



## Royal Melbourne Graduate Nurses Association

RMHGNA  
PO Box 2182  
Royal Melbourne  
Hospital  
VIC. 3050.



0415 628 131



RMHGNA@outlook.com

## 2024-25 Committee nominees

The following are profiles for the nominees for the 2024-25 RMGNA Committee. The Committee resolved to have a maximum of 12 members.

*Please note:* in accordance with the RMGNA Model Rules, only Full or Associate members (where more than 10 business days have passed since they became an Association member) are entitled to vote in committee nominations.

Any further questions or comments, please email

[rmhgna@outlook.com](mailto:rmhgna@outlook.com)

### Lara Taylor

I started my General Nursing training at RMH in Group 386, on the 22nd of September 1986...and I've never left!

Following my training, I concentrated on Emergency Nursing, completing my Critical Care Certificate in Emergency Nursing in 1991 and then my Post Grad Dip a year later. I moved up to Anaesthetics and Recovery in the mid 1990's, becoming a Clinical Nurse Specialist and an Associate Charge Nurse, and worked full time until I had my first child in 1999. I returned after my maternity leave and started working part time in both Anaesthetics and Recovery and the Emergency Department. I am still a CNS in the Anaesthetics and Recovery and still find great satisfaction in the work we do and the care we give our patients.

It was during my time in Anaesthetics and Recovery where I met Jackie Dalzell and learned about the RMH Graduate Nurses' Association. Jackie was the Association's secretary but was retiring so looking for a successor. I was fascinated by the Association and its aims so came aboard as the secretary in the late 1990s. I spent many years as secretary then was lucky enough to become the RMGNA President in 2018.

I have a great passion for our hospital and the history we have. I care deeply about maintaining our rich past and looking into how we can help support our nurses now and in the future.

I would like to continue as part of the RMGNA's Committee. We are making strong progress within the hospital, establishing links, slowly increasing our profile and hoping to attract new members from within the RMH, all of which have been a challenge for us over the last few years.



## Janet Briggs

Janet completed her General Nursing training at the Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) in February 1979. Following a 'Staffing Year' and overseas travel she commenced her Midwifery training at the Royal Women's Hospital (RWH) in March 1981. In September 1984 she was appointed Midwife in Charge of one of the Antenatal/Postnatal wards.

During her time at the RWH, she helped establish and run a pilot program for the Day Assessment of Antenatal Women which was the forerunner of the Pregnancy Daycare unit (which she also helped design and plan).

In 1991, she was awarded a RWH Travelling Scholarship to the UK where she visited several Antenatal Day Assessment Units in England, Scotland and Wales. Since 1996 she has worked as a Clinical Research Nurse in the speciality of Vaccine Trials at the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH), Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) the University of Melbourne and currently the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity.

Her tertiary qualifications include a Bachelor of Applied Science in Advanced Nursing, a Diploma of Applied Science in Community Health and a Certificate for Accreditation as a Nurse Immuniser.

## Zoe Fox

Zoe had a very successful career in hospitality, where she was described by a colleague as a "positive and great teacher and leader" but wanted to give and do more so sought a job in healthcare...and knew she'd made the right decision as soon as she started. In preparation for her graduate year, Zoe worked as a Registered Undergraduate Student of Nursing (RUSON) and Health Assistant in Nursing (HAN) in a variety of organisations & specialty areas, most notably as a Critical Care RUSON in the Royal Children's Hospital Emergency Department.

Starting her graduate year at the RMH in 2024 was a dream come true for Zoe, but she was grateful for the preparation the HAN and RUSON roles had provided. Another of her dreams came true when she rotated to ED, an experience which cemented her career aspirations of being a critical care nurse. Zoe wanted to be prepared for this projected career pathway so added post graduate study to an already very busy life!

While fully embracing her professional identity and academic development, Zoe also pursued another of her passions - representing those that may not have a strong voice - and joined the RMH Graduate Nurse Network (a peer-led leadership group for the greater graduate nurse cohort) where the skills gained during her previous roles in hospitality management were obvious to her peers and she was named the 2024 Network's President.

Away from her nursing pursuits, Zoe attends live music, theatre performances and galleries, stays connected with loved ones and slows it all down by reading books and playing board games. Although new to nursing, Zoe is keen to bring the voice of her peers to the Royal Melbourne Graduate Nurses' Association committee and to be part of its exciting future.



## Christine Murray

Christine Murray is a registered nurse and midwife. She initially completed nurse training at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in 1974, followed by midwifery training at the Royal Women's Hospital in 1978. Chris has worked in several Australian states and eventually found her happy place in the Urogynaecology Unit at Mercy Hospital for Women, where she has worked for around 30 years.

Chris is married and has a family, with two adult sons. Chris has studied throughout her career, completing an Undergraduate Nursing degree at Deakin, a Masters degree at Monash and more recently a Professional Doctorate at La Trobe University, where she now works as a Lecturer.

## Julie Halton

*GCertNurs (Emerg), GDipAdvClinPrac, MHLthServMt, MClinEduc*

Julie is a Registered Nurse with over 40 years of clinical practice, management and clinical education experience. Although she calls herself an emergency nurse, with 27 years of experience in this specialty, her career pathway has been quite varied.

After completing hospital-based training, Julie started in the RMH emergency department and worked her way up to acting Nurse Unit Manager before discovering a passion for teaching. As a nurse educator she has supported learners in emergency, acute and subacute medicine, acute respiratory medicine, general surgical, gastroenterology and hepatology services as well as program support for graduate enrolled and registered nurses and as a casual academic educator and lecturer for a number of universities. Her other positions have included Access Management, Quality team member as the Deteriorating Patient Standard lead and project lead for a number of research projects including early work on Trauma Response Teams.

Julie holds qualifications in emergency nursing, advanced clinical practice and masters in both health services management and clinical education. She is a member of the Australian College of Nursing, the College of Emergency Nurses Australasia and the Australian and New Zealand Association for Health Professional Educators. She is also an active member of the Royal Melbourne Graduate Nurses Association, currently in the secretary role, and was a recipient of the RMGNA Jane Bell Scholarship in 2017 to continue with her Master's degree.

Her passion has always been to ensure high quality nursing practice which has included assisting with the preparation of new nurse educators through a hospital-based Masterclass Program, educational lead for a hospital-wide evaluation of the patient assessment practices of all nurses and the development of training, support and ongoing professional development activities for nursing preceptors.

Halton, J. A. (2014). Challenges in health policy: the next 10 years. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 200(1), 17–17. <https://doi.org/10.5694/mja13.11059>

Halton, J.A. (2024). The transition of clinical nurses to nurse educator roles – a scoping review. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 78(3), 104022.



### Kylie Thitchener

Currently, I am the Director of Quality and Patient Safety at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and have been in this position for the last five years. Along with this, I am a Board Director of East Wimmera Health Service, Deputy Chair and Chair of the Quality and Risk Committee, a Director of the Australian Quadriplegia Association (AQA) and am the Convenor of the AQA Risk and Quality Committee.

I trained at RMIT and completed my Graduate Nurse Program and Graduate Certificate in Emergency Nursing at the Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney. After this I took on an ANUM role at RCH Emergency Department and then worked in the USA in an ED for three years. Following this, I worked part time while raising my children and studying for a master's degree in health services management from Monash University (successfully completed!).

In 2006 I joined RMH in the Emergency Department as an educator and then went on to coordinate the hospital's Graduate Nurse program for 12 months. After this I worked in a number of other roles (all under Denise's leadership) at the RMH including Emergency Management and Planning Project Manager and then moving into the quality team with my last role in 2018 as the RMH Interim Director, Clinical Governance and Community Engagement.

The Royal Melbourne Hospital has always been a terrific place to work, and I have had many wonderful experiences working with many wonderful people.

Recently I stepped up to clinically to support the COVID effort. Initially, I administered flu shots in the early part of 2020 to many of the Peter Mac Staff and then working in the Hotels for Hero's for six months looking after many of the unwell health care workers of Victoria who could not isolate safely at home. During all of this time I was a part-time Nursing Officer in the Australian Army and a highlight for me was working on Galiwin'ku Island (500km North East of Darwin) with the local Health Care team and caring for the locals.

My two children are all grown up now and I am trying to transition into life without school kids and managing little adults instead! I now have the time to focus on supporting the Royal Melbourne Graduate Nurses' Association and getting to live shows, gardening and skiing; however, the kids like to tag along for some of these so I'm not completely alone yet!

### Elizabeth Virtue

Liz has spent most of her professional career working at RMH after starting her nursing journey in group 382. After a couple of years working on 4 West, Liz moved to the Emergency Department where she remained for a very long time progressing from Clinical Nurse Specialist to Associate Nurse Unit Manager and finally 15 years as the Manager, Emergency Services. During that time Liz was the recipient of several scholarships, including the Lynly Aitken Travelling Scholarship in 2001 that was used to investigate occupational violence in emergency departments across the United Kingdom and the United States of America and in 2012 she received the Lynly and Yvonne Aitken Trust Scholarship that funded a research study investigating the effectiveness of electronic patient management plans for frequent attenders.



During her time in ED, Liz was asked to participate in several State Government and Department of Health committees including the Emergency Access Reference Committee and the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Trauma & Emergency Services. She also had several research interests including improving patient discharge, implementation of electronic patient management plans for frequent attenders, pain management at triage and occupational violence. She co-authored a number of papers and regularly presented at conferences. Her contribution to emergency nursing was recognised in 2012 when she was the recipient of the Australasian Emergency Nurse of the Year.

Other positions Liz has held at RMH include Nightlife Project Manager, Outpatients Transformation Project Officer, Acting Director of Nursing and Operations Surgery and Perioperative, Emergency Access Manager and Improvement Manager.

Since 2016 Liz has been the Support Services Manager at RMH looking after a team of 200 clinical assistants (CAs) who work across the wards and departments of RMH City Campus supporting clinical teams. During the pandemic she was asked to lead an additional team of COVID Support Officers who were employed to support patients and clinicians in wearing the correct personal protective equipment.

Currently Liz is involved in a range of activities, including peer support and family violence officer, and actively participates in the ongoing work of the Safety Culture team, Communicating for Safety and the Gender Equity committee. Liz is known for her leadership and is often heard to say, "just be kind and respectful".

## Helene Johns

Helene started her PTS at the RMH in October 1974 and enjoyed four wonderful, busy years until the end of her staffing year in 1978 when she left to explore foreign parts. During her time travelling overseas, she completed Midwifery training in Edinburgh, then returned to Australia to work at the Wimmera Base Hospital in Horsham followed by another move to begin working at "the Women's" Hospital (RWH).

Returning to RMH in 1981, Helene joined nurse bank while undertaking a Community Health Diploma to qualify as a Maternal & Child Health (MCH) Nurse; she has worked in MCH in various Victorian municipalities & roles ever since. While visiting a friend she was exposed to midwifery in Malawi which enticed her back to midwifery practice at the Women's in 1984; she has continued to work at the Women's, interspersed with further study and her MCH work, since that time.

In 1986 Helene completed a Community Health degree at Lincoln Institute then joined the Family Birth Centre (FBC) at the Women's to work in a midwife-led model of care. She concurrently completed a Master of Education at the University of Melbourne in 1991, which included a minor thesis evaluating the FBC childbirth education program. Qualifying as a Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) & an Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) volunteer counsellor between periods of maternity leave Helene continued to work at the Women's in the Women's Health Information Centre, the Well Women's clinic and the African Women's Clinic. All these roles allowed Helene





to provide women with education, support, advocacy, and, where necessary, de-infibulation for those who had experienced circumcision/traditional cutting.

Helene has subsequently completed a PhD at LaTrobe University, exploring the phenomenon of mothers exclusively feeding their babies on expressed breastmilk rather than feeding directly from the breast. Helene currently works for the Victorian Maternal and Child Health Line and in the breastfeeding service at The Women's Hospital.

### Robyn Reeder

I started my training at the RMH in April 1970 where we 'lived in' at the Connibere Nurses Home....what a time that was and so many stories to tell!! I loved our training days and 'Staffing Year' – they gave me a good foundation for further training as a midwife at Western General Hospital.

After spending 12 months travelling in London and Europe, including working in the London Clinic in 1976, I returned to Australia and completed my training in OH&S. I found work as an OH&S Clinician at a large industrial site in Sydney which gave me a whole new perspective on risk management and prevention of injury for workers.

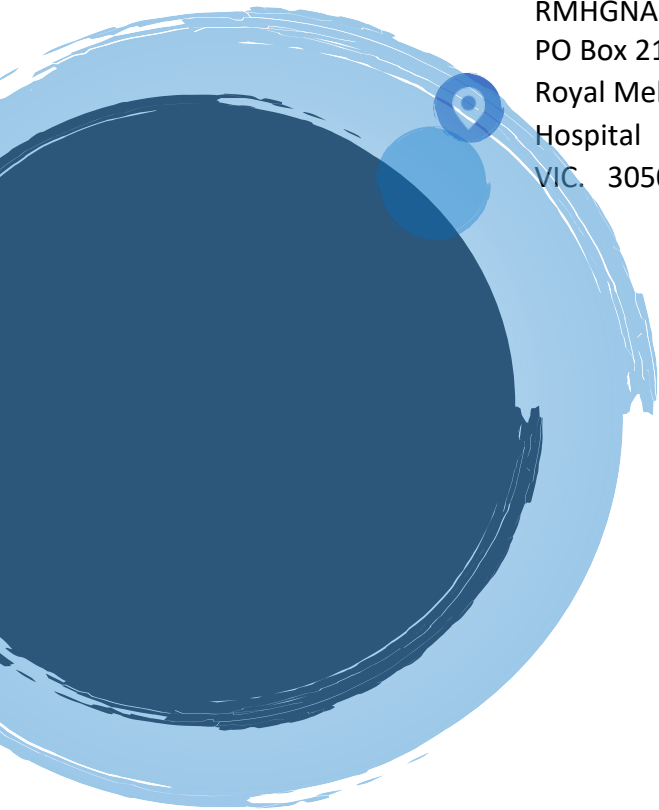
In 1980, busy with a young family and working as a primary care nurse and OHS Coordinator, I realised I needed a career change. Nursing aged and frail patients had always been special to me, so I started my career in aged care in 1988 as an RN in a local nursing home and shortly afterwards accepted the NUM role. In 1990, I completed qualifications in Gerontology, Nursing Home Management, and Human Resource Management and moved into leadership roles progressing from DON to Executive DON then Director of Care Services across a number of residential and community aged care services.

I was then given the exciting opportunity of commissioning a greenfield site in NSW to provide services for independent living units, community and residential clients. This was a time of huge growth for me, liaising with community and political leaders involved in the project as well as co-authoring a book titled "Cultural Diversity and Spirituality in Ageing".

My passion for, and skills in, quality healthcare enabled me to lead teams and providers through successful accreditation and quality audit processes as well as successfully becoming an Accreditation External Assessor registered in both the NSW and Victorian Assessor Registries.

I moved back to Victoria in 2010 where I became the Integrated Services Manager for a large, aged care service, managing residential and community services in Melbourne as well as commissioning another new Aged Care and Community Service site. One of the highlights of this time was publishing the book 'From Seed to Table' filled with recipes from staff, clients and residents and presented on site by Maggie Beer...this was a really exciting event!

During COVID lockdowns, I completed my Certificate 4 in Training and Assessment which allowed me to start my own business to provide services in quality and accreditation, leadership mentoring and support and professional development training and facilitation. It is amazing that I still rely on the original training and skills from the RMH in my various roles and activities today.



RMHGNA  
PO Box 2182  
Royal Melbourne  
Hospital  
VIC. 3050.



0415 628 131



[RMHGNA@outlook.com](mailto:RMHGNA@outlook.com)

