The Australian Health Policy Collaboration at Victoria University works with and supports a collaborative network of organisations and leading chronic disease experts, bringing together Australia’s leading thinkers to translate rigorous research into good policy. The national collaboration has developed health targets and indicators for 2025 that, together, will reduce preventable chronic diseases and reduce the health impacts of chronic conditions.

Australia’s Health Tracker and Getting Australia’s Health on Track are the policy-focused reports compiled by the national collaboration. Australia’s Health Tracker by Socio-Economic Status is the latest report card as part of the Australia’s Health Tracker series. A companion report, Getting Australia’s Health on Track, shows where national action should be focused to improve the health of Australians.

Australia’s Health Tracker by Socio-Economic Status presents a national level snapshot of the impact of socio-economic status on risk factors for chronic diseases, on levels of chronic diseases and on premature deaths from chronic diseases.

More than 50 organisations continue to support a systemic and sustained approach to the prevention and management of chronic diseases in Australia.

Collaborating Organisations

Alliance for Research in Exercise, Nutrition and Activity (ARENA)

Australia and New Zealand Obesity Society

Australian Centre for Health Research

Australian Dental Association

Australian Disease Management Association

Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations

Australian Health Care Reform Alliance

Australian Health Promotion Association

Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association

Australian Indigenous Health InfoNet

Australian Institute for Health and Ageing

Australian Psychological Society

Australian Women’s Health Network

Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute

Better Health Plan for the West

Brimbank City Council

Canons Institute

Cancer Council Australia

Charles Perkins Centre, University of Sydney

Chronic Stress Alliance

Caring & Living As Neighbours

Cohealth

Confederation of Australian Sport

CSC/Physe

Deakin University

Diabetes Australia

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education

George Institute for Global Health

Health West Partnership

Inner West Health Primary Care Partnership

Sue Harries for Women’s Health

Kooyong Health Australia

Lance hfrastructure

Men’s Health Australia

MOHS, Prayer, Plane & Poet’s Health

National Heart Foundation

National Rural Health Alliance

National Stroke Foundation

NCD FREE

Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies

Networking Health Victoria

Dementia Australia

Oncology Australia

Overcoming Multiple Sclerosis

Palliative Care Australia

Public Health Association of Australia

Royal Flying Doctor Service

School of Medicine, University of Notre Dame

School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University

Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health

Social Determinants of Health Alliance

South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute

Suicide Prevention Australia

The Telethon Kids Institute

Victoria University

Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

YMCA

2017

Australia’s Health Tracker by Socio-Economic Status

A brief report card on preventable chronic diseases, conditions and their risk factors

Tracking progress for a healthier Australia by 2025

Low socio-economic status is a major risk factor for poor health.

Policies which address the health impacts of social and economic conditions will significantly improve all aspects of society and contribute directly to a prosperous, productive and healthy nation.
The data in this report highlights that people in lower socio-economic quintiles – two million Australians – are at much greater risk of poor health.

Chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, chronic lung disease, mental health and cancer affect employment, education and community participation, leading to fewer opportunities to improve income and family circumstances.

Cost of living pressures, including the cost of essentials such as housing, food and energy, are more intense for people with less household income. In addition, serious pressures caused by work, family and career duties and other commitments can have a significant impact on diet and exercise.

Struggling families and individuals do just have more chronic diseases – having a chronic disease is much more likely to kill people in the lower two socio-economic quintiles.

Early death rates from the same conditions are markedly higher for people with lower socio-economic status.

Action by communities and governments, services and families, can help prevent chronic diseases regardless of socio-economic status, improve health across the life-course, and help prevent unnecessary deaths.

The 2025 targets for a healthier Australia have been developed through the collective effort and guidance of Australia’s leading scientists, researchers and clinicians. Failure to tackle the health of Australians affected by disadvantage will result in rising costs and burden on health services, widening existing health disparities and how to manage higher rates of hospital admissions for preventable causes.

Poor health experienced by disadvantaged Australians will continue to affect welfare and education; systems and costs, productivity levels and employment; and social participation.

Health, education and other public policies must be tailored to tackle the impacts of socio-economic disadvantage to improve the health of all Australians.