

GOVERNMENTS MUST TAKE ACTION ON OUT OF POCKET COSTS FOR CHRONIC WOUNDS

The peak body for wound prevention and management, Wounds Australia, has called on the Federal Government to take urgent steps that reduce out of pocket costs for chronic wound patients.

Speaking on Day Three of Wound Awareness Week, Wounds Australia Chair Hayley Ryan said the high costs of treatments and dressings was leading directly to a massive health crisis.

“While chronic wounds can affect anyone at any time, most patients are over 65 years old. The average out of pocket costs are about \$340 per month, or nearly \$4000 each year.

“This expense can lead to many pensioners or retirees missing appropriate care. As a result, their health worsens and social anxiety increases. It produces a vicious cycle.

“That’s why Wounds Australia has used its expertise to build an 11-Point Plan to overcome the problems caused by chronic wounds.

“To put it simply, the solution to chronic wounds is bleeding obvious,” Hayley Ryan said.

“The Wounds Australia 11-Point Plan calls for small changes to how the government structures spending and manages out of pocket costs. This will ultimately save hundreds of millions of dollars for the nation’s health and aged care budgets.

“Central to our Plan are the allocation of a dedicated MBS item to wound care, and the subsidising of wound products for people at risk of venous leg ulcers, diabetic foot ulcers and over 65s.

“Wounds Australia will be meeting with Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt and state Health Ministers to outline our Plan and demonstrate how a cooperative relationship will slash costs and patient numbers.

“Chronic wounds are Australia’s hidden epidemic,” Hayley Ryan said.

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“Over 420,000 people develop a chronic wound each year. The cost to governments is at least \$3 billion annually. The loss in economic activity is untold millions annually.

“However, by adopting Wounds Australia’s 11-Point Plan and removing the barriers imposed by out of pocket costs, will result in a better aged care and healthcare systems.

“This Wound Awareness Week state and federal governments should jump at the chance to embrace a health and aged care plan that has the goal of actually spending less and treating fewer people.”

The Wounds Australia 11-Point Plan is available at: WoundsAustralia.com.au

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DETAILS OF INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES OVER PAGE

Details on Wound Awareness Week is available at: WoundAware.com.au

Information on Wounds Australia is available at: WoundsAustralia.com.au

Spokespersons for Wound Awareness Week 2021 are:

PROFESSOR FIONA WOOD AM FAHMS (Wound Awareness Week Ambassador)

Professor Wood is one of Australia's most innovative and respected surgeons and researchers. She is a highly skilled plastic and reconstructive surgeon and world leading burns specialist. Professor Wood has pioneered research and technology development in burns medicine, including 'spray on skin' to treat the 2002 Bali bombing victims. Professor Wood was named Australian of the Year in 2005 and a 'National Living Treasure' in 2014.

HAYLEY RYAN CNC (Chair, Wounds Australia)

Hayley is a leading educator in the Australian and New Zealand health and aged care sectors on the principles of wound management and infection control. Her specialities include chronic wound management, palliative wounds and pressure injury prevention. Hayley's expertise was central to the development of Wounds Australia's *11-Point Plan* and response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

BLAKE WILSON (Wounds Australia CEO)

Blake's reputation as a reformist CEO has been enhanced by his work with Wounds Australia. He has built partnerships to make Wounds Australia a force in shaping efficient and effective healthcare, expanded the reach of Wound Awareness Week, and connected the wound care's commercial sector and other advocacy organisations.

ABOUT WoundsAustralia

Wounds Australia is the peak body for chronic wound prevention and management.

Membership comprises thousands of doctors, nurses, podiatrists, Aged Care workers and other professionals vital to treating chronic wounds and caring for patients.

Wounds Australia works to reduce the harm caused by wounds by supporting members with resources and continuous education. Wounds Australia works with governments and industry to improve wound management, knowledge and resources.