

MEDIA ALERT
17 October 2025



Dr Stephen Parnis to deliver annual Plunkett Lecture on the essential nature of ethical care

Emergency physician Dr Stephen Parnis will tell medical and health professionals why acting ethically, even if it comes at a personal or professional cost, is central for safe, effective healthcare.

The high-profile physician, who has been a vocal critic of euthanasia laws, an authoritative commentator during the COVID-19 pandemic, and prominent advocate for the rights & responsibilities of health care workers, will deliver the 2025 Plunkett Lecture next month.

A Clinical Fellow at ACU's Plunkett Centre for Ethics, Dr Parnis will use the public lecture to defend the necessity of doctors and healthcare professionals to act according to the dictates of their consciences.

"The rights of doctors and other healthcare workers to act according to their conscience, the need to carefully form that conscience, and the judgement and courage to determine when not to bow to unreasonable dictates imposed by employers, regulators and governments - these are essential for a strong and ethical health workforce, and for the community to maintain trust and confidence in those who care for them." Dr Parnis said.

He will draw from his own professional experience of the personal and professional costs of acting in accord with his ethical principles, including his experience of burnout in the wake of the pandemic, and more recently in terms of speaking on ethical issues in the public domain, and their impact on his roles as a medical specialist and Board Chair.

The 2025 Plunkett Lecture with Dr Stephen Parnis will be delivered at the Peter Cosgrove Centre at ACU's North Sydney Campus and livestreamed.

Since 2009, the annual Plunkett Lecture has become an important fixture in addressing key ethical issues in Australian healthcare.

Registration is free, and media are welcome to attend.

Dr Stephen Parnis will be available for interview.

Event details:

What: 2025 Plunkett Lecture Ethics in Healthcare: Principles or Platitudes? with Dr Stephen Parnis

When: Wednesday 5 November 2025 from 5:30pm (refreshments to follow)

Where: Peter Cosgrove Centre, Level 18, Tenison Woods House, 8 - 20 Napier Street, North Sydney NSW 2060 and livestreamed

Register: <https://www.acu.edu.au/about-acu/events/2025/november/plunkett-lecture>

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