

# MOBILISING PUBLIC SUPPORT: BUILDING DIABETES AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT



# PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Our Western Sydney Diabetes initiative aims to beat type 2 diabetes in the region. The pillars of this initiative are:

- **Building an Alliance and Testing the Strategy:** We have built an alliance of more than 70 partners across government, business and the community to better understand the problem, engage with decision makers to develop and implement solutions that will tackle the epidemic of diabetes in our region.
- **Primary Prevention:** Securing investment for primary prevention programs and interventions to reduce the development of type 2 diabetes in the community and limit the progression of people at 'high risk' or with pre-diabetes to a formal diagnosis of type 2 diabetes.
- **Secondary Prevention and Management:** Securing investment for secondary prevention and management programs and interventions to slow or stop the development of diabetes complications.
- **Data for Decision Making:** We are building a surveillance and monitoring system that will leverage data and intelligence to continuously evaluate the problems and impacts.
- **Mobilising Public Support:** Our community awareness campaign will inform the community on the risks of diabetes and engage them to do something about it.

This document sets out our 'Mobilising public support' pillar. Details of the other pillars are set out in the respective supplementary documents.

In western Sydney the general public are largely unaware of the true threat that diabetes poses for them. Unless we are able to drive a campaign to build awareness about diabetes and explain the life changes that many need to take, we will fail to achieve the progress that is required to reduce the cost of this problem on families and communities.

In this document we therefore set out:

- Our approach to developing and delivering a community awareness campaign
- A communications implementation plan for the Western Sydney Diabetes initiative
- The case for investing in our communications program.

**Western Sydney Diabetes**

**TAKING THE HEAT OUT OF OUR DIABETES HOTSPOT**

**BUILDING AN ALLIANCE AND TESTING THE STRATEGY**

- ➔ **INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY: PRIMARY PREVENTION**
- ➔ **INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY: SECONDARY PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT**
- ➔ **DATA FOR DECISION MAKING: BUILDING A SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE**
- ➔ **MOBILISING PUBLIC SUPPORT: BUILDING DIABETES AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT**



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# MOBILISING PUBLIC SUPPORT: BUILDING DIABETES AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

## Western Sydney Diabetes: Communications Action Plan

### Introduction

Diabetes remains one of the most significant health challenges for western Sydney residents. The region is now a diabetes hotspot with rates of diabetes more than double that of Sydney's eastern and northern suburbs. Unless we take action, the problems will continue to worsen.

Western Sydney is one of the fastest growing populations in Australia but the social determinants of health that promote healthy eating, active living and social inclusion are not working favourably to prevent diabetes and its progression in western Sydney.

Now more than 60% of the western Sydney population is overweight and at risk of developing type 2 diabetes. It is estimated that 15% of residents (129,000 people) have diabetes. In addition, 35% of the local population (301,000 people) are at 'high risk' of type 2 diabetes with pre-diabetes or high blood glucose.

Being overweight has become the norm and the majority of patients seeking treatment for serious illness in our hospitals either have diabetes or pre-diabetes. More than a third of people with diabetes do not know they have it. Even worse is a worrying lack of awareness about how serious the threat of diabetes is and how it will lead to serious health complications if left undiagnosed or unmanaged.

If this 'hotspot' is not addressed, within a decade it will cause a very substantial economic and societal burden on the state's healthcare system.

But there is much that we can do to turn these trends around and together, we can beat diabetes.

This requires us to influence behavioural change in the people of western Sydney to achieve weight loss and the adoption of healthy behaviours and lifestyle choices. We need to change the food, nutrition and active living norms in western Sydney.

### Building Awareness Requires a Strategy

The communication program, as part of the Western Sydney Diabetes (WSD) initiative will focus on mobilising the key audiences in western Sydney – children and young people, families, elderly, at-risk populations, Aboriginal community and the CALD community. The campaigns will be tailored with individual programs implemented to engage the

ethnic diversity of the region across Chinese, Lebanese, Vietnamese, Indian, Aboriginal, Islander and Caucasian groups.

The strategy will focus on mobilising public awareness, improving health literacy, early intervention and providing clear pathways for minimising risk, diagnosis, screening and support. The campaigns will engage the broader community, communicating the severity of the diabetes hotspot in the region, with an emphasis on activating people with pre-diabetes and diabetes.

The communications strategy will be aimed at influencing behavioural change at a grass roots level that will include strategies and messaging that can be replicated in other regions. The program will be rolled out over a seven to ten year timeframe to achieve its goal of 'Beating Diabetes Together'.

### Community Engagement

The communications action plan will focus on six key areas:

#### 1. Linking Health to Sport

In alignment with the Health Heroes program, forming partnerships with the dynamic and high profile sports bodies in the community and arming them with the right messages to share about diabetes with their fans and members. Target organisations include:

- Soccer – Western Sydney Wanderers
- AFL – Greater Western Sydney Giants
- Rugby League – Parramatta Eels, Penrith Panthers
- Netball – Greater Western Sydney Giants

#### 2. Strengthening Program Partner Activations

- Encouraging engagement through partners – accessing partner networks
- Consolidate existing partnerships
- Expand the partner network
- Develop resources to activate and motivate engagement with the Western Sydney Diabetes Partners
- Leverage Partner communications resources to amplify the messaging
- Existing Partners include: Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD), Western Sydney Primary Health Network (WSPHN), Diabetes NSW & ACT, NSW Premier's Department and Cabinet (DPC) and PwC. NSW Departments, Greater Sydney Commission, WSROC, Councils, the private sector, pharmaceutical industry,

**WESTERN SYDNEY**

# Professor's heavy diabetes warning

**Tony Bosworth**

IT'S an epidemic of tsunami proportions sweeping western Sydney and if left unchecked will be one of the country's biggest and most costly health threats, leading to many thousands of deaths and increasing limb amputations.

Today, 420,000 people in NSW suffer from lifestyle-related type 2 diabetes, with as many as 120,000 people unwittingly living with the disease and many more expected to be diagnosed in the next decade if lifestyles are not radically changed.

It is a problem growing in direct proportion to people's ever-expanding waistlines, warn the experts, and only a major change in lifestyle will make a difference.

In Blacktown, Parramatta and Mt Druitt there are two to three times the number of diabetes sufferers than in the rest of the country and western Sydney is set to have the dubious honour of diabetes capital of Australia

**Steps to take**

- » 10,000 steps a day - enable the app on your smartphone to track how far you walk
- » Increase intake of fresh fruit and vegetables
- » Cut back on junk food
- » Cut down on food portions - most people should eat half as much as they do
- » If overweight, lose at least 2kg; if you have diabetes and are overweight lose at least 4kg

within a decade if people do not slim down.

Shockingly, living in western Sydney means you are twice as likely to have T2 than if you live on Sydney's expensive north shore or northern beaches suburbs.

It's perhaps not too surprising - people in the west do half the amount of exercise as their northern Sydney cousins.

Not only that, even children are getting diabetes now, setting them up for a future of poor health and constant lifelong medication."

Western Sydney Diabetes senior endocrinologist Professor Glen Maberly said the disease was an epidemic in Australia and now the leading burden of disease.

"It's being driven by, over the last 20 years in adults, a weight gain of 4kg," he said.

"So, in essence we can back out of this if we most of us lose on average 4kg.

"We see it in kids now. It's not that common but it is quite common in the 20s, so it's not only getting more severe, it's getting more common and coming on earlier."

Prof Maberly said the drivers of diabetes were the easy access to unhealthy food and a reduction in physical activity. "We tend to be a little bit car-bound and time-poor and also it is the lower your income the greater chance you have of getting diabetes. That's got to do with choice of food," he said.



**Emergency**

**Red alert: Professor Glen Maberly.**

food companies, the health and fitness industry, non-government organisations, pathology companies, IT industry, Universities, education institutions, hospital specialists, general practices, allied health and pharmacy

### 3. Growing Community Hub Engagement by Targeting 'Pods of People' in the Western Sydney Community

- Starting at the grassroots level with school based programs including SALSA
- Community Club partnerships – RSL, sporting clubs, Rotary, Lions
- Ethnic group specific congregations – church, community centres
- Childcare and mother's group engagement

### 4. Driving Local, Regional, State and National Media Activation

- Utilising media promotional opportunities in alignment with the existing media relationships of the WSLHD Communications team who have ready access to local media
- Working with local government – tapping into key communication channels through Council databases, Council events
- Target ethnic publications

- Target media personalities as exemplified by recent Alan Jones/WSLHD CEO Danny O'Connor interview
- Develop human resources to create content and promote media relationships
- Leveraging profile and partnerships with sporting bodies

### 5. Amplifying the Voice for Champions of the Program

- Personalising the diabetes story. When diabetes bumps up to people they reform their lifestyle behaviours for themselves and their families. These living testimonials become evangelists fighting for their lives. The program will invite these ambassadors to share their journey to better health, emphasise the support and resources available and strengthen the voice for change in the community
- Recognised sporting champions as ambassadors sharing messages with the community
- Activate media personalities affected by diabetes with a voice for change

### 6. Creating a Social and Digital Hub for Community Engagement

- Develop a digital hub for supporting people in the community influenced by diabetes or interested in making a change to their health and wellbeing
- Develop a social platform for sharing useful information, as a forum for discussion and a catalyst for motivating people in the community to take action

## Messaging That Matters

We need the significant problem of diabetes, as well as the preventable solutions, to cut through so that people change behaviours.

Our narrative will establish the link between unhealthy lifestyle choices and diabetes, and the significant health risks that diabetes presents. The messaging will be of the necessary integrity to be scalable.

The messaging will be multi-disciplinary – playing to the current and future needs of the community. It will:

- Provide a clear understanding of the severity of the diabetes hotspot in western Sydney
- Provide a pathway to influence behaviour change at a community level



# MOBILISING PUBLIC SUPPORT: BUILDING DIABETES AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

**Latest data reveals rates of deadly disease in West, far worse than thought**

## Far more diabetes

NEW data has heightened fears that diabetes rates may be far worse in Sydney's West than previously indicated.

Testing of 26,000 people by Blacktown Hospital to the end of May, found 17 per cent had diabetes and 28 per cent were identified as high risk of contracting the disease.

Figures are likely to swell significantly when targeted testing begins later this year at Westmead Hospital with data from the Australian Diabetes map showing that rates of diabetes in Auburn, Regents Park and Merrylands and Guildford, were already nearly two per cent above the national average of 5.1 per cent.

Western Sydney Diabetes director Professor Glen Maberly to say the results should recast thinking about diabetes.

"If data emerging from this targeted testing, holds consistent across the community, diabetes is a far bigger problem than anybody has anticipated," Prof Maberly said.

"Anybody who visits their GP should ask that they are screened for diabetes as early detection can help prevent onset of the disease."

According to Diabetes NSW and ACT, there are 407,725 people living with diabetes in NSW, and diagnoses are also up 13 per cent compared to last year and CEO Sturt Eastwood says that figure will continue to rise without a bigger focus on early detection and prevention.

"Strong evidence shows that if diabetes is detected early, and treatment is optimal, then most of the complications can be prevented – potentially saving lives and billions in healthcare costs," he said.

### Half a million with undiagnosed disease

AN estimated half a million Australians are living with undiagnosed type 2 diabetes and health authorities are urging people to look for the early signs of the disease by recognising the four 'T's':

- Are you going to the toilet a lot?
- Are you unable to quench your

thirst?

- Are you feeling tired all the time?
- Are you getting thinner despite eating and drinking more? (type 1 only).

For more information, visit [diabetesnsw.com.au/ausd-risk-tool](http://diabetesnsw.com.au/ausd-risk-tool).



Diabetes patient Fatima Yasir with Lindyan Song at the Diabetes Clinic in the Auburn Community Health Centre.

## Experts fear the worst

BY HARRISON VESEY

BLACKTOWN is at the heart of one of the greatest health epidemics of the 21st century, with the latest figures showing diabetes rates are worse than previously thought.

In less than a year of groundbreaking targeted testing at Blacktown Hospital, almost 12,000 people have been identified as having type 2 diabetes or being at high risk of diabetes.

Of the 26,000 people tested as part of routine blood checks in the hospital's emergency department, 17 per cent were diabetic and 28 per cent were pre-diabetic, meaning they could soon develop the disease.

Western Sydney Diabetes director, Professor Glen Maberly, said the rate of diabetes in the adult population of western Sydney could be as high as one in ten.

"If data emerging from this targeted testing, holds consistent across the community, diabetes is a far bigger problem than anybody has anticipated," he said.

"Previous estimations have been around six per cent. We don't know for sure, we're trying to find out, but it seems like it's a bigger problem."

Western Sydney Diabetes has worked with 180 doctors at 40 practices in the past year to improve the management of diabetes. Professor Maberly has urged doctors and residents to take advantage of the government-subsidised blood test.

"If you're aged over-20, you're overweight and you live in western Sydney, it would be worthwhile going to the GP and asking to have a diabetes test," he said.

One in five people admitted to Blacktown Hospital had diabetes, a figure that shoots up to 42 per cent in the cardiology ward.

Professor Maberly said the average person with diabetes costs the health system \$10,000 per year, while every dollar invested in prevention would return at least \$3-\$4 in savings. The average pre-diabetic patient can reduce their risk of developing diabetes by 30 per cent if they lose just two kilograms.

The expert said he is in favour of a sugar tax and other "big levers" the federal government could pull, but said it must be accompanied by serious action from stakeholders including local and state government, schools, sport clubs and the food sector.



LEADERS: Premier Gladys Berejiklian presents the 2017 Penruhvy Prize to Danny O'Connor and Christopher Brown for the Western Sydney Diabetes Initiative.

- Change the food, nutrition and active living 'norms' in western Sydney
- Direct people to GPs for testing and support
- Promote and unify the partners and the programs available to assist people in the community at risk or affected by diabetes
- Influence a ground swell for healthier lifestyle choices
- Be bold and content rich, emphasising the importance of making change whilst giving voice to its champions
- Act as a catalyst for promoting at risk community members to approach GPs for help, driving GPs to be more engaged with the initiatives of the WS Diabetes program including case conferencing

### Channels of Communication

Our campaign will rely on a many different, but coordinated, platforms to carry our messages and influence change. These will include:

- Face-to-face events – local and targeted in different venues

- Media – print, radio and TV
- Digital online media
- Social media
- Websites
- Publications including Ethnic Media
- Advertising:
  - Social Media Advertising
  - In GP practices
  - In community hubs

## Communications Implementation Plan

Change doesn't happen by accident. It requires consistent, sustained engagement, planning, resources, content and management.

To achieve lasting sustainable behavioural change that reverses the diabetes tide in western Sydney,

there are several key resources and initiatives required to be implemented:

- Each initiative to have identified messaging, timeframes, channels of communications, and organisation/person for delivery of activity
- In house staff members on the ground to:
  - Propel the messaging to community groups and ethnic sectors
  - Enrol, propagate and manage partner resources and relationships
  - Manage advertising and media resources
  - Develop relationships with sporting bodies
  - Create, manage and distribute content
  - Onboard and manage champions and ambassadors of the program
  - Curate consistent appropriate content for social and digital channels
  - Capture real life stories as they happen
  - Research and collate data to support the messaging and media channels
  - Inform, enrol and motivate GPs to support the program
  - Enrol new partners
- External communications support to:
  - Manage the overall communications strategy
  - Develop advertising/messaging campaigns
  - Create messaging, collateral, reports, brochures & posters
  - Shoot video media
  - Develop social media channels
  - Create website – digital hub
  - Implement tools to support community engagement and information sharing
- Develop plans that focus on key initiatives for engaging people to influence change across:
  - Primary prevention – initiatives to have identified messaging targeting each specific group – stakeholders, the community, wider public
  - Secondary prevention – initiatives to have identified messaging targeting each specific group – stakeholders, the community, wider public
  - Sector messaging for prevention initiatives – Local government, State government, Food sector, Fitness Sector, Education
  - Screening and coaching
  - Community Enhancement – separate plans for WSD app, case conferencing, HRFS
  - Hospital Enhancement – separate plans for Diabetes Detection Management Strategy (DDMS), testing at Westmead, Continuous Glucose Management (CGM)

## Investing in Resources That Deliver Results – Beating Diabetes Together

The challenge of achieving our communication goals in western Sydney relies on our ability to unify our resources, our partners and our consultants to focus on beating diabetes together. It hinges on creating the right messaging to engage our target community audiences on a personal level and with a clear, seamless pathway for them to take the appropriate action. The campaign must influence sustainable behaviour change on its way to achieving real results on scale.

Our messaging will be highly targeted directing the right people to highly accessible resources to support this change.

Your investment will ensure we:

- Secure four full time communications specialists to our team to manage and maximise our community engagement
- Engage the right consultants to implement the messaging, the resources and the assets we need to connect
- Marshall the partnership group to leverage their support to best effect
- Enrol the right champions for influencing change
- Manage the content we use to stay connected with the community
- Create a lasting footprint on the community to reverse the diabetes hotspot in western Sydney
- Develop a communications blueprint for influencing other communities in other regions
- Demonstrate that even in one of the most high risk population centres in Australia, we have the capacity to influence positive health and economic reform for generations to come

We invite your participation, influence and financial support. Together we can beat diabetes in western Sydney and improve community health outcomes and reduce public health costs.



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