RSA Conference 2026

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Inspiring and Enabling:
Diversity in Action - Every Voice, Every Patient

17-19 June 2026

Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre

RSA Renal Society of Australasia

Te Pae
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Barriers to Research and Quality Improvement in Nephrology: nurses and allied health professionals' perspectives.

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Background



Nurses and allied health professionals are central to kidney care

✓ Improving patient outcomes

Gap



Research engagement remains limited



Barriers in nephrology is not understood

Objective

To identify **barriers and facilitators** to research and quality improvement engagement among nephrology nurses and allied health professionals across Australia and New Zealand.

Methods

- **A mixed methods** convergent parallel study using an online survey and facilitated workshop at the Renal Society of Australasia Conference (June 2025).

- Capability, Opportunity, Motivation–Behaviour (**COM B) framework** guided data collection and analysis.

The COM-B Framework

Guiding data collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings

C Capability

Knowledge, skills & confidence to conduct research

- Research training & education
- Confidence with methodologies
- Practical research skills

O Opportunity

Environmental & organisational conditions

- Time & protected hours
- Resources & infrastructure
- Organisational support & leadership

M Motivation

Beliefs, values & professional aspirations

- Value for patient care
- Career development
- Passion for improving outcomes

⟶ BEHAVIOUR: Research & Quality Improvement Engagement ⟵

Result: Participant Characteristics

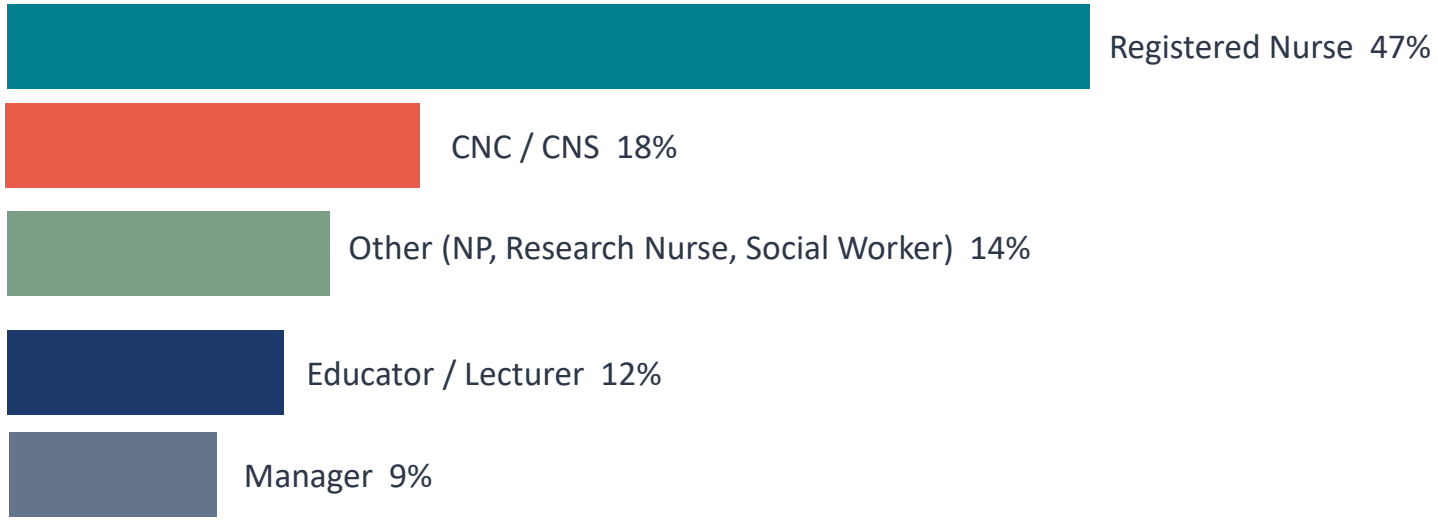
47
Survey Responses
(from 64 received)

28
Workshop
Participants

91%
Based in
Australia

93%
Female
Gender

Roles (Survey Participants)



Workload Profile

Research component in role:
Yes: 47% No: 53%

Quality improvement component:
Yes: 86% No: 14%

Mean age: 45.5 ± 9.2 years
Location: VIC 65%, NSW 14%, QLD 9%, Other 12%

Perceived Barriers: Survey results

Statements with mean score < 3.0 → classified as barriers (lower = stronger barrier)



Perceived Facilitators: Survey results

Statements with mean score ≥ 4.0 → classified as facilitators | All 4 facilitators fall within Motivation domain



Qualitative Findings: 2 Key Barriers

Barrier 1 — Knowledge & Capability

- Unsure how to start or navigate research
- Lack of knowledge about ethics approval processes
- Unaware of diverse study designs beyond RCTs

"I don't know where to start! You just don't know which one's got the priority."

Barrier 2 — Support & Opportunity

- Lack of mentorship, supervision and peer support
- Leaders don't actively encourage or prioritise research
- KPIs and operational compliance dominate priorities
- Heavy clinical workloads; no protected time for research

"Even if you know how to do research, the bigger challenge is actually using that research to implement changes in practice."

Qualitative Findings: Key Enablers

Enabler 1 — Networking & Collaboration

- Professional bodies provide resources, mentorship and guidance
- Research symposia and conferences inspire new ideas
- Shared team interests reduce individual burden
- Hospital library teams offer research skills workshops

"Working together rather than individually. Finding a group means no one has to do 100% of the work."

Enabler 2 — Valuing Research

- Genuine passion for research to improve patient care
- Research engagement linked to career progression (CNC roles)
- Formal recognition of research in career pathways
- Intrinsic drive: knowing research translates to better outcomes

"If you want to make a change, and you're passionate to make that change, that's the driving force."

Clinical Implications & Recommendations

🎓 Build Capability

- Interactive, activity-based research training.
- Mentorship programmes pairing novice and experienced clinician-researchers.
- Practical skills workshops (study design, ethics navigation, team coordination).

🏢 Strengthen Opportunity

- Protected time within clinical roles for research.
- Leadership that actively champions research engagement.
- Access to research infrastructure, librarians and grant support.

⭐ Foster Motivation

- Formally recognise research contributions in career pathways.
- Help clinicians connect research to direct patient impact.
- Create reward and recognition systems for QI/research outputs.

Take Home Messages

- Structural barriers (time, resources, support) are the dominant obstacles — despite strong intrinsic motivation
- Networking, mentorship and career recognition are powerful enablers
- Addressing these barriers can build a research-active workforce to drive evidence-informed kidney care

Take Home Messages

Nurses and allied health professionals are the clinicians closest to our patients. Bringing them into research isn't optional — it's essential.