

# Media Release

**Embargoed: Sunday 8 July 2012**

## Diabetes prevention is a smart investment

More than 2.5 million Australian workers are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes, new research shows.

Unless federal and state governments cooperatively fund a national diabetes prevention program, many of these workers can expect to develop diabetes in the next five years.

At the start of National Diabetes Week 8–14 July, Diabetes Australia has today launched a national campaign, *Let's Prevent Diabetes*, calling on governments to fund a high-risk prevention program for type 2 diabetes.

The need for prevention in many other areas, such as on our roads and in our waterways, we take for granted. For decades the wearing of seatbelts and helmets to reduce deaths on our roads and lifejackets to prevent us from drowning have been mandated by governments.

But when it comes to type 2 diabetes very little is being done.

With type 2 diabetes set to become the leading burden of disease in Australia by 2017, it's time for governments in this country to make diabetes prevention a priority.

Diabetes Australia CEO Lewis Kaplan says "A commitment to type 2 diabetes prevention is well overdue. We want federal and state governments to come together and fund a powerful and proven national type 2 diabetes prevention program to give those 2.5 million high-risk workers the best chance of preventing this life-threatening condition. By investing \$582 million over the next four years, Australia can save an estimated \$1.37 billion in healthcare costs."

Around the world solo yachtsman Jesse Martin got the ball rolling on the campaign at today's launch on the steps of Melbourne's Parliament House.

He voted yes for a diabetes prevention program.

"Lifejackets prevent drowning. Everyone knows that. Type 2 diabetes can also be prevented, but I didn't know that. There are steps we can take to reduce the risk," he says.

"Every year hundreds of people die from drowning whilst thousands die from diabetes. Just like education about lifejackets, education about type 2 diabetes should exist, because we can prevent it".

We want all Australians to show their support for our *Let's Prevent Diabetes* campaign.

Visit [www.letspreventdiabetes.org.au](http://www.letspreventdiabetes.org.au) and email your local MP using the form provided.

Then send the link to your friends, family and colleagues and ask them to do the same.

The more people who add their voice to our campaign, the greater our chances are of getting governments to listen.

Richard Voss knows it is possible to improve your lifestyle and reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes.

Eighteen months ago, the Portland resident weighed 136kg. He also had high blood pressure, high cholesterol and a strong family history of diabetes, putting him at high risk of type 2 diabetes.

Now, after doing the Life! diabetes prevention program and getting the advice and support he needed, Richard is 50kg lighter and is leading a much healthier lifestyle – and he feels great.

"I was overweight and not happy with myself. My dad died from diabetes this year, so I have always known about diabetes. I had tried to lose weight before but I couldn't maintain it," he says.

The Life! program taught him to set small, achievable goals and focus on the things he can do, like walking four times a week, rather than the things he cannot.

"I'm a school teacher so a lot of the kids give me compliments like 'gee you're looking good', and that's pretty rewarding. It's good to be able to go out and kick the footy with them. I wasn't able to keep up before," he says.

*In 2007, **7500** people died from diabetes (type 1 and type 2) and diabetes complications*

*In 2010–11, **315** people died after drowning in Australia*

*In 2011, **1292** people died on Australian roads*

*In 2006–07, **1131** cyclists suffered a head injury on Australian roads*

## **Prevention investment initiatives work on our roads and in our waterways – let's make them work for diabetes too**

Diabetes Australia is the national peak body for diabetes in Australia providing a single, powerful, collective voice for people living with diabetes, their families and carers.

The Life! program is funded by the Victorian Government and provided by Diabetes Australia – Victoria. For more information visit [www.diabeteslife.org.au](http://www.diabeteslife.org.au)

### **Diabetes information:**

The diabetes epidemic is growing by a staggering 275 new cases every day.

2 million Australians have pre-diabetes and are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes

Almost 60 per cent of type 2 diabetes cases are preventable.

Type 2 diabetes may be prevented through sustained lifestyle change, together with healthy eating and maintaining a healthy weight.

For more information about diabetes, visit [www.diabetesaustralia.com.au](http://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au) or call the national Diabetes Infoline: 1300 136 588.

To assess your diabetes risk, visit [www.ausdrisk.com.au](http://www.ausdrisk.com.au)

### **Available for interview:**

**Lewis Kaplan**, Diabetes Australia CEO

**Prof Greg Johnson**, Diabetes Australia National Policy Adviser

**Jesse Martin**, Solo round the world yachtsman and campaign ambassador

**Richard Voss**, Person who has prevented type 2 diabetes

### **For more information:**

**Lyn Curtis**, Ph: (03) 9667 1714, 0411 019 924, [lcurtis@diabetesvic.org.au](mailto:lcurtis@diabetesvic.org.au)

**Shannon Crane**, Ph: (03) 9667 1744, 0478 029 929 [scrane@diabetesvic.org.au](mailto:scrane@diabetesvic.org.au)