



The 678 day wait for Albanese Government's diabetes response is over, but it's no sugar hit.

Dr Monique Ryan, Independent Member for Kooyong and Deputy Chair of the House Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Disability, has welcomed the Albanese Government's belated response to the 'State of Diabetes Mellitus in Australia' report, while lashing the Government for cynically tabling its reply as Parliament is pre-occupied with today's Federal Budget.

The House Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport spent a year studying Australia's diabetes epidemic. It received nearly 500 submissions and produced 23 recommendations in the report tabled on 4 July 2024. Now, 678 days later, following a letter from Dr Ryan to the Chair of the Standing Committee on 4 March 2026 proposing referral of this delayed response to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, parliamentary pressure has finally produced a response.

Says Dr Ryan: "Australia's diabetes epidemic is a public health crisis. Nearly 1.5 million Australians are living with diagnosed diabetes and, in the past decade, diagnoses have increased by 44 per cent in people aged 21 to 39. Children as young as nine are being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, an unknown phenomenon a generation ago.

"Tabling the Government's response on Budget Day is no coincidence. This is a bitterly disappointing reaction to the inquiry's thoughtful, evidence-based report. The government has deferred action on every measure identified for arresting this epidemic, particularly a levy on sugar-sweetened beverages, and expanded subsidised access to continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) and insulin pumps for insulin-dependent diabetics."

More than 130 jurisdictions around the world have implemented levies on sugar-sweetened beverages, and seen consumption reduced, industry reformulation, and revenue invested in prevention. The Australian Medical Association has projected a levy of 50 cents per 100 grams of sugar would reduce annual sugar consumption by around two kilograms per person and raise \$3.6 billion over four years, while Grattan Institute predicted sustained reductions in Type 2 diabetes, dental disease, and premature deaths.

The RACP, AMA, Diabetes Australia, and the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance have all called for a levy on sugar-sweetened beverages.

Dr Ryan: “The experts are unanimous, but the government is not listening. A government that ignores the most cost-effective prevention measure is more focused on avoiding industry pressure than on protecting Australians from diabetes. It has kicked the can down the road - and that can contains 10 teaspoons of sugar.

“As a paediatric neurologist, I’ve seen first-hand what inadequate access to diabetes technology means for children and families. I am also concerned that the government's response does not commit to expanded subsidised access to insulin pumps for people with Type 1 diabetes, or to equitable access to GLP-1 receptor agonists for high-risk patients in remote and disadvantaged communities — both of which were strongly supported by the committee, RACP and Diabetes Australia.”

Implementing the ‘State of Diabetes Mellitus in Australia’ report in full would deliver:

- A graduated levy on sugar-sweetened beverages modelled on international best practice, with revenue directed to prevention;
- Expanded subsidised CGM access for all insulin-dependent diabetics;
- Removal of age limitations on subsidised insulin pump access for people with Type 1 diabetes;
- Mandatory food labelling to clearly identify added sugar content;
- Comprehensive restrictions on advertising of junk food and sugary drinks to children; and
- Equitable access to GLP-1 agonists and bariatric surgery for high-risk patients who cannot afford out-of-pocket costs.

Dr Ryan: “The diabetes epidemic won’t wait for another review. The government should commit to implementing these recommendations in full. I’ll be pushing, in parliament and in the community, to make sure it does.”