

# Second online public consultation: National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions

Submitted on Wednesday 22 June 2016

## Section A: Demographics

1. Please provide your name:

Sarah Davies

2. Where are you based?

- ACT
- NSW
- NT
- QLD
- SA
- TAS
- VIC
- WA
- \*Other, please specify: National

3. Please provide your email address:

sdavies@vision2020australia.org.au

4. Are you providing your response on behalf of an organisation

- No
- \*Yes, please specify: Vision 2020 Australia

5. Are you providing your response:

- As a health professional
- As a researcher/academic
- As a policy maker
- As a member of the public
- \*Other, please specify: As the national peak body for eye health and vision care sector in Australia

**6. If applicable, please specify your or your organisation's area of expertise:**

Vision 2020 Australia is the national peak body for the eye health and vision care sector, representing over 50 member organisations involved in: local and global eye care; health promotion; low vision support; vision rehabilitation; eye research; professional assistance and community support. This submission has been developed in consultation with members of Vision 2020 Australia's Prevention and Early Intervention and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committees. Vision 2020 Australia also supports the submissions put forward by our member organisations, namely Indigenous Eye Health at the University of Melbourne and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists.

**7. Do you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person?**

- \*No

- Yes

**8. In which country were you born?**

- Australia

- \*Other, please specify: N/A

## Section B: The structure of the Framework

In providing your responses to sections B and C of the survey, please consider:

- *The National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions provides a national approach to guide planning, design and delivery of policies, strategies, actions and services to reduce the impact of chronic conditions in Australia.*
- *The Framework moves away from a disease specific approach by recognising that there are often similar underlying principles for the prevention and management of many chronic conditions.*

Questions 9 & 10 relate to the entire Framework.

9. **The structure of the Framework is appropriate and easy to follow. (Relates to the entire Framework)**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- \*Agree
- Strongly Agree

10. **Please explain your selection (100 word limit):**

The *National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions* (the Framework) provides a comprehensive overarching guide for policy development however does not provide extensive detail on the implementation of identified activities.

Vision 2020 Australia is interested to understand how implementation of the Framework will occur, acknowledging that the *National Chronic Disease Strategy 2005* was intended to direct the development and implementation of action plans tailored to meet local requirements within each jurisdiction and the Framework is intended to supersede the 2005 strategy. Further, the sector is keen for clarity on how the success of this Framework will be measured and reported.

### Part 1: Setting the Scene

Questions 11 & 12 relate to Part 1: Setting the scene (pages 5-12).

11. **Part 1: Setting the Scene provides adequate context and background for the Framework. (Relates to pages 5-12 of the Framework)**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- Agree
- \*Strongly Agree

**12. Please explain your selection (100 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia strongly supports a refocused approach to chronic conditions, particularly an emphasis on prevention. 75 per cent of blindness and vision impairment is preventable or treatable. This increases to 94 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Vision 2020 Australia is currently working in partnership with the Australian Government to address eye health and vision care issues related to chronic conditions as a key priority area of the *Implementation plan under the National framework for action to promote eye health and prevent avoidable blindness and vision loss* (NFIP).

**Part 2: The Framework**

*Questions 13-20 relate to Part 2: The Framework. (Pages 13-17 of the Framework)*

*Vision (page 14)*

**13. The Vision reflects the intent of the Framework and its Objectives. (Relates to page 14 of the Framework)**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- Agree
- **\*Strongly Agree**

**14. Please explain your selection (100 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia strongly supports the need for effective prevention and management of chronic conditions for all Australians.

Around half of all Australians have a chronic disease and around 20 per cent have at least two. Patients with existing chronic disease often suffer multiple complications including those which affect their vision, and often share risk factors associated with blindness and vision impairment. It is therefore vital for chronic disease management plans to involve collaboration between GPs, optometrists and ophthalmologists; as well as other allied health professionals and low vision support services where appropriate.

*Principles (page 14)*

**15. The Principles of the Framework are appropriate and comprehensive. (Relates to page 14 of the Framework)**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- Agree
- **\*Strongly Agree**

**16. With regard to the Principles, is anything missing or what should change? (200 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia supports the eight governing principles, particularly that all Australians receive equitable access to quality health care. The eye health and vision care sector also agrees that there is a need to identify areas where collaboration, such as between GPs and eye health professionals, can be reinforced and better supported.

*Enablers (page14)*

**17. The Framework identifies the key Enablers to assist in achieving the Vision of the Framework. (Relates to page 14 of the Framework)**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- \*Agree
- Strongly Agree

**18. With regard to the Enablers, is anything missing or what should change? (200 word limit):**

The inclusion of specific identified enablers which will assist with achieving the Framework's vision is vital to initiating the development of appropriate policy, strategy, actions and services. However, a clear plan for implementation which includes timelines, responsibilities and defined actions and is developed in consultation with key stakeholders is crucial to ensuring effective support for people with, or at risk of developing, chronic conditions.

Additionally, a focus on data and technology will improve primary health care outcomes for patients. A functioning national electronic medical records system will ensure that health professionals have access to necessary information required to treat patients safely and efficiently. In order to improve primary health outcomes for patients, allied health professionals, such as optometrists, require support to link their data management systems with My Health Records. Creating effective linkages between the systems used by eye health professionals and the My Health Record will enable the linking, storing and sharing of information between the patient, eye health practitioners, GPs and other health services.

*Objectives (page 16)*

*Questions 19 & 20 relate to the Framework's three Objectives overall. Specific questions relating to each Objective will be addressed in Section C of the survey.*

**19. Overall, the three Objectives of the Framework appropriately identify the key areas for action to address chronic conditions in Australia. (Relates to page 16 of the Framework - specific questions relating to each Objective will be addressed in Section C of the survey)**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- Agree
- \*Strongly Agree

**20. With regard to the three Objectives overall, is anything missing or what should change? (200 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia supports the three objectives proposed to guide the Framework. In particular, targeting priority populations is essential to reducing the burden of chronic disease and the prevalence of risk factors which are also associated with blindness and vision impairment.

In implementation, priority populations should include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and those living in rural and remote areas. Determining priority populations to be targeted should also take into account key risk factors, including age, obesity, smoking status, and those with a family history of chronic disease such as diabetes and/or associated conditions.

## Section C: Objectives, Strategic Priority Areas and Outcomes

### Objective 1: Focus on prevention for a healthier Australia

*Questions 21-25 relate to Objective 1 and its Strategic Priority Areas and Outcomes (pages 18-24).*

**21. The information provided in Objective 1 and its Strategic Priority Areas adequately addresses the key issues relating to the prevention of chronic conditions.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- \*Agree
- Strongly Agree

**22. Please explain your selection (400 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia strongly supports a refocused approach to chronic conditions with an emphasis on prevention. 75 per cent of blindness and vision impairment is preventable or treatable and this increases to 94 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Despite this, evidence shows that a significant number of Australians do not have a comprehensive eye examination at the frequency recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Currently, around half of all Australians have a chronic disease and around 20 per cent have at least two. Patients with existing chronic disease often suffer multiple complications including those which affect their vision, and often have risk factors which are also associated with blindness and vision impairment.

The eye health and vision care sector therefore intersects with chronic disease prevention and management in a multifaceted way. Early identification of chronic disease provides an opportunity to ensure that an individual's eye health is regularly monitored and any issues that may affect the eye and vision are detected early.

The introduction of new Medicare item numbers for non-mydratic retinal photography to assess whether diabetic patients have signs of diabetic retinopathy is an important step in early identification and prevention of eye complications linked to chronic disease. From 1 November 2016, the listing will particularly benefit communities where there is limited access to optometry and ophthalmology to identify diabetic retinopathy, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

Additionally, many chronic conditions also exhibit early signs and symptoms that can be detected upon comprehensive ocular investigation. Therefore, strengthening the eye health and vision care system and promoting regular comprehensive eye examinations can assist to facilitate the early detection of chronic disease that may otherwise go undetected until the later stages of disease progression.

**23. With regard to the four Strategic Priority Areas in Objective 1, is anything missing or what should change? (400 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia supports the identified strategic priority areas under Objective 1, and is particularly interested in working with the Australian Government to ensure that linkages and partnerships between eye health professionals and the broader health system are identified, supported and maintained.

Vision 2020 Australia is interested to understand how the success of this Framework will be measured and reported; and how implementation of the Framework will occur. It is Vision 2020 Australia's position that a clear plan for implementation which includes timelines, responsibilities and defined actions, and is developed in consultation with key stakeholders is crucial to ensuring effective prevention and management of chronic conditions for those both suffering from and at risk of developing chronic disease.

**24. The Phased and Aspirational Outcomes identified in each of the four Strategic Priority Areas will contribute to achieving Objective 1.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- \*Agree
- Strongly Agree

**25. With regard to the Outcomes in Objective 1, is anything missing or what should change? (400 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia broadly supports the phased and aspirational outcomes put forward in the Framework, acknowledging that the achievement of these outcomes will ensure the success of the Framework's first objective, to focus on prevention. Additionally, achievement of these outcomes will contribute to the reduction of avoidable blindness and vision loss as a result of eye disease associated with chronic conditions.

However, Vision 2020 Australia notes the need for policies, strategies and services, underpinned by agreed responsibilities and defined actions to ensure the full implementation and success of the Framework. Additionally, the success of the framework needs to be monitored against agreed measures of progress and reported on regularly to inform stakeholders of progress.

## Objective 2: Provide effective and appropriate care to support people with chronic conditions and optimise quality of life

Questions 26-30 relate to Objective 2 and its Strategic Priority Areas and Outcomes (pages 25-34).

26. The information provided in Objective 2 and its Strategic Priority Areas adequately addresses the key issues relating to the provision of effective and appropriate care to support people with chronic conditions and optimise quality of life.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- \*Agree
- Strongly Agree

27. Please explain your selection. (400 word limit):

Vision 2020 Australia strongly supports the need for people with chronic conditions to have access to effective and appropriate care which optimises their quality of life and ensures that where possible their condition does not progress and worsen.

Best practice for the prevention and management of chronic disease in Australia involves a multi-faceted approach including comprehensive care planning and management; multidisciplinary, coordinated team-based care involving medical and allied health providers; patient education and self-management; and ongoing monitoring and follow-up. Supporting this approach, the eye health and vision care sector has a framework of clear cut best practice guidelines to outline the optimum continuum of care. As patients with existing chronic disease often suffer multiple co-morbidities, including those which affect the eyes and vision, chronic eye health conditions are well established and considered within this framework.

Primary eye care is an integral part of the best practice continuum of care. The timely detection of eye health concerns by primary care professions and the referral of individuals diagnosed with eye disease which requires treatment is key to reducing the burden of chronic eye health conditions.

Best practice in managing chronic disease through primary care also includes programs where health professionals such as optometrists and GPs play a role in reinforcing general health; acknowledging that individuals may be visiting an optometrist regularly but are not regularly seeing a GP and vice versa.

To ensure that the appropriate care is available, effective and coordinated access to both primary eye care services and ongoing specialist eye care when necessary is essential; particularly for those suffering from or at risk of developing a chronic eye condition.

Additionally, it is essential that the higher burden of chronic eye health conditions in at risk population groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, be considered in any approach. One useful indicator is the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with diabetes who have had an eye assessment to identify diabetic retinopathy. This indicator, which would include the new Medicare item numbers for retinal photography, is a measure of the management of chronic conditions with eye health complications in priority populations, and is also applicable to the whole population.

A system based on best practice should aim to ensure the best possible outcomes, noting that targeted approaches are required to ensure equity of outcomes for all people.

**28. With regard to the five Strategic Priority Areas in Objective 2, is anything missing or what should change? (400 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia supports the identified strategic priority areas under Objective 2, particularly in ensuring coordinated and continuous care for patients diagnosed with chronic disease, including linkages with the appropriate eye health professional (both in primary and specialist care) and ensuring the accessibility of health services for all Australians.

Vision 2020 Australia is interested to understand how the success of this Framework will be measured and reported; and how implementation of the Framework will occur. It is Vision 2020 Australia's position that a clear plan for implementation which includes timelines, responsibilities and defined actions, and is developed in consultation with key stakeholders is crucial to ensuring effective prevention and management of chronic conditions for those both suffering from and at risk of developing chronic disease.

**29. The Phased and Aspirational Outcomes identified in each of the five Strategic Priority Areas will contribute to achieving Objective 2.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- \*Agree
- Strongly Agree

**30. With regard to the Outcomes in Objective 2, is anything missing or what should change? (400 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia broadly supports the phased and aspirational outcomes put forward in the Framework, acknowledging that the achievement of these outcomes will enable the success of the Framework's second objective, to ensure effective and appropriate care for those diagnosed with a chronic disease and to optimise quality of life. It is vital for chronic disease management plans to involve collaboration between GPs, optometrists and ophthalmologists; as well as allied health professionals and vision impairment support services where appropriate.

Vision 2020 Australia notes that to ensure the full implementation and success of the Framework, policies, strategies and services established under Objective 2 must be underpinned by agreed responsibilities and defined actions. Additionally, the success of the Framework needs to be monitored against agreed measures of progress and reported on regularly to inform stakeholders of progress.

### Objective 3: Target priority populations

Questions 31-35 relate to Objective 3 and its Strategic Priority Areas and Outcomes (pages 35-39).

**31. The information provided in Objective 3 and its Strategic Priority Areas adequately addresses the key issues relating to priority populations.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- \*Agree
- Strongly Agree

**32. Please explain your selection. (400 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia is pleased to see that the Framework acknowledges that the health system must be responsive to the specific needs of priority populations in order to effectively address chronic conditions. This must be supported through the delivery of culturally safe and appropriate services and in recognition of the urban, regional, rural and remote diversity of Australia.

Further, Vision 2020 Australia is pleased that the Framework highlights the need for targeted action in priority populations, particularly to reduce access barriers to appropriate health information and high-quality, safe health services; and that this strategic priority area includes a focus on addressing health literacy.

The eye health and vision care sector acknowledges in particular the higher burden of chronic eye health conditions in at risk population groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, older Australians and Australians living in rural and remote areas. In particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have six times the rate of blindness and three times the rate of vision loss than the broader population. Vision loss accounts for 11 per cent of the health gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. The findings of the National Indigenous Eye Health Survey in 2008 show that there is a high prevalence of eye health and vision care issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and it is also notable that a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people fit into other at risk categories.

**33. With regard to the two Strategic Priority Areas in Objective 3, is anything missing or what should change? (400 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia supports the identified strategic priority areas under Objective 3, highlighting that strengthening communities and undertaking targeted action to address barriers to accessing health services and achieving optimal health outcomes is the most effective way to generate change in priority population groups.

Vision 2020 Australia is interested to understand how the success of this Framework will be measured and reported; and how implementation of the Framework will occur. It is Vision 2020 Australia's position that a clear plan for implementation which includes timelines, responsibilities and defined actions, and is developed in consultation with key stakeholders is crucial to ensuring effective prevention and management of chronic conditions for those both suffering from and at risk of developing chronic disease.

**34. The Phased and Aspirational Outcomes identified in each of the Strategic Priority Areas will contribute to achieving Objective 3.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- \*Agree
- Strongly Agree

**35. With regard to the Outcomes in Objective 3, is anything missing or what should change? (400 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia broadly supports the phased and aspirational outcomes put forward in the Framework, acknowledging that the achievement of these outcomes will ensure the success of the Framework's third objective, to address the higher burden of disease experienced by identified priority populations through targeted action. It is vital to recognise that some populations within Australia are disproportionately affected by chronic disease, due to a range of physical, social, environmental and other factors.

To ensure the full implementation and success of the Framework, policies, strategies and services established under Objective 2 must be underpinned by agreed responsibilities and defined actions. In identifying these actions and responsibilities and developing policies to oversee these, the Australian Government needs to work in collaboration with key community representative groups, such as the National Aboriginal and Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and its affiliates, to ensure strategies and agreed actions are consistent with priorities identified by key representatives in all states and territories. Through strong collaboration, improvements in service delivery and culturally appropriate awareness raising initiatives will be identified and advanced.

Additionally, the success of the framework needs to be monitored against agreed measures of progress and reported on regularly to inform stakeholders of progress. These measures of progress should be disaggregated by priority population and key risk factors to enable analysis.

## Final comments

**36. Please provide any other comments you may have on the Framework. (500 word limit):**

Vision 2020 Australia welcomes further opportunities for consultation and would be pleased to provide any further information as required.