

# MEDIA RELEASE

17 August 2020

## LAUNCH OF *WOUND AWARENESS WEEK 2020: 17 – 23 AUGUST*

Today's launch of *Wound Awareness Week 2020* starts an important seven days for the 420,000 Australians who will suffer a chronic wound this year and the health care workers who will treat them.

With chronic wounds costing the health and aged care budgets around \$3 billion annually, this year's activities will focus on:

- supporting health care professionals to improve their treatment and prevention of wounds
- highlight how government policy changes can reduce the incidence, severity, and costs of chronic wounds.

*Wound Awareness Week* is a key event for Wounds Australia, the nation's peak body for wound prevention and management. In addition to its regular public health campaign, Wounds Australia is opening its suite of resources to all health care professionals to expand their skills and knowledge used to treat patients.

Ignoring a chronic wound does not make it go away, but it can lead to:

- **Physical and health complications**

Every year, 420,000 Australians suffer from a chronic wound. They are often in constant pain, struggle with mobility and can be stopped from working, studying, and engaging in recreational activities. Chronic wound sufferers are predisposed to complications including infection, cellulitis, amputation and even death.

- **Mental health concerns**

People with chronic wounds are more likely to have depression and anxiety from social isolation, negative body image and reduced quality of life.

- **Severe financial pressure**

The treatment of chronic wounds costs around \$3 billion a year. The average out of pocket costs for an individual's treatment, wound dressing products and medications is about \$4,000 annually.

Wounds Australia is supporting health care professionals to deliver best practice wound management during *Wound Awareness Week* by providing:

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

For more information visit [www.woundaware.com.au](http://www.woundaware.com.au)

**ENDS**

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**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 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.

### **Mr 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 health care 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 is why he is expanding the resources and professional development opportunities available during *Wound Awareness Week 2020*.

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