

MEDIA RELEASE

17 July 2020

ONE MONTH UNTIL *WOUND AWARENESS WEEK 2020*: 17 – 23 AUGUST

Every year over 420,000 Australians suffer from a chronic wound, costing the Health and Aged Care Budgets more than \$3 billion. Treatment can cost individual sufferers thousands of dollars annually.

Chronic wounds damage mental health and stop people from working, studying and enjoying the lifestyle others take for granted.

That's why in one month's time, *Wound Awareness Week 2020* will be held. For seven days there will be a spotlight on the hidden affliction and calls for action to reduce harm.

Wound Awareness Week is a key annual event held by Wounds Australia, the peak body for wound prevention and management in Australia. Wounds Australia supports clinicians, healthcare professionals and students by delivering the professional development and resources needed to improve the care of chronic wound patients.

A chronic wound is simply any wound that has not progressed through normal healing stages. They can last months or years, leading to odour, pain and disfigurement.

Australia's chronic wounds epidemic is concealed by embarrassment, being a 'gross' conversation topic and people not seeking treatment early enough – or at all!

The COVID-19 pandemic is shifting this year's *Wound Awareness Week* towards more virtual and online experiences, focusing on events to allow health care professionals to improve their expertise, care and treatment through:

- webinars from leading wound care specialists
- expanded online resources on best practice wound management
- social media-based conversations and knowledge sharing.

The increase in cases of wounds afflicting health care professionals from using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for extended periods will also be an important addition.

For more information on *Wound Awareness Week 2020*, visit www.woundaware.com.au

ENDS Page 1 of 2 - More information over

Contact: Kel Watt (Watt Advocacy & Communications) 0411 707 489

Spokespersons for the *Wound Awareness Week 2020* campaign include Dr Nicoletta Frescos (Chair, Wounds Australia Board) and Blake Wilson (Wounds Australia CEO).

Dr Nicoletta Frescos – Chair, Wounds Australia Board

Chair of Wounds Australia Dr Nicoletta Frescos is one of Australia's most respected chronic wound management experts. She has over 15 years in clinical practice, research and clinical teaching. Dr Frescos is:

- a lecturer and clinical educator at La Trobe University, Victoria
- Clinical Research coordinator and podiatry wound consultant at the Austin Health Wound Clinic
- Health Adviser for the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Dr Frescos has particular expertise in chronic wound pain, diabetes foot related ulcers and the psychosocial impact of lower limb wounds.

She is a strong advocate of an interdisciplinary team approach to wound care and a passionate teacher on lower extremity wound prevention and management.

Blake Wilson – Chief Executive Officer

Blake's reputation as a reformist CEO has been enhanced by his first year's work with Wounds Australia.

While initially appointed for his business expertise, Blake has built partnerships to make Wounds Australia a force in shaping a more efficient and effective healthcare system.

Blake has expanded the reach of *Wound Awareness Week* this year. In addition to the usual strong public awareness campaign, the *Week* now connects with wound care's commercial sector and other advocacy organisations.

Blake understands the key to reducing the incidence and impact of chronic wounds is a more knowledgeable, skilled and coordinated health care workforce. That's why he is expanding the resources and professional development opportunities available during *Wound Awareness Week 2020*.

Contact: Kel Watt (Watt Advocacy & Communications) 0411 707 489