



Pilot WA Public Health Officer Training Program (WAPHOTP) Communiqué 6 July 2022

UPDATE

We are pleased to confirm that the WAPHOTP will continue for the remainder of 2022, with a graduation to be organised in late November 2022.

In May and June, the trainees participated in learning activities covering competencies in the areas of environmental health risk assessment, advocacy, health promotion and workforce development, control and prevention of sexually transmissible infection, blood-borne viruses and mosquito-borne infections and health impact assessment.

Many thanks to the organising committee of the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Research and Evaluation Network (SiREN) Symposium for supporting WAPHOTP trainee's attendance at a discounted fee.

Thanks also to Drs Gemma Crawford, Jonathon Hallet, Roanna Lobo and Daniel Vujcich from Curtin University who are conducting an independent evaluation of WAPHOTP pro bono. Their findings will be invaluable in guiding the future of public health officer training in WA.

SOUTH WEST PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT, BUNBURY FIELDTRIP

Trainees and WAPHOTP staff were welcomed to, and learned on, country with Respected Elder Mr Dennis Jetta and Mr Shayne Taylor, Senior Aboriginal Health Worker and didgeridoo player who led us in a dance.



The South West Health Unit provided the following learning activities:

- Overview of the South West Public Health Unit (SWPHU): Amanda Whittle and Sharlene Abbot
- Presentation on the impact of COVID-19 on South West Peer Based Harm Reduction WA's client, staff and services: Dr Susan Carruthers and peer workers
- Health impact assessment and risk management regarding mosquito-borne diseases workshop: Tanya Gillett, Director Infrastructure and Development, Shire of Capel and Prof Donna Mak
- Disease Control Workshop: Amanda Whittle and Prof Donna Mak.



2022 WAPHOTP trainees and staff and SWPHU staff on the fieldtrip, 5 July 2022.

ADVOCACY WORKSHOP

The Advocacy Workshop held on 25 May provided the trainees with an opportunity to learn with medical students from the University of Notre Dame, School of Medicine, Fremantle. The interactive workshop included prominent health advocates:

- Prof Terry Slevin, CEO, Public Health Association of Australia
- Dr John Van Der Kallen, Chair, Doctors for the Environment Australia
- Mr Matthew Armstrong, Community Services Manager, Hepatitis WA
- Ms Catherine Hughes, Founder, Immunisation Foundation Australia.

Trainees worked in small groups with medical students on simulated advocacy scenarios regarding immunisation, injecting drug use and climate change.

HEALTH LEADER SPEAKER SERIES

At each session over the past six weeks, WAPHOTP trainees learn from, and are inspired by, Health Leader Speakers reflecting on their career journey throughout the healthcare system. Trainees have had the privilege of hearing the following health leaders:

- Dr Mike Lindsay, Director, Environmental Health Directorate (EHD) Public & Aboriginal Health Division, Department of Health WA
- Mr Matthew Lester, Manager, Science and Policy Unit, EHD
- Emeritus Professor Mike Daube AO
- Dr Susan Carruthers, Peer Based Harm Reduction WA.

AUSTRALASIAN FACULTY PUBLIC HEALTH MEDICINE (AFPHM) REGISTRARS UPDATE



Anwyn Pyle & Alex Shivarev

WAPHOTP extended invitations to WA AFPHM registrars to attend WAPHOTP teaching and learning sessions as there are synergies between the WAPHOTP and AFPHM curricula.

AFPHM registrars from WA Health and non-governmental organisations have attended several teaching and learning sessions including the Environmental Health Risk Assessment and the Ethics Workshop.

Thanks to AFPHM registrar representatives Alex and Anwyn for liaising between the WAPHOTP team and AFPHM registrars.

Moving forward, we hope to expect to see more AFPHM registrar participation and collaboration in WAPHOTP teaching and learning activities.

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 trainee Jo O'Dea and her mentor Maurice Swanson AOM.



Joanne O'Dea
Health Promotion Officer,
Wheatbelt Aboriginal
Health Service

I currently work as a Health Promotion Officer at the Wheatbelt Aboriginal Health Service, which sits within the WA Country Health Service. Before securing this position, I had been pursuing a role in health promotion for some time and the fact that this role was in Aboriginal health and regionally located were two added bonuses.

WAPHOTP has come at a convenient time in my career, while I figure out my next move. It has been an incredible opportunity to learn about the various opportunities there are within Public Health and hear from leaders in the field who provide an insight into their roles.

I am so grateful the program provides us with a mentor and feel so fortunate to have the opportunity to have one-on-one time with someone of Maurice's calibre. We both work in tobacco control but at opposite ends of the spectrum; Maurice advocates to policymakers to enforce tighter restrictions, whilst I counsel individuals through quitting smoking.

I have always been attracted to working face-to-face with individuals to improve their health and I always thought policy and advocacy work was dry. However, Maurice has illuminated the field for me and shown me that policy change is the best way forward to ensure people never develop or adopt risk factors for disease, such as smoking.



Maurice Swanson AOM
Executive Director,
Australian Council on
Smoking and Health

I have been working in tobacco control for four decades, currently as the Chief Executive of the Australian Council on Smoking and Health (ACOSH).

My university training was in science and nutrition, however during my time working at the Health Education Council of Western Australia, I was asked to stand in as the HEC's representative on ACOSH's Council for a colleague.

As well as being the launchpad for my career in tobacco control, membership of the ACOSH Council has provided me a network of the leading tobacco control experts in WA and nationally. I have emphasised to Joanne the importance of your network and WAPHOTP is an excellent opportunity to develop and strengthen existing networks that will be beneficial over the course of trainee's careers.

I am moving close to the end of my career and jumped at the opportunity to mentor through WAPHOTP as I have had informal mentors in my career whose guidance has been beneficial to my development.

BON VOYAGE !



Nicola Ball,
Public Health Registrar, Public Health Operations (PHOs)

I worked as a junior doctor at Royal Perth Hospital and Perth Children's in 2020 and 2021. While I enjoyed clinical work, I found I was most interested in what could be done to keep people healthy rather than treating disease at an individual level. This prompted my interest in public health and led me joining PHOs in January 2022.

I have learnt so much this year in my work, and it has been a real bonus to also be able to take part in WAPHOTP.

One of the highlights of the program has been meeting my mentor Krista Coward. Krista initially trained in nutrition and dietetics before completing a MPH and in 2003 took part in the original WA Public Health Officer Training Program. Krista found that the three years she spent in the training program helped build her networks and gave her the opportunity to broaden her skills and experience in a range of public health areas. Her current role is Manager Health Promotion at North Metropolitan Health Service.

Health promotion is an area of public health I am especially interested in, so it has been great to get to know Krista and hear about the projects she has been involved with, such as making all North Metropolitan Health Service sites smoke free.

I have been accepted into Europubhealth which is an Erasmus MPH program in Europe. I'll be heading over to Dublin in August to do my MPH there, followed by another Masters the following year in public health leadership and governance in Maastricht in the Netherlands. I am very excited for the adventure and can't wait to see where it leads.

I'm grateful to be heading over with a foundation in public health from my time in PHOs and WAPHOTP.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The WAPHOTP trainees will undertake Aboriginal Health shadowing placements at the Aboriginal Health Council of WA, ArcheHealth, Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service, Metropolitan Communicable Disease Control and Moorditj Koort and in late July, and present their learnings to each other and representatives of these services in mid-August. Clinical audit/quality improvement and media/communications workshops are scheduled for late August.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

© Department of Health 2022

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.