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From the office of Mr Guy Barnett*,
Ambassador for Diabetes Australia and Diabetes Tasmania

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WORLD DIABETES DAY 14 November 2011

"Monday 14 November 2011 marks World Diabetes Day," said Guy Barnett, inaugural Ambassador for Diabetes Australia and Diabetes Tasmania.

"346 million people worldwide have diabetes and by 2030 nearly half a billion people will have diabetes.

"1.7 million Australians have diabetes. It is a progressive and unrelenting disease which can reduce life expectancy and quality of life. Nearly half the people with type 2 diabetes don't know they have it. Sadly this leads to serious health complications. An estimated 275 Australians develop type 2 diabetes every day and the number of Australians diagnosed with diabetes is expected to reach 3.5 million by 2033," Mr Barnett said.

To draw attention to this health crisis, iconic buildings across the world including many Australian buildings will be lit in blue. The Launceston Town Hall and the Anglican Holy Trinity Church Launceston will be bathed in blue light for World Diabetes Day 2011.

"People living with diabetes can also be affected by a range of health complications, including heart and kidney disease, blindness and limb amputations. The health costs are significant and the impact on our economy substantial," Mr Barnett said.

"Unfortunately type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented. However, between a healthy diet and just thirty minutes of physical activity on most days you can drastically reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

"With an estimated two million Australians having pre-diabetes and a real risk of developing type two, we must act now.

"There has been tremendous progress into the understanding of the causes and treatment of type 1 and type 2 diabetes but there is still more work to be done", Mr Barnett said.

For more information on World Diabetes Day visit www.worlddiabetesday.org and www.bigbluetest.org Further information on Diabetes Tasmania can be obtained at www.diabetestas.com.au

For further media information please contact: 0428 622 333

*Guy Barnett, a former Senator was the only Federal Parliamentarian living with type 1 diabetes and was an Executive and Foundation Member of the Parliamentary Diabetes Support Group. During his Senate term, together with Diabetes Tasmania the annual Tasmanian 3-day Pollie Pedal has raised over \$240,000 since its inception in 2006. The 2012 Pollie Pedal is scheduled for February 2012 from St Helens to Hobart.