

AUSTRALIAN CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION ALLIANCE



Media Release – Wednesday, 2 March 2011

Health experts urge Australian Government to address the 35m global death toll from chronic disease each year

The first UN health summit in 10 years is an opportunity to take action on chronic diseases including heart disease, cancer, diabetes and kidney disease

In the lead-up to the first United Nations health summit in 10 years, Australian health experts are calling on the Australian Government to take a leading role in the global campaign to reduce the growing burden of chronic diseases on the world's population.

Today Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon will hear from representatives from across Australia's health sector, including the CEOs of the National Heart Foundation, Cancer Council Australia, Diabetes Australia, Kidney Health Australia and the National Stroke Foundation.

The UN summit will focus on non-communicable disease which, according to Rob Moodie, Professor of Global Health at the University of Melbourne, claims the lives of 35 million people each year.

"Heart disease, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease and chronic lung disorders account for most of the global death toll," Professor Moodie said.

"Low and middle-income countries carry 80% of the chronic disease burden. However, chronic diseases receive just 2.3% of overall development assistance for health," he said.

Professor Greg Johnson, Chair of the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance said Australia has shown global leadership on health issues like tobacco control and was well placed to take a strong role at the UN summit.

"The Australian Government can seek tangible outcomes from the summit and play a strong role beyond the summit to assist developing nations, particularly in the Western Pacific, to reduce the incidence of chronic disease through improved prevention, screening, early detection, treatment and palliation," Professor Johnson said.

"There are several steps world leaders could take to reduce the incidence of chronic disease, such as fully implementing the existing Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Tobacco is responsible for 5.4 million deaths each year worldwide each year, more than HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria combined."

The Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance comprises: Cancer Council Australia, Diabetes Australia, Kidney Health Australia, the National Heart Foundation of Australia and the National Stroke Foundation.