

MEDIA RELEASE

15 September 2023

Nurse-led care the solution to support growing number of Australians with diabetes

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) today spoke to its submission to the Inquiry into Diabetes, which is being conducted by the Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport, at a public hearing at Parliament House in Canberra.

ACN CEO, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, told the Committee that new models of nurse-led and multidisciplinary care are needed to meet the healthcare needs of the rapidly growing numbers of Australians with diabetes.

Around 1.3 million people in Australia have diabetes, and 1.2 million of those have type 2 diabetes.

In 2021, the incidence of diabetes was two times as high among Indigenous males and 2.4 times as high among Indigenous females compared with their non-Indigenous counterparts.

Adjunct Professor Ward said nurse-led care in managing and supporting people with diabetes is an effective addition to health care in Australia.

“Nursing is the largest and most geographically dispersed health profession in Australia,” Adjunct Professor Ward said.

“We have around 450,000 nurses and midwives spread across the nation.

“Nurses are often the highest trained and qualified health professional in many communities. In smaller and more remote communities, nurses are the only healthcare professional.

“Due to their education, skills, and values, nurses are well-positioned to address the need for holistic care that acknowledges the social determinants of health and improves health outcomes.

“By being embedded within communities, nurses promote public health and disease prevention by helping people to make healthier choices.

“Nurses empower individuals and families by supporting and working alongside local populations.

“Access to care is poorer in regional and remote and First Nations communities. With the prevalence of chronic diseases 20 per cent higher in rural and remote Australia than in urban areas, it makes sense to promote and invest in nurse-led care for diabetes and other chronic conditions.

“Nurses are highly skilled – and they are trusted and respected. Nurses are the solution,” Adjunct Professor Ward said.

The ACN submission to the Inquiry into Diabetes recommends:

- The Australian Government promotes and invests in nurse-led and multidisciplinary clinics throughout Australia to provide better access and care for all people living with diabetes. These services should be supported to complement existing services nationally, including in rural and remote areas of Australia.
- Every Australian living with diabetes has access to nurse-led chronic disease management plans in primary care provided by nurses and Nurse Practitioners with appropriate post graduate education and training in diabetes management.
- The Australian Government invests in funding the Australian College of Nursing to develop a suite of online diabetes learning modules which will be freely available at no cost to all nurses.
- The Australian Government further invests in building healthy communities to address both the social and environmental known risk factors for diabetes, together with investment in health promotion programs targeting known risk factors.

ACN stresses the need for Australia to:

- Scale up type 2 diabetes prevention, including increasing funding and investment.
- Increase type 2 diabetes detection efforts, including more opportunistic screening in healthcare settings and community locations.
- Set clear, measurable targets for type 2 diabetes prevention and the prevention of diabetes-related complications.
- Ensure Australians with type 2 diabetes who want to attempt type 2 diabetes remission can access specialised support to help them.
- Introduce key population health-level prevention initiatives, including a levy on sugar-sweetened beverages, restrictions on marketing unhealthy food to children, strengthened Health Star Rating system and planning requirements that promote physical activity.
- Ensure all Australians can access affordable, healthy, fresh food.
- Recognise the importance of the Nursing role in managing diabetes and preventive health.

The ACN submission is number 245 at:

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary Business/Committees/House/Health Aged Care and Sport/Inquiry into Diabetes/Submissions](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Health_Aged_Care_and_Sport/Inquiry_into_Diabetes/Submissions)

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>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/acn_tweet

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/company/australian-college-of-nursing>

<http://www.linkedin.com/company/australian-college-of-nursing> Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/acn_nursing

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.