

For immediate release: 14 February 2017

NURSES CAN HELP CLOSE THE GAP

While today's Closing the Gap report shows some positive signs, particularly in terms of reduced rates of smoking and infant mortality, the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) continues to be concerned about the significant disadvantage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face in regard to health outcomes.

"Since its inception, the Closing the Gap campaign has helped improve a number of key indicators for Indigenous health, but more needs to be done," Australian College of Nursing CEO, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward said. "The lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are still sicker and shorter than they should be.

"If we are serious about Closing the Gap, we need concerted effort across governments and respectful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to understand what they need and what will work in terms of health service delivery."

Nurses have a key role to play in working with communities to improve health outcomes. Research, including work by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, highlights the importance of quality primary health care services to population health. In rural and remote Australia, nurses are providing a large proportion of primary health care.

When she spoke at the annual ACN Oration in 2014, Professor Roianne West, Professor of First Peoples Health at Griffith University, said there is much that nurses can do together with Indigenous Australians to advance health outcomes, particularly by learning new and more sophisticated ways of working together.

"Professor West called on nurse leadership to strategically build the cultural capability, cultural safety education and competence of the nursing profession," said Adj Prof. Ward. "As the preeminent and national leader of the nursing profession, ACN is taking up this challenge."

ACN proudly administers the Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarships Scheme on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Health. More than 1540 scholarships have been awarded since 2002 in areas such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, Allied Health, Dentistry, Medicine and Nursing and Midwifery.

The College also delivers a range of rural and remote health scholarships.

"Each of our relevant training courses include sessions on cultural needs and sensitivity," Adj Prof. Ward explained.



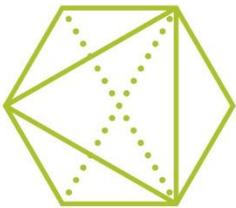
-ends-

For interviews, please contact Narelle Barrie, Executive Assistant to CEO on 02 6283 3459, 0450 908 920 or email narelle.barrie@acn.edu.au

For more information, please contact Carolyn Stapleton, Manager – Policy and Advocacy on 0448 017 194 or email carolyn.stapleton@acn.edu.au



Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward, CEO of ACN.



Australian
College of
Nursing

Advancing nurse leadership

Canberra

PO Box 219, Deakin West ACT 2600

freecall 1800 061 660 (charges apply to mobile phones)

t 02 6283 3400 | f 02 6282 3565

www.acn.edu.au

Australian College of Nursing Ltd

ABN 48 154 924 642

Notes to the Editors:

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is the national professional organisation for all nurse leaders and its aim is to ensure that the Australian community receives quality nursing care now and in the future. ACN is a membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialties. ACN is also the Australian member of the International Council of Nurses headquartered in Geneva.

ACN, an organisation not afraid to intelligently challenge industry issues affecting the nursing profession or Australia's health care, is a well-connected and educated national body that drives change with people of influence to enhance the delivery of health services to the Australian community. ACN advances the skills and expertise of nurses to provide leadership in their contribution to the policy, practice and delivery of health care.

A membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialities, ACN's membership includes many nurses in roles of influence, including senior nurses, organisational leaders, academics and researchers.

What is the role of ACN to media?

- ACN provides trusted, well supported information about Australia's health care system, the delivery of health care, nursing leadership and the nursing profession.
- ACN has a number of media-savvy spokespeople within the organisation who can comment on Australia's health care system, the delivery of health care, nursing leadership and the nursing profession.
- ACN offers media with an alternative voice to that of an industrial relations perspective.
- ACN is in-the-know and can comment on health care matters of interest.
- ACN can respond to media requests in a timely manner and with subject/clinical expert's available on-hand for further discussion.
- ACN regularly responds to government updates pertaining to Australia's health care system.

What role does ACN play?

ACN is here to act and deliver results as agents of change. They are working towards a brighter future through advancing nurse leadership to enhance the delivery of health care to all. The organisation provides nurse leaders with access to relevant information, support and education that will enhance Australia's reputation on the world stage.

Advancing nurse leadership



Australian
College of
Nursing

Social media channels:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acnursing>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/acn_tweet

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/company/australian-college-of-nursing>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/acn_nursing

Canberra

PO Box 219, Deakin West ACT 2600

freecall 1800 061 660 (charges apply to mobile phones)

t 02 6283 3400 | f 02 6282 3565

www.acn.edu.au

Australian College of Nursing Ltd

ABN 48 154 924 642