

# MEDIA RELEASE

**Sunday 4 August 2024**

## **Two trailblazers scoop AMA's Women in Medical Leadership Award**

Professor Helena Teede and Dr Sarah Whitelaw have been honoured as joint recipients of the Australian Medical Association's 2024 Women in Medical Leadership Award for their outstanding leadership, and contributions to healthcare.

The pair have been recognised for influencing national health policy by promoting gender equity and diversity as fundamental pillars of healthcare.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said the pair's collaborative efforts have significantly influenced national health policy.

"Professor Helena Teede and Dr Sarah Whitelaw are gender equity trailblazers," Professor Robson said.

"I am delighted to honour these two incredible doctors who have shown an unwavering commitment to improving women's participation in healthcare and leadership."

For the past decade, Dr Sarah Whitelaw has been at the front lines of health as a senior specialist emergency physician at the Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) and an advocate for the AMA.

Dr Whitelaw's influential advocacy has earned national recognition, contributing to systemic changes in healthcare leadership and policy.

"I am incredibly grateful to receive this award but I accept it on behalf of a terrific AMA team," Dr Whitelaw said.

"I'm really proud of the work the AMA has done in this area, and I'm honoured to work with the extraordinary Advancing Women in Healthcare team.

"We have a long way to go in terms of our leadership reflecting our profession, but there are so many working so hard to achieve it, and it's important also to look back at what's been achieved."

As chair of the AMA equity, inclusion, and diversity committee, Dr Whitelaw led the development and implementation of major policies, including the AMA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan 2023-25.

"We want to thank Dr Whitelaw for supporting medical students and doctors with disabilities and for elevating women's participation in healthcare leadership," Professor Robson said.

Professor Helena Teede is Professor of Women's Health and Equity, Monash University, the Director of the Monash Centre for Health Research Implementation and an Endocrinologist at Monash Health, with over 30 years of clinical academic experience.

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"My career has focused on women's health and in more recent years I have continued to use research to disrupt the status quo and drive evidence-based change, extending to advance gender equity and leadership in healthcare," she said.

Professor Teede spearheaded the Advancing Women in Healthcare Leadership (AWHL) initiative, which is a national program with 24 large scale partners including the AMA. Together with an amazing team and partner leads including Dr Whitelaw, we have worked to promoting women's leadership and influence in the healthcare sector.

"Healthcare has a 78 per cent female workforce, yet we have major inequity in leadership roles. My focus has been on using evidence to support gender equity and diversity in leadership as a foundation across healthcare, medical research, education and training," Professor Teede said.

Professor Robson said Professor Teede's work has "paved a path or generations to continue in her footsteps".

The two Victorians were awarded the AMA's Women in Medical Leadership Award at the organisation's national conference, AMA24, in Queensland.

Finalists of the award included Dr Kim Loo, Dr Ashna Basu and Dr Desiree Swei Lien Yap.

For background:

Bio

#### **Professor Helena Teede AM**

At Monash University, Helena is Professor of Women's Health, Head Monash Centre for Health Research and Implementation (MCHRI) and is supported by an NHMRC L3 Investigator grant for implementation and impact in women's health. Helena is an active clinician and is a leader across clinical, implementation, epidemiology and public health research and translation.

Professor Teede has held competitive fellowships across a successful career and holds clinical, academic, NGO and government leadership roles. She leads multiple international guidelines, has senior roles including the Council of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences, Professional Society roles including President Elect International Society of Endocrinology, and Chair of a WHO task force.

Professor Teede has inspired a generation of younger women in endocrinology, academia and women's health. Google Scholar H-Index is 101, with >580 publications, 46,000 citations, in NEJM, JAMA, JAMA Int Med, BMJ, Annals Int Med, Lancet Diabetes Endocrinol, Nature Disease Primers, Nature Medicine, Nature Reviews Endocrinology, PloS Med, BMC Med and specialty journal.

Bio

#### **Sarah Whitelaw**

Dr Sarah Whitelaw is an esteemed Emergency Physician with over two decades of experience. For the past ten years, Sarah has served as a senior specialist at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, following senior roles in Gold Coast, Brisbane, and London. Her career merges clinical practice with significant contributions to medico-politics, health policy, and advocacy. Dr Whitelaw champions integrated health systems and patient journey optimization, emphasizing gender equity and diversity as vital for healthcare excellence.

In leadership, she holds notable roles such as the Emergency Medicine representative to the federal AMA council and Chair of the AMA Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Committee (EIDC). She has spearheaded key initiatives like the AMA's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan (2023-25) and the first AMA position statement on supporting medical

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students and doctors with disabilities.

Dr Whitelaw's extensive community engagement includes education, research, and health policy contributions. She holds fellowships with the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (UK), and the AMA. Her professional involvement extends to senior instructor roles and active campaigning for health system improvements. Regularly presenting at national conferences, she advocates for reforms in medical education and gender equity in healthcare.

### Former Women in Leadership Award Recipients

- 2023 - Dr Helen McArdle
- 2022 - Dr Kym Jenkins
- 2018 - Professor Judith Goh AO
- 2017 - Dr Genevieve Goulding
- 2016 - Associate Professor Diana Egerton-Warburton
- 2015 - Dr Joanna Flynn AM
- 2014 - Professor Kate Leslie
- 2011 - Dr Barbara Bauert
- 2005 - Dr Ngaire Brown
- 2004 - Dr Gabrielle Casper
- 2003 - Dr Elizabeth Jane
- 2002 - Dr Deborah Colville
- 2001 - Dr Parricia Mackay
- 2000 - Professor Jane Lawrence
- 1999 - Professor Tess Cramond
- 1998 - Professor Priscilla Kincaid-Smith

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