

Media Release
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Opposition disease prevention plan will save more than 55,000 Australian lives in antismoking measures alone

Thousands more saved through food, physical activity and alcohol strategies

The federal Opposition's chronic disease prevention strategy announced today would prevent more than 55,000 tobacco-caused deaths, save 323,000 Australian life years and deliver \$740.6 million in healthcare savings in antismoking measures alone, according to Cancer Council Australia.

Cancer Council Australia CEO, Professor Sanchia Aranda, said the Opposition's plan would also significantly reduce the number of cancers associated with obesity, poor diet, physical inactivity and excess alcohol consumption.

"On our analysis, the Opposition's commitment to scale up Australia's National Tobacco Campaign with \$20 million will prevent 55,000 premature Australian deaths, most from cancer, by complementing the tobacco tax increases with hard-hitting media campaigns.

"The additional \$30 million targeting high-risk and disadvantaged groups, such as Indigenous Australians and people with mental illness, has the potential to deliver even greater benefits.

"The 323,000 life years saved is particularly significant, as it represents the loss of healthy years of life caused by premature smoking-related deaths."

Professor Aranda said the Opposition's commitment to implement national strategies for nutrition, physical activity and alcohol should also be commended.

"In Australia, 7000 new cancer cases a year are attributable to low fruit and vegetable intake, low fibre intake and eating excess red meat, while obesity as an independent risk factor causes 3900 annual cancer cases," she said.

"Excess alcohol consumption causes another 3200 new cancer cases in Australia each year.

"This milestone disease prevention package announced by the Opposition today marks a major step towards reducing the preventable cancer disease burden associated with these lifestyle risk factors."

Professor Aranda said that the scale of the Opposition's plan - \$300 million overall - showed that Opposition Leader Bill Shorten and Shadow Minister Catherine King were deeply committed to improving Australia's health.

"The measures also make economic sense. Prevention is always better than cure - for individuals, for the health system and for the economy over the long term."

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