

# CAPHIA position statement guidelines

May 2026

## Purpose of position statements

CAPHIA Position statements summarise the evidence and state our policy position on a topic aligned with CAPHIA's mission: 'To improve the public's health by advancing public health education, research and workforce development'.(1)

Position statements may be aspirational, aiming for best practice and based on principles of equity and social justice. They should also be implementable: action-oriented and supported by clear recommendations for practice and policy.

## Position statement format

Position statement should be 1,000 - 3,000 words, excluding references, and use the following structure:

### Title

The format is: '[Title of Position Paper]: Position Statement'. Titles should be concise and clearly indicate the topic, population or system of focus where relevant. The month and year should be provided under the title.

### About CAPHIA

*The Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australasia (CAPHIA) is the peak advocacy body that represents universities and aligned organisations that educate, research and develop the Australasian public health workforce. CAPHIA advances excellence in academic standards in the education and development of public health practitioners, researchers and students across Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific.*

### Summary

The summary should include:

**Key messages:** Approximately 100 words describing the issue, its significance and the proposed solution or policy direction. Dot points can be used (but they should be presented as part of a grammatically correct sentence).

**Key policy positions:** Presented as 1-5 numbered dot points outlining the key actions to address the issue.

**Audience:** For example, CAPHIA members, universities and allied organisations, governments, policymakers, program managers and media.

**Contact:** [caphia@caphia.com.au](mailto:caphia@caphia.com.au)

**Suggested citation:** CAPHIA, [Year]. Title of Position Paper: Position Statement. CAPHIA.

### Background

The background provides the rationale for the position statement, including why the issue is important to public health and to CAPHIA's mission. The background can include the principles that underpin CAPHIA's position on this topic and should set up the rest of the document.

### Evidence

This section summarises recent, relevant evidence that identifies the nature and scale of the issue, contributing causes, populations or systems impacted and potential solutions. The summary of evidence should consider what works, existing policies and best-practice guidelines and identify gaps where further action or reform is needed.

### Recommendations

Recommendations should be informed by the evidence and gaps identified in the background and evidence sections. Each recommendation should:

- be a short, actionable statement of intent
- identify who should act, where possible
- include a brief rationale why the action matters and how it could be implemented.

### References

References should be formatted using Vancouver style.

### Acknowledgements of authors

Individual contributors should be listed at the end of the document. Authors may be:

- listed alphabetically by surname; or
- ordered by level of contribution (e.g. first, second, third author), with remaining contributions listed alphabetically, by agreement of the author group; or
- by negotiation.

### Conflicts of interest

Authors must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

### Format

To ensure consistency and readability, CAPHIA position statements should follow these formatting guidelines:

- Letterhead: Position statements should be published on CAPHIA-branded letterhead.
- Font: Calibri
- Font size: 11 pt for all main text
- Line spacing: 1.5
- Margins: standard A4 (approximately 2.5cm on all sides)
- Headings and subheadings: Bold with a clear hierarchy

### Position Statement development and review process

Position statements are developed and reviewed using the following process:

1. **Development** - Position statements are drafted by CAPHIA members with relevant expertise in public health and the topic area. Writing groups and lead authors are responsible for drafting the position statement and should notify and coordinate with the CAPHIA Executive Director or Executive early in the development process to ensure alignment with organisational priorities, timing and related advocacy activities.
2. **Review** - Draft position statements are reviewed by other CAPHIA members, and where appropriate, other relevant partner organisations and/or stakeholders. Reviews should consider clarity, readability, evidence use, and actionability. The review process is coordinated by the lead author(s), in consultation with the CAPHIA Executive Director, who may advise on stakeholder engagement. Lead authors are responsible for incorporating feedback.

3. **Approval** - The CAPHIA Advocacy & Engagement Committee reviews and endorses position statements. Final approval is provided by the CAPHIA Board of Directors.
4. **Publication** – Approved position statements are published as PDF documents on the CAPHIA website and made publicly available.
5. **Updates** - Position statements are reviewed at least every three years, or earlier if significant new evidence or policy changes arise.

### Writing for policy

Models of policy agenda-setting can be helpful frameworks for developing effective policy arguments. For example, Hall’s 1975 model of health policy agenda setting(2) suggests that policy arguments should combine three elements to be successful:

1. *Legitimacy*: the extent to which the issue is perceived to justify action.
2. *Feasibility*: the ease with which the problem can be addressed, shaped by the availability of a technical solution and strength of the system to implement the policy.
3. *Support*: the degree to which interest groups embrace the issue, and the public backs the government in addressing it.

Writing for policy differs significantly from academic writing. The aim is to inform and influence decision-making by presenting evidence in a clear, concise and accessible way.

Engaging policy writing should:

- use short sentences and paragraphs (be succinct)
- use active language and avoid jargon
- clearly describe the actions required and the intended outcomes
- use gender-neutral language (e.g. "their" instead of "he/she")
- cite recent, relevant and authoritative evidence.

### Dissemination and promotion

There are many ways to disseminate and promote a published position statement. The most appropriate strategies will depend on the target audience, purpose, and available resources.

Possible dissemination and promotion strategies include:

- Share the position statement through CAPHIA’s social media channels (e.g., LinkedIn) and encourage member organisations to amplify the message.
- Feature the publication in the CAPHIA newsletter, as well as in newsletters of partner organisations and relevant professional networks.
- Distribute the statement via targeted emails to advocates, policy partners, peak bodies, government agencies and other key stakeholders.
- Publish a short blog post summarising the key messages, rationale and implications.
- Host a webinar to present the statement, highlight its relevance and create space for discussion or Q&A with stakeholders.
- Present the statement at relevant network or community-of-practice meetings, including CAPHIA working groups.
- Develop an academic publication to provide a peer-reviewed, evidence-informed basis for the position.
- Present the work at conferences, such as the annual CAPHIA Conference, as well as other public health, education and policy forums.

## References

1. CAPHIA. CAPHIA About us 2025 [cited 2026 2 February]. Available from: <https://caphia.com.au/about-caphia/>.
2. Hall P LH, Parker R and Webb A,. Change, Choice and Conflict in Social Policy. London: Heinemann; 1975.