

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Finalists announced for Health Minister's Award for Nursing Trailblazers

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is proud to announce the four nurses who have been selected by an expert panel as Finalists in the 2023 Health Minister's Award for Nursing Trailblazers.

In its fifth year, the Award recognises nurses whose leadership has led to innovative solutions addressing key challenges facing our health and aged care systems.

This year's Award is administered by ACN on behalf of the Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP.

The 2023 Trailblazer Finalists are Lauren Barber MACN, Associate Professor Caleb Ferguson FACN, Tammy Harvey, and Toni Slotnes-O'Brien.

The 2023 Finalists have:

- Developed technology to assist patients in alleviating the mental and physical problems associated with needle phobia,
- Utilised a new learning platform that is revolutionising stroke prevention,
- Established a Nurse Practitioner clinic providing an inclusive and interprofessional model of care for transgender people, and
- Helped create a model of care led by nurse practitioners that is improving bed occupancy rates in a district hospital. The model assists patients with ongoing care and rehabilitation.

ACN CEO, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, said that this year's Finalists are well deserving, and their impact on the profession has been immense.

"I congratulate each of these exceptional leaders. They are now members of a select group of nurses to be a Finalist for the Health Minister's Award for Nursing Trailblazers," ACN CEO Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN said.

"The prestigious award acknowledges on behalf of all Australians the creative and innovative ways that nurses are leaders in addressing the biggest challenges facing our society.

"The Finalists have used their expertise and passion to improve health and save lives. They have already made a difference in their local communities and beyond."

#### About the 2023 Trailblazer Finalists

##### Lauren Barber, MACN – New South Wales

Ms Barber drew inspiration from her personal experience to start NeedleCalm Pty Ltd, a company focused on changing the narrative around needle phobia and advocating for education in needle procedures.

As the founder and Managing Director of NeedleCalm, Ms Barber's biggest challenge is creating awareness about the consequences of needle-phobia avoidance, a surprisingly under-researched area in health care.

NeedleCalm has launched a new, world-leading medical device in Australia to improve vaccination rates and calm the nerves of the approximately six million Australians who fear injections.

### **Professor Caleb Ferguson FACN – New South Wales**

Professor Ferguson's mission is to revolutionise stroke prevention through scalable technology to enable the widespread provision of theory-driven education to support behaviour change and help fight stroke.

Currently, life-saving treatment includes stroke prevention medications that thin the blood, and anticoagulants to reduce the risk of stroke in patients with Atrial Fibrillation. But Dr Ferguson says people do not always take medicines as directed or sometimes stop taking them.

He used a new learning delivery platform called Qstream to improve cardiovascular nurses' and patients' knowledge and practices related to stroke prevention, atrial fibrillation, and anticoagulation therapy.

### **Tammy Harvey – Tasmania**

Tammy is an endorsed nurse practitioner (NP) who helped to establish a NP led model of care in a rural hospital in Tasmania.

The model of care established in 2018 aims to increase bed occupancy and underutilised rural hospital resources and enable a restoration/rehabilitation focus for acute and subacute patients. It was initially set up with a geriatrician and NP and is now a GP/NP shared care model with a team of experienced nurses and allied health specialists.

Achievements include increased bed occupancy, reduced iatrogenic complications such as falls, delirium and pressure injuries and consistently positive patient feedback.

### **Toni Slotnes-O'Brien – South Australia**

Transgender Australians are arguably among our community's most marginalised and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. Ms Slotnes-O'Brien opened a Nurse Practitioner-led clinic to address patients' physical, mental, and social needs in line with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health Standards of Care.

The clinic is an inclusive and interprofessional model of care for transgender individuals and is a necessary step towards providing a very needed service for transgender individuals. Nurse Practitioners prescribe gender-affirming medical care and coordinate a multidisciplinary approach to providing low-cost health care.

The clinic aims to lower suicide rates, improve mental health, and provide the best gender-affirming care and coordination of care to enable trans and gender-diverse people to live a life without barriers.

**The winner of the Health Minister's Award for Nursing Trailblazers will be announced at the Australian College of Nursing National Nursing Forum in Adelaide in early August.**

**For more information:**

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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.

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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.