

Investing in Preventative Health

Individual health and wellness are the foundation of a healthy community. When we are physically healthier, we are also happier, and our mental wellbeing is improved.¹

Too many Tasmanians suffer from chronic conditions and too many end up in an over-stretched hospital system. 52% of Tasmanians have at least one chronic disease and 25% have two or more.² These are the highest rates of any Australian jurisdiction.

In 2018, physical inactivity was responsible for 20% of the disease burden of type 2 diabetes, 17% for uterine cancer, 16% for coronary heart disease, and 12% each for dementia and bowel cancer.³

Tobacco use was responsible for 76% of the disease burden from lung cancer, 73% from COPD and 50% from oesophageal cancer. It was also responsible for 13% of all deaths in 2018.⁴

Dietary risk factors contributed to 50% of coronary heart disease burden, 26% to bowel cancer burden, and 26% each to type 2 diabetes and stroke burden.⁵

There are over 8,000 people on our elective surgery waiting list.⁶ In public emergency departments, only 49% of emergency and 44% of urgent patients were seen on time.⁷

Better funding of preventative health across Tasmania will help people live longer, healthier lives, take pressure off the hospital emergency departments, and mean fewer people end up on elective surgery waiting lists.

Preventative Health Grants

Community-based health programs address diet, exercise, and other health behaviours have been shown to have significant benefit in preventing and managing type 2 diabetes,⁸ childhood obesity,⁹ and provide significant cost savings to the health system.¹⁰

After years of lobbying from the Greens, the Government introduced preventative health grants, called the 'Healthy Tasmania Fund'.

The fund, however, is only for \$2 million per year and expires in 2026.

The Greens will fight to extend the 'Healthy Tasmania' grants program for community-based preventative health initiatives to \$5 million per year, and fund it beyond 2026.

¹ Fox, K R, [The influence of physical activity on mental well-being](#), Public Health Nutrition. Vol. 2 no. 3A, pp. 411-418, 1999.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, [National Health Survey: First results](#), cat. 4364.0.55.001, 2018.

³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Burden of Disease Study 2018: Interactive data on risk factor burden, "[Physical inactivity](#)", 2021.

⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Burden of Disease Study 2018: Interactive data on risk factor burden, "[Tobacco Use](#)", 2021.

⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Burden of Disease Study 2018: Interactive data on risk factor burden, "[Dietary risk factors](#)", 2021.

⁶ Tasmanian Government, [Health system dashboard](#), 2024.

⁷ Productivity Commission, [Public Hospitals](#), Report on Government Services 2021, Part E, Section 12, Table 12A.13, 2024.

⁸ Shirinzadeh, M, Afshin-Pour, B, Angeles, R, Gaber, J, Agarwal, G, [The effect of community-based programs on diabetes prevention in low- and middle-income countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis](#), Globalization and Health, Vol 15, no. 10, 2019.

⁹ DeMattia, L, Denney, SL, [Childhood Obesity Prevention: Successful Community-Based Efforts](#), The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. 615, no. 1, 2008.

¹⁰ Masters, R, Anwar, E, Collins, B, Cookson, R, Capewell, S, [Return on investment of public health interventions: a systematic review](#), Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, vol. 71, no. 8, 2017.

Health in Schools

Move Well Eat Well has been evaluated as a highly successful example under the International Union for Health Promotion and Education guidelines for establishing health promotion settings, and has been recommended as a successful case study and learning opportunity for other programs.¹¹

The SmartFood program provides accreditation to schools ranging from bronze to platinum that encourages healthy canteens and linking the school food service to the curriculum.¹²

The Greens will fight to extend the SmartFood and Move Well Eat Well programs to all public schools, to promote healthy eating and exercise.

Smoking Cessation

General Practitioners can play an important role in smoking cessation.^{13,14}

People trust their GP – and for many people their GP is their most frequent point of contact with the health system.

75% of smokers who attempt to quit smoking without any assistance return to smoking

within a year. This number reduces to 16% when they attempt to quit with the support of advice and a smoking cessation aid.¹⁵

The Greens will fight to establish a program for free, government-funded, smoking cessation product handouts in GP clinics.

Health and Wellness Apps

Health and wellness apps, if appropriately evidenced and tested,¹⁶ can have positive impacts on diet and physical activity,¹⁷ mental health,¹⁸ and supporting patients through various stages in the health system.¹⁹

They can empower people to meet their own health goals, raise the quality of the self-management of health,²⁰ and contribute to and enhance other health interventions.²¹

The Greens have a plan for a health and wellness App fund, for the Department of Health to develop their own Apps, provide public lists of curated, quality Apps, deliver grants to non-for-profits for the development of free health and wellness Apps, and to run competitions for budding amateur App developers.

¹¹ Dymont, J, Emery, S, Doherty, T, Moir, S, Eackhardtband, M, Frendin, S. "[Settings-Based Health Promotion.](#)" In *Health and Wellbeing in Childhood*, edited by Garvis, S, and Pendergast, D, 269-70. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

¹² School Food Matters, [SmartFood Guide](#), 2021.

¹³ Litt, J, [Smoking and GPs: time to cough up: successful interventions in general practice](#), Australian family Physician, vol. 34, no. 6, 2005.

¹⁴ Brown, J, Raupach, T, and West, R, [GPs have key role in helping patients to stop smoking](#), The Practitioner, vol. 256, no. 1751, 2012.

¹⁵ Dockrell, M, [Viewpoint: How GPs can help smokers quit for good](#), GP Online, 2018.

¹⁶ Wisniewski, H, Liu, G, Henson, P, Vaidyam, A, Hajratalli, NK, Onnela, JP, Torous, J, [Understanding the quality, effectiveness and attributes of top-rated smartphone health apps](#), BMJ Mental Health, Vol. 22, no. 1, 2019.

¹⁷ Wang, Q, Egelanddsdal, B, Amdam, GV, Amli, VL, Oostindjer, M, [Diet and Physical Activity Apps: Perceived Effectiveness by App Users](#), JMIR Mhealth Uhealth, vol. 4, no. 2, 2016.

¹⁸ Wang, K, Varma, DS, Prosperi, M, [A systematic review of the effectiveness of mobile apps for monitoring and management of mental health symptoms or disorders](#), Journal of Psychiatric Research, Vol. 107, 2018.

¹⁹ Scholz, S, Teetz, L, [Smart health via mHealth? Potentials of mobile health apps for improving prevention and adherence of breast cancer patients](#), Digital Health, vol. 8, 2022.

²⁰ Alexandru, A, Ianculesca, M, Coardos, D, [Improved Patient Engagement in Self-management of Health, a Key to Sustainable Preventative Healthcare Systems](#), International Conference on Wireless Mobile Communication and Healthcare, 2017.

²¹ Scholz, S, Teetz, L, [Smart health via mHealth? Potentials of mobile health apps for improving prevention and adherence of breast cancer patients](#), Digital Health, vol. 8, 2022.

Healthy Eating Advisory Service

The Victorian Government's Healthy Eating Advisory Service offers advise to organisations to promote healthier food and drinks,²² as well as implementation and support tools for public institution compliance with Government healthy food and drink policy.²³

The Greens will fight to establish a Healthy Eating Advisory service in Tasmania, to assist organisations and businesses promote healthier foods and drinks.

Budget

	(\$m)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Health Grants		3.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	16.00
School Programs		0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	2.00
Quitting Smoking		0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	3.00
Wellness Apps		0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	2.00
Healthy Eating		0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	1.60
Total		5.15	5.15	7.15	7.15	24.60

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²² Health Eating Advisory Service, [About Us](#), n.d.

²³ Department of Health, [Healthy choices: policy directive for Victorian public health services](#), Victorian Government, 2021.