

7 April 2017

## DEPRESSION A CHRONIC PROBLEM FOR AUSTRALIA

On World Health Day, the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is calling for increased support to provide additional training to all nurses in identifying people at risk of depression or suffering from a depressive disorder.

“Our profession has highly-trained Mental Health Nurses, but with the prevalence of depression and chronic disease in Australia, all nurses are likely to be caring for people with depression or at risk of depression and have a vital role in early intervention,” Australian College of Nursing CEO, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward said.

According to the World Health Organization, depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, and is a major contributor to the overall global burden of disease.

In any one year, around one million Australians have depression. Research shows that physical illness is one of the strongest risk factors for depression.

“Nurses provide care in schools, aged care homes, primary health, community, and hospitals – all locations where people will present with a physical illness,” Adjunct Professor Ward said. “Nurses are likely to be the health care professionals spending the most time with patients with chronic illness. This means they have a central role in recognising people at risk of, or suffering from, depression.”

Prompt diagnosis and early intervention in the initial stages of a mental illness can have significant and life-changing consequences for a person’s mental health.

“Early diagnosis and treatment of depression can also have a positive impact on a person’s physical health,” Adjunct Professor Ward explained. “Evidence shows that depression is a risk factor for physical illness and for early death. So depression can be caused by having a chronic disease, but it can also precipitate chronic disease.

“The Australian College of Nursing would like to see nurses receive more ongoing and intensive training in recognising the symptoms of depression. Nurses can help ensure depression is no longer underdiagnosed and undertreated.”

The Australian College of Nursing currently offers a range of mental health training courses.

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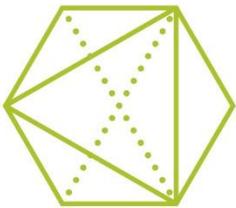


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Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward, CEO of ACN.



# Australian College of Nursing

Advancing nurse leadership

## Notes to 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 specialties, 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 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.

### Social media channels:

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

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/acn\\_tweet](https://twitter.com/acn_tweet)

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

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/acn\\_nursing](https://www.instagram.com/acn_nursing)