



Healthy Cities Australia: Policy priorities for the 2025 Federal Election

Healthy People. Healthy Cities

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World Health
Organization



Acknowledgement of Country

Healthy Cities Australia head office is located in Dharawal land and acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work. We pay our respect to Past, Present and Emerging Elders.

About Healthy Cities Australia

Healthy Cities Australia believes that healthy people are the foundation of strong communities and healthy cities, places that support positive health and well-being. Healthy cities result from healthy public policy and empowering individuals through public health initiatives that promote well-being and drive positive change. Guided by our core values of integrity, collaboration, equity and inclusivity, we work in partnership with local government, health care providers and other community organisations to develop and support action that prevents chronic disease and addresses the social determinants of health.

Key contact

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Most of the Australian population live in urban areas, making cities uniquely positioned to address the growing burden of noncommunicable diseases. By implementing policies that reduce exposure to risk factors, cities play a key role in improving public health.

Healthy Cities Australia advocates for all political parties to make health and well-being a top priority in their election policies. To ensure the health of all Australians and future generations, we call for commitments to the following priorities:

1. First Nations People's Health

The health disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians remains unacceptably large. Addressing the health inequities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples requires new approaches that prioritise self-determination, respect for First Nations knowledges, cultural expression, and a deep connection to Country.

Healthy Cities Australia supports the delivery of health services to First Nations people through Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), recognising their deep community connection and their role in promoting self-determination. ACCHOs are positioned to address cultural considerations in the provision of health services including noncommunicable disease prevention and management, ensuring a holistic and effective approach.

Commit to increasing funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.

2. Australian Centre for Disease Control

Addressing Australia's most significant health challenge – noncommunicable diseases – demands a stronger emphasis on disease prevention and improving food systems. The Australian Centre for Disease Control should be a permanent, fit-for-purpose centre, focused on tackling both infectious diseases and the national epidemic of noncommunicable diseases.

Commit to establishing a fit-for-purpose Australian Centre for Disease Control to take immediate action to prevent and manage noncommunicable diseases.

3. Healthy Eating and Food Security

The current food system is failing to provide healthy diets for all, contributing to food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms - undernutrition; micronutrient deficiencies; and diet-related noncommunicable diseases.

[Healthy Cities Australia](#) partners with organisations, community groups and funding bodies, to develop and support the delivery of public health programs focused on healthy eating and food security. Our programs include [Cook Chill Chat](#), [The Dinner Table Project](#) and [Food Fairness Illawarra](#).

Healthy Cities Australia calls for the implementation of the [National Preventive Health Strategy](#), and [National Obesity Strategy](#) including government-led mandatory policies such as Health Star Ratings front-of-pack food labelling, restricting the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages and a levy on sugar-sweetened beverages.

Commit to fully funding and implementing the National Preventive Health Strategy, and National Obesity Strategy including evidence-based community-led initiatives.

4. Physical Activity and Active Transport

To improve public health and reduce the burden of noncommunicable diseases, investments must be made in physical activity and active transport. This includes developing safe, accessible infrastructure for walking, cycling, and public transport, as well as promoting policies that encourage active commuting.

[Healthy Cities Australia](#) partners with organisations, community groups and funding bodies to develop and support the delivery of public health programs focused on physical activity and active transport. Our programs include [Community Walking Programs](#), [More than a Cyclist](#), [Active In-Betweens](#), and [Play Illawarra](#).

Healthy Cities Australia calls for the prioritisation of physical activity and making active transport the easy, convenient choice for more Australians. This will foster healthier lifestyles, reduce traffic congestion, and contribute to a cleaner, more sustainable environment.

Commit to investing in safe, accessible infrastructure for walking and cycling, while reducing the cost of, and expanding public transport options.

5. Community Wellbeing

Strong social connections are essential to our mental, physical health and overall well-being. The growing issues of social isolation and loneliness, particularly among adolescents and older people, have become a major public health concern.

[Healthy Cities Australia](#) partners with organisations, community groups and funding bodies to develop and support the delivery of public health programs focused on community wellbeing. Our programs include [Breathe Better Illawarra](#), our [Community Walking Programs](#) and [Cook Chill Chat](#).

Healthy Cities Australia calls for action to improve community wellbeing by prioritising interventions that foster social connections and create inclusive, supportive environments.

Commit to investing in community activities and initiatives to improve community wellbeing, reduce isolation, including evidence-based community-led initiatives.

CALL TO ACTION

Healthy Cities Australia calls on all political parties to prioritise the health and wellbeing of every Australian by committing to five key areas. Every policy decision shapes the health of our communities, and we need bold, immediate commitments to create a healthier, more equitable Australia.

We urge policymakers to take decisive action: invest in prevention, fund community-led initiatives, and create lasting policy change.