



15 June 2008

The Hon Nicola Roxon MP
Minister for Health and Ageing
Commonwealth of Australia
MG 50
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Roxon,

Re: Introducing the Type 1 Diabetes Opinion Leaders Group

Eight health professional bodies, six non-government organisations and three voluntary consumer groups are represented on the newly-formed Type 1 Diabetes Opinion Leaders Group, alongside 14 people with Type 1 Diabetes and four parents of children with diabetes.

The Type 1 Diabetes Network, a consumer-led health promotion charity, has convened the group to develop **A Statement of Issues affecting Australians with Type 1 Diabetes**, and stimulate discussion about solutions. Together with expert advice from the opinion leaders, public submissions have been sought, with 67 received to date, from health professionals and people affected by Type 1 Diabetes.

Health outcomes for people with Type 1 Diabetes remain poor:

- Death rate of girls with diabetes aged 10-17 is 5 times greater than non-diabetic peers;
- Eating disorders are 8 times as common amongst pre-teens;
- Rates of still-births for women with Type 1 diabetes are almost twice that of the general population;
- Clinical targets (HbA1c) are achieved by less than 20% of Australians with Type 1 diabetes;
- Over 40% of people with Type 1 diabetes develop severe kidney disease by the age of 50; and
- 80% develop retinopathy (vision-threatening eye disease) after 15 years of Type 1 diabetes.

The Type 1 Diabetes Opinion Leaders Group is hoped to facilitate ongoing networking and information sharing, as well as greater collaboration between users and providers of healthcare to improve outcomes for the 110,000 Australians of all ages who live with Type 1 Diabetes.

We enclose a background paper: *Type 1 Diabetes in Australia, 2008*, and a listing of the confirmed members of the Type 1 Diabetes Opinion Leaders Group.

The Statement of Issues affecting Australians with Type 1 Diabetes will be launched at the joint diabetes health professionals' conferences (ADEA/ADS) in Melbourne on 29 August 2008. We would welcome your contribution to this work, and will be in touch again to invite you to the launch event.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Gilbert
Founder & President