

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nurses say YES to Indigenous Voice to Parliament

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) today reaffirmed and amplified its support for a YES vote for the Indigenous Voice to Parliament in the upcoming Referendum.

ACN CEO, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, said the Indigenous Voice to Parliament is a historic human rights and health improvement opportunity for First Nations Australians – and all Australians.

“Closing the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians remains unfinished business and a national priority for our country,” Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward said.

“Nurses witness first-hand the health needs of all Australians in all settings in all locations every day.

“There are around 450,000 nurses and midwives spread across our great country – in every suburb, town, village, and remote communities, including Indigenous communities.

“We are the largest and most geographically dispersed health profession in Australia.

“The essential qualities of nursing – leadership, sacrifice, compassion, dedication, loyalty, and friendship – support people on their individual health journeys.

“We are their carers, and we are their navigators to lead them to the best health outcomes in a complex health system.

“Nurses are trusted and respected.

“Nurses are by the side of Australians to provide care, comfort, and advice at every stage of their lives.

“Midwives and nurses are with patients through maternity and childbirth. We listen to the voice of the mother and family to achieve the best outcome – together.

“Nurses are with families as their children grow and need primary care or treatment at emergency. We listen to their voices to achieve the best outcomes – together.

“Nurses are with patients when they need surgery, elective for a hip or a knee or in emergency or ICU after a serious accident or injury. We hear their voice to work for the best outcome – together.

“Nurses are with patients for vaccinations, routine and in health emergencies or pandemics such as COVID-19. We listen to their voice to achieve the best outcome – together.

“Nurses help manage patients with complex or chronic conditions like diabetes, asthma, or arthritis. We listen to their voice to get the best outcome – together.

“Nurses are there on the oncology ward to help patients through challenging and emotional times and treatments. We listen to their voice to help them get through emotionally and physically – together.

“Nurses are with our parents and grandparents in residential and home aged care at a time that is often when people are vulnerable and in need of particular care. We listen to their voice and make this time of life the best it can possibly be – together.

“And nurses are with patients when they are in palliative and end-of-life care. We listen very closely to their voices and create the best possible care and environment – together.

“Quality health care depends on hearing and heeding the voice of the patient.

“In the same way, the Federal Government can deliver better outcomes for First Nations Australians – especially in health and housing and education – by giving them a voice: an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

“Let’s all work together to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our Constitution and give them opportunities to inform policy decisions that directly impact them – like Closing the Gap.

“ACN says vote YES,” Adjunct Professor Ward said.

ACN is one of more than 120 health and medical organisations that last week signed an Open Letter in support of a Voice to Parliament to improve health outcomes for First Nations people and communities.

ACN is a Member of the Close the Gap Steering Committee.

ACN proudly supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

ACN stands proudly alongside other nursing and midwifery organisations that support the Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

ACN will this evening host a National Nursing Roadshow event in Brisbane – *Talking about the Voice to Parliament: An informed conversation without the noise*. The Panel discussion will feature ACN CEO Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN; three First Nations nurses from the ACN First Nations Faculty – Professor Odette Best FACN (Chair), Mel Robinson MACN, and Adjunct Associate Professor Lynore Geia MACN; and Selwyn Button, a member of the Referendum Engagement Group and Chair of the Lowitja Institute.

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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>

X (formally known as 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.