

4 December, 2013

MEDIA RELEASE

2013 ACHS Medal Award Winner Announced

The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) has awarded its prestigious 2013 ACHS Medal to Professor Christopher Brook PSM, a distinguished Victorian clinician who is Australia's longest continually serving Deputy Secretary in Health, with experience in a variety of portfolios.

In presenting the award, ACHS President, Adjunct Associate Professor Karen Linegar said "We are delighted to present this award to Professor Brook for his work across three significant areas; the first is in quality and safety in health care, the second is in blood and blood products and the third is in cancer services and cardiac services in rural and regional areas."

"He is highly respected for his work within the Department of Health, as well as for his commitment to rural Victoria and his engagement in many issues across Government and at the national level. However, it is his contribution above and beyond the normal parameters of work which deserves recognition."

"Professor Brook's initial role was as Chief Medical Officer, followed by a period as regional Director for the then North Eastern Metropolitan region of Melbourne; followed by several years as Director of Public Health; five years as Director of Acute Health (Hospitals), and almost 10 years as Executive Director, Rural & Regional Health & Aged Care (with both specific regional roles as well as state-wide functions)."

Professor Brook is widely regarded as one of Australia's most important figures in the safe and progressive use of blood and blood products, most notably in the care given to haemophiliacs in the 1990s. He was instrumental in ensuring the Commonwealth were made aware of the better solutions available – particularly for children who were likely to grow with severe joint deformity. Professor Brook was also closely involved in the reformation of separate state-based Red Cross Blood Services into a single national body (ARCBS) in the late 1990's. He also sat on the Advisory Board that created the National Blood Authority.

In Cancer Care and Cardiac, Professor Brook worked with the Commonwealth and others to establish Australia's first regional radiotherapy service and to demonstrate its benefit as a "hub and spoke" model with five regional radiotherapy centres established in Victoria. The establishment has been highly successful in increasing rates of radiotherapy and in ensuring better cancer care. Other jurisdictions have adopted this model.

The same logic has applied to the establishment of regional and outer metropolitan cardiology services including provision of stenting for urgent care of those with compromised coronary circulation. As a result of these significant changes more people are receiving care when they are presented with a life threatening illness than would have otherwise been the case.

In quality and safety, Chris continued the reformation of the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) to the significant international body it is today. He was President elect, President and past President over a six year period.

Professor Linegar said Professor Brook currently sits on the Board of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare (ACSQHC) and ACHS is very proud that he is the 21st recipient of the ACHS Medal.

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