

# MEDIA RELEASE

**Saturday 3 August 2024**

## **AMA's highest award presented to Professor Caroline de Costa**

Professor Caroline de Costa was tonight awarded the 2024 AMA Gold Medal for her long and dedicated career and extraordinary work in regional Queensland.

Professor de Costa — a Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and a clinician until 2016 — is recognised for her leadership in reproductive health, Pacific health, and Indigenous health in regional Australia.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson, who presented the award at the AMA's national conference gala dinner, commended Professor de Costa's dedication to reproductive healthcare across decades, and her advocacy and activism in reproductive rights.

"I am absolutely delighted to present the highest AMA award to Professor de Costa tonight," he said.

"Professor de Costa is a trailblazer and has shown in her work an absolute commitment to ensuring everybody, even in the most remote parts of the country, have access to the highest quality reproductive healthcare.

"Professor de Costa was Australia's first female professor of obstetrics and gynaecology, having previously studied for her medical degree while pregnant and a single mother."

Professor Robson said Professor de Costa had been at the spearhead of fighting for reproductive rights.

"Professor de Costa's activism included transporting contraceptive devices into Ireland while taking her undergraduate studies there, and later in Australia fighting for access to medical abortion," he said.

"There are many, many women around the world who can thank Professor de Costa for her actions whether it be in her research, her clinical work, or her activism."

Professor de Costa said she was honoured to again receive such an accolade from the AMA.

"I have been very fortunate to have been able to devote so much of my life and career to reproductive healthcare. I have seen incredible leaps and bounds in the science and the practice of reproductive health and this award affords me a moment to reflect on the advances which give women such better care and autonomy than they had previously," Professor de Costa said.

"As we see around the world the fight for reproductive freedoms is far from over. I hope this award might serve as a reminder that we must continue to ensure women are never seen only as vessels for birth but instead to ensure their care and agency is never subject to external decision makers."

For background:

Bio

Professor Caroline de Costa

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Caroline de Costa is Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at [James Cook University](#), Queensland, Australia, as well as an advocate for [indigenous health](#) and [abortion rights](#). She also writes medical nonfiction books and crime novels.

Professor de Costa is the author of over 90 research articles and a number of textbooks. Her PhD thesis became the subject of a book, *Hail Caesar: Why one in three Australian babies are born by Caesarean sections*, published in 2008.

Professor de Costa received the President's medal of RANZCOG and the Sidney Sax medal from the Australian Public Health Association in 2014.

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