

FOREWORD

CRANAPLUS MAGAZINE

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG

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I am proud to be Patron of CRANApus.

In the words of the CEO, Christopher Cliffe:

“CRANApus exists to drive the delivery of safe, high quality, primary healthcare to remote and isolated areas of Australia. We are an affordable, grassroots, not-for-profit organisation that has provided over 30 years of education, support and professional services to the multi-disciplinary remote health workforce of Australia. Our services are tailored specifically for this unique section of the Australian health workforce which is difficult to physically access – but so essential.”

At the beginning of most conferences and events in Australia today, it is usual for the speaker to begin with an expression of respect for the indigenous people of our country – the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. But for CRANApus, this is not a courtesy or a polite routine. It is part of the daily reality. Although CRANApus members in the health care services work with and for people of all races, backgrounds and communities, a significant part of the work of CRANApus concerns the indigenous people who live in the remote and rural areas of our huge intercontinental country.

* Justice of the High Court of Australia (1996-2009); Member of the UNAIDS/Lancet Commission on Sustainable Health (2014-15); Member of the Global Fund’s Equitable Access Initiative (2014-15).

Australia still presents many paradoxes in its treatment of the indigenous peoples. Poor educational opportunities; housing; and healthcare facilities are all too frequently a cause of injustice and deprivation. This is where the work of CRANApplus members turns words of acknowledgement into positive action. They are agents for good outcomes in the provision of universal human rights for vulnerable Australians.

I also applaud the commitment to members of CRANApplus to high ethical standards. At a conference in Cairns which I attended, in my capacity as Patron of CRANApplus, I shared with the participants a quandary that had been presented in debates at UNAIDS in Geneva. The advent of antiretroviral therapy (ART) to reduce the deadly toll of HIV, would it be justified to conduct HIV tests randomly, and without specific counselling and consent on the part of patients. Could such a course be justified by the outcomes?

It was no surprise to me to hear the answers given by the CRANApplus members. 'We could never do that. It is contrary to our ethics as Australian healthcare professionals. It would also be counter-productive. Our patients, when they heard that this had been done, would never trust us again. It would take decades, if not generations, to win back the trust and confidence of our patients'.

When I recounted this response in the hallowed halls of the United Nations in Geneva, there was great admiration for CRANApplus and its members. And for the integrity of the provision of healthcare in Australia.

I therefore honour and acknowledge the work of CRANAplus and its members. It is work to high standard of professionalism and integrity. It is sometimes arduous and difficult, beyond the demands of the provision of healthcare services in metropolitan areas of cities. But the CRANAplus members are accomplished and determined. Their work is described in the *Annual Report* in the *CRANAplus Magazine* and in other media. I am glad that I am associated with them.

The images of Australia that appear in the wonderful photographs in the *CRANAplus Magazine* need to be specifically mentioned. Most Australians live in cities that hug the huge coastline of our continental country. For them, the sights, sounds and smells and feelings of remote townships and country areas are an unknown mystery. The photographs in the *CRANAplus Magazine* reveal the great beauty and diversity of Australia. The amazing flora and fauna. The images of small townships and the faces of a hardy people who truly make Australia home.

To the Executive and members of CRANAplus, and all those who support them in their work, I express a citizen's grateful thanks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Smith', written in a cursive style.

Patron