

**EMBARGOED 21 JUNE 5.00AM**

## **HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF AUSTRALIANS IN THE DARK ABOUT DEADLY LINK BETWEEN TYPE 2 DIABETES AND HEART DISEASE**

A national survey by Diabetes Australia has found two thirds of people with type 2 diabetes don't know heart disease is the number one cause of death for people with type 2 diabetes.

Only 12 per cent of people thought they were at risk of heart disease and 6 per cent thought they were personally at risk of having a heart attack.

Yet based on the current numbers - more than 700,000 Australians living with type 2 diabetes will die from heart disease or stroke and this will shorten their life expectancy by 8-9 years. Heart disease contributes to almost two in three deaths of people with type 2 diabetes and is a major contributor to shortening the life expectancy for both men and women (8.2 years for men and 9.1 years for women).

The worrying findings have prompted Diabetes Australia to launch a new *Take Diabetes 2 Heart* awareness campaign.

"Heart disease is one of the most common complications that people with diabetes develop, however most people don't know this and underestimate their risk," Diabetes Australia CEO Professor Greg Johnson said.

"There are currently over 1.1 million Australians living with type 2 diabetes. Our new campaign, *Take Diabetes 2 Heart*, will encourage these people, and the people who love them, to have a serious heart-to-heart conversation about diabetes and heart disease and what they can do to reduce their risk.

"The good news is - our survey found 99 per cent of people would act to reduce their risk if they were aware of it.

"Lifestyle changes, including healthy eating and getting more physical activity, can significantly reduce someone's risk.

"People with type 2 diabetes can reduce their risk of heart disease by losing some weight, being physically active, quitting smoking, managing high blood pressure and taking medication as prescribed.

"We are asking people to *Take Diabetes 2 Heart* and have a serious conversation with their GP about what they can do to reduce their risk."

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# MEDIA RELEASE



Professor Johnson said that while there had been a reduction in deaths from cardiovascular disease in the general population, this improvement had not been seen in people with type 2 diabetes who were still at a much higher risk of heart attacks or sudden cardiac death.

“People with type 2 diabetes are twice as likely to die from cardiovascular disease as people without diabetes and they are likely to die much earlier,” he said.

“This risk is even higher in women, and people who develop type 2 diabetes under the age of 40, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.”

People with type 2 diabetes are encouraged to visit the *Take Diabetes 2 Heart* website and access a range of information resources about the campaign and heart health.

The campaign features real life stories of people with type 2 diabetes and the people who love them.

- Chris and Bev have been married for more than four decades. When Chris had a heart attack a couple of years ago, it threatened their long-held plans for retirement.
- Yvonne and Fay have been friends for about seven years. They dance together, they holiday together and they care for each other. Fay reveals why she is concerned for Yvonne’s heart.

Visit the Take Diabetes 2 Heart website at [www.takediabetes2heart.com.au](http://www.takediabetes2heart.com.au)

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**See how your community stacks up.** The table below provides an Australia-wide analysis on prevalence of type diabetes and heart disease and reveals the number of people expected to die from heart disease.

State	Area	People with type 2 diabetes	Estimated number that will die from heart disease or stroke
ACT	Australian Capital Territory	14331	9172
NSW	Central and Eastern Sydney	53322	34126
NSW	Hunter New England and Central Coast	63646	40733
NSW	Murrumbidgee	13289	8505
NSW	Nepean Blue Mountains	18561	11879
NSW	North Coast	24613	15752
NSW	Northern Sydney	26348	16863
NSW	South Eastern NSW	33031	21140
NSW	South Western Sydney	55936	35799
NSW	Western NSW	17498	11199
NSW	Western Sydney	50918	32588
NT	Northern Territory	13552	8673
QLD	Brisbane North	35663	22824
QLD	Brisbane South	45996	29437
QLD	Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast	41163	26344
QLD	Darling Downs and West Moreton	28537	18264
QLD	Gold Coast	20369	13036
QLD	Northern Queensland	33060	21158
QLD	Western Queensland	3751	2401
SA	Adelaide	63458	40613
SA	Country SA	30928	19794
TAS	Tasmania	24675	15792
VIC	Eastern Melbourne	62538	40024
VIC	Gippsland	17007	10884
VIC	Murray	32704	20931
VIC	North Western Melbourne	76907	49220
VIC	South Eastern Melbourne	63212	40456
VIC	Western Victoria	32429	20755
WA	Country WA	25591	16378
WA	Perth North	40660	26022
WA	Perth South	43981	28148
<b>Total</b>		<b>1107674</b>	<b>708911</b>

# Based on National Diabetes Services Scheme registrations.

\* Shaw, J., Thomas, M. and Magliano, D. (2018). *Dark Heart of Type 2 Diabetes*. Melbourne: Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute.

\*\* Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017. Deaths among people with diabetes in Australia, 2009–2014. Cat. no. CVD 79. Canberra: AIHW.

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