

Best of Health for Australia, the experts' priorities for the 2019 Federal Election

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Political leaders must embrace the need for changes and investment in our health system to create a consumer-centred and equitable 21st century health system.

What is the right level of investment? Is prevention adequately considered currently? What impact will the rising levels of obesity and chronic disease have on the health system, and how might we address this?

While our health system may be serving us reasonably well now, this will be increasingly challenged given the escalating pressures from complex and chronic condition, placing a huge burden on lives, the health system and the economy.

The George Institute for Global Health and the Consumers Health Forum of Australia are jointly presenting a National Press Club event on Friday, 22 March. Three health policy leaders will discuss and debate potential health priorities for the 2019 Federal Election. The panellists are Karen Carey, a leading consumer advocate, Professor Stephen Duckett, director of the Grattan Institute's health program and Dr Sandro Demaio, international public health advocate and presenter of the ABC's *Ask the Doctor*.

The George Institute and CHF have joined forces in recent years to identify and advocate for reforms to the health system to drive more comprehensive policies for preventive health, system efficiencies and consumer-focused care.

The CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells, said that the Press Club discussion involving experts with evidence-based ideas for change, would provide a platform for an informed health debate. "There is much evidence available showing how much more we could do in Australia to improve health care and the overall health of the nation. Our health system must be more consumer-centred and focused on integrated primary health care in the community. "

The Executive Director of The George Institute, Australia, Professor Vlado Perkovic says it's a pivotal time in the health of our nation. "Whilst we have one of the best health systems in the world, it is not good enough that one in two Australians have a chronic disease. Prevention, health equity, and evidence must underpin the health agenda and be matched with serious commitment and investment across all levels of government."

There is a clear need for policies and treatments to target chronic disease, which account for around 80 per cent of the mortality gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

These include curbing the marketing of food to children and reformulation of food products, to improving access to basic, proven preventative treatments. CHF and TGI thought leadership

roundtable publication series can be found here: <https://www.georgeinstitute.org.au/event-series/health-policy-roundtables>

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