# Preventing chronic disease: How does Australia score?

## Researcher

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## Summary

On 27 September 2018, the UN will hold its third High-level Meeting on NCDs, where Member States will report their progress on tackling NCDs. The Prevention 1st Scorecard assesses our progress on preventive health policies in Australia. It seeks to highlight the successes of Australian governments and the areas where more work is needed to address risk factors.

As a member of both the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and World Health Assembly, Australia has pledged to tackle the global burden of disease. As part of this political declaration, Australia has endorsed and adopted the Global Action Plan on NCDs, including its policy recommendations. However, with declining investment in prevention and no coordinated action to address chronic disease, it will be difficult for Australia to meet its obligations.

## The scores

Government approaches on the prevention and control of NCDs have been ad-hoc. This has resulted in inconsistent implementation of policies across the country. While there has been some progress to address the four modifiable risk factors of tobacco use, alcohol consumption, nutrition and physical activity, more must be done. The Scorecard found that while tobacco policies are ‘good’, efforts to address alcohol consumption, physical activity and nutrition all rate poorly.

## Call to action

The need for action is clear. By preventing illness, Australians can experience better health and wellbeing and as a result live happier, longer and more productive lives. The Government must develop national strategies for alcohol, nutrition and physical activity and renew the National Tobacco Strategy.

These are some of many actions that governments can take from the WHO Global Action Plan on NCDs to invigorate Australia’s preventive health efforts.

1. Renew mass media campaigns that are population-wide and engage effectively with disadvantaged groups.
2. Abolish the Wine Equalisation Tax (WET) and introduce a volumetric tax for wine and cider.
3. Legislate to implement time-based restrictions on exposure of children (under 16 years of age) to unhealthy food and drink marketing on free-to-air television until 9.30pm.
4. Implement a whole-of-school program that includes mandatory daily physical activity.

[view the report](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Prevention-in-Australia-online.pdf)