

MEDIA RELEASE

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ACN urges National Cabinet to put Australians' health first

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) calls on state and territory leaders to prioritise the health of all Australians when National Cabinet meets on Friday.

ACN CEO Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN said that the nursing profession has consistently shared concerns about the state of our primary health system and its impact on the community, especially those in rural and remote areas.

In 2021 ACN released a white paper, *'Reimagining the community and primary health care system'* outlining the enablers and barriers to a person-centered and valued-based primary health care system.

"Our health system has been sick for some time, and we need urgent action from Government to support nurses to deliver high-quality, accessible, affordable health care to all Australians, and prevent unnecessary hospital presentations," Adjunct Professor Ward said.

"Our Medicare system is no longer fit for purpose. It is failing Australians, and consumers are waiting longer to access high-quality health care than ever before.

"According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the further you live from a major city hospital, the higher rates are for preventable deaths.

"This is an unacceptable sacrifice many Australians make. All consumers deserve to get the care they need where they live.

"In fact, there are more nurses in remote areas relative to major cities, but they are underutilised and often unable to deliver the care they are trained to provide, or left doing tasks that could be undertaken by someone else, including admin staff.

"Giving nurses and other health professionals access to adequate funding in the primary and community setting is long overdue and essential for health equity and universal health care. Australians could have increased access to health professionals for longer hours.

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“Nurses could reduce the burden on our emergency department and hospital systems by providing more primary health support.

“Modernising our outdated funding system is the only solution to ensuring all Australians can access quality health care regardless of their postcode, particularly marginalised and disadvantaged populations and people.

“I urge the Premiers and Chief Ministers to work together and put the health of all Australians first.”

For more information, read ACN’s whitepaper [‘Reimagining the community and primary health care system’ here](#)

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Notes to Editors:

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.

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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.