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MEDIA RELEASE

Budget: Great Preventive Health Initiatives

The President of General Practice Registrars Australia (GPRRA), Dr Melanie Smith said today that one set of initiatives in the Federal Budget 2018 is critically important for protecting the health of Australians into the future.

“The measures listed under ‘supporting the development of preventive health initiatives’ may not get much media attention but they will help turn the tide against unhealthy lifestyles and Australia’s escalating chronic disease burden,” said Dr Smith.

“Of particular note is the intention to encourage healthy lifestyles through increased physical activity and better nutrition,” she said.

“One of the proposed projects is the development of training and educational resources for general practitioners to support their patients to embrace healthy lifestyles.”

“An important next step, to support this initiative, will be to develop an effective way of funding GPs to allocate time to assist patients to make critical lifestyle changes, “ she said.

“Resources are important but we must also ensure that GPs are funded in a way that allows them to be effective change agents and foster the patient behaviours that will improve health outcomes.”

“We must acknowledge and support the cornerstone role of general practice in managing the whole patient and this Budget initiative supports recognition of that role.”

“General practice is the logical home for new initiatives to influence behaviours,” said Dr Smith. “It is the one part of the health system that can take a holistic approach to ensuring the well-being of Australians.”

“Within this context, it is critically important that we continually review the role of GPs, and their training arrangements, if we are to ensure they are highly effective in making a contribution to reducing the burden of chronic disease in Australia and to make sure we get the maximum benefit from key measures funded in the 2018 Federal Budget,” said Dr Melanie Smith.

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