



Alan Hodgkinson: A life of dedication and achievement

Staff at the School were greatly saddened by the sudden and unexpected death of a dear friend and colleague – Alan Hodgkinson – in April this year. Among other titles, Alan was deputy head of the School – but he was much more than that. He was a friend, mentor, counsellor and the human face of the School for staff and students alike. This is an edited version of the eulogy for Alan given by Graham Roberts.

Alan was like a brother to me. We met in 1973, in our early twenties. I had just returned from the PNG highlands and we met at the Macquarie Hospital – then the North Ryde Psychiatric Centre. That seems like several incarnations ago now almost

40 years later, but I remember everything about that time. At that place we learned how to get through to people in any condition, psychotic, depressed or in any of the many shades of sane – no matter who they were. And we learned to talk to people about anything – absolutely anything that mattered to them, no matter how personal and revealing.

If you thought Alan was unusually insightful, you were right. Every conversation with Alan was therapeutic – he tuned into your humanity and knew immediately what was troubling you, whether your perceptions were accurate or not – and he always found the way through – with great compassion. How many people have left Alan feeling better than they were before?

The humanity and compassion that we all loved Alan for was already there in the young man – it must have been there all along and in his upbringing – that is why he chose to do the work he did, to be a help to people – to be useful. In those years we talked about the ‘doors of perception’

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and the origins of mental distress, and how fragile we are in our human condition. He was not a religious man, although he credited Buddhism for helping him find himself. He was essentially a humanist in the modern sense. He believed that we are our own saviours. His empathy was monumental and it touched everyone.

You might not have known this – but Alan was very much a romantic – in his love of music and lyrics and the poetry of life's experience. He has an extensive music collection. I have seen him in raptures over a single line, or a note, all familiar to him but which 'got him' every time. He drove me home recently and as we got into the car he asked me what I wanted to hear – with a big grin on his face knowing that we shared so much of those times – the songs, their allusions, the symbolism and the history. It was all there, collected with a grin.

I've been immensely privileged to be close to Alan – we could talk about anything, often reminiscing and laughing about the shared times and people we had met, but always digging through to the essences of their and our own humanity. In coming back to Australia after 16 years away I looked forward to time with Alan, thinking about the retirement years ahead and how best to spend them and where. How tragic that he won't have that time – he who deserved it so much.

Over four decades our career paths crossed and at times we helped each other up along the way. I recall his frustrations before he joined UNSW and how he wanted to be 'a player' – and to have influence and make a mark in the world. He wanted to study for the Master of Community Medicine but doubted he would be accepted.

I found the spin to strengthen his application (it wasn't hard at all) and he was thrilled to be in. Some time later, Arie Rotem asked me if I could take a visiting delegation from China for 6 weeks. I was steeped in my PhD and bravely said 'No, but I know someone who can' – and that's how Alan came on board at UNSW – as an Associate Lecturer. It's because he was so useful that he rose so far. He had become a 'player' – at times acting as head of the School he once though wouldn't accept him as a student!

Some years later I asked him to come out to Fiji to take a training officer position on the Fiji Health Management Reform Project – a week before the coup of 2000. He was out at Pacific Harbour when the Speight coup erupted and the shops and streets of Suva were trashed. He rushed back into Suva to get back to his wife Jane, and his daughter Lucy, and I'll never forget his face as he watched Suva burn from their hotel – on the very first week of his contract! Later that day we walked around Suva amid the chaos and trash – a memorable walk. I remember a belligerent Fijian asked 'How do you like Fiji now?' and I said 'the best part is underwater' and made a hasty retreat – Alan was already well ahead of me. But he stayed and he loved working in Suva – it was the most relaxed he had been for years and he, Jane and Lucy made lots of friends. He loved Suva for its size – a country town, perhaps like his childhood.

People in Fiji remember him as fondly as you would expect – some of our alumni and others that he worked with in his role in the Ministry of Health. Dr Salanieta Saketa, the Permanent Secretary of the MoH has said: "I am very saddened by the passing away of someone that I had the pleasure and privilege of working

very closely together during the Fiji Health Management Reform Project. I thank God for Alan's life and for the impact and change he contributed to making the Ministry of Health a learning organisation and one that is adaptable to change."

Dr Adriu Naduva of UNFPA has said: "Alan has been one of the greatest helpers of students I know. He was always there to provide a listening ear and give sound advice to issues that were raised, without hesitancy or rancor. I will miss him for this."

Dr Timaima Tuiketeti of FSMed has said: "Alan had a very good and caring heart and always tried to help other people. That was how I knew him in my time at UNSW."

There is no doubt that Alan was a 'capacity builder' – and many who he worked with have gone on to achieve good things, and with a better understanding of what's important and how they can contribute. In this way, his influence is still very much alive. And so we say farewell to Alan.

In looking for a single lyric capturing the lesson of Alan's life – if that's at all possible – I think it's maybe in the very beautiful song 'Wondering Aloud' by Ian Anderson of Jethro Tull:

*It's only the giving that makes
you what you are.*

*Our deepest sympathies go to
Alan's wife Jane and his much-
loved daughter Lucy for their
tragic loss.*

Where are they now?

The School of Public Health and Community Medicine (SPHCM) has a long history of attracting outstanding overseas students into both the Master of Public Health and the Master of Health Management programs. In many cases these students now hold important leadership and policy development positions in the Asia-Pacific region. It is always interesting to hear about the progress of our former students and the significant contributions they are making to health care in their country.

Dr Isimeli Tukana is just one example of an alumni of the SPHCM, he is now Deputy Secretary, Planning, Policy Development and Analysis, in the Fiji Ministry of Health.

Isimeli graduated with a Bachelor in Medicine and Surgery (MBBS) from the Fiji School of Medicine in 1991 and completed his Masters in Public Health (MPH) at the SPHCM in 2003. Since that time Isimeli has been a Subdivisional Medical Officer Lautoka/Yasawa (2004-05), the Chief Medical Officer Public Health Western Fiji (2006-08), the National Advisor on Noncommunicable Disease Control (NCD control) between 2009-2011, before taking up this current position in August 2011.

Isimeli says: "I have significant experience working successfully at high levels of Public Health in Fiji. This includes working with Public Health networks within the Ministry of Health and with stakeholders outside the Ministry of Health. Importantly, it includes many years of living closely within and among Fijian communities, and working

within the existing traditional systems to bring about public health improvements."

Isimeli's Fiji experience commenced at age 30 in Kadavu Fiji, where his interest in socio-cultural community development in health commenced in 1995 during an AusAID funded Kadavu Rural Health Project (KRHP). It has found practical expression in his work in Public Health, where he has applied community development in Fiji into the broad context of Healthy Islands and health promotion.

Isimeli's Says: "Studying these issues during my masters program at the SPHCM helped provide me with a logical and comprehensive framework which I applied to the health care environment in Fiji."

Isimeli's involvement in Pacific health issues includes being an adviser in NCD control in forums such as the 2-1-22 NCD program in the Pacific. At a national level in Fiji he now holds a senior public health position and has interacted at all levels of government and



Dr Isimeli Tukana
Deputy Secretary, Planning, Policy Development and Analysis
Fiji Ministry of Health.

community to prepare NCD strategic plans for Fiji.

In addition, Isimeli is a co-author with Graham Roberts, who recently rejoined the SPHCM, of *Village Health Worker: a Manual for Village Primary Health Care for the Pacific Community*.

Isimeli says: "I have developed a sound and practical understanding of the Fiji health sector, health workforce, and the legislative, governmental and community systems for health and NCD control. A broad life experience, private study of indigenous health, and close personal exposure to Fiji cultures are among my most important qualifications. My time at the SPHCM also gave me a more global perspective of the health care system and emphasised the importance of health promotion and public health programs in general in improving health status in the community."



With cooperation, hard working and diligence the aim of improving and promoting healthy municipalities can be achieved.

Conversations with Karen

Paula Watkins is a clinical psychologist and PhD candidate at SPHCM. Her research is supervised by Dr Husna Razee and Associate Professor Juliet Richters and focuses on the psychosocial wellbeing and distress of Karen refugee women living in Sydney. The Karen are one of the largest ethnic minority communities who face persecution from Burma's military junta.



Lah Lah Gaw, Beh Beh Zu, Eh Soe Gay Zu (who opened the exhibition with a speech about her experiences as a young refugee moving to Australia) and Paula Watkins

During the course of her data collection in the Karen community, Paula started to use various forms of art to express part of her reflexive process, and to present her research to a wider audience – to raise political concerns and hopefully enhance understanding between communities.

Paula says: “In my choice of using art I was influenced by Hartnett and Engels (2005) *Aria in time of war: Investigative poetry and the politics of witnessing*, who speak of ‘investigative poetry and the politics of witnessing’. Hartnett & Engels encourage the distribution of research findings in optimally helpful ways and call upon researchers to work at the interface of the personal and political through their research. They challenge us to take our research out of our universities, out of our journals and into our communities and world in which

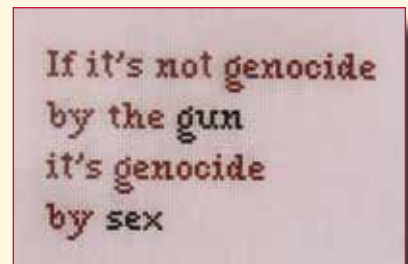
we live making it accessible and interesting to a wider audience.”

In June 2011 Paula held an exhibition entitled ‘Conversations with Karen’. The artworks shown presented quotes from refugee women in the mediums of cross-stitch and felt typography. Each piece was accompanied by a small typed explanation to contextualize the quote and educate viewers about refugees from Burma.

The launch coincided with World Refugee Day and Australia’s Refugee Week. The event was covered by local media and hosted free of charge by Porch & Parlour – a café and art gallery in Bondi. Eh Soe Gay Zu, a 16-year-old Karen refugee student opened the exhibition.

She shared photos of her life and spoke to a full crowd about her journey growing up in a refugee camp and arriving in Australia three years ago.

Paula says: “Over half of the artworks sold. Profits have been donated to a Karen women’s group in Sydney. The group have already decided to invest the money in buying materials so that they can make (and hopefully sell) their traditional woven crafts.”



"If it's not genocide by the gun it's genocide by sex." This quote comes from an interview in which a Karen elder reflected on the systematic rape of ethnic minority women by Burma's military personnel.

GRADUATE SUMMER SCHOOL



The School of Public Health and Community Medicine Graduate Summer School offers a series of intensive workshops over a period of several days, which can be taken as part of a postgraduate degree or as standalone non-degree courses. The workshops are followed by coursework to be completed over two-and-a-half months for those participants who are doing the workshops for coursework credit. The Summer School is designed for a range of people:

- Postgraduate students from the School wishing to take courses during summer semester
- New domestic students wishing to commence their degree
- Postgraduate students from other faculties or universities wishing to take electives for credit
- Health practitioners wishing to increase their professional standing
- People doing a course out of interest and not for credit.

All of the Summer School workshops are held on the Kensington Campus at the University of New South Wales.

Courses available at this year's Summer School are:

- Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health
14 – 17 November
- Managing Human Resources for Health
14 – 18 November
- Current Debates in International Health: Health and Social Aspects of Emergencies, Conflict and Disasters
21 – 25 November
- Inequalities and Health
21 – 23 November
- Prevention and Management of Chronic Disease
24 – 25, 28 November
- Principles and Practice of Primary Health Care Services in the Community
29 November – 1 December
- Communicable Disease Control in Humanitarian Emergencies and Disasters
28 November – 2 December
- Mathematical Modelling of Infectious Diseases
5 – 8 December
- The Global HIV Epidemic
5 – 8 December

Our Summer School offers postgraduate courses in many aspects of public health and community medicine. These courses provide a framework for advanced study in many fields of public health and health management. All the courses offered can be taken for degree credit by both domestic and international students or as non-credit workshops for others. They are taught by the staff of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine. This program has been designed so that participants can enrol in one or more courses.

For further information, including how to apply and payment of fees, visit the Summer School website: www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/SummerSchool

Postgraduate Learning and Teaching Initiatives

by Lois Meyer and Sonal Bhalla

Scenario Based Learning Project

Scenario-based learning (SBL) is a core feature of the pedagogical approach used in the Faculty of Medicine's undergraduate program. Through a series of UNSW Strategic Learning and Teaching Development grants (2008-2010), the postgraduate learning and teaching team have been exploring innovative ways that SBL might productively be incorporated using rich media in online learning within the Master of Public Health and Master of Health Management programs. The strength of SBL is that it situates students' learning in authentic scenarios where they can engage in immersive collaborative tasks to address meaningful real-world dilemmas and by using problem solving skills develop relevant capacities for professional practice (Errington 2008).

Our approach was to select three courses to pilot different approaches to embedding video based scenarios for triggering participative online learning to foster a suite of graduate capabilities including students' reflective practice and their analytical and critical thinking. We worked with the course convenors to design and implement SBL strategies that could be piloted in 2009 and then evaluated and enhanced in subsequent years. In 2009, the course 'Advanced Health Economics' embedded a SBL approach where students were presented with a real situation that they are likely to face in their professional practice. A trigger (via a YouTube Video) of an HIV program became the catalyst for undertaking a health economics assessment of a program intervention. With initial design input by Sonal Bhalla from



Lois Meyer

SPHCM, this SBL initiative has continued to be used within the course provided by Kevin Forde. Student groups are asked to explore the issues that confront practitioners in undertaking a health economics assessment and identify possible strategies for responding effectively.

A cross faculty and inter-professional team approach was piloted in 2009 by Dr Alison Rutherford in the 'Environmental Health' course. SPHCM students teamed up with students in the course 'Environmental Management for the Mining Industry' (School of Mining Engineering, Faculty of Engineering) to participate in a role play simulation investigating a toxicological risk assessment, communication and decision-making process that brought mining management, environmental health experts and community residents together in a tense situation. The role-play simulation was based on a documentary by ABC's Foreign Correspondent on real life events relating to a mine operation in the area of Buyat Bay, Indonesia. Although highly successful and well



Sonal Bhalla

received by the students, this cross-faculty approach requires substantial academic commitment and time. The scenario of 'The Battle of Buyat Bay' has continued to be used in the 'Environmental Health' course now offered by Associate Professor Melissa Haswell-Elkins and other ways of adapting this approach are currently being explored.

A different SBL approach was used with the course 'Indigenous Health in Australia'. Lois Meyer from SPHCM with Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver and Sally Fitzpatrick from the Muru Marri Indigenous Health Unit came together in 2009 to design and develop a new DVD resource *Ending Indigenous Inequalities in Our Lifetimes*. This resource of real-life interviews was the trigger for students to work in small groups online to undertake scenario planning and policy formulation for 'Closing the Gap'. This SBL strategy has continued to be used and enhanced within the course. In recognition of their work Lois Meyer, Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver and Sally Fitzpatrick jointly received the Faculty Innovation in Learning and Teaching award in 2010.

To date our research on these SBL initiatives with staff and students suggests the strong potential of SBL to nurture requisite graduate attributes for addressing the dynamic and complex environments within which public health and health management practices occur. It also suggests SBL can foster high engagement with course outcomes and improve students' learning experiences. A short video was developed to record and evaluate the project outcomes and findings of our approach to SBL. This and other information on the project will shortly be available on the SPHCM website.

A systematic assessment review

In 2011, the postgraduate learning and teaching team won a Strategic Learning and Teaching Development grant (2011) to undertake a systematic assessment review of the coherence and curriculum quality of assessment strategies across the SPHCM postgraduate Public Health and Health Management programs. The project is part of a larger University wide assessment project that is seeking to enhance program coherence in assessment strategies within all Faculties.

This project is scheduled to be completed by the end of this year and will provide an opportunity to all staff to discuss findings as well as share ideas on enhancing assessment methods and processes across the postgraduate programs.

For more information on either of these projects, please contact the School's Learning and Teaching team: Lois Meyer, Senior Research Fellow, Learning and Teaching, Postgraduate Programs, l.meyer@unsw.edu.au or Sonal Bhalla, Educational Designer, Postgraduate Programs, s.bhalla@unsw.edu.au

Honours and Awards



Public Health Impact Award

Professor Robyn Richmond has been awarded the Public Health Association of NSW 2011 Award for Public Health Impact. The Public Health Impact Award (PHIA) 2011 recognises outstanding contributions to a public health issue by a dedicated public health professional working to improve the health of the population and reduce health inequalities.

The PHIA recognises health professionals who have made a significant impact on an important public health issue in Australia, particularly in NSW; who have developed innovative solutions to problems; demonstrated a high degree of excellence; overcome substantial barriers in the design, implementation or evaluation of a program of work; communicated their efforts so others may benefit; generated public and/or professional enthusiasm and support for a public health initiative; and who have promoted the concept of public health.

Congratulations to Robyn for this recognition of her research impact in public health.

National Drug and Alcohol Award

Robyn also received a highly-regarded National Drug and Alcohol Award. She was inducted into the Honour Roll at the National Drug and Alcohol Awards night on 24th June. The Honour Roll acknowledges and publicly recognises the exceptional work done by people who have worked tirelessly over a number of years in this sector.

Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning

For the first time, the Australian Learning and Teaching Council has recognised 22 'Early Career' achievers, as part of the 2011 Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning.

The winners in this category were recognised for a sustained commitment to the student experience, despite having begun their careers in higher education no more than seven years ago. Chief Executive of the ALTC, Dr Carol Nicoll, stressed the importance of acknowledging the accomplishments of these recipients.

"The ALTC commends the efforts of these staff who have made a significant contribution to the student experience so early in their careers," she said.

"This formal recognition by peers and the sector is important for encouraging their continued high level of engagement with their students into the future."

In total, 185 individuals and 25 teams were presented with Citations, worth \$10,000 each, at the 2011 Australian Awards for University Teaching ceremony at the Sydney Opera House on 16 August.

Dr Chinthaka Balasooriya from the School of Public Health and Community Medicine received one of these prestigious citations for the enhancement of Scenario-Based-Learning through innovative design, excellence in small group facilitation and wide-ranging scholarly contributions.

It was a good month for Chinthaka as he was also promoted to senior lecturer in the School. Congratulations to Chinthaka on both this award and his promotion.

Congratulations also go to Holly Seale who has been promoted to senior lecturer.

Queen's Birthday honours

Two members of the SPHCM were appointed Members of the Order of Australia (AM) in the recent Queen's Birthday honours. Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver was recognised for her service to medical education, particularly through the Muru Marri Indigenous Health Unit, and as a supporter of educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Conjoint Professor Kerryn Phelps received her award for service to medicine, particularly through leadership roles with the AMA, to education and community health, and as a GP. Congratulations to Lisa and Kerryn on their exceptional achievements.

Linkage grant successes

Contraception understandings and experiences of Australian women

Associate Professor Juliet Richters and Dr Alison Rutherford from SPHCM, in conjunction with Associate Professor Alexandra Barratt, Dr Deborah Bateson, and Ms Ann Brassil, have been awarded a linkage grant to analyse contraception understandings and experiences of Australian women. Most women use contraception for much of their lives, yet we know little about how they experience the effects on their bodies and relationships. This in-depth study will explore women's thoughts, feelings and experiences and the results will be used to train doctors and nurses in contraceptive counselling and prescribing.

Mobility and HIV risk across the Papua New Guinea/Indonesia border

Associate Professor Heather Worth, Dr Angela Kelly and Dr Patrick Rawstone were also successful in obtaining a grant to study mobility and HIV risk across the Papua New Guinea/Indonesia border. Mobility and border crossings have often been associated with HIV risk. People are more likely to engage in risky behaviours, such as unprotected sex with casual

partners and sex workers, and drug use when they are away from home. Both Papua New Guinea and Papua provinces of Indonesia have generalised HIV epidemics, with around 1% of the adult population in PNG and 2.4% in the Papua provinces in Indonesia infected with HIV. The border between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea stretches for 750 kilometres, and there has been continuous substantial two-way movement across the border traditionally and now for both business and leisure

The aim of this ARC Linkage project is to examine the relationship between mobility across the border between Indonesia and PNG and HIV risk. As well, patterns of mobility at the PNG/Indonesia border are very much influenced by family movement for festivals and funerals and to hunt as they have done traditionally. This project will survey people returning home at six border crossing sites on both sides of the border. It aims to assess whether or not risk takes place and if so under what circumstances.

The project is a collaboration between the PNG National AIDS Council, The AIDS Council of Papua, Indonesia (KPA), the University of Cenderawasih and the PNG Institute for Medical Research.

Let's hear from you

We would like to keep in touch with former staff and students of the School. Please send your contributions to the editor, Kevin Forde: k.forde@unsw.edu.au

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Opinions expressed in the articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of New South Wales. Information was correct at the time of publication but is liable to change. Please visit the School website for the latest information: www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au

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