IND 2014 – A spotlight on Australia’s largest group of health professionals

Today is International Nurses Day (IND); a time to celebrate the work of the world’s largest group of health professionals. Today is the day for all nurses, across all specialties, to reflect on the important roles they play in addressing the health needs of Australians.

An initiative of the International Council of Nurses, IND is held around the world each year on the anniversary of Florence Nightingale’s birth. This year’s IND theme, Nurses: A Force for Change, focuses on the vital resource for health, which is the nursing workforce.

Kathleen McLaughlin, Executive Manager Member Relations at the Australian College of Nursing (ACN), said nurses are highly skilled and knowledgeable, and as a collective are critical to the delivery of quality cost-effective health care.

“Today we celebrate the roles nurses have in our health care system and their impact on health outcomes. We also use this opportunity to shine a light on the issues currently facing the profession, and offer ways in which to mitigate them.

“Nurses have a significant influence in all health care sectors across metropolitan, rural and remote areas. Given Australia’s ageing nursing workforce, we need to ensure nurse recruitment and retention programs are a priority to ensure we have enough nurses to meet the future health needs of all Australians. If not, we will be faced with issues that can seriously imperil our ability to provide quality health care across Australia,” said Ms McLaughlin.

Enhancing the utilisation and flexibility of the nurse workforce will contribute to increasing efficiencies across our health care system. Supporting nurses to work to the full extent of their education and experience and developing transition programs to support nurses to move across clinical settings or areas of practice during their careers, will go a long way in maximising the contributions of nurses.

Nursing research demonstrates that nursing care has a major contribution to the health outcomes of patients in the short and long term and the impact investments in nurse staffing have on patients’ health.

ACN celebrates and acknowledges the responsibility and contributions of nurses to the health of individuals and populations in Australia and across the world.

-for interviews with Kathleen McLaughlin, please contact Diana Abeleven or Felicity Zadro on 02 9212 7867 or diana@zadrocommunications.com.au.