Prevalence of condition

Another criterion for the priority issue was the current number of cases of the illness or condition. Epidemiology shows that cardiovascular disease, cancer, injury, mental health, diabetes and asthma contribute substantially to mortality and morbidity in Australia. The seven priority issues in Australia account for the large majority of deaths recorded every year in Australia, and also for a significant number of the recorded hospital episodes.

***Cardiovascular disease*** – although experiencing a decline, is still the leading cause of death in Australia. As the population ages the number of people with CVD may increase.

***Cancer*** – Is the second leading cause of death in Australia. The incidence of some types of cancer is increasing. Advances in cancer diagnosis and treatment, and an ageing population, have led to greater numbers of people surviving after an initial diagnosis of cancer.

***Diabetes*** – is increasing significantly. The real figure is likely to be higher because many people with type 2 diabetes (adult-onset diabetes) remain undiagnosed. Apart from deaths directly due to diabetes, a much larger number of deaths also occur as a result of diseases that are complications of diabetes.

***Respiratory diseases*** – such as asthma, are a major cause of morbidity in Australia, with levels among the highest in the world. Asthma particularly affects young children and is one of the most common reasons why young children are hospitalised. Improved asthma management and diagnosis have significantly reduced the number of deaths related to asthma.

***Injury*** – mortality is declining. It is still responsible for substantial hospital admissions. Injury is the greatest cause of death in the first half of lifeand leaves many people with serious disability or long-term conditions.

The prevalence ***of mental health conditions*** in Australia has only recently been understood. Someone may suffer a mental illness only once and recover fully. For others, mental illness can recur throughout their lives. It is currently estimated that one in five individuals will be affected by a mental health roblem at some point in their lives.