

PROFESSOR ANNE KELSO AO FAA FAHMS

Doctor of Medical Science, *honoris causa*

Professor Anne Kelso is a highly distinguished and respected medical researcher who has made significant contributions to national and international science, community health and medicine. Professor Kelso's career spans research in immunology and vaccines and transformative directorship roles to progress research and pathways to better health and health care.

Following her PhD at the University of Melbourne, Professor Kelso undertook research in immunology at the Swiss Institute for Experimental Cancer Research, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research and the Queensland Institute of Medical Research. From 2000 until 2006, she was Director/CEO of the Cooperative Research Centre for Vaccine Technology. In 2007 she then returned to Melbourne as Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza. In 2015 Professor Kelso took up the role of Chief Executive Officer of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

The far-reaching impact of Professor Kelso's leadership as CEO of NHMRC is impressive. Professor Kelso led the reform of the agency's grant program, creating Ideas Grants, Investigator Grants, Synergy Grants and Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grants. During her tenure the organisation developed a regulatory framework to support the staged introduction of mitochondrial donation into clinical IVF practice; produced a Special Initiative in Human Health and Environmental Change; initiated the National Network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Researchers (OCHRe); provided support to researchers and clinicians during the COVID-19 era; and released advice on a range of health challenges including on e-cigarettes.

Professor Kelso was also the architect of a major initiative at NHMRC to drive gender equality at the highest levels of the sector by recognising and rewarding the outstanding work of women in health and medical research. This initiative was announced at a press conference in 2022 by the Federal Ministers for Health and Aged Care and Women. This gender diversity reform, led by Professor Kelso, required extensive national consultation with wide ranging stakeholders to find a way to provide real gender equity at leadership levels. It is this contribution that highlights Professor Kelso's courage, tenacity and steadfast professionalism that enabled her to lead the transformation of the sector to improve gender equality in health and medical research. This significant intervention will provide the pathway for changes in practices within research organisations to support all genders during all career stages and support better decision-making and research design to the benefit of Australians.

In 2007 Professor Kelso was appointed Officer in the Order of Australia for her service to science. Professor Kelso has contributed training, research and leadership to a range of scientific organisations nationally and internationally and is a member of several Government and international committees, including the Australian Medical Research Advisory Board (advising the Minister for Health and Aged Care on the strategy and priorities for the Medical Research Future Fund), the Strategy Board of the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases and the Board of Trustees of the International Human Frontier Science Program Organization.

Professor Kelso is a highly distinguished researcher and health leader and is recommended for the award of Doctor of Medical Science (*honoris causa*) for her sustained contributions to training, research and leadership in a range of scientific organisations both nationally and internationally.