

MEDIA RELEASE
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MEDICAL DEANS CELEBRATE WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Medical Deans is celebrating International Women's Day by highlighting women leaders in medical education and research.

Professor Nicholas Glasgow, President of Medical Deans, said that International Women's Day was an opportunity to celebrate the enormous contribution women have made to medicine and medical education and research.

"There are now six Deans and five Deputy Deans at the 21 medical schools and faculties across Australia and New Zealand. This is a significant increase since 2004 when the first woman Dean of Medicine, Professor Judy Searle was appointed at Griffith University.

"Over the last three decades there has also been a significant increase in the number of women studying medicine. We have come a long way since the University of Melbourne graduated Australia's first women doctors, Clara Stone and Margaret Whyte, in 1891. In 2014, 51 percent of Australian medical graduates were women and there were 1 666 women (51.9 percent) commencing medical studies in 2015."

Professor Glasgow acknowledged there are still challenges to address. "While we have seen substantial progress, it remains a challenge to see the increase in medical school students translate into a similar increase of women in leadership positions and specialist roles and we will continue to work towards this end."

The Executive Dean at the University of Wollongong, Professor Alison Jones, said profiling the achievements of women leaders can assist in reaching this goal.

"The importance of women leaders as role models and mentors cannot be underestimated. I hope being a female executive dean, medical practitioner and toxicologist will encourage girls to consider a science-based career and to aspire to a leadership position. We are nuts as a nation if we don't use half of the smarts of the population."

"Medical Deans is committed to diversity in medicine, supporting women and reducing barriers that may stand in the way of women continuing to rise to the top of the profession."

Across university campuses, events such as Monash University's Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences International Women's Day lunch are being held to celebrate women's achievements.

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Current Women Deans and Deputy Deans

Professor Christine Bennett AO is Dean of Medicine at the University of Notre Dame Australia in Sydney. Professor Bennett is a specialist paediatrician and has over 35 years of health industry experience in clinical care, strategic planning, and as a CEO in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. She is also Chair of Research Australia, Sydney Children's Hospitals Network and formerly the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission.

Professor Shirley Bowen is Dean of Medicine at University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle. Professor Bowen holds Fellowships in Infectious Diseases and Sexual Health Medicine. Her research interests include strategic planning for the prevention of HIV and STIs; Chronic Disease Management Services; cost effectiveness and health outcomes; and Residential care and the Emergency Department interface.

Professor Wendy Erber is Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at the University of Western Australia. Professor Erber, a Rhodes Scholar (the first female from NSW), worked as a haematologist in Sydney, Perth and Cambridge hospitals. Her specific areas of interest and expertise are cellular haematology, and particularly the integrated approach to the diagnosis and assessment of haematological malignancies. In 2015 she was named the Cancer Council WA's Research of the Year and inducted as a Fellow by the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.

Professor Annemarie Hennessy AM is Dean of the School of Medicine, at Western Sydney University and Foundation Chair of Medicine (2006-2016). Professor Hennessy is a Renal and Obstetric Physician with a research interest in Hypertension and Hypertension in pregnancy.

Professor Alison Jones is Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health at the University of Wollongong. Professor Jones is a scientist and medical practitioner who has served as a high-level toxicology adviser to NSW Ministry of Health. Professor Jones maintains strong, collaborative research partnerships with health and medical researchers nationally and globally. Professor Jones is Secretary of Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand.

Professor Christina A. Mitchell is Academic Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash University. Professor Mitchell has practiced as a general physician and as a specialist haematologist. Professor Mitchell major research is to investigate the role of lipid phosphatases in development and human disease.

Professor Cheryl Jones is Deputy Dean (Education), Sydney Medical School. Professor Jones is a clinician-scientist in paediatric infectious diseases who leads a bench-to-bedside research program covering laboratory-based research, population health epidemiology and surveillance of infectious diseases.

Professor Michelle Leech is Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash University. Professor Leech has been a research fellow at Monash Centre for Inflammatory Diseases and continues as a consultant physician and deputy director of Rheumatology at Monash Health. Professor Leech is Treasurer of Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand.

Professor Imogen Mitchell is Deputy Dean of the Medical School, ANU College of Medicine, Biology & Environment. Professor Mitchell is an intensive care specialist and a senior medical advisor to the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. Professor Mitchell's major research is development of sustainable processes for managing patient deterioration.

Professor Tania Sorrell is Deputy Dean (Clinical), Sydney Medical School. Professor Sorrell is Director of the Marie Bashir Institute for Infectious Diseases and Biosecurity (MBI) and is an infectious diseases physician and medical mycologist whose research focuses on invasive fungal infections.

Professor Eileen Willis is Deputy Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences at Flinders University. Professor Willis has a research interest in the area of Indigenous public health policy and is currently engaged in two research projects examining the impact of rationalised care in the public hospital system and international nurses.