



NZRGPN Press Release: Peter Snow Memorial Award 2016

Great Barrier Island husband and wife receive Peter Snow Award

The 2016 Peter Snow Memorial Award has gone to husband and wife team of Dr Ivan and Mrs Leonie Howie from Great Barrier Island.

The award was announced at the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network's annual conference in Dunedin (March 31 to April 3). The Howies were presented with the award by last year's recipient Dr Katharina Blattner, a rural hospital doctor based in the Hokianga.

The Howies were nominated for "outstanding and innovative medical and nursing service to the Great Barrier Island community".

Ivan (QSM) has served the Great Barrier Island community for 35 years, initially commuting from Auckland in 1980 and relocating permanently at the end of 1983. He travelled to his first clinics by motorbike and then with some assistance from the Ministry of Health purchased a second hand Holden sedan. In 1986 he married Leonie Taylor an experienced primary health care nurse and together they became a formidable team.

Together Ivan and Leonie have had vision and effected change to create an outstanding health service on the island. Initially Ivan worked out of an old building in the southern part of the island and out of the Public Health Nurses Cottage in the North. In between times his surgery was a caravan on his front lawn and the waiting room was the very small lounge in his and Leonie's house. In 1987 Ivan gathered a group of community members together and The Great Barrier Island Community Health Trust was formed with the mandate to obtain a purpose built health centre that would meet the needs of the local community. Both Ivan and Leonie remain as two of ten trustees administering the trust. Leonie has been the secretary and a driving force since its inception.

In 1994, in response to the health reforms Ivan, Leonie and I formed a company, Aotea Health Limited. Ivan as always has treated the nurses with respect and encourages us all to work to our strengths so he was not afraid to take a leap and go into business with two nurses. Our combined views enabled us to innovatively contract to provide a specifically designed island based health service that ensured the island population would not be disadvantaged by its remote rural location. Leonie takes a lead both in administration and in nursing to ensure that a quality service is provided. Two years ago the Auckland DHB conducted a series of community meetings to elicit community input into services. The overwhelming response was that the community felt that they had an excellent service and that the ADHB should do all that they could to support it.

Ivan and Leonie have both gone above what would normally be expected of them professionally because they have a genuine regard for the people that they serve. Bad news for clients is mostly given by a home visit. Time is set aside when in Auckland for a visit to any clients who may be in hospital at that time. Hospitalised clients are rung and followed up while they are off the island. Ivan also officiates at many a christening and funeral. He had in the past conducted marriages but has

tried to let this role be taken up by others (sometimes he gets talked into it). They have spent the last thirty years doing a large amount of afterhours and weekend on call, not an easy thing with two children initially in the mix (they once came to assist me at a birth with a baby asleep in the car!).

As well as her role in partnership with Ivan Leonie is an outstanding example of an advanced rural nurse specialist (she has had Primary Health accreditation with NZNO with Expert Endorsement since 2003). She has Tainui affiliation and is a member of Nga Maia o Aotearoa. During her Masters studies her dissertation developed a Rural Framework Wheel that contextualised nursing practice. A section of this has been published (Ross, 2008). Leonie has also actively participated in activities that involve rural practice nationally. In 2007/2008 representing Rural Nurses (NZNO) on an MOH working party reviewing the rural ranking scale. As well she represented Rural Nurses (NZNO) on the Primary Health Care Nurses Advisory Council. Then from 2008 – 2010 she assisted in setting up the College of Primary Health Care Nurses. Presently she is a part of the Auckland / Waitemata Rural Alliance Leadership Team. She is a true leader encouraging and supporting other nurses to extend their practice.

About the award

The Peter Snow Memorial Award was set up to honour the life and work of Dr Peter Snow who passed away in March 2006. Dr Snow was a rural general practitioner based in Tapanui. As well as caring for his patients Peter was Past-President of the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners and was a member of the Otago Hospital Board and District Health Board. He was enthusiastic and active in seeking knowledge to improve the health and safety of rural communities. His work contributed to the identification of the chronic fatigue syndrome and he was influential in raising safety awareness on issues related to farming accidents.

Previous winners include:

Inaugural winner Dr Ron Janes (2007)
Nurse Jean Ross and Dr Pat Farry (2008 – jointly awarded)
Dr Garry Nixon (2009)
Dr Tim Malloy (2010)
Dr Martin London (2011)
Nurse Kirsty Murrell-McMillan (2012)
Dr Graeme Fenton and NZIRH CE Robin Steed (2013)
Kim Gosman and Dr Janne Bills (2014)
Dr Katharina Blattner (2015).

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