

MEDIA RELEASE

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New \$22m national chronic disease research centre will drive critical change

A major new \$22.6 million partnership research centre launched today will tackle head on, the chronic disease tsunami facing Australia.

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre, launched today by Federal Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research Tanya Plibersek will identify what works and what doesn't in helping people make lifestyle changes to prevent chronic disease.

It will conduct leading-edge research to help Australia drive changes to its healthcare systems and adopt the type of programs that will make a real difference to people's health.

"We ignore the magnitude of the chronic disease burden at our peril and the partnership centre will be pivotal to a joined up Australian research and development effort to address this major public health challenge," said the centre's Director, Professor Andrew Wilson, a public health expert with wide leadership experience across government and university sectors.

"The centre represents a unique opportunity to transform the way research is conducted and used in preventing chronic disease."

The centre will ensure health policy makers in all states and territories can access the best research evidence about what works to address lifestyle-related chronic disease. It will bring organisations together and help them learn from each other about how to best communicate prevention messages.

It is funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) with co-funding from the Australian National Preventive Health Agency (ANPHA), the NSW Ministry of Health, ACT Health, HCF, and the HCF Research Foundation. It will be managed by the Sax Institute in partnership with the Centre of Excellence in Intervention & Prevention Science (CEIPS), led by Professor Alan Shiell.

This strong emphasis on partnership recognises that successfully tackling chronic disease requires researchers, policy makers and practitioners across the health system to work better together. The centre boasts a team of 28 investigators from three states and two territories and involves researchers from eight universities and research institutes.

Sax Institute CEO Professor Sally Redman said the centre would draw on the Institute's international reputation for bringing health researchers and policy makers to the same table.

"The rapid growth in lifestyle-related chronic disease has seen a large increase in government and non-government interventions to change behaviours, risk factors and environments – but we need to make sure that what we are doing actually works," Professor Redman said.

"The centre will pull together and analyse the rapidly growing body of evidence about what is effective and make this information widely available so it can be used to best effect."