

Anthony Bright (DTA Vic Board Representative)

I grew up in the city of “Good Sports Wagga Wagga NSW”. I am a passionate advocate of living an active and socially connected lifestyle. Like many of my comrades I began my early career in aged care, during a career change from youth work. In 2006 few men would dare to step inside a palliative aged care unit let alone set up a purpose built Dementia Specific Unit. My early role was to “entertain the residents” not so much enhance their lifestyle opportunities.

My Diversional Therapy education was limited until I moved to Melbourne. There I stumbled into Wintringham a specialist aged care provider with a sole purpose of enabling the elderly homeless access to aged care services the rest of the community took for granted. Wintringham prompted me to return to Wagga Wagga to enroll in the Bachelor of Health Science Degree at Charles Sturt University. To survive I studied at night while managing an aged care facility as Lifestyle Coordinator during the day.

After graduation I sold all I owned to travel with a group of Medical students from University of New South Wales, a multidisciplinary team of Nurses, Dentists, and a Pharmacist coordinated by a Singaporean philanthropist. My role was to create arts and sports programs for orphaned children in rural Vietnam. That experience humbled me and taught me about ethnic divisions and how poverty shapes lives.

I returned to Melbourne to establish my own business and work part time for the city of Melbourne’s tourism branch and urban design unit. Later I was offered a contract at Council of The Ageing (COTA) as the Active Ageing Officer. In that role I designed and facilitated a best practice physical activity program in partnership with Parks Victoria and Deakin University.

My thirst for a multicultural experiences begged me to travel again, hence I approached Dental Health Services Victoria to facilitate another health program this time in China - the sister city to Melbourne Tianjin.

Finally settling in Melbourne, my experience in aged care, physical activity and Local Government helped me gain the support of the wider community and key partners such as the Heart Foundation and Young People in Nursing Homes to establish an urban Melbourne Men’s Shed based at the people’s meeting place Federation Square. The key to gaining the funding was to share the site with people and include female members, younger men and people from outside the city limits.

A sucker for punishment I am now studying Sports and Exercise Sports Science-Clinical Practice and operating a private practice. I have the support of a small team of allied health professionals who have joined The Lifestyle Company.

In my spare time I enjoy cooking and woodwork and follow the Richmond Tigers. I hope to learn more about DTA’s members and support the work of the committee. My experience as a Qualified Diversional Therapist has opened some amazing doors and working with a range of clients has taught me a great deal about life, as I am sure is the case for other members.