

The History & Development of Kinesiology in Australia: A Brief & Personal Account

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Kinesiology has come a long way since it exploded on to the natural health scene in the 80s. While each state or geographical area in Australia had its own beginnings with a local person or group birthing this new and exciting modality, it was Melbourne/Victoria that became ground zero as a platform for the growth of kinesiology in Australia.

I was lucky enough to be right there at that time, young and fresh and looking for answers to what makes both mind/body and the universe tick. As such, this paper and presentation centres around my involvement and experience of the Kinesiology field from the early days until more recent times.

I was studying Science at Melbourne University and nearing the end of my degree. The year was 1981 and I had been exploring a number of natural therapies and spiritual disciplines. By September that year, I decided to attend a three month massage diploma course. Back then a 'diploma' was not necessarily the kind of government accredited and standardised course we see these days.

On the first night I entered the foyer area and noticed a male sitting on a table with his back against the wall, knees up and embraced by his arms. He grinned like a Cheshire cat and said "Hello" in an accent that was hard to pick, but seemed to resemble 'English', foremost, with a touch of 'USA'. Little did I know it at the time but this guy would set the course of my life for decades to come.

His name was Philip Rafferty and he was soon to become one of the great pioneers of Kinesiology in Australia; dragging me along with him for the ride. The reason for his accent was that while he was English in origin, he had been travelling the world and had spent time in the USA learning Touch For Health (TFH) and had come over to Australia as a newly fledged Touch For Health Instructor.

Before that 1981 year ended, he had taught me TFH Basic and I was hooked, as were a number of other people who did that same massage course.

The important thing to note here was that the only 'Kinesiology' or muscle testing courses one could learn back then was TFH Basic, TFH Advanced and TFH Instructor Training. Respectively, it was one weekend, another weekend and then an eight day course. The exception to this was that if one was a chiropractor, doctor or other similar professional, then there may have been an opportunity to do an Applied Kinesiology course. But for the average Joe Blow it was TFH only.

It is well established that the original 'Kinesiology' was Applied kinesiology (AK), founded by George Goodheart DC. In the 70s, US chiropractor, John Thie studied AK, and quickly

realised that this material need not be restricted to the professional, but could be a powerful tool in the hands of the layperson for self help. So he developed a version for anyone to learn and called it 'Touch For Health'. If it was not for TFH, I would not be writing this now and perhaps Kinesiology or muscle testing would not be as well known today. I always likened AK as the grandfather of Kinesiology and TFH as the grandmother. In essence TFH nurtured muscle testing worldwide.

So it was that Kinesiology as we know it today had its beginnings in Australia as TFH. And so it was that Philip Rafferty was in Melbourne and eager to spread the TFH gospel. For me, there were serendipitous moments that would quickly come to pass. The first was barely weeks after finishing my TFH Basic under Philip at the end of 1981. My partner at the time called me one evening in December to say that she had finally found a house mate for the spare room that had become vacant. That person turned out to be Philip Rafferty. Further she said that she was leaving for the whole summer to head back to Queensland and that I would have to stay at her place. So within weeks of learning TFH, by amazing chance, Philip and I were living under the same roof for about 2-3 months in all. And what a time it turned out to be. Amidst watermelon and grape fasts, we practised and practised our 42 muscle tests over and over until perfect.

That year I also finished my degree and in February 1982 I put a pack on my back and hitch hiked right around Australia for the remainder of the year. While on the trip of my lifetime, I accepted any willing bodies and demonstrated TFH to them, gaining experience and confidence in the technique. Meantime, in my absence, Philip continued to teach TFH in Melbourne and was meeting and gathering TFHers, both local and interstate. By the time I got back from my trip, there was a TFH Association in QLD and one forming in Victoria and WA. Philip was on a mission to 'blast' the country with TFH. His passion, motivation and energy was incredible. If there was a festival on anywhere in Melbourne or country Victoria, he would have the TFH Association of Victoria attending with the biggest tent and the biggest group of enthusiastic volunteers.

People streamed into TFH courses and if they wanted more there was the TFH Instructor Training at the end. This required having a TFH Instructor Trainer and the person for the job was Dr. Bruce Dewe, from New Zealand. Bruce and his wife, Joan, were both mentoring forces for the growth of the TFH in the South Pacific region. Philip would get the bums on seats and Bruce would traverse the ditch and teach them to be TFH Instructors. And while doing so he would assist and advise the growing number of TFH organisations around the country. Both Bruce and Joan were valuable assets.

Eventually the isolated pockets of enthusiasm became a collective, nationally, as TFH organisations across the country communicated and shared. The very first 'Kinesiology' Conference, under the then 'TFH banner', was organised on the Gold Coast in 1984 by the TFH Association of QLD. Anna McRobert was the main organiser and as history now shows, a major pioneer of TFH & Kinesiology in Queensland as well as contributor to the national scene.

Although Melbourne proved to be a groundswell of energy for TFH and later the Kinesiology field in general, each state or area played its part in creating something for Kinesiology nationally. In 1986, under the guidance of Dr. Bruce Dewe, the State and local TFH bodies came together to form the TFH Foundation of Australasia, which included New Zealand. The President or elected chair of each local body became a founding board member of the TFH

Foundation of Australasia, which later became the Australian Kinesiology Association (AKA).

Back tracking one year, in 1985 I became the President of the TFH Association of Victoria and headed the committee to organise the 2nd Australian TFH Kinesiology Conference in Melbourne. It was our first real taste of going beyond the TFH scene with International speakers such as Gordon Stokes, Joan Dewe and Wayne Topping, bringing some of the new and developing techniques from across the globe. What this did was whet the appetite for hungry TFHers eager to learn more and more.

By 1986, as President of my local state group, I was by default, fortunate to be one of the founding committee members of the national body, which officially formed at the 3rd National TFH Kinesiology Conference in 1986 in Sydney. Other founding members were Dr. Bruce Dewe (NZ) Joan Dewe (NZ), Toni Lilley (Chairperson), Anna McRobert (QLD), Don Davies (NSW), Sylvia Marina (WA), Dave Whitmore (NT). By 1990 I had become the Executive Officer of the AKA and held that position for 7 years. I remained on the National Committee of the AKA for about another 10 years or so.

I recall giving a presentation at this 1986 conference as did my long time friend, Brendan O'Hara, and colleague, Barry Summerfield. By this time Educational Kinesiology was starting to make its mark and both Brendan and Barry were at the forefront of this new modality from Paul Denison in the US.

By the latter 80s, other kinesiology modalities were approaching our shores. As already mentioned one of these was Educational Kinesiology (now called Edu-K or Brain Gym). Another was Three In One Concepts, founded by Gordon Stokes, Daniel Whiteside and Candace Callaway and famous for its Behavioural Barometer and for bringing the psychological/emotional component into the fray. There was also Applied Physiology founded by Richard Utt, Hyperton-x created by Frank Mahoney, and Biokinesiology taught by Wayne Topping, to name a few. It would be no surprise by now, but all these modalities came about by the founders first learning TFH. However, there was one exception and that was Biokinesiology - one of the very few Kinesiologies over the decades that grew in parallel to TFH rather having its roots in it. Biokinesiology was founded by John Barton, but back then and still to this day, is largely taught by Wayne Topping.

Along with the advent of the national body came a magazine which was entitled 'In Touch'. The first issue appeared in Autumn 1987 and it has never missed a beat since that first publication, appearing each and every season since then. It is now into its 31th year and 125th edition. The In Touch magazine has served as a wonderful networking and communication tool over all those years and gone from a single colour plain looking magazine to a more glossy and colourful publication with many great articles, stories, updates and titbits for Kinesiologists and students across the country. It has certainly played a major role in the development of Kinesiology in Australia.

The next serendipitous event involving myself and Philip came about with TFH supplies. With all these TFH classes being taught across the country, there were issues with getting TFH supplies from the USA. Philip quickly realised that they should be printed here to make them more accessible and affordable and orchestrated permission to print & supply TFH

materials in Australasia. The venture he called 'Equilibrium Muscle Kinesiology Promotions'. But he needed capital to pay for the printing and that is where I helped out; Equilibrium had barely started before I had a slice of the action. This was 1984 and by 1985 Philip had started a family and he wanted to take them to England for a visit. Needing more funds to do so he offered the rest of Equilibrium to me and the rest is history.

But why mention Equilibrium in this historical account of Kinesiology in Australia? Because Equilibrium's supply network became a pivotal part of the growth of Kinesiology. Many modalities and founders turned to Equilibrium to distribute their manuals and certificates. In addition, the national TFH body used Equilibrium as a collector for class royalties for a number of years. The business became a trusted part of the Kinesiology framework for years to come. This, in fact, was one of the things that separated Australia from other countries in terms of the early success of kinesiology. No general kinesiology supplies business found such a place in other countries. Elsewhere, they were fragmented into different modalities or organisations. In Australia it was centralised, broad and efficient. Philip always said that is why I ended up with the role in the end. He never saw himself with the admin skills to run such an enterprise and we both found our respective places for our talents.

Along with distributing Kinesiology materials, in the early days I was involved with setting up workshops for international visitors. My partner, Franca, and myself, were lucky enough to have people like Gordon Stokes, Wayne Topping, Frank Mahoney and Richard Utt stay at our home. We attended their courses and met Kinesiologists from interstate, often housing more in the kinesiology field.

The TFH Association of Victoria grew and grew and morphed into the Kinesiology Association of Victoria (KAV). As did all of the others TFH Associations. They all became satellite Kinesiology Associations attached to the parent body, the Australian Kinesiology Association.

Melbourne continued to be a hotspot for Kinesiology and imported Kinesiologies began to take a back seat to home grown modalities. While some of the founders of the following modalities may no longer live in Melbourne, at the time of the birth or seed of their modality, they did reside here:

Kinergetics - Philip Rafferty

Neuro-Training - Andrew Verity

Learning Enhancement Advanced Program (LEAP) - Charles Krebs

Counselling Kinesiology - Gordon Dickson

Super Five Element Fix (SFEF) - Keith Aggett & Geoff French

Neuro-Energetic Kinesiology - Hugo Tobar

Movement & Learning – Brendan O'Hara

Stress Indicator Points System (SIPS) – Ian Stubbings

Symbol Kinesiology – Geoff French

Neuro-Spiritual Integration – Peter McLellan

Many of these modalities were introduced to the rest of world and some continue to be taught globally to this day. Although kinesiology originated in the USA, in the 90s, Melbourne was considered to be the mecca of kinesiology knowledge worldwide and had the highest per capita of kinesiologists on the planet. To the Europeans, Melbourne and Australia were

places to be worshipped, Kinesiologically speaking! In 1994 the International Kinesiology Conference was held in Melbourne, further cementing its place in the Kinesiology world.

More about the 80s

While TFH was the spring board for learning muscle testing in the early 80s it did not always appease the appetite for more. As mentioned, new Kinesiologies from both abroad and those home grown, excited the learner and along with the associated organisations, propelled the kinesiology field forward. One of these new modalities was Professional Kinesiology Practice or PKP as it was known at the time. Bruce & Joan Dewe, as prolific Instructor Trainers for TFH, had seen how TFH had gone beyond John Thie's vision of being taught to laypeople as more and more natural therapists and professionals presented to study TFH and were eager to add more to their muscle testing repertoire. Bruce and Joan consequently founded PKP and made it the professional arm of TFH. After doing the TFH series one could enter into the PKP series to learn more about muscle testing in the clinical practice. PKP incorporated a number of Applied Kinesiology techniques and broadened the scope of areas that Kinesiology could work in. Importantly it expanded the use of finger modes as a basis for the clinical procedure, setting up a clear and functional system to work by. Finger mode research was aided and helped along the way by people like Andrew Verity and Don Viney.

Drawing on supply from TFH and its practical methodology, PKP became a very popular modality. So much so that each year one could go to Bali for 16 days to learn or repeat the series – and many of us did, some more than once. For me it is safe to say that the Bali workshops count right up there amongst the most fun I have ever had in my life.

The energy in Kinesiology in the 80s was nothing short of amazing. Those who got involved in their local TFH body were motivated and excited and freely gave much of their time, and sometimes funds, to market, promote, administrate and manage. It was a time when there was never any shortage of helpers and hands - everyone wanted to be a part of what was new and developing, and experience the fun and togetherness that came with it.

It might be of interest to some to know that back then, the field of muscle testing was referred to as 'Muscle Kinesiology'. By the end of the 80s in the USA, the term 'Specialised Kinesiology' was becoming favourable. It never really caught on here, but locally, after a while, the word 'muscle' faded from the terminology and 'Kinesiology' was left to stand alone.

By the 90s, the Kinesiology field was making a push for more 'professionalism' and the now well established Australian Kinesiology Association had its own Practitioner Registration and Course Accreditation Boards and annual Kinesiology Conferences.

And it was the annual Kinesiology Conferences that played an important and valuable role in creating an arena for the networking and gathering of Kinesiology personnel and information. They were also seen as an enjoyable part of the Kinesiology calendar, reflected by the fact that many 'oldies' still attend each year, some 30 plus years since the very first one in 1984.

In Victoria, another annual event that began in the 80s and carried through into the 90s was the Kinesiology Expo. After the great successes of the TFH Association of Victoria/KAV, attending various Expos and Fairs to promote and market TFH and muscle testing in general, the idea was put forth to have our own Expo, just on our own methodology. It was a one day event, initially called 'The Body Reveals Day', but later became the 'Kinesiology Expo'. And it was not just made up of stalls, it also had lectures running on the half hour on muscle

testing and topics such as learning, sports injuries, food sensitivities etc. Importantly these topic specific lectures were broken up with well attended "What is Kinesiology' presentations as a general introduction. One year this event was held at the prestigious Camberwell Civic Centre with its huge space and very large lecture theatre. By this time Melbourne had developed such big names in kinesiology that the presentations, albeit aimed at the public, were given by people like Philip Rafferty, Andrew Verity and Charles Krebs and Don Viney.

During this time, under the banner of Equilibrium, I started the world's first Kinesiology Directory which is still in existence today as a website. In 1989 I canvassed the Kinesiology field to list themselves as Kinesiology Practitioners and Instructors in their own state, under their own suburb or country town. Advertising space was also available. The first 10 pages or so were used to describe Kinesiology and some of its aspects and modalities. It began as an A5 publication and grew to up over 60 pages with 12000 copies being printed each year. In 2001 the directory went online and in 2006 the last printed version was published, much to the disappointment of many. In the 90s, the UK and Canada Associations based their own publication on the Australian Directory, with permission, using the same structure and descriptions.

Melbourne could not help but be a major centre for Kinesiology. The biggest local association was in Victoria, the AKA office was in Melbourne, as was national supplier of Kinesiology materials, and the Kinesiology Directory was also published in this city. Further, the Practitioner Registration and Course Accreditation Boards met in Melbourne, and the annual Kinesiology Expo was thriving. Added to this, significant research and new course development was a hotbed here. And to top it off, for much of the life of the 'In Touch' magazine, it was edited and published in Melbourne.

But throughout the 90s, two major changes to the landscape set the scene to impact the Kinesiology field tremendously by the time we were well into the 2000s.

One was, surprisingly, related to the dominance that Melbourne played in the Kinesiology field at the time and the other was the advent of the college format of teaching Kinesiology.

Taking the first point, which in detail is somewhat beyond the scope of this presentation, Melbourne became such a focal point for everything Kinesiology, that to some it seemed the balance of things was not always seen as best it could be. Politically, cracks began to appear in the national organisation, the AKA, over the fact that the numbers were often skewed towards a Melbourne or Victorian power base. This, along with other issues, led to a break-away group which was given the name 'The Australian Institute of Kinesiologists, the AIK. The circumstance did create choice within the field, but for some, the philosophy of 'united we stand' was eroded. Over the years there has been ongoing discussion as to whether or not the two organisations should merge and how that can happen.

During the same period of this political turmoil, colleges entered the scene. With their emergence came a new sense of freedom on 'the how, when, where and why' of teaching Kinesiology. Prior to this, Kinesiology classes were mainly taught on weekends and invariably adhered to a particular format and curriculum as per the Kinesiology modality being taught. However, colleges were able to move away from this norm, by becoming their own identity rather than that of a certain modality or group of modalities. This gave them the opportunity to stray from preferred formats and, in some cases, offer their own kinesiology

stream rather than a known modality from elsewhere. Further, courses could be taught in blocks rather than weekends, or set times or periods each week.

Colleges also offered a different supportive atmosphere for the ongoing student, with scheduled practice sessions, regular teachers and hopefully a place to air any grievances. Unlike the original format for learning, one stepped into a diploma or certificate iv course with a known and long term mapped out curriculum and itinerary.

It is, perhaps, a good reason for the success of the college format, that diplomas could attract government subsidies. Students could be financially compensated for the fees they paid, making learning with a college and attaining a diploma attractive. It was a matter of which college to attend that was often the hard decision.

With the new college format gaining ground, the older method of learning Kinesiology became known as the 'workshop model'. Although the workshop model began to wane as new students favoured the college model, it still had its advantages and individual instructors continued to teach via this structure. One of the big factors in choosing the workshop model over the college format was flexibility and choice. With the workshop model, one could choose the Kinesiology modality one was most attracted to and learn the material at a time more suited to individual needs and also perhaps with an instructor of one's choice. This was more likely with the Touch For Health system as it was taught more often and more widely. Further, on the financial aspect one could attend workshops according to availability of funds, should that be an issue. Another important factor was that the workshop model was more suited to people living in rural areas who could not adhere to college timetables.

As time wore on, the workshop model, despite some of its clear advantages, did fall under the shadow of colleges and diploma learning. The ability for colleges to align with government and societal expectation was just too great. Also, Kinesiology organisations began to change their policies to support the growing college industry.

But the workshop model is still to this day fighting for its place. It will never disappear totally and perhaps conditions may present for a resurgence in the future.

In many ways the workshop model remains in the hearts of the pioneers and those students from the 80s and 90s. Many college principals, certainly earlier on, all acquired their Kinesiology knowledge and practice via the workshop model - a fact that is often forgotten or not well recognised these days. In essence, the Kinesiology field, its techniques, the research it achieved and its political structure had been borne from people doing weekend workshops with great enthusiasm and passion.

There is no doubt that the contribution to the growth and development of the Kinesiology field in Australia is far and wide. There have been many players, both in the beginning and over the years. There have been prolific teachers - those who taught hundreds of workshops and thousands of students, especially Touch For Health in the early days. And there are those who took their Kinesiology modality to the rest of the world. There have been those who became highly respected as practitioners with clinic booked out for months in advance. Plus there were those who researched and added to the field in this manner. Of course in most cases, all or some of these aspects were rolled into the one person, who successfully taught, practised and/or researched.

But perhaps, most of all, there were those who gave of their time and energy, voluntarily, to promote the field, to administrate and manage on behalf of others, to engage in activities that helped the field grow and develop into what it is today.

Sadly, the day of the volunteer is almost over as many of the necessary jobs are paid positions and what is not, is often a hole that does not get filled. However, things are different now. The volunteer of old was riding on a wave of excitement and passion of the new. These days people enter the field to get a certificate. That energy of purpose is just not the same.

Still the structure of the field manages, even with government and societal expectations pushing and pulling with greater force. Some of the volunteers of old still show their faces to help out and regularly attend conferences because they know how important and valuable they are (and how much fun).

The future of the Kinesiology could rest with adhering to increasing government rules and red tape. Or perhaps the opposite. Society, or parts of society, may reach a tipping point and become fed up with bureaucratic changes and the like, which often mean more restriction and difficulty with getting on with the job at hand. The question may arise: 'Will we go down the medical path, where so much energy is put into what you must do, or what you can and cannot do, that the human being, both practitioner and client, could be lost amidst it all? We will wait and see. Whatever the case the Kinesiology field has already made its mark in Australia and in the world, for the betterment of all.

Here are some pictures. Since they were taken many years ago, quality is an issue!
The are many more. Come to the Equilibrium Stall or contact me to see more.



Charles Krebs muscle testing Andrew Verity at the 1994 International Kinesiology Kinesiology Conference in Melbourne



Michael Wild demonstrating surrogate with Marianne Rafferty on crutches and Kerryn Franks as the surrogate -way back in the mid 80s.



The national committee of the AKA in Perth in 1993. From L to R:
 Back Row L to R: Michael Wild and son (VIC), Toni Lilley (QLD), Peter Emmerton, (NSW)
 Graham Duck (QLD), Pam Mountfield (NSW), Barbara McCloud (SA).
 Middle: Kerryn Franks (VIC), Ardis Emmerton (NSW Country)
 Front Row: Franca Wild (VIC), Dave Whimore, (NT), Jen Luddington (ACT)
 Missing: Sylvia Marina (WA) – off organising the conference !



The banner for the Bali Workshops in 1987. Wow were they fun!



An extremely young John Coates, Philip Rafferty and Michael Wild at TFH stall at in Expo in the 80s (somewhere, sometime)



Another young one at the time – Franca Wild receiving her Advanced Edu-K certificate from Paul and Gail Denison (USA) – Melbourne 1987



Charles Krebs, Michael Wild and Brendan Rohan doing the Enzyme Dance – a take off from Charles' presentation at the Adelaide Conference some years ago