



Diabetes – the “State of the Nation” Report

World Diabetes Day

14 November 2016

1. Introduction

Prior to the 2013 federal election, Diabetes Australia, working with diabetes clinical and research leaders across Australia advocated for a new National Diabetes Strategy to be developed and implemented by the incoming Government noting that the most recent national diabetes strategy had ended in 2004

The Coalition went to the 2013 federal election promising a new strategy and soon after the election, then Health Minister, Hon Peter Dutton appointed a National Diabetes Strategy Advisory Group to develop the strategy.

A new Australian National Diabetes Strategy 2016-20, informed by the advice of the National Diabetes Strategy Advisory Group, was released by Minister for Health, Hon Sussan Ley, for World Diabetes Day, 14 November, 2015.

It is now one year since the release of the new strategy. This brief report provides a summary of progress and implementation of the goals of the Australian National Diabetes Strategy in the year since its release by the Australian Government.

This report attempts to identify all substantive new diabetes policy commitments or actions undertaken by the Australian Government and the State and Territory Governments in the past year. Some policy commitments or actions may be under development and some may not be acknowledged in this report. This report does not attempt to document actions or initiatives being implemented and/or funded by the non-government sector or business sector.

Diabetes Australia intends to produce a similar “State or the Nation” report in future years to identify and monitor progress.

This report has been prepared by Diabetes Australia with input from member organisations. We would like to acknowledge additional input to this report from Professor Paul Zimmet AO and Professor Stephen Colagiuri who were both members of the previous National Diabetes Strategy Advisory Group.

2. Background – the scale and impact of the diabetes epidemic continues to grow

Diabetes prevalence in Australia has continued to grow at an alarming scale over the past year.

In the 12 months to June 2016, another 100,105 Australians were newly registered with diabetes on the National Diabetes Services Scheme. As this is voluntary registration, it underestimates the likely number of new cases of diabetes in that year.

At 30 June 2016 there were 1,211,251 Australians living with diabetes and registered with the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS). This represents those who have been diagnosed with any type of diabetes and includes type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes, gestational diabetes, and other less common types of diabetes. The breakdown is:

- 1,049,929 people with type 2 diabetes
- 117,875 people with type 1 diabetes
- 36,198 women diagnosed with gestational diabetes in the past 12 months

The total number of Australians with diabetes could be up to 1.7 million people as the number of Australians currently with undiagnosed, "silent" type 2 diabetes is unknown but likely to be in the range of 250,000 to 500,000 people. Type 2 diabetes can be present for years with no obvious symptoms but importantly, many of the serious complications may be developing during this time.

An additional 109,077 women who have developed gestational diabetes in recent years are also registered with the NDSS and receive regular reminders for diabetes/health checks for mother and baby.

Some important trends continue to appear.

The number of people with type 2 diabetes requiring insulin therapy continues to increase dramatically. At 30 June 2016 there were 250,950 people with type 2 diabetes needing daily insulin injections, along with 117,875 people with type 1 diabetes and 10,648 women with gestational diabetes also needed insulin therapy. In total, 383,439 Australians with diabetes needed insulin injections every day (or insulin pump therapy).

The trend towards more young people developing type 2 diabetes is concerning. At 30 June there were 5,646 young adults aged 20-29 years with type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes in pregnancy has become a major health issue. The new understanding of epigenetics and the increased risk of both mother and baby developing diabetes and other chronic conditions highlights the need to address gestational diabetes as a major health issue. Over 36,000 pregnant women developed gestational diabetes in the past year and over 10,000 of these women needed insulin therapy to manage the diabetes in pregnancy.

The number of people with prediabetes and at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes is also unknown but estimated to be around 2 million. People with prediabetes are much more likely to develop type 2 diabetes in the next 5 years.

The serious complications of diabetes continue to present in alarming numbers. These complications have a significant personal and family burden and represent a huge cost to the nation.

In the past year it is estimated that diabetes has caused:

- 4,400 amputations of toes, feet or limbs
- 3,500 people with diabetes to need kidney dialysis
- 840,000 hospitalisations

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to develop diabetes at much higher rates than non-indigenous Australians, and continue to experience the serious complications of diabetes including amputations, blindness and kidney damage, at higher rates. There is no evidence Australia has closed the gap in terms of diabetes.

3. Coordinated Implementation of the Australian National Diabetes Strategy

To date, a comprehensive and coordinated plan to implement the Australian National Diabetes Strategy has not been developed although there has been some positive action and progress.

- The Health Minister, Hon Sussan Ley, referred the new Australian National Diabetes Strategy 2016-20 to the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) where it was endorsed, and it was also noted by the COAG Health Council.
- The AHMAC has formed an intergovernmental Implementation Working Group to operationalise the Strategy through an Implementation Plan. To date there has been no report, output or outcome from this work.

4. Significant Diabetes Related Policy, Program or Funding Activity over the Past Year

There have been a number of important policy, program or funding decisions or announcements during the past year including:

- The 2016 federal budget included \$33.8 million over 4 years for new funding for retinal photography for people with diabetes to detect eye damage and support early identification and treatment. This targets rural and remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and is provided through new Medicare items. It is expected to commence in November 2016.
- In May 2016, the Australian Government signed a new, four year funding agreement with Diabetes Australia with \$174 million over four years to continue the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) and coordination of registration for all Australians with any type of diabetes and the provision of information, education and support services and programs to the 1.2 million registrants. The NDSS has been administered by Diabetes Australia for 29 years under successive Australian Governments.
- The Government also introduced new limits (from 1 July 2016) to NDSS subsidised access to diabetes self monitoring products (blood glucose monitoring strips) for people with type 2 diabetes not using insulin. The full effect of this is yet to be felt as the limitations start to take effect from 1 January 2017. However, the Government has advised that any person with type 2 diabetes not requiring insulin therapy who requires access to blood glucose monitoring strips on the advice of their doctor or credentialed diabetes educator will still be able to get them.
- The Australian Government's planned Pharmacy Diabetes Screening Trial project will utilise pharmacies to risk assess people for prediabetes and help to identify undiagnosed type 2 diabetes. This is a trial in selected pharmacies (about six per cent) and is funded from the Pharmacy Trials Program under the 6th Community Pharmacy Agreement.
- The Queensland Government has provided 4 year program funding of \$27 million for *Health for Life!* - an integrated type 2 diabetes prevention program including risk assessment to identify those with prediabetes, early identification of undiagnosed type 2 diabetes, and prevention programs for those with prediabetes integrating prevention of diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

- During the 2016 election campaign, the Coalition promised \$54 million of new funding over 4 years to subsidise continuous glucose monitoring devices for children and young adults with type 1 diabetes. This program has bipartisan support and the Government has established an Advisory Committee to examine implementation of the program.

5. A Scorecard Against the Goals of the Australian National Diabetes Strategy

Brief comments on new Government action over the past year in respect of key actions or objectives identified in the Australian National Diabetes Strategy 2016-20.

The recommendations/actions identified in the Strategy are listed in italics. This report does not attempt to include ongoing programs/activities which pre-dated the new National Diabetes Strategy.

Key Objectives and Recommendations	Federal	State
Goal 1 - prevent people developing type 2 diabetes		NSW Government released a new <i>Diabetes Prevention Framework</i> in September 2016 Queensland Government has provided 4 year program funding of \$27m for <i>Health for Life!</i> - an integrated type 2 diabetes prevention program
<i>Drive change to develop health promoting environments that encourage increased physical activity, reduced sedentary behaviour, and improve healthy eating</i>	No major new initiatives	NSW Government funded <i>Make Healthy Normal</i> campaign launched
<i>Embed physical activity and healthy eating in workplaces, schools and communities</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Public education, social media campaigns to educate parents, kids to increase physical activity and healthy eating</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Increase the availability of and demand for healthy food and reduce it for unhealthy food – e.g. food labelling</i>	Some further action on Health Star Rating on foods	No major new initiatives
<i>Reduce exposure of children to marketing, promotion, sponsorship of energy dense, nutrient poor foods and beverages - codes of conduct etc.</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives

<i>Strengthen, up skill primary health care and public health workforce (particularly Aboriginal Community Controlled services)</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Address maternal, family and child health to enhance early life</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Identify high risk individuals and consider interventions</i>	Some action. The planned Pharmacy Diabetes Screening Trial project (funded under the 6th CPA) is a structured trial in 350 pharmacies (about six per cent) and will help identify both people with prediabetes and undiagnosed type 2 diabetes. It does not include any funding for delivery of evidence based prevention programs for people with prediabetes	<p>The Queensland Government has provided 4 year program funding of \$27 million for <i>Health for Life!</i> - an integrated type 2 diabetes prevention program including risk assessment to identify those with prediabetes, early identification of undiagnosed type 2 diabetes, and prevention programs for those with prediabetes integrating prevention of diabetes and cardiovascular disease</p> <p>The Victorian Government has provided continuing funding until 2017 for the <i>Life!</i> program which has had bi-partisan support for the past 8 years and provides integrated risk assessment, early detection and prevention programs and was the first integrated program in Australia for people at high risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke</p>
Goal 2 - awareness and early detection of type 1 diabetes and type 2 diabetes.		
<i>Increase awareness of symptoms, and timely detection of type 1 diabetes - health professionals, community, parents, teachers</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Increase recognition and awareness of type 2 diabetes in health professionals and community</i>	Some action through planned Pharmacy Diabetes Screening Trial	<p>Queensland - new <i>Health for Life!</i> program funding will assist this</p> <p>Continuing funding for the <i>Life!</i> program in Victoria also supports this</p>

<i>Increase use of risk screening tools in high risk people</i>	Some action through planned Pharmacy Diabetes Screening Trial	Queensland - new <i>Health for Life!</i> program funding will assist this Continuing funding for the <i>Life!</i> program in Victoria also supports
<i>Integrate diabetes testing with other conditions (cardiovascular, kidney)</i>	No major new initiatives	Some action through the new Queensland Government funded program Continuing funding for the <i>Life!</i> program in Victoria also supports this
Goal 3 - reduce complications and improve quality of life		
<i>Develop a nationally endorsed set of diabetes guidelines</i>	No major new initiatives	Not applicable
<i>Develop clinical care standards for diabetes</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to develop local tailored pathways of care</i>	Limited action. No national agenda for PHNs to address diabetes and prevention of complications. No consistent reporting or transparency. Some diabetes projects underway	Not applicable
<i>Complications prevention programs in PHNs or generally, single (e.g. Amputations) or covering multiple complications</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>My Health Record in clinical use for diabetes</i>	Limited action. A few PHNs doing limited projects	Not applicable
<i>Enhance access to structured self management education for newly diagnosed, children, adolescents, older people</i>	Newly committed NDSS funding enables this to be addressed over next 4 years	No major new initiatives

<i>Peer support programs accessible</i>	Newly committed NDSS funding enables this to be addressed over next 4 years	No major new initiatives
<i>Education and social marketing campaigns about complications and monitoring</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Quality improvement - Reporting data against outcomes</i>	Limited action. Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care recently reported diabetes related amputations data nationally highlighting poor outcomes and need to action.	Not applicable
<i>Uptake and use of My Health Record as a management tool</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Enhance data connectivity to improve care</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Promote use of My Health Record by consumers</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Support access to telemedicine consultations and explore expansion</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Facilitate consumer engagement platforms</i>	Newly committed NDSS funding enables this to be addressed over next 4 years	No major new initiatives
<i>Harness remote monitoring technologies</i>	During the 2016 election campaign, the Coalition promised \$54 million in new funding over four years as new funding to subsidise continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) devices for children and young adults with type 1 diabetes. This program has bipartisan support and the Government has established an Advisory Committee to examine implementation of the program	No major new initiatives
<i>Facilitate connected and consistent software</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives

<i>for GPs and primary care</i>		
<i>Improve affordable access to medicines and devices</i>	Coalition election commitment of \$54 million in new funding over four years for continuous glucose monitoring for type 1 diabetes. No new initiative on new, clearer pathways for assessment and funding	Most of the current State and Territory co-contribution agreements to support people with diabetes to access free needles and syringes through the NDSS end 30 June 2017 (with the exception of Victoria at 30 June 2018) and there are indications that some may not continue these co-contributions which would seriously disadvantage people with diabetes
<i>Improve workforce capacity Upskill existing workers and particularly ATSI workers</i>	Newly committed NDSS funding enables this to be addressed (in part) over next 4 years	No major new initiatives
<i>Consider specialist workforce</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Consider redistributing some roles in care</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Develop clear competences</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Improve funding mechanisms - Innovative funding models</i>	The Australian Government has announced a trial of a new Health Care Home initiative for primary care. This is targeting people with chronic and complex conditions where diabetes will be significant. The trial is in 10 regions and funding details have only recently been released	No major new initiatives
<i>Mental Health – routinely monitor mental health issues</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Mental health assessment as part of annual cycle of care</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Promote use of mental health services by the diabetes community</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives

<i>Transition from child to adult - Strengthen programs to assist</i>	Newly committed NDSS funding enables this to be addressed over next 4 years	No major new initiatives
<i>Make school, pre school, child care safe for diabetes</i>	Newly committed NDSS funding enables this to be addressed over next 4 years. New NDSS resources for schools, pre-schools and families released in 2016	No major new initiatives
<i>Provide high quality hospital care</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Add diabetes to the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality Health Care standards program</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Education and training for hospital staff</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Address national standard for handover from hospitals to primary care</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
Goal 4 - Pregnancy Diabetes		
<i>Accessible pre pregnancy programs</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>All pregnant women tested for diabetes</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Women during pregnancy can access credentialed diabetes educator</i>	No major new initiatives. Note - the current Medicare items do not cover gestational diabetes	No major new initiatives
<i>Post pregnancy programs for all women after gestational diabetes</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives. Continued funding for the <i>Life!</i> program in Victoria supports program for women after gestational diabetes
<i>Paediatric follow up for at risk children</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Reminder system for women registered on the NDSS for future diabetes testing</i>	In place as part of the NDSS - Gestational Diabetes Register program	

Goal 5 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People		
All the general actions in Goals 1-4 apply for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and no major new initiatives to report		
<i>Culturally specific, diabetes specific actions or approaches</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
Goal 6 - Other priority groups		
Culturally and linguistically diverse		
<i>Translate consumer resources</i>	Newly committed NDSS funding enables this to be addressed over next 4 years	No major new initiatives
<i>Encourage use of translation services</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Culturally appropriate information and programs</i>	Newly committed NDSS funding enables this to be addressed over next 4 years	No major new initiatives
Older Australians, and dementia and disability risk		
<i>Promote implementation of guidelines on diabetes in older people</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Training for aged care workers</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Ensure Care Transitions supported</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Early discharge planning and communication</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Support the role of carers</i>	Newly committed NDSS funding enables this to be addressed over next 4 years	No major new initiatives
<i>Share care and transition plans between services</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives

Rural and Remote		
<i>Coordinate regional services across primary, secondary and tertiary care</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Community based health workers</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Telehealth, online medical services, equitable access</i>	New Medicare item for retinal photography targets rural and remote areas	No major new initiatives
<i>Utilise community pharmacy</i>	Pharmacy Diabetes Screening Trial soon to commence	No major new initiatives
<i>My Health Record uptake</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Partnerships and linkages</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
Mental Health		
<i>Mental health assessment on diagnosis, and monitoring</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Monitor people with mental illness for diabetes</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
Goal 7 – Research, Evidence and Data		
<i>Develop a national research agenda</i>	No major new initiatives	Not applicable
<i>Identify barriers to best practice and access</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Causation of type 1 diabetes</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Causation type 2 diabetes</i>	No major new initiatives. No priority within National Health and Medical Research Council	No major new initiatives
<i>Evidence base for CGM and pump therapy</i>	During the 2016 election campaign, the Coalition promised \$54 million in new funding	Not applicable

	over four years to subsidise continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) devices for children and young adults with type 1 diabetes. This program has bipartisan support and the Government has established an Advisory Committee to examine implementation of the program	
<i>Linking and connectivity of data sets</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives
<i>Regular national biomedical health survey including diabetes</i>	No major new initiatives	No major new initiatives

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