

## MEDIA RELEASE

15 June 2023

### **ACN welcomes Blair Comley PSM as next Secretary of Department of Health and Aged Care**

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) welcomes the announcement of Blair Comley as the next Secretary of the Department of Health and Aged Care.

Mr Comley, who is an experienced public service leader at both Federal and State levels, takes over from retiring Secretary, Professor Brendan Murphy, from 17 July 2023.

ACN CEO, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, said Mr Comley comes to the role at a vital time for the Australian health system.

“The Albanese Government, led by Health Minister Mark Butler, is driving a range of important reforms across the system – including primary care, aged care, Medicare, the PBS, and the health workforce” Ms Ward said.

“Nurses are critical healthcare professionals in the Australian health system and are at the core of many of these reforms.

“ACN looks forward to working closely with Mr Comley, the Department, and the portfolio Ministers to ensure all Australians have improved access to high quality health and aged care.”

Adjunct Professor Ward said that key reforms and ongoing processes that require expert input from and partnership with ACN and the nursing profession include:

- 24/7 Registered nurses in aged care;
- the National Scope of Practice Review;
- expanding the nursing workforce to improve access to primary care;
- improving after-hours primary care access;
- flexible funding for multidisciplinary team-based models of care;
- COVID-19;
- Indigenous health;
- mental health; and
- public health.

On behalf of ACN and the nursing profession, Adjunct Professor Ward paid tribute to Professor Brendan Murphy AC for his outstanding contribution to the health sector as Chief Medical Officer (CMO) from 2016 and Department secretary since 2020.

“Professor Murphy at all times acknowledged and understood the key role of nurses across the health system and always worked collaboratively and openly with ACN,” Adjunct Professor Ward said.

“We wish him well in his retirement.”

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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 in collaboration with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF). 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:**

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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.

Kylie holds honorary academic appointments with seven leading Australian universities and in 2017, Kylie won Telstra Businesswoman of the Year in ACT for Purpose and Social Enterprise.

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