

**Tim Proudman AM**  
**1962 - 2024**



Dr Tim Proudman passed away in the Mary Potter Hospice in Adelaide on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> of February. He was 62 years of age, and left behind his wife Susanna, and his three children Rebecca, Charlotte and William.

Tim and his two brothers, David and Andrew, were the sons of the late William “Bill” Proudman. Dr Bill Proudman was a General Surgeon, who amongst others, played a pivotal role in the development of the surgical programme at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital almost from the time it was first built in 1954. Whilst all the brothers have been successful in their chosen fields, it was Tim who continued his father’s medical legacy. Tim had a high regard for his father, using his father’s initials in a personalised number plate, carrying his fathers old leather work satchel around, and having his father inaugurate at the opening of his private rooms on Wakefield Street.

Tim was educated at Saint Peters College in South Australia, and subsequently studied Medicine at the University of Adelaide. His generosity of spirit meant that he developed a wide circle of friends both within and outside the “hallowed” blue and white Saint Peters College circle. He even knew some regular people. He remained a loyal friend and colleague to all concerned, right up to the time of his untimely death. He loved his cricket and football. A possible life highlight for him occurred only some months ago, when his closest friends managed to entice South Australian football legend Barry Robran, Tim’s sporting hero, to attend a function at Tim’s home where Barry personally presented Tim with a North Adelaide Football Club guernsey. Whilst studying at the University of Adelaide Tim was awarded a University Half Blue for football.

Tim graduated from the University of Adelaide Medical School in 1986 and completed his training in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery in Adelaide and Brisbane. He also completed a Master of Surgery at the Craniofacial Unit in Adelaide studying craniosynostosis in Crouzon’s Syndrome. He was an early adopter of technology and I remember watching him bravely stuffing his small crate sized 40MB Macintosh Classic II

computer into his backpack on a number of occasions. He was admitted into RACS as a Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon in 1996 and completed fellowships at St James' Hospital in Leeds in 1996 and 1997.

On return from the United Kingdom he took up a public appointment at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital. As a specialist he provided unbroken service to the South Australian community from 1997 to 2021, only retiring when he commenced treatment for his Glioblastoma. During the time he worked at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, he also held positions at the Royal Adelaide Hospital (1999-2000), and the Women's and Children's Hospital, where he was Head of Unit between 2009-2013. He was Head of Unit at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital from 2000-2021, a commitment few people have achieved. During this time Tim demonstrated what an eclectic and skilled surgeon he was, comfortably practising across the demanding fields of congenital hand and brachial plexus surgery, as well as sarcoma, breast, and head and neck reconstructive surgery. The staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital strongly supported Tim as head of unit, because not only was he the best person for the job, but we also didn't want him getting any ideas of relinquishing the position to anyone else. There was a brief period of unrest however. Tim took to running marathons late in life, and when in training for his next run, he insisted on walking up 6 flights of stairs whenever possible. We all regarded this activity with some degree of suspicion. However, Tim went on to become a member of the 7 continents club in 2023. This curious club only admits members who have run marathons on all 7 continents and was established in 1995 when it became possible to do a marathon in Antarctica. Less than 1000 men and women in the world have achieved this feat and less than 40 Australians. It is a mark of Tim's determination that in March 2023 he completed his sixth marathon in Antarctica, and in May, his seventh marathon in Monterey California by which time he had developed a homonymous hemianopia due to the recurrence of his brain tumour.

During Tim's professional life, he has promoted and advanced the specialty of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery widely. His emphasis was always on facilitating a high quality of training and advancement for aspiring Plastic surgeons, both nationally and internationally. He was an examiner in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery for the College of Surgeons Court of Examiners from 2010-2020, becoming Senior Examiner from 2017-2020. Additionally, he served on the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Board of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery from 2003-2007 and was Chairman from 2007-2009. Locally he spent periods presiding over the South Australian Plastic Surgery Society, and the South Australian Hand Society, and for some years was the Supervisor of Surgical Training at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital. He held tenure as state chair for the board of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery training before becoming national chair for Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery training. During this time, he was instrumental in introducing the competency based interview format for the selection of trainees.

With the assistance of Interplast, Tim's love and dedication to his specialty has had international impacts. In recent years Tim became a regular contributor to overseas aid work. His passion was Bhutan. He travelled on six occasions to Bhutan to lead a plastic surgical team for Interplast, teaching local doctors and performing plastic and reconstructive procedures on Bhutanese patients. His crowning achievement was successfully organising a fellowship position for Dr Sonam Jamtsho at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in 2023. He had been mentoring Sonam for some years and Sonam returns to Bhutan with significant plastic surgical training, and will become Bhutan's first surgeon with formal plastic and reconstructive surgery skills. Locally Tim travelled to remote indigenous communities in the Northern Territory to teach wound care with the Australasian Foundation of Plastic Surgery. Consistent with his overseas adventures, Tim enjoyed safari suits. He was the proud owner of a beige safari suit and often wore it with pride at social functions. An imponderable achievement, but he somehow pulled it off with panache!!

Tim moved in many circles and had an enviable number of friends and colleagues across a very wide spectrum of professions. He loved his wine, tennis evenings, golf, camping and four-wheel driving as well as travel, walking and cycling. He particularly liked fishing. He more particularly loved his family. He was in awe of his wife Susanna's achievements in her field of Rheumatology and was immensely proud of his children Rebecca, Charlotte and William.

In 2022, he was awarded the Sir Henry Newland Award for outstanding service to the community, to medicine and to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. His father Bill was similarly honoured with this

award in 2015, and they are the only father son combination to have achieved this honour. As such, their medical bond has achieved perpetuity. Tim's acceptance speech for this award encouraged people to make the most of their lives and to strive to achieve, as life holds many surprises. In 2023 Tim was awarded Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for significant service to Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and professional organisations.

Tim Proudman epitomised the Latin adage carpe diem. His was certainly a life well lived. He enriched our lives and was a respected mentor. As he did in life, and as his memory will reflect, I say alis aquilae, my friend. I will miss you.

Richard Harries