

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY 4 JULY 2023

## Appointment of Professor Matthew Kiernan AM as NeuRA Chief Executive Officer

Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) is thrilled to announce the appointment of Professor Matthew Kiernan AM to the position of Chief Executive Officer and Institute Director. This appointment marks a significant milestone for NeuRA and the beginning of a new era for our independent medical research institute.



*Professor Matthew Kiernan AM*

Professor Kiernan is a world-renowned clinical academic and scientist, whose research focuses on neurodegenerative disease, motor neuron disease (MND) and frontotemporal dementia (FTD). Professor Kiernan is a neurologist who completed his PhD at UNSW Sydney and his specialty training at Prince of Wales and Prince Henry Hospitals. His research in neuroscience was recognized by the award of Doctor of Science (DSc) by UNSW in 2009. In 2015, he became a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences. He was honored with an Order of Australia in 2019 for ‘significant service to medicine and to medical education, in the field of neurology’. In 2022, Professor Kiernan became the first Australian to receive the prestigious Sheila Essey Award from the American Academy of Neurology. In June 2023, he was awarded the Ramaciotti Medal for Excellence in Biomedical Research (Perpetual Trustees).

Currently, Professor Kiernan is co-Director of the Brain and Mind Centre, having been appointed inaugural co-Director at the Centre’s launch in 2015. Professor Kiernan is the Bushell Chair of Neurology at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and the University of Sydney, with academic responsibility for the discipline of neurology across the university’s multiple campuses. He is past President of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Neurologists; former Director of Motor Neuron Disease Research Australia and President of the Australian Brain Foundation. Under his leadership, the Brain Foundation has become the largest priming institution for neuroscience research in Australia, defining the criteria and allocating funds to research and medical education for the treatment and prevention of neurological disorders. In 2010, his appointment as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry* with BMJ Publishers UK represented the first non-UK appointment with this prestigious journal since its launch in 1920.

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## Announcement

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Professor Kiernan leads a multi-disciplinary group of clinicians, scientists, biomedical engineers, doctoral and postdoctoral students focusing on disease pathology, biomarkers and treatment strategies including clinical trials exploring novel drug regimes. He has extensive experience in the biotech industry, including current roles as Non-Executive Director of the Australian medical technology pioneer Optalert, in drug discovery as Scientific Advisor for QurAlis (Cambridge, Massachusetts), and through commercialisation of diagnostic software with Soterix Medical Inc (US). He has devised and introduced world-first neuroscience techniques that enable ion channel function to be studied in patients. He has defined diagnostic disease criteria and established consensus guidelines that have been adopted globally by the World Federation of Neurology. He was invited to join the World Health Organisation (WHO) Committee that defined the International Classification of Disease (ICD-11) for Neurological Disorders.

Professor Kiernan has provided leadership for health policy development through his roles with the Greater Metropolitan Transition Taskforce NSW Health; as Medical Advisor Neurological Conditions for the Federal Government Immigration Legislation; for the Federal Government Department of Defence; and with the Federal Department of Health and Ageing.

James MacNevin, NeuRA Chair, said: “We are looking forward to Professor Kiernan’s arrival with enormous anticipation, building on the strong foundations established by Professor Peter Schofield AO. Not only will he bring superlative standards of scientific, clinical, and academic excellence, he will also significantly boost NeuRA’s capacity in neurodegeneration, a primary focus of the Institute and a significant community need. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Carole Renouf as the Interim CEO for her dedication, professionalism, and valuable contributions during this important transition period.”

Professor Kiernan said: “I am really excited by this incredible opportunity to join Neuroscience Research Australia and its stellar team of research scientists and clinicians. NeuRA’s foundations are firmly established and I am very much looking forward to building on the institute’s prime position in the rapidly accelerating fields of medical discovery. I look forward to working with key partnerships at UNSW, Mindgardens and the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, and with industry and philanthropy to promote research at NeuRA, to enhance patient outcomes, and to make significant impacts for Australia, and globally. I thank the NeuRA Board for their great support.”

Professor Kiernan will also take up an appointment as Scientia Professor of Neuroscience within the Faculty of Medicine & Health at UNSW, as well as a clinical appointment in Neurology within the Local Health District and Prince of Wales Hospital.

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## Announcement

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Dean of UNSW Medicine & Health and Acting Provost – Faculties, Scientia Professor Vlado Perkovic said: “Professor Kiernan is a global leader in neurology and neuroscience, and will drive improved health outcomes at NeuRA working in partnership with UNSW, Mindgardens and the Local Health District.”

Chair of the Mindgardens Neuroscience Network, John Grill AM, added: “Professor Kiernan’s appointment will enable an exciting opportunity to further enhance neuroscience translational research and collaboration, impacting the patient outcomes.”

Chief Executive of the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, Tobi Wilson added: “The appointment of Professor Matthew Kiernan AM to the position of Chief Executive Officer and Institute Director NeuRA represents an exciting opportunity to further drive medical research in this area, strengthen the existing partnerships and spotlight the organisation and its stellar work.”

## About NeuRA

Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) is an independent, not-for-profit research institute based in Sydney aiming to prevent, treat and cure brain and nervous system diseases, disorders and injuries through medical research.

To learn more about NeuRA: [www.neura.edu.au](http://www.neura.edu.au)

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