PHAA President’s Award to be given to the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee

The Public Health Association Australia (PHAA) today announced a special PHAA President’s Award for the members of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), whose work over recent months has helped keep all Australians safe during the COVID epidemic. The announcement coincides with the start of Australia’s first ever virtual Preventive Health Conference 2020 on the 13 May.

“This band of public health experts, hitherto unknown to most Australians, have undoubtedly saved lives.” said PHAA President David Templeman.

“Their rapid success in advising and influencing political leaders, health sector, community and business leaders, and ultimately all Australians of the urgency of the present situation which has put Australia in an enviable position worldwide.”

“They deserve every form of recognition Australians can give. The Public Health Association is proud of them, and proud to be recognizing them formally through this award.”

“In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic the AHPPC has been the engine room that has driven the capture and synthesis of the vital data on the unfolding pandemic, which has underpinned their policy advice to our political leaders.”

“This committee, some of whom are PHAA members, has meet almost every day for more than three months and operated under extreme pressure to provide definitive advice in extraordinarily uncertain circumstances.”

“They have been professional, measured, tireless and fearless in their advice, giving a human and humane perspective, while keeping the health of the Australian people foremost in their minds.”

“In addition to the tireless efforts of the AHPPC, there have been many other players supporting our relatively safe national outcome – including specialist teams at national, and state and territory level,” said Mr Templeman. “But the AHPPC members have been the key advisers, and they have been the “braintrust” of our nation’s collective response.”

“The AHPPC members have given Australians confidence in our collective ability to face this crisis, and through that confidence, made it possible to get to where we have.

“I cannot commend our nation’s chief health officers highly enough.”

The award will be announced at the opening of the first ever Virtual Preventive Health Conference 2020. The conference is run by the PHAA and starts on Wednesday 13 May and runs over a two-week period.

It features sessions on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, the economics of prevention, climate health and the vital role of communication in preventive health.

Attachments:
List of members of the AHPPC
PHAA President’s Award Citation

For media inquiries please contact Rebecca Blackburn on 02 6171 1304 or communications@phaa.net.au.
Members of the AHPPC

Professor Brendan Murphy, Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer
Professor Paul Kelly, Deputy Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer
Dr Nick Coatsworth, Deputy Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer
Professor Michael Kidd, Deputy Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer AM
Dr Jenny Firman, Deputy Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer
Ms Alison McMillan, Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer
Dr Andrew Robertson, Chief Health Officer, Western Australia, CSC and PSM
Professor Nicola Spurrier, Chief Health Officer, South Australia
Professor Brett Sutton, Chief Health Officer, Victoria
Dr Kerry Chant, Chief Health Officer, New South Wales, PSM
Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer, Queensland
Dr Mark Veitch, Chief Health Officer, Tasmania
Dr Kerryn Coleman, Chief Health Officer, Australian Capital Territory
Dr Hugh Heggie, Chief Health Officer, Northern Territory
Rear Admiral Sarah Sharkey, Commander Joint Health and Surgeon General, Australian Defence Force, CSC
Mr Rob Cameron, Director General, Emergency Management Australia, OAM
Dr Caroline McElany, Director of Public Health, New Zealand Ministry of Health
Dr Christine Selvey, NSW Health Acting Director of Communicable Diseases, Chair, Communicable Diseases Network Australia
Professor Ben Howden, Chair, Public Health Laboratory Network
Ms Bronte Martin, Nursing Director, National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre
Professor Len Notaras, Executive Director, National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre, AM
PHAA President’s Award

“For outstanding contribution to the betterment and protection of public health in Australia”

Conferred on the Australian Health Protection Principals Committee (AHPPC) and its members

13 May 2020

Citation

Australia has been among the most successful countries in the world to navigate the initial ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no doubt concern exists at the prospect of second and subsequent waves of the disease, and how Australia, like the rest of the world, will deal with the virus beyond this initial period. None the less there is increasing international recognition of the relative success of the containment of the initial spread of the disease in Australia.

By any measure, when compared to many countries in the northern hemisphere, the Australian response to the COVID-19 crisis has been a great public health success story.

That success has come down to the efforts of the Australian community in accepting and adopting previously unheard-of restrictions on personal freedoms, which have come with significant economic, social and emotional impacts. But Australians have almost universally adhered to the necessary restrictions, and have made the best of these challenging times.

Political leaders have also stepped up to take on the challenge of COVID-19. Many have made difficult decisions, and have explained and defended them in the face of criticism. They have worked together and constructively in ways previously unseen, often setting aside political and ideological differences. Most importantly they have closely followed the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the AHPPC has been the engine room that has driven the capture and synthesis of the vital data on the unfolding pandemic which has underpinned the policy advice to our political leaders. When Australia’s political leaders refer to the advice of their “medical expert panel”, it is the AHPPC they mean.

This committee has operated under great pressure to provide definitive advice in extraordinarily uncertain circumstances. They have been professional, measured, tireless and fearless in their advice, giving a human and humane perspective, while keeping the health of the Australian people foremost in their minds.

The AHPPC has drawn upon the efforts and expertise of a wide range of experts nationally, in jurisdictions and in academia.

For that reason, the President of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is awarding the committee as a whole, and each individual member of that committee, the President’s award for outstanding contribution to the betterment and protection of public health in Australia.

David Templeman
President
Public Health Association of Australia

Terry Slevin
Chief Executive Officer