

OBITUARY

Tony Egan

Tony Egan, a stalwart of ANZAHPE and previous editor of *FoHPE*, died on 5 September 2021. He was one of the first health professional educators I met, and I knew him for over 20 years, although his contributions to our education community spanned over 30 years. For me, he was always 10 years ahead of everyone else. I learned to listen to Tony, as he had an uncanny ability to foresee what was going to happen next in health professional education. He was always thoughtful, reflective and constructive. I never saw him angry—occasionally disappointed or puzzled, but never resentful. His was always the “still small voice of calm”.

He received the ANZAHPE Award 2012 and was awarded life membership in 2018. He attended his first ANZAME (as it was then) conference in 1989 and regularly attended thereafter. He quickly identified with the lack of formality and the general openness of ANZAHPE. He first joined the committee of management in 2000 and was editor of *Focus on Health Professional Education* from 2007 to 2015. Prior to that, he edited the bulletin. His editorials were always a great read and captured a mix of current contents summaries with philosophical musings on health professional education.

He was born in the north of England but spent most of his life in or near Dunedin, New Zealand. He registered as a psychologist in 1975 and worked as a research fellow in Otago’s newly formed Medical Education Development Unit from 1987 to 1991. After that, he was an active and constructive contributor to many medical education groups, projects and committees until his retirement in 2018. His work for the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners was recognised by them awarding him an honorary fellowship in 2003.

As examples of being ahead of his time, he proposed the use of focus groups for course evaluations in the 1980s. He used problem-based video roleplay and introduced reflective exercises in clinical teaching from 1993. He contributed to the development of a mentoring program for clinical students and formalised reflection through TPERs (thought provoking episode reports). He was an early adopter of web-based learning resources (in evidence-based medicine) and was an active contributor to simulation long

before others were considering it. He told me about “assessment for learning” well before programmatic assessment was on the scene. Forty years earlier, he wrote about the effect of architecture on learning. His most recent contributions were on communities of practice—a concept he not just reflected on but actively enacted. He was the person who encouraged new ANZAHPE members, in particular those who were first-time presenters, by attending their presentations and actively seeking them out over tea breaks. He was notable for nurturing Otago students to undertake projects about education and submit them for the student awards. The spontaneous waiata sung by his Aotearoa colleagues, at the time he was awarded ANZAHPE life fellowship, moved him (and many others).

Above all, Tony always made you think. You would always want him in a group. He questioned current practice, listened thoughtfully and brought perspectives that others hadn't considered. He maintained a focus on the student and patient experience. He was always keen to implement innovations that brought long-lasting change.

Kua hinga te tōtara o Te Waonui a Tāne (the tōtara in the great forest of Tāne has fallen).

Tim Wilkinson