



Pilot WA Public Health Officer Training Program (WAPHOTP) Communiqué 23 August 2022

UPDATE

In July and August, the trainees participated in learning activities covering competencies in the areas of professional practice, cultural competence and Aboriginal health.

Many thanks to the Aboriginal health services who collaborated with the WAPHOTP team and trainees to make this experience such a success.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH PLACEMENTS & PRESENTATIONS

On the 19 July 2022, the WAPHOTP trainees had the privilege of listening and being able to ask questions from representatives from the following Aboriginal Health Services:

- Kim Gates – Aboriginal Health Council of WA
- Trish Bushby – ArcheHealth
- Corey Dalton – Derbal Yerrigan Aboriginal Health Service
- Naomi Nelson – Metropolitan Communicable Disease Control
- Shannen Thiel – Mooditj Koort.

This provided both an introduction to the host from each Service, a little of their backgrounds including their healthcare journey, and the Aboriginal Health Service which they represent.

The WAPHOTP trainees undertook Aboriginal Health shadowing placements in late-July to early-August; this involved varying experiences including:

- Overview of Aboriginal Health Council of WA role and services
- Boodjari Yorgas – antenatal care
- Koolark Elders - home visits
- Material and child health, community liaison officers and health promotion at Derbal Yerrigan
- Moorditj Kids – immunisation home-visiting outreach
- MCDC outreach with homeless healthcare.

The trainees presented their learnings on the 9 August 2022, to their peers and representatives from the Services. The presentations went beyond a narrative account of what they experienced, including how they will apply their learnings to their individual and corporate professional practice.



**Aboriginal
Health Council
of Western Australia**



moorditj koort
Aboriginal Corporation



Government of **Western Australia**
North Metropolitan Health Service
Mental Health, Public Health and Dental Services

CLINICAL AUDIT WORKSHOP

On the 22 August, WAPHOTP trainees had the opportunity to participate in a Clinical Audit and Quality Improvement Workshop with Notre Dame medical students. Trainees learned what is a clinical audit and its contribution to clinical service improvement, patient care and personal career development through a simulation activity where they worked in small groups to develop an audit on WA Health staff's completion of influenza vaccination consent forms, analyse and disseminate the results to selected stakeholders and develop an action plan for improvement. This interactive learning was complimented by a Health Leader speaker talk by Dr Christina Bertilone, Acting Executive Director, Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Directorate, Clinical Excellence Division.

MEET THE TRAINEE / MEET THE MENTOR

Trainees continued to meet and work closely with their respective mentor, all of whom are highly skilled senior healthcare professionals throughout Australia. In this edition we meet trainees Tracie Chong and her mentor George Truman.



Tracie Chong
Epidemiologist,
Metropolitan Communicable
Disease Control

While studying the Masters of Infectious Diseases, I was convinced that I would pursue a career in entomology or even work in a microbiology laboratory. As life is never what it seems, I ended up working casually as a Research Assistant at the Telethon Kids Institute and as a Project Officer at Metropolitan Communicable Disease Control (MCDC).

I gained incredible knowledge and skills during my time at MCDC having been involved in measles outbreak management in October 2019 and subsequently the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. Under the supervision of Dr Ben Scalley, I learnt the power of automation and innovation in disease control surveillance and immunisation and continue to incorporate this across my work.

I knew there was more of Public Health I hadn't explored and WAPHOTP has been instrumental in teaching me about ethics, advocacy, health promotion, cultural awareness, and so much more.

A highlight of WAPHOTP for me is being paired with a fellow epidemiologist who is not only wise beyond his years and experienced in emergency management but also shares the same appreciation for good food and wine! George always offers sound advice and I hope he continues to be a mentor to others and demonstrate to them the good that can be done in Public Health.



George Truman
Public Health
Epidemiologist,
Sydney West Area Health
Service/ Nepean Blue
Mountains Local Health
District

I was born in Alice Springs at a time when we still did not recognise the traditional owners of this land as citizens. I had a rather nomadic existence – Geraldton, Darwin then moving to Perth. After trying Medicine at UWA it was clear I was not going to become a doctor, so I worked as a clerk and then in a mining company in north-west WA. I returned to UWA to complete an Honours Degree in Psychology. However, what the degree taught me most was that I was not going to be a psychologist.

I moved to Sydney with my partner in the early 1990s. I continued to work in research/education before completing an MPH. I moved from suburban Sydney to the beautiful Blue Mountains in 2000.

I have now worked as an epidemiologist for a Public Health Unit in the outer north-west of Sydney for over 20 years. The advantage of working in a small Public Health Unit is that I can get on with my own thing while things are quiet, but when things are extra busy, I am in the thick of the excitement as the main (only) epidemiologist. I even get to play the Director of Public Health at times.

I am now into the last decade of my career and wanted something that would challenge me and to give something back to public health. I have had a lot of interesting experiences growing up and working in public health, and when the opportunity came up to be a WAPHOTP mentor I jumped at it. I have enjoyed being paired with Tracie. It is great working with early career professionals who are enthusiastic. It is fantastic being part of WAPHOTP where both parties can expect to learn equally from each other.

ALUMNI – WHAT ARE THEY DOING NOW?



Asha Singh, 2020 WAPHOTP trainee, supported the COVID outbreak response in the Kimberley, including through contact tracing and supporting the Looma remote community response, in addition to working in her “day-job” as Kimberley Cancer Strategy Project Officer, based at Broome Regional Hospital.

Asha said that working in the COVID response, *‘this was a really valuable opportunity to put lots of learnings from the WAPHOTP program into practice’*.

Asha has now moved to the Kimberley Population Health Unit as a Senior Project Officer working to improve coordination of care, for chronic conditions between acute and primary care.

UPCOMING EVENTS

31 August 2022 - Media and Communications Workshop which will be hosted by the WA Health Communications.

9 September 2022 - ‘Health Economics Evaluation- concepts and case study using anti-HCV testing for blood donation’ webinar hosted by Dr Veronica Hoad, of the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood and a member of The Kirby Institute, UNSW Australia.

13 September 2002 - Mental Health Commission webinar which is entitled ‘Let’s talk about sex, syphilis, STIs and BBVs the issue in an alcohol and other drugs (AOD) or mental health session’ hosted by Dr Donna Mak with an expert panel of speakers from AOD and mental health sectors.

From mid-September the trainees will be developing and presenting the Teaching and Learning Activities for the remainder of the program.

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