

# KIDNEY DISEASE ON TRACK TO BECOME WORLD'S 5<sup>TH</sup> LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH

## NATIONAL PEAK BODY URGED AUSTRALIANS TO GET CHECKED FOR KIDNEY DISEASE: SIMPLE TWO-MINUTE TEST COULD SAVE A LIFE

This World Kidney Day, March 13, Kidney Health Australia is calling on Australians to find out early if they're at risk of kidney disease, because waiting for symptoms to appear is too late to take action.

Research from the Medical Advisory Council of the Global Patient Alliance for Kidney Health has found Chronic Kidney Disease is on trend to become the 5<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death worldwide by 2050, up from 9<sup>th</sup> in 2017, and 18<sup>th</sup> in 1990.

Three in four Aussies are at risk of kidney disease, with the highest contributing factors being diabetes and high blood pressure. The absence of symptoms until the disease is well advanced can mean that kidney disease is often not diagnosed until it's too late to avoid kidney failure.

Alarmingly, 1.8 million Australians have kidney disease and are unaware of it.

Ninety per cent of kidney function can be lost without symptoms, meaning diagnosis is often too late. With no cure, early detection can slow or stop the progression of this deadly disease.

The consequences for people with the disease are dire. For people whose kidneys deteriorate to the point of kidney failure, treatment options involve either Dialysis - where a machine cleans the blood as they kidneys can no longer do this work) or a kidney transplant to stay alive.

“Early detection is the key to stopping kidney disease in its tracks, and it starts with a simple two-minute online risk test,” said Kidney Health Australia CEO Chris Forbes.

“This World Kidney Day, we urge every Australian to take the test – because knowing your risk today could save your life tomorrow.”

Dialysis treatment involves being connected to a machine for 15-30 hours per week and has a large impact on health and wellbeing of individuals. Many people on dialysis say they are surviving but not thriving.

The waiting list for a kidney transplant is approximately 2.2 years, however some patients can wait over a decade to receive a compatible organ. Kidney Transplants are not a cure and require a lifetime regimen of tablets, suppressed immune systems and increased cancer risk. Transplants can fail, meaning that for those who have previously received this gift of life are faced with retuning to the machines.

Forget holidays with loved ones or holding down a job – even making the bed in the morning is too hard for many people living with kidney failure. Kidney disease does not discriminate and can strike at any time, regardless of your lifestyle.

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) costs taxpayers \$9.9 billion annually, \$5.1 billion of which is attributed to lost productivity (reduced employment, absenteeism and absenteeism) with the total cost to the health care system alone estimated at \$2.3 billion.

The financial burden on the individual is equally alarming: 82.5 per cent of patients report that dialysis has put them on a path toward financial hardship.

Kidney Health Australia has clinicians and CEO Chris Forbes available to speak about:

- The number of Australians with kidney disease
- The importance of early detection
- The organisation's vision to End Dialysis by 2050
- The two-minute test to check if you are at risk

Kidney Health Australia also has case studies available.

**Hayley Van Hostauyen, 29, from Endeavour Hills in Melbourne:**

- Mum to Sage, 2, born premature due to Hayley's end-stage renal failure.
- Diagnosed with CKD during pregnancy, requiring 20+ hospital admissions in 2 years.
- Experienced acute kidney injury and severe nephrosis.
- Awaiting a transplant.
- A hairdresser unable to work due to her illness.
- Struggles with loneliness and isolation post-diagnosis.
- Finds it hard being an active mum.

**Michael Adams, 50, from Ballarat:**

- Owns a lawn mowing business.
- Before his second kidney transplant (October 2023) he was wrecked, unable to work due to dialysis fatigue.
- Spent 12-14 hours a day in bed, barely able to get up.
- Formerly worked as a prison officer and in transport, but had to change careers due to medical appointments.
- Dialysis three times a week meant missing work, family events and a trip to Darwin.
- Has had two kidney transplants, the first in 2005.
- Partner Dee offered to be a donor but wasn't a match. Since his second transplant he's full of energy and has started his own business.
- Recovery had setbacks (infection), but kidney function is now at 85%.

**For further information**

**Rebeka Powell**

Stamping Ground – PR

[rebeka@stampingground.com.au](mailto:rebeka@stampingground.com.au)

0459 900 045