

## Dietitians Australia 40th National Conference

### LECTURE IN HONOUR OF DR CATHERINE (CATE) LOMBARD/CATHY HANNON

#### Professor Claire Palermo, Fellow of Dietitians Australia

I acknowledge that I live on the sacred sovereign land of the people of the Kulin Nation. I pay my respect to their elders and to all Aboriginal people. I acknowledge that I am an occupier and that although I was born here, I come from a history of occupiers who have yet to reconcile with the people, or the land they have occupied. I stand for a future of shared mutual respect and partnership with Indigenous peoples of this country and the world.

Indeed, it is a privilege and pleasure to honour one of our profession's trailblazers Catherine or Cate Lombard. Today I am going to take you on a journey of Cate's life and career as a dietitian (and mother, and friend, and wife). I also hope that I encourage reflection and self-discovery on areas for your further development through this lecture in honour. I also hope to provide her family, Michael, Marcus, Tess and Annai, with a story of just how much of a difference Cate made to our world of nutrition and dietetics.

For those of you in the audience from whom this is your first conference or those that need reminding, the Lecture in honour is a standard feature of our conference. This our 40th National Dietitians Australia conference likely marks the 40th lecture in honour. The associations' Lecture in Honour recognises members who have made important contributions to our profession. The

conference organising committee invite a "distinguished" member to present the lecture at our annual national conference. And for this "distinguished" member it is also an opportunity to reflect on their career and its connection to that of whom is being honoured.

Lectures are usually given in memoriam. In some circumstances, prominent members receive the honour during retirement. For Cate sadly this is in her memory. I like to think Cate is looking down upon us and watching closely as our profession grows and develops, hopefully feeling proud of how she has contributed to nutrition and dietetics research and practice.

So, what of me, the "distinguished member of the profession". As Deputy Dean Education in the faculty of medicine nursing and health science at Monash University, I am to make a difference to the teaching and learning experience and outcomes of our health professionals, including that of dietitians.

At Monash University, and I am sure many other universities around the world, "the lecture is dead". Only pre-recorded lectures are allowed and seminars or workshops must replace them. This is due to the fact that in teaching and learning circles we know that lectures where information is delivered does little to support deep learning. So, to ensure you learn something from this session I'm turning this into a seminar. What that means for you the audience is that ideally you will learn something. By the end of the seminar you will be able to:

- Describe the life of Dr Cate Lombard and the contributions she made to nutrition and dietetics through her career and the impact it has made on nutrition and dietetics practice
- Appraise the values that inspired Dr Cate Lombard to achieve what she achieved
- Explore the evolution of our professions practice and how these

are reflected in practice (competency) and accreditation standards

- Identify your own values and what it means to live to your values

Cate was one of 12 children born to Maureen and Brian in a place named Casterton in the late 1950s on the traditional lands of the Jardwadjali people. For those non-Victorians in the audience this small western Victorian town close to the South Australian border is apparently home to the Kelpie! Cate initially attended Sacred Heart girls' school in Geelong. However, after her father, a school principal was promoted to a position at Belmont High School her father moved Cate to Belmont because he saw Cate's interest and capability in science. In those days girls and science were not typically considered a pair and thought her best potential was the science program, so Cate moved there in year 11 and completed year 12. Cate then went on to complete her Bachelor of Science majoring in nutrition at Gordon Institute that later became Deakin University. I'm sure many of you in the audience can also relate to this love and capability in science that drew you into the profession of nutrition and dietetics. It is this backbone of science that you will see shaped Cate's career and that I will show you continues to be the backbone of our profession as we progress into the future.

After completing her science degree, Cate applied to do nutrition and dietetics. At that time, in 1988 only 5 institutions offered dietetics training, in stark contrast to today with 17 going on 20 universities accredited to graduate dietitians in Australia. She was offered a place at Curtin University and completed a graduate diploma in dietetics there. I understand from her family that Cate lived with house mates in Cottesloe where she made the most of the Perth beaches while studying.

Her first job as a dietitian was at Warrnambool health service in western Victoria. This rural position was part of a studentship where she was required to work as a dietitian there after

completing her training. In the early 1990's this was a strategy for providing a rural allied health workforce. In Warrnambool Cate met her future husband Michael, a young lawyer. They were married a few years later at St Bernard's in Geelong.

I have found memories of my university experiences. The colleagues and other dietitians that will hold a special place in your heart for your whole career because of the learning and experiences you undertook together.

Like all of you in the audience who "went rural" for your first job, like I did, I am sure you can imagine the fun Cate had in her first years of work!!! I worked in rural Australia, in Alice Springs, in my first years of work and reflect on that experiences as profound in shaping the dietitian I have become. Being deeply connected to the community you work in and live was fundamental to me understanding the determinants of eating well very early in my career. Being away from your norm and in uncomfortable and uncertain spaces also helps you find who you are, what makes you tick. Perhaps that's why I too met my husband and soul mate in Alice Springs and had a competency development curve like no other. I learnt through making mistakes and through experiences which shaped who I have become as a dietitian.

Upon returning to Melbourne, Cate worked at Southern Memorial Hospital. She met a group of dietitians whom would become her lifelong friends. One of her special colleagues and a very special PhD student of mine, Judy Tweedie (dec.), told me this story just moments before she received a diagnosis that had her taken away from us well before we were ready. Judy told me the story of how the hospital had decided that the dietitians would be relocated to an out-house at the front of the hospital. At the time of the relocation, nurses were striking and there was much unrest in the hospital system. The team of dietitians took it upon themselves to make it known to the hospital community about their

relocation and that while perhaps out of sight they should not be out of mind. They would not be forgotten in their pledge to improve nutrition of patients. As such they establish the “Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics”. They marked the establishment of the new academy by Queening the chief dietitian Delia Quin who paraded to the hospital staff to mark the occasion with her following of dietitians closely in toe. The large crowds of nurses striking on the day, soon joined in the festivities, apparently resembled a parade of sorts, one that would instill nutrition in the hearts and minds of nurses and any other hospital staff and patients that happened to be passing by that day.

When I was asked to do this “seminar” I pondered what was it about Cate that I should honour. I thought of her work and wondered what drove her to achieve what she did in her life.

Have you ever wondered what drives you to get up and go to work every day to be a dietitian? Why you became a dietitian in the first place? Our values are something that can very much explain what drives us and why we react the way we do to certain situations. Values are the beliefs that are most important to you - that help you find your way in the dark, that fill you with a feeling of purpose. I first learnt about values from Brene Brown who describes values as:

Values are a way of being or believing that we hold most important. Living into our values is doing more than professing our values. We practice them. We are clear about what we hold to be important and we take care in the words we use and behaviours that we exhibit. We can't live into values that we cannot name – what is most important to us? We only have one set of values – we don't shift our values based on context. (Brene Brown)

To identify your values complete this worksheet available at:

<https://brenebrown.com/resources/living-into-our-values/>

I came to know Cate in 2015 when I convinced her to come and take an associate professor role at Monash University in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics. I had met Cate previously through her work in prevention at the Department of Health. Cate was unsure that she could do the job. After some convincing she agreed to take up the offer with a mantra of giving back all that she had learnt in dietetics to the next generation. Sadly, Cate was taken away from us before I could ask her what her values were. Based on her actions and behaviours for the time I was lucky enough to have known her, and in consultation with her husband I have done my best job at guessing Cate's values.