



Media Release

Wednesday, 13 July 2011

Diabetes Tasmania Appoints Former Senator Guy Barnett to be Inaugural Ambassador

National Diabetes Week 2011 (July 10-16)

In recognition of his lifelong commitment to diabetes, former Tasmanian Senator Guy Barnett has been appointed the Inaugural Ambassador for Diabetes Australia and Diabetes Tasmania.

Mr Barnett, who has type 1 diabetes, has been a well-known passionate advocate for people with diabetes, both during and prior to his parliamentary career over the past decade.

Diabetes Tasmania CEO Caroline Wells said the appointment was well-deserved recognition of Mr Barnett's steadfast dedication and passion to representing the views of those with diabetes.

"Mr Barnett's long-standing involvement has included a role as President of Diabetes Tasmania, a former Board member of Diabetes Australia and Foundation and Executive Member of the Parliamentary Diabetes support Group.

"Importantly, he was also a co-founder of the Tasmanian Polliepedal, which has over the past six years raised more than \$240,000 to assist Tasmanians with diabetes," Ms Wells said.

"As part of his new role, Mr Barnett will work with Diabetes Tasmania to foster community relationships as well as lobby government and help raise the profile of diabetes during World Diabetes Day and National Diabetes Week.

"It is hoped that his new role inspires trust and integrity in the existing supporters of the organisation and also strengthens and develops Diabetes Tasmania's identity in the community.

"We congratulate Mr Barnett on his dedication to diabetes over the past decade and we look forward to working more with him in the future to educate the community on the seriousness of the disease."

Around seven Tasmanians develop diabetes every day and there are currently more than 20,000 people in the State diagnosed with type 2 diabetes alone. For every person diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, another remains undetected.

Diabetes is the fastest growing chronic illness in Australia and internationally. Around 1.7 million Australians have diabetes, and up to half of them are unaware of their condition. Diabetes is a serious condition with complications including blindness, kidney disease, limb amputation, heart disease and stroke.

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