

Advance Care Planning for the Paramedic – Presenter’s Biographies

Dr Alison Parr is a Specialist in Palliative Medicine, currently working as Director of Medical Services and Director Physician Education at St John of God Murdoch Hospital (SJGMH) and Clinical Lead, Palliative Care with the WA Department of Health’s End of Life and Palliative care Program.

Alison studied medicine in the UK and completed her training in Palliative Medicine in 2001. Following her first Consultant post in Bolton (Lancashire, England), she became Medical Director of St Catherine's Hospice, Preston, UK in 2007, overseeing inpatient, day therapy and community palliative care services and delivering a hospital consultancy service. She moved to Australia in 2014 to take up the post of Director of Hospice and Palliative Care Services at SJGMH. She became Deputy Director Medical Services in 2015 and was appointed to her current role in 2017. Alison continues to work clinically alongside her administrative roles. Dr Parr has a strong interest in education and training. She has been affiliated with the University of Notre Dame, Fremantle since 2016, and was Discipline Leader for Palliative Medicine until earlier this year.

Alison chaired regional research networks in the UK, set up an education department at St Catherine's Hospice to deliver internal and external education programmes and conferences and has taken an active role in undergraduate and postgraduate medical training and nursing and allied health professional education throughout her career, including supervising PEPA placements and delivering a series of GP workshops on behalf of PEPA, Rural Health West, WAPHA and the RACGP. She is currently a PMCWA surveyor, with an interest in ensuring the quality of junior doctor training and sharing good practice.

Alison was a member of the Board of Palliative Care WA 2017-2019, has participated in CEO roundtable events on palliative and end of life care with the WA Minister for Health representing St John of God Healthcare, has presented to the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices, the subsequent Ministerial Expert Panels on Advance Health Directives and Voluntary Assisted Dying, and to the more recent Joint Select Committee on Palliative Care in WA. Alison is a member of the National ANZSPM COVID-19 Palliative Care Working Group, and Chairs the ANZSPM Palliative Care Workforce Working Group.

Dr Simon Towler is a staff specialist in intensive care at Fiona Stanley Hospital. He was a Medical Co-Director during the commissioning of the hospital before being appointed as the Clinical Lead to the Futures Program in the South Metropolitan Health Service. This role has included development of Clinician Engagement Strategy, establishing the first Institute for Health Care Improvement Chapter in WA and championing the implementation of new approaches to end of life care and sepsis management.

He worked at Royal Perth Hospital for 25 years in the intensive care unit including a period as Head of Department and Director of the Division of Critical Care. He has also been WA's Chief Medical Officer from 2006 until April 2012. In late 2018 he was appointed to the Ministerial Expert Panel for the development of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Legislation in WA.

Simon is also the Clinical Lead for a project between WA Health and the Australian Digital Health Agency to increase the use of the My Health Record for keeping a range of end-of-life planning documents. Simon has particular interests in technology in health care, patient blood management, evidence into practice in hospital services and approaches to End-of-Life Care. From his personal experience of being a patient with a life-threatening illness Simon gained a much deeper appreciation of the challenges patients face and the importance of a true patient-focused approach to the delivery of health services and healthcare.

Gary Wilson and Susie Wilson

Following the death of their daughter's friend and a close friend's death, both from brain tumours, Susie and Gary Wilson were inspired by the international story of Ambulance Wish and could see how a similar scheme could benefit Western Australian patients.

After reaching out to Stichting Ambulance Wens they, with a group of friends, established Ambulance Wish Western Australia.

With over 20 years in emergency care, Susie works both as a registered nurse and registered paramedic, currently employed as a Clinical Nurse in a busy emergency department in Perth, working privately as a paramedic and managing her own training company.

With over 20 years pre-hospital and out-of-hospital care experience, Gary is a registered paramedic currently working in the Perth metropolitan area. A clinical educator with a Masters in Health Professional Education, he and Susie have been running paramedic CPD courses and workshops since 2004.