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Dropping the jargon to stop the diabetes epidemic

Today, health professionals across the nation are vowing to use plain language when communicating with their patients and customers. Diabetes Victoria supports the 'Drop the Jargon' campaign, designed to improve health-related communication.

"We know that six out of 10 Australians have low health literacy skills," says Diabetes Victoria CEO Craig Bennett. "This means that many people would struggle to understand a technical medical diagnosis or treatment plan."

"Low health literacy skills can have serious consequences, especially when people do not understand how to properly take their medication or to manage chronic conditions like diabetes," Mr Bennett adds.

Jargon exists in all professions, but it has its greatest impact when health professionals try to communicate with patients – people whose wellbeing and health might be at stake.

"People with low health literacy have been found to have more health problems," Mr Bennett says. "They have more hospital and emergency visits and often do not understand how to prevent certain conditions."

There are currently 300,000 Victorians living with diabetes. Every day, around 70 Victorians are newly diagnosed, most of them with type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body isn't producing enough of the hormone insulin or cannot process it effectively. If it is not well managed, type 2 diabetes can become a silent killer.

Mr Bennett says there is a great need for Victorians to better understand diabetes: "Research tells us that many cases of type 2 diabetes could have been prevented. We know that a healthy lifestyle can significantly reduce the risk – the key now is to clearly communicate what that means for all Australians."

The 'Drop the Jargon' campaign is a day of action for Australian health professionals, community services and local governments to take up the challenge to use plain language. Visit dropthejargon.org.au for more information.

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

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