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Global Diabetes Experts Meet in Geelong: ACBRD hosts 30th PSAD Scientific Meeting

Leading international experts in the psychosocial aspects of diabetes are gathering in Geelong this week for the 30th Annual Scientific Meeting of the PsychoSocial Aspects of Diabetes (PSAD) Study Group. Hosted by the Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes (ACBRD), this is the first time the PSAD meeting has been held outside Europe.

Held at the Waurin Ponds Estate on Deakin University's Waurin Ponds campus, from 17–19 February 2026, the meeting brings together a global network of clinicians, researchers, and advocates dedicated to understanding and improving the emotional and social experience of living with diabetes.

Landmark international meeting hosted in regional Australia

ACBRD Director and current PSAD Chair, Professor Jane Speight, said hosting this milestone meeting in Australia is a significant moment for behavioural diabetes research and care in this part of the world.

“Being the first group to host the PSAD Annual Scientific Meeting outside Europe is an important recognition of the strength, maturity and impact of behavioural and psychosocial diabetes research in Australia,” Professor Speight said. “It sends a clear message that the innovations and collaborations happening here are part of a truly global effort to improve life with diabetes.”

The meeting provides a rare opportunity for Australian and Asia–Pacific clinicians, researchers and advocates to connect face-to-face with leading international experts without the barriers of long-haul travel, high cost and time away from clinical and community work.

Showcasing Australian and regional leadership

The scientific programme highlights the latest research from more than 80 Australian and international researchers in key areas such as diabetes distress, diabetes and weight stigma, mental health, family and peer support, person-centred communication and the implementation of psychosocial care into routine clinical practice, as well as the relevance of psychology to new advances such as cell therapies.

“Hosting the PSAD conference enables us to showcase world-class work being done here and across the world – from large-scale national studies to co-designed interventions with people living with diabetes,” said Dr Eloise Litterbach, ACBRD Research Fellow, PSAD Local and Scientific Organising Committee Lead, and co-lead of the PSAD Early-Career Researcher (ECR) group “Supporting ECR initiatives is especially important to me, and the conference provides a unique opportunity for emerging researchers in our region to connect with access to international mentors, collaborators and networks.”



The ACBRD's role as host organisation reflects its long-standing commitment to partnering with people with diabetes, health professionals, diabetes organisations and academic institutions to generate evidence that directly informs practice and policy.

Elevating lived experience, advocacy and authentic community involvement

A highlight of the meeting is the prestigious Anita Carlson Lecture, delivered this year for the first time by a diabetes advocate. Melbourne-based Renza Scibilia has lived with type 1 diabetes for many years and is recognised globally for her advocacy and thought leadership. Renza will address delegates on “building diabetes care from the ground up”. She is expected to highlight the power of language, and true partnerships with people with lived experience to elevate diabetes care and research.

“We are honoured to invite Renza deliver this year's Anita Carlson Lecture. Delivering it here in Victoria is especially meaningful,” Professor Speight said. “It underscores a shared commitment – from ACBRD and PSAD – to elevating lived experience as essential expertise in shaping research agendas, clinical practice and policy.”

The PSAD Study Group has also awarded “Axel Hirsch Awards” (supporting registration and travel) to three people living with diabetes across Australia. The recipients will have the opportunity to connect with other attendees, explore the latest research on the psychosocial aspects of diabetes, and share their insights with their communities. The awards reflect PSAD's commitment to ensuring lived experience has more than one seat at the table.

Strengthening partnerships and future impact

By hosting the 30th PSAD Annual Scientific Meeting, the ACBRD aims to strengthen existing partnerships and seed new collaborations across Australia, the Asia–Pacific region and beyond. The meeting provides a platform for:

- Developing new multi-country research projects on psychosocial aspects of diabetes.
- Supporting implementation of international psychosocial care guidelines in diverse health systems.
- Building skills and capacity in behavioural and psychosocial research among emerging researchers and clinicians.
- Ensuring that the voices and priorities of people living with diabetes remain central to research and service innovation.

“ACBRD was established to put the psychological, social and behavioural aspects of diabetes on an equal footing with biomedical care,” Professor Speight said. “Hosting PSAD's 30th Annual Scientific Meeting here in Geelong is both a celebration of how far we have come in the past 16 years and a catalyst for what we can achieve next – locally, nationally and globally.”



The Australian Centre
for Behavioural Research
in Diabetes

About the Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes (ACBRD)

The ACBRD is a national research centre dedicated to understanding the psychological, social and behavioural aspects of living with diabetes. The ACBRD conducts high-quality research in partnership with people with diabetes, health professionals and organisations, with the goal of improving quality of life and clinical outcomes through evidence-based, person-centred care. The ACBRD was established in 2010 as a partnership for better health between Diabetes Victoria and Deakin University. The ACBRD celebrated its 15-year anniversary in 2025 with renewal of the partnership for a further five years, through to 2030.

For more information about ACBRD and its work, visit: www.acbrd.org.au

For more about the PSAD Study Group, visit: www.psadgroup.org

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