

MEDIA RELEASE

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Chronic disease prevention research receives significant budget funding boost

Australia's efforts to prevent chronic disease have received a significant boost tonight with the Federal Government's Budget announcement of a \$10 million investment in The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre based at the Sax Institute.

"We welcome the Federal Government's significant commitment through the Medical Research Future Fund to support innovative research into preventing chronic disease," said Professor Andrew Wilson, Director of The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre. "Chronic disease is Australia's greatest health challenge and is the leading cause of premature deaths and disability."

The Prevention Centre is a national research collaboration established in 2013 to bring together academics, policy makers and practitioners to identify and address real-world problems in prevention.

"This significant funding commitment of \$10 million will allow the Prevention Centre to scale up projects that have shown promise – in areas such as physical activity, childhood obesity, maintaining a healthy weight, and tobacco and alcohol control – and to fund a series of new projects over the next four years," Professor Wilson said.

Head of the Sax Institute's Analysis and Evaluation Division and deputy director of the Partnership Centre Associate Professor Sonia Wutzke said the Centre's partnership research model brought together health policy makers, agencies responsible for implementation and researchers, meaning that projects and findings are timely, relevant and effective in everyday situations. "We know from Australian and international experience that partnership research increases the use of evidence in policy and practice, which is essential as we tackle issues as complex and challenging as chronic disease prevention," she said.

"We look forward to working with Minister Hunt, the Department of Health and all of our partners over coming years as we seek to find the solutions to address this crisis of chronic disease in Australia," Professor Wilson said.

About The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre is based at the Sax Institute and is funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Government Department of Health, the NSW Ministry of Health, ACT Health and the HCF Research Foundation. Current projects of the Centre include:

- Childhood obesity: Working with the NSW Government on the Premier's Priority to reduce childhood overweight and obesity
- Incentivising weight loss: We are examining different types of incentives to help people maintain weight loss
- Aboriginal food security: As many as one in five urban Aboriginal people report being unable to afford food at some point in the last year. We are working with local urban Aboriginal communities to improve the system to ensure Aboriginal people have sustainable access to healthy food
- Prevention Tracker: We are working with communities in Albany, Broken Hill, Glenorchy and on the Gold Coast to help them strengthen their local prevention systems.

About chronic disease in Australia

Chronic diseases like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, respiratory disease, arthritis and cancer are the leading cause of death and disability in Australia, responsible for eight out of every 10 premature deaths and accounting for 80% of years lost due to ill health, disability or early death. Australia spends an estimated \$27 billion a year treating chronic diseases – 36% of all health spending. Yet 80% of heart disease and type 2 diabetes and 40% of all cancers could be prevented if we eliminated risk factors such as overweight and obesity, physical inactivity, harmful alcohol consumption and smoking.

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