

MEDIA RELEASE

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Government to put social determinants of health on the front page

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) would like to congratulate the Albanese Government on handing down a Budget that addresses social determinants of health and equality for all Australians.

Prefacing his Budget speech with the statement “the next two years are expected to be the weakest for global growth in over two decades”, Treasurer Jim Chalmers set out a range of measures to ensure that Australian’s experiencing hardship do not fall behind.

ACN Chief Executive Officer, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, said that investments in a range of areas gives the nursing profession confidence that generations born now would not experience decreased health outcomes due to a reduction in the carbon footprint and innovative measures to promote renewable energies to build healthier sustainable communities.

Social Determinants of Health

“It is good to see that the Budget is making positive changes not just for improved scope for nurses but also the people we care for,” said Adjunct Professor Ward.

“Hearing the Albanese Government lift nurses and confirm that the health system would be improved by increasing our scope is a proud moment for me as the leader of the nursing peak body. I hope nurses around the country hear support they have from this Government – particularly as we celebrate International Nurses Day this Friday.

“This Budget speaks of a Government building a better future for Australians by laying the foundations for a healthier nation.

“As a nurse, I cannot tell you the heartbreak of having someone present to you when they are experiencing a period of distress.

“Decreasing the cost of accessing primary care and medications, particularly for people dealing with chronic illness is something to be celebrated. Increasing bulk billed visits will take the pressure off many Australians having to choose between their groceries or their health. Changes to Medicare that allow nurses to work at top-of-scope will increase primary care access for many, particularly in rural and remote areas.

“Parenting payments, affordable housing, and improved cost of early childhood education arrangements provide security for parents and children which will have health benefits long into the future.

“This Budget will serve future generations by protecting access to universal health care, affordable housing and early childhood education, all of which are instrumental in building strong social determinants of health.

Gender Equality

“Nursing is a profession which we find attracts more women than men and, we have seen in the past been impacted greatly in our remuneration and even scope of practice due to our gender.

“Making gender equity an objective of the Fair Work Act shows that this Government has listened to women and acted to prevent generations of women to come finding themselves in gender based financial hardship.

“Encouraging women into apprenticeships through the Australian Skills Guarantee is another initiative where we see women encouraged to think outside of gendered roles – old stereotypes which are proven to be irrelevant.

“The increase in fee-free TAFE places will help lift education levels – knowledge is power and we want to see Enrolled Nursing courses included in these.

Aged Care

“It was a relief to hear that there was consideration for how we are viewing the needs of our older Australians. We need to listen to our older Australian’s wishes for their care in their final years and treat them with the dignity they deserve. Yes, some will have complicated health needs which will require residential aged care but for those that can stay at home, they should be empowered to stay at home with the support of a home care plan. ACN welcomes the 9,500 new homecare packages and we have the curriculum to educate the nurses required to ensure optimal care and support the government.

“Aged Care workers will see an improvement in remuneration which as we know, was a driver for so many nurses leaving the field. As the Treasurer said “you deserve every cent”. A valued, respected workforce that is invested in ensures the quality of care all Australians deserve.

“This is a budget designed to keep Australians healthy now and into the future. Nurses are the largest group of health professionals this country has, providing care in every postcode in Australia. We want to serve and work to the top of our scope - let’s hope this government delivers on its promises.

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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.