

AFOEM Fellows interview series

This series provides insight into the careers of retired and actively serving physicians in occupational medicine.

Interview with Dr David Beaumont from Otago, New Zealand. He is a Past AFOEM President, Lead Fellow RACP Congress 2019 and has been extremely active with RACP and AFOEM over his career. I had the privilege of working closely with him on Policy and Advocacy in RACP Employment, Poverty and Health which gave me an insight into his leadership skills and his inspiring vision for medicine.

Dr Farhan Shahzad MBBS, FAFOEM, Consultant Occupational Physician, Sydney

[An interview with Dr David Beaumont](#)

Farhan: David, lovely to be talking with you again. Tell me, what has been the highlight of your time with our Faculty?

David: Of course, I have to mention my time as President, which was a huge honour, highly satisfying and an amazing experience. But interestingly, as I think about it, when I first became involved in the Faculty just over 10 years ago, was just as memorable. Just before coming to the AFOEM ASM that year, my wife said to me, “David, it’s not like you to not be on a committee...”. At the ASM, it was suggested I should speak to Mary Wyatt. Mary invited me to join the Policy and Advocacy Committee. Within 3 months, I was co-chairing the committee and leading a working party developing the position statement Realising the Health Benefits of Work. (Later to become Good Work). That was one of my proudest achievements.

Farhan: What did you enjoy most about your presidency?

David: That’s an easy one – it was touring the regions of Australia and New Zealand and meeting our fellows and trainees in their own meetings. I felt very privileged to join in their regional meetings, hearing what was keeping them busy (or challenging them) and hearing how they saw the future.

At the time, one of the projects of my presidency was a statement on the role of the Occupational and Environmental Physician. In every region I asked how they saw the future. Sure, challenges were identified, but overwhelming the view for the future was seen to be positive and exciting. Many saw our role evolving into a far wider and more preventative or population role. Certainly, there was strength of feeling that there must be more to us as a specialty than medicolegal practice.

Farhan: Where to now for you, David?

David: Great question? After moving on from my company, Fit For Work, last year I took some time out to write the book I have been promising to write for the last 10 years. It’s currently in the publication process. I hope I convince them to keep the title – Positive Medicine: Disrupting the

Future of Medical Practice. It's a critical look at the reductive and deficit-focussed medical model, which proposes an additional preventative role for doctors. A new model which focusses on empowering people to take responsibility and control of their own health. Watch this space!