



Preventive Health Conference 2020

Statement from the Public Health Association of Australia

Due to the evolving COVID-19 situation the Preventive Health Conference 2020 and the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) have made the difficult decision to not proceed with the Preventive Health Conference 2020 as a face to face conference as originally planned in Perth, Australia, from Wednesday 13 to Friday 15 May 2020.

We have maintained regular contact with Australian public health authorities to ascertain the best advice about the risk to participants and the wider spread of COVID-19 associated with holding the Conference. As of Thursday 12 March, we were advised that due to the escalating situation with the virus, the safest option is to no longer proceed with the event. Travel restrictions implemented by various countries and organisations such as universities and Health departments have also impacted attendance by speakers, delegates, exhibitors and sponsors, thus reducing the viability of a successful event.

Key changes that have occurred this week that has led to this decision are

- WHO declaring COVID – 19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020.
- Large employers such as WHO, Departments of Health and universities withdrawing permission for staff to attend conferences and mass gatherings.
- The Australian government considering advice provided by Chief Medical Officer and the jurisdictional Chief health Officers to cancel mass gatherings of more than 500 people.
- Many health focused conferences scheduled in March, April and May being cancelled, in part driven by concerns over threats to continuity of service in circumstances where key health staff are required to undergo isolation if a single delegate is suspected of being a COVID-19 carrier.

The PHAA do not make this decision lightly. We understand the individual impacts of not proceeding with the event, and we appreciate everyone's time, support and engagement in creating a high calibre program and extra satellite activities.

PHAA will be exploring options of online and virtual information exchange for Conference delegates. We ask for your patience as we work through the consequences of this unprecedented event. Once an approach has been agreed on the best way forward, we aim to notify all involved as soon as possible.



We are very conscious of the financial implications this will create for sponsors, exhibitors, and delegates. We are also concerned about the financial implications to us as the organisers. Our intention is to be as open and transparent as we can be in addressing these financial implications, while doing our best to consider the needs of our stakeholders.

We understand you will have questions. Our intention is to be in touch with you again in the near future with as much information as we can provide. We thank you for your understanding and support as we work through these many complex issues.

Yours sincerely,



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