**MEDIA RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

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**1.5 MILLION REASONS TO GET YOUR KIDNEYS CHECKED**

**TODAY IS WORLD KIDNEY DAY**

Kidney disease affects 1.7 million people in Australia – but a staggering 1.5 million are not even aware they have it.

This **World Kidney Day** (Thursday, March 10) Kidney Health Australia is calling on the public to visit their GP and get a Kidney Health Check.

After two years of the pandemic, regular kidney health checks could not be more important, according to Kidney Health Australia CEO, Chris Forbes.

Mr Forbes said: “For those in a high-risk category it is absolutely essential to stay on top of your kidney health by getting regular checks with your GP. Lockdowns have resulted in people not visiting medical professionals as often as they normally would, so we are urging at-risk Australians to book a Kidney Health Check with their GP.”

People can lose 90 per cent of kidney function without experiencing any visible symptoms, so early detection is paramount. With one in three Australians having an increased risk of kidney disease, the leading risk factors for chronic kidney disease are diabetes and high blood pressure. Other factors that increase a person’s risk include smoking, obesity, family history, being over the age of 60, or over the age of 30 if you are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin and having a previous acute kidney injury or a history of heart problems.

Young people are also impacted by severe kidney disease, including Luke Macauley from Adelaide who was diagnosed very late at stage 5 at the age of 23. After noticing he was fatigued and had a swollen foot, he was put on dialysis for six months before needing a kidney transplant. This may have been avoided with early detection.

Luke said: “When I was 18, I would never have guessed I had kidney disease. I lost so many good years because I didn’t know what the signs or symptoms were. By the time I was diagnosed, I needed dialysis and a transplant. It would have only taken a simple blood test and everything could have been different.”

All Australians who are in a high-risk category (such as those with diabetes and high blood pressure) or people who have recently had severe COVID-19 illness should visit their local GP for a kidney check.

Kidney Health Week is held from March 7 – 13, with World Kidney Day falling on Thursday, March 10. For more information visit Kidney Health Australia’s website at **www.kidney.org.au**.

**About Kidney Health Australia**

Kidney Health Australia is a not-for-profit organisation and the peak body for kidney health in Australia. As the recognised national voice for kidney disease, we are increasing awareness and early detection for kidney health to support a healthier community, with the aim to ensure the 1.7 million Australians with signs of kidney disease are diagnosed and have delayed progression of their disease.

To find out more visit [**www.kidney.org.au**](http://www.kidney.org.au/).

**Interviews**

Prof Karen Dwyer, Nephrologist and Clinical Director, Kidney Health Australia

Chris Forbes, CEO of Kidney Health Australia

Luke Macauley, person living with kidney disease

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