



## Diabetes Australia Walk to Work Day

**14 November 2014**



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### **85% of Australians are not aware of physical activity recommendations**

#### **1 in 4 Australians not doing any moderate or vigorous activity in the past week**

To launch the *Diabetes Australia Walk to Work* campaign and *World Diabetes Day*, we released results today from a new Australian survey about physical activity and the latest global and national diabetes figures.

The AMR survey commissioned by Diabetes Australia and the Pedestrian Council shows:

- 1 in 4 adults aged under 65 report no moderate or vigorous activity in the past week
- 33% report only moderate intensity activity in the past week
- 85% are not aware of the recommendations of Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines.

Diabetes Australia also revealed new global estimates for diabetes showing that 387 million people are affected and more than 4.9 million deaths are caused by diabetes around the world. In Australia almost 100,000 people have been diagnosed with diabetes in the past year alone.

The Federal Minister for Health Peter Dutton was joined by Minister for Communications Malcolm Turnbull in a walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge to officially launch the Diabetes Australia Walk to Work campaign and launch a new mobile resource on diabetes.

Diabetes Australia CEO Professor Greg Johnson said: "Type 2 diabetes is one of the biggest threats to the health and productivity of all Australians. Being inactive is an independent risk factor for type 2 diabetes – independent of what you eat. Even if you have a healthy diet, being inactive increases your risk of type 2 diabetes."

"Walking and other forms of physical activity, combined with healthy eating and maintaining a healthy weight is 'just what the doctor ordered' for both the prevention and treatment of type 2 diabetes," Prof Johnson said. "Making a few simple changes in your life can make a big difference. For the 1 in 4 people who have done no moderate or vigorous exercise - a short brisk walk is a great way to start."

Communications Minister Turnbull launched Diabetes Australia's new smartphone App which places the latest diabetes information and technology in the palm of people's hands.

"Just about everyone has a smart phone and now everyone can have access to the latest information and services 24/7 to be able to find out how to reduce your risk of getting type 2 diabetes, and how to better manage your diabetes if you are diagnosed," Minister Turnbull said today. The smart phone app has been developed through a partnership with eftpos Australia and Minister Turnbull acknowledged Managing Director, Bruce Mansfield who joined the Walk to Work.

Mr Dutton said World Diabetes Day is an occasion to reflect on the national and global impact of diabetes, which has been called the epidemic of the 21st century. "We know diabetes is not just a health issue and a threat to our health system and spiraling costs - it is an economic and productivity challenge."

"Diabetes Australia has today released a new report commissioned from Deloitte Access Economics which places the productivity impact of diabetes in Australia at \$5.6 billion per year." Mr Dutton said



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Pedestrian Council Chairman Harold Scruby said Walk to Work was in its 17<sup>th</sup> year and walking was one of the easiest forms of exercise to build into your life. "People who walk before, during or after work are generally healthier, more productive and creative and are less likely to be absent or take sick leave."

Fifty-one-year-old worker with type 2 diabetes Yvonne Appleby tries to fit in walking around her busy schedule, "It can be hard when I have an early start so I look at where I can build walking into my day. I walk every day at lunch time, and I make sure that if I go to the shops I walk rather than drive. Working at a desk all day it's so important to make sure I get active and have people around me who will encourage me."

To emphasise the magnitude of diabetes in 2006, the United Nations General Assembly designated an official day World Diabetes Day on 14 November. The latest figures on the spiraling prevalence and impact of diabetes include the following statistics:

Around the world:

- Around 387 million people have diabetes;
- Around 4.9 million deaths were caused by diabetes in the past year;
- By 2035 an estimated 600 million people will have with diabetes;
- Global health expenditure to treat and manage diabetes was around \$US 612 billion in 2014;

In Australia:

- 100,000 people have been diagnosed with diabetes in the past year alone - enough people to fill our biggest sports arena the MCG;
- Approximately 1.7 million people have diabetes;
- Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness and vision impairment in working age adults in Australia;
- Diabetes is a leading cause of kidney failure requiring dialysis;
- Over 2 million Australians have prediabetes and are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes in the next 5 to 10 years;
- Diabetes is more than a health issue, it is an economic and societal issue with the productivity impact of diabetes in Australia estimated at \$5.6 billion this year. This concurs with earlier estimates of the total costs to the nation of \$14.6 billion when we add in health system and other costs;
- Around 1 in every 4 hospital beds is occupied by someone with diabetes or a diabetes related complication.

For more information [www.diabetesaustralia.com.au](http://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au)

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**Ends**



*It took humans a million years to learn how to walk ...  
And one generation to forget.  
So, let's get walking again.*