

Silent No More

Dr James Muecke AM, Australian of the Year 2020

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Executive Summary

Type 2 diabetes is an avoidable man-made dietary disease impacting nearly two million Australians.

There are multiple barriers to preventing and reversing type 2 diabetes in this country:

- Barriers to the prevention of type 2 diabetes
 - The Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013 (ADG) are flawed:
 - The ADG discourage the eating of foods containing natural saturated fat, and this has in turn led to the production of thousands of low-fat products, many of which are highly processed and loaded with sugar and refined carbohydrates. There is no strong evidence linking natural saturated fat to adverse health outcomes – this critical information was known during the review 2009-2013 and yet was not included
 - The ADG encourage the eating of unhealthy polyunsaturated oils, and this in turn has led to the boom in production and consumption of margarines and seed oils, industrially-produced fats which have been linked to cardiovascular disease
 - The ADG, by their own admission, are not for people with type 2 diabetes and yet GP and dietitians are using a set of guidelines that instructs what healthy people should eat on people who are not healthy. GPs and dietitians are being encouraged to do so by their overseeing bodies and *Diabetes Australia*.
 - Type 2 diabetes is a disease of carbohydrate intolerance, and yet Australians are being told to eat foods that are high in non-essential nutrient-poor carbohydrates. There's no evidence to show that the high-carb dietary pattern recommended by the ADG prevents type 2 diabetes
 - The dietary recommendations within the ADG, that inform national policy, are born out of weak and unreliable epidemiological data
 - The ADG have been biased by industry influence:
 - The literature review for the ADG was undertaken by the *Dietitians Association of Australia* (DAA), an organisation who were conflicted by the ultra-processed food industry at the time they were awarded the tender by the *NH&MRC* in 2007
 - The literature selected by the DAA and that informs the ADG is biased as the majority of the studies were funded by the food industry
 - Two critical research questions that guided the literature review are biased and appear to have been written by the DAA to manipulate an intended outcome
- Barriers to the reversal (remission) of type 2 diabetes
 - In December 2020 there was no mention of the potential for remission of type 2 diabetes on the website of *Diabetes Australia*, the peak body for patients with diabetes. *Diabetes Australia* continues to be funded by the pharmaceutical industry

- In December 2020 there was no mention of the possibility of remission for type 2 diabetes in Australia's *National Diabetes Strategy*. Members of the Expert Advisory Group have undeclared conflicts of interest with the pharmaceutical industry and the ultra-processed food industry
- Vested interests are not only shaping what we eat and driving chronic disease in our society, they are also shaping how we treat these diseases.

We have an incredible opportunity here, and it's time for our government to take action:

- To create dietary guidelines which are based on solid science, are free from vested interests, and relevant to all Australians
- To support healthcare professionals and their patients in ridding our country of this cursed disease.