

## **Rotary Club International awards fellowship to ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton in recognition of the organisation’s contribution to nursing and the health of communities worldwide**

**Geneva, Switzerland, 14 July 2021** – ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton has been made a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Club International organisation. Rotary Club International is a global network with 1.2 million members whose aim is to solve the world’s problems through passion, energy, and intelligence. Its 35,000 clubs work to address the most persistent problems, including promoting peace, fighting disease, providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene, and saving the lives of mothers and children.



Mr Catton was awarded the Fellowship in recognition of his extraordinary service to the nursing community during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Award was presented during a webinar on Tuesday July 13, organised by the Global Nurses and Midwives Rotary Club, which nominated him for the award.

Accepting the award on behalf of the ICN and the nursing community, Mr Catton said:

“I am humbled and honoured to receive this award on behalf of the ICN and all nurses everywhere. This award is gratifying because it shows that the work, we and nurses are doing is having an impact in the world at large. Rotary and ICN are connected as organisations because we share the same values, and prioritize humanitarian work that promotes health, peace and safety.”

A number of prominent figures in nursing paid tribute to Mr Catton and his contribution to ICN and the profession, especially over the past 18 months since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

World Health Organization Chief Nursing Officer Elizabeth Iro said:

“On behalf of the World Health Organization I would like to say a very sincere thank you for your incredible work over the last 18 months. Your support to the global nursing profession has been one of the constant voices of the pandemic: a voice of information, insight, action, and strength. Since the pandemic began, you have shone a light on the realities of nursing in the thick of this crisis, and you have been relentless in your pursuit of better working conditions, demanding better equipment - especially PPE – and highlighting the lack of reporting around nurses who have been ill or have died of COVID-19 through work.”

ICN President Annette Kennedy said:

“During the COVID-19 pandemic he has led the way internationally in highlighting the issues in the media and with the World Health Organization and many other global agencies and governments. Howard is tireless in his advocacy for nurses, seeking to protect and support them wherever they are. He is doing everything in his power to ensure that we have better preparedness for future

international health emergencies, pointing out to governments, other international agencies and the media the enormous global shortage of nurses that must be addressed.”

University of Technology Sydney Adjunct Professor James Buchan said:

“It has been particularly impressive to see how ICN has stood up for and represented the nursing profession, ensuring that nurses and midwives are safe and protected when they stand up on the front line to ensure that there is an effective response to the pandemic.”

CGFNS International President and Chief Executive Officer Dr Franklin Shafer said:

“I would like to congratulate Howard and ICN in recognition of his accomplishments during the COVID-19 pandemic. He, along with the stellar team he has assembled, put nursing in the forefront of every media outlet, where he positioned us for our image, what was needed to keep nurses safe, and the vital role we are playing.”

Mr Catton joins the ranks of many other notable figures who have been named Paul Harris Fellows, including Mother Teresa of Calcutta, United States President Jimmy Carter, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, US astronaut James Lovell, United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, and the developer of the polio vaccine, Jonas Salk.

In his acceptance address, Mr Catton said he remains extremely concerned about vaccine equity, especially in relation to nurses and other healthcare staff who, despite the availability of vaccines elsewhere, are going into potentially dangerous situations unimmunised.

Mr Catton said that of all the vaccines that have been delivered so far around the world, less than 2% have gone into the arms of people on the African Continent, and 75 to 80% have gone to people in high-income countries.

“Dr Tedros has said we are facing a moral catastrophe over vaccine inequity, but I am concerned that we are losing our moral compass on this issue. We still have not got our act together to make sure that nurses and health workers are receiving the vaccine right around the world in an equitable way. That means that today, there are nurses going to work unvaccinated, looking after COVID patients, knowing that the risk to them is higher: they are worried about their families and their families are worried about them.

“While those nurses are risking their health and even their lives by going to work, there is the rush in high-income countries to ‘double jab’ people so that people can go on holiday and sit on a beach.

“Now we are hearing that some manufacturers are looking at prioritising the supply of booster vaccines for people who have already had two doses of the vaccine, before millions of healthcare workers have been vaccinated even once.”

Mr Catton said he is also concerned about the speed of unlocking that is happening in some countries.

“There is a logic in some countries to starting to unlock, but we seem to be going from full measures to no measures at all, which is a highly risky path to go down. We have written to the G-7 Group of Nations, the G-20, the United Nations about this issue. ICN has set out the actions we want to see: an increase in supply, multilateral global leadership to ensure that supply chains are open, and the sharing of technology and know-how. We are not going to rest until all nurses and healthcare workers have been vaccinated.”

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**Note to Editors**

The **International Council of Nurses** (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.

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