

Diabetes Victoria welcomes continuation of *Life!* program

Diabetes Victoria, the leading charity and peak consumer body working to reduce the impact of diabetes, has welcomed the continuation of the *Life!* program in 2016–17 and the expansion in the eligibility criteria, which will allow more Victorians to benefit from the program.

Life! is a lifestyle modification program, managed by Diabetes Victoria and funded by the Victorian Government, that helps people reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. The program is run by expert health professionals and gives participants the opportunity to learn more about healthy eating, physical activity, stress management and goal setting.

Every day, more than 70 people in Victoria are diagnosed with diabetes and, of those, almost 90% have developed type 2 diabetes – which is often linked to issues such as a poor diet and a lack of regular exercise.

In line with stakeholder recommendations, workforce focus group discussions, best practice guidelines and consultations between Diabetes Victoria and the Department of Health and Human Services, several changes to the eligibility criteria for the *Life!* program will be introduced from Friday 1 July.

After this date, all Victorians aged 18 years or over who meet one or more of the following criteria will be eligible for the *Life!* program:

- An AUSDRISK score of ≥ 12 (AUSDRISK is a test used to calculate the risk of developing type 2 diabetes) and a Body Mass Index (BMI) of ≥ 25
- Have previously been diagnosed with:
 - impaired glucose tolerance
 - polycystic ovary syndrome.

The inclusion of a BMI cut-off of ≥ 25 combined with an AUSDRISK score of ≥ 12 will help ensure the program targets individuals who can benefit most from participating in the *Life!* program.

“We welcome this change in criteria,” says Diabetes Victoria CEO Craig Bennett. “Until now, the program has been aimed at people over 45 years, but we know that there are many younger Victorians at risk. For example, over 27,000 Victorians aged between 18 and 40 are currently registered with the NDSS, so we are absolutely supportive of this expansion.”

“With more than 261,000 Victorians living with type 2 diabetes, there is an increasing need to provide lifestyle modification programs on how to prevent this condition,” said Mr Bennett. “Diabetes increases a person’s risk of heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, loss of vision and loss of limbs, but a healthy lifestyle can significantly reduce the risk of developing these life-threatening complications.”

*We **support, empower and campaign** for all Victorians affected by diabetes.*

For more information:



MEDIA RELEASE

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About the *Life!* program

Since the program began in 2008, over 40,000 Victorians have learnt more about the steps they can take to live a healthier life. Funded by the Victorian Government and managed by Diabetes Victoria, the *Life!* program is the biggest prevention program of its type in Australia.

Previous eligibility criteria can be found at lifeprogram.com.au

For more information, and to find out if you are eligible, contact 13 RISK (13 74 75) or visit lifeprogram.org.au