



Government
of South Australia

SA Health

South Australian Public Health Council (SAPHC)

a statutory body established under section 26 of the
South Australian Public Health Act 2011

Meeting Summary – 43rd Meeting held 7 May 2025

Highlights presented for information and discussion raised at the May SAPHC meeting include:

Updates from the Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO)

The Presiding Member provided an update on administrative and operational matters including the appointment of a new member to SAPHC (Dr Jon Gorvett) and the reappointment of three members (Ms Nikki Clinch, Professor Helen Marshall and Associate Professor Courtney Ryder) for a three-year period.

Measles

An increase in the notification of measles cases at both a national and international level was noted. Three cases of measles have been notified in South Australia in 2025 (reported to 7 May). Measles is a serious disease and highly infectious. Two doses of measles vaccine provide 99% protection against illness and serious complications. The Australian Government Chief Medical Officer, Professor Anthony Lawler recently issued a [statement](#) on measles, reiterating the need to maintain vaccination vigilance.

National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Exercise

NEMA recently coordinated an exercise simulating a cyclone hitting Queensland, resulting in the depletion of insulin stocks intended for national distribution. International supply chains were impacted by an unrelated cyber-security attack, resulting in a national shortage of insulin. This exercise was attended by the CPHO and Chief Health Officers from other jurisdictions and highlighted the importance of maintaining strong working relationships and processes to respond to national incidents.

Microalgal Bloom – Southern Fleurieu Coast

A microalgal bloom, initially reported at two beaches on the Southern Fleurieu Peninsula in mid-March is believed to be a result of an unusual marine heat wave with higher than normal water temperatures. Human symptoms are generally of short duration and there are no long-term impacts associated with exposure. This algal species is, however, toxic for marine life, with fish kills being reported in areas including Kangaroo Island and the Southern Yorke Peninsula. SA Health issued public advice to avoid impacted areas of the coastline with discoloured water and foam. A whole of Government [statement](#) is also available.

Dust Issues – Sellicks Beach

An update was provided to the Council on community concerns related to exposure to respirable crystalline silica and dust particles from operations at the Sellicks Hill Quarry. The Department of Energy and Mining, the Environment Protection Authority and SA Health are working with the community to respond to these concerns, with consultation meetings being held since mid-2024. Dust control measures are being reviewed and site compliance monitoring is ongoing.

State Public Health Plan (SPHP)

A number of engagement sessions have been held with multicultural communities and stakeholders representing groups including women, men, LGBTIQ+, disability, young people and older persons. Equity and the determinants of health, and how these impact on public health outcomes, has been a key focus of these discussions. Work is underway to draft priority area

statements and criteria for prioritising strategic directions for inclusion in the SPHP. The development of an interactive, digital platform to host the Plan is continuing.

CPHO Report and SMART-PH

Work continues to draft the CPHO Report, which will be published later in 2025 as a concise, summarised report. The following biennial CPHO Report will be released in a new digitised, online format, facilitated by the SMART-PH (Digitising InforMation for PRacTice in Public Health) project. Two mini SMART-PH projects are underway.

Minister's Excellence in Public Health Awards – 10th Anniversary

The Minister for Health and Wellbeing Excellence in Public Health Awards recognise council initiatives across South Australia which have resulted in outstanding contributions to public health in local communities. The judging panel for the Awards includes representation by two SAPHC members. 2025 is the 10th anniversary of the Awards. The Council discussed ways to promote the Awards to councils, and other ways to recognise this milestone year.

Environmental Health Workforce Roundtable

There is a long standing local, national and international shortage of environmental health professionals, particularly in rural and regional areas. A roundtable to discuss environmental health workforce issues is being planned for late 2025. Proposed agenda items include a snapshot of environmental health in South Australia and perspectives and input from Local Government, Environmental Health Australia (as the professional peak body) and Flinders University, who offer post-graduate courses in environmental health. The importance of Aboriginal environmental health worker programs, opportunities for cadetships and other pathways into the environmental health field, and the importance of recognised continuing professional development were raised for consideration as part of the roundtable.

Vaccination and Local Councils

The recent increase in confirmed measles cases and concerns over declining vaccination rates was further discussed as a dedicated agenda item. Councils through the delivery of the School Immunisation Program (SIP) play an important role in the delivery of vaccination programs and reducing vaccine preventable disease including measles.

The existing service delivery model for the SIP is recommended as the most cost effective and efficient way to deliver the measles vaccination program. However, vaccination coverage rates in the SIP have been declining since 2018. There was agreement that the decline in councils delivering the SIP is a significant issue and that action is required to address, with further agreement that SAPHC has a role under S.38 of the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011* to provide or support the provision of immunisation services for the protection of public health.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

While avian influenza usually affects birds (wild and domestic), human infections can occur, typically due to exposure to infected live or dead poultry. The avian influenza viruses currently circulating are not considered to be able to effectively transmit between humans, therefore the overall risk of HPAI to humans is considered to be low. During 2024 and 2025, HPAI detections in poultry and domestic birds have occurred in Australia, including Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. There have been no detections of HPAI in South Australia. The importance of ongoing surveillance and preparedness for HPAI outbreaks was noted.

Next meeting

The next SAPHC meeting is scheduled for 12 August 2025.

Contact

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