

10 September 2013

Esteemed kidney specialist conferred national health science award

One of Australia's leading kidney specialists has been recognised with a prestigious national award for his contributions to kidney health and advancing Indigenous health.

Treatment of kidney disease costs the health system more than \$1 billion each year. The incidence of end-stage kidney disease, where the kidneys fail and a person needs dialysis or a transplant to stay alive, is 10 times higher among Indigenous Australians than it is among non-Indigenous Australians.

Menzies School of Health Research Director, Professor Alan Cass was yesterday conferred the 2013 TJ Neale Award by the Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology (ANZSN) as part of their 49th Annual Scientific Meeting held in Brisbane.

The TJ Neale award recognises outstanding contribution to the field of nephrological science.

ANZSN President, Professor Rowan Walker, said that Professor Cass was a deserving recipient of the award.

"The awards committee was impressed by the caliber of applicants and there were many worthy winners, speaking to the strength and health of renal science in Australasia," he said.

"As a kidney specialist who has made outstanding contributions to kidney research in Australia, coupled with leadership in research with Indigenous populations, the Award Committee identified Professor Cass as the outstanding figure."

Professor Cass has been involved in kidney health research for 15 years. He has led the conduct of large-scale clinical trials, documented the economic burden associated with kidney disease and pioneered the use of qualitative research to understand the impact on individuals and their families of living with kidney disease. Professor Cass welcomed the national recognition from his peers, but believes there is much more to be done.

"The burden of kidney disease amongst Indigenous Australians remains extremely heavy," Prof Cass said.

"My clinical research is about being part of the solution – working with Indigenous researchers, patients and community organizations, as well as with health service providers and governments, to develop strategies and new models of care that improve health."

Prior to his position at Menzies, Professor Cass was the Director of the Renal Division at the George Institute for Global Health in Sydney. Professor Cass has published 180 academic papers and government reports, fuelled by a commitment to prevent chronic disease and advance wellbeing among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Australians.

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Menzies Background

Menzies School of Health Research are Australia's only Medical Research Institute dedicated to improving Indigenous health and wellbeing. We have a 27-year history of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies work at the frontline and collaborate broadly, partnering with over 60 Indigenous communities across Northern Australia to create resources, grow local skills, and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.