



BOARD STATEMENT CONSTITUTIONAL REFRESH

Background

Diabetes Australia is proposing a modernised Constitution so that the organisation is well positioned to meet the needs of people living with and at risk of diabetes in a rapidly changing environment. The revised Constitution will provide clear flexible governance arrangements that are the right fit for a contemporary national charity.

Why changes are needed

Diabetes Australia's current Constitution reflects an earlier stage in the organisation's evolution, when in 2021 a number of State and Territory organisations moved from the original Federation model to come together with the national body.

Since its inception, Diabetes Australia has grown significantly in size, reach and impact. Five years on from the structural changes in 2021, the Board considers it timely and appropriate to simplify the Constitution by removing rigidity, allowing the organisation to operate in a more agile and effective way. A well-respected law firm, Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer was retained to assist and their summary of the proposed changes is included.

Our charity-type also reflects an earlier time, namely as a Public Benevolent Institution established for the relief of suffering. Evolving to be a Health Promotion Charity is a more contemporary approach aligned to the needs and expectations of our community.

What's changing

One of the most important changes in the refreshed Constitution is to move from a structure that represents member organisations, to a structure that is focused on people living with diabetes. Most importantly, that means the ability for people living with, and at risk of, diabetes to formally join Diabetes Australia as Community Members at no cost.

Diabetes Australia has evolved into a national community of almost 500,000 people, and this change enables that community to have a direct and meaningful connection to a public member led company by opting in with no annual fee.

What's not changing

Existing individual paid members will continue to hold their current rights under the revised Constitution, including the right to vote at general meetings. Current health professional organisation members may continue their member arrangements on terms agreed with the Board, aligned with Diabetes Australia's charitable purpose, including participation in Advisory Councils and development of community information.

Why this benefits the diabetes community

The changes make it very clear that Diabetes Australia's purpose is to support people living with and at risk of, diabetes. Lived experience perspectives are at the heart of our work and these constitutional changes provide a governance structure that reflects this focus.

Consistent with our purpose, Diabetes Australia will continue to work to reduce the impact of diabetes across Australia through support, education, advocacy and research, providing a strong national voice for all Australians impacted by diabetes.

We are proud to be the third oldest diabetes organisation in the world, 88 years young. Recent achievements include advocating for Australians to have improved access to diabetes technology, investing \$40 million in research, developing prevention tools for those at risk, and supporting more than 60,000 young people in under resourced countries through our Life for a Child program. These achievements reflect both the strength of the organisation and the potential to do even more in the future.

Having carefully considered the proposed changes, the Board of Diabetes Australia believes the revised Constitution is in the best interests of the organisation and the people it serves. The Board unanimously recommends that members vote in favour of adopting the revised Constitution.

The Boards of Australian Diabetes Educators' Association Limited (ADEA) and Australian Diabetes Society Limited (ADS), in their capacities as Member Organisations of Diabetes Australia, have been advised of the terms of the revised Constitution and support it being put to members for consideration. Diabetes Australia, ADEA and ADS look forward to continuing to work together for the benefit of people living with and at risk of diabetes.

The Board is confident that this constitutional refresh will strengthen Diabetes Australia's governance, enhance member participation, and support the organisation to continue and expand its impact for the diabetes community into the future. ●