



Professor Kylie Ward
Chief Executive Officer
Australian College of Nursing

8 January 2020

Dear Prof. Ward, *Kylie*

On behalf of the Board and staff of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and our member national nursing associations worldwide, I am writing to express our support and solidarity to the nurses of Australia as you care for those who have been impacted, physically, emotionally and mentally by the unprecedented deadly bushfires across Australia.

We understand from news reports that over 20 lives have been lost, thousands of homes destroyed or damaged, and thousands of people forced to evacuate. We know that many people will be suffering both now and for a long period of time. The magnitude of destruction that these fires have brought is devastating. Our thoughts are with you.

We acknowledge and honour the hard work that is being undertaken by all emergency workers, volunteers and community members who are working tirelessly amongst horrendous conditions. Stories are emerging of the heroic actions undertaken by those seeking to contain, manage and end this disaster. We know that there will be many nurses fighting to save their homes whilst at the same time supporting the health care needs of the communities in which they live. We admire and respect their remarkable courage and sacrifice.

We recognise that climate change has intensified the magnitude of these types of disasters and we call for stronger action to prevent global warming ([Position Statement on nurses, climate change and health](#)) so that future generations will not have to go through this level of devastation and suffering.

With the increasing frequency of disasters, we are also passionate about supporting the global nursing community in disaster preparedness and management. Nurses are the largest group of the healthcare workforce and are on the frontline during disasters. Our hope is to protect nurses, enhance their skills and capabilities, and improve community health outcomes during and after emergencies (for more information see [ICN Core Competencies in Disaster Nursing](#)).

As your country faces this unprecedented disaster, we at ICN and our member national nursing associations from across the world offer you our support and encouragement as you care for those who have been impacted. We stand in solidarity with the nursing profession in Australia as you face this devastating crisis.

Yours sincerely,

Howard Catton
Howard Catton
Chief Executive Officer
International Council of Nurses

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