

## **Address to the Fellowship on the launch of the Academy**

Delivering quality health care is one of the bigger challenges facing any country. The Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences aims to advance the delivery of effective health care to the community, through promotion of evidence based clinical practice. It will provide an independent forum, through which health and medical research can be discussed and debated, and from which expert opinion can be sought and promulgated. Further, it will, through a mentorship program, contribute to research training for the next generation of health care providers, and to assisting researchers interested in translating their basic research into the clinical arena. This is necessary to ensure that research is firmly embedded into all aspects of clinical practice, and in all clinical practice settings. It will ensure that there are sufficient health practitioner scientists to deliver the research agenda, and to ensure evidence based practice, across all areas of health care practice.

Today, we are acknowledging, through the award of fellowship of our academy, some of the best talent and expertise in academic health and medical sciences in Australia. A learned society can only be as productive as its fellowship - individuals, not organization, move the world forward. To those elected to the fellowship, I therefore take this opportunity to remind you that successful delivery by the academy of the aims I just outlined lies in the hands of each of you. You, through your contributions to the Academy, will determine the Academy's future, and I ask you to contribute to every aspect of the Academy's work as fully as you can.

Across all disciplines of human knowledge, and in all countries of the world, learned academies have an amazing track record of moving scientific knowledge forward, and applying it to the benefit of humankind. We are fortunate to live in a country that already supports four learned academies. I acknowledge that our sphere of knowledge, and our fellowship, intersects with each of theirs, and I look forward to working collaboratively with our sister academies to ensure that Australia continues to contribute world-leading research in Health and Medical Sciences.

Many colleagues have contributed over the last two years to ensuring the successful launch of the Academy, including the members of inaugural board and council, our initial and volunteer Executive Officer Alan Mackay, our current Executive Officer Simone Yendle, and the group of elders who initiated the move to develop the Academy. On behalf of the fellowship, I thank each of these for their wise counsel in the past, and ask that they continue to contribute over the coming years, as we grow the fellowship and increase our ability to deliver on our goals.

We live at the start of an exciting era of medical research – Moore's law, which says that technologies will double in capacity and half in price every 18 months, will continue to prevail across all activities of clinical research and treatment. Big data on health across communities will be gathered by continuous monitoring through intelligent wearable devices, intelligent systems will assist us in health care, and data security and privacy will take on new meaning with cloud storage and social networking. Clinical trials will become globalized, new technologies in imaging, and molecular pathology will become widely available, new diseases will challenge us, and new treatments, and new uses for existing treatments, will become available to us. These important steps forward will

raise new challenges. An effective learned academy will ensure that we remain ahead of this wave, rather than drowning in it. Additionally, we need to make sure we are effectively using the knowledge we have at our disposal – for example, immunisation policy. This is good for community health, and the public purse, and the academy will provide a means to provide learned advice to the community and health care providers through opinion papers.

The next year promises to be a busy one. Our first annual scientific meeting will be in Canberra in October. We will establish regular state based events for the fellowship, initiate our mentorship program (which all fellows are encouraged to participate in as mentors – see the academy web site for details) and provide a training workshop for mentors and mentees in association with the annual scientific meeting and AGM. We will also develop a governance framework within which the academy can move forward with confidence. The first AGM will be held in association with the Annual Scientific meeting, and will give the new fellowship the opportunity to help shape the future direction of the Academy. I therefore look forward to seeing all fellows at the Annual Scientific meeting, and to hearing in the meanwhile from each of you about how you would like to see the Academy develop further, including initiatives that you may want to lead. Your contribution will ensure that we accomplish the key goals of our Academy over the next few years, and that the Academy will be recognised as a major contributor to the Australian health and medical landscape into the further future.