

Monday 29 June 2020

## **80 reasons to celebrate during National Diabetes Week**

When Anna Moresby was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in 1940, she received the grim prediction that she wouldn't live to see her 30th birthday. But Anna has defied all odds and is now the first Victorian female to reach the amazing milestone of living with diabetes for 80 years.

In this spirit, Diabetes Victoria is launching a new awareness campaign with the theme '80 reasons to celebrate' for National Diabetes Week 2020 (from Sunday 12 to Saturday 18 July), honouring Anna Moresby's remarkable achievement of living with diabetes for 80 years. National Diabetes Week is celebrated each year to raise awareness about all types of diabetes.

"Anna has overcome many obstacles in her long life with diabetes – diagnosed during wartime with food and insulin strictly rationed; when doctors knew little about the condition; and when medical treatments were nowhere near as advanced as they are today," says Diabetes Victoria CEO Craig Bennett. "We can learn a lot from Anna – from her courage, her resilience and her determination."

Almost 100 years ago, type 1 diabetes was, more or less, a death sentence. Half of the people who developed the condition died within two years and more than 90% were dead within five years.<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the introduction of insulin therapy in the 1920s, and numerous advances since then, the long-term outlook for those with type 1 diabetes has dramatically improved over the decades.<sup>2</sup> But even today, there is no cure for type 1 diabetes.

"There have been amazing advancements in diabetes management and technologies, as well as in diabetes education," continues Mr Bennett. "We now know that people can live well with diabetes, and each year we see more and more people receiving a *Kellion Victory Medal* – testimony to the fact that long, healthy and productive lives with diabetes are indeed possible."

With the *Kellion Victory Medal*, Diabetes Victoria honours those who have lived with diabetes for more than 50 years. In 2020, 44 Victorians have qualified for this recognition, combining a staggering 2,445 years of lived experience with diabetes.

"While COVID-19 pandemic restrictions are finally easing in Victoria, it's still not safe for us to celebrate our *Kellion Victory Medal* recipients in the usual way – at an award ceremony during National Diabetes Week. This is why we have decided to dedicate our whole National Diabetes Week campaign to our 80-year recipient Anna and her fellow *Kellion* medallists," Mr Bennett explains.

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<sup>1</sup>Source: Harvard Health Publications.

<sup>2</sup>An Australian study has found that diabetes results in a modest reduction in life expectancy (3.1 years for women and 3.2 years for men) and a substantial reduction in disability-free life expectancy (9.1 years for women, 8.2 years for men) in Australian adults. Source: Huo L et al. (2016). Burden of diabetes in Australia: life expectancy and disability-free life expectancy in adults with diabetes. *Diabetologia*, July 2016, Volume 59, Issue 7, pp1437-1445.

**About 80 reasons to celebrate**

Diabetes Victoria's digital awareness campaign celebrates the milestone achievements of Anna Moresby and all 2020 *Kellion Victory Medal* recipients during National Diabetes Week. Campaign materials will be available on the campaign page: [diabetesvic.org.au/NDW2020](https://diabetesvic.org.au/NDW2020) from Monday 6 July. Via this page, you can listen to our special National Diabetes Week podcast episode with Anna and learn more about each of our 2020 *Kellion* medallists.

**About Anna Moresby**

Anna Moresby grew up in England and was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in 1940 when she was only four years old. "I remember that my father had brought home a tin of toffees, which was a rare treat we all loved. He told me, when I was cured, he would buy me a tin. But I am still waiting," Anna jokes.

Anna's main support from day one was her father. He survived a polio infection, but was left physically handicapped. "I think because of that he understood me more. He always used to say to me: 'You can do everything the same as everyone, you are no different.' And he used to point to his legs and say that people could see that he was disabled, but that I wasn't disabled. So that was good advice," Anna says.

Anna's life changed when she met her first diabetes specialist – who was none other than Dr Robert Daniel 'Robin' Lawrence, one of the three founders of the International Diabetes Federation. "He was the big man in England for diabetes," Anna explains. Through Dr Lawrence, Anna and her family finally received the support and education they had craved. "There was a diabetes wing in the hospital and you felt you were somewhere where people knew what they were doing," Anna says. "My whole life changed then. I was allowed to ride my horse and do all the things I had never been allowed to."

After emigrating to Australia, Anna pursued a career in medical technology, with her first job at the Biochemistry Department at the Alfred Hospital. She married and had two sons, and travelled the world with her late husband, a medical engineer who was very supportive of Anna and her diabetes.

Anna is a big believer in peer support and has been active in peer support groups for many years. She was asked by Gwen Scott, former Diabetes Victoria CEO and the person who established the profession of diabetes nurse educators in Australia, to set up a peer support group in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. It was there Anna met her dear friends Dawn Stanton and Suzanne Warner, both of whom also receive a *Kellion Victory Medal* for their long lives with diabetes this year.

**About *Kellion Victory Medals***

*Kellion Victory Medals* honour the lives of people who have lived with diabetes for many decades – which is an outstanding achievement. Australia's *Kellion Victory Medals* were named in honour of the late Mr Claude Kellion AM, a Sydney businessman who established a foundation to promote diabetes research after his son died, aged 38, from diabetes-related complications.

*Kellion Victory Medals* have been awarded since 1984 in Australia. All Australians who have lived with diabetes for 50 years or more are eligible for a *Kellion Victory Medal*. More information and application forms are available here: [diabetesvic.org.au/kellion](https://diabetesvic.org.au/kellion)



# MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## About diabetes in Victoria

Diabetes is a serious, complex and lifelong health condition which requires careful management and constant attention. In Victoria, there are currently more than 346,000 people living with diabetes and registered with the National Diabetes Services Scheme. Furthermore, Diabetes Victoria estimates that another 125,000 Victorians are living with undiagnosed type 2 diabetes.

If diabetes isn't managed carefully, it can lead to an array of serious health complications; including kidney disease, heart disease, stroke, vision loss and amputations.

We **support, empower** and **campaign for** all Victorians affected by, or at risk of, diabetes.

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