Global practice

PAUL HAYES

The Rose-Hunt Award has inspired Professor Michael Kidd to continue to strive for excellence in general practice in Australia and around the world.

> Named on the 2009 Queen's Birthday Honours List and made a member of the Order of Australia (AM) for service to medicine and education in the areas of general practice and primary healthcare, Professor Michael Kidd has too many qualifications to list. An honorary fellow with various Australian and international medical colleges his career has included being named a professor at the University of Sydney at the age of 35. Head of the Department of General Practice at the University of Sydney, and a two-term President of the RACGP Professor Kidd currently chairs the Australian Government's Ministerial

Advisory Committee on Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections. He is also the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. Nursing and Health Sciences at SA's Flinders University and President of the World Organisation of Family Doctors (WONCA).

As the recipient of the 2014 Rose-Hunt Award, the highest honour the RACGP bestows on any of its members, Professor Kidd has had his career-long clinical and academic efforts recognised and sees his name alongside many other leading Australian GPs.

'I am very grateful to our College for this recognition,' he told Good Practice. 'Some of my great heroes, GPs I really respect and admire, are among past recipients of this award.

'It's really quite humbling to now be included in their ranks.'

The award is also recognition of the fact that, regardless of what positions or offices he holds outside of the clinical setting, Professor Kidd remains a GP whose fundamental role is to help ensure people receive the best healthcare possible.

'The privilege of working with people who trust you for their medical care and advice is remarkable,' he said. '[It is important to be] able to reflect at the end of the day on the people you have seen and interacted with and the work that you've done. To look back over time on the lives that you've influenced

'If you do that, you can see the meaning and the influence of the important work that we do as GPs.'

Collegiate career

Despite having a career filled with so many highlights, Professor Kidd has never defined his life in general practice according to individual achievements.

'There are milestones in my career, but what's really important is how you use these opportunities to make a difference,' he said.

One of Professor Kidd's most significant opportunities to make a difference in Australian general practice was as RACGP President. Having been elected in 2002, Professor Kidd became President at a time when the RACGP was in a very difficult financial position. He played a key role in helping to ensure the RACGP continued.

'The greatest success of my time as President was that we still had a College

The Rose-Hunt Award is the highest accolade awarded by the RACGP. The award is a gift from the Royal College of General Practitioners (UK) to the RACGP. The Royal silver medals to the Australian College on 5 October 1972, commemorating two of its founding members, Lord Hunt of Fawley (the first Honorary secretary) and Dr Fraser Rose. The first Rose-Hunt Award was presented to Dr WA Conolly, a founding father of the RACGP. in October 1974.

The Rose-Hunt Award is awarded to an RACGP Fellow or member who, in the opinion of Council, has rendered outstanding service in the promotion of the objects of the RACGP, either by individual patient care, organisation, education, research or any other means. Outstanding service may be over a period of 10 years or a substantial and significant contribution to general practice over a shorter period.

at the time that I stepped down,' he said. 'This was a time when the survival of the College was at serious risk.

'When I became President the financial membership of the College had fallen to around 1000 members and I wrote a letter to all those who were holding off renewing their membership, or who had let their membership lapse, and I asked them to support me in ensuring the survival of our College.

'People recognised that the role of the College was critical to the health and wellbeing of the people of Australia and put their support behind us and we now have a strong, respected and influential College once again.'

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Professor Kidd's time as RACGP President involved substantial progress in a number of other areas, including new editions of all major resources, establishing the RACGP Foundation, expanding support for registrars and medical students, and many others.

'Probably one of the things I am most proud about is that we set in place what led

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The Rose-Hunt Award

to the establishment of our National Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health,' he said.

'Our College provides support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are medical students, recent graduates, registrars or who have attained their Fellowship in general practice.

'The Faculty also brings together all GPs across the country who have a passion for supporting and improving the health and wellbeing of our nation's Indigenous people.

International outlook

Professor Kidd began his three-year term as President of WONCA in 2013. He describes its mission as similar to that of the RACGP, but employed on a global scale.

'To ensure that the people of the world have access to well trained and well supported family doctors, delivering the best quality care that they can to the people in their communities,' he said

WONCA is a member-based organisation that represents approximately 500,000 GPs, or family doctors, in 131 countries throughout the world.

'Between them, our 500,000 members deliver over two billion consultations to their patients every year,' Professor Kidd said. 'That's the scope of WONCA's potential influence.'

This international role sees Professor Kidd travel to countries all over the world in order to meet and work with other primary healthcare professionals, allowing him an even broader perspective on general practice. >>

>> 'I think that my global role is providing me with insights into general practice and primary care in countries around the world. It allows me to reflect on how so much of what we do and what motivates and inspires us as GPs is similar from country to country,' he said.

'I also see how political decision-making influences the successes or failings of general practice.'

Professor Kidd remains aware of the political decision-making issues, such as the proposed co-payment and the closure of General Practice Education and Training (GPET), currently playing a significant role in Australian general practice. While he understands the view point of many in the profession, he sees reasons to be positive. 'Australia has a very strong culture of general practice as the backbone of our healthcare system and our GPs are critical to successful healthcare. We may not feel valued all the time, but we are highly respected by the people of this country,' he said.

Training for life

Professor Kidd has done extensive research work in various areas, including family medicine, e-health, health policy, safety and quality in primary care, and HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Having maintained a balance of clinical and academic positions throughout his career, Professor Kidd believes the varied and stimulating aspects of general practice



From top: Dr Liz Marles presented the Rose-Hunt Award at GP14; Professor Michael Kidd's time as RACGP President saw him on hand with Wes Fabb (left) and John Murtagh (middle) to open the John Murtagh Library in 2005.

influence its practitioners in their lives outside of the consulting room.

'I try to be respectful and sensitive to the views of others. I think our training and experience as GPs reinforces these sorts of traits in each of us, but it also helps in other endeavours as well. In committee work, working with community groups, working on research projects, working with government,' he said.

'I also think my training and experiences as a GP has set me up well to be a university dean. Being able to solve problems, to make intelligent decisions, to set goals to inspire other people and motivate other people, and to coordinate the activities of multiple contributors.'

General practice has inspired Professor Kidd to put pen to paper and he has done a lot of work in publishing, including as co-author (with Dr Leanne Rowe) of Save your life and the lives of those you love: your GP's six-step guide to good health and First do no harm: how to be a resilient doctor in the 21st century. He was also the founding editor-in-chief of Journal of Medical Case Reports.

'General practice is a great natural laboratory. People come in every day, they share their concerns, they share their experiences, they share tales of their lives. And that's incredibly interesting,' he said.

'Many GPs are fascinated with people. We're fascinated with the way people live their lives, we're fascinated with the way that people cope with the challenges of ill health and serious disease.

'That fascination and that learning we gain through the discussions with our patients and observations that we have helps us to become better doctors and to be able to provide better care to people in the future.'

Professor Kidd has always approached his career in general practice with nothing less than complete commitment – 'my dad once told me if a job is worth doing, it's worth doing well' – and views being the recipient of this year's Rose-Hunt Award as motivation to continue to strive for success in his lifelong vocation.

'It's good to note that many of the past recipients have gone on to make many further contributions to general practice and to our nation after receiving the award,' he said.

'It's not an end-of-career award and I don't have to retire just yet.'