



# School of Physiotherapy



Newsletter

September 2008 Issue

## Thanks for the memories... Farewell to Diana Spurrirt and Merilyn Mackenzie

On June 4<sup>th</sup> the School of Physiotherapy held a function to mark the retirement of Diana Spurrirt and Merilyn Mackenzie who have both made a significant and sustained contribution to physiotherapy education in Victoria. Physiotherapists who were taught by one or both women must number in the thousands. In recent years Diana has taught mainly in electro-physical agents and women's health, and Merilyn has co-ordinated the clinical program and taught in rehabilitation and geriatrics.

Colleagues past and present gathered with family to celebrate the occasion. A picture montage of the 'life and times' of both women was shown. Memories were recounted and tributes were made by Pat Cosh (founding head of school in the Lincoln Institute days) and Elizabeth Burman, who retired two years ago after a long career in physiotherapy education.

In her address, Diana shared her personal recipe for good fortune and happiness; a mix of 5 ingredients: family, friends, fun, food - and physiotherapy. Diana commented that much had changed since she her career began. In 1968 she had to resign from her public hospital job as they did not employ married women. But, Diana said "to be fair, they also did not employ male physiotherapists, as these were the days before equal pay, and the Chief Physiotherapist refused to pay a

man more for doing the same job as a woman".

Merilyn shared her memories of life in physiotherapy education, noting the many friendships made with colleagues, the changes to teaching technology and staff numbers over the years.

The 'e-clinics' strategy devised by Merilyn some years ago in re-

sponse to a critical shortage of placements for second year students, has gone on to attract funding for further development and a faculty teaching award. Staff and students of the School of Physiotherapy would like to thank Merilyn and Diana for their contribution to the life of the school and to physiotherapy education, and to wish them both a very happy retirement.



Merilyn Mackenzie and Diana Spurrirt

### Contents :

- P1 Thanks for the memories  
Farewell to Diana Spurrirt  
& Merilyn Mackenzie
- P2 Megan's Memo  
The end is nearing!!!
- P3 Update on Staff, Students  
News and Events
- P4 Felice Rosemary Lloyd  
Trust - Scholarship  
Cochrane Collaboration
- P5 Graduation Ceremony  
and Awards  
Royal Freemasons  
Homes' Scholarship a  
Winner

©  
School of Physiotherapy  
La Trobe University  
Bundoora, Victoria 3086  
AUSTRALIA

Ph : +61-3-9479-5815  
Fax : +61-3-9479-5768  
www.latrobe.edu.au/physiotherapy

## Megan's Memo...

This edition of the newsletter is full of news about physio people – happy news of babies, prizes and Olympic glory, and sad news of the untimely deaths of graduates Jo Tubb (nee Robbins) and Damon Bonney (page 3). We have recently said goodbye to retiring staff members Merilyn Mackenzie and Diana Spurrutt and welcomed new staff members Andrea Bruder (clinical co-ordinator) and Sarah Barradell (neuro). We have also welcomed Jon Ford who has joined the Musculoskeletal Research Centre team heading up a team of research students in the area of back pain.

As many of you will know we are introducing a new double degree Bachelor of Health Sciences and Master of Physiotherapy Practice in 2009. In line with an overall program of growth in the education of health professionals in Bendigo we have decided to move a number of places from the



**Dr Megan Davidson**  
Head of School  
School of Physiotherapy

Bundoora to the Bendigo program. From 2009 there will be 40 places in the Bendigo and 80 places in the Bundoora program. Students in the Bendigo program will now do years 1, 3 and 4 in Bendigo and year 2 in Bundoora. Eventually all four years of the program will be delivered in Bendigo as well as Bundoora. La Trobe at Bendigo now offers Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy Nursing, Midwifery, Social Work, Dental, Oral Hygiene and Pharmacy.

Past graduates are organising 20<sup>th</sup> (1988) and 50<sup>th</sup> (1960) class reunions (page 3). If you are a past graduate and interested in organising a reunion we can supply the list of people who graduated in your year. The La Trobe University program is a continuation of the old Lincoln course, making it the longest-running program in Victoria. The Lincoln School of Health Sciences amalgamated with La Trobe University in the late 1980s.

Thank you to all supporters of the physiotherapy program.



**Andrea Bruder**

## New staff....

Andrea Bruder has joined the School of Physiotherapy as Lecturer and Clinical Co-ordinator.

Sarah Barradell has now commenced as the Lecturer in Neurological physiotherapy with the School.



**Sarah Barradell**

## The end is nearing!!

Every year, a group of enthusiastic students proudly graduate from La Trobe's School of Physiotherapy with great memories of their university – this year is no different.

Enthusiasm, derived from the Greek word 'entheos', means 'strong interest or admiration, great eagerness'. To the Class of 2008 graduates, enthusiasm means much more. It means being rewarded for our four years of work. It, also, simply means the light at the end of the tunnel.

I have fond memories of my

years as a physiotherapy student – perhaps more socially than academically, but nevertheless, I can safely say that, on behalf of my colleagues, we have thoroughly enjoyed this course. Apart from learning how to safely manipulate spines and critically appraise research papers, the single most important thing I have learnt from this course is the value of friendship. School career counsellors failed to tell me how strenuous the course hours, or the degree of difficulty all of our subjects, were going to be. Nobody warned us that we would have to

memorise all the intrinsic muscles of the hand (OK, realistically I do not blame anyone for that one) but one thing I know for sure is that I could not have survived this course without the support of my friends.

In a few months' time, it is with friends that we will be celebrating our achievements at the Physiotherapy Students Association (PSA) sponsored Graduation Ball. A group of 100 people, mainly students (and a few dedicated teaching staff) will be commemorating the past four years on the dance-floor of the Radisson Hotel Ballroom.

Although the university chapter of our lives is closing, a new chapter is about to begin. I congratulate you, Class of 2008, and may we be the finest physiotherapy graduates of 2008.

Lily Liu, Co-President/PSA; Physiotherapy Students Association.



## Update on Staff, Students.....

On the 11th of June 2008 we mourned the passing of

### Joanne Tubb

(*nee. Robbins*). Jo, as known affectionately to her family and friends, was 31 years of age. Jo fought a courageous battle with cancer for many years, with her supportive and caring husband Chris by her side for every step of the journey.

Throughout her student days at La Trobe University Jo was well known to all for organising (and attending!) many social events. It was in fact at such an event that she met her future husband Chris, also studying Physiotherapy. She graduated from the School of Physiotherapy in late 1999 and commenced work at the Angliss Hospital as a new graduate in 2000. Jo's passion and expertise in the field of Paediatrics won her much respect and loyalty from both staff and the families she touched.

Jo and Chris celebrated their wedding in December 2003. A beautiful ceremony that was shared by their family and friends.

In 2004 Jo accepted a job at The Royal Children's Hospital with a quick progression to a Senior Clinician in recognition of her clinical expertise as well as her dedication to the student program. Due to illness the following year, Jo stepped away from this position after leaving her mark with The Children's.

Following a period dedicated to her health, Jo returned to the Angliss Hospital in early 2007, consulting as a Senior Clinician in Paediatric Physiotherapy. Her ability to mentor, teach and develop staff & students was once again seen back at the Angliss. As well as this role Jo accepted a position with La Trobe University in July 2007 as a Conjoint Lecturer for the 4th year subject Interdisciplinary Professional Practice. Late in 2007 Jo stepped out of these roles to once again focus



Chris & Jo Tubb  
Wedding Day

on her health. The first half of 2008 has been a time of joy & celebration, as well as hardship & sadness for Jo and Chris. Yet throughout this time, Jo openly cherished precious moments with her husband, with their families and with their friends. Jo passed peacefully on the 11th of June 2008.

Written by Tash Brusco at the Angliss Hospital, Eastern Health.



Damon Bonney

### Vale Damon Bonney

We were shocked to learn of the death on the 4<sup>th</sup> August of new graduate physiotherapist Damon Bonney. Damon hailed from Devonport, Tasmania, and completed the Bachelor of

Physiotherapy degree in 2007. Damon was selected from a large number of applicants for a new graduate position at Caulfield General Medical Centre, where he was highly regarded for his professionalism and skills. Damon was a warm and genuine person who was liked by all who met him. He will be sadly missed.

## Olympics....

Physio graduate Sam Belz represented Australia (kayaking) while others went to Beijing as Team Physios - Eric Clarke (Sailing), Cameron Dunkerley (Football), Stephen Evans (Basketball), Susan Everett (Rowing), Danealle Lilley (Waterpolo), Katrina MacDonald (Softball), David Morarty (Swimming), Andrew Stanford (Waterpolo) and Mark Stokes (Hockey).

On his return from Beijing staff member Mark Alexander, physio to the triumphant triathlon team (gold and bronze for the women), presented a lecture on "The Olympic Experience" about what goes on inside an Olympic Games and what it takes to win Olympic medals.

## 20th Reunion of 1988 Graduating Class...

Tracey Gregson (Jukes) and Kirsty Larkworthy (Murray) are organising the reunion for the graduating class of 1988. If you are one of these please contact Mary Tomlinson at the School of Physiotherapy on 9479 5793 - details being planned at present for a November 2008 gathering.

## 50th Reunion of 1960 Graduating Class...

Anne Taylor (Dodds), Elfreda Marshall (Love), June Harris (Baglin) and Robin Hickling (Powers) are organising the reunion of the graduating class of 1960. If you are one of these please contact Mary Tomlinson at the School of Physiotherapy on 9479 5793 - details being planned for a gathering sometime in 2010.

## Welcome....

Sonia Denisenko and husband Hamish Talty welcome the arrival of son "Matthew Elliott". Hylton Menz and wife Liz welcome daughter "Anika Mary". Alex Kountouris and wife Sonali welcome second son "Xavier".  
WELCOME EVERYONE!!!

## 4th Year Ball....

PSA students have organised their Graduating Ball for this year to be held in late November. Great response with tickets all sold. Enjoy your night!!



## Felice Rosemary Lloyd Trust - Supporting a program of professional development

I was a lucky recipient of the Felice Rosemary Lloyd Scholarship in 2006. My application centred on a program of professional development in my area of research interest: *physical activity for people with physical and intellectual disabilities*. My specific aims were to develop my skills in exercise testing, to establish links with leading researchers in this field, and to undertake a research study.

Between June and October 2007 I travelled overseas, taking in Canada, the US and Ireland.

My first stop was Vancouver to attend the 15th International Congress of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy. This was an excellent way to kick-start my programme, with over 3,500 delegates from all over the world and 4-days of presentations and seminars.

Energised by the conference, I travelled to the US states of Illinois, Michigan and Missouri to meet with three leading researchers in the field of exer-

cise for people with disabilities: Prof Bo Fernhall, Prof Dale Ulrich and Assoc Prof Diane Damiano.

**Prof Bo Fernhall** is a leading exercise physiologist based at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, with a particular interest in the fitness of adults with intellectual disability. During my 2-weeks I spent time in the exercise laboratory practising measurement techniques including fitness testing, heart rate variability, blood flow measurement, and ECHO and ultrasound techniques.

I then travelled onto the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor to meet with **Prof Dale Ulrich**. Dale is best recognised for his research on treadmill training to expedite motor development in infants with Down syndrome. I had the opportunity to assist with data collection for four research studies that were underway during my visit.

St Louis, Missouri was next stop where I met with **Assoc**

**Prof Diane Damiano** at Washington University. Diane is a leading researcher in gait analysis and muscle testing for children with cerebral palsy. I participated in a 2-day training seminar Diane convened as part of a multi-centre drug trial and also spent time at 'Camp Independence', a summer activity programme for children with cerebral palsy run by physiotherapists from the St Louis Children's hospital.

My final stop was Dublin, Ireland where I spent 3-months working on a study with Prof Hillary Howey, Dr Juliette Hussey, Dr Joan Murphy and Dr John Gormley at Trinity College Dublin. The study investigated the relationship between fitness, activity and body composition in children with Down syndrome.

I had a truly wonderful time overseas and I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to the Felice Rosemary Lloyd Scholarship Trust who provided the financial support and the opportunity to meet so many



Dr Nora Shields

inspirational researchers. My programme of professional development has enabled me to set up an international collaboration for a future research project and my new skills and knowledge are also proving to be extremely important for the development of the new Master of Physiotherapy Practice curriculum at La Trobe University! I am very grateful for these experiences and will endeavour to use them to help further the physiotherapy profession in Victoria.  
By Dr Nora Shields.

## Scholarships available for Victorian Physiotherapists

Are you seeking to travel overseas for postgraduate study or to gain professional experience?

The Victorian Community Foundation – Felice Rosemary Lloyd Trust is offering several scholarships of up to \$10,000.

Brian Lloyd established the Scholarship in 1985 in memory of Felice, his late wife.

Since then scholarships have been distributed annually, with the same intention as Felice had pursued in her physiotherapy career – to seek overseas

experience in the field of physiotherapy. In the past 12 years 20 scholarships have been awarded totalling in excess of \$115,000.

The closing date for applications is **1 October 2008**. ANZ Trustees is the sole trustee

of the Victorian Community Foundation – Felice Rosemary Lloyd Trust, a perpetual charitable trust. Application forms and guidelines can be downloaded from the ANZ Trustees website <http://www.anz.com/aus/fin/Trustees/guFinding.asp> and further information is available on 03 9273 6799 or via [charitable-trusts@anz.com](mailto:charitable-trusts@anz.com).

## Cochrane Collaboration - Evidence Corner :

The Cochrane Library now has podcasts available: <http://cochrane.org/podcasts/>. The podcasts are summaries while the website also provides links to the full review. Cochrane systematic reviews are freely available at <http://www.cochrane.org.au/libraryguide/index.asp>

Some podcasts of interest to physiotherapists:  
**Jan 2008**  
Cranberries for preventing urinary tract infection.  
Non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for low back pain.  
**April 2008**  
Physical activity and enhanced

fitness to improve cognitive function in older people without known cognitive impairment.

**July 2008**

Rehabilitation for ankle fractures in adults.  
Printed educational materials: effects on professional practice and health care outcomes.  
Physical activity programs for persons with dementia.  
Exercise or exercise and diet for preventing type 2 diabetes mellitus.

Cochrane Open Afternoon will be held La Trobe University on Thursday 30 October—for more information please contact Sophie Hill at Cochrane Consumers and Communication Review Group on 03 9479 1941. Sophie is hosting the afternoon with Elizabeth Martin and one of the speakers will be Assoc. Prof Anne Holland from the School of Physiotherapy and based at The Alfred.

## Graduation Ceremony and Awards

At the annual presentation of prizes and scholarships which was held on July 31<sup>st</sup> Physiotherapy was well represented.

The *DM Myers University Medal* for the most outstanding undergraduate student in the Faculty of Health Sciences was awarded to physiotherapy graduate **Sarah Warby**. Sarah was also awarded the *Bernard Rechter Graduate Research Prize for Honours* and the *Physiotherapy Research Foundation Research Prize*.

Another multiple prize winner was **Cheryl Emms** who won the *Eliza McAuley Memorial Prize* (with **Holly Pietsch**), the *Kay Spencer Memorial Award* (with **Tahnee Badrock**) and the *Paediatric Special Group Prize*.

**Congratulations to all prize winners !!**



Above, from left to right : Karina Coffey, Holly Pietsch, Tahnee Badrock and Nick Bridges



Tahnee Badrock with sponsor John Spencer, was presented the Kay Spencer Memorial Award



Megan Davidson, Bernard Rechter, Sarah Warby and Alex Ward



## Royal Freemasons Homes' Scholarship a Winner

In 2007 the Royal Freemasons Homes Victoria introduced a scholarship for physiotherapy students at La Trobe University. The scholarship provides the successful applicant with a grant of \$10,000 and ongoing part-time work as a physiotherapy assistant. Students are eligible to apply for the scholarship if they are in their final year of study and are an Australian citizen or permanent resident.

The first holder of the RFHV scholarship is Amy Barlow who writes:

I have had the wonderful opportunity to work across 2 RFHV sites so far, Centennial Lodge (Wantirna) and in the

Day Therapy Centre (Pahran). I have been welcomed warmly by staff and residents alike and feel as though I am really part of a team with a focus on the best possible care of the residents. There is a lovely patient-centered ethos. To borrow words from Pauline Bates, Director of Nursing at RFHV, 'aged care isn't the sexiest area of health care to work in!' However I have found that what it lacks in glamour it certainly makes up in job satisfaction. Although I wasn't entirely sure of what working in Aged Care would entail, my experience has dispelled all negative myths... it is an area that provides me with hugely varied learning experiences, a supportive team of professionals

whom I work alongside and great job satisfaction - there is never a dull day! My relative youth and the fact that I am new has made me a novelty amongst residents which leads to many friendly conversations in the halls. RFHV has provided an extensive and interesting induction program and places great emphasis on staff training and professional development. I am currently in the Day Therapy Centre which looks after Residents, Community Patients and Transitional Care patients. My role is varied, but tends to comprise assisting with group exercise (which typically includes anywhere from 5 to 50 residents at once) and one on one sessions. I am also getting very

good at making the odd cup of tea! I have also been given the responsibility of developing and implementing a new quarterly license testing procedure of the Hostel residents for their electric wheelchairs and scooters. I am very grateful for the 'foot in the door' that this position has given me; to get some practical hands-on experience has boosted my confidence in handling and interacting with patients, and my colleagues are very supportive, offering advice and assistance whenever I need it.



Amy Barlow

**For further information :**

©

**School of Physiotherapy**

La Trobe University

Bundoora, Victoria 3086

AUSTRALIA

Ph : +61-3-9479-5815

Fax : +61-3-9479-5768

---

[www.latrobe.edu.au/physiotherapy](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/physiotherapy)



[www.latrobe.edu.au](http://www.latrobe.edu.au)