



**The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**  
Minister for Health

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

13 July 2018

### **New eye screening program to protect people with diabetes**

The Turnbull Government will provide funding for a new eye health screening program for Australians with diabetes, helping preserve the sight of thousands of people.

During National Diabetes Week I am pleased to announce that Diabetes Australia will receive \$1 million to develop the Preserve Sight program, which will include a national electronic eye health record.

The national electronic eye health record can be used by patients' nominated health providers, such as optometrists, ophthalmologists, GPs and diabetes health care professionals, to track eye health.

The program will also establish an alert system to encourage eye checks for people registered on the National Diabetes Services Scheme.

Over the next five years the program will alert an estimated 630,000 Australians with diabetes, who are currently missing out on recommended eye checks.

Everyone with diabetes is at risk of developing diabetic retinopathy, where poor glucose control affects the tiny blood vessels inside the retina at the back of the eye.

Diabetic retinopathy can seriously affect vision and, in some cases, even cause blindness.

There are around 100,000 people with vision threatening diabetic retinopathy and the number of people will double by 2030.

This program will provide timely identification and intervention to protect the sight of Australians with diabetes and prevent their vision loss.

Diabetes Australia will partner with Vision 2020 Australia, Oculo and many organisations in the eye health and diabetes sector to deliver this important initiative.

The Government contribution of \$1 million will be matched by Specsavers Australia.

About 1.7 million Australians have diabetes, with around 280 developing the disease each day.

Authorised by Greg Hunt MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Somerville, Victoria.

This includes all types of diagnosed diabetes including the 1.2 million known and registered as well as up to an estimated 500,000 silent, undiagnosed type 2 diabetes.

The Turnbull Government is committed to promoting awareness and early detection of Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

In the May Budget, the Government provided \$125 million through the Medical Research Future Fund for research funding focused on diabetes and heart disease. The fund also aims to fast-track patients' access to medical research.

A further \$600,000 was allocated in the Budget to increase awareness of the risks of type 2 diabetes.

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