



## **People's Health Movement OZ met in Canberra 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> September for a Pre-PHA4 workshop**

The PHM-OZ workshop was planned in collaboration with the Public Health Association of Australia Political Economy of Health Special Interest Group. We called the workshop Health for All or Health for Some to highlight the issue of health inequities. During the workshop we derived key messages to take to PHA4. The main issues that emerged were:

- The importance of understanding both the materialist and ideological view of global capitalism
- How we need to stop making the world safe for transnational corporations profits
- The need to improve global responsibility and international solidarity amongst workers to challenge TNCs
- The need for measures of wellbeing and not just of GDP in order to assess the progress of nations
- How we can manage the ecological crisis without the death of millions of people
- The importance of building international solidarity with trade unions
- The need to address the worsening health crisis in Papua New Guinea (PNG) where health is going backwards (Australia spends forty times as much per head of population on health care provision as does PNG)
- Australia has cut its overseas aid and it needs to be restored
- The meaning of real empowerment and the importance of self-determination especially for Indigenous peoples
- The Alma Ata vision of comprehensive primary health care needs to continue to be fought for. Countries' implementing comprehensive primary health care continues to be challenged by neoliberal health reforms and private sector interests. There are concerns the Declaration at Astana will not be as visionary as the original Alma Ata, with more of an emphasis on health insurance and less on comprehensiveness and the political economy of health.
- Our desire to highlight the successes of the Aboriginal community controlled health sector in developing an effective model of comprehensive primary health care
- The ways private-public partnerships are undermining PHC
- An international consideration of the brain drain whereby Australia recruits international medical personnel to fill their workforce gaps and this results in the loss from many low and middle income countries
- Conditions of employment (e.g. Gig economy) can make people sick – the Change the Rules campaign run by Australian Trade Unions is important and will be supported by PHM. Gender equity needs to be attended to in all employment condition advocacy.
- The implementation of welfare systems for unemployed people can have consider impacts on their health. The current approach of a cruel, convoluted, and dehumanising welfare system in Australia needs to be challenged.

- PHM needs to continue to attract young people and involve them in the governance of the network

PHM Chair David Sanders was visiting Australia and so able to give a keynote address at the workshop. The local Australian Labor Party Federal MP Andrew Leigh who is an advocate of equity also came and addressed the group. Other PHM members Fran Baum, David Legge and Bel Townsend also presented on aspects of global capitalism, trans-national corporations and trade. Matt Fisher presented on the ideology of liberalism and why it is damaging to health.

Peter Tait spoke about the ecological crisis the world is facing and the need for very urgent action to avert a crisis. One of the potential crises being conflict over food and water security.

We were really pleased to have a strong representation from the Aboriginal community controlled health sector including Donna Ah Chee from Alice Springs and Pat Turner from the national peak body NACCHO. They spoke with passion about the need to promote Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander definitions of health and caring for the land for the whole community.

Perspectives on primary health care from around the world were presented by David Sanders on Africa, Don Mathieson on Papua New Guinea and Toby Freeman on Australia.

One of the focus areas was on employment and health and we heard about the importance of gender, time and work (Lyndall Strazdins) and from the Australian Unemployed Workers Union (Owen Bennett) and from the Secretary of Unions ACT (Alex White). These presentations highlighted the health impacts of the gig economy and casual work.



Launch of GWH 5 by David Legge



Matt Fisher discussing the impact of neo-liberalism on public policy and public health in Australia



Peter Tait from the Climate and Health Alliance taking about climate change



Bel Townsend discussing Trade and its impact on health