

MEDIA RELEASE
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New report highlights billion-dollar burden of kidney disease treatments

A new report released today by Kidney Health Australia reveals the spiraling and costly number of Australians with signs of chronic kidney disease. The *'State of the Nation: Chronic Kidney Disease Hot Spots'* report identifies 20 areas in Australia where the burden of chronic kidney disease is high.

Kidney Health Australia CEO, Anne Wilson, says the annual snapshot of the nation's kidney health, released to coincide with this year's Kidney Health Week 22-28 May, also highlights that people with CKD incur 85% higher healthcare costs and 50% higher government subsidies than individuals without it.

"On average, 1 in 10 Australian adults have signs of chronic kidney disease. The total cost solely attributable to chronic kidney disease in Australia is an estimated \$4.1 billion made up of \$2.5 billion in direct healthcare costs, \$700 million in direct non-healthcare costs, and \$900 million in government subsidies. In addition, dialysis and transplantation for end stage kidney disease (ESKD) are estimated to cost a combined \$1 billion each year," she said.

Admission to hospital for end stage kidney disease treatment is one of the key contributors to these costs. Of 10.2 million admissions to hospitals in 2014/15, over 1.3 million admissions (13%) were for life-saving kidney dialysis treatments.

"Admissions for dialysis have increased by 3.6% on average each year, with the latest data indicating there are 22,234 people on dialysis or living with a transplant in Australia. This number is expected to continue to spiral to 31,589 by 2020," said Ms Wilson, "This will mean a growth of 60 per cent from 2011, which is more than quadruple Australia's projected population growth of 13 per cent for the same period."

Ms Wilson added that compounding this is the number of people whose end stage kidney disease is caused by diabetes. Globally the number of people with diabetes has nearly quadrupled since 1980.

"Kidney Health Australia is calling on an incoming Federal Government to fund an Integrated Health Check for kidney disease, diabetes and heart disease," added Ms Wilson, "Improving early detection measures for kidney disease is critical and has the potential to significantly delay the decline in kidney function and reduce the number of Australians progressing to dialysis, not only improving health outcomes for patients, but also reducing costs for governments."

"We need a national strategy on kidney disease and dialysis in this country, and initiatives to better support home dialysis in particular."

The *'State of the Nation: Chronic Kidney Disease Hot Spots'* report also reveals the 20 hot spots for chronic kidney disease across the country, and that the gap in Indigenous kidney health remains a critical issue, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people more than twice as likely as non-Indigenous people to have indicators of chronic kidney disease.

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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.

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