

Professor Brendan Murphy - ACHS Medallist 2020

Professor Brendan Murphy has worked for 40 years in the Australian health system as a doctor, medical researcher, and senior executive.

He has held a range of Board positions including at the Florey Institute, the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute, and the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre.

Professor Murphy has recently commenced his position as Secretary of the Federal Department Health, the first medical doctor to serve in this role. Prior to his appointment, Professor Murphy was the Chief Medical Officer for the Australian Government from 2016 and was the principal medical adviser to the Minister of Health. He also held direct responsibility for Health's Office of Health Protection and the Health Workforce Division. In addition to the many committees he chairs, co-chairs and participates in, he is the Australian Member on the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) Governing Committee and represents Australia at the World Health Assembly.

When he was first appointed as Australia's primary medical advisor, Professor Murphy made an impression. He went beyond the traditional focus of the role on biosecurity, immunisation, and disease surveillance, engaging with the health sector as a whole.

Professor Murphy was at the forefront of the Australian government's response to the coronavirus pandemic, as a key policy advisor and government spokesperson, and as the Chair of the Australian Health Principal Protection Committee (AHPPC), the key body advising the national cabinet throughout the coronavirus pandemic, which immediately followed Australia's Black Summer bushfires.

Professor Murphy's distinguished leadership over many months as the Chief Medical Officer positioned Australia to be able to respond to COVID-19 in a co-ordinated manner based on evidence and ensured that quality practices were implemented for the health of the Australian community.

This award recognises an individual's outstanding contribution to the promotion of quality and safety in Australian health service and in a year when our 'normal' has changed forever, we have relied strongly on the guardianship of leaders in health as never before. Congratulations Professor Murphy on being awarded the ACHS Gold Medal in 2020.