



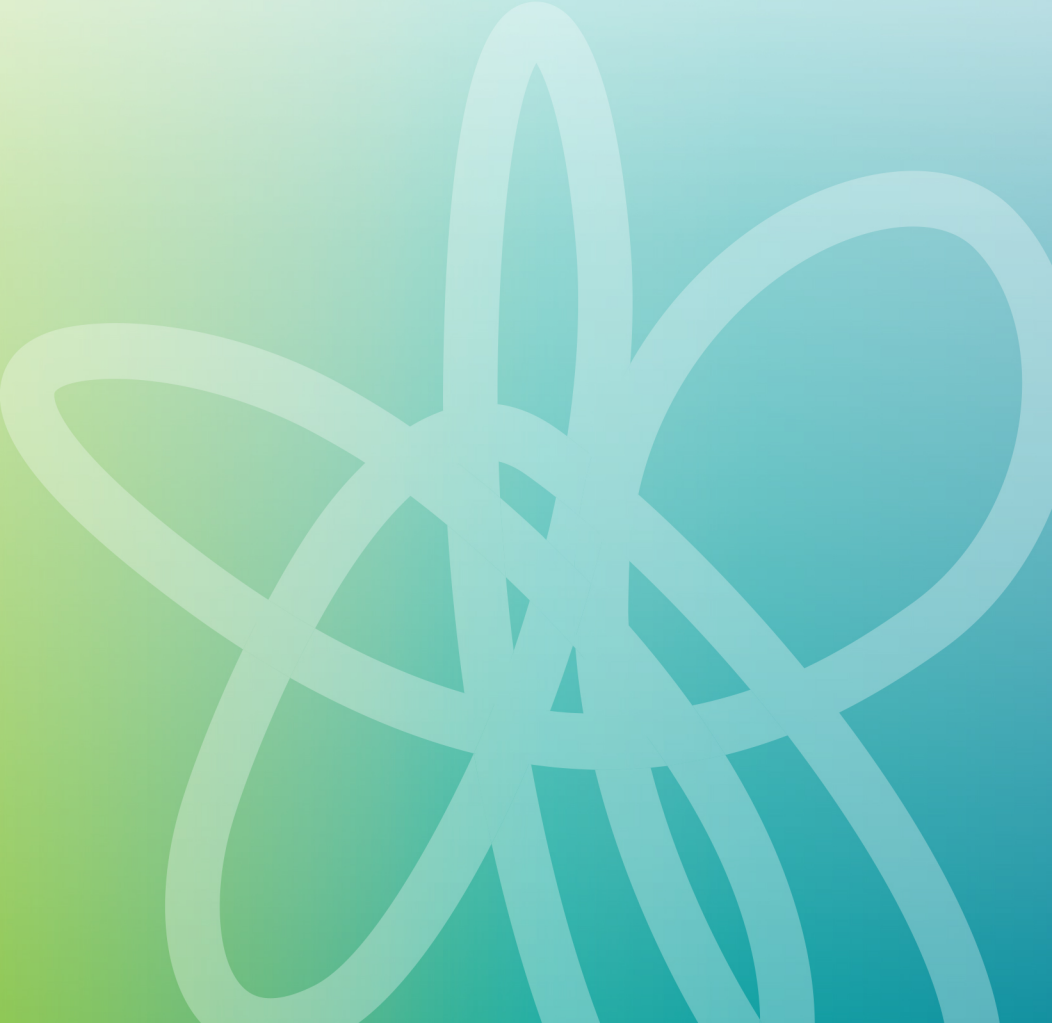
The Australian Prevention  
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Systems and solutions for better health

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# AUSPOPS 2016–2018

## Second national report

April 2019



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### Our funding partners



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## Funding Partners

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## Background

The AUStralian Perceptions Of Prevention Survey (AUSPOPS) was first undertaken in 2016 to understand how Australian communities perceive government interventions aimed at reducing lifestyle-related chronic disease. The 2016 AUSPOPS comprised a single national sample of adults (aged 18 years and over) who were residents of private households in Australia. A total of 2,052 respondents completed a survey.

In 2018, additional funding was secured from the Prevention Centre to boost the sample size in Tasmania. The total achieved sample size for the 2018 AUSPOPS was 2,601 (2,200 national sample, 401 Tasmania boost). The 2018 survey largely covers the same content as the 2016 survey, with a small number of modifications from consultations with Prevention Centre partners and findings arising out of the analysis of the 2016 data.

## Objective

The main research objectives for AUSPOPS were to explore, measure and track current:

- Community awareness and understanding of government chronic disease prevention policies and programs
- Exposure to and participation in such programs
- High level attitudes to prevention policies and programs, as well as attitudes to specific policies and programs
- Perceptions about priorities for prevention
- Perceptions and beliefs about the role of government in prevention and the balance of responsibility between the individual, government and other parties.

## Methodology

The 2016 and 2018 surveys used a dual frame sample design. The split between the landline sample frame and mobile phone sample frame was 40:60 in 2016 and increased to 30:70 in 2018 to account for increases in the proportion of the mobile-only population. Landline and mobile Random Digit Dialling (RDD) sample frames were used for the core national sample, while a landline RDD sample frame and a listed mobile sample frame was used for the Tasmania boost. With the landline sample, the “next birthday” method was used to randomly select respondents from households where two or more in-scope persons were present. The person who answered the phone was the selected respondent with the mobile sample. Further details are available in the technical reports<sup>1,2</sup> for each survey.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Perceptions of Prevention Survey – Wave 2, Technical Report, Social Research Centre, December 2018. Available from: <https://preventioncentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/1712-2018-AUSPOPS-Technical-Report-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Perceptions of Prevention Survey, Technical Report, Social Research Centre, July 2016. Available from: [https://preventioncentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/1622-AUSPOPS-Technical-Report\\_SRC\\_Final.pdf](https://preventioncentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/1622-AUSPOPS-Technical-Report_SRC_Final.pdf)

# Results

Key project statistics are summarised at Table 1.

Table 1: Key project statistics (source: Australian Perceptions of Prevention Survey – Wave 2, Technical Report, Social Research Centre, December 2018)

Field	2016	2018 (Total)	2018 Tasmania (sub-sample)*
Interviews achieved (n)	2,052	2,601	401
Average interview duration (mins)	17.6	15.2	15.1
Cooperation rate (%)	76.9	58.6	60.8
Response rate (AAPOR RR3) (%)	20.4	16.7	20.5
Main fieldwork start date	6 Jun 16	17 Oct 18	17 Oct 18
Main fieldwork finish date	10 Jul 16	1 Dec 18	1 Dec 18

\* Sub-sample of total in previous column

Descriptive statistics across the AUSPOPs questionnaire are shown in Tables 2–8 for the 2016 and 2018 surveys. With the exception of Table 2 (sample characteristics), the data are weighted appropriately to the population for gender, age, part of state, education, country of birth and telephone status (mobile/landline) for the year of survey.

Statistical tests comparing the years are not reported. However, there were a number of descriptive trends to note. The 2018 sample attracted a slightly higher percentage of those aged over 55 years compared with 2016 (50.5 vs 55.1%, Table 1) and, related to this, a higher proportion who were retired or on the pension (31.1% vs 36.9%, Table 1). However, the weighting applied to all survey outcomes ensures representativeness of the underlying population for the years of the survey. The health indicators appear to be relatively stable across the two survey years.

There were a number of modest but notable apparent increases in perceptions regarding the effect on health of people's genetic make-up, financial circumstances and whether a person smokes or not. For each of these there was an approximately 5% absolute increase the proportion of people saying these factors had a large or very/large effect (compared with no to moderate effect) from 2016 to 2018 (Table 4). There was also an almost 9% increase in the proportion of people believing that whether a person drinks alcohol or not has a large/very large effect on their health (55.2% vs 64.4%, Table 4) from 2016 to 2018. With respect to the role which people and organisations play in maintaining health, there was a 14.5% (absolute) increase in the proportion of people believing the government has a large or very large role to play in maintaining health, (46.1% to 60.6%, Table 6). Other actors such as people themselves, parents and schools remained stable on this indicator. There was also a 5% increase in the proportion believing private health insurers have a large or very large role to play (34.4% vs 39.1%, Table 6).

The surveys included a range of questions on perceptions of government intervention for health, which showed little change in the proportions agreeing and disagreeing with a range of statements, but a strengthening of support for government intervention. For example, while the overall proportion agreeing (agree/strongly agree) with the statement "sometimes government needs to make laws that keep people from harming themselves" changed little from 2016 (79.7%) to 2018 (81.0%), the proportion strongly agreeing went from 24.7% to 36.1% (Table 7).

Four new questions on government intervention arising from the recently published analysis of the 2016 survey<sup>3</sup> aimed to gauge agreement with different conceptualisations of the government's role in population health. Less than 40% agreed that Australia has been made a nanny state, but over 90% agreed that maintaining the community's health required a combination of government regulation and personal responsibility (Table 7). With regard to specific interventions such as plain packaging, restrictions on advertising of unhealthy products and taxes, there were few notable changes, except there was an increase from 2016 to 2018 in the proportion of people feeling that bans on smoking in cars with children had not gone far enough (42.8% to 48.6%, Table 8) and in the proportion saying regulation in general had not gone far enough (43.9% vs 50.4%, Table 8).

Full statistical analyses of these data will be undertaken for peer review publication.

**Table 2: Demographic profile of samples (unweighted)**

Characteristic	2016		2018		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	960	46.8%	1,237	47.6%	2,197	47.2%
Female	1,092	53.2%	1,364	52.4%	2,456	52.8%
18–<35yrs	400	19.6%	429	16.5%	829	17.9%
35–<55yrs	610	29.9%	738	28.4%	1,348	29.0%
55+yrs	1,032	50.5%	1,432	55.1%	2,464	53.1%
Country of birth English speaking*	1,726	84.6%	2,183	84.0%	3,909	84.3%
Not English speaking	314	15.4%	415	16.0%	729	15.7%
English speaking	1,750	85.6%	2,266	87.1%	4,016	86.5%
Other language	294	14.4%	335	12.9%	629	13.5%
No	1,998	98.0%	2,536	97.9%	4,534	98.0%
ATSI	40	2.0%	54	2.1%	94	2.0%
Employed	1,101	54.0%	1,343	51.8%	2,444	52.7%
Unemployed	73	3.6%	72	2.8%	145	3.1%
Retired/pension	634	31.1%	957	36.9%	1,591	34.3%
Student	134	6.6%	108	4.2%	242	5.2%
Home duties	75	3.7%	85	3.3%	160	3.5%
Other	23	1.1%	29	1.1%	52	1.1%

<sup>3</sup> Grunseit AC, Rowbotham S, Crane M, Indig D, Bauman AE, Wilson A. Nanny or canny? Community perceptions of government intervention for preventive health. *Critical Public Health*. 2018 May 2:1–6.

High School	648	32.4%	832	32.8%	1,480	32.6%
Post-secondary	616	30.8%	822	32.4%	1,438	31.7%
University Degree	735	36.8%	883	34.8%	1,618	35.7%
No	1,365	67.2%	1,724	66.6%	3,089	66.9%
Income support	666	32.8%	864	33.4%	1,530	33.1%
No	727	35.8%	1,012	39.1%	1,739	37.6%
Private health insurance	1,305	64.2%	1,578	60.9%	2,883	62.4%

\*Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Nth Ireland), USA, Canada

Table 3: Health profile of samples (weighted)

Measure	2016	2018	Total
<b>General health</b>			
Excellent	13.1%	11.4%	12.2%
Very good	32.4%	32.2%	32.3%
Good	36.6%	37.3%	37.0%
Fair	13.4%	14.6%	14.0%
Poor	4.5%	4.5%	4.5%
<b>Meeting physical activity recommendations</b>			
<5 days	67.6%	69.2%	68.4%
≥5days	32.4%	30.8%	31.6%
<b>Currently smoke regularly</b>			
Yes	16.7%	14.0%	15.3%
No	83.3%	86.0%	84.7%
<b>Frequency drinking alcohol last 12 months</b>			
Never	18.8%	18.4%	18.6%
Less than once a month	17.9%	16.6%	17.2%
Once a month	10.4%	9.6%	10.0%
2–3 days a month	13.0%	15.2%	14.1%
1–2 days a week	20.6%	21.9%	21.3%
3–6 days a week	13.8%	12.6%	13.2%
Every day	5.5%	5.8%	5.6%



Table 4: Perceptions of factors which affect people's health (weighted)

How much of an effect do the following things have on people's health?	2016	2018	Total
<b>a) The type of food a person eats</b>			
No effect to moderate effect	13.9%	12.9%	13.4%
Large/very large effect	86.1%	87.1%	86.6%
<b>b) The amount of physical activity a person does</b>			
No effect to moderate effect	15.2%	18.0%	16.7%
Large/very large effect	84.8%	82.0%	83.3%
<b>c) A person's genetic make-up</b>			
No effect to moderate effect	54.8%	47.4%	51.0%
Large/very large effect	45.2%	52.6%	49.0%
<b>d) A person's financial circumstances</b>			
No effect to moderate effect	46.0%	41.0%	43.5%
Large/very large effect	54.0%	59.0%	56.5%
<b>e) Whether or not a person smokes cigarettes</b>			
No effect to moderate effect	19.2%	14.6%	16.8%
Large/very large effect	80.8%	85.4%	83.2%
<b>f) Whether or not a person drinks alcohol</b>			
No effect to moderate effect	44.8%	35.6%	40.1%
Large/very large effect	55.2%	64.4%	59.9%
<b>g) Where in Australia someone lives</b>			
No effect to moderate effect	61.1%	59.6%	60.3%
Large/very large effect	38.9%	40.4%	39.7%
<b>h) Access to health and hospital services</b>			
No effect to moderate effect	25.0%	21.7%	23.3%
Large/very large effect	75.0%	78.3%	76.7%
<b>i) Access to bike paths</b>			
No effect to moderate effect	74.4%	76.9%	75.7%
Large/very large effect	25.6%	23.1%	24.3%
<b>j) Having activities to promote health in the workplace</b>			
No effect to moderate effect	54.6%	54.9%	54.7%
Large/very large effect	45.4%	45.1%	45.3%
<b>k) Being able to afford to go to a gym to exercise</b>			
No effect to moderate effect	64.0%	63.4%	63.7%
Large/very large effect	36.0%	36.6%	36.3%

Table 5: Individual vs population & treatment vs prevention health measures (weighted)

Which one of the following two health initiatives do you think would make the most difference to improving the community's health?	2016	2018	Total
a) Subsidising drugs that lower blood pressure	32.7%	30.4%	31.5%
b) Setting limits of salt in processed food to lower blood pressure	67.3%	69.6%	68.5%
a) Providing low cost gym membership	24.5%	27.3%	25.9%
b) Building a network of walking and cycle paths	75.5%	72.7%	74.1%
a) Taxing processed food with high sugar or fat content	71.5%	66.9%	69.1%
b) Subsidising operations for people who are obese	28.5%	33.1%	30.9%
a) Funding alcohol treatment centres	42.0%	43.6%	42.8%
b) Placing restrictions on alcohol advertising	58.0%	56.4%	57.2%
a) Increase access to fruit and vegetables	78.6%	79.7%	79.1%
b) Subsidise medications to lower cholesterol	21.4%	20.3%	20.9%

Table 6: Role in maintaining people's health (weighted)

To what extent do you think each of the following have a role in maintaining people's health?	2016	2018	Total
<b>Government</b>			
No to moderate role	53.9%	39.4%	46.5%
Large/very large role	46.1%	60.6%	53.5%
<b>Parents</b>			
No to moderate role	10.9%	10.6%	10.7%
Large/very large role	89.1%	89.4%	89.3%
<b>People themselves</b>			
No to moderate role	9.8%	9.4%	9.6%
Large/very large role	90.2%	90.6%	90.4%
<b>GPs, nurses, pharmacists</b>			
No to moderate role	36.7%	37.4%	37.1%
Large/very large role	63.3%	62.6%	62.9%
<b>Employers</b>			
No to moderate role	72.4%	71.0%	71.7%
Large/very large role	27.6%	29.0%	28.3%
<b>Food manufacturers</b>			
No to moderate role	38.5%	36.2%	37.3%
Large/very large role	61.5%	63.8%	62.7%
<b>Schools</b>			
No to moderate role	31.2%	30.0%	30.6%
Large/very large role	68.8%	70.0%	69.4%
<b>Private health insurers</b>			
No to moderate role	66.0%	60.9%	63.4%
Large/very large role	34.0%	39.1%	36.6%
<b>Alcohol manufacturers*</b>			
No to moderate role	NA	61.9%	61.9%
Large/very large role	NA	38.1%	38.1%

\* Question asked in 2018 only.

NB: Community groups were also included in 2016, but not 2018: 59.5% no to moderate role, 40.5% large/very large role

Table 7: Perceptions of government intervention (weighted)

<b>People in our society often disagree about how far to let individuals go in making decisions for themselves. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Sometimes government needs to make laws that keep people from harming themselves</b>			
Strongly disagree	4.4%	6.3%	5.4%
Disagree	12.8%	11.4%	12.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	3.2%	1.2%	2.2%
Agree	55.0%	44.9%	49.8%
Strongly agree	24.7%	36.1%	30.6%
<b>The government interferes far too much in our everyday lives</b>			
Strongly disagree	6.0%	10.2%	8.1%
Disagree	42.6%	42.8%	42.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	8.1%	4.1%	6.1%
Agree	28.4%	23.3%	25.8%
Strongly agree	14.9%	19.5%	17.3%
<b>It's not the government's business to try to protect people from themselves</b>			
Strongly disagree	9.8%	15.1%	12.5%
Disagree	37.4%	36.8%	37.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	5.0%	3.3%	4.1%
Agree	34.3%	27.2%	30.7%
Strongly agree	13.5%	17.7%	15.6%
<b>Government should put limits on the choices individuals can make so they don't get in the way of what's good for society</b>			
Strongly disagree	18.2%	23.0%	20.7%
Disagree	38.9%	33.5%	36.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	5.9%	3.5%	4.7%
Agree	29.9%	30.6%	30.2%
Strongly agree	7.1%	9.4%	8.3%
<b>Maintaining the community's health requires a combination of both government regulation and personal responsibility*</b>			
Strongly disagree	NA	2.2%	2.2%
Disagree	NA	4.8%	4.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	NA	0.4%	0.4%
Agree	NA	32.8%	32.8%
Strongly agree	NA	59.8%	59.8%

People in our society often disagree about how far to let individuals go in making decisions for themselves. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	2016	2018	Total
<b>Limiting the advertising and sale of unhealthy products make it easier for people to make healthy choices*</b>			
Strongly disagree	NA	7.8%	7.8%
Disagree	NA	12.2%	12.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	NA	1.1%	1.1%
Agree	NA	40.6%	40.6%
Strongly agree	NA	38.3%	38.3%
<b>It is not worth spending money on prevention because people will do what they want anyway*</b>			
Strongly disagree	NA	26.2%	26.2%
Disagree	NA	32.6%	32.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	NA	1.4%	1.4%
Agree	NA	20.5%	20.5%
Strongly agree	NA	19.3%	19.3%
<b>Government regulation on health has made Australia a nanny state*</b>			
Strongly disagree	NA	17.5%	17.5%
Disagree	NA	42.3%	42.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	NA	2.4%	2.4%
Agree	NA	22.0%	22.0%
Strongly agree	NA	15.8%	15.8%

\* Question asked in 2018 only.

Table 8: Support for specific types of government intervention (weighted)

For each of the following government initiatives, please tell me whether you think it shows the government going too far, not far enough or having about the right amount of involvement in helping people be healthy?	2016	2018	Total
<b>Plain packaging for tobacco products</b>			
Too far	15.4%	12.7%	14.0%
About the right amount	54.8%	55.5%	55.2%
Not far enough	29.8%	31.8%	30.8%
<b>Bans on smoking in cars with children</b>			
Too far	4.8%	4.0%	4.4%
About the right amount	52.4%	47.4%	49.8%
Not far enough	42.8%	48.6%	45.8%
<b>Lower speed limits (30km/hr) in high pedestrian areas</b>			
Too far	26.8%	15.9%	21.2%
About the right amount	58.6%	66.2%	62.5%
Not far enough	14.5%	17.9%	16.3%
<b>Restrictions on advertising unhealthy foods to children</b>			
Too far	6.5%	5.5%	6.0%
About the right amount	35.1%	36.0%	35.5%
Not far enough	58.4%	58.6%	58.5%
<b>Restrictions on alcohol advertising</b>			
Too far	7.6%	8.1%	7.8%
About the right amount	47.0%	49.0%	48.0%
Not far enough	45.4%	42.9%	44.1%
<b>Taxing soft drink</b>			
Too far	22.9%	20.1%	21.4%
About the right amount	34.6%	36.0%	35.4%
Not far enough	42.5%	43.9%	43.2%
<b>Setting salt limits on processed food</b>			
Too far	8.5%	7.5%	8.0%
About the right amount	36.2%	42.1%	39.2%
Not far enough	55.3%	50.5%	52.8%
<b>Compulsory immunisation at school entry</b>			
Too far	8.2%	7.5%	7.8%
About the right amount	55.5%	61.2%	58.5%
Not far enough	36.3%	31.3%	33.7%

For each of the following government initiatives, please tell me whether you think it shows the government going too far, not far enough or having about the right amount of involvement in helping people be healthy?	2016	2018	Total
<b>Laws setting limits on working hours</b>			
Too far	16.4%	14.8%	15.6%
About the right amount	61.5%	59.6%	60.5%
Not far enough	22.1%	25.6%	23.9%
<b>Creation of bike lanes separated from cars</b>			
Too far	10.4%	9.6%	9.9%
About the right amount	48.3%	46.3%	47.3%
Not far enough	41.3%	44.1%	42.8%
<b>Removing advertising for unhealthy food and drinks in places owned by the Government (such as train stations)*</b>			
Too far	NA	10.3%	10.3%
About the right amount	NA	44.6%	44.6%
Not far enough	NA	45.2%	45.2%
<b>Restrictions on sports sponsorship by companies that sell unhealthy food and drinks*</b>			
Too far	NA	15.3%	15.3%
About the right amount	NA	37.9%	37.9%
Not far enough	NA	46.8%	46.8%
<b>Banning venues with an alcohol license from selling cigarettes*</b>			
Too far	NA	21.3%	21.3%
About the right amount	NA	45.5%	45.5%
Not far enough	NA	33.2%	33.2%
<b>In general, do you think Australia has too much, too little or about the right amount of government regulation and policies in place to help people be healthy?</b>			
Too much	9.2%	9.2%	9.2%
About the right amount	47.0%	40.4%	43.6%
Not enough	43.9%	50.4%	47.2%
<b>In general, do you support or oppose the idea of the government putting a tax on a product that can negatively affect people's health?</b>			
Strongly oppose	14.9%	18.3%	16.6%
Oppose	16.1%	15.1%	15.6%
(Neither support nor oppose)	2.5%	2.0%	2.3%
Support	39.7%	35.8%	37.7%
Strongly support	26.8%	28.8%	27.8%

\* Question asked in 2018 only. NB. Asked in 2016 but not 2018: Health ratings on packaged food - Too far: 4.4% About right: 41.2% Not far enough: 54.4%; Restrictions on the sale of unhealthy foods in school canteens - Too far: 8.9% About right: 47.1% Not far enough: 44.0%.



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