



Rural Health



GRADUATE RESEARCH NEWS

August 2010

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Welcome

As you may have noticed, the arrival of August was marked with a beautiful welcoming marvel: in the last two days of July, the rain tenderly kissed the trees, grass and insects to revitalise them and then nature opened the gate for the arrival of a new horizon with beautiful blue skies and sunlights. This is a sweet reflection of the Rural Health “graduate research land” where our achievements flower in harmony with nature.

Yes, with this wonderful spirit, I would like to share with you insightful stories in our August Graduate Research News in 2010.

Greetings from A/Prof Tony Barnett, UDRH new Director

Hello everyone. My name is Tony Barnett and I am absolutely delighted to have joined the staff at the UDRH here in this beautiful state of Tasmania (I started work with the UDRH on 20 July). I have come from Monash University, where I have worked for the last 18 years. Prior to that, I was with Deakin University (Warrnambool) and also spent time working in hospitals in both SA and VIC. My background is in nursing and whilst I have worked in both Adelaide and Melbourne, my preference has always been to live and work in the country where I can readily access more natural environments and indulge some of my favourite leisure pursuits: walking, hiking and riding my motorbike (when it manages to get across the Bass Strait).



A/Prof Tony Barnett

I am learning lots about the work and activities of the UDRH and some of the wonderful research done by our graduate research students to help promote the health and wellbeing of rural people and their communities. My own research interests include: ageing in rural areas; interprofessional learning, education and practice; as well as more “clinical” health-related topics.



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The two principal (funded) projects I am currently engaged with are: advance care planning in rural residential aged care facilities and discovering ways by which the capacity of hospitals to accommodate and supervise health professional students can be expanded through Interprofessional Learning (IPL). All lots of fun and well suited to mixed methods approaches to research!

I am looking forward to meeting with you all and learning about your own projects. The upcoming "Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium" on the 21 – 22 October will be a great opportunity to do this and a way to expand my research horizons. One of the factors that attracted me to the UDRH was the fact that it embraced such a strong collaborative approach to its graduate research program and engaged in practices that acknowledge how important multi-disciplinary approaches are to intellectual rigour, public debate and in advancing our knowledge in and around rural health. The variety of challenges that face our rural communities can only truly be solved by respecting and sharing different understandings and by embracing more collaborative approaches to finding solutions to these problems. We live in interesting and exciting times!

I wish you all the very best with your studies and hope to catch up with each of you in the not too distant future.

New candidates and supervisors

The UDRH has been further enriched by the arrival of new students. Warmest welcome to **Annette Loudon** and **Thuy Thanh Le** who have been admitted to the Masters of Medical Science degree!

A/Prof **Tony Barnett** (UDRH Director), Drs **Susan Johns**, **Jess Woodroffe** and **Martin Harris** (UDRH) have applied to be registered supervisors. We would like to welcome newly registered supervisors Professor **Neil Pillar** of Flinders University and Dr **Maarten Immink** of University of South Australia. We look forward to working with you.

Greetings from Annette Loudon

Hi everyone, I am **Annette Loudon**. I joined the UDRH as a Masters candidate a few days ago. My professional background for over thirty years has been in the area of access, initially in access to English literacy. One particular research project I undertook in this field concerned the needs of, and later the re-teaching of literacy and numeracy to, adults with acquired dysphasia.

I was also a teacher of English for Speakers of Other Languages, specialising in refugees and migrants to



Annette Loudon

Australia. In this area, I became a head teacher at Northern Beaches TAFE in Sydney. I won fellowships to work and conduct research in Japan and England.

Many years later, I retrained as a teacher of Yoga and Pilates and as a Massage Therapist and opened my own business 'Forest Yoga, Massage and Pilates'. The focus of my business was working with people with all kinds of limitations.

My general yoga classes included an increasing number of women who had or were having treatment for breast cancer, including those with secondary lymphoedema as a result of their treatment. While making a dvd and writing a book on this topic, I found that there was a lack of research into the effect of yoga in reducing secondary lymphoedema for this group of women. In order to study what could be a very beneficial health outcome in a formal, controlled way, I then applied to become a Masters student at UTAS.

My passion is to combine all my interests, so that one day I will be able to offer yoga classes through the internet to women with breast cancer and secondary lymphoedema living in remote areas of Australia.

Good news

The past six months were showered with some wonderful news. Warmest congratulations to the following members for their success:

- **Shandell Elmer**, PhD candidate, submitted her thesis for examination. Congratulations to Shandell and her supervisors, Dr **Clarissa Hughes** and Prof **Sue Kilpatrick**.
- **Fiona Jones** passed her Masters thesis – congratulations to Fiona and their supervisors, **Dr Peter Orpin** and **Kim Boyer**.
- **Sharon Hetherington** has had a poster accepted for the 43rd National Conference of the Australian Association of Gerontology to be held in Hobart on 17 - 19 November.
- **Peter Mulholland** passed his Masters thesis – congratulations to Peter and his supervisors, Prof **Judith Walker** and Dr **Christine Stirling**. Peter was a recipient of ACAP bursary in 2006. The bursary is a joint initiative of the Australian College of Ambulance Professionals Tasmania Branch, Calvary Health Care Tasmania and the UDRH.
- **Maria Yue** completed all the requirements for the confirmation of progression of PhD candidature.
- Dr **Rosa McManamey** won the Conference Funding Grant 2010 for Rural Health honorary research supervisors to attend the International Conference of Arts and Health Australia – Healthy People, Healthy Communities in Sydney later this year. Congratulations to Rosa for her success.

Ha Hoang won a Commercialisation Training Scholarship



Ha Hoang

I would like to share with you the good news of my success in getting a Commercialisation Training Scholarship (CTS) offered by UTAS Graduate Research to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Research Commercialisation (GCRC). The CTS is a Commonwealth Government initiative with the objective to provide high quality research commercialisation training for the next generation of Australian researchers as a means of equipping them with the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to bring research-based ideas, inventions and innovations to market.

I am so lucky to get the scholarship to undertake the training. Given the short time of notice, at some stages I thought I would not have enough time to prepare for all required documents for the application. However, with a strong support from my supervisor, Dr **Quynh Lê**, we submitted the application to the Graduate Research Office in time.

Consulting with my supervisor was the first thing that I did when I got the information about the CTS. We practically looked at my timeline for the current study and assessed how the training would fit in the planned stages.

I have already started my first unit for the training. The good thing about the CTS is that we are doing it online with students of different disciplines from various Australian Universities.

I am enjoying the course so much and special thanks to the University of Tasmania for giving me an opportunity to undertake the training and research networking with many students across the country.

Although it is now winter, I feel strongly the summer breeze and glorious sunlight around me. Yes, I am over the sun and... the moon.

Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium – October 2010

We are pleased to let you know that the Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium in Launceston this year will be rescheduled to 21 – 22 October, 2010. We hope the new time will best suit the participants.

The Symposium is co-organised by the University Department of Rural Health, Rural Clinical School, School of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Human Life Sciences, School of Medicine and the Launceston Clinical School to provide opportunities for research in progress sharing, professional and interpersonal networking, and a chance to reflect individually and collectively on our research journeys. It includes keynote address, public lecture, supervisor training session, thesis writing workshop, and presentations from PhD and research Masters candidates

from the above department and schools.

The Symposium is an illustration of a dynamic research and collaborative spirit and the participation of the School of Medicine in 2010 will definitely enhance the quality of research interaction and social networking.

Student's reflection from Peter Mulholland

Early in 2006 I noticed a flyer asking for applications toward a paramedic research bursary provided by the Australian College of Ambulance Professionals, Calvary Health Care, and The University of Tasmania School of Rural Health. Little did I realize how my ensuing application would lead to a time consuming, lifestyle altering, coffee addicting, yet completely rewarding experience over the next three and a half years.

Although I had ideas on what I wanted to research (A comparison of Rural and Urban Paramedics), and itching to get stuck into "field work", it was important to conduct a literature review first. A research plan emerged, and I could then commence the rewarding process of field work.



Peter Mulholland

When researching aspects of rural health I found it important not to blinker into a "paramedic only" context and it became invaluable to attend education sessions conducted by the Department of Rural Health, as well as rural health conferences. The sessions offered by the UDRH expanded my outlook on rural health by mixing with other graduate students and also helped with the planning, analysis, and writing stages of my project. Rural health conferences allowed me to place my findings on paramedic care within an overall rural environment.

The writing stage of my Masters research was a continuing process from day one, and presented the greatest challenge. The sessions offered by the UDRH were most useful here. So too, were my supervisors. I have forgotten how many drafts I presented to my supervisors, who were always there with positive encouragement!

The importance of good supervision became most apparent during the examination process.

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My thesis passed examinations but with conditions that had one examiner suggest some minor changes, and the other suggesting more comprehensive changes. This is where my supervisors were able to guide me to an acceptable “middle ground” approach.

The final letter of approval of my thesis and seeing my work in its hard copy form struck home that the previous years had all amounted to something. The journey had been difficult at times, but very rewarding. I offer thanks to the organisations of ACAP, Calvary and the UDRH in offering the paramedic bursary, and offer particular thanks to my supervisors, Prof **Judith Walker**, and Dr **Christine Stirling**.

Sharon Hetherington's contribution to Gerontology research

Sharon Hetherington has had a poster accepted for the 43rd National Conference of the Australian Association of Gerontology to be held in Hobart, on 17 - 19 November. Sharon will be presenting findings from her PhD study of the factors that influence older people's participation in physical activity. Specifically, at this conference, Sharon's presentation will focus on overcoming extrinsic and intrinsic barriers to participation and enhancing motivation for physical activity. Sharon will also present a summary of her findings in a 20 minute presentation at the Graduate Research Symposium in October.



Sharon Hetherington

Sharon Hetherington is in the final year of her PhD candidature and is in the process of writing up her doctoral thesis. Sharon's project has focused on factors that influence older people's participation in physical activity. The project has used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to try and produce a comprehensive understanding of older people's activity levels, their barriers and motivations for being active and to ascertain the best approaches to help this population to be engage in physical activity.

Stars of graduation

Graduation is the time for celebrating hard work, achievement, and it marks the happy ending of the study journey. The UDRH is so proud to have three shiny stars at the August graduation ceremonies. We would like to warmly congratulate Dr **Susan Johns**, **Peter Mulholland** and **Fiona Jones** for their success. We are also looking forward to seeing more stars arising in the next horizon.



Dr Johns, Prof Kilpatrick and Mr Mulholland at graduation ceremony, Albert Hall, Launceston, 14 August 2010

Event calendar

- **Linking chapters and shaping up the thesis using advanced word**, conducted by NDA Consultancy, Hobart Tuesday 31 August, 12noon – 3.00pm
- **Introduction to SPSS**, conducted by Drs Penny Allen & Quynh Lê, Launceston, Tuesday 14 September, 12 noon – 3.00pm
- **Conference sharing/research journey reflection**, Launceston session will be facilitated by Dr Penny Allen, Tuesday 31 August, 12 noon – 2.00pm; Hobart session will facilitated by Dr Quynh Lê on 24 September, 12 noon – 2.00pm.
- **How to write a thesis or academic paper**, conducted by Dr Penny Allen, Launceston Tuesday 28 September, 12noon – 2.00pm, videoconferencing available.
- **Presentation skills**, conducted by A/Prof Dominic Geraghty, Launceston, Tuesday 12 October, 12 noon – 2.00pm, videoconferencing available.
- **Public Lecture**, Guest speaker: Prof James Vickers, IR IC 108 LTH (Architecture Lecture TH), Inverest Campus, Wednesday, 20 October, Time: TBA.
- **Faculty of Health Science Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium**, New Gallery – Education Building, Newnham, Launceston, Thursday 21 – Friday 22 October.
- **One-on-one NVivo/qualitative analysis support**, conducted by Dr Peter Orpin, on request.
- **Statistics series for health professionals – Part 1**, conducted by Dr Tom Hartley, Tuesday 26 October, 12noon – 3.00pm, videoconferencing available.
- **Statistics series for health professionals – Part 2**, conducted by Dr Tom Hartley, Tuesday 9 November, 12noon – 3.00pm, videoconferencing available.

Each achievement in our Rural Health Graduate Research has its own story to tell. Like many voyages in life, journeys to achievements are not always smooth sailing. The sea can be calm one day and treacherous the other day. Yes, there are moments of the sky shadowed by dark clouds or brightened up by affectionate sunrays. However, all the achievements embodied in this Graduate Research News testify the courage, optimism and the collective spirit of our collegiality. Till we say hello again in the next news, best wishes and take care.

Quynh Lê and Kim Izard