

## **The Future of the Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL) Communique**

### **1. What is PCAL?**

PCAL succeeded the former NSW Physical Activity Task Force (PATF) that was established in 1996 by the then NSW Premier as an intersectoral approach to the promotion of physically active lifestyles in the NSW Community. The Taskforce developed and implemented the statewide strategic plan entitled *Simply Active Everyday: a plan to promote physical activity in NSW 1998-2002*, achieving 56 out of 66 of its objectives and was at that time identified by the World Health Organisation as a 'global best practice model for health promotion'.

Arising as one of the actions from the NSW 2002 Childhood Obesity Summit, in 2004 the then Premier established the Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL) as a new cross sectoral body to promote active living in the NSW community. Inaugural members of PCAL included senior representatives from the Premier's Department, NSW Health, Department of Education & Training, Department of Local Government, Roads and Traffic Authority, Ministry of Transport, Department of Community Services, Department of Infrastructure Planning & Natural Resources, Department of Environment and Conservation, Department of Tourism Sport & Recreation, FitnessNSW, NSW Centre for Physical Activity & Health, National Heart Foundation NSW and Insurance Australia Group (corporate representatives).

In 2011 the membership and focus of PCAL changed to incorporate healthy eating as well as physical activity expanding its remit and membership to include representatives from the food industry and other Health non-government organisations.

### **2. What are some of the notable PCAL achievements?**

PCAL has made an important contribution to obesity prevention in NSW through cross-agency collaboration, expert advice and awareness raising in healthy eating and active living to drive population based behaviour change. PCAL has been a strong advocate for the role of the built environment in supporting human health as part of everyday living.

PCAL's recent contributions include co-ordinating the International Walk 21 Conference in Sydney in 2014; hosting a series of annual FitNSW Forums at

Parliament House in Sydney to showcase NSW Government's leadership in areas of physical activity, active living and the built environment; convening the Healthy Planning Expert Working Group to advocate for healthy planning; development of an online resource to assist local councils to integrate healthy eating and physical activity as part of their Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework obligations and development of five key healthy eating messages that has since been incorporated into the *Make Healthy Normal* Campaign.

### **3. What is the future of PCAL?**

The policy context has changed significantly since PCAL was formed in 2004, with the NSW Government expanding and strengthening its efforts to promote healthy eating and active living across the state in a much more structured and considered way.

A number of senior cross government committees have been established to carry forward some of the strategic work PCAL previously coordinated and consequently there is some degree of duplication.

A decision has therefore been made to discontinue PCAL, with a transition arrangement in place until the end of December 2016 to allow for this to occur.

### **4. Why has this decision been made?**

Obesity prevention is an important priority for the NSW Government. In September of 2015, the Hon Mike Baird MP, Premier, announced his priority to reduce childhood overweight and obesity by 5% in 10 years. This target is ambitious and requires a whole of government response.

The *NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Strategy* provides a whole of government framework to promote and support healthy eating and active living in NSW. Through HEAL, the NSW Government is making a strategic and coordinated investment across agencies and sectors to change environments and support individuals to achieve and maintain a healthy weight throughout life.

HEAL aims to encourage the people of NSW to make healthy lifestyle choices and to be supported in their choices by health focused planning, built environment and transport initiatives, as well as improved access to healthier foods.

The *NSW Health Premier's Priority Childhood Overweight and Obesity Delivery Plan* outlines enhanced and new actions that build on HEAL. An Expert Advisory Panel, Implementation Committee, and cross-government working group have been established to drive the implementation of HEAL and the Premier's Priority to ensure that the target to reduce childhood overweight and obesity is met.

In addition, the *Make Healthy Normal* social marketing campaign aims to generate a community-wide conversation about overweight and obesity and the simple, easy and effective measures that can be taken to tackle this complex issue.

These initiatives are a strategic response by the NSW Government to tackle overweight and obesity in NSW.

This increased focus and expanded agenda has overtaken PCAL's primary remit.

## **5. What is the way forward?**

The NSW Ministry of Health is committed to evidence based approaches to increase participation in physical activity and will continue to support the following programs of work in partnership with the National Heart Foundation:

- a. The annual FitNSW Forum to showcase best practice international, national and local initiatives to promote physical activity
- b. The *Healthy Planning Expert Working Group* (HPWEG). A key focus of the HPEWG will be to work with the Ministry of Health and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment to deliver Healthy Built Environment Guidelines in accordance with *A Plan for Growing Sydney*
- c. Work with councils and local health districts to promote the integration of healthy eating and active living strategies into Council Community Strategic Plans and Council Operational Plans
- d. Determine the best way to transition the PCAL website and regular newsletter to reflect the new arrangements.

NSW Health is working with the Greater Sydney Commission and the Department of Planning and Environment to integrate healthy living actions in District Plans across Metropolitan Sydney and in regional plans across the State.

The Ministry of Health and Transport for NSW are developing and testing new approaches to encourage active travel to school.

Local Health Districts in partnership with regional offices of Department of Premier and Cabinet are taking a local leadership role in implementing the Premiers Delivery Plan.

The Ministry of Health, South West Sydney Local Health District and the Department of Premier and Cabinet are coordinating an enhanced regional intervention focus in the South Western Sydney region.

For more information on the NSW Government's response to overweight and obesity, visit:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities-list/tackling-childhood-obesity>

<https://www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au/>

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/heal/Pages/nsw-healthy-eating-strategy.aspx>

## **6. What are the timeframes?**

The transition will commence in August 2016. The PCAL secretariat will remain in place at the Heart Foundation until 31 December. PCAL staff may be contacted as usual until then. The work of PCAL over the past 12 years will be acknowledged in a report on PCAL's achievements, which will be compiled over the next five months.