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For immediate release

### **Medical ID vital for people with diabetes in an emergency**

During National Diabetes Week (July 11-17), the Australia Medic Alert Foundation reminds all Australians that quick action is vital in treating the potential complications of diabetes in an emergency.

Diabetes is on the march in Australia with over 800,000 people currently diagnosed with the disease and an estimated 275 people diagnosed each day, according to Diabetes Australia.

A report published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Australia's Health 2010*, also indicates that the rate of new cases of Type 1 diabetes among children under 15 years of age increased by 30 per cent between 2000 and 2007 and many people with Type 2 diabetes remain undiagnosed.

Aside from the risk of hypo and hyperglycaemia, people with diabetes can develop chronic kidney disease, nerve damage, loss of vision and can also be at higher risk of coronary heart disease and stroke.

According to the Foundation's chief executive, Ms Sandra Turner, people with diabetes may be unable to communicate their special needs in a medical emergency due to confusion or unconsciousness related to their diabetes.

"Emergency and medical personnel have only moments to determine a patient's specific needs and to begin potentially lifesaving care in a diabetes emergency," Ms Turner said.

An engraved MedicAlert® emblem worn around the neck or on the wrist as part of a diabetes management plan can be instantly recognised by emergency personnel and healthcare professionals, providing critical information such as key medical conditions and current medications.

As part of the MedicAlert® system, emergency responders can call the Foundation's 24/7 emergency hotline number engraved on the back of the emblem to access further information about the patient. This may include other medical conditions, emergency contact details, allergies and more.

Diabetes Australia advises people living with diabetes to wear medical identification to ensure that others know they are in need of urgent medical help particularly in the event of hypoglycaemia (when blood glucose levels fall too low) which can leave them unconscious, drowsy or unable to swallow.

"Wearing a MedicAlert® emblem as part of Foundation membership gives people living with diabetes the freedom to live their lives to the fullest without worrying about sharing medical information in a medical emergency. This helps to ensure they receive faster, safer treatment and avoid harmful or fatal reactions," Ms Turner said.

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#### **For more information or comment, please contact:**

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**Australia Medic Alert Foundation** is a non-profit organisation serving Australians since 1971 by providing a 24/7 personal medical emergency information and identification system. The authentic, individually engraved MedicAlert® emblem is instantly recognised by medical personnel in many countries and provides immediate access to important medical information that can be vital in an emergency.

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#### **Australia Medic Alert Foundation**

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