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**PREVENTATIVE HEALTH TASKFORCE REPORT:
AMA SUPPORTS NATIONAL STRATEGIC APPROACH TO
PREVENTION**

AMA President, Dr Andrew Pesce, said today that the AMA supports a national strategic approach to prevention as set out in the report of the National Preventative Health Taskforce.

Dr Pesce said that doctors have been actively involved in providing preventive healthcare and advice for smoking, alcohol abuse and excess weight for a long time, and will continue to do so, but they will need greater support in providing prevention plans for patients to meet the targets set by the Taskforce.

“The AMA advocates a comprehensive package of preventive measures to be coordinated by doctors, and general practitioners in particular,” Dr Pesce said.

“I am pleased that the Taskforce recommends that, as part of the first phase of the Prevention Strategy, the role of primary care in prevention be further strengthened and supported.

“We need funding models that will allow GPs to spend time with their patients to make sure that they can incorporate more preventive health strategies into the health care plans for these people.

“Many of the measures proposed by the Taskforce reflect AMA policy on obesity, smoking, alcohol abuse, and Indigenous health, and will deliver health benefits to the community.”

Dr Pesce said the AMA supports specific Taskforce recommendations on:

- simple and informative nutritional labelling on food products;
- restricting broadcast advertising of junk food to children;
- banning all remaining forms of tobacco advertising and promotion;
- mandating plain packaging of tobacco;
- increasing taxation on tobacco; and
- restricting the promotion of alcohol products to young people, including sponsorship of sport and cultural events.

“People need help to be convinced to adopt the lifestyle changes that will provide better health and better quality of life,” Dr Pesce said.

“While education and marketing campaigns can help promote the prevention message, the real benefits of prevention are generated through personal one-on-one interface in general practice.

“GPs must be supported to make the Taskforce's prevention targets a reality,” Dr Pesce said.

Dr Pesce said that in its submission to the Taskforce the AMA recognised the place of prevention in Australia’s health system, but also recognised the importance of a strong commitment to the resourcing of acute care and treatment.

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