

## **Professor David M de Kretser AC**

Professor David de Kretser graduated MBBS from the University of Melbourne in 1962. His pursuit of a surgical career was diverted as his interest in research took hold under the guidance of leading academics then involved in establishing Victoria's second medical school at the newly founded Monash University.

A world-recognised and respected infertility and andrology expert and long-serving medical academic, David de Kretser's contribution to the field of male fertility is prominent from both scientific and public perspectives. His research into reproductive biology, infertility and endocrinology has produced more than 430 papers in national and international peer-reviewed journals and over 155 chapters in learned texts. He has been a member of over 70 national and international advisory boards, editorial boards and committees.

His research on the regulation of reproductive processes identified a network of communication systems between the brain and the gonads establishing endocrine, paracrine and autocrine systems. He led the team that elucidated the structure and physiology of major players in these systems, the inhibins, activins and follistatin and their roles in both male and female reproductive function. His work has also shown that the activins and follistatin have major roles as modulators of inflammation and fibrosis with potential therapeutic outcomes. David de Kretser's work has been critical to the understanding of male infertility, testosterone deficiency, impotence and other diseases affecting the male reproductive system and their links with heart and blood vessel disease, obesity, diabetes, and mental health. The authority of his research and his commitment to publicising the consequences of male reproductive health have combined to deliver comprehensive advances in men's health.

As Foundation Director of the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development (now the Monash Institute of Medical Research) and Associate Dean of Monash University's Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, his integration of research with clinical medicine and teaching has been of principal importance. This approach is also reflected in David de Kretser's community education leadership. His founding directorship of a community and professional education program called Andrology Australia has done much to advance public education of men's health issues, some subjects of which are notoriously resistant to open discussion. This successful organisation, dedicated to community and professional education and awareness about men's reproductive health, continues to flourish under his patronage.

David de Kretser has been widely commended for the eminence of his achievements by national and international organisations including the Australian Academy of Science, the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, the US Endocrine Society and the American Society of Andrology. In addition to the award of a Centenary Medal, he was made a Companion of the Order of Australia for his distinguished contributions to public life as a medical researcher of international reputation in the field of reproductive biology, to the development of the biotechnology industry and bioethics, and for his broader service to the Victorian and Australian community.

The appointment of a medical scientist and academic to the 28th governorship of Victoria was a break from tradition for the Victorian community. David de Kretser's scientific and educational breadth of understanding and belief that public debate should be informed by the best scientific information enhanced this role to the benefit of the wider community. His recognition of the importance of health messages and his community protagonism from the perspective of a world-class clinician and scientist, who understands both the social and

research contexts, is particularly evident with regard to the issues of men's health and climate change.

Upon his recent retirement as Victorian Governor, David de Kretser takes up once again the tools of the medical research specialist. The distinct public contributions arising from the work of David de Kretser have confirmed him as an example for all scientists and academics entering into roles of public engagement.