



The Australian Prevention  
Partnership Centre  
Systems and solutions for better health

# Partnering to prevent chronic disease

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre is a national collaboration that is finding effective ways to prevent Australia's greatest health challenge: the epidemic of lifestyle-related chronic diseases.

We bring together more than 200 academic researchers, policy partners and prevention practitioners to conduct research into what works and what doesn't work to prevent chronic disease. Our aim is to provide decision makers with evidence and tools to turn knowledge into sustained action.

Since we were established in 2013, we have provided a focus for chronic disease prevention research in Australia. We have completed 40 projects and demonstrated the value of working in partnership.

Now we are building on this work to translate the evidence into practice, and conducting further research. We are also expanding our national focus, finding the best ways to implement and scale up policies and programs, and extending our work with high-risk and vulnerable populations.



The leadership team: Professors Emma Slaytor, Lucie Rychetnik and Andrew Wilson

## A new way of approaching prevention

The lifestyle-related behaviours that cause chronic disease are complex and embedded into everyday life. Achieving and sustaining meaningful change requires a systems perspective – recognising the role of social, economic and environmental factors and how each of these interacts.

The Prevention Centre uses a systems approach in our research. This means we look at all the connected and inter-related issues, how changing one part of the system will influence other parts, and how relationships and behaviours change over time.

Tackling the whole system means we can find ways of creating an environment that supports people to make better health decisions and avoid chronic disease.

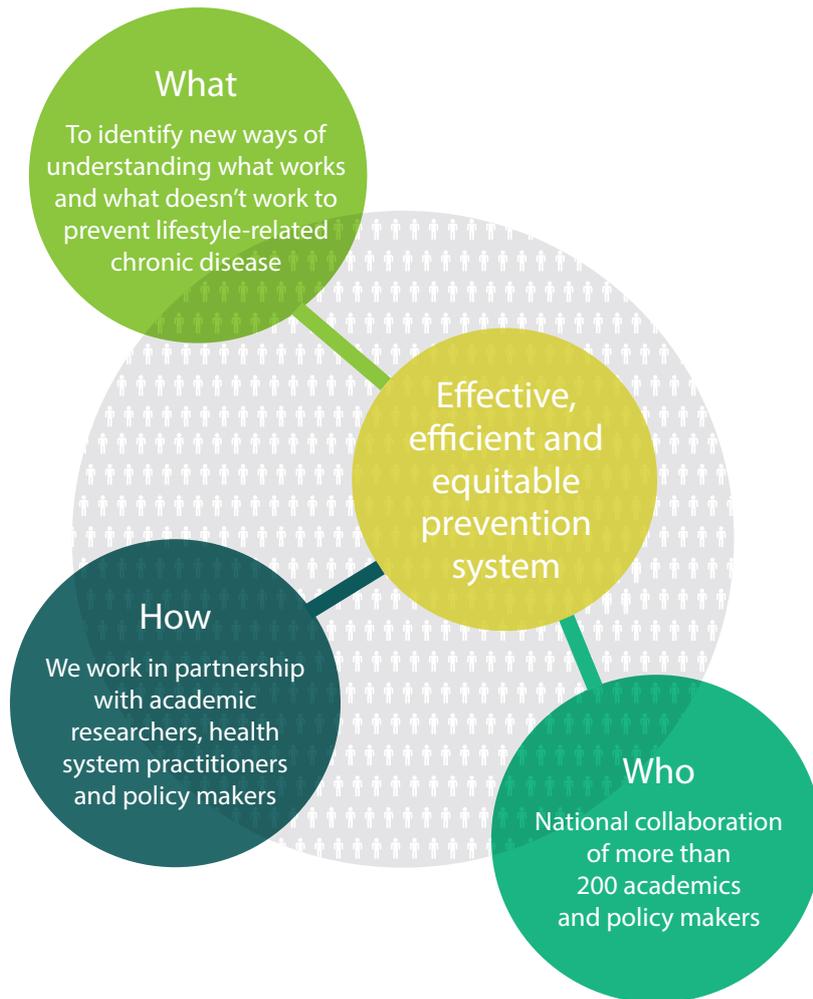
# Working together to drive action

Only a fraction of research is ever used in policy and practice. Our goal is to increase the use of evidence in decision making.

As an NHMRC Partnership Centre for Better Health, we work in partnership with the end-users of research – policy makers and practitioners – from project design through to implementation. Working this way means we focus on areas of interest to government and policy agencies.

Our governance model puts researchers together with policy partners on the leadership team. We employ a range of strategies to ensure our findings are used in policy, including co-production of research, engagement, science communication and capacity development.

## Who we are and what we do



## Adding value

Our model means our achievements are greater than the sum of our individual research projects. It means we can address complex problems in ways that would not be possible without the size of the collaboration, our national reach and the diversity of our expertise.

We add value to our researchers, funders and partner organisations through diverse activities aimed at facilitating collaboration and nurturing the next generation prevention community. People who work with us value the connections, dialogue and trust that we help build between researchers and policy makers.

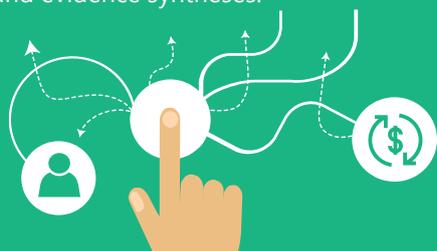
We are flexible to our partners' needs, and have been able to demonstrate a positive return on their investment. We provide our partners with new knowledge, methods and thinking; support in complex program evaluation; insights into implementation; increased systems thinking capacity; and resources translating evidence for policy makers.

# Our work

Our research delivers internationally significant knowledge about the application of a systems approach to the prevention of lifestyle-related chronic disease.

## New methods, tools and thinking

We develop, test and make widely available methods and tools to improve prevention decision-making and practice. These include dynamic simulation models, systems methods and evidence syntheses.



## Driving change

Our work supports decision makers to design and implement policies and programs to prevent chronic disease. We are researching best practice implementation and provide expertise to policy makers on how to evaluate and scale up effective programs.



## Supporting the case for prevention

Despite the burden of lifestyle-related chronic disease and the opportunities for prevention, only a small percentage of Australian government budgets for health care is spent on prevention. Our research helps our policy partners to communicate the benefits of prevention, to engage the public, and to drive action.



## Targeting risk behaviours



Risk behaviours such as smoking, harmful alcohol consumption, poor nutrition and physical inactivity are responsible for most of the burden of chronic disease. Our work seeks to find the best places to intervene in the complex system to support people to make healthier choices.

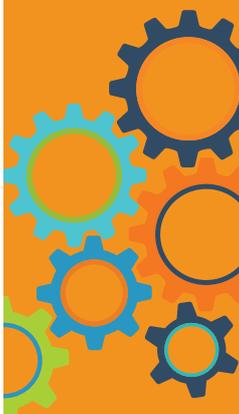
## Supportive environments for better health

We are working to understand how the environments in which we live contribute to health outcomes. We are looking at the design of urban environments, the systems that impact on whether or not people eat healthily, and the impact of food insecurity on Aboriginal overweight and obesity.



## Improving the prevention system

Prevention requires many agencies both within and outside the health sector to work together. We need policies and regulations that support healthier environments and healthier behaviours, and the widespread implementation of interventions known to be effective in the health and other sectors. We are using a combination of systems thinking and approaches to examine ways to make all these interactions work together more effectively as a prevention system.



## Populations and settings for intervention

We are developing and testing prevention strategies for high-risk populations, such as those in rural and remote communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and those with mental illness. We are researching preventive health strategies in different settings, from primary care to hospitals and schools.



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# Our Funding Partners

The Prevention Centre is one of three National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Partnership Centres for Better Health, created to improve the availability and quality of research evidence to health decision makers. From 2013–2018, we were provided with \$22.6 million by our Funding Partners: NHMRC, Australian Government Department of Health, NSW Ministry of Health, ACT Health and the HCF Research Foundation.

In 2017, the Australian Government, through the Department of Health, provided us with a further \$10 million for 10 specific research projects under the Boosting Prevention program, which is funded from the Medical Research Future Fund.

In 2018, we were refunded for a further five years. Our new Funding Partners are NHMRC, Australian Government Department of Health, ACT Health, Cancer Council Australia, NSW Ministry of Health, South Australian Department for Health and Wellbeing, Tasmanian Department of Health, and VicHealth.

The Prevention Centre is administered by the Sax Institute in Sydney.

## Our funding partners



## Hosted by



## Contact us



(02) 9188 9500



preventioncentre@saxinstitute.org.au



preventioncentre.org.au



@TAPPCentre