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**AMA calls for independent Centre for Disease Control**

The Australian Medical Association says a Centre for Disease Control (CDC) needs to be independent to ensure it can develop public health and pandemic responses based on scientific and technical evidence without political interference.

The AMA has been calling for a Centre for Disease Control since 2017 and the federal government this year allocated \$3.2 million dollars to begin the process of establishing the new centre.

In its submission to the Department of Health's consultation paper on the scope and function of a CDC the AMA said robust governance would be critical to ensure a CDC is trustworthy, accountable, and has the necessary expertise to carry out its role effectively.

AMA President Professor Stephen Robson said while it was still early days in establishing a CDC it was vitally important to get the settings right and this included ensuring any centre would be independent.

"The CDC must have the confidence and the funding structure to act in the public interest and not in the political interests of the day.

"The advice released by the CDC to the public and medical community must be evidence based, transparent and independent from all political and external influences," Professor Robson said.

In its submission the AMA also called on the government to:

- incorporate the expertise of health professionals at the coalface into the CDC, particularly doctors, to ensure the appropriate preparedness and response of the health care system
- incorporate both communicable and non-communicable disease prevention and response in its scope, with an initial focus on communicable disease noting the current urgency to have a more coordinated system in place for the COVID-19 pandemic
- ensure collaboration with community and local-level groups when health issues and projects impact them, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health peak organisations, disability service providers and community representatives, culturally and linguistically diverse populations, and aged care service providers and representatives.

Professor Robson said that once operational the centre would be a fundamental shift in Australian's health system.

"The AMA supports a transition phase being built into establishing a CDC to ensure the health system can adapt and any issues can be worked through. This will minimise any roadblocks in the centre's development," he said.

"The COVID-19 pandemic and the threat of future health challenges illustrates the need for a nationally coordinated body across all jurisdictions in Australia.

"Establishing a CDC will be complex. The AMA invites ongoing engagement with government at all stages of design and development to ensure an Australian CDC is fit for purpose," Professor Robson said.

[Link to AMA submission](#)

[Read the Department of Health and Aged Care's CDC discussion paper](#)

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