

PUBLIC HEALTH EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH RECOGNISED BY CAPHIA 2014 AWARDS

The inaugural national awards for excellence and innovation in public health teaching and research were announced on 18 September 2014 by the Council of Academic Public Health (CAPHIA) at its annual Forum in Perth.

They were presented by Prof Catherine Bennett, CAPHIA President, and Prof Mike Daube AO, Curtin University. Prof Bennett said “the quality of the applications was outstanding” and Prof Daube commented that “public health in Australia and globally would benefit from these achievements by Australian educators and researchers.”

The CAPHIA 2014 Award for excellence and innovation in public health teaching was awarded to Giselle Manalo from the Sydney School of Public Health at the University of Sydney. The Award recognises Giselle’s many contributions, and in particular, The Beyond Borders Program initiative to bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in shared tutorials to explore their contextual similarities in health priorities and social-cultural determinant; and The Classroom in the Field program for international public health education with students partnering with communities in the Philippines, NGOs and government departments to experience public health in the field.

The CAPHIA 2014 Early Career Research Team Award for excellence and innovation in public health research was awarded to Dr Thomas Astell-Burt and Dr Xiaoqi Feng, School of Science and Health, University of Western Sydney. Drs Astell-Burt and Feng are social epidemiologists with strong interests in preventing type 2 diabetes and other cardiometabolic diseases. Their research will lead to better understandings of how social and built environments can shape our health and participation in health-relevant behaviours in Australia: *for better and for worse*. In particular, they aim to enhance understandings of how the places in which we all live can be potentially modified to promote better physical and mental health in Australia and other countries, and they have conducted some of the largest studies on this subject.

The CAPHIA 2014 Team Award for excellence and innovation in public health research was awarded to The Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes (ACBRD), a partnership for better health between Diabetes Australia – Victoria and Deakin University. The ACBRD was recognised for its significant contributions, in the four years since it was established, to diabetes research, clinical practice and public policy. The first of its kind internationally, the ACBRD provides national leadership in psychosocial and behavioural diabetes research, to inform policy and practice. Matching the diversity of diabetes itself, the ACBRD’s research program focuses on type 1 and type 2 diabetes, all ages and stages, and includes emphasis on diabetes-related distress and depression; social stigma; prevention of acute and long-term complications; the impact of new treatments/

technologies on quality of life; and improving self-care, e.g. physical activity, intensification of medications, self-monitoring of blood glucose.

The CAPHIA 2014 Team Award for PhD excellence in public health was awarded to Dr Erik Martin, School of Medicine, Deakin University for the high quality of his thesis on *Implementing an international health treaty in small Pacific island nations*, and his PhD work on outcomes for the cultural and spatial complexities in investigating the international tobacco control treaty in four small Pacific Island countries, and being able to secure ethics clearance across the Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Palau and Nauru. The research highlighted barriers and facilitators to implementing tobacco control policies in these countries in an effort to reduce the substantial health burden caused by tobacco use, and explored how tobacco control policy can be shaped in the challenging environments of small island developing states.

The CAPHIA Awards also included commendations for excellence and innovation in public health teaching for two other highly regarded nominations:

Dr Basia Diug, School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Monash University, for her leadership in teaching across several campuses to 900 students, including epidemiology, biostatistics, research methods, anatomy and physiology; and

The Public Health Undergraduate Teaching Team, at the School of Medicine and Public Health, University of Newcastle, for their co-ordination and teaching eleven undergraduate public health courses to over 1,350 students every year across three different campuses.

For more information:

Prof Catherine Bennett, President CAPHIA, and Head, School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University, (03)9244 6553, 0488 255 344.

The COUNCIL OF ACADEMIC PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTIONS AUSTRALIA (CAPHIA) is the peak national organisation that represents Public Health in Universities that offer undergraduate and postgraduate programs and research and community service activity in public health throughout Australia www.caphia.com.au