

Aboriginal ear surgeon honoured with Menzies Medallion

13 November 2020

Australia's first Aboriginal surgeon, the highly acclaimed ear, nose and throat surgeon, Associate Professor Kelvin Kong has been awarded the prestigious Menzies Medallion.

Presented with the award at Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) today, A/Prof Kong was recognised for his leadership in Aboriginal health service delivery, advocacy and research, in particular his work to improve ear health in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

A Worimi man from Port Stephens, the breadth and depth of A/Prof Kong's work over the years is far reaching and includes his role as chief investigator for the Menzies-led Centre for Research Excellence in Ear and Hearing Health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children.

He currently practises in Newcastle (Awabakal Country) as a surgeon specialising in paediatric and adult otolaryngology, head and neck surgery (ear, nose and throat surgery), and lectures in allied health at University of Newcastle plus participates in a project group at the Hunter Medical Research Institute carrying out research investigating *Alloiococcus Otitidis*.

Menzies Director Professor Alan Cass said he was delighted the award was presented to someone who has made such a contribution to improving hearing outcomes for Indigenous children.

"I am very pleased to see A/Prof Kong receive this year's medallion. Kelvin brings passion, energy and expert skills as a surgeon and researcher to improve ear health in remote, rural and urban communities," Prof Cass said.

"Kelvin has a strong and clear voice in advocacy to close the gap in educational and social disadvantage associated with the high prevalence of otitis media (OM) and hearing loss in Australian Indigenous children.

"In particular, Kelvin has been instrumental in raising awareness of ear health problems in the Australian community and bringing this issue to the attention of governments. His work has had a profound and measurable impact."

A/Prof Kong is also joint chair of the Hearing for Learning Initiative; a community-based training initiative that focuses on prevention through early detection of ear issues in young children by a locally trained and community-based workforce.

The Menzies Medallion is the highest award offered by Menzies School of Health Research.

Read more about Associate Professor Kelvin Kong on the [University of Newcastle Website](#).

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Menzies background

Menzies School of Health Research is one of Australia's leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving Indigenous, global and tropical health. Menzies has a history of over 35 years of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, joining with partners across the Asia-Pacific as well as Indigenous communities across northern and central Australia. Menzies collaborates to create new knowledge, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.