



I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) to express our support for the Australian College of Nursing and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation and the tremendous work you are doing during the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus.

We understand that cases are continuing to increase in Australia as in many countries across the world. We applaud your work to keep nurses and patients informed via your websites. Ensuring that people have access to accurate and timely information is essential in the battle against this virus. We also applaud your government for providing scholarships to 1,000 registered nurses for the ACN refresher course. Ensuring that nurses are trained for this unprecedented health crisis is essential in response to COVID-19.

Unfortunately, like many countries, the Australian health system is facing a growing amount of pressure along with a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE). ICN is very concerned about the health and safety of nurses, as well as that of the population at large. We are working closely with the World Health Organization to support the global effort to defeat this virus, calling on governments to ensure that health workers are tested for the virus, have access to a sufficient supply of protective equipment, provided with proper training and given psychological support to help them through this incredibly difficult time.

You may have seen our recently released [statement](#) on the grave situation in Italy where nurses and other healthcare workers lack the sufficient protective equipment to keep them safe. This is a stark warning to other countries around the world to ensure their health workforce is protected – both physically and psychologically. ICN's CEO, Howard Catton, has been very active in the media promoting this message that countries must prioritise and protect nurses and health workers right now.

This is a global crisis which requires a global response. Our aim is to share lessons learned by national nursing associations across the world. We held a webinar on 27 March which brought together representatives from ICN, WHO and leaders of NNAs in the hardest hit countries. ICN, as the global voice of nursing, will continue to enable this sharing of information and experience so we may all learn from them. We are also issuing [weekly updates](#) on the situation with links to the latest guidance and information which you may find useful to share with your members.

Please pass on our expressions of solidarity and gratitude to all the nurses in your country who are working long hours and making personal sacrifices to deliver essential care to patients in very difficult conditions. We must ensure that the care that nurses provide continues without risk to their own health and those of their families. To do this all nurses need to be aware of the [guidelines issued by WHO](#) on how to protect themselves, as well as the rights and responsibilities of nurses during this difficult time. Our aim is to support, protect and save lives and we must do everything we can to protect our nurses and, in turn, our patients.

Howard has filmed a message of support for you to share with the nurses of the Australia. Please click [here](#) to access the video.

ACN and ANMF are highly respected members of ICN and we acknowledge and congratulate you on the incredible work you are doing. We pray for a speedy resolution and containment of the outbreak across the world.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Annette Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Annette Kennedy  
President  
International Council of Nurses