

MEDIA RELEASE

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Investing in prevention partnership on chronic disease bears fruit

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre today released its outcomes report 2013–2018, detailing the progress the Prevention Centre has made in forging innovative new research–policy partnerships to help reduce the toll of chronic disease.

Chronic diseases including arthritis, cancer, respiratory disease, heart disease and diabetes are now the leading causes of death and disability in Australia. The Australian health system spends an estimated \$27 billion a year treating chronic diseases – 36% of all health spending.

The \$22 million Prevention Centre was launched by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in June 2013 to help decision makers understand what does and doesn't work in chronic disease prevention in Australia.

The Centre's report, *Changing the system, A partnership approach to chronic disease prevention*, details the findings of 40 different research projects undertaken nationally over the last five years involving more than 200 researchers across 22 research institutions.

According to the report, the Centre's achievements include:

- Developing sophisticated computer models to help policy makers test the best combinations of policies
- Training for researchers and policy makers to understand the complex systems that cause chronic disease
- National liveability indicators that show how the built environment can improve health
- A new way of costing healthy versus unhealthy diets
- A roadmap for government action to improve population nutrition
- Evidence-based advice for governments on the best ways to implement, scale up and evaluate complex programs designed to combat chronic disease.

Prevention Centre Director Professor Andrew Wilson said the main impact of the Prevention Centre was how it brought together the prevention community to work in a more coordinated way.

"Policy makers' participation in this large collaboration is changing how they think and talk about prevention problems," he said.

"We now have good evidence about what we could do better in prevention. Our mission into the future is to better inform the decisions about what we do and how we do it – putting the research into action."

The Prevention Centre was originally funded by NHMRC, the Australian Government Department of Health, ACT Health, NSW Ministry of Health and the HCF Research Foundation.

It has recently been refunded until 2023 with a further \$15 million from NHMRC, the Australian Government Department of Health, ACT Health, Cancer Council Australia, NSW Ministry of Health, South Australia Department for Health and Wellbeing, Tasmania Department of Health and VicHealth. The Centre is administered by the Sax Institute in Sydney.

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