

9 March 2016

**Kidney Disease and Children  
Better Knowledge. Better Care.**

**Joint Statement  
Kidney Health Australia and  
The Australian and New Zealand Paediatric Nephrology Association**

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Kidney Health Australia, Anne Wilson in collaboration with Chairman of The Australian and New Zealand Paediatric Nephrology Association Dr Joshua Kausman, MBBS FRACP, PhD.

While the mortality associated with many chronic diseases including some cancers is stable and even declining, deaths related to kidney disease are unchanged, with two Australian lives lost every hour.

Chronic kidney disease has NO warning signs and it is estimated 1.7 million Australians aged 18 and over already have at least one clinical sign of existing chronic kidney disease, and approximately 90% of these people are unaware they may be on a descending pathway towards end stage kidney failure.

It is estimated that over 20,000 people will die with a kidney related disease in 2016.

Dr Kausman stated 'many children may be at risk of kidney disease at a young age and it is important to both detect and treat early in the disease process.'

Treatments such as dialysis and transplantation are now highly successful in children whose kidneys fail, but do not offer a complete cure. Historically, children with kidney failure who receive dialysis or even a transplant have still been at 10-100 fold higher risk of dying and had a life expectancy 25-50 years less than their healthy peers.

While these treatments continue to improve, research and education of the public about kidney disease in children is essential to improve outcomes. The majority of chronic kidney disease in children arises from inherited conditions, making it critical to concentrate resources on the understanding of these genetic causes in order to find specific treatments that offer a cure.

Further, in Indigenous communities in our country, there is a great deal of work to be done to close the gap in health status. Children in many Indigenous communities endure diverse and heightened risk factors including but not limited to recurrent episodes of infectious nephritis.'

'It is crucial that we continue to strive for world's best practice in the detection and treatment of children with both hereditary and acquired disorders of the kidney and urinary tract. Improved knowledge and understanding enables translation into tools for early detection and effective treatment.'

'It is also essential to encourage and facilitate education and a healthy lifestyle in children to combat the increase of preventable kidney damage including acute kidney injury and chronic kidney disease.'

Obesity and high blood pressure are major risks for the development of many health complications in adulthood, including kidney disease, but often have their origins in childhood.

It is a priority to enable children to develop sustainable health promoting lifestyles early in life such as choosing water over soft drinks, enjoying opportunities for physical activity and embracing healthy food choices. These opportunities and behaviours should be encouraged to promote health and prevent chronic disease later in life.'

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