



On Extreme Heat Awareness Day, Dr Monique Ryan Calls for Heatwaves to Be Named to Save Australian Lives

On Extreme Heat Awareness Day, Independent Member for Kooyong Dr Monique Ryan has warned that extreme heat is both a growing health crisis and a national communications failure. She is calling on the Albanese Government to begin naming heatwaves, using the same approach governments have applied to cyclones for over 60 years, to strengthen public awareness and save lives.

Dr Ryan has launched a petition urging the government to introduce a heatwave-naming system to improve public understanding of heat-related health risks. In just one week, the petition has attracted almost 2,000 signatures from across the country, and a public poll on potential names for the next heatwave has drawn over 800 responses. Dr Ryan will reveal the poll results at the press conference today, Extreme Heat Awareness Day.

Dr Ryan has stressed that without clearer, more consistent communication about the health impacts of heatwaves, vulnerable Australians will continue to face life-threatening risk.

Quotes from Dr Monique Ryan, Independent Federal MP for Kooyong:

“On Extreme Heat Awareness Day, the Albanese Government should seriously consider the proposal to formally name heatwaves. Over the past month alone, Melbourne has endured record-breaking temperatures exceeding 48 degrees, underscoring just how urgent this issue has become.

“The government has a clear opportunity to adopt lessons from 60 years of effective cyclone communication, applying them to Australia’s deadliest natural hazard. Heatwaves represent a health crisis. They kill more Australians than fires, floods and cyclones combined.

“A heatwave naming system, paired with severity categories and consistent public messaging, would improve risk awareness, support targeted health outreach like welfare checks, pop-up cooling and emergency response resourcing, and focus accountability for climate change.

“Climate change is driving longer, hotter and more dangerous summers, while the urban heat island effect is pushing temperatures in major cities even higher. These overlapping trends make urgent action on heatwave communication essential. It will save lives.”