



## FACT SHEET

# Helping Indigenous Australians to reduce their risk of chronic disease

### What the Australian Government is doing

The Australian Government is funding the rollout of a national network of healthy lifestyle workers to reduce the lifestyle risk factors that contribute to preventable chronic disease in Indigenous communities.

### How this will work

- A network of healthy lifestyle worker teams will be established around Australia. To extend the reach of their activities, healthy lifestyle workers will travel to near-by areas.
- These are non-clinical positions. To develop the skills and knowledge required, healthy lifestyle workers will receive accredited training through registered training organisations.
- The healthy lifestyle workers will work to improve nutrition and physical activity for individuals, families and communities.
- They will refer people who are at risk of developing a chronic disease to health services to help where necessary. People with established chronic disease will also be referred for help in managing their disease.
- They will also work closely with new tobacco action workers (see National action to reduce Indigenous smoking rates fact sheet) in a team-based approach.
- To ensure this program is properly targeted, the Australian Government is receiving advice from external expert working groups. The Indigenous Health Forums in each state and territory are also providing expert advice including on where the healthy lifestyle workers should work.

### How this will benefit Indigenous Australians

- Reduce the lifestyle risk factors that are the main contributors to preventable chronic disease development.
- Raise community awareness of chronic disease within Indigenous communities.
- Free up Aboriginal Health Workers to spend more time on clinical work and program management roles.
- Increase collaboration between Indigenous health services, local general practices, hospitals and allied health providers.

- Help close the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation.
- Around 25,000 individuals, families and community groups will benefit from this program by 30 June 2013.

**Who will implement the new approach**

- The Australian Government will work with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and state and territory governments.