

MEDIA RELEASE

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**SILENT KILLER: ONE IN THREE AT RISK OF
CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE**

Kidney related disease kills more Australians each year than breast cancer, prostate cancer and road accidents combined, yet awareness of this silent killer remains low according to Australia's leading kidney health organisation.

Kidney Health Australia Interim CEO Lisa Murphy said while one in three Australians is at increased risk of developing kidney related disease, and 53 are dying with kidney related disease every day, most are tragically unaware they have it until it is too late.

"One Australian dies every 27 minutes and 1.7 million are affected by chronic kidney disease but it is highly undiagnosed and less than ten percent of people who are affected know they have the disease," Dr Murphy said.

"The more Australians that know their risk and check their kidneys, the higher chance we have of sparing millions of Australians from prolonged suffering, expensive dialysis and unacceptably high fatalities."

Dr Murphy said one simple online test, which helps people to understand their risk factors, could help prevent this devastating and costly toll. Kidney-related illness is estimated to cost the Australian economy \$4.1 billion a year and is projected to rise to \$12 billion by 2020.

With the launch of **Kidney Health Week (March 5 to 11)** today, Kidney Health Australia is urging everyone to see if they are one of the 'one in three' people living in Australia who is at increased risk of developing chronic kidney disease, by taking a simple online Kidney Risk Test.

"It's important Australians know the indicators of chronic kidney disease, as 90 percent of kidney function can be lost without any symptoms and early detection is vital to successful treatment," Dr Murphy said.

"If caught early, chronic kidney disease is very treatable and in some cases can even be reversed entirely. This is why we are urging all Australians to know their risk profile and, if they fall into a high-risk group, to get their kidneys checked by a general practitioner."

Australians at risk of developing chronic kidney disease include those who have diabetes, high blood pressure, established heart problems such as heart failure or heart attack, have had a previous stroke, a family history of kidney failure, are obese with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher, smoke, have a history of acute kidney injury, are 60+ years or are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

Tragically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are twice as likely to have indicators of chronic kidney disease and four times more likely to die from it than the general population.

"Almost 20 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults has indicators of chronic kidney disease however the vast majority is unaware they are at risk," Dr Murphy said.

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“A lack of awareness of being in a high-risk group and late referral being more common with Indigenous Australians is placing a disproportionate amount of suffering on our first nation people.

“Early detection and referral saves lives, and the more Australians know their risk and check their kidneys, the higher chance we have of sparing millions of Australians from unnecessary suffering, dialysis and death.

“Our message this Kidney Health Week is don’t wait until you feel sick. Take our online test and if you are high-risk, get your kidneys checked,” she said.

To take Kidney Health Australia’s online Kidney Risk Test, to find out if you are at an increased risk of developing chronic kidney disease, and for more information on Kidney Health Week, visit www.kidney.org.au.

Hashtag: #KHW18

About Kidney Health Australia

Kidney Health Australia, formerly the Australian Kidney Foundation, is a national health care charity and peak body with a vision 'to save and improve the lives of Australians affected by kidney disease. In 2018, Kidney Health Australia celebrates its 50th anniversary.

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