

73RD SESSION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY – RESUMED
Australia's written statement on Agenda item 23

Australia thanks the Director-General for his progress reports and work across these priorities.

Australia acknowledges the importance of a timely dementia diagnosis and the need to improve quality of life for people living with dementia and their support networks. We are proud to be a committed member of the World Dementia Council and one of the first countries to contribute to the Global Dementia Observatory. Australia has noted the comparatively low number of published research papers focused on dementia compared to other non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and has announced a 10-year Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission research program to address this deficit.

We appreciate the Secretariat's ongoing technical support and strategic guidance to Member States in relation to universal eye health. Australia has a strong interest in eye health. We were pleased to lead, with Indonesia, the eye health resolution and support efforts to progress the global action plan. We commend the Secretariat for developing the first World Report on Vision and recommendations to address eye care challenges, increase global research efforts, and develop feasible targets for eye health to 2030.

Significant progress has been made in response to the resolution on integrated people-centred health services but there is still a considerable amount of work to be done. We agree continued global effort on primary health care is needed to advance this agenda.

Australia reiterates its support for progress towards the attainment of international development goals and targets in reproductive health. We remain committed to supporting access to sexual and reproductive health and rights to improve gender equality, strengthen women's economic empowerment, and improve health and education outcomes. Australia supports recognition of a rights-based approach to sexual and reproductive health to underpin access to these services.

Australia thanks the WHO Secretariat for its work developing a menu of policy options and cost effective interventions to reduce the number of premature deaths from NCDs attributed to air pollution. Australian communities experienced prolonged hazardous air pollution levels during the 2019-20 bushfire season. We are investing in research to further understand the long-term effects of prolonged exposure to bushfire smoke and look forward to engaging with the WHO on this, particularly the analysis of the effectiveness of existing interventions and guidance.

Australia supports international efforts against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and towards achieving the highest attainable standard of health for all, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. Australia is committed to ending gender-based violence, including harmful practices such as FGM.

We support work on the implementation of the Joint UNODC/WHO Programme on Drug Dependence Treatment and Care and the development of guidelines on access to controlled medicines and their safe use.

Australia recognises the important role of the Science Division in developing valuable, technical, normative guidance for Member States and supports the WHO Chief Scientist and the Science Division taking responsibility for the WHO strategy on research for health.