



ACIPC
Australasian College
for Infection Prevention and Control



AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY FOR ANTIMICROBIALS

7 October 2020

The Honourable Anthony Albanese MP
Leader of the Opposition
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Sent via email

CC:
The Honourable Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister of Australia

Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health

Hon Chris Bowen MP
Shadow Minister for Health

Dear Mr Albanese,

As leaders of the peak bodies for medical professionals working on the front line of Australia's response to COVID-19, we are writing to you in support of your call to establish a [national centre for disease control in Australia](#).

The Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases (ASID), the Australasian College of Infection Prevention and Control (ACIPC), and the Australian Society for Antimicrobials (ASA) have long been advocating for such a body - one central place where resources are concentrated, and where experts are employed to coordinate both surveillance and action. See [Australia needs a National Coordinating Centre on Antimicrobial Resistance 2018](#).

We would like to formally offer our knowledge and expertise with the planning and design of such a centre. As professional associations, we are concerned that Australia is the only OECD country without a CDC equivalent.

Given the experiences of our members involved in COVID-19, we strongly believe that Australia needs better national co-ordination of responses to infectious diseases. Australia was quick to respond to COVID-19 but in the early days there was a degree of confusion as state governments

sometimes gave conflicting advice. There is also a duplicity of activity and resources associated with the development of guidelines at the jurisdictional level

A national co-ordinating centre would work with the Commonwealth and state/territory health departments to support surveillance and response for all infectious diseases, including COVID-19 and influenza. It would also train the public health and clinical workforce and identify gaps in our knowledge that require research.

It is also in Australia's best interests that a national centre covers all infectious diseases threats. While we have existing national centres for immunisation and HIV/hepatitis, co-ordination is also required for antimicrobial resistance, healthcare associated infections, diseases associated with animals (such as Hendra virus) and insects (such as dengue).

We would welcome a discussion on how we can assist in this important work at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Joshua Davis
Immediate Past President
Australasian Society for
Infectious Diseases (ASID)



Associate Professor Philip Russo
President
Australasian College of Infection
Prevention and Control (ACIPC)



Professor Geoffrey Coombs
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