



From L to R, Prof Mark Harris, Dr Tom Calma - Social Justice Commissioner, Aunty Allie Golding - Aboriginal Elder and Prof Raina MacIntyre at UNSW Population Health Research Showcase

2011 in review

by Professor Raina MacIntyre, Head of School

2011 was a year of successes, changes and new directions. We faced the sudden loss of Alan Hodgkinson, Deputy Head of School and Associate Dean postgraduate coursework, who passed away unexpectedly in April 2011. A UNSW memorial service allowed staff to offer their condolences to Alan's wife and daughter, and to reflect on and celebrate his life and many contributions to SPHCM.

Our postgraduate teaching programs of the Master of Public Health (MPH), Master of Health Management and Master of International Health continue to grow and evolve, with A/Prof Glenda Lawrence being appointed Associate Dean, postgraduate coursework. We launched a new Summer School, which was

hugely successful, coordinated by A/ Prof Heather Worth. In 2011 we launched an MPH stream in Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing to contribute to education and training in this area.

The school also makes an important contribution to teaching in the UNSW undergraduate medicine program including convening a course in each of the three phases. We continuously monitor and review the school's input to the Medicine program, in order to ensure that adequate emphasis is maintained on public health concepts.

The School is the chosen academic partner for the Public Health Officers Training Program (PHOTP) of the NSW Ministry of Health. PHOTP trainees are recruited by NSW Health and work concurrently

towards the achievement of the Program's competencies and the DrPH provided by UNSW. Since the partnership began in 2009, 19 students have enrolled in the DrPH. The first candidate submitted their thesis in March 2012.

Our flagship research areas, global health, infectious diseases, primary care and indigenous health,

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continue to grow and thrive, with a new NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence in Immunisation, as well as several ARC grants.

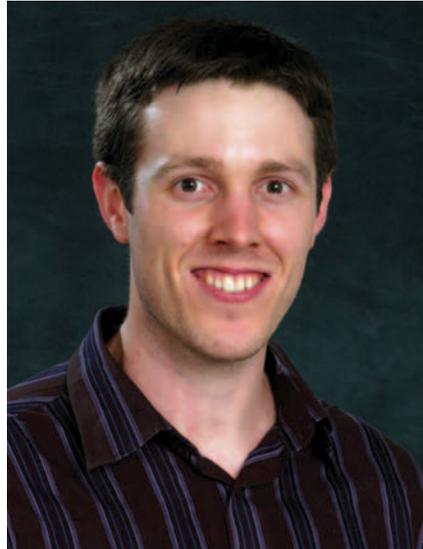
We have four NHMRC postdoctoral fellows in the school, and a range of research staff in our flagship areas. We also had over 140 enrolled PhD students in 2011, and hosted the third Population Health Research Showcase in August 2011, with Dr Tom Calma, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner as the plenary speaker and a spirited debate on public health to finish the day, featuring senior UNSW academics.

The Muru Marri Indigenous Health Unit continued to build on its important work in Indigenous health, with Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver receiving an Order of Australia for her contributions to the nation in the area of medical education for Aboriginal people.

The AusAID funded Human Resources for Health Hub is addressing the crisis in human resources for health in the region including collaborative engagement with a wide range of institutions in the Pacific and Asia, further afield outside of the region, and international, NGO and aid agencies.

Football United went from strength to strength in 2011, and had far reaching community engagement in NSW and Australia.

There are many other achievements of our staff and students which are too numerous to list, but note that this year the School of Public Health and Community Medicine (SPHCM) will celebrate its 10th anniversary. The School was launched in 2002 after the merger of the Schools of Community Medicine, Medical Education and Health Services Management, and we have come a long way in that time. We will have a decade of achievements in our new incarnation, to reflect on and be proud of.



DR ANTHONY NEWALL

Lecturer

Economic Evaluation of Infectious Disease Prevention

Dean's Rising Star Awards

Dr Newall is a lecturer (research) in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the UNSW who specialises in the economic evaluation of infectious disease prevention. He is an honorary fellow at the National Centre for Research and Surveillance (NCIRS). In 2011 he was awarded the Dean's Rising Star Award, which is presented to an early career scientist within the Faculty of Medicine at the UNSW who has made significant contributions to research. He was also awarded the prestigious Aileen Plant Memorial Prize in 2011 by the Australian Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA). This prize, presented by the Chief Medical Officer of Australia, is awarded for a peer-reviewed publication in infectious disease epidemiology.

His research brings together techniques (and researchers) from a variety of disciplines to assess infectious disease prevention programs. This often involves using epidemiological and statistical techniques to assess the disease burden from infectious diseases. The results from these studies can then

be used in health economic and mathematical models to estimate the impact and cost-effectiveness of prevention programs. A major focus of his work has been the integration of dynamic transmission (mathematical) models into economic evaluations of vaccination programs. Dynamic transmission models allow the estimation of herd immunity effects, which can be highly influential in determining the cost-effectiveness of vaccination strategies. The growth in expenditure on immunisation has increased the pressure to assess the value for money offered by vaccination strategies.

Over the last seven years of research he has been an advocate for increased rigor and transparency in economic evaluations of infectious disease prevention. His research has led to 15 peer-reviewed publications, including first author publications in high impact journals such as the *Lancet Infectious Diseases*, *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, *Vaccine* and *Pharmacoeconomics*.

*There are around 100 PhD students in the SPHCM and its affiliated centres. Here is a profile of one of them:
David Muscatello*

David Muscatello: PhD profile



In 1981, when I completed a degree in science, majoring in applied mathematics and geophysics, I never thought that 30 years later I'd be doing a PhD in influenza epidemiology. After spending many years working in data processing and software development, I decided I was much more interested in social and health research. I joined the Australian Bureau of Statistics in Canberra, and completed a Masters degree in population health at the Australian National University. This led to an epidemiologist position in the NSW Department of Health and then three years in the NSW Public Health Training Program.

Throughout this program, I was taught and worked with some of the best public health practitioners in Australia, and developed a love of research.

I found that my technical skills in information technology and data analysis were highly valued in epidemiology.

I moved from the training program into a senior epidemiologist and manager position examining ways of developing population health surveillance in NSW. This gave me access to a wonderful and diverse array of data on health and health care.

With heightened government concern over bioterrorism and emerging diseases in the early years of this century, I had the opportunity to be involved in the development of a near real-time syndromic surveillance system using first emergency department and then ambulance dispatch administrative databases. This was the first of its kind on such a large scale in Australia.

In 2009, through an NHMRC Capacity Building Grant, I found myself spending some months in Professor Raina MacIntyre's team at the School of Public Health and Community Medicine. This was a great opportunity to commence a PhD on the surveillance and epidemiology of influenza, and I enrolled under Professor MacIntyre and Dr Janaki Amin's supervision. Dr Amin is from the Kirby Institute.

Unfortunately and fortunately, my time at the School was interrupted by the emergence of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus. I

returned to the Department of Health to be involved in the NSW public health response to the pandemic. The fortunate part is that this led to additional PhD research components, with two papers published fairly quickly in the journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases*.

One of these publications led to Professor MacIntyre and I being approached by a World Health Organization study team to be involved in the GLaMOR project. This stands for the Global Pandemic Mortality Burden. The study will use time series analysis to estimate the global mortality impact of the pandemic influenza virus in 2009. Our involvement will ensure that Australian data contributes to the initial mortality estimates used to model influenza mortality in countries that have limited cause of death data.

Despite the pressures of a full-time job and a family, I'm thrilled to be completing my PhD at the School of Public Health and Community Medicine. I look forward to the stimulating challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

David was also a recipient of a 2011 Dean of Medicine award to acknowledge the achievements of young researchers with the potential to become career scientists

New Staff Member

ANDREW HAYEN

Associate Professor Biostatistics

Andrew Hayen joined the School of Public Health and Community Medicine (SPHCM) in February 2012 as associate professor of biostatistics. Andrew is a university medallist in mathematical statistics and he also holds a PhD in mathematical statistics from the University of Sydney.

After lecturing statistics for a few months, he decided to change career and he completed the NSW Health Biostatistical Officer Training Program. This involved placements at the NSW Health Department, NSW Cancer Council, Children's Hospital at Westmead and the University of Sydney. During this time he also completed a Masters of biostatistics through the Biostatistics Collaboration of Australia.

After the NSW Health Biostatistics Officer Training Program, Andrew joined UNSW as a research fellow in biostatistics with a joint appointment in the School of Mathematics and Statistics and the NSW Injury Risk Management Research Centre. In mid 2007, Andrew joined the Screening and Test Evaluation Program at the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney as a senior lecturer in biostatistics.

Andrew's major research interests are in theory and application of statistical methods in diagnostic testing, particularly in examining follow-up of people with chronic diseases. He has published extensively on blood pressure monitoring, and the monitoring of osteoporosis. He currently holds NHMRC grants looking at



monitoring of biomarkers in people on dialysis to predict cardiovascular events and another grant looking at the diagnosis of glaucoma using new imaging methods. This research is being conducted with the Centre for Eye Health at UNSW.

Andrew enjoys teaching and has taught statistics at many levels, including at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in both statistics departments and school of public health. At the SPHCM, he will be involved in teaching the Introduction to Epidemiology and Statistics for Public Health course as well as the Advanced Biostatistics and Statistical Computing course.

Andrew says: "I am excited to be joining the SPHCM to develop the School's profile in biostatistics, through both school's biostatistics teaching and through adding to the School's research in quantitative methods."

Andrew enjoys spending his spare time with his family, especially doting on his 3 month old son Daniel.

Appointment to CRCATSIH Advisory Board



Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver OA has been appointed as the Lowitja Institute's representative on the CRCATSIH Advisory Board.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (CRCATSIH) was established in January 2010, following in the footsteps of its predecessors the CRC for Aboriginal and Tropical Health (1996–2003) and the CRC for Aboriginal Health (2003–09).

The Australian Government is funding its activities to 30 June 2014 through the CRC Program with funds and in-kind support provided by the CRC's essential participants.

The Lowitja Institute oversees the implementation of national research programs focused on improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Health Economics and Modelling for Vaccine Preventable Diseases Introductory Workshop



22 - 23 November 2012, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

UNSW Sydney, Australia

The workshop is being presented by the UNSW-led National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Centres of Research Excellence (CRE) in Population Health Research - Immunisation in under Studied and Special Risk Populations: *Closing the Gap in Knowledge through a Multidisciplinary Approach*.

About the workshop

Modelling has become an important tool to help inform our understanding of infectious disease epidemiology and control. Infectious disease models can be used to predict the impact of vaccination on the population and can be linked with economic models to estimate the cost-effectiveness of these programs. Together these factors can play a major role in vaccine policy and funding decisions.

This workshop aims to introduce participants to the economic and infectious disease models applied to vaccine preventable diseases by:

- Providing an understanding of the fundamental concepts in the use of economic and infectious disease models through hands-on practical sessions
- Providing key skills for interpreting and critiquing economic and infectious disease models used in policy development and research.

The workshop will include sessions led by Prof Philippe Beutels from the University of Antwerp. Prof Beutels is one of the world's leading authorities on economic and infectious disease modelling for vaccine preventable diseases. Other sessions will be led by Dr James Wood (infectious disease modeller) and Dr Anthony Newall (health economics) from the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the UNSW along with guest speakers to be confirmed.

Who should apply?

Medical and health professionals, policy makers, medical and allied health students, and researchers

interested in the role and implications of modelling in infectious diseases. Participants do not need prior experience in economic or infectious disease modelling. The workshop will use practical but simple models that will be provided to participants in Excel.

How much does it cost?

Non-industry: \$550 (total for 2 days)

This includes morning tea and lunch on both days

Industry: \$1100 (total for 2 days)

This includes morning tea and lunch on both days

Requirement

Need to bring laptop with Excel (2003 or later) installed.

Workshop organisers

Dr Anthony Newall & Dr James Wood

Contact

For further information please contact Kader Kurt (k.kurt@unsw.edu.au)



Professors Baker and Richmond chairing the symposium

Killing them with kindness: Underserved populations

Professor Robyn Richmond from the School of Public Health and Community Medicine and her colleague from the University of Newcastle, Professor Amanda Baker, organised a symposium on high risk disadvantaged groups who smoke at the European conference of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco held in Antalya in Turkey in September 2011. The Symposium was titled: *Killing them with kindness: Underserved populations*.

The symposium focused on redressing the lack of proactive smoking policy and smoking cessation interventions for people with mental health and other problems in outpatient and inpatient settings and in prisons.

During the symposium, Professor Robyn Richmond presented the results from her research

team's *Randomised controlled trial of a smoking cessation intervention conducted among prison inmates* study. The study's aims were to compare a multicomponent smoking cessation intervention, including combination pharmacotherapy of nicotine replacement therapy (patch) and active nortriptyline, with a comparison group that receives the multicomponent intervention with nicotine replacement but placebo nortriptyline. This study is a randomised controlled trial with follow up at 3, 6 and 12 months. Thirty prisons participated in New South Wales and Queensland, with 1751 male prisoners screened and 425 prisoners were recruited to treatment (n=206) and comparison (m=219) groups.

The smoking cessation intervention consisted of 2 individual sessions of cognitive behavioural therapy, a booklet, a

calendar giving a step by step approach to quitting, access to the Quitline and Mental Health phone line, a stressor pack to assist prisoners to cope with stressful situations like court appearances, and the nicotine patch.

Professor Richmond found that active nortriptyline as an adjunct to a multicomponent intervention assists smokers to quit for 3 months. She says: "Prisons are important contexts for smoking cessation programs as they house people with the highest rates of tobacco use in Australia. After release into the community, ex-prisoners generally do not access smoking cessation services, so assisting them to quit while incarcerated can set them up for a healthier lifestyle on release."

Yammer@SPHCM Student Network



In Semester 1, SPHCM successfully launched its very first social network to bring together the postgraduate coursework students and connect them with each other online via Yammer. Yammer's enterprise social network was selected as the preferred software for its ability to provide a secure way for members to communicate, collaborate and share information. This major initiative has come out of the need to provide an opportunity to both international and local students, studying via distance or face-to-face mode, to connect with each other and assist them in forming new networks in an accessible and flexible way.

The SPHCM Student Network site is currently being moderated by two of our Student Representatives – Ajit Karna (International) and Joel Curtain (Local). With membership of over 60 students, online conversations are already underway on wide-ranging topics from sharing information on SPHCM Lunch time seminars, links of interest, accommodation, sale of books, to organising their first social event.

On the benefit of providing such an online meeting place for students, Joel Curtain adds: "Yammer provides an interactive platform for all SPHCM Masters students to interact, collaborate and share ideas. It is a space where internal and external students create an inclusive student community regardless

of their location. With such a diverse student community at the SPHCM, interactive discussion amongst students has immense potential learning opportunities. Class discussions also provide such opportunities however unlike in class, the Yammer SPHCM Student Network is not limited by time nor limited to internal student. As such Yammer attempts to maximise both the SPHCM Masters experience and the benefits of our diverse student body."

We expect that the student community will be able to utilise this online environment to enrich their university lives with building memorable experiences together as well as forming lifelong networks. For further information on this initiative or advertising on Yammer, please contact any of the Yammer Project Team listed below.

More information on Yammer:
<https://www.yammer.com/product>

Yammer Tutorials:
<http://vimeo.com/channels/yammertutorials>

*The Yammer Project Team
(Sonal Bholla, Catherine Bateman-Steel, James Wood, Anita Heywood, Ajit Karna and Joel Curtain)*

Yammer

Vale Ken Boylan AM 1926 – 2012

Ken Boylan was a life long health administrator who earned his reputation in the NSW Health Commission starting in 1946 as a hospital inspector. He became chief executive of Balmain Hospital and established the inaugural health "Administrative Training Program" in 1965. This programme was the seed for the Australasian College of Health Service Management (ACHSM).

He enjoyed many important and senior roles, including administrator of Royal Newcastle Hospital (1964); Commissioner for finance and physical resources in the NSW health system (1973); deputy chairman of the Health Commission (1978), member of the Gleeson Inquiry into the NSW Ambulance Service (1982); CEO NSW Ambulance Service; administrative surveyor for the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (1989); life member of the Australasian College of Health Service Management (2007); member of multiple health related committees and organisations and provided services to UNSW in the then school of health administration.

Ken Boylan was made a Member of the Order of Australia for services to Health Administration in 1986.

More information about this remarkable man can be found on www.achsm.org.au



Chinese Delegates Visit UNSW and NSW Prisons

13th -16th February 2012

Dr Lorraine Yap from the School of Public Health and Community Medicine and Professor Tony Butler, Head of the Justice Health Program at the Kirby Institute, recently hosted a group of Chinese delegates from the Ministries of Health, Justice and Public Security and from the Guangxi Centres for Disease Control (CDC), Justice, and the Narcotics Control Bureau to visit NSW Justice Health clinics and Department of Corrections NSW programs for offenders and other marginalised groups. The visit was sponsored by an AusAID funded Australian Development Research Awards (ADRA) project. The project is currently examining how to strengthen national health policies related to HIV, TB and HIV/ TB co-infection among detainees in re-education through labour camps in a region of China. For the past two years, the School of Public Health and Community Medicine and the Kirby Institute had developed joint partnerships with many of the Chinese delegates (pictured above) and their institutions who were directly involved in the project.

First row from bottom left: Jiangzhong Tang (Vice Director, Guangxi Narcotic Control Committee Office), Prof Tony Butler (Kirby Institute), Dr Tong Wan, Prof Zunyou Wu (Director, NCAIDS, China CDC) Second row: Guoqiang Ding (Deputy Chief, General Office, Bureau of Detention Administration, Ministry of Public Security), Fuchen Liu (Deputy Director, Bureau of Re-education-through-Labour Administration), Michael Doyle (Kirby Institute), Prof Basil Donovan (Kirby Institute) Third row: Dr Liu Wei (Division Chief, HIV/AIDS Prevention, Guangxi CDC), Lili Wang (Vice Director, Guangxi Justice Bureau), Kexiang Fan (Project Office Director, Guangxi CDC), Chen Yi (Guangxi CDC), Dr Lorraine Yap (School of Public Health and Community Medicine) Fourth row: Mingfei Lu (Director, Heng County CDC), Yongzhen Li (Vice Director, Guangxi CDC), Dr Xinhua Sun (Deputy Inspector, Bureau of Disease Control and Prevention, Ministry of Health) Absent: Dongming Liang (Deputy Director, China CDC)

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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