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In the Hot Seat

4-Aug-2009

Dr Margaret Purcell is a GP in far-north Queensland and a volunteer with Australian Doctors International.

The main reason I decided to do medicine was ... Captain Benjamin Franklin "Hawkeye" Pearce from *MASH*.

home.

The most unusual presentation I have seen ... leprosy or cerebral malaria, but for the people of Papua New Guinea, these are commonplace.

Describe your relationship with your computer. It prints much clearer than I write.

The one thing I wish I'd known about general practice is ... how endless it is.

If I hadn't been a doctor, I would have been ... a podiatrist (such a useful and important role) or a self-sufficient gardener.

If I could change one thing about general practice it would be ... to triage the "worried well".

If I were Health Minister for a day I would ... remind all who work in health that the system exists for sick people, that clinicians are employed to treat/heal sick people, and that administrators are there to support the clinicians -- not the other way around. The health system is about serving the population, not supporting the processes of administration.

My greatest regret in my medical career is ... none. I love the privilege of talking to people about all sorts of things and seeing if there is a way to help as needed.

The book that changed me was ... AB Facey's *A Fortunate Life*. To remain positive after all his trials is a wonderful thing.

If I were a car I would be ... a Nissan Patrol -- not fancy or fast, but simple, honest, reliable and hardworking.

Dr Purcell spoke with Geraldine Kurukchi.

If you would like to take part in this column or to nominate a GP to feature in it, please e-mail geraldine.kurukchi@reedbusiness.com.au

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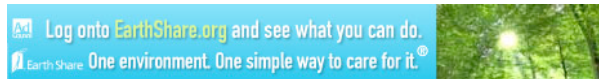
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