



Media Release

14th March 2023

Heart Support Australia appoints new Patrons

Heart Support Australia is currently entering a new era of rapid expansion and growth across Australia. As a part of the strategic goal to grow the organisation over the coming months, there is an important need to have a stronger relationship with prominent Australian leaders in the field of cardiovascular disease to enhance and champion the work being done by Heart Support Australia to assist patients living with heart disease.

We are pleased to announce our new [Patrons for Heart Support Australia](#) for the next two years and are thankful for their support of our organisation and the work we do.

- Prof Clara Chow AM
- Prof Gemma Figtree AM
- Prof Robyn Gallagher
- Prof Jeroen Hendriks
- Prof Stephen Nicholls
- Prof Julie Redfern
- Prof Prash Sanders
- Dr Ross Walker

Our Chief Executive Officer Dr Christian Verdicchio is delighted to have such a high calibre group of individuals being patrons of Heart Support Australia.

“On behalf of Heart Support Australia, we are delighted to have such an amazing list of individuals who have all played a leading national or international role in heart disease, and it just goes to show how well respected Heart Support Australia is by the leaders within our field.

“I look forward to growing Heart Support Australia over the coming months and am thankful for the support our patrons have given us to go ahead and continue the amazing work our team does to assist those patients living with heart disease.”

The Chair of Heart Support Australia, Rowley Tompsett, echoed the Chief Executive Officer’s comments:

“I am delighted so many of Australia’s prominent cardiac specialists have agreed to support the mission of Heart Support Australia. I thank them for their support and look forward with working with them to provide peer support to those many Australians and their families whose lives have been impacted by a cardiac event.”

-ENDS-

About Heart Support Australia

Heart Support Australia is the peak national body supporting Australians affected by heart disease through peer support. We are a national consumer organisation providing support, encouragement and education to heart disease patients and their families. Our goal is to stop secondary cardiac events and improve the lives of those living with heart disease in Australia.

About Our Patrons (see Patron bios on page 2 of this release)

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About Our Patrons

Prof Clara Chow AM

Dr. Clara Chow is Professor of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Health, Academic Director of the Westmead Applied Research Centre (WARC) and Academic Co-Director of CPC (Charles Perkins Centre) Westmead. She is a Cardiologist and Clinical Lead Community Based Cardiac Services at Westmead hospital. She is currently the immediate past President of the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand (CSANZ)

Prof Gemma Figtree AM

Gemma Figtree is a Professor in Medicine at the University of Sydney. She co-leads the Cardiovascular Theme for Sydney Health Partners, a NHMRC Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre and is the Chair of the University of Sydney's multi-disciplinary Cardiovascular Initiative. Professor Figtree is committed to the promotion and advocacy of cardiovascular research, working as President of the Australian Cardiovascular Alliance with a national team to secure \$220 Million Federal funding for the Mission for Cardiovascular Health, as well as being a board member of the National Heart Foundation of Australia.

Prof Robyn Gallagher

Robyn Gallagher is Professor of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine and Health, Sydney Nursing School based at the Charles Perkins Centre and an Honorary Professor at Edinburgh Napier University. Professor Gallagher's clinical and academic career focusses on understanding and supporting patients who have cardiovascular disease engage in secondary prevention behaviours to reduce their risk of future cardiovascular events.

Prof Jeroen Hendriks

Prof Hendriks holds the inaugural Leo J Mahar Cardiovascular Nursing Chair at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Flinders University and the Department of Cardiology, Royal Adelaide Hospital. In this clinical academic role he aims to develop a collaborative of academic and clinical excellence to support joint research endeavours between Flinders University and the Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN). In the past decade Dr Hendriks has developed an international reputation in the field of integrated care management and the required practice redesign and health care reform associated with the implementation of such approaches.

Prof Stephen Nicholls

Prof Nicholls is a world-renowned cardiologist and leads the Victorian Heart Hospital (VHH). A multiple-award winner, Professor Nicholls has written more than 770 manuscripts, book chapters and conference proceedings, and has raised more than \$100 million in research funding. Since 2012, Professor Nicholls has been Deputy Director and Heart Health Theme Leader at the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI). He is also Professor of Cardiology at the University of Adelaide, Consultant Cardiologist at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and Principal Research Fellow of the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (NHMRC). Prof Nicholls is also the current Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand (CSANZ) President.

Prof Julie Redfern

Julie Redfern is a Professor of Public Health, 2022 NSW Woman of Excellence and current holder of a NHMRC Investigator Grant Leadership 2 (NHMRC Elizabeth Blackburn Award for Health Services). She is also a practicing Physiotherapist, leads the Engagement and Co-Design Research (ECHO) Team in the School of Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine and Health, is a Fellow of the European Society of Cardiology and is a Professorial Fellow at the George Institute for Global Health.

Prof Prash Sanders

Professor Sanders is a clinical academic based at the University of Adelaide, Royal Adelaide Hospital and the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute. He is the Director of the Centre for Heart Rhythm Disorders at the University of Adelaide; Director of Cardiac Electrophysiology and Pacing at the Royal Adelaide Hospital; and the Group Leader for Heart Rhythm Disorders at SAHMRI. Prof Sanders and his team have revolutionised the way atrial fibrillation is treated through their leading research in weight loss and risk factor management reversing the arrhythmia burden.

Dr Ross Walker

Dr. Ross Walker is an eminent practising cardiologist with 40 years' experience as a clinician, a passion for people, and for health. He is one of Australia's leading preventative health experts and has directed his focus towards preventative cardiology for the past 20 years. Dr. Walker has published 7 best-selling books on preventative cardiology and lectures both nationally and internationally on this subject. He is also the President of the Gut Foundation of Australia.