

## What nurses have to say about postgraduate study

Jennie Bell – Nurse Practitioner – Based in Primary Care

“I graduated as an RN in 2006. When I moved to Greymouth in 2009, working as an RN in the medical ward I felt I needed to upskill, so I started study. Pathophysiology gave me a deeper understanding of the conditions I regularly cared for within the ward, and I added in some pharmacology as I initially felt bewildered by all the medications. I then moved to ED and finished a health assessment paper-a very practical, skill-based paper that really added to my confidence in patient assessment and my ability to communicate with senior nurses and medical staff when I was concerned. I also did shifts in CCU, so I felt adding a critical care paper to my skillset would be useful. In the rural setting we will sometimes have long periods of time where we do not see a condition, or someone who is very unwell. Then when we do see them having the background knowledge of the critical care paper assists with our confidence, ability to assess a patient and understanding of what is happening to them.

After this I completed a Master of Nursing – with a focus on rural health. I was then given the opportunity to complete another year of study to become a Nurse Practitioner.

My current role takes the baseline skills learnt as an RN – assessment, communication and building relationships and uses it to provide advanced care. All of the study I did helps me in my current role: I will assess a patient, use pathophysiology to understand what is happening, apply pharmacology to understand the treatments and the critical care assessments come in useful in ED. As a Nurse Practitioner I cover the shift a medical practitioner would normally cover in ED or the acute walk in clinic. I am currently moving to be based within Primary Care.

My study has opened up a whole new role, with the ability to take my nursing communication skills to work with a patient to independently provide care.”

Angela Orr – Poutini Waiora

“I have been studying with the University of Otago for the past five years. Apart from the research paper (which is required for Nurse Practitioner), I have loved every minute of it. The Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences gave me the skills to assess my patients in more depth and learn more about differential diagnosis and treatment plans. These skills gave me the qualifications to become a Nurse Prescriber in the community where I can now

prescribe for my patients with long term conditions. The tutors have been very supportive throughout my career and have never given up on me.”

### Jo Tiller - Nurse Educator and Interim Quality Patient Safety Manager

“My story is a little complicated in relation to my study and progress to my current role.

I began my post graduate studies in 2001 my first year in a hospital as a registered nurse. I funded this study myself and it was all directed from my work area at that time which was older person’s health and that is why my first post graduate diploma is endorsed in Gerontology.

I really enjoyed this direction of my study I think I defiantly assisted in my understanding of the demographics of the New Zealand population and the population going forward from 2002, it still informs a lot of my work in understanding my work in the Dementia Stakeholders Group and ARC meetings locally and nationally.

I then moved into a different area of study and gained a post graduate diploma endorsed in Clinical Nutrition, this was completely separate to the course of study I completed at Otago University, but has led me to understand the roles of supplements and foods to keep well, it also supported an important discussion in the perioperative ward around vitamins, minerals and medication interactions, through this study my role as an admitting / PACU nurse was much easier when giving advice around restarting vitamins or when to stop prior to surgery. Although not a nursing post graduate diploma it has and still is valuable to my work, and if I ever choose I could be a registered clinical nutritionist, but I enjoy being a nurse too much.

The current direction my studies have taken me on thanks to being funded now, is Rural Nursing and nursing education, both have been relatable to my role. The rural nursing paper was mostly all by zoom but I have made contacts nationally who I am still in contact with regularly and led to me understanding the West Coast’s position in the country nationally in relation to policy and health outcomes.

The nursing education paper was one that cemented the ways in which education can be provided and shared, most effectively for learning outcomes for the learner, I still use my reference book daily, to assist with design and direction of education.

Every body’s journey is different and remember one of my nursing colleagues saying there is no straight walk down the corridor and I think the same is true of studies, you start off in one direction and end up somewhere else, but it is all valuable and often can be related to any area of work.”

### Diane Fairhall – Clinical Nurse Specialist Diabetes

Having HWD funding enabled me to apply for a Post Grad Diploma course in rural nursing. This was done through Auckland University with a mixture of online and block courses.

The friends that I made during the study blocks were from around the country and we have kept in contact, which is a great support and it is interesting to hear what others are experiencing in their respective regions.

These papers led me on to further study, again with the help of HWD, which along with my previous work experience enabled me to change roles from District Nursing to a locum Rural Nurse Specialist role in South Westland for 12 months. This was a great experience and I learnt so much and thoroughly enjoyed it. Doing the advanced study gave me the confidence to apply for the position.

The year was a great learning curve and challenged my knowledge and skills.

At the end of this locum a Clinical Nurse Specialist job came up which having the Post Grad papers enabled me to apply for the position. At this point I was still studying towards my Master of Nursing. I had the study bug!!

With now having experience in my CNS job I did further study to gain RN Prescribing in the community and specialty teams. This has been invaluable in my role going forward, as gives me increased ability to use my knowledge and expertise to improve health outcomes for my patient group, along with improving my job satisfaction by enabling me to assist patients on the spot with some of their prescriptions.

I am very appreciative of the opportunity HWD and the then WCDHB gave me to complete my study to enable me to further my career.