



SOCIAL DETERMINANTS
OF HEALTH ALLIANCE

10 April 2014

MEDIA RELEASE

Standing Council on Health to discuss action on social determinants

An alliance of organisations trying to combat health inequity is hopeful tomorrow's meeting of the Council of Australian Governments' Standing Council on Health (SCoH) will be a catalyst for meaningful action on the social determinants of health. SCoH - representing Commonwealth, state and territory ministers with responsibility for health matters - will be discussing a request from the Social Determinants of Health Alliance (SDOHA) for it to take a leadership role in implementing recommendations from a key parliamentary report on social determinants.

"On 20 March 2013, the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs tabled its inquiry report into Australia's domestic response to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Commission on Social Determinants of Health report *Closing the gap within a generation*. A year on from the release of the inquiry report, no action has been taken to address the recommendations. The evidence-based recommendations from the WHO's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health Report have reaped benefits around the world, but we have yet to see Australian governments commit to their implementation," explained Martin Laverty, Chair of SDOHA.

The Coalition/Labor/Greens Senators made five recommendations that the Australian Government:

1. Adopt the WHO Report and commit to addressing the social determinants of health relevant to the Australian context.
2. Adopt administrative practices that ensure consideration of the social determinants of health in all relevant policy development activities, particularly in relation to education, employment, housing, family and social security policy.
3. Place responsibility for addressing social determinants of health within one agency, with a mandate to address issues across portfolios.
4. Give greater emphasis in National Health and Medical Research Council grant allocation priorities to research on public health and social determinants research.
5. Make annual progress reports to Parliament a key requirement of the body tasked with responsibility for addressing the social determinants of health.

The recommendations of the tripartisan inquiry were endorsed by all of the participating Senators, including Senators Siewert, Moore, Boswell, Boyce, Brown, McKenzie, Smith, Thorp, Fierravanti-Wells and Di Natale.

The report clearly states that:

Good health involves improving access to education, reducing insecurity and unemployment, improving housing standards, and increasing the opportunities for social engagement available for all citizens. Addressing the discrepancies of health outcomes resulting from the prevailing social determinants means addressing the causes of those social determinants.

"It's vital that the Commonwealth, state and territory governments work together if Australia is to address those factors that are holding us back in seeking to achieve better health outcomes for the Australian community," said Mr Laverty.

For interviews with SDOHA Chair Martin Laverty: Gavin Abraham

0408 825 788

For all other media inquiries: Melanie Walker, SDOHA Manager

0438 430 963