

MJA Careers

Honour and glory



Professor Samuel Frank
BERKOVIC

Leaders of the medical community have again featured strongly in the Australia Day Honours list, reflecting another year of engagement with and innovation for the public benefit

It is an enduring mystery to Professor Sam Berkovic that even as science is providing more and more answers to medical mysteries, patients increasingly go in search of “pseudosciences”.

“It is a paradox”, Professor Berkovic tells the MJA.

“I find it a bizarre social phenomenon. It’s in our nature, we want to know the answers and while genuine science is providing them, the pseudosciences are flourishing.”

Professor Berkovic is having a busy couple of weeks. His phone has been ringing constantly since the announcement on Australia Day that he is the recipient of the highest honour in the land — Companion in the General Division of the Order of Australia.

“I’m very lucky to be part of a big team”, says Professor Berkovic, who is director of the epilepsy program at Austin Health in Melbourne and Laureate Professor of the Department of Medicine at the University of Melbourne. “I’m just the lucky one who gets the letters.”

Maybe so, but it is no coincidence that Professor Berkovic has been on the receiving end of many an award, including an OAM in 2005, an excellence award from the National Health and Medical Research Council in 2010, and a medal from the Bethlehem Griffiths Research Foundation in 2009, to name just the top three.

His AC is, officially, “for eminent

service to biomedical research in the field of epilepsy genetics as a leading academic and clinician, to the study of neurology on a national and international level, and as an ambassador for Australian medical science education”.

In 1995, Professor Berkovic discovered the first gene for epilepsy. Is he disappointed the search for a cure has not come further in the intervening 19 years?

“No, I’m excited”, he replies. He goes on to explain.

“You could say that the genetics revolution has been ‘disappointing’ because cures haven’t come along quickly. But progress has not been zero, either.

“The truth is we don’t know how long a cure will take.

“I like to make the analogy of an engineer who wants to build a bridge across a wide river. He can make a projection about how many years it’s going to take and how much concrete he’s going to need”, he says.

“But that’s not true in science. We don’t know how wide the river is.

“And neurology has been particularly challenging.

“The genetics revolution has greatly changed our understanding of these diseases, and has shown us just how complex the problem is.

“That’s the excitement of science.”

Companion (AC) in the general division

Professor Samuel Frank BERKOVIC AM

Officer (AO) in the general division

Professor Christine Constance BENNETT

See Box 1.

Professor David Stephen CELERMAJER

See Box 2.

Professor Michael John COUSINS AM

See Box 3.

Professor Michael Matthew DAUBE

See Box 4.

Dr Richard John BRENNAN

For distinguished service to the international community through seminal contributions to humanitarian health, emergency medicine, and disaster response organisations, particularly in developing nations.

Dr Dimity Ann DORNAN AM

For distinguished service to the international community, particularly through the establishment of health care and clinical training programs to prevent and treat hearing loss in babies and young children.

Dr Penelope Ruth FLETT

For distinguished service to aged persons through significant contributions to improve care and support services, to education, and to the community of Western Australia.

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“*The genetics revolution has greatly changed our understanding of these diseases, and has shown us just how complex the problem is. That’s the excitement of science*”

Box 1

**Professor Christine BENNETT**

For distinguished service to medicine and healthcare leadership, as a clinician, researcher and educator, particularly in the fields of child and family health and social policy.

Dean of the School of Medicine at the University of Notre Dame Australia, chair of the Australian National Preventive Health Agency Advisory Council and former chair of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission.

Professor Bennett is a member of a rare species, having worked in every realm of health — education, the private sector, the public sector, not-for-profits and the government.

“It’s been an amazing journey”, she says. “It’s given me a unique perspective. I can see the common ground, and the ideological differences which can get in the way.

“Being dean of a medical school, I’m part of reforming health on the ground, helping a new generation, helping them to understand the privilege of being a doctor ... it’s all the things I hold dear.”

Professor John Francis THOMPSON

For distinguished service to medicine in the field of oncology research, particularly melanoma, to national and international professional organisations, and to medical education.

Associate Professor Edward Thomas WILKES

For distinguished service to the Indigenous community as a leading researcher in the area of public health and welfare, to youth in Western Australia, and to the provision of legal support services.

Member (AM) in the general division**Dr Vikija ANDERSONS RFD**

For significant service to medicine as an ophthalmologist and surgeon.

Professor Phyllis Noemi BUTOW

For significant service to medicine in the field of psychology, as an academic, researcher and author, and to professional organisations.

Dr Carol COX

For significant service to medicine in rural and remote areas as a general practitioner, to education, and to professional medical organisations.

Dr Graham Francis FLEMING

For significant service to medicine in rural South Australia, and as an advocate in the field of mental health and suicide prevention.

Dr Stewart Alfred HART

For significant service to medicine as a clinician, particularly in the area of breast cancer research, and to community health organisations.

Dr Harry HEMLEY

For significant service to medicine through

delivering health care to the homeless, and as a general practitioner.

Dr Vernon Barton HILL

For significant service to rehabilitation medicine and spinal injuries.

Professor Cashel D’Arcy HOLMAN

For significant service to medicine in the field of epidemiology and public health.

Associate Professor Richard William KING

For significant service to medicine as a clinician, educator and administrator, particularly in the areas of health policy development.

The Honourable Dr Francis Leslie MADILL

For significant service to the Parliament of Tasmania, to medicine as a general practitioner, and to the community.

Professor Glenn Mark MARSHALL

For significant service to medicine in the field of paediatric oncology.

Professor Rob MOODIE

For significant service to medicine through HIV/AIDS research, and through leadership roles in population health and disease prevention programs.

Dr Brian Keith MORTON

For significant service to medicine as a general practitioner, and to a range of professional medical organisations.

Dr Peter Thomas MYERS

For significant service to sports medicine and orthopaedic surgery.

Dr Ian Andrew NICHOLSON

For significant service to medicine in the field of cardiac surgery, and through volunteer outreach programs in the Pacific and Africa.

Professor John Henry OLVER

For significant service to medicine, particularly the treatment and rehabilitation of acquired brain injuries.

Associate Professor John Herbert OVERTON OAM RFD

For significant service to medicine, particularly in the area of anaesthesia, through clinical, administration and advisory roles, and to professional organisations.

Dr William Daniel ROBERTS

For significant service to the community through roles in health administration and as a general practitioner.

Dr Paul Douglas STALLEY

For significant service to medicine, particularly the treatment of bone and soft tissue cancers.

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Box 2

**Professor David CELERMAJER**

For distinguished service to medicine in the field of cardiology, as a clinician and researcher, to improved medical diagnostic methods, and to the promotion of heart health, particularly in children and young adults.

Current Scandrett Professor of Cardiology at the University of Sydney, board member of the Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin, clinical director of the Heart Research Institute in Sydney and director of Adult Congenital Heart Disease Services at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

“The future sounds unsexy, it’s in implementation”, he says. “We’ve had a very, very productive phase of discovery, and now the real challenge is how to implement those things into public policy in both developed and developing countries.

“We have a potential leadership role to play in our local area, without being paternalistic about it. The [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] region contains half of the world’s population and we need to start playing a leading role.”

Box 3

**Professor Michael John COUSINS**

For distinguished service to medicine through specialised tertiary curriculum development, as a researcher and advocate for reform and human rights in the field of pain, and as an author and mentor.

Professor and foundation chair of anaesthesia and pain management at the Northern Clinical School, Royal North Shore Hospital and University of Sydney, founding head of the discipline of pain management and founding director of the Pain Management Research Institute at the Kolling Institute of Medical Research.

“One of the really exciting treatments that is a couple of years away is in pharmacogenomics and other aspects of genetics”, he tells the *MJA*.

“It will resolve in DNA testing for people who are at risk for developing neuropathic pain after trauma or surgery, which will allow us to intervene if required.

“I feel a lot of optimism for the field of pain medication. Neuroscientists have decided to devote their energy to clinical and translational research that will produce good new treatments.”

Dr Philip Gregory TRUSKETT

For significant service to medicine, particularly the development and practice of surgery.

Dr Peter Martin WINTERTON

For significant service to youth through a range of child protection roles, and to medicine.

Professor Graeme Paul YOUNG

For significant service to medicine through a range of research, clinical and academic roles, particularly in the area of gastrointestinal health.

Member (AM) in the military division**Colonel Leonard Basil BRENNAN**

For exceptional service to the Australian Defence Force in the field of health support as Director Health, Headquarters Joint Operations Command; Director Army Health;

and Senior Medical Officer, Combined Team Uruzgan.

Medal (OAM) in the general division**Dr Ian James BAGULEY**

For service to medicine, particularly brain injury rehabilitation.

Dr Jurriaan Jan BEEK

For service to medicine, and to the community.

Dr Belinda Jane BROWN

For service to medicine in the field of breast cancer treatment.

Dr James Boyer BROWN

For service to medical education, and to the community.

Dr Graham William CATO

For service to community health, and to surf lifesaving.

Associate Professor James Forrester KING

For service to medicine, particularly in the field of perinatal epidemiology.

Dr John LINDSEY

For service to medicine as a consultant physician

Dr Peter David LIVINGSTONE

For service to medicine as an anaesthetist.

Mr Luke Leonard MARSDEN

For service to medicine in the field of podiatry

Dr Romney Adair NEWMAN

For service to medicine as a physician, and to the community.

Dr James Byrne POLLITT

For service to medicine as a general practitioner, and to the community.

Professor George RAMSEY-STEWART

For service to surgical education.

Dr John Charles VANCE

For service to the blind, and to people with low vision.

Dr Peter Robert WAKEFORD

For service to medicine, and to the community.

Dr Richard Howell WALKEY, deceased

For service to medicine as a general practitioner, and to the community.

Associate Professor Bruce Philip WAXMAN

For service to medicine as an administrator, educator and clinician.

Public Service Medal (PSM)**Dr Nicholas Gerrit HARTLAND**

For outstanding public service in the establishment of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and longstanding and remarkable service to public administration in the area of social policy.

Dr Rosemary Ann LESTER

For outstanding public service in public health leadership, particularly on communicable diseases and immunisation.

Dr Eugenie Mary TUCK OAM

For outstanding public service in the area of healthcare in correctional services.

Professor Michael Ian CLEARY

For outstanding public service to healthcare innovation improvement and reform in Queensland

Dr Catherine YELLAND

For outstanding public service, excellence and leadership in Older Persons Medical Services.

Box 4

**Professor Michael Matthew DAUBE**

For distinguished service to medicine, particularly in the area of public health policy and reform, through advisory roles with leading national and international organisations, and to youth.

Professor of health policy at Curtin University in Western Australia, director of the Public Health Advocacy Institute and the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth, founding co-chair of the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol.

“As we gradually move on from diseases caused by poverty we will have to contend with the ruthless and predatory behaviour of global industries — tobacco, alcohol, junk food”, Professor Daube says.

“Here in Australia, we need to finish what we’ve started with tobacco. In the next 20 to 30 years we will see significant changes for the good around alcohol. The situation now is like it was with tobacco in the 1980s.

“The other big issue is public health for our vulnerable communities — the Indigenous, and those with mental health issues.

“Finally we need to persuade the Australian people that we have a bloody good health system and we should continue to fund it.”

Cate Swannell