



## School of Population, Health and Clinical Practice

**June – July 2009**

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Message from the Head of School**

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Honours bestowed on David Scrimgeour from the Discipline of Public Health (AM, for services to Indigenous health) and Heather Schubert, a Title-holder in the Discipline of Nursing (OAM).

#### School Planning Day

Over 70 members of the School attended the Planning Day held on 12<sup>th</sup> June at the Hawker Centre, Waite Campus. Having all of them in a single flat space was revealing – lots of individuals reported meeting colleagues for the first time and discovering shared interests in research, teaching and other fields. Once mid-year break and NHMRC Panels are out of the way, we can make a start on implementing the many good ideas that emerged on the day.

#### Progress towards co-location

Sadly, the Federal Budget did not provide funds for a new building for the metropolitan parts of the School, and we will therefore have to face the tyrannies of dispersion for some time to come. Meanwhile, our footprint at 122 Frome Street grows ever-larger, and there will be some further staff moving there. Plans to consolidate MLTU, Yaitya Purrana and ultimately the urban parts of the Spencer Gulf Rural Health School on the Ground Floor of Medical School North are well thought through, but taking them forward requires first that some existing tenants move out. With at least some of the moves effected, work will proceed with establishment of a medium-level clinical skills laboratory on Level 1 of Medical School South.

#### Occupational Health and Safety

The University is facing an external audit of its Occupational Health, Safety and Well-being system later this year, an assessment that is central to its aim of maintaining its present favourable WorkCover insurance status. While the School Office and our OHS Representatives and Officers are progressively reviewing and consolidating our evidence of good practice, occupational health and safety remains fundamentally a matter of attitude and organisational culture. We all need to conduct ourselves in a way that reflects the fact that ‘accidents’ do NOT ‘happen’, taking care not to create hazards in our work-places, to remove those that are not integral to our work-process, and to report promptly those we perceive to exist but lie beyond our control.

#### Pulteney Street goes smoke-free

A welcome development in regard to OHS is agreement by the Vice-Chancellor that the entire Pulteney Street complex will remain as a smoke-free space, even once the present refurbishment

works are completed. This represents an important initiative for the University, as the expected good compliance by smokers will add considerably to momentum to have the entire 'cultural precinct' made smoke-free.

### Information technology

Project Apollo, the takeover by ITS of our basic computing functions, has now formally come to an end. As a School whose IT system was significantly in advance of that available to certain other parts of the University, we have been given and undertaking that prompt and insightful assistance will be provided or arranged by the IT HelpDesk when we encounter problems. Please do avail yourselves of this HelpDesk service, and let the School Office know when the quality of support fails to meet that promised.

### On-line management of leave

Also on matters electronic, the Human Resources Branch is presently developing an upgrade of the PeopleSoft System which will support, among other things, a self-service arrangement surrounding requests for leave.

### School Website

The end of Project Apollo will allow us finally to turn our attention to modernising the School's website. This is the principal portal via which prospective students find us and external agencies identify groups who might undertake contract work for them. In addition, as a geographically-dispersed School, we need a website that becomes the first port of call for help whenever one of us is faced with a vaguely-familiar but rarely-tackled task. In the near future we will employ a Project Officer to oversee this upgrading effort, but he or she will need help from you to achieve the quality of outcome to which we should aspire.

Thank you, all for your hard work in the first half of 2009. With appearances in the Honours List and increasing coverage of our research in the general media, it is clear that others can see that we are achieving our aim of directly influencing policy and practice in population health.

Konrad Jamrozik

### School Seminars

The **Professorial Seminars** to be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month excepting September which will be held on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

The **Visiting Academic Seminars** will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month.

The School Seminars will be held in the Robson Lecture Theatre, Level 1, Eleanor Harrald Building, RAH from 3.30 pm to 5.00 pm. The program starts with an afternoon tea from 3.30 pm to 4.00 pm followed by the presentation from 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend these seminars so bring your colleagues along to join us for the afternoon.

## **NEWS: Upcoming SPHCP Visiting Academic Seminar**

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009**



**The next presentation will be given by Mr Andrew Phillips who is the Policy Advisor, National Rural Health Alliance in Canberra.**

Title: Rural health, climate change, opportunities and impediments

### **SPHCP Professorial Seminars held to date:**

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009**



Presentation was given by **Professor Alison Kitson** who is the Professor of Nursing and Head of Discipline, Discipline of Nursing

Title: Closing the Knowledge of Action Gap: making research count

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009**



Presentation was given by **Professor Alan Pearson** who is Professor of Evidence Based Health Care at the University of Adelaide; the Executive Director of the Joanna Briggs Institute; and Editor of the International Journal of Nursing Practice.

Title: Systematic reviews of qualitative evidence in health care: methodological challenges

**Tuesday 2nd June 2009**



Presentation was given by **Professor Phil Ryan** who is a Professor in the Discipline of Public Health, Public Health Physician and Medical Statistician.

Title: Contributions and Lessons: research at the Data Management & Analysis Centre

## SPHCP Visiting Academic Seminars held to date:

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2009**



Presentation was given by invited guest **Associate Professor Stephanie Brown** from Healthy Mothers Healthy Families, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Melbourne, Victoria.

Title: The Maternal Health Study: investigating complex causal pathways for maternal morbidity.

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2009**



Presentation was given by **Professor Philip Weinstein**, Public and Environmental Health, University of Queensland.

Title: Cultural Evolution, Water, and Medical Geology

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009**



Presentation was given by **Associate Professor Julie Ratcliffe**, Professor of Health Economics, Department of Rehabilitation and Aged Care, Flinders University.

Title: Determining priority for liver transplantation: A comparison of cost per QALY and discrete choice experiment generated public preferences.

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009**



Presentation was given by **Professor Alistair Woodward**, Professor of Public Health at the University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand.

Title: Health Co-Benefits of Greenhouse Mitigation: A Silver Lining on a Very Dark Cloud?

## Planning and Development Reviews

The School Office is presently completing the background work for a further cycle of Planning & Development Reviews for academic staff, to begin over the next few weeks. Apart from presenting a plan to take accrued leave (which presently accounts for \$2.2M of the School's money locked away in central University accounts!), there will be a special emphasis in this cycle on our preparedness to face the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) process of academic accountability next year.

## Awards & Fellowships Received

### Grants Awarded

In June 2009 NHMRC called for public health and medical research proposals that aimed to rapidly inform and advance Australian strategies to prevent, prepare for and respond to a potential H1N1 influenza pandemic and inform the development of public policy.

**Annette Braunack-Mayer** together with Helen Marshall, Phil Ryan and Jackie Street have been awarded. \$185,922 for this NHMRC Grant. The projects cover research from the laboratory to the bedside, from patients to community health, with an emphasis on rapid results to benefit Australians and the rest of the world. The successful applicants are based throughout Australia. Some of the research to be supported includes:-

- Understanding why some people get more severe flu than others;
- Strategies for containment in rural, remote and indigenous communities;
- Improving the detection of swine flu;
- The best strategies for anti viral use;
- The prospects for swine flu to interact with other flu strains; and risks to children in hospitals.

The results will be shared internationally, and will be particularly valuable for those countries who are currently preparing for their coming flu season. Researchers will report their findings at a symposium in December 2009 by the Chief Medical Officers of Australia and each state and territory, as well as public health experts.

**Charlotte de Crespigny's** and **Peter Athanasos** together with the South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services (SANDAS) have been successful in attracting a grant of \$20,000 from Alcohol, Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AERF) to develop an E-Learning module on the Effect of Drug and Alcohol Use on Psychiatric Medications. If successful, the plan is to make this the first in a series of E-Learning modules around similar issues with this same group. The first module will be available for all South Australian (and perhaps national) Drug and Alcohol Services to train their staff. It will be launched at the Australian Professional Society on Alcohol and Other Drug (APSAD) conference in Darwin in December, 2009. In addition, Charlotte and Peter have received to date a total of \$19,000 (from AERF, Drug and Alcohol Services, South Australia and Reckitts Benckiser) for the Nurses, Midwives and Aboriginal Health Workers Practicum that is being run in August.

### Queen's Birthday Honours

Membership (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia has been awarded to **Dr David John Scrimgeour** from Public Health. The award is for service to medicine through the development and delivery of services and programs in remote indigenous communities, and to public health research. This award is most thoroughly deserved, and I am sure all in the School of Population Health & Clinical Practice will join me in congratulating David on this honour.

**Emily Steel PhD** Candidate and current recipient of NHMRC Public Health Postgraduate Scholarship has been awarded an Early Career Award from the Australasian Epidemiological Association, based on a description of a methodological issue that she has come across in her research. The award is contingent on presenting at a workshop at the AEA conference in NZ in late August. The

presentation is entitled “*life course analyses incorporating complex time-dependent exposure variables*”.

### **Order of Australia Medal (OAM)**

Clinical care nurse Heather Schubert’s 40 year career saving lives has been recognised with an Order of Australia Medal. The Rostrevor resident began her career at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and helped to design the state’s first intensive care and coronary care units in the late 1960s. Soon, her extensive knowledge in resuscitation was being used to teach others across the state. In 1976, Mrs Schubert’s work took her to rural Australia, where she implemented new resuscitation technology in country hospitals across South Australia and Victoria. She also helped found the Australian College of Critical Care Nurses in 1974 and still organises training courses for the group. Since 1991, Mrs Schubert has run her own nurse consultancy business, continuing to train hundreds of nurses across the state, especially in rural areas.

### **AMA (American Medical Association) (SA) Awards**



The annual AMA (SA) Award provides an opportunity for peers to honour the work of colleagues who have given outstanding service to others, or to their chosen field. With this award, the AMA(SA) this year acknowledged Dr Jill Benson’s untiring work across diverse spheres of medical practice, incorporating rural and remote health, Indigenous health, migrant and refugee health, trans-cultural mental health, and doctors’ health.

A depth of care for the profession and for patients has been a hallmark of Jill’s career. She has shown a willingness to “go beyond the comfort” zone to help others, whether in Adelaide, a remote Indigenous community, or overseas, and has taught and written on many topic relating to her areas of interest. The Director of the Health in Human Diversity Unit of the Discipline of General Practice at the University of Adelaide , and a general practitioner for almost 30 years, she currently works with refugees at the Migrant Health Service in Adelaide, as well as in the remote Aboriginal community at Yalata, and has also worked in a teaching hospital in Dharan in rural eastern Nepal. The AMA(SA) Award was awarded to Jill Benson due to her commitment to working in difficult and often unheralded areas of medicine, as well as teaching and research.

The Discipline of Nursing **Charlotte de Crespigny’s** area have been awarded by the Australian Department of Health and Ageing up to \$10,000 to support aboriginal health workers from South Australia to attend the Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs: Nursing, Midwifery & Aboriginal Health Worker Practicum 2009 on August 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> at the Grand Chifley Hotel South Terrace, Adelaide.

**Associate Prof Peter Baghurst BAgSc(Hons),BSc, MS, PhD**, who is a Title holder, has been awarded the PHAA (SA) Basil Hetzel Leadership in Public Health Award for his work over many years supporting numerous nutrition and women's and children's health projects by ensuring that research design and biostatistics were done well. In particular, the award recognises his leadership in advocating for the introduction of National newborn hearing screening programs and for his work on the recognition of the effects of low level lead levels in children. This award was presented by Prof. Basil Hetzel at the PHAA(SA) AGM on the 3rd June 2009.

**Dr Jackie Street, Lecturer** and Research Fellow, Discipline of Public Health, was elected to serve as President of the Public Health Association of Australia (SA Branch) for 2009-2010 at the recent PHAA AGM. In serving with the executive of the PHAA, she follows in the tradition of others in the Discipline: Assoc. Dr Jackie Street was awarded the **Dean's Prize for Excellence in Teaching** on Thursday 11th June in a presentation ceremony held at the SA Art Gallery.

### **International Fellowship**

**Professor Alison Kitson** has been awarded an International Fellowship in the American Academy of Nursing. This is an important acknowledgement of her contribution and achievements in Nursing. There will be an induction ceremony for new Fellows during the Annual Meeting November 5-7 in 2009 at the Marriott Atlanta Marquis in Atlanta Georgia.

### **Post Graduate Fellowships**

The Faculty of Health Sciences Research Committee has approved and granted \$1,500 to both Fiona McDonald and Nicole Pratt for Postgraduate Travelling Fellowships for health science research. This is to assist in furthering research activities.

### **AusAID fellowship Leaders Program**

The Australian Leadership Awards - Fellowships are a component of a regional program that aims to develop leadership and build partnerships and linkages with developing countries. Afzal Mahmood from Public Health has been successful in receiving funding for an AusAID Fellowship Leaders Program and has received \$193,000 for this program. AusAID has approved an application to fund 13 Fellowships from Indonesian Academics from Trizakti University in Jakarta.

### **Grants**

Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute is Australia's first health and medical research institute tackling the deadly trio of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Their work extends from the laboratory to wide-scale community studies. **Tracy Merlin** from AHTA is part of a team that was successful in winning the Tender bid. Tracy has been asked to be the Chief Investigator by the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute to form part of the project management team to review and update NHMRC endorsed evidence-based clinical guidelines for:-

- Type 2 diabetes guidelines on diagnosis and Management of Hypertension;
- Type 2 diabetes guidelines on Prevention and Detection of Macro vascular Diseases;
- Type 2 diabetes guidelines on Lipid control; and
- Type 2 diabetes guidelines on Identification and Management of Diabetic Foot Disease.

The tender call from the Department of Health and Ageing and the joint tender was therefore badged as Baker IDI, AHTA and the George Institute.

## Events

I would like to thank Daphne Georgaras from the School Office who held Australia's 'biggest morning tea' event and raised \$136.80. The money from the event will go towards the Cancer Council for raising funds to defeat cancer. The money is dedicated to Research, Education and Prevention Programs, Support Services and Advocacy to protect the community from cancer risk factors. This will now probably be an annual event.

**Lesley Salem**, a Master of Nursing Science Student, gave an important address and made a valuable contribution to the United Nations Commission on Gender Equality and Aboriginal Torres Strait Island Women. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) provides an international forum for Aboriginal women to discuss issues of gender inequality and seek solutions. The CSW is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. It is the principal global policy-making body. The meeting was also an important opportunity to lobby for Australian Government support of the participation of Pacific colleagues at the CSW, with AusAID supporting both government and NGO participants. It was a great opportunity to contribute to legislative and policy responses to promote the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in all areas. As Australia's new Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, is committed to improving the lives of Australian, women, and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people. The inclusion of an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander delegate was a demonstration of that commitment.

## Overseas Trip Reports - Vanuatu

**Jill Benson** was asked to conduct some workshops in **Vanuatu** in mental health for a group of doctors, nurses and health professionals according to the PIMHnet and Vanuatu Government human Resources Training Plan. This is the first time such a Primary Health Care mental Health programme has been run in the Pacific Islands region. By the end of her two week visit the staff there had developed basic skills in diagnosis, assessment and management of mental health problems and illnesses.

In 2007 the World Health Organisation initiated the Pacific Islands mental Health Network (PIMHnet) to address the paucity of mental health care in the Pacific region. This network, which is funded by NZAID, aims to encourage governments of the area to increase funding for their country's mental health infrastructure and workforce, to instigate mental health policies strategies at a primary care level, to use the WHO psychotropic medication list as their formulary and to teach mental health skills to primary care health professionals.

In Vanuatu there are no trained mental health professionals in the entire country, there is no knowledge in the community that mental illness might be the business of health professionals, and there are no words in Bislama even for depression, let alone more complex Western mental health concepts.

One of Jill's tasks was to extensively review the Ministry of Health's draft Mental Health Policy and Strategy Plan and to discuss this with the Minister of Health and the Director of Public Health. They are both fully supportive and very pleased with the progress to date through PIMHnet.

Professor Dimity Pond and Jill Benson are the first of the 'roll-out' of this teaching for PIMHnet. Both are General Practitioners with extensive experience in mental health as clinicians as well as teachers. Jill has recently written a book entitled *Mental Health Across Cultures. A Practical Guide for Health Professionals* and completed a Masters of Public Health.

Jill noted that this was some of the most challenging and the most satisfying teaching she had ever done.

Jill is hoping to return to Vanuatu in six months' time, again as a WHO consultant with PIMHnet. In the interim Jill is hoping the group will continue to liaise with her via the internet and to meet monthly to discuss cases and to review what they have learnt. Jill is hoping to go to another island of Vanuatu and to teach some more health professionals.

This is just the beginning. The work ahead for Vanuatu is huge and WHO PIMHnet has similar work to do in other Pacific Islands.

For more information about the Pacific Island Mental Health Network website:

[http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/policy/pimhnet/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/mental_health/policy/pimhnet/en/index.html)

### **Vacant Positions**

The School recently won a \$2m grant which seeks to explore how decisions about health service might be rounded out if the ethical dimensions, economic implications and the community's views on what is being proposed are routinely considered in deciding what changes to make to existing patterns of care. The School recently advertised for 3 Researchers to join a multi-disciplinary team of senior and early career researchers, to undertake systematic exploration of major issues in healthcare. The recruitment process is currently underway and interviews for these positions will be held in late July and August.