

73RD SESSION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY – RESUMED
Australia's written statement on Agenda item 11.2 and 11.6

Agenda item 11.2 Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

Addressing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is an essential element of moving towards universal health coverage and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages.

Australia acknowledges that the COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected access to health services for NCDs with three-quarters of countries worldwide reporting a considerable degree of disruption to NCD services. This disruption provides a significant disadvantage for people living with NCDs who are more likely to become severely ill with COVID-19. Australia encourages the World Health Organization (WHO) to ensure a focus on maintaining essential health services is integrated across COVID-19 responses.

The Australian development program provides targeted regional and bilateral support to address the NCD epidemic in the Pacific region with actions to foster strong and resilient health systems and promote health security as prioritised in the Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response.

Agenda item 11.6 Epilepsy

Australia thanks the Director-General for his report, and for providing updates on the synergies in addressing the burden of epilepsy and other neurological disorders, as requested by the Executive Board in February 2020.

We recognise that epilepsy and other neurological conditions place a significant global burden on the health, livelihood, social well-being, and independence of individuals, their families, and carers. We acknowledge the significant challenges and gaps in providing care and services to people living with neurological conditions and recognise that an integrated public health response is critical in addressing the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care of neurological conditions, including epilepsy.

Australia is pleased to co-sponsor the resolution 'Global Actions on epilepsy and other neurological disorders'. Australia supports the development of action plans that maintain a broad focus for diseases that have similar underlying principles for their prevention and management. This would enable better consideration of the shared health determinants, risk factors and multimorbidities and support an integrated systems approach for the development of strategies and action plans.