

## Welcome focus on youth health but more support needed

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Measures to support the health of young people are often overlooked so the Consumers Health Forum particularly welcomes the focus the political parties are giving to youth health at this stage of the election campaign.

“The health and wellbeing of young Australians is a key priority, yet many teenagers and young adults have critical and life-changing health experiences which the health system often fails to take account of,” the CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells, said today.

“As the 50 young leaders who are part of CHF’s Youth Health Forum emphasised at their inaugural roundtable, the lack of attention to youth health compared to that for children and the elderly is the “missing middle” of the health system.

“We welcome today’s launch of the Coalition’s *National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People 2020-2030*. The plan is the product of considerable consultation and cooperation between experts and consumers, coordinated by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY).

“We particularly welcome the Coalition’s pledge of \$1 million to support CHF’s work with the Youth Health Forum.

We set up the Youth Health Forum in 2018 because we believe it is so important that young people are supported to have a say in shaping future health policy and programs that have an early intervention and transformational focus on youth health. They are the health consumer leaders of the future.

“A disturbing alternative to supporting youth health is that because of the growth in health problems such as chronic conditions and obesity, we may find that this generation ends up living shorter lives than their parents.

“We also welcome Labor’s announcement to fund a youth health peak organisation to give young people a voice in national policy. We urge Labor to match the \$1 million pledge to support the Youth Health Forum.

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### Consumers shaping health

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“The mental health of young Australians is a key challenge for the health system. We welcome the support from both parties to the expansion of headspace services, and Labor’s commitment to trial four headspace plus community-based hubs for youth mental health.

“However, while steps from both sides to improve access to best-practice youth mental health services are commendable, we must not forget how commonplace it is for mental ill-health to co-exist with debilitating physical health conditions in young people.

There is an urgent need for a significant increase in support and care services for the many young Australians who currently are not receiving the care they need, whether in the community or in hospitals,” Ms Wells said.

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