

Farewell Professor Beverley Raphael – an inspirational, wise, funny, and compassionate Australian treasure. Her legacy lives on.

By Julie Dunsmore AM, President NALAG (NSW)

It is with great sadness I write of the passing on the 21st September of our amazing friend, mentor and colleague Professor Beverley Raphael AM. Beverley was a life member and patron of NALAG. She was a founding member of NALAG when it was formed in 1977 after the Granville Train Disaster. She was NALAG's first president. Beverley has, over all these years, been a true friend to NALAG and an inspiration and guiding light in the evolution of NALAG to its present day.

Beverley, through her research, publications and advocacy work was one of the most influential individuals in the area of loss, grief and trauma both in Australia and internationally. She has been a pioneer in the area of mental health response to disaster and terrorism, indigenous emotional social health and initiatives that addressed loss and trauma in children and adolescents. Her research and advocacy work has changed both public policy, professional and community responses to loss, grief and trauma and promoted an empowering, humane, compassionate response to suffering.

Beverley championed the honouring of people's grief experiences and their stories. She in particular promoted hope after adversity by seeing the good and enlisting the strength and wisdom that exists within individuals and communities that are suffering.

She encouraged us to embrace a culture that continually reflects on why we do what we do, and **what we can learn, so we can be the very best we can be**. Beverley was always asking us to reflect on what assists people and communities who have experienced traumatic loss and grief. She particularly wanted us to explore what helped to provide some respite from their pain and what allows people to go from surviving to thriving. Over all the years that I have known Beverley she again and again would return to what became her mantra:

"...that in the work we do we can't underestimate the power of human kindness".

Beverley's achievements were recognised in many arenas, including the RANZCP Medal of Honour (2008), the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Life Time Achievement Award (2004), the Australia Day Award (Top Ten Achiever) in 1994 for her work in mental health. She became a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1984 for her service to medicine, particularly in the field of psychiatry. She told me that the work that she did with her friend and colleague Pat Swan, was a highlight in her life. Bev and Pat were responsible for the first national analysis of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health – *Ways Forward: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Policy National Consultancy Report*.

Beverley would say that what fuels her work and passions was having the love and connection to her family. Family grounded her and her grandchildren in particular gave her so much joy and laughter and let her inquisitive nature continue to enable her to look to the future and dream right to the end.

We miss you Bev but are determined to continue your brilliant legacy.