



Public Health Association
AUSTRALIA

7/12/2023

RE: National Sport Plan Consultation Paper

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

PHAA commends the National Sport Plan Consultation Paper's overarching vision, inclusive principles and the identified priority areas. We acknowledge the social, physical, and mental benefits of participating in and watching sport.

However, we note that the Consultation Paper conflates physical activity and sport, when in fact these are two different terms. Sport is one way people can be physically active, but physical activity also includes all movement like during leisure time, for transport, or as part of a person's work.⁽¹⁾ The Consultation Paper certainly does not encompass the full breadth of physical activity.

To see earnest improvement in physical activity levels, one can refer to the [National Preventive Health Strategy](#) (NPHS), which calls for physical activity action in a specific National guiding document and numerous other policy achievements that could begin to be made now (see page 57 of the NPHS). The NPHS is a broadly supported document, yet we are two years into its nine-year timeline and very little progress has been made to implement the policies required to achieve the set targets.

Further, instead of spending the next 6-12 months creating and implementing the National Sport Plan, the Department should consider directing relevant resources and time to improving and implementing the 2018 [Sport 2030 National Sport Plan](#).

One such major improvement would be to address the ongoing use of professional (and even club level) sport as a platform to advertise harmful products including gambling, alcohol and junk food.²⁻⁵ For example, approximately one quarter of junior sports clubs accept unhealthy food sponsors in Victoria,⁶ and several National Rugby League teams display their gambling sponsors on jerseys and within the stadium.⁶ Sport exerts a large amount of influence on the community.⁷ When sport normalises and socialises these harmful products, the positive attributes of sports participation and observation are diminished. The Government should prevent commercial interests from exploiting the influence of sporting organisations on the community.

The PHAA appreciates the opportunity to make this submission. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require additional information or have any queries in relation to this submission.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Slevin'.

Adj. Professor Terry Slevin
Chief Executive Officer
Public Health Association of Australia

References

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