



Faculty vision

BEVAN WANG

Dr Ayman Shenouda travelled from the surgical wards of Cairo to his new role as Chair of the RACGP's National Rural Faculty.

Dr Ayman Shenouda's life in Australia started when he migrated here from Egypt 24 years ago. His career in healthcare began at Cairo University, where he trained to be a surgeon.

'When I went into medicine, it was to make a difference in the lives of my patients,' he told *Good Practice*.

'As an intern, you go and rotate around the hospital placements and you see how much change can happen to people who need you the most.

'We didn't really have general practice in Egypt, so I went into surgery.'

Shenouda was born into an influential family in Egypt, but always had the idea of leaving to experience a different life in another country.

'My dad was a very big political writer and the editor of one of the biggest journals in the Middle East,' he said. 'In Third World countries you are always the son of the influential man and you will never be yourself, no matter what achievements you do.'

Following some timely advice from family friend Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Shenouda decided to migrate to Australia in 1990.

'[Boutros-Ghali] told me that I have the option of going to the US or Australia, and the difference between Egypt and the US is about 100 years and the difference between Egypt and Australia is about 25,' he said.

'He told me that I might find my opportunity in Australia to be better. I was convinced with that and made the move.'

Shenouda's move to Australia marked the beginning of his successful 15-year career in rural general practice.

After being named Deputy Chair of the RACGP's National Rural Faculty (NRF) in 2010, he was named Chair at October's GP14 Conference for General Practice. Shenouda is the first international medical

graduate (IMG) to hold the position in the faculty's 24-year history.

'I don't see myself as an IMG in a Chair's position, I feel like I am the Chair of the NRF and I will be looking to all the members on what direction we take,' Shenouda said. 'The NRF has an incredibly important role to play in rural and remote general practice and I hope to work closely with all members to improve the access to quality healthcare.'

Shenouda joined the NRF Board in 2008 and has provided a strong voice for its many IMG members.

'I joined the NRF about six years ago because rural general practice is really in my heart and I just love what rural medicine can do for the community,' he explained. 'I love the challenge and working with my community. I find it is a really satisfying job that is really fulfilling.'

General practice

Shenouda started life in the general practice profession in 2000 in Wagga Wagga, NSW, after he spent six years as a surgical registrar in Tasmanian hospitals.

'The day I started in general practice was fantastic. It was like a dream come true, like I had discovered myself,' he said.

'General practice is really exciting because you are dealing with a patient and a person.'

“Rural general practice is in my heart and I love what rural medicine can do for the community. It is a really satisfying job”

Shenouda considers his consultation room to be a place in which patients are able to open up about anything that is going on in their lives, calling it the 'confession room'. His commitment to general practice and his patients was an important factor in him being named the recipient of the RACGP's 2009 GP of the Year Award.

'The communication and help and advice that a GP gives to their patients make a big difference in their lives,' Shenouda said. 'It is not only on a medical level, but