



Pilot WA Public Health Officer Training Program (WAPHOTP) Communiqué 27 May 2022

UPDATE

During April and May WAPHOTP trainees were mapping their workplace roles and achievements against the WAPHOTP competency areas. This exercise demonstrates engagement in professional development and provides contemporaneous documentation that trainees can include in workplace performance reviews, and applications for jobs and study opportunities such as scholarships and university courses.

GAME OF THE GREATER GOOD

Trainees participated in the Game of the Greater Good, a simulation of health care resource allocation, in partnership with the University of Notre Dame and students from the Rural Clinical School of WA on 11 May 2022. Participants were allocated a role as a clinician, administrator or health consumer in a rural or remote health service. The learning objectives for the session included:

- Appreciate the increasing role of climate change in health emergencies and long-term health outcomes
- Develop an appreciation of the strengths and limitations of the Australian health care system
- Identify socio-economic and political factors influencing the allocation of finite resources in health care systems
- Explain the health economics concepts of resource allocation and opportunity cost
- Describe the ethical debate related to resource stewardship in health care.

ETHICS WORKSHOP

On Tuesday 17 May, the trainees had the privilege of listening to Mr Jim McGinty, AM who spoke about ethical issues he faced during his time as Minister of Health. The session also included a presentation and discussion led by Dr Anna Beswick focussing on ethics in Public Health, and an Ethical Dilemmas Panel Discussion with guest speakers:

- Dr Lorraine Anderson, Medical Director, Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service
- Dr Stephanie Davis (public health physician and academic, formerly Chief Health Officer, Australian Government Department of Health)
- Ms Lena Van Hale, Manager Magenta.

HEALTH LEADER SPEAKER SERIES

At each session over the past 6-weeks WAPHOTP trainees have learnt from Health Leader Speakers reflecting on their career journey throughout the healthcare system. Trainees have had the privilege of listening to the following speakers:

- Ms Trinity Mahede, A/Manager, Office of Population Health Genomics, Department of Health
- Dr Laura Kirkland, Principal Epidemiologist, Public & Aboriginal Health Division
- Dr Lauren Bloomfield, Epidemiologist, Communicable Disease Control Directorate and Senior Lecturer, University of Notre Dame, School of Medicine Fremantle
- Mr Jim McGinty, AM.

MEET THE TRAINEE / MEET THE MENTOR

Trainees have each been allocated a mentor, all of whom are highly skilled senior healthcare professionals throughout Australia. In this edition we meet trainees Melissa Coci and Sharon Vulimu, and their mentors Prof Martyn Kirk and Dr Laura Kirkland.



Melissa Coci
Program Officer, CDCD

I have had informal mentors in my lifetime, but usually they have come about from me declaring to someone “*you are my mentor*” and them not really having a say in it. So, I was a little bit nervous when I was given an “official mentor” through the WAPHOT Program and even more nervous when I googled “Martyn Kirk” and his impressive CV!

However, one email from Martyn and my nerves were eased, soothed by the words “*let’s have a cup of tea and introduce ourselves!*”. This tea was shared over the power of Teams.

Our second meeting was postponed as Prof Martyn was in Timor Leste conducting research into water-borne diseases in infants. I thought that was a pretty good excuse. I am in the fairly early stages of my public health career, after a not so illustrious career as a pharmacist and journalist.

My forays in public health have focused around research (primarily qualitative and in bloodborne viruses) and I am in my second year of my first non-clinical government job. Prof Martyn has patiently listened to my ramblings about academia versus government, qualitative versus quantitative etc, and has inspired me with his advice stemming from his diverse career in epidemiology (detective work!), coordinating the Master of Applied Epidemiology, research and government work.

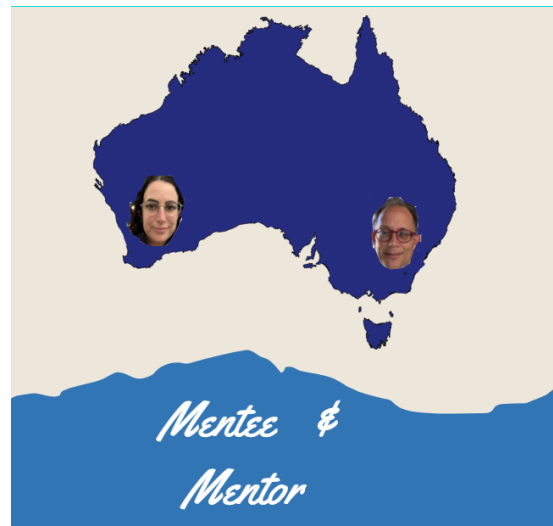
I feel extremely lucky to have Prof Martyn as my mentor, as apart from his extensive career expertise he has a generous soul and is very giving with his time and advice.



Martyn Kirk
Professor and NHMRC
Career Development
Fellow, The Australian
National University

I am currently situated at the Australian National University in Canberra, where I am a NHMRC Career Development Fellow at the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Australian National University.

In this role I conduct research into food and water-borne diseases, and diseases transmitted from contaminated environments.





Sharon Vulimu
Registered Nurse, PHOps

I currently work as a Surveillance Officer at PHOps and have worked in health since 2016 after completing Bachelor of Science in Nursing. I commenced as a Registered Nurse working in various settings including aged care and in rural and remote areas. I have also volunteered in the community through “Street Teams” which went into homes of disadvantaged people and assisted with activities of daily living. This together with my passion for public health resonated with the need to make a difference in the community. I then completed a Master of Public Health; I enjoy being part of a team whose overall goal is improving population health.

I am currently a trainee in the 2022 WAPHOTP which has enabled me to consolidate my knowledge in Public Health. The program has been an eye opener and has allowed me to get out of my comfort zone and identify areas that need development. I hope to make an impact however small in improving the health of populations. I continue to work with my mentor Dr Laura Kirkland who shares my passion for improving population health and has been key in offering guidance.



Dr Laura Kirkland
Principal Epidemiologist,
Public and Aboriginal
Health, WA Department of
Health

My own experiences of having a mentor have been really empowering and beneficial for my career and I think it’s important to be able to support others in their career journeys.

It can be helpful having a mentor to help clarify goals, to provide opportunities to enhance learning, and troubleshoot any issues that arise and learn from their experience.

This is my first-year mentoring for WAPHOTP, but I have also mentored in other programs, and always found it a rewarding process.

ALUMNI – WHAT ARE THEY DOING NOW?



Jenny Vo, 2020 WAPHOTP trainee, has secured an exciting new opportunity as a data analyst at Eliiza, a company that does Artificial Intelligence (AI) / Machine Learning (ML) consulting in a range of industries. Jenny’s first project in her new position is in the health sector.

Jenny said “I have been searching for opportunities outside of government because I felt that the field of data and technology is accelerating and expanding at a pace that WA Health would not be able to match (at this point in time, anyway) ... I would like to think that one day I’ll be coming back to WA Health wiser and with refreshed enthusiasm and optimism”.

UPCOMING EVENTS

All WAPHOTP trainees have the opportunity to attend the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Research and Evaluation Network (SiREN) Symposium on 24 June 2022 at a substantial discount. We are very grateful to the organising committee for their generous support <https://www.sirensymposium.com/event-details-1>

Our South West Public Health Unit fieldtrip to Bunbury is scheduled for 5 July 2022. The WAPHOTP team are grateful for Sharlene Abbott’s and Amanda Whittle’s support in planning this rural educational experience.

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