



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

11 May 2010

World First Action on Preventative Health

The Rudd Government will boost its efforts in preventative health with world leading new action on smoking and other chronic disease risks.

Preventative health measures in the 2010 Budget include:

- the world's toughest regime on cutting smoking rates;
- \$27.8 million for a new, hard-hitting anti-smoking campaign;
- \$50.0 million to boost efforts to tackle binge drinking;
- a new approach to managing diabetes as part of reforms to primary care;
- a \$262.7 million boost to sport funding to encourage participation in sport and active recreation; and
- \$54 million to deliver the most ambitious study of Australia's health ever conducted.

The Rudd Government has made preventative health a major funding and policy priority since coming to office. Reducing the burden of preventable health conditions is central to delivering a sustainable health system in the future.

Tobacco crackdown

Australia is set to have the world's toughest measures against tobacco, our single largest cause of premature death and disease, killing 15,000 Australians a year.

Excise on tobacco products was increased by 25 per cent from 30 April. This is expected to lead to 87,000 Australians quitting smoking.

For the first time, proceeds from all tobacco excise – approximately \$7.5 billion per year – will be directly invested into funding better health and hospitals.

In a world first, all tobacco products will be sold in plain packaging by 1 July 2012. This will remove one of the last frontiers for cigarette advertising. Internet advertising of tobacco will also be restricted in line with restrictions for other media.

The Government will also launch a new hard-hitting \$27.8 million campaign targeting high-risk and disadvantaged groups. This increases total spending on anti-tobacco campaigns to more than \$85 million over the next four years.

These measures deliver on key recommendations from the Preventative Health Taskforce.

Binge Drinking Campaign

The Government will invest an additional \$50.0 million in the National Binge Drinking Campaign. This includes:

- \$25.0 million to provide sponsorship to community organisations as an alternative to alcohol sponsorship;
- \$20.0 million for community level initiatives to tackle binge drinking; and
- \$5.0 million for enhanced telephone counselling and referrals for people with alcohol-related problems, and possible expansion of existing social marketing.

These additional investments in alcohol programs were agreed with the Australian Greens and Senator Xenophon in the context of the passage of the 'alcopops' legislation last year.

Fighting diabetes and lifting participation in sport

As part of the Government's reforms to primary care, under a \$449.2 million investment in fighting diabetes, for the first time diabetic patients will have the option of signing up with a GP practice of their choice that will be responsible for their care. Payments will be partly based on keeping patients healthy and out of hospital.

Diabetes complications result in 32 per cent of all avoidable hospital admissions.

The Government is also committing \$262.7 million in new funding for Australian sport – which will include a focus on the junior and community level – to encourage greater participation in sport and physical activity.

Australian Health Survey

Together with the National Heart Foundation, the Australian Government has engaged the Australian Bureau of Statistics to undertake the \$54 million Australian Health Survey, which will be the most comprehensive research on the health of Australians ever undertaken.

Starting from next year, 50,000 Australians will be asked to complete the survey, including information about health issues, medications, nutrition, exercise and optional pathology samples.

The information generated by the survey will provide health researchers with crucial data on the risk factors for disease and changing patterns of disease in the Australian population.

The Government thanks the National Heart Foundation for its support for this important project.

Response to the Preventative Health Taskforce

The Government has today released *Preventative Health Action*, a comprehensive response to the report from the Preventative Health Taskforce, detailing the

Government's response to the Taskforce's report, including strong action on smoking.

The actions included in the 2010-11 Budget build on a strong record of action in prevention since the Government came to office in 2007, including:

- a record \$872.1 million in the National Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health agreed to by COAG in November 2008;
- a \$100.6 million investment in tackling high rates of smoking in Indigenous communities; and
- closing the tax loophole on 'alcopops' which has resulted in a reduction of spirits consumption of 3.45 million standard drinks per week.

For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220