



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

ISSUE 26 | 2017

Dent-AL

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Celebrating history

On Anzac Day this year, off the coast of Queensland's Fraser Island, a plaque was laid beside the wreckage of the *TSS Maheno*, a former passenger liner that served as a hospital ship for the New Zealand Government during World War I. I have a personal link to the *TSS Maheno* through my grandfather, AH Vivian Morgan, an 'x-ray specialist' onboard the ship during wartime and a Sergeant and Staff Sergeant in the Second New Zealand Division Medical Corps.



The bronze plaque unveiled on Fraser Island to commemorate the *TSS Maheno*

Two years ago, I mentioned this link and the story of the *TSS Maheno* (which you can read in full online: go.unimelb.edu.au/4yp6) to Dr Ross Bastiaan AM RFD at the launch of the Medical History Museum's exhibition and publication 'Compassion and Courage'. An alumnus of the Melbourne Dental School and periodontist, Ross has placed over 270 large bronze commemorative plaques at sites of military conflicts involving ANZAC troops all around the world. The *TSS Maheno* is now included in this list, with descendants of the ship's crew and those rescued by them during her time as a hospital vessel coming together at the unveiling.

The story of TSS Maheno and the service it provided in times of conflict is memorable, and it is fitting that we celebrate her history.

History was also celebrated in August this year when we marked 20 years since the University of Melbourne graduated its first cohort of oral health practitioners. This is a profession that developed in New Zealand in the years following World War I, when there was dire need for childhood oral health care and education. Though it was the mid 1990s before the University emerged as a leader in this field, we have since graduated nearly 350 students from the Diploma of Oral Health Therapy and the Bachelor of Oral Health. To mark this occasion, we held a reunion for all those connected to oral health on Friday 25 August at University House at the Woodward.

All who attended would agree that the reunion and preceding tour of the clinical school provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the history and strong connections in this community, and to share fond memories of teaching and learning oral

health at the University. It was also an opportunity for the Melbourne Dental School to celebrate and recognise the achievements of students, graduates, staff and volunteers who have contributed to the success of this program over the past 20 years.

We are immensely proud that our graduates are now located all over the world, working in disciplines including public health, policy development, Indigenous health, emergency care, community health, private practice and much more.

Thank you to all who attended and helped celebrate this important milestone amidst the rich history of our School and Faculty. Pictures of the event can be viewed online: go.unimelb.edu.au/andp6.

Professor Mike Morgan
Head, Melbourne Dental School

Dr Ross Bastiaan AM

Dr Bastiaan is a periodontist who has made and installed military history plaques in more than 20 different countries. These plaques can be found at Menin Gate in Belgium, the start of the Kokoda Trail

in Papua New Guinea and at Sandakan in Borneo, amongst many other locations. They explain, often in more than one language, the role of Australia and New Zealand in military conflicts. Dr Bastiaan also negotiates

with governments and communities to arrange appropriate placement of the plaques, funded through his own contributions and over \$1 million raised by Dr Bastiaan to support the initiative.

Awards and achievements

Laureate Professor Eric Reynolds AO (BSc (Hons) 1972, PhD 1978), Chief Executive Officer of the Oral Health CRC at the University of Melbourne, was awarded the Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation.

Each year, the Australian Government honours Australia's best scientists, innovators, and science teachers through the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science. Professor Reynolds has been recognised for his outstanding achievement

in the translation of scientific discovery into globally successful products that prevent and treat oral disease.

The remineralising technology CPP-ACP developed from a dairy milk protein by Professor Reynolds and his team at the University of Melbourne is now sold globally as Recaldent™ and used by millions of people every day in chewing gum and oral health products. Products using Recaldent™ have

generated sales of over \$2 billion to date, and it has been estimated they have saved over \$12 billion in dental treatment costs worldwide.

Professor Reynolds continues to lead research at the Oral Health CRC that is testing, improving and developing new Recaldent™ products. His team is also developing a therapeutic vaccine for the highly prevalent gum disease Chronic Periodontitis.

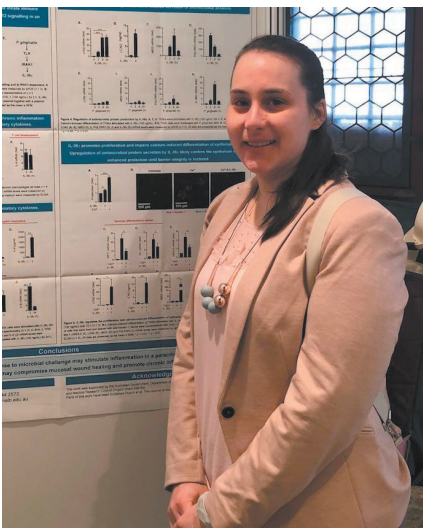


Laureate Professor Eric Reynolds AO accepts his award from Senator the Honourable Michaelia Cash (Acting Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science) and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

Dr Jacqueline Heath (BSc (Hons) 2010, PhD 2016), an Early Career Research Fellow with the Oral Health CRC at the Melbourne Dental School, received the 'Best Poster Award' at the Development of Tissue- and Pathogen-specific Cellular Innate Immunity International Symposium in Freiburg, Germany (27-29 September). Dr Heath won for her poster, titled 'IL-36γ stimulates a pro-inflammatory response by macrophages and oral epithelial cells.'

Sally Huynh, a fourth-year Doctor of Dental Surgery student, travelled to Sydney with fellow students to represent the University of Melbourne at the Australian Financial Review's third annual Higher Education Awards Ceremony in August. The awards recognise innovation and achievement in Australia's higher education sector.

The University was nominated in the 'Community Engagement' category for the Teddy Bear Hospital, our largest community engagement project involving nearly 2000 volunteer students per year. The Teddy Bear Hospital teaches student practitioners to relate to kids, and helps children understand and become interested in health.



Dr Jacqueline Heath with her winning poster.



Doctor of Dental Surgery student Sally Huynh attends the AFR Higher Education Award Ceremony with student representatives from medicine and physiotherapy.

Changing faces Combining medicine and dentistry

Professor Andrew Heggie's (BDSc 1977, MDSc 1981, MBBS 1991) work in oral and maxillofacial surgery (OMS) straddles the worlds of both medicine and dentistry. His academic journey began with a dental degree at the University of Melbourne, during which time the father of a fellow student, a surgical specialist, recommended that he observe Mr Robert Cook undertaking surgery. What he witnessed dramatically altered his career aspirations.

"I went and watched Mr Cook totally change a face, by essentially moving the jaw back, and I just couldn't believe my eyes. I didn't know this sort of surgery was possible," Professor Heggie said.

From that point on, Professor Heggie committed himself to acquiring the specialised training that is required for OMS - a dentist's unique anatomical understanding of jaw function and pathology and the medical knowledge and skills related to surgical principles. This training involved almost a decade and a half of studying and training to complete both a dental and a medical degree, the latter of which he undertook whilst running an oral surgical practice with a young family.

OMS has changed dramatically since Professor Heggie entered the specialty. Bridging the worlds of medicine and dentistry provided major challenges for the discipline, as he and his fellow practitioners established their place alongside related specialties, particularly plastic surgery and ear, nose and throat surgery.

"We are registered as both dental and medical specialists, and dentistry is pivotal to our surgical specialty as this is the unique background that delivers our specialists superior skills in managing conditions affecting the maxillofacial skeleton," he said.

Advances in technology have also had a significant impact on Professor Heggie's work since his surgical career began.

"Using computers to help make alloplasts, which are materials that can be implanted to replace the shape and form of normal structure, has had a dramatic effect on our profession, together with software that enables virtual surgical planning of corrective and reconstructive surgery."

The specialty of OMS has also now evolved sufficiently for sub-specialties to develop. Professor Heggie's interests in the correction of facial skeletal deformities and infant airway obstruction in the cleft and craniofacial spectrum has led to the development of the sub-specialty of paediatric maxillofacial surgery. He has held the position of Head of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery in the Department of Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery at the Royal Children's Hospital since 1994, and was recently appointed as Clinical Professor in the Department of Paediatrics at the Melbourne Medical School.

Despite the lengthy and rigorous training involved to become an oral and maxillofacial surgeon, Professor Heggie says there are still many young students aspiring to this career pathway.

"You can tell those that are riveted by it. You can just see this in their eyes."

Professor Heggie has dedicated his career to the development and recognition of maxillofacial surgery, including helping to found the Melbourne Research Unit for Facial Disorders in 2000, and advancing the techniques and management of facial deformities.

As with all specialties, there is still much more to be explored and perfected by the new guard of aspiring OMS surgeons at the University of Melbourne, who are lucky enough to have many inspirational leaders, such as Professor Heggie and the Training Centre team.



Professor Andrew Heggie
(BDSc 1977, MDSc 1981, MBBS 1991)

Have you considered becoming a mentor?

We are now accepting expressions of interest for the 2018 Melbourne Dental School Mentoring Program. This program aims to help final year Doctor of Dental Surgery and Bachelor of Oral Health students become 'work ready' through a one-on-one confidential partnership.

As a mentor, you will have the opportunity to share your knowledge, skills and experience to help another progress in their own life and career.

If you are working in general practice, have at least seven years experience and a keen awareness of the current professional environment, we'd love to hear from you! Email us at mdhs-alumni@unimelb.edu.au for more information.

Giving in our own backyard

Royal Flying Doctor Service Dental Outreach Program

I first heard about the Royal Flying Doctor Service Dental Outreach Program in a local volunteering opportunities lecture at the beginning of my third year in the DDS. The general premise of the presentation was that looking outside Australia for volunteering opportunities, while charitable and humanitarian in nature, means that we often miss the opportunity to give back in our very own backyard. That night, I went home and sent an e-mail to Alison Avery, who manages the dental outreach visits. In late July, I was contacted to confirm attendance for a week-long visit to a series of small towns at the New South Wales-Victoria border. After working out leave with Melbourne Dental School, who were hugely supportive and made the process easy, I was off to the country.

In a team of two dentists and two students, myself and a fourth-year LaTrobe student, we visited schools and preschools in the towns of Cohuna, Kerang, Koondrook, Leitchville and Lake Charm, providing check-ups for the children and recommending future treatment for the permanent dental team who would return in September. The most eye-opening thing about the experience was how different practice becomes when resources are limited. Setups were made in classrooms using makeshift dental chairs and examinations were taken out using disposable mirrors and double-ended probes. Basic equipment like hand pieces, ultrasonic scalers, amalgamators and triplexes were unavailable, thereby meaning that even basic caries diagnosis required adjustment. We were forced to think about the principles underlying what we do as opposed to the procedures that we are taught to follow as, in many cases, these became impractical in the given setup. Time constraints also meant that, in a very short period of time, we were required to develop the skills to be able to pick up the imperative information and relay it in a way so that the patient would receive the appropriate treatment and standard of care.

The school visits also involved oral health education, in which the entire school (sometimes only 10 students) would be given a talk about brushing, flossing and diet with relation to oral health. In contrast, our visit to the Cohuna Aged Care Home was palliative in focus. While visits conducted in schools were centered on ensuring optimum dental health and working towards ensuring that the children were able to keep their teeth healthy well into adulthood and old age, the nursing home visits were mainly to ensure that the patients were comfortable and free from any acute infection. As a student, this shed some

light as to how treatment decisions were made in the special needs sector of dentistry and allowed me insight into the principles that underlie those decisions.

The towns we visited during our weeklong trip were still using water supplies that had not yet been fluoridated. This was reflected in that a fair proportion of the students we were examining were suffering from early childhood caries, some of which were severe. In these parts of remote Victoria, lack of access to fluoridated water and regular dental care meant that meticulous oral hygiene using fluoridated products was of a great importance, more so than that of city communities.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service, in addition to providing transport for the volunteers, also provided accommodation for the five days and four nights. Spending a week with

experienced dentists also meant that students had the opportunity to gain insight into the dental profession and seek advice regarding both their professional and student careers.

On the whole, the trip was hugely enriching and eye-opening. It provided me with invaluable experiences both professional and personal. The multifaceted learning opportunities worked to augment my understanding of several concepts, particularly diagnostics and treatment planning principles. Presented with the opportunity, I would definitely participate in the dental outreach program. The work that they do is crucial and the experience gained from the trip is one I could not have had any other way.

Sharifa Tartoussi, third-year Doctor of Dental Surgery student

