

10 May 2017

## NURSES LEADING THE WAY TO BETTER HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA

International Nurses Day will be celebrated around the world on 12 May 2017, providing an opportunity to reflect on the contribution nurses make to health services in Australia and their ongoing advocacy to improve care for all.

“Australia prides itself on being the lucky country, and when it comes to the health of our population and life expectancy we are certainly amongst the best in the world,” Australian College of Nursing Chief Executive Officer, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward said. “However, there are still significant inequalities between health outcomes of individuals and communities.

“All Australians have a right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, no matter their age, sexual orientation, cultural background, religious beliefs, income, education or even where they choose to live.

“Due to their centrality in all aspects of health care in Australia, nurses are amongst the first to recognise disparities in care and speak up for change.”

The theme for International Nurses Day is Nurses: A Voice to Lead – Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were adopted by the United Nations in 2014 and cover issues such as poverty, hunger, health and education, and climate change.

While there are health specific goals; health and nursing have an impact on delivery of other SDGs. The conditions in which people are born, grow, work, and live are referred to as the social determinants of health as they affect a person’s well-being.

“There is a famous saying by Sir Michael Marmot: ‘Why treat people and then send them back to the conditions that made them sick.’ This is a credo nurses have adopted – nurses don’t just fix the medical problem they are confronted with, they look at fixing the cause of the problem,” Adjunct Professor Ward explained.

“For this reason, nurses are advocates for individual patients and their communities as they strive to prevent illness as well as treat it.

“Every time a nurse speaks up and speaks out, they are leading our health sector towards change. Nurse associations and those with a seat at the policy table can seem to be the main influencers of

government decisions; but all of the profession, at every level, plays a role in providing better health services and outcomes to patients.

“The nurse who makes a call about an injured child’s domestic situation, the nurse working in rural or remote Australia, the nurse who works in an inner-city emergency clinic, all impact on a patient’s immediate health and potentially improve their future.”

For nurses’ keen to ‘raise their voice’ even higher, the Australian College of Nursing runs a series of leadership seminars. For more information, visit <https://www.acn.edu.au/leadership-dates>

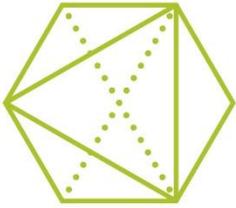
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Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward, CEO of ACN.



# 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.

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- 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)