

MEDIA RELEASE

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AMA confirms need to maximise use of nursing and allied health workforces in rural and regional Australia

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) welcomes comments from the AMA that “*a more modern, flexible, and transient workforce*” is needed to meet the current and future primary health care needs of rural, regional, and remote communities.

The AMA last week hosted a rural summit to discuss long-term medical workforce shortages in rural and regional Australia, which highlighted nationwide GP shortages and medical students not choosing general practice as their career or not opting to live and work in country areas.

ACN CEO, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, said the doctor shortage in rural Australia is serious and it would take some time to turn it around – if it can be turned around.

“The wellbeing of people living in regional and rural Australia is a priority for the nursing profession,” Adjunct Professor Ward said.

“A values-based approach to health care delivery will provide more innovative, quicker, and more affordable solutions to provide rural and regional Australians with improved access to quality primary health care.

“Governments must be inventive to make better use of the nursing and allied health workforces to build multidisciplinary teams to serve local communities.

“Nurses can do more to ease the load on the GPs still practising rurally and are a key solution to achieving universal health care in Australia.

“Your postcode should not determine your health outcomes – but currently, in Australia, it does.

“Nurses are the largest, most geographically dispersed and adaptable health profession in Australia.

“Nurses are on the frontline of their local communities and are a valued part of those communities.

“Nurses are committed to their local communities – for the long term. They live there. They work there.

“Governments must do more to maximise the leadership, skills, experience, and potential of the nursing workforce nationally.

“It is easier and quicker to bolster and support the nursing workforce to keep nurses in the profession and attract and retain new nurses.

“We look forward to innovative solutions and recommendations from the Kruk and Cormack Reviews.

“Nurses are the solution,” Adjunct Professor Ward said.

The ACN urges all Australian governments to support nurses to take leadership in solving health workforce shortages, especially in rural and regional Australia, by implementing:

- Nurse-led multidisciplinary teams with allied health practitioners and First Nations health workers
- Ethical skilled migration reforms to assist overseas trained nurses to live and work in Australia permanently
- Empowering Nurse Practitioners, including with greater direct MBS access
- Greater support for flexible Re-entry to Practice and Transition to Practice programs for nurses
- Nurse access to digital and e-health technologies, including telehealth
- Fee relief for undergraduate and postgraduate nursing courses
- Supported and flexible accommodation
- Health and wellbeing support frameworks

For more information:

Kirsty Waterford 0403 295 934

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>

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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.