

MEDIA RELEASE

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New funding to drive action in preventing chronic disease

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre has been awarded \$7.7 million by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to continue its work on the prevention of lifestyle-related chronic disease.

The funding was announced by the Minister for Rural Health, Sport and Regional Communications Bridget McKenzie at the Charles Perkins Centre at the University of Sydney.

Prevention Centre Director, Professor Andrew Wilson, said the new funding would enable the Prevention Centre to translate its findings into sustained action to address chronic diseases, which are the leading cause of death and disability in Australia

“Chronic disease is Australia’s number one cause of preventable death, disability and healthcare costs,” Professor Wilson said.

“Australia has done well in some aspects of chronic disease prevention, most notably in tobacco control and management of cardiac disease risk factors like high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. But we have a long way to go in terms of obesity, diabetes, osteoporosis, arthritis, preventable or screenable cancers, and mental health.

“Discovery research has provided the evidence for what we could do better in prevention. The mission of the Prevention Centre is to better inform the decisions about what we do and how we do it – putting the research into action.”

The Prevention Centre is a national collaboration founded in 2013 to identify new ways of understanding what does and doesn’t work in chronic disease prevention in Australia.

Administered by the Sax Institute in Sydney, the Centre has grown to involve more than 170 researchers, policy makers and practitioners around Australia, who have worked together on 40 research projects across a number of health priority areas including obesity, nutrition, smoking, physical activity levels and harmful alcohol consumption.

The \$7.7 million grant from NHMRC is in addition to support from partner organisations including the Australian Government Department of Health, the Health Departments of New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, South Australia and Tasmania, Cancer Council Australia and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, VicHealth, bringing the total value of the Centre to over \$15 million.

In the next five years, the Prevention Centre will expand its national focus, find the best ways to implement and scale up policies and programs, and extend its work with high-risk and vulnerable populations.

Professor Sally Redman, CEO of the Sax Institute - a leading Australian expert in helping decision makers find and make best use of research – said the Prevention Centre’s research was more likely to have impact because it brought together researchers to work with policy makers and practitioners.

“The Prevention Centre’s emphasis on co-produced research improves the likelihood its findings will be relevant, useful and adopted by policy and practice,” Professor Redman said.

“This funding will enable the Prevention Centre to continue its internationally significant research and arm governments and health decision makers with the best evidence that will lead to people avoiding chronic disease and staying out of hospital.”

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