

## PHAA and SBS-TV recognise the work of ‘Too Deadly for Diabetes’ creator, Ray Kelly

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### Jeremy Lasek – PHAA

One of the great strengths of the PHAA’s annual awards is to uncover great stories of public health best practice at work and making a big difference to people’s lives.

Ray Kelly was Highly Commended in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Public Health Award for his nearly three decades of leadership as an exercise physiologist in the health and sports industries. Kim O’Donnell was also Highly Commended.

Ray is a proud Gomeri man and an emerging public health research leader at the University of Technology Sydney. He’s also about to be featured on national TV for his life’s work improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. But more on that shortly.

Ray created a successful life-saving lifestyle program, [Too Deadly for Diabetes](#), which aims to reverse Type-2 diabetes through the promotion of good nutrition, physical activity, weight loss, and to lower blood glucose levels among First Nations’ peoples.

### Putting ‘the bush’ first

“I grew up in the bush, and people in the bush are usually the last to get access to a program such as this,” Ray explained.

“I wanted them to be among the first.”

The program has now been delivered across regional NSW in Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett, and more recently in Coonamble and Dubbo.

Through his program, Ray engages with local Indigenous community and health care providers to identify obstacles to lifestyle change in the community, and to design strategies to support achieving positive health.

Ray said over a period of 10 months, his participants in Coonamble achieved a collective weight loss of 1.3 tonnes.

“Several people lost 50kg or more each,” Ray said. “That’s why I get so excited about it.”

Ray now trains others how to deliver the ‘Too Deadly for Diabetes’ program to maximise the impact in regional and rural areas.

“A chronic disease nurse who has never delivered anything like this ran the successful Coonamble program where so many people have reaped the rewards.

Ray says many people who’ve experienced the program have gotten off their medications and reduced doses.

“We’ve had lady get off four injections of insulin a day in just five days,” he recalls.

“Another lady got off insulin in seven days and that was three years ago.

“The issue has been that patients are given too much information and they don’t know exactly how to apply it.

“What we do is simplify what needs to be done, and drip feed information. When people comprehend what needs to be done and why, they have a chance at success.”

An independent study investigated the results of the program in Sydney’s west where it was found participants achieved an average weight loss of 7.5kg.

The success of his program led Ray to enrol in a PhD to further examine the factors contributing to the reversal through lifestyle changes of Type-2 diabetes among Indigenous people in Australia.

His nominator for the PHAA award said: “One of the key reasons for the success of Ray’s project is the degree to which he engages with end-users, consumers and community leaders, and his commitment to collaborating with the communities targeted by his program has enabled him to gain and keep the trust of Indigenous communities in each of the new locations where his program is implemented.”

## **Media focus**

The astounding success of his program has also attracted significant media attention. Ray has acted as a consultant on the popular television program, *Biggest Loser*, and his work will be featured later this month in a new SBS series, [\*Australia’s Health Revolution with Dr Michael Mosley\*](#) which premieres at 7:30pm Wednesday, 13 October.

Working with Ray, Dr Mosley puts his own body on the line to demonstrate the latest science and to show just how quickly you can eat your way into, and out of, ill health.

To demonstrate this, Dr Mosley follows an average Australian diet and in just two weeks, his blood sugar levels become pre-diabetic and his blood pressure becomes worryingly high. This highlights the root of Australia's obesity and Type-2 diabetes epidemic. Almost 200 Australians are diagnosed with Type-2 diabetes daily.

Ray and Dr Mosley won't be on this journey alone. They'll meet eight people diagnosed with Type-2 diabetes or pre-diabetes who dream of getting their health back, and turning their lives around.

In addition to the SBS series, NITV will air a suite of supportive programs that explores the Type-2 diabetes epidemic in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. At 8.35pm on Wednesday 13 and 20 October, on [Living Black](#), Karla Grant will interview Dr Mosley and Ray Kelly about their motivations to help people tackle diabetes.

"I've been pushing for change for a long time and I have systems in place to spread these treatments nationally," Ray added.

"I've been traveling to International conferences for years and knew this paradigm shift was coming.

"It is an exciting time for both health professionals and the community"

***PHOTO: Dr Michael Mosley, left, and exercise physiologist Ray Kelly, stand on Bondi Beach during the filming of their SBS-TV program. Image courtesy Ray Kelly.***

<https://intouchpublichealth.net.au/phaa-and-sbs-tv-recognise-the-work-of-too-deadly-for-diabetes-creator-ray-kelly/>