



# CHIRON

MELBOURNE MEDICAL SCHOOL | TWENTY SIXTEEN

## FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



It is my pleasure to bring you the first 2016 edition of *Chiron*, the alumni magazine of the Melbourne Medical School. We are committed to staying in touch and many of you will notice the temporarily changed format and size of your magazine. We are currently undertaking research to understand how we can best provide you with news and information that is fresh, thought-

provoking and relevant and if you would like to be a part of our surveys and focus groups I encourage you to contact us via email at [mdhs-alumni@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:mdhs-alumni@unimelb.edu.au). Later this year we will also be launching a new Melbourne Medical School alumni website – a new site *for and about* you, with details of reunions, alumni publications and obituaries. Again, we look forward to your feedback and input.

Our reputation is in no small part due to the esteem and skill of our alumni and their tireless commitment to their profession and the communities they serve; some of their stories are detailed in this edition of *Chiron*.

You will no doubt be aware of the current fundraising campaign for the University of Melbourne, the second phase of which was recently

launched with the ambitious target of raising \$1 billion by 2021. The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences is privileged to have received a number of generous philanthropic donations since the Campaign was launched in 2008. These include extraordinary gifts from Diana and Neville Bertalli (BCom 1964) who established the Bertalli Chair in Cancer Medicine, Dr Geoff Handbury AO who established The Geoff and Helen Handbury Chair in Adolescent Health, Pamela Galli who established The Lorenzo Galli Chair in Melanoma and Skin Cancers and The Lorenzo and Pamela Galli Chair in Developmental Medicine, and Greg Poche AO and Kay van Norton Poche who established the Melbourne Poche Centre for Indigenous Health at the University of Melbourne.

Also in 2015 we were delighted to celebrate ten years of our relationship with the Victorian Medical Insurance Agency Limited, who fund the VMIAL-PSA Medical and Dental Scholarship for talented rural students to live on campus while they complete their degrees.

We are deeply grateful to all who have contributed to the Melbourne Medical School. I trust you will enjoy learning more about what has been happening here on campus and with your colleagues more broadly. I encourage you to contact us with your news and opinions and I hope to see you at one of our events.

Best wishes  
**Professor Geoff McColl**  
(MBBS 1985, PhD 1996)  
*Head, Melbourne Medical School*

## THE INAUGURAL PRISCILLA KINCAID-SMITH ORATION ON HEALTH



*“Our future health depends on the recognition by all of us of the importance of research and the application of new knowledge to our culture and to our development.”*

**Professor Judith Whitworth AC (MBBS 1967, MD 1973, PhD 1977)**

On 10th November 2015 Professor Judith Whitworth AC presented the inaugural Priscilla Kincaid-Smith Oration on Health in honour of the renowned nephrologist, Priscilla Kincaid-Smith (MD 1968), who passed away on 18th July last year. At the oration, Professor Whitworth AC stressed the necessity of translating research into all of our societal endeavours – from everyday care to national policy – in order to shape a better future.

The Priscilla Kincaid-Smith Oration on Health was part of the 2015 Conferring of Degree Ceremony where

Doctor of Laws (honoris causa) was conferred upon Dr Brian McNamee AO (MBBS 1979) and Doctor of Medical Sciences (honoris causa) was conferred upon Professor Julie Cliff AO (MBBS 1967), Dr Margaret Garson AO (MBBS 1951), Professor Yati Soenarto and Dr John Stocker (MBBS 1969, PhD 1976).



# HONOURS AND AWARDS



## 2015 TALL POPPY SCIENCE AWARD

MDHS PhD alumna Misty Jenkins (BSc(Hons) 2001, PhD 2007) was awarded the 2015 Tall Poppy Science Award, recognising her as the brightest young scientific researcher in Victoria. This prestigious award acknowledges the achievements of Australia's outstanding young scientists who combine world-class research with a passionate commitment to communicating science.

Dr Jenkins was the first Indigenous Australian to attend an Oxbridge university and is now a senior research fellow, supported by a New Investigator project grant from NHMRC, in the Cancer Cell Death laboratory at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne. Dr Jenkins is also the inaugural ambassador for the Melbourne Poche Centre for Indigenous Health.

## AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Several staff and alumni of the Medical School were acknowledged for their significant contributions to academia and the community in this year's Australia Day Honours.

**Officer:** Professor David Copolov (MBBS 1974, GDipPsychMed 1979, Honorary Professorial Fellow Department of Psychiatry), Professor Kate Leslie (MBBS 1985, MD 1998, GDipEpid&Biostat 2000, MEpid 2002, Honorary Professorial Fellow), Professor Finlay Macrae (MD 1983, Principal Fellow), Professorial Fellow and current Director of Research Leadership Unit in Melbourne Research), Professor Peter Sly (MBBS 1977, MD 1988)

**Member:** Dr Ian Carlisle (MBBS 1973), Professor Mark Frydenberg (MBBS 1982), Professor Ego Seeman (MD 1991, Professor of Medicine and Endocrinologist), Dr Brian

Spain (MBBS 1985), Dr Roderic Sutherland (MBBS 1952), Dr John Vorrath (MBBS 1964), Associate Professor Michael Woodward (MBBS 1979, MD 2011, Honorary Professor of Medicine)

**Medal:** Dr Peter Greenberg (MBBS 1966, MD 1972, PhD 1974, Honorary Principal Fellow, Melbourne Medical School), Dr John Tucker (MBBS 1942, GDip Anaesthetics 1953)

## Lifeguard of the Year

Fourth year medical student Luke Plant (BBiomed 2012) has won the 2015 Australian Lifeguard of the Year award. Luke is chief lifeguard on Phillip Island, fitting in volunteer duties, as well as his paid lifesaving role, in the University's semester breaks.

# THE FUTURE OF PROSTHETICS

## - A GROUND-BREAKING COLLABORATION BETWEEN MEDICINE AND ENGINEERING

A major donation to the Melbourne School of Engineering (MSE) and Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (MDHS) will revolutionise prosthetics, providing new hope to patients with limb loss.

The positive trend in the numbers of patients surviving cancer has seen a growing need to provide care and rehabilitation to those who have lost a limb to the disease.

Ms Valma Angliss AM has generously funded a three-year post-doctoral research engineer position at the University Department of Surgery at St Vincent's Hospital. In collaboration with a robotics research team, this position will explore innovative ways to assist patients with partial or total limb loss to regain mechanical and tactile function.

Initially focusing on patients who have lost a hand, research enabled by Ms Angliss' gift and led by Professor Peter Choong (MBBS 1984, MD 1993) and Professor Denny Oetomo (MSE) will consider advances in orthopaedic surgery to enable the most instinctive interaction between the human user and robotic hand.

*"Advances in limb saving surgery together with the breakthroughs in the science of materials and engineering have allowed bold dreams to become realities,"*

Professor Choong explains.

Bringing together experts in guided nerve regeneration, intelligent electro-materials and

robotics, the project highlights the value that can be created by integrating disciplines.

Ms Angliss' contribution to prosthetics and orthotics dates back to the 1950s. Working with limb deficient children at the Royal Children's Hospital, she was promoted to Chief Occupational Therapist at just

26 years old and decades later, her passion remains. "It is exciting to see the work being undertaken in the robotic field for amputees, an advanced step from my work," Ms Angliss says. "I'm thrilled to see the realisation of research into tangible outcomes and I look forward to seeing its future."



# A DAY IN THE LIFE

## - THE REWARDS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY DOCTORS IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

Dr Jeff Robinson (MBBS 1991) is a dedicated rural doctor who has served the Victorian alpine communities of Mount Beauty and Falls Creek for the past 17 years.

His commitment to his local community was recognised late last year when he was named *2015 Rural Doctor of the Year*, a peer-nominated honour bestowed upon him by the Rural Doctors' Association of Australia.

"In North East Victoria, Jeff Robinson's name is synonymous with the highest qualities of a specialist rural GP," says Dr Ewen McPhee, President of the Rural Doctors' Association of Australia.

Growing up in Stawell and Ballarat in the Western District of Victoria, Dr Robinson always knew he would come back to the country. One of the attractions to rural general practice was the breadth of medical challenges he would be expected to deal with.

"From a clinical perspective the isolation of being a rural doctor means dealing with the broadest possible range of clinical presentations both in terms of illnesses as well as emergencies. Working without the complex diagnostic equipment that is available in metropolitan hospitals, I frequently draw upon my fundamental training in physiology and anatomy, particularly here in the ski fields where accidents and trauma are not uncommon with people bike riding in summer and skiing in winter."

Professor Julian Wright, Director of Medical Education for the

University of Melbourne's Rural Clinical School in Shepparton, concurs:

*"While the curriculum is identical across the Melbourne Medical School, the experience students will have in the rural clinic is to see medical conditions managed without the specialist equipment available in the big cities."*

The Melbourne Medical School has been placing students in rural rotations in GP and hospital settings for nearly 25 years and ten years ago established the Rural Clinical School to create a specialist cohort of medical graduates with an education grounded in rural areas.

"In a rural GP setting, you can't always get a second opinion quickly so resilience and confidence in your own abilities are essential qualities when facing complex medical conditions head-on," says Professor Wright.

The University's Rural Clinical School offers a special initiative that integrates students with rural general practices and hospitals for an entire year. Dr Robinson's practices, the Mount Beauty and Falls Creek Medical Centres, are teaching practices for these students who are known as the 'Extended Rural Cohort'.



"These students spend a year of their degree attached to our practice," explains Dr Robinson. "I really enjoy teaching them. It's rewarding to see them grow in confidence and skills and it's good for us as teachers as it keeps us on our toes!"

An even more extreme experience of isolated medical practice is that of Dr Christine McConnell (MBBS 1982), a rural GP for over 20 years and recipient of the *Rural Health West Award for Remote and Clinically Challenging Medicine (2010)*.

After a stint as a GP in the Antarctic, Dr McConnell swapped the freezing conditions for the broiling Australian outback, moving to work with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) based in Meekatharra — a small, isolated town in Western Australia once famously described by former Prime Minister's wife Tammie Fraser as 'the end of the earth'.

As a Senior Medical Officer with RFDS, Dr McConnell is one of very few female general practitioners practising in remote Western Australia. When asked about the unique challenges and rewards of her work Dr McConnell replies:

*"In a remote and isolated general practice we are often dealing with significant and complex medical problems. But the reward of working in a regional setting is the depth of the relationships and family connections that you come to understand within the community and the appreciation the people have for the service that you offer."*

Dr Robinson agrees wholeheartedly. He describes his job as 'one of the best jobs in the world'. "It is a privilege to be able to work in such a beautiful place. I enjoy the challenges and the sheer variety of rural practice. Not a day goes by when I don't see something interesting and thought-provoking."



# CLINIC IN THE CLOUD

## 2016 REUNIONS

MBBS Class of 1956: 60 Year Reunion  
– Friday 18th November 2016

MBBS Class of 1957: 59 Year Reunion  
– Friday 4th November 2016

MBBS Class of 1960: 56 Year Reunion  
– Thursday 20th October 2016

MBBS Class of 1963: 52.5 Year  
Reunion – Sunday 15th May 2016

MBBS Class of 1966: 50 Year  
Reunion – Saturday 12th  
November 2016

MBBS Class of 1976: 40 Year Reunion  
– Saturday 8th October 2016

MBBS Class of 1981: Reunion –  
date to be confirmed

MBBS Class of 1986: Reunion –  
date to be confirmed

MBBS Class of 1996: 20 Year  
Reunion – Saturday 18th June 2016

## 2017 REUNIONS

MBBS Class of 1952: 65 Year Reunion  
– Saturday 11th November 2017

MBBS Class of 1972: 45 Year Reunion  
– Saturday 20th February 2017



Recent graduates of Melbourne Medical School, Andrew Lin (BMedSci 2009, MBBS 2011) and Hon Weng Chong (MBBS 2012), both 27 years old, take their responsibility to improve the health and wellbeing of communities around the world very seriously. Their approach has generated a concept so logical yet transformational that it secured \$5 million funding from Chinese investment company Tencent Holdings Ltd in 2015 and retail distribution through US retail giant Best Buy.

Andrew and Hon are the co-founders of CliniCloud, a company that produces medical diagnostic tools linked to phone apps for home and clinic use. CliniCloud's products collect high quality data for diagnosing and

monitoring a range of common health conditions and, to date, the company has produced a digital stethoscope and non-contact thermometer that work with a self-explanatory smartphone app to generate, collect and store data that can be remotely accessed and assessed by a doctor.

Andrew says: "We realised quite quickly in clinical school that most of the patients in Emergency don't need to be there, and that most people coming into clinics were there to monitor just a small amount of data. We saw that there are a lot of things that could easily be digitised to make life easier for everyone involved."

CliniCloud's home kit combination of a stethoscope and a thermometer provides powerful diagnostic data that allows the diagnosis of respiratory conditions, heart failure and many other common health problems.

"A lot of the time doctors only see a snapshot of a patient but having a timeline of a huge amount of medical-grade quality data gathered by patients at home on a regular basis could be a game-changer in catching and preventing health

issues, and noticing trends, early on," explains Andrew.

"Ultimately computers are going to be involved in how we manage our healthcare and what we hope to see is a layer of automation to augment existing medical services."

The CliniCloud founders hope to eventually see the devices in every home and also in hospitals. Their bold vision does not seem so out of reach given their success so far – in the five years since they graduated the company has grown to 17 employees, almost all of whom are graduates of Melbourne Medical School, Melbourne School of Design or Melbourne School of Engineering.

Andrew and Hon still have a close relationship with the University of Melbourne and pay homage to their time here. Andrew says: "I took a lot away from my med degree and, other than the medical knowledge, I developed a real understanding of the health problems that people go through at a meaningful level."

Andrew will present at this year's MD Conference on 28 June.

## 2016 MEDICAL HISTORY MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

*Medicine: Then and Now* – a small exhibition lead by members of the Melbourne Medical School Student Ambassador program, with the generous assistance of Senior Museum Curator, Dr. Jacky Healy. This exhibition is located on the first floor of the Medical History Museum and will be on display until June 24th 2016.

*It's a gas! Dentistry and cartoons* – From Monday 9 May to Saturday 3 September 2016 at the Medical History Museum in the Brownless Biomedical Library, *It's a gas!* will trace the history of dentistry through illustrations and cartoons dating from the seventeenth century to now from Europe and Australia. Come along and laugh out loud!