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Pollie Pedal provides prompt reminder for regular screening

As this year's Pollie Pedal comes to an end, the Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) is reminding Australians about the importance of regular screening for the two main causes the Pollie Pedal has been raising funds for, breast cancer and type 2 diabetes.

AGPN Chair Dr Tony Hobbs who participated in today's last leg of the ride from Windsor to Westmead, commended all participants for their commitment to raising funds for much needed medical research and took the opportunity to remind Australians to have regular screenings for these conditions.

"Until we have scientific breakthroughs that prevent type 2 diabetes and breast cancer occurring, it is essential that people in high risk categories visit their GP and have regular screenings.

"Recent figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), indicating breast cancer deaths have decreased in women aged 50-69, are excellent news. It shows public awareness campaigns and screening are making a difference," Dr Hobbs said.

All women should be aware of the importance of breast screening. If you are over 50, you should have a mammogram every two years with many states provide free screening for women

In the case for type 2 diabetes- knowing the risk factors and being screened for type 2 diabetes is critical.

"It is estimated that there are now over 1 million Australians with type 2 diabetes, and the tragedy is, that the majority of these cases could have been avoided with a good diet and adequate exercise.

"Lifestyle risk factors such as obesity, physical inactivity, smoking and alcohol overuse are significant contributing factors many cases of type 2 diabetes in Australia," Dr Hobbs said.

Dr Hobbs urged all Australians aged over 55 or with risk factors including overweight or obesity, a family history of diabetes, smoking or high blood pressure or people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to see their GP to be checked for diabetes.

"The earlier we can pick up a problem or a potential problem, the better the long-term health outcomes are for the patient," Dr Hobbs said.

In an effort to combat these rising incidences in type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases, general practices, with the support of their local division of general practice, have introduced a program called "*Lifescrpts*" to help patients make better lifestyle choices.

"The *Lifescrpts* tools are fantastic resources that GPs can use to support their patients loose weight, increase their activity levels, stop smoking and reduce alcohol intake. It is quite simply a non medical prescription, encouraging patients to make positive lifestyle changes," Dr Hobbs said.

For more information or interviews with Dr Hobbs please call Kathryn Conroy at AGPN on 0416 428 678. Dr Hobbs will be available following the ride for interviews

