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## Major push to halt rise in kidney failure

SA Minister of Health and Wellbeing to launch pivotal changes in kidney care

Kidney Health Australia's latest kidney disease guide for primary care practitioners will be pivotal in slowing down the rates of kidney failure, which have doubled in the past 20 years and if left unchecked will grow by a further 42% by 2030.

With specific reference to new kidney treatments and culturally safe kidney care for First Nations Australians, the 5th edition of *Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Management in Primary Care* handbook, known as the 'kidney bible', is a significant step-up in enabling earlier diagnosis of kidney disease for GPs and other front-line healthcare professionals.

**South Australian Minister of Health and Wellbeing Chris Picton** will launch the guidelines at an event on World Kidney Day, 14th March, at Royal Adelaide hospital.

“Together with the kidney community, esteemed healthcare champions and fellow Parliamentarians, I am honoured to be part of the exciting changes happening in the kidney health arena. The 2 million Australians affected by kidney disease deserve better. We are now on the forefront of fighting this incurable disease,” said Minister Picton.

The number of Australians treated for kidney failure has doubled in the last two decades, causing widespread treatment shortages, increasing costs, and plunging thousands of Australians into highly invasive and life-altering dialysis. With 1.8 million people currently unaware they have kidney disease, this number will only continue to grow.

Kidney Health Australia CEO, **Mr Chris Forbes** believes the country is at a pivotal point.

“There is already immense strain on the Australian healthcare system with kidney failure treatment alone costing over \$1.9 billion per year. We urgently need to reduce the number of people reaching kidney failure, for their own well-being and for the economy. We don’t want people falling through the cracks and finding themselves suddenly hooked up to a dialysis machine every other day for 5 hours a day, indefinitely.”

Some of the important changes in the new edition include:

- significant advances in kidney treatments, and recommendations for detecting and managing CKD.
- new guidelines for culturally safe care in First Nations Australians, and
- new guidelines for referral to kidney specialists

**Breonna Robson**, General Manager, Clinical and Research at Kidney Health Australia, said: “The new edition of the GP handbook helps health professionals working in primary care to identify people at risk of CKD in their practice and proactively diagnose CKD. It outlines key strategies to slow the progression of CKD and reduce cardiovascular risk, including simple colour-coded action plans for different stages of the disease.”

Ms Robson added, “It’s an exciting time in CKD care, with new treatments now available that have been shown to slow the progression of CKD to kidney failure by 15 years or more. The handbook contains significant new information on using these medications in people with CKD so that their health outcomes and quality of life can be extended for many years to come.”

The handbook is endorsed by major professional bodies including, the Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology (ANZSN), the Renal Society of Australasia (RSA) and the Australian Primary Healthcare Nurses Association (APNA). It has been approved as an Acceptable Clinical Resource by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

Now is the time to get in front of the disease - early detection and management of kidney disease has been shown to save \$45 in health systems cost for every \$1 invested, prevent 38,200 deaths and avoid 237,324 hospitalisations of people with CKD.

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The handbook is available from Kidney Health Australia in hardcopy or free download, and shortly via the CKD-Go! App.

## KEY STATISTICS

- 3 in 4 Australians are at risk of chronic kidney disease.
- Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) affects more than 2 million Australians – that’s one in every 10 Australian adults – yet it is often unknown and under-diagnosed, with 90% of people unaware they are living with CKD.
- CKD costs the Australian economy \$9.9 billion each year including \$2.3 billion to our healthcare system – a cost that can be greatly reduced if we diagnose kidney disease earlier. For every \$1 invested in earlier detection and treatment of kidney disease, there is \$45 saving to the health system.
- CKD is a disease of inequality that disproportionately impacts the most disadvantaged Australians, affecting those in the lowest socioeconomic groups and in outer regional and remote area at much higher rates.
- The burden of CKD has a large impact on First Nations Australians.
  - First Nations peoples are twice as likely to have CKD and 4 times as likely to die from CKD than non-indigenous Australians.
  - First Nations peoples are often diagnosed with CKD at a younger age and progress faster to kidney failure.
- Over 90% of kidney function can be lost with no symptoms.
- Up to 50% of people on dialysis will experience depression.
- Australians undergoing dialysis spend an average of 60 hours per month connected to a machine that cleans their blood of toxins.
- Australians can wait between 5 to 7 years for a kidney transplant through the donor registry.
- Diabetes and hypertension are the leading causes of kidney failure in Australia, directly causing over 50% of all cases.

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**Kidney Health Australia** is the recognised voice for kidney disease in Australia. With no cure in sight and treatment shortages Kidney Health Australia is fighting to change the status quo: to change outdated treatments, increase accessibility, to be a voice for our unsung community, to train up healthcare professionals, and support individuals living with this deadly disease.

We're walking hand in hand with our community of strong and courageous warriors to change lives and diagnose kidney disease earlier, for a brighter healthier life, free of invasive treatments. Together, we can rewrite the narrative of kidney disease.

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