

MEDIA RELEASE

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Prevention vital to reducing the impact of chronic pain

'If pain is not addressed early, it can become a debilitating and costly condition. We know that 3.24 million Australians experience chronic pain. Making even a small improvement in early intervention can have a big impact on long term health outcomes for individuals, their families, workplaces and communities', Painaustralia CEO Carol Bennett said.

Painaustralia has welcomed Labor's \$115.6 million commitment to promoting health and preventing many painful chronic conditions.

Chronic pain, also called persistent pain, is pain that continues for more than three months and often has its inception in surgery, an injury, or as a result of disease or chronic condition like arthritis or lower back pain.

"This funding commitment addresses a number of common risk factors that cause many painful chronic conditions such as cancer, arthritis, asthma, back pain, cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and mental health conditions," Painaustralia CEO Carol Bennett said.

"Tackling these risk factors through prevention and early intervention is a vital step in addressing the growing prevalence of chronic pain," Ms Bennett said.

Painaustralia's new report on [the Cost of Pain in Australia](#) highlighted that people living with chronic pain also have other comorbid conditions, with over 44% also living with depression and anxiety, 29.3% with arthritis and 25% with high blood pressure.

"Chronic pain can have a debilitating effect on a person's mood, physical functioning, and social relationships. People living with chronic pain can also experience other conditions along with chronic pain such as depression, sleep disturbance and fatigue," Ms Bennett said.

These comorbidities often contribute to worse health, societal and financial outcomes – for example, major depression in patients with chronic pain is associated with reduced functioning, poorer treatment response, and increased health care costs. In 2018, this figure was \$73.2 billion in direct health, productivity and related costs and \$66.1 billion in quality of life costs totalling \$139 billion.

"Strategies outlined in Labor's commitment today, such as a National Obesity Strategy, a National Tobacco Campaign, a National Alcohol Strategy and a National Platform for consumer information, can all play a very important role in reducing the burden of chronic disease and together with that, the significant impact of chronic pain," Ms Bennett said.

Media contact: Priyanka Rai, Painaustralia Media Manager
Phone: 0421 288 439
Email: Priyanka.rai@pinaustralia.org.au

Painaustralia Limited
ABN 69 147 676 926
P: 02 6232 5588
E: admin@pinaustralia.org.au
M: PO Box 9406, DEAKIN ACT 2600
A: Unit 6, 42 Geils Court, DEAKIN ACT 2600