



## Winter 2009 Newsletter

### Retirement of UNE Partnerships' longest serving director



***UNE Partnerships Board from left to right:***

***Dr James Harris, Member of UNE Council; Professor Alison Sheridan, Head of School, Faculty of The Professions, School of Business, Economics and Public Policy, University of New England; Chris Patton, Chief Development Officer, University of New England; Phil Bennett; Gary Smith, Practice Manager; and Richard Doyle, Managing Director, UNE Partnerships.***

Dr Phil Bennett, chairman of the UNE Partnerships' Board of Directors, retired on 19 May 2009 after 15 years of outstanding service. Phil was farewelled over lunch recently in Sydney, where his contribution to UNE Partnerships was recognised. Phil's wife Elsa also attended the lunch hosted by the board.

Phil was appointed to the Board of Directors in 1994 and is our longest serving board member. His connection with the University of New England (UNE) extends back to 1984 when as head of Mayne Nickless Information Services he provided a research grant and professional advice to the Agricultural Business Research Institute to assist in developing Australia's first electronic system for livestock marketing.

In 2004 UNE's Council conferred on Phil the degree of Honorary Doctor of the

University in recognition of his outstanding contribution.

Phil has been a leader in Australia's business community for over two decades including senior positions with a number of other large public companies such as Esso, Dulux, Bradmill, Computer Accounting Service.

Apart from successfully building up his own business, Minorplanet Asia Pacific Pty Ltd, he has also provided consulting services to a number of Australian companies.

Phil's diverse corporate career and his business acumen has provided UNE Partnerships' board with invaluable strategic guidance as it developed into a leading education and training company.

Retirement will give Phil more time with family, sailing and sampling his vineyard's harvest.



## Why 'the Greater' believes training adds real value to its business



**Greater Building Society Graduates**

The Greater Building Society (the Greater) continues to outperform many of its rivals, and "as the business continues to grow, retaining and developing the right staff is an important priority", according to chief executive, Don Magin.

In 2006, senior management at the Greater realised that as part of its succession planning, developing middle management skills within the organisation would be an essential criterion for moving forward.

Creating the right culture in the workplace was also recognised as vital, from the observation that staff loyalty involved more than just monetary rewards, and was about building the right environment for staff to grow and develop with the organisation.

According to Don Magin, "We recognised that we had staff who were very happy with where they were, whilst others were more aspirational, wanting to move up within the organisation and we were keen to provide training opportunities to that group."

Don speaks from experience having been with the company for more than 22 years. He started in the IT Department and has taken various other positions including responsibility for advertising, marketing and the customer service centre. "The Greater's core values contribute to the staff's strong sense of loyalty. These are the principles we manage our people with and supporting and developing our staff is an important factor. We have one staff member who has just celebrated 35 years with the company" said Don.

The Greater investigated a number of training organisations, looking for one which could provide value back to the organisation through customisation rather than using generic case studies. According to Don, "We chose UNE Partnerships as our training provider because they could provide us

with a training program that developed the specific skills required for the Greater. Their style of training ensures direct application of new skills into the workplace, which meant that we were seeing the outcomes relatively quickly."

To date, the Greater has supported almost 40 staff through UNE Partnerships' **Advanced Diploma of Business Management**. The program was delivered through a mixed mode of distance study, workshops and group projects. For some this was the first formal study undertaken since leaving

school, but with the support of their managers and UNE Partnerships' trainers they were able to achieve their ambition. The workshops provided a great opportunity for staff from a wide range of branches and Head Office to work together and discuss new ideas and concepts and how to apply them in the workplace.

As part of their final project, groups were formed from a cross section of personality types, positions and locations.

Each group had to develop a project that provided a new concept or improved an existing service within the Greater. One such project that is currently being implemented is a Carbon Footprint strategy. This project set out to promote a culture of carbon reduction by adopting a sustainable use of non-renewable resources. A detailed document provided 'quick win' practices which included lighting, climate and fossil fuel reduction measures. It highlighted the role each staff member can take in adopting a more sustainable work practice. The Greater has already experienced substantial dollar savings as well as significantly reducing carbon emissions across the company.

### UNE Partnerships/UNE Country Scholarships

As part of our commitment to ongoing education, UNE Partnerships provides funds for the University of New England Country Scholarships. These undergraduate scholarships are structured to support country students with a record of academic

achievement, who have been involved in leadership positions at school or within the community. UNE Partnerships is proud to support these students as they pursue their ambitions.



**Prue Schoen (Bachelor of Nursing), Jayne Heagney (Bachelor of Arts), Laura Bairstow (Bachelor of Livestock Science), Richard Doyle (Managing Director, UNE Partnerships), Brodie Smith (Bachelor of Criminology), Laura Quayle (Bachelor of Rural Science), George Proudfoot (Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Law).**

## Regional opportunity to develop project management skills

Successful projects don't just happen, they require careful planning. Understanding how and what this involves is essential before embarking on any small or large project. UNE Partnerships successfully held two-day workshops on **Fundamentals of Project Management** in Armidale and Narrabri for those involved in or managing projects.

This practical course is designed to ensure that new learning can be immediately applied to projects at work or home. Participants develop the skills to plan and manage a project throughout its lifecycle. Group work during the workshops provides 'real life' examples of how to apply the principles of project management as they are discussed.

Throughout the workshops participants learn how to initiate and plan a project, execute a project plan, and then how to control and close a project. They are introduced to the nine functions of project management: scope, time, cost, quality, human resources, communications, risk, procurement and integration.



*Armidale workshop*

The workshops were facilitated by Sandra Scheetz, academic director for Project Management at UNE Partnerships. Sandra also works as a project management consultant. She brings to the workshops her extensive knowledge and wealth of experience, with a very practical, hands-on approach to dealing with small and large scale projects.

"The workshops provide an ideal opportunity for people to grasp the essential steps of project management. Whether it's tackling a renovation in your home, or a large scale project in your workplace, it is imperative to develop the right process to project management skills" commented Sandra.

## Waniora Parkway Medical Centre's ongoing commitment to education and training

The Waniora Parkway Medical Centre has had a long-term commitment to the ongoing training of their practice management staff. Since 2003, they have supported eight staff through UNE Partnerships' **Professional Practice Manager Development Program**.

Dr Robert Clarke, principal of the practice, actively encourages his staff to undertake training. According to the practice manager, Lita Connell, "we are lucky to have such a supportive owner, who understands the direct benefits training brings to the practice. Dr Clarke recognises the importance training plays in developing the right skills for our staff, to operate a more efficient and effective business."

Lita has observed a growth in confidence both in staff themselves and in their ability to deal with others. "As trained staff, we know how to deal with people in a more professional manner, how to make their transactions with us easier and satisfy their needs to make them come back to us again.

"At the end of the day, if our clients don't return, there is no business, and we have no jobs."

The practice also employs a new trainee each year, completing their Certificate III in Business Administration (Medical). "Frontline reception work is a fantastic way for a person entering fulltime work to develop good customer skills. Balancing the needs of sick people within the organisation is hard. All our trainees have excellent people management skills and have matured personally also" commented Dr Clarke. Their current trainee, Klara Tasner, works as a receptionist at the practice. "Introducing new staff into the practice is always a good way of reviewing the existing systems and brings in new ideas" said Lita.

Lita has also completed the Certificate IV in Practice Management and the Diploma of Practice Management, so is well qualified to understand the benefits as a student and as the practice manager. These industry relevant qualifications have been specifically designed, introducing industry best practice for healthcare practices, through UNE Partnerships' long standing relationship with the Australian Association of Practice Managers Ltd (AAPM). The programs are designed so assessments are practical, undertaken within the practice and can be directly applied within the workplace.



*Dr Robert Clarke and Klara Tasner from Waniora Parkway Medical Centre accepting their certificate of appreciation from UNE Partnerships.*

The Waniora Parkway Medical Centre's practice team consists of administrative staff, manager, nurses and assistant, plus six doctors. They function as a cohesive team, because all staff work on the front desk at some stage, giving them a hands-on approach to understanding direct contact with their customers. "This approach has helped solve many issues that are often overlooked particularly in the peak periods of surgery. We talk about problems as a team, and work out how to practically apply a solution to avoid the same issue again. Thinking and working as a team is essential, and understanding how we interact is an important skill that we have gained from our training" commented Lita.

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services - *Developing new skills*

Developing the right skills and knowledge was a key objective for the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) for staff from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services in Queensland.

To maximise the benefits for QAIHC, UNE Partnerships worked with them to ensure that delivery for the **Certificate III in Business (Medical Administration)** was focused on the specific needs of Community Controlled Health. This not only makes learning more relevant, but means that new skills can be directly applied back into the workplace.

Workshops were presented by Gary Smith and Colleen Sullivan from UNE Partnerships, both with extensive experience in Practice Management, and long standing leadership roles within the Australian Association of Practice Management. Having worked with many workshop groups across the healthcare industry they see firsthand the benefits of training to the individual and the workplace. According to Gary, "Reviewing our skills sets and knowledge is a great way of managing the challenges we face, particularly when 'change' is a constant in most workplaces.

"Changes to systems, funding and regulations all have significant impacts on the day-to-day running of Community Health Centers, so developing skills through certified educational programs to process and handle these changes is extremely important."

The program was conducted in two parts over two weeks.

"A huge advantage", said Colleen Sullivan, "is that the students have the ability to use computers during the course and are able to complete their assessment tasks as they go. The group has the opportunity to work together during the course, see how other Health Services function and develop strong networks for the future."

Sandy Robertson, project officer for the Regional Quality and Support Program and Quality Use of Medicines Maximised



**Current QAIHC students**

Program at QAIHC, has witnessed the positive outcomes this course has provided. "As the organiser, I can see the confidence of participants growing each day. It's just amazing" commented Sandy.

This is the second group to complete the program, with 11 in the first group, 15 in the

current group and already interest is being registered for a third intake. The group was from a wide geographic area and variety of ages, but the workshops provided them with a great opportunity to openly share their experiences in a safe and comfortable atmosphere.

## Investing in your future has never been this Ezy

If you are looking for a more convenient way to invest in your future, UNE Partnerships is now able to offer a new Ezy pay payment plan. This gives you the opportunity to invest in your future and spread the cost. Very simply, the payment plan requires an upfront deposit at the time of enrolment followed by 10 equal monthly payments.

**Call us to discuss your training needs and find out how the payment plan will help you realise your potential.**

**1800 066 128**



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