



MEDIA RELEASE - Geelong, Australia – 17 February 2026

Global network on psychosocial aspects of diabetes convenes in Australia for 30th Annual Scientific Meeting

The PsychoSocial Aspects of Diabetes (PSAD) Study Group, an international network dedicated to improving the psychological and social wellbeing of people living with diabetes, today opens its 30th Annual Scientific Meeting in Geelong, Australia.

Hosted at Waurin Ponds Estate on Deakin University's Waurin Ponds campus from 17–19 February 2026, the meeting brings together experts from around the world to share the latest evidence, innovations and real-world strategies for integrating psychosocial care into diabetes practice and policy.

Professor Jane Speight, Chair of the PSAD Study Group, said this milestone meeting reflects how far the field has come – and how much more there is to do.

“Over three decades, the PSAD Study Group has evolved into a truly global network spanning disciplines, health systems and countries, all united by a common purpose: to ensure that the emotional, social and behavioural needs of people living with diabetes are recognised as core to high-quality diabetes care, not an optional extra,” said Professor Speight. “Meeting in Australia for our 30th Annual Scientific Meeting underlines both the strength of psychosocial diabetes research and advocacy in this region, and our commitment to advancing these issues in our region and globally”

Focus on psychosocial care, equity and implementation

Across three days, delegates will explore cutting-edge research and practice in areas such as diabetes distress and burnout, stigma and discrimination, positive mental health and wellbeing, family and peer support, technology use, person-centred communication, and implementation of guidelines for psychosocial care.

The programme includes symposia, workshops and oral presentations focused on:

- Reducing the psychosocial burden of diabetes across the life course
- Tackling diabetes-related stigma and discrimination in healthcare and society
- Co-designing interventions with people with lived experience
- Supporting health professionals to deliver person-centred, empathic care
- Translating psychosocial research into policy, guidelines and everyday practice

A key focus will be on the PSAD Group's role in implementation of the first ever clinical guidelines of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD), focused on assessing and managing diabetes distress, including how best to embed its recommendations in routine clinical care, health systems and national policies.

Elevating lived experience: the Anita Carlson Lecture

A highlight of this year's meeting is the prestigious Anita Carlson Lecture, which in 2026 will be delivered for the first time by a diabetes advocate.

Melbourne-based Renza Scibilia has lived with type 1 diabetes for over 25 years and is recognised internationally for her leadership and advocacy.

“Renza’s advocacy has been instrumental in shifting how diabetes is talked about – from blame and judgement to respect and partnership – and in elevating community involvement in research and all aspects of clinical care: #NothingAboutUsWithoutUs,” said Professor Speight. “Inviting a diabetes advocate to deliver the Anita Carlson Lecture for the first time signals PSAD’s deep commitment to working with, not just for, people living with diabetes. It is a powerful recognition that lived experience is expertise in its own right.”

In her lecture, Ms Scibilia is expected to reflect on the language, narratives and power dynamics that shape the day-to-day experience of diabetes, and to challenge researchers, clinicians and policymakers to centre the voices of people with diabetes in all aspects of care and research.

A global network with a clear purpose

Founded in the mid-1990s, the PSAD Study Group has evolved into a global network of psychologists and social scientists, physicians, nurses, allied health professionals and people with lived experience of diabetes. Members are united by a shared commitment to understanding and addressing the emotional, behavioural and social dimensions of living with diabetes.

Over 30 years, PSAD members have produced influential research that underpins clinical practice and policy worldwide, including major contributions to international position statements and guidelines such as the recent EASD guideline.

The Annual Scientific Meeting is a cornerstone event for this community – providing an intimate, collaborative space for presenting new evidence, building international collaborations, mentoring early-career researchers and fostering partnerships with people with diabetes.

“PSAD’s strength lies in its community,” Professor Speight added. “Our members work in diverse contexts – including large academic centres, specialist and community clinics, advocacy organisations and industry – but we are connected by the belief that diabetes care must support the whole person. This meeting is about strengthening that network and accelerating progress together.”

Strengthening regional and global collaborations

Holding the 30th Annual Scientific Meeting in Geelong provides opportunities to strengthen collaborations between PSAD and key partners in Australia and the broader Asia-Pacific region, as well as with colleagues across Europe, North America and beyond.

Delegates will also have the opportunity to engage in academic visits and collaborative discussions, with the aim of:

- advancing global research on the psychosocial and behavioural aspects of diabetes
- building capacity in this field of work
- promoting authentic community involvement
- advancing clinical care, informed by the psychosocial and behavioural evidence

About the PSAD Study Group

The PsychoSocial Aspects of Diabetes (PSAD) Study Group is an international network dedicated to promoting research, collaboration and advocacy on the behavioural, psychological and social aspects of diabetes. Through its Annual Scientific Meeting, collaborative projects and advocacy, PSAD aims to:

- advance high-quality research on psychosocial aspects of diabetes
- integrate psychosocial care into diabetes guidelines, policy and everyday practice
- build capacity among clinicians and researchers globally
- work in partnership with people living with diabetes to improve both health and quality of life.

For more information about PSAD Study Group and the 30th Annual Scientific Meeting, visit:
www.psadgroup.org

For more information about member benefits and how to become a member, please visit:
<https://www.psadgroup.org/membership/>

Media contact

Professor Jane Speight, Chair, PSAD Study Group

Email: info@psadgroup.org or jspeight@acbrd.org.au