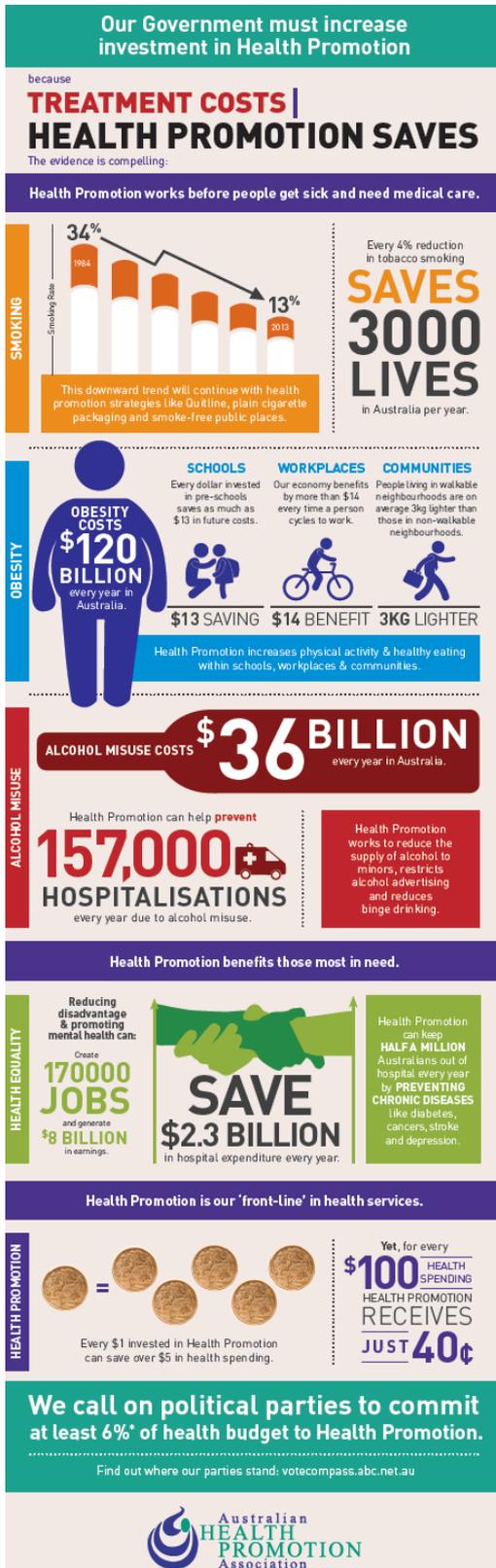


MEDIA STATEMENT: TREATMENT COSTS | HEALTH PROMOTION SAVES

The Australian Health Promotion Association (AHPA®) calls on the major political parties to get serious about supporting the health of all Australians, by committing to invest at least six per-cent of the health budget in to health promotion and prevention, in line with other OECD countries.



- The vast majority of Australia's spiralling health costs are caused by obesity, tobacco and alcohol. These preventable risk factors generate more than ten times the disease burden of any other risk factor.
- Our governments *must* know that health promotion is the answer. It not only saves thousands of lives every year, it also saves our money: for every dollar spent on health promotion, our health system will save five dollars within five years.
- Recent reports reveal that more than 30,000 Australian children are severely obese, and that previous research has almost certainly underestimated the extent of the problem, which costs Australia \$120 billion every year.
- This comes at a time when our government investment in preventive health has fallen to just 1.6% of overall health spending.
- Health promotion is arguably the most cost-effective prevention activity. Yet for every \$100 spent on 'health' in Australia, less than 40 cents goes towards health promotion.
- Internationally, Australia is losing the population health battle. Countries such as New Zealand, Canada and Finland allocate 6% of their health budget to public health activities. Unsurprisingly, by most measures, these countries are healthier and their overall health costs (per capita) are lower than that of Australia's.
- For jurisdictions within Australia that are investing in health promotion and prevention, it is paying off.

NSW example: The NSW Office of Preventive Health was set up in 2012 and immediately embarked on the Healthy Children Initiative, a comprehensive physical activity and healthy eating program reaching all pre-school and school children across the state. The NSW childhood obesity rate has now plateaued and is showing initial signs of falling, bucking the decades-long national and international trend of increasing obesity.

Victoria example: Healthy Together Victoria was established in 2011 to tackle the rising rates of overweight and obesity and related chronic disease. The program undertook a systems approach to prevention, with a focus on where people work, live, learn and play. These Healthy Together Communities reached at least 1.3 million Victorians, promoting healthy behaviours and creating supportive environments.

WA examples:

Tobacco: WA enjoys one of the lowest rates of smoking in Australia thanks to the work of organisations such as ACOSH, the Cancer Council and Healthway and programs such as Smarter than Smoking, QUIT etc.

Obesity: The Live Lighter campaign by WA Heart Foundation, Cancer Council and WA Department of Health demonstrated strong findings of impact.

The evidence is compelling: Treatment costs. Health promotion saves.

ENDS

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More information:

- The Australian Health Promotion Association represents individuals and organisations across Australia involved in the practice, research and study of health promotion. www.healthpromotion.org.au
- The “Prevention First” 2016 election platform provides a clear and realistic blueprint for increasing government investment in health promotion. <http://fare.org.au/prevention-1st/>
- **Source information:**
 - <http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/health-expenditure.htm>
 - www.aihw.gov.au/alcohol-and-other-drugs/ndshs-2013/
 - <http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30020085/magnus-reducingdiseaserisk-2009.pdf>
 - www.smh.com.au/national/health/obesity-costs-drag-down-national-good-20130308-2fr0b.html
 - www.web.mit.edu/workplacecenter/docs/Full%20Report.pdf
 - https://infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/pab/files/Our_Cities_National_Urban_Policy_Paper_2011.pdf
 - <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/>
 - <http://www.fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/research/36-Billion.pdf>
 - www.natsem.canberra.edu.au/storage/CHA-NATSEM%20Cost%20of%20Inaction.pdf
 - www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=6442468375
 - www.healthyamericans.org/reports/prevention08/
 - www.mja.com.au/journal/2016/204/6/australia-s-health-being-accountable-prevention
 - [Submission on the Australian National Preventive Health Agency Abolition Bill 2014 .pdf](#)
 - [The case of national health promotion policy in Australia: where to now?](#)
 - <http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129548150>
 - [Assessing cost effectiveness in prevention \(ACE Prevention\): final report.](#)
 - [A review of economic evaluations of tobacco control programs](#)
 - [Australia: the healthiest country by 2020 – Technical Report 2. Tobacco control in Australia: making smoking history](#)
 - [State of Preventive Health 2013](#)
 - [Health promotion success in Australia a note of warning](#)
 - [Health promotion: an integral discipline of public health](#)
 - [‘Killer Budget’ attacks prevention and primary health care.](#)
 - [Budget crises, health, and social welfare programmes](#)