

DO YOU LEAK WHEN YOU LAUGH?

Call the National Continence Helpline

1800 33 00 66



LAUGH
WITHOUT
Leaking.



continence.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 17 JUNE 2018

The \$67 billion silent health epidemic affecting 1 in 4 Aussies

World Continence Week 18 to 24 June 2018

Over 5 million adult Australians are suffering in silence from a \$67 billion health issue that for the majority can be helped or even cured.

Incontinence is on the rise and now affects one in four Australians, of all ages and genders.¹ It is an embarrassing and frequently painful problem that can lead to anxiety, depression and other serious health issues. While often curable, only 30% of people with a problem seek help.²

“World Continence Week is a timely reminder that the majority of people affected by incontinence can be treated, better managed and even cured. It is important people make the call for help, says CEO of the Continence Foundation of Australia, Rowan Cockerell.

Mrs Cockerell says the stigma of incontinence prevents people taking action for the condition that won't get better on its own.

“We know that many people dismiss their leaking as a normal part of getting older or after having a baby. But it's not normal and can have a seriously negative impact on the daily life for millions of women, men and even children,” Mrs Cockerell says.

“This silent epidemic is costing the Australian economy a staggering \$67 billion each year including the burden of disease, health costs, work productivity losses, carer and continence aid costs. It is a massive problem but the good news is we are working to provide the solution.”

The Continence Foundation is working with the Australian Government to deliver the National Continence Program providing awareness, information, resources, workforce education and advocacy. This includes the National Continence Helpline 1800 33 00 66 which answers over 30,000 calls for help each year and the [National Public Toilet Map](#) showing the location of over 16,000 publicly available toilets across Australia

The Continence Foundation of Australia is using humour to overcome this stigma and get people talking about their bladder, bowel and pelvic floor problems with the [Laugh without Leaking](#) campaign. It is being championed by popular comedian/actress, Bev Killick who has lived with incontinence all her life. Bev is among the many inspiring stories of Australians that the Continence Foundation is sharing during World Continence Week.

“If you keep it hidden and secret it can become an even bigger problem. Humour is a great tool for breaking down those barriers and showing people that they're not alone and they can do something about it,” says Ms Killick who is now on the “road to continence” since becoming the *Laugh Without Leaking* Ambassador.

To get help for bladder, bowel and pelvic floor health problems, call the free National Continence Helpline (1800 33 00 66) or talk to a doctor or continence specialist.

For further information: laughwithoutleaking.com.au and continence.org.au

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With special thanks to:



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Spokespeople available for interview:

- Hon Greg Hunt, MP, Minister for Health
- Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Minister for Aged Care and Minister Indigenous Health
- Bev Killick, award-winning comedian and Ambassador of Continenence Foundation of Australia
- Rowan Cockerell, CEO of Continenence Foundation of Australia
- Continenence health experts and people living with incontinence in all states

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Media photo opportunities

- **Mon 18 June 9am** – CANBERRA – World Continenence Week launch. Australian Parliament House with Minister Hunt, Minister Wyatt, Bev Killick and Rowan Cockerell, CEO of Continenence Foundation of Australia
- **Mon 18 June to Sun 24 June** – ALL STATES - media interviews with health professionals and people of all ages now living with incontinence
- **Sat 16 June** – CANBERRA - Bev Killick performing continence comedy at the Melbourne International Comedy Roadshow at Theatre Centre
- **Sun 17 June to Wed 20 June** – CANBERRA - Continenence Foundation’s Aussie outdoor dunny on display at the National General Assembly of Local Government, National Convention Centre
- **Thurs 21 June** – PERTH - World Continenence Week cocktail party/MICF Perth opening night, His Majesty’s Theatre Perth
- **Search for over 200 other WCW events by state**
<https://www.laughwithoutleaking.com.au/blogs/events/>

Continenence fast facts

- Over 5 million Australians – 1 in 4 people aged 15 years or over – are incontinent
- By 2030, the prevalence is estimated to increase to 6.4 million Australians
- The majority of people affected by incontinence can be better treated, managed or cured
- 70% of incontinent people do not seek help
- 80% of people who report they are living with incontinence are women
- Half of those women are aged under 50 years
- 1 in 3 mothers wet themselves
- 1 in 5 leak when they laugh
- Incontinence impacts self-esteem, motivation, dignity and independence
- In 2010, the total economic cost of incontinence was estimated to be \$66.7 billion and rising

References

¹ CFA continence survey 2017, Deloitte Access Economics (DAE) report 2010, AIHW ‘Continenence in Australia’ 2013

² Vissers, D., Neels, H., Vermandel, A., De Wachter, S., Tjalma, W. A. A., Wyndaele, J. J., & Taeymans, J. (2014). The effect of non-surgical weight loss interventions on urinary incontinence in overweight women: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Obesity reviews*, 15(7), 610-617.