As some of you know I have been on some “long service” leave which I felt, after joining the Clifton Hill Medical Group 36 years ago was timely.

When I joined the practice, it consisted of 4 elderly GPs. I took over from the younger one (in his late 60s) who was retiring first! I remember then, as the others one by one anxiously announced that they would retire, that I felt a modicum of relief and promised myself not to be in the same situation and stay too long.

So, having reached the age of 66, I needed to make a positive decision in deciding to retire from clinical work.

It has not been easy as I have loved being a GP, I have loved you as patients, and I have loved making the practice what it is today.

It has been partly possible to do this as we have welcomed some excellent doctors to the practice whom many of you have already met, being Dr Xiao Pei Yip, Dr Aaranan Paransothy, Dr Miriam Yassa, Dr Michelle Lee and Dr Jun Yeoh and I am more than happy for them to take over your care. As well as Drs Richard Blanch, Samantha Wilson, Trish Molloy and Chris Papachristos who are continuing as usual.

I intend to continue running the practice with Dr Jane Collins, who I have worked with for the last 30 years, and we plan to continue the high standard of care of the practice as best as we can.

I am looking forward to spending time with my daughters, one who lives in Canada and has 2 daughters, 3 and 1 years old, and the other one here in Melbourne, who has a 5 month old daughter.

I am also looking forward to having time with my husband, who retired 4 years ago and has been patiently waiting for me to have the opportunity to join him on trips - usually involving cycling!

It is confronting to get to this age, but I have listened to many of you who have retired and seems that mostly it is a positive and welcome decision, but I also acknowledge that it will be difficult for many of you as we have known each other for a long time and shared both good and tough times.  I will miss the closeness and opportunity you have given me to be your GP, it has been a privilege and a pleasure.

With a tear in my eye, I wish you all the best but know you will continue to be cared for at our practice.

With my best wishes,

Lora Gurney