PREVENTION TRACKER

Who are we?

Prevention Tracker is being led by The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre, which is a national collaboration of researchers, policy makers and practitioners who are finding out how we can build an effective, efficient and equitable system to prevent lifestyle-related chronic disease.

The Prevention Tracker project team is supported by a number of leading investigators experienced in community-based research An International Advisory Committee provides advice and recommendations.

Prevention Tracker team

- Associate Professor Sonia Wutzke, Project Co-leader
- Dr Therese Riley, Project Co-leader
- Dr Dan Chamberlain, Research Fellow
- Dr Seanna Davidson, Manager of Systems Thinking and Capacity Building
- Maria Gomez, Research Officer
- Dr Liza Hopkins, Research Fellow
- Nick Roberts, Research Officer

International Advisory Committee

- Professor Andrew Wilson, Prevention Centre and The University of Sydney
- Professor Lesley Barclay, The University of Sydney
- Professor Barbara Riley, University of Waterloo, Canada
- Professor Pennie Foster-Fishman, Michigan State University, US
- Professor Terry Huang, City University of New York, US

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre
Systems and solutions for better health

Learning locally to act nationally

What is Prevention Tracker?

Prevention Tracker is a national project that is exploring how local communities work to prevent chronic disease. We will gather and learn from this knowledge to build a comprehensive picture of an effective prevention system for Australia.

Why is it needed?

Chronic diseases are Australia's greatest health challenge. Lifestyle factors such as smoking, harmful alcohol use, poor nutrition and physical inactivity are causing a massive increase in chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, cancer and diabetes. Almost half of all Australians have a chronic disease and these diseases lead to eight in 10 premature deaths.

In cities and towns all over Australia, many different organisations, people and programs are working to improve the health of their communities.

Prevention Tracker is helping us to better understand local communities' prevention efforts and how they connect and influence each other. It will help us to describe, guide and monitor communities' work to prevent chronic disease.

What is a prevention system?

By prevention system, we mean the people, processes, activities, settings and structures – and the changing relationships between them – that work together to try to improve the health of a community. The idea is that if we can better understand the parts of a prevention system, and how they connect to make the whole, we can make better decisions about where and how to intervene to bring about improvements.

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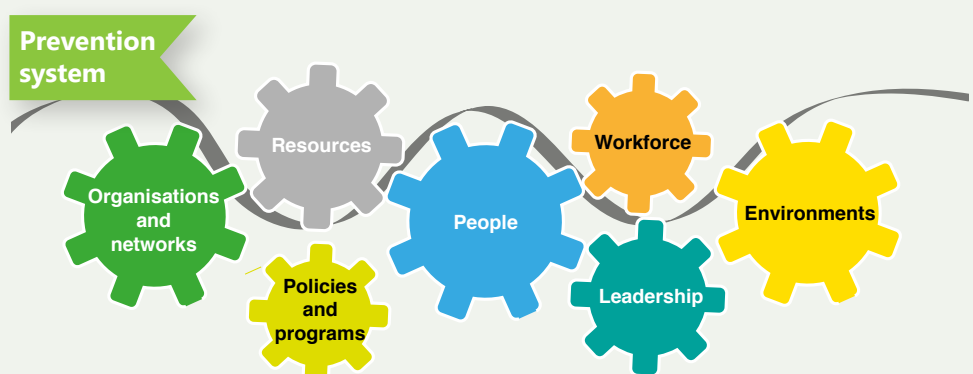
What will Prevention Tracker do?

We will use a range of methods to ensure we get the full overview of a community's prevention system and to help identify ways to improve it.

Explore local activities and data

Interview local prevention workforce

Review how environment impacts health

Analyse links between organisations

Run community workshops

Try out system improvements

Exploring the system parts

What do we hope to achieve?

By uncovering the prevention system in a community, we can better understand and guide action to improve efforts for the prevention of lifestyle-related chronic disease.

We aim to pool and use what we learn from local communities to encourage action at local, state and national levels – actions such as better allocation of resources and stronger partnerships – to reduce the impact of chronic disease.

What's in it for communities?

We will help communities to map activities and resources that help to improve the health of residents. The process will uncover challenges in communities and help to develop and strengthen links between organisations.

Prevention Tracker will also support communities to track changes in the prevention system in their area and share ideas with other communities involved in the project.

Last year we tested the Prevention Tracker program in Glenorchy, Tasmania, and it was well received.

Elisa Ryan, of Glenorchy City Council, said the Council welcomed the opportunity to be involved in Prevention Tracker because it had revealed the many activities that contributed to chronic disease prevention in the Glenorchy area.

"That mapping exercise is really important as it can help us to identify gaps in our community. It can also demonstrate how well the community is doing in prevention, which might help if there are any opportunities for further funding."

Elisa Ryan, Glenorchy City Council