



**Rural Health West  
Doctors' Service  
Awards  
2008**

*RURAL HEALTH WEST WOULD LIKE TO  
CONGRATULATE THE FOLLOWING DOCTORS FOR*

*30 years service*  
*to rural and remote communities of Western Australia*

Dr Roger Boston

Dr James Bowie

Dr Thomas Buckley

Dr Mick Dewing

Dr Christopher Friend

Dr Graham Jacobs

Dr Jane James

Dr Nigel Jones

Dr Mashie Levi

Dr Ernest Manea

Dr Gary Mincham

Dr John Parry AM

Dr John Radunovich

Dr Eric Robertson

Dr Basudeb Saharay

Dr Hoon Loom Wu

*The Rural Health West Doctors' Service Awards were presented  
on Sunday 19 October 2008 by His Excellency Dr Ken Michael AC  
Governor of Western Australia.*

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Foreword from

# HIS EXCELLENCY DR KEN MICHAEL AC GOVERNOR OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



I am delighted to have this opportunity to present the Rural Health West Doctors' Service Awards 2008 in recognition of those who have devoted their careers to rural medicine in Western Australia.

The contribution made by these doctors and their partners to life in a rural town is significant, providing a service that sustains and enriches the whole community.

In choosing rural practice, these doctors have contributed to both the physical and social well being of their communities. This illustrates their values and commitment and is also testament to the communities themselves, and the bonds of friendship and loyalty formed through community life in WA country towns.

My congratulations to all the recipients of the Rural Health West Doctors' Service Awards 2008. I feel confident that I speak on behalf of the communities that you have served when I offer our heartfelt thanks for all that you have done during the past 30 years.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ken Michael".

*Governor*

Acknowledgement from

# MR IAN TAYLOR CHAIR, RURAL HEALTH WEST

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Rural Health West, it gives me great pleasure to pass on my congratulations and words of thanks to the 2008 award recipients.

The Rural Health West Doctors' Service Awards were instigated by the desire to publicly honour those doctors who have served their rural communities for many years, in many cases, their entire careers.

They have provided not only medical care for generations of families, but also inspiring examples of leadership, strength of spirit, perseverance and mateship.

We owe a debt of thanks to those receiving their awards today and indeed to all those doctors who, on a daily basis, make a positive difference to the lives of people in rural and remote Western Australia.



*Chair*





Photo courtesy Tourism Western Australia

# 30 years service

to rural and remote communities of Western Australia



## Doctor Roger Boston

*Busselton  
Medical Practice*

BUSSELTON

### Personal background

I was born in Rhodesia and lived on the edge of Ilkley Moor, Yorkshire during school years. I lived one year in North Borneo teaching Chinese middle school before studying medicine.

### What drew you to practise in a rural community?

Disillusionment with city General Practice in the British National Health Service.

### What are the best things about practising in a rural community?

Infinite challenge.

### What things have surprised you most about working in a rural community?

Little surprises me!

### What advice would you give to others considering rural practice?

Get as much practical experience as you can.

### Do you have any tips for making the most of rural life and practice?

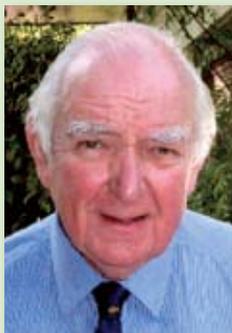
Join a good practice.

### A highlight or memorable occasion?

Chasing Kevin Cullen around the washing line outside Matron's residence, negotiating to join the Busselton practice as he took his lunchtime run.

# 30 years service

to rural and remote communities of Western Australia



**Doctor  
James Bowie**

*Warren District  
Family  
Medical Practice*

MANJIMUP

## Personal background

I was born an undiagnosed Prim Breech at Alswick Hall, (a manor house where Queen Elizabeth 1 had stayed ) in Buntingford, Herts, England. I was schooled at Earls Colne Grammar School Essex and attended Glasgow University from 1952 to 1958. I graduated with Commendation and obtained my D.Obs, FRCS in Glasgow, Edinburgh and England.

I was in the Territorial Army from 1960 to

1966. In late 1961, I spent three months as Ship's Surgeon travelling to Japan and back.

Arriving in Australia I worked in Port Hedland in 1966 where I quarantined iron ore ships at sea following the pilot on board. Moving to Bridgetown in 1968, I served in Vietnam and was Surgeon for Australian Surgical Team Long Xuyen for three months at the end of 1969.

On returning to Bridgetown I married local girl, Elizabeth Goyder on 11 April 1970. We lived in Tom Price from 1970 to 1975 and finally settled in Manjimup from 1975.

## What drew you to practise in a rural community?

I had always wanted a farm.

## What are the best things about practising in a rural community?

You know most of the patients' backgrounds; it is more of a 'Barber' Surgeon life. You are not a pen pusher. A disaster requiring medical/surgical intervention may be only minutes away.

## What things have surprised you most about working in a rural community?

How some local tradesmen charge heavier prices than in Perth.

## What advice would you give to others considering rural practice?

Marry a country girl.

## Do you have any tips for making the most of rural life and practice?

Buy a farm so you can do physical work. You will never be able to afford to retire, which is good for you.

## A highlight or memorable occasion?

In 1995, I overpowered a schizophrenic who flung himself at me from behind with a knife in hand. I was stabbed, but got the knife handle in my hand and was able to push him into the corner of the room. I felt very good after this although there was some omentum protruding.



## Doctor Thomas Buckley

*Dr Thomas Buckley's Practice*

GERALDTON

### Personal background

I was brought up and educated in Cork, Ireland. I moved to Perth and went to Geraldton to do six weeks locum work. I am still there 30 years later!

### What drew you to practise in a rural community?

The opportunity to practise a diverse range of medicine and maintain medical skills ie practise medicine as I was trained to do.

### What are the best things about practising in a rural community?

Diversity of practise.

### What things have surprised you most about working in a rural community?

None, it has lived up to my expectations.

### What advice would you give to others considering rural practice?

Integrate with the community, enjoy and participate in the sporting and social life of the area.

### A highlight or memorable occasion?

At my age, every day is a highlight!

# 30 years service

to rural and remote communities of Western Australia



## Doctor Mick Dewing

*Bridgetown  
Medical Centre*

BRIDGETOWN

### Personal background

My first nine years were spent in the Wheatbelt. In retrospect, I think that made me a 'country kid'.

### What drew you to practise in a rural community?

Chance. I was spending all my weekends in recreational activity in the bush.

### What are the best things about practising in a rural community?

Seeing illnesses in context; because you know a person's family history and social situations so well.

### What things have surprised you most about working in a rural community?

How respectful people are of my time, privacy and need for rest and sleep.

### A highlight or memorable occasion?

Presiding at the birth of a baby whose parents I also delivered.



## **Doctor Christopher Friend**

*Genpar Medical  
Centre*

ESPERANCE

### **Personal background**

I grew up in country South Australia where, at the completion of my 5th Year at Unley High in Adelaide, I decided to study Medicine. Adelaide University provided a stark contrast to my country upbringing and became a major part of my life for the next six years. After completing my year residing at Royal Adelaide Hospital in 1970, my new bride and I headed west. In retrospect, this was a momentous decision as we left our families and friends behind to take up a position in Kununurra.

### **What drew you to practise in a rural community?**

Despite my years in the city, I yearned for country life and its challenges. Between 1970 and 1973, I became involved in an enormous range of community activities whilst pursuing my dream of country practise and its holistic approach to medicine.

### **What things have surprised you most about working in a rural community?**

The diversity required of a country GP astounded me as I became aware of just how involved one becomes in the lives of patients and their families.

### **What advice would you give to others considering rural practice?**

Rural communities are close knit. They rely heavily on their doctor and regard them as their own. Embrace the activities and the people of your town and they will reciprocate. It's a good life and job satisfaction goes hand-in-hand.

### **A highlight or memorable occasion?**

As a fledgling general practitioner in a town so heavily involved in the development of Lake Argyle, the settlement of the 'Top Dam' and surrounding stations gave me unforgettable insight into remote medicine.

# 30 years service

to rural and remote communities of Western Australia



## Doctor Jane James

*J A James  
Pty Ltd*

DENMARK

### Personal background

I was brought up in Wales, including rural Aberystwyth, where the local GP 'Uncle Peter' was a close family friend and a very significant adult in my childhood. After qualifying in Liverpool, I bravely tried to do time in North West India with Tibetan refugees in 1971 and 1974, but pined for home and 'my own' village.

### What drew you to practise in a rural community?

The need for GPs in the bush – expressed even then. A boyfriend in the country! The smell of gum trees, access to the bush. No traffic.

### What are the best things about practising in a rural community?

A beautiful environment, trees, wildflowers, hills and rocky coast. Knowing people of all ages and backgrounds, being involved in so many activities one might be more a spectator to in the city; playing music, acting, pantomime, Scouts, church, book club. Meeting people in a multi-faceted way.

### What things have surprised you most about working in a rural community?

That I'm still here! Deep affection for many of my patients (reciprocated, I think!). The joy of treating several generations of the same family, of being present at births, deaths etc.



### What advice would you give to others considering rural practice?

It's a wonderful lifestyle and the most stimulating and interesting job you can do. You can follow through to the local hospital and develop good support systems with city specialists.

### Do you have any tips for making the most of rural life and practice?

Never stop learning and challenging yourself. Get involved in the community. Train the patients to treat you like a friend, not a doctor when they see you in the shops. I've looked suitably dazed if I've been asked for results of tests there! Do not listen to gossip – it's not meant for your ears, ignorance is bliss!

### A highlight or memorable occasion?

I have loved having medical students and sharing the relaxed and personal style of medicine and country life. I have hosted several John Flynn Scholarship students, many from the Eastern States, three Irish students and a few locals; mostly staying in our house and coping with our chaotic and alternative lifestyle. I still keep up with most of them!

It was certainly a memorable occasion when I cut Ernie's leg off in a ploughed paddock in soft rain and scenery like a French Impressionist painting. He had caught and broken his leg in the three-point linkage. I put up a morphine drip which his son held up on the trailer. Nurse's scissors did well for the job. As the patient said "It only hurt that bit Doc where you said it would" (the sciatic nerve). He was very considerate of my motion sickness in the ambulance to Albany!

# 30 years service

to rural and remote communities of Western Australia



**Doctor  
Graham  
Jacobs, MLA**

*Banksia Medical  
Centre*

ESPERANCE

## Personal background

I went to Esperance in 1957 with my 'new land' farming parents. For two years we lived in a caravan by a waterhole and mum taught us initially by correspondence education, later becoming 'bus kids'.

## What drew you to practise in a rural community?

As a country boy it was natural for me to go back there. What better than my own town!

## What are the best things about practising in a rural community?

A sense of community. People truly value you and mostly respect you; you become part of their families.

## What things have surprised you most about working in a rural community?

How much your business becomes everyone else's business!

## What advice would you give to others considering rural practice?

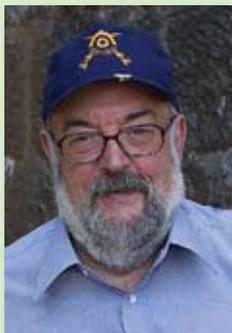
Give it a try; it is an amazing journey. Only commit for a short while and then extend (you will probably want to).

## Do you have any tips for making the most of rural life and practice?

As a doctor, be a doctor but also be part of the community. Share with people their highs and their lows. You will be a better person for it.

## A highlight or memorable occasion?

Being asked by a lovely Christian lady who died of complications of multiple sclerosis to preside at her funeral. (Her daughter came to my house on the day of her death and passed on Ollie's wish.)



**Doctor  
Nigel Jones**

*Bridgetown  
Medical Centre*

NANNUP

**Personal background**

I was born in Cardiff, South Wales into a working-class background. A Grammar School education was followed by training at Guys Hospital in London. After this time, I served five years in the army with the Scots Guards, including a tour of duty in Brunei with the Gurkhas.

**What drew you to practise in a rural community?**

I came out to Australia to join my brother who was a GP Surgeon in Katanning, originally flying in by Hercules (known as 'coffin ships') from Vietnam.

**What are the best things about practising in a rural community?**

Two main factors – being able to utilise all the skills you have been taught and not having to wear a jacket and tie!

**Do you have any tips for making the most of rural life and practice?**

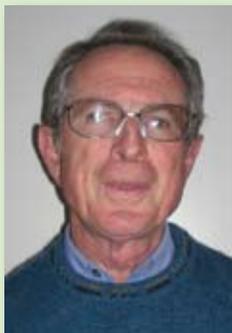
Make sure your wife is happy to live in a rural community.

**A highlight or memorable occasion?**

Stopping a policeman from shooting a schizophrenic – a long story!

# 30 years service

to rural and remote communities of Western Australia



## Doctor Mashie Levi

*Dr Foster &  
Associates  
– South Bunbury  
Surgery*

BUNBURY

### Personal background

I was born in Perth and grew up in North Perth, leaving Western Australia for the first time to do 2nd, 3rd and 4th Year Medicine at Adelaide University. I returned to The University of Western Australia for 5th and 6th Year Medicine.

### What drew you to practise in a rural community?

The opportunity to practise a broader scope of medicine. In Bunbury there was the advantage of a supportive group of colleagues.

### What are the best things about practising in a rural community?

Involvement with community activities gives a broader understanding of people's lives. Proximity to the countryside or in our case the tourist Meccas of the South West.

### What things have surprised you most about working in a rural community?

I was surprised at how well the surgeons in Bunbury (GP and specialist) compared with those I had worked with as an assistant anaesthetist in the teaching hospitals.

### What advice would you give to others considering rural practice?

Be well prepared. Become involved in the community.

### Do you have any tips for making the most of rural life and practice?

Ensure arrangements are available for time off.

### A highlight or memorable occasion?

Giving a general anaesthetic for a ruptured Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm before we had specialist anaesthetists in Bunbury.



## Doctor John Parry AM

*Federal Street  
Clinic*

NARROGIN

### Personal background

I was born and brought up in Narrogin and attended high school in Albany. I did my first year of medicine at The University of Western Australia and completed my studies at the University of Melbourne.

I have been extensively involved with the local community having served as Mayor for six years, on committees (including involvement with the Rural Clinical School)

and as a Commissioner for the distribution of Commonwealth Grants money and to align boundaries for Aboriginal communities. In 1997, I was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to rural areas.

### What drew you to practise in a rural community?

The town and its people. I get a thrill each time I drive into Narrogin and look over the countryside and into the valley.

### What are the best things about practising in a rural community?

Medicine in a rural environment is the most privileged way of life. To be known, valued and trusted by people who have your own respect is so valuable.

### What things have surprised you most about working in a rural community?

That I still had the people's trust, respect and the expectation of capability even after my

larrikin years working at Narrogin Regional Hospital during university holidays.

### What advice would you give to others considering rural practice?

Accept the friendship that is offered. Work in and for the community. Use your education and any prestige for the benefit of the community.

### Do you have any tips for making the most of rural life and practice?

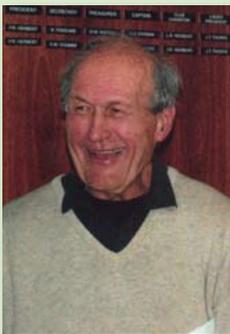
Become involved in community life. There is a community responsibility and a private joy in seeing well people, that at some time, you have saved from pain or disability.

### A highlight or memorable occasion?

Featuring on the front page of *The West Australian* with Mr Ian Taylor while lending government employees a hand in a day's work at the Narrogin creek during the Centennial Beautification Program. Playing the role of Dr Sperrey in a play written about my life performed over four nights in Narrogin.

# 30 years service

to rural and remote communities of Western Australia



## Doctor John Radunovich

*J G Radunovich  
Pty Ltd*

KUNUNOPPIN

### Personal background

I was born in Montenegro but brought up in Manjimup, was educated at Scotch College and the University of Melbourne.

### What drew you to practise in a rural community?

Having been raised in the country, I wanted to return there.

### What are the best things about practising in a rural community?

Being readily accepted into the community.

### What things have surprised you most about working in a rural community?

The social fabric that exists if anyone needs help or is in need.

### What advice would you give to others considering rural practice?

It's worthwhile.

### Do you have any tips for making the most of rural life and practice?

Become part of the community.

### A highlight or memorable occasion?

Probably Ron Gilbert, who wandered in with a towel draped over his left arm and said he'd hurt his left hand harvesting. When I asked him to show me his hand, he put his right hand in his overall pocket and took out his severed left hand.



## Doctor Eric Robertson

*Rangeway Surgery*

GERALDTON

### Personal background

I was born in South Africa, to a family of a long line of lawyers. Having been sent to study law at Stellenbosch University by my father, I found that I didn't like the subject and switched to medicine, effectively becoming the 'black sheep' of the family!

I arrived in Western Australia with my wife Leanne in 1977, after reading about workforce shortages in the rural areas. After a three-week trial with the Geraldton Medical Group, I returned in February 1978 and have remained in Geraldton ever since.

### What drew you to practise in a rural community?

I dislike metropolitan areas and although Geraldton is becoming a busy mining town, the beautiful countryside is never far away.

# 30 years service

to rural and remote communities of Western Australia



**Doctor  
Basudeb  
Saharay**

*Collie Medical  
Group*

COLLIE

## Personal background

After graduation in Calcutta and completion of FRCS in UK, I joined the Collie Medical Group in 1976 to develop and provide surgical services in the mining town, then population of 10,000. My wife provided radiography services in the Collie Hospital and we have both become an integral part of the local community over the past 30 years. I included General Practice in my weekly duties and continue to do so due to demand.

## What drew you to practise in a rural community?

The lack of services in the town. This was a genuine incentive and challenge for my wife and me. We are now satisfied that we have made a difference to the local community.

## What are the best things about practising in a rural community?

There is a true sense of duty-of-care and the townspeople have developed trust and respect in what I can do. Good environment for raising our daughter, now a GP. I enjoy rural living with nature and bush settings.

## What things have surprised you most about working in a rural community?

Despite the distance from tertiary facilities I am able to handle most cases and the townspeople appreciate not having to travel away for specialist advice. The presentation of clinical material is vast and varied. IT and advancing communication allows one to be up-to-date and access advice easily.

This reduces a sense of isolation from your colleagues.

## What advice would you give to others considering rural practice?

There is a wide scope of clinical practice and hospital practice which is fulfilling. You gain confidence in the management of difficult and acute cases that, in city practice, would normally be referred.

## Do you have any tips for making the most of rural life and practice?

Always consult with colleagues when faced with difficult cases and arrange transfers early. Make time for family and reduce their isolation by orientating your social life within the town.

## A highlight or memorable occasion?

Emergency tracheostomy on a two year old who was buried under sand, tracheostomy on a post anaesthetic male aged 50 who had laryngospasm, and providing cancer surgery in town for local people.



**Doctor  
Hoon Loom  
Wu**

*Harvey Medical  
Centre*

HARVEY

### Personal background

I was born in Singapore and graduated from the University of Singapore in 1966. I was a Registrar in Geelong Hospital and Repatriation Hospital Heidelberg in Victoria, gaining my MRACP in 1971 and Fellowship in 1975.

### What drew you to practise in a rural community?

I was invited to join the Harvey Medical Centre by the late Dr Peter Topham where I have practised as both a GP and General Physician over a few years.

### What are the best things about practising in a rural community?

The people are friendly, appreciative, respectful and helpful.

### What things have surprised you most about working in a rural community?

The people are able to raise funds to buy equipment, books and instruments for the hospital, on our advice.

### What advice would you give to others considering rural practice?

Try to stay for five years before deciding whether you like the place.

### Do you have any tips for making the most of rural life and practice?

Become involved in farming activities eg farm cattle, sheep, aquaculture or horticulture. Also get involved in sporting activities such as fishing, golf, tennis etc.

### A highlight or memorable occasion?

To be able to teach medical students and trainee GPs.

*The following doctors are also recipients of the Rural Health West Doctors' Service Awards. Unfortunately, they were unable to contribute to this publication:*

Dr Ernest Manea

Dr Gary Mincham



Photo courtesy Tourism Western Australia



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