

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nurses call for policy action on World Health Day

Today marks 75 years since the establishment of the World Health Organization (WHO) and yet 30 per cent of the global population is still unable to access basic health services according to WHO's data. This year on World Health Day, WHO has looked back to its founding principle to set the theme of Health for All.

Inequality continues to be the insurmountable barrier to universal health care. As the cost-of-living increases globally, and we watch on as health spending decreases, social determinants of health will compound.

Australian College of Nursing (ACN) Chief Executive Officer, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, said as we struggle with the post-COVID economy, protecting universal health care needs to be the ultimate focus for policy makers in Australia.

"ACN is calling on state and federal governments to put universal health care at the heart of all social policy.

"Without a focus on primary care in the social policy space, we are guaranteeing future generations will have poorer health outcomes. We know that access to affordable, quality primary care in the early stages of a person's life leads to better health outcomes throughout life.

"Two years ago ACN released a White Paper [*Reimagining the Community and Primary Health Care System*](#), which I urge policy makers to read. The white paper outlines the current enablers and barriers to a more holistic, integrated, person-centred and [*value-based primary health care system*](#), and provides key recommendations for policy change.

"Many Australian families are struggling with the cost of living, which disproportionately affects those already vulnerable and marginalised. The nursing profession is the interface between the health system and the public, which is why governments should listen when we are concerned. Nurses are the largest and most geographically dispersed clinician group. We are Australia's solution to Health for All.

Enabling all nurses to work to their full training and scope would greatly improve access, equity and health disparity in Australia now and into the future.

Patients deserve this and nothing less, irrespective of their postcode, social or economic circumstances," Adjunct Professor Ward said.

ACN policy documents relating to primary care:

- [Reimagining the community and primary health care system](#)
- [The role of the nurse in the assessment and management of multimorbidity](#)
- [Person-centred care](#)
- [The role of nurses in chronic disease prevention and management in rural and remote areas](#)

For more information on ACN policy and advocacy work, please visit our [website](#).

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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.

Social media channels:

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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.