

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Health Psychologists can assist in beating diabetes**

The Australian Government has recently pledged up to \$200 Million to support the prevention and management of diabetes in the Australian population, recognising the serious health cost of this often lifestyle induced disease.

"Type 2 Diabetes is usually caused by unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as poor diet or lack of exercise. Preventing and managing diabetes is not just about having information," said Australian Psychological Society President, Amanda Gordon. "Most people know what they are meant to change, but the problem is knowing how to make and maintain that change."

"Psychology includes the study of behaviour change: it is more than just mental health. Specialist Psychologists, such as Health Psychologists, are trained in strategies for long-term health changes and can help people with diabetes: increase their level of exercise; change unhealthy eating patterns, such as eating too much sugar; improve attendance to GPs for checks of blood sugar levels, and medication reviews; support people to seek treatment for feet and eye health issues; and manage the negative mood associated with living with diabetes," said Gordon.

Health Psychologists work side by side with other medically trained health professionals, such as GPs, dieticians, diabetes educators, podiatrists and exercise specialists to affect outcomes in the prevention and management of diabetes.

The Australian Psychological Society encourages the inclusion of Health Psychologists in all chronic disease management teams of health professionals. "The addition of a Health Psychologist in every team would increase the effectiveness of the team's effort to reduce the physical, social and financial burden of chronic disease for the individual and the community," said Gordon.

"Following the announcement by COAG of the funding allocated, it is essential that Health Psychologists are included in any funding initiative."

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