

MEDIA RELEASE  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Governor General Celebrates 50 Years of Kidney Health Australia

As Patron of Kidney Health Australia, His Excellency the Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove, and Lady Cosgrove, hosted a large contingent of the kidney community at Admiralty House on Monday, 3 September to celebrate 50 years since its foundation in 1968, and to present two significant awards: the Mark Colvin Scholarship in partnership with the ABC, and the Kincaid-Smith Medal to acknowledge an outstanding contribution to kidney disease research.

Kidney Health Australia is a not-for-profit and the peak body for kidney health in Australia with a vision 'to save and improve the lives of people living in Australia affected by kidney disease.'

**Sir Peter Cosgrove stated, "Whilst there has been enormous progress made since 1968, 1.7 million Australians are affected by kidney disease, and 1.5 million are not aware of it. For all the education, advocacy, research and support, kidney disease continues to be a silent killer. Ninety per cent of kidney function can be lost without any symptoms. Picking up any disease late is never a good thing."**

**"53 Australians, like Mark Colvin, die every day from kidney-related disease. That's one person every 27 minutes - more than breast cancer, prostate cancer and road accidents combined. It's time to take action!" says Professor Carol Pollock, Chair of Kidney Health Australia**

**Professor Pollock went on to explain that "Mark was a strong advocate for kidney health awareness due to his own experience firstly with kidney failure as a result of a rare autoimmune disease triggered by an infection, which required him to be on dialysis for many years; and then with his life-saving kidney transplant in 2013.**

**"Mark's passion and commitment to raise the profile of kidney disease in Australia was on par with his committed approach to journalism, and Kidney Health Australia is honoured to partner with the ABC to establish the inaugural Mark Colvin Scholarship, and we congratulate Alex Tighe for being this year's recipient. Alex's personal story of living with his mother's kidney disease made him stand out as a clear winner."**

## Mark Colvin Scholarship

The 12-month paid cadetship commemorates the life and work of the esteemed ABC journalist, who died in 2017 due to complications related to kidney disease.

ABC Managing Director Michelle Guthrie said: **"The Mark Colvin Scholarship is a fitting tribute for such a giant of Australian journalism, ensuring that his commitment to accuracy, honesty and integrity will be passed on to future generations.**

**"Alex Tighe is a worthy recipient of this honour. Alex's work in law and journalism demonstrates the qualities of critical analysis, creativity and curiosity that Mark held so dear. I am confident that Alex will continue Mark's great legacy at the ABC."**

Alex, 23, has worked in community media as a writer, editor and radio producer. His journalism career started aged 13 when he hosted a program on community radio. **His work includes a story on his mother's kidney disease and the challenges of accessing medical treatment in regional NSW.** He has held internships at ABC RN, triple j and *Four Corners* and worked as a paralegal and media adviser for a Sydney law firm.

## Kincaid-Smith Medal

Research is a fundamental pillar of Kidney Health Australia, and the Kincaid-Smith Medal is the highest accolade awarded to an Australian citizen or resident in recognition of outstanding clinical and scientific achievement in research into the treatment of diseases of the kidney and urinary tract.

**"We proudly announce Doctor Carmel Hawley as the 2018 Kincaid-Smith Medal in acknowledgement of her outstanding contribution to nephrology and medicine."** said Professor Pollock

Presented only eight times since its inception in 1994, Doctor Hawley was selected for her strong track record in clinical research over the past two decades. Her greatest contribution to research has been as the principal driver of the Australasian Kidney Trials Network (AKTN). She has taken this from a mere concept to its current status as a nationally and internationally respected trials group performing world-class research, innovating and leading in trial design and collaborating with leading international groups to improve the care and treatments for patients with kidney disease with the aim of improving the evidence base of care, quality of life and outcomes.

The award honours the late Emeritus Professor Kincaid-**Smith's clinical and scientific achievements** in the field of nephrology both in Australia and globally as well as her many years of service to the former Australian Kidney Foundation as one of its founders in 1968. In the early 1960s, Professor Priscilla Kincaid-Smith demonstrated overwhelming evidence of a link between headache powders and kidney damage, and campaigned against their use. Her research also contributed to a link between the kidneys and high blood pressure.

Doctor Hawley thanked the Governor-General and praised Priscilla Kincaid-Smith, saying, "She was amazing pioneer for women in science, particularly in the area of research into kidney disease, and she paved the way for my career. I am honoured to receive such a prestigious award in acknowledgement for the work that that has been achieved through the Australasian Kidney Trials Network. **Thank you to Kidney Health Australia for your continued support."**

With the support of Government, individuals and organisations, Kidney Health Australia has led and achieved significant progress across the years in the areas of kidney research, advocacy, education and support, such as awarding more than \$30 million towards research; and raising awareness through community events such as the Big Red Kidney Walks, which are happening around Australia this month.

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For media enquiries, please contact:  
Kidney Health Australia  
Phone: 0434 801 485 or email: [media@kidney.org.au](mailto:media@kidney.org.au)

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[www.kidney.org.au](http://www.kidney.org.au)