



Review of the State Public Health Plan  
*South Australia: A Better Place to Live 2013*

# Overview of findings from the review

March 2018



Government  
of South Australia

SA Health

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## 1. Executive Summary

The review of the inaugural State Public Health Plan has provided an opportunity to both reflect on the achievements of public health planning since the implementation of the *South Australian Public Health Act, 2011* and gather feedback about the 2013 Plan to identify changes that need to be incorporated into the 2019-2024 State Public Health Plan. The review consultation process has been extensive. Key stakeholders have been provided with multiple opportunities to provide feedback to the review process, with over 180 individuals and organisations contributing.

Overall, feedback from the review highlighted the need for a shorter, more succinct Plan in the future that reflects the diversity of the South Australian population in its imagery and is supported by an online portal with elements (such as data) that are regularly updated and readily available supporting materials such as guidance documents, tools and case studies.

The 2019-2024 State Public Health Plan should maintain the focus on building a strong and sustainable public health planning system that leads to improved health and wellbeing for all South Australians. The purpose of the 2019-2024 Plan should be to drive a co-ordinated and consistent approach to public health action by having clear vision, goals, priorities, deliverables and targets relevant to a broad range of stakeholders.

The review found that the inaugural Plan engaged strongly with the Local Council audience but that many other public health stakeholders found it difficult to see themselves in the Plan or see the relevance of the Plan to their work. The development of this 2019-2024 Plan will provide an opportunity to engage closely with NGOs, State Government Departments, and professional associations as well as Local Councils, to mobilise future collective effort.

The review has shown that the 2013 State Public Health Plan has been successful in setting the strategic direction for public health action in the State and developed a strong foundation from which much has been achieved and the future State Public Health Plan can build upon. It is also recognised that system level change takes time and a sustained focus is needed. It is for these reasons that the review recommends that extensive changes are not required, but that updates are needed to reflect achievements, ensure that the Plan is relevant to a broader range of stakeholders and sets clear strategic direction for co-ordinated and consistent public health action over the next 5 years.

The review recommends that updates are made in relation to the:

- vision
- inclusion of a clear purpose and goal
- measurability of the Plan
- articulation of the roles and commitments of a broad range of key stakeholders (i.e. Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and other Government Departments in addition to SA Health and Local Councils), and
- governance structures for implementation and monitoring

## 2. Background

The State Public Health Plan 2013 was the first State Public Health Plan under the *South Australian Public Health Act, 2011*.

The Plan's vision, *South Australia: A Better Place to Live*, was supported by four strategic priorities:

1. Stronger and Healthier Communities and Neighbourhoods for All Generations
2. Increasing Opportunities for Healthy Living, Healthy Eating and Being Active
3. Preparing for Climate Change
4. Sustaining and Improving Public and Environmental Health Protection.

In addition to actions under the four strategic priorities, the Plan also included a number of system building priorities and actions to set the framework for action to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of South Australians.

Section 50 of the *South Australian Public Health Act, 2011* prescribes that the Minister must prepare and maintain a State Public Health Plan (the Plan) and that the Minister must review the Plan at least once in every five years. The inaugural Plan, was released in November 2013 and therefore needs to be reviewed and if required, an updated Plan in place by November 2018.

The 2019 Plan will set the strategic direction for public health for the next five years, incorporating feedback from the review process as well as having regard for data and actions outlined in Local Council's Regional Public Health Plans (RPHPs) and biennial reports, the South Australian Public Health Indicator Framework and public health planning achievements.

## 3. Consultation process and participants

The review of the 2013 State Public Health Plan occurred from October 2017 to February 2018, involving a wide range of stakeholders. As well as being a legislative requirement, the purpose of the review was to inform the development of the next State Public Health Plan and to provide an opportunity to engage with a range of stakeholders to consider achievements occurring over the past five years and consider any changes needed for the future. The review explored:

- Achievements
- The content and structure of the 2013 Plan and gaps,
- Aspects that need to be considered in the development of the next Plan.

Appendix 1 summarises the way in which key stakeholders were engaged in the consultation process through forums and invitations to provide written feedback. The consultation methods were tailored to each stakeholder. Diagram 1 summarises the review process and the key stakeholders involved.

Over 180 individuals and organisations provided feedback to the review process (Appendix 2). This included 29 Councils, 15 NGOs/professional associations and 12 Government departments. This extensive process has resulted in the collection of a large amount of data that is summarised in the findings below.

Diagram 1



## 4. Summary of findings

### 4.1 Commitments and achievements

The first part of the process involved the review of the actions outlined in the Action Plan for implementing the State Public Health Plan 2014-2016. This is an internal SA Health document that aimed to ensure SA Health (and particularly Public Health and Clinical Systems) was taking action on its commitments outlined in the State Public Health Plan. In the same way that Local Councils are required to undertake planning which is consistent with the State Public Health Plan, SA Health must also demonstrate how it is planning and working in ways which are consistent with the development of the State Public Health Plan and its priorities.

The Action Plan shows how SA Health is contributing to the implementation of the key priorities of the State Public Health Plan. The majority of the system building actions listed in the 2013 Plan are the responsibility of SA Health and the majority of these have or are being actioned. Almost half of the actions listed under the four strategic priorities also are clearly commitments that SA Health is responsible for actioning and all of these commitments have or are being actioned.

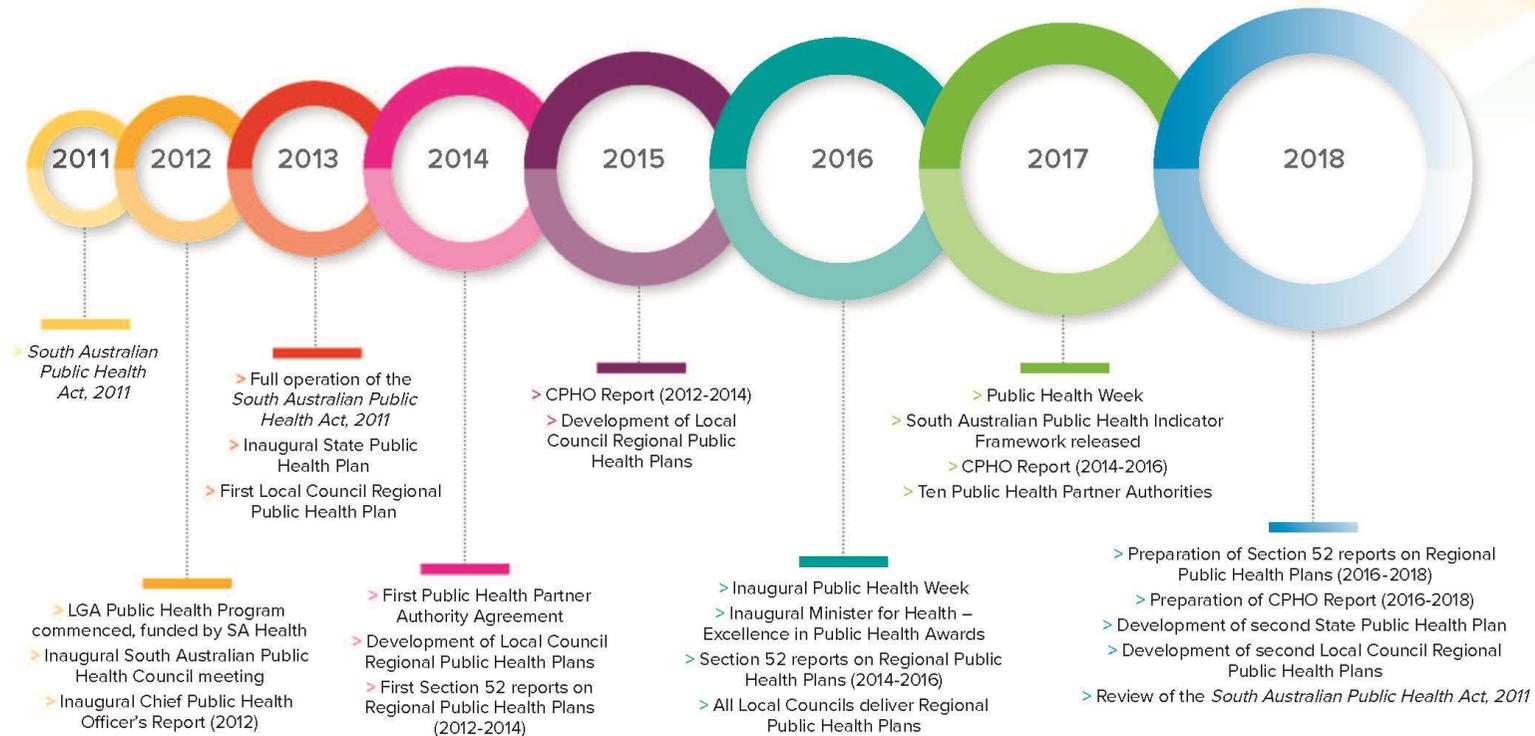
The implementation of the Plan and the Act has seen collaboration between SA Health, the Local Government Association (LGA) and Local Councils, Government Departments and NGOs, in the delivery of positive public health outcomes at both a local and state level. For the first time, Local Councils have developed Regional Public Health Plans (RPHPs) that assess and respond to the public health needs of their local communities and establish governance structures that support the implementation and evaluation of these plans. These collective efforts have resulted in both an increased profile and understanding of public health and wellbeing and the establishment of foundational structures that will be maintained and built upon in the next State Public Health Plan.

The ongoing focus on building and maintaining a strong public health planning system and working in partnership are essential to protecting and improving the health and wellbeing of South Australians and are themes that will continue into the 2019 Plan.

Diagram 2 shows the achievements of the building of the public health planning system since the implementation of the *South Australian Public Health Act, 2011*.

Diagram 2

# Building the Public Health Planning System 2011 - 2018



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## **4.2 Feedback about the content and structure of the 2013 Plan**

Feedback about the content and structure of the 2013 Plan was gathered from key stakeholders via workshops, meetings and written submissions. The findings from this part of the review are summarised below, under the key areas of the Plan.

### **Content**

Overall, the 2013 Plan has been recognised through the review as a comprehensive and informative document that included content as per the legislative requirements and set a strong foundation for future Plans. Due to the breadth of public health, it is difficult to cover all topics here, but there was feedback about content gaps that should be considered in the future Plan. It is recommended that the roles and responsibilities of a broader range of stakeholders are more clearly articulated, so that more agencies can 'see themselves in the Plan'. Other feedback suggested that future imagery needs to reflect the diversity of the South Australian population with a simpler English writing style to make the document more accessible to various audiences.

### **State of Public Health**

The *South Australian Public Health Act, 2011* states that the State Public Health Plan should 'comprehensively assess the state of public health in South Australia'. Whilst it is a legislative requirement and feedback indicated that the data provided was useful at the time of publication, by nature, this data went out of date quite quickly. It was also recognised that the level of detail in this section of the Plan could be reduced, have less of a focus on the burden of disease and a greater focus on the determinants of health and differences resulting from social disadvantage. Consideration should be given to linking this data more closely with the priorities and deliverables of the Plan as well as monitoring of public health outcomes and the South Australian Public Health Indicator Framework. Overwhelmingly, feedback from the review recommends that this section is shortened and that it would be more readily accessible, better utilised and more current if it was available online, on the SA Health website. This would ensure that up to date, relevant data is available in addition to that provided through the biennial Chief Public Health Officer's report.

### **Vision**

Feedback on the vision of the inaugural Plan, indicated that it was comprehensive, enabling a broad interpretation of public health. However, there was considerable comment that a more positive, bold and aspirational vision was needed to provide a strong framework for the next Plan. There was mixed opinions about whether the word 'health' should be included in a future vision, understanding the reasons why it was not included in the vision of the 2013 Plan. Instead of using the word 'health', terminology such as wellbeing, connection, liveability, happier and productivity were suggested to assist with describing what we want South Australia to look like in the future, to improve health and wellbeing. Stakeholders also recommended that the vision is more prominent and near to the front of the 2019 Plan.

### **Priorities**

The priorities of the 2013 Plan are generally viewed as still relevant and useful, with some small enhancements suggested. There is a sense that there is still a large amount of work to be done under the priorities and that a further five year focus on these priorities in the 2019-2024 State Public Health Plan would enable sustained effort and ongoing work in these areas, to achieve positive health and wellbeing outcomes. There was also considerable feedback that the priorities should be more measurable in the future. An additional priority focussing on continued work in building the state-wide public health system was also a frequent suggestion through the review. It was also suggested that

equity should either be a priority in its own right or underpin all of the priorities with greater recognition of the social determinants of health throughout. Suggestions for additional priorities included a focus on mental health and wellbeing, alcohol and drugs as well as injury prevention. The opportunity in the 2019 Plan is for the priorities to continue to be high level areas of focus that support collective action across a broad range of public health areas.

- **Priority 1 – Stronger and Healthier Communities and Neighbourhoods for All Generations**

This priority is well supported with broad agreement regarding the importance of and continued focus on creating healthy environments, through both physical and social infrastructure. This priority was strongly supported by Councils and NGOs, who see this work as a core aspect of their roles. There was a large amount of feedback recommending the removal of the wording 'generations' so as to recognise diversity in ability, gender and ethnicity as well as age. Suggestions for expanded content under this priority should be explored as the full Plan is developed.

- **Priority 2 – Increasing Opportunities for Healthy Living, Healthy Eating and Being Active**

Feedback indicated that there was a large amount of overlap between Priority 1 and Priority 2 and that this priority is actually a sub set or key action of Priority 1 and could be accommodated as such in the 2019 Plan. In relation to this priority, stakeholders expressed the need for greater leadership from State Government, particularly in relation to public health policies and interventions that are largely outside of the scope of their control (i.e. state wide nutrition and physical activity plans and limiting the marketing of unhealthy food to children). There were also suggestions for expanded content under this priority which should be further explored in the development of the full Plan.

- **Priority 3 – Preparing for Climate Change**

There was strong support for climate change as a priority but given that the impact of climate change cuts across all aspects of public health, much of the feedback to the review suggested that it should be reflected across all of the priorities. Feedback to the review also strongly suggested that 'adaptation' is added to the wording with 'preparing' or could be framed as 'climate resilience' to incorporate both aspects. The scope of climate change, as it is reflected in the 2013 Plan, should be expanded and more clearly related to the evidence base around climate change impacts in South Australia specifically.

- **Priority 4 – Sustaining and Improving Public Health and Environmental Health Protection**

Public and environmental health protection reflects the enduring, foundational and essential public health functions that are a core activity of public health. There was overwhelming support for the priority to be retained and suggested slight changes in wording and content under this priority should be considered as the 2019 Plan is developed.

### **Specific Actions**

The specific actions outlined in the 2013 Plan under the four priorities, as well as the system building actions, were helpful in highlighting particular strategies that would be implemented over the duration of the Plan. Feedback suggested that a valuable addition in the future would be to articulate the role of a broader range of public health stakeholders such as Non-Government Organisations and other State Government Departments in addition to SA Health and Local Councils.

## **Structure**

While respondents recognised the 2013 Plan contains a lot of useful information, the majority of feedback in relation to the structure of the Plan was about its length and that a future Plan would benefit from being a more concise document, with a clearer plan structure and use of infographics. This could include a visual summary of the Plan (Plan on a page) as well as the vision and goals of the Plan being included earlier in the document. It was suggested that some of the background information and resources could be included as online components or appendices. The summary document was well used as an overview and a similar document recommended for future Plans.

## **Use of the 2013 Plan**

Feedback about use of the 2013 Plan varied significantly across stakeholders involved in the review consultation process. Those working in State Government spoke of its value as a reference document, advocacy tool and its value in providing an authorising environment for their work. The 'system building' elements of the Plan were useful in enabling and promoting discussion and partnership development opportunities, especially with Local Councils, but also between SA Health and other organisations. Councils reported using the Plan in the development of their Regional Public Health Plans and in establishing regional priorities. However, once these plans had been developed, the State Public Health Plan was used much less regularly. Those who had not used the Plan stated it was not relevant to them, was missing key stakeholders or was not accessible due to its length.

## **4.3 Other feedback that should be considered in the 2019 Plan**

### **Guide for work**

Feedback from the review suggested that a future Plan could be a better guide for work by being clearer about the vision, goals, priorities, deliverables and targets and enabling a broad range of stakeholders to determine their role in implementation. This would help the Plan achieve its purpose of driving consistent and co-ordinated action to improve health and wellbeing for all South Australians. Tools such as information about return on investment and 'best bang for buck' deliverables were also identified as key components to assist stakeholders as well as improving the accessibility of the Plan by including readily available online components.

### **Challenges**

Most of the challenges identified in the review are in relation to workforce capacity and resourcing for public health as well as governance structures for implementation of the future Plan. It was well recognised that it will be challenging but not impossible for the next Plan to be relevant to a broader range of public health stakeholders and be an active document that is constantly referred to and drives co-ordinated and consistent action. Other identified challenges included incorporating the public voice in the 2019 Plan and more clearly demonstrating the impacts and outcomes of the Plan.

## 5. Recommendations

The recommendations from the review of the 2013 State Public Health Plan are included below in relation to changes that should be considered in the development of the 2019-2014 State Public Health Plan. The review has shown that the 2013 State Public Health Plan set a strong foundation and its overall intent is still relevant and important. Therefore the following recommendations highlight updates that could be made, but given its legislative foundation, the overall strategic direction and goal of the 2013 Plan remains sound.

- Overall a more concise document is recommended that includes easily accessible online components and supporting tools.
- The purpose of the 2019 Plan needs to be clearly articulated and more traditional plan structure should include a visual summary of the architecture of the Plan (i.e. Plan on a page).
- The imagery of the 2013 Plan needs to be updated to reflect the diversity of the South Australian population.
- A shortened section on the State of Public Health is recommended, that focusses on the determinants of health and links to the priorities of the Plan and online data sources that are updated more regularly than the Plan.
- Create a new, bold and aspirational vision that is articulated early in the 2019 Plan and uses terms such as wellbeing, connection, liveability and productivity to describe what we want a healthier South Australia to look like in the future.
- Make only minor changes to the priorities to reduce overlap and include a strategic focus on system building. Ensure that the priorities are measurable, with targets linked to the South Australian Public Health Indicator Framework.
- Ensure principles such as equity and partnerships are embedded across all of the priorities and consider ways in which actions relating to the public health impacts of climate change can be included across all priorities.
- Instead of specific actions, outline high level deliverables or commitments under the priorities that are measurable and relevant to a broader audience of public health stakeholders in addition to Local Councils and SA Health.
- Greater consideration should be given to establishing processes for implementation governance, monitoring and delivery of the Plan.
- Use information from the analysis of Regional Public Health Plans and Section 52 reports to inform minor changes to the priorities and key deliverables.
- Continue the focus on building a strong foundation for a sustainable state wide public health system.
- Consider the ways in which other priority issues raised in the review consultation process can be incorporated into the 2019 Plan.

Adopting these recommendations from the review of the inaugural State Public Health Plan, will enable the development of a future Plan that is relevant to a broader range of stakeholders, has accountability through links to the South Australian Public Health Indicator Framework and will be a driver for co-ordinated and consistent public health action for the next five years. Through the review

process, other Government Departments, NGOs and other agencies have expressed their interest in being engaged further in the development of the 2019-2024 Plan.

## 6. Next steps

The feedback from the review process is being used to develop the content and structure for the draft framework for the State Public Health Plan 2019-2024. This draft framework will be available for consultation in May 2018. Following this, a full draft Plan will be developed and consultation will once again occur with a broad range of stakeholders before the Plan is finalised and released by November 2018.

## 7. Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Consultation methods used with key stakeholders

Stakeholder group	Consultation methods
Public Health Act Implementation Group (PHAIG), SA Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Face to face consultation throughout the review process</li> </ul>
Public Health and Clinical Systems (PH&CS) staff, SA Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feedback on SA Health Action Plan commitments</li> <li>- Externally facilitated staff briefing and consultation forums</li> <li>- Individual feedback (via meetings and online survey)</li> </ul>
Other SA Health stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Office of the Ageing, Office of the Chief Psychiatrist, Drug and Alcohol Services SA, Aboriginal Health Strategy</li> <li>- Local Health Networks (LHNs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Briefed individually to explain the review process and seek advice about the best way to consult with areas</li> <li>- Individual consultation sessions held with Office of the Ageing, Office of the Chief Psychiatrist and Aboriginal Health Strategy</li> <li>- Letters sent to the CEOs of LHNs</li> </ul>
South Australian Public Health Council (SAPHC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation at November meeting</li> <li>- Opportunity for out of session feedback</li> </ul>
Local Government Association and Local Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letters sent to the CEOs of all Local Councils and the LGA as well as an LGA Circular and Local Government Relations and Policy (LGR&amp;P) Communique</li> <li>- Externally facilitated consultation workshop for Councils staff</li> </ul>
Public Health Partner Authorities (PHPAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letters sent to the CEOs of PHPAs and emails sent to PHPA officer contacts</li> </ul>
Primary Health Networks (PHNs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letters sent to the CEOs of the PHNs</li> </ul>
Other Government Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letters sent to the CEOs of 13 Government Departments</li> </ul>
Non-Government Organisations, Universities and Professional Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letters sent to the CEOs of 51 Non-Government Organisations, Universities and Professional Associations</li> </ul>

**Appendix 2 - Summary of individuals and organisations who contributed to the review consultation process**

<b>Stakeholder group</b>	<b>Feedback sources</b>
SA Health	<p>Aboriginal Health Strategy</p> <p>Drug and Alcohol Services SA (DASSA)</p> <p>Emergency Management Unit (EMU)</p> <p>Office of the Chief Psychiatrist</p> <p>Office of the Ageing (OFTA)</p> <p>Public Health Act Implementation Group (PHAIG)</p> <p>Public Health and Clinical Systems (PH&amp;CS) staff</p> <p>SA Ambulance Service (SAAS)</p>
Local Health Networks (LHNs)	<p>Central Adelaide Local Health Network</p> <p>Women's &amp; Children's Local Health Network</p>
Local Government Association and Local Councils	<p>27 different Councils were represented at the Council consultation workshop. Additionally, the following Councils and Council networks provided written submissions:</p> <p>City of Adelaide</p> <p>City of Holdfast Bay</p> <p>City of Marion</p> <p>City of Onkaparinga</p> <p>City of Playford</p> <p>City of Port Adelaide Enfield</p> <p>District Council of Grant</p> <p>Eastern Health Authority (EHA)</p> <p>Local Government Association</p> <p>Northern Regional (Barossa, Adelaide Plains, Gawler and Light Councils)</p> <p>Social Planners Network</p> <p>Southern and Hills LGA</p>
Other Government Departments	<p>Department for Child Protection (DCP)</p> <p>Department for Correctional Services (DCS)</p>

	<p>Department for Education &amp; Child Development (DECD)</p> <p>Department of Communities &amp; Social Inclusion (DCSI)</p> <p>Department of Environment, Water &amp; Natural Resources (DEWNR)</p> <p>Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI)</p> <p>Department of Primary Industries &amp; Regions (PIRSA)</p> <p>Department of the Premier &amp; Cabinet (DPC)</p> <p>Environment Protection Authority (EPA)</p> <p>Office for Recreation &amp; Sport (ORS)</p> <p>Safework SA, Attorney-General's Department</p> <p>SA Mental Health Commission</p>
Primary Health Networks (PHNs)	Adelaide Primary Health Network
Non-Government Organisations	<p>Australian Medical Association (AMA)</p> <p>Council of the Ageing (COTA SA)</p> <p>Doctors for the Environment Australia</p> <p>Healthy Cities Onkaparinga</p> <p>Heart Foundation</p> <p>Nursery and Garden Industry of South Australia (NGISA)</p> <p>SA Public Health Consortium (Public Health Association of Australian (PHAA), South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS), Australian Health Promotion Association (AHPA), Anti-Poverty Network, People's Health Movement - Australia (PHM Oz))</p> <p>Sexual Health Information Networking and Education (SHINE SA)</p> <p>Walking SA</p>
Universities and Professional Associations	<p>Australian Institute of Landscape Architects - SA Chapter (AILA SA)</p> <p>Dietitians Association of Australia</p> <p>Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)</p> <p>University of Adelaide (School of Public Health)</p> <p>University of Adelaide (Faculty of Health &amp; Medical Sciences)</p>

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## For more information

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