

Australian initiative wins global grant to tackle silent epidemic of heart and kidney disease

90% of Australians with signs of chronic kidney disease are unaware they have it – new campaign aims to increase awareness and earlier diagnosis in primary care settings

Sydney, Australia – 29 January 2026: An Australian health initiative aimed at tackling the nation's silent epidemic of heart and kidney disease has secured more than AU\$80,000 (€46,000) in global funding after being named one of just 15 worldwide winners of the prestigious **Boehringer Ingelheim CRM CONNECTIONS Grant**.

Selected from over 80 submissions globally, the winning Australian submission titled '*Essential GP Checklist for Kidney and Heart Health*' is a joint initiative by Kidney Health Australia and Hearts4Heart. The campaign empowers patients to take a proactive role in their health by encouraging them to ask their GP for a Heart and Kidney Health Check during routine visits.

Now live in GP waiting rooms across metropolitan and regional clinics, and Aboriginal Health Care centres, the nationwide campaign will run for six-months, targeting patients at a pivotal moment - just before they see their doctor.

Campaign messaging prompts patients to request:

- **A Kidney Health Check** – comprising three simple tests (urine ACR, blood eGFR, and blood pressure) to detect markers of kidney disease.
- **A Heart Health Check** – a cardiovascular risk assessment estimating the likelihood of heart attack or stroke within five years.

"Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a silent epidemic - over 90% of people with signs of CKD don't know they have it," said Chris Forbes, CEO of Kidney Health Australia. "By prompting conversations at the point of care, we can catch these conditions earlier and change lives."

Tanya Hall, Founder and CEO of Hearts4Heart, added: "Heart and kidney disease are deeply interconnected, yet too often overlooked in everyday consultations. This initiative turns every waiting room into an opportunity to reduce the long-term burden on patients and the health system – and ultimately save lives."

The global recognition of this joint initiative underscores the urgency of shifting Australia's approach to chronic heart and kidney disease from late-stage crisis response to one that focusses on earlier diagnosis and improved disease management, something **Boehringer Ingelheim** is proud to champion.

"Real progress starts with those who understand patient needs best," said Edward Hollywood, General Manager, **Boehringer Ingelheim** Australia and New Zealand. "The **Boehringer CRM Connections Grant** is a global initiative that aims to support patient organisations in taking local action to improve CRM-related care all around the world, so it's wonderful to see our partners at Kidney Health Australia and Hearts4Heart receive funding for their campaign."

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Life forward

“We know when CKD is detected early and managed appropriately, deterioration of kidney function can be reduced by as much as 50%¹.

“Encouraging earlier conversations, at a time and place when patients and doctors can take action will lead to earlier detection and better health outcomes. For patients this means more years of quality life with fewer kidney and heart health complications. That’s what makes this campaign so important and a worthy grant winner.”

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FAST FACTS ABOUT CKD, from Kidney Health Australia

- ◆ 2.7 million Australians are living with signs of kidney disease, with CKD now implicated in **one-in-six hospitalisations and 11% of all deaths**.
- ◆ Deaths associated with CKD and rates of kidney dialysis or transplant have **doubled in the last 20 years**.
- ◆ CKD is a **silent epidemic**, with less than 10% of people with CKD aware they have the condition.
- ◆ If CKD is detected early and managed appropriately, **deterioration in kidney function can be reduced by as much as 50%**.
- ◆ Australians with diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, excess body weight or a family history of kidney failure, as well as all Indigenous Australians, should **ask their GP about a simple kidney health check involving blood and urine tests**. Smoking and vaping are other known risk factors for CKD.

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¹ [Impact of hospital-based early detection on management in chronic kidney disease: the CKD Stewardship study \(CKD-S\) – protocol for a prospective, multicentre, observational cohort study | BMJ Open](#)