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Dear Dr Brushe, Dr Earl and Ms Blythman

Thank you for the South Australian Public Health Consortium 2026 Election Platform and for hosting the pre-election Virtual Forum, which was the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Chris Picton MP, was pleased to participate in again. This remains a great opportunity to discuss issues that are important across preventive and public health in South Australia.

The work of the Consortium should be acknowledged, and we thank each of your organisations for the work you do across public and preventive health, health promotion, research and advocacy to promote the health and wellbeing of South Australians.

As you are aware, in February 2024, the Malinauskas Labor Government delivered on our 2022 election commitment to establish a dedicated preventive health agency - Preventive Health SA. Bringing together Wellbeing SA and parts of Drug and Alcohol Services SA in a single independent agency to strengthen the prevention agenda in South Australia.

The prevention priorities include tobacco, vaping, obesity, mental health, suicide prevention, alcohol and other drugs, and the determinants of health.

Preventive Health SA is leading evidence-informed, innovative and integrated action to prevent and reduce the burden of non-communicable health conditions and improve health equity across South Australia and future generations.

We have also recently appointed an independent, experienced and expert advisory Council to deliver strategic advice about preventable health issues.

Along with supporting the Federal Albanese Government's national reforms, we banned non-therapeutic vapes for under 18s, implemented new smoke free areas, became the first state to ban nicotine pouches, banned vending machine sales of tobacco, delivered new

education campaigns in our schools and rolled out hard-hitting media advertising campaigns targeted specifically at young people about the harms of vaping.

Accompanied with our investment in a dedicated taskforce within Consumer and Business Services to tackle the illicit trade.

This has seen South Australia's tough response to tobacco and vapes rated the best in the nation, given an A+ in a national scorecard released by the Australian Council on Smoking and Health last year.

But we're not stopping there, because it's not just tobacco that's leading to adverse preventable health outcomes in this state.

Obesity is now the leading risk factor in preventable health conditions – overtaking smoking. Latest data reveals 66% of South Australian adults and 37.1% of children are overweight or living with obesity. Modelling indicates that if no action is taken, the number of South Australians living with overweight or obesity is expected to grow by an additional 1,900 children and 48,000 adults over the next five years.

That's why the Malinauskas Labor Government has been taking action against obesity. We became the first State to ban junk food advertising on public buses, trains and trams from 1 July 2025, reducing the exposure of children to unhealthy food.

In partnership with the Cancer Council SA we also rolled out the Live Lighter public health education campaign raising awareness about the health impacts of obesity with support range of resources to encourage healthier eating and physical activity.

The Minister has also backed calls from health experts to make Health Star Ratings mandatory on all packaged foods and advocated on the government's behalf for other improvements at a national level regarding food regulation.

Preventive Health SA have also started work on a State Obesity Plan looking at further actions Preventive Health SA and other South Australian Government Agencies can take at a state level, in support of the National Obesity Plan.

We've also been working on other prevention priorities including delivering the Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy, and mental health running a number of campaigns and initiatives to bring awareness and support to South Australians.

Looking forward Preventive Health SA are currently preparing the first Preventive Health SA Strategic Plan outlining priorities, policies and areas for action over the next few years and I hope that we continue to take important action to improve South Australian's health.

As you are aware and have been involved in work is also underway on the next State Public Health Plan, providing is a blueprint for action on the State's public health priorities over the next few years.

We know that South Australian children are regularly exposed to unhealthy food and drink advertising. Data from Cancer Council SA shows that almost 80 per cent of food and drink advertisements on South Australian buses promote unhealthy food and drinks.

As we announced we committed to an independent monitoring and evaluation strategy that Preventive Health SA are commissioning to assess the impact of the policy and its effectiveness in reducing the exposure of the advertising of unhealthy food and drinks. This will take place 12 months from policy commencement and the results may inform a policy review process to improve implementation or effectiveness.

Regarding workforce, as you are aware as part of our commitment to establish Preventive Health SA, we brought together staff from across Wellbeing SA and parts of Drug and Alcohol Services SA into a single independent agency to strengthen the prevention agenda in South Australia.

Both Public Health and Preventive Health SA are committed to enhancing the health and wellbeing of all South Australians. To do this work, they partner with a number of other Government Agencies but also work with Local Government across South Australia.

Preventive Health SA has been partnering with South Australian Local Councils to co-invest in the planning, implementation and evaluation of local Wellbeing Hubs, supporting community physical, mental and social wellbeing.

They have also been supporting the employment of Preventive Health Project Officers last year these positions were employed in the Riverland and Murraylands regions through two new partnerships to imbed preventive health as part of these Councils.

As you are aware the Department for Health and Wellbeing are currently finalising the next State Public Health Plan and work is now underway to prepare the Strategic Preventive Health Plan, which are two important Plans to outline the work of the Government across prevention and public health over the next few years.

We will continue to ensure that these important health services have the appropriate resources to ensure delivery of important initiatives and work in partnership with Local Government and other State Government Agencies to promote good health.

The Malinauskas Labor Government's tough response to tobacco and vapes in South Australia has been the best in the nation.

Our leadership has been demonstrated across a range of new measures and laws we have introduced including:

- Investing \$16 million in a new taskforce within CBS to tackle the illicit trade.
- Implemented nation leading penalties of up to \$6.6 million.
- Implemented a raft of new smoke and vape free public areas
- Banned the sale of therapeutic vapes to under 18s.
- Became the first state in the nation to ban highly addictive nicotine pouches.
- Banned vending machine sales of tobacco products in public areas.
- Delivered new education campaigns in schools.
- Rolled out hard-hitting media advertising campaigns about the harms of vaping.

The benefits of the measures that the Federal and State Labor Governments have introduced have been stark - statistics from SAHMRI found 2024 vaping rates among 15 to 29-year-olds reduced from 15.1% in 2023 to 10.8% in 2024.

We've also seen a significant drop in suspensions relating to vaping at SA schools.

Smoking continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in South Australia, with 28 South Australians dying every week from tobacco-related diseases.

Smoking has an estimated \$2.3 billion impact on the state's economy each year in associated health costs.

We know there is still more to be done, and we continue to explore further action to strengthen our action against tobacco.

This work is underway as part of the South Australian Tobacco Control Strategy, released by our government in 2023 which aims to reduce daily smoking prevalence in South Australians from 9.8% in 2021 to 6% in 2027.

The South Australian Tobacco Control Strategy 2023-2027 outlines South Australia's commitment to examining the merits of the 'smoke-free generation' model. Preventive Health SA is conducting an analysis and providing advice to enable the Government to consider how a smoke-free generation model could be implemented.

To consider this model it is important that action is taken to address the illicit tobacco market and this is something that our government have remained committed to and continue to address.

Our government also believe that education is the best investment a government can make to change lives and ensure that everyone in South Australia has access to a secure future.

Our generational changes are delivering improved results, greater opportunities, better supported students and more empowered teachers.

We will continue our efforts to make every school a great school because we want to ensure that our young people have everything they need for a great education, no matter where they live.

We have made the biggest change to education in a generation with the introduction of Three-Year-Old Preschool. We've also banned smart phones in schools, banned vapes for children and spearheaded the social media ban for children under 16.

We acknowledge it is important to fuel our children's minds and that's why in the 2023 State Budget we committed \$5.1 million to boost the breakfast provider funding which has since seen support flow on to some of the state's most disadvantaged schools.

We also acknowledge that the SA Parliament Social Development Committee in the last sitting week of 2025 tabled a report with a number of recommendations for the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, including consideration of model of school lunch programs.

The Committee acknowledged the success of trial initiatives such as Swallowcliffe Primary School, which the Committee members got to visit the school.

Government will evaluate and consider the recommendations made by the Social Development Committee in their recent report.

Our government have acknowledged that the algal bloom is a disconcerting natural disaster and recognise the grief and uncertainty South Australians have felt regarding it. The Malinauskas Labor Government have been listening, acting, and been committed to supporting affected communities and industries.

This includes holding a number of community forums on the Algal Bloom around the state which have played an important part in the Government's response, to allow people to come and question us about a matter that affects us all.

SA Health's team of public health experts, led by Professor Nicola Spurrier, has been providing evidence-based health advice to Government and direct to the community since the early stages of the bloom.

Our \$102.5 million investment into the Algal Bloom, in partnership with the Albanese Federal Government, also reflects our commitment to do everything we can to tackle the challenge. This investment has included more than \$37 million for science and research, monitoring and also environmental resilience and recovery.

The Malinauskas Labor Government delivered on our previous election commitment providing \$800,000 to SACOSS over the last four years, and the Minister for Health and Wellbeing was pleased to visit Dr Catherine Earl and the team at SACOSS at the start of this month as they launched their website for People's Health Voice.

This is a community-designed initiative that ensures lived experience helps shape how healthcare is delivered across our state. This website makes it easier than ever for South Australians to engage, be heard, and have their experiences embedded in how healthcare is designed and delivered.

The Minister announced during his visit that our government are continuing funding of \$800,000 to support the People's Health Voice going forward. This funding commitment ensures the People's Health Voice can continue its vital work, grow its reach, and remain a strong, independent voice for the community. It reflects our government's belief that a stronger health system is built with South Australians, not just for them.

We look forward to continuing to work with PHAA, SACOSS and PHPA on future opportunities to improve the health of South Australians.

You may also like to keep up to date with our other 2026 State Election Policy Commitments here: <https://www.sa.alp.org.au/our-policies>.

Once again, thank you for your ongoing contribution to the state.

Yours sincerely

SA Labor Team