

FOREWORD

The health of people of NSW is among the best in the world. Over the past 20 years, the chances of dying before we reach 70 years of age have dropped by almost 25 per cent. However, these benefits have not been shared by everyone; in fact, men who live in the poorer parts of NSW now have a similar life expectancy as men who lived in the richer areas of the State 20 years ago.

The challenge we face is to make sure that everyone has opportunities to be healthy. Part of this challenge needs to be taken up within the health system. We need to make sure that the way in which we allocate health resources and deliver services gives all residents of NSW the same access to high quality health services, related to need and not ability to pay. But beyond this we need to work with the community, non-government organizations, and other government departments, to influence those things we know affect health—a good education, secure employment, safe communities, and access to affordable accommodation, food, and transport.

In All Fairness, NSW Health's health and equity statement, presents an important step in the NSW Government's long-term commitment to making sure we have a fair health system and a fair society. It focuses on action that can be taken by the health system to tackle health inequality. Many of the actions that are suggested are not new; for example a commitment to improving the health of children and young people, having an accessible primary health care system, and engaging communities in solving health problems. We are building on the good work that is already taking place across the health system, in ways that will make it more effective and sustained.

This Supplement of the *NSW Public Health Bulletin* provides an important overview of *In All Fairness*, and pulls together articles that have been published in earlier issues. These articles provide important insights about the health of the people of NSW, and report current and proposed actions to reduce the inequalities in health. I am sure this will be a valuable resource for readers in taking practical action to create fairer health outcomes for the people of NSW.



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