



# Media Release

11 August 2010

## **Diabetes Australia strongly supports new funding for diabetes care and opposes scrapping of \$449m new funding**

Diabetes Australia today expressed strong concern about the Coalition's proposal to scrap \$449 million of new funding for diabetes care, as recently announced by the Labor Government.

"The Coalition has promised \$1.5 billion for mental health, but nothing specific for diabetes. This should not be a case of mental health services benefiting at the expense of diabetes care" said Diabetes Australia CEO Professor Greg Johnson, "both are very important national health priorities and both are underfunded".

"The recent Australia's Health 2010 report showed type 2 diabetes is projected to become the leading cause of disease burden in Australia in the next seven years, overtaking coronary heart disease, depression and anxiety".

"There are 275 new cases of diabetes diagnosed in Australia every day. That's 100,000 more Australians with diabetes in just the past 12 months and we cannot pretend that current diabetes funding, and the current healthcare system, can cope with such a serious epidemic".

Diabetes Australia noted the \$350 million pledged from the Coalition to increase Medicare rebates for GPs to spend more time with patients with chronic and complex conditions such as diabetes, and the \$115 million to increase rebates for practice nurses "but this is across all chronic conditions and we need a plan and funding for the diabetes epidemic" said Professor Johnson.

Professor Johnson noted that while there are legitimate and significant concerns about the detail and design of the new diabetes program announced by the Government, Diabetes Australia wants to see the government of the day, diabetes consumer organisations and health professionals all work together to make a better health care system for the 1 million Australians currently known and diagnosed with diabetes.

"Fundamental to this challenge is more funding and we call on the Coalition to match or increase the \$449 million diabetes offered by the Government and to outline a plan that addresses the serious challenge of improving diabetes care in Australia."

Diabetes is a serious disease and if not well managed can cause heart attacks, strokes, kidney damage, blindness, and amputations and other complications. Diabetes and its complications cause up to one third of preventable hospital admissions in Australia.

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Diabetes health care needs to support all people with diabetes including those with type 1 and type 2 diabetes, diabetes in ATSI peoples, diabetes in our youth, diabetes in pregnancy, and diabetes in older Australians. Additional funding is required across the spectrum of primary and allied health care, diabetes centres and specialist care, and in-hospital care. It is important that diabetes services are integrated across all components of the health system.

Diabetes Australia also called on both the Government and the Opposition to seriously address prevention noting it continued to be the 'poor cousin' in health policy and funding.

Diabetes Australia is the national federated body made up of state and territory diabetes consumer organisations supporting people with diabetes, and health professional bodies dedicated to the treatment and prevention of diabetes.

**For more information and interview: Lyn Curtis 0411 019 924**  
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