

Shining a light on women this World Diabetes Day

Friday 10 November 2017: Joining the international *Blue Monument Challenge* on World Diabetes Day (Tuesday 14 November), Diabetes Victoria is shining a light on women's health and diabetes. In Melbourne, Diabetes Victoria will light up the *Queen Victoria Women's Centre Trust* building in blue as a testament to the worldwide effort to raise awareness about diabetes and to engage the global diabetes community.

Diabetes Victoria is celebrating this year's World Diabetes Day in line with the International Diabetes Federation's theme: *To the women of diabetes – thank you*. "We are taking the opportunity to recognise the day-to-day achievements of women in the field of diabetes – many of which go unnoticed," says Diabetes Victoria CEO: Craig Bennett.

"Women are often responsible for ensuring their loved ones' diabetes is managed; many work as diabetes nurse educators, doctors or researchers; and many live with diabetes themselves. This year we want to thank all these women who are touched by diabetes in some way," Mr Bennett continues.

For every person diagnosed with diabetes there is usually a family member or carer who also 'lives with diabetes' every day in a support role. Very often, this support is given by women. According to Carers Australia, more than two thirds of primary carers are women.

Women, whether living with diabetes or not, are also predominantly the gatekeepers of household nutrition and lifestyle habits. Therefore they have the potential to drive prevention from the household and beyond. Women, as mothers, also have a huge influence over the long-term health status of their children.

"We know that almost 320,000 Victorians are currently registered on the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS). More than 151,000 women in Victoria are currently living with diabetes – be it type 1, type 2 or gestational diabetes," says Mr Bennett.

"In women of childbearing age, diabetes can affect both mothers and their unborn children. Women with diabetes have a higher risk of complications during pregnancy and have poorer pregnancy outcomes," adds Mr Bennett. "Women with type 1 diabetes have an increased risk of miscarriage and malformations, so pre-conception planning and meticulous blood glucose management, before and during pregnancy, are essential."

In Australia, around 1.7 million people are living with diabetes and more than 300 develop diabetes every day. Every day, more than 80 people in Victoria are diagnosed with diabetes and, of those, the vast majority have developed type 2 diabetes – which is often linked to issues such as a poor diet and a lack of regular physical activity. Just as concerning – one in every four Victorians over the age of 25 is directly impacted in some way by this condition.

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

For more information:

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Note to editors:

- World Diabetes Day is celebrated every year on 14 November.
- The day is a significant date in the diabetes calendar – it marks the anniversary of the birth of the man who co-discovered the medical use of insulin, Sir Frederick Banting. Banting was responsible for isolating insulin for this purpose for the first time in 1922, alongside Charles Best, for which they won a Nobel Prize.
- World Diabetes Day is a leading global diabetes awareness and advocacy campaign, officially recognised by the United Nations and led by the International Diabetes Federation.
- The International Diabetes Federation theme for World Diabetes Day 2017 is 'Women and Diabetes: our right to a healthy future', promoting that all women with diabetes deserve a right to a healthy future.
- **The lighting up of the façade of the Queen Victoria Women's Centre Trust building (210 Lonsdale St) in blue will take place at 8pm on Tuesday 14 November**, as part of the International Diabetes Federation's annual monument challenge.
- The *Blue Monument Challenge* was launched in 2007 to mark the first United Nations observed World Diabetes Day. Since then, thousands of iconic sites and buildings in over 80 countries have gone blue to raise diabetes awareness on World Diabetes Day.
- Diabetes is a serious, progressive and complex condition which can result in health complications.
- Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes specific to women during pregnancy. In Australia, between 5 and 8 per cent of all pregnancies are affected by gestational diabetes (GDM). Women with diabetes have a higher risk of risk of experiencing pregnancy-related complications, including high blood pressure and large birth weight babies, compared to women without diabetes. In addition, women with GDM have a 1 in 2 chance of developing type 2 diabetes at some time later in their lives.
- Heart health: Women with type 2 diabetes are 10 times more likely to develop coronary heart disease, and at a younger age, than women without diabetes. (Source: IDF)
- According to some studies, women with diabetes have a 50 per cent higher risk of fatal coronary heart disease than men with diabetes. (Source: BMJ. 2006 Jan 14; 332(7533): 73–78. doi: 10.1136/bmj.38678.389583.7C)
- Mental health: Women experience depression about twice as often as men. There is scientific evidence of a bi-directional association between depression and diabetes. People with depression are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes, while having type 1 or type 2 diabetes places people at elevated risk of developing depressive symptoms or depression. (Source: WHO & ACBRD)
- Eating disorders: Research suggests that eating disorders are more common among women with type 1 diabetes than women who do not have diabetes. This might be influenced by requirements of recommended diabetes management; such as detailed meal planning, precision in food portions, and constant monitoring of food intake, carbohydrates in particular, to adjust insulin doses. (Source: http://www.thejournalofdiabetesnursing.co.uk/media/content/_master/4922/files/pdf/jdn21-3_103-7.pdf)