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FREE EDITION

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Aaron Jones FACN

### AN OFFICER AND A NURSE

Patricia Kemp MACN

### PARAMEDICINE: IS IT FOR YOU?

Brent Driscoll MACN

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NURSING BEYOND THE BEDSIDE



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# SOCIAL JUSTICE: THE COMMON DENOMINATOR

**South Australian Parliamentary Member for Hurtle Vale Natalie Cook  
MACN on how being a nurse leader culminated in a career in politics**

**L**ife is a unique journey for all of us and the destinations and stops on the way really aren't predetermined, but are guided in some way by one's origins and the paths one chooses. My journey to political life wasn't deliberate, it was the culmination of the experiences chosen and otherwise.

I often joke that you can take the nurse out of the hospital, but you can't take the hospital out of the nurse. To be honest, there's a lot of politics in nursing but even more nursing in politics. Nursing requires patience, the ability to listen, read a room and adapt to a number of circumstances quickly, and using evidence to inform policy, as does politics.


I grew up in Adelaide, a first-generation Aussie in a working-class family, a family of 'Ten Pound Poms'. I knew that I would have to work hard to get anywhere in life. During my early education from a high-quality public school, I grabbed every opportunity to participate in activities, supported by a diverse group of teachers who instilled in me a desire to reach for the stars and use my voice — a feminist voice. In high school, I tried and played every sport possible, and I drove my teachers wild because I tended to get involved in other people's issues. Nothing has changed, to be fair!

I was part of the United Nations Youth movement and this opportunity opened my eyes to inequities on a global level.

I realised that Australia was a great country and felt a responsibility to ensure fairness, equality and equity were fundamental in our community.

Volunteering with the St John Ambulance Cadets exposed me to the caring roles played both in community settings and nursing homes. Having spent many weekends sitting with and assisting with the care of the elderly during my teenage years made me realise that nursing was for me. I'm not sure if I chose the profession or the profession chose me, but it was a good match. It was my nursing career which, with all its challenges, gave me opportunities to learn, influence and improve the quality of life for those that needed it.





**“Any nurse or health care professional entering the rough and tumble of local, state or federal politics would be doing so from a strong socially progressive base with a desire to help others who can’t help themselves.”**

## RAISE YOUR VOICE

- Be involved in local community issues
- Be engaged with your local MP
- Volunteer for organisations that interest you and align with your beliefs, network actively
- Consider participating in local campaigns
- Seek training in dealing with media/communication
- Be active through professional nursing organisations

I trained as a Registered Nurse at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and went on to both study and teach nursing at Flinders University as well as study at Adelaide University. I became a union member, joining the now Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation on my first day of work as a nurse and became a worksite representative at a young age during a time of change and uncertainty. I was active and vocal, with a determination to make sure that staff had a voice and opportunity to participate in the change process.

During this time, some incredible people mentored me, teaching me to never stop looking for ways to improve the lives of our colleagues. I fought for the right to wear pants or culottes in the workplace, a completely practical deviation from the tradition of wearing dresses in a role where squats, bends, pivots and lifts were the norm.

I also introduced the clinical practice of IV cannulation in the chemotherapy unit of a private hospital in Adelaide well before this was normal practice in our hospitals. Before this, patients were out of pocket and treatment delayed because of numerous failed IVs during a hospital stay.

The turning point in my nursing career came in 2008, when our son, Sam, lost his life in a one-punch assault at the age of 17. He was at a private party and uninvited people attended and started to agitate, there was heavy drinking involved and the consequences to our family and our community were devastating. Angry yet determined to not let this define me or my family, we started the Sammy D Foundation, which has now delivered harm prevention and education programs in groups and mentoring relationships to well over 100,000 young South Australians.

This also prompted me to think about a political career, a way to use my skills, knowledge and personal story to help find solutions to some of society’s problems. I chose to align politically with the party whose policies and platform reflect my own. I ran for a seat which was held for 25 years by Dr Bob Such. The odds were against me, but my determination, networks developed from nursing and local sport helped me win.

Throughout my life’s journey, politics in its most important form has been present. It’s the relationships, the negotiations, the influences that are formed and undertaken in order to inspire voice and

the grassroots activism that inspires and leads change. Each one of us needs to believe in ourselves and the power that we have as nurses. Our rich journey through life informs our ability to be the best representatives. Nurses are so well-placed to advocate for and on behalf of their community.

I hold it to be true that any nurse or health care professional entering the rough and tumble of local, state or federal politics would be doing so from a strong socially progressive base with a desire to help others who can’t help themselves. A career in health and a career in politics are not so unfamiliar, but to make the leap from one to another requires a strong constitution, and an even stronger social ethic.

A commitment to social justice and to bettering one’s community is at the core of what makes both a nurse and a politician.



**AUTHOR**

**NATALIE COOK MACN**

# AN OFFICER AND A NURSE

**Being a military nurse is a matter of unmistakable pride and comes with its own unique skills, experiences and sense of fulfilment**



COMMANDER PATRICIA KEMP MACN

**A**CN Member Commander Patricia Kemp MACN is one of the only three Australian Defence Force's (ADF) Nurse Practitioners. In this edition, Patricia provides insights into being a defence nurse practitioner, what guides her work in the military and how it can be a fulfilling career for nurses.

## **Who should join the Defence Forces as a nurse?**

Nurses who are looking for adventure, discipline, personal challenges, mateship, the ability to use their initiative, show their resilience and who want to work with and meet the most amazing and inspiring people.

## **What are the core values of military nursing?**

Our Defence Values are Service, Courage, Respect, Integrity and Excellence. As nurses, we live these values every day. I'm also guided by the example of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) Nurses' compassion and dedication to duty. All these things influence our modern ADF nurses and the way we apply our skills.

In the Navy, our health care motto is 'By Constant Care'. Our care is based on education, research and scientific rigor as it is vital that we deliver the best possible care to the men and women of the ADF and to affected people in our region,

in sometimes austere and challenging environments, at sea, on land or in the air.

## **What are the fundamental ways in which a Defence nurse's practice differs from a non-Defence nurse's?**

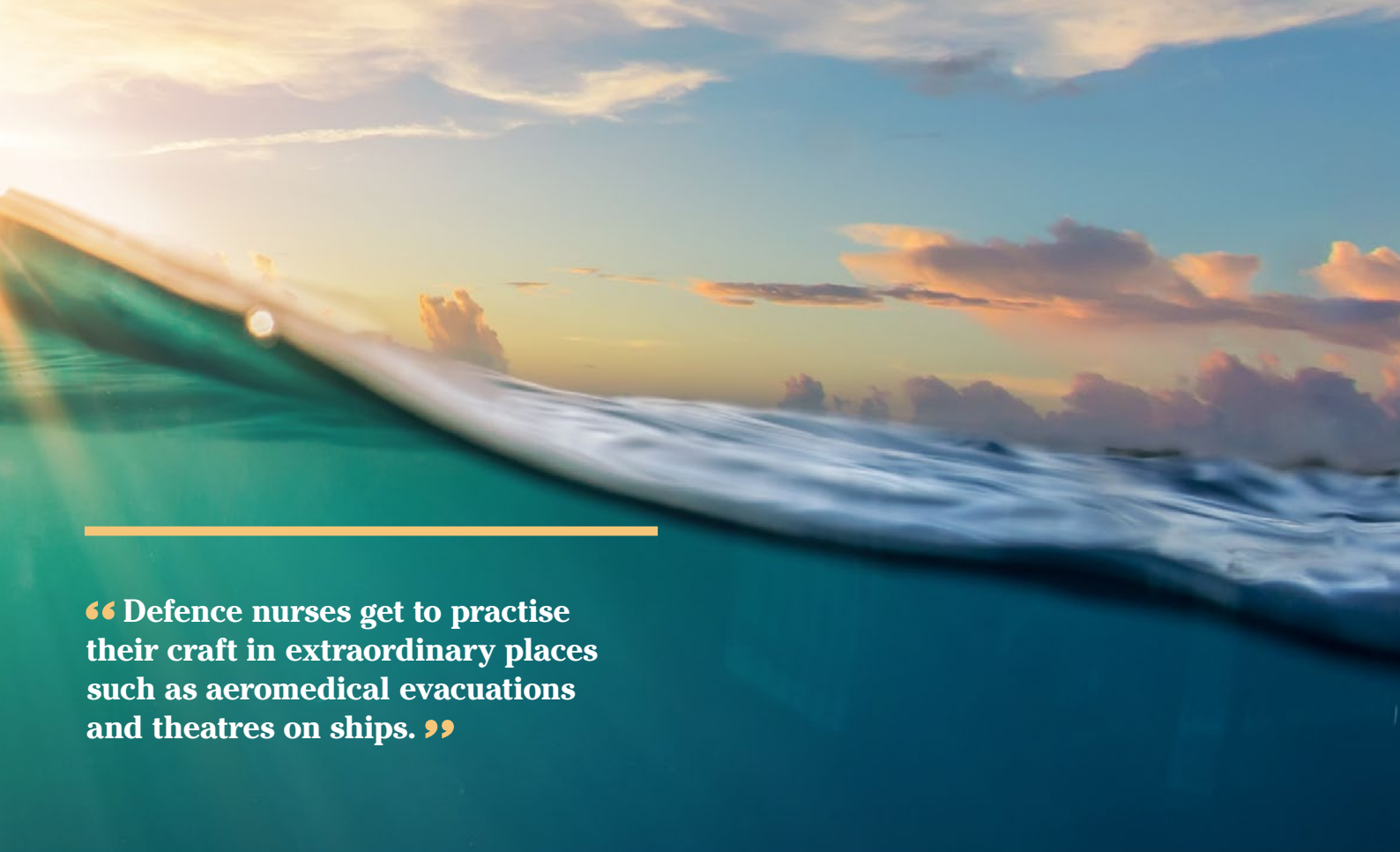
Defence nurses bring their specialty to Defence (such as Critical Care or Peri-operative skills) and they get to practise their craft in extraordinary places such as aeromedical evacuations and theatres on ships.

Military Nurses differ from our civilian counterparts in that we are Military officers and Nursing Officers, and need to know the difference in various situations. We also are required to maintain our currency for both.

## **What can a Defence nursing career progression look like?**

My career trajectory has been a little different to other nurses in the ADF. I still had to undertake the New Entry Officers Course (NEOC) at HMAS Creswell, officer basic training and my professional qualification after graduation – which included management of trauma, mass casualty and advanced life support – prior to being able to practice as an ADF nurse. It is the same for the other services.

Nurses in the Navy then spend time with the Maritime Operational Health Unit (MOHU), and form part of a deployable



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## “Defence nurses get to practise their craft in extraordinary places such as aeromedical evacuations and theatres on ships.”

multidisciplinary medical team. These teams have recently assisted with the bushfires and have done great work on Operation Fiji Assist following Cyclone Yasa.

After spending time with the MOHU, you may then manage a Health Centre or work in a Health Operations team that manage health centres, or provide education to other health care personnel. You can also get to work in a Joint Headquarters or deploy overseas.

As your career progresses, as with the civilian nurses, your employment becomes more administratively focused. But the ADF never lets your clinical skills run down because in order to fulfil your requirement to remain a nurse in the ADF, spending time in the practical environment is mandatory. After all, you may be required at a moment's notice to undertake your core role as a nurse. We manage this with agreements with various hospitals and agencies to maintain our recognition as ADF nurses.

### What are some of your duties?

Apart from normal nursing duties, you have to undertake military officer duties as well. Some of my duties include Officer responsibilities such as being Officer of the Day on a Defence base, where you act as the delegate for the Commanding Officer. As an Officer, you conduct ceremonial duties, and I have been fortunate to attend the Bangka Island memorial service, and even got to

meet and chat with the late Anne Leach, one of the most legendary of ANZAC Nurses.

Most duties, however, utilise your health skills. You always work as part of a team.

### What unique skills have you been able to learn as an ADF nurse?

As an ADF nurse — and a Commissioned Officer — you wear a military uniform that you have to learn to wear and take care of. You learn to practise leadership, military staff officer skills; people management, writing and preparing of briefs and other documents, a smattering of logistics, equipment lifecycle management, operational planning, weapons, marching drill, survival skills and how to drive small boats for those in the Navy — just as a taste. You learn how to configure aircraft for patient stretchers and gain an understanding of the challenges of rescuing injured personnel from tanks and helicopters and many more skills besides.

### What are some unique experiences an ADF nurse can have?

A really rewarding part of the job is working with medical and health colleagues from allied countries in planning events to better understand how we could work together and achieve a goal. A lot of that work can be understanding what the other partners can bring to the table in the event of, for example, a large-scale disaster.

This in turn exposes you to many varied cultures and individuals and expands your horizons to gain new understanding of this amazing world in which we live.

I have sailed on one of our ships as a concentrated effort to get the ships company ready for a deployment; I have trained in underwater medicine, deployed as a midwife on a humanitarian exercise called Pacific Partnership to countries all over South East Asia, spent time in a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Role 2 Hospital in Kabul in Afghanistan, and served as the Senior Health Officer in charge of the Primary Casualty Receiving Facility on HMAS Canberra which is one of the Navy's largest warships as we visited over 16 countries as part of a regional exercise.

### How has your role been highlighted in the COVID-19 pandemic?

My role in the COVID-19 pandemic was working in an Operation Cell within Defence, and being part of the team that initiated the tracking of COVID-19 patients in the early days of January 2020. This provided seminal information to the Defence Senior Leadership Group about how COVID-19 was affecting the ADF and started to inform how the ADF might respond. As the pandemic progressed, I was involved with planning Defence's support to the Victorian aged care response and now the vaccination roll-out.



# PARAMEDICINE: IS IT FOR YOU?

The work environment in paramedicine is dynamic, but just as in nursing, it requires compassion, technical clinical skills and leadership capabilities



**A**ustralian College of Nursing Member Brent Driscoll MACN went straight into nursing in 1987 at the age of 18. His exposure to emergency whetted his appetite for acute care. Brent completed a graduate certificate in Acute Cardiovascular Nursing and became involved with first aid volunteering and the Australian Defence Force, which cemented his attraction to prehospital care. He followed up with a graduate paramedicine course in 1997 and today, remains involved in both paramedicine and emergency nursing.

In this edition, Brent, who has been working with Ambulance Victoria for over two decades, answers some pertinent questions about his work as a paramedic and what nurses can expect from working in this area.

## What are the training pathways for a nurse to become a paramedic?

Like nursing, undergraduate paramedicine is a three-year degree leading to a registration with Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. Dual nursing/paramedicine degrees are on offer and for graduate Registered Nurses (RN) with acute experience or critical care qualifications, post graduate diplomas and degrees are also available.

## What are some fundamental differences between being a nurse and a paramedic? How do their skillsets differ?

Nursing and paramedicine both harness the concept of person-centred care. We have moved from the days of task-oriented practice. Just as nursing uses the process of assess, diagnose, plan, implement and evaluate, so does paramedicine. While nursing may be more holistic, paramedicine is focused on presenting problems and management over a shorter timeframe. However, they both require care and compassion, technical clinical skills, problem-solving capabilities and leadership.

## Do you find that many RNs transition to paramedics?

At Ambulance Victoria (AV), we have graduates, experienced intensive care clinicians and educators, as well as senior managers with nursing backgrounds.

Nursing is integrated in so many parts at AV through secondary triage, referral and our retrieval service. Many of my nursing colleagues have considered moving to or adding paramedicine as a practice area. After experiencing nursing, paramedicine is attractive in terms of longevity in health care. It doesn't have to be a choice between the two. There are lots of opportunities for nurses who want to work alongside paramedics, whether it be on the frontline or behind the scenes in triage services.

## How was your role highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic?

We have had to modify skills, guidelines and interventions to meet the need and keep everyone safe. Donning and doffing PPE on the side of the road in the wind and rain hasn't been an uncommon sight. We encountered a lot of worried people and at the time, we were their only source of reassurance and care.

## What are some of the unique challenges one encounters being a paramedic?

One of the roles of a paramedic is working as a single responder. This relies upon them being able to provide care in the short term without direct support from colleagues. It can be quite a challenge providing care, support and referral without that second voice. On a grander scale, it's knowing when to seek extra support from higher skillsets. Just as





we have escalation of care in nursing, we embrace this concept in the prehospital environment. Best care is about having the most suitable clinicians for patient needs.

Three important challenges to me are safety, fatigue and self-care. Paramedics operate in a dynamic environment, where safety is always at the forefront to our approach. We see people across the entire journey of life. We are fortunate that we have a large network of mental health professionals and peers who support us, not just after critical events, but when we and our families are impacted by what we do.

#### **What are some of your favourite aspects of being a paramedic?**

When I had my interview for a position as a paramedic student, I was asked why I wanted to be a paramedic. I answered that I think what we do for others at the onset of their injury or illness has the greatest impact on their well-being and recovery, and that is very rewarding to be a part of. I really enjoy the dynamic environment and the challenges it provides. The future of paramedicine and the expanding role and education of paramedics is exciting.

#### **In your opinion, which nurses can explore this line of work and who shouldn't?**

If you are considering paramedicine, go for it. I don't think there is a single 'type', but sound assessment skills and a wide variety

### **“ While nursing may be more holistic, paramedicine is focused on presenting problems and management over a shorter timeframe. ”**

of recent acute experience is essential. Both professions complement each other, but it's important to remember they are different, and each brings unique challenges. Consider getting involved in first aid volunteering or part-time defence jobs, which may help to know if prehospital care is for you.

#### **Are there any memorable experiences you would like to share?**

I have worked at major sporting events, dance parties, bushfires and even a vice-presidential motorcade. A case that

stands out is when my partner and I cared for a young lad who hurt himself on a mountain bike jump. We both received a thank you letter, a gift and importantly, a photo of him successfully completing the same jump after recovery. It's very rewarding to know our patients' outcomes. When we hear about critical patients leaving hospital, it makes what we do worthwhile. At the same time, the simple cases when we make someone feel better through minor treatment, empathy or just going that extra mile, are often the most memorable.



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# THE NATIONAL NURSING FORUM

*Champions of Change*

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## **Keynote speaker**

**Georgie Carroll**

Born and raised in Manchester, England; now a proud Australian. Georgie Carroll is a Comedian, Nurse, Wife and Mother. This combination of Nationalities, home life and hospital has provided a 24/7 training ground that has nurtured Georgie's naturally funny bones. Her bluntness and charm coupled with razor-sharp wit, give her a broad-spectrum appeal that can be put into any room and shine.

Georgie is a regular Comic Panelist on Australian TV having appeared on The Project, HYBPA?, Hughesy We Have A Problem, Shaun Micallef's Talkin' 'bout Your Generation, Celebrity Name Game, Show Me the Movie and the Oxfam Melbourne International Comedy Gala. Her exceptional comedic talent combined with her eighteen years Nursing has cemented Georgie as the go-to entertainment for Medical and Nursing Corporates, Conventions and Award Ceremonies.

See more speakers at [acn.edu.au/nnf2021](https://acn.edu.au/nnf2021)

Registrations are open at [acn.edu.au/nnf2021](https://acn.edu.au/nnf2021)



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10.03.21



# It's Time for Nurses Giving Day

In December 2020, the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) Foundation held its first ever 24-hour Giving Day to raise funds from the community to support with new scholarships

Ongoing education is vital for nurses to progress their careers and provide high level care. The Australian community counts on its nurses to be highly skilled. You, our nurses, work on the frontline of every health care setting and provide the most face-to-face clinical care to the Australian community. You are likely to be the first and only health professional seen by people in remote communities for both specialist and clinical care. Unfortunately, limited availability of nursing scholarships means too many nurses miss out on the chance to upskill, specialise and expand their knowledge.

The ACN Foundation (the Foundation) aims to change this by reaching out to the community at large by creating opportunities for the public to easily support nurses in their quest to upskill. The *It's Time for Nurses Scholarship Fund* aims to begin to address this shortfall by raising funds to provide 50 Australian nurses with access to scholarships of up to \$5,000 in 2021. We can only do this with help from the community.

Hence, on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020, a 24-hour fundraising event, **It's Time for Nurses Giving Day**, was held to support this important initiative. For 24 hours, ACN's staff members and volunteers called upon Australians to support our nurses through donations, big or small. Thanks to our generous corporate donors, all donations to the Giving Day were doubled.

At the end of the day, the Foundation was able to reach the target for the day with the help of 172 donors. This campaign was the first time the Foundation reached out to the community in this way for support. The *It's Time for Nurse Scholarship Fund* will be a mainstay of the Foundation's programs to be there for nurses.

"As more people learn about ACN Foundation and its mission to support nurses, the more the community will understand the need and feel that even their small donation will make an incredible difference," says Laurie Staub, Director of Philanthropy at ACN Foundation.

"The ACN Foundation has only been in operation for less than two years. Curiosity was at a high with over 4,000 hits to the donation page. Our challenge and opportunity, of course, is to encourage those 'curious' to become donors. We will continue to grow the funds we raise and feel strongly that members of the community really can make a difference to health by supporting nurses in their educational journey. It is in the community's best interest to have skilled nurses."

Kate Rowan-Robinson MACN, who was a recipient of the ACN Scholarship Grant in 2019, highlights the importance of a nurse scholarship in her case. "When applying for the ACN Scholarship Grant in 2019, I had no idea of the impact COVID-19 would have upon my studies," she says.

"The ACN grant ensured I was able to continue studying through some of the toughest days seen by our profession in recent times and allowed me to not only complete my thesis on clinical governance in nursing but achieve a high distinction. It is my hope this research will one day amplify the nursing voice in clinical governance."

ACN Member Arun Thomas MACN, one of the donors on Giving Day, said he was motivated to participate because he had experienced first-hand how a receiving a scholarship could provide him opportunities to excel in his nursing studies.

"I received a scholarship during my university studies, all thanks to a generous donor who supported me. So, when I heard that the ACN

Foundation was organising the Giving Day, I didn't have to think twice to get involved in this worthy cause," says Arun, who reached out to family, friends, colleagues and mentors to raise money.

He adds, "Nurses are the backbone of our health care system and we are proving every day how invaluable our service, care and commitment to our community is, especially through this pandemic. I believe each one of us has needed the men and women in this profession at some point and are indebted to their service."

"It is important to invest and raise funds for the nursing profession to deliver patient-centred care to support healthy communities. In order to provide safe, quality and timely care for the community, to develop and support emerging nurse leaders, to empower and educate nurses in their professional development, fundraising plays a vital role. Nurses always have the time, energy and commitment for quality and safe patient care, it's time to give back and support our nurses to be the best version of themselves."

To know more, visit [www.acnfoundation.org](http://www.acnfoundation.org) or call +61 434 133 619.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**172**  
first time donors

**4,000+**  
website visits

Over  
**\$40,000**  
raised