

MEDIA RELEASE

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At last – A national plan for better pain management

Painaustralia has today launched the new National [Strategic Action Plan for Pain Management](#). [Millions of Australians](#) live with ongoing persistent pain. Chronic pain can have a devastating impact on individuals, their families, workplaces and the community, often contributing to problems including; opioid dependency, depression, loss of income and increased risk of suicide.

Painaustralia CEO, Carol Bennett, said “The Australian Government and Minister Greg Hunt funded and supported the development of the first ever National Strategic Action Plan for Pain Management (NSAPPM) in May 2018. The year of exhaustive consultation and development that followed have now culminated with the final release of the NSAPPM that sets out the key priority actions to improve access to, and knowledge of best practice pain management, in the next three years,”

The NSAPPM comes at a critical time: [pain management finds itself at the intersection of key global public health challenges](#) of the 21st century including the safe and effective use of medications (particularly opioids) and the urgent need to stem the rise of chronic conditions.

[Consultations](#) with the pain management sector and stakeholders have confirmed the need for greater awareness of pain and pain management, more timely access to consumer-centred interdisciplinary services and research to underpin greater knowledge of pain.

The NSAPPM builds on the strong foundation and advocacy of Australia’s pain sector which developed the first National Pain Strategy in 2010 to provide a blueprint for best practice pain management.

“This Action Plan provides us with a clear pathway to meet the challenges that chronic pain poses to all Australians. The [Deloitte Access Economics Cost of Pain](#) report released by Minister Hunt in April this year has highlighted the seriousness of the pain burden in Australia and makes a clear case for investment and support to prevent and manage chronic pain conditions,” Ms Bennett said.

The number of Australians living with chronic pain is set to rise from 3.24 million to 5.23 million by 2050. Inaction will see the chronic pain price tag remain in the \$billions: Last year alone, Australians paid \$2.7 billion in out of pocket expenses to manage their pain. As a nation, the annual cost will rise from \$139.3 billion in 2018 to an estimated \$215.6 billion by 2050.

“The Australian Government and Minister Hunt have demonstrated their commitment to addressing chronic pain, with an [election commitment of \\$6.8m to deliver better pain management](#) across Australia, as well as the establishment of a National Advisory Council on Pain,” Ms Bennett said.

The NSAPPM will now progress to the Australian Health Ministers Council, ahead of being presented to the Council of Australian Government’s for endorsement in the coming weeks.

According to Ms Bennett, ***“Australia now has the opportunity to lead the world with the implementation of the first, fully funded government response to comprehensively addressing the burden of pain.”***

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