

Media Release



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Invest in Public Health Workforce now, before the next pandemic hits

Chief Health Officers and public health leaders from across Australia will [on 7 December outline their ideas for the future of Australia's Public Health Workforce](#) in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, a nearly spent workforce, and upheaval in the university sector.

Dr Kerry Chant PSM (NSW), Prof Brett Sutton (VIC) and Dr James Smith (QLD) among others will focus their attention on ensuring the development of the future public health experts, in a forum organised by the Public Health Association of Australia in partnership with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and the Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine (AFPHM).

With the pandemic far from over and the next one around the corner, now is the time to plan for and commit resources to developing the next generation of public health leaders, PHAA CEO, Adjunct Prof Terry Slevin said.

"We can't expect an immediate investment in the public health workforce unless we present a clear plan. Every cent will be hard fought and won.

"It's an essential time to boost our hardcore expertise. We're calling on the Commonwealth and all the states and territories to invest in Australia's future. National Cabinet has twice committed to advance investment in public health workforce, but so far nothing has happened. Action is now urgently needed. We need to get cracking."

"In our efforts in 'Closing the gap', it is essential that we strengthen the cultural safety and Aboriginal health expertise of our public health workforce," Dr Megan Campbell from NACCHO said.

"There must be training and leadership opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and recognition of the important role of ACCHOs in keeping communities safe and healthy."

"Public health doctors have never been more prominent in Australia – yet there is an urgent undersupply of qualified Public Health Physicians," said Professor Robyn Lucas, President of the Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine (AFPHM).

"Unless this is addressed and training positions funded and filled, there risks a major leadership vacuum."

More than 420 people have signed up to the national meeting where key issues will be discussed and a plan developed. But a key ingredient is investment from all Australian governments.

The [Public Health Workforce is one aspect](#) of the PHAA's 2022 federal election campaign.

The webinar runs 12pm-2pm AEDT. [Click here for the list of speakers](#), and registration details.

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