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**RECORD NUMBER OF VICTORIANS DIAGNOSED WITH DIABETES**

New figures have been released today which show the number of Victorians diagnosed with diabetes has now reached the critical 300,000 mark.

Of greater concern, is that some half a million other Victorians are now at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes unless they start changing their lives.

In just two years' time, diabetes will be the leading cause of disease burden in Australia, overtaking heart disease.

Of the 300,000 cases now in Victoria, a small number are women with gestational diabetes. However, the alarming snapshot of the condition in the state has been made public by Diabetes Australia – Vic on the eve of the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, a popular event for which DA–Vic has been appointed as the first ever official charity partner.

New figures from the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) show that 27,000 Victorians have been diagnosed with diabetes in the past year alone.

That means that every day of the year in Victoria, 74 people are diagnosed with diabetes, and of those Victorians, almost 90 per cent are living with type 2 diabetes, which is linked directly to issues such as poor diet and lack of exercise.

Just as concerning, now that we enter 2015, is that one in four Victorians over the age of 25 has pre-diabetes, diabetes, or worse still, doesn't actually know they have the condition.

Launching these new figures, Victoria's Minister for Health, Jill Hennessy, said more needs to be done to reduce the prevalence of diabetes in Victoria.

"Diabetes does present a significant public health challenge - it can often lead to problems such as heart disease, stroke, vision loss, kidney disease and nerve damage."

"Melbourne is a city of amazing food and wine, but we must be mindful of the importance of eating healthily and being active which can reduce the chances of developing Type 2 diabetes."

DA–Vic CEO Craig Bennett believes the alarming figures are a timely reminder to encourage Victorians to eat well and exercise regularly.

"Diabetes is the most significant health challenge of this generation. Diabetes affects all levels of our community – individuals, schools, workplaces and of course the entire healthcare system," said Mr. Bennett.

He also pointed out that as the peak consumer body that supports people living with all types of diabetes, DA–Vic would like to see a majority of the Victorians diagnosed with diabetes to make use of the products and services that DA–Vic provides them, which are either free or are heavily subsidised by the NDSS.

The rate at which Victorians are being diagnosed with diabetes and the growth in the number of people who are identified to be at high risk is an indication to us that there is still a lot of complacency about this serious chronic disease. Our health system is under enormous pressure and there is a great burden on taxpayers from preventable health conditions. The active management of diabetes helps prevent complications including heart attack, stroke, kidney damage, blindness and amputation so we encourage people to take steps to ensure their quality of life. Being able to identify and help those who are at risk of diabetes, as through our Victorian government-funded *Life!* type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke prevention program saves money. More importantly, it saves lives.

These new figures were highlighted at the newly re-opened award-winning Melbourne restaurant Maha.

Maha chef Shane Delia has embarked on his own health journey, shedding 10 kilograms and re-opening Maha with healthier menu options.

“I work long hours and late nights, and like many Victorians, have a young family and neglect my own health and well-being. I was not looking after myself well enough and I decided to take action. It’s nice to start a new year in a positive way,” he said

Joining Shane at the launch were Jason Pearce and Mignonne de Witt.

After realising his significant risk of developing type 2 diabetes and losing his best friend to a diabetes-related heart attack at the young age of 22 years, Jason decided to take control of his own health. Jason has now lost a staggering 35 kilograms by training six days a week and raises vital funds for the cause through charity runs, in the hope that one day we might find a cure so that no one else will have to lose a friend like he did.

Mignonne was 38 years old when she was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Her family had a history of the condition and her father had severe heart problems. She ate poorly and did little exercise but has since lost weight so she can go back to wearing clothes from her teenage years, goes to the gym three times a week and takes insulin injections.

A new study published in the Medical Journal of Australia from 11 Melbourne public hospitals found that 1 in 4 hospital inpatients have diabetes.

“This is a stark reminder of the impact of diabetes on our hospital system. The condition is one of the major drivers of hospital admissions and health costs in Victoria,” said Mr Bennett.

DA–Vic coordinates the statewide *Life!* Program – a free lifestyle modification program that

helps Victorians at high risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

Early diagnosis, treatment and effective ongoing management can reduce the risk of diabetes-related complications.

These include:

- Heart attacks and strokes – up to four times more likely in people with diabetes
- Blindness – diabetes is the leading cause of preventable blindness in adults
- Kidney failure – three times more common in people with diabetes
- Amputations – 15 times more common in people with diabetes
- Depression, anxiety and distress – common in over 30 per cent of all people with diabetes

DA–Vic will hold a progressive breakfast around Melbourne’s iconic running track, The Tan, at the Botanical Gardens on Sunday 15 March. Famous Melbourne chefs will take part in the event with proceeds to help fund diabetes research.

Tickets for this fun event for all ages are \$15 for children under the age of 16, \$35 for adult general admission and \$80 for a family of 2 adults and 2 children. Five per cent of all tickets sold go to DA–Vic. Tickets can be purchased from the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival site. <http://www.melbournefoodandwine.com.au/event-calendar/breakfast-around-the-tan-presented-by-diabetes-australia-vic-5576>

DA–Vic is the leading charity and peak consumer body working to reduce the impact of diabetes.

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