

# Media release

Sunday 22 November 2020

## Celebration and reflection amid Virtual Congress success

Members, fellows, hospital pharmacists and technicians from across the country tuned in in droves as the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) hosted a successful, celebratory and all-virtual 2020 SHPA Virtual Congress (VCON) this weekend.

A special Acknowledgment of Country video, curated by the SHPA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Leadership Committee, featured members in every state and territory. SHPA President Peter Fowler's rousing welcome urged delegates to 'follow your passions and explore something new' across the diverse program, that also delivered notable inspirational and emotional moments during orations from [2020 Fred J Boyd Award recipient Professor Jeff Hughes](#), [2020 SHPA Medal of Merit recipient Vaughn Eaton](#) and [2020 Australian Clinical Pharmacy Award recipient Dr Erica Tong](#).

The energy and commitment of Australian hospital pharmacy was on full display with local VCON viewing sites organised in Brisbane, Canberra and Perth, as numerous sessions reflected on the challenges of 2020, lessons learnt amid the coronavirus pandemic and how the profession can harness national focus on medication safety and aged care to improve patient care in all settings.

In the celebratory closing session, **Branko Radojkovic**, **Courtney Munro**, **John Coutsouvelis** and **Tom Chynoweth** were inducted as SHPA Fellows, while SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels revealed the winners of the 2020 SHPA Members' Awards, determined by member vote, with all 2020 Branch Award recipients as nominees.

**Phil Tibbits** (Tas Branch) was announced as **2020 SHPA Early Career Pharmacist of the Year**, recognised for outstanding leadership demonstrated in managing a clinical service leading up to, and during the COVID-19 outbreak. The nominees were Racha Dabliz (NSW), Adam Livori (Vic), Samantha Pringle (ACT) and Claire Kendrick (WA).

Fellow Tasmanian **Liza D'Ettorre** won **2020 SHPA Technician of the Year**, with her work in the procurement, storage, distribution and reporting of medicines recognised as crucial in a year where medicines supply and distribution has been paramount. The nominees were Julia Tisdall (Qld) and Tara Clayson-Fisher (SA/NT).

The **2020 SHPA Hospital Team Innovation of the Year** honour went to the **Western Australia Country Health Service (WACHS) Telechemotherapy Cancer Team**. The team were recognised for overcoming significant – and often complex – barriers to delivering chemotherapy services to the Kimberley, Pilbara and Wheatbelt regions of WA this year. These included a lack of appropriately trained staff, medical governance issues, medication supply challenges, as well as a range of COVID-19 related challenges, such as border closures. The nominees were Canberra Health Service in the ACT, NSW Therapeutic Advisory Group, Royal Women's Hospital PostMAN Clinic in Queensland, Tas Statewide Dispensary and Top End Health, in SA/NT.

Following last Friday night's final, **Mika Varitimos** (Qld Branch) was announced as SHPA 2020 Resident of the Year. Mika is a Medication Safety Pharmacist at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, and her

presentation was 'The time is now: ensuring timely and appropriate medications for patients with Parkinson's disease'.

Other finalists were Georgia Bish (Vic), Matthew Hollett (Vic), Bianca Jones (Tas), Negin Nasseh (Qld), Jennie Nguyen (Vic), Ella Raguz (Qld) and Georgia Walsh (Vic).

All VCON delegates will have exclusive access to program content, including full session recordings and more than 140 virtual posters.

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**About SHPA**

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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