

Catholic Health leaders recognised with prestigious award

Catholic Health Australia (CHA) has paid tribute to two exceptional leaders for their outstanding lifetime contributions to Catholic healthcare over almost half a century.

Associate Professor Rosanna Capolingua AM and Charles Curran AC were named joint recipients of the Sister Maria Cunningham Lifetime Contribution Award at CHA's Annual Dinner and Awards ceremony in Sydney last night.

CHA Chair Jenny Parker said it was the first time the award had been bestowed on two recipients in a single year.

"This is the most significant honour presented in the Catholic health and aged care sector. It recognises those who have made critical contributions to the Church's mission in health and aged care, inspiring others and enabling the healing love of Jesus to be felt by those in need," she said.

"Rosanna and Charles have shown unwavering dedication to advancing Catholic healthcare and their leadership and commitment has had a profound and lasting impact on countless lives.

"Their contributions have not only strengthened individual Catholic health organisations and improved patient outcomes but have also advanced the entire sector, helping to ensure that Catholic healthcare remains at the forefront of medical excellence while staying true to the core values of our ministry."

Mr Curran is a philanthropist, company director and businessman, and is currently Chair of the Trustees of the St Vincent's Curran Foundation. He was nominated by St Vincent's Health Australia.

A highly regarded GP in Western Australia since 1985, Assoc. Professor Capolingua is a former WA and national president of the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and former chair of the AMA board. Among other roles she is currently Chair of Child and Adolescent Health Services WA. She was nominated by St John of God Health Care.

The two recipients were named at CHA's annual conference dinner, which this year, under the theme of '**Rejoice, Reimagine**', celebrated the long history of service that the healing ministry of Christ embodies, while urging practitioners to rethink the future of Mission-led health and aged care.

St Vincent's Health Australia Chairman Paul McClintock AO said Mr Curran's philanthropic and leadership contribution to Catholic healthcare was extensive and longstanding.

"Charles' leadership, vision and dedication to advancing Catholic healthcare has enabled St Vincent's to be at the forefront of patient care, groundbreaking research, medical and nursing education and the undertaking of major medical developments," he said.

"He has been instrumental in realising countless milestones in healthcare, from the establishment of Australia's first dedicated HIV/AIDS ward in Darlinghurst Sydney, to the nation's first advanced cardiac imaging centre.

"He continues to play a significant role as a mentor to St Vincent's leadership and executive, and in advocacy to government and other stakeholders in support of the institution's ministry to

the vulnerable and broader community. His generosity and commitment has inspired countless others.”

St John of God Health Care Board Chair Kerry Sanderson said Assoc. Professor Capolingua’s contributions aligned with the mission and vision of SJGHC to continue the healing mission of Jesus, and provide care that brings healing, hope, and dignity, particularly to those most in need.

“Not only have Rosanna’s professional accomplishments been significant, but her impact and inspiration on others in the field have been profound and have left a lasting impact,” she said.

“Her commitment to patient care, advocacy for equitable access to health care, and emphasis on quality and the patient experience serve as a remarkable example. She consistently demonstrates genuine concern for the well-being of individuals and communities, inspiring others to prioritise holistic and patient-centric care.

“Rosanna’s dedication to the mission of providing compassionate and excellent care is commendable, making her a highly deserving candidate for this remarkable recognition.

“Her role as a Director on the Board of St John of God Health Care as well as her role chairing our Patient Experience and Clinical Excellence Committee since its inception has been instrumental in emphasising the importance of clinical governance.”

Each year, Catholic Health Australia recognises the achievements of individuals and organisations that have worked towards improving the development and delivery of services within a Catholic framework.

The CHA Annual Awards recognise member organisations, both large and small, as well as individuals and collaborations doing outstanding work across five award categories.

The Winners

Outreach Health Care: Paediatric School Outreach Clinic, Mercy Health

Awarded to a Catholic Health Australia member organisation that has demonstrated its commitment to the healing ministry of Jesus through the development and delivery of innovative services, particularly devoted to improving the health status of the vulnerable and/or the marginalised.

Leadership in Positive Ageing: “Celebrating You” TV and Podcast Series, St Vincent’s Care

Awarded to a Catholic Health Australia member organisation that has consistently demonstrated and enhanced the worth and value of the lives of the people it serves. Compassion in service delivery and a high commitment to providing quality of life will be especially recognised.

Excellence in Pastoral Care: Peter Stevenson, Lifestyle Coordinator and Choir Master, Southern Cross Care NSW & ACT

This award honours an individual, team or initiative that contributes in an innovative way to the integrity and effectiveness of the Catholic ministry of health and aged care through a particular project, program, strategy, or outstanding effort that enhances the pastoral care of patients and staff.

Nurse of the Year: Lyndal Moore, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Hunter & Northern NSW Youth Cancer Service, Calvary Mater Newcastle

This award honours an outstanding nurse, midwife or nursing team working in Catholic health and aged care services. It recognises the commitment of an individual nurse or team to serving patients/clients with respect and dignity while acknowledging their individual uniqueness. This commitment will be demonstrated through a research project, innovative program, or a significant contribution to a new or existing body of knowledge that contributes to the promotion and celebration of a Catholic understanding of care within a changing environment.

Emerging Leader: Jae Smith, Manager Performance and Innovation, MercyCare Perth.

Awarded to an individual emerging leader within a Catholic Health Australia member organisation. This award honours great commitment to leadership through a research project, innovative program, introduction of change management or a significant contribution to improving the body of knowledge in health and aged care.

History of the Sister Maria Cunningham Lifetime Contribution Award

Sister Maria Cunningham was a nurse and a leader of Catholic health care ministries for all her working life. She was instrumental in the establishment of Catholic Health Australia. She set an example for others by committing her life to service of the sick and the poor through working in hospitals, prisons and with mothers and children. In recognition of her life of service, Catholic Health Australia awarded her the inaugural Sr Maria Cunningham Lifetime Contribution Award in 2011, and determined an annual award would be given in her name in subsequent years.

Criteria for the Sister Maria Cunningham Lifetime Contribution Award

The Sr Maria Cunningham Lifetime Contribution Award has been bestowed by the Catholic Health Australia Board on Catholic health Leaders since 2011. The award is given to those who have made significant contributions to the Church's presence in health and aged care, and inspired others working in Catholic health and aged care ministries. The award recipients have enabled the healing love of Jesus to be felt by people in need.

Sister Maria Cunningham Lifetime Contribution Award winners 2024

Charles Curran AC is Chair of the Trustees of the St Vincent's Curran Foundation. He has been involved with St Vincent's Hospitals and affiliated entities since 1976, when he was appointed to the board of St Vincent's Hospital Sydney. In 1984 he established the Paul and Elizabeth Curran Foundation Endowment Fund in response to funding shortages for public health services at St Vincent's Hospital. In 2013, at the invitation of the then Chair of St Vincent's Health Australia, Paul Robertson AM, the Curran Foundation took on the broader role of managing all fundraising activities for St Vincent's Hospitals and Facilities in NSW and was renamed St Vincent's Curran Foundation. The Foundation has since raised over \$350 million for St Vincent's projects and services. Mr Curran was named a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2006 for service to business and commerce, was awarded a Knighthood of the Grand Cross of the Order of St Gregory the Great in 2013, and in 2014 was admitted to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa), University of Sydney, for his exceptional contributions to business, the Catholic Church and the broader community as a philanthropist.

Associate Professor Rosanna Capolingua AM is a General Practitioner with broad experience across health care delivery with a focus on equitable patient access to high-quality, safe health care. She was AMA (WA) president from 1998–2000 (the first woman and youngest person to hold this position), AMA national president from 2007–2009, and Chair of the AMA board from 2021–2022. She has served on numerous other boards, including the Medical Board of Western Australia, the Professional Services Review Committee, Healthway, and Chair of the Governing Council for the Child and Adolescent Health Service, Deputy Chair of the North Metropolitan Health Service and a member of the WA Mental Health Commission's Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board. She continues to be a Board Member of St John of God Health Care and chairs the Patient Experience and Clinical Excellence Committee and is currently also Chair of the Child and Adolescent Health Service in WA. In 2023 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to patient care, to medicine, and as a role model to women.

Notes to editors: Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is Australia's largest non-government, not-for-profit group of health, community, and aged care providers. Our members operate over 80 hospitals in each Australian state and in the Australian Capital Territory, providing around 30 per cent of private hospital care and 5 per cent of public hospital care, in addition to extensive community and residential aged care. CHA members also provide approximately 12 per cent of all aged care facilities across Australia, in addition to around 20 per cent of home care services