

**PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**  
**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT STUDIES CLUELESS ON PREVENTIVE HEALTH**

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHA) has slammed the results of a study released today by the Centre for Independent Studies which claim there is little evidence that prevention programs reduce the incidence of chronic diseases like obesity and diabetes.

“There is overwhelming evidence that public health initiatives designed to prevent illness have been a great success,” said Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer.

“We need to look no further than lifestyle modification campaigns in areas such as smoking and HIV/AIDS. Significant reductions in rates of smoking in Australia have been achieved over the past decade as a direct result of prevention initiatives – indeed, Australia’s anti-tobacco work is used to highlight best practice internationally,” explained Mr Moore.

“Most people in the community will remember the ‘grim reaper’ advertisements from the 1980’s that were used to promote the safe sex message in the face of rising rates of HIV/AIDS internationally. Australia has amongst the lowest rates of HIV/AIDS compared to other countries as a direct result of early preventive health measures and campaigns. Public health practitioners understand that health education, promotion and advertising campaigns are not enough on their own but they are successful as part of a comprehensive preventive approach. Dr Sammut seems to have missed the point that successful media campaigns are part of a broad preventive approach.

“Rates of immunisation in Australia increased significantly after Government commitments and funding were provided in the late 1990’s. Australia now has one of the highest rates of immunisation in the world – contributing to low rates of a whole range of serious diseases like polio and measles that would otherwise be harming the community. The Australian Government’s investment last year in vaccinating young women against human papilloma virus will ultimately reduce rates of cervical cancer that have been plaguing Australian women.

“While the Centre for Independent Studies makes some interesting points in relation to the uptake of some prevention initiatives, on the whole, programs designed to prevent rather than treat illnesses have huge benefits in terms of reducing illness and saving lives,” said Mr Moore.

**For further information:**

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