07 August 2026

The PHAA VIC Branch is calling on political parties to discuss their public health agenda for Victoria's 2026 State Election and political commitment to several identified election priority areas.

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is recognised as the principal non-government organisation for public health in Australia. Its mission is to drive better health outcomes through increased knowledge, better access and equity, evidence informed policy and effective population-based practice in public health.

In the lead-up to this year's state election, the PHAA VIC Branch will be assessing how aligned each party's policies are with our election priorities and the commitment of our potential future representatives and leaders to preventive health and health promotion.

We will be developing an Election Scorecard, which will rank political parties according to their policies on a range of key public health issues in Victoria and alignment with our four election priorities:

- **Invest 5% of total government health expenditure on preventive health by 2030.**
- **Maintain the independence of VicHealth.**
- **Ensure 5-year funding for local public health units to deliver successful population health and health protection outcomes for their community.**
- **Establish and fund a Victorian public Health Officer training program.**

We intend to publicly release and distribute the Election Scorecard to our members/key stakeholders, as well as conduct a campaign to assist them to make an informed voting choice.

We encourage your political party to respond to the questions against our top four asks on the next pages by **11th September 2026** to help inform our Election Scorecard. We have provided a template for responses that you may wish to use. In early October, we will release the Election Scorecard to indicate how each party's policies align with our four election campaign focus areas.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important process. The PHAA VIC Branch looks forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

The PHAA VIC Branch

Public Health Association AUSTRALIA

Victorian Election 2026 Policy Priorities: Response

Priority 1: Invest 5% of total government health expenditure on preventive health by 2030	
Why? • All Victorians should have the best opportunity to live healthy and full lives, regardless of where they live, their personal identity or circumstances, or their stage of life. • 38% of illness, disease and early deaths can be prevented, with many Victorians belonging to the priority populations who are most at risk. • The impact of physical and mental illness on Victorians and the Victorian State hospital system must be reduced to ensure long term viability. Therefore, the Victorian government must increase preventive health spend to 5% of the State's overall health budget.	
?	***If elected, does your party commit to investing 5% of total government health expenditure on preventive health by 2030?***
Response	The Liberals and Nationals' health policies focus on keeping people out of hospital to ease the burden on an overstretched acute system and improve health and wellbeing. Investment in preventive health is a key component of this and we have had preliminary discussions with stakeholders about the most effective models. If we have the privilege of forming government, every proposal will be viewed through the lens of rigorous costing, the budget position we inherit and, above all, whether it delivers better health outcomes for all Victorians.

Priority 2: Maintain the independence of VicHealth

Why?

- Independence from government has allowed VicHealth to grow into an innovative, effective and world-leading health promotion organisation, trusted by the communities and organisations it works with.
- As an independent health promotion agency, VicHealth thinks and plans beyond election cycles to tackle long term and significant health challenges of the future, while driving innovation.
- VicHealth uses the latest evidence to develop new approaches that position Victoria to respond effectively to emerging health risks.
- VicHealth is a world leader in tackling the health impacts of harmful industries like vaping, tobacco, gambling and alcohol.

Therefore, the independence of VicHealth must be maintained to preserve its critical role and unique contribution to the Victorian health system.

?	***If elected, does your party commit to supporting the independence of VicHealth?***
Response	VicHealth has pioneered health promotion for decades including world-leading achievements in prevention, education, awareness and research with bipartisan support. The Opposition supports community-based health initiatives and has been critical of the Labor Government's decision to effectively abolish the VicHealth model. The Opposition has had productive discussions about the ongoing role of VicHealth with the current CEO of VicHealth Anna Peeters as recently as August.

Priority 3: Ensure at least 5-year funding for Local Public Health Units to deliver successful population health and health protection outcomes for their communities	
Why? • Nine Local Public Health Units (LPHUs) have been established in Victoria. • LPHUs play a critical role in providing locally driven, coordinated efforts to protect and improve health and wellbeing of their communities. This results in the identification of health needs specific to their community, which are addressed in a place-based way. • Commitment to strengthen LPHUs and their vital role in health promotion, disease prevention and health protection of Victorian communities is vital. **Therefore, ongoing funding to maintain and consolidate the role of LPHUs in public health infrastructure within Victoria must be guaranteed for at least 5 years.**	
?	***If elected, does your party commit to a minimum five-year funding for Local Public Health Units (LPHUs) to deliver local health promotion, protection and prevention activities?***
Response	If the Liberals and Nationals have the privilege of forming government, we will immediately undertake a comprehensive review of all areas of the Victorian health system. Our focus will be on reducing surgery waiting lists, workforce attraction and retention and finding better ways to manage ambulance response and emergency department demand. Investment in preventive health is a key component of keeping people out of the acute system and managing growing demand. Every proposal will be viewed through the lens of rigorous costing, the budget position we inherit and, above all, whether it delivers better health outcomes for all Victorians.

Priority 4: Develop a Victorian Public Health Officer Training Program	
Why? • The State of Victoria must prepare for an increasing number of significant health emergencies in an increasingly unstable global environment. • A Victorian-based, Public Health Officer training program will deliver highly skilled public health practitioners (doctors and other professionals) who understand the health and wellbeing needs of Victorians and be ready to respond to new and evolving public health crises. **Therefore, Victoria requires urgent government action to establish a state-based public health training program as part of a robust and emergency-ready public health infrastructure.**	
?	***If elected, does your party commit to developing a Victorian Public Health Officer Training program?***
Response	Our initial focus will be on reducing surgery waiting lists, workforce attraction and retention and finding better ways to manage ambulance response and emergency department demand. We would very much like to keep the door open for ongoing discussions. However, with little more than two months until the election, the window for specific commitments such as this has effectively closed.