



# Jillian Skinner MP

## Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### MINISTER MARKS MILESTONE IN THE 45 AND UP STUDY OF HEALTH AND AGEING

The Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research, Jillian Skinner, has welcomed the first five-year follow up to The Sax Institute 45 And Up Study.

Australia's largest study into health and ageing is gathering vital information from 250,000 men and women in NSW aged over 45. The eldest participant is 100. Fifty four per cent of participants are female, 46 per cent are male.

Every five years, participants complete a questionnaire on life style risk factors, physical and mental health status and work, financial and social factors. These questionnaires are linked to databases, allowing a range of research projects and studies.

"There's something fascinating about a longitudinal study, which shines a light on lives over years and decades," Mrs Skinner said after meeting a group of participants at Clovelly today.

"I congratulate every participant for being prepared to share precious personal information for the benefit of society. You have just hit your first five year milestone – and may there be many more to come."

The scientific director of the 45 And Up Study, Professor Emily Banks, described the participants as "national treasures".

"The more we know, the more we can manage and prevent illness. We are asking them to tell us how they're faring four to five years on, so we can unlock the secrets of healthy ageing by better understanding the causes and outcomes of conditions such as cancer, heart disease, arthritis, depression and obesity," Professor Banks said.

Over 440 researchers are using the data. Data collected from participants includes:

- **32 per cent** are in the healthy weight range for their height
- **33 per cent** drink alcohol less than once a week
- **56 per cent** have never smoked and **37%** have quit
- **49 per cent** have had a bowel cancer screen
- **88 per cent** of women have had a mammogram

- **11 per cent** say their mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease
- **30 per cent** say their father was diagnosed with heart disease
- **8 per cent** say they have a sibling diagnosed with diabetes

The Sax Institute is a coalition of 37 public health agencies, health service groups and universities across the state which receives core infrastructure funding from the NSW Government.

The Sax Institute is managing the 45 And Up Study in partnership with the Cancer Council NSW, the Heart Foundation (NSW Division), *beyondblue*: the national depression initiative, NSW Ministry of Health, Ageing, Disability and Home Care, NSW Family and Community Services and Australian Red Cross Blood Service.

**MEDIA**

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