

State Public Health Plan 2019-2024

Summary



Government
of South Australia

SA Health

Introduction

Good health and positive wellbeing are essential for any thriving community. Everyday life is improved by public health systems and services that support a clean, safe and healthy environment. In order to develop a sustainable health system for the future, we need to reduce the burden of disease and associated costs to our community by focusing on protecting and promoting health and wellbeing and preventing illness.

The State Public Health Plan 2019-2024 provides a framework to take action towards sustaining and improving the health and wellbeing of all South Australians. The vision of the Plan is for a healthy, liveable and connected community for all South Australians. The purpose of the Plan is to guide coordinated action over the next five years in partnership with local councils (as public health authorities for their areas) and a range of other public health partners.

The inaugural State Public Health Plan was released five years ago under the provisions of the [South Australian Public Health Act 2011](#). Since then, all South Australian local councils have developed [Regional Public Health Plans](#). In developing their plans, councils have worked in partnership to assess the state of public health in their areas, identified existing and potential public health risks and considered opportunities for promoting public health and wellbeing. The [State Public Health Plan 2019-2024](#) has regard for the key issues raised in these regional plans and the progress achieved. The Plan includes new areas of action to address the health needs of priority populations, especially Aboriginal people, and also comprehensively addresses cross cutting issues, such as mental health and wellbeing and the public health impacts of climate change.

This summary focuses on the four priorities; promote, protect, prevent and progress and associated action areas that will see existing work continue, new issues addressed and an increased focus on actions to support priority populations to help improve the health and wellbeing of all South Australians.

Public health is...

Public health is what we do collectively as a society to create the conditions and environments that enable health and wellbeing. Public health touches the lives of South Australians every day, protecting and promoting health and wellbeing. Examples of public health in action are shown below.

PUBLIC HEALTH INCLUDES:



services and programs at libraries or community centres



recreation facilities and sports grounds



safe drinking water



community gardens or local fruit and veg swaps



parks and shaded playgrounds



immunisation services



footpaths and walking trails



skate parks and dog parks



volunteering and community involvement



the way our communities are planned



climate risk management planning



wastewater management



events that bring the community together



services that celebrate and promote cultural diversity



health information and education programs



disability inclusion services



safe and nutritious food



smoke and alcohol free environments

Public health is about everyone working together to achieve our vision for a healthier South Australian community.

A snapshot of public health in South Australia

South Australia has very similar health outcomes to the rest of Australia in terms of our life expectancy at birth, hospitalisation rates, pregnancy outcomes and cancer survival¹. Eighty one percent of South Australian adults report their health status to be good, very good or excellent². However, outcomes are not the same for all South Australians and there are continuing and emerging public health issues which require ongoing effort.

The *South Australian Public Health Act 2011* requires biennial reporting by the Chief Public Health Officer about public health trends, activities and indicators. This [report \(and the associated data compendium\)](#) provide significant detail on the state of public health in South Australia and should be viewed as a valuable and timely complementary source of advice to this section.

POPULATION



1.7 million³

Our population growth rate of 0.6% is below the national rate of 1.6% and is the second smallest of all states and territories⁴

Rural and regional population growth rate is 0.2%⁴

ABORIGINAL POPULATION



42,000

(2.5% of the population³)

CULTURAL BACKGROUND



We come from: **200 countries**⁵
 Speak more than: **200 languages**⁵
 Follow around: **100 religions**⁵

LIFE EXPECTANCY



80 years⁶



85 years⁶

South Australian median age: **40 years**⁷

Australian median age: **38 years**⁷

Aboriginal people median age: **23 years**⁷

WHERE WE LIVE



23%

live outside of Adelaide⁸

SA population density: **1.6 people**⁴ per km²

Australia population density: **3.2 people**⁴ per km²

Generally we enjoy good health and wellbeing but there are increasing rates of chronic conditions and considerable disparities across different sections of the population.

- > About half of the population has at least one of the eight most common chronic conditions such as arthritis, asthma, heart disease diabetes or a mental health condition. These contribute to 61% of the total burden of disease⁹.
- > Diet-related chronic conditions are among the leading causes of death and disability in Australia².
- > The burden of disease could be lowered by more than 30% if modifiable risk factors were reduced across the population¹⁰, for example:
 - less than 10% of adults eat enough vegetables¹¹
 - only 45% of adults reported engaging in the recommended amount of physical activity each week²
 - 61% of adults are overweight or obese¹¹.
- > Many South Australians enjoy a high standard of living, live in safe neighbourhoods, have stable employment, secure housing, are well educated and have easy access to services like schools, transport, health and social services. These social determinants of health contribute to improved health and wellbeing, however:
 - on every measure of social determinants, Aboriginal people have lower levels of health. Additionally, they have higher rates of the risk factors that contribute to chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers, as well as poorer access to health services. Overall, Aboriginal people have higher rates of disease and shorter life expectancy¹²;
 - South Australians living in rural and remote areas, have higher rates of chronic conditions and have poorer physical and mental health status than those who live in metropolitan areas. Rates of risk factors for disease are higher and access to services poorer¹³;
 - people living in areas with the highest socioeconomic disadvantage are more than twice as likely to die from avoidable causes¹⁴.

Every day, public health services are working to help prevent the causes of disease and improve health and wellbeing of South Australians. Across one year:

- > over one million funded vaccine doses were distributed
- > more than 50,000 reports of communicable and infectious diseases were made allowing appropriate responses to be implemented
- > water, food safety and environmental hazards are monitored and problems addressed to prevent the spread of disease.

Regional Public Health Planning 2013 to 2018

Under the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011*, local councils are required to prepare and maintain regional public health plans for their areas. Thirty one regional public health plans were developed in the first round of planning. The summary below is drawn from actions identified by regional public health plans, biennial reports on implementation (Section 52 reports) and discussions with councils and planning groups.

Determinants of health

- > All regional public health plans consistently focus on key determinants of health including built and natural environments, social cohesion and inclusion, social protection, climate change, food and water safety and security, economic development and local employment, education and learning, crime and safety and the cultural determinants of health.

Population focus

- > Regional public health plan action generally takes a whole of community focus on planning, policy utilities, spaces, services, programs and activities that build health and wellbeing.
- > Specific populations are also identified for action, commonly focused on our ageing population, young people, and children.
- > Councils respond to vulnerability to health and social risks within their communities, including social and geographic isolation, unemployment, housing stress and complex needs.
- > Action focuses on the most vulnerable people, seeks to build resilience, links with support networks, services and resources, and effective advocacy. This action has a strong emphasis on partnering with other agencies.

Keeping us well

- > The greatest emphasis is on creating and maintaining environments and facilities that promote good health and wellbeing, followed by providing opportunities for healthy living through council-run and sponsored spaces, programs, services and events. All councils plan, promote and deliver opportunities for physical activity in their communities and link physical activity with personal and community wellbeing. These actions highlight links between the council's stewardship of healthy local environments through open space provision and preservation, and the benefits of social connectedness and recreation.
- > Most regional public health plans address alcohol as a public health and safety issue within the context of dry zones and alcohol licencing, frequently in tandem with smoke-free areas.
- > Regional public health plan action on mental wellbeing and suicide prevention includes building networks and participation opportunities, facilities provision, and access to services.
- > Both metropolitan and rural regional public health plans include a strong focus on building community participation and capacity. This includes developing capacity to contribute to community wellbeing and social cohesion, particularly through volunteering, to build engagement and connection with others. This also includes initiatives to build community voice in council planning and decision making on local matters, including regional public health planning governance. Rural councils have a strong advocacy focus on preserving their volunteer base, in response to challenges of population decline and ageing for regional South Australia.

Keeping us safe

- > Regional public health plans reflect councils' pivotal public health protection role, with public and environmental health action representing a substantial proportion of overall planning commitments. Examples of regulatory action include food safety inspections, monitoring of cooling towers and swimming pools, provision of community waste water treatment and preventing and managing public health risks under the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011*.
- > Regional public health plans respond to local area community safety through environmental design principles, policy enforcement and infrastructure to preserve the safety and amenity of public spaces.
- > Climate change directly impacts on community safety. Regional public health plans feature commitments to joint vulnerability assessment and planning for our climate-altered world and responses to immediate risks through zone emergency management planning, consideration of human, urban, environmental and infrastructure protection issues, including sustainability and community resilience.

Partnering

- > Partnering occurs across the spectrum of determinants raised in regional public health plans and the demand for partnerships is much greater in rural South Australia (72.5%) than in metropolitan areas (27.5%).

In conclusion, issues emerging from regional public health plans demonstrate the breadth, depth and complexity of council action to protect and promote health and wellbeing. As public health authorities for their areas, councils take action as partners in administration of the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011* and as leaders, influences, and advocates for their communities and regions.

The State Public Health Plan 2019-2024 incorporates issues emerging from regional public health plans, through the priorities and action areas, and provides continuity with the inaugural State Public Health Plan. The introduction of a stronger strategic focus on systems and enablers in this Plan provides local government with a clearer mandate for strengthening capacity and coordination of public health action.



Vision

A healthy, liveable and connected community for all South Australians

The Plan's vision is for a South Australia where communities are friendly, safe and sustainable with well-designed places that support physical and mental health and wellbeing. This includes being able to walk or cycle to local services, easily access public transport to larger centres, make nutritious food choices and enjoy being active in parks and other recreational facilities. The vision also sees South Australia's rich diversity celebrated, community activities accessible to everyone and residents participating and having a say in community life. The vision provides an opportunity for everyone to work together at a local and state level to improve health and wellbeing in South Australia.

What we hope to achieve

The Plan outlines actions and opportunities for collaboration between SA Health, local government, State Government departments, non-government organisations and Public Health Partner Authorities to address the environmental and social determinants of health with a particular focus on priority communities. By working in partnership, we will not only achieve consistency in our approach, but will better mobilise our collective resources and effort for coordinated and positive public health outcomes for all South Australians. Improvements in the built, natural, social and economic environments that promote and protect health and wellbeing can only be achieved by working in partnerships as no one sphere of government, non-government, business or community has responsibility across all of these areas.

Determinants of health

There are many factors that impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Factors such as where we live, the state of our environment, genetics, our income and education level, and our relationships with friends and family all have considerable impacts on health¹⁵. A framework for the determinants of health is shown in Diagram 1. Addressing these determinants of health requires a partnership approach with a broad range of agencies.

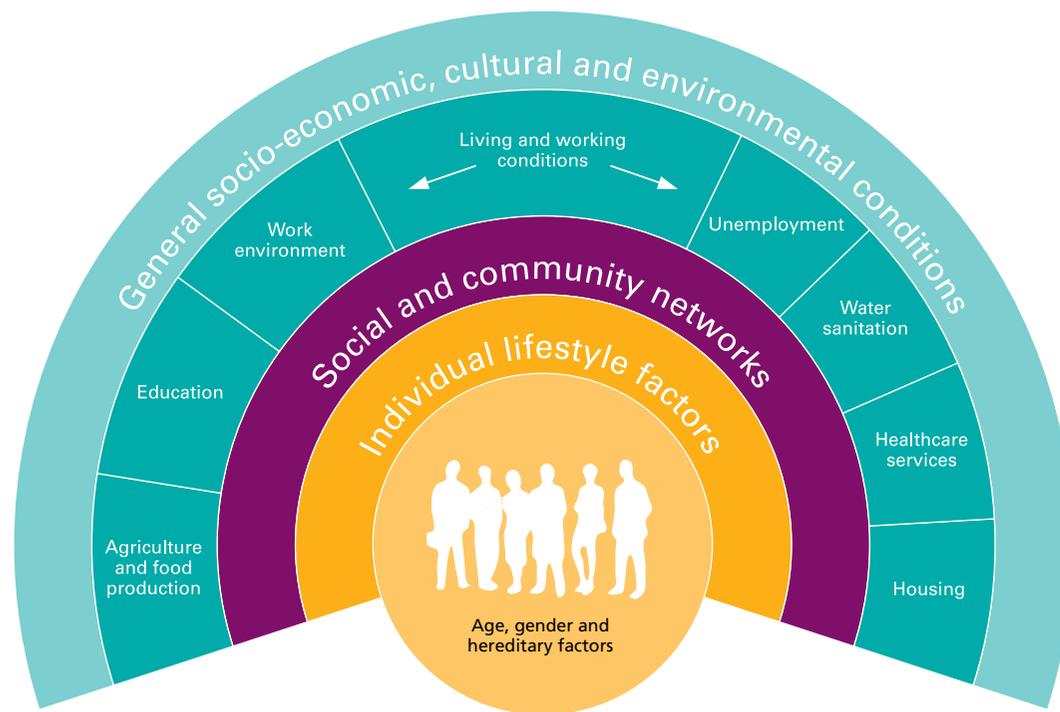
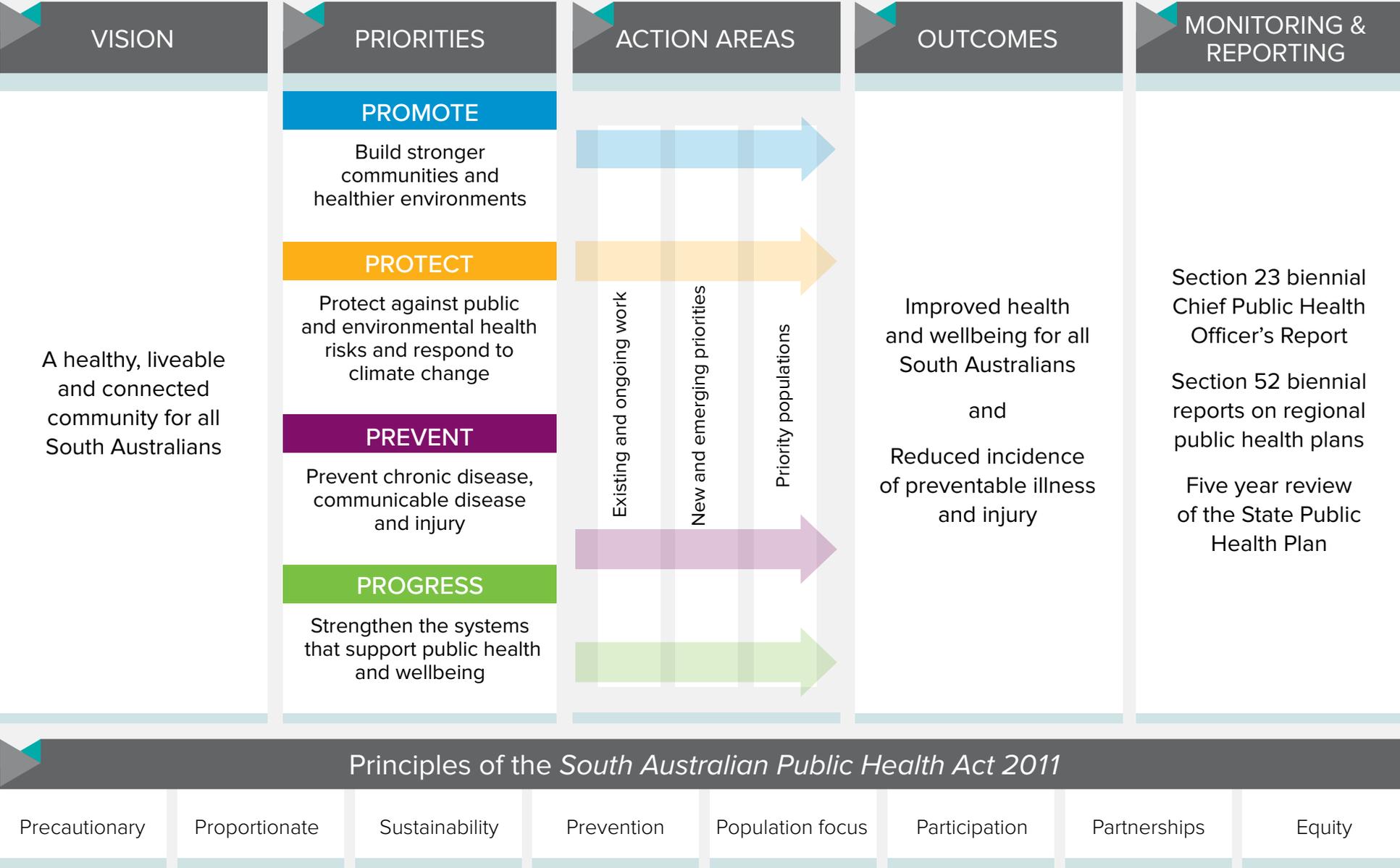


Diagram 1: A framework for determinants of health¹⁶

A focus on priority populations

Most South Australians live and work in communities and environments that support wellbeing. The State Public Health Plan 2019-2024 recognises the disparities in the health status of South Australians and includes actions to address health inequities. There is an obvious and necessary focus on addressing the health needs of priority populations, especially Aboriginal people and people living in rural and regional areas, those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Framework of the Plan



Priorities



These priorities are consistent with the priorities of the inaugural State Public Health Plan and align with the terminology of public health services and functions outlined in the [Global Charter for the Public's Health](#).

To achieve the vision of a healthy, liveable and connected community for all South Australians, actions will be required across all four priorities. Public health partners will play a variety of roles in the implementation of the actions that follow, including partnering, advocating, leading and facilitating.

PROMOTE

Build stronger communities and healthier environments

Action areas could include:

- > Plans, policies and guidelines that support the creation of healthier communities and sustainable environments for all ages and abilities.
- > Opportunities for social connection, volunteering and community participation to enhance mental wellbeing and healthy ageing.
- > Capacity building of individuals, families, carers and communities to support mental health and wellbeing.
- > Empowering communities to be involved and engaged in decision making processes that impact on their health and wellbeing.
- > Built environments that support health and wellbeing for all through improved:
 - access to quality public realm and green infrastructure, including open space and effective use of shade, vegetation and sustainable water use
 - public infrastructure (for example walking and cycling paths, functional street scapes, recreation spaces, smoke free environments and accessible services)
 - urban planning that promotes active travel and public transport
 - accessibility and availability of healthy food.
- > Policies and programs to improve community safety for all.
- > The development of all-ages friendly communities.
- > Public health and wellbeing strategies in remote Aboriginal communities, in consultation with Aboriginal communities.
- > Physical and mental wellbeing promotion strategies in settings such as schools, childcare centres, sport and recreation facilities, community centres, health facilities, prisons and workplaces.
- > Reducing exposure to environmental pollutants in air, water and soil and in the built environment.
- > Activities to improve mental health and wellbeing and respond to intergenerational trauma, grief and loss and disconnection to land and community for Aboriginal people.
- > Policies and practices that support cultural diversity and address racism.
- > Partnerships in local communities to prevent and reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harms.

PROTECT

Protect against public and environmental health risks and respond to climate change

Action areas could include:

- > Public health regulations, policies and guidelines.
- > Compliance and enforcement of public health legislation.
- > Capacity building for the delivery of health protection to all South Australians.
- > Public and environmental health risk assessments.
- > Prevention and management of the public health impacts of major incidents, emergencies and disasters.
- > Supporting individuals and communities to be aware of and plan for potential risks in their environment.
- > Building the capacity of Aboriginal people and communities in environmental health protection, to improve everyday living conditions.
- > Connection to Country initiatives to support Aboriginal people's health and wellbeing.
- > Plans to minimise and respond to climate change impacts on public health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on ensuring sustainability and addressing the needs of priority populations.
- > Exploring, monitoring and responding to emerging public health issues associated with the changing climate.
- > Applying a climate risk management lens to the development of new plans, policies and strategies, as well as implementation of vulnerability assessments on infrastructure and assets.
- > Ensuring safe drinking water supplies and the recycling of wastewater to support the safe and beneficial use of South Australia's limited water resources.
- > Partnerships to reduce and mitigate exposure to environmental contaminants in regional economic and industrial hubs.
- > Reducing the harmful effects of exposure to lead and other contaminants in domestic settings.

PREVENT

Prevent chronic disease, communicable disease and injury

Action areas could include:

Chronic disease

- > Plans, policies and practices that address the risk factors for chronic disease focusing on:
 - healthy eating (including breastfeeding and food security)
 - physical activity
 - reducing tobacco use
 - reducing alcohol and other drug related harm.
- > Empowering individuals and communities to be healthier, through policies, programs and education that supports wellbeing and improved health literacy.
- > Strengthening the interaction between public health objectives and the food regulatory system.
- > Plans to increase screening rates for early detection of cancers.
- > Specific and culturally appropriate plans, policies and practices to prevent chronic disease for Aboriginal people, including enhancing early detection and management of chronic disease in Aboriginal communities.
- > Strengthening mental health and wellbeing and prevent mental illness through promotion, prevention and early-in-life intervention strategies.
- > Suicide prevention initiatives that build community capacity.

Communicable disease and injury

- > Plans to minimise the impact of infectious and communicable diseases.
- > Specific and culturally appropriate plans, policies and practices to prevent infectious and communicable disease and injury for Aboriginal people.
- > Strategies that address preventable disability and injury across the life course.

PROGRESS

Strengthen the systems that support public health and wellbeing

Action areas could include:

Partnerships and collaboration

- > Developing, expanding and strengthening mutually beneficial partnerships with:
 - local, state and federal government departments
 - non-government organisations
 - research institutions and universities
 - Public Health Partner Authorities.
- > Application of an Aboriginal and equity 'lens' wherever possible in all public health strategies.

Governance

- > Appropriate governance structures for public health planning and implementation.
- > Strengthening community engagement and involvement in public health and wellbeing planning and decision making for all.

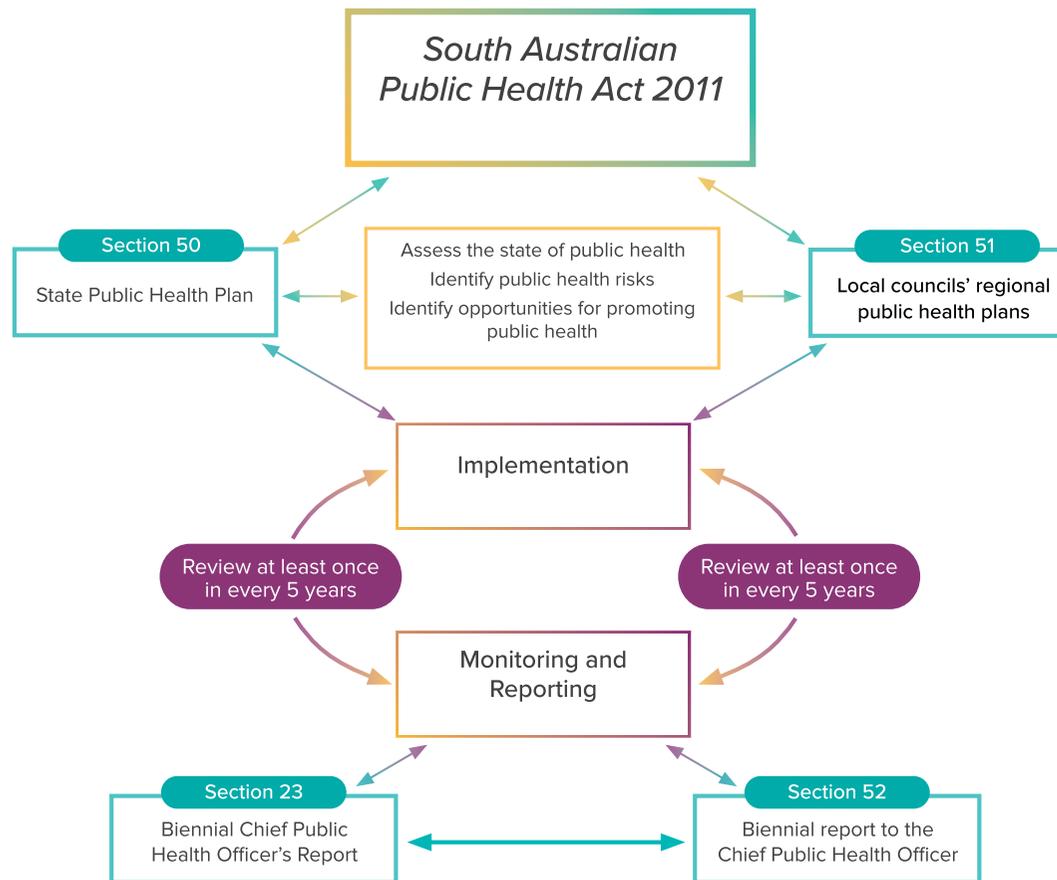
Surveillance, evaluation and research, reporting and communications

- > Data and surveillance systems, research and evaluation to inform public health planning and action.
- > Monitoring, evaluation and reporting on public health action and information to inform best practice.
- > Strategic communication initiatives to promote understanding of public health and wellbeing.
- > Data sovereignty (Aboriginal people's inherent and inalienable rights relating to the collection, ownership and application of data about them) and respectful consultation in all data collection.

Workforce capacity

- > Organisational capacity building in public health and wellbeing, across spheres of government and other key stakeholders.
- > Workforce capacity and skill development to support coordinated public health action.

Implementation, monitoring and reporting



The Department for Health and Wellbeing will coordinate the governance and implementation structures for the Plan, in consultation and partnership with the Local Government Association, local councils and other public health partners.

As shown in Diagram 2, reporting and monitoring on the implementation of the State Public Health Plan 2019-2024 will occur through existing legislated mechanisms outlined in the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011*. This includes reporting on the implementation of the State Public Health Plan through the biennial [Chief Public Health Officer's Report](#), the review of the State Public Health Plan at least once in every five years and the requirement for local councils to prepare biennial reports on implementation of their Regional Public Health Plans.

Diagram 2: Public health planning system

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For more information

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