

APPENDIX B: About the Commissioners



Dr Christine Bennett was in June 2008 appointed Chief Medical Officer of BUPA Australia Ltd, operating as MBF, HBA and Mutual Community. BUPA is a global health and care company with health insurance, aged care and wellness businesses and operates across 200 countries. At the time of her appointment as Chair of the Commission, Dr Bennett was Group Executive, Health and Financial Solutions, and Chief Medical Officer of MBF Ltd. Prior to that, Dr Bennett was Chief Executive Officer, Research Australia Ltd, a health and medical research advocacy organisation. Dr Bennett has worked in the health care industry as a clinician and chief executive in public, not-for-profit and private sectors, including as a Partner at KPMG, advising on health and life sciences transactions and business development.

Dr Bennett is a specialist paediatrician and a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. She was Head of Family and Child Health and then Director of Health Services Planning in NSW Health. She led major reforms of maternity and perinatal services in that state, negotiated the relocation of the Children's Hospital to Westmead, and implemented the NSW State Trauma Plan. She was subsequently the General Manager of the Royal Hospital for Women, relocating and building the new purpose-designed hospital on the Randwick campus, and then Chief Executive of Westmead Hospital and Community Health Services – arguably Australia's largest teaching hospital. She was subsequently Managing Director of a private health care company operating general practices, diagnostic services, a day surgery centre, and skin cancer clinics. Dr Bennett has served as a non-Executive Director for a number of publicly listed, private and charitable enterprises including Symbion Health care Ltd, Pacific Nursing Solutions Pty Ltd, and the Schizophrenia Research Institute, to name just a few. Throughout her career, Dr Bennett has been passionately committed to health and medical research and the medical profession's contribution to social issues, and served for two terms on the Council of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians.



Professor Justin Beilby is the Executive Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, which oversees training for medical, dental, nursing, psychology and health sciences graduates at the University of Adelaide. Professor Beilby is also a Professor of General Practice at the University of Adelaide.

Professor Beilby has been in general practice in both rural and urban settings for over twenty years. He has been President of the Australian Association for Academic General Practice, and a member of the Strategic Research Initiative Working Group of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Professor Beilby has had a long career in general practice and primary care research, particularly in the areas of financing, chronic disease management, health services reform and quality initiatives.

He was Independent Chair of the Attendance Item Restructure Working Group which developed the seven-tier Medicare Benefits Schedule General Practice attendance item structure, and has been a member of the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute Advisory Board.



Dr Stephen Duckett is President and Chief Executive Officer of Alberta Health Services, the organisation responsible for delivery of all public health services (hospitals, primary care, public health, emergency medical services) in the Canadian province of Alberta. With about 90,000 staff, it is the largest provider of health care in Canada. Prior to his current role, Dr Duckett was, from 2006 to 2009, Chief Executive of the Centre for Health care Improvement in Queensland Health, responsible for clinical governance, leadership transformation, health statistics and public reporting and improving hospital access (elective surgery, emergency department care, outpatients) across Queensland.

Dr Duckett was formerly (1996 to 2005) Professor of Health Policy and Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at La Trobe University – the Faculty is one of the largest providers of health professional education in Australia. He was convenor of the Council of Deans of Health Sciences from 1999 to 2005. Dr Duckett’s research and publications focus on aspects of the Australian health care system (including health insurance, workforce), the economics of hospital care (particularly the use of casemix measures), and safety and quality of hospital care. He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science by the University of New South Wales on the basis of his publications, and is also a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

From 1994 to 1996, he was Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health. From 1983 to 1993, he held various operational and policy positions in the Victorian Department of Health and Community Services and its predecessors, including Director of Acute Health Services, in which position he was responsible for designing and implementing Victoria’s casemix funding policy. From 2000 to 2005, Dr Duckett chaired the boards of directors of Bayside Health (now Alfred Health) and the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

He is currently an Adjunct Professor at the University of Queensland (Australian Centre for Economics Research on Health and School of Population Health) and Griffith University (School of Public Health).



The Hon Dr Geoff Gallop AC is Professor, Director, Graduate School of Government, University of Sydney. Professor Gallop was the Premier of Western Australia from 2001 to 2006.

He was a Minister in the Lawrence Labor Government from 1990 to 1993 (holding a range of portfolios most notably Education, Fuel and Energy and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) and when that Government was defeated in 1993 he took up a range of Shadow Ministerial appointments. In 1994 he was elected Deputy Leader of the State Parliamentary Labor Party and in 1996 he was elected Leader.

As Premier, he oversaw a range of political and social reforms (electoral reform, gay and lesbian equality and a State Administrative Tribunal), upgraded the State’s industrial and labour laws, brought a spirit of reconciliation to the resolution of Native Title and developed partnership models for the State’s indigenous communities, changed the law to require all 16 and 17 year olds to be in education or training, was the first Premier to commit his government to a major desalination plant, stopped the logging of all of the State’s Old Growth Forests creating record numbers of new national parks, restructured the State’s electricity and racing industries, and started construction of the Perth to Mandurah Railway and City Tunnel.

As Minister for Science he established the Science Council, committed significant funding to Research and Development in the State, and established the Premier’s Research Fellowship Program to attract leading researchers from overseas and interstate.

Dr Gallop has been involved in a range of educational, community and sporting associations over many years and from 1983 to 1986 he was a Councillor at the City of Fremantle.

In 2001 he was awarded a Commonwealth of Australia Centenary Medal and was honoured with Life Membership of the Association for the Blind (Western Australia).

In 2003 he was elected a Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration Australia and on the 4th April 2006 he was admitted to the Honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by Murdoch University.

In June 2008 Dr Gallop was honoured as a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC).



Dr Mukesh Haikerwal is a General Medical Practitioner in Melbourne's western suburbs, where he has practised since 1991.

He was the 19th Federal President of the Australian Medical Association (2005-2007), following two years as Federal Vice President and, prior to that, two years as Victorian State President.

He is currently working with the National e-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA) apprising the clinical health professional community of the benefits of the vital role of IT in health care.

Internationally, he is the Chair of the World Medical Association Finance and Planning Committee.

He was awarded Honorary Fellowships by both the Australian Medical Association (2005) and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (2007).

In June 2009, he was appointed as Professor in the School of Medicine in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Flinders University in Adelaide, South Australia.



Associate Professor Sabina Knight is a Remote Area Nurse and Associate Professor in Remote Health Practice and Remote Health Management at the Centre for Remote Health in Alice Springs.

Associate Professor Knight's professional activities have been focused on remote, isolated and rural health, in particular Aboriginal primary health care and health inequalities, and she is a recognised leader in remote health. Associate Professor Knight was a foundation member, and past president, of the Council of Remote Area Nurses of Australia (CRANA), foundation deputy Chair and Chair of the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) and Chair of the Central Australian Rural Practitioners Association (CARPA) editorial committee, producing the internationally recognised CARPA best practice guidelines for remote practitioners.

Associate Professor Knight has been awarded the Centenary Medal, the Louis Ariotti Award for excellence and leadership in rural health, and the CRANA Aurora Award for leadership and outstanding contribution to remote health. She holds a Master of Tropical Health, is a Fellow of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation and the Royal College of Nursing Australia, a member of the Deputy Prime Minister's Regional Women's Advisory Council and the Northern Territory Health Minister's Advisory Council, and a Director of the Board of the Rural Health Education Foundation.



The Hon Rob Knowles AO is the Chairman of the Mental Health Council of Australia, President of the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia, Chairman of the Campus Council of the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, Member of the Board of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, and Chair of the Committee of Management of the Joanna Briggs Institute Adelaide.

He is a Consultant and Adviser in the health sector and has a high level of expertise in public administration, having been a senior Minister in the Victorian Government for seven years, including Minister of Health.



Ms Mary Ann O'Loughlin is Executive Councillor and Head of the Secretariat of the COAG Reform Council. The Council's role is to monitor and assess progress in COAG's agenda for human capital, competition and regulatory reforms, as well as in the implementation of the new Commonwealth-State Financial Framework.

Before she joined the Council in 2008, Mary Ann had 20 years senior executive experience in both the public and corporate sectors. Formerly a Director of the Allen Consulting Group, a leading economics and public policy consulting firm, Mary Ann specialises in health and social policy analysis and development.

Mary Ann was Senior Adviser (Social Policy) to the then Prime Minister, the Hon Paul Keating, and held a number of senior positions in the Commonwealth Public Service, including Deputy Secretary of the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, and First Assistant Secretary, Social Policy, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Mary Ann has also worked as a senior executive for a major publicly listed health care company.



Professor Ronald Penny AO is one of Australia's leading immunologists and is currently Emeritus Professor of Medicine, University of NSW and Senior Clinical Advisor, NSW Department Health. In 1979, Professor Penny was awarded the first Doctor of Science for clinical research from the University of NSW, followed by a Personal Chair in clinical immunology in 1998.

Professor Penny has published over 360 medical and scientific papers in prestigious national and international journals.

He currently serves as Co-Chair of the Chronic Aged and Community Health Priority Task Force and is a member of the NSW Health Care Advisory Council, the NSW General Practice Council and the Physicians Taskforce. He was Chairman of the Justice Health Board from 1991–2007.

He is a Commissioner for the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission and a Board Member for the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence.

He is also Medical Director of Good Health Solutions, a company dedicated to health promotion in the workplace, and Medical Director of Cryosite Pty Ltd .



Dr Sharon Willcox is the Director of Health Policy Solutions, an independent health consulting company. She has over 25 years experience working in health policy in government and the community sector.

Her government experience in the Victorian, New South Wales and Commonwealth health departments has included a leading role in the negotiations of the 1998–2003 and 2003–2008 Australian Health Care Agreements for funding public hospitals, improving public reporting on health system performance, and reforming the interface of acute and aged care services.

Dr Willcox was involved in the policy development for the National Health Strategy in the early 1990s on issues including new funding models for general practice. She also has a background in prevention and consumer advocacy through her work with the Cancer Council Victoria and the Health Issues Centre.

Dr Willcox has also worked in the United States on health policy and financing issues, as a Harkness Fellow in Health Care Policy in 1999–2000 and as a visiting scholar at the Center for Health Program Studies at Harvard University in 1992–93. Her Doctor of Public Health thesis examined the effectiveness of Australian private health insurance regulation.