



16th June 2011

Senator Guy Barnett Announced as Inaugural Diabetes Australia Ambassador

Diabetes Australia is very pleased to announce the appointment of retiring Tasmanian Senator Guy Barnett as the Inaugural Diabetes Australia Ambassador. The announcement was made at a Parliamentary Diabetes Support Group event on Tuesday 14th June, which was held in Senator Barnett's honour. "Senator Barnett has been a strong and effective advocate for people with diabetes, both during and prior to his parliamentary career over the past decade," said Lewis Kaplan, Diabetes Australia CEO. "We are thrilled that Senator Barnett has accepted our invitation to become a Diabetes Australia Ambassador". Senator Barnett's appointment is the first under the new Ambassador Program, currently being established by Diabetes Australia.

Senator Barnett has type 1 diabetes. With his departure from the Senate, no other current federal parliamentarians have (publicly disclosed their) diabetes. In responding to the invitation by Diabetes Australia to become its inaugural Ambassador, Senator Barnett expressed his commitment to continue his work on behalf of people with diabetes, both in Australia and internationally. At the PDSG function, he was praised for his leadership and commitment by colleagues within and outside the world of politics. "Senator Barnett is a shining light in the diabetes world and a key leader in achieving much better government support for people with diabetes," said Lewis Kaplan.

Diabetes is the fastest growing chronic illness in Australia and internationally. Around 1.7 million Australians have diabetes, and up to half of them are unaware of their condition. Diabetes is a serious condition with complications including blindness, kidney disease, limb amputation, heart disease and stroke.

Diabetes Australia is a national federated body made up of state and territory organisations supporting people with diabetes, and those professional and research bodies particularly concerned with the treatment and prevention of diabetes. Our purpose is to help all people affected by diabetes and those at risk and to contribute to the search for a cure.