



Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030

Foreword from Board Chair

Kidney Health Australia stands at a defining moment. After decades as Australia's national voice for kidney disease, we are entering a new era — shaped not by where we have been, but by what we know is achievable.

The people we serve are at the centre of this strategy. The patient managing their condition daily, the carer navigating an uncertain journey, the family hoping for a transplant, the Australian who does not yet know their kidneys are under threat.

In 2025, we launched our bold aspiration to **End Dialysis by 2050** — a call to governments, healthcare systems, industry and the community to fundamentally reimagine kidney disease, shifting the paradigm from kidney failure to kidney preservation. This is our commitment for the next 25 years.

The urgency is clear. Kidney disease is in crisis in Australia and more than **2.5 million Australians** don't even know they're living with markers of kidney disease. The burden is too heavy and so we must act now.

We have the passion, the programs and the partnerships to change the trajectory. This five year strategy is our plan to do exactly that.

Our five strategic pillars — championing awareness, driving early detection, enhancing patient care and disease management, advancing transplant access, and fostering research and innovation — are the engines that will drive us toward a future free from dialysis dependency.

By 2050, we will have increased early detection, reduced late-stage presentations and expanded access to life-saving transplants. It is an achievable vision, built on the belief that every Australian deserves healthy kidneys.



Professor Carol Pollock AO
Chair MB, BS, PhD, FRACP, FAAHMS

Acknowledgement of Country

Kidney Health Australia respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, water, sky and community. We pay our respects to the peoples, cultures, and Elders past and present. We acknowledge the over-representation of First Nations Australians in kidney disease and recommit to working with communities to close the gap on kidney health outcomes.

CEO Introduction

One in seven Australians is living with kidney disease. Most do not know it. That is not a statistic, it is a crisis hiding in plain sight.

In just a decade, cases have surged by more than one million. Chronic kidney disease now costs Australia an estimated **\$9.9 billion annually** and drives one in six hospitalisations, making it one of our fastest-growing and most costly health challenges. Yet it receives a fraction of the national attention and investment.

The situation demands we act. Up to **90 per cent of kidney function** can be lost before a single symptom appears. There is no cure. When kidneys fail, patients face dialysis of up to 15 hours a week, or the uncertainty of waiting for a scarce donor kidney. This is a future we can prevent, but only if we intervene early, invest boldly and act now.

End Dialysis by 2050 sets the horizon. This five-year strategy is how we begin delivering it with five pillars, clear priorities and a growing coalition behind us, working hand in hand with our community and stakeholders.

We have the evidence. We have already demonstrated what is achievable. The **Kidney Health 4 Life** and **Kidney Health 4 Youth** programs are transforming the lives of thousands of Australians at every stage of kidney disease. Industry partners and those with lived experience have united behind a shared mandate for early detection. We are determined to make that possible.

What is required now is collective will — from government, from industry, from healthcare professionals, from communities and from every Australian who believes that preventable kidney failure is unacceptable.

**We can do it.
Join us in this journey.**



Chris Forbes
Chief Executive Officer, Kidney Health Australia



Our Vision

**Healthy kidneys
for all Australians**

Our Bold Aspiration

**End Dialysis
by 2050**

Our Values

We care about people

- We act with integrity and treat people with respect.
- We ask questions, listen, collaborate and empower people.
- We act with compassion and demonstrate empathy.

We are aspirational

- We unite and guide others in a shared vision of the future.
- We are curious and embrace new ideas.
- We think critically to find better ways of doing things.

We seek impact

- We improve the lives of the Kidney Community through delivering measurable outcomes.
- We do as we say we'll do.
- We learn from our mistakes, act on feedback and celebrate our successes.



Good enough is not good enough

With first-hand experience of barriers to treatment, Jamen advocates for optimal CKD care for rural and remote communities.

I developed kidney failure several years after having been diagnosed with an autoimmune disease (systemic lupus erythematosus) at age 20. I spent 7 years of my twenties on dialysis before receiving a transplant, which lasted 9 years. I returned to dialysis for another difficult 7 years until I was given a new transplant, which has gone well.

*Living with dialysis is not only difficult and constraining, but I sometimes had to speak up for myself to get the best care. During one checkup in a regional clinic, **a doctor told me I seemed to be doing well enough on dialysis and suggested we could delay transplant.** I am now very glad I didn't have to accept indefinitely compromised quality of life as a young person.*

Since my teens, I've experienced multiple medical investigations, treatments, and hospital stays, and as an adult I've worked with regional and remote health services to improve health outcomes for First Nations communities. Having experienced excellent care, but also the gaps in our health system, I know we can do better for our people. There is an urgent need to support healthy lifestyles for people living in our remote Aboriginal communities, including by providing access to healthy food, clean drinking water, and good health care.

Jamen Wilcox, Mamu Yindinji man, occupational health and safety consultant, consultant on Indigenous health care, and patient advocate

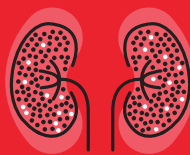
Why Kidney Disease Matters

The kidney crisis in Australia is a public health emergency which cannot be ignored. More than **2.5 million Australians** don't know they're living with markers of kidney disease. In Central Australia we now see the highest rates of treated kidney failure per capita in the world. The cost of preventable deaths and unnecessary costs to the Australian economy are neither palatable nor sustainable.



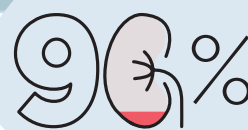
CKD is common.

1 in 7 Australians are affected by kidney disease.



A hidden national problem.

2.5M Australians are unaware they have signs of kidney disease.



People do not know they have kidney disease.

You can lose **90%** of kidney function without symptoms.

Kidney disease is under-detected in Australia.

Only **23%** of people at known risk of CKD have had a **Kidney Health Check** in the last two years.



A silent killer.

50% of people with kidney disease die prematurely of a heart attack or stroke.

A growing threat.

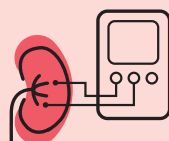
1 million more Australians are affected by CKD than a decade ago.



Major impact on Australian families.

Australians with kidney failure are on life-support three days a week, five hours at a time.

Indefinitely.



If we do nothing...

CKD will be the **5th** leading cause of death globally by 2050.



Detecting kidney disease early saves money.

Every **\$1** invested in early intervention, **saves \$45** in health care costs.

The 5 Strategic Pillars

Our Vision

Healthy kidneys for
all Australians

Our Bold Aspiration

End Dialysis by 2050

Pillar 1

Champion
Awareness

Pillar 2

Drive Early
Detection

Pillar 3

Enhance Patient
Care and Disease
Management

Pillar 4

Advance Access
to Kidney
Transplantation
& Innovative Care

Pillar 5

Foster
Research and
Innovation

Guiding Principles

People and culture

Consumer voice

Advocacy

Collaboration

Digital and data capability

Financial sustainability

Pillar 1

Champion Awareness

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) affects **1 in 7 Australians**, yet remains poorly understood outside the kidney community. Kidney Health Australia is committed to closing this gap. By investing in targeted awareness campaigns, professional education and community engagement, we will elevate kidney health to its rightful place alongside the nation's leading health priorities. Together, we will ensure it is recognised, prioritised, and acted upon nationally.

Key outcomes

- 1.** Australian public aware of what kidney disease is, if they are at risk, and how to take action.
- 2.** Healthcare professionals proactively raise kidney disease in every chronic disease consultation.
- 3.** A wide range of stakeholders actively supporting and collaborating on the Kidney Health Australia mission.
- 4.** Stronger policy support for raising awareness and prioritising routine kidney screening.





Key actions

1.1 Run national awareness campaigns

- Launch culturally safe campaigns across multiple channels to build public understanding of what kidneys do, what kidney disease is, and what actions to take.
- Audiences to include those who face the greatest barriers to health information and those at highest risk of kidney disease.

1.2 Share lived experience stories

- Use co-designed and lived experience storytelling, featuring diverse real-life kidney disease journeys to drive engagement and understanding.

1.3 Educate and engage healthcare professionals

- Launch targeted awareness campaigns for GPs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners (AHP), promoting kidney health discussions and reinforcing three-step testing.
- Advocate for systemic healthcare changes, such as CKD risk prompts in medical software and inclusion of kidney checks in routine chronic disease consultations.

1.4 Build partnerships and collaboration opportunities

- Establish and grow collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders including corporates, media and other charities to expand audience reach for kidney awareness and Kidney Health Australia programs.

1.5 Advocate for change

- Utilise public awareness to secure stronger political recognition of kidney disease, positioning it as a national health priority and drive sustained government attention, investment and action.

Pillar 2

Drive Early Detection

Over **2.5 million Australians** have early signs of kidney disease and don't even know it. Kidney Health Australia is changing this by running targeted early detection campaigns, supporting healthcare professionals, and advocating for system change so every Australian at risk of kidney disease gets a simple **Kidney Health Check**.

Targeted early detection can prevent over **38,200 premature deaths** and avoid **237,324 related cardiovascular hospitalisations** over the next 20 years.

Key outcomes

- 1.** More Australians at risk proactively ask to get a Kidney Health Check at their GP.
- 2.** Rates of people diagnosed more closely resemble prevalence rates.
- 3.** Healthcare professionals feel confident and supported to deliver best practice kidney care.
- 4.** Innovative models of care are trialled and expanded outside GP settings.
- 5.** Policy reform unlocks dedicated funding for Kidney Health Checks.
- 6.** Kidney Health Checks become standard part of all heart, diabetes and First Nations (715) Health Checks.





Key actions

2.1 Launch targeted early detection campaigns

- Educate people at risk (diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, smokers, obese, acute kidney injury, over 60 years, over 18 years First Nations, and a family history of kidney failure) to ask their GP for a regular Kidney Health Check.
- Increase awareness of kidney disease burden, risk factors and targeted detection among healthcare professionals.

2.2 Empower capability across the healthcare workforce

- Support health professionals with evidence-based guidelines, practice tools and resources to drive detection and diagnosis.
- Drive early adoption of guideline-recommended medications.

2.3 Reimagine innovative approaches to detection and diagnosis

- Pilot and scale alternative models of care in community settings.
- Influence the introduction of automations, such as AI prompts, in clinical systems to proactively identify at-risk patients earlier.

2.4 Shaping Health Policy and system change

- Advocate for dedicated funding for Kidney Health Checks within existing chronic disease health assessments.
- Collaborate across the cardio-kidney-metabolic sectors to enhance person-centred outcomes.

2.5 First Nations kidney health

- Develop culturally safe and trauma-informed awareness, care and education into early detection activities, in partnership with First Nations communities and Aboriginal Community controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs).
- Establish a National First Nations Renal Community of Practice, grounded in self-determination, cultural safety, and Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing.
- Advocate and partner with programs that tackle social determinants and racism.

Pillar 3

Enhance Patient Care and Disease Management

Kidney Health Australia, through its **Kidney Health 4 Life** and **Kidney Health 4 Youth** programs, is committed to empowering every Australian living with, or at risk of, kidney disease with the knowledge, tools and support to manage their kidney health confidently. This empowerment also helps reduce pressure on healthcare professionals by strengthening self management and early intervention.

Key outcomes

1. Strengthen the physical and psychological wellbeing of the kidney community through the growth of the **Kidney Health 4 Life** program.
2. First Nations communities accessing Kidney Health Australia programs report improved wellbeing.
3. Outside of clinical treatment, **Kidney Health 4 Life** is the top referred service by health professionals to support patients.
4. Sustainable partnerships ensure **Kidney Health 4 Life** grows and thrives long term.
5. Healthcare professionals deliver consistent, world class CKD management with confidence and clarity.





Key actions

3.1 Expand kidney health self-care guidance

- Increase preventative kidney health support through education and lifestyle management, including health coaching and dietetic services.
- Support psychological wellbeing through expanding mental health resources alongside expanded peer connection opportunities.
- Continue to engage the kidney community in advocacy, research co-design and community awareness initiatives.

3.2 Ensure equity and access to kidney health support

- Foster equitable, culturally safe care for all people with kidney disease, with initiatives for First Nations peoples grounded in self-determination and cultural safety, and designed, guided and led by community.
- Enhance women's health support, with initiatives that provide guidance from puberty through to menopause.

3.3 Support the patient and healthcare provider relationship

- Embed **Kidney Health 4 Life** and **Kidney Health 4 Youth** across primary, tertiary and allied health networks.
- Develop digital tools, systems and integrations to enable seamless, direct referral into KH4L and KH4Y programs.

3.4 Build capability and sustainability

- Strengthen digital capabilities that expand access, while maintaining a secure, engaging and easy user experience.
- Secure commercial partners, and paid or licensed subscribers to grow these programs.

3.5 Support best practice kidney care

- Address gaps between guideline recommended care and real-world practice to improve outcomes for people living with kidney disease.
- Implement programs to support the uptake of medications to slow disease progression; establish effective linkage between primary and tertiary care; encourage appropriate patient centred referral and follow up.

Pillar 4

Advance Access to Kidney Transplantation & Innovative Care

Kidney transplantation offers a life-changing alternative to dialysis and is central to achieving the **End Dialysis by 2050** aspiration. Pre-emptive transplantation, before dialysis is required, offers the best outcomes for many people with kidney failure – delivering improved survival, quality of life and reduced long-term system costs.

Despite this, access to living donor transplantation in Australia remains below international best practice. Largely due to awareness gaps, financial and psychosocial barriers, inconsistent referral practices, and inequities in access — particularly for First Nations peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Addressing these barriers represents a significant opportunity to transform outcomes for people living with kidney failure.

Key outcomes

1. More people access and choose living donor transplantation earlier in their care journey.
2. A more connected and responsive transplant system, with timely referrals and seamless pathways to care.
3. Improved patient and donor experience, confidence and long-term quality of life.
4. A more equitable system where access to transplantation is consistent across all communities, including improved access and outcomes for First Nations people.
5. Reduced reliance on dialysis through increased uptake of transplantation and other innovative new treatments.



Key actions

4.1 Inspire conversation about living donation

- Deliver an awareness and behaviour change campaign to increase understanding of living kidney donation and encourage earlier conversations about transplantation.
- Embed peer support and counselling to address psychosocial barriers and strengthen participation and experience.
- Co-design tailored initiatives with CALD communities and multicultural organisations, to address language, cultural and system navigation barriers to transplantation.

4.2 Establish a Living Donor Hub

- Establish a centralised Living Donor Hub providing culturally appropriate information, decision-support tools and access to navigation and support services.
- Integrate with **Kidney Health 4 Life** to provide structured, ongoing support for donors and recipients across preparation, recovery and long-term self-management.

4.3 Strengthen early engagement and referral

- Implement an early engagement and referral approach across primary care and renal services to support timely and pre-emptive transplantation.

4.4 Champion healthcare professional capability

- Deliver targeted education, training and clinical decision-support tools for healthcare professionals, including structured referral education and feedback mechanisms to improve the consistency and timeliness of transplant referrals.

4.5 Deliver First Nations transplant equity

- Co-design and deliver dedicated initiatives with First Nations communities, in partnership with First Nations organisations, to improve equity of access and ensure culturally safe, community-led approaches across the transplant pathway.

Pillar 5

Foster Research and Innovation

Kidney Health Australia has a longstanding tradition of supporting kidney research in Australia. Kidney health research remains underfunded relative to its societal impact, representing a significant opportunity for growth. Current scientific advances, new technologies, and growing international momentum present a timely opportunity to accelerate innovation and transform kidney health outcomes. Kidney Health Australia aims to grow investment in kidney health research, set national priorities and drive discoveries that will fundamentally improve the lives of people living with kidney disease.

Key outcomes

- 1.** National research priorities reflect the lived experience and voices of people affected by kidney disease.
- 2.** Increased funding for kidney research is secured.
- 3.** First Nations led research strengthens cultural safety, data sovereignty and community driven principles.
- 4.** Commissioned research collaborations, and targeted grants help to close key data gaps, drive innovation and harness patient experience to inform care.
- 5.** Kidney Health Australia becomes a recognised national and global leader in driving research that changes lives.





Key actions

5.1 Unite strong collaboration in kidney research

- Strengthen the national Kidney Research Alliance (with Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology) to attract strategic investment, enable collaboration, and accelerate translation of research into impact.
- Target a Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) grant before 2030 to significantly grow funding for specific kidney health research in Australia.
- Partner with Australian and international researchers and stakeholders on projects aligned to the Strategic Pillars of Kidney Health Australia.

5.2 Bring the consumer voice to research

- Create a Consumer Research Hub to ensure lived experience informs kidney health research.

5.3 Setting national research agenda

- In consultation with the kidney research sector, identify, agree and advocate kidney research priorities aligned to the needs of those living with the disease.
- Support research with a strong health equity focus to address the high burden of kidney disease in First Nations Australians.

5.4 Unlock investment in kidney health research

- Build a sustainable, high-impact research program through government and community investment, partnerships, and diversified funding.
- Award excellence in kidney health research through a targeted grants and awards program.

5.5 Drive innovation in kidney health

- Bring new innovative treatments and technologies to Australia through partnering on research projects, supporting regulatory approvals and funding pilot programs.
- Monitor and promote global innovations in kidney disease management, linking Australian researchers and clinicians to international advances.

Guiding Principles

These are the essential enablers behind our purpose — what allow Kidney Health Australia to turn strategy into lasting impact.

People and culture

Our purpose depends on the people who deliver it — our staff, volunteers, health professional partners and community advocates. We are building an inclusive, values-driven high-performance organisation that invests in its people and helps them grow.

Collaboration

Kidney disease is too urgent a problem for any single organisation to solve alone. Through partnerships with government, health services, comorbid disease organisations, research institutions, industry and community organisations, we expand our impact and drive the change our kidney community needs.

Consumer voice

The lived experience of people affected by kidney disease shapes the design, delivery and evaluation of our programs and campaigns. We involve consumers, carers and community members directly, and amplify their voices so our work reflects what they actually need.

We continue to be a trusted partner and credible voice for people living with kidney disease.

Digital and data capability

Delivering our purpose in a modern health landscape requires strong digital infrastructure and the ability to collect, analyse and act on data. We are investing in technology, AI, systems and capability that let us reach more Australians, deliver programs at scale, measure our impact and continuously improve our community's experience. Data will underpin how we track outcomes, demonstrate value and make informed decisions across every pillar of our strategy.

Advocacy

We advocate at every level of government, and mobilise our community as advocates, to drive policy reform and secure funding across the kidney health continuum — pushing for equitable care, greater investment in prevention and research, and the systemic change needed to improve outcomes for every Australian affected by kidney disease.



Financial sustainability

Kidney Health Australia is committed to sound financial stewardship and responsible governance to ensure the organisation remains resilient, adaptable and able to deliver its purpose over the long term. We will strengthen our financial position through diversified income, strategic partnerships, a strong national brand and targeted investment in opportunities that align with our mission and strategic priorities.

We will take a whole-of-organisation approach to financial sustainability, balancing immediate operational needs with long-term capability, impact and independence.

This will include growing unrestricted and purpose-aligned revenue, deepening supporter and partner relationships, and investing in the systems, people and digital capability required to support sustainable growth.

Financial discipline will underpin all decisions about resource allocation, program development and investment. We will prioritise initiatives that strengthen organisational resilience, improve efficiency and maximise impact for people affected by kidney disease, ensuring that financial sustainability is not an end in itself but a foundation for long-term mission delivery.



For 3 years, my body had been giving warning signs of chronic kidney disease – yet no-one ordered basic kidney function tests.



I was diagnosed with end-stage renal failure at just 29 years old, a life-altering moment that came after several years of unexplained symptoms. For 3 years prior, my body had been giving warning signs of chronic kidney disease, yet despite seeing five different GPs, no one ordered basic kidney function tests such as a creatinine blood test or urinalysis. I was considered 'too young,' with no family history of kidney disease, no diabetes, and no obvious risk factors – assumptions that ultimately delayed my diagnosis until my kidneys had almost completely failed.

In 2009, I was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive autoimmune disease. To save my life and preserve what kidney function remained, I underwent a year of intensive chemotherapy to achieve remission. While the treatment was successful, it left me with just 20% kidney function. In 2010, as my kidney health continued to decline, I commenced dialysis – a reality I never imagined facing in my twenties.

Then, unexpectedly and against all odds, I discovered I was pregnant. My baby survived but the pregnancy cost me the remainder of my kidney function. When my baby was only 3 months old, I began peritoneal dialysis, navigating new motherhood alongside life-sustaining treatment. I have now been on dialysis for approximately 15 years. My journey highlights not only the unpredictable nature of kidney disease, but also the critical importance of early detection and testing – regardless of age or perceived risk.

Lesley, patient advocate

Show your support:



Connect with us:

Kidney Helpline 1800 454 363
careteam@kidney.org.au
kidney.org.au

