and fewer people with chronic diseases secondary to chronic blood-borne virus infection	Improve linkages between community STIBBV service providers and community organisations who support priority population groups (e.g. migrant support services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs) Lead agency—ACTHD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in STIBBV service system Improved linkages between community organisations and service providers Service level data and pathology testing data is routinely available Codesigned campaigns 	HEALTH: Overall Health

Objective	Actions to achieve this	Intermediate/short term outcomes	Wellbeing Domain/Indicator
	<p>Explore possibilities to improve data infrastructure so that service level data and pathology testing data is routinely available to inform health system and policy responses to STIs and BBVs*</p> <p>Lead agency—ACTHD</p>		
	<p>Engage service users and community members in the co-design of health promotion campaigns and education materials to reduce the health and social burden of STIs and BBVs</p> <p>Lead agency—ACTHD</p>		

Promoting healthy ageing

Objective	Actions to achieve this	Intermediate/short term outcomes	Wellbeing Domain/Indicator
To support positive ageing, more adults engaging in healthy and protective lifestyle behaviours related to their physical and mental health	Engage and support quality research to build the evidence base for healthy ageing initiatives, with a focus on the secondary prevention of chronic disease (Personality and Total Health Through Life 'PATH' study)* Lead agency – ACTHD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased evidence base to inform targeted programs and policies 	HEALTH: Overall Health and Life Expectancy
	Promote vaccination and cancer screening in the community* Lead agency – ACTHD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased early identification of chronic disease 	HEALTH: Overall Health, Healthy Lifestyle, Mental Health and Access to Health Services
	Deliver healthy homes for all ages by developing and implementing programs to improve the thermal comfort of homes and reduce energy hardship for low income or otherwise vulnerable households, including support for people with specific chronic conditions Lead agency—EPSDD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The health and wellbeing of renters, low-income and other vulnerable households is improved Instances of asthma and other respiratory illnesses caused by cold, damp, mould and gas appliances are reduced 	HOUSING AND HOME: Housing suitability

	<p>Support physical and mental health and facilitate healthy lifestyle behaviours in the workplace*</p> <p>Lead agency – CMTEDD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge and awareness of protective lifestyle behaviours including sleep, social connectedness, diet, exercise, etc. • Reduced risk factors for lifestyle-related chronic disease 	<p>HEALTH: Healthy Lifestyle</p>
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*Actions continuing from the ACT Preventive Health Action Plan 2020-2022

Glossary

ACTHD – ACT Health Directorate

CHS – Canberra Health Services

CMTEDD – Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

CSD – Community Services Directorate

EDU – Education Directorate

EPSDD – Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

JACSD – Justice and Community Safety Directorate

TCCS – Transport Canberra and City Services

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

ACT Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people. ACT Health respects their continuing culture and connections to the land and the unique contributions they make to the life of this area. ACT Health also acknowledges and welcomes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of the community we serve.

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