



3-7 APRIL 2017

15th WORLD CONGRESS
ON PUBLIC HEALTH
2017 MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA
VOICES • VISION • ACTION

15th World Congress on Public Health Secretariat
ICMS Australasia
GPO Box 3270, Sydney, NSW, 2001, Australia
P: (+61 2) 9254 5000 F: (+61 2) 9251 3552
E: info@wcph2017.com W: www.wcph2017.com

Syria; self-driving cars; big businesses spreading disease; and more: Stories from Day 3 at the World Congress on Public Health

- Syria, chemical weapons, and industrial chemicals
- Self-driving cars will save lives
- Best of times, worst of times for Australian adolescents
- Obesity and climate—the crises we've created. Are we eating ourselves to an early collective grave? Or is food a silver bullet?
- Multi-nationals and mozzies—both great at spreading diseases
- Big bad companies blocking life-saving public health policies

Researchers at the World Congress on Public Health in Melbourne available for interview Wednesday, 5 April

- More at www.scienceinpublic.com.au/publichealthcongress
- Researchers available for interview, contact Niall Byrne on 0417 131 977 or niall@scienceinpublic.com.au

Syria, chemical weapons, and industrial chemicals

Paul Walker has visited every US and Russian chemical weapon stockpile.

The recent use of chemical weapons and toxic industrial chemicals in the Syrian civil war, with thousands of innocent civilians killed and injured, has once again illustrated the threat of inhumane, indiscriminate, and banned weapons of mass destruction to humankind, the environment, and public health.

And numerous industrial accidents and occasional catastrophes such as the nuclear reactor meltdown at Fukushima, Japan in 2011 underline the extreme importance of safety and security for high-risk commercial sites, facilities, and transportation.

Paul Walker is the head of security and sustainability at Green Cross International. He received the prestigious Right Livelihood Award in Stockholm, Sweden in 2013.

Obesity and climate: two linked global crises we've created

Are we eating ourselves to an early collective grave? Or is food a silver bullet? Alessandro Demaio, WHO

Food is contributing to the global burden of obesity-related disease and the emissions from its production are contributing to climate change. In many ways, these are both externalities of the recent, rapid and redefining transitions of globalisation, urbanisation and economic growth.

With unhealthy diets now the leading risk factor for death and disability worldwide, and our food systems representing the largest driving sector for climate-related carbon emissions, are we eating ourselves to an early collective grave? Or is food the closest we have to a silver bullet for planet and people? **Dr Alessandro Demaio** will be discussing the consequences of our food systems, new research on childhood obesity, and the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition at the World Congress on Public Health.

Dr Demaio is an expert on non-communicable disease (NCD). He co-founded the millennial, global social movement NCDFREE in 2013. Then in 2015, he founded festival21—a massive, public celebration of our greatest collective challenges. Since November 2015, Alessandro has been a



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Medical Officer with the Department of Nutrition for Health and Development at the World Health Organization in Geneva. He loves food and lives for positive social impact. Dr Demaio trained as a medical doctor at The Alfred Hospital in Australia.

Autonomous vehicles will save lives

Curtin's mini-bus is ready to roll – Simone Pettigrew, Curtin University

Road rules, seat belts, airbags, good design have all helped smash the road toll. What will the impact of autonomous cars be? **Simone Pettigrew's** research shows that autonomous cars will bring huge health benefits, drastically reducing the number of car accidents and cutting the air pollution emitted from the tailpipes of our cars, trucks and other vehicles. But they're also a new, unfamiliar technology—we need to understand how people feel about autonomous vehicles in order to smooth the transition of this technology from lab to day-to-day life.

Curtin University—where Simone Pettigrew is a Professor with the Faculty of Health Sciences—have their own autonomous shuttle bus. It runs on 100 per cent electricity, can carry up to 11 passengers and safely drive up to 45km per hour. It's currently being programmed and will be on the road in the next couple of weeks.

At the World Congress on Public Health, Simone will present the results of a study of Australians' attitudes to these vehicles and their perceptions of the positive and negative outcomes that are likely to result from the transition to these new vehicles.

Best of times, worst of times for Australian adolescents

Public forum with George Patton tonight

Today's Australian adolescents are the best-ever nourished, educated and interconnected generation—but they also face unprecedented cultural, economic and social change.

Adolescence is a critical developmental phase for achieving human potential. It is characterised by dynamic brain development, a time when interaction with the social environment moulds the capabilities that an individual takes forward into later life.

But are we creating the conditions for adolescents and young adults to thrive?

Find out [at this free public event with Melbourne Conversations tonight](#) with **Professor George Patton**, psychiatrist and epidemiologist at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. He will discuss how the findings of the Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing are transforming the way we think about this age group.

Multinational companies, like mosquitoes, are vectors of disease

Meet the man behind Australia's tobacco plain packaging laws – Mike Daube, Curtin University

Big Tobacco with their armies of lawyers; multinational companies with huge advertising budgets; sports sponsorship and its subtle ability to associate unhealthy products with healthy activity – the modern public health battleground pits science-based policy against the mighty dollar.

Mike Daube says the single most important obstacle for effective public health advocacy remains ruthless and determined opposition from powerful global and national industries and companies that are both vectors of disease and unrelenting in their efforts to prevent any action that would run counter to their interests. How do we make them accountable?



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Mike will receive the World Federation of Public Health Associations highest honour, the Hugh Leavell Award for Outstanding Global Health Leadership.

People are dying: big tobacco, alcohol, gambling blocking public health policies

Tobacco, alcohol, and gambling are major causes of illness, misery, and premature death globally. But the implementation of public health policies that are known to reduce harm are often delayed or stopped by industry groups who place private profits ahead of public health.

Peter Miller, a Professor of Violence Prevention and Addiction Studies at Deakin University, has studied the tactics of the vested interests our policy makers are up against. The tactics include casting doubt on science, lobbying, spending huge sums on media and advertising campaigns, and ‘astro-turfing’—the creation or funding of fake grassroots groups or movements.

Peter’s particular expertise is in alcohol, including alcohol-related violence in licenced venues, links between alcohol use and emergency department admissions, and the influence of the global alcohol industry on public policy. Working with colleagues who specialise in tobacco and gambling, he’s seeing similar patterns of unhealthy corporate behaviour in these industries. More at www.industryinsight.info.

The World Congress on Public Health is on from 3 to 7 April at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

More at www.wcph2017.com/media.php and @wcph2017 on Twitter.

Contact Niall on 0417-131-977, niall@scienceinpublic.com.au or Tanya on 0404-083-863 for interviews

