

AUSTRALIAN CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION ALLIANCE



MEDIA RELEASE

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Time to get moving on preventive health agency

Australia's largest disease prevention groups are calling on all sides of politics to support legislation to establish Australia's first national preventive health agency which is up for debate again tomorrow after being stalled in parliament for an entire year.

"It really is time to put the health of Australians first and set up the agency to get on with the job of implementing a comprehensive preventive health strategy," said Professor Greg Johnson, Chair of the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance.

"Over four million Australians already suffer from largely preventable chronic diseases associated with smoking, obesity and alcohol abuse - diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, kidney disease and cancer," Professor Johnson said.

"Millions more will join them unless we get serious about tackling these risk factors head on."

"A well-funded preventive health agency to lead action under a national strategy can do much to tackle the lifestyle risk factors that are driving our escalating rates of chronic disease," Professor Johnson said.

However, continuing delays in passing the agency legislation will only increase the magnitude of the task at hand, especially in relation to obesity control, as each month of delay sees an extra 10,000 Australians become overweight or obese," he said.

Establishing a preventive health agency was a key recommendation of the National Preventative Health Taskforce as part of the comprehensive national preventive health strategy it presented to Government in the middle of last year.

"We have seen with the increase in tobacco excise that bi-partisan support for preventive health measures is achievable and I urge all parties to support the agency legislation," Professor Johnson said.

"The time has come to get serious about preventive health," Professor Johnson said. "We simply can't afford to delay comprehensive action any further."

The Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance comprises: Cancer Council Australia, Diabetes Australia, Kidney Health Australia, the National Heart Foundation of Australia and the National Stroke Foundation.

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