

ARC SHEILA SIMPSON OAM NURSING EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP



Building Nursing Capacity in Australia

Sheila Simpson OAM

To support elimination efforts in Australia, ARC has been working in partnership with Western Sydney University, School of Nursing and Midwifery and the National TB Program stakeholders to develop and implement the Graduate Diploma/Masters in Nursing (TB Management).

The course, represents a significant educational opportunity for developing nursing workforce capacity within the Australian TB Program. The ARC is committed to supporting capacity building for the Australian TB Program through the development of specialist nurses.

To support future students ARC initiated, in 2020, a program to award up to three scholarships each year to enable nurses to undertake the speciality units within the Graduate Diploma/ Master in Nursing (TB Management). The scholarships have been named in recognition of the outstanding contribution of Sheila Simpson OAM, to the work of ARC, her clinical leadership and mentoring of the nursing workforce within the speciality area of TB, over four and a half decades.

The inaugural scholarships were awarded to Cathy McKenna, Amy Peachy and Sherri Towle. Each of the recipients successfully completed the Public Health Management of TB. A profile and feedback from the scholarship recipients is provided below.

Amy Peachey



Amy works for the Victorian Tuberculosis Program, Melbourne Health. Amy was inspired to pursue a career in public health when working in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. Amy's Masters of Public Health (MPH) in 2012 and experience across other public health settings have led to her current (dream) role, as a Clinical Nurse

Consultant (CNC) with the Victorian TB Program (VTP).

Amy advises that in her role within the VTP, she contributes to the management, control and prevention of TB. Amy and her colleagues engage and support patients with TB, often for many

months, to promote treatment adherence and enhance patient outcomes. They are the liaison between patients and clinical services, and work collaboratively with their treating teams in the hospitals and in outpatient infectious disease clinics. They assist patients in the community, conduct contact tracing, and provide education to individuals and their families diagnosed with TB. Through this process they work to assist with, and overcome, barriers to treatment.

Amy advises that as one of the newest members of the VTP team, she is very excited to have embarked upon course this year and hopes to learn as much as she can about this vital area of public health. Amy believes that the TB specific training provided in the course will further develop and enhance her practice, allowing her to gain the knowledge and skills to provide current, evidence based, high quality care for patients with TB, their families and their communities.

Completing this unit has allowed Amy to develop networks with other nurses completing the course, to gain a better understanding of how TB programs in other states and territories operate, and how best to collaborate with each other in the future. Amy advises she is inspired by the career-long, extraordinary contribution of Sheila Simpson OAM, and hopes to work in and be a part of the TB field for many years to come.

Cathy McKenna



TB Nursing has been Cathy's professional specialty for 25 years, starting at the Wollongong Chest Clinic, NSW in 1988. Cathy's career has been focused in rural and remote communities providing TB care and prevention work mostly to diverse cultural communities in some interesting social environments.

Cathy's current role includes providing nursing consultancy for the communities and health professionals of Southern NSW and Murrumbidgee Local Health Districts. As the District Coordinator, responsibilities include ensuring the key principles of the National and State TB Programs are

implemented with consideration given to the cultural diversity and issues of service access addressed equitably for all consumers. This advocacy role is important in a low TB incidence country such as Australia to ensure we continue to aim for TB elimination.

Another important component of Cathy's work is workforce development. This includes training and education of staff to ensure they understand the Global TB Program and how it works at the grass-roots level. Cathy also works to ensure that staff are competent to undertake the clinical skills required to diagnose and manage TB care with a client centred perspective.

As the recipient of this award, Cathy advises that she can continue to learn, this enhanced knowledge gives Cathy "confidence to tackle the dwindling political commitment to support the national TB program in Australia and at a local level. If this is not sustained, global TB elimination goals will not be met".

Cathy advises that "the learning opportunity has re-invigorated her passion to advocate at local levels for others to better understand ongoing TB client needs, maintain knowledge and skills of those working both in District TB services and engage other health professionals and non-government partners in collaboration to improve service delivery. Into the future Cathie hopes to also apply her learnings in the Western Pacific Region by sharing knowledge and skills to support regional goals of TB and drug resistant TB elimination".

Sherri Towle



Sherri has 18 years' experience in the speciality area of TB, Sherri commenced TB training as a registered nurse in the TB clinic at Wollongong Hospital, which has led to her current role as the District TB/Staff Vaccination Clinical Nurse Consultant for the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD).

Sherri is an advocate for the people she manages and supports through her work. Sherri advises that the "the patients are my priority, placing their welfare first, and enabling them to live their life while managing their TB diagnosis and treatment".

Sherri is a professional leader in the domain of TB, empowering and promoting research, providing education to healthcare professionals while building collaborative partnerships within the local health district. Sherri enjoys the challenge of providing a solution-driven problem-solving approach in a complex health system. By exceptional role modelling, motivation and mentoring, Sherri hopes through education, support and skill development to inspire a new generation of health professionals to consider a career in Tuberculosis management.

Sherri was successful in securing the ARC Sheila Simpson OAM Nursing Education Scholarship 2020, this award will enable Sherri to achieve her academic goals and empower her professional development by supporting her tertiary studies and contribute to Australia TB elimination agenda.

Following the completion of this unique tertiary opportunity, Sherri advises that she will be able to implement strategies learned, adapt to the changing health environment with innovative ideas, provide clinical teaching techniques with clinical context and to apply best-practice principles in the care and management of people with TB.

For further information about the ARC Sheila Simpson OAM Scholarships please go to the following link:

<https://www.thearc.org.au/scholarships/shelia-simpson-oam>