



**WORLD
PUBLIC HEALTH
NUTRITION
ASSOCIATION**



Public Health Association
AUSTRALIA

World Public Health Nutrition Congress 2020
Tuesday 31 March to Friday 3 April 2020
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre
Queensland, Australia

World Public Health Nutrition Congress 2020

Statement from the World Public Health Nutrition Association and Public Health Association of Australia

Due to the evolving COVID-19 situation the World Public Health Nutrition Association (WPHNA) and the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) have made the difficult decision to not proceed with the World Public Health Nutrition (WPHN) Congress 2020 as originally planned in Brisbane, Australia, from Tuesday 31 March to Thursday 3 April 2020.

We have maintained regular contact with Australian public health authorities to ascertain the best advice about the risk to participants and the wider spread of COVID-19 associated with holding the Congress. As of Thursday 12 March, we were advised that due to the escalating situation with the virus, the safest option is to no longer proceed with the event. Travel restrictions implemented by various countries and organisations such as universities and Health departments have also impacted attendance by speakers, delegates, exhibitors and sponsors, thus reducing the viability of a successful event.

Key changes that have occurred this week that has led to this decision are

- WHO declaring COVID – 19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020.
- Large employers such as WHO, Departments of Health and universities withdrawing permission for staff to attend conferences and mass gatherings.
- The Australian government considering advice provided by Chief Medical Officer and the jurisdictional Chief health Officers to cancel mass gatherings of more than 500 people.
- Many health focused conferences scheduled in March, April and May being cancelled, in part driven by concerns over threats to continuity of service in circumstances where key health staff are required to undergo isolation if a single delegate is suspected of being a COVID 19 carrier.

The WPHNA and PHAA do not make this decision lightly. We understand the individual impacts of not proceeding with the event, and we appreciate everyone's time, support and engagement in creating a high caliber program and extra satellite activities. We want to maintain this momentum so we are now considering options for the 2020 Congress as well as achieving ongoing engagement with you around public health nutrition.

We have explored the feasibility of postponement of the congress, however due to non-transferability of costs so close to the commencement date we, unfortunately, do not consider this a viable option.



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WPHNA and PHAA will be exploring options of online and virtual information exchange for Congress delegates. We ask for your patience as we work through the consequences of this unprecedented event. Once an approach has been agreed on the best way forward, we aim to notify all involved as soon as possible.

For travel bookings we encourage you to contact your travel and accommodation providers as soon as possible to explore your options in light of the unforeseen pandemic.

We are very conscious of the financial implications this will create for sponsors, exhibitors, and delegates. We are also concerned about the financial implications to us as host organizations. Our intention is to be as open and transparent as we can be in addressing these financial implications, while doing our best to consider the needs of our stakeholders.

We understand you will have questions. Our intention is to be in touch with you again in the near future with as much information as we can provide. We thank-you for your understanding and support as we work through these many complex issues.

Yours sincerely,

Terry Slevin
CEO: Public Health Association of Australia

Margaret Miller
President: World Public Health Nutrition Association
Convenor: World Public Health Nutrition Congress 2020