



Announcement

Passing of our Founder – Judith Mary Jacka, GradDipHRE, BHSc, ND 1 August 1938 – 1 March 2022

On behalf of the Directors of the Jacka Foundation, it is with much sadness that I announce the passing of our Founder, Judy Jacka.

Judy passed away in the early hours of 1 March 2022 after an illness of some months followed by a recent fall. The Board extends our heartfelt condolences to Judy's family and friends, and to the numerous colleagues who held her in high esteem.

It is impossible in this announcement to encapsulate the magnitude of almost 60 years of Judy's commitment to natural therapies in Australia – to clinical practice, the development of formal educational courses and qualifications, her authorship of eight books on natural therapies, her solid commitment to research, and Judy's well-known participation in the battle to enable the positive regulatory system we now enjoy for natural medicines in Australia.

Her career culminated in a decade of philanthropy with the establishment of the Jacka Foundation in 2010 and included service on the Board as Vice-Chair until her retirement in 2021.

Judy graduated from general nursing training at Prince Henry's Hospital in 1960. Dissatisfied with the way orthodox medicine approached disease, she enrolled at the then Southern School of Naturopathy, attaining a diploma in 1971. Her talents and commitment were recognised by Alf Jacka, founder of SSNT, who appointed Judy as a lecturer and later as principal of the school.

Judy and Alf Jacka were pioneers in natural medicines in Australia. The college steadily grew in enrolment numbers and the quality of the curriculum, and Judy's nursing background was instrumental in developing the formal, scientifically structured educational programs that paid equal attention to medical sciences and the naturopathic understanding of health, disease and healing.

Judy was principal from 1974 to 1985 and chair of the Southern School council until 1999. She was concerned during this period to create a high standard in both medical and naturopathic sciences within the college and worked tirelessly to develop, and gain government accreditation for, naturopathy and other natural therapy courses offered at SSNT. She was particularly interested to



help graduates become established in practice using a core synthesis of clinical nutrition, herbal medicine, and homeopathy.

Natural therapies steadily became more popular in Australia, drawing the attention of government regulatory authorities.

During the 1970s and 80's Judy dealt with various pieces of proposed state and federal legislation which threatened the future of natural therapies in Australia. She co-ordinated submissions and other responses on behalf of SSNT and the naturopathic profession, and instigated public letter-writing campaigns to MPs which were markedly successful due to strong public support for choice in health care. In brief, the enquiries and proposed bills targeting natural therapies were:

- Amendments to the Dietetic Bill (Victoria) 1980
- Draft Standard on Vitamins and Minerals (NH&MRC) 1981
- Therapeutic Goods Bill (Victoria) 1984
- Inquiry into Alternative Medicine and the Health Food Industry 1984-86 (Victoria Social Development Committee)
- Therapeutic Goods and Cosmetics Bill (Victoria) 1985
- Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act 1989
- Amendments to the Regulations for the Therapeutic Goods Act 1991

A thorough account of this period, and the challenges it presented to the natural therapies professions, can be found in Judy's book *Natural Therapies, the Politics and Passion: a personal story of a new profession (1998)* (ISBN 0-646-36095-7).

The Southern School emerged from these challenges a much stronger organisation. Work continued on upgrading the curricula and applying for government recognition of its courses. In 1996 the Advanced Diploma in Health Science (Naturopathy) was accredited, followed by the four-year Bachelor Degree in Health Science (Naturopathy) in 1997.

The (renamed) Southern School of Natural Therapies (SSNT) is the longest established school of its kind in Australia. It played a leading role in the development of complementary medicine both locally and internationally - hence the attractiveness of the college for global acquisition.

Thanks to Judy's early philanthropic leaning, the Southern School had become a recognised not-for-profit organisation in 1981. Although it was not foreseen at the time, this selfless act created the bedrock for establishment of the Jacka Foundation thirty years later.

In 2010 the SSNT was sold to an international education company. However, only the education arm of the business changed hands – the multi-storey heritage building housing the college,



located in an inner suburb close to the Melbourne CBD, was retained and passed into the hands of the newly created Jacka Foundation of Natural Therapies, a registered not-for-profit charitable fund.

The outcome of Judy's long philanthropic leaning is that the Jacka Foundation has now disbursed over three million dollars in funding for research, postgraduate scholarships, and other projects in the natural therapies field. Examples of that funding include to the NICM HRI at WSU to fund the Jacka Senior Research Fellow position and related projects, a research and leadership mentoring program for naturopaths at ARCCIM UTS, and development of an indigenous over-the-counter herbal pain medication – a collaboration between the Jarlmadangah Burru Aboriginal Community in the Kimberley WA and Griffith University. A full list of all grants can be found on the Jacka Foundation website (see below).

Awards granted to Judy Jacka

The commitment, dedication and achievements Judy demonstrated throughout her career led to the granting of numerous awards.

1999 Life Membership of the Australian Natural Therapists Association granted for contributions to the profession, education, and industry

2012 Complementary Health Care Council of Australia award in appreciation of ongoing support for the Council

2016 Honorary Fellowship, Western Sydney University, in recognition of philanthropic work and contributions to education and practice

2017 Lady Cilento Award, Complementary Medicines Australia for lifelong dedication to complementary medicine.

The most recent accolade was the naming of the Jacka Foundation Conference Centre at NICM Health Research Institute headquarters at the Westmead campus of Western Sydney University. NICM HRI is located beside the extensive Westmead Hospital precinct where Dr Carolyn Ee, the inaugural Jacka Senior Research Fellow, is actively developing collaborations for joint research.

In March 2020, the Jacka Foundation Conference Centre was formally opened with a conference honouring our female pioneers of natural medicine, the first speaker being Judy Jacka. Fittingly, it was held in the Judy Jacka Room. This conference centre will remain a lasting legacy of Judy's contribution to natural medicine.

We will, along with many others, be forever grateful to Judy for her foresight in fostering SSNT and the Jacka Foundation. Our commitment is that we will continue to honour and recognise Judy as the Founder of JFNT, and carry the philosophy of supporting natural therapies long into the future.



JACKA FOUNDATION

For Natural Therapies

Judy's aim was always to create a synthesis of naturopathic and medical sciences. She was particularly interested in the concept of vitality which is at the core of all the major systems of natural medicine. Research that addresses the complexity of holistic health care remains central to the ethos of the Jacka Foundation.

At a personal level, Judy enjoyed lifelong friendships with many people whom she loved dearly.

Judy is survived by her partner John, sister Maggie, children Milton and Matthew, and grandchildren Jennyfer, Melanie and Coen, all of whom she was very fond.

The Board will now consider how we can best honour Judy's memory going forward.

Kindest regards,

Terri Albert
Chairperson
Jacka Foundation of Natural Therapies
terri.albert@jackafoundation.org.au