



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

31 July 2020

Hon Roger Cook MLA  
Minister for Health  
13th Floor Dumas House  
2 Havelock Street  
WEST PERTH WA 6009  
**By post and email: [Minister.Cook@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:Minister.Cook@dpc.wa.gov.au)**

Dear Minister Cook

## HEALTHY OPTIONS POLICY AUDIT

The Australian Medical Association (WA) (**AMA (WA)**) is seeking an update on the implementation of The Healthy Options WA: Food and Nutrition Policy (**the Policy**). The AMA (WA) was troubled by the results from the *Healthy Options WA: Food and Nutrition Policy for WA Health Services and Facilities 2018-19 Statewide Audit of Policy Implementation (the Audit)* released earlier this year and seeks an update on remedial action taken by the WA Government to improve Health Service Provider compliance, and the outcome of these interventions.

The Audit revealed that implementation of the Policy has been extremely slow. After being in place for more than ten years, there are still no health facilities in WA that are fully compliant with the Policy. The AMA (WA) believes that this indicates WA Health Service Providers lack either commitment to or understanding of the Policy, which is of great consequence to the health of health care workers and the broader community.

As you are aware, obesity is the second leading contributor to burden of disease in WA. Two thirds of Western Australian adults are now overweight or obese. This is causing increased rates of diabetes, liver and heart disease, many types of cancer and multiple musculoskeletal health conditions. There is also a growing list of research finding that obesity is a risk factor for severe COVID-19 infection.

The AMA (WA) believes that WA should be making greater progress in these areas, given previous political commitments on overweight and obesity, and the WA Government's commitment to the Sustainable Health Review Final Report.

We believe that:

- Leadership should come from the Minister to drive implementation of the Policy. The importance of the Policy should be made clear and health service Executive Directors, Directors and Senior Managers across WA Health should act with a sense of urgency to implement the policy.
- Health Service Provider Boards should have key performance indicators around compliance with the Policy, which should be publicly reported in respective Annual Reports.
- The scope of the Policy should be increased to all government departments and agencies. Health related policies should not be limited to healthcare environments.

- Strengthening and implementing the Policy should be the first step taken to achieve the goal of having Australia's highest percentage of the population with a healthy weight by 2029 (Sustainable Health Review, Recommendation 2a).

I look forward to your response and an update on the implementation of the Policy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Andrew Miller', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Andrew Miller  
PRESIDENT AMA (WA)