

PRESS RELEASE
Friday 12 July 2024

Australian Hypertension Taskforce unveils Roadmap to transform high blood pressure control and reduce preventable deaths

Raised blood pressure (BP), also known as hypertension, is a ‘silent killer’ and the leading cause of death in Australia, where it contributes to more than 25,000 deaths each year. It is also the leading risk factor for death from stroke, heart disease, kidney disease, and dementia, yet 68% of Australians with hypertension are uncontrolled.

In response to this pressing issue, a Call to Action was published in 2022, leading to the establishment of the National Hypertension Taskforce, launched by Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care.

The National Hypertension Taskforce, led by the Australian Cardiovascular Alliance and Hypertension Australia, has now published a Roadmap to improve Australia’s blood pressure control rates from the current 32% to 70% by 2030. Achieving this target will make Australia a global leader in blood pressure management.

The Roadmap, published in the [Medical Journal of Australia](#), is built on three pillars to (A) **prevent**; (B) **detect**; and (C) effectively **treat** raised BP.

“Improving blood pressure control rates in Australia is not only critical but possible,” says Professor Alta Schutte, Co-lead of the National Hypertension Taskforce. “The Roadmap provides a clear guide of how we can make that happen. We welcome individuals and groups who have been affected by high blood pressure, stroke, dementia, heart or kidney disease, or with a shared interest to substantially improve blood pressure control in Australia, to get in touch.”

The Roadmap is the result of consultative workshops held with National Hypertension Taskforce members, including key representatives from organisations such as the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Heart Foundation, the Stroke Foundation and Kidney Health Australia.

Professor Markus Schlaich, National Hypertension Taskforce Co-lead and President of Hypertension Australia notes that the collaborative nature of the consultation process has yielded something which can succeed. “When we come together like this, we can achieve far more than we ever would as individuals. The focus on management of high blood pressure in the community must include general practitioners, pharmacists, remote health care workers, nurse practitioners and all other healthcare providers.”

The Roadmap has key recommendations including a focus towards team-based care, empowering the community to take charge of their health, and supporting equitable and accessible screening and health testing programs.

“Preventing the catastrophic effects of high blood pressure is a goal we all share. We congratulate the National Hypertension Taskforce and welcome their comprehensive Roadmap towards a healthier future for all Australians,” says the Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler MP.

Professor Jason Kovacic, President of the Australian Cardiovascular Alliance sees the Roadmap as a significant achievement. “From the outset, our vision has been to unite the sector in addressing the most pressing areas of unmet need and hypertension is clearly one of them. This Roadmap marks a significant milestone - a testament to collective efforts. We’re



thrilled to be playing a role in this meaningful collaboration. It presents a genuine opportunity to positively impact the health outcomes of everyday Australians.”

Professor Schlaich says, “The 10 priorities in this Roadmap equip us with the tools necessary for improved BP management in Australia. Through collaboration and active engagement, Australia has the potential to establish itself as a global benchmark for blood pressure control.”

Media Enquiries

Kerry Doyle PSM OAM, kerry.doyle@ozheart.org M: 0417 456 979

Nina Cullen, nina.cullen@ozheart.org

You can access the Roadmap in the Medical Journal of Australia [HERE](#).

You can find out more about the National Hypertension taskforce [HERE](#).

Bios

Professor Markus Schlaich is the Dobney Chair in Clinical Research at The University of Western Australia, the President of Hypertension Australia, Co-lead of the new Hypertension Taskforce, and Executive Committee Member of the World Hypertension League.

He is a renal physician and a European Society of Hypertension (ESH) accredited hypertension specialist with a strong background in clinical research. His main scientific interests focus on pathophysiologic aspects of hypertension.

Professor Alta Schutte PhD FESC FRRSAf ISHF is SHARP Professor and Principal Theme Lead of Cardiac, Vascular and Metabolic Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine and Health at UNSW Sydney, Australia, with a joint appointment as Professorial Fellow at the George Institute for Global Health. She is also ACvA Company Secretary, Hypertension Australia Board Member, a NHMRC Investigator Grant Leadership Fellow and the Co-lead of the new Hypertension Taskforce.

She has extensive experience in working in clinical and population-based studies with a focus on raised blood pressure, hypertension and cardiovascular disease.