

# My STORY



## GP ON A JOURNEY

Associate Professor

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# GP ON A JOURNEY

## Early life

I was born and raised in Cairo, Egypt into a loving family with parents and two brothers.

My family upbringing influenced me greatly as my



mother, who was a school teacher, valued learning and was always supporting people in times of need. Unfortunately, she died

of cancer in her early forties.

My father was a renowned political journalist who encouraged us all to work hard and study for success. I graduated with a Degree in Medicine from Cairo University and subsequently completed a Master in Surgery in 1990.

I have always enjoyed lifelong learning and in 2003 I completed a Diploma of Dermatology University of Wales, UK, followed in 2015 by completion of an AICD course in company management.

## The journey to General Practice

My wife and I decided to migrate to Australia in 1992 and in January 1995 we started working in Tasmania.

I was a surgical registrar in Launceston General Hospital for 3 years then I moved to The Royal Hobart Hospital for 2 years.

An opportunity then opened up for us to work as general practitioners.

In January 2000 we moved to Wagga Wagga in New South Wales and soon after I worked in general practice, I realised what a wonderful profession it is. It was as if the dream I had when I went to medical school had come true - patient communication, family care, diversity, and lots of challenges. I was instantly hooked on it. I was lucky that I entered into general practice at a time of change so I could see clearly

where general practice was going. Concepts of a multidisciplinary approach and information management were in my thinking as the corner stone for the way forward in primary care.

## A new practice in Wagga Wagga

I thought the most important start is the infra structure, so I decided to build a purpose-built premise with plenty of room and equipped with IT infrastructure and the best medical equipment available.

I made an effort to travel to previous winners of the RACGP "Practice of the Year" award in both New South Wales & Victoria, in order to gain an understanding of what was regarded as the best practice at that time. This information, together with hours of research and a strong commitment to be the best was finally put together in 2005 when the dream was realised.

In August 2005, Glenrock Country Practice was opened in Glenfield Park Wagga Wagga to meet community needs in the Riverina with a state of the art, purposely built modern medical centre in a growing rural community.

The practice was awarded General Practice of the year NSW /ACT 2007 followed by 3 AGPAL awards in 2009 and 2010.



## Involvement in a General Practice

In January 2008 I assumed the role of Director of Medical Education for the MRLTG working with Coast City Country Training.

As well as providing medical education for 33 GPRs, support was also provided to approximately 30 International Medical Graduates (IMGs) preparing for their Fellowship exams under the auspices of the Rural Outreach Vocational Education (ROVE) program. This enabled these IMGs to receive educational practice visits and to attend examination preparation sessions.

Currently in my practice I have 4 IMGs whom I supervise on a daily basis. I have created a system where I get IMG doctors to be observers in my practice for 3-6 months before they apply for the medical board. This way I believe they gain a better orientation to Australian General Practice.

In the practice I also supervise 2 registrars on the GP training program and we are always mentoring 2-3 medical students from UNSW Rural Campus and The University of Notre Dame.

The practice was also involved with the **PGPPP** program and trained around 12 interns unfortunately the funding for this program stopped in 2015.

At all times being involved in education not only improves my own knowledge and performance, but also that of my fellow Doctors, surgery and even the patients. I believe education is an essential part of the culture of our practice which is committed to delivering quality care to its patients.



## Involvement with the Division

I was elected to the Board of Management of the Division of General Practice in 2002 and served in that position consistently and consecutively for eight years. During the time, as a member of the Division Board, I learned the machinations of governance which has enabled me to participate in an increasingly active manner. Additionally, I utilised the acquired skills, experience and expertise gained from this role to assist with the orientation and preparation of newly appointed Board members. During the period as a Board member, I have held committee membership of several key Division committees including:

- Population Health Committee
- Enhancing General Practice Committee
- IM/IT Committee
- Quality Use of Medicines Committee
- GP Aged Care Panel and
- Quality Use of Medicines Committee

Throughout the course of my involvement with Division committees I chaired the IM/IT Committee and the Enhancing General Practice Committee. In addition, I was a founding member and chaired the Wagga Wagga GP after Hours Service for several years (a model of cooperative after hour's service delivery that has attained national recognition).

During my involvement with the Division I enjoyed participating in health promotion activities within the community including:

- being nominated 'GP media Spokesperson' covering a variety of health topics
- being the GP representative on non-Division working parties (including reviewing cardiovascular care within the Local Area Health Service)
- preparing and delivering presentations to community groups and as part of Division community activities (i.e. men's health; healthy lifestyle programs)

## The Primary Care Collaborative

Our surgery was elected to be part of the National Primary Care Collaborative (NPCC), which centres on improving patient care in the areas of Diabetes management, Coronary Heart disease management, and patient access to their usual Doctor and nurses in a timely manner. I was then selected to present our surgery's new and innovative "Diabetes Cycle of Care Program" at a workshop in Melbourne presenting to approximately 400 clinical staff. This was well received and due to the over-whelming success, I was asked back to present another workshop the following year. I felt this was a great acknowledgement of the efforts and commitment of my staff to develop and implement extremely efficient and effective integrated systems (patient, personnel, electronic information, administrative) to ensure best practice and improved patient outcomes.

The program also ensures that the Doctors' reporting requirements to outside organisations such as Medicare Australia and HIC are covered on an annual basis.



## My involvement with RACGP

I am the current Vice President of the RACGP. I have been a company director of the RACGP Board as the Chair of the Rural Faculty for the past 6 years. Over this time, I have made tough decisions for the benefit of our profession.

I have held leadership positions within the college for the last 15 years. I have represented, communicated and advocated on behalf the profession to State and Federal Governments. Due to my roles, my focus has been on rural general practice but my passion is for general practice as a whole - unified, strengthened and in charge of its own destiny. My advocacy efforts have resulted in better funding arrangements and new initiatives to support general practice.

The recent Collingrove Agreement between RACGP and ACRRM is a testament to my ability to collaborate with other organisations for the enhancement of general practice.

In my roles with the RACGP, I have visited every capital city and state faculty office. I have travelled extensively across rural Australia, from Longreach in QLD, Alice Spring in NT and to Ravensthorpe in WA. I have met with grass roots GPs to make sure my advocacy efforts are a true reflection of the hard-working GPs across Australia.

# Community Involvement

## The Rock

My wife, a fellow GP, and I have been delivering medical services to The Rock - a community of about 1000 population about 20 minutes from Wagga Wagga on the way to Albury – since the year 2000.

Although the medical facility there was located in a rented room in the CWA building, we were committed to continuing to provide our services to this community.

In January 2006 I was nominated on The Rock & District Aged Care Facility Committee which was a steering committee to try to develop an aged care facility at The Rock – a community dream for many years. It was a privilege to work with this committee which not only achieved its goal of building the facility but also raised more than \$200,000 towards its construction.

At the same time, I had a vision to build a medical center in conjunction with the aged care facility so I approached the local Council and the Division to submit for funding under the Rural Medical Infrastructure Fund which was approved.

Now, The Rock has the aged care facility, the medical center, A pathology service and a full-time pharmacy. I



## The Wagga Wagga Coptic Church

As with all Coptic Christians (Egyptian Christians) our church is an important part of who we are. When I started in Wagga Wagga there were three Coptic families and a few months later we became four. At a social gathering we decided to establish a church building in Wagga Wagga, so we went and discussed the matter with our bishop who agreed. Coincidentally there were two churches in Wagga Wagga for sale at that time. We decided to purchase the big church building believing that god would fill it with people. It is unbelievable but this church has attracted twenty-nine GP's to the Riverina /Murrumbidgee area and now we are a congregation of fifty-five families and approximately hundred and fifty Copts. On top of that the church has attracted twenty-eight university students to Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga.