Coffee with... Adam McLeod, CEO, Melbourne East GP

Describe your work/role at MEGPN?

It's a really varied role, MEGPN has been through a lot of changes in the last year, but that is behind us now. My core work focuses on a mix of Mental Health, Diabetes and Asthma Clinics in GP practices, the After Hours clinic in Box Hill and a huge emphasis on POLAR - our data engine, as well as delivering consulting services in eHealth to organisations like DHHS.

What sort of work were you doing prior to starting at MEGPN?:

I was working at the Victorian DHHS, rolling out the TRAK systems to community health and the iPM system to Royal Melbourne and Monash Health. It was a fiery introduction to the world of the Department, but I had a great team to support me. If you want to know how a hospital or a community health service really works - that's the role.

What excites and motivates you in your role?

I am definitely motivated by change for the better. Seeing innovative practice or hearing ideas from smart people. That app that allows you to find a vein in a patients arm, monitor glucose levels without a pin prick, or instantly code a DNA sequence, that's what's coming, some are here now. I may not invent them, but I'd like to be the person who makes use of them and gets others excited about them.

You won the Jon Hilton Award for Excellence for Primary Health Informatics at the Health Informatics Conference in July. Can you tell us about that?

That was a surprise, but great to be nominated and recognised by my peers. I'm probably a bit of an anomaly coming from a clinical background, but now I've had the opportunity to work across so many different programs in IT, community, hospital and General Practice. My first 'eHealth' job was working with Jon Hilton rolling out the HMS system across Eastern Health. I must admit I was pretty green back then but he taught me a lot about the basics of project survival. I was sad to hear of his passing, however it is great that his legacy lives on the through this award. It was an honour to receive it this year.

What strengths do you see in the people and organisations you work with?

Passion, there are so many people I work with that want to see the health world work in a better way. Health, in particular primary health, seems to be in a state of perpetual change which oddly makes change itself very difficult. Sometimes it feels like the 'wild west', but at the same time changes and a shakeup can be a really good thing.

If you could change one thing about the world right now, what would it be?

Data sets. I'm a nerd at heart, probably more than just my heart to be honest. My biggest gripe with the way the world of health works is the lack of alignment and standards around data sets. If the 'data gods' could make one standard inpatient and one standard community/primary care data set with a few variations for each specialty area it would change health. By doing that we would instantly save millions of clinician hours spent filling in data sets, save patients having to fill in endless forms, have comparable and compatible data across sectors, services and funding streams, open up a world of research and data compatibility. The vendor community could align their work around standard data sets allowing each service to use any product that fits their needs the best.

If you weren't working at MEGPN right now, what would you be doing?

Sleeping, then playing my ukulele by a pool somewhere, or maybe around a campfire with my family. I'm not really sure what I'd be doing, I meet a lot of people who say their ambition is to be CEO or CIO, etc. I was never really that person. The idea of having a goal, then getting there and finding it wasn't quite what I expected scares me a little. I'd much rather see what tomorrow offers and move in a direction I find interesting. I'm more interested in something that makes me happy and offers the right challenges.