

A Public Health focus for Tasmania's 2024 elections



Public Health Association
AUSTRALIA
TAS Branch

The Public Health Association of Australia is seeking commitments from every candidate seeking election on **five key public health issues**. We specifically invite health policy spokespersons for the Liberals, Labor, and the Greens to make a formal response on our policy asks by Monday 11 March 2024. We also welcome responses from all other minor parties and candidates. We will publish our analysis of responses online in the form of a scorecard by Wednesday 13 March.

Five key public health issues

Invest 5% for Prevention. One-third of the social and economic burden of chronic disease suffered by Tasmanians is preventable, if we invest in prevention. The financial benefit for the state budget from taking pressure off under-pressure health services can be as high as \$14:1 for every dollar spent. **We call for the state government to be directing a minimum of 5% of state health spending to preventive programs by 2034.**

Ensure food availability and affordability. Tasmanians are struggling with cost of living, and putting food on the table is becoming out of reach for people on low incomes including working families. We call for state government to fully fund and implement the comprehensive food and nutrition actions in the Food Security Strategy, and Healthy Tasmania Strategic Plan. **We call for ensuring emergency food relief provides quality, nutritious food. We also call for government funding for healthy food programs for our schools including a clear and achievable path/future for the school meal program.**

Stop nicotine uptake. Vaping was designed to get a new generation of young Tasmanians addicted to nicotine, and it is rapidly doing so (AIHW Household Drug Use Survey, February 2024). Many vapers go on to take up smoking. National reforms are underway to aggressively counter the nicotine industry, and so far Tasmania's Government has played its part in an integrated national policy and supply reduction response. **We call for ironclad commitments not to weaken vaping control in the face of industry lobbying and disinformation. We also call for local information campaigns to reach young people to explain the dangers of vaping, and empower them to resist addiction.**

Improving housing for Tasmanians. Housing is one of the most basic social and economic determinants of everyone's health. But housing supply, affordability, and quality are in crisis. **We call for all parties and independents to commit to increase housing supply, intervene to control excessive rent rises, and mandate home quality standards that affect residents' health.**

Clean up political influence. Unhealthy corporate influence has long been a major cause of policy decisions adverse to public health, regarding tobacco, food, the environment, and many other areas. **We call for complete transparency of political donations to parties and members of parliament, and full transparency of the activities of corporate lobbyists. We seek unambiguous law reform to deliver this transparency, and we call for all parties and candidates to voluntarily disclose donations and lobbying during the current election campaign.**