

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA  
**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH CONFERENCE**  
***Indigenous health - alcohol and smoking - obesity and nutrition***

**Embargo: 6.00am Monday September 28**

A wide range of people with an interest in public health are coming together in Canberra for the Public Health Association of Australia's (PHAA) 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. The three day conference starts today, with a focus on making a difference through research and action in Indigenous health; alcohol and smoking; and obesity and nutrition.

"The conference will be opened by the Hon Nicola Roxon MP, the Australian Government Minister for Health and Ageing, at 10:00am.

Keynote speakers on the opening day of the conference include: Professor Terry Dwyer, Director of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute; Professor Sandra Eades, Head of the Indigenous Maternal and Child Health Research Program for the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute; and Professor Simon Chapman of Sydney University, an internationally recognised expert public health campaigner", said Professor Mike Daube, President of the PHAA. "This is a vital opportunity for public health experts from around the country to learn from each other and develop new strategies", Professor Daube added.

"The ultimate goal of public health is to improve health outcomes. Public health has had great successes that have resulted in improved health and life expectancy in industrialised countries and, to varying degrees, globally. But there are also significant public health failures. Today, the conference will focus on ways to improve public health outcomes in relation to the key areas of Indigenous health; alcohol and smoking; and obesity and nutrition. To face the future challenges, public health needs to focus on research, policy and practice that will deliver health improvements for all," explained Michael Moore, PHAA's Chief Executive Officer..

One of the keynote speakers, Professor Simon Chapman, will argue that researchers must focus on ways in which they can influence Ministers and key decision-makers. "Our job is not just to impress a handful of colleagues, but to make contact with policy makers uninformed in their bedrooms first thing in the morning".

"Another key feature of the program on the first day of the conference will be presentations from a wide range of speakers in the concurrent sessions, who will focus on a variety of different public health issues and challenges," said Associate Professor Emily Banks, Chair of the Conference Scientific Committee.

**What: PHAA'S 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference - ***Making a Difference: Intervening to Improve Health Outcomes*****

**Where: Hotel Realm, National Ct, Barton ACT When: Monday 28 September 2009 Time: 8:30am – 6:30pm**

**For further information/comment:**

Michael Moore, CEO, Public Health Association of Australia:	0417 249 731
Professor Mike Daube, President, Public Health Association of Australia:	0409 933 933
Associate Professor Emily Banks, Chair of the Conference Scientific Committee	0431 960 268
Professor Simon Chapman, University of Sydney	0438 340 304

***If you wish to contact particular speakers at the conference, or require copies of presentations delivered, please contact Janine Turnbull on 0418 482 444.***

*A summarised version of the conference program and biographies for the speakers in plenary sessions can be found on the PHAA website at: <http://www.phaa.net.au/2009AnnualConference.php>*

***PHAA's 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference is supported by the National Health and Medical Research Council; Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing; ACT Health and the NSW Department of Health.***