

CITATION FOR PROFESSOR HEATHER JEFFERY AO

Professor Heather Elizabeth Jeffery AO was born in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. A medical graduate from the University of Sydney, Professor Jeffery is a Member of the Royal College of Physicians, UK and a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians.

For more than 40 years, Professor Jeffery has been a newborn intensive care specialist, academic, medical educator and researcher in Australia and internationally, mostly in South East Asia. Working alongside Australian and local doctors and nurses, Heather has worked tirelessly to reduce neo-natal infection, which kills millions of babies each year.

Early in her career, Professor Jeffery moved to Malaysia with her young family for 3 years where she established the first intensive care unit for newborn babies at the Universiti Sains Hospital, Malaysia.

On her return to Australia, Heather was appointed Head of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the now Royal Prince Alfred Hospital where she established a centre of clinical and research excellence, training many Australian doctors in newborn medicine and supervising numerous Honours and PhD students.

At the same time Professor Jeffery served as an International Consultant to the World Bank where she developed a systematic education program that has led to a 36% reduction in early infant deaths - thousands of babies' lives saved internationally.

Professor Jeffery has led many teams of Australian health professionals to develop and deliver medical programs in remote Vietnam and most recently to other countries in the region including Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Myanmar and Indonesia.

Her teams developed and delivered medical teaching in remote and poorly resourced hospitals to develop important clinical skills for local doctors and nurses.

Professor Jeffery's singular goal is to reduce infection and deaths of mothers and babies with improved clinical care. In addition to providing advanced clinical training for senior doctors and nurses from our Region, Heather focuses on further building workforce capacity by teaching these clinicians how to train others. Her outstanding clinical skills, her empathy, warmth, humour, generosity, kindness and respect for her Asian colleagues working in the least resourced and most difficult clinical situations has always made every exchange one of mutual learning.

Professor Jeffery has established firm linkages with hospitals and universities across Asia. Educational exchange programs have enabled clinicians from the region to come to the University of Sydney's teaching hospitals, and Australian doctors to work, learn and teach overseas. All involved have come away from her programs with a deeper understanding of culture and history and how these factors significantly impact on people's health outcomes.

There are thousands of babies, children and mothers alive today because of Heather's work. Equally there are many doctors and nurses inspired by her commitment, compassion, care and tireless advocacy to reduce infections and deaths in mothers and babies.