

MEDIA RELEASE

14 October 2023

ACN calls for respect and support in wake of Referendum outcome

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is calling on all Australians to respect and support one another in the wake of the defeat of the First Nations Voice to Parliament in today's Referendum.

ACN CEO Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN said the failure of the YES vote will have an immediate devastating impact on the mental health and wellbeing of millions of Australians – especially First Nations Australians – who have campaigned for years for the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the First Nations Voice to Parliament.

“Today is a day for people to provide comfort and support for their families, friends, and neighbours as the Referendum result sinks in,” Adjunct Professor Ward said.

“This is a health issue. This is a human rights issue. And people who voted YES will be going through all sorts of emotions.

“They will be hurting. They will be disappointed. They will need help. They will need assurance that everything will be alright.

“It is not a time for blame or recrimination or division. It is a time for unity.

“This is not the end of the path to reconciliation. This is not the end of Closing the Gap.

“Nurses stand ready to provide care and counselling and comfort to people struggling with the Referendum outcome.

“Nurses will listen, provide appropriate support, and refer to other support if required.

“Let's be kind. Let's look after each other,” Adjunct Professor Ward said.

ACN recommends Helplines for support, including:

13YARN

13 92 76

(24 hours/7 days) to talk with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter

NMBA

1800 667 877

Nurse & Midwife Support

Beyond Blue

1300 22 4636

Mental Health Support line for adults and young people (24 Hrs)

Lifeline

13 11 14

Mental Health Support line for adults and young people (24 Hrs)

Suicide Call Back Service

1300 659 467

Mental Health Support and Referral line for adults and young people (24 Hrs)

HeadtoHelp

1800 595 212

Mental Health Support and Referral line for adults and young people

Eheadspace

1800 650 890

Mental health and wellbeing support information and services to young people aged 12 to 25 years and their families

QLife

1800 184 527

Support for LGBTIQ+ people

For more information:

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Email: acn.media@acn.edu.au

Notes to Editors:**ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF NURSING**

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is the national professional organisation for all nurses 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. An organisation not afraid to challenge industry issues affecting the nursing profession or Australia's health care, ACN 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's membership includes nurses in roles of influence, including senior nurses, organisational leaders, academics, and researchers.

Social media channels:

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

X (formally known as Twitter): https://twitter.com/acn_tweet

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

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

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

CEO - Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN - Bio

Kylie Ward. Policy Reformer. Nurse. For-Purpose Leader. Equality Warrior. Adjunct Professor. Transformation Specialist.

Kylie is the CEO of Australian College of Nursing. She has led a program of transformation at ACN, which has now become Australia's beacon for Nurse Leadership.

She is a major policy influencer, advocate for women, children, and equality.