

National Prevention Summit

Investing in Australia's health and wellbeing

The National Prevention Summit is hosted by the Australian Institute of Health Policy Studies (AIHPS) and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has announced the Australia 2020 Summit to address **long term challenges** confronting Australia's future including the challenges of preventive health.

Now is the best opportunity to contribute to the national agenda. The National Prevention Summit will bring together leaders from State, Territory, Commonwealth and local government, non-government organisations, health services, the corporate business sector, academic institutions and the community to **develop a platform for working together** to strengthen our collective prevention initiatives. This summit will explore realistic mechanisms for achieving an integrated, efficient and cooperative approach to prevention.

The time to act is now. The number of Australians with chronic disease, mental health problems, and serious disabilities will increase dramatically over the next few decades as a result of population ageing and a lack of concerted and effective long term prevention initiatives in healthcare, business and community¹.

Summit Date: Wednesday 9 April 2008

Please note: **Opening Cocktail Event**
Tuesday 8 April hosted by
The Victorian Minister for Health
The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP

Summit time: 9:30am – 3:30pm

Where: Park Hyatt Melbourne,
1 Parliament Sq,
East Melbourne.

Key features: Opening Address by The Hon. Nicola Roxon MP Federal Minister for Health and Ageing

Key outcome: A Platform for Action

Facilitator: Assoc. Professor Kathy Alexander

Participation: Invitation only. Delegates will be sent background information (no more than 20 pages), and a draft 'Platform for Action' for review prior to – and discussion and debate on the day.

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The reasons for investing in prevention are many.

- **Spending on healthcare is escalating.**

Australia and the United States currently spend at least 10% and 16% of GDP respectively on health. Nobel economics laureate, Robert Fogel, predicts that Western economies will be spending @20% of GDP on health by 2020².

- **Prevention saves money in the long term.**

Tobacco control programs have resulted in many Australians living longer healthier lives and health care savings of \$8.4 billion. Coronary heart disease programs have saved \$8.5 billion, measles immunisation \$9.1 billion, road safety programs \$13.4 billion and HIV/AIDS programs by \$2.5 billion³. In the longer term, investment in prevention reduces the cost of curative healthcare.

- **Prevention reduces pressure on hospitals.**

Hospitals across Australia were burdened with 650,000 hospital admissions in 2005-06 which could have been prevented⁴.

- **Health is a major indicator of workforce participation and productivity.**

It is anticipated Australia's greatest economic gains will come from maximising workforce participation⁵. Combined health promotion and disease prevention, education and work incentive initiatives could potentially result in increases in GDP of around 6 and 3 per cent, respectively, after 25 or more years⁶.

- **New funding sources are needed for a holistic approach to prevention.**

New sources of funding need to be identified to enable hospitals and general practice to focus on the health of populations, and schools, workplaces and other organisational settings to focus on the health of individuals.

The first step is determining how the multiple sectors of the community can effectively work together to reduce illness and disease. We can work together to improve the future health and wellbeing of all Australians.

¹ AIHPS (2006) *Purchasing Prevention: making every cent count*. Roundtable summary of outcomes www.aihps.org

² P. Brooks. *Why business needs to invest in health futures*. Australian Financial Review (September 2007)

³ Applied Economics 2001, *Returns on Investment in Public Health*, Available online at: www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-publth-publicat-document-roi_eea-cnt.htm

⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2006, *Australian Hospital Statistics*. Available online at: www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10305

⁵ *Locking In or Losing Our Prosperity*, Business Council of Australia (2005)

⁶ *Potential Benefits of the National Reform Agenda*, Productivity Commission (2007)