



The Australian Pain Society

2009
*Distinguished
Member
Awards*

Awarded for services to the promotion,
treatment and science of pain management
and lifelong contribution to the
Australian Pain Society.

Dr Leigh Atkinson discovered his longstanding interest in chronic pain as a trainee neurosurgeon in the 1960s. His mentor, Dr Geoff Toakley CBE, introduced him to percutaneous cordotomies and lateral facet joint procedures. In those days, the neurosurgeon alone saw most cases of neuropathic pain.

Neurosurgeons such as Bill Nordenboos (Amsterdam), Sean Mullan (Chicago), Ted Hitchcock (Edinburgh), Taka Fukushima (Tokyo) and Bill Sweet (Boston) influenced

his clinical development. It became obvious that neurosurgical sectioning of the pain pathways often failed to control neuropathic pain. It was then that Professor Bill Sweet and later Don Long in Baltimore, advanced the use of the dorsal column stimulator.

As his interest in Pain Medicine grew, Dr Atkinson became a Foundation Member of the Australian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine (RACP) in 1984 and later, in 1999, a Foundation Member and Board Member of the Faculty of Pain Medicine, ANZCA.

As a fellow of these colleges, he is keen to promote the multi-disciplinary nature of Pain Medicine and the need for the special skills of different groups in the management of pain problems.

In 1979, he was co-founder of the Multi-disciplinary Pain Clinic at Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane although this closed down in 1991. From 1982-1984, Leigh Atkinson served as President of the Australian Pain Society which was effectively developing a broad



Leigh Atkinson AO

MBBS; FRACS; FACS; FRCS (Edin);
FAFRM; FFPMANZCA

clinical examination of the advances in the care of the pain patient. He became a Board Member of the Faculty of Pain Medicine in 1999 and served as Dean from 2002 to 2004. He continues as both Treasurer and an Examiner representing the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. He introduced a Pain Section to the 2003 Annual Scientific Meeting of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons which has become a regular two-day program.

He continues as a Director of the Chronic Pain Management and Rehabilitation Program at Wesley Hospital and is a Visiting Medical Officer at the Princess Alexandra Hospital Persistent Pain Clinic.

Leigh has served as Vice President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, 1996-1998, President of the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia in 1984, Treasurer of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies, 2001-2005, President of the Asian Surgical Society, 1998-2000 and Honorary President of the Asian Australasian Neurosurgical Society.

His awards include the 1991 Medal of the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia, 1998 Court of Honour, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, 2003 Centenary Medal of Australia and he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2004.

