

NEW REPATRIATION MEDICAL AUTHORITY CHAIR APPOINTED

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, today announced Professor Nicholas Saunders has been appointed as the new Chairperson of the Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA).

Professor Saunders recently retired as Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Newcastle and will commence his five year appointment with the RMA on 1 July 2012.

"I congratulate Professor Saunders and welcome him to the role. He is a highly respected and experienced leader, who has held high profile positions in the academic and medical professions over many years. He is well qualified for his new role," Mr Snowdon said.

Professor Saunders was awarded an MBBS with first class honours (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) from the University of Sydney in 1970; he became a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians Canada in 1975, followed by fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians in 1976. He has also served as the Chair of the National Health and Medical Research Council from 2000-2003.

Professor Saunders was awarded the Centenary Medal in 2002 for his contribution to the success of the nation. He also received the College Medal in 2002 for his outstanding services to The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, which is responsible for the training and education of more than 13,500 physicians and pediatricians in Australia and New Zealand.

Professor Saunders will replace outgoing chairperson, Professor Ken Donald, who has held the position since the inception of the RMA in 1994.

"I would like to thank Professor Donald for his dedication to the RMA and for his many achievements over the past 17 years including setting up the Statement of Principle regime, which is a critical element of the system established to provide compensation to veterans who may have service related injuries or illnesses," Mr Snowdon said.

"Professor Donald has left a lasting legacy with both the RMA and DVA and I wish him all the best for the future."

The RMA was established in 1994 to reform the process of decision making about disease causation. It is an independent statutory authority responsible to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs. It consists of a panel of five practitioners eminent in fields of medical science, who each determine Statements of Principles for any disease, injury or death that could be related to military service, based on sound medical-scientific evidence.

Media Note: An image of Professor Saunders is available on the DVA Media Centre website at www.dva.gov.au/media

Media inquiries: Minister Snowdon: Lidija Ivanovski or Marcus Butler 02 6277 7820 or 0407108 935 / 0417 917 796
Department of Veterans' Affairs Media: 02 6289 6203