



## **Joint Statement**

**26.10.25**

### **Independent MPs: Safeguards Needed to Ensure Australian CDC is Independent and Fit for Purpose**

Independent MPs Dr Sophie Scamps, Dr Monique Ryan and Dr Helen Haines warn legislation to establish the new Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC) lacks safeguards to ensure the CDC is independent and fit for purpose.

Whilst welcoming the establishment of an Australian CDC as long overdue and a vital reform, the three health professionals are calling on the Government to get it right from the outset to meet future public health challenges and threats to Australians' health.

The MPs have put forward amendments to address concerns about the lack of legislated integrity safeguards and the exclusion of prevention of chronic disease from the CDC's foundational scope, but to date, these have been ignored by the Government.

The MPs are calling for:

- **A transparent and quality appointments process** for both the Director-General and Advisory Council members.
- A clear separation of governance and executive leadership, with the **Chair of the Advisory Council being independent** from the Director-General.
- **Prevention of chronic disease** in the CDC's remit from the beginning.

**Getting this legislation right is critical to ensuring the CDC can deliver on its mission to protect public health - now and in the future.**

**ENDS**

#### **Chronic disease statistics:**

- Chronic conditions account for 85% of Australia's disease burden and contribute to 9 in 10 deaths.
- An estimated 15.4 million Australians live with a long-term or chronic health condition.
- Chronic conditions are responsible for around 6.4 million hospitalisations annually - 55% of the total - costing the Government approximately \$82 billion per year.
- Nearly 40% of Australia's burden of disease is preventable.

**Quotes attributable to Dr Sophie Scamps MP, Independent Member for Mackellar:**

Public trust in the CDC hinges on its ability to operate independently and free from political interests, and that begins with how its leadership is selected.

In Opposition, Labor railed against the jobs-for-mates culture. In Government, they seem to be embracing it. It's alarming that the Director-General could be appointed at the discretion of the Minister of the day.

The politicisation of the US CDC under the influence of Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has shown how misinformation and political pressure can undermine scientific leadership.

This underscores the critical importance of ensuring that our own CDC is built on a foundation of independence, scientific rigour, and transparency.

It would be a fatal flaw in the CDC if the Director General is appointed by the minister not by an independent selection panel.

**Quotes attributable to Dr Monique Ryan MP, Independent Member for Kooyong :**

A job worth doing is worth doing well. This legislation is attempting to shortchange Australians, and risk the health of this and future generations, by walking back from the Prime Minister's 2019 commitment to a CDC that 'would play a role in preventing health threats posed by chronic disease as well as infectious diseases.'

Australians were promised a world-class Centre for Disease Control during the pandemic. What we've been given is a shell-underfunded, underspecified, and underwhelming.

The decisions we make now about the scope, remit and funding of the CDC will shape our nation's health for decades to come. To be bold, effective, and world-leading, our CDC must be independent, and it must be well-funded.

**Quotes from Dr Helen Haines MP, Independent Member for Indi:**

We've seen overseas what happens when health advice becomes politicised - the United States is a clear warning. We can't let that happen here in Australia.

When we establish a Centre for Disease Control, it must be protected from political interference. Health advice should come from experts, not politicians.

By rejecting good faith crossbench amendments to safeguard the CDC's independence, the Government risks undermining trust in this vital institution from the very start.

It's important that Australia has an independent CDC that provides independent, trustworthy advice to the government, and the Australian people about our health.

**Dr Sophie Scamps, Dr Monique Ryan and Dr Helen Haines will hold a joint press conference at 9am Monday October 27 in the Mural Hall**

Contact Alexandra (Lexie) Browning for media requests: 0413 349 764 | [media@sophiescamps.com.au](mailto:media@sophiescamps.com.au)