

MEDIA RELEASE

6 March 2017

Rising Obesity Rates tip Australia towards Kidney Disease Crisis

The growing national obesity crisis is set to lead to a significant increase in chronic conditions, such as kidney disease, a new report released by Kidney Health Australia has highlighted.

The report, ***Obesity and Chronic Kidney Disease: the Hidden Impact***, has been launched today to coincide with Kidney Health Week, 5 to 11 March, and World Kidney Day, 9 March.

The report documents skyrocketing obesity rates across Australian Primary Health Networks and highlights the link to above-average chronic kidney disease rates in many of these areas.

This comparison reveals that in the 16 health areas across the country where obesity rates are above the national average of 63 per cent, the majority also have higher than average estimated rates of chronic kidney disease.

Kidney Health Australia CEO Mikaela Stafrace said it was a very concerning situation. "In these health areas where obesity is above the national average of 63 per cent, there is a risk that chronic kidney disease rates will also be above the national average."

"There appears to be a strong correlation between obesity and chronic kidney disease rates in some areas, perhaps even higher in Northern Territory, Western NSW and Country South Australia, but we won't know for certain until more data is captured."

"Being obese is a potent risk factor for the development of kidney disease," said Ms Stafrace, "In obese people the kidneys have to work harder, filtering more blood than normal. This increase in function can damage the kidneys – effectively shutting them down – and cause kidney disease."

"It's critical that Australians understand that when your kidneys shut down, your body shuts down."

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- **2 in 3 (63%) of Australians are overweight (35%) or obese (28%)**
- **Overweight people increase their risk of developing kidney disease by 1.5 times**
- **Obese people double their risk of developing kidney disease**
- **1.7 million Australian adults have at least one clinical sign of chronic kidney disease, yet 90% don't know they do**
- **Estimated that 510,000 Australians have signs of chronic kidney disease that may be due to obesity**
- **90% of kidney function can be lost before it is detected; it is a silent killer**
- **One Australian dies every 25 minutes (or 60 per day) with kidney-related disease**
- **Number of Australians dependent on dialysis or kidney transplant to stay alive expected to rise by 60% between 2011-220**
- **Obesity is also a risk factor for developing kidney stones and kidney cancer**
- **Severe obesity projected to rise by 13% by 2025**
- **By 2025, it is projected that 1 in 6 women and 1 in 10 men will be severely obese**

-continues-

Obesity and Chronic Kidney Disease: The Hidden Impact highlights that the prevalence of obesity, and severe obesity, among Australian adults is predicted to increase exponentially over the next decade.

“If you’re at increased risk of developing kidney disease due to your weight, ask your GP for a simple Kidney Health Check and start taking control of your kidney health before you become another statistic,” added Ms Stafrace, “If caught early, and managed appropriately with lifestyle changes and medications, you can slow the progression of kidney disease by as much as 50% and, in some cases, even reverse the effects of the disease.”

For more information on Kidney Health Week and to read the full report, visit kidney.org.au.

Kidney Health Australia, formerly the Australian Kidney Foundation, is a national health care charity with a vision 'to save and improve the lives of Australians affected by kidney disease'. As the national peak body, Kidney Health Australia promotes good kidney health through delivery of programs in education, advocacy, research and support.

- ENDS -

NOTE TO EDS.

Kidney Health Australia’s **Obesity and Chronic Kidney Disease: the Hidden Impact** report highlights the damaging impact of obesity on kidney disease:

Table 1: Estimated adult obesity and CKD rates across Primary Health Network areas, 2014-15

PHN Area	Estimated Obesity Rates	Estimated CKD rates##
Australia	63%	10%
Country SA	73%	8%
Western NSW	71%	9%
Darling Downs & West Moreton (Qld)	70%	16%
Western Victoria	70%	14%
South Eastern NSW	69%	20%
Murray (Vic & part NSW)	68%	14%
Hunter New England & Central Coast (NSW)	68%	12%
Tasmania	68%	11%
Country WA	67%	14%
Central Qld, Wide Bay & Sunshine Coast	67%	13%
Nepean Blue Mountains (NSW)	67%	6%
Eastern Melbourne (Vic)	66%	14%
Northern Queensland	66%	13%
Western Sydney (NSW)	65%	12%
Northern Territory*	64%	8%
Australian Capital Territory	64%	7%
Adelaide (SA)	63%	9%
Brisbane South (Qld)	62%	12%
Perth South (WA)	61%	15%
Gold Coast (Qld)	61%	6%
North Western Melbourne (Vic)	60%	13%
North Coast (NSW)	60%	6%
South Eastern Melbourne (Vic)	59%	14%
Brisbane North (Qld)	58%	9%
South Western Sydney (NSW)	58%	9%
Central & Eastern Sydney (NSW)	57%	15%
Perth North (WA)	57%	8%
Northern Sydney (NSW)	53%	7%
Murrumbidgee (NSW)	NP	13%
Gippsland (Vic)	NP	NP
Western Queensland	NP	NP

Shaded cells represent PHN's with rates of overweight/obesity or CKD higher than the national average

* ~25% of the population live in very remote area and discrete Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities, and are excluded from these data.

These rates are estimations only, and may be an underestimation in some PHN's that incorporate rural and/or very remote areas.

NP Not available for publication but included in totals where appropriate

Source Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and Kidney Health Australia

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact:

Cassandra Bradshaw

National Media and Communications Manager

Kidney Health Australia

T (03) 9674 4313 **M** 0402 346 197

cassandra.bradshaw@kidney.org.au

Antonia Liosatos

Media Advisor

Kidney Health Australia

M 0458 000 955

tonia.liosatos@kidney.org.au