



The Hon Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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OFFICE OF PREVENTIVE HEALTH FULFILLS ELECTION PROMISE

The Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, and the Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, Kevin Humphries, today officially opened the new Office of Preventive Health in Western Sydney.

The establishment of the Office of Preventive Health is one of the NSW Government's key election commitments for NSW Health.

Minister Skinner and Minister Humphries were joined at Liverpool Hospital by the Member for Menai, Melanie Gibbons, and the Member for Camden, Chris Patterson.

The new facility, located on the NSW Health campus at Liverpool, is responsible for coordinating initiatives to reduce the sort of lifestyle related risk factors which lead to chronic disease.

"The NSW Government is firmly committed to keeping people healthy and out of hospital and, most importantly, to improving their quality of life," Mrs Skinner said.

"Prevention is about much more than just keeping people out of hospital – it's about making sure that people are living healthy lives."

Minister Humphries said preventing chronic disease had widespread economic and social benefits for NSW.

"Improving people's health and well-being and keeping them out of hospital will not only improve health outcomes across the board, but is one of the most effective ways to manage rising health costs," Mr Humphries said.

"Given the high rates of preventable chronic diseases in our communities, we need to provide services and shape policies that support changes in poor lifestyle behaviours, such as smoking, inadequate physical activity, poor nutrition and unhealthy weight.

"Establishing the Office of Preventive Health will help achieve these aims," he said.

Ms Gibbons said the office will oversee the NSW Government's \$120 million Preventive Health Fighting Fund.

"The fighting fund is designed to coordinate preventive health initiatives for children and adults across NSW over the next four years," she said.

Mr Patterson said it will also connect Local Health Districts with academic institutions, including the University of Western Sydney.

“This will ensure there is a close link between academic evidence, NSW Government policy, and better health outcomes for at risk population groups,” he said.

Professor Chris Rissel from the University of Sydney’s School of Public Health will be the inaugural Director of the Office of Preventive Health.

“Professor Rissel has a strong background in implementing preventive health initiatives in his role in health promotion with the former Central Sydney and Sydney South West Area Health Services,” Mrs Skinner said.

Mrs Skinner said Professor Rissel’s experience in leading regional obesity prevention and tobacco control programs and his contributions to cycling, physical activity and sexual health research made him the perfect for the new role.

Professor Rissel will participate in an advisory group of key health academics that will support the Office of Preventive Health with:

- Associate Professor John Wiggins, Newcastle University;
- Professor Ian Ang, University of Western Sydney;
- Professor Adrian Rauman, University of Sydney;
- Ms Ros Tokley, Mid North Coast Local Health District;
- Mr Paul Klarenaar, Northern Sydney Local Health District;
- Associate Professor Peter Sainsbury, South West Sydney Local Health District;
- Dr Jo Mitchell, Ministry of Health; and
- Ms Louise Farrell, Office of Preventive Health.