MEDIA RELEASE

International Nurses Day - Nurses a force for change across the mental health system, a timely reminder for the election

Kim Ryan, CEO, Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) reminded all parties standing in the federal election that on International Nurses Day the theme of ‘nurses a force for change’ was never more relevant to them achieving their health and mental health promises.

‘It’s timely that this year’s International Nurses Day falls within the Federal election and that the theme is nurses a force for change. All parties will be making a lot of promises, particularly in health, and this change will not be achieved without nurses leading the way.’

‘Last year in mental health the Government announced significant reform, with most mental health program funding going to the Primary Health Networks to try to achieve regionally planned services. The College supports better planned services, but we want to make sure nurses play a significant part in all the reforms.’

‘Nurses make up the largest workforce in health and also in mental health. Quite simply, all the promises made by politicians won’t mean anything if they don’t think about the role of nurses in these changes and reforms and include them in the stakeholder groups that advise them,’ Ms Ryan said.

A Morgan Poll found that for the 22nd year in a row, out of 30 professions nurses were seen, by a very large majority of 92%, as the most ethical and honest profession. There are also over 20,000 nurses working in mental health across Australia and over 300,000 nurses in total.

‘The community values nurses and so should all those making decisions and creating policy.’

‘Too often we are left out of committees and decision making processes and our opinions are sought through consultation, not valuing the role and scope of the nursing profession,’ Ms Ryan said.

‘Nurses are here to support and effect changes in the health care system and are well placed to do so. With over 300,000 nurses in Australia we are a force for change.’

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