

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Time to get back on track with diabetes

The National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) has launched a new campaign to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with type 2 diabetes to reengage with their diabetes healthcare teams and their diabetes management in 2021.

Diabetes Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Manager Chris Lee said the new campaign, *Back on Track*, was designed to encourage people to reconnect with their diabetes management after the significant disruptions caused by COVID-19.

The campaign is funded through the National Diabetes Services Scheme, an Australian Government initiative administered by Diabetes Australia.

"COVID-19 has been incredibly difficult, and it has had a major impact on the lives of all Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living with type 2 diabetes who are at a much higher risk of developing severe complications from the virus," Mr Lee said.

"In fact, research found that more than a third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people said COVID-19 has had a negative personal impact that has affected their connection to culture and their mental and physical health.<sup>1</sup>

"This has been magnified by the significant disruption many people experienced to the way they usually visit their GPs, nurses, Aboriginal medical centres and other places that they access healthcare.

"This meant some people living with type 2 diabetes might not have been managing the condition as well as they normally would.

"To help people kickstart their diabetes management in 2021, the NDSS is launching *Back on Track* to encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as they start to reengage with their diabetes health teams.

"We know diabetes is tough and we want to provide the inspiration to help everyone get back on track with diabetes management."

The campaign's key messages urge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to:

- Check in with their diabetes health team
- Check blood sugar and take medications
- Check they are eating healthy food and being active every day
- And check they are looking after each other and taking time to look after themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> Orima Research. "Autumn First Nations Omnibus Survey – COVID-19: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander awareness, attitudes and behaviours." July 2020.

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Mr Lee said these messages were relevant to anyone living with diabetes, not just Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but the campaign's creative design had been developed to resonate with a First Nations audience.

"This campaign is not about pointing the finger, but rather a reminder to us all that after a really tough 2020, we need to reconnect with diabetes management in 2021," he said.

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