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World Kidney Day

Kidney disease is chronic

A report released today estimating the costs of treating Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) in Australia is rising by \$50 million a year highlights the importance of CKD awareness and improved measures for the screening of CKD.

The *Economic Impact of Kidney Disease in Australia* commissioned by Kidney Health Australia and conducted by the George Institute of International Health estimates that in the last 25 years the number of Australians with the condition has increased by 400%.

Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) Chair Dr Tony Hobbs said, CKD is just as important as the diabetes epidemic and is obviously taking its toll, both financially and socially on the Australian community.

"The big problem we have with this CKD is that unlike other chronic conditions there are no noticeable symptoms to the patient despite the fact that 90% of their kidney function is depleted.

"We know that one in seven Australian adults have CKD and it's the seventh most common cause of death in Australia. We also know that one in three Australians are at risk," Dr Hobbs said.

CKD greatly increases a person's risk of cardiovascular disease.

People with obesity, high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, a family history CKD, are aged over 50 or are of Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander heritage are at increased risk of CKD and should be screened annually by their GP. Screening for CKD is fairly simple and includes measurement of blood pressure, a urine test and a quick blood test.

These frightening statistics indicate that much more needs to be done in this area.

Dr Hobbs said the Divisions Network has been working closely with the Kidney Check Australia Taskforce (KCAT) to promote educational events to better inform GPs of kidney CKD disease.

"In addition to KCAT there needs to be strategic government policy for screening and a public awareness campaign to help correct these horrendous figures," Dr Hobbs said.

For more information please phone AGPN CEO Kate Carnell on 0415 662 266