

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Nurses and Violence – Data, Awareness, Education and Protection Needed** *Parliamentary Friends of Nursing*

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is calling for action to address all incidences of nurses and violence – violence in the workplace, domestic violence in their own homes, caring for victims of domestic violence, and responding to child abuse and neglect.

At a Parliamentary Friends of Nursing (PFON) event at Parliament House in Canberra today, ACN released four Position Statements detailing nurses and violence issues and called for greater support from governments.

The Position Statements cover:

- Occupational violence against nurses;
- Second responder for callouts in rural, remote, and isolated workplace settings;
- Nurses and violence; and
- The role of nurses in a public health response to child abuse and neglect.

ACN CEO, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, said there is an urgent need for data, awareness, education, and protection to address all incidences of violence affecting the nursing profession.

“It is a sad reality that violence is part of the everyday lives of nurses,” Adjunct Professor Ward said.

“Nurses experience more occupational violence than prison guards and police officers.

“There is violence in their workplace. They see victims of domestic violence. They help children who experience domestic violence. They are victims of domestic violence in their own homes.

“Nurses are protectors. But they also need protection,” Adjunct Professor Ward said.

ACN President, Adjunct Professor David Plunkett FACN, told the Parliamentary Friends of Nursing that nurses are the lifeblood of every community in every electorate.

“We need your support to help build the nursing workforce to meet Australia’s growing and changing health needs,” Adjunct Professor Plunkett said.

“We need the right conditions to attract people to the nursing profession.

“We need the right conditions to retain nurses in the profession.

“We need incentives to bring nurses who are not working or doing other things back to the profession.

“We need support to build career pathways for nurses and keep them in the profession for long and rewarding careers.

“Nurses must be supported to live and work in rural, regional, and remote communities.

“We need to be supported to be able to work at our full scope of practice.

“We need safe workplaces.

“We need support to allow nurses to help others have safe lives and safe homes – free of violence.

“The health and wellbeing of nurses must be a priority as nurses always put patients and families first,” Adjunct Professor Plunkett said.

Key recommendations in the ACN Position Statements include:

- The Federal and State governments should fund and oversee the development of a nationally consistent data set for occupational violence to support national reporting and visibility of the size and scale of the problem.
- Funding for the development of a national campaign (including a code of conduct and media campaign) with a focus on zero tolerance to set the expectations in relation to appropriate behaviours in the community and across workplace environments with a focus on healthcare interactions.
- Introduce national legislation and regulation that supports organisations across all jurisdictions to enforce policies and procedures and provide clear guidance for health professionals and second responders to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all remote workers.
- Fund and implement the establishment of a Medicare Item number for a family violence wraparound package of care that includes counselling and therapeutic services, which is accessible to Nurse Practitioners as well as General Practitioners. This would be distinct from the existing mental health care plan.
- Ensure nurses are represented at all levels of decision-making in addressing child abuse and neglect - from Primary Health Network policies and guidelines to evaluation of the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children.

The co-convenors of Parliamentary Friends of Nursing are Shadow Assistant Minister for Regional Health and Member for Mallee, Dr Anne Webster MP, Member for Indi, Dr Helen Haines MP, and Member for Dunkley, Peta Murphy MP.

The ACN Position Statements are available at:

- <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/position-statement-occupational-violence-against-nurses.pdf>
- <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/position-statement-second-responder-for-callouts-in-rural-remote-and-isolated-workplace-settings.pdf>
- <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/position-statement-nurses-and-violence.pdf>
- <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/position-statement-the-role-of-nurses-in-a-public-health-response-to-child-abuse-and-neglect.pdf>

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#### 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](https://twitter.com/acn_tweet)

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

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/acn\\_nursing](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.