

For immediate release

Type 2 diabetes epidemic predictor wins prestigious award

The prestigious Diabetes Australia – Vic's Outstanding Achievement in Diabetes Award will be presented to Professor Paul Zimmet AO Director Emeritus at the Diabetes Australia – Vic 2014 Annual General Meeting tonight.

Over time, DA–Vic has honoured many eminent people in the diabetes field for their contributions to improving the lives of people with diabetes.

Prof Zimmet is influential both internationally and nationally in the field of diabetes. Last year as part of Australia's largest ever health conference, Paul oversaw the World Diabetes Congress' scientific program. More than 10,000 delegates from around the world attended this important diabetes meeting.

Late last year, Prof Zimmet was appointed Co-Chair of the Federal Government's National Diabetes Strategy Advisory Committee to tackle the growing diabetes epidemic, alongside Diabetes Australia President The Hon Judi Moylan.

He also is an Honorary President of the International Diabetes Federation and is Head of the World Health Organisation's Collaborating Centre for the Epidemiology of Diabetes Mellitus.

In Australia, Prof Zimmet led the first-ever national diabetes and obesity study in 2000, the Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle Study (AUSDIAB). This study, and the follow-up study in 2012, are still the benchmark diabetes studies in Australia. They serve as litmus test for new cases of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and kidney disease, examining the factors that increase risk factors, such as family history, ethnicity and lifestyle.

Publishing over 800 papers in peer-reviewed journals, Prof Zimmet has passionately advocated for more to be done to deal with the tsunami of the type 2 diabetes epidemic. He has been listed recently in the Thomson Reuters 'World's-most-influential-scientific-minds-2014' as only one of only seven Australians among the 400 scientists in the 'Clinical Medicine' category.

DA–Vic CEO Craig Bennett said that he is delighted that DA–Vic has chosen to honour Prof Zimmet in this way. "Professor Zimmet is a most appropriate recipient of the DA–Vic Outstanding Achievements in Diabetes Award. He has made an immense contribution to our understanding of a challenging condition."

Prof Zimmet said, "I have received many international awards, but it is great to receive acknowledgment locally."

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

More information on Prof Zimmet

Prof Paul Zimmet is Director Emeritus, Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute, Adjunct Professor, Monash and Pittsburgh Universities and an Honorary President of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF).

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Prof Zimmet's many international and national awards include the Kelly West and Harold Rifkin Medals (American Diabetes Association), the IDF Lilly Award, the Banting Award (Diabetes UK), the Kellion Award (Australia) and the Global Novartis Award for long-standing contributions in the field of diabetes that have had a major impact. In 2010, he received the Grand Hamdan International Prize for Medical Sciences. In 2013, he was made a Member of the Spanish Royal National Academy of Medicine and was awarded the Peter Wills Medal from Research Australia. This award recognises an Australian who has made an outstanding contribution to building Australia's international reputation in the area of health and medical research.

Prof Zimmet holds Honorary Doctorates from the Complutense University (Spain), Monash University (Melbourne) and Tel Aviv University (Israel). He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his distinguished services to medicine, nutrition, and the biotechnology industry.

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