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Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

22 October 2009

Australia's First Preventative Health Agency

Australia's first ever Preventive Health Agency will soon be established following the passage of important legislation in the House of Representatives today. The Agency is a key part of the Rudd Government's decision to invest more in preventative health measures than any other government in Australia's history.

The legislation is now with the Senate for consideration. It is essential that this Bill be passed without delay so that the agency can commence work on 1 January 2010.

The creation of this agency responds to calls from health professionals for Australia to establish – as many other countries have done – a dedicated agency to focus exclusively on driving the prevention agenda and combat the complex challenges of preventable chronic disease.

The agency will guide health ministers in their task of curbing the growth of lifestyle risks driving chronic disease. It is a role requiring national leadership, capacity to work across sectors and portfolios, and an oversight role for surveillance and monitoring.

The agency will bring together the best expertise in the country and play a key role in gathering, analysing and disseminating the best available evidence and evidence-based programs.

Its prevention activities will engage all Australian governments as well as employers, businesses and other sectors, to benefit every community in the nation.

The new preventive health agency will concentrate on reducing the burden that preventable health problems are already placing on the workforce, and ensure Australia's productive capacity is maintained.

The agency will receive \$133 million over four years, from the Government's record \$872 million COAG Prevention Partnership funding.

Strong support for the agency has been expressed by key players in the preventive health field such as the Public Health Association of Australia, and this is important in ensuring the agency's success in forging cohesiveness in national preventive health efforts.

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