

# Adelaide Statement on Health in All Policies

*moving towards a shared governance for health and well-being*

Taking account of health  
means more effective government

More effective government  
means improved health

*Report from the International Meeting  
on Health in All Policies, Adelaide 2010*

**The Adelaide Statement on Health in All Policies** is to engage leaders and policy-makers at all levels of government—local, regional, national and international. It emphasizes that government objectives are best achieved when all sectors include health and well-being as a key component of policy development. This is because the causes of health and well-being lie outside the health sector and are socially and economically formed. Although many sectors already contribute to better health, significant gaps still exist.

The Adelaide Statement outlines the need for a new social contract between all sectors to advance human development, sustainability and equity, as well as to improve health outcomes. This requires a new form of governance where there is joined-up leadership within governments, across all sectors and between levels of government. The Statement highlights the contribution of the health sector in resolving complex problems across government.



World Health  
Organization



Government  
of South Australia

## Achieving social, economic and environmental development

A healthy population is a key requirement for the achievement of society's goals. Reducing inequalities and the social gradient improves health and well-being for everyone.

Good health enhances quality of life, improves workforce productivity, increases the capacity for learning, strengthens families and communities, supports sustainable habitats and environments, and contributes to security, poverty reduction and social inclusion. Yet escalating costs for treatment and care are placing unsustainable burdens on national and local resources such that broader developments may be held back.

This interface between health, well-being and economic development has been propelled up the political agenda of all countries. Increasingly, communities, employers and industries are expecting and demanding strong coordinated government action to tackle the determinants of health and well-being and avoid duplication and fragmentation of actions.

## Need for joined-up government

The interdependence of public policy requires another approach to governance. Governments can coordinate policy-making by developing strategic plans that set out common goals, integrated responses and increased accountability across government departments. This requires a partnership with civil society and the private sector.

Since good health is a fundamental enabler and poor health is a barrier to meeting policy challenges, the health sector needs to engage systematically across government and with other sectors to address the health and well-being dimensions of their activities. The health sector can support other arms of government by actively assisting their policy development and goal attainment.

To harness health and well-being, governments need institutionalized processes which value cross-sector problem solving and address power imbalances. This includes providing the leadership, mandate, incentives, budgetary commitment and sustainable mechanisms that support government agencies to work collaboratively on integrated solutions.

## Health in All Policies approach

The approach described above is referred to as 'Health in All Policies' and has been developed and tested in a number of countries. It assists leaders and policy-makers to integrate considerations of health, well-being and equity during the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and services.

Health in All Policies works best when:

- a clear mandate makes joined-up government an imperative;
- systematic processes take account of interactions across sectors;
- mediation occurs across interests;
- accountability, transparency and participatory processes are present;
- engagement occurs with stakeholders outside of government;
- practical cross-sector initiatives build partnerships and trust.

### Tools and instruments that have shown to be useful at different stages of the policy cycle include:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • inter-ministerial and inter-departmental committees | • community consultations and Citizens' Juries <sup>1</sup> |
| • cross-sector action teams                           | • partnership platforms                                     |
| • integrated budgets and accounting                   | • Health Lens Analysis <sup>2</sup>                         |
| • cross-cutting information and evaluation systems    | • impact assessments  |
| • joined-up workforce development                     | • legislative frameworks                                    |

## Drivers for achieving Health in All Policies

Building a process for Health in All Policies requires using windows of opportunity to change mindsets and decision-making cultures, and to prompt actions. Key drivers are context specific and can include:

- creating strong alliances and partnerships that recognize mutual interests, and share targets;
- building a whole of government commitment by engaging the head of government, cabinet and/or parliament, as well as the administrative leadership;
- developing strong high-level policy processes;
- embedding responsibilities into governments' overall strategies, goals and targets;

<sup>1</sup> Citizens' Juries - [www.jefferson-center.org/](http://www.jefferson-center.org/)

<sup>2</sup> Health Lens Analysis - [www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/HiAP/health-lens.htm](http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/HiAP/health-lens.htm)

- ensuring joint decision-making and accountability for outcomes;
- enabling openness and full consultative approaches to encourage stakeholder endorsement and advocacy;
- encouraging experimentation and innovation to find new models that integrate social, economic and environmental goals;
- pooling intellectual resources, integrating research and sharing wisdom from the field;
- providing feedback mechanisms so that progress is evaluated and monitored at the highest level.

It is not unusual that such a process can create tensions within government as conflicts over values and diverging interests can emerge. Resolution can be achieved through persistent and systematic engagement with political processes and key decision-makers.

### New role for the health sector

To advance Health in All Policies the health sector must learn to work in partnership with other sectors. Jointly exploring policy innovation, novel mechanisms and instruments, as well as better regulatory frameworks will be imperative. This requires a health sector that is outward oriented, open to others, and equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and mandate. This also means improving coordination and supporting champions within the health sector itself.

New responsibilities of health departments in support of a Health in All Policies approach will need to include:

- understanding the political agendas and administrative imperatives of other sectors;
- building the knowledge and evidence base of policy options and strategies;
- assessing comparative health consequences of options within the policy development process;
- creating regular platforms for dialogue and problem solving with other sectors;
- evaluating the effectiveness of intersectoral work and integrated policy-making;
- building capacity through better mechanisms, resources, agency support and skilled and dedicated staff;
- working with other arms of government to achieve their goals and in so doing advance health and well-being.

### Next steps in the development process

The Adelaide Statement is part of a global process to develop and strengthen a Health in All Policies approach based on equity. It contributes to a critical debate that Member States and Regions of the World Health Organization (WHO) are now engaged in. The Statement reflects the track record of countries that have already gained experience in implementing such an approach.

The Statement provides valuable input into the World Conference on Social Determinants of Health in Brazil 2011, the 8<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Health Promotion in Finland 2013, and preparations for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) post-2015.

### Background and acknowledgements

Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. Therefore, health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector but goes beyond healthy lifestyles to well-being and supportive environments.

The Adelaide Statement was developed by the participants of the *Health in All Policies International Meeting, Adelaide 13–15 April 2010*. The Government of South Australia together with WHO invited 100 senior experts from a wide range of sectors and countries to discuss the implementation of the Health in All Policies approach. The main aim of the meeting was to move the agenda forward by identifying key principles and pathways that contribute to action for health across all sectors of government, and engage the health sector in contributing to the goals of other sectors.

The 2010 meeting drew on the report of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health 2008 and other significant documents from the ILO, OECD, UNDP, UN-ECOSOC, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and the World Economic Forum. It was also able to build on earlier work by WHO including the Declaration of Alma-Ata on Primary Health Care 1978; the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion 1986; the Adelaide Recommendations on Healthy Public Policy 1988 and subsequent global health promotion conferences; the Gothenburg Consensus Paper on Health Impact Assessment 1999; and the Declaration on Health in All Policies, Rome 2007.

Since 2007 the State Government of South Australia has been playing a leading role in promoting knowledge exchange on Health in All Policies within Australia and internationally. Their initiatives have included holding a Health in All Policies conference in 2007 to launch their work; providing continuing support to central and other agencies across their State Government; publishing guidance materials on their methods for Health in All Policies; and holding the International Meeting on Health in All Policies, co-sponsored with WHO, in April 2010.

## Examples of joined-up government action

Sectors and issues	Interrelationships between health and well-being
Economy and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic resilience and growth is stimulated by a healthy population. Healthier people can increase their household savings, are more productive at work, can adapt more easily to work changes, and can remain working for longer.</li> <li>Work and stable employment opportunities improve health for all people across different social groups.</li> </ul>
Security and justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rates of violence, ill-health and injury increase in populations whose access to food, water, housing, work opportunities and a fair justice system is poorer. As a result, justice systems within societies have to deal with the consequences of poor access to these basic needs.</li> <li>The prevalence of mental illness (and associated drug and alcohol problems) is associated with violence, crime and imprisonment.</li> </ul>
Education and early life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor health of children or family members impedes educational attainment, reducing educational potential and abilities to solve life challenges and pursue opportunities in life.</li> <li>Educational attainment for both women and men directly contributes to better health and the ability to participate fully in a productive society, and creates engaged citizens.</li> </ul>
Agriculture and food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food security and safety are enhanced by consideration of health in food production, manufacturing, marketing and distribution through promoting consumer confidence and ensuring more sustainable agricultural practices.</li> <li>Healthy food is critical to people's health and good food and security practices help to reduce animal-to-human disease transmission, and are supportive of farming practices with positive impacts on the health of farm workers and rural communities.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure, planning and transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optimal planning for roads, transport and housing requires the consideration of health impacts as this can reduce environmentally costly emissions, and improve the capacity of transport networks and their efficiency with moving people, goods and services.</li> <li>Better transport opportunities, including cycling and walking opportunities, build safer and more liveable communities, and reduce environmental degradation, enhancing health.</li> </ul>
Environments and sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optimizing the use of natural resources and promoting sustainability can be best achieved through policies that influence population consumption patterns, which can also enhance human health.</li> <li>Globally, a quarter of all preventable illnesses are the result of the environmental conditions in which people live.</li> </ul>
Housing and community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing design and infrastructure planning that take account of health and well-being (e.g. insulation, ventilation, public spaces, refuse removal, etc.) and involve the community can improve social cohesion and support for development projects.</li> <li>Well-designed, accessible housing and adequate community services address some of the most fundamental determinants of health for disadvantaged individuals and communities.</li> </ul>
Land and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved access to land can support improvements in health and well-being for Indigenous peoples as Indigenous peoples' health and well-being are spiritually and culturally bound to a profound sense of belonging to land and country.</li> <li>Improvements in Indigenous health can strengthen communities and cultural identity, improve citizen participation and support the maintenance of biodiversity.</li> </ul>

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