



## Richard Madden celebrated for work in disability services, Indigenous health and welfare

20 June 2018

Richard Madden, an actuary who has advocated for better and more services for Australians with disabilities through decades of volunteer work, has been celebrated with an award in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

Professor Madden was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the General Division.

He is a professor at the University of Sydney, where he is the co-director of the National Centre for Classification in Health, and he is the deputy chair of Australia's largest provider of disability services, House with No Steps. He also plays an active role in improving statistics on Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people.

He is a firm supporter of social statistics informing good public policy. An advocate for Australia's National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), he said seeing changes come to fruition that include increased resources, greater choices and better services has been enormously satisfying.

"People who had few choices now have some say in what services they want, and how they want those services delivered," Professor Madden said. "Putting those decisions into the hands of individuals makes them customers, not clients. It gives them better services but also delivers consumer sovereignty."

Previously, governments stated what services they wanted to provide. "Now, we look at where demand is coming from and what that demand is," he said. "House with No Steps provides accommodation services, supported employment, and a range of other activities for people not in the labour force. We look for gaps and opportunities for people, we provide services people want."

Professor Madden said his guiding principle has been to empower people to meet their own goals, to help them live as full a life as they can, in broader society. His training as an actuary means he brings evidence-based decision making to health and social policy. "If you can't measure something, you can't value it," he said.

Actuaries Institute chief executive Elayne Grace said Professor Madden had been an active member of the Institute's health practice committee and had been named Actuary of the Year in 2002. "It is wonderful to see Richard recognised for a lifetime of achievement, in particular in the areas of health and welfare of both the indigenous and disability communities," Ms Grace said.

Professor Madden joined the House with No Steps Board in 2006 and became Chair in 2010. This year, the organisation merged with Victoria's The Tipping Foundation to support a greater number of people with disabilities, in more places. Following the merger, he was appointed deputy chair of the organisation.



"It is important for national disability support organisations to emerge to best support the NDIS and take advantage of the increased opportunities in the disability support sector," Professor Madden said.

Apart from his actuarial qualifications, he holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Statistics) from Princeton University, and is the recipient of an honorary doctorate of science from the University of Sydney, awarded in 2005.

Of his work on health classifications, Professor Madden said: "Classification is a fundamental building block for health information, which in turn forms the basis of good public health policy in Australia and worldwide.

"The methods of collecting information have changed, but social statistics and the use and importance of reliable information will never change."

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