

MEDIA RELEASE

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Kidney Health Australia welcomes new Health and Indigenous Health Ministers

Kidney Health Australia CEO Mikaela Stafrace has welcomed the appointment of the Hon. Greg Hunt MP as the new Federal Health Minister.

Ms Stafrace says the appointment comes at a critical juncture in the fight against the growing burden of chronic kidney disease in the community. In 2014-15 kidney disease was the most common single reason for admission to hospital out of a total of 10 million hospital admissions.

“Kidney disease is estimated to cost \$2.5 billion per year in direct healthcare costs, while the personal cost to Australians is immeasurable,” said Ms Stafrace.

“Kidney Health Australia looks forward to working with Mr Hunt on a range of major issues outlined in our [National Action Plan](#), including improving early detection in a primary care setting, increasing organ donation rates, adopting a national approach to dialysis.”

Ms Stafrace said in total 1.7 million Australians are living with kidney disease. Even more alarming is that 90% of people with kidney disease - which equates to 1.5 million people nationally - don't even know that they have it, as there are generally no warning signs.

“One of the most frightening things about kidney disease is you can lose up to 90% of your kidney function, before experiencing any symptoms – it really is a silent killer,” she said.

“We are missing early opportunities to detect and manage kidney disease and potentially avoid the complications of chronic kidney disease and the need for dialysis or transplant, and we also need the expansion of the NDIS to include CKD and end stage disease sufferers”, Ms Stafrace said, “I look forward to tackling these issues head on with Mr Hunt.”

The burden of kidney disease is growing. The latest data indicates that there are 22,234 people on dialysis, or living with a transplant in Australia. By 2020 this number is expected to spiral up to 31,589. This is a 60% increase from 2011, and more than quadruple Australia's projected population growth of 13% for the same period. The number of people whose end stage kidney disease is caused by Type 2 diabetes is projected to double between 2011 and 2020.

Ms Stafrace also welcomed news of the Hon. Ken Wyatt MP's promotion to Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health, noting the dire need to turn around the devastating rates of chronic kidney disease being experienced by Indigenous Australians.

“At the moment 1 in 10 non-Indigenous Australians are living with clinical signs of kidney disease, while within the Indigenous population this is a heart-breaking 1 in 5.”

For more information about the work of Kidney Health Australia and to read the National Action Plan, visit kidney.org.au.

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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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